

February
2010



Muckross Mail

Newsletter of the Muckross Past Pupils' Union



The class of 1959 celebrating 50 years since leaving Muckross at the Annual Dinner in April 2009.

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Goatstown, Dublin 14
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Writers Workshop

Saturday 6th March 2010, From 2pm – 5.30pm
in the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire
Cost €20 (incl. refreshments).
Bookings: Contact Valerie Cox 087-216 6669

Union Day & AGM

Sunday 7th March 2010 in Muckross Park
11.15 am Mass followed by AGM & refreshments

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday 28th March 2010 in Muckross Park
from 12 – 1 pm. Booking essential

Annual Dinner

Friday 23rd April 2010 at 7.30pm
In Stillorgan Park Hotel, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
Booking essential

Combined Dominican Golf Society

Monday 12th July 2010, in Naas Golf Club
Contact: Mary Ryan 087-678 9078

Muckross Golf Society

Thursday 9th September 2010
Edmondstown Golf Club, Rathfarnham.
Time sheet is available from Darina Marshall
Tel: 01-4944818
or email marshallfam@eircom.net before 31st August.

Combined Dominican Unions' Mass

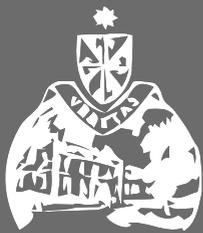
Sunday 3rd October 2010 at 11.15am in Muckross Park

Santa Party

Sunday 5th December 2010 in Muckross Park
At 12 noon - 1pm. Booking essential.

PPU Mass in Muckross:

1st Sunday of February, March, April, September,
October, November and December
at 11.15am in Muckross Park



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased to say that 2009 was yet another successful year for the Past Pupils' Union. As a result of great attendances at our various events during the year our membership has increased as more people discover the PPU. We hope to see lots of new faces and well as our regulars at some of our functions during 2010.



Last June I was delighted to meet Sister Caitriona who runs the Playgroup Projects that we support in South Africa. She was home on holiday from Capetown and staying in Muckross. It was great to put a face to the name at last. She brought me up to date with how the various groups are progressing there. She expressed her thanks to the PPU and all the past pupils for the support we have given them over the last few years. Given the rate of exchange between the Rand and the Euro she said our donation was able to supply food for all the children in the playgroup for the entire year.

During the year I met up with the Presidents of Eccles Street, Dun Laoghaire and Sion Hill when I attended their annual dinners. Not only are these enjoyable but we get to discuss ideas and see how each Union is doing. All four Unions worked together during the year to promote the annual Combined Dominican Schools Unions Mass last October and we also placed an ad in *The Irish Times*. As a result nearly 80 Dominican past pupils from schools all over the 32 counties attended the Mass in Muckross. This was an increase of approx 70 from previous years.

As usual our annual raffle was a big success. I would like to thank all our past pupils for supporting it as the proceeds from it and membership fees enable the PPU to continue to provide help to our various causes. Our 2010 raffle this year has wonderful prizes many of which have been donated by past pupils – see details in this issue.

On a personal note I had a great year as I got married last May. Tony and I had a fabulous day in the Merrion Hotel and then we spent our honeymoon in Positano on the Amalfi Coast. The fact that I haven't changed my name caused great confusion when friends were addressing our Christmas cards, though most of them seemed to opt for Mr and Mrs Rodgers!

I hope you enjoy this issue of Muckross Mail and I would like to thank all who contributed to it. A big thank you is also due to our fantastic committee who manage to arrange all our events with just 5 meetings a year. So if you fancy joining our dynamic group let us know.

GAY RODGERS

President

ANNUAL DINNER – 23rd APRIL 2010 in STILLORGAN PARK HOTEL

The 2010 Annual Dinner will be held in Stillorgan Park Hotel on Friday 23rd April 2010 at 7.30pm at a cost of €45 per head. The format be a sit-down meal (with main course choice) as feedback regarding last year's buffet was a bit negative. 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 dinner.

To book for the Annual Dinner please send a cheque for €45 each (*payable to Muckross Park PPU*) to the address on the Booking Form in this issue and you will be sent a Dinner Ticket to be brought along on the night. If you are planning a class reunion at the dinner we request that ONE person of that class be responsible to collect ALL names and cheques and forward them in bulk. This will help greatly with bookings and avoid confusion. Large groups will be accommodated at adjoining tables.

Please Note: Telephone bookings will not be accepted and all tickets must be paid in advance no later than 16th April.

MUCKROSS PARK GOLF SOCIETY

Thursday 10th September 2009 was a beautiful day for the Muckross Golf Society Annual Outing in Edmonstown Golf Club. All that rain we had over the summer months stayed away and 36 golfers enjoyed the weather and the course. Congratulations to Moya Williams (Forde) who won first prize. When we concluded the golf we all gathered in the dining room for dinner which was followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Society. Our Lady Captain Annette Quigley addressed the meeting where she thanked her committee for all the work that had been done in making the day a great success. Annette announced that Darina Marshall was the incoming captain for 2010 and wished her all the best for the coming year.

We look forward to welcoming all past pupils and their friends to our next outing in Edmonstown Golf Club in Rathfarnham on Thursday 9th September 2010. Tee time from approx 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Time sheet is available from Darina Marshall telephone no. 01 4944818 or email marshallfam@eircom.net. If you don't play golf why not come along for the dinner.

Bernadette Feeney (Lacy)
Hon. Secretary

PPU Committee

President:

Gay Rodgers

Vice-President:

Valerie Cox (Fitzpatrick)

Hon. Secretary:

Claire Johns (Doyle)

Hon. Treasurer:

Margot Doyle

Committee:

Sr. Barnabas

Mary Buckley (Deane)

Philo Butler (Fisher)

Elaine Cogavin (Bastable)

Felicity Coll (O'Brien)

Beatrice Doran

Katherine Duffy (Fox)

Helena O'Dowd

THE COMBINED DOMINICAN UNIONS' MASS

takes place
on Sunday
3rd October 2010
in Muckross Park
at 11.15am.

UNION NEWS

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your 2010 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 various projects including the Benevolent Fund, the Playgroup Projects in Capetown and the costs involved in the production of the Muckross Mail; your support is greatly appreciated. Please complete the Membership form at the back of this issue.

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.

UNION DAY

Union Day will take place on Sunday 7th March 2010 in Muckross Park. 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.

AGM AND NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2010/2011 COMMITTEE

The AGM will take place on Union Day on Sunday 7th March 2010. 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 4 or 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 Gay Rodgers, President on 087-638 3683 prior to the AGM or email us at muckrossppu@ireland.com

STAY IN TOUCH BY EMAIL

The PPU has an email address, muckrossppu@ireland.com and we would love to hear from you. Email us now so we can add you to our address book. If you are in touch with other Muckross girls perhaps you would be good enough to let us have their email address. Remember to let us know if you have changed your email address or postal address recently. That way you won't miss out on Union news or the Muckross Mail. Likewise if you have news for us that we can put in the Muckross Mail we will be delighted to hear from you.

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 husband, children, boyfriend, anyone! Mass in the chapel is followed by tea/coffee and biscuits and hopefully some news and gossip!

The **Combined Dominican Schools Unions' Mass** will take place in Muckross Park on Sunday 3rd October 2010 at 11.15am. 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 tell them about it and bring them along too. We were delighted to welcome nearly 80 Dominican past pupils at the 2009 Mass.

The Mass on the 1st Sunday in November is dedicated to all deceased past pupils. If there is anyone whose name 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.

2009 RAFFLE RESULTS

The Raffle took place at the Muckross PPU Annual Dinner on 24th April 2009 in the Stillorgan Park Hotel. The value of the prizes was almost €2,000. Congratulations to the following winners:

- 1st Prize Oil painting donated by artist Pamela O'Connell (Dain)
Winner: Muireann Toibin
- 2nd Prize Two nights BB+1 Dinner for 2 at any of the Brennan Group Hotels
Winner: F. Coghlan
- 3rd Prize Designer Hat from 'Hats by Jean'
Winner: Triona Corcoran
- 4th Prize €100 voucher for Brown Thomas
Winner: Kay O'Loughlin Kennedy
- 5th Prize One year's subscription to 'The Irish Garden' magazine
Winner: Una Dennis (O'Donoghue)

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

Visit our website www.muckrossparkppu.com
for all information and events



ANNUAL DINNER

Book a table for your classmates at the
Muckross PPU Annual Dinner
to be held on
Friday 23rd April 2010
in the
Stillorgan Park Hotel

Dinner 7.30pm

Tickets €45 each

Bookings by 16th April

All tickets must be paid for in advance

Payment is not possible on the night

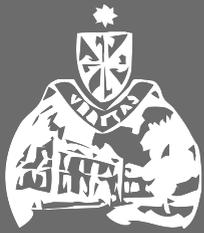
See Booking Form on back page

Don't forget to renew your subscription for 2010.

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

See Membership Form in this issue

Muckross Mail



SCHOOL NEWS

MUCKROSS ARCHIVES

At present the school is compiling its archives to protect the legacy of Muckross Park College. We would like to appeal to any past pupil, teacher or parent that may have any items of interest to contact us. Suggested items may include photographs, letters, certificates, correspondence, awards, drawings, artifacts etc. (the list is endless!) If you have something that may be of interest to us please contact:

Ms. Deirdre Mac Mathuna, Muckross Park College, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

Tel (01) 4914033 or email deirdre.macmathuna@dublin.ie

**Don't forget
the AGM
on**

UNION DAY

**Sunday 7th
March 2010**

**After
11.15am
Mass**

DEDICATION PLAQUE FOR ROLL OF HONOUR

At the Garden Party in May 2007 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 Ann Lucas, our wonderful librarian, and Margaret Grogan.



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.

Deirdre MacMathuna

THE MUCKROSS 2009K RUN

The Muckross 2009k fun day was a great success again last year. It was held on October 5th in Irishtown Stadium. The girls made a huge effort with their sponsor cards and came wearing T-shirts in their house colours. Thank you to 2Wheels in Sandymount for their sponsorship. Transition year had set up stalls with a difference. There was a cake stall, vintage clothing and accessories and a magnificent plant and pot stall. Together with Ms Stephenson and some Transition year parents, 85 beautiful plant and hanging baskets were made and sold on the day. We had the usual super slide and this year Sumo wrestling was a favourite. Thanks to the kind generosity of other parents we had an ice cream van and burgers from the BBQ. We are grateful to everyone who helped on the day setting up gazebos and trestle tables. Without the support of all the parents, pupils and teachers this event would not be as successful and this year we raised an amazing €30,000 towards the new school theatre.



Some 3rd Year pupils who took part in the Muckross 2009K Run

**Siobhan McErlean,
Parents' Association**

**If you would
like a
back issue
of the
MUCKROSS
MAIL
please contact
the editor**

50 YEARS ON.....

The evening of 24th April 2009 was an exciting one; the annual Muckcross Park PPU Reunion dinner in the Stillorgan Park Hotel. As we gathered in the hotel foyer our eyes turned frequently to the swing doors as other past pupils arrived. Would we recognise our peers from fifty years ago and longer? There were furtive glances at names as badges were pinned on. The noise level rose as cries and screams of recognition rang out and laughter greeted each new encounter.

A memorable evening followed. The PPU Committee had organised a wonderfully successful event and the hotel staff ensured that there were no hitches. Delicious food and excellent company combined to make the occasion happy and enjoyable.

However, on behalf of the class of 1959, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary hard work and administration which went on behind the scenes for many months. This work was carried out by Beatrice Doran and Margot Doyle, who were unstinting in their dedication and commitment to the organisation of our gathering. World wide contact was made and letters were sent to every corner of Ireland, England and the States so that as many of us as possible could be there. From Sherkin Island to Seattle, they came. We remembered our absent friends and teachers who had passed away, and we were particularly pleased to see faces from earlier years of our class; those who had left to pursue interesting careers or studies in other educational establishments. Their wish to be re-united with all of their former classmates was a pleasure. So many memories and stories were exchanged!

None of this would have happened without Beatrice and Margot. The morning after the dinner Beatrice was a gracious and welcoming hostess to many of us, who gathered again in her lovely home for coffee. The rich feast spread on her table made it look more like a banquet. A lively occasion. Even her cats looked content! Thank you Beatrice and Margot.

Lorna Murray (Madigan)
Class of 1959

WINNING ENTRY FROM 2009 WRITERS COMPETITION

Last year you may remember we ran a competition in conjunction with the Writers Workshop. We gave the first sentence from a recent Irish novel by Sebastian Barry and asked you to complete the paragraph in 200 words. The variety of story lines stemming from the same sentence was most interesting – Muckcross girls have great imaginations!

The winner was Emer Minogue (Halpenny) who read out her winning entry at the Writers Workshop in February where she was presented with a €50 book voucher. The sentence we used was: 'The world begins anew with every birth'. The following is Emer's winning entry.



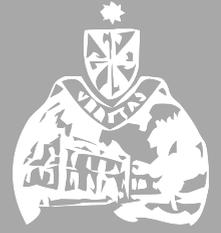
Emer Minogue (Halpenny) winner of the 2009 Writing Competition receiving the €50 book token from PPU president Gay Rodgers

How Many Babies?

*"The world begins anew with every birth", my father used to say.
"How many babies born today, Molly?" he'd shout through the bedroom wall – his way of waking me up. I'd run and pull up the blind.
"Seventy two!"
"A grand day so."
Wild days always brought a windfall – maybe a hundred and two.
"How many boys and how many girls?" He'd ask as I'd climb onto his bed, kissing him where the plastic tubes disappeared into his nostrils.
"Fifty girls and..." I'd falter, realising he'd tricked me into this. We'd work the mathematics of it out together, and then his eyes would begin to close. I'd put my hand on his face and listen to him breathe.
"I love you", I'd whisper.
"Good girl."*

The snow was a surprise and it fell for hours. When it stopped the birds came back into the sky. I didn't build a snowman or marvel at my own footprints. I sat inside and waited. The only sound, a ticking clock and occasionally my mother's controlled sobs. I pressed my nose to the window and watched as gradually movement came back to the earth, a hint of evergreen winking through white lace, elegant shadows thrown onto warm looking blankets of snow.

*"That's it", someone said and my mother crumbled.
The most beautiful day of my eight years and no one asking how many babies.*



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

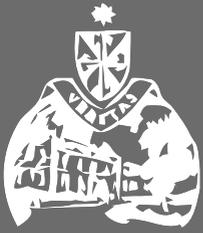
Have you renewed your subscription for 2010?

Only €15 or £10 stg.

(or over 60's €10)

See Membership Form in this issue

Muckcross Mail



A MESSAGE FROM CAPETOWN

This is a thank-you to the Muckross Past Pupils for your generous donation to the Izimvozethu Playgroup Project in Nyanga on the outskirts of Cape Town. The money will be used for food for the children who are between three and six years of age. It is a great help in a community where unemployment is very high and mothers spend their time trying to put food on the table. We are hoping that conditions will improve in this Playgroup in the year ahead. There are plans for it to be given assistance by the Catholic Welfare Development in Cape Town who have a special outreach to Playgroups who need training and monitoring to be able to improve their service to the local community.



Sr Aine with Fezeka, Ncediswa and Joyce who help run the Project.

We will be in touch with you in 2010 to let you know how things are going at the Izimvozethu Playgroup Project. Thanks once more to the Muckross Past Pupils' Union for coming to the help of these preschool children and to the support of the women running the Project.

Greetings and blessings to each one from all here.

Sr Caitriona

THANK YOU TO ALL THE SPONSORS OF OUR 2010 RAFFLE

This year's raffle has really fantastic prizes, many of which have been donated by past pupils. We do hope this generosity will be rewarded with a bumper fundraising.

- 1st Prize: 1 week self-catering for 2 at Old Grain Cottages, St. Mullins, Co. Carlow
- 2nd Prize: 1 year's drama class for 1 child (age 3.5 up to teens) at the Emer Halpenny School of Drama
- 3rd Prize: 2 nights BB+1 Dinner in a Bewley's Hotel
- 4th Prize: Dinner & Show for 2 at Johnnie Fox's Pub, Glencullen, Co. Dublin
- 5th Prize: Afternoon Tea for 2 in the Four Seasons Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
- 6th Prize: A One Hour Massage from Heaven Face and Body, Grafton Street, Dublin 2

Tickets are €5 each or book of 5 for €20. If you did not receive your tickets with the Muckross Mail or you would like extra tickets please email muckrossppu@ireland.com or phone 087-6383683.



Some Easter egg hunters having a chat with the Easter Bunny



Santa Party colouring competition winners Maebh Waters and Dylan Fitzsimons with Santa

**Book now
for the
WRITERS
WORKSHOP
on
Saturday 6th
March 2010
by ringing
Valerie
on
087-216 6669**

RAMBLINGS OF A WOULD-BE DIVA!

Hi there everybody. The editor very kindly offered me an opportunity to write something for the 2010 issue of our PPU magazine, so here goes. I have opted for news about my passion since retirement almost 10 years ago. Gosh, is it really that long since I had a proper job!

Well, anyone who remembers Sister Cecilia will probably remember me, Geraldine Martin, and the Gilbert & Sullivan (G&S) performances we produced in our 6th year. When I look back at that time, I realise it was the beginning of a love affair with performing. Oh, yes, coming from a musical family – remember Philip Martin, my brother – I was immersed in music from a very early age but G&S really started me on the path to singing.

Skipping lightly, as one of the maids in G&S, to my days in Aer Lingus Musical Society, I did not sing as much as I danced. The arthritis now suffered is a legacy of those gruelling years dancing in so many musicals. But, I am glad to say I am putting the experience of all those R&H shows now to good use. Of course we now have Lord Lloyd Webber and Sondheim to get to grips with but I find that when compiling a programme, one must use the old favourites e.g. *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *South Pacific*, *Showboat* etc. Sorry, I get a bit carried away when discussing musicals.

Since being in England, 40 odd (very odd) years, I have been a member of many musical societies including Aer Lingus, The London Stock Exchange, Twickenham Operatic etc. and worked in many of the professional theatres, but my thoughts sometimes stray back to my childhood performances in the beloved Gaiety Theatre in Dublin. That theatre has such memories for me as a child and, of course, my uncle, Stephen Black was very well known in the Olympia working with the great Jimmy O'Dea and Maureen Potter. Although he was a very fine baritone, and performed in many famous operas, he always came back to his first love – comedy. I fear I have followed in his footsteps – I mean in the comedy sense – not the fame! Hang on a minute though, I have sung opera in Covent Garden in the chorus of *La Traviata* – no, not the street theatre (how very dare you!) – in the actual theatre.

An interesting digression; when I worked in the Stock Exchange, I had a boss called John Dargan. We were chatting one day and I remarked that Dargan was not a common Irish name and I had only known one before – Michael Dargan, CEO of ALT when I worked for them. Low and behold – John was only his nephew! It gets better, my brother Philip (whom I mentioned above) was doing concerts in New York and was staying with John's cousin, Allan Dargan. Neither Philip nor I had ever made the connection until that time. What a small world we live in.

Then, when John left the Exchange to go back to the US and get married he asked me to sing at his wedding. What an honour and what fun. There I was, a pure amateur, singing in the Beverley Hills Hotel in LA with an audience of people like Jack Nicholson (drunk as a skunk) and Michael Douglas to drop only two names – have I no shame! It was a marvellous experience and I still keep in touch with John and his wonderful wife Janet. It goes to show, you never know who you are talking to, and for that reason, should be very careful!

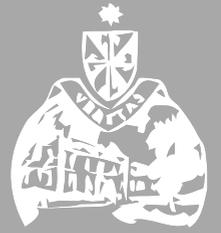
I never miss an opportunity to sell our theatre group, Manor Players. I have recently compiled a show called "Some Enchanted Evening" which ran in November 2009 at The Riverside Arts Centre, Sunbury on Thames here in England. Anyone now living here or visiting should contact me on 01784 460136 for tickets for our next production. Check out our website www.manorplayers.org for future events.

Well, if you have persevered so far, I congratulate you. You either have fantastic stamina or absolutely nothing else to do! I am one of the class of 1961, so our 50 year celebration is not far off – perhaps we could all get together prior to it and compile some entertainment. I would gladly direct, although I suspect I am only one of many of Muckross Park lucky pupils who could do that. I am just getting my bid in early!

I wish all you lovely people a fantastically, healthy and successful 2010 and would love to hear back from anyone who might have family or connections here in the UK. I told you, I am shameless in drumming up business for our shows.

God bless you all. Keep smiling.

Gerry de Faoite
(nee Geraldine Martin)
Class of 1961



**THE
COMBINED
DOMINICAN
UNION MASS**
takes place
on Sunday
3rd October
2010
in
Muckross Park
at
11.15am.

THOMAS PRIOR HALL
BALLSBRIDGE

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Muckross Mail

OUR FIRST WINE TRIP

The excitement was brewing (or better still, fermenting) for weeks; our first trip with our Wine Club. It was also the club's 10th consecutive trip abroad so we knew it was going to be good. What will we wear? How hot or cold is the weather in Burgundy in March? Bring lots of warm clothes we were told and so we did. Meeting all the experienced wine trippers at the airport, you could easily spot the 'wine trip virgins' – my fellow 'wine virgin' and good friend Deborah dressed as if she was going skiing and I was not far behind.

We flew to Geneva where we were met at the airport by Goran, our coach driver and that was the start of the magical 3 days. The trip through the Swiss Alps was beautiful. It seemed no length of time before we arrived at the Paul Sapin bottling plant. Boring you may think. Not at all, we had to dress in white coats and all looked like we were on the set of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. We saw how the wine was stored in 70ft vats and different bottling procedures. Oh such excitement when we saw labels go on the bottles for Marks & Spencer! Finally, we ended in the tasting room where we sampled a lovely thirst quenching St Veran, our first tasting, a lovely white. Bliss!



Muckross girls wine tasting in a cellar in Burgundy.
L-r Gay Rodgers, Helena O'Dowd and Claire Johns (Doyle)

Back on the coach and into the heart of countryside past rows and rows of vines as far as the eye could see. Our destination was the lovely restaurant La Table de Chaintre. Dinner was a gastro feast, a menu of 14 tasting courses. Now I know what makes a Michelin Star restaurant and to top it all, 28 of us were served by 2 floor staff and 1 chef!! Pure excellence, (said with a French accent, of course!) After dinner we left for Beaune to check into our hotel and then to bed. You need all your energy for these wine trips.

The full first day we visited 3 vineyards, all so different. We stopped for lunch at Olivier LaFlaive's, a fabulous wine maker who produces 56 varieties of wine from the one grape! We were confronted by 14 different wines from his vast range for lunch, which only took about 3 hours. After lunch we travelled north to Nuits-Saint-Georges for one more tasting at a small vineyard and we saw the oldest wine cellar ever, full of cobwebs & mould, it was like a scene from a scary movie. Here we learnt more about tasting wines and spitting... yes that is right, spitting to Olympic standards.

Next day began with some sorry looking faces at breakfast; some of the group had gone to Pickwicks, the local pub in Beaune and the dirty auld stop outs didn't come home until 3am! That morning we visited Gevry-Chambertin and had another fabulous tasting, hitting the bottle at 10am! Then on to Chassagne Montrachet for a tasting lunch at Roux Pere et Fils. It was in a rustic vineyard, used by the vineyard workers and it was all hand-made before us by 3 generations of the Roux family. On this occasion we could buy wines ... woo hoo!! and no bother at all for Deborah to part with €48 for one bottle, a special wine to open for her 40th birthday which was happening in July. However she later discovered that the wine really needed to be laid down for at least 5 years – so it's in the wardrobe for the 45th!

Dinner that night was again a joyous occasion, well it would be after nearly 56 tastings in 2 days! When dinner was over, all of us, even Deborah and me, ventured to Pickwicks for a few totally unnecessary pints and stayed out until the magic hour of 3am.

Our final morning was spent tasting the crème de la crème of Burgundy wines at the hotel. These were wines you would not be buying with your regular weekly shop. Then sadly we boarded the coach with our trusty driver to head back over the Alps, but we were cheered up with a great sing song starting off with "Ernie – the fastest milkman in the west" and the trip back to the airport seemed so much shorter.

The memories of our first Wine Club trip are the beauty of the French countryside, the passion of the vineyard owners and the pride they have in their wines. The food was magnificent and the welcome the "wine trip virgins" received from the long established members was out of this world. If we only ever go on one wine trip in our lives we are glad it was this one and to Burgundy too.

Helena O'Dowd
Class of 1988
(with Deborah
Morrissey filling
in the blanks!)

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Muckross Mail

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2009 WRITERS WORKSHOP REVIEW

Last February, I went along to the Muckross PPU Writers Workshop in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. Our purveyor of wisdom was author Patricia O'Reilly.

Patricia is great. She's so comfortable in her own skin that pretty soon you could sense everyone relaxing, pens at the ready, all ears. She has an easy manner and focused approach and I know we all learned something. Patricia stressed the importance of just *writing*. Bits of ideas and stories here and there can be tied together eventually.

In Patricia's book, *Writing for Success*, she says would-be writers often fall into two categories: those who are full of ideas but can't decide which writing route to take, and those with an unquenchable drive to write, but lack ideas and feel devoid of imagination. To both of these, Patricia says: "... it's facile to say 'just write'. But then again, that's about it." To help us to develop our own voice, Patricia gave us some exercises. These were great fun, and there was a real buzz in the room during them. The exercises forced us into 'just getting it down' and some of the results were amazing. It was humbling to listen to people's pieces, written like that, in just a few minutes. I don't know where the ideas came from, but Patricia worked a little magic that day, for sure.



L-r Patricia O'Reilly (Dain), guest speaker June Considine and Valerie Cox (Fitzpatrick) at the Writers Workshop in February 2009

Successful author June Considine was the guest speaker and she generously gave us an insight into her life as a writer. There were humorous anecdotes about writing to deadlines during the early years when the kids were small – strange stories of screaming hungry children swinging out of the rafters, and in someone's case, running wild around the house while their mother locked herself into the playpen with a typewriter. (Why are these playpens no longer on sale? Could I get one on e-bay?)

June's well known and loved children's stories including the *Lavender Trilogy* and the *Beechwood* series, were recalled fondly. Her novels for adults include *Deceptions* and *When the Bough Breaks*, and more recently the *Prodigal Sister*, under her pseudonym Laura Elliot.

Both Patricia and June agreed that it was crucial to carry a notebook everywhere with you for those wonderful moments of inspiration, or for times when you find you have nothing else to do. As I sit here in Specsavers, I'm hoping that my waiting time doesn't end too soon. My observations are triggering all sorts of creative possibilities: A tall well groomed priest in a pristine black suit looks like he might be "important". With him is a small handsome man of Indian extraction, also sharply dressed in black (although with no collar). The small man seems to be hovering, asking questions on the priest's behalf. I've come over all Dan Browne and the Da Vinci Code... why is he queuing here with us plebs if he's so special? What if – but then I'm called in for my eye test. "Yes... just a moment," I say as I gather up my handbag, still scribbling the last bit of a dying idea. Patricia O'Reilly – what have you done to me?

Emer Minogue (Halpenny)
Class of 1985

COMPETITION: Win a €50 book voucher

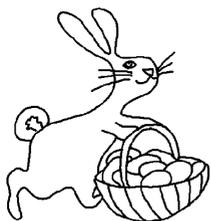
Here is the opening line from a well known novel. In your own words complete a short story in a maximum of 500 words.

'Even before I came to my senses, I knew my sister was dead.'

Please return your entry to The Editor, Muckross Mail by email to muckrossppu@ireland.com or by post to 33 Hazel Avenue, Kilmacud, Co. Dublin no later than Wednesday 3rd March 2010. Remember to include your name, address and phone number.

The winning entry will be read out (hopefully by the author) at the Writers Workshop on 6th March and will be published in the next edition of Muckross Mail.

Good luck and enjoy the experience. If you do, please come along to this year's Writers Workshop on Saturday 6th March 2010 at 2pm in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. The title of this year's workshop is: The Secrets of Writing Fiction. This will deal with the main ingredients of fiction i.e. Plot, Characters and Location(s). There will also be a panel discussion on writing with Valerie Cox, Patricia O'Reilly and special guest, author David Rice, director of the Killaloe Hedge-School of Writing..



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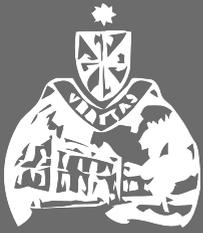
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Muckross Mail



DOMINICANS – IRELAND VERSUS USA

Aine Furey has a successful career as a location manager, working on movies and TV series with Disney, Paramount Pictures, MTV, Warner Bros and Columbia Pictures to name a few. Here she tells us about having to move to America during her school days.

I left Presentation Convent, Terenure in 6th class in June 1958 and by September had started in 2nd Year in Muckross Park College. I remember the changing room, where I changed shoes from outdoor to indoor, removed my green Gabardine overcoat and checked that my beige knee socks were pulled tight; then I was ready to conquer the world of Secondary School.

Attending Muckross was a delight, experiencing smaller classes and friendly girls. The nuns were very approachable and seemed very willing to help the students. Being not as strict as the Presentation Sisters started my appreciation of the Dominicans. Having an uncle a Bishop, another a Canon, another a priest and an aunt a nun did not put me in bad stead with the nuns in Muckross!

I loved every minute of school and even tried out for a hockey team. Never having held a hockey stick before, I was appointed to the position of left wing. Hockey was fun and you had to be fast. I remember the nickname given to the team by other schools – 'Mucky Muckross Girls'.

English was quite enjoyable for me, reciting the Merchant of Venice in the concert hall with all my classmates. Little did I know the effect it would have on my future choice of career. Recitation was not for the shy and poetry gave me the escape one longed for. I loved delving between the lines to come up with an interpretation of some sort trying to guess what the writer had in his/her mind and would mine parallel theirs?

Towards the end of second year, my Mother told me we would be moving to Los Angeles, California. It would be there I would finish my secondary education attending San Gabriel Mission High School run by the Dominican Sisters of San Jose and located in the grounds of the fourth Mission built in California in 1771 – that is old for California! Thinking of all the films I attended at the Classic, Kenilworth and Stella cinemas, I was delighted and knew I was going to an area like Beverly Hills (as I had seen in the films and knew that is how everyone lived in California!). In June 1959, we boarded a flight to London (my first flight) then onward to San Francisco - this flight took 27 hours with stops at Baffin Island and Seattle; then another flight on to Los Angeles. The farthest I had been in the past was to a summer place in Portrane!

Driving to our new destination that would be called 'home' for the next few years was awe inspiring. From the car window I could look up and see palm trees as tall as 4 story buildings, billboards with flashing lights and large cars with big fins. Everything seemed so large compared to Dublin.

A week later, I met Sister John Dominic, the Principal of Mission High School. She was to the point about fitting in, not having had a 'foreign' student since the school opened in 1949. She seemed quite impressed that I had attended the Dominicans in Ireland. I did notice her looking at my clothing but it did not bother me. Little did I realize that on my first day my clothing would become a topic of conversation.

On my first day I searched through the school and found my locker and homeroom. There were 20 'desks', each being a chair with a wooden arm that came around the front on the right to form a small writing area, plus a shelf under the seat for books. As I took a seat I could see girls whispering and looking at me. Finally Sister Anita welcomed everyone and said at times people had come into the wrong room but she was there to help and immediately headed in my direction. She politely asked to see my school registration form. The first day was a 'free dress' day; she looked at me, flat-chested in a white terry towel top with a cotton skirt above the knees, a pair of white knee socks and my Clarks open-toed cream sandals, and asked how old I was. When I answered 'Thirteen, Sister' there were gasps from the other girls and a look of complete shock on Sister Anita's face. It was then I noticed that all the girls were wearing training bras, lipstick, louis-heels, nylons and skirts down between ankle and knee – it was no wonder I felt out of place. For the rest of the year we wore a uniform – a long mid-calf green straight skirt, white blouse with a bow tie, beige jacket, green socks with white shoes. With the heat in California reaching over 90 degrees we wondered why the nuns chose such an unsuitable uniform.

Then there was great conversation from all asking if I knew their great grandfather's family named Byrne, O'Reilly or the like. They thought Ireland was so small that everyone knew everyone. After 40 minutes the bell went, and on we moved to the next class. This was all new to me, going from classroom to classroom for different subjects.

Once in English class, there was a discussion about Ireland and I was asked what I thought of the American perception of Ireland. I replied that I thought it behind the times as most Americans thought that all Irish had pigs and chickens running free in their homes. Sister asked all the girls who actually thought that to raise their hands and sad to say 99% put up their hands.

In my first year of High School, a local newspaper wrote an article about me being a 'foreign' student in my school. Two weeks later, I had a telephone call from the Kennedy Campaign Headquarters, saying the Senator had read the article and would like me, being Irish, to be a Kennedy Girl while in Los Angeles for his Presidential Campaign. I enjoyed the event and met Senator Kennedy who shook my hand and said he was delighted I could attend. With him were Janet Leigh, Tony Curtis, Peter Lawford and his wife, Sammy Davis Jr, Frank Sinatra, Joey Bishop and many more – I thought I had died and gone to Movie Heaven. Little did I know then that I would have a career in the Film Industry many years later.

In June 1962 I graduated and returned to Ireland for a year then back to America. Having a career in the Film Industry as a Location Manager for 30 years now and working mostly with Americans from "La La Land" (Los Angeles), it is always great to include into the conversation 'I attended school with the Dominican nuns in both Ireland and Los Angeles'. I have resided in Toronto, Ontario since 1967. Over the years, I lost contact with my friends at Muckross but I did return to California, usually in February each year, as my family remained there and this gave me a chance to keep in contact with the girls from Mission High School. I unfortunately have not returned to Muckross as I am rarely in Ireland. It would be a delight to walk the grounds again and walk through the back door, into the cloakroom and then into the building itself to walk the halls again. Who knows... maybe someday soon.

So to all the girls attending Muckross Park College may you appreciate the Dominican education as much as I do. I hope you attain your goals, have fun, keep smiling and the World is yours to conquer.

Aine Furey (McGouran)

Visit

www.muckrossparkppu.com

for all
information
and photos
of previous
events

CLASS OF 1984 CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY



The class of 1984 celebrating their 25th anniversary with Sisters Barnabas, Rose Elizabeth, Carmel, Louis Dominic and Rita.

On Friday 18th September 2009, the Class of '84 got together in the Burlington Hotel – where we had our deb's party all those years ago – to celebrate 25 years out of school! About thirty of the class showed up on the night, and it has to be said, the years (and maybe a little botox in places!) have been very kind to us. Most of us hadn't seen each other since the 10 year reunion so it was great to catch

up and hear how everyone's lives are going. We have set up a Facebook page – muckcross1984 – and are planning to try to do something on an annual basis at least. We were absolutely delighted to see Sister Barnabas, Sister Carmel, Sister Rose Elizabeth, Sr Louis Dominic and Sister Rita on the night – all looking fantastic. Rachel Egar (now Brown) brought a montage of school photos – collectively, we managed to identify everyone! Sadly, three of our school friends have passed on, Helena Mullins, Karen Flynn and Deirdre O'Neill. They were remembered fondly on the night.

THE TRAVELLING 69ers IN BRUSSELS

Early in the morning of Friday 4th December, Valerie Cox (Fitzpatrick) and I arrived in Brussels. We were to spend the weekend with our class mate, Emer Daly, who has lived there for many years working with the Commission. Leesha Evans (Gaffney) who lives in England, was taking Eurostar directly to Brussels to join us later. Once established in Emer's lovely home, Valerie and I battled the wet and windy weather to the nearby Metro. We soon proudly found ourselves at Place de la Monnaie, close to Rue Neuve, the main shopping street. After carrying out some commissions there, the Grand Place in the Old Town was next, where a magnificent Christmas tree commanded the square with a traditional crib to one side. The restaurant, Roy D'Espagne, soon beckoned and we warmed ourselves by the big fire, ate hot food, washed down with white beer, and did some people watching from our cosy window seat! Emer collected Leesha from Gare du Nord and our little party was complete. We spend the evening eating, drinking, reminiscing and laughing. It was if we had not been apart one day of our forty years since leaving Muckcross in 1969.

Saturday morning was dry and after a breakfast of delicious croissants we drove into town. At Place du Grand Sablon, the antiques market brought back memories of earlier visits and purchases. Valerie found a near replica of her grandfather's brass corkscrew, stolen from her some years previously. Walking on, we passed the Palais des Beaux-Arts, with its art deco stained glass, and the entrance to the very fancy Museum Brasserie 'where food meets art'. New to Brussels since my last visit is the master chocolatier, Pierre Marcolini; the shop was full of Japanese tourists and apparently is an essential stop on their European tour!

After stopping at a traditional Belgian pub for coffee we set out to find a specialist fetish footwear shop for ladies of the night! But we got sidetracked – it was 5th December, the feast of St Nicholas, and we came upon him in his horse drawn carriage with Zwarte Piet (his helper) as they threw sweets to all the children. They were accompanied by musicians and a group of men and boys on stilts, all dressed in colourful clothes. It was an incredible spectacle as they danced and walked through the Grand Place. All around were tourists and locals, like ourselves overwhelmed by the amazing sight.

The next show stopper was the Manneken Pis, a fountain with a bronze statue of a little boy relieving himself. On important holidays the figure is dressed in a costume; that day he was wearing an outfit to rival St Nicholas' magnificent robes.

After lunching on Coquilles St Jacques, prawn croquettes (a traditional dish) and blonde bier, we headed into Place St Catherine and the Christmas markets. The goods on offer were varied and not all were 'Christmassy'. We revelled in the buzz of excitement, the lovely smells and the diversity of stalls.

On Sunday, most shops are closed in Brussels but the Marche du Midi, the famous fruit and vegetable market was open, with exotic foodstuffs from the world over. It is close to Gare du Midi; Leesha departed here to get Eurostar and missed the lovely tapenade which we savoured in Emer's homely kitchen before being driven to the airport for our return flight to Dublin.

Thank you, Emer for your very generous hospitality; it was a GREAT weekend.

Mary Buckley (Deane)
Class of 1969

ANNUAL DINNER – BOOKING FORM

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