



Scoil Náisiúnta Bhaile Aodha

May 21st 2010



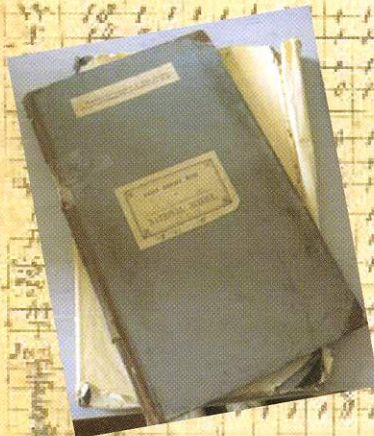
*Official Opening and Blessing of the new school
and*

Launch of the Percent for Art Project

Old School Records

Date of Birth	Age of Child	Parent's Name in Full	Age of Child	Residence	Occupation	Place of Birth	Place of Birth	Place of Birth
18/4/1894	1	John O'Connor	18/4/1894	Thornhill	Farmer	Thornhill	Thornhill	Thornhill
18/4/1894	2	John O'Connor	18/4/1894	Thornhill	Farmer	Thornhill	Thornhill	Thornhill
18/4/1894	3	John O'Connor	18/4/1894	Thornhill	Farmer	Thornhill	Thornhill	Thornhill
18/4/1894	4	John O'Connor	18/4/1894	Thornhill	Farmer	Thornhill	Thornhill	Thornhill
18/4/1894	5	John O'Connor	18/4/1894	Thornhill	Farmer	Thornhill	Thornhill	Thornhill

Insert showing Mamie Scanlan, oldest surviving student from April 1914



Old attendance record of Ballyea National School (1880 - 1923)

Fáilte Romhat

Ar an ócáid stairiúil seo i saol na scoile agus i saol muintir Bhaile Aodha, tá sé mar mór phribhléid agus onóir againn fáiltiú romhaibh uilig um thráthnóna. Mar a fheiceann sibh, tá scoil álainn, nua-aimseartha againn agus tá sár-mholadh agus buíochas ag dul chuig na daoine go léir a d'oibrigh chun an tionscanamh seo a thabhairt chun críche.

To witness a dream becoming reality is a privilege. We are indeed privileged in Ballyea to have such a fine, modern school facility in our midst. Most especially in the current, economic climate, the new Ballyea N.S. stands like a beacon of hope for the future.

Thank you for joining us this evening in our celebration of the official opening of the school and the launch of our Per Cent for Art Project, a beautiful mural, painted by the artist, Michael Dillon. It is a celebration of community and an acknowledgement of the efforts of so many people, past and present, in bringing this development to fruition.

Bricks and mortar, even of the “state of the art” variety, do not necessarily make a good school. It is the spirit and ethos alive within it, that is of real importance. It is our hope that in the years ahead, true educational values will continue to be fostered, nurturing the seeds of potential, of present and future pupils, of Ballyea N.S. We look forward to it being a place of creativity, fairness, respect, opportunity, gratitude, fulfilment, fun and laughter. It is our wish that this beautiful, child-friendly learning environment will enrich minds in the years to come.

We hope that you all thoroughly enjoy the evening, which will be greatly enhanced by the presence of the Ennis Brass Band.

Mary Keane Chairperson Board of Management
Eddie Liddy School Principal



Blessing at the Official Opening

Opening Hymn: Ode to Joy

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

May God, the source of all wisdom, Christ the Lord, his Word incarnate, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, be with you all.

And also with you.

BISHOP:

We gather to pray God's blessing on this new school and on all who are involved in its use. Lord we recognise that you are the source of all knowledge. We ask your blessing on this building, we pray that the hearts and minds of the children who attend this school may be opened to the wonder and beauty of the world and thus may grow in their belief in you as our loving Father. We pray that the teachers may be inspired by that same belief and may in turn inspire their pupils in the Christian way of life. May Christ be their model and inspiration. We pray that all who are involved in the work of this school – pupils, teachers, other staff, member of Board of Management, parents and guardians – may work together in building a truly loving Christian community where every person is valued, respected and enriched by their presence here. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen

SCRIPTURE READING

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

We do share in God's work; you are God's farm, God's building.

By the grace of God which was given to me, I laid the foundations like a trained master-builder, and someone else did the building on them.

Now each one must be careful how he does the building.

For nobody can lay down any other foundation than the one which is there already, namely Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: My Shepherd is the Lord

Blessing of Crosses for each classroom

Blessed are your Lord, God of power and might;
you have called us to worship you in spirit and in truth;
and given us signs of your love in creation
and in the work of your Son, Jesus Christ.



He has called us to pray continually and to call upon you, father, in all our needs.

Send your blessing upon these crosses and upon all who use them devoutly; that looking upon them they may be drawn to the vision of your goodness and conform their lives to the likeness of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever. Amen



Prayers of the Faithful

Reader: Cathal Breen 6th Class

May God bless: the people involved in the building of our new school: those who worked hard in the design, planning and building; the Board of Management, Teachers and Parents who gave so willingly of their time and efforts. We thank the community of Ballyea and our friends everywhere for their endless generosity.
Lord Hear Us.

Reader: Amy Nagle 5th Class

We pray for Pope Benedict, our Bishop Willie Walsh and all our priests. May they continue to guide us on our journey through life.
Lord Hear Us

Reader: Lisa Foley 4th class

We pray for the parents and guardians of the pupils in our school. May God grant you and your families health, happiness and fulfillment.
Lord Hear Us.

Reader: Claire Longe 3rd Class

We pray for children everywhere. We appreciate how lucky we are to have such a lovely school and we remember and pray for the children around the world who are not fortunate enough to have such facilities.
Lord Hear Us.

Reader: Conor McMahon 2nd Class

Let us pray for all our dead relatives and friends. We remember especially former teachers and past pupils who have passed away. May they rest in peace.
Lord Hear Us

Reader: Aaron Lynch 1st Class

We pray for our teachers. May they know how much we appreciate their care and concern for us.
Lord Hear Us

Blessing:

O God,

It is by your gracious favour that today we have come to inaugurate this new school.

We ask your blessing on all who have guided this project in the community here and beyond. Grant that all who will come here may always pursue the truth and learn to know you the source of all truth.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

May the all-knowing God, who is Lord, show us his ways;

may Christ, eternal Wisdom, teach us the words of truth;

may the Holy Spirit, the blessed light, always enlighten our minds,

so that we may learn what is right and good and in our actions carry out what we have learned.

Amen

And may the Blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

come upon you and remain with you for ever.

Amen

Final Hymn: A Hymn For Milestones

Appreciation: Vincent O'Connell (1924- 2002) R.I.P.

This evening, as we gather to celebrate the completion, blessing and official opening of the new Ballyea National School, we remember the late Vincent O'Connell, our generous benefactor.

When Vincie (as he was more affectionately known) decided to donate the lands on which the 1967 school was built, he was continuing a proud and generous family tradition. His ancestors had in the past bequeathed land to the community of Ballyea to facilitate the building of the local church and the old school (1887). As a further mark of his extraordinary generosity, some years before his death, Vincie donated further lands to the people of Ballyea which provided an extension to the graveyard and extra ground for the building of this modern school.

We gratefully acknowledge his kindness and munificence and thank God for all that Vincie has made possible in our community. We also salute and thank his extended family. To honour his contribution to the school and the wider community, his grand niece, Emma, who is a pupil in 6th class here, will plant a tree in his memory. Ar dheis Dé go raibh sé.



Na Glúinte ag Oiliúint

Just a short time before Babe Ruth made his debut with the Red Sox, and still some months before the world became embroiled in one of the bloodiest wars in history, Thomas O'Mahony of Castlegregory, Co. Kerry, arrived in Ballyea. Having heard about a vacancy in Ballyea National School from his old friend Tom Hanley, who was teaching in Clarecastle, he applied for the position of Assistant Teacher and was appointed on March 6th 1914. Thus began a long link with Ballyea N.S. and the neighbouring community which continues right up to the present day.

Michael and Gretta Hehir



Before long, a pretty local girl, would catch Tom's eye and romance and love would blossom in the leafy environs of Cragbrien. Mary Hehir, who had trained as a Primary teacher in England, and whose parents, Michael and Gretta, taught in Killerk National School, married Thomas O'Mahony in 1920 and they set up home in Cragbrien where they reared seven children, five of whom followed their parents' career paths and qualified as either Primary or Secondary teachers. Mary and Thomas worked side by side in Ballyea N.S. right up to the time of Tom's untimely death in June 1955. The reins of Principalship then passed to Michael (Haulie) O'Mahony, their only son, and mother and son laboured together at the chalkface until Mary retired in 1960.

Tom and Mary O'Mahony



In 1964 Haulie married Mary Meaney, a Primary teacher from Lavalla, Ballynacally, and she joined the teaching staff of the school in 1970. Three sons, Tomás, Micheál and Colm, were born to Mary and Haulie and the family continued to reside at Cragbrien. Their service to the school and community of Ballyea continued up to 1987 when both Haulie and Mary retired from teaching. Regrettably, Haulie did not survive long to enjoy his retirement, dying suddenly in 1989. In later years, Mary, Tomás and Micheál



Haulie and Mary O'Mahony



Tomás, Micheál and Colm

moved to live in Ennis and Colm with his wife, Ethel, took over the family home where they live with their three children, Ava, Cormac and Zara. Ava and Cormac are presently enrolled in the school and Zara is scheduled to begin her Primary education next September.



Ava and Cormac

Thus, while the teaching link with the school has been broken, the link with the O'Mahony family continues.

Gabhaimís buíochas dóibh as an seirbhís fada, dúrachtach a thug siad ag obair in oiliúint na glúinte i mBaile Aodha.

Bóithrín na Smaointe



Mamie Murphy nee Scanlon, Tiermaclane, Ennis. Ballyea N.S. 1914- (As told to her daughter, Peggy)

In this piece, Mamie Murphy, who is the oldest surviving past- pupil of the school reminisces about the “old days”. Mamie Murphy nee Scanlon was born on April 9th 1910 at Tiermaclane. She recently celebrated her 100th birthday. She has some great memories of her time in Ballyea N.S. and also of life growing up.

She started school at the age of four. Her teachers were Miss Moran who later became Mrs. McDonnell, Mr. & Mrs McMahon and Mr. Tom O'Mahony. In school the boys and girls were in separate sections. The children had the usual subjects but also studied Domestic Science. She remembers her sister, Baby, learning how to truss a chicken. Pupils had to bring a sod of turf to school and at lunch-time were obliged to go down by the



river to collect sticks – some were used for discipline and the remainder for the fire. A few of the girls in her class she remembers are Mary Cahill, Aggie Brennan, Delia McGuane and Corrie McInerney. She speaks of the company of the Carriggs and Hehirs walking home from school each evening – and with-

out shoes in summertime.

The school inspector, Mr. Tynan, visited two to three times a year. It was a very exciting time. Fr. McGrath was the priest at that time. The children were allowed to church to see most weddings and again to the mass for funerals.

Mamie has vague memories of the Black & Tans and remembers that their house was raided at one time. During the Civil War, the soldiers drove up past their house and they would also be gathered at Keatings' cross when they were going to mass. She can recall the family having the ration books which had to be left in one shop – they dealt with McPharlands in Parnell St., Ennis. She says they were never short, having their own milk and butter.

She speaks about the time when the severe frost came and they were able to skate and play on Griffey's pond. They were great times.

Her life changed when she was ten. She and her father, John, got pneumonia. John died aged 50 and a couple of years later, her sister, Kitty, died at the age of 12. From then onwards, the children were required to work on the farm. Mamie, her brother, Tom, and sisters, Baby and Sue had to help out when ever possible. While Baby spent a lot of time at McDonnells, it was mainly Tom and herself who worked the farm. They were a very close family and she laughs when she speaks of Tom. When she would be upset, he would pat her on the arm and say, "steady girl, steady pet". Her mother's favourite address was "a stór". She has wonderful love for her uncle, Morgan McInerney, who guided them and physically helped on the farm.



Mamie left school at 15 and stayed home. It was just too expensive to go to Secondary School. Fortunately, her younger sister, Sue, was educated in the Convent in Ennis after National School. Her mother, Mary Scanlon nee McInerney was a very gentle lady.

When Mamie left school, her mother and she would cycle to the library in Ennis twice a week for books. They loved reading and if the books were finished, they would do so more frequently. Her evenings were spent knitting, embroidering and crocheting and they had the dancing at Markams'. She tells this story that she wore a black dress at one of the dances and did not receive any dances. She has never worn black to this day. The music played at the house dances was provided by local musicians, Paddy Fenton and Vince Lillis.



She met her late husband, Michael (Mick) Murphy, from Ballynacally at McTigues in Tiermaclane and they were married in 1947. On her wedding morning, the taxi did not arrive to take her to the church and she decided to cycle but her family persuaded her to wait and eventually Paddy McTigue, (her brother-in-law) came to the rescue, one hour late. They honeymooned in Dublin. Trams were the main mode of public transport at the time. Mamie returned to Knockboy, Ballynacally, after the wedding and there worked the farm and reared six children. Her father-in-law, Ned Murphy, lived with them until his death in 1960. She comments on his out-going personality and on never having a cross word between them.

She used her sewing and knitting talents to make all the clothes and knit all the sweaters worn by her children. She was very involved in the ICA and the Apostolic Works Society. The roadside garden competition was a big event and preparation went on for weeks. This was an ICA project and the gardens were judged by outsiders and it was always very exciting. Mamie is very spiritual and prayer and mass have been a very important part of her life. She can be seen with the rosary beads in her hand or in her pocket every day.

Gabhaimis buíochas le Dia dá saol fada, sláintiúil (Thank God for her long and healthy life)



**Teresa Collins [Sr. Francis, Poor Clare Sisters Ennis] formerly of Killerk, Darragh.
Ballyea N.S. 1943-1950**

I lived in Killerk with my beloved parents Tom and Mary Collins and my brother John and sister Philomena, about a mile and a half from Ballyea School. But we had our own “bypass” and my brother and sister and our pals used to take a short cut through two fields, so it was indeed ‘to school through the fields’. I do not remember much about my first day at school but I do remember very clearly going into the ‘small room’ as it was called, for infants, first and second classes, and telling my teacher Miss Brody, that I could sing the Mass and proceeded to sing at the top of my voice the Tantum Ergo!

In third class I went into the ‘big room’ next door, for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth classes, and then “the happiest days of my life” as they say, began in earnest! We were the big girls now and to our English, Irish and Sums were added History and Geography. I felt very important with my new atlas not to speak of the excitement when I got my first Bible History and Catechism Notes in preparation for my confirmation, which in those days was always in Clarecastle Church every three years. In sixth class I sat the Primary Certificate examination in Clarecastle [old] School. After lessons or at lunch time a few of us went to gather sticks to keep the open fire burning. This was our heating system and also served to warm our Chef Sauce bottles of milk, tea or cocoa which we took with the lunches our mothers had lovingly put in our school bags, sitting out in the school yard in Summer or in the shed in colder weather.



There were also other sticks in use in the classroom by our teacher to give us a good slapping, to put it mildly, when she felt we needed it. And to be honest the ‘punishment’ very often outweighed the ‘fault’. Looking back I really do believe that we were slapped not for being bold but because we were afraid, fear of not knowing the answer and of the consequences! I well remember I was always slapped for poor spelling though I’m not

continued...



Teaching Staff 2010

Junior Infants	Mary O'Donohue	Third Class	Michelle O'Boyle
Senior Infants	Maria Rynne	Fourth Class	Helen McMahon
First Class	Kathleen Scanlan	Fifth Class	Sinead Cleary
Second Class	Kathleen Scanlan	Sixth Class	David Eyres
Resource	Madeline McNamara, Muireann Mescal		



Ballyea N.S. students April 2010

Principal

Eddie Liddy

Photo: Liam Jones

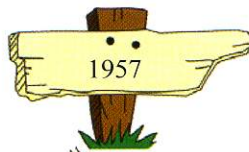
Teresa Collins continued)

so sure it taught me a lesson, even to this day I use my dictionary! But we took our “punishment” in our stride and on our way home a few of us would often sit by Gavins’ well, fill up our lunch bottles and “drown our sorrows” in pure, clear, spring water which would put Ballygowan out of business!

But we did have very happy days and great fun also in the playground playing our games skipping and jumping and running about. We would stay back after school in turns to sweep the classroom floor and tidy up generally. Another thing I enjoyed was opening the top of the high windows. These were operated on a type of small wheel which was a tricky job for two of us who would hop up on the window sill, no bother!

There were separate rooms for boys and girls and even in the playground “a great gulf was fixed” to use a biblical phrase, forbidding anyone crossing from one side to the other! In fact I remember one day when a football was kicked into the girls’ ground and one of the boys came to collect it the matter took a couple of days to investigate and be sorted out. Such were the times, we never even heard of the word “sex education”! Seriously though, we did receive an outstanding basic religious and moral education which even still I can refer to – in other words, the basics never change.

And yes my Ballyea school days were among the happiest days of my life and I can remember all those girls who were my school pals all those years ago. This is really just an outline, I could expand on every paragraph but space does not permit. I am glad that those walls which hold so many memories are still standing in the new Community Centre and I am very grateful to Eddie for inviting me and giving me the privilege of being part of ‘Down Memory Lane’.



Anthony McNerney, Ennis, formerly of Ballyea: Ballyea N.S. 1957 - 1966

On the morning of the first Monday of September 1957 my face was scrubbed, hair combed, my bright new satchel was slung over my shoulder and I was marched to our front gate. After a little wait along came Christina Longe who was in loco parentis of her little troupe of brothers. I was entrusted to her care and we set off on the remaining five or six hundred yards to Ballyea School. On arrival I was placed in the Junior Infants' class of Mrs. O'Mahony and so began my nine years of Bunscoil Education.

Bean Uí Mhathghamhna had the unenviable task of trying to "múin" the basic rudiments of Uimhríocht, Béarla, Gaeilge, and of course Christian Doctrine. It was all very new to us and I recall arriving home from school one day to tell my Dad that Mrs. O'Mahony called a horse a "capall"!

On another occasion during our Sums Tables she said that trí is a ceathair was seacht. We thought that Theresa Cahir was a local woman we had seen at mass and wondered what had shocked her.

The cailíní agus buachaillí shared the same classes but it was a different matter when we broke for 'Sos' or 'Lón'. The girls headed for one 'clós' and the boys to another. As a 'buachaill' you might occasionally have to go to the girls' yard to retrieve a ball and then you would get a glimpse into a whole new world from ours. Skipping and Hide and Seek and other strange games were completely alien to us boys. Eventually the dreaded bell would ring summoning us back to our classrooms and our 'ceachtanna'.

Our lunches consisted of two slices of home-made brown bread thickly buttered and stuck together. With this we brought a bottle of milk or cold tea. During the Winter months we would place the bottles of tea beside the fire for warmth. When we collected them at lunch time, there would be a scum of ashes and turf dust on top of the bottles, not very palatable – but we survived!

Occasionally, Canon Hogan or one of the Curates would call in. Sometimes we would be told to 'lean ar aghaidh le bhur gcuid oibre' while he spoke to the Múinteoir. At other times – to our great fear - he might examine us on our knowledge of Catechism. Great emphasis was placed on Christian Doctrine in those days and in 1960 – within three years of starting school – we were all lined up for First Confession and Holy Commun-

ion. Ours was particularly nostalgic as it was 'Old' Mrs. O'Mahony's last Communion class. Mrs. O'Mahony had taught all the infants in the school down through the years, including many of our parents. She was extremely popular and it was seen as the end of an era when she finally bowed out. She was replaced by Theresa, or Miss Nagle, as we all respectfully called her. She took us through Rang a Dó, Trí agus Ceathair and steered us through Confirmation with Bishop Rodgers. For weeks before 'Confo', the only subject taught the whole day long was Catechism. No wonder we became fine 'Soldiers of Jesus Christ'.



We were now getting bigger and no doubt bolder and though Miss Nagle was well able to handle us, the ultimate threat was to be sent before the 'Máistir' who taught the seniors next door and whom we thought was a great ogre with a vicious 'bata'.

Eventually the day came when we entered his classroom for Rang a Cúig agus a Sé. His task was to prepare us for the Primary Cert – the first state exam we would face. We were now the 'big' boys and girls. Once a week the boys would be taught Algebra by 'An Máistir' while the girls would go next door to one of the female teachers to learn 'fuáil'. The senior boys brought hurleys to school and some fierce tussles took place in Vincey O'Connell's field. In Summer we fished for pinkeens and eels in the local stream – the Amazon of our youth. The two years with Máistir Ó'Mathghamhna passed rapidly and eventually the day came when we got our bikes and cycled into Clarecastle school to do the Primary Cert. What we did not realise at the time was that our childhood years were now behind us. We would scatter to the four winds – some to Secondary schools in Ennis, more to help their families on the home farms and even more to employment in the now emerging Ireland.

But, no doubt, the more the wheel of life spun round, the rosier the memories would be of our youth and innocence in Ballyea N.S.



Senan Hogan, Newhall, Ennis: Ballyea N.S. 1979 - 1987

On my first day at school in 1979 I learned a valuable lesson – don't walk on the Master's Lawn! The carefully-manicured grass was a No Go Area for pupils and a prized possession of the Master who educated generations of families in Ballyea.

He also gave pupils a solid grounding in Gaeilge as good as any modern-day Gaelscoil. He used to call us in from *sos* by ringing a his brass bell up and down the footpath. I remember walking to and from school and on rainy days we wore wellingtons before changing into slippers in our cloakrooms. You were lucky to find a matching pair! Sometimes the river beside the school would flood at the bridge and tractors with transport boxes had to ferry children across.



I remember snow in the cold winter of 1982 and we were all sent home due to frozen heating pipes. We were often encouraged to bring material into school for the “nature table” such as birds’ feathers, frog spawn or hazel catkins in the spring. But nobody could match the exotic set of deer antlers somebody had brought in years before. Friday afternoons were often spent doing “handwork” for the lads and knitting or sewing for the girls. For younger pupils it was storytime with a Ladybird book from Ms. Nagle’s small library.

This was still years before Playstation or Nintendo!

I remember a very holistic education with even singing classes and Mrs O’Mahony doing her best to keep us in tune as she played the organ. Another memory is the joy of winning a box of cherished Faber and Castell coloured pencils for a handwriting competition when I was in second class.

In the early 1980s an energetic young teacher named Mr Liddy began teaching in a classroom in the community centre while also coaching hurling and producing plays. Towards the end of my time in 1987, a new school extension was being built on our playing yard – thus heralding another new era for Ballyea National School.

Claire Brougham, Ballyea N.S. 1987—1992



It was with great excitement in September 1987, I enrolled in Miss McNamara's second class in Ballyea National School. The school had just lost its fourth teacher, Mr. Grace, due to a fall in numbers. There were then eighty pupils and three teachers. I was in the school's biggest class, one of twelve pupils. We had three classrooms and a General Purpose room.

On sunny Friday afternoons the girls would do knitting and embroidery with Miss Nagle, sitting on the tiny seats designed for infants, while the boys went off playing hurling. A few years on, we got a uniform for the first time. No fashion show on the catwalks of Paris ever generated as much excitement! There was a pinafore for the girls and trousers for the boys. From then on, Sunday evenings were marked by Glenroe followed by the ceremonial ironing of the uniform for Monday morning.



Ms Teresa Nagle

We played Red Rover or Tag at lunchtime but the highlight for me was always the Christmas concert and going to the Feile Dramaiochta. We were lucky enough that the teachers were very dedicated and we had lots of after school activities. I especially remember Mr. Liddy's keyboard classes in the evenings.

The church was refurbished in the early 90s and our Confirmation was the first to be held in Ballyea in many years. It was a glorious sunny day. It's funny, when I look back, it seems that every day I spent in Ballyea was filled with sunshine and that's exactly how I will always remember it.



Gary Brennan, Reaghfa, Darragh: Ballyea N.S. 1993 - 2001

“Scoil Náisiúnta Bhaile Aodha...howmayIhelpyou?...OK...I’ll...get...him...now”...

Answering the phone was always one of the more challenging parts of the day. The sprint from classroom to office would render you breathless (as effective a training method as I’ve encountered) and you’d march back to retrieve Mr. Liddy, praying all the while that the person on the other end of the phone line wasn’t ringing to call off an upcoming match.

Such a responsibility, of course, was only afforded to those who had progressed to the top room; a sign of true seniority. The duty of bell-ringer accompanied it – a practice that was closely monitored from the staff table in the GP room. I had once experienced the terror of the seemingly never-ending walk to that very table after picking out Mrs. Scanlon’s classroom window with an inch-perfect pass! Therefore, when increasing numbers dictated the need for the GP room to become our classroom for our final years, I wasn’t overly disappointed! It meant that we were back where we started - at the rear of the school again, but we managed!

Perhaps it is suitable that our journey captured the ‘full circle’, as that was the very nature of our time there. Ballyea NS wasn’t just a building, or even just a school. It was a centre for the education of the whole person. Spreagadh grá don Ghaeilge, academics, choir, Christmas plays, sport, yard duty, debating, arts & crafts, quizzes – the list is endless – they were all part of it. Of course, it was all just a sideshow – it was the game at break-time that really mattered...



Cliona Redington. Temporary School at the GAA pitch. 2008-2009

Moving to the temporary school was a big adventure. It seemed like almost overnight that our old school was gone – demolished behind the giant blue wooden fence. It was like an evacuation. All our pictures were taken down and we helped to put stickers on the cardboard boxes for the move. The rooms seemed very empty when everything was gone. It was hard to believe we would never be in our old school again. Our new classrooms were square grey pre-fabs all joined together with a long thin corridor in the middle. I remember when all of us first sat in Mr. Eyres room together. It was so small that I felt like Alice in Wonderland after she took the Grow-Big potion.



It soon became familiar and a lot of fun. I remember when we were in third class we drew up our class rules. Rules like “we must listen to each other” took on a new meaning when we were sharing such a small space. You could hear lots of things through the walls. In winter, the radiators smelt different than the ones in our old school. Leaving your bag or gear in the corridor was a big sin which meant trouble. The sports days were class. It was always sunny. There was never enough chewing gum for the egg-and-spoon races and it was hard to find a scissors to cut holes for the sack race. Everybody won.

Getting to school was harder. The big girls helped with the smaller ones as the lollipop lady walked us through Ballyea cross and up to the pitch. ‘Temporary’ was for ages



back then, but even though we spent our last few weeks of Primary school in the new school, I have special memories of the huge playground at the GAA pitch and playing tag rugby with the teachers (and winning).

Last days in the old school

Walking into the new school after the Summer holidays, we were amazed at the beautiful mural on the corridor wall. It wasn't just the beautiful mural that amazed us – it was like walking into a whole new world, a world that was ours, and a world we would enter every single day!

We felt happy, amazed, blown away by every aspect of it, but mostly we felt spoilt; and we are, we're spoilt rotten with seven classrooms, an art room, a library, a PE hall, two offices, five computers in each room providing facilities for research. If that wasn't enough, we also have interactive whiteboards in each teaching area. These are like giant computer screens on which we can watch DVDs during break times on rainy days. Our teachers can use them to show us pictures of wild animals, bring up maps to use in Geography and search for pictures of old artefacts to use during History lessons. Recently we were able to follow the activity of the volcano in Iceland on our whiteboard. In one of our classrooms, the whiteboard is linked to a webcam in a nesting box on the school wall and we can look every day to find out if there is any activity in the box. Unfortunately the nest remains unoccupied to date.



We have a large playground on which we can play soccer, basketball, hopscotch, skipping and a game called "What time is it Mr. Wolf"?

During the day the main subjects covered are Irish, English, and Maths, as well as History, Geography and Science. Art, PE and Drama are done at least once a week and other activities during/after school include the School Band, Homework Club, Hurling, Football and Camogie. Each Christmas we rehearse and prepare over many weeks for our Christmas concert, to which all families and people from the community are invited.

Ballyea school is a place of hard work which gets rewarded in so many different ways, but school is also a place of friendship and fun and there are plenty more fun-times to come!



Ballyea National Schools

1880 - 1964



1964 - 2009



2009.....



Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers
Tagann eolas
ach fanann
eagnaíocht
Tennyson



Detail from Ballyea N.S. mural
Artist Michael Dillon
PerCent for Art Scheme