

ROSCREA

REVIEW

No. 62

Newsletter for the Cistercian College, Roscrea, Union.

Spring 1994

ROSCREA LETTER

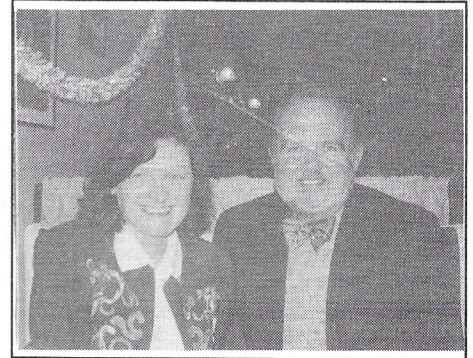
Michael Keohane

Every facet of our lives has its centre, be it in family, leisure or work. For me, Mt. St. Joseph, be it the college, monastery or the guest house with its accumulated images gathered over decades, has now become a such place.

Over the past two years I have come to know better the living heart of this haven, the monks and the Cistercian ethos. Fr. Dermot, the general secretary of the Union, has a steady hand on the tiller, and looking to the future welfare of the students both past and present. The President, Fr. Kevin, is ever available, working behind the scenes to achieve the greatest good with the least possible fuss. Fr. Abbot, Dom Colmcille pulling all the strands together ensures through the establishment of the Board of Governors the future of the college into the 21st century. To have worked with these and other selfless monks has certainly added to the sum of my life. Thank you.

The Union is stronger than ever, with increased membership, but, as with all organisations, the winds blow stronger in some directions than in others. In a previous newsletter, ways and ideas of developing the union were solicited. Unfortunately, the response was limited. It was decided by the central committee to maintain the present branch structure. The much heralded employment initiative still remains at the starting blocks and I must accept much of the responsibility for this, but it is, I assure you, a race that shall be run.

As you are all aware, a major extension is being undertaken in the college and it is hoped that a space will be made available to the Union for a permanent archive and secretarial facility, from which the news letter and union notices would emanate. I should also like to thank Mr. Larry Branigan for all the support he has given to the Union during the past two years.



Roseanne and Michael Keohane

To hold the office has been for me a great honour, sometimes perceived by others to hold more mandates than it does. By the students, "it should be co-ed". By the parents "my son should be doing honours maths". By the pastmen "this is the year we must win the senior cup". But above all, it has been fun.

As to the future of the Union there has been much talk down the years of ways and means of helping the recent pastmen. Maybe the time has come for them to take the initiative and start a junior branch of the Union, centred perhaps in areas of third level education. The power you have, but it must come from yourselves.

I have enjoyed many functions over the past years: Kenmare, the Dublin dinner, Mount Juliet, and may I take this opportunity to wish my successor, Gerard McCarthy, every success in his term of office. Coincidentally, the annual retreat takes place this year on March 27, the day after the Cork dinner. One of the events that has established itself without peer is the annual Roscrea golf competition thanks to Gerard Maher, Gerry Hayes and Liam Spooner. To all my fellow members on the central committee a heartfelt, thank you, and to the branches, may you all prosper. If any pastman knows somebody who is not receiving a news letter, why not pass on your copy so that more and more may stay in touch with the centre? Thank you all for your support and also the staff in the college. By the time you receive this news letter a dinner shall have taken place in London thanks to the work of Jim Egan, Tim O'Dwyer and Conor Massey and a report shall appear anon. Keep in touch.



Heather Plummer, President, the King's Hospital P.P.U. and Michael Keohane, Union President, Cistercian College.

DUBLIN BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER - A FUN FUNCTION

Simon Coyle

The Annual Dinner of the Dublin Branch took place on Saturday 13 November 1993 at the Hibernian and United Service Club on St Stephen's Green. Whilst there is no doubt that the incidence of the Rugby International against Romania that afternoon served to depress numbers to 98, it provided by contrast an opportunity for "country cousins" to kill two birds with one stone and attend both the match and dinner in the same visit to the metropolis. True to Club standards, the meal and attendant service were top class and a wonderful meal was enjoyed. Fr Kevin Daly ably and articulately, represented the community and was much in evidence circulating in the pre and post dinner chat sessions which, invariably, are a feature of the function. The young and not so young generations of pastmen were in fair measure represented although the student fraternity were a little thin on the ground. Ambassadors such as Barney Sherry and Denis Crowley were much in evidence, the former fulfilling perfectly his task as prefect of ten Presidents of kindred Leinster Schools Unions.

We were delighted with the presence for

the first time of Gerard Maher and Liam Spooner from the North Tipperary Branch as we were indeed with the presence of Frank Smyth the College Headmaster. Hopefully, they will return year on year for many to come. Union President - Michael Keohane - was resplendent and as witty as usual in his succinct post dinner address. The guest speaker, David Walshe, the well known Sports/Rugby journalist, provided many humorous insights into some of the aspects and personalities of the Rugby world.

Virtually every generation of life at CCR was represented on the night with an increasing number of young (relatively) pastmen in evidence covering a wide range of professions and vocations. Declan Martin of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Michael McNamara the architect, Eamon Maher, teacher, Jeremy Massey, undertaker, and Manus Agnew, estate agent. The legal profession was also much in evidence in the forms of Kevin O'Connor, Donal Keane and Ian Simington along with a host of bankers,



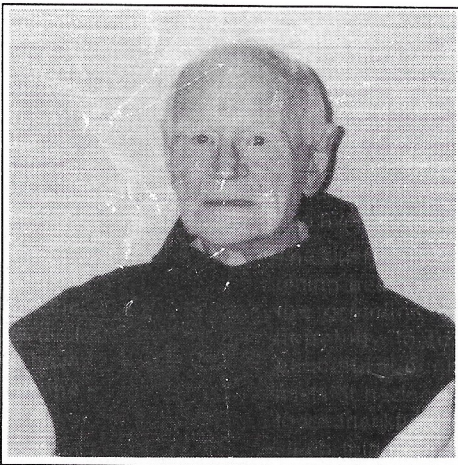
Diarmuid Crowley and Chairman Simon Coyle

stockbrokers, accountants and the odd "man of the cloth".

Sadness at the passing of Frs. Patrick and Emmanuel and gratitude to John Shanahan for his outstanding contribution to academic life in CCR figured more than once in the dissertations. Speechifying was kept to a minimum consistent with the responsibilities demanded of the occasion and as a consequence, plenty of time was afforded all to mingle post-dinner and enjoy a few "scoops". At 2.30 a.m. all but the hardy annuals had unwound themselves from the Club to the somewhat more charged atmosphere of Leeson Street and its selection of night clubs - All in all a full and enjoyable evening.

FR. PATRICK MOLONEY OCSO (1906-1993)

Liam S. Maher



Fr. Patrick Moloney

Student at Roscrea : 1919 - 1923

Monk at Roscrea Abbey from August 1923 to September 29th 1993.

President of Cistercian College : 1962 - 1972

Requiem Mass on October 2nd 1993

He came to Roscrea because his teacher in Brosna, Co. Kerry, a Mr. Cronin, had a son there and he strongly advocated the cause of C.C.R. education. His mother was ambitious for her family. He was the youngest and the farm was his if he wished to run it. He did not. There was no local secondary school at that time, so boarding school was the only option.

As they lived simply at home, the food at

Roscrea was not a problem for him. He was the only surviving son (his only brother died at an early age) living with four sisters, so he enjoyed the male companionship.

Fr. Anthony Daly was his first Latin teacher. He was very good and was interested in people and seemed to know everything. Patrick never lost his love for Latin and he taught it until he retired. He went into 3B when he arrived and the next year into 3A. He entered the monastery after Matric, in 5th Year. That was customary until the Leaving Certificate became the more obvious concluding exam after 1947.

Br. Patrick returned to the College in 1927. Fr. Malachy (Novice Master) approved of young monks having the experience of the College: 'good for them intellectually', he said. But preparing classes and teaching them and correcting exercises while studying theology did not leave much time for praying and thinking. Yet this practice continued. He was ordained priest in 1930 and was immediately put in charge of the large study hall. Ailbe said to him, pointing to the rostrum which was at the north end of the hall, "Don't leave that seat for six weeks". After a month there was whispering under the clock and Fr. Patrick picked out his man. "Bring your books down here", and he planted the offender beside the rostrum. That stopped the distant whispering. He did not walk around the study hall at any stage. He had seen

that Br. Peter (Paddy) Long had made life hard for himself by walking, pausing and looking around him, and again moving forward. The boys had too many eyes for his two to cope with them, and discipline suffered.

He was away from the College for two years with pernicious anaemia which gave him very high blood-pressure. But for the discovery of raw liver as an antidote - later its essence in liquid form - he would have died. He always needed liver-extract daily. He missed the typhoid epidemic of '33-'34 which hurt Ailbe badly as he was so proud of his food and of the care the boys got. Four monks and four boys died from the fever. (Overcrowding could have been a cause of the outbreak but the water-supply is more likely).

Fr. Patrick started the College Praesidium of the Legion of Mary in 1943. He got members just by spreading the news. His second president was Tom O'Toole, later Lord Abbot. He (Fr. Patrick) was inclined to intrude too much on the meetings. The Legion got its own duplicator and the boys did the writing and the printing of the *Vex*, mainly the College news and topical events. In 1945, they started the book-barrow. He remained in charge until 1954. The boys spread the Legion to the farmyard, to Citeaux Hall and to surrounding areas.

He was surprised when asked to become President of the College. He thought he was too rigid with boys, monks and lay teachers. He thought it was a job for a young man, one closer to the generation of schoolboys. He expected too much from

his fellow monks. He did not get involved in finances except that he wrote to those parents who had not paid their fees and told them he would not give a character-reference to their sons unless fees had been paid. Most of them responded positively.

He was very dependent on his deans. He sometimes felt he was only a dignified prefect. He occasionally changed the prefects in the ref. One prefect said, "But I have to eat, Father, or I won't be a good athlete", when blamed for keeping too much food for himself! The prefect-system was working well then, but it had to be watched carefully.

It was hard to leave the College and return to obscurity, but the decision to depart was his. He wanted to go in 1971 when the new block was being opened but agreed to wait until 1972 when Fr. Peter could be ready to replace him.

He had compulsory attendance at Mass on one weekday; then it was made optional and those not attending went to study. The Mass did not seem to mean much to the boys. (He was President during the sixties when Irish society was undergoing drastic changes and youthful rebellion became the norm.) Confession was no longer compulsory. The nightly rosary was cut down to one decade. He dropped the attendance at the abbey Sunday Mass to a couple of times a year. He approved of visits to the abbey and model farm when a class was accompanied by a teacher.

He did not think monks should be asked to teach; their presence in the College should be voluntary. Like Fr. Michael (Patrick)

Sherry (editor of first *Fiolars*) he approved of the College as part of the abbey's apostolate. He thought the number of students should not have gone over 280. At least four monks at the school would be necessary as a monastic presence.

The above is a synopsis of his long life as a monk and teacher as given to me at the abbey guesthouse on September 19th, 1991.

As President, he did not like teachers to call at his office. He stood up and started swinging his belt nervously when he arrived. All he wanted was to find out what he wanted and to get rid of him. He never invited him to sit. At the rare meetings with teachers, he was equally ill-at-ease and made them as brief as he could.

His "No" was famous - to parents, students and teachers. Once, however, in the late sixties, there was a change when younger teachers were anxious to cut back on the 3 p.m. conclusion of class on Saturdays. New timetables were worked out with 10-15 minute additions to class on most days. Patrick just added 30 minutes to Wednesday classes and finished Saturday classes at noon. He cut the 28 hour week to 26¹/₂ hours - without arguing or bargaining.

In the 30's he was in charge of hurling but all he did was hand out hurleys. As President, his worst nightmare was a drawn game, only surpassed if a match was postponed when the buses had already reached Portlaoise! He was a man for routine - class and study were almost sacrosanct and visiting teams and outings were undesirable distractions. Even his

beloved Legion should not interfere with study or involve late returns from Citeaux Hall - as some boys discovered to their annoyance.

But he kept the lid on unrest and maintained discipline and his deans cooperated. The students knew where they stood with him and respected his integrity, as did the teachers.

He would have been amused that his requiem Mass at 3 p.m. on October 2nd last was in the middle of the Abbot's Cup Competition at Roscrea golfclub and so upset the timesheet drastically but in his own quiet way he would have appreciated the number of pastmen who missed the golf to celebrate Mass in his memory.

He was a secretive, private man. He built around him a protective wall and never spoke of his family. At his requiem Mass not one of his nieces or nephews knew he was christened 'Tim' and not one of them had any emotional connections with him. He kept them well away from him, likewise with monks and teachers.

But some did get close to him. One such was Conor Brady (1962-66). "To those who knew him and could relate to him - and I was privileged to be one of that number - he was a man of great kindness and great wisdom. But he did not make himself an easy man to know. He had a somewhat gruff manner (which actually concealed a certain shyness). He was not one for easy banter or for sharing anecdotes . . . But there was never a gentler, never a more conscientious and never a more idealistic man." (Dec. 1993 Memories).

STRANGE TWIST OF FATE

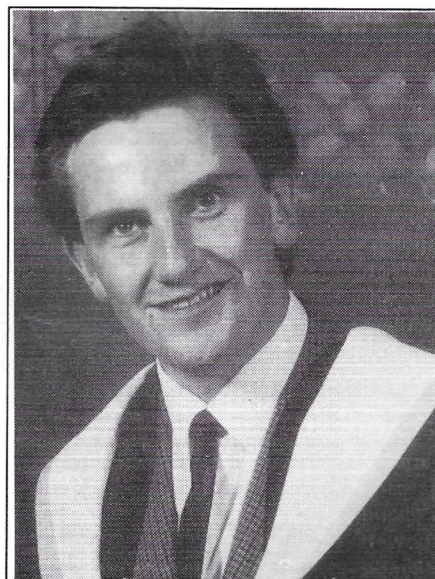
Brian Scott

When one speaks of a job in any domain, one nearly always considers how that job was received and the events which led up to it. When I speak of my own case and the fact of working now in Cistercian College as a French/German teacher, my mind goes back to 1979 when I started in the school as a pupil. One of the main features of that year was the postal strike which crippled the country for several months. My parents had considered sending me to C.C.R. but it was not a definite course of action. The postal strike meant that the College were not able to correspond with parents of prospective pupils and so were compelled to use the newspapers to convey the fact that the admission examinations (i.e. Entrance & Scholarship) were coming up. I clearly remember one morning in March 1979 at the age of eleven and a half, putting old newspapers for my dear mother in the wastebasket and noticing this advertisement by chance. As a result, I took the Entrance Examination and was offered a place. So started my secondary academic career in Cistercian College. Admittedly, the first year or so was tough enough but when I found my feet I settled and enjoyed the College in all its aspects -

from its traditions right down to the sense of camaraderie existing between the pupils.

When I finished a Temporary Wholetime position in St. Brendan's Bray last year, I was considering various options. One of them was to travel but in the meantime a permanent position arose in a school in the North Midlands. I was not totally happy with the prospect but then a phone call arrived from Fr. Kevin Daly. My initial reaction was one of shock that my Curriculum Vitae would find its way back to C.C.R. but then I remembered the day I saw the advertisement in the *Irish Independent*. It could be said that it was a chance that I saw that particular ad. Not many jobs within my subject area were advertised that day and just as I was closing the paper, I noticed the ad.

I took the interview for the position and was offered the job. Though happy with the decision, I was nonetheless apprehensive about starting, particularly given the fact that I would be working largely with my old teachers. To be quite honest, I nearly died on the evening of last August 31st when I had to start my contract. When I met all the staff again my fear subsided



Brian Scott

as I did not see them anymore as my teachers but rather as workmates. It is interesting to note however, that my perception of them as people did not change. The only difference lay in the fact that I could now get to know them on a one-to-one basis. I have found the staff to be fully welcoming and supportive.

The school, generally speaking, has not changed either. I thought that the type of

pupil would have altered but this was not so. If anybody asked me what stands out in my mind about C.C.R. I would say that the bond that develops between pupils past and present is most striking. Even when dealing with the boys, I sense a certain common bond at times as they are aware that I understand what they are experiencing. Obviously, the teacher/pupil divide exists but I have not fully departed from life as a student. Almost everyday I am reminded by things pupils say and do of my own time here.

Upon reflection, it seems quite ironic that both my terms of stay here in Roscrea were brought about by articles in newspapers that I nearly missed on both occasions. "Fate" is a phenomenon I used not believe in but now I wonder.

SCHOOL NEWS

Congratulations to Shane O'Rourke on winning 1st prize in the recent Bord na Gaeilge short story writing competition. His was the best of ninety five entries and the £300 first prize was a well deserved honour.

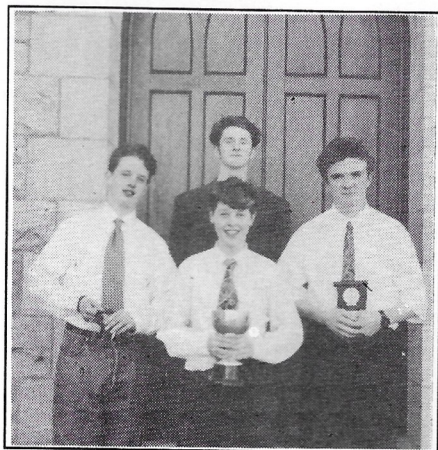
Dara Harrington achieved one of the top ten scholarships in German, based on Junior Certificate results, allied to a subsequent interview. He wins a one month all expenses trip to Germany during which time he will both study the language and present a talk on Irish life and culture.

Maths Olympiad based Junior Certificate Results

Congratulations to the following on their Junior Cert. Maths results:

Fintan Cox, Ultan McGuckin, Colm McGarry, Dara Harrington.

Tipperary Equestrian Centre Inter-Schools Competition 1994



1st Place went to L/R: David Maher - Roscrea; Kenneth Purcell - Emily; Diarmuid Crowley - Kilkenny.
Back: Hugh Curley - Mayo.

THEN AND NOW



Teaching Staff and Distinguished Visitor 1974

Back Row Left to Right: Mr. John Williams (Retired), Mr. John Flanagan, Mr. Hugh McDonnell, Mr. Pat Kilborne, Mr. Michael Coughlan, Mr. Norman Davey, Mr. Dan Smith, Mr. Vincent Leahy, Mr. Liam Maher (Retired).

Front Row Left to Right: Mr. David Hartnett, Mr. Brendan O'Rourke, Mr. John Shanahan (Retired), President Erskine Childers (R.I.P.), Mr. Sean Burke, Fr. Emmanuel Curtis (R.I.P.), Mr. Rody Ryan (Retired).



Teaching and Administrative Staff 1992/93

Back Row Left to Right: Hugh McDonnell, John O'Sullivan, Gerard Maher, Gerard Hayes, Vincent Leahy, Gerard Dunne, Paddy Kennedy.

Middle Row: Thomas Kenna, Diarmuid Fitzgerald, Fr. Bonaventure Melvin O.Cist, Pat Sheedy, Pat Kilbane, Dan Smyth, Norman Davey, Mrs Pauline Sheedy, William Guiry.

Front Row Left to Right: Miss Ann Harrington, Mrs Aileen Spillane, Miss Stella Quigley, Mr. Brendan O'Rourke, Frank Smyth (Principal), Fr. Kevin Daly O.Cist (President), John Shanahan (Vice Principal) Mrs. Mary Spain, Fr. Eanna Henderson O.Cist, Mrs Brenda Murray, Miss Pauline O'Reilly.

KENMARE WEEKEND 1993

This was the 10th year in succession we had come to the Park Hotel Kenmare for the Union Weekend Away, and it was a beautiful day. We have been very lucky with the weather over the years. This has been important for the golfers and walkers who burn up their energy at these sports



Anyone for golf?

on Saturday. Others prefer to sit around, chat, and soak up the atmosphere. The landscape is lovely - mountains, oakwoods that have turned to rich gold mirrored in a sea inlet, and huge skies, and a tangible tranquillity.

The weekend grew out of the Annual General Meeting of the Cork Branch convened by Seamus Gallagher who was Chairman of the Branch in '83. Some other Union officers from the Central Committee who attended were so impressed with the location, and the hotel, that they decided to repeat the social occasion the following year. Being the end of the season, the Management offered special rates.

Francis Brennan and his staff go out of their way to make your stay comfortable and memorable, and the cuisine is world famous. You can indulge yourself by arriving early and having dinner on Friday night - a foretaste of the Gala Dinner on

Saturday. This is a social and gastronomic experience, and is followed by a soothing musical evening when the guests join in the sing-alongs. This has been known to last into the wee hours of Sunday morning. After breakfast, served with the sun streaming in the east windows against a backdrop of mountains, Mass concludes the visit. And so to the cars and the fuss of packing up and the many goodbyes, and the long journey home. Yes, for many it is a long journey, but there is always next year D.V. See you there!

Fr. Dermot



Kenmare '93

Owen Fox, Larry Brannigan (Chairman, Board of Governors) and Nancy McCarthy at the sing-along.

DUBLIN BRANCH A.G.M.

Donal Taaffe - Vice-Chairman

I come to write this article fresh from the Dublin Branch A.G.M. which saw the introduction of the following new Committee members:-

James Lee, Maurice Phelan, Brian Hogan, Conor Fox, Seamus Duggan, Paul McDonnell and Michael McNamara.

It was a great boost to the Branch and also to the Union and its uplifting timing couldn't have been better, coinciding as it did, with the Junior team's victory over St. Gerard's in the Cup!

When I was first approached to write this article, it was suggested that I should write it on the Roscrea College Senior Cup campaign and the ancillary post match activities of the various recently departed pastmen which inevitably result. Like the team, I started well but then St. Michael's College and ill-fate conspired to keep the college cupless and myself storyless!

In the same dejected mood that must have saddened the hearts of the pupils as they climbed aboard their buses to return to school, I headed for home suffering from severe material starvation. Well I remembered the same feeling during my time in the college as the year yawned ahead of me characterless and absent of the welcome milestones of the next stage in the Senior Cup competition.

I particularly recall the year that Con Egan's talented team were unluckily put out in the second round by a surprised Wesley team in Newbridge. Having been introduced to the Senior Cup by the fabulous team of Kevin "Chauv" Kelly in

1980, the prospect of a semi-final appearance came to me more as an expectation than as a hope. After such an 'early' exit I simply didn't know how I would fill the remainder of the school year. I looked forward to other sports in which to involve myself, the summer sports such as soccer, tennis or athletics. When the 3rd and 4th year Leagues had been completed with their characteristic whimper I realised precisely what this predicament meant.

The comradeship and unity of purpose of the rugby season, and of the game itself, had been replaced by the prospect of playing games which are, by their nature, individualistic and somewhat selfish.

The human tunnel applauding the opposition had now become thrown racquets and persecuted referees, people being sent off and heightening tensions in this power keg of testosterone! The catalyst of exams, of course, went a long way towards intensifying the situation.

I remember writing, in an attempt to explain this "silly season" phenomenon, in the *Vexillum* at the time;

"For we are in the final quarter when days grow longer and tempers shorter". So, at the risk of sounding depressing, the first half of the year is over for the Senior Boys and they're 10-0 up!!

NEWS OF PASTMEN

ENGAGEMENT

Robert Cole and Denise Larkin engaged Christmas 1993.

Getting married on March 25th Donal Taaffe and Cara Brophy.

Paddy O'Boyle - getting married in June 1994 to Jacinta Higgins.

Martin Daly - getting married in May to Miriam Mangano.

MARRIAGES:

Mark Redmond and Elane Hanley married September 11th, 1993.

Barry Cowen married Mary Gowran on September 4th, 1993.

David O'Brien married Eleanor O'Callaghan (sister of Billy, John, Denis) in January, 1994.

Also congratulations to Brian Meehan on his recent wedding.

BACK HOME:

Danny Cole I.V.R. Specialist, returned from England in October 1993 and is at present working with Telecom Eireann Information Systems.

THIRD WORLD:

Frank Heslin, working with Trócaire based in Mendesa on Kenya/Somalia border setting up an engineering programme to enhance water supply.

Gerry McCarthy also working in Mendesa with Concern looking after legislation and

administration.

Paul Enright also working with Concern in Baidoa, in the distribution of food from warehouses to the needy.



Peter Hogan (1963-1968), from Dublin, the first Irishman to sail single-handed around the world, pictured with President Mary Robinson on a courtesy call to Aras an Uachtarain. Included is his father Tommy (C.C.R. 1922/27).

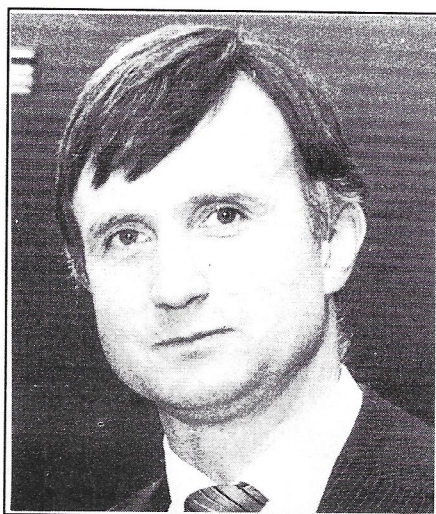
GENERAL:

Patrick O'Shea has been elected President of the European Association of Lactose Manufacturers in October 1993.

Mark Ledwidge graduated with a First Class honours degree in Pharmacy from Aberdeen University in June 1993. He is currently a postgraduate student of pharmaceuticals in Trinity College, Dublin.

Dara Quinn also graduated in Pharmacy from Aberdeen University in 1992 and, having married in 1993, is currently practising in the West of Ireland.

John O'Carroll, currently attending the Limerick School of Art, was the only student to have his work exhibited in the College last Christmas. He continues to advance his rugby career and has appeared for Old Crescent at All Ireland League, Division 11.



Liam Spooner

Is a former all-Ireland colleges and BLE high hurdles champion. He is a former captain of the Leinster Junior Rugby XV and a holder of five Co. Tipperary senior hurling medals. He is a member of Roscrea Golf and Hurling Clubs, is President of the Roscrea Rugby Football Club, and Treasurer of the Cistercian College Past Pupils Union. He has been an enthusiastic and successful supporter of the Abbot's Cup and every year manages to accommodate all who wish to attend the dinner. His son Dara started in the school in September 1993.

Declan Madden, IBEC director of social affairs and specialist services.

Father John Garry is one of six Kiltegan priests working in Sudan for many years. He is based at the Palataka Mission and his parish covers 500 square miles with a population of 50,000.

Brian Meehan registered his 12th success of the season as a trainer with Captain Scarlet in Bath on September 13th 1993.

Pat Cunneen, managing director of A.I.B. Investment Managers.

John Rafferty is Bord Failte's business development manager.

Peter Hogan, opened his own gallery on Dame Street, Dublin where he will show his work. His opening exhibition was called "From a Southern Ocean", which featured a series of paintings inspired by his recent voyage around the world.

Donal Chambers is general manager AIB Corporate and Commercial Banking.

Ian Curley is personal assistant to Michael Smurfit.

Professor Fergal O'Gara co-ordinator of UCC's microbiology department.

Michael O'Connell (1988-'93) was awarded an Exhibitionary Scholarship by T.C.D. based on his 1993 Leaving Certificate. Presently studying Law in Trinity.

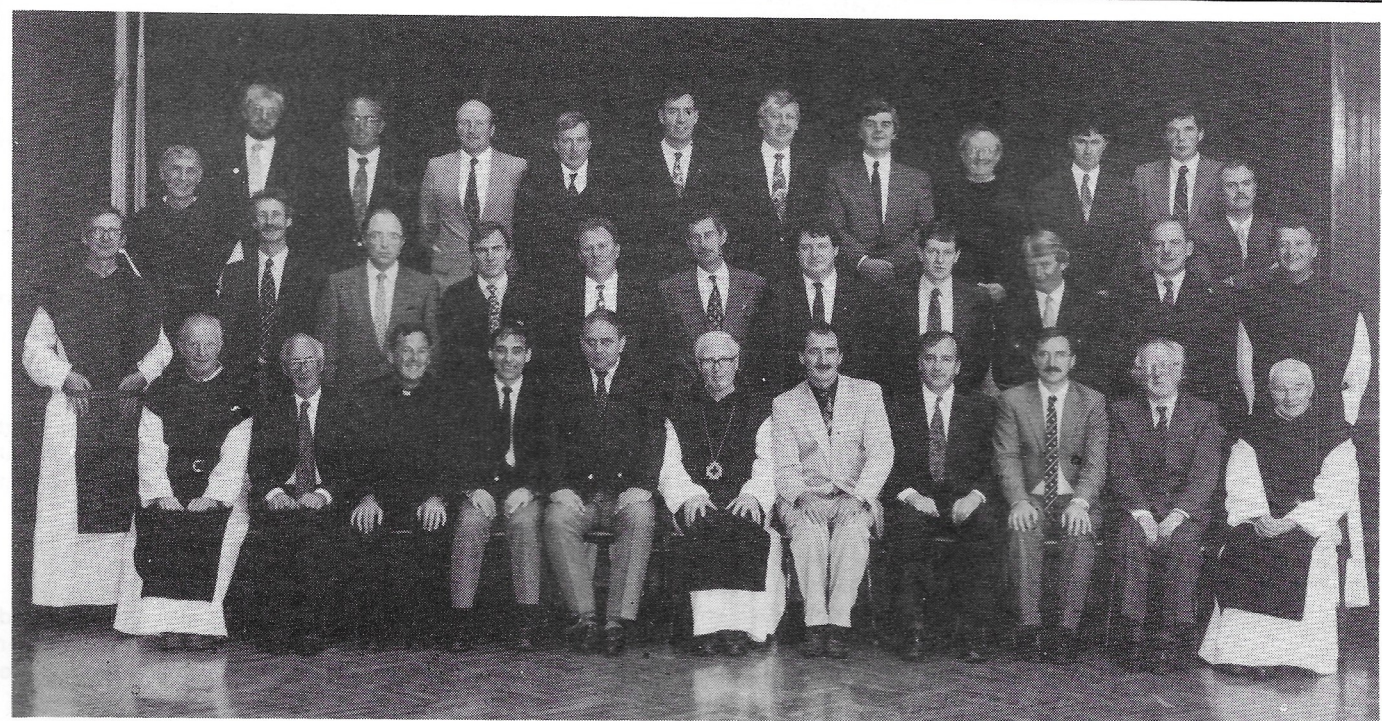
DEATHS:

Col. Patrick Collins died January 13th 1994 (nephew of General Ml. Collins) at the Blackrock Clinic. (R.I.P.)

Fr. Denis Curtin, parish priest of Cappawhite, died in January of this year. He had spent some years lecturing in St. Patrick's College, Thurles and was a former President of Thurles Golf Club.

Patrick Finn (1923-24), Ballymahon Castle, Thurles who died on 18th February 1994. (R.I.P.)

Charles Walsh (1931-'33), Youghal, Co. Cork (living in Scotland) who died February 18th 1994. (R.I.P.)



CLASS OF 1963 - 1968

HAS SCHOOL FAILED US?

James Shannon - Taking his Leaving Certificate in June '94

Once, in some blinding flash of archaic wisdom, someone had an idea. Not one of those useful ones that we appreciate in everyday life - lightbulbs, ballpoint pens, fad food and the like. No, this rather inspired individual was convinced that to rip children away from the love and care of the parental home, and imprison them with a mob of similar ilk would be a damn fine idea. And so, on the Sunday evening of the first week, after most things had been created, the notion of a "boarding school" was husbanded and given life.

While, doubtless, on Monday morning everyone was fascinated and intrigued by an idea of camaraderie, co-operation and friendship within the confines of a school, by Friday afternoon opinions began to waver. But, nonetheless, the proverbial ball had been heaved, and was by now, rolling callously over generation after generation of would-be scholars. For, all is not sweetness and light in the boarding school. In fact, one could say that these commodities seem entirely out of place in the life of a contemporary boarding school student . . .

Footfalls in vast, Orwellian corridors, echoing in the stale empty air: sickly tones of lemon and coffee glaring loathfully down from towering, rampart-like walls, the locking and unlocking of doors, the lighting and extinguishing of bulbs, cold words from impersonal wardens . . . Alas, this is not some gothic nightmare from the realms of science fiction. Neither is it an exposé on some mythical Turkish prison. Rather, it is Sunday morning somewhere in the halls of a hypothetical boarding school.

The dusty sand of a dreamless night still gluing heavy eyelids to bloodshot eyes, the gremlins of fatigue still clinging hopefully to leaden feet, one's only peaceful thought looming through the mists of haziness still blanketing reality, is to be thankful that there is an hour extra sleep this morning. Stumbling down the last of those treacherous steps, ground floor is reached. Like characters in some modern Dickensian fable, countless shivering figures trudge in, to the clamorous screech of a new bell.

One's mind begins at last to register some shade of reality and, grudgingly at first, begins to whir into operation. Thoughts begin to flash without the agony of fatigue numbing their potency, and now, for the first time since one stumbled from the embrace of the soft arms of sleep, consideration of one's situation begins to materialise. Sitting here, with countless heads bobbing up and down in rhythm with the ungracious clank of the spoons, one can only wonder at what shrouded mysteries the outside world may shield from vision. Countless thoughts are

provoked, of such glorious wonders as television, of the attraction of discotheques and cinemas, of all the unrealised comforts of home.

Home - as distant as the stars outside, still desperately trying to blink away the ungracious intrusion of the dawn, palely framed in the window above. Even the word itself evokes mouthwatering images of happiness and contentment. It is seen by the mind's eye as a place devoid of the competition, the stress, the spirit-sucking grasp of weariness so characteristic of and integral to the boarding school. It is a place where individualities are accepted as the norm, there is no pressure to seem uninterested in every "uncool" aspect of school life. It is a place without a path towards effort so rife in the modern mentality. Or is it?

And so, what conclusion may we come to as regards the merit of the boarding system? What can a boarding school offer that a day school cannot? There are countless advantages, doubtless, ranging from the structured study periods to well organised sporting events. But schools like Cistercian College Roscrea have failed us in that they have failed to portray a realistic view and microcosm of society.

Boarding schools and indeed schools in general, should mould the students from the first time that he or she cowers beneath those gargantuan front doors to the moment one strolls for the last time down its hollow corridors. They should instill notions of respect, decency and responsibility, no matter what the student's academic level might be. This begs the question, have so many schools forgotten what their objective should be?

Alas, perception of what the ideal school should purvey has become clouded in the

billowing, ever increasing importance of academic success. We live in a society where, unfortunately, examination results form the only yardstick by which a person's individual merit is measured. Too often formation of character and personality take an exceedingly humble second place to the complicated rhetoric of the classroom. Too often participation in events such as the annual musical or inter-house and school public speaking competitions is discarded in the deluge of mock-examinations, oral examinations, revision and classwork which overwhelms any student. We must be grateful that at least some schools, and thankfully Cistercian College Roscrea numbers among them, do provide these invaluable assets, perhaps to a degree that is unique. But, how can we reconcile the fact that involvement in the above events wanes as the student nears the ominous Leaving Certificate Examination? Perhaps, its cause is the philosophy of a society, striving to assert its position among an established communion of nations, desperately trying to instill in its offspring the finality of what academic success entails.

And so, as one hears for the final time this December day, the jarring clash of keys, and as the dormitory conversations wane, perhaps the drawbacks of this boarding school system are not as glaring as any student might be forgiven for suggesting in his mini-adolescent rumblings about such elusive images as "blasted keys" or "damnable bells". Perhaps all the nostalgia of "old boys" might be deserved, and so as the last light is finally dimmed, so ends another day in the life of Cistercian College Roscrea.

[Ed's Note: What will James say about life as a boarder in 2,000 A.D.??]



Lord Abbot's Cup, October, 1993

Back row left to right: Liam Spooner (Organising Committee), Eamon Maher, Gerald McCarthy (Incoming Union President), Gerard Maher (Organising Committee), Joe Dooley, Gerry Hayes (Organising Committee), Matt McHugh.

Front row: Chris McDonnell (Lady-Captain Roscrea G.C.), Fr. Peter Garvey, Michael Keoghane (Union President), Kevin Dwan (Winner), Wally Kirwan, (President, Roscrea G.C.), Ber Cavanagh.

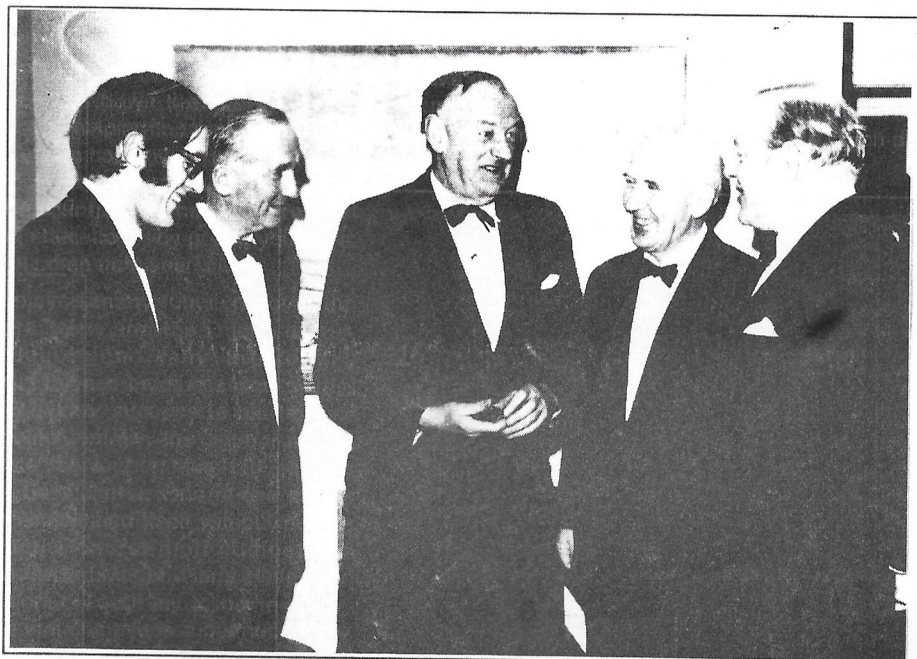
BOARD OF GOVERNORS 1993/94



Rev. Father Abbot with Board of Governors

Seated left to right: Sister Patricia Greene, Mr. Larry Branigan (Chairperson),
 Rev. Fr. Abbot, Mrs. Nuala Kernan, Br. Jerome Kelly.
 Standing: Fr. Peter Garvey, Rev. Dean Cuddy, Dr. B. Sherry, Mrs. Margaret Cunningham,
 Dr. Peter Fahy, Mr. Thomas O'Cofaigh, Fr. Ambrose Farrington.
 Back Row: Fr. Kevin Daly, President, Mr. Frank Smyth Dean of Studies/Principal.

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE - 1971



Vivian Lavan, Dr. Bernard Sherry, Dr. Robert Holmes Levers, Sheamus Sherry,
 Noel Windle.

NOTICE

The Dublin Branch has booked Milltown Golf Club on Thursday, March 31st, for the annual **Matt Hyland Trophy**. The first tee will be available from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 3.45 p.m.

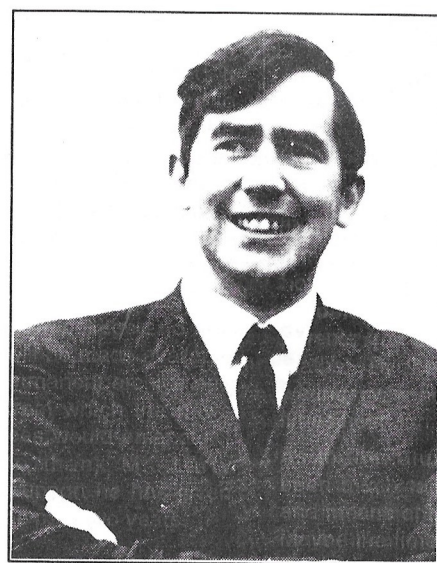
Tee-times must be booked in advance from Simon Coyle -

Tel: (01) 6761116 Fax: (01) 6766640.

Golf and Dinner : £35.00.



President of the Past Pupils Union (1971)
 GERARD BATES (1930)



Gerald McCarthy, (1956), an Architect in
 Cork.



Johnnie Dolan and Paul Wrafter were the
 Golf Champions in 1971