



# ROSCREA REVIEW

No. 99 - NEWSLETTER OF THE CISTERCIAN COLLEGE ROSCREA UNION

Summer 2017

**A bright future beckons. The onus is on us, through hard work, honesty and integrity, to reach for the stars.**

*Nelson Mandela*



*Four first year students react with unbridled joy to Dom Richard's announcement on 16th March of CCR's future.*

## In this issue...

- The Future of CCR.
- Tributes to Frankie Bergin and Hugh McDonnell.
- New Board of Management for the College.
- Class Reunions.
- Ronnie Culliton: A Profile.
- Round up of Union events.

# The Future of CCR

To say it's probably been the most tumultuous few months in the 112 year history of CCR is surely putting it mildly! The announcement of Friday 17th February, while most immediately affecting the current pupils, their parents and the staff, sent shock waves throughout the CCR diaspora scattered all over the world. Tears were shed and feelings of regret mingled with thoughts that a school with as eminent a history as CCR just shouldn't be closing down.

And some people decided that they were determined to see that CCR **WOULD NOT CLOSE DOWN!**

Meetings like the one in the County Arms, Birr on Wednesday 22nd February are often just occasions for people to vent their feelings of regret, frustration and even anger, but never lead to any concrete outcome. From the beginning it was apparent that this one was going to be different. An Action Group was formed, mainly involving parents and pastmen: a number of meetings were held with Dom Richard and on Friday 24th February he gave a commitment that no action to close the College would be taken before St. Patrick's Day.

In years to come, someone may write the story of all that happened over the following three weeks. Parents, College Staff, pastmen of all ages worked flat out to get the message across that CCR could and would be saved. The hard work was accompanied by the best possible example of leadership – leaders who were committed themselves and could convince others that the venture could succeed. No matter how much emotional attachment a parent or a

pastman might have to CCR, he or she would not be likely to pledge, still less donate, one, two ten or a hundred thousand euro, pounds or dollars to a venture without some prospect of it being a successful and worthwhile investment. Ronnie Culliton, Andrew Cody, Padraic Ó'Máille, Bill O'Brien, Fergal Cox, Paul Davey, Graham Ross, Arthur Spring and others are to be commended for the sheer credibility they brought to the venture.

Early in March, when things were very much in the balance, a survey seeking expressions of interest was organised members of the Parents' Association and staff assisted by pastmen Denis Delaney, Gareth Doorley, David Ryan, Conor Loughnane, Peter Ormond, Steven Miller, Barry Liffey, Tim Meaghar and Paul Davey. This involved distributing 15,000 flyers to schools in the Laois, Offaly and North Tipperary.

Then on 16th March, Dom Richard made the announcement that in the light of the submission to the Trustees from the CCR Action Group, the monastic community had decided that Cistercian College would remain open and extend its enrolment options to include 5-day and day boarders, and that the Trustees would immediately begin the process to appoint a Board of Management.

While the Abbot's letter to pastmen described that day as one of the most joyous in the history of the College, and said that they had witnessed a small miracle over the previous four weeks, of even greater significance was the fact that when it came to nominating five members to the Board of Management, the

Trustees chose three CCR pastmen Ronnie Culliton, Andrew Cody and Jack Kennedy, along with Brother Malachy from the Monastery and Sr. Ann O'Donoghue of the Loreto order. Sr. Ann was until recently the Principal of St. Aidan's Community School in Brookfield, Tallaght and brings huge experience to the Board. The Board which also has three staff members, Catherine Smyth, Jim McManus and Kevin Kelly and two parents Sinéad Lawlor and Peter Murphy, has been up and running since April and has been extremely busy.

A Status Update was emailed to pastmen on the Alumni database on 8th June and can be had on request from the Alumni Office. This was an extremely positive document which gave details on the Board and its work of so far, its plans for the near future under the headings: Fundraising, Capital Expenditure, Enrolments for 2017 and beyond, the Scholarship/Bursary Programme, Marketing/Communications, Teaching and Learning, Boarding, Finance and Strategic Plan. This latter will be developed under the Chairmanship of Professor John Geary (CCR 1975-'80), Professor of Industrial Relations and Human Resources at UCD School of Business prior to the end of 2017. The update also contains biopics of the Board Members. All told it runs to just over 12 pages and is a testament to the great work done by the Action Group and the Board these past few months, and offers great hope for the future of CCR.

The Strategic Plan will help the College return to financial stability through integrated enrolment, financial and fundraising strategies.

As an additional benefit, the plan will help with both enrolments and fundraising. Parents are more likely to send their sons confident in the knowledge that the College's future is guaranteed and donors are more likely to support a College that has a clear vision and a strategy to make it happen.

***The Board recognises that key to a successful strategic plan is unity of purpose and the Board is committed to engaging as early and as widely as possible in the process.***

The Board wishes to keep the aims simple and they are;

1. Achieve excellence in the accomplishment of our core mission, the education of boys.
2. Plan for financial stability within 3 years and long term financial equilibrium.
3. Retain the Schools unique ethos.

The Board of Management is delighted that Professor John Geary has agreed to Chair the committee that will produce this integrated strategic plan prior to the end of 2017 dealing with all aspects of Cistercian College.

As well as his role in UCD he is Honorary Professor at the Marco Biagi Foundation, Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Italy. A native of Rathkeale County Limerick, after leaving CCR he obtained his primary degree in NUI Maynooth and studied for his Doctorate at Oxford. In the past, John worked at Warwick Business School and held visiting professorships in Italy and Norway. He was the first Director of UCD's College of Business and

Law Graduate School and, until recently, was Director of Doctoral Studies at the UCD Michael Smurfit School of Business. He is the co-author of many books including *Partnership at Work: The Quest for Radical Organizational Change*. He has contributed to the coverage of news stories on work and employment on TV and radio, including RTE's Prime Time and This Week programmes, and in The Irish Times and the Industrial Relations News.

A number of committees will examine a large range of issues and make recommendations for key improvements over the next six years and should report no later than 31st of October 2017. The Board of Management is looking for past pupils to assist them by becoming involved in these committees. The Co-ordination Committee will then be tasked with integrating the aims of the various committees and asked to complete their work in November 2017 bringing all the reports together into one unified plan.

One cannot leave this subject without mentioning Andrew Cody. Like all of us he was shattered by the February 17th announcement. Like most of his age group and older, he knew very little about social media, except that they have great influence. So, he started a Save CCR Facebook page not knowing what effect it would have. Within two days it had 2,000 followers and today has 3,500, this number growing weekly. Thousands of people accessed it and Andrew learned new skills of editing video and incorporating music and speech which he has used to post wonderful items on the now renamed CCR Support Group page. Recent past pupils Simon Meagher, John Cummins, Brian Diffley and Sam Hastings prepared

an emotional video entitled "We are only getting started" which was viewed by hundreds of thousands of people. And though older pastmen mightn't realise it, the reality is that many of today's parents are regular users of Facebook and other social media. If you haven't seen it click on <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=ccr%20support%20group> - in particular I loved his inspirational collage backed by the song "You Raise Me Up" and the more recent one "Dreamers and Doers".

Many events have taken place recently – including an Open Day, on 1st April which was planned and superbly executed in less than 10 days by a group of parents, staff and pastmen, and an U-12 Hurling Blitz on 20th May that saw approximately 500 boys representing 32 teams from 9 counties enjoying themselves thoroughly. In the photographs from the day on the Facebook page are two huge groups of boys at the front steps of the College. The organization of this, and the feeding of the multitude of c.1000 must have been a mammoth effort. Well done to all concerned!.

I have tried to give a snapshot of recent activity around the one ambition we all share – the future of an extraordinary educational institution that has served us well for over 100 years. I have never seen such interaction and co-operation between parents and pastmen working together for a common cause. Generations yet unborn will salute those who took up the challenge, rolled up their sleeves and worked so hard to secure the long term future of the school we love so well!

*Here's to the next 112 years!*

# EDITORIAL

This editorial will be short and sweet.

I usually try to attend the Rugby Support Group's Annual Grand Slam Draw in late January – thanks to the generosity of pastmen who buy tickets over the internet I usually have plenty of counterfoils to put into the drum for the draw. This year, I was asked to baby sit my one and only grandchild on the Sunday night, so I drove down to Junction 14 on the M7, the day before, met Ronnie Culliton for coffee and transferred the tickets. We had a grand chat and both of left for our respective homes. To my huge surprise, Ronnie rang me at about 9.30 on the Sunday night with the news that my name was first out of the drum and that I could look forward to a trip to Cardiff to watch Ireland play Wales on 10th March. How appropriate that I wasn't there on the night!

Little could either of us imagine as we spoke then, what dramatic events were to unfold over the next few weeks.

Here is a long overdue edition of a Review that covers events of 2016 and even earlier. A lot of it was ready for the printers last February, but events since then have demanded people's attention in a

big way. This edition has to send a positive message and based on the content I have no doubt that it will. The work of the Save CCR Action group and latterly the new Board of Management has been absolutely extraordinary, as can be gleaned from some of the pieces inside.

Those who have been following events on Facebook and receiving updates online will no doubt be up to speed on the present state of affairs, but here we offer a printed account which we hope all pastmen will appreciate. Ronnie Culliton and his team have done a great job so far, but in reality, the work is only beginning.

The next edition of the Review will be the 100th – a milestone in the life of any publication. It was started back in the 1960s by Fr. Cathaldus (James) Ryan, was edited for years by Fr. Dermot O'Colmain, and later Gerry Maher and Gearóid Ó Briain before I took on the mantle in 2001. I will be asking some of our most prolific writers to contribute to what will be a special edition, but don't feel the need to wait to be asked. The Review always welcomes contributions from pastmen of whatever vintage. There has been a great coming together of pastmen in recent months – let's keep it going!

*Pat Hanratty*  
*pathanratty@gmail.com*

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## BRENDAN FEEHAN RESIGNS AS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Statement from BOM Chairman:

I want to wish Brendan good luck and our very best wishes in his new role from September. Brendan has been at the helm in CCR for probably the most tumultuous 3 1/2 years the College has ever been through.

He has been incredibly committed to CCR over that time and has worked extremely hard in his role as President. I want to thank him personally for his great support and work through the past 4 months since 17th February, when it was first announced that CCR may have to close.

It has been a pleasure to work with him since the inception of the new Board of Management on 26th April and we are very grateful for his continued support of the College while we seek a successor for this extremely demanding role.

Whatever happens in the future, Brendan will always be remembered for being at the helm of CCR on one of its most glorious ever days, 17th March 2015!

*Ronnie Culliton.*  
*27th June 2017*



*Brendan Feehan at the RDS after CCR's historic Leinster Cup win on St. Patrick's Day 2015.*

# RONNIE CULLITON - A PROFILE

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF CCR

Ronnie Culliton is a past pupil of Cistercian College (Class of 1984) as was his father, uncle, brothers and cousins and he has two sons in the College (Lúc in TY and Cuan in 2nd Year). Ronnie was Chairman of The Action Group that successfully put together the proposals to the Abbot to keep the College open.

He has been working in the Fund Management Industry for over 26 years having started in regulation with the London Stock Exchange in 1990. He then worked for the two largest fund managers in Ireland before joining Deutsche Asset Management in 2001.

He took up his first Board position of a regulated investment business firm in 2005 with Barclays and has now sat on the Board of nine different regulated entities. Just before that in 2003 he had taken a few years out of the industry to act as Finance Director of an international on-line travel business that floated on the AIM market in London in 2004 successfully raising \$44m in the process.

As well as acting as Director to these businesses, he provides lifestyle financial planning advice to business owners as well as financial and tax advice to SMEs. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accounts in Ireland (ACA) and is a Qualified Financial Advisor (QFA).

OK, that's the officially authorised potted biopic! Here's what Andrew Cody posted on

Facebook some months ago.

## COMETH THE HOUR, COMETH THE MAN!

This phrase was uttered by the English bowler, Cliff Gladwin on 20th December 1948 in Durban, South Africa, when it appeared that all was lost against South Africa before he came into bat. He scored the winning run with the last ball of the match after the ball had struck him on the thigh. Afterwards, in the dressing room, he proudly showed all comers the bruise and said "I told you, 'cometh the hour, cometh the man',"

While the Save CCR campaign and group has many participants putting in enormous effort, there is one man who has worked so hard that gargantuan seems to be the most appropriate word to describe his contribution. His leadership throughout the process is an example to us all. For those of us who know Ronnie Culliton for many, many years it comes as no surprise. Whatever happens there is no doubt that all CCR men, past, present and hopefully future owe him an enormous debt.

The concept of servant leader is an ancient one and there are 10 characteristics of critical importance. They are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Ronnie has displayed each and every one in spades.

His leadership reminds me of the Cistercian philosophy of education.

*"There are those who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge; that is Curiosity. There are those who seek knowledge to be known by others; that is Vanity. There are those who seek knowledge in order to serve; that is Love."*

*St Bernard of Clairvaux.*

Ronnie, we cannot thank you enough for what you have done so far – our hopes and prayers are with you in the weeks, months and years ahead. *Go maire tú an chéad!*



*Photo shows Ronnie and his wife Sharon with the Abbot's Cup which he won in 2013 and 2014.*

# CCR Board of Management

*The new Board of Management held its first meeting in April. This photo was taken on the occasion.*



*Back row: Andrew Cody, Jack Kennedy, Jim McManus, Kevin Kelly.  
Front Row: Peter Murray, Bro. Malachy oco, Ronnie Culliton (Chairman), Sinéad Crowley.  
Absent from the photo: College President Brendan Feehan and Catherine Smyth who were away on a school trip and Sr. Ann O'Donoghue IBVM whose appointment to the Board had not been finalized at the time.*



*Sr. Ann O'Donoghue IBVM*



*Catherine Smyth*

# SPECIAL CC MEETING

As the campaign to save CCR was gathering momentum, Union President Pádraic Ó Máille called a special meeting of the Union's Central Committee for 5th March 2017, and a very positive workmanlike meeting it was. This photograph was taken afterwards – in attendance were 12 former Union Presidents (including three Honorary Life Vice Presidents) and others who have given sterling service to the Union over the years.



*Front row: Liam Spooner, Sean Murphy, Union President Pádraic Ó Máille, Johnny Dolan, John F. Walsh, College President Brendan Feehan, Union General Secretary and Alumni Officer Katherine Donovan.*

*Back row: Frank O'Meara, Frank Thompson, Conor Massey, Union Treasurer Pat Keane, Aidan McNulty, Pat O'Shea, Jim Keating, Pat Hanratty, Michael Houlihan, Gerald McCarthy, Michael McNamara.*

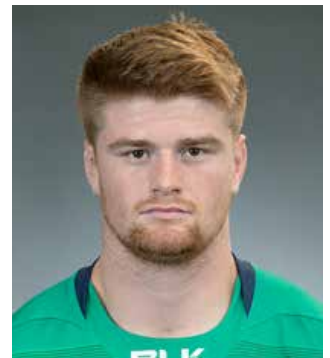
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## CCR AND CONNACHT RUGBY



*Tiernan O'Halloran*

All of us, even those of us who are diehard Leinster supporters were delighted at Connacht's success in winning the Pro 12 in 2016, and especially as it involved two CCR pastmen, Tiernan O'Halloran (Class of 2008) and Sean O'Brien (Class of 2013). Both men have established themselves at the heart of the current Connacht squad, indeed Tiernan has notched up a few caps for Ireland and we hope Sean will soon follow him.



*Sean O'Brien*

# Dublin Branch Business Lunch 2016

The fourth of the branch's Business Lunches took place on 4th March 2016 – on one of the last outings the Leinster Senior Cup had while in CCR's hands. The Guest Speaker was former Union President John Sherry who regaled us with stories from his career in his own inimitable way.

A Business Lunch was scheduled for 3rd March this year, but in the wake of the announcement of 17th February it was decided it would be unfair to the speaker to address an audience who would only have one thing on their mind. The event has been re-scheduled for Friday 22nd September 2017.



*Kevin Keegan (CCR 1983-'88), Maurice Phelan and Mark O'Byrne (both CCR 1987-'92).*



*Sean Byrne (CCR 1993-'99), Graham Ross (CCR 1989-'95) and Michael Brannigan (CCR 1987-'92).*



*John Sherry (CCR 1960-'65) entertaining the troops, with the special guest we hope will be with us again in the not too distant future.*



# Abbot's Cup 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016

On a fine Autumn day which allowed for good scoring no one was able to beat the 42 points of Eamon Maher, playing in the event for the first time in several years. It was a very popular victory – Eamon's late brother Gerry played a huge role in organizing the day for many years.

Full results:

|                       |                                       |                     | Handicap | Score             |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Prize | Abbot's Cup & Union President's Prize | Eamonn Maher        | 16       | 42 Pts            |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize | College President's Prize             | Ronan Murray        | 13       | 41 Pts            |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize |                                       | Pat Sheedy          | 14       | 36 Pts CB         |
|                       | Gross Prize                           | Brian Murphy        | 9        | 38 Pts (29 Gross) |
|                       | Visitors Prize                        | Sharon Culliton     |          | 36 Pts            |
|                       | Student Prize                         | Sam Murphy          | 5        | 32 Pts            |
|                       | Longest Drive                         | Niall Morrison      |          |                   |
|                       | Nearest the Pin                       | Brian Duggan        |          | (Nine Inches!)    |
|                       | Fr. Dermot O'Colmain Cup              | Richard O'Connell   |          | 36 Pts            |
|                       | Class of 1986 Prize                   | Pat Murrily         | 12       | 36 Pts            |
|                       | Class of 1976 Prize                   | Fr. Enda Cunningham | 9        | 34 Pts            |
|                       | Class of 1956 Prize                   | Jim O'Shea          | 23       | 25 Pts            |

This year's event will be on 9th September and it is hoped that the reunions of the classes of 1967, 1992 and 1977 will swell the numbers participating! Many thanks to Katherine Donovan and the boys of Transition year for their help in organising the 2016 event.



*Dom Richard Purcell presenting the Abbot's Cup to 2016 winner Eamon Maher.*

# Dublin Dinner 2016

The 2016 Dublin Dinner was held in the Davenport Hotel on 22nd October – the earlier date being chosen to avoid clashing with the Autumn Rugby Internationals. There was a lively gathering of pastmen and guests, and we were treated to a fantastic speech by Union President Pádraic Ó Maille, in which he encouraged, entertained and inspired us in equal measure. Pádraic has obviously recovered from the

illness which prevented him being our guest speaker in 2014, and his SMACHT Academy goes from strength to strength. See [www.omaille.ie](http://www.omaille.ie)

Little did we know at the time the busy Spring he and others would have in 2017! There were fewer of the younger union members this year, which was unfortunate as they always provide an added atmosphere. The CCR President,

Mr. Brendan Feehan was unable to attend, but Katherine Donovan attended and was presented with a One4All voucher as an expression of thanks for her work as the Union Secretary.

There were several guests from other Unions – see photo. Despite lower than usual numbers at the event the evening was enjoyed by all and extremely well run by the staff at the Davenport.



*Maeliosa Power (Clongowes Wood), David McCormack (St. Mary's College), Stephen Tonge (CUS), Paddy Bolger (Gonzaga), Dublin Branch Chairman Sean O'Donnell, Union President Padraic Ó'Maille, Philip Treacy (Kings Hospital), Andrew Cree (Terenure College) and Sean O'Farrell (St. Michael's College).*



*Union President in fighting form as he gives the keynote speech at the 2016 Dublin Dinner.*



*Former Union President Jim Keating has some advice for the new incumbent!*



*Aidan McNulty, Katherine Donovan and Seán O'Donnell.*



*Stalwarts of the Class of '68 Jim Ryan, Pat Keane, Michael Haugh, Jim Keating, Michael Coyle, Pete Hogan and Leo Crehan.*



*Pat O'Shea, Gerry Moloney and Declan Martin.*



*Pat and Joe O'Shea*



*Chairman Seán O'Donnell presenting a voucher to Union General Secretary Katherine Donovan.*



*Mattie Keane, Tim Foley and John Taaffe, all Class of 2015*



*Brendan Phelan, Rory Burgess and Donal Taaffe.*



*Paul Murphy who took over as Dublin Branch Chairman in February 2017.*



*John McDonnell with the Union President.*



*Michael Keane, Tony O'Grady and Don Harrington.*

# Dublin Golf 2016

As I write this preparations are well under way for the 2017 event, but last year's should be recorded before we all forget what happened that day.

History will record that the event was hosted in Elm Park Golf Club, of which the then Union President Mark Ryan is an esteemed member, that 50 played golf and 45 attended the dinner, and a very good dinner it was too.

There was drama, however at the beginning and the end of the day. John Cunningham who had won the Matt Hyland trophy at his first attempt in 2015 couldn't play due to family commitments – indeed those family commitments saw him at Dublin Airport early that morning and a rendezvous with this scribe near Junction 11 on the M50 was arranged. Alas, somebody forgot to pack the trophy and when John and I spoke at about 8.30 a.m. we realised we had a crisis on our hands.

Pádraic Ó Máille has spoken recently about the *can do* approach of CCR folk. This was a case of 'Desperate situations need desperate remedies' of 'how the -- can we get the Cup from Roscommon to Dublin?!' Enter that man of many parts, John Sherry, who lives in Galway, but would be heading to Dublin for the golf.

A quick phone call was made, but there was no reply. Typically, the Sherrys realised there was a missed call and John rang me back. "Have you left home yet John?", I asked. "Yes, but only just" was the answer. Relief was

the feeling and a plan was hatched whereby John Cunningham's wife drove from Roscommon to Athlone with the Cup and the two Johns met up somewhere near Athlone and the Cup was brought to D4, much to the relief of all concerned. They even had a photo shoot of the transfer which thanks to the wonders of modern technology, was sent to me within minutes to reassure me that all was well and that the West was awake!

On the course we had a wonderful day's golf. The course was in excellent condition and there was plenty of drama – Pat Coady, one of "the Nico's gang" who regularly support the outing and who played what he called "the round of his life" came in with 39 points! Well done, Pat! Alas it only qualified him for the Visitors' prize!

The big trophies went as follows:

**Matt Hyland Cup:**  
**Ronan Whitty 36 points**  
**(Count back)**

**Noel Windle Cup:**  
**Thérèse Kilcline**

**Peter Garvey Trophy:**  
**Mark Ryan 36 points.**

We don't really need to tell the world about the mix up that occurred, and had prizes initially awarded to the wrong people – it showed the importance of avoiding slow play, marking cards carefully and scrutinising them with absolute diligence! And of a forgiving attitude!

Sean Garvey made the presentation of the Dom Peter

Garvey prize, and spoke of his late brother's love for this event and his commitment to the Union.

Congratulations to the other winners:

**Runner Up (Men):**  
**Diarmuid O'Loughlin.**

**Runner Up (Ladies):**  
**Mary Romeri.**

**Team Prize Winners:**  
**Graziano Romeri, Emilio Cirillo and Pat Coady.**

**Team Prize Runners Up:**  
**John Sherry, Thérèse Kilcline and Diarmuid O'Loughlin.**

**Longest Drive:**  
**Jim McDonnell.**

**Nearest the pin:**  
**Brendan Phelan.**

*All told it was a wonderful day – looking forward to another on 23 June 2017!*



*Dublin Branch Chairman  
Seán O'Donnell addressing the  
gathering.*



***Team Prize Runners Up, Thérèse Kilcline, John Sherry and Diarmuid O'Loughlin with Union President Mark Ryan.***



***Union President Mark Ryan presents the Matt Hyland trophy to Ronan Whitty as Dublin Branch Chairman Séán O'Donnell looks on.***



***John Cunningham, the 2015 winner of the Matt Hyland Cup hands it back to John Sherry at a point somewhere West of the Shannon. I always thought each of these men was outstanding in his field, but this is surely taking it a bit too far!***



***Dublin Branch Chairman Séán O'Donnell presents the Dom Peter Garvey trophy to Mark Ryan.***



***Mark Ryan presents the Ladies Runner up prize to Mary Romeri.***



***Pat Coady receives the Visitors' Prize from Union President Mark Ryan.***

**As ever we are extremely grateful to those who sponsored the event:**

Accenture, Belleek Pottery Ennis, Byrne Wallace Solicitors, Comans' Wholesale Ltd., Commtech, Elm Park Golf and Sports Club, Goldcore, Gowan Group, Graphprint, Mark Ryan, Mason Hayes and Curran Matheson, Mazars, Michael McNulty & Co. Accountants, Nico's Italian Restaurant, O'Callaghan Hotels, O'Connell's Restaurant, Paddywagon Tours and Three Rock Capital Management.

**All told it was a wonderful day – looking forward to another on 23rd June 2017 when we will have sensational prizes sponsored by Ronan Cahir of Giftvenue.com!**

# London Dinner 2016



*This group photo was taken on the occasion of the London Branch Dinner in February 2016.*

*Back Row: Tim O'Dwyer, Pat O'Grady, Tony Bennett, Fergal Keane, Barry Bennett, Donald Gallivan, Dermot Hurley, Peter Murphy, Jim Egan, Katherine Donovan, John O'Shea, Manus Moran.*

*Front Row: Brian Flynn, Dom Richard, Kevin Flanagan, Jim Keating.*

*It was with deep regret that we all heard of the sudden death of Kevin O'Flanagan last October.*

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*Two of the stars of the 2015 and 2016 teams,  
Alan Tynan and Fineen Wycherley were part of the Irish team at the recent  
U-20 Rugby World Cup in Georgia.*

*The photos show them in action in the opening match against Italy.*



*Alan Tynan*



*Fineen Wycherley*

## FRANKIE BERGIN A TRIBUTE

**In October 2016 the entire Mount Saint Joseph community, and the town of Roscrea, lost a loyal servant and a true friend. All the posthumous clichés ring true about our beloved Miss Bergin; she was “a one off”, “larger than life”, and “a lady to her fingertips.” In a school staff well-populated with characters, Frankie had presence, enthusiasm and boundless energy. Most of all she was kind and she was fun.**

For five decades from her arrival in 1963, Frankie was at the centre of the performing arts in the College. She taught elocution and piano to students individually, and was hugely invested in their success. In the lead up to examinations, she laid on extra classes in the evenings to ensure that the best possible results were achieved. I am told that in the Sixties she established a music appreciation group for the boys. This involved listening to classical music and researching the lives of the composers. Frankie settled on the Record Society as its name but the then college president Fr. Patrick insisted on giving it a more Victorian flavour, referring to it as the Gramophone Society. Frankie was also in charge of the Junior Choir which sang at High Mass in the Monastery. She collaborated in this endeavour with her friend, the late Fr. Anthony Finnegan. They shared an interest in music and a mischievous sense of humour, and Fr. Anthony could also be depended on to stop the messing that might otherwise have occurred while Frankie was at the piano. Each year Frankie organised the Doctor Sherry

Cup, the College’s concert and competition to reward musical performance. Once again, she put in the hours in advance, ensuring that the entrants were up to scratch and would give the competition their best shot. There were no short cuts with Miss Bergin. Her duties changed as Ireland changed. Older past students recall her playing the organ at Benediction in the College Chapel on Sundays.

Of all the varied school activities in which Frankie was involved, the annual opera is perhaps the one that will forever be associated with her. By the time I came to the College in 1997 photographs of Frankie with the casts of different productions filled the massive showcase outside the Big Study Hall. She had a particular love of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein, but was not averse to experimenting, venturing into the world of Andrew Lloyd Weber with *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. But she returned again and again to her old favourites, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific*. As soon as a new academic year had begun a notice would appear on the door of Frankie’s room naming the show, the parts to be filled and the times for voice testing and auditions. Ever generous with her time, Frankie would meet with prospective actors in advance of the auditions, accompanying them on the piano. Coordinating a diverse group of schoolboys to perform a musical was a mammoth undertaking. In some years there was help from an outside producer and choreographer, but it was Frankie



who was the lynchpin, overseeing the programme of rehearsals, the organisation of costumes and the myriad other things that are required to make a performance happen.

In addition to her hard work, Frankie’s shrewdness was to the fore in getting the opera to the standard she required. The stage managers were always hand-picked for their practicality and strong personalities. It was a role that appealed to those who wanted a ticket out of study, and Frankie understood that perfectly. If rehearsals were not being taken seriously the doyenne of the opera was not above doing a dramatic walk out in which she would tell the assembled cast that they could put on the show themselves. On one occasion she went home and said she was not coming back. Needless to say, a dumb-struck cast sent its emissaries to apologise and rehearsals went without a hitch after that. On the night of a performance Frankie would take her place as conductor at the front of the stage with great

## FRANKIE BERGIN A TRIBUTE (Continued)

elegance and effortless poise. But before she did so, she would call the cast together backstage and lead a prayer to Our Lady of Good Success. Expectations were not lessened because it was a school production. If anything did not go to plan the performers would be told the next day. In one of these debriefings an irate Frankie observed: "I was horrified to learn that last night several members of the Junior Chorus left the dressing room and went to the shop at the interval. When you do that you break the illusion!"

Frankie must have been a striking addition to the College of the 1960s, perhaps the only woman who was not a nun or a member of the domestic staff. As an independent woman with her own career she was also unusual in the Ireland of that time. Past students who got to know her, whether in 1963 or in the second decade of the twenty-first century, speak of the same Miss Bergin, a kind and talented lady who loved young people and valued sincerity and loyalty in others. There was something exotic about Frankie with her perfect pronunciation and her beautiful manners, but she was also incredibly down to earth. She thought it was hilarious when a student assumed she was "the laundry lady" because the bags of washing were piled up outside her office for collection.

Frankie had a special relationship with the boys she taught and those she directed in the operas. Her focus was always on the task at hand but a concern for the welfare of the student was never far below the surface. If you were struggling in any way you had a friend in Frankie. She could

be mildly subversive, listening intently to a tale of school life while smoking a cigarette. A shrewd observer of the boys and of College affairs generally, her love of her work and of the Monastery was plain to see.

Given all the time and effort Frankie devoted to her job in the College, it is amazing to reflect on the contribution she also made to the town of Roscrea. She was the organist and choir director in St Cronan's Church, where she played at countless weddings, communions, confirmations and funerals in addition to the weekly Masses. In 2012 her contribution to the parish of Roscrea was acknowledged with the bestowal of a Papal honour, the *Bene Merenti* Medal. Frankie's faith was very important to her and she was thrilled by this award. A community person to her core, her activities in the town extended well beyond her important role in Church music. Frankie was a founder member of the Roscrea Musical Society and centrally involved in its productions down through the decades. She was also an active member (and former Lady Captain) of Roscrea Golf Club. In 2013 her service to the town was recognised at the Roscrea People of the Year Awards. Frankie also taught elocution and music in her home to generations of people from Roscrea town and I am reliably informed that this took place under the watchful gaze of an army of stuffed toys.

Apart from music, Frankie's hobbies included baking, attending auctions and watching sport. She pursued each of these interests with her characteristic energy and enthusiasm.

Baking was an extension of her generosity, as the cakes were invariably for others. Antique auctions brought out an unexpected commercial side in Frankie and she enjoyed the banter that went with them. She diplomatically supported both Tipperary and Offaly in hurling and was an avid Manchester United fan. A brilliant mimic, she could impersonate voices and body language with ease, but never with malice. She was tremendously sociable and had the ability to make any encounter feel like a special occasion.

In the final three years of her life, Frankie lived at Mount Carmel Nursing Home in Roscrea. It was a big wrench to leave her independent life, her job in the College and the home in which she took so much pride. She settled in time and had many visitors. She retained her sharp memory and the end came quickly. Her funeral, at which the current students sang, played instruments and along with past students and others formed a guard of honour, was a fitting tribute to her long, energetic and productive life.

Frankie made an enormous contribution to the College. One can point to the many obvious triumphs she had with shows and choirs and the other public things she did. But Frankie the extrovert also had another side, a discreet one where she befriended and supported boys who were away from home and in need of kindness and a chat. She was a great lady whose warmth, talent and innate goodness enriched many lives.

*Mark Coen (CCR 1997-2003)*



# South West Branch Dinner 6<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2016

As ever, the South West Branch Dinner was a most enjoyable occasion, ably hosted by Gerald McCarthy with Conor Brady and Union President Mark Ryan as special guests. Once again it was held in the lovely Sundays Well Tennis Club. Below are a collection of photographs taken on the night by Peter Sommerfield.

The Branch recently held another Dinner – a report will appear in the next Review.



*Union President Mark Ryan and Jim Keating.*



*Conor and Carmel O'Hara and Margaret O'Shea.*



*Gerald McCarthy and Brendan Hyland.*



*Jim Keating, Kevin Morrissey and Billy O'Neill.*



*Tom Coughlan and Katherine Donovan.*



*Mary and Maureen O'Neill.*



*Mick O'Neill and Aidan McNulty.*

# REUNIONS!

## REUNION OF CLASS OF 1956

The Class of 1956 celebrated their Diamond Jubilee at the College on Union weekend 9th-11th Sept 2016. It was their 5th Reunion get together starting with their 25th in 1981, followed by their 40th, 50th, 55th and now the 60th. They are actively now planning their 62nd get together in 2018, God Willing!

A long discussion took place at their Banquet Dinner which was held in the Guesthouse on the Saturday evening on whether they should wait a further 5 or 10 years but prudence prevailed and they are looking forward to Sept 2018.

To add to the uniqueness of the occasion the 3 former House Captains led by Pat O'Shea together with Dr. Donal Monks and Dr. Michael Meagher were not only in attendance but that they have attended all previous reunions: Michael Meagher travelling over from London and Donal from Gravesend, Kent. Terry Ashe who has been a consistent attendee since the 25th travelled from Glasgow for their celebration

### Highlight of the celebration

While some of the guys played in Abbot's Cup Golf Competition, others availed of the opportunity to tour the College Campus developments facilitated by the College President Mr Brendan Feehan and Union Secretary Katherine Donovan, The reception and tour by the President was much appreciated by all while others wandered through the peaceful ambience of the woods: the real highlight was having Dom Richard, Abbot of Mount Saint Joseph to meet, greet and dine at the Dinner on the Friday evening. Their special guests for the dinner on the Saturday night were Dom Kevin Daly and Dom Ambrose Farrington, Bolton Abbey.

For the record Dom Kevin was a former prefect of a Junior table and Junior Dor in 1953 and was subsequently President of the College for many years.

The Jubilarians were also delighted that the sSnior Dean of 1956, Fr. Ambrose, now aged 90 years and as sprightly as ever honoured the occasion by celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving in the College Chapel: at which all deceased classmates RIP were remembered. Also, those who were unable to attend and those who were not well or in hospital together with all members of the families of classmates were remembered.

To be greeted and welcomed at the Guesthouse after the Mass by 3 former Abbots, Laurence, Ambrose and Kevin together with Fr Abbot Richard was considered a tremendous honour by all and an occasion never to be forgotten. Unfortunately Fr Eanna who was Junior Dean at that time was unable to join them. The Jubilarians also felt honoured to have the facilities of the Guesthouse, it's ornate and historic sitting room and inner dining room made available to them. All were delighted to have individual en suite rooms... who could have asked for better!!

During the speeches Dom Kevin, acting as guest master, was formally thanked for laying on such a most enjoyable function. Their appreciation was also extended to the Guesthouse staff, Eileen and Trish and gourmet chef Mark.

All enjoyed the craic, banter and reminiscences late into the night. Some key questions were asked "Why do we have such a bond with the College? Why do we have such an appreciation of our Alma Mater and the monastic community? Why have we come back to celebrate 5 Anniversaries?". Answer: There is no doubt it is the ethos as such which is imbued with a spiritual monastic culture and tradition that becomes infectious and impacts us all in many different ways! In summary it is the Jubilarians' wish that there will always be a living monastic presence about the College in the years to come and that they are looking forward to returning in 2 years time, God Willing. It is suggested on the next occasion that some members of their group may wish to tour and view the Abbey's priceless collection of stained glass windows which are portrayed in "Lumen Christi" edited by Dom Laurence Walsh, OCSO.

# SPUTNIKS, MOLOTOV COCKTAILS AND GREEN POSTBOXES -

## THE 55 YEAR REUNION OF THE CLASS OF 1955 - '60.

A wintry afternoon in mid December 2015 saw 21 members of the class arrive at the appointed time with almost military precision, in the College entrance hall. Then I knew that band of brothers, the class of 1955-60, was not yet ready to stand down its colours. I had encountered Tom Fletcher and John Casey in Roscrea town looking slightly lost like myself, but in time for a warming coffee in a local pub. Some like John Joyce (Birr) and James Hamill (Ferbane) rolled in from the neighbourhood. Others had driven from further afield like John Kenny from East Cork. Of the 51 class members, 5 had passed away: Sean Gohery, Declan O'Shea, Johnny Lang, John Toomey and Bernard D'Arcy. We remember them with fondness. May they rest in peace. (Sadly, since our reunion, two more of our number, Kevin McDonagh and Paddy McMahan have joined them ar slí na fírinne.) Five were untraceable despite the best efforts of the organising committee.

We were treated to welcome refreshments in the Rec Hall and a viewing of the Leinster Schools Senior Rugby Cup, and the All Ireland Hurling Senior Schools C Cup by Katherine Donovan. Then we viewed a very interesting if limited video of the College. Then the group photo with Katherine unveiling her new camera! Tom Enright posed like a seasoned politician. The rest posed in their usual self-deprecating manner. And then we had a nostalgic tour of the College conducted by College President Brendan Feehan. We were grateful for his courtesy and forbearance in dealing with our many questions. Then on to the County Arms, Birr for dinner. The Lord Abbot, Dom Richard kindly accepted our invitation to join us and updated us on life in the Monastery in a relaxed, good humoured way.

In many ways this reunion was more enjoyable than previous ones. Maybe we did more catching, up especially with those for whom it was their first reunion. Arriving to CCR as callow youths in September 1955, we were blissfully unaware of events shaping the world around us. World War 2, was only ten years gone by, but its after-effects lingered, as they do to this day. The Treaty of Austria had just been signed, with the Soviet Union and the Western Allies in process of withdrawal from that country. The fascination with, and success of our generation in athletics e.g. Sean Murphy in the All Ireland Pole

Vault, helped to endure the sometimes tedium of life at CCR. So it was when College President Fr. Aidan announced in the Refectory at breakfast in December 1956 that John Landy the Australian favourite had won the 1500 metres in the Melbourne Olympics there was a muted response. When he realised his mistake and announced the winner was Ronnie Delany we had a wonderful collective thrill which reverberates to this day. That same year we had a more immediate reminder of outside events when two Hungarian boys arrived in the school, refugees from the Uprising and the Soviet invasion. They had initially been housed in an Army camp in Knockalisheen, County Clare. Conditions in the camp were poor and Sean Peyton who visited there at the boys' invitation, now recalls this visit and concurs. They were funded by the Red Cross, as were two others in Mount Mellerary and two in Multyfarnham Agricultural College. These were streetwise lads, one of whom could easily be imagined lurking in a Budapest alley, Molotov cocktail in hand, waiting to encounter a Soviet tank. They stayed about one year and as far as I know emigrated to Canada, like many of the others at Knockalisheen. This episode at Roscrea resonates to this day, as the first of the refugees from Syria are about to arrive. And Ireland has had refugees before, as far back as the Huguenots and Palatines in the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries, and in recent decades Vietnamese, Kosovans and Iraqis. *Plus ça change.*

The variety of careers and interests of the class was a happy and eclectic mix: from a poet (Eamonn Grennan) to priests (the much travelled Norman Jennings and Ray Collier, also Tommy Breen and Willy Ryan), bankers (Paddy McMahan, Kevin McDonagh, John Casey and Vincent Dooley) publicans (Tom Fletcher and James Ryan), medics (Sean Murphy, Michael Behan and twin brothers Hugh and Cathal Bredin), a dentist (John Kenny), an Aer Lingus executive (Anthony Flaherty), a commercial pilot (Joe Moran under the vast skies of East Africa), a solicitor (Tom Enright), a teacher (Francis O'Toole), a Garda (Michael Duggan) and never to forget the farmers (Liam Burke and Jimmy Bergin). But not by work alone doth man live: side interests were also notable: John Joyce is Chairman of the Birr Georgian Society, underlying his interest in one of Ireland's best preserved Georgian towns and John Lennon represented Ireland and won a prize at an international conference on Philately in Paris. I always thought that Ireland was the land of green post (pillar) boxes but John informed us that the original postboxes in Victorian England were dark green! And the first effective postal system in Ireland was introduced by, of all people, Oliver Cromwell. Tom Enright became TD for Laois-Offaly for many years: was that a full time job or a side interest?

And then it was recalled we were all survivors of the Influenza Epidemic in 1957 when all except a handful of the circa 250 student body were laid low. That was also the year when the Russians moved ahead of the Americans in the space race. We watched fascinated, through the windows of the Farmers' Dormitory as Sputnik 1 arced it's elliptical path through the night sky. The outstanding memory of 1958 was the 50th anniversary of the foundation of CCR and the corresponding reunion, which had been delayed by 3 years, held during the Hallowe'en break. Months earlier the then Bursar Fr. Edmund had marshalled a squad of student stamp lickens in the Rec Hall to deal with the avalanche of post required for the event. As a considerable number of letters were returned it appears the Past Student data base was not as good as the current one. In our final year a small landmark in the history of the College was passed, but had been forgotten by many of us. The Class of 1960 was the first to take the Leaving Cert oral examination in Irish and so the first class to take an oral State exam of any kind in the history of CCR. This was held in the Front Parlour and conducted by Mr. John Williams and the extern. Then there was the written exam, with the accompanying tensions of the major subjects

like Irish, English, and Mathematics. And after all that, the interminable wait to sit subjects like Applied Mathematics. Then it was out on the front steps to say adios to members of the Community, including the then Fr. Colmcille, Dean of Studies. It was about then we heard news that a relatively unknown Senator called Kennedy had won the crucial West Virginia Primary. The Cuban Missile Crisis, Dallas, Vietnam and the Troubles in Northern Ireland were all ahead in the relatively near future; much further down the road were international/national issues like the Twin Towers, Climate Change, the TROIKA in Ireland. But we young men, no longer callow youths, were not concerned about and did not foresee any of that as the well filled taxi to Roscrea railway station wheezed its way out through the eagle topped gates.

Cathal Bredin (1955-'60) for the organising committee: John Kenny, Paddy McMahon and Will Hanly.

*Editor's note: two men mentioned above died during 2016, Kevin McDonagh on 24 January and Paddy McMahon on 22 May 2016.*



***Members of the Class of 1960 who gathered for a Reunion in December 2015***  
***Front Row: Joe Moran, Sean Murphy, John Casey, Kevin McDonagh RIP***  
***Second Row: Norman Jennings, Tom Fletcher, Billy Hanly, Tom Enright, James Hamill, Andy O'Flaherty, Cathal Bredin - Third Row: Noel Costigan, Michael Carey - Fourth Row: John Kenny, Sean Peyton, John Joyce***  
***Fifth Row: Francis O'Toole, John Lennon, Paddy McMahon RIP***  
***Sixth Row: John Keoghan, Anthony Whelan***

## 50 YEARS ON...

### THE CCR CLASS OF '65 REUNION

On Saturday 26th September 2015, some 25 members of the Class of 1965 came together from various parts of Ireland – and further afield – to celebrate our 50th reunion at the College. It was a marvellous, truly memorable gathering for all concerned.

We were joined by four special guests: Lord Abbot Rev. Dom Richard Purcell OCSO; Rev. Dom Laurence Walsh OCSO; former teacher John Shanahan; and Gerry Hayes, representing the College as current President Brendan Feehan was attending the London PPU Dinner that same evening.

On arrival we assembled in the former science/billiard room, now known as the Centenary Room, for a meet and greet reception. Wow! It was hilarious to see the reactions as we went around the room – some faces were as instantly recognisable as they were back in 1965 while others were utterly changed, eyebrows furrowing as people struggled to put a name to the face.

It was wonderful, and so fitting, that our former teacher John Shanahan was there to share the occasion with us. It is a measure of the man that he slipped me a bottle of whiskey at one stage, apologising profusely that he could not attend the dinner but asking me to share the bottle with “the boys”.

Gerry Hayes then took us on a tour of the campus, which as you’d expect is a very different environment from the one we remember. Overall there is a much warmer, more homely atmosphere with huge improvements both in the classroom, dormitory and hang-out areas of the college. Some of today’s facilities – the pool, the technology and so much more – we could only have dreamed of back then.

I slipped out to collect the Mass leaflets from my car and, to my delight, spotted none other than Fr. Eanna approaching from the monastery. We greeted one another, and when I said my name he immediately replied “Ah, Chill Mhantain!” A mind that is as razor-sharp as it always was, even now that he’s in his early 90s.

The campus tour was halted so we could all say our hellos to Fr. Eanna and take a wonderful group photo in the recreation hall – one of the highlights of the day. Gerry then continued the tour, after which we proceeded to the College Chapel for a Mass of Remembrance in honour of our deceased classmates, 10 in all.

It was a great honour to have Dom Laurence Walsh OCSO celebrating Mass on our special half-century reunion, and he conducted a beautiful ceremony that stirred the emotions and rekindled fond memories of our student days. Addressing us as “Lads”, he spoke of the readings he had selected for us, in particular the Acts of the Apostles where St Peter quotes the prophet Joel: “Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams”.

He went on: “50 years ago in the very same chapel we would have seen and mulled over visions, stored them in our hearts and brought them to the classroom, to the study hall, to the pitches, and many of them we would have carried with us throughout our lives.” How true.

Drawing our attention to the stained glass images of the beautiful Clarke Studio windows and the striking Opus Sectile Stations of the Cross, he wondered what better place to celebrate the memories and the great joy and thanksgiving of coming together 50 years on. Our Mass, he said, was a celebration of the visions of 1965 – perhaps dimmed by the experiences of life, perhaps matured in an even more wonderful way.

In the Prayers of the Faithful, Des Purcell then referred to those who could not be with us and I am sure I was not alone in being deeply touched as he individually remembered our 10 deceased former classmates.

When Mass was over I had the honour of thanking Dom Laurence for celebrating Mass and for his inspirational homily on the occasion of our historic milestone reunion. Who more appropriate than someone who, having attended the college for five years, went on to spend a further 69 years in the Monastery. A Roscrea man for all of 74 years and scarcely a sign of wear and tear on him! God Bless you, Father Laurence – and thank you again.

From the Chapel we went to the front steps for a group photo, and from there we went on to the County Arms in Birr where we had a wonderful evening of dinner, a few jars and a great deal of reminiscing and recalling good memories.

Our guest of honour, Dom Richard Purcell, spoke to us about the challenges facing the Order and the College itself – with depleted numbers of vocations, the Order itself faces difficulties in sustaining five monasteries in Ireland, while the College likewise faces many challenges including declining numbers and changing societal attitudes.

On a brighter note, he also pointed out that Roscrea continues to punch well above its weight in academia,



***A Policeman's Lot is not a Happy One  
John McHugh who played the sergeant in the 1964  
production of The Pirates of Penzance (and later joined  
the Gardaí) with two of his "officers", John Sherry and  
Aidan McNulty.***

music, debating as well as on the hurling and rugby pitches in particular. The historic winning of a first ever Leinster Schools Senior Rugby Cup earlier this year was a huge shot in the arm in terms of confidence and self-esteem for the College, management, pupils, staff, past pupils, friends and family – all concerned! It may even mark a turning point for the school – let's hope so.

To round off the evening, our old classmate John Sherry, in customary style, delivered a brilliantly researched, thought-out and entertaining account of life in the college as it was 'back then'. John had us all in stitches as he described some of the antics the lads got up to all those years ago.

A great day among old friends, who could ask for more? Thank you to my fellow members of the organising committee Aidan McNulty, Jim Coffey and Des Purcell, and to everyone who made it so special.

*Frank Cullen*



***John Shanahan, Bob Greaney, Bart Scanlan and  
John Sherry.***



***Jimmy Coffey, Eugene O'Sullivan and Aidan McNulty  
with An tAthar Éanna and minder.***



***Liam Kennedy, John Feehan, Andy Lyons, Frank Cullen,  
Dom Richard, John Sherry, Aidan McNulty and Des  
Purcell.***



***Front row: Paddy Kennedy, Vincent McIntyre, Dom Laurence,  
Shaun Wrafter, Niall Wrafter, Brian Lillis, Michael McNulty,  
Eugene O'Sullivan.***

***Middle Row: John Moloney, Michael Murray, John McHugh,  
Milo Butler, Andy Lyons, Des Purcell, Frank Cullen.***

***Back Row: Bart Scanlan, John Feehan, Phil Sheedy, Michael  
McCarthy, Aidan McNulty, Liam Kennedy, Jimmy Coffey,  
John Sherry, Bob Greaney, Willie Dillon.***

## 40 YEARS ON...

### C.C.R. CLASS REUNION OF 1976

#### 10TH SEPTEMBER 2016

The class of 1976 met for their 40 year Reunion on 10th September 2016. On a sad note, just two weeks before the reunion, we learned of the sudden death of our classmate Pat Ennis, formerly of Clara, but living in Tullamore. Pat had intended to attend the reunion, and many recalled the entertainment he provided at our 25 Year Reunion back in 2001. Pat was a full-time musician based in Tullamore and his passing is deeply regretted by wife, Deirdre, and children, twins Ryan and Amy as well his family and friends.

The reunion weekend started well with six of the class joining in the Abbot's Cup competition. While we didn't feature on the podium, Fr. Enda Cunningham fared best of the group which included Paul Irwin, Sean Tunney, John Murphy, John Harding and John Neylon.

The main group met at the college in the afternoon for a Sherry Reception in the Billiard Room where we mingled with other groups and some of our former teachers including John Shanahan and the late Hugh McDonnell.

This was followed by a tour of the college, which brought back fond memories to all. 24 (out of a possible 55) of us assembled on the front college steps for our "Class of 76" photograph; John Neylon (Dublin), John Harding (Dublin), Gerry Carthy (Longford), Gerry Walsh (Ballyragget, Co Kilkenny), Paul Irwin (Crewe, England), John Coughlan (Vancouver, Canada), Ned Sheary (Nenagh), Sean Reidy (Athlone), Pat Healy (Dublin), John Phelan (Ballyragget, Co Kilkenny), Tim O'Colmain (Dublin), John Murphy (Toronto, Canada), Nicky Greene (Limerick), Joe Nolan (Clonmel), Pat Hassett (Derry), Hugh Dodd (Bray), Michael Creagh (Rathdowney, Co. Laois), Fr. Enda Cunningham, (Parish Priest, Westland Row, Dublin), John

Naughton (Dublin), Sean Tunney (Dublin) John Lynch (Kildare), John Dundon (Limerick), Ciaran McMahon (Dublin) and David Culliton (Kilkenny).

We all then convened at the Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh for dinner at 8.00pm, where we were joined by another classmate, Jim Murphy of PREM Group Hotels.

The master of ceremonies for the night was our house captain, John Phelan, the youngest man in the class, and the one who was responsible tracking down everyone and making arrangements for the event, assisted by Tim O'Colmain and John Neylon. John thanked everyone for coming, especially those from abroad, Johnny Coughlan, the North American Ice Cream magnate from Vancouver, Dr. John "Spud" Murphy from Toronto and Dr. Paul "Chicken" Irwin from Crewe, England.

The proceedings eventually repaired to the residents' lounge and continued well into the early hours, with the main source of entertainment coming from our resident poet, the "Rustic Boy" himself, Michael Creagh from Rathdowney.

We remembered absent classmates who for one or other reason couldn't attend but sent on best wishes for the night; Cormac O'Sullivan (Kilkenny), Kieran Burns (Bradford, England), Mike Carr (Ennis Co. Clare – recuperating from a quadruple by-pass), Liam Dalton (Mullingar), Kieran Dwyer (Dublin), Brian Sheppard (Tipperary), Christy Daly (Tullamore), Risteard Mulcahy (Youghal, Co. Cork) and Tom McCutcheon (Latteragh, Co Tipperary) and those we couldn't contact, not that we didn't try!

Looking forward already to the 50 Year Reunion in 2026.

Finally, we remembered in our thoughts and prayers our classmates who are no longer with us: Liam Byrne, Paul Lynch, Bill Shaw, Shane O'Leary, and Pat Ennis, and their families and friends.

# 40 YEARS ON...

## THE CCR 'CLASS OF '76' REUNION



*Front Row: John Neylon, John Harding, Gerry Carthy, Gerry Walsh, Paul Irwin, John Coughlan, Edward (Ned) Sheary, Sean Reidy, Pat Healy.*

*Middle Row: John Phelan, Tim O'Colmain, John Murphy, Nicholas Greene, Joe Nolan, Pat Hassett, Hugh Dodd, Michael Creagh.*

*Back Row: Fr. Enda Cunningham, John Naughton, Sean Tunney, John Lynch, John Dundon, Ciaran McMahon, David Culliton.*



*John Phelan, John Coughlan (all the way from Vancouver), Gerry Walsh & John Neylon.*



*Paul Irwin, Gerry Carthy and Joe Nolan*



## CLASS OF '95

It is often noted that there is a certain bond between past men of Roscrea, it is hard to quantify and cannot be described in words alone, as it is something nurtured and implanted in one's personality by mutual experience and a shared value of the unique character building that CCR provides. Time does not diminish that bond but invariably makes it stronger.

Planning and facilitating a 20 year reunion is a lot more difficult than it initially seems! There are a few critical factors which will ultimately determine eventual success or perceived failure. Firstly you will need an organizing committee made up of members of your year with the specific skills necessary to pull it off. It does help if one of your classmates owns a hotel as you will need a venue so Conor Loughnanne of The County Arms became a de facto committee member. You will then need a facilitator, someone who can motivate the committee and disapprove of the deluge of ridiculous ideas, a former House Captain and someone with conference calling facilities suits the job perfectly, step forward Dara Harrington.

It then helps to have someone with an in-depth knowledge of the dark arts of social media and digital networking, if that person also helped to organize the previous year's reunion, that's a bonus - thank you Graham Ross! Finally you will need, for want of a better word, a domestique, someone to beg, blackmail or demand your special guests to turn up on the day - I took that one on by default!

There were 69 members of the class of '95 during our 5 year tenure in Roscrea. Our primary aim was to get as many as possible back after 20 years. What amazed us most was how many now worked and lived abroad, approximately a quarter. There were unfortunately some that we just couldn't find, no matter how hard we searched. In the end, about half found their way back for the weekend.



*John Delaney, James Fleming, Ross Hennesy, Patrick O'Byrne, Graham Ross, Conor Cahill, Philip McGuinness, Pat Cass, Robert Smyth, John Phelan, Dara Harrington, John Dwyer, Eugene Wallace, Eddie Callagahn, Paul Davey, Peter McGrane, Eoin Doyle, Fintan Cox, Keith Murphy, David Roe, Derek Fogarty and Michael Farrell.*

Like all good weekends, things kicked off on the Friday night, meeting in the County Arms for drinks, food and a heavy dose of nostalgia that lasted well into the night. The following day the Class of '95 met on the steps of CCR for the first time in 20 years, and were subsequently joined by a group of our former teachers, Dan Smyth, Norman Davey, Hugh McDonnell, Pat Kilbane and Brendan O'Rourke for a drinks reception in what we once called the Rec Hall.

Once assembled we were met by the current College President, Brendan Feehan who gave us an excellent presentation on the contemporary running of the school. This was followed by a truly memory invoking tour of the school's current facilities, which made us all wish we had been born a quarter of a century later!

Then the obligatory pictures with the Leinster Senior Cup followed by a stroll around the College and Monastery grounds. Fading daylight saw everyone returned safely to the County Arms for yet more drinks and nostalgia - we were just warming up!

At 7.30 we made our way to a private dining room in the beautifully preserved old section of the Hotel. We were joined by our special guests for the evening; The Abbot Dom Richard Purcell, Katherine Donovan representing the College, Union President Frank Thompson, Eddie O'Sullivan who had graciously accepted our invitation as requested by popular

demand and our honoured guest, Conor Massey, representing his son and our friend Zebedee who we lost in 2008.

What followed was a culinary tour de force, an absolutely outstanding seven course service of Michelin star quality and execution. Conor Loughnane had promised us a memorable meal, and he and the staff succeeded in a most exemplary fashion in providing that. After dinner speeches began in tandem with dessert and coffee.

Conor started proceedings, welcoming us warmly to his home town and portraying his gratitude in having the opportunity to host the reunion. Graham thanked our guests and introduced Frank Thompson who caught the moment perfectly talking eloquently about what it means to be a pastman of Roscrea. Then, I was fortunate to have the honour of making a presentation to Mr Conor Massey in memory of his son Zebedee. What followed was a poignant and heartfelt acceptance speech by Conor, which received a standing ovation by all present.

Dinner finished and we proceeded to talk, laugh and toast our way into the early hours of the morning, with everyone committing to the next reunion without reservation!

*Paul Davey*



*John Thompson and Fintan Cox with the Leinster Cup.*

## CLASS OF 2003 REUNION

In July 2014 the class of 2003 inaugurated a new Roscrea tradition – the 11 year reunion. Organised by Daniel Grandjean with the assistance of Damien Lynch and Richard Phelan, it took place in Langton's Hotel, Kilkenny. All members of the class were energetically tracked down and notified of the reunion, including those who make a point of shunning social media. On the night 24 pastmen presented themselves for pre-dinner drinks at Langton's.

Brendan McIntyre had the small matter of the arrival of his first child to delay him elsewhere. Small groups formed in the bar as familiar faces drifted in. It transpires that people look much the same after 11 years, although there was general agreement that Michael Barry had matured from a boy into an almost unrecognisable man.

Questions about jobs, locations and families were asked as we reacquainted ourselves with those we had once known so well.

Catching up continued over a delicious meal served with patience by the staff of the hotel. The atmosphere of the refectory was briefly resurrected when wine was spilled in an accident inevitably involving Damien Lynch. Our House Captain, Des Hernon, addressed us with a characteristic mix of the humorous and serious. He reminded us that we were a group that had shared many unique experiences, including being taught by Pat Sheedy and being served stew in stainless steel buckets. In a reflective moment he recalled our

classmate Dermot Sheridan, who died tragically in 2009.

After dinner we moved into a courtyard adjacent to the function room and the conversation continued, more natural and relaxed now that reintroductions and the meal were out of the way. Eventually we made our way into Langton's Bar where there was much straining of the vocal chords in an effort to be heard above the music.

Brendan McIntyre was given a hero's welcome when he arrived and informed us of the birth of his son, Daniel. Meanwhile Raph Keane mingled with the non-Roscrea crowd on the dance floor. The CCR men were among the last to leave the venue, at which point the group became splintered when some made shameless efforts to gain entry to the residents' bar at Langton's. Many repaired to a local pub while others called it a night.

The reunion was a great success and much credit is due to the organisers for taking the initiative and putting in the hard work. In general the focus of conversations seemed to be more on the present than on the past. However, many of the chats on the night were peppered with statements of gratitude for our education and the advantages we can see it has provided us. Perhaps we will reminisce more about Roscrea days in 2023, but will we recognise each other?

*Mark Coen (1997-2003)*

*The Editor apologises to the Class of 2003 for the delay in printing this report!*



*Andrew Fogarty and Richard Phelan.*



*Raphael Keane, Daniel Grandjean, David Sparrow and Tomás Lundon.*

## OBITUARIES

### **Frank Buckley (CCR 1961-'66)**

died on 23rd February 2015 after a valiant three year battle with cancer. Originally from Tullamore, he studied Commerce in UCD and worked in the building/construction sector. He was a director with SCB (Structural Concrete Bonding), based in Newbridge. A talented musician who played banjo, mandolin and fiddle he was described as 'the life and soul of the party' at the 2011 reunion of the Class of '66. He is survived by his wife Mary and sons Matthew and Nevan. His brother Joe was in the Class of '61 in CCR.

### **Dr. Joe Daly (CCR 1948-'53)**

went to God in December 2016 after an exciting life as a medical practitioner, a dedicated family man, and a keen sportsman. In CCR he was known as the younger brother of Martin (later to be Dom Kevin Daly OCSO, College President and Abbot). Joe was a fine hurler and popular student. On leaving Roscrea he qualified as a family doctor and settled in his beloved Ballygar, where he married Madeline and had seven children - Martin, Michelle, Peter, Joanne, Madeline, Aisling and Luke who predeceased him in 2010.

Joe for many years was the Galway GAA football team doctor as well as being a guiding light at Pearse Stadium, Salthill. He was also a former captain of the Roscommon Golf Club, but it was his involvement with Connacht Rugby that brought him most praise. He was a founder member of Creggs RFC and in 1988 he became President of the Connacht

Branch where he provided great leadership, particularly in dealing with the IRFU. He was a gentle man, yet persuasive and firm, who in his final years was subject to poor health.

*Michael O'Carroll.*

### **Paddy Coffey (CCR 1954-'59)**

died on 30th October 2016. Along with **John (CCR 1956-'61)** and **Damien (CCR 1961-'66)** he was one of three brothers who followed their father **John Joe (CCR 1927-'30)** to CCR.

### **Noel Condon (CCR 1946-'48)**

died on 23rd October 2016. After leaving CCR Noel took up the Management of his own farm at Ballymarsough, Tipperary and was a Master Farmer for 30 years. Noel enjoyed attending the CCR Union Social Functions and liked keeping in touch with fellow pastmen. To his wife Irene, daughters Ann, Ursula, Irene and Margot we offer our sympathy.

### **Pat Ennis (CCR 1971-'76)**

When I started in CCR in 1971 and met Pat Ennis for the first time he was already an accomplished guitar player. During my time there I was in awe of himself and Brendan (Bunny) Hayes. I loved music and longed to have their talents. They were the mainstay of the choir, and any sing songs that might occur. In school I was more involved in Athletics than music but in the years after I left I became very involved in the music and drama scene. I met Pat at many musicals where he was usually the lead guitar player. He carried his talent lightly and wasn't one for blowing his own

trumpet (guitar!). We had many a nice chat post show and would always have a short reminiscence about our years in CCR where music helped to keep us all sane. A few years ago I had the pleasure of being involved with Pat in the Offaly produced film *Eden*, directed by the Recks brothers. Pat was with the band in the film and I was a customer in the bar - type cast again!

My final chat with Pat was on the phone shortly before our class reunion in 2016. I phoned him to ask if he would be interested in sharing a room on that night. The last thing he said to me was "I'll get back to you" - sadly that never happened. I was shocked when I heard he had passed. When I walked into the chapel in Tullamore on the day of his funeral and saw his guitar lying silent on the altar, and thought that we would never hear him play it again it broke my heart. Pat was a humble man and wouldn't want me saying anything too "flowery" about him, but I just want to finish by saying that Pat Ennis was one nice fella and gifted musician. He would regularly break into a tongue in cheek version of *The Wandering Minstrel* from *The Mikado* so I will leave you with a few lines from it which aptly describe Pat:

*A wandering minstrel I,  
A thing of shreds and patches  
Of ballads, songs and snatches  
And dreamy lullaby!  
My catalogue is long  
Through every passion ranging  
And to your humours changing  
I tune my supple song!  
I tune my supple song!*

*Rest in peace my friend.*

*Michael Creagh.*

# OBITUARIES

## Jack Fennell

**(CCR 1957-'61)** On 8th July last, as the Class of '61 gathered in Birr for their 55 year Reunion, we were shocked to learn of Jack Fennell's unexpected death that morning as he appeared to have had made a very successful recovery from a recent illness. They were also sad and bewildered as their many gatherings in recent years would have been incomplete without his ubiquitous presence. Indeed even in his physical absence that evening in July, he somehow managed to dominate the gathering, a presence copper-fastened when Tom Garvey shared a text that Jack had sent him during the previous week on returning from Birr to Dublin after working on the arrangements for the Reunion. It read:

*I have just been to Parsonstown (sic) with Messrs Gerry Moloney and Joe Doherty to meet with the retired keeper of the telescope Mr John Joyce. He had a decanter of fine Irish malt to warm my weary heart. In recent times I sent one of my agents to Roscommon and he reports that Lord Lecarrow, aka John Coffey, is well, and still installing hangovers on his customers. Looking forward to meeting you and the rest of the reprobates at our Reunion next week.*

As well as being a true CCR man – his heart never left the place – Jack was one of those rare species of men who, if lucky enough, one runs into occasionally. He was a raconteur extraordinaire, whose endless store of amusing tales of past pupils, teachers, and yes, the Cistercian community – no deserving targets were outside his range – never failed to delight his eager audience.

Jack's reminiscences were a joy to hear. He revelled in poking fun at those who liked to portray themselves as a cut above the rest, and he excelled in providing richly embroidered detail surrounding the circumstances involving dents in his victims' social standing – as they inevitably did in Jack's anecdotes. But he was never cruel to his cast, who were always deserving of their billing on his programme.

Even during his seven month sojourn at St Vincent's Hospital he availed of every opportunity to hilariously entertain visiting classmates, staff and fellow patients, as only Jack could, and he greatly appreciated the never less than weekly visits from his good brother Richard travelling from New Ross.

When he arrived at Roscrea in 1957 he was simply John Fennell, the son of a bank manager in Arklow, and brother of Richard who had started the previous year. But once it was established he was the grandson of legendary Maths teacher Jack Murphy, the 'father of the chapel' of the teaching staff and confidant of many of the monks, he was quickly renamed 'Jack'. Whilst the majority of his classmates sought to catch the eye in the classroom or on the playing fields, Jack adopted a strategy of flying under the radar and focused instead on developing his powers of observation and listening. This he accomplished to an extraordinary degree, and honed his lifelong skills from watching those around him in action – not the least of whom was his aforementioned grandfather.

Probably his most significant contribution to CCR was as one of

chief architects and editors of The Weed, a subversive alternative commentary on College life which was not reflected in the 'approved' – and vetted – students' magazine The Vexillum. Those were days long before Private Eye and The Phoenix. Jack's publication merrily and mercilessly debunked much of the authority that went with life in CCR at the time, and stood fearlessly on the side of the underdog.

Having completed his Leaving Certificate with distinction, he joined the Munster and Leinster Bank (later AIB), moving between branches in all four provinces of Ireland. Wherever he went he sought out Roscrea-men, and did his best to 'look after' those in need. He was a committee member of the Dublin Branch of the Union for some years before his bank duties took him to Ulster, and from there moved south again as the Northern Troubles escalated. In due course his highly valued practical banking skills led to his appointment as an executive in the bank's Visa Card division where he worked until he retired. He is survived by his brother Richard – also of the Class of '61, his widow Aileen, his son David, his daughter in law Bonnie, and his granddaughter Mia.

*Ar dheis De do raibh a anam dilis*

*Gerry Moloney.*

## Tom Hastings

**(CCR 1948-'53)**

Enniscorthy and Co. Roscommon, died on 10th May 2016. Aged 82, had been in poor health for about a year up to his death.

All his life Tom spoke fondly of his time in Roscrea where

## OBITUARIES

he captained both Junior and Senior rugby teams. He played alongside the likes of Gus Martin, David Andrews and Gerry Culliton although as he would tell you “Gerry played more hurling in those days”. He vividly remembered games against Garbally, Rockwell, Newbridge, St Mary’s etc. as though they were played yesterday. Tom subsequently went on to play with Corinthians and London Irish.

Tom came to Enniscorthy in 1974 when he was appointed Assistant Chief Nursing Officer at St Senan’s Psychiatric Hospital. Tom took up this role in a time when a more enlightened approach to psychiatric care was being ushered in. Tom excelled in this role. His professionalism and compassionate nature inspired staff and patients alike.

Tom also played a huge part in the development of Enniscorthy Rugby Club where he served in a variety of roles, including Coach, Treasurer, Secretary and President. He was held in such esteem at the club that he was appointed their Centenary President in 2012. He was hugely proud when Enniscorthy won the Provincial Towns Cup that year.

Tom never married: his fiancée was killed in a tragic motor accident in 1973. Tom himself suffered from major injuries in that crash but happily recovered after being on life support at St Vincent’s Hospital for 3 weeks. There was a large attendance at his funeral in Enniscorthy. At the conclusion the cathedral fell silent as his friend Niall Wall sang a moving version of ‘The Parting Glass’. This was followed by Tom’s final journey back home to Kilronan cemetery just outside Keadue in North Roscommon.

*May he rest in peace.  
David Wrafter*

### **Christopher (Christum) Leonard**

**(CCR 1945-’49)**

died on 24th December 2015 in the Mater Hospital. A native of Trim, Co. Meath, where he lived all of his life he was scrum half on the Junior Rugby team. He is survived by his brothers **Cornelius (Conny) (CCR 1945-’48)** and **Gregory (CCR 1948-’53)**. All three followed their parents into businesses in Trim.

After leaving CCR, Christum worked at Ferrier Pollock, William Street, Dublin for 5 years. He returned to Trim where he started his own successful business and only retired 10 years ago.

He was predeceased by his wife Norah. After her untimely death he helped set up The Meath Hospice Homecare Movement and spent many hours fundraising on its behalf. He was always deeply involved in the Trim community and this was reflected by the large number who attended his funeral.

*Pat Keane.*

### **Leo Mattimoe**

**(CCR 1958-’64)**

died on 12th January 2016 after a long illness.

Leo taught History for many years in Mercy College, Sligo. He is survived by his wife Úna, daughter Meabh and son Niall.

### **Kevin McDonagh**

**(CCR 1955-’60)**

Kevin attended his class reunion at CCR on 12th December 2015, so it was a shock to his classmates to hear of his death on 24th January 2016, in his home place of Ennistymon. Kevin initially studied Veterinary at UCD, and then switched to Banking, including at AIB Westport. He was a very accomplished rugby player at hooker for the Senior Cup team at CCR. He was always very

relaxed and friendly, full of good humour, which characteristics were still very evident at his recent class reunion: a true champion from county Clare.

*Cathal Bredin.*

### **Paddy McMahon**

**(CCR 1955-’60)**

It was a shock to his classmates to learn of Paddy’s death in Dublin on 20th May 2016. He was one of the most youthful looking at our 55 year reunion at CCR in December 2015 and was a key member of the organising committee. Paddy was an amiable Meathman, an engaging conversationalist, and a leader in the class. These leadership qualities were shown in his success in his post-CCR career, in banking, eventually becoming CEO of Ulster Bank. He will best be remembered by classmates for his eloquent Goodbye speech on behalf of the class, in the Refectory, in the presence of then College President, Fr Declan, as we had just put behind the labours of Leaving Cert and were looking forward to the post-CCR future with a mixture of relief, optimism and trepidation. His brother Jim is also a CCR pastman (1959-’64). To his family we offer our heartfelt sympathy.

*Cathal Bredin.*

As we gathered in Roscrea Golf Club after the Abbot’s Cup on 10th September last, news came through that **Pat Rafferty (CCR 1950-’53)** had passed away. Pat was a very loyal pastman, he was the son of a pastman and the father of Brian, Niall and Eoin who graced CCR in the 1970s and 1980s. His brother John (class of 1966) is also a CCR pastman.

Pat was an ever present at CCR events in the South West, and a great supporter of the College and the Union. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Nuala and all the family.

# OBITUARIES

## **Kevin O’Flanagan (CCR 1966-’71)**

died suddenly last October. A native of Cahir, Kevin studied in Trinity where he was close pals with Paul McGovern, who passed away from Motor Neuron Disease some years ago. After that, he went to London and worked in financial services and was married. His wife suffered from dementia, and died some years ago.

He had a sharp wit and intellect and was one of the brighter guys in the A class. He was a good athlete - a fast 100m runner, and though he was relatively small, this got him a place on the SCT as a good running outside centre or winger. Kevin was a great supporter of the UK Branch of the Union. A former Chairman, he regularly attended formal and informal events, including the London Dinner in February 2016, and the gatherings of London based pastmen watching the Senior Cup matches at Philomena’s in Covent Garden. His brothers **Michael (CCR 1959-’64)** and **James (CCR 1961-’66)** are also pastmen.

*Declan Martin*

## **Brendan Smith (CCR 1954-’59)**

In February 2016 my younger brother Brendan and his wife Sueellen came over from Melbourne to spend a rare couple of weeks with us in the San Francisco Bay Area. In July I received a phone call from Suellen to report his sudden death at home. This made me doubly grateful for that last visit.

Brendan was born in Roscrea town when our dad was stationed there by his bank, and duly followed me to C.C.R. My own contemporary, the legendary Gus Martin, was his superb English teacher.

After Leaving Certificate, Brendan repaired home which was now in Belfast, where he joined the bank. As the situation deteriorated in the 60s Brendan, now married with two young daughters, got a transfer to England. He rose in the ranks, moving from Manchester to Liverpool to London, acquiring along the way loyalties to Manchester United, Everton and London-Irish (Cheshire-born son Niall playing rugby with the latter). His years in the Bank of Ireland were memorable for his Union activism, and it was a happy day when he retired in 1992.

This enabled him to do what earlier circumstances had not allowed – he enrolled at the Open University and acquired his B.A. in English Literature. It opened up for him a whole new playing field in Anglo-Irish Studies, with the accent on Joyce. There was ample scope for this in, of all places, Australia, where he emigrated to find, among other things, a sunnier climate for a congenital rheumatic condition. Nor did he limit himself to the programs on offer at the University of Melbourne. I would receive seductive postcards from Trieste, Italy, trying to entice me into joining him for a Chianti-fuelled fortnight of fun at the annual Trieste Joyce jamboree. (Learned academic footnote: The Trieste where Joyce spent more than 15 richly creative years between 1904 and 1920.)

The first e-mails I had after his sudden death were from shocked Joyce scholars across Australia who vividly remembered his lively participation in their seminars and soirées. The month before he died he proudly sent me a copy of an invitation to him and Suellen for a Bloomsday dinner and theatre program showcasing

Joyce in Melbourne.

Looking back to Ireland in the fifties it now stands revealed as a grey time when lads like Brendan and I in small provincial towns had no realistic prospects of university. No wonder that when we belatedly battered down the door we couldn’t get enough of it. My own junk mail bin is largely solicitations for donations to seven or eight colleges across Europe and the U.S.A. who claim me for an alumnus.

Brendan was a regular attendee at the CCR dinners in London back in the day, and we once met in New York to attend the branch dinner there. The eventual victory in the Leinster Senior Cup generated unprecedented e-chatter between us and our respective contemporaries across the globe. I felt a gaping void when Ireland beat the All Blacks and I had no brother to share the moment. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam!*

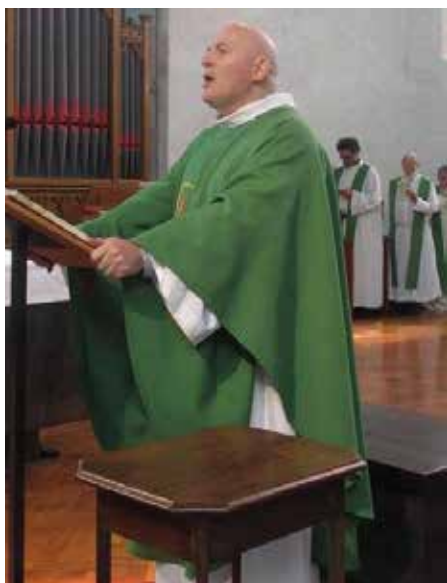
## **Damian Smyth (CCR 1947-’52)**

*Is it irony or what, that I should be editing this piece on Bloomsday 2017? Editor.*

*We recently heard the sad news of the death of **Liam Mulcahy (CCR 1963-’66)** - an obituary for him will appear in the next issue.*

*We are greatly indebted to those who wrote tributes to the above deceased pastmen, and to those who provided news of their passing. Information on deceased pastmen should be forwarded to the Editor at pathanratty@gmail.com or to Katherine Donovan at katherine.donovan@ccr.ie*

## FR. MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN (CCR 1977 - 1982)



Many past pupils of Cistercian College Roscrea have been ordained priests in its 110-year history. Michael O'Sullivan was not the last past pupil to have been ordained a priest but he is the youngest past pupil to have been ordained.

Two fellow students who were ahead of both myself and Father Michael, Eamon Stack and Brendan McHugh RIP were also ordained. It is a sign of the changing times that for a school which would often have 3 priests a year we have had 3 in the past 40 years and none in the last 30.

Fr. Michael O'Sullivan is a native of Kiltrush, County Clare and started boarding in Roscrea in 1977. Most of us in his class realised while we were in Roscrea that Michael was destined for priesthood. He decided he wanted to be a priest at 15, when he met for the first time with White Fathers in Roscrea after he went with

them to a youth meeting in the ecumenical monastery of Taizé in France. After his Leaving Certificate, and a brief period as a trainee manager with Tesco in Ballyfermot, he went for two years to study philosophy in Milltown Park and then did his novitiate in Fribourg Switzerland in 1985.

It was while in Switzerland that he learned about the congregation's founder, Cardinal Lavignerie, who had sent missionaries south from Algiers into the unchartered wilds of Africa.

Michael was very attracted to the Arab and Islamic world and asked for an apostolic training in Algeria. He began learning Arabic and immersing himself in the Arabic culture. Two years later he went to Toulouse to study theology and to continue his Arabic studies, and was then ordained a priest in 1991 in his hometown of Kiltrush, Co. Clare.

Michael then completed a Master's Degree in Arabic and Islamic studies in Rome before being sent to Khartoum.

Fr. Michael found the transition to Khartoum a difficult one, because while the standards of living in North Africa were reasonable, Sudan is one of the poorest countries in the world, affected by a series of incompetent and corrupt governments, war, drought, famine and a staggering foreign debt.

Michael spent the first two years in a parish in a slum outside Khartoum and the following five years running a language school, teaching Arabic to up to forty students, mostly Church personnel, who worked among the refugees and displaced Christians who had fled the war in the south.

After seven years Michael moved to an Orthodox Monastery in Tripoli in Northern Lebanon which he describes as a very beautiful experience and then took a year's sabbatical before returning to Rome to finish his thesis. He then travelled to Jerusalem to work for nearly eight years with the French Branch of Caritas, Secours Catholique, the French equivalent of Trócaire.

He represented Caritas in the Holy Land where he worked with other Churches and also ran La Maison d'Abraham, a guest house for the poor and needy in East Jerusalem. Michael really enjoyed his time in Jerusalem which he described as a fantastic place where he was working with other Aid Organisations on aid projects and liaising with the Paris HQ.

After eight years in Jerusalem Fr. Michael then moved to Dubai to work as Financial Administrator to the Vicariate of Southern Arabia, a diocese which stretches from Abu Dhabi to Aden, a distance of two thousand five hundred kilometres. Michael has settled in Dubai for the past



three years and has been involved in formulating a solid financial structure for the dioceses.

He ministers in Saint Mary's Church, Dubai, the busiest Catholic Church on the planet. The Church regularly accommodates 70,000 worshippers with up to 40 Masses a weekend.

Fr. Michael was always a fine singer and it is no surprise that he is a member of the Dubai Chamber Choir and during his time in Jerusalem was a member of its Oratorio Chamber Choir.

As Michael is still officially attached to Jerusalem he returns there regularly and was delighted to be able to meet up with Fr. Peter Garvey, Fr. Peter's brother Tom and his sister-in-law Jean when they spent four days together just a few weeks prior to Father Peter's passing.

On 25th September last, the Monastic community was delighted to welcome Fr Michael preside at the Sunday Eucharist in The Abbey with his family, friends and members of his Society joined the monastic community, the staff, the students of the College and the local community for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood in 1991.

Michael Tarpey, Don Collins, Brian Hartnett and I were delighted to be able to attend and help him celebrate this milestone.

*Andrew Cody*

## HUGH MC DONNELL RIP



Hugh McDonnell passed away peacefully at his home in Streamstown, Roscrea on May 27th with his wife Nora, his daughters Deirdre, Fiona, Niamh, Aoife and his sons Jim and David, both past pupils, by his bedside. Locals found it hard to comprehend as he had his daily stroll in the Monastery grounds just eight days previously.

Hugh was born in Carrigatoher, Burgess in 1941. He was educated in Nenagh CBS, St Flannan's College Ennis and UCD. At the age of seventeen, he played for Burgess - Kiladangan at Minor, Under 21, Intermediate and Senior levels all in the one season – that was some achievement! He played in the Harty Cup with St Flannan's and the Fitzgibbon Cup with UCD.

He joined the staff of Cistercian College, Roscrea in 1970 and retired in 2006. Hugh was a committed family man with a passion for hurling and the Irish language. He played a significant role in the in the development of hurling in the College. CCR had experienced many barren years in hurling before Hugh took charge - thirty nine years to be exact! With his coaching expertise the College won the Leinster "B" Final in 1986. That team was beaten by one point in the All-Ireland Final. The following year he guided the College to another Leinster success but lost the final again to Shannon Comprehensive. Ten years later

CCR won another Leinster Final but succumbed to St Clement's of Limerick in the All-Ireland Final. Hugh persevered and was rewarded in 2000 when his team won the All-Ireland title. The following year CCR defeated St Kieran's, Kilkenny in the Leinster League Final. CCR annexed another All-Ireland title in 2004 over-coming St Patrick's Maghera by 2-13 to 2-10. His contribution to hurling was immense. Twelve past students played in the Fitzgibbon Cup in 2004 and he was so proud of them. As Manager of Roscrea Hurling Club, he trained the U/14 Team to win the All-Ireland at the Community Games. He was a popular mentor with Roscrea Hurling Club and was their Representative on the County Board for many years.

Hugh was a staunch member of Roscrea Golf Club and he had the rare distinction of winning the Captain's Prize on two occasions, a feat accomplished by just three other members. He also won the President's Prize. He formed lasting friendships, and his enthusiasm endeared him to adults and students alike. This was evident when so many came to pay their final respects.

Bhí grá aige don Ghaoluinn agus déirigh leis Craobh na hÉireann a ghnóthú sna sóisir, i Muineachán sa bhliain 1984. Bhuaiigh CCR Craobh na hÉireann sinsear sa bhliain 1991 in Ostán Gresham. Sár ghaisce déanta ag Aodh agus na fóirne cinnte. Ba laoch é Aodh nach ndéanfar dearúd air go deo.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.  
Breandán Ó Ruairc*

# Photo Gallery



Before we handed back the Cup won so gallantly in 2015 Tom O'Connell suggested that someone bring it to Barney Sherry, at 95 one of our oldest pastmen (though his brother Vincent is 100 this year.) Brendan Feehan duly did and this happy photo was taken by Barney's son Brian.



At a jam packed pre-match lunch on the day of the 2016 Final, Union President Mark Ryan presented a framed photo of the victorious 2015 team to Tom O'Connell who has done Trojan work feeding the hungry on match days. Long may that tradition continue!



Philip Keegan (CCR 2007-'13) who starred in many musical events during his time in CCR is now a student at the Lir Academy in Dublin. Picture shows Philip and the Editor after a production of *Vampirella* at the Smock Alley Theatre, which was directed by the Editor's son, Conor.



At a recent promotional meeting in Ballinasloe: Sean O'Brien, Captain of the SCT in 2013 and current Connacht regular, Union President Padraic Ó Maille and Board of Management Chairman Ronnie Culliton.



CCR parents Inez Heenan and Lurlene Duggan with Fergal Cox (CCR 1987-'92) and Paul Davey (CCR 1990-'95) pictured at the Open Day back in April. These four are doing a colossal amount of work in the promotion and marketing of the College.

# Lorrha Men in the Great War

Those who know Lorrha native Gerry O'Meara (CCCR 1965-'70) will have known of his longstanding interest in the First World War, and of the many trips he has made to the battle fields and cemeteries in Belgium and Northern France.

Interest in and fascination with a topic is one thing – it's quite another to turn that interest into writing a book about it. Clearly a labour of love, his 382 page book, *Lorrha People in the Great War* chronicles across 62 chapters the stories of a large number of men from Lorrha and the locality who fought in that conflict.

The last seven chapters deal with men from the area who fought in other conflicts. That there were so many from what has often been seen as a 'Republican' area drew many comments at the book's launches before Christmas in Lorrha, in Birr and in Glasnevin Cemetery Museum.

The book which is beautifully illustrated is the product of painstaking research over a four year period, and the clear devotion to his subject and

pride in the men and women of his native parish is evident throughout.

The organisers of the Tipperariana Book Fair, held in Fethard on Sunday 12th February, chose Gerry's book from about 40 books published in Tipperary as the *Tipperariana Book of the Year 2016*.

This award was inaugurated to honour and draw attention to the great work being carried out by the dozens of authors and local historians across the county who produce up to forty major publications every year. Gerry received a specially commissioned 'Art Piece', by talented artist and potter Dóirín Saurus, which evoked the image of the 'Cemetery Headstone' which is one of the iconic images that remind us of the needless slaughter of millions of men during that awful war.

Accepting the award, Gerry referred to his great interest from an early age in all things 'militaristic' - even though he had never shot a gun in his life - and of his visits to the War Cemeteries in France and Belgium where countless millions lie buried.



***At the launch of his book, Lorrha Men in the Great War in the Glasnevin Cemetery Museum on 3rd December 2016, Gerry was joined by CCR pastmen Tom Hope, Liam Nicholl, Aidan McNulty, Pat Kelly and Pat Hanratty.***



***Gerry O'Meara received the Tipperariana Book of the Year 2016 award from Dóirín Saurus on 27th January 2017.***



# CISTERCIAN COLLEGE ROSCREA MARKETING BRAINSTORM

10TH  
JUNE  
2017



*A brainstorming session, prepared with great skill by Andrew Cody was held in CCR on Saturday 10th June.*

*The pictures show some of the participants representing the Monastery, College Staff past and present, parents and past students from every decade since the 1940s.*

*We hope this edition of the Roscrea Review has helped spread the message that CCR is thriving and has a bright future. For the past few months, Ronnie Culliton and the Board of Management have been working tirelessly for the College.*

*Part of that work has been engaging with pastmen at home and abroad, including the many who have pledged support, financial and otherwise.*

*Ronnie and all at CCR want everyone to know that the door is open for all pastmen, whenever it suits them and they have the appetite, to engage with the College in any way they see fit. Ní neart go cur le cheile!*