

BALLYMACARBRY CENTRAL SCHOOL

It has been another busy year at the local primary school. But as Henry D. Thoreau noted "It is not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is: what are we busy about?" Hopefully by the end of this account of the year's events you will see what we mean by "busy" or "gnóthach" as the junior infants would say.

Pupils Last June we said farewell to 22 pupils. This September we welcomed 24 to our junior class hereby continuing the circle of primary school life. We are now taking enrolments for 2015. This year we have 8 class teachers for 8 classes which is proving beneficial to all. We congratulate Sam Tarleton on winning a scholarship to Rockwell College. Maith thú Sam. During the year we attained the services of a pharmacist, a former air traffic controller and a garda to speak to our final year pupils and perhaps enlighten their career decision making process. On the Centenary of World War 1, we also attained the services of Battle Group Centre to call in full military uniform exhibiting equipment of both world wars. Local man Brendan O'Brien was to the fore in this.

Staff We welcome Mr Molan to our staff as 4th Class teacher; Shane is a native of Ballyporeen and has settled in very well to his role. We also welcome Miss Healy (Kilsheelan) as a recent replacement for Mrs. Connolly. We congratulate Mrs Connolly & Aidan on their recent wedding. Miss Jill Power will replace Laura as. We also welcome Tina Condon to our staff as cleaner, wishing her the best and thanking her predecessor Mary for her hard work in this regard. Mary continues her role as school supervisor. I would like to acknowledge the work done over the years by our gardener Brendan McGrath and wish him well in pastures new and welcome on board Kevin Mulcahy.

Sacramental Preparation The boys and girls from 5th & 6th received the Sacrament of Confirmation both at Fourmilewater and the Nire in mid March 2014. We were joined in our preparations by both Newcastle & Touraneena. 5 candidates presented at the Nire along with Fr Edmund Cullinan and concelebrant, Fr. Kelleher. 40 pupils presented themselves at FMW. Fr Crowley officiated at the ceremony along with Fr. Desmond. Thanks to Mrs Byrne & Miss Melody. Miss O'Gorman prepared her class for Holy Communion in Fourmilewater (18) and in the Nire (7). Changes to the Eucharistic Sacrament are being rolled out this year in the Newcastle / FMW parish. Our senior classes travelled to Cill Siogáin Cemetery last October. This formed part of the Local Studies Strand of our History Curriculum. It was a great experience to see the great works carried out there, read the inscriptions on the stones and hear stories behind some of the people who repose there. It would be great to extend this to Kilronan and Bennett's Church. Thanks to Ned Moore for his help in this area.

Fundraising On Saturday 25th October, Traditional Irish group Caladh Nua performed a concert for us at Ballymacarbry Community Centre. Derek Morrissey, a past pupil of ours is an important member of the group and indeed the packed attendance enjoyed the ceol agus craic on the night. The proceeds of this will go towards technology aids for our school. It is the intention of the school to hold a night of entertainment in mid January to acknowledge those involved in our recent fundraising drive to future proof the school. This night will take the shape of a family quiz night and we would love to see as many as possible in our improved premises. More details to follow. Indeed the fundraising continues and we thank Pat Whelan and his Committee for all its help.

Music Present and former pupils enjoyed tremendous success over the summer period when amassing a great haul of silverware from participating in county, provincial and All Ireland Fleadh Ceoil competitions from Dungarvan to Sligo. Tá ceoil 's amhráin tradisiúnta na nDeise fíorbheo sa cheanntar seo.

Our pupils took part in the Amhráin na nDeise Schools Project to revive the old songs of the county. This was organised in conjunction with Fleadh Ceoil na nDeise. Cór na bhfear from Ring gave workshops on the day and accompanied the 10 schools with their afternoon performance.

The Banna Ceoil was busy in 2014, performing at school events such as religious ceremonies and local happenings. The 32 member band excelled themselves at the Caladh Nua concert with a lively mix of music and song. Again this year we hope to entertain our local Thursday Club with festive cheer. Sincere thanks to Mrs Kelly.

School Tours & Outings Before the school broke for the summer our annual school tours took place; our junior & seniors went to Clonea strand, our first & second travelled to Parson's Green and Cahir Castle, our third & fourth spent the entire day at Lismore Heritage Centre while our fifth & sixth classes ventured to University of Limerick Activity Centre and some shopping at the Crescent Shopping Centre.

Following our graduation our sixth class travelled to the lakes before they finished. It was a tremendous day and a fitting way for rang VI to end their tenure at our school.

School Improvements As with the last few years, more improvements were carried out at our school in 2014. The most noticeable being the painting of the entire building. We thank Paul / Dawn Grace and staff for this and staff from within, involved in us winning a Dulux competition to receive free paint. In addition, 4 new doors were sourced and the school community came together to fund extending the marmoleum to the remainder of the classrooms and hall area. Another noticeable improvement was the removal of the hedge to the rear of the building. We feel it a lot safer now and supervisor friendly. The wire fence adds greatly to the children's safety. Thanks to Pat Phelan, Pat Mangan and Tom Power for their work in this regard. A new portocabin which has been situated to the rear of the building has been sourced for PE equipment. Plans are well underway to construct our extension. Following an application we have been granted an extra classroom, resource room and toilet. It is our intention to build these onto the existing build. Planning permission is being sought and it is expected to commence in early spring with the intention of having it ready for September.

In tandem with the new build it is hoped that something can be done to alleviate parking problems at our school. As a Board we are engaging with council officials to this end. Again we constantly seek the cooperation of our parents and general public to abide by our one-way system and observe the flashing lights during the school day.

Environment The following is an excerpt from the Village Tidy Towns Report 2014 "As expected, the school contributes enormously under this heading. The green flags were noted. The pages describing the Green School initiatives are exemplary. As found in other centres where sustainable waste and resource management is taken very seriously it is the children who bring the message and the practices into the homes. Energy and water conservation appear to be foremost in attention."

Our school community came together for a Clean Up Evening back in March to give the building and its environs a face lift. A lot of work was done by members of staff, Board members, Parents, locals and in some cases, pupils. We are well on the way to attaining our 3rd Green Flag for Water Conservation. Since schools have been paying water charges it is in our own interest to reduce our costs as much as possible. A Water committee has been working continuously to this end and has organised a water themed day at our school. Measures have also been put in place to reduce outflow per day.

Sport Our Boys took Pride of Place this year. On December 3rd we won the Allianz Cumann na m Bunscoil County A Final for the

first time. We beat Cappoquin, Lismore & Abbeyside along the way. Scoil Garbháin in the Western Final and St Declan's of Waterford City in the County Final in Walsh Park on an historic afternoon for our school. The players were a credit to themselves, their families, the local club and the school. Our supporters, both at the match and back at base deserve a special mention. The "Victory Train" which was put on for the players' return will be remembered fondly as will Mr Molan's poetry recital. We also won the 7 a side competition. We reached the A western hurling final also but had to yield to a very strong and fancied Lismore side. The girls were recently beaten in the "A" semi Final by Garranbane. We have high hopes for the future as quite an amount of work is put in at both school and club levels. Go raibh maith agaibh to Mr Molan, Mrs Byrne, Miss O' Gorman and Eoin Wall who helped out during the year.

We also had visits from the Nire Seniors on their very successful exploits at both county and provincial level. Our school was out in force in Dungarvan, Killmallock and Páirc Uí Chaoimh to support our local heroes. Our underage past pupils were not to be forgotten as both the Nire and FMW teams brought their respective trophies to our school following county final wins in both codes. Congrats also to the Ballymacarbry Senior ladies on their 33 in a row.

In terms of sport it was yet again a very busy year. We participated in Active week when we travelled Curragheenavoher, Touraphuca and the Lacka Wood. During the week we also held a very enjoyable "Inflatables Day" part sponsored by the P.A. and sports day with the traditional water balloon between pupils and staff. Kelly Ann, Kyle and Larry represented us at Primary Games, Lily Wall attained high national placing in school swimming. We swept the board at the Clonmel Athletics Day back in May at the Dr. Pat O' Callaghan Sports Complex and we had regular good news for assembly of running prowess at the weekends. We were victorious in the John Fitzpatrick Cup against Newcastle N.S., but had to settle for second place in the county final of the schools soccer when we lost after extra time in Ferrybank after a very spirited display. We had visits from Michelle Power & Michael Kelleher and local man Eoin Wall to perfect our hurling skills and have also engaged with past pupil Frankie Quinlan to offer rugby coaching to 5th & 6th class pupils. Most pleasing of all is the fact that this area boasts both indoor and outdoor facilities and organisations that cater for all our pupils outside of school time, to get some air in the lungs - as we teachers would say.

Congrats to current 6th class pupil, Lillie Wall who has just won a swimming gold in the Munster Schools Gala at the UL Arena.

Extra Activities The school won a prize for our entry in the Mobile Garden Competition run by WCC last May. We made a mobile vegetable garden and a mini potting shed from recycled plastic, 2 ltr bottles and crates. Dawn Grace and Winnie Hickey helped with the planting and presentation of the entry and Tom Reynolds helped with the construction. Well done to all including Mrs Ryan and the pupils.

Hens & Coup - The school received a prize of a chicken coup and 3 hens for entering a competition some months back. Mr. Molan and his 4th class have been given the task of looking after "Salt, Pepper and Garlic" The prize was presented to us in late November when Fiona Dillon of the Irish Examiner fame called to the school with our prize. The hens will remain with us until the building project commences. Pupils and parents received the certificate from Darina Allen in Waterford.

RSA Training - The Road Safety Authority called to our community in late November and over a 2 day period got to speak to all our pupils, instilling in them the importance of Road Safety, Cycle Safety and Travelling Safely in vehicles. The kids enjoyed this very worthwhile exercise while receiving their personal road safety licence.

Our middle classes travelled to Dungarvan to witness a science show hosted by Calmast in mid November. They got to perform experiments and appreciate the science behind bubbles from the London Science museum. They also participated in the artwork for the Junction Festival which is held every July in Clonmel.

Christmas Shoebox appeal. - Yet again the families of our school came up trumps in collecting for the less fortunate Children of Eastern Europe / Africa when we collectively amassed 100

"Christmas boxes" This gesture means so much to those and it is great for our children to participate and to watch DVD's the following year.

Heritage Days - Tina Keating our heritage expert visited our school. She ran classroom based sessions looking at fossils, the earth, volcanoes, etc. The children thoroughly enjoyed the activities and slideshow. Sessions were finished off by making erupting volcanoes. The Heritage in schools Scheme encourages an awareness of the genius of the natural, cultural world amongst primary school children and engages them in a direct experience of their heritage.

Bake Sale - 5th class drew inspiration from the Irish story - "Díolacháin Cácaí" to host a cake sale with the assistance of Breda Houlihan and members of the PA. On the Day we raffled a Rice Krispie cake which was made by Stephen & Sophie Hogan. Thanks to everyone who either baked for, or bought on the day. It was a tremendous success.

Dramatics Our pupils were treated to a production of "Setanta" in February last. Children are busy preparing for our Christmas show which will take place on Tues 16th & Wed 17th December. In addition to staff, we are delighted to be ably assisted by our drama specialist Ms Aileen Hogan for this production.

Thanks Sincere thanks to one and all that helped in any way to run the school over the last twelve months. A special word to the teachers / SNA, ancillary staff, who educate, supervise, organise and keep the school in ship shape. To Ann, Emma, Louise, Laura, Michelle, Jackie, Shane, Niamh, Claire, Catherine, Anna, Gill, Fiona, Mary, Rose and Tina, I say thank you. As a group, they all go above the call of duty, not merely to enhance the school but to help out within the local community also. A special mention for Rose our secretary, who is the first port of call for parents, guardians from the outside and indeed staff and pupils from the inside.

Thanks to the Board under Chairman Thomas Crotty for all its hard work and commitment to the cause and the Parents Association under newly appointed Chairperson Ms Angela Peters for its continued support and sponsorship of worthwhile projects. We recognise Eleanor Muhlwald's role in the PA after stepping down from the role of chair and compliment her on a job well done.

To those who visited our school in a work experience capacity or as part of teacher training, we hope you found your placement rewarding and are more certain of your future as a result of time spent at our school. There is one important visitor left to call - let's hope he does so before too long.

An entire community keeps a school functioning; pupils, teachers, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, grandparents, cleaners, supervisors, bus drivers, tradesmen post staff, bin men etc. To these we say thank you and look forward to seeing you again in 2015.

It always amazes me when questioning the pupils of 6th class in their final year at primary and again in their first year of secondary. There is a marked difference of opinion in their answering. To the first there is a hurry to get out and the second a longing to return, but such is the system of education we uphold. However to all our school going pupils I quote Aristotle in saying

"The roots of education are bitter, but the fruits are sweet."

Go n-éirí an t-ádh libh. Le gach dea ghuí 's Beannachtaí na Nollag Daoibh go Léir
Mícheál S. Ó'Riain. Príomh oíde.

