

Fethard & Killusty
NEWSLETTER
2010



€12



*Denis Mullins, Pat Mullins and Cly Mullins from
Mockler's Terrace, The Valley.*



*Kitty Mullins and baby Denis Mullins
1928*



Fethard School Outing c.1958. Photograph taken in O'Connell Street, Dublin, on a trip to see Cyril Cusack in a Shakespeare's Hamlet. In the back: Philip Byrne, Johnny O'Dwyer, John Egan, Paddy Lonergan, Tony Woodlock, Pat Woodlock, Finbar Tobin, Jimmy Tobin, John Britton, Sean Evans, John Meade (teacher). Middle: John McCarthy, Tommy Long, Lory Dineen, Collie Morrissey, Ken O'Neill, Eddie Dillon, Davy Woodlock, Ian McLellan. Front L to R: Eamon Maher, Willie Harrington, Derry O'Dwyer, Paddy O'Donnell, Jack Moclair, Jimmy Fitzgerald, Joseph Hanley, Willie Ryan, Tommy Teehan, Pat Noonan, Damien McLellan.

FETHARD & KILLUSTY NEWSLETTER 2010

Dedicated to our friends and relations
living away from home

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Front cover: Filming 'Stella Days' on The Square, Fethard
Back cover: 'Stella Days' in the Town Hall (photos by Adrian O'Donovan)

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Twenty Ten

by Joe Kenny (editor)



*Helping with packing and posting of last year's Emigrants' Newsletter are
L to R: Brud Roche, Rory Walsh and Johnny Burke.*

When I hear the current year spoken of as 'twenty-ten' it still sounds strange and makes me feel in unfamiliar territory, probably so, after spending most of my life in the 'nineteen something' years.

What 'Twenty-Ten' also reminds me of is my annual pursuit of items to use in this newsletter from ten, twenty, thirty or more years ago, which, this year, hopefully includes articles to suit all ages.

Twenty-ten has been an eventful year in Fethard with lots of positive happenings in our community life. It has also been a year of cutbacks and financial difficulty for many families. Local businesses have also suffered a lot and badly need community support by 'shopping local'

whenever possible, but, like all previous recessions, things will get better in time.

We are very lucky in Fethard to have a great, caring community that has continued for generations. These people have volunteered over the years to provide Fethard with a great network of facilities that enhance community life in many ways that we may now take for granted. Not many towns our size can boast of having a ball-room, theatre, youth centre, community sports field, and day care centre, to complement all the other long-established facilities like our local GAA Park, ICA Hall, Town Hall, Community Centre and indeed, unique town wall. All these facilities



Helping with packing and posting of last year's Emigrants' Newsletter are L to R: Ian O'Connor, Margaret O'Donnell, Patricia Fitzgerald, Monica Hickey and Brud Roche.

were community driven projects and now accommodate the forty or more voluntary organisations that survive in our town.

Twenty-ten also reminds me of the 50% cutbacks suggested by FÁS earlier this year for our Community Employment Scheme that operates from the Tirry Centre. FÁS and its predecessor ANCO, have been a great asset to our community for many years and this was highlighted by the late Joe Nixon when he chose Fethard as the ideal town for his thesis on how FÁS can benefit community life. Joe Nixon was a FÁS Regional Supervisor who worked on many of Fethard's community projects over a 29-year period, up to his death on 26th December 2005.

Unfortunately, FÁS is no longer to be and will be disbanded in

early 2011 to make way for a new restructured training agency, yet to be decided. The present Fethard & Killusty Community Employment Scheme has fifteen participants and a supervisor, Joan Donohoe, based in the Tirry Community Centre. This scheme commenced in 1995 and has been a tremendous boost to our community offering employment, training and support for the various voluntary groups operating in Fethard such as the Day Care Centre, Meals on Wheels, Tidy Towns, GAA, Senior Citizens and other parish services. If these services are no longer supported, rural communities all over Ireland will be seriously affected. Lets hope the 'powers that be' can do the math in their head and not on a calculator.

In this year's newsletter we have

some new writers contributing articles which is great to see, because as time moves on so do many of our readers. Over the past fifty years, since the first newsletter was sent in 1959 by the Legion of Mary, we may have turned over a number equal to our parish population. The faces and stories of days gone by will remain in our memory and those written about will be recorded for future generations in books similar to this.

I'd like to thank all the contributors who make this publication possible and all our friends at home and abroad who very kindly make financial contributions towards the

printing and delivery of the newsletter. My thanks to Carmel Rice for looking after correspondence and donations, Brendan Kenny for distribution and Gemma Burke for proof reading.

I also thank the great team of voluntary helpers who organise the packaging and posting of the newsletter to our emigrants living throughout the world.

This newsletter, as always, is dedicated to our emigrants and I know is dearly appreciated from the correspondence we receive every year.

I take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. ●



Group of Fethard Legionnaires photographed in the Convent Hall in the 1970s. Front L to R: Tommy Carey, Noelle Maher, Nellie O'Donovan, Carl Kenny, Carmel Rice. Middle L to R: Don O'Connell, Fr. Cunningham, Percy O'Flynn, Nicky O'Shea, Kathleen Keane. Back L to R: Paddy Kenrick, Gus Fitzgerald, Catherine Sayers, Mary Gunne, Margaret Cummins and Christy Williams.

Parish Greetings



Fr. Joe Walsh's Golden Jubilee Celebrations at the Augustinian Abbey on 11th July. Back L to R: Fr. Mick Leahy OSA, Fr. Iggy O'Donovan OSA, Fr. Paddy O'Reilly OSA, Fr. Brendan Quirke OSA, Fr. John Meagher OSA, Fr. Joe Egan, Fr. Michael O'Regan OSA, Fr. Tom Breen (P.P. Holycross), Fr. Pat Moran OSA, Fr. Liam Ryan OSA, Fr. Peter Haughey OSA, Fr. Pat Codd OSA. Front L to R: Fr. Martin Crean OSA, Fr. Tom Breen P.P., Fr. Gery Horan OSA, Fr. Joe Walsh OSA, Fr. Joe Walsh, Fr. Martin Nolan OSA and Fr. Timmy Walsh OSA.

Greetings to all at home and away as we come to the completion of the first decade of the 21st century. May this greeting on behalf of Fr. Anthony and myself find you all well and at peace with God and yourself.

The first few years of the twentieth century turned into a golden era for our nation. The upsurge in our business world and indeed in our sporting world brought enormous rewards and a great standard of life to all, but one would have to question the rapid decline in the devotional practises of our country.

The social upheaval and the political turmoil in Ireland during the early part of the last century led to the decline in the state system. The social upheaval and the political turmoil at the moment will no doubt also bring changes. But one would dearly hope that our strong faith

tradition would be revitalised at this time and help us all to realise the importance of God in our lives. This is the time of coming home to self.

We have practised faith all our lives but in such transitory things: we trusted banks that failed, governments who were not always honest with us. We put our faith in credentials that faded and positions that disappeared, and money that failed to satisfy. We put our trust in ourselves and called it faith. Now we know we must put it elsewhere.

We are truly grateful to the people of Fethard & Killusty and beyond for their faith and support over the past year. With Fr. Anthony, I wish you all a Happy Christmas and I pray that it will be a time of many blessings for you all, and that 2011 will bring you Health, Happiness and the Peace of Christ in your lives. ☪

Canon Tom Breen & Fr. Anthony McSweeney

Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary members wish all of you a peaceful Christmas and New Year. We continue the work of the Legion and hope we will increase our membership during 2011. Some members visit local nursing homes and the hospital. Others sell Catholic literature. We invite you to consider

joining the Legion of Mary and if this is not possible perhaps you might become a helper as an auxiliary. Information can be obtained from our Legionnaires. During these difficult days we depend on the power of prayer and solidarity of faithful and practicing Christians. ●

Fethard Legionnaires of Mary

Greetings from the Abbey

Dear Reader, In August, I attended the launching of the very fine and interesting book – ‘Fethard, County Tipperary 1200-2000’, which I am reading. On page one, Michael O'Donnell informs us that, in 1200, the shire of Limerick comprised the late counties of Limerick and Tipperary. This unit makes the people of Limerick and Tipperary first cousins. It is no wonder then that I, a Limerick man living now for over a year in Fethard, am feeling very much at home. I thank the people of the town and the surrounding areas for this kind welcome.

Let me mention the very cordial relationship that exists between us here at the Abbey and Canon Tom Breen and Fr. Anthony McSweeney in the parish. Only yesterday as I drove out to Fethard from Clonmel, I was thinking of my many years in the bush in Nigeria. I thanked God for the lovely countryside on both sides. It is a pleasure and relaxation to

drive in such rich surroundings.

To refer to the preface in the Fethard Book – a person suddenly comes over the top of a hill, Market Hill, and is met by a sight of a plain spread away before him/her. A plain beautiful to the eye. As a returned exile myself who always treasured the beauty of my homeland and country, the diaspora from Fethard must look back from time to time and recall the fine valley of Fethard that is embraced by Market Hill and Slievenamon. I hope wherever you are, that there are beautiful views, which you can unite home with.

As a new priest in the Abbey, one of my first steps in 2010 was to appoint a committee of eight people to advise me on the restoration of our ancient abbey. We attacked the stairs going up to the choir gallery. When I first saw it, I agreed that it was a priority from a safety point. The flat roof over the lady chapel was leaking badly. Again a repair job done just in time saved us from

flooding in the recent November rain. A watchful eye from my committee is very important in keeping the Abbey in good shape.

The high point of the year here in the abbey was when Fr. Joe Walsh OSA, from Kilconnell, Fethard, celebrated his Golden Jubilee with his family, relations and friends. On the altar were nineteen priests, both from the Augustinian Order and the archdiocese. Fr. Joe spent all his life in Australia except for four years when he was stationed in Callan.

For those of us who hold traditional values high, as we end the year on a truly Christian celebration – the Birthday of the Son of God – I wish you all on behalf of the Abbey community, Fathers Jerry, John, Timmy and myself, a happy and peaceful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. We thank you for your support, help and prayers during the year. They are very much appreciated. We pray for all our benefactors, living and dead, daily. God bless you all. ☉

Fr. Martin Crean OSA



*Photographed at St. Patrick's Day Mass at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Fethard.
L to R: Jack Spillane, Mark Hayde, Róisín McDonnell, Canon Tom Breen P.P. and Laura Ryan.*



*Photographed at the Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland on 20th December 2009 are
L to R: Dr. David Butler, Peg Butler and Rev James Mulhall*



*Photographed at the Carol Service at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland on 20th December 2009 are
Back L to R: Anne Schlueter, Caroline Stokes, Dorothy Wall. Front L to R: Zoë Stokes and Annica O'Connor.*

George Plant 1904-1942

by John Cooney

In February of this year, TG4 screened a two part documentary on Fethard man, George Plant, and on Easter Sunday, as has been the case for many a year, a small crowd gathered at St Johnstown cemetery to commemorate his memory. But, George Plant himself remains somewhat of an enigma and the circumstances surrounding his life and death remain as controversial now as at the time when they took place.

George Plant was born in 1904 into a strict Protestant farming family and reared in St Johnstown where his parents had a farm. His mother was Kathleen Hayden and she was to farm and rear the children for much of the time as a single parent. She died in 1965.

There is a notable incident in George Plant's childhood that happened when he was about twelve years of age. One Sunday, after attending church service in Killenaule, he and his brother James were invited or taken in to the RIC Barracks and questioned about a neighbour, Sean Hayes, and his friend Dan Breen who were already

of interest to the RIC. These two gentlemen were later to play active roles in public and political life.

This interview in the barracks was not successful and it resulted in some physical abuse of the two boys. Blood was drawn. On their way home from their ordeal, the

two boys were spotted by neighbours and were brought into Foley's bar in an attempt to clean them up before they were seen by their mother.

There was consternation when they got home and Elizabeth Plant in an interview recorded in 1991, stated that she remembered her mother asking the boys whether they had provoked the RIC to which George

replied that 'they had done nothing to vex them in any way'. The church wardens were later to try and bring it to the attention of a Mr Ponsonby who was a secretary in or to the Ministry of Agriculture but this did not appear to have been successful.

In his teenage years Plant joined Fianna Eireann before he graduated to full membership of the IRA and took part in the War of Independence, where he estab-



One of the two known surviving photographs of George Plant, Fethard,

lished a great reputation as a soldier. During the civil war Plant sided with DeValera and so found himself on the losing side. Like many of those who remained anti-treaty and who had been defeated by their former comrades, they felt there was no place for them in the new state and so George Plant and his brother James emigrated to Glasgow, then to Canada and later to America.

George joined the revolution in Mexico and was deported from there back to Ireland. He appears to have led a somewhat nomadic existence but kept returning to Ireland before he eventually returned to live here full time in the 1930s. Indeed it is believed that Plant was invited back on a personal basis by DeValera as he attempted to persuade many of his former colleagues to abandon political violence and to prepare themselves to take over the political running of the country.

The approach that DeValera and his allies were adopting was much the same as their former colleagues like Michael Collins et al had done years before. Slow learners, you might say but the lesson was well and truly learnt. George Plant did not take that political exit from the IRA but remained a stalwart and active member who wished to fight in order to remove the British presence on the island of Ireland.

So, just to remind ourselves of the broad political backdrop of the time, there was growing tension between DeValera's government in

the 1930s and the IRA, as the latter embarked on a bombing campaign in England. In the late thirties DeValera set up military tribunals in order to deal with the IRA and it was also declared an illegal organisation. Hunger strikes, internment and executions were to follow.

As World War II approached, the Irish government was to declare itself neutral (but on the side of the Allies) and attempted to steer itself as a fledgling state between the opposing forces of the World War. It could not, under any circumstances, give succour to the IRA in the desperate times that were about to unfold as the patience of the Allies was already at breaking point because of the state's refusal to give up several sea ports to England. There was also a genuine concern that the IRA would exploit and act on the old adage, that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity.

It is against this broad political background that the story of Plant has to be viewed. The then head of the IRA had gone abroad to drum up support for the organisation and a man called Hayes was placed on a temporary basis in his position. Mr Sean Hayes was from Wexford and the quartermaster of the organisation for the area was a young man called Michael Devereux who used to drive an oil truck for his living.

Devereux went to a meeting of the organisation in Dublin where Hayes was present and it is believed both were arrested and questioned

over a number of days by the Gardai. Shortly after their release the Gardai carried out a raid in Wexford and discovered a substantial arms dump and immediately suspicions within the IRA were raised that one of those arrested had given information to the Gardai.

The story becomes more complicated, for the Northern IRA members were already suspicious of Hayes and were convinced that he was a traitor. Leaving that aside the southern IRA leadership decided that Devereux had informed and would have to be executed.

No one is quite sure to this day of who informed or whether the whole escapade had been orchestrated by the Gardai to sow seeds of suspicion within the IRA, for there was no love lost between the two organisations, then or now. In today's parlance it could have been

a counter terrorism strategy.

Two IRA men were selected by a Mr O'Connor from headquarters to carry out this execution, George Plant and Michael Walsh. These two went to Wexford, tricked Devereux into driving them back to Grangemockler, Co Tipperary, and invented a cock-and-bull story to keep him there for a number of days convincing him that he was safer there with them rather than in Wexford where the Gardai were supposed to be looking for him. They also attempted to conceal his car and for at least four nights this small group lingered in a safe house, why is not clear.

On a Friday night, 27th September, it was decided to set out on a march with another IRA man called Davern to a second safe house and on route, it is alleged, George Plant accused Devereux of



Local Unit of National Army 1922-1923. Back L to R: Ned Hall, D. Brien, Mick Farrell, Bill Tobin, "The Plugger" Brien, Bill Shanahan, Gerry Murphy, Dick (The Rock) Hennessy, Joe Brennan, Michael Power, Ned O'Donnell. Middle: L to R: Jack Brown, Dick Farrell, D. Noonan, T. Pollard, John Ivors, Connie Burke, Pat Somers, John Fitzgerald, Wm Ryan, Ned Grace. Front L to R: P. Pollard, John (Springfield) McGrath, Jimmy Maher, Tommy O'Meara, Percy Dillon and Michael Hall.

being a spy and shot him dead on the mountainside where he was later buried.

In due course, events deteriorated within the IRA and Mr Hayes became the chief suspect for being an informer and he was subsequently court-martialed by the IRA, and made and signed a captor's confession which he subsequently withdrew after he escaped from his IRA interrogators into Garda custody.

It gets even more like the movies, for now a detective in disguise pretending to be from the IRA in Dublin went to Mr Davern's house in Grangemockler and elicited information from him about the whereabouts of both Devereux's grave and car.

The following day the car was found under a bed of onions and it was this particular fact which strayed into popular myth. But shortly thereafter the body of Mr Devereux was officially located and brought to Fethard where an inquest was initiated by Dr Stokes before the remains of Michael Devereux were returned to his family and buried in St Ann's Cemetery, Tomhaggard, Co. Wexford.

In due course, O'Connor and Plant were charged with the murder and the evidence against them was based largely on statements given by Davern and Walsh. The two withdrew their statements under a particular type of pressure associated with the IRA and copied now by criminal gangs. The case against

O'Connor and Plant collapsed.

The rules of evidence used before the military tribunals were altered by the Government and used retrospectively to recharge Plant, and on this occasion, to charge Walsh and Davern. All three were found guilty. However, the sentences for Walsh and Davern were commuted but George Plant was executed in Portlaoise Prison on 5th March, 1942.

It is accepted that his family were not well-treated at the time and the state was shabby in its treatment of them. The family heard about his execution on a news bulletin on the radio. It is reported that George Plant said that those who live by the gun die by the gun and he faced his ordeal bravely. He is supposed to have stayed up all night reading a book before he dressed in his best suit to face his own executioners. Some soldiers fired above his head.

His solicitor was Sean MacBride who always maintained it was a bad day for the Irish legal system. George Plant was initially interred in Portlaoise Prison but in 1948 the National Grave Association organised that his remains were brought to St Mary's Church of Ireland, in Clonmel, and on the following day, September 19th, he was re-interred in St Johnston Cemetery.

Ultimately it had become a question of the state's survival, its legitimacy and the allegiance of the citizens. The political need to establish politics over the gun was

greater than the moral adherence to the law and as a consequence the law was bent to suit the needs of the state. Not many cared. The Government was out to get Plant and they showed him no mercy.

Did he know too much about his former comrades and were they afraid of what he might say? Plant appears to have been an honest and true soldier. It is said that he kept a diary but in the aftermath of the shooting it was burnt as it contained lethal information about members of the then political establishment.

Was he shot as an example to the others? He represented that strain of the IRA that appears to be forever with us, that refuses to accept British Armed Forces stationed in Ireland and is prepared to use violence to oust them. This pattern is being played out to this very day.

If we are to complain about Plant and his lack of respect for the law we are on thin ground for the law of the land was changed so that he was tried for the same crime twice and evidence not admissible was then made admissible for the second trial. But all of us know, that for the survival of the state, at times a citizen will get a raw deal.

It was a tragedy all round. Plant was the old soldier to the end, following orders. He was a member of his local farming community and fought for the freedom of this country. He is to be commemorated and applauded no less than many others across the globe who fought for

their countries' freedom. Many other countries had also been denied, through the use of potent physical force by Imperial London, the freedom to govern themselves.

Mr Plant refused to compromise and he paid the price with his own life. Michael Devereux joined the IRA and was made quartermaster in the Wexford area but he was a young man, perhaps well meaning, idealistic and brave; little did he think that he would meet his death at the hands of his older experienced and respected comrades by the side of Slievenamon without having a chance to refute the allegations made against him.

Had he spilt the beans to the Gardai or was it Mr Hayes, his own commanding officer? The general consensus now is that it was not Michael Devereux although Sean Hayes protested his own innocence till his death in 1973. Physical force republicanism was very much a spent force after the Hayes affair and notwithstanding the border campaign in the 1950s, it was not found to have much influence or power even up until 1969 where, however, a rebirth took place among the ashes of the Falls Road in Belfast. Once again it was 'Croppie Boy lie down'.

This is but a brief account of this sad episode. Much of the information is taken from a great article by Michael Moroney in the Tipperary Historical Journal edition of 1988 where there is a detailed and com-

prehensive historical analysis of the affair. All opinion and bias that has crept in here is not his, however. There is a copy of this Journal in the local history section in the Clonmel library.

People in the town may remember Friday, 17th September, 2004, when Fethard Historical Society invited the late Nollaig Ó Gadhra (died August 13, 2008) to give a lecture on George Plant. Nollaig Ó Gadhra was Uachtarán, Conradh na Gaeilge, and was an advisor to Albert Reynolds who promoted and worked hard to establish the peace process in the North.

At the lecture, Nollaig welcomed the fact that the Historical Society was willing and able to discuss modern historical events as he had become very frustrated by the strict censorship that had crept into

broadcasting and which, he felt, was reflected in public discourse, which in turn was monitored by the revisionists.

Revisionists at the time being Southerners, who in their attempt to quell the horrible situation in the North, intellectually identified with British might rather than with the Northern nationalist plight, and having seized the moral high ground of propriety, then accused their opponents of being fellow travellers of the IRA and often dumber down their own history.

Over a hundred and thirty people attended the lecture where the speaker addressed the audience more on the historical aspect of the IRA and the then unfolding Peace Process before he proceeded to castigate Sinn Féin and George Plant much to the chagrin of those



Over 130 people attended the Abymill theatre in Fethard on Friday, 17th September 2004 to hear Nollaig Ó Gadhra's talk about George Plant and his family. Photographed at the lecture were L to R: Mary Hanrahan (Fethard Historical Society), Catherine O'Flynn (Fethard Historical Society), Michael Moroney (author of the "definitive Plant story" published in the 1988 Tipperary Historical Journal), Nollaig Ó Gadhra (guest speaker) and Dóirín Saurus (Fethard Historical Society).

present.

If Nollaig Ó Gadhra, and many like him, were horrified by the actions of the IRA, Ó Gadhra was also put off by the revisionists who had come to dominate much of the political agenda of the time, for Nollaig Ó Gadhra was deeply committed to the nationalist population of the North.

Perhaps the audience recognised on the night that deep commitment from him for they tolerated his needlessly dismissive and subtle comments on Plant. But for many years Nollaig had stood his ground between the IRA on the one hand and the revisionists on the other and today that is the place where most of us readily and finally agree to be.

Just to mention a few other matters, James Plant, the brother of George, had long emigrated to England and as if to show the complex web of relationships that exists between the two islands, he worked

for years as a chef in a hotel which was owned by a retired British army colonel.

George himself had married a Catholic Mooncoin woman and one of his two children, also called George, who lives in County Cork, appeared on the TG4 documentary. George Plant's sister Elizabeth Plant lived on in the family home until she died in May 1992.

On a sunny evening in spring-time, go out to St Johnston graveyard, indeed it is but one of the many old and attractive graveyards in the area, and see his grave. You can pay your tribute to the man that lies buried beneath.

There is a certain romance to the setting as there is about the earlier adventures of George Plant. Unfortunately, it would appear, he was unable or unwilling to extract himself from the vortex of political violence that he found himself in during his life. ●



This photograph was taken at the George Plant commemoration ceremony on the day he was reburied.

Fethard – my home away from home



Visiting an outdoor climbing park in Germany are L to R: Kevin Hayes, Simone Müller (Stefan's sister), Stefan Müller, Matthew Fitzgerald, Sam Manton and Adam O'Donnell

In last year's Newsletter I reported on my unforgettable five months stay in Fethard which dates back almost two years now. In retrospect I call this time the best of my life because I had wonderful host families, enjoyed going to Fethard secondary school, made loads of friends and changed my character and personality in a very positive way.

Most of the students who go abroad usually have a great time but only very few of them still have contact with their host families and friends or even return. I am definitely an exception.

I left Ireland in January 2009 and within a period of less than two years I have been in Fethard four times

and four of my very best friends came to visit me in Germany.

The first time I came back was Easter 2009 with my family to show them Ireland, Tipperary and Fethard. During summer holiday 2009, Adam O'Donnell, Matthew Fitzgerald, Kevin Hayes and Sam Manton came over to Germany visiting me in Bonn for one week and I showed them a bit of my city, German culture and everyday life. We had a wonderful time together and the boys became fans of Germany.

In autumn for one week I lived with my former host family, Miceál and Mary McCormack, had a great time with my friends and went to Fethard school again. This time was lovely because I had the same



Photographed in Fethard this year L to R: Stefan Müller, Johnny Fleming and Adam O'Donnell

rhythm of daily life which reminded me of the good old days. During awards day celebration I decided spontaneously to speak in front of the whole school to say thank you to all students and teachers who treated me always in a nice, friendly and helpful way. Furthermore, I reminded the students of their unbelievably good community within the school. At the end of my speech I promised that they will see me in Fethard again.

At Easter time 2010 my best friend, Adam O'Donnell, invited me to come over to his house to celebrate his 18th birthday. I especially want to thank Willie and Theresa O'Donnell whose hospitality is overwhelming. I stayed for ten days and had great craic with the boys. Another highlight which reminded me of Fethard was the All Ireland hurling final. I watched it in

Cologne's biggest and oldest Irish pub whose owner is from Tipperary. After the final whistle the two of us went absolutely mental and the great lad decided to give free pints and champagne to all his guests.

The last stay in 2010 was a surprise for me. The exchange organisation I came to Fethard with offered me a job supervising eight German students from a secondary school in Bonn, who were awarded a scholarship to travel to Ireland for two weeks doing some voluntary work, while improving their English and getting used to another culture. When I heard that all of us would stay in the area around Clonmel I cut capers because I knew that I could visit Fethard once again. I absolutely enjoyed the time working with motivated students and I filled them with enthusiasm for the Emerald Isle.

For me it is just great to be in

Fethard because all the memories of my wonderful stay two years ago come flooding back and there is no place I feel more welcome than in this 'magic town' of Fethard.

There is nothing better than walking along by the town wall and on Main Street, going to Sparkey's for a bag of chips, having a pint in one of the pubs, watching out for mad Irish drivers, seeing people wearing Tipp jerseys with pride, hearing people shouting in the Barrack Field showing pure emotion, listening to Tipp FM and watching 'The Sunday Game', having dinner or a cup of tea with my host family

meeting my friends. It is great to have a home away from home and every time in Fethard is a revival of the best time in my entire life.

In last year's Newsletter article I called Fethard 'The town I love so

well' according to Phil Coulter's sentimental folk song. In the first stanza it says:

"Those were happy days in so many, many ways, in the town I loved so well."

These lines describe my attitude towards Fethard perfectly. And

I am sure that in the near future I certainly will have more "happy days in the town I loved so well". ●

— Stefan Müller



Stefan Müller photographed in 2008 and 2010 at the river walk in Fethard



Millett Family from St. Johnstown photographed in November 1962. Nora (Curran) and Thomas Millett with their children L to R: Anthony, Tommy, Frank, Mary, Gus, Monica, Matt, Nora, Jim and Shaun.

‘The Old O’Donnell Fiddle’

by Nicholas Williamson

*Well, my son, looking back just makes me sad
To think of all the men who’ve been glad
To slide loving fingers o’er my neck
The vibrations of my strings to check.*

*Twass in April I was traded by the gate
At the old O’Donnell’s farm in 1748.
Here I hung, a hundred years or more,
Above the “Inglenook” to cure,*

*Except when taken down with loving care
To soothe a “wake”, or speed a foursome “square”:
And from O’Donnell to O’Donnell I was duly passed,
Some of whom sailed before the mast*

*To foreign lands where my dulcet notes
Eased my master’s thoughts of home,
And dreams of Fairies and the Leprechaun
Who graced the banks of Slievenamon,
And slyly gambolled in the grass
Around the farm at Knockinglass.*

*Many years have passed and gone
Since I accompanied Father Tom
Across the sea to spread the Faith;
Where lovely evenings spent together
Were soothed with music, just as ever,
Until one day, old age creeping on,
He passed me on to cousin, John.*

*Your great grandfather, my son,
Whose mother came from Slievenamon,
An O’Donnell from Knockinglass
Who bound us, lad and lass,
Never from this family must I pass;*

*But be treasured, day by day,
Nor sold, nor even given away.
I'll reward you, son, each time you play
With Organ tones, high and sweet
And a wealth of timbre that can't be beat.*

*Drawn from memories of other days,
Of Theatre, Shows, and many Plays,
Of Army Camps, and Navy Boats,
Where fighting men with tightened throats
Muttered prayers as they left the floats:*

*With thoughts of home as they heard me play
Those lovely songs of a happier day –
Mother Machree, or Tara's Hall,
Galway Bay, or Finnegan's Ball.*

The 'Old O'Donnell Fiddle' poem was submitted by George Byrnes. George came across this poem while doing some genealogical research with a newly found distant cousin, Farrell Hopwood, of Vancouver, British Columbia. Farrell already knew of the poem.

The poem was written by Nicholas Williamson, a descendant of the Knockinglass O'Donnells and an uncle of Farrell Hopwood.

Nicholas' grandmother, was Mary Anne O'Donnell (1828–1920),

a daughter of John O'Donnell of Knockinglass (1803–unk). Williamson was a violinist and quite an interesting person. The O'Donnell fiddle is currently in the possession of one of the O'Donnell/Williamson descendants in Canada.

George invites any other descendants of the O'Donnell's of Knockinglass to contact him for the purpose of

sharing additional genealogical information. George's email is: geobyernes@aol.com ●

— by George Byrnes



L to R: George and Diane Byrnes. George's grand-uncle is the late Archbishop O'Donnell of Knockinglass.

The Irish Soldier in Foreign Fields

The military history of the Irish soldier is both colourful and intriguing, earning them a legendary reputation on battlefields across the world. From the end of the sixteenth century many Irish soldiers found employment in the armies of Europe. In France in the 1630s, the first Irish regiments were formed. By the end of the seventeenth century over 20,000 Jacobite Irish soldiers went to France following the defeat of James II at the Boyne in 1690. Irishmen fought in nearly every war for the next 200 years. They often faced each other across the battlefield, the Irish who fought in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the Wild Geese) met Irishmen fighting for the ruler of Spain and Austria.

The French Army had Irish regiments up until the Revolution. The Spanish had their Irish units until 1818. Irish Catholics made up a large part of “the thin red line”. A grateful Duke of Wellington (himself Irish) in his address to the House of Lords at the passing of Catholic Emancipation in 1829, said, “it is mainly due to the Irish Catholic that we owe our proud prominence in the military career.” Such praise was not typical of Wellington, but his soldiers did get him out of many a tricky situation.

The Great War of 1914-1918 saw the Irish soldier make his greatest sacrifice. Nearly 135,000 volunteered in addition to the 50,000 who were already serving in the regular army.



Photographed in Moyglass village 1963 are L to R: John Dillon, Saucestown; Tom Carroll, Coolbawn; Jack Carey, The Green; and Jimmy Walsh, Coolenure (boy at window). Jack Carey (1888-1976) worked at Blackmores, Mortlestown, prior to the Great War. He then left with three other farm labourers and joined the Irish Fusiliers. He was captured in 1917 and looked after mules and horses while imprisoned. In his later years he lived on The Green until his death in March 1976.



Group of 1st World War Soldiers (supplied some years ago by the late Paddy Ahearne).

Ireland commenced the war with nine regiments of regular infantry, most of whom had two battalions, one of which served at home and the other overseas. The Royal Irish Regiment was the oldest Irish regiment. Its first battalion dating back to 1683. In 1690, it fought with William at the Boyne. In 1695 it stormed the defences at Namur in Belgium and earned the title the Royal Regiment of Ireland. It was also the unit of what was later to become the British Army and to have a battle honour bestowed on it. The Regiment went on to serve in every major campaign in the next 200 years.

In 1914, the first battalion was in India. It sailed for home in October and travelled to France as part of 27th Division. Just before Christmas, it moved straight to the front, and one of its first engagements was at St Eloi, Belgium. In 1915, the Battalion left for Solonika, Egypt and Palestine. The second battalion saw action on the Western Front from October

1914 to November 1918. It suffered greatly at the battle of Le Basse as it tried to stall the German advance. Both regiments recruited mainly in Tipperary, Waterford and Kilkenny. It is estimated that 1,400 Tipperary men lost their lives in the Great War. They, like the Irishmen of three hundred years before went for whatever reasons, be it poverty or adventure to places they had never heard of like France, Flanders and Gallipoli. Those that survived returned to a very different Ireland. No triumphant welcome awaited them.

In 1922, the proud Irish regiments were disbanded. The six south of Ireland regiments handed over their colours at Windsor Castle. The Royal Irish Regiment, The Connaught Rangers, the South Irish Horse, the Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment (The Royal Canadians), The Munster Fusiliers and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The end of an era of proud and heroic military service for the Irish soldier. ●



Fr. John O'Flynn and family friends at Olympics celebrations in Rome 1960. Sitting at the table from left: John Whyte, Percy O'Flynn, lady, Fr. John O'Flynn OSA, Paddy Tierney, lady and Austin O'Flynn.



Main Street Fethard c.1900s



North Gate, Fethard, as it appears in Rev J. A. Knowles book 'Fethard: its Abbey' 1903

South Tipp Military History Society

South Tipperary Military History Society — remembering and respecting our Military Heritage — was formed on Tuesday, 23rd March, 2010, after initial advertising by Kay Neagle resulted in a lot of interest being generated locally. The meeting was held in Slievenamon Golf Club and on the night 22 people attended.

Kay Neagle was elected president, Michael Dolan was elected secretary and Robert Reid, treasurer.

The purpose of the Society is to increase awareness amongst society members and the general public of the large part that military affairs have played in the history of Tipperary; however, we always strive to look at this history from the human aspect rather than tactical or strategic aspects. This involves relating the history from the viewpoint of those who participated or those who supported them, be it family or friends.

We are very fortunate to have a wide variety of talents available to us within the Society, both people who have experience of speaking about military matters and people who have extensive knowledge of their particular area of interest. It is important to note that we are definitely not about glorifying war. If anything, we are more about the impact of war on those who fought and died and those who survived, and where possible keeping alive their memory

and respecting them by organising tours to the battlefields where they fought, and wreath-laying ceremonies at their places of rest.

Every month we have a guest lecturer or a member speaks on a chosen subject. Some of the subjects covered this year were Tipperary War Memorials by Michael Dolan and General Richard Mulcahy and the Civil War by Pat Taafe from New Ross. Tom Burnell, author of *Tipperary War Dead*, brought along a display of weaponry used during the World War I and War of Independence and Brian Deegan spoke on Barrack Building in Ireland in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

We also go on field trips. This year we had a guided tour of Kichham Barracks and the museum there, we visited Charles Fort in Kinsale, and were given history lessons by Michael Dolan and Robert Reid when we travelled to Crossbarry, Kilmichael and Beal na mBláth.

Our president Kay Neagle is a member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides, and, along with some other members, is in the process of organising a trip to France/Belgium next April where we will visit some of the sites where Tipperary-men from the Royal Irish Regiment, amongst others, fought and died. We also hope to lay a wreath at the Menin Gate in Ypres in memory of them.

We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month in Slievenamon Golf

Club, membership fees are €25 for the year and €2 on the night, and we have a wide and varied programme of events for 2011, so if anyone

would like to join us, please email southtippmilitaryhistory@hotmail.com or contact Kay Neagle at kayneagle@eircom.net ●



Soldiers 1922 L to R: Jim Boy Danagher, Paddy Carroll and Din Croke.

Irish Walled Towns Network



We held our breath this year and crossed our fingers: would there be Heritage Council funds available for the Town Wall? Our application had to be submitted on a new computerised system. There was a glitch and somehow we were not included in the first group of towns to be awarded funds. The phone lines buzzed for a month. Then came the news - €60,000 for Fethard and a further €6,000 from the County Council as 'matching funding.' All systems go...!

Ivor McElveen Associates were appointed as consultants. A number of specialist conservation and repair firms then tendered for the work. This year the contract went to Cornerstone Construction Ltd. Cornerstone are award-winning conservation and restoration contractors and civil engineers with offices in Cork, Dublin and Laois. Last year Cornerstone successfully conserved part of the town wall in Cashel. The firm recently acted as stone repair contractors in the prestigious recon-

struction of the five-star Dunboy Castle Hotel on the Beara peninsula in West Cork.

All the work this year was concentrated on the North Wall between the North Gate/Currikeen Castle and the Round Turret that marks the top of the GAA car park.

Hurrying to be ahead of the frost (which is fatal to lime) preparation work started in Fethard towards the end of September and the project was signed off by the consultants on Tuesday 2nd November.

North Gate / Currikeen Castle

The square building at the side of the North Gate (within the GAA area) is known as Currikeen Castle. The top floor and battlements are missing. 2008 and 2009 saw the start of remedial work to this building. This year, all external repointing work was completed. The breach high on the east face was sealed with iron bars against vandalism, and the blocked up slit window

facing the road (west) was cleared. Earlier concrete blockwork (that fills a breach) on the north side was rendered with lime plaster.

The south wall of Currikeen Castle was raked out and repointed. This is where the consultants came across the highlight of this year's work, the discovery of an 'ogee-headed' window. David Sweetman, Ireland's leading expert on medieval architecture and the former Chief Archaeologist at Dúchas, came to inspect the find and has dated this window

to the sixteenth century. The window had been filled with loose stones bound with a weak mortar, probably from the days when a school run by the Blunden family stood here against the inside

of the Town Wall. The ghost of the Blunden's school can still be seen in the remnants of plaster adhering to the stonework of the tower.



Heading east, the inside of the Town Wall was cleared of ivy and dense foliage at the Dillon family home (inside the North Gate) right across Joe Kenny's and Ger Manton's properties and on through the mart to the Round Turret. All this was then scaffolded, raked out and repointed using hydraulic lime and a coarse aggregate mix sourced by Cornerstone from

Co. Wexford and approved by Dr Nessa Roche (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) who made a site visit.

The Wall in Joe Kenny's property revealed the distinct track of





Track of the 'robbed out' access stairs at Joe Kenny's



Inspection of Town Wall renovations viewed by PAC Committee L to R: Denis O'Brien (Cornerstone Construction), Hugh Dorian (Mortar Supplier), Joe Kenny (Steering Committee), Jonathan Flood (Executive Planning Officer, South Tipperary County Council), James Powell (Ivor McElveen Associates), Labhaoise McKenna (Heritage Officer South Tipperary County Council), Ivor McElveen (Ivor McElveen Associates), Peter Grant (Steering Committee), Gus Fitzgerald and Mary Godfrey (Fethard GAA).

a robbed out stone access stairs leading from ground level up to wall walk level (a similar one was found last year in the Wall at Martin Burke's Bridge House) – all the cut stone steps had been taken in antiquity for re-use.

In Ger Manton's property, things got even more dramatic with the revelation of the parapet wall rising above the wall walk (this is the part that protected a defender from arrowshot).

The wall lost to view and obscured by ivy within the mart turns out to be in very good condition, straight and regular and little damaged by plant growth. This section needed a light hand in 'patch

pointing' those areas where mortar had been lost.

Weekly Site Meetings

The consultants convened a weekly site meeting with the contractors and council officials attended by members of the steering group. This proved to be a master class in limework and was most informative for all concerned. Lime is the white binder that is mixed into the sand in place of modern cement to make mortar or render. It's the old way of building. But it's unpredictable: it takes weeks to dry and months, even years to 'carbonate.' If some of the sand is too wet, the



Lime Masterclass: Ivor McElveen BAI MA C.Eng. FIEI, Conservation Engineer, checking the correct mix for mortar. L to R: Denis O'Brien (Cornerstone Construction), Gus Fitzgerald (Fethard GAA), Mary Godfrey (Fethard GAA), Ivor McElveen (Ivor McElveen Associates), and Hugh Dorian (Mortar Supplier).



The Wall at Manton's showing the parapet white from the mason's hand — the new lime mortar (it takes a year or two for the colour to soften and fade).

lime dries in patches of different colours. If the weather is too cold, the adhesive quality of the lime is lost and it flakes out like powder. Why then do we bother with it? The answer lies in its flexibility. It dries 'like chewing gum', slowly curing where cement dries quickly and ends up brittle, 'like a boiled sweet', so the lime can flex and settle over the years and accommodate substantial movement in the stonework, where cement would have no tolerance. And lime 'breathes', allowing air and water to enter and exit the structure where impervious cement would bottle the water up in the wall and speed its demise.

GAA Sports Ground

The outside of the Wall at Ger Manton's is the tennis court area. Here a large collapse (caused some

years ago by a falling branch) was repaired 'like-for-like' to match the original 'grain' of the wall as closely as possible using tooled stone – an expert achievement and hardly discernible. At 25 feet 6 inches, the Wall here has now been confirmed as the highest part of the entire circuit – some three feet higher than the restored Wall at the Valley.

Within the GAA grounds, the Wall has been well maintained and is mostly clear of vegetation. Most of the Wall here received 'patch pointing' applied by the team with a cherry-picker. Cornerstone were careful to run the cherry picker on sheets of board to limit the damage to the grass.

The area of Town Wall outside the North Gate was a little more dilapidated and tangled with vegetation and all this was removed and made good with lime mortar revealing a



Inside the mart, hessian keeps the frost (and the sun) off the new lime mortar

hotch potch of ancient repairs and rebuilding, including some areas of facing stone and some core stone.

With consent from the Department of the Environment, the consultants and officials from the GAA agreed to the removal of the tall sheet of concrete blocks that surmounted the wall at the west side of the tennis courts. This was considered to be something of a hazard and its replacement with netting has opened up the tallest part of the

Town Wall to view, giving a dramatic prospect of the sweep of the Town Wall from the Rocklow Road. The original masonry has been secured with a small 'return' wall to the south.

A huge amount has been achieved on time and within budget and the work is of the highest standard. Special thanks must be given this year to the Mantons and the Kennys and particularly to the GAA for accommodating the conservation team with such courtesy. ●



Fethard Ballroom



*Monica Aherne, presenting the 'Mick Aherne Perpetual Trophy' to this year's winners.
L to R: Collette Moore, Monica Ahearne (sponsor) and Pat Kirwan*

The ballroom had another successful year with full bookings each night. The usual clubs being catered for were; On your Toes; Girl Guides; Scouts; Under Age Dancing; Irish Dancing: Keep Fit Classes; Martial Arts; Cards; and Adult Dancing Classes.

In November the film crew for

'Stella Days' occupied the ballroom. The car park was filled with equipment and the interior looked something like a theatre, with make-up artists, wardrobes etc. Our thanks to Dermot Cleary, Location Manager, for allowing us the opportunity to accommodate the cast and crew in the making of this film. We very



much appreciated the ongoing cooperation of all our regular clubs and personnel who use the hall, while this filming was going on.

A dancing competition in memory of our late chairman, Mick Aherne, and run in aid of South Tipperary Hospice, was held in April with a special perpetual trophy awarded to the winners. This was a most enjoyable night with competitors from far and wide taking part. The event raised a total of €1,300 which was presented to Phil Keogh from South Tipperary Hospice. Two special card nights were also held in aid of local parish funds. These events, along with the regular ones, keep the committee busy throughout the year, not forgetting the ongoing maintenance on the hall as well.

In September 2010 a sad day dawned for the ballroom as we saw

the departure of our great associate to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. He was as reliable as the grass is perennial, flexible with his time, and for many years coordinated all the clubs and individuals who use the ballroom. I speak of Shem Butler. We shall miss him and we wish him and Marie the very best for the future.

We have been very fortunate to have been allocated another FÁS worker in these times of severe cutbacks. We welcome Tom Tobin, whom we have every reason to believe will be a huge asset to the ballroom.

To the groups, clubs and individuals who supported the ballroom we say thanks. To all the people of the parish and beyond we wish you all a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year. ●



Group photographed attending the dance classes at Fethard Ballroom



'Belinda Rabbit takes the Baton', an entry in Fethard Carnival Fancy Dress Parade in the 1950s L to R: Mary Slattery, Mary Doran, Anne Hurley, Patricia Ryan, Doreen Maher, Nan Sayers, Breda Ryan, Carmel Brett, Chrissie Sayers, Anne O'Neill, Ann Napier, Mary Fitzgerald.



Fethard Patrician Brothers Class c.1963. Back L to R: John Lyttleton, Andy Fox, John Tobin, Bill Maher, Tom Ryan, Hugh O'Donnell, Davy Morrissey. Middle L to R: Dick Ryan, Donal Mullins, Mick Smith, Alan Ryan, Pat Brett, Noel Gleeson, Frankie Barrett, Louis Coen. Front L to R: Martin O'Neill, Christy Aylward, Paddy Ahearn, Don O'Connell, Willie Frewen, Eddie O'Callaghan and John Lacey.



Fethard Carnival Parade on tour 1950s L to R: ?, Biddy Henehan, Johnny Murphy and Peggy Henehan

Fethard Country Market

Fethard Country Market lost a true marketeer this year with the death of Maura Meaney.

Maura joined the market in 1975 encouraged by her neighbour Olivia Hughes, one of the founding members of Country Markets in 1947. Maura and her husband Bill kept the market supplied with seasonal fresh vegetables, fruit and flowers from their garden in Crampscastle.

Maura baked bread, cakes and buns, and her strawberry jam sold out most weeks. Friday morning saw Maura behind the egg counter bantering with customers over the plenteousness or scarcity of eggs depending on

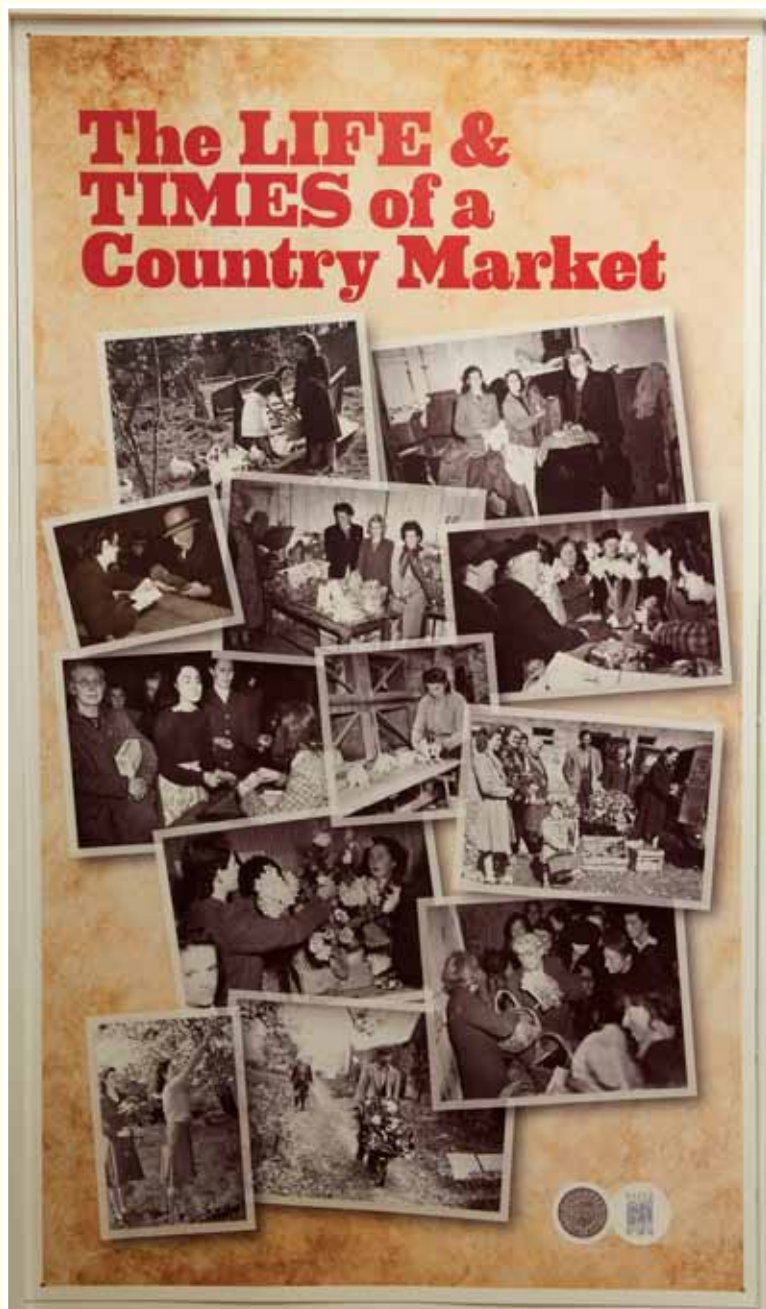
the time of year. Pumpkins graced the sales table in the run-up to Halloween and when the frost put paid to fresh flowers Maura brought

in colourful bunches of dried flowers saved over the summer months. Coming up to Christmas the orders came in for Maura's cakes and puddings. Her baking skills were acknowledged further afield with her claiming first prize in the Great Cherry Cake competition at Iverk Show.

Maura's talents have passed to the next generation. Her daughter Bernie continues to supply the market. Long may it continue. ●



Fethard ICA members photographed at the "ICA - Champions in our Community" exhibition at South Tipperary County Museum on 14th October 2010. L to R: Ann Gleeson, Noreen Allen, Ann Horan, Marie Crean and Betty Lanigan. On the opposite page is a photograph of a panel display in the exhibition featuring the work of Fethard Country Market in the 1940s and 50s.



‘Home thoughts from abroad’



Fethard London Annual Reunion 1965. Back L to R: ?, Margaret Connell, Dick Cummins, ?, Betty Shine and her husband Dym Major, Pat Shine, Noreen Cummins, Mary Shine. Front L to R: ?, Jimmy Smith, ?, Johnny Shine, ?, ?, Mary Scanlon, ?, ?, Peg Keating. Kneeling in front is Paddy McLellan.

Such is the title of a poem by Robert Browning written in the 1850s while he was living in Italy. He hankered after the English countryside with its many shades of greenery and its temperate climate. To many of us who live away from home these sentiments attain a broader significance. We are concerned not just with the sights and sounds of home but with the condition of the country. Some years ago I wrote a piece for the Newsletter about emigration and my own experience of it and hoped that such a situation would not happen for the generation then growing up. After all, Ireland at the time was passing from a society where net emigration had been transformed into

net immigration with the arrival of thousands of people from abroad, many from the Eastern European countries recently admitted to the EU. The Celtic Tiger was rampaging across the landscape and Ireland was, we were assured, launched on a path of sustained prosperity.

It has all gone awry. Ireland is now the “sick man of Europe”, a phrase used to describe 19th century Turkey. The economy has imploded, economic recession threatens to become depression, that ghastly state to which the world economy descended during the 1930s with all its evils. Unemployment has risen to 13.6% (as I write), a figure probably lessened by the twin factors of immigrants returning to their home-

lands and Irish people resorting to the old device of leaving the country in search of work. The sense of 'here we are again' is overwhelming and, for me, wholly depressing. How did we get here? After all we were told Ireland was set on a course of economic growth, rising prosperity and increasing employment and living standards. In fact businesspeople and politicians had begun to lecture others on the superiority of the Irish system, an open economy where free-market principles ruled unrestricted and "light touch regulation" of enterprises were the norm. Ireland vied with the USA and Thatcher's Britain in accommodating business and, for a time, benefited handsomely. Politicians and business folk pursued an almost incestuous relationship so much so that Niall Fitzgerald, one of Ireland's most successful businessmen on the international stage, was worried at its closeness and stated so in an interview with 'The Irish Times' last year. Not that his remarks were reported widely in Ireland for he seemed to be the spectre at the feast and his message was regarded as somewhat unwelcome.

As I write this on a November evening with the light fast fading it seems that the same light has faded even faster on the Irish economy with severe and far-reaching consequences for the country and its people, especially the young who will grow up in a state I remember all too clearly from my own youth

and which forced me and too many others out of the country.

How did all which seemed to be so promising just a few years ago come to this? We can point to the way in which businesses and those who run them were allowed to operate free from all the prudential controls which mature economies have created to prevent what has happened in Ireland. We can blame bankers, "a profession where style, self-assurance and tailoring are much more important than intelligence", to quote that great economist, J K Galbraith. Certainly that profession has wreaked havoc on the Irish economy and, as yet, no member of that discredited bunch has faced criminal charges. We can blame property developers who covered the country in square miles of tacky properties nobody now seems to want or need. We can blame the European Central Bank whose monetary policies created a tidal wave of cheap money and inflated asset prices, especially housing, beyond the realms of commonsense. We can blame businesspeople who forsook the mundane course of providing goods which were of practical use to people in their lives for providing services, many of them financial, which, it now is clear were of doubtful if any value at all. We can blame the general hubris of too many people in Ireland.

However, I blame the Irish social and political system which has over

almost ninety years elected politicians whose moral horizons are confined to looking after their own immediate group to the exclusion of the common good. I blame the twisted morality of a population which believes that rules are for fools to observe and virtue lies in circumventing them. I blame a culture which has not understood that, to quote our American brethren, “there is no such thing as a free lunch” and are happy to let others, all too often the low paid and disadvantaged, fund their extravagances. Such perverse morality has created and perpetuated a grossly unequal society and undermined social cohesion. I blame a political class which inherited from their forebears the post Independence state and which, like their forebears, regarded that state as the path to their place in the sun to the exclusion of too many others. In too many ways they have come to ape the ways of the maligned Anglo-Irish Ascendancy as the recent spectacle of the cabinet arriving in top-of-the-range Mercedes for a meeting at Farmleigh Mansion all too graphically illustrated. The likeness to the Ascendancy lord arriving at the “Big House” in coach and four and graciously passing a few patronising words to the tenantry is too hard to avoid.

Each Saturday morning I read the current edition of ‘The Economist’. It is a habit I have retained from my time teaching

economics to generations of students here in Plymouth. Today that respected magazine reports on Ireland’s near bankrupt state and its difficulty in borrowing money in international markets. The banking crisis has beggared the country to a degree which I find quite mind-numbing. Stupid, incompetent and reckless people have been allowed to wreck the financial system to a degree scarcely believable. An equally stupid, incompetent and reckless government has saddled the population with responsibility for clearing the debts these exponents of the free market amassed. We have the reverse of the Robin Hood syndrome, we are robbing the poor to fund the excesses of the rich, just like tenants in 19th century Ireland had their rents raised to fund the absentee landlord’s losses at the gaming tables of Monte Carlo. Like the 19th century tenant, too many will be evicted as recession drives them into unemployment and sees their houses possessed as they fail to service their mortgages. The other depressing consequence is that emigration which many of us had thought was now a question of choice rather than necessity is back on the agenda for large numbers and Ireland is losing those people any country can least afford to see go. The outlook can hardly be more dispiriting.

Each day I read the online edition of ‘The Irish Times’. Each day I read the various articles in the



Fethard London Annual Reunion in the 1960s

opinion section and their attendant online responses. Those who try to defend the indefensible, the actions of government, point to the global crisis and by way of excuse try to absolve their politicians of responsibility. I just don't buy it. Ireland is in deeper debt than almost any country in Europe, its credit rating is lowest, its interest rate on borrowing is highest. It is in the realm of the traditional 'banana republic' and, like the state dependent for its income on that fruit, just as corrupt. Its indebtedness is a product of its feckless amorality. What is the way forward? How do we get out of our predicament?

One way is to eschew the politics which has held back and beg-

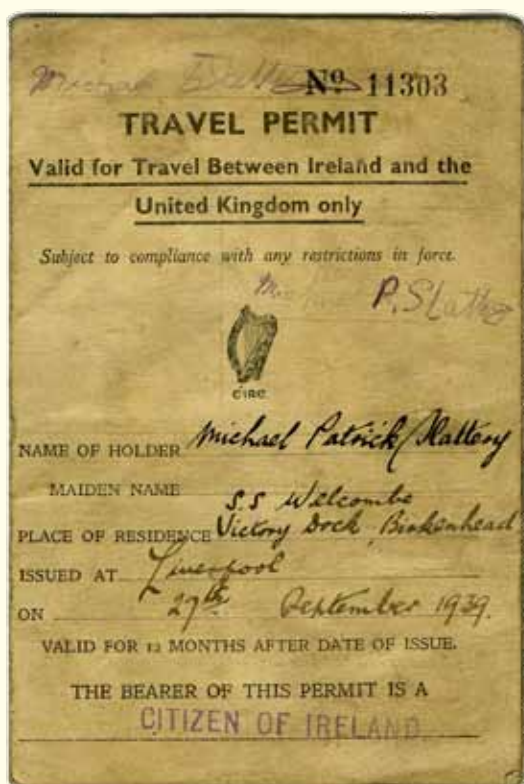
gared Ireland since the foundation of the state and which probably derive from its having been a colony. Governments must be elected which act in the public interest rather than simply favour their own adherents to the detriment of others. Honest politicians, yes, there are some out there, must be elected, the country must cease to favour the dishonest because they seem to "get things done". That gave Ireland in recent years one whose behaviour was a byword for crookedness but who was elected just because he was a loveable rogue who seemed to "get things done" and not just for his adherents but himself. The country must cease to see TDs as those who help them circumvent

the rules but as those who govern honestly and hold the executive to account rather than simply support their party come what may. In short Ireland needs to grow up. Our European brethren have all at some time in their existence encountered some of the problems Ireland is now facing and have addressed them. Ireland is supposed to be among the most positive in its attitude to the EU. Perhaps it might examine the ways in which our neighbours have managed their problems in the past and adapt its

approach to suit the country's particular characteristics. 18th century British governments were as corrupt as sin, Germany in the 1920s experienced ruinous financial problems, post-war France had ineffective governments. All these countries faced up to their problems and emerged the stronger for having done so.

If Ireland is currently beset by problems, solutions are not too hard to find. Perhaps we shall then at last begin to "cherish all the children of the nation equally". ●

—Tommy Healy





The Melody Makers photographed on the Main Street 1940s



Mrs and Mr Jim 'Boy' Danagher, Cashel Road.

27th Tipperary Scout Unit



Fethard Scout Group photographed in July 2010 at their Annual Camp in Larch Hill, Scout Headquarters, Dublin.

Fethard 27th Tipperary Scout Group runs from September to July and holds weekly meetings in Fethard Ballroom. We have forty-six members, thirty-five youths and eleven adults, of which three are committee members. Since returning in September 2009, we have had a very good attendance in all sections from Cubs, Scouts and Ventures.

In November the scouts attended a fun weekend in Melleray and also sold tickets for our 'Twelve Days of Christmas Draw'. Some of the cubs managed to sell four books of tickets which was very encouraging as great prizes are on offer and all monies received go to the respective Cub/ Scout/Venture by way of savings to cover annual registration. Leaders and committee members enjoyed a

great day out Karting in Kilkenny followed by a lovely meal in McCarthy's during the Christmas break.

St. Patrick's Day saw the full group parade to 11am Mass in Holy Trinity Parish Church. This is an annual event with the group also doing a guard of honour at the Corpus Christi procession.

February and March saw the scouts do a hike on the Comeragh Mountains up around Mahon Falls. They also took part in the county mountain pursuit challenge on Knockanaffrin organised by the Kilsheelan Group. A weekend away at Leigh Dale Cottage in Inniscarra Cork, was enjoyed by the scout group in March with the main emphasis being on cooking, food preparation and cleaning up. A trip to the

city with a 3D movie included, was enjoyed by all. We hosted the Co. Orienteering on Knockanaffrin, with Fethard winning the under-12 and under-14 events.

The annual county fun weekend took place in Melleray in April. A large attendance from the Fethard group was recorded. The highlights of the weekend were the hike and the games. We attended the County Shield in May, and also the County Sports, with four cubs winning a total of twelve medals between them. Congratulations to all that attended.

Our minibus, donated by very good friend to Fethard Scouts, Tony Burgess, took to the road in March/April. This is a sixteen seater minibus which is a fantastic asset to the group. It now means that we no longer have to hire busses to go

to the various camps and planned activities around the country. We purchased a second-hand box trailer which has been invaluable in transporting our equipment.

May and June saw the group continue with weekly meetings which were well attended. Two hikes took place, one on Slievenamon where the Ventures overnighted and the other one locally in Fethard. On the weekend of 18, 19 and 20th June, the entire group held a weekend camp in Grove with the kind permission of Harry and Rosemary Ponsonby. The sun shone down for the entire weekend. The kitchen tent was erected, with great food served up over the few days. The pack took full part in setting up camp. The camp fire on Saturday night was one of the highlights of the weekend. Our thanks to



Luke Grant and Patrick Walsh on the 'Grass Ski' at Larch Hill



*Venture Squad photographed on a hike to Slievenamon, June 2010 with John Cloonan
(Venture Leader and County Commissioner)*

Canon Tom Breen for coming to say Mass on the Saturday night.

Over the year our marquee was erected on many occasions: in Grove, P Walsh Pony Club, Mass on Slievenamon, Fethard Medieval Festival, and Fethard Rugby Club Family Day. We are always happy to be of assistance and are most grateful for donations received in respect of same. Fundraising this year included a flag day in Clonmel in July and a church gate collection held recently.

Annual Camp took place in Larch Hill, Scout Headquarters from 24th July to 1st August. This was a fun-filled adventure for the entire group. Weather was good and everybody took full advantage of the activities available. We hiked through the woods, etc., and enjoyed great fun with the Crate

Stacking competitions.

Our Venture Unit consists of one scouter and six venture scouts. Since its establishment Philip O'Donnell has departed from the group, necessitating a change in the leadership of the Venture Unit. The unit has been relatively active and meets fortnightly (Wednesday nights) to discuss forthcoming programme and activities.

The unit had an overnight expedition to Slievenamon in May, attended the Group Camp in Grove in June, the annual camp in Larch Hall in July and in September attended Ventact, in Kilcully. Plans for the coming year include a hike before Christmas and an overnight around the Christmas/New Year period. Other future events include 'Foot Fest' in Tramore and a return to Ventact in August next year.

Venture Scouts have assisted

both the Cub Scout and Scout Sections throughout the year, in addition to group events. Venture Scouts have also attended Group Council, including the single agenda One Programme Group Council meeting.

Our AGM took place on Monday night 8th November 2010. This was a good meeting where the current programme of events was discussed. Plans are in place for the setting up of a new Beaver Colony, which is to suit boys and girls from 6 to 8 years. This should be up and running in February, 2011. If any parents and young children are interested in joining this section, further details will be available in the New Year.

We are delighted to welcome the following new voluntary members to the group, Michelle Hennebry, Nicola Quigley, Claire McMahon, Noreen Hackett and Tony Burgess.

The 27th Tipperary Fethard and Killusty Scout group would be delighted to welcome anybody interested in helping out with weekly meetings, group activities, becoming a leader, etc.

We would like to recognise and acknowledge all the time and effort put in to Fethard Scouts by Michelle Hammond and Philip O'Donnell. We regret their departure but respect it. Much thanks and we wish you both well for the future.

Many thanks to all who helped with the many meetings/events, the parents of the boys and girls, Scout Leaders Dermot and Mikey, Cub Leader John, Venture Leader Lofty, and in spite of being County Commissioner and group mentor for the new programme, Group Leader Robert, absent leaders Michelle and Philip who have moved on, com-

mittee chairperson Mary Healy, treasurer Mary O'Donnell and secretary Mary Lynch. We thank all who supported us during the year, the ballroom committee for their facility, the public who support our raffle, flag day and church gate collection. Thanks to all our youth members who make up our successful scout group. ●



Cubs photographed at Larch Hill Annual Camp with leader John Walsh and John Cloonan, County Commissioner

Grand Dad Joe

*I tell this story as I kneel
About a man from Drumdeel.
Cutting timber, draw in the bales
Walk the dogs, two wagging tails
All sorts in the shed
Margaret bought that bloody bed.
Down the back for nail or plank
Washed pants but it shrank
On the line round the clock
On each leg, a cement block.
Easter eggs he loved to eat
What about that new en suite
Playing cards at the table
But Mother was never able
Over home to knot the tie
On the telly, Dell Boy
Watching snooker and the darts
Brown bread and rhubarb tarts
Mind your money he'd insist
Poppin pills and Irish Mist
To Tramore for good old days
Backing horses, more money for Hayes
Telling stories of olden time
See you soon good friend of mine.*

*by
Adrian Bradshaw*

Fethard Senior Citizens

Fethard Senior Citizens' meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month where all our members are served tea, sandwiches and cakes, followed by entertainment from a guest speaker, music or bingo.

Our January meeting was postponed due to bad weather but by February we were back in full flight enjoying our regular bingo session. In March we had a very enlightening and informative talk by Garda Andy Neill on security and safety in the home and in April we visited Mount Melleray via The Vee and came back to Raheen House Hotel for the evening meal. It being our Easter outing members also had their Easter Bonnets which were displayed and judged by a member of hotel staff. Prizes were awarded to the best three bonnets.

We had our annual Mass in the Tirry Centre in May celebrated by our new curate Fr. Anthony McSweeney.

In June we went to Kilmeaden for a trip on the Waterford and Suir Valley railway. It was a lovely evening and we finished the day in Waterford Manor Hotel for dinner.

In August we paid our usual trip to Tramore and ended the evening with dinner at the Majestic Hotel. In October we were back in the Tirry Centre for our usual tea and bingo and in November we had our quiz night, which was a huge success. Questions were prepared by Eddie and a good night was had by all.

Preparations are now under way for our Christmas Party to be held at the Anner Hotel Thurles, preceded by Mass in the Augustinian Abbey, Fethard. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone who has helped us in any way financially or otherwise to keep our club going.

A very Happy and Peaceful Christmas to all our friends at home and abroad. ●



Fethard Senior Citizens October 1988 L to R: Josie Maher, Nancy Sheehan, Kitty Tobin, Mary O'Dwyer, Mamie Morrissey, Nell Fitzgerald, Agnes Allen and Bridget Burke.

Patrician Presentation Awards Day



Award winners photographed at the Patrician Presentation Secondary School Awards Ceremony 2010. Back L to R: Kate Quigley (Attendance Award), Emma Hayes (Sports Award), Karen Hayes (2nd Year Student of the Year), Michelle Walsh (Attendance Award), Daiana Adamczak (Senior Writers Quill Award), Anastasia Blake (LAM Award), Jack Connolly (Special Achievement Award for Sport), Orla Walsh (Junior Writers Quill Award), Brian Healy (Sports Award), Adam O'Donnell (Paddy Broderick Perpetual Award), Aaron O'Donnell (Special Achievement 'Make a Book' JCSP project). Front L to R: Cormac Horan (1st Year Student of the Year award and Gradam na Gaeilge Award), Kate Horan (representing her daughter Gráinne who won the 6th Year Student of the Year award and Gradam na Gaeilge Award), Michael O'Donnell (special guest and past-pupil), Marian Gilpin (Deputy Principal), Eran Britton (Principal), Ailish Humphreys (Le Cheile Trust), David Hayes (Padraig Pearse Perpetual Trophy and Special Achievement Award for his Junior Cert results), and Joseph Thompson (5th Year Student of the Year award).

The school year began in late August, heralded by fine, sunny weather after a much improved summer. It has been a time of change; a time of joy and a time of sadness. The tragic death of Mrs Ann O'Donnell's daughter Aideen, also a past pupil, was in all our minds. Mr and Mrs Prendergast had retired in June, but thankfully Mrs Prendergast returned in September to continue her excellent work of teaching Irish.

Damien Byrne, our school completion programme co-ordinator had returned to the classroom in Cahir, and Liam O'Brien, our guid-

ance councillor, had taken up a new position in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary. However, we welcome our new S.C.P.co-ordinator, Sinéad Burke, and Aileen Power, our new guidance councillor.

Ms O'Connor has returned to the P.E. department and Ms McKeogh will shortly return to the English department. We, sadly, will lose Ms Barrett who has been with us for some time now, and when this article goes to print, Mrs Gilpin, our Deputy Principal will have left us to pursue a new life in retirement.

And so the waters of change

flow onward ...

Our 1st Year group have almost settled into their new life at Secondary School, and our former 6th Year's have moved on to another level after achieving excellent results in their Leaving Certificate.

One outstanding success was David Hayes, son of Michael and Bridget Hayes, who received eleven As in his Junior Certificate results.

And so as 2010 draws to a close, and the school year progresses, Mr Britton our Principal, and staff extend a warm greeting to all our readers of the ever-popular Newsletter. To conclude we bring you an insight into one of the most important days of the year at our school ... Awards Day 2010.

Awards Day 2010, October 15, dawned bright and sunny, appropriate

weather for a special occasion. It commenced with mass in the assembly hall at 11am celebrated by Canon Tom Breen PP, who, as ever, gave solid words of encouragement to our students.

The theme of the mass was "Love ... Learn ... Live", which was delightfully displayed by our 2nd Year students under the watchful eye of Mrs Maher and Ms Barrett of the R.E. Department.

Kevin Hickey, our organist, and Mrs Gilpin provided the choir made up of boys and girls from 1st Year to 6th Year. Our guests for the occasion were past-pupil Mr Michael O'Donnell and his wife Kitty, and Ms Éilis Humphries of the 'Le Chéile Trust'.

Michael addressed the students and told them a little about



Ernan Britton, Principal, presenting the Padraig Pearse Perpetual Trophy to David Hayes for his results in Irish and History in the Junior Cert examination. L to R: Karen Hayes, Michael Hayes, Mary O'Sullivan (teacher), David Hayes, Ernan Britton (Principal), Bridget Hayes (David's mother) and Bridget Hayes (David's grandmother).



Adam O'Donnell, winner of the Paddy Broderick Perpetual Trophy for results in Geography in the Junior Certificate. L to R: Sean O'Donnell, Adam O'Donnell, Ernan Britton (Principal) and Paddy Broderick.

school life with the brothers in 'The Monastery' as it was called in those days.

Michael has recently launched his 'History of Fethard, 1200 – 2000', a work of love much of which was completed during his retirement. He encouraged the students to grasp the opportunity to do something fulfilling at whatever period, or time, in their life that the opportunity arose.

The awards were then presented. Student of the Year awards (Druid Cu-chulainn) were presented to Gráinne Horan (6th Year), Cormac Horan (1st Year), Karen Hayes (2nd Year) and Joseph Thompson (5th Year).

The Padraig Pearse Perpetual Trophy, awarded for results in Irish and History in the Junior Cert examination, was presented to David Hayes who also received a Special Achievement award for his Junior Cert results of eleven A's.

The Paddy Broderick Award was presented to Adam O'Donnell by Mr Britton, for his results in Geography in the Junior Certificate. The new Wood Technology Award was presented to Sean Whyte by Mr Cummins.

Deputy Principal, Ms Marian Gilpin, presented the L.A.M. Award to Anastasia Blake and Fethard Quill Writers Awards to Orla Walsh and Daiana Adamczak

The 'Gradam Na Gaeilge' award was presented by Mrs Prendergast to Gráinne Horan, whose mother, Kate Horan, accepted on her behalf.

Mr McGree presented sports awards to Emma Hayes and Brian Healy for their dedication and captaincy of both the school's boys and girls successful volleyball teams. A Special Achievements award was presented to Jack Connolly for his national and international boxing skills and being selected to captain the national junior boxing team.



Sports Award recipients L to R: Bernie O'Connor (teacher), Brian Healy (volleyball), Jack Connolly (special achievement in boxing), Emma Hayes (volleyball) and Justin McGree (teacher).

Ms Maher presented Student Council Emblems to Tommy Sheehan, Niall Rochford, Jean Anglim, Garreth Lawrence, Rachel Prout, Cathal Hurley, Lucinda Carroll, Emma Hayes, Brian Healy, Jack Connolly and Christine Fitzgerald.

Attendance and Punctuality awards were presented to Kate

Quigley (1st Year), Michelle Walsh (2nd Year), David Hayes (3rd Year), Ted Barrett (4th Year) and Fiona Crotty (5th Year), and a Special Achievement award to Aaron O'Donnell for his 'Make a Book' JCSP project.

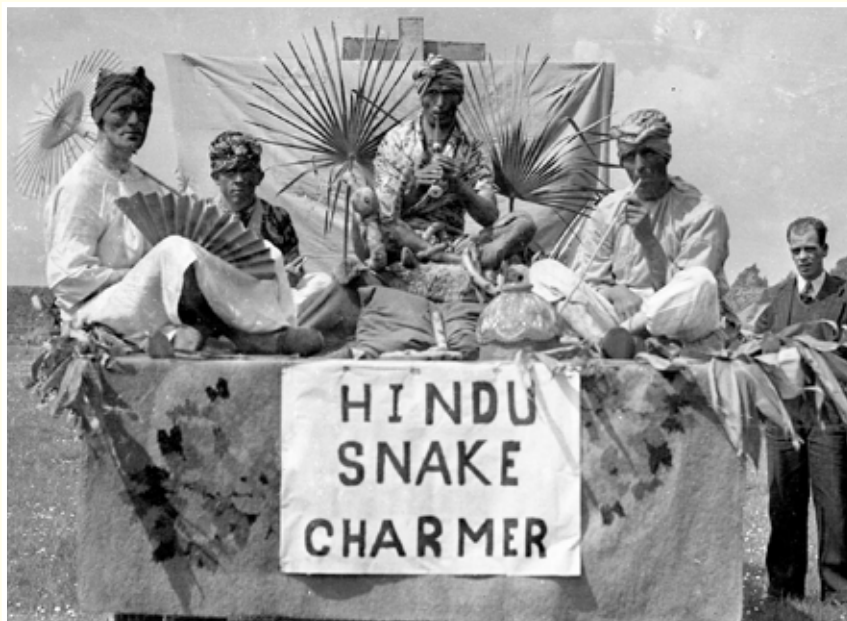
It was a memorable day and may we have many more. ●



Marian Gilpin, Deputy Principal, presenting the theatrical LAM award to Anastasia Blake.



Joseph Thompson, 5th Year Student of the Year, photographed with his mother Frances.



'Hindu Snake Charmer' Fethard Carnival Fancy Dress Parade in the 1940s



First Communion 1950. Back L to R: Tom Mackey, Philip Ward, ?, ?, Sean Evans. Middle Row L to R: Keating (Monroe), ?, Richard O'Brien, Paddy Moloney, Ned Connolly. Bro Damien. Front L to R: ?, Billy Power, Richard Butler, ?, Lory Dineen and Cyril McSweeney.



'Japanese Fancy Shop' Fethard Carnival Fancy Dress Parade in the 1940s



'Forget Me Nots' Fethard Carnival Fancy Dress Parade in the 1940s

Do you remember . . . 2000?

Yes, most of you do. It was the beginning of the new century; we were finished with the nineteens. Many of us had wondered would we live to see it. Well we did, and in many ways it was no different from 1999. The prophets of doom did warn us that the millennium bug would destroy the contents of our computers, but that didn't happen either. Nevertheless, it was good to live to see the new century and with the turnover we felt a new surge of hope. In Fethard the Community Council celebrated the great event by having the Town Hall illuminated and by distributing 'goodies' to any children that

were present. On the occasion the Pheasant Pluckers entertained us with music. The church bells pealed forth their beautiful tones to welcome a new year and a new century. The night sky over Fethard was lit for about an hour by a massive display of fireworks. Sadly, if you were far away and living in a foreign country you did not see our celebrations. However, Joe Kenny trekked out, at a most un-Godly hour, to Bennett's Hill to capture on film the day's, and the new century's, sun rising over Slievenamon ('our mountain').

But other, more mundane, changes took place in Fethard over the first year of the new century. In February



Photographed on Christmas Day 1999 are L to R: Martina Ryan, Lory Kenny, Ida Carroll, Kevin Ryan and Maryanne Keane with Canon James Power P.P. and Fr. Sean Ryan C.C. (right)



Credit Union Table Quiz in Fethard January 2000 L to R: Liam Ryan, Michael McCarthy, Tom Gilpin and Timothy O'Flynn.

the County Council began the work of re-designing The Square so as to control the flow of vehicles. To begin with, The Square had to be dug up, especially on its south side. Consequently, the disturbance in the area throughout the month of February was horrendous. People began to complain and to wonder if the changes were really necessary and if too high a price in discomfort was being paid for such changes. But slowly over the next few months things began to take on a satisfying shape. Low block walls were being installed to highlight the traffic flow system, parking spaces were being provided and footpaths renewed. By June the Council were ready to re-surface The Square. Throughout the summer The Square became a place of beauty with its flower beds, large tubs with plants, and a fine tarmac finish to the road surface.

People quickly forgot the mess and upset of the previous six months.

The new century also brought other urban changes. Public lighting was placed in the ballroom car park. Litter bins were placed about the town, and the community was given the services of a mechanical sweeper which would clean the streets on one day in each week. The roadway that ran from Woodvale Walk to Redcity Road cross was finished to a high standard. There were plans in hand to extend the Fethard sewage scheme further out along the Cashel Road.

A new footbridge was placed across the Clashawley river between The Valley and the south side of the town wall. The official opening of this beneficial addition to the structure of the town took place on Monday evening 26 May at 8.30pm and was performed by the then chairman of



Fifth Year debating team 2000 L to R: John Lonergan, Tom Grant, Aideen O'Donnell (RIP) & Terence Fahy.

the County Council, Pat. Norris.

In July, with a great fanfare, a highlighted news item in *The Nationalist* informed the people of Fethard that their town would be included in the new town renewal scheme then in being. It would be included in the massive residential, commercial and industrial new countywide scheme. The Executive Planner for South Tipperary County Council expressed his great hopes: *'It will bring about huge investment with at least one multi-million pound development envisaged in each of the four towns'*. Fethard was one of those four, but in the case of Fethard it would appear that the scheme would help solve the problems of dereliction and neglect, especially on sites on the Main Street, Burke Street, and the area about The Mart. A significant rejuvenation was expected for the

town from a scheme which was to run until 2003. Under the scheme the government would pay 50% of the cost of new constructions and where old buildings were converted the payment would be 100%. The great hope was that these incentives, granted over a few years, would help to improve the general appearance of the town.

But other improvements were being implemented which were also important for the townspeople, even if they were not on the high level of the renewal scheme. The Community Council were seeking support for the installation of alarm units in the houses of the elderly about the town. This idea was put forward in October as the dark nights of winter were rapidly approaching. The cost of placing such security in each house was estimated at £260, which was some-

thing that most elderly people could not bear themselves. The plan was that an appeal would be made to the public at large to contribute to the \$6,500 already received from the South Eastern Health Board for the scheme. The alarms were distributed by the Day Care Centre.

That Day Care Centre was still giving an excellent service to all who availed of it. For example, the Centre, together with Meals-on-Wheels was supplying about 8,000 meals annually to the elderly; and all this from a small kitchen in the Tirry Centre. This was approximately 25 meals on three

days in each week between September and the following June and the same number twice a week during the months of July and August. When the meals were prepared, voluntary car drivers took them about, but it is worth mentioning that the actual delivery to

the door was made by the transition-year pupils from the Secondary School. The latter travelled with the car driver. The Day Care Centre also organised an outing for the elderly. On Tuesday 26 June of this year the bus took them on a lovely drive through the Vee beyond Clogheen

which was then in its full glory with heathers and flowers. At Lawlor's Hotel, Dungarvan, the group had a meal which they followed with a session of song and dance. Before the centre closed for the summer period a team from a local Tipperary radio station came to interview the staff and guests and the result was broadcast a few days later. The St. Vincent de Paul Society also offered the old people of Fethard an opportunity to avail of a day-tour. On 24 June the Society took a group to Carne beach in Co. Wexford and on 17 May they visited Dail Eireann. There



New footpaths on Main Street February 2000

was a flourishing Bridge Club in the town. And on every Sunday night there were dances in the ballroom with a capacity crowd on each night. As the local reporter for The Nationalist noted, 'no bar, no bouncers, no noise on the streets afterwards. What was offered

was good dancing'.

What could also be called an improvement was the good news from the factory on the Kilnockin Road. In June Dawn Fresh Foods announced that they had won a \$2 million contract from the Tesco stores in Ireland to supply them with



*February 2000 Back L to R: Laura Rice, Amy Grant, Laura Mullins, Jean Anglim, Kelly Fogarty.
Front L to R: Jane Kenny, Audrey Tynan and Rebecca Fogarty.*

three new brands of ready-prepared meals: a good start to the millennium.

Other plans were also in the pipeline for that year. Whether they were an improvement or not only the parents involved could answer. During November discussions were put in train for the amalgamation of the boys and girls primary schools. Proposals for the change were being placed before the parents at a meeting held on Thursday night 30 November. In that year, for example, the Boys National School had four teachers and ninety-five pupils, so amalgamation would bring changes.

Another change that came in that year was that the Community Council acquired a licence, in April, to run a community lotto which would be used to generate funds for their many needs. In November,

for example, the Council signed a contract for the purchase of the Presentation Convent hall for future use by the people of Fethard. The hope was that the hall would be suitable for adult training schemes. The Council also supported an exchange visit which took place between some local people and representatives from the town of St. David's in Pembrokeshire in Wales. This particular visit was made on Friday 31 March with the intention of creating meaningful contact between towns of a similar size and to pursue, if possible, future joint projects such as the marketing and publicising of Fethard's potential as an area which would draw in tourists. The group that travelled out from Fethard were, Joe Kenny, Father Ben O'Brien, OSA, Jimmy Connolly, Peter Grant, David Sceats, Mairead Croke, Mary

Hanrahan, Chris Nevin, Dóirín Saurus and Terry Cunningham. The initial outcome was a web-site exchange and some contacts at primary school level. A representative group of people from St. David's made a return visit on 29 April. They were much impressed by the Abymill Theatre, the Country Markets, the ballroom, and the Credit Union. The exchanges appeared to have had much merit and future potential.

But other changes were being mentioned that were greeted with a sense of gloom. In January the Augustinian friars broke the news that they would have to assess their situation in Ireland because of a lack of vocations to the Order. For a

number of years before 2000 there had been no new recruits, and so the closure of some houses about the country seemed necessary because of shortage of manpower. In the changes that were about to be implemented only one of the two houses at Callan and Fethard could survive. A great sense of shock was felt. Would Fethard be without an Augustinian priest after a service of nearly seven hundred years?

In June, however, the decision was known. Four friars would live in the house in Fethard and from there the churches at Callan and Fethard would be administered. Fethard was saved, and the friars would continue their ministry, but for how long was



Sixth Year Class 2000: Back Row L to R: Siobhán Whyte, Mary Doyle, Siobhán Slattery, Philip Croke, Jacinta Flynn, Caitriona O'Brien, Declan Kenny, James Halpin, John O'Meara, Brian Sullivan, Kenneth O'Donnell. Third Row L to R: Aisling O'Riordan, Marie Holohan, Edel Fitzgerald, Audrey Conway, Richard Hayes, Conor McCarthy, Marcella Lonergan. Second Row L to R: John McCarthy, Shane Sullivan, David Kennedy, Kenneth Byrne, Kevin O'Donnell, William Ryan, Edmund Healy, Richard Burke, Orla Neagle. Front L to R: George Culleton, Paul Barry, Deirdre Keane, Katie Whyte, Teresa Morrissey, Emma Morrissey, Maeve Britton and Yvonne Flynn.



Faith Friends for First Holy Communion Class 2000 L to R: Kevin Hayes, Lisa Condon, Eimear Gahan, Philip Doyle, Laura Rice and Laura Maloney

anybody's guess. As I write this in 2010 the friars are still in Fethard, but as a pointer to how things stand one of the priests, Father John Meagher, is ninety-four years old.

In the year 2000 ordinations to the priesthood in the Church of Ireland were as rare as they were in the Catholic Church. Consequently, that of Rev. Kenyon Homfray was worthy of a news item. Before he took ordination Mr. Homfray, from Garranguile, Cloneen, ran a very successful saddler business on the Main Street in Fethard, and was also a successful exhibitor at the Dublin Horse Show. He was ordained a curate in May in the Church of Ireland Cathedral in Derry by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe and was sent to serve at Convoy in Co. Donegal.

While some turned to matters spiritual others had, of necessity, to put their thinking to more

mundane and physical things. A special meeting, held on Monday 2 October, was convened by the Community Council. This meeting was a consequence of the many complaints received by the Council on the ever-increasing speeding in and about the town. Fears were expressed at the meeting that if no controls were exercised then somebody would be killed. On the night, complaints were made about the lack of respect for pedestrians by motorists; cyclists and walkers growing more and more apprehensive about using the roads. The words used in the Fethard Development Plan, issued by the County Council, were brought to the attention of the meeting. That document noted that, 'the pedestrian has the right to live in urban and village centres tailored to the needs of human beings and not to the needs of the car'; and

elsewhere, 'that children, the elderly and the disabled have the right to expect towns to be places of easy social contact and not places that aggravate their inherent weaknesses'.

Despite such worries, and they were real and in need of articulation, Fethard was not a place of doom and gloom ten years ago. As the new century opened the town had about forty-five active societies catering for a broad range of interests: sporting, charitable, musical, dramatic, artistic, historical, youth needs and many others. The town must be among the leaders in south Tipperary in the services and social contacts it can offer to a newcomer. Had the fact that Fethard had self-government for nearly four hundred years anything to do with the proliferation of societies?

After so many years in existence the Irish Countrywomen's Association was still active and on Thursday 13 July the guild had its outing when it travelled to Altamont Gardens at Tullow, Co. Carlow. From there it went on to the Roundwood Garden Centre. The members then returned to Kilkenny city where there was time for shopping and an evening meal in the Newpark Hotel. They had their Christmas party in J's restaurant on Tuesday 12 December. There was also an active Macra na Feirme branch in the area. Their senior debating team won the county final held in January, they won a talent comedy competition in March and they performed well at the Clonmel Horse Show in July. In that same July the members had an exchange visit with the



Faith Friends for First Holy Communion Class 2000 L to R: Nicola Gleeson, Kevin Needham, Mary Kane, Glen O'Meara and Sarah O'Meara

members of the Carluke and District Young Farmers club in Scotland. The group that went out from Fethard had a most enjoyable time and later eight guests from Carluke paid a return visit. The big event this year for the Macra members was the celebration of their 50th anniversary. The occasion was marked by a dinner/dance held on Saturday night 7 October in the Clonmel Arms Hotel with



Alfie Brett and Sean Lanigan in McCarthy's 2000

music by Tony Egan. Over two hundred attended the event, including six members of the original founding group. On the night an excellent booklet, Fethard Macra na Feirme, 1950 – 2000, was launched. Keeping up with a long tradition the Tipperary Foxhounds held their opening meet in Fethard on Monday 30 October at 11am. Like the novels of Anthony Trollope the pleasure they give never seems to wane. Eighty-five mounted followers turned out on the day, the first meet of the new millennium, and there was a huge following of car and foot supporters. The first day's run, which did not have good weather, was from the old Kilnockin Racecourse through Rathcoole and Ballintemple, into Rocklow and ending in Ballintemple. Like foxhunt-

ing, the under-sixteen girls volleyball team continued to play and to play well. At the end of July they defeated a team from Lismore in the packed hall of the Presentation Convent, Clonmel. This win opened the way for a trip to Mosney, Co. Meath, in September.

Another event with a long life was the Killusty Pony Show. This was its thirty-eighth year in existence, and in this year the show moved to a new location at Claremore, Killusty, which was no more than 200 yards from the village. All the usual pony classes were still being catered for and some new ones because the committee had more space in the new site. They also organized sheep dog trials, and had a fancy dress pageant. Another 'oldie' was the Fethard Autumn Flower and Horticultural Show which was held in the Ballroom on Sunday 8 October from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. The proceeds from the event were offered to St. Joseph's Hospital, Clonmel. Hard to believe that in this year it was fifty-four years old.

Like the Flower Show the dramatic society – The Fethard Players – has been around for a long time. They have been producing plays

in the town since 1931 and, G.A.A. apart, are probably the oldest existing society in the town. And the young people were being trained to stage appearances. In this year the transition year at the Patrician/Presentation Secondary School put a production of the musical 'Oliver' at the Abymill Theatre in early December. It was directed by Marian Gilpin, and was lively, buoyant and entertaining. In May the Youth Drama Group presented a three-night run of their production 'Grease' which had a full house on each night. The producer of this was Seamus Hayes. All who attended the show were impressed by the singing and acting of the young artists, many of whom were appearing on stage for the first time. The Fethard Players themselves also trod

the boards during the year. Between Sunday 12 November and Saturday 18 November they had a comedy at the Abymill Theatre which was produced by Austin O'Flynn. This was 'You Can't Take it with You', and was said by all who saw it as being one of the best productions and that the cast even exceeded its own standards. Incidentally, some of the players in that production were third generation members of the Fethard Dramatic Society. Sadly, the Hogan Musical Society (How many, I wonder, still remember Father William Hogan after whom the society is named and who served as curate in Fethard from 1 April 1939 to 9 December 1955? He was later parish priest in Killenaule) produced no show in 2000, but had great hopes for the following year.



'Disney Stars visit Fethard' Fethard Historical Society Fancy Dress Parade 2000



*Tipp FM 'In Your Kitchen' Breakfast Show at Stapletons, Coolmoyne, 28th June 2000.
L to R: Alice Quinn, Gretta O'Donovan, Theresa Cummins and Kitty McCarthy.*

Another of the interests catered for was scouting which offered its members regular hikes to such places as Grove Wood where they learned to make pancakes. In May ten scouts headed off for Mount Melleray Scout Centre where all of them had a delightful weekend in the sunshine. Their summer outing was spent in Castlegregory, Co. Kerry, where, despite the rain, their activities included hiking, rafting, cooking and various activities. At home the scouts paraded on St. Patrick's Day and at the processions held in May and on Corpus Christi. They were also on Slievenamon for the parish pilgrimage to the Holy Year Cross. For those who might have found scouting to be a little too strenuous a new Foróige Club was formed on Saturday 12 August. This was a club with a more social aspect in that

it helped young people to make friends and to develop their particular abilities. Over twenty young people attended the initial meeting which had as its founding members, Mary Shanahan, Edwina Newport, Michael Callan, Rita McCormack, and John and Clare Hannigan.

But the well-established Historical Society had a very active year. In August, in consideration of this being the first year of a new millennium, the members made a significant tour to view aspects of ancient Ireland. On that Saturday morning, under the guidance of Terry Cunningham, they left Fethard at 9am and travelled south to the pre-historic lake of Coumshingaun in the Comeragh Mountains which is a stretch of water which was probably carved out of the mountain in the Ice-age. Following that bracing

walk in the mountain the group came back to Carrick-on-Suir to the Park Inn where they had a hearty breakfast. Being well fortified for more intellectual demands the party made its way out to Knockroe near Windgap where Professor Muiris Ó Suilleabhain, the man who was in charge of the excavation of the megalithic burial site, gave a talk on his work there and on the significance of the place which is estimated to be 5,000 year old. The members then adjourned to nearby Delaney's Pub for a lunch. One last bit of culture was left to them: they came down to Kilkieran graveyard where they were shown the ancient High Crosses. They ended the very enjoyable outing at the Kilcash community centre where the group had a meal while they were being entertained with pleasant music.

But the society had some other outings on this special year. In July fifteen members set out on a week's holiday which they spent in the south-west wine region of France with special emphasis on the Barton wine business in the Bordeaux district. Five members went again to France in September. This time their journey took them on a tour of the First World War battlefields in the Flanders area where many Fethard young men, such as J. Quirke and Thomas Murray, both from The Green, lost their lives.

Their loss, and that of their many comrades, is commemorated in the lyric words of a young poet who lost

his own life in the last year of that terrible war:

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

As always the G.A.A. was the bedrock of entertainment in Fethard; and is the oldest organisation. But for all of that the hopes of the senior football team were dashed at Clonmel on Sunday 9 July when the Ardfinnan side beat them by two points. However, it was admitted by all who saw the match that the winners had an inspiring second half and thoroughly deserved their victory. But when current victory cannot be grasped old men's ruminations turn to what would be the dream team for Fethard: Tony Newport (goal); Tommy Hogan (right full-back); Ned O'Shea (full back); Mick Byrne (left full back); Liam Connolly (right half back); Mick Gunne (centre half back); Jim O'Gorman (left half back); Dick Allen and Brian Burke (both centre field); Gus Danaher (right half forward); Tom Tubridy (centre forward); Dan Mullins (left half forward); Ned Cummins (right forward); Jim Noonan (full forward); and Gus McCarthy (left forward).



Members of Fethard Macra Club at their club meeting to finalise plans for their 50th Anniversary Dinner Dance which took place on 7th October 2000.

Ah yes, the team that never was. But sad reality had also to be faced. In this year it was learned that a sporting club can no longer be run on a wing and a prayer. In 1999 the local G.A.A. Club had running expenses of £43,000, for example, and it would have been a lot more but for all the voluntary help that was readily available.

Whatever about the annual ups and downs a gala night was held on Friday 25 August to honour the members of the old Coolmoyne Hurling Club. The event was convened in the Fethard Arms. What was being honoured was the Coolmoyne team who, in 1950, won the county junior hurling championship which was played in Cashel. To gain the top award the team played Carrick Davins, Rockwell Rovers, and finally Rahealty. The members of that team who were still alive in 2000

were, Dick Hayes, Joe Ahearne, Tony Newport, Stephen O'Brien, Jim McCormack, and Cly Mullins. Fethard was football country, but Coolmoyne became home to hurling. This may have been due to the arrival in the area (to Ardsallagh) of members of the famous Walsh family from Tubberadora. They brought quality hurling with them and from then on Coolmoyne became the centre for the game. In its day Coolmoyne also fielded a senior team. On that night in the Fethard Arms about sixty guests sat down to a fine meal and afterwards the parish priest, Canon Power, presented mementos to the survivors and to the representatives of those who had not survived. That 1950 squad consisted of Tony Newport, Paddy Murphy, Paddy Ahearne, Joe Clarke, Stephen O'Brien, Sean McCormack, Peter Walsh, Jerome O'Dwyer, Cly

Mullins, Jimmy (Slicks) McCarthy, Paddy Dalton, Michael McCarthy, Jim McCormack, Joe Ahearne, Dick Hayes; and the subs were, Jack Wall, Mick (Toby) McCormack, Brother Dominic Lyons, and John Collins.

While hurling in Fethard may have been looking at the past the Badminton Club was having a good year. This club had been founded in Fethard in 1946 by a secondary school teacher, Austin Stack, who came from Co. Kerry. What he had in mind was a social centre and a fitness club, but very soon outstanding players in the game were coming to the fore and the social aspect was quickly knocked on the head and serious training was undertaken. Soon county and inter-

county competitions were entered and won by the likes of Cly Mullins, Jimmy McCarthy, Sean Henehan, Pat (Walsh) McCarthy, and Betty (O'Donnell) Holohan; and two of those gained provincial status. From then on the game was played with style and verve and always with the determination to win.

Another of the associations in the town with a long life was the Fethard and Killusty Anglers. They celebrated their thirtieth anniversary in this year. At their fishing competition on 30 April a combination of father and son were the winners. And the son, George McGrath, was the feature of an article in the May edition of the Irish Angling News. This gave great emphasis to George's skill as a dry fly



Junior Classes taught by Mrs Frances Harrington at Killusty National School 2000.

Back L to R: Stephen Coffey, Patrick Kearney, Joseph Morgan, Daniel Hickey, Shane Power, Aaron Conran. Second Row L to R: Mathew Holohan, Anita Pollard, Natalie Cahill, William Morgan, Katie Coen, Fiona Crotty, Leanne Sheehan, Seamus Holohan. Front L to R: Nicola Harrington, Shannon O'Brien, Aisling Harrington, Michelle Walsh, Shannon Hickey and Jessica Conran.



*A stitch in time — fourth class knitting decorations for their Christmas Tree December 2000.
Back L to R: Chloe Gough, Aisling Breen, Siobhán Pollard, Carrie Sweeney. Seated L to R:
Aoife Delany, Bernadette Costello, Ida Carroll and Lisa Anglim.*

fisherman and his ability in the art of tying fishing flies.

Another ‘oldie’ that made the news that year was the Tullamaine point-to-point course. On Sunday 27 February the Tipperary Foxhounds chase was held there on a fine day and on a wonderful old course, but unfortunately the occasion was marred by the accidental death of a young rider from Athboy, Co. Meath. Many readers of this will recall travelling to the place on foot, by horse-and-trap, by bicycle, and the few by motor-car. Tullamaine had a long history of horse racing. The earliest recorded meeting was held in 1897 and on that occasion the starting point was the Gate Lodge and the finishing line was at the old Donoughmore Church. In 1923 Tullamaine became a banked course and continued so until, in 1931, the course was removed to

Lanespark near Killenale. But the racing returned to its old haunt in 1945 bigger and better than ever and was to be a major event throughout the late 40s and all of the 50s. But in 1961 the racing was taken from Tullamaine to the old Cashel Racecourse.

Memories of still another ‘oldie’ were revived this year by the return of a dance-band drum to Fethard. The drum was part of the equipment of Tom Sheehan’s Twilight Serenaders, the very popular local band of the 1940s and 1950s. The drum came home to Tom’s daughter through the efforts of local man, Brendan Kenny.

To honour something that was half a century old, to make a special effort on what was ‘Pilgrimage Sunday’ and to note in the way of devotion this first year of the new century the people of the Fethard

area made their way up to the Holy Year (1950) Cross on Slievenamon. On the Sunday the largest crowd in years made the ascent, and later attended Mass in O'Donnell's field. The spiritual director of the pilgrimage was local curate Father Sean Ryan and worthy of note was that Father John Meagher from the Augustinian community also walked to the Cross. He was then in his eighties. After the Mass a local Killusty committee laid on a buffet meal which was much appreciated. The traditional May procession, the first of the new century, was held on Sunday 7 May and had a good attendance. The statue of Our Lady, which preceded the procession, was carried by members of the Fethard Boy Scouts.

But new things were happening. In April Doctor Molly Owens

from Ardsallagh came to Fethard as a new doctor to take over the practice of Dr. Mattie Corcoran who had his surgery on the Main Street. Dr. Owens set up her clinic on the Square. And in July Elizabeth Burke opened a barber's shop in Burke Street. Her talents were devoted solely to cutting men's hair which is something of a rarity in Ireland as a hair salon run by a woman generally caters for women and sometimes men. Many older readers will recall Jack Kenrick's barber shop, which was very much a man's place. Another new and special event was the honour conferred on Fethard man Professor William T. Coffey from Burke Street by the University of Perpignan in France at the instigation of the Minister for Education in that country. Professor Coffey, who worked in the Dept. of Electronic



Fethard 'wrenboys' photographed on St. Stephen's Day 2000 in the Fethard Arms. The group raised £445 for the Fethard and District Day Care Centre. L to R: Marie (O'Donovan) Murphy, Kitty O'Donnell, John Pollard, Sr. Christine O'Byrne, Thelma Griffith, Pauline Morrissey and Sr. Clement.

and Electrical Engineering at Trinity College, Dublin, received the honorary doctorate for his contribution to chemical physics.

A special effort was made to bring back some of the flavour associated with Trinity Sunday in Fethard. In the long ago three wooden statues held in the parish church sacristy were put on display on this Pattern Sunday and the town enjoyed a festival. To mark this singular year the students of the Patrician/Presentation Secondary School, under the able direction of their art teacher, Ms. Pat Looby, created life-size papier-mâché representations of the statues which they displayed at the 11am Mass on that Sunday. This was a wonderful opportunity to see the shape and appearance of the statues, now in our National Museum. Later, on that Sunday 18 June, a festival was held along the banks of the Clashawley and many stalls and side-shows were set up under the massive town wall. The beautiful day made the event a great success. There was also a fancy-dress parade which walked from the ballroom to the Town Hall.

There were other social events, of course. Andrew Lloyd Webber and his family spent Christmas at their home at Kiltinan. The Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Dermot Clifford, was in Fethard on Friday 11 May to administer Confirmation to local children. The jockey Frankie Rafferty came back to look over the Fethard he knew in the 1950s when he worked as an apprentice

jockey for the late Major Vigors of Coolmore. Frankie had spent his working life in England. The late Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, came on a visit to Fethard on Saturday, 10 June. Though it was not an official visit it was the first occasion on which a serving Taoiseach came to Fethard. On the occasion Bertie was electioneering for the south Tipperary by-election. However, Bertie wasn't the only important visitor. Jimmy Ryan of Watergate Street had seven baby goslings hatched out. These new arrivals quickly became a great attraction. While Jimmy's goslings came as expected, President William Jefferson Clinton had to cancel his visit to Fethard which he hoped to include in his seven-day trip to Ireland in October. Lack of time prevented the historic opportunity.

And inevitably the year came to an end. Thanks to the efforts of Martin Cuddihy of Crampscastle a large Christmas tree was erected on The Square. However, because of the recent renovations in that area there was some doubt as to whether or not it would be lit. And the special lighting of the streets was also in doubt. But the Pheasant Pluckers did make every effort to bring cheer. On Thursday night 21 December they went about the streets, starting at the Town Hall, singing carols. Their efforts were much appreciated and greatly enjoyed. Whatever they collected went to aid the CRC Santa Bear Appeal. ●

Michael O'Donnell

'The Compleat Angler'

by Tommy Healy

Each time I come home on holiday I visit some of the cemeteries in town. It is to pay my respects at the graves of relatives and the many people I knew before I emigrated almost fifty years ago. Peppardstown is where both my parents lie and their grave dates from the late 18th century indicating that the family has been in the area for at least two centuries. Calvary is where most of my relatives who died in the past fifty years are interred and when I was growing up it was called 'the new cemetery'.

It had been laid out just after the war and I learned from my Uncle Michael that the first to be buried there was an employee of Duffy's Circus who had died suddenly while the circus was in town and had been hastily buried there.

It is odd to think that in my case I recognise more names on the grave-stones there than I do when I walk around the town. Such is one of the consequences of being away for so long and each visit evokes a flood of memories, mostly pleasant ones for most of the links with my youth were people with whom I got on very well and who I appreciated.

Wandering around Calvary the last time I was at home my eye fell

on the grave of John Sayers and set in trail a great torrent of memories. John was Fethard's most successful trout fisherman. His skill and persistence were legendary and he was held in the highest esteem by the rest of our small band of anglers. Quite plainly, none of us seemed to come within a mile of him in terms of mastery of the art of trout fishing. He seemed to be able to catch fish when the rest of us had had to return home empty handed after a long day on the Anner or Clashawley. He seemed to be able to



John Sayers

find fish in places where the rest of us had tried earlier in the day and found nothing. His prowess at casting was masterly and he could land a fly on a saucer from twenty-five yards. He also seemed to be undeterred by weeds and protruding bushes, obstacles which cost the rest of us numerous flies and casts and tested our patience to the limit. He used a heavy, steel-centred split cane rod made by Hardys of Alnwick in Northumberland and he could cast a fly more than thirty yards with it and against the strongest of winds. Hardys were the Rolls-Royce of the fishing tackle industry but their products required skilled hands to master and John was just such a skilled

hand. This was in the days before fibreglass and later, carbon fibre, arrived to create feather-light tackle of great power and durability and revolutionise fishing. I do not know if he ever had any truck with such new-fangled gear, he certainly did not need the assistance of new technology to improve his performance. I suspect he was one of those people, few in number, who can excel with very limited resources, unlike the rest of us who embrace technology as a means of limiting our shortcomings.

I took up trout fishing in the summer of 1958. Two pounds got me a Japanese split cane rod, a plastic reel which rattled loudly and threatened to fall apart and a length of cotton line which had to be greased with mutton fat to make it float. I also bought a length of nylon cast and two flies. The flies I lost almost at once, they snagged in some river weed which had the toughness of unripe celery and, with little money to replace them, I was given the incentive to tie my own. John's son, Jim, was already very proficient in this craft and, between consulting a book in Fethard Library and watching Jim, I soon mastered this difficult but absorbing craft. John

was a master fly tier but, increasingly, he let Jim produce the flies. It was, I suspect, because his eyesight was no longer as sharp as it had been and tying the very small versions of Red and Ginger Quills, his favourites, required very acute sight.

For the next four years the months from March to late September were spent on either the Clashawley or Anner. The best months were April when a natural fly imitated by a pattern of artificial called an Iron Blue hatched on the water and drove the trout into a feeding frenzy. An accurate imitation which floated high upon the surface of the stream produced good results and I often went home with



John fishing

half a dozen or more fish. John, however, could be relied upon to triple or quadruple that number. Late May and early June brought the mayfly and here fish lost all sense of caution and inhibition and gorged themselves on this insect. Seldom was fishing so easy. July and August were the dead months of the season. The warm weather reduced the level of the river and while fish became more visible they also could spot the fishermen and became very wary. Most of us went

out before sunset when you could expect trout to rise to those flies hatching in the late evening. Often you would be lucky to come away with just a fish or two except John who seemed to excel regardless. The summer of 1958 was very wet, both rivers were often in high flood and while many of us took to fishing with worms in the swirling brown water, John stuck to the fly. I remember him taking five big fish out of a pool just below Madams Bridge by the present river walk one evening in a space of ten minutes. The river was clearing after a flood, the water was the colour of ale and fish could be tempted on a black and silver fly pattern which stood out against the dark water. I believe that there were but five fish in the pool and John got the lot, quite a display of skill and application.

The summer of 1959 was one of

the driest of the century. It stopped raining in late June and, apart from one mighty thunderstorm on a Sunday night in August, did not rain again until late October. The Clashawley dried up from the point above the Mullinbawn and still pools of water marked the course of the river. Huge numbers of fish died, suffocated by the lack of oxygen in the stagnant pools where they became trapped. That season was a disaster for trout and those who tried to catch them. Even the Anner, fed with plenty of springs almost from source to its confluence with the Suir at Two Mile Bridge, almost dried up. Matters did not return to normal for a couple of years but still John Sayers did better than the rest of us mere mortals. That winter Jim Sayers and I spent many happy evenings tying flies at his house in St Patrick's Place and I can still picture the two of us work-



Local fisherman Dickie Butler presenting fishing cup to John Sayers (right)



Fethard Anglers prize presentation in Lonergan's Bar May 1984. Standing L to R: Mick Kearney, Frank Kearney, Jim Sayers (winner John Sayers Trophy), Tom Sayers (chairman and winner of Eddie O'Neill trophy), ? and Jim Ryan (2nd Spring Competition). Front L to R: Owen Cummins (2nd Eddie O'Neill Trophy) and David Lawton (winner Juvenile Competition & John O'Donnell Cup)

ing away, our efforts being watched and checked by John. It was a master class in the art we both received and I can still turn out effective patterns despite my deteriorating eyesight over fifty years later. We repeated the exercise the following winter, then went our separate ways when we left school and did not meet up again for over thirty years when I met Jim while back in Fethard. We spent a most enjoyable evening in Lonergan's discussing events of long ago and wallowing in nostalgia.

John died over twenty years ago and that level of skill and persistence he represented seemed to go with him. All the fishermen of his generation have passed on and now cast their lines on celestial waters. The last to depart was, I seem to

remember, Jack Flynn. Jack and his next door neighbour Ned O'Shea had a penchant for night fishing. Both would go out during the summer as darkness was falling and return as dawn was breaking. I once joined them without telling my parents and scared the life out of my mother who thought something terrible had befallen me. Night fishing often produced some large fish which seemed to venture out to feed only after dark and both Jack and Ned were very skilful practitioners of this nocturnal habit. Quite a few fished during that time and I spent many pleasant afternoons with Dicky Butler who, along with John Sayers, worked for the County Council and Paddy Shine who lived on the Cashel Road. Later on we

were joined by Tommy Coffey and my father who took up the sport as I became proficient at it and mastered the art. All are no more but

the character who stands out at the distance of fifty years is John Sayers. He was unique, we shall not see his like again. ●



Some disciples of Izaak Walton, the author of 'The Compleat Angler' published 1653, photographed at a Fishing Competition 1968. Front L to R: Boy, Johnny Keating, Richie Rankin (Clonmel), ? O'Gorman (Clonmel), Atty Wilson, Paddy Shine and Paddy Dahill. Back includes some Clonmel fishermen along with the following locals: Eddie O'Neill, Mick Kearney, Johnny Sheehan, Jack O'Flynn, John Martin, Jim Ryan, Dickie Butler, Tom Shea, Jack O'Donnell, John Sayers (with cup) and Ned Healy.

Killusty Sheepdog Trials

Killusty Sheepdog trials were held this year on the October Bank Holiday weekend. Once again the weather was reasonably kind to us, the sun shone even if it was cold. Saturday's competitions included novice, intermediate, open and the Maurice O'Connell Perpetual double's competition. The double's competition results were: 1st: Dan Morrissey, 2nd: Martin Walsh, 3rd: Dan Morrissey. Sunday's prize was the

Paddy Morrissey Memorial Cup. Competition was high again this year and the results were as follows: 1st:

Toddy Lambe, 2nd: Martin Walsh, 3rd: Toddy Lambe, 4th & 5th: Dan Morrissey, 6th: John Cremmin.

Pictured in the photo (left) are Saturday's and Sunday's winners, Toddy Lambe and

Dan Morrissey with their trophies. Included in the picture are Dan's grandchildren Laura, Sarah and Kieran O'Donnell. ●





Members of the Sheehan family photographed on Confirmation Day 1968



*Eddie McGrath and Madge McGrath,
Confirmation 1968*



Confirmation 1968



Michael Allen on his Honda c.1970



Michael Trehy and the petrol pumps, late 1960s



Slievenamon 1970s L to R: John Shortall, Mattie Bradshaw and Mary O'Connor

To an Athlete Dying Young

by Tom Burke

Frank Hughes came to us at the beginning of our Leaving Cert class, in September 1959.

Additions to the Patrician Brothers Secondary School classes in Fethard were few and far between and to come at Leaving Cert was unheard of. He had received his secondary education up to that time as a boarder in Rockwell College. He would now travel from near Ballingarry to Fethard each day on the Thurles/Clonmel bus, joining half a dozen other students from that area who attended.

Originally born in the Mullinahone area, after the death of his parents at a young age, Frank, with his brother and sister, had gone to live with an uncle in Ballykerrin, Ballincurry, and attended Glengoose N.S. I believe.

He was unique in many ways, all of which appealed to us in the Leaving Cert class. For a start, he was a great athlete, running in the colours of the Ballincurry Athletic Club, and holder of the Tipperary and Munster Youths' Cross Country titles from earlier that year. He was also a brilliant hurler for Ballingarry minors and juniors. Most importantly, he was full of confidence, which was in short supply among his fellow Leaving Cert members. The Patrician Brothers, God be good to them, did many fine services but building confidence was not high on their priorities. Confidence was viewed as

arrogance and, as our education progressed from primary through secondary, humility was stressed by our mentors. Frank had not been subjected to the 'conditioning' we had undergone through the formative years, and so he was like a breath of fresh air. If we did not have him, we would have had to invent him, such was his influence on us through that one Leaving Cert year.

What did we learn from him? Firstly, the confidence of his individual feats in winning so many races was infectious and rubbed off on us. Secondly, he was a great mixer, being particularly popular with the opposite sex. He would easily mingle with a group of the 'convent' girls and be on first-name terms with them, jokingly introducing us to girls who were in fact our neighbours for years but whom we had previously lacked the courage to even talk to. That would have been a dull year without Frank.

The cross-country season would commence around January, but his training for same was underway almost from early September, when he arrived in Fethard PBS. The bus home was not a dedicated school bus but the 'private' bus which connected Thurles with Clonmel via Fethard. The evening service departed Clonmel at 6pm and would arrive at Fethard around 6.45pm. With school finished before 4pm, all the 'bus users' would be supervised



Fethard Patrician Brothers Leaving Certificate Class 1960. Back L to R: Frank Hughes, Bro Albert Small, Mr Timmy O'Connor (teacher), Tommy Healy, Sean Evans. Front L to R: Rae Molloy, Richard Butler, Tom Burke, Lory Dineen, Philip Ward, Tom Mackey, Eamon Maher and Damien McLellan.

in the school whilst they performed their homework. He had permission to train in the school field for part of the waiting period. Initially, he trained on his own, but he had a programme. Years afterwards, we heard of the Africans training in surges, i.e. increase/decrease of the lap times to burn off the opposition. Frank exerted the theory back then, and used that method to win his many races. It wasn't long before a few of us would stay back to train with him. When I told him that my father had been an athlete of note and held the Munster 100m title in 1928, he was intent on making a 'runner' out of me. He taught us pace, breathing control, how to dictate a race instead of being just a follower, and how to survive 'bad patches' during a contest.

We progressed to the point

where a few of us competed in Ballincurry at a trial from which the team to represent the club in the 1960 Youths' Championship was selected. We were well short of Frank's standard but two of us, Tom Mackey and myself, qualified for the team which would turn out in Holycross one Sunday in February 1960 in the Tipperary championships. Pick up in the square in Fethard was set for noon, but the car sent to collect us broke down en route, and didn't arrive until 1.30pm. We arrived in Holycross just in time to witness Frank storming up the straight to retain his title, with all challengers hopelessly in his wake. In the following weeks, Frank would go on to retain his Munster Youths title and win the Irish title.

It was then down to the run-in for the Leaving Cert exams and



Celebrating the 50th anniversary of their Leaving Certificate are past pupils of the Patrician Brothers Secondary School who met up again in October this year. L to R: Damien McLellan, Paddy Loneragan, Tommy Healy and Tom Burke.

thoughts of what career to pursue.

A series of events then occurred which added a sour note to the final lap of our secondary education. Frank and his fellow 'bus travellers' decided en masse to take a day off. Instead of alighting from the bus in Fethard one morning they carried on to Clonmel where they spend the day. It was a silly prank, easily detected and sure to provoke a retaliatory response from the powers that be. That response was not slow in coming. On the following day, shortly after lunch, all classes were assembled and the 'bus travellers' were called out. The charges against them were outlined and the punishment would be a public caning for each offender. The sight of young men being reduced to tears by the severest form of physical violence was sickening to witness. Frank, being

considered the ringleader, came in for probably the severest punishment but he bore it stoically. There was the briefest instant when his body language indicated that he would retaliate, disarm his tormentor, and walk out. But he did not. Maybe Fethard Patrician Brothers School was his last stop, and with the Leaving Cert exams only weeks away, any retaliation would probably have led to expulsion.

Frank always spoke about a class reunion, particularly as the final exams loomed. He suggested that we should all meet under Big Ben, in London, for the 40th anniversary, in year 2000.

We all went our separate ways that summer of 1960, and I often wondered if Frank, or anybody else from that class, turned up in London at the start of the new Millennium.

Only in the last year did I learn of how Frank spent his time since leaving Fethard. First stop was London, where he enrolled in the armed forces.

His athletic prowess ensured that he trained and qualified as a physical education instructor. Most of his service was spent overseas, mainly in the Middle East area. In addition, he continued to compete in both cross country and track, where he won many titles. Having retired from the forces in the early 1950s, he remained working in the Middle East, running physical education and orienteering courses.

Around the year 2000, he had purchased a house on the West Clare coast, where he spent his holiday periods renovating and restoring. During one of these sojourns,

the great engine that had powered him to so many victories malfunctioned and he was found dead at his coastal retreat. May God have mercy on his soul. ●

*The Time you won your town the race,
We chaired you through the market place.*

*Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder high.*

*Smart lad to steal betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the lilac grows,
It withers quicker than the rose.*

*Now you will not swell the route,
Of those who wore their honours out.*

*Runners whom their race outran,
And the fame died before the man.*

(A.E. Houseman)



Patrician Brothers Football Team 1957 Back L to R: Pat Woodlock, Paddy Lonergan, Tom Mackey, John Egan, Finbar Tobin, John Britton, Timmy Tobin, Peter O'Connell, Tony Woodlock. Middle L to R: Waltie Moloney, Lory Dineen, Davy Woodlock, Tom Long, Tony Tobin. Front: Jose Carcia, Pat Barrett, Jimmy Fitzgerald, Eddie Dillon and Tommy Teehan



*Alice and Mick Coen's Ruby Wedding Anniversary celebrated in June 1986 with their family.
Back L to R: Tom, Pat, Alice, Louis. Michael. Front L to R: Annette, Mick, Alice (senior) and Olive.*



*Alice and Mick Coen's Ruby Wedding Anniversary celebrated in June 1986 photographed with
their grandchildren and Fr. Tony Lambe*

Captain Fantastic - Jack Connolly

2010 has been another memorable year for Fethard's Jack Connolly, who is a valuable member of Clonmel Boxing Club. Jack, at just fourteen years old, has added more titles and achievements to his already vast honours list.

Jack's season started in his hometown, where the T.J. Redmond

Memorial Tournament was held in the ballroom, on Sunday 24th January. This was a special occasion, as it was Jack's first time to fight in front of a home crowd, and this he did with great effect, dismiss-

ing Irish Champion Lee Reeves from Limerick in the 52kg division.

On 7th February, Jack became county champion for the third year in a row, when after 45 seconds of the first round, he beat M. McDonagh from Dungarvan in the semi-final, and Mark Lennon from Thurles in the final. After these two very impressive displays, Jack was voted 'Best Boxer of the Tournament' and was awarded the Frank O'Meara Perpetual Shield.

St. Patrick's Day has fond memories for Jack, as this was the day

he became Munster Champion for 2010, when he destroyed the golden boy of Fermoy Boxing Club, Kurt Bowes, on a scoreline of 17 points to nil. Never had a Munster final been won on such a huge margin before. Bowes made two mistakes; the first mistake was coming down 4kgs to fight Jack, and the second mistake

was getting into the ring with him.

Tuesday, 6th April, Jack set up camp in the Citywest Hotel Dublin, to prepare for the All-Ireland Finals. His semi-final opponent was a repeat of last year's final, Leinster

champion, James Joyce, where Jack cruised to a 7 points to 1 victory. Saturday, 10th April, was the big day when Jack picked up his 3rd All-Ireland Title, beating the Ulster Champion from Belfast, Ricardo Letang, 8 points to 1. This victory was even more sweet as a large number of Jack's friends travelled to Dublin by bus that morning — a big thank you to Derry Curran our bus driver, and to Owen Walsh who supplied the bus.

Jack was now on a high, when he travelled to the Leaside Lough



Jack Connolly photographed with his idol, former world champion, Bernard Dunne



Jack Connolly, received a Patrician Presentation Secondary School 'Special Achievement Award' for boxing and being chosen as captain of the National Junior Boxing Team. L to R: Kathleen Connolly, Jack Connolly, William Connolly, Olive Curran and in front Ciara Connolly

Boxing Club's annual tournament in Cork, which was held on Sunday, 30th May. This time he was up against John Keenan from Mahon, but after giving him two standing counts, in the first 40 seconds of the 2nd round the referee stopped the contest.

None of this was going unnoticed. Jack's coach got a call from the National Boxing Stadium in Dublin to say that he was to commence squad training on Saturday, 26th June. A national team was being picked to represent Ireland in the upcoming European Championships to be held in Bulgaria. Jack had to do it the hard way when he had to box-off two Irish champions to get selected on to the national team. Saturday, 3rd July, he beat Luke Thomas from Watergrasshill 3 points

to nil, and on Sunday, 4th July, he beat Cadet Champion, Louis Crocker from Antrim in a cracker of a fight, 3 points to 2. Jack was now a member of the high performance team, and had to sacrifice his family holiday to go into full time training.

All his achievements during the year, and his hard work in the national box-offs, had paid off, as he was announced national team captain of a fifteen man squad. The proudest moment of his boxing career came as he carried the Irish flag at the opening and closing ceremonies of the European Championships in Bulgaria.

Even at the highest stage that Jack can box, he did not disappoint when he beat the champion of Azerbaijan, Huseyn Tarverdili, 2 points to nil. Jack narrowly missed out on a European

bronze medal, when he was robbed of a point against the Ukraine champion, in which he lost 1 point to nil.

In the words of Jack's team manager, Paddy Gallagher from Kildare, "The only satisfaction for Connolly, if you could call it that, was that this performance proved what many have known about this young man for many years, and that he is a complete warrior in the ring and out of it. The respect he showed in defeat

to his opponent, his corner men and even the referee (who allowed the Ukrainian to constantly hold without ever issuing a warning) was admirable. It is clear to see why this man is captain of his country's boxing team."

Continued success and safety in your chosen sport for the coming season. You are a credit to your town, your club and your country. You are truly 'Captain Fantastic'. ●

Oh! For the Good Old Days!

by James O'Mara

My father was standing in the yard waiting for me when I came home from school. I gave him the Irish Independent that I had picked up at Burke's shop on my way home. I remember him opening it and announcing to my mother, "The war is over". It was the spring of 1945. This historic headline did not mean much to a seven-year-old but must have been huge and significant news to the country at large.

Living in a farming community in Lisonagh our neighbours were Lonergans, Caseys, Powers and O'Donnells, all fighting the odds and elements to make a living off the land. Electricity and water supplies were ten to fifteen years away.

It was still the day of the horse and plough, the scythe, horse-drawn mowing machine and reaper and binder. Living off the land had for us a true and accurate meaning. We grew root and grain crops to

supply fodder for livestock in winter when grazing was scarce. A kitchen garden, apple orchard, black currant and gooseberry bushes and rhubarb yielded plenty for daily needs. Onions were dried and hung up in hanks in an outside shed and apples and potatoes were buried in pits to last all winter. Milk was separated by means of an Alfa-Laval separator and the cream churned into butter when a few days old.

Once a year our uncle, Tom Prout, would ceremoniously arrive in a pony and cart to kill and butcher a pig which was cured and smoked to last all year. It was a big day on our calendar.

As country kids our world was small and local. Looking at Slievenamon from our kitchen window or from the field high above the house I would dream of someday being old enough to climb its slope and view the world on the other side from its summit. Places



No Electricity, No Plumbing - No Problem! Henry O'Mara shaves outside his kitchen door in 1951.

like Rosegreen or Ballypatrick, where my Aunt Maggie lived, were faraway places in another part of the world.

Oh the excitement one day, coming home from school and seeing a tall slim pole in the ground with a wire extending to the kitchen window. Later that night a man from Brady's in Clonmel arrived and took a big, black shiny Pye wireless from a cardboard box and set it on a shelf on the wall. Our thrill of now being connected to the outside world knew no bounds.

Soon we would be addicted to popular shows such as the 'Foley Family', Din Joe in 'Take the Floor', Peadar O'Connell with 'Making and Mending'. Question time and Sunday night plays from the Abbey Theatre were eagerly awaited. Was there anything else in the world a child could wish for?

Another red-letter day was when our first car, a second hand Morris Eight was purchased. For my father, who was not exactly mechanically inclined, starting it by cranking it with a handle was sometimes an ordeal to behold. Still, on summer Sundays it took us on day trips to Tramore, Clonea or Mount Mellary.

As we got older a treat was to cycle to the pictures in Clonmel, to the Ritz or Oisín cinemas. Our parents suffered through no sleepless nights while we were out. How much trouble could a teenager on a bicycle with two shillings in his pocket get into?

Alas as the years went by, time and so called prosperity brought many changes to a society and way of life. Those of us who still remember might rightly say, Oh! For the Good Old Days! ●

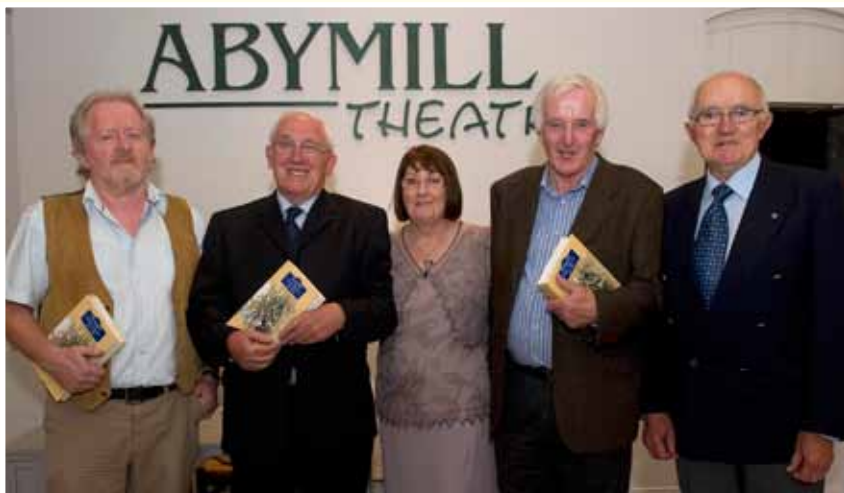
Fethard Historical Society

History was made in 2010. To the great delight of the society and the wider public, Michael O'Donnell's 557 page book, 'Fethard, County Tipperary 1200-2000', was published. On Saturday evening, 21st August, in the Abymill Theatre, the Historical Society hosted a gala event and a full house was present to see Tony Newport officially launch the book. The society, once again, congratulates Michael on his wonderful achievement.

Other very notable events have also taken place during the year, especially the ongoing restoration work on the Town Wall, a subject which is detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The other very visible addition to

the town is the recent erection of a very comprehensive Historic Town Trail signage and information system around the 'old town'. The signs were funded by Fáilte Ireland and erected by South Tipperary County Council. However, much of the planning and all the compilation of the information for the complete trail was the work of the society and this task took up a huge amount of member's time. The society would like to thank Barry O'Reilly, Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (who lives locally), and Eileen Horgan of the County Council for their great assistance. Special mention must go to our loyal Clonmel friend, Liam O Duibhir, for his vital help in translating the



Photographed at the launch of Michael O'Donnell's book 'Fethard, Co. Tipperary 1200-2000' are L to R: Terry Cunningham (Chairman Fethard Historical Society), Michael O'Donnell (author), Kitty O'Donnell, Dr. Willie Nolan (Geography Publications) and Tony Newport who officially launched the book.



The new medieval trail fingerpost signs in situ at Watergate

detailed historic information into the Irish language.

Of course, preparations for the Medieval Festival on the first weekend of Heritage Week, 21st and 22nd of August, took up a lot of time over the summer but then the festival was a huge success on the day. Funding of €10,000 was received from the Heritage Council, €1,500 from the Heritage Officer, Labhaoise McKenna, and €500 from the County Museum. Without this state funding it would be impossible for the Festival Committee to organise such a quality event. As well as the Historical Society and Community Council, the festival committee also wish to thank the many other individuals and community groups, Fethard Ballroom, Rugby Club, Macra na Feirme, Scouts, Church of Ireland, etc., for their input and support on the day.

As part of the preparation for this

year's festival, twelve members travelled (at their own expense I might add!) to Chinon, in The Loire Valley in France, in early August to see their Medieval Festival. We were kitted out in authentic medieval Irish costumes for their parade and we were given the honour of leading the procession through the town which was packed with thousands of visitors. They also have funding and manpower problems but we did gain some valuable insights, especially as to ways of getting all the community organisations involved on the day.

The year kicked off, as usual, with preparations for the Tipperarian Book Fair which is held on the second Sunday in February every year (2010 was the 15th Book Fair) and the choosing and presentation of the 8th Tipperarian Book of the Year.

Last year the 'Book of the Year' went to 'Pouldine School -Inné agus

Inniu' written by Liam Ó Donnchú, the recently retired principal of that Moycarkey school.

It can be stated again that the Fethard Book Fair is now regarded as an 'annual fixture' in the lives of over 700 people from all over Tipperary and the numbers have remained very constant over the fifteen years of the fair.

Monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month in the Abymill Theatre and the meetings are open to anyone who wants to come along.

Our AGM was held on 25th March and the following committee was formed for 2010: Terry Cunningham (chairman), Colm McGrath (vice-chairperson), Catherine O'Flynn (secretary), Ann Gleeson (assistant secretary), Pat Looby (treasurer), Mary Hanrahan (public relations officer), Tim Robinson (membership secretary) and the following

committee members: Kitty Delany, Marie O'Donnell, John Fahey, Liam Noonan, Ann Lynch and Diana Stokes.

Two very successful outings were held in the first part of the year; one to Kilcooley Abbey, led by Liam Noonan on Sunday 18th April, and the other to Athassel Abbey, led by Carmel O'Donnell on Sunday 20th June. The Society hopes to increase these 'local outings' in the coming years as they are very popular with all age groups.

Membership of the society can be arranged by contacting Pat Looby, Kerry St, Fethard, or via her email patlooby@fethard.com Membership fees are €7 (individual), €10 (family) and €5 (students/oap).

Now that many of the society's 'Big Aims' have been broadly addressed (e.g. the conservation of the Town Wall, the Historic Town Trail, the publication of the Fethard



Members of Fethard Historical Society photographed on their visit to Kilcooley Abbey

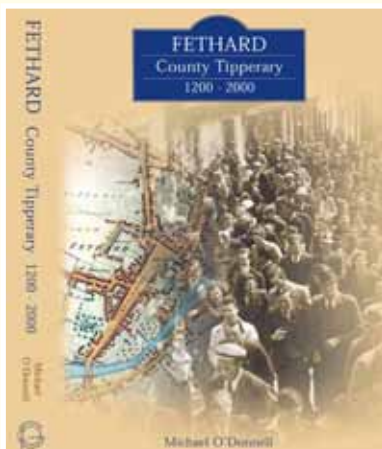


Fethard representatives photographed at the Medieval Festival Parade at Chinon in France. L to R: Pat Looby, Joe Kenny, Maree Moclair, Colm McGrath, Tim Robinson, Mary Hanrahan, Terry Cunningham, Diana Stokes, Jennifer White, Richard Robinson, Kate Robinson, Dóirín Saurus and Tony Hanrahan.

History, a national profile for Fethard, local pride in our historic town ,etc.), the society is ready to look to the next twenty years and to discuss, ‘where to now for the Historical Society?’ There is therefore an opportunity for a younger generation to

come forward and build on the great achievements of the society over the last twenty-two years.

Finally, the Fethard Historical Society wishes all Fethard people everywhere a very happy Christmas and good fortune for 2011. ●



FETHARD, Co. Tipperary 1200-2000

This book is available from Newport's, Fethard, or Geography Publications, 24, Kennington Rd., Templeogue, Dublin 6w.

The price is €40 and it is post free. The book - hardback with 600 pages including illustrations - is also available online from the Geography Publications Website.

www.geographypublications.com

The book deals with the town and people of Fethard over the great span of 800 years from 1200 to 2000. Religion and education are two consistent themes and the author traces the relationship between Fethard's central buildings and these fundamental services.

This is a finely balanced book between the big events of history and the business of day-to-day existence. It will be of great interest to students of genealogy.



Tipperary Hunt leaving Fethard in the 1960s. Kathleen Heffernan Knockelly on grey horse (left), group includes Mrs Delmedge, Tom Ronan, Louisa Carrigan and Paddy Anglim



Vincent and Jacqueline O'Brien photographed with their two children at the Opening Meet of Tipperary Foxhounds in Fethard sometime in the 1950s

Correspondence from 1914 *by William T. Coffey*

My grandfather Dr. William Coffey, who was the son of Michael Coffey and Ellen Lonergan, had a younger sister called Nell, later Daly, born in 1896 who had an interesting experience when she went in 1914 to study German in Wurtemberg (now Baden-Wurtemberg), and in Prague which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Her picture is shown on the right

The second illustration on the opposite page describes people's feelings as written in a postcard to her sister Bridget Mary on the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo in 1914 including a wry comment that the Archduke resembled the RIC sergeant in Fethard.



This is a postcard featuring Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, who were both shot dead on Sunday, 28 June 1914, at approximately 1:15 pm by assassin Gavrilo Princip. The event led to a chain of events that eventually triggered World War I.

Now, his, your dear welcome letter & pictures
 received. I was so glad to get all - although
 letter was short it contained very much
 news - your letters always do - as you
 say a lot in few words. I was delighted
 with all the papers, especially with
 the accounts of Ferdinand's death - you
 no idea of how it affected everyone here
 the news was like another bomb in Prag.
 The front of Louvent is draped in black.
 I'm sure you laughed at my silliness in thinking
 there was something wrong at home. I don't
 think that I'm remembered still by all of
 you, especially by yourself who shares
 your remembrance so well. When A.G. remark
 ed that Mo. went up to Gen. a few weeks ago
 she was at September my word! It is no wonder for
 was shot after all. A.G. sent me five P.C. imagine.
 When may I expect Mary's photo? I hope soon.
 Anna & I took a beautiful walk this morning
 & visited many places of interest - she
 wanted me to go to concert yesterday - but I
 wasn't in form. What you think Ferdinand is
 like the P.C. - sergeant in Hethard I forget
 his name - the likeness struck me the very
 minute. Goodbye now my darling
 a 1000 thanks & again for letters
 Nell. & the



A second postcard sent to Prague relates to the Home Rule question in Ireland but I am not sure who the sender was.

The illustration on the left refers to how my grand-aunt was stranded in Germany when the war broke out and how the German censor sent back a letter coming to her from Fethard.

In those days, it seems that a certain element of chivalry obtained amongst the belligerents as she was allowed to return to England in November 1914 using an emergency passport issued by the U.S. embassy in Berlin.



The above photograph shows Abbeyville, Fethard, about 1920 where my great-grandmother is seated along with four of her children, presumably May, Bridget Mary, Nell and Joe Coffey.

All of this material was given to me recently by my cousin Nell's son, Dr. Jerry Daly who is married to Kate and now lives near Le Bugue in south west France. ●

My life and times in Killusty School



Killusty National School 1931. Back Row L to R: Jerry Lee, Mick Prout, Jackie Aylward, Christy Greer, Tom Nagle, William Byrne, Jim Davis, James Darcy, Pat Halpin, Philip Byrne, Joe Nagle. Third Row L to R: John Meagher (teacher), Johnny Sheehan, Tommy Lonergan, Mick Halpin, Mick Dunne, Jack Kearney, Kevin Prout, Michael Kearney, Thomas Milieu, ?, Patricia Lee, Mary Meagher (teacher), Bridget Lawrence, Mary O'Connor Smyth? Second Row L to R: Peg Meagher, May Meagher, Maggie Lonergan, Bridget Houlihan, Alice Dunne, Kathleen Prout, Margaret Byrne, Mary Madden, Bab Davis, Mary Holohan

Born January 1925, I started school in Killusty after the summer holidays in 1929 at four years old. My late mother brought me to school the first day and our neighbours Jack and Alice Dunne brought me to school and home again for some time after. My first day was a bit scary, a huge room with big windows, a lot of strange faces and a tall lady with glasses, our teacher Mrs Meagher. I was put in a corner desk on my own near the fireplace and when I saw my mother closing the green door behind her I was terrified. I had a jotter (copy book) and a quill pen, the pen was

made from a goose wing feather but after a few days I had to have a 'N' pen, as they were known at the time, they cost one penny and all the desks had an inkwell.

I had been in the school once before, to see a play and it was probably run by the GAA - at the time the GAA was strong in Killusty. My only memory of the play is my father, who was the dentist and Peter Donovan, Walshbog, who was the patient. Peter had to be tied to the chair and my father had a wooden pincers and a wooden tooth painted red and when he extracted the tooth Peter got up and ran off with the chair tied to him

shouting 'Doctor! Doctor! Doctor!' I will never forget the man running with the chair tied to him.

My first lessons were making words from letters cut from cardboard boxes. After a couple of weeks I was allowed to sit beside John Lonergan and as time went by I settled in. Pierce and Tom O'Donnell from Grangebeg would come to school in a 'pony and trap' and I became very friendly with Tom. Sadly Tom died at a very young age, he was my best friend. The big lads from the Master's side of the school used to put the pony in the shed in the churchyard and leave the trap in the churchyard also and each evening they would harness the pony to the trap and come out the old chapel gate. After Tom died Pierce would come to school on a small bicycle, something we had never seen before and occasionally, to our delight, he let us go on his 'bike' around the village. We went to school barefoot (cosnoctha) from about April each year and all through the summer holidays until September.

The school principal, John Meagher, died one morning while getting ready for school so his son Paddy taught us for a short time and then Mrs Meagher became principal and eventually we moved to her at the Masters side. There was a Civic Guard named Cassells in Fethard around that time and he would visit the schools in the area and tell us that if we did any 'wrongs' we would be sent to an Industrial School with

only bread and water for food. Any time we saw him coming we would quake in our boots (if we had boots), even those of us who had done nothing wrong.

One evening going home from school, down 'Clancy's Height', my brother Jimmy threw his books after a thrush (a lot of us didn't have schoolbags in those days so we used a string or strap around the books and that's what Jimmy threw at the thrush) because he couldn't find a stone. Of course he missed the thrush and the books went flying into the snowdrop hedge at Clancy's old house and couldn't be found. Next day at school he had to tell Mrs Meagher what happened and she was going to complain to the guard and we would all be taken away; just then in walked Guard Cassells and the whole lot of us burst out crying. He stood inside the door and asked, "What's wrong?" the teacher said, "We were just talking about a boy who threw his books after a little thrush". He said if the books were recovered he wouldn't do anything about it and so after a long search the books were found and that saved us from the dreaded Industrial School. We didn't know what an Industrial School was but it didn't sound good.

Mrs Meagher was a good teacher, she taught us the Latin Mass and I served mass for a number of years in Killusty. Fr. O'Dwyer was our Parish Priest then. I also served mass in Phil Shee's parlour (now Byrne's) for Fr. Willie Noonan from Cloneen,



Killusty Confirmation Group 26th April 1953 Boys L to R: Michael Sheehan, ?, Michael Kane, Billy Phelan, Eddie Phelan, Liam O'Flaherty, ?, ?, Tom Cleary (teacher). Girls L to R: Miss Mary Flood, ?, ?, ?, ?, Cecelia O'Flaherty, Mildred O'Flaherty, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?.

after his ordination. He was a cousin to Chrissie Shee (Byrne). I got one and sixpence, which was a lot of money then for a minor and the first thing I bought in the shop was a 2p bottle of 'Brilliantine' for my hair as it was always standing up on my head and my teacher was always on about it. Before that I used to wet it every morning with water and it was fine up to about 11 o'clock, thereafter it would be like a furze bush.

Prior to our First Communion, Mrs. Meagher took us to the church and got us to kneel at the rails, she put the cloth under our chins and then she gave us a white lozenge as communion. She also taught us conversational Irish by 'Linguaphone'. She had a flip chart hanging on the blackboard with a

series of sketches on each chart and the voice on the record would talk about the sketches. Then she would write that paragraph in Irish and English for us and play the record many times. Her method of teaching made us eager to learn Irish, for only then did you find out and understand what was happening in the stories being told; as a result we all became very fluent. Sadly, through time you forget what was once daily routine, however, for some of us, the love of the Irish language remains with us to this day – "Go raibh maith agat," Mrs Meagher.

In those days we had two inspectors coming to the school once a year, one a religious inspector Rev. Fr. Lee and the other an Irish inspector, Mr. Dick and prior to the exams we

would do serious study for them. I must say that we were never forced to learn Irish or religion as our teacher Mrs Meagher had a white leather football on top of the cupboard in the corner. If we excelled in these exams we got the new football and we always got good exam results, the football was a great incentive - I don't remember what incentive the girls got.

Before our Confirmation we had to do serious study on the catechism as it was the norm in those days that the bishop would ask you a question from the catechism. However, for some reason that was the first year the Bishop didn't ask any questions and what a relief it was. On that special day we arrived in Fethard, my brother Jimmy and I, our parents and our now dear-departed brother Ned, who was too young to get confirmed. After the ceremony in the Parish Church, Dad gave us sixpence each and the first place we headed to was Bert Newport's shop where we all bought a 2p ice cream. We had never tasted ice cream before; we had only heard others talking about it. As the day was very warm the ice-cold wafer was something we talked about for a long time. There was no electricity in those days and like many others we had a paraffin oil lamp in the kitchen and candles in the bedrooms. Jimmy, Ned and I slept in one room and we left our two navy confirmation suits up on a sideboard beside the bed and

the lighted 'snob' of a candle was stuck to the top of the sideboard. We forgot to quench it before we went to sleep so the candle burned down to the table top and set the two suits alight. They were totally destroyed and we were back again to the 'hand me downs', but thankfully we were not injured and the house was still standing.

The rosary was said in our house every night at 9 o'clock, we went to mass every Sunday and Holy Day, communion every month and at mission time you made sure you attended every night. There were usually two missionaries, one very quite one and one to threaten fire and brimstone. We were one of the poorest families of our era but we were brought up, all twelve of us, by our wonderful and loving parents to respect our clergy, the law of the land, our peers and their property. We never stole anything belonging to anybody and the guards never had to come to our door. Each of us in turn went to Killusty National School and even though we did not have much by way of material wealth, we always had the support of each other, whether it was in school, on or off the pitch (usually more on than off – "one in all in") or life in general, and while it was by no means ideal to have to 'do without', life as part of a large family compensated in so many other ways. In later years when young people seemed to be 'going off the rails', Mam was asked if she would like to be rearing a fam-



Group of Killusty men photographed at Holy Year Cross with Fr. Lambe

ily now and mother said, "If I could rear the same family all over again I would willingly do it".

Sometime around 1937/38 all schools had to fill in a Folklore Book knows as Béaloideas. All pupils had to gather stories from the elders, bring them in to school and they were written in the book by Bab (Davis) Halpin. Mick Halpin (Bab's husband) and I were the ones chosen to do the writing and sincere thanks to the present principal, Frances Harrington, for having a copy of the book at the Centenary.

Reading through those stories, beautifully handwritten so long ago but thankfully preserved forever, brought back memories of those happy days in Killusty school which I left in the summer of 1939.

Agus is mion liom a rá comhghairdeas le gach duine a bhí i dtreis san eagrú cead blianta Scoil Naisiunta Cill Loiste mar bhí se go hiontach agus bhí an bía den céad scoth.

Nollaig faoi shéan agus faoi shon nas cun cách. ●

Is Mise Sean O Siodhacain.

Killusty National School Centenary



Staff members photographed at the Killusty National School Centenary Celebrations on Sunday 3rd October. L to R: Sarah O'Sullivan (S.E.T.), Canon Tom Breen P.P., Cathriona Morrissey (Teacher), Tracy Wallace (S.N.A.), Josephine Mackey (Secretary Part-time) and Frances Harrington (Principal).

Greetings to all from Killusty National School, where, on 3rd October this year, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of our school's existence. To mark this special occasion, the school community, past and present, worked together to make the day memorable. Our newly extended and renovated school building was the source of pride and pleasure to pupils, past and present.

The occasion, attended by almost three hundred people, started with a glance back over the years since 1910, in a drama performed by our current pupils, under the direction of Mrs Martha Sheehan.

Mass, celebrated by Rev. Canon Tom Breen P.P., followed during which our pupils gave wonderful

renditions of traditional hymns and 'Slievenamon', directed by Mrs Cathriona Morrissey.

The official opening by Mrs Crissie Byrne, the oldest surviving past pupil, followed, and our new school was blessed by Canon Tom. Our new interactive 'whiteboards' were a huge attraction. Once again the school children, ably guided and assisted by Mrs Sarah O'Sullivan, had prepared photographic displays and Powerpoint presentations giving wonderful snapshots of school life past and present. The photographs and memorabilia on display were a source of enjoyment for all.

Food and beverages were available for everyone in marquees erected for the occasion by our Board



Centenary Mass in Killusty Church celebrated by Fr. Tom Breen P.P. and Fr. John Meagher OSA

of Management and our parents' association.

This was a wonderful day of memories, set in the wonderful renowned

valley of Slievenamon and blessed with sunshine — a day to remember for many years to come.

Frances M. Harrington (Principal)



Members of the Byrne family photographed after the unveiling of a plaque by oldest living past-pupil, Mrs Chrissie Byrne, to mark the opening of the new extension at Killusty National School. L to R: John Byrne, Noel Byrne, Canon Tom Breen P.P., Mrs Chrissie Byrne, Bridget (Byrne) Gould, Fr. John Meagher OSA and Mrs Frances Harrington (Principal). In front is Jack Sheehan.



Cutting the cake at the Killusty NS Centenary Celebrations are L to R: Frances Harrington (principal) and Catriona Morrissey (teacher)



Killusty's oldest living past-pupil, Mrs Chrissie Byrne, holding the youngest child at the celebrations, baby Sean Kelly at three weeks old.



O'Shea family members L to R: Mary Coen, Nora McCole, Jimmy O'Shea and Kathy Aylward.



Halpin family L to R: Tom Halpin, Alice Gorman, Bab Halpin, Mary Cahill and Bridie Kearney,



Killusty past-pupils L to R: Leo Darcy, Professor Michael Kane, Dan Sheehan and Dick Sheehan.



Killusty past-pupils L to R: Chris Lee, Joe Lee and Michael Kenny



Killusty past-pupils L to R: Sheila Duggan, Marian Duggan, Eileen Duggan and Rose Murray



At the Killusty National School Centenary Celebrations were L to R: Margaret Clancy and P.F. Quirke.



Mick Ryan (centre) photographed with his sisters Nora Browne (left) and Joan Ryan Yeatman who came back to Killusty for the Centenary Celebrations



Lee family members photographed at the Killusty National School Centenary Celebrations. Back L to R: John Lee, Joe Lee. Front L to R: Jim Lee, Bridie Lee (mother) and Gerry Lee



Mrs Mary Donovan (front) photographed with family members L to R: Michelle Walsh, Kathleen Donovan, Mary Walsh and Orla Walsh.



Christy Williams photographed with sisters Peggy Bowes and Kitty Nicoles (right)

Art, Heart and Killusty

by John Cooney



Griffins at Milking Time - Austin McQuinn © 2010

So, there we are, going about our own business, getting through the day as best we can and in our habitual patterns of behaviour we forget how precious our life is, how wonderful it is to have eyes to see the world, how skilful our hands can be, how marvellous it is to hear sounds. We forget how all the bits and pieces of ourselves go together so well until ... 'bang' ... the pain in the left arm, the wicked severe pain in the chest, the breathlessness and before you know it, that is, if you are lucky, you might find yourself being transported via St Joseph's Hospital to the new coronary care unit at the Cardiac Renal Centre in Cork Regional Hospital or Cork University Hospital as it is now known.

If you are still well enough to look around you, you might see pho-

tographs on the walls and, well, glory be, you would swear that photograph of the dog is the spitting image of your neighbour's dog and if that is not strange enough, there is a photograph of cows from down a boreen in a very familiar landscape. How can this be?

As part of any major structural public building works there is strong encouragement from the EU for public bodies to spend a small portion (up to a max of 1%) of their capital spending on an art project. Under this scheme, several sculpture pieces, which many people would now be familiar with, have been erected following big road works in this area. There is the salmon and the brick house outside Cahir, the three-poppy seed heads at the Moangarriff roundabout on the ring road out-



"Rita Hickey and Holly" - Austin McQuinn © 2010

side Clonmel, and there is also, on the right hand side of the road as you head towards Waterford from Carrick-on-Suir, a discreet bronze conical shape 'bee hive' which was created by Austin McQuinn.

It is this artist who concerns us here, for his proposal, entitled 'Hearts of Kind and Kin' was selected in the national competition for a permanent art commission in the new Cardiac Renal Centre in Cork.

Austin, who is originally from the Kingdom of Kerry, lives just outside Killusty at the foot of Slievenamon. He is one of a small trickle of people who have come to live on the north side of the mountain which people left, according to word of mouth, around the 1950s, though it must be said that on the Kilcash side, it is all a go and a very popular place to be

– the 'Dublin 4' part of Slievenamon, you might say.

Austin, an artist of note, who, since living here for the past thirteen years, has had substantial one person shows in Kilkenny, Dublin, Cork City and in America. Like many artists today Austin is multi-disciplinary. He works in a variety of media from sculpture and video to painting and performance.

The project that Austin submitted is a series of 78 photographs of mostly domesticated animals which are to be permanently placed throughout the six floors of the new Cardiac Renal Centre which caters for people with heart complaints, people with kidney complaints and it also provides dialysis. This new unit has been described as state of the art, is clinical and sterile and given over to

technology. The project therefore is an attempt to introduce part of the natural environment into this high tech unit; there are pictures of pets such as rabbits, cats and dogs, animals that live in close proximity to man such as cows, calves and horses; and birds, those strange creatures that fly between heaven and earth.

The idea behind the images selected is that they might serve as a reminder to the patients that there is an outside life going on, that patients can return to that life again, return to their pets, return to their working animals, return once again to see the birds flying in the sky and to appreciate again the full vigour of life.

Photographs, of course, draw us in to them like the way an open fire in a room draws and magnetizes our eyes, and thereby, our mind; the

photos bring us in and thus help to bring us out of ourselves, out of our focus on our pain, on our worry and concern for the future. And who in a cardiac unit does not have fear and grief, do not the therapists and poets tell us that our grief is emotionally stored around the heart?

These photographs may prompt us to empathy and compassion for animals in a way that melts us, that draws us out even that little bit from our fear. Although these images in themselves are of interest and attractive, they also serve to soften the necessary hospital environment, to make it less scientific, more homely for the distressed patient, more welcoming for the visitor. There might be animals in this parish worth millions but there are also other animals worth their weight in gold for in



"Dan Sheehan and Plug" - Austin McQuinn © 2010

touching them and caring for them, we evoke our own compassion and they help us appreciate the interdependence and fragility of life.

All of us know that anything to do with the heart, be it love or health, is a serious business and this is a serious project which has spread out from glimpses of the animal kingdom in Killusty through to Fethard and on to animals and their interaction with people in the urban setting of Cork City.

The photos are not pretty or sentimental or copied like a scene from a holiday brochure; such delusion does not fit with sick people who tend to know the reality of living all too well. Cows going home for milk, the majesty and curiosity of horses, the sleeping cat, the alert sheep, the sick hen by the cooker in the kitchen, the feeding calves, the tactile communication of dog and owner are captured in images that are distributed among the different floors according to mood and function of

the wards; animals in landscapes are favoured in the waiting areas and in the dialysis units, while the images of the more active and alert animals are placed with the more active patient.

These photographic art-works are attractive, warm and life-enhancing and some are quite large and collectively have a definite soothing quality about them in their portrayal of animals and people in normal day-to-day living. And normal day-to-day living is a most attractive prospect to all who go through an illness.

Many of the photographs are already permanently installed and are on show and the project is to be completed by March, 2011.

Our last word is from Austin, writing about Animal Assisted Therapy, *"As the research continues, we can definitely say that even a short exposure to dogs and other animals seems to bring a favourable physiological and psychological effect to people in all circumstances of life."* ●

John Sadlier, Solicitor

John Sadlier Solicitor, entered Parliament in 1847, settled in London, became a company promoter and director and familiar figure on the Stock Exchange, established a bank with many branches in Tipperary, and became a Lord of the Treasury.

In Feb. 1856 he committed suicide by taking poison, having ruined thousands of Munster Farmers who

had invested in his bank. His assets were £35,000, depositors losses £400,000. He was allowed to overdraw his account to the extent of £200,000 for his daring financial ventures. In 'Little Dorrit' by Charles Dickens, the character of Mr. Mordle is recognised as a picture of John Sadlier. The Tipperary Joint Bank was established in 1827 by James Sadlier, brother of John. ●

Badgers Soccer & Social Club



Badgers over-30s soccer team. Front L to R: Noel O'Dwyer, Neil McCormack, Shane Kehoe, Liam Meagher, Mick Tillyer and Liam Harrington. Back L to R: Ray Doherty, Mark Cummins, Declan Kenny, Miceál Walsh, Tony & Owen (Glengoole) and Colm McGrath.

Badgers Over-30s Soccer & Social Club is still one of the very few clubs which has no season. There is no hibernation period for these badgers, and so each Wednesday at 8pm, games continue to be played either in the Community Field grounds in Fethard or in winter time, at the all-weather pitch in Killenaule.

Because we have a good membership from the Killenaule side, we held our AGM half way between the two towns in the Village Inn, Moyglass. During that meeting it was discussed whether we should stay in Killenaule altogether and not bother to move back to the Community Field, but in the end it was decided we might lose our identity so it was

decided to try playing two days a week, one night in Killenaule and the other in Fethard. At that meeting Andy Donovan took over the office of chairman from Kevin O'Dwyer, who sadly feels unable to hold the office because of health reasons and not being able to participate in the games. Thanks Kev for all your work and for your continued support.

Before the meeting ended, Michael 'Magic' Ryan and Neil 'Hellboy' McCormack volunteered to organise a number of competitive games. The first of these was a particularly memorable victory with a huge margin against a team that beat us easily last year. The second, against a Clonmel Post Office

team, proved different when they finally overcame and beat us.

One Saturday in May a number of us spent a memorable afternoon in Dungarvan competing in what was called, 'GI Joe'. This was a series of team and individual games that included tug-o-war, obstacle course, and paint ball target shooting etc. A fun day was had by all and at the end of the day Mick Tillyer was announced as the overall winner of 'GI Joe'. Some of us were sceptical of the scoring system, mind you, but

when the curry and beers arrived no one really cared.

This year a new initiative started by our chairman was to meet after our game on the last Wednesday of every month, have a drink and talk about possible future events, sporting or social. Speaking of such, our Christmas party night will be a little different as the 'Badgers' go to the dogs, for a night of greyhound racing at Thurles.

'Til next year 'cave canem'. ●



Jimmy Ryan and Austy Slattery (May 1986)

Fethard & District Rugby Club



Fethard Under-13 team celebrating their East Munster Cup success after beating Waterpark in the final played in Carrick-on-Suir

Fethard & District Rugby Club has come a long way since it was reformed in 2001 after a lengthy absence. In the last century rugby was very strong in Fethard and surrounding districts, with a particularly successful team in Fethard in the 1920s. When members of this team retired, the club lapsed and it was many years before rugby was played in the district again. In 2001, on discovering that rugby was included in the Community Games programme, a rugby team was entered to compete on behalf of Fethard.

It was reformed with three coaches and two teams — under-10 and under-12. In their first year of competition, the team reached a county final. Following the success of this team, interest in the sport of

rugby grew in the area. With support from the development office in the Munster branch of the IRFU, the process of the revival of the Rugby Club had begun. The reputation of the club quickly spread to other areas and many players come from different local parishes including Killenaule, Moyglass, Ballingarry, Glengoose, Mullinahone, Drangan and Lisronagh. Over the years, all teams from under-7 to under-19 have earned success, beating well-established teams in the East Munster Region.

In the last 12 months, the club has continued to have its share of successes on the pitch. Our under-13 team won the East Munster Cup, beating a very strong Waterpark team in the final. Our under-15 team played great rugby and were in hard

luck to meet the same teams in three different competitions; we lost out to Dungarvan in the Plate Final after a very tense game. Our under-17 team were very competitive, reaching the semi-final of the Plate, but unfortunately lost out to a Clanwilliam side that we had previously drawn with in the league. And our under-19 team won the Plate after a very close game against local rivals, Clonmel, in a final that saw Fethard win with the slightest of margins.

The club formed a senior team to represent Fethard & District at the beginning of the 2009/2010 season, and we currently have thirty players eligible to play at this level. As well as increasing the profile of the club, this enables us to retain players who have progressed through the youth ranks. It also has attracted many first-time rugby players, particularly

players from other sporting codes who perhaps use rugby to maintain their levels of fitness over the winter months. This team is currently enjoying great success in the Gleeson League, and we wish them well for the remainder of the season.

Tag Rugby continues to grow with up to thirty players attending training. Two of our teams have entered the Clonmel Tag competitions — a senior team and a more senior team! Last year, our senior team (Fethard Flyers) got to the semi-final, while the 'Shower of Flankers' (the more senior team) went on to stun the young bucks from Clonmel and surrounding area to win the Cup. This year we weren't so fortunate, but it was a very exciting competition nonetheless.

We have a growing number of ladies involved in the sport. Both of the tag rugby teams are mixed



Ladies from Fethard & District Rugby Club took part in the inaugural Women's 10k Mini Marathon, in Thurles on Sunday 19th September. The Ladies used the event to raise funds for the development of the Community Sportsfield Clubhouse. Pictured L to R: Deirdre O'Dwyer, Regina Murphy, Marian Smullen, Marie Kennedy, Roisin Smullen, Alice Butler, Margaret O'Donnell, Theresa Kavanagh and Polly Murphy.



Under 12 team. Back L to R: Hugh O'Connor (coach), Jack Grace, David Healy, Ross McCormack, Richard Holohan, Ned Grogan, Harry Butler, John Smullen (coach). Front L to R: Josef O'Connor, Jesse McCormack, Patrick Scully, Aaron Smullen, Aaron Delaney and Dara Harcourt.

teams; in fact, the tag rugby competitions are structured to encourage female participants by awarding additional points when female members of the team score a try. Tag rugby is a non-contact sport, and is a wonderful way of engaging in a team sport, meeting new friends, and keeping fit at the same time. We also have a ladies' rugby team at the club, currently at under-15 level. We hope to build on this in the coming seasons, and would like to invite even greater participation from ladies in the future.

Perhaps the biggest milestone of 2010 has been the opening of the new clubhouse at the Community Sportsfield. This is a truly magnificent facility that will be of great benefit to the club and the community in the years ahead. We are very

grateful indeed for the generous support we have received from the parents, players and patrons who have helped us make the clubhouse a reality.

On a final note, Fethard & District Rugby Club play host to visiting teams most weekends over the winter months. In mid-October we had a feast of rugby in the Community Sportsfield when we played host to nine teams from different clubs in various age categories from under-7 through to the senior level.

The club would like to extend an open invitation to everyone to join us in the Community Sportsfield for training and match days to support the players. Entrance is always free, and you can be assured of a warm welcome, and some great displays of rugby. ●



Hallowe'en Party in the Town Hall 1989



Killusty National School pupils who earned a set of World Book Encyclopaedias for their school in the Partners in Excellence Reading Programme scheme organised by Joe Prendergast. (March 1990)



Speech & Drama Christmas Concert (December 1985)

‘Stella Days’ for all in Fethard



‘Stella Days’ film crew photographed on Main Street, Fethard, on 19th October, discussing sets and locations for production due to be filmed in Fethard from 9th to 26th November. L to R: Anna Rackard (Production Designer), Dermot Cleary (Location Manager), Thaddeus O’Sullivan (Director) and John Christian Rosenlund (Cinematographer).

Berystede Film Productions’ location manager, Dermot Cleary, was in town having a good look around. Fethard, he told us, had a chance of becoming the set for an upcoming film starring the American actor Martin Sheen. It wasn’t in the bag at that stage as there were a few other places in Tipperary that might qualify. The project did have to stay in Tipperary as the county is close to Martin Sheen’s heart, his mother being a native of Borrisokane. The original plan was to make the film there, but that town had changed too much from the 1950s, the era in which the film is set. As the production was low budget, the director needed somewhere which required little change so as to minimize the budget for sets. Fethard was ticking the right boxes, but it was up to the

director, Thaddeus O’Sullivan, to visit and make the call. He arrived and saw the town hall, the street around the Square, the Protestant Church, McCarthy’s Bar as well as a few other potential locations, and when the location manager got permission to use all of the places that they needed, he decided on Fethard. ‘Stella Days’ was coming to Fethard.

Adapted from a true story, ‘Stella Days’ revolves around a priest in rural Ireland in 1957 with a passion for film. Under pressure from the bishop to raise money to renovate the church in the town, he is more interested in converting a local hall into a cinema. This he does, despite conflict with the bishop and some of the local residents opposed to the perceived negative effects that the cinema images might bring to town.

The bishop did give his backing later on when he saw the turnover of the cinema box office.

Once the Fethard project got the green light, the location manager, Dermot, and the art director, Anna Rackard, got busy scouting the town for suitable locations, and for just about everything needed for the set. Doors were knocked upon and people asked if they might be interested in renting their property to the film, if deemed suitable. Others were asked to change shopfronts or dress windows and in some places props were spotted that would be useful later on. The amount of work that went on before a camera was pointed was enormous. Places had to be sourced to build props and sets, a storage area had to be found,

somewhere was needed to park up all the vehicles carrying equipment, the caterers had to have a stand as well as the make up and costume departments. Dressing rooms were needed for the actors. Offices were needed for the backroom crew. Period vehicles had to be sourced, as well as animals for a market scene. Extras had to be hired for crowd scenes. Local tradesmen were called in to sort out electrical and plumbing problems. And this was just the work on location.

Martin Sheen, star of 'The West Wing', 'Apocalypse Now' and 'Catch Me If You Can', was confirmed as the leading actor. Stephen Rea, Amy Huberman, Brendan Gleeson. Marcella Plunkett, Tom Hickey and a host of Irish actors were men-



Standing in the doorway are L to R: Marcella Plunkett (Molly), Trystan Gravelle (Tom Lynch) and Amy Huberman (Eileen O'Meara) in a scene from 'Stella Days'

tioned. Rumors were rife as to who was coming. There seemed to be a lot of juggling of people going on as the various people tried to work out schedules to fit everybody in to the time frame set aside for the film. This was the first time that I realized that top actors could be working on a few projects at the same time. Because of this, there were constant re-writes to fit people in.

As I listened to the men and women involved with the production, I could see that any of the scenes could be retained or axed overnight, depending on the ever changing ebb and flow of people, money, writes and re-writes, weather conditions . . . anything. One day I met Dermot to be told that the proposed scene in McCarthy's might not be in the film, depending on a meeting somewhere, but that the director and crew were fighting to keep us. I expected the worst and was delighted to be informed a few hours later that we were in! We learned the same day that Brendan Gleeson was gone.

A few days later, everything was becoming more concrete. Schedules were being confirmed and the crew were about to arrive to build the sets, even though a workshop had not yet been procured. Being in the bar trade certainly has a few advantages, especially in a small town, as everybody knows someone who has something or who can source something. A phone call to Benny Tynan got the A&B factory open as a work-

shop. It wasn't uncommon for one of the crew to stick their heads in the door looking for anything from a horse and trap, to a vintage car, to an electrician or a plumber, or a few cows with horns, a name of a person with a key to a gate, a courier or just a bowl of soup and a sandwich. When they said that variety is the spice of life, they were right. It was interesting to help when anything could happen.

The sound crew were Dutch and wanted to see a hurling match on their day off, so somebody found them a match. There was a question about cowshit. Would the cows shit on demand, as one of the actors was going to end up lying in one in a fight scene, though he didn't yet know it. I learned that cows, out of their environment, would shite for Ireland, so there would be no problem with availability. I'm sure the crew providing (and washing) the costumes were delighted when they heard this one as there was rarely a perfect first take on a scene.

A few days later, filming commenced. A fleet of trucks pulled into town with props, costumes, generators, make up depts, lights, cameras and all the paraphernalia of the film industry.

The first shoots were in Mrs Ahearne's on Main Street. The director loved the house from the start and it was chosen to be one of the main sets. A few days before shooting Amy Huberman was confirmed as one of the actresses by her husband,

'Stella' stars in Town



Irish Rugby captain Brian O'Driscoll, who said in a radio interview that she was to appear in a film which was to be shot in Tipperary in the coming weeks. The following week, she was up and down the street with actors, actresses and extras as often as any local.

Martin Sheen was due in town on Friday 12th November. The day before was a rush as McCarthy's had to be fitted out for his first scene . . . well his second, as his first was outside the door, entering the bar. Everything not related to 1957 was removed from the bar. Which was a lot! Lights, exit signs, televisions, tobacco adverts (the nanny state doesn't allow them, even though they are historically accurate), the till, and coffee machine, the fridges, the beer pumps, most of the current spirits and liqueurs, the optic meas-

ures, adverts and much more.

At about 8.50am on a cold November morning, Martin Sheen stepped through the door of McCarthy's, closed it behind him, looked around and said, dressed in his priestly attire, "God Bless all here, even the undeserving!" and gave us all a smile, before walking back out to have a chat with Thaddeus. I'm still not sure if that line was in the film, but it was a nice introduction to Martin Sheen for a few of us who were warming up with a cup of coffee when he walked in.

It was the first day of filming with the main star and they got the first take in one shot after the rehearsal. That was a good start and the filming progressed well. Martin Sheen showed that he was a true pro and mingled with the other cast rehearsing lines and meeting the crew and



A scene from Stella Days set in McCarthy's Hotel



Martin Sheehan in a Fair Day scene outside the Town Hall

the few that were hanging about the set. Many of the crew were being cool and not approaching Martin, so as not to look uncool, but he went into them in the snug to say hello, and one brave soul produced a camera. "Can we take a picture?" Martin just smiled, winning every heart in the snug and sat down with the girls. "Who has the camera?" And they took a few photos with Martin guiding the camera, "Don't take it from there girls . . . the light will kill it . . . take it from over there". As soon as he left, the girls who had been so serious around the place, were reduced to giggling school-girls checking out their photos.

A few minutes later, I was in the back room of the bar where one of the lads from the props department was busy pulling pints of stout in a makeshift bar which we organized

to pull pints for the film. One of the other lads on props was busy putting spoons of salt into the stout. "It's to stop them swilling it back", he declared. With so many takes and angles to fit in that day, they would have been hammered drunk by dinner time.

Tuesday before the filming began was audition day for the 'extras'. These are the men and women, boys and girls that fill out the scenes around the actors. The posters were out locally for the auditions and it went out on local and national radio and newspapers. Over 600 people attended the audition which involved turning up, filling in a form to outline your availability for the shooting sessions, having your picture taken and then waiting for the call. While I was there, two men from Borrisokane



Canon Tom Breen P.P. having a look at the new 'Catholic' Holy Trinity Church for Stella Days

auditioned and expressed their dismay at Fethard being chosen over their home town, the town of Martin Sheen's family. Their disappointment was understandable, as they thought that their town was getting the film. Unfortunately for them, pounds, shillings and pence decided where the film would happen.

Once the filming began it was action all the way. The crew jumped between the various locations, filming pieces as actors were available. Some actors were unavailable, as they were working on other projects. Stephen Rea was working on a film in Hungary. Martin Sheen was arriving from his father's native Spain. Martin is half Spanish and half Irish, his birth name is Ramon Estavez, but he chose an Irish name to get ahead in the film industry. He took the sur-

name of the local bishop, and thus he became Martin Sheen. His son Charlie has followed in his footsteps with the name, though his other son Emilio has kept his Spanish name. It was fun on the first few days spotting well known Irish actors and actresses on the street and matching them to films and programs.

Once filming was in full flow, there was a constant stream of people up and down the Main Street. The Town Hall was opened once again, and though in a very poor state of repair, it was made safe enough to use as a film set. Initially it was a dance hall, just as it had been to generations of Fethard people and then it became the Stella cinema. And a wonderful cinema it made! The Protestant Church became a Catholic one for the first time in

centuries. One lady stood at the door of the converted church and commented that, "We got it back without a shot being fired or a stone thrown!"

The Square went back in time to the 1950s, converted by the art and props departments. Some buildings needed very little conversion, while others had shopfronts built to suit the era. Many of the owners preferred the fifties style fronts and decided to leave them after the film moved away. The outdoor scenes, such as the fair day brought back memories to many of the older generation who remembered the real fair days. Indeed, Tom Purcell, who used to herd cattle to the old Fair Days was drafted in as an 'extra' to look after the cattle on the street for the film. Hundreds of people visited Fethard that day to watch the filming and spot the stars of the screen.

The 'Unit Base' was at the ballroom. This was where the actors and extras were dressed each day, made up and fed. They then either walked or were driven to the various sets.

As the weeks progressed and people got to know each other, things got more relaxed. Many of the crew brought their families to town and a few even got accommodation in Fethard to escape the soulless environment of hotel dwelling. Some are even pledging to return for holidays, having enjoyed the town so much.

It was a pleasure to meet and mix with both the cast and crew. The stories and banter were a great anecdote to what would otherwise have been another quiet, dreary November (especially this one with the IMF waiting in the wings to create the Celtic Tiger).

Three weeks later they were gone, leaving behind lots of stories, tales, tall tales, images and memories that will last some a lifetime. The film is due for release in Spring and Thaddeus, the director, has promised to return to town for a special viewing of the film for the people of Fethard. We wish the film every success. ●●

Vincent Murphy



'Stella Days' extras





Irish Girl Guides



Slievenamon Ladybirds photographed with leaders Pamela Daly and Catherine O'Donnell. Back L to R: Abby McGrath, Alison Connolly, Anna Collier, Sophia O'Brien, Rachael Loughnane and Anna Quigley. Front Row L to R: Jennifer Phelan, Rose O'Donnell, Kelly Ryan, Gillian Burke and Jessica Stokes.

In 1911 the first Irish Girl Guide Company was founded in Harold's Cross, Dublin, so there is great excitement within The Irish Girl Guiding organisation preparing for events for our Centenary Year celebrations to commence in 2011. There are many national days of celebration planned for Ladybirds, Brownies and Guides, and of course there will also be local events within areas and districts. We in Fethard are very lucky because the two biggest national events are being held in Thurles. On 7th May 2011 girls from all over

Ireland will assemble in 'Field of Dreams', Semple Stadium, for the biggest fun day ever! Let's hope it will be a day for dreams to be realised for all involved! Later in the year on 19th November the Premier Hall will be the venue for a massive 'Gang Show' when Guides, Brownies and Ladybirds from all over Ireland will perform on stage. Watch out for next X-factor hopefuls!

During 2010 we had all our usual outdoor and indoor activities with the girls, including a trip to a pantomime, Parsons Green, Dundrum

Woods, nature walks, cook outs, badge work and many more. Our Brownies visited a local nursing home and entertained residents for Positive Aging Week. So a very busy year was had by all.

The highlight of the year was when four of our guides attended Peaks International Scout and Guide Camp in the beautiful grounds of Chatsworth Park in Derbyshire in July. Tara Horan, Amy Tynan, Maria Walsh and Molly O'Dwyer accompanied leader Judy Doyle and a group of eight guides from Cashel. Three other leaders joined the 6,000 other campers for an absolutely fantastic week of activities. The weather was good which added greatly to our

enjoyment.

Catherine O'Connell has been joined by new leader Majella Drea with the Brownies. Catherine O'Donnell and Pamela Daly look after the Ladybirds and the guide leaders are Teresa Hurley and Judy Doyle. At present, for the first time in over ten years we have two girls Tara Horan and Molly O'Dwyer, training to be Young Leaders. This is great because it ensures leaders for the future.

Many thanks to all parents who helped out during the year and thanks also to those who supported our Church Gate Collection. Looking forward to our Centenary Year 2011 Celebrations! ●



Fethard Brownies photographed at their meeting in Fethard Ballroom

St Rita's Camogie Club



Fethard Camogie May 1990. Back L to R: Lisa McCormack, Martina Morrissey, Eleanor Condon, Annette McCarthy, Noelle Murphy, Mia Treacy, Elizabeth Burke, Ann Marie Murphy. Front L to R: Sharron Lawton, Jennifer Fogarty, Caroline Fitzgerald, Olivia Phelan, Kay Spillane, Fiona Dorney and Edwina Keane.

2010 saw the revival of St Rita's Camogie Club. Our AGM was held in February 2010 and the following officers were elected: Emily Noonan (chairperson); Sharon O'Meara (vice chairperson); Fiona Conway (treasurer); Jennifer Fogarty (assistant treasurer); Sandra Maher (secretary). County Board Delegates are Audrey Conway and Edel Fitzgerald. Committee members: Joe Keane, Norah O'Meara, Jennifer Keane, Jean Morrissey, Lylah Condon, Stephanie Fitzgerald and Jillian O'Connell.

The Junior team competed in the B League; we had a successful campaign beating teams like

Borrisoleigh and Silvermines. We reached the county league final but were beaten by three points on the day by Kilruane McDonaghs in a well contested game.

Our championship campaign got off to a bad start, being beaten firstly by Kilruane McDonaghs by a single point scored late in injury time, and then being beaten by Thurles by 2 points. We then comfortably beat Portroe and received walkovers from Moyle Rovers and St. Cronan's. Unfortunately the narrow defeats at the start of the championship left us in 3rd place in our group with the top two going through to the semis. No silverware

this year, but overall a good year during the rebuilding process of the club.

The club would like to sincerely thank our coaches, Frankie Flannery and John Leahy, for their time, commitment and hard work throughout the year, also a special thanks to our selectors Mia Treacy, Caroline Quinlan and Lisa McCormack.

A special word of thanks to all our sponsors for a table quiz held on the 26th March in Butler's Bar. Thanks to Tom Hennessy, Spar, Ian Meagher Londis, Centra, Stephanie's Hair Salon, Abigail's Hair Salon, Carol Murphy Beauty Clinic, McCarthy's Hotel, Glanbia Country Life Shop, Butlers Sports Bar, The Well Bar, O'Sullivan's Chemist, Sam McCauley's, Tom & Maureen

McCarthy, Annette O'Meara, Fitzgerald & Nash, and Tom and Paula Gahan. We raised a total of €801 on the night, thanks to everyone who supported us.

Our annual church gate collection was held in August, and a total of €635 was collected in the parish of Fethard & Killusty. Once again thank you to everyone for your kind donations and generosity. Thanks also to Butler's Bar and the Well Bar for sponsoring sliothars for the year.

We look forward to 2011, when we hope to get our Juvenile Club up and running. Our AGM will be held in early February 2011 we look forward to seeing you all there. Finally St Rita's Camogie Club are always recruiting new players, all are welcome. ●

Community Spirit !

I have had a vast and varied experience of community spirit it both locally, nationally and internationally, but this year I felt in a way I never have before in my own local town of Fethard.

I imagine it sticks out for me more so because it was not at all organised and yet it was the most efficient operation that I have come across. Outdoing that of the Irish Defence Forces military projects either at home or abroad, or that of the Greenpeace action teams that manage to gain public support but keep one step ahead of those who contaminate our world.

This local project began very early one morning when a certain eyesore in the town that had been the shelter for rats, rubbish and lots of other unwanted things, was accidentally struck by a big yellow digger. Or so we suppose. Certain local authorities and people could, if they wished, have gotten in the way but instead looked the other way. So the big pile of scrap metal was cleared away and some time later top soil appeared and a lawn was created.

A previous eyesore became a feature and a proud entrance to the ever more tidy and popular town of character. ●

Fethard Ladies Football Club

Officers elected for 2010 are: Fr. Tom Breen (president), Tom McCarthy (chairman), Maureen McCarthy (secretary), and Joe Keane (treasurer).

In 2010 we entered teams in u-12, u-14, u-16, u-18 and junior. Our year started with our u-12s and u-16s in championship action first. Following a great campaign our u-12s reached the county final only to be beaten by Boherlahan. This group of girls are u-12 again next year so the future looks bright. Thanks to Michael Hayes and Michael Ryan for their time and effort with this team.

Our u-16s also reached the county final and but for the uprights and the crossbar the result could have been different, only losing in the end

by 2 points to Upperchurch. Thanks to Tom McCarthy, Kieran Butler and Maureen McCarthy for their work with this team.

In 2009 our junior team won the county Junior D title in great style in Golden and 2010 dawned with us competing in the 'C' Championship. With new trainer Gary Hallinan in place we started the league in great style reaching the final against old foes, Gortnahoe, which was played on a wet night in Ballingarry. Victory was ours with a 6 point win and captain Edel Fitzgerald lifting the C league shield.

In the championship, we reached the county semi-final with some great displays only to meet arch-rivals Gortnahoe again. In a titanic



Fethard's Under 16 Girls reached the Football County Final on 15th May. Pictured Back L to R: Tara Horan, Lucy Butler, Deirdre Dwyer, Faye Manton, Amy Pollard, Ciara Tillyer, Leanne Sheehan, Aine Phelan, Aobh O'Shea, Karen Hayes. Front L to R: Evie O'Sullivan, Annie Prout, Katie Butler, Jessie McCarthy, Niamh Shanahan, Emma Walsh, and Niamh O'Meara.



On Sunday 12th September 2010, Fethard's Junior Ladies were crowned County Champions, retaining the title they won in 2009, and adding to the League title they won earlier this year. Back L to R: Maureen McCarthy, Emily Noonan, Marie Holohan, Fiona Conway, Sharon O'Meara, Bernadette O'Meara, Amy Pollard, Sandra Maher, Marion Harrington, Edel Fitzgerald, Sarah Smyth, Elaine, Audrey Conway, Annie Prout, Tom McCarthy. Front L to R: Gary Hallinan (coach), Sandra Spillane, Kay Ryan, Lucy Butler, Rachel Prout, Anita Manton, Norah O'Meara, Mary Jane Kearney, Jessie McCarthy and Emma Wilson.

struggle in Clerihan we secured our place in the final with two late goals in the last three minutes.

In the final we faced a very young Ballyporeen team and following a heroic performance we emerged victorious on the score line of 1-08 to 1-07 and the county Junior C title was Fethard's. Edel Fitzgerald accepted the cup amid joyous scenes in New Inn and securing this team's place in the history books with back-to-back county titles. Who knows, in 2011 we might capture the junior B to make it a hat trick. Special thanks to trainer Gary Hallinan and selectors Tom McCarthy and Maureen McCarthy

Our u-14s started their championship late in September and following an unbeaten campaign, except for one loss, they reached the county final only to come up against a much superior and strong-

er Moycarkey team. This team gave us some great performances during the championship and no doubt a county title is just around the corner. Special thanks to our trainer Chris Sheehan for a tremendous job and also to Aisling O'Dwyer and Kieran Butler for all their time.

In 2010 a decision was taken to enter an u-18 team and with a mixture of u-14s and u-17s we put in some great displays in the championship to reach the county final against hot favourites Ardfinnan. The performance given in the final, which was played on the 13th November, was one of the best displays of football given by any team this year. Having led by five points at one stage they were beaten by two points in the end. It is not often the better team loses but this was the case and this team can be very proud of their achievement

in their first year in u-18. With all this team underage again in 2011 a county title is on the horizon. Special thanks to Tommy Sheehan, Tom Anglim and Caroline Sheehan for taking on the u-18s and for the fantastic job they did with them.

In 2010 we started a new project called Gaelic4Mothers. This is solely football for mums who have never played football before. We trained for twenty-five nights under the guidance of Tommy Sheehan, Tom Anglim and Tom McCarthy, otherwise known as the 'Three Toms' and had an average of thirty ladies per night. It proved to be a wonderful success which culminated in the club being selected by Croke Park, on the basis of a portfolio submitted by Kieran Butler, for ten

ladies to play in Croke Park. What a wonderful day it was, and it will live long in the memories of our Gaelic4Mothers. Their year finished in Portmarnock at the national Gaelic4Mothers blitz with two teams competing there and winning seven out of nine games. A fantastic year for this group, roll on 2011!

On the county scene we currently have three girls, Jessie McCarthy, Katie Butler and Ciara Tillyer, on the Tipperary u-13 development team and we wish them the best of luck.

To all who sponsored us in 2010 and to those who contributed to our fundraising events we can't thank you enough as without your support it would be impossible to keep going. We would also like to thank Kieran Butler for all the photos and the



Fethard Gaelic4Mothers team who played their first competitive game in Cloneen on 18th August 2010. Pictured Back L to R: Cathriona Davey, Patricia Fitzgerald, Aine Doocey, Noelle Ahearne, Anne Tillyer, Avril McGrath, Jacqui O'Flynn, Eleanor Roche, Carina Condon, Finola Anglim. Middle L to R: Anita Manton, Cabrina Roche, Linda Delaney, Teresa Grant, Pamela O'Donnell, Catherine Ryan, Liz McCormack, Annette Connolly, Sarah Lawless, Aoife O'Connor, Anne Marie Kenny, Donna Broune, Freda Hayes. Front L to R: Susan McCormack, Mary Maher, Bernadette Flanagan, Hazel Sheehan, Alice Butler, Caroline Sheehan, Tracey Lawrence, Kay Cummins, Theresa Hurley, Margaret Flanagan.



Under-14 Team which played the County Final against Moycarkey on 7th November. Back L to R: Maureen McCarthy, Sadhbh Horan, Chloe Burke, Katie Butler, Clodagh Bradshaw, Rachel Delaney, Ciara Tillyer, Niamh Shanahan, Annie Prout, Laura Ryan, Lorna Walsh, Chris Sheehan. Middle L to R: Nicola Thompson, Jessie McCarthy, Kiya Lawrence, Aobh O'Shea, Karen Hayes, Kate Guinan, Emma Walsh. Front L to R: Ciara Hayes, Megan McCarthy, Megan Coen, Kate Davey, Molly O'Meara, Leesha Stapleton and Aine Proudfoot.

great job on the portfolio.

2010 will be remembered as the year that our club became a major force in ladies football having contested six county finals. To all our players, a big thank you for your time

and commitment. You are all a credit to yourselves, your families and the club. Looking forward to seeing you all back in 2011. Merry Christmas and a very successful 2011. ●

Tom McCarthy



Minor Ladies Team which played the County Final against Ardfinnan on Saturday 13th November. Back L to R: Emma Hayes, Amy Pollard, Aine Phelan, Annie Prout, Aobh O'Shea, Karen Hayes, Ciara Tillyer, Mary Jane Kearney, Fay Manton, Hannah Daly, Emma Wilson, Emma Walsh. Front L to R: Jean Anglim, Evie O'Sullivan, Katie Butler, Jessie McCarthy, Lucy Butler, Leanne Sheehan, and Rachel Prout.

The Dodgers



Presentation Convent Fethard 6th Class 17th November 1949 Back L to R: Ann O'Donnell, Kathleen Mullins, Brigid Cummins, Patricia Pollard, Ann Quirke, Rose Walsh and Pat Walsh. Centre: Rita O'Donnell, Peggy O'Reilly, Marie Rice, Ann Mackey, Eileen Woodlock and Frances Evans. Front: Joan Fergus, Patsy Byard, Marie Dineen, Mary Skehan, Mary Ryan and Lucy Hanly.

A day in the life of four girls from Presentation Convent Secondary School Fethard.

On Thursday 27th March 1952, as arranged, we met at Cramps Bridge and our plan was to cycle to Killusty first. It was a nice crisp sunny morning, ideal for cycling. Our feelings at the time were that we needed an extra-curricular activity to break the monotony of everyday school life.

We went by what is known as the back road to Killusty, that is through Carrigbawn and Tullow. When we reached the village Dan Davis was

standing in his doorway as if he was on sentry duty. He looked at us with suspicion so we were a bit worried as we thought he would tell a teacher or a priest about the lassies who should not have been where they were at that hour of the day.

Anyway, we continued without a stop down to Loughcopple, over the Anner and then turned left at the Barracks for Clonmel. On through Grangebegg (known locally as Sleepy Valley), Mullinarinka, Kilmore on to Powerstown where we passed by the church and soon reached Clonmel.

We did some sightseeing in the town (of educational value of course) and after that we bought some light refreshments which included lemonade, biscuits and a few pieces of 'Peggy's Leg'. We got them in a little shop close to where Heatons is now.

Still having lots of time on our hands we decided to head for Kilsheelan. Now one of our group had brought a frying pan (sneaked out of her home) with the idea that we would club together to buy some sausages. The frying pan owner also had the idea that we could light a fire to fry said sausages but we persuaded her that it might not be the wisest thing to do.

On reaching Kilsheelan we turned right, crossed the river Suir and wandered aimlessly down to the bank on the other side. Nearby was a small house and we asked the owner for some water to drink. In the course of conversation with the lady of the house we divulged what we were doing for the day. The sausages and the pan were mentioned and before we knew it the sausages were sizzling. Needless to mention we haven't eaten anything like them since. We all agreed she was a very kind person.

Now time was ticking away so we got on our bikes and headed for Fethard going through Gambonsfield then crossing the Clonmel-Kilkenny road at Ormond Stores, on to Ballyboe and over the Anner at Thorney Bridge.

At this stage it was just a case of reaching Fethard at a time that would coincide with the schools closing for the day. We returned by Kiltinan and Grove.

Nothing left to do but collect our school bags from their hiding places. One of our group was a bit worried about her bag as she visualised some four footed creature making a meal of it.

We have no recollection of anyone, a parent or a teacher asking awkward questions afterwards. For example, if Sister Alphonsus got wind of what we had been up to we would definitely remember the episode. If you were reprimanded by her she could look at you with such a fixed gaze that you would almost be afraid to blink.

In the diary where we got the date of the outing not a word is mentioned, even the day before, about what we were preparing to do and not a word the day after. Maybe dodging school was a common occurrence.

To sum it all up it was simply a day of escapism. Great fun! — Ann O'D. Kitty D. Mary R. Marie R.

P.S. There is a slight possibility that the frying pan is hanging by a nail in the corner of some old farm building. One of the school bags dumped all those years ago is still in existence. Also one of the bikes used that day is still in good condition, it just needs new tyres and tubes and it's ready for the road again! ●

Some of your comments . . .

I cannot tell you what a pleasure it was today to receive another year of The Fethard & Killusty Newsletter. Please keep me on your mailing list.

Dee Gordon Morgan Michigan U.S.A

Well done. Always enjoy my copy.

Sheila Williams (Browne) Surrey

Each year when the Newsletter comes out I read it "from stem to stern" with great enjoyment. The quality of the photos is amazing. Keep up the good work – it gives us great pleasure.

Rena Staunton (Stokes) London

Thanks a lot for lovely reading.

Ollie Fitzgerald, Leicestershire.

Thanks for Newsletter. It's great to see and hear of all the changes since 1948!

Michael J Ryan, Herts. England

I still enjoy all the news and old photos of Fethard – Thanks

Vincent Mullins N. Yorkshire

I look forward to the book very much – long may it continue.

Agnes Szwarc, Kent, England.

Newsletter much appreciated. I enjoyed John Fogarty's article – many a night I ramble down around Saucetown - will really have to do it soon!

Tom Shine, Cahir

Thanks for sending the Newsletter – it is enjoyed by all the family.

Katie O'Connell – Bonns, West Yorkshire

Thanks to everyone who helps with the Newsletter

Mrs. C. O'Connell, Essex.

Very much enjoyed, as normal. Thanks to you all for your hard work

Rita Flanagan, Bristol

I really do enjoy, and look forward to receiving the Newsletter each year. Imagine I am over 50 years left Fethard!

Laura O'Mahoney (Ward), Ballybay

Many thanks for a beautiful informative Newsletter

James Dineen, California

I am not a native of Fethard but enjoy reading your Annual Newsletter. My native Parish is Solohead, Cappawhite. The late Canon Power was Curate in Cappawhite when I was a teenager. I was ordained in 1967 and have been in America ever since. God bless you all in Fethard and surrounding area. Slán.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Willie Oliver O'Neil, Georgia.

Great Newsletter as ever – Best wishes to all.

Tony Flanagan, London.

Thank you all so much for another great publication.

Pat Shine, Herts.

We love the Newsletter and also the on-line news.

Catherine Keane, New Hope, Minnesota.

Love the Newsletter. Have been living in Australia since 1957 and still like to keep in touch. Mary (née Anglim) loves it too.

Pat and Mary Hayes Queensland, Australia.

Thank you for excellent Newsletter. Well done to all

Dorothea Hannigan (Schofield), Cashel

Thank you for Newsletter – it was very interesting and most enjoyable. I look forward to it every year.

Mary Hennessy, Middlesex.

Thank you for sending me the Newsletter. I really enjoy reading it and looking forward to next year's already.

Angela Barrett (McCarthy), Ardfinnan

Keep up the good work!

Willie Freeman, Fenor

Well done again. It was on the mat when I came back today from shopping, and the contents of the bag defrosted as I got sucked into the 'gas'! The photos are particularly good this time.

Anon. Co. Waterford.

Thanks for sending the Newsletter every year. I thoroughly enjoy reading it.

Brendan Ryan, London.

Love the Newsletter. My Grandparents were Michael and Annie Mackey, No. 3 Congress Tce., Fethard.

Anna O'Donnell, Niles, Illinois.

Many thanks for the Newsletter – you make my Christmas when I receive it.

Patrick O'Hanrahan, London.

Many thanks!

Sean Morrissey Fawdon, N/CLE. England

Well done yet again – it just keeps getting better every year.

Fr. Abe Kennedy, Portumna.

Thank you for sending it again.

Vera Kelly (Stokes), Cork.

We enjoy reading the Newsletter and the pictures. Thank you.

Kathleen and Arthur McLean, Connecticut,

Thanks for the Book. Wonderful production. Continued success.

Bro. James Moran, Abbeyleix.

Enjoy Newsletter very much.

B. Walter MacDermid, Silverspring, Maryland

Congratulations again on a great Newsletter.

Canon Matthew Hayes, Bath.

Another excellent production. Thanks

Pat Byrne – Healy, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Many Thanks

Tony O'Donnell (Crampscastle) Dublin.

Always look forward to Newsletter

Biddy Perkins, Cheltenham.

Enjoy reading Fethard News very much

Frances Barnes (O'Halloran), Bexley, Kent.

Excellent as usual

Rev John O'Connor OSA Dungarvan.

Very informative, keep up the good work.

Mrs W Hunt Rugeley, Staffordshire.

Well done again! Much appreciated. Maybe a comments page or two from recipients in the actual Newsletter – just a thought!

Anne Walsh (Kenrick) Dublin.

Done Anne! Thanks for your suggestion – you might like to tell us if you like this comment page and perhaps make a few comments of your own. I would enjoy recording them when I receive them.

— Carmel Rice (Secretary)



Pat Shine photographed celebrating his 78th birthday in June 2010 at Holy Year Cross on Slievenamon. Pat, originally from Crampscastle and now living in London, had to wait 78 years before making his maiden trip to Slievenamon's Holy Year Cross. Obviously a great experience as Pat is coming back to climb Slievenamon again for his 80th birthday



Birthday Party 1989. Back L to R: Edmund Healy, Patrick O'Shea, Eoin Doyle, Ian Kenrick, Ross Maher. Front L to R: Paul Kenny, Jimmy Shanahan, Aaron Kelly, Richard Barrett, Colin Kenny, Glen Burke, Peter Tynan and Colm O'Shea.



Fethard Patrician Presentation Leaving Certificate Class 1990. Back L to R: Dick Prendergast (Principal Patrician Brothers Secondary School), John O'Flynn, Jennifer Cummins, Ciarán Kehoe, Mary Hurley, John Meagher, Mairead O'Brien, Martin Ryan, Clara Phelan, Pat Doocey, Pat Phelan, P.J. Tobin, Noel Maher, Brian Daly, Declan Ryan. Third Row L to R: Siobhán Cleary, Tina Phelan, Sarah Ryan, Mona O'Gorman, Margaret Allen, Sandra Wade, Kim Lonergan, P.J. Lonergan. Second Row L to R: Bernadette Holohan, Debbie Coen, Mairead O'Connor, Josephine Denn, Charlotte Lawless, Helen Costello, Emma Boland, Sr. Breda (Principal Presentation Secondary School). Front L to R: Fionnuala Murray, Jacqueline Conway, Pamela Morrissey, Rowena Lawless, Valerie Colville, Eleanor Maher, Sarah Ryan and Eleanor Sheehan.



Group photographed at the start of a Charity Cycle/Walk outside Town Hall in May 1989

From Perrywell to Cotapoxi and back

W.J.Turner's poem 'Romance'
has as its first verse:

*"When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land
Chimborazo Cotapoxi
took me by the hand"*

A little more mature in years than Turner's 'Thirteen', having been afflicted with arthritis and with a combination of a need for a more favourable climate, an opportunity to do some voluntary work and a year off for our school-going children so that they might see how the other half lives and dies, we arrived in Ecuador, via Miami in 1992.

Our temporary destination was a highland town deep in the Andean mountain range, called Guaranda where friends of ours from Galway were residing. The scene in the airport at Guayaquil was chaotic. Hands grasping at you so they might 'carry your bags' (a later translation of this kindness was to relieve you of them permanently). A three to four hour journey to our Andian destination was enthrall-

ling. From the sweltering banana plantations, courtesy of the 'Dole Corporation', to the chilly climb up on to the Pan-American Highway to our destination, a beautiful modern home, with ample accommodation for both families and stunning views of the majestic volcano 'Chimborazo' to the north. It was a typical Ecuadorian market town, crowded on market days, which seemed to

be every day. The highland people are small in stature, with their beautiful hats and gaily-patterned ponchos. At these elevations the air is quite thin and any over exertion leaves one exhausted.

Having enjoyed that part of the country for a number of weeks, where it seemed to be eternal spring, we moved to a coastal town called Playas,

90 miles south of Guayaquil, in the province of Guayas where we intended to reside for a period of time. About 10 km south of the town, a local landlord with beachfront property agreed to build a three bedroom house with an agreement that if we paid \$2,000 up front, which would cover the cost of the build,





Jim Culligan reading the 1992 Fethard & Killusty Newsletter' on the Pacific coast

we could live there rent free for one year and then return it to its owner. No argument with that, three beds, Pacific Ocean, own private coconut trees and a beautiful beach. But the downside ... snakes! One of my treasured moments in 1992 was receiving a copy of 'The Fethard and Killusty Newsletter' and reading it on the sun-porch on the Pacific coast.

From time to time we would travel up to the highlands again to have a break from the heat of the coast. We would swap homes with our friends who needed a break from the mountains. On one of these occasions we had the opportunity to visit a town called Cotacachi north of the capitol Quito. This town is famous for its 'Cuero' or leather goods. At the time it was possible to buy fine leather goods, clothes, bags, etc and sell them in Florida, the profit covering a plane trip and a couple of weeks holiday. As we descended from the

Pan-American highway, on entering the small town, where every 'tienda' was selling leather goods, a strange sight caught my eye, which lives with me to this day.

To my right, across the corrugated roofs and half finished houses, fluttered what seemed to be the Irish tricolour – green, white and gold. Yes, there it was! I couldn't believe my eyes. Abandoning my Canadian friends who were bargain hunting among the shops, I made my way through the 'barrios' to where I thought the house with the flag might be. As I rounded the corner, sure enough, there it was. My heart missed a beat. The date was the 17th March, 1993, Lá Fhéile Pádraig. Who could it be that had raised the tricolour on this so Irish day? Who would answer the door? What would be the story behind the fact that here, so far from all that is, this Irish someone had broad-

cast their Irishness. As I approached the door my heart thumped with anticipation, stepping over a few small black pigs, up onto the creaky boardwalk, a nervous knock on the door, will it be, *Hola que pasa?*, or *Conas ata tú?* No reply, I could not hide my disappointment. No answer from the house and no one about to ask who lived there. To this day I still wonder who raised the tricolour on the 17th March in 1993.

Time passed and in June 1993 my short wave radio picked up the BBC world service and a very weak signal told me that Tipperary man Michael Kinane had won the Epsom Derby for Henry Cecil and Sheikh

Mohammed on 'Commander in Chief'. On hearing that I thought it was time to return home.

Seventeen years later, back home in my grandmother's cottage in Cahir, I still wonder at the circumstance of that 17th March in 1993. I still hear the call of the Andes and treasure my time in that beautiful country with its humble smiling people. Yes, as Turner concluded his poem:

*"The houses, people, traffic
seemed thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo Cotopaxi,
they had stolen my soul away."*

● Jim Culligan



Members of Fethard Foróige (1986) pictured during their pram push which raised £192 for Bob Geldof's Self Aid Project. Back L to R: Kevin Coffey, David Lawton, James Kearney, Mary Tynan, Lizzy Reddy, Laura Allen, Sinead Eustace. Front L to R: Margaret Sayers, Michelle Fogarty and Kieran Burke.

Fethard Mart in the 1970s



John Joe's Corner

by John Joe Keane

Cly

*Turning backs, in that easy style
Free taking, expertly, for the side
also played badminton, with ability and guile
Wore the Fethard jersey, with pride.*

*Whether fishing, hurling or handball
Cly could play, and walk tall,
loved a stroll around grove
Quiet in demeanour, a rover.*

*A remark on the gaelic field, side-line
Cly, could have been, a soccer player,
such was his control, sublime
In his memory, a silent prayer in time.*

The detour to rest

*From the Parish, the funeral took off up Main
Street, turn right and left, down Burke Street,
up the green and Killenaule road to Calvary.
A remark, why did they not go down Barrack
Street? Someone answered: Cromwell slipped on
a dropping and put a curse on it. Other funer-
als outside the town did not know and passed
through, a customary tour.*

Barrack Field Play

*It was always the near goal
sometimes loose, was an upright pole
a half crown, if one twice hit the crossbar
better the green grass, than street tar.
Backs and forwards, someone kicked it in
your own umpire, to foul, was a sin
afterwards, we added the score
sometimes a shirt got tore.*

A Surprise

*Fifty years ago, two Fethard ladies
Brought a neighbour's child to Clonmel
gave him an expected treat
In Gladstone's Ormond Hotel.*

*Alice and Moira, genial hosts
carpets, steps, tables among
a bus, outside the venue
where, the Labour Party begun.*

*To young eyes, the occasion the most
To the memory, a grateful toast.*





Liam Connolly

*Slight of movement, brainy, in play
gave Fethard people, many a fine day
His mentor, was Brother Albert Small
With talent, played the big and small ball.*

*Could field and turn, in the air
played wing back, with class, to spare.
Performed, with and against, the greats
on league and all Ireland dates.*

*A gentleman, with a manner, so mild
could play, with a man, or a child
won All-Irelands, in all grades
In his prime, had ability in spades*

Fethard of the Past

*Bicycle clips, slab toffee, candle grease
large 7 Up bottle, hanging in space
Cornflakes delivered, door to door
in school, the cane in store.*

*Street pump, separated milk, pitch and toss
an offering up, of a loss
Peggy's Leg, jerkin, hobnail boots
fine combing, the hair from the roots*

*In the Capitol Cinema, watching pictures
The Latin mass, of the scriptures
Zam Buck, Carnivals, old ghost stories
The processions, in all their glories.*

The Messiah

*An expectant crowd, gathered at the Barrack
field, to see the challenge game between
Wexford and Tipperary in hurling. An even
enough contest with Ned Buggy doing well, for
the 'Yella Bellies', after all, it was only a chal-
lenge, midway, through the second half, under
the barbed wire, a young hurler was sprung, he
had, all the touches and more, one Nicholas
English, taken off after ten minutes, a talent to
be minded, for the future, fruition came to pass,
years later. The hierarchy were wise and had
long sighted views on his class. ●*

Maggie's Kitchen Keep

by John Joe Keane

In the hall was the half door, paving slabs covered the floor, Maggie's permission allowed a transgressor, unusual delph adorned the dresser, she kept the family in fine fettle. Blankets were stored beneath the settle. Over the range, a Sacred Heart picture, hung out in the yard the clothes were strung. The fifties were the era of bicycle clip, candles, and the oil lamp, the letters were posted with a trupenny stamp. Darning, patching, hand washing, baking was in full flow, material was acquired for dresses to sow.

On Sunday morning, a stud for Paddy's collar, boots were polished, set aside and buffed, covered were the parts worn or scuffed. A watch was chained to the waistcoat pocket, a nightmare was a bike with a broken sprocket, through it all Maggie

held it together, Christy would visit, with the twins, in fine weather.

Carbolic soap, Omo, Daz, or Lux, handy was the wooden butter box. Times were frugal, an ounce of loose tea, it could be a half pound of butter, spuds varied, between good and black, bedded down was a fire of slack. To the creamery, for the skimmed milk, great was a parcel, with a scarf of silk.

The weather, when good, gave joy, daunting was the telegraph boy. Paddy Dahill provided some chat to the doctor, one doffed their cap or hat, a big thing was to lose the same, at a game, spring cleaning, at the rise of the sap, it was a desire to put Fethard on the map, since, things have taken a leap, the spirit of that era still runs deep, up Fethard every time! ●



Agnes Allen and her sister Maggie Ryan who lived in Barrack Street

Fethard ICA Guild



ICA Federation members photographed at the grave of founder member Olivia Hughes at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Fethard L. to R: Anne Gleeson (Secretary Fethard Guild), Ann O'Connell (President South Tipperary Federation), and Eileen O'Callaghan (Vice-President Waterford Federation).

2010 has been a very significant year for the ICA as it celebrated its 100th year in existence. The organization was founded in Bree, Co. Wexford, in 1910, and was then called 'The United Irishwomen'. In 1926 Fethard Guild was founded by Mrs Olivia Hughes, Phyllis and Helen O'Connell and other great women from the area. In 1935 the name was changed to 'Irish Countrywomen's Association' and we still have a very good membership in Fethard. Of course we are always looking for new members.

Some of our ladies attended the

celebrations in Bree and met with members from all corners of Ireland with much to talk about. It was a wonderful couple of days.

On 21st June, South Tipperary Federation invited a group of Waterford ICA ladies to visit Fethard and also the site of the first ICA Summer School which was held on Slievenamon in 1929. Fethard guild entertained the visitors to refreshments when they arrived and also to an evening meal in the ballroom. Mary Hanrahan of the Historical Society took them on a walkabout of our medieval town and they vis-

ited the graves of Mrs Olivia Hughes and the O'Connell sisters. They went home with very happy memories of their visit to Fethard.

We hold our meetings on the second Tuesday of each month in our own hall on Rocklow Road. We have speakers or demonstrators at every meeting, where we always learn something new. In October, Brid McDonald from Mullinavat, who recently featured on the ICA Bootcamp TV programme, came to us and gave a demonstration on butter making.

In October the County Museum in Clonmel launched a wonderful exhibition of ICA artifacts, memorabilia and crafts by South Tipperary

ladies with many entries from Fethard. This display continues until February 2011 and is well worth a visit.

Our A.G.M. was held in April and the following committee was elected: Betty Lanigan (president), Sheila O'Donnell (vice president), Anne Gleeson (secretary), Margaret Phelan (treasurer) and eight committee members.

Another year has come to an end. How quickly time flies! Fethard ICA guild would like to extend Christmas and New Year greetings to one and all who read this great Newsletter, and we hope the weather will be kinder to us all. ●



Sr. Claver & Craft Group, Woodvale Walk, December 1989 Pictured with some of the work which they had done at No. 10 Woodvale walk are, standing from left: Marie Crean (ICA instructor), Sr. Claver, Frances Harvey, Margaret Sayers, Catherine Flynn, Mary Dwyer, Valerie O'Meara, Geraldine Lonergan, Rita Doyle and Mary Murphy. Seated from left: Patricia O'Meara, Kay Neagle, Irene Sharpe and Helen Doyle.

Holy Trinity National School



Staff at Holy Trinity National School L to R: Margaret Gleeson, Aisling Fanning, Anne Darcy, Denise Meehan, Sr. Winnie Kirwan, Lorraine deLacey, Rita Kenny, Ann Marie Harty. Front L to R: Eileen Fitzgerald, Carmel Lonergan, Patricia Treacy (Principal), Maureen Maher (Vice-Principal) and Mary Hanrahan.

The past year has seen major changes in the world of Primary school education in Fethard. Little did we think when writing up our school reports this time last year that we were in fact recording the last days of Nano Nagle National School and St Patrick's Boys National School respectively. It is therefore with great pleasure that we announce the long-awaited amalgamation of both schools and the inception of the brand new entity known as Holy Trinity National School. As we write, our new school is all of three months old, teachers and pupils alike have settled into routine, we are looking forward to celebrating our first Christmas together and, in some ways it is hard to imagine that we haven't always

been as we are now.

The amalgamation of both schools was first mooted way back during the 1990s. The idea was then revisited in 2001 and seemed a certainty for immediate implementation but a long delay ensued. Finally, this year, the Department of Education & Science gave the go-ahead with the provision of a grant towards the cost of a new extension to the girls' school where the amalgamated school is now located. The new addition will comprise two resource rooms, a staff room and a storage area. Building work will commence, weather permitting, as soon as all the necessary paperwork has been completed and next year's newsletter will hopefully contain a photographic update of our new school.

The staff of Holy Trinity N.S. comprises: Mrs Patricia Treacy (Principal), Mrs Maureen Maher (Vice-Principal teaching 2nd Class), Mrs Rita Kenny (6th Class), Ms Aisling Fanning (5th Class), Ms Carmel Lonergan (4th Class), Mrs Mary Hanrahan (3rd Class), Ms Denise Meehan (1st Class), Sr Winnie Kirwan (Senior Infants), Mrs Margaret Gleeson (Junior Infants), Mrs Eileen Fitzgerald, Ms Lorraine de Lacey, Mrs Sarah O'Sullivan, Mrs Triona Morrison, Mrs Valerie Ferncombe, Mr Keith MacAdhaimh (High Support Unit), Ms Ann-Marie Harty (S.N.A.), Mrs Agnes Grogan (S.N.A.), Mrs Anne Darcy (Secretary) and Mr Willie Ryan (Caretaker).

We are also fortunate to once again have Ms Peig McGarry working with us on a voluntary basis and making her own inimitable contribution to our learning support team. Ms Carmel Lonergan is currently out on maternity leave and we send her our best wishes. We extend a warm welcome to Mr Tom Butler who is presently teaching 4th Class in her absence. Congratulations and best wishes also to Ms Lorraine de Lacey who is getting married in December and given current weather conditions it could, indeed, be a very seasonal white wedding.

The first term has seen the school routine evolve to encompass music for all with Gillian on Wednesdays, swimming on Thursdays for 3rd-6th Classes and football training on Fridays for 1st-6th classes. We

would like to say thank-you to the GAA trainers, Johnny Cummins and Thomas McCarthy who give so generously of their time. A special word of thanks also goes to our caretaker, Willie Ryan, who is always there to help out at the training sessions. Ms Fanning is taking spikeball classes after school on Tuesdays and Fridays. We took advantage of our mornings in Clonmel for swimming to also visit the library and the county museum. Fourth Class were lucky enough to be invited to meet children's author, Jeremy Strong, at a book reading in the library. Ms Julia Walsh, Outreach Officer, facilitated our visits to the county museum and provided the pupils with fun activities based on such diverse topics as history, geology, archaeology and bio-diversity. Sixth class are participating in the 'Challenge to Change' project under the aegis of the Presentation Sisters. This year's theme is 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' and focuses on bio-diversity. The pupils have already been out and about with naturalist Liam Bourke exploring the local environment in Grove.

We were delighted to win the award for the tidiest school in the Fethard electoral area. This year, too, as a way in which to consolidate our commitment to environmental awareness, we are aiming to earn a Green Flag for our school. A Green School committee has been set up comprising two pupils from each class (including the Junior and

Senior Infants who are most enthusiastic) and, under the guidance of Mrs Maureen Maher, they are setting our agenda for the year. They are currently running a slogan competition and have arranged that each class supplies litter wardens for break times on a weekly basis. They have organised recycling, waste and compost bins for each class and set up a composting bin down near the grove of trees. Mr Brian Sheehy has also volunteered to help in planting bulbs in the school grounds.

We were thrilled, like everyone else in Tipperary, when our county team won the All-Ireland Hurling Final in September and so you can imagine the excitement that prevailed when Eoin Kelly, the captain of the Tipp team, came to visit us bringing the McCarthy Cup. He also brought the Cashel Cross and the

U-21 trophy. Photographs were taken, autographs were signed with exemplary patience and Eoin proved to be an excellent role model for our young people. He encouraged them to play sport, emphasised the importance of perseverance in the face of disappointment, advocated teamwork and related how the Tipperary team motivated each other by constantly encouraging one another. All in all, a very positive, inspirational message for all of us.

We celebrated our first school mass in the school hall on Tuesday, 23rd November, and Fr. Tom Breen officiated saying the Mass of the Holy Trinity which we all felt to be most appropriate. It was lovely to come together and to invoke God's blessing on us all as we begin our new journey as Holy Trinity N.S. We are currently preparing for our Rock



Tipperary team captain, Eoin Kelly, keeps a close eye on the McCarthy Cup as the pupils of Holy Trinity National School all reach to touch the 'Holy Grail'.



Junior Infants Class at Holy Trinity N.S. Back L to R: Ms Margaret Gleeson (teacher), Sarah Smith, Saoirse Maher, Kaycie Ahearne, Jack Quinlan, John Coady, Katie Allen, David O'Brien. Middle Row L to R: Áine Connolly, Jenna Coen, Jake Dorney, Aleksa Laaksonen, Joseph O'Flynn, Kayleigh Nevin, David O'Donnell. Front L to R: Amy Costin, Holly Hayes, Bobby Clemson, Shakira Bradshaw, Adam Tynan and Mark Neville.

Nativity, another first, which will take place on Wednesday, 15th December 2010, while the Infant classes will perform their 'Fairytale Nativity' on Monday, 13th December.

Fethard was buzzing during November with the advent of the 'Stella Days' film crew and we availed of the opportunity to bring our pupils down town so that they could get an 'on set' glimpse of how films are made. It was incredible to watch as Main Street was transformed with 1950s style shop fronts, a pony and trap, vintage cars, cloth-capped men, head-scarfed women and short-trouserred little boys. We learned about lighting, the importance of staying silent while

a scene was being recorded and the endless succession of 'takes' necessary before the director was finally satisfied. Five of our pupils were selected as extras and it's the first time that that particular reason has been given for absence from school! Well done to Jack Spillane, Lucy Spillane, Nell Spillane, Josef and Annica O'Connor. We look forward to seeing them on the big screen when the film is released.

In conclusion, we would like to wish all the joys of the festive season to all readers of this Newsletter, especially those who find themselves far from home at this time of the year. Nollaig Shona agus Ath-Bhliain faoi Mhaise dhíbh go léir.

St. Patrick's Boys N.S.

The Patrician brothers came to Fethard and established their primary school in 1873. They taught here for 120 years until Brother Raymond, the last brother, retired in 1993. It was with regret that we learned of the death of Bro. Raymond at the end of November this year. It was decided to mark the closure of St. Patrick's B.N.S. by inviting past-pupil, Mr Tony Newport, to ring the final school bell at twelve noon on Tuesday, 29th June 2010. Parents and past-pupils joined the teachers and pupils for this historic moment in the history of the school. The ringing of the school bell brought to an end 137 years of the primary school boys being

educated in Scoil Naomh Pádraig. Mrs Patricia Treacy (Principal), paid tribute to the contribution made by the Patrician Brothers throughout their many years in Fethard. Mrs Treacy went on to say, "The aspirations of Bishop Daniel Delany, who founded the Patrician Order and those of Nano Nagle, who founded the Presentation Order, will merge when the two schools amalgamate as Holy Trinity National School on 1st September 2010. So, while on the one hand we feel a sense of sadness and loss, we also look forward with a sense of anticipation and excitement."

The principal then invited all present to join in singing 'Iosagáin' a hymn synonymous with Fethard, and the Boys' School in particular,



Past-pupil Tony Newport, who rang the bell for the last time at St. Patrick's Boys National School on 29th June, 2010, photographed with Mrs Patricia Treacy, school principal.



The first mixed Sixth Class at Holy Trinity National School. Back L to R: Chloe Lawrence, Ross McCormack, Luke Brastock, Nathan Thompson, Rachael O'Meara, Connie Coen. Middle L to R: Cassy Needham, Sadhbh Horan, Lesley Ann Prendergast, Jonathan Hennessy, Josef O'Connor, Megan Hartford Reed, Tony O'Reilly, Ms Rita Kenny (teacher). Front L to R: Corey Carroll, Ciara Hayes, Emma Keating, Thomas O'Reilly, Andrew Phelan and Timmy Hurley.

as it was composed by one of the Patrician Brothers. Tony Newport then thanked Mrs Treacy for inviting him to represent all past-pupils and proceeded to share some of his memories of the teachers and of his schoolmates. Many of his generation had been obliged to leave school after 6th class, and a great number of them had emigrated to England. He remembered particularly those who had died in England and are now interred far from their native town. Tony also referred to his own family's long association with the school. His eldest uncle, Paddy Kenrick, who was born in 1872, and his seven brothers, would have among the first pupils to attend the school. The Kenrick

family's sons, grandsons, great-grand-sons and great-great grandsons have continued to attend the Patrician Brother's School down through the years right up to the present, as is the case with many other families in Fethard.

Tony then rang the school bell for the final time, marking the end of one era and heralding the beginning of another.

Nano Nagle National School

The Presentation Sisters came from Thurles to Fethard in 1862 and they opened their first school on 1st May that year with ninety pupils present. The number

had risen to three hundred within a few weeks. The current school was officially opened in September 1978.

While the amalgamation with the boys' school had been in the offing for a number of years and was welcomed by both teachers and parents, there was also a sense of regret at the closure of Nano Nagle N.S. We were also very sad to say farewell to Sr Maureen Power, our principal for the past thirty years, who retired this June. Sr. Maureen brought dedication, commitment and great organisational skills to her role both as class teacher and as principal. Her administrative skills contributed hugely to the apparently seamless efficiency with which the school operated. Her love

of computers was an enthusiasm she shared with all of us. While Sr Maureen was naturally quiet and unassuming, she was an excellent team leader, kind and full of encouragement to her staff, firm and fair to her pupils.

A Mass to mark Sr. Maureen's retirement and the school's transition from the trusteeship of the Presentation Sisters to a Parish School was held in Holy Trinity Parish Church on 30th June 2010 to which parents and friends were invited. Canon Tom Breen officiated and paid tribute to Sr Maureen's talents and attributes as principal. He also acknowledged the Presentation Sisters' long and valued association with Fethard. ●



Nano Nagle National School staff members and Board of Management photographed at their function on 30th June, 2010, marking the retirement of Sr. Maureen Power, School Principal for the last thirty years. Back L to R: Joe Burke, Ann Marie Harty, Denise Meehan, Rita Kenny, Mary Hanrahan, Anne Darcy, Lorraine de Lacey, Carmel Kieby, Willie Ryan. Front L to R: Margaret Gleeson, Maureen Maher (vice-principal), Sr. Maureen Power (principal), Canon Tom Breen P.P. and Peig McGarry.

Liam McCarthy Cup in Fethard



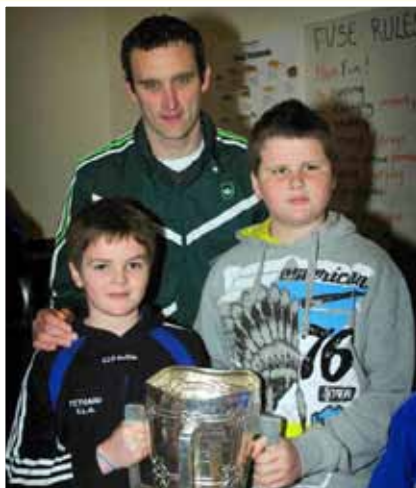
The Liam McCarthy Cup paid a visit to Butler's Bar on 8th October accompanied by Tipperary star hurler, Declan Fanning. Photographed with enthusiastic supporters who came along to show their support.



Pupils from Holy Trinity National School, Fethard, photographed with the McCarthy Cup on 2nd November, when Tipperary captain, Eoin Kelly and members of the South Board visited the school.



Liam McCarthy Cup visit to Fethard Day Care Centre. Standing L to R: Marion Noonan, Sean Nugent, Joan O'Donohoe, Michael Cleere, Geraldine McCarthy, Annette Quigley, Noel Byrne. Front: Joe Bradshaw.



Declan Fanning with Jess and Ross McCormack



Fr. Timmy Walsh OSA and Eoin Kelly



*Assorted photographs of the McCarthy Cup visit to Patrician Presentation Secondary School.
L to R: Johnny Cummins, Mr Ernan Britton (Principal), John Cummins, Eoin Kelly, Michael Ryan,
Noel Byrne, Mary Godfrey, Sean Nugent, Miceál McCormack and Tom McCarthy*

A change in the weather

by John Fogarty

Snow always changes things, brings the usual routines to a halt. So, when the snow came just after Christmas we were certain that the school would close. It didn't. And so off we trudged to school through a powdery dusting of snow on that first snowy morning. Feeling really hard done by, calling all kinds of evil down on Brother Virgilius' head. He was the principal and it was up to him to close the school. This heartlessness, as we saw it, on his part only confirmed what we already thought of him. Of all the brothers we had known since being marched up to the boys' school from the convent to start first class he was the one we feared and hated most. His moods

were unpredictable and mostly bad: sudden flailing attacks with the bamboo that were completely out of proportion to whatever the hapless pupil may have been deemed guilty of. Usually coming as a result of not being able to give the right answer to some question, spelling or sums, or not being able to recite the Latin responses for the Mass. Recite them only, nobody had a clue what they meant.

'Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meum'.

Those words are still lodged meaninglessly in my brain. Probably only death will erase them.

For me, the sight of Virgy writing sums up on the board was enough to bring on a paralysis of fear. Fear



L to R: Bro Virgilius, Bro Mack and Tom Bulfin photographed in Tramore

that if he asked me a question I would give the wrong answer. And I usually did. If he'd just given three or four palmers, well, we could take that. We were used to that. It was normal, painful, but we could take it. But the constant mental torture, prodding at you, trying to force an answer, trying to make you grasp something when your brain was frozen by fear, twisting your ear and dragging you out in front of the whole class, then losing control and knocking you around in a rage with his tongue thrust from one side of his mouth and his eyes dancing madly — well, that was enough to induce total terror and bring tears to the eyes of the toughest. The fear of that hung over us every morning as we made our way along the Rocklow Road to school.

Frankie (Ringo) Napier said to me one morning as we passed the monastery:

*'Maybe the aul ***** will cut his throat shaving'*

'With the help o' God'

So when the snow came and transformed our world it seemed to offer us a reprieve. The school would surely be closed. We prayed that it would snow and snow.

And our prayers seemed to be answered. The town walls were capped in white. Trees that we'd hardly noticed before now seemed magical and strange. The river was black between snow-covered banks. Snow lay thick on the roads. The world was muffled and quiet

and suddenly mysterious. Surely he would close the school. But no word of closure came.

So off to school we went.

It was my job to light the fire in the classroom. So I had to be in early to give myself plenty of time to have a good blaze licking up the chimney when Virgy arrived. Usually though, I was rushing in at the last minute trying to get the fire going while desperately trying to cog the sums for the previous night's homework. By the time I had a good blaze going on that first snowy morning the shout was going up that Virgy was coming out the door of the monastery. I had time only to scribble down the answers — if he asked to see my copy I was in trouble. I went to my desk quaking.

The bell had gone and we were all in our desks by the time we heard him stamping the snow off his galoshes in the porch outside. He came in and removed his hat, coat and galoshes. Placed that bloody umbrella in a corner by the desk. Then stood with his back to the fire warming his hands behind his back. Adjusting his sash. Gazing at us. Us sitting there, silent, shivering, wondering what might be in store, having a pretty good idea, but living in hope was second nature to us. He went through the daily ritual of the roll-call.

Then to our astonishment he told us to pull our desks up close to the fire.

The other two classrooms had large, potbellied stoves that glowed and reddened when the coal got going and threw out tremendous heat. Very little of the heat from the open fire in our classroom would reach even to the front row of desks — the patriarchs at the back may as well have been outside in the snow.

There was bedlam as we dragged and clattered our desks into position. The noise level grew and I threw fearful glances towards Virgy, expecting an explosion. None came. In fact for the whole of the week that the snow lasted he was

not the man that we knew and feared. We were mystified by this change, still wary of him despite this outbreak of kindness, sure it would melt away at any time.

All through that day I was terrified that he would begin asking us for the answers to the previous day's sums. We were so close to him that he would see at a glance that I didn't have them done. But there was no mention of sums or homework. Not that day or for the entire week. We had entered a kind of freezing, short-lived paradise.

Maybe it was the strangeness



Fethard First Communion class at Patrician Brothers 10th May 1951. Back L to R: Fr. Lambe, Billy Power, Paddy Lonergan, Tommy Healy, Michael Mackey, Leonard Smith, Tom Burke, Bro Damien. Middle L to R: Noel Morrissey, Willie Ryan, Tommy Whyte, Noel Whyte, Ken O'Neill, Billy Fitzgerald. Front L to R: Damien McLellan, Danny Ryan and Michael O'Meara.

that the snow brought, that aura of otherness in the late afternoon light when there was an eerie glow on the horizon. Maybe the sight of stars still shining in the early morning had driven Virgy into temporary insanity. Something had affected him. Whatever it may have been, all during the week that snow lay on the ground the normal class routine was abandoned. No sums, no Irish, no spellings. But most of all — no bamboo cane.

He began reading to us: 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin.' The story came jumping to life as he read and talked about it. He spoke about keeping your word and honouring your promises, we weren't to be like the townspeople of Hamelin. About the little boy on the crutches, about affliction and how it can be a blessing sometimes, I didn't really get that one — that one was harder to grasp than the sums he put on the board.

He told us funny stories. He walked back and forth in the semi-circular space in front of our desks imitating a man walking past a graveyard at night. We laughed and laughed at his antics, his nervous whistling, his terrified looks and rolling, fearful eyes. We were almost beginning to like him.

For that week I found myself running to school every morning

and getting a really good fire going so that it would throw the heat as far as our bare legs and numbed feet. We wanted the snow to stay forever, for those fear-free days to last forever, but of course that was never going to be. I dreaded the day when the snow would begin to thaw, willed it to remain there on the ground. That was pointless, of course. When the first tell-tale drops of water began to drip from the edges of roofs and snow began to slither from tree branches my heart sank. It was all over. Just like Christmas. The change back to normal weather conditions brought a parallel change in Virgy. The weather went from severe to soft. Virgy went from soft to severe. An end to the magic of storytelling. All returning to normal. We moved the desks back, slowly, miserably, just beyond the radius of the heat. We could only gaze longingly at the red glow and keep our stockings pulled up to our knees. The reversion was complete when Virgy came in one morning when the snow had nearly vanished and began chalking a long division sum on the board. I sunk low in the desk praying that he wouldn't call me up to do it. We were like those soldiers in the trenches as Christmas day ended: normal hostilities were about to be resumed. ●

Presentation Convent Centenary 1962



Presentation Sisters from Fethard and visiting nuns from Thurles and Ballingarry photographed at the Centenary of the Presentation Convent celebrations on Sunday 3rd June, 1962, in Fethard. Back L to R: Srs. Agnes Ryan, Bernadette Kelly, Teresita Mullins, Regis Doherty, Majella Wall, Madeleine O'Byrne, Catherine Mulcahy, Mary of Lourdes McQuish, Alphonsus Noonan, Marie Stella Mangan, Annunciata Cleary, Áine Ryan. Front L to R: Srs. Assumpta Kiely, Columba Ryan, Ita Doyle, Mary of Mercy Maher, Agatha Murphy, Raphael Shanahan and Peter O'Sullivan.



Archbishop Thomas Morris photographed with local and visiting priests and Patrician Brothers at the Centenary of the Presentation Convent celebrations on Sunday 3rd June, 1962, in Fethard. Seated in front: Dean Edmond O'Donnell, P.P. Cashel; Archbishop Morris, Fr. Martin Fitzgerald, P.P. Gortnahoe; ?. Second Row L to R: Fr. Ledden OSA; Dr. Christopher Lee, P.P. Fethard; Fr. John Lambe, C.C. Cashel; ?, ?, Fr. Paul Walsh, P.P. Clerihan. Third Row: Fr. James Holway; Fr. Tom Kennedy, C.C. Fethard; Bro Virgilius, ?, ?, Bro Ultan, FR. Holohan, CSsP, Rockwell College; Fr. Michael Quinlan, P.P. Drangan. Back includes Fr. Michael Lee, P.P. Ballingarry (centre).

The longest drive

by Denis Hayes

There are no balmy warm ocean currents and winds down in the Southern Ocean, just the Roaring Forties, and that is where the prevailing winds come from in the southern part of Australia. The winters and early springs tend to be chilly with cold winds and grey skies. As a consequence, those of us that have the transport and the time to do so tend to seek warmer climates at that time of year.

This autumn, not having any family or work commitments, my wife Carolyn and I decided that we would take a long drive, join the huge army of Grey Nomads and head off up north to the sun. So, at the end of June, the caravan was provisioned and the sturdy four wheel drive car was given its mechanical check-up. The two of us and our two Golden Retriever dogs set off with only a vague idea of where we were going – but it was going to be a long drive.

We would be only two of a large number of retired people that travel around Australia each year, in caravans, camper trailers, 5th wheelers and motor homes. It is estimated that there are probably about three hundred thousand caravans registered in Australia. The numbers are growing all the time as the Baby Boomers retire and, after many years of work, rearing children and paying taxes, set out on that carefree trip of a lifetime and 'Go around Australia'.

The recreational vehicles, as they

are called, vary from Bushy Bill's rickety old contraption to the most sophisticated and expensive motor homes with rooms that slide out electrically to provide even more living space for the occupants. Most caravans are well equipped with television, air-conditioning, microwave and comfortable furnishings. They can operate equally well with mains power and, off road, with battery and gas. Many have shower and toilet facilities.

Lots of people would not even remotely entertain the idea of caravan travel and holidays. But there are many others – retired couples who have seen their children settled, who sell their homes, buy a decent caravan and set off for ever and a day. They move around as their fancy takes them and the weather suits. Their bumper stickers say, "Adventia before dementia". When asked if the journey will ever end, they usually say that maybe if they find a place they like they may buy it – but who knows? Others find occasional temporary jobs to help pay expenses.

Our journey took us up the central highway as far as Darwin, then down the west coast and back along the Nullarbor Plain. It took us four months and we covered nearly twenty thousand kilometers. Early on we acquired a healthy respect for road trains and salt water crocodiles. Road trains consist of a very powerful prime mover pulling three

or four trailers and they operate on the central and western highways. They mainly haul ore but they also supply the settlements along the way with fuel and food. They travel at the maximum speed limit – 110 kms per hour and they do not like to slow down because it takes too long to get back up to speed. Fully laden they carry well over a hundred tons and are fifty four meters long. The biggest one I saw had 98 tyres on the road. When, at first, we were overtaken by these vehicles, we were very alarmed. The force of the wind coming off them

pushed the caravan and car around like a rag doll, but we learned to deal with them and not slow down as they passed or overtook.

While we had no close encounters with salt water crocodiles ourselves, we met lots of people that did and the stories were fairly scary. They usually inhabit the estuaries in the tropical north and are equally at home in salt and fresh water. There is another species called the fresh water crocodile that is not dangerous and lives on frogs, insects and other small reptiles. The “Salty”, as the former is called, also lives on those but can happily include

humans, horses or whatever else is silly enough to enter his domain. When camped near infested waters, a regular pastime after dark was to shine a strong torch on the water and see the reddish green crocodile eyes looking back at you and what creepy feeling it is!

We could not pass through the Central Desert without visiting Uluru



Denis and dogs with Uluru (Ayers Rock) 15kms away in the background

or Ayers Rock as it used to be called, and what an eye-opener it was for us. We appreciated the wonderful colour changes of the mountains and rocks as the sun rose and set, but most of all we

came to an understanding of the catastrophic events that befell the indigenous desert tribes. They had lived in the desert for many thousands of years – some say up to forty thousand years. They had evolved a successful society with their own laws and a deeply spiritual culture. They did not concern themselves with buildings or vehicles or cultivation. Living in desert conditions meant being on the move for food all the time so why bother with houses or permanent things?

But they did have gatherings and these were held around Uluru and Kings Canyon and in other canyons

in the McDonnell Ranges. These places had beautiful rock pools, clear springs coming from crevices in the rocks, trees, flowering shrubs and rock galleries. They were the equivalent of our churches, town halls, post offices, schools, parliaments and libraries. They had areas where the women met and places for the men. All social matters were discussed and resolved. The old rock paintings are still treasured.

European explorers had come through the desert many times and had passed on. But in the early 1880s they brought in cattle and it is easy to imagine what a mess a mob of thirsty and hungry cattle would make of the water pools. It must have been an awful outrage for the tribes. They tried to drive the cattle out with their wooden spears and weapons. But they were no match for the settlers and police with guns. There were massacres and retaliations but the tribes never had the law on their side. Even up to the 1930s the area was still a frontier. Eventually, settlements were made and the indigenous people were allowed to live and hunt on the cattle stations. The men were employed as stockmen and the women as domestic servants with minimal wages.

However, in 1967, the Australian Parliament decreed that a living wage was to be given to aboriginal stockmen and workers. The ranchers said that they could not afford to pay such wages to the tribes and extended families and they ordered

them off their land. Then a further downward spiral of social disintegration started. Aboriginals moved into shanty towns around the local towns and cities like Alice Springs. Here conditions were right for every known vice such as depression, domestic and other violence, child abuse, alcoholism, drugs, petrol sniffing, murder and thieving.

There have been many official attempts to fix the problem. Some did more harm than good. Some were well-meaning but the money was squandered and misused. There are hopeful programs, like in Fitzroy Crossing near the north-west corner of Western Australia, which had been declared a disaster area, where fine new schools, a hospital, homes and police station have been built, and it is hoped that in time the indigenous people will be able to employ, teach, treat and police their own people and thus regain their culture and dignity.

For us, the Kimberley was the most fascinating place we visited. This is the northern bit of Western Australia. It is a vast area—as big as Germany. It is tropical and has the usual wet season or monsoon. There is such huge rainfall that the houses do not have gutters or down pipes. It is safer to let the water cascade off the roof. The rivers, and there are many, can rise up to 25 meters and submerge the surrounding area for weeks at a time. We walked, drove, flew and boated through some of the most remote and beautiful val-

leys and canyons with mountain ranges changing colour in the evening light.

We stood in the old homestead which Patsy Durack and his brother, Stumpy Michael, built on the vast pastoral lease which they called Argyle Station. Patsy had left Scariff in County Clare at the end of the famine times. He made some money gold mining in Victoria and encouraged the rest of his family to follow him to Australia. They prospered in sheep and cattle farming in New South Wales. When they read the reports of explorers in the Kimberley they determined that they would take up leases there. The advance party sailed from Brisbane in 1882 and landed near the present site of Wyndham and proceeded inland. They decided on the stunningly beautiful valley that was to be Argyle and took up a lease on one million acres of land.

Then began, what I think must be one of the longest drives of all time. The Duracks drove 7,250 cattle over 3,000 miles from New South Wales to Argyle using wagons, dogs and 200 horses. It took two years and four months using careful planning so that water was available for the stock at appropriate intervals. They crossed stony deserts that must have taken a huge toll on the cattle. They lost considerable numbers of stock through disease, crocodiles, drought and hostile aboriginals. Malaria was common in tropical Australia at that time and

took its toll on the stockmen.

The cattle drive was only the start of what was to be a long battle to make the gamble pay.

As always, many things affected their profits from cattle farming. Gold was found at Halls Creek in 1886 and beef demand and prices soared to feed the flood of gold miners but the mines fizzled out. The boom and bust cycle went on for years but the families improved their habitations and married. More leases were added on and overseas trade was established. The Duracks tried every possible means of improving the value of their beloved Argyle. They searched for gold, other precious stones and oil. But they never realized that an absolute fortune lay under their very feet- the fabulously wealthy Argyle diamond mines. That was not discovered until 1975 and by that time the Duracks had left Argyle. However, they left a lasting legacy in the Kimberley not only in folklore but also in politics, agricultural science and literature.

As well as the diamond mines, our travels took us to fascinating places like Coober Pedy where we saw opal being mined and people living underground in palatial homes carved out of the rock. People resorted to the underground dwellings to manage the intense summer heat. They found them so successful that they carved churches, halls and pubs in the rock as well. We visited the pearl beds off the coast at Broome and read of the brutal

history of pearl diving in the 1890s when indigenous people and islanders were enslaved and forced to dive.

We sat on the shores of the Indian Ocean and watched the most wonderful sunsets. We walked on the board-walk over Hamelin Pool at Shark Bay and saw what looked like rocky little structures but are the remains of the first living organisms that evolved on this earth in its early days. They produced enough oxygen for the rest of us to evolve. We went on the tree-top walk in the Valley of the Giants – a board-walk 50 meters up in the mighty Red Tingle trees – a rare species of eucalypt tree unique to the area near Walpole in the south of Western Australia.

We had a most memorable experience in Albany on the south coast of Western Australia. We had been to the old whaling factory which is now a museum the previous day and saw where thousands of harpooned whales had been reduced to tallow and fertilizer over the years. As we sat on the beach, we saw a pod of mother whales and their new calves resting and moving around slowly in the water near us. It was a rare and beautiful moment.

By now it was time to bring our long drive to an end and make our way home. As we made our way on the three-day drive across the

Nullarbor Plain, the weather got cold and wet and the huge treeless plain had a desolate beauty. I was looking at the map and I thought that if one were able to do so, one could turn north at Cocklebidly Roadhouse, pick up the Connie Sue track which eventually joins the old Canning Stock Route, and you would come out in Hall's Creek if

you survived. In that journey you would have travelled nearly 1,500 kms and, if you were lucky, met half a dozen people. More likely you would not have seen one solitary person. It is an awe-

some and daunting thought.

It struck me forcibly on several occasions as I walked the dogs in the early mornings and viewed the desert or the savannah or the distant mountains. There is hardly anybody in there and that is the way the Dutch sea captain, Dirk Hartog, must have felt when he stood on a sand hill on the west coast in the seventeenth century. He stuck a timber post in the ground and nailed to it a pewter sign with his name and the date inscribed.

On our return home, we felt greatly enriched by our long drive and the experiences we had. Maybe the bumper sticker 'Adventia before dementia' is not a bad one after all. However, I think that the Duracks get the prize for the Longest Drive. ●



Sunset on the Indian Ocean

‘Army Rising’ sign record deal



Army Rising on stage in the Abymill L to R: Louis Rice, Ted Barrett, Noel O'Brien, Tony Myler and Garreth Lawrence.

Local metal band Army Rising comprising Noel O'Brien (vocals/guitar), Ted Barrett (drums), Tony Myler (guitar), Louis Rice (bass) and Garreth Lawrence (guitar) are pleased to announce their signing to record company 'Rising Records' which are based in England.

This coming summer the band

will record their debut album in England. The album is set to be released around December, 2011, and will be available in most good music stores (HMV, Zavii etc) and through online retailers (Amazon, Play.com, iTunes etc). More information and updates will be found on the band's Facebook page. ●

Fethard & Killusty Community Games

Fethard and Killusty Community Games held their annual general meeting at the end of 2009 and were delighted to welcome some new faces. Alice Butler, who is no stranger to various committees, joined us along with Willie Quigley, Redcity.

Alice, daughter of a former

staunch committee member, the late Pat Ryan, is also a former competitor, and former manager at national finals, she certainly does not lack experience. Alice is married to Kieran Butler, son of Tom Butler, Coolanure who is a founder member of community games. Willie expressed a keen interest in GAA

and offered to look after same while his daughter Kate has a good record in the field of athletics.

Helena O'Shea The Valley is one of our most loyal members. Helena will rise to every occasion, we are so lucky to have her. Miceál McCormack also offered his assistance. The existing members, Joe Keane (chairman), Bernard Feery (secretary), Joe Keane and Peggy Colville (joint treasurers), along with Denis Burke and Tom Tobin made up the remainder of the official committee. We are fortunate to be able to rally the troops whenever the occasion arise.

During the year we received great help from Mary Healy, The Green, who acted as a most capable question master at our quiz where we also had help from Gerard Manton and

Paul Shanahan. Thanks to Fethard & Killusty Community Council for the use of their Youth Centre to host same.

Mary Lynch, Andrew O'Donovan, Anthony Wall, Hugh O'Connor and Willie Morrissey were among those who helped with athletics. We were well represented at the county finals but not lucky enough to qualify for National Finals in this very competitive event, although Ryan Walsh, son of Eugene and Tracey, Killenaule, went very close winning a silver medal in the under-8, 60m.

John Stokes looked after swimming. His daughter Zoë and William Morgan from Grangebeg both won gold medals at the county finals.

Justin McGree, a Kilkenny man, put in a tremendous amount of work



The Fethard Under-16 Girls and Boys teams who won bronze in the All-Ireland Community Games Finals at Athlone on 15th August 2010. Back L to R: Mr Dinny Burke (coach), Cormac Horan, Adam Fitzgerald, David Hayes, Christina Myler, Lucy Butler, Ronan Fitzgerald, Niall Doocey, Mr Justin McGree (coach). Front L to R: Tara Horan, Kelly Keating, Aisling Costin, Emma Hayes, Karen Hayes, Michelle Walsh and Aobh O'Shea. Missing from photo: Brian Healy.

promoting both boys' and girls' volleyball this year, with the help of Denis Burke. Both teams were successful at the Munster finals and won bronze medals at the National Finals in Athlone.

Fethard families once again showed great support in Athlone — both Horan families from Tullamaine; Michael and Mary Healy, The Green; Aine and Franny Tyrrell, Ard Alainn; Michael and Bridget Hayes, Coolmore; Helena O'Shea and Mary Walsh, from Killusty, who also put in a lot of work helping at ground level along with Alice and Kieran Butler. Alice and Kieran also played a blinder travelling on the bus to the Munster finals in U.L. and Athlone, taking care of the children and looking after the photographs.

Thanks to Helena O'Shea, Mary

Walsh, Mary Horan, Alice Butler, Theresa Hurley and Joe Keane who looked after the all important church gate collection and special thanks to all those who supported us financially.



Tom and Mary Butler on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, celebrated on 10th August 2010. Tom was a founder member of the Tipperary Branch Community Games and was a renowned progressive farmer and recipient of the Avonmore Creamery Milk Supplier of the Year Award (South Tipperary Region) for 1982.

We really appreciated the assistance of Margaret Burke-Hogan from Clonmel who helped with the administration of both the quiz and athletics. It was nice that Catherine McCormack, CEO FÁS accepted our invitation to attend some of our finals and get a view of all the activity going on at ground level. During the year children took part in art, athletics, gymnastics, swimming, quizzes and volleyball.

Apologies if we have omitted anyone. We really appreciate the help of all concerned.

We wish a Very Happy and Holy Christmas to everybody at home and abroad. ☺



Leaving Certificate Class 1985. Back L to R: Liam O'Dwyer, Ian Cooke, Willie Phelan, Dermot O'Donnell. Front L to R: Gabrielle Hayes, Willie O'Meara, Lisa Rice, Michael Barry, Sarah Carey, Raymond Looby, ?, Tom Haydon, ?, T.J. Maher, Tom Ryan, Jim O'Donnell, Colm Keogh and Orla Broderick.



Fethard Presentation Convent 'Class of 1969' reunion dinner in McCarthy's Hotel, Fethard, photographed in May 1990. Back L to R: Margaret (O'Brien) Ryan, Patsy (Sayers) Kiwan, Kathleen (Keane) Maher, Peggy (Delahunty) Fox, Gemma (Kenny) Burke, Ann (Tierney) Boyle, Mary (Meagher) Reddy. Front L to R: Anne (Kenrick) Walsh, Nora (O'Meara) Bourke, Patricia (O'Connor) Clear, Majella (Healy) Healy, Marie (Shortall) Gilchrist, Eva (Hackett) O'Keefe. Missing from photo are: Frances (O'Flynn) Ryan, Nora (Harrington) Croke and Anne (Shelly) Fortune.

The Railway Line

by Pamela (Morrissey) O'Donnell



Cashel Road area with Fethard Railway Station in the background 1960s

Growing up on the Cashel Road in the 70s and 80s we had the best adventure park at our back door that you could ever want, the railway line. This old stretch of the railway had not been used in years but the grassy line was still there and had banks and hollows at either side that proved a real hit with all the local kids.

Summers and winters were spent on the line with kids from the Cashel Road, Kerry Street and Congress Terrace converging there every weekend or free day that was available.

From our back we had a bit of waste ground that we claimed as our own, so any huts or cubbyholes we had made up were strictly for our use, we were very territorial about these things! As you went fur-

ther out onto the line you had to take your chances when you found a good spot to set up house, chances were that your house could be claimed by some other group the next time you came up. Mind you, we didn't mind dropping in to visit people in any cubbyhole that looked homely enough.

I don't remember being hungry out on the railway line but being a Morrissey, we were always eating so I assume that we used to bring food and find berries or fruit along the way. I do remember Mary Connors bringing us hot fairy cakes out of the oven a few times because Maureen loved them straight out of the oven, so we benefited by always being with Maureen when the buns were being cooked!

The railway line was a great

social outlet for a group of kids, we'd start from our back and, depending on the day, we could start off at the back of Ryan's where we'd bring sugar lumps for 'Honey', the horse. How that horse survived with that amount of sugar in his system I'll never know, however, he was always waiting patiently for our noisy arrival. If any of the Ryans were around we'd either go along on our travels in a bigger group or sometimes be invited into the old Station House, which was an adventure in itself. The back of the house had the real train station feel to it with the canopy over the old waiting area and the dip in the grass where the trains used to run. I used to try to imagine what it was like in the days when the trains were actually pulling up. The Ryans had hens too and we

terrorised those poor creatures one evening. We were there when they were trying to put in the hens for the night. We were shown how to catch the hens gently but I don't think there was anything gentle in the way we chased them around the yard and threw ourselves on the poor creatures. I think that they actually ran in themselves that night!

From Ryans, to continue along the line, we'd head down past the back of O'Donnells, Connors', the priest's house and Brid Cummins'. Every now and then we'd sneak into the back of these gardens to get a glimpse of how other people lived. On one or two occasions play had to be abandoned when we'd notice the priest cutting his lawn. All friendships and loyalties would be discarded in the rush to be the first



Cashel Road 'gang' and friends at Fethard Festival Parade 1984

group to arrive at his door with the offer, "Fr, can we rake up your grass?"

This was a very lucrative gig in those days because the priests would pay us anything up to 50p to rake up the grass, that equated to a lot of sweets so the smaller the group of kids, the more sweets we got, young entrepreneurs in training! Fr Cunningham was there when I was very young, I remember Agnes Allen bringing us in one day for biscuits and orange. Heaven! Then Fr O'Gorman lived there with his big Lassie dog which we all adored. Fr Lambe was next followed by Fr Michael Ryan, all great neighbours.

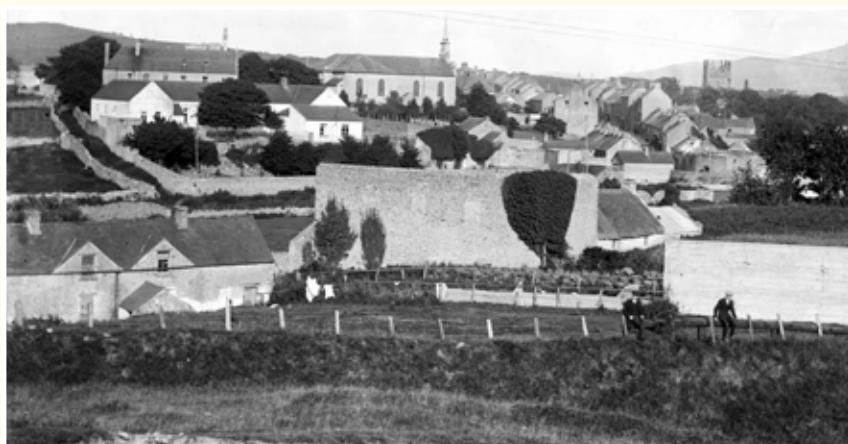
Back to the railway line, we had a long stretch of the line which brought us over as far as Kerry Street, beside Riordan's garage, so children from that area came over from that side to join us. There were different age groups and a hierarchy of who was allowed where etc. Our group consisted of the Morrissey sisters, Maureen Connors, Edwina Newport, and others we'd meet along the way. The older boys, Jimmy Connors, John O'Riordan and company were often around but we weren't allowed too close, it wasn't good for street cred to be found in the company of girls. We left them alone most of the time apart from when we'd decide to taunt them in front of their friends and then run for home as fast as we could go. On one occasion I didn't get away fast enough and got hit with a flying stone. There was a lot

of explaining to be done when my father got home from work and found me trying to cover up a huge shiner on my forehead.

For the brave among us, there was a real adventure to be had if you cared to venture as far as the old abandoned rail carriage, which was in off the beaten track. I don't know how it got to be there but we imagined every scenario including the one where it had crashed and had lots of skeletons of real people inside. Who was brave enough to get really close to have a look in? Not me anyway, I was terrified!

Of course Kerry Street had its own attraction in those days in the form of Mrs Looby's sweet shop. Now that was a real treasure trove of penny sweets, fizzle sticks, gob-stoppers, golf ball bubble gums, fruit salads and black jacks. Our hard earned cash never lasted long when we got inside the door.

Another great part of the railway line was Donovan's Hill. This big field, I never knew who owned it, was another place for huts, games, races, football and rugby training (I kid you not!) and of course skiing, for the one or two years when we had enough snow. Football and rugby training happened only a few times when my brothers, Declan and Brendan, met up with some of the lads from the area and decided to teach the girls how to play men's sports. The main teaching point was that 'real players don't cry when they're injured' so we had to learn to



View from the back of the Cashel Road showing old handball alley and houses c.1900

be tough in scrums or leave and go back to our little girls' games.

Our farming background often came in handy to impress friends when we'd encounter cattle in the fields. We'd head off into the field with the curious cattle heading towards us, while the others looked on in dismay at the thoughts of having to head through the field. No matter how many times we told people just to walk quietly through them and never to run, inevitably someone would start to panic and sprint off which would send the cattle off after them. Us brave soldiers would stroll after them to show how real farmers do it.

The winters of the snow were great. We all decided that skiing couldn't be that difficult and took off armed with plastic bags, lids of buckets for skis and solid sticks for support. We'd line up at the top of Donovan's Hill and race to the bottom. Of course most of us would fall

over after a few seconds and end up rolling down the hill sideways trying not to kill everyone on the way. We'd fall around laughing at the bottom before picking ourselves up and heading back up the hill for more of the same. When we'd get too cold we'd start a snowball fight to warm up and then head home to a warm fire and dry clothes.

The railway line holds fond memories for me, it was a great place for playing, socialising and having fun. In an age of no mobile phones, we managed to be gone from morning 'til it was almost dark some nights and no one had to worry because there were enough of us there to look out for each other and plenty of mummies to call on if required. I haven't been up there in a long time, it must be about time to make a return journey although I doubt if I'd fit into any of our cubbyholes now, I did manage to grow a little since, not much though! ●

Donations Received 2010

Acknowledged below are donations (€10 and over) received from readers and organisations up to 30th November 2010. We would also like to thank all those who wished to remain anonymous.

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 White, Eileen (Leahy), Drangan
 Whyte, Michael, Leicestershire UK
 Wilkins, Christine (Sayers), Taghmon, Co. Wexford
 Williams, Sheila, Effingham, Surrey UK
 Wright, Ann (Flanagan), Wantage, Oxon UK
 Wyatt, Frank, North Carolina, USA
 Wyatt, Kathryn, Lausanne, Switzerland
 Wyatt, Kevin, Phoenix, Arizona
 Wyatt, Paul, California USA

If, for any reason, we have omitted your name, please let us know
 and we will acknowledge your donation next year.



*Photographed at Fr. A.B. Kennedy's Ordination in June 1983 are L to R: Fr. A.B. Kennedy,
 Paddy Whyte and Fr. Philip Noonan P.P.*

A man of the soil

by John Fogarty



Jimmy Walsh harrowing on his farm at Kilconnell in the 1960s

So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. - Native American Wisdom

Jimmy Walsh leans on the gate and gazes across the fields. He has had his hands in the soil of these fields at Kilconnell, farmed and tilled them endlessly throughout the innumerable seasons that make up all the years of his long life. Seeing, perhaps, through the eyes of memory, his younger self at work in these old fields.

These fields have history for him. Not the kind that generates heavy volumes for historians and scholars. The history here comes from the everyday and the ordinary: all the simple, family dramas that surround the birth and the rearing of children; the tilling of the soil, sowing, growing, harvesting. Unfolding quietly over

decades. Seeping into the soil.

And that is what Jimmy's life has been about: family and farm – farm and family, bound inextricably together.

And so he gazes over his familiar fields seeing them, not just as they are now but as they were when he first arrived here in 1942. He was a young lad then, aged 18, the oldest in a family of seven, already seasoned to farm work. His father was here then - John Walsh, and his mother Ellen. They had come to Kilconnell from The Glen of Aherlow where all of the family had been born. They were hard and cruel, those years of war and shortages, people struggled to grind out a living in whatever way they could. He remembers his father travelling from the Glen to fairs in Cahir and Cappawhite. Selling young saplings as a way of raising some

money for his growing family.

He recalls leaving school at fourteen, spending long days behind horse and plough at fifteen. He nods towards a huge field on a neighbouring farm. Forty acres, he says, ploughed in a matter of hours with huge multi-sod ploughs drawn by giant tractors. He shakes his head in wonderment. Thinking of his own long days spent guiding horse and plough along a slowly opening furrow. In his lifetime he has seen farming methods change beyond belief. The pre-industrial world of the horse and horse-drawn

farm machinery lingered on in Ireland right up to the nineteen-fifties. It was all Jimmy knew in his childhood, and well into his adult years. The horse was the powerhouse of farming then. Used for everything: ploughing, spreading dung taking milk to the creamery, pulling hay-machines.

All long gone now, he says.

Thrashings he remembers too back in the Glen, clearing the chaff,

suffocating, mouth blackened and lungs whistling full of dust. His first job paid ten shillings a week.

The farm at Kilconnell was small, twenty-nine acres. It was not easy for a large family to make a living on

such a holding. It was necessary to be resourceful. Pigs were killed, six in the year, he says, the bacon salted and cured. Puddings and sausages made. Potatoes and cabbage plants were grown and sold, produce for which the Walsh's were justifiably renowned.

Eventually Jimmy took over the running of the farm. In 1962 he married

Anne and soon had a family of his own: John, Elizabeth and Ellen who now lives in Australia. By then his siblings had left. His father passed away in 1967, his mother in 1978.

'They saw what you'd call hard times', Jimmy says, 'they worked hard, a lot harder than I did.'

In 1993 he lost Anne suddenly. That was hard. It left an empty space, he says simply.



Jimmy Walsh digging potatoes on his farm at Kilconnell in August this year

Continuity is important to Jimmy. He took over the farm from his father. His own son John farms the land now on a part-time basis. Whether or not John's son, James will farm here in the future rests in the womb of time. The future will unlock the answer to that question.

'It's a different world now,' Jimmy says, shaking his head.

It is a remarkable tribute to Jimmy's – and Anne's while she was with him – industry and resourcefulness that he was able to remain on the farm, earn a living and raise a family, during a time when the emphasis was on pushing men off smaller farms to create bigger, facto-

ry-type units.

Jimmy is the quintessential, quiet-spoken countryman, dressed in flat cap and body coat. He is quietly dignified and represents a solidity, an approach to life, an inherent honesty and decentness, that all but vanished in the Celtic Tiger years and is sorely missed following its demise. His life has been spent jousting with nature, making a living off the land in harmony with the seasonal cycles of the natural world. Spring for planting, summer for growing, autumn harvesting – and winter, well winter is all about waiting patiently for the sure and certain return of spring. ●



Fr. Joe Walsh and his family photographed at his Golden Jubilee in the Augustinian Abbey Back L to R: Brothers Michael, Christy, John and Jimmy Walsh. Front L to R: Peg O'Dea (sister) and Fr. Joe Walsh OSA.

Memories of a Fethard messer!



All Ireland Feile na nGael Winners 1991 - Under 14 Fethard Hurling Team. Back L to R : Joe Corbett, team manager; Miceál McCormack; Stuart Looby; Donacha Prendergast; Tomás Keane; Pádraig Cloonan; Eric O'Donnell; Liam McCarthy (selector). Middle: Colin Allen, Barry Corbett; Joe Bradshaw; Paul Fitzgerald; Edward Walsh; Raymond Condon; Thomas Burke. Front: Patrick Lawrence; James Dorney; Ciaran Treacy; Michael Burke (capt.); John Paul Looby; Alan Roche and Trevor Spillane.

What do you remember most about growing up in Fethard?

It's a simple question, but one that brings back all sorts of memories.

For a start, the big one was growing up in my 'second home' on Burke Street. Home was Woodvale Walk, but Gretta and Andy O'Donovan's home was where I was practically raised.

Although I went there for dinner every day during my school life, Christmas Day was the centre of the dinner world in Burke Street.

A real family affair, it seemed

like 300 were being fed there, such was the collection of plates, bowls and cutlery set out each year when I was a kid. A mish-mash of aunts, uncles and cousins, two long tables were put end-to-end and seated easily twenty people – maybe more.

It was an all-day job. Get in after Mass, sit down for what seemed a marathon dinner which took a breather around tea-time, followed by more tea, games of cards and messing. It was the one day you were let stay up late – you knew you were up late when Amhran na bhFiann came on the telly before it shut off

for the night!

Next door to my Gran's was Jimmy McNerney's newsagent, the place where I was sent every day to collect the Irish Independent - which was then hidden from me while I ate my dinner. Still to this day I never found out where my granddad hid that paper! Incidentally, Jimmy was the first person who taught me how to tie a tie, a handy trick as the primary school introduced that maroon and grey uniform when I was just a kid. As I got a little older, the trips became more adventurous - across the road to Percy Flynn's for sweets or, if it was in the evening time, further down to Bernie McManus's shop.

Speaking of school, I remember first class with Mrs Quinn - images of collecting frogspawn and keeping it in the class 'hop' into my mind (apologies for the very bad pun), as well as a mini feast we had around the time of our First Communion. That was a picnic we had in the gardens of the Patrician Brothers house (now the grounds of Dr Condon's surgery) after enduring the 'torture' of giving up sweets before our Communion.

School didn't start in first class, obviously. Going to the Nano Nagle for junior and senior infants was where I first met my friends - lads who I've been trying to shake off for the last thirty years (don't worry - they'll say the same about me!). It was also the place where my budding career as an actor went up

in flames - forgetting your lines in the school play is not an ideal way to build up to an Oscar. By the way, sorry to my co-star on that night, Gwen Cooke (now married to another friend, Liam O'Sullivan) - you were the real pro who carried on!

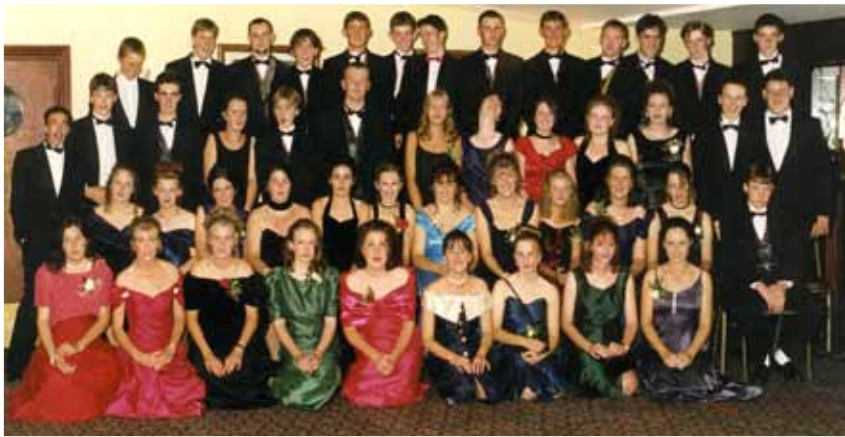
School was also where we first played hurling - incredibly, coming from a town which leads the way in the roll of honour for county senior titles (21). Gaelic football passed me by, although I do remember having my picture taken with the cup after the senior footballers won the county title, maybe 1984-ish.

Given that a Tipp revolution happened back then, it was only natural that hurling would catch us all in its grip. In primary school the hurling team was coached by Mr Dwyer, who had a great way of keeping us grounded if we were winning a game at half-time.

"Two scores lads and they're back in the game," he'd say. Didn't matter if you were two points or six in front, that line was a good way to keep you from getting carried away.

Granted, as a goalkeeper the last thing you wanted to do was let those scores in, but with lads like Paul Fitzgerald in front of me it didn't happen that often. I never did get to become the next Ken Hogan mind; Fitzzy proved himself to be the better netminder!

Throughout primary school there was talk that someday, when we were old enough, we'd walk into a brand new secondary school. It didn't hap-



Fethard Debs from 1995. Back L to R: Greg Walsh, Joseph Bradshaw, Raymond Condon, Michael McCormack, Thomas Burke, Mark Barrett, Brendan O'Dwyer, Tomás Keane, Michael Burke, Michael Ryan, Gary Lonergan, Liam O'Sullivan, David Fanning, 3rd Row L to R: Seamus Tynan, Noel Barry, Gabriel Horan, Deirdre O'Meara, Jimmy Butler, Paul Fitzgerald, Samantha Outram, Valerie Allen, Caroline Gahan, Christina Thompson, Annette McCarthy, Trevor Spillane, Anthony Coffey. 2nd Row L to R: Nora Cummins, Jennifer Hannigan, Treasa Doocey, Sandra White, Shonagh Coen, Joanne Clancy, Treasa Looby, Kay Spillane, Cabrina Roche, Mairead Lennon, Colette Fitzgerald, Matthew O'Shea. Front L to R: Noelle Murphy, Caroline Fitzgerald, Bernie Horan, Gwen Cooke, Elaine O'Connell, Sharon Lyons, Johanna Sheehan, Olivia Phelan, Deirdre Lawlor. Missing from picture: Jill Barrett, Kim Barrett, Lee Anne Burke, Paraic Cloonan, Keith Colville, Robert Hickey, John Hunt, Stephen Keane, Sharon Lawton, Stuart Looby, Declan Maher, Anne Marie Murphy, Michelle Nevin, Mark O'Flaherty, Eleanor Ryan, Emily Sayers, Thomas Sayers.

pen by the time we left Brother Raymond's sixth class and moved the short distance up that footpath, but it was just as well. We would have missed out on Vincent Doocey's old woodwork room, a real getaway spot from the half-tonne schoolbag and the shock of having several subjects to study in up to nine classes - on one day!

Secondary school brought with it another hang-out spot - the corner of what, I'm told (I'm not that old!) was the old pharmacy across from John Whyte's shop.

On any given morning, anything from two to ten young lads would drop schoolbags there and wait for

everyone else to show up before heading to school. As you got a bit older there was even the chance of smoking the odd fag before class.

We weren't completely unhealthy though. We did have a great soccer league going when we were in fifth year, a competition where the mighty Boca Juniors swapped Argentina for the gold medals and glory of the school field, all under the whistle of Denis Burke.

Dinny was one of those teachers we were lucky to have. A man with boundless energy, he was always a positive influence. Michael O'Gorman was another man who always saw you for more than the

student you were. Meet him in the corridor or outside the school and he'd talk to you on a personal level, something you probably only truly acknowledged after you leave school. There was also Marian Gilpin, who instilled a love of English and the ability to think outside the box – both of which came in handy for a career in journalism.

Whatever else I remember, or struggle to recall, the one thing I will never forget are the friends I made as a kid. Much of that is down to the fact that I still hang around with the same shower of messers.

Things have moved on – it might not be hanging out in the Abymill as the Air Arrow (aka Liam, Gary and

Keith) lads got ready to play their first gig there, dossing study together (sorry Mam!), listening to music in Macca's sitting-room on Kerry Street, playing tennis together (my claim to fame is beating Jimmy Butler once, a match he claims to have forgotten about!) or even just having a game of crosses with a football in Lonergan's garden or soccer in the schoolyard – but the craic is still the same whenever we meet up.

Some are married now. There's even a next generation of messers born, but we're still kids at heart. Fethard kids. Now go across to Percy Flynn's or down to McManus's and get me a ten-penny bag of sweets! ●

Trevor Spillane



Pupils from Presentation Patrician Secondary School who took part in an exchange trip with the Lycee Professionnel in St. Aignan s/Cher in France in 1994.. Back L to R: David Fanning, Stephen Keane, Roger Daly, Lisa McCormack, Liam O'Sullivan, Thomas Bourke, Trevor Spillane, Pádraig Cloonan. Middle: Lee Anne Burke, Aine Cloonan, Laura Doyle, Gary Lonergan, Michael Bourke, Colin Lee. Front: Treasa Doocey, Shona Coen, Deirdre O'Meara, Michelle Nevin, Linda Blake and Jimmy Butler.

Fethard Bridge Club



Kathleen Kenny (centre), President of Fethard Bridge Club, presenting 'President's Prize' to winners Nell Broderick and David O'Meara.

Fethard Bridge Club is now in its 34th year. At our President's Prize dinner at Fairways Restaurant on 14th May 2010 our president Kathleen Kenny presented the following prizes: President's Prize to Nell Broderick and David O'Meara; Committee Prize to Alice Quinn and Berney Myles; Club Championship (Hayes Trophy) to Betty Walsh and Brigid Gorey; Player of the Year (O'Flynn Trophy) to Berney Myles; Individual Champion (Dick Gorey Perpetual

Trophy) to Berney Myles; Most Improved Player (Suzanne Opray Trophy) to Anne O'Dea; The Lucey Trophy to Anne Connolly and Eileen Frewen.



Berney Myles (left) winner of the William O'Flynn Memorial Trophy for 'Player of the Year' receiving her prize from Kathleen Kenny.

We played for the free sub for the coming year on 30th September and 7th October and the winners of the gross free sub were Alice Quinn and Berney Myles, and the nett free sub was won by and Carmel Condon and Brendan Kenny. On 12th November we held a charity

night and donated the proceeds for the evening to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Our Christmas party was held at Slievenamon Golf Club on 17th December at which our Christmas prizes were presented.

At the AGM on 19 May 2010 the following officers and committee were elected: President, Carmel Condon; Vice President, Anne O'Dea; Secretary, Brendan Kenny; Treasurer, Anna Cooke; Asst. Treasurer, Rita Kane. Tournament

Directors: Alice Quinn, Betty Walsh, Frances Burke, Gemma Burke, and Marie Delaney. Committee members: Ellen Rochford, Nell Broderick, David O'Meara, Tony Hanrahan and Kathleen Kenny. Partner Facilitator: Berney Myles.

May we take this opportunity to wish all bridge players (and non-bridge players!) at home and abroad a very happy and holy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. ●

Clonacody Country House



Clonacody Country House, situated two miles from Fethard on the Clonmel road, has recently been refurbished to a very high standard and is now available for accommodation, including overnight stays with breakfast provided, and evening meal on request. The house and grounds can also cater for any special occasion whether it be a family reunion, wedding, birthday, corporate functions, social, training or holistic workshop.

Clonacody can also cater for

groups of up to fourteen people sharing for that special 'get-away' with friends or family, to either relax in cosy sumptuous surroundings, or go hillwalking, fishing, fox hunting, shooting or just shopping in the nearby towns of Cashel, Clonmel, and just a little bit further, the city of Kilkenny. Cork is just one hour away by motorway if you prefer the 'big' city.

Prices vary depending on request, however, we do our utmost to price competitively especially in



this gloomy economic climate. For further information contact Helen by phone at 087 1689167 or visit website: www.clonacodyhouse.com

Before 1937 Clonacody was home to the Kellett Family since its construction c.1750. The Kellett family where involved with the British military, however, one particular member of this family, Admiral Kellett, is renowned for his exploratory expeditions.

Helen's grandfather took ownership of Clonacody in 1937 and introduced an Angus Herd on the farm whose lineage spread as far as Australia, on one side of the world,

to Argentina and United States on the other. His bulls and dams won several prizes in the Dublin shows throughout the 1950s and 60s. He was also one of the first to produce bottled milk.

In 1970, Helen's parents purchased the property from her grandparents and their family had the privilege of growing up on this very beautiful estate. Helen's mother, Bitsy, a vibrant member of the local ICA Guild, grew every type of vegetable imaginable in the walled garden. Summers were spent picking peas, sugar snap, mange tout, broad beans, French beans, run-



The late John and Bitsy Carrigan at Clonacody House in the 1960s

ner beans, string beans, and then there was fruit – gooseberries, black and red currants, raspberries, loganberries, blackberries, strawberries, plums, apples, pears and figs. Helen remembers, in the wintertime, having to go out in the freezing cold to dig for horseradish (for the sauce to go with roast beef), pull leeks, cabbages, broccoli and other type of winter vegetable. Her mother even grew Christmas roses, which were white with no thorns.

Helen hopes to get the walled garden back to the way it was and started letting allotments during the year. She now has 80% of the plots taken and next year expects to have it all taken.

Helen was left this exquisite house, including the walled garden, courtyard farm buildings and some acreage of parkland, and now looks by in awe at how fortunate she was to have grown up at Clonacody. She

is now determined that this new business will also bring pleasure to her clients who come to stay.

Helen thanks all those people who supported her in this exciting venture, especially her partner, Michael Brennan and his family, her own family, Chris Southgate (conservation engineer), Frank Barrett (builder), Billy Prout (plumber), Niall Walsh & Damian, Michael Cranitch (electrics), Willie Breen and Joe Ryan (sand, gravel and machinery) and of course Toby Purcell, her friend and neighbour, who was always there when you needed with the dinky and link box.

Helen is looking forward to the years ahead and hopefully in the future will get to meet many emigrants when they return home to visit their native Fethard. A very Happy Christmas from all at Clonacody Country House. ●●



Fethard & District Day Care Centre

The Day Care Centre Committee meet once a month. The committee is as follows: Jimmy Connolly (chairperson), Fionnuala O'Sullivan (secretary), Liam Hayes (treasurer), Geraldine McCarthy (supervisor), Carmel Rice, Breda Nolan, Desmond Martin, Marie Murphy, Maureen Whyte. Our mini-bus driver is Michael Cleere.

At the centre we still continue to provide our 'Senior Day' once a month, where our elderly neighbours who do not attend the centre can avail of a chiropody service, meet the district nurse, and also avail of a hot meal. All for a nominal sum. We thank the staff, volunteers, transition year students and committee members who continue to try and provide the best service possible for our clients.

The Bealtaine Festival held in

May is a great showcase for our older citizens who have much to offer with their varied skills such as cookery, knitting, sewing, pottery, painting, acting, singing, dancing and of course their patience and advisory skills. Exercise classes also continue every day at the centre and we all feel the benefit of keeping our joints supple. Very important for all age groups!

Our holiday this year saw us in Enniscorthy in May. We enjoyed good food, good company, good weather and wonderful scenery. Our summer outing took us to Clogheen and Tipperary and we dined in great style in the Aherlow House Hotel.

As you are all aware Tipperary won the All Ireland senior hurling and Under-21 titles. We had a visit from the Tipp team with the Liam McCarthy and Under 21 cups. Tiobraid Árann Abu.



Photographed at the 'Wine Tasting' at Town & County Shop, The Square, Fethard, held in aid of Fethard & District Day Care Centre are L to R: Marie Murphy, Liam Hayes, Susan Archdeacon (Town & County), Ann Butler, Philip Butler and Declan Ryan (Findlater Wines).

We are now preparing for our annual Christmas Bazaar which is a great fundraising event for the centre. Our clients start making Christmas cards and Christmas decorations as early as February and our knitters stay busy knitting throughout the year. All items are sold at the Christmas Bazaar. Our Christmas party will be held in the

Slievenamon Golf Club in December.

We had various other fundraising events throughout the year and we take this opportunity to thank all our sponsors who continually help in our fundraising efforts.

A very happy and peaceful Christmas to all in our community and to you, our readers, from all at the Day Centre. ●

Letter from Father Michael Downey

May I introduce myself; I am Father Michael Downey, retired parish priest of Sherborne, Dorset. I am writing to let you know, rather belatedly of the death of my uncle Mr James Downey. He died on Christmas day 2007. My father was Cornelius Downey and the family lived at Brookhill. I believe the place is still known as Downey's corner. Jim was the last of that generation, the other members of the family were, Molly, Cornelius, Bridget, Patrick, Cecilia and James.

Some time in the seventies the eldest child Molly married a captain in the British Army, he then resigned from the army and they crossed over to England. His father owned a number of textile mills and Molly's husband whose surname was Brough became manager of one of these mills. First of all my father joined them and became very involved in the textile industry. Eventually the whole family came over to England including the mother who had been a widow for many years and she died in Nottingham, England in 1938.

She was buried in the churchyard at Rathcoole in the family grave.

Some time in the fifties Cecilia, who was also married to an Englishman, opened a pharmacy in Bournemouth where my father Cornelius was now working. Round about this time my father opened his own knitwear company called Mayborne and Jim joined him in the workplace. Eventually Cecilia and her husband (Abbott) retired from the pharmacy and bought a house in a district of Bournemouth and Jim went to live with them. As time went on both Cecilia and her husband Lawrence became housebound and Jim looked after them 'til they both died. He was on his own for a year and I then persuaded him to go into a retirement home where he remained until 2007 and he was buried close to his brother, my father Cornelius, and his wife Dorothy. I have been to Fethard on a number of occasions and met some of the McCarthy family.

Thank you for the newsletter. ●

Best wishes, Father Michael.

‘Before I Go’

*Before I go I'd like to take
Some moments of your time,
And reminisce a little bit
On the years that have flown by.*

*I studied Arts instead of Science
In college many years ago;
And that made all the difference:
Margaret Walsh I got to know.*

*I fell in love, gave up the cloth,
And to the Higher Dip. I went;
Two years in Kieran's – got married then,
Thirty-six in Fethard I have spent.*

*A family man I am at heart
And proud I am to say;
Margaret stayed home to rear the lads:
Well worth it all – despite the pay!*

*Each one in turn grew up so well
And have given so much pleasure;
I salute you, thank you, love you all,
Am glad you're here, this night we'll treasure.*

*The pupils I'll remember well,
Many days were filled with laughter;
The games we played, the work, the fun,
And frequently the banter.*

*I learned a thing or two of course!
In Irish, History and Religion:
That Collins sailed the ocean blue,
And de Valera wrote the Bible;
The Celts ate spuds and watched T.V.,
The Normans, they were Protestants;
'Ta mé go maith' means 'How are you?';
And I gave up on the Tuiseal Ginideach.*

*I must pay tribute to the parents,
Many now are pupils past;
They have been supportive o'er the years
From the first until the last.
I'd like to thank them at this time
For their help and co-operation;
No need to fear I'll torment no more
For raffle, table-quiz or fund-raising.*

*Fate decreed I was not to be one –
But the priests my friends have always been;
At liturgies down through the years:
None better than Fr Gerry and Tom Breen.*

*And now I come to reflect upon
Your own good selves my colleagues;
Some have passed on; most are still strong,
My thanks to you all is endless.*

*I must express my heartfelt debt
To the Sisters and the Brothers,
And all the staff who welcomed me
When first I came to Fethard.*

*No sandbags now, no bowls, no buckets:
The new school's great, we must admit it;
But the thing that I'll remember most
Is the friendship of the teachers in it.*

*In recent years in times of need,
Your kindness to us was tremendous:
I'd like to thank you from my heart
For your great support, so apt and generous.*

*It's time to go; I wish you well
And a future filled with brightness;
My thanks again to one and all,
Slán, slán go fóill is míle buíochas.*

Dick Prendergast – retirement address 3rd June 2010

Our school

by Margaret Prendergast



Donnacha holding baby Aaron, Yvonne, Risteárd, Úna, Dick and Margaret Prendergast.

The beautiful memory of the evening of Thursday, 3rd June 2010, remains with us. It was a wonderful balmy evening, heralding the arrival of the summer holidays and our loyal colleagues, friends and children gathered together in Raheen House, to give us a really special “send-off” into retirement. A very big thanks to the organisers, who left no stone unturned to ensure a most enjoyable occasion for all.

Personally, I am very glad to have had the opportunity of joining the teaching profession and subsequently teaching in my own Alma Mater in Fethard, where my husband, Dick, was soon to be my colleague at work. Our combined years teaching in Patrician-Presentation, exceed 60 and throughout these years, the wonderful kindness which we experienced from the school management

team, from each and every one of our teaching colleagues and from the ancillary staff, will always be appreciated with gratitude. We relied on their support and very practical assistance in times of need. On many occasions, they went far beyond the call of duty to shine a light for us and raise our spirits. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we pay a special tribute to all those who have been our exhilarating travelling companions along such a large and important part of our life's journey. We shall continue to cherish the enormous collection of shared experiences indelibly printed on our minds.

Our school song may have ended, but hopefully its melody lingers on!

Go n-éirí an t-ádh le cách sa scoil agus go raibh todhcaí rathúil i ndán don mheánscoil i bhFíodh Ard. ☀

Buíochas. Margaret Prendergast



Patrician Presentation Secondary School staff photographed at the joint retirement function held for Dick and Margaret Prendergast. Back L to R: Noel Maher, Justin McGree, Liam O'Neill, Fr. Tom Breen, John Cummins, Paddy Broderick, Michael Leonard, Vincent Doocey, Dinny Burke, 3rd Row L to R: Gwen Cronin, Majella Whelan, Orla Barrett, Maryanne Fogarty, Liam O'Brien, Michael O'Gorman, Ann O'Donnell, Bernie O'Connor. 2nd Row L to R: Nuala Ahearn, Deirdre Mulhall, Mary Lysaght, Marie Maher, Catriona McKeogh, Mary O'Sullivan, Gillian Prendergast, Yvonne Prendergast. Front L to R: Donnacha Prendergast, Éman Britton, Dick Prendergast, Margaret Prendergast, Marian Gilpin, Eoin Prendergast and Risteárd Prendergast.

Marian Gilpin

There is no tribute fitting enough to put into words the career of Marian Gilpin. I once overheard her being referred to as the celebrity of Fethard and that has some truth in it. Whether it is for the stage or music or her commitment to the community over the years, such as the Credit Union, everyone knows who she is.

Marian has taught generations of families in the town and surrounding areas and everyone has great stories to tell of their experi-

ence in school with her. It was a sad day on 22nd October 2010 not only for Marian herself but for her colleagues and pupils. The school was saying farewell to a colleague and teacher who not only was a staple for people in the school but also in the town. Marian connected with every generation and her personality and ability to create a passion within the school and connect with her students never floundered.

Marian began her life in Fethard and remains in the house where she

grew up. In 1970 Marian began her teaching career in London where she remained for a couple of years until she returned to Fethard to take up the post of teaching English, music and economics in Fethard Patrician Presentation Secondary school. It was the beginning of what would become a legacy of passion and commitment to the students that will be hard to be found through anyone else. Marian taught English with such enthusiasm and entertainment that you forgot you were in school and began to think you were lost in a world of all things fantastic about the English language. We forget sometimes just how much there is to know about English and one conversation with Marian would set your mind alight

with realisations and education.

But her passion in music and drama will stand as a very strong element within the school also. Marian produced and directed numerous shows for the school throughout the years. Marian brought her talents to the students and helped them find inner confidence and talents they never knew they had. It was through this commitment and dedication to not only her teaching job but also to the happiness of her students and the extra hours put in over the years that will stand to her indefinitely. I have never witnessed a person so committed to her work and who succeeded so well. This can be seen with a succession of fantastic shows, her own talents on stage and her voluntary work with the Credit



Marian Gilpin photographed with family members on the occasion of her retirement from teaching at Patrician Presentation Secondary School. L to R: Carrie Sweeney, Tom Gilpin, Honor Davern, Jonathan Gilpin, Marian Gilpin, Patrick Davern, Jodie Gilpin and Donacha Davern.

Union in Fethard of which she was Chairperson.

Most teachers would like to sit back and relax at the weekend but not Marian, forever occupied with something in the community. In the year 2002 Marian became deputy principal in the school and again was extremely popular in this role with both colleagues and students.

This is why I feel that the gratitude and general admiration for Marian cannot be put into words. Speeches given on the evening by principal Ernan Briton, Fr. Tom Breen and others did sum up fantastically how much Marian will be missed in the school. But I know that her character, creativity and passion will always be remembered

in the school and in the community. I was told that someone overheard a young student shout across the street to Marian in Fethard during the week, "Hey Miss, we miss you loads". Marian we thank you "loads", we thank you for your never-ending education to all of us throughout the years. I think that it can officially be said that Marian now has a legendary status in the school and it is thoroughly deserved. A terrific woman who had a terrific career, may you shine through all of us who were lucky enough to have you as our teacher and we know you will shine in your new adventures.

Go forth and enjoy! ●●

—JMG



School Extension Public Meeting June 1991 - Bill O'Sullivan (parents representative), Bro.. Cormack (chairman Board of Management), Marian Gilpin (staff representative) and Fr. Lambe (chairperson of public meeting) pictured at a public meeting to discuss Fethard Secondary School's proposed extension. At the meeting, local T.D. Noel Davern, promised that a letter from the Dept. of Education giving the long awaited go-ahead would be received within two days.



Bus Trip to Bray, Co. Wicklow. L to R: May Fitzgerald, Alice Fitzgerald, Ollie Fitzgerald, Billy Smith, Rita Fitzgerald, Peggy Fitzgerald and Nell Fitzgerald.



Madden family who lived in Kerry Street, on the corner now owned by Wards. Back L to R: Jackie Madden, Mary Madden, Jocie (Madden) Fitzgerald, Paddy Madden, Mrs Madden. Front L to R: Jimmy Madden, Billy Madden with Michael Dineen on his knee and Betty Dineen.



Louise Bone & Carl Byrne



John Hassett & Marie Taylor



Gabriel Needham & Catherine Ardern



Conor McCarthy & Orla Neagle



William Lee & Marie Kinnane



Paul Rafferty & Nuala Sheehan



Ollie Reddy & Amanda Kelly

Marriages

Marriages in the Parish

*Séamus Freeman, Mullinahone, and Rachael Outram, Bannixtown
 Cornelius Gayson, Cashel, and Lisa O'Sullivan, Main Street
 William Smith, Cashel Road, and Edel Fogarty, Tinakelly
 James O'Sullivan, Clonmel, and Mary Ellen Thompson, Moyglass
 Declan Lonergan, Knockbrack, and Amy Russell, Garryowen, Limerick
 Ciaran Treacy, Strylea and Audrey Conway, St. Patrick's Place
 Conor McCarthy, Kerry Street, and Orla Neagle, Cloneen
 John Hassett, Muroe, Co. Limerick, and Marie Taylor, Saucestown
 Ciarán Strappe, Ballyneale and Tracy Wallace, Saucestown
 Attila De Souza, Abbey View, and Mary Doyle, Strylea
 Daniel Ryan, Tullamaine, and Triona Donaldson, Louisville, Kentucky
 Oliver Reddy, St. Patrick's Place, and Amanda Kelly, Rathvin*

Marriages outside the Parish

*John Paul Burns, Clonmel and Rachel Lyons, Coolmoyne
 Yvonne O'Rahilly, Killenaule, and John O'Neill, Clonmel
 Irene Maher, Rathsallagh, and Lee O'Connor, New Inn
 Alan Phelan, Strylea, and Eimear Dunne, Carrick-on-Suir
 John Paul McCarthy, Monroe, and Rosemarie Grant, Clonmel
 Richard Butler, Fethard, and Elaine Nolan, Tralee
 Desmond O'Meara, Waterford, and Marie Martina Burke, Fethard
 Aidan Robert Phelan, Stylea, and Tara Fitzharris, Carlow
 William Waddell, Banbridge, and Eleanor Ryan, Fethard
 Peter Hughes, Ballina, and Cecily Ryan, Coolanure
 Mark Paul Lonergan, Rathmacrath, and Catherine Shanahan, Upperchurch
 Louise Bone, Surrey, and Carl Byrne, Crampscastle
 Gabriel Needham, Abbey View, to Catherine Arden, Liverpool
 William Lee, Killusty, and Marie Kinnane, Cork
 Paul Rafferty, Malahide, and Nuala Sheehan, Clarebeg, Killusty*

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Deaths in the parish

The following is a list of deaths that occurred in the parish during the year. We have also included many of the deaths (from information supplied) that occurred away from Fethard and, in brackets, the place of funeral service if known.

Ahessy, Shay, Kilsheelan (Cloneen)
 Bradshaw, Joe, Congress Tce. (Calvary)
 Byrne, Dick, Main Street (Tullamore)
 Carey OSU, Sr. Paula, Kilnockin (New York)
 Clancy, Helen, The Green (Calvary)
 Connolly, Jim, The Valley (Redcity)
 Cummings, Carol 'CJ' (Saratoga)
 Dillon, Eddie, Cooleagh (Peppardstown)
 Doran, Joan, Ballinard (Cloneen)
 Doyle (Ryan), Kathleen, St. Patrick's Place (UK)
 Fitzgerald, Willie, Amsterdam & Crampscastle
 Forde, Bro. Raymond, Glanworth (Tullow)
 Fox, Andy, Kilsheelan & Killerk (Kilsheelan)
 Gough Risk, Patricia, The Valley (Gilroy CA)
 Guiry, Maureen, Milltown (St. Johnstown)
 Healy (nee Coen), Alice, England (Calvary)
 Heffernan, Capt. J.J., The Green (Canada)
 Horan, Joachim, Tullamaine (Calvary)
 Kenny, Austin, Baptistgrange (Rosegreen)
 Lyttleton, Johnny, Mockers Tce. (Cahir)

Madden, Jimmy, England & Kerry St.
 Maher, Bill, The Green (Calvary)
 McCormack, John, Kilnockin (Drangan)
 McGrath, Philly, Burke Street (Cahir)
 Meagher (Sharpe), Ellen, Drumdeel (Tipp Town)
 Meaney, Maura, Crampscastle (Calvary)
 Murphy, Pat, Munroe (Calvary)
 O'Callaghan, Seán, St. Patricks Place (Calvary)
 O'Connell, Mary, Magorban (Moyglass)
 O'Connor, Joe, Knockelly (Peppardstown)
 O'Donnell, Aideen, Mocklershill (Cashel)
 O'Dwyer, Chris, Strylea (Calvary)
 O'Meara, Susan, St. Patrick's Place (Calvary)
 Pollard, John, St. Patricks Place (Calvary)
 Staunton, Margaret 'Peggy', Knockelly (UK)
 Thompson, John, Silverfort (Moyglass)
 Wall, Jack, Tullamaine (Calvary)
 Whelan, Patricia, Tullamaine Cottage
 Wright, Richard, Killerk (Lisronagh)
 Wyatt, Frank, Jossestown (Ballylanders)



Ellen Mary Lines ('09)



Joan Doran



John Thompson



Jimmy Madden



Sr. Paula Carey



Our dear departed 2010 *from available photographs*



Peggy Staunton



Mary O'Connell



Maura Meaney



Pat Murphy



Patricia Gough Risk



Jack Wall



Bro Raymond Forde



Bill Maher



Carol 'CJ' Cummings



Joe Bradshaw



Austin Kenny



Jim Connolly



Aideen O'Donnell



Chris O'Dwyer



Jim Heffernan



Maureen Guiry



Sean Callaghan



Frank Wyatt



Eddie Dillon



Joe Horan



Joe O'Connor



John Pollard



Susan O'Meara



William Fitzgerald



Shay Ahessy

From Kassel to Kathmandu



*Aidan Ward gigging with friends, Ted Connolly and Mervyn Colville back in 1988.
Also included is No 1 fan, Gary Lonergan!*

I was giving a drummer friend of mine a lift to Kilkenny after our gig last weekend when we were stopped by the gardai.

"Where are you from?"

"Fethard, County Tipperary," I answered helpfully.

"Where are you living?"

"Connemara,"

"Where are you going?"

"Kilkenny,"

"Where have you come from now?"

"Thomastown,"

"Where are you staying tonight?"

"Kells."

"... But your driving license is addressed in Leitrim!"

It has been like this for years. Falling through the cracks. Constantly on the move, puzzling all kinds of authorities, confusing any forms I've had to fill out, and basically

not being able to explain in short answers exactly what it is that I do. I ramble. I rove. I float. I am free.

This causes hilarity in some countries such as Canada, where they have soul and a sense of humour, but places like the US see people they can't pigeon-hole as a threat somehow and redirected me north to their far more hospitable neighbours. The graffiti on Woody Guthrie's guitar, 'This weapon kills fascists,' echoed in my mind.

It started in 1996 when I finished working as a roads technician for Kilkenny County Council. I was glad. I met more dishonest, backstabbing bullies, in my three short years in the building industry, than I have met in all my travels as a musician on stages worldwide. I packed my bag, strung my guitar and headed from a dole queue to Amsterdam for a planned

three month tour. It was seven years before the 'tour' ended, or more likely 'paused'!

I had booked gigs with a friend of mine, Darren Byrne from Wexford, who lived in Rotterdam. We gigged solidly as a folk/rock/punk duo, 'The Ringstucks', between Holland and Germany. The gigs went down really well and I learned the ropes from Darren. Soon I was getting booked solo and went from gig to gig, and strength to strength until I was fully booked all over Germany, Holland, Poland and Greece. It was great craic.

In the mid '80s the Irish pub scene began in Sachsenhausen, Frankfurt, and grew at a rapid rate as Irish bar staff got experience there and then moved to open their own places, taking on more bar staff who then worked for a couple of years and moved to open more pubs. It grew and grew and by 1996 there were 500 to 600 Irish pubs all over the country, all connected somehow. These pubs offered Irish beer, food and nightly live music. This is where we came in.

With so many pubs having music seven nights a week we were kept busy. Most bars offered payment, tips, accommodation and free food (mostly liquid). They booked musicians for two nights in a row usually once a month, so with some careful planning a musician could gig Monday and Tuesday in Saarbrücken, Wednesday and Thursday in Mainz, Friday and Saturday in Hamburg and Sunday

somewhere nearby. This rotation kept going so you could pick and choose and play as much as you wanted. There were hundreds of us criss-crossing the country, staying where we played. The network kept in touch (sometimes by graffiti on musicians' rooms' walls, these were the days before texting and e-mails!) and pretty soon the numbers for the 'better' gigs were passed around. This usually meant a gig where you could play music you liked (as opposed to what the crowd 'wanted' to hear), sleep in a bed (as opposed to a floor), and order whatever drink you liked or needed (as opposed to the drink-bans for musicians imposed by the lesser intelligent bar owners – imagine the repercussions of that!).

Soon connections in other countries opened up as soon as the Irish bars did. Some moved north to Sweden, some south to Austria. I had great nights in Belgium, France, Spain and Luxembourg, but I loved heading east. I played in Gdansk and Warsaw and spent my spare time wandering through the beauty of Hel in Poland, the Transylvanian forests in Romania, the cities of Buda and Pest in Hungary and other spots east of Germany.

When summer came and the German beer gardens lured the crowds away from the cavernous Irish pubs, we headed for the resorts. I played several seasons on the beautiful Mediterranean island of Crete. Four hours a night, seven nights a week for bed, board and



Photographed after Aidan's gig at the Abymill Theatre in 2006 are L to R: Lisa Ward, Niamh Ward, Tom Portman, Aidan Ward and Roger Mehta.

beer or hammock, toasties and vodka. The latter I had to stop. After the years it had become too much and to be honest alcohol is the most dangerous occupational hazard for a musician. You have to learn your limits or it controls you. I had no limits so I stopped.

After a few years of playing solo I formed a group called 'Aiseiri' with two others. We had a residency at the Irish Rover in Hamburg, where we recorded two albums, 'Live Jam' and 'The Touched'. One album was folk covers and tunes, the other original. We toured across Germany, then Greece and finally on to Ireland. This two-year tour in a camper van broke me. I was finally exhausted. While walking on Glassilaun beach in Connemara I decided to quit, and settle at home. I got work on a fishing trawler and gave up music, quite an inverse mid-life crisis.

After a few weeks, the Connemara

fishermen suggested I go back to music. I began recording, writing and playing my own music and started a radio show of live music on Connemara FM. During this Celtic Tiger time in Ireland people thought nothing of spending money on second homes, cocaine and music (luxuries they can no longer afford) and I soon built up enough work and income from albums to live at home and it was great.

One of the only times that it was written that Jesus lost the head was with the money-lenders in the temple. It seems that these same creeps have ended our financially good times in Ireland by squandering everyone's savings. Instead of these idiots being whipped and lashed and run out of the country, the government of today now expects us to pay for these soulless cretins mistakes and crimes. Even people on the dole, the sick, the young

and the elderly are being robbed to feed these fat useless cats. It's insane. Unless these wasters are driven away we are finished.

Ireland today is haemorrhaging talent, qualifications and good people to the four corners of the globe again. Artists are being forced out and this explains the title of this piece as I wait in a train station in Kassel, Germany having played

here for Hallowe'en weekend and the next destination is Kathmandu, Nepal where we have some gigs on Freak Street. The road goes on forever, the quest for perfection is a moving target, the flow of music, (my bluebell breeze), carries me from Ireland for now, but I know it will carry me home again soon, God willing. ●

Aidan Ward

Fethard Juvenile GAA Club



Tipperary's Eoin Kelly surrounded by enthusiastic supporters when he visited Fethard GAA Cúl Camp

What a year we have had. Under the new committee and team managers we were able to win U-12c, U-14c and U-16b South Football Championships, as well as the U-14c South Hurling Championship and went on to win the U-14c County Football Championship and the U-16b County Football Championship.

Coaches for U-12s were Willie Morrissey and Willie Quigley (Football), Willie Quigley and Thomas Keane (Hurling). U-14

coaches were, John Hurley and Tom Anglim (Football), John Hurley, Tom Anglim and Tommy Sheehan (Hurling). U-16 coaches were, Michael Quinlan, Jimmy O'Meara, Stephen O'Donnell (Football) and Shane Walsh, Michael Quinlan and Stephen O'Donnell (Hurling).

Our Mini GAA, ranging from 4 years to and including 10 years met every Saturday and played many challenge matches throughout the year. Their coaches were, Michael Moroney, John Neville, Eugene



2010 Under-16 County Football Champions. In a thrilling game against Rockwell Rovers on 3rd July, Fethard claimed the County title on a scoreline of 2-11 to 1-08. Back L to R: Cathal Hurley, Ciaran Walsh, David Hayes, Garreth Lawrence, Mick Smyth, Andrew Maher, Brian Healy, Eoghan Hurley, Philip Maher, Ronan Fitzgerald. Front L to R: Niall Doocey, Charlie Manton, Kyle Walsh, Gerard Gorey, Tommy Anglim, Dylan Fitzgerald, Adam Fitzgerald, Joedy Sheehan, Dion Butler.

Walsh, Michael O'Mahoney, Michael Quinlan and Shay Coen.

Fethard was flying the 'Blue and White' banners and flags for many weeks, in addition to the 'Blue and Gold' in support of our Senior Tipperary Hurlers, who of course went on to win the All Ireland Hurling Championship.

Lá na gClub this year saw our 1991 County Football Champions take on our 2001 County Football Champions as the main event of the day, after a morning of Mini GAA games.

Fethard also celebrated Tipperary's U-16 All Ireland Hurling win with our football captain, Dylan Fitzgerald, playing on the team.

VHI GAA Cúl Camp 2010 was another success this year with sev-

enty-five boys and girls joining in the fun for the week. We also had great help from Mary Godfrey (Senior Secretary), Ann Fleming, Annette O'Donovan, Emma Fleming, Frankie O'Donovan, Ronan Fitzgerald and Cathal Hurley. Another success was young Dara Hurley who went on to win the Cúl Camp County final in U-8 Football.

At present the club is in the process of updating the changing rooms. Initial plans have been submitted. We are looking forward to a very bright future for Fethard GAA Club. Of course there is a lot of hard work ahead and some fundraising. But with the help of the community, Fethard will have grounds to be proud of.

The officers this year were P.J.

Aherne (chairperson), Patsy Lawrence (vice chairperson), Ann Fleming (secretary), Liza Ward (asst. secretary), Andy O'Donovan (treasurer and designated children's officer), Kathleen Maher (asst. treasurer) Patricia Fitzgerald (public relations officer and children's officer) and Ronan Fitzgerald (player's repre-

sentative).

We look forward to 2011 and wish our lads who move up from Juvenile to minor the very best, they are: Jack Devaney, Dylan Fitzgerald, Ronan Fitzgerald, Gerry Horan, Cathal Hurley, Garreth Lawrence, Andrew Maher, Mike Smith and Philip Maher. ●



Under 12 team winners of the South Championship on 17th May 2010. Back L to R: Willie Morrissey, Matthew Lynch, Jack Ward, Liam Quigley, Jack Dolan, Josef O'Connor, Darragh Lynch, Ross McCormack, Andrew Phelan, ?, Tony O'Reilly, Willie Quigley. Front L to R: Tom Morgan, ?, Jonathan Hennessy, Harry Butler, Mike Earle, Eoin O'Donovan, Tom Sheehan, Dean Kenny, Dean Dorney, Jesse McCormack.

Fethard GAA Club

The AGM of Fethard GAA Club was held in the Tirry Centre on Saturday, 5th December 2009, with no changes in officers for 2010; Jimmy O'Shea (chairman), Mary Godfrey (secretary) and Nicky O'Shea (treasurer).

The report for 2009 was presented in booklet form by our

secretary, Mary Godfrey, who did a fine job, and our treasurer, Nicky O'Shea, who produced accounts that emphasized the enormous costs to run a voluntary organisation over twelve months, and particularly when they are slowly rising every year. ●

The Sound of Music



Nuns, novices and postulants from Nonnberg Abbey in the Hogan Musical Society's production of 'The Sound of Music' in the Abymill Theatre, March 1989.

The Sound of Music had special significance for the Hogan Musical Society when they staged it in the Abymill Theatre twenty-one years ago in March 1989.

It would be the first musical staged by the society in the newly-opened Abymill theatre. Up until then the society had staged its shows in the frosty interior of the Ballroom, an excellent venue for dancing but one that had to be adapted for stage shows. The stage had to be extended with stacked pallets and sheets of Medite. A dressing room had to be constructed along one side of the ballroom. Cast had to share toilet facilities with the audience, which didn't help with

the suspension of disbelief.

Tales of rehearsals in sub-zero temperatures on freezing January nights are legendary among society members. Decked out in scarves and woolly hats, warming freezing fingers and backsides around a couple of Supersers on the ballroom floor. So, the prospect of putting on a show in a real theatre with comfortable seating for the audience, proper dressing-rooms, orchestra pit, wings and lighting and being able to rehearse without fear of frostbite seemed like heaven.

It would also be a kind of coming-of-age for the society. It would be the first, full-scale musical to be produced by one of its own

members, Anne Connolly. Up until that point its shows were overseen by outside producers, most notably Michael O'Donoghue and Mary Cummins from Clonmel, both of whom developed a special rapport with the society. Anne courageously undertook to produce the show with Mary Cummins acting as production adviser. Following the success of 'The Sound of Music' Anne went on to produce a number of outstanding shows for the Hogan Musical Society.

After many nights and weeks of intense rehearsal the show finally

opened and proved to be one of the most successful ever staged at the Abymill. The initial run was for seven nights but such was its popularity with audiences that it was extended for a further three, leaving the cast exhausted but elated. The fact that it was the society's very first musical in the new Abymill added a special flavour and sense of occasion for those involved in the staging of 'The Sound of Music'. It was the kind of run that theatre people dream of: full houses, appreciative audiences, a smooth-running show with no major



Von Trapp family (A) Back L to R: Damien Keane, Billy McLellan, Siobhán Ryan. Front L to R: Mia Treacy, Fiona O'Shea, Geraldine McCarthy, Clare Fogarty and Gary Lonergan.



Von Trapp family (B) Back L to R: Damien Keane, Mona O'Gorman, Billy McLellan, Lorraine Treacy. Front L to R: Niamh Ryan, Susan McCormack, Geraldine McCarthy, Emily Graafland and Sean Cleary.

hitches, great atmosphere backstage between cast members as all worked towards the common goal of making the show a success. The presence of seven young kids onstage and backstage every night was both a novelty and an inspiration for most of the seasoned adult performers. There were fourteen kids altogether rotating every second night. Without exception all hated the nights when they had to stay home and would have performed every night if allowed. There were tears and sadness when it all came to an end – for children and adults alike. The last night of any show is always shot

through with a bittersweet mixture of sadness and satisfaction: great to have been part of such a successful show, sad to see it all end. But there was a particular poignancy at the ending of 'The Sound of Music', owing, probably, to the enthusiastic involvement of so many kids and their families and the realisation that such shows are very rare and to be savoured.

And who knows, maybe the sound of music, which has been missing from the Abymill for some time, may be heard there some day again. ●

– John Fogarty

Dunboyne the Bishop-Baron

Local tradition has it that a heavy fall of snow accompanied the funeral cortege of John Butler, former Catholic Bishop of Cork and the 22nd Baron Dunboyne, as he was laid to rest in the Augustinian Abbey Church at Fethard. An evocative scene surely, of the horse drawn hearse crunching through the snow as it made its way down the Killenaule road. However, history records that Lord Dunboyne died on the 7th May 1800. A flurry of snow is not unknown during the month of May, or indeed June, but the tradition mentioned above is thrown into doubt by the fact that he died in the month of May. More about that later.

John Butler was born in the year 1731 at Grangebeg, within sight of Kiltinan Castle, which had been his ancestral home for two hundred and fifty years until the Butlers were dispossessed under the Cromwellian settlement. His father was Edmund, 18th Lord Dunboyne and his mother was Anne Grace, who had previously been married and was widowed before she married Edmund. John was third eldest in a family of four boys and four girls. This branch of the Butlers remained Catholic, while many of their kinsmen became Protestant. The title originated with William le Petit in 1324. William's line continued until the reign of Henry III, when the sole heiress, Synolda married Thomas Butler, son of Theobald

lord of Ormond. Thus the Dunboyne title came into the Butler family, where it remains to this day. The title gained official sanction in 1541, by royal patent of Henry VIII.

Little is known about John's early career, except that he studied for the priesthood in Rome and was ordained priest in the Basilica of St. John Lateran in 1755. At some stage in his early life, he lost an eye in an accident of some kind. Accounts differ as to how this happened. One account says that he lost it during a brawl in a tavern, another that he lost it in a duel. Whichever is true, it can lead to the conclusion that not all his time and effort was devoted to spiritual matters. On his return to Ireland, he was appointed as parish priest of Ardmayle. He was subsequently appointed as secretary to the Archbishop of Cashel, his kinsman, Dr. James Butler, who compiled the penny catechism, which was in use in the schools until relatively recently. After some years, Butler was appointed as Archdeacon of the diocese, before being appointed as Bishop of Cork in 1763, at the age of thirty-two. Bishop Butler held the See of Cork for twenty-three years, at a time when the Church was gradually emerging from the penal laws. His administration of the diocese is thinly documented, but it is known that he had a sometimes fractious relationship with the religious orders who were based in the dio-

cese. However, he was instrumental in the setting up of the Presentation Sisters in Cork by Nano Nagle. Butler was known for his opposition to the Whiteboy movement and in 1784 was one of the Catholic bishops who signed a declaration of loyalty to the Government.

Events outside of his control were to lead to Butler's life taking an unexpected turn in relation to the Dunboyne inheritance. Bishop Butler's eldest brother James, who had succeeded to the family title in 1732, died unmarried in 1768. His brother Pierce succeeded and conformed to Anglicanism a year

later. He died in 1773 and Edmund, the youngest of the Butler brothers, died in 1781. The title was now vested in the sickly seven-year-old Pierce, son of the late Pierce. No doubt the Bishop was fully aware of the implications of these events for himself. The Bishop's apprehensions were realised when Pierce died at the age of thirteen in 1785. The Bishop now inherited the title and from hereon began to use the signature 'Dunboyne'. Dunboyne was now faced with an important decision. As a priest, he was unable to marry, yet

he was aware that if he didn't marry and produce an heir, his line would die. He was aged fifty-six and still had hopes of producing an heir if only he could obtain a dispensation from Rome to marry.

In any event, Dunboyne did not seek a dispensation. Instead, in December of 1786, he sought permission to resign as Bishop of Cork, in a letter addressed to Pope Pius VI. The reasons that he cited for this decision were his 'failing strength' and the temporal cares of his inheritance. Around this time, he had met the twenty-three-year-old Maria Butler from Wilford

near Drangan, a distant cousin, who had conformed to the Established Church in 1773. Dunboyne married Maria in April 1787, possibly at St. Mary's Clonmel, though no record exists. These events caused a nationwide sensation. The news was carried in the newspapers of the day. Dunboyne was held up by many as a figure of fun and was lampooned in popular ballads and on broadsheets. The Pope wrote to Dunboyne, urging him to renounce his marriage and return to his priestly duties. Far from complying with the Pope's instruc-



Dunbine monument at the Augustinian Abbey

tions, Dunboyne conformed to the Established Church at St. Mary's Clonmel on Sunday, 19th August, 1787. He was reported by a witness to be nervous and inaudible while signing the Roll of Allegiance and Supremacy and the Declaration against Popery. Following the service, Dunboyne and his wife were driven away at speed, in order to avoid the angry mob which had gathered outside at the news of his conversion.

Dunboyne and his wife now took up residence in his estate at Dunboyne Castle in Co. Meath, where for the next number of years they lived a quiet life, away from the public outcry which followed the above events. He did not attend service in the village and declined invitations to ordinations and other functions at Trinity College Dublin. In short, his interest in Anglicanism appears to have declined after his marriage. There was talk of him being appointed to an Anglican Bishopric or to the House of Lords as a Spiritual Peer, but none of these materialised.

By now, Dunboyne was in his sixty-ninth year and was in failing health. His efforts to produce an heir had ended in failure, although there is a tradition that Lady Dunboyne was delivered of a baby girl who died shortly after she was born. After making his will, Dunboyne wrote to the Pope, seeking reconciliation with the Church. The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, hearing of his situation, asked Dr. William Gahan OSA, an Augustinian Friar and an

old acquaintance, to call upon Dunboyne, who by now was living in his Dublin residence at 18 Leeson Street.

Dr. Gahan called on Dunboyne on numerous occasions. Dunboyne died on the 7th May, 1800. Though it was expected that he would be buried at Dunboyne, Co. Meath, he was laid to rest in the sanctuary of the side chapel in the Augustinian Abbey at Fethard. This chapel is officially known as the chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel, though it is oft referred to as 'The Dunboyne'. Proof of his burial there was uncovered in 1935, when a new sanctuary was being laid down. Lead coffins were discovered in a vault, one of which contained the remains of the bishop-baron and the other, that of his baby daughter. Dunboyne was buried feet towards the altar, while the child's head was faced in that direction. The tradition of burying a priest with his head facing east, to signify that he was a herald of the gospel was also extended to baptised infants. Whoever was responsible for Dunboyne's burial did not accord him this honour.

In his will, Dunboyne provided well for his wife. He also left a large bequest to the recently established St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, where a hall of residence, Dunboyne House, was named in his honour. Dunboyne's sister, Mrs Catherine O'Brien Butler, who lived at Bansha, feeling aggrieved at the amount that he had left to Maynooth, contest-

ed the will on the grounds that it was void, as he had returned to the Catholic faith on his deathbed. The penal laws forbade a Catholic who had converted from the Protestant faith, from making a will involving landed property. Mrs O'Brien Butler was hoping that she and her sons would gain if Dunboyne's will was overturned. The case was heard at the Trim Assizes in August 1802, before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Kilwarden. Lord Kilwarden was to die less than a year later during Robert Emmett's rebellion. He was mistaken for Judge Carleton, who had gained an unenviable reputation in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion. Kilwarden was dragged from his carriage on Thomas St. and killed.

In the court case, Maynooth College was represented by John Philpot Curran, the father of Sarah Curran, who was Robert Emmett's fiancée. Mrs O'Brien Butler was represented by Standish O'Grady, uncle of the famous Celtic scholar and writer of the same name - both well-known legal luminaries at the time. The principal witness in the case

was Dr. Gahan OSA, who had attended Dunboyne at his final illness. Dr. Gahan refused to tell the Court whether Lord Dunboyne had died a Protestant or a Catholic, though he was at pains to point out that he did not act out of disrespect to the Court on this issue. Rather he was

acting out of principle. The principle that Dr. Gahan was upholding was that these were matters between him, Lord Dunboyne and God. Dr. Gahan professed that he was indifferent as to who benefitted from the case, whether it be Maynooth College or Mrs O'Brien Butler. The spiritual solace that he afforded Lord

Dunboyne was nobody else's business. While Lord Kilwarden expressed sympathy for Dr. Gahan's position, he still held him in contempt of Court and he was sent to jail for one week. The Court decided that Lord Dunboyne had died a Catholic and then adjourned the case to decide on the distribution of the estate. During the adjournment, the two warring parties came together and reached an amicable settlement on the matter.



*The arms of The Butlers, Lords Dunboyne,
on the facade of Fethard Town Hall*

Lord Dunboyne's wife, Maria, remarried soon after the death of her first husband and moved to Co. Galway with her second husband. She died at the age of ninety-five in 1860. The title Baron of Dunboyne passed to a distant cousin of the late bishop, James Butler, who received it in 1827, having petitioned the Lord Lieutenant. The current Lord Dunboyne is John Fitzwalter Butler, the twenty-ninth Baron, who succeeded his father in 2004. He lives at Rotherfield in Sussex.

A contemporary of Dunboyne described him as 'a tall thin man, with tight black wig and a black patch on his eye'. No known portrait of him exists. A portrait of him was kept at Knappogue Castle in Co. Clare. It was sold at auction in 1927 and having been left in an out-house for storage was inadvertently destroyed when chicken feed was dumped on top of it.

To return briefly to the story surrounding Dunboyne's funeral. Another tradition existed among his wife's family, the Butlers of Wilford, that after his death, he was buried secretly at Wilford, as they wanted to avoid as much controversy as possible. After the passage of some months, his coffin was dug up and buried at the Abbey in Fethard. They may well have chosen a snowy day, when there would probably be less people around to witness the burial or cause a fuss. Their efforts were not entirely successful, as contemporary accounts state that guards had to be

posted in the vicinity of the grave to prevent angry townspeople from digging up the coffin and desecrating the corpse, such was their contempt for the dead man.

One cannot but have sympathy for Lord Dunboyne in the situation that he found himself in and the dilemma that he faced. The solution that he chose for the problem was not rewarded with success. He was not motivated in his actions by religious conviction, but out of expediency and for so doing, he now found himself ostracized from the people who were his erstwhile followers. Even though he returned to Catholicism on his deathbed, his apostasy from it was not easily forgotten by the general Catholic population. Taking into account the context of the time, it is not surprising the lengths to which Dunboyne went to ensure his inheritance remained within the family. At the time, one's religion was an important issue and played a big part in rights of succession. Dunboyne was well aware of his own ancestors being dispossessed of the Kiltinan estate nearly one hundred and fifty years earlier and this strengthened his resolve to secure his title and estates for the Butlers. While his story has been largely consigned to history, his memory is maintained in the side chapel of the Augustinian Abbey, which bears his name and also in the chalice which he gifted to the parish of Killusty, which is regularly used at Mass to this day. ●

Community Employment Scheme

It has been a tough, worrying year for the Fethard & Killusty Community Employment Scheme and our sponsor, we had rumblings of cuts early in 2010, but in July things came to a head and it looked like our scheme could be disbanded with disastrous consequences for all concerned, mostly the Day Care Centre. But as always our sponsor, Fethard & Killusty Community Council, fought the biggest fight ever and after many meetings and discussions with other sponsors and FÁS management, the battle was won and we live to fight another year.

This means so much to so many people, the participants on our scheme who do such great work. Working as scheme supervisor, I really appreciate my job and never take it for granted. The scheme is an integral part of the town and has been for many years enabling terrific voluntary services for the Day Care Centre and Fethard in general.

I feel I have to mention a few people specifically, Joe Kenny, Edwina Newport, Jimmy Connolly, Fr. Tom Breen and Ger Manton who

took it upon themselves to lobby our Minister, Martin Mansergh. So on behalf of myself and all the participants a big thank you to you all.

We lost a lot of our colleagues this year, Monica Aherne, Brud Roche, John Neagle, Linda Webster, Marie

Hannigan, Martin Bolger and Willie Needham, it was a big change and a very emotional time for all concerned as some had been with us for a long time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of them so much for all their hard work

and dedication over the years.

We welcome a lot of new recruits and I am sure they will also do a great job, we have Cabrina Roche, Emma O'Donohoe, Annette Quigley, Tom Tobin, Joe Bradshaw and Christy Dalton. I would like to extend a big welcome to all of them and I hope their time on the scheme will be enjoyable and productive. We still have some of the old crew with us, Marian Noonan, Jack Kenny, Emma Wallace, Bernadette Meehan and Tony Keating and again I would like to extend a huge thanks to all of them for all that they bring to the scheme.



William Needham photographed with Supervisor, Joan O'Donohoe, after being presented with a Certificate of Achievement on completion of the FÁS/VEC Return to Education Programme 2009/2010.

All in all it has been a year of great changes for us all, once again a huge thanks to our sponsors for all their support throughout the year, thanks to the customers of the Tirry

Centre, especially all the regulars. A very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New year to everyone at home and away. ●

Joan O'Donohoe

Tidy Towns Competition Results 2010

Adjudication Report

	<i>Maximum Marks</i>	<i>Marks Awarded</i>
<i>Overall Development Approach</i>	50	30
<i>The Built Environment</i>	50	32
<i>Landscaping</i>	50	36
<i>Wildlife and Natural Amenities</i>	50	27
<i>Litter Control</i>	50	35
<i>Waste Minimisation</i>	20	7
<i>Tidiness</i>	30	14
<i>Residential Areas</i>	40	23
<i>Roads, Streets and Back Areas</i>	50	29
<i>General Impression</i>	10	7
Total Marks	400	240

Overall Development Approach:

The historic town of Fethard is warmly welcomed to the Tidy Towns programme. Your town has so many adherent advantages and has so much to offer that we look forward, with interest, to your progress over the years. You have taken the first and important step in deciding to take part and congratulations to all involved in this decision. This adjudication should therefore be seen in the nature of a base line report on which you can build and expand over the years. Please spend some time over the next winter in analysing the various strengths and weak-

nesses of Fethard, establishing priorities for action and committing the results of your deliberations to paper. This in effect will become your first Three Year Action Programme, identifying the objectives you intend to achieve. Be sure to always add a time line – a realistic start and finish date for each project and element of the programme. Such a written statement is beneficial in firstly concentrating your own minds on priorities, second in securing the wider engagement and involvement of the community at large; thirdly in the context of discussions with other agencies such as the local authorities whose funding coopera-

tion and involvement you are likely to be seeking. Please refer to the Tidy Towns handbook which will give you many pointers in this regard. What has always impressed about the Tidy Towns movement is the willingness of groups to share their accumulated knowledge and experience with other starting out centres.

Invite some members of the Counties winning centres to visit you from time to time. The immense resource of your 13th Century town walls and the north gate set you apart from other towns. Its presentation has improved in recent years and is now a magnificent vista especially when viewed from The Valley. Well done on the series of historic plaques. The Fethard Town Trail adds greatly to one's enjoyment when viewing this historic town.

The Built Environment:

The Augustinian Abbey and the nearby Old Mill Theatre both were very well presented, the present day Catholic Church in Main Street was admired but devoid of flowers or flags. The memorable Town Hall projected a fine image with its numerous plaques and medieval windows with their tall hood mouldings. St. Patrick's Boy's National School and the Presentation Secondary School were both neat and orderly with well tended gardens. Commercial premises that caught the eye included Gaul's Pub, McCarthy's in Main Street but do wash the sign, Countrylife Garden display, Burke's Lounge Bar, Kellett's Fashion featuring delight-

ful window boxes, J.J. O'Sullivan's Chemists and the colourful Gateway B&B. The sizeable Folk Farm and Transport Museum site was well presented with the exception of their promotional sign which needs to be simple washed. The Post Office looked well in its green livery.

Landscaping:

Excellent advantage has been taken of the grassed area along The Valley, setting off the town walls to best effect. The new bridge over the River Clashawley is a delight. However parts of its cobble lock surface are unravelling and need attention. Incidental planting, for example the raised bed with roses on Watgate Street opposite the Court Castle provided a welcome splash of colour. The extensive area of grass and mature trees at the start of the Cashel Road is a delightful development. Hopefully the missing and broken verticals of the low level, concrete post and rail fencing will be repaired shortly. The Back Green featured extensive grassed areas. The Community Sports Fields are improving and the impressive new Club House will shortly become a major additional resource. Green Street featured an exceptional display of roses and grassed areas. For best effect please do reinstate the out of position curb stones. The Cemetery was very well maintained itself but the outer walls would be improved by power washing. The 'Medieval Town' display board at the Town Hall would benefit from refurbishment as

it has become somewhat difficult to read with age.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your work on the Clashawley River was seen to good effect. The mature trees on Abbey Road and also on the Kilsheelan Road offer opportunities for the installation of bird boxes in these areas. Do keep in mind that enhanced bird life and activity necessary depends on the availability of suitable food for them. In your decisions about landscaping, as a policy use native Irish, berry bearing shrubs; in places beside the river leave some rough grass, nettles and perhaps install a log pile, all of which will accelerate the availability of items lower down nature's food chain suitable for birds. Discuss the option with a knowledgeable local birdlife enthusiast who can offer ideas as to how best to proceed. On the day of adjudication we were delighted to become acquainted with the five ducks who had commandeered Burke Street; it was a joy to see all, especially young children were enjoying this unexpected encounter with wildlife.

Litter Control:

Litter bins of a suitable design were noted in many appropriate locations. While there was a modest sprinkling of litter, we did not observe any significant black spots. The litter picks you have organised on Wednesdays and again on Sunday mornings are clearly having their effect. Do put some effort into

exploring the probable sources of litter which makes these twice weekly picks necessary.

Waste Minimisation:

This section of the competition seeks a change of mind-set in respect of waste minimisation. It invites the community at large and individual households to monitor their own use of energy and other materials. The creation and subsequent disposal of these items impacts on the environment, in addition to having both a personal and an environmental cost attached. The second subsidiary objective is to reuse items where this is appropriate and finally to recycle items wherever possible so that the final amount of waste carried to landfill is minimised. We noted the Clothing Bank at Glanbia which is designed to help the resources of the ISPC; also the Recycling Centre at the Cashel Road car park was clearly in use. Sadly some dumping had taken place around the latter.

Tidiness:

It is the unfortunate nature and duty of reports such as this to comment on the few items that jar despite the overall good impression made by Fethard. The pleasant premises of Fethard Electrical Wholesale would be improved if the front wall was power washed. The significant vista of the walls from The Valley was somewhat diminished by the two lamp poles. Both of them could be repainted. The table element of the picnic site was missing. The pile of used car tyres on view at the com-

mercial premises by the wall might with advantage be repositioned out of sight of the passer by. Although not a significant problem generally, in a few locations weeds and spoil outside the curbs on roads detracted.

Residential Areas:

The housing stock in Fethard has expanded dramatically over the last number of years. Most of these estates but not all have been occupied and are contributing positively to the town. The new estate outside North Gate was presented in an exemplary fashion and seemed fully occupied. The long established St. Patrick's Place featuring an extensive central communal grassed area was well presented and grass cutting was in progress on the day of adjudication. The houses were individually well painted, many with window boxes and hanging baskets. The newer Friary's Field featured a pleasant row of houses. The sizeable Seanline Estate featured exceptionally well presented single story houses, many with window boxes and hanging baskets, the area was neat and orderly and the open plan of their respective gardens provided a very pleasing aspect. This estate however does not appear to have been completed to the planned extent and the undeveloped land remaining does require development as an open space albeit temporarily in fairness to the existing residents. Cedar Grove and Ard Alainn were delightful houses and were very well presented. In Cluain Ard the majority

of houses seem to be unoccupied while Abbey View also had a number of houses awaiting occupiers.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads into Fethard from all directions were well presented in the main. The Cashel Road entry traffic restriction signs were somewhat obscured by vegetation and the town name plate and its poles would benefit from washing. The 'Welcome to Fethard' sign on this road and else where will soon need enhancement. On the Clonmel approach the river bridge provides a natural start point. It was well painted and the signs here were clearly visible while the mature trees give an excellent impression. The surface was somewhat below par on Rosegreen Road. Outside the North Gate the speed limit signs need attention and the 'Yield' sign approaching Main Street would benefit from being washed. Directional signs, notably the cluster of signs at the base of Watergate Road and at the Killenaule Road would benefit from washing at least and ideally repainted. On the Kilsheelan Road excellent planting was noted and the grass verge very well maintained. One vertical is broken at the extensive grassed area and it ought to be replaced and the two horizontal bars then relocated for best effect. The town name plate on this road needs to be replaced.

General Impression:

It was a joy to revisit Fethard for this adjudicator after a number

of year's absence. The added work done to accentuate the delightful vista of your extensive town wall is a very strong plus factor in your presentation. Please avail of the potential resource that the various area or residences associations can represent. The formal and public launch of your plan early each year is recommended as this will ensure that

all interested, however casually, will have the opportunity to participate in your worthwhile activities as the year progresses.

To all involved and each agency associated with this year's entry our best thanks and applause. You have taken the first and important step and you are wished well in next year's competition. ●

Fethard & Killusty Community Council



Members of Fethard & Killusty Community Council and Youth Leaders photographed at the official opening of Fethard Youth Centre Back L to R: Joe Kenny (Chairman), Peter Grant, Bobbi Holohan, Paul Shanahan, Edwina Newport (Secretary), Ger Manton, Brian Sheehy, Kyle O'Donnell. Front L to R: Marie Murphy, Thelma Griffith, Diana Stokes, Tina Conran, Fiona Cleverley and Rita Kenny.

The highlight of 2010 for Fethard & Killusty Community Council was the opening of Fethard Youth Centre. This project has been the primary focus for the Community Council for the past number of years. Cllr. Liam Ahearne, Cathaoirleach, South Tipperary County Council, officially opened the facility on Friday night, June 4th 2010. In his address

Cllr. Ahearne stated that Fethard Youth Centre was "state of the art" and complimented the Community Council and all those involved in the project. He considered that in time people would travel from throughout County Tipperary and beyond to come and see the place and to get advice from those involved. "It cannot but be a success", he said.

Liam continued by stating that youth doesn't last - the youth of today are not the youth of tomorrow, it is merely a passing phase in our lives. However, there will always be young people and it is important that the youth have a place to play in society and that they are encouraged to participate in the community. The provision of youth facilities can only help with their involvement and participation. In conclusion Cllr. Ahearne saluted Fethard Community in providing such an excellent facility and, on behalf of South Tipperary County Council, the main funder of the project, acknowledged their delight in being involved in and contributing towards Fethard Youth Centre.

On the night our Chairman, Joe Kenny, extended a warm welcome to everyone present. He outlined the history of the Community Council's involvement with the project, from the acquisition of the Convent Hall

from the Presentation Sisters, through the completion of the Fethard Youth Needs Report, by Tipperary Institute, to the renovation and refurbishment of the building into a dedicated Youth Centre. Joe acknowledged that the completion of the project was due in no small part to the strength of the Community Council and how all members worked together. He continued by expressing his gratitude to the many adult leaders who had come on board to get involved as volunteers. Joe also thanked those who made the project possible with financial assistance, South Tipperary County Council, through the Recreation and Amenities Scheme and the Magnier family by means of a private donation. Joe concluded by mentioning the various agencies and organisations who had been involved with the Community Council on the project and stated that the committee were looking



Photographed at the official opening of Fethard Youth Centre are L to R: Joe Kenny (Chairman Fethard & Killusty Community Council), Cllr. Liam Ahearne (Chairman South Tipperary County Council) who officially opened the premises, Canon Tom Breen P.P. Fethard & Killusty Parish, Cora Horgan (CEO Tipperary Regional Youth Services) and Cllr John Fahey (Chairman South Tipperary VEC).

forward to developing and strengthening these relationships in bringing the Youth Centre to its best potential in the years to come.

Canon Breen PP, on behalf of the clergy of the Parish, congratulated the Community Council on the "amazing project" which was completed to "an unbelievable high standard" and wished them the very best of luck with their endeavours. Canon Breen remarked that in life, you get back what you give. The Youth Centre was a fine illustration of this and he considered it a fitting example, of community undertaking and leadership, to young people. He hoped that the youth of Fethard would appreciate what the Community Council had done for them and give the facility the recognition and respect that it deserves.

Once the formalities were over the many guests in attendance were able to have a look around the premises and enjoy the refreshments provided while being entertained with a slideshow of pictures illustrating the various stages of the building work on the Youth Centre and other Community Council events and activities.

The summer months, generally a quiet time for the group, were kept busy for us with a threat to the FÁS Community Employment Scheme. Substantial cutbacks on spending and both Supervisor and Participant numbers were proposed for throughout South County Tipperary. Accordingly, it was mooted that

the four rural schemes of Fethard, Killenaule, Glengoole-Gortnahoe and Ballingarry, with a total of sixty-two participants and four supervisors, were to be merged into two schemes with revised numbers of two supervisors and approximately thirty-six participants. We received the news with considerable concern and dismay and thought the proposal to be both unacceptable and unworkable. In an effort to maintain the current situation it was necessary for us to communicate with FÁS, and others, to outline the invaluable contribution that the CE Scheme makes to Fethard.

We informed them that since the inception of the scheme, the supervisors and participants have greatly enhanced the provision of services within the immediate and wider community and have fully co-operated and wholeheartedly supported the work of the Community Council. Also, we outlined that the personnel on the scheme have a great knowledge of and affinity with the community of Fethard which is of great importance to work of the scheme. We were delighted to receive the response, a number of weeks later, that the scheme - our supervisor, Joan, and fifteen places - had been secured, for the foreseeable future at least. While it is uncertain that FÁS, as we know it, will remain as is in the months and years ahead we are sure that we will do all that we can to ensure that Joan and her team remain in-situ to continue the won-

derful work that they do.

Since 1976 the Community Council has achieved much on behalf of the people of the area. In recognising and acknowledging the contribution of former committees and examining the ongoing activities of the group the current committee have recently embarked on a process of evaluation of the organisation. This process, directed by an experienced facilitator, Ailbhe Harrington, is enabling the Community Council to review the mission, role and scope of the organisation. The Community Council now believe it is necessary to examine a number of issues regarding the role, structure and functioning of the organisation in order to meet current and future challenges.

The following are examples of tasks that are being undertaken during the three months to help us reach the objectives of the programme: Conduct an internal analysis of the role and performance of the Community Council; Assess the areas of Strengths and Weaknesses of the Council as well as exploring Opportunities and Challenges; Assess the Values of the Community Council; Look at the Vision and Mission of the organisation; Stakeholder Analysis – Who do we represent? Who can assist us in our role? and How can we organise ourselves best to fit that role? This Development Programme, which commenced in late October, is an enjoyable and enlightening experi-

ence and it is hoped that the outcomes will have far reaching benefits for the Community Council and its activities in the years ahead.

The members and committee of Fethard & Killusty Community Council would like to sincerely thank all those who contribute, in any way, to the activities of the organisation – to the many volunteers who work tirelessly in the community and on the various sub-groups of the Community Council; to the fifteen individuals involved in the Community Employment Scheme, both those who finished during the year and the new recruits who joined us, who contribute so much to the Fethard community and an extra special thank you to Joan O'Donohoe, who we 'saved' during the year, for her commitment to her role and the various activities of both the Community Council and the wider community; and our local public representatives, Cllrs. John Fahey and Jimmy O'Brien, for their involvement and contribution.

The Board of Directors of Fethard & Killusty Muintir Council Limited, elected for 2010, are as follows: Joe Kenny (chairman), Edwina Newport (secretary), Jimmy Connolly (treasurer), Very Rev. T. Canon Breen P.P., Ger Manton, Thelma Griffith, Maria Murphy (public relations officer), Peter Grant, Brian Sheehy, Liam Hayes, Diana Stokes, David Woodlock and Joe Keane. Wishing you a peaceful and happy Christmas and all the very best for the year ahead. ●

The big freeze 2010



Having fun skating on the frozen pond on 7th January L to R: Ciarán O'Meara, Dylan Fitzgerald, Damien Morrissey, Kevin Shine, Dion Butler and Cathal Hurley.

January 2010 will be remembered for the Big Freeze. Temperatures in Ireland dropped into the minus figures for weeks. It was the longest cold spell in Ireland since the winter of 1963. There was a seriously heavy fall of snow in 1981, but that was preceded and followed by relatively mild weather. The cold spell of 2010 actually started in December '09, giving us a White Christmas.

The arrival of frost and snow was pleasant at first. The young and young at heart enjoyed the change in the countryside and indulged in winter sports. One of the main venues for the snow and ice skaters was Nick Harrington's field on the Red City road. Heavy rains at the start of winter had left a substantial lake in

the middle of the field, which had a steep bank running down to it from the roadside. Once this froze over and the snow arrived, it was the ideal launch site for the daring souls to fly down the snow-covered banks and shoot out onto the ice-covered lake. There were fears about the thickness of the ice and the depth of the water beneath, in case someone went down through it, but it held firm and gave hours of fun.

The same expanse of water was to yield a strange crop later in the year when the ice melted. A man out walking spotted splashes in the water. Upon investigation, hundreds of trout, a few salmon and thousands of smaller fish were discovered in the lake. These had swum in when a tributary of the Clashawley river



Members of Fethard & Killusty Anglers fishing in pond at Redcity to free trapped fish and release them into the Clashawley River before flood waters recede. L to R: Fran Igoo (Fishery Board), Tony Quigley, Willie McGrath, Tom Fogarty, Roy Ryan and Norman O'Reagan.

burst its banks and flowed into the field. When the water receded, they were left behind, only to be rescued later by the Fisheries Board and returned to the Clashawley.

The novelty of the frost and snow soon wore off. Ireland is poorly equipped to cope with such extremes of weather, as we rarely see them. The frost-covered roads were treacherous for both pedestrians and motorists. The Council started to salt and grit the main roads, while the secondary roads remained untouched. Soon, the country ran out of salt. The only answer was to slow down, though this didn't register with some of the younger drivers who had never seen these road conditions before and were soon having their first meeting with the panel beaters to restore their crumpled machines.

Farmers and horse owners found the cold spell costly as animals had to be housed and fed. Supplies soon started to dwindle and money had to be found to keep the livestock fed. Following the devastation of the heavy rains earlier in the season, it became an expensive winter.

Many householders got a dose of winter when the water pipes supplying the houses froze. People soon realized just how dependent they are on water. Things that we all take for granted just ceased to function. Without the water supply you can't wash yourself, your children or your surroundings. Your washing machine and dishwasher are redundant. And your cistern doesn't refill, so you can't flush the toilet. A number of people (myself included) were lucky enough to live beside the Clashawley, so we were at least able to get buck-

ets of water to fill the cistern.

For months afterwards the countryside had a brown surreal look. It looked like the Australian countryside as everything had been burned, only our burn was from the frost and not the sun. As I write, a mere ten months after that freeze, the outside

temperature is minus 8. It was the same last night and one of my taps is frozen already. I think it's about time that I stopped writing and went and looked for the buckets. Looks like I'll be heading to the Clashawley in the next few days. ●

Vincent Murphy

School nature trip to Grove

The following essays were written by pupils from Holy Trinity National School after being on a nature walk at Grove with their teachers and guide, Liam Burke

Nature trip to Grove Wood

It was a picture perfect day for our trip to Grove Wood. The sun was shining in a cloudless sky, the breeze had a summer feeling belying the fact that it is officially the last month of autumn. I was looking forward to the experience and although I am so lucky to live in a beautiful part of the world with natural beauty all around me, I take it for granted and never stop to smell the roses, as the saying goes. Now I had a chance to get close to nature.

I was in awe at all I saw and heard in the wood. I loved learning about the different plants and trees and I wondered what I would be doing when the oak sapling we found would be standing proud and tall in years to come. The berries and nuts were plentiful and we even found a half eaten acorn – some squirrels forgotten lunch. We found some domesticated flowers that had long broken free and found the wild. As we went deeper into the

woods, my imagination took over and I pictured wild animals lurking in the undergrowth and maybe even a Robin Hood type character living deep in the forest, a champion of the poor, a recession fighter. I missed seeing the beautiful butterfly. I am sure I missed a lot of things, but then again I saw a lot of things that mattered to me. We dined alfresco and a little mud mixed with lunch was not too bad after all.

We then went to the beautiful Grove Estate with its crystal clear river lazily going who knows where. The horses were enjoying the sunshine and the fields were many shades of green. The giant horse chestnut trees were awesome, full of conkers just waiting to be picked. I got stuck in mud, joined in all the fun and had a ball but what I most remember is the magic of the beautiful autumn colours, apple red, lemon yellow, rustic brown, mixed together with the rogue summer sunshine.

Timothy Hurley (6th Class).

Grove Wood - 12th October

I love nature, and today we went to Grove Wood. It was so much fun, but our teacher, Mrs Kenny, didn't tell us until this morning so none of us brought our wellies!

The excitement was palpable in the classroom as we saw Liam Burke (arriving by bike) entering the school grounds. Leaving our books in school we clambered onto a Gene Walsh bus.

Arriving at Grove we saw a Beech tree and found Beech nuts. I ate one. It was lovely. We also found a fungus. It was orange. Liam said it was lovely with egg – I'll take his word for it! So we plodded on coming across a fair share of fungi and plants.

We stopped at a pond and Liam

told us about rushes. We continued on through the leaf litter finding much, much more species of fungi.

Finally we arrived at a field and had our lunch. There was a picturesque view of Slievenamon. A butterfly came into our midst, a 'Small Copper' – it was so tiny.

We descended coming across many more fungi and arrived at the small gateway out. We crossed the road in the direction of the bridge. A few vehicles passed before we reached the water. Right after we got there, we left, as the bus was waiting.

It was time to go back to school. I had such a great time in the woods. I would recommend it to anyone. It was brilliant! ●

Sadhbh Horan



My Fethard quarter of a century



Volunteer speakers at Fethard Foróige's 'One World Our World' night held in the Tirry Centre in October 1986. L to R: Thomas Barrett, Peg Delahunty, Terry Cunningham, Celine Dwyer and Jennifer White.

We never know where we are going to end up, do we?

I was born (and I mean actually born) and reared on a farm in Clashmore, West Waterford, spent five years in Dublin (mostly) and Galway while at college, spent three years in Dundalk, four in Mullingar (with the Department of Agriculture) and then three years in East Africa before I ended up in Grangebeg, Fethard in the spring of 1985!

How come? Quite straightforward really. On the very day that we landed back in the country from Africa (after three years official 'leave of absence' to work with Concern in Tanzania) I phoned my parents – as you do – and my mother told me that the Department of

Agriculture had phoned and wanted me to resume my duties with them – but this time in Kildalton College in Piltown, Co. Kilkenny.

So, after a short few days rest, I resumed my duties. The Department was in a hurry - the post of Scientific Officer in the Crop Variety Testing programme in Kildalton was vacant, it was summer time and the crops needed attention.

One of the very first places I had to visit was the farm of John H Delany at Parsons Hill here in Fethard, as John provided one of the sites that we needed in order to grow our trial plots of cereal varieties.

I remember coming up the road from Kilsheelan - I had never been on the road before in my life - and I

was amazed with what I found, both on the way up and especially when I reached Fethard. I came over the bridge at Watergate and was met with a strange scene. There in front of me was a jumble of ruined houses, half ruined houses, ivy covered walls, turrets, old castles and I'm sure there must have been a horse somewhere - as in those days you couldn't pass through Fethard and not meet a horse in some shape or form.

So, seeing Watergate is my first memory of Fethard, and I can truly say that the mystery that is Watergate, and the Valley, and the view across to Holy Trinity, and the roofs of the townhouses is still with me. To this day I often stop and just look and marvel at a scene that has been around for 800 years.

Grangebeg

You need a place to live, so we set about visiting auctioneers in a 20 mile radius of Piltown and this included Clonmel of course. There, in his auctioneering premises in Mitchell Street, we encountered Tony Nugent. At that time also, as fate would have it, Tony and his family were moving from their home in Grangebeg to live in Clonmel and so we ended up buying Tony's place in Grangebeg. In the process, we became firm friends with Tony and his good wife Joy (Lonergan, a true Fethard woman) and their daughter Emma and this helped greatly with our transition to life in our new home.

On a fine spring day, 11th April 1985, the removal lorry brought all our 'stuff' from our old house in Mullingar and we set up home – for good – in Grangebeg, the last townland in the parish of Fethard and the last townland in the diocese of Cashel and Emly for that matter.

In fact, we are only a few hundred metres from the border of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, so I felt close to my old Deise roots. I've learned since that Sliabh na mBan – which I see out the window as I write – was also a sacred mountain to the Deise people and marked the border with the Eoghanachta people who lived here in the heart of Tipperary.

Norman Country

The countryside around here is very much the work of the Normans who passed this way and set up the town of Fethard in the late 1100s. The name 'grange' (from Norman French) means a 'grain farm or store', so 'Grange-beg' means the 'little grain farm', which suggests that there must have been a 'grange-mór' someplace else in the neighbourhood of Fethard at that time.

The road from Grangebeg to Fethard is, in my opinion, one of the most 'perfect' pieces of landscapes in Ireland and again I love to travel on it and am always captivated by it. It is dominated by the walled and wooded estates of Kiltinan and Grove and in later years by part of the manicured Coolmore 'estate'. With Slievenamon on one side,

Grove Wood on the other side and the fields stocked with thoroughbred horses and big fat cattle, it surely is 'a land worth fighting for', as one invader is supposed to have said.

Normal Life

Most days and most hours of my time in Grangebeg have been filled with 'normal' life – raising children, rushing to and from work, chatting to neighbours, keeping a few cattle, growing some food, doing 'the jobs' (as they say) and looking out the

kitchen window at the ever-changing woods on the slopes of Slievenamon. To see the swans flying up over the river Anner, with those woods as a backdrop, on a sunny autumn evening, well that's a sight to behold!

As things go, I've been lucky over the past twenty-five years in my home 'beside the Anner at the foot of Slievenamon'. Lucky yes, but many good people involved also and I thank you all. ●

Terry Cunningham

Fond memories of Phyllis and Helen



Helen and Phyllis O'Connell photographed while preparing for an ICA Open day at their home on Rocklow Road in the 1960s.

This won't be an adequate account of the lives and times of 'the sisters' from Main Street, Fethard, whose father was a

doctor and their house, coincidentally, was later bought by another doctor, one Dr. Jerry Maher, whose daughter Susanna and her family



Helen O'Connell tending to her white rabbits at the back of her house on Main Street

now live there.

The O'Connell sisters kept a site at the back of their garden on which they built a lovely wooden bungalow, where they lived out the rest of their lives. Coincidentally, again, this bungalow was bought by none other than the editor of this newsletter, Joe Kenny, where his family now live.

These are but my memories from childhood into adulthood of Phyllis and Helen, mostly Helen, which began when I was attending National School with the Presentation nuns. Helen was a jolly, outgoing person and a dear friend of Sr. Agatha, who taught fourth class for many years. Miss O'Connell, as we called her, taught Irish Dancing and Figure Marching and she smelled of lavender – I could always smell it when she came near me to help with a

step or movement. She always wore a tweed skirt, a blouse, cardigan, flat shoes, stockings (sometimes ankle socks) and her hair in a bun.

I remember going up to her house in the Main Street with my mother, Liz Brett, not far away from my own house. She reared rabbits, black ones, white ones, brown ones, and kept them on a long row of hutches out in their back yard. I was fascinated by them and she used to let me help at feeding time. Luckily I didn't know they were sold for their skins, which were made into coats and shrugs, etc. My mother made a beautiful white fur cape for my sister, Joan, for her first dress dance. I also remember their housekeeper, Mrs O'Halloran, who dressed all in black – skirt down to the ground and a shawl criss-crossed around her waist.

Her hair was snow-white. I thought she was really spooky! Sure she was a lovely old lady, God rest her.

At one time Helen encouraged me to enter a competition in the Clonmel Show – to name a collection of wild flowers and grasses. She helped me to pick and name them. When she heard my Confirmation name was Frances, she assured me I could win, which I did! St. Francis of Assisi, she told me, was patron of animals, flowers and wild life. I wonder did he help me, or was it mostly Helen's doing? Anyway I was delighted.

When I left school I was involved with both sisters in the Fethard Players. Helen acted sometimes, but mostly took care of the make up and from her I learned all about 'No 3 Stick' and 'No 6 Stick', etc. Her remedy for sore lips, which I invariably get from the stuff, was 'Camphor Ice' of which she always had a supply.

Phyllis, a quiet, gentle soft-spoken person was our continuity person, or prompter, as it was then known. She was an expert at the job. She had a very gentle voice which carried remarkably well to the stage but no further!

From there I graduated to working with Helen on the Meals on Wheels. She managed operations from the Nissan Hut first and then the Town Hall for years. Indeed, she often had to rattle me up to remind me I was on duty to prepare meals – always good-humouredly.

Then there was the ICA – a

huge part of both their lives, especially Phyllis, who became the chief organiser driving up and down to the headquarters in Dublin and, indeed, all around Ireland visiting and encouraging all the guilds. She drove a Renault 4 and was a very proficient driver. My mother was also a voluntary organiser for South Tipperary and used to traverse the highways and byways in an old banger of a Morris 8 teaching rush-work and sheepskin curing. She was a good friend of both sisters. Every Christmas we got a present of a box of their beautifully kept apples all decorated with red crepe paper.

They were very involved in the life of the community – some of the things I can remember are the Altar Society, the Country Market, the Annual Chrysanthemum Show, pantomimes with Fr. Hogan, Fethard Carnivals and fancy dress parades. They were always there ready to volunteer and help out.

They were able craftswomen – rush work, jewellery making, lumra rug work – in fact I still have in my possession a circular work-box made from rush-work which their mother made, a beautiful piece of craftwork, fully lined inside. Phyllis gave it to me. I treasure it and use it still. It must be well over 100 years old.

They were a 'giving pair' – gave of themselves so much to the Fethard community. I have felt the need for a long time to put pen to paper to remember them and to remind oth-

ers of my vintage of the two lovely ladies and their contribution over the years to the town.

My last memory is visiting them in their porch in front of their bungalow. They were sitting down, 'Happy as Larry', busy at their lumra rug-making. They had a sister called Stephanie who was a nun in England and only visited home in later years, when she was allowed to do so. They also had a brother called Gerard who was a doctor in England and a

dog called Berry.

They made a big and lasting impression on me growing up and I'm so glad to take this opportunity to pay a small tribute to them both. The Nissan Hut or ICA Hall that was, is now called 'The O'Connell Hall' in their memory.

They are buried in the graveyard of our parish church – just at the top of the steps. May their gentle and lovely souls rest in peace. ●

Carmel Rice

Kampala Diary – January 1986



Jim Trehy, Donoughmore, photographed with visiting family members in January. L to R: Angela Edwards, Jim Trehy, Lynn Edwards, Aisling Edwards, Jamie Trehy (front), Tony Edwards and Gay Trehy

Going through some papers recently, I came across this diary that I had written during the siege of Kampala in January of 1986. I had been posted there by the European Commission as Agricultural Administrator approximately 18 months previously. The

office of the Commission was situated in downtown Kampala and the staff was made up of the Head of Delegation and five Administrators, each with a responsibility for a specific sector of the economy

Because there was a state of war in parts of the country that is Uganda,

our team had a security team in situ to assist in the event of problems which might arise as a result of the conflict.

The conflict came to a head in January 1986 when the leader of the guerrilla forces attacked the city of Kampala and my colleagues and I were trapped in our houses for a period while the Government forces under General Maruru were attacked by the guerrilla forces of Yoweri Musaveni. This is an account of the events of the following days more or less as they happened

Day 1 – 24th Jan – 0900 hours

Have not gone to the office. Sitting on my veranda listening to the big guns booming around the city. The BBC World Service broadcast said that Musaveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) are advancing on Kampala along the Hoima Road and Rubaga. That is quite a distance from here (Bugalobi) and I am not in any immediate danger

I am thumbing through project document which I was supposed to discuss with the Ministry of Livestock Husbandry this week but that is gone by the wayside now.

The guns are becoming more frequent now and it looks as if the Government forces are operating the big guns on Kololo Hill as well. The head of delegation lives on Kololo Hill so I expect he will be a bit uncomfortable now

My turn may come because my house is quite close to Mbuya

Barracks and Government forces there must be on full alert (Our security team live just below me in Bugalobi and they are in touch with all of us by two way radio which is accessible in the event of an emergency.)

Security (Bob) has been on to say that there is heavy fighting around the Clock Tower on the Entebbe Airport Road. He also said that we should stock up with water in case supplies are cut off and position the water in the safe area of the house. In my house that is the corridor upstairs which has two concrete walls on either side.

24th January - 1330 hours

The foreign minister of the besieged Government has made a statement on Uganda Radio to the effect that all is well with the Government and that there are some army exercises in progress and the people should remain calm. Likely story!

24th January - 1830 Hours

There was a big explosion a few minutes ago. Sounded like an oil tank going up in the industrial estate. I can see the plume of black smoke now on the horizon. It is just getting dark and I have asked Penina (the lady who cooks for me) and Abdu the gardener to go up to the safe area tonight. Penina is cool but Abdu seems a bit frightened.

Tank Hill has become noisy and the tracer is now visible across the sky.

BBC news has said that Musaveni's troops are moving into Kampala but are meeting strong resistance from Government troops especially around Rubaga and Makerere (the University area). Uganda radio usually opens at 1600 hours but it is silent today.

24th January - 2200 hours

A terrible battle raging across the valley in Kibuli. This is close to the Esso and Mobil compounds and I am afraid that the oil tanks there will go up. Anyhow we are safe in our corridor for the night. Hardly any likelihood of sleep, I think. I wonder how the Irish nuns are faring in Nambia Hospital which is on the edge of the Kibuli township. One of the nuns is a surgeon and she is known to be very skilled in treating bullet wounds. I think she will be busy tonight.

There is non-stop gunfire now down below me near the Coffee Marketing Board compound. Eli's house is down there. He must be in danger. I just thought it but security signalled that they are on the way to move him to their house.

Day 2 – 25th Jan – 0700 hours

After all, I did sleep for about 2 to 3 hours. But not till about 3 o'clock. At 0100 hours, all hell broke loose around us. There was earth shaking explosions, a lot of small arms fire and tracer that we could see reflected in the corridor. I think it was an attack on Mbuya Barracks

It lasted for about three quarters

of an hour and it scared the shit out of me. We had no lights on but we kept two candles burning in the corridor. Penina and Abdu were frightened too but they did not panic. That helped me to keep ` kind of cool.

Still don't know what it was. Security called on the radio at about 0900. They said that the attack was on Mbuya Barracks alright by Musaveni's forces but they did not capture the barracks. They were pushed back. Bob (security) thought that they will come again later in the day or tonight.

This morning the firing is sporadic and not as intense as yesterday. The security team are moving around town just now and they are reporting battles going on round Kololo. There is no activity round the Coffee Marketing Board - all soldiers are gone from the roadblock that was there. It would seem that many Government soldiers have left town – at least that is what I would like to believe.

Two Godsendings in this situation – the security team and two-way radio. The radio keeps us in touch with security and with colleagues and we are talking or listening to talk all the time. That's a great help. And the security team gives us confidence that all is under control. That is how it seems but we must be at risk especially if an assault is made on Mbuya barracks.

25th January – 1130 hours

Security - Norman and Doug

went to pick up two colleagues whose houses are in a high risk area. Their comments as they went round was interesting. They have seen soldiers moving from Mbuya Barracks and if that is so, then the danger in my house is lessened. They have seen a lot of casualties from both sides especially at road blocks near the centre of town

25th January – 1430 hours

Have just had a communication from security to lock all doors and move into the safe area as there is a large band of NRA moving across towards Mbuya from Tank Hill. My neighbours, Dilip (Elf Manager) and Jan van Der Horst (United Nations) are here and they must stay till it is safe to return to their houses. The corridor is a bit crowded but the company is appreciated.

25th January – 1700 hours

That was quite a show, RPGs and Bazookas and small arms fire as they passed the house. Security has heard that General Maruru has made his HQ in Mbuya Barracks and the NRA is attacking again. Seemingly they were unsuccessful again because Bob said on the radio that the men are retreating across the swamp towards Tank Hill.

Dilip and Jan went back to their houses so we are three again. Penina has made a meal and I'm eating but my interest in food is minimal at the moment.

There is tremendous small arms

fire in the direction of the Coffee Marketing Board. I would think that Musaveni's forces (NRA) want to set up a forward base there in order to make another attack on Mbuya Barracks..

25th January – 1730 hours

Water is now gone but electricity remains on sporadically. There is amazing quiet for an hour or so. I'm thinking that I would give a lot to be out of Uganda now. I think that my family in Dublin listening to the news on BBC are wondering if I am dead or alive.! Anyway, I'm trapped in Kampala and I can only sit out the siege now.

25th January – 1900 hours

The first positive news. Musaveni has taken control of most strategic places in town. They took Mbuya Barracks easily because the Government troops had left and headed for Jinja, a town about 30 kilometres east. That is a relief to know. But the security people want to consolidate in case the remnants of the army start to commandeer transport or other needs.

So all EC guys are to stay in the security house for the next few nights. I have to pack a few things and move NOW. Norman is here with the green jeep (the green jeep is known all over town as our security people). We all had a good chat about our experiences tonight and wait to see what happens tomorrow.

Day 3 – 26th Jan – 0700 hours

Not much signs of Sunday about. I 'm writing this in the middle of a small gun battle - how one gets used to these sounds is most surprising. It seems that the NRA are doing a clean up in the industrial area and taking over that part of the city.

The Head of Delegation has gone to town to try to meet the new bosses along with the British High Commissioner and the American Ambassador. The security team are with him and are filling us in on the radio as events happen. I am back in my house again because the security house is crowded and my place is easily accessible from security.

Bob on the radio says that they have been around town and have seen a lot of Musaveni's men (NRA) at various checkpoints. It does seem that they are consolidating their position. There are also a lot of dead bodies on Kampala Road and along the Entebbe Airport Road, Bob also says that there is some looting.

The fighting seems to have moved to the northeast and to Jinja area. Two towns - Soroti and Moroto have been hit and looted. One of my projects is centered on Moroto but the technical assistance had moved out to nearby Kenya with as much of the project equipment that they could shift. But there are bound to be losses.

26th January – 1500 hours

According to Bob on the radio, the Head of Delegation (HOD) met

Musaveni and had a discussion with him about ongoing projects, the present military situation, human rights and the defeated army. HOD seems to have been very impressed by Musaveni and his approach to development.

Abdu just came in and said, "Someone at the gate to talk to you". I was reluctant to go out but notified security that I was going to talk to whoever it was. He turned out to be an NRA soldier complete with semi automatic and field glasses. He wanted to inform households that his leader, Musaveni, would speak on Radio Uganda at 1800 hours when he would make a special announcement. The NRA man was very happy. He went next door after saying, "Praise the Lord, Kampala is now in our hands."

Some sporadic shooting goes on. Mick on the radio (what would we do without it) saw two government soldiers run up Younger Avenue and he warned me to stay in and lock the doors. I was inside at the time but there has been some movement between houses today.

There is a French couple further down the road and they have run out of food because they are sheltering some colleagues from the French embassy. I sent down some tins but I don't have a lot myself and I have to feed Penina and Abdu. I am sure food supplies in town will be very scarce for some time.

27th January – 1930 hours

This was a busy day. No time to think about the dangers of our situation. I was woken from a very deep sleep – the first in a few days – by the delegate's cook, Karamagi, on the radio to security reporting that there were intruders in the compound and they were stripping the wheels and windscreen of the delegate's Mercedes. He thought there were four people, two men and two women. The men and one woman left with the wheels and left one woman behind. This was at 0200 hours. I heard the security jeep race up past my house and heard no more till Mick called to my house at 10 o'clock. He just said that the team had dealt with the situation

Mick had also come to collect me for a meeting along with the delegate and my colleagues. The meeting was with Musaveni at the old palace of the Kabaka and under a banyan tree. Musaveni was very complimentary to the European Commission and their work in Uganda and he hoped that the good relations could be fostered under the new National Resistance Movement which he will preside over.

He came across as a very simple man who is aware of the development problems of his country and wants to tackle them as soon as possible. He touched on a wide range of issues – health, education, roads, agriculture and livestock development.

He talked about human rights and the importance of supporting these rights in countries where there

are abuses.

He went on to outline how he will go about reorganizing government through an interim council of the National Resistance Movement. His personnel will mobilise village committees who will advise on development matters.

I must say I was impressed. I had already heard of his village committees idea and that he had developed these units in all the areas that he took under his control towards the south of the country. I think some of our aid programmes particularly the Coffee Rehabilitation Programme which is my major program, will fit in quite well.

27th January – 2200 hours

Mick on the radio to Echo (my call sign). He is a ham radio operator as well as his other talents. Where do I live in Dublin? I tell him I live in Kilmacud. Is it near Leopardstown? Yes about two miles away. He has someone on the radio from Leopardstown and this man will give a message to Margaret and my family that I am okay and will speak to them as soon as telecoms are restored. Great. (He came down to Lakelands on his bicycle at midnight and delivered the message personally.)

I can sleep easy in my bed tonight! As I said before, thank God for small mercies. Must get up to see the nuns in Nsambia tomorrow if at all possible. ●

Jim Trehy

Walled Town Medieval Festival



National Walled Towns Day was celebrated in style in Fethard on Sunday 22nd August. Over two thousand people came from all parts of Ireland, and further afield, to attend the medieval festivities by Fethard's Valley park set in the shadow of the old Town Wall, where our forefathers used also sport and play over eight hundred years ago. This, our fourth annual Medieval Festival, was declared the 'most successful yet', helped immensely by great weather.

Again, the Town Wall along by the Clashawley was ablaze with colours of flags and family shields of the Norman families that first came and founded the actual town over 800 years ago. Liam Mannix, Project Manager Irish Walled Towns Network at The Heritage Council, and also

Alison Harvey (Heritage Council of Ireland) — a great friend of all things 'Fethard' — attended the festival and were truly impressed with the medieval frolics in the Town. The Heritage Council also sent a TV crew to film sections of the events which will be later available on their website www.heritagecouncil.ie Our thanks again to the Heritage Council and South Tipperary County Council who helped part-fund the event with the local Medieval Festival Committee comprising of members of Fethard Historical Society and Fethard & Killusty Community Council.

This year's festival kicked off on Saturday with the opening of the 'Fired by Bees' ceramic exhibition by local artist Dóirín Saurus in the Town Hall and was followed at 6.30pm by a guided tour of the

Medieval Town by Mary Hanrahan of the Historical Society. At 8pm, Tony Newport launched Michael O'Donnell's book 'Fethard County Tipperary 1200-2000' in the Abymill to a full house. Following this tremendously successful event those with energy retired to McCarthy's Marquee to hear the unique singing and songs of John Spillane from Cork, who was supported by Laura Rice from Brookhill.

Sunday was simple magnificent, the sun shone to all our delight, the people came and a great show awaited them starting on the Square where the Fayreweather Band entertained the gathering spectators and participants of the Medieval Fancy Dress Parade. It was again great to see ninety-seven year old Nellie Shortall arriving in full medieval attire at the parade with chauffeur Sean Ward. I don't think Nellie has

missed a parade in all her time living in Fethard.

The very colourful parade, marshalled by Tony Hanrahan, made its way to the Town Wall via Main Street to loud applause from the spectators as they passed.

The Valley looked great in the sunshine. All the work of the Tidy Towns, County Council staff and locals was a joy to behold along with the great flags fluttering in the wind overlook the Town Wall decorated with the Norman family shields, well it surely made a pretty picture. The afternoons entertainment provided by medieval re-enactors, childrens activity tents, craft stalls, fun and games, archery, dog show, bird displays, food stalls, exhibitions, music was continuously enjoyed by huge crowds of all ages, making it our most successful festival to date. ●





Fethard Players cast of 'A Life' photographed in the Abymill Theatre. L to R: Liam O'Connor, Marian Gilpin, Anne Connolly, Colm McGrath, Pat Brophy, Mia Treacy, Anne Kennedy and Ciarán Mullally.



Paul Davey, Manager of Fethard Credit Union, presenting flowers to twins, Joan and Eileen Gleeson, who were first customers at the office on Friday 4th June after the "transfer of engagements" by Fethard and District Credit Union to Clonmel Credit Union. Both Board of Directors had previously met and approved the transfer on the 1st June.

Fethard Car Boot Sale



The weekly market has a huge social aspect to it where people get a chance to meet and have a chat about the week's events over a cup of coffee.

Bargains are always available from toys, tools, books, clothes, antiques, shrubs, fruit & veg, car accessories and collectable items. Whatever you are seeking, you are sure to find it at the Fethard Car Boot Sale held every Sunday from 11am.

A new feature at Fethard Car Boot Sale is the presence of talented buskers who bring their lyrics and music to the market. This is a great chance for any budding musician to play to the public without feeling too stressed. Freddie's amazing Puppet Show has also been a great hit with young kids. ●





'Stella Days' in Fethard — opening night of the Stella Cinema 1957 (filmed in the Town Hall)



1950s dance hall scene from 'Stella Days' filmed in the Town Hall (see page 122)