

ROSCREA



REVIEW

No. 45

Newsletter of the Cistercian College, Roscrea, Union

Winter 1984/85

New Helmsman at C.C.R.



Fr. Kevin Daly, President of Cistercian College, Roscrea, does not look a day older than when I knew him as a pupil there a generation ago. My image of him there is remarkably clear: he is standing in the square of the Top Pitch stopping balls with a hurley, sending them back down the field, and smiling as he does it. He is both intent and good-humoured. These, I think, are the qualities that have kept him looking so young. I have never seen him idling and I've certainly never seen him in bad humour. He was a year ahead of me at Roscrea and his younger brother, Joe, was my best friend there. Because of the amiable distance brothers must keep between them in a boarding school I was therefore not intimate with Martin/Kevin. He was outstanding as a person, though unremarkable in the various departments that loom so large both with boys and teachers — games, athletics, studies, theatricals. He participated whole-heartedly in all the school's activities and modestly held his own in all of them. Looking back on it all it strikes me that he saw all of these activities and qualities as interesting and

essential insofar as they served a larger pattern. The intentness behind the good humour was focused on the purpose of life itself.

It therefore came as no surprise that Martin entered the Monastery; that he left it again for a period in the world where he entered upon the delightfully profane activity of cinema management; that he discovered there his real vocation and returned to the contemplative life for good. Over the past decade or more he has become justly admired for the marvellous talent he has with pupils and parents — as Dean of Discipline, games master and athletic trainer. His genial presence around the College has been a source of reassurance and confidence to the most timid first year as well as to parents and past students. When Fr. Peter Garvey moved to higher things Fr. Kevin was the obvious heir apparent: his skill and eloquence at the Past Student's Dinner this year confirmed both his authority and charisma. The old firm could not be in better hands.

Gus Martin

It was, as it always is, a splendid evening. Jury's private banqueting room was full to near-capacity. Indeed, on the original bookings it would have been overfull! In the end the committee clocked 137 at the door.

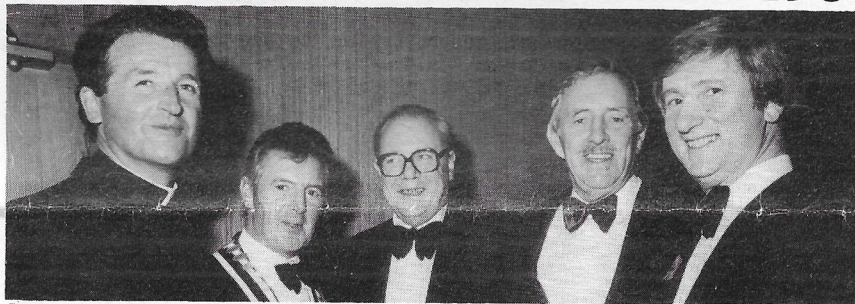
Frank Cullen was an urbane, humorous and efficient master of ceremonies at this, the highlight of Dublin Branch's year. While exploring (with full documentary evidence) the adolescent wanderings of Rom Massey, he led us through an evening of wit, good spirits and good cheer. Frank, of course, is Chairman of Dublin Branch and brings to that post all the organising ability which characterises his business life. As Chairman, Frank's prerogative was to propose the toast of the College.

Rev. Kevin Daly, visiting us for the first time in his new capacity as President of the College, replied. Kevin Dwan, also carrying his new honours as President of the Union, proposed the toast of the Dublin Branch. Des Windle replied eloquently and graciously.

Tom Ambrose proposed the toast of the honoured guests. (A pleasant and interesting aspect of the Dublin dinner in recent years is the number of pastmen who invite along friends — not necessarily C.C.R. men — for the evening). The reply came from Ted Bonner, journalist, wit, traveller and friend of Frank Cullen, who had invited a number of the motoring correspondents from the Dublin newspapers.

There was universal enthusiasm when a

Dublin Branch Annual Dinner 1984



Fr. Kevin, O.C.S.O., President, Kevin Dwan, President P.P.U., Desmond Windle, Ted Bonner, Frank Cullen, Chairman Dublin Branch.

special presentation was made to Noel Windle, outgoing President of the Union. Noel has long been the pillar and foundation of Dublin Branch. No man could better deserve the honour of the fine silver tray with which he was presented.

The Roscrea REVIEW draw took place at the dinner. This remarkable scheme, undertaken to put the finances of the REVIEW on a sound footing, yielded £5,000, as planned. Congratulations and well done to those who conceived, planned and executed the scheme.

After the close of formalities, a pleasant hour or two saw many old acquaintances renewed and old friendships revived. There was particular interest in the presence of four

pastmen who now captain leading rugby clubs: Tom Kavanagh (Bective); Jim Glennon (Skerries); Mick Sherry (Garryowen); Donal Spring (Landsdowne).

By 2 a.m. the formal proceedings had come to a close. But conversation, reminiscences and recollections continued long after.

The organising committee was: Frank Cullen (Chairman); Vivian Lavan, Michael Coyle, Terry Gleeson, Noel Hayes, Matt Hyland, Conor Massey and last, but not by any means least, Noel Windle. To all, our congratulations and our thanks for a first-class show.

Conor Brady

Reflections on a Presidency: 1974-84

Peter Garvey, O.Cist.



Fr. Peter Garvey, O.Cist.

The first thing I'd like to do is to explode the myth that parents offload their sons to boarding school, and thus abdicate their responsibility. In my experience nothing could be further from the truth. The most abiding memory of the past 12 years is the overwhelming number of magnificent parents and happy and idealistic families that it's been my privilege to know. As a result of that experience I could not identify with the pervading pessimism about family life. That is not to underestimate the magnitude of the task that parents and families face in creating such a family life. There is a lot of work in it and many sacrifices have to be made, but it is both possible and worth the effort.

St. Thomas Aquinas formulated a philosophical principle — "virtus in medio stat" which could be freely translated "wisdom is found in a balance between two extremes". It constantly applies to the school situation and one of the sad memories is of one extreme or other prevailing and the consequent damage done to the boy. To find the balance between never looking at a school report and going through it with a fine comb (the latter is easily the most prevalent current extreme); between being fanatical about a boy's achievement on the sports field and not knowing he plays the game; between taking the head off him for a breach of school discipline and ignoring it completely; between looking on him as the perfect boy who can do no wrong and the imperfect boy whom one never expects to do the right thing; to find this balance must be

one of the key aims of parents and educators and the finding of it is one of the secrets of good parenting and good education.

There were four essential dimensions of school life that rarely caused major problems during the past 12 years — namely, academic standards, games, discipline and finance. My predecessor Fr. Patrick had raised the academic level of the school to a high pitch, and it was thanks to his work and the work of the teaching staff and Fr. Emmanuel and Fr. Ciaran that it retained that level. So much so that it was possible during the past 12 years to introduce the students to a wider variety of intellectual and cultural activities, such as reading music, debates, visiting lecturers, seminars on careers etc., contact with other schools, liturgies and prayer groups. Major contributions to this cultural and spiritual enrichment were made by Mr. Williams, Mr. Coughlan and all the staff.

Unfortunately it has to be said that despite the best efforts of the teaching staff, the basic desire for knowledge and learning for its own sake, the sense of wonder at the beauty and grandeur of the universe, the intricacies and discoveries and languages of man, have been seriously undermined. This has been caused by our appalling system of university selection on the sole basis of examination results, which forces the students into pragmatism and functionalism and leaves no room for the eternal search for wisdom and knowledge.

Sports invariably evoke an enthusiastic response in boys and the response of the school to that enthusiasm in recent years has been the availability of a wider range of games, a more formalised training programme for all age groups, and a much increased programme of matches with other schools. The contributions of Fr. Kevin, Mr. Hayes and Mr. Burke to organisation and training have been outstanding, as have those of Mr. McDonnell, Mr. Sheedy, Mr. Gerard Maher and Mr. Davey.

The rather rigid discipline of Roscrea may

have made life difficult for the boys (even though many succeeded in circumventing its strictures), yet it has been an invaluable foundation on which to build the work and character formation of the students. For this much of the credit goes to Fr. Kevin, my successor, who was dean of discipline since 1965, to Fr. Eanna and latterly to Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. Carroll.

In the area of finance, the meticulous administration of Fr. Gabriel and Mr. Kennedy ensured that there was never any anxiety about this vital sphere of school life. All of which pinpoints the twin pillars of school life — tradition and staff teamwork. The combination of these two plus the quality and character of the families who send boys to the school, are what make it strong and secure, harmonious and happy.

It is on the aspect of tradition that I'll conclude. To be a student at C.C.R. is to understand it and make it part of your life. There is no other adequate way. Hundreds of times during the past 12 years, I returned in memory to my own schooldays at C.C.R. to find the meaning and spirit of the place and to touch distantly the experience of being a boy of 13 or 17. From the sinking feeling of arriving on those cold steps for the first time, lonely and unknown, to exhilarating days on the sports fields which made the studies tolerable, to the happy hours spent on the stage in operas and concerts, to the permanent friendships growing from the comradeship and banter enjoyed in the refectory and dors, on the walks and in the "saloon", to the visits to the College chapel each evening where my love affair with Jesus grew to the point where I wanted to give my life to him in the monastery — these were the memories that shaped my understanding of the College and the boys, and that made me feel proud to be its leader.

Such memories are part of the heritage of every past student — cherish them!

October 7, 1984

The Union Gold Medal was won this year by **Fergus O'Connor**, a native of Ring, Co. Waterford. In the Intermediate examination, on which the competition is based, he gained seven "A's" and three "B's". Among the subjects he took were Latin, Art, and Music.

David Tarpy from Ardrahan, Co. Galway, got his Final in Agricultural Science this year, 1984.

Dr. Anthony Brady, Junr. qualified in Medicine in 1984. He was a son of Tony Brady the well known Motor Dealer who finished in C.C.R. 1958.

We note the passing of **Paddy Shanahan** 1947-8, Ballyfruita, Garryspillane, Co. Limerick. Paddy who was a nephew of Fr. Albert is survived by his wife and five children.

PASTMEN

Dr. Michael Delaney 1919 of Castlereagh, died on the 5th October, R.I.P.

John B. Sherry (1965), a chartered accountant, has been appointed Group Managing-director of Thomas Lydon and Sons, the Galway-based catering group which owns the Tea Time Express in Dublin. John who was previously General-manager of the Masstock Group in Saudi Arabia. He is a son of Seamus Sherry of Foxford (1933) who was President of the Union in 1958. The Sherry family has maintained nearly an unbroken line in the College to the present day. Fr. Cronan Sherry entered Roscrea in 1936 and became the founding Superior of the monastery in Tarrawarra, Australia, where he is now living.

Paddy O'Halloran (1954) formerly of Tipperary Town, is now living in Dublin. He has a son on a Soccer Scholarship and two daughters on Tennis Scholarships in the U.S.A.

Fr. Andrew Fennessy, O.C.S.O. 1952, was home on holidays recently from the Cistercian monastery of Tarrawarra, Melbourne, Australia. He told us that Fr. Cronan Sherry had presided at the marriage of Ulic Boyle, formerly of Terenure 1949, at Canberra, Australia recently. Some time ago both Frs. Andrew and Cronan attended the funeral of George Murphy who was a contemporary of Fr. Cronan in C.C.R. in 1935. He had spent most of his life in Australia. He had two monks from Roscrea, a nun from the hospital where he died and one for his former workmates at his funeral.

Address by Kevin Dwan

— Our New President

I feel very honoured at having received this chain of office of President of the Past Pupils Union of Roscrea and am privileged to be now addressing my fellow past pupils.

When I became a member of the P.P.U. back in 1956/57 I felt very honoured, but being elected President really puts the icing on the cake as it were.

It is exactly 30 years since I sat down to a meal in the refectory. Never did I think that 30 years later that I would be addressing some of my distinguished past pupils. When I arrived 30 years ago I was a shy country boy from Holycross and when I encountered the Masseys from Dublin and other city boys it made me more shy and reserved, but after some time I was able to match the city slickers and we got on like a house on fire.

Matt Hyland, John Lanigan Ryan and I were the first people to form the South Tipperary Branch in 1956/57. Matt was our first President and John our Secretary. Our first function was in Hayes' Hotel, of which you all know. I was the disc jockey that night which consisted of playing a few rock and roll records. We had about 30 past pupils, their wives and girlfriends. That was our humble beginning but we went from strength to strength with the incoming Secretary Rev. Hogan.

We came to a point where we had to refuse people as the crowds were getting bigger and bigger. In all these years with a surplus of money we went into Catholic Action. We paid for the education of a clerical student to the priesthood in the Pallotine College, Thurles.

I feel strongly at the moment and so do our members of our branch headed by our new Chairman Mr. Michael Roche, that we should co-ordinate all the activities of the

branches of the Past Pupils Union and with the surplus money give something worthwhile to a charity each year.

We also have a big problem in the present recession with so many students leaving our college and also graduating from university with no possibility of employment. We have many past pupils in very high places in private and public industry in Ireland and other countries and my wish in the P.P.U. would be to make contact with these people to see if through them we could secure positions and futures for our students. I do feel we owe this to our fellow brethren and our fellow past pupils.

The idea of associate membership of Roscrea Past Pupils Union which would include wives of past pupils and parents of students has been raised by Fr. Dermott at this year's A.G.M., I do feel Fr. Dermott is very right in his views as we in the South Tipperary Branch have experienced our wives looking after the various functions that we have had over the past couple of years and we would never have been so successful if it were not for their hard work and dedication.

Finally to Noel Windle I thank him most sincerely for all the hard work and dedication he put into the affairs of the Past Pupils Union while he was President and I thank the Central Committee for having the confidence in selecting me as their new President.

Noel Windle has been an excellent President in every possible way. A most genuine, dedicated man who worked very hard with all the Union activities. I would say that Noel never missed a meeting from the Central Committee for the past 4/5 years. Any rugby matches that the College played, Noel was always there to cheer and to organise the catering afterwards. For Branch



functions at the various branches which are numerous, he never failed to show his presence. I thank you Noel, and hope that you will give me every guidance in my years of office.

I am glad to see Fr. Dermot our Secretary, we know he has not been well and should be convalescing. Because of his dedication and sincerity to all aspects of the Past Pupils Union he never fails to attend.

Where would we be without him! He has been our excellent Secretary for a good many years and I hope, please God, that he will be well soon to carry out his good work as Secretary of the Past Pupils Union for many years to come.

South Tipperary — Function

The Annual Dinner Dance of the South Tipperary Branch took place on October 26th in that part of the gentle environs of Thurles which boasts of Kevin Dwan's home and the Golf Club. It was in the latter that the major part of the evening took place, but the former figured very prominently in the later proceedings when Saturday's dawn was heralded in by the more enduring of the Roscrea men and their ladies.

The Branch Chairman, Michael Roche of the demure smile, welcomed his guests in his own inimitable way. It was obvious to all, as the evening developed, that he is approaching the position of Chairman with vigour and freshness and, clearly, sees his role as being much more than a figurehead.

Fr. Kevin, carrying out his first official social duty as President of the College moved among the revellers with an effortless ease that bore all the hallmarks of one who had spent earlier years in the world of the movie executive, charming males and females alike.

One mother was heard to remark that if he was an example of the powers-that-be in Roscrea, then even her sensitive son would be happy there.

This function was also a first for our new Union President, Kevin Dwan, and he took full advantage of home ground to let himself go. Looking resplendent in his recently refurbished chain of office which he wears with obvious pride and delight — he didn't take it off once, not even at six o'clock the following morning — he followed Michael Roche on the podium — a difficult act to follow — and thanked those who had travelled long distances, particularly, for their presence. As the night progressed he went from mellifluous eloquence to a rendition of *I did it my way* and other more mundane numbers, delivered with such snap and élan as I haven't seen since the Cats' Concerts of the Fifties.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Lucullan repast that was prepared for the

large throng. I noticed Pat O'Shea, who vigilantly guards the reputation of the South-East Branch as being the leaders of epicurian extravagance on the Union circuit, look anxiously at John Keohane across the laden tables as if to suggest that they had discovered a rival for the rosette of excellence. Noel Windle let out his belt a notch or two and declared that, what with this spread and the imminent prospect of the Park Hotel, Kenmare, followed by Kilkenny, he would have to postpone his proposed diet for another few weeks.

On a serious note, Michael Roche, in announcing the raffle, asked for a minimum of a fiver a man for tickets. All the proceeds, would go to the Ethiopian Famine Relief Fund. The amount subscribed, five hundred and fifty pounds, speaks for itself.

This splendid evening started the Union's annual social whirl and it must be a propitious augury for a memorable season.

Conor Massey

The REVIEW Fund Half-way at £10,000

The total fund now stands at £10,000 which represents the efforts of various branches of the Union. We are delighted to learn that the Dublin Branch has now reached its allocated target of £6,000, £2,000 of which is already safely in the review fund account. The balance of £4,000 was raised by way of "The Review Club Draw", brainchild of Frank Cullen, Dublin Branch Chairman. This was a 20-1 draw offering a total prize money of £5,000 with the first prize of £2,000 together with 24 other prizes. The draw proved an outstanding success and was in fact oversubscribed in the end. The drawing of the lucky winners was a highlight of the recent Dublin Branch Dinner (see separate report). Due to limited space we are unable to publish a list of the winners here. Congratulations to Frank Cullen and his team.

The target date for the raising of the balance of the review fund is May 1985. Work to this end is well underway at present and we wish all Branches every success in their efforts. We also urge all pastmen to lend their support to the various functions and other fund raising activities being held in their area.



Senior Rugby Club Captains left to right: Tom Kavanagh (Bective), Jim Glennon (Skerries), Fr. Kevin (President C.C.R.), Donal Spring (Lansdowne), Mick Sherry (Garryowen). Inset John O'Callaghan (U.C.G.).



Kenmare Weekend

The above photo is one of two guests savouring the splendour and relaxed atmosphere of the Park Hotel, Kenmare where the South Western Branch held their Annual General Meeting and Dinner Dance over the weekend of the 16th and 17th November. Thirty of those attending the Dinner Dance stayed over on Friday and Saturday night. After a warm welcome by Jim Murphy, a committee member South Western Branch and hotel manager, guests chatted over drinks followed by an excellent dinner with further conversation and musical diversion provided by Conor Massey on the piano until the small hours of the morning.

Saturday morning, in ideal bright frosty conditions motivated many to organise outdoor pursuits for the day. Father Dermot was to be seen (by those who were up) photographing the dawn and the interplay of early light on the frost and low lying mist. A golf outing on the adjoining 9 hole Golf Course was organised while others explored the varied and dramatic surrounding countryside. Saturday afternoon brought the arrival

of the remainder of the guests including the Chairman, Seamus Gallagher and his wife Eileen.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by a Sherry Reception and magnificent dinner, the closing ceremony of which was the presentation of golf prizes, Kevin Dwan taking first prize. Dancing and carousing then occupied the remainder of the evening until the very small hours of the morning. The retiring of the band did not stop the entertainment as Conor and others tinkled the ivories to provide the accompaniment to various renditions of well known Gilbert and Sullivan songs.

Among those attending were Donal McCarthy of Cork, Pat Buckley of Killarney, Michael and Dennis O'Donoghue of Kenmare and Michael Houlihan of Kenmare; Conor and Michael O'Flynn, Cahill Bredin, Conor and Rom Massey, Michael Coyle, Dr. Barney Sherry, Noel Wyndle, Michael Haydn and of course our President, Kevin Dwan and his wife.

Michael Coyle

Golden Jubilarians 1934/84

Fathers Michael Sherry and Joseph Power, O.Cists, celebrated their Golden Jubilee of their ordination to the priesthood on 15th August 1984.

Fathers Michael and Joseph are past students of the College. They entered on August 15th 1926. Eight years later to the day both were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Lee on August 15th 1934. Father Michael with the late Father Benignus were the first editors of the *Fiolar* in 1929.

Fathers Michael and Joseph made their solemn profession in 1931. One year later both were members of the College Training Staff. In 1934 Father Joseph was appointed Dean of Discipline in the College and held this job until 1948. Father Michael held many offices in the Monastery including Bursar until 1946. In 1946 he led the Nunraw foundation and his life since then has been one of service to our Monastery and Nunraw. Father Joseph was Prior of the Abbey here in Roscrea from 1949 to 1960. We had many changes and new appointments on August 15th 1960. Father Joseph was then appointed sub prior, an office he held until 1981. For many years Father Joseph has been confessor both in the Monastery Secular Church and to the boys in the College.

To two great Monks and Priests we say thank you for your years of faithful service to Mount Saint Joseph, to Nunraw and to the Cistercian College. May God bless you both and grant you many more years of happiness in his service.

Union Day

Union Day was held on Sunday, October 7th, and a good representation of wide-ranging vintages of pastmen, some with their families, enjoyed the varied attractions of the day which was blessed with wonderful weather.

The Abbot celebrated the Union Mass at 11 o'clock and this was followed by lunch in the Billiard Room.

The A.G.M. began at 1.30 with our outgoing President, Noel Windle, in the chair. Noel spoke of the honour that had been his for the past two years and how proud he was to have worn the chain of office. He paid particular tribute to the hospitality he had been accorded at the branch functions he had attended and to the total commitment he had encountered in all the officers of Central Committee and at Branch level. Fr. Dermot gave a full run-down of the state of the Union and thanked those who had begun collecting for the Review Fund, reminding everyone that next May was the deadline for achievement of our target of £20,000.

Kevin Dwan was then formally installed as our new President to prolonged applause. He thanked Noel for his exemplary service over the past two years and expressed the hope that he could emulate the high standards of Noel and the recent Presidents.

The remainder of the agenda was attended to with a certain degree of expedition so as those present could watch the rugby and hurling games. This prompted a suggestion from the floor that, in future, perhaps the A.G.M.



The Control Centre of Union Day manned by Tim Maher and Frank Lynch.

could start a little earlier as it was felt that, since the meeting was the essential *raison d'être* of Union Day, it should not be rushed.

On the playing fields, the Past were successful in rugby, and the Present edged home by a single point in hurling. The Abbot's Cup, which was played for on the previous day at Roscrea Golf Club, was won by John Cahill, carrying the colours of North Tipperary. South Tipperary, in the person of Kevin Dwan, ran him a very close second. The Ladies Committee of the Club laid on a most excellent meal for all the participants which put everyone in good form for a sing-song, led by Rom Massey of the delicate phrase, which went on until four o'clock the following morning.

The climax of Union Day was the Dinner,

held in the refectory after sherry reception. Speaking after the delightful meal, Fr. Abbot told us of the great joy in the Monastery over the arrival of four novices after such a long barren spell; Fr. Kevin confided his hopes for his term as President of the College, and Kevin Dwan, with a few well-chosen words, expressed the appreciation of the Union for the support which is invariably extended to us by the college and epitomised by our General Secretary, Fr. Dermot.

A very notable personality who travelled down from Dublin was Henry Reilly who started his scholarship in Roscrea way back in 1915. We wish him many more years of attending Union Day and congratulate him on his outstanding loyalty to the College.

Conor Massey

Athletics 1984

The summer of 1984 was a very successful one for Roscrea athletes. The season started with the Irish Schools championship in Belfield on June 2nd. C.C.R. recorded three victories in technical events. Donagh Cronin won the senior pole vault in a new Irish Schools Record of 4.35 metres. Jim McCormack recorded a splendid victory in the junior hammer with a throw of 45.54 metres. On the track Padraic Grealy won the intermediate 400 metre hurdles in a time of 56.61 and Caoilte O'Connor was placed second in the 100 metre hurdles. The next meeting was the schools inter provincial in which Padraic Grealy won the 400 metre hurdles and Caoilte O'Connor finished second in the 100 metre hurdles. This meant that both boys gain international recognition. The international meeting between Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales was held in Crawley, Sussex. Padraic Grealy won Ireland's only Gold medal in the 400 metre hurdles in a time of 54.70. Meanwhile, Donagh Cronin was competing in the Catholic Student games in which he won the international pole vault championship for Ireland.

On the home front Donagh won the Irish under-21 championship and was placed second in the Irish Junior championship and third in the national senior championship. Padraic Grealy won the B.L.O.E. under-16 400 metre hurdles in a time of 54.63.



Donagh Cronin, Senior Pole Vault, new Irish record 4m. 35cm.

Thanks to our coaches Mr. Hayes, Mr. Davey, Mr. Coughlan and Mr. Carroll for their dedication to the athletes during the year. A special word of thanks must be given to Mr. Pat Creagh who despite the fact that he resides in Dublin travelled down twice

weekly to coach the hammer event. His efforts were rewarded when Jim McCormack won the gold medal in the All-Ireland junior hammer championship. So the great tradition of athletics in the school lives on and please God will continue to do so.

Reunion of the Class of '63: Some Personal Reminiscences

by

Gerard Lyne

It was Anthony Bardon's brain-child from first to last. He called me up one bright July morning in the National Library, his voice sounding across the space of two decades, and asked me if I'd realised it was all of twenty-one years since our passing out from Mount Saint Joseph's. An appropriate occasion, surely, for a class reunion. He had, he told me, already sold the idea to his brother James and also to Paddy Cunneen. Paddy, I know, sits high in the Councils of a well-known insurance corporation within a stone's throw of my own place of work. James, I gather, is attached to the Bank of Ireland's head office, while Anthony himself is one of a team currently engaged in overhauling the operations of another well-known insurance giant. This triumvirate of financial high-fliers. I reflect, could do with a mild cultural infusion. I am promptly enlisted.

Our activities over the next two months are co-ordinated through frequent round-table conferences in Jury's Hotel. Anthony proffers lists of names and addresses of pastmen (many of them obsolete, as we discover) and sets us to hunting down a score or more apiece. He and James have already been in touch with the college authorities. Feedback from pastmen starts coming through. The omens are favourable. We are encouraged to persist.

And so I find myself on the afternoon of Saturday September 22nd turning onto the road that leads from Portlaoise, through Mountrath, to our *alma mater*. It is a day of changing moods — bright sunshine interspersed with showers; splashes of early autumn colour already in the hedgerows; banks of light cloud drifting slow and stately across the wide midlands sky. Along this route the loneliness of the midlands is pervasive. It makes for reminiscence. I am coming to terms with the fact that twenty-one years is a long time. I recall the remark of the old islandman: "Twenty years a-growing, twenty years in blossom and twenty years declining: such is the life of man". By this reckoning, I tell myself wryly, our gathering will be in harmony with nature's season. I feel faintly apprehensive. The chasm of the years yawns wide. Bridging it may, I fear, make demands beyond our capacity to meet. I begin to think that Anthony may have sold us a non-starter.

Edging through the Saturday afternoon clutter of Roscrea town I glimpse the name of the Pathé Hotel. It recalls parental visits to the college — occasions of adolescent self-indulgence which invariably centred on the Pathé. A little self-indulgence seems now in order. I cross the threshold of the lounge feeling guilty as any schoolboy caught in the act of breaking bounds (regression is clearly pro-

gressing apace). Sitting against the far wall is Paddy Cunneen, solid and reassuring, smiling and waving a welcome. Beside him is the dapper figure of John Egan, instantly recognisable. As I hasten to join them the years seem suddenly to fall away — the spell is broken. There are other pastmen in the group — Pat White, Donal Sheedy, Tom Fay. I find myself fitting names to faces with surprising alacrity.

Twenty minutes later, trailing Paddy through the college gates, the smooth playback of reminiscence receives something of a shock. The guardian golden eagles of my memory have turned grey! A phenomenal development this, I reflect — the pastmen remaining perennial schoolboys — only the symbols that dominated their youth ravaged and reduced by time. "We've seen the greying eagles . . ." It does not fit. The author of the college anthem must, I think, be turning over in his grave. It suddenly occurs to me that the eagles are simply in the process of receiving a face-lift. I feel absurdly relieved.

Coasting up the tree-lined avenue now, the once-familiar landmarks leaping out — the lofty spire of the monastery church, visible for miles around; the guest-house, squatting incongruous on its low eminence; the college buildings themselves, as always somewhat cold and severe in outline, but altered somehow — smaller than I remember them — a trick, no doubt, of the shift in mental perspective between youth and middle age. I am glad to note that the little copper beech — familiar backdrop for photographs of the passing generations — still spreads its leafy branches on the lawn opposite the main door. That, at least, has survived unscathed the buffeting of two score winters. In the porch someone has hung out a sign reading "Welcome, Class of '63". Through the big swing-doors then, into the cavernous hall, and the time-machine taking over completely now, transporting me with headlong momentum back down the corridor of the years to that best of time and worst of times.

A door stands open on the left leading to what used to be known as the professors' room (do they still call it that?). Framed in the doorway is the unmistakable figure of Fr. Eanna, beaming a welcome. Rock of ages, untouched by time — effortlessly filling out each individual canvas in terms of parents, brothers, place or origin! The sasucal visit is transformed by his touch into a homecoming.

Pastmen from far afield are already at hand. Pride of place goes to Finian Lennon, flown fresh from New York, coolly cosmopolitan, his wonten air of mild cynicism belied by the twinkle in his eye. Others there are from corners not quite so far distant. Maurice Wilson has come by boat and bus from Brad-

ford. He has acquired a beard and the accents of the North Country. Gabriel Cummane has torn himself away from his Manx dental practice. In the hall I am warmly greeted by John Monks, who has left a similar practice in London to be with us. He looks youthful as any sixth former, urbane and distinguished as ever. Another voyager safely returned to port is Freddy Kirk — Captain Kirk as he has now become — looking behind dark glasses every inch the formidable maritime commander. The hall echoes a rich mellifluous baritone, distinctive as the Burren's botanical rarities. It is, of course, Desmond Houlihan. Noel McCormack, prominent political activist, farmer and auctioneer, has voted himself an evening off to attend. My old friend James T. Quain comes striding up, looking a little greyer than I remember him, burnt by the sun of a recent sojourn under tropic skies, but still very much the same James T. It is good to see him.

They are streaming fast through the great doors now. I glimpse the brisk figure of Teddy Forde who, I recollect, teaches in Dublin. Frank Canavan, who follows the same vocation in his native Tuam, comes striding in, large as life. I wonder if he has tickets to give away for tomorrow's All-Ireland Final. Fellow civil servant Tom Mulhern waves to me in greeting. I find myself readily fitting names to other faces — John Mulligan, Pat Chambers, Mick O'Neill . . . The hall continues to fill. We are joined by the Lord Abbot and Fr. Kevin who, with Liam Maher and Seán Bourke from the college staff are our guests of the evening. Our gathering is well-nigh complete.

Soon we are tramping towards the guest house and dinner. The file of middleaged pastmen strung out along the gravel drive somehow recalls for me the walks led by Fr. Gerard through the autumn fields of our boyhood — the woods ablaze with colour, the harvest golden in the sun, big flocks of marauding pigeons whirring above the stubble, the wind from the distant Slieve Blooms fresh in our faces — and so much of life still waiting to be lived. Happiest of memories.

Sherry circulates and the company unwinds and mingles easily. I am momentarily baffled by the identities of bearded Jim Dillon and Bernard Jones and of Gordon Ballantyne sporting a moustache of Edwardian proportions. The group photograph is a near disaster. Our company should have marshalled on the college steps as on so many similar occasions in days of yore. As it is mild chaos reigns and Fr. Dermot ends up snapping the gathering in two sections. When they come to link up the overlapping edges, I reflect, those caught in the middle may end up



In September of this year the Leaving Cert. class of 1963 returned to C.C.R. from the four corners of the globe to celebrate their twenty-first anniversary. The Union and the College are delighted with this innovation and will gladly lend their support to similar reunions of other years. Already, moves are afoot to follow this example.

looking like Frankenstein or the Cyclops.

By now it is after eight and the guests have discovered a hearty appetite. Seated opposite at table is Mick Sweeney, looking as if he might still be prefect of the Senior Dor. In fact, he now owns a restaurant on the outskirts of Cork city. Beside me are Willie Conway and Phil Hourican. I remember that Phil gave us quite a chase, but we eventually managed to run him to ground, far from his native Longford, at Bishopstown, Co. Cork. Willie, I learn, now runs the family farm in Tipperary. Fr. Eanna entertains us with an easy blend of reminiscence and up-to-date information concerning college affairs. We find ourselves remembering with affection the late Fr. Declan who, though he barked at many, bit none, and whose mild regime belied his rugged exterior. Out of the corner of my eye I note a jovial Harry Hunt presiding over a far table. He looks every inch the solid legal advocate. Behind me I observe the Lord Abbot and Joe Doyle in deep converse with Freddy Kirk who would seem to be expounding the perils of the maritime approaches to Valparaiso.

We listen to Anthony, our eloquent M.C., reading the roll of absent friends: Tony O'Rahilly (Canada); Liam Burke (Australia); John Farrell (South America); Ger O'Connor and Jack Houlihan (London). He names others nearer home who have been unable to attend: Peter Ahearne, officiating at a parishioner's wedding, Brendan Troy, "refing" a rugby match, Donal Lennon, Frank Mont-

gomery . . . In proportion to those actually present the list is not a long one. The Lord Abbot dwells on the changes that the years have brought. The authoritarianism of the past has softened, he tells us. "We made mistakes", he says, "but then we were as much afraid of you as you were of us". Fr. Kevin, the newly-appointed President, says that he regards our gathering as a tremendous morale booster. Tommy Grennan, resuming the burden of the house captaincy for an evening, speaks with affection of his association with the college. Liam Maher reminds us that it is the high noon of our day. He tells us that by far the greatest part of our contribution to family and society alike will be made in the course of the next decade.

A mild bacchanalian revel occupies the remainder of the evening. The venue, somewhat startlingly, is the vacant Ladies' Retreat House. In view of the fact that many pastmen are overnighting there the arrangement makes eminent good sense. Here finally the process of intermingling is completed. I meet with Noel O'Connor, Pat Ryan, Val Sadleir, Con Guiney, Pat Chambers, Philip McGovern . . . Good fellowship prevails on every side. Somebody sings *The Rose of Tralee* (superb rendition — company quite overwhelmed — not a dry eye in the house). Choruses swell to Willie Staunton's virtuoso piano accompaniment. The Brandon brothers entertain us with tuneful numbers (including their original *Roscrea News*). Efforts to reunite them as a quarter with Mick Carroll

and Finian Lennon prove, alas, unsuccessful.

Breakfast time finds us, if not bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, at least all present and correct. I note that the monastery's homemade brown bread tastes crisp and delicious as ever. Eleven o'clock sees us assembled for Mass in the college chapel. The setting is strongly evocative (outwardly nothing here has changed) the atmosphere quiet and reflective. The celebrant is Fr. Nivard. Prayers are offered for deceased pastmen Paul Lawless and Ben Shorten. I find myself recalling both quite clearly. Intimations, indeed, of mortality. Fr. Nivard's sermon dwells, appropriately, on the subject of change. The comfortable religious certainties of our youth, he tells us, are gone forever. Truth can only be attained and preserved through individual struggle. It is for each of us to accept the challenge in his own way.

Our pilgrimage is almost at an end. We meet briefly with some of the new student generation — a race as yet unborn when many of us last passed through these portals. A few of us accompany the house captain on a guided tour of the class rooms and dormitories. Ghosts lurk among the scarred desks and along the dim corridors. Responding to the traditional challenge one of our guides clears a bed in the Senior Dor at a single bound. I note that none of the senators from our side takes up the wager. All the red robins of our youth are fled . . .



The above is a photo of the South Tipperary Branch of the Union presenting a cheque of £1,000 to Catherine Cullen for the people in Ethiopia.

This money was collected at their function and also at Thurles Greyhound Track. In photo from left to right: Rev. Fr. Curtin, John Purcell, Mrs. Brid Doyle, Ms. Mary Keelan, Mrs. Michael Roche, Jim Doyle, Catherine Cullen, Con Moloney, Michael Roche and Kevin Dwan.

Christmas

Fr. Nivard Kinsella

Has it ever occurred to you how depressing the winter would be if we did not have a break in it? The long dark days, with their cold and rain; the grey skies, leaden and hanging over the very housetops; the bare trees and the dead earth — it would all depress you. From October the evenings drawing in more rapidly, the days shorter and the nights so long. If we did not have Christmas we would have to invent it. We need to react against the dark, to reassure ourselves that it will not last forever.

That is what our ancestors did. One of the great sights of Europe is the huge burial mound at Newgrange in Co. Meath. It was built about four and a half thousand years ago, in what we call the Stone Age, when men had neither iron tools nor (so far as we know) any form of transport other than the sled pulled by themselves. But the most interesting point about Newgrange is neither the size of the enormous stones used in its construction, nor the fact that the builders must have transported them long distances, but the recently discovered preoccupation of the builders with the sun. The doorway is so angled that it catches the rays of the rising sun on the three days before the winter solstice (that is December 21st, the year's shortest day), and the sun shines for about twenty minutes right to the back of the burial chamber, which is about sixty-five feet down a narrow passageway. In order to achieve this, the floor had to be angled too, so that the floor of the burial chamber is about six feet higher than that of the threshold. This is all the more a matter for wonder in that so far as we know the men of Ireland at that period had no knowledge of mathematics, had no science, and have left no other record of their religion.

But this they have left — a picture of a race who in the cold and dark of our northern climate yearned for the sun and the light, even for their dead, and who went to what must have been almost inconceivable trouble to capture that short moment of dawn light of those three or four darkest and shortest days

of the year. They needed to remind themselves, and if possible to reassure their dead, that there WAS light; that the sun would come back again; that warmth and life would come with it; that even on the darkest day there is a moment of light; and that light can penetrate even the tomb.

Man needs light. Without it he cannot live. He also needs reassurance in the dark. We are unwilling to admit it, but we are all of us afraid of the dark. It is fair enough that we should be, for it is really fear of the unknown. However much we know that science has dispelled the myths and the enchantments, we feel there could be something out there. You cannot see where you are going. You might trip or fall into a hole or step on something. The dark holds fears that the light alone can dispel.

We cannot take too much darkness. Up in northern Norway, where the sun never rises in the winter and the night lasts for twenty-four hours, they have a name for it. They call it "dark-sickness". Sometimes it gets a man down and he goes over the edge of sanity. The treatment is not tablets or psychiatry, but a plane ticket south as soon as possible. Get him to the light, to the sunshine and normality of life, and he will be alright. No one can take too much of the dark, for man is made for light and sunshine, for joy and lighsomeness.

And this is what Christmas is about . . . light and life and joy. It is about the life that in the beginning, that came into the world, and that was the light of men, when the darkness could not overcome. Christmas is a challenge as well as a celebration. It is a call and an invitation to enlighten the darkness in which men live, and in doing so to answer this deepest need of man's heart.

We wish each other happiness, without perhaps committing ourselves to bring it. We give each other presents, and sometimes just fulfil a duty in so doing. You even hear people saying they hate Christmas. Allowing for the posing of those who like to claim boredom with everything (an outlook that calls for pity



rather than blame), perhaps this is because of loneliness. The cold and the dark of the winter of loneliness has come upon them, and they need the reassurance, not just in word and passing, but in deed and truth, that there is goodness and joy in the world.

Christ is the "Light of the World". But is he? What difference has he made to the darkness within me and around me? At the very beginning God said "Let there be light" and in so doing enunciated a need and a law of human nature. And ever since men have sought the light, and followed it, and longed for it. And today they have not changed. But the light no longer comes from heaven, but from each one of us to the other. And when we say "Happy Christmas" this is what we commit ourselves to, this is what we are offering each other. That in the long winter of our life, we should light up each other's paths and dispel the loneliness and terror of the dark, and reassure each other, even to the echoing emptiness of the tomb. And this man needs, and this Christ came to bring. That there be light and warmth and joy in the heart of man.

The Past v. Present Debate will be held in the College on Saturday 26th January, 1985.

The O'Loughlins of Ballingate, Carnew, Co. Wicklow have been with us over the past ten years. Joseph who left in '76 has taken up farming and he is doing well and happy with his choice of career. Eugene who finished here in '77 is working hard on his Ph.D. in Trinity. He did very well in his Finals and got a Trinity Award for Marine Research. The third brother Brian, who finished in C.C.R. in '82, has completed his studies in the London School of Bakery. He is now working in the Kylemore Bakeries in Dublin. He now awaits the results of his City and Guilds exams. This he says is a fantastic course, covering a wide range of subjects from Art to Industrial Psychology, and if he never made another loaf of bread, his training would fit him for any business job.

PASTMEN

Luke Brady of Tullow, Co. Carlow is now with the Bank of Ireland in Manchester, England.

John Murphy (1973) another Tullow man, is now married and they have a baby daughter.

Thomas E. Byrne of Sillot Hill, Kilcullen, left C.C.R. in 1936 after five years of hard work. But it has since paid off, for he has been actively involved in the Supermarket business in Athy and Kilcullen. He also has a fashion shop in Naas. His brother James died last April — we commemorated his obituary on Union Day this year, R.I.P. — was the owner of the well known hostelry in Kilcullen, known as "The Hide Out". He is sadly missed.

Harry McGowan 1965-69 has returned to Castlereagh after many years of absence. He brings with him his first child, a boy now five months old.

John O'Regan 1983 First Freshman to be elected "Editor" (?) of the Film Society (ausitor?) in U.C.C.

The appointment of Kevin Dwan as President of the Union made changes in the Officials of the South Tipperary necessary. The following are the newly elected officers:
Chairman: Mr. Michael Roche, Urlingford.
Secretary: Mr. Conor Molony, Thurles.
Treasurer: Mr. John Purcell, Thurles.
Committee Members; Rev. Fr. Denis Curtin; Kevin Dwan; Jim Doyle; Michael Dwyer; John Quinn; Pat Lanigan-Ryan; Pat Rafferty.