



Cistercian
College
A Place To Grow

ROSCREA Review



No. 103 - NEWSLETTER OF THE CISTERCIAN COLLEGE ROSCREA UNION

Winter 2021/2022



Outgoing Union President **Pat Keane** using a socially distant method of handing over the chain to **John Yurky**.



New CCR President **Gavin Clark** who took up the reins of office in November.



Kevin Keegan who recently succeeded **Ronnie Culliton** as Chair of the Board of Management.



Felix Ross, new Head of Boarding.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to issue No. 103 of the *Roscrea Review*. As the main focus of the Review is the Union and its people and events, there was precious little to write about in the first half of 2021 as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on our lives. Union



President 2020-'21 Pat Keane was deprived by the pandemic of doing many of the things a Union President does – I remember Aidan McNulty who was President at the turn of the Millennium saying that he put on the President's chain over 30 times during his year. The one and only function Pat attended as President was the Dublin golf outing last August. Pat nevertheless was busy with Union affairs – he presided over Central Committee meetings via Zoom and guided progress towards a new Constitution for the Union which will hopefully be adopted at an EGM later this year.

As Spring gave way to Summer, the prospect of holding events became a reality and, taking all the restrictions into account, the Dublin Branch Golf outing in August was planned and took place amid great rejoicing. Some weeks later, the Abbot's Cup Golf competition took place in Roscrea G.C. and that same weekend no fewer than five Class Reunion groups met at the College and celebrated in the County Arms Hotel in Birr. (A sixth group subsequently met up in October in Athlone). Then in October the Dublin Branch Business Lunch was held in Fitzwilliam Lawn Tennis Club, where Ray Hernan (CCR 1979-'82) was the guest speaker. *It is important to note, that all Union events held in 2021 adhered to the protocols in place at the time.*

In the Autumn, Pat Keane handed over the Chain of Office to John Yurky (CCR 1957-'62), a London based architect who originally hailed from Sligo. He has already made quite an impact with Central Committee and hopes, Covid permitting, to be a visible President and to attend most Union functions in 2022.

While things may have been relatively quiet in Union circles, a lot was happening in and from the College. There was the guiding of the Class of 2021 through the Leaving Certificate (no small matter) and the subsequent recruitment and appointment of Gavin Clark and Felix Ross as College President and Head of Boarding respectively. Felix has the unenviable task of stepping into the shoes of the larger than life Gary Halpin who was taken from us so suddenly in

February when only 55. But both Felix and Gavin are happily settling into their roles and all in the Union wish them every success. Everything we hear from the College suggests that things are going very well in every area, academic, cultural, sporting and musical, and despite all the Covid related challenges, there is a very happy atmosphere there. Conor Brady's article inside this Review gives an update of the various developments in the College at managerial level and beyond, and anyone visiting CCR now will undoubtedly be impressed with all the additions to the campus in the past few years.

Ronnie Culliton who led the *Save CCR Campaign* in 2017 and chaired the Board of Management for well over 4 years stood down in the Autumn and was succeeded by Kevin Keggan (CCR 1983-'88). While many people made huge contributions to the success of that campaign and to putting the College on the firm footing on which it now stands, Ronnie's contribution was exceptional and all of us who love and care for CCR will be forever in his debt. *Good health and God speed, Ronnie!*

Since the last issue of the Review, three former Union Presidents have passed away, Larry Branigan (1998-'99), Frank Lynch (1978-'80) and Seán Murphy (1988-'90). These men gave long and distinguished service to the Union and the College. Indeed, Larry was Chairman of the first Board of Governors between 1990 and 1997. We include lengthy tributes to them and obituaries of other pastmen who have died in recent times. I am extremely grateful to the fellow pastmen who wrote these, and to those who informed me of the passing of pastmen and helped with the compiling of various obituaries. Most of the families and friends of these men had to say their last goodbyes under the various Covid restrictions in force which must have added to their grief – we extend the condolences of the Union members to all.

While the pandemic is still with us at the time of writing and likely so to be for some time to come, there is every reason to hope that 2022 will see the return of Union activities – certainly a number of Branches are working on plans to host events in the coming months. If the last 22 months have shown us anything, it is how vulnerable we are - let's hope and pray for the best going forward.

Pat Hanratty, CCR 1962-'67
pathanratty@gmail.com

JOHN YURKY UNION PRESIDENT 2021-'22



I doubt that anyone was as surprised as I was when I received a call suggesting I allow myself to be proposed for election as President of the CCR PPU. Having given the matter a few days thought it came to me "here's one for 3B2". I am not about to explain that but there are some who will know what I mean.

So I am certainly the oldest elected President - I left in 1962 having spent 5 years, most of which I enjoyed. In September 1957 having arrived by train I became for a while a number. I was no. 12. We all had a number for laundry and other identifying purposes and here's a thought. We all belong to a very exclusive group because at best I suspect there are at most eighteen no. 12s in the world or whatever number you were allocated when you arrived. So your identity no (if a criterion for membership of a society) makes you part of a very exclusive group indeed. In reality there may be just a dozen number 12s.

I have always had the view that it was my great good fortune to attend CCR. (I almost went to Rockwell!!)

I have very fond memories of my time there and indeed having left (as I walked out through the gates in June 1962), I knew that the comfort of knowing what I would be doing at 3.00 pm in three week's time had ended. I had the benefit of wonderful support and friendship from everyone connected with the school, some of whom had left many years before me.

While at CCR and indeed since, the school has had the unstinting support of the Monastery and the Cistercian community. We had brilliant teaching from dedicated professionals (even if sometimes somewhat eccentric).

We had sporting opportunities, we had the

Long Walk, we had movies that stopped for a reel change, we had full on tragic plays by Shakespeare with mostly brilliant performances by our contemporaries, we had Cats' Concerts, we had the woodwork shop by the Avenue and we probably had the best brown bread in Ireland.

We had firm lasting friendship in and out of College forged in Spartan conditions (is there any other type?)

So now we have class reunions. Seven are already booked for next September and they go from strength to strength. I am suggesting each year obtains and provides an up to date set of contact details for all those attendees if willingly provided. No pressure we understand. I should say I have been told not to accept or request union fund raising at year reunions.

There are Union functions throughout the year from dinners to business lunches, to the race meetings, informal meeting for a drink and a chat and the piece de resistance attending Cup Rugby in Dublin and anywhere else the college plays. It may be almost seven years since we finally won the Leinster Senior Cup, but it feels like yesterday! In the Leinster and All Ireland Sports, we always had a great tradition of success and certainly punch way above our weight.

We have the *Roscrea Review* an indispensable reference source of information and here I give a special mention for Pat Hanratty who labours continuously in its production.

We have Katherine Donovan our Hon. Secretary who holds the whole thing together.

So what is the state of the Union?

We are solvent and we have a significant credit balance of money in the bank: we have an income which is adequate, if we don't produce and post two Roscrea Reviews each year. The Review is available to all online by email provided we have your email, so make sure we do, send it to Katherine at katherine.donovan@ccr.ie

If you require a paper copy this is available subject to an annual subscription to Union funds to defray our costs (please be aware the present cash balance will disappear in 10 years if we continue to print and post the Review).

I will propose a Union notice board be put up in the college it can simply have pages of the current Review and some archive Review information and together with a Review supply available for picking up (there is

nothing like providing a sense of historic and ongoing involvement after leaving a school) and I believe this along with the College prospectus will give prospective parents greater understanding of the benefit to be provided by a Roscrea education.

I will propose a new funding programme, which if agreed will result in a permanent credit bank balance and provide for the possibility of some funding of future activities which may benefit all.

There is after 22 years a new union constitution drafted by some of the finest legal minds in the country. I propose this be adopted at the next committee meeting. It will give the Union a breath of fresh air and bring us into the 21st Century

We have a successful mentoring programme and I propose we augment this with some nitty gritty career advice. It's all very well having made a career decision but ask yourself what do you really know at 15 or 16 in the general sense for the next 50 years. I do acknowledge that career moves and changes are different from my time – nowadays most don't expect to stay in a job for life.

Last September Offaly County Council adopted a record of protected structures, in compliance with recent planning legislation. Item 61 and 62 are Mount St. Joseph's. CCR school and associated buildings. I had intended having a good look at the Sports Pavilion - it is in my view a unique building type with its double hand ball alleys incorporated into the structure.

All Gaelic games were encouraged at the time of transition of Ireland to a Republic. The hand ball alley became, in my view, a local community facility that provided social opportunities throughout the country. I have memories of attending country dances in the local alley when I lived in Sligo.

It is possible that some TLC may be appropriate but I would certainly like to have a good look at it. Then having done so to consider should the Union support a programme of upkeep with the possibility of government assistance if available.

So here we are. I am grateful that a number of my fellow alumni should have honoured me with the responsibility of the Presidency. It is my pleasure to carry on the great tradition. I will do my best to keep it steady as she goes (to coin a naval phrase).

I will of course issue further progress reports as and when these become applicable. With best wishes to all and have a happy healthy and prosperous New Year!

John Yurky,
Union President, 2021-'22.

BOARD & COLLEGE UPDATE CONOR BRADY (CCR 1962-'66)



For society in general, 2021 has been the year of the pandemic. But for the extended Cistercian College community it has also been a year of great changes. And, hopefully, it will be viewed as the year in which the exertions of those who brought the College back from the brink in 2017, came to fruition and consolidation.

As the year draws to its close, conditions at CCR are positive, with an enrolment of 247 students, and it may be safely said that the College can look to 2022 with optimism.

In October, Gavin Clark took over as President, having been appointed after a rigorous, professionally-led, international executive search. The post of President had been vacant since 2017 after the departure of Brendan Feehan who had held the role since 2014.

At the request of the Abbot, Dom Malachy, a search committee was brought into being early in 2021, chaired by Inez Heenan, former chair of the Parents' Association. The committee also included Mark Ryan (Class of 1977) former head of Accenture, Ronnie Culliton (Class of 1984), Conor Brady (Class of 1966)

and Ian Simington (see below.) At an early stage, the committee was augmented by the addition of Kevin Keegan (Class of 1988) and David Mescal (Class of 1997).

Gavin comes to CCR with a distinguished track record in educational leadership and management. He has held senior educational posts in his native Scotland, New Zealand, Qatar and latterly in Malaysia. His most recent posting, before coming to CCR, was as principal of The International School at Uplands, Penang, a day and boarding school, with an enrolment of 700 pupils of 42 different nationalities.

The search committee's first task was to identify and recruit a new Head of Boarding after the sad and untimely passing of Gary Halpin in February. Felix Ross, originally a Dubliner and a past pupil of The King's Hospital, was appointed to fill this all-important role in the College and took up residence in The Lodge in August. Felix had almost 10 years of experience as Deputy Head of Boarding at Glenstal. He holds primary and post-graduate degrees from the University of Limerick and is an experienced rugby coach.

Also in August, Ronnie Culliton, who had chaired the Board of Management since 2017 and was central to the campaign to save the College from threatened closure, relinquished the arduous role that he had fulfilled with courage, energy and determination.

At the invitation of the patron and trustee, Dom Malachy, CCR pastman Kevin Keegan assumed the role of chair in succession to Ronnie. Kevin is a partner in Boyden (a Forbes Top 10 leadership advisory and executive search firm). He has formerly worked with Ulster Bank (where he was

Human Resources Director), with Digicel and the Kerry Group. He is chair of the Make A Wish charity. Kevin's professional input into the search and selection processes for the President and Head of Boarding posts, along with that of Dave Mescal was invaluable.

At the end of September, Jack Kennedy stepped down as Director of Development in order to return to his business interests. Jack had served in this role for almost four years and the fruits of his great exertions can be seen in the many notable improvements within the college buildings and grounds. In particular, he worked with Director of Sport, Brendan McKeogh, investing in and further developing the College's sporting facilities. A number of endowments facilitated these developments, among others, opening up the wider campus to public participation which has been warmly welcomed among the local population.

At the end of 2021, it can safely be said that the College's leadership and management team is well placed and staffed to bring CCR to new levels of excellence. In addition to the new appointments detailed above, Gerry Grealish, as Principal, with Catherine Smyth as Deputy, leads a strong and committed teaching cohort; Seamus Hennessy remains indefatigable in the role of Director of Admissions, with an impressive success record in attracting foreign students in addition to boys from within Ireland; John Hanamy heads the finance function; Brendan McKeogh leads his team of coaches and trainers as Director of Sport while Yvonne O'Rourke and Sarah Brislane are responsible for chaplaincy and wellbeing among the students.

The development of the executive team, however, is only part of the story at CCR at this time. Significant changes have also been effected in the governance of the College.

Early in the year, Dom Malachy decided to augment the Board of Management with the appointment of additional Trustee Nominees in order to bring further expertise to the table. Trustee Nominees to the Board during the year included Kevin Keegan (chair) in succession to Ronnie Culliton; Peter Murray (chair of the Finance Committee); Inez Heenan (former chair of the Parents' Association); Sr Ann O'Donoghue (Loreto Order) and the present writer. At the end of the year, Inez Heenan stepped down and Gavin Clark took her place. Inez, however, continues to chair the Education and Learning Committee of the Board.

In coming to his decision to augment the board, Dom Malachy, in addition to consulting with the monastic community, was advised by a number of pastmen and by Ian Simington, a change-management expert who is Principal of Truepoint Consultants, a firm with wide experience of innovation and change in the educational sector. Meanwhile, valuable work had been done within the Board itself to develop a strategy document for the next 5 years and to draw up a new mission statement for the College. In addition, a number of pastmen with experience in business and public life have been available to the Abbot as an advisory resource.

On appointment to the Board, the present writer was asked by Dom Malachy to undertake a review of governance at the College. After extensive consultation with monks,

staff, parents, pastmen and other stakeholders, this resulted in a report with 24 recommendations which was presented to the Abbot in May 2021. Dom Malachy and the community accepted the principal points of the report as did the Board of Management.

While the great majority of the recommendations were purely procedural, one particularly significant initiative to flow from the report has been the establishment of a Patron Trustee Board (PTB) to sit alongside the College Board of Management.

The role of the PTB is to advise and assist the Abbot and the monastic community in the development and operation of the wider Mount Saint Joseph campus, including the monastery and library, the college and its grounds, the guest houses, the farmland and farmyards and the Walled Garden. It has no executive role, however.

The Abbot invited Dick Spring (Class of 1968), former Tánaiste, leader of The Labour Party and company director, to take the role of founding chair and he has agreed to do so.

The members of the PTB are appointed by the Abbot, initially for a term of three years. The initial membership includes a number of those who also serve as Trustee Nominees on the College Board of Management; Kevin Keegan, Inez Heenan, Sr Ann O'Donoghue and the present writer. At the invitation of the Abbot, the President of the Cistercian College Roscrea Union nominated David Healy (Class of 1986) to be a member. Other members include Mark Ryan (Class of 1977); Michael

Walsh, a Dublin-based business advisor and Olwyn Enright, a public affairs and communications director and formerly a member of Dail Eireann. Olwyn's father, former TD Tom Enright (FG) and her uncle, Anselm, are pastmen.

Thus, CCR faces forward into the future, confident that it will attain even greater levels of excellence in education and personal development for its students. It will remain rooted in its founding principles and values as expressed in the College motto: *Insideat Coelis Animo Sed Corpore Terris* – let the soul reach to the Heavens but the body dwells on the Earth. In colloquial terms; aspire to the heights but keep your feet on the ground.

Both Board of Management and Patron Trustee Board now face a busy and exciting agenda, as the newly-strengthened management group gets to work, mobilising the expertise and energies of their respective professional teams.

An early initiative is in hand to raise the College's profile with a professionally-led marketing and promotion campaign, directed by Graham Ross. Steps have been taken to appoint a new marketing executive which will be a fulltime College post. An early product of this campaign has been the creation of a new video that represents the College in all its varied facilities and activities. Well worth viewing and capturing much of the caring spirit and welcoming atmosphere of CCR, it is entitled *Cistercian College – A Place to Grow*. It can be watched on the College website or on YouTube.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT APPOINTS MR GAVIN CLARK AS CCR PRESIDENT, NOVEMBER 2021.



Cistercian College Roscrea is delighted to announce that our new President, Mr Gavin Clark has recently taken up duty at the College since last week and has been settling into his new role.

On behalf of all at the College and the Mount Saint Joseph community, I would like to take this opportunity of extending the warmest of welcomes to Gavin, his wife Cherie and their two sons and to wish them every happiness and success in this phase of their lives among us here at Roscrea.

The new President has already undertaken a round of initial meetings with staff across all departments at the College. And it is necessary to say that he has impressed everyone with his open, friendly manner, his clear

sense of purpose and his attentive, listening ear. He has already met and had discussions with members of the Board of Management and, of course, with the Patron and Trustee, Dom Malachy Thompson OCSO.

In the days and weeks ahead, he will be meeting parents as well as members of the Cistercian College Roscrea Union.*

Gavin comes to CCR having served as Head of the International School of Penang, one of the most distinguished schools in Malaysia, with an enrolment in excess of 700 pupils drawn from 42 nationalities. He grew up in the North East of Scotland, attending Robert Gordon College, a private co-educational school in Aberdeen, and holds postgraduate qualifications in both management and education. He held teaching and leadership posts in Qatar and New Zealand before taking up his appointment in Penang. Gavin is a Master of Educational Leadership with First Class Honours and is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teachers and the International Institute of Directors and Managers. He is also a certified member of the Australia-based Institute of CEOs and a keen sportsman.

The new President has been appointed after a rigorous, professionally-led, international executive search, with a mandate to bring CCR to even higher levels of excellence across all areas of activity, educational, cultural, sporting and developmental, all within the ethos, values and spirituality of the Cistercian tradition.

We are confident that with the new President's appointment, along with the recent appointment of Felix Ross, as Head of Boarding, that the management and staff team at CCR is now stronger than ever and is well resourced to take the college to new heights of success, bringing the boys entrusted to our charge to the fulfilment of their potential in the caring, safe and supportive environment of the Mount Saint Joseph campus.

Kevin Keegan, Chairperson, Cistercian College Board of Management.

**Editor's note: Mr Clark attended the Union's pre-Christmas Central Committee meeting which was held via video-link at which he was given a warm welcome.*

UNION PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF WELCOME TO MR CLARK.



Dear Mr Clark,
It had been my intention to greet and welcome you in person on 19th December on my own behalf and

that of the Cistercian College Roscrea Union.

In this unusual time it is difficult to travel and so I'll just say welcome!

I trust you are settling in, please be assured you will have my and the Union's support at all times. From what I have heard it is our great good fortune to have secured such a capable and suitable candidate for the role you now have.

I attended the College from 1957 until 1962 and after leaving in June I moved to London to continue my formal training and remained here.

I have to admit I was somewhat surprised when approached last September and asked to accept the role of Union President. I have mostly felt that it was my good fortune to attend CCR and I do have fond memories of my five years and the dedicated, sometimes brilliant if occasionally eccentric teaching staff. I formed the view that the ambiance was mostly one of doing ones honest best and that fair effort was what was expected and generally provided. Guilt did not enter into the arrangement. A fair and

honestly held view was respected.

Firm and lasting friendships were formed in what at the time I believe are best described as somewhat spartan conditions, I always loved Greek and Roman mythology and history even if I struggled on the academic side.

We enjoyed the unstinting support of the Monastery and the Cistercian community in areas too varied to mention and I was acutely aware of the benefits we received from this relationship. I believe it now comes to us to return in whatever way we can that support if required.

I came to my role accepting that original thought is rare and generally requires genius. Having put my feet under the table I believe there are a number of areas where mutual benefit may result, and I shall be asking for your view, permission, and support if you consider it to be appropriate. It is my plan to write separately setting out a number of proposals for consideration and adoption.

For now once again welcome!

*Kind regards,
Yours sincerely,*

*John Yurky,
President, Cistercian College Roscrea
Union, 2021-'22.*



NEW HEAD OF BOARDING, MR FELIX ROSS.

Last February we were devastated by the passing of our Head of Boarding Gary Halpin, who left an indelible mark on us all. We are very fortunate to have Felix Ross join us from Glenstal Abbey School to take up the role, bringing his experience as Senior Housemaster and Head of Rugby.

A highly motivated education and sports professional with 10 years of experience, Felix is committed to a personal ethos based on the confluence of academic excellence and extra-curricular achievement to mould second-level students into well-rounded and ethically sound individuals.

He also has extensive boarding experience across different year groups and is committed to the welfare and development of each individual student.

Dublin Branch Golf outing

13th August 2021

It was just great to be back! After nearly a year and a half with no Union events, it was great to be able to attend a CCR Union activity in person. Just shy of 50 golfers enjoyed a fine day and excellent conditions at Elm Park GC, which has been the venue for the event since 2016.

For Union President Pat Keane, it was his first occasion to wear the Presidential chain and he marked the occasion with a short speech and presented the Matt Hyland Cup on behalf of the Branch.

The event was also notable for the presence of several younger pastmen, although the headline of the day was that apart from winning the event, repeating his achievement of 2019, Michael O'Sullivan (CCR 1992-'98) had an albatross on the 503 metre par 5 ninth hole. It was a remarkable achievement, though unlike Louis Oosthuizen's famous one at the Masters' in 2012 no one captured it on film!

We were made particularly welcome on the day by CCR pastman Tim O'Brien (CCR 1978-'83) who is now the General Manager at Elm Park. Ironically, Tim had the same role in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire in 2020 where the Branch Committee was organising the Dublin Dinner, scheduled for 20th March 2020, but which was an early casualty of the Covid pandemic.

As ever, Kay Garvey was on hand to present the Dom Peter Garvey trophy to a surprised but delighted Manus Agnew, who didn't expect his 32 points to be a winning score. Kay herself won the Windle Cup for (at least) the second time.



Union President Pat Keane presents the Matt Hyland trophy to Michael O'Sullivan.

Results:

Matt Hyland Cup:

Winner: Michael O'Sullivan (39 points)

Runner up: Stephen Ryan (33 points)

Dom Peter Garvey Trophy:

Winner: Manus Agnew (32 points)

Runner up: Diarmuid O'Loughlin (31 points)

Windle Cup (Ladies)

Winner: Kay Garvey (34 points)

Runner up: Barbara O'Mara (30 points)

Team Trophy

Winners:

Michael O'Sullivan, Donal O'Sullivan and Niall O'Hagan (92 points).

Runners up:

Liam O'Brien, Stephen Ryan and Diarmuid O'Loughlin (77 points).

Longest Drive: Men - Tim O'Brien

Longest Drive: Ladies - Eileen Trapp

Nearest the Pin - Fiona Duffy

One might get the impression that apart from the actual winners, the scoring was hardly world class. Elm Park is not an easy course, despite perhaps appearing to be relatively short. There are plenty of challenges where a wayward shot can land a player in all sorts of trouble. As there were a number of players who had no club handicap, it was decided that there should be separate prizes for them, but that they would not be eligible for any of the major prizes.

Aonghus Cody did a wonderful job as MC for the evening. The meal was good, Tim O'Brien made sure we were treated like royalty and he was very generous with the raffle prizes.

The Dublin Branch is most grateful to those who attended, and to all who donated prizes and to the tee sponsors.



Aonghus Cody presents the runner up prize to Stephen Ryan.



Team Runners up, Liam O'Brien and Stephen Ryan with Aonghus Cody.



Team Prize winners, Niall O'Hagan, Donal and Michael O'Sullivan and with their smoothie makers, sponsored by Mick Dwan of the Gowan Group.



Kay Garvey presents the Dom Peter Garvey trophy to Manus Agnew.



Kay Garvey accepting the Noel Windle Cup from Aonghus Cody.



Aonghus Cody with his father Donncha, girlfriend Eileen Trapp and cousin Andrew Cody.



Liam Spooner and Mark O'Byrne.



Tony O'Grady, Liam O'Shea and Manus Agnew – all class of 1985.



Katherine Donovan and Fergal Cox



Michael Brody and Aidan O'Connell.

Young pastmen Jack Culligan, Jack Gilligan, Manus Heenan, Brian Bergin, Martin Fallon, John Mc Keon, Oisín McCloskey, Ben Whelehan and Andreas Murphy before they teed off at the Dublin Branch Golf outing.



OBITUARIES

Recently, a number of illustrious pastmen have gone to their eternal reward, some during the Covid-19 pandemic, their parting causing added grief to their families due to their not being able to give them a “proper Irish funeral.” Our heartfelt condolences to all the bereaved, and my thanks to those who wrote or helped me with the tributes below.

Laurence F. (Larry) Branigan (CCR 1946-'51)

Our esteemed friend Larry died peacefully on 5th January 2021 in the wonderful care of Foxrock Nursing Home. A beloved husband of Adeline and father of David, Susan and Sarah. His younger brother Dick (CCR 1947-'53) a solicitor in Drogheda died in 1999.



Due to Covid restrictions at that time a private funeral Mass took place in Dalkey. His interment took place later in September at Roscrea with a memorial Mass in the Abbey. A guard of honour en route to the public cemetery was provided by the TY students dressed in College uniform and supervised by the College Principal Mr. Gerry Grealish, a fitting sight and tribute to Larry.

Larry was born in Drogheda in 1933 and though he worked in Dublin for decades he never lost his love for ‘the Wee County’. While in Roscrea from 1946 to 1951 Larry played a low profile but was a member of the Legion of Mary and The Children of Mary, and played principal parts in The Gondoliers, Ruddigore and HMS Pinafore. Indeed throughout his life Larry continued his love of music singing in various choirs.

He joined the monastery on leaving CCR but left after two years. He then pursued a career in Law. During his

apprenticeship he won the gold medal in the Solicitors Apprentices’ Debating Society in 1956-57 and was later elected auditor of the society.

He married a young hockey player Adeline who was very involved all her life with Riding for the Disabled Ireland and Paraequestrian Ireland and in his retirement Larry acted as Treasurer of the latter body. Over time he became senior partner of the renowned Law Firm - Bell, Branigan, O’Donnell and O’Brien.

Roscrea was always very close to Larry’s heart and he always maintained a very keen interest in the College and the Monastery. During the late 1980s the College was excelling academically and in sport. With 300 students the College was bursting at the seams and in urgent need of upgrade and development. The monks for years recognised the need to signpost the way forward and plan for development. After many years of meetings under the leadership of Dom Colmcille and in the context of identifying the central traditions and ethos of the College and the way forward with a sound administration, it was decided to seek expert legal and educational guidance in formulating a future of the College.

In the Autumn of 1989 Dom Colmcille approached Larry Branigan who was then the Abbey’s solicitor, and invited him to lead a small group composed of the Abbot, Fr Nivard, (Prior). Fr Laurence (Bursar), Fr Kevin (President of CCR) and Fr Peter (Novice Master and former President

of CCR). The group sought advice and opinions from educational experts; they visited schools and consulted with the teaching staff and College monks. Following countless meetings a draft constitution for the College was prepared by Larry incorporating a Board Of Governors, as distinct from a Board of Management, outlining the chief objectives and Modus Operandi as follows: the College would remain a distinct arm of Roscrea Abbey Community, that reality to be reflected in the administration of the College, and that the Board of Governors would be selected and appointed by the Abbot and asked to administer the College on behalf of himself and the Abbey Community. The new Constitution of the College and its Modus Operandi, reflecting the wishes of the monastic community was explained to the teachers and staff before its launch.

The official launch of the College Constitution and the Board of Governors was made by Larry on the front steps of the College in September 1990 as he addressed a vast assembly of parents, past students, monks and laity. Over 600 people were present. This was one of Larry’s finest moments. His eloquence in delivering the substance of the document to the assembled audience was awesome. His presentation took over 30 minutes. The detail of the Modus Operandi, its rationale and aspirations were explained in great depth. The then President of the CCR Union Michael Houlihan responded on behalf of the past students and wished Larry and the new Board of Governors every success and guaranteed the full support of

the Union. Larry was confirmed as Chairman of the Board of Governors at its first meeting on 3rd October 1990 and remained in that position until 1997 during which period significant progress in the management of change was achieved at the College.

The Board always operated in the background while directing and supporting Fr Kevin as the Leading Light for Change with the full backing of teaching staff and supported by Fr Peter. In hindsight this new Constitution may not have been the ideal solution in signposting the way forward but it was a good start.

The management of change by the Board of Governors initially included:

- the transition of a monastic run College to lay people and coping with its resultant financial impact;
- the restructuring of the College;
- the introduction of a new Dean of Studies, Catering Supervisors and new Medical Care;
- capital development projects including upgrading of House facilities and a new link building at a cost of IR£1.5m funded by the Abbey;
- the setting up of a fundraising team for future developments- a further approx IR£2m was raised by parents and past students.

Larry retired from the Board in 1997. He was then elected President of CCR Union for the period 1998/1999. As President he invited all living past presidents of the Union to a lunch in the College in recognition of their past status and continued support of the Union. The historic photo of this group is displayed in the Centenary Book, Céad Bliain Faoi Rath on page 346.

In 2005 Larry was invited again to join the Board of Governors, this time under the Chairmanship of Conor O'Hara. During his term on the Board a serious rethink of the future strategic direction of the College was

carried out. The proposals, however at that stage were judged to be too far reaching for the community and no decisions were made.

In later years Larry continued to be keenly interested in the monastery, the College and the PPU. He was a keen supporter at the College rugby matches and pre match lunches and actively supported Union functions in Dublin, Cork, Kenmare and Kilkenny.

His greatest love of all was his family. He adored his loving wife Adeline and children, David, Susan and Sarah. One of his greatest joys was to see his daughter Sarah join the Cistercian Monastery at Glencairn, Co. Waterford. All three children participated in the readings at the Memorial mass in the Abbey in September 2021, while Sr. Sarah sang the Psalm.

Larry will be greatly missed by his family, relations and many friends and in particular, the Community at Mount Saint Joseph.

*May he Rest in Peace.
Pat O'Shea.*

Dr Seán Murphy (1955-'60) - a classmate's tribute.

It was with great sadness that the news of Seán's death on November 4th 2021, was received by his classmates and the wider College community. He was a House Captain in 1959-'60, along with Eamon Grennan and Tom Fletcher which reflected his popularity amongst his peers. Seán was of a gentle, kind and softly spoken disposition and these qualities were emphasized by the Celebrant at his Requiem Mass in his beloved town of



Portumna on November 8th.

As well as passing the usual academic obstacles without difficulty, including the obstacle of being in the first ever CCR Leaving Cert class to sit the Oral Irish Exam (May 1960), he was a very accomplished sportsman particularly in hurling and pole vaulting. He was All Ireland Schools Pole-vault Champion for the years 1959-'60, and uniquely was succeeded the following year by his late brother and fellow Roscrea student (Dr) Gabriel. After Roscrea he studied Medicine at UCG and went into Family Medicine eventually settling in Portumna, where he practiced for some 35 years. During this time he remained very active in the CCR Union including serving as President. It was said at one of his classmate's reunions (of 1960) that his father was concerned that Seán would not settle in CCR and contacted the College to express this concern. This was way back in September 1955 when Seán, I am sure like the rest of the sixty or so of his peers, at the tender ages of 12-13, faced the Brave New World of Boarding School, as they were driven through the eagle-topped gates, up the avenue past the sports pitches and climbed the College steps for the first time, with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation. But as events turned out his father's concerns were completely unfounded. Seán was a fine Galway man, House Captain, sportsman, CCR Union man, and much more besides. To all his family very sincere sympathy is expressed.

Cathal Bredin (CCR 1955-'60).

Fellow Co. Galway native and Union President (2016-'17) Pádraic Ó Máille in his blog under the pseudonym 'Reilly' penned this piece about Seán Murphy.

Seán Murphy was not just one of the most humble people Reilly ever met. He was also by far and away the best pole vaulter. In 1959 and 1960 he was All-Ireland Schools' Senior Pole Vault champion. On both occasions he went on to represent Ireland in the

European Games where he won the silver medal on both occasions. His national record stood for years.

When Reilly asked him once where his talent for pole vaulting emerged from he replied with typical modesty.

‘Talent is greatly overrated Reilly. I was no better nor worse than the next person but I had one distinct advantage over most of the rest of my competitors.’

‘What was that,’ asked Reilly curiously.

‘The Woodlawn River.’

‘What’s that?’

‘The Woodlawn River bordered the end of my father’s farm, and as a young lad I figured that if I could only vault across that stream I’d save myself a long walk around by road. After many’s the good wetting I succeeded in crossing it. Each day I’d take that short cut to and from school via that river and bit by bit I got better and better at it. I must have jumped that river a thousand times a year over a ten year period. I owe most of my athletic success to that small stream’ he replied nostalgically.’

‘So you see Reilly, by the time I started competing competitively, I was way ahead in terms of hours practiced than most of my competitors. My success was far less a function of genetic talent and more a reward of years of practice vaulting the Woodlawn River. You could call it purposeful practice.’

Purposeful practice is precisely what an American psychologist, Anders Ericsson called it in 1991. In the most extensive study ever undertaken into the origins of success, Ericsson studied the results of violinists at the renowned Music Academy of West Berlin in Germany.

By the age of 20, the best violinists had practiced an average of ten thousand hours - more than two thousand hours more than the good violinists and more than six thousand hours longer

than those aspiring to become music teachers.

The research shows us that if you want to bend it like Ronaldo or fade it like Tiger, you have to work like crazy, regardless of your genes, background, creed or colour. You’ve probably heard of the 10,000 hour rule, which was popularised by Malcolm Gladwell’s blockbuster book ‘Outliers.’ As Gladwell tells it, the rule goes like this: it takes 10,000 hours of intensive practice to achieve mastery of complex skills and materials, like playing the violin or getting as good as Bill Gates at programming.

There would be no Western Branch of the Cistercian College Roscrea Union but for Seán. In fact there might be no Cistercian College but for Seán. When the debate raged as to whether the College should close or remain open, Seán made an impassioned plea that he had two grandsons who were good athletes who might benefit from a Roscrea education. That was quintessential Seán Murphy. When many others were debating budgets and corporate governance, Seán reverted to the students. He always put the student front and centre.

The proudest man in Clontarf Ruby Club the following February was Seán Murphy when his grandson Ben lined out on the wing for Roscrea in their victory over Wesley College in the first round of the Leinster Senior Cup. And genes may not be everything, but his other grandson Sam, continues to represent Ireland, albeit in a different sport. Sam Murphy is one of Ireland’s finest young golfers. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree!

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.
Pádraic Ó Máille (CCR 1974-’79).*

Frank Lynch (CCR 1943-’48)

Union President 1978-1980, died peacefully on 9th May last in his 91st year. He was the eldest of four brothers who attended CCR, all of whom will be remembered by their contemporaries chiefly for their prowess on the Rugby field.



When Frank left Roscrea in 1948, he went to work in Stafford, England with the Lotus Shoe Company which had been established for more than 200 years. It was here that he honed his exceptional business acumen, underlined by his integrity and charisma which were the hallmarks of his persona and the basis for his successful business career. He was head-hunted by Evode Industries to run their Irish enterprise in Swords, Co. Dublin. Under Frank’s leadership and guidance it quickly thrived to become the leading adhesive company in Ireland, so much so that he earned the sobriquet “Sticky Lynch.”

After the rejuvenation of the Dublin Branch in 1969 when the memorable 40th Anniversary Dinner was run by Noel Windle in Jury’s Hotel in Dame St., Frank became more active in Union affairs, so much so that he was a shoe-in for the Presidency in 1978. The last Dublin Dinner Dance was held under his watch, the appeal of this type of function having died a slow death generally in Ireland; it was dinner only from then on, though the event remains Black Tie to this day.

Frank was very much a family man, devoted to his wife Patricia who predeceased him and his five children. Despite his achievements, he was understated and modest which made him welcome everywhere and a true representation of the College and the Union.

*May his gentle soul rest in peace.
Conor Massey.*

Dom Ambrose Farrington RIP (CCR 1944-'47)

Fr Ambrose, a dear friend, founding father and former Abbot of The Cistercian Monastery at Bolton Abbey, Moone,



Co. Kildare, died peacefully at Bolton Abbey on January 16th 2021 after a short illness and at the ripe old age of 91 years. He was predeceased by his brothers Tom, John and Michael (CCR 1950-'54). He is greatly missed by his fellow monks, his sister Theresa, sisters in law, members of the local community, his many friends and personal confidants.

He was born and reared at Long House, Ballymore Eustace, County Kildare in 1930 not far from Bolton Castle, home of the Farnan family who were related to the Farringtons. Fr Ambrose, known as Dick Farrington, went to CCR in 1944 and enjoyed his time there under the Presidency of Fr Ailbe Sadlier.

He joined the Monastery on 15th August 1947 and was ordained in 1952. In February 1955 he left the Bursar's office in the Abbey and became the assistant bursar to Fr Francis in the College for six months. In September 1955, without any training he was sent out to the College by the Abbot to be the senior dean / dean of discipline. During that period, times were difficult in the context of discipline/ student behaviour. During his 2 years at the College he was a man for all seasons with the boys and the staff. He was open and gregarious, fair minded and always smiling, and happy in himself. He worked very well with Fr Eanna in supervising the dorms, ref and study halls. He did a world of good, quietly, for young students "in trouble" and sometimes gave lads money so that they could travel to matches.

The class of 1956 had so much respect

and high regard for Fr Ambrose that they invited him to all their class reunions, 25th, 40th, 50th and 60th reunions as their special guest.

In 1957 he was called back to the monastery to take up the role as Bursar - Fr Eanna became Senior Dean.

Bolton Abbey and Fr Ambrose.

In June 1962 Archbishop McQuaid informed the then Abbot Dom Camillus of the extraordinarily generous gift of Mrs Bridget Farnan and her son Pat - they offered their 300 acre farm and Bolton Castle, Moone to be a new Cistercian foundation. As Dom Camillus had retired but was still acting superior, pending the election of a successor, a definite decision could not be made.

Dom Eugene Boylan was elected Abbot on in July 1962 and pending a final decision Dom Eugene arranged for Fr Ambrose Farrington (neighbour) and Brother Kieran Dooley to be pro- temp administrators of the property and to continue farming. 18 months later Dom Eugene died as a result of a car accident. In 1964 the newly elected Abbot Dom Colmcille, being apprehensive about making a decision invited the Abbot General to visit Bolton. His reaction was very positive so with the favourable vote of the community Dom Colmcille went ahead with the foundation appointing Fr Ambrose as Superior and arranging for 17 Roscrea monks to establish the new monastery at Bolton Abbey.

At this stage Fr Ambrose was considered to be too young at the age of 34 years to be appointed the first Abbot, so Dom Benedict Kearns was elected by the new community and remained for a long time in situ. He was succeeded by Dom Ambrose.

During the interim period Fr Ambrose held many senior positions including Prior, Bursar, Guest Master, Spiritual Director for Retreats and Farm Manager. He also had a great rapport with the local parish community and the local farming community. He was

known as a man of prayer, spirituality, and hard work. He maintained his link with Mount St Joseph serving as Dom Colmcille's nominee on the Board of Governors of the College between 1993 and 2002.

Fr Ambrose impacted so many lives that to record even a summary would not do justice to the man. This is reflected in the tributes paid to him in the condolences section of the rip.ie website. They refer to him e.g. as a faithful priest who enriched the lives of many, a great listener, a great advisor, gentle, caring and humble, a man of profound wisdom, a man of resilience in a time of crisis and a true ecumenist, among others.

To the writer it has been a wonderful experience to have Fr Ambrose as a close friend and confidant since the 1950s.

*Leaba I measc na naomh go raibh aige.
Pat O'Shea (CCR 1951-'56).*

Paul O'Brien (CCR 1965-'70)

Paul and his younger brother Barry arrived in CCR in 1965, the first of five O'Brien brothers from Carrick-on-Suir to attend Roscrea. Paul immediately



made an impact by his sporting abilities as a brave, speedy rugby player and by his athletic prowess.

He played as a centre/winger for two years on the Junior Cup Team, followed by two years on the Senior Cup Team. After scoring a few tries in a Cup game, the newspaper headlined its report with "O'Brien stars for Roscrea." Fr. Patrick, the College President, using Patrick Sarsfield's words, added: "Give me three men or an O'Brien!" What stood out was Paul's fearless tackling and big-hearted defence for a player, small in stature, and his attacking prowess,

possessing pace and running skills to side-step, swerve, or dummy. Paul was also a versatile athlete, excelling over sprints and middle distances, and in cross country running.

Classmates still remember Paul for his beaming smile, his colourful ties and for holding a transistor radio (!) up to his ear, trying to catch Radio Luxembourg or Radio Caroline. He was an avid Rolling Stones fan when most guys favoured The Beatles.

Paul was kind, considerate and helpful. He listened and heard. Calm and chilled, modest with a quiet unassuming style, Paul built relationships and ensured that no one was left out of his circle of friends, who often were an eclectic, almost bohemian group, with a strong leaning to the Arts.

Respected and admired, in his final year he was elected by the students as Second House Captain with Tony Collier, as First House Captain and Michael Garvey as Third House Captain.

After Roscrea – “A New Home”

After CCR, Paul went to Galway to study in NUIG in 1970. He competed in Boxing with the University Boxing Club.

In the late 70s, Paul moved to Lahinch, Co. Clare, where he had previously spent many great family summer holidays. There, he came under the wings of the Vaughan family at The Aberdeen Arms Hotel, where Paul was to meet his future wife, Theresa, a chef in the hotel, and they married in 1979.

Lahinch became home for over forty years. In 1985, Paul and Theresa built their home in Barrtrá, outside Lahinch. Three years later, they turned their home into a restaurant, despite the bank manager declaring that a rural restaurant start-up in a recession was diabolical.

Barrtrá Seafood Restaurant opened in 1988. Paul was the beloved front

of house host, greeting his guests with a smile and making his team feel like part of the family. The McKenna food guides soon listed the restaurant and, in 2002, Paul and Theresa won the prestigious Georgina Campbell ‘Seafood Restaurant of the Year’ award. Paul even appeared on a TV food show, where he jumped into the Atlantic Ocean in Barrtrá to fetch fresh lobsters for the restaurant from the red fishing boat! Paul’s son, Ruben, now runs the restaurant. Paul remained in the business in recent years, working especially in his beloved garden.

Paul kept his interest in fitness and sports. He surfed in the early days of surfing in Lahinch, and ran on the beach, followed by a swim in the sea. He went for long hikes on the Burren and ran the roads of North Clare. Paul competed in the first Dublin City Marathon in 1980 and twice more in the early 80s breaking 3 hours on a few occasions. In 1999, he ran the New York Marathon when 47 years old, a tribute to his fitness and athleticism. In recent years, he walked the prom and beach in Lahinch, having a welcome chat for friends, old and new.

Music was always a huge part of Paul’s life. Paul started playing guitar and drum kit with his brothers in Carrick on Suir (“The Strolling Tones”). He had two bands, based in UL, one called “The Richards” which also included his brothers John and Vincent, the other called “No Ballroom” which also included Vincent. Later his music career flourished in Lahinch. Paul was so enthusiastic to play music and so inclusive that he played with a large variety of bands with local musicians. His first band in Lahinch was “Wheels on Fire” with wife, Theresa, on drums! He played country music with his neighbour and engaged in folk, reggae, and trad sessions. However, Paul came into his own with Rock Music, some saying that he had invented Rock ‘n’ Roll in North Clare! Paul recorded a number of songs with his brother John (CCR 1970-’74). A later band, “Kohima”, had a great repertoire of original songs with a unique electronic

twist. In recent years, he played a mix of original and favourite cover songs with his daughter, Martha.

Paul was a song writer and recorded and published his own songs and albums. A talented poet and a founding member of the North Clare Writers Group, Paul self-published “Bluebells & Purple Hearts”, a book of his poems, “a kaleidoscope of different feelings and observations I have had along the way.”

Paul was philosophical and spiritual with a keen interest in history, including his own family ancestry. He loved France, speaking French fluently (thanks to Mr John Shanahan in CCR!),

and was Chairman of The Lahinch Arzon Twinning Association, a partnership between Lahinch and Arzon in Brittany, France.

Paul regularly travelled to Dublin to support the CCR boys in Cup matches. In 2015, Paul and his four brothers, Barry, Michael, John, and Vincent sat together in the RDS to witness CCR finally win the Leinster Schools Senior Cup. He also followed Munster Rugby, regularly attending Thomond Park.

Finale

This year, our 1970 Class held its 50 + 1 Year Reunion. Paul was very enthusiastic about attending the event but in late July, he conceded that he was not well enough to travel and said “I will do my own pilgrimage to CCR!” At our 1970 Reunion Dinner on 4th September, we received a text message : **“Happy Reunion to all my colleagues in CCR from Paul O’Brien.”** We now know that Paul was seriously ill at that time and, sadly, he died two weeks later.

Paul’s family – Theresa, his four children Caleb, Ava, Martha, and Ruben and his eight grandchildren have lost a husband, a father, and a grandfather. His brothers, Barry, Michael, and Vincent, and his sisters, Gina, Tina, and Martine have lost their eldest brother, Paul. A younger

brother, John (CCR 1970-'74), died suddenly in September 2019.

Paul's funeral was in his beloved Barrtrá and in Moy Church, rural settings in his adopted Northwest Clare. Some of Paul's contemporaries from 1970 and 1971 attended. Tony Collier and Pat Kelly were asked to speak at Paul's Funeral Mass and, having reflected on Paul's life during his CCR school years, they extended the sympathy of our 1970 Year and of the wider CCR community to Paul's family on their sad loss.

We all have wonderful memories of Paul, who enriched our lives. Paul was a great friend, "one of the really good guys", who contributed hugely to our happy times in Roscrea and later to his own family and to the local community in his adopted home in Lahinch, Clare.

In the words of Paul's daughter, Ava, "Paul's deep philosophical mind allowed him to appreciate life, knowing that the simple things were important - family, friends and being kind to all. He lived his life with a positivity that was contagious, a "can-do" attitude that made anything possible and an ability to connect with people that made a lasting impression. When asked "How are you?", Paul always answered, "Fantastic!"

Pat Kelly CCR 1965-'70.

Gary Halpin R.I.P.

Gary Halpin was easy to befriend. He was chatty, engaging and always fully present. Once you met him and talked for a while, you got the distinct impression that you had made a friend. He was easy company- pleasant, warm and witty. He was an excellent listener. Gary's rich personality shone through. He had a beautiful sense of humour - he recounted stories and anecdotes with



the skill of a seasoned 'seanchai'

For all of this, Gary was an intensely modest man who never allowed his own considerable successes to dominate. Yes, it was possible to get stories from him about his sporting days, but mostly, he avoided putting himself centre stage. He won an athletic scholarship to Manhattan College, where he excelled, winning All-American Amateur Athletic honours as a hammer thrower. He represented Ireland at both student and adult levels as an athlete, including in the 1997 World Athletic Championships, and also as a rugby international earning four caps as a schoolboy international, and eleven senior international senior caps as a prop forward. He scored a famous try against New Zealand in the World Rugby Cup in 1995. But for many people, (especially those too young to have seen him in action for his various clubs, province or wearing the green jersey), Gary Halpin's modesty meant that his sporting accomplishments only manifested themselves from reading accounts of him in the various print media, many of which were published posthumously. The tone and warmth of these tributes spoke volumes of the exceptional person that was Gary Halpin.

Gary Halpin's experiences of boarding school as a student at Rockwell College, and his years in the education system in England and Wales, stood him in great stead as he applied himself to the post of Head of Boarding at CCR from the beginning of 2018. He had an excellent sense of the uniqueness of CCR, partly from his many visits to the College during his Rockwell days, but partly too, from his own natural intuition. He was insightful and an excellent judge of character. He didn't try to reinvent the College, but rather appreciated its traditions and institutions while keeping the ship steady and focused. He understood the students and showed great empathy towards them. Though he was a big physical presence, the students didn't fear Gary- they respected him! And though Gary knew how and when to be tough, he favoured a very pastoral approach.

Gary was a doer, and he immersed himself in all aspects of the job - as Head of Boarding, including Refectory and Study supervision, presiding over Morning prayer, meeting parents, colleagues and students. He relished physical work too. The last time I met Gary, only about a week before he died, he had just finished helping colleagues to move a considerable consignment of cement blocks in the newly restored enclosure, (formerly the disused, enclosed orchard near the waterfalls, and now a beautiful place of reflection thanks to the work of Transition Year students, Mr. Paddy Smyth and Fr. Aodhán.)

Gary Halpin supported and endorsed all aspects of college life, from sport to debating, from academia to school outings. He also had a great love of music, and spent many an hour playing his guitar, singing Irish folk songs and classic songs from the 60s and 70s.

As Head of Boarding, Gary contributed many practical and innovative ideas to the College. He was a highly respected colleague whose professional approach, combined with his unique and genial personality made him immensely popular with all constituents of the College.

Sadly, on February 23rd, Gary Halpin was called from his earthly life. Cistercian College, like all schools, was under lockdown due to Covid-19 restrictions. Nonetheless the grief was palpable, even when classes resumed shortly before Easter. His untimely passing has left a huge void in the lives of those who had come to know and work with him from his arrival at Cistercian College just a few years earlier. Gary Halpin continues to be greatly missed but we are much the richer for having known and worked alongside him.

*May he rest easily in eternal peace.
Diarmuid Fitzgerald.*

ABBOT'S CUP

Saturday 4th September last saw 76 golfers taking part in the Abbot's Cup. This represented a big increase on recent years, the numbers being partly swollen by the fact that five class groups were holding reunions that weekend, and partly no doubt by the fact that this was the first Union event in Roscrea for nearly two years.

There was some excellent scoring, but Niall Morrison was the real star – playing off a handicap of 4, he scored an amazing 45 points to land the trophy that his brother Gary had won in 2019.

The other prize winners were:

| | | | |
|---|---|--------|--------|
| Gross Prize | Brian O'Sullivan | 8 H/C | 35 Pts |
| Visitors' Prize | Donncha Cody | 21 H/C | 41 Pts |
| Student Prize | Luke Murphy | 9 H/C | 35 Pts |
| Nearest the Pin | Michael Fogarty | | |
| Longest Drive | Eddie O'Flynn | | |
| Fr Dermot O Colmain Cup – Class Group Prize | Class of 1996 – Michal Coogan | | 90 Pts |
| | Mark Curley, Thomas O'Connell, Tomás Sheehy | | |

Dom Malachy presented the prizes: none was happier than Donncha Cody (Marcelline's husband) who declared that it was the first time he ever won a trophy in Roscrea Golf Club, of which he has been a member for more than 40 years!



A delighted Donncha Cody accepts the Visitor's Prize from Dom Malachy.



Dom Malachy presents the Abbot's Cup to Niall Morrison



Mathew Mellotte and Liam Moran



Sean Cody and Shane Kelly



Chairman of the Board of Management Kevin Keegan presents the Student Prize to Luke Murphy.

REUNION GROUP PHOTOS

CLASS OF 1970 50 YEAR REUNION 4TH SEPTEMBER 2021



Back row (L-R): Jim Glennon, Jack O'Connor, Con O'Flynn, Pat Kelly, Liam Nicholl, Dermot Moloney, Mundy Hayes, Charlie Flattery

Front row (L-R): Charlie Cavanagh, Pat Loughnane, Gerard Flood, Donal Brennan, Tony Collier, Pdraig Moran (lower step), Peter Madden, Gerry O'Meara (lower step), Paddy McGovern, Philip Tierney (lower step), Donal Byrne (lower step).

CLASS OF 1971 REUNION



Left to right: Matt Sinnott, Michael Bruen, Tiernan Dolan, Michael McLaughlin, George Coyle R.I.P., Hugh Curran, Eddie Comber, Martin Gibbons, Willie McTiernan, Michael Matthews, Donal Hayes, Michael O'Dwyer, Jim Gibbons, Jim O'Flynn.

REUNION GROUP PHOTOS

CLASS OF 1996 REUNION



Left to right: Jack Golden, Eric Briody, Will Delaney, Joe Fleming, John Kenny, Austin Brosnan, Fiachra Liston, David Ormond, Mark Curley, Ronan Murray, Adrian Lynch, Mark Hassett, Darragh Martin, Paul Mernagh, Stephen Thompson, Sean Maher, Joe Dalton.

CLASS OF 2000 REUNION 4TH SEPTEMBER 2021



Back row: Sean McGrath, David Downey, Dermot Nolan, Austin O'Meara, Barry McCann, Gavin Duffy, Gerard Corcoran. Front row: Niall Grogan, David Bardon, Conal Sherry, Cian Begley, Redmond Barry, Paul Carroll.

REUNIONS!

CLASS OF 1970 50 YEAR REUNION 4TH SEPTEMBER 2021

As with so many other events planned for 2020, our 50 Year Reunion was deferred because of the pandemic and resultant social regulations. However, even though there were still many issues unresolved, we decided to proceed with the Reunion during the Past Students' weekend (4th/5th September) of 2021.

So about 20 cheerful pastmen came together for a weekend of nostalgia and friendship at the College: meeting up on the front steps, reintroducing ourselves before adjourning to the Centenary Room (the Billiard Room in our day) for a reception. We were delighted to renew acquaintance with our former teachers, Messrs. John Shanahan and Pat Kilbane who travelled respectively from Limerick and Thurles for the occasion. Also, to meet Dom Kevin who was Dean of Discipline throughout our tenure. None of these mentors showed any after effects from their dealings with us up to 56 years ago. Even so, the class was very appreciative that they had gone to some inconvenience to meet up with their former students. We were also honoured to have Dom Malachy join us.

Our group was given a presentation on the modern, holistic approach to education and to the boarding school concept as it is applied in CCR. Following the presentation, we were taken on a tour of the College. Our class was most impressed with the massive changes and improvements to the campus in the intervening years.

Later we adjourned to the County Arms Hotel in Birr for a socially distant, regulation compliant function. However, we still managed a long night of stories from our time in CCR as well as catching up on our post CCR lives.

Indeed, we acknowledge the support and cooperation of the staff and management of the County Arms towards the success of the event, especially given the uncertainty, postponements and cancellations caused by the prevailing pandemic. We were joined at the County Arms by the younger boys from the Class of 1971 who were having their own 50 Year Reunion.

A number of pastmen living abroad were prevented from joining us due to travel restrictions – Frank Gleeson in France, George Sinnott in Belgium, Michael Garvey in Malaysia, John Shouldice and John Brody in the US and Colm Crowley and Michael Scannell

in the UK. However, John Shouldice, John Brody and Colm Crowley did join us on Zoom.

One very pleasing aspect of our 50 year + 1 Reunion was that quite a number of Pastmen who hadn't managed to get to our previous get togethers were able to make it. We were delighted to welcome back Donal Byrne, Padraig Moran, Robert Stephenson and Dermot Moloney – and happy to say that the years have been kind to them. Jim Glennon was MC for the occasion and the main presentation was by our House Captain Tony Collier. Both referred to their families' long and beneficial association with CCR, the camaraderie with their classmates and the enduring friendships made.

At Mass in the Abbey the following morning, our eleven classmates who sadly are no longer with us were remembered during the ceremony.

Pat Kelly did great work getting details of our classmates and this will be a great help in keeping communication going in the years ahead.

And, now that we have a comprehensive database of all our classmates, it should be somewhat easier to arrange our next (55 Year) reunion when hopefully, this pandemic which cast such a cloud over the 50 Year Reunion will be consigned to history.

On the matter of keeping in touch, back in 2017, our Second House Captain, Paul O'Brien communicated with several of his classmates to update us on his contact details for the purpose of ensuring that he would be informed of all the arrangements for our 50 Year Reunion to which he was very much looking forward. Paul had been speaking to a number of other Pastmen who spoke in glowing terms of their own 50 Year Reunions. While up to June of this year, Paul was all set to join us, subsequently his health deteriorated rapidly. On the evening of our Reunion, he sent his good wishes to his classmates and said that he 'would be making his own pilgrimage to CCR'. A few days after our Reunion, Paul went into care and sadly passed away just over two weeks later. Quite a number of his classmates attended the funeral ceremonies where his CCR jersey was very much in evidence, and many more paid warm tributes on rip.ie.



Donal Byrne, Mundy Hayes and Philip Tierney.



Tony Collier, Pat Loughnane, Paddy McGovern and Padraig Moran on a tour of the new facilities in CCR.



Jim Glennon, Gerard Flood and Tony Collier.



Tony Collier, Charlie Cavanagh, Pat Loughnane and Pat Kelly.



Padraig Moran and Paddy McGovern.



Pat Loughnane and Pat Kelly.



Robert Stephenson and Gerry O'Meara linking up with Colm Crowley in London.



Robert Stephenson linking up with John Shouldice in the USA.



John O'Connor and Donal Brennan.

CLASS OF 1966-71 FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY REUNION.

The Class of 1966-'71 celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their graduation from CCR on Saturday 4th September last.

The reunion began with a reception in the college and we were delighted to be sharing the event with the class of 1965-'70, who had to cancel their event last year due to the Covid restrictions which were in place at that time. We received a great welcome from the current staff of the college and also from members of the monastic community. It was great to see Dom Kevin and also Mr. John Shanahan and Mr. Pat Kilbane who had travelled from Rathkeale and Thurles respectively to be with us.

In due course the golfers joined us and we made our way to the County Arms Hotel in Birr where we again joined the 1965-'70 Class for what everyone agreed was a magnificent dinner and a very enjoyable social evening with old friends.

On Sunday morning, many of us went back for Mass in the Abbey church, at which prayers were offered for deceased members of both classes.

We would like to thank Katherine Donovan for all her help and encouragement, without which it would not have been possible to organise the event.

It was a pity so many of our classmates were unable to attend but it was agreed that we should have a further meeting in 2026. Eddie Comber has a database with contact details and if you wish to be added to it or if you know someone who would, please contact him: e@comber.org.

Hugh Curran has also set up a WhatsApp group and if you would like to be included please contact him: hugh@hughcurran.com or +44 7977 041950.



Brian O'Sullivan, George Coyle R.I.P., Paul Wrafter, Donal Cantwell and Noel Hayes.



Donal Hayes, Jim Gibbons, Oliver McGinnity and Willie McTiernan.



Eddie Comber in the foreground, Tiernan Dolan, Michael Bruen in the shadows.

CLASS OF 1996 REUNION

The 25 year reunion of the class of 1996 took place on 4th September 2021. There was an excellent attendance on the day. Over thirty of the class were present despite the numerous obstacles that Covid-19 presents.

The day began for many with the Abbot's Cup golf competition. A large number of the group participated in the Cup and the class of '96 boasted the winner of the event. My congratulations goes to Niall Morrison who lifted the coveted trophy.

The main reunion group met at the College and were treated to a tour of the

impressive facilities that are now on offer to the students. The tour brought back so many memories to us all.

After the college we all convened at The County Arms Hotel in Birr. Once assembled we enjoyed dinner and drinks and remembered lost and absent class mates. After dinner the festivities lasted well into the night and we reminisced on happy times and all enjoyed a large slice of nostalgia.

Reunions are never easy to organise and I would like to thank my co-coordinators Pádraig O'Loughlin, Phonsie Deegan,

Jack Golden and Darragh Martin for their help in organising the venue, the golf and tracking down class mates.

The friendships that we forged in CCR over thirty years ago are as strong now as they were then. The class of 1996 are a really great group of guys and this sentiment was echoed throughout the weekend.

We are already looking forward to the 30 year reunion!!!

Mark Curley.



Stephen Thompson (beard), Eric Briody and Paul Mernagh.



Ronan Murray, Joe Dalton (wine polo shirt) and Mark Curley.



Colin Smyth and John McLoughlin.



Adrian Lynch (blue), Tomas O'Connell (white) and Gearóid Slattery.



Cormac O'Riordan (striped jumper) and John Redmond



Will Delaney (white shirt) and Michael Heffernan (pink jumper)



Sean Maher (blue shirt) and Austin Brosnan. (checked shirt)



Fiachra Liston (navy shirt) and John Bresnihan. (white shirt)



Joe Fleming, Darragh Martin and Jack Golden (glasses).

CLASS OF 2000 REUNION 4TH SEPTEMBER 2021

After a year of postponements, the Class of 2000 were delighted to get together to celebrate their 20 (now 21) year reunion. The pandemic certainly still had its impact as numbers were relatively low with some of the pastmen forwarding their apologies in advance of the gathering. Many of the attendees participated in the Abbot's Cup Golf in the afternoon which, as always, was a great occasion. While none of our group featured in the prizes, there were plenty of moments of magic from David Downey, Cian Begley and David Bardon. Ex Tipp hurler John O'Brien proved that he is as accurate with a putter as with a hurl, but will need to take more balls with him when driving 'Happy Gilmore' style. Redmond Barry was quick to offer some advice to the golfing novice, along with a friendly jest, while Gerard Corcoran showed plenty of glimpses of why he was

once a single digit golfer. Walking the length and breadth of the fine Roscrea golf course was the perfect way for lads to genuinely catch up, share a story and have a laugh.

The non-golfers joined the celebrations at CCR where we received a tour of the College. Seán McGrath travelled from Glasgow for the event and was chauffeured from the airport by good friend Conal Sherry. Dermot Nolan, Niall Grogan, David Hughes, Austin O'Meara and Paul Carroll all got a chance to catch up while walking the halls of CCR, admiring the updated facilities. It was fantastic to see the College thriving again, all made possible thanks to the tireless voluntary work of Ronnie Culliton and Co. We are all indebted to those who put up a big fight to keep the doors of CCR open. For some of

our group, it was the first time setting foot in the grounds in 21 years.

The gathering then moved to the County Arms in Birr for dinner where we were joined by some of the lads who are still playing competitive sport at the ripe age of 40. Shane O'Loughlin, Noel Maloney and Gavin Duffy all played for their clubs in football or hurling before getting the opportunity to enjoy a beer with old friends. Plenty of stories were told, new memories made, and commitments given to meet again at the next reunion. Hopefully, circumstances will allow for more pastmen of the Class of 2000 to join us.

Barry McCann.



Dermot Nolan, Sean McGrath, Barry McCann.



Niall Grogan, Gavin Duffy, David Bardon, Conal Sherry.



Noel Maloney, David O'Keeffe, Gerard Corcoran.



John O'Brien & David Hughes.



Redmond Barry & David Downey.



Cian Begley & Shane O'Loughlin.



Paul Carroll & Austin O'Meara.



The new Gym in CCR.

What did you do during the pandemic, Daddy?

The younger generation might ask us this in years to come.



**Dr. Colman Ryan
(CCR 1956-'61),**
Borris, Co. Carlow
native and star
medic at the Seton
Medical Center in
San Francisco, as
well as writing for
a Bay Area Irish
magazine, advanced
to writing poetry.
One can imagine him

confined, as many of us were to the back garden
where all kinds of creatures have their home,
oblivious to the issue that was convulsing a
large portion of humankind.

My Covid Creatures

Sequestered in my place and reading in my yard

*My creatures come to comfort me,
my threats they disregard*

*They peck at breadcrumbs at my feet
I wonder for them at their stealth
And fear I may contaminate
And rob them of their health
I contemplate as joyously,
their feet around me bound.*

*Do birds and animals have souls like ours
as well as pleasant sounds?*

*My Rabbits cute and full of glee
until my grass turns yellow
From their abundant pee.*

*My finches bounce around the place with
never ending grace*

*Pecking at my brown bread crumbs,
with elegance and grace
The blue jays are so bold;
they take the bread in pouches*

*As much as they can hold
The hummingbirds are wonderful and whirr
their wings with grace
And hover over nectar abounding in my place*

*The furtive little monsters, the lizards in the yard
But gone so fast at movements, even shadows make them scared*

*The little mouse appears so brief and darts back in the bush
While circling hawks are wondering where is their future lunch?*

*The spiders spread their endless webs the little flies to catch
And stupidly, their little wings on silken threads they latch
The flies, themselves, are numerous, and far too hard to catch
They're gone in seconds from my hands,
to join their other hatch.*

*The crickets make a huge noise, and keep us all awake
Each night they rub their legs together, making quite a crake*

*Mosquitos are a nuisance; their gattle buzz is clear
They're very hard to capture, before they're in my beer*

*The butterflies – they hover ever graceful in the sky
And, sadly, they are short-lived and in several days they die*

*The bees they are aplenty, and usually benign
Unless you tempt them with your hand,
and then they are not fine*

*And lastly we have vermin, ants and aphids too;
They eat our plants, infect the rest
They are our COVID2*

But all of this distraction is God's way to renew

*My refuge from the COVID that lives in my domain
For I am over seventy, and easy to obtain*

*But I feel safe with all the creatures in my yard
And blessed by God to have it - with all its just reward.*



Conor Kenny (CCR 1973-'75)

Another pastman who admits to having no sense of connection to the school he attended for nine or more years but who went to CCR after his Inter Cert and loved it, published his most recent book in September 2020. As the founder and principal of the highly successful professional development and training company, Conor Kenny and Associates it's hardly surprising that the book is about communication. Its title is "What Are You Saying" and it is dedicated specifically to Norman Davey who taught in CCR between 1974 and 2005 and to the other teachers and the wider monastic community.

Another pastman who lives abroad read a lot during the first lockdown, including all back issues of the Roscrea Review available on the Union website and then wrote a lengthy email to the Editor telling how it brought back memories of his own days in CCR.

He was the youngest of several brothers who were good students and outstanding athletes, but didn't measure up to expectations on any front and had an unfortunate experience near the end of his time in CCR. An injury incurred on the Athletics field was not diagnosed properly (he was given aspirins when he should have been taken straight to hospital) and this led to several years of hell. Much later, he realised that he suffered from ADHD and dyslexia, conditions not even talked about in the Ireland of the mid 20th century. Happily he eventually had a successful career abroad, but the contrast between the Cistercian College described by the three House Captains in the Summer 2020 Review and his own experience was enormous. He also quoted Dr Martin Daly (CCR 1975-'80) guest speaker at the Dublin Branch Dinner 2008 who as well as dealing with the issue of bullying in school and the work place suggested that we reach out to all pastmen:

I have been very fortunate in my life so far, but I also want to remember the past students who have not been so lucky - some who have not survived, some who have illness, and some who, like the Irish immigrants, don't have the confidence to come to reunions because they feel that they are not successful enough. They are the ones the Past Pupil organisations of every school should reach out to, because their stories are integral to any reflection on the success of a school in educating young people.

Editor's note: having been involved in organising and reporting on several reunions, one can certainly empathise with those remarks and encourage those planning reunions and other events to cast the net widely and reach out to as many as possible. Many guys for whom their time in CCR wasn't happy for whatever reason have been known to turn up thirty, forty, fifty years later – going forward let's all do our best to make sure no one takes so long.



THE OTHER JIM KEATING

Many of us know Jim (Jas.) Keating (CCR 1963-'68), Union President 2012-'13, who along with Gerry O'Meara did huge work digitising College photographs from the earliest days of CCR right up to recent times. Well, there was another Jim Keating in CCR, part of the Class of 1963 – this one is now living in Canada where he is President and CEO of Speakers Forum. Jim has just published a book entitled "OutSpoken: 15 MasterClass Business Essays For Our Time", bringing together great past keynote speakers. The Speakers Forum based in Toronto boasts an extraordinary selection of past guest speakers, including four US Presidents, Prime Ministers from the UK, Canada and Pakistan and a leader of a team that climbed Mount Everest.

See <https://speakersforum.com/> and for more details about the book see an article in <https://celticcanada.com/outspoken/>

It's a long way from Tipperary!

OTHER PASTMEN WHO DIED IN 2020 & 2021

Noel Cheevers (CCR 1955-'60)

died on 31st May 2021. He was a native of Moylough, Co. Galway, and was a very good friend of the late Seán Murphy with whom he featured on the Athletics team which won the College of Science Cup in 1960.

An excellent footballer and hurler in his youth, he was part of the Galway team which won the All-Ireland Minor Football Championship in 1960. Noel starred in the Connacht championship and in the semi-final against Offaly but did not get to play in the final in September as by then he had joined the Oblates with whom he stayed a few years. (Many years later the Galway County Board presented him with a well deserved Winner's medal). He moved to London in the mid 1960s and worked with IBM, and later returned to Ireland where he worked with the firm in both Dublin and Galway. His brother Des is also a CCR pastman (1957-'62).

In later life, Noel was a very keen golfer, playing in Oughterard G.C.

George Coyle (CCR 1966-'71)

Members of the class of **1966-71** were greatly saddened to hear of the sudden passing of classmate **George Coyle**. A native of Athleague, Co Roscommon, he had strong CCR connections in that area, being related to Naughtons, Cunninghams, Duignans and Canavans, who all passed through the college. George trained as an accountant achieving first place in Ireland in the final professional entry examination. He was the founder (in 1985) of Coyle & Company Chartered Accountants in Ballinasloe travelling there from his home in Dysart and was in the process of retiring and handing

the business on to his son James when he was suddenly taken. He was clearly highly regarded in both communities, judging by the very large number of people who attended his funeral and posted online condolences. Friends and fellow pastmen who met him at the recent 50th anniversary in the school remarked how fresh and youthful he appeared. One of life's true gentlemen, his brothers John (1969-'74), Eugene (1971-'76) and Gerard (1973-'78) also attended CCR.

May he rest in peace.

Declan Martin.

Rory Culliton (CCR 1964 -'68)

It was with great sadness that we received the news of Rory's death on December 23rd, after a short illness bravely fought. Rory was the eldest in his family of four: his two brothers, Paul who died in 1998 and David were also in CCR. He did a degree in Microbiology in TCD, and farmed in Rearymore, Rosenallis, Co Laois for a number of years before applying himself to management consultancy and latterly in the veterinary pharmaceutical industry.

Rory was very involved in the community of Portlaoise, a member of the Parish Church Choir, former Captain and President of the Heath Golf Club and a volunteer in the Failte Isteach group which gives English language lessons to newcomers to Ireland. He had the distinction of winning the Abbot's Cup on the day of the 40 year reunion of the Class of '68.

Those who knew him, will always remember Rory for his warm smiling welcome and ever positive optimistic outlook on life, always willing to assist

and giving freely of his time. He is survived by his wife Mary, sons Ross and Stephen and daughter Jill, his siblings David and Ann and the wider Culliton family, to whom we offer our sincere condolences.

Tom Devine (CCR 1992-'97),

formerly of Clontarf in Dublin died suddenly on 20th December 2020. He worked in the Central Bank of Ireland. His brothers Paul & Ian are also CCR pastmen.

We recently learned that Tom's wife Sharon who also worked in the Central Bank, died unexpectedly in September 2021. To their children Alison, Daniel, Catherine and Róisín we extend our deepest sympathy on behalf of the whole CCR community on their double loss.

Professor Jim Fehily (CCR 1943-'48)

formerly of UCD died on 13th March 2020 at the Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar. He was the architect who designed the College's swimming pool in the early 1970s. Jim's grandson Christian is also a CCR pastman.

Liam Hanley (CCR 1967-'70).

Having attended the 25 and 40 year reunions of his class, he had hoped to attend the 50 year reunion originally scheduled for September 2020 but died suddenly at home on 18th September of that year.

After leaving CCR he completed an Engineering degree in University College, Cork and returned to Limerick where he ran a successful Engineering firm. Liam always credited Fr Bonaventure for giving him personal

grinds in Latin enabling him to have a language in his Leaving Cert, necessary for University admission purposes. He is survived by his wife Trish, daughter Michelle and brothers Kyran (CCR 1968-'73) and Patsy.

Mark Kavanagh

(CCR 1994-'97),

formerly of Seapoint House, Westport died on 30th June 2020. He was Director of the Kavanagh Retailing Group which runs the Supervalu store in Westport.

Mark had already been widowed when his wife Claire had lost her battle with cancer in 2013.

Vincent Lyne

(CCR 1954-'59)

a native of Lauragh, Co. Kerry died on 28th April 2020 in Gorey in his adopted county of Wexford, where he worked as a primary teacher. He was a fine athlete, excelling in the Long Jump but not surprisingly being from Kerry his abiding passions were Gaelic Football and the Irish language.

A father of five, he was predeceased by his younger brother Gerard, whose obituary appeared in the Autumn 2019 Review.

Brian McGinnitty

(CCR 2010-'16)

died in a traffic accident shortly before Christmas 2021. He was third generation CCR, a son of Eoin (CCR 1987-'92) and grandson of Eugene (CCR 1961-'66). A native of Longford, he won an Entrance Scholarship to UCD in 2016 based on his Leaving Cert results and graduated in 2019 with a B.Comm before doing an M.Sc in Aviation Finance and Aviation Leasing at the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School. He worked as an Associate Fund Accountant with

HedgeServ from March 2021 until his death. A keen aviator, on his 17th birthday he sat the test to become the youngest person ever to obtain a professional pilot's licence in Ireland.

James (Jimmy) Meehan

(CCR 1957-'62)

who died on 29th March 2020 was a brother of Fr. Billy, St Mary's, Clonmel (CCR 1956-'61), and the father of James (CCR 1994-'99). All were good hurlers, and Jimmy was on a fine 1961'62 Senior Team, captained by Gabriel Murphy brother of the late Seán. Jimmy kept up the hurling for a number of years, and later became a very keen & competitive golfer.

After CCR, he trained in the meat industry, starting work in Clonmel Foods, then moving to a German company, Irish Casings Limited, Tullamore, where he was Managing Director for some 15 years. He subsequently worked with Kepak, before moving to a senior management position, about 1990, at the A.I.B.P. facility, at Bandon.

Since retiring, about 2010, he had been living at Kilsheelan, near Clonmel.

Brian O'Boyle

(CCR 1947-'55)

died in November 2020 at the tender age of 86. Though born in Monaghan, his family moved to Strokestown Co. Roscommon when he was young. He lived in England since the 1950s where he worked as a psychiatric nurse. He lived in Billericay in Essex where he was very involved in local charities and in his parish community. He is survived by his sons Gerald, Anthony and Mark. He was predeceased by his wife Linda and his daughter Annette. Brian attended the London Branch Dinner in February 2020, just before the pandemic struck.

Jim O'Brien

(CCR 1970-'75)

died unexpectedly on 21 February 2021. A native of Nenagh, he travelled widely through the USA before finally settling in Sitka, Alaska, where he built his dream cabin on Kasiana Island for himself and his wife Tina to call home. Though he treasured life in Alaska, he never lost his love for Ireland and loved bringing Tina and their children to Nenagh to share the places and memories of his childhood with them.

Jim's brother Des (CCR 1972-'77), has long been a lynchpin of the North American Branch of the Union.

Barry O'Hara

(CCR 1948-'53)

formerly of San Francisco, California, died on 5th December 2020. Like his older brother Dermot, (Fr Stephen oco) he joined the Monastery on leaving school but left after a few years.

He emigrated to Canada moving later to San Francisco (1963). He and his wife Lorraine later moved to Coral Gables, Florida. Later still they moved to New York, before finally retiring back to San Francisco.

Barry's brother Conor is a great supporter of the Union and chaired the CCR Board of Governors for a number of years, either side of the College's centenary in 2005.

Brendan O'Loughlin

(CCR 1964-'68)

late of Foxrock, Dublin died on 30th January 2020 after a lengthy battle with various illnesses. His classmates remember him as a perfect gentleman, always immaculately dressed, with no airs and graces.

CCR Business Lunch

2021

The Dublin Business Lunch has been one of the most compelling events on the CCR alumni calendar in recent years - an influential business speaker (usually a fellow pastman) and an opportunity to network in an informal but business-like manner. Little wonder then that more than 80 attendees showed up at Fitzwilliam Tennis Club on 15th October for the eagerly awaited post-lockdown event.

Dublin Branch Chairman Sean O'Sullivan welcomed new Union President John Yurky for his first major address. John outlined his vision for the Union, noting the importance of the new constitution, adequate funding and the importance of the Review.

Ray Hernan (CCR 1977 –'82) was the guest speaker. A native of Ballygar, Co. Galway, and one of four brothers who attended the College, Ray is currently CEO of Aer Rianta International, following a successful business career across many sectors. This included stints at KPMG (where he qualified as a chartered accountant in 1989), IAWS Group and then a decade at the newly emerging Ryanair. He then joined the Brown Thomas Group, where he worked at BT and Selfridges, before becoming CEO of Arnotts. He moved on to Bus Éireann and rescued it from a potential financial crash, before taking up his current role at ARI. Memorable moments, he added, included the brinkmanship with the transport unions at Bus Éireann and working with Michael O'Leary at Ryanair – whom he described as the most astute business person with whom he has ever worked.

Another excellent event. Roll on 2022!

Declan Martin (CCR 1966-'71)



James Corcoran, Caoimhín Bradshaw and Liam Crowley.



Bill Harrington, Daragh Loughnane, Billy Foley and Ben Whelehan.



Dermot Moloney, Declan Martin and Pat Kelly.



Paddy O'Byrne, Fergal Cox, Barry McCormack and Ronan Egan.



A few words from Union President John Yurky.



Jack Kennedy, Brendan Phelan and Guest Speaker Ray Hernan.



Guest Speaker Ray Hernan addresses the gathering.



Dublin Branch Chairman Seán O'Sullivan introduces the Guest Speaker.



Pat Keane and Liam Nicholl in happy mood.



Brothers Ray and David Hernan.

CCR Business Lunch

2021



Sean Byrne, Eoghan Comerford, Tony Cahalan, David Lucey and Justin Owens.



Joe Cronin and Martin Fallon.



Martin Kelly and Brendan Phelan.



Eoin Deegan, James Dillon and Michael Gibbons.



Declan McNulty, David Hernan and James Phelan.



Jim O'Connor and Sean Byrne.

Look What They've Done to Our Tree!



Zimbabwe native Para Havatitye is married to a lady from Birr and like many of his countrymen and women is skilled in working with wood. From the carcass of the tree he sculpted an eagle with her young which now proudly stands in the quadrangle – a new symbol for Cistercian College going forward.

So the tree at the top pitch lives on. What memories pastmen surely have of epic Hurling matches, of stellar achievements on the Athletics field, or simply of quiet reflections during a retreat, or even (whisper it) of a clandestine smoke when one hopes nobody is looking!

Most CCR pastmen will have memories of the huge oak tree close to the halfway line of the top pitch. Well that tree was blown down during one of the recent storms whose more frequent occurrence has been ascribed to global warming. But that wasn't the end of the tree!



The picture above shows Para with the almost finished but unvarnished Eagle in the workshop.

COMPUFAST SOFTWARE LTD
Workforce Management Solutions

www.perfast.com

Time & Attendance
Biometrics / Access Control
NCHD Timesheet Management

Human Resources Software
Payroll

Powered by
PERFAST
Advanced Human Resource Solutions

nicholl@perfast.com

Next CCR Union President

The Union President 2022-2023 will be David Hernan

(CCR 1983-'89), the youngest of the four Hernan brothers from Ballygar, Co. Galway who all attended CCR in the 1980s. He is currently the National Account Manager, Beer and Cider Division at C&C Group.

An excellent sportsman during and after his time in CCR, he was capped by Ireland at school level and won seven caps playing against each of England, Scotland and Wales twice and against a touring Zimbabwe side.

He served several years on the Dublin Branch Committee, including two years as Chairman, 2008 and 2009.

He is married to Susan (née Kelly) and they have two sons Jesse (7) and Sam (5) and live in Kildare.



ROSCREA HURLING CLUB RECALLS ITS GOLDEN AGE.

Roscrea Hurling Club won the Tipperary Senior Championship five times in six years between 1968 and 1973. They went on to win the very first All-Ireland Senior Club Championship in 1971. At a recent event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that victory, commemorative plaques were presented to members of the playing squad, which included the three Spooner brothers, Aidan (CCR 1959-'64), Liam (CCR 1962-'68) and Jody (CCR 1965-'70).



Picture shows (L to R) Jody, Liam and Aidan Spooner with their plaques.

Remember this? Could we ever forget?



Hard to believe but it's almost seven years since that day in March 2015 when grown men cried tears of joy. Some of that team were fifth years in a group that saw CCR contest three Senior Finals and lose to the eventual Cup Winners on four occasions. Now, every student who was in CCR when we won the Cup is a CCR pastman and there is a danger of the achievements of the golden generation becoming a distant memory.

SO THAT THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN, YOU ARE INVITED TO SUPPORT THE 2022 RUGBY SUPPORT GROUP DRAW

- SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS.



There are several more excellent prizes not listed on the ticket shown – see <https://ccr.ie/rsg/> for details. This year, tickets can be bought online at the address above. As ever tickets can be bought from Pat Hanratty as dozens of pastmen have done over the years – Pat has sold a few winning tickets to pastmen, indeed his own name came out of the drum first in 2017 and he won a trip for two to the Wales v Ireland match, though the result that night wasn't so good. Email pathanratty@gmail.com. With the possibility of travel restrictions still being in place, none of this year's prizes involve travel outside Ireland.

Remember: the draw takes place on 25th January, so get your tickets in time!

Mamma Mia in CCR!



The decision to stage the Musical *Mamma Mia* in CCR last November came as a surprise to some, but by all accounts it was an inspired choice. According to College Principal Gerry Grealish it was great to have live music performed to a hugely appreciative audience after the restrictions placed on all schools during last year.

He wrote in *"The Eagle"* the online ezine for parents: "A number of new stars were born this year. It is so encouraging to see new talent develop each year and these younger stars will take over the mantle from the more experienced performers who gave them such good example".



Young Pastmen's Committee

The recently formed Young Pastmens' Committee of the Union has been busy revamping the union website in recent months. A notable addition is that of the union database in which it is possible to search for other union members and their details. We encourage members to reach out to one another to promote guidance and networking should they seek it. The committee is also planning its first social event of the year for young pastmen. We look forward to hosting this once current covid restrictions are lifted.

Simon Meagher (CCR 2010-'16) Chairman YPC

Sport in CCR

- a brief update by Director of Sport,
Brendan McKeogh

*Some of the sports department projects
that may be of interest are outlined below.*



FACILITIES

The College are delighted with the revamped look of the sports area. The lock down period was put to good use and we can now boast facilities that will keep the boys entertained morning and evening, Included in the facilities now are:

1. Two 3G Multi Use sport areas.
2. Indoor Golf Suite with Trackman.
3. Refurbished Basketball Hall
4. Outdoor 3G Hurling alleys and 3G courtyard
5. New Games Room
6. Refurbished Junior Gym
7. Junior Hurling Field

SEÁN O'BRIEN JOINS COACHING

STAFF

We are delighted to welcome Seán O'Brien to the College Rugby Coaching Staff. Seán will oversee the development of the rugby programme for the next 3 Months. Seán brings a wealth of experience gained from his days playing for the College to winning a Pro 14 title with Connacht in 2016.

ANNIE M^cCARRA: ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The College is very fortunate to have Annie filling this new role of Athletic Development Manager. Annie has worked in schools in South Africa as well as lecturing in Setanta College. Annie is also S&C Coach with the Tipperary ladies footballers and U-20 footballers. Annie will look after the Athletic Development of all year groups as part of her role.

BOBBY KING GOLF PROGRAMME

Bobby King is leading an exciting new Golf programme aimed at making CCR the leading golf school in the country. Bobby is a PGA professional coach with many years' experience. Bobby runs both participation (beginner) and Elite programmes. The programme has been a huge success to date with over 30 aspiring golfers in the programme. The golf suite is also open to the public so feel free to contact Bobby if you want to get down for a look.

COMPETITIONS

We look forward to seeing pastmen and families at the various upcoming fixtures.

RUGBY

SCT Cup v Wesley and JCT Cup v Newbridge: These were originally scheduled for February 3rd and 7th @ 3pm in Donnybrook but have been put back for two weeks for Covid related reasons. See <https://www.leinsterrugby.ie/domestic-rugby/domestic-schools/school-news/> for updates.

JCT League Semi Final: TBC

HURLING

South Leinster Senior Final v Carnew: Tuesday 18th January iin TBC

North Leinster Junior Semi-Final v Boyne: TBC

BASKETBALL

U16 National Cup Final v Bettystown: Tuesday Jan 18th in National Basketball Arena @ 4pm

U19 All-Ireland Last 16 v Gael Coláiste Ceatharlach: Sunday 16th in GCC at 12.00.

RONNIE CULLITON STEPS AWAY FROM THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT.



While a great many people contributed to the saving of CCR when threatened with closure in 2017, none was more influential than Ronnie

Culliton. At the time, his two sons, Lucas and Cuan were in the College. He attended that fateful meeting in Birr and drove the discussions with Dom Richard that led to the reversal of the decision to close the College. He took on the role of Chairman of the Board of Management and committed all his body and soul into implementing on the one hand the changes necessary and on the other the fund raising drive necessary to revitalise the College. Dedication is too small a word to encapsulate all the hours that Ronnie has given to the College over the past 4 ½ years. Without Ronnie, we would not be where we are today.

It therefore came as a surprise to hear that Ronnie had stepped away from the Board, to be replaced by Kevin Keegan (CCR 1983-'88). Ronnie's contribution to CCR during the years from 2017 to 2021 has been enormous and we all owe him a huge debt of gratitude. If his father, Gerry, was a sporting legend in earlier times, future generations in CCR will acknowledge Ronnie as having played a supreme role not only in the saving of the College but in its growth and development into a 21st century centre of excellence.

In November 2021 Ronnie wrote a letter to pastmen which Katherine Donovan circulated by email which we reproduce here in full.

Dear Pastmen of CCR,

Some of you will be aware that I stepped away from my position as Chairman of the Board of Management back some weeks ago. With the passage of time, I felt it might be good to reflect on that past 4½ years and to sign off with my plea for your continued and persistent support to the College that shaped us all in our most impressionable years.

It is now over 4½ years since the threat of closure hung over the College and a huge amount has been achieved over that time to secure the future of a wonderful place to grow. It is very different from my time there in the 1980s when "we were sent, and we made the best of it". Cistercian College is a very student centred place now, with so much more than pure academics at play, and as a parent I can attest to the great enjoyment that my boys have had during their time in residence.

I had the great pleasure over that time to work with some fantastic people who felt as I did, that the loss of Cistercian College would be a tragedy. Although I received disproportionate credit for the great progress made, I will look back on this period with great pride for what we all, as a collective, achieved. I was probably the face of this great work but so many contributed and in far greater ways than I did.

It would be unfair for me to try to name those people with whom I've developed a very deep friendship for fear of inadvertently excluding someone, but I will always cherish that engagement with them all, in a project that has produced a very positive outcome so far.

I do want to pay particular tribute to the many great people at Cistercian College – who go above and beyond

the call of duty. Their response to the volunteer effort was most gratifying and their great commitment to the College is without question. What we learned above all, in the last 4½ years, is that everything they do, is entirely for the benefit of the boys, with all other agendas being secondary to that. Maybe that's the great advantage of being such a small and intimate school BUT I believe it is more likely to be in the very fibre of all of the staff in CCR, that makes this place such a caring and safe place for the boys to live.

I'm delighted that Kevin Keegan (Class of '88) has committed to take my place as Chairman of the Board of Management and this is particularly important given his great contribution, along with the Recruitment Committee, in finding two great people to join the College; Felix Ross to fill those enormous boots of our great friend Gary Halpin as Head of Boarding, and Gavin Clark to take on the role of Head of College. I really hope that Cistercian College will be a great fit for both of them.

There are some critical tasks and objectives yet to be completed to ensure the College's long-term sustainability and independence into the future. I wish all stakeholders involved success in this incredibly important endeavour.

Finally, I would wish to thank my wife, Sharon for her unwavering support and guidance at all times, for her forbearance and patience with all things CCR over the last 4½ years.

Good luck and thanks....onwards and upwards.

Ronnie Culliton

Thank you Ronnie for the part you played in this period of the history of CCR!