

A CENTURY OF MEMORIES

Dominican Convent
Muckross Park Past Pupils Union
1912–2012

First published in 2012 by
Muckross Past Pupils' Union
www.muckrossparkppu.com

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Book design: Niamh Power, Print Design Services.

Cover painting: Jakki Moore, class of 1976.
www.jakkiart.com

Cover design: Niamh Power.

Typesetting and layout: © Print Design Services, Bray.

Printed by: Walsh Colour Print, Co. Kerry.

WELCOME



WELCOME to 'A Century of Memories', the book that celebrates one hundred years of our Past Pupils' Union. Thank you so much to all the past pupils who provided the articles, information and photos; also to our wonderful Book Committee, many of them established authors, who have given their time so willingly to make this project happen.

I also want to thank Niamh Power, our brilliant graphic artist, and, of course, we must never forget all the Dominican Sisters without whom Muckross PPU would not have survived!

This book is not exhaustive and we were reliant on the material provided, so please forgive us our gaps. Enjoy reading...

Valerie Cox
Editor

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How to join the Muckross Past Pupils Union

Joining the PPU could not be more simple. You can download a membership form from our website, www.muckrossparkppu.com and post the completed form to the address shown on it. Please note that this form cannot be completed online as the banks require an original signature on the standing order.

If you do not have access to our website please email muckrossppu@ireland.com or ring 087-6383683 to request a membership form.

Here are five good reasons to join Muckross Past Pupils' Union:

- * You will be staying in contact with old friends
- * You get priority booking for events
- * You will automatically receive your own copy of the *Muckross Mail* newsletter
- * You will be informed of coming events
- * You will be supporting our charitable endeavours

If you have an email address please email muckrossppu@ireland.com and we will add you to our address book. That way we can notify you of upcoming events and news of the PPU. Also do remember to let us know if you change either your email or postal address. You can also find us on Facebook.

We hope that you will use the Past Pupils' Union as a means of networking and staying in touch with old friends. We look forward to seeing you at many events during the coming years.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



It gives me great pleasure to be the President of the Muckross Past Pupils' Union during our centenary year. The Union's History goes back to 1912, when on March 18th three past pupils of the school approached the mother prioress (Mother Martina) and asked permission to form a Past Pupils' Union.

We are fortunate to have been educated by the Dominican nuns in Muckross where we have made lifelong friendships with many of the nuns, not to mention the wonderful network of Muckross Past Pupils, who are found in every walk of life. In our time in Muckross we studied a wide-ranging curriculum given to us by the enlightened approach of the Dominican nuns to education. Our extra-curricular activities included debating, sports, the arts and music. I recall with great pleasure a number of Gilbert and Sullivan operas in which I performed as a schoolgirl, and my romance with G & S continues to this very day.

The story of Muckross is included in this book of memories, going back to the early days when women students were prepared by the Dominican nuns for the degree examinations of the old Royal University. From its days as a boarding school, Muckross has been a unique school with a wonderful atmosphere and spirit. Its many cherished traditions have been handed down to us by generations of Dominican nuns. It has always been a school with a wonderful family atmosphere – more like a home from home, and this has always been very much appreciated by Muckross pupils both present and past. No doubt these traditions and atmospheres continue in the new school. The Union continues to have good relations with the principal of the school, Ms. Caroline Lundy, with the Vice Principal Ann Marie Mee and with a number of the current teachers in the school.

Here's to our second centenary.

Beatrice M. Doran
President
Muckross Past Pupils' Union



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Best wishes to
Muckross Park School and
all past-pupils on the launch
of – **A Century of Memories.**

*Best wishes to Muckross Park
Past Pupils Union
on their Centenary Year*



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PPU CENTENARY COMMITTEE

Some of the Past Pupils who attended the AGM held in Muckcross on 4th March 2012

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and Deirdre Shortall (Garrett)



Helena O'Dowd, Valerie Clancy (Barry)
and Claire Johns (Doyle)



Sr Rose Elizabeth, Margaret Dunne (Ross)
and Sr Barnabas



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Wishing Muckross Park PPP all the best on their Centenary.

Congratulations and best wishes from Fionnuala Smith, Sinéad Smith, Sunniva Smith, Sarah Smith, Mairead Smith and Caroline Foy and all at Smith Foy & Partners.

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Family vignettes compiled by Nollaig Rowan-Downey





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*Best wishes to the Muckross
Past Pupils Union on their
Centenary!*

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Chapter One

The Beginnings...





The Beginnings...

MUCKROSS PARK: The house and the family, the nuns and the school

Honor O Brolchain

Muckross Park House, which was the core of the Dominican Sisters' new college premises when they moved in at the turn of the twentieth century, was built as a family house, but only served as such for about twenty-seven years. The builder was Patrick Cranny, a Carlow man, who came to Dublin in the early 1840s with his wife, Maria Keane, and set up a very fine shoemaking business in South Great George's Street. He kept on the shop, but moved into building in the 1850s, first in Rathmines, then Ballsbridge and finally on Marlborough Road in Donnybrook.

There were many tragic tales after the Famine of the 1840s, one of them being the neglect and abandonment of land by landlords through desperation or penury or emigration. The 'Encumbered Estates Act' was an instrument to deal with these results, and Patrick Cranny took advantage of it to acquire a 2.2 acre site in Donnybrook which had been owned by Samuel Thomas the Elder. It had been originally sold in 1741 by Joseph Leeson, Earl of Milltown, when he was raising money to build Russborough House in County Wicklow. The site, visible on the 1837 map, was just off Bushmount Avenue, later named Bushfield Avenue and, later again, from 1883, Marlborough Road after the death of the Duke of Marlborough.



Muckross Park, 1900



Patrick Cranny's purpose in building the house was to repay his wife, Maria, for funding his building projects. Maria's family were from Kerry and it seems likely that the house was given the name 'Muckcross' in honour of her Kerry connections. There was a stream running through the grounds named 'The Muckcross Stream'. It was ten years before the house and land were ready for the Crannys to move in but the finished work was well worth it. It was a good-looking, unpretentious house. A short drive from the very ornate, cast-iron gates led to a flight of steps (without rails) and the hall door with its portico. The house was two storeys over a ground-level basement; in front were two windows on either side of the hall door and five on the upper storey, which was topped by a stone balustrade. The hall floor windows, divided into two large panes of glass, were examples of this expensive new technology. The upper storeys had the somewhat cheaper version of glass, divided in four panes.

The rooms were well-proportioned, and many original features still survive. The elegant hall with ceiling mouldings and an ornamental niche led to three reception rooms and a dining-room, all with decorative mouldings, picture rails and cast-iron fireplaces. A fine staircase (now gone) at the back of the hall, with large drawers for storage set into the sides, was the family access to the upper storey. Outside a conservatory ran along the south side of the house, supplying fruit and vegetables for the family, and beside it was a formal rose garden. Stables (everyone in the family had a horse), workshops and some accommodation for servants were in the yard behind the house, and the grounds were stocked with trees and shrubs.

The family who moved in in 1861, besides Patrick and Maria Cranny, consisted of the surviving children of Maria's seventeen pregnancies: John Joseph (Jack), a doctor who practised from Muckcross to start with; Gerald, an architect; Frank, the Black Sheep, who was sent to Australia for his sins; Mary Eliza, who had many talents but died when she was fifteen; and Josephine, who married George Noble, Count Plunkett, in 1884.

While the new church in Donnybrook was being built, Mass was celebrated in one of the first floor rooms in Muckcross Park for the small local Catholic congregation. The altar stone came from the previous small church which had stood on the present site of Donnybrook Garda station. The new church, designed by Pugin and Ashlin was inaugurated in 1866.

Patrick Cranny, having built houses on Elgin Road and Wellington Road, went on to build over fifty of the houses at the Donnybrook end of Marlborough Road, and bought several more from the older stock. He finished with building in 1884, and that same year Count



The Beginnings...

Plunkett and Josephine Cranny, second cousins, were married in Donnybrook Church, with the reception and photographs at Muckross Park. Their marriage settlement included a terrace of eight houses in Rathmines and seven houses on Marlborough Road. They never lived in Muckross, as their main home was No. 26, Fitzwilliam Street, but they and their seven children visited there. One of their children was Joseph Plunkett, the youngest signatory of the Proclamation of Independence, who was executed for his part as a leader of the 1916 Rising.



Above: The marriage between the Plunkett and Cranny families



When Patrick Cranny died in 1888, bequeathing houses to his family and to his wife, Maria moved into a house on Marlborough Road and let Muckcross for a few years. Her granddaughter, Geraldine Plunkett Dillon said this of her:

Grandma Maria was methodical, economical, competent, sharp-tongued, practical, domineering and religious. When she came into the house, her thin, crepe gloves were always put away in a drawer in the wrapping in which they were bought. The handles of her table-knives were always rolled in paper to keep them from discolouring and when she got a new muslin cap, her oldest one was carefully unpicked to make a strainer for the housepaint which she mixed herself and used to decorate her houses. Nothing was ever done in any other way.

In 1896 Maria agreed to sell Muckcross to the Dominican nuns of St. Mary's College, Merrion Square, where women sitting Royal University examinations could get tuition. They were still not allowed to attend university at that time. Maria Cranny died in January 1900 and that August it was announced in the papers that *'The Dominican Sisters have just purchased, as a permanent home for St. Mary's College, the beautiful and spacious grounds known as Muckcross Park, Donnybrook with its fine residence'*. The agreement was concluded with the signing of the ground lease in 1901, and this extract from the deed names the nuns who were the Trustees for the purchase:

'The premises were by Indenture dated the 8th day of February 1901 and made between John Joseph Cranny and Countess Plunkett the Executors of the last Will of Maria Cranny deceased of the one part and Mary Clare Elliott, Mary Bourke, Bridget Mackey, Margaret McLoughlin, Mary Gibney, Elizabeth Claffey, and Annette Cuffe, the trustees of St. Mary's Dominican Convent of the other part at the yearly [ground] rent... for the term of 999 years... fixed at £20.14.0.'

The nuns were not given their religious names, but Miss A. Cuffe is listed later in Thom's Directory as 'Muckcross Prioress'.

This was the beginning of a new era of Dominican education, with the opening that year of a primary and a secondary school. The third-level college, which had many outstanding teachers including the historian, Mary Hayden, continued as before. Many of the students were boarders but, with little room on the premises, houses had to be rented on Marlborough Road and on Mount Eden Road. In 1907 a new dormitory was built for the boarders, but the opening in 1909 of the new universities in Dublin, Cork and Galway with full access for women meant that the Dominicans' college was no longer needed, and it closed that year. In the 1920s a larger secondary school was built



The Beginnings...

on one side of the original house, and a new convent building and residence for student nuns on the other. The 1930s saw the addition of the Junior School, Science classrooms and the all-important Concert Hall.

In all this time there was no chapel; the nuns used whatever space they could find as a substitute until 1945 when the exquisite chapel, designed by architect, Eleanor Butler, the Countess of Wicklow and a past pupil, was opened and blessed. Her main interests were improving social housing and beautifying towns, and it appears that this is the only chapel she designed. In 1953 two richly beautiful stained glass windows, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection by the artist Hubert McGoldrick, were added to the chapel. A church bell donated by the past pupils was also installed; still there, still ringing. In 1949 the Sisters were offered the 10-acre back field and decided to buy it. It was of immense use for sports with playing fields, tennis courts and an all purpose sports pitch, and later for extensions and new buildings but it took many years counting every penny before that debt was paid off.

A fourth storey was added to the school and to the old house (removing its original balustrade) during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1963 a new hostel for university students, particularly nuns from overseas, was completed on the Mount Eden Road side. Pupil numbers continued to increase in the 1970s and 1980s when the new Science Laboratory was built, and the Junior School moved to their own buildings set back from the area in front of the school; they and the seniors had to have pre-fabricated classrooms brought in to cope with the spaces needed.

In 1999 (in good time for the centenary celebrations) the Department of Education announced that it would finance the construction of a whole new school building on the 10-acre back field. Construction of the new school began in 2005 and the pupils and staff moved from the old to the new in February 2006. The 19th April 2007 marked the official opening and blessing of the new school building.

From their beginnings as tutors of young women who wanted to take university degrees and were prevented from doing so, to their current situation, enabling large numbers of young women to take up the many opportunities now available, the Dominican Sisters, particularly in Muckross, have played a very significant, enlightened, generous and liberal role in the education of girls in Ireland. The gates, the drive, the house and its hall door are still there, like statements of their efforts and their history in Donnybrook.



Memories of a Muckross family

Paddy Waldron (junior)

I was actually a second-generation Muckross boy. My father moved from Limerick to Dublin with his parents, Jack (1884–1959) and Ciss (née McNamara, 1884–1966), in 1922 and lived just across the road from Muckross at 21 Marlborough Road, in a house rented from his greataunt and her husband, the Keoghs. Their daughters, Evelyn Keogh (later Mrs. Kelly, 1907–81) and Kathleen Keogh (later Mrs. Coleman, 1909–70) spent some time at Muckross, so it was inevitable that the Waldrons would follow, and one could even argue that, taking the Keogh cousins into account, I was a third-generation Muckross pupil.

My grandfather Jack Waldron's identical twin brother, another Paddy Waldron (1884–1953), was married to Ciss's sister, Lily (1886–1973), and they moved from Limerick to Dublin at the same time, living at 34 Belmont Avenue from 1923 on, and their children also went to Muckross. Many of the extended Waldron family were enthusiastic Gaeilgeoiri and by the mid-1930s were using the Irish version of the name, de Bhaldraithe. I don't have any evidence to suggest that the Muckross influence contributed to the Gaelicisation of the family.

My father and his double first cousin Thomas MacDonagh Waldron (1916–96) both started at Muckross in September 1923. The latter will be well-known to generations of Muckross past pupils from Irish class, but by the alternative version of his name, which he adopted socially in 1944 and used as editor of the standard English-Irish Dictionary. The two cousins made their first communion together at Muckross on Ascension Thursday, 29 May 1924, and continued at Muckross for another two years before moving on in 1926, to the all-male environments of C.U.S. (Catholic University School) and Belvedere respectively.

According to Tomas's daughter Cliona, lore has it that he had threatened to attend Sandford Park as there was no Jesuit school in the south city at the time—Gonzaga did not open until 1950. My aunt, later Ceit bean Daltún (1913–93) had one son, Antoin, also a Muckross boy; her first cousin, later Maire bean Uí Fhlathartaigh (1913–85) and the latter's sister Caitlín were responsible for a rather larger dynasty of Muckross girls continuing into the current century (Uí Fhlathartaighs, Garretts, Shortalls, Farrells and Sarah Marsh).

In the 1920s, Muckross still had boarders, including a number from west Clare, from where the McNamara side of my family came. On visits to Kilkee, Muckross always came up in conversation with the likes of Susie Jordan (Mrs. O'Shaugnessy),



Above: The Waldron family on holiday in Kilkee in 1927. Paddy and Lily Waldron with their children Mary (later Máire Uí Fhlathartaigh, class of 1931) at back; and at front: Eileen, Jack (Seán), Kathleen (later Caitlín Garrett, class of 1932) and Tom (Tomás de Bhaldraithe).



The Beginnings...



Above: Waldron cousins with friends in 1949.
Back: 1st 3 from left: Antoin Daltún, Donla Ní Flathartaigh (class of 1960), Máirín Garrett (also 1960). Group at front: 1st and 2nd from left: Colm Ó Flathartaigh, Eithne Ní Fhlathartaigh (1964); 4th and 5th from left: Cliona de Bhaldratthe, Deirdre Garrett (1964); on extreme right Nuala Garrett (1962).

September holiday in Kilkee, so I started at Muckross a month late. In any event, I was presumably the only new pupil starting on what was my first day at Muckross, and I was probably entrusted by my mother to the care of my then next-door neighbour in Merton Drive and classmate, Mary Harty, who had of course been at school from day one. Joanne Browne, who lived directly across the road, was a few years ahead of us.

There were no traffic lights at Sandford Church in those days, but there was a 'lollipop man' or traffic warden to help pedestrians across a busy Sandford Road. The highlight of the trip during my early days was kicking through the autumn leaves by the chicken-wire boundary fence of the Sandford Park school grounds, looking for newly-fallen chestnuts. The building boom of the new millenium has seen Sandford Square encroaching on the grounds, but most of the chestnut trees survive.

My kindergarten teacher was Sister Anita, who seemed absolutely ancient to me. I had never been to any form of creche, childcare, playschool, or Montessori before I started at Muckross. My mother, a civil servant and a barrister who lost her job because of her marriage under the law of the day, had obviously taught me well at home, as Anne McNamara recalls her surprise when I read aloud from *The Irish Press* (or perhaps the *Sporting Chronicle*!) during the week that she stayed with us in the autumn of 1968.

whose family ran the local hardware store, and Mary Kett (Mrs. Leyden, 1919–09), a schoolteacher in Kilrush. Conversations with Mrs. Leyden were never short and always came around to her gammy knee, which she first injured in a hockey match at Muckross, and which was still giving her trouble seventy years later.

The Kett name has been synonymous with Muckross for almost a century, in the person of Sister Barnabas, older sister of Mrs. Leyden and another sister, Kitty, all of whom attended the school at various stages.

I started at Muckross in October 1968. I have no clear memories of my first day at school. The small matter of a son of school-going age was not enough to change my father's habit of a lifetime, a



Above: Dressed for Corpus Christi procession, 1954. Back: Nuala Garrett (1962), Donla Ní Fhlathartaigh, Paula Slattery and Máirín Garrett (all class of 1960).
Front: Deirdre Garrett (1964); Maeve Garrett and Aighleann Ní Fhlathartaigh (both 1965).



THE WALDRON FAMILY

The Waldron family was associated with Muckross Park from 1923 to 2005. In 1922 twin brothers Jack and Paddy Waldron both moved from Limerick to Dublin with their families. Jack was married to Mary (Ciss) McNamara, and Paddy was married to Ciss's younger sister Lily.

GENERATION 1 in Muckross

During the 1920s and 30s Lily and Paddy's daughters MARY, KATHLEEN and EILEEN WALDRON (also known as Máire, Caitlín and Eibhlín de Bhaldraithe) were pupils in Muckross Park, as was Ciss and Jack's daughter MARY WALDRON (Máire/Ceit de Bhaldraithe). Lily and Paddy's sons TOM and JACK WALDRON (Tomás and Seán de Bhaldraithe), and one of Ciss and Jack's sons PADDY WALDRON (Pádraig de Bhaldraithe) also attended Muckross up to their 1st Communion years during the 1920s.

There would have been a family connection from some years earlier when Ciss and Lily McNamara's younger first cousins EVELYN and KATHLEEN KEOGH attended Muckross. However the Waldron name would not have appeared on the school roll books until 1923. Kathleen Keogh's daughters ANGELA and MARGUERITE COLEMAN were pupils in the 1950s and 60s.

GENERATION 2

Lily and Paddy's grandchildren:

Máire (de Bhaldraithe) Uí Fhlathartaigh's daughters DONLA (class of 1960), EITHNE (1964), AIGHLEANN (1965) and RÍONACH (1968).

Caitlín (de Bhaldraithe) Garrett's daughters MÁIRÍN (1960), NUALA (1962), DEIRDRE (1964) and MAEVE (1965). Máire's son COLM Ó FLATHARTAIGH and Caitlín's son EOIN GARRETT also attended up to First Communion class.

Ciss and Jack's grandsons (to 1st Communion):

Máire/Ceit (de Bhaldraithe) Daltún's son ANTOIN. One of Paddy Waldron's sons PADDY jr.

GENERATION 3

Five of Lily and Paddy's great-granddaughters attended Muckross:

Deirdre Garrett's two daughters, NÓRA SHORTALL (class of 1998) and ÉADAOIN SHORTALL (2005)

Maeve Garrett's two daughters, ÚNA FARRELL (2000) and NIAMH FARRELL (2003)

Cliona de Bhaldraithe's daughter (and Tomás's granddaughter), SARAH MARSH (2000)

Three granddaughters of Paddy and Jack's youngest brother Des Waldron were also pupils at various times between about 1987 and 2002. These were daughters of Laura (Waldron) and Paddy O'Dwyer – JEAN ANNE, DEIRDRE and the late and much lamented LAURA jr.

Deirdre Shortall (née Garrett)



The Beginnings...

My transition year teacher was Sister Brenda Mary. I learned her surname (Kelly) only several decades later, although I was vaguely aware that my father discovered that she too had roots in west Clare. I have much clearer memories of her, probably because she appears in the cine film of my first communion day, as does Sister Barnabas. I used to tell people that I was always interested in genealogy, but when I discovered forty years after

I left Muckross that Sister Brenda Mary and Sister Barnabas were second cousins, I realised that my interest in genealogy must have developed only after my Muckross days.

When my father died in 2008, I inherited a large archive of family photographs. I remember some of my classmates' names, but can't match them up to the faces—Fergal Donnelly and Paschal 'Jim' Carney were later classmates in Gonzaga and neighbours when we moved to Park Drive in 1977. When Declan O'Carroll moved to Gonzaga, he remembered me from Muckross, but I didn't remember him. I think Malachy Brady moved on from Muckross to C.U.S. with me and I remember Kevin McHugh, whose foot was run over by a bus while we were in Muckross. When he recovered, he came back to school wearing a sandal with the track of the bus tyre still visible on it. I met Paschal Carney recently and discovered that his Muckross memories are as skimpy as my own.



Above: 1990 photo of Caitlín (de Bhaldraithe) Garrett with her daughter Deirdre (Garrett) Shortall and three of her grandchildren: Nóra Shortall (class of 1998) and (at front) Éadaoin Shortall (2005), and their brother 1st Communicant Kevin (not a Muckross boy!)



Above: Paddy Waldron's First Communion Day in 1970 with Fr. Thomas Treacy, C.C..

It was only when I came across the 1970 Muckross First communion class photograph again recently that I became somewhat nostalgic and curious about my earliest classmates, so I was delighted to be asked to write these few words about times past.

References:

Mac Aonghusa, P., ed. (1997), Tomas de Bhaldraithe: Cuimhn Cairde, An Clochomhar, Baile Atha Cliath.



A SENSE OF STYLE—100 YEARS

Compiled by Patricia O'Reilly and edited by Helen Litton

1912-1922

Muckross News

Florrie and Eily McLoughlin and Ivy Powell receive permission from Mother Prioress (Mother Martina) to form a Union of past pupils. Over the next weeks invitations are sent out and a large gathering of past pupils finally meets in the library.

The positions of President, Vice President and officials are voted on:

President	Miss Agnes Ryan M.A
Vice Presidents	Misses Fitzgerald and Lena Butler
Secretary	Miss Ivy Powell
Treasurer	Miss Lily McLoughlin
Committee	Misses M Hanly, B.A., and Margo Lillis

The Past Pupils' Union forms a Debating Society and Tennis Club and holds a successful concert. Enthusiasm is high, with subscriptions pouring in and the committee going from strength to strength.

Irish News

In 1910 the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) had been founded. Its brief was to be at the forefront of making life-changing improvements for Irish families. This is the start of the recognition of the power of women's role within the home and the advancement into modernity of skills such as baking, cooking, butter and cheese-making, poultry-keeping etc. Over the next decades the ICA continues to grow.

Countess Markievicz, founder of Fianna Éireann, a member of Sinn Féin and Inghinidhe na hÉireann, a women's movement, is jailed for her part in the demonstrations that took place against the Irish visit of King George V. During the Dublin Lock-out of 1913, she runs a soup kitchen for those who cannot afford food. Imprisoned and released after the Easter Rising in 1916, she is elected Britain's first-ever female MP in 1918, but does not take her seat. In 1919 she is Minister for Labour in the First Dáil.



Above: Anita Lett, founder of the ICA, in 1910.



The Beginnings...

World News

Women's Enfranchisement Bill is defeated by 14 votes on its second reading in the House of Commons, London.

The unsinkable *Titanic* sinks with the loss of more than 1500 lives.

The Great War changes everything; way of life, attitudes, society, politics and people. No previous war had ever involved so many civilians. With hindsight it is obvious that the war emancipated fashion, but while it is happening the trousers and overalls worn by women are not considered part of fashion. Class distinctions and formality relax to the extent of women smoking in public.

Lady Lavery, the red-haired Irish-American from Chicago married to the painter Sir John Lavery, is a well-known figure in London and Dublin Society. Her portrait is incorporated into her husband's design for Irish pound notes.

Royal Vinola Vanishing Cream guarantees it will 'Make the Beauty of your dreams...a Reality'.



Fashion

For the fashionable, laced whalebone corsets are superseded by camisole bras and rubber girdles. The society 'flapper' has arrived. Skirts rise from floor length to above the ankle; women bob their hair. The stage is set for the Jazz Age and the dancing of the charleston.

In rural areas of Ireland, the old traditions of story-telling, kitchen ceilis and traditional Irish songs linger. Homespun clothes such as the red skirts, black fringed shawls, tweed trousers and collar-less

shirts, as well as the all-enveloping Kinsale cloak are still worn.

The popular songs being hummed are *If You Were the Only Girl in the World* and *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*.



Left and above: The 1920s society 'flapper' and Irish traditional dress.



Memories of Muckross, 1920s

Marie Hackett (in conversation with Jacinta Doolan).

Maire Hackett's fondest memories of Muckross Park are the friends she made there and playing hockey! And her memory is absolutely crystal clear—in fact at the wonderful age of 92 she brought back pictures of Muckross Park which painted an idyllic time in her life and Dublin in general.

In 1926 Maire started school in Muckross at 6 years of age, preceded by her brother Brendan. Her other 7 siblings were to follow Maire to Muckross. The 4 boys—Brendan, Pat, Tom and Joe, until they received their Holy Communion—and her 5 sisters, Ita, Dympna and Eilis (RIP) and identical twins Therese and Frances. Before that they had a governess, Molly Gallagher, who also taught all of the 10 children musical appreciation during her time with the Hacketts. The family home was in Milltown, a 3 storey house with a public house and grocers, with her father's name Thomas Hackett written in Irish over the door.

'It was a glorious place, with nearly a half acre garden and orchard, we were fed out of it. There was no electricity, just gas light, with big fires in all the bedrooms. We had a housekeeper called Bridget and a gardener called Tom who used to bring up the hot water and fill the big tin baths in front of the fires. I can remember the shadows from the light on the ceiling when we were in bed. It was glorious. We walked the mile to the school but in the beginning I went on the back of my father's bicycle and later we took the bus.

"I remember the gate lodge at the entrance to the school on the left where the grounds man lived, who also looked after the cattle which were kept in the surrounding fields beyond the hockey pitches. I remember Michael Cullen used to cycle from Donnybrook to get fresh milk from the dairy every day when his children were ill. All of the milk was delivered to the door by horse and cart."

"Back then the uniform was navy blue with the VERITAS badge and it was down around our shins. I remember one time playing hockey against Alexandra College and they complained that our long uniforms interfered with play during a match – the ball kept catching the hems of our gymslips! We just lifted them up by two buttons for a match. Alexandra were much more sophisticated, they had shorter skirts long before we did with those long drawers underneath, which of course we also had".

It is quite astonishing how well Maire remembers her friends from Muckross—the Walkers, Pat, Stella and Pauline; Joan Dudley; Eileen Elliott ; the Morrisseys—Maeve, Eithne, Cora and Rita. And Mary Reville-Strahan the Hockey International. She also remembers Noreen Cleary whose sister Maeve was to return as a Dominican, Sr. Vincenzo. 'I remember Maeve changed from Hockey to Camogie, she was one of the first to do so'. But her most beloved, lifelong friend was the first person Maire met in Muckross in 1926. "When I sat at the desk on my first day at school, the girl beside me was Consilia Keane and we became instant





The Beginnings...



Above: Maire Hackett is 2nd from the left in the back row, and Consilia Keane (Connie), her friend, is 3rd from the left.

friends. When Consilia was 9 her mother died and when she was 10 her father died. In those days the school took boarders only from 12 years upwards. But the nuns decided to take Consilia under their wing and she became a boarder at age 10. I always remember how good they were to her. They also did the same for Deirdre Mc Alpine when her parents went to live in India. And so Consilia was nearly like our sister and my parents were very good to her—she spent holidays with us. Eventually she studied nursing in England and was there during the war. After that she met Walter

Nelson Groves who served in Burma—he was a desert fox—who wanted to marry her and live in Burma! But Consilia brought him for a holiday to the Scilly Isles and he fell in love with the place and they lived there instead. They renovated a cottage on the beach and named it 'Nowhere'. We were friends until the day she died."

Maire also remembers fondly Mother Albertus who was a Bavarian Princess. "I loved Mother Albertus, she was straight as a die and her hands were never idle. She was always knitting—socks and vests and God knows what else for the nuns. But I never can remember being taught by her". Maire also remembers Mother Benvenuta, but not as fondly! "I hated Shakespeare as a result of being taught by her! We had to learn reams of speeches from Shakespeare as a punishment for not doing homework or whatever and for some reason I know a lot of Shakespeare."

"And I remember Betty Kettle whose father died on hunger strike before she was born and he wrote a poem to his unborn child—*Poem to a Rosebud* I think it was and she was constantly reciting it—and Patricia Dunne would recite that poem '...and the Raven never more.' Sometimes the punishment was a catechism pinned to the back of your uniform and you had to wear it all day, but I never knew whether the punishment was for the wearer or whether it was for the girl who had to recite from it!"

When Maire left Muckross she did a shorthand and typing course. Her father had died at the age of 52 leaving her mother a widow with 10 children. 'I started work in Mc Donagh, Haughey Boland and the first person I met when I started was Niall Mc Govern who brought me up to the office. I married Niall in 1947. I remember the year well because I was picked to try for the Inter provincial trials, but the final was never played because that winter 1947 was the worst snow we could remember. Then in September when I married Niall, it was an Indian summer. But I never played hockey again."

Maire and Niall Mc Govern have 4 children—Barry, Brian, Helen and Niall. Both Maire and Niall are resident in Newtownpark House.



1922-1932

Muckross News

Past Pupils' Union has been going from strength to strength over this decade, holding concerts, garden fetes, 'At Homes', tennis tournaments, performing scenes from *The Taming of the Shrew*, fund-raising for the building fund.



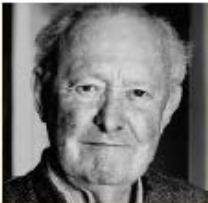
Irish News

In January 1922, Dail Éireann approves the treaty with Britain which sets up the Irish Free State; in June the first general election is held and the pro-Treaty party is victorious. Free State troops fight the IRA and win battle for control of the law courts buildings; the Civil War begins, lasting till April 1923. The Irish Constitution Bill, creating the Irish Free State, becomes law and the last British troops leave Dublin.

The publishing event of 1922 is James Joyce's *Ulysses*, published in Paris. A fight breaks out on stage at Dublin's Abbey Theatre during a performance of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*.

World News

In the UK the Matrimonial Causes Bill allows a wife to petition for divorce for a husband's adultery. In Italy, scantily-dressed or bare-legged women are banned from church. Doctors claim short skirts cause puffiness and chafing of legs as well as endangering women's moral welfare. New Yorker Gertrude Ederle is the first woman to swim the English Channel in 14 hours, 31 minutes.



A famous past pupil: Conor Cruise O'Brien Paddy Waldron (junior)

In the 1920s, the age and gender criteria for admission to Muckross were very different from those which apply in 2012. Neither Paddy Waldron nor Conor Cruise O'Brien was the first of his extended family to attend Muckross. Each had a maternal first cousin born in 1913 and attending Muckross. Paddy started at Muckross in September 1923 and made his First Holy Communion there on Ascension Thursday, 29 May 1924. Conor attended two preparatory schools before Muckross, both "Protestant in ethos, though not obtrusively so". Against that background, he considered Muckross "a radically different educational environment". It was towards the end of his eighth year that Conor came to Muckross, presumably in the autumn of 1925. At that time Conor lived at 44 Leinster Road in Rathmines. After Muckross Conor moved on to Sandford Park. He went on to have a distinguished career with the United Nations, was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, a journalist with the *Irish Independent* and author of many books. He was married to poet and writer, Marie McEntee.



The Beginnings...

In the interests of research, crime novelist Agatha Christie succeeds in vanishing.

Claude Monet, the first of the Impressionist painters, dies in 1926 at his home in Giverny in Normandy.

Ten-year-old-violinist Yehudi Menuhin causes a sensation in Paris as he plays Mendelssohn's violin concerto.

Captain Charles Lindbergh is the first to fly the Atlantic solo in 1927—his 3,600 mile flight was accomplished in 33 hours 39 minutes at an average speed of 107.5 mph. He stayed alert by eating homemade sandwiches. A year later, in 1928, Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly the Atlantic.

In 1929 Wall Street crashes, with 13 million shares changing hands on the New York Stock Exchange.

Fashion



This decade sees the emergence of the international fashion industry. Navy and black are worn for town, white with coloured scarves and cloches for the country. Hems fall between the ankle and the calf of the leg, and the cloche sits so low on the head that it hides the eyebrows. Day suits have hip-length jackets buttoned low and hanging straight over a straight skirt. Scarves tie in 'aeroplane bows'—stiffly like propellers.

Towards the middle of the decade, the straight, slim silhouette begins to move with pleats and godets, bloused bodices, swaying fringes, flying scarves and streamers. Skirts get shorter and shorter and 'the Little Black Dress' makes its first appearance. The smartest accessories are suede gloves, a stubby fat umbrella and steel beads. Later on shoulders get broader, the fit is looser and women raid men's stockists for plaid socks and sleeveless V-neck sweaters; coats have fur collars and neat suits have frilly jabot blouses.

Towards the end of the decade *Vogue* magazine tells women how to dress for £75 a year: including 'dress from your little dressmaker, £4, three pairs of shoes, £6.10s, two hats, £3, lingerie and accessories,

£2'. The day silhouette becomes more simple, just a long jersey belted over pleats or a 'pure in line' dress.

The songs being sung this decade include *Ain't She Sweet*, *On the Sunny Side of the Street* and *Bye Bye Blackbird*. Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, treating of intimate relationships between women, is withdrawn on the advice of the British Home Secretary; however, Compton Mackenzie's *Extraordinary Women*, dealing with the same subject, sells out.



Elizabeth O'Donoghue, 1930s–40s

Éilís Mac Giolla Choille



There were only a hundred girls in Muckross and just six in her class when Elizabeth (Betty) O'Donoghue, now Éilís Mac Giolla Choille, did her Leaving Cert in 1942. Now 87, she can still remember her classmates' names: Pat Maughan, Nancy Hely, Pearl Dunne, Mona McGregor and Marie Curran.

She was head girl in her final year (1941-42). The position was largely honorary, she recalls, her principle duty being ringing the bell at the end of every class.

She first walked then later cycled to school from her home in Merton Road. Her sister, Una, followed her, and returned later as a teacher, first in the primary school and then in the secondary school in the 1960s and 1970s, ending up as career guidance teacher.

Among the teachers she remembers: Mother Hillery, Mother Benevenuta, Sr Patrick, Mother Osana and Sr Alphonsus (a sister of the poet Tom Kettle), and lay teachers Iníon Uí Ainle, Eileen O'Farrell and Miss Duignan. Éilís remembers delivering letters for Sr Alphonsus to her relatives who lived near Merton Road.

In those days the uniform was very different, 'we wore navy gymslips and green for hockey. The hockey pitch wasn't even a full size one and we used one of the class rooms for changing. There was no question of a pavilion'.

The nuns were strict and Éilís remembers one occasion when she was in trouble! 'The tennis courts were out front between Marlborough Road and the convent and one summer's day I was playing tennis and I jumped over the fence and I was called in by Mother Gonzalez. She knew me well, she had taught my mother, Una Ryan (who was the youngest of fifteen children) in Sion Hill and my aunt was a nun there too. Anyway, Mother Gonzalez took my Child of Mary ribbon from me as a punishment because I had jumped a fence in front of a man'!

There wasn't much money around in those years and few people thought of going on to third level education and, of course, it was during the emergency years. 'Butter was scarce and tea. We had a meal in school during the early years, we paid for them. But in sixth year we could bring our own lunch into what was called the refectory'.



The Beginnings...

Éilís went on to UCD where she did her BA and H. Dip and captained the college hockey team which won the inter-varsity Coffey and Chilean cups in the 1940s—another Muckross old girl, Pat Warren, played on the UCD team with her.

It was a tradition when Éilís got married that the brides visited the convent on their wedding day and when Éilís married archivist Breandán Mac Giolla Choille in 1951 they called to see the nuns. 'I was feeling so wonderful but it was only a question of going into the hallway and you signed the book. I remember Sr Cecelia saying "that's the first time you signed your married name".'

Éilís says Muckross gave her a good solid education. She remembers being in the first class to actually sit their Leaving Cert in the school, 'it was the first year that a State exam was held in Muckross. We usually went to St Louis in Rathmines. There were so few of us that there hadn't been a centre up to then. We were in a classroom with the fourth years'.

Éilís and Breandán reared a family of five in Clondalkin, but later moved to Nutley Lane, where she lives now. Breandán died in 2006. Their grand-daughter, Róisín White, was a recent pupil – she's now a student in DIT. Éilís visited the new school while her grand-daughter was a pupil and is very impressed with what she saw.

Were her schooldays happy? "Of course, I loved Muckross and everything about it."

THE DOWLING FAMILY

The five daughters attended Muckross beginning in 1936. They lived in Ballsbridge at the time. Their mother came from England and didn't know the schools here. She used to take the girls to Herbert Park and noticed a sign saying "School for young ladies". That was it! She chose Muckross for her 'young ladies'.

*Twins, MARIE and NORA began school in 1936
CELIA DOWLING BRUEN began in 1938
BERNADETTE DOWLING MARMION began in 1943
CLAIRE began in 1947.*

All five went right through Muckross to Leaving Cert and went on to further education, four doing Arts degrees in University and pursued careers in teaching, music performance and lecturing.

Celia taught English and French in Muckross from 1955 to 1963. She says "We are very grateful to Muckross for the education we got there".



Memories of Muckross, 1930s–40s

Imelda FitzPatrick (née Tucker)

The late Imelda FitzPatrick (Tucker), 1924–2008, wrote this piece for the special Millenium edition of Muckross Mail.

It was 1936 and there were seventeen of us in the class, I remember them all—Marie Curran, Maureen O'Dockery, Pearl Dunne, Mona McGregor, Alice Chatain, Peggy Dee, Maureen Lemass, Una Walsh, Clare Morrissey, Joan Tallon, Frances Coyne, Carmel McGrath, Mona Bellamy, Nuala Meagher, Nancy Healy and Pat Maume.

There was always a lovely atmosphere in Muckross but it was also a very strict one. The uniform had to be perfect. We wore detachable white collars and when one of us wasn't wearing one, we could expect to hear 'The horizon is a bit dull today girls' from the nuns.

My memories are still vivid—the Welsh rarebit we made in domestic economy class, the gardener handing out handfuls of russet apples from the nuns' orchard and I thought they were the loveliest apples I had ever tasted.

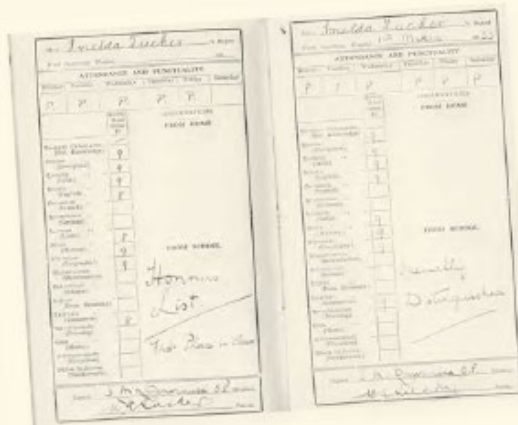
Then there were the evening dances in the school—girl-only affairs! But we were so excited about them. We had our hair curled and were all dressed up in our best to dance with one another for the evening with the nuns watching us. There was even an admission charge.

We had both camogie and hockey in those years and there was great rivalry between the two. I was secretary of the first Irish Debating Society set up in 1937. The nuns of my school days were memorable

women who, even then, encouraged an interactive exchange of ideas and an independent streak in their pupils.

There was Sr. John, Sr. Cecelia, Mother Benevenuta, Sr. Patrick, Sr. Anna and Sr. Anselm. Mother Ozanna was the Prioress and Sr. Brendan (who was French) and Mother Albertus (who was German) conducted their own 'cold war' between 1939 and 1944 while guns battled it out over Europe in what we called 'the emergency'.

In time I married and had my own three daughters, all of whom went to Muckross.





The Beginnings...

Maureen Lemass, 1930s–40s

Maureen Haughey

Maureen Lemass, her sisters Peggy and Sheila and their brother, Noel, grew up on Palmerston Road in Ranelagh. Maureen married Charlie Haughey, Peggy married Jack O'Brien, Sheila married John O'Connor and Noel married Eileen Delaney. After Noel's early death Eileen took his seat in the subsequent by-election and went on to become an MEP.

Their mother and sister had been to Muckross so that's why the school was chosen for the girls. They first attended a private school in Terenure and then after their first Communion moved to the junior school in Muckross, where the nuns told them they had learned nothing in Terenure.



Above: Maureen is first right in 2nd row, her sister Peggy is 2nd left on the back row. Ena Sweeney is also in the group.



Above: Two camogie players. Maureen identified one as Pauline Brosnan.

She remembers that when they moved to first year Sr Vincenzo was in charge and the class size was much smaller than they are now. Nancy Hely was her best friend then. Later Nancy emigrated to New Zealand but came home to Ireland after 40 years. "Nancy lived in Dundrum and Peggy and I joined Ballinteer Tennis Club with her, so we spent a lot of time in Dundrum staying with her. Then one day some boys we knew in Dundrum came up the avenue in Muckross and somebody told the nuns that the boys were meeting the Lemass girls after school. I forget what nun it was but I remember her saying 'I know your mother is very busy and she hasn't time to mind you' which nearly drove me mad as my mother was very hands on."

She also remembers Eilis O'Donoghue who was a year ahead "but we used to meet on the bicycles going home. Then when I went to UCD she was very kind and collected me and brought me into college and showed me where everything was."

Maureen recollected the impact of the war years. "My father evacuated us to Skerries in 1941. In fact we used to go there every summer, we always took a house for a month but the evacuation meant taking a house for three months and Sheila and Noel went to school in the convent in Skerries. Peggy and I (there was less than two years between us) travelled into Muckross each day by train. It was a bit mad when you think of it but we had great fun. When there was the bombing on the North Strand, we still had to travel through there on the train so the evacuation was a bit pointless. I remember in school that day, every time an airplane went overhead, the whole class was in a fit and the nuns were trying to keep us quiet. That was the year we did the Inter. Cert".



Above: Maureen's mother, Kathleen Lemass (née Hughes) who was also a past pupil with her daughter, Peggy.



The Beginnings...



Above: Noirn Cleary, Nancy Healy, Ned (who was probably a coach), Maureen Haughey.

Maureen recalled being a Child of Mary which gave rise to a misunderstanding with her own mother. "When I left school first I used to go to Mass every day and, being a Child of Mary, you had to read your office and wear a blue ribbon. My mother got the impression that I was going to be a nun!"

Then, when Maureen and Peggy were in college, there was the trip to Paris. It was the inaugural Aer Lingus flight and Maureen's father decided to take his two girls with him. Peggy was supposed to be sitting a science exam but the college very kindly offered to defer it for her.

"It was a marvellous day, some of the women brought us round the shops. There was a reception at the French embassy and the wine was flowing". But Maureen and Peggy were good pioneers and stuck to orange juice. A prominent priest in the Pioneer movement was also at the embassy reception and he took it

on himself to write to the nuns in Muckross and inform them that even though the champagne was flowing they must congratulate the Lemass girls because neither of them had broken their pledge. In fact Maureen says she kept her pledge until her own wedding day.

"College was great, there was great freedom and that's where I met Charlie. We all knocked around in a gang and it was third year before we were really going out". Asked did she fall madly in love with him? "Not really, it just kind of happened!"

"Even before we were married, Charlie was running for the Corporation and I was very involved. But as time went on I decided to stay in the background and to feed the people instead".

As the daughter of Sean Lemass, Maureen remembers canvassing at election time. Canvassing one year around her home area of Palmerston Road, they were invited into so many houses for cups of tea, that when they eventually arrived home, the whole place was locked up and everyone had gone to bed.

Maureen says her education in Muckross prepared her very well for the political life she became part of. She remembers the debating society as being especially useful. Imelda Tucker, who was in Maureen's class, was the secretary of the debating society at the time.



1932-1942

Muckross News

The Past Pupils' Union has been active in co-ordinating fund-raising to build the chapel; putting on plays; organising weekend retreats. 1932 is the year of the Eucharistic Congress. The Union organises retreats, lectures, instigates Whist and Bridge drives and much successful fund-raising.

In 1935 the Concert Hall is finished. Almost 100 past pupils attend *The Merchant of Venice*, with the cost of the production coming out of Union funds.



Above: The Eucharistic Congress In 1932—Benediction on O'Connell bridge.

Irish News

Irishwomen get the vote in 1935.

Eamon de Valera heads the new Irish government. He inserts into the Constitution Article 41.2: 'In particular the State recognises that by her life within the home woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties inside the home.'

The IRA warns it will not cease its activities until a republic is secured.

Dail Éireann drops the loyalty oath to the British monarchy, required by the Treaty.

Amelia Earhart lands in Ireland after flying the Atlantic in record time in 1932.

Biggest ever sweepstake opens on the Epsom Derby with £4 million in prize money.

Irish Senate approves a bill authorising tit-for-tat tariff reprisals against Britain. Economic War begins, and lasts until 1938.

The most active women's organisations are: the ICA, still the largest women's organisation in Ireland; the National Council of Women; the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers; and the Catholic Federation of Women. In later years the Muckross



The Beginnings...

PPU long-term representative on the CFW is Mrs Peggy Hussey, lobbying primarily for 'home-makers' to have a voice in government and to be represented as a vocational group. The Second World War begins. The effects of what the government terms 'The Emergency' are severely felt across the county. Private motoring is banned; gas rationing results in supplies being cut off for much of the day; fuel and food are rationed. In January 1941, James Joyce dies in Zurich.

World News

Hitler declares providence has chosen him for a great mission: he assumes the title 'Fuehrer'. In America, Franklin Roosevelt wins a presidential landslide victory.

The USSR restores relations with Japan.

King George V dies; the Prince of Wales becomes king, and the scandal of his affair with Mrs Simpson is the worst kept secret of the decade.

The *Queen Mary* liner is launched, and the *Hindenberg* crosses the Atlantic—on its last flight it explodes over New Jersey.

The loneliness of suburban housewives becomes a social problem; experts in the UK attribute the syndrome to them being home all day with not enough to do and too much time to think.

Benito Mussolini expels all Jews who entered Italy after 1918.

On September 3 1939, British Prime Minister Chamberlain declares: 'The country is now at war with Germany'.



Fashion

In the early 1930s focus is on the raised waist, emphasised by wider heavier shoulders, and necessitates a return to corset-wearing to pull in the waist – the new ones are two-way stretch.

The big international news story is Chanel's circé satin cinema suit, but Schiaparelli, using felt socks for hats, steals the limelight.

The look for 1934, according to *Vogue*, is an 'important profile with the windswept, fleet lines of speedboat or aeroplane'.

By 1936 daytime looks *a la* Mrs Simpson are severe and military, with square epauletted shoulders, plumed hats and low heels.

Colour floods the 1937–38 Paris Collections: cardinal red, coronation purple, emerald green, sulphur yellow.

The *Vogue* edition of November 1939 is the first issue produced under war conditions. Already clothes and copy are attuned to the War. Leading looks in muted colours are shirt dresses and simple suits.



The music of the era is swing played by big bands and danced to in hotels and onboard liners. With the outbreak of war, the popular songs are: *Hang Out Our Washing on the Siegfried Line* and *Over the Rainbow*

Muckross Past Pupils' Union lapses from 1939 to 1945, the years of The Emergency.

1942-1952

Muckross News



The chapel is built at a cost of £18,000 in 1945—the thinking behind construction now is that it would be considerably more expensive to build after the War. The past pupils presented the bell and a plaque with the inscription: *Pray for our past pupils who presented the Church bell MCMXLIV.* The Girls Club in Pearse House, Sandwith Street, Dublin is run by past pupils, with Rita Kenny in charge.

At this point the 'records' ceased to be written up, but the Union Presidents and Committee ensured the Union continued through constantly changing times, with help and co-operation from the community.

Irish News

Ireland is shell-shocked in the aftermath of the War.

A cinema in Co Monaghan introduces gender segregation: men sit on one side and women on the other of the cinema, although married couples may sit together.

World News

The UK government announces plans to build up to 4m houses over the next decade with "clean, cheerful rooms where meals can be taken with the maximum of convenience to the housewife".

The first instance of network censorship occurs in 1944 when sound is cut off on the Eddie Cantor and Nora Martin duet, 'We're Having a Baby, My Baby and Me'.

In 1942 the Pulitzer Prize for fiction goes to Martin Flavin's *Journey in the Dark*. *Casablanca* receives the Best Picture Oscar and the Nobel Prize for Literature goes to Danish born Johannes V. Jensen.

Fashion

The Liberation of Paris in August 1944 heralds the first Paris collection since 1940. The 'New Look' collections are given a mixed reception: the official reactions of the UK and the USA protest against such wastage of fabric and labour.



The Beginnings...

1952-1962 *Muckross News*



An Tostál Choir 1953.

Towards the end of the 1960s, longstanding members of the PPU hand over the reins to more recent members, with a few senior members remaining to offer advice. There is a recognition of being in a changing world: 'the future remains to be seen'. The Golden Jubilee of the PPU is celebrated in 1962, with the Community, guests from other Dominican Unions and nuns from other Dominican convents. Lunch is served in the concert hall.

Irish News

Bord Fáilte is established, hoping to increase tourism to Ireland. A national festival is launched, called An Tostál.

The Republic of Ireland is admitted to the United Nations; nine Irish soldiers are later killed on UN peacekeeping duties in the Congo.

T.K. Whitaker becomes Secretary of the Department of Finance; he is responsible for a report on economic development which opens Ireland to industry and investment under Eamon de Valera's

successor as Taoiseach, Sean Lemass. De Valera becomes President.

Aer Lingus inaugurates flights to the USA, and Ireland's first film studios are opened at Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Telefís Éireann begins transmission on 31 December, 1961.



Above: 4th Form Junlor School 1952.



World News

John Fitzgerald Kennedy becomes the first Irish-American, Catholic president of the USA.

Yuri Gagarin becomes the first man in space; Russia had also launched the first unmanned satellite, the 'Sputnik', goading America into the Space Race. John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth.

The Beatles begin their stellar career in Hamburg and Liverpool, threatening the supremacy of Elvis Presley.

The Berlin Wall is constructed. Adolf Eichmann is hanged in 1962 for war crimes; he was 'transport manager' of the Holocaust.



Above: Eithne de Valera, a Muckross girl, greeting Princess Grace of Monaco at Dublin airport, 1961.

Fashion

Yves St Laurent opens his couture house in Paris, and Truffaut's film *Jules et Jim* sets the fashion for granny specs, long scarves and boots. British fashion is set to explode under Mary Quant, and culotte skirts and miniskirts become the statement outfit. The Twist, fresh from France, heralds the start of the 1960s; popular songs are *Stranger on the Shore*, *I Remember You* and *Rock-a-Hula Baby*.



Above: Patricia Bowe, Nollaig Rowan, Pauline Murtagh, Maureen Shannon and Monica Hurson, Class of 1971.

1962-1972

Muckross News

The new hostel for student nuns from overseas is opened in 1963. In 1971 a dance is held in January and the Dramatic Society staged *Bless the Bride*.

Irish News

Gay Byrne's first 'Late, Late Show' hits Irish screens.

Comprehensive schools are established.

President Kennedy visits Ireland in June, 1963.

Triumphalist celebrations mark the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising, 1916; Nelson's Pillar is blown up in Dublin.

Donogh O'Malley, Minister of Education, announces universal free secondary education.



The Beginnings...



Above: PPU Reunion mid-60s.

Front Row: Nancy O'Neill, Peggie Hussey, Barbara Lightfoot, Eileen Monahan (President), Margot Doyle, Sheila Roe. Second Row: Aideen Connolly, Marie O'Reilly, Eileen White, Betty Ballantine, Lil McEnroe, Pat Maume, Jo Tierney. Back Row: Maire Dalton, Eileen McAllister, Jo Pakenham, Rita Kenny.

The Republic is becoming aware of the growing civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, which is encountering strong unionist opposition; in 1968, Prime Minister Terence O'Neill announces that 'Ulster is at a crossroads'. Two years later, Charles Haughey, Minister for Finance, is acquitted of importing arms illegally for use in the North. The GAA ban on 'foreign games' is dropped, so members can now play and attend rugby, cricket and soccer matches.

Dana wins the Eurovision song contest in 1969, and the contest is hosted by RTÉ the following year.

World News

1962 sees the Cuban Missile Crisis, which pits President Kennedy against Russia's Nikita Krushchev; in the end, the missiles are withdrawn. Kennedy is assassinated in November 1963.

Betty Friedan publishes *The Feminine Mystique*, heralding the development of the feminist movement.



Mao Tse-Tung starts a Cultural Revolution in China, and the USA starts sending troops to Vietnam.

Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy are assassinated in 1968. The first man lands on the moon in 1969.

The Beatles break up.

Decimal currency is established in Britain and Ireland.

1971 sees the Munich Olympic Games overshadowed by a terrorist attack, and President Nixon is threatened by the Watergate scandal.

1972-1982

Muckross News

The PPU affiliates to the Catholic Women's Federation (CWF).

Irish News

RTÉ shows Eurovision in colour when Ireland hosts the contest for the first time.

Ireland joins the European Community; the final vote was 1,041,880 for referendum and 211,888 against. The women's movement has been having a profound impact on women's perception of themselves, and EC legislation encourages equal opportunities.

Dutch industrialist Dr Herrema is freed after 36 days of captivity by members of the Provisional IRA.

Pope John Paul II is the first ever Pope to visit Ireland.

World News

Richard Nixon is the first US president to resign.

British police seek Lord 'Lucky' Lucan in connection with the murder of his children's nanny in London.

In 1976 the car of British Ambassador Christopher Ewart-Biggs is blown up; he dies, along with a female civil servant.

A Pam Am jet and a KLM jumbo jet collide on the ground at Tenerife airport, killing 500. The first test tube baby is born in England.



Above: This is how we celebrated then! This appeared in the Evening Herald newspaper forty years ago when we were celebrating our 60th.



The Beginnings...

1982-1992

Muckross News

To quote from Una Ní Dhubhghaill's essay for *Muckross Park, A Century of Memories*, the 1980s were 'the glittering, shoulder-padded, "greed is good" years, with Gordon Gekko making his millions on Wall Street and Margaret Thatcher making her mark on Downing Street'. In Muckross Park it was the decade of the musical, with the staging of *Calamity Jane* and *The King and I*. In 1982 Eithne Bolger took over as editor of the *Muckross Mail* from Valerie Cox, who edited it for 12 years.

There was the innovation of Mary (née MacMahon) Golden's watercolour art classes. Cabra, in the chair of the CDU under the presidency of Mrs Valerie Somers, host the annual retreat and fork supper. Hams were purchased and Peggy Kelly was appointed as chief carver! Committee members were reminded to bring along their sherry trifles.

Eithne Bolger formed a swimming club.

AGM 1984: The rules were amended to allow the President to serve for two years and to be eligible to serve for a third. The AGM was also told that an Altar Cloth had been presented to Mother Prioress in memory of Peggy Kelly (née Nelson) to be used for the first Sunday Masses.

Irish News

The Stardust disco tragedy, where dozens of young people lost their lives or were injured, is one of the worst disasters to hit Dublin.

The phone tapping scandal is made public.

The circumstances surrounding the death of 15-year-old Ann Lovett, who gave birth in a grotto in Co Longford, reverberates throughout Ireland and beyond.

More than 1,000 Ford workers lose their jobs when the plant closes in Cork.

Live Aid, brainchild of Dubliner Bob Geldof, raises £30m for the starving of Africa.

Irish voters reject proposals for divorce.



World News

Lady Diana Spencer marries Prince Charles and Princess Grace of Monaco dies of injuries sustained when her car goes over the side of a mountain road.

The world's worst nuclear disaster takes place at the Chernobyl power plant in Ukraine.



1990s and beyond...

The passing of 100 years has seen thousands of young women leave Muckross Park with the Dominican ethos of Veritas (Truth) planted firmly in their hearts, writes Tanya Walsh, head girl 2000-2001, in *Muckross Park—A Century of Memories*.

In 1993, Muckross joined the growing band of schools offering the Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES). The aims of the programme are to provide students with first-hand experience of setting up their own business; to encourage

initiative, creativity and entrepreneurial skills and to create a business culture. In 1999-2000 Tanya Walsh qualified for the national finals, while Laura Gormley came second in the regional finals.



Above: Sketch of Muckross House, Dermot MacGowan, 1992.

And so Muckross Park Past Pupils' Union is 100 years old. It is the oldest Past Pupils' Union in Ireland. The principal aim of the Union is to encourage and help past pupils to remain in contact with the school and with each other. This is achieved mainly through the solidarity, awareness and support of the Union; *Muckross Mail*, the yearly newsletter going since the 1970s; the monthly masses and the annual dinner. The other major activity is fundraising for the Union's Benevolent Fund which is used to help past pupils experiencing financial difficulties.

Information Sources

Dominican College Muckross Park, A Century of Memories (2001, ed. Helen Litton)

Muckross Mail, various dates

History of the Foundation of the Past Pupils' Union (1912-1982)

Chronicle of the 20th Century

Irish Independent, 100 Years in the News

The Encyclopaedia of Ireland

In Vogue, 60 Years of Celebrities & Fashion

Patricia O'Reilly archives



The Beginnings...

Women in the State 1912–2012

Helen Litton

At the time of the foundation of the PPU, women were valued as homemakers and mothers, and not expected to work outside the home whether they were married or not. Few professions were open to them apart from teaching and nursing, although progress was being made in medicine. Employment for uneducated women was limited to domestic service, shop work or factory work. This began to change under the influence of the two world wars, as women's labour became essential to maintain the war machine; however, post-war societies emphasised the need for population increase and the pre-eminence of motherhood. The 1911 census listed almost 9,000 women in religious orders, the largest group of professional women at the time; religious life often provided a refuge for those without other support systems.

The Irish Free State did not offer much consolation, despite the vow of the Easter Proclamation to guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities 'to all its citizens'. Eamon de Valera's 1937 Constitution, under which we still live, stated:

'41.2.1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

41.2.2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.'

This kind of thinking gave rise to the 'marriage bar', which meant that for several decades Irish teachers and civil servants, among others, were forced to abandon paid employment on their marriage. Muckross PPU members interviewing women for this book found that they were mostly speaking to women who had worked outside the home, because for so long women who married fell, so to speak, 'outside the record', changing their names and often losing touch with old comrades. They are here in spirit, we hope, having reared their children and watched them step into a wider and more welcoming world.

From the late 19th c., western women have fought for property rights, the right to vote, the right to jury service, the right to take out a loan without a man's signature, the right to birth control, the right to university education, the rights of single parents and non-marital children — the list goes on and on, and nothing was yielded up easily or without long and painful struggle. Most of these struggles are forgotten now, and their results taken for granted, but it is worth remembering that many of the pioneers were products of such schools as Muckross, and the type of education provided by such orders as the Dominicans.





The Story of Muckross Park



HAD you been scanning your morning paper on the 4th August, 1900, you might have read: "St. Mary's University College. "Important Development. "The Dominican Sisters have just purchased, as a permanent home for St. Mary's College, the beautiful and spacious park known as Muckross Park, Doneybrook, with its fine residences." Our story takes us into the history of Irish university education, and should have some interest for future undergraduates. Girls go in hundreds to our universities today, to take degrees in every faculty, but fifty years ago, things were very different. From 1879 onwards, the Royal University of Ireland admitted women to examination for degrees, but it offered no education to students. Thus it was, that Irish women laid siege to the citadel of learning in a thirty years' war, which ended in the admission of women to the newly established University College, on equal terms with men. In that war, there was a definite Dominican phase! Through St. Mary's University College, first at Eechea Street from 1884 to 1893, later at 28 Merrion Square, the Dominican Sisters offered higher education to women, with amazing success. "Its triumphs, says the *Freeman's Journal*

(4-8-1900), "have been too numerous to regard it from any other point of view than that of the most successful and indispensable of the educational institutions of the nation." Thus, the editorial sees the foundation of Muckross, as "an enterprise brimful of promise." On 11th July, the Merrion Square Community moved to their new home, the Convent of the Immaculate Conception, Doneybrook. In September, in addition to the university courses, Secondary and Junior schools were opened. The late Miss Eleanor Butler, M.A. (her books are well known to Geography students!) wrote years later of her arrival for the Michaelmas term 1900, at the House of Residence, on Mount Eden Road, Ard Eoin, which "smelt strongly of new timber and mortar," the tradesmen—as is the way with tradesmen—not being up to schedule. But to the enthusiastic women students of 1900, mere physical discomfort gave zest to the enterprise and the bedrooms with "their bare white-washed walls, bare floors and curtainless windows were the perfect setting for the earnest young student, determined to scorn delights and live laborious days. After tea, candles were divided round; Latin dictionaries, books

of Trigonometry, of Logic and I know not what, were exchanged. . . . Next day, lectures were at 9.30 a.m. I found my way through the fields, at the back of Muckross Park. Very fresh and pleasant the grounds appeared, a veritable platonian academy! Having paid my respects to Mother Pricress, Mother Imelda Harris, I joined the First Arts class in the room now the Chapel." (c. 1951 the *Tribune*.) Miss Butler tells us about the professional staff. "Mother Patrick Sheil took French, Mother Gonzales Stone, English; Mother Joseph Keighros, Latin and Mother Albertus Hochburger, German." On the lay staff were Professor Mary Hayden, M.A., Professor Sempfe, Professor Arthur Cleary, who were all to hold chairs in U.C.D. and Professor P. J. Merriman and Professor Nary Ryan, future President and French Professor, respectively, at U.C.C. Lectures at St. Mary's ended at 1 or 2 p.m. After lunch, groups of students went to the National Library to study. "Tea was at 7, after which some good public meeting at the University College might draw us to town again. . . . We were able to let ourselves in, for we had the honour of locking up Ard Eoin for the night. "Strange," said a friend to Miss Butler, "that the nuns do not keep a watch on these young girls (the Lady Dean was Miss Johnston) but leave them free to come and go as they please." Remember, it was still the Victorians, but the age of Dominic too, and he always trusted people to do what they ought to do, to act on principle! What intellectual giants these young women were! The long list of academic successes—scholarships, exhibitions, fellowships—prove the quality of their work: it was even whispered that they sometimes surpassed the men students! The pioneering work of the Dominican Sisters, in the field of university education for women, came to an end in 1909 when U.C.D. opened its doors to women, on equal terms with men; this solution had been advocated by Professor Mary Hayden in her brilliant defence of women's rights to higher education, speaking as representative of St. Mary's, before the Royal Com-



MUCKROSS 1900
Bought from the family of Joseph Plunkett's mother)



The Beginnings...

mission in 1902. So ended a chapter in the Muckross story, but not its contact with the university. The House of Residence opened in 1929, for sons attending U.C.D., has drawn students not only from Ireland but from England and America; this year, we had the pleasure of welcoming a student-sister all the way from Ceylon.

Meanwhile, the Secondary School had not been idle. Judging by the Press notice for 2nd September, 1901, it had been extremely active, for the editorial ranks it among the six leading schools of that year. "Twenty candidates were presented (for public examinations) and they won eight Exhibitions, one Gold Medal, six composition prizes, two book prizes and many honours. These included a first place in Mathematics and French and third place in Celtic." Devoting five and a half columns to "exhaustive analysis" of the Intermediate results plus one and a half columns of editorial comment, the *Press*'s *Journal* says that the Catholic schools by taking the lead for a second year have given the lie to Professor Mahaffy's remark that "paupers don't need universities," which reminds us that Dublin in 1901 was an outpost of a mighty empire.

The Irish national spirit was in danger of death from strangulation, at the hands of an alien culture. Yet, there was another side to the picture; Ireland was fighting for her life. We see this in Miss Agnes O'Farrelly's spirited paper "The Nests of Humbug" (later published by the Gaelic League) read to the Muckross "Literary Academy" in 1900, in which she underlines the danger of "cosmopolitanism." We find it in the Press report of another meeting of the Academy in 1903, at which a paper "An Cosabh Rua" read by Miss O'Keenney is followed by a discussion in Irish; one of the speakers is a young man called P. H. Pearse. The Chairman, Professor Douglas Hyde (President of the Gaelic League) in summing up "congratulated the nuns and students on having the courage to be boldly and frankly Irish." It is a touching scene: that little group of enthusiasts gathered in Muckross on a February evening, men and women pledged to the cause of Dark Rosaleen, and among them, Pearse, the idealist, poet, schoolmaster, patriot, who was to give his life for her. Muckross tries to be faithful to the spirit of that little group by unremitting efforts in the cause of the language.

There have been many material changes in Muckross since 1900. In 1923 an extension to the original house was built; in 1935, came a new wing comprising science rooms, hostel rooms, a junior school and a college theatre. From its first production in 1901, "The Tempest," Muckross has put on many good performances whether of Shakespeare or light operas such as Gilbert and Sullivan; the first Gaelic performance in

Muckross

Park

Chapel

1958



the new hall was "Polvelecte" in the beautiful translation of Ngr. F. de Bran. The Past Pupils' Union sponsors a flourishing Musical and Dramatic society. In this pleasant hall, you may find us attending a film, a lecture, a Cill, or it may be the weekly meeting of An Camara Gaelach, or a debate. You may even share the privilege of watching our six year olds perform their Nativity Play.

In 1949, the acquisition of ten acres, on our southern boundary, gave us excellent playing fields. There is a delightful story told of the first hockey match ever played by Muckross. The team were warned beforehand that each girl must, where all, keep her place. The match begins. The Muckross girls do not budge from their places—they have their orders—so Slon Hill sweeps on to a 14 nil victory! Things were different after that; very soon Muckross built itself a hockey reputation with a series of Leinster Cups, while members of the senior club found their way (as they still do) to inter-

national honours. Many years have passed, since the Camogie club entered the Muckross scene, but it has gone from strength to strength and today its members can wield a camán with the best! Our youngest, the Netball club, still in its infancy, promises to be a fine sturdy child!

Muckross had its red-letter day on 25th May, 1945, when the new chapel (designed by a past pupil, Miss Eleanor Butler, J.Arch., M.R.I.A.), was blessed. It was not given to the late beloved Sister M. Bonaventure to see here on earth the glorious day for which she laboured so devotedly.

With its lovely lines and tasteful appointments, the chapel is a perfect setting for liturgical worship. Here, we have the centre which gives life and meaning to everything else that we do, for though Muckross is young and might be called a child of the twentieth century, yet, it belongs to a family with an old, old tradition, in which prayer and the apostolate are inseparable elements.

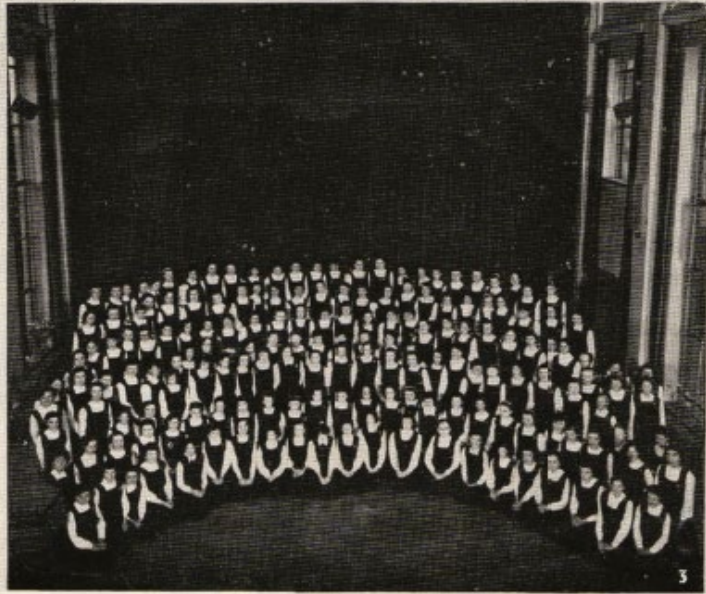


MUCKROSS PARK, 1958

Muckross pupils line the avenue to bid farewell to the Master General.



SENIOR SCHOOL, MUCKROSS PARK, 1957



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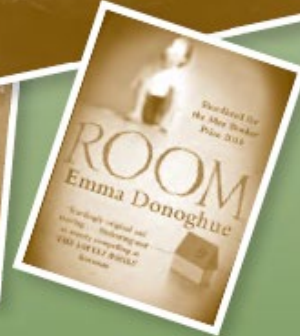
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Chapter Two

Muckross and the Arts





MUCKROSS AND THE ARTS

Brenda Moore-McCann

This section of the Muckross Centenary is concerned with the role that past pupils have played in the arts, in literature, the visual arts, dance, theatre, film and architecture. It includes as many people as possible but regrettably, is far from comprehensive and merely a snapshot. The arts are a sector of society in Ireland that reflect its social, economic, political and aesthetic mores which at times have been bleak, but today form a vital and vibrant part of Irish culture both at home and abroad.

Artists

The visual arts had a small but consistent place in Irish culture up to the mid-twentieth century. Through the impact of the Rosc Exhibitions (1967-88), greater ease of travel, a more open society and increased structures with Government support, the visual arts have flourished both locally and on the international scene. Female artists played an important historical role in the education, practice and organisation of the arts.

The majority of the artists included in this section came of age during the decades of the 1960s-1980s, a period of great change in Ireland and within the arts. This was reflected not only in a dramatic and historic movement away from traditional values and traditions inscribed largely by a dominant Catholic Church, but also by a changing status for women. This was the period of the convulsive Abortion Referendum (1983) followed by two divisive Divorce Referenda (1986 & 1995). In spite of these changes however, women's visibility within the visual arts was relatively low until the late 1980s. This was in marked contrast to an earlier period in the 1940-60s when women like Mainie Jellett, Evie Hone, Norah McGuinness and Nano Reid played a leading role not only as practitioners but also organisers of the visual arts.

Apart from throwing off the shackles of a deeply conservative and patriarchal society, another kind of shift was taking place within the visual arts not only in Ireland, but all over the world. The certainties and exclusivity of Modernism (1890s-1960s) were gradually replaced by post-Modernism (1960s-present) that ushered in a more anxious, yet inclusive and open age. This affected in particular the position of women artists till then largely excluded by Modernism.

The Women's Movement of the 1970s in particular brought new perceptions of women's experience to the surface to displace those of a predominantly patriarchal



society. This was reflected in the arts by the gradual eclipse of Modernist painting with its emphasis on the creative genius of the (male) artist in favour of subjects that involved the social, cultural and political and the experience of ordinary people. As a result there was an expansion of forms of art, practices, and the media in which it could be made that included sculpture, video, photography, installation and performance. Yet within this expanded field of art, new forms and media co-existed alongside the more traditional, a pattern also seen among artists from Muckross.

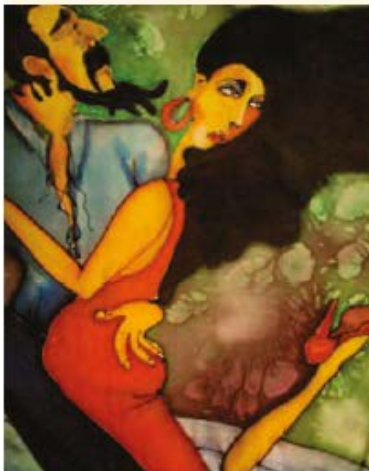


Jakki Moore

Class of 1976

American born, Jakki Moore has been an artist and traveller from an early age. One of the pupils inspired by Mrs. O'Connor's art classes, Jakki intended to study the History of European Painting and Archaeology at University College Dublin before unexpected events altered her course in life. She became Miss Ireland at the age of seventeen. This led to an international modelling career under the name Riley that brought her all over the world. However, a degree in social anthropology taken at night in the University of London while modelling during the day, led to travelling for an altogether different purpose.

Spending time with the Huichole in Mexico and Native American peoples, led to a decision to use art as a bridge to connect people. She acted as Director at the Esalen Institute in California for six years up to the year 2000. This alternative educational institution was frequented from the 1960s by such diverse people as the Beat poets, the Beatles, Joan Baez, Gestalt psychologists and Aldous Huxley among others. Jakki lives in Norway, has a studio in Bulgaria, exhibits her art, illustrates children's books and continues to travel the world as part of her husband's business and creativity company. She has exhibited her work in most recently in Dublin's Sol Gallery with another artist and ex-Miss Ireland, Nuala Holloway, who taught at Muckross, in December 2011.



www.jakkiart.com.



Muckross and the Arts

Gwen O'Dowd

Class of 1975

Gwen O'Dowd is one of Ireland's leading contemporary painters. From schooldays at Muckross she had wanted to be an artist. Her work is concerned with landscape, a dominant subject of Irish art. However, her art is far from removed from the traditional romantic, poetic view of nature. Her treatment of dark caves in the *Uaimh* series or seascapes on the Irish coastline all share the sense of an artist who wishes to show the raw beauty, power and mystery of nature in almost microscopic detail. Hovering between figuration and abstraction and beautiful in terms of colour and technique, her paintings are far from decorative. Gwen's art seduces the viewer to look as long and hard as the artist has obviously done at

essential elements of the natural environment. We see its geological strata and hollows as well as thunderous pounding seas painted with a power that is almost audible. The artist presents land and seascapes at so close a range and on such a scale that we feel completely immersed in them which engenders a renewed sense of wonder about the natural world. She works slowly building layer upon layer of paint that records physically the changing mood of the ocean or the way various strata are built over time in a landscape. Working on up to six paintings simultaneously, the artist's work is distinguished primarily by her ability to produce vibrant textured surfaces using knives, rags and the addition and



Above: Gwen O'Dowd in her Dublin studio, 2011.



scraping away of pigment, that are almost sculptural. These are works that also produce different kinds of experience when viewed from afar or close up.

Gwen qualified in 1980 with a B.A. in painting from NCAD and has been exhibiting in Ireland and abroad since the early 1980s. She was elected a member of Aosdána in 1991. Her work is held in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Office of Public Works, Allied Irish Bank and the European Court of Justice, Strasbourg.

www.gwenodowd.com.



Mary Ruth Walsh

Class of 1974

Mary Ruth Walsh had a career as a nurse before moving into the arts in the early 2000s. Since then she quickly established herself as one of a significant younger generation of contemporary artists. Using lens based images, photographs, drawings, and video, she uses readymade objects and discarded packing material to explore ideas about our consumer society, the experience of art and architectural space. For Walsh it is not just the art object that is important but the way it is presented within the architectural space of the gallery to affect viewer response. This concern had already been addressed by Brian O'Doherty in his seminal *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (1976). Walsh however explores such ideas in new inventive ways using the detritus of consumer packing to ask what is the value of the object it protects? The persistent use of white and Walsh's technique

render sculptures ambiguous in relation to scale and the nature of the material that requires a double take on what one is seeing. Walsh looks to various sources for the development of ideas. Jonathan Swift for example, underpinned *A Modest Proposal* (2000) a permanent public work on the facade of the



National Archives Office in Dublin 8, a stone's throw from St. Patrick's Cathedral where Swift had been Dean. The Modernist architect and designer, Eileen Grey, is the subject of a body of work from 2009–2011, *Strangely Familiar Shadows of Gray*. The constant interrogation of consumer society and the property bubble that led to the collapse of the Irish economy is ironically addressed in a performance/installation of an 'auction' of houses in 2011 beside St. Patrick's Cathedral, complete with a real auctioneer, agent and lawyer.

Walsh graduated with a B.A. from NCAD in 2001 and an M.A. from Goldsmiths College, London in 2004. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions and has had a number of solo exhibitions. She has received numerous awards and has had studio residencies in Basekamp, Philadelphia and at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. www.maryruthwalsh.com.



Above: Mary Ruth Walsh in her studio. (Photograph: Brenda Moore-McCann).



Muckross and the Arts

Pam O'Connell (née Dain)

Class of 1965



Pam graduated from the Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology in 1996 following a primary degree in Social Science in University College Dublin. Working and exhibiting for ten years in Ireland and internationally, she then graduated with a Masters in Fine Art in the Burren College of Art in 2008. She also became an animator and Arts Facilitator. Her work has been exhibited in group and solo exhibitions since the 1990s and can be found in many private and public collections.

"People are the starting point for my paintings" she says. "I originally studied Social Science and... as an artist the themes of relationships and dynamics continue to fascinate me. My current practice is deeply influenced by Jungian psychology... particularly his concept of Shadow, the repressed and hidden parts of the human psyche."

www.pamoconnell.net



Abigail O'Brien

Class of 1975



Abigail O'Brien, like many at Muckross, was first drawn to a career in art by the art teacher Mrs O'Connor. Since then she has achieved a reputation as one of Ireland's leading contemporary artists internationally. Working in a variety of media, photography, sculpture, video, text and installation, her art explores aspects of contemporary experience in a variety of ways. Although initially fearful of the mechanical, she was drawn to photography because of its immediacy. Indeed it was photography that first



brought her Irish and international attention with the installation *The Seven Sacraments* (1995-2003) which explores the lives of women at a number of levels. Inspired by the two series of famous paintings of the same name by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), as well as the seventeenth century Spanish still life painter Sanchez Cotán, O'Brien took a traditional genre in art history and transformed it into a contemporary, secular 'history painting'. Seven highly finished large photographs hang behind a long table covered with a white embroidered cloth. introduced elements that challenged and engaged. The title *Last Supper* (1995) immediately recalls Leonardo da Vinci's famous work yet in O'Brien's work women replace men, and, ambiguously given the title, are shown preparing for a wedding. The empty space of the central photograph overlooking a single chair precipitates questions that remain open to each viewer's interpretation.

Abigail's wit, ingenuity and highly polished work was again displayed in a publically commissioned series of photographs that celebrated eighty years of The Oatfield Sweet Factory in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. *Oatfield-Temperance* (2009-2010), part of the series *The Natural Virtues*, documented the materials, machinery and work of people involved in making sweets. There is however, as always, another layer of interpretation that moves beyond documentation of the process to evoke a fairyland of milk and honey and the alchemy of art through the metaphor of sweet making. Through Abigail's lens, layers of cooling toffee metamorphose into folds of silk, and black liquorice into taffeta. Yet in spite of the sensuous appeal through the play of colour, light and texture, the artist indirectly cautions against over indulgence through her choice of title for the whole series and such works as *Saponaceous* and *Adipose*.

The artist's experience of a serious illness inspired *Sic Juro (I Swear)* at a group show at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 2011 as part of the Tercentenary of the School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin. Collaborating with scientists in Trinity, she made a new Hippocratic Oath for contemporary times from a hospital blanket upon which she embroidered the text derived from a contemporary song.

Abigail qualified with a B.A. (1995) and a M.A. in painting from NCAD (1998). She was elected a member of the RHA in 2010 and her work is held in many private & public collections in Ireland, London, Frankfurt, Rotterdam and Vienna. www.abigailobrien.com.



Aileen MacKeogh

Class of 1976 (died 2005)



Aileen MacKeogh was one of a group of important women artists who emerged during the 1980s in Ireland. Following initial studies in the National College of Art & Design (NCAD), she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship (1979) going on to complete a Masters in Fine Art in the United States. She returned to Ireland in 1982 as a lecturer in sculpture at NCAD, developing her career as an artist at the same time. During the 1980s and 1990s she became an important teacher and artist exhibiting in numerous group and solo shows in Ireland and abroad and her work appearing in both private and public collections.

The emergence of this generation of women artists which included Aileen, Alice Maher, Dorothy Cross, Kathy Prendergast, Gwen O'Dowd, and Abigail O'Brien, mirrored the dominant role women had played in art of the early 20th century. There were of course huge differences in the nature of their contribution which related to the enormous socio-political and cultural changes that had taken place in Ireland. One of these was Aileen's move, like many of her generation, from painting to sculpture and newer forms and materials for making art. She also made a major contribution to art education in her role as head from 1997 of the Dun Laoghaire School of Creative Arts and the National Film School.

In the 1980s Aileen adopted an unconventional approach to sculpture making miniature



Above: The Space Inside



Above: The Flower Press

three-dimensional sections of landscape with wood, bronze, paper, and wire. Their modest scale and often delicate materials suggested an unromantic view of nature that moved far beyond the romanticism of traditional Irish landscape painting. These works seemed to point instead to more ecological concerns and the sense of the wood as a magical space. This was an indirect, questioning approach far removed from the loud vitriol of international feminist artists in the 1970s. Her work in contrast unveiled a multiplicity of meanings left open to each individual viewer.

The accidental death of the artist's son in 1987 led to a profound personal and artistic crisis. After a couple of years however, it led to a solo exhibition that explored loss and memory based on the idea of a house at the Project in 1991. This was followed by a group exhibition in

1993 in Belfast where she showed *Flower Press* in which a flower was compressed between glass plates and followed over a period of time. The artist's statement that accompanied this work showed her continuing exploration of fundamental issues about the uncertainty and random nature of events in life. Her untimely death makes one wonder what other areas she might have explored. We are left however with a rich body of work that presciently addressed issues of increasing relevance to Irish society. The Aileen MacKeogh Award for achievement in film-making was awarded by President Michael D. Higgins to the fifth class, Ballyadams National School, Co. Laois, at the Ffs Film Festival in November 2011.

In March 2012 Aileen's husband, Tom Inglis, paid a great tribute to his late wife with the publication of 'Making Love', a memoir of their lives together.



Writers

Literature is acknowledged historically as the most prominent form of art in Ireland. Nobel Laureates abounded in the 20th century (Yeats, Shaw, Joyce, Beckett). Irish writing continues to make its presence felt on the international stage in a range of genres such as the short story, the novel, historical fiction and history, to all of which Muckross past pupils have made contributions.



Patricia O'Reilly (née Dain)

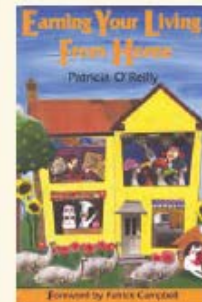
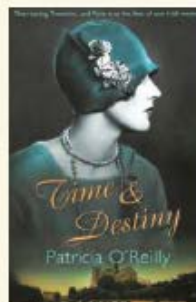
Class of 1959

Patricia began her writing career in the 1970s with the publication of a number of stories before re-inventing herself as a freelance journalist writing for such Irish newspapers as the *Irish Times* and *Independent Group*, *Irish Daily Mail*, and the magazines *Image* and *Gloss*, as well as international publications. Her interest in writing began in Muckross primarily with the encouragement of Sisters Innocentia (later Marie) and Patrick. Her work as a

broadcaster for Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) Radio 1, Lyric FM and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) includes documentaries, plays, short stories and pieces for *Sunday Miscellany*, RTÉ Radio 1.

Patricia's is widely known as an author of novels *A Type of Beauty, the Story of Kathleen Newton (1854-1882)*; *Time & Destiny, the story of Irish designer Eileen Gray*; *Felicity's Wedding* and *Once Upon a Summer*, as well as non-fiction books like *Writing for Success*; *Working Mothers*; *Earning Your Living from Home*; *Writing for the Market* and *Dying with Love*. Her short stories have been published in a variety of magazines and anthologies.

Besides her own writing, Patricia convenes writing workshops for the Adult Education Programme at University College Dublin (UCD) and also runs an On-Line Advisory Tutoring and Editing Services for emerging and professional writers. www.patriciaoreilly.net. [blog: lovewriting.patriciaoreilly.net](http://blog:lovewriting.patriciaoreilly.net).



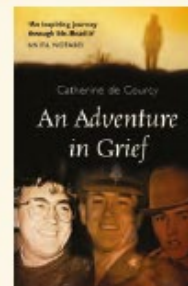
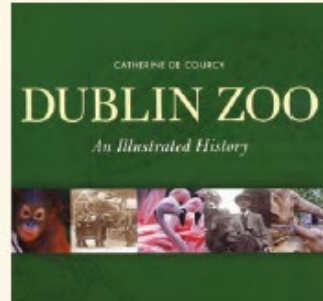


Catherine de Courcy

Class of 1975

Catherine is a much published author with a special expertise on the history of zoos with such critically acclaimed books as *Dublin Zoo: An Illustrated History*, *Zoos of Australia*, and *Evolution of a zoo: a history of*

Melbourne Zoo 1857-1900. Qualified with a B.A. and Diploma in Library and Informational Studies from University College Dublin and a M.A. from University of Melbourne, she is also a travel writer writing *Desert Tracks* and *River Tracks* in collaboration with her husband, John Johnson. Following John's tragic death in 2000, she moved back to Ireland from Melbourne and wrote *An Adventure in Grief* (2009). In 2010 she gave an illustrated lecture on the history of Dublin Zoo to the Royal Dublin Society (RDS). She has also contributed an article "Extracurricular Activity in Muckross Park 1958-1985" to this book. She is currently completing a novel set in 13th century France and returns to Dublin Zoo once again with a book about elephants due for publication in 2013. www.catherinedecourcy.com.

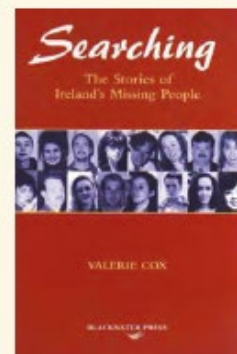


Valerie Cox (née Fitzpatrick)

Class of 1969

Valerie, encouraged by Sr. Bertanda in particular, has been writing since her time in Muckross including acting as former editor of the *Muckross Mail*. She has worked as a journalist and broadcaster for RTÉ, in particular for the immensely popular "Today with Pat Kenny" on

RTÉ Radio 1. On completion of a series on Ireland's Missing People for RTÉ radio, she was commissioned to write a book on the subject in 2003. She was also co-author of *The Facilitators*, the story of the divisive 1983 abortion referendum. Valerie has also had a series of street theatre pieces performed on the streets of Dublin, the 'Late Late Show' on RTÉ television and on the streets of Strasbourg under the aegis of the Council of Europe.





Muckross and the Arts



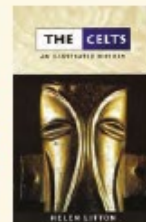
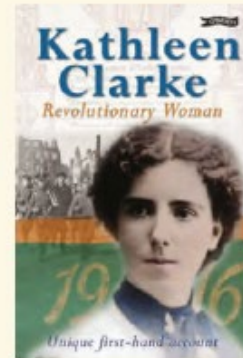
Helen Litton (née O'Sullivan)

Class of 1965

Helen is a writer of non-fiction books. She claims no particular literary influence while at Muckross except perhaps Sr. Bertranda's insistence on "clarity of expression and a lack of waffle". She was awarded a B.A in Archaeology and Early Irish History by University College

Dublin, followed by an M.A. in 1970. In 1978 she commenced a freelance career in the publishing industry, first as an editor and proof-reader before becoming an indexer. In 1990 she edited and published *Revolutionary Woman*, a memoir of her great-aunt, Kathleen Daly Clarke. This was followed in 1994 by *The Irish*

Famine, the first of six short illustrated Irish history books. She is currently working on a biography of her great-uncle Edward Daly, who was executed in 1916, as part of a series for the centenary of the Easter Rising.

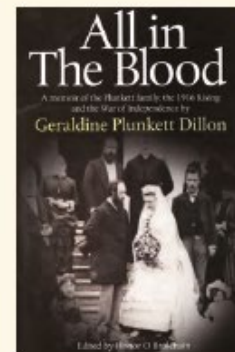


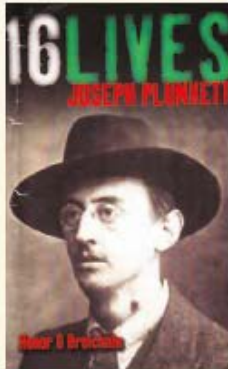
Honor O Brolchain

Class of 1966

Honor, unlike other past pupils had the distinction of being brought up and educated in Muckross Park, a house built by her two great-great-grandfathers. Her first career on leaving Muckross was as a music teacher and examiner in the College of Music, Dublin

Institute of Technology, the Royal Irish Academy, and Alexandra College. She also performed with several groups specialising on Early Music including the Consort of St. Sepulchre, the Consort of Viols, Good Company and Pandora.





On the death of her grandmother Geraldine Plunkett Dillon, sister of Joseph Plunkett, executed for his role in the rebellion of 1916, she became more involved in her family's colourful history. Inheriting her grandmother's papers, she published *All in the Blood* (2006), an account of her grandmother's life from 1820 to 1922. A biography of her granduncle, Joseph Plunkett, the youngest of the 1916 leaders, was published in 2012 as part of the 16 Lives series, biographies of all those executed in 1916. She is a leading member of the Relatives of the 1916 Leaders' Group seeking to have four houses of the National Monument (14-17 Moore St.) preserved as a commemorative area for 1916. Honor continues to research, give talks, and conduct walks relating to the Plunkett family including their building enterprises in 19th century Rathmines, Donnybrook and Ballsbridge.



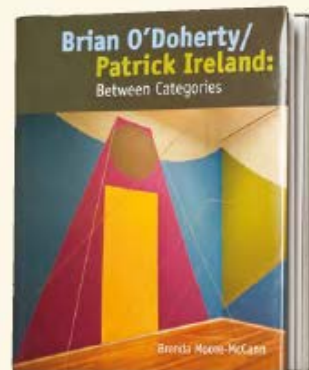
Brenda Moore-McCann

Class of 1964

Brenda qualified as a medical doctor in 1970 at University College Dublin. She worked for twenty years in a variety of paediatric posts including paediatric research in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, while rearing a family. Before retiring from medicine in 1990 she was medical director of Family Planning Services, Dublin from 1985 to 1990. She was awarded an honours B.A. (History of Art & Classical Civilisation) by the University of Dublin,

Trinity College (1996) before completing a Ph.D. in the History of Art in 2002. Her book *Brian*

O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland: Between Categories was published in 2009. It is the critically acclaimed first monograph on this international artist, critic, filmmaker, novelist and writer. She is currently an adjunct lecturer in the School of Medicine at Trinity College Dublin where she teaches a humanities module to medical students. She is also an occasional lecturer in art at University College Dublin and publishes criticism and writes essays for exhibition catalogues. Commissioned by the Royal Irish Academy (R.I.A.) for Volume V of Irish Art and Architecture, which presents new scholarship from the year 400 to the present, her two essays will be published by the R. I.A. & Yale University Press in 2014. She is currently researching material for a book on the Rosc Exhibitions (1967-1988). www.seeartmatters.com.





Muckross and the Arts

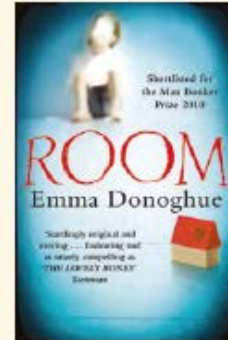


Emma Donoghue

Class of 1986

Emma is an award-winning novelist, playwright and literary historian. She was the last of eight children born into a literary family. Her father is Denis Donoghue, the literary critic and Henry James Professor at New York University. Following a B.A. in English and French at University College

Dublin in 1990, she was awarded a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in 1997. In 1998 she settled in London, Ontario with her family. *Room* (2010), a story narrated by five year old Jack who lives in a single room with his mother and has never been outside, was an international bestseller and winner of numerous awards including the Hughes & Hughes Irish Novel of the Year, W.H. Smith Paperback of the Year and the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. Her short stories have been published widely in *Granta*, *The New Statesman* and over thirty journals and anthologies. They have also been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and 4, RTÉ and CBC. *Slammerkin* (2000), a work of historical fiction, won the Ferro-Grunley Award for Lesbian Fiction. Emma also writes drama for stage and radio and has ventured into film with *Pluck* (2001) and *Immaculate Conceptions: Inside a Lesbian Baby Boom* (2007). Her novels have been translated in more than forty languages. She has taught creative writing courses, been writer-in-residence at the Universities of Western Ontario and New York and acted as a literary judge for the Irish Times Literary Prizes. www.emmadonoghue.com.

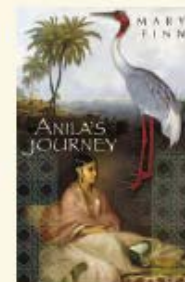


Mary Finn

Class of 1968

Before leaving Muckross, Mary won a literary award and a trip to Canada. On leaving school she worked as a magazine journalist for RTÉ before writing her first novel *Anila's Journey* (2008) which was winner of the Parents Choice Gold Award as well as the Éilís Dillon Award. Inspired by the 18th century painting at the National Gallery of Ireland

Portrait of an Indian Lady by Thomas Hickey, it tells the story of an orphaned Indian girl. Painting also inspired her most recent book for children, *Belladonna* (2011). Her admiration for the painter George Stubbs' work led to this historical novel about a fifteen year old boy set in the English countryside.





Film and Theatre

Film and theatre in Ireland have intersected during their historical development during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first dedicated cinema in Ireland was the Volta in Mary Street, Dublin (1909) managed for a short while by James Joyce. Since then Irish cinema consisted of Irish drama (*Juno and the Paycock*, *The Dead*) or films using Ireland as background (*Ryan's Daughter*) by foreign film-makers. Indigenous films from the first decades of the 20th century, apart from *Irish Destiny*, were destroyed in the Easter Rising. In the 1940s and 50s the National Film Institute was formed, and Gael Linn produced important documentaries such as *Mise Éire*. The establishment of a national television service in 1961 and the Irish Film Board twenty years later, encouraged the growth of an indigenous industry engaging with social, economic and political issues. Since then Irish cinema has developed internationally encouraged by Government support but especially during 1993-97 with the appointment of the first Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the current President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.

Irish theatre in the 20th century relied on exiled playwrights such as G.B. Shaw, Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett. By the middle of the century following the establishment of the Abbey Theatre (1899) and the Gate Theatre (1928), indigenous playwrights began to establish themselves (Thomas Kilroy, Tom Murphy, Hugh Leonard, Frank McGuinness and John B. Keane). Independent companies (Focus, Project, Red Kettle, Field Day, Druid) began to challenge the dominance of the Abbey in the 1970s and 80s. More recently in the 1990s and 2000s new companies and playwrights such as Marina Carr and Conor McPherson have achieved national and international recognition.



Ger Ryan

Class of 1975

Ger is a film and television actress. She has also worked extensively in theatre. She was twice nominated for a Royal Television Society Award for *Family* and *Amongst Women*. She was nominated three times by the Irish Film and Television Awards (IFTA) for *Amongst Women*, *Intermission*, *Happy Ever Afters*, *Dorothy Mills* and *The Return*. She is the recipient of a Belfast Telegraph EMA Award for *A Place with the Pigs* and *Song of the Yellow Bittern*. In 2007 she received an IFTA for her work in a two-part documentary,

Stardust, by RTÉ. In the award-winning BBC drama series, *The Street*, she played Margie McEvoy. She also played the role of Meave Harte in RTÉ's popular drama, *Raw*.



Catherine Owens

Class of 1976

Cathy is an artist working mainly in installation as well as drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, sound, film and video. She grew up in a household full of artwork: "Every inch of every wall was covered in art". She was greatly encouraged to draw by her father who was in advertising, while her mother "would make sure we were all immersed in the arts". She started out playing the guitar with an all-girl band before abandoning music for the visual arts. While attending art school in Belfast she was commissioned by U2 to paint some murals which marked the beginning of a fruitful friendship and working relationship. She moved to New York where she lives and works although she has a house in Ireland, to which she returns frequently. She is best known as artistic director for U2's last five world tours and in particular as Co-Director of the experimental film U2 3D that documents U2's critically acclaimed "Vertigo" tour in South America in 2006. This is the first live action feature length 3D digital film made that broke technological boundaries in film-making internationally. In 2009 she directed the video content for U2's Grammy and Brits performances as well as the "360 Degree" tour that featured Desmond Tutu, Sinead O'Connor, Shirin Neshat and Maya Angelou. She went to India in 2010 to make a 3D documentary about Kumbh Mela, the world's largest spiritual gathering that takes place once every twelve years. She is currently working on a 3D feature film based on the Oscar Wilde fairytale, "The Selfish Giant". In an interview in 2011 she remarked: "It's so important for people to understand that real creativity and real joy comes out of being...crazy. It doesn't come out of being strategically perfect".





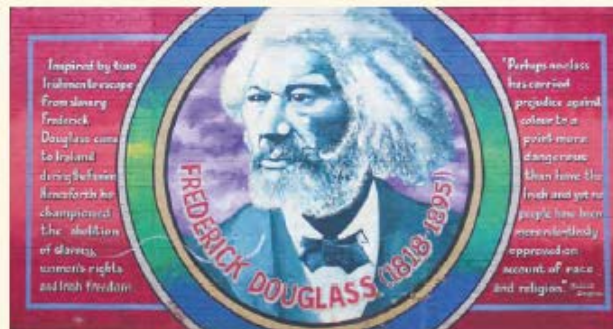
Catherine Lyons

Class of 1981

Catherine is the owner of Camel Productions, Dublin, which she co-founded with John Doherty. Camel is a film company that specialises in high quality documentaries in arts and culture. Prior to this however, Catherine gained life experience as a "chambermaid in Freiburg...picking jojoba beans in the Negev Desert...counting cars on Lambeth Bridge." Following a degree in Languages and Marketing at Dublin City University she became Business Manager with

the publishers Middle East International Ltd for a year in London. This pro-Palestinian paper had been set up in the 1970s to counteract the pro-Israeli bias of English-speaking media. Before returning to Dublin in 1993 she began, in her spare time, to make short films (inspired by the first Gulf War) and art at an experimental film workshop. In 1996 she received a degree in film-making at the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. Her company has won a number of awards. It won first prize for the Best Arts Documentary at the Celtic Film and Television Festival in 2004 and Best Documentary at the Fantasy Worldwide International Film Festival in Toronto in 2005 for *Harry Clarke: Darkness into Light*. In 2010 its second dance film, *Admit One*, was selected by the RTÉ/Arts Council for the *Dance on the Box* season. The

film documentary on Frederick Douglass and his relationship to Ireland, *Frederick Douglass and the White Negro* was also shown on BBC1 and TG4 with the support of the Irish Film Board. Finally Camel Productions also won the award for Best Film on black experience at the Berlin Black International Cinema in 2010.



The company also distributes its own work internationally as well as that of other film-makers. It also makes short films for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Not for Profit sector. Catherine states: "Film-making is an interesting, if somewhat precarious choice of career...I am glad to say that I have never been bored. There is always something to be done." She goes on to point out that in spite of the current recession film-makers have seen other recessions, are a resilient group and that things are a lot better now than in the recession of the 1980s when the Film Board had been disbanded, TG4 did not exist and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland did not support television productions.

Camel Productions' documentaries on Frederick Douglass and Harry Clarke are available at local outlets and online at www.camelproductions.net.



Muckross and the Arts

Architecture

Architecture in 20th century Ireland moved from inherited colonial styles such as the Georgian (Merrion Square) and Victorian (Rathmines) in favour of minimal, sleek, international modernism (Busárus) and the eclecticism of postmodernism with new materials, light and space. In recent decades there was also a move from the building of single dwellings to the multiplicity of apartment blocks of the so-called 'boom' period during the 1990s and early 2000s. This period also saw a growth in the number of female architects and firms with international clients.

Olivia Rowan

Class of 1979

It was 1985 and I had just finished my architectural degree course in UCD, (after 13 years in Muckross), and had decided to go to New York to spend the summer, since job prospects in Ireland looked so bleak. Along with a good friend I landed in New York and began my search for a job in Manhattan while living out of a rucksack in a youth hostel. Fortunately there was an abundance of jobs in New York at the time and I procured a good job within a week. Our living situation was a little more difficult, but we eventually found a summer sub-let on the Upper West Side, and later an apartment in the West Village that we shared with two other Irish friends.

My first job was in a small architectural office, Vandenberg and Lasky Architects, on the eight floor of the Flatiron building overlooking Madison Square Park in Manhattan. There I had to relearn 'feet and inches' and the bizarre NY city building codes. After a few years there and a H-3 visa in hand I moved to work at Robert A. M. Stern Architects, a large architectural firm specializing in high-end residential work. There I met my future husband and thoughts of returning to Ireland were postponed. I worked on many impressive houses for the rich and famous and learnt a lot about construction in the US.

Now as a partner in a small firm in Chelsea, Oliver Cope Architects, I continue to design high-end residences, town-houses and apartments. My first job here was to work on a beach house for a couple on the north shore of Long Island. Fortunately because they liked what I did on their beach house they hired us to design their main house (a 15,000 sq ft brick house with indoor swimming pool). This house was recently sold and bought by Billy Joel who planked over the pool and turned the room into his sound studio!





I recently completed a large cedar and glass house in the Hamptons for the deputy mayor of New York; an awarding winning shingle-style house for a couple and their seven children, on the coast in Long Island; and a house, pool, golf course, pro-shop and maintenance building on 21 acres for a financier just outside the city. All these houses incorporate geo-thermal heating and cooling systems and where possible solar for electrical power.

Last year with my husband, and our two boys, we bought a town house in Brooklyn near Prospect Park and I had the chance to design and renovate the interior. After all these years working on other people's houses it felt great to finally get to do it for myself and my family. I have made New York my home but I still manage to get to Ireland nearly every year to see my family and to bring my boys 'home'.

Florence Shields (née McGloughlin)

Class of 1962

Florence graduated in architecture from University College Dublin in 1969. Like many women, her career was interrupted due to family commitments until 1989 when she initially took contract work before setting up her own practice in Drogheda in 1996. Most of her work has been domestic but she has also overseen a number of restoration and renovation projects including the Augustinian Church in Drogheda. More recently she completed a course in conservation and is now a Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Conservation Architect. www.florenceshieldsarchitect.ie.



Liz Hughes (née Brennan)

Class of 1962

Liz qualified as an architect in Bolton Street before working in London for a number of years and then with the Office of Public Works in Dublin. She established her own practice while rearing a family, specialising in the renovation of old houses. She also acted as consultant architect to the Office of Public Works on city garda stations and Probation and Welfare centres.

Following a Master's degree in Conservation, she worked on heritage projects including the Four Courts and many Georgian and Victorian houses. Seeing architects to the forefront of energy efficient construction and retrofitting, Liz is undergoing training to become a Certified Passive House Designer that will ensure proper insulation of houses in the future. Here are some of Liz's thoughts on architecture: "We try to protect and conserve our heritage of buildings as much as we can for those who come after us...Architecture is changing all the time, but the basic idea of building uplifting spaces to bring joy to the people using them never changes!"



Muckross and the Arts

Dance

Dance in Ireland has come a long way from the traditional céilí which has been given a new lease of life through the international success of Riverdance. There is a vibrant culture of dance in Ireland today from ballet to contemporary dance that belies its historically complicated attitude to the physical, sensual, body. The long years of neglect of the medium of physical expression was recently underpinned by the opening of the National Dance Archive of Ireland in 2011 at the University of Limerick, containing over forty collections of dance donated by dancers, choreographers, and dance companies.



Ester O'Brolchain/Mazzetta

Class of 1958

Meeting Ester in Rome in the summer of 2011, I was entertained and regaled with wonderfully colourful stories of her life in Ireland and Italy. Ballet became the central force of her early years

dancing after school every day in the dusty top room of the Gaelic League's headquarters in Ely Place and teaching movement to Abbey actors at twelve years of age. A grand-niece of the Irish nationalist, poet, and writer, Joseph Plunkett (1887-1916), she was born in Dublin, leaving Muckross at the age of thirteen to become one of Ireland's leading ballerinas.

Training first with Valentina Dutko at the Dublin National Ballet she was awarded a scholarship to the Nadine Nicolaeva-Legat School before being invited by Dame Ninette De Valois, founder of the Royal Ballet, to London at the age of fifteen. At eighteen she won a scholarship to the Rome Opera House where she studied opera direction as well as working as a ballet assistant. Fluent in Italian, Russian and French she acted as interpreter to Rudolf Nureyev's choreographer, Eric Bruhn. She also worked on Vatican radio for a period and qualified in Benesh Dance Notation.

Following her marriage to Giancarlo, Ester taught Classical Ballet from 1979-83 in her school in Cerveteri, Rome, and in nearby Valconneto for a number of years while rearing three daughters. She returned to Ireland in 1993 where she taught at the National Ballet and danced on the newly inaugurated Radio Telefis Eireann before going on to act as Assistant



Above: Ester in her garden in Rome, 2011. (Photograph, Brenda Moore-McCann).



A CENTURY OF MEMORIES



Director of the College of Dance, Knox Hall, Monkstown, Co. Dublin. In this capacity she taught Classical Ballet and Dance History until 2009. Many pupils went on to have internationally successful careers. The College also provides training in Pilates, Jazz, Tap and Contemporary Dance. Ester performed in *Murder Ballads* with Finola Cronin at the Kilkenny Festival and Project Theatre, and *Chambermade* with David Bolger which toured Ireland and appeared at the Fringe First, Edinburgh. Following her husband's death she returned to Italy and currently lives with one of her daughters in Valconneto, near Rome.

The Rosc Exhibitions and the Internationalisation of Irish Art

These were a series of six international modern and contemporary art exhibitions held in Dublin between 1967 and 1988. They are still remembered for the vitality, controversy, and visual excitement that influenced subsequent generations of Irish artists.

They filled the gap between Sir Hugh Lane's vision of bringing changing forms of international art to Ireland in the early 1900s to the establishment of the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 1991.

The level of the excitement and public awareness of the first exhibition in 1967 can be gauged by the initiative of Muckross girls the same year, as told by Valerie Cox (née FitzPatrick, class of 1969).

'MUCKROSC'

Valerie Cox

The first Dublin ROSC Exhibition took place in the RDS in 1967. Our class—fifth years—had just become the first residents of the new Prefabs and it was an exciting time! There were all sorts of advantages to living in a Prefab, the most notable being that there was ample warning of the approach of a teacher coming from the main building! This gave a great sense of freedom to a bunch of girls trapped in green uniforms and still getting over the overwhelming happiness of the Inter Cert.

So—when the first ROSC art exhibition came to the RDS just down the road—we had to be involved. We were a lot more creative than anyone gave us credit for and, one day, when the heady artistry of youth burst forth—we gathered paints and brushes and paper and grass and flowers and glue and the end result was wonderful. We 'exhibited' our works in the sunshine outside and on the inside walls. There were no offers to buy, no red stickers and they eventually wilted away into just another schoolday.

By the time ROSC 2 came to Dublin in 1971 we were long left school but I like to think that the art world probably missed our small contribution.

Best wishes to

Muckross Park Past Pupils Union



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Chapter Three

Memories, 1950s–1960s



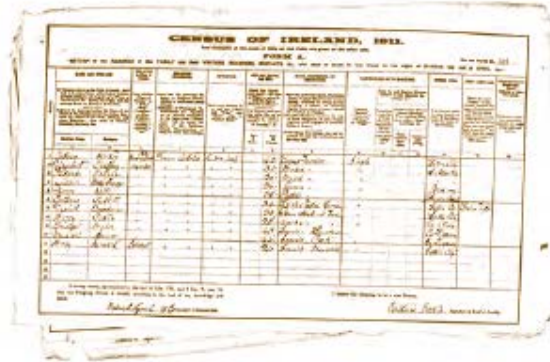


A JOURNEY THROUGH THE ARCHIVES

Deirdre MacMathuna, Muckross Archivist

“I went to Muckross when I was five years old and I can still remember sitting outside Sr. Polycarp’s room with my father tying the laces of my ‘indoor’ shoes...”

This striking memory of the first day at school could be the opening of a short story. In this case, the child waiting outside the nun’s office was Siobhan Connaughtan, who left Muckross in 1970. She was one of a group of pupils commissioned by Sr. Barnabas to write an account of their ‘Muckross Memories’. These are now stored in the School Archives along with other



Above: The 1911 Census Return for Muckross.

material that is a record of the life of the school since its foundation. The Archive bears witness to the legacy of the pioneering Dominican sisters and their staff, who have always promoted a broad, liberal education that prepared pupils to play a positive and, most importantly, an active role in society. The story of Muckross takes us to the heart of the Irish education system for girls, championed by Mary Hayden – a past pupil who



Above: Deirdre MacMathuna, teacher and archivist at Muckross.

became the first female professor of History in Europe – at the beginning of the 20th century. Remarkably, an insight in to the curriculum provided by the school can be found in the Census return for 1911. It records the names of the Dominican nuns and their staff and the subjects they taught. They were Irish, English, German, Music, Science and Mathematics. Over the years the range of subjects has broadened but the role a Dominican education plays in preparing pupils for life has remained unchanged over a century!



A quick glance at the names of some past pupils shows how central the school has been to the Irish experience: Plunkett, Dillon, MacNeill, de Valera, Pakenham, Kettle, Shackleton, Lemass, Cruise-O'Brien, Whitaker... all of these families played major roles in the political, cultural and economic development of this country. In the light of their common experience as pupils of Muckross Park, it could be argued that the school's contribution to their personal development played no small part in the decisive role they played themselves in the early years of this State.



Above: Past Pupil Eilish Mac Neill and her son, Michael McDowell, at the school Centenary celebrations.

The tradition of high academic achievement is still evident in the amount of scholarships, exhibitions and fellowships that are awarded to pupils each year. Past success include Catherine Conlon, Young Scientist; Eithne de Valera, National Art Competition; Caitriona Ni Dhuill, Irish Debates; Elizabeth Ahern-Flynn, *Irish Times* Debate; Sorcha Mullen, Thomas Mc Donagh Memorial Prize; Music, Drama, Chess... the list goes on and is evidence of the talent and skills that are fostered within the school. Sporting achievements are a particular source of pride in the school and past pupils like Sandra Gorman, Maria Lynch and Eimear Sloan have provided excellent role models for all. Other past pupils who have excelled in their fields are Francis Ruane (TCD, and now director of the ESRI), Emma Stokes (TCD), Paula Slattery (Ambassador to Argentina), Mary O'Dowd (historian), Rachel Kavanagh and Janet Moran (Drama/Theatre) and Emma Donoghue (internationally acclaimed novelist).

The School Archive is a place where the collective memory of Muckross Park is being preserved and fed. The school played host to Patrick Pearse in the early 1900s, Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney in the 1990s and President Mac Aleese in the 2000s; all of these visits are recorded in the archive. Archives keep things alive and, in the words of Eimear O'Sullivan (who left in 1964), to her Muckross was "A home of learning and friendship".

Long may that continue and 'Happy 100th Birthday'.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

Muckcross in London

Philo Butler (née Fisher) and Helen Litton

In 1965, Muckcross experienced its very first overseas trip. London was chosen, presumably having much high culture to offer—Shakespeare, The National Gallery, Madame Tussaud's... It can be taken as read that the girls privileged to experience this city of legend anticipated other delights —The Beatles, Carnaby Street, Biba's...

The letter to parents informed us that up to forty girls could go, accompanied by at least two teachers. The tour was organised by Joe Walsh Tours of Nassau Street and the full inclusive fare was 16 pounds 10 shillings per head, deposit of £2 required immediately. The cost included return travel (boat and rail), coach transport from Euston Station (placenames to conjure with!) to the Convent of the Assumption (23 Kensington Square, W8, stiletto heels NOT allowed), full board in said convent for four nights, coach transport to Stratford-on-Avon plus a performance, and two half-day escorted coach tours of London—six days in all.



Above: Felicity Coll (O'Brien) in her room in Kensington.

The departure on Easter Monday evening, 19 April, was memorable for the choppy seas. Owing, I have always believed, to my unyielding roll-on, I was one of the few in our cabin who didn't throw up in the tiny basin (is that a carrot?).

Our coach tours brought us at speed past St Paul's, London Bridge, Trafalgar Square, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Hyde Park, the British Museum, Scotland Yard and the Tottenham Court Road, with occasional stops. We visited the Tower of London in its old unreconstructed state, dark corridors and blackened walls, and you could see the old inscriptions up close. These days it is sanitised

and bright, a monument to Health and Safety and a martyr to endless queues, but we found a real sense of age and history in its gloomy dungeons. We stopped at Westminster Abbey, where the nuns contradicted the guide, insisting that 'O Rare Ben Jonson' should read 'Orare' (pray for). Our trip to Stratford included Hampton Court and Blenheim Palace, not to waste a minute.

Our last day was free. There was a long list of recommended visits, such as the British Museum, but most girls headed straight for Oxford Street with their spending money, probably rather more than the £2 per head advised. I, a nerd's nerd, spent the morning with Sister Bertranda at the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery (well, I'd wanted to visit them for years). We were both unused to tubes and escalators, and I watched in horror as her flowing habit hovered perilously near the gaps. In fact, walking with the nuns had its own entertainment—I remember being warned that a man was 'looking at me'. Disappointingly, I couldn't work out which man Sister Barnabas had meant... actually, I was



Above: Feeding swans In Stratford.

painfully groped in a packed Chamber of Horrors in Madame Tussaud's, with barely room to breathe let alone move away, so I should not deprecate their efforts at protection. They had a lot to be responsible for, and future trips depended on the success of this one.

It was highly organised, a great taste of London with enough free time to prevent a sense of grievance. As sixth years, my class had the most freedom, and one night a trip to the

cinema took place, daringly braving the bright lights of the city centre (and possibly a drink...). It was long past lock-out time when the miscreants returned, but the ever-reliable Miss Kinsella was on hand to save the night. Indeed, special arrangements had had to be made to enable the said Miss K to indulge in her nightly cigarette, smoking being utterly banned in the convent, so she was no doubt a sympathetic conspirator!

On the train to Holyhead, some avowed that they would only revisit it for the shopping, but for me it had been a dream come true. We staggered off the boat to our anxious parents, clutching souvenirs (a clockwork Dalek for the small brother, and an LP of rugby songs, banned in Ireland, for the older one, special request). However, the bulk of my money had gone on me—the third volume of *The Lord of The Rings*, not yet available in Dublin, for a whole guinea (21 shillings)! Life was good...



Left: Annette Soraghan giving a thank you speech on the steps of the concert hall in the late 50s/early 60s surrounded by:
 Back: Veronica Hurson, Brenda Moore, Susan O'Sullivan, Annette, Marguerite Barry, Emer O'Sullivan.
 Front: Anne O'Hagan, Pamela Rodgers, Philomena Fisher, Joan Hayes, Breda Farrelly.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

A CAREER BEGUN IN MUCKROSS, 1951

Cynthia O Dúnlain (née Gaffney)

In 1951 I came to Muckross Park from St. Louis National School, Rathmines and began in 1st year. From the day of arrival everything was wonderful; making new friends, wearing the smart uniform of green gymslip and black blazer and games after school. Hockey was played in the front field overlooked by the concert hall, camogie in the back field where we also played lacrosse. When playing camogie, a passing Sr. Hilary heard me yelling encouragement to a team mate at the far end of the field, drew me aside and gave me my first lesson in 'becoming a lady': "A voice is sweet, gentle and low and an excellent thing in a woman". Our first match with a visiting team brings back a vivid memory of our side before play, standing on the desks in the 1st year classroom to prove to Sr. Vincenzo that our green matching bloomers (with pocket!) were covering the bare leg and suspenders at the top of our stockings.

There was an atmosphere of caring and love in the school and, apart from the times I was in trouble for my high spirits and asked why I was not more like my sister Cora, who was then in 4th year, life for me at Muckross Park was indeed very happy. A fairly average student, I loved choir with Sr. Cecelia and art with Sr. Anna with occasional trips to the Art Gallery. The highlight of the week was the ballet lessons in the concert hall with Miss Christine Kane. From the day I saw the film *The Red Shoes* my life's desire was to become a ballerina and now the opportunity was available.



Above: Cynthia, left, as the Clarinet in the *Young Persons Guide to the Orchestra* with the Piccolo, right.

Of course there were the more professional school performances of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. In 1955, for a run of four performances, we played the *Mikado*. I was a school girl in the chorus and in 1957 *Iolanthe* was staged with yours truly in the title role. It was great fun. More academic events were also held in the Concert Hall; the ceremony when we received *An Fainne Nua*, choir exams when we sang in parts the lovely plain chant in Latin. Religious Doctrine and the Intermediate and finally the Leaving Certificate Examination. And then I was free to pursue my life in ballet.



I assisted Miss Kane teaching, started a small class of my own and continued with my dance training. An opportunity to audition with Ballet Rambert and Festival Ballet Company was offered to me. But to leave home and go alone to London to live where I knew nobody... I was not so brave, and there was another reason for my staying in Ireland. I had become engaged to Séamus O Dúnlaing, a Muckross Park boy! I continued teaching in Navan, Tullow, Abbeyleix and Dublin and dancing in The Gaiety and Olympia Theatres with Belvedere Musical Society, the Rathmines and Rathgar and the Dublin Opera Company.

We were married in 1961 and of course wives did not work after marriage in those days. My fortieth birthday was fast approaching so it was now or never. I auditioned to join the panel of Examiners of the Royal Academy and was accepted for training.

After four gruelling weeks at the London Academy I was successful. My life as an examiner had begun. For thirty one years I was Ireland's sole representative on the board and examined the world over from Ireland to most continental countries, the Middle and Far East, North and South America and Canada.

It was a wonderful experience. All happening because Muckross Park gave us a sound, all-round education with excellent extra-curricular activities.

THE O'REILLY FAMILY

The only triplets to attend Muckross were in the class of 1959. They lived in Nutgrove Park, Clonskeagh at the time. Their seventieth birthday was in 2011. Two are in Dublin and one moved abroad :

- MARIE O'REILLY
 - LORRAINE O'REILLY
 - BRENDA O'REILLY now Brenda O'Doherty, living in California.
- Lorraine played hockey for Ireland. Their sister CARMEL FLEMING (née O'REILLY) also attended Muckross, (class of 1956). She now lives in Blackrock.*



Above: The O'Reilly triplets, l-r: Lorraine, Brenda and Marie, and their elder sister Carmel O'Reilly.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

MEMORIES OF MUCKROSS, 1955–68

Marie Foley

My education started at Muckross Park in September 1954 as a kindergarten pupil with Sr. Polycarp. One of my first memories is of having great fun playing with all the different colours of plasticene and the smell of it. Eithne de Valera sat next to me and we shared the same pigeon-hole box for storing our lunch boxes and crayons. On First Communion Day we were paired off and my partner was a boy named Eugene. That day all the



Above: Marie Foley



pews in the chapel were decorated with white satin ribbon and lily of the valley flowers. Following Mass, breakfast was held in the Convent with our families but one of the highlights of that day was the presence of Eamon and Bean de Valera at this ceremony. And what impressed me at the time was that Sr. Vincenza and President de Valera conversed in Irish throughout the entire morning.

School was also held on Saturdays from 9a.m. to 12 noon after which we were obliged to attend Mass in the chapel to finish the school week. At times this was a rather giddy affair as we knew we were now free.

We also performed a play or musical during term, Gilbert and Sullivan being a hot favourite at the time. One of the

Left: Eamon and Sinead de Valera at Eithne's (their grand-daughter) First Communion in Muckross.



outstanding productions was Hiawatha set under the willow tree on the front lawn, the first ever open air production in the school. It was a colourful sight to see the costumes, the tepees, and mock fires while Hiawatha and Minnehaha strolled under the trees.

My first introduction to senior school was Sister Barnabas coming to us at the end of fifth form to introduce herself as Mistress of Schools. She advised us that we were now young ladies and should act accordingly. We knew then that we were dealing with a "tour de force".

Such was her reputation that when anyone was summoned to her office, that one poor individual went with heart pounding and the steps got slower as she approached the door. One day I was that person and was racking my brain to figure out what I had done wrong. All my fear was suddenly swept away as she



Above, left to right: Celine and Antoinette Foley.

announced that she was appointing me as a prefect. Oh what joy! And thanks to her we ended up in life as the young, well-educated ladies she wanted us to be.

Senior school opened up a whole new world which, aside from the obvious exams, new studies, etc., went to outside activities including joining the Junior Red Cross, learning first aid, visiting and entertaining children stricken with polio and Cappagh Hospital, and also the Marino Clinic in Bray.

On the lighter side, we also had music and art appreciation classes once a week after hours which inspired my love of opera and music in general. Our class was taken to the opera and our first one was Aida performed at the Gaiety Theatre. We also went to plays that related to our studies.

During the Summer between fifth and sixth year, four of my classmates and I pooled our pocket money (the sum total of sixteen shillings) with a view to going on a picnic. I persuaded my father to lend me the car to go to Glendalough and having put ten shillings worth of petrol in the car we, Elaine Russell (Daly), Coreen Dennis, Carmel



Memories, 1950s–1960s

Farrelly, Claire McDonald, and myself set off on that picnic. We retraced that trip in 2011 with some of these former classmates plus Ita Ganly (Lawlor); only this time we added a horse and cart ride taking us around the lake. On the way back from our little excursion, we met a bus which took up the whole road and left us virtually no room. Angry words were exchanged between us and the bus driver who, by the way, wasn't supposed to be using the road, and elicited good-humoured shout from a nearby hawker "oh, look at the spice girls," resulting in our peals of laughter during the rest of the journey.

The late Patsy Kinsella used to say there was a "Muckross spirit and Dominican educated girls had a mark, not a physical one, but one that would always set them apart from everyone else". I truly believe this.

Being President of the PPU

Marie Foley

As President of Muckross, one of the highlights of the year was the Debs Ball. The big challenge was to get a nice venue and, of course, at the right price. This entailed what seemed like hundreds of phone calls to banqueting managers at hotels. Once the venue was sorted, then the battle for menus and prices began; plus decorations for the ballroom, the band/music and all the ancillary necessities. Once all of the above was sorted, ticket printing was next.

During my year as President of the Combined Dominican Unions of Ireland I had the privilege of attending functions at our other Unions which were: Dun Laoghaire, Eccles St, Santa Sabina in Sutton; Taylor's Hill, Galway; Sion Hill, BlackRock; Newbridge College (for Boys only at that time), Co. Kildare; Falls Road, Belfast; and Portstewart, Co.Derry.

I have such vivid memories of driving around the country, mostly in wintertime, as that was when most of the functions took place. But I wouldn't have missed any of those functions for all the world as it was such an honour to represent Muckross as the then youngest President of the Combined Dominican Unions.

*Best wishes from
Mink Hand and Foot Spa.
45, Main Street, Donnybrook, Dublin. 4.*



A LONG FAMILY HISTORY

*As a past pupil with a long family history ROISIN O'DRISCOLL-KEADY writes:
My Grandmother CHRISTINA GRIFFIN was a teacher in Muckross; she taught music and
Irish I think. She died in childbirth in 1951. All her 7 children went to Primary school in
Muckross and the girls to secondary school.*

*FIONNUALA MCAREE 1943-1957
ROISIN MCAREE 1947-1961
HUGH MCAREE 1952-1956
CHRIS MCAREE 1954-1969*

*EAMONN MCAREE 1945-1949
DIARMUID MCAREE 1950-1954
COLM MCAREE 1954-1958*

They all lived in Ranelagh Dublin 6.

*When my last aunt finished in Muckross my eldest brother started in the primary
school and then we all went there.*

*EOIN O'DRISCOLL 1969-1973
ROISIN O'DRISCOLL 1972-1986*

*CONOR O'DRISCOLL 1971-1975
KILLIAN O'DRISCOLL 1974-1978*

*When I was in secondary school my mother was teaching in the school as a Home
Economics teacher. My mother died in 1995 and was still a teacher there. At the time
of her death we had as a family around 52 unbroken years of family in Muckross!*



Above: Kindergarten class, 1955.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

THE 'TRAVELLING 69ers'; 1950s–60s

Mary Buckley (née Deane)

I began my fourteen years in Muckross in the junior school with Sister Polycarp. I can still see the little blackboards on the walls and the row of tall windows down one side of the large kindergarten room. The year was 1955. Of the 'Travelling 69ers', (so called as we have visited each other in various cities around the world and left school in 1969), Roisin Drury would have been in that classroom with me. The others in the group, Valerie Cox (Fitzpatrick), Eudes Hand (Brophy), Leesha Evans (Gaffney) and Emer Culley (Daly) joined our class over the following years. We all consider ourselves lucky to be 'Muckross Girls' and cherish the close friendships built up over that time.

For a weekend in January 2003, Valerie, Leesha and I set off for Vienna, the longtime home to Eudes and her husband Sean, where on the right bank of the Blue Danube, we realized a trip that was years in the planning. This city of music, home of Strauss and



Above, left to right: The 69ers—Leesha, Roisin, Mary, Valerie, Emer and Mirlam.



Mozart, was covered in a blanket of snow. One of the most vivid memories of the visit was being able to climb up into the uppermost dome of the magnificent Karlskirche, (rebuilt after the Turkish siege of 1683) on special scaffolding, only possible due to renovations, to enjoy a magnificent view of the baroque city.

Skip to October 2005 and we are visiting Eudes and Sean in New York in their rather splendid 63rd Street apartment. There is a magnificent view from the apartment window of the 59th Street Bridge made famous in the song as the 'Bridge over Troubled Waters', although properly known as the Queensboro Bridge. No trip to New York nowadays is complete without a visit to Ground Zero and here we went on our first morning. On a less sobering note, the sightseeing bus trip is a wonderful way to get a feel for this fabulous city. Sean had mentioned to look out for Grand Central Station; a lovely Beaux Arts building, from the early 1900s which has been renovated. The Empire State building at 102 storeys, now the highest building in New York, is classic Art Deco. Ice skating was in full flight at the Rockefeller Centre and we had fun spotting the Irish flag among the 181 flags at the United Nations.

During September 2006 Miriam Hannon, one of our classmates, was coming home from Australia and Eudes would be back from New York. Leesha was coming over from Manchester so really there was no good reason why Emer could not make the trip from Brussels. I was going to have a party and Kathleen Doyle was going to join our little group. Miriam and her Swiss husband, Rudi, had left home in Brisbane and spent the last six weeks making a journey of a lifetime on the Trans Siberian railway before visiting the families in both Ireland and Switzerland.

Early on the morning of Friday 4 December 2009 Valerie and I set off for Brussels. We were to spend the weekend with Emer, who has lived in Brussels for many years where she works with the Commission. Using the metro we travelled to Place de la Monnaie. Nearby is the Rue Neuve, the shopping street—I will say no more!

The summer of 2011 saw our intrepid 'Australian' traveller, Miriam, make another visit home. Emails went out to New York for Eudes, to Manchester for Leesha, to Brussels for Emer, to Wicklow for Valerie and to Dublin for Roisin and me; following on from which a date was set in July. This time we descended on Valerie's house in Wicklow for a garden party to beat all garden parties. We were wined and dined and the craic was mighty. How lovely for the 'Travelling 69ers' to be back together, this time on home turf. Plans are afoot for the next garden party, to be hosted by Leesha this coming summer.



THE GAFFNEY FAMILY

The GAFFNEY family of Nutley Lane, Donnybrook, had nine daughters, many of whom went to Muckross for some or all of their secondary school years.

Those who went to Muckross up to 6th Year were :

LEESHA (EVANS) (class of 1969) now living in England.

DAIRINA (class of 1971) now in Scotland.

NAOMI (SOMERS) (class of 1974) Now living in South Wales.

ELIZABETH (PETCU) (class of 1976) Now living in Bray, Co Wicklow.

Leesha has penned her memories of Muckross:

When I look back at the time I spent in Muckross, it was a very happy time. In those days, teaching was all talk and chalk, no internet, interactive white board or powerpoint in the classroom. The most advanced piece of equipment was a reel-to-reel tape recorder which was considered to be at the cutting edge of progress.

It goes to show that all the gadgets are only a supplement to what happens in the classroom. At Muckross there was something very significant that happened on the feeling level. We knew that the nuns and the lay staff really cared about us in every way. There was a great community feeling simply because we were all there and shared that physical space. In deed when I go to Ireland now, many of the friends I see are those that I spent time with in Muckross.

I must admit that I have forgotten most of the Latin that I learnt. We always worked on the premise that Caesar won all the conflicts, so we made up a good story relating vaguely to the Latin text to confirm our theory. Maths formulas and calculus I personally have not needed since leaving school, but I am sure they were of some service to someone.

The nuns gave us a tremendous sense of self worth and responsibility. I organised the swimming club with Miriam Hannon and we held a post office account for all the membership fees which were used to hire Tara Street baths. We also had super debates in and out of the classroom and we took part in all sorts of activities – Red Cross – parties for the blind – trips to Belfast and a full social life with games and contact with other schools and organisations. We were made to think for ourselves and share good and bad times with others.

Isn't this what a good education is about?



Friendship

Una Mangan (née Harper), Leaving Certificate 1969

My son Stuart had an accident playing rugby in London 2008 and subsequently died of his injuries sixteen months later in August 2009. When trouble comes none of us are prepared, and the support that is given to you by friends, old and new, creeps up on you and it is only on reflection that you realise how good people are.

A range of friends arrived at different times. You don't make friends, you recognise them. They are revealed over time. Your needs are met without structure and rules. It is often personal and private, sometimes unspoken. A friend is someone who looks out for you and makes you feel you are not on your own, someone you can talk to, who listens. You feel a sense of affinity and a freedom to call on them at anytime even if your last contact was when you were at school. When old friends from school made contact with me there was a massive feeling of goodness that carried me through tough times.

Some old friends just could not be there in the early days for whatever reason but, when they did appear, it was so uplifting and reminded me that we have no need to worry. We will be carried in distress by a gift that is so precious.

As the high point of your crisis passes the friendship and support that you received rests well with you and the memories of that kindness leaves you with a sense of awe and wonder at the incredible depth and range of the actions that friends took on your behalf. The debt of gratitude is almost overwhelming and is only eased when you get an appropriate opportunity to thank all your friends sincerely. I would like to say how much my family appreciated the love and support they received from the community and friends at Muckross.

Right: Granny Harper, Una and Stuart.





Memories, 1950s–1960s

FRIENDSHIP—class of 1954

Anne Maher



Above: The girls in 1954.

Our class are the Class of '54—say it fast and it doesn't seem all that long ago—but it is—and then say that some of us started in Muckross in Junior Infants and now we're really going back a long way.

There has been a core group of six of us who have been very close through the years and did the 'dinner-party'

thing during the eighties/nineties I think it was—then without any discussion, any dissent, we suddenly realise we are now meeting for lunch instead. Could it be that driving at night etc has made us gladly switch to day-time meetings? I guess. One of our class, Lola Bugatto (née Lambert) lives in San Francisco, and lots of times when she comes over on one of her many trips, we just ring around—(now we e-mail of course).

A little snippet as to how Lola and myself became such firm friends. During school years Lola and myself were not particularly friendly as she left Muckross by the 'back gate', whereas I left by the 'front gate'. Then Lola went off to London to train as a nurse, but one day when I had gone back to Muckross to 'visit' (as we did then)—Sister Patrick mentioned to me how Lola Lambert was very lonely over in London and as I was going over shortly to visit my sister would I think of getting in touch with her. I duly did and Lola asked me if I could bring her over some Hafners



Above: Lola and Anne in 2007



Above, left to right: Anne Maher (Smith), Barbara McHenry (Nevin), Patricia McGeown, Muireann Hourihane (NI Dhulaing), Denise Meade (O'Brien) and Joy Campbell (Murphy) In 2008.

rashers and sausages. We met in Oxford Street and I handed over my 'parcel' and, as in the last line of *Casablanca*—'this could be the start of a beautiful friendship'—and it was—and the rest is history.

Muckross seems to have instilled a sense of what is worthwhile in life in most of us I think, as I do know that some other classes keep in touch like we do, so for the 2012 school leavers—do make the effort to keep in touch with some of your school friends—it will just take an e-mail, a text, a phone-call and then let it happen—you will not regret it.

THE BROPHY FAMILY

Three Brophy sisters attended Muckross during the years 1961 to 1973. The Brophy family lived on Woodbine Road near Belfield at the time.

EUDES: (class of 1969) graduated from Trinity College, moved around internationally for most of her professional life and now lives with her husband between Dublin and Vienna, Austria.

HILARY: (class of 1972) graduated from UCD and from the College of Optometry, Dublin Institute of Technology. She has an optical practice in Stillorgan and lives in Donnybrook with her family.

BERRY: (Junior School 1966–1973) graduated from Trinity College and the College of Marketing, Dublin Institute of Technology. She now lives with her family in Monkstown.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

A Fishy Story from the Sixties

Maeve Kenny (née Brennan)



And so—we won the Fish Competition! And great celebrations did abound with much fuss and excitement, and suddenly there was much attention focused on this school girl—it was bit of a shock I must admit, but everyone else seemed to be happy, so, hey.

It was all good, trophies and presentations and photographs and, wait for it, prize money—a whopping 100 guineas (remember 20 shillings plus one makes 21 shillings = 1 guinea)—you'll have to agree it was megabucks back in 1964. That 100 guineas subsequently bought a series of Irish grinds for the leaving cert; a course of Lingaphone records in French also for the leaving cert, plus the record player to go with it and last but not least a new uniform—a release from the threadbare hand-me-downs.

And then there was the thing about the recipe title. 'Whiting Marie Rose'—'Marie' for Sr. Consillia, now Sr. Carmel, and 'Rose' for the pink colour of the sauce, courtesy of the tomato puree that was pointed at the apple cider béchamel. That was another departure—above all things a 'pink' sauce on fish. All very dubious, and, dare I say it, rather pushing the boat out for the kitchens of the 60s.

Well, wouldn't you know, there was someone interested in acquiring the name 'Marie Rose'—those nice men from Bord Iscaigh Mhara asked if I would like to sign away the rights to the name for the princely sum of 2 guineas, and a few weeks hence up pops an alternative name to the pink sauce that is normally served with shellfish, previously known as Cocktail Sauce, now also being called Marie Rose Sauce.

So, Sr. Carmel, little did you know that your name would live on on menus nationwide down through the years.

Moving on, it's true our school achieved great things through the years when you consider the raw recruits they took in and the much accomplished women they turned out in all spheres.

As for me—I just loved cooking then as I do today, but winning the fish competition was something that was to crop up for me for some years to come when I least expected it. Not least, when my boyfriend (now husband) was bringing me home to meet the parents. It didn't take long before his Mom, Marjorie, offered by way of polite conversation over a cup of tea—'and you're the girl who won the fish competition?' and with that she promptly pulled out the newspaper cutting which was carefully stored in an old cookbook complete with girly photo of myself in uniform—oh horror, I thought. I was so surprised, and embarrassed at the same time, but then again grateful for any help going my way when trying to make a good impression.



THE HURSON FAMILY

Six of the 7 Hurson family members of Nutley Road attended Muckross for various lengths of time. Most of the girls started at Junior Infants and continued to finish School with Leaving Certificate.



Above: The Hurson family on Killiney Beach c 1956. Alphy and Marie with Anne, Kevin, Maura, Brian, Veronica, Rita and Monica.



They are: ANNE (HURSON) KIRWAN, now living in Gorey, left Muckross in 1955 at end of 2nd year. MAURA (HURSON) COLLINS, Portmarnock, started 1953 till 1962. BRIAN HURSON attended Low Babies, High Babies and First Class from 1951 to 1954. VERONICA (HURSON) GRAHAM, Mounthra, class of 1965. RITA HURSON, Blackrock, started in 1954 till 1967. MONICA HURSON KELLY, Dunshaughlin attended from 1965 to 1971.

Right: First Year 1964, Including Mary Raftery, D. Pares, Elaine Kelly, Carol D'Arcy, Ann Rogers, Chris McAree, Mary Delaney, Kathleen Doyle, Leesha Gaffney, Captain Anne Nolan, B. Ryder, Marie Loftus, Mary Deane, Clodagh Haugh, Monica Kennedy, Val Bergin, Vice-Captain Pat O'Brien and Aine Lowry.





Memories, 1950s–1960s

CLASS OF 1964



Above: Pals in the Class of '64, in the summer of '62. Valerie Nolan, Mary McDonald, Mary Murphy, Gemma Doyle, Roisin Quigley, Deirdre Garrett, Gaye Mulholland, Maura Harper, Carol Cluskey, Helen Lambert, Anne Fitzgerald.



Above: The Girls of class '64. Veronica Hurson, Annet Soraghan, Brenda Moore (head and toe!) and Anne Fitzgerald.



Above: The young HENS of '64. Marguerite Barry, Marcella Burke, Annette Soraghan, Joan Hayes, Brenda Moore, Darena Bowden, Madeline O'Dwyer and Emer O'Sullivan.



THE MOORE FAMILY

HELEN MOORE (Class 1963)

Helen was awarded a Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL) degree in 1967 by University College Dublin (UCD). She became the first member of their family to be called to the Irish Bar in 1968.

BRENDA MOORE (MCCANN) (Class 1964)

Brenda qualified as a medical doctor in UCD in 1970. She worked in a variety of hospital jobs before going to the United States in 1974. Following her return (1976) she worked in paediatric research at the Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, for a number of years before working in a non-profit Family Planning Clinic (1980-90) in Dublin, acting as Medical Director from 1985-90. Retiring from medicine, she took a degree in Art History & Classical Civilisation at the University of Dublin, Trinity College in 1996 followed by a Ph.D. in Art History 2002. She is now a writer and art educator.

CATHERINE MOORE (VADERAA/O'BRIEN) (Class 1965)

Catherine was awarded a BCL degree at UCD in 1969 and was called to the Irish Bar in 1970. Having worked with Mother Teresa in London, she moved to India where she lived for a number of years before returning to Ireland in the late 1979. She worked as a solicitor in P.C. Moore & Co. before becoming first a partner and then managing partner in the 1990s to the present.

JACINTA MOORE (Class 1952-1964 & Wicklow 1964-1967)

Jacinta was awarded a BCL degree by UCD in 1970 and called to the Irish Bar in 1971. She worked in a number of companies before joining the Irish Times in the 1978. She acted in various roles before taking up her current position of Credit Accounts Manager from 1989. An inveterate traveller, she also was National Secretary of An Oige (Irish Youth Hostelling Association) for several years (2001-2006).

Kindergarten

Sharon Griffen (née Lyons)

For a very short time, from 1965 to 1967, I attended Muckross and made my Holy Communion there. I was six years old and it was the time when children "were seen and not heard". I have to say it was a happy time. I liked the green gym slip, I loved the tie we wore back then and we had a lovely nun called Sister Brenda Mary, who read the story Black Beauty to us over a number of weeks. We all sobbed in the class the day Ginger was removed on the cart, quite dead. Despite the sobbing it was to foster my great love of reading. For that I thank Sister Brenda Mary. She was a nice nun and I have clear memories of her cream Dominican Nun's habit with the brown wooden cross that dangled from her waist. I thought she was old, but I know that she is still living which means she was probably in her twenties or thirties then.





Memories, 1950s–1960s

THE COPPER BEECH, 1950s–60s

Margaret Thomas

Looking back I can see a 4 year old travelling unaccompanied on the bus to school, being generally looked after by the other children and by the gardener Mr. Dunne. He used to cast a fatherly eye over all the children travelling and we all knew to get off the bus when he did. We all walked down Marlborough Road together, all ages chatting together. It was the beginning of 13 years of happiness.



The lovely Marlborough Road and then the sweep of the driveway of Muckcross was always a lovely way to start the day. I remember walking around to where the hostel is now and the adults talking about Pope Pius XII's pending death. The main talk of the day was the swimming pool they were going to build in the playground. They never did of course, but instead they built the hostel in its place, telling us that it was more important.

I can remember Babies very clearly, the room with the red floor and Miss Hogan who used to play the piano for us and she and Sister Polycarp taught us how to learn and to enjoy school. One evening I decided that I wanted to see what the school was like when everyone went home and so I stayed back out of curiosity. My poor mother was distraught, and rang the school looking to see if I was all right. Miss Hogan came to the rescue and found me wandering around. She put my coat on and sent me home. She had to ring my mother to tell her she had found me, and boy was my mother cross when I got home, she just could not understand what I was so curious about.

Miss O'Donoghue was to play a big part in my education, in that I met her again in 4th form, where she inspected our nails every day until we learnt to make sure we cleaned them with a nail brush, not a nail file or anything else. She also taught us arithmetic and English.

My next memory is of Mother Clara, who taught me Maths and gave us great encouragement, she was a genius, and a great teacher. We also had Sr Letitia who was our class tutor for 5th form and she took great interest in our well being. I have fond memories of her because she helped me when I was always so shy.



My class was one of strong characters, our Captain, Catherine O'Rourke, who sadly died very young, was a great singer and she was in a group that competed in competitions and won.

In our first year we took part in *Hiawatha*, which was directed by Miss Cranny and we were the little warriors, while 2nd years were the chantresses and chanted from the steps in front of the convent building whilst the rest of us put on a performance on the front lawn. It was a spectacular performance and was a great success.

Sr Barnabas introduced us to Opera after school and for me a lifelong interest. Patsy Kinsella gave us a modern education despite the confines of the curriculum and in 2nd year we went down to Roscrea to visit her brother, Fr Niavard Kinsella, and the boys who were putting on *The Merchant of Venice*.

Sr Bertranda, who was a brilliant historian, gave us a love of history which lasts to this very day and which I put to great use when I was an International Tour Guide.

I am a proud Muckcross woman and am so glad I walked up that driveway every day for thirteen years and looked out the window at the copper beech from the different floors and loved it.

THE MOLONEY FAMILY

EVA DOHERTY (née MOLONEY) attended Muckross Park College from 1963 to 1977. She and her family were living in Donnybrook and her parents are still there.

EVA is currently living in Blackrock. She works as a Clinical Psychologist, is married to Bryan and has four children, Emma, Mark, Alice, Ellen.

Later her daughter went to Muckross also. EMMA MOLONEY DOHERTY, class of 1996, (started junior school 1981) currently living in Kent England.

Eva's sisters and brothers:

KITTY MOLONEY—class of 1989 (started junior school 1975) Currently living in Galway.

JENNIE MOLONEY—class of 1994 (started junior school 1980). Currently living in Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

MARTIN MOLONEY 1964–1967—Currently living in Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

MICHAEL MOLONEY 1970–1973—Currently living in Washington DC, USA.

Eva's niece (Martin's daughter), MAITÉ MOLONEY Class of 2013 (started 2007).



Memories, 1950s–1960s

The Concern Story

Katherine O'Loughlin Kennedy (née Banahan)

At the 50th Gathering of the Class of 1957, we exchanged life stories and many wanted to hear about my part in setting up Concern. My husband John, sometimes called Loughy, and I and our one-year-old, Paul, were living in a flat at 82 Northumberland Road, Ballsbridge, a Victorian house with a very large drawing room. This was filled to capacity on the 19th March 1968 when we held a meeting of friends, relations and people who had connections with West Africa.

A war was in progress between Nigeria and the breakaway state of Biafra and the military blockade was preventing all movement in and out of Biafra. Even the news of the war was prevented from reaching the world media. My brother-in-law, Fr Raymond Kennedy, CSSp, had circumvented the blockade and returned with horrifying news of a rapidly developing famine.

The meeting decided to reconvene every week until we would find a way to send medicines and food into the area. With an ecumenical committee established under the title of Africa Concern, we were able to respond to the developing situation.

On 28th June 1968, the Catholic and Anglican Bishops of the Dioceses of Owerri in Biafra came together in Dublin to launch our appeal to raise £100,000 and *Send One Ship* to Sao Tomé, a small tropical island from which nightly relief flights had been established by Joint Church Aid—an agency set up by all the mainstream Christian Churches working together.

The generous response from the good people of Ireland was breathtaking and we were overwhelmed with donations and offers of assistance from a voluntary advertising committee and experts in business,

banking and shipping. Our flat could not contain the volunteer office workers and we borrowed the vacant flat downstairs. We coped with, literally, sacks of mail and managed to acknowledge every donation. We passed the initial target of £100,000 within five weeks and raised a total of £3.5 million in two years—the equivalent of about €70 million today.

As the situation in Biafra worsened with reports of upwards of 2,000 people dying every day through 1969, the donations continued, enabling us to charter four ships and send over 12,000 tons of vital supplies to the airlift at Sao Tomé. We bought a ship, the *MV Colmcille*, and it drew relief supplies along the West African coast for more than two years.



Above: Katherine at age 13. Muckross Park 1949-57, Hockey Captain 1956/7.





To supplement the Sao Tome airlift, we established another from Libreville in Gabon and chartered aircraft for 350 flights into Biafra.

As the organisation grew, we hired staff and moved the activity out of our home to Pembroke Road. Things were no less hectic for me. Loughy was still working days at the Economist Intelligence Unit. I continued as a volunteer in day-to-day management and as company secretary of Africa Concern Ltd.

Some years later when we extended our operations to Bangladesh we dropped 'Africa' from the title, becoming simply 'Concern'. The organisation has continued to be blessed with the enthusiastic services of many, many dedicated people at home and abroad. It now has an annual budget in excess of €200 million.

Looking back, we see the guiding hand of the Lord in many of the decisions we made and in the people that were inspired to help us. Personally I am grateful for the Dominican influence of the Sisters at Muckross Park who taught us to trust in God, use our heads and keep going in the face of challenges.

THE ANDERSON FAMILY

BRIGID ANDERSON (née MAHER) attended Muckross Park College from 1940 to 1953. Brigid's younger siblings MARGARET, PADDY and THOMAS MAHER also attended Muckross until First Communion. Later Brigid's daughters went to Muckross.

They are :

DEIRDRE ANDERSON class of 1979.

CAROL ANDERSON class of 1982. Both Brigid's sons FERGAL and COLM ANDERSON also attended Muckross for a few years in the seventies.

DEIRDRE is married to Tony Redmond who is the eldest son of GRACE REDMOND (née CONROY) who attended Muckross from 1940-1949. She was a classmate of BRIGID.

GRACE'S sister ANNE COYLE (née CONROY) also attended Muckross from 1951-1962.

Their brothers, PADDY, JOHN and MICHAEL CONROY all attended the Junior School also

PADDY from 1939-1942

JOHN from 1944-1947

MICHAEL from 1948-1951

GRACE, PADDY and JOHN all started aged 5 and at that time there was just one "Babies" class. In later years (after the war) there were two "Babies" classes in Muckross "Low Babies" and "High Babies" so MICHAEL and ANNE both benefitted from a year more of their Muckross Park education.



Memories, 1950s–1960s



Above: The class of 1967 celebrating on the front lawn.



Above: Leaving Cert class of 1969.

THE CRANNY PLUNKETT FAMILY

ENDA COGAN writes:

'Many of the extended Cranny Plunkett family have been pupils of Muckross over the past 100 years. The family built Muckross as the family home and lived there until it was sold to the Dominicans in 1900.'

One branch of the family descends through COLM O'LAOGHAIRE, grandson of Count and Countess Plunkett. He was born and raised on Marlborough Road and attended Muckross in the 'twenties. He made his First Holy Communion there. His daughters, EMER, DEIRDRE and NIAMH were pupils in the 'sixties and 'seventies, as were Emer's daughters, ELLEN and LEAH BRENNAN, in the 'nineties.'

Colm's half sisters, MAEVE and ENDA O'LEARY, were pupils in the 'forties and 'fifties. Enda's daughter, LOUISE COGAN, attended the Junior School in the 'seventies. Several members of the family are still residents of Marlborough Road.'



Muckross on wheels

Gay Rodgers, class of 1966

In August 2003 there was a lively discussion on the Leo Enright RTÉ radio show about the number of unqualified drivers on Irish roads. Apparently this was caused by a backlog of driving tests and a shortage of qualified instructors and driving testers. Many listeners telephoned and emailed the show with suggestions for solving the problem. One suggestion was to include driving lessons as part of the school curriculum to ensure that everyone is taught by qualified instructors.

Well, Muckross was already showing how it should be done way back in 1965/66 when they arranged with the LSE School of Motoring to teach 5th and 6th Years to drive. Quite a number of us took up this great opportunity and thanks to the patience of Jim Fleming our instructor, went on to pass our tests with flying colours.

I for one, was more concerned about passing my driving test than the Leaving Cert! Three weeks after the Leaving Cert exams I was taking the test and driving along the North Circular Road when the examiner directed me to take a route through the cattle market which took place there every Tuesday morning. So I had cows to avoid as well as other road users. Obviously the examiner must have approved of my combined urban and rural driving skills as I passed at my first attempt.

Well done to Muckross and that little Austin mini.



Left: Some of the class of 1966 having fun between lessons. L-r Veronica Wynne, Clodagh Brady, Enda O'Callaghan, Aideen M. Ryan, Catherine Whyte, Gay Rodgers, Aideen O'Sullivan, Rosemary Cuniffe and Mary Fallon.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

MEMORIES OF MUCKROSS, 1960s

Valerie Cox, class of 1969

It was a hot summer's day in 1962 when my mother walked me up the tree-lined avenue to the sound of tennis balls. In those days there were tennis courts on the front lawn and I was in awe of these very grown-up young women while I was dressed in my Confirmation frock. We were on our way to discuss my impending admission to the Junior school the following September.



Just as we reached the steps of the front door, an upstairs window opened with a clatter, a nun put her head out and shouted: 'Who is that disgraceful girl wearing shorts?' The tennis stopped, the culprit crept guiltily towards the school and I was absolutely terrified. This was my first encounter with the Dominican Sisters.

A few months later, in green gymslip and black beret, I presented myself as a pupil and I loved the place from the beginning. There are moments that stand out, like that time in First Year when Sr Frances was so kind to me after our twelve year old cocker spaniel died; 'Boss' had always been there, since I was a baby, and she understood that my heart was breaking and gave me a big hug. A small thing, you might think, in relation to the greater Crosses we are asked to bear, but maybe a spot of training too.

My mother, Imelda Tucker, was also a past pupil and had kept in touch with the nuns over the years. Me and my two sisters, Iris and Gabrielle, had our names down from babyhood.

I wasn't a great pupil and only worked at the subjects I enjoyed, which is probably why I failed and had to repeat the Leaving Cert. I loved the extra-curricular activities, the Christmas Fair where for many years my Dad was the man in red. Then there was what we called the 'Blind Boys Party', very non-pc now but a highlight on Holy Thursday every year when the small boys from the Rosminians in Drumcondra spent the day in Muckross. We had a gift for every child, bought wholesale from another parent, Tommy Soraghan who operated from Sean McDermott Ltd in Dublin city centre, a toy wholesaler. We went in every year with our small funds and came out laden down with gifts, only realising years later that Mr Soraghan in his kindness had only charged us a fraction of their cost.



There was Irish college in Ballingearry in Co Cork which was great fun and where I came off over the handlebars of somebody's bicycle hurtling down the Pass of Keimaneigh!

Then there was the Young Scientists' Exhibition which the nuns encouraged and which was actually a wonderful opportunity to meet what were then called 'members of the opposite sex'. There was the Junior Red Cross and the wonderful residential camp in Gormantown College where Juniors came from all over the world. We followed this up with a trip to Mayo where we looked after a number of children with disabilities. One night, on a full moon, the lake looked kind of gorgeous and we decided to create a few memories for them, and for ourselves of course! I know it involved ladders against the side of a three storey building and... we were caught by the then Director of the Red Cross, Mollie B Murphy. But it was worth it. A couple of nights later it was the first moon landing and we sneaked downstairs to watch the first steps... but we were caught again by Mollie B and sent back to bed. This is why I never saw the moon landing live on that crackly old snowy picture in Tourmakeady.

I loved Muckross, so much so that my husband, Brian, and I popped out from our wedding reception to drop in and say hello to the nuns. Then there was the birth of our first child, Brian William, and calling down to the convent to have him presented in the Chapel by the late Sister John.

Being a past pupil means being part of a very special family. I am still in close contact with a number of friends from my schooldays, some of us are godmothers to one another's children. I really appreciated their support through the tough times in my life. Both of my parents died within a few months of one another and seeing old friends and the elderly Sisters travelling all the way to Wicklow to be there with us was such a comfort.

And the link goes on—my son Brian is now engaged to another past pupil, Niamh Jordan.

THE TUCKER FAMILY

IMELDA TUCKER (FITZPATRICK) attended Muckross from 1934 to 1940. She and her family were living in Rathgar at that time. Her sister, LAURA (McLOUGHLIN) also attended Muckross some years later. Imelda's three daughters are also past pupils:

VALERIE COX (class of 1969) now living in Wicklow.

IRIS CONDRON (class of 1970) now in Donegal.

GABRIELLE PARKINSON (class of 1974) now in Kildare.

Imelda's niece, JUNE FITZPATRICK left Muckross in 1978 and her two daughters, TARA LINNANE (class of 2007) and ALEXANDRA LINNANE (class of 2010) are also past pupils.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

Memories of the '60s

Ann Harper

First years sitting on brown steps in the Concert hall—Mother Cecilia and Tantum Ergo Sacramento—all in tune—such joy.

Annual retreat Dominican Priory Tallaght—dormitories—all night chat and laughter—deadly—Father, is French kissing a sin?—neither French or kissing are sins—everything in moderation—smiles—one of the good guys—newspaper says 'Rock in the quarter final—off to Bective and a Muckross sea of green—Newbridge won—our Dominican Father smiles again.

September elections for Class captain and vice-captain—pressed pleats and polished indoor shoes—Models of correctness—trying to keep the prayers going on the train to Knock.

The Gas Company Cooking Competition—Gold Medal—96% for Brown Bread—Sister Consilia's girls rise again—at breakfast next morning Daddy said 'that inspector got it wrong—the correct mark should have been 100%'—that's my girl—that's my Dad—the confidence builder.

Irishmen and Irishwomen, in the name of God and of the dead generations—standing ovations—such high drama with Miss Cranny and the Easter Pageant 1916 and 1966—WB Yeats said "The Old brown thorn trees break in two high over Cummen strand"—so did Una Harper for her opening line.

A second Year walked a boy called Peter up the Avenue to the showing of Michael Caine and the Ipcress File—the reel broke—the lights came on—everyone went home—some on the back of motor bikes with the warm breeze in their hair—a Sixth year told—next morning's greeting 'Ann, Barney is looking for you'—again!

All afternoon Mrs Harper prepared High Tea for a June birthday served in the dining room over the butcher shop—sunny play in the back garden—lambs to the slaughter in the small abattoir—eat up girls—no one could eat a thing. Ann never noticed this was home, this was bliss—later in their homes the Muckross girls all told of the unusual sights and smells and the uneaten savoury bridge rolls and cream cakes—lasting memories and a new vegetarian generation—Jane Burke told Ann years later—such laughs.

The triangle in Ranelagh—off the 18 bus—run like Ronnie Delaney in the morning—stroll along Sandford Road in the afternoon—no hurry Summer Rounders—sunny days—hockey over—best of fun.

THE MURTAGH FAMILY

EMER COPPINGER (née MURTAGH) class of 1969, PAULINE WOOLFSON (née MURTAGH) class of 1971 and DEIRDRE FITZGERALD (née MURTAGH) also class of 1971 lived in Mount Merrion.

Later Pauline's daughters attended Muckross, RUTH WOOLFSON (class of 2001) and PAULA WOOLFSON (class of 2003).

Pauline now lives in Ranelagh, Deirdre in Foxrock and Emer in Galway.



CLASS OF 1962



Above: 1946—The Class of 1962 while still in the Junior school.



Left: Muckross Ladies—
Nuala Garrett, Judith
Bardon, Clare Lyons
and Orla White, class
of '62.



Memories, 1950s–1960s

IRISH COLLEGE, 1956

Patricia O'Reilly

Back in the 1950s we were innocents. But beneath the shapeless uniform, lisle stockings and elbow-patched cardigans we craved Experience – with a capital E. For most, our first expedition into this Experience in the world of grown-ups was at Irish College. We were Third Year, going into Fourth Year, and all that entailed with sitting the Intermediate Certificate examination the following June. It would be our first public examination—if you didn't count the annual religious examinations—the nuns did, we didn't. And to pass Irish in the Inter Cert was mandatory.

The day a lady called Sighle Ní Dugain gave a talk on the Irish college in Gortahork was a red letter one. Sr Vincenzo, even more flustered than usual and beaming widely, introduced her. We'd heard of Sighle—her reputation, for quite what, you couldn't be sure, had travelled far and wide across the country. In her sensible navy coat and hair held in place with a sturdy Kirby grip, she was a formidable presence. As she spoke, Sr Vincenzo nodded enthusiastically on the rules and regulations of the college. I knew I would die if I didn't get going to Irish College.

Next step was to sell the idea to my parents. I stressed the amount of Irish I'd learn and how that would reflect on my Inter results—they were big into results. Next I stressed the discipline—my mother was at the stage of worrying I 'was beginning to look at boys', so I emphasised the lack of boy/girl fraternising. I believe that's what swung permission to go.

Freedom started on the train journey with the boys from Castleknock College. They were going to Rannafast, another Irish college in Donegal, a few miles from Gortahork. The boys bought us minerals—the clincher of commitment in those days—and promised to visit.



Right: Irish College, Gortahork, 1956.



I don't remember what Irish we learned but I do remember the heady excitement of the ceillis and the loveliness of our bean an tí with her shy husband and gaggle of gorgeous children. After a tea of warm soda bread with lashings of melting butter and strawberry jam, we got ready. This getting ready was greatly impeded by our lack of choice of clothes. Nightly our styling innovation was stretched to its limits.

The swapping of dresses and cardigans, squirts of 4711 and borrowing of deodorant from the lucky ones who had it heightened the anticipation. Who would ask us up? And would we blush beetroot? How could we make an impression on our desired one with only our cupla focal? We knew better than to try seduction with the Bearla. Sighle could sniff out an English talker at fifty paces, and we didn't doubt she'd keep her threat of 'back to Dublin on the next train'.

But none of this mattered. In our Clark's sandals and grubby socks we danced The Walls of Limerick, Siege of Ennis and the Polka, as well as jigs and reels with exotic-sounding names. The rousing rebel songs brought my first flutter of real patriotism—loving my country's culture and being proud of it. But most of all I remember the heady excitement of the few cigarettes smoked in ditches and behind hedges. And my first kiss—from a red-haired Castleknock boy who, as good as his word, did visit.

Down the time line of memory it's the dedication of Sighle Ní Dugain that stands out. She was everywhere on her upstairs model of a bicycle. It may have seen better days but it brought her primly cycling up and down the stone-walled boreens on her nightly checks to ensure that each of her charges was safely in. I never heard of anyone who wasn't.

THE SHERIDAN FAMILY

ANNE MARIE SHERIDAN attended Muckross from 1960 to 1973. She and her family were living in the Clonskeagh / Goatstown area. Her sister PAULA and brother TOM also attended.

Later Anne Marie's daughter, EAVAN HEALY (class of 2010) also attended Muckross. Anne Marie and her family currently live in Ranelagh, Dublin.

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centenary year**

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Country Manager of CWT Ireland, and
a past pupil of Muckross Park College.



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Chapter Four

Sport at Muckross





SPORT AT MUCKROSS

Compiled by Annette Quigley (née Soraghan) and Emer Keeling

Our journey through the 60s and an enduring friendship!

Iris Condrón (née FitzPatrick) and Emer O'Brien (née Flanagan)

We met in St Catherine's classroom in early September 1964 and today, almost 47 years later, we're still best friends. This is a friendship which cemented itself on the grass hockey pitch in the back field of Muckross. Emer as the centrehalf fed the ball to Iris, the centre forward, under the beady eye of Deirdre Ennis. She seemed to us to be at least 90 years of age—which she obviously wasn't! She was quite a formidable lady who always wore a silver grey hair net over her set silver curls and shocking red lipstick with a long cigarette hanging from her lips. As she coached us she would gesture wildly with her bright pink painted finger tips and shout "Wun gels wun!". Can you imagine that today? But we loved her and took it all in our stride as being quite normal.

Another thing we never questioned was our 'hockey uniform', unlike today's school girls we played in the same gymslip we wore to the classroom, but with another set of buttons on the shoulders to raise it up a notch or two. The only difference was that we had to wear green knickers, not ANY green knickers but interlocking knickers, which, on a cold day would keep your chest warm! We practised hockey every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon after school from 4pm to 5pm, or in our enthusiastic fervour until it got too dark to see the ball on the shorter evenings. Nobody bothered to change out of hockey gear to go home and so we travelled on the no. 18 bus mud splattered and more often cold and wet. Our hockey pavilion, ie the barna shed at the far end of the field, did not boast facilities.....as in toilets and showers. Can you see 'the young wans' of today putting up with that?

Our next coach was Eileen White, a lady well known in Irish hockey circles and very involved with Muckross Past Pupils hockey club. She volunteered to coach when her daughter, Paula joined with us in 1964. In 2nd year Mrs. White encouraged us to play for the past pupils and on many occasions after playing a schools match in the morning she would bring us down to Leinster Cricket Club in Rathmines to play in one and sometimes two matches with the past pupils—we couldn't get enough of it and were probably Mrs White's biggest fans, but she was no pushover! When it came to hockey uniforms she was a stickler. To her dying day she would notice the slightest deviation from the correct uniform, knickers other than green and bras other than white were her pet hates. Perhaps a song written by a past pupils entertainment group for the annual dinner was inspired in part by Mrs White:

M—your match, arrive on time	R—you'll never play again
U—must never turn up late	O—dear what would do then?
C—the umpire on the pitch	S—another s again
K—your knickers must be green	S—which wil bring us back to

MUCKROSS

This was a friendship which lasted over 40 years until her death.



In our third year a very young, trendy trailblazer by the name of Susan Warner catapulted into Muckross as the new P.E. teacher and took over our team, the Junior A's. This was a completely new experience for us and we thrived on it, and when we moved up to the Senior team she told us we could call her Susan. OOOOOH we had arrived! We thought we were sooooo cool and all grown up. There was nothing we wouldn't do for her and that is why we could be seen doing our 'rounds' every morning at break, running around the circle of grass where the prefabs were. 2012 hockey teams eat you hearts out—we were hot!

We thought nothing of getting two buses to our matches on Saturdays—no 4x4's for us!—just green, bone-shaking, cold, never-on-time CIE. There was one match we played out in Clontarf in the snow which wasn't abandoned until midway through the 2nd half, the only reason being that we could no longer find the ball in the thick snow. I can still remember the long, cold, wet two hours it took to get home. It didn't do us any harm, we didn't even get a sniffle out of it.

We moved on. We remained members of Muckross Hockey Club and went on many trips, one of them to the Cross Cup in Galway, which was an annual event. One of the years Iris had just bought a Fiat 500 convertible which she christened "her bippi". We packed into the tiny car and set off for the 140 mile journey to Galway. This tournament was the first trip that we went on in the club and we saw another dimension to the club and boy did we love it! At this stage we are afraid to say we were more interested in the social aspect than the hockey and couldn't be expected to play our best after only 3 hours of sleep the night before.

Later still, as married women, our interest in Muckross HC prevailed. Our friendship was as strong as ever and we enjoyed many trips abroad together supporting Muckross 1st's in Club Championships tournaments. It was in the early years of these trips that we made new and lasting friendships which we both still to this day enjoy. From these lasting friendships, love of hockey and aging bodies the Muckross Vets team was born and we played in various tournaments. One of these was a mixed one, in Seven Oaks in Kent which we went to seven years in a row. Unfortunately we didn't do too well on the hockey pitch but never failed to win the entertainment award, and so Muckross became famous in the South East of England.

We both celebrate our 60th in August 2012. Muckross was not just where we went to school and played hockey, it has been an integral part of our lives and will continue to be. Perhaps this song, written by a social group in Muckross HC, sums up our love for Muckross and what it gave to our lives:

*Muckross we love you Muckross we do, When we're very far away, We'll think of you
And someday when we're older, We'll look back and say, We would play for Muckross now
But our green knickers are grey.*

*Muckross we love you Muckross we do, And for all those years of fun
We've enjoyed them too, And some day when our children, Are playing this game, We will say good
gracious! The committee is still the same! Muckross we love you Muckross we do.*



Above: Emer O'Brien (née Flanagan) and Iris Condron (née FitzPatrick).



Sport at Muckross

HOCKEY

Joan Horne (née Priestman)



As an example of outstanding, and durable sporting talent in a past pupil, Joan Horne has few equals. She became a pupil in Muckross in 1936, and has remained connected to the school ever since. Her achievements as a hockey player are remembered as a series of 'glittering prizes'. Her international career lasted from 1952-1965, during which time she gained 43 international caps, and captained the Irish side in 1962 for their win over England. She played in all positions on the field (except in goal), exhibiting astonishing versatility. She was one of three Irish players selected from a combined British and Irish team that toured the United States of America in 1965. She also captained the Irish team that beat Holland in the same year.

She not only played hockey to international acclaim, but was later to set up the combined Dominican Past Pupil unions Golf society in the early sixties. She became its first captain, and then president for 3 years. In 1977, she was one of the organisers of the '100' club, which raised funds for the Diamond Jubilee anniversary of Muckross Hockey club.

In 1994, she became an honorary life member of the Irish Ladies Hockey Union, and was inducted into the Irish Hockey Hall of Fame in 2006. Later, she adapted her skills to both tennis and golf. She became captain of Lahinch golf club in 1972, and captain of Milltown in 1985.



Left: Hockey team c. 1961. Mary Baldwin, Deirdre Ross, Veronica Hurson, Madeleine O'Dwyer, Joan Hayes, Brenda Moore, Annette Soraghan, Darina Boden.



Sandra O’Gorman —Hockey



Sandra O’Gorman is one of the best hockey goalkeepers Ireland ever produced. She gained 44 caps and won the award for Outstanding Goalie of the 1994 World Cup tournament in Belfield. The Muckross goalkeeper won the last of her 44 caps at the 1995 European Nations Cup finals in Amsterdam.

THE BANKS FAMILY

MAUREEN BANKS (née WALKER) born 1915, attended Muckross from 1920 to 1933.

She was heavily involved in hockey, playing for the school and then Muckross Hockey Club. She gained Senior Interprovincial honours but unfortunately World War 2 resulted in no international hockey during most of her best playing days.

In the 1970s she coached hockey and was actively involved in the Parents’ committee which installed the original ‘all weather’ hockey pitch on the school grounds.

She and her family were living in the Ranelagh area of Dublin at the time. Maureen died in 1998. Her daughter GERALDINE BANKS, class of 1977, is currently living in Ranelagh.

THE BOWE FAMILY

MARIE BOWE (née O’GORMAN) from Hollybank Ave., Ranelagh, attended Muckross.

Later her daughters attended: PATRICIA O’CONNELL (née BOWE) class of 1971, now living in Cork. HELEN BITTEL (née BOWE) now living in Milltown.

Patricia’s daughters also attended before the family moved to Cork. JESSICA, OLIVIA and GILLIAN O’CONNELL.



Above: Muckross Hockey Team June 1984.



Sport at Muckross

HOCKEY

Ciara O'Brien

A member of the 1997 Leinster Schools Cup winning team with Muckross, Ciara continued to progress her hockey career after leaving school and amassed 156 international caps for the senior Irish hockey team.

Although injury forced Ciara to hang up her stick prematurely in 2009, she remains one of the most capped female international hockey players and travelled the world whilst representing Ireland.

After leaving Muckross, Ciara undertook a Social Science degree in UCD, followed by a Masters in European Studies in the Dublin European Institute, UCD. Ciara coached in Muckross while at university and in between international events. She was always willing to give something back to the school following their support of and interest in her hockey while she was a student.

Ciara made her senior international debut in 2001 against England. Two years later, she earned her first of many milestones lining up against France to earn her 50th cap at the European Championships. Her 100th cap came against Italy in 2006 at the World Cup Qualifiers and 150th against Korea in 2008 at the Olympic Qualifiers.



Her personal highlights included the 2002 World Cup in Australia and three European Championships, including a 5th place finish in front of a home crowd in Dublin in 2005. Hockey also afforded Ciara the opportunity to play in front of large crowds in New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, the USA, Korea and she encountered the most vociferous and enthusiastic supporters in Argentina.



Above: Maria (no. 312) In action.

Maria Lynch—Running

Maria has won many all-Ireland running titles and represented Ireland at the European Under 23 Championships in Helsinki in 1999, the World Student Games in China in 2000, the European Senior Championships in Gothenburg in 2001 and the World Indoor Championships in Birmingham in 2003. Her career came to an end when she sustained a navicular fracture in Australia while training for the Athens Olympics in 2004.

At school she won every race from minor to senior on the track over 800m and 1500m, the only athlete to hold the record of being unbeaten in her school career. She also won Cross Country All-Ireland Races representing Muckcross when Junior, Intermediate and Senior.

Claire Bergin—Athletics

Before leaving Muckcross in 2003, Claire had a successful national and international athletics career, qualifying for the World Junior Championships in Jamaica. She continued representing DCU and Ireland at various international championships. She then became a break-woman for the first ever Irish Women's Bobsleigh Team at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver 2010, finishing a very respectable 17th.

Now she is back in athletics as a member of the Irish Sprints relay teams, and she is Ireland's National Athletics 100m and 400m senior womens' champion.



Sarah Hopkins—Gymnastics

Sarah has been a member of Muckcross Park Gymnastics Club since she was seven years old. She was a member of the Irish Squad from 2000 until retiring in 2007. Her major international competitions include the World Championships in Denmark 2006, European Championships in Hungary 2005 and European Youth Olympics in Paris 2003.

Left: Sarah Hopkins with coach Nicola McEnroe (née McGlade), also a past pupil.



HIGH JUMP

Deirdre Ryan

Deirdre left Muckross in 2000 and will shortly compete in the High Jump at the London 2012 Olympics. The eyes of the nation will be focused on this superb athlete, competing in one of the most challenging and dramatic of Olympic events.

Deirdre is at present in Germany training with world renowned coach, Gerd Osenberg. Her past record of achievements demonstrates her rise to excellence. It also serves to illustrate the steep and sturdy path to such sporting success, and the stamina and commitment necessary to get to the top.



Above: Deirdre Ryan of Ireland competes in the women's high jump qualification round during day six of the 13th IAAF World Athletics Championships at the Daegu Stadium on September 1, 2011 in Daegu, South Korea (photo, Ian Walton/Getty Images AsiaPac).

The major championship from which she qualified for London 2012, took place in Daegu, South Korea in August 2011, where she jumped 1.95m in the qualification round to gain her place. She came sixth overall with a jump of 1.93m on the day.

THE GRUMLEY FAMILY

ORLA RAINERT (née GRUMLEY) – adopting this year! Attended Muckross Park College from 1971 to 1985. She and her family were living in Dundrum at the time.

Orla had 3 sisters who also attended Muckross. BLANAID GRUMLEY-TRAYNOR, class of 1980. SHARON WEAVER, class of 1983. NAOMI GORE, class of 1990.

THE MONKS FAMILY

MARY HATCH (née MONKS) 1952–65 was living in Dundrum when she attended Muckross.

Other members of her family who attended were sisters ANGELA and LOUISE, brothers PAUL and GERARD, nieces EMILY and LAURA MONKS and cousins DEIRDRE and NUALA MURPHY.



The Barry Sisters

Valerie and Marguerite Barry

The story of the Barry sisters is not only unique in Muckross sporting history, but in the history of Irish sport, and especially so in the annals of Irish hockey. They were both natural athletes, who excelled at a range of sports. They won international laurels in hockey, and athletics. They also played cricket for Leinster.



Above: Valerie Clancy (née Barry) Class of 1960 being presented with her award by Micheál O Muircheartaigh.

Marguerite represented Ireland in the high jump and went on to become an international hockey umpire. Amongst their fantastic credits, is that they were the only sisters to captain Irish hockey teams in the same year, the season of 1968/69. On March 22nd Valerie led the Irish team against Wales, and Marguerite captained the Irish reserves. Valerie's spectacular goal scoring talents included a hat trick against the Netherlands in 1963. She was inducted into the Irish Hockey Hall of fame in 2008. They have both become golfers of distinction.

Marguerite achieved golfer of the year in 2007, having done so also in 1969, at Hermitage.

Irish Hockey Hall of Fame honours a Muckross past pupil

In 2006 the Irish Hockey Association instituted an exciting new initiative, the Hockey Hall of Fame, to honour a carefully selected group of players from Irish hockey who have made exceptional contributions to Irish hockey and are worthy of recognition. In 2008 Valerie Clancy (née Barry) was one of the six players chosen that year to be inducted in the Hockey Hall of Fame. The award ceremony took place in the Ballsbridge Hotel on 31st May 2008. It was attended by celebrities and dignitaries within Irish sport and was hosted by the legend of Irish sport, Micheál O Muircheartaigh.

Muckross can be very proud of Valerie who began playing hockey when she was a student at the school and went on to become an International hockey player with 26 caps which she acquired between 1962 and 1973.

The citation for Valerie at her inauguration into the Irish Hockey Hall of Fame read:

'Valerie had a distinguished International career spanning eleven years. An attacking player, she could perform outstandingly in any forward position. Her exquisite touch and skill made her the torment of defenders and her quick shot in the circle resulted in numerous Irish goals. In 1963 she scored a hat trick in Ireland's 3-2 victory over the Netherlands. She captained Ireland in 1968/1969.'

It is interesting to note that 1963 was the last time Ireland beat the Netherlands – 46 years ago!



ORIENTEERING—Muckross Park Orienteers

Catherine Lyons

Muckross Park Orienteers (MPO) was formed during the mid 1970s. Spurred on by Norah and her husband the late Joss Lynam, the club went from strength to strength. Sr Barnabas was the chief motivator on the ground who organised a bus to transport MPO to events in the Dublin and Wicklow mountains. The Lynam's daughter Ruth led the club in mapping Herbert Park which greatly helped with map-reading skills.

MPO took many of the prizes at the Leinster Schools Championships each year in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In later years, the Convery family continued to represent MPO in orienteering and collected many accolades. Several members went on to win top places at the Irish national championships and later to represent Ireland internationally. Most of these went on to join Ajax Orienteering Club and later other clubs around the world, and competed at elite level up to the 1990s.

Of the class of 1981, Orla Cooke competed at the World Orienteering Championships and Catherine Lyons competed at the Student World Championships. Tara Horan was also a member of the national orienteering squad and Michele Coleman, Erika Keane and Ann Masterson (class of 1980) competed internationally at both junior and senior level. They also competed in Hill racing and mountain marathons at home and abroad in the eighties and nineties.

The Conway girls

Karen, Maeve and Phillipa

These three sisters first played sport at school. They played basketball, hockey and athletics. Karen developed a passion for both the discus and the hammer. She competed for Leinster and in the all-Ireland championships. Later she continued to compete at collegiate level in Arizona and New York.

Phillipa also competed in the discus and hammer championships. She won the All Ireland senior school title in the discus, and her hammer throw gained her a fifth place. Her biggest achievement to date is a bronze medal at the national senior ladies championships in the discus event in 2007. She lives in London but hopes to compete again in Ireland in this summer.

Together with her sisters, Maeve finds time to support Crusaders AC where they all enjoyed athletics, especially the hammer.



CRICKET

Alice Stanton

Alice Stanton played cricket for Merrion Cricket Club, South Leinster, Leinster and Ireland. As her childhood years were spent on Anglesea Road, next door to Merrion Cricket Club, she started playing cricket with the boys from a young age. As soon as Leinster's Women's Cricket was revived in the early 1970s she was immediately selected for the Senior Merrion's Ladies team, even though at the time she was only 13 years old.

Between 1983 and 1990, she was capped on the Irish Women's Team on 15 occasions, playing against The Netherlands (5), Denmark (2), England (6), Trinidad and Tobago (2) and Australia (2). She was initially selected as an all-rounder, but her main contributions to the Irish team were as a batswoman. Her top international score was 27 runs, when Ireland beat The Netherlands in 1986 during the European Women's Championship, hosted by Ireland, and played in Phoenix Cricket Club, Dublin.

Alice V. Stanton, Muckross School 1965-1978, Merrion Cricket Club 1974-1999, and International Cricket Player 1983-1990.



Above: Alice Stanton batting and Kay Bergin as wicket keeper in a South Leinster versus North Leinster Match in 1987.

Isolda Howard—Cricket

In 1982 Isolda Howard was elected first president of the Irish Women's Cricket Union which she helped to form in 1938. She played cricket for Ireland as a left-hand bowler. In 1936 she organised a heroic first women's match at Sydney Parade against Deirdre Ennis's XI.





Sport at Muckross

GOLF

Gay Rodgers

It took an amazing 91 years from the foundation of the PPU to form the Golf Society. The inaugural outing took place at Elmgreen Golf Club on 25th September 2003. This was thanks to the then president of the PPU, Valerie Clancy (née Barry) who made all the contacts and arrangements. The weather was excellent and 11 past pupils played golf. Eadaoin Maher (née O'Connor) was the winner with a superb score of 45 points. Since then the annual outing has become a popular event with a record 50 past pupils playing in 2008.

In 2004 the Campbell sisters, Phyl Kelleher and Carmel Keogh, presented the Golf Society with a lovely antique silver rose bowl as our Perpetual Trophy. It was a most thoughtful and generous gift and we are most appreciative of it. Since then the trophy has been presented to the following winners: Moya Williams (née Forde) in 2004 and 2009, Olivia Byrne 2005, Marguerite Barry 2006, Janice Woodcock (née Burke) 2007, Anne Keane (née McIntyre) 2008, Claire Baxter 2010 and Susan FitzGerald (née Levins), 2011.

In 2005 the annual outing moved to Edmonstown Golf Club, Rathfarnham. This has proved to be a lovely and successful venue for the Society and where the Centenary Outing will be played in September.



Golf Society Lady Captains:

- Valerie Clancy 2003/04
- Sheila Hughes (née Nally) 2005
- Beatrice Doran 2006
- Phyl Kelleher 2007
- Mary O'Brien (née Whooley) 2008
- Annette Quigley (née Soraghan) 2009
- Darina Marshall 2010
- Moya Williams 2011
- Eadaoin Maher 2012

Left: Muckross Golf Society 2004 winner Moya Williams (née Forde), receiving the Perpetual Trophy from sisters Carmel Keogh and Phyl Kelleher with Lady Captain Valerie Clancy.



Combined Dominican Schools' Golf Outing

Gay Rodgers

Joan Priestman (née Horne), a past pupil of Muckross and Wicklow, was the president of Wicklow PPU in 1964. Joan had the idea of forming a golf society for Dominican girls as she was mad jealous of her Loreto friends who had their school society.

The first golf outing of the Combined Dominican Schools was held in Edmonstown Golf Club on the 27th June 1964, and it has continued ever since. 71 Ladies played in the first outing. The Green fee was ten shillings and the cost of the supper (as it was referred to in the minutes) was four shillings.

Muckross Park has not won the competition since 1993 so maybe the Centenary year will be lucky for us.



Left: Anyone for Tennis? Class of '64. Eithne Ní Fhlatharta, Clare Doyle, Mary Murphy, Anne Daly, Marcella Burke, Annette Soraghan, Darina Boden, Veronica Hurson, Emer O'Sullivan.



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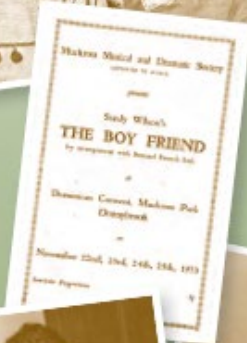
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Chapter Five

Musicals and Drama





MUCKROSS MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Beatrice M. Doran

The Dominican nuns instilled a love of music, drama and the performing arts into generations of Muckross girls. The Junior School saw us take part in a number of pageants and plays. In our first year in the Senior School, Sr. Vincenzo produced and directed a play in Irish called *Na Bóithre* by Padraig Pearse. It was Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Patrick, though, who introduced us to the joys of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and together they produced and directed a number of their shows during our time at school, and for many years afterwards. On leaving school many of the past pupils were delighted to be able to join the Muckross Musical & Dramatic Society.

Documentary evidence of the activities of the Past Pupils' Musical and Dramatic Society is hard to come by. The society was founded in 1936 and continued until 1980 producing both plays and operas. The support of Mother Prioress and the Community, especially Sr. Anna, and Sr. Louis Dominic, and the Past Pupils' Union, were of tremendous help in keeping the society alive, not to mention the role played by people like Peggie Hussey, Peggy Nelson, Beth and Kathleen MacAllister, Mary Monks, Aline Molony (O'Dwyer) and Muriel Hackett, who were active members of the committee of the society for a number of years. The School provided rehearsal facilities, and also the venue for the various productions over the years. In trying to piece together a history of the society, time was spent trawling through the major Irish newspapers from the 1930s to 1980 looking for reviews of the society's shows. The indexed newspapers produced a few notices and reviews of a number of their shows, but they were insufficient to write an entire article. Another source for reviews of the society's productions was the A.I.M.S (Association of Irish Musical Societies) Bulletin, and Alice Hughes provided a number of reviews from this publication as did Brendan and Dolores Hughes. It was also necessary to find former members of the society, to hear first-hand about the shows they were in, and their experiences as active members of the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society.

Thanks to Therese Birthistle, a former President of the Past Pupils' Union, two meetings took place with her sister Ita Hackett, who was very active in the society productions during the 1940s and 1950s, as was her sister Dympna. Ita was generous with her time and her memories of the society, and entertained me with details of the shows she had performed in, and those in which she was Stage Manager. She gave me programmes of the shows from the 1940s and 1950s, and provided some of the photos in this chapter.



Mary Monks, who was PRO for both the Muckcross Musical and Dramatic Society and for A.I.M.S., and who now lives in Vancouver, was a tremendous source of information. Other members and producers of the society productions whom I spoke with included John Allen, Pat Boylan, Muriel Hackett, Patricia and Kevin Hough, Alice Hughes, Brendan Hughes, Dolores Hughes, Aline Molony (O'Dwyer) and Joan Merrigan. They all provided invaluable information on the society's productions, including programmes and reviews from the 1960s and 1970s.

Valerie Cox was also active in the society at one time during the early 1970s, and was responsible for a spin off of the society of people interested in Poetry reading. Speaking with all of these former members of the society, it came across loud and clear how much they had enjoyed the experience of taking part in the plays and operas, what fun they had, the happy memories of the shows, the friends they made, and they are all still in contact with many of them. Reference to the wonderful parties, for which the society were famous, were frequent. The parties took place during and after the shows. The society depended on members of other Musical Societies, such as the St. Louis Musical Society, and the Rathmines & Rathgar Musical Society, to augment the casts of the shows.

Finding the financial resources to put on plays and musicals was always a problem. Aline Molony (O'Dwyer) tells me that the Muckcross Musical and Dramatic Society were always fund-raising to help the society finance the shows. It was Mary Monks who introduced the concept of Patrons of the Society. A list of the patrons appeared on the programme for *The Boy Friend* produced in 1973, and included: Mother Prioress, Mr. P. Boylan, Mr. E. Brady, Mr. & Mrs. J.L. Corcoran, Miss M. Hackett, Mr. & Mrs. P. Hackett, Mr. P. Hackett, Mr. B.





Musicals and Drama

Hughes, Miss M. Kane, Miss B. MacAlister, Miss K. MacAlister, Mr. & Mrs. J.P. Monks and Mr. & Mrs. E. O'Kelly. Obviously members of the society had persuaded their family members to become patrons! There was also some local advertising in the programmes too, which would have been another source of finance. The society produced a show called *Good Night Vienna* in the early years and it was not a financial success.

Early productions of the Society

Ita Hackett recalls attending one of the Past Pupils' Musical and Dramatic Society productions while still at school in the 1930s. This was an *Alice in Wonderland*, produced in the 1930s with Peggie Randall and her sister Terry in it. Peggie Randall later became Peggie Hussey, and was the first President of the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society. That well-known second President of the society, Peggy Nelson, was in this production.

Peggy Nelson was the very heart of the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society, and was its President and driving force for many years. Valerie Cox tells a lovely story about Peggy and her second husband Charles Kelly, founder and editor of *Dublin Opinion*. During the course of rehearsals one Saturday at lunchtime in Muckross, Peggy took off and headed for Herbert Park where she became engaged to Charlie Kelly. They married subsequently, and it is interesting that Charlie's late wife had been Peggy's best friend, and Peggy's late husband and Charlie had been best friends too. Peggy and Charlie were very happy together. Charlie was also a well-respected painter and the cartoonist for *Dublin Opinion*. Peggy and Charlie held several exhibitions of his work in the house they bought in Booterstown.

On leaving school, Ita Hackett joined the society, and took part in many of their productions. She recalled an early production of *Pride and Prejudice*, which had the Lemass sisters, Peggy and Maureen, in it. During the 1940s, the society performed *A Quiet Wedding* in the Peacock Theatre, perhaps the most popular of Esther McCracken's plays. Again, Ita Hackett was in this production. Ita tells me that, although not originally cast as Marcia, she swapped the part for which she had been originally cast with another member of the cast, as the other person refused to say she was pregnant on the stage which was part of the script! This play was directed by P.J. O'Connor who produced it several times in Dublin and Ita said she often got called in at the last moment to play the part of Marcia in these other productions. P.J. O'Connor also produced a play called *The Carmelites*, which was the last show he did with the society.

An early production was *The Quaker Girl* a popular opera. This was directed by Gerard Victory, of RTÉ, and a well-known Irish composer. Gerard Victory's two daughters Isolde



and Fiona Victory are past pupils of Muckross. The leading lady in *The Quaker Girl* was Ita Hackett's elder sister Maura. Her then boy friend, and later her husband, Niall McGovern, played the part of Charteris in the show. They are the parents of Barry McGovern the well-known Irish actor. Niall McGovern's love interest in the show was Frances Curran who had a lovely voice and played the part of the Princess in the production. Other members of the cast included Denis O'Riordan, Eileen McNamara, Una McNabb, Des Broadberry and Ita Hackett who played the Landlady of the Inn. Many of the rehearsals for this production took place around the piano in the Hackett home. The Hackett twins (Fran and Therese) were very small at the time but they knew every word of all the songs. They attended a number of performances of the show and Ita said they were always afraid that if anyone missed their lines that they would be provided by the Hackett twins in the audience!

Another early production that Ita Hackett performed in was an Opera called *Nita* by Pat Delahunty with music by Gerard Victory. This was produced by the society in 1944, at the Father Matthew Hall, Dublin. Pat Delahunty directed a number of shows for the society in the 1940s, and eventually went to Africa where he was active in radio.

In 1945 the society produced *And the World knew him not*, a passion play by Agnes Johnston, with Harry Killick as the Producer. Among the large cast were: E. McNamara, C. Morrissey, B. Murphy, J. Byrne, P. Lemass, M. Dunne, T. Foley, E. Murray, B. Ballantine, D. Mack, P. Delahunty, M. Gibson, J. Roberts, P. Doran, P. Cleary, D. Mackey, G. Sullivan, E. Sherry, P. Kennefick, J. Birsthistle, J. Kennedy, J. Roberts, D.H. O'Riordan, J. Reid, J. O'Mara, M. Hackett, J. Byrne, P. Warren, J. Hackett, M. Lemass, N. Cleary, M. Killoran, M. Flanagan, O. Burgess, G. McCann, H. Trainor, J. Kelterer, W. Sheridan, P. Cleary, J. Boylan, and J. O'Mara.

Traitors's Gate was one of the best plays the society ever produced, according to Ita Hackett. It is the story of Saint Thomas More by Morna Stuart. Joseph O'Riordan played the part of St. Thomas More — he was a brother of Denis O'Riordan who appeared in a number of the society's productions. The most important female part in this show was that of More's daughter Margaret, and this was played by Margaret Dunne. P.J. O'Connor was the producer for this show. He produced many shows for the society before being appointed head of drama at Radio Éireann. The wonderful sets for the show were created by Michael O'Herlihy, a brother of Dan O'Herlihy the well-known actor. The next set of sets Michael O'Herlihy created were for a season of plays with MacLiammoir and Edwards in the Gate Theatre. Michael O'Herlihy went on to Hollywood where for many years he directed a vast number of films including *Hawai Five O* and *The A Team*.



Musicals and Drama

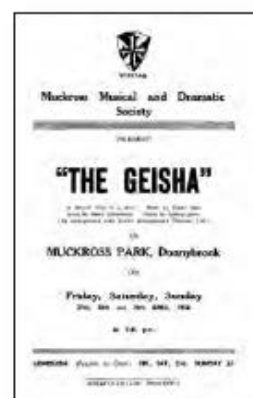
Another production of the society was *Quality Street* by J.M. Barrie produced in 1946. Among the people taking part in the society's early productions were Margaret Dunne who, Ita said, always played leading roles in the shows, as well as Eve Murray, Betty Ballantine, Evelyn Sherry, Pat Warren, Noreen Clery and Olive Burgess. Some members of the society took part in a film in 1946, which was made for TWA an American airline. This was a promotional film about Ireland, one of the countries to which this airline flew. The promotional film involved members of the society and the film was shot on Greystones beach. Ita Hackett provided me with a number of photos of this event.

The society took part in the Father Matthew Drama Festival of 1947 with a play called *A Man's House*, a biblical play by John Drinkwater. Included in the cast of this production were Margaret Dunne, Una McNab, Maeve and Pat Maughan, Phyllis Cooney, Eileen McNamara (afterwards Eileen Monahan, a former President of the Muckross Past Pupils' Union). Many will recall Gerry Sullivan, who played the Doctor in the TV drama *Glenroe* on RTÉ television in recent years. He was active in the society in the 1940s and 1950s. In the chorus of this production were E. McNulty, T. McGuikin, P. Maume, M. Maume, M. Hackett, B. Murphy, I. Hackett, B. O'Donnell, R. Wilson and T. Feeney. Other gentlemen involved in the society at this time included Denis O'Riordan who produced some of the shows, Des McCarthy, Conor Coghlan and Ned Frewen.

The society produced a *Quiet Weekend*, by Esther McCracken in 1954. The Director was Willie O'Gorman, who also produced plays in the Abbey Theatre. Included in the cast were Colm Fearon, Betty Murphy, Marjory McCauley, Pat Stephenson, Margaret Dunne, Kathleen MacAllister, Alan Hanna, Miceal Fearon, Peggy Nelson and Mary Golden.

Other interesting plays done by the society in the 1950s included *A Murder has been Arranged* (Emlyn Williams), a 1930s ghost story, and *Dear Octopus* (Dodie Smith), a comedy in three acts that starred Ita Hackett and Margaret Dunne. Three children were also required for this play, and where else did they get the children, but from the Hackett household, (there were ten Hacketts who all went to Muckross), so the twins Fran and Therese and their brother, Tom Hackett, took part in this production.

In 1956 the society produced *The Geisha*, a story of a teahouse. This is a musical comedy in two acts. The score was composed by Sidney Jones, to a libretto by Owen Hall, with lyrics by Harry





Greenbank. Dympna Hackett, a sister of Ita Hackett, played the lead in this production and she was also in three other musicals. Unfortunately, no further details of this show were available.

Blossom Time with music by Franz Schubert, arranged by Sigmund Romberg, and book and lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly, was produced by the society in 1957. It is a tangled web of romantic intrigue accompanied by Schubert's music. Joe Flood, a well-known performer and director of shows in many Irish musical societies played the part of Schubert. Others in the cast included Paddy Boylan, Gerry Byrne, Jim Byrne, Noel Byrne, Reg Clery, Ned Dempsey, Arthur Dunne, Colm Fearon, Miceal Fearon, Ray Joyce, Kevin O'Connor, Michael Mahon, Gerry Ryan and Fred Taylor. Some of these gentlemen were also active members of the Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society. Among the ladies taking part in *Blossom Time* were Muriel Boylan, Pat Carroll, Gerty Duffy, Greta Gaffney, Terry Ganly, Fionnuala Green, Nessa Fearon, Irma Flynn, Geraldine Hughes, Nuala Hunt, Loretto McIntyre, Una O'Donoghue, Pat Stephenson, Detta Sullivan, Lola Starr and Claire Thomson. Ita Hackett was Stage Manager for this production, which was directed by P. J. O'Connor.

More recent productions

The Tourist Bored by Fergus Cunningham was produced in April 1961. Fergus was a member of the Muckcross Musical and Dramatic Society. Another play done by the society in the 1960s was *Quality Street*, a comedy in four acts by J.M. Barrie. This play was written before his more famous play, *Peter Pan*. *Quality Street* is the story of two sisters who start a school "for genteel children," and the society's production was a great success.

Blithe Spirit is a comedy by Noel Coward and was performed by the society in 1964, with Eileen Knowles as Producer. Included in the cast were Sheila Marlow, a wonderful actress, who appeared in many of the society's plays, and Damien Hand, who also took part in the society's musicals, as well as being an active member of the Rathmines & Rathgar Musical Society. Others in the cast were Muriel Hackett, Eithne Bolger, Ciaran Kenny, Angela Cullen and Bridin O'Kelly. This was performed in Muckcross



Above: Muriel Hackett and Damien Hand in *Blythe Spirit*, 1964.



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Park School, and an additional charity performance was also held in the Irish Life Theatre. The President of the society Mrs. Peggy Nelson was asked if the society would perform the play in aid of the establishment of a Hostel for Homeless Youths in Dublin.

Another play performed by the society was *Good Night Mrs. Puffin*, a delightful British comedy by Arthur Lovegrove. This has been described as a romantic charmer, which humorously stereotypes the parental attitudes of the British upper classes. The cast of this play included Sheila Marlowe, Aline Molony (O'Dwyer), Muriel Hackett, Bridín O'Kelly, Maureen Nagle, Kevin Hough, Paul Flynn Bill Blood-Smyth, John Fitzpatrick and Norman O'Byrne. Yet again, the Producer was Eileen Knowles.



Above: Damien Hand as Grosvenor and Beatrice Doran as Lady Jane in *Patience*, by Gilbert & Sullivan.

Having taken part in Gilbert and Sullivan Operas at school, it was a great pleasure some years later when we heard there were to be auditions at the Past Pupils' Musical Society for Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*. My great friend, the late Claire Dowling, who had played a principal role in Gilbert and Sullivan operas while at school, also auditioned with me for a principal part in this production. Both of us were successful, and Claire sang the role of Patience and I played Lady Jane. The production was by Eileen Knowles, with Teresa Owens as Musical Director. Other members of this cast in this 1965 production were Patricia and Kevin Hough, Donal Molony, Aline Molony (O'Dwyer,) Joan Sharvin, Pat Russell, Damien Hand, Fred Graham, (afterwards stalwarts of the

Rathmines & Rathgar Musical Society, as were the Houghs,) and Frank Dunne a well-known Dublin tenor who played the Duke. The chorus in this production included A. Linehan, G. Doyle, M. Hackett, B. M. O'Kelly, M. Barry, B. Barker, M. Finlay, M. Burke, D. Bowden, U. Hughes, U. O'Connor M. Hunt, M. Nagle, M. McDonald, N. Boyse, D. Mullen, P. Clancy, S. Keating, B. McKenna, P. Doyle, F. Nagle, M. Rafter, N. Larkin, S. Coughlan, J. Lynch, H. Cummins, C. Kenny, R. Breslin. Claire Dowling and myself went on to tread the boards in the Gaiety Theatre, as members of the R&R.

On Friday 28th October 1965 the society presented a Gala Concert in aid of the Muckross Park Building Fund. Artists taking part included Reg Cant and Ben Cole, Brendan



Cavanagh, an Operatic Ensemble of Feis Ceol prize winners, Brendan McShane, Elizabeth and Ingrid Hannan, Catherine O'Connor, Kevin Hough, Othmar Remy Arthur and Marjorie Courtney. The accompanist for the evening was Carmel Moore and the compere was Albert le Bas. A short one act play was also performed at this Gala evening called *The Parson's Bride*. The cast is listed as Mrs Boylan, Miss Doyle, Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. Hand. The producer was Mrs. Bolger with Miss McAlister as Stage Manager and Lighting by Miss McAlister.

The following year (1966) the society produced *The Yeoman of the Guard* another Gilbert and Sullivan favourite. Again Eileen Knowles was the Producer, with Miss M. Griffiths as Musical Director. Kevin Hough, Damien Hand, Paul Flynn, Pat Russell, Paddy Brennan, Conor Malone, Richard Stapleton, Des Anderson, Tony Sweeney, Sean O'Sullivan, Harry Cummins, Patricia and Fionnuala Hough, Eithne Bolger, Nessa O'Hara (Fearon) took the main parts in this production. The chorus of Yeomen included J. Dillon, E. Taylor P. Doyle M. Dolley, J. Fleming and N. Larkin. The Citizens chorus included M. McDonald, M. Burke, B. Barker. D. Boden, M. Murphy, A. O'Dwyer, M. Hackett, B. O'Kelly, N. Boyce, A. Linehan, M. Nagle, T. O'Dwyer, M. Rafter, J. Dalton, A. MacAlister and B. McKenna.

The society did *The Mikado* in 1967 with Damien Hand and Kevin Hough. Minnie Clancy played Yum Yum, Pat Boylan was Pitti Sing, and Aline Molony (O'Dwyer) was Peep-Bo. Pat Russell who was in a number of the society's productions played Pooh-Bah. Unfortunately, I failed to find a programme for this production.

During 1967-68 George Bernard Shaw's *You Never can Tell* was produced by the society. Written by Shaw in 1897, it is a play in four acts. There was no programme available for this production, although I did ascertain that among the cast were Billy Blood Smith and John Fitzpatrick.

Eileen Knowles produced *Salad Days*, by Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds, for the society in 1969. Leading the cast were Kevin Hough, who appeared in six productions with the society, and Ann Hodgins who played the role of the heroine, Jane. Though probably



Above: *The Mikado*, December 1962. The three little girls from school were Darina O'Dwyer, Carol Cluskey and Helen O'Sullivan.



Musicals and Drama

dated now, the show's popularity and appeal probably lies in its light-hearted innocence, and apparent simplicity. Other regular members of the society's productions appeared in this one too, Included were Nessa O'Hara (Fearon), Pat Boylan, Muriel Hackett, Carmel Farrelly, Ivy Farrell, Muriel Casey, Bairbre O'Kelly, Damien Hand, Paul Flynn, Fran McKeivitt, Pat Russell and Campbell Grant. This production appears to have been done in conjunction with the Dominican Convent Eccles Street, and was performed there as well as in Muckross.



Above: Press photo at the dress rehearsal of *Bless The Bride*.

The society performed *Bless the Bride*, a light Opera by A.P. Herbert with music by Vivian Ellis in 1970. The producer was Lorna Madigan (a Muckross Past Pupil), with Michael Murtagh as Musical Director, and Choreography was by Jeanne Murnaghan, another Muckross girl. Leading lights of this show included Pat Boylan, Anne Breslin, Rita Buckley, Betty Deegan, Fionnuala Hough, Muriel Hackett, Margot Kent, Margaret Madigan, Aline Molony, (O'Dwyer), Mary Monks, Bridin O'Kelly, and Wendy Stephens, Gentlemen of the cast were Paul Flynn, Fergal Murphy, Brendan Muldowney, Frank Murphy, Jimmy O'Reilly, Brendan Hughes, Ed Blake, Niall Sharpe, Members of the chorus were C. Nagle, P. Hough F. McGowan, D. McKeown, M. Hough, K. Van Haften, M. Kent, and E.O'Kelly.

There were two productions by the society in 1971. *The Heiress*, a play by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, was based on the novel *Washington Square* by Henry James. This play was produced by Paul Murray, a Senior Producer in the Drama Department in RTÉ, who later married Lorna Madigan, the producer of *Bless the Bride*, and a Muckross past pupil!

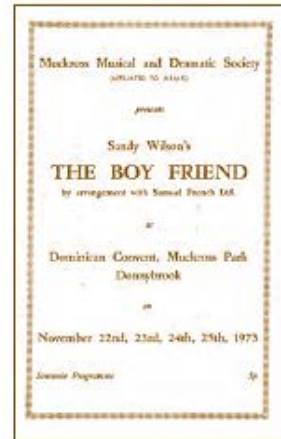


The same year (1971), the society performed *The Quaker Girl*, a musical comedy in three acts by James Tanner and Lionel Monckton. Josephine Scanlan was the producer. She was the wife of Chris Curran, and both were performers and directors of Musical Societies throughout Ireland. Pat Boylan was the Quaker Girl in this production and Brendan Hughes was also in it. Others in the case were Ed Brady, Muriel Hackett, Aline Molony (O'Dwyer) and Frank Cullinane. Phil Campbell remembers that in the earlier version,



which was about 1955 or 1956, that she, her sister Carmel and Evelyn Foran were dancers in the show. Their mother, Lil Campbell, was the accompanist and musical director for this earlier production.

In 1973 the society presented Sandy Wilson's *The Boy Friend*. This musical is set in the carefree world of the French Riviera in the Roaring Twenties. Produced by Pat Russell, with John King as Musical Director and Choreography by Annette Hynes, the show was conducted by John King and Paul Deegan. According to a review of the show in the *A.I.M.S. Bulletin* there were power cuts during the show, which must have been a nightmare for the committee and actors. Mary Monks recalls that the late Terry McLoughlin a member of the society, provided a generator. This was used for just one performance—fortunately, as it was quite noisy! The light it provided was somewhat dim. However, electricity was restored in the middle of one of the musical numbers—resulting in a round of applause!



Yet again Brendan Hughes was an outstanding member of the cast according to the following review: "Quite the most irresistible performance of the evening was that of Brendan Hughes as the alcoholic lecherous Lord Brockhurst." Included in the cast of *The Boy Friend* were Fionnuala Egan, Pat Scully, Pat Buckley, Pat Hughes, Mary Farrell, Loreto O'Connor, Derry Smyth, Greg Murphy, Tom McConalogue, Pat Boylan, Derek Pullen, Tony Mulholland, Terry McLoughlin, Muriel Hackett, Campbell Grant, Ed Brady, Ray Cobban, Christine Redmond, Hilary Moore, Norman O'Byrne, Catherine O'Connor, Nora O'Rourke, and Sheila Quinn.

In 1975 the society produced *The Heart's a Wonder*, a musical based on the *Playboy of the Western World*, written by Maureen Charleton and her sister Nuala O'Farrell. Peter O'Driscoll was the Producer and Musical Director of this show for the society. Michael Murphy played the Playboy Christy Mahon, Eddie Gilmartin played Old Mahon, Loreto O'Connor was Pegeen Mike, Pat Scully was the Widow Quinn, Pat Culleton was Shawneen Keogh, and Fionnuala Egan was Sara Tansey. Eddie Gilmartin was the recipient of an A.I.M.S. award for his role in this production.

The Beggar's Opera was produced in 1975 by the society. It is a ballad opera in three acts, written in 1728 by John Gay, with music arranged by Johann Christoph Pepuschu. The



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Association of Irish Musical Societies (A.I.M.S.)

The Muckcross Musical and Dramatic Society was affiliated to A.I.M.S., the Association of Irish Musical Societies. There are over 150 musical societies in the country, most of which are members of A.I.M.S. (www.aims.ie). According to A.I.M.S., there are about 14,000 people directly involved with musical theatre in Ireland, with an audience of about 1.2 million people.

A.I.M.S. provides a number of different services to its members, including help and advice in choosing shows, workshops on aspects of the theatre, through to an awards scheme that aims to increase the standards of musical theatre in the whole of Ireland. A member of the Society, Mary Monks, acted as PRO for both A.I.M.S. and for the Muckcross Musical and Dramatic Society. She edited the A.I.M.S. Bulletin for a number of years and wrote articles for it.



The Society competed in the A.I.M.S. awards competitions over the years. Members of the Society won the A.I.M.S. Trophy at the Feis Ceol in 1975 with *Hey Big Spender*, a cabaret style song and dance version of the song from *Sweet Charity*. A review by John Holohan in the *Sunday Independent* after the Feis, felt this contribution was not in accordance of the tradition of the Feis Ceol! However the adjudicator, Roy Williamson, did not conceal his surprise and delight at their performance, and he had no hesitation in deciding the winner was the Muckcross Musical and Dramatic Society, which he awarded "for a splendid performance which meant the total involvement of the cast."

In 1977 the Society was awarded a number of prizes at the A.I.M.S. awards in Wexford. They won a prize for the best wardrobe for their play *Innish*, a musical version of the play *Drama at Innish*. With music by Jim Doherty, John Allen produced the show. The A.I.M.S. Best Comedian award, went to Eddie Gilmartin playing the role of Peter Hurley in *Innish*.

society's production of *The Beggar's Opera* was directed by Peter O'Driscoll, who also worked with the Strand Players. The late Joan Walsh, who was in *Fair City* on RTÉ television for many years, was the leading lady. Alice Hughes tells me she was also in this show, but I failed to find a programme for it. Financially this was not a great success for the society according to Aline Molony (O'Dwyer) and Mary Monks.

In the early 1970s the society presented a *Quiet Weekend* by Esther McCracken for the second time – it was originally done in the 1950s. The cast included Tom Wood, Mary Monks, Mary Farrell, Muriel Hackett, Brendan Hughes, Fionnuala Egan, Iris Fitzpatrick, Pat Scully, Patrick Comerford, Frank McKeivitt, Pat Boylan, Ed. Brady and Pat Hughes. Frank Gormley was the producer, with B. O'Neill and the MacAllister sisters (Beth and Kathleen) as Stage Managers.



Innish, a musical by Jim Doherty and Fergus Linehan, was based on Lennox Robinson's comedy *Drama at Innish*. This show was produced by John Allen for the society in 1977, with musical direction by Jim Doherty. The story is set in a rural Irish town in the 1930s. Included in the cast were Aline Molony (O'Dwyer), Fionnuala Smyth, Loreto O'Connor, Paddy Joyce, Pat Scully, Ed. Brady, Sean O'Siochain, Muriel Hackett, Paul Morrin, Eddie Gilmartin, Bob McKeivitt, Mary Farrell, Joan Soraghan, Pat Buckley, Mary Smyth, Bairbre O'Kelly, Pat Culleton, Sean Hegarty and David Howell. Music was provided by Jim Doherty, Des Moore, Martin Walsh, Alfie Barry, Desi Reynolds, and Denis O'Sullivan. Choreography was by Annette Hynes and the Rehearsal Pianist was Eileen O'Neill. The society were delighted that Fergus Linehan and his wife, Rosaleen Linehan, attended the Opening night of *Innish!*

In 1978 the society performed *Two by Two*, a Broadway musical by Richard Rodgers, with great success, and they then brought it to the Waterford Light Opera Festival. This was one of the most successful shows ever done by the society, according to reviews of this show published in the press. "The Muckcross Musical & Dramatic Society have got together a production of such quality and precision that they could easily pass for professional theatre." Another review, from *The Munster*

Express, states that *Two by Two* "is the story of Noah and the building of the Ark played in the American Yiddish comedy style." *The Munster Express* report concluded with the comment that "this whole performance was one rare treat in which black comedy, a little bit of pathos and some real Jewish philosophy were welded by imaginative production into a top-class night's entertainment." Produced by Ned Power, the show's Musical Director was Gearoid Grant. Costumes were designed and made by Ronnie Fagan. The society brought their own small orchestra to Waterford with the Show that was directed by Gearoid Grant from the piano. Brendan Hughes, who played Noah, was described as a revelation in one of the reviews, and he won the Best Actor Award at the Waterford Light Opera Festival for his role in the show. Other members of the cast included Pat Buckley, Dolores Barry, John Coyle, Colin Smith, Pat Scully, and Muriel Hackett, who was also nominated for a Best Actress Award by A.I.M.S. Cathal McCabe from RTÉ broadcast a review





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of the society's performance in Waterford of *Two by Two*: "Muckross gave us a delightful evening's entertainment with *Two By Two*, which had something for everybody. I think too that all of us in the Theatre Royal last night were quite moved by the time the curtain fell."

The final show done by the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society was the Irish Premiere of *Robert and Elizabeth* by Robert Millar and music by Ron Grainer. Joan Merrigan played the role of Elizabeth Barrett, and John Foley was Robert Browning. *Robert and Elizabeth* tells the story of the romance and elopement of the poets Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. The show was produced by Ned Power, and Aidan Faughey was the Musical Director. Choreography was by Annette Hynes. A review by Nora Lever in the A.I.M.S. Bulletin stated "Joan Merrigan's singing of Elizabeth was excellent and the music required a good singer and John Foley sang well as Robert Browning. Dolores Barry as Henrietta looked and sounded exactly right." Victor Gibbons, Pat Scully, and Muriel Hackett gave other good performances in the show.

Many of the plays and operas done by the society were produced and directed by Eileen Knowles. She also conducted the orchestra on many occasions. Eileen was active too in the Rathmines & Rathgar Musical Society between 1922 and 1935, taking part in seventeen R&R productions. She later took on the role of an accompanist, producer, and musical director. Eileen Knowles was succeeded as an accompanist in the R&R by Carmel Moore, who also acted as accompanist for the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society.

Orchestra members over the years included Madeleine Berkeley, Bridget Breen, W. Brewer, Lil Campbell, Bernadette Caruana, R. Christopher, J. Conaghey, Teresa Costello, M. Dagg, Patrick Fitzgerald, May Fitzpatrick, K. Foley, M. Grace, Bay Jellett, D. Kearns, D. King, Mary McCarthy, Mary McDonnell, Eilis MacGabhan, M. McKenna, John Mooney, B. Mulvey, D. Mumaghan W. Oaklen, H. O'Brolochain, T. O'Mara, Eileen O'Neill, Eileen O'Reilly, C. O'Rouke, Kitty Purcell, Marie Wall, D. Williams, and W. Sloan. Key members of every production were the MacAllister sisters, Beth and Kathleen, who both acted in plays, and worked as Stage Managers for the various productions.

A conversation with Phil Kelleher (Campbell) and her sister Carmel Keogh brought forth more memories of the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society. Their mother Lil Campbell was an accomplished pianist. She served as an musical director and accompanist with the society for a number of years. She was also a great needlewoman, and helped out with the costumes over the years. Most of the costumes came from Gings and Bourkes in Dame



Street, but there were always additional costumes to be made or altered. Phil and Carmel tell me, they were brought to see at least three of the shows done by the Muckross Musical and Dramatic Society including *The Lady with the Lamp*, a play about Florence Nightingale by Reginald Berkeley, *Traitors Gate*, a historical play about Sir Thomas More by Morna Stuart, and *The White Headed Boy*, a comedy in three acts by Lennox Robinson. During the time their mother was associated with the society, they also recall seeing *The Country Girl*, Clifford Odets's 1950 American backstage drama about the tribulations of a once-great actor, *The Desert Song*, an operetta with music by Sigmund Romberg and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, and *Miss Hook of Holland*, an English musical comedy in two acts, with music and lyrics by Paul Rubens.

Rehearsals for the shows were generally held in Muckross. Since Mrs. Campbell did not drive, she was often driven down to the school by her husband, or collected by Alan Hanna or Bernard Frawley, active members of the society. Principals from the shows were often invited to the Campbell household for additional rehearsals. On other occasions, sections from the chorus would be invited as well to rehearse. Phil and Carmel were on duty these nights serving supper, while members of the society were rehearsing. Mrs. Campbell looked after her guests well with a lovely supper, which included sandwiches, bridge rolls, and fresh cream flans!

A small offshoot of the society was 'Verse Sessions' poetry group, which was started by Valerie Cox, and which toured around giving readings of their own poetry. One of the leading lights of this Poetry group was Margaret Thomas, and Mary Deane was also very involved. Valerie says that a number of men were poached from the dramatic society to join their little group. Among them were Patrick Comerford, Aidan Matthews (now the well known writer), and Rory McCabe. This group lasted for about two years.

Conclusion:

The Muckross Musical & Dramatic Society was, in its time, a vibrant and active amateur musical and dramatic society. set up by past pupils of the Dominican Convent Muckross Park. The success of the society was due in no small part to the committee which ran the society, and on the facilities provided by Muckross Park School for its productions. Many Muckross past pupils took part in the productions, but the society was also augmented by members of other local musical and dramatic societies. Lifelong friendships, and romances leading to marriages, took place within the society. Everyone I spoke to remembered their time there with great affection. The society was in existence from 1936 until its demise about 1980. Some of its members went on to join other musical and dramatic groups.



Musicals and Drama

Since the late nineteenth century, amateur operatic and dramatic societies have played an important role in society, bringing music and drama from the commercial stage into the lives of local towns and villages throughout the world (Hughes, 2008). A very large audience for amateur plays and operas has existed over the years, and amateur musical and dramatic societies have made, and continue to make, a huge contribution to society in general (Lamb, 2000, Ganzl 2001, Kenrick, 2010). Today there are some 150 amateur musical societies in existence in the entire island of Ireland, and most are affiliated to A.I.M.S. Amateur productions have provided an initial platform for thousands of aspiring actors and opera singers, throughout history. Many of today's professional actors and opera singers began their careers on the amateur stage (Cody & Sprinchorn, 2007). Today, despite competition from television, the professional theatre, and the cinema, amateur musical and dramatic societies continue to thrive and delight their audiences in countries throughout the world (Lowerson, 2005).

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THE SORAGHAN FAMILY

Five of the Soraghan family from Anglesea Road attended Muckross. ANNETTE was first, Leaving Cert 1964, HELEN 1965, STEPHANIE 1967, JOAN 1973 and PAUL until his Communion in 1966.

The girls played hockey and took part in the operettas. Muckross had such a good influence that Annette ended up teaching in Dublin and Helen in Italy!

Best wishes from everyone at Ranelagh Arts Centre and Festival

<http://ranelagharts.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/ranelaghartsfestival>



Productions by the Muckross Musical & Dramatic Society (1936–1980)

1938	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
1940s	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>
1940s	<i>A Quiet Wedding</i> (E. McCracken)
1944	<i>Nita: an opera</i> (P. Delahunty and G. Victory)
1945	<i>And the World knew him not.</i> (J. Drinkwater)
1946	<i>Quality Street</i> (J.M. Barrie)
1947	<i>A Man's house.</i> (J. Drinkwater)
1950s	<i>A Murder has been arranged</i> (E. Williams)
1950s	<i>Dear Octopus</i> (D. Smith)
1954	<i>A Quiet weekend</i> (E. McCracken)
1955	<i>The Quaker Girl</i> (Tanner, Ross and Greenbank)
1956	<i>The Geisha</i> (S. Owens and J. Hall)
1957	<i>Blossom Time</i> (A.M. Wilner & H. Reichert)
1961	<i>The Tourist Bored</i> (F. Cunningham)
1964	<i>Blithe Spirit</i> (N. Coward)
1965	<i>Good Night Mrs. Puffin</i> (Arthur Lovegrove)
1965	<i>Patience</i> (Gilbert & Sullivan)
1966	<i>The Yeoman of the Guard</i> (Gilbert & Sullivan)
1967	<i>The Mikado</i> (Gilbert & Sullivan)
1967	<i>You Never can Tell</i> (G. B. Shaw)
1969	<i>Salad Days</i> (J. Slade and D. Reynolds)
1970	<i>Bless the Bride</i> (A. P. Herbert and V. Ellis)
1971	<i>The Heiress</i> (R & A. Goetz)
1971	<i>The Quaker Girl</i> (J. Tanner)
1973	<i>The Boyfriend</i> (S. Wilson)
1974	<i>The Heart's a Wonder.</i> (M. Charleton & N. O'Farell)
1975	<i>The Beggar's Opera</i> (J. Gay & J. C. Pepusch)
1977	<i>A Quiet Weekend</i> (E. McCracken)
1977	<i>Innish</i> (J. Doherty & F. Linehan)
1978	<i>Two by Two</i> (R. Rodgers, M. Charnin & P. Stone)
1979-80	<i>Robert & Elizabeth</i> (R. Miller & R. Grainer)

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Chapter Six

Memories, 1970s–1980s





Memories, 1970s–1980s

ALICE FROM MUCKCROSS—A special memory

Emer Halpenny, class of 1985

It all began when Emer Halpenny remembered sitting the entrance exam for the secondary school...

I wanted to walk around the grounds during the exam, jig around memory lane—or maybe even the old smoking lane if it was still there. The ground was hoary—I'm not being poetic, it was actually hoary, only way to describe it. My husband tried to identify some plants and I tried to get my bearings. Was that the nun's garden? Where CB got detention for climbing the apple tree? I had asked Dan Maloney about the old building. He told me its sad story, of the pre-recession plans for it, before promised government funding ran out and left it, half gutted and redundant. We peered in the window of the old main door. "There's the stairs," I said to my husband, as if he couldn't figure it out for himself. "And we used walk along there every day, fifty times a day. There's the old parquet floor..." I smiled at my teenage self, bopping down those stairs, for years inadvertently admiring the carved swirl of the wooden banister. That's when I saw her, appearing as if out of nowhere, as she tended to do—Old. White hair. Smiling. Apron. Where did she come from? And where was she going? Always headed towards the convent kitchen, the part of the house we did not know. "Her name is Alice" people said.

"Who is she?"

"Don't know."

"Is she a nun?"

"Don't know. She's been here for years."

Someone might have said the nuns had taken her in when she was a child. Impossible story—she must have been a hundred years old. In fact, Alice Power was almost a hundred when she finally passed into the next world. I know that because my obvious first step in uncovering Alice's tale was a phone call to Sister Barnabas.

Sister Barnabas said to contact Rosie Doherty who cooked in the convent for years, she'd know all about Alice. They had worked together in Muckcross. "Rosie Doherty," said Barney, "she's Ken Doherty's mother."

"Who's Ken Doherty?" I asked, thinking she meant a teacher there during my time. "Ken Doherty! The world snooker champion!" Ah yes, of course: Jason's of Ranelagh and all that. What other Doherty could it be?



Since Rosie was in hospital, Barney couldn't get in touch with her. "Phone Ken," she advised. "Okay" I said meekly, quietly thanking God for the internet. I left an email for the man himself, hoping that my Muckross status would stand to me. It did. He called me and suggested I visit Rosie where she was convalescing after a bout of pneumonia. I felt like a tabloid journalist, bothering this elderly woman, but I needn't have worried. Rosie Doherty was a lady, a lovely lady, giving of her time and happy to have her old friend included in a book like this. Her face lit up at the idea that she might talk about Alice.

How close had Rosie and Alice been? Sister Barnabas told me a remarkable thing: when Alice died, she was buried in the Doherty family plot, along with Rosie's husband. They lie in Deansgrange cemetery. I asked Rosie about it, this exceptional kindness.

"Yes," she nodded. "How it came along was this; we went up every Sunday of our lives to see her. My husband sat there," she gestured to one side. "Alice sat in the centre and I sat here, the other side. And she said this day, "I don't know where I'm going to be buried. I'm going to be buried in No Man's Land."

It was a genuine worry. Alice's mother died young and her grandmother reared her. She was, in Rosie's words, her 'soul heart'. At the age of ten, her grandmother died and Alice was alone. I thought about that. I think about it now. I have a ten-year-old. It is a needy age. She was sent to what I assume must have been a Dominican convent in Kilkenny. Rosie said, "The convents took them from convent to convent when they were able to work." I see her, a ten-year-old child, arriving at a convent with the Dominican sisters, heartbroken, alone. I understand why her dying words were of thanks to the Sisters of Muckross. She loved the nuns and the nuns loved her. Sister Barnabas called Alice "a little gem." Alice would say to the novices, "I trained all of you—I was here before you and I'll be here long after you." It was a long and happy relationship. More than seventy years long. They did all they could to love this woman, but they couldn't bury her, that was law



Above: Lifelong friends—Rosie Doherty and Alice Power.



Memories, 1970s–1980s

at the time. And Alice worried about being buried alone. On this day, when Alice spoke of her worries to Rosie and her husband, he said: “Would you like to be buried with us, Alice?” She responded by throwing her arms around both of them and kissing them.

“She said she’d love it”, said Rosie, “When she did die, we told Sister Martha and the nuns buried her in our grave. They paid for it all.”

When Alice was seventeen she came to Muckross, where she was to stay for the rest of her life. There were only two or three nuns there at the time, Rosie said, as it had not yet become a school. When the students did come, it was Alice who kept them in line. Rosie chuckled at the memory.

“They used to get Alice to come down to the junior school but she’d only have to look in and point the finger at them, and she’d say “you have to be good for the nuns.” And the sisters would say, “we’ll send for Alice and she’ll get more severe than us.” That was their punishment. But she was a lovely person.”

Sister Barnabas herself was a boarder at Muckross and remembers this. When the children would tell Alice they had been bold (Barney, bold?) Alice would laugh and say “Oh no! Hop away there! You’re fine.” Though she could be cross with children who didn’t change their shoes, as she liked everything shining.

Two or three times people come into the room and walk out again. Perhaps they sense something—although I am sitting with a woman I don’t know, there is warmth between us. I think, it is definitely a Muckross thing. Rosie’s connection with the school goes back many years. When aged seventeen she arrived there to learn to cook. She sent her own daughter, Rosemary, to Muckross. We discover she is younger than me, by about five years. I am ‘a lady—possibly a journalist—who wants to talk about Alice.’ I like being called a journalist, but I think, ‘I’m no lady—why, I’m only... I’m only... well, gosh, I am the class of ‘85. I suppose, I must be a lady. What else can I be?’

I see Rosie smiling at the memories and I ask her if Alice made her laugh. “Oh she was funny, and she would tell you yarns. We did have good fun, but she did have a little bit of a temper if you said anything about De Valera. She loved De Valera. All the De Valeras went to Muckross and she used to look after them. She had a picture of him in the old kitchen, and we’d turn it around sometimes, backwards, to annoy her. She’d go mad. “Who touched that picture!” she’d say.”



I thought about this formidable woman, who could laugh at herself, who liked the simple things in life, like playing Ludo and making woollen toys and clothes for Rosie's children. Ken also remembers her with fondness. Plus, the weekly trip to Muckross convent meant jelly and-ice cream for the Doherty children. Did she ever regret not meeting someone and moving on? Rosie shook her head.

"She never regretted, you'd never hear her say it, and she thanked the nuns from the bottom of her heart before she died. She thanked Sister Terresita and Sister Martha for being so good to her. And they were all very good to her. Sure they treated her as their own."

"And poor Sister Patrick did everything to get Alice her pension," said Rosie, "but she didn't get it until ten years after she should have got it. All the baptismal things were burned during the time of the Custom House and it was very hard to get information. She didn't get her pension for a long, long time, and it wasn't much then. I think it was only seven and sixpence or something. And Sister Patrick kept at it until she got it because you see, she could prove that she was so many years in Muckross and that she was over seventy. You had to be seventy back then." (I spared a thought for the unfortunate civil servant that was foolish enough to try to fob off Sister Patrick, who may have thought, 'here comes a tiny little nun, I'll have no trouble getting her off my back...').

And all the while Alice Power worked away, getting up at half six in the morning, putting on the fire for the irons. She'd light the stove and Sister Lucy would come down and between them they would do the ironing. "But Alice always did the altar linen and it would be perfect, there wouldn't be a crease in it" said Rosie, ignoring a phone call coming in on her mobile. It was a surprisingly rocking tune—no little old lady here! "She was just an old friend and a real good friend; a sincere friend. I'll never forget Alice. Never."

And then, at my insistence she answers. It is her daughter. "Hello Rosemary. How are you?" I tiptoe away, grateful. So many people wondered about Alice. Alice Power, who returned to her soul heart on 18th September 1984.

Her remembrance card is simple. In the words of St. Martin de Porres, it says:

What is death?
A wondrous mercy,
a coming home,
a divine welcome,
to a well-loved child.



THE HALPENNY FAMILY

Many years before the Halpenny girls were born their mother, Carmel, had decided that if she ever had any daughters they would go to Muckross Park, because the girls she knew that had gone to Muckross were confident and independent young women, just how she wanted any daughters to be.

NIAMH GOURLAY (née HALPENNY) was in the class of 1983, followed by her sisters EMER HALPENNY (1985) and BRONA HALPENNY (1987).

During this time the girl's father, Kevin Halpenny, also became involved with the school when he joined the Parents' Association and was chairman for a couple of years. During this time the PA worked with the school to build a physics lab and introduce the subject to the school.

Representing the next generation, Niamh's daughter LIANE GOURLAY (class of 2010) attended Muckross, and is now studying Sports & Exercise Management in UCD. Emer's daughters AISLING and CIARA are due to start first year in 2012 and 2014 respectively.



Above: First day at school! Katherine Duffy (née Fox) who was then in 6th year, with her baby sister Eileen on Eilleens' first day in Junior School, 1970.



Above: The class of 1971 on a school outing with Sr Martha and Sr Carmel c. 1969.



All girls!

Jacinta Doolan

The Doolan girls attended Muckross at a time when there seemed to be a lot families of all girls! Jacinta, Paula, Vianne, Orna and Jane Doolan, (Jacinta class of '70 and Jane class of '83), the Harpers—Maura, Sheila, Una, Ann and Philly; and the Ryan's—Mary, Phil, Ger, Carmel and Martina. And we Doolans are still in touch with all of them.

My baby sister Jane Doolan started in Muckross long after I left so there were quite a number of changes in the interim years. Obviously the school grew (or the portacabins expanded) the uniform changed from gymslip to skirt but the hockey, VERITAS badge and lots of the teachers were the same. All of us have very different memories which are interesting—a lot dependent on teachers and rules and regulations and how rebellious the times were. Jane remembers being on an exchange in Paris and placing a Lenin emblem over her VERITAS badge in a show of rebellion, whereas I actually thought my blazer was very trendy.

I do believe the Dominican ethos in Muckross, led by Sr Barnabas particularly, was to nurture creativity and communication. During my time there we had Poise and Personality classes with Kay Toal, sex education with Dr. Doorley and we were even offered driving lessons in 6th year with the driver coming to the school to collect anyone lucky enough to be able to afford the lessons. The mind boggles! We have seen artists, writers, broadcasters, film makers and journalists come out of Muckross.

Over the years I have run my own tourism business, Trident Holiday Homes. Paula works in the Insurance Industry in the City in London. Vianne trained as a nurse in Crumlin Hospital and now owns Bistro 1 in Foxrock with her husband Mark. Orna is a Psychotherapist and Jane a film producer. We all live far apart—Paula is on a 2 year secondment in Dubai, Vianne lives in Tuscany, Italy/Dublin, Orna in Killaloe, Co. Clare, Jane in Sardinia, Italy and Jacinta in Roundwood Co. Wicklow. Between us we have produced 13 children and 1 grandchild. Facebook and Skype keep us all in touch and of course we love those overseas visits.





Memories, 1970s–1980s

CLASS OF 1971



Top and above: 6th year class of 1971 and reunion of the class of 1971 in Deerpark.



MEMORIES

Adrienne Keane Davitt

I joined Muckross in junior school and was lucky enough to move into Sr Ann Domineco's domain after a year or so.

In secondary school, I came under the watchful remit of Sr Barnabas—known to all as Barney. What can I say? For six years Barney was instrumental in steering me through the many twists and turns of teenage years—with a more rebellious nature than most, apparently, and I came out still loving to learn, challenging the established ways, exploring new ideas and, ultimately, creating a completely new and amazing career for myself, as founder of the most well-established corporate psychology organisation in Ireland. Of course, friends made in those years also had a huge impact on my life and are too many to thank, but I must mention Ruth McGartoll, Iseult O'Brien, Paula Doran, Sue Jones (R.I.P), Janet Uhlemann, Noeleen Farrelly all of whom—at different stages—had profound effects and contributed so much to my growing(up)... as did so many other very cool girls, who also made my time in Muckross extraordinary. We all left in '77 and I was so lucky to meet up with many of them at our 30th reunion.

My two younger sisters had the dubious pleasure of coming after me. Of course they both created their own footprints. Tania (now Abrahams) went on to do nursing in St. Vincents and is still brilliant as both a nurse and a sister—we come from a long line of matrons, GPs and vets! She left in '79. She was big on sports also and now meets with golfers from my year. Then Erika (now Whitaker), not a golfer—though married to a very good one—she was a champion orienteer, did medicine at the college of surgeons, won gold medals and is still involved with Muckross activities, not least because she has two daughters there.

THE SLATTERY FAMILY

The Slattery family lived in Ranelagh and the following members attended Muckross from the fifties to the seventies.

PAULA SLATTERY, class of 1960.

MARY SLATTERY

VINCENT SLATTERY, in Kindergarten only!

NANCY SLATTERY

MARGARET SLATTERY, class of 1970.

IMELDA SLATTERY, class of 1974.

Now living in Dublin.

Now MARY PIERSE living in Cork.

Lives in Dublin.

Now NANCY LOONEY living in Cork.

Sadly Margaret died in 2009.

Now lives in Dublin.



THOSE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Catherine de Courcy

Arguing, playing hockey and basketball in far-flung parts of the city, choral singing, running three-legged races, doing cartwheels off a wooden beam or singing on the Larry Gogan show, these were some of the ways Muckross students diverted themselves between the late 1950s and mid-1980s. The nuns created an environment that supported a range of extra-curricular activities, which helped to dispel the angst of teenage years and develop skills and friendships. My sisters and I got stuck in and, drawing on our experiences, here is a flavour of some of those activities.

There were five of us — Mary (commenced 1958), myself (1962), Sheila (1964), Brigie (1968) and Anna (1972). Our first cousins Ruth and Clodagh Lynam also joined the school after they returned from India in 1965. When I started in Sr Polycarp's class in 1962, we played alongside a piebald horse called Dolly owned by Bernard, the gardener. The senior school girls played on the square lawn between the school and the bicycle sheds, while we played on the lawn in front of what is now the hostel.

The Concert Hall

Our secondary school days regularly commenced with assembly in the concert hall. It was a substantial space with polished parquet flooring, tall windows, long brown velvet curtains, a balcony and doors at either end. This is where the choir rehearsed, PE classes were held, theatrical performances took place and debating was organised.

Regular ballet and gym classes also took place in the concert hall. When Mary was leaving in 1971, it was the tradition for the class to give a present to the school. Her class gave the school a vaulting horse, which delighted some and presented an additional misery for those of us who were not fond of PE. Brigie loved gymnastics; her teacher, Marie Healy, established the Muckross gym club and taught the students sophisticated routines at a national standard, Brigie, who also loved ballet, was one of the Muckross girls who performed at national events.

Elocution with Miss Cranny was a feature of junior school for all of us. We stood on the wooden steps and said slowly and repeatedly 'How now brown cow'. It may have been Miss Cranny who encouraged us to enter the Fr Matthew Feis. At about six years old, Mary was one of scores who recited the Flattered Flying Fish at a Feis in Milltown. I was also entered in a Feis, I recall being one of a row of Muckross girls who queued in



a cold room under the cranky eye of a Friar, when our moment came, he pushed us onto the stage to recite a poem to three judges who were sitting in the middle of an otherwise empty hall.

I moved to secondary school, and one of the pre-fabs known as An Grianán, in 1969. After Bloody Sunday in January 1972, my friend, Norma O'Connor, remembers Sr Domenico coming into our class to ask us how we felt. 'There was a lot of fuss at the time about what we should do and how we should react,' remembers Norma. My recollection of that event was my father using Jesuitical argument to dissuade me from joining the protest march to the British Embassy, which ended in the burning of the Embassy.

The Back Field

This was another major theatre for extra-curricular activities, at the heart of which was the small pavilion, which smelt perpetually of matted fresh grass deposited from the spikes of hockey boots. Class and after-school sports started there. We had a succession of teachers including John O'Shea who founded GOAL. Many Saturdays in the junior classes of secondary school were spent getting several buses and navigating from memory to schools some distance from Muckross, like Mt Sackville and Killester.

In summer, I played rounders after school; a group of us would get access to the pavilion and help ourselves to the equipment. Maura Donnelly, who had spent years in the States before coming to Muckross in First Year, turned rounders into baseball and, on her first outing, hit a home run that no one could go after because it landed in the nuns' vegetable patch.

The corridor and the top floor of the junior school

Between second and fourth year, we had a choice of either domestic science or science. The science lab and the kitchen were in the corridor between the junior and the secondary schools. As a child, I had glimpsed the high brown tables and smelt the chemicals and was so drawn by the mystery that I opted to do science for the Inter Cert with Sr Francis. Dissecting a mouse proved too much for me and I abandoned it to annoy Miss Hehir in the Sewing Room in 5th year on the top floor over the Junior School. In our family, Anna was the one who pursued science, entering the Young Scientist Exhibition in the RDS in 1980 and 1981 with studies of plankton in Dublin Bay. She was highly commended for her projects both years and received a display award another year. In 1981 Catherine Conlon was named 'Young Scientist of the Year'.



Memories, 1970s–1980s

The rest of Ireland

Sr Barnabas, Sr Patrick, Sr Letitia, Sr Rose Elizabeth and the indefatigable Sr Ann Dominica brought us all over the city to the museum, the National Gallery, the Zoo, the Botanic Gardens and other public places. Just after Vatican Two, when the rules on nuns travelling outside their convents were changed, Sr Rose Elizabeth brought thirty girls aged nine into the city centre on one of the first nun-led excursions from the school. My most memorable trips were a visit to the HB factory in Rathfarnham to see the glass milk bottles being washed and filled, followed by a free ice cream; we also went on a trip to Guinnesses where we stood in the pungent smell of the hops looking down on the vats—there were no free samples on that occasion. Sr Ann Dominica took Sheila and her junior school class on mystery tours around Dublin. They went to St Michan's to shake hands with the crusader, explored the Poddle and the Dodder, and became familiar with old Dublin at Wood Quay, Christchurch and High Street. We were also brought on hired buses to sites around the country. On one occasion, Sr Patrick brought Mary's junior school class on a day trip to Mayo. I went as far as the Metal Man in Waterford and to Clonmacnoise. These trips usually involved creating a scrapbook with information about the destination; the research for these little productions was something I enjoyed.

Some things never change!

Emma Stokes, class of 1986

I remember my years in Muckcross—all 14 of them—with great fondness. I made close friendships that remain today although we could probably see more of one another. I was one of the few of my class of 1986 to go to Trinity College—many more went to UCD—and I chose to study physiotherapy. After a few years of work in the health service, I returned to Trinity to take up a position on the faculty. Along the way I have worked with the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists, the professional organisation of physiotherapists in Ireland.

In recent years, I have had the opportunity to take up two very interesting positions. From 2005–2010, I served as the Junior Dean in Trinity; this is the Dean responsible for student discipline and I was the first woman to be appointed to the position. It was one of the most professionally fulfilling work experiences I had because of the great team work involving other staff members from across the College.

In October 2010, I was honoured to be nominated by the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists for election to the position of Vice-President of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy.

My Dominican education gave me the confidence to take on new challenges and opportunities, to consider making a contribution. I reflect on the chances we were given to develop the skills that, I believe, have stood to me in later years and have enabled me to take on many of the interesting opportunities that have presented themselves to me.



THE BRADY FAMILY

I had the great pleasure of attending Muckross Park from September 1957 to June 1971. My days there are full of fond memories. Muckross was for me, and I presume is now for many others, a 'Way of Life'.



Above: Anne Brady.

As I am the eldest of nine children our relationship with Muckross straddled a few decades. My youngest sister Grainne left school in 1982. Not only did the four girls in my family attend Muckross but four of my brothers also attended the school.

ANNE:	1957-1971
EMER:	1962-1976
CAITRIONA:	1966-1980
GRAINNE:	1968-1982



Above: Anne and Emer Brady.



Above: Anne Brady and Noreen Quinn.

One of my happiest memories of Muckross is the great relationship we all had with the nuns who ran the school. What patience they must have had! We were wild out and yet they turned us into wonderful young ladies who went on to be professional women.



Memories, 1970s–1980s

RUNNING A FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC IN THE 80s

Brenda Moore-McCann



Growing up in the 1960s I had the innocent idea like many at the time, that I could change the world. So from the age of twelve or thirteen I decided I wanted to be a doctor. I did eventually become one and practiced for twenty years in the areas of public health, paediatric research and reproductive health. The latter began in the late 1980s just before I had my last child, one of three boys.

From the late 1960s Ireland was beginning to break away in unprecedented ways from the dominance of a conservative mainly Catholic culture. The lives of women in particular were controlled to a large degree in terms of social, financial and legal status. The First Commission on the Status of Women (1970) for example recommended the 'bar' on marriage in the work-place be removed with the implementation of equal pay. The rise of the women's movement embracing tactics of both confrontation and persuasion led to the removal of the marriage bar in 1973, The Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act (1974) and the Maternity Protection of Employees Act (1981). The first family planning clinics opened in the late 1960s and 1970s as women were unsure of their general practitioner's views on the subject. The clinic I worked in, Family Planning Services, first opened its doors in 1972.

The 1980s were difficult years with a clash between traditionalists and modernists that affected the whole of society compounded by a deep recession and emigration for a generation of young people. They were marked by the divisive Abortion Referendum (1983), followed by the Divorce Referendum (1986).

The clinics were run as non-profit making ventures that relied on 'contributions' from patients. Part of my work as medical director was not only to see patients, publish research and work with the administration and Board of Directors, but also to organise training for GPs and trainee specialists in gynaecology who did not have access at the time to reproductive medicine as part of their training in hospitals. In an effort to forge better links between doctors working in general practice and as specialists I and others founded the Irish Family Planning Doctors Association.



Muckross 1971–1977

Sharon Cooper

I'm ashamed to say that I don't remember the names of many of the girls at Muckross. Some teachers' names escape me too. But, whatever else I fail to recall, I will always retain the memory of how happy I was there.

I remember Mr. Walsh, the Latin and math teacher who once got so fed up of my inattention to Latin verb conjugation that he "sarcastically" asked me and my partner in crime (Catherine Halion) if we would "like to take a walk around the grounds." We did!

Sr. Mairead, our Irish teacher, who took the reading of Peig Sayers extremely seriously and sent me into convulsions of laughter for which I was sent outside of the classroom only to find a broom and wave it over the little window at the top of the closed door. This delinquent act sent the rest of the class into hysterics and shot Sr. Mairead's blood pressure into orbit. Sorry, Sr. Mairead.

The sermon I preached from the pulpit of Muckross church to my friends one lunchtime until I noticed Sr. Francis praying in the balcony. She never turned me in and I never proclaimed from a pulpit again.

Beautiful Ms. Slattery, the Spanish teacher. Colette Dunn, the English and History teacher who moved me from a D in English and History to a B just by her enthusiasm for the subjects.

Science and my fear of lighting the bunsen burner. Domestic Science and the roast stuffed hearts we made and forced our families to eat. "Stewing is a long slow cooking in a small amount of liquid in a tightly covered vessel". I wonder, do they teach that anymore? The sewing machine I never did learn how to thread. The trip to Muckross House in Kerry with the amazing Sr. Barnabas who always had our best interests at heart. What a glorious time!

THE DEMPSEY FAMILY

SUSIE DEMPSEY (née MCGANN) 1930 to 1935.

*Later her daughter and son.
VINCENT DEMPSEY class of 1958
SUZANNE DEMPSEY class of 1974*

Suzanne is currently living in Port au Prince Haiti and is working for Concern Worldwide as a water and sanitation engineer. Vincent lives in Kilkenny where he manages a theatre company. Suzanne's cousins ELIZABETH (1971), GWEN (1973) and ALAN PAKENHAM attended Muckross as did her cousin GRACE DALY (1972).

Elizabeth now lives in Brussels. Gwen and her family and grandchildren live in Cork and Alan and family live in Dublin. Grace and her family live in Dublin.



Above: Some of the class of 1975 with Miss Kinsella and Sr Domenico on their last day.



Memories, 1970s–1980s

Memories of the 1970s

Auveen Campbell (née Byrne)

I left Muckross in 1971. I feel I got a good academic education in Muckross, as well as lots of encouragement in “extra-curricular” activities.

I remember having great fun writing and performing sketches for school concerts. The nuns were extremely generous with their habits for some of these! We entered sketches in “Slogadh”, a national competition to promote the Irish language.

A small memory is making coconut macaroons and selling them in the corridor at break time—I hope the proceeds went to charity.



Above: Deirdre Forkin, Mary Gannon, Margaret Gannon, Anne Duggan, Margaret Slattery, Noreen Quinn and Anne Barrington c. 1970.

Below: Muckross pals c. 1970.



THE BYRNE FAMILY



The Byrnes lived in Mount Merrion. AUVEEN (now CAMPBELL) left Muckross in 1971. She is currently living in Mount Merrion with her husband Michael, no kids/two dogs. She is a consultant town planner.

Her sister, ORLA, was in the class of '77. She now lives in Shankill with her husband Dermot Kelly and daughter Aislinn, aged 9. She qualified from NCAD in textile design is an interior design consultant.

EMER O'REILLY HYLAND left Muckross in 1980. She is now a freelance journalist, having spent many years as the editor of VIP magazine. She lives in Ballsbridge with Kenneth and their daughter Elizabeth, aged 6.



MEMORIES OF MUCKROSS IN THE 80s

Sinéad Smith



The sixth years in micro minis and multicoloured tights. Sr Ross Mhuire teaching religion while the messers messed. And my friendship with Clodagh Whelan. Those are my most vivid memories from first year. And are followed by so many more. Organising debates against CUS so that I could be in the presence of Nicky Someone, with

his beautiful brown eyes. The day two sixth years dropped a box of sanitary towels all over the floor, causing consternation. Wondering whether girls really did smoke in the back field. Crowds at the bus stop. Sr Nora telling girls to pull up their socks and flatten down their (Duran Duran) hair.

Clashing with Sr Marie and Miss Stephenson. Students crying in Miss Rigney's maths class. Veritas. Sport, sport and more sport. Miss Delaney, unfailingly gentle and kind. Sr Louis Dominic, teaching civics quietly to a noisy class. Sr Rita, strict but fair. Sr Maeve's hut. Annette Tarpey-Gainey's name. France. Sr Barnabas, who took us under her wing in third year, and there we stayed. Miss Brennan, who broke her stiletto in class one day and told

us it was all our fault. Sr Marie telling us a new bookcase had cost £280, "which was the best part of £500, which was the best part of £1,000". Miss Grant, who could say the Sé do Bheatha Mhuire in the time it took her to (quickly) bless herself twice. Miss Mee, always smiling. Iníon Ní Bhroin, ag labhairt Gaeilge an t-am go léir cibé rud a thárla.



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Chapter Seven

Muckross Past Pupils Union





Muckross Past Pupils' Union

WELCOME TO THE PAST PUPILS UNION

Muckross Past Pupils' Union Presidents

Our Records of the past Presidents of the PPU are not complete. But we do know that the first President of the newly formed PPU in 1912 was Agnes Ryan. She was followed in 1915 by Mrs Brayden. Eily McGloughlin served in 1935, followed by Miss P Randal.

After those early years, Una Fitzsimons (Bourke) served in the forties, followed by Peggie Hussey and Peggy Nelson. On into the Sixties and Eileen Monaghan (McNamara), Eithne Bolger (O'Donnell) and Barbara Lightfoot. The Seventies saw the Union in the capable hands of Carmel Walsh (Cole), Marie Foley and Deirdre McCann (Sherry). In the Eighties we had Anne Brady, Therese Birthistle (Hackett) and Lorie O'Connell (Sutton).

On into the Nineties and Edie Goff (Ronaldson), Katherine Duffy (Fox) and Gay Rodgers. The Millenium dawned with Gay still at the helm followed by Valerie Clancy (Barry), Beatrice Doran and Valerie Cox (FitzPatrick). Our current President, Beatrice Doran, is serving her second term of office, as indeed have many of our former Presidents.

However, the records are incomplete—maybe you can help to fill in the gaps?

MUCKROSS PARK CONVENT

STUDENTS' ANNUAL REUNION

The annual re-union of students at Muckross Park Dominican Convent, Dublin, was held yesterday. An elaborate outdoor programme of sports had to be cancelled owing to the heavy rain. The Civic Guard Depot Band, under Superintendent Delaney, played throughout the afternoon in the Main Hall.

The attendance included—Miss E. McGloughlin, President of the Past Pupils' Union; the Misses E. Nevins, P. and S. Randal, N. O'Toole, G. Lavery, E. Martin, M. Coughlin, K. Leahy, A. O'Neill, E. Barry, M. de Bhaldraithe, M. McAleer, M. and N. ni Chleirigh, N. and R. Moore, E. Hanlon, M. Stranahan, B. Hogan, M. Hogan, M. and G. Donovan, T. Dunne, C. Keane, E. Collins, Mrs. T. Keble, Mrs. O'Dea, Mrs. Bourke, Mrs. Walsh, Mrs. Dunne, Mrs. Hourigan, the Misses E. O'Gorman, M. Savers, M. Daly, C. O'Connor, P. and C. McPhillips, E. Kenny, M. Webster, J. Behan, N. and S. O'Neill, M. E. and T. Foley, K. Kettle, S. and E. Golden, S. Conkling, A. Hussey, Mrs. T. H. Scanlon.



PAST PUPILS' UNION.—Members of the Muckross Park Dominican Past Pupils' Union, which met yesterday.

Above: Press cuttings from the Muckross Past Pupils' Union meeting of 13 June 1938.



THE COMMITTEE of the Dominican Convent (Muckross) Union photographed at Sunday's Union Day celebrations. Seated (from left): Miss G. Hughes, Miss E. Foley, Mrs. Bourke, Miss Randal (President), Miss P. Kenny, Miss M. Hanly, and Miss M. Donovan (Hon. Secretary). Standing: Miss E. Martin, Miss M. Heffernan, Miss P. Dunne, Miss M. Waldron, Miss M. McNeill, Mrs. Greene, Miss R. Kiernan and Mrs. Hussey.

Big Thank You!

To the Principal Caroline Lundy, to teachers Ann Marie Mee, Deirdre MacMathuna and Dan Moloney (especially for his "special" help at our Santa Party day) and all the teachers, staff and pupils in Muckross College for their help and continued support to the Past Pupils' Union. We are very appreciative to be included in present day College activities.

We would also like to extend a thank you to the Parents' Association for their continued support.

And to all our Members who support our events and who always turn up to provide valuable assistance when help is required and to everyone else who supports the Union, especially those who donate raffle prizes—a very big Thank You!

**Claire Johns,
Secretary, Muckross Park PPU**



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

So what does the Muckross Past Pupils' Union actually do?

Niamh Gourlay (née Halpenny), Vice President

If you are not (yet) a member or maybe even if you are a member you may still wonder what MPPU actually does. Well, it helps past pupils to get together socially, helps them to help others and provides an opportunity to network with one another.

The tradition of getting together for an annual dinner in April is possibly as old as the Union itself. Last year over 150 attended, some flying in from abroad for class reunions. It is always a great night, an opportunity to meet up with friends from years gone by as well as the nuns and be amazed at how they remember us all.

At Easter and Christmas there are events for the children of past pupils –the future Muckross girls. An Easter egg hunt is held to find all the chocolate hidden around the gardens and in December Santa comes to see us.

If you are a keen golfer there is an annual golf outing – followed by a dinner which is open to all past pupils, even if you can't play golf.

In spring we stretch our creative muscles at the annual Writers Workshop and this year we are delighted to welcome one of Ireland's best known writers to speak at the workshop – Deirdre Purcell. With excellent speakers and writers there is ample opportunity and practical tips for us all to learn something.

There are other social events planned for the Centenary year such as a Wine Tasting (for members only) and Centenary Open Day on 7th October 2012 – which will be packed with events.

Apart from all the socialising MPPU also has a benevolent fund which has been supporting past pupils in need and the Dominican playgroup projects in Cape Town for many years. Other individual causes have been supported.

With your support by attending events, supporting fundraising and helping out, the Muckross Past Pupils' Union will still be going strong in another 100 years.



Above: Maura, Veronica, Monica and Rita Hurson at the Muckross PPU Dinner, 2004.



FROM SCHOOL ECHOES TO THE MUCKROSS MAIL

Orla Browne (née Farrell) and Valerie Cox (née FitzPatrick)

'School Echoes' was started by our class in 5th Form and as we left Muckross in 1966, I figure this must have been 1959 and the nun who encouraged us to do this was Sr. Bernardine. Certainly, I do remember having to get permission to carry the magazine on into Senior School and meeting Sr. Barnabas to secure this before we made the big leap into First Year.

As far as my memory serves me at this removed stage, I think we carried 'School Echoes' on until Fifth Year, when we handed it on to the then First Years. Whether the magazine fostered any future writers or journalists, I don't know, but we certainly had good fun in the production of it, apart from when deadlines were looming and articles were thin on the ground.

Our English teacher for a lot of those early years in Senior School was Sr. Innocentia and so she was more responsible than anyone else for the finished product. 'School Echoes' was actually printed on an old Gestetner machine, using typed stencil sheets on some sort of waxed paper - an incredibly messy process involving lots of ink. The individual pages had then to be stapled together and a willing band of volunteers had to sell same to cover costs. If only we had the benefits of modern technology, what could we have produced? Whether there was a profit or loss at the end was something which escaped us entirely. Obviously, we had no budding accountants in our midst.

I was the first editor and Sheila Ross (Hickey) and Clodagh Brady (O'Leary) were the two sub-editors for the initial stages. Veronica Wynne, I think, succeeded me as editor and there were many regular contributors/victims pressed into service.

School Echoes, part 2

I took over as editor of 'School Echoes' when the then Fifth Years were compelled by Leaving Cert study to hand it on. I can honestly say it was the most important thing I did in school. I envied the editors their job and would have been devastated if the magazine had been given to any other class. But Sr Innocentia, who didn't teach our class at all, let us loose! We were then aided and abetted by Sr Bertranda and by Sr Louis Dominic, who was the chief Gestetner operator. Yes, Orla, I too recall the wonderful metallic green Gestetner, the black ink and the smell of the printing, the anticipation of production.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

We had a fine body of contributors including Mary Deane, Emer Daly, Aideen O'Neill, Roisin Drury, Leesha Gaffney, Miriam Hannon and Ruth Flanagan. My grandfather gave me great encouragement and always waited in anticipation for his copy. (At least that was the wonderful impression he created!) When he died in 1968, there among his things was a complete set of the 'School Echoes'.

Selling the magazine was an art in itself—we used to start at lunchtime when pupils had more time and possibly a few pence. The trick was to sell enough copies before the original purchaser passed them among her friends for a free read. Eventually our own Leaving Cert loomed and we had to hand over the magazine—but I seriously would have chosen 'School Echoes' ahead of the exams!

THE BIRTH OF THE MUCKROSS MAIL

Valerie Cox (FitzPatrick) and Gay Rodgers



The Muckross Mail was born in 1971 when as a young 20 year old I was coerced onto the Past Pupils' Union committee and was asked for my ideas! Okay, I wasn't that long out of school and had edited 'School Echoes' so it was inevitable really that I would think of putting pen to paper. The committee had what seemed to me back then a rather mature profile. I remember one day somebody mentioned the Second World War! But really these women could only have been in their fifties.

Peggy Kelly (née Nelson) was the star of the show, the woman who always got stuck in and, luckily for me, championed new ideas. Peggy and Mary Buckley (née Deane) were my partners in crime. But dear reader, you have to remember that this was well before the advent of computers and printers. So... my mother, Imelda Fitzpatrick, (née Tucker) typed up the pages on waxed stencils. Sr Louis Dominic then attached these to the Gestetner and printed them off. This may sound simple but it involved gallons of ink. Indeed on one occasion this absolutely malevolent machine went into reverse and splattered the black ink all over Sister's formerly white habit!

Then we had to staple everything, fold it and address by hand. Peggy Kelly was the Mistress of the Oxo cube box which contained all our addresses before modern technology took



over. At that time there was a rule (by An Post) that only 40 newsletters could be put in any one post box, so Peggy and I took off in opposite directions looking for post boxes. Unfortunately, she had chosen Ailsbury Road and was apprehended by the Special Branch while stuffing 40 newsletters into a post box alongside one of the embassies. A suspected terrorist, Peggy was questioned in depth! And not having mobile phones then, we couldn't even come to her rescue.

Over the 41 years of the Muckross Mail we have had just four editors as far as we can remember; myself, Eithne Bolger (née O'Donnell), Noreen Quinn and currently Gay Rodgers. We progressed from the Gestetner to printing and then Eithne's husband Billy transferred everything on to a disk compatible for printing. A special word of thanks goes to Sheila Hughes (née Nally) owner of Lantz Print who printed the newsletter free of charge for many years until she retired. We now print our address labels, so no more handwriting, and we drop off all the envelopes in bulk to the Dublin Mail Centre so no more sticking on stamps. But one thing has not changed—the contributions from our past pupils who write articles about all their experiences since leaving Muckross. Through these we have been armchair travellers reading about life in the Cayman Islands, Canada, France, Moscow, USA, the Punjab, Cape Town, New Zealand and of course Ireland. Muckross girls are everywhere.

Getting articles in was, and is and probably always will be, one of the hardest parts of getting Muckross Mail to our readers. So I want to say a sincere 'thank you' to everyone who kept it fuelled for us.

THE MCDONAGH FAMILY

*RÓISÍN McDONAGH 1994–1998, CAITRÍONA McDONAGH 1994–2000
GRÁINNE McDONAGH 1995–2001, SORCHA McDONAGH 2000–2006
Both SORCHA (2006) and CAITRÍONA (2000) were Head Girls of the school. ROISIN and
GRAINNE were Prefects. Their aunt, ANNE GARVEY, taught French and German for a
period in the 1980s in Muckross.*

*While in transition year CAITRÍONA McDONAGH was editor of the yearbook in 1997 and
did a feature on interesting past pupils who sent us their memories of Muckross for
inclusion. They included: CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN (academic, politician, diplomat,
journalist) who attended 1924–1926. LUCY MITCHELL (writer & poet) who attended
1982–1987. ALISON McKENNA (actress) who attended 1982–1988. LORNA MADIGAN
(head of presentation RTÉ) who was there 1946–1959. DULCIE CASSIDY (judge) who was
there late 1930s–1940s.*



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

A past pupils' afternoon tea

Beatrice M. Doran

It is not every day that one is entertained for an afternoon by three eighty-seven year old Muckross girls! I met Angela Dee accidentally one afternoon in the Merrion Centre when I mistook her for Ita Hackett whom I interviewed some weeks ago regarding the Muckross Musical & Dramatic Society of which she was a member.

Angela laughed when I said 'Are you Ita Hackett?', and informed me that she had often been mistaken for Ita when at school. I asked if she was a

Muckross Past Pupil and whether she had been in any of the Past Pupils' shows. She immediately broke into a song from 'The Quaker Girl' and then invited me to her house for afternoon tea!

Angela still lives in her family home on Sandford Road in Ranelagh and she said she would invite two other Muckross girls on the same afternoon. True to her word Angela contacted me and the afternoon I



Above: Afternoon tea party with Angela Dee and Marie Elliott (Curran).



Above: The Bolger sisters, left to right: Dorothy, Marie, Aileen, Sybil. All Muckross girls!

spent with her and her two school friends was most enjoyable. The three of them (Angela Dee, Marie Curran and Peggy Brosnan) remembered the Lemass sisters Maureen and Peggy with great affection as well as the Bolger sisters, Aileen, Marie, Sybil and Dorothy who lived on Eglington Road. I had the pleasure of meeting the Bolger sisters at their sister-in-law's 70th Birthday party last year.



THE DOMINICAN PROJECTS—Cape Town Playgroup

Gay Rodgers

In 2005, as a result of a suggestion from a past pupil at the AGM, the committee decided to investigate to possibility of adopting a needy cause among the Dominican missions. As you know we support past pupils in need through our Benevolent Fund but we felt we could also manage to share some of our resources further afield. With this in mind we decided to support the above project in Cape Town, South Africa.



The first playgroups we became involved with were the four Etafani groups who operated out of backyard shacks and shipping containers. These provided early learning education and nutritious food for children between three and six.

The Provincial Government census categorizes Nyanga the poorest area of the Western Cape. The level of unemployment is as high as 70%. Research in Nyanga clinics show that between 20% and 25% of Nyanga residents are HIV positive and most are inadequately nourished.

In 1983 Sr. Aine Hardiman OP, in defiance of the Apartheid laws at that time, went to live among this community. With the help of a local woman, Rose Mbude, they set about caring for the children who were left alone while parents went in search of work. There is no social service for those who cannot find work.



Top: Happy children in the playgroup.

Above: Sr Aine with the helper in the izimvozethu Playgroup.

Right: Mothers and children in the playgroup.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union



Since becoming involved a number of new playgroups have been set up at Philippi, Izimvozechu and Monwood. In 2007 while on holidays in South Africa, Valerie Clancy (née Barry) visited the Etafani playgroup and presented them with a cheque for €1,000 from Muckross PPU.

The following is an extract of a letter from Sr Caitriona giving us an update:

'I remember the very hot day when Valerie and Rose visited the Playgroups, bringing with them greetings from the Muckross PPU and the actual cheque all the way from Ireland, for educational equipment for the children. The first playgroup they visited was the Monwood Playgroup in Philippi where they met Nophelo who accompanied them around the other playgroups. The second playgroup was the Sophumelela Playgroup, also in Philippi, which was run by Ntombizonke. (In the Xhosa language Sophumelela means 'we are going forward'.)

In 2008 we were delighted to hear that the Etafani Playgroup was running its own project independently. The Playgroup in most need then was the Izimvozechu Playgroup. The women running this Playgroup have called it Izimvozechu (Pronounced Izim-vo-ze-thu) which means in the Xhosa language 'Our Ideas'.

Muckross PPU have been in a position each year since to send money to Sr Aine and Sr Caitriona to help with the upkeep of the playgroups. What we send might not seem much to some but for example €1,000 converted into South African Rand can provide a daily meal for all the children in the playgroup for a year.

It is thanks to the membership subscriptions from past pupils and the proceeds of the annual raffle that the PPU can give support to these playgroups and to our other charitable causes.



Above: A local mother helps Sr Aine share out oranges outside the Wendy house.

Right: Valerie and Rose visiting the playgroup.



Some Reflections on a Library Career

Deirdre Garrett Shortall

I was still in school when I first decided I would like to become a librarian. I remember being disappointed that I wasn't asked to be one of the library helpers when the 6th year jobs were being allocated. I was appointed prefect to one of the 1st year classes instead.

It is amazing how often life events come full circle. Having unsuccessfully set my heart on helping in Muckross library when I was seventeen, by chance the job which came my way and which I worked at for the nine years before I retired was as School Librarian in a secondary school, Loreto College, St. Stephen's Green. About a decade after I left school, Muckross demonstrated a very progressive attitude by appointing its first full-time librarian. Many of us who attended the school in the 1960s have fond memories of those class periods when we could escape from the normal drill of school life and enjoy the treasures of what was for its time an exceptionally well-stocked school library.

I do not know how many librarians there are among the past pupils of Muckross, but I feel sure that there must be many more than I am aware of. Two of my own classmates, Madeleine O'Dwyer and Breda Farrelly also became librarians, as did Marie Bolger who was a year ahead of us—all of the above including myself have at some stage worked in the library of University College Dublin. Other ex-Muckross librarians that I know of include Ruth Flanagan, formerly Cork County Librarian, and of course our current Past Pupils' Union President, Beatrice Doran, formerly Librarian of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

Librarianship has become quite a popular career in recent times, although as with all areas of life employment opportunities have reduced in the last few years. The nature of the job has of course undergone dramatic changes with the great advances in information and communication technologies—I think it is generally recognised world-wide that the library sector was among the quickest and most enthusiastic to embrace the new technology. After all, long before "googling" was heard of, information retrieval systems were all in a librarian's day's work.

Right: The PPU presented books to the library from 1996 to 1999. Left to right: Almee Sweeney, Library Prefect, President of the PPU Gay Rodgers, Principal Patricia Fitzsimons, Sr Barnabas and Librarian Molra Laffan in 1999.





Muckross Past Pupils' Union

WRITERS WORKSHOP & SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Gay Rodgers

On a Saturday afternoon in January 2007 a new PPU event was born—a Writers Workshop. The venue was the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire and those in attendance were put through their paces by Patricia O'Reilly, past pupil and author of numerous books including *Writing for Success*. During the afternoon another past pupil, Helen Litton, passed on her experiences of being an historical novelist. Then Brian Cox told those gathered about how his love of golf prompted him to write a history of the Ryder Cup.

Following the success of the first workshop, we ran three more. In 2008 Marita Conlon McKenna, author of *Miracle Woman*, *A Promised* and *Under the Hawthorn Tree* told us of the great joy writing has brought to her life. She described herself as a fast and furious writer and writes many of her books for children.

Our guest author in 2009 was June Considine. She spoke of her life as a writer, giving us humorous anecdotes about writing to deadlines during the early years. June's well-known children's stories, the *Lavender Trilogy* and the *Beechwood* series were fondly recalled as well as her novels for adults, '*Deceptions*' and *When the Bough Breaks*.



Above: Writers Workshop 2010: author Patricia O'Reilly.



Above: Writers Workshop 2010: PPU President Gay Rodgers and her husband Tony Davis.

We had a great line up of authors for the 2010 Workshop including Catherine de Courcy, Emily Cox and David Rice. Catherine is a travel writer and historian as well as a past pupil. She has written more than 10 books and is acknowledged as a world authority on zoos. She spoke about a number of her books including her most recent publication, *Dublin Zoo: an illustrated history* which has been described by the independent Zoo Enthusiasts Society UK as "probably the best ever zoo



history from these islands". She also spoke about her book *Adventure in Grief* which she wrote after her husband John's death by suicide in 2000.

On a similar theme, Emily Cox spoke about her first book, *Suicide, Ireland's Story*. The book covers the high rate of suicide in Ireland, especially among males, and how modern society drives individuals to such extremes. This subject generated an enormous amount of discussion.



Above: Writers Workshop 2010: authors David Rice, Emily Cox and Catherine de Courcy with Chairman Tony Davis.

David Rice is director of the Killaloe Hedge-School of Writing. He has taught writing and editing skills for over 20 years in Ireland, China and America. His books include *The Pompeii Syndrome*, *Blood Guilt* and *Song of Tiananmen Square*. He gave everyone a great insight into writing clear and simple prose.



Above: Patricia O'Reilly with guest author, Deirdre Purcell, at the 2012 Writers' Workshop held on 24th March in Muckross Park College.

The common denominator during the four years of running the Writers Workshop has been Patricia O'Reilly. During her exercises she has passed on valuable information on the main ingredients of fiction writing—plot, characters and locations. Patricia also advises to carry a notebook everywhere for those wonderful moments of inspiration.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

Bridge Drives

Gay Rodgers

Bridge as we know is a very popular card game and apparently keeps the brain active. Over many years the brains of our past pupils were exercised at the annual PPU Bridge Night. This event was run by the PPU committee in St Catherine's Hall, usually on a Sunday night.

The preparations for this included tidying the hall, assembling the tables and placing them in neat rows and making sandwiches for the supper. Each committee member had to make a large sliced pan's worth of sandwiches—the fillings having been decided in advance of



**In the excitement, Sheila let slip
that she was new to Bridge**

course. Every year without fail Lorie O'Connell RIP would bake her fabulous tea bracks and arrive with them ready to slice and butter.

While the serious business of bridge took place in the hall, the committee would prepare the food in the kitchen and pray that the old Burco Boiler would have the water boiled in time to make the tea. Invariably someone would crack a joke and we would be trying to stifle our laughter before one of the bridge people came in and complained. It was like getting a fit of the giggles in the school chapel.

Then in 2003 we moved to Donnybrook Tennis Club where we had a Bridge Morning with lunch—very D4! This venue was thanks to the then PPU president Valerie Clancy who was a member of the tennis club. It was not just the venue that changed. With the better facilities we could greet the players as they arrived with tea and coffee; we had a lovely view of the tennis courts and we produced -according to reports - 'a super lunch'. But one thing did not change—giggling in the kitchen.

The last Bridge Morning was in 2006. The PPU is very grateful to all supported this event each year, both organisers and players, as it was a significant contributor to our Benevolent Fund.

*Congratulations to Muckross Past Pupils' Union
on celebrating their Centenary!
Best wishes, Phyl Kelleher (Campbell), Class of 1956.*



MUCKROSS PPU TRIPS—Budapest & Copenhagen

Compiled from the *Muckross Mail* by Gay Rodgers

When Valerie Clancy (née Barry) was President of the Past Pupils' Union in 2004, she thought it was time for the PPU to take a trip abroad. The PPU Committee agreed and chose Budapest as the destination for a weekend trip. We advertised it in the *Muckross Mail* and in September 2004 a group of Muckross past pupils and some friends arrived in Budapest.



Left: Muckross girls, Deirdre McCann (née Sherry), Clara McCann, Brigid Bruce (née Sherry), Coreen Dennis, Ann Simmington, Ita Lawlor, (née Ganly) Felicity Coll (née O'Brien), Catherine Walsh (née Smyth) and friends, Fintan Clancy, Sheila and David Horkan, Simone Dallaghan, Betty de Mangeat and Mary Kelly.

The planned half-day tour of Budapest was enthralling, as the guide Sophie was superb. Budapest is made up of two towns, Buda and Pest. Heroes Square is most impressive—it is surrounded by the Museum of Fine Arts and by the Palace of Art. Our guide took us to the Buda side of the river as well, where we visited the palace and also had a welcome cup of tea. One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the Matyas church. Another day we had a delightful boat trip to Elizabeth Island where we had time for a glass of wine and the opportunity to recover from a two hour walk. We saw many of the beautiful sights on the Pest side of the river as well. The next day some of us went to the Museum of Applied Arts



Above: Clara McCann and Brigid Bruce (née Sherry) being serenaded in Budapest.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union



Above: Deldre McCann (née Sherry) hitting the right note in Budapest.

which is an amazing building with a wonderful oriental green and gold dome, which we had spotted on our way from the airport.

The highlight of the trip was a night at the opera. Felicity Coll had booked tickets in advance for *La Boheme*. The opera was wonderful as were the magnificent surroundings of the opera house. It is interesting to note that the tickets cost €3.75 each, significantly cheaper than opera tickets in Dublin!

On our last day we attended a sung mass in St. Isteven's Cathedral and some of us went for a walk and visited the Museum of Fine Arts. Lunch in an outdoor restaurant overlooking the lake in the park was our last meal in Budapest, after which, we headed for the hotel and then to the airport for our homeward journey.

Wonderful Copenhagen

Following the success of the PPU Budapest trip in 2004 it was decided to organise a weekend in Copenhagen for 2005. This time the group was smaller, maybe it was our choice of destination or the time of year but just five past pupils signed up to travel.

Undaunted, the five intrepid travellers set off on the "Muckross Trip" on Wednesday 23rd September 2005 full of happy anticipation. Felicity Coll (O'Brien) proved right from the start, to be a superb leader of our little expedition. She led us—Catherine Walsh (Smyth), Annette Richardson, Ann Shaw and Joan Priestman—(without a hitch) straight to our hotel within walking distance of the station. Having settled in we set off to the National Art Gallery, a train ride away, where we saw beautiful pictures and sculptures in a very fine building. That night dinner was in a lovely Italian restaurant where we were treated royally by the Italian waiters and had great fun.

The next day we went on the tourist trail and got a birds-eye view of the city including The Little Mermaid and the changing of the guard at the Royal Palace. With weary legs we headed to Nyhaven, a fantastic part of the city and relaxed over lunch where Joan Priestman was the only one to try the delicious herrings—a traditional Danish delicacy. That evening Felicity and Catherine went to hear the Symphony Orchestra and the rest of us returned to our Italian friends. Not the same without the other two though.



On Friday morning the shops beckoned and we all spent time getting rid our cash. We met up for lunch at a very historic old Danish restaurant called Husmanns, which was very enjoyable. Later on that day we visited the famous Tivoli Gardens and looked with horror at some of the rides—a bit terrifying and no one was brave enough to try them! That night we had an enjoyable meal in a Chinese restaurant and afterwards we strolled through the magnificently illuminated Indian Palaces and fountains.



Above: Felicity Coll (née O'Brien), Catherine Walsh (née Smyth), Annette Richardson, Anne Shaw and Joan Priestman In Copenhagen.

On the last morning everybody did their own thing, some shopping, some sight-seeing and going on a cruise. Later we headed back to the airport and our flight home. What we lacked in quantity we made up for in quality—a great trip with lovely people.

Combined Dominican Unions' Mass

The annual CDU Mass takes place in Muckross on the first Sunday in October each year. This Mass has a long tradition but we have not been able to ascertain exactly when it started. In the past the Mass was held in a different Dominican school each year but over time a number of the schools and convents have closed and so now Muckross hosts it in our chapel.

In recent years the numbers attending were falling but with some newspaper advertising and the support from our sister unions in Dominican College, Eccles Street, Dun Laoghaire and Sion Hill it is now well attended. The Mass takes place at 11.15am and is followed by refreshments when we all catch up with old friends.

If you have friends who went to Ballyfermot, Cabra, Dun Laoghaire, Eccles Street & Griffith Ave, Falls Road, Fortwilliam, Portstewart, Santa Sabina, Sion Hill, Taylor's Hill or Wicklow or any other Dominican school, including the boys schools, tell them about it and bring them along too.





Muckross Past Pupils' Union

The Past Pupils' Union present a Roll of Honour to the School

Gay Rodgers

On 19th May 2007 Muckross Park College held a garden party to show off its new facilities to past, present and future pupils and their families. We were blessed with a sunny day which enabled everyone to wander around not just the new school building but the grounds and watch an exhibition hockey match on the new Astroturf pitch. The match was between present pupils and parents. It was a draw at half time – (well done parents!) but youth and fitness paid off in the end.

A small school orchestra consisting of 2nd, 3rd and 5th year pupils entertained us while Transition Year pupils plied the guests with wine and delicious finger-food.

We believe the oldest returnée to the school was Eithne Murphy who left Muckross in 1929.

A framed 'Roll of Honour' was presented to the school by Muckross PPU. Sr. Barnabas presented it to Principal Patricia Fitzsimons on behalf of the PPU. The Roll contains the names from the original college register from 1884 -1902. At that time Muckross was the first Catholic college in Ireland specifically intended for the higher education of women. The college not only catered for university students but also primary and secondary levels.

In September 2009 a dedication plaque to commemorate the presentation was put in place after a brief address to senior students on the history of the School, the Dominicans, the Suffragette Movement, the 1916 Rising, St. Mary's College and finally, the influence of Sr. Barnabas on the life and history of the school. Transition year and Leaving Certificate classes were present as well as Deirdre MacMathuna, librarian Ann Lucas, and Margaret Grogan.



Above: 6th Year History class with Margaret Grogan (teacher and member of the Board of Management) and school librarian, Ann Lucas with the Roll of Honour in the background.



EASTER EGG HUNT AND SANTA PARTY

Gay Rodgers



Above: Easter Egg hunters having a chat with the Easter Bunny.

In 2006 we had our first Easter Egg Hunt and Santa Party. Both these events have attracted our younger past pupils and their families and have proved to be very popular ever since.

The Easter Egg Hunt is great fun with dozens of children running all over the lawn in front of the old school building looking for eggs. Lots of children arrive every year well equipped with bags and colourful baskets to fill up and most leave with very chocolaty faces!

The Santa Party is now so popular we have to limit the number of children attending to 40. So between parents and children we have over 100 people in the parlours in the convent waiting their turn to see Santa. While waiting the children can take part in a colouring competition and have sweets and minerals and the parents catch up with old classmates and the nuns over mince pies.

A big thank you to Dan Moloney for his special help with the Santa Party each year and to the nuns who allow us take over their home to run these events.



Above: Colmhe Long, left, with her sister Beibhinn and Santa.

THE KAVANAGH FAMILY

Possibly the oldest past pupil – now aged 88 — is MAUREEN KAVANAGH (née TALBOT). She was in the same class (1941) as PATSY KINSELLA (later a teacher in Muckross).

Maureen's daughters, GAY (class of 1970) and ELAINE HARTIGAN (class of 1975) also attended.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

PICTURES FROM SOME OF OUR PPU AGMs



Left: Sr Barnabas, Valerie Cox, Gay Rodgers, Therese BIRTHISTIE, Margot Doyle, Valerie Clancy, Carla Sload and Beatrice Doran.





The National Au Pair Seminar

In 1972 Muckross Past Pupils' Union embarked on a most ambitious project—a National Au Pair Seminar. At that time, more than forty years ago, au pairing was quite an industry. The seminar was held on 12th November and the concert hall was jammed with more than 200 students from schools all over Ireland, all determined to get the inside story on what seemed then a very exotic way of life!

A number of Muckross girls had already been abroad as au pairs and they held a series of information workshops. After the Seminar, which was widely covered in all the national media, the PPU passed a resolution calling for the Government to sign and ratify The Council of Europe Au Pair Charter as a matter of urgency.

Later a book was published by the PPU, *Mind how you go*, a guide to au pairing, which was written by Valerie Cox (née FitzPatrick) and Mary Buckley (née Deane).

THE ROWAN FAMILY

NOLLAIG ROWAN attended Muckross from 1958 to 1971. The Rowans lived in Goatstown at the time. Her sisters also attended:

OLIVIA (class of 1979) now lives in New York, USA.

PAULA (class of 1982) now lives in Sydney, Australia.

Brothers IVOR now living in Florence, Italy and RAYMOND now living in London, England, began their schooling in Muckross.

Nollaig's daughters also went to Muckross. AIFRIC DOWNEY (class of 2007) and OLWYN DOWNEY (class of 2009).

Nollaig and her family now live in Ranelagh, Dublin. She is married to Charlie and they have four children. Nollaig works as a child psychologist and also writes poetry and short stories. Their mother, Lillian Rowan, although not a past pupil, was very involved in fundraising for the school and in setting up the Muckross Bridge Club.



Left to right: Aifric Downey, Lillian Rowan, Olwyn Downey, Nollaig Rowan-Downey.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

NEW SCHOOL OPENING, 2007

Muckross Park Parents Association

Muckross Park Parents' Association is the representative body of the parents and guardians of the girls attending Muckross Park College and membership is open to all parents and guardians. The aims of the association are:

- to provide a forum for the views of parents;
- to represent these views to the Principal, the Board of Management of the school, and any other relevant person or bodies;
- to ensure that parents are kept informed of developments in the school and in education;
- to support the role of the parents' elected representatives on the Board of Management;
- to help give parents an effective voice through affiliation to regional and/ or national councils of school parents' associations; and
- to organise or assist with activities to improve the educational and financial resources of the school as required, subject to the sanction of the Board of Management.



Above: The Principal Patricia Fitzsimons and 6th Years welcoming the Minister for Education and Science Mary Hanafin T.D. to the official opening of the new school in April 2007.



Above: A view from the top balcony of the blessing of the new school by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at the official opening on 19th April 2007.

In the last year the PA have organised parents evenings, coffee mornings, produced the biannual newsletter, provided refreshments at the Carol Service and Sports Day, arranged talks for the parents and girls—most recently *Parenting, Rewards and Challenges* by John Lonergan, *Career Coaching* by Roger Grennan and funded the 6th year COA talk—and last but not least the Parents Association organised three wonderful Fun Runs in 2008, 2009

and 2011 in Irishtown Stadium. These events were fantastic days out for all the family and very successful fundraisers, providing funds for the further development of facilities in the school, such as the lights for the sports pitches and the new canteen/lunch room. The Fun Days were very enthusiastically supported by the parents, teachers and girls, both present and past.



Above: The pupils, teachers and guests assembled in the school's new gym hall for the Mass to celebrate the new school.



Muckross Past Pupils' Union

PATRICIA (PATSY) KINSELLA—an appreciation

Anne Thurston (née Meldon)



Above: Patsy Kinsella and Sr. Maebh, 1963.

fitting that they were there. And inside, the church was filled with her past pupils and her former colleagues and her many friends.

Miss Kinsella taught Irish and English. She organised debates, plays and trips. There was that school trip to London, on the mail-boat and a tea in *Derry&Tom's* roof garden to which she treated her pupils. She travelled widely, often alone, when this was unusual for a single woman, and brought tales of her adventures back to the classroom.

Born Patricia Kinsella in Dublin in 1923, known as Pat to her family, as Patsy to her colleagues in the staff room, but for generations of her pupils at Dominican College, Muckross Park, she was simply: 'Miss Kinsella'. Her name was synonymous with the school where she taught for 38 years, becoming its first lay vice-principal.

Patsy Kinsella had been retired for 21 years by the time she died on January 4 2009 yet there was a guard of honour of present day Muckross pupils for her funeral. Immediately recognisable in their green and black uniforms, they stood with dignity to say farewell to someone they had never personally known, but who was so respected in the annals of the school, that it was



She was an excellent teacher but it was not what Miss Kinsella taught that remains uppermost in the mind, but how she was as a person. She showed respect and got it in return. She encouraged independent thought. There is a Benedictine rule which talks about the corrosive effect of 'murmuring', a kind of gossiping which destroys a community. There was no 'murmuring' in Muckross Park when Pat Kinsella was there. She would come into the classroom. 'Now girls...' she would begin, and whatever issue was concerning us—no matter how contentious—it would be aired.

She embodied everything she conveyed. She was loyal, trustworthy, and unobtrusively generous. She had a great sense of humour, a caustic tongue at times, and a way of cutting through insincerity, sentimentality and sheer nonsense. She was a straight talker and expected no less from others. The Dominican motto is *Veritas*; she manifested this, not by preaching about it, simply by living it. There was no obvious piety, just good practice.

She had strong feelings about things and her pupils soon learnt what they were. They ranged from the love of the Irish language to disliking trouser suits to never lending money to a friend!

She was utterly fair. There were no favourites. Yet some of her pupils later developed a friendship with her and valued her wisdom as a 'good listener'. You could tell her anything; her friends often did.

She was intensely curious about life and interested in people. Her conversations would always begin with and 'How is everybody?' And she meant everybody. And if you omitted someone from the list, she would recall them.

Her first and greatest love was for her family: her sister Joan, her brother Father Nivard in Roscrea, her nieces and nephews, her grand-nieces and grand-nephews. She was the most devoted aunt and great-aunt. They will rejoice in the many wonderful memories. Her colleagues and her friends will recall her with great fondness.

A good teacher leaves an extraordinary legacy: such a teacher influences thousands of young lives. The virtues transmitted by Pat Kinsella: fairness, integrity, compassion, friendship and truth never die.

This appreciation was originally published in the Irish Times February 9, 2009

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CONSUMER AND CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS

*Congratulations to Muckross Past Pupils' Union
on reaching your Centenary!*

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Chapter Eight

Celebrations at Muckross





Celebrations at Muckross

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AT MUCKROSS

A pictorial memory



First Communion Group 1949



First Communion Group 1961



First Communion Group 1974



A CENTURY OF MEMORIES



First Communion Group 1959



First Communion Group 1960



First Communion Group 1959



First Communion Group 1960



First Communion Group 1966



Celebrations at Muckross

Weddings

A Muckross tradition

In earlier times it was a tradition that Muckross brides called to the convent on their wedding day. The nuns produced this little prayer leaflet which was presented to the happy couple. This particular one was given to Imelda FitzPatrick (née Tucker) on her wedding day, 19th October 1949.



✠

May Christ, Who blessed the
Wedding Feast,
At Mary's whispered prayer,
Bless you to-day a hundredfold;
We place you 'neath His care.

May Mary's tender heart enfold
The home you make to-day,
Her love enlightening your house;
This gift for you we pray.

And may St. Joseph guide you both
In wisdom sweet and true,
And make your home a Nazareth;
This is our wish for you.

*From all friends
of Dominican Convent,
Muckross Park,
Dunnsbrook,
Dublin.*

*19th October,
1949.*



Left: Imelda (née Tucker) and Des FitzPatrick, 19th October 1949.

A CENTURY OF MEMORIES



Left: Maura (née Harper) and Sean Frankland signing the visitors book in Muckcross, March 1969. Sadly, Sean died in July 2010.



Above: Elizabeth O'Donoghue (Éilis Mac Giolla Choille) and Breandán Mac Giolla Choille, 1951.



Above: Confirmation group, 1965.



Celebrations at Muckross

MUCKROSS DEBUTANTES

Making your debs dress

for Aifric

*I shake free blood-red silk,
weft and warp of life,
lay tissue pattern flat
like membrane on its
shot surface.*

*Pin, tuck, chalk, tack,
raise scissors,
cut, snip, clip, shear.
Sculpt your shape
your familiar form.*

*Bodice front cut on fold.
Front side cut two.
Front, back.
Back side cut two.
Facings, straps, sash, loops.
All the notions that are you.*

*You look at me fraying at the edges
I snip, rip, quick-unpick,
unravel the ravelled,
ungather the gathers.
Lay bare this pin-pricked mess.*

*Then tentatively sew.
Slip-stitch us together.
Fold back seams, clip curves,
press darts towards centre.*

*Attach lining, secure straps.
Adjust. Adjust. Adjust to fit.*

*Now you float seamlessly in
this red dress.
Our nineteen years loosely
hemmed. Seams secure.*

NOLLAIG ROWAN-DOWNEY, 2007

Winner of Dromineer Literary Festival poetry competition.



Above: 2010 debs in the Shelbourne Hotel.



Above: Maura Harper at her debs with Sr Barnabas and Sr Patrick in 1964.

Right: Una Mangan (née Harper) with Brian Mangan at her debs in January 1969.

Below: Past pupils Imelda FitzPatrick, her husband Des and her daughters Iris and Valerie at the Debs Ball in 1969.

Below right: 2009 Muckross Debs Dance. Katie Griffin, Helen Rochford, Tara Clinton, Claire Gavin, Rebecca Landers, Olwyn Downey, Alwyn Duffy.



**Best wishes
to all the past
pupils of
Muckross Park
School**

from all the staff at Bank of Ireland
Ranelagh

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Chapter Nine

The Nuns of Muckross





Nuns of Muckross

SISTER PATRICK

Patricia O'Reilly

During the 1950s the liberation of women was but a pipe dream, but nuns like Sr Patrick saw it as a reality. She and many of the other sisters in the convent were liberated by their knowledge and interests which were wider than the majority of married women of the time who were trapped in domesticity and rearing children.

OBITUARIES

SR PATRICK CRONIN
Donnybrook

Sr Patrick Cronin (88) died at the Dominican Convent on 7 January after a long illness. She served with the Dominican Convent, Muckross Park, for many years, joining the order in 1926. Sr Patrick was born Hannah Cronin in Roscommon in 1904. Her father died suddenly when she was a child. The family moved to Dublin, living at Norfolk Road, Phibsboro. After school in Eccles Street, she went to University College Dublin, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. She worked for the civil service in Dublin Castle and took up amateur dramatics. On the night before she entered Sion Hill, Sr Patrick started in two one-act plays in the Abbey Theatre, which had been translated from French to Irish.

Sr Patrick was 74 when she joined Muckross Park. She taught geography and Irish and later became headmistress of both the junior and senior school. She

kept up her interest in amateur dramatics, staging an annual dramatic production in the school. In the academic sphere, Sr Patrick was respected for her keen interest in and knowledge of geography. She was a founder member of the National Geographic Society of Ireland. In 1967 she was chosen as the government's delegate to the first European Geographic Congress in Paris.

In later life, Sr Patrick travelled widely, making several trips to America and China. She also spent a week with the then Archbishop of Tehran, William Bardon OP. Sister Francis of Muckross Park said that Sr Patrick was endowed with a very special faith which enabled her to talk to God as though she were talking to her friends.

Sr Patrick is survived by her brother, Fr Kevin CM, and is pre-deceased by her brother Fr Feargal. Funeral mass was at the Convent Chapel with burial at Palmestown Cemetery.



Sr Patrick would be met patrolling the corridors of the convent, cheeks flushed to bright red, clutching haphazardly piled copy and text books or whatever other bit of information had taken her fancy. An Abbey actress before she entered, she was deeply interested in current affairs and frequently her English and Irish classes were elevated to discussion on what was happening in the world.



THE SISTERS THROUGH THE YEARS

A pictorial history



Above: Sister Hilary



Above: Sister Cecilia.



Above: Flonnuala O'Driscoll's wedding day, with her sister Chris and twin brother Colm in front. Left to right: Sisters Bernadette and Hilary. 2nd row: Sisters Vivienne, Carmel, Francis and Patrick. 3rd row: Sisters Polycarp, Barnabas and Anna. 4th row: Sister Marie.



Nuns of Muckross



Above: Mothers Xavier, Gonzales, Catherine, Hyacinth and Dominic.



Above: Sisters Barnabas, Meabh and Rita.



Below: Sr Caitriona Geraghty, the present Prioress of Muckross Park.



Above: Sister Joseph Keighron, Prioress 1903–1906.





Above: Sr Mary Barnabas OP, Mary Buckley, née Deane and Mrs Kathleen Deane at Muckross Park, June 1969.

Left: Sr Barnabas and her birthday cake in the parlour in June 2007 after the committee made a surprise visit on her feast day with the cake to celebrate her 90th birthday. She wanted to keep the event quiet but we thought all her past pupils would love to see this photo. Of course we are now going to be in big trouble for sharing this information with you! You'll forgive us, won't you Barney?



Nuns of Muckross

LIST OF PRINCIPALS OF MUCKROSS PARK

1920–1922	Sister John Moloney
1922–1928	Sister Osanna Curtin
1928–1944	Sister Benevenuta Connolly
1944–1948	Sister Meabh (Vincenzo) Ni Chleirigh
1948–1957	Sister Cecilia Veale
1957–1963	Sister Louis Dominic Nolan
1963–1969	Sister Patrick Cronin
1969–1975	Sister Domenico Miley
1975–1977	Sister Angela Champion
1977–1981	Sister Manus O'Byrne
1981–1989	Sister Norah O'Connor
1989–1991	Ms Ruth Dromey
1991–1997	Sister Norah O'Connor
1997–2010	Ms Patricia Fitzsimons
2010 to present	Mrs Caroline Lundy

THE BONAR FAMILY

*MARY CONWAY (née BONAR) 1955-1965 (now living in Blackrock, Dublin).
NOLLAIG BONAR 1957-1970 (now living in Prince Edward Island, Canada).*

Later their nieces went to Muckross.

ALISON LEAVY, class of 2003, EVANNA LEAVY, class of 2005

Nollaig Bonar writes from Canada :

My father worked in the ESB in Merrion Square and after the family moved to Stillorgan he polled his colleagues for what might be the best girl's school to send us to. Muckross was the answer and so it was that that my sister Mary and I became pupils of the Dominicans. I received all my schooling there all the way from Sister Polycarp in Babies (with her paper race cars—each of us was assigned one, inching across the squared paper chart hung high on the wall as we progressed in our learning) through Sr. Bernadine, Sister Patrick and the inimitable Sister Barnabas.

I always dreamed of buying the pony from the gardener though.

brophy opticians

Hilary Brophy (class of 1972)
Brophy Opticians, Stillorgan
Shopping Centre, Upper Level.

*Congratulations to Muckross
Past Pupils' Union on our
100th Anniversary*



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FINE GAEL



Congratulations
to
MUCKROSS
100 Years

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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday

Muckross Park Past Pupils Union, one of the first unions in the country, is one hundred years old this year. To celebrate our centenary, our past pupils have recalled their memories of their schooldays which happened against a background of



Teas (Rel. Knowledge)

toméur



the jailing of Countess Markievicz, the Easter Rising, the First Dáil, the sinking of the *Titanic*, two World Wars, An Tostál, the first man on the moon and Pope John Paul II's visit to Ireland.



Seánaimia

(German)

Larógas

(L)

Stair

(History)

Among those included in this book are Marie Hackett who went to school in the twenties and Elizabeth O'Donoghue and Maureen Lemass who were schoolgirls in the thirties.



Tíreolaíocht

(Geography)

m

er

ti

ti

(Commerce)



Read on... and our past pupils will explain what it means to be a 'Muckross girl'.