

RST Newsletter

Rathfeigh • Skryne • Tara



DIGITAL VERSION FOR DURATION OF CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

SATURDAY 31st Oct 2020

ISSUE NO. 23



HAPPY HALLOWEEN EVERYONE

Condolences

Our sincere sympathy goes to

Margaret Hayes, Denis Smyth, Brian Smyth and Sean Smyth on the death of their sister, Sr. Consolata Smyth (nee Carmel), a member of the U.K. Order of the Good Shepherd Congregation

Also to Marguerite Morley, Rathfeigh, who's sister Deirdre who died recently.

May they rest in peace

Weekly Liturgy

Carmel Reilly has recommenced her weekly liturgy of readings and music. The recital can be viewed by following this link:

<https://youtu.be/0mJBblcGUqw>



Congratulations

Pictured following their recent Covid restricted wedding are Mary Conroy, Collierstown and Pearse O’Caoimh, Kilkenny



Active First Responders – Community Support

We are available for community support during the increased restrictions. We are happy to help out with light shopping, post collection or drops and medication collection. Please don't hesitate to contact our support number on 0868853713 from 9am to 5pm. Areas covered are Rathfeigh/Skryne/Tara, Dunshaughlin and Kiltale/Moynalvey.

Hillview Nursing Home

We are pleased to let you know that we are all keeping well here in Hillview. We are continuing to work hard to ensure the safety and welfare of all our residents and staff.

As you can see, we are keeping busy and enjoying the last of the autumn weather! (pictures shared with full permission).

You may be aware that An Post have a new initiative whereby you can send a letter or parcel to a nursing home for free during the pandemic. Our residents love to receive letters / postcards, so please feel free to a letter or postcard, and pass this information on to all your family/friends!

Please write FREEPOST above the address and ensure you write Hillview Nursing Home, Rathfeigh, Tara, Co. Meath. You must also provide a return address on the back of the letter or parcel. You do not need a stamp.



John gets the board ready for the days activities



Out for a stroll in the Autumn sunshine

The Tuesday Club

RST super troupers sharing the sunshine at the Kennedy homestead in Dunganstown , Co Wexford just over two years ago . Hopefully we will be back on the road next spring . !!



Skryne National School from Martin Kennedy

What a strange Mid Term break it has been for everyone. School was out as Alice Cooper once screamed but we had "No particular place to go", to rob a phrase from Chuck Berry. {All you young folk can Google away to your heart's content to find out who they were!}. For that hit tune back in 1964 Chuck Berry reworked an old tune of his from 1957 - a good vintage in that year - and the reworked version became a huge hit. Someone once told me that there is no such thing as an original idea. Maybe Chuck got it right.

So with no particular place to go we stayed within our 5KM radius and did the essential things like trying to stay sane without getting dizzy. It's different this time isn't it? We know what lies ahead now. The evening light has been taken from us too and it all can seem a bit unfair. It is OK to feel down now and again. We have referenced that before. It is not good to stay down however. It will only take you longer to rise up in the end.

Covid has visited and has laid some low. Numbers in Meath have become alarmingly high as some people let their guard down. A few were just a little careless and let the guard down. Others were a little reckless and paid a price. The unfortunate thing is that we must all pay the price by enduring greater restrictions. The illness cares little for why we slip up. It punishes us all in the same manner. It offers no suspended sentence. We must all do the time.

Therefore as we head back into the remainder of the school term in the run up to Christmas it is important that we each and everyone one of us does our level best to keep the school open as a safe place for everyone. School will be a vital lifeline for families trying to work from home and making plans to have a very meaningful Christmas together. It is crucial that we all cooperate to keep the school open and receiving children.

We may feel let down by the DES and the HSE in terms of the mixed messages they sometimes send. The lack of communication at times can be very frustrating. The gap in contact tracing has been appalling. In fairness they are overwhelmed, but schools must be fast tracked so that we may inform concerned families in the fastest time possible. Hopefully the new term will see a big improvement in that regard.

The most important link in the chain can be ourselves however. I am appealing again to any family who has a confirmed case to notify the school immediately so that we may inform close contacts in the speediest manner. Close contacts are those 4/5 pupils in the pod of the confirmed case.

Children who are showing symptoms should not be sent to school. We must treat suspect cases as potentially positive until such time as negative results are confirmed. This does mean isolating which can be difficult in some households. Unfortunately there is no other way for the moment. Maybe Santa will bring us all a vaccine.

We must also be clear as to when it is safe for children to return to school following testing. It is not right to take short cuts here. We are after all dealing with the health of others. We have staff and families who are at risk and vulnerable to infection. We must not play loose with regard to sending children back to school. HSE will offer the best advice in that regard. This advisory will also be published on school website.

Thanks to all for the patience, understanding and compliance you have shown so far in our fight to keep the school safe. We have reached the water break. The next period is about to begin. Let's face it with renewed vigour.

The Isabel Cup is a much prized item in the Skryne NS calendar of events. Last year it was the amazing creation of Finn Naughton which took the Cup and Finn had it back to us shining and bright so that we could do it all again this Halloween. We remember a very special party girl each year when we present this cup and her essence is present in a very meaningful way as we celebrate happy times.

Of course it had to be different this year but not even Covid 19 could diminish the creativity and imagination of both staff and pupils for this event. Each class was invited to take part in a cat-walk parade and the results of their labours can be seen on the school website - just in time for Halloween. There were goodies for everyone and then the serious business of deciding on Prizes was commenced.

Alyson Russell could not attend to present the Isabel Cup in person but she did send in some generous gifts for the main winners. Finn put up a strong defence of his crown with an amazing Steel Man suit crafted by hundreds of tiny pieces. He wasn't giving up without a fight! Super costume which took runner-up spot. The winner however was a most creative costume from Alicia which confused all our senses as we struggled with the amazing 3-D effect. Living art and a worthy winner. Hazel presented the Isabel Cup to a delighted Alicia and the generous 1st prize was the icing on the cake. Thank you to all the wonderful children who put so much thought and effort into their costumes. You brought light and joy to all of us for Halloween.

Check out the website for some great pictures.

Over the Mid Term there have been two different recalls of materials from the DES approved list of suppliers of PPE equipment to schools. The latest recall came at 16:20 on Thursday afternoon. I spent Friday in the school checking all of our stock for items on the withdrawn list. I can assure you that no product from the list of withdrawn items is in use or has been used in Sc. Cholmcille.

I have sourced materials from at least 6 suppliers and we are well stocked in all items. We do have some stock of wipes from the latest list of 52 withdrawn items but these have been isolated and packed, ready for return. They were never in use. The health and safety of all in the school is a top priority for us. We will continue to be cautious and vigilant in the sourcing of all our supplies.

For those wishing to secure a place in Sc.Cholmcille for the coming school year please remember to submit an application form for enrolment in the school if you haven't done so already. We would also appreciate your cooperation in spreading this message to others who may wish to apply for Sept.'21. Thank you.

A special thank you to the phantom gardeners and others who appear when nobody else is about and manage to keep us trimmed, neat and tidy at different times throughout the year. Your secret efforts are much appreciated .

We are happy to welcome on board a new Chairperson for the Board of Management of our school. Catherine Hanley has agreed to take on this role and we look forward with enthusiasm to working closely with her as we strive to continue the great work of her predecessors.



The Hill of Tara

To see video of Phil Coulter on The Hill of Skryne and The Hill of Tara follow this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/100221401719948/posts/170778697997551/?vh=e&extid=0&d=w>

Continuing our serialisation of 'The Hill of Tara' which was written by Kenneth MacGowan in 1979.

THE BANQUET HALL

In the words of Thomas Moore's song *Oft in the Stilly Night* this building is now truly "a banquet hall deserted". Today practically nothing remains of what must have been a magnificent building. It was 700 ft. long, and 90 ft. wide; 45 ft. high and was probably the largest building of its time in Ireland or England.

It was sometimes called the Hall of Assembly and also The Great House of Tara. It has been estimated that it was capable of seating one thousand people at a sitting. The credit for its construction in the 3rd century A.D. must be given to King Cormac MacArt during whose reign Tara reached its Golden Age.

Two historic books — the *Book of Leinster* and the *Book of Lecan* — contain information about the layout of the Banquet Hall. It had a great north door and also six doors in both the west and east walls. It had a common hall and central passage which ran from north to south. On either side it was sub-divided to provide accommodation for various uses.

The Hall played an important part in the way of Irish life and provided facilities for the holding of religious ceremonies, judicial investigations, literary and athletic activities as well as being the place where laws were passed.

The central aisle contained kitchens and lighting facilities, the former providing space for three huge hearths and an enormous cauldron which was capable of holding an ox and a pig at the same time. From the ceiling spits hung over the hearths and the meals prepared there were of a most elaborate nature.

During a banquet the king and queen had pride of place and the guests were allocated their seats in accordance with the rank or profession they held. They included members of every profession, trade, or occupation necessary for the administration of the kingdom. The type of food and the size of each portion varied accordingly and 150 cooks and 300 waiters were in charge of the meals.

Some idea of the degree of culture of the period can best be gained from the following extracts from early Irish Mss.; the first refers to King Cormac "Splendid, indeed, was Cormac's appearance at that assembly. His hair was slightly curled and of golden colour; a scarlet shield with engraved devices and golden hooks and clasps of silver, a wide folding purple cloak on him, with a gem-set brooch, and a gold collar about his neck. A white shirt with gold embroidered; two golden network sandals, with gold buckles upon him; two spears with golden sockets and many red-bronze rivets in his hand; while he stood in the full glow of beauty without defect or blemish".

A vivid description of ladies' dress is given in the story, the Cattle Raid of Cooley. It tells of a lady "Wearing lace was she, and in her right hand was a bordering rod of silver bronze, with its seven strips of red gold at the sides. A many spotted green mantle around her; a bulging, strong-headed pin of gold in the mantle over her bosom; a hooded tunic with red interweaving about her. A ruddy fair-faced countenance she had, narrow below and broad above. Red and thin were her lips. Shiny and pearly were her teeth; thou wouldst believe they were showers of white pearls rained into her head. As sweet as the strings of lutes, when, long sustained, they were played by master

players' hands, was the melodious sound of her voice and her fair speech."

These quotations, while highly descriptive, may not be historically accurate to the final detail but do serve to enable the reader to envisage something of the scene at a royal banquet.

It is interesting to note that extreme care was used to separate the various social ranks and retain the elaborate rituals associated with these banquets. Punctuality and precise decorum were of the utmost importance and the serving of the meals to the various ranks was exact to the last detail.

A poem, ascribed to the 10th century poet Eochaidh O'Flynn, tells that –

"The feis of Teamur each third year,
To preserve laws and rules,
Was then convened firmly
By the illustrious Kings of Erin.
Cathaoir of sons-in-law convened
The beautiful Feis of regal Temur,
There came with him – the better for it –
The men of Erin to one place.
Three days before Saman always,
Three days after it – it was a goodly custom –
The host of very high passion spent,
Constantly drinking during the week,
Without theft, without wounding a man
Among them during all this time;
Without feats of arms, without deceit,
Without exercising horses.
Whoever did any of these things
Was a wretched enemy with heavy venom;
Gold was not received as a retribution from him,
But his soul in one hour."

Memories from Eoin Hickey

This extract is taken from Eoin's memoir titled 'Growing Up In Skryne'

Corbalton Hall was built around 1800 by the architect Francis Johnston who also built the G.P.O. and Nelson's Pillar. Corbalton, up to the Fifties, was home to the Corbally-Storton family and must have included some thousands of acres as after the Land Commission had divided a substantial part of the estate, there was still some five hundred acres remaining. Amby McNerney of the McNerney Building Firm bought the estate in the late Fifties. He felled and sold the timber from the woods which ran all along the main road, hacked up the roots and restored the land to agricultural use and then sold on to Carl Max von Schmieder and his wife Vicky, from Germany. The von Schmieders substantially remodelled and renovated The Hall. Today it belongs to businessman Pat McDonagh.

Recently, on a visit to King's Hospital School in Palmerstown, it was interesting to see; Charles von Schmieder, Carl and Vicky's son's name on the honours board *for Distinction in Economics 1991*.

Both Amby McNerney and Carl Max Von Schmieder stayed at Skryne Castle while purchasing and becoming established at Corbalton. It was at that time that I, just turned sixteen, met up with Amby and managed to secure a position with the company at Shannon Airport, where they were then building the, two mile long, runway in preparation for the new Jumbo Jets. I stayed with the company for nearly ten years.

The next townland along the road towards Ratoath is Greenpark, home to the Mooney families. Tommy and Packy Mooney were doyens of Skryne football. As well as organising teams I remember seeing Mooney's flat lorry heading off to away matches loaded with half the team and as many spectators on board. Irene Mooney, of the same class as me at school, led the girls in rounders while the boys played football. She married Eamon Giles and their son Trevor became one of the greats of Skryne and Meath football. Football is obviously in the genes because Trevor's cousins are Mickey and Paraic Lyons of Summerhill also giants of Gaelic football. Both Mickey and Paraic worked with me, at the height of their football careers in 1986, when I was rushing to get Finnstown House Hotel ready to open and they were rushing to get off to Australia with the International Rules Team. Nora and I met Irene and Eamon recently, still fit, strutting along The Ringstrasse in Vienna.

My mother travelled this road every day to Dunshaughlin Community College where she taught in the Seventies and Eighties. One of her fellow teachers was Madeleine Stuart, who lived beside Greenpark at The Reask, with her writer husband Francis Stuart. They visited us and we visited them occasionally. Madeleine was Stuart's second wife, his first being Iseult, daughter of Maud Gonne McBride. Stuart had a colourful and long life; he died in 2000 age 97. He had been involved in the Civil War on the Republican side and interned for a period. He spent the war years in Nazi Germany where he worked actively for The Third Reich. Returning to Ireland in 1945 he published over thirty novels and several plays. Madeleine died in 1986. An old friend of mine, Ray Jordan and his wife Celine, live at The Reask today.

Its evening and time to head back up to Skryne, The pony goes slowly and we find it difficult to keep him going past his own home but once through Oberstown he picks up speed again

NOTE FROM EOIN HICKEY

my mother's booklet, The legend of Tara, was first published in the early 1950s and sold in the shop on top of the Hill of Tara for 50 years. We had a new addition printed last year and Michael Maguire on Tara has it for sale at €5.

This edition has a new introduction which references the late Fr Gerard Rice, a fellow member of the MAHS. Father Rice taught in St Patrick's in Navan and would have had many of the lads around Skryne as pupils.

I will be pleased to send anyone a copy of The Legend of Tara for €5 including postage if they let me have their email at >eoin andnora@rathinree.com<

Rathfeigh National School from Seamus Tansley

New Beginnings

The first term (August 26th-October 23rd) went very well in Rathfeigh. We were all happy and relieved to get to Halloween with no confirmed coronavirus cases in the school. It was a somewhat stressful term for us all as nobody knew what was around the corner. The children, staff and parents/guardians deserve great credit. Everyone took one day at a time and took all the precautions necessary. As we start another term in uncharted waters we ask parents/guardians not to send their children to school if they have any symptoms whatsoever of Covid-19 or if they are a close contact of a confirmed case. This is an exciting term for the children as they count down the days to Christmas. An uninterrupted term could be the best gift (or a vaccine) we receive this year! We wish everyone in the Rathfeigh and Skryne school communities a safe and enjoyable end to 2020.

Run a Mile

At the start of October we set a target (5th/6th class) to run a mile (1600 metres) by the end of the month. A circuit of our ball-court is 90 metres. So to achieve this we would have to do 18 laps. We started by doing 4 laps and this was increased daily by 1 lap. By the end of term the majority of the class achieved the target of 18 laps. We are all proud of the children who attempted this. Their fitness has improved and their concentration levels in class have also improved. We might set a target of 2km before the end of November!

Book Fair

The dreary days of November are always forgotten about when the Book Fair arrives in Rathfeigh school in the second week of November. The Xbox and online games are put to one side as the children immerse themselves in books at home and at school. It is great to see books being the centre of their attention and they love the time in classroom allocated to reading their favourite books. The Book Fair will be slightly different this year with the children ordering books online with the books then being delivered to the school. We will give more details about the ordering books this week. Of course we will have other activities to entertain us – bookmark and poster competitions as well as the children dressing-up as their favourite book characters. I'm sure the children will also have their own ideas to keep themselves entertained!

“Imagine More”

The theme for this year's Credit Union art competition was “Imagine More”. The standard of the entries was stratospheric. In these gloomy times it was great to see positivity and optimism reflected in the children's art work. The future is in safe hands if the thought-provoking entries are anything to go by. The teachers had the very difficult task of picking “winners” in each class as art can very subjective. Well done to all the boys and girls who won small prizes (Cameron, Elliot, Regan, Lucia, Niall, Tiernan, Aoibhin, Ella, Donnacha, Jane, Nicola, Marc, William, Bowie, Eve, Eoin, Archie, Katelyn, Ruadhán, Timmy, Eve, Isabelle, Grace and Freddy). Everyone who entered the competition had their entries sent to the Tara and District Credit Union for judging. In recent years the children have been very successful in this competition so best of luck to all pupils.

Halloween Fancy Dress/Pumpkin Competition

There was no written homework in the final week before Halloween as the children focussed on their artwork as well as completing their pumpkins at home. All entries were uploaded this year to Edmodo and we had great fun looking at the various pumpkins online in class. The standard was very high as usual with great imagination on display. I must compliment the children not only on the high standard of the entries but more importantly for all the positive comments posted on Edmodo about each other's pumpkins. Well done to everyone who participated in the competition and to those who won small prizes (Eilín, Tomás, Kai, Noah, Aibhlinn, Patrick, Harry, Taylor, Ella, Daniel, Nicola, Jessica, Lucy, Leila, Stevie, Cathal, Molly, Freya, Lucy, Timmy, Chloe, Kaneesha, Lucy and Seán). Below is a small selection of pumpkin pictures from 5th/6th class.

Friday was of course Fancy Dress day. Although slightly different to previous years the children excelled themselves once again with their scary and imaginative costumes. It was lovely to see the children forgetting

about Covid-19 and enjoying their friendships in school. Hopefully our Halloween Fancy Dress will be back to “normal” in 2021!!

Positivity

To fully appreciate the brightness in our lives we sometimes have to experience the darkness. Stars can't shine without darkness! The current pandemic will undoubtedly focus many of us on the bright and positive things in our lives that we sometimes take for granted.

“For every night there is a brighter day”.

Fan slán.







My Brother's Scribblings by Norbert Coyle

Psychology

I was just thinking about the phrase referred to in my last missive..."Will I throw on another sod or light one bar?"

The phrase was used by "Gippy" as the fire died down and the visitors showed no sign of going.

"Gippy" was the name given to Mrs Jacksie Galligan by Bridie Lynch Nee Reynolds who insisted on never calling anyone by their given name including her own kids.

Her husband (one thick man) was referred to as "Me Da".

Galligan's had built a new bungalow in Ballincree and invited the Ma and Da over one evening for a viewing.

As the night progressed and the fire died down and the visitors seemed reluctant to leave ... "Gippy" was between a rock and a hard place.

She had a decision to make but being a mere "chattel" she had to give the impression that hubby made the decision lest she be deemed bossy and hubby lost that most valuable of treasures ...face.

She made her decision...she needed to top up the heat in the kitchen.

She didn't have a PhD in psychology for nothing.

Her first priority was to use either turf or the 3 bar electric fire .

She toned down the extravagance by referring to both forms of heating in their most modest quantity.

"Another sod"single...or "one bar"...again single was the subtle diminution of the "waste" of turf or delectric at this late hour.

Having majored in psychology she already knew the decision she had engineered for Jacksie. Delectric fire was a demon and nobody could tell how much of delectric it could waste in an hour or so whereas a sod was a sod was a sod.

Delectric was never "used" but always "wasted".

Jacksie opted as expected for "another sod" and Gippy agreed saying "G'wan so".

This was a further use of her degree in that not only had she given Jacksie the impression that he made the decision but she also gave him the task of putting on the one sod knowing that if she tended to the dying embers she'd be confined to the single agreed sod whereas when Jacksie was in charge of the heat source he couldn't be seen to be a meanie and he popped on a good few sods.

It's hard to beat watching a master (or mistress) at work.

Gippy was simply superb.

If she was from a more ancient era they might say of her....

She came...she saw ...she conquered.

Of course the most exciting thing about this little everyday encounter was that it was conducted without bells, whistles or mad hooves galloping in the sky.

It was come day go day stuff and was the essence of many is the happy marriage where intelligent women married to decent but relatively thick men kept life on an even keel and most remarkably did this subtle stuff without even thinking...

Any inference that Jacksie was a thick man is untrue but a lot of his compatriots possibly were.

Fan slán.....v

Gather the bits of road that were

Not gravel to the traveller

But eternal lanes of joy

On which no man who walks can die

Patrick Kavanagh 1904-1967

John Donohoe's first ever front page Meath Chronicle story featured saints, bishops and a future All-Star footballer in Skryne in October 1992!

MARTYR HONOURED AT MASS

The Bishop of Meath, Most Rev. Dr. Michael Smith, paid tribute to Blessed Margaret Bermingham - Ball and the 16 other Irish martyrs at a concelebrated Mass in honour of the Skryne-born martyr recently beatified by Pope John Paul II in Rome.

Bishop Smith was assisted by Very Rev. Joseph Gleeson, PP, Skryne, and Rev. Patrick Flynn, CC, Rathleigh, at the Mass in St. Colmcille's Church, Skryne. Also present was the Bray businessman who is a direct descendant of Margaret Ball, Mr. Ray Ball, and his wife, Laura.

Margaret Ball was born around 1515 and was a strong supporter of Catholicism following the extension of the Reformation to Ireland in the 1530s. However, her son, Walter, became a Protestant and a determined opponent of the Catholic religion. Margaret provided "safe houses" for any bishops or priests who



Bishop Smith.

might be passing through Dublin. Walter Ball became Lord Mayor of Dublin. He had his mother arrested and drawn through the streets of Dublin and a wooden hurdle,

as she could no longer walk, to Dublin Castle where she was to be imprisoned for the rest of her life.

The conditions in jail were extremely harsh and she suffered greatly. She could have at any time returned home, all she had to do was renounce her religion and take the Oath of Supremacy, accepting the Queen as head of the Church. Margaret Ball refused and so languished in prison until she died in 1584 at the age of about 70 years.

Amid persecution and threats, the martyrs remained strong in faith and made the ultimate sacrifice for their Church. Today's people, said Dr. Smith, should be willing to make more sacrifices for their faith, rather than choosing as if from an "a la carte" religion. A portrait of Margaret Ball was brought to the altar in the offertory procession by Skryne's Meath minor footballer, Trevor Giles.

Some more extracts from Joan's Milestones along the journey of life

Leaving School

Although I was always fond of school, after some two years in Navan Tech. I became suddenly bored and fed up, and decided, (very much against my parents wishes), that I would embark on a "working career".

I think, being the eldest, I hated always asking for money at home for this, that, and the other, and of course by now I also wanted to buy some lipstick, make-up and some new clothes and generally to become independent. I also wanted to be able to go to the pictures on a Sunday night, like some of my other teenage friends.

We were not allowed into dances until aged eighteen in those days, and girls NEVER went into pubs at that time, it just simply wasn't done.

First Job

My first job was in a carpet factory, where I had to cycle nine miles and be in for 8 am., and the only thing I can remember about that was the fear I had of the little Scotsman who was the boss there at that time, I was scared to death of him, so I only stayed eight months, when I upped and left.

My next job was in a clothing factory, and I have to say this was much more my scene, as I was always very good at needlework, which I loved and still do.

I had good fun in this job, as I liked the people who worked there. Nearly 50 years later, I recently met some of them and we had great fun reminding each other of the things that went on. For instance, one day one of the girls decided she would pierce her friends ears with a large sewing needle at lunch time in the "canteen", (this was an open shed outside in the yard !!!). So when lunch time came we all went to witness this "operation", she started by "Sterilising" the needle over the flame of a match, and after a fair amount of blood and a lot of groans from the "patient", (well they do say that vanity knows no pain) she finally pulled some thread through the holes in her ears to keep them open, and the job was complete, and in spite of the less than ideal conditions, I'm happy to report she is still alive and well.

The Night Sky by Tony Canavan

Sunrise: 730 am

Sunset: 5 pm

Full Moon Saturday 31st October known as 'The Blue Moon' as it is the second full moon in October. The next time this happens will be in 2039. Looking forward to that!

Weather for Halloween is rain for most of the day but there is a break in the cloud around 7 pm before next tranche of cloud and rain arrives. So hopefully time for a photograph of the full moon. The full moon rises before 7 pm and by 8 pm it has an altitude of 23°. Anything later is a better view as there is less light distortion around altitude 40° and above. It sets at 7 am on 1st November.



November 1st 2 am: the above image shows Orion high in the southern sky. It has risen from 11 pm on Halloween and the full moon is in the SSW. You can see Betelgeuse and Bellatrix on either shoulder and Rigel marks his foot and Saiph his knee. You can see the three stars of his belt and his sword which marks the Great Orion Nebula. In the righthand top corner is the Pleiades (Seven Sisters). The top left-hand corner is Capella and to the south, the brightest star in our sky, Sirius. The red 'blob' is the Rosette Nebula in the Milky Way. There is a cluster of stars at its heart, just like stamen, the stars having been formed from the dust cloud. The Milky Way is full of such nebulas.

November 7th 11 pm: The half moon is close to the Beehive Cluster in Cancer with Pollux and Castor to the north. Orion is in full view in the South-East. Mars is clearly visible in the South-West with Uranus trailing close behind. Ursa major is to the North (The Plough) and if you follow the last two stars of the plough you will arrive at Polaris, the Pole star. This star is used by astronomers to line up telescopes for tracking of heavenly bodies.

November 13th: Friday the 13th!! 6 am: Just before sunrise, in the East, Venus and Mercury are rising ahead of the rising sun with a thin crescent moon in between the two. On the 12th November the crescent moon is ahead of the two planets. Just to the right of the moon, also between the two planets, is the star Spica. Spica is at a distance of 250 light years and is visually 1900 times more luminous than our sun. When examined closely it is found to be two suns/stars orbiting each other.

NASA's OSIRIS-REX Spacecraft:

In December 2018 after travelling 1.2 billion miles NASA Osiris spacecraft arrived at its target, the near earth asteroid **Bennu**. This asteroid is a primitive remnant of the origins of the solar system. The asteroid is roughly the height of a skyscraper. It is rich in magnetite which was used by mariners as an early form of magnetic compass.

Osiris-Rex spacecraft touched down on the asteroid Bennu last week (October 20th) and puffed nitrogen at the space rock to blow pieces of rock into the sampling arm before backing away to safety. Osiris was successful in collecting its sample and will return to earth by 2023.

Our understanding of the evolution of the solar system constantly improves but many questions remain. The asteroid Bennu is a **time capsule** and it takes us back 4.5 billion years when clouds of dust flattened into a swirling disc by gravity and at the centre of the disc, where molecules crash together tightest, clumps of dust are flash heated into droplets of molten rock which clump and grow into the first asteroids and eventually planets. Bennu is one of these and astronomers hope that the sample will answer some important questions about the very beginning of our solar system.



NASA image of Osiris coming in to take the sample.

Lifting the Veil from the Unseen World by Anne Frehill

On these shores, the 31st of October is called Samhain or Halloween. The former meaning (Summer's End) was one of four major festivals in the Celtic calendar, celebrating the transition of the sun and the changing seasons. While the latter name "Halloween" literally meant "hallowed evening" with *hallow* meaning "holy person; saint. And the "een" part of the word a contraction of "eve" or evening before.

Whatever name you choose to call it, this year only one thing is certain, it will be celebrated within the constraints of a second lockdown as the deadly COVID-19 virus still lurks in every nook and cranny. In our quasi- dystopian world face masks have become necessary to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Last week while browsing online I came across face masks (selling as masks to slow the virus) with large Halloween symbols on them i.e. bonfires, pumpkins, witches. I cannot vouch for those masks as there was no indication if they met the minimum standards recommended for face masks (a minimum of two or preferably three layers of named fabrics) but they certainly showed the entrepreneurial spirit of the manufactures!

The earliest evidence relating to the celebration of Samhain can be traced to our own county to approximately 200 AD. At Hill of Ward (Tlachtga) near Athboy, a great Fire Festival began on the eve of Samhain which lasted for at least 5-7 days and focused on the God Lugh (flashing light). Tlachtga was the daughter of the Druid Mug Ruith, sadly she is said to have died at the site giving birth to triplets and so it is named after her. This place is just 12 miles from the Hill of Tara and was a forerunner to the Samhain Festival at Tara.

The entrance passage to the Mound of the Hostages at Tara is aligned with the rising sun around the days of Samhain/Fire Festival. However, more recently academics have pointed out that the Mound of the Hostages is 2, 500 to 5,000 years old, which begs the question was Samhain celebrated long before the first Celts arrived in Ireland around 2,500 years ago.

Fire is seen as the earthly counterpart of the sun. The apparent decline in the strength of the sun at this time of year would have been a source of great anxiety to early man and the lightning of the Winter Fires were

symbols of man`s attempt to assist the sun on its way across the upper regions. The Celts believed that the boundaries between this world and the Otherworld were relaxed at the time of Samhain and they left offerings in fields and near villages for Sidhs or fairy type beings. They also thought that ancestors could cross over at this time and they dressed as animals or as other grotesque figures so that fairy type entities were not interested in kidnapping them. During the Middle Ages, smaller Samhain fires became popular near farms to ward off fairies and witches from families. (Jack-o-Lanterns) or carved turnips, attached to sticks by string and lit by coal also appeared. With the arrival of Christianity, the church was eager to superimpose Christian celebrations on the pagan festival. In the 9th century, Pope Gregory IV moved the “Feast of all Martyrs” (which over time included all saints) from May 13th to November 1st, some scholars argue that this was a deliberate attempt to reframe what they saw as a pagan feast.

It is interesting to note that in the 19th century and especially around the time of the Great Famine, Irish immigrants brought many of the traditions associated with Samhain to America. The best known is “trick-or-treat”, but in the ancient celebrations tricks were blamed on fairies and not on mischievous children. And carving the turnips which was still popular in some parts of Ireland well into the 20th century, morphed into carving pumpkins on the other side of the Atlantic.

We have heard for many years now about the creeping Americanisation/commercialisation of Halloween in this country and I must admit that I have agreed with many of the sentiments expressed in these articles. I can still recall when my daughter was about 7 years old. She was invited to a Halloween party in a leafy suburb of Dublin, (where we had lived for a while) and it was mentioned that various prizes would be given out under titles such as “Most Imaginative”, “ Scariest”, etc. She had great fun in the days preceding the party cobbling together a simple witch costume from bits and pieces found in our home. Imagine the disapproval of our hostess, who happened to be an art teacher when 2/3 children arrived in what can only be described as “ designer Halloween outfits” from high end Department stores. Well, I am happy to say that creativity won out in every category!

This year because of COVID-19, there will be no trick-or-treating so it is possible that there may be a return to traditional Halloween games and to a much more family-focused celebration as in my childhood.

I had two favourite games, in the first “dunking game”, a dish of water was placed on the floor and a threepenny- coin thrown in, as well as apples which were set floating on the water. Each child with their hands behind their backs tried to take up an apple with their teeth or the coin with their lips. The child who succeeded was permitted to keep his catch.

In the second “Snap-Apple” game, an apple was attached to the ceiling with a string and the children, again with their hands behind their backs, tried to grasp it in their mouths.

I relished my mother`s barm brack which included not only the traditional ring, but a whole list of tiny items wrapped in greaseproof paper, as a light-hearted means of telling the future. The ring signified early or imminent marriage, a coin represented wealth, a thimble spinsterhood, a button meant bachelorhood, a rag for poverty and finally a tiny piece of stick meant that the unfortunate finder would be beaten by their husband. Thank goodness, most skeletons in the cupboard including wife beating have long since been exposed but it is a sobering thought that the issue of “domestic abuse” was included in Halloween games/ food, which were handed down through the generations.

Folklore tells us that people were very superstitious about the in-between time i.e. when one season was reaching an end, and another had not yet started. They believed that the supernatural world was closest to our world at Halloween as the dead were just in another “realm”. People left out food to make the dead feel welcome in case they were still in limbo and wandering aimlessly around hoping to find their old home. A motley array of spirits including ghosts, fairies, banshees, and vampires or half dead creatures (not the Hollywood version) were thought to career around the countryside on that night. Pranks of all sorts were played by groups of teenagers with blackened faces or in some form of disguise, resembling “spirits”, on unsuspecting farmers, cranky or eccentric individuals and the much maligned spinsters and bachelors, who were seen as not doing their part to keep the village alive by entering into a marriage and producing offspring.

People also believed in witches (again not the Hollywood ones) and unfortunately these beliefs had serious and lasting effects on the culture and society in Ireland, resulting in some horrific cases from history involving the treatment of so-called witches. Hopefully, in the next bulletin I shall look at cases of witchcraft from history but for now, I will stay with folklore, where witches were believed to be at their

most prolific around Halloween, riding a broomstick to the nocturnal Sabbath. It was held that they had sold their souls to the Devil, who in return gifted them with many tokens of his favour, and evil spirits to carry out their dastardly behests.

And so, after Halloween comes All Saints Day closely followed by All Souls Day, two important landmarks in the Christian calendar. Now I have no intention of stumbling into the theological minefield surrounding purgatory, suffice it to say, “each to his own”.

However, I would like to share with you an incident which happened to me in the 1980`s , on one of the special days deemed by the Greek Orthodox church to be “A Saturday of Souls”, set aside for the commemoration of the dead, because Christ lay dead in the Tomb on a Saturday.

I was visiting the Greek island of Crete. It was a glorious day in the month of May, the mercury was hitting 30 degrees, unseasonably hot even for Greece at that time of year. We decided to take a bus up into a tiny village atop a hillside several miles from the city of Heraklion. While my friend sought shade in a dusty café, I decided to explore the narrow, medieval laneways backing onto the one and only street. Just outside the village I came to a Greek Orthodox cemetery: a sea of white marble tombs glistening in the sunshine, against a heavenly blue sky, and bedecked with vases of flowers, some real, more plastic and others in silk. Opening the creaking gate which was surrounded by trailing bougainvillea in that magnificent shade of deep purple, one only sees in Greece, I ventured inside. A few minutes later as I wandered along, I heard one of the most haunting sounds which I have ever encountered. On closer inspection I discovered an old Greek lady dressed in black from head to toe sitting on a dilapidated deckchair, fingering her *worry beads*. The lament had shades of a chant, but it was more like a series of utterances, expressed in a peculiar and rhythmic manner, in praise of the dead person, pictured on the marble tomb beside her. It reminded me of our own Irish “caoineadh” and I felt the urge to talk to her but I waited until she was leaving the cemetery. I had learned back then, when tourism was in its infancy in Greece, that they still remembered WW11 vividly and despised anyone that looked remotely German with fair skin/ hair. Once she established that I was Irish, she chatted to me about her deceased husband who had fought with both the Allies and the Cretan Resistance movement against the Nazis.

She was a truly gracious lady, who shared with me not only her life story in broken English but also a slice of spiced walnut cake (Karythopita) her husband`s favourite, which she had taken with her to be enjoyed at the grave. What a simple but moving way to remember her beloved.

Finally, given that tonight is Halloween be home before dark!!

My father`s generation had many ghostly tales to tell about our locality. The first one involves the road near the old coaching inn in the direction of Ballyna cross/ Killeen and the second one is “Corp” road (or road of the corpse) which I believe is roughly the dark, wooded, spooky road from the old side entrance to Killeen castle down towards Dunsany. In the former case, local legend has it that ghosts of highwaymen who plied their trade along that route have appeared over the years to unsuspecting road users. While in the latter case, dead bodies which were once carried along this road to an ancient church were said to get up and walk again!

From Shakespeare`s “Macbeth”

“By the prickling of my thumbs,

Something wicked this way comes.”

(2nd witch)

The End

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1926.

EXECUTION OF KEVIN BARRY IN MOUNTJOY.

WITHOUT A TREMOR
TO THE END.

ASKED FOR NO PITY

Kevin Gerald Barry (18) was executed in Mountjoy Jail yesterday morning for the part he took in the attack on military in N. King St.

He was steadfast and unflinching to the end, walking to the scaffold without a tremor in voice or body. It is recorded that when being pinioned and blindfolded he objected to both processes, saying that as a soldier he was not afraid to die.

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1926.

NEW PRESIDENT
OF U. S. A.

MR. HARDING ELECTED

WOMENS' VOTE GIVES AN
UNPRECEDENTED POLL.

The U.S. Presidential ballot was conducted yesterday, and our London correspondent, telegraphing this morning, says that private advices from New York, state that Mr. Harding, Republican, has been elected.

It is believed the poll is the largest ever recorded in the history of the country. Inclement weather prevailed in the Northern and Eastern States.

50 Years Ago

MEATH CHRONICLE, 31st OCTOBER, 1970



Pictured after their marriage in Skryne Church are Mr. Jack Yore, Carnaross, Kells, and Miss Carmel Carty, Skryne, Tara, with officiating clergy, bridesmaid and bestman. The reception was held in the Village Hotel, Bettystown. Photograph: B. FLYNN, Mountnugent.

SKRYNE FUNCTION

The popular Gallowglass Ceili Band returns to the Matt Talbot Hall, Skryne, on Wednesday night next when they play at a ceili, old-time and modern dance run by the local G.F.C. A good attendance is expected.



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78 mph. Up to 37 mpg. Independent suspension. Impact-resisting padded seating compartment. Anti-burst doorlocks. Heater demister with adjustable fascia vents. Fold-down rear seat back. Engine compartment light. Rubber-faced overriders.

Flora and Fauna

These amazing fungi photographs were taken by Karen Carty





Farming Snippets from Norbert Coyle

Holy cows

The dairy herd at Dalgan Park reflect on the quality of the food



Piano pigs



Saddleback pigs once popular especially in Cavan when God was a nipper !!



Dingbats

Can you solve this Dingbats puzzle?

Answers will appear in the next issue of the newsletter

YYY MEN	DOSH = $\sqrt{\text{TOTALBAD}}$	HCNUH	SMART
01	02	03	04
GOOD NIL NIL NIL NIL	PIT	BALD $\frac{\text{PAR}}{2}$	TOWEL
05	06	07	08
TIME T E I M			UR KICK KICK $\sqrt{(2 \times 33)}$
09	10	11	12

Last weeks answers

1 Bungee Jump, 2 Puss In Boots, 3 Kiss and Make Up, 4 High Explosive,
5 Sweetheart, 6 10 Downing Street, 7 The Undertaker, 8 Backup,
9 3 Piece Sweet, 10 Incoming Message, 11 Wet Behind The Ears,
12 Just A Tick

Poetry Corner

Boyhood's Days by Brian Smyth

(I)

The shades of evening softly falling
Cast lengthening shadows oer the ways
The course they mark to me recalling
Life's progress since my boyhood days
Those days when careless free from guile
I lived amongs't my young compeers
With ne'er a thought at all the while
To fate's rude store in flight of years.

(II)

How one doth like to think awhile
On happy youthful days now flown
On thoughts perforce that bring a smile
To one to whom good luck's unknown
And e'en the stereneest of us all
The one who's trod the roughest ways
Will often to himself recall
The long lost joys of boyhoods days.

(III)

But only in our dreams can we
Relive, retaste those happy hours.
Or per chance in our progergy
We see the tent of faded flowers
Yet oft and oft, we'll sit and think
Whilst looking on our children's plays
Whose innocence affords the link
To join us to our boyhood days.

This is from Brian's 'Collected Poems

Some Seasonal Photos from Norbert Coyle

Autumnal hues at the humpback bridge in Dunsany “ When yellow leaves , or none , or few do fall



There's something about Red Hot Pokers that soothes the soul at this time of year !



Cattle

Can you name these two breeds of cattle? Answers in next week's RST



11A



11B

Last week's breeds:

Breed 10A

The Belted Galloway is a traditional Scottish breed of beef cattle. It derives from the Galloway cattle of the Galloway region of south-western Scotland, and was established as a separate breed in 1921. It is adapted to living on the poor upland pastures and windswept moorlands of the region

Breed 10B

The Highland is a Scottish breed of rustic cattle. It originated in the Scottish Highlands and the Outer Hebrides islands of Scotland and has long horns and a long shaggy coat. It is a hardy breed, bred to withstand the intemperate conditions in the region.

Some Awful Jokes

The Drover at the Pearly Gates

A drover from a huge cattle station in the outback appeared before St. Peter at the Pearly Gates.

"Have you ever done anything of particular merit?" St. Peter asked.

"Well, I can think of one thing," the drover offered.

"Once, on a trip to the back blocks of Broken Hill out in New South Wales , I came across a gang of bikers causing trouble so I set to and told them to cut it out."

"When was this?" , asked St. Peter.

"About five minutes ago."

Right-click

Tech Support: "I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop."

Customer: "OK."

Tech Support: "Did you get a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "OK. Right-click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?"

Customer: "Sure. You told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click'."



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if you would like to become a volunteer get in touch with us today.
- **Not For Profit But For Service**



Tuesday – Saturday 9.30Am-1pm & 2pm-4.30pm. Closed 1-2pm for Lunch

We are regulated by the central bank of Ireland. T&C Apply.

YOUR MONEY - YOUR DREAM

Here at Tara & District we have loans worth looking at, so whether you're a New or Existing Member you can get a reduced Interest Rate for your first loan with TDCU or if you are already a member but have not had a loan in the last 24 Months you can also avail of the **reduced Interest rate of 5.9%** 6.07% Apr).

What are you waiting for speak to us today about a loan that suits you!

T&C Apply. Max Loan €5000. Max Term 36 Months.

CONSIDERING A LOAN....

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- **Highly favourable interest rate**
You only pay interest on the reducing balance and we have one of the best interest rates around.
Standard Interest Rate 7.9% (8.22APR)
Secured Interest Rate 5.9% (6.07APR)
- **No extra charges**
No processing charges or documentation fees.
- **No penalties for early settlement**
Pay off your loan early with no penalties.
- **Quick decisions on applications**
Almost 90% of our loans are approved in just 48 hours.
- **Free loan protection insurance**
In the event of your death your loan will be cleared in full. (Terms & Conditions apply).
- **Personalised application process**
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- **Local**
The knowledge that your savings are supporting the local community loans.

Table Below Represents Loans at our STANDARD loan rate of 7.9%

Loan Amount	Typical Weekly Repayments	Term Months	Total Interest	Total Repayments
€1,000	€20.02	12	€40.60	€1,040.60
€5,000	€36.22	36	€613.45	€5,613.45
€10,000	€46.57	60	€2095.92	€12,095.92
€15,000	€70.06	60	€3,144.17	€18,144.17
€20,000	€71.67	84	€6,011.19	€26,011.19
€30,000	€107.50	84	€9017.39	€39,017.39
€40,000	€111.34	120	€17,782.53	€57,782.53

* Credit unions in the Republic of Ireland are regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Spooky Halloween
SCIENCE CAMPS



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Immediate start. Contact:
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A&J Print are open for business, this may be of particular interest to students who need to have their projects printed up

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Contacts

Apologies to all whose submissions have been omitted due to time/ space constraints or perhaps as a result of gross negligence by the compiler. Hopefully we will be able to include those items in future issues

Do you have family or friends living abroad or elsewhere in Ireland who would like to receive the RST?
Do you have neighbours or friends who do not have email?

Perhaps you could send us their contact details, or family member details, and we will add them to our mailing list

Our next newsletter will be due out Saturday 14th November 2020

Please send all articles to jimconroy747@gmail.com or to patriciaconroy1@hotmail.com