Fethard & Killusty NEWSLETTER 2014

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Nellie Fitzpatrick, Rocklow Road, photographed in London with her brother Tom. Nellie, who later married Larry Shortall, celebrated her 101st birthday on October 24, 2014. Her brother Tom now lives in New York.

Front cover photograph ‘Fethard in Winter’ taken this year by David Henderson (Chief Operating Officer at NAS - National Aviation Services, Kuwait)
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Parish Greetings

Once again I send greetings to all at home and away as we rapidly approach Christmas and New Year.

In October 2011 a hole in the ground in the wilderness of the Chilean desert held the centre of the world’s attention – 33 miners had spent 69 days trapped 700 meters underground, the first 17 days of which they had to endure without human contact. One thing that struck me as I followed the coverage was the faith of the miners and their willingness to express it publicly. They also survived by working together.

At Christmas we celebrate Jesus coming among us as a light in the world. In the rather ‘topsy turvy’ world that is ours at this present time, may we help to make His light shine as we place our trust in Him; and as we work together on the journey may we start this Christmas and New Year with a new sense of hope. The God who gives us hope is the God who listens when we cry out in despair.

I send my greetings to all in far-off places, Canada, Australia etc. Greetings also to Fr. Anthony McSweeney and Fr Morty O’Shea. May you have peace and a renewed sense of hope in all your homes this Christmas and a space for the baby Jesus in your hearts.

Fr. Tom Breen PP

Augustinian Abbey Greetings

Dear Reader, does the year pass more quickly because I am getting older? Christmas will be upon us soon. I am greeting all our readers at home and in exile that all the blessings on the Holy Season will fall from heaven upon you.

The big news from the Abbey is that Fr. John Meagher OSA was transferred from Fethard to the Augustinian nursing home in Ballyboden, Dublin, in June this year. Reports from there are that he is one of the few of fourteen patients who is walking around without a walking aid.

Fr. John celebrated his 98th birthday in September in the presence of his niece and nephew and their families. Some of his very good friends also called to see him, relaying that as soon as he sees a doctor he will return to Fethard. This, unfortunately, will never happen. He is in the best place for a man in his stage of life.

As for our community of three – Fr. Gerry Horan, Fr. Lazarus Bakindo and myself – life goes on. I must add that Fr. Lazarus is becoming more Irish and the Irish themselves. Have a peaceful Christmas.

Fr. Martin Crean OSA.
Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary, Fethard wish to send greetings to all readers, especially to all emigrants from the areas of Fethard and Killusty, for a joyful and spiritual Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year. We ask Our Blessed Mother to shower all parishioners and readers with the many blessings and graces received from her Divine Son, which will strengthen our faith and help us to live truly Christian lives.

The Legion of Mary, Fethard entitled Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Senior Praesidium, Fethard, meets every Monday at 7pm in the Abbey residence. New active members are very welcome to come along and join us. At present we have eight active members and many auxiliary members. Members are a lay movement who wish to develop their spiritual lives and their faith in order to achieve personal sanctity, with the goal of reaching eternal salvation. Being in the Legion helps members to work seriously towards this goal.

The works of the Legion are as follows:-

Spreading devotion to Our Lady and the Holy Rosary, the Miraculous Medal and the Green and Brown Scapulars; the distribution of Holy water; making available the Catholic Sunday newspapers in the Abbey and Killusty and the Parish Church; the sale of Blessed Rosary Beads and spiritual and religious literatures at the 11.30am Sunday Masses in the Abbey; the recitation of the
Rosary in the Abbey during May and October; helping to organise the May and Corpus Christi processions; the recitation of the Rosary for the Holy Souls in November at twelve cemeteries in the area, namely:- the Parish Church, Holy Trinity, Augustinian Church, Everardsgrange, Calvary Cemetery, Peppardstown, Rathcoole, Red City, Tullamaine, Kiltinan, Killusty, Kilmacluh and Presentation Convent. Some of these cemeteries are in remote areas, which are infrequently visited. Also the monthly Patrician meetings have been revived. We also take part in a day’s annual retreat and in an annual outing to places of spiritual and religious interest.

Legion members also visit the nursing homes. They enjoy speaking to many of our Fethard friends now living in these homes. They are always made welcome and come away refreshed and happy to have met such patient and thoughtful natives of our locality.

In order to appreciate the work being done by the Legion of Mary, you might wish to come along to our weekly meetings and learn first-hand how we pray and work.

A special mention of our spiritual director, Fr. John Meagher OSA is called for. He enriched our meetings for a long time and deserves special thanks for his unfailing support and direction given so kindly and cheerfully. He is now a resident in St. Augustine’s, Ballyboden, and we are glad to say, he is very happy there. Our thanks also to our Parish Priest, the Presentation Sisters and the Augustinians for their ever-present support. Finally, the Legion of Mary wish you well during the Christmas season and throughout the coming year.

This photograph was taken by Nicky O’Shea at the Fethard London Reunion sometime in the 1970s.
Greetings to all readers – far and near – from Killusty National School.

For us here at the foot of Sliabh na mBan, the last year has been filled with lots of variety, interesting changes, many highlights and much fun. September 2013 saw the enrolment of our Junior Infants – Emily, Inés, Katie, Tadhg and Tara. They were a very welcome addition to our school and settled in nicely with life in Killusty N.S. Also during the month of September Killusty school enjoyed a sponsored trip up Sliabh na mBan. Great fun was had by all.

October rolled in before we knew it and 2nd to 6th took part in a cycling day organised by Cycle Ireland. The children dazzled us with their various skills and learned new ones on the day. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Also during October the senior room took part in a gaelic football blitz in Mullinahone. Killusty played commendably and won two out of their three games but despite a fine display of sporting spirit, victory was not ours on the day.

November was spent preparing for the annual Christmas show under the dedicated eye of Martha Sheehan, our speech and drama teacher. Auditions got under way and songs were decided upon. Rehearsals were in full swing in no time.

During the month of December the children made their way to the Pantomime in Limerick. There the children were treated to a wonderful performance of Aladdin. Staying on
the drama theme but back on home ground, all the November rehearsals were to come to fruition. Martha Sheehan and the children staged a fantastic production of The Little Match Girl. We were all treated to a delightful evening.

The end of 2013 saw the exit of our long-established and much loved principal, Frances Harrington. We trust Mrs Harrington is enjoying her retirement and we know she thinks of us from time to time.

The new year rolled in and children returned to school in January ready once again for hard work. It was business as usual. During January the children were treated to a Con Cluaine production of the old Irish legend Setanta. The children of Killusty school made their way to Cloneen N.S. where the event was hosted. The show was enjoyed immensely by all. January also saw the commencement of our swimming instruction. Children from 1st to 6th class travelled by bus to Clonmel swimming pool every Tuesday afternoon for lessons. Also during January, much preparation went into Mrs. Harrington’s retirement Mass which took place on January 31. Parents, staff and the whole school community worked together to make this event very special indeed. The children were proud to be part of the celebration and a delightful evening was had by all.

February tumbled along and brought with it a new arrival – Sarah O’Sullivan was welcomed on board as the new principal of Killusty N.S. She replaced Mrs. Harrington as the new junior room teacher and everyone settled in nicely.

March was a very busy month indeed. Our local librarian, Anne-Marie, paid a visit to Killusty N.S. on

Killusty National School pupils looking over the school wall (November 2013)
L to R: Tara Moquet, Emily Holohan, Inés Byrne and Katie Coonan.
World Book Day – March 6. Classes were treated to story-telling and book readings. Confirmation day for Killusty and Fethard was celebrated on March 14. The VIPs on the day were Ben Coen, Carrie Davey, Caoimhe O’Meara, Jessica Gainford, James Doyle, Laura O’Donnell, Leah Coen, Mikey Doyle, Kieran O’Donnell, Phoebe Duggan and Cathal Ryan. It was a truly lovely day. Community games competitions were also held in March. Fabulous pieces of art and handwriting were entered by the children in Killusty School. Handwriting medal winners were Dara O’Meara, Éabha Ryan and Danny Shelly. Freya Byrne received a special commendation. Art medals went to Jessica Gainford, Freya Byrne, Charlie Hackett, Kieran O’Donnell, Ben Coen, James Doyle, Evan Moore, Amy Morrissey and Mikey Doyle.

April was a busy month for the junior room. Not to feel left out on the aquatics fun, juniors and seniors travelled to Clonmel swimming pool to enjoy a morning of splashing and games. From there we made our way across to the library where Marie treated the children to some lovely stories. And as it was a fine day we stopped off in the playground in Fethard for more fun and games. A great day was enjoyed by all. Also during April the school had a non-uniform day when the children brought in a contribution towards Trocaíre’s Lenten campaign. We felt very proud raising money for a good cause. Towards the end of April the children of Killusty school participated with An Taisce Spring Clean up in preparation for the First Holy Communion weekend. The community came out in force and a smashing job was done indeed.

May came around quickly and it proved to be even busier. First Holy Communion was held on Sunday May 4. The recipients were: Emily, Evan, George, Jack, Jake, Matt and Taryn. A wonderful day was enjoyed by the whole community. Killusty N.S.
participated in Active School Week during the month of May also. The senior room paid a visit to Semple Stadium where they took part in gaelic football, hurling and camogie activities. They were also treated to a tour of the stadium. Meanwhile back at base the junior room enjoyed our ‘Drop everything and Dance’ activity and our spontaneous Mexican waves. In keeping with a sporting theme, the senior room participated in athletics events in Clonmel. Great success came our way on the day. Killusty N.S. won all the small school events – a great achievement.

During the month of May, fifth and sixth class headed into the secondary school in Fethard to enjoy a flavour of post-primary school life. Appetites were definitely whetted. They participated in science, art and baking activities on the morning and all returned more relaxed about their transition. The month of May was closed off with our annual school tour. This year the whole school was Limerick bound as we travelled to UL for an activity packed day on Friday, May 30. Thankfully the weather was kind to us on the day which made our outdoor activities all the more enjoyable. A picnic style lunch was enjoyed by one and all. A very tired but satisfied bus load of children returned home safely to Killusty at 6.30 that evening.

June announced itself with glorious sunshine. Unfortunately, however, the day of the senior room’s Local Studies trip around our medieval town of Fethard was blighted with showers. The children enjoyed the talk by our local historian Terry Cunningham as he escorted them along the town wall, under the protection of many much-welcomed umbrellas! Also during June, Pat Looby visited our school in anticipation of the Medieval Festival. Under her talented instruction, the children designed hats and created shields which became a main feature on parade day.
Our annual sports day took place in mid-June. We tempted fate by scheduling our sports day for Friday 13 but in fact the day couldn’t have gone any better. The weather was glorious, we enjoyed a morning of fun ‘Kool School’ activities, an afternoon of races and to top it all an ice-cream van made an appearance on the day - courtesy of our past principal. This was certainly the icing on the cake and will be remembered for a long time to come.

Our Graduation Mass was presided over by Rev. Canon T. Breen on June 20, 2014. Those graduating were Ben Coen, Carrie Davey, Caoimhe O’Meara, Michael Doyle, Jessica Gainford, James Doyle, Laura O’Donnell, Leah Coen and Mikey Doyle. It was a truly lovely occasion even though it was one of farewell. We trust our recent graduates are busy with the challenges and demands which secondary school life presents but embracing them warmly nonetheless. We look forward to a return visit from time to time.

In June we also said good bye to Sarah Hogan our shared teacher for 2013-2014. Sarah returned to Holy Trinity N.S. in Fethard and was missed by all here in Killusty. We wish her well.

I’m sure the next year has a few surprises to throw our way. We look forward with anticipation and hope to the wonder of what lie ahead.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh go léir. A peaceful and Happy New Year to one and all.

– Sarah O’Sullivan (Principal)
This photograph with ‘Fethard Tennis & Badminton Club Annual Dance, February 26, 1957’ written on the back was found by Karen Davies while working in Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 on January 28, 2014. Karen looked Fethard up on the Internet and posted the photograph to Joe Kenny to be identified and returned to owner. After posting the photograph on fethard.com Anne (Kenrick) Walsh, Dublin, formerly from Burke Street, and Tony O’Donnell, Dublin, formerly from Crampscastle, both contacted us within hours and identified the couple as Joan and the late Sean Kennedy. Burke Street. Sean and Joan owned the pub on Burke Street, later known as Carroll’s Pub and presently Gaule’s Pub. Joan and Sean sold up and moved to Dublin and opened another pub there. They had three children, Jimmy, Sheila and Tony.
Saving hay on Woodlock’s farm in the 1950s. John Woodlock driving tractor with Mick Breen, Michael Woodlock, Davy Woodlock, Austy and Vincent Woodlock on board. (Supplied by Johnny O’Dwyer)

O’Connell family from Coleman. L to R: Mary Hopkins, Tommy O’Connell, Josie (O’Connell) Gildea, Joe O’Connell, Margaret Croke, Connie O’Connell, Peter O’Connell and James O’Connell. (missing Nora Heffernan, Jackie O’Connell, Kilsheelan, Michael O’Connell, Paddy O’Connell, Billy O’Connell.)

Adrian O’Donovan with daughter Chloe and son Cian, enjoying the climb to Slievenamon this year.
The Searchers

by Don McCarthy

What makes a man to wander?
What makes a man to roam?
What makes a man leave bed and board and turn his back on home?

This hauntingly sad song accompanies the opening credits of what may be director John Ford’s most ambitious film. What was very odd for a Hollywood film of that time (1956) was that the questions asked were not directly answered as Hollywood rarely allowed loose ends or left questions unanswered.

I don’t remember but I would hazard a guess that the above great western arrived on the big screen in the Capitol cinema in Fethard around 1959/1960. If it did then I imagine all the hot-blooded males like myself and the other ten-and eleven-year-olds got a terrible urge to go on a search, though we knew we would never be lucky enough to find the beautiful Natalie Wood at the end of our expedition.

Exciting events didn’t occur very often around the Green at that time. We didn’t wake up every morning wondering what great piece of excitement we might have to contend with that day. Life was fairly humdrum and mundane. Sometimes a couple of dogs got stuck together. It didn’t bother us kids any but the grown ups sure seemed to get hot and bothered about it. Maybe the cir-
cus, the amusements or the George Daniels road show arriving in town caused the heart to beat a little faster. Maybe the county council tarring the road brought about a shiver of near excitement. Maybe someone’s rich relatives coming to visit in a lovely new car stirred the blood.

And then it happened, not once but twice. The sheer joy and excitement emanating from the misfortune of others. This was what we dreamed about, our chance to go on a search, when we could play the roles of John Wayne and Jeffrey Hunter, when we could be and were ‘The Searchers’.

Search 1

Landon was our neighbour and our friend and he lived with his parents, his brothers, ‘The Navigator’ and Giuseppe, and his sister Jemima. Landon often filled in for his dad minding the store and serving the customers. He was a very smart guy and quickly learned about turnover, profit margins and that all customers were not the same. Another of Landon’s tasks was to engage in commerce with other establishments in the area and it was this which led to the first of the great searches.

One day Landon was given a five-pound note (near enough a week’s wages at the time) by his dad and sent on a mission. This mission entailed departing the safety of ‘Fort Home’ and venturing into hostile territory. He would have to cross the badlands of Burke Street and Abbey Street, negotiate his way across the wide expanse of the great Clashawley river and on into the wasteland beyond. His final destination was a settlement known as The Creamery. This place was often frequented by roughnecks called farmers and Landon would have been warned not to engage with them, he would have been advised to, “Just get your business done and get home safely”, and, “For God’s sake don’t lose the fiver.”

Bravely Landon set off, with the money clutched tightly in his little hand, knowing that danger lurked everywhere, that he might at any time have to contend with the bandits from Burke Street, the Indians from the Valley, or the Comancheros from St. Patrick’s Place.

I heard the agonizing wail from the door of my hacienda and I saw Landon between sobs try to explain the inexplicable. He had lost the fiver. Where are you now Mr Ford? None of your old makey uppy stuff here. What we have is real life imitating art. Who needs Monument Valley when we have the highways and byways of Fethard to search? A dispatch was sent to the sheriff’s office but he was at that time on the trail of some rustlers and was not available to coordinate the search. The main body of searchers spread out and retraced Landon’s steps. We formed our own posse and decided to search the side roads and back lanes. We knew
that Landon had not been down Barrack Street or up the Back Green but we searched them anyway. We made our way across Healy’s lane and over the rocks and every sweet paper, fag box and gum wrapper was checked out.

As evening time closed in the posse members started to lose faith, their energy spent. They were tired and hungry so they started to drift off home making lame excuses like, “My mother will be worried about me”, or, “I have homework to do,” until only The Navigator, myself and Mitch were left. We decided to make one final swoop knowing that if we found it now any reward would be divided in two as ‘The Navigator’ being a family member didn’t count. If a gem like Natalie Wood could be found surely God would help us find a lousy five-pound note.

Search 2

When he was about eight years old Dolan read a story in a comic which to this day has coloured his feelings towards cats. In the story cats were depicted as aliens in disguise, evil creatures just waiting for the most opportune time to take over the earth. Like John Wayne with Indians, Dolan thought the only good cat was a dead cat.

Dolan with his brothers Anton and Mitch, were obliged to help their parents keep a good garden. The garden was a source of great pride to their father and the three boys were very protective of it and were prepared to take up arms to defend their patch against any invading creatures, especially cats.

Now there was a lovely lady in the neighbourhood who loved cats. She had numerous cats of her own but would always provide a home to any stray. The cats were treated with great kindness by the lady and each bore a very exotic name, some of which may have had their origins in Japan.

One day as they sat in their kitchen having a cup of tea and a slice of grinder, with the back door open, Anton spotted an invader rooting up the emerging new onions. Like a flash Anton was out the door and without breaking stride picked up a good sized stone. The invader, too engrossed in his destructiveness, failed to notice the impending danger. In truth the poor old cat wasn’t a bit afraid and would only leave when forcible ejected. Anton threw the stone, only as a warning you understand, but it hit the cat on the head and the poor creature died instantly. Dolan, hot on his brother’s heels witnessed the killing and saw it as nothing more than another small step towards the preservation of the human race, one less alien to contend with when they eventually made their move. However, Anton became quite upset at what had happened, explaining that it was an accident and that he didn’t mean to hit the cat. A pact was made and the cat was secretly buried.
Later that evening word spread that the cat was missing and a search was being organized. Anton, having had a few hours to recover, was now back to his old self and was the self-appointed leader of the new posse. Imagine, they now had the chance to go on a second search so soon after the first one. Life may never get more exciting than this.

The search was conducted in the same haphazard way as the first one except this time two of the seekers knew the search was all a cod. That knowledge however, did not dampen their enthusiasm and they ran around like all the other headless chickens giving it their best shot. There was no denying the evil deed. However, one boy's misfortune was another's opportunity and Dolan, the little shagger, was not about to pass up on such a chance. “Murderer”, he whispered to Anton as the search was concluding. “Shut up”, said Anton in reply, “Someone will hear you”, but Dolan looking at Anton’s wan face knew he had him. “It will cost you”, said the blackmailer Dolan. “What will it cost me?”, said the killer Anton. “The terms and conditions we will discuss later,” said Dolan, smirking his well-practised Edward G. Robinson smirk.

Unanswered questions and loose ends

Who lost the fiver? Who, if any, found the fiver? Who killed the cat? Who is the blackmailing knave? Who owned the cat? What was the price of secrecy?

Mr Editor, what was good enough for Hollywood should be good enough for you!
The Irish Walled Town Network (IWTN) is a thirty-two county body administered and mostly financed by the Heritage Council whose headquarters are in Kilkenny City. Other county and city councils also contribute to the central fund. Tipperary County Council pays Fethard’s membership fee every year. IWTN membership has been very advantageous to Fethard since its formation in 2005, as through this network Fethard’s medieval heritage became nationally recognised. All Heritage Council funding used for the preservation of the Town Wall, has come as a result of our membership. Furthermore, the bulk of finances that Fethard Historical Society used to stage the Annual Medieval Festival for the past eight years have also come from the Walled Towns Network – a ‘Fairy Godmother’ to Fethard during the bad years of the recession.

The Walled Towns Network works closely with the local county council to ensure that the ‘medieval aspect’ of Fethard is strengthened in every way possible. The new ‘rumble strips’ and signage installed during 2014 at the sites of the five gateways into Fethard is all part of this collaboration between the two bodies. All this good work over the past decade – including the Fáilte Ireland financed information panels – has helped Fethard to get County Council and Leader funding so as to transform the Tholsel (old Town Hall) into a Tourist Reception Centre for Fethard. At a national level there is great belief that Fethard can develop into a small but vibrant tourist destination. The IWTN website itself calls Fethard, ‘Ireland’s most picturesque walled town’, so that’s a pretty good accolade to have from the body that oversees all the walled towns in the thirty-two counties.
This Toll Board dating from the 1880s was discovered in a local shed in the 1970s, and is now the property of Tipperary County Council. The toll charges were collected twice yearly, at the October and April fairs. An official of the Town Commissioners visited the various stall-holders and sellers and collected the fees from them. The Toll Boards were in use up to the 1940s and then faded from the scene.

London Reunion 1970s. L to R: Denis O’Donovan, his sister Vera and wife Rose.
Josie Connell, Coleman, who used to work in the Convent, pictured in Fethard Fancy Dress parade as ‘Going to the Dogs’.
Training for sports day in the Barrack Field c.1980 are Back L to R: Louise O’Meara, Ann Bradshaw. Front L to R: Lorraine McCormack, Suzanne O’Meara, Dessie O’Meara and Rosanna O’Meara.

Nellie Shortall sitting on a bench outside O’Shea’s shop, Lower Main Street, with Mrs. O’Shea standing at the door.

Community Games had wonderful participation and great success in 2014. After a long path through the area, county and Munster finals, a total of seven competitors qualified for the coveted National Finals in Athlone AIT where they performed very well.

We are very proud of all our participants this year who gave their parents, mentors and supporters hours of excitement and entertainment. Our area won various medals in all of the individual events at county level. There were some breath-taking finishes in the athletics finals in Templemore, the girls’ football team put up a spectacular performance in University of Limerick winning their semi final against Waterford but were pipped by Cork in the final.

There was an emotional moment in Athlone when young Isobel Maher won a bronze medal in under-10 backstroke, swimming on her first attempt.

We would like to compliment all parents and managers for their support to the community games committee especially Micheál Spillane, Annette Connolly, Willie Morrissey, Michael Moroney, Fiona and Michael Ryan, Miceál McCormack and Fethard GAA Committee for their dedication and cooperation with the GAA events, also to Siobhán and Micheál Maher for their valuable assistance with the swimming event.

The following is an overview of the complete results:-

Art (Area) – U8 Girls: Aoife Harrington, Freya Byrne, Isabelle

**Art (County)** – Leo Makhynka won gold and represented Tipperary at the National Finals while Matthew Burke won silver and Jennifer Phelan won bronze.


**Athletics (County)** – Alison Connolly and Jack Dolan both won gold. Oisín Ryan won silver, Ryan Walsh and Lucy Spillane both won bronze. Alison and Jack represented Tipperary in Athlone where Jack qualified for the final of the 1500m and had a tremendous race narrowly missing a medal. Alison was at the start but was unable to run due to an injury.

**Gymnastics** – Katie Allen from Woodvale Walk won the U9 category in the County final and represented Tipperary at the National Finals in Athlone where she performed very well.

**Handwriting** – Anna Collier, Crampscastle, Gillian Burke, Sladagh, Dara O’Meara, Killusty and Sean Moroney, Tullamaine competed in the county final in Moneygall. Dara won a gold medal here with bronze going to both Anna and Sean. Dara then represented Tipperary in the All Ireland finals in Athlone where he submitted an excellent script even though not in the medals.

**Swimming** – The Maher sisters Abaigeal and Isobel, Tinakelly won U16 and U10 events at the County Swimming Championship where Thomas Morgan, Grangebeg was second in the boys U16 freestyle event. Abaigeal and Isobel then proudly
represented the county in Athlone at the National Finals where Isobel won a bronze medal which was a great achievement.

**GAA Team events U10 Mixed football** – This team which consisted of Conor Neville, Thomas Donegan, Jack Quinlan, Shane Lawrence, Dara O’Meara, Michael James Phelan, Michael Flanagan, Charlie Hackett, Seán Moroney, Nicole Delaney, Cáin Hall, Lilly O’Mahony, Heather Spillane, Kelly Ryan and Luke Dolan had some super games defeating Drangan-Cloneen and Killenaule-Moyglass but lost to Cahir in the South Final.

**U12 Girls Football** – County champions from last year once again gave their mentors and supporters some memorable games. They defeated Ardfinnan and Cahir on their way to the county final in Semple Stadium where they successfully defended their title with a win over Templemore. This brought them to the Munster Finals in University of Limerick where they beat Waterford in the semi-final but just could not contain the strong challenge of Cork in the final. Team members were Alison Connolly, Laura Harrington, Ava Ward, Emma Lyons, Aoife Morrissey, Eimear O’Sullivan, Hayley Ryan, Kaylin O’Donnell, Aine Ryan, Jess Gleeson, Nell Spillane, Heather Spillane, Lily O’Mahony, Nicole Delaney, Kelly Ryan and Ellie Devaney.

**U14 Camogie** – Team members were Lucy Spillane, Laura O Donnell, Sally Butler, Katie Ryan, Carrie Davey, Alison Connolly, Chloe Nolan Ciara Connolly, Ava Hickey, Sally Nagle,
Nell Spillane, Aine Ryan, Laura Kiely, Amy Roche and Sophie Delaney. These young girls were unlucky to meet a more experienced team from Powerstown Lisronagh in the first round and some players suffered injuries, but we are sure to see more of them in 2015.

U14 Tag Rugby team played in the county final where they tied with Cashel but forfeited the game on the count back to the first score to Cashel. Personally I cannot see the logic in this system. Team members were Richard Anglim, Peter Wall, Ryan Walsh, Ethan Coen, Evan Looby, Charlie Pearson, Alison Connolly, Laura O’Donnell, Leah Coen, Carrie Davey, and Lisa Anglim (manager).

It was a very worthwhile and enjoyable year and we look forward to continued success in 2015.

We wish to congratulate the local ladies football teams in all age groups, both junior and senior, on the wonderful success they are having at the moment. Joe Keane, current Community Games chairman, was responsible for founding the ladies football club in Fethard so he is very pleased with the outcome.

Sean Devaney was responsible for reviving rugby in the area a few years ago, also through Community Games, after a lapse of 70 years, and they have gone from strength to strength playing successfully at numerous levels. Well done to all.

We would like to extend our sympathy to all families who suffered bereavements during the year. We wish to sincerely thank everybody who supported us financially and assisted with administration also Joe Kenny, The Nationalist, Tipp FM, South Tipp Today and all the media who afforded us great publicity, Philip Butler who included Community Games achievements for recognition in many of his monthly sports awards in 2014. Apologies if I have omitted anyone. All help is very much appreciated.

We wish everybody at home and abroad a Happy and Holy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.
A short history of Fethard Railway

Last year, 2013, marked the passing of 50 years since the railway through Fethard was closed to scheduled passenger services, the official date of closure being “from” Monday, September 9, 1963, so that the final trains ran the previous Saturday, September 7. The last regular passenger train consisted of locomotive A22 hauling a 2-piece railcar set (for the record, AEC driving motor cars 2627 and 2638). The train had started from Ballybrophy, where it took a connection from Dublin. An additional coach was attached at Thurles, but only some 40 passengers travelled, so there was ample space for all. Arrival in Clonmel was 30 minutes late, so no doubt some farewells were made along the way.

The first portion of the line opened on Monday, June 23, 1879, from Clonmel to Fethard, by the grandiosely-named “Southern Railway Company”, but it was a further year before the rest of the route to Thurles was ready for service, the first trains running on Thursday, July 1, 1880. The Southern Railway owned no rolling stock, and all trains on the Fethard branch were operated by the Waterford & Limerick company, the “main line” railway in Clonmel. The Southern company went bust in 1884, when the Fethard railway was taken over by the Board of Works, with the Waterford and Limerick company continuing to run the trains.

However, the Southern Railway Company was never formally wound up, and the Board of Works arrangement continued for another 40 years until 1925. In that year, the
old independent railway companies in the Irish Free State were amalgamated into a single entity, the Great Southern Railways (GSR). The Southern Railway Company had the dubious distinction of being the last organisation to be officially subsumed into the GSR, when no one could be found claiming to have any remaining interest in it.

From Clonmel, the Fethard line diverged to the north, serving Powerstown Park racecourse when events took place, by a platform about ¾ mile out. From there, the line climbed for some 3 miles before reaching an undulating section with fine views of Slievenamon. Fethard was reached at 8¾ miles from Clonmel. The remaining sta-
tions were at Farranaleen (11¾ miles), Laffansbridge & Killenaule (16¼), and Horse & Jockey (20¼). The Cork main line was joined at Thurles Junction (24¼), site of a beet factory from 1934, with extensive rail sidings, and Thurles station followed after a further mile.

The initial 1880 service of three trains daily in each direction between Clonmel and Thurles remained unchanged for decades, and by the 1920s had settled into a pattern of morning and evening passenger-only services in each direction, with a midday mixed train (passengers and goods), also in each direction.

Life on this idyllic rural railway byway was largely tranquil, apart from some incidents during the War of Independence and more serious actions during the Civil War. Normality was restored after the end of the Civil War in March 1923, but from then on, traffic declined all over the railway system. The Fethard branch was no exception, and by 1938 the morning passenger trains ran on Wednesdays and Saturdays only, and the line was threatened with closure.

The advent of the Second World War brought about a reprieve, and trains continued to run, albeit with a great reduction in frequency as coal supplies dwindled. The end of the war was followed by the bitter and extended Winter of 1946/47, with further fuel shortages and more curtailment of transport services, and it was not until 1948 that conditions eased fully. But now only one passenger train ran each day, up to Thurles in the morning, and down to Clonmel in the evening. A goods service ran in the opposite direction, down from Thurles in the morning, and back in the afternoon.

This vestigial service continued to 1954, when CIE introduced a railbus to the branch and reinstated two round trips daily, up from Clonmel morning and afternoon, and down from Thurles late morning and in the evening. The railbus, No. 2508, was an AEC Regal road bus, converted to railway use at Inchicore works in Dublin. It was the only such vehicle to run on the CIE network, although several similar railbuses worked on the Great Northern railway and affiliated companies. With very little capacity, it could not cope well with busy days. Nonetheless, the railbus remained assigned to the Fethard branch into the winter timetable of 1956, but the summer timetable of 1957 shows steam trains to have been reinstated, happily with the twice daily service being retained.

Modernisation arrived at last from January 1, 1959, when closure of the Harcourt St. line in Dublin released a number of railcar sets, one of which took up duty between Clonmel and Thurles. From then until closure, the Clonmel railcar, usually 2-piece, ran beyond Thurles to and from Ballybrophy, where it provided a connection into Dublin-Limerick trains. Travel time between
Dublin Kingsbridge (now Heuston) and Fethard was typically about 2 hours 45 minutes. From June 1961 to closure in 1963, the first morning train from Clonmel started back from Waterford, giving a good connection from Carrick-on-Suir to Dublin, while the down evening train also ran back to Waterford. This extension of the service was primarily, however, to bring the railcar to a location with overnight servicing facilities, namely Waterford.

In the Autumn of 1961, the use of a steam engine on the goods train appears to have finally been superseded by diesel traction. Regular goods service between Thurles and Clonmel continued after the passenger closure in 1963, until the line was closed finally to all traffic from Monday, March 27, 1967. This four-year reprieve appears to have been due at least in part to the late appearance of a surprising new traffic, Ballingarry coal from Laffansbridge, exported, remarkably, to South Wales – a kind of real life “coals to Newcastle”. A new siding was installed at Laffansbridge in 1963 and up to nine wagons a day were brought to Waterford for shipping to Newport, Monmouthshire.

The line also saw several beet specials daily, during the beet season, running between South Wexford and Waterford stations to Thurles. But it all came to an end in 1967, sadly long before there was any concept of greenways. The old right of way across the bogland to Laffansbridge, through the scenic gap in the hills down to Farranaleen and Fethard, and up over the hills again to Clonmel, with its fine views of Slievenamon and Comeraghs, has been lost to the traveller. But the railway no doubt still lives on in the memories of those, now all at least well into their 50s or 60s, who made use of the trains in those final years.

I am grateful to Joe Kenny for the opportunity to provide a brief memoir and some images of this charming railway. I am also grateful to the Irish Railway Record Society for permission to use the present photographs, and especially to Ciarán Cooney for locating these pictures from the Society’s Collections. The Society publishes a Journal of Irish railway history three times a year, available by subscription only – see www.irrs.ie. A history of the Waterford Limerick & Western Railway by Ernie Shepherd, Ian Allan 2006, ISBN (10) 0 7110 3147 9 contains further information about the Fethard line and the trains that served it.

I hope this piece may prompt some further memories and pictures. The recollections of anyone who used the unique but short-lived railbus would be particularly welcome. Also of interest would be information about what the railbus did when it got to Thurles and what kind of train took passengers on from Thurles to Ballybrophy during the railbus period.

Michael J. Walsh (Dublin)
The railway from Thurles to Clonmel was never provided with any regular Sunday service. Nonetheless, sports matches and other special events brought trains to and through Fethard on many Sundays, especially during the summer and the GAA season. Sunday, June 19, 1960 was, however, rather different. A special 6-carriage train operated from Waterford to Fethard for the Fethard Carnival Committee. In this photograph (above), taken from the Clonmel end, the train is seen standing at the Up (north-bound) platform in Fethard station.

For the technically-minded, the special service is formed by a 6-piece AEC railcar, members of a fleet built for CIÉ in 1951-1954, and consists of two 3-piece units, each with the formation - driving motor car, unpowered trailer, driving motor car.

The train at the Down (south-bound) platform is even more exotic. Locomotive A9, built in 1955, heads a “Mystery Train” special service from Dublin Amiens St. (now Connolly) to Clonmel! “Mystery Trains” had been reintroduced for the first time since pre-war years in 1959 and were highly popular.
during the early 1960s until line closures reduced the number of possible destinations. The mystery was of course that you headed off not knowing where you would end up! Clonmel certainly provided good value in hours of travel, although one wonders how the Dublin clientele reacted when they diverged onto the branch at Thurles. The many heads leaning out of the train windows suggests that an, “Are we there yet?” syndrome was setting in.

On this day, no less than four Mystery Trains operated from Dublin to Clonmel via Fethard, departing Dublin Amiens St. at 12:45, 13:00, 13:15 and 13:30. This may have been the most intense day ever for passenger operations at the small station in Fethard. With the benefit of 53 years’ hindsight, perhaps it’s a pity that at least one of the trains did not make Fethard its destination, and introduce 400-500 thirsty Dubs to Ireland’s most attractive walled town.

This second photograph (above), taken from the cab of A9 as it ran into the station from the Thurles end, gives a more general view of the station facilities. The railcar from Waterford stands at the Up platform, while a small group of railwaymen are at the signal box on the Down platform, probably the crew from the railcar and at least the local signalman. The signal to allow the train to proceed to Clonmel is “On”, in railway terms, with the arm horizontal, thereby indicating to the driver that the line onwards is occupied. A9’s train is most likely therefore not the first of the Mystery Trains, and it had to stop to await clearance of the line to Clonmel by the preceding service, thereby allowing the photog-
rapher time to get off the engine and take the previous picture.

While the train was stopped, the arcane processes of securing authorisation for A9 to continue along the single track line to Clonmel would have taken place in the signal cabin, involving communications with the Clonmel cabin by bell signals to bring about release of the Electric Train Staff, a metal token given to the driver of a train entering the single line, authorising him to proceed to Clonmel. The system worked in such a way that only one token could be released at any time for a single line section of railway, thereby minimising the risk of head-on collision. When all of this had been organised, the train driver would then be given final clearance to proceed by the “Starter” signal, at the south end of the platform, being moved to the “Off” position, to slope downwardly to the left.

The picture also shows some of the goods facilities at Fethard, a long “bank” siding to the right of the diesel railcar, most likely originally for cattle traffic, and a shorter “dock” siding to the left of the signal box, for unloading large consignments such as agricultural machines. Just in front of the photographer, two sets of points give access by reversing from the Down platform to other goods sidings, one of which served the Goods Store building, still in situ today. Unfortunately, there is a marked absence of actual goods wagons in the picture – a sign of the long slow decline of the rural railway in Ireland.

— Michael J. Walsh (Dublin)
This photograph was supplied by Kath Duffy, Birstall, UK, who is a daughter of Tom Leahy, formerly from the Kilnockin Road. The photograph is L to R: Bridie Leahy, Tom Leahy holding his son Chris Leahy, and Gerry Leahy holding his granddaughter Kath Leahy outside their house on Kilnockin Road (around 1970).

Killusty National School 1930. Back L to R: Mrs Meagher (teacher), Jerry Lee, Jackie Pollard, Michael Prout, Michael Duggan, Pat Byrne, Matt Millet, William Byrne, Michael Dunne, Christy Greer, Matty Holohan, John Meagher (principal). Third Row L to R: Peg Meagher (Shee), Alice Madden, May Meagher (Dunne), Hannie Darcy (Fahey), Annie Lonergan, Biddy Lawrence, Minnie Aylward (Allen), Mary Nagle (Connors), Peggy Cullen, Maggie Lonergan, Mary Madden (O’Dwyer) and Kevin Holohan. Second Row L to R: Monica Millet (Murphy), Nora Millet (Coady), Josie Keane (O’Shea), Mary Holohan (O’Donnell), Kathleen Prout (Kenny), Alice Dunne (O’Neill), Mary Prout (Jones), Pearl Lee (Darcy), Lena Darcy (Keoghan), Peg Darcy (O’Connell), Margaret Byrne (Hickey), Bab Davis (Halpin), Nell Davis (Sr. Teresa) and Biddy Burke (Keane). Front L to R: Philip Byrne, Jackie Aylward, Johnny Duggan, Michael Millet, Tom O’Donnell, Tom Keane, Pierce O’Donnell, Tom Nagle, Pat Halpin, Jim Davis, Jim Darcy and Joe Nagle.
I write stories and I acknowledge that part of the gift came from the fact that I grew up in a family of readers. My mother and father were both avid readers, a thing they passed on to their offspring. I have passed on that joy to my children and they bestowed it on theirs. My mother also passed on to me her power to nurture, not only her family but also the wild things around us. I see that gene in the way my children treat theirs.

As a youngster, Bridgid McCarthy grew up in an Ireland under the grip of the Black and Tans. She told me thrilling stories about that time in her life. She died when I was twenty-two, so I never had a chance to ask her all the questions I wanted to that had not occurred to me back then. She married Thomas Redmond of Howth and bore him seven children. Four boys died at birth, three girls survived. I was the seventh. My father died aged forty-one. Bridget’s strengths of endurance and good humour got her through an ensuing life of tough times and uneasy health.

One of the happiest periods in my young life was the summer trip to Tipperary to visit the relations in Cashel and Coolmoyne. I grew up beside the sea on a beautiful peninsula, and land-bound Tipp was something new for me with its wide vistas of green fields.

Howth has an old castle belonging to the Howth aristocracy. Then it was enclosed in the private lands that surrounded it. Its best known tale was about Grace O’Malley’s visit there when, legend has it, she kidnapped the Lord of Howth’s son because he closed the gates of his castle against her in fear of her reputation as a warrior queen. Cashel had its much more imposing and approachable ‘Rock’ which I loved to explore. There is still in me a strong affection

Stories

by Colette Ní Reamonn Ioannidou

Colette Ní Reamonn Ioannidou is a writer now living in Cyprus. Her mother, Bridig McCarthy, was from Fethard and died of cancer in her sixties. Colette has no photo of her mother as a young woman and would love to have one. She would also love to find out if anyone in the area remembers Tom and Bill and Frances McCarthy. The following is a brief ‘story’ from her life.
for old stones and that too, I can trace back to the place my mother came from.

My marvellous Aunt Frances and Uncle Tom lived in a small cottage with a piece of land beside it. Uncle Jim used to turn up in a buggy pulled by a swift little horse. There was an old barn of sorts out the back that was a source of great poking around for a curious, imaginative young mind. There was the rain barrel out of which we washed our hair. Aunt Frances told me it was the best, softest water to use on hair and the novelty of a pump with its noisy gush of cold water. There were haystacks to climb and jump on. There was the open fire, the cooking pots that gave out gorgeous aromas and good wholesome food. There was a friend of my mother’s called Steven whose apple orchard was a wilderness as intoxicating as an exotic jungle to me. There was the creamery a short distance down the road and, oh, bliss, a rare shop that sold sweets! There were the friends and the cousins and that odd (to me) gentle accent that I picked up and took home, much to the fun of my ‘Jackeen’ pals. At 70, I’m still going around Nicosia on my bike.

Most of all, what Co Tipperary gave me was a memory yield of pleasure, the kind of emotional, childhood experience that lives in a part of my mind that files things under ‘wonderful’. Things I can take out and savour on bad days: mind pictures, scents of the land and good people.

My mother died of cancer in her sixties and never saw my son and daughter but she did meet Andreas in the early stages of our romance and was very fond of him and he of her. When my husband died aged 35 from a brain tumour, I did what Bridget did, I got on with it and valued every laugh that came my way as a balm for hurt and depression. Thankfully, I was able to use my writing skills to earn some money towards raising my young children. I worked at everything and anything that turned up (as long as it was legal, moral and didn’t make me fat!). I’ve worked in a surgery, a flower shop, English institutes, I did offshore secretarial work and a lot more, much of which I was untrained for but necessity is the mother of fast learning. I worked for the CyBC, Cyprus’s RTE on both radio and television. That was a very useful experience.

I’m now an author-pensioner hoping to spend more time writing, tidying up the rough novels and short stories I have packed into files. I would love if any relations, old friends of the O’Gradys, the Mahers or any other folk who knew my mother’s family would get in touch with me. I want to build a family tree for my grandchildren. I would also love any stories anyone has to tell of that time. My email address is:: Nireamonnioannidou@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Colette Ni Reamonn Ioannidou
This is the only ‘young’ photo Collette has of her mother, Bridget McCarthy, from Fethard.
Some people say this to express incomprehension and perplexity. Yes, Greek does look daunting until you delve a little into it and are reminded that our alphabet and a significant amount of our vocabulary comes from the Greeks.

During a visit to Cyprus a few years ago, I noticed a group of Greek Cypriot children on a school outing. One of them called out to the teacher, “Kyrie, Kyrie”. It dawned on me that this must be the word for ‘sir’ that also means Lord as in Kyrie Eleison, Lord have mercy. I felt animated at the thought that Pythagoras would have similarly addressed his teacher just before he hit on the idea of the square on the hypotenuse five centuries before Christ was born.

I began to take note of the signage on shop fronts and was so captivated by the lettering that I took some lessons on the alphabet and learned some useful everyday phrases, much to the amusement of the locals.

I had thought that the inscription on vestments and elsewhere consisted of our letters P and X. Not so. They represent the Greek letters X ‘chi’ and the letter P ‘ro’ as in our letter R. This combination is known as a Christogram or labarum repre-
senting Christos, which is Greek for Christ, and was later adopted as his insignia by the Christian Roman emperor Constantine.

The strategic importance of Greek in early Christian times cannot be underestimated. St. Paul, a Jew and a Roman citizen, was fluent in Greek. This combination was a golden passport to people and places all over the Mediterranean. All his letters to the Corinthians were in Greek otherwise they couldn’t read them.

On his first missionary journey in 45AD he visited Paphos, Cyprus, accompanied by apostles Mark and Barnabas. They managed to convert the Roman proconsul who embraced the Christian faith, thereby making Cyprus the first country in the world to be governed by a Christian.

To share more of these sentiments, e.g. where the Greeks got their alphabet, have a look at www.fethard.com/greek

This pillar, where legend has it St. Paul was tortured and given “forty bar one lashes” for preaching Christianity, is situated in the church courtyard.
Our 7th annual event was held the weekend of July 26 and 27 and this year we had a Tractor Run with a difference. To the delight of the entrants we drove to a Vintage Silage Cutting venue on a farm provided by a club member. Most of the machines were from the 1970s. Harvester types included single chops, double chops, an inline precision chop and a very rare Taarup wagon.

For Sunday’s Static Show we had tractors which ranged from a 1950s Ransomes garden tractor to high horsepower four-wheel drive tractors. The cars which ranged from the 1930s to the 1980s included a Citroen, two Austins, an MG TF, a Bentley S1, an Austin Healy (Frog eye) Sprite and a Porsche 911 SC convertible. Philip Byrne put on a fine display with his three miniature horizontal bed steam engines. He displays at Innishannon among other places.

Our designated charity this year was Moyglass Sports and Leisure Centre, a facility which caters for young and old in the community. It also provides us with a venue for our annual event. We wish to thank the exhibitors, the public, and anyone else who helped in any way to make the weekend a success.

To conclude our activities for this year we ran another bus trip and these are proving ever popular with local vintage enthusiasts. We travelled to Craanford Mill in Gorey, Co.Wexford, which has been in existence since the 1700s. After spending a couple of hours there we travelled to the Irish Agricultural Museum in Johnstown Castle outside Wexford town. It has a fantastic collection of bygone items from pre-famine times to the 1950s. Once the fog lifted, the beautiful weather set the tone for an extremely successful trip which was enjoyed by all. To round off the day we had a lovely meal at The Rue Glen Country Club Hotel.

Pat O'Loughnan
St. Rita’s Camogie Club

The past year saw St. Rita’s Camogie Club field teams from U6 to U14. It was a very busy year for our club, contesting county finals in both U12 and U14. We have sixteen U6-8s registered this year. These girls are learning the basics of camogie and have participated in County Blitzes throughout the year and showed tremendous improvement with each match they played. A fantastic bunch of girls learning the skills of camogie from a very dedicated coach in Jimmy Smyth. We would also like to thank Edel Moloney, Laura Ryan and Deirdre Smyth for all their help during the year.

Our U6-8s and U10s started back training on April 1. It has been an action-packed year for our U10s, twenty-seven girls registered in this grade alone. The first blitz was played in May, which we hosted on behalf of the County Board. It was a busy summer with blitzes and tournaments; we travelled to Goatenbridge, Cahir, Moyle Rovers, Rosegreen, Dundrum, Boherlahan and New Inn, together with a few home games against Cahir and New Inn. We finished off the year with a blitz hosted by Ballybacon Grange.

Along the way the girls gained great experience from playing teams from north and south of the county and won the Lou O’Grady Tournament at the Rosegreen Field Day. There was a noticeable improvement in the skill level from all the girls. We would like to thank the coaches Mark Moloney, Kay Spillane, Jim O’Donnell, Mary O’Mahony and Noreen Sheehy for helping out.
On February 15, our U12s started their year. They entered the U12 league in which they played Thurles, Carrick Swan and Moyle Rovers. In the county semi-final they played Knockavilla B. They reached the final of the league in which they played Moycarkey, which was a thrilling game that finished in a draw at full time. In the very last minute of extra time Moycarkey were awarded a free and we were unfortunate to have it reach the back of the net, resulting in a two point win for Moycarkey. We were very proud of the girls as they played some fantastic camogie.

Another highlight of the year was when they were chosen to play in ‘Camán to Thurles’. They got to play in Semple Stadium and played teams from Cork, Clare and Waterford. It was great to see the club colours worn with great pride on that day. The championship was run in late September and we came up against stronger teams. The girls, however, showed great improvement throughout the year. We would like to thank their coaches Sandra Spillane, Willie Morrissey and Margaret Hogan and also a big thank you to parents for their support throughout the year.

Our U13 team had a fantastic year reaching the County Final in which they were narrowly beaten by Moycarkey. A great bunch of girls, with great heart and determination. We would like to thank Michael Ryan and Sandra Spillane for training this team.

This was our first year competing in league and championship in the U14 age group. In the championship we played St Mary’s, Moyle Rovers, Clonoulty and Carrick Swan. With every game they improved and con-
continued to train through the summer months. In the league we played New Inn, Moycarkey, Moyle Rovers and Carrick Swan. The girls played fantastic camogie throughout the league and were unlucky not to qualify for the county semi-final. We would like to thank Michael Ryan and Sandra Spillane for all the work with this team.

We took part in Community Games Camogie this year. We were unfortunate with the draw but the girls played a great match and we were very proud of them.

‘You and Me play Camogie’ is an initiative by the Central Camogie Council. Seventy-five clubs from all over Ireland entered the competition and just two clubs from each province were included in the programme. We were extremely lucky to take part in the programme. We had an outside coach come into the club for six weeks and train the girls along with their parents. The aim of programme is to get parents participating with their daughters and to encourage all to keep active. We also received a talk on nutrition during the programme. We would like to thank our coach Sinead Millea for all her hard work during the six weeks and the nutritionist Sandra Gillick.

The club would like to sincerely thank all our coaches for 2014, for their time and dedication given to training each team, we also thank parents for their support, encouragement and help throughout the year. Roll on 2015!
St. Rita’s U13 Camogie team who reached the County Final

St. Rita’s U12 Camogie team who played in Semple Stadium
Fethard Car Boot Sale

The punters keep turning up every Sunday morning for their weekly ‘fix’ – yes, they are addicted – and if they can’t make it on Sunday, well, their week becomes one long torment. The place in question is the Fethard Car Boot Sale.

Sunshine or rain the stallholders and customers turn up from all corners of the country. Some come to sell their unwanted items and make a few quid in the process. Others come simply to pass a Sunday and meet up with like-minded people.

The Mullins family opened their gates thirty-one years ago and every Sunday like clockwork those gates open again and again. If you are looking for something strange or something hard to find, then the Car Boot Sale is the place to go. Jewellery, antiques, tools, toys, clothes, shrubs and garden equipment are just some of the variety of items you will find on sale at knock-down prices.

Fethard Car Boot Sale has been featured on a number of occasions in the Irish Times newspaper. Recently one cover story listed it as number 4 on a list of ‘100 things to do in Ireland this summer’. This news was received with great delight by the weekly stallholders.

The atmosphere at the market yard is of old times, simple comforts, good friendships, good will and a hub for some great socialising. So whether it’s a bargain you’re looking for or an excuse to get rid of unwanted goods, come along to Fethard Car Boot Sale any Sunday morning of your choice.

For further information contact Margaret at Tel: 086 8757490.
Fethard Senior Citizens

Fethard Senior Citizens meet on the first Tuesday of each month in the Tirry Centre where members are served tea, sandwiches and cakes followed by an invited guest speaker or bingo. On arrival, each member gets a ticket for a raffle for hampers and other gifts which takes place during the meeting.

In March, as it was Shrove Tuesday, pancakes were served in addition to the usual fare. Our Easter party was held in April in the Tirry Centre and some members brought their Easter bonnets which were judged by Mandy and prizes were given for the best three. In May we held our annual Mass in the Tirry Centre celebrated by Fr. Gerry Horan OSA.

Our annual outing in June was to the John F Kennedy Park in Wexford where we had a bus tour of the whole park. Then back to New Ross for the evening meal in the Brandon House Hotel.

In August our mini-outing was to Tramore and our evening meal was in Dungarvan after which we enjoyed a session in the function room with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí. In October we had a visit from Dr. Carmel Condon who gave a very informative talk on health issues. Our guest speaker in November was Garda Denis O’Brien who gave some very good hints on safety in the home to our seniors.

As we go to press preparations are well under way for our Christmas Party which will be held on Sunday, December 7, at the Anner Hotel, Thurles, preceded by Mass for all our senior citizens in the Abbey church Fethard.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped us in any way to keep our club going, either financially or otherwise, and wish a very Happy Christmas to all our friends at home or away.
The year 2013-2014 was a busy one for our guild, with thirty-six members on our books. Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month with a break in July and August. During the year a lot of new members joined our guild. Two of our long-standing members, Kathleen Barry and Aggie Barrett, passed to their eternal rest. Our condolences to both families, may they rest in peace.

During the year we had guest speakers on various subjects including, ‘Flower Arranging and Planting’, ‘Personal Wellbeing’, ‘Fashion Wear’ and ‘Alternative Medicine’.

Nineteen members attended our Christmas party held in Hotel Minella on Saturday, December 14, where a great time was had by all. Instead of Kris Kringle we collected €690 which was donated to Fethard & Killusty Emigrants’ Newsletter this year.

Our summer outing was to Co Cork where we visited Jameson’s Distillery in Midleton, then on to Shanagarry, Ballymaloe, and finished with a lovely meal in Garryvoe Hotel. We had a lovely day.

Ten of our members attended the Federation Table Quiz held in Mulcahy’s in Clonmel. We attended Federation Day in Cashel in June. The theme this year was ‘An Grianán Sixty Years’. We also attended several other Federation meetings during the year. It was decided at our May meeting to get our hall painted dur-
During the summer break and we held a cake sale to help defray the cost. We came back in September to a lovely bright clean and freshly painted hall.

This year again, some members plus friends, twenty-three in total, travelled to An Grianán and then on to Belfast as part of our four-day tour. This tour was very informative and we also had a very enjoyable time. In April we had Tai Chi classes which were very well attended.

Our AGM was held in March and the following officers and committee members were elected: Catherine O’Connell (Guild President); Anne Gleeson (Vice President); Margaret Phelan (Secretary); Judy Doyle (Assistant Secretary); Phil Wyatt (Treasurer); Ann Horan, Sheila O’Donnell, Marie Crean, Kathy Aylward, Nora Ahearne, Frances Murphy, and Dolores Cleary. We are happy to welcome new members at any time. Finally, we wish everyone in the Parish and beyond a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Mrs Olivia Hughes selling her produce at the market in the Nissan Hut in the 1950s.
Dan Heaney, one of Kerry Street’s better known and well remembered personalities, photographed outside his house with a young boy.
Parish Trip to Medjugorje  

by Michael Barry

On August 13, 2014, a group of seventeen pilgrims from the Fethard area travelled to the village of Medjugorje which is located in Bosnia Herzegovina, around 25km southwest of Mostar and...
Medjugorje came to world attention back in June of 1981 when six children from the locality claimed to have had an apparition of Our Lady. Remarkably, three of these children, now adults, still report having daily apparitions ever since. The other three have them less frequently but do still report seeing Our Blessed Mother on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas day.

In the years since the first apparition over 40 million pilgrims have flocked to the little village of Medjugorje, a name which literally means ‘between the hills’. Our little group added to that number when we arrived at our lodgings in the Dubrovnik Hotel in the centre of the main street and adjacent to the local parish church dedicated to the apostle St. James.

Our tour operator was JWT who had local representatives to assist us during our week-long stay. They introduced us to the pilgrimage programme and accompanied us on the various walks and climbs which are central to the story of Our Lady in Medjugorje.

The more able-bodied among us were able to pray the Stations of the Cross while trekking to the summit of Mount Križevac (also known as ‘Cross Mountain’) which overlooks the village, at 5am (the coolest time of the day as afternoon temperatures can reach as high as 40c). The less-able (and the lazier!) were able to pray The Stations on smoother ground in the vicinity of the Cross of the Resurrection to the rear of the Church complex.

One of the lesser climbs was to Apparition Hill where Our Lady first appeared to the children on June 24, 1981. This climb was made early one morning after a short walk through the local vineyards. The JWT representative who accompanied us shared the story of the early days of the apparitions and of how difficult it was for the young visionaries in, what was then, a very communist community.

We were very lucky with the weather during our week in Medjugorje. The only drop of rain we experienced was on our journey back to Dubrovnik Airport for our flight home during which we saw some spectacular views all along the Adriatic Coast.

All in all we had a wonderful week. People go on pilgrimage for all sorts of personal reasons. Whatever the reasons each member of our group had for going on this particular pilgrimage, one thing is certain: as the days passed the camaraderie and friendship among us grew. Deep chats were intermingled with fun and laughter during the course of our week. Most of those who travelled had never been to Medjugorje before, but the general consensus seemed to be that a return trip was definitely on the cards.
Bill from Scully’s, Main Street, 1939

Fethard, 19

From John Scully, Hardware and Ironmongery.

Window Glass, Oil, Colour, Italian and Provision Warehouse
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1939
10 Art. Form
Nov 23
4 Cmt. Cement
Nails 2 Glass 1/6
4 Cmt. Cement
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2 x 2 Ill. Sand Stain
2 x 1 " Paint
Distemper
1 Ill. Ovals

£8 5 0
£7 16 0

Cash 1 16 0

By Roll held
Ann Shortall, The Valley, in her First Communion dress outside Scully’s Shop on Main Street in the 1960s.
The AGM of the Fethard Historical Society was held in the Abymill on March 25, 2014. The following were elected on to the committee: Pat Looby (Chairperson), Terry Cunningham (Vice Chairman), Mary Hanrahan (PRO), Ann Lynch (Treasurer), Catherine O’Flynn (Assistant Treasurer), John Cooney (Secretary), Anne Gleeson (Assistant Secretary). Committee Members: Gerry Long, Marie O’Donnell, Diana Stokes, John Fahey, Colm McGrath and Kitty Delany.

Following the meeting there was the launch of the Calvary Cemetery database project carried out by Lory Kenny and Rian Ó Cuinneagáin and a showing of the ‘Oldest Dated Roof’ video both of which can now be accessed on the Fethard website (www.fethard.com).

The recent death of Diana Stokes was a sad loss to the society. She was a founder member and served all these years on the committee. Wise and practical, she was able to steady the ship from time to time and gave of her own time freely. She was a brilliant hostess and opened her house to the many gatherings and meetings that took place there. She was great company on our trips abroad and a surprisingly good storyteller. Diana served on many committees in the town and was able to straddle the different groupings that go to make up the public fabric and civic spirit of a town. The society would like to offer her family condolences at this time.

The first task in January was to choose Tipperariana Book of the Year. There were 32 books to choose from and it was ‘The Black and Tans in North Tipperary’, by Sean Hogan, that was finally chosen. Speaking on behalf of the society at this year’s presentation, John Cooney praised the author for the detailed and balanced account of this harrowing revolutionary period in the north of the county. A characteristic of the book is that it looks at the social and religious background of members of the Black and Tans and dispels some of the myths that have grown around this group. The book also contains personal accounts by actual participants in some of the flashpoints that occurred.

Sean Hogan, in an emotional
address, spoke of his delight that the book was so well received and of his gratitude that he was being acknowledged in his home county. The packed audience included a substantial number of people who had travelled from Nenagh to the event. Gerry Long showed some old Black and Tan footage on screen and Sean O’Callaghan played some of the popular songs of and relating to the period.

The Tipperariana Book Fair was held as usual in the Ballroom on the second Sunday in February. This event initiated by Terry Cunningham over a decade ago continues to be very popular with the general public and with the book dealers who travel to the fair from all over the country. Many people gave their time on Friday night and some on Saturday to help set up this annual event which could not take place without the support of the ballroom committee, in particular Monica Aherne, who are very accommodating with their facilities. If you have not yet visited the book fair, you might be surprised at the bargains available inside and with the wide variety of magazines, comics

Members of Fethard Historical Society who co-ordinated the ‘Medieval’ aspect to this year’s festival. L to R: Terry Cunningham, Pat Looby (Chairperson), Colm McGrath and Mary Hanrahan. Also included is Rí, one of the Irish Wolfhounds that lead the parade every year.
and books that are also available. Thanks to all who donated books.

Several members of the committee participated in the Tipp FM radio programme ‘Down your Way’ which was deemed very successful as listeners were given an account of the town, its medieval structure and outlay and its future potential, particularly now that the refurbishment of the Town Hall is actually under way.

On May 23, Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, author of ‘Blood on the Banner’ and ‘Revolution’ gave a most interesting and stimulating talk on the Truce – that period in Irish history between the Anglo Irish war, the treaty negotiations and the start of the Civil War. The talk, which was well received, was followed by a lively question and answer session.

Pat Looby undertook a grave-slab project with the transition year students from Patrician Presentation Secondary School. This involved taking rubbings from the old tombstones within Holy Trinity Church and also translating the Latin inscriptions into English. They took rubbings from the graveslabs in the main body of the church but were also able to go into the less accessible areas of the church which contain examples from the seventeen and the eighteen century. Some of the surnames from centuries ago are still to be found in the town and that surprised and delighted the students. These rubbings were then mounted and placed in positions around the church. This project culminated in an exhibition on June 20, which was very well attended. A lecture on medieval graveslabs was given by archaeologist Denise Maher, who is a daughter of the late Paddy and Ann Maher, from Abbey Road, Fethard, and now married and living in Cork.

Photographed at the launch of the Grave Slab Project are L to R: Róisín O’Grady (Heritage Officer), Patricia Looby (Chairperson), Michael O’Sullivan (Principal Patrician Presentation Secondary School), Denise Maher who gave the lecture, and Rev Barbara Fryday.
The Fethard Festival weekend went very well, helped greatly by fine weather. The musical group, Nuada, performed in the old Holy Trinity Church of Ireland on Saturday night, playing and displaying a variety of traditional instruments – medieval, renaissance, contemporary – covering 1,000 years of musical history. They also led the festival parade on Sunday.

Members of the society were busy organising the medieval portion of the programme. Many people dressed up in medieval costumes which added to the gaiety of the occasion. A raffle was held at the concert and the €100 raised went towards paying for the dating of timber found in the excavations of the foundations of the Town Hall. This archaeological dig took place prior to the recent restoration work. The society welcomes the restoration and appreciates the great effort undertaken by the Fethard Business & Tourism Group in obtaining the grants necessary for the work. Fethard is blessed with many historical buildings and the old town alms house is set to serve a brand new function in the future. The result of the timber dating will be known in a few months and it might help establish an exact date of the building’s construction.

Culture Night – an annual all-island public event that celebrates culture, creativity and the arts – took place all around the country on September 19. In Fethard, Pat Looby, organised Fethard’s first culture night by holding workshops for adults and children on graveslab rubbings.

In October, the society facilitated what is known as a pop-up museum in McGrath’s shop window on Main Street. It consisted of an imagined collection of various implements and utensils which might have been in use in a typical well-to-do house around the seventeenth century. The instruments included a lantern, knives and pottery jars and pointed us towards a very different and more frugal lifestyle than what is more customary since the last century. Thanks to Colm McGrath for allowing the use of his shop window.

Preparations are now in place for a talk on the Peace Process by Dr. Martin Mansergh on November 21. Martin Mansergh is a former senator and TD who played a substantial part in bringing these talks to a conclusion and he has promised to outline a Tipperary connection at the talk.

Grey hair and old ideas are beginning to dominate the society and the committee would welcome fresh faces and new ideas. You would be made most welcome by the society and knowing or not knowing much about history is not the point. However, if you are curious and willing to learn about our history and do something now and again, then this might be the place for you. Ask any committee member for information or just come along to one of our monthly meetings.
This year the Graveyards Clean-Up Committee was involved in the clean-up and restoration of a number of local graveyards, as in previous years. Last year we attended to Rathcoole, Red City, and Tullamaine cemeteries. In addition, the graveyard enclosed by Grove Estate at Kilmacluigh was added to the list.

This year the committee was fortunate in establishing a connection with South Tipperary Development Company and TÚS, through the good offices of the Fethard Tidy Towns committee. This allowed us to have the services of a TÚS sponsored worker for the course of our works during the year. The availability of a TÚS sponsored worker on a semi-permanent basis has allowed us to undertake a much more extensive programme of works than in previous years. It has also meant that the planning of works could proceed with a greater deal of confidence and certainty than in the past.

Beginning in May the first graveyard to be tackled was Rathcoole. Over the following weeks, grass cutting, weed removal, bramble cutting, and general maintenance continued apace, so that by summer the graveyard was looking very tidy indeed. The next graveyard to be tackled was Red City. This turned out to be a bigger job than originally anticipated. In previous years the graveyard received...
a general clean-up, however, the presence of our TUS employee allowed the committee to carry out a much more intensive level of works and Red City took much longer than planned. Over ten tractor-trailer loads of waste vegetation was removed from the site, which resulted in a much tidier outcome.

In the course of the work the committee were made aware of the condition of the graveyard at Kilmaclugh, Grove, Fethard. Despite the determined and valiant efforts of a number of local volunteers the graveyard was by this summer particularly overgrown. An inspection of the graveyard quickly established that it would take a lot of work and effort to clean and restore it to an acceptable level. Several local volunteers were happily on hand with our TUS worker in undertaking the much needed works. The Ponsonby family, owners of Grove estate, must also be acknowledged and thanked for their co-operation with the proposed work which included the removal of excessive vegetation, several storm-downed trees, repair of fencing, and the replacement and erection of a marker cross.

The erection of the marker cross was due to the destruction of the existing wooden cross by decay. The previous wooden cross had fallen and so a replacement was needed.
Tipperary County Council came to the committee’s aid and provided a suitable galvanised steel replacement. This cross was erected on a concrete encased steel platform, provided by Paul Bergin, Engineering Works, Rosegreen, and undertaken by a local volunteer and TÚS cooperative effort. It now stands in a shaded but prominent point in the graveyard.

Further post and rail type fencing has still to be erected on site as well as a new set of galvanised steel entrance gates. It is hoped this work will be completed by springtime.

The last graveyard to be attended to by the committee in this year’s series of works was Tullamaine; works are at present (November) being carried out. Grass cutting and curtailing of wood growth is being undertaken, and it is hoped that the graveyard will be in good order shortly.

When the committee began its programme at the beginning of this summer’s growth season it was envisioned that works would be undertaken on a regular repeating schedule but this did not happen. The unusually warm summer and its spectacular growth spurts meant that clearing work seemed unending due to new growth. It is a tribute to the efforts of our TÚS employee that he persisted with such dedication throughout this summer with enthusiasm and good humour while endlessly repeating the same tasks.

At this point it must be said that the success of the summer and autumn programme of works is due to the terrific efforts made by our volunteers. All who participated cheerfully carried out heavy and strenuous work in a spirit of good company and co-operation, and we thank them gratefully and look forward to their continued participation in the future. There is still much work to be done for next year and vegetation, like rust, never sleeps so more cutting, sawing and weeding remains.
At the presentation of Fethard GAA Club’s ‘Player of the Past’ to Jack Gunne, The Green, in 1984 are L to R: Sean Gunne, Mary and Jack Gunne and Kathleen (Gunne) Connolly.

Fethard supporters at the County Football final replay against Loughmore / Castleiney in Cashel on October 19, 1983. Fethard lost by one point.
John Joe’s Corner

**World Champion**

The championship, of the forty by twenty, in the alley built by Fethard town, spectators were there a plenty, to see Pat Kirby of high renown. The novice was a point to point, the junior full of energy, then the senior took pride of place and the master made the court sound. If he was a horse, he would be Cheltenham-bound. Skill, power, pace, all on display there, for the hand, ball, game, great day!

**A chat of History and Uisce**

We stood on Madam’s Bridge chatting. The Clashawley underneath, in full flow after a heavy night of darkness and rain. The old master, Paddy Broderick, it was evening time at the weekend, we mentioned Brother Ultan O’Mahoney, who months before had passed away in Newbridge, how the *cigire* or inspector set the pace. The same Brother told us about the early people who settled on this island of Ireland in the Stone Age and the Bronze and Iron Ages. ‘Bro’ as he was known, meticulously taught me how to read and write, in a time of religious fervour, in a not long formed new state of pride. *Go raibh maith agat agus ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

**Capital Ballroom**

Money in the ‘póca’ and spruced up, on the way a stop for the Dutch courage sup. The relief band played out their gig, a pause, the roadie had already set up the rig. Some tuning and placement was next, by them, the hall had filled, full text. The promoter was impresario Danny Doyle. The approach, the request for a dance, if one liked, the question, “Do you come here often?” “Would you like a second dance?” And then, “can I buy you a mineral for a sit down?” All the top acts played there, outside Guard Fallon was on duty, sometimes the bouncers had the unsavoury task to perform.

**Power Broker**

It was a pleasant evening in Fethard town, the leader of the Labour Party arrived. A former rugby international of high renown, an honour, that Alfie Brett contrived. The meal was in the Lantern Restaurant,
a fitting occasion for a tireless worker. For years Alfie was a union stalwart. In his career he laid down many a marker. A community activist, in life and sport, taxi for the great John Ryan of Wexford, donated a plaque accord, to the centre a report about the one great scorer, the Lord.

**World War One story**

Pat O’Shea was in his senior years, a strong man with little fears. The youngster, wide eyed, heard him relate his experience in the trenches, a rendition of Gurkha fighting, prowess and tradition, fearsome, little men, who served Britain. Their kukri knife and their religion smitten, if they drew it, even to sharpen it, they had to draw blood, a nick in the finger. Their accurate throwing and bagging of an ear or a nose of the victim, how the Germans dreaded them and the toughness, roughness of the Nepalese mountain men. Pat was decommissioned owing to a bayonet injury to his hand. Afterwards, he worked on the Clonmel-Thurles railway line.

**Along those Lines**

The station house and its master oversaw the store, train, house and crew. Signal box dictated where and when, austerity and order reigned then. Through town, village, wood and glen, rolled the stock, steamed again. Cattle, beet, parcels, livestock, in general to the linesmen, their work was venerable. Coras Iompair Eireann, C.I.E. or ‘Come In Early’, level crossings had their gates, wrought, twirly, sometimes manned or with a warning. It is when, one does look back, they should never have taken up the track. ☑
Do You Remember 1974?

What are memories? Nothing more than the sum of people we knew, people we interacted with, or those with whom our friendship was close. Any glancing backwards, then, has to have people in its focus and in this short essay I have attempted to do that. What I am writing about happened, nevertheless, some forty year ago. In that span people grow old and some (naturally) die. Even the seasons can change because, for example, the first primrose of 1974 was seen at Slainstown on the first day of January; a flower that probably lived to regret its impetuosity. But there are constants in this changing world: Brookhill and Kilnockin Hill still remain. No matter how far away we live Slievenamon is forever the same in our mind’s eye. Fethard is still Fethard. These will not change; they will outlast all the readers (young and old) of this Newsletter. As will the sports complex on the Rocklow Road.

The official opening of the Sports Centre took place on June 9, 1974. The event commenced with a parade to the Centre and the formal opening was at 3pm; later there were tennis, volleyball and handball games. All this was the climax of three years of community effort which owed a great debt to the energy and driving force of the local curate, Father Denis Cunningham. The completed Centre included three tarmacadam tennis courts, a volleyball and basketball court, a putting green, and two very popular (one indoor) handball courts of a high order. In early March, incidentally, officials from the Irish Handball Council visited Fethard and looked over the completed indoor alley. They let it be known that, apart from one in Belfast, the Fethard layout was the best they had seen in Ireland. Dressing-rooms, showers and toilets were a part of the finished complex. The formal opening was performed by Dr. Pat. O’Callaghan, the renowned sports figure from Clonmel, and the blessing was given by Dean Lee on his first visit to Fethard since his transfer. A special feature of the
entrance to the complex from the Rocklow Road was the old doorway which formerly had graced the north wall on The Square. This was informally known as Everards’ Gate. The overall cost of the structure was £12,000 which was built by John Harrington of Fethard and William O’Dwyer of Tipperary.

Other structures that have endured in Fethard are the churches. While the personnel could and did change, the buildings and their ethos remained. During the first week of May, Canon Christopher Lee was appointed as parish priest of Cashel and Vicar-General of the Archdiocese; he was also promoted Dean. Canon Lee, both as parish priest and curate, had been a part of the fabric of Fethard since 1942. He was succeeded by Father Philip Noonan who came to the parish from Mullinahone. Father Philip, who was unconventional in his tastes, was born in Oola in 1911. He was the driving force behind the extensive restoration of Mullinahone church; and, in totally different mode, was the executor to the estate of Dan Breen (whom Father saw to his grave). Following much suffering he died in July 1986. At the end of September Father Sean Kennedy, the curate, was transferred to Emly parish to be replaced by Father John Stapleton who came to the town from Kilcommon. Father Sean had come from Cappawhite to Fethard on June 7, 1969.

On St. Patrick’s Day a native returned to concelebrate the 11am Mass in the parish church where he served as an altar boy. This was the former Archbishop of Brisbane in Australia, Dr. Patrick O’Donnell. He
had retired from the See of Brisbane in 1973, following which he came to live in Clonmel with his sister. This Mass, before a packed church, was celebrated by the Archbishop, by Dr. Owen Oxenham, the then Administrator of St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Brisbane, and by Canon Lee who was then the parish priest. Dr. O’Donnell was born on the Main Street in 1897 and was educated locally by the Patrician Brothers; he finished his education in Ireland with the Jesuits at Mungret College. He moved to the Pontifical College in Rome where among his classmates was the later Pope John XXIII. He was ordained priest in 1922 for the Australian Mission. In time, in that country, he became parish priest of Leongatha in the diocese of Sale in Victoria, and it was while he was here that he wrote a history (still unpublished) of that diocese. He also took a keen interest in the welfare of Italian prisoners-of-war then working with farmers in the State of Victoria. As a thank-you for his good work the prisoners painted the ceiling of Leongatha church in the style of the Sistine Chapel. Dr. O’Donnell was consecrated co-adjutor Archbishop in 1949 and succeeded Archbishop Duhig in 1965. Soon after his visit to Fethard he returned to his home in north Brisbane where he died.

In this year the Augustinian community consisted of Father Anthony Leddin, the Father Prior, and Father J. Crean. On May 20 the seventy-six-year-old Father McFadden died and was buried in the Abbey cemetery. The Abbey improvements con-
continued throughout the year: ladies’ and gents’ toilets were constructed and the driveway and paths about the church were tarmacadamed, though at one point the Abbey church building was seriously threatened when the adjoining Coffey’s Mill took fire. To help pay for the improvements local people held various social occasions. For example, at a card drive held in the Country Club Ballroom on Friday, December 13, the respectable sum of £300 was handed over to the Abbey.

In this year the Christmas Masses in the churches were at midnight, 8.30am, 10am and 11am in Holy Trinity Church; in the Augustinian Abbey there was also midnight Mass and on Christmas Day at 9am, 9.30am and 11.30am.

Our sister church, the Church of Ireland, also made changes. Canon David Clarke, who was a native of Stradbally, Co. Waterford, was installed as Dean of Cashel and Rector of Fethard and Magorban at a ceremony which was held in the Cathedral of St. John, Cashel, on Friday, January 25. The guests were entertained in the Cashel Palace Hotel which was very appropriate as the house had formerly been the residence of the Church of Ireland Deans of Cashel.

And still another survivor of former days was the Holy Year Cross on the side of Slievenamon. A fine pictorial study shows Archbishop Thomas Morris of Cashel and Emly leading a group (mostly from Fethard) of pilgrims to the Cross. The 1,000 feet climb took place on the Feast of the Assumption. Earlier in that year a new twenty-foot concrete cross had been erected which replaced...
the timber one which had been raised on the mountainside in 1950 and blessed by Archbishop Patrick O’Donnell. On this latter pilgrimage Dr. Morris blessed the new cross, and as the pilgrims made the stiff climb a group of young men (and maybe some not so young) carried fourteen wooden crosses which were planted at intervals between the mountain base and the site of the cross. These represented the Stations of the Cross.

By this year of 1974 another solid institution was the Newsletter. In those early years of its existence it was in the hands of the Legion of Mary, whose members worked at the editing, the compiling, and (importantly) the posting of copies to Fethard people living away from the town (in that year 750 copies were posted). The current Newsletter was a slim production of twenty-four pages and was published in a sepia colour. The issue had some fine full-page photos including one of the Fethard 1943 South Tipperary football champions. In it can be seen Brother Albert Small and Frank ‘Scout’ Butler in his iconic cap. As always, a wonderful read. Naturally, such a production required money and so various events were held to raise it. One such was the Céili Mór held in the Country Club Ballroom on Friday, December 27. On that occasion the music was supplied by the Blarney Céilí Band and the dancing was from nine to one. The admission charge was fifty pence.

Others with a sturdy past were the Fethard Players. They had begun their acting life in 1913 as the Fethard Dramatic Society; later becoming the Sodality Players and still later the Tirry Players. The title Fethard
Players was taken in 1940. For the year 1974 the Players presented Agatha Christie’s ‘Ten Little Niggers’ in the Town Hall between Sunday 27 January and Sunday 1 February. They later took the play to Killenaule at the invitation of the parish priest, Canon Hogan. The producer was Austin O’Flynn and the cast, in no order of importance, was made up of Carmel Rice, Danny Ryan, Michael Woodlock, Percy O’Flynn, Geraldine Arnold, William Lonergan, Joe Hanly, Goldie Newport, Eddie Sullivan, Danny Kane, and Gerry Skehan. Incidentally, it is worthy of note that the sound effects for the play were supplied by Joe Kenny, a name known to readers of the Fethard Newsletter. Joe’s efforts received much praise for the atmosphere created by the eerie sounds of wind, sea and storm. Christie’s play, a thriller, was a marked departure from what had been offered over former years and, therefore, demanded a high level of production, acting, and staging. This it received in full measure. Austie O’Flynn, as always, gave a confident and well-paced production and was supported by the players in this new genre with great aplomb.

Another of the old organisations in the town was the GAA Club. Following a lively discussion (and every Irishman is a major authority on how the games of hurling and football should be played) a new committee was elected for 1974. Canon Christopher Lee was to be president, Richard Fitzgerald chairman, Jack Kenrick to be vice-chair, the secretary was John Keane and the treasurer was James O’Shea. The trainer was Jimmy O’Shea, and the selec-
tors were Ned Sheehan, St. Patrick’s Place, Tim O’Riordan, Barrack Street, and Cly Mullins, Mocklers’ Terrace. In this year the senior footballers won their first outing when they beat a North Tipperary side, Newport, by three goals and a point. And so they continued. In a dramatic and vigorous senior football quarterfinal held in Thurles on Sunday, August 11, Fethard drew with Loughmore-Castleiney. All praise went to Fethard for making this the game of the year. In the replay held in Cashel Fethard won by four points. The Fethard team consisted of: J. Allen, A. Maher, S. Moloney, G. Harrington, M. Kenrick, J. Keane, W. Moloney, G. Leahy, D. O’Brien, M. O’Riordan, A.B. Kennedy, M. Healy, T. McCarthy, D. Morrissey, and L. Connolly. The subs were G. Fogarty and L. Kenny. This great team went all the way to the county final which was held in Clonmel on Sunday, October 20. Their opponents were Ardfinnan who had six county finals. Fethard had fourteen county titles: 1887, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1927, 1928, 1938, 1942, and 1954. Yes, a long line of figures, but so worthwhile writing out in detail. But to return to 1974 – in that clash Michael ‘Babs’ Keating was playing for Ardfinnan and Fethard had Liam Connolly. When the final whistle blew an amazing goal from a penalty, which was scored by ‘Babs’ Keating, enabled Ardfinnan to win their first senior county football title since 1970. Though the Fethard side led some heavy attacks they did not have the ability to follow through with a score. For all of that it was on this team that thirty-eight-year-old Liam Connolly had his finest hours. This veteran of so many games ended this year with a personal tally of ten points scored. Over the years as a player Liam had spread considerable glory over his native place.

And some other organisations have survived all those years. In the month of January 1974 the Credit Union held its annual meeting and elected the following officers: The president was Dr. J.B. Maher, Main Street; the secretary was Father Sean Kennedy; the treasurer was Mr. Sean Henehan. The loans officers appointed were James Connolly, Brodeen, with Richard Garvey, Main Street as his assistant. In this year the membership rose from 330 to 368 and both shares and loans increased. The Union suffered the loss of one of its directors when Father Sean Kennedy was transferred to Emly. Father Sean had been president of the inaugural meeting and had also served as secretary in his time.

The Post Office has survived as an institution in its own right, not as an adjunct to some supermarket. But some changes did occur in 1974. On Thursday, September 26, the old manual telephone connection system in the area was replaced by a new automatic dialling structure. The initial exchange had the capacity for 430 lines and included Cloneen and Knockbrit. Subscribers were now able to dial each other directly
rather than requesting a telephone operator to put their call through to the required number. Subscribers could now also dial directly to numbers outside the Fethard area. Today we are so advanced that some of us are able to drive a motor car and talk on a telephone system at the same time. Another change that occurred was that in November the Post Office changed its half-day closure from Thursday (the old closure day in the town) to Saturday. By that year Saturday half-day closures had become commonplace.

And the town walls, so much part of the fabric of medieval Fethard, still encircle the town. But in 1974 many in the town were becoming anxious about their state. How long would they survive was the question asked. An approach was made to the Commissioners of Public Works with the hope that they would undertake the necessary conservation and preservation. The Commissioners, however, kicked the ball into the long grass by noting that the buildings and walls were not in their charge and so they could offer no help. The concerned hopes were then passed to the County Council with the expectation that money could be obtained (and the work envisaged would be expensive) from Europe under the terms of the forthcoming Architectural Heritage Year of 1975.

Yes, the ICA is still with us. Over this year the association had a steady increase in membership. During the winter months of 1973/74 craft classes were held twice weekly. During the July Fethard Festival the members held a fashion show and later a jumble sale to help to defray the travelling expenses of the volleyball team. Following a summer recess the guild’s activities commenced on Tuesday, October 22. As the members came together the shock of the death of Helen O’Connell was on the
The July page of the Esso Petrol Co. calendar for 1974 had featured the two Misses O’Connell, Phyllis and Helen, engaged in Lumra rug making in their garden on the Rocklow Road. And now as the ICA assembled in October the members talked of the death of Helen. She died suddenly at the end of August to the great shock of her many friends. Helen spent the greater part of her life in Fethard where she received her initial education from the Presentation nuns. From there she went to the Notre Dame Order in England. When finished there she returned for a short time to the School of Art in Dublin where she was taught the technique of metal work. At the end of that course she returned to England to teach block printing to schoolchildren. While there she appears to have been caught up in the travel restrictions of the Second World War and so she had to spend those war years in England as a forestry worker. During the time she spent at this work she acquired a love of woodcraft and bird life which lasted for her lifetime. When the war ended she returned to Fethard and from then on her life was lived locally. The early years of the ICA owed much to her; she was a major force in local pantomimes and plays; she was an accomplished folk dancer and taught in the convent. In this she was a first-class teacher having endless patience.
with the muddled and the clumsy. She was a woman of whom Fethard can well be proud and one can but express the hope that her name will not pass to oblivion.

The Tipperary Foxhounds have also survived for nearly two centuries. During the winter season of 1973/74 the members were actively hunting at Drangan, Slainstown, Ballinard Cross, Lisonagh, and numerous other centres. The ‘Tipps’ as they were known also supported a children’s meet, and held a Pony Club rally at The Kennels, Tullamaine, on Wednesday, August 14. Another such rally was held, on Friday, December 20, in the grounds of Grove through the kindness of Mr and Mrs Harry Ponsonby. The members held a hunt ball in the Country Club Ballroom, Fethard, on Friday, March 15. The dancing was from nine to two, a supper was on offer, and the tickets cost £1.50. The music was provided by the well-known Mick Delahunty.

As always, the opening meet of 1974 was held in The Square, Fethard, on November 4. About one hundred mounts turned out on the day, all of whom moved off in the traditional manner through the arch at Sparagoleith to Rocklow. They were led by their then master Mr Michael Higgins who, in the previous season, had joined the ‘Gallant Tipps’ from the Galway Hunt as the new master. The dog pack of fifty couples, the third largest in the country, was under the whips of Michael Flanagan and Pat O’Brien.

Another pony event of this year was the sale of the entire pony stud at Kiltinan Castle on October 22. The pony stud was synonymous with Mrs La Terriere, and now both were gone.

Other sports have flared and then died and perhaps flared again. In the year of which I write the Killusty Pony Show was an important event. It was held on Saturday, July 6, and had twenty different classes on show (consisting of about two hundred entries) which were judged over two rings. The entries came from many parts of the island of Ireland.

Killusty also had a Clay Pigeon Club to tempt the budding sportsman. This group had a very active membership. The Mill Field in
Killusty was the venue for the sixth annual Munster Sporting Clay-Bird championships which was held on September 1. The event had an excellent attendance of guns, and local man Tony Sheehan was one of the stars. On the day, incidentally, Tony won a cup which was presented to him by its donor, his eighty-nine-year-old grandfather (Paddy Sheehan).

There was a badminton club in Fethard in this year. The meetings were held in the Town Hall on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights. During the year the club fielded three teams and took a part in various competitions. For the entertainment of its members and guests it held a dance in the Town Hall on Friday, July 19, with the music being supplied by the Castle Stars.

Another sport which the new Sports Centre helped to revive was tennis. This was thanks to the new hard courts there. The re-organised game was now under the management of Betty Gorey, Betty Holohan, Carmel Rice, Danny Kane, Lory Dineen and Jimmy McCarthy.

If you were the outdoor type there was the Coolmoyne and Fethard Gun Club. During the year the club reared 250 pheasants in three pens. Even without these birds it was reputed that in the area about Fethard game was plentiful in the preserved areas. Owing, however, to the cost of rearing the young pheasants the membership fee then stood at £2. In this year the leading members of the committee were John O'Donovan, The Valley (chairman), Thomas Noonan of Coolmoyne (secretary), and William McCormack, Coolmoyne (treasurer).

Throughout the year soccer was kept alive by a Killusty side. As in so many walks of life, you win some, you lose some, and so it was with Killusty Soccer. The club held its annual general meeting on Wednesday, June 12, and the new committee consisted of Father Sean Kennedy, president; Joe Allen, chairman; Christy Williams, vice-chairman; Michael Kenrick, secretary; Christy Aylward, assistant secretary; Louis Coen, treasurer. The new selectors were George Mathews, C. Aylward and C. Williams, and the team captain was Louis Coen. As the new season opened in the autumn of that year the team played what could be called some respectable games. And that team was M. Kenrick, T. Halpin, P. Kenrick, M. Holohan, L. Coen, S. Aylward, P. Byrne, B. Power, M. Riordan, E. Fox, N. Sharpe, and J. Maher.

With the ready availability of first-class courts in the new Sports Centre a rising interest in handball became very apparent. But the new covered and lit courts did raise some problems. These were built on what was termed the American style: that is forty feet by twelve feet instead of the more common Tipperary one of sixty feet by thirty feet. The upshot of discussions was that the new courts were adopted as the county standard. And these new courts greatly impressed the four
international players who came to Fethard on Thursday, October 31, to give an exhibition of handball to a packed gallery. The local committee who oversaw all this were: P. Walsh, chairman; Brother Sylvester O’Neill, secretary; and a general committee of Arthur Daly, Joe Keane, Dick Fitzgerald and Tony Newport. Some of the good local players in this year were Arthur Daly, Paddy Walsh, Davy O’Dwyer, Billy Treacy, Jim O’Meara and Joe Keane.

Very fit to stand alone in the sport sphere because of their great successes were the Presentation Convent Volleyball team. Over the year they won All-Ireland titles in three different competitions. Two teams (under sixteen and under eighteen) brought home trophies from Cork when they played on Saturday, February 23, and so qualified for the international games to be held in Zaragoza in Spain at Easter. To come to this standard the girls had been training for about three hours a day. To add to the pleasure of the occasion the girls had three bus-loads of supporters with them in Cork and bonfires and a reception at the ballroom carpark when they got home. And justly honoured on that night was their coach Sister Fidelis. Playing on the Cadette team that day were Lillian Gorey (captain), Patricia Harrison, Bernie Coady, Mary Morrissey, Elizabeth Holohan, Mary Ahearne, Ann Hayes, Catherine Newport, and Josephine Keane. And
the senior players were Josephine O’Brien (captain), Breda Gorey, Trudy Hanrahan, Elaine O’Meara, Patricia Morrissey, Rita O’Connor, Angela Dillon, Helen Roche and Eileen Wright.

Later in the year the girls won medals at the Tailteann Games in Dublin (in May) and in the September National Community Games held in Butlin’s Holiday Camp at Mosney, Co. Meath. When the girls returned from the latter they were received in Fethard by a large crowd in the Town Hall. Also present on that occasion were Sean Hickey, chairman of the Tipperary Games Committee, Alderman Sean Lyons, then Mayor of Clonmel, and Jimmy Murphy, chairman of the County Council.

Outside of sport there were other organisations that catered for the social life of Fethard people. For some time past the Muintir na Tíre organisation had been moribund, but on July 26 a re-organising meeting was held. This was addressed by Mr Patrick Costello from Templemore. As a consequence a new local council was elected, and a show was held on October 26. Another rural institution that was active in that year was Macra na Feirme which then had twenty-six members. They held a field evening in the Cattle Mart on Friday, June 21, and followed up with a dance in the Country Club Ballroom. Throughout the year various courses were on offer for the members, such as keeping farm accounts, rug making, and
welding. The members were also very active in drama. For example, they qualified for the final of the one-act drama competition which was held in Golden on Friday, March 22, and was open to all Macra clubs. In this particular final they lost by one mark, but their producer, Paddy Maher, won a Best Production award. And a best actress award went to Helen Maher. The committee running the club were: Father Cunningham (president); Joe Hanly, Coleman (vice-president); Pat Fahy, Lisronagh (chairman); Helen Maher, The Green (secretary); and Tom Grant, Killerk (treasurer).

Another event that was old and still active was the Chrysanthemum Flower Show which was held in November. A great occasion which was well supported and the proceeds were given to various charities such as St. Vincent de Paul, the Old Folks Party, St. Brigid’s Clothing Society, and Meals-on-Wheels. And making mention of Meals-on-Wheels, that organisation served 2,500 meals over 1974. All the work, which was run from the local Social Service centre, was undertaken by volunteers; despite this the cost of foodstuffs had so risen that the service had become debt ridden. All of which had the centre scrambling to acquire financial help. The leading committee members of this worthwhile organisation were, Dr. J.B. Maher (president), Mrs Olivia Hughes (secretary), and TF Hayes (treasurer). Another benevolent society was the Apostolic Society, which, since 1962, had been meeting weekly to sew
and stitch vestments and church requisites for missionary priests. They also paid for Catechists serving on the Augustinian Mission in Kenya. To fund their endeavours they held a sale-of-work in the town. The Country Markets also existed to be of benefit to others. They ran a weekly market in the Town Hall which made available fresh vegetables and fruit. Their annual general meeting was held in the ICA Hall on Friday, May 17.

But there were also general entertainments. The annual festival for this year was billed for the week from June 30 to July 7 and was under the guiding hands of Austin O’Flynn of Abbey Street and the Fethard Development Association. Any profits that accrued were intended for improvements about the town. Flying lessons could be had up at Coolbawn in a dual-control aircraft and with an introductory flight cost of $3. Back on ground Duffy’s Circus came to Fethard on Friday, July 5, for one day only with performances at 4.30pm and 8pm. From Fethard the circus moved off to Callan; a great circus gathering up its baggage and travelling off is almost as entertaining as the show itself. Later on Monday, September 9, the Circus Courtney came to town.

And there were other entertainments. By 1974 the old were being referred to as ‘senior citizens’, but the seventy who went to the Town Hall on the evening of Tuesday, January 1, gave the lie to the ‘senior’ word. They partied and had a wonderful evening. The event was organised by the local Our Lady’s Sodality and the money to pay for the experience was raised through a series of whist drives. In mid-summer a group of ‘senior citizens’ travelled by bus to Shannon, to Killaloe, and to the lake at Dromineer. A meal was laid on for the folks in Nenagh. Sadly, though the outing was in summertime, the weather was anything but favourable. An assemblage of sixty of those on the wrong side of sixty-years was treated to a pre-Christmas party on Sunday, December 15, in the Town Hall. A sumptuous meal was followed by a sing-song and a dance; the whole event was organised by Sister Peter and those who...
diverted the folks were William Phelan, Teresa Ryan, Mrs Morrissey, Ned Lawrence, Paddy Grant, Jackie Aylward, Olivia Hughes, Phyllis O'Connell and Goldie Newport.

Those away from home and in the broad London area were entertained when the annual Emigrants’ Reunion of Fethard and Killusty people took place on Thursday, May 23. The gathering was in the Irish Centre, 52 Camden Square. The local contingent of about twelve was led by Father Thomas Cooke and organised by the Legion of Mary; the event itself was attended by about 200. The great success of this particular meeting was due in great measure to the efforts of Patrick Shine and the London committee.

Another Reunion was that of the Fethard Patrician Past Pupils. At their annual general meeting Mr Percy O’Flynn passed the president’s chair to Tommy Carey. The other new officers were: Brother Stephen, chairman; Paddy McCormack, vice-president; Brother Berchmans, vice chairman; Timmy O’Connor, secretary; and Joe Hayes, treasurer. Canon Lee was co-opted as patron of the Reunion. In that year the dinner-dance was held in Hearn’s Hotel in Clonmel on Friday, March 29. And in an event that was open to all the Reunion organised a graduation social in the Town Hall on Friday, June 7. In this same year Brother Stephen celebrated the golden jubilee of his profession as a Patrician Brother. For his fifty years of service his Order presented him with a six-week tour of the U.S. and the
Past Pupils with a Parker writing set.

There were still other commemorations. In 1974 many of the old warriors of the War of Independence (1919-21) were still living. At the Easter Commemoration held at the Republican Plot in St. Michael’s Cemetery, Tipperary Town, Fethard and Moyglass were represented by J. O’Neill and Jack Myles. An old man who died on May 6 had a totally different connection with Fethard. He was Sydney Arthur Weeks who died the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and was buried in Woking, Surrey. Sydney had served as a young sergeant in the Royal Field Artillery at the beginning of the 1920s in the barracks in both Fethard and Clonmel. He appears never to have forgotten, ‘Sweet Tipperary, where the fields are so fertile and green’ (his own words).

Another remembrance for very old readers (those who could be said to be beyond the ‘senior citizen’ grade) of this Newsletter would be the story from Radio Eireann. On Saturday, January 12, Miceál O’Hehir interviewed a man called Frankie Gomez. Now those old ‘oldies’ will recall that Frankie served as a jockey for the late Major Vigors of Tullamaine and later Coolmore. By the time of the interview Frankie had become a successful horse trainer in America.

Though memories remain, things change and people die. One such to die was Billy Kenrick. Though he lived in Clonmel Billy was always a Fethard man, and will be remembered as a band leader to which older readers would have danced. Billy, too, gave unstinted of his time to the Council for the Blind. And a great prominent business premises...
changed hands in this year when on April 1 the property formerly owned by John Scully went on sale. An old way of doing business which included Tommy Hogan and Richie Fitzgerald had now come to an end.

But the institution that attempted to give reality to those memories and those hopes was the Fethard Development Association. As the New Year began the Association was pleased to announce that it had been instrumental in bringing a new factory (Elron Ltd.) to the town. Throughout the year the factory, which it was hoped would employ about fifty people in the cooking and packaging of food for export, was under construction. It was being built on the Kilnockin Road.

During the year the Association entertained some proposals for improving the quality of life within the town. They advocated improved public lighting and the provision of public toilets. They were interested in the preservation of the walls and the various historic building as well as the enhancement of The Square and The Valley areas. They promoted the need for renovating the various derelict sites and houses about the town and improving the road surfaces and pathways. All the members agreed on the great need for flowers and greenery in public places.

After some prodding by the Association the County Council produced a development plan for the town: ‘the most important thing the Council will ever undertake’, according to the then County Manager. The plan, which also included Cahir, was estimated as costing £11,000 spread over five years. It was hoped that it would anticipate the land use need for all forms of human activity over a five to ten year period, where jobs would be found, and where people would live, shop and play.

And finally the committee of that worthwhile executive were: Canon Christopher Lee, president; Austin O’Flynn, chairman; Tom Barrett, vice-chairman; Mrs Mary Healy, secretary; Sean Henehan, treasurer. The general committee were: Mrs O’Brien, Jim Kenny, Jim Ryan, Jack Kenrick, Austin Slattery, Dick Gorey, Tim O’Riordan, Paddy Murphy, Catherine Allen, Brendan Kenny, Paddy Lonergan, Tommy Carey, Larry Dargan, and Frank Coffey. Such then was the Fethard of forty years ago.

Fethard GAA Convention 1984


Fethard GAA Centenary Convention in The Tirry Centre January 1984
Racquetball Presentations 1983

Photographed at Fethard Racquetball Presentations in O’Shea’s Bar May 1983 are L to R: Eileen Tobin, Mary Woodlock and Marie McGrath.

Photographed at Fethard Racquetball Presentations in O’Shea’s Bar, May 1983, are Frances and Joe Thompson, Mockler’s Terrace.
The curtain has come down on a very busy 2014 and this is a brief review of the year. In 2014 the number of kids playing juvenile GAA in Fethard continued to increase and the level of activity undertaken has grown. Playing and training activity now takes places from February to October each year. The Juvenile Club is extremely appreciative of the financial support provided by Coolmore, our main sponsor.

A huge amount of excellent work is being done by a lot of dedicated voluntary coaches and administrators to ensure that young boys in Fethard have a rewarding and enjoyable experience in playing GAA activities. Evidence of this is the increasing numbers taking part year-on-year for the past few years. Also, the result of this effort is that Fethard underage teams, once again, are beginning to compete at the higher grades.

The club has 100 juvenile members ranging from U6 to U16. The U6s are ‘our minis’ and many of this year’s group will be underage again in 2015. Each week they had great fun learning the basics of hurling and football.

Our largest numbers are at the U8 level. They have been coached since February, and took part in many football and hurling matches and blitzes. They lost narrowly during the summer in the final of Fethard’s annual U8 football ‘Danagher Cup’ tournament.

The U10 boys also trained and played games since early spring. Fethard was one of very few clubs who entered two teams in the South U10 football blitz during the summer. Both teams played excellently with the first team being undefeated. Many of these boys were
also part of the Fethard-Killusty Community Games team which lost narrowly in the South football final. Their hurling skill level has come on tremendously this year.

At U12 to U16 level, although no titles were won, a lot has been done and achieved. Two teams were fielded this year in U12 football; the first team just getting piped in their divisional semi-final, and the second team giving a great display in losing in the South final. In U12 hurling, one team was entered and reached the divisional semi-final. The U12s were also invited to Croke Park in July to play football games against teams from around the country. Two bus loads of kids and parents/supporters went off for a very enjoyable day.

A very young U14 team put in many good performances during the course of the year; a lot of these boys are underage again in 2015.

At U16 level, Fethard is amalgamated with our neighbours St. Patrick’s GAA and are known as Anner Gaels. They were very
unlucky not to qualify for a South semi-final in football, only losing out on score difference. And they had many excellent games in the hurling championship.

We had six boys represent the club at the U8, U10 and U12 Skills County Finals in Thurles. Each of them qualified from the club’s Cúl Camp in August (in which over 90 children participated). Fethard had two top-three places; Micheál Quinlan was 1st in U12 football and Seán Moroney finished 3rd in U10 football.

A number of the boys from the club were selected on South division squads during the year. In addition to this, Ross McCormack and Jack Dolan at U15, and Jack Ward at U14, were selected on County Tipperary football squads, a great achievement for them.

Considerable work (the vast majority of it voluntary in nature) was done since mid-Summer on transforming the field beside the primary and secondary schools into a usable full-size U12 field. This is a joint project by the Juvenile Club with the Senior, Camogie and Ladies Football clubs in co-operation with these schools. Permanent goal posts and safety netting behind the goals were installed and a lot of other improvement work around the field carried out. The field will be an excellent additional facility for the schools and clubs and will alleviate pressure off the main field.

A qualified external GAA coach is coming into both the Holy Trinity and Killusty National Schools to do coaching with 1st to 6th classes each week. This coaching is being funded by the clubs to supplement the already huge contribution made by voluntary coaches.
The 2014 piano exams held in Fethard for pupils of Fethard piano teacher Stuart Clooney were a big success again this year. Pupils of all levels from Fethard and the surrounding areas who sat the exams, either pre or post Easter, were examined by an examiner from the Leinster School of Music and Drama, Griffith College Dublin. The graded piano exams are extremely important to help students focus on an annual goal and thereby progress through the music grades syllabus. Outstanding results with Honours and First Class Honours were achieved by all students on both exam dates. Well done to all students who took part, with many young beginners receiving their first piano certificate from the college. Medals were awarded to the following students for particularly high results of over ninety-five percent in the intermediate and higher grades: Kaylin O’Donnell, Keith Morrissey, Laura O’Donnell, Eoin Murphy, Hannah Sheehy and Katie McCarthy.

Fethard was well represented by Stuart Clooney’s piano students again this year at the annual National Music and Drama Excellence Awards Competition held in Griffith College Dublin in July 2014. The competition involved students from all over Ireland who were examined in the exams during the year. Out of 15,000 examinees...
the examiners nominated 140 students excelling in a particular piece of music or drama. Congratulations go to six of Stuart’s students, Sadhbh Morrissey, Keith Morrissey, Katie McCarthy, Laura O’Donnell, Chloe O’Donovan Carey and Hannah Sheehy who were nominated and travelled to Dublin to play their piano pieces before the examiners in the College. Katie McCarthy and Chloe Carey O’Donovan reached the final thirty of the competition thereby receiving a special recognition from the judges. To reach the final rounds of this prestigious competition is a testament to the talent and hard work involved.

Stuart would like to thank all of the students for all of the hard work in preparation for their piano exams and to the students and their families, the secondary and primary schools in the area and to John Shortall Pianos for their support during the year.

For further details and enquiries please contact Stuart or Maura Clooney, Cashel Road, Fethard Tel: (052) 6132567.

Ahearne family photographed at Rocklow Bridge in the 1970s
Late August, for many years a time for me to admire the red-berried rowan tree and remark to Sr. Annunciata, ‘It’s time to go back’, and she would smile knowingly and we would all return to school.

Years of deferred gratification – not so now – as leaving my lovely family behind, my brother Declan home from California, my lovely sister Honor and her loving sons and family, Jodie and Tom, the delight of my days and Foley, my steadfast Jack Russell, I decided to indulge in instant gratification and embarked on a journey to a land of fire and water – Mesopotamia and gladiator country.

A brief interlude in Budapest – to return to later – and whirring from Pest to Buda, over the bridges of the Danube, in a taxi ducking and dodging in lanes of afternoon traffic, with a jovial Hungarian driver I made my way from the International Airport, which significantly has been re-named ‘Franz Liszt’ airport after one of Hungary’s most illustrious composers, to Deli Railway Station, one of the great hubs of the European rail system. Here Europe is one’s oyster. Vienna, Paris, Zagreb,
Berlin, whichever far-flung mythology one chooses, the station milling with students of every nationality inter-railing for the summer; smartly dressed women and lithe young men looking oh so important with classic leather briefcases, and ‘moi’, a not-so-young retired school teacher paying her Hungarian forint to the tune of €12 and George Ezra’s ‘Budapest’, a quirky little number from the summer of 2014 floating ‘round and ‘round in my head.

The train chugged out of the station, discreetly gathering speed as carriage after carriage, sleepers, passengers, bicycles, spirited me away south towards the Croatian border . . . rolling planes, acres of ripening grain, fields of tall, majestic sunflowers . . . green . . . green . . . the Basin of Europe . . . then the amazing Lake Balaton, the largest inland lake in Europe.

After ‘singing dumb’ to an irate ticket collector, who was trying to tell me that I owed the princely sum of 30 cent in our money, he gave up and disappeared into the bowels of the train. The shores of Lake Balaton emerged from the warm August sunshine – mile on mile of tiny pre-war railway stations – an eerie feeling – a sense of deja-vu – a stream of consciousness of the thousands of Hungarian Jews, Gypsies and so many other poor souls who were transported to Auschwitz in the final months of World War II, when Hitler discovered that the then Hungarian ruling party were ‘inside trading’, so to speak, and quickly occupied one of the finest buildings on Andrássy Avenue as Nazi headquarters, and ravished this fine land and its people with ‘Fire and Brimstone’, metaphorically – just as it had emerged from the earth millions of years before.

Alighting from the train in Balatonlelle I indulge my senses in a new world. The Hungarian language strange in its nuances; the balmy late-summer sunshine; the wild swans of Balaton, akin to the ‘Wild Swans at Coole’, and magnificent thunder storms. The sky above Balaton rent with lightning, merciless, relentless rain, and then silence, sunshine and calm.

Adapting to my new environs was made easier by the presence of Patrik and Andrey – young, gently-spoken Hungarians from Kaposvar – they made a ‘mean latte’, and willingly traded Hungarian phrases in exchange for – no! not English but Portuguese! Loving sport, they shared in my enthusiasm for the clash of the titans on the following Sunday, Tipperary v Kilkenny. Methinks the
young ladies of Tipp would also enthuse on their good looks but time and distance prevails!
What a final it turned out to be, sitting on the terrace of the Hotel Lido, listening to Marty Morrissey and Donal Óg Cusack paint wonderful pictures of the thrills and spills in Croke Park. And then 'hawk-eye' had to go and spoil the party! My Samsung and I were getting seriously strange looks from the Sunday afternoon strollers. An excited, frenetic commentary on All-Ireland Hurling Final Sunday is not something these locals would hear in this part of the world too often. I even managed to capture the attention of a very much extended family who were cooking an aroma-inviting Goulash, in a type of cauldron hanging on a tripod over an open fire, shades of 'Macbeth' and 'bubble, bubble, toil and trouble!' Forget bacon and cabbage, I wanted a dinner invite!

‘Trains and boats and planes’, ah! what a lovely melody I hummed as the train transported me to Siofok and the boat to Tihany – a peninsula so beautiful, the result of millions of years of evolution. The imposing Benedictine Monastery circa 1055, towering over and protecting this little village with its twisting hills and leafy foliage and the smell of lavender wafting through the air. The World Heritage Centre of ‘The Lavender House’ gave me a further insight into this incredible place. Nothing has been spoiled in Tihany and my hope is that it will always remain as it is now.

The time came to leave peaceful Balatonlelle and go north once more to Budapest, memories lingering, the rustling leaves, the conkers as big as small footballs, acorns beneath my feet and that special heady smell of burning leaves.

Ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa ... fields flying by ... little villages with high church steeples ... closer and closer to the grand metropolis of Budapest. As a camera takes a stereo image I mused on this great rail system, which links so many peoples and cultures and see our own Ireland – torn-up tracks, the magic of the train gone from so many towns of rural Ireland, the West Clare railway a memory in song, 'Are you right there Train heading for Fethard via Moanbeg
Michael, are you right?”

Like a cannonball it struck, exciting, edgy, quirky Budapest! The awakening of the senses bombarded with chatter and music, sirens and strange noises of the city, a cacophony of sounds. The magnificence of the palaces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the stark square buildings of Communist occupation; parks and gardens with imposing statues of Kodaly, Bartok and the heroes of the revolution of 1956.

Thermal spas and boat trips on the Danube; the splendour of St. Stephen’s Basilica; Gucci and Armani in the stylish fashion houses of Andrassey Ave; ‘buzzy’ pubs and fine dining, the famous Hungarian foie gras, an experience of a lifetime, and mouth-watering desserts so exotic that one is inclined to leave them in their state of perfection and then the temptation is too much! Yes! Budapest has it all and more.

Between two worlds, back to the ‘holy ground’, Indian summer, late September, blackberry picking in the sunshine. The silence of the wood enveloping Tommy Cantwell’s cottage, where one can almost imagine smoke curling from the chimney; the colourful butterflies; the buzz of flies, another haven of solace, of peace.

“... now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake’s edge or pool
Delight men’s eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?”

– (Yeats)
Fethard Ladies’ Football

The past year proved to be another very successful year for Fethard Ladies’ Football after reaching no less than nine competitive finals. Of course there must be winners and losers and, although we had our share of heartache, we also had the jubilation of taking no less than six titles back to the club in four different age groups.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and determination the players and should we continue in this vein there can only be a bright future ahead for the club.

At U6-U8 ages the emphasis is on skill development and good ‘fun’. Training for this age group is a light-hearted affair while using football related games to teach the girls. At this age the group is involved in non-competitive blitzes and through participation in these games the girls gain a basic knowledge of the skills of the game.

Our U10 girls will learn more advanced skills with training sessions that are at a slightly higher tempo compared to younger groups. Girls will still take part in non-competitive blitzes while also playing one-off games of 15 aside.

U12 level is where we play our first championship games and, as in recent years, this group has excelled. Competing in the A competition for the first time the girls played some tremendous football and were unlucky to lose the county final by a narrow margin. They learned from that experience and went one better in the county blitz securing the title. This group also participated in the Community Games and, having built on last year’s success, went one better, not only winning the county title but creating history by reaching
the Munster final.
Again, it was another good year for our U14 girls who won two of their three finals. Having won their county championship in emphatic style the girls added a county blitz title before moving up to A grade for the county league. Although the girls came up short in the final they can be very proud of their efforts.

Our U16 girls were drawn in a very tough group in their championship and having played some great football were unlucky to lose out in the semifinals. To their credit the girls never gave up and battled their way to the county league final where, in what can only be described as the ‘game of the year’, the girls clinched victory in a nail-biting finale.

Our minors, at the time of writing, are due to play Galtee Rovers in the plate semifinal.

Our junior ladies had a great year also, competing in two finals. Firstly the ladies won their county league final with a decisive victory over Gortnahoe in Fethard. The ladies then battled their way to a county final against Mullinahone where, unfortunately on the day, they came up against a very strong opponent.

The club took great pride in the fact that we had five players representing their county at three different levels. At U14 we had three representatives in Laura Stocksborough, Muireann O’Connell and Sophie Ryan. At U16 level we had Kate Davey and at Intermediate we had Amy Pollard. All the ladies represented the county with distinction and Kate had the distinction of being part of the All-Ireland winning U16
team scoring three points herself in the victory over Laois in the final.

All in all it was a great year for the club and that is in no small amount a credit to the players, coaches and committee who all work tirelessly to make the club such a success. We would like to thank all of our sponsors, because without their help and generosity throughout the year we could not sustain the club. We would also like to thank all those who supported our fundraisers in the year, the parents for their support and all those who attended the games.

Kate Davey receiving the Butler’s Fethard Sports Achievement Award for September from special guest Waltie Moloney (left) and Sean O’Sullivan, representing sponsor, O’Sullivan Insurance, Clonmel.

Ladies Football Club members photographed at the presentation of the Sports Achievement Award. L to R: Tracy Grant, Sarah Smyth, Sharon O’Meara, Sandra Spillane and Kay Spillane.
Very little is known about the Solomon Islands in this part of the world. It is a cluster of over 100 small islands in the South Pacific to the north east of Brisbane, Australia. The main Island, Guadalcanal, has a population of about 50,000 people and the main town and seat of Government is Honiara.

To anyone who has read about or seen on television the history of World War II in the Pacific, the island of Guadalcanal will be known as the scene of one of the most bloody battles between US and Japanese armies.

Strategically, the island was important to the Japanese because it was within bomber range of many Australian cities, Darwin, Cairns and even Brisbane and the New Zealand mainland.

Following the occupation of Guadalcanal, which had previously been a British Protectorate, the Japanese proceeded to build a long airstrip which could take the bigger bomber planes with a long flying range. In August 1942, the airstrip was almost ready for use when a large force of US marines attempted to land on the Island with the intention of capturing the strip before it could be used.

What followed was one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Some 32,000 marines lost their lives trying to capture the airstrip and seventeen US battleships were sunk in the Honiara bay area.

Today, this bay is known as Iron Bottom Sound, an area known as an exciting dive site for amateur divers and a source of tourist revenue to the government of the Solomons. Landside, the battle areas are as well-known too and areas in the hinterland of Honiara bear names such as Bloody Ridge, Coffin Corner, and Blood River. In those areas too, there are the original foxholes where soldiers defended ridges overlooking Henderson airfield which was finally secured by the US marines in February 1943, six months after the battle commenced.

Because there were visits by veterans of the campaign to the battle areas on a regular basis, some local historians often arranged Sunday tours of the battle areas. The author was able to join sometimes and learn more about the battles at first hand.

One very poignant tour involved a veteran from Maine, USA who...
was able to point out the foxhole that he manned in a defence situation at some stage in the battle. He explained that he was barely nineteen years old when he landed in the Solomons and his first assignment was to a row of foxholes on Bloody Ridge looking down on the airstrip. He was not afraid to confess that he cried all of the first night as he squatted there waiting for the Japanese assault that was expected and which came almost nightly. The attack did not come and he remembers that his platoon sergeant moved him the following day, much to his relief. Enough about war!

Having spent three years in the Solomons, the author had time to see most aspects of island life. The work involved much travel between islands and this, for me, was stressful at times. Travelling by open boat with the inevitable spluttering outboard motor was often a cliff-hanger. The absence of life jackets was a problem, and when I had to undertake a five-hour boat trip to Santa Isobel Island, I realised how scarce and precious they were.

Eventually my search brought me to the Anglican Bishop of Honiara who very kindly lent me his jacket for five days until I returned to Guadalcanal. In my conversation with Bishop Richard, he told me that he too was mortally afraid of these trips and could sympathise with me and my fears. But, he said, this life jacket is blessed! Needless to say, on my first trip to Brisbane, I secured ten life jackets and used them for visiting Brussels personnel and other visiting dignitaries.

One of my most enjoyable trips was to be present at the opening of a round-island road in the neighbouring island of Malaita. This island had a steamer service from Honiara in what was originally a small cargo boat bearing the rather curious name of the ‘SS Bullamacow’. This boat carried passengers, vehicles, dry goods for shops in Auki, the main town in Malaita, and fuels. The trip was an overnight one and the passengers included the Prime Minister, 

Jim Trehy as a young boy holding a bull by the nose on their farm at Annsgift, Fethard.
who was to perform the opening ceremony of the new road. The road had been funded by the European Union and hence my attendance.

Later, I discovered the importance of the road to the economy of the Solomons as it opened up areas of valuable hardwood forests – teak, mahogany, rosewood – for felling and export. It also serviced coconut plantations which produced copra for fibre production, also a big export item to Malasia, Thailand and the Philippines.

The trip across was interesting because the night was calm and most people stayed on deck where the Prime Minister moved freely around chatting to people and smoking an odd joint while discussing different problems of government. His entourage included the Minister for Transport, Housing and Agriculture (all rolled into one man) and various Secretaries of Government. It seemed a novel way to meet the people and the politicians made full use of the opportunity to do so.

Not all the islands had a steamer service and these had to be visited in the open boats with outboards. The funding of a schools’ program by me on five of the larger islands necessitated numerous visits until the projects were costed and finalized. On some islands, we would have to wait offshore for help to appear in order to beach the boat, and many of the wharves were protected by reefs, which required special boatman skills to manoeuvre through. But we survived, and many schools benefited from our efforts as they were equipped with course books and much-needed desks made from the hardwoods found in all areas in abundance.

Many of the projects funded by the European Development Fund were also supported by British Overseas Aid and by the New Zealand Government. The project with the Education Ministry was supported by a teacher training programme funded by British Overseas Aid. A training institute in Honiara trained teachers in new learning techniques and is on-going.

An idea from an Irish priest who has spent a lifetime in education in the Solomons has resulted in carpenter training centres being set up on some of the larger islands and desks have been provided under the schools project for many of the places of learning. This little project has been supported by the Rotary Club of Clonmel and is also on-going.

After three years and a lot of experiences, good and not so good, I finally said goodbye to the Solomons, and I could truly say, that the local title ‘The Happy Isles’ was apt for the people with so little but a disposition to be happy.

(Jim Trehy retired some years ago from his position as EU’s Resident Advisor in the Solomon Islands and now lives at Donoughmore, Lisonagh)
Peter Napier whistling his way up The Valley was the first sign. A bucket of paste and an outsized distemper brush in one hand and a roll of bills under his oxter. When Peter was armed like that it could mean only one thing: there was a circus coming to town.

Word spread quickly and by the time Peter had stopped at the gate that led into the council plots we were gathering round him. Watching, eager to see what would be revealed on the bill that he was about to post on the pier. He had all the powers of a wizard to us then, standing there, about to conjure images of another world with his brush, his bucket, and his bills.

Conscious of his expectant audience he set his cap at a jaunty tilt, winked at us, smathered a generous dose of paste onto the knobby face of the pier. Brushing it over the remnant of other, faded, posters whose forgotten messages had generated excitement in us on other days. With a flourish he flung the brush back into the bucket, dramatically selected a bill from the roll, offered it up to the pier. Paste oozed out at the edges as he patted the poster onto the pier.

And yes, there was a circus coming to town, Duffy’s circus. ‘Bigger and better than ever.’ The words blazed on the poster in bright red letters.

The poster teemed with an exotic array of characters that spoke to us of another world. They would perform a matinée and an evening show in the big top bringing
colour and excitement to our lives for a few short hours. There were tightrope walkers, trapeze artists, a magician, clowns, a bucking bicycle that nobody had ever managed to stay on board, a man without arms who could do the ‘MOST AMAZING’ things with his feet. There were troupes of dancers, ponies, a female contortionist. And more, much, much more, the poster promised.

We gazed at the sketch of the strongest man in the world. Commented on his bulging biceps and tattoos. He was bull-necked, looked like an ugly cousin of Lon Chaney who played the werewolf in films at the Capitol cinema. A thick tail of hair curved from the top of his shaved head and hung down along his back. I wondered if his strength was in his hair, like Samson in that film we’d seen one Sunday recently.

It never occurred to us to wonder why the strongest man in the world would be coming to our little town instead of performing his feats in the capitals of the world. New York, London, Paris, some of those cities. But he was coming to the centre of our world, the only world we knew.

‘That fella would never be as strong as Butty Sugrue,’ Peter declared, confidently, with a knowing wink.

We gazed at him, doubtful, never having heard of Butty Sugrue, awaiting the elaboration that we knew would come.

Butty Sugrue didn’t seem as exotic to me as the malevolent looking individual gazing at us from the poster. We waited though.

Peter had seen Butty in Duffy’s circus years back. Had seen him prevent a motorbike from taking off with a chain gripped between his teeth. Even though it was revving and revving, its throttle fully open. Butty had held two men above his head with one hand, pivoting round and round as they dangled from either end of a shovel handle. Peter twirled around, arm raised above his head, demonstrating.

I didn’t think much of that. Holding back a motorbike wasn’t any big deal. Not like maybe lifting a baby elephant over your head which the lad with the ponytail looked per-
fectly capable of doing. He looked capable of eating a baby elephant.

It was all so alluring, so colourful. Looking at the poster we were seeing into a world far removed from the mundane world that we inhabited. Glimpsing an illusory world where the most incredible, the most outrageous, death-defying feats were possible. Routine, even. People had been known to run off with circuses in search of a more exciting life and stay away for years. Some never to come back.

Peter moved on leaving a trail of posters in his wake on telegraph poles, walls, doors and galvanised gates.

And so the waiting and anticipation began. The show would last maybe two hours, but an eternity of waiting lay between us and the great moment when it would begin.

Every day we ran past that poster on the pier, no longer stopping to look at it, seeing it instead in our peripheral vision. Its colour and characters were imprinted on our imagination, a constant reminder and reference point for us during the intervening days as we awaited the arrival of the living embodiment of what was depicted on the poster.

I'd never seen a circus arriving into town, and I'd never seen one go. Circus convoys always arrived in the early hours of the morning, even before farmers had their cows in the byre for milking. Those circus folk were strange, came stealing mysteriously into town, unnoticed, while all the countryside was quiet and we
were motionless under our blankets. To me it seemed as if they came ghosting in from a world parallel to ours but not part of it.

And thus they came about a week after Peter had posted the bill on the pier.

One morning as I was steepling reluctantly to school there it was, the big top, bright and red, towering up out of the Barrack field, drawing all eyes to it as we made our way along the Rocklow road. All fear of school was driven away for a while as we gazed at the high top, its coloured pennants fluttering and a network of ropes straining this way and that holding it together. All through class thoughts and eyes wandered away from books and the blackboard as we tried to visualise what was going on over in the Barrack field. At play in the schoolyard there was little talk of anything else. Expectations were heightened after lunch when the lads from Patrick’s Place brought back exaggerated reports of lions roaring and elephants trumpeting. There were no lions, no elephants. We knew that. Still we wondered: could there be?

At four o’clock we were rushing in through the gates of the Barrack field to be confronted by an array of vehicles: trucks, caravans and trailers used to transport animals and equipment. And an almost psychedelic rush of colour: bright reds, yellows, blues. And that powerful, indefinable circus smell was thick in the air.

We made a quick scouting mission round the outer edge of the big top, bent on finding some way to feck in under the tarpaulin and have the entrance fee for sweets. But the perimeter was being patrolled by a tough-looking individual who ran us with threatening looks and very unsympathetic language.

Once inside we climbed to the highest row of tiered seats. Inside, the big top was adazzle with colour, pulsating with music. The show began to manic, uptempo music that seemed to be played at twice its normal speed by a group of musicians in dickey-bows and glistering jackets. A ringmaster in a red coat and top hat cracked a whip and announced every act to dramatic drum-rolls. First out were three ponies, girls vaulting on and off their backs. We weren’t
really bothered about ponies with plumes and acrobatic girls in glittering knickers who posed and bowed endlessly with smiles as wide as a mile. But the ponies couldn’t force a smile to hide their apathy.

What we really wanted to see were the clowns, the bucking bicycle and the strongest man in the world. Or something really dramatic like an artist falling off a trapeze, instead of pretending to, just to make small children and old women squeal. We could see through all that mock stuff that the circus people went on with.

As the ponies left, a clown capered in with a wheelbarrow and gathered up some droppings. Three others came leapfrogging over one another into the arena. When the third clown bent over he received a hefty boot in the backside. From that moment on we roared and screamed and laughed as they honked their noses snapped the braces on their outsized trousers and performed well-rehearsed routines with exaggerated gestures and bangs on the drum.

The bucking bicycle was the highlight. The clowns tried to ride it. Were thrust high into the air by some kind of mechanism attached to the wheels, were thrown off the saddle as it plunged downwards again. We couldn’t figure out how it worked and talked about it for days afterwards. Suddenly the wheels fell off. The handlebars lifted away. The bike fell asunder, was reassembled by the clowns. It fell asunder again. The clowns slapped and kicked one another as they put it together. A man from the audience was called into the ring to try and ride it. We laughed and screamed when he was lifted into the air then dumped unceremoniously onto the sawdust.

‘Hop up on it again, ya Mullinahone teddy-boy,’ a clown shouted.

The strongest man in the world strolled out flexing his muscles and went through his routine without too much enthusiasm. Butty Sugrue would probably have been better.

By six o’clock we were back out blinking in daylight again everywhere looking drab and lifeless after the colour and excitement of the circus matinée.

But circus visits were only one day affairs.

Next morning on the way to school there was something missing from the skyline. There was no big top, no fluttering pennants, no anticipated pleasures to distract us from the grim possibilities that every school day held. There was nothing. Just a slowly-fading poster to remind us of pleasures that had passed. And an empty space in the Barrack field with sweet papers, scattered animal dung, flattened grass and wheel-tracks where a palace of dreams had stood the day before. We would have a long wait for the carnival in July, or some travelling show that might come to the town hall early in the summer.
Tramore 1947 L to R: Jim Sullivan, Jimmy Hanrahan and Jackie Whyte
In 1943, at the age of thirty, Chrissie Byrne inherited the running of the shop from her parents, Philip and Brigid Shee. The shop survived being ransacked and burned by the Black and Tans in 1920. For a while in the 1940s, Chrissie had the help of her Aunt Chrissie, a lady with a lame step, looking after the shop and the pub across the road. The church and the new school opened in 1912. The village was almost a small town back in the 1920s up to 1960s, and, with most families having at least six children, up to 100 children attended the school. The creamery in Cloran was a hive of activity on a daily basis. As the families called to the creamery they collected groceries and supplies in the shop on the way. Rabbits and foxes were also purchased by Shee’s shop and sold on to customers. There was no electricity in many houses so paraffin oil for lamps and heaters was also stocked and sold in the shop, along with brawn, corned beef and pigs’ heads.

Almost 100 families lived along Slievenamon mountain, between Kylatlea, Boherboy, Cloran East and West, Walshbog, Clarebeg, Killusty North and South, Cappadrummin, Boolagh, Kyleavalla, Killurney, Ballyknockane, Ballypatrick, Kilcash and right up to Toor. With some crossing the mountain to school in Killusty, the village was a hive
of activity. A good number of the old families are now gone: gone out of Boolagh are the Carews, Careys, and Holohans; Cappadrummin the Mahers and Clerys; Killusty South the Foxes, Donovans, Holohans, Meaghers, Clancys, Currys, Bretts, Aylwards, Nagles, Duggans, O’Sheas, and Ryans; Killusty North the Dunnes, Murrays, Nagles, Daniels, Greers and Lonergans. These are only some of those long gone in the area.

The shop was the main meeting place and, with no telephones available, was also the centre for local news. All news was passed by word of mouth or letter to over 150 families in the local area. With that in mind, the single shutter in Shee’s (and later Byrne’s) big shop widow was used as a communication instrument during all those years, indicating when someone had died in the parish and other useful information. This custom came to an end when the telephone became popular in the mid 1960s. The last time it was used was in 1970, and not again until July 11, 2014, when it displayed, for the final time, the passing of Chrissie (aged 101). Go ndéana Dia trocaire orthu.
This was not an easy task. While the family finances had improved they were far from secure and despite the financial return, Johanna Daniell didn’t want her boys to enlist. Mick was in the station, the only one with a regular wage, and he was staying there. Tom was the eldest, well aware of his responsibility. I am not even sure if either of them wanted to go. Paddy was the youngest son, the one to watch.

He was working on a farm near Fethard, sleeping over there. With him was a neighbour of the same age, Danny Mullins, and the two decided to enlist. Danny Mullins was a devil-may-care sort of character, and was afraid the fighting would be over if they didn’t join up quickly. They expected to be home in a few months. Aware this decision was not going to be approved at home the lads said nothing but after finishing work on Saturday, instead of heading home to the Green, walked the forty or so miles to Waterford to sign up. It was Sunday when they got there and the recruiting office was closed. They walked back along the banks of the Suir, and returned to work.

Word must have got back to his mother, for during the next week as Paddy was bringing milk to the creamery another Fethard man, Joe Dwyer, accosted him, “Your mother is looking for you, Daniell.” He did call up home but managed to avoid his mother, instead sneaking up to the attic to take out his suit. This he hid in a barn or shed near the top of Market Hill for the next attempt. He wanted to look good.

Next weekend Danny and himself headed to Clonmel. At Market Hill Paddy changed into his suit, leaving his work overalls behind. It was August 15, the Feast of the Assumption, and they got Mass in Lisronagh on the way. In Clonmel they enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

I couldn’t say why he joined this regiment. Clonmel was the base for the Royal Irish Regiment, which recruited in the Munster area, and many Tipperary volunteers joined this. The boys from the Green (Paddy, Danny Mullins, four Butler brothers – Frank ‘Scout’ Butler enlisted the day after Paddy and Danny – Patrick Dagg, to name some) seemed to
go for the RDF. They were placed in the 8th Battalion RDF, Paddy in B Company, and in one of those delicious ironies of imperialism his name is entered as ‘Patrick Daniels’.

The 8th and 9th RDF ultimately became part of the 16th (Irish Division), recruited almost completely from Irish volunteers. The casual anti-Irish prejudice this group had to endure was of just the type that prevented many Irish volunteers from enlisting, and encouraged those who didn’t, to fight for independence. The sectarian decision that the pro-Union Ulster Volunteer Force recruits deserved their own officers but that the Irish volunteers needed British officers to mind them, was compounded by the bigotry of these self-same officers, in particular their overall commander Henry Wilson, who rated ‘Johnnie Redmond’s pets . . . Inferior’ and 50 percent of them, ‘useless and whiskey sodden’.

By this time, however, their failure to arrive home had alerted their families, and on Monday the two mothers, Johanna Daniell and her counterpart, Annie Mullins, headed to Clonmel to prevent their sons from enlisting. They left by train from Fethard, but their arrival in Clonmel
coincided with the arrival of the marching recruits, paraded from the barracks to the station by the Irish volunteers, on their way to embark for Buttevant where their training would begin. For the two mothers it was too late.

Paddy began his training in Buttevant. The regiment moved to Aldershot in England for more intensive training in September 1915. In December they crossed to France joining the British Expeditionary at Étaples, from where they left, with the 16th Division for the front, on December 18.

They were to be stationed in the Loos salient, north west of Lille, and from the war diary we can follow their progress across the north of France. The battalion marched to Marles les Mines from Nédonchel on February 5, 1916. It was very cold and the men’s feet were treated with anti-frostbite grease. Their commanding officer wrote: “A gift of plug tobacco from the ladies of Dublin is distributed among the men”. The following day a cold rain fell; the march continued to Houchin where they stopped overnight.

Then on to Mazingarbe, where, as they ate their midday meal, some shells fell, killing two men from another unit. The battalion was attached to the 45th infantry brigade, and B Company was now attached to the 6th Camerons, a more experienced unit. They began to move out for the front in platoons 100 yards apart and they completed the relief of the 46th infantry brigade in the stretch of trenches from Vendin Alley to the north and the Loos-Cité St Laurent road on the south. It was February 7.

The area around Loos was mining country, and the fighting here dominated by the pits, huge mounds of spoil and in particular the twin towers of the double casemate winding gear in Loos, nicknamed ‘Tower Bridge’ by the Tommies. Battalions had a stretch in the trenches (usually eight days) then a stretch in reserve (usually four). Being in reserve was no picnic, with many duties, and still close enough to the lines to be shelled. But it was preferable to the trenches. These were in three lines (front, support and rear), and were linked by communication trenches. They were also not straight, but zigzag, so that even if the enemy did enter they wouldn’t have a clear line of fire along the length of the trench. This also limited the effect of shrapnel from exploding shells.

The trenches the 8th RDF went into were in very poor condition, with damage caused by poor weather and enemy shelling. Water was often over the duckboards on the floor of the trenches, and in general it was very uncomfortable. As a salient, i.e. a bulge in the front, with the Germans on three sides, it was destined to be tough going. The war diary for this battalion in the early part of 1916 gives a picture of the lives of the ordinary soldiers.

On February 12, they were
attacked with rifle grenades, and also shelled, causing casualties; then at 6.40 am, an explosion. German sappers had dug under the trenches overnight and set off a mine. The Germans continued to mine while the RDF worked frantically to repair the damage to their trenches and prepare for an assault. Artillery was called up to hit German lines, and no assault materialized. The war diary states: “very busy both sides.”

Then on February 16, they were relieved and went into reserve, first at Flechinelle and later Manqueville. It was very cold, and they engaged in exercises and inspections. New drafts of men were arriving and being trained and integrated into their units. Training continued, as did the cold weather, with ‘capes poor protection’ according to the Commanding Officer, Major Edward Bellingham.

Groups of men were trained in the use of the ‘flammenwerfer” or flame thrower, as well as machine guns. A Lieutenant Sheridan was killed while demonstrating how bombs should be thrown, due to a faulty fuse. It remained cold and snowy.

The training was punctuated by St Patrick’s Day. The Catholic soldiers attended Mass, and later the brigade sports were held. The Brigade championship was won by A Company of the 8th RDF. One wonders what the prize was – a boat back home?

They began moving back to the trenches from February 23 on, with the full battalion in place at Hulluch by the March 26. As the relief was taking place, a mine exploded destroying part of the front trench, and was followed by a short but heavy bombardment, killing one man and wounding two.

The next month shows what I imagine is the routine of the trenches. The snow went, but not the cold, and the weather became wetter, with wind and rain. They were attacked by rifle grenades and shells, and had a number of alerts for gas attacks. Rifle grenades caused some casualties. Major Bellingham criticized the artillery, which he felt was slow to respond or retaliate. They were also attacked by aerial torpedoes, which I presume are bombs thrown from an airplane.

On March 30, B Company was moved to a part of the line called 10th Avenue. That evening they were attacked by aerial torpedoes and saw an air battle between the Germans and the RAF, but suffered no casualties. The next day they were put digging a new trench, and did suffer casualties. British engineers exploded a mine on the enemy’s lines apparently with good result, and then their own front line suffered heavy fire from all arms in retaliation.

The aerial torpedoes were back on April 4 with one man killed, and the following day they were under heavy bombardment for 90 minutes with many casualties including shell shock. Time in the trenches took a psychological toll on the soldiers,
— there is a report in the war diary of a Private who shot himself in the foot — and the officers were not going to countenance any slacking. At some point during this time Paddy felt sick: he had a cold, and reported to the doctor. His temperature was taken, and the doctor declared it was normal. He was accused of malingering and spent two days in the guardhouse. Danny too got on the wrong side of his superiors. He had an accident with a ‘Very Gun’ — a single shot pistol used to throw up a flare over no man’s land or over the German trenches. Danny was handling one of these guns in preparation for firing when it exploded and hit him in the foot. Because it was a flare rather than a bullet he was not badly hurt, but he did require treatment. His captain felt he had done it deliberately in order to get out of the trenches, and gave him a severe dressing down. Danny felt he was lucky not to receive more than a reprimand.

On April 6 B Company were moved back to Mazingarbe for six days, where they were billeted. Unfortunately April 8 saw the town shelled and further casualties were sustained. Here the battalion was working on improving the communication trenches for some days, then back to the trenches. On April 12 all leave was stopped and all on leave were to return April 18, obviously because an attack was felt to be imminent.

For the next fortnight there is plenty of activity in the sector, most of it German–generated in preparation for an assault.

April 13, shelled again (8 inch, 4.2inch and shrapnel), trenches were damaged and craters caused near the level crossing. Repair parties came under shrapnel bombardment. Finished job after dark, one killed, three wounded.

April 14, One of the Loos towers fell at 2pm as a result of enemy shelling.

April 15, Philosophe (where the rail lines were) also shelled: seven wounded, one dead.

April 16, Shelled, station damaged, gun-point also.

April 17, B Company had a man shot and killed by sniper.

April 18, Germans wiring, our trenches in a dirty state due to rain.

April 19, Trenches much damaged by rain, wiring parties out. Heavy shelling on front trench, plus rifle grenades fired.

April 20, Working on restoring and cleaning trenches.

April 21, Shelling, our artillery replied lightly.

April 22, Practically all men on fatigues in front trench, digging and carrying material. Still raining

April 23, B Company moved to reserve trench; much German air activity including ten sausage balloons. Some men wounded from pieces of anti aircraft shells falling.

April 24, Again much air activity; night quiet

April 25, One man killed and one
wounded while firing a rifle grenade. ‘These are too strong for the rifle causing many explosions’ according to Major Bellingham.

April 26, A group went and bombed the crater the Germans had made and had been working on.

And then, the first major engagement for the 16th Irish Division. During the night of the April 26/27 clouds of smoke were blown on an east wind towards the Irish trenches. B Company was at this point in the rear, or third, trench. The cry went up and the men put on their gas masks. They had been given these before leaving for the front. As already said, Danny Mullins was very easygoing, and felt that he had enough to carry; a Tommy’s equipment would equal roughly half his body weight. He suggested to Paddy that they leave the gas masks behind. “Sure, there’ll be plenty more of them at the front,” said he. Paddy persuaded him this might not be such a good idea.

When the men realized that no-one was hurt or suffering any ill effects, some of them removed their gas masks. It was just smoke. An hour and a half later, at 4.45am to be exact, another cloud was blown on the east wind from the German trenches. Thinking this was again only smoke many of the Irishmen did not don their masks. But this was chlorine gas. While the Germans had been first to use this weapon in the war, its effectiveness was such that the British had come to use it too. The gas initially blinded men, then as it entered their lungs and they began to disintegrate, a foam spewed out of their mouths and they died in agony. Their corpses were left blackened and burned from the effects of the gas.

In preparation for this attack the Germans had stockpiled almost 7,500 cylinders of a mixture of chlorine and phosgene gas along a stretch of the front less than two miles long. They had also replaced Bavarian troops, considered easy going by the Irish, with Prussians, one of the reasons the front had been so busy of late. The German sappers had dug pits out from their lines from where the gas was released. In the initial attack only about half of the stockpile was used, because the Germans were afraid that the wind would blow the gas onto their own trenches where the salient turned. This would seem to indicate the smoke was not a deliberate ploy but simply a trial run to gauge the wind.

As this cloud of gas rolled over the trenches, the scene can hardly be imagined. Many of the men had not put back on their gas masks from the earlier false alarm and were caught unawares. In any event the older type of gas mask used by British troops, while providing some protection against chlorine, was not effective against phosgene. Soldiers writhed in agony in the bottom of the trenches, clutching at their throats as the foamy liquid spewed up out of their mouths. Chlorine gas is heavier than air: it flowed
down into the trenches where some of the men sought shelter. Soldiers who attempted to avoid the gas by jumping out of the trenches were machine gunned by the Germans.

The nightmare of gas is well described by Wilfred Owen in his poem Dulce et Decorum Est:

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime...

Dim, through the misty panes
and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

To compound the nightmare, the Germans started shelling the front trench, manned by A and D companies, followed by more gas as the shelling passed to the reserve and communication trenches. The second trench was manned by C company, with B company in the reserve trench. Under cover of the second wave of gas German infantry attacked across no man's land and entered the front line trench. Some reports indicate they entered the second line also. In the front trench most of the men had been either killed or wounded, but the remnants of the two companies put up a resistance. B Company was ordered into this trench to help them push the Germans out. The fighting must have been a nightmare, with the shelled trenches, gassed comrades, wounded soldiers and tenacious Germans.

The RDF eventually cleared the front trench, and held it against later attacks. These attacks were abandoned when the wind changed, blowing the gas back towards the German trenches. Their engineers were unable to shut off the gas canisters quickly enough, and caught their comrades completely unprepared. Now the nightmare of gas was visited on the Prussian trenches: as well as the gas, men scrambling to escape from the trenches were themselves mown down by the British machine guns, while those fleeing to the rear were shelled by British artillery, which took the opportunity to start a bombardment. The battle ended at 11 o'clock.

In the lines occupied by the 8th RDF, that night was spent evacuating the wounded, burying dead and identifying bodies where possible. This was ghastly work, and all of those survivors who wrote about the war, singled out this horror amongst many. The artillery 'put up a good shelling' of the German trenches while this work was going on.

Subsequent German attacks over the next two days were repulsed.

But Paddy wasn't there: he had been one of the wounded from the fighting on April 27, and had been evacuated. He was one of many casualties: the 8th and 9th Battalions of the RDF suffered 800 casualties over the three days. After the first day, the 8th A Company had only twenty 'effectives' and D Company forty-five. This was because they had been in
the front trench and took the brunt of the attack. Many of the dead and wounded had been gassed.

B Company also took heavy losses. The first page from the list of their casualties (in alphabetical order and finishing at Dempsey) shows 19 dead, 17 missing, 9 gassed and 16 wounded, indicating that for them gas wasn’t the biggest problem, rather the trench fighting to remove the Germans. Paddy is on this list, showing he was wounded on April 27. He was wounded in the leg either by a bayonet or a bullet: Joe O’Donnell said his father had a gash on his thigh in later life. His rank is given as Lance Corporal. Danny Mullins seems to have come through this encounter relatively unscathed, and it marked a parting of the ways for the Fethard friends. This, too, was the week of the 1916 rising, which had begun on April 24. It would be interesting to know the reaction of those Irish volunteers in the British ranks to this event.

Paddy was taken first to a Casualty Clearing Station, then to a field hospital, and later back to England. He arrived in the First Northern General Hospital in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on May 10. He was still there a month later – he remembered the newsboys crying ‘Kitchener Drowned’. Field Marshal Kitchener had been on board the HMS Hampshire, which sank when it struck a mine in the North Sea, on the evening of June 5, 1916. He was on his way to Russia for talks with the Tsarist Government, who were fighting the Germans on the Eastern Front. Kitchener was one of 650 men who went down with the HMS Hampshire. As already stated, Paddy had been wounded in the thigh and while it was serious enough to get a break from the front for a few months, it wasn’t going to get him out of the war.

He was considered well enough to return to the front, and sailed for France on the HMS Dieppe on October 5. He was now allocated to the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dubliners, thus separating him from Danny Mullins. This time he was stationed further north, at the Ypres salient, east of Ypres. Once again you can follow the movements of the 2nd Battalion through a different set of French (and Belgian) villages – Huppy, Toeufles, Meteren, Locre – before entering the line in trenches east of the village of Kemmel on November 28. Here they relieved Paddy’s old unit the 8th. Did he get a chance to exchange news and maybe share a cigarette with Danny Mullins? Almost certainly – the 8th and 2nd were to be close enough for contact over the months ahead.

On December 10, the 2nd were moved to the Vierstaat sector. This was not a good posting: their trench was low-lying and damp and likely to be enfiladed by enemy machine guns and batteries. The subsequent months follow a similar pattern to his previous stint – time in the trenches, then back to billets, or camp and training, with inspections
by senior officers (including on one occasion General Haig). They were at various camps behind the lines – Louaques, Hazebrouck, Arques – with time for sports on April 13. Much of the time in the rear was spent practising making attacks, and when they returned to the front at the end of April, two night raids were made on the German trenches – on the night of May 2/3, and again on May 27. Lieutenant Colonel Jeffreys described the German trenches as being in poor condition, “... very badly knocked about... Dugouts poor and barely splinter proof...”. Thirty prisoners were taken in this raid as well as maps and despatches.

After their next relief they were back for a major attack on June 6 and then back to more training. This was in preparation for the ‘next big push’, which would become the Battle of Passchendaele (or Third Ypres). On July 15 there was a special Mass for all the Catholics in the Brigade in St. Omer Cathedral, then back to preparations for the attack. In late July they moved to assembly trenches at Poperinghe, and on August 5 into the front line near Frezenberg.

Having survived the horror of the Battle of Hulluch, Paddy was now facing into something even worse. The weather had been wet and the artillery barrages had affected drainage, which wasn’t great anyway. The trenches were sodden, the whole place a sea of mud, as the heavy rains had no place to go. Men literally disappeared and drowned in flooded shellholes.

The 2nd got a break the following week, but suffered many casualties while on the move back to the front line, due to shelling and gas. They were forced to shelter in water-filled shell holes for an hour and a half, only reaching the trenches at a quarter to four in the morning. These had been German until recently, as the British had made some gains in the advance, which began on July 31. These ex-German trenches were in good condition, especially the concrete dug outs, which were dry and provided excellent shelter. The 2nd Battalion commanding officer, along with some of the men, had been affected by gas and replaced, and losses were so high that D company was subsumed into the other three companies to maintain these at a reasonable strength. On the night of August 15/16 as the battalion assembled for the assault on Frezenberg Ridge (Phase Two of the Battle of Passchendaele,) the Germans shelled the assembly area causing casualties and confusion. The three companies of the 2nd RDF were in the rear of the leading wave of the attack, supporting the 7th Royal Irish Rifles, and themselves supported by a detachment from the 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, amounting to one understrength battalion. As they moved forward B Company was almost wiped out by machine gun and artillery fire, only five men surviving. The machine guns were
a particular problem because they were situated in concrete emplace-
ments and dugouts unaffected by the artillery barrage, which had preceded the assault. There was no shelter, with holes and ditches full of water, and thigh-deep muck to be trudged through. The Germans meanwhile were well entrenched and expecting the attack, with the result that carnage ensued, with huge losses inflicted on the attackers. The casualty rate is staggering. The first wave of the attack (9th RDF and 7th RIR) took losses around 65 percent. The second wave fared a little better, though when the attack stalled due to casualties to the first wave, the 2nd RDF (with the detachment from the 8th) pushed forward and attempted to advance further. Casualties in this wave hit 50 percent. While some advances were made, because of the absence of defensi-
ble cover, and unable to take cover in waterlogged shellholes or ditches, all the captured ground had to be abandoned, as the Dublins fell back to the original ‘black line’ (starting trenches) late on August 16, 1917.

This series of assaults, known as the Battle of Langemarck, took place north-east of the Belgian city of Ypres, present day Ieper. The attack faltered after two days, and much of the ground gained was lost to counter attacks.

But again Paddy wasn’t there at the end – he was wounded during the advance on August 16. A bullet, or more likely, a piece of shrapnel, struck him in the head. It was said in Fethard afterwards that he had a plate inserted in his skull to repair the damage but his son says that this is not so. He simply had a piece of his skull missing, with just a covering of skin.

One of those killed on the same day was Fr Willie Doyle. This man was famous for his bravery and unflappability under fire, adminis-
tering comfort and the last rites in the thick of battle, and going out into no man’s land with the men of the 8th RDF as they advanced. Fr Willie had been with the 8th through many of the battles of the war, including those Paddy had missed while wounded. He was at Messines Ridge, and was awarded the Military Cross at Ginchy. He had been at Hulluch, too, giving the last rites to the dying when Paddy had previously been wounded. He left a diary of the horrors of his war, particularly the effects of gas. Fr Willie Doyle’s body was never found, lost amid the mud and mayhem of Frezenberg Ridge. The quagmire was such that up to eight men were needed to stretcher a wounded man back to the British lines. He wasn’t alone; of over 2,000 casualties suffered by the 16th Division in the August mud, 700 were never recovered. And neither should Paddy.

He fell to the ground, and when he came to, he was on his back in the muck, unable to move or to speak. As the advance moved on men were sent out from the British lines to search for survivors in what had
been no man’s land. Their instructions were to be quick: the attack was floundering, and the Germans might counter attack at any time. In fact they did, and regained the ground they had lost, which meant any of the wounded not recovered immediately would be left to die. These stretcher-bearers were told to leave any of those too severely wounded to stand unaided. As he lay on the ground immobile but conscious Paddy became aware of movement near him, but was unable to attract attention. He then realised the accents were Irish, and a face looked down at him, “Christ, if it isn’t Paddy Daniell from Fethard!” A second face, “Jesus, so ‘tis.”

As they searched through the bodies of dead and wounded, looking for survivors, two South Tipp soldiers recognised the agricultural labourer they had seen bring milk for local farmers to the creamery in Killenaule.

“Paddy, are you all right?”
“Can you stand up?”
“He’s hurt too bad, he’s not able to stand.”
“It’s Paddy Daniell, we can’t leave him here.”

And so two men from Killenaule, in contravention of their orders, carried the wounded Fethard man back to safety.

One of the songs he had from this time that he’d sing afterwards had the lines:

Oh I wonder, yes I wonder,
will the angels play their harps for me?

Whatever about the real angels, he had found two guardian angels from Killenaule. Apart from the wound to his head, Paddy had another souvenir of Frezenberg Ridge: he kept Fr Willie Doyle’s mortuary card in his wallet for the rest of his life.

The head wound was serious, and the following week he was invalided back to England and treated at The Western General Hospital (Fazackerley) near Aintree in Liverpool. He was moved back to barracks in Dublin, and attended Tomás Ashe’s funeral there at the end of September 1917. Ashe had died after attempts at forcible feeding, following a short hunger strike in Mountjoy jail. His funeral was the first public republican funeral since the Easter Rising and became a major propaganda boost for republicans. On September 30, over 30,000 people followed the cortege to Glasnevin, led by armed Volunteers. Michael Collins gave the pithy graveside oration: “Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian.” Tomás Ashe’s mortuary card, too, would remain in Paddy’s wallet in later life.

Paddy also spent time recuperating at Ballykinlar, Co. Down, a convalescent hospital for recovering soldiers. A photo taken here shows him in army uniform and sporting a moustache. Ballykinlar was later an internment camp for IRA men dur-
ing the War of Independence. He was discharged in May 1918 with a 60 percent pension. His wound caused him complications ever afterwards: he would get periodic ‘fits’, and would have to travel to Dublin for occasional check-ups. He was on one of these visits when his son Joe was born in 1930.

On discharge he was awarded the Silver War Badge. This was issued to soldiers who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness. It was meant to be worn on civilian clothes, to protect the wearer against the practice by some women of abusing, or showing white feathers to, ‘cowards’.

Paddy travelled back to Fethard by train. As he stepped out of the station he found that he couldn’t face the busy Main Street. He would have to answer too many questions, and wanted to get home quickly. He walked straight down to the river Clashawley, which he crossed and skirted the town on the northern side. He slipped down the Back Green, across the main road, down the lane and home. His mother, who had tried so hard to prevent him going, stopped him at the door and felt him all over to make sure he was all in one piece, before welcoming him inside. Despite her relief, Johanna Daniell wasn’t one to let the grass grow under her feet, and she promptly used Paddy’s discharge money to have the workshop annexe to the cottage slated.

The world Paddy returned to had changed. For a start, many of the men he had grown up with in the Green were dead: his cousin Dick Lonergan, three immediate neighbours (James and Thomas Butler and John Quirke), as well as acquaintances such as Michael Dagg. Others, including his friend Danny Mullins and another cousin Jim Gorman were still in the army. Danny’s war seemed to go on for ever. He finished up in Germany, eventually embarking from Danzig (Gdansk) to Leith in Scotland, before making the long trip back home, presumably by way of Liverpool. He didn’t arrive in Fethard until well into 1919.

The house Paddy had grown up in was different too. Nellie had died earlier in the year, leaving six-year-old Tommy in the care of his grandmother. Paddy’s oldest brother Tom was still at home, doing whatever labouring work he could get, but Mick was now working in Cahir, and
around only at weekends. Bridgie had moved to England with her new husband, and was living in London. Maggie was away learning lacework in Clonmel, and also only an occasional visitor.

Political sentiment in the country had changed completely. The 1916 rising had served to mobilise Republican sympathies, and more recently the threat of conscription had driven people to Sinn Féin. The attitude of the authorities simply hardened opinion.

Paddy was obviously a smart soldier. At the time of his discharge he was acting sergeant, so he must have shown some potential. His soldiering days weren’t quite over, either. He rejoined the Volunteers, and put his army experience to good use, conducting drill on Kilknockin Hill, along with Dick Butler from the Valley, another ex-British Army man. The Volunteers used wooden ‘guns’ or hurleys for these exercises, due to the shortage of the real thing. He was on the other side now – during this period, he had an altercation with a British Army officer during a Sinn Féin meeting on the Square in Fethard and was rescued by his brother Tom, who pulled him round the corner to safety. (It was to be a feature of his post-war life: his older brothers became very protective of him because they feared what a blow to the head might do). During the War of Independence he served with Cahir Company of the IRA while working there, and later fought on the republican side in the Civil War. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

Despite his mother’s evident relief to see him again in one piece, he wasn’t going to be allowed to rest on his laurels. As soon as was possible he was put back to work. At first it was back to the agricultural labouring he’d been at before enlisting. Farmers had done well during the war, with their produce fetching good prices. The shortage of manpower also meant that this type of casual work was now better paid. One of the farms he worked on was Slattery’s of Killerk. These had Republican sympathies, and gave Paddy a reference when he finished working there. Subsequently his cousin Lar Gorman got him a job, digging drains at Knockelly House. It was back to work for Paddy, army pension or no army pension. Shortly afterwards Mick, who was now in Cahir Station, got him a job in the stores there, and his life moved onto a different plane.

Many years later while shaving himself in the morning Paddy would occasionally sing lines from the trench song ‘I want to go home’.

“I want to go home, I want to go home,
I don’t want to go in the trenches no more
Where whizzbangs and shrapnel
they whistle and roar.
Take me over the sea,
where the Alleyman can’t get at me,
Oh my, I don’t want to die,
I want to go home.”


Mc Cormacks and Ryans 1960s Back L to R: Sean Ryan, John Joe McCormack, Patrick Ryan, Richie Ryan. Middle L to R: Michael McCormack, Tony Ryan and in front Derek Ryan. The Ryans were from Gammonsfield, Kilsheelan, nephews of Mrs McCormack.
Kitty and Paddy Ahearne helping with catering at what appears to be a community event in the 1950s.

Heading for Amsterdam - 20 Years Ago

Patrician Presentation Secondary School Trip to Amsterdam 1994
Heading for Amsterdam - 20 Years Ago

Patrician Presentation Secondary School Trip to Amsterdam 1994
Fethard Chrysanthemum Show 1960s Back L to R: Mrs Madigan, Mrs Hazelton, Mrs Nora Guiry, Mrs Jacob. Front L to R: ? and Mrs Olivia Hughes.

Canon Lee introducing Archbishop Dr. Thomas Morris to local children after Fethard Confirmation 1964
Fethard Confirmation group outside Holy Trinity Parish Church with Archbishop, Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Morris, 1964
On a warm, balmy night last Summer, I went to a barbecue in the grounds of the Convent Community Hall, and, in the course of the evening, climbed the back steps to the playground. It was the first time I had been there since the school buildings were demolished. How strange it was to see nothing but the empty yard. The primary school, an L-shaped row of classrooms with various entrances and partitions, was gone, and so was the two-story secondary school block at the other end. Hundreds of girls from Fethard and the surrounding areas were educated on this site down through the years and of course all the boys spent their ‘Babies’ and ‘Top Class’ years there too. It was hard for me to believe that the building that housed all their stories was no longer there.

There is no trace of the primary school, with its “Babies” room full of little desks, slates, toys and counting frames, and no sound of girls voices singing ‘The Ash Grove’, ‘Under The Old Linden Tree’ or ‘Marianina’, while Sr. Finbarr accompanied on the harmonium! Now, when you walk up the back steps to the school, there is only the playground - no lunchhall where Mrs Treacy distributed meals, no toilet block, cloakrooms or music rooms. It was such a fascinating place to us as children – a series of interconnected classrooms, with all sorts of nooks and crannies between them. (Once, when a Home Economics inspector was visiting, I was hidden in one of these nooks between the rooms, as my sewing wasn’t up to scratch!).

Further up from the music rooms
you could go towards the Summer House and the ‘Nuns’ Rocks’ where, as a treat on rare occasions, we were taken for a picnic. I remember another special day, maybe a Feast Day or Presentation Day, when all the pupils were given buns and cake in the glassed-in corridor that led down to the back of the school from the convent. Sunny days in May and June were chosen for the processions, when the nuns and all the pupils walked in pairs through the nuns’ garden, saying the rosary and other prayers. At the grotto in the far corner, we would stop and sing ‘Ave Maria’ and ‘Queen of the May’, with the sound of the waterfall trickling over the rocks in the background.

There was a great air of excitement and anticipation in the school at Christmas-time too. All the girls brought in a few pence each to buy a present for the nun, maybe a box of linen hankies, or soap and bath salts. Each classroom had its crib, and if you did a good deed, you could cut off a small piece of paper from a strip near the crib, and put it in a bowl to be offered up in the church at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. In the days coming up to the Christmas holidays there would be a frenzy of cleaning in the classrooms. We would shine the brass inkwell covers with Brasso, clean out the inkwells, and polish the desks, and were delighted to have a day free of lessons. To finish up, we all gathered in the convent hall to await the arrival of Santy, who gave a little bag of coins to all the children. Then we found out who had won the raffle for the giant Christmas stocking, which was on display in Hennessys’ window for weeks before.

My own first memory of school is of being brought down at night to be a ‘Babe in the Wood’. My role was to lie on the stage on a bed of blankets and leaves, along with the other babe, played by Helen Dillon, while the real cast performed their roles around us. I had not even started school yet at that stage, but I was suitably small and lived nearby, so my mother could drop me up home once my ‘part’ was over. And so began schooldays marked with shows, plays, concerts and drill displays. During a recent visit to Fethard, I met another past pupil of the school, Ann Kenrick, and we reminisced about the variety of activities arranged for us by the nuns in the course of our school days back in the late 1950s and 1960s. In Primary School in those days, you could get involved in Irish dancing, singing, choir, piano, elocution and drama not to mention sewing, knitting and embroidery, without ever leaving the school. Irish dancing and ‘drill’ were taught by Mrs Legear who came from Limerick once a fortnight to the convent hall, and was helped by Miss Helen O’Connell (who came every week), and the nuns. Mother Agatha was a wizard on the piano and accompanied most of the dancing, drill and singing, but I do remember ‘The Bluebell Polka’ blaring out from
the old gramophone as we danced around the hall. In the concerts, pupils performed anything from a two-hand to a twelve-hand-reel – as well as jigs, slip-jigs and horn-pipes, and there were drill displays in which we did physical exercises in formation, while carrying various weights and pieces of gym equipment. I am not sure how entertaining all that was for the audience!

Sr. Finbarr and Sr. Teresita were always involved too. Sr. Teresita was in charge of lighting and curtains, and kept us all quiet backstage! Weren’t we lucky to have such a wonderfully-equipped hall, which had a big stage and backstage area, an excellent lighting system, flats and sets of curtains. The local community raised much of the money for this hall to be built, and students down through the years benefitted enormously from it. Sales of work, jumble sales and displays of vestments, which were made by Sr. Peter and the members of the Altar Society, were regularly held there too.

Ann Kenrick reminded me of a production of ‘Cinderella’ in which she played Prince Charming. We thought the costumes for the show were gorgeous – dresses in a whole range of beautiful shades for the ballroom scene. There were always lovely outfits for Christmas shows too, with glittering wings for angels and tiaras and wands in silver and gold for fairies. Most of these costumes were supplied by the nuns themselves. In one sketch I remember, Marguerite Delaney played Little Bo-Peep, her long golden plaits making her a perfect choice for the part. Then there was a play about the life of Nano Nagle, the founder of the Presentation Order, with Marian Mulligan in the leading role. Esther Nevin also played a part and supervised some of us in the wings when she was off-stage. We used to have great fun with her.

And the fun didn’t end with our primary school days. In secondary school, there were debating competitions through English and Irish, with students coached by Paddy Maher and Sr. Agnes. Many of the debates were held in the convent hall, though I remember one against a team from Rockwell College, which took place in the Town Hall, and of course teams travelled to ‘away fixtures’ too, in Cashel and Clonmel. Among those who took part in debates in my time there, were Grace Smith, Rainy Healy, Mary Maher, Marian Teehan, Ben Costello, Carl Crosse and myself.

For those who excelled at sport, there was hurling and football for the boys, and with the arrival of Sr. Fidelis in the Convent, volleyball became a big attraction for the girls. The school teams enjoyed many successes at national level at this period and participated in international competitions abroad. Talented athletes and runners among the student population got a chance to show their prowess on school sport’s days. Mary O’Connell, who was in my class, was an impressive cross-country runner.
We got a chance to try out our literary and editorial abilities when Br. Paschal oversaw the production of the first school magazine called ‘The Co-ed’ in 1969-70 and a second issue was published in 1970-71. Meanwhile, in addition to tutoring the debating teams, Paddy Maher produced many school plays over the years. We girls were highly entertained when we went to see ‘The White Headed Boy’ by Lennox Robinson, and ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’ by Oscar Wilde, which were played by all-male casts, in the days before the schools were amalgamated.

My brother, Tadhg, reminded me of a sketch staged sometime in the 1960s, about Dangerous Dan McGrew and ‘a lady whose name was Lou’, which featured Jimmy Hayes, AB Kennedy and Martin O’Mahoney. He also remembers another concert, with Michael Kenny singing on stage, while a choir of boys sang in harmony from the back of the hall!

When I was in 5th year, in 1969-1970, the school play was ‘Many Young Men of Twenty’ by John B Keane. I played the part of the barmaid Peg Finnerty, who had to sing several songs in the course of the play. This was a bit of a challenge for me, as I was never noted as a singer, and probably more of a challenge for the audience! There was a big cast in the play, drawing on students from 5th and 6th years. Paddy Maher and Br. Paschal were the producers, and I think we all enjoyed every minute of rehearsal and performance. The production wasn’t without controversy though, as Peg Finnerty confessed in the course of the play that she had had a baby out of wedlock, and some audience members felt this theme was inappropriate in a school production. The cast members were Ben Costelloe, Tony Kiely, Rainy Healy, John Norton, Grace

Over the next few years, Paddy Maher and Br. Paschal put on further plays, including ‘The Playboy of the Western World’ by John Millington Synge, and ‘Heartbreak House’ by George Bernard Shaw. All these productions were hugely enjoyable, and greatly enhanced our experience of school, and our relationships with teachers and other students. Of course there were many other plays and productions over the years, but these are the ones I remember best.

Today, the co-ed primary and secondary schools stand side by side on the Rocklow Road. I had the pleasure of visiting the Patrician Presentation School for the annual awards ceremony recently, and was given a tour of the building. It was my first time back there since I did my Leaving Cert and, of course, it has changed beyond recognition. Projects and artwork were on display in the bright, well-equipped classrooms, including some spectacular costumes which were successful entries in Junk Kouture. Photographs of student enterprises, of sports teams, of theatrical productions down through the years, adorned the walls of the upstairs corridor. Staff and students exuded an air of pride in their school and achievements. There was talk of the Great Fethard Bake-Off and the show to be staged in the Abymill before Christmas - Cinderella! Despite my nostalgia for the old building, it’s great to see that the tradition of extra-curricular activities lives on in the school’s new home.

– Mary O’Connor (Westport)
Fethard v Commercials in Kilsheelan on November 6, 1955, in replay of the South Minor Football Final, which was also a repeat of the previous year’s final. Commercials once again came out on top and were fortunate on occasions when only the Commercials goalie saved certain goals. The score at half-time was Commercials 2-1 to Fethard 0-3. The second half proved almost a stalemate with Fethard getting the only score – a goal by P. Woodlock leaving the final score 2-1 to 1-3. Fethard Team Back L to R: Tony O’Donnell, Peter O’Flynn, Sean Condon, Gus Danaher, Tom Cooney, Sean Connolly, Pat Woodlock, Paddy Fitzgerald.

Fethard senior football team that played Commercials in Kilsheelan. c.1955. Back L to R: Eddie Casey (Clerihan), Gussy Neville, Jerry Mackey, Jimmy McCarthy, Jim Williams, Mick Byrne, Mick O’Riordan, Peter O’Flynn, Gus Danaher, Ned Sheehan. Front L to R: Tony Newport, Sean Moloney, Sean Connolly, Liam Connolly, Jimmy O’Shea, Jack Prout, Cly Mullins (captain) and Paddy O’Flynn (boy maybe Billy Power).
Whence Saucestown?  Sometimes spelled Sawcestown, Sauestown or Saucestown. The people who gave the name to this townland also answer to various spelling – Sausse, Sauce, Sause, etc. Now, we need to form an opinion based on some logic and some early records as to how this name came to be.

It is my considered opinion that we can start the story back about 1,000 years ago. The good Pope Urban II was receiving reports from his intelligence agents, that all was not well in the Holy Land. The reports showed considerable Muslim terrorist activity against the Christian residents and visitors. Savage Saracens were roaming the area and turning it into a Christian burial ground.

Pope Urban II was highly disturbed by the reports and vowed to do something to curb these infidels. He issued a call to arms for most of Europe. The valiant Knights of France and Normandy were the primary responders. The year was 1095.

Galloping out of an area, in Normandy, known as La Saussaye, came the Knights who answered to that name. Participation in this great Crusade is easily shown by a look at the heraldic coat of arms for Sause / Saussaye. It features a Knights helmet, a hand covered in armour, holding a cross and prominently displayed on the shield are the heads of two Saracens.

Returning to Normandy, these battle-hardened veterans went back to their normal activities of helping damsels in distress. Seeing as how these Crusades extended well into the 12th century, it is not hard to imagine some of these Knights, from
La Saussaye, opting for new adventure by answering the call to arms extended by Richard de Clare, also known as ‘Strongbow’. Strongbow was committed to invading Ireland and in 1169 he did so. His successful campaigns led to the foundation of the Irish Norman population. Fast forward to 1200 and we find these Normans founding a planned village known as Fethard. Norman settlers came to Fethard looking for good ground and a place to raise a family. It would seem reasonable to expect that Normans, from traditional farmland, would be attracted to the fertile fields surrounding the village. Enter Saucestown! Some written evidence indicates that these Sauses were some of the shakers and movers in this village. The great Irish researcher, Eoghan O’Neill, in his book ‘The Golden Vale of Ivowen’, recounts that, “… there were no Gaelic families in the area other than the O’Neills and that Irish Norman landowners are represented today by the names that they gave to Townlands. One example being the Sawse family.”

By 1649, tragedy was to enter Ireland again, in the form of Oliver Cromwell. Devastating Ireland and reducing Catholic landowners to virtually none, he did not spare the Norman Irish Catholics. However, thanks to the incredible website, hosted by Trinity College, we now have information from the Down Survey. We find that in 1641 the owner of Saucestown is none other than Pierce Sauce, of Fethard (Protestant). The 1659 census shows Nicholas

Photographed at Crocanoir, Mullinahone L to R: Kieran Murphy, Sean Bermingham, Teresa Lanigan, Grace Fanning, Johnny Hickey and Shane O’Connell. In front is Montana Skye Smith.
Sauce, Gentleman of Saucestown, Rathcoole Parish controlling 348 plantation acres. In 1670, the owner is James Sauce (Protestant).

Now, in 1689, James II, a Catholic, brings to Ireland, a French army that he combines with the existing Jacobites and plans to overthrow the Crown and restore Irish land to its proper Catholic ownership. The Sauses apparently join his army and following their defeats at Boyne and Aughrim in 1691, they also join the ranks of the landless. (Wikipedia, Williamite War in Ireland).

The apples do not fall very far from the tree and in the 19th century we find Sauses in Carrick-on-Suir (Sausse), Ballingarry (Sausse), Thurles, Poulacapple, Peppardstown, Ballyduggan, etc. The Baptismal records for Fethard show that in 1841, a child named James Sause was born to Henry Sause and Bridget Ryan. The record shows the Townland of Saucestown. So, apparently, at least one Sause remained to work the land for the new landlord. Henry and Bridget have four children listed in the Fethard Baptismal register. Two of these, Bridget Sause, born in 1835 and John Sause, born in 1838, left Saucestown and migrated to the USA. Their descendants primarily live today on the West Coast, in the State of Oregon. During our Gathering in 2013, Kristi Sause Booth, of that family, returned to Fethard. Kristi and her husband, Matt Booth, had travelled from the State of Idaho.

A logical question would be: How do you know that your families’ apples only rolled as far as Ballyduggan? Two reasons stand out: Research and luck! Local research among family members and the NYC Archives pointed out that the first Irish immigrants, in our family, were my Great Great Grandfather, Richard Sause and his wife, Margaret St. John. A lucky hit on the Ancestry.com site brought up the records for ‘The New York Emigrant Savings Bank’. The Test Book records for Richard were incredible to say the least. Dated: September 29, 1851, #1167, Richard Sause is described as a ‘Screwcutter’ who lives at 26, 19th St., in NYC. It further states that he is a native of Ballyduggan, Co. Tipperary; three years in the USA on
April 1 next; he came on the ship ‘John DeWolfe’ from Liverpool; he is married and his wife’s name is Margaret St. John; he has five children, Michael, James, Peter, Ellen and Richard. Margaret is also a member of this bank. Her records show that she is from Mullinahone and her mother’s name was Ellen. How lucky can you get?

Checking on the ship’s manifest, for ‘The John S. DeWolfe’, proved elusive, at first, because the transcriber had listed the Sauses as Jances. But, there they were: Richard, Michael, James and another young man, named John Sause. Coming from Mullinahone, where it started, and ending in Ballingarry, where a young John Sausse lived, it is possible that Richard, his two oldest sons and a cousin from Ballingarry may have been a part of the 1848 uprising and had to leave town suddenly or perhaps they were just tired of having nothing to eat. The rest of Richard’s family followed shortly.

In 2008, accompanied by Johnny Bermingham of Ballycullen, my two oldest daughters and I were taken to the ancient graveyard in Killamery. In the shadow of a very famous High Irish Cross, Johnny traced out the following, on a very old tombstone, that was weathered almost beyond reading:

_Erected by Honora Lawrence, alias Sauce, in memory of her husband who died in 1828_

Thanks to incredible detective work by Johnny Bermingham and Ricky Sheehan of Mullinahone, Honora Sause proved to be the sister of my Great Great Great Grandfather Michael Sause, of Ballyduggan. She married Patrick Lawrence and they and their descendants stayed in the area. This is important because by 1850 most of the male Sauses had left for other lands. Tracing Honora and Patrick’s family line, Johnny and Ricky discovered, in July of 2013, two current residents who are my cousins. It was my genuine pleasure to meet and get acquainted with Tony Nolan of Mullinahone and Martin Cody of Poulacapple. I have never shaken hands with two finer men.

Speaking of fine men, we were also privileged to meet Eamon O’Neill, who now lives in Carrick-on-Suir but still farms his land in Ballyduggan, the same as his ancestors did 300 years ago. Eamon’s land borders the old Sause farmstead. He gave us the grand tour of the thatched roof cottage and his working farm. It was an eerie feeling, knowing that the Irish Sauses had walked on this same land 160 years ago. It wasn’t hard to imagine smoke rising from the chimney of the long ago vanished house that they left so many years ago. It must have been heart-breaking to leave this beautiful land.

Johnny Bermingham introduced me to a man who lives on the mountain overlooking the fields of Ballyduggan. Inviting me into his home, Jim Keating graciously
showed me the panorama that he gets to see every day. It was breathtaking. This County of Tipperary is an amazing place, inhabited by amazingly hospitable people.

It was a heart-warming journey, back to our roots. The landscape, the hospitable people, the camaraderie, the music. Centering our activities at Crocanoir, in Ballycullen, was an inspiration. Everyone needs a place to start and help in finding the hidden treasures of long ago families and places. The Berminghams, John, Monika and Seanie, seem like my family. It is often quoted that, “the Normans became more Irish than the Irish”. So, it might be said about the Sauses and Berminghams. When my granddaughters, Delaney and Montana, were invited to join Seanie’s band, ‘We Looked Like Giants’ on stage and it was a scene never to be forgotten by this man.

Gatherings are meant to be joyful occasions and this one certainly met all of the criteria. We sang and we laughed and we learned about our heritage. With all of our extended family, from far away lands and our most welcome guests, we were treated to a most interesting and educational discussion about Irish and local history and how the Sauses fit in by historian Ricky Sheehan. Crocan Oir was the perfect place for all of this camaraderie.

The icing, on the cake, was reserved for the day when our extended family strolled about the turf, near Saucestown Bridge, and Joe Kenny rolled up with his camera. Preserving the moment, on film, and inserting the story in his weekly publication, we knew that this was our, ‘Return To Saucestown’. ☀
Main Street residents in 1934

The photo on the right was taken on Main Street in 1934 when Fethard was full of shops of all descriptions. Most houses had some sort of little enterprise going in the front room, and there were several extensive and thriving businesses on the street.

Noddie (Hennessy) Wall RIP (photographed on the right) and Mary (Hennessy) Smith RIP (left), were the daughters of Gracie and Mike Hennessy. Gracie had a drapery shop in the building beside the Credit Union office and Noddie continued to run the shop after her mother’s death. The other girl in the photograph is Joan (Brett) O’Connor, in the centre. The late Jimmy Ryan, who died at the age of 67 on October 18, 2003, in his home at Watergate Street, pointed out to Joan shortly before his death, that she and he were the oldest Fethard residents still living in the house they were born in.

Joan was born in the house she now lives in and has lived there virtually all her life. Her grandparents, John and Nora Brett, ran a public house and large drapery shop and this business was continued by her parents, Jack and Liz Brett until the mid 1960s.
Scouts - 27th Tipperary Group

Scouting is about young people and adults working together, implementing the Scout Method in all sections – the scout promise and law; outdoor and indoor activities; learning by doing; small group system; symbolic framework; personal progression; responsibility and leadership. The Scout Programme Cycle is about, ‘planning, doing and reviewing’, and meeting challenges that are age appropriate.

Our programme ran from September 2013 to August 2014 and was a fantastic year for the whole group. With ninety-eight members, from Beavers to Cubs, through Scouts and on to Ventures, there was always plenty of activity at group, county and national levels.

Beaver Section
Leading our youngest colony of 6 to 8 year-olds is an enthusiastic
leader, Nicola, ably assisted by Teresa, Rhya and Tony. Over the course of the year the programme included a ‘Fun Weekend’ held in Mount Melleray in September 2013. They also had a night hike in Grove Wood, which included a campfire with a Halloween theme. All were kitted-out in scary costumes and we had a sing-song and drinking-chocolate.

They next partook in the group weekend in Carne, Co. Wexford. Prior to Christmas they held a sleepover in the Den – a very exciting night as Santa made a surprise visit with presents for everyone. As part of this two-day event some Beavers were invested. Mid-January meetings resumed with a full programme, so by March they entered and won the County Beaver Quiz – a brainy bunch this lot.

With the rest of the group they participated in the annual parade to 11am Mass on St. Patrick’s Day. Late March they were back to Grove Wood for another muddy night hike. April saw another sleepover, rising on Sunday morning and heading off to the Knockmealdown Mountains for the annual county hike, taking in the Liam Lynch Monument and the conservation duck pond area. An Easter egg hunt in Grove Wood proved most entertaining.

They took part in the parish May Procession and a hike in Cloran with some ‘backwoods cooking’. Late May saw a hike to the top of Slievenamon. A weekend camping was also organ-

*Members of the 27th Tipperary Scout Group photographed at St. Patrick’s Day Mass in Holy Trinity Parish Church in Fethard.*
ised in Parsons Green on June 6, 7 and 8. Finishing their Scout year they took part in the parish Corpus Christi Procession. Well done to an adventurous Beaver Section.

**Cub Section**

Heading up this pack of 9 to 12-year-olds is Michelle, methodical in everything, a great programme co-ordinator, helped in no small way by John and Denis. Their year started with a lightweight overnight camp on the lower slopes of the Galtees, rising at 4.30am and a hike further up to an advantageous viewing point to watch a beautiful sunrise at 7.20am. During October they undertook instruction on kayaking, achieving stage two in sailing and rowing. They attended a group weekend in Carne in November and as a last activity for 2013 they had a Den sleepover and a visit from Santa.

January 2014 started with a training weekend for ‘sixers’ and ‘seconders’ and in February Cubs attended the county Swimming Gala. On St Patrick’s Day they took part with the rest of the group in the traditional parade to 11am Parish Mass in Fethard. All enjoyed a fun weekend in April in Mount Melleray. May saw us host the county sports day in the School Field. The Pack also participated in both the May and Corpus Christi Processions.

Cubs Annual Camp saw them travel to Fota Scout Centre for a six-day camp. Activities included building and sleeping overnight in bivvies in the nearby wood; backwoods cooking; a hike; a day on the beach; and a tour of Fota Wildlife Park, to

_Congratulations to Fethard Scouting Cougar Patrol who represented Fethard in the Cois Suire County Shield Competition and came away clear winners for the third consecutive year. This was a great performance and well done to the following: patrol leader Dylan Ryan; assistant patrol leader Dan Walsh; quartermaster Katie Whyte; assistant quartermaster Noelle O’Meara; scribe Poppy Kane; assistant cook and assistant Katie Ryan; assistant scribe Sarah Clarke; hiking Brendan Walsh and Dylan Fenlon; fireman/site safety David Mockler; and assistant fireman/site safety Aiden O’Dwyer._
mention a few. Throughout the Cub year the pack continued on their journey through the ‘lands of adventure’, learning many skills, working in their ‘sixes’ and helping each other achieve their best. A huge well done to this very active section.

**Scout Section**

Leading this troop of 12 to 16 year olds is another great lady, Rachel, assisted by a great man Cormac. They started their year with first aid training and team building exercises, culminating with a visit from Liam Hayes who gave instruction in CPR using manikins. They spent the first weekend of November on the ‘Fun Weekend’ in Mount Melleray the theme being ‘Halloween’ and ‘Haunted House’. Also in November they attended the group weekend in Carne Scout Centre, and interestingly had a night hike on a snow covered beach.

It was back to basics in January. February saw four scouts sign up to undergo the Chief Scout Award (CSA) – a year-long adventure in addition to their normal programme. On completion, due to the award’s high standard, they are automatically awarded the Gaisce President’s Award. All scouts took part in the Mountain Pursuit Challenge (MPC) on very wet and windy Galtee Mountains. Orienteering training commenced in February with the County Orienteering in March on the lower slopes of Knockanaffrin. On the day they took 1st, 2nd and the U16 team event.

They undertook a number of hikes and also participated in the
traditional parade to 11am Mass on St Patrick’s Day. April saw them concentrate on training for the testing County Shield Competition held in May. Having won this for the previous two years we anticipated all and sundry would try and prevent us getting three-in-a-row. This competition is an event of multiple disciplines, includes tent pitching, site-layout, knots and lashings, cooking on open fires, map and compass, hiking, sketches, first aid, pioneering, plus a few fun disciplines. Fethard were to prove clear winners of this challenging weekend.

Next on the agenda was Annual Camp, and planning and preparing for this followed immediately. Camp was held from June 28 to July 5 in glorious weather at Curragh Chase – an action-packed programme consisting of: building and sleeping in bivvies many kilometres from base-camp; canoeing; swimming; sailing; archery; hiking; the two-day Brian Ború challenge; a shopping day which included a trip to the cinema and a fun day on Friday. We were joined for the last two days by the Links (cubs coming to scouts). Also joining us for these two days were a troop of scouts from Canada and we were pleased to accommodate them.

Annual Camp now over, duty called and we now prepared to represent our county at national level, so back to train and plan for the National Phoenix Challenge – a four-day event similar to the County Shield. This year the venue was Mount Melleray from August 14 to 17, and with 860 scouts taking part the task looked daunting. The Cougar Patrol attitude was, meet all challenges, improvise and overcome, and this they did, true grit! Fethard rose to the challenge achieving the ‘Gold Standard’. What a performance from a great Cougar Patrol: Dylan Ryan (PL); Dan Walsh (APL); Katie Whyte (First Aider); Noelle O’Meara (Cook); Katie Ryan (Scribe); Poppy Kane (Scribe); Dylan Fenlon (City Expedition); David Moclair (Fireman); Lucy Whyte (Cook); and Brendan Walsh (City Expedition).

Ventures

The oldest and smallest unit (in numbers only) is for 16 to 18-year-olds. The Ventures continue to be a huge asset helping the other sections. They largely plan and run their own programme under the guidance of a leader. The section needs a designated leader, so if
you’re interested please come along to our meetings or contact any leader for information.

The section took part in county and national challenges. Being dropped off at various unknown locations in unfamiliar terrain, they had to navigate their way over varying distances to a number of set locations over a number of days and complete pre-set challenges enroute. While being self-sufficient camping out and cooking on trangia stove, they also attended the annual music and fun weekend in Kilcully near Cork.

**Group**

As a group we held a number of events including a weekend in Carne Scout Centre, we organised a county all-sections hike in Glengarra Wood where there were 267 youth members attending from around the county. As per tradition, we paraded to St Patrick’s Day Mass and the May and Corpus Christi processions. None of the above activities could have been conducted without leaders – people who are always available throughout the year – winter and summer. We are so lucky in Fethard to have a seriously dedicated band of leaders who work tirelessly, not just with their respective sections but across the entire group. Helping and supporting each other, they are truly remarkable, giving their time, skill and patience to one and all. In addition to their scout programme work, they are often called on at short notice to erect a marquee, take it down, and whether a Sunday morning or Monday night, they always oblige. They are a credit to themselves and our community.

We welcome on board two new leaders, Cormac Horan and Ryha Roberts, who both look to be very promising leaders. Both

*Photographed at the Scouts Remembrance Mass for Sean Cloonan*
young, eager, with a lovely attitude and great way with our youth. We wish all the people of the parish and beyond a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Sean Cloonan

Unfortunately I finish on a very sad note. In February 2014 we suffered a tremendous shock with the untimely loss of our great friend and comrade, Sean ‘Lofty’ Cloonan. Sean was one of our very first scouts who joined in 1987 and was hugely active from starting as a young scout to his later position as County Commissioner. I had the privilege of training him as a scout, a venture and onto a leader. He was always eager to learn and willing to take responsibility. To scouting he was loyalty personified. Having worked side-by-side with him for 27 years through all aspects of scouting, his absence is indescribable. He is a huge loss to scouts and his fellow leaders, not just in Fethard but across the county and beyond. This was evident with the large attendance of scout leaders from across the county, including Chief Scout Michael John Shinnick, County Commissioner Michael Dempsey and all group leaders at our Scout Group Remembrance Mass concelebrated by Canon Tom Breen PP and Fr Martin Crean OSA. Sean always spoke highly of everyone, especially his family. To his wife Susan, her daughters, his parents Liam and Mary, his brother and sisters and extended family, our heartfelt and deepest sympathy. We too, miss him enormously. Slán a chara, agus ar dheis Dé a anam, solas na bhflaitheas air go deo.

– Robert Phelan (Group Leader)
On October 19, 2014, following the scouts’ remembrance Mass for John Cloonan, Chief Scout, Michael John Shinnick said he had a second reason for coming to Fethard. After a brief introduction to keep people guessing, he concluded by announcing that a much deserved (and flabbergasted) Robert Phelan, was to be conferred with the Order of Cú Chullainn award – the highest level in scouting. This award recommendation for Robert was first initiated by the late Sean Cloonan and what more fitting place to present the award than at Sean’s remembrance Mass.

Robert Phelan has been an active member of the 27th Tipperary Scout Group since its foundation in 1987, firstly, as an Assistant Scout Leader. In 1988 he took on the role of Scout Leader. In 2003 Robert became the unit’s Group Leader, leading the Fethard Group under the new title ‘Scouting Ireland’.

Bobby, as he’s generally known in scouting circles, is the only remaining member of the group’s original leadership team. Today the group is at its strongest, with active Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venture Scout and Rover Scout Sections, supported by an enthusiastic team.
of adult scouter. One of the key changes introduced by Bobby was the engagement of all concerned in decision-making, particularly the engagement of the youth members. 

Over the years Bobby played a key role in ensuring the scout group had a base in the town. Fethard Ballroom was their home for many years and through Bobby’s efforts, the group was able to secure an equipment store there, in addition to having a venue for weekly meetings. As the group grew, its needs and activities also expanded and in January 2013, with Bobby’s intervention, the now vacated Boys’ Primary School became the new Scout Den.

Robert Phelan is a worthy recipient of the Order of Cú Chulainn. He has been steadfast in his commitment to scouting at local and county level since 1987. The scouting community in Fethard and Co. Tipperary have benefited from Bobby’s many scouting and personal experiences and skills. He acts as mentor and guide to adult scouters and scouting children. Throughout the wider community, Bobby is highly regarded for his voluntary contribution to various aspects of Fethard life. In the words of our young scouts,–’He’s a Legend’.

Robert Phelan photographed with his wife Margaret and members of his family after being conferred with the Order of Cú Chulainn award, the highest level in scouting.

Robert Phelan photographed with his wife Margaret and members of his family after being conferred with the Order of Cú Chulainn award, the highest level in scouting.
The mechanic advised, ‘Come back in two hours’, as he tapped my car. ‘It should be good and ready by then!’ There was nothing for me to do but wander around the streets of Tipperary Town and it really is an interesting place with lovely old-fashioned shop-fronts and some fine three storey Victorian buildings.

Walking up from Main Street to Michael Street, where the solid parish church is located, there is an historical information sign outside an old square building which informs us that this is where the Bridewell Jail used to be. The sign tells the story of a Thomas F Burke – a native of Fethard – who led 150 men in a Fenian uprising just outside Tipperary Town on Tuesday, March 5, 1857. The sign also tells us that he was brought to America by his parents when he was ten years of age and that the family settled in New Orleans. He was a young man when the American Civil War broke out. He joined the Confederate Army and fought at Gettysberg where he was captured and imprisoned until the war ended. Upon his release he became involved in the Fenian movement and returned to Ireland for the planned Fenian Rising here. Captured at Ballyhurst, he was brought to the Bridewell Building in Tipperary Town before eventually being tried for treason in Dublin. He was sentenced to death but this was later commuted to imprisonment and he was sent back to America where he died before the age of fifty. There was further information about more recent events but not of concern here.

I walked back to the garage and true to his word, the car was fixed on time. Driving back to Cashel I passed the commemoration plaque at Ballyhurst on the left side of the road between Tipperary and Kilfeacle. Burke is again mentioned but this time as ‘General Burke’. Coming in to Cashel I drove up to Ladyswell, the street leading on to the old Dublin road, and parked there. It was time for tea and a creamy bun to soften the blow of having a much lighter wallet that when I had set out in the morning. Right opposite and down the steps from the old cinema, which is closed now for a long number of
years, there is a discreet round, free standing plaque which states that the terrace walls were built after a renowned court victory by Michael Doheny, in or around 1842. Although not mentioned on this historical plaque, Doheny is also a native of Fethard having lived and worked here until he was at least twenty years of age, but he is now probably more associated with Cashel.

Doheny, however, keeps cropping up. Every few years, his name emerges somewhere in this Annual Newsletter publication. There was a talk on him in Cashel last year given by Dr. Willie Nolan. A neighbour informed me that in his youth he was on a tug-of-war team that christened themselves the Dohenys and another neighbour also informed me that there was field on the Cloneen road when he was growing up called Doheny’s field.

There is of course a plaque to mark where he was born, near Byrnes, just outside the town, erected thanks to the diligence of the late Mary Healy amongst others. Doheny does seem such a wild and courageous character, going from being a respectable barrister to a felon is a big move – and not for the financial reasons that we might think of today. Tackling the clergy in America, writing his book, ‘The Felon’s Track’, and rearing a big family, all of which is quite enough for any one lifetime.

There may be other Fethard people also remembered in different places but to come across two in the one day in different towns was a happy coincidence. Both were leaders in the Fenian movement in the nineteenth century and both worked for the good of their country, in their own way.

L to R: Jimmy O’Donnell, Marie Crean and Eileen O’Donnell enjoying a day out at Car Boot Sale in 2002
Abymill Theatre

This lovely building, gilded in its autumnal colours, is once more a busy place as the Fethard Players rehearse for their 2014 production – the comedy ‘Arsenic and Old Lace’ which opens November 17.

During the summer months bingo continued every Thursday night and now that winter is nigh it will be a welcome venue on this night.

Majella Forte and her dance studio, ‘On Your Toes’, staged their highly successful summer show over a series of nights in Abymill. This show usually takes place in early June before the young people break up school for summer.

On a balmy September evening Ann Williamson brought the celebrated singer and actress Rebecca Storm to Abymill. She played to a capacity audience and was supported by Ann’s daughter Holly Jean Williamson. So popular was this concert that she is returning to this venue in the New Year on January 10.

The theatre is becoming increasingly popular with outside groups, to stage musicals and plays and even the odd ‘One Man Show’ as was the case on February 28, when Ulick O’Connor came to Abymill with his one man show, ‘The Poetry and Wit of Oliver St. John Gogarty’.

The local primary and secondary schools will also stage their Christmas productions in December in the Abymill, which is an ideal time of year for a night out at the theatre.

The Annual General Meeting of Abymill was held on September 18, and the following Board elected: Joe Kenny (Chairperson), Marian Gilpin (Secretary), Agnes Evans (Treasurer), Austin O’Flynn (Administrator). Board members: Michael McCarthy, Jimmy O’Shea, Eileen Maher, Vincent Murphy, Michael Kenrick and Carmel Rice. Caretaker: Christy Mullins.

Photographed at Ulick O’Connor’s one man show ‘The Poetry and Wit of Oliver St. John Gogarty’ at the Abymill Theatre are L to R: Bob Lanigan, Dr. Martin Mansergh, Ulick O’Connor and Susan Archdeacon.
Fethard Players

Fethard Players’ production for this year was written by Joseph Kesselring in the antiwar atmosphere of the late 1930s. A colourful and spirited play, it was made into a successful dark comedy film directed by Frank Capra, starring Cary Grant as Mortimer Brewster.

Jimmy O’Sullivan takes on this role in the Fethard Players production along with his endearing but zany elderly aunts played by Anne Connolly and Ann Walsh. The cast is big by comparison to previous years and should make for very entertaining evenings from November 17, for a six night run up to November 23.

Producer Austin O’Flynn and cast are currently busy rehearsing in Abymill – the ‘home’ of the Fethard Players since 1988. Michael McCarthy is helping to create a set under the direction of Austin – always a conversation piece for playgoers.

It is nice to see the players undertaking a comedy, which is always popular among audiences in the locality and further afield – which the popularity of the Fethard Players encompasses. Once again a huge success for this talented and experienced group.

The Lost Innocence

Wait!, she cried, as she jumped through the long green grass. Fred had run ahead of her and there was no opportunity of catching up with him. Every second step was another cow pat and they had to be avoided or Mama would not be happy if her white socks were stained with excrement. The smell in the air was that of burning, not wood but of gun powder in the air, the kind of smell you get if you step outside and imagine a thousand batteries have exploded. Between the shoot-outs from both sides of the town and in the town, Mama would not be happy with the discovery of their escape and Mary wondered if life itself would be worth living upon their return...they would be in so much trouble.

But Fred was convinced there were babies in the church ground, the 'church for babies' they overheard. 'What kind of babies?' they thought to themselves. Little babies, big babies, fat babies, what would they look like? Why were they all on their own down at the church which was a ruin. Mary knew it was going to be a bad idea to go down there and yet wherever Fred went she had to follow to ensure his safety and because secretly she loved their little adventures. Even if it meant a serious telling off when they got home again.

They had a pet calf. Like Mary, the calf considered himself fragile although he could not communicate this with anyone and he had to be dragged along too for the adventure. So off they went to the 'church', to find the babies and, unknown to themselves, disparage their innocence.

Once down the field, there was the marshy swamp to get through, Mary called out to Fred, 'Let's go to the railway line instead!', trying to distract Fred by asking to go watch the trains pass by. But Fred was adamant that there were coffins at the church and that there were babes inside. For anyone not familiar with the 'baby church', it is also known as Templemartin, a small ruin now still. It is visible on a walk around Jesuit's Walk in Fethard and was used for all babies who passed away before being baptised in those days. It was their burial ground. I don't think Fred or Mary knew this, but somewhere they had heard chatting or talk and wanted to see for themselves what

Fred and his sister Mary
was down in the little church.

When approaching the church, the gunshots rang out in the air, men shouting at each other from across fields. Mary had a churn in her stomach, something was not good today, there was a lot more noise than usual and Mama had put extra lining of sheepskin on the windows of the house. Mama said she feared bullets would come through the windows. Mama was Nora, she had six children altogether, five boys and one little girl. Mary was the second youngest. She and Fred were very close, but boys as brothers will always protect their one and only sister. The small age gap between Mary and Fred meant though that they were inseparable as children.

They crept through the grass into the ruins of the old church. The calf bewildered, stumbled over a stone. Mary quickly turned to see if the little calf was regaining its balance again and it was back on its feet. They saw the boxes, ‘the coffins’, Fred said. They crept through the grass and opened the boxes but Mary was behind and Fred frantically fell backwards upon Mary. ‘What?’ said Mary, “is it the babies?” “No,” said Fred, it is just guns. With this it was a scramble, as in the distance they heard a men shouting and these men could have been looking for those guns. And they would be killed if they were found with them. Mary said, “Quick Fred, let’s get home, before they catch us.” They both scrambled through the ditch, across to the field which

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Canon James Power P.P, photographed on October 6, 1996 saying Mass, assisted by Fr. Sean Ryan and Fr. Ben O’Brien OSA, after blessing a newly erected plaque erected in memory of all the infants buried in the grounds of Templemartin church ruins. The Mass was attended by over 150 people who showed their appreciation with a loud round of applause at the end.
would lead back to the marshy field and then just a stone’s throw from their house. They would climb through the ditch that they had burrowed out over time between the marshy field and their own field. As they ran into the marshy field they heard their mother calling, crying out, “Marryyyyyy ... Freddddd ...”

Now they knew they were in trouble! However, it was a different tone, a worried tone, not angry. With this, the sound of gun shots rang out around them, the smell was more prominent now, the gun powder smell. They ducked in the grass covering their heads. Their mother was screaming their names hunching down and trying to get to them as fast as she could. Gunshots were ringing out across the fields. As she clutched each child under her arms she struggled back to the house in what seemed like thick smoke. Rubbing their foreheads and crying, she told them, ‘You had me worried sick, don’t ever leave our field again, not now, not while this is going on’. Mary wondered where her pet calf was, but she knew that it wasn’t so fast and that Mama would not be able to pick him up too. She didn’t ask questions. Fred and she had been too upset. As night fell, the pet calf arrived back at the house, two bullets in its little body. Caught in the shoot-out.

Mary knew this wasn’t just a naughty thing she and Fred had done, it was far more serious, they had put themselves and the pet calf in danger and the calf had paid the price.

The year was 1922, the Civil War lasted for ten months, three weeks and five days, upon which we gained an Irish Free State. But with this brothers killed brothers, fathers lost sons, women lost husbands and sisters lost brothers. Mary had already lost her baby brother Eddie and now her little calf, she was seven years old.

What a way to begin life in the walled town of Fethard, amongst such troubled times, she rarely spoke of the experience. There are many more stories that have been passed down through the generations, but this one is of significance. The significance of youth, age and innocence; no matter what era we are born into there will always be troubled times. However, the wonderful gift of life is something that we can be thankful for; that poor little calf lost his life but Mary and Fred gained theirs and left their childhood innocence in those boxes in Templemartin.
The people of Fethard have great reverence for this little ruined church and its venerable name. It stands on the brow of a hill beyond The Valley, lying east-west (as all the old churches do), old neighbour to the river, the mill, the churches and the people of the town. Close beside it is a green sward which was formerly used as burial ground of infants who died without Baptism.

Years ago, one evening as I was passing near it, along the way that is known as The Jesuit’s Walk, the convent bell of the town began ringing for Vespers. I stood to listen — and to my wonder and delight, every sound of it came back down to me in clear, sweet echo from the old walls of Temple-Martin. I said to myself, “I have heard St. Martin’s Bell” — and later came these verses in remembrance:

**ST. MARTIN’S BELL**
by Father P. A. Doyle, O.S.A.

Good Sister Somebody left her cell,  
And hurried to ring the Convent Bell;  
For Vespers, Rosary, Silent Prayer;  
And all the nuns would be kneeling there.

The people hear it and go their way;  
“An hour to Angelus still,” they say:  
In rosy splendour the sun sinks down  
And ’tis gentle evening in Fethard town.

Beyond the valley, below the brow.  
Near Temple-Martin I’m standing now;  
Its walls and windows all torn and rent,  
And ivy shrouding its orient.

In Temple-Martin — my word is true,  
The guardian Echo is ringing, too;  
His sweet responses come clear and well  
To the swaying sounds of the Convent Bell.

My bright good fortune, and bless the day!  
The bell of St. Martin’s I hear, and stay,  
For Vespers, Rosary, twilight prayer,  
While the souls of saints will be hovering there.

And then I wondered, I’m wondering still,  
If God would grant it, His Blessed Will!  
Some sainted Rachel* to come and call,  
The exiled children** at evenings fall:

To cease their singing and happy play,  
In Temple-Martin to end the day  
With Vespers, Rosary, rest-time prayer,  
And a mother’s love to be near them there.

* A voice in Rama was heard – Rachel bewailing her children because they are not. (St. Matthew II. 18).

** The unbaptised infants.
World War Melody

During the mayhem that was the First World War, amidst the carnage of shelling, rifle fire, death and destruction the soldiers, as a morale booster, somehow found time for singing. Singing such songs as “Keep The Home Fires Burning”; “Pack Up Your Troubles”; “Mademoiselle From Armentières”, etc., were sung with gusto. Without a shadow of a doubt the most famous and best known of the lot was “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary”. Indeed, this song could be considered as one of the defining symbols of the War. It was also probably the last song that hundreds, if not thousands, of young soldiers heard or sang as they marched out to the trenches and their doom.

Many and varied are the stories of its origins. Who composed it, where was it first performed, who sang it and so on, still continue. The following could be considered to be the most definitive article on the ballad. We’re all familiar with this marching tune that became such a hit during the War and that the young soldiers of the Connaught Rangers sang as they headed to the Western Front in August 1914.

What isn’t so well known is the name of the man who wrote it five years earlier, Harry Williams, from Warwickshire, who was born in Erdington, Birmingham in 1873 and spent his childhood living in pubs run by his parents, Henry and Mary.

As a schoolboy he fell down the cellar steps in one pub, breaking both legs, putting him in a wheelchair. Unable to play in the streets with his friends, Harry developed a talent for songwriting. Then, at around the turn of the century, he met a man called Jack Judge at his brother’s pub, The Malt Shovel, in Oldbury, West Midlands and they began writing songs together.

As a team they wrote about 32 songs in total. Jack was a great singer and Harry was a musician. One of the songs was a ballad, It’s a Long Way to Connemara, which Jack regularly performed at concerts. However, it was to be another three years before the song took final shape.

A keen gambler, Jack was set a five-shilling challenge to compose and perform a song within twenty-four hours at the New Market Inn in Stalybridge, Cheshire. The smart
Jack simply changed ‘Connemara’ to ‘Tipperary’, winning the bet and delighting his audience with the catchy ‘new’ song.

Bert Feldman, a London music impresario, heard about the song and within months had released the sheet music with a small but important change. He told the pair that Tipperary wouldn’t be a hit unless they made it into a marching song and added an extra ‘long’. The change was made, the song was published and the rest is history.

The Connaught Rangers

A Connaught Rangers’ captain, Dryden, is reputed to have heard an itinerant busker playing the song in Galway and encouraged his troops to sing it during marches. On August 13, 1914, Daily Mail journalist, George Curnock, stood on the steps of the Hotel Metrople, Boulogne to watch the British troops march past on their way to the front. The Connaught Rangers sang a song he had never heard before and, in addition to its rousing tune and the pathos of its words, undoubtedly what fixed the song in his memory were the words of a French soldier’s widow, who had stood silent beside him from the beginning of the parade.

As the troops marched past singing ‘It’s a Long Way to Tipperary’, the widow turned to Curnock and asked him what they were singing. He explained and translated the words for her and she replied emotionally: ‘Oh! The poor boys! . . . A long, long way . . . they do not know how long is the way they are going . . . how long – how long!’ No doubt the poignancy of the words caused her to think of her late husband’s death and the fact that many of these brave young men would undoubtedly soon join him.

Other soldiers in the war carried the song home with them and it became widely popular around the world. Harry Williams and Jack Judge earned £1,680, the equivalent of more than £150,000 today, from sales of Tipperary in the 12 months after its release.

Harry eventually became sole rights holder. Jack was a gambler and owed money to Harry and rather than pay them he gave away his rights to Tipperary. When Harry heard of the success of the song he donated £1,000 to the Great War Injured Beneficiary Fund.

Harry Williams’ Role Restored

However, when Harry died from pneumonia at 50 years in March 1924, his role in one of the nation’s most famous songs all but died with him.

His great-niece, Meg Pybus, has spent a lot of time in restoring Harry to his rightful place as the writer of the song. According to her, his part in the song was quickly forgotten about. Jack took all the credit for writing it and it became his song. Because he sang it everybody just assumed that he wrote it too.

Meg eventually decided to launch a campaign to have Harry’s
part in writing Tipperary officially recognised. Together with her family they put together an enormous amount of material and sent it to the Imperial War Museum. Having studied it, the Museum wrote letters to Harry's family saying they recognised his role in the song. It was in 2012 that the family got formal recognition that he wrote the song. Before them he was just recognised as the rights-holder.

It’s a Long Way to Tipperary is now the longest-earning song in musical history, even raking in cash from ringtones and YouTube. Though copyright expires seventy years after a composer’s death in Britain, Meg Pybus still receives a one-eighth share of the royalties, about £4,000 a year.

The royalties come from all over the world. According to Meg the rights passed on to her grandfather when Harry died, then on to her mother and her sisters, and now through to the cousins. The cheques come every six months. ‘It’s everything from ringtones, cruise ship performances, YouTube and jukeboxes. The individual amounts are absolutely tiny, but when they are all added up it comes to quite a sum.’

**Place of Origin**

Arguments continue over where the song was written, with the residents of Honiley, where Harry lived with his parents in the Plough Inn, and Oldbury, where Jack Judge’s brother owned the Malt Shovel, at loggerheads to this day.

According to Meg, her grandfather and other relatives always said it was the Plough Inn. Harry lived there from 1900 until he died. She states that his name is on all the original sheet music, so there is no doubt about it. Jack Judge’s family claim it was written by him in the Malt Shovel but, as far as Meg is concerned it was in the Plough. She remembers going to her grandfather’s house as a child and Tipperary was always being played. ‘I grew up with the song.’

The Plough Inn was renamed The Tipperary Inn in Harry’s honour in the 1940s and remains a shrine to the famous song to this day. The final word goes to Meg: ‘It’s a terribly sad song in many ways, given the connotations attached to it nowadays. It’s a strange story, because if it wasn’t for that bet in Stalybridge or the outbreak of war, the song would never have become popular.’

The song’s enduring popularity is reflected in the fact that in the last
one hundred years it is estimated that three million copies have been sold in the USA and another five million around the world.

**It’s A Long Way To Tipperary**

*Chorus*

It’s a long way to Tipperary,
It’s a long, long way to go.
It’s a long way to Tipperary
To the sweetest girl I know.

Goodbye Piccadilly,
Farewell Leicester Square,
It’s a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart lies there.

Up to mighty London came
An Irish lad one day,
All the streets were paved with gold,
So everyone was gay!

Singing songs of Piccadilly,
Strand, and Leicester Square,
‘Til Paddy got excited and
He shouted to them there:

*Chorus*

Paddy wrote a letter
To his Irish Molly O’,
Saying, “Should you not receive it,
Write and let me know!
If I make mistakes in spelling,
Molly dear”, said he,
“Remember it’s the pen, that’s bad,
Don’t lay the blame on me”.

*Chorus*

Molly wrote a neat reply
To Irish Paddy O’,
Saying, “Mike Maloney wants
To marry me, and so
Leave the Strand and Piccadilly.

Or you’ll be to blame,
For love has fairly drove me silly,
Hoping you’re the same!”

*Chorus*

While there seem to be some doubt as to where the song was written there is no doubt of a few other historical Tipperary connections with World War One. The first shots of that terrible conflict were fired by a Tipperary man at Casteau, a village in Belgium. He was Edward Thomas, a native of Nenagh. Edward served in the war and died of pneumonia in London in 1939. Percentage-wise the greatest number of men between eighteen and thirty-five years to volunteer from any town in Ireland was from Carrick-on-Suir. A Carrick soldier’s wife, on receiving her regular weekly soldier’s wife allowance was heard to remark, “If this is war may there never be peace”. In the past few years, a Fethard couple visiting an out of the way holiday resort were surprised when, on seeing their passports, the elderly father of the landlady said, “Well, what a surprise. Up to now I thought Tipperary was a mythical place, like Brigadoon or suchlike,” and proceeded to sing “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary”.

Incidentally, the author(s) of “It’s a Long Way…” are not recorded as ever having visited either Ireland or Tipperary. A sincere thank-you to well known Tipperary GAA historian and author, Seamus J King, for his courtesy and co-operation in compiling this article.
Marée Moclair asked me to pay a tribute to Jack at his Requiem Mass. Paying this tribute to a good friend and congenial companion is a special honour for me. But where does one begin – Jack had such a wide range of interests, so many sides to his personality, so many characteristics, so many enthusiasms.

I suppose one of the first things that come to mind was his neighbourliness. An old lady who lived nearby used to be wheeled out on sunny days just to be beside the road, where she would see life going on and the passers-by. Jack never failed to stop if he was passing. He would get out of the car and chat with her, no matter how busy he was, or what was on his mind. It added greatly to her day, and it says a lot about Jack, who, I think, never wore a watch. His children recalled how often they waited for him to pick them up from school, then adding, “but we couldn’t be mad with him”.

Jack was very sociable, very companionable. “You’d be fond of him”, was what I heard a lot of people say at his wake. He liked to have family members or friends with him sharing his special interests, notably following Tipperary’s fortunes in the hurling and football. He was at the Tipp versus Galway game in Semple Stadium on a Saturday in
early July last. It was a case of Jack wanting himself to be there, even though he was pushing himself to the limit, battling against the cancer that made him angry at times. It was the last game he was able to attend. At least he had the satisfaction of seeing Tipperary comprehensively win in both the hurling and football games that day. He could analyse a game well, the more thrilling the game the better he liked it. The victory over Cork would have brought him special satisfaction, especially having this year’s good hay crop all saved to his satisfaction and in the barn, and now ‘Cork bet’.

Another passionate sporting interest Jack had was horseracing. He was a keen follower and a studier of form. His well-stored, retentive memory stood to him as always. From his hospital bed he got bets placed on Joe Murphy’s horse going in the Leopardstown that day. It won. In his years of good health you could meet Jack at the major classic meetings in the Curragh or Epsom. You could meet him even in Paris in early October when he and Marée would be there, Jack heading off to Longchamp racecourse for the famous Prix d’Arc, while Marée would be heading off somewhere such as the Tuileries Garden. You could meet Jack as well at the famed chase meetings of Listowel and Cheltenham, which were special favourites of his.

Yet another enthusiasm was traditional music. Miltown Malby was a special place for Jack to spend a few days during the Willie Clancy festival. There he would seek out little neighbouring villages where the purest traditional music was to be heard. The traditional music of European countries also appealed to him and he welcomed any opportunity to enjoy it.

Jack was a true European, wanting to savour the great centres of art, architecture and culture. It was a great fulfilment for him if he could get in a week or so in some great European centre in late January/early February just before the cows of Ballinlough began to calf. Florence, Pisa, Sienna, Barcelona, Venice, Verona, Madrid, Granada, Krakow, Jack shared these with Marée, my wife Mairín and myself. His friend and schoolmate, Joe Hanly, was coaxed along on at least one of those trips. Jack would bring home armfuls of books from Clonmel library in preparation, picking out and reading the special things he particularly wanted to enjoy. What a zest for life he had and life’s experiences. He kept focused on living right up to the final days.

Jack was as interested in any Irish rural townland as he was in great European cities. In the earlier days of his illness, while in Acorn Lodge in Dualla parish, he spent part of his days walking around the quiet roads there, meeting locals and chatting about who lived in the various houses and the townlands he was walking by. He enjoyed relat-
ing about that countryside, new to him.

Jack had a list of some more trips he had lined up and books to read about them. But it wasn’t to be. The time for his final journey, the journey to his heavenly inheritance, had come, the heavenly inheritance that surpasses all we know of.

Many of Jack’s interests were indeed unusual for a farmer, but he was really first and foremost a farmer. He had a deep feeling for it, and kept well abreast of modern farming trends. His attachment to the family homestead and farm in Ballinlough was strong. The warm welcome and hospitality that he and Marée exemplified will, I know, continue to be a tradition in Ballinlough.

Jack loved books, loved being surrounded by them, loved reading them. Books bulged out of every available shelf in Ballinlough. On one of the final days in which he was still alert in hospital, I arrived at the door of his room and heard Marée reading to him. There she was, sitting on the bed and reading the final words that some of the 1916 leaders wrote while awaiting execution – a favourite book of Jack’s. He was proud of his family’s involvement in the War of Independence.

There near his bed in his final days was a photo album showing Jack and Marée, and their children in various stages of their childhood, Jack’s animated, smiling face, in the midst of them. He stimulated his children’s minds with his own well-stored mind as they were growing up. He loved the University Challenge programme on TV. They all had to be as quiet as mice for fear he wouldn’t hear the answer. How proud he was of them if they got the answer right.

Moving indeed was the affection Marée and family showed him in his drawn-out illness, and now as the mourn him. He will be greatly missed by Marée and his children, his sisters and his wide circle of friends. I too will miss him, miss his companionship and his enthusiasms. Jack has gone on his final journey: may he now attain God’s promises, which surpass all human desire.
Photographed on the Rocklow Road on February 26, 1962 are L to R: Jimmy Fitzgerald, Eddie Fogarty and Tom O’Connell.


Annie Barrett and Peggy McCarthy (Cantwell) taking a walk in Tramore in the 1950s
A lot has been said and written about the burning of Brigid Cleary in Ballyvadlea, and in recent times it got big news coverage again. But there was a much bigger atrocity committed only two and a half miles North East of Killusty and one and a half miles South East of Cloneen. It’s on the road leading from Killusty to Nine Mile House and Grangemockler, a place called Ballynatten beside Peafield Bridge, it was known then as a sub townland of Tubber. A family named Shea and some of their friends (eighteen people) were burned to death on November 24, 1821, in a dispute over land ownership. No historian in my lifetime ever mentioned it except my late father who used to repair cottages for the County Council in the 30’s. One such cottage that he was working on was Billy Meagher’s beside Peafield Bridge and during my school holidays my dad used to take me with him to hold bits of timber and do odd jobs. One morning when we arrived at Peafield my dad said there were eighteen people burned to death up there pointing towards Peafield Bridge, that was probably about the summer of 1935, I was about ten years old. At the time he told me the story, some of those burned were potato diggers from Kerry and a mother and child burned to death in a tub of water. This dreadful act often crossed my mind and throughout my life it was something I never forgot. I made many enquiries but to no avail, maybe the older generation didn’t want to talk about it. This year I met a friend from Cloneen, Michael Costello, whose late mother was a renowned poet and historian. He looked through some of her records and found two articles about the burning of the Sheas, one written by the late Mr J.F.McCarthy, Clonmel and the other by the late Right Honourable Richard Shiel who was council in some of the cases.

The Sheas were from Seven Acres, a townland about two miles East of Peafield Bridge. They are described in the story as a well-to-do family, opulent, respectable and esteemed. Nicholas Shea was the owner of Seven Acres; he had a brother Edmond who owned land at Tubber and he rented some of it to a man named O’Gorman. One account says O’Gorman built a house on the land but as the lease was not stamped it gave Shea the right to evict Gorman and live there with his family. His actions caused serious hostility with his neighbours as the great mass of people depended on the land for a living after a succession of bad seasons 1817–1821–1828 with a serious loss of crops. The landlords and their agents were totally unsympathetic and continued to demand high rents. The very Rev William
Canon Burke remarks during the years 1814–50, a war without truce was waged between landlord and law and the forces of the crown on the one side and the whole population on the other. A system of clearances without parallel in any other civilised country was inaugurated and thousands were thrown on the roadside to perish of hunger and typhus (my father’s family were evicted from their mud and thatched hut in Tinrush and the thatch set on fire towards the end of the 19th century). Prior to 1815 a tenant could not be evicted without an expensive process costing £150 but Act 56 of that year, known as Civil Bill Ejectment, meant a tenant could be got rid of for £2. The story goes on to say the unhappy people protected neither by law or public opinion nor by conscience set about the method of assassination. The alternative, as the poor tenant saw it, was the slow death by hunger for himself and his family. To the tenant the law was his enemy (it is much the same today).

Due to the lawlessness in Tipperary, South Tipp had the doubtful distinction of having the first peelers set up here by Robert Peel (hence the name ‘Peelers’) and in 1824 the first barracks built was at Tubber near Peafield Bridge. Slievenamon seemed to be ringed with these small stone barracks, one at Tubber, one at Kylethea Hill and one at South Lodge. A German traveller to Ireland at that time, Johann Kohl, in 1836 wrote that there were police stations every three or four miles.

In those feudal days if a person was injured or assaulted or in any way inconvenienced they didn’t go to the police; they got together a gang of friends and exacted their own type of justice on the offender, usually assassination. This is what brought about the burning of the Sheas. When Ed Shea evicted William Gorman it aroused serious hostility amongst the neighbours who swore revenge on Shea, and Gorman had no problem getting a gang together. Gang leaders with Gorman in this murderous mob were two cousins named William and Darby Maher, but Shea had formed a well armed party to defend the house. It was now a miniature fortress capable of resisting any attack, the one weakness was the thatched roof which proved fatal. The day prior to the burning William Maher was in the house of a Mary Kelly melting lead and making slugs and bullets as the gang had an idea that Sheas were armed. The plan had been to attack Shea’s, kill all the Sheas and let the innocent off. Mary Kelly had recently married Thomas Kelly who gave up his job. He and his wife set up a Shebeen selling liquor without a licence and the Right Hon Shiels describes this Shebeen as a mountain brothel, or rather combined the exercise of a variety of trades that take place in towns. The Shebeen
provided board and lodging to any passengers who thought it expedient to take up abode in it and if a young man and woman had any wish to be left alone in this hospitable and accommodating mansion, Thomas Kelly and his wife didn’t think it genteel to meddle with this discourse. It will be thought singular that in so wild and desolate a district in the midst of solitary glens and moors such conveniences did exist.

Mary Kelly had a female relation named Catherine Mullally who was a servant at Shea’s and lived there, was married and in an advanced state of pregnancy. The day before the burning she visited her cousin Mary Kelly. William Maher was still at Kelly’s; as neighbours all knew each other and Maher began to question Catherine and converse with her in the tone of mixed joke and gibe. The story tells she was pleased with his attentions and in her innocence told Maher all about the arms and defence of the house. Armed with this knowledge Maher and his gang decided to set the thatch on fire.

The people in Shea’s house that night were Ed Shea, his wife Mary, Ed Shea Junior, William Shea, Margaret Shea, Michael Butler, Pat Mullally, Catherine Mullally, Mary Shea, Margaret Power, Nick Shea Junior and six labourers. Three of the labourers were later named as John Goulding, Denis Mara and Michael Griffin. They were described as Kerry labourers and were resented by local men. Shea had expected an armed attack and was well prepared. The day Maher was in Mary Kelly’s house making bullets she knew what his intentions were, especially after questioning Catherine Mullally. After Catherine Mullally left she begged him not to harm her cousin and he promised he would not. That night Mary Kelly couldn’t sleep, everybody knew some kind of attack was imminent so she left her bed around midnight and went towards Maher’s house. She hid behind a hedge and saw sixteen or seventeen men led out by William Maher all heavily armed and one man had a sod of turf which he kept alight by occasionally blowing his breath on it. They proceeded in the direction of Shea’s house and as they passed by Mary Kelly, unseen at the opposite side of the hedge, she knew them all and guessed what was about to happen so she followed at a safe distance to a point where she could see Shea’s house, she saw them reach the house and then the thatched roof was ablaze. There was a high wind fanning the flames. Next she heard shots and whoops of laughter from Maher and his gang; then more shots and as the wind died down she could hear the moans and groans of those being burned to death, the only door to the house having been secured on the outside so there was no escape. The shooting brought Philip Dillon from his bed nearby and he
rounded up some neighbours as he knew the Sheas were in trouble. He had hoped to help the Sheas but his small gang were no match for Maher’s gang. They all knew the murderers and one young lad who worked for Dillons named John Butler, whose brother was burned to death, defied the mob and moved close to the house where he identified William Gorman, the evicted tenant. His testimony later helped to find Maher and Gorman guilty and also sustained the evidence of Mary Kelly. The roof had fallen in and the ruins of the cottage became a sepulchre. Gorman, Maher and their associates left the scene and returned by the same path by which they had arrived. Another eye besides God’s was upon then as they passed a second time by the place where Mary Kelly lay concealed. She cowered at their approach and as they went by she had a second opportunity of identifying them. The conversation of the murderers turned upon the doings of the night and Gorman amused the mob by mimicking the groans of the dying and mocking the agonies which he had inflicted. The morning began to break and Mary Kelly, haggard, affrighted and laden with the dreadful knowledge of what happened returned to her home. She was well aware of the consequences of any disclosure, and didn’t utter a word to her husband or her son. The next day before a magistrate, who conjectured from the ill-fame of her house, that she must have some idea of what had taken place, she declared herself innocent of all knowledge. She did not venture to speak as to use her own words, a word would be as much as her life was worth.

John Butler who had witnessed the death of his brother immediately proceeded to his mother Alice Butler’s house. He awoke her to tell her that her son had been burned alive, and instead of reporting it to the police she enjoined her son not to speak of the subject lest she and all the family should suffer the same fate.

On the morning of November 20, 1821, the remains of the house of Ed Shea, a respectable farmer who had a considerable quantity of land at the foot of Slievenamon, exhibited an appalling spectacle. It had been consumed by fire on the previous night and a large concourse of people assembled to look upon the ruins of the thatched roof that had first received the fire. A few smoking rafters were all that remained; the walls had given way and stood gaping in rents through which the approaching eye caught a glimpse of the dreadful effects of the devouring element. The door was burned to its hinges and at the threshold as awful a scene offered itself to the spectator as is recorded in the annals of terror.

The bodies of sixteen human beings of both sexes lay together in a mass of corpses inside the locked door. The occupants of the small house rushed towards the entrance
where they were gathered by hope and perished in despair. Here they lay piled upon each other; those who were uppermost were burned to the bones while the wretches underneath were partially consumed. The young pregnant woman already mentioned, whose child was born in the flames in a premature labour, made the eighteenth victim. She was not found among the sixteen wretches assembled at the door. Further into the room lay the body of this unhappy young creature and the condition in which her child was discovered accounted for her separation from the group of the dead. A tub of water lay beside her, in it she placed the infant which she had delivered while the fires were raging around her in the hope of preserving it. She succeeded in preserving its limbs for the body was perfect with the exception of the head which was held above the water and which was burned away. Near this tub she was found with the skeleton of her arm, with which she had held the child, hanging over it. The spectators had learned caution and silence and folding their arms they whispered to each other that William Gorman had at last been revenged. The late J. F. McCarthy of Clonmel tells us that for three years no word was mentioned about the burning of the Sheas, it was thought it was an accident such was the terrifying fear of all the witnesses for their lives. It was only when Mary Kelly’s conscience made her tell a priest in confession what she knew and witnessed, and he advised her to go to the authorities which she did. Maher was arrested in 1824 and Gorman became a fugitive. The Mahers were put on trial at the Assizes in the Courthouse Clonmel, and Mary Kelly gave evidence of everything she saw on that terrible night. She said she was aware that Shea’s house was to be attacked that night. The two Mahers who were young, unmarried men were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging. A few days after their trial on the August 21, 1824 they were conveyed from Clonmel to Cloneen via Fethard and were placed on two carts underneath two large triangles in Cloneen village, and the carts were pulled forward to effect the hangings. The sentence was carried out by public hanging. William Maher asked for and got a glass of wine en route to the gallows. Speaking quietly in Irish, Maher asked the crowd not to take vengeance on his behalf. It is reported they met their death with quiet dignity. They were attended by two priests from Clonmel, Frs Brennan and Fogarty, and a large crowd attended the executions. They were executed in view of Darby Maher’s residence, a small whitewashed cabin on the slopes of Slievenamon. Their bodies, in accordance with the custom at the time, were conveyed to Cashel Infirmary for dissection.

Fr. Fogarty, in a bizarre turn by modern standards, chose the time before the hanging to lecture the
crowd from the scaffold on evil doings. He spoke in Irish and in English, no doubt to suit those in charge of the proceedings, blaming drinking to excess, irregular habits, disregarding the instructions of their priests, and lacking subordination to the constituted authorities for all their woes. Then he said, as Catholics whenever you engage in any act calculated to unsettle the law you cease to be members of that religion. Property, it seems, whether ill-gotten or by rightful ownership had its own religion.

The Mahers had exonerated others in prison and they were released. William Gorman was arrested in 1825 while attending Mass in Carrick-on-Suir but the crowd stoned the police and he escaped. Two years later he was captured at the house of a man named Lonergan near the Slate Quarries, and he gave his name as Leahy. The Clonmel Advertiser in its issue Saturday, April 7, 1827 announced that, “On Wednesday last William Gorman was executed in front of Clonmel Jail for the burning of Ed Shea and family.”

Seven of the victims were buried in Cloneen cemetery, four at Kilvemmon cemetery and one in Grange. There was no mention of the other six.

A faction fight is also reported in these pages of history. It took place at Peafield between the Hickeys and Hogans and over five hundred people took part. Some of the Hickey party were slain on the field, resulting in four members of the Hogan family being arrested and tried for murder and found guilty of manslaughter. Three of them were married with families and were condemned to separate forever from family and home and the Hon. Shiel wrote at the time that these unhappy men had been doomed to a fate more disastrous than those who had perished on the scaffold. They were taken to Cork for transportation to a foreign land never again to see their families or home.

**Exile’s Lament**

Oh! Erin my country, though sad and forsaken,
In dreams I revisit thy sea-beaten shore;
But, alas! in a far foreign land I awaken,
And sigh for the friends that can meet me no more.

Where now is my cabin door so fast by the wild wood?
Sisters and sire did weep for its fall;
Where is the mother that looked on my childhood?
And where is my bosom friend, dearer than all?
Staff who worked in Canon Patten’s garden at the Rectory c1937. We haven’t identified the people in the photograph above but some of the workers employed at that time included: Mattie Tynan, Bob Hally, Danny Mullins, Dick Allen, Tom Walsh, Jack Hally, Connie Fitzgerald, Mick Boughe, Pat Butler, Paddy Daniel, Jimmy Hally and Christy Allen.

Fethard’s budding young footballers photographed in the 1970s outside the Secondary School.
GAA Dinner Dance - 30 Years Ago
GAA Dinner Dance - 30 Years Ago
Tom and Kathleen McCormack (nee Cassells) photographed in their early married life.

Fethard Tennis Team Winners of 3rd Division Tipperary League 1984. L to R : Lydia Newport, Davy Morrissey, Pat Culligan, David Kane, Lisa Rice and Gerry Burke.
Patrician Presentation Secondary School students photographed 30 years ago - 1984
Enjoying a break by the sea in Clonea 2014 are L to R: Hugh Lynch, Jimmy Connolly, Ann Lynch, Sean Moloney, John Whyte, Anne Connolly and Alice Moloney. (photo taken by Maureen Whyte)

Peg and Paddy Whyte, Main Street, photographed with their daughter Euna, 1960

L to R: Michael McCarthy, Mick Hogan and Don McCarthy in the 1990s
We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Sr Betty Cagney for the care she provided to young children during her 38 years service in residential social care spent in Fethard and as Betty has moved on to a new role in Kilkenny, we believe it is an opportune time to acknowledge her work.

Sr. Betty joined the Thurles congregation of Presentation Sisters in 1966. She moved to Dublin in 1972 to commence her training as a paediatric nurse. On graduating she returned to Tipperary, initially to Dundrum, before she moved to St. Bernard’s Group Homes, Fethard, in December 1975. She arrived as a young nun called Sr. Anselm, dressed in her full habit and veil. Betty was one of the founding members in establishing St. Bernard’s as part of the local community and is much loved and fondly remembered by the children, staff and parishioners.

We’ve had a year to prepare for Betty’s retirement and it was with great sadness we bid a fond farewell to her in May, 2013, after 38 years. We marked the occasion with bittersweet emotions, both tears and laughter. Her retirement from us was the more poignant due to the fact that she was the last remaining religious staff employed in St. Bernard’s and to our knowledge the last remaining sister in residential care in Ireland.

In preparation for this day the staff were asked to provide words which for them best described Betty and which were; caring, kind, dedicated, wonderful, fun, energetic, unselfish, all heart, solid, safe, supportive, loving, fearless, hardworking, and with a knack of making things...
Betty did the rounds in St. Bernard’s working in all units, starting in Short Term Emergency Unit, then Medium and Long Term, Disability and the Therapeutic High Support Service. Over the years she worked with lots of young people from infants to teenagers. The way she cared for the children is truly admirable. She had a unique ability to make each unit feel like a home.

The children have their own memories; she was there through the happy, sad and tough times. It is a testament to her that so many keep in touch and to this day if any of the present staff meet past residents they will always ask for Sr. Betty. The importance of relationships as the foundation of social care came naturally to her and was a fundamental part of her career.

Sr. Betty witnessed and experienced lots of change over the years in St. Bernard’s: from the hustle and bustle of three full time residential units, catering for all children and young people up to the age of 18 years of age, to the current transformation of a dedicated therapeutic residential service and a community based Therapeutic Fostering Support Service for children aged 7-11 years old. She took all the changes in her stride. She even reverted to her Christian name, Betty, and ditched the habit for a track suit.

But it’s not just the children’s lives Sr. Betty touched, she touched the lives of all of the staff also. The support and care she gave to the staff did not go unnoticed. She has been part of the professional journey of hundreds of staff, at varying stages of their careers, from the students on placements, to new graduates and new recruits, be it social care workers, leaders, managers or directors. She guided and encouraged all along the way and even taught us a thing or two.

Sr. Betty was the designated driver on many a night and had a great ability to make a minibus move like a Formula 1 racing car. In recent years she ditched the minibus for a bike and is, no doubt, still probably breaking the speed limit. Her boundless energy and physical fitness put all who know her to shame.

All staff who came in contact with Sr. Betty would like to thank her for teaching all the fundamental principles of social care. Without a relationship you cannot expect the children to trust; without the basics of food, warmth and a welcoming environment you cannot establish a home; without unconditional love and respect, the children will not have a sense of self worth or belonging; and you need a group of children and staff working together to make a community. To all of us she epitomised the ethos of Nano Nagle, by dedicating her vocational life to the care and acceptance of vulnerable children, she shone the light and showed the way and has inspired us to keep the light burning for future generations.

– Róisin Stewart
Fethard Bridge Club

Fethard Bridge Club is now in its 38th year. At our President’s Prize dinner held in the Hotel Minella on Friday, May 16, the following prizes were presented by our president, Eileen Frewen: President’s Prize, Eileen Ryan and Jim Lahert; Committee Prize, Berney Myles and Alice Quinn; Club Championship (Hayes Trophy), Berney Myles and Alice Quinn; Player of the Year (O’Flynn Trophy), Frances Burke; Individual Champion (Dick Gorey Trophy), Betty Walsh; Lucey Trophy, Betty Walsh and Madeleine O’Donnell.

We note the death this year of former club member Mary Quirke. Mary was an active member of the club for many years and it was always a pleasure to see her at our weekly game along with her playing partner, Fr. John Meagher OSA. Although Mary hadn’t played with the club in recent years she maintained an interest in the club’s activities. She will be fondly remembered by the club members.

This year we are pleased to welcome some new members who are beginners at bridge and bridge lessons are held on Tuesday evenings in the Tirry Centre. Our Christmas party was held at Hotel Minella at which our Christmas prizes were presented.

At our AGM on Wednesday, May
22, the following officers and committee were elected: President: David O’Meara. Vice-President: Monica Anglim. Secretary: Marie Delaney. Treasurer: Anna Cooke. Assistant Treasurer: Rita Kane. Tournament Directors: Alice Quinn, Betty Walsh, Frances Burke and Gemma Burke. Committee: Eileen Frewen, Brendan Kenny, Carol Kenny, Jim Lahert and Bernie O’Meara. 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.
Depression

If you are like me and you have a good life,
But can’t always see it through lack of sunlight,
The dark and the rain from night to the morning,
The grey in-between like an enemy to us calling.

If you are like me these days are a struggle,
You can’t think straight, your head’s in a muddle,
Could you laugh at a joke then burst into tears,
Would you tell me about it or hide your worst fears.

If you are like me does your mind have a switch,
That goes on and off like an electrical glitch,
But no sparks can fix what goes on in our head,
It’s really up to us when all is done and said.

If you are like me and you keep it ahide,
Then nobody knows to come to your side,
Like a pantomime baddie it creeps up on cue,
Except there’s no one to shout look out behind you.

If you are like me then step back from the brink,
And don’t be afraid of what others might think,
Your family and friends still love you the same,
It’s a medical condition, there is no shame.

If you are like me now hold up your hand,
Say it out loud when life isn’t grand,
Be brave and have courage and be proud of yourself,
When you take the first step and go and seek help.

If you are like me and the first person you see,
You don’t get along with, not your cup of tea,
Then try another, and another, and another until,
You find the right one that really fits the bill.

If you are like me then lots can be done,
Thinking positive thoughts is definitely one,
It may sound out there and off the wall to you,
But please give it a try you’ll be amazed what it can do.

If you are like me and I can just make you see,
That living this life doesn’t need to be,
Would you go to the doctor if you had a bad pain,
So why where’s the difference just because it’s your brain.

If you are like me then know that I care,
These are not just words that come from nowhere,
‘No surrender’, we’ll shout whatever the cost,
So prepare for the fight before another life is lost.

— Phil Sheehan
Ellen Dwyer, St. Patrick’s Place, taken when she worked for Fr. Burke in Fethard.
I grew up in the 1940s and 1950s in Coolenure, Fethard. My father was a cattle dealer and my mother was a farmer. My mother fed us with fruits of the land; she had ducks, geese, hens, turkey, pigs and cows. My father would refer to the cows as the ‘standing army’; they were always waiting to help us. She brought most of the milk to the creamery in Fethard and the rest we drank, or she’d make butter and cream or use it for baking bread.

After I got my First Communion in Fethard in 1951 I was deemed old enough to attend a fair and my father brought me to my very first fair in Killenaule. I had a great time showing myself off and getting a little bit of money from everyone. A shilling was a lot to get from someone, but Lar Donovan, a dealer from Killusty, gave me two shillings and I ended the day with 10 shillings in my pocket - a fortune for a seven-year-old. I had a great time.

After that day in Killenaule I was qualified to walk cattle to the Fethard Fair. Fair Day happened on the third Tuesday of every month. Fethard was considered an early fair and around 2 or 3 o’clock on the morning of the fair, Daddy put the cattle he wanted to sell out on the road, sent me to the front, as the runner, and my brother John to the back of them. We walked along, or in many cases ran along, the Rocklow Road and headed for Fethard, a distance of about four miles. Rocklow Road gave us the best access in terms of where we wanted to have our cattle.
right in the middle of the town and right in the heart of the fair. We’d stand them around what was known as Schofield’s Corner opposite the Munster and Leinster Bank – now Jimmy Sullivan’s house – and just across the way from the cattle scales. The cattle scales are still there today and stand as one of the only reminders of Fethard fair day. Incidentally, the scales were only used to weigh large cattle, as the smaller ones were sold by sight. My father followed on a little later in his small lorry in which he carried a few calves and weanlings.

Tony Newport recently told me that Fethard Fair dated back centuries and in the 13th century there were tolls on cattle leaving the fairs. The money from that toll was used to build the Town Wall, so the fair has a long and significant history in helping to create the town we know today. On the Monday evening before fair days all the shops and pubs put up creels, timber guards that were specially made for each shop front or pub. Back in those days putting up the creels was a job that paid 2/6 or half a crown.

We’d arrive into the town and it was already buzzing. Gerry Moynihan from Clonmel had a small van where he used to sell tea and steaming hot Bovril. The aroma of that Bovril wafting through the fog on a freezing cold October morning was a must for the body. He did a roaring trade just outside the bank selling tea, ham sandwiches and the most gorgeous cream buns, which I
was a bit partial to! Mrs Corcoran’s, near Jimmy Ryan’s old house, sold teas and dinners too.

The familiar faces of the Claffey brothers, from Mullingar; Joe Cusack from Tullamore and many men from the County of Meath greeted us. My father and others wore the cattleman fashion of the day, a Crombie overcoat, trousers, and brown leather boots, all topped off with a hat and of course an ash plant in hand. The tall slender frame of Sean Hanrahan could be seen arriving in from the Green and in close pursuit was the jovial Michael Hogan; no fair day would be complete without this two-some. When I started out on my own in 1959, Sean Hanrahan gave me this piece of advice: “Let your eye be your judge, let your experience be your guide, and the last thing to part with is your money.” A fine bit of advice, which I still use today!

Cattle started to come in from all over the place; up Kerry Street, down the Cashel Road and across Madam’s Bridge, down Barrack Street, up Burke Street, down Rocklow Road and into the middle of town. Cattle in droves, with steam rising off them, came thundering down Bennett’s Hill from Drangan. People from Killusty, Moyglass, Cloneen and Killenaule came to sell in Fethard. The larger-than-life Neddy Delahunty was commander and chief of the cattle that came off Market Hill. ‘Tanglers’ came from all over - they didn’t pay for any cattle nor did they have land to keep cattle - they were experienced and astute judges of cattle who would buy for dealers or maybe farmers. ‘Tanglers’ would be paid by the buyer or seller of the cattle per ‘tangle’.

Many a drover walked cattle to Fethard. Some of the cattle that had been bought in Fethard by dealers were walked by drovers on to Dungarvan for a fair the following day, a journey that took all night. I remember Jerry Mackey, a drover for Lar Donavan, having walked cattle from Clonmel queuing up at Mrs Hughes’ stall where she and her ICA helpers gave refreshments to the drovers outside the Town Hall. Johnny O’Brien was another drover; he was affectionately known as ‘Johnny O the Valley O’. He worked for Pa-Joe and Billy Holohan, as did John Mackey.

The cattle were generally very quiet, but now and then they’d break into other groups. Everyone knew their own cattle, not like these days where you need to check the tags in their ears to decide if they’re yours or not. Eight hundred cattle would often stand in the middle of the town. The backend fairs in September, October and November were the best fairs as the cattle would have come off grass. The cattle would stretch from the Abbey all the way up to Kerry Street. There would be good fairs in April and May, too, for store cattle; cattle fed on hay and turnips over the winter months. John and I would stand around watching the goings on and would turn cattle or walk them up
to the station for someone and we’d get a shilling here and there for helping out. The pig fair was held around the Back Green. I didn’t ever spend too much time there, but they did a roaring trade and the squealing pigs were heard far and wide.

The imposing presence of Dan Horgan, a big buyer from Cork, although small in stature, was always welcome. One glance at the cattle was enough for Dan to decide if he wanted them or not. He bought most of the bigger cattle which he shipped off from the North Wall of Dublin to sell to farmers in England. Dealing started early around 6am and at 10am the bank doors would open. A few minutes later Dan, who wore a small hard hat perched on the side of his head, would appear back out on the street with a whole lump of money. The buyers never carried money, it was a lot easier to go into the bank and draw it out to pay the sellers. Dan would call out to all those waiting, ‘Have you a docket?’ Every buyer had their own mark, which they’d make with a scissors and on purchasing the cattle they handed over a docket with the mark. On producing the docket, you’d get your money and away you’d go. The bigger cattle were sold in no time at all, but some of the smaller ones used to take a bit of time. Joe Cusack bought many of the smaller cattle, who went on the ‘special’ train to the midlands.

After the money changed hands,
men would be seen falling out of pubs drunk and half drunk and there would be the odd fellow breaking into song. Daddy used to sell calves after many of the farmers had sold their lots to Horgan. They might have arrived with 10 or 12 cattle, got a good price, and then they might buy four or five more small cattle or calves to take home. We didn’t go to school at all much in those times. In the 1950s times were hard and everybody worked; if you didn’t you’d die of the hunger.

Horgan’s new purchases were run up the Cashel Road and loaded on the ‘special’ train to Dublin, they were then shipped off from the North Wall to sell to farmers in England. Little did I think as a young boy that when I walked up the Cashel Road and into the station with those cattle that the Station House would be my home in years to come, and has been for the past 45 years. Another ‘special’ headed for Cork. Each wagon could take about 12 or 14 cattle, depending on how big the cattle were. There might have been as many as 40 wagons per train. The evening before the fair the train drivers came to the station and parked the trains and wagons ready to depart the following day. Many of the train drivers stayed at Davern’s pub, now Butler’s, the night before the fair. When the cattle were loaded at the siding for Dublin, they had to cross over the bridge on the Cashel Road, which is now demolished but would have been around where Christy Mullins’ house now stands. The ‘Tailor’ Ryan from Cashel loaded the cattle going to Dublin for Dan Horgan and the cattle going to Waterford and Cork were loaded at the other side of tracks from another siding.

The clean-up began at around 3pm when Dick and Johnny Cummins, Dickie Butler, Paddy Dahill and John Sayers washed the whole town from the Fethard Cross all the way up to the Green with a fire hose. They carried the large hose around in a wheel-barrow and they’d leave the whole town spotless. They’d often give a free shower to an unsuspecting body, who might after all, have needed it!

In the late 1950s Michael Quirke started the mart in Fethard, and with that came the demise of the Fethard Fair. The frenetic fairs were much more fun than modern marts, but at least we still have the memories.
We have had a very busy year at Fethard & District Day Care Centre. In July we went on a holiday for a week to The Galway Bay Hotel in Salthill and as usual we were blessed with good weather. We also had an outing to Leighlinstown, Co. Carlow in September where we enjoyed a lovely lunch in the Lord Bagenal Hotel followed by a visit to the award-winning Arboretum. The weather was gorgeous due to the Indian summer we enjoyed in Ireland this year. Hopefully this is not the end of our gallivanting as we hope to have our Christmas Party at the Slievenamon Golf Club.

As usual at this time of the year we are getting ready for our Christmas Bazaar with everyone working away making an assortment of cards and a variety of crafts. Our sewing circle members are outdoing themselves with their beautiful stitching. We continue with our exercise classes every day. The benefits from exercise for our physical and mental health cannot be emphasised enough.

We had a full programme throughout the year. The Bealtaine Festival held in May is a great showcase for the many skills of our older citizens. We had various fundraising events throughout the year including table quizzes, fun run and Ladbroke’s races. We cannot thank enough all who helped us and supported us throughout the year and who continue to help us. Once a month we have an afternoon of...
dancing, singing and music in the company of Jim Roche, his wife Nuala and their daughter Ger. Jim and his family give of their precious time to the centre and we really appreciate it.

The Day Centre committee meet once a month. We still continue to provide our ‘Senior Day’, where our elderly neighbours who do not attend the centre can avail of a chiropody service. Thank you to staff, volunteers, transition year students, and committee members who continue to try and provide the best service possible for our clients.

The committee is as follows: Liam Hayes (chairman), Fionnuala O’Sullivan (Treasurer), Bobbi Holohan (secretary), Carmel Rice, Molly Standbridge, Tom McGrath, Breda Nolan, Desmond Martin, Marie Murphy, Jimmy Connolly, Geraldine McCarthy (supervisor) and Michael Cleere (mini-bus driver). Once again we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our sponsors who continually help in our fundraising efforts and we wish you all a very Happy Christmas. To all in our communities, to you our readers and especially to all our new emigrants who had to leave home during the year, our best seasons greetings from all at the Day Centre.

Gus Breen, Fethard, photographed with his extended family on the occasion of his 80th birthday celebrated at Raheen House, Clonmel, on June 8, 2014.
Grieving Love

I will never forget this very day
The way it went when you passed away
It came with shock and without warning
There was no goodbye, only mourning.
Everything changed from here on in
No worse feeling there could have been
Not to have you in our lives
Was hard to take for the ones behind.

Your smiling face, those kind big eyes
Your gentle touch that never lied
The presence felt with your every move
The very essence would light up any room.
You were always there no matter what
To lend a hand I kid you not
The go-to person for one and all
Whatever the challenge, you stood proud and tall.

But that was then and this is now
How things have changed I wonder how
What you would think and how you’d go
You’d still be here this I know.
I know you’re in heaven smiling down
Laughing and joking and kidding round
But as times are changing and seasons part
You will live forever in our hearts.

— Bernard O’Shea
Our Dear Departed 2014 from available photographs

Kathleen O’Connell  Bro. Ultan O’Mahony  Liam Butler  Dinny Flynn  Michael O’Dwyer
Maise Maher  Kate Phelan  Catherine Healy  Joe Hayes  Tommy Hunt
Sean Cloonan  Mick ‘Sonny’ Gleeson  Kathleen Barry  Adam O’Donnell  Tony Nugent
Maggie Napier  Sr. Winnie Kirwan  Pa Joe Holohan  Gus O’Flynn  Claire Sullivan
Liz Sheehan  Phil Tobin  Peg Gleeson  Gerard Long  Alan Bourke
Adam O’Donnell, Moorestown (Clerihan)
Agnes ‘Aggie’ Barrett, Main Street (Calvary)
Alan Bourke, Tullamaine (Clerihan)
Alfie Brett, Rocklow Road (Calvary)
Barbara Dargan, Abbey Close (Clonmel)
Billy Clancy, Killusty & Cloran (Cloneen)
Breda O’Dwyer (née Maher), Woodhouse (Moyglass)
Bro. Ultan O’Mahony, Newbridge (Newbridge)
Catherine Healy, The Green (Calvary)
Chrissie Byrne (nee Shee), Killusty (Killusty)
Christy Allen, The Green (Calvary)
Claire Sullivan, Woodvale Walk (Calvary)
David Saunders, No. 1 Rocklow Road (Cahir)

Denis ‘Dinny’ O’Brien, Fr Tyrre Park (Calvary)
Denis Flynn, Redhill Surrey & The Green (Calvary)
Diana ‘Di’ Stokes, The Square (Old Holy Trinity)
Eileen (Morrissey) Voss, Nov 2012 (Surrey)
Elizabeth de Vere Hunt, Garraun (Calvary)
Gerard Long (MRCVS), Lavelesstown (Clonmel)
Gus Flynn, Main Street & Ballyfin (Clonaghadoo)
Helen Morrissey, Nuneaton, Oct. 2012 (London)
Jack Moclair, Ballinlough (Old Clerihan Cemetery)
James O’Connell, Coleman & Essex (Upminster)
Jimmy Roche, Ballinhard (Cloneen)
Joe Hayes, Rathcoole (Calvary)
John Moxley, Tinakelly (New Jersey)
Kate Phelan, Derryluskin (Calvary)
Kathleen 'Kay' Walsh, An Sean Líne (Calvary)
Kathleen Barry (nee Cahill), Tullamaine (Calvary)
Kathleen O'Connell, Burke St., Apr. 2013 (Calvary)
Liam Butler, Birmingham & Garrinch (Cremation)
Lizzie Sheehan, St. Patrick's Place (Calvary)
Maisie Maher, Henehan’s, The Square (Crosscannon)
Margaret 'Peggy' Manton, Boherlahan (Ardmayle)
Margaret 'Maggie' Napier, The Green (Old Holy Trinity)
Mary Grace (née Culligan), Clonmel (Calvary)
Mary Hall, Killenaule Road, Fethard (Calvary)
Mary Mulvey (nee Fitzgerald), Somerset (England)
Mary Quirke, Kiltinan (Clerihan)
Michael (Mick) Meehan, Lismortagh (Moyglass)
Michael Cranitch, Ballinard (Cloneen)
Michael O'Dwyer, Clonacody (Calvary)
Mick 'Sonny' Gleeson, Coolenure (Calvary)

Monica O’Meara, Magorban (Moyglass)
Pa Joe Holohan, Marianville, Fethard (Calvary)
Padraig O Riain, Loughcropple (Killusty)
Pat Grant, St. Patrick’s Place (Moyglass)
Pat O’Callaghan, Steevenamon Close (Cremation)
Peg Gleeson, Coolmore (Crosscannon)
Peg O’Connell (nee Darcy), Killusty (Basildon UK)
Philip ‘Phil’ Tobin, Fr. Tirry Park (Calvary)
Sean Cloonan, Clonmel & Kilnockin Road (Calvary)
Sean Morrissey, Oct 2012 (Newcastle-upon-Tyne)
Shane Carroll, Coolbawn & Knockroe (Moycarky)
Sr. Winnie Kirwan, Fethard Convent (Calvary)
Teddy Morrissey, Friarsfield (Calvary)
Tom Cummins, Ardfinnan & Saucestown (Cremation)
Tommy Buitin, The Valley (Calvary)
Tony Nagent, Clonmel & Grangebeg (Powerstown)
Vincent Mullins, Chapel Lane Nov 2013 (Yorkshire)
Marriages

Marriages in the Parish
Des de Vere Hunt, Garraun, to Nellie Lonergan, Dunlavin, Wicklow
Teddy Morrisey, Friarsfield, to Tara Clancy, Friarsfield
Shane Nugent, Clonmel, to Nicola Kennedy, Cois Falla, Fethard
Robert Griffin, to Ailish O’Connell, Coolmoyne
Gethin Dafydd Evans, Dublin, to Jane Lanigan, Tullamaine (Abbey)
James Cawley, Sallins, to Nora Doyle, Fethard
Joseph Burns, Butlerstown, to Lynda Nevin, Ballintemple

Marriages outside the Parish
Conor Rainsford, Ballinlough, to Sarah Noonan, Drangan (Drangan)
Christopher Mullins, Cashel Road, to Mary Delaney, Rathdowney (Holycross)
Eoin Doyle, Strylea, to Elmarie Cottrel, Innishannon, Cork (Innishannon)
John Paul Kenny, The Green, to Ciara Harrison, Offaly (Rathdrum)
Mark Lawless, Fethard, to Orla Britton, Lismolin (Mullinahone)
Patrick Delaney, Redcity, to Patricia McGinley, Glanmire (Bansha)
Eimear Fogarty, Tinakelly and Michael Collins, Clonmel (Kilkenny)
M.J. Croke, Tullamaine, to Ann Marie Hearne, Ballylaneen (Ballylaneen)
Andy Power, Fennor, to Anne Marie Webster, Fethard (Holycross)
Siobhán Prout, Derryluskin, to Donal O’Neill, Castlemane (Fossa)
Mark Cummins, Everardsgrange, to Sarah Flynn (Dungarvan)
Martin Sheehan, Killusty, to Alannah Cusack, Nenagh (Spain)
Donations Received 2014

Acknowledged below are donations (€10 and over) received from readers and organisations up to November 30, 2014. We would also like to thank all those who wished to remain anonymous.

Aherne, Joan (Murphy), Clondalkin, Dublin
Allen, Vincent, Edenderry
Anglim, Joan, The Valley, Fethard
Arkell, Joan (O’Donnell), Warwick, UK
Armstrong, Monica (Dwyer), Northampton
Augustinian Abbey, Fethard
Aylward, Christy, Clonmel
Aylward, Mary, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Bailey, Patrick, Wisconsin, USA
Barnes, Frances (O’Halloran), Kent, UK
Barrett, Angela (McCarthy), Ardfinnan
Barry, Michael, Kilkenny
Barry, Seamus, Tullamaine
Berry, Geraldine (Heffernan), France
Boulton, Valerie, Bristol, UK
Bowers, Mary, Portlaw, Co. Waterford
Bradley, Tess (Fogarty), West Sussex, UK
Brazil, Peg (Shine), Cappamore, Limerick
Brett, Peg, Rocklow Road, Fethard
Brett, Teresa (Leahy), Kilfeacle
Broderick, Pat & Rowena, Melbourne
Browne, Dolly, Portarlington
Burke, Eamon & Nora, Tralee
Burke, James, San Francisco USA
Burke, Joanne, Dublin
Burke, John, Holycross, Thurles
Burke, Mary, Thurles
Burke, Patsy (Byard), Killenaule
Burke, Richard Glenealemany, Clonmel
Butler, Ann, Sutton Coalfield, UK
Butler, Mike, Limerick City
Butler, Sean, Lisronagh
Byrne, John, Ballincollig, Cork
Byrne, Lelia, Middlesex, UK
Cannon, Christina (Murphy), Dublin 18
Canty, Mary (Casey), Tramore
Carroll, Brendan (Morrissey), Isle of Anglesey
Casey, Elaine, Edinburgh, Scotland
Casey, Rosemary, Wimbledon UK
Clear, Margaret (Gough), California USA
Coady, Johnnie & Mary, Dorset, UK
Coen, Mary & Louis, Killusty
Collins, Olivia (Schofield), Templemore
Colville, Anthony, Essex, UK
Colville, Maeve (O’Shea), Tullamore
Connolly, Liam, Kilkenny
Connolly, Thomas, Essex UK
Coolmoyne & Moyglass Vintage Club
Cooney, Tom, New York
Cord, J., Sussex, England
Crane, Tom, Illinois USA

Cullen, Olive (Flanagan), Clonlouly
Cummins, Eamon, Lake Carmel, New York
Cummins, Joan (Sayers), Cashel
Cummins, Liam, Clonmel
Cummins, Michael, Bradford UK
Cummins, Mrs R, Hemel Hempstead, UK
Curran, Timmy, Welwyn, Herts UK
Curtin, Jacqueline (Moloney), Stillorgan
Danaher, Celine, Dublin 15.
Danaher, Kevin, Fulham, London UK
Darcy, Mrs Phil, Kent, England
Davey, Catherine (O’Connor), Penzance
Davin, James, Tottenham, London UK
Dawson, Martina (Murphy), Cappamore
Dawson, Sheila (Cummins), Gloucester UK
Delaney, Catherine (Bergin), Castlerea
Delany, Kitty, Parsonshill, Fethard
Devlin, Rainy (Healy), Toledo, Ohio, USA
Dixon, Patrick, Enniscorthy
Douglas, Patsy (Mackey), Kent UK
Dunne, Patricia (O’Dwyer), Newcastle West
Dunphy, Deborah (Guiry), Dunhill, Waterford
Everard, Richard, Holland
Fahey, Betty (Bradshaw), Clonmel
Fergus, Sheila, Congers, New York
Fethard & Killusty Community Council
Fethard & Killusty Community Lotto
Fethard & Killusty FÁS Community Scheme
Fethard Car Boot Sale
Fethard Community Games
Fethard Country Markets
Fethard Historical Society
Fethard ICA Guild
Fethard Juvenile GAA Club
Fethard Ladies Football Club
Fethard Parish Church
Fethard Tidy Towns
Fitzgerald-Ryan, Denis & Sheena, Calgary
Fitzgerald, Con, Bradford
Fitzgerald, Jimmy, Fenit, Co. Kerry
Fitzgerald, Michael & Mary, Castlehiggins
Fitzgerald, Paddy, Gwersyllt, Wrexham UK
Fitzgerald, Patrick, Blaby, Leicester UK
Fitzgerald, Tony, Clonmel
Fitzpatrick, Jo Beatty, Long Island, NY
Fitzpatrick, Thomas, Woodlawn, New York
Flanagan, Frank & Rita (Fitzgerald), Bristol
Flanagan, Tony, Ealing, London UK
Flannery, James, Perrysburg, USA
Flynn, Denis (In Memory), Redhill, Surrey
Fogarty, Joe, Busan, South Korea

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Frewen, Willie, Fenor, Co. Waterford  
Gibbs, Maria (Scanlan), Calgary, Canada  
Gibson, Mrs M., Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny  
Gleeson, Joan & Eileen, Knockelly  
Gluck, Kathleen (Morrissey), Isle of Wight  
Gorski, Robert & Alice (Fitzgerald), Hastings UK  
Grant, Tom, Rushcutters Bay, Sydney NSW  
Griffin, Ena, Herts, England  
Gunne, Sean, Clonmel  
Hanlon, Margaret, New Jersey USA  
Hanlon, Mary (Ryan), Dalkey, Dublin  
Hannigan, Dorothea (Shofield), Cashel  
Harkin, Jennifer (Cummins), Old Leighlin  
Hayes, Canon Matthew, Bath, UK  
Hayes, Gerry, Melbourne, Australia  
Hayes, Willie, Roscrea  
Hetterley, David & Frances (Kenrick), Hereford  
Hitchcock, Barbara, Rochester, Kent UK  
Hoey, Cathleen (Murphy), Birmingham UK  
Horan, Kevin & Lisa, Braintree, USA  
Humphries, Helen (Walsh), Surrey UK  
Hunt, Bill, Staffordshire, UK  
Ioannidou, Colette (Ni Reamonn), Cyprus  
Jakeman, Rodney, Cheshire UK  
Kane, Conor, Crann Ard, Clonmel  
Kane, Dermot, Dublin 8  
Kavanagh, Rena (Keyes), Waterford  
Keane, Joe, St. Patrick’s Place, Fethard  
Keane, John, Tullamore  
Kearney, Breda, London, UK  
Kenny, Carol, The Green, Fethard  
Kenrick, John, Deansgrove, Cashel  
Kenrick, Paddy, Clonmel  
King & Family, John, Valley (R. McLaughlin)  
Knight, Mai, Wantage UK  
Lacy, Joe, Selangor, Malaysia  
Lanigan, Helen, Faugheen  
Leahy, Gerry, Kilkeney  
Lee, John, Bishopstown, Cork  
Legion of Mary, Fethard  
Looby, John & Patricia (O’Halloran), Surrey  
Lonergan, Thomas, Gwynedd, Wales  
McElroy, Paula (Carey), Newry, Co. Down  
McGoey, Chrissie (Kenny), London, UK  
McLean, Arthur, Thompson, USA  
McLellan, Billy, Clonmel  
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Meaney, Michael, Ipswich, Suffolk UK  
Meehan, Mrs Ellen, Oklahoma, USA  
Moloney, Patrick F., Bucks. UK  
Moloney, Tom, Northampton UK  
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Morris, Edel, Dublin  
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Neville, Seamus, Tramore  
Nevin, Gerry, Floral Park, New York  
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O’Brien, Mary (Kenrick), Limerick  
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O’Connell, Seamus, Essex, England  
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O’Connor, Kevin, London N4  
O’Donnell, Mary, Westport, Co. Mayo  
O’Donnell, Ann, New York  
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O’Donnell, A.L., Camberley UK  
O’Donnell, Jimmy, Dublin 16  
O’Donnell, Joe, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary  
O’Donnell, Joe, Surrey, UK  
O’Donnell, Mary (O’Meara), Ontario, Canada  
O’Donnell, Tony, Drumcondra, Dublin  
O’Donovan, Gabrielle (Mackey), Carlow  
O’Flynn, Patrick, Glen Ellyn, Illinois  
O’Hare, Patricia (Murphy), Limerick  
O’Keeffe, Michael & Hazel, Birmingham  
O’Mahoney, Laura (Ward), Ballybay, Monaghan  
O’Mara, Pat & Evelyn, Lismore  
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If, for any reason, we have omitted your name, please let us know and we will acknowledge your donation next year.

Kate Myles & Kitt O'Neill, Saucestown, sharing the load.
“The light of other days”  

*by Tommy Healy*

Such is a line from a poem by Thomas Moore written early in the 19th century. It evokes memories of times past in a manner which I have long found both eloquent and compelling.

In the past few months there has appeared a Facebook page on the Fethard website, entitled, ‘Fethard Faces and Places from the Past’. I have looked forward to the photographs which have appeared day by day and many have brought back memories from long ago, in many cases over fifty years ago. They portray a Fethard in so many cases vastly different from today, yet, in other ways much as it was in my childhood.

Photographs from the early years of the 20th century have always fascinated me. The views of Main Street from about 1900 show a town which, in many respects, has hardly changed in a century. The military barracks has gone but the layout of the street remains largely as it was. True, there have been changes to accommodate traffic but the houses and shops which existed then are substantially as they were, at least in external appearance. One noticeable change is the huge reduction in the number of retail businesses; there are fewer public houses, fewer grocery shops and almost a complete absence of clothing retailers. The growth of the large scale national chains has wreaked havoc on small retailers and I have noticed, probably more so than residents, the extent of this. Living away and visiting at intervals brings home how radical the changes have been. Seventy
years ago Paddy Carroll RIP wrote a poem “The Traders of Fethard” which featured in the 1986 edition of the newsletter. Looking at the names of the proprietors then I wonder how many of those names feature now. However, the Town Hall remains as it was and it is encouraging to learn that it is to be refurbished soon. As a schoolboy I used to look forward to performances by the Fethard Players there and can remember productions such as “Drama at Inish” by Lennox Robinson with Billy O’Flynn and Helen O’Connell in leading roles.

Photographs of people whom I knew so well in childhood have evoked many and varied memories. That of Stephen Dwyer in army uniform rekindled stories he told me of his time as a soldier on the Western Front. He related the feelings of apprehension and fear he experienced in the front line. As an artilleryman he expected a direct hit by an enemy shell which would have sent him instantly to meet his Maker. He recalled trying to get some sleep in a dugout and experiencing the sensation of a large rat crawling over him as he slept as it searched in his pockets for food. Fr William Doyle SJ, chaplain to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, recalled being awakened by what he thought was a rabbit resting on his chest only to discover, on closer inspection, that it was a giant rat. Stephen survived to recount his exploits, his brother did not and Fr Doyle was killed at Third Ypres.

Bridget Dwyer and Stephen Dwyer, from St. Patrick’s Place (the original No. 20 before houses were renumbered). Close neighbours were Harry & Maggie Sayers and the Nappers (Napiers).
in 1917. Stephen received honourable discharge from the Royal Horse Artillery in 1922 while serving with the Army of Occupation in Germany. He returned to a Fethard experiencing the bitter upheaval of the Civil War, an event which saw the barracks destroyed by fire never to be rebuilt.

Other photographs show life on The Green in the 1950s and ‘60s. For those who grew up in the ‘40s and ‘50s The Green was in many ways the alpha and omega of our existence. We played football and hurling in Major Delmege’s field; he was an indulgent soul and did not object. On one occasion we even attempted to play cricket with a homemade set of stumps and bails. This was one ‘foreign’ game which did not attract the ire of Brother Albert for Albert had played and coached it as a young brother serving in Australia, as Tom Burke’s excellent article on him last year demonstrated.

The photograph of the visit of Archbishop O’Donnell in 1950 recalled some of my earliest memories. He was then co-adjutor Archbishop of Brisbane and was on one of the rare visits home afforded such prelates at the time. I remember him coming to the Patrician Brothers School where I was in Brother Damian’s class. Damian taught the first two classes so I was just over six years old then. We sang for him and he seemed very pleased. That August he blessed the Holy Year Cross on Slieve Na Mban and I was there with my father. It was a very wet day and windy but we did not seem to mind despite the fact that the location was so exposed and guaranteed you a thorough soaking. The photo shows him being driven through the town flanked by a guard of honour of Fethard’s stalwart citizens. All those have now departed the scene as has the archbishop. The exception is the driver of that car, Sean Ward, who still soldiers on. I was in the same class at the then High School as his brother, Philip RIP, who passed on over twenty years ago.

Views of The Green reveal characters like Mikey Slattery and those two ladies, Mrs Carey and Mrs Hanrahan. I still expect to find Mikey standing at his front door or the two ladies on their way to Kenny’s Shop. All three now conduct their business in celestial realms but I was pleased to see the photo of a young Joan O’Meara and am happy to see that she is still hale and hearty. Tommy Carey was one character I always made a point of visiting when I returned. He was one of those individuals who were part of the essential fabric of a community and gave so much to it in so many ways. Those like him are commended in the Book of Ecclesiasticus which says, “some there be which have no memorial … but these were merciful men whose righteousness has not been forgotten”. These verses sum up neatly those ordinary people who do their best in their communities. These formed the wider family in which we grew up. They looked out
for us as our parents did and gave us a deeper sense of time and place. As a child I did not appreciate it but I have long valued what all these did for us just by being there and caring.

One character whose photo appeared a few weeks ago was Joe Green. He lived on The Back Green where you turn off, or used to turn off, for the path to Strylea. Unlike most of the older houses there which have been demolished as unfit for habitation it still stands for it is a solid dwelling. Joe was a plasterer of high skill and had a reputation to match his expertise. He virtually remade the interior walls of The Abbey Church in the 1950s. These probably still had the medieval plaster, which, by then had begun to disintegrate. Joe, assisted by, I seem to remember, Joey Fogarty, remade those walls working in the evenings after a day at his main job. The results stand testimony to his craftsmanship. He did a similar job for my parents a few years before and, like The Abbey, his work has stood the ravages of over fifty years. He was a thorough gentleman and much appreciated by all who knew him. I often wonder if the level of craft skill we used to take for granted still persists.

Several of the scenes from the early 1900s feature troops outside the military barracks. It was the time when Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and Home Rule had been on the agenda since 1885 when Gladstone had announced his conversion to the cause. Several regiments of the British Army were stationed in Fethard, among them the XVth Hussars and The Royal Field Artillery whose soldiers featured in the 1911 Census published online a few years ago. These regiments were almost always of cavalry or artillery. Cavalry came because, no doubt, of Fethard’s reputation for producing fine horses. Artillery at that time was utterly dependent on horsepower, the four-legged variety, to function so again Fethard’s reputation came to the fore. Before the barracks succumbed to the flames of the Civil War it no doubt contained extensive stabling and provided a lucrative market to local farmers and millers for the supply of fodder and to saddlers and harness makers for the supply and repair of tack. It must have been
one of the lynchpins of the local economy and its disappearance must have caused some economic hardship to set against the gains of political freedom. The army was part of the social fabric and it organized the annual point-to-point race meeting along with the Tipperary Foxhounds. My grand-uncle Mick, who acted as whipper-in for the hunt, used to relate that the meeting was a two-day affair with the cavalry clearing the course at Kilknockin on the first day and the hunt doing so the next. There used to be a race card of the event dating from the 1890s in Lonergan’s Bar. It names the stewards and these are divided between the military and the landed gentry who were the backbone of the hunt. I wonder if the card is still there for such items are priceless. I mentioned in an article a few years ago that the novelist Anthony Trollope was an avid follower of the hunt when he was stationed as a Post Office official in Clonmel. Did he try his luck as a rider in the point-to-point?

A few years ago a collection of photographs of scenes from Dublin suburban life in the late 1890s was published. The photographer, whose name eludes me, captured ordinary scenes in a manner which was utterly compelling. A reviewer said that you appeared to look down a passage of time when you examined these scenes. The photos I have described do this in so many instances. They awaken memories from long ago. They conjure up images from childhood and put memory into overdrive. I look forward to seeing more.
Presentation Convent c.1955, Sr Victoire with Back L to R: Honor Mulligan, Carmel Rice and Anne Connolly.
Fethard girls playing on the street in the 1950s

Mary Croke, Rocklow Road

Fethard Festival Fancy Dress entry ‘Black & White’
Kathleen Quirke and Rita Walsh relaxing against a cock of hay while minding a baby and two dogs.
As 2014 draws to a close, Fethard Athletic Club can look back on another enjoyable and successful year. Our annual four-mile ‘Walls of Fethard’ run on May 29, was the first of our club’s races and it yet again proved to be another popular and well-attended road race. Next up was the ‘Mid-summer Ramble’, a 5k fun run on, as the name suggests, mid-summer’s evening, which was a more easy-going affair but equally as enjoyable. All proceeds for this run went towards a local palliative care fund so was greatly appreciated. The club was involved in organising another successful fun run in Dualla during the summer festival which was enjoyed by a large crowd.

Our seasonal finale was, our now annual, Christmas 5k ‘Santa Run’ which took place last year on the Sunday before Christmas and was a resounding success, with all proceeds going towards the paediatric ward at South Tipperary General Hospital. This fun run got everyone into the festive spirit and we hope to recapture that vibe once again this year on Sunday, December 21. Clonacody House played host to our club’s Christmas night out and we had a fabulous evening of food, music, dancing and craic; we didn’t want to go home!

Club members made great strides during the year in winning race categories and beating previous personal bests so we wish everyone continued success in the year to come. As always, we would love to see new members joining in 2015 in an effort to make our club even bigger and better than it was before, and as much a local community group as a successful running club.
On Friday, October 24, 2014, the Patrician Presentation Secondary School community, Board of Management, Parents’ Association members and invited parents gathered for the school’s Annual Awards’ Ceremony. The event was a great success as usual and was a credit to the organising committee of Ms McKeogh, Ms Maher and Mr Cummins. The event lauds and honours the many achievements of our students in the school year 2013-2014 and is eagerly awaited by the students.

Niamh Morrissey, Cloneen, chairperson of the Students’ Council, welcomed everyone to the occasion and handed over to Fr. Tom Breen PP for the opening of the school year Mass. Fr. Breen in his homily said that each one of us is a lighted candle and prayed that each person present would be a source of light and goodness for themselves and for each other in the coming school year. He went on to urge the students to truly enjoy who they are, to be proud of who they are and where they come from, and in doing so they will be doing the will of the God who loves them.

The Principal, Mr Michael O’Sullivan, welcomed all and congratulated all the prize winners and their parents. He thanked all those who organised the event and said he is extremely proud of the school, the teachers and the pupils. They, too, should have pride in themselves, in their town and in their communities.

The surprise invited guest speaker was star Tipperary senior hurler, Eoin Kelly, Mullinahone, who,
although unaccompanied by the McCarthy Cup, was very warmly welcomed by all present. Eoin first of all congratulated the prize winners and told them they will remember this prize giving day for the rest of their lives. He reminded the pupils that actions speak louder than words and urged them to go to Mass and keep the faith. In so doing they will perhaps inspire someone else in their class or in the school. He went on to speak of the similarities he sees between sport, school, and work, where honesty, positivity, leadership and discipline are concerned. Finally, Eoin said that hard work beats talent if talent doesn’t work hard, the pupils should put in the work and they will reap the rewards of their labours.

There were two new awards this year: The Adam O’Donnell T.Y. Award in memory of past pupil, the late Adam O’Donnell, which was kindly donated to the school by his family. The inaugural winner of the prize was Louise Fitzgerald of Clerihan and Adam’s mother Sue Anne was present to present the prize to Louise. The second new award was in memory of the late Mr Timmy O’Connor, a former deputy principal of Patrician High School and an esteemed Latin, Irish and Commerce teacher in the school. The award was donated to the school by Timmy’s wife, Joan, and her family. We were delighted that Joan and Timmy’s daughters Mary and Rita were able to join us on Awards’ Day.

The prizewinners were as follows: Student of the Year awards: Amy Byrne, Lisonagh (1st-2nd Year);
Mark Hayde, Saucestown (2nd-3rd Year); Eoghan Hurley, Fethard (5th-6th Year). Bishop Delany Award for Best Leaving Cert Results 2014 – Michelle Walsh, Killusty (550 Points); Timmy O’Connor ‘Spirit of the School Award’ – Lucy Whyte, Coleman; Adam O’Donnell T.Y. Award – Louise Fitzgerald, Clerihan; Padraig Pearse Award (Best Junior Cert Irish, History and English) – Sadhbh Horan, Tullamaine; Paddy Broderick Award (Junior Cert Geography) – Sarah O’Donnell, Grangebeg; Ms Marian Gilpin (Literature, Arts and Music) Award – Orla Walsh, Katie Whyte and Louise Fitzgerald (Junk Kouture 2014 Finalists); Fethard Quill Awards – Junior Section, Alan Larkin, Kiltinan, and Senior Section, Timmy Hurley, Fethard; Sports Awards (presented by Mr John Palmer, AIB and sponsored by AIB) – Megan Coen, Fethard and Keith Cronin, Coleman.

Student Council Certificates were presented to 2nd Year students Lucy Whyte, Coleman and Malachy Brett, Tullamaine; 3rd Year students Amye O’Donovan, Fethard, and Mark Hayde, Saucestown; 4th Year students Emily Whyte, Clerihan and Dylan Fenlon, Lisronagh; 5th Year students Orla Walsh, Killusty and Keith Cronin, Coleman; 6th Year students Niamh Morrissey, Cloneen and Thomas Channon, Lisronagh. Senior Mentors certificates were presented to Orla Walsh, Killusty; Katie Whyte, Coleman; Annie Prout, Derryluskin; and Louise Fitzgerald, Clerihan. Attendance and Punctuality Certificates to Lucy Whyte, Coleman (1st–2nd Year); Shauna O’Neill, Lisronagh (2nd–3rd Year); Emma Cronin, Coleman (3rd–4th Year); Katie Whyte, Coleman (TY–5th Year); Adam Fitzgerald,
Fethard (5th–6th Year).

Special Achievements Awards were presented to: Sadhbh Horan, Tullamaine (Art); Cassie Needham, Fethard (Art); and Dylan Fenlon, Lisronagh (Woodwork). Great Fethard ‘Bake Off’ awards went to Carly Tobin (Junior Section) and Orla Walsh (Senior Section).

Well done to all our award winners, their parents and their teachers. We are extremely proud of their success and we wish them all the best in the future. Finally, thank you to all those who helped in any way to organise this special day in our school calendar including school secretary, Ms Gwen Cronin; caretaker Mr Connie Sullivan; and SNA, Ms Nuala Ahearne.
Steve, Jim’s brother

I saw him often but watched from a distance
The return of the true pilgrim,
with his staff, long hair, wild beard
and purposeful stride.
Later, in smart dress and trimmed appearance
he abandoned the staff as if no longer needed,
settled into the music and the pints,
picking up odd jobs from childhood friends.
He had made it back safely,
had landed softly with the immigrants longing
for the old familiar fields and streets.

He took photographs of people,
spoke to everyone and told his tale,
campaigned for the good cause.
Nevertheless, seeing him on the long acre
alone, grazing the white horse:
he seemed to have retained
that inward jolted look
that told of unsettled energies.
Old saws say walk through your suffering:
whether this wisdom was drawn down by himself
or dreamed up for him by a comrade
remains unknown to me but he must
have considered old ways are best
as he had stepped out with the horse
across the sun-drenched flatlands of Spain,
then up through the green expanse of France,
across the busy landscape of England
where he had been blessed with family.
The white horse, carrier of generals
harbingers of victory,
Victory of the living thus far.

But moods can become tyrants:
memory – a gulag with no escape –
as we bypass fun and joy
in a downward spiral of pitiless doom.
Trouble and bother reclaimed him here
at home or not at home
in his parish of origin until impatiently
he could no longer wait for death.
He was laid to rest by the church ruins
in the ancient cemetery of Kiltinan,
the townland of his people.
Slievenamon – the lament for ‘98 –
was sung in the old tongue
by the new grave,
the journey completed for this lifetime.

– John Cooney
Fethard & Killusty Community Council is now functioning in a more administrative role promoting and helping our very effective sub-committees who are able to focus on their individual projects such as the Convent Community Hall, Tidy Towns, Fethard Playground, Community Lotto, Day Care Centre, Meals on Wheels, Business & Tourism Group, Christmas Lighting, and the great work of the Community Employment Scheme supervisor Joan O’Donohoe and her fifteen staff who are employed to support community groups and the running of the Tirry Community Centre and Information Office. Taking all into account, including the many other local organisations, there is a tremendous voluntary contribution to complement the running of our close community in Fethard & Killusty.

With new EU regulations delaying and mystifying both community group projects and private business ventures equally, let’s hope the powers that be have enough sense to see the bigger picture and recognise the value of unpaid community work by at least offering support to overcome the mountain of red tape that voluntary groups are expected to be acquainted with.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on April 29 and the following officers and committee were appointed: Joe Kenny (chairman), Brian Sheehy (vice-chairman), Deirdre Brady (secretary), Eileen Coady (treasurer), Edwina Newport (public relations officer); committee, Jimmy Connolly, Fr. Tom Breen, Joe Keane, Brian Sheehy, Peter

Photographed at the Community Text Alert Meeting organised by Fethard & Killusty Community Council are L to R: Joe Kenny (chairman Fethard & Killusty Community Council), Cllr John Fahey, James O’Neill (Muintir na Tíre), John Hayes (Killenaule Community Text Alert) and Sergeant John Burke.
Grant, Maurice Moloney, Marie Murphy, Carmel Kiely and Pamela Sweeney. The following members were also co-opted on to the committee: Jonathan Ledger, Carmel O’Meara, Marie O’Hara and Colette Geoghegan.

During the past year we were very sorry to hear of the death of past committee members, Kathleen Barry, Michael O’Dwyer and Diana Stokes, who all worked tirelessly for their community while involved.

One of the new projects undertaken this year was setting up a Community Text Alert Scheme in conjunction with Muintir na Tíre who first set up the scheme 27 years ago to reduce burglaries and aggravated robberies, particularly in rural areas and on farms. A public meeting was held on May 13 attended by James O’Neill, Muintir na Tíre and Sergeant John Burke. A great turnout at the meeting provided for informative discussion and a decision was reached to proceed, starting in the Killusty area. Sgt Burke said the Text Alert scheme had the old values of community awareness and modern technology and was especially valuable in rural areas. He said it helps Gardai to receive information and respond quicker.

The FÁS Community Employment Scheme was amalgamated with the sports scheme and now has a full number of participants, sixteen in total. One of the positions was caretaker for the Rugby Club, the second a caretaker for the GAA and the third position a Community Games administrative position. The existing positions...
included kitchen staff, office administrator, ballroom caretaker and a new position of caretaker for the playground. Catherine Flanagan is the new Project Development Officer and the scheme is now under the remit of the Department of Social Protection.

The Convent Community Centre continues to cater for a wide range of activities from birthday parties to funerals. A ladies’ committee, spearheaded by Pamela Lawlor, has worked industriously promoting the centre with new ideas for mothers and toddlers, youth, dance and keep fit enthusiasts, socials and gatherings of all sorts. As a result the hall is now self-financing and should soon be in a position to develop further services.

Fethard playground opened to the public on December 7, 2013 and has proved a great addition to children of the town and visitors alike. The latest addition to the playground is a Sensory & Musical Garden, which was officially opened on Saturday, August 2, 2014, by Robin Blake and Cian Hurley, both from Fethard. This sensory musical garden project was co-ordinated by South Tipperary Autism Support Group Ltd and led by Janette and Noel Blake, Kilnockin Road, Fethard.

As a follow-up to making Fethard a better, safer place to live the committee invited representatives from Northwood Technology, Coolmore and An Garda Síochána to a public meeting on January 28, 2014, to discuss the possibility of installing
a modern high-tech Community CCTV system in Fethard. Garda representatives were Superintendent John Courtney, Sergeant John Burke and Garda Denis O’Brien who were all very enthusiastic about the project. Superintendent Courtney stated that available CCTV is one of the most important assets in solving present day crime. Sergeant John Burke also highlighted the advantages of having a community based CCTV system in Fethard. Conor Maguire, Coolmore Stud, stated they were fully supportive of the project in Fethard. All present were very much in favour of using a CCTV system in Fethard and were very interested in the possibilities of extending it to outlying areas, including Killusty. After many follow-up meetings and site surveys this project is currently in progress.

Meetings are at an advanced stage in acquiring the land from Tipperary County Council for a Community Town Park adjacent to the north of the present GAA field. The project, facilitated by the Community Council, will eventually be run and maintained by a committee of representatives from the various groups interested in using the park.

Other projects suggested during the year included a proposed addition to the Playground Park with the installation of adult outdoor gym fitness equipment along the walkway. A proposed site plan was suggested by the Irish ‘Outfit’ group who visited the site on September 18. Another suggestion was the formation of a Mens Shed group in Fethard, affiliated to Irish Men’s Sheds Association (www.menssheds.ie). A suitable premises is needed to proceed with this great idea.

Fethard Business & Tourism

Photographed at a public meeting in Fethard Community Centre on Tuesday, January 28, to discuss the possibility of a modern high-tech CCTV being installed by the community in Fethard are L to R: Jeff Harney (Northwood Technology), Paul Hennessy (SafeTown), Sergeant John Burke, Garda Denis O’Brien, Superintendent John Courtney and Conor Maguire (Coolmore Stud).
Group have finally gotten the go ahead to proceed with their Town Hall project and work commenced on Tuesday, September 30. You can read their, and other affiliated group reports in separate articles published in this Newsletter.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the Community Council and Community Lotto over the year; Tipperary County Council, Cllr. John Fahey and his fellow councillors; and all our committee and sub-committee members and volunteers. We wish all at home and living away from home a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.
The past year was one of mixed emotions with highs and lows but as we go to press a great feeling of achievement and work in progress exists within our group. Our main focus was to secure government approval for funding allocated to us by Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Development Company in 2013.

After months of phone conversations, emails and endless documentation, it was only on September 18, 2014, that work could finally commence on the renovation of the Tholsel (Town Hall). Our thanks to the determination of committee members Bill O’Sullivan, Maurice Moloney and Tadhg Gleeson in particular, with the added support from Anthony Fitzgerald (Community and Enterprise) and Isabel Cambie (Tipperary Leader).

Fethard Business & Tourism Group was established on May 24, 2011, as a sub-committee of Fethard & Killusty Community Council. On Thursday, February 7, 2013, the Fethard Business and Tourism Group formed a Limited Company (Reg.No. 523543) with the following named directors, James O’Sullivan, William O’Sullivan, Catherine Corcoran, Maurice Moloney and Peter Grant. The company is non-profit and voluntary in nature and the directors or members do not gain personally from the company’s activities. Our current members are: Jimmy O’Sullivan (chairperson), Peter Grant (company secretary), Bill O’Sullivan (honorary secretary), Anna Stokes (treasurer), Tadhg Gleeson (auditor), Susanna Manton BCL (solicitor), Maurice Moloney, Terry Cunningham, Leo D’arcy, Bernadette...
Stocksborough, Tim Robinson, Cllr. John Fahey, Gwen Cooke, Catherine Corcoran, Michael O’Riordan, Colm McGrath, Tom Anglim, Patricia Tracy, Helen Carrigan, Edwina Newport, John Ward, Ian Meagher and Seamus Barry.

Losing Diana Stokes (RIP) this year was a great loss to our group. Di was with us since our formation and was always first to put her hand up when there was work to be done. Diana is buried in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, facing the tower, which looked fantastic at her funeral with the sun shining and the flags in full flight. It was a day when Fethard looked its best for all the friends, family and connections who filled the church for the short ceremony that ended with the master of the hounds blowing his hunting horn, a sound that rang out over the town. For me it was a memorable moment as I recalled the many years that Di had invested her time with the Fethard Business and Tourism Group, Fethard Historical Society, Fethard Community Council, Killusty Show and in par-
ticular, Fethard Tidy Towns. Diana had a strong sense of community and made no apologies for inviting others to support her many endeavours. May she rest in peace.

This year the Fethard Festival was organised in conjunction with the Historical Society and attracted over 4,000 people over the weekend. It was splendid to watch the enjoyment of so many people in the summer sun, along the Clashawley river bank by the Town Wall. Thanks to the hard work of Maurice Moloney and the support of the Magnier family at Coolmore, local school children attending Fethard National School and schools in surrounding villages were given vouchers for free amusement rides, burgers and ice cream on the day. This really created the perfect free family ‘fun day’ without the usual costs.

In conjunction with the Festival, a ‘Fethard Art & Craft Walk’ was conceived by Marie O’Hara (née Hanrahan) for the summer months. This innovative project brought the unused shop windows in town to life with displays of local artisan crafts and products. The headquarters were set up on Main Street which was manned daily by the participating artists. At a time when so many local shops lay empty, this was a very welcome initiative.

The restoration and conservation of the 17th century Fethard Tholsel when completed will serve as a tourism hub for Fethard and its hinterland. The proposed redevelopment of this national monument will incorporate a tourism information and services centre, public toilets, decked viewing area, exhibition and interpretive centre, and a retail space.
Fethard Tholsel is a significant landmark within the town, but it also connects the main thoroughfare with an area of huge significance to the rear of the building, namely the medieval back lands which include Holy Trinity Church of Ireland and the Town Walls.

Our vision is that the restored Fethard Tholsel will become a focal point for visitors and the building will act as the link and portal for the tourist to visit the medieval heart of Fethard. It will offer a welcoming, multi-functional and hospitable environment where visitors and local people can relax and learn more about Fethard.

The current phase of the work is scheduled to finish by March 2015. Our fundraising to date, though substantial, will bring us only part of the way therefore we will soon be enlisting more friends and supporters to help us bring the project forward while we continue our fundraising efforts.

Like many other rural towns today, local businesses are working hard to survive and sometimes it’s difficult to remain positive. However, we are encouraged by the takeover of the closed Dawn Meat factory on the Killenaule Road by RibWorld, who we expect will be a good employer in the future.

Thanks to all who follow our progress with interest and are always ready to support our events. We look forward to a new and better year ahead for all local business and the hope that we can realise our plans to bring new life to our unique town. Follow our progress on www.fethardbusiness.com  

by Peter Grant
Fethard Medieval Festival 2014
Mrs Patricia Treacy retired from Holy Trinity National School on August 31, 2014. Trish, as she was known to her colleagues, trained as a primary school teacher in Mary Immaculate College of Education. Having begun her career in Grangemockler, she joined the staff of Nano Nagle National School in 1974. She served twenty-nine years as Deputy Principal before taking up the position of Principal in St. Patrick’s Boys’ National School in 2004. In 2010 the amalgamation of Nano Nagle and St. Patrick’s schools took place, and Trish was appointed Principal of the newly formed school and staff. Trish held this position until her recent retirement.

Trish probably put at least one thousand pupils through her hands during this time and was steadfastly as dedicated in year forty-two as she was in year one. At each stage of her career, she threw herself wholeheartedly into her work. Many will remember her as a kind, committed and talented infant teacher.

During her years in Nano Nagle, the Adlerian approach to discipline was adopted by Nano Nagle staff and Trish was a huge advocate of its principles of mutual respect, inclusiveness and encouragement. Her concern for her pupils was always evident and her sense of justice and
fair-play always permeated her work.

On her transfer to St. Patrick’s Boys’ National School parents, pupils and teachers were delighted with her energy and hard work in embarking on this new role of principal. Her talent for this position really came to the fore during this time and her skill in administration and management became evident when she was appointed Principal of Holy Trinity National School. This involved a huge commitment of time, energy and hard-work and Trish threw herself into this position with a “no holes barred” approach. She acknowledged the support and help of the Board of Management and the Parents’ Association, especially at this demanding time in her career.

The Catholic ethos of the school was always very important to the school community and when the Presentation Sisters retired, Trish ensured that the Catholic ethos was always cultivated and nourished. Trish’s faith is very strong and she was involved directly and indirectly in preparing many children for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation in her role as teacher and principal.

Trish was an innovative, creative teacher and principal and never let the grass grow under her feet vis-à-vis new techniques and teaching approaches. She had her finger on the pulse of modern developments and initiatives and led her staff well in this regard.

Trish’s interest in and love for the town of Fethard was evident in encouraging pupil involvement in community based projects. She was always open to suggestion and always supported her staff in any new endeavours.

As Trish embarks on this new phase of her life we wish her health and happiness. At last she will have time to dedicate to her many talents and interests. Maybe next March, she will have the time to go to Cheltenham! Trish is also a wonderful seamstress and baker, among other things – we’ll miss her scones; her family will have the opportunity to enjoy these! We wish Trish all the best and many, many happy years with her family – Billy, Liam, Ciaran, Mia and her grandchildren. ☺️
A
fter a fabulous summer
we returned to school in
September full of excitement for the
year ahead. We have all been very
busy to date and settling in well to
school.

Mrs Patricia Treacy retired on
August 31, 2014, and Mrs Triona
Morrison was appointed as new
Principal of the school. Mrs Aisling
Fanning was appointed Deputy
Principal in September. We are very
fortunate to have two great new mem-
bers of teaching staff join us this year
– Ms Rebecca Meagher, who teaches
6th class, and Ms Lisa Kearney, who
teaches 2nd class. Other classes are
taught by: Mrs Aisling Fanning (5th
Class); Ms Róisín Ryan (4th class);
Mrs Rita Kenny (3rd class); Ms
Leonie Loughman (1st class); Mrs
Denise Meehan (Senior Infants);
and Mrs Margaret Gleeson (Junior
Infants). Support Teachers are: Ms
Sarah Hogan, Mrs Eileen Fitzgerald,
Mrs Carmel Lonergan and Mr Keith
MacAdhaimh. Staff members: Ms
Ann-Marie Harty (SNA); Mrs Anne
Darcy (Secretary); and Mr Willie
Ryan (Caretaker).

We welcomed nineteen new
pupils to Mrs Gleeson’s Junior
Infant class. This year infant class-
es are implementing the Aistear
Programme. Aistear is the early child-
hood curriculum framework for all
children from birth to six years. The
word Aistear is the Irish word for
journey and was chosen because
early childhood marks the begin-

Holy Trinity National School

Staff at Holy Trinity N.S. Back L to R: Róisín Ryan, Keith MacAdhaimh, Aisling Fanning, Lisa Kearney,
Sarah Hogan, Anne Darcy, Eileen Fitzgerald, Rebecca Meagher, Ann Marie Harty, Leonie Loughman. Front
L to R: Denise Meehan, Rita Kenny, Triona Morrison (Principal), Carmel Lonergan and Margaret Gleeson.
ning of children’s lifelong learning journey. Junior and Senior Infants love Aistear and Mrs Gleeson, Mrs Meehan, Mrs Lonergan, Ms Hogan, Mrs Fitzgerald and Ms Donoghue have put a huge amount of work into ensuring the programme’s success.

Challenge to Change is a development education programme for young people attending Presentation schools. It aims to raise and bring about a greater awareness of environmental issues. It also aims to create and foster a critical mind-set in relation to inequality, social injustice and human rights. Over the last few years Holy Trinity have presented projects dealing with human rights issues in Africa, the plight of child soldiers and biodiversity. The 2014 year project was called ‘Variety is the Spice of Life’. During the year the children engaged in activities to make the school woodland and garden area more diverse. Third and Fourth classes visited Fota. The aim is to learn about the conservation of wild animals. Fourth class visited Lough Doire Bhile in Glengoole. This was originally a bog but has now been transformed into a lake and wetlands conservation area. All the classes in the school contributed to the project which was presented in Kilkenny on Thursday, May 8. Pupils from Fourth class co-ordinated the project and ten travelled to Kilkenny.

In May, members of the Green Schools Committee and teachers Mrs Kenny and Mrs Gleeson attended a ceremony in Kilkenny where Holy Trinity N.S. was presented with the school’s second Green Flag in recognition of its energy saving...
efforts since September 2012. The flag was raised by Mrs Mary Carroll and celebrations continued in the school with the Fun Day.

Pupils strive daily to reduce electricity usage and pupils have also raised awareness in their homes. One of the aims was to reduce our oil bill and we were delighted to achieve this goal and hope to maintain this. We have also been monitoring our ESB bill and a team of children regularly check classrooms to ensure that no lights have been left on. We held ‘low energy’ days within the school and the ‘Energy Awareness Dress Up’ day was most memorable thanks to the innovative costumes of the children, helped by their parents!

We are currently in the process of preparing for our third Green Flag on the very appropriate theme of Water Conservation. We look forward to the continued co-operation of the whole community in this endeavour. Thank you to all involved and a special thank you to the Green Schools Committee and to Mrs Gleeson and Mrs Kenny for their continued efforts with the Green Schools initiative. They keep us all working with great enthusiasm and excitement!

Friendship Day was held on September 30. In school we celebrated all our friends and worked on poems, dances, stories and artwork around the theme of Friendship. Pupils and teachers did fantastic work with their classes – well done all! “The best things in life aren’t things…they’re your friends.” – Anonymous

Sports Day was held on Tuesday, June 17. The Fethard Scout Group facilitated this day and set up many

Staff and pupils photographed at the raising of the school’s second ‘Green Flag’ awarded by the Environmental Section of Tipperary County Council. Included are Eamon Kennedy and Brian Sheehy from Fethard Tidy Towns, Mary Carroll (Environmental Section Tipperary County Council), Patricia Treacy (school principal), Triona Morrison (vice-principal), teachers Rita Kenny and Margaret Gleeson who co-ordinated the project, staff members Ann-Marie Harty (SNA), Anne Darcy (secretary) and Willie Ryan (caretaker) who had the honour of raising the Green Flag, and pupils from the Green Schools Committee.
activities, such as sponge races, obstacle courses and other co-operative games. It was a huge success and the school would like to extend a special thanks to the Scout Group who helped make the sports day such an enjoyable day for all. When all the fun and games were over the Parents’ Association made sure that pupils and teachers were refuelled by providing hot-dogs and cool drinks. This was very much appreciated by all. Thank you to the Parents’ Association.

We have a wonderful school garden on our grounds. The school has a poly-tunnel and raised beds. Classes across the school were busy throughout the year planting and growing various vegetables and fruit such as lettuce, tomatoes, raspberries, strawberries, onions, carrots, broccoli, cabbage, and potatoes. A special thank you to Brian and Noreen Sheehy for all their work throughout the school year in the school garden. A ‘Clean Up’ morning was held on October 18 and great work was completed to clear out the tunnel, weed the raised beds and have everything ready for winter planting. Winter planting is presently underway! Many thanks to the parents who gave their time and effort to the school garden ‘Clean Up’. Your help is, as always, very much appreciated.

In athletics we had our most successful year to date. In May boys and girls from 3rd to 6th class competed in a schools track and field competition in Clonmel. The activities were 300m, 80m, ball throw and relay. During the competitions we had many individual winners and at the end we were delighted to get the overall shields in the boys’ and girls’ competition. There was great excitement back in school. In October
we took part in the Marlfield Cross Country Competition. Again we had many individual winners – Alison Connolly (6th), Ciara Spillane (4th), Thomas Donegan (4th), Sean Moroney (4th) and Kaycie Ahern (3rd). Holy Trinity N.S. was the winner of the Joe Holden Perpetual Shield for the Best Girls’ Large School competition. Well done to all participants and thank you also to their teachers, Mrs Kenny, Ms Ryan, Mrs Fanning, Ms Meagher and Mrs Fitzgerald for training the children in school.

Every year we take part in Cumann na mBunscol GAA competitions. The hurling is played in May and the football in October. Competition is fierce but we always acquit ourselves well. In October our girls’ under-13 team won their blitz well but came up against a very strong Thomastown team in the semi-final. All pupils avail of school coaching on Tuesdays courtesy of Derry and these coaching sessions are invaluable for developing skills and team work. Many thanks to Ms Meagher, Mr MacAdhaimh and Ms Loughman for their afterschool coaching.

Elections for our Student Council took place in September and we have eight newly elected members. Ciaran Moroney is the Chairperson, Hayley Ryan is the Deputy Chairperson, Eimear O’Sullivan is the Secretary and the PR team is made up of Kaycie Aherne, Jennifer Phelan, Mark Neville, Daragh Spillane, and Heather Spillane. The Student Council gives the students in our school a clear voice and allows them to have a real input into decisions made in the school. They take issues from a class level to their meetings and discuss
these before taking proposals to the principal. They also work hard in fundraising for the school and other charities, such as Our Lady’s Hospital in Crumlin and for Focus Ireland which helps homeless families. Mrs Fanning, our deputy principal helps the pupils every step of the way. Keep up the good work.

The AGM of the Parents’ Association was held on September 24 and existing members were delighted to see many new parents/guardians on the night. The Parents’ Association do a huge amount of work in the school. The Association has fundraised for iPads and levelled readers among lots of other items for the school. Many parents/guardians also volunteered for the Bric-a-Brac held on October 17. We were inundated with toys, teddies, books, cakes and buns. Thank you to everyone for your time and efforts in making the day so successful! We are extremely grateful. It is never too late to join the Parents’ Association, all help is deeply appreciated.
Katie O’Shea, Woodvale Walk, celebrating her 21st birthday with friends at Lonergan’s Bar

Helena Fanning (front centre), Fethard, who celebrating her 50th Birthday with family and friends

Gerard Lonergan photographed with family members and friends at his 50th Birthday Party celebrated at Butler’s Bar on April 6, 2014.
Michael and Margaret Flanagan, Tullamaine, photographed with their immediate family at their 50th Wedding Anniversary celebrated on Friday, October 3, 2014. L to R: Bernadette, David, Michael, Roseanne, Margaret, Tony and Caroline. Michael has a long association with Tipperary Foxhounds starting at a meeting on Friday, March 2, 1951, when the minutes recorded, “It was the general opinion of the hunting members of the committee that Mickey Flanagan was quite suitable whip-in to T. Ryan next season.” Forty years later chairman Brian Duffy made a presentation to Margaret and Michael marking their 40 years service to the hunt. Michael was Tipperary Foxhounds Kennel Huntsman for many years and also a very active member and promoter of Fethard Coursing Club.
Dear Brother and Sister:

We received your kind and welcome letter on the 23rd inst. which gave us the greatest pleasure to hear that ye were landed and in good health. We were watching the post every day of the week but at last we found what we were expecting, but ye could not imagine the joy that came in our hearts to hear from ye. We did not get the letter ye sent from Galway until the 8th inst. As we were not expecting it when we got the one from Queenstown we wrote to ye on the 7th inst. Let us know did ye receive it and also we sent you a paper every week.

We thought that ye were over all sickness when ye reached Galway but we perceive by this letter that ye were very bad again. It was very hard on ye and we felt for ye and also sister Ellen to hear that you did not eat any during the voyage. Indeed we know that ye were in a bad state when ye landed. There is one thing that consoles us now when we know that ye are to meet with your Uncles and Cousins. Let ye take courage now and be in good cheer and we hope with the help of the Lord that this letter will reach ye and Uncles and Cousins in as good a health as we are in at present.

Dear Brother and Sister during the time since ye left we did not rest any night but thinking of ye. We wish to tell ye now that on next Sunday week the 8th of July the new church in Killusty will be consecrated. There is great preparation making. There are four Bishops invited and Archbishop Croke is expected to make a speech. We will let ye know all we possibly can about the meeting on that day and we will send ye the best paper that will give ye grounds. We are very lonesome without ye to accompany us to the meeting. It was little we thought when the Church was commencing that we would be so far separate.

We were very busy for the past three weeks preparing the crops and indeed they are very promising. The wheat crop is very good and the turnips, John, that you sowed have the lead of Cloran. The weather was very fine since ye left. We had no rain until the 17th. You could not believe how the potato crop improved since. Richey is going to school every day and he is anxious to let you know that he marked your sheep and is taking care of them.

Dear Brother I wish to let you know that the promise I made ye in Clonmel, I did it after the fair day. I am also taking up your place in Drangan. Dear Brother and Sister we request of ye to write often and Sister Ellen do not forget the promise that you made us that you would write every week. Let us know in your next letter all about the strange country and also let us know how our Uncles and Cousins are and their names.

Margaret and her husband and family are in good health and all their neighbours. We send our love and best respect to ye also to Uncles Thomas and family, to Uncle James and family, to Uncle Richard’s wife and family and to James Fogarty and family.

We are dear Brother and Sister your affectionate Brother and Sisters

Signed: Michael Burke, Alice, Mary and Kate

P.S. Write us as soon as ye get this letter.
In hours of leisure my sweetest pleasure.
When toil’s hard measure for a time was o’er,
O! my soul was ravished where nature lavished
O’er thy verdant meadows her richest store;
When the rays of morning
All the land adoring,
In effulgent glory o’er the vale would break,
Then shone the sheenest
On these the greenest
And eternal verdure of Castleblake.

Oft here I’ve pondered
whilst my spirit wandered
From mortals sundered in Elysian climes.
Thro’ scenes of story, thro’ ages hoary,
To my country’s glory of olden times –
When her sunburst standard,
Proudly floating onward,
In freedom’s vanguard made th’ invader quake,
O! such themes were brightest,
And the spirit lightest,
In the fairy bowers of Castleblake.

When in the gloaming the maidens coming,
To fill their pails at the limpid spring,
How the vale rejoices to hear their voices
Of song and laughter o’er the meadow ring,
With the song birds singing,
Their sweet strains flinging
In melodious music from tree and break,
And the wild doves cooing,
With their tender wooing,
In the lowering foliage of Castleblake.

In the summer even, when glowing heaven
Was tinged with a golden and purple hue
How the scent exalting, from the wild flowers stealing,
On the zephyr wafted around me blew
In the early morn,
On the clear air borne,
The shepherd’s voice all the echoes wake,
And the hymns down-pouring
From the skybird soaring
O’er the dew-gemmed pastures of Castleblake.

There the ash trees towering,
with their foliage lowering,
The lofty nests of the garrulous crow,
Here the blossoms adorn and scent the thorn,
‘Neath whose balmy bowers the primroses glow
The hare and rabbit
These meads inhabit,
And gambol around with each antic freak,
And the huntsman sporting,
These haunts resorting
Finds game abundant in Castleblake.

Shall my manhood ever its days discover
From the scenes of beauty and dear delight,
For my heart is grieving for loved friend leaving,
From the dear country taking their flight?
Tho’ far o’er the ocean,
With fond devotion,
And proud emotion for thy dear sake,
I’ll toil untiring,
With hope inspiring,
For Ireland’s freedom and Castleblake.

Castleblake

(Respectfully and affectionately inscribed to Mr Thomas Looby, Miltownmore)

By John F. Davin, of Philadelphia, and formerly of Fethard. c.1910
Platforms and pastimes!

by Tom Shine

Fethard, like other small towns, had little going for it regarding variety shows except for the occasional road show in the town hall so most people made their own enjoyment. Crossroad platforms were very popular in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Downey’s Cross was held every first Thursday and Sunday night. We lived near it and would be allowed to spend a few hours looking on. The next platform was Tullow in Killusty and then Kilknockin started up and was successful for many years.

Another pastime was the toss school every Sunday afternoon. On wet days the men would gather in the old Barracks, and on fine days at the back of Paddy Heffernan’s bicycle shop on the Cashel road. Up to thirty people would participate. The game consisted of the tosser with a piece of wood and two English halfpennies – heads he won, harps he lost. It was fun.

Group at Kilkockin Platform at ‘An Tóstal’ Sunday, April 19, 1953.
Mitford Sisters – Fethard connection

The death of Deborah Mitford, the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, in September this year sparked a renewed interest in the intriguing life of the Mitford Sisters in British society. Deborah, aged 94, was the last surviving sister of six, Nancy (1904-1973), Pamela (1907-1994), Diana (1910-2003), Unity (1914-1948), Jessica (1917-1996) and Deborah (1920-2014) the youngest.

The six Mitford girls experienced an upbringing steeped in eccentricity. Living in genteel poverty in stately homes, the girls variously believed in poltergeists, pre-destination and barmy superstitions. School was frowned upon, in case the girls should develop thick calves from playing hockey. As such, a succession of dotty governesses attempted to educate the girls. And, aside from their beloved nanny serving as a firm but fair disciplinarian, the girls were left to their own devices.

The Mitford sisters fascinated and sometimes scandalised British society in the 1940s. Unity was a friend of Hitler; Diana was the second wife of British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley; Jessica, a left-wing activist, and Nancy, a novelist and historian. Deborah, like her elder sister Pamela, was more focused on home life. Not many locals, including myself, were aware of a Fethard connection with the sisters, until strolling home from Fethard parish church I started chatting to Goldie Newport, who had just heard of the death of Deborah Mitford. Goldie, a life-long follower of the Mitford family, told me the story of Pamela Mitford.

Pamela was down to earth in her tastes and interests, a superb cook and happiest living in the country in the company of her dogs. At the age of twenty-nine, she married Professor Derek Jackson, a brilliant scientist who was prone to equally brilliant eccentricities. They both moved to Ireland in 1947 and lived in Tullamaine Castle, Fethard. During this time she became very active in local affairs and Goldie recalled several meetings while working in her family shop on Main Street. She became a daily customer for her papers and magazines and also called to Goldie’s mother’s shop for ice cream and confectionary. Mrs Pamela Jackson also got on very well with Goldie’s father, Bert Newport, maybe because he came from Gloucestershire, a place dear to her heart.

Pamela was an enthusiastic member of Fethard ICA and attended all the meetings. She won many prizes for her flowers and vegetables at the local shows. Her gardener was Ted Young who also grew unusual crops, such as purple sprouting broccoli, in her vast kitchen garden at Tullamaine. She also supplied eggs to some local shops in Fethard.

Goldie relayed several other stories and showed me a copy of one of
her books, ‘The Mitford Girls’ Guide to Life’, by Lyndsy Spence. As very little was known of Pamela Mitford’s life in Ireland, Goldie was interviewed at one time and to her surprise, her interesting stories were published in the above book under a separate chapter, ‘Personal Recollections – Memories of Pamela Mitford by Goldie Newport’.

In the book Goldie describes Pamela, “I remember her as a very quiet, country lady. She had pale skin, short blond hair, which was straight and hung over one eye sometimes – Veronica Lake style! She seems to live in a navy three-quarter length coat with brass buttons, a grey skirt and flat laced shoes – all very sensible but stylish, like herself really. In summer she wore a lighter flared skirt – linen or cotton, I suppose, of pale blue mostly to match her eyes, I suppose, and the most beautiful blouses I had ever seen and flat sandals. She never went in for fashion but always looked lovely and really simply ‘classic’. I don’t even remember seeing any jewellery of any kind not even a brooch or engagement ring.”

Pamela Mitford stayed married to Derek Jackson for fifteen years. But the quiet life in Ireland soon grew dull for Derek and he accepted a post at a Dublin laboratory. He had an affair with the woman who would become his third wife, and together they had a daughter, his only child, Rose.

Following her divorce from Derek, Pamela left Ireland in 1963 and relocated to Zurich, Switzerland, with her female companion, an Italian-Swiss horsewoman, Giuditta Tomassi. Pamela never remarried and returned to England in the mid 1970s where she devoted much of her life to her dogs, her prize-winning garden and her beautiful home in Gloucestershire.

In their later years, Pamela and Derek became good friends again and he left her a huge fortune in his will. Pamela died at the age of eighty-seven in 1994.

Joe Kenny

Pamela, Deborah and Derek Jackson, Rignell c.1946
Austy Slattery, The Green, who celebrated his 80th Birthday this year pictured with family members.

Sean Ward and his family on the occasion of his 80th birthday celebrated in January this year. L to R: Mairead, John, Margaret, Sean and Catriona.
The overall winner of the Butler’s Sports Achievement Award for 2013 was announced on Friday, January 17. A large crowd of past monthly award winners, sports personalities and customers attended the presentation and reception.

Philip Butler, proprietor, was master of ceremonies for the presentation evening and introduced two special guests, both hurlers, Donie O’Connell who played hurling with his local club Killenaule and Tipperary senior team in the 1980s; the second guest was Liam ‘Chunky’ O’Brien, a star with the famous James Stephens club and Kilkenny senior hurling team in the 1970s. Philip thanked the selection committee, comprising of representatives from various sporting organisations and walks of live in the parish, who came together over the year to decide the monthly winners and the annual winner for 2013.

Certificates were then presented to the individual monthly award winners before announcing the first annual winner, Michael Ryan, Tullamaine, manager of the Tipperary intermediate hurling team that retained the All-Ireland title by defeating Kilkenny by 2-14 to 2-11 at Nowlan Park on Saturday, August 31, 2013.

Michael, a very popular winner, accepted the award and spoke of how proud he was to win the first annual award and to represent Fethard on the hurling scene at All-Ireland level. The presentation closed with lots of sporting chat and light refreshments provided by Marianne Shortall.
Dan Trehy - his Australian connection

Dan Trehy’s parents, Thomas Trehy and Mary Quinlan, were married in Fethard in 1865. Looking at local records Thomas and Mary are recorded as having the following children baptised: Mary (1866) died in Fethard at the age of four in 1870, Anne (1868) died in Queensland, Australia in 1902 and buried in Cairns McLeod Street Cemetery, Margaret (1870) died in Australia in 1932, Mary Josephine (1872) died in Australia in 1961, John (1874) died in Australia in 1911, Thomas (1877) died in Australia in 1911, Catherine (1879) died in Fethard at 11 months in 1880, Johanna (1882) and Dan (1884) died in Fethard in 1941.

Mary King, Australia, provided us with additional information about Dan Trehy’s family. Mary is a descendant of Dan’s sister Anne (Annie), who migrated to Australia in 1886. Annie was the first of her siblings to migrate to Australia. All Annie’s other living siblings except Dan migrated to the same area in North Queensland.

Annie married Thomas Dillane and had three sons, William Thomas, Thomas Francis and Daniel (Mary King’s grandfather), whom Annie named after her brother Dan Trehy in Ireland. There must have been contact between members of the Trehy family in Fethard and Australia, as the 1911 census shows that Thomas Trehy and his wife Mary Quinlan knew which children were alive or dead. Annie died in Cairns, Australia, in October 1902, leaving her sons behind including Daniel who was only seven years of age. Her husband later remarried.

Daniel (Mary King’s grandfather), just like Dan Trehy in Fethard, was a little too fond of the alcohol, but the most amazing information was about Daniel Trehy’s singing ability. His voice was such that people would stop to listen to his singing. In fact, the hotels would give him and his mates free beer, so that he would stay at their hotel and sing. The song that he sang with such love and melancholy was ‘Danny Boy’. When he had a few beers, he sang this song in a way that made grown men cry. I suspect that he and Dan Trehy in Fethard had the same voice. ☺️
Annie Trehy’s sons William Thomas Dillon and Daniel Dillon (sitting), nephews of Dan Trehy, Fethard
Final word . . .

As the evenings darken and the weather slowly begins to bite, memories of a wonderful year, weather-wise at least, dismiss the temptation to complain as we usually have reason to do here in Ireland.

The past year has been different in many ways and maybe also the advent of better days to come. Our one factory or manufacturing plant reopened during the year under the brand name 'RibWorld' with the promise of lots more jobs to follow. It’s a very welcome sight to see activity again on the Killenaule road. Other positive happenings this year included the go-ahead for Fethard Business and Tourism Group’s ‘Town Hall’ project after they finally received promised funding to advance stage one renovations.

Realisation and acceptance that our small town has changed and will never again be what it was, is of vital importance if we are to progress positively. People will continue to shop in large supermarkets that now, unfortunately, or fortunately for others, sell everything that comes from a butcher, a baker or a candlestick makers, including newspapers, stationery, drapery and electrical goods. Their business may also be short-lived as a huge amount of business is now done online from the comfort of one’s own home. Maybe like-minded Fethard internet-savvy entrepreneurs will tap into this new worldwide market of the future!

As another year’s Newsletter reaches an end and a New Year beckons, I take this opportunity to thank all our readers and supporters for the continued verbal and financial support that really encourages us to continue this great project started over 50 years ago by the Legion of Mary. It appears to be as important today as it was those many years ago. In this new world of social media we now have many ways of communicating with our family and friends, which is very good. But we shouldn’t forget that our biggest assets in this life are our deep Christian foundation and family values which were also the driving force in starting and continuing this Emigrants’ Newsletter.

I would like to thank our varied contributors who annually supplement a very valuable source of information for future generations by writing articles for this publication.

A special thanks to our dedicated backroom staff, Carmel Rice who looks after correspondence and donations, Brendan Kenny distribution, Gemma Burke proofreading, and the great bunch of volunteers who help out annually at our church gate collection and with the packing and posting of this Newsletter.

I wish our readers at home and especially those living away from home a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. 

by Joe Kenny (editor)
Dance in Fethard Town Hall in the 1950s
A busy shopping day on Main Street, Fethard, in the early 1900s

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