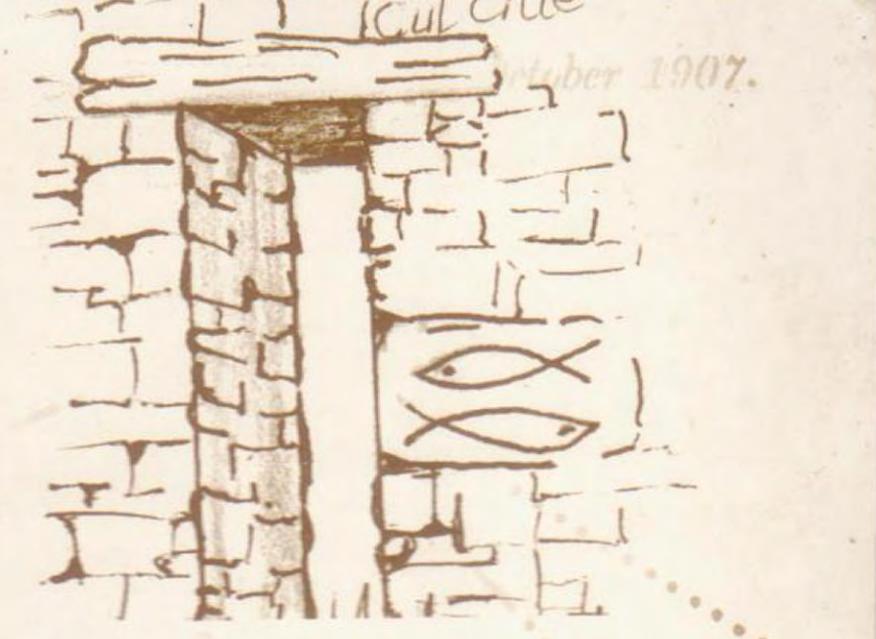


# Drumany National School

Reunion 4th & 5th August 2001

O'Brien



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# Introduction

In October 2000 a number of past pupils of Drumany National School gathered together to explore the setting up of a committee to organise a Re – union of past pupils of Drumany School. It was a common aspiration that a school Re - union be held and so a committee was formed, Chairperson: Patrick Egan, V Chairman: Michael Joe Gaffney, Correspondence Secretary: Bridie Darcy Boyle, Recording Secretary: Andrew Redican, Ass. Secretary: Brendan Keegan, Treasurers: Sean Mc Loughlin and Michael Joe Gaffney, Committee Members: Patrick (Sonny) Mc Loughlin, Anselmn Reynolds, Vincent O' Rourke, Seamus Redican, and Peader Gibbons. One brave woman and ten men!

The committee was unanimous that we should produce a book that would suitably commemorate this very special weekend in our lives. In it we should record the history of the school and enshrine the folklore that our teacher, Patrick Reynolds so generously shared with his pupils. Above all it was the desire of all present that we should invite past pupils and teachers to retrace their footsteps down memory lane and from the mists of time recall and retrieve the memories and stories and dreams that we shared. In this way we may capture in print and picture and celebrate those precious days that had such a powerful and enduring influence on our lives.

The production of the commemorative book was a huge task, but also a labour of love. Drumany School Re - union committee acknowledge with grateful appreciation all those who contributed in any way to this publication. We have endeavoured to accommodate everyone who contributed. We have made every effort to avoid any errors or omissions and apologise sincerely for any mistakes that may have occurred.

A special word of thanks to John Flynn Drumkeerin for assistance in lay out and also to Maura Reynolds for cover design.

It was immensely gratifying to read that the memories were being recalled with such affection, appreciation and pride.

Andrew Redican *Editor.*



Back Row Left to Right: Anselm Renolds, Vincent O'Rourke, Sean McLoughlin, Micheal Joe Gaffney, Seamus Redican.

Front Row Left to Right: Patrick Egan, Bridie Darcy Boyle, Andrew Redican, Patrick McLoughlin, Brendan Keegan & missing from photo Peader Gibbons.

# Chairman's Address

In November 2000 a meeting was called in Fenagh Community Centre with a view to organising a reunion of Drumany National School. As a number of local schools had already had their reunions, it was felt that Drumany should do likewise.

After a number of meetings a committee was formed. It was an honour and a privilege to be appointed as chairman. Our committee met every two weeks rotating between the houses of committee members. I would like to thank all concerned for their warmth and hospitality on these occasions. We worked extremely well as a team and we had some memorable nights reminiscing. Our first objective was a visit to the library in Ballinamore to check out old roll books. It was a most memorable and enjoyable night and really got our interest going. We then set to work collecting name and addresses to contact our past pupils.

We wish to thank Sean O'Sullivan and Mrs Gilheaney, Ballinamore library, for their courtesy and help that night and on numerous other occasions.

We wish to thank John Ellis T.D. and Gerry Reynolds T.D. for their sponsorship of postage Etc.

I would like to express a special word of thanks to - Andrew Redican for all his dedicated work, searching through the archives for school history and making contact with past teachers etc.

Bridie Darcy Boyle, our hardworking secretary for her knowledge and contacts and her very detailed report at meetings. Sean Mc Loughlin and Michael Joe Gaffney, joint treasurers, for all their hard work in taking care of finances.

A special word of thanks to my other fellow committee members – Brendan Keegan, Anselm Reynolds, Seamus Redican, Vincent O'Rourke, Patrick (Sonny) Mc Loughlin and Peadar Gibbons.

We wish to thank all that contributed to the Re-union financially and otherwise.

We also wish to thank – Rev. Fr Francis Doyle PP, for officiating of our Mass and the use of the Community centre. Fenagh G.A.A. Club for the use of the park.

Giesela and Heinz Adam, present owners of the school for making it available.

Our local publicans, Paddy Mc Cann and Tommy Flynn, for the use of their premises.

Tommy Moran, Noel Sweeney and Seamus Gallagher for performing at fundraising events.

This is a weekend for memories, for re-kindling friendships and restoring contact with the past. I would like to welcome home all past pupils and their families and hope that everyone will have an enjoyable time.

We will remember all those who for one reason or another are unable to attend. I hope fond memories remain with us for a very long time to come.

Cead Mile Failte Roimh Gach Duine.

Pat Egan (Chairman).

## Acknowledgements

The Committee wishes to thank all those who contributed financially and otherwise to making this publication and School Re-union, which we hope will be a huge success. The Committee would also like to thank the present owners of the School Giesela and Heinz Adam for making the premises available. Thank you also to our printers Craftsman Press for their Co-operation and expertise.

# Drumany National School 1864 - 1972

## (Andrew Redican)

According to Appendix to Second Report From the Commissioners of Irish Education Enquiry 1826 there were seven pay schools in the parish of Fenagh. Most probably these pay schools were hedge schools, for the Irish national school system was not set up until 1831, two years following Catholic Emancipation.

So in 1826 these schools, and possibly a fourth served the pupils of the area, later to be served by Drumany National School. Castlefore - Leamonish School was described as "Small cabin mud and thatched, cost 2£ .5s. .6d" to construct. The teacher was Martin Mc Cabe and his total annual income was £25-0s-0d. The school in Curragh- gowly was described as "Small and bad, cost £2-0-0". Francis Whelan was teacher with an income of £18-0-0. In Corroborick the school was "Small, mud and thatched , cost £3-0-0 lent by Pk Muldoon". Teacher was Michael Flynn with £12-0-0 income.

Another school was sited in "Drumrush". It was described as "bad, built of mud, cost 4£-105.-od, lent by Thomas Mc Earl". The teacher was Gerald Hennessy with 12£-05-od income. This school could have been in Drumroosk North or Drumroosk South.

There is no further record of these schools in the documentation available. Since the department of Education have no records of their existence, it is most probable that these schools did not become part of the Irish National School System set up in 1931.

The first documented evidence of Drumany National School is to be found in an application by Rev. J. Briody to the commissioners requesting the Board to take over the school which it did on 3rd February 1865. The Board records state that the date of the establishment of the school was 5th October 1864. This was a considerable time lag from 1831 when Irish National School System was set up.

On the 3rd February there was an application also for approval of Thomas Early as teacher from 1st August 1865. On the 2nd October 1866 Mary Ann Roddy commenced as work mistress and junior assistant having brought samples of "plain needle work, rumbling and cutting out" to the manager Rev. John Bohan.

## The First Drumany School

First established on the 5th October 1864 it was most probably sited where the late Master Reynolds home was situated. The school was 27'-6" by 11' - 9" by 8' - 0" in height. It was a one room school. In October 1866 the pupil enrolment was 63 male and 63 female - a total of 126 pupils in a school room smaller than many modern sitting rooms! The first principal and assistant were Thomas Early and Mary Anne Rodd



JOHN MURRAY, Stone Mason and Plasterer at Drumany.

Thomas Early's term was shortlived. He was succeeded by James Cafferty on 31-1-1866 - 10th October 1906 when he was succeeded by John Flynn Selton, Gorvagh. James Cafferty's teaching career was by all accounts, most eventful, if not at times turbulent. The school Inspectors were most officious and most demanding, apparently having scant consideration of the cramped conditions and very limited material resources that prevailed. A short extract from one report will illustrate the unreal expectations of the Inspector.



PADDY DUIGNAN, Tradesman at Drumany.

"Pupils not trained in habits of industry... untidy at writing, supplied with un-ruled slates and stumps of pencils and crowded together".

Mrs Maguire succeeded Mary Anne Roddy as assistant on 3rd April 1869. She appears to have taught with James Cafferty until July 1878. On 25th July 1878 Rev. J. Briody P.P. made an application to the Board of Commissioners to approve Honoria McCarten as assistant. In his request he stated that she was eighteen years and not trained.



MICHEAL MCKEON, The Main Contractor who built Drumany.

## The Second Drumany School

The enrolment at the school had grown to a staggering total of 151 (86 male, 65 female). This was a phenomenal increase when one considers the Post Famine population decline and emigration. The records show that an application for a new school considered by the Board of Commissioners on 26/11/1878.

There was also "a letter from them offering to place in the hands of the Commissioners a sum of money to be placed in a fund to produce 5s -od a year during the years of lease".

The Commissioners replied "The Commissioners cannot take charge of a sum of money to be invested for the purpose stated .. and his application cannot be entertained except on the condition that two solvent persons execute a bond indemnifying the Commissioners and the site against any claim for rent".



JOHN FLYNN, PRINCIPAL 1906-1927

The obstacles were resolved and the new school opened as a National School on the 13th October 1879. This school house was the building re-constructed into a dwelling house by Master Reynolds following the closure of the school in 1932. It was one room school 36 feet by 18 feet by 13 feet six inches in height. The furniture was as follows; No of Desks 2, forms 6, length 6 feet. Separate forms 2, length 12 feet.

James Cafferty and Honoria Mc Cartan (who became Mrs Beirne and lived at Drumlaheen) taught in this new school until 1906 and 1921 respectively.

# An Irish Stew

Like Mr Cafferty Mrs Beirne was frequently in the firing line of the Inspectors. 1909 was a remarkable year for the amount of writing and energy expended in correspondence between the Office of National Education and the school manager Rev. J. Macken and the school Inspector regarding the introduction of cookery on the curriculum of Drumany National School. It is quite evident that the teacher and the Rev. Manager were most reluctant to comply with the wishes of the Office of Education. Could you blame them? Imagine trying to teach cookery in the conditions that prevailed - a one room school, two teachers, open fires and no running water! The whole year the letters went back and forth. Fr. Macken pleaded on the 30th August 1909 that there was no money and the "Assistant teacher cannot be expected to supply it from her small income. The manager has not funds for such purposes and it would be useless to ask the parents of the children".

That letter seems to have put the lid on the boiling stew pot and it was allowed to simmer out into the record books.

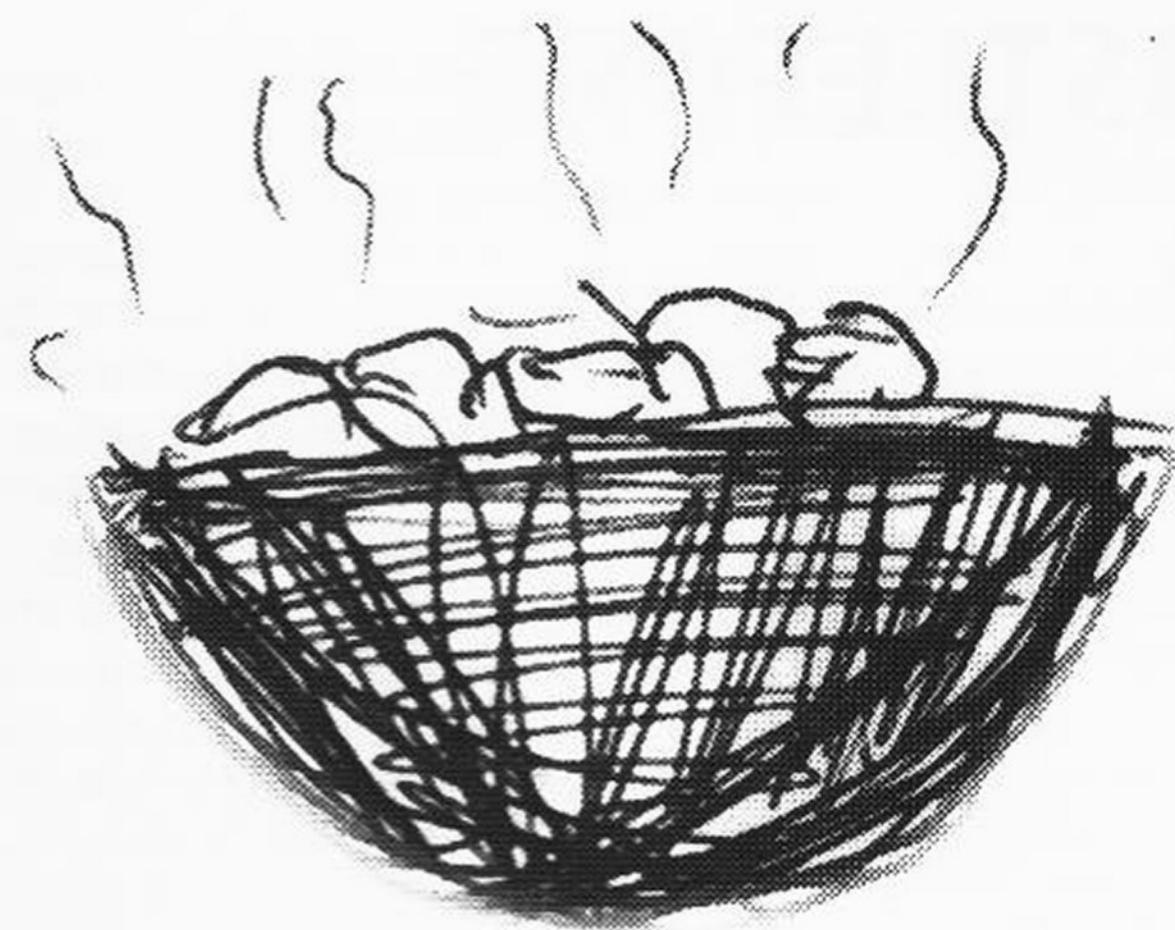
John Flynn had succeeded James Cafferty in 1906. Brigid Keaveney was appointed Assistant on the retirement of Mrs Beirne in 1921. John Flynn arrived with an impressive reputation having "raised two schools from very low to moderately high standards", having taught in Belmullet Boys school 11th July 1904 to January 1905 when he took up appointment as Principal teacher in Newtownforbes Boys School. Brigid Keaveney, later to be fondly remembered as Miss Keaveney or Mrs Mulligan went on to teach in the Third and new Drumany National School until 25th July 1944. Having taught for twenty three years in Drumany Mrs Mulligan had the second longest service as Assistant Teacher in the school.

In 1927 Patrick Reynolds succeeded John Flynn as Principal. Mr Flynn went to take up a teaching appointment in Ballinaglerea. Having taught for over five years in the second Drumany National School which closed in 1932, Patrick Reynolds has the distinction of teaching in a school house that was later to become his residence.

## The Third Drumany School

By 1931 the old school was very run down. Building commenced on the Third and last Drumany National School. The very impressive new school was officially opened following the Easter Holidays on the 19th April 1933. What a change it must have been for teachers and pupils coming from a one room school where teachers taught at each end of the room? The school was also very dilapidated. With two classrooms, two hallways and cloakrooms, dry outside toilets and a fuel store the teachers and pupils must have felt that they were in palatial surroundings.

Patrick Reynolds was to be Principal in this school until his well deserved retirement in July 1963. Mrs Mulligan was to teach there for a further eleven years.



The next two decades saw nine Assistant Teachers filling the role that had only two teachers in almost seven decades. Miss Dympna Burke succeeded Mrs Mulligan in October 1944. Kathleen Neary followed her in March 1946. Next came Maureen Kilcoyne in March 1948. The following May twelve months Sinead Kenny commenced teaching in Drumany. She was to teach for more than five years before going on to take up work elsewhere in October 1954. Eibhilin M. McGuinness followed Miss Kenny and taught until April 1956.

In July 1956 Maura Reynolds eldest daughter of Master Reynolds formed a father and daughter partnership which was to last until July 1961. Kathleen Agnes Dorris commenced teaching the following September. The following July Anna Reynolds and Master Reynolds formed the second Father - Daughter partnership which was to end in July 1963 when Master Reynolds took a well earned rest after thirty six years of inspired and dedicated teaching service in Drumany.

Anna succeeded her father as Principal. At twenty years of age she was one of the youngest principals in Ireland. She was also the first female principal in Drumany and most regrettably the last Principal for the school shut its doors on the 21st December 1972.

When Anna Reynolds succeeded her father as Principal in July 1963 Carmel Melia, Boneil commenced her tragically short teaching career as Assistant in Drumany school.

The two young teachers, full of youth and life, innovation and enthusiasm, heralded a new dawn of learning in Drumany School. It must have been very strange for the older pupils, returning in September, to find that the ever so familiar Master Reynolds was no longer there and probably strangest of all to find no male teacher in the school. Another chapter was being opened in the long and illustrious history of Drumany National School.

However, the beauty awakened in that new dawn was never allowed to fully blossom to its full magnificence. Mercilessly it was cut down on a cold and sad November Day 1972 with the tragic and untimely death of Carmel Melia (R.I.P.).

There is no room for sentiment in the Dept. of Education. With cynical opportunism they signed the death certificate for Drumany School on 21st December 1972. The pupils were bussed to Fenagh in January 1973 and the door closed on an era that lasted from 1864 to 1972.

# CASTLEFORE

BY BRENDAN CAFFERTY (Ballina)

First of all it is a great honour to be asked to pen a few lines for the Drumany school reunion magazine. Seeing one's national school closed and in my case, the Secondary School I attended in Carrick On Shannon also gone, one's sometimes feels like a "stateless" person. I must therefore congratulate those good people who have given us a chance to go back in time and hopefully to meet old school pals not seen for years.

Writing from the Castlefore perspective it was a great privilege to attend this school and to meet all the other various boys and girls from the area. Making the long trek from Castlefore was no easy matter especially in wet weather; but this was an education in itself, crossing over Drumany Bridge, visiting the stone graves in the area, the old church and well in Doherty's land, the underground river and other aspects of rural life giving one a great start in life, something today's pupils miss on school buses. No talk then of underage drink, vandalism, drugs or ripping the seats on the bus! We never thought when passing the old canal, overgrown and the remains of timber gates rotting away that we would see the day when cabin cruisers would be passing up and down, often with the sound of French, Dutch or German accents. Well done to those who sanctioned the project on a North/South basis and with EU funding.

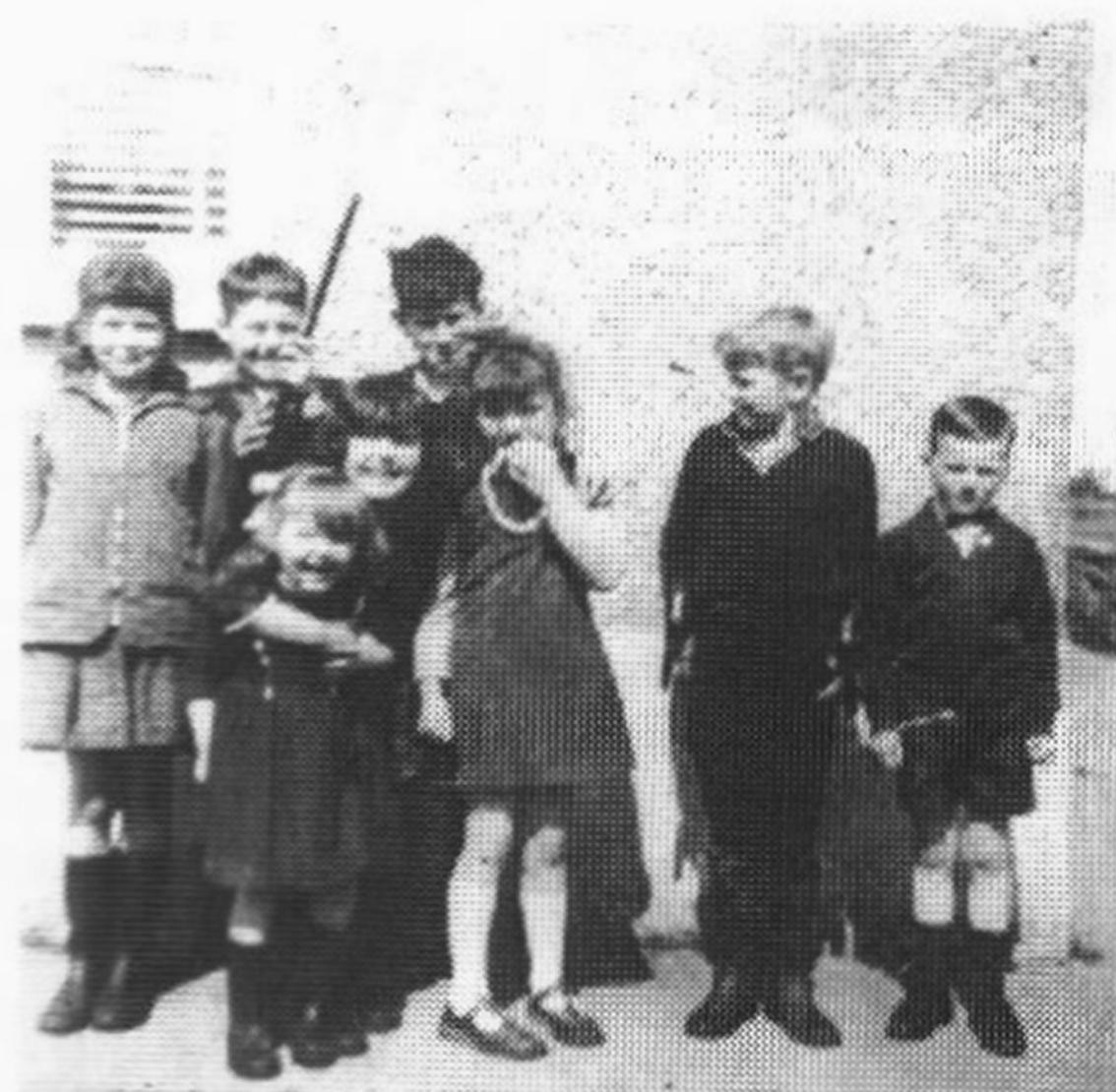


Front Row, Left to Right: Front row, Gabriel McGlynn, Sean Beirne, Brendan Cafferty, Jim Shanley, John Cafferty.

Back Row, Left to Right: Leo Cafferty, John T. Maguire, Eddie Cafferty, Hugh Maguire.

It was always a pleasure to meet the old men of the vicinity on the way to school, people like "Peeler" Moran, old James Doherty and of course "little" Jimmy McGovern, named "little" not that he was in fact small, but to distinguish him from a bigger man of the same name, "Big" Jimmy. Little Jimmy had a quarry and also a shop which he ran along with his sister. Young lads used to marvel at him quarrying out limestone, sometimes setting off a bit of dynamite to dislodge the more stubborn ones. Often of course we eyed up his orchard which he so jealously guarded with an eye to paying an unsolicited visit to it later on.

The school itself was a pleasant place presided over by Master Reynolds and various other lady teachers. It was like a lot of the good old national schools in that in an era where everyone did not get a secondary education, the national often gave a wide ranging



Back Row, Left to Right: Clare McGovern, Seamus McGovern, Gerald Cull.

Front Row, Left to Right: Josephine and Marie McGovern, Martina Cull, Noel and Cyril McGovern.

education which prepared people for life, and as such, often went outside its remit. Master Reynolds seemed to be there for a lifetime, and before him Master Flynn and I'm glad to say a Master Cafferty before that! However I will leave it to others to give a more detailed history of the school and its former teachers. I am trying to look at matters from a Castlefore basis.

## CASTLEFORE

### - IT'S HISTORY PAST AND RECENT

Castlefore is at a five cross-road junction (six if one includes the Drumany road) and the townland of Castlefore is often used as a kind of colloquial name to include other townlands like my own Gubroe and Leamonish. It was often thought that it got its name from the Castle built by Colonel Coote towards the middle of the 1600s and is described in by James McPartlan M.D. (1802) in the old English style as situate "between Fena and Cascangan on the edge of a deep marsh, about 100 perches east of the road".

McPartlan also says in reference to Castlefore "AS to villages in this county the houses don't at all cluster together; and though all the teneantry are in co-partnership, they build their houses asunder; on separate parts of the same farm. I don't know a village in the county but one, viz, Castlefore, containing from thirty to forty houses-it lies between Ballinamore and Keshcarrigan" Thus was Castlefore often described as an original "town" of Leitrim.

When the French who landed at Killala were making their way to Ballinamuck following on their short lived victory and inevitable defeat, they passed through Castlefore on the old Keshcarrigan road and up through Leamonish on their way to Cloone. It is indeed possible that some of the local inhabitants joined this by now bedraggled army as it was later that disaster set in. In some cases though, wiser counsel prevailed and poor ill trained peasants, with hardly anything but their enthusiasm, were advised to return to their homes and avoid the wrath that was to come.

Coming to more recent times there was a dance hall at Castlefore crossroads on a site to the left as one goes up towards what was Johnny Redican's cottage (now owned by Eddie Cafferty). The hall was opened on Wednesday the 27th December 1911. It was run by a local committee of landowners and was a progressive move at the time. Like many halls then it was called a Temperance Hall, as around this time the Temperance movement was making remarkable progress.



1965 - McGaverns, Castlefore.

Back Row, Left to Right: Noel, Big Jimmy, Cyril, Packie.  
Front Row, Left to Right: Seamus and Marie McGavern.

Dances, concerts and ceilis were held there and it also provided a library service and local weekly papers where people gathered to read. There was also a full sized billiard table and heat was provided by two open fires at either end and light was a modern system of gas lights. Irish classes were held there in the Hall which fact probably attracted the attention of the Black and Tans in 1920, who threatened to burn it down, but was saved when Peter Gilhooley pleaded with them to save it as his nearby house might also burn. In the early years it was well run, but when the older committee members handed over, interest seemed to have waned. Rows appeared to develop at functions and the last function was held in the 1930s. Finally it was decided to sell it in the 1940s to pay off debt with the remainder going to parish funds. What a pity it was destroyed-were it still standing one could imagine it being restored on a FAS scheme with its stonework painted and cleaned!

While it is dangerous to single out names one person deserves special mention, and of course that is Johnny Redican the blacksmith who lived just above the hall on the Leamonish road. It was here that horses and donkeys were shod, iron rims put on timber cart wheels from a blazing circular fire and other forge activities carried out. Many's the wet day people gathered in the forge, some of us young lads delighted to get a chance to blow the bellows which fanned the coal fire that made the steel red hot. Johnny was a great craftsman and an iron cross he made for a late uncle of mine Eddie Cafferty, who died at a young age still stands in the old Abbey Cemetery with inscription still legible.

Johnny was a great local historian and republican who did not change his opinions. He always boasted that his family were associated with St. Caillin and not without good reason as we learn that the O'Roadachains were coarbs of St. Caillin and custodians of the Book of Fenagh. His cottage was also a great meeting place at night for the men of the area coming to meet and talk. I can recall people like Hugh Maguire, Tom Duignan, my father John Cafferty, Paddy McGlynn, Big Jimmy McGovern, James McLoughlin and others there in the kitchen. Johnny and his wife Nora had also one of the first wireless sets in the area with wet batteries and many people came there to listen to matches, especially the All Ireland when we felt the whole world was listening in, Radio Brazaville, Stations in America and so on. All those older people have long gone on their "Sli Na Firinne" and may they continue their fireside chats in the Great Beyond. May the all rest in peace eternal.

Being at a cross roads, Castlefore had a unique attraction in the evening times for the young and not so young men of the surrounding areas. After the saving of the hay or a day in the bog all congregated there. In the era of pre television and disco this provided a good outlet and was harmless fun. The summers then all appeared to be good or at least that is how we remember them. Stories were exchanged, the history and folklore of the area expounded upon (if only one had written some of it down), the odd game of skittles or ball played on the road or in our garden in front of Duignan's house. However all that died away in the sixties due to the era of the pub and car coming into full swing. Castlefore once attempted to have a separate football team of its own in the 1930s as it was felt that they were not getting their share of the cake from Fenagh. There were other reasons as well and the experiment did not last very long. Emigration and other social factors also tore at the heart of places like Castlefore. How sad it was to see young people going off to England or America often ill equipped, and who were expected to send money home to their families. That so many of them succeeded was a great credit to them all. Saddest of all was when whole families moved away, their once happy homes deserted and their land probably planted with trees. How much would some of those places be worth today? The way of life at Castlefore is probably changed forever and it is sometimes said that the past is another country. Like so many other areas Castlefore had its share of sad and sorrowful moments.

*It would be nice to see a greater "buzz" around Castlefore and I wonder whether vacant holiday homes for the absentee tax savers or the boats of tourists on the canal however welcome they may be, will ever substitute for the vibrant community that once existed around the place.*

Pardaic Pearse once described the National School system here as the "murder machine". That would not be the experience of those of us who had the pleasant experience of attending Drumany School. I again say well done to those who organised this reunion. It will be a useful contribution to the history and well being of the area.

# From the Folklore of Patrick Reynolds

No Book would be complete without the  
Folklore of Patrick Reynolds

## Cúl Cille

In the North West of the Parish is the smallest townland in the County - Church Field. In Church Field stands Cúl Cille, the ruins of a church. Little is known of Cúl Cille, but tradition says that when the saints were building the church, a fisherman passed from the nearby lake - Loch na Carraigín. They asked the fisherman for some fish. He refused. The Saints cursed the lake and said no fish would be taken there for many a day. Loch na Carraigín was then known as the Fishless Lake. To commemorate this event the Saints cut out two fish, one engraved, the other in relief on a stone in the jamb on the right of the doorway. They are still to be seen there.

## The Mass Rock

A few hundred yards from Cúl Cille is the Mass Rock, a grim reminder of Penal Times, where the disguised priest celebrated mass, while members of his flock kept watch from the tops of the neighbouring hills for the hated soldiers and much more hated priest hunters.

According to tradition a Yeoman on horseback, stood beside the rock while Mass was in progress but miraculously the priest and Mass goers were shielded from his sight. To commemorate this act of God's intervention it is said that the shape of the horses front hooves were carved into the rock.

## St. Patrick's Well

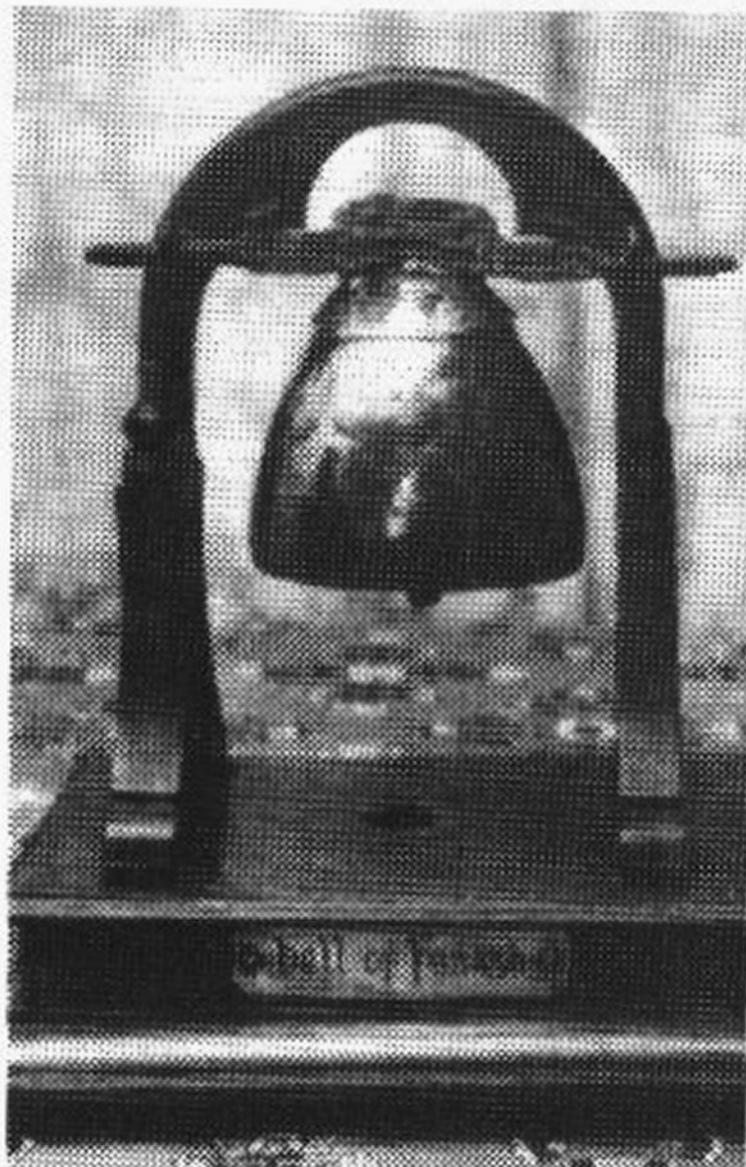
A further couple of hundred yards from the Mass Rock is a Holy Well, St Patrick's Well, from which, tradition holds that St. Patrick passing by baptised some of the native inhabitants.

## Cucoigcrioc O'Duignan

The O'Duignans kept a bardic school at Castlefore (Baile Coillte Foghair). One of them Cucoigcrioc O'Duignan was one of the Four Masters of the Annals of the Four Masters

## St. Caillin's Bell

St. Caillin's Bell or as it is more popularly known Clog na Riog (the bell of kings) is still to be seen at the Parochial House in Fenagh. St. Caillin's bell was used as a font or well at the baptism of nineteen Irish Kings or Chiefs. It was also used at the settling of disputes among chiefs, so many times the fill of Clog na Riog of gold and so many horses was a common 'Eric' or fine. Tradition says that one greedy chief removed the tongue (ringer) from inside the bell to make more room for the gold. That is why there is not tongue in the bell today.



## Fenagh - Dún Baile

When the Tuatha De Danann defeated the Fomorians at the Battle of Moytura in Co. Sligo, the Fomorians fled, pursued by the Tuatha De Danann who overtook them and killed nine of their chiefs at Fenagh. This district is since known as Magh Rein, the plain of track, over which Fomorians ran.

## Dún Baile - Lough Rein

Conang beag Eaglach (Conang the Fearless), the 65th Monarch of Ireland in the Irish Regal List who flourished 400 years before the Christian era, lived at Fenagh for fifteen years. Here he built a major stone fortress. Dun Baile was its name. One day his son Cabtach (Coffa) went to battle in the nearby lake, accompanied by, among others, his nurse, Rein. While bathing the boy got into difficulties. Nurse Rein rushed to his assistance. Both were drowned. Ever since, the lake is known as Lough Rein, in honour of Nurse Rein. Conang then left Fenagh.



## Dolmen - Near Fenagh

Conall Gulban, Son of Niall of the Nine Hostages was killed at Fenagh when they were raiding the district. The Dolmen near Fenagh marks his grave.



## Fenagh Abbeys

Aodh Finn, Chief of Fenagh, on his conversion to Christianity by St. Caillin, gave up to him his Cathair or stone fortress so that he might erect his monastic building within it. There is a tradition that when St. Caillin began to build his church, an evil spirit, the devil, by night

knocked down what was built by day. One night the Saint set a trap and caught the evil one, whom he duly punished in front of the monks next morning. To perpetuate the memory of this victory over the devil, St. Caillin had a rope of stone engraved on the Eastern Gable with the figure of the evil one attached to it. St. Caillin erected his monastic buildings in the sixth century. Here a celebrated divinity school was established. Students flocked to it from all over Ireland and also from the Continent of Europe.

## Crom Cruac

Crom Cruac was the great pagan God of Ireland. According to tradition Crom Cruac stood at Edentenny. The water running out of the rock is Guth Ard (high voice) where St. Patrick raised his voice in anger when he saw visiting chiefs prostrating themselves before Crom. Some will say that the stones into which the Druids were turned by St. Patrick stood north east of Fenagh. Is it a co-incidence that the townland at Edentenny is called Longstone? Crom Cruac was a giant stone.

## Conclusion

So ends our trip into the mythical and historical past a trip that would always begin with the words;  
"overlooking our school is a hoary Dolmen....."

# Drumany National Schools

By Mary Ann Darcy

I started at Drumany old school in the late Twenties. My name in the Roll Book is Mary Ann Doherty. I was born on the 16th July 1923 in the townland of Corrabeagh, which is very near the school. The teachers were Master Reynolds and Miss Keaveney. Later she married Sergeant Mulligan. They were my teachers all through my school years.

The old school was in very bad repair; there were wide seats to seat eight or nine pupils faced for each end of the school. There was no partition and no toilets. The playground went down to the lakeshore. I used to hear of teachers who taught there before my time: Mrs. Beirne from Drumlagheen, Master Cafferty from Cornabroane and Master Flynn from Gorvagh.

The old school was open until 1933. I mind well the day the new school opened. Two rooms, with a partition between them and two entrances with two cloakrooms. There were small seats for two pupils to each seat.



**Mass at Foxfield 1932.**  
**Front Row, Left to Right:** Maria Mulvanerty, Mary Bohan Castlefore, Mary Mulvanerty, Micheal Mulvanerty, Louise McGovern, Katie Agnes McGavern, FR Charles Mulvey, Chief Celebrant of Holy Mass.

I left school at fourteen years. I was an only child. I married in my early twenties Tommy Darcy. We had five children. One of them died in infancy. The other four went to Drumany School. Pity it had to close, as it was a great building. The children had to go to Fenagh then. So had the children from other schools.

I live in Sligo now but I still call Fenagh my home.



**Dromod Station 1932. FR Charles Mulvey, and a steam engine.**

# My Days in Drumany School

By Mary (Darcy) Chance

We went from Crummy School to Drumany in September 1935; Elizan, me (mary and Lucy (R.I.P.)). Lucy had migraine headaches. To Drumany was a much shorter journey than Crummy as we went the near way across Hugh Dolan's hill.

Once when the clock got broken we had no time. I met John Cafferty around the lake. "What time is it?" I asked John. I thought that working for the Council he must know. He said, "What time would you like it to be?" That was his answer. Perhaps he didn't have a watch!

Not a very good start for me in Drumany as one boy, whom shall be nameless, made it hell for me. Thankfully, this all ended after a time and we had a peaceful time.

Dotie Mary Doherty Darcy, one of my friends, sometimes took me home at lunchtime. Her mum, (R.I.P.) made lovely oatmeal soda bread. I can still taste it!

Another friend was Kathleen Melia Mulvanerty. She still is a very dear friend. We still keep in contact, especially at Christmas.

Nancy Redican was in my seat. One day she had a sum answer book. From the answer book we both knew the answer to the sums but we had no idea how we got it. So the Master gave us a good hiding that day! He was a good teacher in all subjects and we could write, read, spell and get through our lives- no problem. If there were more like him today the World would be a better and safer place to live. One thing, out of school he was always friendly and pleasant to meet. I used to go to Jim Earley's limekiln for fresh lime. The Master would be out on the road to meet me, "how are you Maura?" he would say.



**John Cafferty and donkey working for the council**

Summer was the best. Off to the Meadows, Master Reynolds with his horse and racker gathered the hay in. The workmen put the hay up in cocks. Long days and short nights in those days. If only there was a camera to take photos.

Mrs Reynolds (R.I.P.) made lovely soda bread in the turf range. She made all kinds of jam. In summer she preserved the extra eggs in a bucket of fluid for the winter months. They were a great hardworking pair and had a lovely family. Padraig and Hugh (R.I.P.) played together, always making something. One thing was a go-cart.

I remember I was on holiday when Master Reynolds died. I went to the house and funeral to pay my last respects to him. At his funeral in Foxfield Church there was many a tear shed for him, not only by his family, but also by his pupils and plenty of friends who respected him. May he, his wife, Padraig and Hugh Rest in Peace. I only have lovely memories of them all.

# Treasured Memories From Drumany National School

By John Joe McLoughlin, New Jersey, U.S.A.



For years now, I have had the pleasure of viewing the New York City St. Patrick's day parade as it comes up 5th Avenue. The bagpipers and marchers stream by in a multitude of greens and oranges. As they pass the bagpipers and drummers play songs that remind me of my childhood. Specifically, my early days which were spent in Drumany School.

I began my education at Drumany School in 1936 at the tender age of five. With my books and pencils

neatly tucked into my satchel, I eagerly began my journey walking around the Lough with several other children.

When we arrived at school, Ms. Mulligan greeted us. She taught the lower infants, up until the third class. In an effort to keep our interest, she taught with toys and marbles to learn maths and writing. To this day, my lessons learned in Drumany School carry with me. For example, I always begin my writing with up slanted and down straight.

Another activity of Ms. Mulligan's was to say the Rosary in front of the Virgin Mother at noon. This, I believe was to say thank you for the small blessings in life. I can recall that she stood at a large oak table.

We were easily persuaded to learn what Ms. Mulligan taught us. Her incentives to learn were too much to just let go by. Many times she rewarded us by giving a jaunt around in her motorcar. I believe it was a baby Austin with the licence plate of IT 1939. Though at times we had to push it around the Lough to get started. It is a memory that will never be forgotten.

At the end of the school year, Ms. Mulligan would bring in a gallon of sweets for us. She refused to hand them out, but rather enjoyed the pleasure of seeing us scramble in the playground after she threw them high up into the air.

Another fond memory of Ms. Mulligan was the fact that she was never absent from her teaching duties. Considering that the roads in those days were not in the best of shape, she drove quite a distance from Dromod.

One year, Ms. Mulligan even prepared us for our First Holy Communion. It has become a classic memory. She would act as the priest by hearing our confessions and then practising how we were to take our first wafer. We would kneel in front of her with our hands joined to take the communion. Because we were practising, Ms. Mulligan used paper cut out to symbolise the body of Christ. I can recall that some of the children apparently did not know you were supposed to swallow the paper.

Eventually Ms. Mulligan moved on from our school to be Head Mistress somewhere else. Succeeding her was a Ms. Burke. She never knew all of our names. I believe she may have forgotten them because she had her mind on other things, mainly her unhappiness in living and teaching around Lough Carraigin. Apparently teacher's col-

lege never prepared her for living in the "country". She lasted only a short time, where as Ms. Mulligan was in Drumany for 22 years.

When Ms. Mulligan was finished teaching the third class, and from chauffeuring us around, we proceeded to Master Reynolds room. It was on the other side of a beautiful glass partition. Under the order of Eamon de Valera, Master Reynolds taught all of his subjects in Irish. For some children, learning in Irish was a very difficult task.

I can recall that we had a map of Ireland, reinforced with tape, in one of the classrooms. We used the map to learn the names of all the counties in Ireland along with the capitals in Gaelic. Another use for the well-worn map was to visualise in what parts of Ireland our history had taken place. To me, Irish history was very interesting. We learned about the Fenians, tuatha da Dannon and Naper Tandy.

In order to make the children more rounded individuals, the school believed in teaching us some practical lessons in life. On Tuesdays the mistress taught the girls sewing while the boys had to go outside and weed around the school. That's what they called being creative. Some of the fonder memories, of my early education, are based on recollections of the people that lived and worked near the school. There was Mrs. O'Rourke, who lived next door to the school, to our delight. She had to be a saint to put up with



Sean McLoughlin  
and Majella Bohan



Christy McLoughlin

fifty noisy children every year. On a regular basis, balls would sail through the air into her flower garden. I believe that she was reluctant to give the balls back as penance for destroying her nasturtiums and geraniums. We all remember Jim Earley's limekiln. The men who worked there must have had lungs of steel. To add a little spice to our lives in June 1943, a Mr Curran came to teach us Irish step dancing. For two hours in the evening he taught us to dance at the price of three pence per head.

In those years, the War was raging in Europe. It was especially hard for my family as our only sister, Esther had passed on July 4th, 1943 at the age of 13. She was the second person to be buried in the then new graveyard.

Drumany School was built by local farmers who used their horses and carts to draw sand and stones under the direction of Peter Darcy, a mason by trade from Drumrackin.

The Parish priest would act as the manager of the schools. The priests', as I recall, were Father Clancy, whom we were all scared of. Father Kearny, who everybody loved. Then Father Rattigan, a jovial man with a kind word for everyone, who could play the part of Father O'Malley in "Going My Way." Each Christmas, he brought Santa to the school. He always brought us nice toys. Also, Father Frawley who decided to join the army. I guess life in Foxfield was too dull for him. Each year the school had an average of fifty children.

While some of the teachers were severe on pupils, we still had a great love for learning. Life in those days was simple and happy.

It is so good to know that the beautiful old ballads we learned in Drumany School like Boolavogue, the Croppy Boy, God save Ireland and bold Fenian Men are still played as the Irish march up 5th Avenue in New York every St. Patrick's Day. I will never forget my many fond memories that Drumany School provided me in my childhood.

# Schooldays at Drumany

By Chris McNulty Kellegher

Before I started school I used to hear my mother RIP, saying there is the scholars going home from school and I wondered would I be called the same when I'd start going to school. However, I started going in the Summer of 1936, my older sister Brigid brought me along. Mrs. Mulligan was the teacher and we all sat in the low seats that were in her room. I think Brigid Kate (Breege) Doherty started the same day and we threw dusters into one another's faces, but I guess that was called off before too long. Sonny McLoughlin Pauric Greenan and Anna Bohan started that same time. I'm sure we thought school was so different than home, with three large windows, green wainscotting and yellow walls, a big long table and a large press. As we settled in we got Morla to play with. The teacher showed us how to make cats, birds, etc, with it, later we got chalk and slates and I guess that's how we got on to make figures and write a little. I remember so well Mrs. Mulligan writing with the chalk on the blackboard saying up slanting and down straight. It took some time before we mastered the art of writing.

Master Reynolds always came down from his room to call the rolls and we had to answer "Anseo" when our name was called out, indeed a word we were saying for a while before we knew the meaning of it. As time went by we learned English, Irish, Tables and Spelling. The mistress had a lovely doll and she used to take it out now and again to teach us how to say things in Irish, like Lamh na Baboige, suil na Baboige, guna na Baboige and so on. We used to love seeing the Doll being taken out because the most of us never got a doll. We also learned to sew and knit in the Mistress's room, and our boxes for sewing usually were the "Woodbine" boxes (greenish) got from the local shops where cigarettes were sold. Lunchtime was about 12.30 and lunch was soda bread and a bottle of milk, the latter was left in the porch on a big marble like shelf, which kept it nice and cold.

We played games like Tig and Stages and maybe Handball if we had one. All children went barefoot in the summer, often cracking their toes with stones and getting the odd thorn as well, but they got accustomed to that. The Mistress always had an Altar on the big table and children brought flowers to her, especially during the month of May.

Religion was an important subject in both rooms and prayers were said daily. We were prepared for Holy Communion by Mrs. Mulligan and Fr. Clancy heard our confessions. Fr. Kearney was the curate in Foxfield then and his black hat seemed bigger than normal. While we were still in the lower room if Mrs. Mulligan was absent, some of the 6th and 7th class were sent down to supervise us. These could be Philomena Doherty RIP, Peg Gilkeaney, my own sister Brigid or Maura Gill and Mai Beirne. We'd get no lessons that night and of course that was great.

Before passing into the Masters room we four that started school together must be kept a 2nd year in 3rd class because Patsy Doherty, Breege Greenan, John Gill, Caillin McKeown RIP and Patsy Muldoon joined us in fourth class and then we had more subjects to do such as Irish History, Geography, Bible History and longer compositions. These days pupils had to write with a nib pen, dipped in the inkwell on the seats and the Master always made the ink, which was kept in the porch window. We could get a little ink to take home if we wanted.

Joe Beirne, Fenagh, was the Postman that called to the school and occasionally a Guard would drop in just to check that children were attending school. Inspector Finlay would call annually, and each year about the end of October the Religious Exam was held. Children would wear their Sunday clothes them days. Whoever was the best in their Religious Knowledge got a Certificate. I think there was a 1st and 2nd class Certificate.



**The McNulty's Patrick & Lizzie, Children: Mary, Micheal, Joseph, Bridgid & Christina**



**Elizabeth & Kathleen Greenan**



**Chris McNulty & Eileen Shanley**

Murtagh Curran came for a time and gave us Dancing Lessons. He was a Traditional Irish Dance Teacher. He taught us a Reel, a Jig, 4 Hand Reel and a Hornpipe. It was 1 shilling to go to it but it was great fun trying to learn his steps.

I can't remember who along with Rose Anne Doherty, Mary Margaret Moran and myself danced a four-hand reel in "Laheen" at a Feis, we had to get a blue skirt and blouse made for that. A Miss Bowman, a dressmaker who lived in Ballinamore, made this. We won no medals but sure we did our part. Another man who visited the school was Dr. Reynolds "Riversdale" who was the M.O.H. in county at that time and our eyes, ears, nose and throat were examined and if there was anything wrong it was treated. Plenty of us had to get teeth out. My first experience of this was in Fenagh School. Dentist Quinn carried out the job and indeed none of us liked it too well.

In 6th class, we sat The Primary School Leaving Certificate and this too, was held in Fenagh School. Master Wrynn RIP supervised. We all passed. At least it meant that we were average scholars and we then spent a year in 7th class and afterwards some went to the Vocational School in Keshcarrigan. I went for 1 year and that finished my education. I must mention that the town land of Drumany has a good bit of history attached to it, namely St. Patricks Well, Mass Rock, an Old Church and a Dolmen. All of these in Sonny Doherty's land. Many times, when Rose Anne Doherty, Phina RIP and I were going home from school we'd go and say a prayer at Mass Rock. How times have changed and no longer have children any work to do in the fields as we had then. In Spring time they guggered potatoes, often times were sent to a neighbours house for a setting of eggs to be hatched or maybe go to the local shop for paraffin oil. The first shop ever I went to was Jimmy McGovern's. They bought eggs and these paid for whatever little messages were got.

Every housewife kept lots of hens, then as the eggs paid for the groceries. Farmers produced their own potatoes, oats, vegetables and pigs that were fed potatoes and good Indian Meal. One pig usually got fattened to be killed and this provided the family with bacon for a few months. Neighbours in those days would often work together and swap seed potatoes in the Springtime. If a field was dry enough for the seed to be set, people would strive to have it done by Easter Sunday. There was little time to be wasted when the Spring work was done, turf had to be cut and saved. Again children helped out and many times Brigid and myself drew out turf to the road, off John Rutledges bog with asses and creels. An ass could walk where it was too soft for a horse. In the Autumn, they'd be carted home and built into a reek so the home fire was kept burning in this way. The portion of turf bank that time cost about £3 and now people could pay that for 1 bag of turf. What a change! The fields that were once ploughed and tilled lie idle, except for cattle grazing and maybe a big modern machine cutting the hedges.

I hope this script will interest someone and I wish the organisers of the reunion the Best of Luck.  
February 2001.

# The Children of Loch na Carraigín



The Rourke brothers Frankie, Packie & Peter.

Walking home from school just seems like yesterday,  
Around the shores of Loch na Carraigín, if only yesterday,  
Where have those summers gone?  
Where have the children gone?

Fond memories come to mind as clear as yesterday,  
Paddling in the waters of Loch na Carraigín, if only yesterday,  
Where have those summers gone?  
Where have the children gone?

I remember Esther vividly, is it yesterday?  
Dancing around Loch na Carraigín, if only yesterday,  
Where have those summers gone?  
Where have the children gone?

Her black hair I r  
ecall, as if it were yesterday,  
Moving in the gentle winds, could it be yesterday?  
Where have those summers gone?  
Where have the children gone?

You mothered us Esther, despite our child like pestle,  
Laughing with us all by the shores of Loch na Carraigín.  
Where have those summers gone?  
Where have the children gone?

And you know Esther, older boys would jester,  
But you were 'our' protector, by the shores of Loch na Carraigín.  
Where have those summers gone?  
Where have the children gone?

In the Summer of 1943, in the month of July, there was no glee,  
You left his land to hold our Lord's hand,  
Oh how quiet are the waters of Loch na Carraigín now,  
Where have the summers gone?  
Where has 'our' Esther gone?

By: Proinnsias Redican  
London (formerly of Drumroosk, Foxfield)

# Drumany National Schools 1864-1972

## TEACHERS

### Principal

Oct 1864 - Jan 1866  
Mr Thomas Early

Jan 1866 - October 1906  
James Cafferty

October 1906 - July 1927  
John Flynn

July 1927 - July 1963  
Patrick Reynolds

July 1963 - Dec 1972  
Anna Reynolds

February 1946 - Feb '48  
Miss Kathleen Neary

March 1948 - May 1949  
Miss Maureen Kilcoyne

May 1949 - Oct 1954  
Miss Sinead Kenny

Nov 1954 - April '56  
Miss Eibhlin M. McGuinness

July 1956 - July 1961  
Miss Maura Reynolds

Sept 1961 - July 1962  
Miss Kathleen Agnes Doris

July 1962 - July 1963  
Miss Anna Reynolds

July 1963 - Nov 1972  
Miss Carmel Melia

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Kathleen Flynn 1937

Mary Rose Keegan 1947

Rosaleen McGarry 1956

Mary Flynn 1972

## Assistants

Oct 1865 - April 1869  
Ms Mary Anne Roddy

April 1869 - July 1878  
Miss Trs Maguire

July 1878 - October 1921  
Ms. Honoria McCartan  
(Mrs Beime)

Oct 1921 - July 1944  
Miss Bridget Keaveney  
(Mrs Mulligan)

October 1944 - Jan 1946  
Miss Dympna Burke

## John Flynn Principal in Drumany N.S. 1906 - 1927

John Flynn succeeded James Cafferty as Principal in Drumany National School on the 10th October 1906. He brought with him a very high reputation having "raised two schools from very low to moderately high standards" having taught in Belmullet Boys School 11th July 1904 to January 1905 when he took up appointment as Principle Teacher in Newtownforbes boys school.

John Flynn was an excellent teacher. He was also an excellent gaelic footballer playing for Leitrim for many years. He was also noted as an administrator playing a very important role in the organisation of the Gaelic football within the county.

In 1927 John Flynn transferred to teach in Kilmore (Cornagee) School in the parish of Ballinaglera. Here he taught and resided and finished his teaching years. He died in 1952.

## Brigid Keaveney Mulligan

Brigid Keaveney Mulligan taught for twenty-three years in Drumany National School (1921 – 1944). She was a very kind and understanding teacher. She was also very dedicated and inspiring.

One of the past pupils recalls, "We were easily persuaded to learn what Mrs Mulligan taught us. Her incentives to learn were too much to just let go by. Many times she rewarded us by giving us a jaunt around in her motorcar. Another fond memory of Mrs Mulligan was at the end of the school year she would bring a gallon of sweets. She refused to hand them out, but rather enjoyed the pleasure of seeing us scramble in the play ground after she threw them high up in the air".

# TEACHERS IN DRUMANY N.S.

## Dympna Burke Hickey

Dympna Burke taught in Drumany N.S from October 1944 to January 1946, her first teaching post. She stayed with the Reynolds family. "It was a home from home and I enjoyed the school too - it was my first school", she confesses.

Dympna went on to teach in Glasthule, Dublin, Donnycarney girls school and Baldoyle Boys National School before retiring from teaching in 1987. Dympna Burke Hickey has very happy memories of Drumany N.S and the Reynolds family.

"I remember with fondness the way we were all conveyed by pony and trap to Mass on Sundays. It gave me more pleasure than any Mercedes could do now!"

Dympna married Sean Hickey, a teacher in 1956. She has one son, John, and she lives happily with her husband Sean in Dublin.

## Kathleen Neary



The Late Kathleen Neary

Kathleen Neary from the Elphin area of Co. Roscommon taught from February 1946 to February 1948 in Drumany National School. Miss Neary was a most dedicated teacher with a great grá for Irish and local history. From Drumany N.S she went to teach in Carron National School at Lough Allen. Here she taught for some years. She was principal of Scrabbagh National School, Hillstreet. However, ill health dogged her after this and she died at a very relatively young age on 5th September 1964.

## Máire Kilcoyne McCarthy

A young teacher cycled from Ballyhaunis to the Parochial House in Fenagh. She had come for an interview for the post of Assistant Teacher in Drumany N.S. She remembers the kind hospitality of Fr. Reynolds who having interviewed her, gave her tea and refreshments before she hopped up on her bicycle back to Ballyhaunis. How times have changed!



Far Right: Máire Kilcoyne

This young teacher, Máire Kilcoyne, took up teaching in Drumany in March 1948 and taught until May 1949. She has "happy memories of my short time in Drumany" and she writes also "I have lovely memories of Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds and family". I remember Máire Kilcoyne as being very pleasant with a lively sense of humour. She would have needed it. Does she remember the cure for the hooping cough? One imagines that she would never forget it.

Miss Kilcoyne's teaching took her to Fahy N.S, Killimor, Ballinasloe, Keash N.S, Ballymote, Clonbollogue N.S, Tullamore Infant Boys N.S, Francis St. Dublin and finally to Prosperous N.S, Co. Kildare, where after nineteen years teaching, she retired in 1986, almost forty years after that long cycle to Foxfield. She lives happily in Prosperous, Co. Kildare.

## Sineád Kenny Byrne

On a wet and windy 16th of May 1949, three young boys walked into a rude awakening in Drumany National School. As they timidly tread towards their seats they were stopped in their tracks: "What do you say arriving late into school?" They stood dumbfounded. They were marched back and having been suitably instructed they meekly inquired: "Will cead agam dul isteach sa rang?"

Sineád Kenny, the new Assistant Teacher in Drumany School, had instantly stamped her authority. Then followed a lesson in Irish that no student ever forgot:

"Bhí bean ann fadó agus bhí Gé aici. Do rug an gé ubh órga gach la. Ní raibh an bhean Sásta leis sin agus do mhabh sí an gé. Ní raibh an t-ór ná an gé aici ansin"

Two lessons were learned in one day! It was indeed a rude awakening for everybody! However we soon learned that most certainly her



Miss Kenny

bark was worse than her bite. She maintained strict discipline. She was an excellent teacher. She was most fair. Above all she was very kind and understanding. She taught until October 1954. Drumany had lost an inspiring teacher. On leaving Drumany, Miss Kenny took up a post in Wicklow where she met and married her husband in 1957. They lived for a few years in Rathdowney Co. Laois and returned to Wicklow in 1969 living in Delgany and teaching in Kilmacanogue N.S for the

next twenty years before retiring in 1989.

Sinead Kenny Byrne has three sons and four grandchildren and lives happily in Delgany, Co. Wicklow.

## Eibhlín McGuinness McNally

On the 2nd November Eibhlín McGuinness arrived in Drumany N.S. The pupils were still lamenting the departure of their beloved Miss Kenny. However, the youthful and beautiful Miss McGuinness had soon won over their confidence and affection. She professes that singing wasn't her strongest point. Yet senior students recall several songs that she taught in the Masters Room, including "Treasna na dTonnta dul Siar dul siar".



Eibhlín McGuinness

For less than two years, Miss McGuinness taught in Drumany, making the long journey back to her native Parish to teach in Stracarne National School with Mrs Gallagher. Two years later Miss McGuinness joined the teaching staff in the Boys School, Mohill where she distinguished herself as an inspiring and dedicated teacher until her retirement on the 5th November 2000. Eibhlín McGuinness lives happily with her husband Jack and family in Dromod.

## Maura Reynolds Mulvey

Maura Reynolds commenced teaching in Drumany N.S on the 2nd July 1956. So began the first father - daughter teaching team in the school. Past pupils recall with great affection the soft spoken, gentle and very patient and understanding young teacher with a sense of humour. Maura gave five years of dedicated service in Drumany before departing on the 14th July 1961 to take up a teaching post in The Bower, Athlone. Later she transferred to a small rural school in the Parish of Ardagh. Later Moydow was amalgamated with the Parish Central Primary School in Ardagh. When Maura Mulvey retired from teaching she had taught for a total of thirty three years in Ardagh Parish. Maura lives happily in Longford with husband Seamus (a noted historian) and family.

# My Year in Drumany N.S.

Catherine Agnes Dorris (Fallon)

My teaching career began in Drumany National School. Father McCabe, who often dropped into our house for a mug of tea during his rambles around Cornhill in the grouse and pheasant shooting season, was looking for a temporary teacher. He offered me the job and so I arrived in Drumany on the 6th November 1961.

I met Pat Mullen and Nancy for the first time in Father McCabe's house that Sunday evening. Nancy had laid the table beautifully for a lovely meal in the dining room. I was so nervous I nearly knocked over my cup. I needn't have worried I was among friends.

Master Reynolds (R.I.P.) was principal in Drumany National School and I was privileged to be his assistant for the year. I was to replace Máire who had moved to Longford. He gave me a warm 'céad míle fáilte', showed me the roll book and then introduced me to my Junior and Senior Infants, First and Second classes. From day one I was inspired by his firm, yet gentle ways, with the pupils who he loved and respected. They in turn were happy and secure at work and at play. He knew each one personally and their parents before them. He loved stories and folktales, poetry, songs and music. He never failed to praise my efforts and thanks to his advice and support, I survived.

I have very happy memories of my time in the home of the Master and Mrs Reynolds. Let me say I was treated like one of the family from day one. Being a woman of great talent, Mrs. Reynolds brown bread was baked daily. I remember walks with Dette around the lake after school, the Swan's nest in the reeds, trips to Ballinamore on pay day, night classes in Kesh with Mrs Reynolds and above all, I remember her wonderful sense of humour. The highlight of the Autumn term was The Knights Dance in Ballinamore. In fact there was never a dull moment. We were always on the go - Dette and I to the musical society in Carrick in her brand new green Volkswagen, and to dances near and far with Rita Gibbons in her lovely car - to the Mayflower in Drumshanbo, to Rooskey and to the Carnival in Hillstreet. Everything was possible in those carefree days and Drumany was the centre of the Universe!

Pat Mullin and Nancy held "open house" in Fr McCabes kitchen. That year the Amateur Drama Group that met there, decided to stage a play "Old Acquaintance" by J. Bernard McGarthy. Pat Mullin produced and directed, made all the props and also played the main character. I was excited and delighted to get a part. Despite numerous disasters in rehearsals it was a roaring success on the night.

I was very sad to leave Drumany on the 30th June 1962. It was to be the Masters last day, too, and we both were close to tears. I believe he decided to continue on for a few more years - there was just no stopping him. I will always remember his beautiful spoken Irish - the blas he had as he called "M á i r e" down to breakfast! Ni bheith a leithéad ann arís. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dilís. A carefree, rich chapter in my life was ending and a new one was about to begin yet. The memories linger on. I pray very special blessings on all past pupils, parents, teachers and friends of Drumany N.S.

We pray for Master and Mrs Reynolds, for Nancy and for all those friends who have gone to their eternal reward. May they rest in everlasting peace.

To the Board of Management and to the committee a very sincere "thank you" for organising this re-union. We look forward to renewing old acquaintances. May God continue to bless the lives of all the friends of Drumany National School

- Taught in Manor House Junior School Raheny 1965 - 73
- Studied by night for a BA Degree at U.C.D.

- Did the H.Dip in Education in Trinity College, Dublin 72 - 73
- Graduate Class St. Pat's 1973 - 74.
- Joined the staff of Scoil Aine, Raheny 1st July 1974.
- Married Joe Fallon 1970. 4 children, Aisling (London), Deirdre (teaching in Dublin), Ronán & Gearóid students.
- Teaching in St. Fintan's N.S. Sutton to date.

## Carmel Ferguson

Carmel Ferguson (Nee Melia) started teaching in Drumany National School in 1963. It was her first teaching post after finishing college. I started school in September 1972 and although some of my memories would be vague enough, I do remember her as being very gentle, kind and lovely to me, especially as I had a little difficulty settling into school and would arrive at her room door many mornings with my mother, after crying all the way around the lake!



**Carmel (Melia) Ferguson & Anna Reynolds**

I recall her not being at school then for a number of weeks and feeling very sad when my mother told me she had died. Carmel died on the 14th November 1972. May her gentle soul rest in peace. (Sharon Curran)

## Anna Reynolds

In 1963 when Anna Reynolds succeeded her father as Principal of Drumany N.S., she was in all probability, the youngest school principal in Ireland. She was only twenty years old. Because of her youthfulness and with just one year's experience, one could possibly have reservations about entrusting such a responsible and demanding position to so young a teacher.

However, no one entertained any fears or doubts that Anna would not measure up to the daunting task of leading the school. In her years teaching she had demonstrated outstanding qualities as a teacher, bringing fresh ideas, new initiatives and great enthusiasm. She had also worked under an inspiring, wise and experienced principal, who not only handed on very sound managing skills, but also very rich values and teaching practices. These Anna readily accepted for "Briseann an duchas tri shuile an chait".

Anna went on to be an inspirational leader not only in her school, but also in the social and cultural life of her community, and county, rising to Co. Secretary of Leitrim I.C.A. federation.

When Drumany closed in December 1972 the students and Anna Reynolds transferred to Fenagh Central Primary School where she continued as an inspiring teacher for many years before taking early retirement.



**Catherine Agnes Dorris outside Dublin Zoo 1962**

Padraic Leyden, one of her past pupils writes of Anna Reynolds: "The class of which I was part graduated with Anne Reynolds as we both moved from the Mistress's room to the Master's room following Masters Paddys retirement and her promotion. Anna was an inspirational teacher with a tremendous sense of humour and a mischievous twinkle in her eye as she gently teased the best out of us. Indeed when we graduated to secondary school we had an academic head start on many of our peers which was a credit to her professionalism and dedication."

# Memories of School

By John Leyden,  
Derrinkeip.

My earliest memory of my school days at Drumany is in fact my first day at school in the spring of 1921 at the age of four and half years. The old Drumany School was one large room, like a hall with a coal fire stove at either end. As I walked into the school on my first morning I went up to the Masters end, who was John Flynn (later replaced by Master Reynolds) and I asked him if I could open the door of the stove to see if the duck had laid an egg. It's a memory that has never left me.



Leyden  
Children 1928  
Outside Old School

Also in my memory of those early years was the practice at that time of allowing children to go to school barefooted in the summer time. Children looked forward to this, because it seemed to give them a sense of freedom. I should add of course, that I seem to remember that our summers were better and longer. However there were usually problems on Sundays when shoes had to be put on, the feet had swollen during the week. I would imagine that the practice of children going barefooted ceased a long time ago.

I also seem to remember that pupils occasionally asked for "early leave" from school usually granted after play hour, to help on the farm during busy periods. No doubt the practice also ceased a long time ago.

## My Memories of Drumany School

**Bridgid Greenan Duggan.**

Master Reynolds was a very special teacher and I always went to see him and Mrs Reynolds when I came home. When I got sick the Master would send me down to his house for Mrs Reynolds to take care of me. The house smelt so lovely from what she was cooking and the warm fire and her special kindness seemed to make me well.

I was taken out of school after my Leaving Cert., because I was needed at home. But I was heartbroken and cried all the way home!

Thank God for Drumany and all my Friends I left behind.

# Memories

By Maureen Pace Greenan RIP

As you are probably aware, all of us shared one room for all lessons but thanks to Master Reynolds, we all left school being able to read, write and do our mental arithmetic and I have no problems even today.

It is pitiful to watch so many young people, today, panic unless they have a calculator at the ready. The brain, which is the best computer of all time, is being left to die. Mankind, in general seems to be going headlong into self-destruction.

Enough Said and enough preaching, ha!



Greening Family

## My Memories

**Maureen Adley Howard**

My younger brother Gerald Adley and myself went to live with our grandparents, Michael and Annie Melia in Drumany while our Father was ill in hospital. I was about four years of age and Gerald was younger. It would have been around 1946.

I remember not wanting to wear shoes to school (probably because others didn't) and my Aunt Lizzie telling me I must because I was English. So I hid them under a bush and went barefooted! I also remember taking jam sandwiches, probably for my lunch, but I didn't remember eating them! I also remember one afternoon the priest came into the classroom, and I think we must have been naughty because we were all lined up along the classroom wall and caned. Sadly they are all my memories in Drumany School.



Maureen Adley Howard

I have very fond memories of living in Ireland, with my grandparents also Uncles John, Paddy and Tom and Aunt Lizzie, sadly all passed away now. We had great time getting the hay in, going to the well to collect water, and chasing the chickens. We were only there about two years, as when I was six we returned to England.

# MEMORIES

## By Maura Reynolds Mulvey

My best memories of school days are of Summer-time. On the evening of April 30th we would pick butter cups and strew them on the door step to greet the first Summer morning.

Shoes were thrown aside and we went bare footed to school. How we ran and danced around in the wet grass, like young calves released to freedom for the first time! Legend had it that if you bathe your face in the dew on 1st May you wake up beautiful the following morning. In those days we did not care and anyway we were all beautiful then.

Before three o'clock on that day we were sure to get headings on the blackboard for a composition on "May Day." By this time fires were no longer lit in the classrooms so grates were cleaned up, polished black and filled with lovely fresh moss gathered from the surrounding fields and ditches.

In early Summer the turf were cut and saved. Then each family brought their 'contribution' to the school. This came by 'ass and cart' or 'ass and creel' and was locked away in the fuel shed to provide heat in the classrooms the following winter.

Everyone had to write a composition at this time on "A Day on the Bog". The pleasures and pains of that outing were related in detail, and the closing sentence usually was – we went home tired but happy after a good day's work.

School holidays came in early July when the weather "took up" for haymaking. The older children would be needed to work in the meadow or help mother bring tea to the workers in the evening. This would consist of home made bread with lashings of home made butter and jam, perhaps a rhubarb tart and bottles of tea to wash it down.

Each parish had confirmation every third year so three classes were tutored well in advance. Then for the last few weeks we went to the church on Saturday afternoons, together with children from other schools in the parish. There we got further instruction from the priest before the bishop came to visit and check our religious knowledge and deem us worthy to be confirmed.

These Saturday outings were notable occasions and we always took the longest way home and were never in a hurry.

My favourite poem from third or fourth class went like this:

"Up the airy mountain  
Down the rushy glen  
We dare't go a-hunting  
For fear of little men  
Wee folk, good folk  
Trooping all together  
Red jackets, green cap  
And white owls' feather" etc. etc.

This may not be very elevated poetry but it sure sounded great in chorus!



Detta, Sinead, Ann, Maura Reynolds



Maura Reynolds In Drumany Classroom

## Quote from little Girl On Her First Day At School 1958 In My Class!

*"This is a funny house with no kittle.  
then later – I don't see any of your auld shoes  
about teacher – where do you keep them?"*

Pauline Shanley remembers starting school at Drumany National School. My brother Sean was the original reluctant scholar. He had reached the ripe old age of five and a half, he had learned to read at home and Drumany National School held no attraction for him. However a compromise was reached. It was decided that I should make a premature start on my education. Although I had not yet celebrated my fourth birthday I would start school with Sean to keep him company. (And yes all you mathematicians out there can now deduce that I am no longer twentyone!) And so it happened that on a bright May morning in 1937 my father Jim loaded up his trusty bicycle with a child fore and aft and delivered us into the care of Mrs Mulligan.

Mrs. Mulligan was the teacher in the Junior room while Master Reynolds was in charge in the Senior room. Other new recruits on that May morning included Proinsias Redican, Sonny Redican, Anselm Reynolds, Maura Maguire, Imelda Greenan and Cora McKeon. Come September my brother Sean was promoted to the "High Babies" while I was required to serve my time with the other "Low Babies". I was having none of this and promoted myself to sit alongside him as I had done before the holidays. However I encountered a will stronger than my own and was marched back to where I belonged. I can remember the indignity of it yet, the first of many lessons to be learned in the hard school of life.

I have fond memories of childhood games played as we made our way to school through the fields. We carried a bottle of milk and a cut of soda bread for lunch. The milk was secured with a twist of paper. Many the schoolbag that came to grief, when the same twist of paper proved to be less than reliable.

A turf fire smoked sulkily in each room. The teachers' first task of the day was to set the fire which would not blaze merrily until half the day had passed. Hard balls of "marla" were provided which only after much handling could be softened sufficiently to be modelled into sheep and people. We Infants learned to write with pencil and paper but the older children struggled to reproduce copperplate headlines with pen and ink. The inkwells had to be regularly filled and were an endless source of mischief.

Needle work was taught to the girls by the Mistress. We had copies, which had to be filled with samples of buttonholes and patches. Our efforts often proved to be grubby and blood stained. The knitting inspector was a regular and dreaded visitor to the school. Cora McKeon was an expert buttonhole maker and was often prevailed upon to rescue our pathetic attempts and save our bacon.

When compared to today's schools, the National School in Drumany was under resourced. However that small National School equipped us for life. It provided a high standard of education and a wonderful sense of belonging. We Learned many valuable lessons and formed friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

# Master Reynolds

By Andrew Redican

"And Still they gazed, and still the wonder grew  
that one small head could carry all he knew"

How vividly I recall those lines being read in Drumany School and how I instantly concluded that these lines could be applied to our teacher, Master Reynolds. Now, almost fifty years later, and having been involved in education and the teaching profession for four decades, I am convinced that, if ever Goldsmith had a particular teacher in mind, then it could certainly be a master Reynolds. The Modern teacher specialises in a small number of subjects.



**Master Reynolds last day at school**

Master Reynolds taught with ease, enthusiasm and interest so many diverse topics such as English, Irish, Arithmetic, Religion, History, Geography, Environmental Science and Archaeology.

For the students who studied under Master Reynolds we had no need for calculators. His mental arithmetic classes were electric. The question was popped. The hands shot up. The competition was infectious. We were literally thinking on our feet. When we were hesitant and the answer was not forthcoming, he teased it out of us. How he sharpened our wits and reflexes for life.

We loved his History classes. I honestly believed that he relived the hours of sorrow, the moments of triumph, the ages of failure in the tragic history of our country.

I can recall as vividly, as when he re-counted, them the great epic moments in Irish history. The Battle of Clontarf! The impossible odds against us! Brian Boru's rousing speech:

*"Stand you now for Erin's Glory*

*.....*  
Chase those Northern wolves before you

*.....*  
What though brothers league against us?  
What through myriad's be the foe?  
Victory will be more honoured in the myriad's overthrow.

Then there was the rout of the Vikings!  
The flight to the boats! Brian Boru kneeling in prayer in his tent!  
Mercilessly he is truck down by an intruder! Then followed the "Ard Riochta go bFreasabhra" - the civil war among the chiefs for the High Kingship of Ireland. With a sigh he would relate that because of this civil war Ireland had no powerful King to repel the Normans.



**School Photograph of Master and Pupils,  
As The Master Moves Out Another Principal Moves In**

We shared his delight in the heroic victories in the Nine Years War - the Battle of the Curlews, the Battle at Tyrells Pass, the Battle of the Yellow Ford. Hopes were high - only to be dashed at the Battle of Kinsale. "Why? Oh why?" he would ask did the Spanish sail into Kinsale? "The long march to Kinsale in the middle of winter sapped the strength of the Irish forces" he would lament. The flight of the Earls was the death knell of the old Gaelic Ireland. But we were back celebrating with Owen Roe O'Neill's victory at the Battle of Benburb. But our cause was lost when Owen Roe died, poisoned perhaps. Our pride was restored with the heroics at the Bridge of Athlone and the Siege of Limerick.

Perhaps, no event fired our imagination like Ballyneethy. How often we played the game and the password was:

*"Sarsfield is the word! And Sarsfield is the man".*

*But alas Ireland's hopes sailed out with the Wild Geese. There was little consolation for Ireland as the dying Sarsfield, at the Battle of Landen, uttered his last famous words*

*"Would it were for Ireland".*

*In 1978 we fought with the pikes, the scythes and pitchforks. Proudly we sang;*

*"Kelly, the Boy for Killane"*

*As the dew of sadness crept over the dying Croppaí Bocht we mournfully recited.*

*Sínte aire thaobh and tsleibhe  
Chonaic me and Croí Bocht  
Bhí ard druacht go trom ar Eadan,  
Bhí pileár trid a ucht.  
Bhí sé I bfhad on a chairde  
I bfhad ón a thí is a mhaoí,  
Agus é in a aonar Fágtha,  
Ar an bfheár fuar fluch ina luighe.*



**The Reynolds Family: Hugh (RIP), Detta, Master Patrick, Anna, Padraic (RIP), Anselm, Maura, Fr. Paddy Dolan, Mrs Reynolds**

Master Reynolds was an outstanding teacher of Irish. He brought the language alive. Most students recall with ease large extracts from the Irish books, stories and poems on our courses. We were not compelled to learn them off by heart. Yet past pupils will recite from "Iosagán", Bríd na nAmhrán", "Eoínín na nÉon", "M'Asal Beag Dubh" and of course, the poem, "An Gleann in ar Tógadh mé".

He inspired us with his passionate love and pride for our native parish. With infectious enthusiasm he captivated the imagination of his students with his journey into the past in our parish - a past shrouded in wonder and mystery, bequeathing to us such a glorious and illustrious legacy of monuments, relics and lore.

Our imaginary trip would begin with the hoary dolmen overlooking the school listening to the Formorians fleeing past our school pursued by the Tuatha de Danann. From the dolmen we headed north across the fields to Cúl Cille. On our way from Cúl Cille to St Patrick's Holy Well we passed by the Mass Rock just a stone's throw from Church Ruins. Journeying through Castlefore we heard of Cucoigrioc O'Duignan. Faintly through the music from this bardic school we learned that O'Duignan was one of the Four Masters of the Annals. In the parochial House we gazed in awe at Clog na Riog - St. Caillins Bell. Our voyage then took us to Brún Baile (Fenagh) and at the Dolmen we faintly heard the dying heroic cries of Conal Gulban, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages.

We passed in reverence by the 6th century abbey founded by St. Caillin to stand spellbound momentarily by the waters of Lough Réin where Caffa and his nurse Réin drowned. Finally we hear the "tinkle of Patrick's bell at the destruction of Crom Cruach" at Edentenny.

Certainly this was a journey steeped in lore and mystery. At every stop Master Reynolds was opening for us a "Window of Wonder".

For the journey through life we were taught to an exceptional standard in writing, reading and calculating. Such were the high standards that he taught and sought his students were very well equipped for life. More importantly, perhaps, is that Master Reynolds taught us to respect values, to cherish truth and principle. He abhorred deceit. Woe betide those who told a lie.

To those, who expressed an interest in going to secondary school, he was most generous with his time, helping them prepare for the scholarships and entrance examinations. He would spend several hours after school giving them extra tuition. Very many past pupils will recall how in later years, they returned to the Master for tuition when they were preparing for the Garda Examinations, the nurse entry or other important examinations. He always followed the careers of his past

pupils with great interest and concern. When he would meet them he would light up. One feels that perhaps with justifiable pride, he could reflect with much satisfaction that he had played an important role in moulding their personalities and outlook.



**Mary Reynolds, Cornabrone, Mother of Master Reynolds**

Master Reynolds was much more than a teacher. He played an influential role in shaping the social and cultural life of our community and county. The Gaelic Athletic Association is indebted to his inspired leadership in the early 1930s when he was an administrator. He was instrumental in setting up Juvenile football in Leitrim. "There is a full book in Master Reynolds remarked a past pupil. How right he was! Perhaps, somebody, someday, will decide to write that book. Here, however, we can only touch on the story of an inspirational teacher, who so influenced and so enriched our lives. In life we looked up to him with reverence and respect. Today we loving recall him. Thirty eight years ago he walked out of Drumany School to a richly earned retirement. But he never walked out of the minds of his pupils - still amazed.

*"And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew"  
Ní bheidh a leitheíd ann arís  
"In íothleann Dé go gcastar sinn go léir"*

# Childhood Memories

By Anna Bohan McGovern

I started school in Drumann at the age of six years. Mamie McSweeney brought me to school my first day. Lucy Darcy, God rest her, took me after that. I took my sister Kathleen to school the year after but she died, God rest her, at the age of five years.

We started off in Low Infants. We started to write with chalk on a slate. Then we got onto writing with pens on paper. The pens we used had a nib on them, which we dipped into ink. The ink was in a little ink-well in the front of the desk. We learned to read, write and spell. We also learned Irish, English and Arithmetic. Heating was by means of an open fire. Turf and coal were burned. There was no electricity or running water in the school. We only had a dry privy in a small shed outside the school. For lunch we brought a bottle of tea or milk and home-made bread.



**Tommy McGovern Bringing Water from the Redicans Well**

I lived with my father and mother in a two bedroom thatched house. We drew water in buckets from Redican's Spring Well. Cooking was done over the open turf fire on a crock. Everyone baked their own bread. Boiled boxty was made at Christmas and Halloween. The radio was a great source of entertainment in those days. Anyone lucky enough to have one, would have the house full on Sundays with the neighbours listening to football matches. "Ceili House" and "Take the Floor" with Den Joe were popular programmes back then.



**Anna Bohan & Sister Kathleen (RIP)**

The only source of light we had was an oil lamp. The Tilly Lamp came later. At Christmas the neighbours would get together for a "Join". A half barrel or quarter barrel of porter would be got, as well as some spirits. This would be in some house in the neighbourhood. There was music, singing and dancing, which would go on until the early hours of the morning. Everyone would look forward to the "Joins".



**Left to Right: Mona Flynn, Sue Darcy, Maureen Gaffney, Ita Redican, Maureen Redican**

In the Springtime the farm work was done. We had a horse. The ploughing was done in Springtime and the potatoes and oats were sown. Cutting splits and guggering was a hard job. Going to the bog was next and usually in May. We cut turf on Aughlin Bog beside Uncle George's. The turf was cut with a Slean. Another man would catch them and put them on a wheel barrow and he wheeled them out the bank and emptied them in piles. We were lucky enough, we got our meals in Uncle George's.

After a couple of weeks the turf would be spread and then put into "Futtings". When they were dry enough they were clamped. When they dried and seasoned they were drawn home on the horse and cart. In good weather the bog was a nice place.

Saving the hay was from mid-June, with shaking, turning and raking by hand and fork. If the weather was bad it would have to be made into laps or or hand shaking and later into cocks. We made hay ropes with a "twister" to put round the cocks. In the harvest the hay would be gathered or put into a shed or rick. In September the oats was cut with a scythe or reaping hook. It was bound into sheaves and stooked. Later it was put into a stack. Some farmers just fed it to cattle. Others had it trashed. The day of the "Thrashing" machine was a great day.

The potatoes were dug in late October-November. They were put in a heap, thatched with rushes and later covered with clay. We kept a few cows and made our own butter.



**Annie & Anna Bohan 1959**

Our local shops were Johnnie Travers and James Mulvanerty. Bernie Sweeney and Michael Sweeney came with the Travelling Shop every Thursday and Tony Plunkett, followed by Tommy McCormic, came every Monday. Lime for White Washing was burned in Earley's lime kiln, beside our school.

When I started to go dancing I went to Fenagh and Aughnasheelin. It was only 2s/6p to get in. I am now married to Eddie McGovern and living in Corlough, Co. Cavan. I hope you enjoy these few lines of how things were done in those days.

# In Memory of Esther McLoughlin

When I reflect back on my childhood days growing up in Drumroosk, Foxfield, they are full of very happy memories. It really does just feel like yesterday, oh how time flies!

Some memories seem so 'vivid' and 'familiar' that they almost come to life. Walking home from school is one such strong memory, probably because unlike the journey going to school we were not under any pressure from a time perspective. In particular, the walk home from school during the summer months took longer. You needed time to pick and eat the blackcurrants and strawberries that grew at the side of the road. You needed time to really digest the smells from the summer flowers and other hedge growth. Time was needed to play the game of 'Tig' and not surprisingly, unsuccessful attempts to catch the butterflies. The journey around Lough Na Corriga was always very tempting with the summer sun glistening and dancing on the lake and the calming sound of the Lough waters gently lapping against the rushes and the Lough edges. It was impossible to resist a paddle!

When I think of these summer journeys around the Lough from school, I find it impossible not to think of Esther McLoughlin, who was a few years older than me. She, like the rest of us would walk, talk and paddle. She sticks out in my mind because of her personal qualities and sadly, her sudden death at a young age.

She had a natural motherly instinct and with that came a protective role, especially when older boys would tease. I can remember very clearly when she died. It was sudden and very shocking to my young mind, especially as I had, up until that point, always associated death with elderly people. And whilst I missed her, I coped like children tend to do with death, in a fairly 'matter of fact way'.

In fact, it took until my adult years of reflection, before I really truly recognised and subsequently worked through, the loss that both I, and the rest of the children of Lough Na Corriga experienced at the sudden death of our dear school friend, Esther. Pronnsias Redican



Left to Right: Proinnsias Redican, Anette Redican, Maura Redican, Maura Reynolds, Sonny Redican.

# Drumany School Days

by Bridie Darcy Boyle



**Confirmation Class 1952: Back Row from Left to Right, Kathleen Forde, Bridie Forde, Maura Doran, Maureen Forde, Rosaleen Dolan, Bridie Darcy, Agnes Foley, Mary Feely, Rita Gibbons, Louise Gibbons, Detta Reynolds, and Anna Reynolds.**

**Front Row: from Left to Right, Peadar Gibbons, Matthew Dolan, Christy McLoughlin, Micheal J. Gaffney, P.J. Duignan, Leo Cafferty, Andrew Redican, Padraic Reynolds.**

I have many memories of my school days. We walked to school around Drumany lake. The weather made no difference. We went in all weather be it sunshine, hail, rain or snow. With our breakfast of hot porridge, it kept out the cold. There was no central heating, but a nice turf fire, brought to the school by each of the pupils by the donkey and creels.

At play hour we had our lunch of home-made bread and butter, with a bottle of milk. The Rosary was recited in the school each day as part of our religious duty. At the end of the day we went home with our bags of books. By the time we got home, Mother (R.I.P.) had some nice flowery potatoes, home cured bacon and butter waiting for us. Then we did our homework. Some chores had to be done around the house, like bringing in fuel and water. We were then tired and ready for a good night's sleep for to start another day.

I left school at fourteen and a half years of age as I was the youngest of six daughters. All had emigrated; my Father (R.I.P.) thought I should share the running of the farm with him. Life wasn't easy. As years went by modern machinery made life easier on the farm.

I had wonderful sisters. When my parents got sick they gave me a hand caring for them. They died (R.I.P.) at an old age.

I want to pay tribute to Master Reynolds (R.I.P.). He was a great teacher, a kind man. If you didn't learn, it was your own fault. I hope to meet my old school friends there and sit and speak of those by-gone days.



**From Left to Right:  
"The Darcy Girl's", Bridie, Mary, Hellen, Lucy (RIP), Betty Susan,**

# The Cane Adventure

By Sean Redican

It was in 1955 or 1956 when the Master called up Frank Maguire and myself one morning in school and entrusted us with a special mission- to go and get him a pair of canes! If you remember the Master never used bought canes. He always provided himself with a local production!

So off went Frank and I with a sharp knife he gave us, delighted with ourselves to have a chance to get out of school for a while and proud of the fact that the master had given us the mission for such a delicate matter. It was a half-sunny day with a bit of cold in the air. Walking down the road in the direction of the lake, we saw Jim Earley and Old McCaffery preparing to get another supply of stones to burn in the limekiln that day.

We headed for Egan's field that was covered at the time with young alders. So we walked along the lake for a while and crossed the gate of the "cottage" as it was called then, where O'Rourkes live now, crossed over that little field and jumped into Egan's field. It was a great place to look for canes. Lots of young alders to choose from and very soon we had the canes and the ends tidied, the way we had always seen the canes in school. We had a pair of very neat canes.

The sun was a bit warmer now and the field was protected from the wind off the lake by the ditch so we rambled around those fields filled with alders, delighted to have a doss away from the school and to rest awhile.

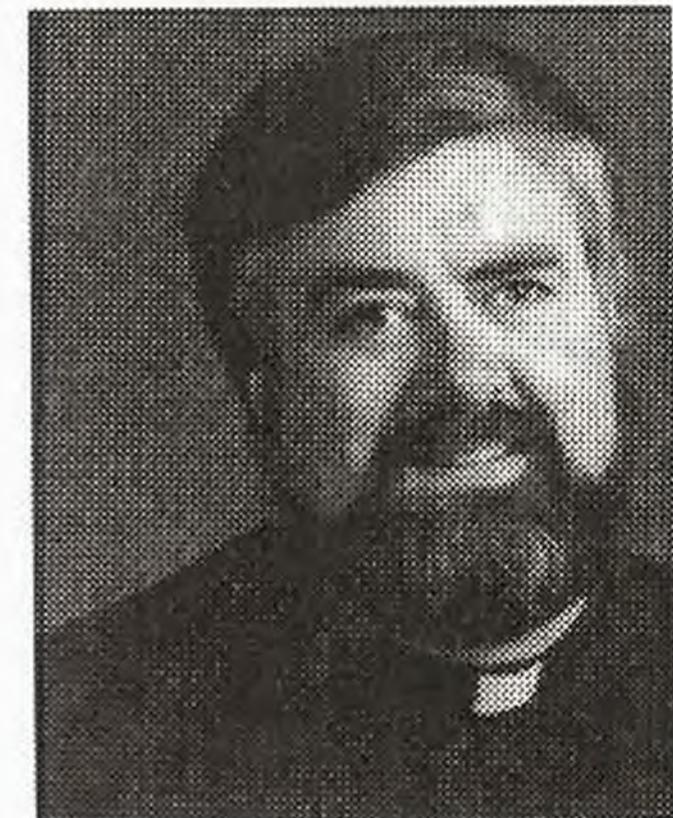
After some time I invited Frank to walk along side the lake, so we climbed up the high ditch a little beyond the place where the road curves and I was proud to show Frank "our" house. We talked and laughed and ran. Finally we decided to have a contest of who could make the stones skid most on top of the water. Of course, I had lots of practice going around the lake everyday, so I felt sure that I could beat him, at least at that game, as Frank was an all round athlete. The day got warmer and we enjoyed ourselves.

Finally we decided it was time to go back to the school. Much to our surprise we found the pupils out for the "big play-hour" and we could see the Master with his white head at the gate. We began to get a bit worried. We met Pat Joe Mulvey who confirmed our suspicions, he told us that the Master was angry that he sent another pair of pupils to try and find us and they couldn't and that he hadn't gone to dinner (worried- I suppose now) waiting to see if we would turn up. Pat Joe prophesied that we'd get slapped but we felt sure we wouldn't. Weren't we the ones who went to get the canes?

However, we did get a cool reception from the Master. He sent us into the school with the canes and we were told to wait for him there for the rest of the play hour. We thought that this was our punishment and that we'd get a good scolding and that would be all. But we were wrong; we were the first to get slapped with "our" nice new canes!



Seamus (Background), Sean (Left),  
Andrew Redican Cane boys.



Fr. Frankie Doherty

## School around the Corner

by Mary Mulvey Doherty

Drumany School retained its original shape. Its well maintained and nicely painted which says a lot for its occupants, who have it for a private dwelling house.

The school is nicely situated with the beautiful Lough na Corriga Lake close by. I was delighted to hear of the reunion of the school, congratulations to the committee on their big event.

We lived a short distance from the school, we could always hear the children out to play, laughing and shouting, play hour they enjoyed to the fullest. In those days they could play on the road as cars were very few, they played through the fields, breaking down fences, knocking down stonewalls, getting caught in bushes and tearing their clothes. All that they enjoyed, they were full of life and energy. I often saw them coming home with briar cuts on their legs and wounded knees, not life threatening. When lunch hour was over an army of hungry crows descended on the road, picking up crumbs and bits of bread that the children left after them. They were a noisy lot, fighting and cawing. They seemed to have the same pattern every day. Looking back, they were happy days, life was simple but memorable. We were all one family and together.

I often thought of those children who had long distances to go to school, through dark and lonely roads, in the cold winter mornings, their clothes wet and cold feet. Is it any wonder that so many people have arthritis today? The fire was slow to come up, it could be eleven o'clock before it gave off any heat. The closure of the national school was the best thing that ever happened for the young people. Buses took them to the community schools that were well built and heated.

Master Reynolds was the teacher in Drumany school for many, many years before his retirement. Now the opportunity presents itself to me to say a few kind words about him. He was a good teacher and kind to the children. If any of them wanted to further their studies, he was there for them. I remember him having Frankie to come back to the school after school hours were over, for a private tuition. It was Master Reynolds who was instrumental in laying the foundation stone for his secondary education and the scholarship to St. Mel's College.



Fr. Frankie Doherty

Before I finish I ask God to have mercy on Master Reynolds, my son Fr. Frankie and all those past pupils who have gone to their eternal reward.

All I wish now is that all will meet and enjoy the reunion of their beloved school, that the committee are working so hard to get material and piece everything together.

# TREASURED MEMORIES

BY P.J. FANNING, CORRABARRICK.



Drumany National School did not play any part in my formative years until it was decided to "transfer" my younger brother Jimmy from Comagon, where the locals were giving him a hard time, at the tender age of four and a half years. It would appear that no consideration was given to my situation at the time. Obviously, it was felt I was made of sterner stuff being six years older. History may have proved otherwise in hindsight. For me in any case my real education began in Drumany with my introduction to Master Reynolds, as he was known to us all. He had an uncanny knack of imparting knowledge. His mental arithmetic class was riveting stuff. Who would have their hand up first? "Twelve apples, at two pence halfpenny each? If oranges cost two pence each how many would you get for two shillings?" and so on. It taught us to think on our feet.

He was also a disciplinarian. The famous hazel rod played a very important part in all country schools in those days. I can remember being sent out to cut one in the hedge. I had considered inserting a few discreet nicks in the rod so that it would snap after a few sessions, but I dismissed the idea as I might have paid the price. He was by and large very fair except on one occasion when he got it wrong! I was sitting in the desk in front of Jimmy Keegan and was being disturbed to put it mildly by the same Jimmy. After a while I turned around and duly clocked Jimmy with a right hook. Of course this caused a commotion and as my explanation was not accepted I paid the price.

Summer time was always great to look forward to. We went to school early in order to kick a leather football in our bare feet in the Master's field overlooking Drumany lake. Just before nine o'clock Master Reynolds would walk up from his house, raise a white handkerchief and it was all over until lunchtime. We made our way back up the road dripping with sweat and into our desks. No showers for us. I was never a great footballer. I envied Frank Maguire who could run toe to hand like a hare. Another person that comes to mind is Seamus Redican. I'm sure there were many more but the names escape me at the moment. Most of us made the famous Fenagh team at one time or another where we did battle with such names as Ballinamore and Aughavas. Speaking of Seamus Redican I can remember a number of us having a race in the field adjoining the school. As we approached the ditch I began to pull ahead. Seamus reached across and tapped the back of my head with his hand. I went head first into the ditch. This resulted in a nosebleed. A cold stone was put behind my head to stop the bleeding. As in all these situations first aid was always administered by Mrs Reynolds, who lived beside the school. Afterwards, a cup of tea was made and you were as right as rain.

The journey home often took a bit longer than was necessary. If times were good you might have two pence to spend with Katie Agnes McGovern. She curled the newspaper into a cone and filled it with bulls eyes or something else of your choice. If you were lucky you could observe Little Jimmy McGovern in his quarry getting ready to do some blasting. I think one of the biggest novelties was LillieFords little two wheel bike. Not a common sight then.

I enjoyed the regular free wheel down the hill from Jimmy McGovern's as my legs were too long to pedal. That bike got some abuse I can tell you. After all that exercise it was time for a drink of water out of Jim Doherty's ice cold well beside the canal. Then it was off home to face a evening's work of shaking or turning hay or maybe picking several ridges of potatoes depending on the time of year. Times were simpler then.

# Drumany National School. 1954 to 1961. Memories and Perspectives.

It was in May of 1954 that I set off for my first day at Drumany National School. It was a walk of about a mile, all of it on untarred road, part of it along the Cavan- Leitrim narrow gauge railway line and part of it around Lough Na Carraigin. On that first day I walked with my sister Mary and Bridie Darcy.



The Flynn Family

Mine was a small world and I was oblivious to the larger stage that was then beyond my imagination. Everything for me in 1954 centred on home and school and I was very far away from events that were occurring nationally and globally.

That year Christy Ring won his 8th All-Ireland medal, Meath won their second All Ireland football title, Little Mo won her fourth in a row Wimbledon and Roger Bannister ran the first ever sub four minute mile.

It was also the year that Polio inoculation started, the U.S. Supreme Court banned racial segregation in Public Schools in USA, Elvis Presley recorded "That's all right, Mama" and Oprah Winfrey was born.

The National School of 1954 would not have been very different to the school of 1920. This probably reflected the country as a whole as Irish Society had changed

very little between the 1920's and the 1950's. Ireland of the 1950's was still in deep recession and depression. Emigration was rampant, particularly from the western counties. Between 1951 and 1961 Ireland's population declined from 2.96 million to 2.81 million. The population of Fenagh parish, dropped from 1054 to 870 during the same period.

Looking back on that eight-year odyssey from a distance of almost fifty years most of my memories around it have disappeared into the mists of time but I can remember parts of it clearly.

My classmates were Patrick Egan, Kilian Duignan and Bernadette Dolan. Sue Dolan joined us in fourth class, the year after we went into "the master's room".

The Mistress's Room was our first introduction to "lessons" as they were called then. There was a constant babbling sound as the various classes from Junior Infants to Second Class chanted their various lessons. The furniture and fittings in the room had their names written "as Gaeilge" on cards attached by thumb-tacks, so we had "doras", "cofra", "cathaoir" and one which I found difficult to get my head around at first, - "fuinneog". There was also a large drawing of a "cistin" naming the furnishings in Irish. It was ahead of the kitchens in our homes however in that the depicted "cistin" had electric light, a phenomenon that was still several years away.



**Confirmation, Foxfield**

I progressed from slate and chalk to pen and nib and copy-book, from infants onwards with many lessons to be learned and some hard knocks along the way, but my memories are of a happy time overall. We were then cared for and if someone was sick they were sent down the road to Mrs Annie Reynolds, the Master's wife, whose hospitality and gentleness always made us feel better. Sinead Kenny, Maura Reynolds and Eileen McGuinness were my teachers there. The highlight of the mistress's room was First Communion. There was a certain amount of dread about First Confession and the darkness of the confession box. But we remembered our list of sins and after a few seconds our eyes got used to the dimly lighted confession box. We looked forward with trepidation to moving "up to the master's room" and third class. We could now be regarded as being on our way to becoming big boys, joining the fellows we had previously looked up to. We could now go to Paddy's Field in summer to play football with the leather ball and play handball in the ball alley. Around this time improvements were being made to the school. A play shelter was built where the ash pit had been and a concrete floor was put down to replace the old clay and cinder floor of the ball alley. In third class we met Master Paddy Reynolds, Master Reynolds as we all knew him. It was all business from here on. He had a very commanding presence. He taught the required subjects diligently. Irish, English, Maths, Geography, History and Religion. The day usually started with tables, multiplication or division, followed by the dreaded "few questions in mental arithmetic". This exercise certainly sharpened the intellect and taxed the brain.

Irish was fine but I never had much time for grammar. An Tuiséal Gínlídeach, An M6dh Connolach, "Da mbeadh maidin amarach maidin D6mhnaigb rachadh me ar Aifrinn". I much preferred reading and my favourite was "M'asal Beag Dubh!".

English class was much more interesting. Compositions were the Master's forte as he showed us how to construct paragraphs and add in poetry quotations for effect.

The pictures in the room were from the "Shell Guide to Irish Wildlife" series. There were also three large maps in the room. The most important, "Uarscaill na hEireann", a map of Ireland from which we learned counties, towns, rivers and mountains in Irish. The other two were a map of England and a map of the world, both of which we covered from end to end. History was a subject that he taught with relish. This included local history and every class spent a day at Cul Cille.

There were few distractions in the school year then. Over the eight years we had two visits from a school dentist who either didn't know anything about preventative medicine or didn't like us very much. We were all vaccinated against T.B., a terrifying experience waiting your turn while the needle was sterilised on a burner. We had visits from Public Health Doctor and Nurse. There was the annual visit of the Diocesan Examiner and infrequent visits from "the Inspector".

Confirmation was another landmark. There was a lot of pressure on pupils leading up to the examination in catechism in order to qualify for the right to be confirmed. It would be a shame not to have an occasion for the new suit.

Local and General elections were a special treat. Not only did we get a day off school but also we helped to prepare the school and turn it into a Polling Station. Elections were one of the few occasions when the big folding partition was pushed back to reveal one large room. We would spend half a day moving and stacking desks and setting up the polling station and another half day following the election reversing the process. There was great excitement the morning following the election seeing the road outside the school festooned with election posters. Master Reynolds would also spend a few hours the day following an election explaining to us the intricacies of the PR system. Our favourite days were when Master Reynolds went to a funeral. Funerals were at 2pm back then so he would be gone from after 1pm and we had two hours of leisure to make life difficult for whatever Mistress was left to supervise us. We looked forward to funerals. My highlight of the year was the changing of classes and the new schoolbooks. New schoolbooks then had a distinctive smell that I can still recall when I pick up a new book. Just as important it also meant that summer holidays were upon us. In my last two years at Drumany we had the Christmas concerts, which we put on in Fenagh hall along with the other three schools in Fenagh parish. I went on two school tours, the first to Dublin in which I got my first glimpse of Croke Park and a tour to Sligo and Bundoran on a wet and windy day. Walking to and from school too has its memories. Barefooted in summer. The noise

of the crusher in Kesh Quany on a frosty morning, the shimmer of heat rising from Jim Earley's limekiln, the taring of the roads. In summer we paddled in the lake and chased the perch, in frost we walked on the ice. We took "short cuts" home by the fields. We ran to watch the train that went past Dolan's cross about 3.15 pm daily and we pressed our ears to the rails after it passed and listened to their hum-ming sound.



**Pat, Joe Bridie & Jimmy Mulvey**

I left Drumany in July 1962. My world was starting to broaden. I was heading out into a rapidly changing world and mass communications ensured that Ireland would keep pace. But I had received an exceptional grounding that would prepare me for it, even if I didn't realise it then.

In 1962 John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as U.S. President. John Glenn orbited the earth, the Second Vatican Council was held and Marilyn Monroe died. Jack Nichalus won his first U.S. Open and Peter Snell of New Zealand knocked five seconds off Roger Bannister's 1954 time for the mile.

During my time in Drumany there were many landmark events, advancements and crises. Ireland entered the United Nations, the Space Age was launched, the Berlin Wall was built. The Suez Canal Crisis demonstrated that the world depended on the volatile Middle East for oil. Ronnie Delaney won gold in Melbourne, Buddy Holly died in a plane crash. Rural Electrification brought "the light" to our homes, the First Programme for Economic Expansion was launched and Telifis Eireann was started.

I was growing up through it all. My heroes were Packy McGarty and Cathal Flynn. It was a time of great expectations for Leitrim football, dashed by Galway in successive Connacht Finals and by Derry in the League semi-final of 1959. But back then hope sprang eternal!

Many of the changes have been beneficial to our lives but some changes meant that there was no longer a place for the Drumany in the educational system. Falling populations and rationalisations signalled the end and within a few years of my leaving it Drumany closed forever. I remember it with fondness and gratitude.

Ni címid a leithead aris.

Brendan Flynn, 15.02.2001.

# The Sixties

By Padraig Leyden

For everyone the sixties appears to have been a memorable decade. On the world stage we had John F. Kennedy, The Beatles, Woodstock, Martin Luther King, The Cuban Crisis, The Vietnam War and Neil Armstrong walking on the moon. Closer to home we had "Lovely Leitrim" in the charts, the first Late Late Show (06/07/62), demolition of Nelsons Pillar (08/03/66), Northern Ireland riots, Farmers march on the Dail and in 1967, Foot and Mouth Disease threatened - now where have I heard that before!

For me and my vintage, the sixties was our primary school decade - national school in those days and Drumany N.S in particular. Mind you, "flower power" nor marijuana didn't affect us too badly back then! Come to think of it "flour" power was probably more relevant. For us the sixties were days of innocence "gay" meant happy, "abuse" was digging with a loy, "chips" were pieces of wood and definitely not of the micro type, "grass" was for mowing while a "mouse" had four legs and ran under the big press in the Masters room. We were before "house husbands", "computer dating", "dual careers" "test tube babies", "group therapy" and "Day Care Centres". You could buy a new car for £250.00 but who could afford one? Pity though because a gallon of petrol cost only 2/3 d-11p to you.



Class of 1956 Drumany School

No, I don't recall where I was when J.F.K was assassinated but I do remember being brought to Drumany school for the first time by Pat Joe, Bridie and Josie Mulvey, our next door neighbours in Derrinkip. I was hoisted over stonewalls, pushed through stiles and dragged through fields of hay as tall as myself, before being presented at the door to Master Reynolds. I remember crying for days. How different it is today, but then most children starting school today have been on at least half a dozen holidays, including trains and boats and planes. By modern standards I must plead disadvantage. Now I wonder which group - 60LM or 00LM suffer the greatest disadvantage. No I don't - definitely the class of the new millennium!

Anyway life settled down - Marla, chalk & slates- yes, roofing slates- brought me around. Copies with spaced red + blue lines brought neatness to handwriting that strained nibs and runny black ink tried to disfigure. Long before my time I learned my history and geography by listening to rote-learning of the older classes in Master's room, while neglecting what I was supposed to be learning myself- even then far away hills were greener. Play hour of course saved the day - every day! Little play time and big play time- we never knew how long either lasted but there was definitely a difference. Anyway nobody but the teacher had a watch and just so we couldn't be champing at the bit, the clock was turned to face the wall when our impatience became obvious.

Lunch was healthy- brown bread, treacle bread or plain white soda bread with "yuppie" families rising to the odd thick cut of a plain batch loaf with a crust so hard it crunched like breaking ice. This was topped with home made butter and for lubrication a bottle of tea, which would have been lined up beside the fire each morning with a cork of rolled paper- the original stopper having long been lost. Jam



Kevin and Mary Greenan

was definitely a luxury- maybe a "lick" left over after Christmas or the day after the station. The crusts were thrown to the crows that circled in anticipation and swooped with such precision that it never ceased to amaze me. For desert we had tig, skipping, a type of physical contact handball against the back wall of the school or when times were really good, a sponge or plastic ball.

A rare treat was Master Reynolds taking the older boys down to "Paddy's Field" on his own land for real football training- with a real leather football. Leather footballs in those days didn't have the synthetic covering of modern types. They soaked up the water and were heavy enough when wet to rock a kicker to the core or to dislocate a clumsily positioned finger of the inexperienced fielder on a cold day - now speaking of cold.....

Abiding memories are of cold- and coal. One was very lucky indeed if one happened to be near the heat source in either room, a stove in the Mistress' room, relative safety I presume and an open fire in the Masters room. I remember the thrill of being sent out to the coalshed at the back of the school for a bucket of coal and even better still was when the coal arrived and you might be detailed to help shovel the shiny black lumps into the shed- a valuable hour could be absorbed. Another privilege was to be allowed go to the spring well for a bucket of drinking water. Toilets of course, were of the outdoor type, with plenty of fresh air. Once or twice a year a traveller was commissioned to recycle the "hazardous waste material"- a sanitary engineer in modern terminology!

Coming from and going to school were of course the highlight of the day. This was the era immediately prior to bicycle transport for school purposes. We walked, mostly cross country- very definitely "to school through the fields." In the mid-sixties Weedy Walsh began to use his own car on his postal route. In bad weather he frequently took pity on us as we tramped along through the puddles, so he loaded us in- up to ten at a time, into his Volkswagen Beetle and left us at the school gate. Often, on a particularly miserable morning he would return for a second or even third load. Thanks Weedy- definitely an era before we became litigation conscious.



**The Duignans, Corrahoosan**

Coming home in the evening was an adventure- at least four disused limekilns to be explored, two working quarries- Jim Earley's and "little" Jimmy McGovern's and from the latter we completed our days education as he had a ferocious vocabulary.

Variety increased with the occasional invasion of travellers who set up camp alongside the road before moving off a few days later, leaving behind their traditional debris. In fact the same families returned regularly and would have been known by first name to our parents, where the women would call to the house- new babies were presented over discussions about a "drop" of milk, a "pinch" of salt, a few "grains" of sugar, a "lump" of butter or a few spuds for the "childer". Occasionally a colourful gypsy caravan brightened up the homeward journey. While we ran through a gauntlet of barking and, we imagined, hungry dogs. Finally a call to Kate Agne's (McGovern) shop where 3d worth of "Bulls Eyes" rolled in a brown paper cone went a long way- long before European union law and department of health hygiene standards!

Then of course there was First Communion- short catechism, long catechism, first confession, with some trepidation and following the sacrament itself came the real event of the day- such sacrilege- the breakfast in Fr. McCabe's house- a veritable feast, with such luxuries as ginger nut biscuits, sponge cakes, sandwiches with unknown fillings,

cups with little handles and more knives and forks in front of us than we had at home altogether.

And what of the real purpose of school- education. The teaching and the learning was simple, direct, interesting, always fair but with well-known consequences. During my school career I was privileged to have been taught by the Reynolds dynasty- the occasional class by the Master- he was long dead before I chanced to hear his name as Paddy; by Maura in my infant days; by Carmel Melia in Junior classes but mostly by Anna. The class of which I was part graduated with Anna as we both moved from the mistress's room to the Masters room. Following Master Paddy's retirement and her promotion. Anna was an inspirational teacher with a tremendous sense of humour and a mischievous twinkle in her eye as she gently teased the best out of us. Indeed when we graduated to secondary school we had an academic headstart on many of our peers which was a credit to her professionalism and dedication



**Anna Reynolds**

Life as ever moves on and we – of my vintage were Mary Greenan, Geraldine Beirne, Joe Mulvanerty, John Nealon and Padraig McGovern, Desmond Doherty, Margaret Duignan, - went into the big bad world outside Drumany and its adjoining townlands. We were of the era of short trousers, bicycle clips and tipped boots, mittens, pixies and duffel coats, walking to mass, fasting for communion- three hours in my tender years, then an hour and now.....?

*Thank you Drumany, for your fun, your shelter, your friendships, your education, your teachers and your clergy. May your current occupants gain as much as we did.*

*From the class of 60-68, Slan agus Beannacht.*

# Seasons and School Days Recalled

By Patrick Muldoon



Snigging The Hay in 1968

The passing years may dim but never obliterate the memories of childhood. Indeed many of those memories may even be embellished throughout the decades. Summers long ago were always sunnier! When we are in a reminiscent mood, a myriad of sights and sounds come crowding the mind vividly, if exaggeratedly.

In our youth, scarcely were we aware of the natural beauty of our locality and even less so of our county. It's only in later years that we come to appreciate and cherish Leitrim's beautiful landscape- its mountain, its rivers and lakes, its hills and lowlands. Its roads and byways wind around and over its drumlin hills and along its lovely lakes. In the background, Sliabh-an-larainn looks down maternally on her adopted, foundling foothills, sheltering them, as it were, from the harsh northerly winds. Her streams and rivers nourish and replenish, with fresh, crystal-clear water, those lovely lakes which she so greatly admires especially when they reflect Summer's azure skies and Winter's star-studded Milky-Way and a Harvest Moon beam's pathway across a watery expanse.

The rotating seasons reflect nature's beauty in its varied splendour; each having its own distinctive charm and also its own peculiar activity and work-routine, especially in the countryside. Nature's re-awakening from hibernation announces the arrival of Spring with the re-appearance of snowdrop, primrose and daffodil and with the song of blackbird, thrush and robin. Newborn lambs welcome the spring as they frisk in the fields. Birds begin nest-building and the squawking of the raucous crows arouses the reluctant farmer who yet has not started Spring's routine of ploughing and planting. Turning Leitrim's sod was challenging work for the ploughman and his horses and required teamwork (working in "Co") with the neighbour, and his horse.

There was always an air of excitement as the equine team were being hitched to the plough and, responding to the ploughman's urging, those horses strenuously tugged and pulled to turn the rushy sod. There was a sense of satisfaction too that Spring's work had, at last, started. Soon a few 'scouting' sea-gulls would arrive. Their heightened excitement at the prospect of a caviar-breakfast alerted their companions who soon would crowd the morning sky and descend to dine on earth's up-turned dainties. Abruptly, their feasting would be interrupted by an invasion of the 'All- Blacks' (a flock of greedy crows) that would immediately engage in a scramble for any remaining tit-bits. The ploughman, momentarily distracted, would enjoy the garrulous interruption but continued with steady hand and fixed eye to guide his team to plough a deep furrow and cut a clean sod.

Within a few days, his strong teenage sons would "step on the steeven" with grim determination to bore almost impossible holes in the spratty sod. His young brother or sister, the Guggerer, would drop the Splits -those so-disliked, single-eyed potato "cutlets"! Guggering, especially during those lovely sunny days before Easter, was the most boring of jobs and particularly hated because the moist, starchy Splits left the fingers coated, causing a dried-up and a very unpleasant sensation. Thank God guggering is no more! Perhaps it would be appropriate that a Lament be written as a tribute to the long-suffering

Guggerers of by-gone days when we had to set, not only our own field, but had to oblige the neighbours also.

Of course, our services would be required again in the Autumn, to harvest the fruits of what we had sown. The old Set had magnanimously sacrificed itself in donating its entire substance to give existence to a cluster of healthy tubers. Itself, now a wizened and shrivelled-up sheath, lay entangled in its stalk root-fibres and scarcely discernable. Like the grain of wheat in the Gospel Story, the humble Split must die to give new life. So, to it our thanks is due and our admiration, for it has given food, not only for the body but also for the mind to think and ponder on that Parable of New Life from a dying-to-self.



For the bog

With Spring's work coming to an end late in April, Summer's arrival is heralded by the delightful twitter of darting swallows and by the mysteriously enchanting, far-off call of the Cuckoo. The Dawn Chorus of May mornings, when blackbird, thrush and robin and a host of other warblers compete in full-throated song with exhilarating exuberance, welcome the new-born day, and Summer!

The lowing cows dispel the remnants of dreamy dawn and demand urgent attention for the relief of their distended udders. Hustle and bustle within and without signal an urgency to avail of a short, unpredictable spell of fine weather in which to save the hay. It's then a case of 'All hands on deck' in the meadow, to get it 'Up' before the rain would arrive and thus avoid 'Handshakes' and those back-breaking 'Laps'. The sweltering heat of mid-day was willingly endured to achieve the aim of having the meadow cocked by evening. Dinner-time was a welcome break, as were the few short rests in the shade, where the gallon of fresh butter-milk, with added oatmeal (more nutritious I guess than its modern substitute Yogurt-Plus!) was raised and cool, refreshing, draughts not only slaked one's thirst but also re-invigorated one for further field-work.

At six o' clock, the Aughnasheelin and Foxfield Angelus bells rang out, loud and clear, commingling in measured tones and with each deliberate peal seemed to roll back each separate century of two thousand years to recall momentous moments in human history when God became Man. That Angelus Prayer in the meadow, recalling mighty mysteries, re-echoed in hearts and homes and highways throughout the land -a Pilgrim People invoking the maternal care of the Mother of God and the mercy of her Saviour Son!..... A loud and welcome call from the house that the Tea was ready was promptly answered and when appetites were well satisfied all returned to the meadow. Súgan ropes were made and cocks tied down.

With the day's feverish activity complete, a 'dip' in the near-by river served as a refreshing 'sauna', which soothed weary limbs and revived aching muscles and one was again fit for fun and football. As birds were completing their Even-Song of Praise and the murmurous and haunting hum of myriads of flies gradually ceased, the golden evening sun, now evolving into a huge, crimson orb, reddening the western sky with its warm loveliness, (thus, guaranteeing another beautiful day on the morrow), now bids Good Night and, lowering deeper into the horizon, finally disappears beyond Drumcara Hill, leaving earth and mankind shrouded in Night and in Gods' loving embrace!



Pat, Bridie & Jimmy Mulvey

Autumn, "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", is the year grown to maturity; when corn and crops and fruits in orchards and hedge-rows, are ripe and ready for harvesting. For school children however, it means the end of summer holidays and its colourful charm has now a diminished appeal. September would bring, for some of us lads, a short mid-term break when Thrashing would occur. For days before the arrival of O' Connell's Thrasher, the delightful drone and hum of its engine, coming across St. John's Lake from far-off Foxfield and beyond, was music to our ears.



**Dog Tired?**

On 'Thrashing Day' when the Meitheal (men and boys- and dogs!) arrived, they helped with the setting-up of the thrasher and soon the work began. The 'Young Bucks' had already strategically positioned their dogs to pounce on the fleeing rats before they reached the ditches and hedges. At the end of the "Operation", the number of rodent victims per dog determined the 'Champion Ratter'. When thrashing was completed, all went in for the dinner and afterwards moved to the next 'station' - Bohan's Stubble Field, where Thrashing Day finished for another year, for us.

Potato-picking in October was another hated task, second only to guggering. Looking forward to Halloween (in a couple of week's time), lightened the burden of potato-picking and also bridged the dreary gap between then and Christmas. The thought of winter did not bother us at all. Halloween, which introduced us to it, was great fun. The haunting darkness and the eerie atmosphere set a perfect background for the telling of fireside ghost stories after the 'Ducking' and 'Snap-apple' games.

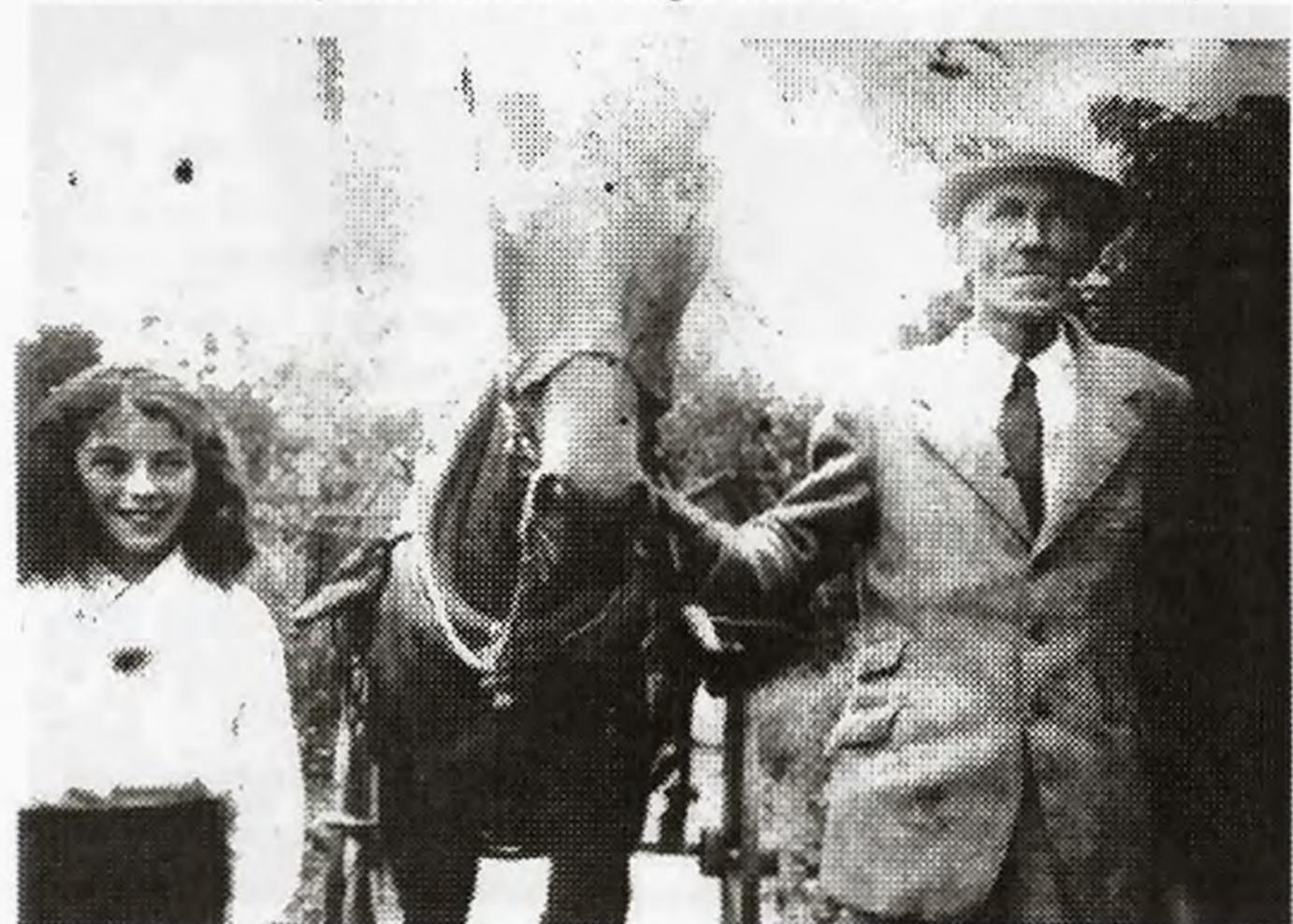
The wonder and awe experienced by younger children when gazing at the winter sky, was surpassed only by the great joy and the childhood dreams and expectations of Christmas and of Santa's - Chimney-Ride, with toys and things, small and simple yet wonderful! When winter snows blanketed the countryside, the option for bigger boys and girls to attend school or not, posed a bit of a dilemma. How nice it would be, not to have to go to school and be able to enjoy just being at home. But on the other hand, the fun of snowball fights and the pleasure of getting one's own back on the Master with a good "Hit", tilted the balance. Bombarding the Master on his way to and from lunch was not that easy for, shrewd old warrior that he was, he always was able to deliver the first missile - his motto obviously being, "attack is the best form of defence"! However, we gave him a fairly good lambasting, but he always took it in good heart.

So much for the snow! It was the frost and ice that provided the best fun. The frozen lakes and rivers and the slippery roads gave endless enjoyment in winters past. The slide on the road outside the school stretched from midway on the hill to the Master's house - almost. What thrills and spills that provided! Yet it was nothing compared to the glassy, unfrosted ice of Lough na Carraige where it was well-nigh impossible to hold one's footing. Tumbles and tosses added to the merriment. I still see, in my mind's eye, Breege Greenan (always full of

fun) laughing uncontrollably as a nearby sliding expert "came a cropper" in the execution of his acrobatic feat. In a flash Breege herself became up-ended, displaying her "finery" but showing no embarrassment. Nor did e'er a lad whistle then! Age of innocence!

In the class-room too we enjoyed the occasional spark of fun as for instance, during a rather serious and tense Geography class the Master asked Benny Rowley what he knew about Killamey, to which Benny, promptly, and in his own inimitable way, replied with a roguish twinkle in his eye: "Me Mother kissed the Blarney before she left Killarney, Sir!" As the Master's mouth widened, displaying those familiar premolar-spaces, indicating good humour, the whole class erupted in laughter with him, thus defusing the tension and generating that happy atmosphere which was not only most welcome, but also appropriate and wholesome. So thank you Benny for that one and take a bow!

I'm not too sure if I should relate the following episode which also involved Benny and myself. It was a pugilistic encounter that we both had on our way home from school. I forgot the reason for and the result of that encounter but not its aftermath. On the following day the Master called both of us up in front of the class and introduced me, on his right, as Joe Louis and, on his left, Benny as Jack Johnston. After being appropriately berated for our misdemeanour, we both received the standard corporal penalty, "four of the best" apiece. Rather deflated, yet somehow feeling a wee bit, what we nowadays



**The Side Car Bridie & John Darcy**

term "Cool" at being associated with the world's Ring Champions, we quietly returned to our desks and blew hard on our hands. Soon it was all forgotten about without ill-feeling. Master after all, was a good old Sport - and in more ways than one.

Here, I now recall the time when he announced that he was making a field available to us for games. The day he purchased a football and we had our first game, was a Red-lettered day for us and indeed for pupils in the years that followed. Thank you Master!

Before concluding, I wish to record our thanks to the McLoughlin family (whose parents John, a kind and thoughtful man, and Mrs. McLoughlin, equally kind and always hail-and-hearty), for allowing us to use their laneway as a short-cut. It meant shortening the journey to school for my sisters and I and also for the McKeons and Gaffileys. Thank you, Sonny!

Finally, a word in fond remembrance of all deceased pupils of Drumany, especially those who were at school with us. The memory of them, though sad, enriches our lives. May they rest in Peace and also Master Reynolds and Mrs Mulligan. They were excellent teachers. It is said that imitation is the best compliment we can pay to those whom we admire. In my own career, I have modelled my teaching methods, to no small extent, on their example.

Míle-bhuíochas daoibh, agus go raibh sibh a Mhúinteoirí uaisle agus bhur n-lar scoláirí a d'éag, i bhFláithreas Dé!

# The Memories of a Day in Drumany School

By Noel McGovern.



**The McGovern's, Castlefore, 1971:**  
Left to right from the back: Seamus, Marie, Noel,  
Josephine, Patrick Cyril and Jonny,

I remember walking down the line of the canal going to school with Seamus and Marie, meeting with the Melia's, McGovern's and Culls at Drumany bridge. Further down the road we would meet up with the Bernies, then to the school, meeting the teacher Anna Reynolds with the tarten skirt and big safety pin. The "Comhra" was the main feature of the day with either James Meehan or myself being picked to recite it, guess we were the brightest students!

Lunch break was usually playing along the big wall. Now and then I remember forgetting my lunch (usually intentional) and Anna would bring me down to her house, usually by the ear. It was a great treat as the television would be turned on and I was always treated to cake and biscuits. Coming from school we usually stopped at Katie Agnes'. We would have the stoned ready to throw on her iron roof. She of course used to be mad and she would follow us with a stick, sometimes to Drumany bridge. She and Jimmy had a great orchard and in the summer time we had many a good evening stealing apples. Indeed I recall Seamus being stranded up in a tree and little Jimmy at the bottom with a long stick belting away. As children we thought we would never get out alive! The next day we were in buying Bulls Eyes from Katie Agnes. I think they got some enjoyment out of us too.

At Drumany bridge we would break up to go home. On the way up the line I'd be checking set hooks that James Shanley would have set and if there was any fish caught it was taken home. They were great days, often spoken about, never forgotten.

# OUR SCHOOL DAYS

By Sean O'Rourke

Through our time spent at Drumany School, or "The School" as it was most commonly called, we always wanted to keep all references to it as short as possible including the time spent there, however short it was. We were always happy to dodge days from school, but our biggest problem was our proximity to the school.



**The First Communion**

lame stones would suffice for non-attendance because on route we would have to pass what was then the Reynold's house where our teacher Anna lived.

Most mornings either the then retired school Master Reynolds R.I.P. or Mrs. Reynolds R.I.P. would be out to greet us. We would always get that little bit of encouragement to get us to school. The usual and best trick of all was to suggest a race to see who would get to the school first and the rest of the gang would slowly roll in behind the leader. Then of course we would always be told how lucky we were going to school, for "school days are the best days of your life". This would always put us thinking. It was a good wake up call - and much needed. Then our thoughts were - what are the really bad days going to be for us?



**Fr. Paddy Dolan**

On some occasions we would receive some educational guidance from our neighbour, Jim Early R.I.P. Whenever he found historical items he would take them to school for us to see. On one occasion, his find was an old axe. He was so thorough on facts and figures that he always got a second opinion on his discoveries. My father, Peter O'Rourke R.I.P. gave the second opinion. This axe has since been fully restored and is on display in the National Museum. Jim always gave us the background to his finds, well his side of the story anyhow. We were very sure nobody was going to cross-examine this man on his words of wisdom. We always made him feel very welcome and hoped he would return to us more often.

The years rolled on and the Winds of Change finally caught up with Drumany School. To the shock and disbelief of all the locals, the closure of the school was in the not too distant future. So here was more history in the making. For all of us who were lucky enough to be pupils in Scoil Drum-Áine, it developed in us a confidence and belief in ourselves that has remained with us down through the years and for the future. Our school days in Drumany were the best days of our lives.



**Sean Geraldine & Patrick O'Rourke**

# My First School Became My First Home !

By Cyril Doherty



The School is now a home (Left) Mary O'Rourke's House (Right)



Cyril Doherty

My position is unique in that I went to school in Drumany National School and later bought it from the then parish priest, Father McCabe. I vividly recall that day in April 1974 when I met father McCabe in Mohill. He said to me "I'm about to let Drumany School go. Will you give me £760?" I answered in a casual remark, like "Maybe" or "I suppose I could", meanwhile trying to conceal my enthusiasm. We then went into Mr Gannon of Gannon solicitors and signed an

agreement. On parting company with Father McCabe he reached into his pocket and handed me forty pounds as a luck penny.

I got married the following year. So myself and my wife Ann set about the task of converting the old school house into our home. This we did over time and finally took up residence in October 1975. Our children were always intrigued by the fact that they were living in a schoolhouse. Those big open fires were such a treat to come into from outside on a cold winters day. They adequately heated the living room areas and upstairs to the semi-open plan bedrooms on top.

My thoughts often slip back to times spent within those walls. If only those staunch stone walls could in some way release all that happened within them. Things like little ones spending their first long days at school away from the security of home. Meanwhile being kindly treated and tactfully phased into the ways of school by teachers like Miss Kenny, and those that followed her. As the children progressed through their classes they then took that big step into the Master's room.

There was confusion every time I approached the County Council or E.S.B. with matters concerning Drumany School house and its location on the map. The answer came to light some years later; the Drumany School showing on the map was that of former times

which later became the residence of Master Reynolds.

In the meantime we had German holiday guests stay with us. They all remarked how much they enjoyed their holiday in the area and how wonderful it was to have spent some time in a converted schoolhouse.

We enjoyed many years living in Drumany School and later sold it to one of those German Families, namely the Adams family who seem to have adapted very well to their living in the old school.



Mrs Mary & Molly Rourke

*My most lasting memories of my early school days:*

The windows, they were so far up. What it would be like to climb up there and see out!

That sliding partition! It was so wonderful to see that in operation and have a chance to see what happens on the other side. In times of elections or parish events the "Big Boys" would help the Master to fold the partition. The desks were removed or placed close to the walls. Now this room was massive!

I recall Jim Earley of the limekiln making his many daily visits to his friend Mary O'Rourke, perhaps better known to her neighbours and wide circle of friends as Mary Tailor O'Rourke or Mary the Tailor.

Undoubtedly, they did discuss the usual affairs of the day, and indeed, sometimes unruly noisy bunch of school children, who were known to have tossed stones off Earley's wall and broken down the hedge going into O'Rourke's garden after a ball.

I can recall that eerie silence which seemed to engulf the schoolyard after playtime, only to be occasionally interrupted by birds or dogs scavenging the scraps of lunch. In later years as I lived there I would reflect back to the times spent in that schoolyard and find myself imagining that those sounds of laughter and play should once more explode into being.

# A Funny Incident From School Days:

Master Reynolds, being the excellent dedicated teacher he was, always went that extra mile to impart his wealth of knowledge to his pupils, even the subjects that weren't part of the curriculum of the time. However he had a great interest in the big map of the world that draped the wall right next to the blackboard. He would point out places of interest and locations pertaining to the then current events. Very often he referred to the landmass of the World being one-third part that of water.

Then one day during play hour two fellows were disputing ownership of a fountain pen (You fellows may recall if you read this!). As they tried to take it from each other, the ink came loose from the pen, generously splattering the World map. After some frantic efforts to remove the ink there still remained stains, close in colour to that of the land. Then one of the lads said to the other "do you think the Master will notice the arrival of the new island? And will he now say that the land is only one third of water?"

In conclusion I wish to respectfully add where appropriate to the aforementioned people who are deceased:

*May the sod rest lightly upon your breast.  
May you enjoy the fruits of your Earthly labour.*

*May you Rest In Peace.*



**Back: Annie Reynolds, Maura Reynolds, Patrick Reynolds  
Front: Paddy Dolan**

gently wipe clean the cuts and wounds and gingerly tease out the grit and stones. Then with the quiet words of caution, "this might sting a little, but a big boy like you won't feel it", she delicately applied the stinging iodine. When we winced, "there, sure that wasn't too bad", and of course we replied, "ho! ooh! Not too bad".

We recall her soft soothing words laced with the gentle levity of her quick wit and humour, until she finally stood up with "Now! You're as right as rain". Then followed the warm tea or soft drink, the biscuits or the lovely currant bread.

*Kindness and generosity touching our little hearts and lives.*

## Mrs Annie Reynolds

Very frequently when we recall our national school days we share memories of our classmates, the special friends we made, the games we played, our teachers, the special days and events in our school lives, the fun and the mischief coming home from school.



**Four Teachers Drumany School  
Left to Right: Carmel Melia, Patrick Reynolds,  
Annie Reynolds, Mrs Annie Reynolds, Maura Reynolds.**

It was most uplifting and assuring, when reading through the articles and correspondence, to find that so many of our past pupils should write so fondly and so appreciatively of the lady who was always in the background during our school days. She was the Florence Nightingale of Drumany. Mrs Annie Reynolds was always there to wipe away the tears, share our little troubles, cure the headaches,



**The School which became the home of Patrick Reynolds & Family**

# Drumany School (A Tribute)

Dear Old School,  
Scarcely do we recognise you!  
What you were, you now no longer are!  
A kind of metamorphic change!  
As a butterfly newly adorned  
    You too look beautiful,  
    Reclining in restful retirement,  
    Snug, in your cosy sylvan surround.  
    You were not always thus  
When generations of Infant- Pupils, in awe,  
    First, timidly entered your portals;  
    Or when big, boisterous boys and girls  
Frolicked carefree on your playgrounds green;  
    Or, on wet days, on your tiled porch- floor  
    Agile lads, shod in heel-tipped Hob-nails,  
Vigorously, in hunkered and feverish competition,  
    Tapped out that silly, funny, Frog-Dance  
    In endless, rapid repetition!  
    Different too from your former self,  
    Then standing coldly aloof;  
    Back to Lough and Mountain fair,  
Facing Southward o'er rocky fields and limekiln ruin;  
    And Westward, towards the setting sun  
Where stands a Sacred Rock of Penal Days,  
On which was offered, in humble adoration,  
    Our Saviour's Saving Sacrifice,  
    By out-lawed Priest and people poor  
    (Though rich in Heavenly Inspiration).  
And, we this day salute you, Faithful People,  
    In joyous and reverent admiration!

I wonder,  
Little School, thinking of you now,  
    If your once wainscot walls  
    Still echo voices...  
The poems, the rhymes, the roll-call names  
    Of pupils present, in far off times;  
    Or if, from the deep recesses of  
        Your attic-memory,  
You recall sights and sounds of by-gone days;  
    The fights, and fun, and playground games  
    And, re-calling, really relish  
Master's telling of Folklore Tales?  
    I wonder!  
    So here we are this August Day,  
    Your pupils past (hot every one)  
Now present again, at long, long last,  
    To re-live our lives of Yester-year  
    And renew acquaintances and  
        Friendships dear.  
    Sadly now, for our School Pals dead,  
    A fervent prayer to God be said.  
        Rest You in Peace!  
        Adieu awhile!  
        'Till we meet again  
        In God's Good Time.  
A final tribute to our Teachers True, .  
    Who skilfully taught us  
    To read, to write and cipher too.  
    You laid foundations solid and sound  
    For further learning  
    And for life's profound,  
All- embracing education of human kind,  
    Of soul, of body and of mind!  
        A Oidi Uaile uile,  
        Ard-mheas 's Mor-bhuiochas daoibh  
        Agus Sibhse a Mhuinteoiri a d ' eag,  
    (Ar Maistir ionraic, Pcidraig Mac Raghnaill  
    'S ar Maistreas ionuin, Bean Uí Mhaolagain),  
    I bhFaitheas De go raibh sibh araoon,  
    Go siorai, i measc na Naomh!  
        Pat Muldoon

# Pupils in Second



**Andrew Redican,  
Drumroosk**



**Margaret  
O'Rourke  
& Catherine  
O'Rourke**



**Jimy Shanley, Kilty fannon**

# Drumany N.S.



**Katie McNulty,  
kiltyfannon**



**Bridgit McNulty**

# Are You Here????





# Turning the Key

By Anna Reynolds Dolan



I spent my first half day in the Academy at the ripe old age of three and a half in Miss Burke" class. After that I had no desire to stay at home and miss the fun.

Time marched on. Many assistant teachers came and went but "The Master" ruled in his "noisy mansion" until 1963 when he retired at the age of 68. I succeeded him as principal there and Carmel Melia was the assistant teacher.

Carmel was a wonderful teacher who loved her work and every child excelled under her gentle guidance. She was a true friend and companion to me. We all celebrated when Carmel married Ray Ferguson never dreaming that her time with us would be so short.

Ach "Níl luibh ná leigheas in aghaidh an bháis"  
"Leagann sé Uí is crón le chéile"  
Táim cinnte guí l bh-Flaitheas Dé atá a anam uasal maorga.

Government policy at that time favoured the closure of small country schools and so Drumany N.S. was amalgamated with Fenagh. Turning the key in that school door for the last time was very very difficult. It marked the end of an era. Children in the area were no longer seen walking to and from school together. The school bus transported them to Fenagh.

The children, who attended Drumany school in my time were very special. They helped in every possible way to make school life run smoothly. The respect and co-operation of each and every one reflected the fine homes they had come from. I say to the parents "Well Done".

Beannacht Dé leis no h-anamnacha atá imithe romhainn agus guim rath agus sean orthu siúd atá linn fós.



### **Back (left to right)**

Rose E. Melia (Leamonish), Mary McNulty (Kiltyfarnon), Jack Leyden (Derrinkip), Maura Doherty (Breanra), Micheal McGovern (Breanra), P.C. Beirne (Edentenny), Tom Joe Flynn (Drumeenaun), Pee McWeeny (Corraphort), Jim Leyden (Darrinkip), Bernie McWeeny (Cloodrumman), Martin Roddy (Drumany).

### **Middle Row (left to right)**

Bridie Redican (Drumroosk), Lily McGovern (Breanra), Mary Kate Greenan (Muckross), Bee Roddy (Kitlyfarnon), Rose Melia (Drumany), Bridgit McPartland (Aughavadden), John Canning (Corrahoosaun), Jimy McWeeny (Cloodrummon), Frank Flynn (Drumeenaun), Pee Rourke (Corrabeagh), Michael Nealon (Muckross), Kitty Nealon (Muckross), Michael Canning (Corrahoosaun).

### **Front Row (left to right)**

Lizzie K. Beirne (Leamonish), Eliz A. Rourke (Corrabeagh), Annie Roddy (Drumany), Molly Rourke (Drumany), Charlie Beirne (Drumlaheen), John McWeeny (Corraphret), Jimmy Moran (Drumany), Michael McNulty (Kiltyfannon), Packie Leaden (Derrinkip), Paddy Doherty (Leamonish), Monica Moran (Drumany).

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Cold Chon.

Dr Sean Bourke.

Detta & Nicholas Power, Ballinasloe.

This page in Memory of:-

Annie & Patrick Reynolds, Drumany.

This page in Memory of:-

Hugh & Padraig Reynolds, Drumany.



Drumany National School 1928