

## Foreword

We take the opportunity to wish all our readers a very happy and holy Christmas and a blessing-full and prosperous New Year 2025.

The Holy Year of 2025 will commence on Christmas Eve with the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. This is a symbolic gesture of the extraordinary graces granted during this year to enable the cancelling of sin so as to start afresh with a new slate. We encourage as many as possible to avail of the Holy Year indulgences both for themselves and for those who might be in need of them.

This year's annual presents us with a very interesting and full sketch of the history of the Convent of Mercy, Charleville and of the vast contribution of the nuns to education, nursing, home-care and care for the elderly in the wide surrounds of the Charleville. Few of us cannot have been affected by their great work over a very long period of time. To say that the Sisters of Mercy influenced and shaped the local area to a deep degree would be an understatement. News of the closure of the Charleville convent engendered a sense of tremendous loss to this parish as well as to the whole area. We wish to salute the nuns for everything they have done for us and to express our gratitude for all the sacrifices, both personal and institutional, they have made to further their work of which we are the ultimate beneficiaries. It is to be hoped that that work will continue in the various initiatives founded by the nuns.

We also present an article on the artistic gem that is the Oratory of the Sacred Heart at the Dominican Convent in Dun Laoighre. This is the masterpiece of another gifted nun, Sr. Concepta Lynch, who taught art and music at the school attached to the convent. For over sixteen years she devoted much of her spare time to decorating the interior of a small funerary chapel built to house a statue of the Sacred Heart which had been gifted to the parish by a parish in Belgium in memory of those who had lost their lives in the First World War. The results of her efforts are truly stunning and deserving of much more public attention than has hitherto fore been accorded this striking product of the Celtic revival movement.

This year's annual includes a series of historical notes on the parish. These were originally compiled by the late Pat Collins and we are glad to ensure that they are permanently recorded through the pages of this publication.

In addition to the chronicle of parish activities throughout the past twelve months, we are also happy to include accounts of the activities of the school,

**preschool and of all the main clubs and associations active in the parish. These serve to illustrate the vibrancy of our community as well as the range and scope of activities supported through our parish.**

**Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the late Jerome O’Keeffe, RIP, of Castlewrixon. He was a loyal supporter of the parish throughout his life and his wise counsellor in its deliberations was responsible for its flourishing through many crises. He will be sorely missed. We extend our sympathies to his wife, Joan, and to his family. May he rest in peace.**

# *Parish News*

## *Baptisms In The Parish*

*December 2023-November 2024*



*Tomás James Corbett  
Grace Hannah Sheehan  
Ruby O'Reilly  
Shannon Grace Curtin  
Tiernan Jack O'Sullivan  
Karter Meade-Leedham  
Michael O'Driscoll  
Jessie Linehan  
Thomas Patrick O'Neill  
Grace Isabelle Cox*



*Deaths From December 2023 - November 2024*

*Sr. Emmanuel Sherlock  
Patrick Cremin, Buttevant  
Pakie Morrissey, Ballycosgry  
Christine (Chrissie) O'Brien, Ballinadrideen  
Richard Walsh, Ballynoran  
Mary Brosnan, Croom  
Paul Long, England, late of Kilmeeady  
Timothy Drinan, Cork, late of Ballinadrideen  
Walter Corbett, Churchtown  
Tom Horan, Milford  
Simon Morrissey, Churchtown  
Brendan O'Kelly, Bruree  
Eileen Egan (Née Murray) Athlone  
Theresa Ryan, Ardnageehy  
Kitty Bergin (Née Carroll) England  
Tom Cronin, Charleville  
Con Buckley, Kanturk  
Madeleine Clarke, Dublin  
Michael Ranflam, Charleville  
Patsy Moran, Newtown Shandrum  
Denis (Denny) Cole, Doneraile  
Pat O'Shea, Charleville  
Phil & Derry Crowley  
Kay Noonan (Née Howard) Cork  
Sheamie Morrissey, Killabraham  
Joan Kennedy (Née Daly) Rathglassane  
Kitty Healy (Née Ryan) Charleville  
John O'Keefe, Doneraile  
Gráinne O'Flynn, New York, late of Newtown  
Ballyhea*

*Kathleen Pierce (Née Barry) Glanworth  
Michael Ring, Charleville, late of Pruntus  
Josie Twomey  
Ver Rev. Fr. Robin Morrissey, Cloyne &  
Castletownroche.  
Patrick (Paddy) O'Shaughnessy, Cooleens  
Helen O'Connor, (Née Keane) Limerick late of  
Ballynoran  
Denis Downing, Donoughmore  
Jerome O'Keefe, Castlewrixon  
Bridie Simcox (Née Carroll) Garrienderk late of  
Ballycosgry  
Agnes Normoyle (Née Carey) Castlemahon  
Mary Coughlan (Née Buckley) Churchtown  
Mary O'Keefe, Doneraile  
James (Jim) Browne, Pike Cross*



*First Holy Communion  
In The Parish  
11<sup>th</sup> May 2024*



*Chase Lewington  
Ciara O'Brien  
Jack O'Callaghan  
Shay Fitzgibbon  
Emily Dick  
Elysha Copse  
David O'Connor  
Mark Holton  
Lucy Flynn  
Phoebe Ronan  
Mark Cussen  
Connell Kelly*



*Photo courtesy of  
William Casey*



*Weddings In The Parish*

The Weddings of  
Mark William Hicks  
and  
Mellisa Peters  
on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

Fintan McGuinness  
and  
Marian Fenton  
On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024



# **Ballyhea Parish Chronicle**

**2023 – 2024**

## **DECEMBER 2023**

**2 December:** The First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of preparations for Christmas.

**2 December:** Collection was taken for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

**8 December:** The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was observed.

**21 December:** A Christmas concert was held in the new hall by the school children.

**22 December:** Christmas sick calls were made.

**25 December:** The Solemnity of the Lord's Nativity was observed.

**27 December:** A Ceili was held in the new hall in aid of the hall fund.

**31 December:** The Te Deum was sung in thanksgiving for all blessings during the previous year.

## **JANUARY 2024**

**1 January:** The Solemnity of the Mother of God was observed.

**6 January:** The Solemnity of the Lord's Epiphany was observed.

**26 January:** Grandparents Day was held with Mass at 10am followed by tea in the new hall.

## **FEBRUARY 2024**

**2 February:** The feast of the Purification of Our Lady was observed and candles were blessed. Offerings of candles and oil were received.

**3 February:** The feast of St. Blaise was observed. The blessing of throats was imparted after Mass.

**5 February:** A new bank holiday dedicated to St Bridget was introduced.

**14 February:** Ash Wednesday was observed. Ashes were blessed and distributed.

**16 February:** The Lenten stations commenced.

## **MARCH 2024**

**3 March:** a group representing Radio Maria Ireland visited the parish, spoke after Mass and explained the work of Radio Maria.

**7 March:** Board of Management of the school was held.

**7 March:** A referendum on the role of women in the home and to redefine marriage was proposed and supported by all of the main political parties. It was roundly rejected by the electorate.

**13 March:** Randal Hodkinson called and surveyed paint works for the sanctuary.

**15 March:** Lenten stations concluded.

**17 March:** The Solemnity of St. Patrick was observed. A parade was held.

**20 March:** A meeting was held to organize a gold classic in aid of the hall.

**24 March:** Palm Sunday on which palms were blessed and distributed.

**25 March:** The Solemnity of the Most Holy Annunciation was observed.

**28 March:** Holy Thursday was observed.

**29 March:** Good Friday was observed.

**31 March:** The Solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection was observed.

## **APRIL 2024**

**7 April:** Divine Mercy Sunday was observed.

## **MAY 2024**

**6/8 May:** Rogation Days were observed.

**9 May:** The Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension was observed.

**11 May:** Representatives of the Medical Missionaries of Mary visited the parish, spoke after Masses and explained their missionary work in Africa.

**11 May:** The Sacrament of First Holy Communion was administered.

**23 May:** May devotions at the Holy Well were postponed to 30 May due to poor weather.

**19 May:** The Solemnity of Pentecost was observed.

**19 May:** The Bishop celebrated a hope Mass in Shanballymore.

**24 May:** Meeting re golf classic was held.

**26 May:** Members of the parish choir on pilgrimage in Lourdes.

**30 May:** The Solemnity of Corpus Christi was observed.

## **JUNE 2024**

**1 June:** The parish received a gift of four altar vases in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in memory of Sheila Kildea of Doneraile and Swansea.

**6 June:** A Board of Management of the school was held.

**7 June:** Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was observed.

**17 June:** Christian Dupont, librarian of the Burn's Library, Boston College, visited the parish.

**23 June:** The Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Bluett celebrated his eightieth birthday.

**28 June:** A golf classic was held a Charleville Golf Club in aid of funds for the new hall.

**29 June:** The Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul was observed.

**30 June:** Canon Séan Cotter celebrated the diamond jubilee of his ordination.

## **JULY 2024**

**21 July:** Archbishop Crotty appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria.

**25 July:** The Marriage of Mark William Hicks and Melissa Peters was celebrated.

**25 July:** A weekly dance began in the new hall organized by John Joe Herlihy.

**27 July:** Archbishop Seamus Horgan, Nuncio Apostolic in South Sudan, was consecrated in Ennis cathedral by the Cardinal Secretary of State.

**27 July:** A Ceili was held in the new hall in aid of the building fund.

## **AUGUST 2024**

**12 August:** Archbishop Randall, Apostolic Nuncio in Bangladesh visited the parish.

**12 August:** Archbishop Nugent, Apostolic Nuncio in Kuwait visited the parish.

**12 August:** A cheque to Euros 1,000 was given to Archbishop Crotty to be applied to a charitable work of his designation in Burkina Faso.

**13 August:** A meeting was held in Cobh with the Bishop, the Vicars General and the diocesan solicitors to discuss matters relating to the tenure of parochial property. It was agreed that deceased trustees would be removed from folios held for the parish and that new physical trustees would be nominated to all folios held for the parish. Typically, these would be The Bishop, The Parish Priest and two other persons nominated by The Bishop. Any other arrangements with regard to folios held for the parish were to be rescinded and abandoned.

**15 August:** The Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady was observed.

**15 August:** Geraldine Egan, after twenty-five years of service, retired as parish sacristan. She will continue as parish clerk.

**24 August:** At an auction of the effects of the Redemptorist monastery at Esker, Co. Galway, the parish acquired two side altars by Davis of Cork for erection in the sanctuary of the parish church. A large outdoor crucifix was also purchased to be erected in the new grave yard.

**28 August:** A license (from August 2024 to January 2025) was granted to a group to conduct an after-school service for children from the school. The group will meet in the new hall.

## **SEPTEMBER 2024**

**6 September:** The Autumn stations commenced.

**8 September:** The feast of the dedication of the parish church was observed.

**15 September:** The relics of St. Bernadette were exposed for the veneration of the faithful at St. Mary's Church, Mallow. Large crowds attended.

**18/21 September:** Ember days.

## **OCTOBER 2024**

**11 October:** The Autumn stations concluded.

**17 October:** Solar panels were installed on the roof of the Parochial House by Clean Energy Solar, Ballincollig.

**27 October:** The marriage of Fintan McGuinness and Marian Fenton was celebrated.

## **NOVEMBER 2024**

**1 November:** The Solemnity of all Saints was observed.

**2 November:** The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed was observed.

**6 November:** The Department of Rural Affairs announced a grant of 14,000 euros to install twenty solar panels on the new hall to provide heating and lighting for the hall.

**10 November:** Prayers for the dead were recited at old Ballyhea cemetery and at Cooline cemetery.

**17 November:** Prayers for the dead were recited at Ballyhea new cemetery and at Imphrick.

**24 November:** The feast of St. Colman, diocesan patron, was observed.

**24 November:** The Solemnity of Christ the King was observed with a period of Eucharistic adoration followed by benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The Te Deum was sung.

**27 November:** A large outdoor crucifix was erected in St. Mary's graveyard.

### *New Crucifix for St. Mary's Cemetery*

Since the new cemetery opened over twenty years ago, a temporary cross marked it as a place of Christian burial. Over the years, various initiatives were undertaken to replace this cross with a permanent crucifix more suitable for our new cemetery and in line with many of the other new graveyards in the locality. Isabella O'Leary pursued this project for several years and liaised with the County Council to bring it to a successful completion.

An opportunity to advance this project arose last August when the Redemptorist fathers auctioned the contents of their monastery at Esker near Athenry in Co. Galway. The parish made a successful bid for the large outdoor crucifix in the monastery grounds. This was transported from Galway to the workshops of Sean O'Keeffe in Doneraile who undertook the restoration and refurbishment of the Crucifix.



In cooperation with Cork County Council, the provisional cross was taken down on 26 November 2024 and the new Crucifix was erected in the graveyard on 27 November 2024. Billy Ryan kindly brought the cross from Doneraile to Ballyhea where staff from the County Council attended to the erection of the new Crucifix.

Given that it has served a sacred purpose for many years, the original marker cross will be re-erected in the grounds of the parish church.

We wish to thank all those who contributed to the subscription fund to defray the costs of the project, to the County Council for its assistance and support, and to all who helped in any way.



The Crucifix is our *Spes Unica* – our only hope of salvation. From the Cross, Our Lord and Saviour keeps watch over those buried in the cemetery, assures them of His protection while they rest there, and leads them to eternal life in Heaven.



## *The Oratory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

### *Dun Laoighre*

The Celtic Revival Movement operated between 1880 and 1940. It engaged the attention of many Irish artists and craft-workers and found particular expression in architecture, wood-work, metal-work, needle-work, mosaic-work, stained-glass work and calligraphy and illumination. One of the greatest creations of the movement, where many of these artistic interests came together to create a masterpiece, is the Honan Chapel in Cork, built 1915-1916. However, the walls of the chapel were never frescoed and are simply painted in white.

If we are to appreciate the possibilities offered by the Revival Movement in painted interiors, then we have to look to another, much lesser known, masterpiece built in the grounds of the Dominican Convent in Dun Laoghaire in 1919. This was the Oratory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: a small two bay mortuary chapel of a type often found the graveyards of convents, e.g. Presentation convent, Doneraile.

This particular oratory was built to receive a statue of the Sacred Heart which had been given to Dun Laoghaire in thanksgiving for the peace and in memory of those from the parish who had lost their lives during the Great War by a town in Belgium. A small chapel was built in the convent grounds to house the statue.

The decoration of the chapel was undertaken by Sr. Concepta Lynch (1874-1939). Sr. Concepta was born in Dublin into a well-known artist family. Her father, Thomas Lynch (1852-1887), was an important illuminator and ran a studio in Dublin. She was trained by him to produce illuminated manuscripts of the highest quality. She ran the Lynch studio following his death. Her artistic inspiration drew heavily from the masterpieces of Insular Art: The Book of Kells, The Lidisfarne Gospel, The Book of Durrow among others sources.

In 1896, she entered the Dominican convent in Dun Laoghaire where she taught music and art. She was an early devotee of Thérèse Martin who was canonized in 1925 as St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Sr. Concepta was also an accomplished poet and writer of hymns.

Her greatest achievement was the internal decoration of the Oratory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which she began in 1920 by painting the east wall of the chapel, immediately behind the altar and statue of the Sacred Heart which was executed in a Byzantine style, not dissimilar to the great mosaic on the liturgical east wall of Charleville church. The lateral walls were painted in elaborate decorative schemes, many of which were drawn from patterns used in her father's studio.

The final part of the scheme to be undertaken was the ceiling. However, after sixteen years working on the project, ill health forced her to abandon the project. Thus, the ceiling and parts of the west wall were never completed. Nevertheless, the interior of the oratory is a supreme example of a concerted decorative scheme of the Celtic Revival. “Her achievement was remarkable: the bare, austere oratory walls were transformed with a profusion of Celtic colours, shapes, and designs. Some motifs she copied from ancient manuscripts, others were of her own invention and were strikingly original. Etienne Rynne wrote: ‘her work is ever *mouvementé*, vibrant with life; her birds squawk, bite and even dance, her serpents wriggle and knot themselves, as do her quadrupeds’ (Rynne, 8). She conceived of her work as a whole; though it is complex, intricate, and elaborate, it is harmonious”<sup>1</sup>.

Four stained glass windows were supplied to the oratory by Joshua Clarke’s studio. It is thought that the young Harry Clarke may have worked on them. In size and conception, they much resemble the Clarke Studio windows in the lateral naves of Charleville parish church.

Sr. Concepta died on 30 April 1939.

In 1996 the Department of Arts, Culture, and the Gaeltacht gave £150,000 towards the renovation the oratory and to enclose it in a protective shell.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bridget Hourican; article on *Mary Concepta Lynch*, in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

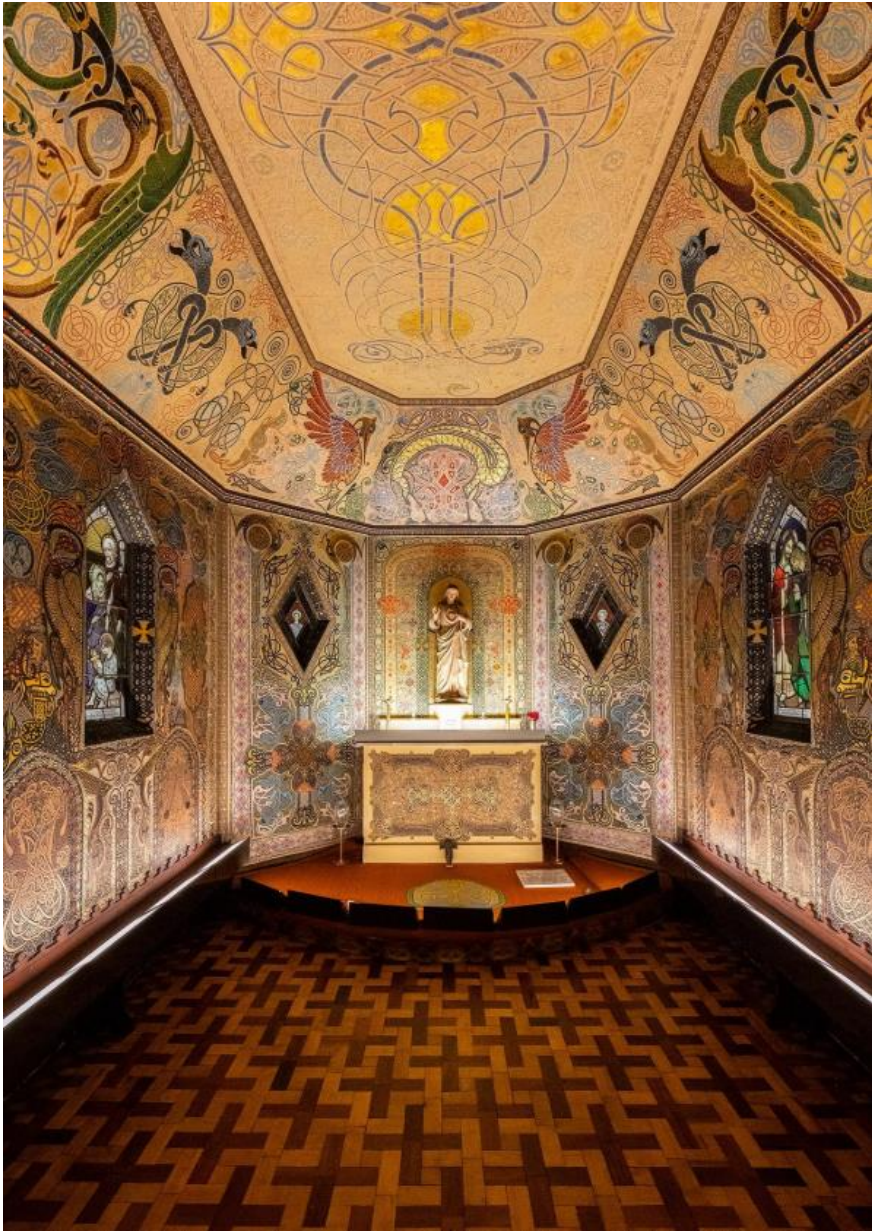


Figure 1 Interior of Oratory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

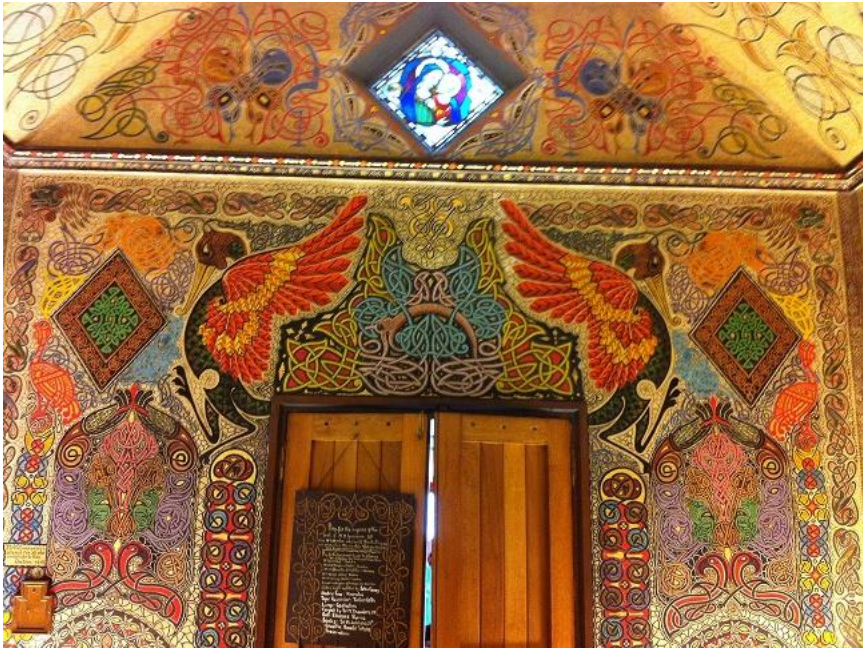


Figure 2 West wall of Oratory of Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Figure 3 Sacred Heart of Jesus Oratory: Exterior

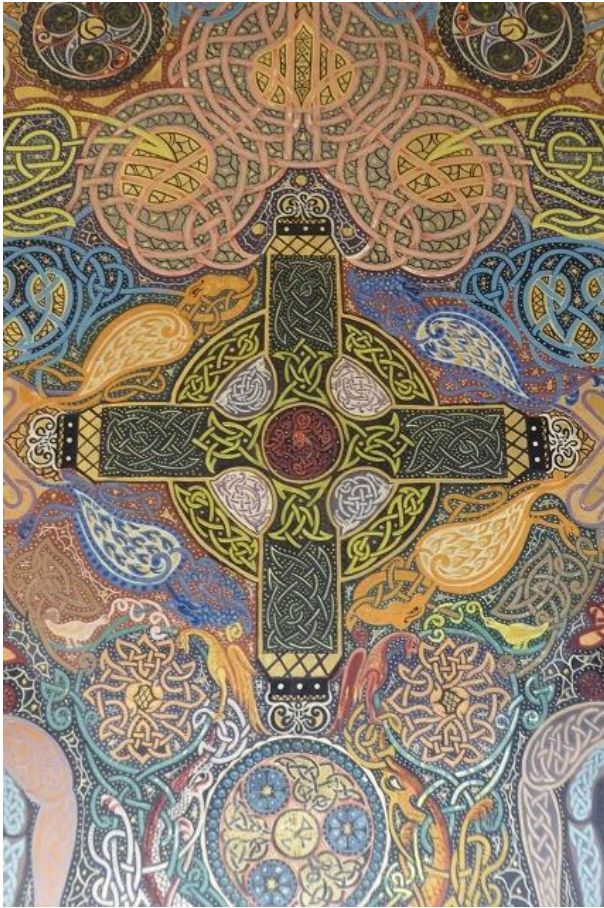


Figure 4 Sacred Heart of Jesus Oratory: wall detail



Figure 5 Lateral wall with glass from Clarke Studios



NONCIATURE APOSTOLIQUE  
AU BURKINA FASO

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Ouagadougou, 8 September 2024

Right Reverend and dear Mgr O'Brien,

I acknowledge receipt of the generous offering of **€1,000 from the 2024 Lenten campaign** of the parish of Ballyhea for the charitable needs of the Catholic Church in Burkina Faso.

I am pleased to inform you that the parish donation has been forwarded to the *Sister Disciples of the Divine Master* here in Ouagadougou who, alongside their liturgical apostolate, are also responsible for the *Mother Scholastique formation centre* that trains girls and young women in activities such as sewing, embroidery and cookery so that they may be equipped with professional skills to make a livelihood. In addition, the centre also provides remedial courses in reading and writing, as many of the girls and young women, because of extreme poverty, were not able to attend primary or secondary level education.

In accepting the generous gift of the Parish of Ballyhea, Sr. Marguerite Kaboré, Delegate of the *Sister Disciples of the Divine Master* in Burkina Faso, has asked me to extend the gratitude of the sisters for this greatly appreciated donation which will contribute to this noble and much needed apostolate to socially and economically marginalised girls and young women.

Entrusting you and your parishioners to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, please be assured of my prayers and blessings throughout the Lenten season.

Yours sincerely in the Lord,

✠ Michael F. Crotty

*Titular Archbishop of Lindisfarne  
Apostolic Nuncio to Burkina Faso and to Niger*

---

The Right Reverend  
Monsignor James Canon O'Brien, P.P.  
St Mary's Church  
Ballyhea  
CO. CORK

## A HOME SONG

**I** read within a poet's book  
A word that starred the page:  
"Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage!"  
Yes, that is true, and something more:  
You'll find, where'er you roam,  
That marble floors and gilded walls  
Can never make a home.  
But every house where Love abides,  
And Friendship is a guest,  
Is surely home, and home-sweet-home:  
For there the heart can rest 🌿🌿

### *THE ANCIENT PARISH OF BALLYHEA*

*This article written by the late Pat Collins, Ballyhea first appeared in the fifth Charleville and District Historical Journal, compiled by the late Ted O'Riordan in 1990.*

Ballyhea means the place of Aodh or Aedh. Aodh flourished in the 900's, and the size of his residence is indicated by the townland of Lisballyhea, which translates to the fort of Aodh's place. Aodh was a chieftain of the Muscraighe-Ti-Maighe clan and was one of the earliest of his clan to settle in the area south of Charleville, which constitutes the modern parish of Ballyhea. Ballyhea parish as we know it today consists of five parishes which existed as separate entities until they were joined together in the combined parish of

Ballyhea. The names of these parishes in alphabetical order were Aglishdrinagh, Ardskeagh, Ballyha, Coolin end Imphrick.

**AGLISHDRINAGH:** Aglishdrinagh means “the church of the sloe bushes” Blackthorn (sloe) bushes were held in veneration by the early Irish and were once used by the Druids in working their rites. The ruins of Aglishdrinagh church are situated in a field near Aglish Cross on the lands of Denis Daly. The church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The stones used in its construction were undressed and the mortar was as hard as granite. The space around the church building was one rood in area. In the Papal Taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291, this church is listed under the name of Ballycrohan and is rated at five marks. According to Col. Grove White, Ballycrohan refers to Ballynoran, which was a townland of Aglishdrinagh. The other townlands were Ardglass, Ballycoskery, Ballinadridden, Ballyroe, Cloonkeen, Fiddane, and Milltown.

The Harrison family enclosed a further space around the church and built a large vault in the older portion referred to previously. This served as a family burial place until the family ceased to live at Castleharrison in the 1940's. The Harold-Barry's are also buried there.

**ARDSKEAGH:** Ardskeagh means the Height of “Sciath.” Sciath was the daughter of Meachair in Fert Sciath (an old name for the place). According to Ver Re. James Rice, P.P., of Ballyhea from 1948 to 1974, Meachair was one of the three dynasts of Muscraige Thire converted by St. Patrick, who died in 461 A.D.

Sometime later, Sciath founded a nunnery (convent) in the area and attracted young ladies to the place, who wished to devote their lives to God. In the life of St. Albie of Emly, we read that he sent her a present of two stags for ploughing and a scribe to write the four Gospels for her. In time the nunnery (convent) ceased to be used and fell into ruins. St. Sciath is mentioned in the “Myrtyrology of Tallaght” and the “Martyrology of Donegal” with her feast day on the 1<sup>st</sup> January.

In the early thirteenth century the Norman De Cogans built a church on the site of St. Sciath's former edifice. Incidentally, an entry in the old baptismal register of Ballyhea observes that the church of Ardskeagh was dedicated to St. Michael, whose feast day is on the 6<sup>th</sup> September. Ardskeagh Church is mentioned in the PAPAL Taxations of 1291 a.d., and 1302 a.d., when it was valued at five marks (5). In 1591 a.d., the church is described as a “locus desertus.”

Unlike so many other places of its kind it ceased to be a burial place. In the early 1900's the ruins were in a very poor condition. However, in the 1930's shortly after Mr. Tomas Leahy acquired the surrounding lands, the old church was touched up by the Board of Works. Further renovations have been carried out in recent years and a signpost on the road indicates the location of the historical building to the visitor who wishes to view the ruins. What remains of

the building indicates it was of great architectural beauty. The townlands of Ardskeagh parish were Ballylopen, Garrane and Rathglassane.

**BALLYHEA:** The ruins of the ancient church of Ballyhea are to be seen in the graveyard east of the Pike Cross. The earliest record of this church date from 1224. Like Ardskeagh it was built by the Norman de Cogans. A large portion of the walls remain standing. The church was built of sandstone brought from the Ballyhoura mountains. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The building is early Norman with Romanesque features. The doorway is Pre-Norman however, as it has a loophole through which the bell-chain passed. Inside the eastern wall is an old sculpture of Our Lady with a child on each shoulder. This was photographed and examined by C.J.F. McCarthy some years ago. He got a report which stated it was a 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century sculpture. The high-altar was on the eastern side; this being the usual position at the time. There is a Gothic window behind the high-altar. Ballyhea Church is valued at 15 marks in the Papal Taxation of 1291 a.d., and 1302 a.d., the same as Buttevant. Ballyhea is written as Baletach in the Papal Taxation. This was the principal church of the area, and as such, it was much more pretentious than those at Aglishdrinagh, Ardkeagh, Cooline or Imphrick.

Among monuments within the building is one to a former parish priest of Ballyhea, Re. Fr. Tieve O'Donoghue, who died on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1761 aged 75 years. His successor Rev. William Joyce is reputed to be buried in the grounds.

Near Fr. O'Donoghue's grave lie the remains of another parish priest Rev. Michael Dee, who died on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1811 a.d. The townlands of Ballyhea parish were Broghill north, Broghill south, Castleharrison, Coarliss, Farran, Killoohig, Knockardandrum, Rathmorgan.

**COOLINE or COOLINEY:** Cooline or Cooliney comes from the Irish word – Coillin meaning the little wood. A great wood once stretched from this area in a north-westerly direction into Co. Limerick. An earlier name for the area was Cúlemni. Fr. JAMES Rice, in his notes stated that Gaillglassa (the English) and the grandson of Murchadh came from Dublin to Limerick and from there to Muscraige Aodha and devastated Bealach Atha (Ballyhea) and Cúilemni (Cooline) in 1176.

The ruins of the church of Cooline can be seen in the graveyard which bears the same name. It was built by the Norman de Cogans early in 1200's. The doorway which was names Coonene in the ecclesiastical Taxation of 1302 a.d. Col. Grove White in his topographical notes mentions the following priests attached to the church of Cooline. Maurice Chapell in 1368 a.d., Gillacomdock Machicallig in 1402 a.d. Rev. Denis Dawley, who referred to as Donagh Daly in 1721 a.d. The church measured 18 paces by 9 paces.

The baptismal font of this church was discovered, while ploughing nearby in the early part of this century, and was donated to Charleville Church of Ireland church by Mrs, Weldon, widow of Francis Cornwall Weldon, who resided at nearby Cooline House. It was renovated and used as a baptismal font in

Charleville Church until it closed. On one side of the font was a carving of Our Lord with the Five Wounds. Another side has an effigy of a bishop (probably St. Patrick). The other sides contain carvings of John the Baptist and the Archangel Michael. There were only four fonts of this type in Ireland, the others were at Straide Abbey, Co. Mayo, St. Nicholas Church, Galway, and Rathmore Church, Co. Meath. Cooline parish church contained the townlands of Cooline, Kiltass, Milltown and Rathnacally.

**IMPHRICK:** The ruined church at Imphrick can be seen in the graveyard to the right of the main road to Cork, near the railway gates leading to Churchtown.

The ruin indicates three periods of architecture: one type is extremely old and reminds the viewer of Aglisdrinagh. The second type is also old, but the most recent improvements of the building are comparatively modern and were executed by the Holms family, whose monument is to be seen in the graveyard.

Adjoining the old ruin and forming part of the building, one can see the foundations and part of the walls of some structure that must have been used in connection with it. It is on the southern side and runs to nearly 30 ft by 12 ft., parallel to the old church. There is a doorway from the main building into it near the eastern end. This side building was, according to Col. Grove White, too large for a sacristy, and too small for a chapter house. Legend has it that the church moved to the present site from the east, probably from the nearby townland of Lisballyhea.

About one hundred yards to the north-east lies the holy well names Tobernadeecla. People used to pay rounds there for the cures of all kinds of illnesses, particularly sore eyes. The holy well is dedicated to St. Matthew. The townlands of Imphrick were Aghaburren, Ballyhoura, Ballynageragh, Caherconnor, Dromin, Imphrick, Lisballyhay, Loughlea and Shinanagh.

The present parish church of Ballyhea was built in 1831 in the townland of Ballycoskery, and in the old parish of Aglisdrinagh. The parish priest at the time was Rev. Fr. John Power, who ministered in the parish from 1811 to 1849. His remains lie within the building on the right-hand side near the altar. He was known as 'Fr Power of the Cures,' as he was reputed to be able to cure people of illnesses.

Legend has it that the original site of his grave was outside the building as people attempted to dig up his coffin in their desire to be cured of illness. Prior to 1831 the parish church was located to the east in the townland of Newtown. This location then became the site of the National School. In 1938 the present school was built and the old building in Newtown is now owned by Mr. David Noonan.

## NUNS' DIAMOND JUBILEE



Mother Angela (left), Rev. Mother (now retired), of St. Mary's Convent, Richmond Hill, Leeds, who celebrated her diamond jubilee recently. She is 83 years old. In centre is the Rev. Mother Mary of the Rosary, Kimberley, who celebrates her golden jubilee in April, and on right is the Rev. Mother Emanuel, who has been the Rev. Mother at Leeds, and who has celebrated her golden jubilee. They are three sisters, being formerly the Misses O'Dea, of Ballyhea, Co. Cork. Their combined ages total over 240 year.

(Topical Press)

**Information re. Fr. Patrick Joseph Bluett. Page 1.**

Patrick Bluett was born 16<sup>th</sup>. March 1908 to John & Helena Bluett (nee Carroll) at Bilyshonakin, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick. He was the 3<sup>rd</sup>. of a family of 11, five boys and six girls. He attended the primary school in Effin, which was situated on their farm, and later the Christian Brother's in Charleville. He studied for the Priesthood in St. Patrick's College, Thurles,

Co. Tipperary, and was ordained in June 1933, by Most Rev.

Dr. Harty, Archbishop of Cashel, for the Diocese of

Middlesbrough, in North Yorkshire. He retired from the Diocese in 1983 having served (not counting his 6 years in the Army) there for 50 years. He went to live with his nephew, Fr.

Tony Bluett in Florida, where he continued his ministry, and died there on 21<sup>st</sup>. March 1991. He was buried in the Church grounds in his native Parish of St. Mary's, Effin, where he was baptised. In accordance with his wishes, his "batman" from the

Army, Jim Gallagher, from Glasgow, attended his Requiem Mass, and the "bagpipes" were played as he was laid to rest.

In 1941 the British Forces appealed for Chaplains as their Chaplain numbers had been depleted by casualties. He was initially posted to an Army base in NI for training, and then assigned as Chaplain to the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers. He then took part in the invasion of

Madagascar.

I enclose his war record of places where he served & Citation. He never gave anybody, not even members of his own family details of how he won the Military Cross. This information was only revealed to them after his death.

There are a few stories about his Army life that may interest you. For his Investiture of the Military Cross, he had invited his mother to London. She had gone to Dublin intending to travel by boat, but due to heavy fog, the boat crossing was cancelled, so she was not present for the occasion.

Page 2.

He also had a pocket prayer book, with had a bullet hole in it.. He was injured in action at Anzio beachhead, and was invalided on sick leave with a shrapnel wound in his back, and for some reason, the shrapnel was never removed.

It was at a town called "Alfadena" a small town in Italy, that he won the Military Cross. On the occasion of the Investiture, as he marched up to meet King George VIth. he requested that the band, the "Irish Guards" play "O Danny Boy" and he was more proud of this than his Army medals. His brother, Fr. John Bluett, and Lieutenant-Commander, and Mrs. McGuinness, of London, were present.

He would recount how when the Battalion went into action they were accompanied by the "bagpipes"---these created a terrifying sound for the German soldiers, but a very welcome and encouraging sound for their own soldiers. He used to state that the Scottish soldiers were "fearless" going into battle. They were called "the ladies from hell", by the German soldiers, because, of course, they were wearing their "kilts". On another occasion, when they were fighting their way up through Italy, they were being held up by an enemy sniper. He asked his commanding officer for a loan of his binoculars, handed them back shortly, and informed the officer that the sniper was in the tower of the local Church. Having dealt with the sniper, they Army were soon on their way. This incident is recorded in one of the history books of the Regiment. On many an occasion he took part in an "entertainment" group for the soldiers, and would dance an "Irish Hornpipe" for them.

RJ/H



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
Bourne Avenue Hayes Middlesex UB31RF

Telephone 01-573 3831 ext

Rev P Bluett  
The Catholic Church  
Milton St  
Saltbourn by the Sea  
Cleveland TS12 1DE

Your reference

Our reference

84/32317/CS(R)2b/7

Date

16 July 1984

Dear Sir

Reverend Patrick BLUETT P/191485  
Royal Army Chaplains Department (Royal Scots Fusiliers)

The military service of the above named is as follows:-

Commissioned Service from 16.6.41 to 9.4.63

Overseas Service

Madagascar	23. 3.42	to	20. 6.42
India	21. 6.42	to	22. 9.42
Iraq	2.10.42	to	3. 2.43
Persia	4. 2.43	to	10. 2.43
Egypt	15. 3.43	to	16. 3.43
Syria	17. 3.43	to	4. 6.43
Egypt	5. 6.43	to	9. 7.43
Sicily	10. 7.43	to	2. 9.43
Italy	3. 9.43	to	8. 7.44
Egypt	9. 7.44	to	12. 7.44
Palestine	13. 7.44	to	3. 8.44
Syria	4. 8.44	to	5.10.44
Palestine	6.10.44	to	15. 2.45
Italy	16. 2.45	to	7. 3.45
North West Europe	8. 3.45	to	1. 3.46

Medals: 1939/45 Star, Africa Star, Italy Star, France/Germany Star, Defence Medal,  
War Medal 1939/45, Military Cross, Territorial Decoration.

He retired on 9.4.63 and retained the rank of OF 3rd Class.

We regret the omission of your service in Madagascar in our previous correspondence.

Yours faithfully

L. HEARN (Miss)

for Departmental Record Office  
(Archives)

Data recommendation passed forward

17 Inf Brigade 5 Inf Division 15 Corps

Received 1/1/44 Passed 2/1/44

Schedule No. Unit RA Unit RAGHD att 2 RSF

Division

Rank and Army or Personal No. 191485 Captain (Rev)

Corps

Name BLUETT PATRICK

Army

(Christian names must be stated)

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
<p>On the 24th November 1944 the 2nd Bn The Royal Scots Fusiliers had one Coy forward in ALFEDENA, the remainder of the Bn being on the high ground to the South of the Town. When Father Bluett heard that there were some casualties in the town who could not be evacuated until dark, he decided to visit the Coy at once</p> <p>The way to the Coy was down a forward slope across the open: after he had gone a short distance the enemy shelled and machine gunned his route. Undeterred by the enemy fire he made his way to the Coy and administered to the casualties such comfort as he was able and then returned over the same route in daylight. His action and disregard of danger had a most invigorating effect on the coy and greatly assisted in sustaining its high morale during the period for which it was isolated.</p>	<p>Sgt J. A. D. WARD, Lt Col, Comd 2 RSF</p> <p>Sgt A. D. WARD, Comd 17 Inf Bde</p>	<p>MC</p>	<p>P.T.O.</p>



CENTRAL CHANCERY OF  
THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD,  
ST JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.1.

26th November, 1945.

Sir,

The King will hold an Investiture at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday, the 11th December, 1945, at which your attendance is requested.

It is requested that you should be at the Palace not later than 10.15 o'clock a.m. (Doors open at 9.45 a.m.)

DRESS:—Service Dress; Morning Dress; Civil Defence Uniform or Dark Lounge Suit.

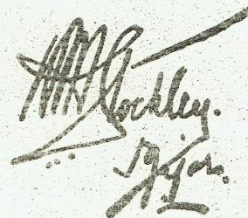
This letter should be produced by you on entering the Palace, as no further card of admission will be issued.

I am desired to inform you that you may be accompanied by two relations or friends to witness the Investiture, but I regret that owing to the limited accommodation available for spectators, it is not possible for this number to be increased. The spectators' tickets may be obtained on application to this Office and I have to ask you, therefore, to complete the enclosed form and return it to me immediately.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

The Reverend Patrick Bluest,  
M.C., R.A.C.D.

  
Secretary.

## *Ballyhea Preschool*

As Christmas approaches, we want to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your incredible support throughout the year. Whether through your time, resources, encouragement, or care, your contributions have made a lasting impact on our preschool community.



As we reflect on the year, we feel so fortunate to be part of such a compassionate and vibrant community. Your support makes all the difference, and we look forward to continuing this wonderful journey together in the coming year.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful, peaceful, and fun-filled Christmas. Thank you for being such an important part of our preschool family!

With warmest regards,  
Yvonne, Clare, Emma, Triona



## *Ballyhea National School*



Aerial photograph of  
Ballyhea National School



All star Darragh Fitzgibbon with his class



Cork City Sports 2024



6<sup>th</sup> Class June 2024



Student Council



Harry Rea and 6<sup>th</sup> class friends, after his medal win at Taekwondo European Championships in London

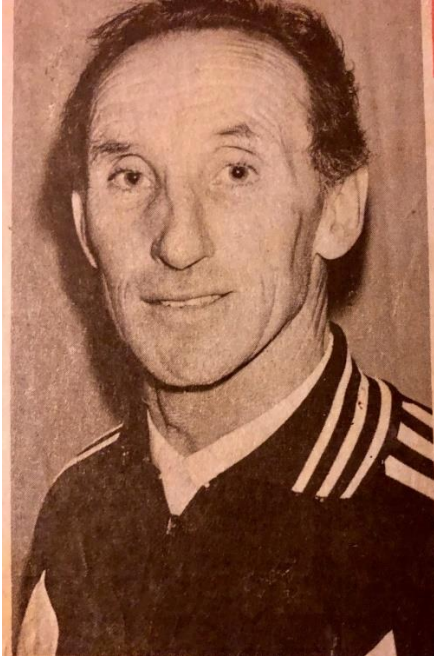


Junior Infants 2024



## *Ballyhea GAA*

### *Jerome O'Keeffe RIP*



The parish of Ballyhea was deep in mourning on October the 4th with the news of the passing of Gaa club President and great servant of the parish Jerome O'Keeffe.

Much loved and admired not only in Ballyhea but far and wide. A stylish defender in his playing days which saw him win 6 North Cork junior hurling medals in 1950 (sub) 1953, 55, 58, 59 and 65 and a county medal in 1955 on the playing field. He also won a North Cork Junior B football (Novice) medal in 1951.

Ballyhea are joint top of the Avondhu junior hurling champions Roll of honour with Kilworth on ten titles. Jerome won 6 as a player and 2 as a coach which is a remarkable achievement.

He served as treasurer of the club from 1957 to 1964. Jerome also donned the black and amber of Avondhu for a number of years and played in the 1961 county final v Blackrock alongside fellow club man Paddy Behan, where the city side came out on top in front of over 18,000 at the Cork Athletic grounds.

Jerome was instrumental in the purchasing and developing of our club grounds Gaels Memorial Park. He took great pride in our facilities. He had many stories of the trials and tribulations when first getting the pitch ready, picking stones and filling in drains. It's a testament to Jerome and his fellow clubmen that the grounds are one of the finest in the county now.

Jerome turned his hand to training teams with great success. He masterminded the county junior hurling title success of 1976 after winning North cork titles in 75 and 76. He led his team to the county intermediate final in 1977 but lost out to Ballinhassig. 1980 saw another county final appearance this time Mallow were defeated in front of a huge crowd in Buttevant. Jerome had led Ballyhea back to senior hurling after a gap of almost 50 years. Jerome's troops reached the Centenary year county final in 1984 but lost out to a star-studded St Finbarrs team. Jerome coached the u21's to the north cork title in 1996 and the juniors to an O'Leary cup and Autumn league double in 1995. He then turned his hand to our school teams with again great success, moulding many of our current senior hurlers. Numerous north Cork and county School titles indoor and outdoor were won. He masterminded victory in the county school's mini sevens competition

in 2007 which led to 2 pupils from the school, Mikey Browne and Pa O'Callaghan featuring in Croke park at the All-Ireland hurling semifinals and final. Jerome was also involved with our under 12 county winning teams in football 2006 and hurling 2007, under 14 football in 2009. Jerome has been involved in many more titles that have come to the parish. He was awarded the North Cork juvenile board hall of fame award in 2006. He was a worthy recipient of the Ballyhea Gaa Ryan Memorial Hall of fame award in 1999. Very interested in the history of the club and parish , he was also involved in the compilation of the clubs two history books , "From Scoubeen to the Centenary " and "Keeping the Flame Aglow".

He served the role as club President with pride and dignity since appointed in 2019.

A great and inspirational leader and when he spoke he had a great ability to encapsulate his audience as he proved once again last April at a function honouring the 1980 intermediate county champions . This happened to be his last official engagement and his speech will not be forgotten by anyone that attended .

On the night glowing tributes were made about Jerome by members of the team , especially Captain Jack Russell who thanked Jerome for everything he had done for them and presented him with a jersey that was worn in the final as an appreciation for his dedication and hard work in preparing and getting them to 4 County finals in this era .

Jerome was awarded the Benemerenti medal in September 2000 for services to the church . He will be sorely missed by the club and entire community in the parish .



Jerome's popularity was evident by the huge turnout for his funeral and large gathering for a guard of honour at Ballyhea Gaa pitch for his removal and at the church for his burial .

He will be sadly missed by his wife Joan , son Ger , Daughters Evelyn and Maria and all his family , relatives , friends and the entire community. Jerome will not be forgotten and his legacy will long live on in Ballyhea.







### SUMMER EVE REFLECTIONS

How sweet to rest on the mountain's breast  
When the big red sun is sinking  
And the scented heath in the glens beneath  
From the clear cold dew is drinking

When the pleasing balm of the twilight calm  
Like wine o'er the senses stealing  
Bids grief depart and inspires the heart  
With a brighter and braver feeling;

When the rustling breeze in the sweet pine trees  
Brings fragrance across the highland  
And the shimmering stream in the moonlights gleam  
Brings dreams of a fairy island;

'Tis then we think what a golden link  
Is binding our hearts forever  
O'er oceans wide with the hope and pride  
That nothing on earth can sever.

*Ballyhea's champion Long Jumper:  
JJ "Jack" Mooney.*

Back in 1894 the World Long jump record holder hailed from the parish of Ballyhea. Born in 1865, J J better known as Jack came from Pruntus. His father John was a gate keeper and originated from Ballinhassig in South East Cork.

His mother Mary Anne White came from County Laois.

He was on the first hurling team that lined out for Ballyhea , which also featured Paddy and Tom Quinn, Old Road , John Downey , Moss Foley (captain ), and brothers Mick and Nick Foley Farran , Pat Clancy and P Dahill Ballinadridden , Jim Power the blacksmith also from Pruntus , Ned Linehan and Jim O'Connell from Ballinagrath, Jack Lehane of Rathglassane ,Ned Riordan Rathmorgan , Jim Casey Colleen's, Mike Kelly Pike Cross , Sim Flaherty Ballynoran, John Barrett Ballyhoura, Tom Feore Glenmore, John and Jim Herlihy from Castlewrixon.

His younger brother Bob was on the Ballyhea team which won the county senior hurling title in 1896 defeating Ballygarvan.

Jack came into athletics around 1885 around the time the GAA was formed. In 1888 the GAA sent the cream of hurlers, footballers and athletes to the USA to popularise the association amongst the exiles. This was known as the American invasion.

Jack was chosen as one of the 48 participants which left Cobh in September 1888. They competed in 10 different cities with Jack winning the 220 yards race in Boston.

Jack stayed in the USA competing and turned into a top-class athlete.

In 1894 he returned to Ireland on holidays and competed while he was here. He won the Irish long jump title hosted by the IAAA.

In September 5th at the Mitchelstown athletic sports, he cleared 23 feet 8 inches to create a world record for the long jump, the previous best was made by Charles Burgess Fry of England and Charles Reber of New York both had cleared 23 feet 6.5 inches.

CB Fry was an extraordinary athlete. He was an international cricketer and played in 26 tests for England. Also, he was a professional footballer playing in an FA cup final with Southampton. He represented Oxford and the Barbarians at Rugby, and was very capable ice skater and golfer.

The Irish record was 23 feet 2 inches set by Pat Davin in 1881.

Jack was so popular at this stage when he was returning to the USA from Ireland, newspapers worldwide covered his feats. When Jack retired it is noted in the 1915 New York census he was working as a hotel keeper and had 6 children. Jack passed away in 1949 at the age of 84.

Long Jump			
<b>Most titles</b>			
	Hugo Duggan - 7		1967, 70, 71, 72, 74, 80
	Adam McMullan - 7		2011, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18
St	Thomas Barry - 2		1887, 88
St	James Chandler - 2		1896, 97
St	Michael Creedon - 2		1906, 09
<b>Championship Record</b>			
St	James Chandler	3.89	1897
	Ciaran McDonagh	8.04 +2.4	1999
1873	John G Lane	Dublin University	6.50 Irish Champions /
1874	John G Lane	Dublin University	6.18 Irish Champions /
1875	George M Kenny	Clongowes	6.55 Irish Champions /
1876	Thomas Davin	Suir Rowing Club	6.31 Irish Champions /
1877	JH Bourke	53rd (Shropshire) Regiment	6.10 Irish Champions /
1878	Patrick Davin	Carrick-On-Suir	6.70 Irish Champions /
1879	Patrick Davin	Carrick-On-Suir	6.88 Irish Champions /
1880	Patrick Davin	Carrick-On-Suir	6.68 Irish Champions /
1881	E J Wolfe	Armagh FC	5.87 Irish Champions /
1882	R G Tobin	French College	6.12 AAAI
1883	Patrick Davin	Carrick-On-Suir	6.20 AAAI
1884	John Purcell	Dublin	6.53 AAAI
1885	John Purcell	Dublin	6.60 IAAA
1885	Patrick McGrath	Aherlow, Co. Tipperary	6.55 GAA
1886	John Purcell	Dublin	6.91 IAAA
1886	Daniel Shanahan	Emly, Co. Tipperary	6.59 GAA
1887	Patrick "Paddy" Lawless	Bandon FC	6.02 IAAA
1887	John Purcell	Dublin	6.63 GAA
1887	Thomas Barry	Dungarvan	3.45 St GAA
1888	Patrick "Paddy" Lawless	Bandon FC	6.24 IAAA
1888	Daniel Delany Bulger	Lansdowne FC	6.72 GAA
1888	Thomas Barry	Dungarvan	3.78 St GAA
1889	Daniel Delany Bulger	Co. Dublin Harriers	6.39 IAAA
1889	Daniel Delany Bulger	Lansdowne FC	6.53 GAA
1889	WG Rockett	Carrick-On-Suir	3.52 St GAA
1890	Thomas T Connell	Blackrock College	6.58 IAAA
1890	Daniel Delany Bulger	Co. Dublin Harriers	6.50 GAA
1891	Pat Farrelly	Linfield	6.28 IAAA
1891	PJ O'Sullivan	Banteer	6.44 GAA
1892	Daniel Delany Bulger	Co. Dublin Harriers	6.96 IAAA
1892	Thomas Francis "Tom" Kiely	Carrick-On-Suir	6.58 GAA
1893	Thomas Francis "Tom" Kiely	Carrick-On-Suir	6.55 IAAA
1893	W Scott	Bellewstown, Co. Meath	6.68 GAA
1894	John J Mooney	Ballyhea	6.68 IAAA
1894	J Lehane	Cork	6.35 GAA
1895	Thomas Francis "Tom" Kiely	Ballyneal	6.28 IAAA
1895	Patrick "Dockty" McNamara	Limerick	6.33 GAA
1895	James Wall	Dungarvan	3.70 St GAA
1896	Walter JM Newborn	Dublin	6.58 IAAA
1896	Walter JM Newborn	Dublin	6.57 GAA
1896	James Chandler	Limerick	3.82 St GAA
1897	Walter JM Newborn	Dublin	6.85 IAAA
1897	Thomas Francis "Tom" Kiely	Ballyneal	6.29 GAA
1897	James Chandler	Limerick	3.89 St GAA
1898	Walter JM Newborn	Dublin	7.05 IAAA
1898	Walter JM Newborn	Dublin	7.47 GAA
1899	Walter JM Newborn	Dublin	7.10 IAAA
1899	Peter O'Connor	Waterford	7.39 GAA
1900	Peter O'Connor	Waterford	7.18 IAAA
1901	Peter O'Connor	Waterford	7.55 IAAA

### *Remembering 40 years Ago 1984:*

Every club targeted success in centenary year 1984. Ballyhea Senior hurlers were no different. With Jerome O’Keeffe still at the helm, hopes were high of a decent C’ship run after a very good performance in the 1983 quarter final before losing out to St Finbarrs 3-10 to 0-13 at Dr Mannix Park Charleville.

The year started on the 20th of January with a challenge v UCC at the Mardyke. After a solid league campaign city divisional side Séandun were our opponents in the first round at Mallow town Park on the 19th of May.

Ballyhea were impressive winners 3-16 to 2-5 over a side which featured Cork great Johnny Crowley from Bishopstown. The Ballyhea line out was Dave O’Keeffe, Mossie O’Sullivan, Mike Morrissey, Neil Ronan, Johnny O’Callaghan, Jack Russell, Phil Ryan, Connie Brassill, Liam O’Connor, Alec Morrissey, Willie Shanahan, Ger O’Connor, Dave Ryan, Dom Hanley, Liam O’Halloran.

Next up was the mouthwatering clash with neighbours Newtown in Dr Mannix grounds Charleville in front of a huge crowd on June the 10th. With no changes from the first-round team, after a tense hour Ballyhea prevailed on a 0-15 to 1-8 scoreline. Christy Hanley was introduced for the injured Jack Russell during the game.

As the Cork hurlers were heading to a historic victory in the centenary all Ireland final played in Thurles, the county C’ship was put on hold. Ballyhea played in a number of tournaments during the summer, beating Tallow in Castlelyons, defeating Newmarket on Fergus and Glen Rovers in the Charleville tournament and going under to Ballyduff in Mitchelstown.

Milford were defeated in the centenary North Cork cup final 0-12 to 0-11. These games set us up for a semi-final clash with Sarsfields. The sides finished level on Sept 16th at Pairc ui Chaoimh 0-13 to 1-10.

Diarmuid O’Flynn returned from his travels to line out at centre forward. Liam O’Halloran coming on for Liam O’Connor.

6 days later, on Sat 22nd returning to the Pairc on a memorable evening, Ballyhea went on a goal scoring spree to stun the east cork side and advance to a county senior hurling final for the first time in 88 years 5-8 to 2-8.

As excitement in the parish reached fever pitch there was just 8 days to prepare for the clash with St Finbarrs.

The Barr’s went into the game as raging hot favourites.

Despite putting in a battling performance Ballyhea couldn’t match the scoring power of the city side which featured 6 members of Cork’s all Ireland winning panel and went under 1-15 to 2-4.

Compensation for the defeat was gained when it was announced that Phil Ryan had won the “Man of the Match “award.

The Corkman Newspaper report:

“Lack Of scoring powers blunts a brave effort to upset the odds “

Report by John Joe Brosnan.

Although St Finbarrs were comfortable winners of Sunday's Cork County hurling final at Pairc Ui Chaoimh, it must be said that Ballyhea emerged with considerable credit from a game that saw them put up a far more accomplished and spirited performance than most people expected.

The pre match opinion throughout the county was that Ballyhea would be decimated by a Barrs team which must realistically be regarded as one of the best club sides in the country.

But that was far from the case. The truth is that for long periods of the game Ballyhea gave as good as they got on the play. But the sad fact for them was that they were never able to match their illustrious rivals in scoring power.

The fact that the North Cork men only scored a point from play during the game, and had to rely to a great extent on Willie Shanahan's powerful striking from semi penalties to keep them afloat, paints a stark picture of their inability to break through the Barr's defence, and also of the faulty tactics that prompted them to keep trying for goals on the second half instead of shooting for points from far out.

But having said that let's give credit where credit is due, Ballyhea may have been outscored by the Barr's but they were not outclassed on the play as many people thought they would. Indeed, for quite a while in the second half they were moving better than their opponents, but their efforts to capitalise on possession almost invariably ended in frustration.

And so, the Barr's won easily in the end because they were able to absorb a lot of pressure and pick off points in a style the North Cork men could never emulate.

The signs were ominous for Ballyhea from an early stage when they failed to make use of a good deal of possession. They seemed to be pulling their punches in the opening minutes, dropping the ball into the Barr's goalkeeper, Ger Cunningham, instead of belting all the way for points. And then, from good positions, they had three wides which they could ill afford if they were to put it up to the city side.

St Finbarrs, from about an equal amount of play, were far sharper up front. Jimmy Barry Murphy picked off two nice points early on and by half time they had nine points on the board- two coming from midfielder John Cremin and one from a sideline cut by half back Frank Ramsey - while Ballyhea's only scores were notched by Willie Shanahan (a goal from a penalty and a point from a free).

That left the Barr's five points in front at half time, and Ballyhea, playing well on the resumption, had a chance to come into the picture only to lose out with narrow wides from Johnny O'Callaghan (twice) and Davy Ryan. While Ballyhea were missing their chances during this period St Finbarrs were making no mistake with three points within ten minutes of the resumption. This seemed to

convince the Ballyhea men their salvation now rested completely on their ability to go through for goals.

And that was a cardinal error in view of the strength of the St Finbarrs defence. Wilkie Cashman, Donal O'Grady, John Blake, Frank Ramsey, Niall Kennefick and John Hodgins formed a protective barrier to Ger Cunningham that Ballyhea failed to crack although trying hard and persistently in the last twenty minutes.

This was a defensive lineup that would have done credit to any county team, and it is a tribute to Ballyhea that on occasions the St Finbarrs backs had to call on all their skill and hurling know how to keep the Magpies at bay. But this they succeeded in doing.

An indication of the strength of Ballyhea's effort in the second half is that during a fifteen-minute spell between the 10th and 25th minutes a potentially lethal St Finbarrs attack was held to two points while Ballyhea scored three at the other end.

But, because of the lead which the Barrs had built up earlier, Ballyhea needed to do better than that. And their failure to do so meant they were seven points behind with five minutes to go when John Meyler's goal provided the icing on the cake for the Blues.

It was a low-key county final because of the general conviction that it would be a one-sided affair. What the game badly needed to lift it into a real contest was a spurt into the lead by the Ballyhea men at some stage, and the fact that they were never able to make that spurt left the Barr's always in control. But the city men had to play a lot harder for the title than most people thought they would.

The line outs were Ballyhea:

Dave O'Keeffe, Mossie O'Sullivan, Mike Morrissey, Neil Ronan, Phil Ryan, Jack Russell, Johnny O'Callaghan, Connie Brassill (0-1), Liam O'Connor, Ger O'Connor, Diarmuid O'Flynn, Liam O'Halloran, Dave Ryan, Dom Hanley, Willie Shanahan (2-3).

Sub used: Mikey O'Callaghan.

St Finbarrs:

Ger Cunningham, Willie Cashman, Donal O'Grady, John Blake, Frank Ramsey (0-1), Niall Kennefick, John Hodgins, Tomas Maher, John Cremin (0-3), John Meyler (1-0), Denis Walsh (0-6), Christy Ryan (0-1), Eamonn Fitzpatrick, Jimmy Barry Murphy (0-2), Tim Finn (0-2).

Subs: John Allen, Vincie Twomey.

Ref Mick O'Flaherty (Blackrock).

The year was also very successful for some of the other teams in the club. Our u-21 hurlers defeated Shanballymore in the North Cork final 1-14 to 1-6. This win exacted revenge for championship defeats, at the hands of the same opponents, at u-14, u-16 and minor levels on previous years.

The team was John Mortell, Joseph Brassill, Eamon Crowley, Jim Byrne, Christy Hanley, Johnny O'Callaghan, Mike Ryan, Paul O'Halloran, Liam O'Connor (capt), Ger O'Connor, Pat Walsh, Donal O'Connor, Liam Crowley, Billy Curtin, Mikey O'Callaghan.

The minor hurlers lost out in the North Cork final to Buttevant after a replay. The u-14s made it 3 North Cork titles in a row defeating Milford 10-6 to 3-5.

The team was Ray Ronan, Pat Byrne, Sean Crowley, Mike Byrne, John Crowley, Mike Browne (captain), Brendan McMahon, Timmy O'Callaghan, David Copps, Kevin O'Connor, P J McCarthy, Kieran O'Callaghan, Ian Ronan, Jeremiah Browne, Mossie O'Callaghan.

The North Cork u-12 title was won for the first time by the club beating Kilshannig in the final 9-9 to 2-0. The winning team was Derek Daly, John Buicke, John Galvin, Eamon Morrissey, Ken Kennedy, Tomas O'Riordan, Martin Hanley, Ray Ronan, Michael Mackessy, Ian Ronan, Mossie O'Callaghan, Trevor Kennedy, Timothy Crowley, Pat Davern, Tommy O'Donoghue.

This team went on to contest the county final v Killeagh but lost out of a cracking game.

Recently on Nov 9th the Mikey O'Callaghan tournament featured the u-14 hurlers of Ballyhea and St Finbarrs with the home side retaining the cup 2-11 to 1-4.

Members of the 1984 team were in attendance and the St Finbarrs club made a presentation to commemorate the 40th anniversary.



*The plaque presented by St Finbarrs to Ballyhea Gaa club*



*Eamon Morrissey (chairman), Darran Ronan, John Hodgins (St Finbarrs 1984 Captain), Johnny Ryan, Neil Ronan, Phil Ryan, Dave Ryan pictured at the Corbett Court at the 1984 reunion.*



*Ballyhea's 1984 half back line.  
Phil Ryan, Jack Russell and Johnny  
O'Callaghan.*



*Johnny O'Callaghan presenting  
the Mikey O'Callaghan memorial  
cup to Ballyhea captain Ross  
Manning.*



*Ballyhea u-14 hurlers winners of the Mikey O'Callaghan Memorial cup pictured  
with members of the Ballyhea 1984 team.*



*Pictures from 1980 county intermediate final reunion and Billy Fitzgibbon Hall of Fame award winner*





## *Juvenile GAA*



*Ballyhea u-16 hurlers winning of the C'ship plate.*



*Liam Murphy presenting Will O'Flaherty with his Man of the match award after Richie Murphy blitz final.*



*The Keane brothers Robbie and Jackie being presented with the Richie Murphy Memorial*



*Ballyhea u-10 hurlers winners of the Richie Murphy memorial blitz.*



*Mike Keogh chairman and Donie O'Sullivan presenting the Jack o Sullivan memorial cup to the Patrickswell captain.*



## *Ballyhea Gaelic 4 Mother & Others*

Ballyhea Gaelic 4 Mother & Others is an initiative for women in the area to play Gaelic football in a fun, non-competitive, social environment. It's all about socialising, having the craic and getting active at the same time!!!!

We started out in Feb this year and had such an amazing 2024.

We participated in the Munster Blitz in Mallow in June. Led by our costume designer Breda Kelly we swarmed about the Mallow Sports Complex in our bee outfits, playing some great football & taking home the Most Creative Costume Award for good measure.

We also played in some fantastic friendly matches with our friends from Buttevant, Dromina & Blackrock/Kilfinnane, decked out in our fabulous Love Cherish sponsored jerseys.

Thanks to all our hosts for such warm & friendly hospitality this year! With our huge social media drive this year we were successful in being selected to travel up to St Sylvesters, Dublin for the National Football Blitz...BALLYHEA ON TOUR!!!

On a glorious sun-drenched day in Dublin, we dressed up again, had some fantastic matches & made some great friends along the way... The Apres Match was fun too!

Our season ended with our now customary Fancy Dress End of Year Blitz. Dave never looked so well in his blue wig as his team 'DAVES AULD WANS' battled it out with 'ZOMBIE ALLSTARS' & 'GOALDIGGERS' on the day. The year ended with our Fun Awards Night where friends reminisced on the great adventures we had this year.

Special note of congratulations also to some of our players on some even bigger achievements in 2024;

Congrats to Jacklyn & Maurice on the birth of baby Tiernan

Congrats to Laura & Sam on the birth of baby Caelan

Congrats to Marian & Fintan on getting married this year.

Here's to 2025!!!

If anyone in the Ballyhea community is interested in joining us feel free to come along to training next year.

Note: you do not require any footballing experience to play and it's not just for mothers!

The only criteria is that you are over 25 and not playing with an adult footballing club.

Why not give it a go?

(Instagram : #ballyheagmao)

*Photos:*



*Munster Provincial Blitz, Mallow Sports Complex*



*National Football Blitz, St. Sylvesters Dublin*





*Ballyhea on Tour!!!*



*End of Year Fancy Dress Blitz*



## *Ballyhea Camogie club*

### **U6s**

Our U6's started training on April 6<sup>th</sup> and continued up to the 26th October. 14 girls joined this age group which was mainly held on early on Saturday Mornings. Thankfully only one session had to be forced indoors and only one had to be cancelled due to weather conditions. The main aim was to have fun and to keep the numbers up each week, which hopefully worked as an average number was 10 girls across a 7-month period. The aim was to have as many coaching sessions as possible until we played local blitzes towards the end of the year. As the weather held up, we played 3 local blitzes. One held in Newtownshandrum at the end of September, and two in October in Charleville. The girls enjoyed the Blitzes as we had 12 player travel to each day. The year finished up with a training party at the field where the girls had a fun. Thanks to the parents who created no fuss as we brought training forward 30 minutes from last season. A special thanks to Chloe Dundon, Jane Foley and Tara O Sullivan, who helped during the year at various training sessions. A very special tanks to Laura Dundon who was present at 90% of the training sessions and she was the difference between the girls training and the girls having fun while training. Hopefully going forward at this age, the plan is for them to learn as they have fun. And look forward to the girls improve at the basic skill of the game.

Trainers U6/U7 ; James O'Shaughnessy, Laura Dundon



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie U6 Team**

### **U8s**

The U8's started training at the beginning of April and continued to train every Saturday morning throughout the summer months. The girls travelled to Newtown, Milford, Charleville, Buttevant and Grenagh for blitzes and Ballyhea Camogie Club hosted 2 blitzes. Throughout all the games the girls battled hard to the end, and it is clear to see that all of their hard work at training and practising at home is paying off. We finished up in the middle of October and I know all of the girls are already looking forward to starting back again in the new year.

Trainers U8 Claire O Doherty, Geoff Watson



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie U8 Team**

### **U10s**

Our U10's started back training on Saturday February 24th in the new hall with 14 girls. We trained for a few Saturdays inside the hall before moving outside. We then moved to a second night of training on Wednesdays in the middle of April. Some of the U9s attended training with us on Wednesdays. Due to the poor pitch conditions, our blitzes didn't start until April 20th. We played 12 U10 blitzes with Newtown, Milford, Mallow, Banteer, Effin and Charleville, 4 of which were in Ballyhea and 4 U9 blitzes two of which were in Ballyhea.

On 2nd October, Ester O'Leary delivered a training session with the Trainers and the girls. She was brilliant and spotted things for us to work on. Would love to have her back for a few sessions next year especially with the younger girls. Last training session took place 12th October.

Trainers U10; Aoife O 'Flynn, Darren Ronan, Dinny Mortell



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie U10 Team**

## U12s

This year's U12 team had a very busy season on and off the field. On the field, we played in 4 group phases throughout the year. In phase 1, we came up against Castlelyons, Ballincollig & Mallow. All games competitively played and as they were our first games of the year, plenty to work on. In phase 2 we played Banteer, Millstreet and Blackrock. Some tough and tight games, which we came out the better on in all 3. Momentum was building and we played phase 3 against Milford, Nemo Rangers and Ballinhassig. The girls were really enjoying their Camogie at this stage, and confidence was flowing with some big scores being racked up. Our final group phase 4 was a seeded group based on previous results. We came up against the strongest of the teams in the county at this stage - Carrigaline, Ballincollig, Douglas, Castlelyons, Ballinora and Killeagh. With the holiday season in full swing, we had to navigate the games as best we could and came up against some very strong teams. The girls to their credit were never found wanting and always gave it their all. To finish the year off in style, we played an u12 team V Parents match, with an annual trophy presented to the victorious u12 team after the game, as well as medals and a player of the match award. We hope that this can be carried forward every year given the excitement and fun had by all parents and kids. Off the field, we organised a trip to Croke Park for the All-Ireland Camogie finals. We teamed up with the u14 team and We had a fantastic day which was helped by the fact that Cork won both the Intermediate and senior finals. We would like to thank the parents for driving around the county all year, and we look forward to getting back at it again in a couple of months.

Trainers U12; Gary Gore, Goeff Watson, Claire O Doherty.



**Ballyhea Camogie U12 Team**

## U13s and U14s

The U13s and uu14s started back training on 23rd February. The U14s had a very long season playing their last game last Tuesday night. The year we were graded A in the County league. We defeated Nemo Rangers, Bishopstown, St. Finbarrs and Ballinhassig to top our group and qualify for the semi-final, where we defeated Cloughduv on 19th June in Ballyhea 5-8 to 3-6. We faced St. Fanahans in the County League final on 29th June in Castle Road and after a great performance we came out on top. As a result of winning the league we contested the Premier 2 Championship but unfortunately after defeats to Valley Rovers and Cloughduv and a victory over St. Fanahans we came 3rd in the group and were knocked out of the championship. We

participated in the plate competition which was called the Autumn league where had victories over St Vincent's and St Fanahans and a walk over from Nemo Rangers meant we were in to a playoff with Sliabh Rua To decide who qualified for the autumn league. Final we played last Tuesday night in Ballymartle and down a few players due to illness and injuries we were defeated 6-6 to 1-6. We would like to thank the players for their commitment and efforts all year and to the parents for their cooperation and driving the girls to matches and training in a very long season.

Trainers U13/U14; Dinny Mortell, Marie Foley, Sheila Lenihan Mentor: Chloe Keogh Medic: Louise Keane



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie U14 Team**

The u13s took part in the Avondhu championship and were in a group with Banteer, Newtown and Kilworth. After 2 defeats and a draw we contested the B final with Kilworth. The final was played on 9th October in Kilworth and after a very exciting match the teams were level and we came out on top after extra time



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie U13 Team**

## **U15s**

Our u15 girls started off this year with an excellent effort in the County Premier Feile competition, a step up from last years A grade. Unfortunately, two one point defeats to St Catherine's & Newtownshandrum and a great win vs Carrigaline just wasn't enough to progress through to the group stages. Ballyhea again hosted the group this year and a huge thanks to all our volunteers who helped out on the day. In terms of U15 Avondhu we had a great win away

to Kilworth in the semi-final, but unfortunately lost out to a strong Newtownshandrum side in the final. Our U16 league campaign started with strong wins in the group stages against Carrigtwohill, Bishopstown, Kilworth & Valley Rovers. We beat Cloughduv in the league semi-final and ventured to Cork on a Monday night to take on a strong Blarney outfit in the league final. After an epic match we came out on top after the late drama of a penalty save by Saoirse in the final minutes. It was a huge team effort by all our girls and a fantastic achievement to win the League Final. With such success it was inevitable that we would be promoted for the championship. With no split between Premier 1 & premier 2 teams like previous years we were placed in a very difficult group. After 2 tough defeats away to Sarsfields & Bishopstown the girls put in an outstanding performance in our last game at home to Sliabh Rua who eventually went on to win the Premier 1 Championship. We have no doubt the experience will stand to the girls and with a little more physical training next year and with renewed confidence the girls should be well capable at having a crack at the Premier 2 championship. On behalf of Neil, Mike & Steve we would like to thank the girls for their huge effort this year, all the parents for their support, Edel for helping us coordinate everything, Chloe for helping with training and to Gabriel for doing first aid throughout the year. Here's to next year where we plan to come back even stronger.



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie U16 Team**

Trainers U15/ U16; Steve Keane, Neil Ronan, Mike Keogh Mentor: Chloe Keogh Medic: Gabreille Walsh



## **Minors**

The Minor team played A grade in League and Championship. In the league we defeated Na Piarasaigh and received a walk over from Enniskeneane and were defeated by Newcestown and Glen Rovers. We did not qualify for the knockout stages of the league. In the championship Wins over Ballygarvan and Blackrock and a draw with Clonakilty meant we topped our Group. We received a bye into the semi-final which will take place Sunday 24th November vs. Glen Rovers in Ballyhea at 2.45pm. We had 18 players available for minor team this year. The minor team Management is Dave Hickey Neil Ronan Eamon Morrissey and Chole Keogh and Audrey Morrissey looks after First Aid.



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie Minor Team**

## **Premier Intermediate Team**

The Ballyhea Premier Intermediate Team enjoyed a relatively successful year, with the highlight being the Premier Intermediate League Final victory over Ballinora, who went on to win the championship. Throughout the season, the girls completed 71 team sessions, on top of their own gym sessions. The entire squad was introduced and progressed admirably through a strength and conditioning program. Originally in January we were graded at Intermediate, however after a board regrade, we found ourselves in the newly established, and highly competitive, Premier Intermediate grade. The girls should be commended, as they never saw this as a problem in their quest to win the championship. Unfortunately, we fell short at the quarter final stage, against Fr. O'Neills, who, with the greatest respect, we dominated throughout. All year, we encouraged the girls to move the ball through the lines, take on their opponent, and we placed a large emphasis on creating goal opportunities. The girls ticked all these boxes, but unfortunately, through pure bad luck, we left a few goals behind us, and ended up losing by a single point.

Looking ahead to next year, the girls should be optimistic. In all probability, we will find ourselves in the Senior League. This will require greater commitment and intensity earlier in the year, to ensure we can be competitive. A strong Senior League campaign next year would be a huge bonus heading into the Premier Intermediate Championship, which I have no doubt,

Ballyhea can win. It is also great to hear that the Minor and U16 teams enjoyed strong campaigns this year, and it is very important that these girls progress to the adult team in the years ahead, as the more numbers that train, leads to greater competition for places. Cormac would like to thank his management team of Marie Harty, Liam Crowley and John O Reilly, as well as our first aiders Breda Dundon and Gabriel Walsh. I would also like to thank the club, and the executive for their support throughout the year. Finally, I would like to thank the girls for a challenging, engaging and enjoyable year.

Trainers Premier Intermediate; Cormac OReilly, John OReilly. Mentors: Marie Harty, Liam Crowley. Medic: Breda Dundon, Gabrielle Walsh



**2024 Ballyhea Camogie Premier Intermediate Team**

Premier Intermediate league winners



Trip to the All-Ireland Camogie final

Rachel Harty All Ireland senior camogie winner with her clubmates



Rachel Harty lifts the O'Duffy cup



Faye Ronan and Róisín Walsh u15 Cork members



## *Ballyhea Gun club*

Ballyhea Gun club is a small club in the Parish

It has been in existence for 49 years.

It came about from a meeting of 7 landowners in the Ballyhea Hall on the 12th October 1975

The purpose then was to found a gun club and develop game stocks on the preserved areas and this purpose remains as is today.

A chairman John Leahy RIP and secretary Jerome o Keeffe were elected. Another meeting would be held on the 28th of October 1975 for game license holders and the election of further committee members who were Vice Chairman John Ronan and Hon Treasurer Michael O Keeffe RIP the president of the club was Tom Leahy RIP

The words Bio-Diversity and Eco Systems are much used nowadays but gun clubs including Ballyhea have been practising them for years. We have been restocking birds for years. Lots of trees have been planted many hedgerows are



there as a result. These provide habitat for wildlife and routeways for movement. Food is provided by the berries of some hedges. Thus, other birds apart from game birds' benefit. Patches of ground are used for Game Crop/Grain which provides food and cover for birds and wildlife.

Of course, all of this would be impossible without the goodwill of farmers. For this we are grateful. We have strict rules about behaviours and limited times for shooting. Predators are kept under control.

All our members have to be members of the NARGC compensation fund. This ensures that farmers are covered for any damage. Members and gundogs are also covered. The NARGC cover applies to the Island of Ireland and Europe.

As well as the goodwill of farmers the club depends on the effort put in by dedicated members. These have never been lacking.

Covid upset a lot of sports but hopefully weather permitting will be back to normal.

New members are always welcome but they must abide by club rules and code of conduct.

Fund raising through the years has taken many forms e.g. clay shoots, dances, chicken suppers, raffles and in most recent year's poker classics and Grand



National draws and Rugby World Cup draw most recently. Fund raising is essential for the club to survive.

All these have a limited time and new ideas have to be sought. Hard work by dedicated members and support from their families was and is needed.

Popular venues were the Deer Park, Greenwood Inn, Barrett Lodge, Buttevant Community Hall, Bridge Bar and Harp Bar.

A most popular musician was the late Johnny Barrett. Young and old enjoyed his singing and company.

Meetings were held in the Ballyhea Hall until it was destroyed by fire. The GAA Hall was our next venue then we moved to the Barrett Lodge kindly made available by Joan Barrett and the late Dan Barrett. Later we moved between the Lodge, The Bridge Bar and the Harp Bar  
Of recent years we have had our meeting in the Corbett Court.



Duck shooting opens 1st Sept and pheasant on 1st Nov the shooting season for game birds ends 31st Jan.

There are too many people who have been officers of the club or members of the club to mention by name. But for them the club wouldn't have a past. The people of the present Are continuing their good work today  
Though the club is not large there is a hardcore of hard working and dedicated officers and members who continue the ideals of the founder members of the 12th Oct 1975.

### **Current Committee**

President Jim Murphy

Chairman Kevin Foley

Vice Chairman Ray Ronan

Hon Secretary Una Hickey

Hon Treasurer U Hickey & K Foley

Club Delegate Martin Lane

Health and Safety Tim Dennehy

Ballyhea Gun Club would like to thank all the farmers for the permission to shoot over there land as only for them we wouldn't have a club.

Secretary Una Hickey

*Ballyhea Community Council  
Tractor Run*

The Ballyhea Charity Tractor Run was held on Sunday, January 7, 2024. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated and supported this event for such a worthy cause. Funds raised were shared among Marymount Hospice, Milford Care Centre, and The Irish Haemophilia Society. The 2025 Tractor Run is set for January 5.



## *Active Age Party*

Ballyhea Community Council hosted the Ballyhea Active Age Party at the Corbett Court in January. A wonderful evening was had by all. 2025 Ballyhea Active Age Party is on Saturday 11 January 2025 in the Corbett Court.



## *St. Patrick's Day*

A heartfelt thank you to all the community groups, parish and club groups, schools, organizations, businesses, and individuals who participated in this year's parade. Your creativity, energy, and enthusiasm made the 2024 parade a truly memorable celebration for everyone. 🍀

Looking forward to seeing you all again next year 🍀



## *Tree of Hope*

The Ballyhea Tree of Hope, planted a few years ago, stands as a poignant symbol of support for those affected by suicide or living with mental health challenges. It shines as a beacon of hope, reminding everyone in the community that they are not alone.

This Christmas, yellow ribbons will be placed on the tree, symbolizing a warm and welcoming sign. The colour yellow conveys the message that the community is open, ready to listen, and here to offer support to those in need. In 2025, a plaque will be mounted on the wall to further honour this meaningful initiative. Recently, flowers, lights, and a beautiful battery light were added, enhancing its reflective and tranquil ambiance.

Special thanks go to Margaret O'Callaghan, Charleville Suicide Awareness Project, and Monsignor O'Brien for their support. For further updates, please check The Vale Star or the parish Mass booklet. This heartfelt project continues to bring comfort and hope to many within the community.



## *Cork Penny Dinners*

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported Cork Penny Dinners. Your generosity makes a real difference to those in need.



## *Our Lady's Well*

It's wonderful to see Ballyhea Lady's Well and the dedicated volunteers who care for it receiving such well-deserved recognition. Holy wells are a cherished part of Ireland's spiritual and cultural heritage, and it's inspiring to know this one is celebrated as one of the most picturesque and well-maintained in the country.



Amanda Clarke's recent book, *Holy Wells of County Cork*, highlights the importance of these sacred sites.

After spending seven years exploring, researching, and documenting holy wells across the county, her work serves as a valuable record of their history and significance. The inclusion of Ballyhea Lady's Well in her book underscores its beauty and spiritual importance.

For those who haven't yet visited, this is the perfect opportunity to experience its charm, especially during the festivals dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The volunteers' efforts ensure that this sacred place remains a beacon for devotion and tradition.



## *Village Clean-up*

A sincere thank you to all the volunteers who participated in the Village Clean-Up on Saturday, 7th September. Your hard work and the tools you brought—shovels, brushes, trimmers, and more—helped make a real difference in our community.

Keep an eye on the Vale Star and the Mass Booklet for announcements about upcoming Village Clean-Up dates. Let's continue to work together to keep our village beautiful.



*Santa  
Claus  
\*IS\*  
coming  
TO TOWN*

## *Community Council Trad Night*

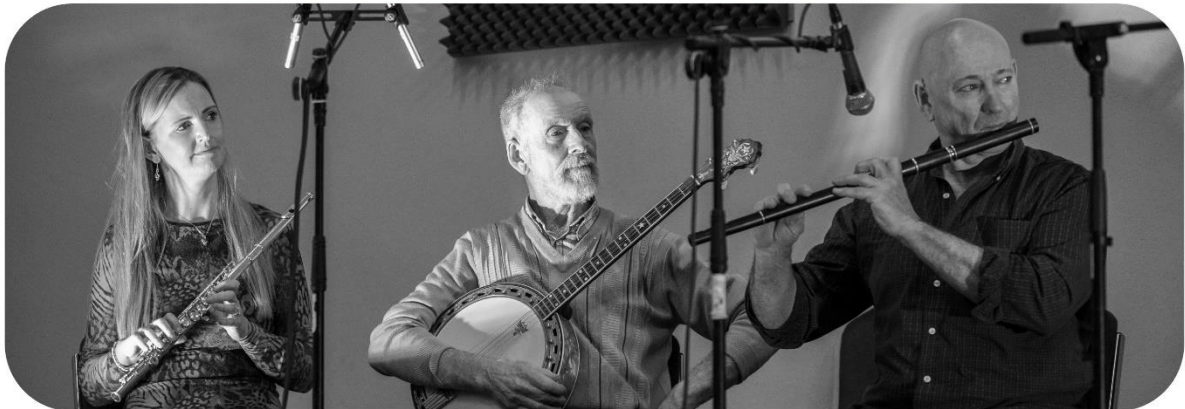
A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported An Evening of Trad, Country, Folk Music & Song, featuring local musicians in aid of Ballyhea Community Council initiatives, including the Active Age Party, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Village Clean-Up, and Flowers for the Village. The event, held last Saturday night at Ballyhea Community Parish Hall, was a fantastic success.

We would like to extend special thanks to our MC, Pat McAuliffe, and to all the talented local musicians who took part:

- Triona & Carl
- The Oddsocks made up of Aidan O'Connor, Shane Ryan, Elliot O'Riordan from Ballyhea National School/Musica Fusion)
  - Ger Wall
  - Ceoltóirí Clárach
  - Linda Buckley
  - Noel Duignan
  - Margo Crean

A special mention goes to Thomas Walsh (Hear it Sound & Lighting) for his technical support and Mikey Moran for taking photos. Additionally, we are deeply grateful to all the committee members and volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this event a memorable one. Your support ensures the continued success of our community initiatives. Thank you once again.



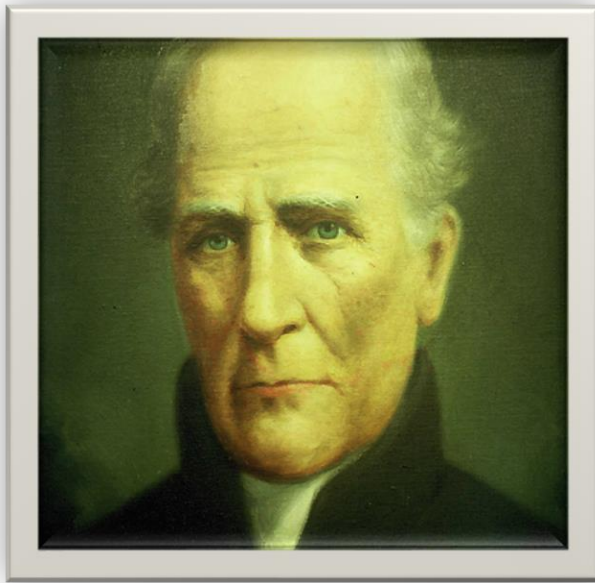


## *History of Charleville Convent*

**1836-2024**

In 1836, pre-famine times in Ireland, Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Mercy Order, was invited to found a convent in Charleville.

Fr. Thomas Croke P.P. and Mary Clanchy, daughter of John Clanchy, a member of a benevolent family, were instrumental in bringing the sisters to the town.



Mary Clanchy offered a house as a temporary convent and £500 as an initial contribution. When Fr. Croke joined his petition with hers and Dr. Crotty, the Bishop of the Diocese, made a formal request, Catherine McAuley yielded to their combined entreaties and the foundation was decided on.

Three sisters were selected to make the journey to North Cork. Sr. Mary Angela Dunne was to be the Founding Superior. Her companions were both novices - Sr. M. Joseph Delany and Sr. M. Elizabeth Hynes. Catherine McAuley brought Sr. M. Clare Moore as her travelling companion for the return journey.

The group of five started the 140-mile journey by canal boat. Canal travel, always slow and inconvenient, (about 6 miles per hour) was cold and in late October particularly uncomfortable. They travelled all day and the cross-country boat stopped at Tullamore in the middle of the night. There they were

welcomed in the convent, the first outside Dublin and founded a few months previously. Fr. Croke had come from Charleville and awaited their arrival.

The following day they departed for Limerick and arrived about 9 p.m. They spent the night in the Presentation Convent in Sexton St. Finally, they arrived in Charleville on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1836. They lived in the middle house in Clanchy Terrace until the present convent was built a few years later.



There was lots of work to be done and the amount of poverty seemed appalling. They began to visit the homes of those who lived in hovels in the many lanes in the town. A monthly collection was made for the sick poor. Every family they visited got food which was brought in a basket. The sisters never visited without a

ticket from one of the local clergy. Day after day they returned from errands of mercy with their perplexity unrelieved.

For nearly four years the community numbered no more than three. Sr. Joseph Delany, the novice who came on the foundation, was professed in 1837 but later she returned to Baggot St. The other novice, who came with her, Sr. Elizabeth Hynes, had grown so delicate that she returned to her family. Then Angela's niece came and became Sr. Clare Lawlor.

They visited the newly built National School, where they gave religious instruction. Later they taught full time in the school.

As difficulties continued, Mother Angela made efforts to induce Catherine Mc Auley to dissolve the foundation. An extract from Catherine's reply in Dec. 1837 teaches us much: *Are not the*



*Poor of Charleville as dear to Him as elsewhere? - and while one pound of Ms. Clanchy's lasts ought we not to persevere and confide in His Providence ...Put your whole confidence in God - He will never let you want necessities for yourself or the children - It would afflict me, and it would be a disgrace to our Order to have a break up".*

Two years later we read a happy prophecy for the Charleville Convent: "*I expect we shall have a useful and flourishing institute in Charleville. I often lay out plans for it. P.G. they will succeed - it hitherto has been a sick branch, but it will be a strong one yet".*

About a year after the Sisters arriving, Fr. Croke succeeded in getting a piece of land from Lord Cork and the foundation stone of the new convent was laid on 24 Sept., (Mercy Day) that year by Catherine Mc Auley herself. The inhabitants of the town and the youth of the parish, headed by the Catholic Authorities of the place, marched in procession to witness the ceremony which was performed by Rev. Fr. Croke P.P. The convent was completed in 1839 and was dedicated to St. Joseph.



Because the sisters had not yet got charge of the National School and as the instruction of youth formed one of the most distinguished features of the Institute, the sisters opened a pay school at the

request of Fr. Croke and the approval of the bishop and Catherine McAuley.

Children were educated in a room in the convent, at such terms as their parents could afford.

In the 1843 the National School was given into the care of the sisters. It was in good working order and about four to five hundred pupils attended.

A great dinner was served in the school on one occasion and Daniel O'Connell who was holding a monster meeting in the town that day attend with Fr. Croke and many neighbouring clergy. Next morning he attended Mass in the convent and visited the sisters.

Another visitor to the town was Fr. Matthew, the apostle of Temperance and the sisters took the pledge for the edification of the community at large and promised to abstain from "*all intoxicating liqueur*". Fr. Wm. Croke, newly ordained and a nephew of the P.P. also took the pledge and became president of the Temperance Society in the town.

The nucleus of a girl's secondary school began in a room in the new convent. Many years later, a field was bought and a new school opened in April 1894.



In the meantime, the Great Famine took its toll on the town. A total of 72% of the people living in fourth class houses in Charleville, which were mere hovels, were wiped out by the famine. The Tablet, Sat. 1 July 1848 reported: "*The Sisters of Mercy with great respect present compliments to Right Rev. Dr. Briggs, and earnestly solicit his charitable assistance to enable them to supply the pressing wants of the sick poor amongst whom they visit. Besides these objects of their care, the Sisters have, during the last twelve months made an exertion to supply one meal a-day to the poorest amongst the children attending their schools; but their resources are now nearly exhausted, and they much fear being obliged to discontinue this relief, which was found to be a great means of ensuring the regular attendance of these poor little creatures. The Sisters have the pleasure to repeat their thanks to Dr. Biggs for his kind donation sent them on a former occasion through the V. Rev. T. Croke, P.P.* Fr. Wm. Croke was one of the victims of Famine fever and he is buried in Holy Cross Cemetery.

In 1847 Isabella Croke, called in religion Sr. M. Joseph, niece of the P.P. entered. She and Sr. Clare Lawlor joined many other sisters from Ireland and England who went to the Crimean War in 1854, to nurse British and Irish soldiers in the Military Hospital in the East.

The Irish nursing sisters had much experience in caring for the sick poor in crowded cabins, tenements and workhouses in Ireland. When they met the soldiers from the battlefields, they found them crawling with vermin, delirious from fevers, thirst and neglect. They set up kitchens and fed the soldiers who were too weak to feed themselves. They made ward rounds with the doctors, administered medicines, dressed and bandaged wounds. Besides attending to the corporal wants of all the patients they prepared the dying of their own religion for the Last Sacraments and instructed the sick.

As well as the squalor and suffering the sisters lived in, there was the ongoing conflict of personalities and policies between Florence Nightingale and the sisters.

After sixteen months peace was declared and the nuns returned home. Co. Cork blazed with bonfires and tar barrels to greet the “*Russian nuns*”. All in Charleville Convent were in the greatest joy at the safe return of Sr. Joseph. Many of her stories, both tragic and comic became the source of entertainment and dismay during evening recreation times for many years. (*For more details of the Charleville Connection to the Crimean War, see the 2022 edition of this Parish Annual*)

In 1855 the Fever hospital closed and the patients were sent to the Kilmallock Union. As the building was in the neighbourhood of the Convent, the use of it was handed over to the sisters with a proviso that if an epidemic broke out it would be available as a hospital again.

This building became an Industrial School. A paid Mistress was in charge and soon it became the centre for the teaching of crafts in



particular lace making. Crochet lace was in full fashion at that time. A qualified lace-maker was employed and between 60 and 80 girls attended daily. Between £700 and

£1, 000 were paid out annually to those who worked there and this was a great means of support in an otherwise precarious employment sphere.

*( For more details on the Lace Making in Charleville, see the 2023 edition of the Parish Annual)*



The fine crochet lace products were sold to America and Australia. When the war broke out in America, trade was interrupted so the sale of crochet had to be discontinued. The school tried to sell silk hair nets but the money was small so the Industrial school was closed.

Many of those employed emigrated to England where they benefited from their

training. Some kept in contact with the sisters for many years afterwards. The former Fever Hospital was also used as an Infant school and one classroom was used by the secondary for the teaching of Science up until 1922 when a new Science room was built - one of the first in the country.

About 1862, due to an increase in the number of girls entering the convent, a new chapel, sacristy and choir were built as well as a new staircase, a corridor with twelve cells, a novice ship and infirmary. On the ground floor a schoolroom for paying pupils, a kitchen, pantry, refectory, laundry and almonry were added.

In 1866 an appeal came from Matthew Quinn, Bishop-elect of the diocese of Bathurst in Australia. He was a friend of Fr. Croke and pleaded for sisters to make a foundation in New South Wales. Mother Ignatius Croke **led a group of seven** - 5 professed and two novices to Bathurst. Sr. Agnes Mc Sweeney, who wrote Hail Glorious St. Patrick was among the professed who went on the mission. They set up schools as quickly as possible and opened boarding schools with reasonable fees, which provided for the education of children from

the vast outback areas of N.S.W. During the next seven years, several other Sisters together with Novices and Postulants left Charleville and the surrounding area for Australia.



They visited the homes of the pupils and prisoners in Bathurst Gaol. During the following years, many foundations were made from Bathurst to other parts of N.S.W

Dec. 21st. 1878, Ms Clanchy, our earliest benefactress, and now Mrs. French, died. During her life she made annual donations for the poor and willed £500 to the community as a sign of her generous promise to continue to befriend the Foundation.

The following year, 1879, Charleville Convent opened its first Irish Branch House in Buttevant. Canon Buckley, P.P. of Buttevant secured ground on which to build a convent and on 2nd Feb., the sisters from Charleville moved to their new home called St. Mary's.

His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, preached the inaugurating sermon and the people of the town visited the house and grounds during the afternoon. For one hundred and thirty-three years the Sisters taught in the schools and visited the sick poor of the neighbourhood and beyond.



Three months later, Canon Ryan P.P. of New Inn, Co Tipperary invited the Sisters to teach the children of his parish and care for the sick poor.



His Grace Dr. Croke presided at the opening and the rural population explored the convent afterwards. Soon the sisters were in charge of the National School and opened a pension school.

In 1880 the Kilmallock Board of Guardians formally requested Rev. Mother Joseph Croke to undertake charge of the Workhouse because the Infirmary nurse had resigned her office. For twenty years previously the sisters had been visiting the sick and poor inmates there and had cherished a hope of being able to improve the spiritual and temporal welfare of the poor sufferers.



Early in 1881, sisters from Charleville commenced duties. Over the decades many sisters toiled there until 1922. The workhouse hospital was suppressed by the Irish Government in 1921. The patients were removed to the home in Newcastle west at the end of the year but a few sisters lived on in the Convent until 1923 when the shot and shell of the Republican Army forced them to withdraw and flee for their lives.

1881 marked the Golden Jubilee of the Mercy Order. Mother Joseph Croke was the Superior and she arranged that a High Mass of Thanksgiving would be celebrated. This was followed by *"giving a substantial dinner to fifty of the poor women of the locality whom the sisters visited and assisted frequently. The meal was served by the sisters in a large schoolroom and each lady was given a suitable gift as a souvenir of the day."*

The Golden Jubilee of the Convent was in 1886 and celebrations continued into the following year. July 25th 1887 was chosen as the day for the public celebration. The town was decked out with banners, congratulatory mottos and arches. A Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. Dr. McCarthy, Bishop of Cloyne and Dr. Fitzgerald Bishop of Ross and over sixty priests attended. A beautifully illuminated address was presented by the people of the town. Refreshments were served and bands played in the grounds. A display of fireworks marked the end of a memorable day.

In 1891 a four-acre field was acquired near the Infant School. Mr. Bohan of Effin died that year. He had been a kind friend to the Convent and to his sisters who lived in the community. He left £1,500 with which a new school was erected

The following year, the Community were asked by Canon Hutch P.P. Midleton, with the Bishop's approval, to take charge of the Workhouse in Midleton (built 1841) because the Kinsale sisters, who had been there, were no longer in a position to do so.



Five Charleville sisters answered the call to nurse the poor and sick. A further building known as the front hospital was opened in 1937 and both buildings were run as a district hospital by the Sisters of Mercy from 1937

until 1994 when a lay matron was appointed by the Health Board.

Enlargements and improvements to the Convent were commenced in 1894. Membership had increased so extra accommodation was necessary. The roof was removed and the front house raised a storey. Twelve new rooms were added. The halls were tiled, a new stairway and banister enabled fresh air to circulate. The old school room was opened into the kitchen and laundry departments completed the changes. A porch was added and glass panels were put into the front windows.

After Easter that year, a new Secondary School - Our Lady's school was opened, consisting of two class rooms which were on the campus of the fever hospital which had been built by the state in 1836 due to an epidemic of cholera.

The Diocesan Amalgamation, 1916 brought many changes. Bishop Browne opened a General Novitiate in Cobh, for the Sisters of Mercy in his Diocese. To ensure the working of this he amalgamated the houses of the order under one Superior General.

In 1919 a new cooking kitchen was added to the Pension School. Art and music were encouraged. An orchestra was trained and gave some splendid performances. Special attention was given to the teaching of Science and a Science Laboratory was built in 1922.

Autumn 1920, the entire convent was heated and the following spring electric light was installed.

Central heating was installed in the National and Infant schools in 1925.

1922-26, the walks in the garden and the inner and outer fields were cemented and rose bowers were erected.

Sisters were sent on various courses in Science and to University to qualify for degrees in order to become Registered Secondary Teachers.

1928, two fields which separated our Convent grounds and the farm were purchased. (Moylan's farm)

When running water in taps was being provided for the town, in 1931, the committee in charge requested permission to place the reservoir in the convent field, the highest point of altitude in the neighbourhood. By way of gratitude two of the schools were to get free water.

In 1932, Mr. Ball's field was purchased for £250 and provided sites for the Primary and Infant Schools.

The Centenary Celebrations were held in June 1937 due to weather the previous Autumn/Winter.

Early June, statues of the Sacred Heart and St. Joseph were placed in the front of the convent. On June 30th the town was decorated at an early hour.

Pontifical High Mass was at 11 a.m. Bishops Roche and Keane joined a large

number of priests. The school children processed to the parish church where the sisters wore their white church cloaks. Sisters from other convents joined a large congregation of townspeople. The children and the parish choir sang the mass. Bishops, clergy, guest and sisters returned to the convent and a deputation from the town presented an address in the parterre. A special meal followed and the local band played sweet melodies to bring the day to its close. In Jan. 1938 the Lourdes Grotto was erected and blessed in the chapel yard.

The Foundation Stone of the new National School was blessed by V. Rev. Canon Burke P.P. on June 12th 1939. The Old N.S. where the Srs. had been teaching for over a century had been condemned as out of date and unsuitable. This had been built at the request of Fr. Croke in 1833. Balls's field, purchased in 1932 was selected as a site for the new school. The cost was estimated at £7,800 of which the P.P. and community were to pay one third of the amount. The new school was officially opened on Nov. 17th 1940.



In the medical field, Srs. worked in the Almonry for many decades and discharged remedies and dressed wounds for many local people.

A large bequest of £2,000 was left to the community by Canon P. O'Gorman P.P. of Skerries. The money was spent on extending the secondary school and building a new school kitchen. The new wing was blessed in 1950.

April 1958 the corner stone of the new choir was blessed by Fr. Lenihan, assisted by Fr. A.T. Barry and Fr. M. Rea. During the removal of the Sanctuary tiles, the grave of our Founder Fr. Croke was discovered. The grave is now marked by a tiny mosaic cross in the Sanctuary.



The new choir was blessed by Bishop Aherne in Feb. 1959. A plaque, on the street outside the convent reminds passers-by that he is buried inside.



The highlight of 1962 was the Episcopal Jubilee of Archbishop Mannix. After a special mass, celebrated in the convent chapel, a celebratory meal was served in the community room where priests, President de Valera and senior members of the Gardai and Army dined.

The Second Vatican Council (Oct. 1962-64) brought major changes to the church and to religious life. Every sister was given a copy of the Documents of Vatican II. The Divine Office was recited instead of the Little Office of Our Lady and was said in English. Changes in dress/ the habit also followed.

In 1964, Social work for the poor and deprived was undertaken in a bigger scale than usual. To facilitate “meals on wheels” a car was purchased by the community- the first convent in the diocese to get one and sisters were prepared for their driving licence as well as for professional nursing.

A new Infant school, St. Joseph’s, was opened with great ceremony in Sept. 1965. Mass was celebrated in the Parish Church and the parishioners, pupils and teachers



processed to the school which was blessed by Canon D. Murphy P.P. A crucifix was hung in every classroom.

In 1967, the altar in the chapel was reconstructed so that the priest could face the community when celebrating Mass.

The introduction of free post primary education and free transport in 1967 brought an influx of pupils too the Secondary school. Consequently, there was great need for more accommodation. The old Infant School was renovated and six beautiful class rooms were ready for occupation by the end of 1969. It was called “The Mannix Block”, after Archbishop Mannix who was a native of Charleville.

O’Riordan’s house and garden, close to the Convent were purchased in 1981. It was decided to build a much-needed Nursing Home for the elderly. The Mc Auley Home was opened in Oct. 1984 by Bishop Aherne and functioned successfully as a Nursing Home until its closure in 2002.



Work on the reconstruction of the ground floor of Mrs. O' Riordan's house in preparation for the Day Care Centre was completed in 1986. There was a lounge, dining room, kitchen, scullery as well as a treatment room, bathroom and toilets. The

function of the Day Centre was to provide services for the elderly of Charleville and the surrounding districts. Services available include meals, chiropody, hair-dressing, physiotherapy and facilities for bath, showers and change of clothes as well as social events e.g. music and card playing.

Sesquicentennial Celebrations: To mark the coming of the Sisters, 150 years ago, Bishop Ahern was the main concelebrant at a special Mass of Thanksgiving in the Parish Church. About 30 priests were present. An open invitation was extended to the people of the parish through the newspapers. Three sisters came from our foundation in Bathurst, N.S.W. Many past and present pupils and teachers attended as well as sisters who had ministered here in the past. After mass, refreshments were served in the Secondary School. Catering was done by ladies from local organisations under the direction of the Charleville I.C. A. guild. An illuminated address and a cheque were presented by the people of the parish.

Celebrations lasted several days and the local senior citizens arranged to have the highlights recorded on video.

In 1989, The Semi-Sheltered Care Project was initiated by Sr. Celestine and the Semi-Sheltered Care Committee. The object was to provide a sheltered housing scheme for the elderly, which would consist of a community block plus a number of suitable flatlets.



The sisters donated the site at the back of the Parish Church, facing Love Lane. March 1991 was open day. Great crowds availed of the opportunity to see the project and were very impressed with the layout of the complex. President Mary Robinson formally opened the complex at Church View, consisting of 14 houses as well as

community and recreational centre on 25th April 1991.

Negotiations for a new secondary school were initiated with the Dept of Education in 1992. Health and safety of the children and the staff was a priority with the trustees. The

Department saw the needs were genuine and in 1998 the new extension was sanctioned. On October 26th 1998 the bulldozer pulled in and in November 2000 a new school, on the same site was officially opened by the Minister Micheal Martin and blessed by Bishop John Magee of Cloyne Diocese.



A new Day Care and Respite Centre was opened on 17 Sept. that year by Dr. Ml. Woods, Minister for Social Welfare. It had additional facilities for occupational therapy, counselling and physiotherapy.

The following spring marked the opening of the Charleville and District Child and Family Education Centre in Broad St. The official opening by Minister John O'Donoghue took place on June 15th.

In March 2002 the refurbishment of the convent and the possibility of a centre for the preservation of Mercy artefacts and heritage was on the agenda. Before the year ended the sisters moved to the Mc Auley Home while the convent was being re-furbished and the former chapel was prepared as a Mercy Heritage Centre which opened September 2005.

In recent decades, many Sisters from Charleville spent time on the Missions: They taught and nursed in Rayleigh, Essex, Kenya, South Africa, Peru and Chile.

But times have changed drastically since we came in 1836. Like so many convents and monasteries throughout Ireland, the shortage of vocations to the priesthood and religious life has led to the closure of many of our traditional buildings. Charleville is no exception.

Sadly, this autumn, after almost 188 years the time came for us to let go.

*(From the Convent Annals, researched by Sr. Bernadette Maria Knopek)*