

# ROSCREA

# REVIEW

No. 57

Newsletter for the Cistercian College, Roscrea Union.

Autumn 1991

## THE COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Seated left to right:

Sister Patricia Green.

Mr. L. Branigan – Chairman.

V. Rev. Fr. Abbot.

Dean J. Cuddy.

Mrs. N. Kernan.

Standing:

Fr. Peter.

Dr. B. Sherry.

Dom Benedict Kearns, O.C.S.O.

Mr. Thomas O'Coaigh.

Rev. Br. Jerome.

Fr. Kevin, O.C.S.O., President.



## The Board of Governors

Since it was opened in 1905 the college was governed solely by the monks. In practice this was done in a very simple way. The abbot was manager and he took important decisions in consultation with the monks directly involved in the college, especially the president.

The system worked well, and over the years the college grew and developed to be the fine school of which we are all so proud.

Over the years too, society has been changing both inside and outside the monastery. Educational needs have become more complex requiring a more broadly based management, a management with vision and expertise. With the present rate of change and the consequent need to make rapid adjustments, it seemed no longer wise to presume that the monastery could supply the calibre of management needed in the years ahead. The post Vatican II Church was urging that the laity be invited to take their rightful place in Church affairs, and most secondary schools in the country had already established Boards of Management. So in the summer of 1989

we decided that the time had come to put together a Constitution for a Board of Governors for our college.

For the next year much thought and work went into drawing up a first draft of the Constitutions. We got a lot of help from the Constitutions already established by other schools. We also realised before long that our situation was different because of the nature of the monastery and its proximity to the college. No other monastic school, as far as we know, has established a Board of Governors, so there was a sense in which we were breaking new ground.

By summer 1990 we had a draft ready. We submitted it to the Community and to the College staff.

At this stage I have to say a sincere thank you for the enlightened comment and co-operation we got. It was a time when the commitment of the Community and the staff of the college surfaced in a unique way.

By the end of summer we were able to put the final touches on the Constitution and sign it.

The time had come to invite people to become members of the Board. I felt humbled by the generosity with which the invitations were accepted, and the speed and quiet confidence with which the Board began its work was most reassuring. The purpose was that the Board would govern the college on behalf of the monks, without changing the nature or character of the college which we have known and loved down the years. Having seen the Board in action for nearly a year now I am pleased to be able to tell our past students and friends that all the indications are that our fondest hopes for the future will be fulfilled.

And on behalf of the Community I can only say a sincere thank you to the Chairman and each member of the Board for the enthusiasm, the expertise, the love and sensitivity with which they are doing the work.

*Dom Colmcille O'Toole, Abbot.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The new scheme for the governing of the College is clearly the outcome of much thought and deliberation by the monastic community. It is a positive indication for the future of the College, a welcome decision and good news indeed.

It shows the determination of the monks that the College should continue to have the resources necessary to meet present and future educational requirements. It is the framework in which the monks want to see the College continue in its development.

Written into the scheme are the elements which have distinguished Cistercian College Roscrea and which are instantly recognisable by past and present students — the College, built on the property of the monks and belonging to them; the College as a full-time boarding school for boys; the President as head of the College; the Dean of Studies (Principal) in charge of the academic programme; the teaching staff, with their professional expertise; the House Masters, caring for the welfare of the boys; the Matron and the Bursar in their respective roles; the other College staff, with their different areas of responsibility; and, permeating everything, the distinctive character imparted by the influence of the monastery close by.

These will continue to be the hallmarks of the College administration in the future.

Superimposed on them by the new scheme is the Board of Governors. The Board has been entrusted by the Abbey with the responsibility of governing the administration of the College and dealing with College policy. Its paramount duty is to provide for the educational welfare, in the fullest sense

of the term, of the boys in the College. The Board is bound by the ethos and traditions of the College.

Shortly after the Board was established in October of last year, Fr. Ciaran gave notice of his pending retirement as Dean of Studies. His exemplary and meticulous attention to his duties won for him affectionate tributes from the students and from the Staff of the Board. We all wish him many happy and rewarding years of retirement.

The appointment of a successor was obviously of the greatest significance for the College and also the first major task of the Board. (Under the new scheme, the appointment is a matter for the Board, subject to the approval of the Abbot.)

Great care was taken in advertising the post and in the process of selection from amongst the many applicants who presented themselves. The recommendation of the selection committee resulted in the appointment of Mr. Frank Smyth who took up office on the 1st August. It gives me pleasure, on behalf of the Board, to take this opportunity of publicly welcoming Mr. Smyth. He comes to the College with a very fine academic and caring reputation. His appointment, combined with the professional excellence of the teaching staff, as much respected in this as in previous generations, assures the continuance of academic excellence in the College.

Cistercian College, Roscrea Union is now well into its third generation. Past students have always shown singular loyalty to their alma mater. This is a great source of encouragement for the Board of Governors in its work for the future welfare of the College.

*Laurence F. Branigan*



*Fr. Ciaran retires and Mr. Frank Smyth takes over.*



### ANNUAL COMPETITION FOR "THE ABBOT'S CUP"

The Roscrea Golf Club will host the competition for the Abbot's Cup on Saturday 21st September, 1991. The success of the event has grown annually and the numbers involved makes a time sheet unavoidable for this year's event. The organizers, thanks to the good officers of the Roscrea Golf Club, have access to the first tee from 9 a.m. on the above date.

The time sheet is now with Mr. Gerry Hayes and only those players who confirm their playing time with him may take part in the competition. Gerry can be contacted at 0505/21061 during office hours and at 0505/47165 in the evenings. Many players have already confirmed their tee times, so if Pastmen wish to have a choice of playing time it is imperative that Gerry be contacted immediately.

The Lord Abbot's Cup Dinner is now a much enjoyed function and this will be held in the Club House at 7.30 p.m. the evening of September 21st. Again due to the restrictions of space 60 to 64 can be accommodated for Dinner. Each year a number of Pastmen have been disappointed at failing to gain access — so once again, early booking is imperative. The Dinner bookings are being handled by the North Tipperary Treasurer, Liam Spooner; 0505/22074 or 0505/21063. Liam has already over 40 confirmed bookings, so only a small number of bookings remain available.

Previous visitors to the Abbot's Cup should be gladdened by the new locker room area just completed in the Club, which should add to the comfort of the day. Also the new 18 hole course, while not available for play, is open for inspection and should prove a suitable challenge for our golfers of the future.

The rates for the day are as follows:

Golf Competition .....	entry fee	£5.00
Green Fees (where applicable)		£7.00
Dinner .....		£13.00

Gerard P. Maher  
Chairman North Tipp. Branch CCRU.

### *As it is now.*





# NEWS ABOUT PAST STUDENTS

**Liam Dwan** (1978-'83) from Drom, Templemore married Siobhan McClean on May 3. Siobhan is a sister of Brian (1978-'83) and Cormack (1981-'86) McClean, Richmond, Templemore. Liam and Siobhan had a Bishop to marry them. Bishop John Kirby of Clonfert is an uncle of the bride. Both Liam and Brian are working in England, Liam in the field of computer management and Brian in the field of developmental psychology. Cormack has completed his B.Sc. in UCD this year.

**Joseph A. Hegarty** (1955-'58), originally from Galway is a much travelled CCR man. A lecturer in College of Catering in Cathal Brugha St., he has undertaken United Nations projects in many parts of the world. He is currently engaged in a Human Resources Development project in Hospitality and Tourism in Katmandu in Nepal. This involves setting up a training institute to train personnel in the demands of Tourism in that beautiful country. Joe has recently published an interesting paper on reconciling the demands of building up tourism and helping the impoverished indigenous population in third world countries.

**Cormac O'Modhrain** (1974-'79) from Ballysax, the Curragh took up Hotel Management after CCR. For some years he worked in Britain with the Trust Forte group of hotels. At present he is with the same group in San Diego, California. He is now married and they have one baby girl. His brother Eamon (1973-'78), is also married and lives in The Lodge, Ballysalla Stud, Ennis.



Wedding of David Daly in Liverpool

Left to right: Enda Naughton - '75/'81  
John Finlay - '76/'81  
David Daly - '76/'81  
Hugh O'Donnell - '76/'81  
Maurice Fitzgerald - '74/'91

**David Daly** (1976-'81) formerly of Kiltoom, Athlone now lives and works in England. He got married to Lynn Plunkett last June in Liverpool and four of his class mates went over to the wedding. They were: Enda Naughton, John Finlay, Hugh O'Donnell and Maurice Fitzgerald. (Photo elsewhere).

**Tim O'Colmain** (1971-'76) works with the Foreign Division of the Bank of Ireland. He lives in Swords Co. Dublin with his wife Kathy and baby daughter. They hope soon to move to Castleknock.

Those of you who follow the rugby and read the newspapers will be familiar with the recent achievements of the Hernan brothers from Ballygar. David (1983-'89) especially, is showing great promise in that field, he is in the Commerce faculty in UCD. Robert (1979-'84) took a B.Sc. degree in UCD and was

awarded a research scholarship in marine biology in Spain which he has now completed. Raymond (1979-'82) has qualified as a chartered accountant and works with the firm of Stokes Kennedy Crowley.

**Desmond O'Grady** (1949-'54) keeps in contact from different parts of the globe and continues to write and translate. He has given poetry readings in St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, and elsewhere in the country. He spends his winters in Italy and his summers in Kinsale. He is currently publishing a book of his poems in Italian and in 1990 had a translation of 6th century Arabic Odes published in Britain. While lecturing in the American University in Cairo he visited the ancient monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai and told the Coptic monks about "his" monastery back in Ireland.

**Eamonn McCoy** (1974-'79) is now a doctor working in Belfast. He recently announced his engagement to Angela Jean Dallas from Newtownabbey. They plan to get married on the 30th September. His younger brother Diarmuid (1978-'83) is also a doctor and works in the Mercy Hospital in Cork. Bryan (1979-'84) works with a pharmaceutical company in his home town of Bantry. He too has announced his engagement.



Declan Martin, BA, B Comm, MBA

It is hard to keep up with the Heslin brothers of Portlaoise. Dr. Paul (1972-'77) is at present working in a hospital in Brisbane, Australia, while his brother Frank (1968-'74) is engaged on an Engineering project in Nigeria. Eoin (1976-'81) is pursuing post graduate studies in Computer Programming in Queens University, Belfast.

**Paul Kenny** (1982-'87) Rathcoursey East, Midleton, graduated in Electrical Engineering in UCC in July '91.

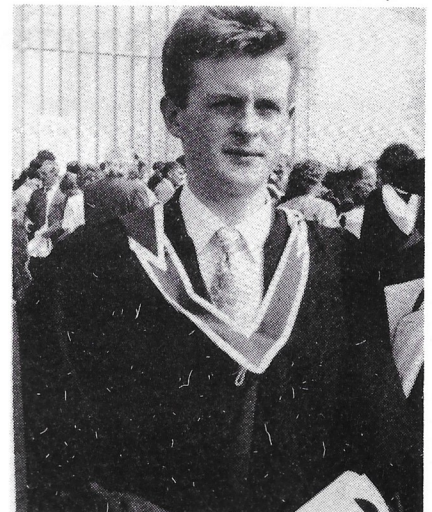
**Declan Madden** (1970-'75) from Dunshaughlin is director of Special Services with the Federation of Irish Employers. At a conference last May on accidents at work, he stated that one in three accidents were preventable. The average accident rate was 7.5 per 100 workers. The average cost of employers' liability insurance was just under two per cent of the payroll, or a potential £145 million.

**Pat Cunneen** (1958-'63), formerly from Scariff, was made managing director of AIB Investment Services.

**John Winters** (1977-'81) has been appointed general manager of Killarney Manor, the new tourist banqueting centre which opened for business last April. John previously worked in London as a consultant with Mulmar, a subsidiary of Ireland's largest catering equipment company, Mulcahy Martin.

**David Culliton** (1971-'76) formerly from Ros-enallis, has been appointed Financial Controller by Mount Juliet. He has his B.Comm., A.C.A. and trained with Craig Gardiner. Previously he worked with Avonmore Foods Plc. and Castlecomer Woodwork Co. Ltd.

**Niel Johnson**, a Galway based psychologist won the European Public Speaking Competition organized by the Junior Chamber International. Having already swept the boards in Ireland and England, Neil defeated speakers from throughout Europe at the final held in Denmark last June. He has now been chosen to represent Europe in the World Final of the Junior Chamber International. There are 8 to 10,000 business people world wide expected to attend this function. Niel was in CCR 1974-'79 . . . Anyone out there willing to sponsor a World Champ.?



Gerard O'Brien, B.A.

**Fr. Dermot McCarthy** (1954-'59) was one of three brothers who came to CCR from Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim. Until recently he was attached to the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin, where he held the position of Administrator since 1986. To quote from the newspapers; 'during his time in office he raised the profile of the cathedral considerably, encouraging young adult ministry, improving social services, and organising theatrical and musical productions, including the annual Passion Plays'. In April of this year he was appointed RTE's new editor of Religious Programmes. This was not a random choice by RTE, for Fr. Dermot had a background as a manager and award winning producer with Radharc, the independent religious television unit, with whom he worked between 1967 and 1982. He won international awards for his documentary on the Charismatic movement in 1970 "Heirs to the Father" and for his story of the Irish and their descendants in Newfoundland, "The Forgotten Irish", in 1980.

We wish him every success in his present responsible undertaking.



**SPORTSMEN OF '47**

Left to right, Front Row: Sean Murphy, John O'Rourke, Rev. Fr. Abbot, Peter O'Regan, Jim O'Farrell, Seamus Browne, Fr. Raymond (Fred Pelly).

Second Row: Fr. Anthony (Matt Finnegan), Fr. Paddy Carroll, Fr. Laurence (Ned Walsh), Paddy Riordan, Martin Lavan, Jim Fogarty.

Back Row: Jim White, John Stokes, John Ryan, Aidan Britton, Fr. Andrew (Vincent Cowen)

## SPORTSMEN OF '47

That year was one of the high points in the Annals of Games in CCR. Teams were led by men who's names have become part of the folklore of the College, John Stokes of Dola, Co. Limerick who could handle a hurley or run a race like nobody else could. The Flynn's of Thurloughmore, Co. Galway were a formidable tribe on the sports fields of Roscrea. Michael had set the pace in the early '40s. Richard had captained the Senior Rugby XV in '45/'46 and won his Interprovincial Cap. The following year Martin led the rugby pack with skill and determination, while his brother Dave threw discus (what's the plural of discus?) and put shots beyond the reach of any ordinary mortal; and young Tom was no daw when it came to pushing a scrum. Fr. Joseph watched over it all — rugby, hurling, athletics, he knew all the tricks of the trade and had willing disciples to learn from him, but none better than John Stokes, he had cups and shields to his credit that would weight down any sideboard.

Is it any wonder then that John, over 40 years on, tried to gather some of the sportsmen of his generation together for a good old "do you remember" session. He spared himself no effort in the attempt to contact the players and athletes of the 1946/'48 period. Forty four years is a long interval in human life, it covered the full span for a few — John Dagg and Peter McCreery were two who had already finished their races and gone to their rewards. Many trails had gone cold and a few had petered out. Very, very few were in their original home places. He managed to track down about two dozen. His optimism was rewarded. On Saturday 24th August, 1991 a goodly number turned up for a commemoration Mass in the College Chapel, celebrated by Dom Colmille O'Toole ('45) ... "prefect when I was a kid whispered one veteran". The other concelebrants were Fr. Laurence (Ned Walsh), Fr. Raymond (Fred Pelly), Fr. Anthony (Matt Finnegan), Fr. Andrew (Vincent Cowen) and Fr. Paddy

Carroll who ministers in Florida. Another priest had been expected, Fr. Cronan O.F.M. (Paddy Torpey), but he had rung that morning to say he could not come as he had to go into hospital. Sadly he died a few days later, may he rest in peace.

After the Mass there were photographs to be taken, and they stood around and talked, and eyed each other up and down.

One prosperous looking business man chatted up the photographer and said "I remember you well Father, when you took the team that won the hurling cup. You used to have a black cloth over the camera in those days." The monk with the camera was seventy plus, so he said nothing. But to be taken for Fr. Austin (Jackie), who would be a hundred and two or three by now, was a bit much! Shades of Maurice Chevalier, 'I remember it well'.

The dinner for the occasion was in the Guest House, and we are grateful to Fr. Gabriel (John McCarthy '42/'46) and his staff for an excellent and most enjoyable meal. It was an occasion to be remembered when names and events from the past were recalled and relived. Half the crowd stayed at the Guest House overnight. The rest had to go back to the "Present".

And the talk continued, long into the night, and resumed after Mass with the Community on Sunday morning. Jim Fogarty told enough stories to fill a bible and Martin Lavan listened and thought perhaps of the long silent days and nights he spent sailing the high seas of the world. Much of the crack is on tape, because with much foresight Fr. Laurence had a machine placed strategically which picked up a lot of the chat, especially when a few got down to identifying the boys of yesterday in old photographs. The name was not always the first to come, but the pseudonym would do ... where did they all come from? Where have they gone?

Auf Wiedersehen, allerseits!

## UNION FIXTURES FOR 1991

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday 8th September, 2.30 p.m. in the College. Notice will be sent to those concerned.

### UNION DAY 1991

SUNDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER, THE ANNUAL UNION MASS WILL BE HELD IN THE ABBEY CHURCH AT 11.00 A.M. THE MASS WILL BE OFFERED FOR ALL PAST STUDENTS, LIVING AND DEAD, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE DIED DURING THE PAST YEAR. (If you have any names to add to the list please bring them along.) On that day also there will be a Sherry Reception, the Past v Present Matches and a Buffet Meal.

The South Tipperary Branch annual function is usually held in October. Consult the Chairman Jim Doyle, Cooleeney, Moyne, or Branch Secretary Noel McCormack, Main Street, Killenaule for details.

**KENMARE WEEKEND AWAY** is on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of November this year. Our special weekend-rate is £102 per person sharing. Those who wish to anticipate or prolong their stay after the weekend are offered a special rate by Mr. Francis Brennan; £65 per day B & B plus dinner. At the time of writing there are a third of the rooms already gone. So book soon and send your deposit of £50.00 per person.

THE PARK HOTEL, KENMARE, CO. KERRY.  
PHONE: 064-41200. FAX: 064-41402.

### DUBLIN ANNUAL DINNER 9th NOVEMBER, 1991.

At the United Service Club, Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. For further details consult Branch Chairman Aidan McNulty.



**AT THE DUBLIN DINNER**

"And Matt said to Cyril" ...

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1991

The AGM was held in May of this year. The date coincided with Parents' and Sports Day in the College. The Meeting was at 1.30 p.m. It was held in the Staff Common Room in the Classroom Block. The attendance was small enough considering the importance of the occasion, because the main item of business was the nomination of a President — Elect. This part of the work was duly completed and the date of the election was fixed for the next Central Committee meeting on 21st July. The AGM approved of the changes adopted for today's venue and timetable, and the proposed holding of Union Day with the Union Mass on 23rd September. This will be the usual High Mass in the Abbey Church at 11.00 a.m.

The President Conor Massey had the meeting completely wrapped up at 3.00 p.m. in time for the School Sports.



### PRESIDENT ELECT

Michael Keohane  
Easky, Co. Sligo.

## PRESIDENT — ELECT

There was a very good attendance at the Central Committee Meeting on the 21st July. The ballot papers had been distributed at the AGM in May so the voters had ample time to make up their minds. Michael Keohane from Easky, Co. Sligo was elected to succeed Conor Massey in September 1992. He has to do a year's "noviciate" on the Central Committee before taking office. Michael was in CCR from 1956 - '61. He has bookshops and news agencies in Sligo and Ballina and does an extensive trade with the schools and libraries of the west and north west. He is also a book publisher. Michael and his wife Rosaleen have two children, a girl Dervil who is in Japan doing a job for the EEC, and a son Jonathan who finished this year in CCR and took his Leaving and Matric with distinction.

## "HOW MANY MILES TO LONDON TOWN"? "THREE SCORE AND TEN, SIR".

I arrived in London, July 1984 and the question uppermost in my mind was accommodation. I had travelled over initially with a cousin already based there. He recommended that I try Bed and Breakfast hotel accommodation in the Shepherd's Bush area — which I did. The first B & B hotel I found with a single room available I booked into for a month. I realised at that early stage the importance of having a base to work from, i.e. a contact address, a place to prepare for interviews, and most importantly of all, a place to lay my head at night.

Because of EEC social security regulations I was able to have my benefits transferred from Ireland to the U.K. Thus I received direct help from the British Government to pay for my accommodation. This initial encounter with D.H.S.S. helped me enormously to get to my feet and meet the huge cost of accommodation. Initially it was all of £60 a week, with breakfast consisting of a slice of toast and orange juice. The landlord did well out of me!

After three weeks I met an Irish priest who put me in touch with St. Augustine's, Hammersmith. This was a happy chance and proved to be the beginning of many encounters with people of Irish origin who were to prove to be the mainstay of many friendships here in London. For nearly a year and a half I stayed in a hostel for young men, based in Hammersmith Grove, and run by the Irish Welfare Bureau. This was a worthwhile experience for me as it brought me into contact with many young men of my own age. I would strongly recommend it to newcomers — particularly for those with no other contacts in London. It gives you a base to start from, as well as a reasonably stable environment with a strong Christian dimension to it if, and only if, one wants to avail of the facilities in the local Catholic Church.

The practice of religion is left very much to the individual, but it is important to remember that a spiritual dimension of some sort can

do much to help you. It serves to deepen the perspective of the lifestyle you find yourself entrenched in, the lifestyle of a very complex environment.

The pace of life here is frantic at times. It can if you let it, invade and consume you totally. Just take a look at one of the main railway stations at the rush hour when commuters arrive or depart — it is crazy. You could travel in comfort from Dublin to Thurles or Limerick in the time it takes to travel across London morning or evening. Time is a precious commodity here and it must not be wasted. Peoples lives are ruled by it. The slide-rule precision syndrome dominates. Life can be very materialistic and secular in this type of existence. There is not much time for the deeper spiritually motivated areas of life. So much emphasis is placed on getting on or getting to the top of the ladder. It is difficult to be a true Christian here. You must be ready very often to stand up and be counted. As I said above, a lot is left to the individual. Contact with the Augustinians in Hammersmith helped a lot. I had music and became involved with a few church related activities — folk masses, youth clubs, care of senior citizens. Apart from the joy and peace this gave to me and others it helped me to make contacts and in due course obtain gainful employment. Friends are always a help, especially keeping you steady when crossing the stepping stones of life.

It seems a long time since July '84. I feel quite used to the way of life and the complexity and variety of peoples I have met and worked with. I took time off to travel, and see how some of these people live in their own home countries. It helps to understand when it comes to housing them here in this country, which is part of my job. However, I sometimes ask myself, is this what I want? How am I coping? Will I stay here for the rest of my life?

David Cummins (1971-'75) Dublin

## ORDINATION OF MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Fr. Peter Garvey, O.C.S.O.

On Saturday July 27th, 1991, Michael O'Sullivan (1977-'82) was ordained a priest in his native parish church of Kilrush. This church has served the parish for 152 years yet Michael has the honour of being the first priest to be ordained there. Michael studied for the Priesthood in Freiburg and Toulouse and also spent two years as a missionary in Algeria — a genuine Beau Gest and Foreign Legion background! It is to Algeria with its 100% Muslim population that Michael will return as a missionary in September. His proud parents, Michael and Josephine, and equally proud sisters Mary, Brid and Elizabeth and brother John (1982-'87) were present at the Ordination and at Fr. Michael's first mass the following day. Three of his classmates, Paul Kelly, Kilrush, Brian Hartnett, Dungarvan, and Michael Hyland and his wife Eileen, Ballylooby were guests at the Ordination. Likewise many of the pastmen from the Kilrush area attended the ordination and first mass. Michael is a member of the distinguished missionary congregation "The White Fathers" and an international group of fellow missionaries and fellow students travelled from Europe and Africa to attend the ceremony.



### UNION TIES £10

Straight Ties from:  
General Secretary C.C.R.

Bow Ties from:  
Aidan McNulty,  
Strand Rd., Portmarnock.

## A MEMORY OF PÉADAR WALSH

I was never proud of the fact that to me Irish was "Double Dutch". My teachers could never understand how anyone could read and understand quite well Cicero, Virgil, Julius Caesar etc. but not "Baile seo againne".

In my last year (1945) in Roscrea I was in the Leaving Cert. Pass class and my Irish teacher was Peter Walsh, affectionately known as Peadar. Peadar had three categories of pupils. The elite whom he addressed by their full name, for instance "Richard Flynn". The next category, to which I was consigned probably because I came from the same "Rebel County" as himself, were called by their surname only. Finally there were the lesser mortals who got a pointed finger and "you down there stand up".

Peadar had long since found out about my blind spot where Irish was concerned as I was lucky to have had him from my first days in Junior 2. After that first year he realised that he was wasting valuable time on me so he decided — T.G. — to just let me alone and hope no one would ever find out.

I think it was during second term of my last year that the bomb dropped. Peadar came into class one morning and without as much as a good morning boys came straight down to my desk. He looked rather worriedly at me and said, "O'Leary how are you today?" As I had never felt better, physically anyway, I answered rather puzzledly, "fine Sir". "Well O'Leary", said he, "I have very bad news for you". At this point both myself and all the lads in the class were rather agog wondering what was bothering poor Peadar. He continued, "O'Leary tomorrow we are having a visit from an Inspector". I felt a cold chill come over me. This was it, this was the one fear I always had. My world was shattered

and I was suddenly changed from probably the happiest boy in Roscrea to the most miserable. Frantically I thought to myself, I'll get sick, but realised that there was no hope in that. We had at the time a Sister in the Infirmary whom we called "The Film Star". She was very pretty but had a heart of stone and no one had yet succeeded in getting an early to bed pass from her, not to mind a day in bed in the Infirmary. She knew all the tricks. Vaguely I heard Peadar say to me, "O'Leary, tomorrow make yourself as small and insignificant as possible, and tonight pray like you never prayed before".

I went to bed that night after study and was quite surprised that I slept like an innocent babe. I awakened next morning with a grim foreboding of terrible things to happen if the Inspector found me out. Peadar would probably be fired and barred from teaching Irish again. I would be expelled and sent down in disgrace. I went down to Mass that morning and never, ever in my life did I pray so hard and so fervently for deliverance from this terrible misfortune.

Ten o'clock was Irish class. Peadar came in with the Inspector, the two of them gassing away in the Vernacular — that's Irish you know. The Inspector then gave us a general chat all of which passed over my head. All this time Peadar was giving me the eye in a beseeching kind of way, hoping I am sure that I would drop dead or at least get some sort of heart attack. I often wondered afterwards why I did not. The Inspector finished his talk eventually and got down to the business that had brought him in the first place. He started over on my right and asked someone to relate one of the stories from some book we had for the Leaving Cert. This

lad was from the West of Ireland and a fluent speaker and he gave a very impressive resumé of the story. Two more boys got the same type of question and did alright. The Inspector was beaming. He now switched to poetry, another dead duck where I was concerned and suddenly he looked straight at me. You have heard of fellows shrinking, boy I shrank! The Inspector hesitated, Peadar started moving towards the door, I sweated, my mouth got dry. This is it I said to myself — to Hell or Glory! He asked me the parts of speech of some noun. Believe it or not it was about the only thing I was capable of in Irish because this you could learn off by heart and at that time I had a good memory. He asked me another — success again!

The Inspector moved on to the next lad and eventually finished the inquisition. He made some entries in his report book, thanked Peadar and shook hands, thanked the class and said Slán something or other and left. Peadar saw him out and after a few minutes came back into the class and straight-down to me. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "O'Leary stand up". I stood up rather shakely for I was drained. The feeling of relief was so great that I really thought I would burst. Peadar stuck out his hand towards me. I took it gratefully for support. "Well done O'Leary", he said. "There must be something in the power of prayer after all".

I have many happy recollections of my five years in Roscrea, but the experience related above I shall never forget.

Donal "Corky" O'Leary.  
1940 - 1945



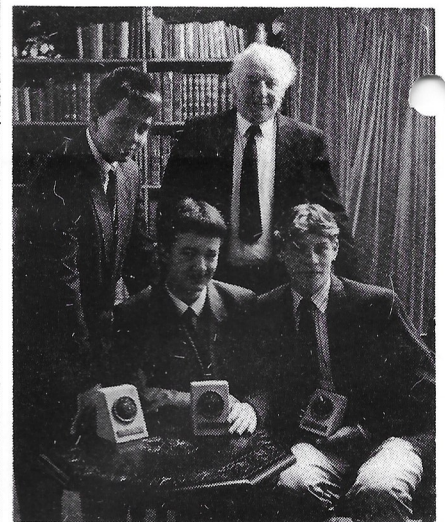
### WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

*THE GUEST HOUSE* — a place of rest and recollection, and where from time to time scholars hold conferences on aspects of Early Christian Ireland. The next one is from the 25th to 27th October 1991 — **Roscrea Winter Conference on Medieval Ireland.**

*Theme: Monaincha: the 31st Wonder of the World.*

For further information contact:

The Guestmaster, Mount Saint Joseph Abbey, Roscrea. Co. Tipperary.



### The Gael Linn Irish Debating Team Munster Final '91

Mr. Hugh McDonnell

Left: Paul Devine, Clontarf, Dublin.

Centre: Thomas Coughlan, Cappoquin, Co. Wexford.

Right: Micheál O'Conaill, Valentia Island.