

EUREKA SECONDARY SCHOOL

CELEBRATING  
  
50  
YEARS

1956 - 2006







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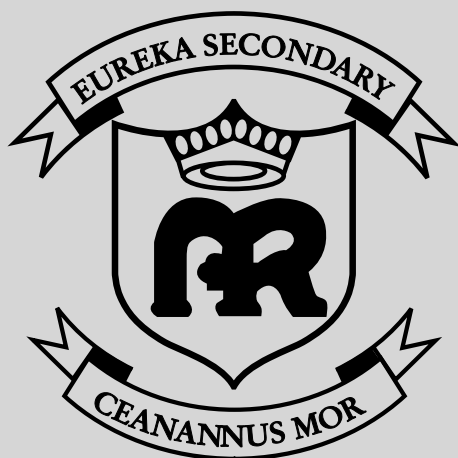
**118** People no longer with us

## Acknowledgements

The Eureka 50th Anniversary Committee wish to gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed photos and/or written material for the compilation of this book. Sincere thanks to all the Sisters of Mercy in Kells, past and present teachers, and past and present pupils who responded to our appeal for materials.

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# Introduction



When the Sisters of Mercy carried their blackboards and chalk from the Convent in Kells to Eureka House in April, 1956, they could not foresee that, fifty years later, "Eureka House Secondary School" would still be thriving and providing such an excellent education to the girls of this area. From little acorns great oaks grow!

Eureka House was, and still is, a beautiful setting for a school, and it is a lovely sight to see the girls in blue enjoying the sunshine while sitting out on the grass on fine days. However, for a long time now the school has been in need of new accommodation, and, in 2006, we await the fulfilment of the promise made to us by the Department of Education and Science in 2000 that a new school will be provided for us on a new site.

I first came to Kells in 1982, to join the teaching staff. I had previously been teaching in St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy School in Navan. In 1986 I was appointed Principal of Eureka. I was conscious that I was being entrusted with the continuation of the traditional Catholic and Mercy ethos of the school. The first aim of the school is 'to provide an environment that will enable us to recognise the individuality and uniqueness of each pupil and to cater for her specific needs'. In the last fifty years, provision has been made for students of all abilities and talents, in a caring atmosphere where help was given where it was needed, quietly and without fuss.

I am coming to the end of my term as Principal, and from September the Sisters of Mercy will no longer be directly involved in the school. The task of carrying on the distinctive "Eureka" tradition will be handed on to the first lay principal, with the support of the staff, pupils and parents of the school. From 2007 the trusteeship of all our Mercy schools will be taken over by 'Ceist', a Trustee Body set up for that purpose. The present Board of Management, some of whom have served the school since the first Board was set up in 1991, will also reach the end of its term in September. The new Principal and new Board of Management will have the task of achieving our 'holy grail' of a new school! I wish them God's blessing on all they undertake and the very best of luck.

This book aims to provide a flavour of the last fifty years in Eureka. We could not include everything; to paraphrase St John the Evangelist (with apologies to him!): "there were many other things that (the pupils and teachers of Eureka) did; if all were written down, the school itself, I suppose, would not hold all the books that would have to be written." We thank all those who have contributed photos, memories, and anecdotes for the book, and hope that you will understand if not everything has made its way into its pages.

I hope that you enjoy this book and treasure it, until the next one, perhaps in 2056! Go mbeirimid beo...

Sr. Joan

# History of Eureka Secondary School

## Background

**1844** In 1844 the Mercy Sisters first arrived in Kells. Three sisters came from Tullamore travelling by sidecar. They had been invited to start a Foundation of the Order in Kells. They undertook the running of the local girls primary school which had been established in 1840 (along with a boys primary school) by the parish with a bequest for that purpose from a local lady named Catherine Dempsey. The school was located on the present day convent grounds. Catherine Dempsey's name is still over the old school buildings.

**1888** In 1888 the Sacred Heart Orphanage was set up by the Sisters and it too was located on the present day convent grounds.

The primary school grew and expanded steadily.

**1924** The Mercy Sisters decided to open a secondary school. In that year five girls from the convent primary school secured scholarships to Boarding schools in Carrickmacross and Eccles St., Dublin. The community thought it a great pity that the girls had to leave Kells to continue their education and so decided to start a secondary school to make a secondary education available to all.

Mother M. Berchmans Hickey was Superior in the convent at that time.

This school at first consisted of two rooms in the convent which were formerly used as a workroom and a lace room. One of these rooms is now the Sacred Heart parlour of the convent with the other adjacent.

Sr. M. Ignatius Murphy was appointed Principal and Sr. M. Ita Searson taught with her. Later Sister Malachy McEnroe joined them.

The school was officially recognised by the Department of Education as a secondary school soon afterwards.

**1934** Demand for places in the school grew and a new school was built on the convent grounds. This consisted of four classrooms, a music room and another small room. The new school was ready for occupation on 24th September 1934, the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. Miss. Conway, the first lay teacher, joined the staff that year.

**1940s** Three new sisters, all graduates of University College Cork, joined the staff. They were all Kells Mercy Sisters who had gone to study in UCC and returned as permanent members of the teaching staff. Sr. M. Evangelist Cooney, (1940), Sr. M. Benignus Kelly (1941) and Sr. M. Gertrude Monahan (1944). All three would play key roles in the development of the secondary school.

**1951** Enrolment in the school reached 107 pupils.

**1954** Compulsory school uniform adopted for the first time - navy gymslip and jumper, white Peter Pan collar and white belt, blazer and beret both with crest.

Enrolment increased to 147.

At this time the nearby Eureka House was bought by the Parish. It originally belonged to Lord Headfort. It was the former residence of his estate agent having been built in 1882. It had previously been sold to the McDonnells of Cross Street who later (1947) sold it to James C. Fitzsimons who owned the bakery. Monsignor MacCullen bought it from the Fitzsimons family in 1954. It was intended to use it as a Parochial House but it proved unsuitable. Given the expanding number of pupils in both the primary and secondary schools Monsignor MacCullen, decided to make Eureka House available to the Sisters for use as a new secondary school. It was renovated and adapted to suit a school at a cost of £4,000. The existing secondary school accommodation was then handed over to the primary school.

## Eureka!!

**1956** On 26th April 1956 the new school was officially opened and blessed by Monsignor MacCullen. The name "Eureka" was retained on his recommendation. Classes commenced there on the same day! The sisters recall walking down the road from the old school carrying blackboards, easels, chalk, dusters etc. There were six classrooms, music, typewriting and reception rooms capable of catering for 150 pupils, all in Eureka House. The school was heated by electric wall-heaters and a big coal and turf stove off the main hallway. There was a great air of excitement among teachers and pupils alike for this new venture. There was plenty of playing space even if it was in grass, a great improvement on the small gravel yard back up at the old school. There were lots of rhododendrons and daffodils on the grounds and a stream running close by, all of which provided a beautiful setting for the new school.

Sr. Evangelist was Principal of the school at this time.

**1962** Pupil numbers increased to 217 and 3 additional classrooms were built adjoining Eureka House.

**1965** Enrolment continued to expand and reached 282.

**1966** Sr. Evangelist retired as Principal and Sr. Benignus became the new Principal.

**1967** A pre-fab block was erected adding 4 more classrooms and toilets. The area at the back of the house was changed from grass to tarmac to provide tennis courts and playing areas.

**1968** The first male teacher, Mr. Leonard Noone, joined the staff.



- 1969** A second floor was added to the 1962 building, giving four more classrooms.
- 1970** Enrolment numbered 332.
- 1972** The Gym, Science Lab, three classrooms and toilets were built.
- 1978** Addition of two more classrooms and a sewing room. A room in the main house was designated to be a Religion room.
- 1980** St. Catherines Boarding school was closed after the Leaving Cert. exams in June.
- Sr. Benignus retired and Sr. Pauline was appointed as Principal.
- Enrolment had then reached 444.
- 1981** May 24th, celebrated 25th anniversary of opening of Eureka with Mass concelebrated by priests of the parish, followed by tea in Eureka hall.
- 1984** New block of rooms built to include 3 classrooms, Home Economic rooms and Physics Lab.

- 1986** Sr. Pauline retired as Principal and Sr. Joan Dunne was appointed to take over the role of Principal.
- 1988** Addition of two prefabricated classrooms.
- 1990** Enrolment now at 638. Building of the Canteen and a new purpose built Art Room.
- 1990s** Addition of six more pre-fab classrooms.
- 2000** Enrolment stands at 718.
- 2000s** Staffroom moved to refurbished classrooms, two additional classrooms provided, Science lab refurbished, second Home Economics kitchen provided, four older classrooms refurbished.
- 2005** 714 students in the school.
- 2006** **Celebration of 50th Anniversary of Eureka Secondary School.**



*1954: Students attending the secondary school when it was located in the grounds of the convent, before moving to Eureka House. (l to r) Back Row: L.Gillic, Bridie Martin, Tisie Carpenter, Kathleen Duffy, Mary Harte, Bridie Geraghty, Carmel Smith, Mary McKenna, Ann Daly, Ethna Ryan, Maureen Connell, Bridie Finnegan. Middle Row: Betty Russell, Ann Raleigh, Dodie Reilly, Kitty Nugent, Rhodie Mullaly, Maura O'Kelly, Florence Jordan, Katie Farrelly, Elizabeth Lynch, Rosemary Daly, Maureen Reilly, Margaret Monaghan, . Front Row: Rene Gillic, Norie Farrelly, Mary Gibbons, Mary Mulloney, Margaret Doyle, Betty Martin, Rose Mary Kane, Rita Skelly, Maeve McKenna, Maureen Fagan, Marian Smyth.*

Extract from The Meath Chronicle, Saturday April 28th 1956

# The building solemnly blessed - New secondary school at Kells. Reconstruction of "Eureka"

"Oh!" exclaimed a resident of Kells Orphanage, that's as beautiful as the palace Grace Kelly is going to live in." The speaker was looking into one of the rooms in the former residence known as "Eureka", Kells, which Right Rev. Monsignor R. MacCullen, P.P. V.G. Kells, has converted for the Sisters of Mercy, into a secondary school. Monsignor MacCullen blessed the new school on Wednesday morning.

The little orphan's remark indicated not only that Miss. Kelly - or as she now is, Her Serene Highness Princess Grace - is news in unexpected places. The child's reaction indicates also that the room was something out of the ordinary. She was looking at the domestic science room, the dazzling white appearance of which justified the child's enthusiasm. A feature of the room, which adds a touch of warmth, is the two-colour terrazzo marble tiled floor.

The careful planning and good taste that went into the domestic science room are mirrored in all the rooms in the school.

Occupying a commanding position at the entrance to the town from the Navan side, the imposing school towers over every other building in sight - save Headfort House, the roof of which can be glimpsed through distant trees.

There are six classrooms, capable of catering for 150 pupils. In addition, there are music, typewriting and reception rooms. All the classrooms are unusually bright and airy, and are equipped with a most attractive type of desk and chair.

The town water is laid on to the building which also has a supply from a well at the rear of the building, an automatic pump giving a supply from the well.

There are outside and internal toilets. The cloakroom is so heated that wet coats will be dried in a comparatively short time. There is also a bicycle-shed.

The reconstruction work cost over £4,000. The outlay would have been considerably more but for the characteristic generosity of Monsignor MacCullen. He provided the heating and lighting systems, various ranges (gas and paraffin), different appliances and the water pump.

The transfer of the secondary school to "Eureka" will provide the Convent of Mercy primary school accommodation, which has been quite insufficient for a number of years, with four additional rooms. The contractors were Messrs. Casserley Brothers, Carnross, who did a first class job on "Eureka".





1955: Second Year Students. (l to r) Front Row: Mary Fox, Leona Madigan, Ann Kiernan, Phyllis Brady, Moria Murray, Ann Doyle, Ann Keane. Back Row: Margaret Bannon, Kathleen Carpenter, Betty Ryan, Marie Tully, Margot Kiernan, Margaret Kiernan, Marie Mulvany. Called 'Hopefuls' as they sat the Inter Cert. in second year as an experiment, and then again in third year.



1956: Back Row: Maureen Reilly, Kathleen Carpenter, Betty Ryan. Front Row: Edna Ryan, Do Do Reilly, Kay Farrelly, Marian Smith.



1956: (l to r) Back Row: Maura Kelly, Florence Jordan, Mary McKenna. Front Row: Carmel Smith, Rose Marie Kane, Birdie Geraghty, Helen Daly, Kathleen Flanagan, Rose Mary Daly.



**1956: (l to r) Back Row:** Florence Jordan, Rose Mary Daly, Mollie Farrell, Carmel Smith, Kathleen McCabe. **Front Row:** Mary McKenna, Helen Daly, Rose Marie Kane. Six of the Leaving Cert. Class of 1956 trained together as Teachers in England. They were Kathleen Flanagan, Helen Daly, Rose Mary Daly, Mary Harte, Mollie Farrell and Kathleen McCabe.



**1956: Back Row:** Marian Smith. **Middle Row:** Anna Higgins, Margaret Doyle. **Front Row:** Birdie Geraghty, Rita Skelly, Maeve McKenna.



**1959: (l to r) Back Row:** Christine Stuart-Mills, Geraldine Reilly, Attracta Lynch, Ita Donegan, Margaret O'Connell, Nancy Cooney, Breda Monaghan, Nora Mannion, Mary Nulty. **Row 2:** Judy Hall, Philomena Tighe, Mary Coyne, Patty Finnegan, Freda Farrelly, Ann Dunne, Gay Byrne, Sheila Dunne, Mary Shanahan, Nancy Daly. **Row 3:** Mary Tully, Mary Geraghty, Elizabeth Olwill, Catherine Lee, Lily Mc Donagh, Frances Monaghan, Kathleen McManus. **Front Row:** Anna Frances Madden, Ann Newman, Evelyn Flood, Nora Horgan, Angela Raghilly, Rosario Farrel, Margie Burns, Eilish Reilly? Catherine Lee, Rosaline McMahon, Stella Benton.





1962/63: (l to r) Back Row: Mary Nugent, Kitty Farrelly, Marie Smith, Ann Cella Gilsean, Rosemary Smith, Betty Travers, \_\_\_\_\_, Olivia Smyth, Ann Mullin. Middle Row: Ann Reilly, Mary O'Connel, Philomena \_\_\_\_\_, Mary Brady, Carmel Clarke. Front Row: Brigid Fitzsimons, Marie Cassidy, Breda Woods, Ursula Wilson, Frances Ward, Valerie Mellon, Josephine Hanlon, Rosella Bird, Mary B. Daly.



1965: (l to r) Back Row: \_\_\_\_\_, Josephine Clinton, Betty Travers, Ann Mullin. Middle Row: Betty Donnell, Irene Gilsean, Ann Hand, \_\_\_\_\_ Reilly. Front Row: Kay Soden, Mary B. Daly, Olivia Keane, Mary Nugent.



1965: (l to r) Back Row: Ann Duffy, Rosella Duffy, Mary Elliot. Front Row: Irene Arnold, Mary Hopkins.





1966: (l to r) Back Row: \_\_\_\_\_, Una Ward, Elizabeth Usher, Mary Walsh.  
Middle Row: Brenda Cheevers, Breda Woods, \_\_\_\_\_. Front Row: Marley Keane,  
Ann Kerr, Fr. Dargan (National President of the P.T.A.A.), Mary Elliot, Ann Geraghty.



1968: This picture was taken outside the "new prefabs" in 1968. Rosemary Fitzsimons, Goretti Newman, Siobhan Stuart-Mills, Emily Newman, Cora Morgan, Nuala O'Reilly, Sally Casey, Valerie Gibney, Mary McGuire, Aileen Logan, Rita Daly, Margaret Murphy, Vera Bell, Carmel Daly, Olivia Hearey, Attracta Smith.



1971: Leaving Certs. (l to r) Back Row: Imelda McCabe, Mary English, Josephine Murray, Ann Horgan, Eileen Murphy, Janette O'Neill, Eileen Foley, Ann Rooney, Rosemary Duffy, Clare Rudden, Ann Gillen. Middle Row: Claire Farrelly, Betty Gibney, Triona O'Donnell, Annette Lynch, Anne E. Maguire, Susan Murray. Front Row: Charmaine Walsh, Ann Brennan, Charlotte O'Reilly, Marian Renehan, Dolores Olohan, Anna Tully, Ann Smith, Rosita Gilsenan, Jenny Hanley.



**1970: Leaving Certs. (l to r) Back Row:** Mary Joe McGuire, Mary Theresa Tormay, Rosemary Hanley, Mary Tallon, Maureen Sheils, Rosemary Baugh, Patria Olohan, Ann Black.  
**Middle Row:** Jean Keyes, Kathleen Lynch, Angela Fulton, Marie Rudden, Elizabeth Newman, Catherine Mahon. **Front Row:** Margaret Donagh, Brigid Rogers, Margaret Renehan, Bernadette Brady, Josephine Murphy, Christine Usher, Jennifer Bell, Goretti Daly, Margaret McKenna.



**1972: Leaving Certs. (l to r) Back Row:** Sheila Eustace, Barbara Conaty, Margaret McKenna, Angela Byrne, Bridie Carolan, Rita Cahil, Geraldine McBride, Aileen Ward, Christine Woods, Roisin Coyne, Helena Carroll, Mary Olive Sugrue, Marian Garry, Mary Garry, Marian Smith. **Middle Row:** Ann Clarke, Teresa Casey, Ann Gilsenan, Maura McEntee, Mae McBride, \_\_\_\_\_, Angela Tunney, Marie Reilly, Mairead O'Donnell, Miriam Carolan, Helen Munroe, Concepta Farrelly, Mary Harkin, \_\_\_\_\_, Ann Boylan, Geraldine Tallon, Catherine Donagh, Carmel Lynch, Helen Mahon. **Front Row:** Marian Newman, Marian Jackson, Patricia McCabe, Mary Fallon, Loyola Banagh, Ann Kellett, Doreen Smith, Maura Smith, Marie Therese McGarr, Ann Quinn, Margaret Keyes, Rosemary Farrelly, Raphaelia McGrath, Assumpta Hopkins, Mary Gogarty.





1972: (r to l) Back Row: Marie Reilly, Ann Quinn, Theresa Casey, Anne Donegan, Kay O'Brien, Bridie Carolan, Bridie Byrne. Middle Row: Maura Smith, \_\_\_\_\_, Ann Kellett, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Loyola Baugh. Front Row: Margaret McKenna, Helen Mulroe, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Marie Therese McGarr.



1975: (l to r) Back Row: Bernie Hopkins, Ina Olohan, Philomena Logan, Mary Farrelly, Margaret McDonnell, Bernie O'Reilly, Dymrna Connell, Margaret Lynch, R. Murray, Rosemary Slevin. Row 2: Dorothy Denning (R.I.P.), Theresa Harten, Cosette Olohan, Pauline O'Byrne, Geraldine McDonnell, Mary P. O'Reilly. Row 3: Catherine O'Connor, \_\_\_\_\_, Joan McMahon, Eithne Keogan, Frederica Sparkes, Josephine Bird, Kay Coyle, Mary C. Reilly, \_\_\_\_\_, Olive Brady, Bernie Keyes. Front Row: Mary O'Malley, Antonine Rogers, Elizabeth Smyth, Collette Daly.





1972: Mr. Val Mulvany with a group of Leaving Certs. In those days the students had to wear slippers while in school. (Note the footwear!)



1974: A group of students outside the science lab. A new blue uniform had just been introduced. In this picture we see some of the girls wearing the new uniform while others are still wearing the old navy one.



1977: Leaving Certs. **Back Row:** Margaret Brady, Ruth McDonnell, Fidelm Lynch, Bernie English, Miriam Ward, Sr. Benignus, Fiona Denehan, Mary Dillon, Frances Tallon, Frankie Farrelly, Linda Gilsenan, Carmel Corley. **Middle Row:** Mary Smyth, Ann Murtagh. **Front Row:** Marina Shelock, Jackie Woods, Ann Cassidy, Carmel Donnellan, Irene Gaffney, Brigid O'Malley, Maria Arnold, Mary Byrne, Jackie O'Reilly, Noeleen O'Reilly, Margo McNamee, Helen Farrell and Marie O'Reilly. **Missing from picture:** Tricia Carry, Loyala Keogan, Siobhan O'Connell, Evelyn Munnelly.





1978: Leaving Certs. (l to r) Back Row: Marie Nevin, Rita Byrne, Frances Gibney, Colette Dennison, Marina Sherlock, Fiona McEntee, Mary Geoghan, Catherine Reilly, Vera Owens, Mary Ryan, Emer Ward, Catherine Gilsenan, Valerie O'Reilly. Front Row: Sylvia ?, Josephine Dowds, Deirdre O'Beirne, Mary Reilly, Rita Brady, Elizabeth Daly, Anita Faulkner, Mary Stafford, Bernadette Harten, Helen Eustace.



1980: Leaving Certs. with Sr. Benignus (Principal).





1980: Leaving Certs. with Sr. Benignus (Principal).



1980: Leaving Certs. with Sr. Benignus (Principal).





1982: Leaving Certs.



1983: (l to r) Breda McInerney, Olivia Dardis, Lorraine McDermott, \_\_\_\_\_, Diane Farrell, Marie Carpenter, \_\_\_\_\_.



1985: Leaving Certs.





1991: Leaving Certs.





1992: Leaving Certs.





1993: Leaving Certs.





1995: Leaving Certs.



1996: Leaving Certs.





1997: Leaving Certs.



2003: Leaving Certs.



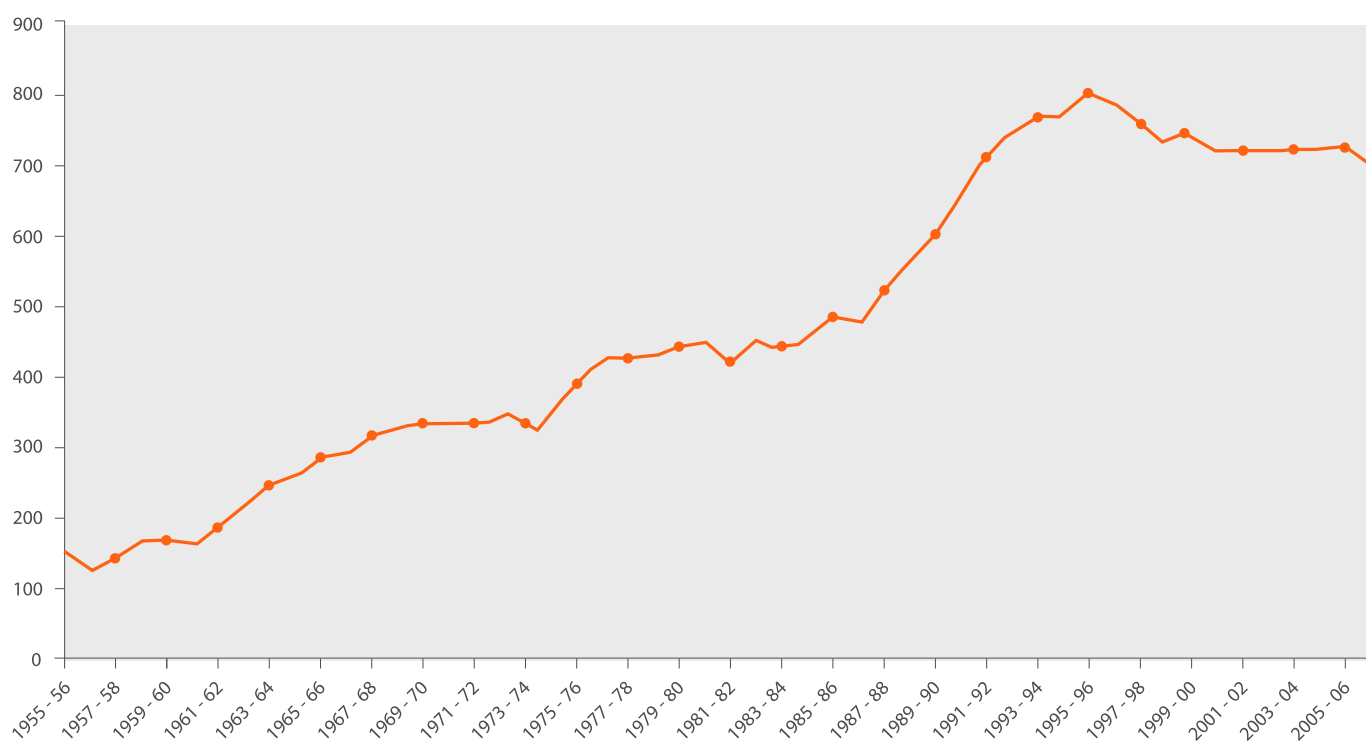
2006: Leaving Certs. (Surnames A to L).





2006: Leaving Certs. (Surnames M to Z).

## Number of Pupils in Eureka 1956 - 2006



# Eureka Principals



*Sr. Evangelist*  
Principal 195?? - 1966



*Sr. Benignus*  
Principal 1966 -1980



*Sr. Pauline*  
Principal 1980 - 1986



*Sr. Joan*  
Principal 1986 - 2006

# Vice Principals



*Kitty McGonagle*  
Vice Principal 1972 - 1998  
Eureka's first Vice Principal as this position in schools was only created by Dept. of Education in 1972.



*John Broderick*  
Deputy Principal 1998 - present  
Position of Vice Principal has been renamed by Dept. of Education.



# Eureka Teaching Staff

The following are the sisters who taught in Eureka, many of whom dedicated their entire teaching lives to the development of the secondary school.

Sr. M. Ignatius Murphy (R.I.P.)  
 Sr. M. Evangelist Cooney (R.I.P.)  
 Sr. M. Benignus Kelly  
 Sr. M. Gertrude Monahan  
 Sr. Eileen Mulvihill (Formerly known as Sr. Patrick)  
 Sr. M. Philomena Browne (R.I.P.)  
 Sr. Brendan Kenny  
 Sr. Pauline McDermott (Formerly known as Sr. Aquinas)

Sr. Columba Gildea  
 Sr. Francis Mennis  
 Sr. Ann Marie O'Brien  
 Sr. Cecelia Smith  
 Sr. Assumpta Wallace  
 Sr. Bonaventure Brennan  
 Sr. Mary Clavin  
 Sr. Joan Dunne

The following are the teachers who contributed to the development of Eureka over the last 50 years. (Those marked with an asterisk are currently (2006) on the staff).

## 1950's & 1960's

Mrs. Casey (nee Conway) (R.I.P.)  
 Miss. Fingeleton  
 Miss. Donovan  
 Miss. T. Davis  
 Miss. Elizabeth O'Hall  
 Miss. Celine Nolan  
 Miss. Keating  
 Julia Kirby  
 Frances Tully  
 Mary Doorley  
 Thelma Doran  
 Patricia Kavanagh  
 Margaret Daly (R.I.P.)  
 Ann Marie Howley  
 Philomena O'Boyle  
 Marie Burke  
 Miss Thornton  
 Ann Leonard  
 \*Leonard Noone  
 Kitty Mc Gonagle  
 Brian O'Brien  
 Frank Mannion (R.I.P.)  
 Pat McCaffrey

## 1970's

\*John Broderick  
 Michael O'Brien  
 Roisin Gallagher  
 \*Paddy Keogan  
 Val Mulvany  
 \*Maria Burke  
 Joan Mulvany (nee Clarke)  
 Christine Usher  
 Marie Therese Lacy  
 Dorothy Leslie  
 Maureen Dolan  
 Irene Driver  
 Kitty Monaghan  
 Dell Connelly  
 Marie Cunningham  
 Maura Mc Entee  
 Raymond Mc Hugh  
 Theresa Hereward  
 \*Mary Broderick  
 Mary Ryan  
 Helen McNerney  
 \*Michael Donagh  
 Angela Creamer  
 Liam McNiffe

## 1980's

\*Pauline Grenhan  
 \*Mary Bird  
 \*Seamus Yore  
 \*Mary McNiffe  
 \*Geraldyn Corcoran  
 \*Barbara Carolan (nee Nolan)  
 Brid Ní hAnracháin  
 \*Irene Yore (nee O'Brien)  
 \*Loreto Reilly  
 Cathriona O'Reilly (nee Keaney)  
 George Goulding  
 \*John Daly  
 \*Norann Daly  
 \*Agnes Dillon (nee McMahon)  
 \*Paula Lyne  
 \*Elaine O'Shea (nee McDonnell)  
 Ann Hugh  
 \*Catherine Gilsenan  
 \*Christine Foley (nee Usher)

## 1990's

\*Dolores Smith  
 \*Mary Jordan  
 \*Maura Keogan  
 \*Anne Marie Murphy  
 \*Eileen Barry  
 \*Paula Smith  
 \*Leo Murphy  
 \*Margeret Shields  
 \*Roisin Mallen  
 \*Mary Byrne  
 \*Kevin Mallen  
 \*Pat Farrell  
 \*Mary Mullaghy  
 \*Nessa O'Sullivan  
 Aine O'Grady  
 \*Mary McCann  
 Kathleen Gilsenan  
 \*Bernadette Corcoran  
 Therese Ruane  
 Muriel Kinsella  
 \*Clare Conaty (nee Clerkin)  
 Valerie O'Connell  
 \*Clair O'Donoghue  
 \*Aisling McGuinness  
 \*Anne Marie Murtagh  
 Noreen Buckley  
 \*Kathleen Naughton  
 Bernadette Meehan  
 Sharon Hughes

## 2000's

\*Aideen Mimnagh  
 Francis O'Toole  
 Sinead Browne  
 \*Jean Kenny  
 \*Claire Smith  
 \*Edel Langan  
 \*Cait Diver  
 \*Theresa McKenna  
 \*Siobhan Keane  
 \*Moirá Swinburne  
 \*Fiona Daly  
 \*Sandra Shelley  
 \*Lynn Byrne  
 \*Orla Shields  
 \*Caroline Shalvey



**1980: Teaching staff (l to r) Back Row:** P. Keogan, L. Noone, T. Herward, V. Mulvany, M. Donagh, R. McHugh, L. McNiffe. **Row 2:** D. Connelly, M. Cunningham, J. Mulvany, M.T. Lacey, M. Broderick, M. McEntee. **Row 3:** Sr. Cecelia, M. Burke, M. Ryan, M. Broderick, A. Duffy, Sr. Columba, I. Driver, A. Creamer, Sr. Eileen Mulvihill. **Front Row:** Sr. Assumpta, Sr. Evangelist, A. Leonard, Sr. Benignus, K. McGonagle, Sr. Pauline, Sr. Gertrude.



*The sisters in the back row were all pupils of the sisters in the front row. (l to r) Back Row: Sr. Elizabeth, Sr. Clare, Sr. Maria, Sr. Genevieve. Front Row: Sr. Evangelist, Sr. Gertrude, Sr. Benignus.*



### **Sr. Gertrude**

Taught French, English, Maths, History, Geography and Choir. Sr. Gertrude retired in 1982 after a lifelong commitment of 40 years teaching.



### **Sr. Columba**

Started teaching typing in Eureka in 1970 and very soon developed a Secretarial Course for students with the assistance of Ms. Maphe Broderick (RIP) who taught shorthand. Sr. Columba also undertook the role of school secretary in a voluntary capacity until the mid '80s.



### **Sr. Eileen**

Taught Home Economics, Irish and Religion and later graduated as the school's first Career Guidance counsellor. Sr. Eileen retired from teaching in 1991 after a career spanning 32 years of work with students.





*1994: Teaching staff (l to r) Back Row: M. Donagh, K. Mallen, S. Yore, J. Daly, L. Murphy, P. Farrell, L. Noone, L. McNiffe, P. Keogan. Row 2: V. Mulvany, M. Mullaghy, A. Moore, J. Mulvany, N. Gangley, E. Barry, D. Smith, E. O'Shea, M. Shields. Row 3: P. Lyne, A. Duffy, M. Keoghlan, B. Carolan, N. O'Sullivan, C. Gilsenan, M. Greaghty, P. Smith. Row 4: Sr. Francis, Sr. Pauline, A. M. Murphy, K. McGonagle. Row 5: A. O'Grady, P. Grehnam, K. Monaghan, J. Reilly, G. Harte, C. Foley, M. Burke, R. Mallen. Front Row: M. McNiffe, M. Bird, Sr. Columba, Sr. Joan, G. Corcoran, A. Savage, M. Byrne, I. Yore, Sr. Benignus.*



*Past pupils who are now on the teaching staff. (l to r) Catherine Gilsenan, Agnes Dillon, Christine Foley, Paula Smith, Orla Shields.*



*Sr. Pauline making a presentation to Mr. Terry Murphy in the Headfort Arms Hotel on the occasion of his retirement. Mr. Murphy spent 21 years looking after the buildings and the grounds of Eureka.*



2006: The entire staff of Eureka. (l to r) Back Row: Jean Kenny, John Daly, Leonard Noone, Michael Donagh, Kevin Mallen, Paddy Keogan, Pat Farrell, Seamus Yore, Fr. Patrick Donnelly (Chaplain), Pat Byrne, Regina Convrey. Row 2: Mary Bird, John Broderick, Leo Murphy, Theresa McKenna, Gabrielle Harte, Noranne Ganley, Ann Duffy, Mary Jordan, Pauline Grenham, Sean Bowler, Rosaleen Allen, Sandra Shelley, Roisin Mallen, Irene Mulvany. Row 3: Siobhan Keane, Aisling McGuinness, Jennifer Reilly, Caroline Shalvey, Clare Conaty, Aileen Mimmagh, Kathleen Naughton, Ann Marie Murtagh, Mary McNiffe, Agnes Dillon, Barbara Carolan, Margaret Shields, Orla Shields, Maura Keogan, Eileen Barry, Susannah Dunne. Row 4: Aoife Fitzpatrick, Margaret O'Murchu, Mary Mullaghy, Ann Marie Murphy, Paula Lyne, Dolores Smith, Mary McCann, Nessa O'Sullivan, Fiona Daly, Paula Smith, Irene Yore, Moira Swinburne, Lynne Byrne, Maria Burke, Clare Smith, May Rogers. Front Row: Christine Foley, Anna Rathbone, Rita Wilson, Carmel Wright, Antoinette Keegan, Sr Joan Dunne, Catherine Gilsenan, GERALYN Corcoran, Bernadette Corcoran, Mary Byrne. Not included Mary Broderick, Elaine O'Shea, Cait Diver.



Philip Kane was caretaker of Eureka from 1986 until his retirement in 1999. Philip and his wife, Kate, looked after the canteen for many years providing lunch for the students in Eureka.



Mrs. Maggie Black and her team who looked after the school for many years. Back: (l to r) Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Arkins, Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Black, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Devine, Mrs. Insley, Mrs. Power, Mrs. Rogers.



# International Teaching Links

## The European Connections



On a number of occasions from the 1970s to the 1990s students in Eureka have had opportunities to develop their language skills with native speakers in addition to being given an insight into the culture of other countries. These opportunities have arisen through both Teacher Exchange Programmes and Assistant Teacher Programmes.

The first teacher exchange was in 1974 when Ms. Róisín Gallagher took the initiative and spent the second school term teaching in France. In her place Eureka welcomed Helene Armand from Uzerche. Helene very quickly integrated into Eureka and has maintained contact with a number of staff members over the years. Helene plans to join us for the 50th Anniversary and we offer her a 'Céad Míle Fáilte'.

In 1983 a French university student, Françoise Graiani from Lyons, and a German university student, Angelika Wholfe from Bielefeld joined the staff as Assistant Teachers for the academic year. (see below for a past pupil's memories).

From January to Easter 1990 Ms. Mary Broderick participated in a Teacher Exchange and Eureka welcomed the contribution of Frenchman Claude Le Gall from Carhaix, Brittany.

In the school year 1991/1992 students were given the opportunity to improve their German pronunciation when Thorsten Seifert from Dortmund joined the staff as Assistant Teacher. The following year it was the turn of the French department again when Flore d'Hallwin spent her Assistant Teacher year trying to perfect the students' accents.

## Memories of German with Angelika

My trip down memory lane takes me back to a time in 5th year, when a young German student, Angelika Wholfe, came to Eureka for a year. She was a very pleasant person - enthusiastic and friendly with a bubbly personality - probably no more than 20 or 21 years old and in reality not much older than we, 5th years were at that time. She was from northern Germany, studying in University there and had taken a year out to come here and improve her English. All the girls loved her class - mainly because of its informality. There was a nice, relaxed atmosphere and plenty of conversation (in German of course!!) She told us all about Germany and her family. She gave us fun things to do, taught us German popsongs - most notably Nena's "Neunundneunzig LuftBallon". We read newspapers, girls' magazines and listened to radio broadcasts. And when she visited the south east of the country at Easter, she even sent us all lovely postcards. Our last week as 5th years in May 1984 was tinged with sadness, as we knew that we would soon have to say our goodbyes. Angelika took our class on a picnic out by the river in Headfort and we spent a lovely afternoon there. Afterwards she kindly left me home in her left-hand drive car which was an experience in itself! We all promised to write and we did exchange the odd card for a time but soon memories began to fade and we returned to reality as "The Leaving" loomed ahead. Nevertheless, I don't think that I can ever forget Angelika or indeed my German teacher - Mrs. Mulvany. They both instilled in me a love of the German language which still remains and one, which I too endeavour to pass on to my own pupils everyday.

Carmel Duffy (1979 - 1985)



Angelika Wholfe from Germany, taught in Eureka in 1984 with 5th year student Carmel Duffy.

# Parents Association and Board of Management

## The African Connection

In February/March 1988 Eureka participated in the African Teachers Programme organised through Interculture Ireland. The school hosted Mr. Jim Dinsey from Ghana in West Africa. Jim taught in a number of classes from First Year to Leaving Cert. level linking with the History, Geography and Religion departments.

During these classes he gave the students an insight into the history and geography of Ghana, traditional religions and Christianity, traditional culture, music and dance, plus life in Ghana in the 1980's .

The programme provided the students with a unique opportunity of hearing about Africa generally and Ghana in particular, from an African perspective. It opened the students' minds to the richness and difficulties of cultural diversity, to the realisation that not all African countries were "so poor", that there was real hope for development.

Many students expressed amazement at how "modern" Ghana was, the number of tribal languages spoken, and the pride people had in their own customs, culture, and traditions. The students really enjoyed the dances they were taught. Controversial issues raised included the status of women, human rights, and the need for understanding and sensitivity around cultural difference, and facing the existence of racial discrimination in Ireland.

Maria Burke



*Jim Dinsey came to Ireland as part of an intercultural exchange programme. He was a teacher from Ghana, Africa and taught in Eureka in 1988.*

Eureka Secondary School has been supported through the years by a strong Parents' Association. This support has taken many forms, through fund-raising, provision of talks for parents, helping out with various school events such as the Leaving Cert. Graduation and Open Day, and many other ways too numerous to mention. Most recent highlights include the Celtic Tenors Concert, held in the Parish Church in 2003, and this year the association undertook to host the Thousandaire. This was the biggest fundraising event ever undertaken in the school, and the council raised a massive 40,000 euro (approx.) which will be spent on school equipment to enhance teaching and learning in the school.

We thank most sincerely all those dedicated parents who have served on the Parents Association over the years and have helped to make the school a success.

We thank also all those who have served on the Board of Management since 1991, and have so generously given of their time and expertise in order to serve the school.



# Past Pupils and the Religious Life

The following are past pupils of the secondary school, all of whom joined the Mercy Congregation in Kells.

Sr. Enda Gibney	Primary teacher & Principal
Sr. Brigid Clarke	Primary teacher (RIP)
Sr. Angela Reilly	Primary teacher
Sr. Bernard Daly	Primary teacher Kells & USA
Sr. Bonaventure Brennan	Taught at Primary & Secondary Level (USA & Kells) Now in Prayer Ministry. She was elected Mother General of Meath Mercy in 1975.
Sr. Maria Manning	Primary teacher & Principal. Now doing Pastoral work in Lurgan.
Sr. Freda Farrelly	Primary teacher Kells & Rochfordbridge
Sr. Genevieve Keogh	Primary teacher Kells - now on Pastoral Work Kells.
Sr. Claire Nugent	Primary teacher Kells & USA. Now organist in Kells.
Sr. Elizabeth Farrelly	Primary teacher Kells

Past pupils of the secondary school also entered in other Mercy Congregations or other Orders;

Annette McKenna	French Sister of Charity
Anna Smith	Mercy, Ballinamore
Maureen Lynch	Holy Faith, Dublin
Peggy Flanagan	Poor Servants of the Mother of God.
Rosie and Anne Fitzsimons	Poor Servants of the Mother of God. Rosie taught in Ireland and England and is now retired but still helping out at Prayer Ministry. Anne works in Venezuela (S.America) among the poorest of the poor.
Mary Nugent	Columban Sisters. Spending her missionary life in Korea where her brother Fr. Walter ministered until he became ill.
Pauline and Betty Nugent	Entered in Ireland with an order who minister in USA. Pauline Ph.D. taught at secondary level for some time but some years ago was appointed Associate Professor of Modern & Classical Languages. Betty teaches in a Primary School.
Helen Smith	Mercy, Athy. Now doing Pastoral work in Clondalkin
Betty Carey	Mercy Sister, Athy
May Dolan	La Sainte Union. Teacher - England & Ireland
Rosemary and Pauline Madden	La Sainte Union: Rosemary is a teacher and Pauline a nurse
Cathy Doran	Mercy, Rochfordbridge - Teacher
Elizabeth Gargan	Mercy, Rochfordbridge & Tullamore - Teacher
Terry Rogers	Mercy Navan, now in Zambia.

# Catherine's Legacy

by Kitty McGonagle

The ten short years of Catherine McAuley's religious life were but a seeding time; it was only after her death that the full fruitfulness of her life began to show itself. Catherine was a busy woman! She would have been at home in the twenty-first century of busyness and high activity. She was able to hold many roles at once and give each its due attention. What was said of her shortly after her death could be said of many faithful men and women: "She was convinced that almighty God required her to make some lasting efforts for the relief of the suffering and the instruction of the ignorant".<sup>1</sup> Her response was to found the Order of The Sisters of Mercy, though she was faced with obstacle after obstacle in the path to embodying her dream of relief for the poor.

The three Sisters of Mercy who made the journey to Kells from Tullamore, by sidecar in 1844 are examples of the fruitfulness of Catherine's life. They commenced a house of the Congregation, which was to bring Catherine's dream to fruition in yet another location. There is much written about the spread of the work of the Sisters of Mercy worldwide. We are concerned here with the establishment of Secondary Education in Kells through the vision, dedication, and sheer hard work of the women who continued the work started by these three.

As is documented in Bonaventure Brennan's book 'It commenced with two...' the Kells foundation owed its origin to the generosity of a local woman, whose concern for the poor of the town led her to bequeath her property for, 'the education and clothing of the poor children of the town and parish of Kells'. Her name was Catherine Dempsey.<sup>2</sup> Her bequest financed the building of two primary schools in 1840. The schools were initially run by lay teachers until the girls' school was taken over in 1844 by the Sisters of Mercy, and the boys' school in 1845 by the Christian Brothers.

In the tradition of Catherine McAuley the Sisters continued to open their eyes and ears to the needs of the community in which they found themselves. The need for the provision of secondary education, particularly for the children of the less well off became more and more apparent as time went by, and in 1924 the Sisters started a secondary school in the Convent. Inevitably with the passing of the years, more space was needed and in 1956 through the foresight of Monsignor Richard McCullen, the then Parish Priest, Eureka House became the location for the new secondary school. This year - 2006 - pupils and staff joyfully and proudly celebrate the achievements, successes and triumphs of the past fifty years.

My appointment to the post of Home Economics teacher in Eureka was almost an accident. The year the Marriage Ban was lifted I answered an advertisement for the post. My application was late. Sr. Benignus wrote that the vacancy had been filled. However in late August, I was notified - by telegram - that the post was again vacant if I was still available. I was, I went to see "the nuns" next day and so began a very important and rewarding slice of my life.

I found myself amongst a dedicated group of teachers - religious and lay - who enthusiastically embraced the aims of the Mission statement - "to provide the highest quality education possible to meet the needs of all, to offer opportunities equally to all its students, to support partnership with parents, employers, schools, local community and pupils' parishes. Staff - acknowledged as the school's most valued resource - are supported and encouraged in their work in every way, creating an environment and ethos that promotes Christian values, mutual respect and responsible citizenship."

The late sixties and the seventies saw exciting developments in the area of secondary education, not the least of which was the introduction of free education. One can only imagine how Catherine McAuley would have welcomed such a phenomenon in her time when, in the interest of her educational efforts, she travelled to France in 1825 to study the educational system among the slum dwellers of that country. She also made close observations of the well-established Kildare Place Schools in Dublin, whose educational standards were excellent, even though she could not agree with their proselytizing techniques, which were offensive to Catholic families.

She would have been proud of her successors in Kells who grasped and continue to utilise every opportunity to keep pace with, and develop each new initiative. One thinks of Career Guidance and Counselling, Remedial classes, Transition Year, LCVP, LCAP, special Small Group work with Leaving Cert. Religion classes, the introduction of Typing and IT and the constant upgrading of facilities for practical subjects, e.g. Science and Technology, Home Economics and Physical Education, Music and Art. In the area of extra-curricular activity the choices are challenging and rewarding - competitive and non-competitive Football, Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, and Tennis, Debates, Public Speaking, Choir, Drama, Foreign Travel - the list is endless. Parents, visitors and school personnel are constantly gratified and appreciative of the ever-increasing collection of trophies on display in the school.

I look back on my thirty years as a member of the staff in Eureka with pleasure and a huge sense of privilege. I think of the efforts and achievements, joys and frustrations of the girls who passed through the school, and I am proud when I receive invitations to attend reunions after ten, twenty years or more! I treasure the memory of generous and supportive colleagues, many of whom I continue to count amongst my friends.

I am proud to have been associated with the legacy of Catherine McAuley and the three Sisters who brought her message to Kells. I am especially grateful to another three Sisters of Mercy - Sister Benignus, Sister Pauline and Sister Joan who as Principals, challenged, supported and enriched my contribution to the life of the school. Their patience, guidance and wisdom enfolded anew one of Catherine's first sayings:

**"We have one solid comfort  
amidst this little tripping about,  
our hearts can always be  
in the same place,  
centred in God,  
for whom alone,  
we go forward  
or stay back"**

Catherine McAuley

<sup>1</sup>Angela Bolster, Catherine McAuley in Her Own Words p. 31

<sup>2</sup>Bonaventure Brennan RSM, It commenced with two...p. 140



# Curriculum Development

The Sisters of Mercy in Eureka Secondary School were women of great vision and were always looking and planning forward so as to provide the best possible opportunities for all their students. The first move was to set up the secondary school in 1924, so that the girls of Kells and the surrounding areas would have access to secondary education. In 1956 the school moved to Eureka House, so that there would be more space and extra subjects could be introduced. In 1968 the first Spanish teacher, Mr. Leonard Noone, began teaching. Sr. Benignus introduced Higher-level Mathematics in the late 60's at a time when many girls' schools did not offer Maths at this level. The first Science laboratory was built in 1972. Prior to that girls who wished to study Science went for classes to the Christian Brothers School. German was introduced into the curriculum in 1970. In the early 80's, Physics became part of the Leaving Cert. curriculum.

The 1980's was a time of high unemployment, and little investment in education from the Government. So when, with EU grants, the government introduced the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme, or VPTP, in 1984, Sr. Pauline, the Principal at that time, introduced it into the school to cater for students who did not have a Leaving Cert. or were not sufficiently qualified to find employment. Mr. John Daly was the coordinator and teacher. This year we were proud to accept one of the past pupils of this programme, Mr. Paul Carey, as a Higher Diploma in Education student teacher in the school.

In 1984 also the Health Education Programme was developed, and Miss. Pauline Grenham was the first coordinator. At that time, with the help of other interested teachers, Pauline developed the programme from scratch. The Department of Education has now seen the value of this programme, and has introduced the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme into all schools. In 1994 the Transition Year was introduced, as an option for those who had completed Junior Cert., and later on the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. In this way the school attempted to fulfil its aims of providing the best possible education for students of all abilities and talents.

In recent years, other subjects have found their way into the curriculum. Japanese was introduced into the TY programme. The Art department has built up and we now have two full-time Art teachers. The music department, begun by Sr. Gertrude long ago, has gone from strength to strength, and the numbers of students taking this subject to Leaving Cert. level has increased enormously. With two music rooms in operation for most of the day, Eureka House echoes to the sound of music all day long! The PE department has also developed since Miss. Usher first took over as PE teacher, in the early Seventies, and now all classes have a double PE class each week, with many lunch-time and extra curricular activities, athletics and games. The annual Sports Day remains one of the highlights of the school year.



# Responding to Students' Needs

In Eureka there was always a concern for students who were not suited to the academic curriculum. Until relatively recently, there was little provision for these students in secondary schools. Nowadays the DES provides learning support teachers, resource teachers and special needs assistants. In the mid 1970's, in an effort to cater for students with special needs, a number of first year girls in 'Eureka' expressed a wish to join a small group of pupils who were finding the changeover from Primary to Secondary level difficult. Twelve students joined the class on the first day and three others the following week. We had the use of two large adjoining classrooms with a partition between them.

Initially the curriculum was developed on a 'needs-based' basis. The class learned local Geography, and History, including the history of Meath, its towns and historic events, linking the two subjects as far as possible. We visited some of these places, bringing a picnic. Maths was on the curriculum, and put into practice when the pupils were sent to a local shop to practice their skills of adding and subtracting. English consisted of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Irish was learned by role-play. On their second year I arranged work experience for the students two days a week in a hotel, hairdresser, shop or factory, and they also had cookery classes. There were weekends away, which the pupils budgeted for themselves. Some got part-time work where they had done their work experience. Nowadays work experience is an accepted element of programmes such as the LCVP, LCAP and TY programmes in schools; Eureka was ahead of its time in this area as in many others.

At the end of three years some of the students gained employment, and some returned to mainstream classes where they successfully completed their Intermediate Certificate examinations.

Sr. Anne Marie O'Brien

# Transition Year 1994/1995

by Therese Smith

## My Experience:

I began Transition Year in September 1994 and began an experience that changed my life altogether. I entered a shy individual and over the course of the year and the activities I took part in I learned life skills that have stayed with me to this day. I developed as an individual outside the parameters of academia. I experienced modules and extra curricular activities that I would not have had the opportunity to experience in school. It was much more than just another year of school. I learned the skill of working in a group, shared experiences, formed life long friends and gained confidence in myself and took the time to realise my strengths and weaknesses. It made the transition between the Junior Cert. and the Leaving Cert. very smooth and I felt I was much more able to deal with the pressures of the Leaving Cert. after the year. My two most memorable experiences were the Gaisce Award and our trip away to Co. Clare and Kerry as outlined below. Most importantly I had a fun filled year of adventure after adventure.

## Gaisce - The President's Award

A group of us took part in this national "personal challenge award" over a period of 6 months during the academic year 94/95. One of the four challenge areas of the award was to complete an adventure activity. We organised a hiking weekend away in the spring of 1995. Our group of four organised to walk from Kells to Castleblaney. The journey covered a distance of approximately 65 km and took many hours of laughs and blisters. In the planning stages of the adventure we prepared our itinerary of what to bring, route plan and timetable of events.

We began walking from Kells early morning and walked at our leisure taking breaks along the way. Around the half way mark we stopped in Dun Na Ri National Park, Kingscourt for our lunch. We prepared our lunch using our camping stove and camping implements.

After a nice feed and rest we continued on our way to Castleblaney. On arriving there we checked ourselves into the hostel, which we had pre-booked. We settled into our four bed dorm before a few evening activities. We had a swim in the lake, took in the local surrounds and cooked our evening meal. The next day we returned home. It was a fantastic experience of working as a group, developing organisational skills, taking responsibilities, getting fit and having lots and lots of fun.

## Transition Year Trip to Co. Clare and Co. Kerry

As part of our geographical, Irish and outdoor adventure modules of TY we went on a trip for a few days to The Cliffs of Moher, The Burren and to the Gaeltacht in Kerry. Here we were divided into two groups and each group stayed with the Bean an Ti, spoke Irish and went to Ceilis where we danced to our hearts content.

# Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCAP)

In 1997 Eureka introduced the Leaving Cert. Applied Programme just one year after it was first initiated by the Dept. of Education. Eureka has always prided itself on providing education on a broad spectrum basis to meet the needs of all its pupils. We recognized from the start that this new programme would provide an alternative and possibly better option for students that were not being adequately served by existing programmes. Our experience since 1997 has proved us right in this respect. Some one hundred and fifty pupils have taken the programme since its commencement, the vast majority of these have found it to have been a good choice for them and have used it successfully to achieve both personal and employment related goals. I am still in contact with quite a few of the pupils from the earlier years of the programme. Many of them specifically attribute their subsequent progress to their experience in LCAP.

Ann Duffy, LCAP Co-ordinator 1996 - 2005

Leaving Certificate Applied Graduation. Eureka's first Leaving Certificate Applied students at their Graduation Ceremony (1999) in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin. Pictured being presented with their certificates by Minister for Education, Dr. Michael Woods, T.D and a member of the NCCA.



1999: Shauna McCaffrey.



1999: Michelle Masterson.



1999: Sandra Rennicks.



# LCAP experiences

We were delighted to be given the choice to take part in the first LCAP class in Eureka. The fact that the course involved more practical work than actual studying made it the best choice for us.

It was a great experience as we got to work together as a team throughout the two years, which a lot of us had never done before. Most of the tasks undertaken were team efforts.

For example, one of our tasks was to start our own business. As it was around Christmas time, we chose to make Christmas Logs which we could sell at the Parent/Teacher meeting in the school before the holidays. One of the girls in the class had a car so she was nominated to do the transportation of the logs. Another of the girls knew a guy in Carnaross who would sell the logs to us. We all brought in Christmas decorations from home to cut down on the expense of making the logs. Everyone had their own jobs to do to complete the task. Collecting the logs involved a lot of work during school which meant missing some time from class, which we didn't mind - We were VERY dedicated to our business!! We then spent a lot of time in the caretaker's shed at the school drilling holes in the logs for the candles. (Thanks Philip and Tom!) When it came to the decorating of the logs we had a great laugh. I think we were all better decorated with glitter and snow spray than the logs were! The finished products went down very well at the Parent/Teacher meeting and we made lots of money for our first business (ad)venture! The money raised was spent on one of our main subjects, Community Care. We organised a swimming gala for St. Mary's Special School in Navan, we held a Christmas Party for the elderly in our local Day Care Centre and we also held a Christmas Party for one of our local playgroups in our classroom.

Another memory of LCAP was our trip to Achill Island. As part of our Physical Education Class, Mrs. Foley, Mr. Farrell and Ms. McCann brought us away for a weekend where we had to take part in Absailing, Hill Walking, Orienteering and Kayaking to name a few. The kayaking was by far the most memorable (who would miss an opportunity to see Mr. Farrell in a wet suit!!) I'm sure all the girls will agree that this was the funniest trip ever! All I can say is that the teachers must be blessed with patience - If they survived that trip, anyone can!

Claire Dolan, Sandra Rennicks & Shauna McCaffrey -  
LCAP 1997 - 1999

I did the Leaving Cert. Applied course in 1998/2000. They were the best two years I had in Eureka. There was lots of fun, except of course when assignments were due. What I remember most is the work experience. Ger Campbell, Aisling Farrelly and I chose to do our work experience in Navan Hospital. There we learned that nursing maybe wasn't for us. We were asked to empty a commode and I pulled so hard on it that it spilled everywhere. When the girls told the teacher she had to leave the class from the laughing. In the end we got our Leaving Cert. and were delighted with ourselves.

Lorraine Reilly

# The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

The LCVP was introduced on a pilot basis in Eureka in 1994. Its introduction was in response to the challenge placed on the education system by a changing work and business environment. Two years later it became part of the established curriculum. Its relevance and popularity is reflected in the numbers of students who decide to participate in the programme each year.

The programme combines the academic strengths of the Leaving Certificate with a new focus on self-directed learning, enterprise, work and the community. The primary goal is to prepare young people for adult life.

## Views of LCVP students

"LCVP is a good stepping stone into the world of work. It has helped me develop new skills".

"The course has given me more knowledge about careers. The work experience helps a lot. The computer classes are great and it is something to add to your curriculum vitae. LC.V.P. is very helpful for when you leave school. It is a really good course to do".

"The work experience was very beneficial and it is a great introduction to the world of work. There isn't so much pressure on 'the big exam' as most marks are obtained from the portfolio"

"You have an opportunity to do work experience. You learn about local enterprises and how businesses are run. Learning computer skills is great for our future. It's a great course to do."

"It is a very practical course. You learn by doing. You gain computer skills and research skills which will be very useful for college"

# Religious Education

Since its foundation Eureka has placed great importance on the spiritual development and religious education of each student. The Mercy Sisters passed on their strong faith to the girls not just through the teaching of religion in the classroom but also through their Christian lifestyle. In the early days, religion classes were held five days a week. On Saturday mornings time was given for "Child of Mary" meetings. Each Friday in May pupils gathered for a procession around the convent garden. They carried a statue of Our Lady as prayers were said and hymns were sung. At the end of the year pupils took an exam in Christine Doctrine and the Bishop of Meath awarded prizes for the highest achievers in the dioceses. Retreats were held annually for all pupils, but by the 1980s these retreats were held in Dalgan Park for senior students only.

In 1983 an upstairs room in Eureka House was converted into an oratory. This provided a perfect place for quiet prayer for both pupils and staff. In recent years "lunchtime prayer" is held regularly each week in the Oratory. Over the years school Chaplains and religion teachers have used the room for various purposes, including class Masses, meditation and reconciliation services.

The Religious Education team in the school has always encouraged the girls to take up the challenge of Christian living in an active way. The importance of participation in recognised organizations and fund raising activities has continually been promoted. The annual Concern Fast and the Annual Bazaar being two of the most popular. From the early days, pupils were involved in acts of social work as members of the Children of Mary. Many were members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association under the spiritual direction of Sr. Benignus. Other organizations running in the school over the years included Amnesty International and more recently the Threads group. Threads is an active suicide prevention group where senior students lend a listening ear to fellow students of all years.

Every year during Advent each class presents a food hamper to the local St. Vincent de Paul Society and many pupils also participate in the Samaritan's Purse shoe box appeal.

In the 1990s the Faith Friend Programme was started which involved senior Eureka students working with the children in the First Communion classes in the local primary schools, sharing faith stories and fun activities together.

The Leaving Cert. Mass and the Graduation ceremony at the end of the school year has become a popular event. Previously, Leaving Certs. attended a special Mass after which they went to the gym where the fifth year pupils provided them with refreshments and entertainment. Nowadays, Leaving Certs. have a Mass during school time and in the evening they attend a Graduation ceremony with their family and friends.

In the year 2000, the Department of Education introduced Religious Education as a subject for examination in the Junior Certificate. The first group of Eureka students sat this exam in 2004.



1956: Children of Mary. (l to r) Back Row: Molly Farrell, Elizabeth Lynch, Rosemary Daly. Front Row: Helen Daly, Kathleen Flanagan.



1981: Leaving Cert. end of year party in the gym. Regina Murphy, Margaret Reilly, Marie O'Reilly.



1997: Eureka students with their "faith friends" from the First Holy Communion Class in the girls primary school.



# Eureka school library

Eureka School Library is in existence over 30 years when in the early days it was located in the present day Oratory and was under the stewardship of the late Mayphe Broderick. The mid '80s saw the library located to its present location when it became a Post of Responsibility under the direction of Ms. B. Carolan, and with the help of Ms. Gina Allen, Margaret Whelan, Mairead Morris, Alison Condra, Niamh Briody, and Hazel Anderson who were our first student library monitors. 1987 saw the arrival of Ms. Rosaleen Allen who kindly volunteered her services to the library. Opening hours were now extended.

A library development plan was put in place with the help of the late Louise O'Neill (Parent Rep. Board of Management) and the 1990s saw rapid expansion of facilities and stock. In 1994 we established a specific careers library with up to date prospectuses from National and International colleges. 1996 saw the computerization of all library stock and services with the great assistance of Ms. Mary Dalton, Ms. Noleen Fox and Ms. Collette Reilly (nee Gilsenan) we now have full Internet broadband facilities, photocopying facility and a stock of over 7000 including books, DVD's and videos and our opening hours are 10am - 3pm daily.

As well as providing access to information we also hosted a wide variety of authors and guest speakers over the years including Siobhan Parkinson, Marilyn Taylor, Tom Mc Caughran, Margit Cruickshank, Ré O'Laighléis, Colm O'Rourke, Fr. Bobby Gilmore (Refugee Centre) Peter Fallon (poet), we had great assistance from the local community with many local people coming to share their experience and love of reading with us. At the moment (2006) we are hosting a series of career talks including childcare (Ms. Bernie Berrill) journalism / film critic (Mr. Michael Doherty), hairdressing (Ms. Aideen Reilly) hotel and tourism (Ms. Olivia Duff).

Over the year we try to organise some fun lunchtime activities for the students including quizzes, poster competitions, book swap shop, design a bookmark competition, photographic exhibition, Halloween and Christmas book displays, poetry readings. The list is endless and varied from year to year.

Without the support (financial & otherwise) and the encouragement from management and staff and Parents Association and without the invaluable help of all our volunteer student library monitors down the years, Eureka School Library would not be the busy, vibrant, accessible organised facility it is today.



*Siobhan Parkinson, guest speaker in the Eureka library.*



*Margit Cruickshank, guest speaker with Transition Year students.*



*A group of students in the Eureka library.*

Art,  
& Music



## Teaching of art craft and design in Eureka

by Loreto Reilly

In 1984 when Sr. Pauline, then Principal asked me to teach art in Eureka, I was delighted to accept. I was replacing Miss. Ní hAnnracháin, who had taken over from Sr. Evangelist who had taught art to students for many years.

The art room then was what is now the library, and although a bright and spacious room, the equipment was mainly paper, paint and brushes. It wasn't long until my love for ceramics, and a conviction that working with form is essential to developing ones creativity to the full, that bags of clay were added to the materials list. The lack of a kiln in which to fire the students' pots was not going to stand in our way. So, with fire officers then rather thin on the ground, we built a sawdust kiln. This is a very basic but ancient way to fire pottery: all pots are covered in sawdust, covered with sacking and set alight. Next day the sawdust will have burned, leaving a heap of fired pots.

Sr. Pauline seemed somewhat amused and asked were there other ways to do firing. She immediately gave the go ahead to get an electric kiln and potter's wheel for the art room. So for safety reasons the then library on the ground floor became the art room. And so the subject grew with many more students choosing it as an option. Within the subject students were doing drawing, painting, calligraphy, embroidery, puppetry, sculpture and pottery.

In 1986, while I was doing further studies in NCAD, Mr. Goulding took over for the year. Sr. Joan became principal and like Sr. Pauline before was totally supportive to the development of art in the school. One day she came in to the art room and remarked that it was getting a bit cramped for the numbers doing the subject. We talked about ways to extend the room and then she asked me would I like to design an art room. So of course I did! I drew a plan for a large room, with an area for

drawing and another for craft work and also a dark room. Without hesitation, Sr. Joan set about the building of this room, giving Eureka one of the brightest, largest and best equipped art rooms in the country.

As part of the art course, the study of the great artists, both past and living, is necessary. Now this being a visual subject, looking at reproductions of paintings and sculptures in books is a poor substitute for standing in front of the real thing. In order to give some life to this part of the course, Miss. Lyne and myself began to prepare to bring our first art trip in 1989. This entailed months of work making sure that the students would benefit to the maximum. And so we brought the fifth years to Amsterdam to see first hand the work of Van Gogh, Rembrandt and many others. A night at the Concertgebouw was included for the benefit of those students studying music.

We continued to organise a tour almost every year from then onwards, visiting art galleries in cities like Moscow, St. Petersburg, Florence, Rome, Paris, London, Figueras and many others.

Due to the continued growth in numbers choosing art as a subject, it was necessary to bring another teacher to the department, and in 1990 Mrs. Hugh began teaching art part-time. Two years later, the position was made full time, and Miss. O'Sullivan was appointed.

The popularity of art as a subject choice has remained constant. It is good to have the opportunity to learn through doing, to work with head, heart and hands and to develop one's creativity. It has always been a pleasure to teach art in Eureka, to be with students who are eager to learn and who bring with them to the art room their enthusiasm and good humour.

# Colgate sculpture competition successes

In 1998 Colgate ran a sculpture competition using their products packaging. The five of us got to work in Mrs. Reilly's art class on the design and construction of a roller coaster. After weeks of work we took this large and rather fragile piece to Dublin in Mr. Mallen's car, the only staff car then big enough for our masterpiece. We were disappointed not to win a trip to Paris, but we did win a computer for the art room.

The next year, while we were busy in Junior Cert., Mrs. Reilly's Fifth years took up the challenge and five students created a life size footballer, again from discarded Colgate packaging, and again won a computer for the school.

Then came Transition Year. With more time available to us and everyone we knew bringing us Colgate tubes and boxes, we were determined this time to win that trip. This was the millennium year and this provided the theme for the competition. So we came up with the idea of a gigantic solar system, all suspended and revolving around a large transparent sphere, with space ship and astronaut. This kinetic sculpture took centre place in the art room and was in fact so large we couldn't find any way to transport it to Dublin for judging. So the judges came to us. We nervously stole glances through the art room window during this process, but were left in suspense for what seemed an eternity. Then the letter came. Our hard work had paid off. All those nights in the art room with Mrs. Reilly making us tea to keep us going had won us a 6 day trip to Barcelona with our teacher.

We had a great trip, with our own guide to show us the wonders of Gaudi's architecture, the Miro and Picasso museums, and of course a day in Figueras, north of Barcelona where we visited the Dali museum. Then we boarded our flight back to Dublin, all suntanned and with whiter than white smiles!

Lisa Carolan, Louise Smith, Elizabeth Barbour, Deirdre Reynolds, Paula Price.



2000: Winners of the Create with Colgate Competition. (l to r) Back Row: Paula Price, Lisa Carolan, Elizabeth Barbour. Front Row: Louise Smith, Deirdre Reynolds.



Fashion designers and models 2002. (l to r) Michelle Smith, Tanya Smith, Cora Ciechanowicz, Aisling Hugh, Laura Rogers, Amanda Brady, Louise McCaffrey, Margaret Murphy.

# Fashion Shows with a Difference



*Maria Mulvaney's design.*



*Aisling Hugh modelling the Second Prize outfit 2000.*



*Sinead Hugh modelling First Prize design 2000.*

The Transition Year students under the guidance of their Art teacher Ms. O'Sullivan, held a "Recycled Fashion Competition" in Spring 2000 which was open to all students. Their brief was to design an outfit from waste materials. The results were striding and very imaginative. There was a great diversity of materials used.

The competition was held over three days and the overall winning entry was designed by a group of Fifth Year students - Jennifer Quinn, Keira Keenan and Sinead Hugh. Their design was made from newspaper, insulating material, chicken wire, mirrors and CDs and was modelled by Sinead Hugh.

Second Prize went to a very wearable design with great attention to detail by Clare Rogers (Second Year) and made from onion and potato sacks. This piece was modelled brilliantly by Aisling Hugh, also Second year.

Third prize was designed by Maria Mulvaney and made with some aid from Paula Newman and Louise Caulfield and modelled by Clare Hickey, all from Second Year. Their outfit was a wonderful top with separate sleeves knitted from strips of black plastic with an underskirt of curtain lining and a clear plastic overly sprayed silver with buttons made from bottle tops.

Following the success of the Recycled Fashion Show in 2000 and after lots of requests from the Art students Ms. O'Sullivan and her Transition Year students decided to run another larger Recycled Fashion Show as a fundraiser for the "Irish Ovarian Cancer Screening Unit". It was a great success raising €890 for the unit.

Pupils in First, Second and Fifth Year entered over 30 costumes in the design competition. Paper, baling twine, glass, wallpaper, crisp and sweet packets were recycled into fashion outfits. The costumes began life in the Art classes but were often finished at home with participants putting in weeks of work.

Fifth year student Aisling Hugh claimed first prize with her peacock-themed creation which featured woven baling twine. Cora Ciechanowicz came second with a costume incorporating glass, netting and bits of onion bags while third prize winner Amanda Barry created a Gothic outfit out of newspaper and cardboard.



## 1998 Shaws/National Children's Hospital Poster Design Competition



Caitriona Moore Leaving Cert. won first prize in a National Poster Competition run by Shaws in support of the National Children's Hospital in Tallaght. The photograph shows Caitriona at the presentation of prizes with the Director of Shaws and a representative of the National Children's Hospital.

## An Post Education Awards 2004



Margaret Flynn (Fifth Year) was the overall winner at the An Post Education Awards 2004 with her postage stamp design based on stone carvings on the High Cross of Moone, Co. Kildare. Pictured above at a reception in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin at which she received an Apple Ipad and a Galway Crystal Trophy.

## Texaco National Children Art Competition 2005



Clare McFadden (Second Year) won a special merit award in the prestigious Texaco National Children Art Competition in 2005. Clare entered a landscape painting.

## 2005 Meath County Council Logo Competition



Fiona Mc Grath (Fifth Year) Winner of Meath County Council competition (2005) to name and design a logo for the New Arts Centre in Navan. The Centre will now be called 'Solstice'

# Choral Singing

**The tradition of choral singing in Eureka dates back to the reign of Sr. Gertrude. The school's musical archives contain many songs from the Eureka choir repertoire of these early years.**

In more recent years, the tradition of class choirs was firmly established in the early 1980's. Earlier choirs were conducted by Angela Creamer, Irene Driver, Sr. Joan and Geralyn Corcoran. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, Paula Lyne, followed by Gabrielle Harte, took most choirs. Even later Bernadette Corcoran and Sr. Francis joined the choral staff, and Maura Geraghty, who for many years taught piano in Eureka, accompanied many choirs. Each choir consisted of two class groups (usually 50 - 60 pupils per choir). 1st and 2nd years sang two part songs, 3rd years three part songs, and 5th years and Leaving Certs. sang four part songs.

The choirs performed annually at the Department of Education choir exams. Choirs achieving particularly high marks in their exams qualified for The Schools Choral Competition, organised by The Department of Education and sponsored by Telecom Eireann. For several years 3rd year, 5th year, and Leaving Cert. choirs consistently competed in the Leinster finals of the competition.

In 1993 a choir spanning a number of year groups and conducted by Gabrielle Harte came first in the 'three part' section of Dundalk Choral Festival.

The choir exams occurred in early spring and were a cause of much panic and sleepless nights!(not by pupils!!). Each choir had to perform three songs of sufficient difficulty for the standard of exam entered. They also had to do a sight-singing test and answer questions on theory of music. The choir examiner was usually an inspector from the Department of Education or a third level music lecturer. Many examiners were friendly and engaged well with teenagers. Some were aloof and distant. One examiner was actually deaf! When she questioned pupils in theory, the pupils had to shout the answers!

In its hey-day Eureka had eleven to twelve choirs, necessitating one or two days of high blood pressure! Teachers recall trying to "borrow" classes from other teachers to fit in extra classes closer to exam time. Some classes were handed over with glee while others had to be fought for! The sounds of voices all day, every day could be heard in the weeks leading up to the exam. On the day of the exam, it was customary to "delay" the examiner with a cup of tea, after his/her long journey!! As if an extra ten minutes would drastically alter the final outcome! Fancy biscuits were produced, and every effort made to convince the examiner of the exceptional talent which stood in front of him! When the exams were over, a huge collective sigh of relief and elation ensued. Then there was a two week delay before the results arrived with comments attached.

In more recent years, the tradition of choral singing has changed. Many schools have discontinued the tradition of the choir exam due mainly to timetabling restrictions. Also, Telecom Eireann by the late 1990's had ceased sponsorship of the choral competition, which had acted as a spur to choirs to achieve sufficient marks in the exam to qualify for this competition.

Currently Eureka choirs are organised for the September school Mass, the Christmas carol service, the Leaving Cert. graduation, and as a support choir for the annual school musical.

Teachers don't miss the mad panic of the choir exams, but look back with fond memories of the collective effort by pupils and teachers, the dazzling sounds produced when everything went according to plan, and the sense of joy and achievement shared by all when talent, discipline, and hard work were rewarded with the congratulatory letter from Telecom Eireann!



*A Balalaika made by pupil Kerry Moore in 1976 as part of her Leaving Cert. music project.*

# Musical Theatre at Eureka

1989 saw the first of a series of 10 musicals to grace the stage of Eureka gym! The first, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat", starred Karen Murray as Joseph, Anne O'Connor as Pharaoh and Dervla Gibney as the narrator. There was a large supporting cast, all clad in biblical gear, singing and dancing to the catchy rhythms of the Andrew Lloyd Weber musical. Produced by Irene Yore, with choreography by Cáitríona Keaney and music by Paula Lyne, the production team were apparently so scared at the prospect of a public audience for their first foray into musical theatre, that they barely advertised the show! It ran for one night to a half-full gym and the producers were so chuffed that they immediately began to lay plans for the next show.

"Oliver" in 1990 starred Eimear Ennis in the lead role, Anne O'Connor as Fagin, Anne Daly as Nancy, Anne Marie McCormack as the Artful Dodger with a lively support cast. This show was well publicised and played to packed audiences. Following the show's final night, the troupe travelled to the Holy Family school in Cootehill to perform for the students there. This tradition continued for the next few shows.

Next up in 1991, the team tackled "The Sound of Music". Not originally written for stage, the Film had to be adapted and edited. This starred several First Year students in the roles of the Von Trapp children. The role of Maria was played by Mary Lynch and Anne Daly played Captain Von Trapp.

The production team took a break in 1992 and followed in 1993 with Sammy Wilson's 1920s musical comedy "The Boyfriend" starring Louise Clarke as Polly.

Another few years passed before 1997 saw the arrival of "My Fair Lady". Eliza Doolittle was played by Gillian Garvey, Lisa Carolan played Professor Higgins and Caroline Crudden played Doolittle. Sparkling wit, hit musical numbers and very impressive costumes marked this show as one of the most popular and successful to date. This was the first show in which the entire cast was from the newly formed Transition Year class and this practice has continued every year since then.

## Grease - a Look Back

by Fiona Mallen

Grease - what can I say, it was the highlight of what was a wonderful year for most people.

Transition Year and LCAP1 joined up for what would be Eureka's finest production since "My Fair Lady". We never thought that we would actually see the day when it would all come together and we would be in the spotlight on that Stage. There was endless repetition and rehearsals. Often frustration set in. We quite literally couldn't get our act together. But even in those moments great memories were made! A musical is never as simple as it looks; there are so many areas to be organized, from props to costumes to choirs, sound, lighting, advertising and finance. We soaked up every minute of it and the confidence we gained from being given responsibilities was truly

2002 saw Irene Yore and Paula Lyne returning after a five year rest with the hit rock musical "Grease" starring Eimear Gilroy and Alison Brady. For this show the small orchestra was replaced by hiring a rock band! The rock band members proved very popular with the girls!! Ms. Lyne recalls including the mobile phone numbers of the band members on the Concert Programme in an effort to possibly gain more bookings for the band. Unfortunately the only phone calls and texts received were from adoring female fans! This practice was, not surprisingly, discontinued!

The rock style continued the following year in 2003 with a staged version of the cult film "The Blues Brothers" featuring strong musical numbers. The band was enlarged to accommodate (in addition to the usual guitars, bass guitar, drums and keyboard) a trumpet and two clarinets. The lead roles were played to tremendous applause by Aoife McAteer and Linda Kenny. The hilarious storyline transferred well to the stage.

2004 saw a new production team lead the Transition Year class in "The Wiz" - a rock version of The Wizard of Oz. Directed by Gabrielle Harte and Clare Conaty, this show featured very impressive stage sets, strong vocal performances and starred Aoife O'Reilly as Dorothy and Laura Corrigan as theWiz.

Mrs. Harte and Ms. Conaty returned the following year in 2005 with the wild west musical "Calamity Jane", featuring Paula Murray as Calamity, Olivia Devine as Wild Bill Hickock, Cliona Ní Thailtigh as Katie and Rebecca Egan as Danny Gilmartin. With well know favourites such as 'The Black Hills of Dakota' the show had four nights of packed audiences.

This year 2006, Mrs. Yore and Ms. Lyne returned to bring a staged version of the hilarious rock comedy "School of Rock" to Eureka gym starring Sarah Hanney as Dewey Finn and Deirdre O'Reilly as Ms. Mullins. Featuring standard rock songs from the '70s, '80s and '90s the show played to full houses from 2nd - 5th May. It is hoped to continue the annual tradition.

one of those turning points in my life. I remember going through the town in full costume (with mad wigs) trying to sell tickets. It was things like this that gave us a taste for silliness and to this day I don't know how Ms. Lyne and Ms. Yore coped.

When the week of the musical finally came, we were exhausted yet exhilarated. On stage everyone pulled their act together and got into their roles. I got my fame not as a good actor but as Mr. Mallen's look alike. Having the obvious genetic advantages - he being my dad, the curly afro wig sealed the deal. The Musical was a success with great acting, dancing and singing. We had a live band playing for us at each show and a brilliant First Year choir whom we grew very fond of. The musical was a great success and was the highpoint of everyone's year and perhaps their school life. If you don't believe me check the 2003/2004 yearbook and see the amount of references to it! The proof is in the print!





1991: *The Sound Of Music.*



2003: *The Blues Brothers.*



1997: *My Fair Lady.*



2002: *The T-Birds in Grease.*



2002: *The Pink Ladies in Grease.*



2004: *The Wiz.*



2005: *'Calamity Jane' performed by Transition Years.*

# Special Achievements





## Thomas McDonagh Award



Melissa Gibney being presented with the Thomas McDonagh Award by the Minister for Education, Mr. Michéal Martin, T.D. This award is made to the student who receives the highest marks in the three subjects Irish, English and French in the Leaving Certificate nationwide. Melissa was the winner in 1999.

Melissa also received an award from the Association of Teachers of English for achieving the highest marks in English in her Leaving Certificate.

Her teachers were Mrs. M. McNiffe (Irish), Mr. L. McNiffe (English) and Mrs. P. Smith (French).

## Tops in the Leaving Cert.



Deirdre Broderick sat her Leaving Certificate in 2003 and achieved a tremendous result of seven A1s giving her a grand total of 700 points. Deirdre was one of just twenty-nine students in the country to have received the maximum points.

Deirdre is pictured here (centre) with two of her colleagues who also achieved outstanding results, Ruth Usher on left and Aisling McNiffe on right each of whom got 590 points from six subjects in their Leaving Certificate in the same year.

## Young Business Writers Award



Thomasina Olwill, Leaving Certificate student 1999, was runner up in the senior section of the Young Business Writers Awards sponsored by the Bank of Ireland, Irish Times and DCU. Her essay topic was 'The European Union has changed dramatically since the Treaty of Rome'. She was presented with her award by Mr. Tom Kitt, T.D. at a ceremony in DCU.

## Essay wins trip to Toronto

Elizabeth Garvey won first prize in the Meath/Canadian Association Essay competition in 1989. Her essay entitled "Ancient Kells" concentrated on local folklore and history. Elizabeth's award included a two week, all expenses paid holiday in Toronto.

## European Youth Parliament

Students interested in European politics have had the opportunity to explore the workings of the European parliament through competitive workshop sessions held over a number of weekends in Dublin. The sessions of the European Youth Parliament simulate the real thing. Delegates are then selected to represent Ireland at the International Session of the European Youth Parliament. In 1998 Thomasina Quinn was selected as one of ten Irish delegates for the International Session in Vienna while in 2000 Clodagh Coll achieved a similar honour and attended the European Youth Parliament in Athens.

# Biodiversity - Youth 4 Change

Transition Years 2004/05 whose project on Biodiversity won one of three prizes awarded in the Gorta sponsored Youth 4 Change competition.



*Prize Winners 2004/05: Back Row: Gorta Education Officer, Olivia Devine, Ailbhe McGrath, Claragh O'Reilly, Hannah Walker, Samantha Brady, Ms. Mullaghy (Teacher). Front Row: Anna Mullan, Rebecca Egan, Kate Reilly, Emma Kearney, Shauna Mangan, Orlagh Reilly. Absent from photo: Cliodhna Ni Thaitigh, Grainne Sullivan, Tara Casserly. Each student was presented with a certificate and the school received a digital camera and a printer. The group's teacher, Ms. Mullaghy, was presented with a Galway crystal vase.*

# Debating, Public Speaking & Quizzes



There has been great participation in a huge variety of debating, public speaking and quiz competitions over the years leading to many memorable experiences and triumphs for those involved. A selection of these events and memories are recollected here.

# Eureka win All Ireland Title in Concern Debates

1984/85 was the inaugural year of the Concern debates for second level schools. Concern wanted to raise awareness amongst young people of the problems and issues faced by Developing Countries. Eureka decided to get involved.

What followed was a rollercoaster of research and debate. 'Auditions' were held amongst the many interested Fifth Years and a team was selected. It comprised Estella Rogan (capt.) Carol Brunnock, Rosaleen Grant and Fiona Flood and substitute Janet O'Sullivan.

The nationwide competition in its first year attracted an entry of 278 schools. In reaching the All-Ireland final Eureka won through eight rounds beginning in Co. Meath. The team beat Dunshaughlin Community School in the Meath final, went on to defeat F.C.J. Convent, Buncloody, Co. Wexford in the Leinster final and met St. Aidan's Community School, Cootehill, Co. Cavan in the All-Ireland semi-final.

Among the motions debated were:

"Irish politicians don't really care about Third World development as it never was and never will be an election issue";

"The Third World is not our problem";

"The Third World poor are a greater threat to world peace than the arms race".

Final night arrived and the excitement and tension was bubbling amongst the whole school community. The venue was the Mansion House, Dublin and the team was accompanied by three busloads of supporters and almost all the staff from the school. Eureka successfully proposed the motion "The message of famine and poverty as we receive it only serves to shield us from the real business of development" against the opposition of Borrisokane Vocational School, Co. Offaly.

The unanimous verdict for Eureka brought tears of joy and cheers of jubilation from the team members and supporters alike. The win meant the trip of a lifetime for the four teenagers - a three week educational tour primarily to Bangladesh in June to see the work being done by Concern volunteers and also a three day visit to Calcutta, India.

20 years later...At the invitation of Concern the four team members attended the 20th Anniversary National Final in the Helix in May 2005 and had a lovely trip down memory lane!



*1985: Winners of the All Ireland Concern Debating Competition. (l to r) Rosaleen Grant, Estella Rogan (capt), Carol Brunnock, Fiona Flood.*

# Estella Rogan (1981 - 1986) remembers...

Fifth year was my most memorable year in school. I was captain of the school debating team. My team-mates were Fiona Flood, Carol Brunnock and Rosaleen Grant. Teachers Mary Bird and Maria Burke were our team mentors.

It was the first year of the 'Concern Debates' which were set up by Fr. Ciaran Kitching to raise awareness of Third World issues. I hoped to educate myself a little on such matters whilst improving my debating and public speaking skills. However, I could never have anticipated the year that was to follow.

When the team won the first round it was very exciting. It was even more exciting to eventually get through to and win the Meath Final. As the competition progressed, there was a wonderful atmosphere in school. The support which the team received from the teachers and our fellow pupils grew with each round.

My strongest memory is the night of the final in the Mansion House, Dublin in May 1985. The venue itself was imposing. I clearly remember feeling physically ill with nerves before my opening speech but at the same time very excited. Our team proposed the motion:

"That the message of famine and poverty as we received it only serves to shield us from the real business of development".

When I attended the 20th Anniversary National Final in the Helix last May, I was surprised to experience the very same physical symptoms twenty years later.

I cannot describe properly my feelings when we won the final. The prize was an educational trip to Bangladesh and Calcutta to see at first hand the conditions that exist in Third World countries.

We visited Concern camps in Bangladesh and stayed with the volunteers. An extract from my diary at that time reads:  
"Today we went to Mirpur with volunteers Vera, Mary and Kate. It was our first visit to a Concern programme. We set off from Dhaka at approximately 7.00am. En route we picked up some of the Concern workers who work in Mirpur. The Mirpur programme is situated just a few miles from Dhaka...Kate brought us into her clinic where she and her health workers cater for the malnourished children in Mirpur. There, children receive medical care and two wholesome meals of high protein food which includes nuts, wheat, lentils, rice or potatoes. The mothers are shown how to make this nutritious meal. Beside the clinic there is a health centre where health education is given to the mothers of the area. Today's lesson was on ear and eye infection."

On our return to Ireland we were interviewed by Marian Finnucane on radio and appeared on a Saturday morning television programme. We also wrote articles for magazines and were interviewed by the press. All of these experiences were wonderful opportunities for a teenage girl.

Unquestionably, my team mates and I would never have had any of these experiences without the steadfast support of all the teachers of Eureka, in particular Mary Bird, Maria Burke, Barbara Nolan and Sr. Joan, to whom I am and will remain eternally grateful.

Rising to the challenge of Concern debates continued with great interest and enthusiasm and the Team of '86/87 photographed here had tremendous success and were Winners of the Eastern Regional Final.



1987: Eastern Regional Winners. Back Row: Aisling Rogers, Lana Fitzsimons. Front Row: Janice Mulvany, Claire King.



# It's not just about winning!

## Extract from article on Concern Debates by Fodhla McGrane from Student year Book 1989

To many people debates appear boring and of a pointless effort, but for me the work was interesting, inspiring and a great eye-opener. It is incredible, amazing, stupendous, but mostly horrific to comprehend the hard, true facts of the state of our modern world.

While on the stage, under the spotlight, the sensation I felt was... inexplicable! Apart from the fear of tripping on the way to the podium, forgetting my cards or mixing up the Chairperson and the Adjudicator, I also felt satisfaction, knowing that we were letting the world know, without beating around the bush, that we **MUST** do something definite and **NOW!!**

Eureka, our famous school, has a tremendous status in the area of Concern Debates, after its numerous triumphs in past years. Admittedly, our team in 1989 didn't get to the finals but we put up a good showing nonetheless! Our first debate took place in Wilson's Hospital, Multyfarnam. Next we had Dunshaughlin Community College on our heels. Again we slogged and swotted until we reached perfection, according to Miss. Bird! After the rigorous inquisition established by Miss. Burke and Mr. Broderick, we felt ready for anything. On the big night, all our fans crowded into the gym and waited and waited with baited breath for the lectures we had prepared. Much to our dismay we lost the debate. However, the smiles kept shining after the debate, with the prospect of getting Sr. Columba's tea and biscuits! Also, we know after the reassurance that everyone gave us, that we had done our level best and we still feel proud to have represented our school.

The Concern team members were: Mary Kerrigan, Alison Condra, Niamh Briody and Fodhla McGrane



*1984: Winners of the Meath Junior Chamber Debating Competition. (l to r) Lavinia Williams, Siobhan McNamee, Gillian O'Neill, Ann Garrahy.*

# Meath Junior Chamber Debating Competitions

This was a very popular debating competition in the 1980s and Eureka students featured very prominently.



1987: Winners of Meath Junior Chamber Debating Competition. (l to r) Nicole Rourke, Karen Berril, Martina Madden, Orla McCaffrey.



1986: Winner of Meath Junior Chamber Debating Competition. (l to r) Helen Quigley, June Finnegan, Catherine Ball, Carole McInerney.



1986: Semi-finalists of Meath Junior Chamber Debating Competition. (l to r) Laragh McNeece, Aisling Rogers, Lana Fitzsimons, Orla McCaffrey.



1989: Winners of Meath Junior Chamber Debating Competition. (l to r) Back Row: Rosemary McNamee, Sr. Joan, Karen Brady. Front Row: Sheena O'Doherty, Rita Lawless.

# Mental Health Public Speaking



1986: Mental Health Public Speaking Regional winners. Cora Fitzsimons, Sharon Brady, Catherine O'Dowd.



1988: Mental Health Public Speaking Regional winners. Caoimhe Whelan, Paula Flood, Catherine O'Dowd.



1992: Mental Health Public Speaking Regional winners. Jane Murray, Regina Carolan, Róisín Murphy.



Nuala Murtagh.

Every thirteen-year-old has heroes. As a first year student supporting the fifth year debaters, I revelled in every intelligent argument and witty refutation of the team as they progressed to the Mansion House and became All-Ireland Champions. I waited until fifth year and dreamed.

On reaching the "senior cycle", I represented Eureka in the Soroptomist Public Speaking Competition along with three of my colleagues. My first speech was entitled "The Future is in Our Hands, Our Environment, Should We Care?"

Although the competition was for individual speakers, I quickly realised that, in Eureka, preparing for such an event was far from a solitary affair. My co-competitors and I worked together sharing ideas and avoiding overlap; Miss. Burke and Miss. Nolan (Geography teachers) provided frightening facts and multisyllabic terms (one that sticks out is Chloroflourocarbon!) with which to pepper the presentations; Sr. Joan and Mr. Broderick ensured accurate grammar and dramatic vocabulary; Those mentioned and a host of teachers gave us advice on our delivery and several unsuspecting class-groupings had their lessons suspended for 5 - 7 minutes as they became our guinea pig audiences. I arrived to the Sacred Heart Secondary School in Drogheda for the first round of the competition feeling rather nervous but very prepared.

The preparation paid off. I was lucky enough to be chosen to advance to the next stage of the competition to be held in Foxrock, Dublin. This round was more difficult to prepare for. Along with the prepared "Environment" speech, an impromptu talk for a minute or two on an unknown topic was also part of the requirements.

During the following weeks at school several speeches were prepared on possible topics. My General Knowledge was at an all-time high. At home, we played a game where one of us would say a word or topic and another would try to speak coherently for as long as possible on the subject...not as easy as it sounds! My father responded to the topic "Dogs" one day by listing their advantages and then mentioning the dangers consequent to their not being controlled. (There had been a mauling of a child in Tallaght by an Alsatian that week). The audience and adjudicators no doubt thought it a very mature response when I used very similar points to illustrate the topic written on the little white piece of paper at the competition - Pets!



# The Soroptomist Public Speaking Competition 1987 - 1988

Something impressed them anyway because I found myself included in the line-up for the All-Ireland final to be held in Ballina, Co. Mayo.

I tried to settle myself to school life as there was little enough further preparation that could be done. For the class Mass I was to prepare the homily on "Justice". With all the recent practice at speech-writing I wasn't too daunted. My brother Matt gave me a lovely dramatic image to begin with and Fr. Conlon seemed quite happy to listen to a homily for one Mass.

Excitement mounted in the weeks preceding the final. All possible permutations and combinations of impromptu speech topics were explored. The bus was booked. A fresher uniform jumper was borrowed from a friend. The entire school community seemed to know about the final and wished me well. A large group of students, teachers and family made the long bus journey to the West. And I have never felt as nervous - before or since!

The hall was packed. I delivered my prepared speech as well as I could and tried to relax as I listened to the other speeches by girls from all over Ireland. The standard seemed extremely high. I was pleasantly shocked when my name was one of three called for a tie-break impromptu speech. Two of us were escorted out of the room. In an effort at fair play, all three of us would speak on the same topic. We could sit at a table to gather our thoughts for one minute after we saw the title. The speech was to last between ninety seconds and two minutes.

The atmosphere in the room was electric when I returned as speaker number two. I had no idea what had gone before me or what was ahead of me. The audience were asked to remain absolutely silent. I looked at the topic. "If I were Taoiseach..." I started to write furiously in the hot, crowded, tension-filled room acutely aware that very many eyes were watching my every move. After a minute I walked to the podium and began.

"On top of the Custom's House building in Dublin, there stands a statue of an elegant woman holding a balancing scales in her outstretched hand. The scales which she holds is the international symbol for Justice. Ladies and Gentlemen, if I were Taoiseach, my primary concern would be Justice..." I am sure neither of the geographical accuracy of this statement nor of a single other word I uttered but the recycled opening to my class Mass' homily went down a treat. I knew I had connected with the audience and it felt wonderful.

And yes...it's a dream ending too. The adjudicators, we were told, were unanimous. I can still hear the cheering and see the pride, the excitement, the joy and the tears on the supporters' faces. It's an experience I actually find difficult to describe. I smile as I write and feel a warm glow inside...treasured, treasured memories. Echoes of the Mansion House from a different perspective.

The joy didn't end there. Firstly, I was presented with a beautiful perpetual trophy. Secondly, Johanna Moore, (the winner from Northern Ireland) and I were hosted for a weekend in a hotel in Limerick at the conference of Soroptomist International, the Competition's gracious organisers. It was my first hotel break! Finally, the third part of the prize was an all expenses paid trip to Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen. Amazing. For me in 1988, that meant a long list of "firsts". I left Ireland, I flew in an aeroplane, I went on a big rollercoaster, I saw fireworks, I ate Danish pastries and continental ice-creams, I went on a ferry to Sweden and generally saw life from a different angle. I had a ball.

Soroptomist International is an organisation of professional ladies, akin to the Rotary Club, who work for Peace. The concept behind the Public Speaking Competition is to provide an opportunity for self-development among young girls. I don't think I'm being presumptuous in saying that by the time I landed back in Dublin Airport their goal had definitely been achieved once.

And so, Eureka, you were a place where dreams could come true. If this article is to have any purpose, perhaps it may serve as encouragement to those who dream and to those who help the dreamers. To all the teachers (and I must give a particular mention to Sr. Joan for her abiding interest and kindness throughout) let you be assured that your input, however small, does make a difference in whatever area you can. Thank You. To all the students offered opportunities to be involved, grab them with both hands. You just don't know where they'll lead you. To my heroes Fiona, Rosaleen, Carol and Estella, I hope life has treated you well. To my family, and friends thank you for sharing the dream with me!.

Nuala Murtagh-Carton

# Irish activities through the years

In the 1960s and 1970s many students took part in a variety of extra-curricular activities as Gaeilge. They included Feiseanna, Oíche cois tine, Drámaí, Damhsa, Slógadh and Clubanna as Gaeilge. Sr. Pauline was very involved in encouraging this participation.

From the 1980s onwards the options for extra curricular Irish activities nationwide changed. Eureka students now choose from Gael Linn debates, Tráth na gCeist Boird to support Féile na Mí week, Seachtain na Gaeilge activities in the library including damhsa, amhránaíocht, cainteanna agus filíocht. The local branch of Conrádh na Gaeilge sponsors Tráth na gCeist Boird which provides opportunities for interaction between Eureka and Pobalscoil Chiaráin.

## Gael-Linn Debates

What can I say about the Gael-Linn Irish debating competitions?! Without doubt, it has been one of the best experiences I had in my time in Eureka and indeed in my life so far. The anticipation of the competitions, the encouraging words of Mrs. McNiffe, our determination to succeed in the next round, the craic on the bus, the nail-biting atmosphere in the room just before the competition, that heart in the mouth feeling I got just before I took the floor and the adrenalin I felt as I sat back down, and that indescribable feeling I felt when we earned our place in the All-Ireland semi-finals are the fondest memories I have of the Gael-Linn Irish debates and I wouldn't change any of it! Long live the Irish debates!

Sarah Bartley (1997 - 2003)



*All Ireland semi-finalists 2002 Gael Linn Senior Debating Competition. (l to r) Aisling McNiffe, Sarah Bartley, Rachel Harten and their teacher Mrs. Mary McNiffe.*

## Business Studies Straight AAAs Quiz 1995

Tanya Reilly was the winner of Business Studies Straight AAAs Quiz 1995 sponsored by Bank of Ireland.



*Tanya Reilly.*

The House of Lords, Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin was the venue for the senior final of the Straight AAAs competition. It was a nail-biting climax to six months of study and quiz rounds. There were nine contestants in the final and at the end of the normal rounds Tanya was tied with another contestant, Neil Osbourne from Pobail Scoil Iosa, Malahide with 58 out of a possible 60 marks. In a tie-break round of 3 six-mark questions Tanya scored full marks and was then presented with the well deserved winners cheque by Bank of Ireland Area East General Manager Mr. Brian Boggan.

## History Quiz



*1987: Leinster Inter Schools History Quiz. Back Row: Susan Carry, Miriam Reilly. Front Row: Emer Mellett, Lisa Smith.*



*1991: Winning Team in the Meath Inter-Schools History Quiz. Joanne Coughlan, Bridget McCormack, Gillian Brennan, Roisin McCabe, Cora Kerrigan.*

# Brain Power - A Class Act



1965: A group of students, including the team setting off for the Mark Time Quiz in RTÉ Studios. (l to r)  
**Back Row:** \_\_\_\_\_ Reilly, Ann Duffy, Ann Hand, Marie Boylan, Mary Lynch, Chrissie Reilly, Frances Clarke.  
**Row 2:** Kay Soden, \_\_\_\_\_, Mary Nugent, Irene Gilsenen, Rosella Duffy, Mary Gargan, Betty Donnelly.  
**Row 3:** Josephine Clinton, Ann Clarke, Catherine Reilly, Betty Travers, \_\_\_\_\_. **Row 4:** Rita Cummins, Olivia Keane, \_\_\_\_\_, Catherine Heery, Mary Elliott, Brigid Timmons, Mary B. Daly. **Front Row:** Imelda Ward, \_\_\_\_\_, Sheila Farrelly, Mary Hopkins, Ann Donlon.

It is the beginning of 1965 and for me the Leaving Certificate Exam is looming ahead with all its worries and apprehensions. The pressure as bad then as now. My mind is preoccupied with the thought of how to achieve success in this exam - nine subjects and two language orals. Scary thoughts. Life was rather dreary. Then a little light crept into that gloom.

At this particular time there was a quiz programme for secondary schools on R.T.É. television called "Mark Time". My school "Eureka" had applied and we got the news that we had been accepted to participate. This was to happen in February. Oh! What excitement. 1965 in Eureka and many other schools in Ireland did not offer many opportunities for outings or trips away.

Now the fun started. Question time classes between 5th and 6th years commenced. The aim was to find the four contestants who would best represent our school. Eventually the brightest sparks were selected - Mary Elliot, Ann Clarke, Mary Lynch and Chrissie Reilly. Then the decision had to be made as to which classes would travel to R.T.É. to support our team. An anxious few days for my class. Eventually the good news - in spite of the forthcoming exams, the Leaving Cert. class was allowed to travel. Mother Gertrude, Sr. Evangelist and Sr. Benignus spoke to us at length on the importance of portraying the proper image of ourselves and our school to the country.

New blazers had been introduced as part of our uniform the previous year but not for the Leaving Certificate students, so we had to borrow. I remember so well the fun we had at the subsequent fitting sessions. A girl called Geraldine Swarbrigg donated her blazer to me for the event. Then the nuns both surprised and delighted us. We were to be allowed wear sheer tights, high heels and those of us with long hair could "put it up" if we choose. Unbelievable.

The big day arrived and we assembled at school. We admired each other and checked out who had the highest heels - most borrowed from our mothers. One or two of the more daring among us even had a hint of colour to lips and eyes. We thought we were so adult and sophisticated. A photographer was present and we enjoyed an hour of fun and laughter having our pictures taken. It seemed so glamorous. Then we crowded into buses and off we went to Dublin.

Arriving at R.T.É. was for me quite awesome. A huge complex with innumerable staff and extraordinary technology, I had never seen anything like it. Then of course, I saw many people who were part of our everyday life, newsreaders, entertainers etc. As our programme was a live broadcast, it was necessary to have a short rehearsal and to meet our opposition. Drimnagh Castle - a boy's school. What bliss. We were so excited. Our hormones were doing summersaults. But we were to be disappointed. These young men obviously received the same lecture as ourselves. They were shy and very reserved, but nothing could dampen our spirits. We were having a ball.

The recording studio was quite intimidating. Cables covered the floor and cameras and lights seemed to hang from every available space. Floor Managers, Sound Technicians and Camera Men seemed to be everywhere. We were shown to our seats and issued with rules and regulations. "Be natural", "don't look at the cameras" and "clap when told". Then the action commenced. Lights illuminated, cameras whirled and the atmosphere seemed electric. There were even two cameras dedicated to audience reaction.

After a short rehearsal, "Mark Time" got under way with Chris Curran as Question Master. Intellectually both teams were very well matched and as they say in racing terms neck and neck for most of the contest. At the last hurdle we fell, the incorrect answer to a question about the number of thieves with Ali Baba lost us the quiz by a mere two points. In the excitement of the day, our disappointment was short-lived. Following the quiz, we were offered refreshments in the main canteen surrounded by many of the TV. stars of the day. Then we headed back to Eureka and back to our respective homes.

I arrived back in Virginia and started to walk the few hundred yards to my home, "saw you on telly", "saw you on telly", "saw you on telly", was shouted at me several times on my short walk. I was so thrilled and felt so proud.

That night as I lay in bed, after all the excitement, I thought how wonderful it was to be a Leaving Cert. student in "Eureka" in 1965.

Mary McGuinness (nee Hopkins)





Lots of past pupils through the decades will recall the excitement of heading out of school on a bus for a 'school tour', whether it was a day out in Bray or the Japanese Gardens, a geography field trip, a ski expedition or a tour of the art capitals of Europe. The following are a few memories.



1974: First Years School tour to Butlins. Back Row: Margaret \_\_\_\_\_, Frances O'Brien, Maureen Ormiston, Margaret Butler, Mary Bradley, Mary Caffery, Mary Gibney. Middle Row: Martina Tobin, Dolores Gibney, Brianan Fox, Bridie Duffy, \_\_\_\_\_. Front Row: Pauline Garry, Anita Tierney.



1968: School tour to Bray. (l to r) Aileen Logan, Sr. Gertrude, Margaret Murphy, Sr. Benignus, Wendy Fisher.



Miss. Maria Burke with a group of students on tour in the Burren.



# Field Trip to the Burren - 1976

Ann Murtagh

It wasn't just a school outing. It was a rite of passage in Fifth Year in Eureka. Up to now we had gone on school tours. Now we were going on a field trip.

The Burren was an area of study in the physical geography book for our Leaving Cert. and in true Maria Burke style, it was not enough to glean the facts from a textbook. We had to experience the real thing. Arrangements were duly made, money collected, consent forms signed by our parents and we left Kells in high spirits one cold Friday afternoon in October and headed "wesht." The geography class was carved up into groups and assigned to cars. I remember that Mary Connelly, who taught in the primary school, was one of the drivers.

Our first stop en route was to inspect a feature of the landscape that was shaped by retreating glaciers during the ice age. This was on the road between Clonmellon and Delvin. Why I remember it so clearly is that I had passed by this spot thousands of times on my way to my many relations in Westmeath. Even though we had only gone about ten miles into our journey, the learning potential was too strong for Maria Burke to resist and we all tumbled out of the cars and climbed the feature. We made a brief stop in Portumna, in Maria's family home and it was very late when we arrived at our hostel in the Burren. This was an old house at the end of a muddy lane.

The following day we immersed ourselves in that unique and beautiful land of limestone. I discussed the trip recently with Helen Farrell and we both agreed that it was an initiation into a lifelong fascination with the Burren. It was one thing to look at an illustration of a gryke in our geography books, quite another thing to jump over one and experience those limestone pavements extending for miles into a grey blur on the distant horizon. Even though we were seasoned teenagers - maintaining a cool exterior was all-important - I still remember the excitement of exploring the area. Not only did we get to ramble in the Burren and absorb the views along the coast, including the Cliffs of Moher - we also got to visit the Ailwee Cave. If I'm not mistaken, this was shortly before it was open to the public. Access was more restricted than it is today, but it still was an awe-inspiring encounter with stalactites and stalagmites and other calcite formations.



*Miss Burke with a group of students on the annual trip to the Burren.*

Anyone who has visited the Burren will be aware that trees are scarce and the cold Atlantic wind howls unchecked across the rocky surface. I started off the weekend in a smart denim skirt that I had recently acquired, but by Saturday evening, my need to be warm had won over my need to be fashionable and I had put on every stitch of clothes that I had with me. Maria Burke has a slide - filed under 'history' at this stage, I'm sure - of me in my many layers. Back at the youth hostel, we each were assigned duties for preparing and cleaning up after our meal. This made us feel all grown up! After such an active day we hungrily devoured our dinner. Later on we lazed about in the common room. We had a singsong with a group of Aussie students before retiring to bed.

Nowadays teenagers have many opportunities to travel, but back in the seventies our world was much more confined. I would regard this field trip as a pivotal experience in my years in Eureka. My abiding memory of it was that it was hugely enjoyable. A learning experience? Yes, but also tremendous fun.

## A School Trip to Dún na Rí

In the early eighties it was an accepted thing that each class would be brought on a school trip by their Form Teacher. In 1984 Mr. Val Mulvany was Form teacher for a second year class. He suggested a bicycle trip to them, and they were very enthusiastic. On a fine Friday in May, the class, accompanied by Mr. Mulvany, Mrs. Mulvany, and myself set out on their bicycles on a trip to Dún na Rí, fifteen miles away. I wonder what reaction you would get from the pupils if you suggested a trip like that nowadays! In those days, most people owned a bicycle, and the traffic wasn't anything like it is today. Most of the girls were dressed appropriately, but I remember one girl in particular, Maria, who arrived wearing strappy high-heeled shoes. It was very difficult for her to manage the bicycle in them. Just in case of catastrophes, Mrs. Mulvany brought her car with a trailer attached. This came in very handy when bicycles broke down or when someone got tired and needed a lift.

We arrived without any serious mishap in Dun na Rí around lunch time. The day was beautiful, and we all sat along a grassy bank, admiring the primroses and bluebells, listening to the birds, while eating our sandwiches. After the lunch, the girls spent some time exploring the lovely parklands, feeding the ducks, and making a wish at the famous Wishing Well.

Then we set off home. The car and trailer come in very handy at this stage, as the legs had become more tired. However, we all arrived safely home, sunburnt, tired but very happy with our memorable day.

Sr. Joan



1996 School Tour to Italy.

## Viva Italia!

Without a doubt it was the highlight of our 5th year in Eureka. It all began on arrival at Dublin airport at some ungodly hour on a bitterly cold April morning in 1996. There we all were, huddled together for warmth waiting for the teachers to organize our getting through passport control. The adventure was about to begin!

It would be a trip of firsts for many of us - first time on a plane, first time abroad away from the watchful eyes of parents, first time to Italy. Finally, with luggage safely stowed, and everybody strategically seated and belted in, we hurdled down the runway, Milan approaching with every second.

Met at the airport by Miguel and Mario who would be our chauffeurs for the duration of our trip, we were whisked off to the Lake Garda region. It was breath taking! Our accommodation was top class (not a 17 year old in the world could possibly have asked for more!). Instead of being cooped up in a hotel or hostel we found ourselves the happy occupants of a motel on the shores of Lake Garda - with the only other clientele being a group of 17 year old Italian boys! Viva Italia!!

From Garda we visited Florence and Venice. It was a fleeting visit to Florence, enough time to sample the local cuisine - a pizza slice from a street vendor, and then back to Miguel and Mario awaiting aboard our chariots.

Venice was a different experience altogether. We were completely surrounded by water for the duration of our time in Venice - it poured! Disembarking the ferry we ran to the nearest vendor selling plastic ponchos. The first 10 students were in luck. The rest of us were forced to succumb to the elements. Splashing around the Venetian streets our disappointment was deepened with the dawning of reality regarding the gondolas, (it appeared most of us believed them to be a free means of public transport), they of course were out of our modest price range. Like a group of soaking wet dishevelled rats we scurried back to our refuge aboard the buses.

Next stop was Rome. On approaching the Colosseum we had no option but to put all photo shoots on hold as scaffolding surrounded the building. Disappointing as it was it didn't quench the excitement we all felt. Transported to another time, another world, the days of man versus lion, we stood gazing into the depths of history until we were shaken back to reality with the incessant honking of the crazy Italian drivers. Back to the chariots and off to the Trevi Fountain we went. According to legend, a coin tossed over the shoulder into the fountain will guarantee your return to the eternal city. After fishing around in pockets for the smallest coin possible, we all obediently threw them in, made a wish and set off for the spectacular Sistine Chapel.

No one could quite believe the sight before our eyes on entering the building. It was a masterpiece. The quest for each and every one of us was to glimpse the infamous "Creation of Adam". A perilous quest it emerged to be as with all necks strained on the ceiling everybody was oblivious to the few steps that led to the main hall. Tragedy and more importantly, embarrassment was avoided only by the presence of a few very gracious Italian boys who managed to catch the falling girls, return them to their feet...and the quest continued!

The last stop on the tour was a visit to the Vatican City with the highlight being catching a fleeting glimpse of the Pope as he stepped out onto the balcony to greet the onlookers. The main square was scattered with chairs to seat the Easter worshippers and pausing for a few moments to take in the awesome view, we psyched ourselves up for our imminent return to Ireland, Kells and the dreaded return to school!

Orla Shields

# Eureka enjoys Easter in Europe

**Rarely was there anything that could beat the sense of excitement and devilment leading up to both the Summer and Christmas holidays from school. However in 1997 the exhilaration that swept over a large group of fifth year students upon the much awaited arrival of the short but sweet Easter holidays was something out of this world!**

About thirty of the fifth year girls were heading off on a school tour...a tour that didn't involve Dublin Zoo, Kilmainham Gaol or the Enfo Offices in Dublin! We were going on a mini tour of Europe, taking in London, Paris, Verona and Venice and lots in between. For many of us it was the first time to leave our green shores so the rush of adrenaline and the sense of fun were incredible. Loading our bags (many of us having the same luggage from gathered with Super Valu tokens!!) at 5am in the pitch dark outside the gates of Eureka I'd say the loud shrieks of excitement could well have woken half the town! Another group of fifth year girls had gone skiing earlier in the year and we were determined that our trip would be at least as much fun as theirs! We surely were more like a gaggle of wild geese than a group of girls heading off on a cultural tour of Europe and the Teachers coming with us must have been questioning their sanity!

Flying with Ryanair to Stansted, the plane was late and we ran en masse through the airport nearly losing several of our party and gathering up others that didn't belong in the hurry to catch our bus. The whistle stop tour of London took in the main sites of London Bridge and Big Ben and then it was off to Eurostar to take the Channel tunnel to France. In our naiveté, many of us thought that our bus would drive through the tunnel that would be pretty and painted with the odd glass bit so we could possibly observe some marine life. Disappointingly enough our bus boarded a big industrial train and we somehow got to France without even seeing a bit of water! Paris had the major "wow" factor for us all; the bateau mouche on the Seine, which we had heard so much about in French class! Racing up the steps of the Eiffel Tower with words of caution echoing from down below and some of us feigning appreciation of the paintings in the Musée d'Orsay were among the highlights!

Only for the fact that we had some great characters and talented singers on board it would be difficult to imagine how we survived the next part of the tour, which was a bus journey from Paris to Verona in the North of Italy. "Don't cry for me Argentina" from the film Evita was a hit at the time and there were many good and several bad renditions down the microphone at the top of the bus along the way! To make the journey even more of a challenge the air conditioning on the bus broke, couldn't be switched off and pumped out cold air throughout the night! We piled on as many layers of clothes as we could find and prayed for daylight no doubt still listening to the Evita soundtrack!

All was quickly forgotten though when we reached our hotel over looking the beautiful Lake Garda. Probably lucky enough for George Clooney that he wasn't resident there at the time as we surely would have been on a mission! The plan for the next few days was hectic but utterly rewarding with visits to the Romeo and Juliet balcony in Verona, an excursion around Venice taking in a gondola ride and Easter Sunday Mass in St. Mark's Basilica where maybe we weren't quite as reverent as we should have been! After an abundance of culture, one of the last days was spent in Gardaland, at the time the biggest theme park in Europe! Most of us not having made it past Funderland were over ambitious and there were plenty of green faces and sick stomachs at the end of the day.

Not only did we get to see many of Europe's finest sights but we got to cement friendships that are still alive and well almost ten years on. We learned that our teachers were real people too and most importantly I think many of us learned that the world was a vast and interesting place beyond the doorsteps of Eureka and that there was loads to look forward to and endless possibilities after the Leaving Cert. Not even the prospect of hour-long bus journeys in the freezing cold deterred many of the girls on the trip from more adventures even further afield. But in the mean time it was back to our bus to catch the ferry from Calais and a flight back to Dublin and I think we even managed a night out in Flix before it was back to school!

Brita O'Reilly



Sport

Eureka wishes to gratefully acknowledge the support it receives from many local organisations and clubs for all its sporting and other extra curricular activities.

# Athletics



1977: The winning Team Irish Schools U19 Cross Country Race. Bríanan Fox, Patricia Butler, Maria Fox, Mary Byrne.

In the mid 70's Eureka had many achievements locally & nationally in athletics.

The breakthrough came on 25th February 1975 when girls from Eureka contested the Leinster Schools Cross Country Championships in Kings Hospital, taking 2nd place in the team event. The team was Maria Fox, Cora Doyle, Bernie Smith and Mary Byrne.

On the 3rd of March 1976 the Eureka girls won their first Leinster Intermediate (U17) Schools Cross Country Championships in Belfield. The following is the Meath Chronicle report of the win at that time.

## Meath Chronicle March 1976

Eureka Secondary School, Kells had a most satisfactory team victory in the prestigious intermediate grade (U17) of the Leinster schools cross-country. The Kells girls were undaunted by the calibre of the opposition and pursued the leaders vigorously for fully 3000 meters. At the half way stage P. Butler was on to the leading group & Maria Fox was about 30 meters behind. Patricia kept pace with the leaders throughout and tenaciously held off two challengers in a sprint for the finish. Maria closed the gap on the leaders and finished strongly in 6th position, 3 places behind her teammate. The team victory depended on Maria Waters and Mary Byrne and both showed tremendous determination and good old-fashioned team spirit. This is the first team victory for Eureka.

1977 was the most successful year for the Eureka girls. They won their first All-Ireland School Cross Country Championship.

The journey started when the girls won the Schools Senior (U19) Leinster cross-country championships. Then on March 12th the girls travelled to Coolmine where they won the team award at the prestigious All-Ireland Schools Senior (U19) Girls Cross-country 3000m event.

This was the first time Eureka Mercy Convent, Kells won an All-Ireland athletics award. It was a magnificent achievement both for the school and the girls involved. The then principal Sr. Benignus duly acknowledged this at assembly. At that time Eureka would have been regarded as a small school and to win in Leinster was significant, but to take All-Ireland honours was truly amazing.

The Senior girls team was the Fox sisters Maria & Brianan, Patricia Butler and Mary Byrne.



Participation and success continued throughout the years at regional, provincial and All Ireland levels.

### Notable achievements include:

**Ann Kiernan** represented the school and Leinster in the All Ireland Finals in 1987.

**Teresa Brady** who won both silver and bronze twice between 1978 and 1981 in the Leinster Schools championships for Cross Country and the 1500metres. Teresa also took bronze at All Ireland level in 1980 for the 1500m.

**Joanne Fitzgerald** became All Ireland Champion in the Irish Schools 400m and the 400m hurdles in 1986/87. She then went on to compete in the European Championships in Birmingham and later to Canada for the World Championships.

**Aileen Rogan** was very successful in both cross-country and track and field events. On her performance in the All Ireland Finals Aileen was selected for the Irish Schools Cross Country Team Quadrangular International at Dungarvan. The Irish team finished second. In the 3,000 metres event Aileen took gold at Leinster, and on her performance in the All Irelands Aileen was selected to represent Ireland in the F.I.S.E.C. games in Hungary.

**Doireann Reilly** claimed silver in the Leinster Finals 800 metres in 1996 and became Leinster Champion in the 300m in 1998.

**Elaine O'Rourke** took bronze in the 1500m in the Leinster finals in 1997 and in 1998 achieved silver at the same distance.

**Blathnaid Ward** became Leinster Cross Country champion in 1997 and qualified for the All Ireland finals in both 1997 and 1998. She was selected for the international team in 1998 to compete in Durham, England. Blathnaid was also Leinster Champion in the 1,100metres in 1977.

**Nola Harrison** won gold in the Leinster finals Long Jump in 2002 and broke the championship record.

**Shauna Moran** claimed gold in 2004 at the Leinster Cross country finals and in 2006 qualified for the all Ireland finals.

**Maureen Farrell** became Leinster Champion at the High Jump Junior level in 2004, took silver in Leinster in 2005 at U17 level followed by gold in the All Ireland Finals.

**Eureka athletes also continue to compete in the many team events with considerable success, for example:**

**1995: The Minor Cross Country** team took bronze medals in the Leinster Finals. The team was: Doireann Reilly, Gráinne Hurley, Onida McBride, Siobhan Farrell, Elaine O'Rourke and Suzanne Caffrey. In 1996 this team as Juniors claimed gold in the Leinsters and bronze in the All Ireland with Melissa Gibney replacing Suzanne Caffrey.

**2006: The U17 2500m team** took gold in the North Leinster Competition. They were : Aine Rowe, Heather O'Brien, Lucy Chapman, Denise Powell, Aoife Murray and Aodhnait Lombard.



*Three successful athletes from the 1980s. Maeve Rogan, Teresa Brady, Joanne Fitzgerald.*



*Blathnaid Ward: Leinster Cross Country champion in 1997 and qualified for the All Ireland finals in both 1997 and 1998.*



*Shauna Moran: (left) winner of 2004 Leinster Cross Country Finals. In 2006 she qualified for the all Ireland finals. Maureen Farrell: (right) 2004 Leinster Champion at the High Jump Junior level, took silver in Leinster in 2005 at U17 level followed by gold in the All Ireland Finals.*



*1993: Meath League Junior Winners. Back Row: Gwen Morgan, Daphne Keena, Fiona Kiernan, Mary McCarten. Front Row: Donna Lynch, Ciara McGovern, Claire Bradley, Joyce Condra.*



*1993 Meath League Cadette Winners. Back Row: Jane Campbell, Norah Clinton, Orla McCabe, Louise Smith, Nicola Carolan. Front Row: Aileen Rogan, Sharon Lynch, Meave O'Reilly, Claire Coyne, Ailish Fitzsimons.*



*Junior Basketball Dingle 1996 All Ireland Bronze Medallists. Back Row: Sinead Ward, Yvonne Rooney, Eimear Carroll, Laura Kelly, Julie Ann Marley, Dearbhalla Smyth, Christine Foley (Coach). Front Row: Sarah Curran, Mary Barrett, Jennifer Bradley, Karen Usher, Carol O'Connell, Elaine Lynch, Grainne Hurley. A year later in 1997 the above team were the Cadet regional winners and qualified for the All Ireland playoffs in Longford.*



## Basketball Memories from the '70s

Paddy Keogan

Basketball began to be played in Eureka around 1969/70 when Pat McCaffrey (who taught for a year in Eureka) was involved. At that stage soccer was just a twinkle in Leonard Noone's eye! In 1971 a 'formidable' staff team of Val Mulvany, John Broderick, Paddy Keogan, Maria Burke and Róisín Gallagher became involved and over the next ten years the sport became very popular. Pupils V Staff matches were held frequently after school.

There were also matches against Athboy, Trim, Navan, Mullingar. There were some amusing memories from these encounters including the pupils beating Wilsons Multyfarnham by about 60 points and their coach offering his services to train our teams!! A staff match against Loreto Mullingar produced a scoreline of 2 points to nil! (It was a rather physical encounter!)

Practically the entire school population would have been in attendance at the home matches. There were some wonderful pupils matches - in particular against Mercy Trim who were our bogey team. Our stars of that era included the Farrellys, Smiths, McDonnells, McGees, Grimes' and Reilly.

Such fond memories!

## Basketball Memories

Agnes McMahon 1976 - 1981

My best memories of my schooldays at Eureka revolve around my involvement with the basketball team. We had great craic especially in 5th year and Leaving Cert. Year. Lunchtime was a race to get to the best court, very often this meant skipping lunch entirely. We had our regular team including Kathleen Brady, Anne Keane, Ruth Cassidy, Monica Brennan, Marie O'Reilly. We played regular matches against the teachers on Fridays right through the year. We also had a league where each teacher captained a different team made up of pupils from 5th year and Leaving Cert. It was all great fun. Time spent in class was for the most part a very serious affair, so basketball was a very necessary break from the pressures of study and made school life very enjoyable.



*Junior Basketball 1998 All Ireland Play Offs. Back Row: Grainne Murphy, Jennifer Quinn, Megan White, Blathnaid Ward, Roseanne Reilly. Middle Row: Maeve Grandgorge, Lisa Corbally, Kerry Gillic, Catherine Dolphin. Front Row: Leslie Hughes, Kendra Smith, Kate Reilly, Tanya Kelly, Richelle Sheridan. Blathnaid Ward was selected to play on the Regional Team.*





*Minor Basketball 1998 Meath League Winners. Back Row: Erin McGrane, Ruth Carolan, Denise Smith. Middle Row: Lorna Brady, Elaine Powell, Rochelle O'Halloran, Nadia Genserovskaya, Kate Bradley. Front Row: Jennifer Ball, Mary Foley, Majella O'Reilly, Ann Marie Kelly, Marie Ann Burke. Nadia Genserovskaya and Mary Foley represented the North East Region U15 Basketball Team, which took part in the Inter Regional Championships in Limerick in May.*



*Cadette Basketball 1998 Meath League Winners. Back Row: Fiona Reilly, Elaine Lynch, Sinead Ward, Yvonne Rooney, Emer Carroll, Ciara Murray. Front Row: Sarah Curran, Sandra Carpenter, Ann Marie Gavin, Karen Usher.*



*Cadette Basketball 1999 Regional Winners; All Ireland Playoffs, Longford, 2000: Back Row: Ruth Carolan, Lisa Corbally, Nadia Genserovskaya, Mary Foley, Liz Govern, Niamh Carr, Blathnaid Ward, Ann Marie Kelly, Deirdre Rice. Front Row: Ruth Usher, Sheryll Alken, Jenny Ball, Majella O'Reilly, Caroline Guillet, Emer Walsh, Therese Ruane (Coach). Orlagh McHugh and Blair Mulvey represented the North East Region U15 Basketball Team, which took part in the Inter Regional Championships in Malahide in May.*



*Minor Basketball Meath League. Back Row: Eileen Farrelly, Justine Garry, Ann Marie Smith, Grainne Harrington, Emma Mitchell. Front Row: Ann Marie Mahon, Emer McManus, Paula Price.*



*Minor SBAI Team 1998 - 1999. Back Row: Michelle Mulvany, Deirdre Ward, Maria Nelson, Lisa Lynch, Paula Newman, Maeve Carroll. Front Row: Katie O'Brien, Andrea McConnell, Ann Marie O'Connell, Aisling Regan, Katie McCormack. The following year this team won the Regional Junior Basketball Finals & won the All-Ireland bronze medal.*

"In 1st Year my basketball team won the Regional Final. We played in the All Ireland Play Offs in Crosshaven Cork. In 2nd Year we won the Regional Final again and played in the All Ireland Finals, this time in Gort. I have very special memories of both weekends - the friends, the craic and even the Basketball."

Ciara Mulvaney Leaving Cert. 2005

"Playing for the North East Regional Team was a great experience. Even though we were from different schools we settled together and combined as a really good team, I learned a lot of new skills and made many new friends. It is definitely one of my best experiences."

Katie Murray Junior Cert. 2006.



## Other basketball achievements

**1997:** Minor S.B.A.I. team won silver in the All-Ireland finals in Gort Co. Galway. They were beaten in the final by Thurles 44 - 43

**1998:** Senior team won Meath League. Team members: Nollaig Ward, Sandra Carpenter, Dearbhalla Smyth, Mary McCartan, Ciara Murray, Brianne Mulvihill and Jennifer Bradley.

**2002:** Senior S.B.A.I. team were Regional Winners. Team members: Blathnaid Ward (captain), Jenny Ball, Niamh Carr, Mary Foley, Ann Marie Kelly, Nadia Genserovskaya, Deirdre Ward, Sylvia Rattigan, Aisling Regan, Katie O'Brien, Lisa Lynch.

### The following players were selected in recent years to play for the North-East Regional teams:

**1998:** Blathnaid Ward, Nadia Genserovskaya and Mary Foley

**1999:** Orlagh McHugh and Blair Mulvey

**2002:** Lisa Finnegan

**2005:** Katie Murray

**2006:** Lucy Dillon and Jordan Gray

# A Trip to Cork

Anne Marie Ball

Playing basketball in Eureka provided some of my best memories from my time there. My earliest memory of it is from first year when we got to the All-Ireland play-offs in Crosshaven, Co. Cork. There were about twelve of us travelling down, Marita Rogers, Sarah Finnegan, Lisa Finnegan, Emma Lynch, Karen Clarke, Rossa Gallagher, Ana Clara Maestre, Nerissa Kiernan, Maura Ormiston, Laura Tully, Ciara Mulvaney and myself. We had won every game to qualify so our confidence was high as we made the long trip down. We were helped by parents, Jennifer Reilly the school secretary and, of course, Mrs. Foley who was our coach along with Eddie, Scheryl and Liz who helped train us. While we were off the court they cooked and provided entertainment for us, whether it was a walk through the village or a 'mystery' tour to the amusements where the students had to drag the responsible adults away from the slot machines (info provided by Mary Ball!!!). Unfortunately we didn't actually win any games that weekend despite our best efforts, but we played hard and had fun and its the fun we had that makes the memories.



*Junior SBAI Team 2006. Back Row: Michelle O'Connell, Aoife Owens, Edel Gaffney, Kerri Finnegan, Jordan Gray, Melissa Shannon, Patrice Murtagh, Clare McDonnell. Front Row: Katie Weldon, Charlotte Comiskey, Aisling Marley, Aoife Lenehan, Clare Foley, Lucy Dillon.*



# Equestrian

Eureka has a great record competing in showjumping and hunter trials since 1990. The first major success was in 1992 coming second out of 120 teams at the All Ireland hunter trials in Askeaton, Co. Limerick. This was a real Kells success as the team which beat Eureka into second place on that day by a mere 6 seconds was from Pobailscoil Ciarán! Marita Dunne, Sandra Carpenter, Ann Marie Gavin, Olivia Duff, Caroline McGarr, Niamh Gilsenan, Cathriona Carpenter and Brianne Mulvihill had many successes at interschool showjumping, winning at Normanstown, Gormanstown and Balbriggan in 1993 and at Drogheda in 1995.

In 2004 Hazel Smith, Denise McGrath, Sophie Dillon and Avril Dunne won at the Inter-schools Showjumping in Broadmeadows. 2005 brought good fortune at the All Ireland Hunter trials for Caroline Lynch, Denise Powell and Aoife Morris who came second out of eighty six participating teams. Eureka finished the year 5th overall in the All Ireland Showjumping league that year, having competed in twelve competitions.

2006 has brought many successes in the showjumping league so far. After eight competitions we are in pole position. We have had four teams this year:

Team 1: Niamh O'Connell, Kellie Allen, Caroline Lynch and Sophie Dillon  
 Team 2: Denise McGrath, Jane Millington, Niamh Hoey and Katie Weldon  
 Team 3: Andrea Coull, Ciara Tiernan, Katie Finnegan and Aoife Morris  
 Team 4: Lucy Chapman, Denise Powell and Heather O'Brien.



*Showjumping 2006: Sophie Dillon, Caroline Lynch, Kellie Allen, Niamh O'Connell. Winners at Loughrea Co. Galway and Millstreet, Co. Cork.*



*1993: Hunter trials team. Marita Dunne, Emma Phillips, Cara Usher.*



*1999: Hunter trials team. Sandra Carpenter, Donna Kerrigan, Caoimhe Sheridan.*



*Showjumping 2004: Hazel Smith, Denise McGrath, Sophie Dillon, Avril Dunne. Winners of the Perpetual Cup at the Mount Sackville Interschools competition.*



*Showjumping 2006: Avril Dunne, Denise McGrath, Aoife Morris, Katie Weldon with Trainer, Mrs. Lucy Allen, centre. This team came 4th at Broadmeadows Interschools.*

# Gaelic football

Gaelic football was started in the school by Therese Ruane, one of the PE teachers, in 1995 and is continued by her successor Aideen Mimmagh. Eureka's greatest achievement on Gaelic fields was in 1998 when the Senior team won the Leinster Championship and then progressed to the All Ireland Final. Unfortunately they lost out here to Killorglin. In latter years teams have won Meath Under 14 Championship on two occasions. A number of Eureka pupils and ex-pupils play for Meath at all levels.



*1998: Senior Gaelic Football Team. Finalists in All Ireland. (l to r) Back Row: Lorna Daly, Cathy Fagan, Caitriona Baugh, Ciara Murray, Sandra Carpenter. Middle Row: Mary Costello, Elaine Lynch, Yvonne Rooney, Maria Henry, Lisa Keenan, Patrice Reilly, T. Ruane (coach). Front Row: Mary Mackin, Gráinne Harrington, Elaine Duffy, Claire Coyne (capt.) Carol O'Connell, Margaret Caffrey, Claire Dolan.*





*1st Year Gaelic Football Team 1998 - 1999. Leinster 1st Year Champions. (l to r) Back Row: Lyndsey Rogers, Katie O'Brien, Michelle Mulvaney, Gillian Farrelly, Miranda Mc Connell, Kerri Brady, Maria Nelson. Middle Row: Kathleen Naughton (Coach), Lorraine Clarke, Loretta Cunningham, Maeve Carroll, Paula Newman, Aoife Mitchell, Ann Marie O'Connell, Lynda Reilly, Aoife Ball, Laura Lee. Front Row: Stephanie Duignan, Lisa Lynch, Suzanne Mc Dermott, Fiona Mackin, Aisling Regan, Fiona Costello, Andrea McConnell, Irene Munnelly. Katie O'Brien was the player of the match in the final, which was played in Portlaoise.*



*1999: Junior Football Team. (l to r) Back Row: Ailbhe Hetherton, Gráinne Murphy, Laura Mulvany, Gillian Harford, Emma Crilly, Mary Rose Ormiston, Laura Lee, Treasa Daly, Lindsey Rogers, Denise Smith, Rosemary Ormiston, Aisling Murphy, Lisa Lynch, Katie O'Brien. Front Row: Jennifer Ball, Mary Foley, Fiona Macken, Loreto Cunningham, Aisling Regan, Ann-Marie O'Connell, Irene Munnelly, Paula Newman, Fiona Costello.*



# Soccer

## Leonard Noone looks back...

John Broderick and myself founded the Eureka Girls' Soccer Club in the early 1970s. I can't remember the exact date nor, indeed, the first game. What I do remember is that we played on the tennis courts and the making of the wooden goal posts, and how crude they were! Sr. Benignus was not very enthusiastic initially. To see her Eureka ladies playing soccer must have been quite a culture shock. However we soon converted her and, to her great credit, she has kept the faith to this present day. From the beginning we had a team of very enthusiastic, dedicated and highly talented players. They were the girls which yielded such a rich harvest. Soon a school league was organised and lunchtime acquired a new dimension. Games between students and teachers were always epic encounters with reputations won and lost.

We then progressed to 5-a-side tournaments in places like Cavan, Dundalk, Dublin and Ballyjamesduff. From there things just snowballed.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the roles played by Sr. Pauline and Sr. Joan. They facilitated me in every possible way. But for them and Sr. Benignus there would be no Eureka Soccer club. My thanks to those special women.



# Soccer memories from the 70's

## Lizzie Flanagan (1974 - 1979)

My memories of Eureka will always be dominated by the time I spent on the hallowed grounds, to the front of the school that was the soccer pitch. It is a part of my life that is locked away in a time capsule.

Whenever someone or something triggers a memory, I am once again a teenager rushing out at "little break" to the sound of the bell. Not wanting to miss a second of that all-important league game that would determine The Champions and runners up of that particular term. There was also the knowledge that those games decided who would be named "player of the year" on the next sports day and so there was all to be played for. That was the type of enthusiasm and dedication that surrounded "Mr. Noone" and his soccer phenomena.

It all began in 1971 with a challenge match between the teachers and a few of the second and third year students of the day. As best can be recalled those fresh faced teachers included Mr. Leonard Noone (who instigated the challenge), Mr. John Broderick, Mr. Paddy Keoghan and Mr. Val Mulvaney. The student line up included Eitne Keoghan, Mags McDonnell, Ruth McDonnell, GERALYN Reilly, Catherine McGee, Mary P. Reilly (goalie), Bernie Smyth (Smithie), Bernie Reilly, Maeve McCabe and Margaret Lynch (Lynchie). The result of that game is still being disputed today, however the score is irrelevant, as the real winners were the girls who followed in the footsteps of those founder players. That day back in 1971 started the events that followed in "The History of Eureka Soccer".

I joined "Leonard's Ladies" in 1974 when the team was just beginning to take shape. My earliest memories include trips to The Show Hall in Oldcastle where Mr. Noone ran 5-a-side tournaments, and every Easter to the tennis courts in Ballyjamesduff. What player could forget those "Gladiator" type matches against Mullaghorn where "Lynchie" was our last line of defence if we were unfortunate enough to loose the ball to the Might of Mullaghorn. Then there were the trips to Yellowbatter in Drogheda and the endless quest to beat the Lourdes Ladies. This finally happened on a glorious night in May, under floodlights in Oriel Park, in The Dundalk May Time Festival of 1977. Pure Magic!!!

We first débuted in eleven-a-side soccer as part of a Dundalk team that played in The League of Ireland but it wasn't long before Mr. Noone had his own squad, and so began the Legendary Eureka Girls Soccer Team.

We travelled the length and breadth of Ireland, from Kells to Cork to Waterford to Galway, anywhere there was a match to win and win we did. Our regular mode of transport at this time included two Ford Capri cars one yellow and the other silver, courtesy of Mr. Noone and Mr. Broderick respectively. They don't make cars like that anymore!

The years that followed brought glory to both students and school alike. As a team we grew from strength to strength winning at all levels, including provincial and All-Ireland finals. Of course we also experienced the taste of defeat, but whether we were winning or loosing, memories and lasting friendships were being made. Names such as Francis Walsh, Maria O'Connell, Edel Tobin, Fidelis Madden, Rosie Smith, Helen O'Reilly (goalie), Madeline Colwell (Mado) and Ann Cole are to name but a few of the players that were of my era.

I left Eureka in 1979 but continued to be part of the team for several years later, and in this time I witnessed many new soccer talents in the making. Under the management and guidance of Mr. Noone, Eureka has produced as many as fifteen International players to date. This is a record by any standards and one still in the making, as Leonard Noone continues to scout for the latest "Georgina Best" in the incoming batch of first year students.

Its now twenty five years since I left Eureka but the memories of those days playing with my friends against our teachers on sports day and the ongoing banter that followed will stay with me forever. The smell of the cut grass in summer as I donned my boots at break time, with the anticipation of scoring "that golden goal". Then in contrast the feeling of immense disappointment as I watched through the window as rain fell, during Miss. Leonard's Irish class, knowing the lunchtime game would be cancelled.

All of these events and memories include one person, a man who dedicated his forty odd years in Eureka to helping students achieve an excellence in both the classroom and on the soccer pitch. His modest and unassuming ways have kept his achievements somewhat played down but for those of us who benefited from knowing him he is a legend. Keep up the good work Mr. Noone.

# Some Glorious Memories

Emer Quinn (1988 - 1994)

**My Soccer memories started in the year 1988, my first year in Eureka Secondary School. On that mid-September day in 1988, at just 11 years of age, I stepped onto the Eureka soil for the first time, accompanied by my sister Maura, often described by Mr. Noone as a “genius”, a player that processed lighting pace and skill, a “match winner”.**

We had no football boots that day, just our new school shoes. Every day after that, we turned up to school with our school bag full of books and to keep them company our football boots. We played every day, every lunch hour, even in the rain. Maura and I made the senior team that year, honoured to play alongside the likes of Fiona Gilsenan, Janet Clarke, Ann-Marie Fox to name but a few and we won our first Leinster title that year. We now had tasted success and it was there to stay. We played at all levels from U14 to senior level with both School and Club Teams.

It was a known fact that every team in the land, no matter what level, no matter what competition feared Eureka Soccer Team, we were unbeatable and regarded by many journalists in newspaper articles as the “Kingspins of Leinster”.

During the late 80's and early 90's, we continued to win titles at all levels, the most memorable being the 3-in-a-row FAIS (Football Association of Irish Schools) Senior Cup Leinster and All-Ireland Titles in the years 1992, 1993 and 1994, a huge achievement for the school. We also won the 3-in-a-row FAI Leinster and All-Ireland Club Titles in the same years. I had the honour of captaining the Schools Senior Team (U18) from 1992 to 1994 and captained the Eureka Club Team (U18) from 1992 to 1997 and also played at International Level.

The memories of the All-Ireland Schools finals of 1992, 1993 and 1994 will live with me for ever. They were without a doubt the “Glory Days”.

On the 8th May 1992, we played Loreto Convent, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal in the All-Ireland final at St. Mel's Park, Athlone, which we won 2 - 1. I was lucky enough to score the two goals in that final.

Mr. Noone often reminisces back to that day and he can describe the goals to a tie. The first goal I scored was from a free kick 35 yards out from goal. I remember our centre forward Ann O' Connor was heading for goal, when she was unceremoniously taken down by an opponent. The referee blew his whistle and awarded us a free kick. I could hear my dad, Lord Rest Him, shouting “now Emer you know what to do, go for goal”. The Loreto girls formed the wall 10 yards away. I placed the ball on the ground and sized up my options, will I chip the ball over the wall for a team mate to run on to or will I take my dad's advise. The latter option prevailed, I took my dad's advise and went for goal. I contemplated trying the “banana shot”, I hit the ball with the outside of my right boot, it curled around the wall, hit the inside of the post and

into the net. What a moment, what a feeling, we were leading in the All-Ireland final. Mr. Noone claims that it was the best goal that I ever scored and one he will never forget.

The next sequence of play in the game, Loreto was awarded a penalty for an infringement in the box. The penalty was scored and the teams were level. The winning goal was scored midway through the second half. I picked the ball up in mid field, passed it to my sister Maura on the wing, she crossed the ball into the box where it had accidentally hit off Tara Clarke and spilled out towards me. I was coming to the ball at speed, I could see with the corner of my eye two Loreto defenders coming towards me, so I just closed my eyes, kicked the ball and it soared into the roof of the net. The Eureka supporters were delirious with joy, parents, teachers and friends. It was like a dream come through scoring two goals in an All-Ireland final.

We had great celebrations the following Monday in school, parading the Cup around the classrooms. While that was going on Mr. Noone was planning for next year, the 2-in-a-row.

On the 9th May, 1993, we played St. Mary's of Nenagh in the All-Ireland final at St. Mel's Park, Athlone, which we won 4 - 1 after extra time.

My sister Maura, believe it or not, scored all four goals for Eureka in that final. For me the second and third goals were the most memorable. For the second goal, Maura received a pass on the right wing from Tara Clarke in midfield and she weaved her way towards goal, ghosting past defenders and eventually slotted the ball low past the goalkeeper's left. Eureka was 2 - 1 ahead. The third goal, Patricia Luddy received the ball from a throw from Emer O'Reilly, who passed the ball to Tara Clarke on the left wing; Tara crossed the ball into the box and in came Maura to hit the ball on the half-volley into the roof of the net. The score was now 3 - 1 and Eureka was well on the way to a second All-Ireland Title in succession. We eventually ran out 4 - 1 winners after extra-time and for the first time I accepted the FAIS Senior Cup as captain.

Dare we say it, but we now were on for the “3-in-a-row”, a possibility but would it be a reality, only time would tell.

On the 16th April, 1994, we played Carnadonagh Co. Donegal in the All-Ireland final at Monaghan United Football Grounds.

We went a goal down 14 minutes into the game. This was unfamiliar territory for us; we were behind in the All-Ireland final and now chasing the game. Just before half-time, our centre forward Lisa Keenan was fouled and we were awarded a free kick. I stepped up from defence playing a sweeper role to take the free kick and I scored. The scores were level. The game ended level even after extra-time. We were now facing a penalty shoot out. It was decision time, who was brave enough to step up and take a penalty. We scored 4 out of 5 in the penalty shot out. The penalties were scored by Tara Clarke, Nora Barry, Emer O' Reilly and myself. I had the responsibility of taking the last penalty hoping to score, leaving our goalkeeper Alice Telvin with

the task of saving the next penalty to win the title and that's how it ironed out. We were All-Ireland Champions three years in a row and for the second time I accepted the FAIS Senior Cup as captain. We won 5-4 after extra-time and penalties, the score at full-time and after extra-time was 1-1 and the penalty shot out ended 4-3 to Eureka.

I had completed my Leaving Certificate in 1993 and am proud to say that I repeated the Leaving Certificate in 1994, purely for soccer reasons, in order to win that illusive 3-in-a-row, a feat which will be hard to repeat and even harder to beat.

Undoubtedly at that time, we were the best team in the country, but it would never have been possible without one person that is Mr. Leonard Noone.

Mr. Noone is a man that possesses many qualities. He is a legend. He is an inspirational figure. Whether you played soccer or not, if you came in contact with him, he would manage to strike a nerve and leave a lasting effect. His fellow teachers have enormous respect for him and can only admire and applaud what he has achieved both on a personal level and for Eureka Secondary School. He has put Eureka Secondary School on the map.

He is totally dedicated and committed to the school and the soccer team. His attitude and enthusiasm for the game is beyond all recognition. His "never say die" spirit is there for all to see. I will never forget his well known phrases, which he used in abundance during every game, some of them being "Girls, let the ball do the work", "Ball through the gap", "Find a blue shirt" or whatever strip we were wearing at the time.

When things were not going our way, I mean when we were only winning 3-0, he would say, well roar to me "Emer lead from the front", I would have to stop and think, "what is he on about, we are 3-0 ahead? What does he want? BLOOD" yeah "Lead from the front", but I'm playing sweeper at the back?

This was the character of the man, always striving for success with failure not an option, pushing us to the limit and well beyond. He managed to get the best out of each and every player. He transformed ordinary players into great players. He is an individual that had a tremendous impact on my life, and in particular, as an achiever; nothing is impossible if you really want it. I have total and utter respect for him as a teacher, a coach and an individual.

I spoke with Mr. Noone most recently on the telephone and he said to me "Emer you know you were one of the most intelligent players and one of the best players ever to have put on a Jersey for Eureka School". This was a huge compliment and one I will treasure forever.

I have to mention my dad Maurice Quinn who passed away in April 1996, a great husband, father, a dedicated supporter of the Eureka School Soccer Team and a great buddy to Mr. Noone. He was a likeable character and adored by all the players and was sadly missed. At home after each game, to the utter disgust of my mother,

we would engage in a full analysis of the game. Every move, every pass, every tackle and every goal was discussed and even went as far as been re-constructed.

We travelled the length and breadth of the country to play games, to Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Galway, Monaghan, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, stitched together in cars, even having to change into our gear in the car, until we got a bit more cash and splashed out on hiring the luxury Keating's coach which was owned by Michael and Margo Keating of Virginia. Margo is a past pupil of Eureka and she continued her link with the school being very much involved with the soccer team and her daughter Michelle was very much a part of the Leinster and All-Ireland winning team of 1993.

Michelle was an extremely likeable person, full of laughter and cheer, a very outgoing person. She processed many skills at the game; she had great strength and power and held off opponents at her ease. Michelle was centre stage and kept us all laughing.

"May she now enjoy the peace and happiness of God's heavenly kingdom. Her pleasant, smiling face, her gentle soul and spirit will remain with us forever."

There was a great bond and unity between all the players, especially the '92, '93 and '94 teams. On the playing field, we all played and battled for each other, for the one cause, which was to win titles for our school.

When leaving Eureka Secondary School, I remember feeling physical pain, a feeling of tremendous loss and sadness, having to leave behind great team mates, a great coach and wonderful teachers but bringing with me unforgettable memories.

My younger sisters Eileen and Mary followed on in our footsteps, playing soccer at all levels for the school and club teams. Eileen played as a defender and Mary as goalkeeper. It was inevitable that they would play soccer, they couldn't miss, and it was all that was talked about in the house with my Dad. He was fanatical about the game and the fact that the school team was so successful and also so proud of Maura and I playing at International level.

I continued to play soccer for the Eureka Club Team until a horrific cruciate ligament knee injury ended my playing days. As the saying goes "all good things come to and end", but no one will take away the memories that I have of my school and soccer days. Of my school days, if I was to calculate the time spent in the classroom and the time spent on the playing field, one definitely exceeds the other.

To finish, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Eureka Convert of Mercy, Secondary School, Kells, Co. Meath, I wish Mr. Noone all the very best for the future and continued success with the Eureka Soccer Team. May God Bless Him.

Thanks for the memories Eureka...





1988: Under 16 Leinster Cup Winners. (l to r) Back Row: Michelle Waters, Fiona Gilsenan, Karen Lynch, Karen Donnellan, Anne O'Connor, Zita O'Reilly, Breda Flanagan, L. Noone (Coach). Front Row: Anne Marie McCormack, Emer Quinn, Josephine O'Reilly, Janet Clarke, Nicola Farrelly, Maura Quinn, Mary Carolan.



1993: FAIS Leinster Champions and All Ireland Senior (U18) Cup Winners. (l to r) Back Row: Ann Englishby, Anne O'Connor, Maura Quinn, Alice Tevlin, Michelle Keating (R.I.P.), Tara Clarke, Nora Barry. Front Row: Emer O'Reilly, Margaret Donegan, Patricia Luddy, Catherine Fox, Emer Quinn (capt.), Sylvia Porter, Rachel Duffy.



1991: FAIS Leinster Champions and All Ireland Senior (U18) Cup finalists. (l to r) Back Row: Fiona Gilsenan, Anne Marie McCormack, Anne O'Connor, Nicola Farrelly, Anne-Marie Fox (capt.), Karen Lynch, Sylvia Porter, Michelle Callaghan. Front Row: Maura Quinn, Emer Quinn, Bríd McCormack, Patricia Luddy, Tara Clarke.

# Treasured memories...

Aine Foxe

**A life is full of choices. As an eleven year old, with the help of my parents, I made a very good one, that was to influence the rest of my life. That was Eureka Secondary school.**

Leaving a small, rural, primary school as I had, Eureka seemed overbearingly big but all it took were some great people to make it feel like home and that's exactly how it was for me. I began in Eureka in Sept '92. My mam, her five sisters and my three cousins had all attended Eureka before me. So while there was an element of choice, it was a foregone conclusion that I would be making the daily trip to Kells, and boy did I enjoy it!

My cousin, Tara Clarke, had played soccer for Eureka for many great years and she encouraged me to play when I started school. So from the first day I saw Mr. Noone rally the troops for a game, my new shoes never stood a chance. It was in these games that Mr. Noone encouraged players to join the team and from day one I was hooked. In my second year in Eureka Mr. Noone gave me the privilege of being captain of the soccer team. This was a huge honour and compliment. I was surrounded by an excellent group of players so my job was an easy one. I did wonder occasionally if Mr. Noone chose me as captain based on the fact that I had a father very willing to travel to the ends of the earth to help share the car load, but I preferred to think there was slightly more to it!

Every week we played at least one game, if not two or three. We all played with both school and club at U14, U16 and U18 so you could say we missed the odd class here and there. I'm sure teachers all remember the excuses for leaving early "we have to find the jerseys" or "we have to fill the water bottles". It was a worthy cause so they put up with it.

Our games entailed us heading off, often like sardines in two cars, to various parts of Leinster, with the blind leading the blind most of the time - unless we were lucky enough to have Margo to guide us to the game on time. Mr. Noone would have directions to the pitch written on yellow postits, stuck to the dashboard. We were convinced the postits were upside down! I'm sure the cackle of hens in the back didn't help him but thank God for roundabouts!

Mobhi Road was a frequent haunt for our team. Merci Beaumont were one of our closest rivals. I think it was a case of "not again" for them more so than us as we tended to tip the scales on the winning front. 1997 was the year we won the FAIS U18 All Ireland title. We had beaten Portmarnock CS, Crumlin CS, Colaiste Chiarain Leixlip and Cashel CS to reach the final. Our opponents were Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiarain from Carraroe. They had a 27 game unbeaten run, until that was, they met us.

It was a miserable wet, "mind that umbrella" type day, but two coaches of supporters followed us to Strokestown. This was a huge occasion and we weren't about to let anyone down. Our predecessors had instilled a fierce reputation in the soccer community and we were here to retain it.

Against the run of play Carraroe took the lead in the 22nd minute, but it wasn't to last. Eight minutes later an in swinging kick from Emer O'Reilly found the head of Ciara Murray who guided a beauty past the Carraroe goalkeeper. We were totally dominant in the second half and our rewards came when an in-form Ciara Murray finished off a great corner from, yet again, Emer O'Reilly. The game was aptly finished off by Lisa Keenan, who had scored in all games leading to the final, when she coolly converted a penalty kick. We had a superb team that day with Mairead Fox, Maggie Donegan, Nicola Brady, Mary Costello, Una Murphy, Emer O'Reilly, Laura Connolly, Anthea Ormiston, Lisa Keenan, Ciara Murray, Patrice Reilly, Stephanie McManus, Leona McCabe, Rachel Coppertwaite, Claire Dolan and myself. The excitement after winning was immense and I was a very proud captain.

That game was broadcast live by Radio na Gaeltachta and was recorded for transmission by T na G. Sean Ban Breatnach had made a trip to Kells in the week leading up to the final to check out the opposition! I remember dreading the interview but I had my Irish orals the same week so I had plenty of help in Miss. Smith's Irish class. The interview was a great experience and I was proud to represent the school and team. Sean Ban Breatnach asked me many questions, and when I wasn't rambling off listing the amenities of the school and town, I did manage to tell him that we had an excellent team "ta foireann iontach mhaith againn" and that we were looking forward to the game "agus taimid ag suil go mor leis an gcluiche." I think Carraroe knew what I meant when we met on the pitch!

Throughout my five years in Eureka I made many friends, most of whom have been through soccer. We traveled many journeys together and had a lot of laughs. We all got on so well and this was a tough unit to crack. A lot of us went on playing after school at senior level and although I am not playing at the moment, I know from chatting to Laura Connolly recently, the buzz and spirit is still there.

One player we all knew and loved was Michelle Keating. In writing about my memories of soccer I couldn't leave Michelle out as she was a huge part of our fun and certainly of our success. Michelle was extremely lively on and off the pitch. Her strength was one of our greatest threats. We always knew if we got the ball up to Michelle in the forwards she would cause a lot of hassle to any poor defender trying to mark her. Michelle was always in the centre of the craic on the bus. She spent her time dashing between chats at the top of the bus with Mr. Noone and Margo her mam, and the rest of us at the back. She loved the banter with Mr. Noone. Michelle was an absolute diamond, and one we sadly miss.



During my five years at Eureka I was lucky enough to have Mr. Noone for English for four of them, although when he was quizzing me about “unwritten essays” at training it didn’t always feel so lucky! Over these four years I learned to love English as much as soccer. This was single-handedly down to Mr. Noone. His passion for the subject at hand was contagious and inspiring.

Mr. Noone’s ‘never say die’ has led Eureka to a plethora of titles over the decades. In doing so he has contributed an immeasurable amount to all our lives. I clearly remember that he shuns praise and has been known

to dodge photographs and other spotlight moments so I can picture him disagreeing that this accolade belongs to him but it truly does and I personally would like to thank him. Thank you: for all the lines from the sideline “have you got tunnel vision?”, “ah Mariah, find a blue shirt”, “can we work in triangles?” to name but a few; for your unrelentless passion which was inspiring; for giving up so much free time for all our teams... the list could go on but finally I would like to thank you for being an amazing teacher. You have been instrumental in providing me with many happy memories and “memories are treasures that time cannot destroy, they are the happy pathway to yesterday’s bright joy.”



1997: FAIS Leinster Champions and All Ireland Senior (U18) Cup Winners. (l to r) Back Row: Emer O'Reilly, Lisa Keenan, Anthea Ormiston, Nicola Brady, Mary Costello, Ciara Murray, Cathy Fagan, L. Noone (coach), Margaret Donegan, Mandy Carr. Front Row: Leona McCabe, Rachel Copperthwaite, Áine Fox, (capt.) Laura Connolly, Una Murphy, Patrice Reilly, Stephanie McManus, Clare Dolan.



# My Experience with The Irish Ladies Soccer Team

Laura Connolly

**Where do I begin? My experience of the Irish team was unbelievable and I will never forget it. It was something that, at that time was the most important thing in my life, more important than school, boys and even a social life.**

Myself, Lisa Keenan and Una Murphy would ring each other every night when we were 13 and 14 and most of the conversation was about soccer. How we played and where the next match was going to be. It was not uncommon for us, or any of the Eureka Soccer Team to play 7 games per week. On one occasion I remember playing 3 soccer matches in one day! It didn't take long for Leonard Noone's enthusiasm for soccer to rub off on all the girls.

If we had one wish at that time it would have been to get on the Irish Ladies Soccer Team. I don't think that too many 14 year olds can say that their wishes came through but for us, it did. The best thing about it was that it was everything we pictured it to be and more. It was tough, it was competitive but most importantly the other people we met were on the same wavelength as ourselves. Lived and breathed soccer like us. Don't think we even complained much when we had to get on a bus every Friday evening after a long week of school and take the trip to Dublin. We would train all weekend in the Marino Institute of Technology and come home late on a Sunday night. This would continue for months. The Marino Institute was a cold scary looking place at the best of times.

The training and coaching was the best in the country been offered to our age group, but I remember thinking that just been picked to play for our country didn't mean that we just went training at the weekends. We had to follow a gruelling fitness schedule ourselves. I remember I used to get up before school and jog around the soccer pitch in my estate when it was still dark and mam used to have her daily walk around it too. If I didn't do it in the morning I would pop into the Gaelic Centre with my brother and we'd jog 20 laps. I'm not sure if I could do it now!!

The experience of playing against other countries was unreal. Travelling to the various countries and playing in some of their best football stadiums was an amazing experience. It was an amazing feeling to walk out, listen to our national anthem been played and then our numbers and names been called out over the speakers as we represented our country. The top class organisation and the whole experience is something I have never forgotten.

One more thing, I think the song 'Simply the Best' by Tina Turner will always have strong memories for me. While on the Irish team that song was always played in the bus before we played a country to psyche us up, and it really did. It will bring me back to my days on the Irish team every time I hear it. The biggest thing I took from the experience is the friends I made and are still great friends of mine today. Una Murphy and Lisa Keenan are two of the most exceptional players and friends I have had the privilege of playing alongside for my country. I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much if they weren't there to encourage me and experience it with me.

I must thank the manager Leonard Noone. If he had not sent us up to trials we would never have been chosen to play for our country. Leonard remains the envy of the management panel of the Ladies FAI and every ladies soccer manager in the country. This is due to his unrivalled ability to produce top quality players, which he has been doing throughout his many years in management.



*Irish U16 Internationals Lisa Keenan, Laura Connolly and Una Murphy returning from a Triangular tournament having played in Wales and Scotland.*



2003: All Ireland Senior Cup Winners. (l to r) Back Row: Claragh O'Reilly, Jackie Shields, Lisa Keenan, Cáitríona Baugh, Irene Munnelly, Laura Lee, Gillian Farrelly, Elaine Donegan. Front Row: Rachel Garvey, Mary Costello, Loreto Cunningham, Anna Mullan, Una Murphy, Áine Foxe, Laura Connolly, Paula Murray.



2006: Irish Internationals. Anna Mullan, Claragh O'Reilly, Paula Murray with Leonard Noone.

# Eureka Girls Soccer Titles 1975 - 2006

**The record of success of Mr. Noone's soccer teams is phenomenal and shows why Eureka has a prominent position in the upper echelons of Irish Schools' soccer.**

All Ireland Senior Schools	4
All Ireland Under 18 Club	7
All Ireland Under 16 Club	4
All Ireland Senior Club	1
Community Games	1
Leinster Schools Senior Cup	7
Leinster Schools Senior League	6
Leinster Schools Junior Cup	6
Leinster Schools Junior League	7
Leinster Schools Minor Cup	7
Leinster Schools Minor League	5
All Ireland Indoor 5-a-side Under 18	3
All Ireland Indoor 5-a-side Under 16	1
All Ireland Indoor 5-a-side Under 14	2
Leinster Club Titles Under 18	7
Leinster Club Titles Under 16	4
Leinster Club Titles Under 14	3
North Eastern Leagues	
Senior Cup	3
Senior League	3
Under 16 Cup	2
Under 16 League	2
Under 14 Cup	2
Under 14 League	2
Leinster Midlands League	
Senior	2
Cup	1

The Club at present fields teams from under 14 to senior level.

# International Roll of Honour

**The following girls have all played soccer for Ireland at international level:**

Elizabeth Flanagan  
Rita Fitzgerald  
Madeline Colwell  
Janet Clarke  
Anne Marie Fox  
Eimear Quinn  
Maura Quinn  
Una Murphy  
Laura Connolly  
Rachel Duffy  
Lisa Keenan  
Gillian Farrelly  
Anna Mullan  
Paula Murray  
Claragh O'Reilly



# Swimming

Eureka has participated in Schools Swimming since the pool opened in Kells. The school became involved in Leinster Schools competitions in 1987 when Ann Marie O'Sullivan won the Leinster Intermediate Backstroke and went on to represent her school and Leinster in the 19th Irish Schools Championships in Bangor where she finished 4th. She qualified again in 1988 and competed in Galway.

The school continued to compete successfully at all levels and in February 1995 the u.14 Medley Team Relay made up of Nollaig Ward, Laura Kelly, Sarah Reilly, Brianne Mulvihill broke the Leinster Schools record.

In February 1996 Nollaig Ward and Sarah Reilly won gold medals in the junior section of the Leinster Schools Lifesaving Championships.

2006 saw the senior relay team of Cara Reilly, Eanair Reilly, Ciara Smith, Aoife Morris win two silver medals in the Irish Schools Championships N. A. C. Pool in Dublin.

The School continues to have an active aquatic teaching programme as part of the physical education curriculum.



*1997: School Swimming Team. Back Row: (l to r) Sarah Reilly, Fiona O'Reilly, Laura Kelly, Kate Burke, Blaithe Ward, Kendra Smith, Kate O'Reilly. Front Row: Richelle Sheridan, Rosita Reilly, Karen Martin, Rachel Garvey, Lisa Tobin, Clare Dolan, Clare Tully.*



*2006: National Schools Swimming Championships. Silver medalists Freestyle and medley relays (l to r) Eanair Reilly, Ciara Smith, Cara Reilly, Aoife Morris.*

# Tennis

In 1967 when the tarmac area was laid and the tennis courts were marked, Sister Patrick introduced the wonderful world of tennis to the students of Eureka.

## Extract from Meath Chronicle, May 1968

"The members of Fatima girls club "Eureka" Convent of Mercy, Kells invited Tullamore girls club to a tennis tournament in the Eureka grounds last Saturday. The tournament was a great success with the Tullamore girls winning the senior section and the Kells girls winning the junior competition. Misses Mary Lambe and Katherine Horan, Tullamore beat Katherine Kerr and Ann Fitzimons, Kells in the senior section. Misses Dolores Olohan and Karen Carolan, Kells, got the better of two very gallant losers from Tullamore. Mister Tim Hazelton, Northern Bank, Kells and Miss. Sweeny, Games Mistress, Eureka acted as umpires. The Kells girls entertained the Tullamore team and supporters to an enjoyable tea and sing song after the tournament. Kells hope to pay a return visit to Tullamore in the near future".

The team were Marion Smith, Roisin Coyne, Karen Carolan, Ann Geraghty, Catherine Kerr (Capt.), Petria Olohan, Christine Usher, Triona O' Donnell, Mary Gogarty, Sr. M Patrick, Dolores Olohan, Geraldine Carolan and Ann Fitzimons.

Sister Patrick continued to promote tennis over the years. In 1968 Miss. Sweeny organised a tournament for the school and Dolores Olohan won the cup.



1970: Second Year Tennis players. (l to r) Back Row: Kay Smith, Paula O'Brien, Anne Tobin, Loretta Loughran, Sheila Brown, Anne Reilly. Middle Row: Barbara Cullivan, Anne Marley, Geraldine Roache, Edel Bennett. Front Row: Louise Reilly, Caramal Shanahan, Teresa O'Rourke, Helen Mulroe, Carol McKenna, Anne McGillick, Anne Farrelly, Sarah Reilly. The girls all made their tennis dresses in Sr. Patrick's Domestic Science class.





1992: Leinster Schools League Minor Team - B Cup Winners. (l to r) Claire Berrill, Susan Foley, Alison Clarke, Anne Bradley, Nora Barry, Sinead Usher.



1998: Leinster Schools League Minor Team. (l to r) Kate Bradley, Maeve Grandgeorge, Mary Foley, Marie Bowler, Lesley Hughes, Tanya Kelly.



2000: Minor Tournament hosted by Alexandra College Dublin. (l to r) Emily Bradley, Sarah Kenny, Sandra Murphy, Elaine Donegan, Claire Tully, Marie Bowler.



1997: Eureka won the North Eastern Inter Schools Tournament. (l to r) Conagh Duffy, Gwen Morgan, Claire Bradley, Claire Carpenter, Ciara Olohan, Ciara McGovern.

#### 1998 North Eastern Inter Schools Shield - Winners

The team were Claire Bradley, Gwen Morgan, Ann-Marie Smith, Lesley Hughes, Mary Foley & Kate Bradley.

#### 1999 North Eastern Inter Schools Shield - Runners Up

The team were Laura Kelly, Sarah Curran, Ann-Marie Smith, Mary Foley, Eimear Gilroy & Kate Bradley



2004: Junior Team in Leinster Schoolgirls League. (l to r) Laura Tully, Ailbhe McGrath, Niamh Ferguson, Caroline Fox, Emma Hurley, Blair Mulvey.



# Volleyball

The first volleyball class took place in Eureka in the late '60s with Ms. Sweeney. A volleyball net was tied to two poles outside the front door of Eureka House on the gravelled avenue.

In 1974, the Eureka team reached the All-Ireland finals but just lost out to the Dun Laoghaire team. The team included Mary Gilsenan, Marion Reilly, Triona King, Gemma King, Catherine Gilsenan, Christine Smith, Elizabeth Daly, Valerie O'Reilly, Elizabeth Tormey and Christine Usher (coach).

In the '80s, volleyball with Ms. Keaney became a very popular sport with teams competing at local and national level. In 1988, the senior team was: Dearbhla Gibney, Sinead Monaghan, Deirdre Murphy, Margaret Carr, Maureen Reddy, Martina McQuaid, Catriona Reilly, Yvette Heavey, Karen Lynch and Sheena O'Doherty.

The junior team: Karen Lynch, Roisin Murphy, Margaret Morris, Glenda Carry, Johanna Murphy, Catherine Morris, Olivia Roache, Ciara Butler, Sinead Flanagan, Brona Mallon.

The Senior team of 1990 reached the Leinster Finals against Dominican Convent Griffith Ave., Dublin.

The team was: Una Darcy (capt.), Janet Clarke, Karen Lynch, Sinead McCaffrey, Orlagh Jordan, Johanna Murphy, Yvette heavy and Roisin Murphy. Coached by Mrs. O'Reilly (nee Keaney).

In 1995, Eureka won the SHS Drogheda blitz at both senior and junior levels in April. Kildare beat the senior team in the Leinster semi-finals and the junior team reached the All-Ireland semi-finals in Loughrea but were beaten by Tuam.



*1994: Eureka Senior Volleyball Team. (l to r) Brid Brophy, Aileen Madden, Gráinne McCabe, Fiona Rogan, Jean Chapman, Gillian Hughes, Maeve O'Reilly.*

## Volleyball memories from the '70s

Catherine Gilsenan

"As a student in Eureka in the seventies sport played a huge part in everyday school life. With Ms. Usher as my PE teacher, volleyball was the game which I played most. We trained each lunchtime in the PE hall and every evening after school. Matches took place at weekends mainly in Dublin. Among the players at that time were, Mary Gilsenan, Gemma King, Triona King, Valerie O'Reilly, Susan Daly and myself. We enjoyed a certain amount of success as a team, but it was the fun and games to and from the matches which I remember most. The one thing that stands out most in my mind about practice was breaking the occasional light in the gym and wondering what would Sr. Benignus say!!"

# Sports Day



*Sports day in the early 1970s. Sr. Pauline and Maura McEntee win the jockey-back race. Maura returned to Eureka a few years later to join the teaching staff as a religion teacher.*



*Sports day 1979. Mr. Keoghan competes in the high jump while Mr. Broderick checks the height.*



*Sports day in the late 1970's. A pillow fight.*



*A bicycle race held on the front lawn on sports day in the late 1970's.*



*Both pupils and staff relaxed and enjoyed sports day together. (l to r) Sr. Pauline, Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Eileen with teachers, Mary Broderick and Maureen Dolan. Mr. John Broderick can be seen in the background running the high jump event.*



*A popular sports day event in the 1970s and 1980s was the hula hoop competition.*



# Sports Day 1972 - a Sports Day with a Difference

Val Mulvany

It was May 1972 and students were pleading for a school outing - they wanted to go somewhere. Someone had a brainwave - "Why not have Sports Day on the beach in Bettytown?" Sr. Benignus thought it was a great idea and a fleet of buses was organised. The whole school moved to Bettytown. Luckily the tide was out and the sun was shining. The 100 yards sprint was quickly marked out in 90 steps by P. Keogan - Cavan men walked in metres in those days even if they no longer walked on water! Jackets and school bags marked the start and the finish. Sr. Benignus gave her blessing and the games were on. The 800 yards was 4 times up and down the sprint length. There was no problem digging out the long jump and a soft landing was guaranteed. This was duly won by Mary Gogarty. Football was organised by L. Noone while Michael O'Brien took charge of the Barbeque. Who can forget his combination of roasted sausage and sand or indeed Michael's scorched eyebrows at the end of the day? Sr. Benignus and a few V.I.P.'s dined in the hotel. Great racing and lepping was enjoyed by all.



*Sports Day in the 2000s. A new event, the four person sack race called the "dak sack" race.*



*Sports day in the 2000s. The dak-sack race.*



*Sports day in the 2000s. Pupils participating in the basketball shots event. The teacher running this event (in red) is Agnes Dillion, a former pupil of Eureka and star basketball player for the school in her day!*



*Sports day in the 2000s. The ever popular tug-of-war.*



# Superstars

The 1980s was the decade of the Superstars in Eureka. Contestants, of which there were many, tested their skills over a range of sports - athletics, basketball, soccer, swimming, volleyball, tennis, badminton, gymnastics and a quiz.



*1983: Superstar of the Year Catherine Smith being presented with the Perpetual Cup by Sr. Pauline, along with other prize-winners in the competition. Back Row: (l to r) Dearbhala Lydon, Grainne Ward, Anne Morris, Caroline O'Reilly, Ann Brady, Cornelia McCarthy, Regina O'Reilly. Front Row: Deirdre Smith, Sr. Pauline, Catherine Smith, Ms. T. Hereward, Cathy Costello.*



*1980: Superstar of the Year Ann O'Sullivan being presented with her prize and the Perpetual Cup by Sr. Benignus. Also in the photo (from left) are runners-up Kathleen Brady and Ann Cole, and PE teacher Ms. T. Hereward. This was the first year of the competition and attracted 80 competitors.*



*1981: Superstar of the Year winner Teresa Brady being presented with the Perpetual Cup by Sr. Pauline.*



*1984: Superstar of the Year Deirdre Smith being presented with her individual trophy and the Perpetual Cup by Sr. Gertrude. On right is Ms. T. Hereward and at back are runners up Josephine Murphy and Anne Morris.*

## Other Superstars over the years included:

Cathy Costello (1985),  
Joanne Fitzgerald (1986),  
Rosarie Lynch and Eavan Morris ( joint winners in 1987) and  
Sophie Chamberlayne (1988).







# The School Bazaars

The school bazaar was one of the highlights of the school year throughout the 1970's and the 1980's. This article from the Eureka Year Book 1989 captures the excitement and goodwill of this event:

## BAZAAR 1989

Elizabeth Garvey (Fifth Year)

It was the morning of October 25th 1988 and Eureka hummed busily with preparations for a day of enjoyment and laughter, a day of co-operation among pupils with the ultimate aim of helping those who have little cause for happiness among the pain and suffering of starvation. The School Bazaar, by now a well-established annual event, traditionally organised by the diligent Fifth Years, was to raise funds for those people of the Third World for whom happiness is represented by a cup of clean water.

Today, the Fifth Years could be seen scampering towards the gym from all directions, eager to have their stands ready for their first customers. The previous week had seen a number of events, which culminated in the preparation of the venue the night before. Among these "lunch-time festivals" there had been a quiz where a team of students competed against a team of teachers, with numerous video shows and a 'Give us a Clue' contest were also very well received by the audiences.

Tuesday, the 25th was the "Big Day" and the Fifth Years' excitement over missing five classes, coupled with the scramble to have all ready on time, had created an irrepressible atmosphere of fun even before the doors were opened to the waiting crowds. The stage was adorned with a colourful array of prizes and bric-a-brac donated by the local shops and sponsors, who had combined efforts with the students and teachers to make the Bazaar a truly community affair. The gym itself was a dazzling collection of colourful stalls ranging from the cake stand to the crazy golf area, and with the arrival of the first bargain hunters at 10.30 am, it was animated with the persuasive shouts of the sellers together with shrieks of laughter from buyers.

The heat which soon built up sent thirsty students racing to the drinks stands, until the exhausted salespersons were zooming down to the local shop for extra supplies of orange. In the kitchen, the popcorn popped vigorously, and every 10 minutes the agile cooks could be seen sprinting to the gym with trays of hot pancakes that were snapped up each time before they reached the popcorn stall.

The cake stall did equally as well, and not long after selling had commenced, little flags marked "Sold" appeared on top of most of the appetising offerings. The fortune tellers, tucked away mysteriously in two dimly lit rooms were also attracting a lot of business from those hopefuls eager to see what the future held. Other favourites were the book, odds and ends and the bottle stalls, not to mention the make up stall, which sent squeals of laughter booming through the air as the latest "victim" emerged, disguised as a multi-coloured cartoon character.

By lunchtime the hullabaloo had abated, and the satisfied customers eased out of the gym, leaving the Fifth Years holding sweeping brushes and dish clothes. When all was cleared up, the remaining donations ranging from live animals to doormats were sold by auction to the students who had yet more money jingling in their pockets!

By 1.10 pm, all was over but through our efforts, we raised the Grand Total of £1500 (€1900), £500 (€635) of which was divided among the following charities: Focus Point - for the homeless, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (Kells Branch), Saint Mary's School for Mentally Handicapped in Delvin and to a Mercy Sister to help Missionary Work.

The remaining £1000 (€1270) was donated to Concern for the specific purpose of building a Water Pump in Tanzania which we hope will provide many African villages with that glass of sparkling water that we take for granted.

## Afri Walks

Every October from 1991 to 1995 a number of students from Eureka joined with people of all ages and counties for the Afri "famine" walk. These walks from Mullagh to the mass famine grave at Lloyd, Kells were organised to commemorate the Irish "famine", to help participants to focus on the causes of famine in Ireland in the 1840's and the famines experienced in Third World countries in the 1980's and the 1990's.

The walks also highlighted other human rights issues. Each year had a specific theme:

- In 1991 the walk was led by Brian Keenan (Beirut hostage) and Sr. Maura Gallahue (Columban Sister).
- 1992 had a Latin American theme. That year Eureka students raised £2,000 on their sponsorship cards for the recent victims of famine in Somalia.
- 1993 was the Valerie Place Memorial Walk.
- 1994 explored the theme of famine and the family and included a 'silent mile' to remember all the famine dead.
- 1995 was the last year of the walk here, its theme was Third World Debt and Development.

1996 Eureka hosted a human rights seminar organised by Afri. It was attended by students from Post Primary schools in Meath, Kildare, Dublin, Offaly and Louth. East Timor and environmental issues were two of the many topical themes explored that day in various ways. Students had a unique opportunity to meet and to discuss issues with many environmental and human rights activists.

# The Concern Fast

Maria Burke

The Concern Annual Fast is undoubtedly the longest running fundraiser in the school as it started in 1984. This coincided with Eureka's first year of involvement in the Concern Debates. Whilst participation in the debates has had a varied history, the Fasts have remained constant.

Its style and organisation has changed over the years. In the early years it was a 24/48 hour fast plus street collection, with some of the "fasters" doing the street collection whilst fasting as well as raising sponsorship. This event happened over the Friday and Saturday before Christmas and there were sufficient enthusiastic collectors to cover a variety of collection points throughout the town for the two days, rain, hail or snow. On the Saturday Ms. Burke and Mrs. Yore co-ordinated the event and ended the day carrying all the counted coins to the parish safe for safe keeping for the weekend. In more recent years the dates have changed to November, it happens during the school week and is organised by the Transition Year students and under the guidance of Mrs. Yore.

Dates, venues, courage, uniforms and hair styles have changed over the years but the commitment of 100 to 120 students to the Concern Fast has remained steadfast over the years. Record years were 1988, 1999, 2001, and 2005 when the totals exceeded €5,000. Concern records show the total raised by Eureka students from 1988 to 2005 was €69,557.

Well done to all the participants and hopefully the spirit of generosity and the desire to help people struggling to survive in other parts of the planet will continue.

# Amnesty International

Maria Burke

The school year 1986/87 saw the establishment of An Amnesty school group, amongst senior students. The first committee members included Fiona Flood, Beatrice Keane, Niamh Moore, and Eilish Reilly.

The format remained the same over the years with membership changing annually/biannually. The group meetings were held during lunchtime at regular intervals. The members committed themselves to writing letters appealing for the release of prisoners of conscience and sending them cards at Christmas, organising petitions and various fund raising activities. The fundraisers varied from cake sales in the early years to running in the mini marathon in the mid 90's: to selling Friendship Bracelets in the late 90's.

Some of the Amnesty group's highlights included:

- the '89 group collecting over 2,500 signatures as part of the Human Rights Now Campaign,
- Gillian Brennan and Brenda Hammant, members of the '92 group organising and giving successful workshops on Amnesty International at a Human Rights seminar for students held in Dalgan Park Navan,
- members of the group attended a student seminar in Trinity College Dublin organised by Amnesty.

For many years these students kept the candle in barbed wire burning as they worked on behalf of prisoners of conscience and other Human Rights issues.

# Fundraising for Pakistan Earthquake victims

November-December 2005 brought new trans-cultural experiences in charitable and fundraising endeavours for the students and staff of Eureka. The school was requested by Navan-based Irish-Pakistani business man Mohammad Khalid to help in the Irish response to his country's appeal for help on behalf of the victims of the devastating earthquake that occurred in Kashmir on the 8th of October. The fact that many of the nearly two hundred thousand killed or injured in the earthquake were school children made the involvement of the school in the relief effort particularly poignant. Mr. Khalid was accompanied on a visit to Eureka by Mr. Geoffrey Mohammad who had himself lost ten members of his family in the disaster. The response of Eureka pupils and teachers alike was in the best traditions of the school. A concert was devised as a fundraiser. This time the teachers did the entertaining, producing an hilarious Father Ted type extravaganza. The students and staff responded with a whopping €7,000 in fundraising.



*Teachers participating in the Fr. Ted Pakistan fundraising concert. John Broderick.*



*Teachers participating in the Fr. Ted Pakistan fundraising concert. John Daly, Irene Yore.*





*Teachers participating in the Fr. Ted Pakistan fundraising concert. Leo Murphy, John Daly, Pat Farrell.*



*Teachers participating in the Fr. Ted Pakistan fundraising concert. Mary Bird, Fiona McMahon, Lynn Byrne, Clare Smith, Paula Lyne, Jean Kenny.*

Memories





# Rosemary Daly (L. Cert. 1956) remembers...

## First Impressions of Eureka on moving from the old school:

The classrooms were large, spacious and well lit. Each student had her own desk and chair. Books could be left in this desk overnight. Monsignor McCullen blessed all the classrooms and students and teachers soon settled into a new life and study in our new school.

The grounds were beautiful - green lawns with pathways where students walked at breaktime and lunchtime. The rhododendrons were in full bloom, students took photographs on these lawns under the rhododendrons. During a free class before the Leaving Cert. some students studied on these lawns. It was such a delightful change from the old school - it certainly was very impressive.

## Other memories

There were only four classes in Eureka in 1956 as 4th and 5th year students were taught together in one classroom. Some students did Secretarial Studies after Inter Cert. Students, if they wished, could do their Leaving in four years, then repeat the Leaving the following year.

Students had to attend class six days a week - there was a half-day on Saturdays. School fees were charged but they were very low.

Day students from the country area cycled to school on an ordinary push bicycle, some leaving home at 7.50 am. They had to cycle twelve miles each way to school. They carried their books and lunches in a case on the carrier of their bicycles. Sometimes indeed if a bicycle had a puncture they would carry each other on the carrier. Roads were 'safe' those times - very little traffic, just the odd car, lorry or maybe horse and cart. They didn't find the journey very long as they chatted, laughed and recited poems as they cycled along. It was a difficult uphill cycle from Maeve's Bridge on the Moynalty Road to the top of the Carrick - bicycles had no gears then. Then the relief of cycling freewheel downhill to the school. Bicycles were 'parked' where the Health Board is located today. Sometimes, for a change of scenery, the Mullagh girls returned home by Carlanstown or by Billywood - the back road to Mullagh.

During the cold severe winter months some students were lucky to be able to travel by CIE bus. This bus came from Cootehill via Bailieborough, Mullagh, Moynalty, picking up students all along the way and arrived in Kells in time for class at 9.25 am. This bus didn't return from Dublin to Kells until 7.30 pm. This meant that the students had to stay in the school. The kind Sisters allowed the students to study in the school. At six o'clock every evening one of the sisters arrived into the study room with a large white enamel jug of hot tea and sometimes cake or buns. These were gratefully received by all the students.

## Elizabeth Newman-Maguire (1965 - 1970) remembers her school days...

My earliest memories of Eureka are when I went there to sit for my Entrance Exam. I remember being very nervous walking up this wonderful tree-lined avenue with rhododendrons and coming upon this magnificent old building that was Eureka House. It was hidden away among trees and shrubs and it provided an idyllic setting for learning.

I remember Sr. Evangelist who gave me my first Art class and feeling that I had finally found someone who understood my passion. I loved the Art class and Eureka gave me the opportunity to develop my creative skills.

Wearing a uniform for the first time was a big deal then and it was exciting going to be fitted out in Clark's Drapery shop in Kells. The uniform then was a gymslip, and we wore a white dickey bow over our blouse and jumper. We also had a gabardine coat with a hood. Somewhere along the way we lost the plastic collar and substituted a tie, a welcome change.

Sr. Eileen (then Sr. Patrick) taught me Domestic Science, and introduced me to a sewing machine. We learned to make and model a dress. In Maths I remember Sr. Benignus was an excellent teacher and her love of Maths shone through. I still love Maths. Sr. Gertrude taught us Geography and one could not have asked for a more knowledgeable teacher. She made our classes really interesting and enjoyable. Sr. Aquinas taught us Irish. She always encouraged us and gave us a love for the language. Although most of the teachers were nuns, we had some lay teachers too. The ones that stick in my mind are Miss. Doorly, Thelma Doran who taught us English, and Mr. Noone who taught Spanish. Thelma was a wonderful teacher.

When we first started in the school the heating was operated using an enormous oil burner like a pot bellied stove only much larger. The heat from it was fantastic and in the morning and at lunchtime we used to huddle round it. While I was in Eureka the tennis and basketball courts were provided and this was an exciting development for us.

In school we were encouraged to take part in concerts in the St. Vincent de Paul hall each year. Sr. Gertrude played the piano, and we enjoyed performing on stage. During lunchtimes we were sometimes allowed up town where we went to Nulty's shop for stationery, and to Sadie Leer's to buy chips. We had school tours to Powerscourt, Glendalough, Bray, and went to see the films 'War and Peace' and 'Ben Hur'. These trips were enjoyable and broadened our perspective on life.

Saying goodbye to many friends in secondary school was hard. I remember having our photograph taken on the steps of Eureka House. I went on to study Fine Art in the NCAD, gaining a degree and then a Masters. I will always remember Sr. Evangelist who encouraged my artistic talents.

I hope to meet up with and reconnect with a host of friends at the celebrations of 50 years of Eureka Secondary School, and I would like to thank the Sisters of Mercy for instilling in us a love of learning and a sense of pride in our school "Eureka".

# Christine Usher looks back...

I started off in Eureka in September 1965, as a 1st year student. My memory of that time was the big high wall that surrounded the school. The entrance then was from the main road. It was a beautiful entrance along an avenue that was lined with rhododendrons. There was no tarmac area at the time and there was a big lawn behind the house. The hill to the left of the house was covered in daffodils in springtime.

Sr. Evangelist was principal in my first year. I remember the school reports in first year - they were always safe to go home as the only 3 grades you could get were: Excellent, Very Good or Good. Students were assessed on their punctuality, attendance and behaviour only.

Sr. Benignus became principal as I entered my 2nd year and the format of the school reports changed so that each teacher gave the marks for each subject and also a comment. I was then under pressure to explain the difference from my first year report to my father.

The school uniform at the time consisted of a navy gymslip with three box pleats, a navy jumper or a blouse underneath and a white Peter Pan plastic collar with a black dickey bow and a white plastic belt. The collar could get very sweaty and the dye of the jumper would discolour the collar. The method of cleaning used was Ajax or Vim and a nailbrush. There was also a black blazer with the school crest on the pocket, a beret which also had the crest and a navy and blue scarf. These were not compulsory however. In my second year a blue blouse was introduced and a navy tie with a blue stripe.

In my first year there were two classes, known as 1A1 and 1A2. 1A1 did Latin Irish, English, Maths, French, Geography, History and Christian Doctrine while 1A2 did Domestic Science instead of Latin. Science was not taught in Eureka then but some girls, about 5 or 6 each year, were sent to the CBS in Bective Street for Science classes. A prayer started each class of the day and at 12 o'clock all stopped to say the Angelus. We also had school on Saturdays for a half-day which included the Children of Mary meeting.

In my second year the area behind the house was converted to tarmac for a play area and prefabs were erected (the present 2nd year block).

There was no PE teacher in the school during my time. When I was in Inter. Cert. and Leaving Cert. Years a PE teacher called Ms. Sweeney came for one half-day per week and took first years, second years and fifth years for games. As exam classes had no PE I was unlucky in both years and therefore never had a PE class in Eureka!

When the tarmac area was put down it became a well-used play area. We made up our own games and kept ourselves very active at lunch times. Netball posts were put up and courts marked out. Some of the girls were taught to play netball by Ms. Sweeney and the rest of us (exam classes!!) learned from them. There were also tennis courts marked out and one of my best sporting memories from Eureka followed from this. Sr. Eileen Mulvihill (then known as Sr. Patrick) organised two tennis matches against Tullamore on a home and away basis. This provided great excitement for the twelve players and the school.

Another 2nd year memory I have is that of some of the girls wanting to start a school newspaper. There was a big debate about it. Monsignor McCullen was approached and gave permission for it and also gave it its title "Ophthalmus Eureka" (the Eye of Eureka). It ran for a number of issues.

Teaching Nuns at the time: Sr. Benignus, Sr. Gertrude, Sr. Patrick (Sr. Eileen now), Sr. Aquinas (Sr. Pauline now), Sr. Cecelia, Sr. Columba, Sr. Ignatius, Sr. Evangelist, Sr. Ann-Marie, Sr. Philomena. Lay teachers at the time: Miss. Doorley, Miss. Thelma Doran, Miss. Patricia Kavanagh

In 1968 Eureka got its first male teacher - Leonard Noone joined the staff. I was in 5th year at the time. He taught Spanish as well as English and History. Spanish was introduced to the curriculum for the first time to 5th year Students

Extra Curricular Activities at the time included Tennis, Quizzes, Cookery Competitions, Choirs, Elocution lessons and daytrips. I have great memories of going up North across the border and getting to buy sweets, which were not available in the South. Other trips were to Glendelough, the Shannon and the Japanese Gardens. Sr. Patrick (Eileen) ran a Youth club for us in the St. Vincent de Paul hall where we had get-togethers, organised hops and put on a Christmas concert. Retreats were organised for students and my class went to a Seminary in Rockcorry, County Monaghan. We had a wonderful time.

I filled in my application form for Sion Hill PE College and got called for interview. When asked how could I possibly know that I wanted to study PE when I had never had a P.E. class myself my reply was "Because I want to return to Eureka and to make sure that no other student will have to say that they never had PE in school."

The day I left school Sr. Benignus and Sr. Gertrude wished me well and said that they looked forward to having me back as a PE teacher in Eureka. They promised they would have a gym built before my return!

1973 - I arrived back to Eureka as planned. The Sisters had also kept to their plan and had the gym completed on my return. To my knowledge the total cost of the gym was paid for from the Sisters own salaries. I was shown to the gym equipped with mats, vaulting horse, basketballs, volleyballs etc. Every class had PE. I also taught Art and Religion. The class times were longer than now. Lunchtime was also longer and a lot of games were played every day at lunchtime with most students involved. There were also games after school until 5.30.

The PE uniform was a red Lycra top and a navy divided skirt and red socks. For matches, navy numbers were ironed onto the tops for the basketball or volleyball team members. Matches were played at the weekends with basketball on Saturdays and volleyball on Sundays - all day!!

PE was such a novelty in the school that Sr. Benignus visited every PE class to see what they were doing. Gymnastics was very popular as the students were fit and well able for it - they were much better able to hold their own body weight than nowadays. Creative dance was also very appealing and the students loved it. Sr. Benignus was a great support and was very interested especially in volleyball and she became the official scorekeeper for every home match.

I remember also the Staff Basketball Matches. A Staff Basketball league against the schools in the area was set up and we played against St. Oliver's Oldcastle, St. Louis Carrickmacross and St. Louis Dundalk.

The number of Students then was about 260. Staff about 20.

In 1976 I retired from Eureka as I was getting married that summer.

I returned to teach in Eureka in 1990 as a substitute P.E. teacher and later rejoined the staff on a permanent basis. There were great changes, most notably the number of students which was almost 800, the number of teachers which was greater than 50, along with the number of new buildings.

Despite the physical changes the ethos of the school lives on today and it is an honour to be part of it.

# Maura McEntee asks...

## Did you attend Eureka between 1967 - 1972? Do you remember...?

- The relief and excitement when the then Minister for Education, Donagh O'Malley announced Free Secondary Education for all and, even more important for those who lived far from town Free School Transport.
- A large body of students on that first day full of 'Great Expectations' (to pun on the title of one of our second year readers)
- Marian was the most popular name in the group.
- A mixed staff of Sisters and lay teachers introduced us to a much wider curriculum - Latin and French alongside Gaeilge and English, Maths, Commerce, History and Geography, Home Economics, Art, Christian Doctrine and Singing.
- We learned as much from mixing within this wider community of staff and students as we did from course content.
- The Christian Doctrine examination and the Bishop's Prize were a feature of the month of May in those early years.
- Were you lucky enough to enjoy a trip to the Gaeltacht?
- A group travelled to Rammafest, Co. Donegal at the end of First Year.
- The Building expansion that continued to accommodate growing numbers always gave an element of surprise in September.
- New staff members were also a feature of September and we were always eager to make their acquaintance.
- In Second year we were saddened by the death of a classmate, the late Miriam Farrelly of Moynalty, who in our minds is forever young. May she rest in peace.
- The teachers' strike (Spring 1969) - an unexpected holiday but with plenty of work to keep us going! Some girls found work and did not return to school.
- Tennis was the game we loved to play. Racquets were expensive and scarce. Do you remember the rush to the cupboard under the stairs for an illicit "bash around" before the owner caught up her property?!
- The tennis tournament in the lead up to the summer holidays.
- Third Year - Inter. Cert. Year and a lot of rote learning required for the examination. Can you still quote passages from the Merchant of Venice? The maths formulae come in useful when called on to help with current homework!
- Fifth year - Relief that this was not an examination year (some things never change). A new teacher introduced basketball to the school and many of our group were passionate about this sport. Matches were played on Saturdays. If you had no transport you walked rather than miss the match.
- The Halloween Bazaar began and became an annual event for many years. It was an enjoyable break from class and a valuable source of funds for the missions. The highlight was the raffle for a beautiful iced Christmas Cake made with great attention to decorations by Sr. Gerard.
- Leaving Cert. year - the focus was now on the leaving Certificate examination; passport to College or work. Yet we still found time to compete in Slógadh at Coláiste Mhuire, Dublin with a short sketch.
- Who could forget Hamlet at Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin?
- In the school year 1972/73 it was my privilege to repeat the Leaving Certificate a boarder at St. Catherine's, an opportunity for which I am ever grateful.

# A Boarder from the '60s remembers...

Rita Cummins (now Hanlon)

## A typical school day:

There were 70 boarders and every morning we got up at 7am, washed and went to Mass in the Convent church. This was followed by breakfast that consisted of fried brown bread and eggs. Then we would head off to school for 9 am, walking through the Church yard and across the style and the little river. We returned to the boarding school for dinner at 12:30 and then back to school from 1:15 until 3:50 pm. At 4 pm we had a snack of bread, jam and milk. This was followed by recreation until 5 pm that was in the bungalow in the garden if it was raining. We had study from 5-7 pm, a break for the Rosary and tea and study again from 8-9 pm.

## Weekends:

We had school for a half-day on Saturdays. On Saturdays and Sundays Fr. McCullen would read Sherlock Holmes to us in the summer. He would also give every student a rum and butter sweet. In winter months he read Curley Wee and also used a projector to show us pictures and captions. On Sundays he supplied and carved the meat for the students' dinner. We were allowed to watch television from 3-6 pm on Sundays. Wuthering Heights and the Old Curiosity shop were typical series at the time. We used to hang out the windows to listen to the bands playing in the St. Vincent de Paul Hall on Sunday nights.

## Memories:

The first Sunday of the month was the Child of Mary meeting in the school. We would go to Mary Caffrey's shop afterwards to get holy pictures and sweets for raffles. In the month of May there was a procession and rosary around the convent garden. All students from the Primary school and Eureka took part.

Outings included the annual pantomime and the Christmas concert was a highlight with Sr. Dominic including choirs, tin whistle and a little drama.

In autumn we would go to local orchards to pick the apples with which Sr. Gerard made apple tarts. She was a great cook and made beautiful fruit cakes and bread. Sr. Dymna ran the laundry.

The convent had a little farm and planted garden where potatoes, vegetables and fruit were grown. Sr. Berchmans was in the dairy where cows were also kept and butter was made from the milk.

Gymslips were kept pressed by placing them under the mattress every night.

An exciting memory was the time that the Eureka team were on the television programme called "Mark Time".

Thank you for the memories.



# Fiona McEntee (1971 - 1978) remembers...

**On hearing the request for memories of the years I spent in Eureka the floodgates open and I am transported back to a different time. Where could I possibly begin?**

My first year passed in a blur. Everything was new and different and I was a bit shy. This was not to last for long however! My strong memories start in the second year I spent in the school. I and 3 or 4 others were deemed too young to progress to 2nd year (something to do with our mothers sending us to school too young!). Sr. Benignus, our much loved and sometimes feared headmistress, advised us to "stay back". I moved up a stream and made new friends, among them Colette Dennison, Valerie O'Reilly and Kathleen Muldoon.

It is to Kathleen my thoughts turn this evening, as they have very much recently, as the Valentine night tragedy that befell those 48 young people and their families in the Stardust Ballroom is relived and remembered 25 years on. Kathleen was one of those who lost their lives that night but Kathleen or 'Mul' as she liked to be known will forever stay in my memory as a happy, bubbly, outgoing schoolgirl who loved life and enjoyed a party!

On leaving Eureka in June 1978 we all wrote in each others "Doss Books" and as I open mine the first 5 pages are filled with Kathleen's memories of basketball games, trips to Dublin to see 'Coriolanus' and 'Joseph and the amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' and of course the many 'Horslips' concerts we attended around the country. We had many laughs and happy times together and I wish she was here today to relive them with us. Ar Dheis De

Never being very academic I preferred the sports activities at school. I was lucky to be chosen as Captain of the basketball team (the fact that my sister was about to marry Ms. Ushers brother had nothing to do with it I'm sure!). Many weekends were spent travelling the length and breadth of the country to basketball matches, sometimes with great success and others with disappointment as we suffered a 'near miss' or humiliating defeat. In her absence Val Mulvany stood in for Christine. I can still hear him shouting "Fiona don't turn your back on the ball". This became one of my life's mottos; To this day I always try to keep my eye on the ball!

Second year was tough for me as my father died suddenly at the age of 57. I will never forget the kindness shown to me and my family by the sisters of Mercy and my school pals at that time.

Inter. Cert. came and went. I don't think I spent too much time worrying about it as I had already decided I wanted to be a nurse and knew exactly what I needed to achieve this.

5th year was an exciting one for us (no transition year then). Sr. Gertrude very bravely offered to take a group of us on a trip to the Champagne district of France. 17 giddy schoolgirls and 2 teachers. What a task! But they managed it very well and I developed a love of France and all things French ever since - not to mention the Champagne! Ms. Burke was our wonderful geography teacher and while we 17 were discovering France the remainder of the class explored the Burren and told us of the great time they had.

Our Leaving Cert. year arrived rapidly and suddenly we were all expected to act responsibly and knuckle down. So why didn't we feel any different? Kathleen, Colette, Valerie, Verna, Sue and I were still Horslips fans but had outgrown our "Bay City Roller" days of tartan hats, scarfs and trousers and the "Sha-La-La-La" songs that used to drive the teachers mad. Thoughts of Leaving Cert. Maths with Sr. Benignus, Irish (Sr. Pauline), English (Mr. Mulvaney), German (Ms. Clarke), History (Mr. Noone), Geography (Ms. Burke), Science (Mrs. Lacy), and Religion (Ms. McEntee) didn't seem to bother us too much as we laughed our way through those happy days.

Exam time passed and as we waited anxiously for results we prepared for our last "Get together", our "Debs" in the Headfort Arms. 'What to wear' and 'who to bring'? The big night arrived and we all had a great time under the strict supervision of the Sisters and teachers. I seem to recall the lights being turned on 'full' at frequent intervals!

After that we all went our separate ways. Kathleen Dunne, Helen Farrell and I started our Nurse training in the Mater, Dublin, thereby continuing our 'Mercy' education.

Many years later I went to work in California and eventually found myself in 'St. Johns', Oxnard (near Santa Barbara), where I was welcomed not only as an Irish trained Nurse and Midwife but as "A MERCY GIRL" and one of 'their own'.

I am proud to say that I am still working with the Sisters of Mercy and wish to thank them for all the education, support and care I have received since starting convent school in Kells at the age of 3. Ta me buioch daoibh uile.

# Boarding School Memories...

Margo McNamee Leaving Cert. 1977

The boarding school, situated on the convent grounds, was called St. Catherine's. It was a three storey building near the old primary school. The ground floor consisted of the kitchen, refectory, pantry and locker rooms. The next floor had a TV room, toilets, study and a small dormitory. The top floor consisted of the two main dormitories, toilets, bathroom and the nun's bedroom.

The number of pupils residing in the boarding school varied from year to year. In the early days, pupils came from as far as Dublin and Donegal as well as Meath, Cavan and Westmeath. Prior to 1972 pupils remained in the school over the weekends, going home only once a month. But in later years pupils were free to go home at weekends as well as holidays. As bus services improved and secondary schools opened in other towns, the number of boarders slowly decreased, until in 1980 St. Catherine's was closed. The building was demolished in 1983.



*St Catherine's Boarding School.*

Sr. Evangelist was in charge of the boarders. She lived in St. Catherine's with the boarders and had her own bedroom beside the dormitory. Sr. Berchmans and Sr. Gerard looked after the cooking with help of Mary Martin. A typical day started at 7am when Sr. Evangelist rang a bell to waken us for 7.45 Mass. We dressed and made our way to the Nuns chapel in the convent wearing our mantillas. On our return breakfast was served in the refectory. This consisted of cornflakes, a hard boiled egg and Spicer's sliced bread and tea. We all brought our own eggs from home and had our names clearly written on them so there was no mix up. We all helped to tidy up and then we headed off to Eureka.

We had dinner in the boarding school during the school lunch time and after an afternoon's work in Eureka we headed back to St. Catherine's around 4pm. We had a snack of scones and tea and when we finished a few chores we had some free time. Often we headed to the "bungalow" which was a shed located at the back of the building near the gardens. We had an old record player with a few scratched records and we spent our time teaching each other how to jive and waltz. At 5pm we went to the study to do our homework. The rosary was recited two hours later by the sister who was supervising us. The highlight of the week was watching Top of the Pops in the TV room. Every November we were delighted to be allowed to watch the Miss. World competition.

When bed time arrived we went to our cubicles. Each cubicle was divided by a partition. We had a sink and a small wardrobe each. When Sr. Evangelist switched off the main lights it was time to take out our torches. Some pupils lay in bed reading and others wandered into a friend's cubicle for a chat.

Visitors were welcome on Sundays and they could take us out for a drive. We really looked forward to that because it meant that we could get some goodies to bring back and hide in our wardrobes for a midnight feast!

## Marie-Therese Lacy (Science teacher) looks back

Prior to my getting married and moving to Kells in July of 1973 Sr. Benignus had asked me to consider teaching science in Eureka as she had just built a new science room but did not have a Dept. of Ed. position for a science teacher. So in Sept. '73 I started teaching science and travelling to Maynooth to do my H.Dip.Ed. Thinking back now I shudder at the thought but I had youth and enthusiasm on my side. As there was only one science teacher the pupils studying the science subjects were particularly committed students which made life very easy for me. I taught in the lovely new Science Room and the pupils came there for class which at that time was a novelty in itself. Besides teaching the scheduled topics we had great fun examining the numerous examples of flora and fauna brought in by the pupils. We also learned a lot together as we opened the boxes of scientific equipment which had been ordered by Sr. Benignus with the help of the science teacher in the Christian Brothers Secondary School. It was a voyage of discovery for all of us. I have nothing only very happy memories of teaching science in Eureka, of the staff, the pupils and the great enthusiasm for the sciences.

# Memories from Martina Maguire (1975 - 1980)

I was first introduced to Sr Benignus when I was 7 years old, my neighbour went to visit her to show off her new baby and I went with her. I always remember “Benig” saying to me that when the time came I might go to Eureka, so when the time came all my friends were going to the Vocational School in Virginia, but my childhood friend Geraldine Smith was a year ahead of me and going to Eureka, so my Mum (R.I.P.) found out about the entrance exam from Ger’s mum and I’m really glad she did.

In Sept 1975 I headed off to Eureka. I had Mr. Leonard Noone for Spanish and it wasn’t long before I was playing in goals for the Soccer team (I already played in goals at Ladies Football). He and Mr. John Broderick took a fantastic interest in the soccer and took us all over the place in their cars. I think the team and all the subs used to pile into the two cars (before seat belt regulations) and off we’d go from Ballyjamesduff to Dundalk.

Speaking of Dundalk, 1977 was the highlight of my life and I will always cherish the evening we played in Oriel Park under flood lights, in the Final of the Maytime Festival against the mighty Suffer Jets. They had three international players on their team but they were in for a big shock as were we. I can’t remember the score but I will always remember the feeling of walking out onto the pitch and to win the match was just fantastic. Later on that year I won 2 All Ireland medals for Ladies Football with Cavan, so it was a magical time for a 14 yr old.

When I went looking for photos, I came across my Doss Book from Leaving Cert., Bernie Faulkner reminded me about the day I got up and jived with Maureen Dolan - something I had forgotten all about, she taught me Maths and Accountancy. I can always remember when Paddy Keoghan supervised our class he would put crosswords up on the board out of his head.

## **Bríanan Fox (1974 - 1980) remembers...**

My main memories of my years in Eureka are of the sport. There was always an opportunity to join in a game of whatever you fancied. The morning and afternoon breaks were just long enough for a quick game of soccer, whereas lunch was reserved for the more serious games of basketball, gymnastics and volleyball. It was wonderful, the schedule kept us so busy we didn’t have time to go wandering around the town getting into trouble, and, looking back on it now it was such an advantage in later life as we were encouraged to try games we would never get the opportunity to try otherwise and it meant we could always keep up some level of fitness after school. Athletics and swimming were also very popular extra-curricular sports. I was very keen on athletics.

## **Paula Murphy (1977 - 1982) recalls**

- Lunchtime was spent in the gym. There was no canteen in those days. We sat on the floor, along the radiators and on the stage.
- We wore slippers in the school buildings. Shoes had to be exchanged for slippers as soon as we arrived in school, regardless of the weather!
- I remember having public speaking classes in First Year under the tuition of Sr. Eileen. We were entered for public speaking exams. I still have my certificates.
- In Fifth Year, Mary McNiffe (Smyth at the time) brought us on a wonderful weekend trip to the Burren. Other teachers including Liam McNiffe and Maria Burke also accompanied us. We travelled in the teachers’ cars. Having spent the day time studying the Burren landscape we relaxed in the evening playing charades with the teachers in the Youth Hostel.



# My time in Eureka as a PE teacher 1976 - 1987

Theresa Hereward-Ryan

**My introduction to Eureka was both pleasant and fruitful when one afternoon in early August, 1976 I hitched a lift from Dublin to Kells to meet and attend for interview in the Convent of Mercy. Eureka was recommended to me on the advice of a classmate who was also interested in the job and she subsequently took up a post in Dublin.**

To this day I wonder how Sister Benignus knew so much about me but as I got to know her later I realise that she had made the relevant phone calls. Her kindness and understanding made me feel that a job in Eureka was to be my destiny and that there and then, I was to progress from being a young and ambitious graduate of The National College of Physical Education to a permanent teacher of P.E. and Irish. Sr. Benignus pointed out all the advantages of living in Kells and listed off all the 'exiles' from the west of Ireland who were domiciled in Meath and successfully getting on with their various careers. To this day, I wonder if Sister Benignus noticed the big hole in my 'lucky' red jumper but nevertheless, as the 'interview' proceeded and quickly moved from the parlour to the kitchen, it is possible that the dress code was somehow appropriate. Any and all the apprehensions I had about becoming a teacher and moving to Kells on the following September were dispelled on being offered the job and the added attraction of payment for doing something which I loved anyway.

Nowadays, PE and Irish teachers are expected to write subject and lesson plans but even in those days, I scribbled notes and had great ambitions for PE in Eureka. These plans were gradually realised as I met the many gifted and motivated girls who were only too willing to take part in any activity I recommended as part of their PE programme.

Also, it was made all the more easy for me when other staff members wholeheartedly helped out with extracurricular activities and indeed participated in the many lunch-time basketball matches. Saturday matches were the norm when many of the basketball matches took place as part of the Meath and Midland League competitions. Eureka met with various levels of success during the years and our enthusiasm for participation was never lacking. There were many great matches in Basketball and Volleyball where Eureka girls excelled to bring home the medals but most of all pride and glory by their exemplary behaviour on and of the court. It soon became obvious to me that I should tap into the vast array of skills in athletics, field sports, aquatics, tennis, dance, gymnastics and a myriad of other skills which the girls possessed and acquired from their participation in Eureka and in out of school clubs and societies. The 'Superstars' mania was rampant at the time and it was only natural that the girls in Eureka should pit their wits and talents against the clock and the elements in the Eureka version of Superstars. From September every year, we planned and plotted the activities, the number of repetitions, the number of eligible participants, rules, scoring and recording systems, along with the timing and venues to best show off the skills of the many athletes. I recall many exciting finishes when the girls in the final event, the 1500 metres race around the school grounds, vied for position on the starting-line to get the best advantage for a good start. It would be unwise for me at this juncture and distance to mention the winners but I recall some brilliant performances by Catherine Smith, Deirdre Smith, Anne Morris and Joanne Fitzgerald and others, too many to mention. I recall the joy for the competitors and the winners. Hopefully the girls benefited from their experiences. This journey down memory lane gives me the opportunity to sincerely thank the Eureka staff who obliged me by allowing the girls extra time out of class and all those girls who so willingly participated to make the 'Eureka Superstars' competition the fun competition it was for the all rounded athlete.

Le gach dea-ghuí

# Sister Gertrude remembers... some French classes

When more emphasis was being put on spoken French, I had a very enthusiastic group of First Years. It was during the second term that the lesson for the day was a recipe for a fruit dish. "Oh please Sister, lets do this fruit dish in the cookery room." I agreed, provided French was spoken at each stage of the preparation. Mrs. Kitty McGonagle gave the required permission for us to use the cookery room. I don't know if a native French speaker would quite understand, but between laughter and the many directions given "en francais" by all together, a lovely fruit melange was produced and, typical of the girls' generosity, a large share was given to the teachers at the 11.00 am break!

This happened in a Second year class. Again the subject matter of our French lesson was a recipe for a mouth-watering dessert. "Oh Sister, my mammy makes Black Forest gateau", "And mine makes cheesecake" etc. "And what do you like to make Sister?" asks Denise McCarthy. "I make Black Forest gateau now and again" said I. "Oh please Sister, if we bring you the ingredients will you please make us Black Forest gateau?" With some difficulty I geared the conversation to some other topic, but occasionally the request would resurface.

Late in the third term, one day at the end of class I said "Bring a plate with you to school tomorrow and we'll have a party". A big cheer went up and I said "Hush, we must do things very quietly". Next day the promised enormous gateau arrived. The girls brought lots of minerals and other dainties and all enjoyed an unusual break from class. While lots of French is forgotten over the years, the party is still fresh in their memories.

## Martina Madden (1983 - 1988) remembers...

I finished in Eureka in June 1988, almost 18 years ago. However, recalling my time there was easy. It seems like yesterday when I was handing up homework to Mr. McNiffe, Mrs. McNiffe, Mr. Broderick, Mr. Donagh, Ms. Bird, Miss. Nolan, Miss. Corcoran...I could name them all! They were a great group of teachers. We were worked very hard but we also had good fun at times. Basketball was a great love of mine at school. In our minds we had a great team! Beatrice Keane, Mary Collins, Una O Keeffe, Anne Gilsenan, Shirley Gillic and myself. We got to the Meath final each year but only won it once. We loved going to the matches, the singing on the bus, the chanting and cheering at the games. We wore wrap around games skirts - I hope the teams today have nicer gear! As seniors we used to help out with the training of the first years on a small outdoor court with low baskets. I remember most Fridays there was a basketball match between students and teachers. Ms. Bird, Mr. Daly, Mr. Yore, Mr. Keogan all played and usually won !

I remember taking part in variety concerts at school. Una O'Keeffe and myself sang and did a comedy act. We were so proud of ourselves when we won a prize. I have a clear memory of Sr. Pauline asking us the next day if we would be interested in a career in showbiz! I'm afraid neither of us followed that path!

We also had great fun the year we did an "Adrian Mole" play with Mr. McNiffe. We put on performances for the students and parents. The excitement of dressing up and putting on make up was great. And we were very impressed with the party that Mr. and Mrs. McNiffe had for us after the shows. I still remember the lovely food!

In fifth year, 1986-87, Orla McCaffrey, Nicole Rourke, Karen Berrill and myself took part in a debating competition run by Junior Chamber of Commerce. The teachers who coached us were Ms. Bird, Miss. Nolan and Miss. Burke. I clearly remember practising my speech in the geography room with Miss. Nolan correcting my pronunciation! We qualified for the final. The motion in the final was "That full employment was an unattainable ideal". We opposed the motion and were lucky enough to win.

Our general school life was a happy one. We loved excursions to the Geography room, sitting at those chairs with rests for your books. We felt very like college students while in that room! I can still hear Miss. Burke holding us enthralled with her descriptions of rainforests.

A trip upstairs to the religion room over in the old building was even more exciting. Miss. O' Brien had endless patient discussions with us about smoking, drink etc. Anything out of the norm was great as far as we were concerned!

1983 to 1988 were great years. Eureka was then a school that provided a wide variety of opportunities to students - from academic to sport to drama etc. My thanks to all my teachers. Congratulations to the school on its anniversary and I wish all there many more years of success.

## Madeleine Monaghan (1984 - 1989) remembers...

My most precious memories are of my dear friend Sacha Flanagan. I thank God I had years to share with her as a best buddie. I remember spending our summers writing a daily journal that Sacha and I would then exchange on our first day back at school. They were pretty dull - but funny. I still have those journals. We sat beside each other in English and in Home Economics. She dreamt of opening her own restaurant in Dublin - a posh one of course. Sacha died far too young. Her memory lives on in our hearts.

## Fodhla McGrane looks back...

I was the first daughter of Ronnie and Attracta McGrane to be educated at Eureka. During 1985 - 1990, it was under the direction of Sr Pauline and Sr Joan. My sisters, Roisin and Erin, followed a few years later.

From a multitude of warm memories, I distinctly recall a new language that my best friend and I created from a mish-mash of the four languages we studied: English, Irish, French and German. This provided great amusement when practising for our exams, especially when describing such complexities as the reproduction of seaweed (from biology class). It wasn't so useful when our examinations were coloured by the language mix! 'Agus' was the most frequent word I used in my French oral.

I was tasked with the responsibility of ringing the bell at the end of each class, a true challenge on those warm, sleepy mornings! A great lesson in time-keeping.

My over-riding memory is of the pastoral care that we received in abundance from the teachers and staff at Eureka. During each year, we were accompanied by good-humoured, lively, generous, and well-informed teachers. They looked after us with 'selfless commitment' and prepared us young ones, who would soon leave the comfortable surrounds of Kells, to venture into new learning pastures.

May I express my deepest thanks to all of my teachers for the many opportunities they gave us which we continue to seize.

God bless,  
Fodhla McGrane

# Olivia Duff (1989 - 1995) looks back...

I believed Sr. Joan when she stated in frustration that Room 16 was the most challenging lot she had encountered in many a day as Principal. When I recollect the antics we participated in as a group on a daily basis, I wish I could re-invent just a snippet of that fun in my working life now, it really summed up the saying that 'school days are the best days of your life'. There was the feeling in first year that the Room 16 gang were there to stay, nothing would separate us in the five years to follow and indeed we would stand firm as a group in the face of trouble! As the years passed class dynamics changed (much to the relief of teachers) and new friendships were forged. As priorities changed so too did interests.

For me, my great extracurricular memories were based around representing the school in Equestrian sports, primarily show jumping and cross country. We travelled the length and breadth of the country in pursuit of red ribbons. What a great achievement it was to travel from Kells to Kilkenny with two teams to the All Ireland Cross Country Championships and for us to return to Royal County soil with 1st and 2nd Rosettes. The point I hesitate to admit is the fact that the team returning with the Red Rosette and All Ireland Schools title was the Kells Community School! Out of 120 teams entered the boys beat us girls by 6 seconds into 2nd place, it was still a wonderful achievement on our part and great to know that the tradition remains as strong as ever in the school, come on girls!

Other poignant memories revolve around Singing and Public Speaking. Miss Lyne was the ultimate disciplinarian when it came to achieving the best in Choral Competition. So many school lunch times were spent in the stuffy and overcrowded religion room repeating our mantras in preparation for Dublin Competition. There was no room for mime in this harmonic group of Soprano firsts never mind the far reaching fourths, no, no this was serious stuff. When competition day would come however we gave everything we had and other schools dreaded the sight of the blue Eureka garb taking to the stage as they knew we were not there for a day out in the city, we meant business!

And then there was Public Speaking, Miss O'Connell and Mr. Broderick tutored us standing upright on top of tables in the library, 'ok, let's have two minutes on the subject; toast, please!' In my time we achieved well in Soroptimist Competitions where the theme of speech invariably surrounded a feminist subject. I can still remember lines from one speech 'Behind every great man is a great woman'. The only difference was that I was unwilling to accept this statement and insisted that it should be 'In front of every great man was a great woman'! It was hard to take in at the time how this would be 'character building' and 'stand to you in life' but indeed it did, even if the subject matter these days is a lot more serious than toast...



# Fond Memories of Eureka

Sr. Eileen Mulvihill

In June I graduated from College. In September of the same year I commenced my teaching career in Eureka Secondary School. I then taught Irish, Religion and Home Economics. I recall those early years as being very happy ones. There was a lovely relationship between teachers and students. The school was surrounded by rhododendrons which, in late spring and early summer, set the area ablaze with colourful blooms. I enjoyed sitting outside with some of the pupils during break times enjoying the sun, the chat and the fun.

In June 1961 I was informed by the Superior that I was needed in Baltimore, Maryland, USA to fill a teaching post there. Need I say that it was with great reluctance that I agreed to embark on this mission. However, in retrospect, I was glad of the opportunity to experience a very different culture. The warmth and hospitality of the American people was unbelievable.

In June 1964 I was recalled to resume my former teaching post. As a result of the American experience, I now saw a greater need for the education of the whole person. To fulfil this objective I set about broadening the students' horizons by inviting them to compete in various cultural activities, such as choral groups, solo singing, drama, dancing and elocution. Educational tours were also on the agenda. We visited Powerscourt House and Gardens, the Silent Valley in Co. Down, the Japanese Gardens, the Wax Museum and many more, too numerous to mention. One that stands out in my memory is a trip to Dáil Éireann organised by Senator Jack Fitzsimons for the Fifth Year students. The Dáil was in session on the same day and the exchange of views between the Taoiseach and individual ministers was both interesting and informative.

In the early seventies, at the pupils' request, Sr. Anne Marie and I established a Youth Club for Eureka to meet pupils' needs. All clubs in Kells at that time were mainly male oriented. We decided to embark on this new venture for the benefit of the pupils. The St. Vincent de Paul hall was made available to us every Friday night. Activities included talent competitions, board games, question time, dancing and preparing concerts for the public. It was also decided by us that, on a monthly basis, these young ladies could bring along their male friends to a disco. DJs were not difficult to find and much enjoyment was had by all. Socially this was a good learning experience for all those lovely young people.

With the increase in the student population, the Department of Education saw the need for establishing Career Guidance and Counselling Centres in post-primary schools. Training Centres were set up and teachers were requested to avail of this training if interested. Once again, I was the person who was asked to embark on this post-graduate course. I did so in 1975 and it proved to be of enormous benefit to myself personally and to the pupils under my care.

On graduating as a Career Guidance Counsellor I set up office in the school where I met pupils on a one to one basis. I also introduced Career Guidance as a classroom subject. Interest inventories and Aptitude tests were administered to Junior Cert. and Leaving Cert. students to give some direction to their choice of a career. Interview preparation and practice was of utmost importance for Leaving Cert. students.

Enabling students to reach their full potential was a priority. For this reason I encouraged them to join Debating and Public Speaking groups. We sometimes travelled long distances to compete. Occasionally we came home with trophies but the most important part of the exercise was for them to acquire relevant life skills.

My favourite pastime was playing tennis and badminton with the pupils and teachers. Interested students played in various competitions and a bus was often hired to transport players and their supporters to the venues.

In 1991 I decided to retire from Eureka. I still hold treasured memories of all the Eureka students who throughout the years shared their hopes and their dreams with me. I sincerely hope they are all happy in their chosen careers.

# Sr. Pauline looks back

In 1956 Eureka House was surrounded by flowers in the Spring - daffodils pushing up through the grass on all sides, and rhododendrons populating the slopes in front and the area behind the tennis courts. There were lilacs there too, and other flowering shrubs. Nowadays the rhododendrons are almost all gone, the daffodils covered up by the tarmac to provide parking spaces for teachers (and sometimes pupils)!

In the house electric wall heaters provided heating. It is only recently that these have been removed. They remained lifeless for many years, a testament to the days before central heating. In 1967 a boiler was installed for the house, fuelled at first by solid fuel. This has served the school well - it was only replaced in 2005!

These days classes change to the sound of an electric bell. In bygone days there was a gong. Later there was a hand bell, and some lucky student was appointed to leave class early and to ring the bell all around the school. Recently there was a power cut, and when Sr. Joan went out after lunch to ring the hand bell, all the pupils laughed. They had not seen one before.

There were two staff rooms then, upstairs and downstairs. The 'lay' teachers were upstairs, and they wore their gowns to class. The sisters were downstairs, and they did not wear gowns. Life was not so stressful then. Classes began at 9.25 a.m. each day, and finished at ten past four. There were eight class periods in the day, each 45 minutes long. There was a morning break and an afternoon tea break. Tuesday evenings there was a class called 'Tuesday activities'. During these classes pupils had a choice of many activities, from crafts, board games, cookery and even card playing. There were parties too for the staff, each year they were entertained in the convent. The weather must have been colder then, as each year we were bound to have a few 'snow days' when the school had to be closed. Pupils would arrive in to have a 'snowball fight' with their teachers, and it was great fun. One day Sr. Benignus, the Principal, was complaining to two teachers about the pupils throwing snowballs, not realising that the two teachers had snowballs behind their backs themselves, ready to take part!!! There was a bicycle shed then, and it was filled each morning as many students cycled to school. Now, there is not a bicycle to be seen.

The Leaving Cert. Graduation consisted of Mass followed by a party in the gym. It ended when the bell went for the end of class at ten past four. There was no school oratory. The existing oratory was then the Library. The Religion room was a sewing room. The existing Library was partly an Art room. There was a small room at the end of it that was at different times an office and a computer room. 'Miss Duffy's room' was a video room. The Reception room was at different times a remedial room, a staff room, the secretaries office. The deputy principal's office was a typing room, a staff tearoom, a music room, and the secretaries' office. The present 'tea room' and typing room was the Home Economics room, an Art room, a music room, and the staff tearoom. Sr. Columba taught typing for many years, and her students were very successful in getting jobs with their typing skills.

Looking after the grounds and buildings we had some illustrious caretakers. Mr. Terry Murphy looked after everything until 1986. After him came Mr. Philip Kane, who served the school for many years until his retirement in 1999. Mrs. Maggie Black (RIP), and her team also took good care of the school. These included Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Molly Arkins, Mrs. Carmel Smith, Mrs. Elsie Power, Mrs. May Rogers. Each Summer there was work to be done, cleaning, building and renovating, and Charlie Reilly (RIP), and his A team, including Charles and Martin, John, Danny, Cathal Usher, the plumber, and Gerard Nugent, the electrician, made sure that each September everything was in order for a new year. In fact, there was always so much activity during the Summer that the teachers would be disappointed if they returned in September and nothing had changed!! All that was done in the pre-Celtic Tiger days when there was no money.

In 1981 we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the beginning of Eureka Secondary School. Fr. Sean Garland, who was the chaplain then, celebrated Mass in the Parish Church, and all were invited to the school for a cup of tea. Mrs. McGonagle and Mrs. Monaghan, with the assistance of the members of the Parents' Council, provided the catering for this event. It was a very successful and enjoyable celebration.

I look forward to our celebration of the 50th Anniversary, and wish Eureka Secondary School, the pupils present and future, the teachers, parents, and all concerned happiness and success in the years to come.

# Memories of my secondary school days

Susan Foley (1990 - 1995)

At 12 years of age I had heard great things about Eureka Secondary School when I had been in the playground in Our Lady of Mercy Primary School, just down the hill from Eureka. Plenty of challenging sports, a variety of new subjects to study, a different teacher for every class, and the chance to meet new friends as girls gathered from nearby towns, villages and countryside to come to Eureka, Kells. I remember I had to complete an entrance exam when I was in 6th class in primary school - quite daunting!

My first day dawned in September 1990. My uniform consisted of royal blue pinafore, light blue blouse, blue v - neck jumper, navy tights or knee socks. Apparently it was not cool to wear your navy socks pulled up; navy opaque tights were the way forward! I remember I was so small that I had to get my jumper knitted specially. This was a special day in the Foley household; it was my first day in secondary school and it was my Mum's first day back to teach PE.

Eureka Secondary School certainly opened a new chapter in my life. I became involved in almost every sporting activity and represented the school on basketball, volleyball, tennis, cross - country running, showjumping teams. I was very lucky to have been a member of the 1991 Tennis team that won the U 14 Leinster Schoolgirls Title along with Claire Berrill, Anne Bradley, Sinead Usher, Nora Barry and Nessa Olohan. We played our final match in Sutton Tennis Club in Dublin against Mount Anville.

I have fond memories of participating in two school musicals "The Sound of Music" and "The Boyfriend". This involved energy, commitment and after - school training from Ms. Keaney, Mrs Yore, and Ms. Lyne. We had such fun. Sadly two of the girls from the Sound of Music are no longer with us; Róisín Morris and Caroline McGrath.

In fifth year in February 1994 I had the opportunity to go on a trip to London and Paris on an Art Tour. Our chaperone teachers included Geralyn Corcoran, Loretta Reilly, John Daly and Dolores Smith. Johanna Cooke, Roisin Kelly, Caroline Mc Garr and Caitriona Coyne were some of the student gang that went along. In London we visited the Tate Gallery, saw 'Miss Saigon' on the West End, did a tour of all London's historical and famous landmarks. We continued to Paris where we visited the Louvre, the Rodin Gallery, and all the exciting landmarks in Paris. It was Valentine's day, it snowed and we went up the top of the Eiffel tower in the elevator. How romantic!! I remember the busload of girls hopping out at a market and nearly everyone bought a velvet hat - I still have mine!

Special memories for me include breaktimes. In the canteen in Eureka we had a shop where Phillip, his wife Kate, and Sr. Columba sold all sorts of goodies. All my pals would meet up after class for break and catch up on all the news. I remember a purple snack bar cost 20p, my favourite chocolate bar at the time. At lunchtimes you could purchase soup and a roll. I remember racing round to try and beat the lunchtime queue so I could quickly eat my lunch and play sport during the break. I loved basketball and volleyball at lunchtime!

Eureka Secondary school is where I completed my Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate, the biggest academic challenge of my life (or so I thought at the time!). I was the second year to go through the Junior Certificate programme after the old Inter Cert. finished. I realise now that these exams were mere stepping-stones to help me on the road to find my chosen career. I was very lucky to have had the opportunity to learn a broad range of subjects at Eureka like business, languages and science to give me more options at a time in my life when I did not know what I wanted to become.

A big thank you to the staff at Eureka for all the happy memories and all the opportunities that studying there has brought me.

## Caitriona Moore (1993 - 1999) looks back

During my school years in Eureka, I seemed to spend the majority of my time making elaborate drawings on my schoolbooks and somehow turning History and Irish assignments into art projects. When the opportunity to do Transition Year came along I jumped at the chance to turn the year into an extended art class, using it as an opportunity to simultaneously put together a portfolio for art college, enter art competitions and get my hands dirty making posters and painting stage sets for our various show-biz endeavours.

The highlight of that year was a talent show we lovingly cobbled together called 'Talentspotting' - the title chosen as a reference to a popular film playing in the cinemas at the time. It was a great thrill for all of us as a team to see everything fall into place at show-time with a full house and a platter of superb talent treading the boards.

I continued to enter art competitions and in 1998 I was lucky enough to be chosen as the national winner of the Children's Hospital poster competition. It was a great boost in terms of deciding if a career in the art-world was a viable one, as was the support and freedom given to me in school.



# There Were Seven Sisters

The Miss. Murtaghs - Deirdre, Angela, Nuala, Camilla, Della, Bernadette and Úna

Eureka's influence on our family started in Sept 1979, Bernadette was only two months old, Úna wasn't born while Deirdre had donned the blue uniform for the first time and a twenty one year relationship between the Murtagh family and Eureka Secondary School had begun.

In the conversations trying to put this article together, the warm and colourful memories of our years in Eureka which have come flooding back could quite literally fill more than a book. What follows are a few snapshots of our time in school, which hopefully will give a flavour of our experiences there, and help to illustrate why we are all glad that was our chosen place of education.

...playing for the school camogie team in Oldcastle and Virginia with Miss. Byrne...

...the creativity of the Bazaars and fundraising ideas including the teachers skipping competition, Mr. and Mrs. Eureka competition and a host of other crazy ideas. Lunchtime talent competitions with numerous entries of "The Rose" and the repeat Leaving Cert. boys band achieving almost celebrity status - Michael Wilcox, Pádraig McNamee and Freddie Cooke (with his moonwalk dance) drove the girls wild with their performances!...

...attending a forum on disability in Dublin and being stunned when a man revealed his homosexuality...

...In fifth year biology class when the topic was the elements essential to human health, Lawna Carolan came up with a mnemonic for a list which included - Sodium, Phosphorous, Calcium, Potassium, Iron, Chlorine. Her memorable sentence was "Sr. Pauline always likes to keep order in Classrooms." Three remaining elements - Carbon, Hydrogen and Oxygen still needed to be included. Quick as a flash, Mr. Yore added "Columba Helps Out!" How apt!...

...not being able to take your jumper off for months because the top of your pinafore was missing...

...the terrific choice of activities available in Civics class (last class on Tuesdays). Among those we took up were quiz, knitting, guitar lessons and singing...

...the family elation at the final of the Soroptomist Public Speaking Competition when Nuala won the All-Ireland and a trip to Copenhagen...

...rushing to try and finish homework in the mornings before classes started - the bus dropped us in an hour early for school...

...The hilarity of being hoisted up to go through the window of a bus to retrieve the keys which had been locked inside...

...getting to the final of the first year high jump on a sunny sports day...

...relief when an eye appointment coincided with the day one of us was suspended for playing tennis in a classroom - our parents never knew...

...debating as gaeilge in Newtownforbes...

...the thrill of receiving results necessary for our chosen careers...

In June 2000 Úna finished her Leaving Cert. and disrobed the pleated blue uniform for the last time. Deirdre, working in tourism, Angela a nurse and Nuala, a teacher, were married, Camilla a doctor, Della an occupational therapist, Bernadette in college in Longford and Úna was accepted into medicine in NUI Galway. Eureka had provided a total of 39 years of very high quality, inclusive and open-minded education to our family - responding to the diverse needs and interests of each one of us. And so it is with a sense of immense joy and gratitude that we offer this article on the occasion of fifty years of the school. The collective community of Eureka has been very kind to us seven sisters. The education received there still impacts on and informs our lives almost daily. Our wish can only be that present and future students of Eureka will have as many good experiences, good memories, good opportunities and good friends as we have from our time there.

# Memories from Aisling Mc Niffe (1998 - 2003)

Eureka: how much it changed and how much I changed within the five years. The tears for the first month as a heavy bag, more than a dozen subjects and teachers replaced the secure cocoon that was Primary School. And then...things changed and suddenly I loved it.

There were never enough hours in the day and being at home was much less fun as you had homework and no friends, whereas in school there were chats before school in the canteen, break time gossip and fun. There was the school Christmas concert, and then the talent show. When I was in first year, the repeat Leaving Certs. (the few fortunate males) performed the Beatles song "Help" to an ecstatic audience one otherwise dreary lunchtime in February. Second and Third year went by...new friends came with subject choices but the dreaded uniform jacket remained. The last few months were always bitter sweet: the smell of freshly cut grass and lunchtimes rolling down the hills versus evening study, revision and exams. For some, there followed Transition year with bonding weekends, musicals, Spanish, first aid, legal studies, work experience and the time of their life. Others ploughed on with arguably the least liked year: Fifth Year! Although again, new friends as classes were changed, new repeats and former Transition Years joined. Of course, thank God there was more than just books with sport-soccer during lunchtime and after school with Mr. Noone who gave out equally to and about the team whether they won or lost, basketball and the sound of the ball bouncing on the courts, camogie and horse riding. There was art, which always looked so elegant in the sunlit room looking onto the lawn. There was debating in English and Irish in the religion room, the canteen, the thinking, preparation for it all, and then the ultimate adrenalin rush for those few minutes whilst you spoke and argued, and the post mortems and tears that followed. There was the Student Forum, the library, the choir and musicals and the sound of the piano and guitar as melodies were repeated to an attentive and not such an attentive choir. There were the geography school tours to the bog, the Burren or places that just were plain backward! There were concerts in Dublin of a classical and not such a classical type. There were plays, usually Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice and Romeo and Juliet for the Junior Classes and Hamlet, Macbeth and Othello for the more senior when suddenly all the lines read, reread and analysed came alive and it actually moved you. And of course, there were the characters: staff and students. Teachers who bored you, who inspired you, who tried to reason with you about trigonometry, French verbs and the rules of rounders (What rules?!) The few classes where the banter was great and the learning rapport fuelled by a lively teacher who cared as much about their subject as they did about their class. The corrected homework and tests and essays, which, although resented at the time, made sense in hindsight. And then, it was nearly all over as you donned the Navy V neck with just a little pride in knowing that you were now most senior in the hierarchy that was Eureka. Teachers suddenly seemed on your side against an exam system. CAO forms, Mocks, Orals, Practicals followed and then there was talk of the graduation ceremony and it all seemed so surreal. Even those who dreamt of escaping since forever realised that this was it. An emotional graduation night before the foreboding exams happened as you realised that all that was left was you, friends and the future.

Eureka : what more could I have wanted?!

## Carol Gilsenan (1999 - 2005) remembers...

I recall my first day in Eureka as if it were yesterday. A small, meek twelve year old in my crisp, new royal blue uniform. I was instantly lost amidst the sea of similar children about to charter the unknown territory of "Secondary School". I wondered if I would ever find myself amongst the others who were busy dipping their toes into the murky waters of independence. But as I gritted my teeth, discarded my water wings and waded in, I knew that although I was only at the shallow end of the pool, this was the start of something great. I remember First Year in Room 34, where life wasn't worth living if you got a B or if you weren't picked to read aloud from the book in Mr. Noone's history class. I remember 3rd Year in Room 14, where the looming Junior Certificate was made to seem like the 'be all and end all' of our lives. I remember Transition Year which, with the many trips (and even more friends) made, along with our "Blues Brothers" musical, was the best year of my life. I remember 6th Year, where the fast-approaching Leaving Certificate was overshadowed only by our quirky fascination with all things odd. I remember thinking how my time in Eureka would never end, and being so unpleasantly surprised when it did. My days in Eureka Secondary were some of the happiest, most fulfilled days of my life. I came away from it all with new skills, newfound confidence, and new friendships, with teachers as well as students. At times, the waters of independence were rough, choppy and unsafe, and as I swam, the waves rose higher and the water got deeper. Some days the water was too tough to navigate and I would wait until it was safe to continue my journey. But, if anything, my arms were growing stronger all the time. One of the most unique aspects of Eureka Secondary School is its name. "Eureka" meaning "I have found it", is a fitting tribute to an institution such as this one. For it was in Eureka that we all truly found ourselves. And for that, I am eternally thankful.

## Lorna Mohan (2000 - 2005) remembers...

I remember my first day of secondary school vividly, as if it were only yesterday. My mother drove me in. I was really anxious, yet excited. But as Mam pulled up at the end of the driveway, I got such a shock. What seemed to me at the time, thousands of girls were walking around the school...in their BLACK tights. And there was me, sitting in the car in my white knee socks!! I was too mortified to get out of the car! But I did in the end. I had no other choice! My memories went uphill from there!

It must be said, I never had to be dragged into school, because I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was part of a brilliant year, in both junior and Leaving Cert. years. Our senior year was made even better when the transition year joined. Friendships for life were made. I couldn't have asked for a better year.

But let us not forget the teachers and staff. Although they kept us in line (Well they tried to anyway!) they were always there for support and up for a laugh. Teachers were not just educators to our year, they became our friends. My fondest memory of Eureka has to be without a doubt, our graduation day in sixth year. Everybody looked beautiful. A wonderful ceremony was held, a look back throughout the years. Memories were relived. We laughed, we cried, we reflected. I have had many a good time in Eureka. I know that in years to come, when I think back on my days in secondary school, I shall smile. My journey in Eureka may be finished, but it most certainly shall not be forgotten.









# Attitude

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts.

It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our Attitudes.”





# Notes

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