**Ballymacarbry Central School 2022**

**Prologue:** Of the last three years, 2022 was the year to most resemble pre-covid times. Thankfully that meant a return to a more holistic schooling experience.

**Sympathy:** Seán Nyhan, our founding principal died in February. Seán taught at our school during the years 1972-82 having spent a previous ten years at Newtown. We remembered him fondly at our Jubilee Mass as we did, his colleagues on the first staff. Sympathies also to Tom, Louise Kennedy and family on the death of daughter Aisling in July. Aisling was a past pupil of ours and graduated in June 2021. Sympathies to Fiona O’Grady and family on the death of her father Gerry Connolly; Eileen our Chair, on the death of mother-in-law, Mary and the Mangan family, on the death of Pat, who worked here in the past.

**Golden Jubilee:** Our 50-year celebration straddles 2 calendar years. We hope to run a series of events before next June. So far, we have had a Jubilee Mass on the school grounds in early September, a Family Table Quiz at Ballymacarbry Comm Centre in November and a pre-Christmas Jubilee Concert for families.

**Retirement:** Bean Uí Cheallaigh (Mrs Kelly) retired at Halloween after 21 years of service to our school. Ann was the only remaining link to Newtown school, in the fact that she attended the school and was a pupil of our founding principal, Mr. Nyhan. Ann also worked in Ballyfermot, Dublin and St Oliver’s Clonmel. She has served under all principals of Ballymac N.S.

Ann has many strings to her bow which she impressed upon many students down through the years. She has an immense grá for our native teanga and everything Irish, including folklore, history, music and song, which proved contagious to both young and old. Also, a great community activist in many guises.

As a teacher, she will be a huge loss to both pupil and colleague alike and will be fondly remembered for, but not limited to, her work with her Banna Ceoil and music in general, her expertise in all things Gaeilge. She will be best remembered however, for her work with the junior classes; the tús maith and the grá don Ghaeilge, she afforded them.

Ann is well travelled, having lived in England, Holland, USA and Australia. She has many a story to tell on account of this – “An té a bhíonn siúlach, bíonn scéalach.” She now has the time to visit some of the other places she spoke of in geography class and more family time with husband Leonard, children Cormac and Clodagh. Go n-éirí go geal leat a Áine! Maith Thú.

**Staffing:** Mr Earley left us in January to take up principalship in Moyglass and Ms Fitzgerald in June. Ciara Denmead became a permanent member of staff in June as did Claudia O’Keeffe in November. We are grateful to both Clodagh and Muireann who have been with us much of 2022. Congratulations to both Mrs McGrath & Ms Blain and their partners who welcomed babies Paddy and Harry respectively.

**Sacraments:** These returned to schedule in 2022. Holy communions took place in May and confirmation in June. This year we introduced a retreat for our Rg 6 pupils hosted by the Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh. Thanks to our patron, priests and staff who prepared our pupils but most of all, the children and their families. We thank Fr Michael, for his dedication to us in our spiritual journey. We welcome Fr Jim and thank Fr Garrett for his ministry. Finally, a special word of thanks to sacristans; Brendan & family at FMW and Nora Whelan in the Nire. Confirmation will take place in late March and Communions in May 2023.

**Board of Management:** We now enter the last year of the current term. Andrew Ryan has recently been replaced as Male Representative by Jason Corbett.

**Summer Works:** This year we took the opportunity to refloor the Hall with laminate. Maureen Purcell of (STAG) helped rejuvenate our historical mural. This was first painted in 1984/85 and a recent Tidy Towns Report suggested a face-lift. Their current report complimented us on a comprehensive submission. We also added to our I-pad stock and acquired HEPA filters improving air quality, especially in times of sickness.

**Roll:** We graduated 25 pupils in June and we welcomed 19 new junior infants in September. Enrolment for next year is open and information can be accessed from our website. Our Open Afternoon will be held in mid – June.

**Breakfast Club & After School Service:** Our Golden jubilee also marked the start of a new venture at our school. Helena O’Meara and staff set about establishing a service for parents to facilitate morning/evening child minding services at our school. This is going very well indeed and is a great addition to the community at large.

**Sport:** Our boys won the inaugural Deirdre O’Ryan Memorial Trophy in Newcastle. Our girls won the Roinn A West Football title, while our boys were defeated by Lismore NS in both codes at final stage. Cara Ryan & Katie Spelman resented us at primary game level. We had an amount of success in athletics this year with both Anna Walsh and Áine Horgan taking individual medals at Marlfield and Devin Ryan taking gold in the Friary. Our Rg 3-6 girls won the shield for best Large Schools Team. Our pupils also benefited from athletics coaching from Pat Power in conjunction with Waterford Sports Partnership, while our infants benefitted from their Balance Bike programme and our senior classes returned to Clonmel Pool after a 2-year hiatus. Our cub members achieved Gold Standard at the National Cub Challenge.

Congrats to all past pupils involved in the capturing of the ‘41 in a row’ Ladies title and indeed the back-to-back Conway cups. To Summer, Sophie and co who won the u-14 All Ireland and a shout out to the Peters, who participated in Ireland’s Fittest Family.

**Tours:** We had many outings this year. In addition to school trips to Ardmore, Waterford, Kilkenny and Limerick. Our senior / Rg 1 visited Cahir Castle. Miss Denmead’s Rg 4 participated in the Local Enterprise Achievement Programme at South East Tech University and Ms Fitzgerald’s Rg 5 participated in the Comeragh Upland Forum Project when they visited the farm of Shane Whelan, Carrigeen, and were given presentations by local sheep farmers on their profession and their practices in the Comeragh uplands.

**Visitors:** We had many visitors including coaches Barry Dunne and Pat Power, Alan Walsh & First Responder colleagues from Sth. Tipp University Hospital. Pat Glavin from Clonmel Library also called.

**Other Events:** We participated in were Catholic Schools Week, Christmas Shoebox Appeal, Uniform Exchange, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Pancake Tuesday, Crazy Hair Day, Santa Claus Visit, Halloween Costume Day, Blue & White Day, Maths & Science Week, St Valentine’s Day and St Patricks Day festivities, a Dream for Danny Fundraiser and a Cake Sale in aid of the late Aisling Kennedy fund. This Christmas we will help the Local Lions Club with Christmas Hampers. Some of these events were hosted in conjunction with the P.A.

**Appreciation:** Again, at this time of year, we extend our thanks to all those connected to us; the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, our secretary Rose, our cleaners Tina and Sarah, Majella our supervisor and Jim our caretaker. We thank the BOM, Chair Eileen and Melissa our Treasurer, Aoife, Therese and Theresa and all associated with the Parents’ Association. Our TP students and work experience candidates and all our pupils.

**Epilogue:** A you can see 2022 was an extremely busy year, making up for lost time and ground. Let’s hope we can do it all again in 2023. Nollaig beannaithe agus athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh. Michael J. O’Ryan - Príomhoide.