

# ROSCREA REVIEW

No. 54

Newsletter for the Cistercian College, Roscrea, Union.

Autumn 1989

## FROM THE UNION PRESIDENT

Having now almost reached the half-way stage of my term as President of the Past Pupils Union, it seems like an opportune time to address a few words to you. My thanks to the Central Committee for their trust and confidence, in having bestowed this singular and prestigious honour on me. It was with considerable trepidation that I accepted the nomination, and had several bouts of minor panic attacks during my year as President-Elect, when I thought of the implications of assuming the Presidential role, looming ominously nearer.

However, I had reckoned without the guidance and influence of the outgoing President, Tom Ambrose. It was a beneficial and enjoyable education to have watched him in action. I admired his competent, and apparently effortless, handling of the many meetings and functions, his extraordinary wit and banter, his boundless energy, whether it be on the golf course or dance floor, and above all, the fact that here was a man that not alone was obviously himself enjoying everything he did, but was imparting a great amount of pleasure to all who were fortunate enough to be associated with him. To Tom, I extend my sincere thanks and congratulations for a superb performance as Union President, and a special word of thanks to his wife, Maisie, who graced the many occasions with her charming presence.

The Union and its eight Branches are in good shape, thanks to the efforts of many Pastmen, but the lions share continues to be done by Fr. Dermot, our General Secretary of long standing, and committed dedication. The Nucleus of the incredible success of the Roscrea Union is the Central Committee, but the Nucleolus is Fr. Dermot, and we all owe him an immense debt of gratitude. Long may he continue to direct it.

The year has taken my good wife, Noreen, and myself to functions in most branches in the country. We have been overwhelmed by the cordiality and hospitality afforded to us by all concerned. It is very gratifying to see the enjoyment our pastmen derive from meeting at these functions, because after all that is what the Union is all about. Let me again apologise to my good friends in the Dublin Branch, the cornerstone of the Union, for my unfortunate absence from their Dinner, due to a clash of dates with the South Tipperary Dinner Dance. I can assure them it will not happen again and I hope to atone for it this year. My thanks also to the Midland Branch, the South West Branch and the Galway, Mayo, Sligo Branch for excellent functions during the year.

## THE WESTERN TEAM



(Back Row) Dr. Gerard Meehan, Padraig O'Maille, Dr. Hugh Breedin, Dr. Brian Jennings.

(Seated) John Sherry, Dr. Sean Murphy, President PPU, Fr. Kevin Daly, President CCR.

It is good to get word of a function coming up in the South East Branch in New Ross on October 13th, after a lapse of some years, thanks to the initiative of Billy Murphy and friends. The only Branch not functioning at all for many years is the Limerick Clare, in spite of a wealth of Pastmen and repeated requests by Central Committee to get organised again. I would again request them to make the effort, and I look forward to attending a function there in the coming year. It only takes one 'phone call to initiate a function, and I have a few people in mind that I will ask to do this.

A word of thanks to the North Tipperary Branch, and in particular to Gerry Maher and friends, for the professional way in which they run off the increasingly successful Abbot's Cup Golf Competition. They are, however, I must remind them, due to hold an Independent Branch function as they have done so well in the past. Very positive moves are taking place in the London Branch, and I can assure our Pastmen there, that the Central Committee has pledged its full support as its Diamond Jubilee commitment.

A final word to my own Branch, and very sincere thanks to John Sherry and his committee for running a magnificent Dinner Dance in Galway last April. Also for producing this issue of the Review, the main credit for which rests with Michael Keohane in Sligo. Well done.

A word of welcome to our new Pastmen, the sixty lads who have just left the College, and by now have learned their destiny, following the exam results. I wish them luck in their new found careers, whether they are in them by choice, or by virtue of the dastardly points system to which they have recently been subjected to.

Thank you, Fr. Kevin, for your invaluable support during the year, and I congratulate you and your staff for another successful College year.

Finally, I thank all the Pastmen and friends who have been so courteous to Noreen and myself during the year, and I look forward to renewing acquaintances in the coming year.

# SILK

by Fr. Dermot O.C.S.O.

The Silk Worm is not handsome by any means, but there are many others far uglier in the same order of nature. One thing about him he is not slimy as the name 'worm' might lead one to believe. In actual fact he is a caterpillar — the larva of the silkmoth 'Bombyx Mori'. The silkworms that so fascinated the young gentleman were fully grown specimens some 4" long and about as thick as a fountain-pen. The segmented body was white, with distinctive dark markings around the head, which is small and shell-like, and at the other end a little spike cocks up like a tail. This seems to serve no other use than to arouse curiosity. A row of 'portholes' runs along each side of the length of the body and from five of the rear segments a pair of feet grow with a sucker attachment for climbing. Three more pairs of a different structure are on the segments below the head. He sometimes employs these forefeet to hold the food while eating.

These big fellows are now nearly six weeks old and during all that time have done little else but eat. But how did it all begin? Here is a question that might interest philosophers; which came first, the silkworm, the silk-moth or the egg? For our purpose it starts with the egg. It is slate coloured, about the size of a pin-head, round in shape with somewhat flattened sides. It takes from thirty to forty thousand to weigh one ounce. We got fresh supplies of eggs from time to time from Cyprus to keep the strain healthy. In this country these eggs would hatch naturally about mid-May — a very unsatisfactory situation as there is normally no food then available.

Which brings us to the vital question of food: mulberry leaf is the only satisfactory diet for these creatures. So the eggs are kept in coldstore until the buds on the mulberry trees are safe from frost and fresh young leaves are available for the tiny new-born. It takes thousands of these worms to give a reasonable quantity of silk. Incubators of various designs are used to ensure a regular hatch. An infra-red lamp suspended over a tray of evenly-spread eggs and giving a temperature of about 60 degrees is satisfactory. The bulbs can be lowered closer to the eggs day by day until the temperature is about 75 degrees. At this stage of heat the eggs will nearly all hatch.

Silkworms need warmth, air, food and cleanliness. At 75 degrees F. they will be very happy with four to six meals in the 24 hours. When very young they need fresh-chopped food — a little very often. At birth they are about one eighth of an inch long and look like fragments of black cotton thread. Their first instinct seems to be to seek food — and they follow this instinct consistently for the rest of their lives. So over the eggs are spread two pieces of fine netting or tulle, and on top of this is scattered some chopped mulberry leaf. The little baby-worms come up through the meshes on to the leaf and set to work. It is a simple matter then to remove the top net with the youngster still busy, and without disturbing any unhatched eggs. On a tray apart this hatch will remain content without wandering, as long as food is served regularly. One of the secrets of success in sericulture, as it is properly called — is to have each batch that hatches out at the same time to itself, and to maintain an even development

of all the worms in these batches. The benefit of this becomes more obvious after the first week. The silkworms then go into a sort of coma for 24 hours and on recovery slough or moult their outer skin and appear in a complete new outfit. They do this at regular intervals throughout their larval life — four times in six weeks.

According as they grow they must be given more space. A rearing which at birth would occupy a square foot of space will need many square yards of living-room when one month old. When large numbers are reared, they are kept on portable trays resting on racks one above the other. But things must not be crowded as silkworms need plenty of fresh air. Some say that 35,000 of them when fully grown need 8,000 cubic metres of fresh air per day. Since all their time is spent on the trays and the food is served there the amount of waste that accumulates is considerable. By using nets with a suitable size mesh the worms can be transferred on to fresh trays in the same manner as after hatching. Cleaning is easy as the moisture content of leaf fragments and excreta is very little. The leaf given must not be damp from dew or rain, a rule that becomes a major problem at times in our damp climate.

The picking of leaf is one of the most arduous tasks. During the last ten days of their feeding life 35,000 silkworms will consume nearly 10 cwt. of leaf. To provide this average of 1 cwt. per day takes 50 hours steady work. In the course of the other 30 days a further ½ ton has been eaten. A small rearing of this size might be expected to yield 160 lbs. of cocoons which give about 10 to 12 lbs. of raw silk, a small return for the long hours and hard work.

The cocoon is the form in which the silkworm delivers the silk so coveted by man. Nature designed this silken covering to be a protection to the larva during one of its most helpless and critical periods, the metamorphosis from a silkworm to a silk moth. When it is about six weeks old the silkworm who has hitherto led a most lazy life showing little interest in anything else except food, suddenly becomes possessed of a wandering spirit. Neither the lifelong companions of his table nor the feasts they gorge any longer interest him — he wants to be alone. Away from the crowd he moves and seeks a quiet corner and if he can find something to climb so much the better. A subtle change has taken place in his colouring too, and when seen against the light he seems amber and translucent. When the sericulturist sees this change he must hasten to build up hedges of twigs and straw around the edges of the trays, and before long these hedges are covered with 'ripe' silkworms. They have been seeking suitable corners to settle down to the serious work of their lives. They take their time in their selection.

Having found a site they set to work immediately, throwing out a fine thread from twig to twig to form a web or hammock. This thread is drawn from tiny spinnerets near the mouth. It is fluid silk which solidifies on contact with the air and is composed of two filaments coated with a natural gum and colouring.

Within the hammock the silkworm rests for a little while. When it begins to work again the haphazard method used in making the web is abandoned and a very restricted and orderly system takes its place. Within a few hours the plan of the work becomes obvious.

He has enveloped himself in a further mesh of silk but this time it is egg-shaped and about 1½" long. Within these flimsy walls he performs the most complicated contortions and convolutions and the ball-socket neck is ceaselessly in motion. The silken thread is being drawn swiftly from the spinnerets and lain down in tiny figures of 8, row after row, up and down and never overlapping. And as he spins he shrinks. You can watch the work for the first day and marvel at the energy and order the little creature displays, but after that the thickening silken wall hides the worker. In three days the task is done and the silk substance within its body exhausted. There is now no need to double up its body to fit the restricted space.

Stretched out and motionless it barely fills the length of the cocoon. Another change in its body structure is taking place and by a process similar to the moulting of its younger days the silkworm casts off the last vestiges of its former life and a chrysalis in a hard shell-like skin rests in its place. With most silkworms this is the end of their earthly pilgrimage, for man comes to gather the fruits of their mutual toil. The cocoon that was a couch now becomes a coffin for the little creature within. The cocoons are gathered and baked, thus destroying the life within and dehydrating the chrysalis without damaging the silk. So the silkworm spins and man reaps the harvest.

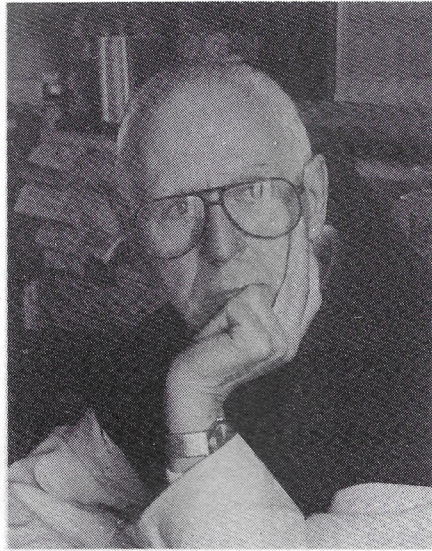
All the cocoons do not go to the ovens. The very best are selected and nature is allowed to pursue her mysterious course uninterrupted. For nearly three weeks there is no apparent change in the chrysalis within the cocoon, then some early morning the shell along the back splits and a new creature is revealed, a white furry moth with wings carefully folded and its black antennae tucked back. It immediately sets to work to escape from its prison. On the end of the cocoon nearest its head it exudes a clear fluid secretion that has the property of loosening the silk wall, and then it begins to push with head and shoulders. Hours are sometimes spent at this until eventually all the strands have been pushed aside. The hole made is just large enough for the moth to squeeze through. It climbs on to the outside and rests while its wings expand and dry. The moth is pure white and has delicate markings on its wings.

Now for the first time a distinction between the sexes becomes apparent. The male is small with a short pointed body, the female fat and blunt. She is also lazy. Centuries of domestication have so much impaired their powers of flight that the delicate wings are only ornaments. The male does a lot of wing-flapping in his quest for a mate. When the female has laid her eggs the moths are of no further use and they soon die. The moths take no nourishment whatsoever and have no apparatus to deal with it. Several hundred eggs are laid by each female moth. She places them in neat orderly rows and they adhere to the surface on which they are laid. If the eggs have been fertilised they turn grey in a short time; if not they remain yellow. These eggs cannot be hatched out until they have passed through a cold season. So they can be safely stored until the following spring.

"I hope that the above article has brought as much joy and fascination to the readers as it did to the Editor on reading it for the first time."

## NEWS ABOUT

### PASTMEN



Fr. Dermot O.C.S.O.

## AN FIOLAR, 1989

From the Editor, Liam Maher

Two generations of students have graduated from the college since the last production of our Annual (in 1978). So it's time for a revival of YOUR favourite reading! It should reach you before November 1st next and is planned to share the monastic community's celebration of Dom Colmcille O'Toole's Silver Jubilee as Lord Abbot, with you, our past students. There will be a broad assessment of the impact of the past twenty years on the life of the monks of Mount Saint Joseph Abbey.

The contributors have been contacted and the response has been encouraging. Advertisers have been alerted and the response has been SLOW. Your help in strengthening the response of the business executives will be much appreciated. So get on that phone please, and don't be shy. Advertisements will decide the quality of our publication.

YOUR response will decide the number of copies of the FIOLAR that we will get printed, so please sign the attached form and return to:

Rev. Kevin Daly, O. Cist.,  
President,  
Cistercian College,  
Roscrea,  
Co. Tipperary.

Oh! by the way MINIMUM contribution is £10.

*The pioneer editor of An Fiolar was Fr. Michael Sherry (1926). He was one of five brothers who came to C.C.R. from Bolton, Lancashire. The first edition was published in 1930, and printed by Colm O'Lachlann at the Sign of the Three Candles.*

## LONDON BRANCH

The London Branch met under the Chairmanship of Paddy Moriarty at the Irish Club, Eaton Square, London early in July. There was a small attendance as the date coincided with one of the rail and tube strikes that have upset communications in the city for some time. The Chairman hopes to have another meeting early in September when arrangements will be made for some social function to be held.

PAUL KELLY (1974), one of the brothers from the Twenties, Drogheda, Co. Louth, is one of the trend setters in the manufacturing of Irish biscuits. Next time you go to the supermarket reach out for Paul's products. They are marketed under the name Kelly's Cookies — if they are not there, ask for them. They have countrywide distribution in Quinns-worth, Superquinn and Dunnes Stores. The range includes Irish Shortbread, Almond Shortbread, Oatmeal and Sesame Cookies, and Chocolate Chip Cookies. Paul has all his packaging, wrapping material and printed labels made in Ireland, thus extending the scope of employment that his factory generates . . . Go on, give yourself a treat!

RORY DOYLE (1986), who comes from Rathcoffey, Naas, Co. Kildare is studying Engineering in Trinity College, Dublin. He was elected Scholar of the Year for 1989. Congratulations Rory.

CORMAC O'SULLIVAN (1976), from Ennis-corthy is at present doing a post graduate course in Edinburgh University.

The three HESLIN brothers came from New Park, Portlaoise. Frank (1974) is an Engineer in Monaghan. Paul (1977) became a doctor, and is working in the north of Ireland. Eoin (1981) is an Engineer in Australia.

PAT HORAN (1973), came from Ballymote, Co. Sligo. He joined the Ulster Bank when he left Roscrea. He is now married and works in Limerick.

PETERLYNCH (1974) who came from Charlestown, Mullingar, is now assistant manager in the Ulster Bank, Longford. He is married and they have three children.

PHELIM McGOVERN (1972), formerly of Owens, Co. Cork, is now working in Basildon, Essex. He lives nearby in 107 Main Road, Danbury, Essex. 0245/413680. His father is GERRY McGOVERN left in 1940.

JOE HOGAN (1973) Shorepark House, Kildysart, Co. Clare is working at home. His brother DAVID (1974) is in England and lives at 10 Gunnersbury Avenue, Ealing, London W.5.

NICHOLAS CONNAIRE (1974), the first of three brothers through C.C.R. They came from Loughrea, Co. Galway. Nicholas became a Quantity Surveyor, married, and now lives in Sydney, Australia.

GABRIEL CONNAIRE (1975), took up Accountancy when he finished in C.C.R. He is at present in Toronto, Canada. He is married.

AMBROSE CONNAIRE (1978), qualified as an Art Teacher. He is one of less than a dozen past students who are qualified professionals in this field. He teaches in Portumna.

MICHAEL COPPINGER (1973), went into the home business in the Square, Athenry, Co. Galway.

BARRY DEVEREUX (1980), formerly from Portarlinton, married Michele Daly last April in the Parish Church, Ballygar, Co. Galway. She is a daughter of Dr. Joe Daly. The ceremony was performed by Fr. Kevin Daly uncle of the bride. Barry is a Solicitor and Michele an Occupational Therapist. They now live in London.



Neil and Riána Johnson, Married St. Mary's Church, The Claddagh, Galway, 18th August, 1989.

NEIL JOHNSON (1979), a native of Co. Limerick, now a member of the Galway Committee has qualified in psychology having taken his Masters in 1987. He is at present conducting a project in second level schools and youth groups in the west. He plans to get married to a Galway girl in August 1989.

Kyran Johnson (1981) brother of the above, from Clonagh House, Reens, Ardagh, Co. Limerick. He took his B. Sc., and did a post grad. in U.C.G. At present he is Production Supervisor in Avondale Brinny, Bantry, Co. Cork.

PATRICK JOHNSON (1949), heads another branch of this family. He lives in Court Lodge, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick. Three of his sons have already passed through C.C.R. and Paul is still with us. PAT JNR. (1987) did Ag. Sc. in U.C.D. and now works in Stratford on Avon, England. CHARLES (1983) qualified in Engineering at Trinity and now works in London. ALAN (1987) is a second Vet at U.C.D.

MAURICE MELLOTT (1979) one of the Neale family now lives in Galway where he is in business. He is married.

MICHAEL McDONAGH (1982) from Balrichard House, Headford, Co. Galway. He got an Honours degree in Agricultural Economics in U.C.D., and a scholarship to London to study 'Meat Technology'. In the subsequent exam he took second place in the U.K. At present he works for a firm who supply ingredients to the Meat Industry. His address is:— c/o Lucas Ingredients Ltd., Cam, near Dursley, Glos., GL11 5NA, England. He plans to get married in October '89 — good luck Michael.

PATRICK D. O'HERLIHY (1954) came from Letterkenny, where his father was in the Hibernian Bank. He is now a successful business man in South Africa where he has settled down. He comes back and forward frequently.

If you are out there give him a shout:— Samancor House, Marshall Street, Johannesburg, South Africa. Phone 836-8673.

DES BURKE (1964) reported in the press recently as prospecting for gold around Croagh Patrick. He was one of three brothers who came to C.C.R. Liam, '63 did Hotel Management and Catering, Noel, '68 became an Architect and was House Captain in his final year. TOM BURKE (1930) is their father, now retired from the Irish Sugar Co., he lives at Airglooney, Tuam, Co. Galway. He too was House Captain of C.C.R. in his time.

## MORE RUINS, WEST OF THE SHANNON

Cistercian monasteries west of the Shannon are few and far between. In the last issue we spoke of Corcomroe in north Clare, this time we will touch on Abbeyknockmoy in Co. Galway and its tiny daughter monastery on Clare Island, Co. Mayo.

Knockmoy was founded in 1189 or 1190 — both dates are given by historians. They also differ on where it was founded from; was it Inishlaugh or was it Boyle? We do know that in 1228 Abbot Stephen of Lexington (England) came with a mandate from the General Chapter to sort out some racial and disciplinary problems in the Irish and Anglo Norman Cistercian monasteries. He rearranged the "paternity" of many houses, especially those of the Mellifont line — Boyle was one of these. When Stephen departed a few years later the Abbot of Boyle was Visitor of Knockmoy with instructions to carry out the long list of edicts decreed by Stephen.

It was about this time that the cell on Clare Island came into the possession of Knockmoy, and troubled times that were in it provided enough rebellious monks to occupy the penal colony it was to become. Knockmoy is about 18 miles from Galway on the main Roscommon road. The remains are considerable and they stand stark and wind-swept on the banks of the river Abbert. Founded by the King of Connacht, Cathal Crovderg O'Connor, the Abbey became the burial place for many generations of the family. Cathal himself was laid to rest there in 1224. Later on the O'Kelly clan, kings of Uí Maine became patrons and an elaborate tomb in the sanctuary was built for Malachy O'Kelly in 1401. About one hundred and forty years later another of the family was commendatory abbot of the Abbey, he renounced the supremacy of Rome and was granted the monastery and its lands for life. The architecture of the church is in the strict Cistercian style of the time, but the sanctuary has some mural paintings on the walls. Recently a roof was put on this area for more protection, it looks very odd.

There is a fine chapter house lit by five beautifully carved windows, but now marred by dividing walls and arches. The refectory on the south of the cloister garth was a large lofty room, with a reader's pulpit set high in one side wall. Considerable renovation has been done recently and it is well worth a visit. The addition of a ground plan map of the abbey, as they have in Boyle and Jerpoint, would greatly help the visitor.

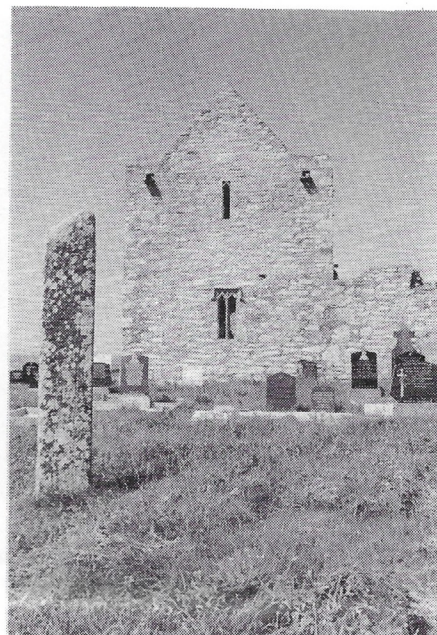
The local parish of St. Bernard is celebrating the 800th anniversary of the Abbey this August.

### CLARE ISLAND CISTERCIAN CELL

Westropp calls it *Monasterium Sancti Bernardi de Cliara* some Irish Annals call it Cleary Abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Long before the Cistercians took over in 1224 there was a monastery on Clare Island founded by the O'Malley Clan in honour of Our Lady and given to the order of hermits or anchorites. This probably explains why later writers thought they were Carmelites. But this Order did not come to Ireland until 1271. They may have been Columban or Culdee. From time immemorial there were monasteries like this scattered over the islands in the west coast, like Cahir, Turk, Inishbofin, and Aran. Early in the 13th century it was plundered by pirates and the monks wiped out. The Cistercians from Abbeyknockmoy took over after that by Papal authority.

Clare Island at the mouth of Clew Bay is a remote and lonely spot, a suitable place for monks who had strayed from the 'straight and narrow' to be sent to do penance. That was to be the function of Cliara for a long time to come. By a strange twist of fate, Clare Island and Inishbofin were chosen by Cromwell as penal colonies for papist priests.

The monastery stands at the foot of the high mountain, a few hundred yards from the sea.

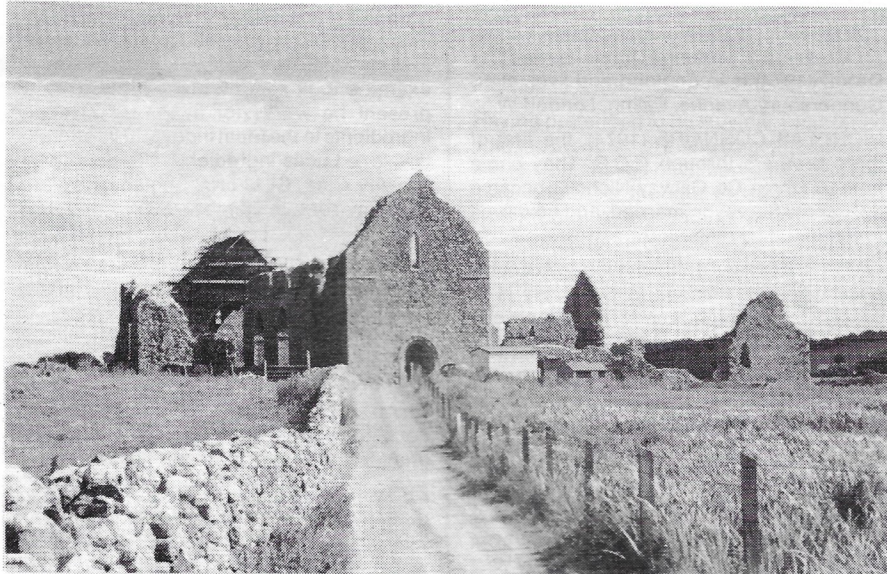


CLARE ISLAND CELL

*The gable end of Abbey Cliara. Living quarters were in the upper storey. Note the standing stone on the left, it has a Latin Cross cut into the face.*

The church — less than 60' long — runs from east to west. The high altar is to the east, and through the narrow lancet window is a magnificent view of Croagh Patrick towering over Clew Bay. To the west the Atlantic Ocean reaches out unbroken to the shores of North America. The church is divided by a single arch into nave and choir/sanctuary. There is a very ornate fifteenth-century tomb canopy with traceried screen in the north wall and beside it is a carving in stone of the O'Malley arms, which is said to mark the grave of Grace O'Malley. Nearby a squint is cut in the wall opening into an anchorites cell. On the opposite wall is a recessed semi-circular arch for a sedelia, and beside that, a door leading to a stairs built into the thickness of the wall going up to the living room over the choir. They must have been very small thin men who lived there! We know nothing of their lifestyle or how many monks looked after the place. They produced one unique feature that has come down to us; on the chancel ceiling, a stone vault, plastered and painted with imitation stone ribs as in the groined roof of Abbeyknockmoy. The resulting triangular bays are filled with floral and animal designs and crosses as well as winged horses and the boar of the O'Malley's.

Clara lasted for three hundred years, and was listed among the possessions of Abbeyknockmoy in 1584 at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries. Some monks were reported to be still living there in the early years of the seventeenth century.



ABBEYKNOCKMOY, CO. GALWAY.

*Abbeyknockmoy became the necropolis of the O'Connor Clan, and later of the O'Kellys. The monastery on Clare Island served the same purpose for the O'Malleys.*



# WHEN YOU HAVE CROSSED THE RUBICON

Bridie & Anthony Kilcullen

For us at Seaview House Farm, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo, going organic was 'crossing the Rubicon', for having ruminated about it for quite some time, we decided to plunge in at the deep end.

It was a brave move to turn 200 odd acres in the West of Ireland over to organic farming. With four years of hindsight and dealing with conditions on the far bank, we are still totally committed and very determined. Our only regrets are that we didn't take this step when we married 22 years ago. But it was nice and very important to be boosted by the support of five fully informed teenage children, and right now I want to take my hat off to all five of them because without their help we could not do it. They are the ones to see it through — it is up to you and I to set it in motion for them.

But what did we find on the other bank? For openers we had the two worst years — weather wise — in our memory. Perhaps it was better that way because we will never know if it were going organic or bad weather which left us with poor crops. Also I think we made the mistake of trying to grow a wide variety of stuff, as organic farming is labour hungry — ask our children about weeding!

Let me get back to our main lines of farming in the first years. It was a case of you win some, you lose some. Our cereal crops were poor but we consoled ourselves with no fertiliser bills — grassland was very good, turnips and potatoes very healthy, sheep, cattle and pigs all fine. We discovered we

could breed pigs very successfully outdoors — something we could never do when they were housed.

As time goes on we are becoming more *au fait* with the mechanical control of weeds in both cereals and roots, but one never becomes *au fait* with the onslaught of leather jackets, etc. I keep saying the Good Lord put them there for some reason, but please, not our wheat! This year they reduced the wheat crop by a third in one end of the field while we never grew a better crop than at the other end of the field. So we live in hopes that next year perhaps they will go — oh not to our good neighbours — maybe take a dip in Killala Bay.

Because our grassland proved to be so good we made a mistake to cut down on stock numbers. When laying down new leys we put back all the old herbs and clovers we can get hold of. Owing to bad hay making weather in the West of Ireland, we mainly make baled silage. We found last winter for the first time ever we could fatten heifers on this silage alone — no meal feeding at all.

By degrees more and more people came to our door wanting to buy organic produce and even though we were producing organic beef, pork, lamb, vegetables, flour, eggs and butter we could not present it to our satisfaction over the half-door. We also wanted to get the full retail price, as we had put a lot of effort into the production of symbol standard food. A farm shop was the answer. But this was no small task because we had to

install a fully equipped butcher shop complying with modern hygienic standards. However, after a lot of expense, hard work, frayed nerves and raised voices, we opened "The Gate Lodge" just before Christmas, 1987. It did not take off with a bang. We never cease to be amazed at the people who come and the people who do NOT come. Even though we were entitled to a premium we decided to keep in line with local prices. We are very lucky to have a good butcher living near and willing to work part-time with us. As we open officially just three evenings a week, it can be a juggle to get the killing right. Sometimes we have too much and other times, not enough. We kill beef, pork and lamb all the time. We like freezer orders best of all because we know exactly what is required and when. We had hoped to keep the shop strictly organic but when our vegetables ran out we stocked fruit, honey and raisins. There are many things like sausages, pudding pate, yoghurt etc., we could sell but we are stretched to our limits. As business slowly improves one thing is clear — if our shop were in a town, we could not keep it supplied.

We battle on with faith in God and a reserve of fierce determination to make our little bit of Ireland once more what it was always famous for — a land producing fresh wholesome food. We realise we are pioneers and this is a sad admission in 1989 but we look forward to making it a success. Will it be a financial success — we hope so — ach sin scéal eile!

## LORD ABBOT'S CUP

Saturday September 23rd will be the date for the 1989 "Lord Abbot's Cup" golf competition. The unanimous decision of the Central Committee is that Roscrea Golf Club will once again be asked to host the event and that the organisation of the day will be in the lands of the North Tipperary Branch of the Union.

In recent years this golf competition has become one of the highlights of the union's calendar. In 1988 over 60 played in the competition and enjoyed dinner in the clubhouse that evening. Last year's winner Charlie Kavanagh, will no doubt be attempting to retain the cup, a feat not achieved by anyone in recent years. The ladies have a separate competition and it is hoped that more of them will compete for the prizes available to them.

Many have commented favourably on the range of prizes available each year. This couldn't be done without the impressive generosity of certain past men, the college, and the support of some of the branches. It is hoped that all the branches will provide financial support for the 1989 event and help to maintain the event at the standard which it has achieved to date. Already some individual past men have volunteered to provide prizes and any others who wish to be involved with the event should make early contact with the organisers.



Roscrea club are most generous — terms of the availability of the first tee for our day. With more people playing it is imperative that we avail of all the time given to us. Entries on the day will be taken from 9 a.m. and last cards will be at 1.30 p.m. The organisers will arrange partners for those who have made no formal arrangements going on the experience of previous years. Those who play before mid-day will enjoy the least crowded conditions.

Those of you who have supported the event in Roscrea realise that the numbers for the dinner have to be strictly limited due to restrictions of space. If you intend staying for the meal, please book in advance. The caterers have been requested to host 60 that evening and that represents the absolute maximum for the venue. Fr. Kevin will represent the college there, and the Union President, Sean Murphy will also attend.

Green fees at the Roscrea Club are £5 for the day and the competition entry fee will probably be £5 also. The dinner tariff has yet to be finalised. So, if you want a good day's golf and the most pleasant evening's entertainment write the date of September 23rd into your diary and arrive early in Roscrea. Dinner bookings may be made to Gerard Maher by contacting the college or his home number (0505) 47245.

## OBITUARIES

VERY REV. CORNELIUS CANON CAMPION (1922), Errill, Laois.

Ordained Priest, St. Kieran's, Kilkenny 8th June 1930; Served in Diocese of Shrewsbury, England 1930-1933; Curate, St. John's, Kilkenny 1935-1944; Parish Priest Borris-in-Ossory 1962-1982; Retired 1982; Died Trinity Sunday, 29th May, 1988.

DR. CYRIL CASSIDY, (1930) native of Loughrea, Co. Galway, worked in London for many years. Married and lived at 119, Pollards Hill South. Was Chairman of the London Branch. He died early in 1989, R.I.P.

SEAN COLLINS, (1935) was Dublin born and bred. The family drapery business in Talbot Street was well known to many pastmen both lay and clerical. Sean was the first to carry a supply of Union ties. Over the years Sean was Secretary to the Dublin Branch of the Union — when the Dublin Branch was the Union — and he was one of the best of the many fine men who have held that job. Sean remained a bachelor and was 71 years old when he died on 8th April, 1989. May he rest in peace.

REV. MICHAEL J. MORIARTY (1938) from Brosna, Co. Kerry. Ordained Priest in Carlow 1944 for diocese of Kansas, U.S.A. Died summer 1989. R.I.P.

DENIS O'MEARA (1918), from Eglisli, Borrisokane. Worked all his life in the auto industry in England, where he died recently, R.I.P.

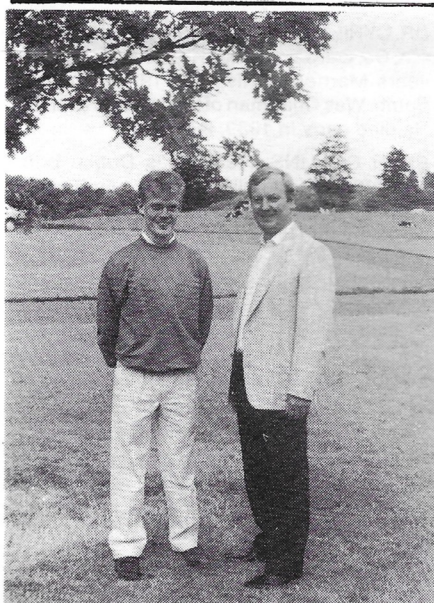
SEAMUS DEERING, (1925) died during the summer. Obituary in next issue.

Ours is a long tailed title — The Galway/Mayo/Sligo Branch! We held a Dinner Dance at the Ardilaun Hotel, Taylor's Hill, Galway last April. It was unanimously agreed that it was a most enjoyable function. The troops were rallied from far and near in order to get the attendance above 100. Members were welcomed from other Branches, and an excellent turn out of Pastmen was boasted by inviting the Parents of Present students in the College. This gave them (the parents) some idea of what Roscrea men turn out to be in later years, and to take the necessary course of action regarding their own sons!

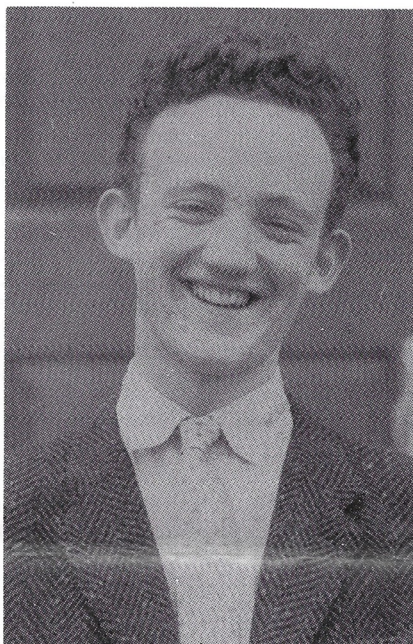
To use that well known phrase of Fr. Declan — of happy memory — "It was most edifying" to welcome Fr. Kevin, President of the College and Conor Massey from Dublin, who has since gone on to higher office in the Union. The speeches got a warm round of applause from the gathering. It is not certain whether it was their content or brevity was the cause of the joy, but at least those present said nice things afterwards to the speakers. Dr. Sean Murphy pointed out the sad contrast between the time he started in University and the pressures that now exist. Sean claimed — and we all believed him — that when he went to U.C.G. to enroll for Engineering he found a long queue for this faculty. Medicine was much shorter, so he sidled into that one, and emerged some years later as a qualified Doctor. The main interest of the night was the speech of the President of the College, we all enjoy hearing his report on the ups and downs of life in C.C.R. and when he mentioned that the school had excellent results in this year's Hunter Trials people pricked their ears more intently; which syllabus is that, academic or athletic? Two teddy bears were put up for raffle and the contribution was excellent.

Perhaps the kindest tributes of the evening were paid by those who urged the committee to organise the same again next year. . . . OK, we look forward to seeing you in 1990.

*John Sherry (Chairman)*



*James F. Phelan, BDS, Abbeyleix. House Captain 1965/'66 and son James, House Captain 1988/'89.*



*Kenneth Ryan.  
Borrisoleigh, Co. Tipperary.*

**ADDITON TO  
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

(N.B. CHANGE OF DATE: Dinner Dance, Old Rectory, New Ross, Friday, 13th October). A special deal has been arranged for those who wish to stay overnight — £20 per couple B. & B. The tickets for the Dinner/Dance cost £22.

Contacts:  
Billy Murphy, Enniscorthy 054/34413  
Pat Crotty, Kilkenny 056/21099  
John Comerford, Thomastown 056/24289  
Or direct to Tim O'Brien, New Ross, Co. Wexford, who runs the Hotel:  
phone 051/21719, Fax 051/22974.

**N.B.** Tim finished in C.C.R. 1983 and studied Business Methods and Catering. He recently took over the "Old Rectory". Another brother Bryan finished in 1984. Donal Jnr. is still in C.C.R. Their father Donal Snr. farms at Rockview House, Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny. He left C.C.R. in 1945.

The Past v. Present Matches will be played at the College on Sunday, 24th September at 3.30 p.m.

The College has a special Cead Míle Fáilte for the 1959 and 1968 Classes who have organised reunions over the weekend 23rd / 24th September.

**DERMOT TOUHY AND THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS AT ROSCREA**

Looking back on events of some thirty years ago, some memories are vivid, some vague, some inevitably gilded and some unavoidably uncomfortable.

In my early days at C.C.R. like everyone else I was trying to make the best of it, being stuck in the middle of nowhere with very few opportunities of a day out. Teams went out so I managed to get a place on the Juvenile Rugby Team. Then there was the prospect of a sort of touring 'Cat's Concert', which would, we thought, visit GIRLS SCHOOLS. So I feigned musical ability, playing the piano in the key of C. I know one contemporary at least, who will never forgive me for my jazz version of 'Kevin Barry'. What followed however was an exceedingly frightening visit to a home for unmarried mothers.

Having pretended to be musical, I was faced with the prospect of being frogmarched into the female chorus of Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Patience'. The thought of being put in a white frock and standing in a line with nineteen other unfortunate thirteen or fourteen year old boys to sing 'Twenty Lovesick Maidens All Are We', haunts me still. I managed to avoid this with a suddenly cracked voice but it was a narrow escape. There was, however, the prospect of a similar ordeal the following year.

Then a miracle happened. God must have spoken to two of our teachers Mr. Martin and Mr. Shannahan, after all, HE works in mysterious ways, does He not? The miracle was that Messrs. Martin and Shannahan persuaded the powers that were, to have the plays on the Leaving Cert. courses instead of the annual Gilbert and Sullivan Operetta. The first venture was to be 'Macbeth', which I saw as the next best thing to cowboys and Indians and I wanted to be in it. So I sucked up to Mr. Joyce, my English teacher, and I sucked up to Messrs. Martin and Shannahan

who unfortunately were trying to help me with my worst subjects Irish and Maths at that time.

A Mr. Tuohy was to join us and produce the play. He was a professional actor, we were told. I had never met a professional actor before and did not know what to expect. My first impression, as I sat in the Rec. Hall with all the other aspiring Shakespearean Players was that Mr. Touhy seemed like a Golf Club Secretary, in his blazer and tie. When he spoke, it was with a clear strong voice and he had our complete attention. He told us that it would be hard work and that we should take it very seriously.

The parts were allocated and rehearsals began. We were excused from many classes during the following weeks. It was great fun, not hard work at all especially if you were not playing one of the leading roles. Donalbain was my lot, a mere boy with only a couple of speeches but with a lot of standing around to do so I was called to an awful lot of rehearsals. I had a problem in so far as I found it difficult to refrain from smiling or indeed laughing in the middle of a scene. Dermot roared at me a few times but the almost uncontrollable urge was still there. I went to him and asked him in all seriousness if he could tell me how to stop laughing on the stage. At this he roared with laughter himself and told me he had the same problem. Then a few of us who seemed to be almost full time actors got to know him better. He was greatly interested in the school and wanted to know all about us, our backgrounds, our interests and how we felt about being at a boarding school. Suddenly, he did not seem like a teacher, he seemed more like one of us.

Rehearsals progressed and we did our best for him, Dermot got the best out of us and that in itself was quite an achievement.



## HAMLET

*Samuel Montgomery, Paul Robinson, John Comerford, Martin Moloney.*

When the day of the first performance dawned I'm sure we were all nervous but my memory is that the play went reasonably well. There were the inevitable speeches afterwards with the cast lined up on the stage and I'm sure we all thought we were great. As I look

back I realise what a triumph it was for Dermot to have marshalled a very large cast of inexperienced boys to give an intelligible account of Shakespeare's Macbeth. The one performance I remember most was Paul Robinson's excellent Lady Macbeth.

The next year we gave our 'Julius Caesar' and the year after we performed 'Hamlet', Leslie Fuaghnán was marvellous in the title role.

Dermot threw himself into the work with great gusto (no pun intended Professor) and the enthusiasm and enjoyment we had during 'Macbeth' increased. By now he had got to know us well and he made us feel as though we were old hands at acting Shakespeare. It strikes me that in my first years as a 'Pro' actor in England I was constantly employed in Shakespearean plays, in fact I was much more at home in them than any modern drama and I have no doubt that this is due to Dermot and the plays at Roscrea.

I met Dermot often during the years between Roscrea and his untimely death and I worked with him once or twice. I remember during a certain play at the Gate that he tried to 'corpse' me every night, that is, he tried to make me laugh on stage. We spoke often about our time at Roscrea and it was always clear that he had a great affection for the school and the monastery. There was no one quite like him. He brought into our lives at school a great richness, an enthusiasm and a wonderful sense of fun. I will end with the words I spoke over Hamlet's body on stage in the Rec. Hall all those years ago.

Goodnight sweet Prince  
And flights of Angels  
Sing thee to thy rest.

*Scott Frederick Wehrly*

## THE EARLY YEARS OF THE PAST PUPILS UNION

The College was scarcely five years old and it could field two very good Rugby teams — Senior and Junior. They both won through to the Leinster Finals where they met Blackrock. They drew both matches. The replays were on the same day at Lansdowne Road. Both matches were lost, 6-3, 3-0. There began the "jinks of the draw" for Roscrea. About the same time the tradition of the Past v. Present matches began — rugby and hurling. There is a photo still around of the last teams arriving at the College on sidecars in 1912. The bond between Past and Present was being forged.

The year 1930 was the Silver Jubilee of the College. For the College authorities the occasion was marked by the publication of the first College Annual — An Fiolár. The Past Pupils made their own gesture by founding the Union. Preparations began in 1929 when a meeting was called. They met at the Gresham Hotel, Dublin on the 16th December. A Committee was formed. Among the men who sat down together to work out a plan were: Fr. John Ryan, Dean of U.C.D.; Dr. Chris Shortall, Bernard Sheppard, William Aird T.D., Conn Duane, Dr. John Dunne, Denis Crowley and Thomas P. Hogan.

They elected Fr. John Ryan, President; Dr. Chris Shortall, Hon. Treasurer; Bernard Sheppard, Hon. Secretary. He conducted the business of the Union from the Gresham Hotel.

The first social undertaking which the Committee faced was to arrange a Union Dinner the following 10th February, 1930, at the Gresham Hotel. It was a black tie affair, and Mr. Jack Murphy represented Fr. Ailbe and

the College. He brought with him the formal approval of the Union by the Lord Abbot, Dom Justin McCarthy and the President of the College Fr. Ailbe. This was announced at the Dinner. Dom Justin had been the first President of the College, 1905 - 1911.

Before the first Annual General Meeting of the Union, on 24th June, 1930 a Constitution had been drawn up and copies sent to the members. This document was discussed at the A.G.M., some changes were made, and finally it was put to the meeting and adopted. In the main, it is the same as we have today.

The following year saw the appointment of a Sub-committee to arrange an Annual Dance. It was directed that the Dinner — a stag affair as it still is — should be held before Christmas, and the Dance after Christmas, an arrangement that lasted right through the war until the year both were cancelled on account of the death of Pope Pius XII. We have the minutes of the Dance Committee meeting held in January 1935. In the light of some recent discussions at Union meetings the composition of this Committee is of interest, there were nine men and eleven ladies. The Dance was a huge success. Over 450 attended. Tickets cost five shillings each. For that you got a four course sit down supper, dancing from 9 p.m. until 2 a.m., and a souvenier programme with all the dance tunes played during the night by the Gresham Dance Orchestra under the baton of Alex Caufield. The band cost 15 Gns. The Lord Mayor of Dublin was there, and there were rave notices in the newspapers next day. The whole affair cost the Union £77-1-5.

They took in £85-15-0; Mr. Micawber would have approved! A retreat for Past Students was organised about this time and held in the College over a weekend. The attendance was very small and the idea never really took on.

The Union Gold Medal was one thing that really caught on. It is awarded to the best student in the public exams; originally in the Leaving but nowadays in the Inter. It was voted at the A.G.M. May 1931. Officially called the "Union Silver Jubilee Memorial Medal", it was to mark the 25th anniversary of the College. The first student to win the medal was Michael O'Meara from Dublin in 1931. The 1988 winner was Kenneth Ryan, son of Patrick Ryan (1946) from Borrisoleigh. Some of the early officials of the Union debated among themselves the possibility of supporting some form of charitable organisation or social work. Fr. Ailbe wrote to them urging this course, but when they sat down and seriously analysed the matter, they had to admit that their resources were too slender, and returns from social functions too sporadic to admit of regular commitment. A Boys' Club was discussed with the St. John Bosco Society, but that came to nothing. St. Joseph's Young Priests Organisation was also examined, and the matter was deferred until a later date. A priest came from a poor parish in Wales and he got some financial help in running a Boys' Club and building a Church. Those were the days of the "mite box" for China and "buying Black Babies" in Africa. The "Third World" slogan had not yet been invented. Anyway many of the men so disposed were involved with the St. Vincent de

Paul or the Legion of Mary or parish organisations. Later the American idea of Communion Breakfasts became popular (it may have come over with the GIs) the masses were said in Clarendon Street where we had a number of Past Student Priests . . . where were the Breakfasts served? Does anyone remember? Somewhat later on a very good movement was fostered by the Union at the Marie Reparatrice Convent in Merrion Square, where members took it in turn to keep vigil before the Blessed Sacrament. This noble movement was for many years in the hands of Aiden Mottley who organised the rotas, until the nuns had to move off, the chapel close down, and the Blessed Sacrament was locked away. Catholic Action did not become a constitutional matter until the revised version of 1958. There it was declared in article 3: "the Union shall be an Arm of Catholic Action".

To go back in time a little bit to rugby in Roscrea and the Past v. Present matches; from the time of the Rebellion of Easter Week, 1916 to a few years after the Anglo/Irish and Civil Wars, rugby was not played in C.C.R. In 1926, due to the efforts of T.P. Hogan and Fr. Ailbe the game was revived and the Past v. Present match became an annual fixture. In time this became part of the Union organisation and a move was made to form the "Old Roscrea Boys Rugby Team". Harry Hall was President of the Union. But that year the "Old Boys" were unable to travel — there was another war on, this time World War II — and the austerity measures asked: "Is your journey really necessary"? Even the Dance was called off that year. However "Ken O'Brien's 15" got to Roscrea privately and gave a match to the students, and the boys got a free day out of it. The Rugby Club was formed in 1943 with a grant of £10 from the Union Committee. The Club paid its own way by holding informal Dances in the Adelaid Hall. After the first of these the Hon. Sec. of the Club, Mr. McKeown,

reported a profit of 2/6. By January 1945 the credit of the Club stood at £8-19-8.

Contemporaneous with the above events another movement was taking place; a quest for a suitable premises for the Union. A modest beginning was made in 1939 when a room was rented in Darra's Tutorial School, Harcourt Street, for Thursday nights. It cost 2/6 per night. The experiment lasted three months. But the idea and the hope persisted, and surfaced in discussions from time to time.

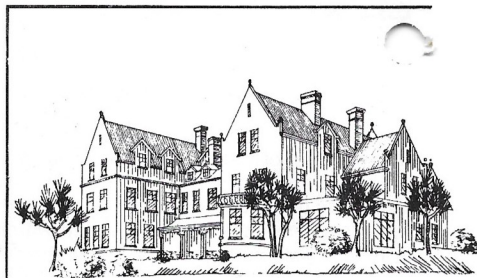
In the Spring of 1947 the Central Committee asked Sean Collins to produce a Union Tie. He approached Messrs. Atkinsons of Dame Street who produced the design and colour scheme we know today. The first consignment of ties was made up in Royal Irish Poplin. The design is still the same, but the style and material has changed from time to time. (Pause for a commercial plug!) Union Ties are available for £5.00 plus p.p. from the General Secretary, and also from Brendan Galvin, Gents' Outfitters, Nenagh.

The 1947 season must have been a very busy time for the Hon. Secretary because Jack Fitzpatrick and Seamus O'Brien put it to the Committee that an assistant be elected or a paid Secretary be appointed — a pity that did not come to pass! Among his duties he had to keep an eye on the Golf Competitions. The Lord Abbot, Dom Justin McCarthy had presented a Perpetual Challenge Cup for golf in 1937 when Patrick Kavanagh was President. The Abbot's Cup is still a keenly fought for trophy. The competition will be held this year at the Roscrea Golf Club on Saturday, 24th September.

A sadness swept over the Union in 1949 with the passing of the great Fr. Ailbe. Many Past Pupils from far and wide gathered for his funeral and set up a memorial to him in the College Chapel.

During Denis Crowley's Presidency, 1951/'53 the possibility of sending out a "Union News Letter" was discussed in Committee and unanimously approved. At this time too Bishop Quinlan returned from captivity in Communist China. The Union hosted a reception for him and made a presentation. At the last A.G.M. of Denis Crowley's term of office, Gerard Bates proposed that a Premises Fund should be formed and added to from year to year; and eventually when the finances of the Union were on a firmer footing an endeavour should be made to procure a permanent headquarters in Dublin, where Members could meet informally and where recreational facilities could be provided. But time moved on and a new administration took over — 'novus rex, novus lex'! But dreams do come true. Ten years later a new Committee picked up the threads and in the Spring of 1963 the Roscrea Review appeared, and it has been going since.

On that note we will end this rambling, and if the critics are not too severe we will conclude our musings in a future issue.



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ROSCREA COMMUNITY

Roscrea Community as it is today. Abbot General of the Order included in the picture. Four senior men and photographer missing.