



*That was a grey day I said goodbye, old school,
And you wiped the chalk from your hand and wished me joy;
Searching ever the mind moves down the dust of the years,
To see in a lively playground the ghost of a laughing boy.*
Sigerson Clifford

This publication is dedicated to:

- The pupils, parents, board of management and teachers of Clarecastle National School.
- To those ex-pupils who kindly invited us into their homes and who shared the memories of their schooldays in Clarecastle and of village life stretching back over the past eighty years. Since this project was mooted in 2003 some of those wonderful people have died and we hope that their captured thoughts in this publication will be a joy to their families.
- To all ex-pupils of the schools who have passed on, having made their mark on the schools and in the wider world. Their names are recorded in the old roll-books that go back to the 1840s. Perhaps, in time, these records will be computerised and made available to a wider audience.

Typesetting and printing: TM Printing Ltd, Ennis

Editorial committee: Frank Barry, Catherine Green, Seamus Leamy, Mary Lynch, Teresa Nugent, Catherine O'Connor, John Power, Eric Shaw and Mona Stack

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this publication. Much of the material is based on the stories of past pupils and allowance has to be made for the way that the passage of time affects recollection

Memories in Black and White editorial committee



Front row, left to right: Mona Stack, Catherine O'Connor, Catherine Green, Mary Lynch, Teresa Nugent

Back row, left to right: Eric Shaw, Frank Barry, John Power and Seamus Leamy



A message from Fr. Brady

That your joy may be complete — John 15:24

Going to school may be seen as a usual, common, everyday occurrence. For that reason alone, so much of what should be treasured and remembered by all of us is lost. This booklet provides us with an opportunity to reflect on school life from long ago up to present times. It contains personal accounts of bygone days in conjunction with present day happenings. The photographs alone are a wonderful source of history.

Sincere thanks to the dedicated committee that undertook this task. Long hours have been spent on research, interviews and meetings. Having such lovely presentation to mark the opening of our new school is a credit to your endeavours and we express our sincere gratitude.

We hope you, the reader, enjoy these pages.

Aobheann beatha an scoláire a bhíos ag déanamh léinn

Roinnt blianta ó shin tháinig an coiste seo le chéile agus é ar intinn againn leabhar a chur ar fáil bunaithe ar stair Scoil Naisiúnta Droichead an Chláir. Seo é an leabhar – toradh ár saothair. Pribhléid iontach a bhí ann bheith ag caint agus ag éisteacht leis na hiarscoláirí ag dul siar ar bhóithrín na smaointe faoina laethanta scoile. Thug na múinteoirí, idir iar-mhúinteoirí and foireann teagaisc na scoile faoi láthair, tuiscint thar bharr dúinn faoi scéal na scoile sna ‘seanlaethanta’ agus san lá tá inniu ann. Táimid cinnte go mbainfidh gach duine taitneamh agus sult as obair na ndaltai scoile: na scéalta, dánta agus obair ealaíne atá ar fáil sa leabhar. Daoine den chéad scoth iad uile agus táimid fíor-bhuíoch as ucht a gcomhoibriú linn.

Foilseachán an-tabhachtach an leabhar seo, go hairithe do na daoine nua atá ina gconaí i Droichead an Chláir anois.

Tabharfaidh an leabar léirgeas dóibh ar spiorad agus cultúr na háite. Tá sé dhualgas orainn an spiorad sin a chothú agus a spreagadh i measc na ndaoine óga ata faoin ár gcúram. Tá an scoil nua beagnach reidh anois agus guímid rath agus séan ar gach duine a bheidh ag obair agus ag foghlaim ann. Scoil an-speisialta is ea ar scoil a bhfuil clú and cáil uirthí i bhad ó bhaile agus taimid thar a bheith bródúil aisti. Bhaineamar, mar ghrúpa an taitheamh as an obair agus tá súil againn go mbainfidh sibhse, ár léitheoirí an taitneamh chéanna as an leabhar. Faoi mar a dúirt Antoin Ó Dálaigh ar ócáid stairiúil eile, “Cuireann sé an-áthas orainn agus is mór an onóir dúinn”, *Memories in Black and White* a chur os bhúr gcomhair.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine.

An Coiste Foilseacháin

Foreword

The idea of this production started back in 2002 when the construction of a new school for Clarecastle was first mooted. An editorial committee was formed to produce a magazine to mark the occasion. Our brief was to collect memories of former pupils and to involve the present pupils as much as possible through art, poetry and composition. We also sought the involvement of the teachers, parents’ council and the school Board of Management.

We are grateful for all the support we received, especially the former pupils who invited us into their homes and told us stories of their upbringing in Clarecastle and school life in bygone days. We sincerely hope we have reproduced your stories accurately. The magazine would not have been possible without the input of the wonderful boys and girls and teachers of Clarecastle National School who contributed quality art, prose and poetry. We thank everyone who supplied us with photographs which are an invaluable source of the history of the school down through the years.

We hope you, the reader, will enjoy the memories, stories and the many photographs as much as we enjoyed collecting them. Perhaps you might send a copy to any of the family away from home, especially overseas.

Editorial committee



“Clarecastle is not a place but a people”

Message from Mr Seamus Leamy, principal, Clarecastle NS

June 6th 1984 was my first day teaching in Clarecastle National School. It was my first time having boys and girls together, a great change indeed and a most pleasant one. Here, I would now spend some of my happiest years. Coincidentally, it was Mr Hanly's first day as administrative principal. The staff was—and continues to be, thank God—very united and dedicated. The pupils were and, indeed, still are a joy to teach. Mr Hanly was an exceptional principal—a born leader and a pleasure to work with.

In those days, Mr Cummins and I would alternate in the teaching of fifth and sixth. Preparing children for the sacrament of Confirmation and secondary school was a privilege and an honour. Pupil-teacher ratio was never an issue then. I can recall one year having forty-two in sixth class, each teacher having had them in their turn. The numbers of pupils attending the school increased. The school hall had to be used as a classroom. Later on, Mr Hanly acquired three second-hand pre-fabs.

When Mr Hanly announced his retirement great sadness was felt by all. A great friend was leaving. Mrs Brooks took over. The joy and care which she always had for the pupils in her classroom was now transferred to the office. Unity and harmony continued. The present school uniform was introduced. Regrettably Mrs Brooks role as principal was all too brief and retirement beckoned in June 1997. A great teacher with such knowledge and respect of children and families alike was a great loss.

My time as principal

In September 1997, I began my years as principal, a totally different role to that of being a teacher. Both roles are very demanding but in different ways. Quite outside our control, winds of change were beginning to blow and we were going to have to adapt to new situations.

- A new curriculum was to be introduced in all primary schools. This would be a gradual process.
- Parents' councils were being set up in all schools and would play a greater role in education.
- IT and the computer age was upon us. Sadly Clarecastle was to be at a disadvantage; initially, all schools in Ennis benefited greatly from the towns status as the 'Information Age Town'. We received nothing.

Change was embraced and challenges faced. New horizons opened up. Much has happened over the past ten years and the school continues to flourish and grow. Most importantly of all, the school standards have remained consistently high. The dedication and enthusiasm of staff has ensured this. Our ancillary staff, comprising of caretakers, secretary and special needs assistants, also play such an important role in the smooth efficient running of the school. Between teaching and ancillary there is now a staff of twenty-five in the school.

What about the children? Isn't it wonderful to be able to say that all who visit the school, either on official business or otherwise, always remark on how well behaved and kind the children are. We have little or no discipline problems and in secondary school our children can compete with the best, truly a great credit to their parents and homes alike also.

In conjunction with the academics our pupils will have fond memories of:

- Participation and success in various sporting activities such as hurling, camogie, football, soccer, basketball, athletics, swimming, tag-rugby etc.
- Participation and success also in art, music, *Féile na b-Inse*, draughts competitions etc.
- Carol singing in the church and Dunnes at Christmas,
- Concert and hip-hop dancing in the West County where every pupil performed on stage.
- Performing in Glór with the Arizona Choir
- School tours
- Sports days
- Sponsored walks
- Science competitions and so on.

The success of the recent 'thousandaire' speaks volumes of what parents can and will do for the school. The clean-up and painting of the school by dedicated parents one summer was most touching.

A fashion show in the Auburn Lodge was organised as a joint fund-raiser with our good friends in the G.A.A. The school has always enjoyed great community support. What pride we all had, when our school was awarded the Green Flag in recognition of its efforts towards creating a better environment.

Nowadays, it is the Board of Management which has the ultimate responsibility in schools. We have been served extremely well in this area. Fr McNerney and the Board, back in 1997, had much work to undertake for the school. I can clearly remember Fr McNerney, or Fr Mac as he was affectionately known, travelling to Dublin on our behalf; a truly great manager and a most devout man. Next came Fr Brady, what can one say? Suffice to state that when our inspector, Mr Connolly, heard Fr Brady was our new chairperson he remarked, "Well if you have any building or anything at all you want done in the school you have the best possible man in Ireland for the job." He was right. Fr Brady is a man of incredible ability and enthusiasm, a born winner with a 'never-say-die' attitude. The present Board of Management is under the chairmanship of Michael Foley. A finer, more dedicated group would be impossible to find. If our school was a private business or

industry they could not be adequately compensated for time and effort given so freely. I have never observed such a group of people. That this day has finally arrived, I thank God for prayers kindly answered. The new school will be a monument to the time, effort and dedication of so many kind friends.

I wish to thank our politicians who helped to make the new school a reality. It will be a most fitting place for the kindest and most sincere staff, teaching and ancillary, one could find.

Clarecastle was never a place but a people and we know you will be so proud of your new school. All our children, both now and in the future, will be the main beneficiaries and our dearest wish is "that they may have life and live it to the full."

Buíochas mór le Dia
Mr Seamus Leamy

Board of Management



Back row, left to right: Fr Harry Brady, Michael Foley, Seamus Leamy, Christy Leyden and Jim Donnellan
Front row, left to right: Mary Cosgrove, Theresa Nugent and Rose Kelleher

New primary school for Clarecastle

The growth of Clarecastle National School is a reflection of the changing nature of the Clarecastle community. The designation of Clarecastle as a residential development area within a Clare County Council planning context will result in continued growth and development in and around Clarecastle.

With a view to upgrading and modernising the school for our children and providing additional capacity to accommodate future needs, a new architecturally-designed school is being constructed on the existing school site. The existing 1970s school extension has been demolished to make way for the new school which has been designed to maximize natural daylight and keep future capacity in mind. The new school will be a single storey building consisting of sixteen classrooms, a large indoor sports/assembly hall, library and variety of educational resource facilities. Each classroom will have individual boys'/girls' toilets, cloak room, storage and a wet area for arts and crafts.

Of significant importance is the retention by the Board of Management of the old 1935 school. This provides for a twenty classroom facility on site. The school design incorporates a landmark entrance feature which will provide a new focal point resulting in a significant contribution to the physical environment in Clarecastle. The contractors estimate that the new school will be ready for occupation by the end of May 2007.

The vision and early efforts to secure a new school goes back to 1999 when Fr Harry Brady (Parish Priest, Clarecastle) and Seamus Leamy (School Principal), with support from the then Board of Management, worked on a feasibility study as part of the process to justify additional classrooms. A new ten-classroom school was approved in 2001 and this was subsequently extended to twelve rooms.

Despite many meetings and representations there was no movement on a funding allocation for the school. Project architects were appointed and they worked up a number of designs and so on and submitted them to the Department. New school building guidelines were introduced during this time and this had the effect of delaying the project.

Some serious momentum was developed in 2004 when the Board of Management (with continued enthusiasm from Fr Harry and Seamus Leamy) secured support from a variety of sources to get the project moving. The Board took a proactive stance and agreed a project plan and time lines with the design team and the department. Planning and funding were secured in 2005, the old 1935 school was retained — it was an original department and planning condition that it would be demolished — and construction commenced in January 2006. An extra four classrooms were secured later in the year, bringing the total classroom capacity to twenty rooms.

Fr Harry's enthusiasm also extended to financial planning and with the full backing of the parish council monies were set aside for a number of years to cover the €60,000 community contribution required by the Department of Education. The existing school contract was amended to provide for the additional classrooms which resulted in avoiding a €30,000 community contribution being raised. This enabled the Board to initiate some very successful fund-raising initiatives, sponsored walks, tax efficient individual sponsorships and a *Who wants to be a Thousandaire* night. This latter event raised over €44,000. While the new school project will cost in the region of €5 million, the Board has to fund specific elements such as a PC lab, quality landscaping, ICT infrastructure and additional security measures from its own resources.

Much of the progress made in advancing the project can be attributed to support received from the local G.A.A. club which has generously donated a *circa* 1.5 acre site to accommodate the development, in addition to providing a range of support measures to facilitate safe construction site access, services to temporary classrooms and ongoing access to play areas for school children. A key enabler in achieving a twenty classroom facility, with generous tarmac playing areas and landscaped features on site, is the goodwill gesture from the G.A.A. club to provide free access to facilities for school-going children during the school term.

Clare County Council has created a peoples' park — Clarecastle Park — a five-acre landscaped development adjacent to the school site with walkways and a pedestrian link to the new school. The design includes the creation of a new path network throughout the site including linking the school to

local residential areas. An elevated timber decking lends itself to an outdoor classroom/relaxation area. Existing ash trees have been retained and new trees and shrubs planted to create structure and shelter within the park. The retention of existing features, including mature trees, large boulders and dry stone walls, combined with planting of new specimens creates a natural park setting for small animal wildlife. Great credit is due to Clare County Council for providing this facility and maximising its value to the local community and, particularly, the local national school.

The works were carried out by Clare County Council under the urban and village renewal scheme 2000-2006. It was co-funded by the European Union as part of the national development plan.

The school's Board of Management warmly acknowledges the great support received from the people of Clarecastle, the principal, teachers, staff and pupils at the school, the parents' council, the GAA club, our local public representatives, fund-raising teams and sponsors, school neighbours and all who support our school in any way.

The progress and integrated nature of developments in and around the new school is a testament to the generous and dynamic community that is Clarecastle.

Michael Foley
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signing the contract for the new school



Back row, left to right: Fiona Brazil (Leahy Conway Architects), Fr Harry Brady, Seamus Leamy, Christy Leyden and Frank Duignan (Kerlim Construction)

Front row, left to right: Michael Leahy, Michael Foley and Jim Keane (Kerlim Construction)

Clarecastle National School parents' council

As the opening of our new school draws near, we decided to let you know what we're all about and what we do. There are 308 children in Clarecastle school but very few parents/guardians attend our meetings. Perhaps you were interested in attending but didn't know how? Perhaps you thought you knew what we were about. Hopefully this should answer some of your queries.

Who are we?

A group of parents/guardians who meet together on the first Wednesday of every school month in order to share knowledge and ideas.

What are our aims?

Our aims are to improve and enrich the learning experience of all children in Clarecastle school and to encourage all parents/guardians to get involved in their child's learning at home, in the community and at school.

How do I join?

Every parent or guardian who has a child attending the school is automatically a member — so you're already a member.

What does the committee do?

The elected committee helps to run the meetings by chairing the meeting, taking minutes, organising finances and so on. The meeting is run as an open forum for parents/guardians.

Who attends the meetings?

Each meeting is attended by committee members, the school principal and parents/guardians.

What does the parents' council do?

Some of our activities in the past have included:

- providing support and refreshments for the children on sports day;
- organising a second-hand book sale on the last day of the summer term and
- some limited fund-raising for identified school needs.

Our intentions for the future are:

- to start a parent/guardian network

This is intended to provide a social network for parents/guardians who are new to the village or to the school, to get to know other parents/guardians in your child's class or the school generally and to find out about social activities for you and your children.

- to start a bank of knowledge

This is intended to identify the various skills that parents/guardians have that may be of use. There has been a focus lately on the lack of physical education and activity of Irish children. Perhaps you have some sports skill and could teach the basics. Perhaps you have skills in other areas — computers, crafts, gardening — or areas we haven't thought of. If so, we would love to hear from you.

We are not

- primarily focused on fund-raising;
- a lobby group for individual issues but a forum for general needs or
- experts; we're just parents/guardians like you.

We have an informal get-together on the first Wednesday of each school month in the school at 8:30 pm. Call in and help us bounce some ideas around. We would love to see you there.

If you would like to know more but can't make the meetings, please feel free to contact any of us or the school. We would be happy to help.

Mary Cosgrove
Adrienne Magliocco
Liam Daly
Manfried Buczek

web site: www.clarecastlens.com
e-mail: clarecastlens.ias@eircom.net

A brief history of education in Clarecastle before 1935

In the early decades of the nineteenth century there were a variety of schools in operation in the Clarecastle area.¹ These included two hedge schools located at Creggaunahilla and the Pound area of the village, two schools run by local landlords Colonel Burton of Buncraggy House and John McDonnell esq. of New Hall House, schools supported by educational bodies such as the Kildare Place Society, the London Hibernian Society and the Baptist Society and a number of private fee-paying schools. It would appear from this proliferation of establishments that the population of the Clarecastle district was well served educationally and, according to the 1821 census, 542 pupils were enrolled in schools in the district. However, it has been estimated that this figure represented only one half of the school-going population in the area in the mid-1820s.

Education was free in only three of the schools mentioned in the reports of the commissioners of Irish education enquiry, 1825-27 (set up prior to the introduction of the national school system in 1831). These were the schools associated with the Kildare Place and Baptist Societies, the London Hibernian Society and the school run by the established Protestant church which was built at Clare Hill in 1813. These schools were strongly opposed by Catholic church authorities that considered them proselytising agencies (even though the first two had Catholic teachers). This church opposition, together with the fact that the majority of children, who were Catholic, would have had to pay for their education at the rate of three to five shillings per quarter — or three to five pence per week — may have accounted for the lack of educational uptake by many families. Joseph Power points out that this education was not cheap considering that the average wage for an agricultural labourer amounted to six to eight pence per day at this time. It is also interesting that of those lucky enough to attend school, boys far outnumbered girls, revealing a parental emphasis on the education of their sons rather than daughters.

The Stanley education act of 1831 provided for free national education throughout Ireland. The first school in the area to apply for recognition under the new act was that established by John MacDonnell at New Hall in 1830, which was managed in co-operation with the parish priest Reverend P O’Gorman.

From 1838 this school, at Lynch’s Cross, was run by the newly-established Commissioners of National Education. In 1860 the school was transferred to the old chapel building at Ballyea before the building of a new national school beside the new chapel there in 1887. Meanwhile in 1838, Rev O’Gorman, already busy with the building of a new church in Clarecastle, applied to the commissioners for assistance to build a national school in the village on a site donated by Sir Lucius O’Brien. Permission was granted and in 1843 the first Clarecastle National School was opened opposite the new church, at the location of the present Abbey Hall.² The National Educational Commissioners contributed £164 towards the cost of the new building, which was supplemented by £80 raised locally. The first pupils entered the school on 1st February 1843. The building consisted of two storeys with an outside stone staircase. The original building survives to the present day and now houses the local community playschool and a meeting room upstairs. Before 1935 the large room downstairs housed the boys school while girls were taught upstairs. Outside, a six-foot high wall divided the boys’ and girls’ yards, at the end of which were located dry toilets, emptied once a year. Heating was provided by an open fireplace near which the teacher’s desk was conveniently located. Pupils used benches, forms and tables. Attendance at the school varied, with often a large discrepancy between numbers on the roll — on average one hundred pupils — and that of actual attendance. Many residents of the parish have memories of their attendance at this ‘old school’, which remained in use until the building of the present National School in 1937.

Most remember the big rooms, in which all the various classes were taught, as very noisy. Children often walked to school in their bare feet. They were the envy of all if lucky enough to get a ‘seat’ to school in an ass and cart from a kind-hearted neighbour. Mary Moroney and her friends often walked to school through the fields from her home in Claremount, picking flowers for her teacher Miss Liddy, who taught up to and including second class. She recalled that, “she always

¹ For a detailed account of these schools and education in the area in the nineteenth century see Joseph Power, *A History of Clare Castle and its Environs* (Ennis, 2004), pp 271-289.

² Thomas Ryan has dealt extensively with the history of this and the later National School in his unpublished B Ed research thesis ‘Educational Developments in Clarecastle 1840-1980’ (1992). The committee wish to express their gratitude to Thomas for his generosity in allowing the use of this thesis in the compilation of this history.

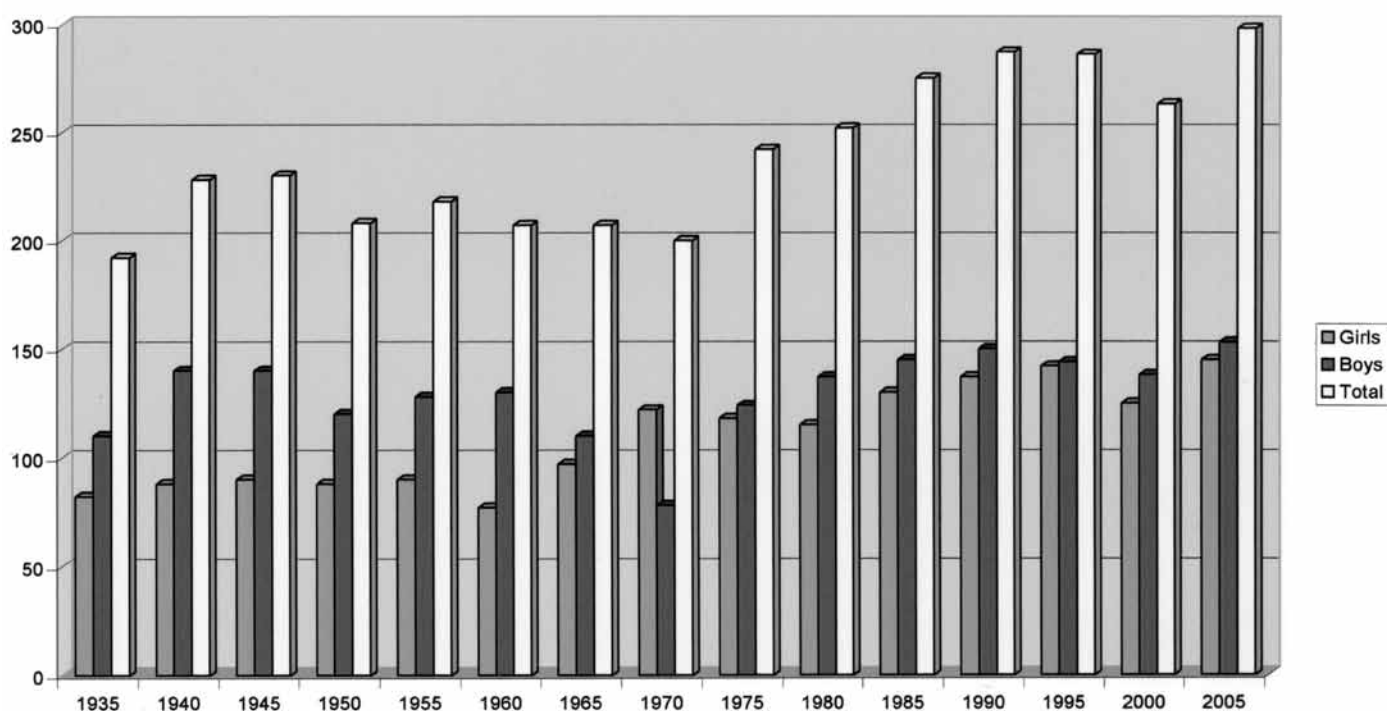
had an altar and a very special one during the month of May.” All remembered the cold in both classrooms in wintertime, when children brought in sods of turf for the fire. In contrast, in summer the classrooms could be hot and stuffy, with the children sometimes being taken out of doors under the trees across the road at the church. Most of the children brought bottles of tea and bread and butter for lunch. The tea was heated by leaving it near the open fire. Una O'Reilly remembered a map of Ireland and a small picture of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes on the wall of the girls' classroom.

An inspector's report of 1933 criticised the 'club' as the old school was known, for overcrowding. In 1935 work began on the building of the existing school. This building was mainly funded by the Department of Education. Again the new school was divided into separate boys' and girls' schools and consisted of a single-storey building of six rooms. The boys' and girls' schools were amalgamated in 1983. In 1972 this original building was extended to cater for the rapidly growing population of the parish. In 1937 the new school, like the old, availed of dry toilets in the school yard, divided boys' and girls' playgrounds by a high wall and had no running water or electricity. At the same time the new school was greatly welcomed in the village and referred to as the 'academy' locally for a number of years. The new school was welcomed too by teachers and students. Mary Moroney described, “then the great day arrived when we

went up the road to a beautiful new school. The year was 1935. We now had three rooms for the boys and three rooms for the girls. It was a new life for both teachers and pupils.” Michael (Milo) Doyle, RIP, also remembered the new school as a 'huge improvement' on the old one, with more space than the old school, where he remembered boys and girls having to stand due to insufficient desk space in the old rooms.

Canon James Monahan, parish priest, was the first manager of the new school, while three teachers Mr Thomas Hanly, Mrs Maura Hanly and Mrs Doyle taught in the boys' school. Mrs O'Dea, Ms Liddy, (replaced on her retirement by Ms Kerin, later Mrs Murphy) and Ms Meehan took charge of the girls. By 1972 the girls' school had four teachers while the boys remained served by three teachers until 1975. During this period numbers attending increased. Most pupils sat for the Primary Certificate examination. The examination consisted of papers in Irish, English, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Nature study. Some of those who achieved success in the Primary Certificate went on to study at second-level. In the economic austerity of the 1930s and 1940s, secondary education (the annual fee at St Flannan's College at this time was around £8 per student) was a privilege few could afford. Indeed, the vast majority of students until the advent of free secondary education in 1966 completed their education at the average age of fourteen in Clarecastle National School.

Graph of School Attendances 1935 - 2005



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Clarecastle National School.

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF DISTRICT INSPECTOR.

Examined from 8.30 o'clock until 11.0 o'clock, 13th day of February 1894.

John C. Russell District Inspector.

I. Class	General Results Examination.
II. Class	a. The day was cold, wet, and stormy; yet no fire was lit, and the grate has no traces of having been recently used and some panes are broken on one side, while one of the windows on the other side is partially open and cannot be closed. Most of the pupils are thinly clad, and some of them barefooted.
III. Class	b. The proficiency in mental arithmetic is most satisfactory.
IV. Class	c. The subject appears to have been taught with any care, and it is evident that the teacher's heart is not in his work.
V. Class	d. Something has been done to the out-office, but it appears to be almost as bad as ever.

I, EDWARD RUSSELL, of Clarecastle in the County of Clare, Labourer the Personal Representative of John Russell deceased late of Ballaghafadda Clarecastle in the County of Clare Farmer who died on or about the 3rd July 1922 Intestate HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT of the sum of ninety Pounds (£90) paid to me by the Reverend James Monahan of Clarecastle in the County of Clare Parish Priest this date being the purchase price of part of the lands of Ballaghafadda East comprised in Folio No 3984 County Clare and containing one rood and 23 perches Statute Measure purchased from me by the said Reverend James Monahan on behalf of the Diocesan Trustees for the Diocese of Killaloe as and for a site for the erection of a National School at Clarecastle aforesaid.

Dated this 27th day of January 1923.

SIGNED Edward Russell

Witness/

James Russell
James C. Clare
Solicitor

60
N.R.M. Class B. National School.

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF DISTRICT INSPECTOR.

Examined from 10 o'clock until 3 5 o'clock, 27 day of Jan'y 1880

S. C. Strange District Inspector.

I. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.		III. Discipline and Order.
I. Class.	II. Class.	IV. School Accounts.
Suppl. Class.	III. Class.	V. School Room and Premises.
III. Class.	IV. Class.	VI. Supply of Books and Apparatus.
This school is falling off both in Teaching and attendance.		
House looks like an old barracks outside. It should be replastered and cleaned. School yard rough and loose stones lying about.		
Pictur cards and some maps spoiled through damp.		

VIII. Observance of former Suggestions.

December 7th. 1863. — 9 1/2 to 10 3/4 o'clock

visited and examined the monitorial class. At my arrival neither of the teachers was in attendance, although according to the time table the class should be under instruction half an hour previously. The 7th. Practical Rule is not observed: on Saturday, especially, the floor should be carefully swept.

Michael Moloney B 2

The evolvment of the school curriculum

Until 1968, formal education for most children in Ireland finished with the Primary Certificate. This proved the child's literacy and numeracy skills and qualified them for jobs, training and apprenticeships. Its abolition in that year reflected the changing belief that primary education should be a first step in the child's formal education. Primary education could now be more holistic and child-centred.

The new curriculum of 1971 reflected this thinking. It placed a greater emphasis on subjects such as PE, music, arts and crafts and environmental studies and less emphasis on the three rs, reading, writing and arithmetic.

The next major development was the setting up, in 1992, of the national council for curriculum and assessment, the NCCA. This body consisted of representatives from all the education partners: parents, teachers, inspectors, academics etc and produced the revised primary curriculum which began to be introduced into schools on a phased basis in 1999.

So the curriculum now being followed in our primary schools had been seven years in formation and is being implemented subject by subject on an annual basis, with provision for in-service training and planning days.

The curriculum is based on two principles: the uniqueness of each child and the development of each child's full potential. Emphasis is placed on the child as an active agent in his/her own learning. The child's immediate environment provides the context for learning through guided activity and discovery methods, all based on children with individual differences.

Subjects now on the curriculum include Gaelge, English, Mathematics, Science, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, History, Geography, PE and Social, Personal and Health Education.

The acceptance that not all children progress at the same rate has led to the introduction of learning support and resource teachers who help identify learning difficulties and seek to provide resources for children with special needs.

All these developments, together with continuous assessments, contribute to the child's total education and development.

The teaching of religion has also been subject to revision through the years. In the past, religion — or catechism, as it was known — was taught through a question and answer or rote learning method. Confirmation took place every three years following an examination by the bishop. In tandem with the new curriculum of 1971, a new religion programme, the Children of God series, was introduced into schools. This adopted a more child-centred approach. Posters, songs and stories were widely used. The sacrament of Confirmation was administered to sixth class only.

Since 1998, a new, revised programme, *Alive-O*, has been phased into schools. This programme concentrates on the child's personal relationship with God, which is developed right through to sixth class. Stories, poetry, art work, songs, nature and reflective prayer are all integrated into a lovely living experience of God and his presence in the world around us. There is also greater parental and community involvement in the preparation of the children making first Holy Communion, the sacrament of Penance and Confirmation.

Teresa Nugent, B. Ed.



1913 boys



Back row, left to right: T Kennedy, J J Frost, S McNamara, O Halloran, J Slattery, M Fitzpatrick, J Walshe, M Hanrahan and M Lyons

Middle row, left to right: T McCarthy, A Ward, J O'Dea, unknown, J Aherne, P Frawley, unknown, unknown and T McNamara

Front row, left to right: J Keane, P Nash, T D Griffey, M Horan, P Moloney, B Moloney, P Madigan, J Willis and G Considine

1913 girls



Back row, left to right: N Moriarty, M Cole, D Considine and C Fitzpatrick

Middle row, left to right: D Walshe, D Aherne, L Reddan, E O'Brien, F McNamara, M Mulligan, E McNamara and M O'Halloran

Front row, left to right: D Kelly, N Fitzpatrick, E Madden, L Sullivan and B Frawley



1923 boys

School principal Michael Murphy
Back row, left to right: T McMahon,
P McMahon, unknown, unknown,
D Connolly, R Frost, M Malone,
P Walshe, unknown, unknown,
A Murphy, school monitor

Second from back, left to right:
K Fogarty, M Sheridan,
W McCreadie, P Neylon, T Scanlon,
M Costelloe, T Torpey and W
Sullivan

Third from back, left to right:
J Howard, P Coughlan, J Slattery,
W Navin, unknown, J Roughan,
J Dillon, unknown and unknown

Front row, left to right: W Moloney,
G Moloney, C Navin, G Egan, G
Dillon and unknown



1935 boys



Bishop Fogarty and the local clergy wait to review the parade as it passed up the main street

Clarecastle girls' school nativity play, June 1942

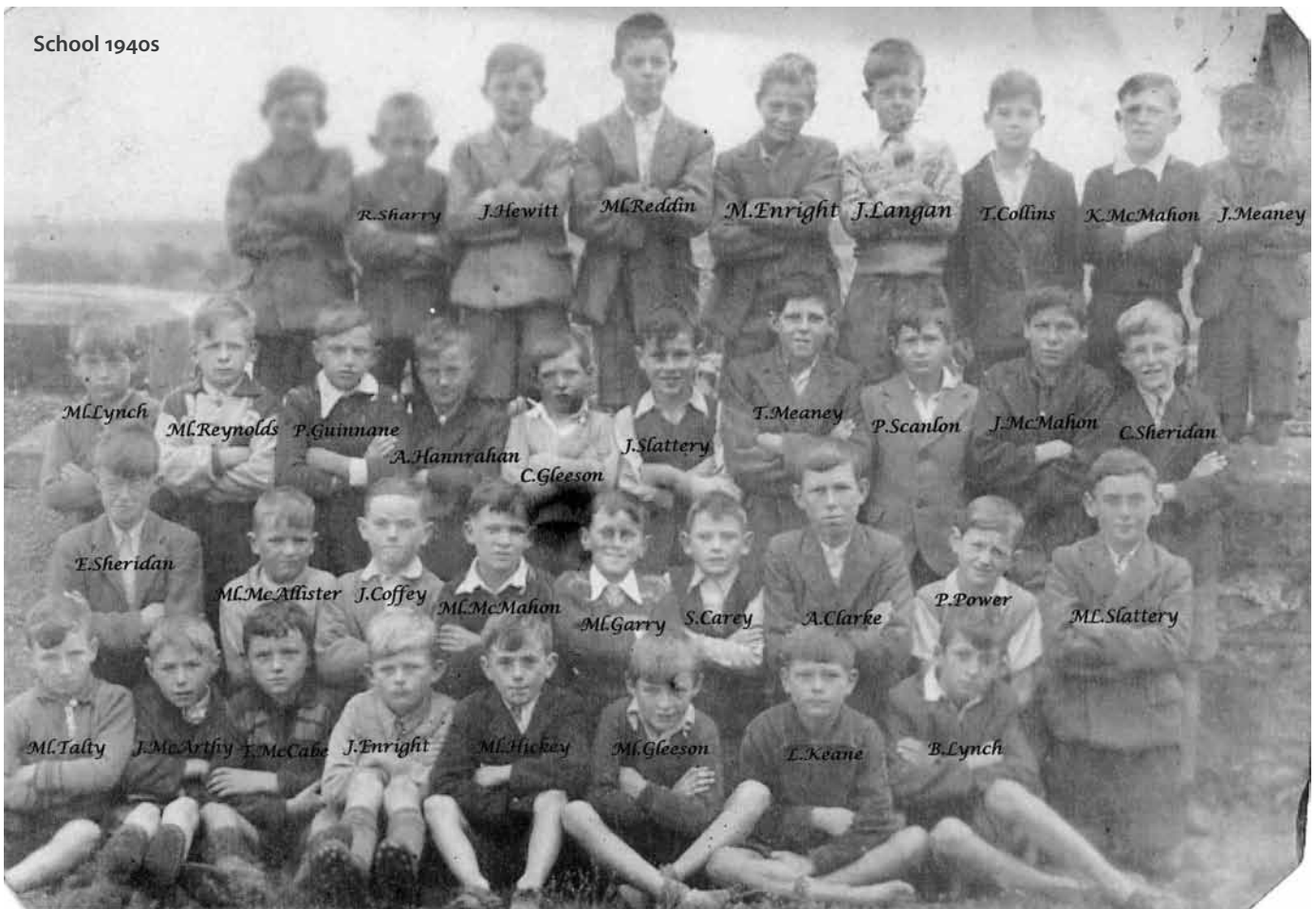


This play, *Bronntanan Nallaig*, was performed at the quay during the annual regatta
This play won first prize at *Feis an Cláir* that year

Back row, left to right: Annette Madigan, Lilly Ryan, Rita Cahill, Annie Moloney, Eileen Keane, Pauline Garvey, Monica McCarthy, Joan Ward, Kitty Ryan, Bridget McCarthy, Molly McNamare and Margaret Moloney

Front row, left to right: Babs Garvey, Biddy Hanrahan, Fanny Hanrahan and Mary Keane

School 1940s



First communion class circa 1950



1951 boys



Back row, left to right: E Moylan, M Lyons, N Shannon, P McMahon, J Sheehan, P Reynolds and M Carey

Middle row, left to right: T Collins, E Malone, M Scanlon, J Hick, J Malone, J McNamara, M Guinnane, F McNamara and G Considine

Front row, left to right: P Carroll, B Martin, S Carroll, N McGuire, G Dillon, B Hayes, V Farmer and F Power



Confirmation, May 1952

Back row, left to right: Fanny Hanrahan, Nuala Monahan, Maura McMahon, Mildred Madigan, Mary Slattery and Mary Power

Front row, left to right: Rita McNamara, Claire Monahan, Anna McNamara, Ann Long and Carol Monahan



1953 girls



1954 boys

Back row, left to right: M J Meere, T Slattery, P Collins, T Collins, J Talty, J McInerney, unknown, J Reynolds, P Tully, S McCabe, M Considine and T Meaney

Middle row, left to right: J Considine, P Monahan, C Hanrahan, C Guinnane, P Reynolds, M Meaney, M Hayes, P Talty, unknown, M Corry, M Guinnane, N Shannon and P McCabe

Front row, left to right: J Hick, B Hayes, P Quinn, M McGuire, E Moylan, T Collins, T Monahan, E Malone, P Scalon, B Donnelly, J Talty and T Moloney



1957 school choir

Back row, left to right: R Meehan, M Callinan, E Slattery, D Slattery, A Slattery, M Frost, C Torpey and M Shaw

Middle row, left to right: F Brennan, M Barry, M Frost, C Casey, F Ryan, M Meere, A Ryan, M Callinan and ? Mullins

Front row, left to right: C Torpey, B Sullivan, C Power, L Cullinan, A Maher and C Shannon

1958 fourth class



Back row, left to right: S Slattery, T McCallister and J McCallister

Middle row, left to right: E Shaw, T Butler, R Shaw and G Moylan

Front row, left to right: M Hegarty, S Carroll, F Power, J Reynolds and M Scanlon

1961 choir with Ms Eva Meehan



Back row, left to right: M Shaw, M Meere, C Reidy, F Ryan, M Barry, R Meehan, M Callinan, B O'Neill and B Haran

Middle row, left to right: A Ryan, F Brennan, K Reynolds, L Cullinan, A O'Neill, C Casey, M Frost, C Shannon, R Considine and D Mullins

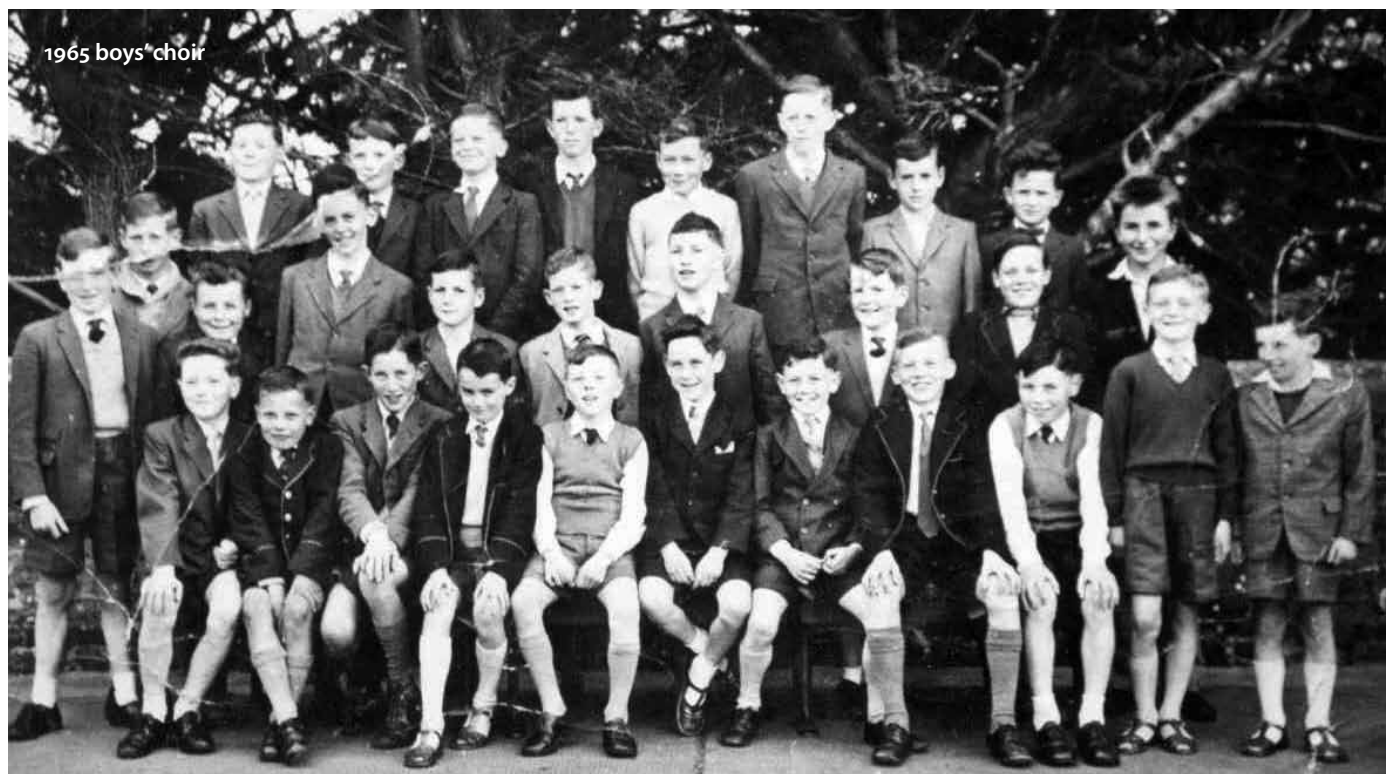
Front row, left to right: M Corry, M O'Connor, C Power, J Ward, G Barry, B Sullivan, A Maher, L Ward, M McMahon and Eva Meehan



Back row, left to right: F Martin, W Scanlon, P Sullivan, G Barry J B Casey, M Daly and B Mulhearne

Middle row, left to right: H Russell, H Moloney, D Butler, S Ryan, F Considine, C Scanlon, F Barry and V Murphy

Front row, left to right: M Hegarty, T Corry, J Horan, P Loughnane, A McNamara, B Farmer and N Torpey



Back row, left to right: J Power, F Barry, unknown, J Considine, F Moloney, C Power, M Considine, J B Casey and J Malone

Middle row, left to right: E Russell, T Butler, A Burns, D Moloney, F Considine, D Butler, M Scanlon, G Barry and P Moloney

Front row, left to right: P Power, P O'Grady, B Butler, M Daly, C Scanlon, A McNamara, B Farmer, P Slattery, W Scanlon, P Donnelly and P J Sullivan



School choir, late 1950s

Back row, left to right: M Shaw, M Barry, A O'Neill, M Barry, C Burns, F Ryan, R Meehan and E Slattery

Middle row, left to right: C Martin, F Brennan, R Slattery, D Slattery, A Hegarty, M Callinan and Ms Meehan

Front row, left to right: B Sullivan, M Callinan, D Mullins, C Casey, K Reynolds, B O'Neill, M Meere and C Reidy



2006 sixth class

Back row, left to right: J Tuohy, C Kirwan, S McDonald, M Lyons, O Donnellan, S McGrath, D Tierney, K Lynch, L Considine, J Keenan and J Birney

Middle row, left to right: D McAdam, K Lynch, R de Loughrey, N O'Hanlon, C O'Gorman, J McDermot, A Fleming, E Bracken, M Foley, E Moloney, A Mangan and K Scanlan

Front row, left to right: N Talbot, J Neville, A Nihill, L Hanrahan, J Morrissey, L Holland, R Mulcaire, R Considine, M Slattery and T Kelleher



Ms Eva Meehan and Ms Una O'Brien with the Confirmation class of 1961



School boys hunting the wren in 1913

Left to right: P Scanlon, P J Aherne, G Considine, J Considine, P McCreadie, J L Sullivan, T Meere, T Considine, M Horan, B Morrissey and W Blake

Memories of Monica Brooks, N.T., retired

As a child, Monica went to Ballyea National School. She had always wanted to be a teacher, it was her vocation. She could not imagine being anything else. After teacher training, she was appointed to Ratharney, Co Westmeath and was very happy there. She tells the story of Canon Hogan arriving to her father's house and saying 'there is a job for one of the girls in the boys' national school, Clarecastle — you decide which one.' Monica's sister, who was also a teacher, did not want the job so Monica took up the position of teaching junior, senior infants and first classes in October 1958. Monica was very sad to leave Ratharney as she had already started the school year but, as always in life, rose to the challenge.

She was made very welcome by the principal Tom Hanly and wife Maura and speaks very fondly of them. She remembers very well her first day at Clarecastle, walking into the big cold room with 'all bare walls, big desks, tables and chairs, ten small *clairini* and nothing else'. In the early years slates and chalk were used as teaching aids. The lack of money was a constant problem.

Canon Hogan was very strict and kept a tight hold on finance. A penny a week was collected from students to clean the school. She spoke of poor families in the parish and was pleased with their progress in life. She spoke of a particular family who had very little but were much loved and stressed this need for love in families.

The rooms were cold and heated by turf fires. The dry toilets were primitive with no running water. There was a wall between the boys' and the girls' toilets with one cubicle reserved for teachers. Asked about improvements in the school, she didn't hesitate to tell us about when running water was installed in 1963 and new toilets installed. While this was going on, classes were held in the hall and clubhouse. She described this new building (toilets) as 'manna from heaven'.

Discipline was never a problem for Monica in all her time in Clarecastle. She was always gentle with children and they in turn loved and respected her.

She spoke of the 'fear' of School Inspectors, who were very tough and arrived without notice. Inspector Donlon (father of the Irish ambassador to USA in 1990s) was very strict.

Inspector Coll had Donegal Irish and both teachers and pupils had difficulty understanding his Irish. In earlier years, a teacher's salary was dependant on a good report from the inspector. She remembers how the inspector could spot the child to 'pick on' by picking up on his body language.

In 1960, Tom Hanly retired and John became principal of the boy's school. Like his father before him, he fostered a good working relationship with the teachers and was wonderful to work with. At this time Clarecastle BNS was a three teacher school, with Monica teaching junior infants, senior infants and first class, Michael Connolly teaching second, third and fourth classes and John Hanly teaching fifth and sixth classes. This later expanded to four teachers with Agnes Shannon joining the staff.

Monica talked about the school tours with great pride. She said Clarecastle BNS were going on school tours when nobody else was doing it. The girls were envious of the boys over the tours. She rattled off all the trips they did including one to Salthill, where they saw the first-ever James Bond film. She remembers the 'silence' in the cinema and even remembers parts of the film.

She remembers the Regatta days in Clarecastle as the teachers were given tickets to sell and had to attend the parish dances.

Confirmation then was held every three years in Clarecastle for the parishes of Clarecastle and Ballyea. Monica would have to prepare the boys for Communion. She also had the job of preparing travellers for these sacraments. She spoke of having one or two, then the door would open and another three would come in. It didn't seem hard to her but indeed great fun.

Amalgamation took place in 1983. This was 'pure joy' according to Monica. However, it was a bit of a culture shock, more for the girls and the girls' school teachers.

Monica told us several funny stories but one that had her and ourselves laughing out loud was when they decided to plant flowers. A small garden was dug, with John Hanly bringing out the big boys to help. Monica bought a packet of wallflower seeds as the money for small plants was not available. The seeds were sown and John Hanly promised to water them over the holidays. Wallflowers were chosen as they flower in spring.

When school resumed, there was a great amount of 'greenery' but no actual flowers. Apparently, Michael Daly, with pure childish devilment planted turnip seeds as well.

When asked about important visitors, she remembers two in particular. One was Erskine Childers when he was canvassing for President. Monica remembers she was wearing a mini-skirt on this day, as they were the height of fashion. Judge Frank Griffin visited the school in 1973. He was a Judge of the High Court at the time and had great time for Clarecastle and Tom Hanly. He was initially educated in Clarecastle and went to Drogheda, where he was moved up classes due to the quality of education he received in Clarecastle BNS under Tom Hanly. Monica met him in December 2006 in Mount Carmel hospital where he was attending Mass and he again spoke highly of the late Tom Hanly and Clarecastle NS.

She remembers the worst tragedy ever to hit the school, the day Ailish Morrissey was hit by a car outside the school, which resulted in her death. It is apparent that this day will always be etched in her mind and she described the sequence of events with great sadness. She recounts how not having a phone in the school meant having to send someone to a house with a phone to ring an ambulance. She described Ailish as a lovely sensible girl and a great loss.

The first ever school traffic warden was introduced after this tragedy. Tom Flanagan was the first warden. She spoke of Peter Dillon also who was a great help to her in looking after the school after hours. She says he always checked had she turned on the boiler and had she turned it off. She felt he worked above and beyond the call of duty.

She remembers children who went through her hands who died tragically later in life.

She remembers when school medicals/dental and hearing checks became a regular occurrence in the school. The children had a great fear of dentist Dowling, in particular.

Monica became principal in 1994. She found the transition difficult and missed teaching. Monica was responsible for introducing the school uniform in conjunction with parents. She had seen a red pullover in a magazine and liked it and the boys had impressed on her not to put them in a shirt and tie. The same uniform is in use today.

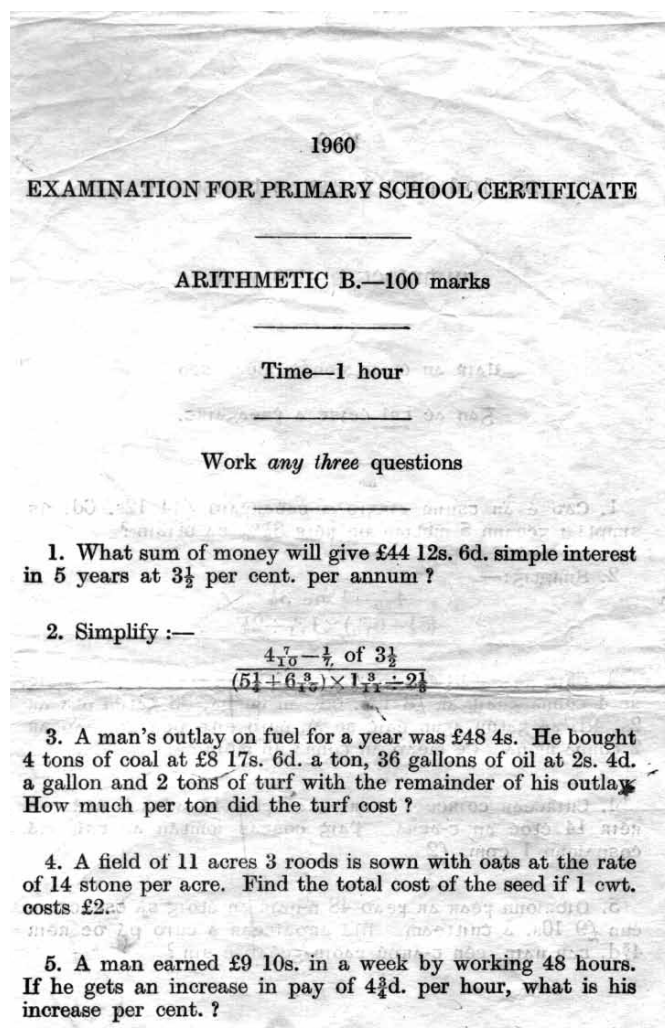
Monica spoke about the roll books and the mountain of information in them and mentions the urgent need to protect them from ageing. Finance was not available for special needs teachers but a remedial teacher was appointed during her time.

Monica had intended to spend more time as principal but ill health intervened and forced her into early retirement. She remembers her last day at school, crying at the special Mass

that was held in her honour and missing the children so much. She loves that children in the younger classes are divided into two classes and emphasises the importance of children getting the right start. The biggest class Monica taught was a whopping forty-six children, all senior infants, and she says they were great.

She said if she there were one thing to say about her time spent at Clarecastle school, it would be the energy she felt there. She says energy flowed from the children and it was a wonderful thing. The pleasure she felt there was indescribable and nothing seemed to daunt the children. She spoke of sport and was happy with the emphasis put on it in the school. She commended John Hanly for his great input in this important area. She would love to do it all again and given the opportunity, you know she would. She would love to have been there for the new school. This vibrant woman has given so much to the school yet, for her, it was a joyous passage.

Monica is happily retired with husband Tom. She is involved in the Third Order, enjoying many trips to Lourdes and Fatima. Tom and Monica have four children and five grandchildren.



1935.

EXAMINATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL
CERTIFICATE.

GEOGRAPHY.—100 marks.

Time.—1½ hours.

Answer any five questions. All the questions have the same value in marks.

1. Draw an outline map of any one of the Irish provinces.
Name on the map the maritime counties.
Mark and name on the map four rivers, four seaports, and four inland towns.

2. Choose any one of the following counties :—Wexford, Kerry, Galway, Down.
Describe as well as you can the physical features and drainage of the county you choose, naming the chief mountains and rivers.
Name also four important towns in it.
What are the main industries in this county ?

3. Name five important crops raised in Ireland.
Name the chief counties in which each is raised.
What use or uses are made of each of the crops you name ?

4. Take the following rivers :—Rhine, Danube, Po, Tagus, Loire, mention the country or countries through which each of them flows, the direction in which it flows, and the sea into which it flows. Name one town on each of these rivers.

5. Choose any one of the following areas : the basin of the Humber, the basin of the Wash, the basin of the Clyde. Tell what you can of the chief industries of the area you choose, and say why those industries are carried on there.

Examination Number _____ Date of Birth _____

Name of Pupil _____

EXAMINATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE, 1961.

ARITHMETIC A.—100 marks.

Time—30 minutes.

Answer all the questions.

Write the answers only in the space provided.

ANSWERS

1. £3 7s. 1d.—£1 18s. 3½d. ? 1
2. $48 \times 7 + 4 \times 69 + 168$? 2
3. $\frac{1}{2}$ of £12 15s. ? 3
4. 6½ lb. bacon at 4s. 4d. per lb. ? 4
5. 239 apples at 2d. each ? 5
6. If $\frac{1}{4}$ ton of coal costs £7 17s. 6d. find the cost of 1 ton. 6
7. 55% of £20 ? 7
8. $3 \times 9 \div 0.3$? 8
9. 80 units of electricity at 1.5d. per unit ? 9
10. If 4 oz. tea cost 1s. 3d., what would 4 lb. cost ? 10
11. If $\frac{x}{9} = \frac{48}{27}$, what is the value of x ? 11
12. 2 cwt. 5 st. 10 lb. + 8 cwt. 7 st. 9 lb. ? 12
13. Express 3 pints as a decimal of 1 gallon. 13
14. Coal is bought at £8 per ton and sold at 10s. per cwt. Find the gain per cent. 14
15. The area of a tile is 1 sq. ft. How many of them would be needed to cover a floor 5 yards long and 4 yards wide ? 15
16. A bicycle which cost £15 10s. was sold at a loss of 20%. What was the selling price ? 16
17. $(5 + 0.5 + 0.05)$ of £1,000 ? 17
18. How many sixpences in £x ? 18
19. If 12s. 6d. is the simple interest on £50 for 6 months, what is the rate per cent. per annum ? 19
20. A clock loses 5 seconds every hour. How many minutes will it lose in 24 hours ? 20

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PRIMARY BRANCH

PRIMARY SCHOOL
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the pupil named
overleaf completed the sixth standard of
the programme of instruction in national
schools and passed the primary school
certificate examination which comprised
written tests in Irish, English and
Arithmetic, conducted by the Department
of Education in June 1960

*The following are the subjects of the prescribed programme
of instruction for the sixth standard in national schools: —*

Obligatory Subjects : IRISH, ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, HISTORY,
GEOGRAPHY, MUSIC, NEEDLEWORK (Girls).

Optional Subjects : DRAWING, PHYSICAL TRAINING, RURAL
SCIENCE or NATURE STUDY, COOKERY
(Girls), LAUNDRY WORK (Girls) or DOMESTIC
ECONOMY (Girls), MANUAL INSTRUCTION
(Boys).

D.24036,M.P.,6/60.



AN ROINN OIDEACAIS
BRAINSE AN BUNOIDEACAIS

TEISTIMÉIREACHT AR
BUNOIDEACAS

DEARBÚ É SEO SUR CRÍOCHNAIS

Páirc Seirge

AN SÉU RANG DE CLÁN AN TEAGHAISC
SNA SCOILEANNA NÁISIÚNTA AGUS
SUR ÉIRIS LEIS AN DALTA SAN SA
SCRÚDÚ SCRÍOFA SA SAEILGE, SA
BÉARLA AGUS SAN UIMHÍOCT A
TIONÓLAÓ AG AN ROINN OIDEACAIS I
MÍ AN MEITIM, 1960, LE HAŠAID NA
TEISTIMÉIREACHTA AR BUNOIDEACAS.

T. O. Rafter

RÚNAÍ

IS IAD SEO LEANAS NA HÁBÁIN DE CLÁN AN TEAGHAISC ACÁ
ORDAITE LE HAŠAID AN TSÉU RANG I SCOILEANNA NÁISIÚNTA:—

ÁBÁIN ÉIGEANTACA:

Saeilge, béarla, matamaitic, stair,
círeolaíocht, ceol, obair shnácaide
(Cailíní).

ÁBÁIN NEAMÉIGEANTACA:

líníocht, corpoilíúint, tuateolaíocht
nó eolas ar nádúr, cócaireacht
(Cailíní), níosáin (Cailíní), nó cíos
(Cailíní), lámhoilíúint (buaicailí).

IONAD.....355.....



The school choir sings with the Arizona choir, 2002



Playing in glór, 2002

Music and our school



The choir gets in the mood

There has always been a strong tradition of music in Clarecastle National School, particularly in choral singing. Both Mrs Nellie Wylde and former principal Mr John Hanly trained school choirs to sing at all church events in the parish. That tradition is carried on today in the school and school choirs sing for First Holy Communion, Confirmation etc., trained by a member of the present teaching staff, Ms Anne Larkin.

Previous choirs have achieved much success over the years, twice reaching the Community Games finals in Mosney and achieving silver and bronze medals. School choirs have also participated in many, many concerts over the years, the most memorable one being in Glór with a wonderful youth choir from Phoenix Arizona.

Féile na hInse has also brought many successes over the years. The choir won many trophies as did individual class groupings, a school céilí band and traditional groups.

Every year all children participate in the school carol service at Christmas and also sing carols in Dunnes to raise much needed funds for the school. This year the present choir will sing for Confirmation on April 21st 2007 and for First Holy Communion on May 12th 2007. There is great credit due to all of the children who have participated and contributed to the many school and church events over the years.

May they continue to sing sweetly.

Anne Larkin, B. Ed.



Christmas choir



School choir 2001



Christmas orchestra



Santa Claus is coming



Traditional musicians

Memories of John Hanly, Former Principal

The first school in Clarecastle was in the small church, now demolished, at the back of Church Drive. It was a Sunday school for the teaching of Catechetics, the responsibility of the Priest in those days. Later, it became a day school. I am not aware of who taught the children. It was possibly a local person who could read and write and do arithmetic. Attendance was very poor because the law did not compel a pupil to attend.

The two-storey building opposite the Church, now the local hall, was built in the nineteenth century. The upper floor was for the girls and the ground floor for the boys. They were two separate schools with three teachers each. The building was surrounded by a five-foot wall, gravel on the playground and dry toilets at the end of each yard. Entrance to the school was through a small gate in the front wall. By the time I went to school, compulsory attendance to the age of fifteen was required, though all pupils did not stay the full time. The age range of the pupils was from four to fifteen, which caused problems so the smaller children were contained in the front of the school. Otherwise there would be many accidents.

In the school room there was little furniture so the pupils sat down only for writing or sums. During singing there was silence and those not participating were supposed to read quietly, learn spellings or tables. However I can imagine most of us listened to the songs and we were delighted to be left alone. Can you imagine three teachers endeavouring to do their day's work and at the same time not causing the next teacher problems?

In my era there were over a hundred boys attending school. In winter it was very cold as there was only one fire at the senior boys' end of the room. In summer, it was warm and so all the windows and the entrance door were wide open. In good weather, during break times, we were allowed to go to the fair green, where Church Drive is now, during break times. There we ate whatever lunch we had and played all kinds of games: hurling, football, spin top, marbles and conkers when in season.

It was to this school that my father came in 1912. What a contrast Clarecastle was to Dungarvan, which was a developing town even then. There was no water supply except for two large pumps and a well. The roads were pot holed, no

pathways or sewerage. The general run of homes was very poor, consisting mostly of two rooms, open-grate fire places, little furniture, earthen floors and high ceilings that made them very cold and draughty. The people were poor, with little or no employment, except for casual farm work or unloading the coal boats. Fishing for salmon was quite lucrative in those days. The bugbear of our society was emigration. When an emigrant returned on holiday dressed in a new suit, collar and tie and overcoat he was much admired and possibly envied.

I have written the above paragraph because the condition of the time had a bearing on school life. Scarcity of means always has alternative ends. So spending on the basic school requisites was not a priority. All schools were deprived of the necessary investment to broaden and enrich the curriculum. In many cases the teachers bought the books and copies for the less well-off pupils.

In 1935, the new school was built. It was the first school built by our government in Clare. There were six rooms in all. Each room had an open grate fire. There were two-seated desks with an inkwell in the centre, and the room had four windows, which gave sufficient light. The lighting of the fire each morning was of the utmost importance and the glow from it exuded a feeling of warmth.

In 1934 the Vocational schools were founded. From then on, the door to second-level education was free and open to all. Other secondary schools were fee paying but even they reduced the fees. Pupils availed of the new opportunities and eagerly sought the uplift that education can give.

The first six decades of the twentieth century were slowly developing. A new and better way of life was evolving and even though emigration continued during those years, the prospects of succeeding abroad were more realisable than heretofore. I pay tribute to the teachers in those years who, despite many disadvantages, taught and encouraged their pupils to further their education.

In my era, from 1960 onwards, the belief and hopes for the future were established. Ireland was becoming an industrial nation. Areas such as Shannon were fully developed and employment was growing year by year. We became a forward-looking people using all modern facilities and techniques that

have in recent years, led to undreamt of national wealth.

In my time as principal of the boys' national school and later as principal of the amalgamated schools, I can only say how privileged I was to be a part of such a transformation. I admire and respect all the ex-pupils who have achieved so much through their education and the confidence they have in their talents.

As regards the teachers with whom I have worked over many years, what can I say? I was blessed to have known them. Their loyalty is much appreciated and their input in the developing school is most praiseworthy. They were and are a wonderful teaching staff. I respect their allegiance to me, their dedication, expertise and the love they have shown to the children in their care.

I welcome the new school, no doubt a state-of-the-art building. The new school of sixteen rooms is necessary because of the influx of people and the extensive house construction in the area. It will have all the modern facilities that the present day curriculum demands.

I wish the new school, its Board of Management, the teachers and pupils every happiness and success in the years ahead. Hopefully external pressures, from whatever source, will not cause unnecessary pressure that could upset the ethos or communal spirit that has always existed in Clarecastle.

The Hanly family taught for 113 years in Clarecastle. My late father and mother always spoke highly of the people. They remembered and appreciated the support and co-operation they got from the parents. They cherished the person-to-person relationships that bonded them together. So do I.



Maura and Tom Hanly
outside school, late 1960s



A relaxed John Hanly

The Schools' Folklore Collection

The Schools' Folklore Collection or Schools' Scheme was carried out during the academic year of 1937-8 and then extended to run for a further four months, to December of 1938. It was a simple but brilliant idea organised by the then Irish Folklore Commission: to encourage children to collect and record both true and 'hearsay' stories from older family members and neighbours on a number of topics.

Children were instructed to collect stories based on the list of topics from family members and neighbours. They first wrote the material into their school copies. The best were then chosen by their teacher to be formally written by each selected child into the large manuscript book supplied by the Folklore Commission, books which were later bound with two or three others from neighbouring parishes. All the school copy-books, including those from children whose work was not written into the book, together with the special manuscript book, were to be returned to the Folklore Commission by the teacher.

The original manuscripts of the Schools' Collection are housed in the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin. The local studies library in Ennis has microfilm copies of the original manuscripts submitted by 188 county Clare schools on approximately sixteen thousand pages and

Clarecastle National School is to be found in the collection.

The Schools' Scheme was voluntary but it has about a half a million manuscript pages of folklore. It has been described as 'a monument to the initiative of the Irish Folklore Commission, the co-operation of the Department of Education, the dedication of Irish national teachers and the scholarship of the children of our national schools.'

A booklet, *Irish Folklore and Tradition* was compiled and issued to the principal teacher of each national school. It contained instructions as to how the scheme was to be carried out. The foreword stated: 'The collection of the oral tradition of the Irish people is a work of national importance.' The senior pupils were invited to participate in this work of 'rescuing from oblivion the traditions...of the historic Irish nation.' Fifty-five subject headings, with suggestions and guidelines, were given for collection purposes Fifth and sixth class pupils (eleven- to fourteen-year-olds) were exempted from their usual weekly essay so as to allow time for written work on their folklore projects. The collecting from family and neighbours was done after school hours. The children first wrote their stories in to their school copies. Then the best was chosen by the teacher to be formally written by each selected child into the large



Pipe band 1937

manuscript book supplied by the Folklore Commission. The wonderful other side to the project is that all of the school copybooks, including those from children whose work was not written into the book, are still preserved by the commission.

Thomas Hanly was principal teacher of Clarecastle NS for the duration of the Schools' Scheme. His name is on the first page of the folklore collection.

Fifty-five subject headings from Irish folklore and tradition, the booklet prepared by the Irish Folklore Commission and issued to schools in September 1937: *Hidden treasure; A funny story; A collection of riddles; Weather lore; Local heroes; Local happenings; Severe weather; Old schools; Old crafts; Local marriage customs; In the penal times; Local place-names; Bird lore; Local cures; Home-made toys; The lore of certain days; Travelling folk; Fairy forts; Local poets; Famine times; Games I play; The local roads; My home district; Our holy wells; Herbs; The potato-crop; Proverbs; Festival Customs; The care of our farm animals; Churning; The care of the feet; The local forge; Clothes made locally; Stories of the holy family; The local patron saint; The local fairs; The landlord; Food in olden times; Hurling and football matches; An old story; Old Irish tales; A song; Local monuments; Bread; Buying and selling; Old houses; Stories of giants and warriors; The leprechaun or mermaid; Local ruins; Religious stories; The old graveyards; A collection of prayers; Emblems and objects of value; Historical tradition and Strange animals.*

Names of some of the pupils who participated in the Schools' Folklore Collection: Thomas Slattery, Buncraggy, Tiermaclane; Patrick Roughan, Creggaunahila, Clarecastle; James Moloney, Patrick St. Clarecastle; Thomas Frost, Quay Road, Clarecastle; Norman Purtill, Clarecastle; John Meere, Clarecastle; Michael Slattery, Buncraggy, Tiermaclane; William Murphy, Pound Road, Clarecastle; Thomas Slattery; Pat Navin; James Moloney; Paul Shaughnessy; John Lynch; Harry Ward; Nancy Costello, Quay Road, Clare Castle; Criostiona Russell, Abbey Road, Clarecastle; Maureen Slattery, Killoo, Clarecastle; Nancy Reynolds, Killoo, Clarecastle; Nancy Killoughery; Brigid Killoughery, Barntick, Clare Castle; Brigid Morley, Clarecastle and Crissie Russell.

The pupils who took part on the collection were aged twelve or thirteen and would have started their schooling in the years 1924 or 1925 in the old school. The roll books for those years list names such as Padraig Ó Muineacain; Tomas McCartaig; Liam Ó Harding; Marcus Harding; Patrick Moroney; Miceal de Bail; Seamus McMatanain; Padraig Ó Siothcain; Seamus McAllaistir; Sean Ó Ceitinn; Martin Ó Mir; Miceal Ó Dalaig; Seamus Ó Neallain; Sean Ó Neill; Padraig McCormaig; Peadair Ó Cuinn and Daiti Ó Muigir

Following are a number of sample extracts from the collection in the handwriting of the children involved. Permission to publish the extracts was kindly given by the UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection.



Liam Mulvihill visits Clarecastle school in 1986 for Féile na Gael

D O'Grady, J Timoney, K Burns, J Hayes, Liam Mulvihill, L Carey, E O'Donoghue, P Moloney, M O'Brien, E O'Mara and N Hayes

Mo Ceannraip féin.

Blarecastle is built on the banks of the River Fergus. It is in the parish of Blare Abbey and in the barony of the Islands. There are 130 houses in it. There was more houses in it long ago because the ruins are to be seen still. It is called Blarecastle because long ago the people used cross between two weirs and there was an Norman castle near the village. There are many people over 70 years in the village but they have no Irish. They tell stories in English. People used go to America and Australia from this district long ago. The land is good and fertile. There are two lakes in the district - Killone lake and Ballybeg. It is said that a man tried to drown himself in Killone lake

but failed. He drowned himself in Ballybeg lake afterwards. It is said that a mermaid lived in Killone lake and she was killed by a man named O'Donnell for taking his wine.

List of People over 70 years

Martin Curran	Blaremount
Jadg Bradley	Barntick
Dennis Noonan	Newtown
Martin Sullivan	Lissane
Martin Reidy	Blarecommons
Mrs Curran	Blaremount
Mrs McMahon	Blarecastle
Mrs McNamara	Blarecastle
Mrs Doyle	Lissane
Mrs Madigan	Lissane
Mrs Kinnane	Blarecastle
Patrick Hehir	Blarecastle
Thomas Slattery	

Buying and Selling.

There were not many large shops in Blarecastle district in Olden times. The village was too near to the big town of Ennis and the people used go to Ennis for their footstuffs and goods. There used to be people with tents at the chapel gates and they sold various kinds of goods. In olden days the cost of living was not as high as it is to-day though the pay was little enough for the large families.

At times people changed goods for goods and no money was needed. The usual goods exchanged were footstuffs and working implements. Not every much work was done on Sundays. The market was usually held in the middle of a town, or on the village fairgreen. There were people who went about from place to place selling all kinds of goods and they are known as hawkers. There are some of them going around to the present day, but they are not as well off as they were year ago.

People used do a days washing in a farmers house for Flour, bread, meat and vegetables. Farmers used pay their labourers by kind, that is, giving them goods such as potatoes, butter, and milk for their work.

Brigid Killoughery,
Barntick,
Blare castle,
Co. Blare.

NFCS 607:425

NFCS 607:377

Local Place Names.

Blarecastle, which is generally known as Blare is situated in the bountry of Blare, in the Barony of The Islands. The names were to the Irish bountries under the reign of King John, and the Bonner bountry Blare derived its name from Lord Blarence, one of the British Nobility.

There are many places in this vicinity which are connected with past ages and some name derived from certain incidents which occurred there. The first of interest is Breazin na Lile and this derived its name from the fact that the old catholic church was situated there. The ruins are still to be seen beside the rocky crag, hence the name. A short distance outside the village, there is a place known as "The Priests Style". This name is derived from the Priests house which was situated beside it. Father Mac Inorney who was one of the local priests lived there over a hundred years ago. He was obliged to leave, and leaving he threw his vestments across the rafters, and tradition has it that they remained in a state of preservation till the house fell into ruins.

Another local placename is Knocknamana, or, in Irish knoc na Mhona, and that is so because the land is boggy and the residents used to cut turf there at one time.

Among the other names worth noticing in this vicinity are Blareabber, Ballybeg, Killora, Newtown, Blaremount, Newhall, the home of the Mac Donnell, Lissane, Barntick, Thomond Villas. These are old Irish names, and there are many old stories told in connection with them.

There is a field in Mr Lynches field, because he lived there one time. There is also another field in this District known as Slattery's field because a family named Slattery's live there and owned the field.

There is a pond outside the village known as Rudy's pond. There are a couple of meadows in this District and they are known as Mr. Howard's meadows.

Erissie Russell b. g. N. S.

NFCS 607:449

Bread

In older times people made bread with wheat, oats, and corn. There were many different kinds of bread made such as, griddle, oven, and potato bread. In kneading the dough they added water and they flattened it. The board on which it was worked was called a losset.

In older times the people sowed a great crop of potatoes and wheat as it mostly on bread they lived. When the wheat was ripe they beat it against a stone and the white grain that fell out was made into flour. This flour made very nice bread.

The people put a cross on the bread before putting the bread to bake. They baked about three loaves every day.

On the feast of the Passover they made bread only with water and flour. This was done on account of the Israelites eating it before they passed over the Red Sea.

There used be a bread made known as stampie which had for ingredients very little flour with old potatoes. The loaf baked in the oven and griddle cake were always in use in this country. It became a very old religious custom when putting the loaf into the oven to put a cross with the knife on top.

Nancy Reynolds g. N. S.

NFCS 607:429

Uld 'School' Schools

There was an old hedge school in Knockatuna bollins and Tom Sullivan was the schoolmaster. The pupils had a spelling book and they were taught to read and write. They had to pay the sum of two pence. There were 20 or 30 pupils attending. The people who taught used go to farmhouses and teach in them. They went to Falvey's house in the townland of Baarngeecha and used it as a school. There was a school at New Hall cross near Jim Lynch's house in the townland of New Hall west of Blarecastle. The teachers was nicknamed John Quill because he used a quill for writing. Hard words were passed as Latin.

John Meere
Blarecastle
b. Blare.

NFCS 607:344

Dear Grace

November 25th 2005 saw the sixth class children from Clarecastle National School undertake a journey to the Helix in Dublin. Jamie Tuohy's entry in the *Dear Grace* competition had secured his classmates this wonderful experience in addition to a place in volume four of the *Dear Grace* publication as one of this year's thirty-two winners. Fellow classmate Tom Kelleher also qualified as a finalist and his excellent letter was published in the book. Grace Nolan (nine years) died in 1999 from a rare genetic blood cell disorder called HHT and the letters Jamie and Tom wrote to Grace gave a glimpse into the events of the previous year at a personal, national and international level. All proceeds from the book go to the Grace Nolan Foundation.

Letter to Grace by Tom Kelleher aged twelve

I really miss you. The whole of Ireland misses you. There have been a lot of things going on in the year 2005.

I went to hospital in April for a week. This is how the story went. I woke up on a Monday morning with a pain in my stomach. I told my mum and dad but they said that I would be ok. I went to school up until Friday. I called my mum from school on Friday and she came and picked me up in twenty minutes. My mum brought me to the doctor in Ennis. I waited in the waiting room until it was my turn to go to the doctor. He wasn't sure what was wrong with me and gave my mum a note for the hospital.

I arrived at the hospital and I was really scared. I was in the casualty ward. They brought me over to a bed. My granny was in a bed in casualty too. My mum went down to see her. Meanwhile I was crying in my bed and a nurse came over to me and said I would be all right. My mum came back and a doctor came then and stuck a needle in my arm and a little tube to connect a drip. I then had to get an x-ray. I was in the room for a long time. My dad came at around six o'clock. He went home then to get my things and came back again. They were sure it was my appendix.

My mum stayed with me in the first night. I couldn't go to sleep that night, as I was petrified. I eventually got to sleep. I woke up on Saturday morning, very sleepy. One of the nurses set up the drip in my arm again. The day went on and on. Thankfully,

there was a television there. I watched cartoons all day. One of my doctors, doctor Byrnes, said that he was going to do the operation that night. I woke up around half-past-ten. I said to my mum that I was afraid to look. You see, I thought I had my operation. My dad said, "You haven't had your operation yet." I felt so stupid and scared. At eleven o'clock I was going to theatre. I was put on a bed and rolled into the room. I saw my mum and dad looking in the window until I could see them no more. I was in the operating room. One of the nurses put two things on two of my fingers, which showed my heart rate on a screen. She put the gas mask on me and I fell asleep.

I woke up on Sunday morning with a really sore pain. My mum and dad were beside me asking how I was. Doctors came in asking me did I feel ok and checking me. I found it hard to sleep that night. I woke up that morning with my dad there. Then man in the bed beside me was leaving that day. He was really nice. When he was leaving he said, "Goodbye and get better soon." I was watching cartoons again when someone was put in the bed next to me. I said hello and he said hello. "What's your name?" I asked him. He said his name was Joseph and he was fourteen years old. He was my sister's teacher's nephew. I found out that in the afternoon he also had his appendix out.

I had loads of visitors who gave me cards and sweets. Day after day went by. When Friday came on of the nurses said that I might be going home if I went through a few tests. I had to drink as much as I could until I was fit to burst. I took the

orders and drank. After a while I asked my dad to get the nurse. I was fit to burst now. The nurse rushed my downstairs and I went into another room with my dad. There was a woman there who told me to lie on this bed. She put some sort of gel on me then she rubbed a sort of computer mouse over my stomach and showed the inside of my stomach on a screen. She called in a doctor to look at it. Shortly, I was in my bed again. A nurse came in with good news. I was going home. I got dressed quickly and went downstairs with my dad. I stepped outside and took my first breath of fresh air and went home.

A lot of other things have been going on this year also. There was a hurricane in New Orleans. Its name was Katrina. There was a lot of destruction and many people were killed. People refused to leave their homes even though their homes were flooded and destroyed. Loads of countries sent aid to New Orleans. It was a terrible incident. I think it has changed people's lives forever.

There was also another hurricane called Rita that hit Louisiana and Texas. My uncle and his family live in Houston. My uncle called my mum to tell her about what was happening. He said that they were asked to evacuate but they didn't as there was too much traffic. After Rita hit he called again to say they were ok.

In London, this year, there were terrible bombings in the tube stations and on a bus. It was a fatal attack when thousands of people were trying to get to work. Lots of people were killed. London will never forget. The investigations went on for weeks. The police were trying to find the bombers. My aunt Edel was near the bus bombing. My dad rang her straight away when he saw it on the news. I was really worried about her. She answered the phone and said that she was alright. That night I prayed for all the families that were affected by the bombing

and thanked the Lord for protecting Edel.

There was a tidal wave called a tsunami in Indonesia. There were floods everywhere. It was the worse thing ever. Thousands of people were killed, young and old. People on holidays were killed. Houses, schools, buildings and hotels were destroyed. Some tourists got the whole incident on tape. The waves were crashing into buildings and people were drowning in the water. After the wave receded people were wandering around looking for lost family members. It was terrible to see. Day after day aid was sent there and people's relations flew there to search for their loved ones. That was one incident that will never be forgotten.

There were good things that happened in your home county Grace. Cork won the all-Ireland senior hurling final against Galway. I watched all of it. It was a great battle. Galway weren't in top form and lost it at the end. You probably helped them to win Grace and helped Sean Óg Ó Halpin to lift the Liam McCarthy cup.

I'm really into motor sport. I go to every rally that I can. Recently I was at the Clare Stages Rally, my home county. I think it was one of the best rallies I have been to. It was a great race between Ray Breen and Charlie Donnelly. Ray Breen won the Clare Stages because Charlie got a time penalty. Ray Breen became the new Dunlop National Rally Championship in his Toyota Corolla.

That's really it Grace. I hope you enjoyed my letter and I hope you get on great in Heaven.

From your friend, Tom Kelleher

PS Say hello to my grandads Tom & Kevin

Letter to Grace by Jamie Tuohy, aged eleven

Dear Grace,

How have you been keeping? I hope you have made lots of new friends. I have had a terrific year; unfortunately for some it has been a tragic year. I'm sure you are very anxious to know what has been happening throughout 2004-2005. Let me tell you about it.

November 2004 was a wonderful month for me. Like many other people who have written to you, I sent a video away to the Late Late Toy Show. I waited for three weeks but there was no reply. On November 2nd, I got a phone call saying I had been short listed to appear on the Late Late Toy Show.

Then on the 6th they called me and asked me to come to the RTE Studios in Dublin for an audition. Unfortunately I didn't make it, I got down to the last thirty out of 2,000 people, but only twenty could be chosen. Hopefully by the time you receive this I will have appeared on the toy show. (Of course I'll charge an appearance fee.)

There was a terrible natural disaster on December 26th. A tsunami hit Thailand. Hundreds of thousands died. Thailand is a very popular holiday resort for Europeans and indeed Irish holidaymakers. Unfortunately many Irish bodies are still out there. Thankfully none of my friends were unlucky enough to be in Thailand during the tsunami. Ireland has donated millions in aid relief but somehow I feel it's not enough.

It wasn't all doom and gloom though. Cork has had a great year. They won the All-Ireland Final against Galway in both hurling and camogie. Cork is the European capital of culture 2005. It was excellent to see a city from Ireland winning it. I am sure you have met the misfortunate Robert Houlihan who died in Middleton this year. It's hard to believe a boy about my own age could suffer like that.

February was what I called the comic month. On the 17th, my dad brought my mum to London which appeared to be a very large shopping and spending spree judging by the bags and designer labels when she got home. She's definitely a shopaholic. What she didn't know was we had organised a surprise birthday party for her. I won't say what age she was because she'd kill me; we'll just say she is twenty-one and a bit. Her birthday was on February 20th, well actually it's the 20th of January but my nana told her it was in February. She only found out the real date on her wedding day. My nana's quite a character; she still thinks she's eighteen even though she's eighty-one. Anytime she's at a party she has to sing something by Daniel O'Donnell or Ritchie Kavanagh. For example one of her favourites is *Maggie Murphy's Knickers*. Here is the chorus:

*Maggie Murphy had knickers that she bought in Bagenalstown,
An inter-locking knickers that she bought for half a crown,
She wore it to the dances, 'twas a lovely shade of brown,
No matter how you'd court her, boy she'd never let it down.*

I suppose you've heard of the terrible situation in Africa. Some people have to walk nine miles just for water. Africa is still an AIDS-stricken country. All of the top countries are joining forces to try to wipe out poverty. Recently there were different concerts held all over the world in aid of Africa. Live 8 was the main concert held in Hyde Park in London. All of the top names in pop, rock and R&B took part, including U2, Robbie Williams, Dido and Bob Geldof. Somewhere in the near future poverty will be history.

On April 2nd, the world mourned the death of Pope John Paul II. I'm sure you've met him; tell him I said hello and I'm thinking of him. Pope Benedict XVI replaced him. John Paul was to visit Ireland once more before he passed away. I think you'll be happy to hear Mary McAleese was re-elected as president. Oh, I almost forgot to mention Dolores McNamara from Limerick, who won 115 million euro on the euro millions lotto. It has changed her life. Unfortunately the bad thing is there will always be kidnap threats. I hope they will leave her alone and let her live her life in peace.

Here's me babbling on and I haven't told you anything about what happened to me. Well in January 2005, I went off to the Cheerios Childline concert. I got up at 7:30 am even though I had set my alarm clock for 6:45 am. Oops! I had an amazing time. Clarecastle, the hurling team I play for, did excellently in

the county championships, but we lost the Stephen O'Keefe, unfortunately I was on holidays in Portugal at that particular time, so I couldn't play. It was a year of surprise parties and my nana's was on April 18th and she was eighty-one. My mum rang here and asked her to come up and baby-sit. When she arrived she gave out yarns. "Look at the state of me. I didn't even brush my hair. I'll get ye back," she warned. She had a great time and of course she had to sing *Danny Boy* and *Maggie Murphy's Knickers*. Prior to her party she had a terrible accident. In mid-March she had a fall. My granddad had laid out a net to go around the garden and she caught her leg and tripped over onto the concrete. As she has very brittle bones she smashed all her bones in her right arm and had to have a metal plate inserted into her arm. She had a brace on it up until August but that didn't stop her having a great time at the party. Did I mention my mum got a new car, her second in eighteen months; it's a Hyundai Trajet seven-seater. By the way, Ennis won the tidy towns competition. My favourite soccer team Liverpool won the Champions' League; hopefully they will go for the double and win it again next year.

You will be pleased to know the IRA decommissioned their weapons, not before time though. So many unnecessary deaths have been caused. Have you met some of the victims of hurricane Katrina? It destroyed New Orleans causing thousands of deaths. Likewise there were bombs planted in the tubes in London. Now bombing is happening on a daily basis.

Before my pen runs out of ink I'd better say goodbye. Please write to me. You have helped so many people who have had the same illness as you. I will never forget you. I promise I will write to you again.

Good-bye Grace, your friend Jamie Tuohy

PS is Elvis up there?

523, Times They Have Changed ???

Times have definitely changed since 1942. We have many more teachers comparing to 1942. In, 1942, there were three teachers in each part of the school. The boys had Mr. and Mrs. Hanly and one other teacher on the right-hand of the school. The girls had Mrs. Murphy, Ms. Guinnane and Ms. Meehan who was the principal on the left hand of the school.

As we have mid-term breaks they didn't have any. We also have a few weeks off from school at Christmas unlike back then they only had a few days off. School started at half nine and ended at three o' clock. School days were the same Monday to Friday.

Now, we have uniforms but they had none. We now bring in our lunch for small and big break. Back then your mother or father came in with your lunch at half-past twelve. We do alot of subjects now, such as, Maths, Irish, History, Geography, Science and many more. Back then they only did Irish, English, History and arithmetic.

The children had to bring in a lump of coal Every day for an open fire as there was no heating. Ms. Meehan had a range, so, there was heating in that classroom. The rest had open fires. Now our toilets are very hygienic but back then, they weren't the best!!!

They had up to twenty to thirty in each class.

We now start school at four to five years and finish at twelve to thirteen years. Back then you had to start at the age of four years and end at the age of fourteen. So, if you started school in 1942 you would end in 1952.

So, now you know that times have changed, I may finish with this,

Clarecastle National School,
Opened 1935.

Times They Have Changed

It's funny to think our ancestors moved into our old school and here we are moving into another new school! The old Clarecastle N.S. was down where the Abbey Hall is now. It was a mixed school but the boys were upstairs and the girls were downstairs. There was a fireplace in each room which kept the children warm. That is if the teacher didn't stand in front of it! Also the children brought their own milk to school and left their bottles beside the fire. Some even raced to school early just to get a good place by the fire! After a while an inspector called to the school. Unfortunately he said the school was over-crowded. So the parish had to build a new school. It was built in the year 1935. The girls and boys were still separated. Even in the yard there was a big wall between them, but around 198 the boys girls were mixed. I spent seven years in that school and loved every bit of it. Then after the Easter holidays of 2006, everybody came back from holidays and the school was knocked. We moved into prefabs straight away. I was sorry to see the old school knocked, but I'm looking forward to going into the new school and maybe in another twenty years or so children just like me will be writing about our new school.

Ellen Quinn

Times they have changed

There is one thing that is happening around the world and everybody knows it that times they have changed. A lot of things are changing around us but the biggest one for Clarecastle is the new school being built.

Back when my parents were young their parents had to pay a fee for the coal because there was no central heating. When our parents and other relations before them went to school, they didn't have computers or calculators. They had to do everything on their own. They always had to do work on the farms after school and do their homework. After school our parents never had the luxuries we have. They only had a radio. They actually didn't have a phone either.

When our parents went to school, the girls were in a separate part of the school to the boys and were at a different side of the school during break. But in some schools out around the country, they were not segregated. The schools weren't

segregated because there were not enough pupils to segregate. Also our parent's copy wasn't a copy. They used a slate instead and children used to walk around three miles to school, some even more. The headmaster always had a stick that he used to keep control.

Nowadays, pupils get dropped at the school gates. We also have the luxuries our parents didn't have like the PSP or an MP3. Nowadays we wrap our books in plastic but back then they used brown paper which came from shops because when they bought something, it was wrapped and was saved for the wrapping of school books. School uniforms were uncommon back then but nowadays everyone has one. At the end of school they gave you a primary examination that was made up of Irish, English and maths. Most people never went on to secondary school.

Michael Lynch, sixth class

Times have definitely changed since 1942. We have a lot more teachers compared to 1942. In 1942, they had three teachers in each part of the school. The boys had Mr and Mrs Hanly and one other teacher on the right hand of the school. The girls had Mrs Murphy, Ms Gunning and Ms Meehan, who was the principal on the left hand of the school.

As we have mid-term breaks they didn't have any. We also have a few weeks off from school at Christmas unlike back then they had only a few days off. School started at half-nine and ended at three o'clock. School days were the same, Monday to Friday.

Now we have uniforms but they had none. We now bring in our lunch for small and big break. Back then your mother or father came in with your lunch at half past twelve. We do a lot of subjects now, such as maths, Irish, history, geography,

science and many more. Back then they only did Irish, English and history.

The children had to bring in a lump of coal every day for an open fire as there was no heating. Ms Meehan had a range, so that was their heating in that classroom. The rest had open fires. Now our toilets are very hygienic but back then they weren't the best.

They had up to twenty to thirty in each class. We now start school at four to five years and finish at twelve to thirteen years. Back then you had to start at the age of four and end at the age of fourteen. So, if you started school in 1942 you would end in 1952.

So now you know that times have changed, I may finish with this. Clarecastle National School, opened in 1935.

Zoe Casey, sixth class

Times They have Changed

There is one thing that is happening around the world an everybody knows it Times They Have Changed. A lot of things are changing around us but the biggest one for Clarecastle is the new school being built. The old school in Clarecastle was built in 1935.

Back when my parents were young their parents had to pay a fee for the coal because there was no central heating. When our parents and other relations before them went to school, they didn't have computers or calculators they had to do everything on (things) their own. They always had work to do on their farm every day as well as their homework. After school our parents never had the luxuries we have. They only had a radio for entertainment. They actually didn't have a phone either everything went by post.

When our parents went to school the girls were in a separate of the school to the boys and were at a different side of the school during break. But in some schools out around the country they were not segregated. The schools weren't segregated because there was not enough pupils to segregate. Also our parents copy wasn't actually a copy they used a slate instead and children used to walk about three miles to school some even more. The headmaster always had a stick that he used to keep in control.

Nowadays pupils get dropped at the school gates. We also have the luxuries our parents didn't have like the P.S.P or an MP3 player. Now days we cover our books in plastic but back then people used brown paper which came from shops, because when people bought something it was wrapped and the wrapping was saved for the covering of school books.

School uniforms were uncommon back then but now days everyone has

At the end of primary school every pupil did the primary exam which was made up of Irish, English and Arithmetic (Maths). Most people never went on to secondary.

Times they have changed

We have come a long way from hedge schools. Imagine like my great granny walked for miles just to get to school with turf in her bag for a fire in the school to keep them warm. She brought home-made bread and milk for lunch. She did all lessons in Irish, I find it hard to do them in English.

My granny cycled to school and got white bread and Bo Peep red strawberry jam and cocoa made from hot water (yeuk). She also did her lessons in Irish (poor granny).

My mammy was very lucky; she got the bus to school. She got soup and bread for her lunch (yum yum) and she learned her lessons through English (lucky her).

Even luckier for me, my parents bring me to school in the car. I have a choice of hot soup and bread for my lunch or yummy

sandwiches for lunch (spoilt for choice). I do all my lessons in English.

The hedge schools in Clarecastle were cold and wet. We are so lucky. We get a brand new school made from concrete. I am looking forward to moving into our new school. IN our new school, we will have computes and a chemistry room for our use which will be a big change from blackboards and chalk which is what my granny and great granny had. I think I will never complain about school again (only joking).

Facts: in 1989 there was a class of over fifty pupils; children had no uniform up to 1994/95 and Mr Hanly and Mrs Brooks were former principals.

Louise Collins, fifth class

It's funny to think our ancestors moved into our old school and here we are moving into another new school. The old Clarecastle NS was down where the Abbey hall is now. It was a mixed school but the boy and girls were separated. The girls were upstairs and the boys were downstairs. There were fireplaces in each room which kept the children warm. Also the children brought their own milk to school and left their bottles near the fire. Some even raced to school early to get a good place by the fire.

After a while an inspector called to the school. Unfortunately he said the school was over-crowded. So the parish had to build a new school. It was built in the year 1935. The girls and boys were still separated, even in the yard there was a big wall between them but around the 1980s the boys and girls were mixed. It was a lovely school and so many memories were in it.

I spent seven years in that school and I loved every bit of it. After

the Easter holidays of 2006, everybody came back from holidays and the school was knocked. We moved into prefabs straight away. I was sorry to see the old school knocked but I am looking forward to going into the new school and maybe in another ninety years or so children just like me will be writing about the new school.

Ellen Quinn, sixth class



Students painting the mural in the shed

Times they have changed

School long ago was very different from today. A lot of the buildings were very old. They had outside toilets and had fireplaces instead of central heating. The children walked to school and took bread and butter sandwiches with bottles of milk or tea for lunch. The bottles of tea were placed beside the fireplace to keep them warm and sometimes the bottle burst because the glass got too hot and the tea spilt.

The children did not have any lunch treats that children have today. The schools did not have any computers and instead of copy books the children drew on slate with chalk and learned to count with an abacus.

They used pen and ink to write with. The desks had a little ink well and a slot for holding the pens. The lid of the table could be lifted up and books could be stored underneath.

Long ago, one teacher usually taught a few different classes and sometimes a school might only have three teachers. More often than not, the teachers were very old and very cross. They

would slap the children's knuckles with a big stick called *bata* and sometimes banged their heads together if they did not know their lessons.

Latin prayers were taught in the schools long ago. This was because the mass was said in Latin. Sometimes the parish priest would call to the school to test the children on their religion and to ask what the mass was about the previous Sunday.

The children learned the other subjects that we learn today but the girls also learned how to knit and sew. The children did not wear school uniforms and when the school inspector came, all the children would wear their best clothes. The boys and girls did not go on nature walks or school tours like we do today.

A lot of children did not go to secondary school because they were needed to work on the family farm or business and some children went to England or America to work after leaving national school.

Brian Gilroy



The castle and the bridge circa 1900

Memories of Mickey McNamara

Mickey attended Clarecastle BNS between 1938 and 1946

Mickey McNamara was born in Clarecastle and is a carpenter. He recounted life in Clarecastle as a child growing up and the progress the village has made in his lifetime. He recalled how his father Martin (Sonny) was paralysed as a young man of thirty-five years and spent the next eighteen years of his life confined to bed under the loving care of his mother Nora or Roddy as she was better known (née Fitzpatrick)

He spoke of the two punt guns now on display at Navin's pub in the village. They were brought into the village by a Mr Vincent, a retired gentleman who lived in Callinan's Coach House. He later gave the big punt gun to Joe Considine and the smaller one to Tommy Considine who used them to shoot duck in the slob lands of the Fergus. The big gun would take a pound-and-a-half of gunpowder and lead and was loaded through the muzzle. The record take for one shot was 120 ducks. Mickey told us the bang was so loud that the gunmen in Ennis shooting at the back of the Bishop's could hear it and would know that within ten minutes the remaining ducks would be heading in their direction from the fright. The punt gun was wedged in the boat and mounted on an x-shaped support. The recoil of the shot would send the boat backward a good distance. The ducks would then be sold locally and to Lanes of Ennis. This was a good source of income for these families during the closed fishing season. The smaller gun took a half-pound of shot that was breech-loaded in a large brass cartridge. Mickey told us that during the war years when everything was scarce, the Considines manufactured their own lead shot by straining molten lead through a milk strainer into a container of water. The lead pieces were not very round but did the job. Their sons Georgie and Marty were the last to use the big guns.

Joe Considine had also the toll rights on the fair days — Smiths previously held these — and they would set up outposts on strategic entrances to the village (the bridge, Enright's house on the Pound road and the school) where they would collect the toll per animal. Many of the farmers (buyers) tried to barge through but to no avail.

The fair green was originally known as Smith's field. The streets were in a very bad state after the fair and Mickey remembers his grandfather Jack Fitzpatrick getting paid by the Parish Priest Canon Madden for trying to keep animals out of the

church grounds. Mickey would help him sweep up and get rewarded for his work.

He spoke about trapping songbirds with bird lime. During the last war when it was not possible to get bird lime, he used the bark of a holly tree from Gleeson's house on the Kildysart road (now Shaw's). The bark was beaten into a pulp and then mixed with resin to produce a sticky substance. The birds when caught would have their wings and feet cleaned with paraffin oil before being put in cages that were home-made.

Another pastime for boys was hunting rabbits. Nearly every house had a dog of some breed or another ranging from terriers to half-bred greyhounds. They would stand down at the bridge and whistle and within ten minutes about a dozen dogs would arrive eager for the hunt. "We used to have great sport and have some rabbits to sell at sixpence each, enough to buy a few sweets and a packet of Woodbines for the next day's hunting".

The principle pastime for boys after school in those years of the forties was hurling in the fair green and Burkes Level (now Primrose Gardens). Bernard Power would give a hurling ball as a prize to the winners. Teams from the Quay Road, Main Street, the Pound, the Commons and Lissane would compete for the prize which was greatly valued as they would be normally be hurling with a sponge or tennis ball. The leather hurling ball when damaged would be brought to Sonny Brandon, who was a harness maker, for repair.

During the nineteen-forties for six weeks before Christmas, Clare County Council would employ men. They called it 'charity week'. A member of each labouring family would be employed for a week. Some households would benefit more than others depending on the size of the families. The work consisted of cleaning the roads and breaking stones with a small stone hammer at the side of the road. Big stones would be broken down to about one-and-a-half inches for sheeting the road. Those breaking the stone would be paid by the cubic yard at six shillings a yard.

During the war years no coal was imported so everyone used turf and timber. The turf from Killoo and Skehana bogs was of poor quality and damp. At school during this time two of the older boys would be sent up to Roughan's and Pat Burley's

fields every morning in the winter months to pick rotten sticks from the hedges to start the school fires. If you delayed too long you would be disciplined when you came back.

Mickey recalled the building of Roughan's old house, which was bulldozed in October of this year (2006) to make way for a new estate of up to 300 houses. Mickey and George Kelly built it from the remains of an old barn and Matt Cunningham plastered it in 1955. He also recalled a sad event of Fr John Roughan on a visit home from the missions dying suddenly while on a walk a short distance from the house. Mickey's father had died in that same year and Fr John had said the Funeral Mass a month previously.

Mickey worked as a carpenter along with Jimmy Neylon, Monthy Flanagan, Sean McNamara and John Quinn on the building of Madden's Terrace of twenty-six houses which had a contract price of £36,500. These replaced the Clare Commons houses.

He was on the Clarecastle minor team that won the 1950 county championship and recalled several fund raising dances at the labour hall organised by Willie Hanly, Joe Hayes and Tolly Guinnane to finance a trip to Portlaoise to play a team there that John Hanly was associated with through teaching there. They travelled in a group of Ford Prefect cars on hire from a firm in Limerick, Ryan's self-drive cars. One of the cars, driven by Dermot Halpin, broke a spring on the way up and Mickey travelled back in that car with Dermot. He also recalled going to films in the old Labour Hall presented by *Scannán na Sionna*.

Mickey was a member of the last pipe band in the village. They played for the 1948 county final. On side drums you had Anthony Considine, Michael Moloney and Mickey McNamara. The pipers were John Slattery, Cyril Moloney, Robbie Moloney, Tom Meere, Tom Gleeson and Pappy Slattery. Jack Keane trained the drummers; on the big drum was Tolly Guinnane and on the tenor drums you had Paddy Russell and Mickey Russell.

He remembered Tommy Kinnane who was shot in the eye by Neville, a Free State soldier from Kilkishen. Kinnane was an IRA man and was usually armed. Kinnane had left the village and was cycling towards Ennis when he came towards the two soldiers at a point of the road near where Christopher Collins house is now. He reached behind him for his gun and Neville shot him. In his later years the IRA provided him with a caravan to live in and erected a headstone to him in the old cemetery in Clare Hill.

Mickey said up to twelve boats a year came into Clarecastle harbour delivering coal to Powers, Suttons, McInerneys, and the Mental Hospital. It gave good employment as it took twelve men alone to unload the coal. The boats had two holds.

There were eight men in the bunker filling the huge buckets, two on the winches and two on the tug ropes. The buckets were swung out from the boat, over the horse-cars, a level was pulled and the coal fell into the cars. The car-men would take the road up the Turnpike to avoid the climb up McNamara's Hill when going into Ennis. They got £7 per man for a 700 ton boat. The car men were paid by the load.

On the 18th of May 1948 Willie Murphy, aged nineteen years, was drowned while swimming in the quay. Swimming was a great summer pastime in those years and the main areas for it were at the 'deep' on the Ennis side of the present dam also at the quay and New Hall lake which was the favourite spot.

The Regatta was an annual event that took place at the quay. It included swimming competitions, boat racing, diving, clay pigeon shooting, sheaf throwing, a drag hunt, fancy dress parades and tug o' war. It attracted big crowds from the parish and outside parishes.

Race meetings were held at Lynch's field at Claremount and at Bob O'Meara's field in Killoo. There were different categories for horses and ponies and prizes consisted of a few pounds and sets of tackling. Those meetings were called 'flapper meetings'. The horses were owned by the local car men and farmers and would be ridden by the local lads bareback with no saddles.

Annual coursing meetings were held at Lynch's field in Lissane.

Mickey spoke about the lack of work in Clarecastle apart from the fishing and shooting. The only other source of employment was working for the local farmers such as Lynch's, McInerney's, William Reidy or Lane-Joint (now Gleeson's) at Carnelly. In the late fifties there was employment in the pipe factory and also at Power's and Sutton's coal-yards.

Clare County Council had bought a field on the Clare Road from the Roughan family. It was known as the Pike field. During the last war, the council gave out allotments on this field to local families to grow potatoes and vegetables. The soil was poor as corn had been grown in the field for many years. The council later built St Joseph's Terrace on this field and Mickey came to live there in one of the new houses. He recalled that initially there was no electricity or water in the scheme. Electricity came later under the Rural Electrification Scheme and the council provided a public pump at the Clarecastle entrance to the houses.

Mickey recalled carnivals coming to the Fair Green. On one occasion, a high-diver amazed the crowd by diving from a platform eighty feet high into a water tank. The tank, which was seven feet high, had to be filled by the fire brigade by pumping water from the quay. The surface of the tank was sprinkled with petrol and set alight. The high-diver, known as Lindberg, dived through the flames from that great height.

Clare Commons		Quay road, east to west on right		Creggaun	
3	National School	a	Micke Aherne	2	Morrissey
4	Paddy Slattery	b	Considine	3	Jim Fitzpatrick
6	Ned Sheridan	c	Brandon	4	Crowe
8	Jimmy Frost	d	Neylon	6	Jack Moroney
12	John McCarthy	e	Joe Considine	7	Mike Daly
15	Peter Meere	f	Joe Smyth	8	Mrs Corry
19	Dan Donnelly	g	Joe Hayes	9	Bill Moloney
19A	Mike Keane	h	Dispensary	13	Delia Kelly, post office
20	Dick Cole	l	Griffin	14	Delia Kelly, post office
21	Paddy (Lord) Kelly	j	Shipley	Patrick Street/Main St, south to north	
22	Freddie McMahon	k	Hickey	1A	Enrights
23	Mrs Mullins	l	Clarke	4	Frank Moylan
24A	Forge, Timmy McMahon	m	Herlihy	5	William Blake
24	George Kelly	o	Meaney	6	Joe Barry
25	Ann Daly	Fair Green Lane		7	Protestant church
26	Mick O'Reilly/Marty Kelly	1	Jim Murphy	8 & 9	Pat Mantle
27	Ned Russell	2	Jack Keane	11	Peter Slattery
28	Paddy Mullins	6	Jim Moloney	12	Slaughter house
29	Martin Meere	7	Eddie Murphy, postman	13	Willie Moloney
30	Labour Hall	Creggaun Lane		14	Jim McMahon
31	Patsy Clancy	13	Mike Taylor	15	Tom Murphy
33	Tony Ward	14	Martin Kildea	16	Jack McNamara
34	Marty Reidy	15	Jim McMahon	17	Patsy Considine/Callinan's yard
34A	Martin Sonny McNamara	16	Mary Guinnane	18A	Alfie Drumm
35	Mrs Halpin	Main Street, east to west on right		18	John Egan
41	Tom Touhy	2	Priests House	19	Mick Monahan
41A	Lime kiln	2A	Tom Hanly	19A	Powers pub and coal yard
43	Whitney/Hegarty	2B	Priest's house	20	Pat Fitzgerald, pub
44	Paddy Flynn	6	John O'Dea, hardware shop	21	Miko Murphy, pub
46	Bridie Culligan	6A	John O'Dea, hardware shop	22	John Monahan
50	Mary Ann Hickey	7	Lizzie Ahern, pub	23	Liza Scanlon
51	Mary Ann McMahon/Boyle	8	Christy Moloney	24	Pal Horan
52	Tom Cole	9	Miss Liddy, teacher	25	Mary McMahon, shop
54	Patsy Clancy, carpentry workshop	10	Guard Hackett	26	B. Lyons - shop
56	Ss Peter & Paul church	11	Mr McGrath	27	Mrs Barry, shop
57	Willie Kelly	12	Guard Collins	28	Fred Burke
58	Joe Hickey	13	Mick Loftus	28A	Fred Burke
58A	Purtill	14	Sweeney's pub	29	Tom Hayes, pub
59	Fogarty	15	Powers	30	Paddy McMahon
60	Navan's pub	16	Powers	31	Garvey, shop
61	Garda Barracks	17	Mrs Costello, shop	32	Garvey, shop
Fair Green		18	Devine	33	P Dillon
26	Jim Davis	19	Sullivan's, shop	34	Sheedy/O'Briens
28	Paddy Normoyle	20	Callinan's, pub		
35	John Joe McInerney	24	Miko McNamara		
40	Martin Kelly	25	John McNamara		
41	Shed	26	Richie McMahon		

House occupancy, mid-1940s, as
remembered by Mickey McNamara





Changing times — a busy main road in the 1960s

Tony Doyle delivers the milk on a horse and cart

Changing times

Modern commuter trains passing by the ancient monastery at Clare Abbey



Fishing boats and nets at the quay in Clarecastle

Is it the end of a local tradition? Licences for drift net fishing on the river Fergus will not be renewed in 2007

Clarecastle NS staff 2007



Back row, left to right: Pauline West, Edel Cotter, Michael Cummins, Liam Hayes, Kitty Talty, Martina O'Callaghan, Brid Leyden and Lorraine McNamara

Middle row, left to right: Barbara Hassett, Anne Larkin, Mary O'Gorman, Carmel Duff, Teresa Nugent, Carmel Nugent, Norah Power, Sharon Brady and Rosemarie Meaney

Front row, left to right: Claire Donnelly, Deirdre Leyden, Christopher Morley, Michelle Delaney, Hilary Parkinson, Christina Talty, Terry O'Sullivan and Caroline Lee



Junior infants class 2007
Class teacher: Teresa Nugent

Back row, left to right: Amy Browne, Jack Tierney, Nessa Collins,
Patrick Maxwell, Erin Howley, David Walshe and Isabel Hillery

Middle row, left to right: Dylan Brown, Amy Russell,
Michael Kelly, Oscar Grijalva, Harry Ward, Dearbhile Ní Mhathúna
and Ben Sullivan

Front row, left to right: Robyn Doyle, Nadia Buczek, Tim Collins,
Veronica Hanrahan, Jennifer Hanrahan, Cian Broderick,
Lauren Mullen and David Tuohy



Junior infants class 2007
Class teacher: Carmel Duff

Back row, left to right: Cillian Casey, Sarah Kearney, Alec Cassley, Doireann Kinsella, Evan Dolan, Kirsty O'Hara and Aidan Ryan

Middle row, left to right: Josh Brack, Leanne Considine, Brandon Healy, Patrick Bryan, Aibhlin Donnelly, Conor Halpin, Cian Considine, Alex McCoy and Jacinta Casey

Front row, left to right: Katie O'Shea, Gareth Guinnane, Andrea Donnellan, Tami Coker, Sarah McNamara, Barry Morrissey and Shauna Carey



Senior infants class 2007
Class teachers: Anne Larkin and Mary O'Gorman

Back row, left to right: Noel Shannon, Luke MacDermott, Jack Hanrahan, Adam Spencer, Oisín MacMathúna, Ricky Mulcaire, Oisín Casey and Leo Corcoran

Middle row, left to right: Sinéad Cullinan, Elise Mulcaire, Seorsia Jack, Jade Noonan, Clódagha McCabe, Rachel Cassidy and Jamie Lee Lavan

Front row, left to right: Sarah Considine, Kimberly Ward, Aisling Donnelly, Emma Cosgrove, Robyn Maxwell and Éibhlín Carey



Senior infants class 2007
Class teacher: Deirdre Leyden

Back row, left to right: Céallum Browne, Eimhear Hodgins, Liam Halpin, Isabel Scanlon, Éanna O'Donoghue and Kelsey Farmer

Middle row, left to right: Ronan Donnelly, Elizabeth Russell, Eoghan Wallace, Erin Backes, Seán Corcoran and Rachel McCarthy

Front row, left to right: Sophie Morrissey, Darragh Healy, Faith Coker, Craig Murphy, Katie Holland and Fergus Garvey



First class 2007
Class teacher: Terry O'Sullivan

Back row, left to right: Rachel Collins, Isabel Gallagher, Alicia Burke, Yasmin Slattery, Amy Kearney, Chealsea O'Grady and Anna Glynn

Middle row, left to right: Niamh McDermott, Sarah O'Rourke, Tess Griffin, Sally O'Shea, Nessa McNamara and Lainey Mae Nugent

Front row, left to right: Mark Coughlan, Daragh Dolan, Liam King, Eoin Collins, Ruairi Power and Shaun Mullen



First class 2007
Class teacher: Claire Donnelly

Back row, left to right: Ally Fleming, Chloe Considine, Rachel Wiley, Tatyana Jack, Aoife Lyons and Lauren Healy

Middle row, left to right: Christopher Bryan, Lee Brigdale, Cian McNamara, Ryan Twomey, Owen O'Hara, Stephen Hogan, Colin Brigdale and Lorcan Clancy

Front row, left to right: Saoirse Phelan, Ellen Barry, Róisín Spriggs, Keeviah Palmer, Sarah McGuane and Ciara Halpin



Second class 2007
Class teacher: Hilary Parkinson

Back row, left to right: David Walsh, Louis Morrisroe, Kelan Browne, Michael-John Hayes, Michael Lyons, Adam Moloney and Dean Hanrahan

Middle row, left to right: Doireann Murphy, Nathan Kerins, Lee Brack, Joey Lynch, Stephen Birney, Brian McDonnell and Rebecca McDonnell

Front row, left to right: Stacey Garvey, Rianne Donnellan, Sarah Canry, Erin Walshe, Chelsie Dinan, Natasha Starr and Amie Wiley



Second class 2007
Class teacher: Christopher Morley

Back row, left to right: Marc McAuliffe, Mark O'Loughlin, Stephen Gilroy, David Barry, Stephen Barry, Conor Ryan and Max Hillery

Middle row, left to right: Garbhan Kenneally, Robert Lipfert, Cian Donnelly, Gareth Kelly, Jack Fleming, Leon Casey and Stephen Kelleher

Front row, left to right: Sinéad Coughlan, Ciara Donnelly, Hannah Wallace, Liadh Hanrahan and Zuleika Browne



Third class 2007

Class teacher: Sharon Brady

Back row, left to right: Ellen Brogan, Niall O'Donoghue, Zhenna O'Sullivan, Jake Kearney, Aisling Ryan, Josh Kelly and Chelsie McGrath

Middle row, left to right: Ryan Crabb, Natasha Casey, Darren Crowe, Claire Phelan, Mark McCabe, Megan Lipfert, Jordan Barnes and Eilish Cullinan

Front row, left to right: Dean O'Hara, Katelin King, Cathal Hodgins, Lauren Kelly, Matthew Fahy, Cliona Glynn, Jack Halpin and Michaela McNamara



Third class 2007
Class teacher: Michelle Delaney

Back row, left to right: Hayden Starr, Jessica Ebbs, Seán Lynch, Lauren Tuohy, Kevin Mulcaire, Sarah Moloney, Peter Stack and Niamh Healy

Middle row, left to right: Peter Magliocco, Tania Benkorie, Adam Cassidy, Nanci Page, Ronan Garvey, Olivia Halpin and Caoimhghin Considine

Front row, left to right: Claire Commons, Jack Hayes, Gráinne Daly, Brandon Greene, Joyce Neville, Jack Murphy and Charlene Keenan



Alex McCoy, Cain Considine, Josh Brack and Aoibhín Donnelly



Garreth Guinnane, Brandon Healy, Patrick Bryan and Kirsty O'Hara



Cillian Casey and Jacinta Casey



Tami Coker, Aidan Ryan and Conor Halpin



Evan Dolan, Andrea Donnellan and Leanne Considine



Sarah Kearney and Doireann Kinsella



Veronica and Jennifer Hannrahan



Dearbhaile Ní Mhathúna



Michael Kelly and Patrick Maxwell



Tim Collins and Cian Broderick



Amy Browne, Isobel Hillery and Erin Howley



Nessa Collins and Nadia Buczek

First day at school September 2006



Barry Morrissey and Shauna Carey



Sarah McNamara and Ivie Oronsaye



Ben Sullivan and Charlie Lavin



Jack Tierney and David Tuohy



Harry Ward, David Walshe and
Dylan Browne



Oscar Grijalva and Robyn Doyle



Amy Russell and Laura Jane Mullen



Fourth class 2007
Class teacher: Edel Cotter

Back row, left to right: Amber O'Sullivan, Fiona Coughlan, Oskarina O'Sullivan, Hayley Lawton, Alanna Hogan, Anna-Mae Kenneally, Michelle Galbraith, Amy McNamara, Jacinta Higgins and Nicole Morrissey

Middle back row, left to right: Paul Dolan, Ben Moloney, Darragh Holland, Adam Howard, Michael McDermott, Carsten Lipfert and Stephen Considine

Middle front row, left to right: Alysha Walshe, Alice Brogan, Lourda Healy, Rachel Lyons, Nicole Corcoran, Aoife O'Rourke, Niamh Donnellan and Ellen McAuliffe

Front row, left to right: Brian Clancy, Ronan Leyden, Jordan McGrath, Sean Trahe, Daniel Slattery, Brian Magner and Evan Wiley



Fifth class 2007
Class teacher: Christina Talty

Back row, left to right: Joseph Barry, Mark McGuane, Ethan Moloney, Tommy Howard, Patrick Tuohy, Dylan Broderick, Derek Casey, Dylan Hanrahan and Séan Cosgrove

Middle back, left to right: Matthew Browne, Miranda Mayo, Bronwyn Long, Louise Collins, Aine Considine, Kelly Doyle, Méabh Cole, Rebecca Spencer and Ella Kearse

Middle front, left to right: Abbie McCarthy, Ciara Mulcaire, Onagh Wallace, Katie Shannon, Rachel Kelleher, Shauna Cooley, Lyndsay Corcoran and Jade Tierney

Front row, left to right: Conor Madigan, Oliver Higgins, Jake Barnes, Gerard Gegan, Ryan Fleming, Brian Gilroy and Adam Crowe



Back row, left to right: Robert Duggan, Fiona Whelan, Cassandra Walsh, Ellen Quinn, Amy Gallagher, Aisling McInerney, Zoe Griffin, Lucy Hanrahan and Stephen Ward

Middle back row, left to right: Sean Lynch, Killian Considine, Jonathan Griffey, Conor Clancy, Aaron Greene, Michael Casey, Michael Lynch, Conor Liddy and Danny Collieran

Middle front row, left to right: Alish O'Rourke, Laura McAuliffe, Danielle Considine, Niamh Daly, Julie Marie Mongans, Kate Murphy, Zoe Casey and Courtney O'Sullivan

Front row, left to right: Lorcan O'Donoghue, Devon Staunton, Michael Glynn, Eoin Hick, Patrick Dolan, Cian McDonnell and Cathal Torpey



Pupils and teachers, May 2007



Twins Eoin and Rachel Collins



Twins Jennifer and Veronica Hanrahan



Twins David and Stephen Barry



Twins Leo and Sean Corcoran.



Four generations of families who attended Clarecastle school

Above: Jessica Noonan, Anne Noonan, Melissa Healy, Brandon Healy, Anna Healy and Jade Noonan.

Left: Pauline Considine, Laura Considine, Betty Cullinan and Chloe Considine.



ALYSHA WALSH



FIONA COUGHLAN

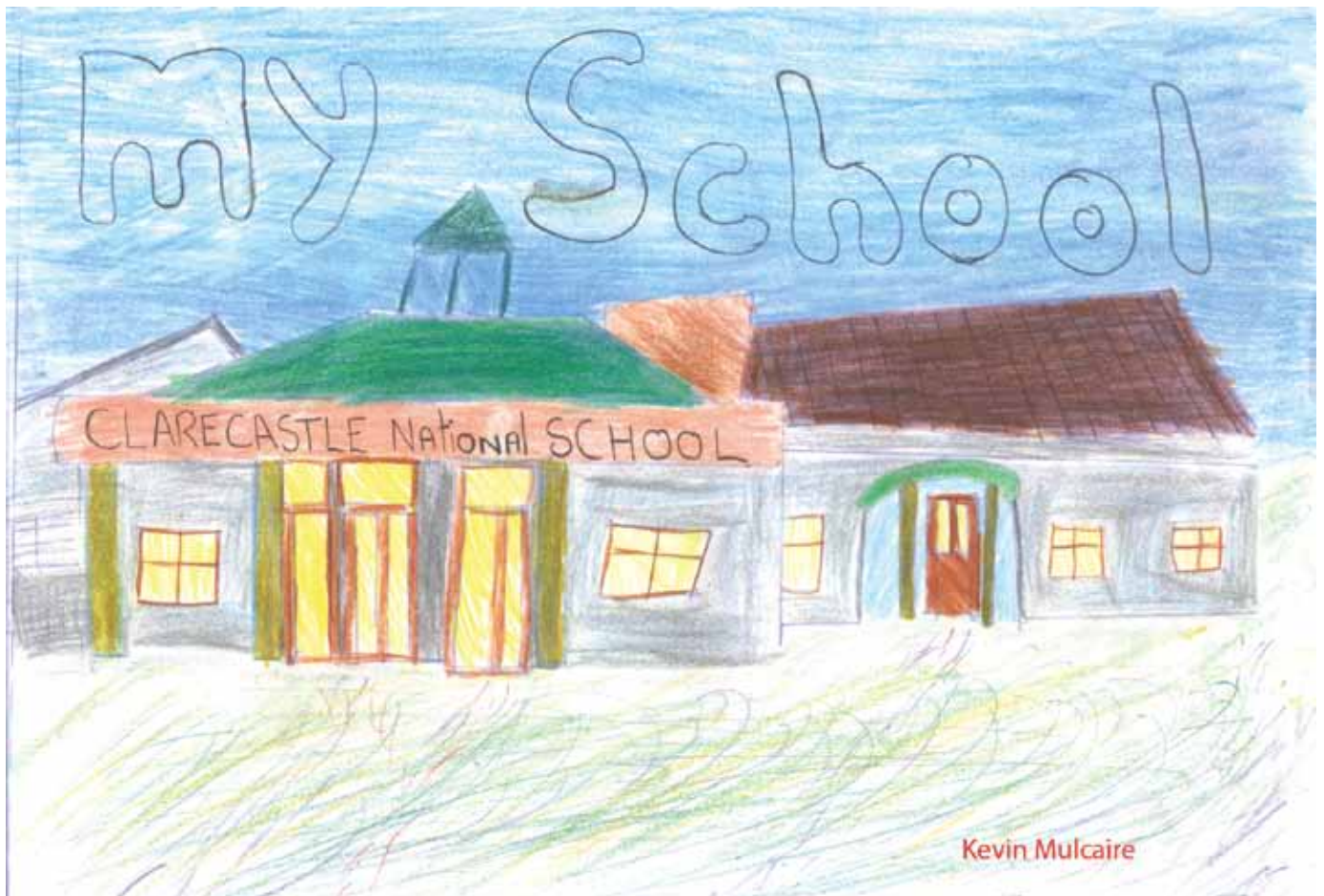


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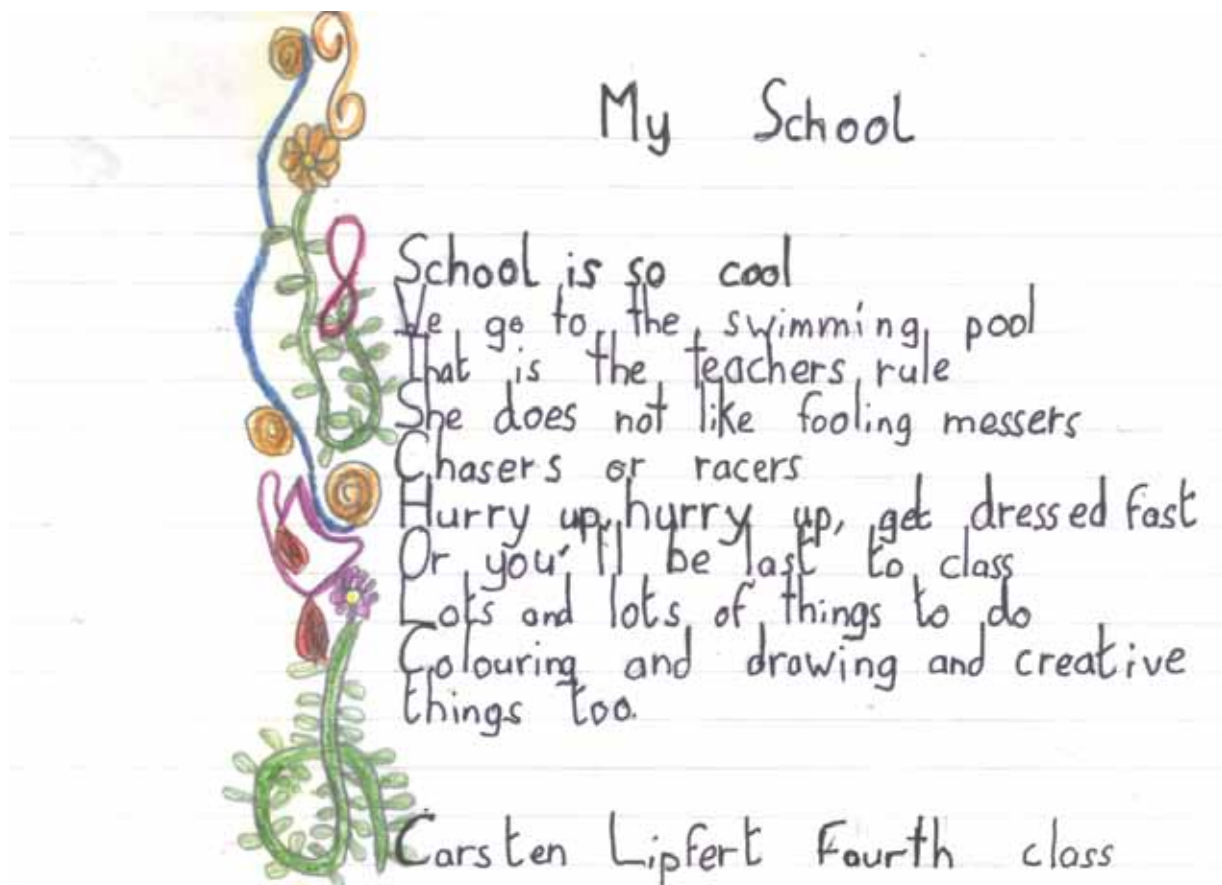
My School



LAUREN TUOHY - 3RD CLASS



Kevin Mulcaire





My School



School is special
School is fun
In the yard
I can play and run.



English, Irish, Maths and Art
In the classroom
We all take part.



I can hurl and swim
And skip and play
I really do
Have fun each day.



The new school is coming
The future is bright
In Clarecastle things are just Right!

Alice Brogan
fourth class

My School



5+6+489=

My school is good
My school is fine
Every day is so divine.
We go there for six hours
To strengthen our English
and Maths powers.
We do sums every day
And in the garden we like to play.
Fourth class is so cool!
We go to the swimming pool,
Our teachers are very kind
They're ones you'll never find.
My first day was so neat
At the end of class
We got a treat.



English



Jordan McGrath
4th Class

$$\begin{array}{l} 2 \times 2 = 4 \quad 4 \times 8 = 32 \\ 9 + 2 = 11 \quad 9 \times 9 = 81 \\ 8 \times 8 = 64 \quad 2 \times 8 = 16 \end{array}$$



My School

Thirty five was the year the school was born
And children have gone there every morn

My grandad, my mother and brothers too
All went to Clarecastle National School

The teachers are clever and very funny
And come every payday they get lots of money

The buildings may change but that's not a hassle,
I thank God everyday I live in Clarecastle.

Lauren Tuohy 3rd class



My School

We go to school to learn each day,
We do our work and then we play.
We learn to know right from wrong,
And read and write as the year goes on.

Ms Delaney makes it fun,
Stars and stickers for everyone.
When the school bell rings our pens go down
We rush for the door - Last one out is a clown.

But tomorrow again we'll line up in the yard,
Ready once more to work and play hard.



My School

We're all excited about our new school,
Because it's going to be so cool.

Hopefully next year our school will be ready,
I hope it will be fairly steady.

At the moment there's stones and mud everywhere,
I hope it will be tidied before the new year.

With classrooms and playgrounds and a P.E. hall,
It's going to be the best school of ALL!

by Kaitlin King 3rd class



My School

So much to do at school each day,
Full of activities and games to play,
Maths, Religion, Reading and Writing,
I ask you, what could be more exciting?

Perhaps Arts and Crafts and Music too
Swimming, and P.E. to name but a few.

While the builders work hard and steady
So that the new school soon will be ready

Oh let's all jump and shout for joy
Don't be shy and don't be coy

It's the tops, it's ultra cool

Hip hip hooray for Clarecastle National School!!

Joyce Neville 3rd class



1955 boys



1955 girls' confirmation

Andy Moloney remembers

Andy was born in 1954 and attended Clarecastle bns between the years 1959 and 1967

Andy talked of the craic they had walking from home from school with his brothers and sister Marella, the Barrys, the Cullinans and the Mulherns and of being in no hurry, especially on the way home, because of the many jobs that awaited them. One day going home he walked across the old bridge at the river, a very dangerous stunt. His father, who worked with the P. and T. (eircom today), spotted him and chastised him when he got home.

Before going to school there were three cows to be milked and calves and a pig to be fed and cleaned out. Regularly too they were up at 6:30 am to be collected by John Plunkett to milk his cows. These chores were repeated again at evening time. "Some of our milk was sent to the creamery in Moyriesk and we would get the skim milk back which would be fed to the calves and pig".

Andy remembers walking in to serve 8:00 am mass in Latin for Fr White, sometimes without any breakfast and going straight to school afterwards. A group of fifth and sixth class students were rostered to do it about once every month. He said it was difficult to learn the Latin responses and that Martin Reynolds was a great help in teaching him.

In the cold winter the school was heated by a turf fire, which was no great improvement for the children, as the teachers stood with their backs to the fire getting whatever small benefit there was from it. The fire also served to heat the billycans of milk and cocoa of the country children. Some bought their drinks in glass bottles and it was many the bottle that cracked due to being too near the heat. The lunch in those days consisted of bread and butter with whatever drink you brought, usually milk. The village boys were allowed home for lunch and often bought ice pops and 1^d bars at Sergeant Long's shop on the way back.

"We would ask them for the butt of the ice pop or a piece of the bar as we were not allowed outside the school grounds."

That small shop was a Mecca for the children where a penny went a long way.

The toilet facilities in the school were antiquated even for that era. They were old solid timber cubicles with no water facilities which had to be cleaned out annually. They would now be condemned as a health hazard

Andy enjoyed his first few years in school with Miss Costelloe (Mrs Brooks) who could control a class without recourse to corporal punishment. He recalls he had difficulty learning the alphabet until one day she bought in a record with the alphabet set to music and after hearing it once he had no difficulty afterwards remembering it. He recalls all she had to do if the class was getting noisy was to raise her voice and the message would get through. She would also give extra homework for bad behaviour.

Andy says he can now solve one of the greatest unsolved crimes of the school. Andy now reveals that it was he who stole Mr Hanly's *bata* as a dare and threw it as far as he could into the Fergus on the way home from school. When the *bata* was missed the following day there was a serious inquisition by Mr Hanly. He announced to the class he knew who took it and asked the culprit to own up. Suddenly Gerry Martin RIP put up his hand and Mr Hanly said "I knew it was you" to which Gerry replied "*An bfuil cead agam dul amach mais é do thoilé*". That ended the inquisition but Andy lived in fear for a while lest Mr Hanly find out.

He disliked doing Irish, especially that book *Jimín Maire Thaidhgh*; he wished it could have been explained better through the medium of English. He also remembers the pressure when the canon (Hogan) would visit class. The build-up with the teachers before he came was only matched by the anticlimax of his visit.

The games played at school were marbles and jailors and Andy remembers playing jailors one day when the jail was up against the high wall dividing the boys from the girl's school and he was the only one free to get his team out of jail. It seemed an impossible task as the defenders had the jail surrounded but he went around by the girl's yard which they were not allowed to enter and got over the high wall and released the prisoners. Mr Hanly spotted him and gave him a *leasa teanga* and no more. He thinks Mr Hanly admired his ingenuity.

He has great memories of coming home from school in the early summer getting a lift on the back of Tom Heffernan's hay float sitting on the metal edge with 'our legs dangling to the road and our backs against the warm cock of hay'. The pace of life was so much slower then. Tom would be drawing hay from Lissane to Doora.

Andy recalls he saw his first television in Navin's, possibly in 1961 or 1962 and it was a western: Kit Carson.

"Mrs Carroll had the first television in our area and the children of the area used to descend on her house for a half-an-hour most days."

He recalled, "we often visited Timmy McMahon's forge on the way home from school and he always made us welcome. He would always say to Andy while hammering the red iron off the anvil and sparks flying in all directions:

"How's the old lad?

"Did he have his egg today?

What way did he have it?

Was it fried, battered or boiled?"

He used to go to the fair of Clare twice a year. They would get up at 5:00 am and walk in the hope that they would get work minding cattle or sheep for the farmers. It might be worth up to a half-a-crown for a day. He once brought in pups their dog had, to try to sell, but he had no success. In the evening time when the cattle were sold they would have to be brought to the station where they would be ferried in old wagons to different parts of the country for fattening.

The Christmas and summer holidays were fabulous. When he was not working at home or for farmers he had great fun. He recalled that they used to make camps in the bog of hazel and reed which was inaccessible only to them as the area was covered in deep bog holes. Sometimes the villagers would locate their camps and destroy them but that was a rarity. Indeed in these bog holes they lost many fine cattle over the years and it was a regular occurrence to have to call for the neighbours help to pull an animal out of one.

Andy used to play hurling and football in McCabe's, O'Meara's or Kerin's field, all beside his home at Killoo cross where all the children of the neighbourhood would gather. Many's the great game they had there that went on for hours.

Before they went back to school, September would be the time to kill a pig. A local neighbour would do this. The pig would be tied up and stunned with a blow from the back of a hatchet; he would be raised up and killed with sharp knife. He remembers there was no waste. The blood would be divided among the neighbours for black puddings and every part would be used in one way or another. The bacon

would be cured in a barrel of salt that evening and hung in the rafters for the winter.

One good neighbour would also castrate the young bulls in the old-fashioned way using bluestone, two sticks and a piece of cord and a knife. It looked cruel but it was the way things were done at the time. Such was the generosity of community spirit at that time that the only payment this man would accept for up to a half-day's hard work was one copper penny (a luck penny).

Christmas was also very special. They would go ice skating and on St Stephens's Day go out on the wren even though Andy could not sing a note or play an instrument, his brothers Haulie and Eddie were very talented in that department. They used to do the rounds of Doora and Manus and his own area. He remember calling to Mrs Moroney's house in Killbricken and getting a banana. It was the first time he had seen one, let alone eat one. He thought it was delicious. They used to make a good few shillings at the wren.

He was in the Legion of Mary in the 1960s and as part of the Legion work he used to visit the old families of the area. He used to call on the Downes family of Jack, Tom and Mary and many the old tales they told and also the Monaghan family whose staple diet 365 days a year was bacon with a small strip of lean and cabbage.

One bad memory he had is when himself and Liam Barry were staying overnight with an old lady Mrs Kerin as part of their Legion work and also because she was an old neighbour living alone. Three thugs broke into the house demanding money. They were only ten at the time but they jumped out the back window and got help as soon as possible. The old lady was not hurt but was badly shaken.



Timmy McMahon's forge

Ada Power remembers

Ada attended Clarecastle girls' NS between 1950 and 1958

In September 1950, at age four, I started primary school. I was the only child there with physical disabilities but, thank God, I was treated the same as all the other children. Friends of ours, Anne and Dora Moloney, wheeled me to and from school in my go-car. My first teacher was Mrs Murphy but, due to family bereavements, she retired. We had a substitute teacher, Miss Gardiner and later Miss Ryan was appointed. I can still remember the day poetry came alive for me in senior infants when Miss Gardiner taught us to act out *We are Dainty Daisies*: it was just magical. I have been teaching speech and drama to local children since 1972.

The girls' school had three classrooms with three teachers: babies, seniors and first; second, third and fourth and fifth and sixth. We had no contact with the boys' school!

From September to December 1952, I spent three months in St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork where I underwent two major surgeries.

I made my First Holy Communion on 4th June 1953. It was a memorable day. I was the only child with a long, frilly dress (this was to cover my deformed feet). We were well prepared by Miss Considine (later Mrs Nellie Wylde) who made us all feel so special. She taught second, third and fourth classes but the First Communion children from first class went to her room for religion. An older girl teased me one day, when I was about seven: "Only babies go in go-cars". I remember the incident vividly to this day and I was so angry. I could not wait to get a tricycle.

With my First Holy Communion money I bought my longed-for tricycle. It was especially adapted to my needs: freedom at last. My best friend, at that stage, was Esther Bradley and I used to cycle to her home in Claremount after school. I repeated first class, due to hospitalisation.

In June 1954, when I was just eight, my parents brought me to Lourdes and I remember much of that trip. We went by boat and train. We overnighted in Paris and visited the Rue du Bac church where Our Lady appeared to St Catherine Laboure and asked her to have the miraculous medal made and distributed. We broke the ten-hour train journey from Paris to Lourdes by visiting Liseaux and Nevers, where we saw the preserved bodies of Ss Therese and Bernadette. We

stayed at the Hotel La Grotte and I loved Lourdes — I was to visit fourteen more times — and was very impressed with the torch light procession and seeing thousands of people from many countries dressed in their national costumes. However, I dreaded the daily, freezing cold baths adjacent to the grotto. I remember bringing home little souvenirs pens to my school friends.

My eighth year was a good one for me. Sadly, a local man named Teddy Corry lost his leg in a dredging accident while working on the dam on the river Fergus that flowed by our village to prevent flooding. He was fitted with a prosthesis. My dad invited him to our home and asked him to show me his artificial leg. I was truly amazed that a 'fake leg' could look so good in sock and shoe. What was my surprise when dad asked me if I'd like a leg like that? Following consultations with Uncle Joe, my medical doctor godfather, Mum and I flew to London thrice in three weeks for fittings at Hanger's limb fitting workshops in Roehampton. I really enjoyed those visits and seeing all the sights of London with mum's sisters who were working there. I instinctively knew then that I would travel extensively one day. Years later, on Legion of Mary *Peregrinatio Pro Christo*, I subsequently visited England, Scotland, Germany, Holland, Gibraltar, North Africa, Italy, Iceland, Russia and America. In 1954, I could not wait to get home to show off my new leg to my family, all my school friends and teachers.

School life continued. Highlights of each year would be the inspector's visit and days off for the local fair days. When we progressed to Miss Meehan's room (fifth and sixth class) we prepared for the diocesan liturgical choral festival. We learned Gregorian chant and many beautiful hymns in Latin. This gave me a wonderful love and appreciation for liturgical music and I longed to join the church choir; little did I realise that I would be choir mistress from 1970 to date.

Confirmation day, 23rd April 1958, drew very near. I was in fifth class and Confirmation was every three years then for fourth, fifth and sixth pupils. The Bishop would come the day before to meet all the candidates to ascertain if they were 'strong and perfect Christians' following an examination of the Catechism and Bible. The fear of God was surely in us, as we waited the day with trepidation. However, Bishop Rodgers turned out to be a very kind gentleman and our fears melted away when,

next day, he gave us the fullness of the Holy Spirit with all his gifts and fruits to fortify us for life. Sadly, many of these lay dormant within us until trouble came to our door.

With my Confirmation money I knew exactly what I wanted: my own two wheel blue bicycle. By now, my best friend was Myra Hick and she taught me to cycle. We roamed the country roads and had wonderful times. I also became very friendly with Mary and Margaret Carey. We all had good, innocent fun together.

I have fond memories of the May and June devotional altars which Miss Meehan would set up, in the hall way, in honour of Our Lady And The Sacred Heart. We would bring bunches of flowers to add colour to the blue or red cloths. Religious education, and mission awareness played a huge part in our on-going development.

We had one very exciting and memorable play and concert that we performed in the Abbey Hall for parents and parishioners. Through my speech and drama pupils, I now produce an

annual musical as an Ethiopian fund-raiser for Sister Mary Barry's Holy Rosary Sisters' mission.

In June 1959, my days in Clarecastle girls' national school were coming to an end. We had to sit our Primary Certificate and this I passed with flying colours.

Sadly, I was rejected by our first choice of boarding school, the FCJs in Bruff, Co. Limerick. Mother Michael, headmistress of St Joseph's Convent of Mercy secondary school, in Spanish Point, accepted me as a boarder. Thankfully, like all my teachers in primary school, she did not see disability, she only saw me.

However, the big drawback was that it was an all-Irish school and I was totally at sea for three months until I got a grasp of this foreign language. Here I was learning Latin, science, history, geography, maths and so on through the medium of Irish, when I was truly not proficient in same.

Attending Clarecastle girls' national school was a wholesome and enriching experience that had a profound influence on my life. I'm happy to share these memoirs with you.

Jimmy Neylon remembers

Jimmy attended Clarecastle NS between 1925 and 1935

Jimmy Neylon was born in Clarecastle in 1921 and has lived here all of his life. Jimmy told us that Paddy Con McMahon built the new school in 1935 and it was a great improvement.

He had not any unusual memories of his school days except for the visit of the dentist, Mr Dowling, who had a fearsome reputation and frightened many from going near a dentist for a lifetime. He was known to put his knee on your chest to pull teeth.

He recalled a funny story of Mrs Brandon baking a cake of bread on the skillet and leaving it out to cool on the floor. She found the dog sitting on it for warmth on the cold day. She made no one the wiser and cut up the cake for the tea.

Sonny Brandon was a harness-maker who worked from his

house next door to Jimmy's but would also visit the local farmers to undertake repairs on horse tackling.

He told stories of Tommie Kinnane who lost an eye in an altercation of carrying a revolver with him and firing indiscriminately from the quay across to the barracks in Thomond Villas. Tommie lost his eye one night when walking up the pound. A lorry-load of Free State troops passed and Tommie was seen to reach inside his jacket. The soldiers thought that he was reaching for a gun and fired at him, causing him to lose an eye.

The clergy had a very high profile in the parish. Fr Monaghan was very much feared, as he was very cross. The altar boys got their own back on him when they blew out all the candles in the sacristy one evening and he tripped on his way in. One of the altar boys accidentally gave him a box in the jaw.

Memories of Biddy Kenny (née Hanrahan)

Biddy, now living in Steele's Terrace, Ennis attended Clarecastle GNS between 1934 and 1941

The year of the changeover was 1935. There was great excitement at the move to what was then a new and modern school. But Biddy's memory is that still it could be a very cold place in the winter months and she remembers being taken out to the yard to skip and jump in order to keep warm. This move also coincided with the change from the slate and chalk to the inkwell.

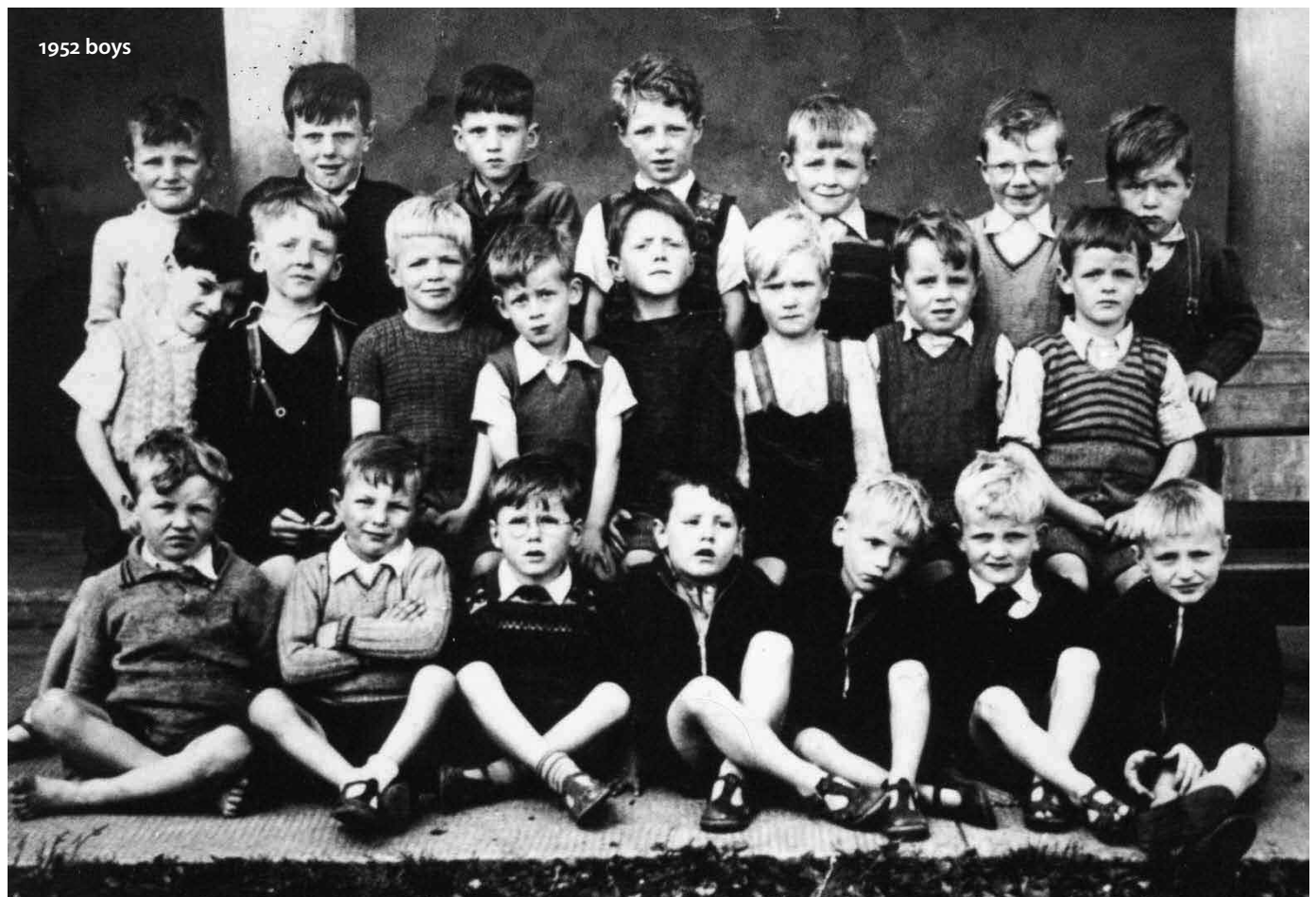
During the summer months the children often went for nature walks into Roughan's field and to collect wild flowers.

Miss Meehan used to have a green square box on her table and she used to have a weekly collection for the black babies. Once

a year she had a collection for St Therese of the Little Rose and she expected six old pence (a lot of money in poor times) from each child.

Poverty was prevalent and many children were scantily dressed and many lived on a poor diet. The lane way opposite the church, behind where Maddens Terrace is now, was a very poor area with shanty type housing and poor or no sanitation. Parents' occupations were mainly farm labourer, council workers and temporary work when the odd boat came in.

Country girls fared better than village children in that they had their own gardens and had a better diet.



Memories of Mary Lynch

September 1967 to June 2004. Thirty-seven years. A lifetime. So many memories. So many changes. Happy times and sad times. So many people who influenced a life. One person influencing so many other lives. A privilege and a challenge. My time in Clarecastle National School.

When I arrived in Clarecastle in 1967, I was a young teacher from Ennis; a Townie but, when I retired in 2004, I considered myself a Magpie. Those thirty-seven years were indeed life changing. Coming to Clarecastle provided me with a great career in teaching but also a wonderful husband and family, a sense of community loyalty and friendships inside and outside of school, which enriched and continue to enrich my life.

In 1967, we had two schools in the village, *buachaillí agus cailíní*, or boys and girls. I taught infants, first and second classes in the girls' school. I look back fondly on that era. Una O'Brien, RIP and Nellie Wylde were my colleagues and, when the numbers provided for an extra teacher in 1972, Peggy O'Keefe joined our staff. I moved to the parish hall with first and second classes while a new school was under construction. Later, Michael Connolly and Monica Brooks joined me there. When we moved up to the new school in 1977, it was like moving to a different country.

Teachers of junior classes in that era had the honour and privilege of preparing children for First Communion. This was always a special day in the parish. Teaching religion in the classroom was something I always enjoyed and found it an awesome experience to have a part in passing on the Christian faith to our young people. Tied up with those occasions — First Communion and Confirmation — was the school choir, which evolved through the years, becoming a near-professional outfit.

In 1983, the two schools amalgamated. The fact that this was agreed by the teachers and not forced on the staff by the Department of Education was considered unique. It showed the dedication of the teachers in wanting only the best for their pupils. I taught fourth class in the amalgamated school and remained with that class group until I retired.

Two curriculum changes occurred during my teaching years and I enjoyed the challenges these changes presented. The amalgamated situation also provided me with the opportunity

of teaching four of my five children. I enjoyed the experience; the jury is still out on their verdict.

So many memories race through my mind. I recall our various and varied traffic wardens and their input into the safety of the children. I feel I have to give a special mention to Peter Dillon, RIP who not only kept order on the road, but also kept order in the teachers' car park. Our school tours spring to mind; too many to list here but the Dublin tours, the trips to Killarney and Kilkenny come to mind. To come down to the children's level and also share experiences with them was enlightening to say the least.

A new innovation in school life was introduced in the mid-nineties, a school uniform. After some initial problems, it turned out to be a great success and a blessing to working mothers.

Sport, of course, played a huge part in the life of the school. The fact that the Clare Senior Hurling Team was victorious in 1995 and 1997 was in no small part due to the training the local players had received in the school, especially from John Hanly. I recall the celebrations when 'Liam McCarthy' arrived in the school in 1995 and 1997. Also, when our Clarecastle senior hurlers brought 'Canon Hamilton' after victories in the Clare championship, especially the 2003 and 2005 teams. Many of the team members were past pupils and it was wonderful to see them in their hurling glory days. Another sporting memory is of going to Cusack Park to cheer on the school teams.

Everything changes, nothing stands still and primary education is no exception. Four decades ago, the Parish Priest filled the role of school manager. Now, every school has a Board of Management. The teaching team has also expanded to include learning support and resource teachers, special needs assistants and classroom assistants, all to the advantage of the pupils in their care. Secretarial and ancillary staff are the norm in schools nowadays and all share their expertise in the overall running of the school.

During my time in Clarecastle, I found the positive attitude, encouragement and support of parents a tremendous advantage in teaching. I would like to express my thanks to the parents for their cooperation through the years. I was also very fortunate to have had the support of very dedicated

and forward-thinking Boards of Management and parents' associations.

As we move forward I think it is very important that the school remains the heart of the community. Clarecastle was always renowned for its community spirit and pride in its identity. As the village and environs expand, I would hope that those values would be upheld and strengthened. I wish the new school every success and trust that departmental thinking ensures all children an equal chance to prove their ability at all stages of their school life.

I was very fortunate to have worked with so many dedicated and committed teachers during all of those thirty-seven years.

To all of them I say 'thank you' for having played such an important part in my life. Also, to my pupils, a thank you. We learned from each other, I hope.

It is a source of great joy to see the children I taught grow up and succeed in their chosen life styles but, at the same time, I feel a sense of sadness when I recall those pupils who departed this life at a young age.

Here's wishing the new school and staff many years of prosperity. If they're anything as good as my thirty-seven, they certainly will be great.

Rath Dé ar an obair.

Bridget (Bridie) McMahon remembers

Bridie, who attended Clarecastle girls' NS between 1914 and 1922, has since passed away.
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dhílis.

She recalled the canvassing of the political parties. 'Dev' used to get a great reception when he passed through. She talked of Paddy Hogan (Labour) canvassing at Monahan's corner on a soapbox to big crowds and also other politicians speaking after the Sunday masses at the pump where

the GAA memorial is today. She expressed disappointment that the council removed the parish pump (outside the side entrance of the Coach House). In olden days there was a wall surrounding it and the villagers got nearly all of their water from it. It was a great meeting place.



Fundraising for the new school

Liam Lynch remembers

Liam attended Clarecastle BNS between 1931 and 1939

Liam remembers walking to school sometimes in his bare feet from Lissane and meeting at his front gate the children who were walking in from Island McGrath, such as the Sullivan children, who lived in a workman's house on what is now Paddy Connors farm. The Hickey girls lived in a farm next to Lynch's, the Kennedy's were a little closer to the village as were the Doyle children. All of these travelled to and from school each day. The old school across from the church was very cold in winter with only one fire, which the school principal Tom Hanly kept well covered and it was warm and stuffy in the summertime. In summertime, classes were often held across the road under the church trees. Liam felt that on these occasions the teachers were, for some reason, stricter.

Playtime in the old school was mainly spent in the fair green, where Church Drive is now, playing hurling and football or spinning tops on the rough road or playing marbles. He also played a game called pitching quates copied from a sailor's game called quoits played on the deck of a ship with metal rings. Liam and his friends used stones as substitute.

The move up to the new school in 1935 was very welcome, as it was a very modern school at the time even though it added to the distance he and his brothers had to walk.

He recalls the lunches. They brought milk and bread and indeed not all might have that as there was a lot of poverty especially in the village. He recalls some children having a potato for lunch. The quality of the bread (even home-baked) was poor as the quality of the flour during the war years was very low and the bread was a dark brown colour with a bad taste. Liam spoke too about the poor living condition he witnessed in the village, particularly in the old house in the Commons. He felt that diet and these living conditions contributed to the scourge of TB, that had a disastrous effect on Clarecastle.

The schoolboys often got days off school during the gardening season to thin the turnips, which were for table and animal use. They worked for farmers, the Lyons, Murphys, O'Donoghues and McInerneys amongst others and it was a welcome supply of income.

Another day off school was the two fair-days when a few bob was to be made minding the cattle for farmers. He remembers the Considine family collecting the tolls from the farmers as

they left the village (6^d for every head sold). It was said that the Considines were owners of the fair green.

Rural electrification brought great change to the lives of the people in 1952 and indeed it took some a long time to adapt to these. One scribe put pen to paper with this ditty on electricity:

It lights our houses

It washes our blouses

It milks our cows

It churns our cream

Now what more would you want than that?



Teresa Nugent and Seamus Leamy inspect the new school

Niamh Barry remembers

Niamh attended Clarecastle school between 1982 and 1991

Clarecastle is synonymous with hurling. No matter where in the world I've been mention Clarecastle and immediately I'm told, "oh that's a great hurling stronghold". It's hard to believe that through most my school years at Clarecastle NS I never held a hurley.

Girl power

There wasn't camogie at Clarecastle NS in my day but I'd like to think that the class of 1991 did something to change all of that.

The primary school was still quite traditional back then. The school's curriculum I'm sure has changed a lot in the last fifteen years. When I was in sixth class, boys went to hurling training and the girls went to sewing class. Then when we had PE (aerobics and basketball) the boys did crafts. I think we girls did get a raw deal. We used to be so jealous of the lads. A lot of the girls would have played hurling with the lads in the village and thought that they would have enjoyed a training session. The lads used to come back from crafts with intricate sculptures: crosses made from matchsticks and so on. It looked a lot better than our gingham examples of straight stitches and hems. We had a lesser grievance with the fact that we couldn't wear trousers; it was the compulsory sewing that really galled us.

The head master Mr Hanly played a large part in our school lives. He always found an hour in his day to call up on us. Sometimes he'd test us on our Irish and Maths or see if we picked anything up from the previous Sunday's scriptures and sermons, but mostly he would chat about everything and anything, the state of world affairs, local news, history, and sport. These discussions often led to little debates, as things like divorce, abortion and contraception were at the time unavoidable in the media.

I think the Italian World Cup in 1990 may have marked this change in our relationship with the headmaster. Up to then he was the *maistir scoile* and we wouldn't ever have questioned him. We were all hyped up following Jack's conquests. Day by day Mr Hanly would call by and talk about the matches. I don't think he was impressed with many facets of the soccer game such as the fans behaviour, the behaviour of players as they celebrated goals and what he saw as the misuse of the Irish

flag on commemorative tee shirts and shorts. We at the time just saw it as an attack on Jack and the boys in green. We asked Mr Leamy, our teacher, why Mr Hanly was so against soccer. He said, "Why don't you ask him yourself?" We did and saw another side to Mr Hanly. He explained that he had nothing against the game of soccer and that he admired the game. I think that it was the commercialism of the sport that bothered him most especially the willingness of clothes manufacturers to use the Irish flag in a disrespectful manner. He banned the boys from wearing the Irish flag shorts if my memory serves me correctly. That started the debates and discussions on mainly current affairs but also anything else that was bothering us.

He made us feel important as senior pupils. We felt that we had valid opinions and that we were being listened to.

We left fifth and started sixth class in September 1990. Mr Hanly continued his daily visit to our class and we looked forward to it. The sewing lessons continued for us girls. Looking back I did get some value from it. I can hem a skirt and sew a button. We sewed little baby coats for babies in Africa and knitted jumpers. Despite all that we felt that, compared to the boys, we were getting a raw deal. We'd enough of the sewing and the aerobics. We decided that if they weren't going to train us how to hurl we'd make 'em.

One Thursday pretty late in the year we decided that for PE we'd take in hurleys. If we came equipped surely our potential would be seen. I wasn't big into sport myself, aerobics suited me fine. Generally I was the girl that was last to be picked for teams anyway. Still I wanted to be part of the gang. I tried to borrow my brother's hurley but he was having none of it. I thought then that maybe I wouldn't be the only one in without one. I was. What to do?

I knew that Mr Hanly kept some in the store. I decided to ask him. I knocked on the office door.

"Please sir could I borrow a hurley?"

He looked at me. "What would you want with one of those?" he said.

"The girls all brought in theirs", said I, "We thought that if we had hurleys that maybe we could play hurling during PE."

"What would you know about hurling?"

I lost the plot at that stage. "Isn't it only a matter of hitting a ball between two posts", said I, "How hard can that be?"

He shook his head, "Oh, Miss Barry, there's a lot more to it than that."

Despite my cheek he took me into the store room measured me up and gave me a proper sized hurley.

Out I went and boy what a sight. A dozen or so girls out the back with their hurleys and sliotars. Some were well able. Others including myself, I suppose were lucky not to lose limbs. We were flaking the hurleys through the air, rising sods and all.

Along came Mr Hanly and he soon put a stop to that. I still don't know whether he saw potential in our unlikely bunch or whether he just couldn't watch us try to play a game that was neither here nor there. He stopped us and the training sessions began. Over the last few weeks into the month of June he taught us a few of the basic skills, rising the ball off the ground, striking it in the air, two hands on the hurley, running with the ball on the end of the stick as if it were a permanent fixture. As I said before I was never a great sportswoman myself but boy, did we have fun over those last few weeks of our primary schooling. I'm sure some of the girls would have made great players if we had had time to build a team.

We did instigate one more little rebellion although we didn't get too far. We came in to school wearing trousers. That was taking things a little too far and we were told in no uncertain terms that it was unacceptable. Well, we couldn't win them all.

We left that June. Some girls went to the Vocational School and some went to the Coláiste Muire. That was the end of the hurling for me. Still it's thanks to Mr Hanly that when my brothers are desperate for a second they can turn to me to go out for a few pucks out the back. The dog invariably gets to the ball before I do but what else to expect from a late starter.

Secondary school wasn't the end of my contact with Mr Hanly though. I passed by his house every day on the bike on the way to school with the Moloney girls. My little brother, in sixth class at the time, came home one day from school raging with me. I had brought disgrace on him. Mr Hanly had seen us cycling. He admired the fact that we were cycling into town to school everyday, the two Moloney girls flying it up the road and poor Miss Barry puffing and panting and trying to keep up. I was told in no uncertain terms that I'd better get fit quickly and learn to catch up and not be bringing shame to the family. Soon after Mr Hanly stopped me on the road outside his house, He looked at the bike and said, "It's no wonder you're struggling." In he went and came out with a spanner. He heightened the seat of my bike and sent me off on my way. I wasn't too long catching up after that and by the time I sat my

Leaving Certificate I was able to make it to the front gates of Coláiste Mhuire in 20-25 minutes.

As I said before a lot has changed since '91. I was the first of the current crop of Barrys to leave Clarecastle NS. Since then the primary curriculum has become very extensive. Teachers have been landed with everything from road safety to science to personal and health education. Everything has become much more formalised. I just hope that nowadays there is still a place for the open and informal chats that formed us and that were of as much value to us as book learning.

The Village Schoolmaster

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The days disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he:
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd:
Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too:
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquish'd he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd is forgot.

Oliver Goldsmith 1728 - 1774

Mickey Morrissey remembers

Extract from *The Growing Orphan*, by Mickey Morrissey
Mickey attended Clarecastle BNS between 1917 and 1924

School pals Dennis Connelly, Pa (Pat) Cullen, Paddy Russell, Pat Moloney, many others and myself were all busy preparing for Confirmation on instruction from Mr Tom Hanly. He said, “I hope that you all will learn the catechism” — we lads called it the *caz* — “from page to page so that you can memorise it all. The first one to do so will win a Conway Stewart fountain pen. It may take a week to do”.

I think that we all did our best. I spent most evenings in Terry Scanlon’s house. Terry was ahead of me. He said that there were lots in front of him already.

The end of the week arrived. We went into school on Monday morning minus the usual gusto. The lads from outside the village, we had no idea how they got on with the *caz*. We were quickly examined at random. Vincie Murphy, who was having advanced study on his own from Mr Hanly, helped with the check for just once. The outright winner and so presented with the lovely Conway Stewart pen, was Johnny Welsh from Cartic. Such an achievement is usually accompanied by congratulations and a bit of back slapping.

When Johnny was asked, with some scepticism, how he managed to learn the *caz* off by heart so quickly, Johnny in all honesty said that he sat with his back against a tram of hay for every minute of daylight that there was. Now and again he went in for something to eat.

You could have been knocked down by all the school lads that didn’t run to shake his hand until Mr Hanly was walking past on his way home. There was an overpowering rush to say, “Good man, Johnny” and belt him on the back without stones in our hands. All this for Mr Hanly to spoil it by saying, “It took you a long time to make your minds up boys”.

As he continued home, when he was beyond earshot, one of the lads called, not too loud, “We all did not have a tram of hay, sir”. Confirmation was two weeks away. Still a little more to learn before the great day on which Bishop Fogarty would officiate the sacrament so make us strong and complete Christians.

Six of us went to Fred Burke’s crag to see if any of us could yet lift the end of the long loose stone thick flag, which we had tried to do many times before. This was two days before Confirmation. We arranged to try again the day after being

made strong. I couldn’t get the thought from my head that if Paddy Russell can’t lift it now, there is no hope of the rest of us ever lifting it. On the day, we were in our new suits, not a *gansai* worn by the lads for Confirmation. This would also be our final day at school. Now past, or about to reach, the age of fifteen years, girls and boys of the working class did not usually go on for further education. I wanted to know more of history but was not displeased with my future life of fishing, punt gun shooting, etc.

The day after Bishop Fogarty officiated at the sacrament, which is only done by bishops since St Patrick officiated in the fifth century (probably the year 440) — correction, I should have said Confirmation is and has been officiated by Bishops and higher princes of Rome — we set off for the crag, each of the six of us to find how high we could lift the stone flag. We arranged for the ones to try the height of lift last. Every man Jack of us failed to move it a fraction of an inch. We felt cheated and all the reasons for our failure, in my opinion, were and are to this day a joy to remember. One: it was connected to the village. Two: Paddy Russell said, “No, but it is tied on to Normyles’ house because I thought the house moved when I lifted”.

On the way back down past the pump after a session of ‘go on, ask him’, ‘no, don’t’, yes, before he goes past’, ‘oh, all right, excuse me father’: “What can I do for you boys” said Father McGrath. We raised our fringes and told him the full story and waited for him to suppress his mirth. He asked the obvious question, “Have you tried to lift it together?”

“No father, because there’s only room for one grip and space for one at a time to stand”.

Well boys, the strength implied in being confirmed is of the mind and spirit. Nothing to do with muscle”.



Easter bonnets and hallowe'en



Green school project



Proud of our flag



Green school –keep Clare clean competition



All done



Green school committee: Barbara Hassett, J Griffey, S Cosgrove, C Guckian and G Bowe



Cleaning up



Green school flag

Mary Moroney remembers

Mary Moroney attended Clarecastle GNS from 1932 to 1941 and is now living in Stumullen, Co. Meath

Life in Clarecastle in the 1930s and 1940s was wonderful. I was introduced to ghost story telling around a blazing fire in wintertime. The stories seemed so real we were shaking in our socks going to bed after hearing them. The only lights we had were oil lamps and candles casting shadows on the walls which made the whole thing spookier.

When school time came round we walked through the fields and picked bunches of wild flowers to present to our teacher Miss Liddy. She always had an altar and a very special one during the month of May.

I attended the old school in Clarecastle, which still looks well opposite the church. It now serves as a meeting place for different organisations. It had only two rooms, one upstairs for the girls, which was reached by solid stone steps. The boys used the downstairs. Mr Tom Hanly and his wife Maura were their teachers. Mrs Doyle came along later. Mrs O'Dea was principal of the girls' school then with Miss Meehan. All classes were held in one room, a bit confusing at times. The teachers were angels to manage us. We had no flush toilets in those days but I must say they were kept reasonably clean. Our thirst was often quenched at the pump across the road near the school. Luckily there were few motor cars then; bicycles, horse traps and donkey cars were the in thing. We often got a seat to school from a kind-hearted neighbour; the other kids would be green with envy when they saw us alighting from an ass and cart. Each child brought a few sods of turf occasionally to heat up the classroom in winter

The Parish Priest, Fr Madden, got a piece of bog from a friend in Killoo and at school holiday time some of us were sent out to foot turf. The weather was glorious and the priest arrived twice a day loaded with goodies. We all thought that all our birthdays arrived together. There is no place like the bog to build up an appetite.

Miss Liddy often had draws for a halfpenny. I won one day and went down to Mrs Costelloe's shop; I bought a money lolly and found another halfpenny inside it. That was a very lucky day indeed for me. I remember money was in short supply then. You felt rich if you had a shilling or even if you had only one old penny you could buy ten delicious Sharp's toffees or six large Geary's biscuits.

The favourite pastimes for children in those days were marbles, skipping, conkers and spinning tops. Hurling always came first with the boys. They played in Devine's field and in Lynch's in New Town.

Then the great day arrived when we went up the road to a beautiful new school. The year was 1935. We now had three rooms for the boys and three rooms for the girls. It was a new life for both teachers and pupils.

I remember in 1938 we got a wonderful Irish teacher named Mrs Murphy (née Kerin) from Ennis. She taught everything through Irish. She even came out to the playground with us and we played our games through Irish, thus fostering our love for our native language.

I remember the old battery radio, someone in Clarecastle had one. The house would be packed when there was a big match on. I recall one Sunday many years ago and the Clare team were playing and a local lad named Considine on the team scored a goal for Clare. One of the listeners got very excited and gave a bang to the table as he shouted, "Good man Considine" and the wireless stopped dead and there was no more heard from the match until the lads returned home that night, as phones were few and far between in those days.

Christmas in Clarecastle was magical. The lighting of the Christmas candle was a very special affair usually done by the youngest in the house. A huge white or red candle would be placed in a turnip that would be scooped out. The candle would last about a week. The same thing would be repeated for New Year and for the 6th of January.

We loved going to Midnight Mass whether it be in hail, rain or snow and we attended Mass again on Christmas morning. Mr Tom Hanly conducted the boys' and girls' choir which sang beautifully in the front seats of the church under his baton. Santa always came and brought something useful even though money was scarce.

Our school lunches were delicious, home-made brown bread and butter and jam and a bottle of milk. The bread had been baked in a pot oven with red sods placed on the cover; nothing like that nowadays. I sometimes get that taste again but only in my dreams.

We were kept busy in the evenings; so much had to be done after dinner and before our lessons. We had to spread potatoes or pick them as the case may be and do weeding in the garden. We had to hand-milk a few cows and draw water for the house from a spring well. I will never forget the spring well in Claremount, going down its steps on a hot summer's day was like going into a fridge. The butter after churning was washed in that water and became rock hard. It was kept in that condition by placing it on a huge cabbage leaf and covering it with a basin.

I remember a great improvement came into our lives with the coming of electricity. The night of the 'switch on' we were very excited looking through the windows and spotting the odd cobweb that the powerful light showed up. It was a real gift when doing our homework on a dark winter's night. Some people were nervous to have it installed as they thought it was dangerous but soon changed their minds when they saw how wonderful it was.

An old man near us got a television. After a while I asked him how he liked it. He said there was only one thing wrong; it was keeping him up very late at night. But I said you can switch it off whenever you like. His reply was, "A lovely man comes on every night at closing time and he wishes good night and God bless you, I would not like to be gone when he appears". People were so innocent then.

I hope the children now are as happy as we were; we loved school and got the odd slap when we deserved it. I think we turned out all right thanks to our homes and our lovely teachers long gone to their eternal reward. After national school some of us went on to the Convent or Vocational School in Ennis. We thought we were independent people at that stage but in fact we were still only children.

I remember going to the cinema in Ennis with a group of fellow teenagers to a cowboy film. Suddenly a stampede of cattle appeared on the screen and seemed to be charging straight ahead. At that one of my friends made a dash for the exit shouting they were after her. She fell in Mary Keane's shop on the other side of the street. That was my first introduction to the Gaiety cinema.

I recall our many trips to St John's Blessed Well in New Hall. St John's eve on the 23rd June was very special. Fr Loughnane started having mass there on that date and it has continued to this day. We often went across New Hall Lake by boat cutting the journey to the well. We did the rounds on our bare feet. I remember old crutches falling asunder hanging on a tree at the back of the blessed well. An old story has it they were left by someone cured there. On the way home we danced a few sets at New Hall cross. When we arrived back at Claremount a huge bonfire would be lighted and we would dance to the céilí music of Mrs Cronin on the melodeon. When the fire

was dying out and we were feeling tired after the evenings activities the older folk told us to bring home a bit of the fire to burn in our own hearth and we parted with a wish "that with God's help we would all meet again on the same night twelve months on."

I remember the house dances we had in Clarecastle. We had great musicians including the great Joe Cooley. When he worked here the neighbours gave their houses in turn so a great night was had by all free of charge. We danced the Clare set and the plain set for hours and we felt disappointed when it was time to go home.

I remember the boats coming into the quay in Clarecastle. They bought in coal, timber and grain. Coal was the most important one. The car men would be ready and eagerly awaiting the boats arrival. The boat's captain would sound the horn as the boat came around Island McGrath. The men transported the coal in there carts to Sutton's and Powers's both short distances from the quay. The longest draw was to McInerney's in Ennis. It was very hard work getting the coal from the vessel. The men worked all hours and walked the horses and carts to Ennis often in the dark with car lamps attached to the shafts of the cart. The roads were very bumpy in those days and often some of the coal fell off which was eagerly collected by the women and children in buckets and pans.

There were many horses in Clarecastle in those day hunters, cart and plough horses and ponies long since replaced by tractors. Timmy McMahon's forge in the village was a great meeting place for the men; all the matches were thrashed out there. How they were won and lost.

The regatta was the highlight of the summer in days of yore. We youngsters spent the weeks before preparing for the fancy dress parade. One year we went as the 'relics of old decency'. Mickey Griffin drove the horse borrowed from the Quinns. Kitty Long, Mary Madigan, Nellie Considine and Mary Flynn were dressed in suitable regalia in the carriage. We got first prize that day. The year was 1945. The parade would start from the old labour hall in the commons headed by the Clarecastle pipers' band and parade all round the village, a small place then. When we arrived at the quayside the regatta began, a fun filled day for young and old. The boat races were very exciting and the greasy pole was great fun in that the swimmers tried to walk on it but few succeeded. Most slipped into the river after a step or two. The best event of the day would be the duck race with swimmers trying to catch a duck, the one succeeding being the winner. There were several side shows on the quayside with céilí dancing set dancing, spin the wheel and sheaf throwing and also boat trips on the river for a small fee. A great day's entertainment was finished off with a dance at the Labour Hall that night

I also remember a travelling road show coming to Ennis in the 1950s. The boss was Anew McMaster and the singers with him were a joy to listen to, one of them was Jack Cruise. Another man named Gordie brought his show to the old Labour Hall in the Commons in Clarecastle, where Maddens Terrace now stands. He had some wonderful plays, *Eastlyn*, *The Red Baron* and *The Squire marries the Gipsy* being but a few.

Well there are lots more that I can't recall but you cannot beat the youth and every one gets a lash at it. I leave you with my final thought:

*Now lots of my school friends have passed away,
God rest their souls I softly pray,
My few remaining pals close to my hearth I hold,
When we chat on the phone, fond memories we unfold.*

Marie Kerrigan (née Callinan) remembers

Marie attended Clarecastle girls' NS between 1955 and 1964

We used to get up to some mischief. When the Bridge family moved next door they had a little dog called Susie. We used to tease her and she was always barking. Then one day Mrs Bridge came to the school to complain. We all were put out by the wall and Miss Meehan gave us all slaps on the hands, which really hurt. Mrs Bridge felt sorry for us. The next day she sent in a box of sweets to us all. She was a lovely lady.

We used to play games such as skipping, hopscotch and marbles.

In those days people had very little money. Lots of people grew their own vegetables and baked their own bread. There was a family in Lissane who milked cows, bottled the milk and sold it to the houses in the village shops. The gentleman who did this was Joe Reidy helped by his wife. The bottled milk was then delivered on a horse and cart.

Michael (Milo) Doyle remembers

Michael attended Clarecastle BNS between 1933 and 1941

Michael Doyle was born in Lissane Clarecastle in 1928. He recalls well during the war years the villagers had plots to grow vegetables in what is now St Josephs Terrace and also families were allocated turf banks in Killoo and Skehana. He told of digging turf with a *sleán* in Monahan's and having to be quick as the water filled the hole almost as he dug it. The quality of the turf was bad generally

but in some areas it was good. They would dry out the turf and bring it back home by ass and cart. They also got permission to cut hazel wood in Doora to keep the fires burning through winter. He talked of the great change electrification made in 1951.

Michael has since passed away.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Pop quiz

Christina Talty, fifth class	
What would be your epitaph?	<i>Live and let die</i>
Do you have any fears or phobias?	<i>Not really</i>
What is your middle name?	<i>Michelle</i>
Have you any tattoos and where?	<i>No</i>
How do you relax?	<i>Walking</i>
When it comes to food, what is your secret guilty pleasure?	<i>Chips</i>
Name two things you couldn't live without	<i>Moisturiser and mobile</i>
TV shows: drama or comedy?	<i>Drama</i>
Do you have a favourite sport?	<i>Basketball</i>
Christopher Morley, second class	
What would be your epitaph?	<i>Live life to the full</i>
Do you have any fears or phobias?	<i>Yard duty</i>
What is your middle name?	<i>Bond</i>
What is the best film you ever saw?	<i>Borat</i>
If you weren't a teacher, what would you like to have been?	<i>Professional soccer player</i>
When it comes to food, what is your secret guilty pleasure?	<i>Taytos</i>
What is the one thing you like most about yourself?	<i>How big is the page?</i>
Name three things you couldn't live without	<i>My mother (aah), the lads and sky sports</i>
TV shows: drama or comedy?	<i>Comedy</i>
Deirdre Leyden, senior infants	
What would be your epitaph?	<i>Don't worry, be happy.</i>
Do you have any fears or phobias?	<i>Flying</i>
What is the best film you ever saw?	<i>Enter the Matrix or Shrek</i>
Do you have a pet?	<i>A goldfish called Nemo</i>
If you weren't a teacher, what would you like to have been?	<i>An artist</i>
Name three things you couldn't live without	<i>Car, ipod and phone</i>
Favourite season of the year?	<i>Summer</i>
Do you have a favourite sport?	<i>Hurling. Up the Magpies!</i>
Carmel Nugent, resource teacher	
What would be your epitaph?	<i>I told you I was sick</i>
Do you have any fears or phobias?	<i>Snakes</i>
Favourite music?	<i>Bon Jovi and Bon Jovi</i>
If you weren't a teacher, what would you like to have been?	<i>I wouldn't mind Madonna's job</i>
The best holiday you ever had was?	<i>America. I travelled with \$30 and a visa card. Had a ball.</i>
When it comes to food, what is your secret guilty pleasure?	<i>Smarties, jellies and cheese & onion Taytos mixed together in a bowl</i>
The last book you've read?	<i>Feakle yearbook; up Feakle!</i>
What is the one thing you like most about yourself?	<i>My sense of humour</i>
Favourite season of the year?	<i>Spring</i>
Do you have a favourite sport?	<i>Track and field athletics</i>
Sharon Brady, third class	
What would be your epitaph?	<i>Upwards and onwards</i>
Do you have any fears or phobias?	<i>Heights</i>
Do you have a pet?	<i>23 (children in class)</i>
If you weren't a teacher, what would you like to have been?	<i>A millionaire</i>
Name your three dream dinner party guests	<i>Sean Connery, Podge & Rodge</i>
The best holiday you ever had was?	<i>Australia, a working holiday</i>
Favourite season of the year?	<i>Autumn</i>
Do you have a favourite sport?	<i>GAA, football and rugby</i>

Our budding young scientists

Mobile phones, iPods, medicine, flowers, animals, fingerprinting, light, water, television — science is all around us. It determines who we are and what we can do. It enables us to discover our world and engage with it in a more meaningful manner. Indeed, its possibilities are endless. We can't be in any doubt that science is a fundamental part of our lives. However, as they say if you're not in, you can't win.

It is the recognition of science as a core part of children's learning that ensures its inclusion in the primary school curriculum. Clarecastle National School strives to highlight further that, not only is it vital to the curriculum, but it is integral to the pupils' lives and hence the children and teachers have had great fun engaging in many science events, culminating last year in the awarding of the Discover Science Excellence Award to the school.

To achieve this accolade the school undertook a variety of prescribed curriculum-based experiments covering such areas as light, sound, forces and so on in addition to supplementary experiments provided in each of the gold, silver and bronze categories. The levels refer to difficulty of the experiments and as such ensured that the children from infants up to sixth class were given the opportunity to engage with programme and take an active part in ensuring the school's success in receiving the award. The children were given an occasion to share their knowledge with other classes and indeed parents at the science open day that was held last May. At this event children demonstrated the experiments, explained the results and discussed the work that their class had done. Each class's effort was clearly evident from the photographs of the children at work which decorated the walls.

However, completion of the experiments in itself was not enough. The school was also required to demonstrate an engagement with science outside of this work. Science week provided a myriad of opportunities for the children to experience science in action, as indeed it had always done in the school. Previous years in Clarecastle National School have seen science week marked by experiments and displays in the school. Last year second class went to Limerick to see Steve Alderman's science or magic show and this year had the opportunity to see a space show in the University

of Limerick. Opportunities for the children to engage with science are not merely confined to science week, however. Other trips undertaken by classes in the school have seen visits to aquariums, pet farms and Fota Island, all opportunities to see 'living things' in various environments. Over recent years visitors to the school have been varied and interesting. One such visitor discussed plants with senior classes and gave them the opportunity to plant their own, while a vet discussed his work with junior classes and brought little animals to visit. Last year garda Barry Walshe demonstrated the importance of science in the daily work of the guards. He explained about forensics showing instruments used to collect fabrics, hairs and so on and he fingerprinted one of the children. Luckily she was innocent. Already this year sixth class have visited an apple farm, where they learnt about the growth of apples, the processes involved in cultivating them and making apple juice and were given the opportunity to make their own juice. These experiences provided for the children are just a sample of the science exposure children receive in Clarecastle National School.

However, science trips and the prescribed experiments were not enough to merit the award. The school had to have achieved at least one activity in each of the four steps suggested and so the school became a registered member of a science e-newsletter. Perhaps more importantly the school web site was born, found at www.clarecastlens.com. It details the school, its history, developments with the building of the new school, fund raising activities, achievements within the school, both team and individual, the school's involvement with the *Discover Science* programme and success as a 'green school' gives examples of the children's artwork under the various strands and details music in the school. Visitors to the web site have the opportunity to listen to the school choir perform in a concert at glór in Ennis. It also highlights different annual events in the school such as the Hallowe'en and Easter Bonnet parades (video of Easter bonnet parade is included), Christmas concerts, world book day, *Seachtain na Gaeilge*, fruit awareness week and visits by the Magpies.

In early June last year the school's efforts were rewarded at the discover science excellence award ceremony held in Birr, Co. Offaly. Three children travelled with our principal, Mr

Séamus Leamy and myself to receive our special plaque, one of the first to be awarded to a school in the Ennis area. What a day it turned out to be. The science displays and experiments enthralled the children, as did the science show that was put on for all in attendance. The logbook, which detailed all the events undertaken in the school to merit the award and which is available to view in the school, was returned. However, it was brought back with a beautiful plaque, which will find its home in the new building very shortly. This plaque is testament to both the teamwork of all in Clarecastle and indeed the strong presence of both science and technology in the school. Furthermore, our school will be detailed in an upcoming discover science newsletter detailing our achievement.

We hope to this year update our award for 2006/2007 and continue to encourage interest in and enjoyment of science. Keeping both science and technology very much alive in the school marks a tradition begun in the old school and being brought forward to the new school. A tradition, which encourages children to see science as being about fun, discovery and adventure and something fundamentally relevant to their everyday lives. Undoubtedly science 'is the future we learn about today'.

Hilary Parkinson, NT

School web site: www.clarecastlens.com



Oil and water don't mix



Too many cooks spoil the broth



Up for the science awards



The O'Driscolls (vets) give a talk to the pupils



Electricity



Tree hugger



Botanists



Young engineers



Gently: it might explode



Visit to O'Connor's bakery



World book day



Cutting shapes



Farm visit



Blowing air bubbles



Bark rubbing



Food colouring



Outing to Seedsavers in Scariff



Fire station visit



World book day



What have we here?



Garda Sergeant Barry Walsh fingerprints Erin Walsh

Memories of John Enright

John Enright attended Clarecastle BNS between 1931 and 1939; formally from Clarehill, he is now residing in Inch

John recalls the usual farm chores he and his brothers had to do before school, such as milking the cows, feeding calves and cleaning out the outhouses among many more. They used to sell milk and potatoes to many in the parish. Indeed much of their school holidays were taken up with hard work on the family farm. After school he and his pals loved running through the fields and jumping the drainage trenches. More often they would land in the middle of them. They also played cowboys and indians in Burke's Crag (presently Primrose Gardens area) with his friends, the Navins and Billy Shaw.

They loved it when the circus or carnival came to the fair green and also when the odd film would come. He spoke of Pat Navin having a film projector and showing films in a shed at the back of Navins and charging ½^d a head. Jim (Darbo) Moloney was the first in the village to have a radio.

His one memory of Confirmation is that many older people were confirmed on the day he made it. He thought that this might be because they left school early and missed Confirmation as it was held only every three years.

He spoke of the many fairs he and his brothers went to with their father, often walking the cattle if they were selling or going in Josie Broderick's taxi if buying. There was always great excitement at these and you had the balladeers going around singing their songs and selling penny sheets of printed songs. The two that John recalls were Red Nell (because she had a red petticoat) and Paddy Fastwalker.

He told us that his mother, during the Black and Tan era on one occasion while on her way to school in Ennis by ass and car, from the Limerick road, ferried guns and ammunition concealed in the car through the village. The locals hid them down the bank from the quay and they were for use in an ambush in east Clare.

He recalled that when Latoon Bridge was blown, the Tans acquired forced labour from Clarecastle to repair it, by rounding up all the available men in the village.

On a funny aside, Paddy Normoyle had a very stubborn mule on the repairs but one of the tans was not happy with the pace of the work and tried to get the mule to move faster only to receive a sore injury — from the said animal that probably had an appreciation of the politics of the situation.

There was a meeting place just down the Quay Road (at the side of Monahan's house) under a large tree where the old people congregated to tell stories and talk of old times. There were people who fought in the different wars and battles of the World War One and the Boer War swapping stories. It was also the place where people looking for work would come, hoping a farmer or tradesman might hire them. Indeed many of them had nicknames associated with their campaigns such as Jim McMahon, who fought in India, was called Duchiu.

On politics he said it was a highly political time. Clarecastle was very much a Labour village but as a child, he thought Paddy Bourke of Fine Gael was the best as when he canvassed he always had sweets for the children. 'Dev' always got a great reception and was led into Ennis preceded by many horses and bands.

Canon Monahan was Parish Priest in John's early years and he recalled his sermons condemning the courting couples he met in his travels by night patrolling the highways and byways of the parish. John wondered it was a miracle that anyone got married while he was priest.

The old area, where Maddens Terrace is now, was a poor part of the village with housing of low quality and no running water or sewerage and little to no work for the inhabitants. There was a hall called the Labour Hall at the upper end where plays, concerts and dances were held which gave much enjoyment. Concerts were also held in the Barracks and Maude O'Brien of Clareabbey was one of the singers there along with Conjuror Moloney and Buddy Morrissey. He told of the sailors from the coal boats, especially the Norwegians and the music sessions they had in the pubs in the village.

He spoke of cycling to dances in Quin and on the way home they would have refreshment by way of drinking the milk from the tankards left out for the creamery at Monahans Hill in Doora.

John recalled one couple, Paddy Carty and his wife, who had a house in the Commons. She would go to Ennis and would get very drunk. Paddy would go and collect her with the ass and cart. When he got to his door he would back the cart up to the door and tip the cart, landing his wife in the kitchen floor. Another character was Delia Kelly who used to come

out only late at night, around three in the morning. She would go swimming in the quay and then go climbing trees getting ivy for her goats. Martin Faulkner, an itinerant traveller, used to call regularly to their home for the cup of tea and the few shillings. He recalls a look of worry on Martin's face one day when he saw his cup of tea and he was not inclined to drink it. There was a tea bag floating in it and it was the first time he had seen tea made that way.

He also went hunting for rabbits to sell in the village and Ennis. One story concerns himself and Mick Doud. They sent a ferret

into the rabbit burrow. The ferret killed the rabbit alright but ate one of his legs. They were in a bit of a quandary, as they would find it hard to sell a three-legged rabbit. The solution came later in the day when they found a dead hare. They cut the leg off the hare and stitched it on to the rabbit and sold the rabbits they caught including the three-legged one with the hare's leg to a shop in Ennis.

Their favourite orchards for raiding were O'Briens at the bridge and Gleesons in Carnelly.

Niall Dunne remembers

Niall attended Clarecastle NS between 1989 and 1997

Niall says that his school days were not much different from today. He says his favourite teachers were Anne Flanagan and Seamus Leamy. He remembers head lice being a constant problem in the school.

He is very passionate about Clare hurling so it is not surprising that the big days he remembers are when the Clarecastle senior team came in to the school. This day, along with the day they came in 1995, were 'big' days for him and have left a lasting impression. He says the whole school collected in the school yard and he thinks they were allowed wear their jerseys to school. He was ten years old in 1995 when Clare won the all-Ireland.

Michael Cummins looked after the sports in the school and Niall says he was 'very good' and describes him as 'a lovely man'.

Niall has kept the same circle of friends since primary school in Clarecastle, explaining that they were all involved in sport. Niall has fond memories of Clarecastle National School.

Lilly Ryan (née Corry) remembers

Lilly attended Clarecastle girls' NS between 1935 and 1943

Lilly was very pleased to speak with us, one of the reasons being she has very happy memories of life in Clarecastle NS. She says herself that she loved school. She speaks of the great emphasis on religion and the 'grilling' the children used to get. She says the church had absolute authority and there were prayers in the morning, lunchtime and afternoon. She spoke of a time when a classmate took off the teacher when the teacher was out of the room. The teacher came back and caught the child. The child was brought up in front of the Sacred Heart to apologise. The class thought it was hilarious and Lilly still does.

Her Confirmation day was 23rd May, 1943. She remembers it well, as her brother had died the previous month. It was the last confirmation that Bishop Fogarty did according to Lilly. The children were in absolute fear as the best of the class were asked questions from the Bishop and the teacher would have disciplined them if they got it wrong.

Lilly remembers well that Santa would come to the school. She figures the teacher would buy sweets for him to give out. She says there are loads of Santies now and children get treats weekly and mentions how much Christmas meant so much then.

There was always a school concert. She remembers it was *Bronntanas Nollag* and she always had the part of the *Máthair*. While she remembers this well, she can't remember who her *leanbh* was.

Memories of Desmond (Dessie) O'Reilly

Dessie attended Clarecastle BNS between 1928 and 1936 and now lives in Castlefergus, Quin

The old school was in an awful state, especially the dry toilets which were cleaned out once a year by Stephen Carty, an itinerant. He shovelled the contents into barrels and brought them on his ass and cart to the quay (often leaving a watery trail as he went) and toppled it into the river. Dessie wonders how people did not get illnesses such as the lack of hygiene.

He remembers playing hurling in the fair green. The children could not afford a real hurley but they fashioned a home-made one out of ash, which they called a 'spock'. Indeed he

recalled one of his friends 'borrowed' the wooden artificial leg of Mr Carmody who lived in a small house at the end gable of what is now Margaret Malone's house, to play hurling. He said that during the summer holidays they ran wild and that no orchard was safe from them. He talked of raiding Sheedy's and Coughlin's orchards and of going down the railway track to Cragmore for hazelnuts. They went out to Ballybeg lake to swim, travelling up the Clare road and turning off through the Fairy lane (now the entrance to the new GAA field and across the fields.

Michael (Mickey) Russell remembers

Mickey attended Clarecastle BNS around 1918.

Mickey Russell, in his eighty-ninth year, has clear memories of his school days and of the many changes that he has witnessed in Clarecastle over that long period of time.

The children gathered hazelnuts in the crags of Cartock and played at the quay when the boats brought coal to Powers and Suttons in Clarecastle and to McInerneys in Ennis. But they were also expected to contribute to the family income by working for the local farmers after school, thinning turnips and mangolds at a shilling a drill and saving hay. Many of the families in the village grew potatoes and vegetables and kept pigs and chickens. Milk was bought from Griffey's.

Mickey remembers the excitement of the arrival of the coal boats which came about once a month. It took about two days for the village car-men to unload the cargo and to transport it to the local yards or to Ennis. Each car load was weighed at the level at the back of Power's yard and weighed again on

arrival at its destination. Mickey spoke of the building of the pump-house in later years at the lever and the collapse of its concrete roof during construction. He remembered also that the field on which his present home is situated was known as John O'Dea's field.

Mickey revealed fascinating details as his mind drifted back over the years such as the name of Alfie James who drove a three-wheel car to transport the priests following the demise of the horse and trap. He spoke of the Labour Hall or the League Hall as it was also known, in the Quay Road and the Clarecastle trade and labour band associated with it, the old dispensary, professor Hayes and the revival of the regatta by Canon Madden. He remembered too a Clarecastle in which TB was rampant and that being sent to the sanatorium (Edenvale) was the same as ordering a coffin.

Mickey has since passed away. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.*

Sport in Clarecastle NS

Today sport has become very important in the lives of children. Physical education as a subject is of great benefit to the pupils for their mental and physical well-being.

Sport, particularly hurling was always treated with importance in our school. For many years John Hanly instilled a love of the game in the pupils. Many of our past pupils have gone on to represent Clare in many grades and it was fitting that when Clare won the all-Ireland in 1995 Anthony Daly, a past pupil of Clarecastle NS, was the captain. Over the years our school has enjoyed much success in school competitions. Hurling is synonymous with Clarecastle and continues to be the number one game in our school.

Since 1990 we have introduced many other sports thus giving a great choice to children to learn and develop different sports. We participated in Gaelic football competition for the first time in the early 1990s. In the meantime we have contested many finals, winning three of them. Indeed our most recent success was this year when Conor Clancy led his team to victory. This team is the last to represent the school before we enter the new school. They are a talented group and they hope to be the first to bring glory to the new school by winning the hurling title. This will be a difficult task but if they show the same determination and dedication as they did in the football we can be confident of success.

Football team 2006: Michael Casey, Mark McGuane, Michael Lynch, Sean Lynch, Conor Clancy, Lorcan O'Donoghue, Robert Duggan, Stephen Ward, Michael McDermott, Derek Casey, Dylan Broderick, Jonathan Griffey and Aaron Green; substitutes: Cathal Torpey, Devon Staunton, Patrick Dolan, Conor Liddy, Tommy Howard, Evan Wiley, Adam Howard, Brian Magnier, Dylan Hanrahan, Gareth Gegan, Stephen Considine and John Lavin.

Camogie was introduced in the mid 1990s. We have contested four finals, winning two of them. Many talented players have left our school and continue to play for their club and secondary schools.

Soccer, rugby and basketball also feature in our sports programme. It is great to have such diversity as the pupils discover their strengths and develop their skills in their favourite sports.

Athletics is also catered for and we are proud of the achievements of our pupils in the annual east Clare championship. Children also attend swimming lessons.

While we celebrate success in all these sports there is no doubt that the emphasis in Clarecastle NS is on participation and enjoyment. All children are encouraged to participate. We are very fortunate to have so many teachers who are interested and willing to give time to training the children in the various sports.

Clarecastle school is also very fortunate in the support it gets from outside the school. This is particularly true with the co-operation we get from the G.A.A. club. We are grateful for the use of the fields. The club (many past pupils) also come to coach the children in hurling and camogie. We also benefit from the expertise of a rugby coach for a few weeks each year.

One of the highlights of the school year is sports day. This is held in June in the G.A.A. field. Here children enjoy a whole range of activities including running, weekend race, obstacle race, chin ball, sack race, spud and spoon race, target throwing, parachute, penalty kicks, three legged race, tug-o-war and football games.

Parents are very appreciative and supportive. Everyone realises that sport is more important now than ever, giving the children the opportunity to be active and healthy. We look forward to even more involvement in games with better facilities in the new school.

Michael Cummins, NT



School seven-a-side team



McDonald's seven-a-side soccer team, 1998 all-Ireland final



School basketball team



Winners in athletics



Sports day obstacle course



Three-legged race



World cup supporters



In the medals



Primary schools football champions 1993

Back row, left to right: M Slattery, S Moloney, P Sheridan, K Moloney, D Quinn, A Nihil, B Hayes, C Higgins, C McNamara, J Dunne and E Dormer

Front row, left to right: J Keenan, T Mongons Eric Considine, G O'Brien, G Farmer, A Considine, M Fitzgerald, K Clohessy, M Leyden, C Plunkett, S Hickey and M Malone



1974 school league champions

Back row, left to right: E Callinan, W Halpin, G Halpin, P Cosgrove, M Daly, M Healy, T Howard and J Colleran

Middle row, left to right: J Keane, P Leyden, B O'Grady, G O'Neill, P Colleran, T Neville, L Daly, M McNamara and L Kelleher

Front row, left to right: J Starr, D Hanrahan, G Keane, P McMahon, T Moloney and P Queally



1999 schools final



Winning athletes



1994 school league final



2006 camogie finalists

Sixth class, 1998



Back row, left to right: E Considine, A Page, S Moloney, A Higgins, D Power, A Griffey, B Guinnane, J O'Connor and J Mongons

Back middle row, left to right: M Geraghty, T McGrath, S Clune, Z McCarthy, S Griffin, L O'Sullivan, T Keenan, C O'Flynn and A Sheehan

Front middle row, left to right: J Clancy, M Killeen, L Vaughan, T Considine, B Travers, L O'Sullivan, A Bowe and L Curtin

Front row, left to right: N Ward, F Markham and D Vaughan

Second class, 1998



Back row, left to right: C Dinan, P Nihill, A Considine, N Quinn, S Callinan, P Keenan, R Clancy and T Doyle

Back middle row, left to right: A Frawley, S Comyns, P Galbraith, C Donnellan, G Bowe, J Kerin, J Cosgrove, H Liddy and K Lynch

Front middle row, left to right: E Lyons, E O'Loughlin, D Kelly, C Murphy, C Trahe, S McMahon, R Gregan and R Galvin

Front row, left to right: V Moloney, A Guckian, K Pavely, K O'Neill and R Halpin

Fourth class, 1998



Back row, left to right: A McCarthy, M Mongons, F Wynne, R Cullinan, D Corry, I Considine, S Flynn and S Flynn

Back middle row, left to right: T Hassett, E Meere, D Morris, A Farmer, M Dillon, K Torpey, A Bunce and A Healy

Front middle row, left to right: C Barry, L Murray, K Torpey, C Donnellan, F McMahon, S Talty and P Walsh

Front row, left to right: B Talty, F Curtin, K O'Connor, B Kierse, P Egan and S Dilger

Second class, 1998



Back row, left to right: S Clune, K Lynch, N Noonan, L Meere, C Cummins, C Hassett, A Moloney, D Greene and C Bergin

Back middle row, left to right: A Morgan, S Higgins, N Dinan, K Geraghty, R Ryan, P Guckian, J Reidy and D Moloney

Front middle row, left to right: K Cooley, L Page, S Brenna, S Bowe, O McNamara, S McMahon, J Kirwan, P Lynch and E Lundy

Front row, left to right: C Cole, R Duggan, R Broderick, L Foley, K Broderick and E Vaughan



Bridie Murphy does a wonderful job taking care of the children and parents when they are crossing the road





Judge Griffin visits the school

In 1973, high court judge Frank Griffin visited Clarecastle school. He had many fond memories of his old school. He was a great admirer of Tom Hanly, who was his teacher when he attended school in Clarecastle. Judge Griffin was a great friend of Paddy Roughan. He was delighted to meet John Hanly and Tommy Hanly as well as John and Liam Roughan.

Left to right: John Hanly, John Roughan, Michael Connolly, Tommy Hanly, judge Frank Griffin, Liam Roughan and unknown



Fr Paddy Loughnane PP, Bishop Michael Harty and Fr Sean Moriarty cc, on confirmation day



Visit to Birr castle

The 1950 fancy
dress parade



The annual regatta was a great event in the social life of the village and surrounding areas. The parade would start from outside the old league room. Then on down to the quay where the judging would take place. It was a great occasion for children and adults alike

On the carriage, driver Mickey Griffey, Mary Madigan, Mary Flynn, Nellie Considine and Kitty Long

Front row, left to right: Nancy McCarthy, Rita Cahill, Anne Hewitt, Margaret Moloney, Joan Ward, Eileen Meere, Breeda Clark, Eileen Howe, May Considine, Lily Corry, Winnie Russell, Gretta McMahon, Fanny Hanmrahan, Anne Moloney, Myra Fitzgerald, Theresa Cole, Mary Power, Sean Keane, Willie Hanly and Mickey Hanly

Back row, left to right: Mary Keane, Molly McNamara, Chrissie Long, Mary Kelly, Seamus Long, Betty Doyle, Annie Moloney, Nancy Slattery, Myra Arthur, Biddy Hanmrahan, Beaso Killoughrey, Noel Herlihy, Mickey Keane, Batt Dillon, Mary Meere, Martin Kelly and Anthony Fitzgerald.

This rare photograph is courtesy of Mary (Flynn) Moroney



Schools inspector Michéal Ó Loinsigh opens the school extension in 1977, watched by the pupils, with Donal Carey TD, Sylvester Barrett TD, Una O'Brien, principal, girls' school, Jack McCarthy, builder, Dr Michael Harty, Bishop of Killaloe, Fr Paddy Loughnane PP, John Hanly, principal, boys' school and Haulie Daly MCC



Ger O'Loughlin signs autographs for his young admirers



Back row, left to right: J Malone, E Burns, H Hallower, S O'Donovan, C Reynolds and F Moloney
Front row, left to right: A O'Donovan, D Tierney, Z Power, R O'Gorman, O Roche and E Moloney

Donal Carey remembers

Donal attended Clarecastle BNS between 1945 and 1953

Donal Carey spoke of the old Scout Hall that was in a building in Sutton's yard in the quay road. A man named Reilly, who had been demobbed from the British army, came to work for Joe Reidy in Lissane. Reilly decided to teach the local boys the art of boxing. A type of ring was erected in the Scout Hall by roping off a corner of the room and the lessons began. Donal recalled bouts with Dick Keane and receiving a broken nose in one of the encounters.

Donal had good memories of growing up in Thomond Villas in the shadow of the castle. At that time, Thomond Villas and the associated buildings, which were part of the former British Army Barracks, provided rented accommodation for many families such as bank staff, local government officials etc who were in the village for short periods of time. The children of these families provided a variety of companions for Donal and the young Careys. Donal was very much involved as a

player and later as an official with the local GAA. He recalled travelling to places such as Newmarket-on-Fergus and Tulla as a child on the back of horse-drawn carts and being supplied with lemonade in such foreign places as Norrie Hencheys on the way home from matches. His experiences as secretary to the local club gave him a good grounding for his later role in national politics.

He spoke with knowledge of the work the Land Commission undertook in dividing up lands in the vicinity of the village in the 1940s and 1950s that helped to improve the standard of living for the local farmers. The 1950s also brought a period of great hardship when the banks of the Fergus burst at Island McGrath, flooding hundreds of acres of land and drowning much of the livestock. People had to be rescued from houses and sheep and cattle brought to safety.



Teachers, First Holy Communion, 1997

Back, left to right Anne Flanagan, Agnes Shannon, Ann Loughman, Anne Larkin, Mary O'Gorman and Mary Fahy
Front, left to right: Mary Lynch, Monica Brooks, Fr Michael McInerney, PP and Betty O'Connor



Teachers at Confirmation, 1973

John Hanly, Fr Sean Moriarty, CC Monica Brooks, Nelly Wylde, Fr Michael Hillery, Una O'Brien,
Dr Michael Harty, Mary Lynch, Peggy O'Keefe, Fr Pat Loughnane and Michael Connolly



Teachers 1994

Back, left to right: Michael Feeney, John Looney, Michael Cummins and Edel Cotter
Middle, left to right: Seamus Leamy, Anne Flannagan and Mary Lynch
Front, left to right: Mary O'Gorman, Mary Fahy, Monica Brooks and Anne Larkin



They'll never miss one



Fruit awareness week



Sixth class, 1992

Back row, left to right: John Hanly, J Hick, A Kearney, B O'Halloran, P Reidy, B Davis, M Mongons, T Moloney, S Bell, K Power, and Seamus Leamy

Second from back row, left to right: J Roche, F Quigley, O McGrath, G Power, N Barry, E Higgins, B Keogh, N Cusack and E Moloney

Third from back row, left to right: D Hickey, B Russell, P Keating, C O'Halloran, D Barry, D O'Gorman, M McNamara and N Casey

Front row, left to right: P Conroy, N McMahon, D Geraghty, P Scanlon, P Ryan, R Leyden and J McLoughlin



Nativity play, 1956



Cruising down the river



Outside Birr castle



Down the big slide



Children's author Liam O'Reilly tells one of his stories to the pupils



Sports day 2001

Roll books 1935

<div> <div>opriced an</div> <div>REGISTER OF <i>Scail na mbeaiceallí</i> <i>Cláir</i> NATIONAL SCHOOL.</div> <div>39</div> </div>									
Date of Entrance.	Register Number.	PUPIL'S NAME IN FULL.	Date of Pupil's Birth.	Religious Denomination as stated by Parent or Guardian.	RESIDENCE.	Position or Occupation of Parent or Guardian.	State the Name and County of the last National School at which the Pupil attended : and the Class in which there enrolled.		
							School.	County.	Class.
9. 9. 35	1295	1 <i>Cogán of Donzuga</i>	9. 9. 35	R. C.	<i>Clár h-ábalga</i>	<i>zárda</i>	-	-	-
9. 9. 35	1296	2 <i>Noel of Ábalga</i>	28.12.30	R. C.	-	<i>R. J. C.</i>	-	-	-
7. 5. 1935	1287	3 <i>Pádraig Óglairín</i>	23. 4. 31	R. C.	<i>Clarecastle</i>	<i>Cartier</i>	-	-	-
24. 5. 1935	1288	4 <i>Frederick McMeigaminn</i>	10. 6. 31	R. C.	<i>Clarecastle</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	-	-	-
27. 6. 1935	1289	5 <i>Dominic Connolly</i>	18. 3. 26	R. C.	<i>Clarecastle</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Ballyea B.N.S.</i>	<i>Clare</i>	<i>I.</i>
27. 6. 1935	1290	1 <i>Seán Seánán Connolly</i>	6. 5. 23	R. C.	<i>opriced an Cláir</i>	<i>Schäbunde</i>	<i>Ballyea B.N.S.</i>	<i>Clare</i>	<i>IV.</i>
19. 6. 1935	1291	2 <i>Wilhelm of Koczús</i>	9. 6. 31	R. C.	<i>opriced an Cláir</i>	<i>Capzár</i>	-	-	-
2. 7. 1935	1292	3 <i>Pádraig Kumpf</i>	4. 5. 31	R. C.	<i>opriced an Cláir</i>	<i>Schäbunde</i>	-	-	-
3. 9. 1935	1293	4 <i>Micéal O'Donnada</i>	30. 5. 29	R. C.	<i>bózar an Cláir</i>	<i>bózar, mairne</i>	-	-	-
9. 9. 1935	1294	5 <i>Anzelm O'Donnada</i>	3. 3. 30	R. C.	<i>bózar Insc</i>	<i>banncaoir</i>	-	-	-

<div> <div>opriced an</div> <div>REGISTER OF <i>Cláir</i> NATIONAL SCHOOL.</div> <div>29</div> </div>									
Date of Entrance.	Register Number.	PUPIL'S NAME IN FULL.	Date of Pupil's Birth.	Religious Denomination as stated by Parent or Guardian.	RESIDENCE.	Position or Occupation of Parent or Guardian.	State the Name and County of the last National School at which the Pupil attended : and the Class in which there enrolled.		
							School.	County.	Class.
9. 9. 1935	141	1 <i>Máire Ní Dálaig</i>	12. 3. 30	C.R.	<i>Na Commónca</i>	<i>marb</i>	<i>Ni Raibí sí ar scoil Róimie Seo.</i>		
"	142	2 <i>Brigid Ní Dubháil</i>	31. 1. 31	"	<i>Liosáin</i>	<i>feaoibre</i>	" " " "	"	"
11. 9. 1935	143	3 <i>Máire P. Ní Lungsig</i>	14. 8. 24	"	<i>Mairistir an Cláir</i>	<i>Ex. Banncaoir</i>	<i>An Cláir, Insc</i>	<i>Cláir</i>	<i>IV.</i>
16. 9. 1935	144	4 <i>Creasa Ní Ó'Leacháin</i>	14. 11. 22	"	<i>An Priam Sraid</i>	<i>Oacadoir</i>	" " "	"	<i>IV.</i>
"	145	5 <i>Eibhlín Ní Gárraid</i>	12. 12. 30	"	<i>Na Commónca</i>	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Ni Raibí sí ar scoil Róimie Seo</i>		
21. 10. 1935	146	1 <i>Máire lea Ní Cuinnéin</i>	31. 7. 31	C.R.	<i>Sraid Pádraig</i>	<i>feaoibre</i>	<i>Ni Raibí sí ar scoil Róimie Seo.</i>		
1. 4. 35	134	4 <i>Máire Ní Madoimnaig</i>	1. 3. 30	"	<i>Carnelly, Cláir</i>	<i>feaoibre</i>	<i>Ni Raibí sí ar scoil Róimie Seo.</i>		
2. 4. 35	135	5 <i>Lúe Ní Madoimnaig</i>	28. 3. 31	"	<i>Sraid Pádraig</i>	"	" " " "	"	"
7. 5. 1935	136	1 <i>Monica Ní Carrigáig</i>	16. 12. 29	C.R.	<i>baile beag</i>	<i>feirmóir</i>	<i>Ni Raibí sí ar scoil Róimie Seo.</i>		
28. 5. 1935	137	2 <i>Brigid Ní Lungsig</i>	8. 3. 31	"	<i>Liosáin</i>	"	" " " "	"	"
1. 7. 1935	138	3 <i>Brigid Ní Carrigáig</i>	17. 3. 31	"	<i>baile beag</i>	"	" " " "	"	"
"	139	4 <i>Siobán Ní Connolly</i>	18. 3. 23	"	<i>Caisleán an Cláir</i>	<i>feaoibre</i>	<i>baile Loda</i>	<i>Cláir</i>	<i>II.</i>
2. 9. 1935	140	5 <i>Máire Ní Ó'Leacháin</i>	5. 8. 31	"	<i>Caisleán an Cláir</i>	<i>Eise Office</i>	<i>Ni Raibí sí ar scoil Róimie Seo</i>		

Memories of Michael Connolly, NT (retired)

Even though I had been to Clarecastle as a youngster to see the boats at the quay once or twice and also at the regatta with my mother and father, my first significant experience of Clarecastle was in September 1961 when I arrived as a teacher in the national school. The first person I met on my way across the road from my car was Nellie Wylde and her friendliness and courtesy, I remember feeling, bode well for the future. I wasn't mistaken. I was then welcomed, first by John Hanly and then by Monica Costello. I was accepted immediately as a member of the staff and, throughout my time in Clarecastle, I was supported, advised and helped by them both in so many ways. I will always be grateful to them and to Agnes Shannon who joined us later on.

Clarecastle Boys' National School in those days, was separate from the girls' school. (Eva Meehan and Una O'Brien worked with Nellie in that school at that time. Mary Lynch arrived later.) We had three classrooms in our side of the building and the outside toilets more or less completed the facilities; sometime around 1964 the toilet situation was rectified. We also were given a cloakroom at that time as far as I can remember.

I also remember lighting the fire in the mornings; I recall that in those days there was a very high and safe fireguard in all schools and this, at least, made it safe. The children helped to lift and move the turf from outside to the classroom at times; schools didn't have the infrastructure that they have now and, of course, there wasn't the same consciousness of safety then as there is now.

When I arrived in Clarecastle, the partitions between the classrooms were made of timber and glass and they were far from soundproof. I felt this difficult at first because in the previous school I was in, I had more or less a soundproof classroom. However, after a while in Clarecastle I became oblivious to *lámh lámh eile a haon a dó...* from the infant room. Outside or external noise didn't seem to affect the children in any way; children always seem to adapt to circumstances.

Later on in the seventies, my classes were located in the Abbey Hall for a few months (during the construction of new rooms at the school); classes were conducted in a room with little space and included a billiard table as part of the furniture. I didn't look forward to Mondays during that period.

In those days, the children used to bring money to pay for the costs associated with cleaning the school and it was a bit of a chore to collect it. I also used to collect money for the Africa magazine, a task I inherited from my predecessor Mrs Hanly. I'm afraid I was a little bit careless in promoting this magazine to the people of Clarecastle and the numbers getting Africa began to dwindle seriously in the seventies. Then, to my surprise, a Kiltegan priest came to Clarecastle and due to his promotion and persuasive powers the numbers signing on for the magazine jumped to an unprecedented level; I was back in an enhanced role a money collector and magazine distributor (actually the children did the distribution work).

The church played a big part of my life in Clarecastle. I used to organise the choir, in a manner of speaking, during Lent and during the May devotions. Bringing the children to confessions and helping with the singing for Mass (in Irish, English and Latin) was also an important duty in my time in the school. The singing in the Church in that era was of a very high standard, something that I cannot claim credit for, I'm afraid.

The children I taught in Clarecastle always had a great spirit and character. I thought this was true while I was in the school but having left it later in 1980, I found out from all the schools I subsequently visited that this perception was even more accurate than I had originally thought. I'm not sure why this was the case; it may have been the influence of the hurling, it may have been the wit among the older people in the village, it may be due to the fact that the older people often allowed the youngsters to join in the conversation and experience the moments of wit and humour that were current at that time in Clarecastle. Television or computers didn't really intrude in human interactions and perhaps children participated more in conversations, particularly with older people.

I taught some brilliant pupils in Clarecastle who went on to achieve considerable distinction afterwards at second level and beyond. The children always loved hurling. I remember, in the seventies, particularly, going to Ennis with hurling teams from my classes to play matches and also, of course, having the 'returns' in Devines' field. I can never forget how much of a thrill it was for these children to get the Clarecastle jersey from John Hanly and the pride and respect with which

it was treated; the tension in the classroom, on the day of a match, was palpable from about twelve o'clock in anticipation of the match after school. I was dependent on teachers and some parents to transport the boys to Ennis; the transport arrangements for the return trip, to say the least, was often problematical. Of course, these boys got excellent tuition in hurling from John in the senior classes and many went on to

achieve great success with the Clarecastle senior team and with Clare.

In later years I was back in the school in a different capacity and I still felt at home. I have always admired the commitment and dedication shown by the board, parents and teachers in the school and, of course, I was privileged to have spent some time with them and with the pupils of Clarecastle School.

Memories of Nellie Wylde, NT (retired)

Nellie (formally Considine) is from one of the oldest families in Clarecastle and has some very fond memories of her days both attending and teaching in Clarecastle school. She remembers attending the old school for a very short time when it was based across from the church. The girls' school was the upstairs large room where all the classes were in the one room with two teachers Mrs Doyle and Mrs Kerin. She moved to the new school on opening day in September 1935 where the conditions were much improved with three school rooms allocated to the girls and three for the boys.

Nellie qualified as a teacher in the early fifties. Her first appointment was to Toomevarra, Co. Tipperary which she enjoyed. A vacancy came up in Clarecastle. Cannon Hogan PP wrote to her offering her the position plus charge of the church choir for Lent and the May and October devotions. Miss Meehan, who was the principal of the girls' school, would take charge of the choir for the highly public events like Communion and Confirmation. She remembers Gerald Barry, now a music composer, helping her out in the choir and her late husband Denis commenting on the quality of his organ playing.

She loved teaching the young girls and always felt encouragement of the student was much better than some of the strict disciplines that were the fashion of the times. Now though it seems to have come full circle where it is difficult to impose any rules on students and parents are often reluctant to believe there child can be causing problems in



John Hanly and Nellie Wylde

the school. She said she would find it very difficult to teach in the current system and has great admiration for the current crop of teachers. The boys' and girls' classes were operated independently of each other and it was only in later years that the two were united. She said that the girls' side of the school did not do the Primary Certificate but the boys did. This was because of some dispute between the teachers' union and the Department of Education. It was not a requirement to have the certificate to get into secondary school.

As a young girl she took part in plays in the Labour hall which were organised usually by Fr O'Neill. Also there were concerts conducted by Eva Meehan NT as well as shows by the local band with Sergeant Long and the Keane family.

Growing up in Clarecastle she recalled that her father Patsy was Harbour Master supervising the boats coming in and out of the small harbour. Nellie's Grandfather, Joe Considine and her two uncles, Jack and George Considine were pilots on the Fergus. When a boat was due in the river, the pilot had to travel to Kildysart by hired car, board the boat there and bring the boat up the river to Clarecastle. The reverse took place when a boat was leaving Clarecastle. Nellie said that she often got a spin in the car travelling to and from Kildysart and on occasion, got a spin on the boat itself. There was a winch on board the boats to unload the cargo and her father would operate that winch. He also had a small fishing boat and licence which he leased out during the fishing season. The war meant an end to boats coming to Clarecastle and after the war, the trade never really recovered. Her father got employment in Sutton's coal yard adjacent to the quay. Nellie recalled the financial records that he kept in the office for Sutton's and the column of tots that he had to do in his head. Her mother would send her or her brother down to the office at the end of the month to assist their father in totting but he would still check all the figures himself. He has a little ready reckoner which was an early form of a calculator. Later again, her father worked for Clare County Council in charge of pump houses in Clarecastle and in Quin.

The Old Fair Green (now Church Drive) and the lands where Christopher Collins's house now stands were once the property of the Considine family. On the fair days, in May and November, her father Patsy and members of his family collected tolls from farmers as they left the fairs on the exit roads out of the Village. Nellie was unclear as to how the Considine family acquired this right.

The main social events were the Regatta days and on New Year's Eve the local band would parade up and down the street and Pat Navin would usually fire off a few shots from his gun to ring in the New Year. Nellie recalled shows coming to the fair green. She called them gazettes. The boys and girls from the village would walk in to the dance hall at Paddy Con's and

come home together as a group, ending up in someone's house in the village for the tea.

Sunday in summer time was spent in New Hall lake in the cool clear waters. She recalled going to St John's Well in an ass and cart to do the rounds and they would have lemonade and cakes afterwards.

During the war they had one of the few battery radios and the people of the village used to come to listen to the matches broadcast on Radio Éireann. Two Lynch brothers from Lissane would come regularly to listen to the broadcasts of 'Lord Haw Haw' on German radio. Nellie recalled rushing down to Callinan's shop when the bread would come in, "that awful brown bread" as she described it. Tea and sugar were rationed and she could remember going up to Dolan's in Ennis to see the first bananas and oranges that arrived when the war had ended. During the war there was little tobacco available and some people substituted turf-dust for tobacco.

Nellie spoke fondly of the late Pat Navin and recalled that he had the first television in the village. He would allow the school children in to see the television on the strict condition that they behaved themselves. Reception came from Cork as this was prior to the Maghera transmitter being built and it was very snowy.

She told us to get where we are to day was a long tough road. Back in the fifties and sixties work was scarce and often only seasonal and emigration was rampant. She recalled that TB almost wiped out whole generations of some families in the village and countryside.

She told when she first moved back to Clarecastle after marrying the late Denis Wylde, she lived in rental accommodation in the barracks at Thomand Villas. Even though she was in full employment banks were reluctant to give mortgages and all they needed at the time was £600. In that era banks only liked to deal with establishments such as business and professional people.

Nellie spoke of her husband's interest in music and his love for photography. She recalled his work with the famous American photographer, Dorothea Lange and showed us two original photographs in her hall, one of her mother-in-law, Mrs Wylde and one of Denis taken in his studio, both taken by Dorothea Lange in the early 1950s.

Her mother, who was a McNamara, lived to be over a hundred years of age. She had great stories of the Black and Tans and those days but sadly her stories were never written down. Her people were great horse and car men and made a good living from transporting goods from the boats in the quay. Nellie spoke of the drowning of a Murphy man in the quay when he fell between the wall of the quay and a boat that was in at the time.

1995: all-Ireland hurling champions visit Clarecastle school



Waiting for the hurlers



Autograph hunting with Ken Morrissey



The players with their trophies



Anthony Daly signing autographs



Ger O'Loughlin signs his autograph

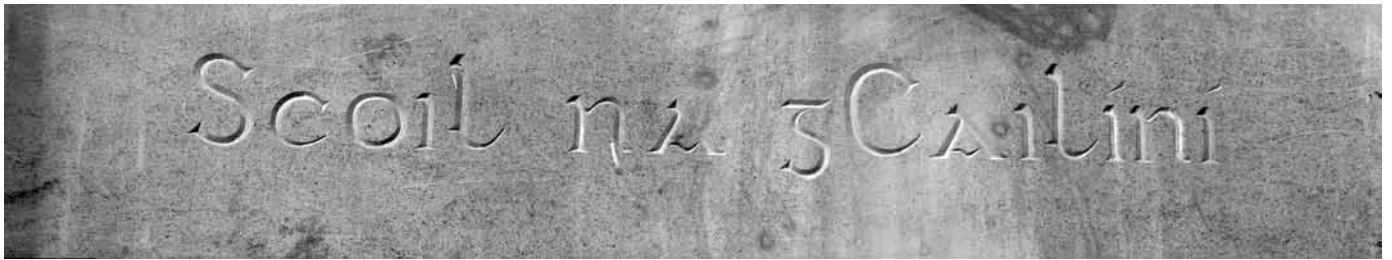
All dressed up for the Special Olympics parade



The old school



The old school plaque



The old school door sign



The old school classrooms and playground



The old school 1935



The old school classroom



The old school classroom

The new school



The new school: clearing the site



The new school: preparing the site



The new school: laying the foundations



The new school: up to roof level



The new school: taking shape



The new school: almost there



1950 boys