

January
2008



Muckross Mail

Newsletter of the Muckross Past Pupils' Union



A view from the top balcony of the blessing of the new school by Archbishop Duirmuir Martin at the official opening on 19th April 2007.

Inside this issue:

- From the President
- Union News
- School News
- The PPU Africa Project
- The Concert Hall Remembered
- Dominicans – 800 years
- 40 and 50 years on
- Writer's Workshop Review
- Memories from New Zealand

Muckross Mail Editor:
Gay Rodgers

Contacts:
www.muckrossparkppu.com
Email muckrossppu@ireland.com

Valerie Cox (Fitzpatrick)
087-6858406

Claire Johns, 4 Willowfield Ave
Goatstown, Dublin 14
087-2218602

Gay Rodgers, 33 Hazel Avenue
Kilmacud, Co. Dublin.
Tel: 087-6383683

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Writers Workshop

Saturday 16th February 2008 from 1.45pm-5.30pm
National Yacht Club Dun Laoghaire
Contact Valerie Cox 087-685 8406

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday 2nd March 2008 from 12-1 pm approx

Union Day & AGM

Sunday 6th April 2008
11.15am Mass, AGM & refreshments

Annual Dinner

Friday 25th April 2008 at 7.30pm
O'Connell's Restaurant,
Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge

Combined Dominican Union Mass

Sunday 11th May 2008 at 11.15am
at Muckross Park

Combined Dominican Golf Society

Monday 14th July 2008
in Roganstown Golf Club
Contact Mary Breen 087-619 2303

Muckross Golf Society

Thursday 11th September 2008
Edmondstown Golf Club, Rathfarnham.
Contact Annette Quigley (Soraghan) by 14th August
At quigleyjas@eircom.net or 087-686 7376

Santa Party

Sunday 7th December 2008.
At 12 noon - 1pm
Booking essential.

PPU Mass in Muckross:

1st Sunday of each month
(except January, May, June, July & August)



PPU Committee

President:

Valerie Cox (Fitzpatrick)

Vice President:

Gay Rodgers

Hon. Secretary:

Claire Johns (Doyle)

Hon. Treasurer:

Margot Doyle

Committee:

Sr. Barnabas

Therese Birthistle (Hackett)

Mary Buckley (Deane)

Valerie Clancy (Barry)

Felicity Coll (O'Brien)

Iris Condrón (Fitzpatrick)

Claire Coonan

Beatrice Doran

Katherine Duffy (Fox)

Alison Kennedy

Jessica Kinane

Norah Owens (O'Meara)

Carla Sload (Mugan)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Past Pupils,

It has been a momentous year for Muckross. I attended the opening of the new school building on 19th April 2007 and it was a wonderful day and brought back so many memories of being there myself in the green gymslip. I also realised that the uniform doesn't matter that much, Muckross is a state of mind as much as anything else. The girls were so involved in every aspect of the ceremonies and an absolute credit to their school and their teachers. They were courteous, kind and carried themselves with great dignity - you would have been proud of them.



The PPU has sponsored the Veritas sign for the new school which is situated beside the main door, so that's a very nice link between the old and the new and the generations yet to come.

On a personal note it's been a very hard year. My Dad – Des FitzPatrick – died in September but I have to mention the warmth from the sisters and from fellow past pupils all of whom made everything that little bit easier, especially for Mam – Imelda FitzPatrick – who is also a past pupil. Many of you from my vintage and that of my sister, Iris, may remember Dad from the hockey matches and the sidelines and the cheering. He loved Muckross and indeed played a major role in red for some years at the annual Christmas Bazaar.

I know many of you have also lost family members during the year and I extend my sympathy to all of you. And if you know of any past pupil who has passed on, do please let us know as we can include them in our prayers and in the monthly Mass.

Unfortunately, the monthly Mass was suspended while the Chapel was being renovated but we hope to be up and running again soon. Do keep in touch via our website.

Our younger committee members are playing a blinder and have been great in organizing the Easter Egg Hunt and the Santa Party. We're always looking for new blood – of whatever age! – so don't be shy in coming forward if you would like to take part.

Finally, I've had a great time as President. I was thrilled to be elected and very honoured to be at the helm of the Muckross PPU. I now hand over the Union this springtime into the capable hands of Gay Rodgers. Thank you to all our committee members for all your work and we hope to see you at least some of our events in 2008.

Valerie Cox (nee FitzPatrick)

President

CELEBRATING DOMINICAN WOMEN IN 800 YEARS

October 8th 2007 – what an incredible evening! "Dominican Sisters 800 Anniversary". When I saw the concert listed in the NCH Guide for October I just knew I had to be there – just to support it, to show solidarity with the Dominicans. I wasn't sure what the evening would be like and I certainly did not expect to actually enjoy it, but a few phone calls later and it was all arranged. Eight of us from the class of '59 would be there and we'd arranged to meet for a pre-concert meal. We didn't know what to expect from the concert and didn't really care; we were going to enjoy ourselves anyway!

Well, we needn't have worried! The buzz of excitement and anticipation in the NCH prior to the concert that evening was amazing. And once we had taken our seats and the evening began in earnest, we were all just swept along by the energy and enthusiasm of all the participants. The choir was just something else! I would never have believed that a combined choir of that size could produce such brilliant results. In fact the whole evening was a success from beginning to end. There are many professional productions that would be envious of what was achieved by the participants – both teachers and pupils – that evening.

Being brought through the history of the Dominican Sisters in Ireland, and their spread throughout several continents, in such a delightful way was both interesting and inspiring. We all thoroughly enjoyed the evening and came away from the NCH feeling very proud of our Dominican connection. A truly wonderful evening!

Barbara Goff

Class of '59

UNION NEWS

UNION DAY

This year Union Day will take place on Sunday 6th April 2008. The format will be Mass at 11.15am followed by the AGM after which refreshments will be served. It is only by attending the AGM that we can hear your views on how you feel the PPU is performing and hear any new ideas for events and objectives for the coming year. Please support your PPU committee and we look forward to seeing lots of you at Union Day.

STAY IN TOUCH BY EMAIL

The PPU has an email address, muckrossppu@ireland.com and we would love to hear from you. If you are in touch with other Muckross girls perhaps you would be good enough to let us have their email address. Email us now so we can add you to our address book. Remember to let us know if you have changed your email address or postal address recently. That way if there is news about Union events or the school we can update you quickly. Likewise if you have news for us that we can put in the Muckross Mail we will be delighted to hear from you.

AGM AND NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2008/09 COMMITTEE

The AGM will take place on Union Day on Sunday 6th April 2008. As a number of the present Committee will be stepping down at the AGM we are looking for nominations or PPU members to volunteer to join the new Committee. We have had quite a few of the more recent past pupils join the Union in the last few years and we would like to see them represented on the Committee to bring new ideas to the PPU.

The Committee only meet approx 5 times a year. So as you see it will not eat into much of your time! If you are interested please contact Claire Johns (Doyle), Hon Secretary at 087-2218602 or Valerie Cox, President on 087-685 8406 prior to the AGM or email muckrossppu@ireland.com

PPU MONTHLY MASS

The monthly PPU Mass (see Forthcoming Events for times and dates) is not restricted to Past Pupils as some of you may think. Bring along your husbands, children, boyfriends, anyone! Mass in the chapel is followed by tea/coffee and biscuits and hopefully some news and gossip!

On the second Sunday in May each year, which falls on the 11th May this year, the Combined Dominican Unions' Mass takes place in Muckross at 11.15am. If you have friends who went to Cabra, Dun Laoghaire, Eccles Street, Sion Hill, Sutton or Wicklow or any other Dominican school tell them about it and bring them along too.

The Mass on the 1st Sunday in November is dedicated to all deceased past pupils. If there is anyone whose names you would like to be read out do let us know. Please do not blame the Committee if a name is omitted – we don't know unless we are advised.

2007 RAFFLE RESULTS

The Raffle took place at the Muckross PPU Annual dinner on 20th April in Elm Park Golf Club. The value of the prizes was over €1,000. Congratulations to the following winners:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1st Prize | Two nights BB+1 Dinner for two at any of the Carlton Group's 7 Hotels Winner: Eva Doherty (Moloney) |
| 2nd Prize | Voucher for 4 Green Fees at Elm Park Golf Club Winner: Mary O'Malley |
| 3rd Prize | Groundforce Gardening Products to the value of €200 Winner: Elaine Hartigan |
| 4th Prize | Lunch for 2 in Roly's Bistro, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 Winner: Una Cullen |
| 5th Prize | €50 voucher for Gardenworld.ie in Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow Winner: Ita Freaney |
| 6th Prize | One Year's subscription to 'Irish Garden' Magazine Winner: Joan Butler |

Our thanks to our sponsors for their generosity in supplying the above prizes

ANNUAL DINNER 25th APRIL 2008 at Bewley's Hotel Ballsbridge

The 2008 Annual Muckross Past Pupils' Dinner will be held in Bewleys Hotel, Ballsbridge on Friday 25th April 2008 at 7.30 pm at a cost of €45 per head. We invite those who are 10, 20, 30 40, 50 and 60+ years out of Muckross to gather a group of your classmates to celebrate at the Annual Dinner. The Dinner will be held in O'Connell's Restaurant well known for the quality of its food. There is also adequate car parking underneath the hotel.

To book for the Annual Dinner please send a cheque for €45 each (payable to Muckross Park PPU) to Claire Johns, Hon. Secretary of Muckross Past Pupils' Union (see Booking Form for details) who will forward you a Dinner Ticket to be brought along on the night. If you are planning a class reunion at the dinner could ONE person of that class be responsible to collect ALL names and cheques and forward them in bulk to the Secretary. This will help greatly with bookings and avoid confusion. Tables of 6, 8 or 10 only are available and large groups will be accommodated at adjoining tables.

It is also possible to stay overnight in Bewleys Hotel should you wish to do so; we are told the rate in April will be €119 per room (2 adults per room). You should book directly with Bewleys Hotel, Ballsbridge, Tel.: 01-668 1111.

Please Note: Telephone bookings for the Dinner will not be accepted and all tickets must be paid in advance no later than 18th April.



ANNUAL DINNER

Book a table for your classmates at the **Muckross PPU Annual Dinner** to be held on Friday 25th April 2008 in O'Connell's Restaurant Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge.

Dinner 7.30pm

Tickets €45 each

Bookings by 18th April

All tickets must be paid for in advance
Payment is not possible on the night

Contact:
Claire Johns
4 Willowfield Avenue,
Goatstown, Dublin 14.
087-2218602

Thank You to our Sponsors for the 2008 Raffle

Brennan Hotel Group
'Irish Garden' Magazine
O'Connell's Restaurant at Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge

Private Sponsors

Muckross Mail



SCHOOL NEWS

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

The official opening of our new building on Thursday, 19 April 2007 was another milestone in the history of Muckross Park College. On a beautiful spring morning the whole school assembled in the Sports Hall with present and former staff, Dominican Sisters, Board of Management, past pupils and our chief guests, the Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin and Mary Hanafin, TD, Minister for Education and Science.



The pupils, teachers and guests assembled in the school's new gym hall for the Mass to celebrate the new school.

The celebrations opened with a Mass sung by the school and staff choirs. The Archbishop commented on the standard of music and liturgy. After Mass, Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education and Science addressed the assembly. She thanked parents and staff for their work on behalf of their children and pupils. She also thanked the Dominican Sisters for their years of dedication and especially for their innovative work in the education of young women. She then unveiled a commemorative plaque.

The pupils, staff and guests processed from the hall led by the Archbishop, priests and Minister to the strains of the Dominican Salve Regina to the main entrance where the Archbishop blessed the school and all associated with it. Refreshments followed.

It was a memorable day of celebration for Muckross, a tribute to all involved.

Patricia Fitzsimons
Principal



The Principal Patricia Fitzsimons and 6th Years welcoming the Minister for Education and Science Mary Hanafin T.D. to Muckross last April.

GRADUATION MASS

The Graduation Evening for 6th Years took place on 22nd May. Gay Rodgers represented the PPU at the invitation of Principal Patricia Fitzsimons. The evening started with Mass in the chapel celebrated by the school chaplain, Fr. Jim Caffrey. The altar was surrounded by 113 girls of the class of 2007 and the rest of the chapel was bursting at the seams with parents and teachers. Music was provided by the 6th years and also by the teachers' choir. At the end of Mass, each girl was called up by name and presented with her class ring by Fr. Jim. Every ring was inscribed with 'Veritas' and 2007. Mass ended with the girls singing the Dominican Magnificat with such gusto that it's a wonder the roof is still intact!

A reception followed in the school where the level of excitement grew by the minute. The 6th Years had shed their green uniforms for glamour and glitz and cameras were flashing everywhere. The 5th Years presented a Graduation Cake to the 6th Years (a new tradition since my time) and balloons were released from the top floor balconies.

Don't forget
the AGM
on

UNION DAY

Sunday 6th
April 2008

After
11.15am
Mass

MUCKROSS GARDEN PARTY



L-R Sr. Barnabas, Principal Patricia Fitzsimons and PPU President Valerie Cox (FitzPatrick) at the unveiling of the Roll of Honour presented to the school by the Past Pupils' Union at the Garden Party last May.

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 returnee 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.

MUCKROSS MEMORIES FROM NEW ZEALAND

Hearing that Muckross is still going, and in particular has opened a new school has set old memories flooding. I decided to put them down on paper or they will continue to annoy me in the middle of the night or at other inconvenient times!

I went to several different schools, due to family movements etc. I started in Muckross about 1932 with 4 girls of the McNabb family whom I already knew. I remember a bell tolled by a rope from the first floor by a nun. Woe betide anyone not safely in the classroom by the time the bell stopped!

Several nuns come to mind, but Sr. Cecilia was probably the one with whom I associated the most. In senior school she taught me French, but my greatest memories are of her singing tuition. She put me into my very first singing competition, in a trio at the Feis Ceoil in about 1934/5. We sang 'Lift Thine Eyes' from 'Elijah' but didn't get any prize, but the experience was invaluable, to me at least.

Another famous character was Sr. Bonaventure. We thought she was about 100 and she used to play the piano for 'drill' which consisted of marching up and down and sundry movements with dumb bells. After 'Bonnie' the next to come to mind is 'Benny' – otherwise Mother Benvenuta. She was small, brisk and efficient. She taught me English and it is thanks to her that I can still quote yards of 'The Merchant of Venice'. Mother Albertus, a German nun, taught French and Sr. Alacoque taught me basic science and domestic economy – now that was a love-hate relationship as I remember!

Being English in a class of Dublin girls I thought I did my best to blend in as at that age nobody wants to be different. In my last year at Muckross it was decreed that more subjects would be taught through Irish. In my case that was History and Latin – imagine learning Latin through Irish! As my knowledge of Irish had not grown beyond a few words I did not make much progress in either subject. I have a fairly good knowledge of history now (well, I've lived through quite a bit of it at 84!) but that has been due to my own reading.

As I said it was Sr. Cecilia who had the biggest influence. She would have been pleased to know I have done a lot of singing since then and I actually married a man I met in a choir and we have sung together ever since. We travelled a lot and lived in central Africa before coming to New Zealand 40-odd years ago. Whenever we got to a new place we joined a choir or if there wasn't one we formed our own and my husband conducted it. We were in the Auckland Choral Society, which has a singing strength of about 120 voices, for over 25 years and have sung just about every major choral work ever written with visiting orchestras and conductors of international renown.

We retired here to Far North 16 years ago and collected 70 singers to perform Handel's 'Messiah' which had not been heard in the district for 35 years or so. Far North is a lovely place and as I am sure Muckross and its past pupils have plenty of maps you might like to find Doubtless Bay at the top of North Island and see how appropriate our address is!

Classmates I can recall include Therese Dee, Kathleen Laverty, Phyllis Kinsella and Phyllis Byrne. Mary Strahan was captain of the hockey first XI, though I was a humble member of the second team. After leaving Muckross I had only one more term at school in Skerries before returning to England. In a life ruled by change and movement, Muckross was my own bit of stability, and I am delighted to know that it is still thriving.

Jo Jones (Nee Josephine Callaghan)



WANTED

Someone with Website Design experience to revamp the PPU website.

If you know a past pupil, family member or friend who would be willing to help re-design our website please contact Gay Rodgers at 087-6383683

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Have you renewed your subscription for 2008?

Only €15 or £10 stg.

(or over 60's €10)

See Membership Form in this issue

Muckross Mail



THE ETAFENI PLAYGROUP PROJECT

While on holidays last March in South Africa, Valerie Clancy (Barry) visited the Etafeni Playgroups and presented them with the cheque for €1,000 from Muckross PPU. The following is an extract from a letter from Sr. Catriona to Sr. Barnabas giving us an update on the progress of the playgroups.



PPU Committee member Valerie Clancy (Barry) 2nd from left, with some of the children in the Monwood Playgroup when she visited them last March.

'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').

The Playgroups in Philippi have come of age and are becoming quite independent. Already, at one of the Playgroups, the women have started a vegetable garden, the parents have helped them in building a little roughly constructed log cabin which is their new kitchen, and the classrooms constructed from shipping containers have been donated by funders. The women running the Playgroups are doing so without funding from Etafeni the parent group, so they are largely dependent on what fees they can harvest from the parents.

These younger women running the Philippi Playgroups are volunteers who themselves are unemployed. The women leading the Playgroups have their Leaving Certificates and are going forward with their level of education in the Preschool Field. In branching off from Etafeni they have taken the risk of being independent even though they have no funds behind them.



The log cabin which is the new kitchen situated between the classrooms in the shipping containers.



**The
Combined
Dominican
Union Mass
takes place
on Sunday
11th May
in Muckross
at
11.15am.**



A local mother helps Sr. Aine share out oranges outside the new Wendy house.

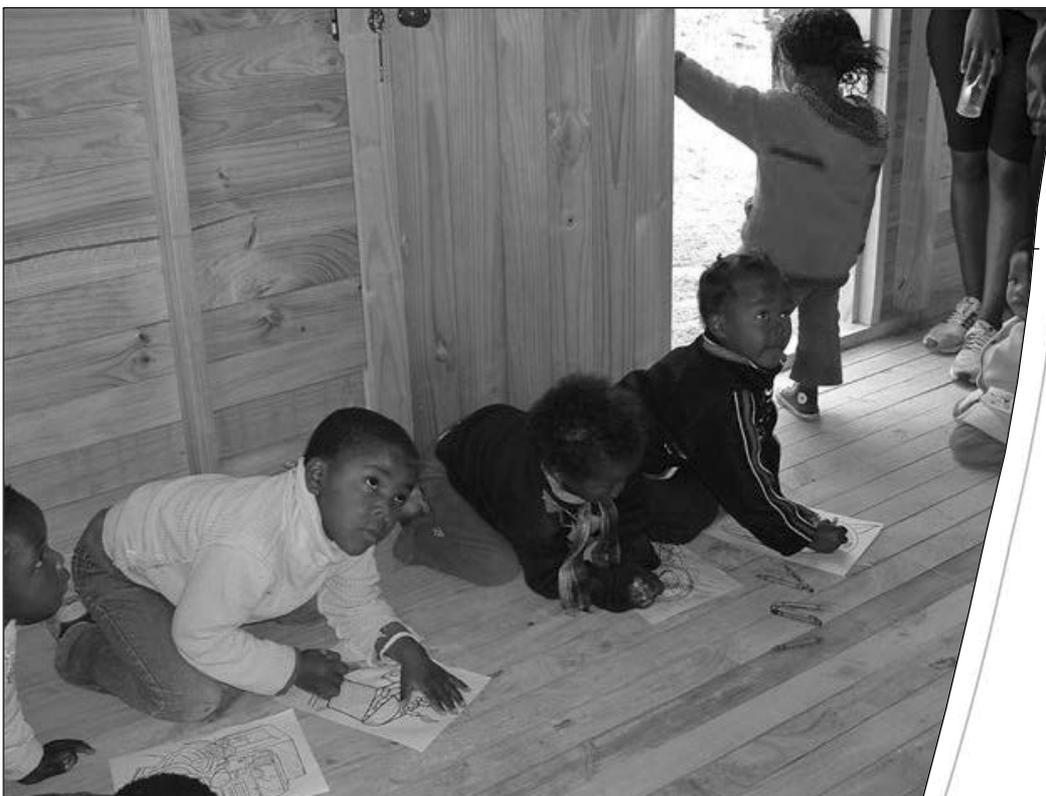
This is the kind of development we like to get behind because their quality improves their chances of sustainability if and when they get under the Department of Education. Our main concern is to try to build up and fund towards this. The maximum amount that we can give each woman is R500 which is the equivalent of 50 Euro for a whole month. The current cost of bread is R5 a loaf which gives you an idea of the subsistence level they are existing on while they are caring for the children, so we would appreciate any and all donations to this cause. When they get under the Department of Education our job will be complete.

The children in the Playgroups are between the ages of three and five. The women are all trained in the basics of Early Learning by play and discovery, and prepare the senior group of five year old children for entry into primary school. So in the best Irish tradition of supporting education we welcome wholeheartedly the generosity of the Muckross Past Pupils and feel personally encouraged when your Dominican spirit stretches across the world to Africa.'

With love and thanks

Sr. Caitriona

Editors note: At time of going to print €1 = Rand 10.03



Children colouring pictures in the new Wendy house which makes for a slightly cooler classroom than a steel container.

Muckross Mail

MUCKROSS GOLF SOCIETY

Thursday 13th September last, was a beautiful sunny day for the Muckross Golf Society Annual Outing. Our venue was Edmondstown Golf Club which was in superb condition, and we felt very much at home there since this was the third occasion the Outing was held at this beautiful course. The new caterers at Edmondstown also did us proud!

The Golf Society was founded five years ago by Muckross past pupils Valerie Clancy (Barry), Sheila Hughes (Nally) and Beatrice Doran all of whom are enthusiastic golfers. Unfortunately none of them were available to play in this year's Outing due to illness and other commitments. They were greatly missed at Edmondstown on the day.

Since its inception the Muckross Golf Society has built up the numbers playing, and we welcome new members. If you and your friends are keen golfers we would be delighted to welcome you to this year's Outing which will be held again at Edmondstown Golf Club on Thursday 11th September 2008. Annette Quigley (Soraghan) looks after the Time Sheet for us and can be contacted at 01-2837110 (home). Be sure to book early as the numbers of lines on the Time Sheet are limited!

This year's very popular winner of the Campbell Trophy and the Lady Captain's (Phyl Kelleher) Prize, was Janice Woodcock (Burke) a Muckross girl who is the current Lady Captain at Edmondstown Golf Club. Playing with this year's Captain of the Muckross Golf Society Phyl Kelleher and her sister Carmel Keogh, Janice brought in a superb score of 45 points. In her thank you speech Janice spoke of her happy days at school in Muckross, and her delight in winning the Muckross Golf Society Outing in her home club.

At the annual general meeting of the Muckross Golf Society held after the Dinner, the Lady Captain Phyl thanked all her committee and helpers who had made the day such a success. In particular she thanked the incoming Lady Captain Mary O'Brien (Whooley) who looks after the Golf Society's finances so well. Thanks are also due to Annette Quigley (Soraghan) for her trojan work in organizing the Time Sheet each year and also to Bernie Feeney the secretary of the Muckross Golf Society.

We look forward to welcoming our regular players and their friends, and any new members and their friends to Edmondstown Golf Club on Thursday 11th September 2008. For the Time Sheet please contact Annette Quigley (Soraghan) Tel. 01-2837110 or 087-686 7376 or email quigleyjas@eircom.net See you all on 11th September 2008 at Edmondstown!

Phyl Kelleher
Lady Captain 2007

THE CLASS OF '67 CELEBRATES.

On November 3rd 2007 twenty-five members of the class of 1967 assembled to celebrate their 40 years anniversary of leaving school.

A committee, formed early in the year consisted of Mairead Mulligan, Rita Hurson, Sylvia Ryan and Winifred Bourke. About fifteen class members attended the Past Pupils Union Dinner in April and all agreed to try to contact some more for a bigger re-union in the autumn. This committee played a vital role in organizing this less formal gathering. Rita Hurson very generously contributed her beautiful house and we all arrived for lunch at 2pm.

The committee members were superb and tracked down a huge number of girls from our year. Some were unable to make it and sent goodwill messages. Others we had lost complete contact with, like Mary O'Leary and Annette Mahon, so if anybody can help us out we would be delighted to include them in the next gathering.

It was a great party, many of us were still availing of Rita's hospitality at 11pm catching up with the happenings in each other's lives and also remembering our schooldays and the fun of being Muckross girls in the fifties and sixties.

Having a re-union at lunch-time and on a Saturday was a real stroke of genius. Having it in a private home made for a very relaxed and informal gathering. I know I speak for all there when I say a big thanks to the organizers, we know that these things look easy on the day but a lot of time and effort went into gathering us all together. A special thanks to Rita for hosting us all.

We hope to have another party in 2012 and as I will be on the committee if you have any ideas or contacts for the class of 1967 please get in touch by email to amcampbell@eircom.net (Please include Muckross 67 in the subject box).

Alice Mangan (Campbell)
Class of '67

If you would like a back issue of a Muckross Mail please contact the editor

THE CONCERT HALL REMEMBERED

"The roar of the greasepaint, the smell of the crowd"; "Break a leg"; "The show must go on"; "It'll be alright on the night". All these crazy clichés went through my head as I sat in the concert hall in Muckross Park College for the last time. I was attending the Carol Concert of the Muckross girls just before Christmas in 2005 as the school prepared to move into a new building in February '06.

I may have been listening to the sopranos and altos singing their hearts out but my mind was hurtling back to my own days in Muckross and in particular to times spent in this very hall. Backstage throbbed with excitement as we took our places behind heavy curtains which would shudder open and we would be emblazoned in light and would squint to see familiar faces in the crowd. This was the hall where Miss Cranny strutted, roaring or whispering the lines we were to repeat. My earliest memories, in Muckross junior school, are of pieces from Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll those great professors of Nonsense:

"You are old Father William" the young man said
"And your hair has become very white.
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –
Do you think at your age it is right?"

As we pranced around in Alice-in-Wonderland costumes we were told to 'use the whole stage' and 'don't mumble into your costume'. But there were other performances too, with tea-towel clad shepherds and tin-foil dressed kings. Nativity plays and Santa's arrival at the Christmas sale-of-work meld together as one, big pantomime.

The senior school brought several opening nights. The major one for us was "Murder in the Cathedral" by T.S. Eliot under the direction of Sr. Patrick, in 1970. This took weeks of practice so that the choral lines are embedded in my memory:

"Seven years and the summer is over;
Seven years since the Archbishop left us.
He who was always kind to his people.
But it would not be good should he return."

Not only was the stage used but all the steps in front of it too, for the members of the chorus.

Probably most fun was had when we were left to our own devices (without teachers) to script, act, produce and direct a short piece in Irish for the recently-launched "Slogadh" competition. We entered a comedy piece (known to us as a 'skit'), borrowed nuns' habits, fathers' suits and mothers' evening dresses and lo and behold, won the Section!

The Aer Lingus debating competition in English and the Gaelinn competition in Irish also used the hall. Miss Kinsella would reign supreme as we opened our debates by addressing her as "Madam Chairman". It was nerve-wrecking to stand on that stage and argue for or against the motion, but it certainly prepared you for any future public speaking occasions.

I know every inch of this concert hall (which existed long before The *National* Concert Hall); the squared pattern in the ceiling, the crest on the balcony, the parquet wooden floor, the black-out velvet curtains. Since my time in Muckross, the paintwork has been renewed, the colour of the curtains changed, the floor re-sanded and polished, but it remains essentially the same to me, a treasure chest of challenges and accomplishments, a buzz of audience applause, a resonance of warm voices and music where a young girl could *pretend* to be a star, even if only for an night.

As rumours bubble under the surface that Muckross students may stage a play or musical in this academic year of '07 / '08 I hope that the new school hall will have the power of the old concert hall to infuse schoolgirls' performances with the magic of stardom.

Nollaig Rowan-Downey

Class of '71.

WINNERS OF THE COLOURING COMPETITION AT THE SANTA PARTY



Maeve Watters, daughter of Laura (nee O'Meara class of '86) who won the under 7 section



Sophie O'Loughlin-Kennedy, granddaughter of Katherine Banaghan, who won the over 7 section

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Have you renewed your subscription for 2008?

Only €15
or
£10 stg.
(or over 60's €10)

See Membership Form in this issue



“Live well, laugh often, leave a legacy”

The Writers Workshop took place on Saturday 27th January 2007. As the halyards played their merry tune on masts of the yachts in the marina Muckcross Park past pupils were beating a path to the National Yacht Club door. Within these distinguished surroundings in Dun Laoghaire the group of prospective authors were settling down by a roaring fire to hear three 'real' authors give their experiences.

“Remember a real decision is measured by the fact that you've taken new action. If there is no action, you haven't truly decided” so go the words of Anthony Robbins. And indeed a decision had been made and our group of prospective writers had made the effort to come to the Writer's Workshop and were yearning to begin.

Valerie Cox, President of the Muckcross Past Pupils' Union opened the workshop with words of encouragement. Valerie herself is a journalist, broadcaster and a published author. *“Expect the best, prepare for the worst. Capitalize on what comes”* (Zig Ziglar) not Valerie's words but you get the drift!

Patricia O'Reilly, whose numerous published works include one on how to become a writer, spoke next. Patricia is one of those soft spoken people that you could listen to for hours. Patricia is well experienced in running workshops and was a mine of information on how to go about starting to write. Everybody has a story in them. We began right then. We each added a sentence to a sheet passed from one to the other. I can only tell you that the resulting 'story' was simply outrageous and worth a good laugh. No shortage of imagination here. Brian Tracy says *“The art of taking the first step is what separates the winners from the losers”* so over to you...

The scene was now set for an entertaining and worthwhile afternoon. Helen Litton, a well know historical novelist now added her weight to the proceedings. *“Without a vision people will perish”* (Proverbs 29:18) Helen's words did not perish and she left us rich with knowledge and full of great stories of her experiences at writing successful historical novels. Helen passed on lots of tips and useful advice.

“Luck is ready to deliver when preparation meets opportunity” now I don't know who said this but I would follow with Shelby Steele's words *“Opportunity follows struggle. It follows effort. It follows hard work. It doesn't come before”* and on to Brian Cox. Brian was the 'newest' author; he had put in the effort and the hard work and produced his first novel from his love of golf. What an opportunity for Brian that the Ryder Cup was in Ireland. A recently retired school principal he wrote about the history of the Cup since its inception in 1927 and the contribution made by Irish players. Brian's talk was well received. His courage at speaking to a room full of women with such obvious enjoyment was a source of merriment.

The PPU is very grateful to Patricia O'Reilly for her assistance in making the National Yacht Club available for the Writers Workshop. Without her contacts this wonderful venue would not have been possible. Why not come along this year and see for yourself? The Writers Workshop will be held on Saturday 16th February 2008 in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire (thank you again Patricia). I had a great time last year and would recommend it to any budding authors out there!

“Life is a book and you are its author. You determine its plot and pace and you – and only you – turn its pages” (Mende Conny)

Mary Buckley (Dean)

Class of '69

Visit

www.muckcrossparkppu.com

for all information and photos of previous events

Book now for the **WRITERS WORKSHOP** on 16th February by ringing Valerie on 087-685 8406

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

We stood in the Pillar Room of Elm Park Golf Club. We embraced and pecked cheeks and cried out the old names in delight and wonder. We giggled and slipped easily into conventional expressions of praise at how well we all looked; how well we had survived; how wonderful to be here.

We missed Fionnuala McAree (O'Driscoll), Margaret Leahy and Eithne Murphy and shed soft tears as we looked at the display of teenage photographs. They were lovely; gone too soon.

Cynthia Gaffney and Irma Flynn sent their regrets and wonderful stories from across the world. We'll catch up soon girls!

I moved in two worlds at this half-century celebration of lives well lived in the values taught us so well by the Dominicans of Muckross. It was 40 years since I, who has lived as a 'blow-in' in County Galway since 1962, had met the class of '57. I was amazed at how little we had changed in friendly manners, straight talk (for which I often get in trouble with my more reticent western neighbours) and our general air of optimism about the myriad of life's stories which we had all experienced. The green uniforms floated before my eyes. I needed an odd moment to check my gear as I moved from group to group. Were we enjoying a 2007 memory session or a 1950's school project planning session? It was all still there, the sense of sharing, the listening, the contribution of talents, 'doing your bit'. The living of ordinary lives with as much honesty and integrity as we could muster. Where did it all come from? I know I found a little piece of myself that I had missed without knowing for 40 years. Fair play to you sisters – lay and religious!

The class of '47 sat at the tasty meal like honorary queens of grace and femininity. May we soon be there! The class of '77 were noisy and inattentive as Katherine (Banahan) gave her splendid speech - kids these days! We shook our venerable heads and laughed at our old-fashioned ways, and remembered for a moment how times has passed and changed so many things. But we have kept time busy, haven't we? And it's been good.

A piece of literature becomes 'a classic' when it still has something to say to the world 50 years after its inception. That's what we are, classics all! The aura of veritas. Great to meet ye girls.

Patricia King (Kennedy)

Class of 1957



Front Row: L-R Irene Nolan, Evelyn Foran, Mary McGovern, Vern Eustace
2nd Row: L-R Maeve O'Leary, Dolores O'Dwyer, Marie Doyle, Jacqueline Martiny, June Croker
3rd Row: L-R Betty Ward, Mary Brennan, Carmel Harrison
Back Row: L-R Helen Hughes, Patricia Kennedy, Mary Finn, Joan Greene, Katherine Banahan

ANNUAL DINNER – BOOKING FORM

The Annual Dinner takes place on
Friday 25th April 2008
in **O'Connell's Restaurant, Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge**
Tickets €45 • Dinner 7.30pm

EARLY BOOKING IS ADVISABLE - TELEPHONE BOOKINGS WILL NOT BE TAKEN

I wish to book _____ places @ €45 each, and enclose cheque for €_____ (payable to Muckcross Park PPU).
Please supply names of all those attending on a separate page indicating anniversary year if applicable

- Please indicate any special dietary requirements

First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Year Left: _____ Maiden Name: _____

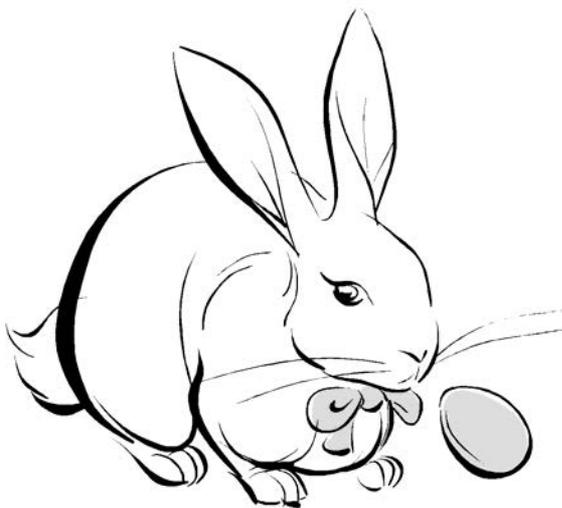
Address: _____

Tel No.: _____ Email: _____
please print clearly

Bookings must be received not later than 18th April and should be sent to:

Claire Johns, Muckcross Park PPU, 4 Willowfield Avenue, Goatstown, Dublin 14.

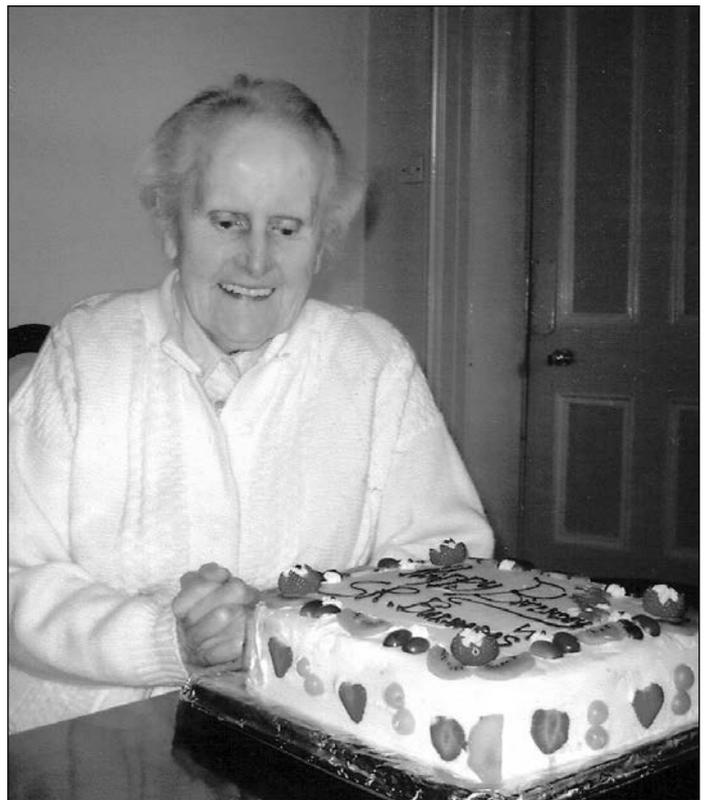
Tables of 6, 8 or 10 only are available and large groups will be accommodated at adjoining tables



EASTER EGG HUNT

PAST PUPILS BRING YOUR CHILDREN
OR GRANDCHILDREN
TO OUR EASTER EGG HUNT
ON SUNDAY 2nd MARCH 2008
AT 12 NOON
IN MUCKCROSS PARK

SR. BARNABAS 90th BIRTHDAY



Sr. Barnabas and her birthday cake in the parlour last June 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 info with you! You'll forgive us, won't you Barnie?

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your 2008 subscription is now due. In an effort to cut down on administration we would greatly appreciate if those who pay by cheque each year could switch to a standing order. This would remove the necessity of sending out reminders.

Your subscriptions help towards the Benevolent Fund, the Etafari Project and the costs involved in the production of the Muckross Mail and your support is greatly appreciated.

The Annual Subscription is €15 with a reduced rate of €10 for over 60s. *If renewing, please amend your existing standing order in line with the current amounts if necessary.*

MUCKROSS PARK PAST PUPILS UNION – RENEWAL / MEMBERSHIP FORM

I wish to join the PPU / renew my membership (*delete as appropriate*) and enclose cheque for €.....

OR complete the Banker's Order Below

(Block Letters)

First Name: Last Name: Maiden Name:

Address:

Year Left: Tel. No: E-mail:

please print clearly

Occupation:

Have you any professional or other skills to offer to the PPU?.....

**Annual Membership Fee: €15 or Seniors (over 60s) €10 Payable by cheque/draft or Banker's Order
From non euro zone area send £10 Sterling**

BANKER'S ORDER

Name of Bank

Address of Bank

Sort Code (6 digits)

Account Number (8 digits)

Account Holder Name

Pay now and on the 1st day of JULY of each year until further notice the sum of € to the credit of:

- Muckross Past Pupils Union Account Account No: 17107621
 - Bank of Ireland, 34 College Green, Dublin 2 Sort Code: 90-07-89
- and charge the same to my account.

Please cancel all previous standing instructions in favour of Muckross Park Past Pupils' Union.

Signature:..... **Date:**