

Nil in aon rud ach seal. – This proverb was upheld at Ballymacarbry N.S. in 2012 when change was the order of the day. The principal and deputy principal both retired in late June after many years of committed service to our school. Ita O' Brien & Winnie Hickey presented and indeed planted an oak tree in the school environs to commemorate their happy years here. The Board of Management organised a day for the retirees incorporating a mass and a banquet in the school hall. Best wishes to Ita, Winnie and their respective families for the, hopefully many years ahead.

Personally, I was delighted to be appointed as principal of my local school in June. This is my third phase involvement with the school; first as pupil, second as teacher and third as principal. I am happy to continue the family tradition with the school, starting with my late grandmother, Madge. I am happy to be following in the line of Sean Nyhan, George Barry, Catherine O' Brien and Ita O' Brien. Thanks to Ita and Winnie for their help during the transition process and indeed their continuing assistance to Catherine and myself.

Best wishes also to our Special Needs Assistant, Ms Dolores Gill who also left our staff during the summer. We also welcome back both Mrs. Long and Miss Melody on a full time basis. Anna coincidentally maintains our link to the first principal of the school.

Glad to report our numbers are on the rise. We welcomed 36 pupils to our school including 33 infants, while only saying goodbye to 21, who have gone to their chosen secondary school. The school now has an enrolment of 197 with an administrative Principal, 7 mainstream teachers, 2 full time Special Education Teachers, 1 visiting SEN teacher, 2 Special Needs Assistant, 1 Secretary and a caretaker. Enrolments are now being taken for September 2013. For further info please contact Rose at 052 6136349.

The school held three fundraising days for charity during 2102. One was a Sale of Work in aid of the School, one in aid of the Children's Hospital in Crumlin, organised by Meadhbh Houlihan and family which amounted to €315. Lastly a Fancy Dress Day prior to the Halloween break, where almost €200 was raised for Temple St Children's Hospital. Thanks to the sixth class girls for instigating this event. In the lead up to Christmas, a fundraiser in conjunction with WLRFM is planned to help with its annual Christmas Hamper Appeal for the people of Waterford City & County.

### GAA tournaments:

Near but yet so far has been our lot since start of term. We have reached both A finals in the Boys & Girls, but unfortunate to end up losing both after two terrific encounters on Finals Day to Abbeyside and Lismore respectively, by nothing more than a kick of a ball. The boys reached the 7-a-side finals also but ended up losing to Tallow after extra time. Now we turn our attention to hurling and the competition which will start after Christmas. Thanks to Ms. O' Gorman and Mr. McGrath for their help in this regard along with Tom Guiry.

I'd like to pay special tribute to all staff who have worked very hard since the summer to get to terms with a new administration. The work load is all encompassing and becoming greater by the year. I'd like to thank them for all the additional activities they become involved in with the pupils, the school, throughout the Community and beyond. In addition most Tuesday evenings after school are spent formulating policies or attending staff meetings in compliance with the Croke Park directive.

### End of Year & Start of Year Mass:

Fr Desmond officiated at our start of year mass in early October. The children played a major part in proceedings as did our school band. This was also to mark World Prayer Day for Children. Congrats to all those partaking in the monthly Children's mass in

the Nire and the Seasonal family mass alternating between Newcastle & Four Mile Water.

### Sacrament of Confirmation:

Pupils from fifth and sixth class made their confirmation in Newcastle (30) and Touraneena (10) churches on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March respectively. Fr. Michael Cullinan deputised for Very Rev. William Lee, Bishop of Waterford & Lismore. Thanks to Mrs Byrne and Mrs. Coffey for preparing the candidates.

### Sacrament of the Eucharist:

On Sat. 19<sup>th</sup> May, eighteen pupils from 2<sup>nd</sup> class made their First Holy Communion at St. Laurence's Church FMW. The following day a further seven pupils from the Nire received the sacrament at St. Bridget's Church the Nire. Thanks to Miss Fenton for preparing the class. Sincere thanks to Fr. Desmond & Fr. Kelleher for their help in sacramental preparation and indeed throughout the school year. Sr. Antoinette of the Diocesan Advisory team called to the locality on Mon 10<sup>th</sup> December to speak with the Parents of those in Rang 2 hoping to receive the Sacrament in May.

### Active Week:

Active week took place in mid May 2012, which incorporated our non competitive School Sports Day, Active Week is held annually to maintain our well earned Blue Flag Status. Once again parents gave of their time to assist us in an inclusive varied programme of events. Our Wiii Dance Day was coordinated by E Muhlwald, also finding time to demonstrate Smoothie Making, using pedal power - a healthy "fruitful" activity. Once again Michael Desmond led a nature Walk up Curragheenavoher and imparted his abundant knowledge to all in sundry. Relaxation was the order of the day, when D Proctor visited and showed us all how to relax using gentle movement to classical Music. The highlight of the week proved to be the free standing "Climbing Wall", which stood at a daunting 28 ft. Children, teachers and parents scaled the structure to get a bird's eye view of the school.

### Coaches:

Sport forms an integral part in the life of this community and this is replicated in our school. We are very fortunate to have a team of coaches come to the school to help our children with sport. Our local teams performed very well on the field of play capturing county titles for Nire / FMW / Ballymac Ladies & Ballymacarbry Soccer Club. We love to see these players come along and we know that they provide a great incentive for our pupils to follow. Our local coaches, Tom Guiry and David Walsh deserve special mention. We also have Michelle Power visit us. This year we were fortunate in that past pupil Frank Quinlan promoted the coaching of rugby. We also have students from Colaiste Cathal Naofa, who travel to the school on a weekly basis and involve the pupils in a plethora of sports. After completing the soccer coaching, we now move to volleyball until Christmas. We thank all of these whose presence adds greatly to the atmosphere of our school. Rang 1-6 also partake in swimming lessons at Clonmel pool on Fridays.



*David Walsh passing on the tradition to our children*

### **Summer Works:**

During the summer holidays a new toilet was built off the school Hall. This caters for those with special needs and was financed by the Dept of Education & Skills. It is an excellent addition to the school. Thanks to all concerned in the process from initiation to realisation.

New flooring has been laid in the main reception area, the toilets and the junior infant class. Thanks to Ita and her initiative in winning a competition, to get a classroom fitted out with this Marmoleum. Thanks also to a most generous benefactor who gave us an invaluable donation that enabled us to lay a new entrance hall floor. It really brightens up the atmosphere of the school and is conducive to cleaning and good hygiene practice. Thanks also to the Board for the extension of this, to all toilets within the school. Noel Hogan and Forbo Ltd were a treat to deal with and it would be the wish of this school to roll this out to all classrooms in the medium term. Again thanks to all concerned.

It is my opinion that a lot of work needs to be carried out in the school. Windows are very dated and not conducive to heat retention. Insulation is also an issue during the winter. The pipe system is also antiquated and needs attention. To this end the BOM will be developing a programme of work to redress this. One or two fundraising ideas are floating around. I would also hope to establish a School Community Day in spring where all the relevant pillars can unite, perhaps on a voluntary basis and give the school and its environs a facelift. Your support would be greatly appreciated – as our motto denotes “Ní neart go cur le chéile” There's strength in unity. We will also lend our support to the local Spring Clean, this will be in furtherance to our ethos as a “Green Flag school” We will endeavour to attain the Energy Flag this year and a committee of all stakeholders within the school will derive ways of lowering our energy costs and reducing our carbon footprint.

On a safety note, we work adjacent to a very busy road and have over 200 people travelling to the school daily. I would kindly ask motorists to be cognisant of this fact, especially at set down and pick up times. By respecting the flashing amber lights, you are safeguarding the children's safety. The lights are programmed for the morning, infant collection time and home time.

### **School Garden:**

Miss Melody's class has taken responsibility of the school garden. Mrs Carroll coordinated and developed the planting and relocation of herbs, fruits and vegetables for 2013. We also made a leaf composter and the class has been busy filling it with felled leaves this autumn. Hopefully Jack Frost won't be too severe on our potential bounty!

### **Banna Ceoil:**

We are fortunate to have very talented, enthusiastic musicians in the school. Mrs. Kelly has established a school band to develop this in school. We are grateful to her and her musicians for their efforts and look forward to hearing them play both in and out of school throughout the year, including family masses, Sharon Shannon Concert and our own school concert in 2013.

Many of our past and present pupils were very successful in the County Fleadh, with the following achieving 1<sup>st</sup> place in their categories: Ross Lonergan (accordion), Katie Corbett (banjo), Emma Corbett (accordion & melodeon), Clodagh Kelly (fiddle), Seamus O'Gorman (fiddle), and Cian Smith (tin whistle). Seamus O'Gorman went on to take 2<sup>nd</sup> place at All Ireland level and Emma Corbett took 1<sup>st</sup> place in the melodeon- a great achievement. Past pupil Nicole Lonergan was selected to take to the world with Ragús dance troop. She has already performed in Holland and France-what a wonderful opportunity for and talented musician and dancer!

### **Amhrán na nDeise:**

Bhí Fleadh Ceoil na Mumhan ar siúl i nDún Garbhán an samhradh seo chaite. Bhuaigh beirt phaiste ón scoil, Chloe Mullen agus Aoife Kennedy duaiseanna sa chomórtas Ealaíne. Ghlac Rang 5 agus Rang 6 páirt i gCeolchoirm in Óstán na Páirce. Tháinig roinnt scoileanna le chéile ag canadh amhrán na nDéise. An dheas, dár ndóigh, gur chan said Sliabh Geal gCua mar bhí Dearbhla Ní hAllacháin ag canadh linn agus do scríobh a sín shín seanathair, Pádraig Ó Milleadha an t-amhrán sin.



*Emma Corbett who received first place in the Melodeon at Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann*

### **Maternity Leave:**

Congratulations to both Mrs Byrne and Liam and Ms. Moore and Aidan on the birth of baby boys recently. We look forward to seeing both Michael and Ollie in junior infants in 4/5 years time. Welcome on board to E Dunlea and S McGrath who are currently substituting with us. Emma and Seán are no strangers to the school and we wish them well here. Thanks also to those who have worked in our school during the year, as substitutes, trainee teachers or merely students seeking work experience in their chosen field.



*Seamus O'Gorman second place Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann slow air fiddle*

### **Board of Management:**

The term of the new board has well and truly started. Thomas Crotty is our Chairman, Brendan Reilly our Treasurer while I, as principal am secretary. We will have meetings on alternate months during the school year and plan to prioritise a number of initiatives to make the school better and safer for all our children. One item that needs further attention is school parking. In the interim our one way collection – Drop off system, seems to be operating quite well. We thank you for that.

### **Parents Association:**

We are very thankful to our Parents Association in the work that they do for our school and indeed our pupils. I congratulate the new officers; (Anna Walsh and Dawn Grace) wish them well and look forward to working with them under the leadership of Eleanor Muhlwald. Meetings are held in the school on the first Wed of each month. The highlight of fundraising might have been the traditional night organised on Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Dec. when the PA secured the services of traditional Irish musician Sharon Shannon to play the Community Centre. Our school band had a big part to play in proceedings and an enjoyable night was had by all.

### **Shoe Box Appeal:**

With the help of the PA and Team Hope our pupils put in an incredible effort to amass a collection of 111 shoe boxes for the children of Kosovo. This is a very worthwhile project and long may it continue. The children got to witness a DVD of last year's recipients opening their presents.

### **Christmas Carol Service:**

This year, our pupils will mark Christmas time with an evening of Carols at Four Mile Water Church on Wed 19<sup>th</sup> December at 7:00pm. Preparations are well underway for this most joyous of occasions. A surprise or two may be in store for those attending the event this year. Let's hope we get a special visit from a special person before the holidays!

### **Parent Teacher Meetings:**

We tried a new format for our Parent teacher meetings this year in an effort to allow more time for parents to engage with teachers. This was done over two days on an alphabetical basis. This will be monitored going forward and comments will be accepted.

During the year we lost a good friend of the School, Tom Walsh. Tom was always at the ready to capture a school photograph when required and especially loved coming to the school each September to take a photo of our new recruits for this very publication. Sympathies to Mary, Billy, Paddy and families. Ar dheis Dé, go raibh a anam dilis.

### **Planned for 2013:**

2013 plans to be a very busy year. In addition to the day to day learning, we have planned the Artist in the Classroom Scheme in conjunction with Waterford Co. Co. This will be happening in Jan/Feb and culminate in an exhibition of the children's work and a launch by county Mayor. In addition to all sporting activities and coaching, we will again enjoy Active Week and our annual Sports Day in May. In the dramatics we look forward to staging a school production in mid year. We will be visited by a drama school to stage Diarmuid & Grainne in Feb. and will also be benefitting from the skills of Aileen Hogan. We will be busy preparing for our Energy Flag in 2013 also. Our Banna Ceoil will be rehearsing and playing for school activities/church ceremonies. It is also hoped to progress with our African Drums Course for the junior school in conjunction with our artistic programme. We have enrolled in the Food Dudes programme for 2013, where the children will be enticed to eat fruit/veg by being given free samples this will be in compliance with our school policy on healthy eating.

### **Conclusion:**

All that remains is for me to extend a happy Christmas to the entire school community. Remember "It takes a community to raise a child." We are blessed that our pupils have a very vibrant and active community and also a vibrant and active seat of learning where children are prepared to continue this community ethos irrespective of educational ability. The task of this new administration is to pass on the school in a better position than when inherited, as my predecessors have done. Heartfelt thanks to all our staff also including our secretary Rose, our Caretaker / supervisor Mary Our SNA's Mrs. Carroll & Mrs. O' Grady who attend to the care needs of the children and so much more and all those who jump to the sound of the school phone call, whether paid or voluntary, to keep the school on an even keel. 2012 has been a very busy year and by all accounts 2013 will be just as busy. As I stated at the beginning "Níl in aon rud ach seal" The school will close on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> Dec. and reopen on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2013. A happy and holy Christmas to one and all - Nollaig Shona dhaoibh go léir - Slán & Beannacht! - Mícheál S. Ó Riain - Príomh oide



*Mick Fraher with some current 6th Class pupils prior to his retirement*