

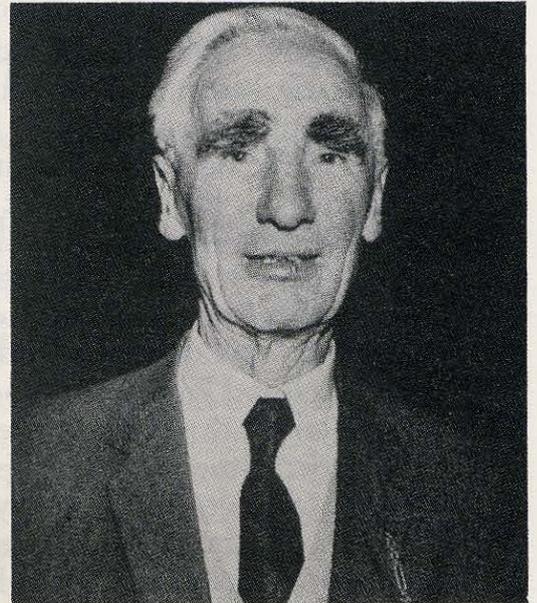
Chapter Seven

Old St Mary's RFC

1900-1916

1900-1905

WHATEVER ABOUT THE inactivity of the parent body of the Union, the affiliated clubs were very active. The rugby club went from strength to strength from its foundation in 1900. The very first match played by that Old St Mary's team, captained by Jim Brennan, was away against Blackrock, and St Mary's won by a try to nil. With that good initial showing, it was decided to enter for the Junior Cup and League the following season, 1901-02. Making spectacular progress, they reached the final of the Junior Cup that season, only to be beaten by RIC. They repeated the feat in the following season, 1902-03, only to meet the same fate at the hands of the same RIC club, this time by the narrow margin of a try to nil. But in 1905, under the captaincy of James Reddy, it was third time lucky, and St Mary's made no mistake. They beat Palmerston 3-0 in the first round, Bob Kinahan, a centre, scoring the try. They then met their old bête noire, RIC, whom they beat 9-6 at Castle Avenue, and met Kilkenny County at Lansdowne Road on April 15, 1905. Two of the team were prefects, John Foley and Michael Franklin. After a scoreless first half, James Reddy scored a try which Bob Kinahan converted, 5-0. Reddy then dropped a goal, making it 9-0. Kilkenny replied with a try but could not improve on it, and Old St Mary's had won their first football trophy. The following is part of the report from the weekly *Sport*.



*James Brennan, first Captain
St Mary's College RFC, 1900*

The curtain was lowered on rugby football in Leinster on Saturday (April 15) when the final of the Junior Cup was decided at Lansdowne Rd between Old St Mary's and Kilkenny County. St Mary's are well known cup fighters, having already fought out two finals, their opponents on both occasions being RIC, who always won by a very narrow margin. The result: St Mary's



Old St Mary's First XV, 1900-1901

Standing: S. Casey; T. O'Donnell; J. Dowling; W. English; Jos. Cummins; J. Foley; E. O'Shea; A. Harrison; L. J. Rice (Hon. Treas.).

Seated: J. Cummins; R. Barr; Jas. Brennan (Capt.); P. Byrne; K. Delaney.

Front: G. O'Hare; M. Kennedy.

(Dowling, English, Foley, O'Shea were Prefects.)

9pts : Kilkenny 3pts. St Mary's, by their win, brought the Junior Cup back to Dublin, and for this they deserve the best thanks of Dublin rugbyites. Drawn against the hardest team in the competition, they fought hard, and I may verily say, they won a glorious victory.

The cup was presented to Mr Reddy by Miss Maguire. After long and unrewarded years (*sic*) of struggle, St Mary's have come through a season more brilliantly than any supporter of the club could have anticipated, as winners of the Junior Cup for the first time since their inception. That the Club was deserving of gaining this high honour cannot be gainsaid, and I must congratulate them.

The team: G. M. Black, J. B. Reddy, H. R. Evans, R. J. Kinahan, M. J. McBride, T. F. Reddy, P. J. Little, J. J. Rooney, W. J. Mulcahy, M. J. Franklin, J. S. Foley, P. J. Dwyer, T. C. Little, F. J. Murray, L. J. O'Toole.
Subs: J. Cummins, J. Dodd, W. B. Dowling.

In the Interpro match against Ulster in 1905. J. F. Reddy, the St Mary's out-half, and W. J. Mulcahy, a forward, gained caps. Junior Interpros against Ulster began in 1901, and two St Mary's players were on that first Leinster team. They were Jim Brennan, the first captain of the club, and J. Delaney, a past student of Rockwell, who had earlier earned the distinction of being on the first ever Munster Schools Interpro team. In 1903, George O'Hare was picked as out-half for Leinster and he scored the only try in the game which Leinster won 3-0. These honours which came so early in the life of the fledgling club, came



Leinster Junior Cup Winners 1905

Standing: *M. McBride; L. O'Toole; H. Evans; M. Franklin; J. O'Sullivan; B. Mulcahy; J. Foley; F. Murray; P. Dwyer.*
 Seated: *J. J. Rooney; R. Kinahan; J. Reddy (Capt.); T. Black; T. Little.*
 Front: *T. Reddy; J. Cummins.*

in an ever increasing and steady flow at every single level of the game throughout the club's existence and constitute a roll of honour that can stand scrutiny alongside that of any other club in the country. (See Appendix)

1905-1906

The following year, 1906, St Mary's, as the holders, were fancied to repeat the feat of the previous year. They accounted for the Veterinary College by just a try (3pts) to nil. They next played Civil Service and won 9-0. They then played Palmerston in the semi-final and could only manage a scoreless draw. However, in the replay they showed better form and emerged winners, 11-0. So, once again, and for the fourth time in five years, they found themselves in the Junior Cup final. But this time success eluded them and they fell victims once more to RIC.



It will be remembered that in those days the only Junior Cup competition comprised all the Junior sides in Leinster. It was not until the 1921-22 season that the Branch established the Metropolitan Cup for the teams then competing in the Junior League who were in the metropolitan area of Dublin, i.e. who were within 18 miles of the GPO. A new trophy was provided for this competition. In 1924-25, the terms of the old Junior Cup were altered to comprise teams from outside the metropolitan area only, and this became known as the Provincial Towns Cup, the actual trophy being the former Junior Cup.

1906-1907

The 1907 Junior Cup Competition found Old St Mary's once more contesting a draw, this time against Carlow, and in the Second Round. Their first meeting, in Rathmines, ended in a draw. The replay was on April 1, 1907, and the weather almost summer-like, according to the *Irish Times* of April 2, with a "large muster of spectators". The final whistle left St Mary's winners by 1 goal, 1 try and 1 pen.(11pts) – Nil.

The next round was the semi-final and Drogheda supplied the opposition. It was played at Lansdowne Road on Saturday, April 13, before a good crowd and St Mary's were easy enough winners at 14-0. The final was due to be played on April 27, but inclement weather forced a postponement until the following week. The other finalists were Palmerston, and St Mary's ran out comfortable winners, 16pts-3pts.

St Mary's: J. Ronayne, A. Ryan, J. Murphy, J. Smyth, B. Doyle W. Joyce, H. Ryan, J. Doherty, T. Little (C), J. Murnane, Jos. O'Donnell, J. J. O'Donnell, V. McDonald, J. Power, J. Ryan.

1907-1908

St Mary's were the holders as the 1908 Junior Cup Competition began. For whatever reason, they seem to have been short of fixtures, because on Feb 15, the Hon. Sec. T. C. Little, of 12 Harcourt St, had a notice in *Sport* requesting matches for Feb 22 and Mar 7, presumably not wishing to enter the competition short of match practice. Whatever practice they got seems to have done them good because after drawing with Palmerston in the quarter final, they won the replay and then met RIC in the semi.

St Mary's College won rather easily by 11-3. The opening play favoured St Mary's. Good forward work by Doherty, Mulcahy and Murnane kept the Constabulary on the defensive. Following some passing among the students' backs, Loughlin got over for a try, which Mulcahy failed to convert. Immediately on resuming, RIC were penalised and from the 25, Mulcahy brought off a grand goal. St Mary's continued to attack and Murphy wound up a brilliant run by scoring a try.

St Mary's thoroughly deserved their victory, being in all departments the superior team.

Sport

Meanwhile, the Royal Veterinary College had also won through to the final, which took place on April 17.

The Leinster Junior Cup was decided between Old St Mary's, the holders of the trophy, and Royal Veterinary College, whose first year it was in the final.

A very keen game it was at the outset, the difference at the finish being but a try to nil in favour of Old St Mary's.

Sport

1908-1909

This was St Mary's third win in the Cup in the eight years since they first entered for it. It was the sixth year in which they had contested the final in the same eight years. Nor did it end their Junior triumphs. The following year, 1909, they won the Junior League for the first time, which compensated them somewhat for their defeat later by Dundalk in the Junior Cup Final by a penalty goal after a replay. The League Final contested against Wanderers was a draw, a penalty goal each.

The replay was two weeks later, on April 17, 1909, and St Mary's were the underdogs:

St Mary's accomplished a big performance on Saturday when, in the replay of the Junior League, they defeated a really strong Wanderers XV, by a penalty and two tries to a try. As is typical of teams competing in a final, the game was characterised by a keenness, which to a great extent, militated against a good display of the code. For a greater part it was a struggle between the rival packs, and in this department, the students were vastly superior. On the general run of the game, St Mary's undoubtedly deserved to win and the score of 6pts to 3pts was a fair reflection of the play.

Sport

Following on that fine victory over the strong Wanderers side in the Junior League Final, St Mary's were expected to beat Dundalk in the Junior Cup Final, played on May 1, 1909. They failed, the game ending in a scoreless draw. It had been played in a downpour which made constructive football impossible. The replay was fixed for May 8, which by any standards was very late for rugby. The lengthy season behind them very possibly affected both teams, and accounted for the poor standard of rugby. On top of which St Mary's were reduced to fourteen men. Dundalk scored a try and a penalty goal, while Murnane got over for a try for St Mary's which Cusack failed to improve on.

1909-1910

The following year, 1910, St Mary's again won the Junior League, but were narrowly beaten, 5-3, in the semi-final of the Cup, this time by Merrion.

St Mary's College had an easy win in the League Final over Dublin University on the Clontarf grounds in Castle Avenue on Sat. The winners were not at full strength but still had all the better of the game, which throughout was fast and well-contested, and most interesting to watch. At the interval, St Mary's led 11-3.

After the change-over, Trinity had several tries at goal from frees, none of which, however, materialised, and at the other end, following a hot attack, St Mary's scored a try, per Power, Mulcahy once more adding the extra points. University now had a spell of attack, and, being awarded a free, Weir dropped a neat goal. From this to the finish, St Mary's did all the pressing, and just before the long whistle, Power bored over for an unconverted try.

Team: A. P. Faulkner, P. J. Hayden, T. F. Collis, D. O'Sullivan, B. Doyle, W. P. McGann (C), N. F. Power, J. Brooke-Kelly, L. J. Clancy, P. J. Cusack, E. R. Farrell, S. Flanagan, M. J. Jenkins G. P. O'Donnell, J. M. Power.

1910-11

This was Old St Mary's final season in Junior Rugby and it ended fittingly with a win in the Junior Cup, the fourth win in the ten years of competition and the eighth time to contest the final.

The final against Sandford was played in Lansdowne Road before a Senior Cup semi-final on April 13. The *Irish Times* reported:

St Mary's undoubtedly did the better work and thoroughly deserved to win.

St Mary's won the toss and elected to face the wind . . . From a drop-out they attacked, and Power, receiving near the 25 ran over for a smart try . . . From a scrum close to the Sandford line, St Mary's forwards carried the ball

close to the centre where Sandford were penalised and Moriarty landed a goal . . . Half-time St Mary's 6 Sandford 0.

The opening stages of the second half favoured St Mary's. A bout of passing by the St Mary's three-quarters ended with Hayden being sent across for a try which was not converted . . . St Mary's had the better of matters to the finish and Purcell added another try. Result: St Mary's 12 Sandford 0.

St Mary's: P. J. O'Neill, J. J. Moriarty, D. C. Timothy, W. L. McGann, P. J. Hayden, N. F. Power, R. T. Francis, T. J. Cleary, B. Doyle, E. R. Farrell (Capt.), W. J. Nagle, G. P. O'Donnell, D. O'Sullivan, T. S. Purcell, M. Richards

OLD ST MARY'S PLAYING RECORD AS A JUNIOR CLUB

<i>Season</i>	<i>Achievement</i>
November 1900	Foundation, Affiliation to Leinster Branch, IRFU.
1901-1902	
1902-1903	Finalists: Junior Cup
1903-1904	Finalists: Junior Cup
1904-1905	Winners: Junior Cup
1905-1906	Finalists: Junior Cup
1906-1907	Winners: Junior Cup
1907-1908	Winners: Junior Cup
1908-1909	Winners: League; Finalists: Junior Cup
1909-1910	Winners: League; Semi-fins: Junior Cup Winners: Minor League
1910-1911	Winners: Junior Cup; Finalists: League

OLD ST MARY'S GOES SENIOR 1911-1916

Such a magnificent record as a junior club stifled any objections there might have been to the application for senior status by St Mary's at the end of the 1910-1911 season. The record showed that they were clearly "out of their league" in Junior ranks. The Leinster Branch recognised the fact and, during the closed season, accepted St Mary's as a Senior Club.

The inaugural meeting of the Old St Mary's Rugby Club as a Leinster Senior Club took place in September 1911 in the college and was well attended as the following report from the *Irish Times* shows:

ST MARY'S COLLEGE F.C.

The annual general meeting of the above club was held at the college on Wednesday evening. The Rev. J. J. O'Reilly, CSSp occupied the chair. It being the first meeting of St Mary's as a senior club, there was evidence of great enthusiasm and a very large attendance, over 80 members being present. After considerable discussion a code of new rules was adopted, and the election of officers was proceeded with. The Very Rev. T. P. O'Hanlon, CSSp, president St Mary's, was unanimously elected president for the season 1911-12. In addition to a committee and vice-presidents, the following were also unanimously elected – Captain, 1st XV, E. R. Farrell; Vice-Captain, J. J. Moriarty; Captain, 2nd XV, P. J. Hayden; Vice-Captain, T. C. Doyle. The election of Captain, 3rd XV was deferred. Hon. Treasurer, P. J. Hayden; Hon. Sec. J. M. Power, Shandon House, Kimmage Road,

Harold's Cross. On the motion of Mr J. Meade, a vote of condolence was passed to the relatives of the late Mr Charles Ryan, father of Messrs Ryan, playing members of the club, of the late Mr J. Byrne, who was for many years vice-president of the club, of the late Mr W. Nolan, a playing member of last year. Owing to the kindness of Mr Edward Byrne, the club has been able to secure a new ground at Beech Hill, Donnybrook, three minutes walk from Donnybrook tram terminus. The ground will be full size; portion of the playing pitch has been newly laid down, and a pavilion, to the design of Mr Charles Powell, architect, is in course of erection and will be finished for the opening match of the season. The hon. secretary has arranged a long list of fixtures for 1st, 2nd and 3rd XVs. The club will have a very large membership, nearly all last year's Junior and Minor League players being available, and there is a large influx of new members. There is every promise that the club's first year in senior ranks will be a successful one. The next match will be with Wanderers at Donnybrook, October 7th.

Irish Times. Sept. 1911

NEW CLUB GROUNDS

Obviously, as a senior club, St Mary's could no longer continue to play on the college grounds which were scarcely adequate for school football. They were fortunate to obtain a lease on grounds off Beaver Row, Donnybrook, just a couple of hundred yards from the tram terminus (now the bus depot). It was called Beech Hill, owned by Mr Edward Byrne, and they immediately set to to turn it into a first grade football pitch. Past-pupil



First St Mary's Team to play Senior Football 1911-12

Standing: J. M. Power; P. J. O'Neill; R. McGrath; G. P. O'Donnell; W. J. Nagle;
T. J. Cleary; J. J. Doyle; L. J. Clancy.

Seated: W. L. McGann; D. O'Sullivan; N. F. Power; E. R. Farrell (Capt.);
J. J. Moriarty; T. C. Doyle; Unknown.

Front: P. J. Hayden; F. A. Purcell.

architect, Charles Powell, who later made a name for himself for his designs for Mount Argus Church and the extension to Whitefriar St Carmelite Church, as well as churches in England, was commissioned to design a pavilion which was completed early on in the season. Incidentally, when St Mary's relinquished these grounds in 1916 after the college closed and past pupil activity appears to have ended, the grounds were taken over by Shamrock Rovers AFC until they acquired Glenmalure Park in Milltown. The *Irish Times* spoke well of the grounds on October 14, 1911:

Their match with Wanderers marked the advent of St Mary's to senior circles and, incidentally, the opening of their new grounds at Beech Hill, Donnybrook. The latter is quite a useful type of enclosure and one capable of considerable development, both from the spectators' and the players' point of view. In securing it the college have been distinctly fortunate, for suitable quarters are somewhat difficult to obtain within anything like reasonable distance of the city, and several other clubs, notably Bective Rangers and Old Wesley, within the past few years have had more than a little trouble in this respect . . . The playing pitch itself is not, perhaps, ideal, for, though inequalities in the surface can and will be rectified in the near future, there is a distinct fall in the ground from the far end towards the entrance. It is not, to be sure, a very serious departure from the absolute level – nothing like as marked as that at Westfield Park which Old Wesley have to contend with – still, it is there and will always militate against the enclosure as a really first-class one.

With this, however, all drawbacks to the place begin and end; there is room, and to spare, no cramping in any way; and when the pavilion, which is being erected and is practically completed, has received the finishing touches, the whole shall be as neat and serviceable as any in Leinster, outside, of course, of Lansdowne Rd. The St Mary's Club have, in all respects, entered into the project of taking their place in the senior ranks in no uncertain manner, and the comparative success which they have achieved in their initial match in first class company, will do much to justify the enthusiasm displayed by the members. Truth to tell, there were not wanting many to decry the students' confidence in themselves, and, in having Wanderers, the cup holders as their guests for the opening match, presumed to have taken on a large order. An overwhelming victory for Wanderers was generally predicted, with many similar defeats to follow; but how different did this aspect of affairs become, when, at the close of a hard match, the ex-Juniors were only vanquished by a solitary score. St Mary's College, indeed, showed form well up to the average of senior football in Leinster, and, if only on this game alone, the plunge they have taken appears to be fully justified.

The excellent form shown by St Mary's College in their match with Wanderers was confirmed by their showing against Dublin University on Wednesday in College Park . . . the Varsity's superiority in points at the close rather flattered the club's actual superiority as the game went. Indeed, it was not until the last 15 minutes that Trinity established an indisputable claim to victory . . . It must be remembered that the losers were playing one short for the major part of the 2nd half, as Flanagan retired injured. They were also short when Dickie Lloyd scored in the 1st half.

The St Mary's team for that first-ever Senior Club match played against Wanderers on October 7, 1911, at the new St Mary's Grounds at Beech Hill was:

T. Wakely, J. J. Moriarty, W. L. McGann, P. J. Lack, P. J. McDonagh, N. F. Power, A. Merrick, J. Burke-Kennedy, T. J. Cleary, J. J. Doyle, E. R. Farrell (Capt) J. McMahon, W. J. Nagle, J. O'Donnell, M. Richards.

The following is culled from the *Irish Times* report:

Though fairly and squarely beaten on the run of the play, St Mary's College were by no means disgraced. Indeed, for an initial effort in first-class football, the college have much to be proud of in their display, and, if they continue to show the same form throughout the season, there can be no question that they will be a factor to be reckoned with in this year's football campaign. To run a team like Wanderers to within 5 pts is no mean achievement, and, with the experience to be gained in the next couple of months, the side should mould into a useful one.

Irish Times: October 9, 1911

St Mary's continued to play reasonably well up to the end of the year. Their captain, Ernest Farrell, still managing to get away from his clerical studies in Clonliffe College, was picked to play for Leinster in an interprovincial match against Munster, the first St Mary's man to don a Senior Interprovincial jersey. He may well have had the unique experience of playing for Leinster at both junior and senior level in the same twelve months, as he had already represented Leinster in a junior interpro against Connaught on January 14, 1911. In the same month the following year, 1912, he was again picked to represent Leinster against Connaught, this time as a senior interpro, which Leinster won 26-0. He was the first of a very long line of senior interprovincial players from the club (see Appendix). At the same time, P. J. Hayden, Captain of the 2nds, and F. C. Culhane, wing-forward, were picked for the Leinster Junior Interprovincial match against Ulster, which Leinster won narrowly by a try to nil, the try being scored by Pat Hayden on the wing after a lengthy solo dribble down the field.

St Patrick's Day was the day on which St Mary's were to face the acid test of their first match in the Leinster Senior Challenge Cup. Their opponents were to be Monkstown, already two-time winners of the Cup. Let the *Irish Times* tell the story of this baptism by fire for the young club:

FIRST SENIOR CUP APPEARANCE - 1912

In this, their first appearance in the Senior Cup Competition, St Mary's gave a rousing display, and, in defeating a team of the traditions of Monkstown, they have much to be proud of. Better still, their victory was far from being a chance one, as though it were a penalty that turned the scales in their favour. There could be no two opinions that they were the better side. They played prettier and more attractive football, were better trained and better together, and, all round, fully justified the decision in their favour that resulted . . . and taken all round, the students can congratulate themselves on giving a surprisingly good display. But it was mainly in the stamina they exhibited in a fast game, and the manner in which they kept going at all periods which fairly paved the way to success . . . It remains only to say that Farrell was the outstanding figure in the St Mary's pack at all times. . . . St Mary's were the first to score, and that shortly after commencing, Moriarty making a good run along the touchline . . . culminating in O'Neill going over for a try.

St Mary's: J. Murphy, J. J. Moriarty, W. P. McGann, J. Murray P. J. Hayden, N. F. Power, A. J. Merrick, W. J. Bailey, W. Blunden, E. R. Farrell (C), M. J. Jenkins, M. J. Lynch, R. McGrath, G. P. O'Donnell, P. J. O'Neill.

This marvellous victory in their very first essay into the maelstrom of Senior Cup football, gave St Mary's entry into the semi-final, where they faced Bective Rangers.

The semi-final took place on April 1, 1912 at Lansdowne Road. In the words of the *Irish Times*:

St Mary's College, considering this is their first season in senior ranks, did well in the competition, and, though beaten by Bective Rangers, were far from disgraced. Faulty place-kicking on the part of the losers proved very costly to them, and seldom have so many frees in easy positions been missed, as was the case with St Mary's on Saturday . . . It was a rare struggle for supremacy between the rival packs, between whom there was little or nothing to choose. Result: Bective 9 (3 tries) St Mary's 3 (pen).

St Mary's: J. S. Murphy; J. J. Moriarty; J. Murray; W. McGann; P. J. Hayden; N. F. Power; A. J. Merrick; E. R. Farrell (C); M. Lynch; W. J. Mulcahy; J. J. Murnane; R. McGrath; W. J. Nagle; G. P. O'Donnell P. J. O'Neill.

So ended St Mary's first foray into senior competition. To have reached the semi-final at their first attempt was indeed an achievement. To have given an admirable display was a matter of pride, and the entire club, as well as the college, could preen itself on the effort.

In January 1912 four St Mary's men were picked on the Leinster Junior Interprovincial team to play Ulster. They were Pat Hayden on the wing and an all-Mary's backrow of F. Culhane, M. J. Lynch and W. Troddyn, who had joined the Junior Club, Merrion, on leaving St Mary's but joined Old St Mary's the following season. With Ernest Farrell gaining his Senior Interpro and Barry Browne and Charlie Culhane gaining their schools' interpro, it was a good year for representative honours for St Mary's.

1912-13

As the season started, St Mary's were not doing badly. They began with a scoreless draw against Monkstown at home, followed by a 7-6 defeat of Wanderers. Lansdowne brought them down to earth with a bang, defeating them 16-0. Incidentally, the St Mary's scrum-half on the occasion was one William Fanagan. Who says rugby is not hereditary, even down to the position? Three days after that humiliating defeat by Lansdowne, the draw for the Leinster Senior Challenge Cup was made, and who were St Mary's drawn against? Yes, you have guessed it – Lansdowne, on St Patrick's Day 1913. Lansdowne duly won by two tries (6pts) to a penalty goal (3pts). As the *Irish Times* said: "Lansdowne deserved to win because they stayed better". It was the first of many memorable Cup encounters with the headquarters club down through the years to the present day.

1913-14

The new season began as all new seasons do, with plenty of hope and ambition. The weekly, *Sport* welcomed St Mary's to the new season with the following report on October 4, 1913:



St. Mary's RFC Senior Cup Team, 1913

Standing: C. Smith; M. Lynch; R. McGrath; P. O'Grady; N. Troddyn; W. Rogers.
 Seated: G. O'Donnell; W. Tierney; J. Moriarty; E. R. Farrell (Capt.); F. Doherty; R. Burns; P. O'Neill.
 Front: F. C. Culhane; B. Brown.

The ex-Juniors have arranged a capital list of fixtures and look forward to having an interesting season. With the exception of E. R. Farrell, last year's captain, who will not run out this season, the side will practically be the same as last year. G. P. O'Donnell has been elected captain and expects to lead a really good fifteen. The club will have some new blood in past members of the sister college, Rockwell, but apart from this outside help, St Mary's itself is a plentiful source for producing new blood, as no club in this Province is a more devoted supporter of the game. The ground at Beech Hill, Donnybrook, has been improved since last year, and with the secretarial reins in the energetic hands of Mr J. Power, the club should have a successful time.

St Mary's travelled to Limerick late in November to play Garryowen, the beginning of a very close liaison between the two clubs, which has endured to this day. In Shay Deering and Tony Ward, St Mary's have given to the Munster club two of the best players ever to wear the Garryowen jersey. St Mary's lost that match, 6-14, Charlie Culhane, who had gained his schools Interpro the previous year, and was still at school, scoring the St Mary's try. It was Charlie's misfortune that World War I intervened while he was at his peak, but he did gain a Senior Interpro for Leinster while playing for Bective in 1920. When the draw for the Leinster Senior Cup was made in February 1914, St Mary's were drawn against Monkstown in the first round. The match was played on Saturday, March 14. *Sport* takes it up:

In their meeting with Monkstown in the initial match of the Senior Cup Competition, there were not many who could have looked for a victory for St Mary's College. Frankly, it has been a lean year for them; there has been considerable weakness, fore and aft, but the players as well as the spectators of this popular club can find solace in the fact that such a state of affairs occurs in the history of all organisations of the kind. On this occasion they

were defeated by 2 tries (6pts) to nil, a score, be it said, that was about a fair reflection of the fortunes of the game.

The Leinster Senior Cup was won that year by Bective Rangers and was the last official rugby competition for clubs until 1920. World War I broke out in August 1914 and the IRFU cancelled all competitions, except at school level, until the end of hostilities. Blackrock and St Mary's played each other early in 1915 in a charity match, the proceeds going to the Belgian Fund. University College and St Mary's played twice in March 1915. That ended Old St Mary's' participation in senior rugby, and, indeed, in all club rugby for seventeen years. The school closed in June 1916 and, with the closure, all activity on the part of the past pupils' societies and clubs. When the World War finally ended in 1918, the rugby threads were not taken up immediately because demobilisation of the forces did not take place immediately for everyone. It was another year before many returned home, and even longer for those, for instance, who had gone to fight the Bolsheviks in Archangel in 1918. But official rugby did recommence in the 1919-20 season, and in the absence of an Old St Mary's Club, many of the past joined other clubs, notably Bective Rangers, and made their mark there, particularly Dr Paddy Roddy, Charlie Culhane and Joseph B. Clarke, all of whom played for Leinster and two of whom played for Ireland as will be seen later.

OFFICERS.
SEASON 1910-11.

President:
Vest Rev. T. P. O'HANLON, C.S.Sp.

Vice-Presidents:
Vest Rev. T. A. FENROCK, C.S.Sp.
Rev. J. J. O'REILLY, C.S.Sp.
Rev. T. FARRELL, C.C.
J. E. BLUNDEN, Esq.
J. BERRY, Esq.

Captain 1st XV. - E. R. FARRELL.
Vice-Captain 1st XV. - W. L. MCGANN.
Captain 2nd XV. - J. O'REILLY.
Vice-Captain 2nd XV. - W. P. BLUNDEN.

Committee:
Rev. J. J. O'REILLY.
Messrs. P. MURPHY and L. J. CLANCY.

Hon. Secretary:
J. M. POWER, Shandon, Kimmage Road,
Harold's Cross.

Hon. Treasurer:
P. J. HAYDEN, 28 Parkgate Street,
Dublin.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
RUGBY
FOOTBALL CLUB.

Junior and Minor
League Teams.

FIXTURES 1910-11.

FIXTURES

1st. XV. St. Mary's College R.F.C., Season 1910-11. 2nd XV.

Date	Opponents	Ground	Result	Date	Opponents	Ground	Result
1910				1910			
Oct. 1	Palmerston			Oct. 1	Palmerston II.		
15	Royal Vet. Coll.	Away		15	R. & S.P. Union II.	Home	Away
22	Wanderers II.	Away		22	Lansdowne III.	L	Home
Nov. 5	Lansdowne II.	Home		29	Bective III.	L	Home
12	Trinity II.	L	Away	Nov. 5	Blackrock III.		Away
19	Palmerston	L	Away	12	Trinity III.		Home
26	Hospitals Match: Newport v. Co. Dublin	L	Away	19	Royal Vet. Coll. II	L	Home
Dec. 30	Monkstown II.	L	Home	16	Wanderers III.	L	Home
3	Merrion	L	Home	19	Monkstown III.	L	Home
10	Wanderers II.	L	Home	23	Sutton	L	Home
17	Lansdowne II.	L	Home	31	Sutton		Away
1911				1911			
Jan. 7	Dundalk	Away		Jan. 14	Sandford II.	L	Home
14	R. & S. P. Union	Away		18	Wanderers III.	L	Home
21	Merrion	Away		21	Merrion II.		Away
Feb. 1	Royal Vet. Coll.	L	Home	28	Monkstown III.	L	Home
4	Carlow	Home		Feb. 4	Bective III.	L	Away
11	England v Ireland	Away		8	Royal Vet. Coll. II	L	Home
18	Palmerston	L	Home	11	England v Ireland	L	Away
25	Monkstown II.	L	Home	15	Lansdowne III.	L	Home
Mar. 4	Trinity II.	L	Home	25	Merrion II.	L	Away
				Mar. 4	Trinity III.	L	Away

L—Junior League Matches L—Minor League Matches.

St. Mary's College RFC Fixtures Cards 1910-11 and 1911-12

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
R. F. C.

★

SEASON 1911-12

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
R. F. C.

SEASON—1911-1912.

This Card must be shown at
all Matches.

Mr.....

Committee:
P. J. BROWN L. J. CLANCY
REV. T. FARRELL P. MURPHY
J. J. MORIARTY REV. J. J. O'REILLY
REV. P. J. WALSH.

Captain, 1st XV.—E. R. FARRELL
Vice-Capt., 1st XV.—J. J. MORIARTY
Captain, 2nd XV.—P. J. HAYDEN
Vice-Capt., 2nd XV.—T. C. DOYLE
Captain, 3rd XV.—T. P. MCGANN.

Hon. Treasurer—P. J. HAYDEN,
28 Parkgate Street, Dublin.

Hon. Secretary—J. M. POWER,
Shandon, Kimmage Road,
Harold's Cross.

Ground:
Beech Hill, Beaver Row, Donnybrook.

Chapter Eight

Personalities

1900-1916

NATIONALISM

AS THE LATEST biographer of Kevin Barry states, St Mary's never claimed a strong Republican tradition (*Kevin Barry* by D. O'Donovan, Glendale Press 1989). Perhaps this is understandable, given the French antecedents of the College, although St Mary's, in fact, was the first house of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Ireland to have started with an Irishman at the head and with an almost entirely Irish community. Nevertheless, they were Irishmen who had obtained their training in France from Frenchmen, and may, as a consequence, have been less subjective in their outlook on national affairs. At the same time, one of the earliest descriptions of the college, quoted earlier, mentions: "On feastsdays and other significant occasions, the green flag of Erin waves over the little hill on which the college was built". Hardly the attitude of West Britons.

With the majority of the boys coming from middle class or professional class families, with whom security would have had an importance understandable in the economic climate of the time, the attitude among the boys in the school probably reflected accurately enough the attitude of their section of the population. Most people inherit their politics rather than acquire them – in school or elsewhere, although a school can do much to nourish or discourage. As 1916 was to prove, when the leaders who surrendered were led through the streets of Dublin amid hostile crowds, it was only a small minority who backed the Rising, until the British began to execute those leaders. In the book already quoted above, Donal O'Donovan states that "At St Mary's, the parents of some of the boys were active separatists". Very likely that statement was true of every school in the country, and in proportion to its size, St Mary's probably produced as many patriots as any other school in the city. It may, and it may not, be symptomatic of the general attitude in the community in St Mary's at the time, that two members of the domestic staff working in the college, William Morris, described as employed as a butler, and Joseph Byrne, described as a gardener, were arrested for taking part in the 1916 Rising and were interned in Knutsford Prison in England. It was a very divisive time in the country. "We will die," said Tom Clarke, "but it will be a different Ireland after us". And so it was.

Bernard Reid

Indicative of the uncertainty that filled the minds of many at that time is the case of Bernard Reid. He was born in Dublin in 1886 and came to St Mary's before the close of the century. He did his Preparatory Grade in 1901 and followed this with the Junior, Middle and Senior Grades in successive years, which was no mean feat. After leaving

school he went to University College, St Stephen's Green, when the Universities Act of 1908 established the National University. He plunged into all the college activities and was editor of *The Nationalist Student*, the student magazine. According to Professor George O'Brien he "showed signs of great literary talent". Eoin MacNeill founded the Irish Volunteers in answer to Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force in 1913. Bernard wrote an editorial in the *Nationalist Student*, urging students to join up, and he himself did so and participated in the Howth gun-running in 1914. In those heady days before the outbreak of the Great War, there was a unity among the various sections, political and cultural, which found Sinn Féin, the Irish Party, the IRB, Labour, Clann na nGael, United Ireland League and Gaelic League united as never before, and, indeed, never since. The war changed all that. Redmond, the head of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the nominal head of the Irish Volunteers (the IRB held all the important posts), stood up in the House of Commons and assured the House that British troops could safely be withdrawn from Ireland to fight Germany, and the Volunteers, north and south, would ensure the defence of all Ireland. This was in return for Home Rule. When the Home Rule Bill was ready on September 18 and needed only the Royal Assent, Redmond allowed it to go to his head and urged his followers in the Volunteers to join the British Army "in defence of right, of freedom and of religion in this war". The Irish Volunteers were split, about 170,000 sided with Redmond and became the Irish National Volunteers, while only about 10,000 remained with MacNeill. Britain reneged on the granting of Home Rule, postponing it until after the war.

Meanwhile, at the very outset of the war and before all this manoeuvring took place which led to the split, Bernard Reid offered his services to the French. His application was postponed, and as time was passing, like many other idealistic young men he did not wish to miss taking part. Believing as millions did that the war would be over by Christmas, he joined the Leinster Regiment and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and went into action in France where he was killed in 1916. Perhaps if he had not been so precipitate, he might have thrown in his lot with Pearse and died on another field in that same year. Of one thing we can be sure – no matter where, it would have been for the highest ideals. The lines written by Tom Kettle, who also died on Flanders fields, would have been as true of Bernard as of most of the other idealistic Irishmen who died in that war:

Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,
Died not for Flag, nor King, nor Emperor –
But for a dream, born in a herdman's shed,
And for the secret scripture of the poor.

THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

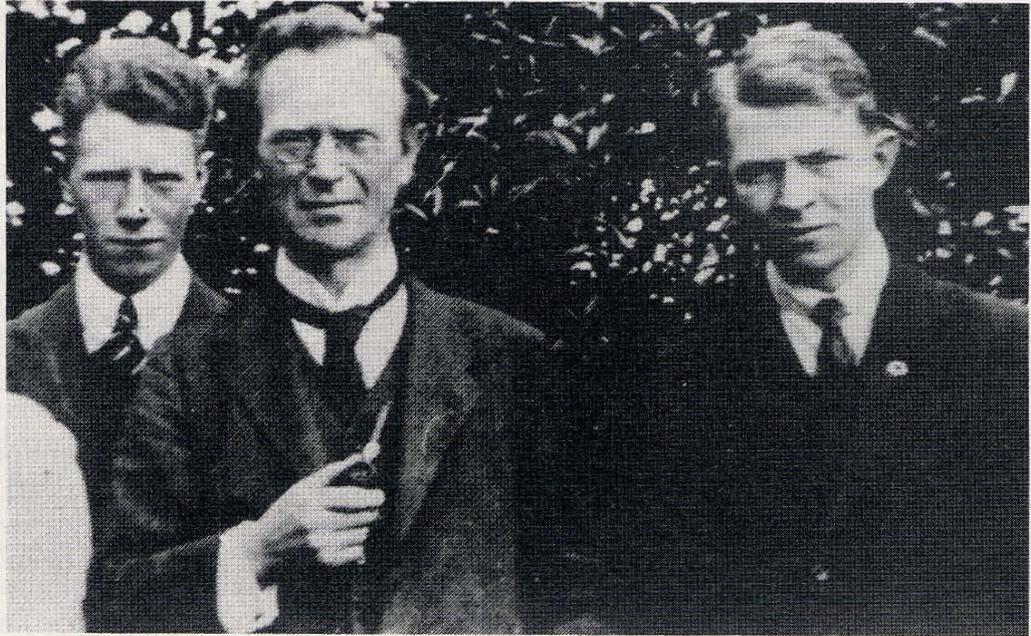
The issue of nationalism has always, and probably will always be joined to the issue of the Irish language. That it was not neglected in St Mary's can be seen by the specialist teachers engaged from time to time, while in Fr Martin O'Mahony (1878-1944) the school had a teacher whose enthusiasm for the language was matched by his knowledge and ability. The place of Irish in St Mary's can also be seen in the subsequent careers of people like Seamus Ó Braonáin, who, for a number of years was Secretary to the Commission on Irish in the Civil Service; Dr T. J. Kiernan, Extern Examiner in Economics through Irish for the NUI; Cathal Ó hÓgáin, son of one of the founders of the Gaelic League, Seán Ó hÓgáin; Colm Ó Lochlainn, Professor of Modern Irish, UCD; the sons of Prof. Eoin MacNeill,

Niall, Brian and Turlough. The language/nationalism nexus can also be seen in the boys who came to St Mary's from Padraic Pearse's school in Cullenswood House, Oakley Road, Ranelagh, later to be transferred to Rathfarnham House and called Coláiste Éanna. Among those who transferred to St Mary's were two sets of brothers, John (Seán) and Frank Dowling, Domhnall and Diarmuid MacCarthaigh (McCarthy). All were involved in the Independence Struggle after they left school. The O'Rahilly, who sent his eldest son to St Enda's at the tender age of 6, later sent three sons, Richard, Aodhgan and Niall, to St Mary's shortly before the school closed down in 1916. This is significant in view of the stand that The O'Rahilly took to promote all things Irish, manufactured goods, an Irish flag for Pembroke Urban District, street names in Irish, acceptance of Irish by the postal authorities, to mention a few random causes he espoused. The O'Rahilly who equally with Eoin MacNeil, was deceived by Patrick Pearse and the IRB regarding the Easter Rising, tried to stop it, but on his return to Dublin and finding it a *fait accompli*, threw in his lot with Pearse in the GPO and lost his life in the retreat from the burning building. It was his second son, Aodhgan, that he sent to the MacNeil home in Stocking Lane, Rathfarnham, with his report on his trip to Limerick in the effort to call off the Rising. Cathal Ó hÓgáin, mentioned above, was also a language enthusiast who took part in the fighting, as did Colm Ó Lochlainn.

The MacNeils

Niall, Brian and Turlough MacNeil all came to St Mary's in January 1913 and remained until the school closed in 1916. Joseph the youngest boy, came in 1915 for the school's last year before closing. Turlough's name appears on the 1914 Programme for the Distribution of Prizes when he was in Preparatory 2. He got honours in all subjects and 1st Place in Irish. He was a classmate of Domhnall McCarthy, Maurice Blunden, Frank Purcell, Raymond Victory, Tom Tierney and others. Niall sat for the Middle Grade in 1915 and passed, with Jimmy O'Dea, Morgan Kavanagh, Joe Maguire and others. Brian passed Junior Grade with Ken O'Dea, Bob Donovan, P. R. Gogan, John Farrell, Cathal Ó hÓgáin and others. Niall failed Senior Grade in 1916, but when we consider the traumatic events in the family's and the nation's life from Easter on, that is scarcely to be wondered at. Brian, less closely involved in events, passed the Middle Grade.

In the events leading up to the Rising in 1916 Niall was used by his father as a reliable courier with dispatches to the various leaders. On his way with such dispatches to the authorities in Portobello Barracks on Easter Monday morning, the firing at Portobello Bridge held him up. The Unit of the Irish Citizen Army holding St Stephen's Green had sent a detachment under Sgt. Joseph Doyle to take over Davy's (now Searson's) public house at the bridge and they had engaged the soldiers who were being dispatched into the city to investigate the rumoured disturbances there. The firing went on for a long time before the revolutionaries began to fall back slowly, first to Kelly's Corner, then to Harcourt St Railway Station and finally to their entrenched positions round Stephen's Green. Niall returned to his father in their home in "Woodtown" in Ballyboden, Rathfarnham, only to be told to go back once more and if he was stopped again, to demand to be arrested and brought before the Commanding Officer, to whom he was to give the dispatch. At this time Niall was still at school and it is interesting to note that, while the Rising took place during the Easter school break, the subsequent events, including the arrest and imprisonment of Prof. MacNeil, took place during the term and yet, according to the school roll, none of the MacNeil boys is marked absent at that time.



*Professor
Eoin Mac Neil
and his sons,
Brian (left)
and Niall*

With her husband in prison, Mrs MacNeil was in straitened circumstances but she received help from a number of sources. The elder daughters had been attending Muckross College in Ranelagh. The Dominican Sisters took them in as boarders. The Professor's brother, James, who later became Governor-General, arranged for Brian and Turlough to become boarders in Blackrock College. Mrs MacNeil kept the youngest, Joseph, at home with herself. Niall had finished school and was apprenticed to a solicitor but later went to UCD where he was prominent in many of the College's extra-curricular activities, and in particular, the activities of the L&H Society, of which he became Correspondence Secretary for Daniel Binchy, the Auditor. With Brian, he was active in the War of Independence, but, unlike him, he joined the Free State Army after the Treaty, making the army his career and rising to Colonel. Brian was captured outside Sligo by the Free State Army and shot, it is claimed, while trying to escape. Professor MacNeil was elected MP for Fermanagh on his release from prison in the general amnesty, and he resumed his post in UCD of Professor of Ancient Celtic Literature.

Seán P. Dowling

John (Seán) P. Dowling was born on January 27, 1896, his brother, Frank, on November 8, 1898. Both went to Syngue Street Christian Brothers' School before enrolling in 1908 and 1909 in Padraic Pearse's new Irish school, Coláiste Éanna, in Cullenswood House, Ranelagh. John, called Eoin by Pearse and Seán for most of his adult life, played the leading part in the school play in 1910, *Da Dearga's Hostel*, written specially for the school by Padraic Colum and performed in the Abbey Theatre that April by the schoolboys. He was the star pupil, distinguishing himself in the Junior Grade Intermediate examination that same year by winning an Exhibition in Modern Literature, and prizes in Science and Irish. When Pearse moved his school to Rathfarnham, a number of the boys preferred to attend school nearer home. The Dowling boys as well as the McCarthys did this, and began to attend St Mary's from their Harold's Cross home. John passed his Senior Grade in 1913 and went on to UCD where he first did Arts and, according to Todd Andrews, was offered a lectureship in English Literature by Prof. Thomas MacDonagh, but for some unexplained

reason changed to dentistry, the profession he followed for the rest of his life. The only sport he was interested in at university was boxing, and he was light-weight champion of UCD. His favourite recreation was fly-fishing, and he fished every river and stream in Dublin and Meath.

Seán Dowling, who had spent summer holidays in Rosmuc, Connemara, with the Pearse family, continued to follow Pearse after school and took an active part in the Easter Rising of 1916, and later in the War of Independence. He took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War and rose to be a Senior Commandant in the Republican Army and a member of the Army Executive. He was C/O of the 4th Battalion of the Dublin Brigade, his brother Frank being Lieutenant of C Company, and defended Hammam Hotel in O'Connell Street while Rory O'Connor held the Four Courts. Later he became Director of Organisation in the IRA after Ernie O'Malley.

He was a most accomplished man; a fluent Irish speaker, an excellent pianist and singer, a talented painter. While continuing his profession as dentist, he was art critic of *Ireland Today* for a number of years in the '30s and wrote a number of plays, two of which were produced by the Abbey Theatre. He died at the age of 92, having been for a number of years Chairman of the Fianna Fáil Party.

Probably the two most prominent names from St Mary's in this phase of Irish history were Rory O'Connor and Kevin Barry.

Rory O'Connor

Rory O'Connor was born at 23 Kildare Street, Dublin, on Nov. 28, 1883. The first school he attended was in Charleville Road, Rathmines. This must have been the Loreto Sisters who moved to Charleville House from 4-5 Kenilworth Square, in 1889. Charleville House was the first property that the Holy Ghost Fathers had their eyes on when considering opening a day school in the Rathmines area, only to be pipped at the post by the Loreto Sisters. This was providential because the site eventually acquired, Larkhill, was much superior, both in extent and situation.

Rory came to St Mary's with his brother Charles and enrolled in June 1892. Charles left at the end of the academic year to continue in Clongowes, while Rory, who was known as Rody – short for Roderick – stayed on for three more years before following elder brother, Charles, to Clongowes where he finished his secondary studies in 1901. In October 1906 he got his B.A. from the Royal University and took a degree in engineering in the new National University in 1910. During his university days he became involved in politics and joined the Young Ireland Branch of the United Ireland League. When the branch was expelled from the League as too radical, he seemed to lose interest in parliamentary politics. He was described by a contemporary as “. . . a quiet, gentle soul, a lovable companion, but physically very frail; and like many of us in Ireland, he had trouble with his lungs. For reasons of health he had to leave Ireland in or about 1910, and I attended a farewell dinner which many of his College friends gave for him in the Dolphin Hotel on the eve of his departure for Canada. (E. Sheehy: Cent. Hist: L & H).

In 1911 he took up an appointment with the Canadian Pacific Railway and for four years was engaged in building 1500 miles of transcontinental railroad. Some of the leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood recalled him to Ireland to join them in the physical force movement for the independence of Ireland. He joined the engineering department of Dublin Corporation and was responsible for the planning and construction of one of the best boulevard-style of streets in the city – Griffith Avenue.

During the Easter Week Rising he was wounded but after his recovery continued an active role in the struggle as Director of Engineering with the rank of Major-General. He organised successfully a number of prison escapes, from Strangeways and Mountjoy, and was sent to England to organise diversionary activity there. The activity included the burning of three timber yards on the Liverpool Docks, causing over £2 million worth of damage, and extensive fires on Newcastle Docks, all with no loss of life. In January 1921 he was captured and confined in Dublin Castle and then in an internment camp on the Curragh, from which he escaped with a Mr Ryan of Tipperary, the first two Republicans ever to escape from an internment camp. He was anti-Treaty from the beginning and with Liam Mellows organised the defence of the Four Courts on that fateful June 28, 1922, which may rightly be called the start of the Civil War.

It is an interesting coincidence that the courier who brought the Free State Government's demand for the evacuation of the Four Courts, was Aloys Petit de Mange, Dublin-born son of the Chef de Cuisine at the Gresham Hotel and himself a past pupil of St Mary's. On receiving the reply to the note that there was no answer, Petit de Mange delayed his return to the GHQ in Beggars Bush, and as a result, it was thought that he was held prisoner. On his return about midnight, a final demand was sent, giving the Republicans twenty minutes in which to parade by the Liffey wall without arms. When the ultimatum ran out, the shelling from across the river began. On June 30, the Four Courts garrison surrendered and Rory was jailed in Mountjoy.

The following December the Free State cabinet made the order for the execution of four Republican prisoners, Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett and Joe McKelvey, as a deterrent to further assassinations in the wake of that of Sean Hales, T.D. Rory had been bestman at the wedding of Kevin O'Higgins in the previous year, and now O'Higgins, who, with Joe McGrath, had been the strongest opponent of the order and only consented to show unanimity with the majority, had to carry out that order as Minister for Defence.

On the morning of December 8, 1922, Rory O'Connor sent for the chaplain of Wellington Barracks, Fr Piggott, who spent two hours with Rory, Joe and Dick, who went to confession and received Holy Communion at Mass. Liam Mellows had refused the ministrations of the priest, fearing that more would be asked of him in submission than he would be able in conscience to give, but finally, at the very last moment, when he was already blindfolded, Liam consented and received the Last Rites.



Seán P. Dowling



Rory O'Connor



Kevin Barry

The following is the last letter written by Rory O'Connor. It is to his sister Eily:

Mountjoy,
8 December 1922
About 7 a.m.

Dear sister Eily,

I have just finished a General Confession. I am going calmly to death with four dear comrades. Is it not the grace of God that I am given time to confess and not like some others who have to answer the call without notice.

Dearest: You and all will mourn for me. DO NOT DO SO. Is it not a magnificent death?

I forgive all my enemies. I have never felt any feelings of revenge.

Were you aware that the devotion of my life has been to the Blessed Virgin and this day I had just finished a novena in honour of the Immaculate Conception. The anniversary of my First Holy Communion. God bless you and protect you all.

Your loving – if undemonstrative brother,
Rory

Kevin Barry

Kevin Barry came to St Mary's in September 1915 as a 13-year old. He was born in Fleet Street, Dublin, on January 20, 1902, to Tom and Mary (née Dowling) Barry, who had come to Dublin from Tombeagh, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow, to open a dairy with Tom's sister, Judith. Kevin was fourth in a family of seven, and attended school first in Holy Faith Convent, Clarendon Street. When his father died in 1908, Mary decided to bring the four youngest children back to the family farm in Tombeagh and Kevin continued school in Rathvilly National School until 1915 when he returned to Fleet Street. For three months he attended O'Connell Schools with the Christian Brothers before enrolling in St Mary's in September 1915.

A class-mate at St Mary's was Bobby Bonfield of Moyne Road, Ranelagh, who accompanied Kevin to a concert in the Mansion House in commemoration of the Manchester Martyrs in November, an event which affected Kevin greatly and probably moved him to join the Fianna Boys, the youth branch of the Volunteers, his first step on the road to involvement in the struggle for Irish freedom. When St Mary's closed down as a secondary school in June 1916, Kevin, with the rest of the boys who had to finish their schooling, had to find another school. His family chose Belvedere College for him as the most adjacent, since the best was no longer available! Over a dozen other boys from St Mary's joined him in Belvedere, (including John Farrell who was Auditor of the L&H Debating Society while Kevin was in UCD, and later became a District Justice). Kevin led a very happy school life, participating in every area of school activity as a very normal boy. He passed Junior Grade in 1917, got honours and third place in Middle Grade in 1918, passed Senior Grade and matriculated in his final year, 1919, winning a Dublin Corporation scholarship to the university. He was a sub on the JCT which defeated Blackrock in 1917, but a full member of the SCT which was beaten in the semi-finals by Blackrock in 1919. His position was hooker. He also played cricket though there are no records of his prowess. When hurling was introduced into Belvedere that year, Kevin was one of the first to try out for it.

University life seemed made for this happy, life-loving young man who threw himself into every activity within the walls of Earlsfort Terrace and its environs. His medical studies were peripheral to everything else. And among the everything else was his

increasing involvement with the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Volunteers which he had joined in 1917 at the age of fifteen. Used first merely as an orderly riding round the city on his bicycle delivering mustering notices for parades and meetings, his enthusiasm and dedication won him the respect of his elders in the Company and we find him taking active part in a raid for arms on the King's Inns in June 1920, and in the following month in an attempt to burn the military barracks at Aughavannagh, county Wicklow. It is hardly surprising that he was among the inordinate number of 73 who were failed that year in First Med. Kevin was due to take his final paper in the Repeat examination on September 20, 1920. That morning he was arrested during the attempt to capture and disarm a troop of British soldiers picking up supplies at Monks' Bakery in Church Street. Three soldiers were killed in the raid and Kevin, who had dived under the army lorry when his gun had jammed, was captured. During the following weeks he was interrogated with torture, charged with murder, tried, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The priest who attended him at the end, said his final Mass and anointed him, was Fr Matthew McMahon, Dean of Clonliffe College and former member of the lay staff of St. Mary's College.

Tom Counihan S.J. had been a Jesuit Scholastic teaching in Belvedere. He was Kevin's maths teacher, rugby coach and friend. On the night before the execution he was told that Kevin wished to see him and he left a report of that meeting, part of which is quoted in O'Donovan's *Kevin Barry and His Times*.

"I have a clean slate now, and am glad to offer my life in atonement for my sins."

On November 1, 1920, the execution took place in Mountjoy.

Bobby Bonfield

Bobby Bonfield was a classmate of Todd Andrews in Synge Street CBS before transferring to St Mary's where he did his Preparatory Grade examination in 1916 with Kevin Barry, although he had come the year before Kevin to the school. They were close friends and shared the same aspirations for a free Ireland. We have seen how it was at Bobby's instigation that the pair went to the Mansion House for that rally on the occasion of the anniversary of the Manchester Martyrs, which made such an impression on Kevin. When the college closed that summer of 1916, Bobby also went to Belvedere to finish his schooling. He took an active part in the War of Independence and threw in his lot with the Republican side on the Treaty issue. He was a member of the 4th Dublin Battalion and was shot in an engagement with the Free State forces at Clondalkin in 1923.

Gerard Crofts

Another past pupil was Gerard Crofts who found himself in Frongoch internment camp in North Wales after the Easter Rising 1916. Gerard came to St Mary's in September 1899 and passed his Middle Grade in 1903. He saw action in 1916 in the GPO area, taking a suicidally-exposed position in a tram at Nelson's Pillar in order to halt the Hussars charging from O'Connell Bridge. When the original charge was halted, he withdrew with his companions under withering fire to the Hammam Building opposite the GPO. After the surrender he was sentenced to ten years penal servitude. He was released early from Frongoch because of ill health. He will be long remembered as a singer of Irish ballads. It was he who introduced the 'rebel' song, All for Ireland, composed by Eamon Ceannt, one of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation. He was in constant demand, like Fred Jeffs, for concerts on the stage and radio. He died on November 14, 1934.

John Gogan

John was one of the five Gogan brothers who went to St Mary's, three generations of whom have now come to the school. John was born in 1892 and came to St Mary's in 1900, following in the footsteps of his brother Tom. He passed Preparatory Grade in 1902 and Junior Grade in '07 and '08, and during his schooldays was active particularly in dramatics which he continued to pursue after he left school, taking part, as we have seen, in the affairs of the Past Pupils Dramatic Society and the Irish Theatre Company, along with a group of like-minded past students. He took part in the 1916 Rising and was interned in Frongoch where he was member of the General Council of the prisoners. He was released in the general amnesty in 1917, and continued his interest in amateur dramatics with the Past Students' Union Dramatic Society into the '30s. He was elected President of the PPU in 1937 in recognition of his work for the college, past and present. He was the father of Fr Gerry, CSSp and Larry, RTE.

Cathal Ó hÓgáin

Cathal Ó hÓgáin was the son of Sean Hogan, one of the founders of the Gaelic League with Dr Douglas Hyde. Although it was a non-sectarian, non-political organisation, devoted to the promotion of all things Gaelic, it was, in the words of Padraic Pearse: "The most revolutionary influence that has ever come into Ireland. The Irish Revolution really began when the seven proto-Gaelic Leaguers met in O'Connell St . . . The germ of all future Irish history was in that back room". (*The Irish Volunteer*, Feb. 1914). Cathal was in St Mary's until its closure and sat for his Middle Grade in 1916. On leaving school he joined the Volunteers and fought in the War of Independence and in the Civil War which followed. Afterwards, in 1923, he emigrated to New Zealand where he remained until his death in 1961.

Frank Doherty

Frank was in St Mary's at the turn of the century, and distinguished himself at both rugby and cricket, at school and with the Past. He won Junior Interprovincial caps for Leinster in rugby in 1907 and 1908. After school, he too joined the Volunteers and took part in the gun-running at Howth in 1914, as well as the Rising in 1916. He was one of the re-founders of the Past Pupils' Union and St. Mary's RFC, being closely involved with Fr. Ernest Farrell in reviving both the union and the club after the re-opening of the school in 1926. He was an active member of the Selection Committee of the rugby club for many years and was President in 1958 when the club won the Leinster Cup for the first time.

When he left St Mary's in 1904 he entered Alex Thom until 1920 when he took over the family paper and printing-ink importing business after his father became ill. He founded Killeen Paper Mills and later, Glenside Printing Ink Co. in 1934, becoming chairman of the company in 1958.

All his life he was a keen sportsman. Besides rugby and cricket, tennis also interested him, and he was good enough to play with J. C. Parkes of Trinity, the then world champion, and rugby international. His three sons and some of his grandsons also attended St Mary's. He died in an accident on Christmas Eve, 1963.

THEATRE

John Dudley Digges

We have seen that theatrical productions were a feature of St Mary's from the very beginning. A play and a concert were presented within three months of the opening of the college in 1890. As early as the year 1893 we find the name of John Dudley Digges,



John G. Gogan



Gerald Crofts



Frank Doherty

who was playing the part of the Earl of Pembroke in scenes from Shakespeare's *King John*. On leaving school, John turned to acting and joined the brothers, Frank and Willie Fay, in their theatrical adventures which pre-dated the Abbey Theatre. He appeared in a number of their plays presented in their Camden St theatre, and when Willie Fay took over the work of producing for the fledgling Irish Literary Theatre on its foundation by Yeats, Martyn and Lady Gregory in 1899, Dudley was one of the players recruited. He was in the company when the split came in 1904, Martyn and others disagreeing with the policy of Yeats and Lady Gregory, and Dudley left with a number of the other members of the company to appear in Irish plays at the St Louis Fair in 1904. He remained on in America, apart from short holidays at home and became a power on Broadway with the New York Theatre Guild. He made occasional forays to Hollywood and Halliwell lists 41 of his films, including *The Invisible Man*, *Mutiny on the Poutny*, *The General Died At Dawn*, *The Light That Failed*, *Raffles* and *Son of Fury*. He died in 1947 at the age of 68.

Jimmy O'Dea

Undoubtedly, the outstanding theatrical personality to come out of St Mary's was James A. O'Dea, who came here with his two brothers, Canice and Lionel, and did his Middle Grade in 1915. While Halliwell lists seven films in which he appeared, including the *Rising of the Moon*, and *Darby McGill and the Little People*, it was live on stage that Jimmy O'Dea made his greatest impact and won the hearts of all Dublin, and indeed all Ireland. He was, without doubt, Ireland's greatest comedian and greatest pantomimist. His recorded comic sketches with Harry O'Donovan (the writer of most of them and whose son went to St. Mary's) are probably among the earliest and most cherished memories of those throughout the country who were fortunate enough to possess gramophones or listened to the Sponsored Programmes on Radio Éireann in the 1930s.

Jimmy's two brothers, Lionel and Canice, came to St Mary's with their elder brother and stayed on after he left to become apprenticed to an optician on the quays. They too had been bitten by the stage 'bug' and appeared with Jimmy in many of his shows, pantomimes, radio and film appearances, as Ken O'Dea and Lionel Day. Ken had a separate career as a singer and pianist in variety shows, while Lal (Lionel) was in the Radio Éireann Players for many years. Their young sister Rita, who became a qualified optician, ran the optical business for her elder brother, who very soon became much too busy for such mundane work. Rita was an accomplished actress in her own right, although she confined herself



John Dudley Digges



Jimmy O'Dea



Tom Gogan

to the amateur stage. She appeared in many of the productions staged by the St Mary's Past Students Dramatic Society.

P. R. Gogan

On the other side of the footlights – or in the front of the house – was another member of one of the 'extended' St Mary's families – the Gogans. Pat Robert Gogan, known throughout theatreland as P. R., was one of five brothers who were in St Mary's from September 1895 till the closure in 1916, beginning with Tom and ending with Lorcan. Two of them, John and Lorcan were Presidents of the Union, in 1937 and 1962 respectively. Pat's three sons, Paddy, Terry and George were also pupils, as were many nephews and cousins, including three Holy Ghost Fathers, Cothraighe, Gerry and Brian. The entertainment profession has been carried on in the family by P. R.'s godson, Larry, a voice well-known to all 2FM listeners.

P. R. was an amateur actor of considerable talent which he used to effect in the St Mary's Past Pupils' Dramatic Society, which was a cultural force in the life of Dublin city during the '20s and '30s, with numerous well-received presentations even in the Abbey Theatre.

P. R. became Manager of the Theatre Royal in its heyday in the '40s and '50s, and then of the Queens, where he helped to launch the careers of many of the well-known personalities of today's theatre and television. He was a kind, gentle man, who will be best remembered for his helpfulness to others.

Thomas Gogan

Tom Gogan was another of the illustrious Gogan Clan whose life was bound up in entertainment. From the time he left school in 1905, having passed Senior Grade, he was associated with show business, first with the Abercorn Hall Cinema on Harcourt Road (one of the very first commercial cinemas in Dublin, now long vanished), and later as Manager of the Coliseum, Henry St, partly destroyed by fire during the 1916 Rising and later knocked down. Then he was successively Manager of the Carlton, the Theatre Royal, the Pavilion, Dun Laoghaire, and the Astor. For a number of years before his death in 1961 he was President of the Irish Film Institute. After his death, Noel Moran, Film Critic of the *Evening Herald*, wrote: "The death of Tom Gogan removes one of the best-loved figures in the Dublin cinema world . . . To Tom, the cinema was more than an occupation . . . His appreciation of the cinema transcended commercialism. It was aesthetic in the extreme. To him, cinema was an art".

Leo McCabe

Leo McCabe spent only two years in St Mary's, where he seems to have been more notable for his absence than for his presence. He was the heir to a prominent fish and poultry firm in Dublin, in which he took not the slightest interest during his life. There is no record of his having taken part in any dramatics while in St Mary's. He did his Preparatory Grade examination in 1914 and failed to return after the summer holidays in 1915. He obviously passed his Matriculation because we find him in the Trinity College Dramatic Society (DUDS) in 1928, where he was a shining light. He played in London and the provinces before joining up with an English thespian, Stanley Ilsley, to form a theatrical production company they called IMP (Ilsley/McCabe Productions).

The first production of the fledgling company was in the 102-seat Peacock Theatre on St Patrick's Day, 1940. It was the Irish première of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, and proved so successful that it was transferred to the larger Gaiety Theatre for a long run. IMP presented a number of seasons in Dublin, Belfast and Cork before settling in the Olympia Theatre. Leo's father learned that the theatre was for sale, so he formed a company with his friends T.P. and J.J. Robinson to purchase it. Leo and Stanley owned 25% of the shares and were appointed Managing Directors. Their aim was summed up in their slogan *World Theatre – At Your Doorstep*, and that was literally what they brought to Dublin, productions from all over the world – Ballet and Dance Companies from England, the U.S., South America, Europe, Japan and Africa; star-studded presentations from London and countless world premières. Noel Coward himself attended many of the Irish premières of his plays in the Olympia. Apart from 'legitimate' theatre, the Olympia played host to a great variety of productions, Arthur Rubinstein on piano; *Teresa and Luisillo*, Spanish Dancers; *Laurel and Hardy*; *Pilar Lopez and Company*; an Ice Carnival; Emlyn Williams with his one-man shows, "Dickens" and "Dylan Thomas". After thirteen years, Leo and his partner returned to London where they had begun their acting careers, engaging mainly in stage and television, until they retired to Kilpeddar in county Wicklow.

ACADEMICS

Pierce F. Purcell

Pierce F. Purcell was born in October 1881 and came to St Mary's in February 1893 in the College's third year of its existence. He was a contemporary of Fr Tom Farrell, Msgr. Daniel Moloney, Jim Brennan, Bob Kinahan, Pat Laracy and others. He did the Junior Grade in both 1896 and the following year, much as people repeat the Inter Cert these days. Then, as often quite customary in those days too, the supposed spartan training of a



Leo McCabe



John J. Dowling



Colm Ó Lochlainn

boarding school, induced his parents to send him to Castleknock College for the last two years of his education.

He entered the School of Engineering in Trinity College in 1899. In the final exam in Engineering in 1902 he was awarded first place with credits in all subjects and the Professor's Prize in Geology. In the following year he took his Senior Moderatorship with the Gold Medal in Experimental Science. From 1904-1909 he worked on the engineering staff of the London County Council, and was engaged in the construction of the two major thoroughfares which changed the character of west central London – Aldwych and Kingsway. He was also engaged in the construction of large tunnels in the south London area involving the use of compressed air.

His appointment as the first Professor of Civil Engineering in University College, Dublin, in November 1909, was a happy choice. Looking back over the forty-five years during which he held the post, it is difficult to realise the enormity of the task that confronted the young man, only twenty-eight at the time. Faced with the competition of three other prosperous and famous schools of engineering, the new school secured recognition as their equal in a surprisingly short period and soon surpassed them in numbers. Under Professor Purcell the faculty underwent great changes. In 1926 the College of Science in Merrion St was merged with UCD bringing in a well-organised and flourishing Mechanical Engineering department. This was again divided into two departments, to which, just before Professor Purcell's retirement, was added a department of Chemical Engineering.

For thirty years, Prof. Purcell was a member of the Governing Body of the College and the longtime Chairman of the Academic Staff Association. He made a major contribution to the securing of a site for the new college buildings in Belfield. Outside the university he was the Secretary of the Irish Peat Enquiry Committee from 1917-1919, Peat Investigation Officer to the Fuel Research Board from 1920-28. He served as Technical Adviser to the government in connection with peat development. In his own profession he was Hon. Sec., President and Hon. Treasurer of the Institute of Civil Engineers of Ireland. After retirement he continued to put at the disposal of the college authorities the accumulated wisdom and experience of his years, particularly in regard to sites and buildings. He was truly one of the principal makers of the new university college in Belfield. A keen golfer his name is perpetuated in the Annual Shield Competition which bears his name.

John J. Dowling

John Joseph Dowling was born on June 21, 1886, and came to St Mary's in 1895 at the age of nine. He was considered too young in 1898 for the Preparatory Grade examination, and when he was preparing for the 1900 exam he broke his arm and was unable to write. However, he more than made up for it in the Junior Grade in 1902 by gaining an Exhibition in Experimental Science. In the Middle Grade the following year he got honours in seven subjects and the medal for Experimental Science. In his Senior Grade in 1904 he got honours in eight subjects and went on after school to obtain an M.A. from the Royal University. When the National University of Ireland was established in 1908, he was a foundation-member of the Faculty of Science at UCD and became one of Ireland's foremost physicists.

During World War II he took charge of the Emergency Research Bureau, and later was a founder-member of the Institutue for Industrial Research and Standards. He was a Fellow of the Institute of Physicists and government nominee on the Governing Body of UCD. At his death in 1960, Prof. T. S. Wheeler stated: "Many generations of students have passed through his hands and many of them have distinguished themselves in the field of physics. He will long be remembered by his students and colleagues as a distinguished physicist and a fine professor".

Joseph O'Reilly

Joseph Reilly (the "O" came later in life) was born on September 3, 1889, and came to St Mary's early in the new century. He sat for the Middle Grade in 1906 and passed with flying colours, obtaining honours in seven subjects. The following year he did his Senior Grade, winning prizes in French and Chemistry. He went on to university, specialising in chemistry, and upon graduating, obtained a lectureship in his favourite subject in UCC, rising to full Professor of Chemistry. In 1940 he was awarded the coveted Boyle Medal from the Royal Dublin Society in recognition of his work in Organic Chemistry.

Colm Ó Lochlainn

William Gerald O'Loughlin came to St Mary's in September 1903, having been born on October 16, 1892. He passed his Preparatory Grade in 1906, his Junior Grade with honours in 1907, winning a 1st Class Exhibition and a prize for French Composition. He gained his Middle Grade in 1908 and was young enough to sit for it again in 1909 when he again won an Exhibition and a Prize, this time for English Composition. He sat for the Senior Grade in 1910, again gaining honours and a 1st Class Exhibition and a Medal, this time for 1st Place in Ireland for French. He obtained sixth place in Ireland in the Modern Literary Group. In that final year at school, he also won the Gold Medal (presented by Canon Anderson) for the Modern Literary Group in the school.

After school he went to UCD and graduated in Ancient Irish History. He became an assistant in the faculty of Modern Irish Literature. He was an outstanding scholar of Irish Language and Music and a noted Scots Gaelic scholar. He wrote a number of books on the subject.

He was also an authority on printing, publishing and typography, establishing his own printing company under The Sign of the Three Candles, which was noted for the high quality and artistic merit of its work. He was an accomplished pianist and singer of traditional Irish songs, which he had himself collected from all over the country.

Colm was also closely associated with the foundation of An Óige. He was one of the seventeen people who gathered in Newman House, St Stephen's Green, on May 7, 1931, under the chairmanship of Prof. Felix Hackett, to establish an Irish Youth Hostel Association. It was he who coined the name An Óige. He was a member of the first Executive Committee, and a Trustee and Patron for many years. For the first ten years of its existence, his own office in Fleet St was used as the An Óige office. He represented Ireland at the Inaugural International Youth Hostel Federation in 1932 and was the leading member of the Sub-Committee which designed the sign language which is used in Youth Hostels all over the world to overcome language barriers. He also designed the An Óige Handbook. His contribution to the theatre in Ireland is noted elsewhere in this book.

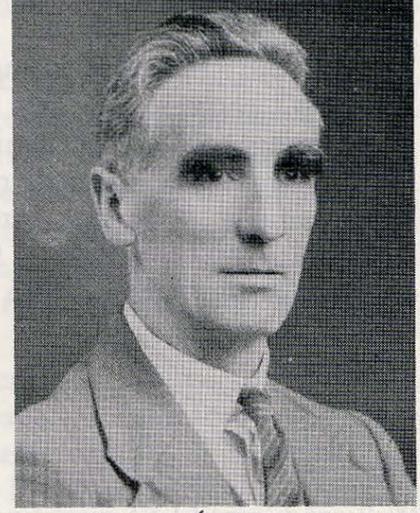
At UCD he was fully committed to the republican ideal of armed force to secure Ireland's freedom from Britain, siding with Eoin MacNeill in the Volunteer split with John Redmond, but, as an IRB member, siding with fellow-staffman at UCD, Thomas MacDonagh, against MacNeill over the 1916 Rising. It is claimed that he was instrumental in forging an alleged British Intelligence plan to suppress the Volunteers and arrest the leaders, which Pearse used as an excuse to alert the Volunteers to armed readiness, and thus have them prepared for the Easter Rising. He was pro-Treaty in 1922, but gradually seceded from active politics to pursue his academic and cultural life. He died in 1971 after a long illness.



Seamus Clandillon



Thomas J. Kiernan



Seamus Ó Braonáin

BROADCASTING

It is quite a coincidence that the first three Directors of Broadcasting in Ireland were all connected with St Mary's, Seamus Clandillon, Dr Tom Kiernan and Seamus Brennan.

Seamus Clandillon

Seamus Clandillon was on the staff of St Mary's in the early years of the century as a young man. As already mentioned, he was one of the many fine teachers of the Irish language employed by the school. Later he went into the Civil Service and became a Health Insurance Inspector. A native of Gort, county Galway, he became a well-known and popular singer of Irish ballads and the organiser of Feiseanna and concerts throughout Ireland. In November 1925 he was appointed first Director of the Broadcasting Station, 2RN, which was officially opened on January 1, 1926. Maurice Gorham, in his *Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting* says, "The first Director was a colourful character who left vivid memories of his nine years in broadcasting. It was a haphazard business, running a pioneer station and running it on a shoestring, and Clandillon was no bad choice for the job. He was an impulsive, exuberant character, and he tackled the task of launching a broadcasting service with the enthusiasm it needed if Ireland were to have a broadcasting service at all."

Dr Thomas J. Kiernan

Tom Kiernan came to St Mary's in 1904 at the age of 6½ years and stayed on to the Senior Grade, winning medals, distinctions and prizes every year. He won first-class Exhibitions in Junior and Middle Grade, with first place in Modern Languages in the latter. He won a university scholarship at his Senior Grade, and went on to a first-class Exhibition in Economics in his B.A. at UCD, and first-class honours in his M.A. He then went to London University and obtained his Doctorate in Philosophy. On his return to Ireland, he entered the Civil Service, rising to Inspector of Taxes in 1922. He was appointed Secretary to the High Commissioner in London in 1924 and filled that office until his appointment as Director of Broadcasting in 1935. He also became Extern Examiner for the NUI in Economics through Irish. Fr Martin O'Mahony, CSSp, had introduced him to Irish in St Mary's and encouraged him as well as a classmate, Colm O Lochlainn. Tom was not a blinkered swot at school. Under the tutelage of Fr J. J. O'Reilly, he blossomed into a very useful wing three-quarter at rugby.

Dr Tom was the author of three weighty tomes, *British War Finances & their Consequence* (1920), *A Study in National Finance* (1923), and *The Financial Administration*

of Ireland till 1817 (1930), as well as numerous articles in learned journals. He continued his diplomatic career as Minister to the Holy See during the war years, while Seamus Brennan, who had been his Assistant in Broadcasting, took over at Radio Eireann in 1941. From Rome Dr Kiernan went on to become ambassador in Australia, West Germany, Canada and the United States. He was married to one of Ireland's most popular ballad singers, Delia Murphy, whose "Three Lovely Lassies from Bannion", "The Spinning Wheel" and others, conjure up a whole era of Ireland as foreign to today's population as the time of Fionn MacCumhaill. He retired in 1964 and stayed on in the U.S. to administer the Irish-American Fund set up after President Kennedy's visit to Ireland in 1964. Other books by him are *The Irish Exiles in Australia*, a literary portrait of Pope Pius XII and an historic novel. He died in Dublin, December 1967.

Seamus Ó Braonáin

We are fortunate in having Seamus Brennan's own recollections of his schooldays, which he wrote for the 1963 College Annual. He was born in Durrow, county Laois, on January 21, 1881, and came to St Mary's in 1894, largely because of his family connection with the family of the President, Fr Fogarty. He was outstanding at school, academically and athletically. In his final year he was Captain of the School as well as Captain of Football. Because of their small numbers they were unable to enter a team in the Schools' Cup. They did enter a team the year after he left, 1899. He passed his Senior Grade in 1898 and entered the Civil Service, being posted to the National Education Office as it was then called until it became the Department of Education after 1922. He remained there until 1936 when he was appointed Secretary of the Commission on Irish in the Civil Service, which he held for four years before his appointment as assistant Director of Broadcasting to Dr Tom Kiernan, his fellow St Mary's man. He took over from Tom in 1941 as Director, and it was during his term that the Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra was formed. Seamus retired in 1947, but continued the lifelong interest he had in the Irish language, contributing articles to newspapers and magazines in Irish. But it was his prowess at games that many people will remember. On leaving school he played for the Blackrock Club as St Mary's did not have a Past Students Club then. That was 'Rock's last year as a junior club; the next year, 1899-1900, they went senior. In 1900 Old St Mary's RFC was founded, largely through the influence of the new President of the College, Dr. Edward Crehan, and Seamus was elected captain. He also gained a Cap in the first-ever Junior Interprovincial played that year against Ulster, the first of many St Mary's men to gain Interprovincial honours. The match was played in Belfast in a downpour and he recalls that the pitch became a quagmire making good play virtually impossible. The game ended fittingly in a scoreless draw. His fellow centre was a Trinity student named Frank Casement who became an International and was a relative of Roger Casement.

In 1901 Seamus joined the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League and became an enthusiastic advocate of all things Gaelic, the language and games. He stopped playing rugby and took up hurling and Gaelic football. He admits never becoming very good at hurling which one must start early in life, but he won four All-Ireland medals in football with Dublin, between 1903 and 1909, which makes him unique among the past pupils of the school, who have gained the top honours in many sports. And if that was not enough, he was a keen athlete and cyclist, a founder-member of Donabate Golf Club, a medal-winning Irish dancer at Feiseanna, and an accomplished actor. In his article in the College Annual he wrote:

I have never for a moment regretted the course I adopted in 1901, and I would not wish to change anything that happened since... and to cap it all, it was in the Keating Branch that I met my wife.

MEDICINE

Robert D. Joyce

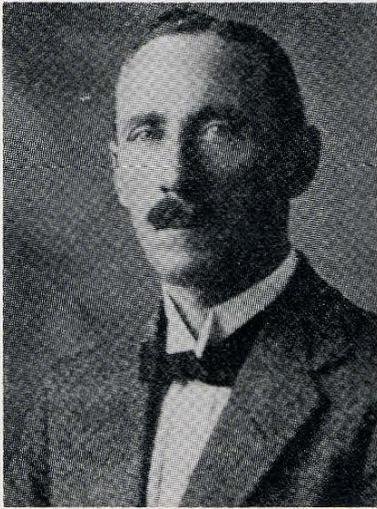
Robert Dwyer Joyce was the son of Partick Weston Joyce, *ma, lld, mria* who was the Commissioner for the Publication of Ancient Documents, a noted historian and the author of *Irish Place Names*, and lived at 71 Leinster Road. Robert's elder brothers, including Weston St. John Joyce, the author of the recently re-published *The Neighbourhood of Dublin*, and *Rambles Round Dublin*, had already finished school by the time St Mary's was opened in 1890, so only Robert arrived on that historic date. He was born in 1874, so he had only two years in St Mary's before finishing school, which made him one of our earliest past pupils. He went to the old Catholic University School of Medicine in Cecilia St, Dublin, and gained the London Conjoint Diploma in 1896. He was an outstanding student and won the Chancellor's Gold Medal in 1895. He was House Physician in the Mater Hospital before going to the Continent for post-graduate studies. He was assistant at the clinic of Fuchs in Vienna, followed by a similar post for Schwabe in Berlin. He remained a close friend of Fuchs all his life.

When he returned to Dublin he was admitted as FRCSI and became both Ophthalmic and Aural Surgeon in the Richmond, a combination of specialties incomprehensible to the modern mind. In 1917 he was appointed Ophthalmic Surgeon in the Mater and from then on devoted himself exclusively to that specialty. His record was outstanding and he contributed to a number of manuals and read papers at international congresses. He became Professor of Ophthalmology at UCD in 1935. The NUI conferred the *m.ch.* on him in 1941. He was a member of the Ophthalmology Society of the UK from 1901, and later became President of the Irish Society. When he retired from the university, he continued to work in the Mater until 1951 and in private practice until a few years before his death in 1959 at the age of 85.

In spite of the heavy work-load of surgery and study and writing, Robert found time for an active outdoor life. When he went to Europe for post-graduate work he discovered the joys and thrills of mountaineering and took to it like a chamois to the rocks. He was a member of the Swiss and French Alpine Clubs, probably the only Irishman to have that distinction. He took part in many notable climbs, including the Matterhorn, Jüngfrau and Mont Blanc, when climbing conditions were not as easy as now. He was also interested in the art of photography, then only in its infancy. He continued his mountaineering until well into his fifties, but after World War II he replaced it with walking, particularly in France. At home he walked in the Dublin hills and Wicklow mountains, a passion he shared with his brother, Weston, and it was not unusual for him to take an early walk in the hills, returning on the early workmen's tram, bathe, change and begin work before his colleagues had opened an eye. A few days before his death he took a 4-mile walk along the recently disused Harcourt St railway line to see if it had changed. At his death he had been ill only one day in his entire life.

James B. Magennis

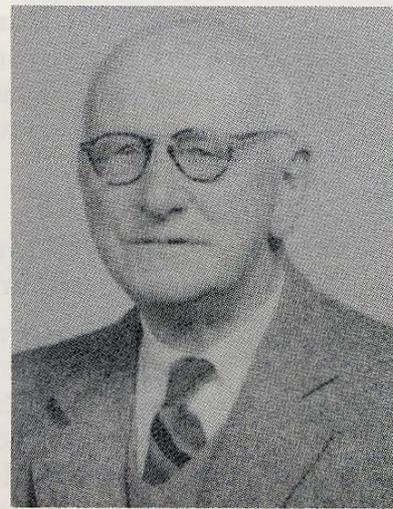
Jim Magennis was one of the most prominent members of the medical profession in his day, with a very distinguished record. Throughout his life he was a St Mary's man, following every activity of past and present with a lively and practical interest. He was the son of Dr Edward Magennis of Harcourt St and came to St Mary's in September 1900 with his elder brother, Edward, having been born on August 25, 1890, just a couple of weeks before the school opened for the first time. He had a brilliant academic record at school: an Exhibition in the Junior Grade in 1905 and again in 1906; a prize in the Middle Grade in 1907 and sixth place in Ireland in the Literary Group; another prize in Senior Grade in 1908 along with a scholarship to university.



Robert Joyce



Jim Magennis



Bernard Doyle

Jim Magennis was one of the first students to enter the newly established UCD and began an equally brilliant university career. He got 1st Class Honours in his MB, BCh and first place in his BSc and MA with 1st Honours, with a post-graduate scholarship to top it off. He was appointed Assistant Physician in St Vincent's Hospital some months later and rose to be Senior Physician.

Neither at school nor university had Jim been a swot. An outstanding gymnast, he was captain of the team that won the Irish Gymnastic Championships three times in succession. It was a sport at which he was supreme, winning fourteen medals at school. The stage held an enormous attraction for him too, and he appeared at school as Portia, Ophelia, Lady Macbeth and Hamlet at different times with great success. At UCD he was a member of every society in the college and a founder-member of the DRAMSOC (Dramatic Society). His career as an amateur actor is recounted elsewhere. He was a brilliant student of French and German, Hon. Sec. of the Legion Française and for three years Vice-President of the Deutsch Verein. In addition he was associated with the founding of the Students' Union and was an office-holder in the distinguished Literary & Historical Society which was the proving-ground for most of the great speakers and politicians of the new Irish State in 1922. During World War I he served with the French Red Cross at the battle of Verdun and was made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur for his work. His medical consultations took him all over the world, to Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Toulon, Italy and the US. The walls of his consulting rooms in Merrion Square were lined with mementoes of his travels. He indulged in the Sport of Kings and the blue-and-white of St Mary's were his racing colours when he won the Irish Caesarevitch with Galli-Galli in 1934.

Bernard Doyle

Bernard Doyle died in his 91st year in 1975, and may have been the longest-lived of our past students to date. He was born on August 21, 1884, and entered St Mary's in 1896. He got his Preparatory Grade in both 1897 and 1898; his Junior Grade in 1900; Middle Grade at the top of his class in 1901; Senior Grade, with honours in all subjects in 1902. He was an excellent rugby player, serving with distinction both at school and afterwards with Old St Mary's, with whom he won Junior Cup and League medals between 1907 and 1910. He qualified as a doctor in 1912 and went into general practice in the East End of London. He was in the Army Medical Corps during World War I, and in World War II he was Medical Officer for the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy. For his services to the Navy

and to the people of the East End, he was awarded the George Medal. On his retirement, the British Sailors' Society presented to him one of only two medals ever presented by that society. He remained in contact with the school all his life and took pleasure in declaring that he was the oldest surviving past student.

Joseph B. Maguire

Mention of Dr Bernard Doyle brings to mind another past student who chose the sea as the scene for his medical career.

Joseph Ballantyne Maguire was born in Belfast on August 12, 1898, the son of Dr D. J. Maguire, who moved with his family to Dublin and lived in Highfield Rd, Rathgar, which is how Joe came to St Mary's in 1912. He entered for the preparatory Grade in the following year but failed. All present pupils can take heart. He passed the following year and in 1915 did the Middle Grade and the matriculation which gave him entry to Trinity College where he took his medical degree. He served for a time in Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital (now closed), but for reasons of health decided to go to sea. He spent the rest of his life as medical officer aboard ships. He served on the SS Queen Elizabeth from the beginning to the end of her service as a troopship during World War II and then transferred to the Queen Mary on the Atlantic run, for eight years until his retirement in 1953, again because of ill health. In 1957 he published his best-selling account of his life at sea, especially on the two Queens, called *The Sea my Surgery*. He died in 1964.

ARCHITECTURE

Charles Powell

Charles B. Powell was born on November 3, 1881 and came to St Mary's in 1893 at the age of 12. He obtained his Junior Grade in 1896 and is listed as being in the college at least until June 1897. The records after that are a little sketchy for a while. He was a most religious person with a life-long devotion to the Mass which he attended every day of his life, and lived a very ascetic life. But he was by no means ostentatious in his piety. He was a talented musician and took part in all the school concerts and plays. He had a charming manner and in later life enjoyed the reputation of being a first class conversationalist and raconteur. After school he studied architecture and designed many beautiful buildings and was especially in demand for churches in both England and Ireland. Perhaps his best known work in Dublin is the extension to Mount Argus Church and the reconstruction of the Carmelite Church in Whitefriar St. He died in 1960, a distinguished architect and a Christian gentleman.

COMMERCE

J. J. Kerrigan

James Kerrigan was in St Mary's from 1905 to 1908. He was born on January 25, 1884. The only academic distinction he appears to have gained at school was a prize for Religious Knowledge in the Preparatory Grade 1907. He was a classmate of William Fanagan, Henry O'Neill, Henry Becker, Barry Browne, Nick Power and others. Like so many boys in those days he did not finish his secondary course, and he himself stated in an interview for *An Réalt* that classwork was not his forte. On leaving school he emigrated to the United States where like so many of our emigrants, he worked his way to the top by dint of hard work. The top for him was the presidency of one of the biggest pharmaceutical firms in the world, Merck & Co., the developers and manufacturers of the wonder drug, cortisone.

In the Summer of 1951 he was in Ireland to receive an Honorary LL.D. from the National



Joseph Maguire



J. J. Kerrigan



Gerald Kilduff

University in recognition of the supplies of cortisone his company had donated to the university for research purposes. He took the opportunity of visiting his alma mater to recall his days at school there. On his return to the US, he wrote an article for *An Réalt*, the short-lived college magazine of the '40s and '50s, which appeared in the Christmas 1951 issue.

William J. Fanagan

William J. Fanagan, founder of the Fanagan dynasty that has given four generations of Fanagans to St Mary's, so far, was born on September 15, 1895 and came to the college in 1904. He did his Presparatory Exam in 1907, along with J. J. Kerrigan, and left after a few years to finish in Clongowes. But his attachment to St Mary's was so great that not only did he retain an interest in everything to do with the college, past and present, but became President of the PPU. He was an active member of the Old St Mary's Rugby Club, playing like his son, Joe after him, at scrum-half. Founder of the funeral director's firm which bears his name, he built it into the largest in Ireland, a position it still holds. Another son, John, also became President of the Past Pupils Union.

Edward Tew

Eddie Tew was born in 1894 on September 21 and came to St Mary's in December 1903 as a very small boy. He got his Junior Grade in 1908, Middle Grade in 1909, and finished up in 1910. He went to study engineering, but at the outbreak of war in 1914 he joined up and fought as a 2nd Lieutenant in France. When the war ended he returned to Ireland and continued his engineering career, establishing his own precision engineering firm in Harold's Cross. He was a staunch member of the Past Pupils Union. Golf was his game and he became captain of the Castle GC. He was secretary of the Club when he died in 1964.

The Kilduffs

The Kilduff brothers were but one of many sets of brothers who attended St Mary's in those pre-closure days – the Dallaghans, Clarkes, Culhanes, Purcells, the Cussens, Cunninghams, Donovans, Kiernans, Neckers, Roddys, Smiths, Spadaccinis, Blundens, Tierneys, Bolands are just some of the many.

Gerald Kilduff was in St Mary's from 1909 and had reached Middle Grade before the college closed in 1916. In 1919, at the age of twenty, he emigrated to South America and did very well for himself, rising to be managing director of a large export firm in Rosario,

Argentina, in 1937. In 1948 he paid his first visit home in twenty years and seven years later retired to Ireland. He died in 1959.

Eddie was two years older than Gerry, having been born in 1898. He got his Preparatory Grade exam with honours in 1911. He was a keen sportsman and while his first love was golf, he excelled at all games. He was full-back on the JCT in 1912 and the SCT in 1914. After school he gained many honours at golf. He joined Milltown GC in 1914 on leaving school and was a scratch player in 1926; captain in 1927; winner of the Lumsden Cup in 1927 and 1935; an International in 1928. Of course, this was all a side-line for him. His real occupation was the Stock Exchange of which he was member for 35 years. He died in 1965.

The Faulkners

The Faulkners, Alfred, Charles and Joseph were another family at St Mary's at the turn of the century. Alfred was born in 1886 and came in 1899. He played on all the school rugby teams and kept up his interest after school by joining Old St Mary's, with whom he won a Junior League medal in 1907. He remained a keen sportsman all his life, with interests in golf, yachting and tennis. The family business was paper-making, and he became managing director of P. Faulkners & Sons, Ltd, founded in 1860 by his grandfather, the oldest paper firm in Ireland. He was a past chairman of the Irish Paper Trade Association, and a committee member for twenty-five years. He was President of the St Mary's Past Pupils Union, and until his death in 1964 was keenly interested in all the union's affairs and attended every function.

BANKING

Merely to list all the past pupils who entered on a career in the banking business would fill pages. We pick a few at random.

P. J. O'Grady

P. J. O'Grady was born in Dublin in 1891 and came to St Mary's early in the new century. He played on the SCT in 1911 and 1912, and when he left he joined the Old St Mary's Club. He was also a keen cricketer. He joined the Bank of Ireland and had the usual succession of posts in different parts of the country, ending up as Manager of the St Patrick's Bridge Branch in Cork city, from which he retired in 1952 because of ill health.



Alfred Faulkner



William Fanagan



Robert J. Kinahan

He was keenly interested in the Irish Bank Officials Association from its earliest years. He was the bank's representative on the Executive Committee, and was Hon. Sec. of the Association for many years. After his retirement he took on the onerous duty of secretary of the Distressed Pensioners, whose welfare he always had at heart. When posted away from Dublin he was unable to attend many of the college and club matches, but cherished the annual trips to Lansdowne Road for the Internationals. When he retired he was able to give free rein to this interest and could be found on the touchline at games in every grade, past and present, a constructive critic, whose assessments could always be trusted. He died in 1965.

The Blundens

The Blundens spanned the closure of the College. The earlier generation of William, Maurice and Jack was followed after the re-opening in 1926 by Niall, William's son. William attended from 1904 to 1908 and was an outstanding student and sportsman. He was an Exhibitioner in Mathematics twice, once gaining 1st Place in Ireland, a tribute to his teacher for a time, Eamon de Valera. He graduated from UCD in 1912 and entered the Civil Service, rising to Principal Officer in the Department of Defence. He was on the SCT in 1908 and later played for the Club. He was on the 1911-12 Old St Mary's team that went senior that year. A keen golfer, he was captain of the Castle GC, and also President of the PPU.

Maurice Blunden came to St Mary's in 1911 and distinguished himself in the classroom and on the playing fields at both rugby and tennis. Although too young for any of the school representative teams before the school closed in 1916, he showed his prowess when he went to Blackrock College and played on the JCT in 1917. He left school in 1920 and joined the Hibernian Bank in College Green, rising through the ranks until becoming chief cashier ten years before his death in 1962. He played rugby for Palmerston RFC in the absence of the St Mary's Club which was not revived until 1932, and then played some time with Blackrock RFC until injury forced his retirement from active playing. He then turned to tennis in earnest, having played only desultorily until then. A member of Templeogue LTC, he played on their 1st team for a number of years and was an active member of the club committee.

LAW

Robert J. Kinahan

Bob Kinahan was an all-rounder, a born leader, intelligent, skilled rugby and cricket player, orator, raconteur and wit. At school he was captain of the cricket XI, figured prominently at rugby and gymnastics and cycling and dramatics. Born on March 24, 1881, he came to St Mary's in September 1892 and passed the Preparatory Grade in 1893. He did Junior Grade in 1895 and 1896, passing each time. Along with Jim Brennan he passed Middle Grade in 1897 and they were the only two who did Senior Grade in 1898, when Robert won a Medal and an Exhibition. After school, Jim Brennan went into the Civil Service as we have seen, but Bob went on to university, attending University College, St Stephen's Green, where he had a distinguished academic career. He afterwards dismissed his university career briefly: "I read my course, I played my games".

Then as now, the most prestigious society in the university was the L & H (Literary & Historical Society), the proving ground for generations of undergraduates intending to pursue careers in law or politics. In the academic year of 1901-02, Robert allowed himself to be persuaded by his friends to go up against William Dawson for the office of Auditor of the society. He won by a sizeable majority in a major upset. He chose socialism as the subject of his inaugural address, during which the chairman, the Honourable Tim Harrington, Lord Mayor of Dublin, caused a near riot by a too rigid insistence on

ORDER. A contemporary, Eugene Sheehy, stated that "Kinahan was a clever and witty debater . . . loved to use high-sounding and unusual words. In his address on socialism he introduced the word proletariat and I and many other students had to consult our dictionaries to find out what he meant". (*Centenary History: L & H*). He won the Gold Medal for Oratory that year. The calibre of the opposition he encountered in that election is seen in the committee elected to serve with him: Hugh Kennedy (later S.C. and first Attorney-General of the Free State); Arthur Clery (Professor); J. Murnaghan (High Court Justice); John Marcus O'Sullivan (Professor, Minister for Education).

Robert was called to the Bar in 1906 and was attached to the Leinster Circuit, taking silk in 1917. A contemporary, Thomas Bacon, said of him: "Before his untimely death in 1921, Bobby Kinahan had become one of the most colourful and popular members of the Leinster Circuit". A unique performance was his appearance on the same day before the County Court Judges of Wexford, Waterford and Tipperary in their respective bailiwicks. He was a very successful defence Counsel.

After school Bob continued to excel at games, playing for the Old St Mary's Club and winning a medal in that first Junior Cup win in 1905. He was even more outstanding as a cricketer, graduating from junior cricket with St Mary's to senior cricket with Leinster CC.

John A. Ronayne

Another St Mary's man, John Ronayne, was Auditor of the L & H in 1911-12. Born in 1887, he came to St Mary's in 1900. On leaving school he joined Old St Mary's and played for a number of seasons and was on the 1st XV when the club went senior in 1911-12. John was described as 'a highly skilful demagogue'. He seceded from the L & H in the row in 1906 when the president of the college sought to curb the policies of the society. Incidentally, it was a row in which John was opposed by Rory O'Connor, the arch-republican, who sided with the president. John returned to the society in 1907, but in 1908 the College Council declared that he was still 'disqualified'. But in 1910 he was received back, Dr Coffey, the president, stating that he had no objection. The other candidate for the Auditorship in 1911-12 was Patrick Gilligan, who was to go on to a brilliant political career in the Cosgrave Government as Minister for Finance. As his inaugural address John chose "Dawn on the Hills of Ireland". The theme was Home Rule. John's secretary in the society was John A. Costello, the future Irish Taoiseach. Arthur Cox, the brilliant barrister, said that John was ". . . a personality. He was an excellent speaker and debater, he gave great promise of a high career at the Bar but his forte was in the politics of the Society. He had a genius for party management". (*Centenary History: L & H*).

John Ronayne was one of the speakers at the monster Home Rule rally in O'Connell St in 1912 and one of the most dramatic moments came when he denounced the Union Jack flag which had been hoisted over the offices of a newspaper in Carlisle Building. He was called to the Bar in 1909 and practised on the Munster circuit. It was the general consensus that but for his untimely death in the great 'flu epidemic of 1918 he would have had a great career at the Bar or in politics.

John Farrell

John Farrell was born on the 12th of July, 1900 and came to St Mary's in 1913, did his Preparatory Grade in 1914 and the Junior Grade in 1915 and 1916, obtaining honours the second time round. When the college closed in 1916 his parents sent him to Belvedere where he finished his schooling in company with Kevin Barry and a score or more of ex-St Mary's boys. He went to UCD in 1918 and was elected Auditor of the L & H in 1919-20. Once again, the calibre of the man is shown in the Committee elected to serve with him, including Sean MacBride and James Dillon, both Ministers in the Inter-Party

Government of John A. Costello. The *Centenary History of the L & H* states: "Having regard for the difficulties of his period in office, considerable credit is due to Farrell and the members of the Society that it was kept going as a live body with something of a parliamentary tradition in its procedure". He studied law and was called to the Bar in 1921. He was appointed a District Justice in 1943.

CIVIL SERVICE

Patrick J. Laracy

A civil servant may well have been the tallest boy St Mary's ever had. Pat Laracy stood 6ft 7in tall. He was born on April 2, 1882 and came to St Mary's in 1896, where he gained Exhibitions in Junior Grade in 1898 and his Senior Grade the following year. He entered the civil service in 1901. In the First World War he was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant in the Royal Irish Regiment and wounded on active duty on the Somme, losing a leg. On his discharge he was awarded the MBE (Military Division) and returned to the civil service where he rose to assistant chief accountant at the Post Office. His height alone made him a noted figure, but he was a chess player of distinction, being Leinster champion in 1927 and reaching the final of the national championships many times. He died in 1960.

Gerald Condell

All the time he was in St Mary's (1898-1905) Gerry Condell led his class in most subjects, obtaining his Preparatory Grade in 1902, Junior in 1903, Middle in 1904. In his final year, in which he did his Senior Grade, he won the College Good Conduct Gold Medal as well as the Gold Medal for Oratory and a medal for Christian Doctrine. On leaving school he entered the civil service in the revenue commissioner's department, rising to higher executive officer in Dublin Castle. He was a keen past student, interested in every aspect of college life. Every year he donated a silver cup, a replica of the O'Hart Perpetual Challenge Cup, for High Jump Championships at the College Sports. He was a past President of the College Union. He died in 1961.

Francis Brickell, MBE

When we read of St Mary's men leaving school and entering the civil service, we are inclined to forget that in the pre-1916 days that meant the British civil service. Seamus Brennan in 1899 and Tom Kiernan in 1919 entered the very same service as Frank Brickell, but they ended up in the civil service of the Irish Free State, Frank ended up in the diplomatic service of Gt. Britain. His career is summed up as follows in *Who's Who*:

Brickell, Daniel Francis Horseman, O.B.E. (MBE 1929)

b. 4 Sept. 1893. m. 1924 Mary Elizabeth Sherlock.

educ. St. Mary's College, Rathmines. Passed C. S. Exam

and appointed Estate Duty Office 1913, Foreign Office

1914. 2nd. Lt. RFC 1917. Vice-consul Levant Consular

Service 1923; served at Istanbul, Smyrna, Cairo, Suez,

Athens, New York; Consul at Basra, 1936; Rouen 1940

Minister to Paraguay 1940-43; 1st. Sec. and Consul, Montevideo 1944;

Consul-General Detroit, USA 1945-49;

Minister at San Salvador, 1949-50; Consul-General at

Ahwaz, 1950; Philadelphia 1951-53. Retired 1953.

Grand Officer Paraguayan Order of Merit.

Recreation, golf.



Patrick J. Laracy



Gerald Condell



Francis Brickell

To this we would have to add that he was in St Mary's from 1900 till 1909, where he distinguished himself both on the football field, as centre on the SCT, and the classroom, as medallist in the Literary Course, Junior Grade, and Special Prize for English Composition, 1908. In the College Annual of 1961 he wrote an article on his Forty Years in the Foreign Service.

SPORT

Dr Paddy Roddy

The first St Mary's man to don the green jersey of Ireland in an international rugby match was Dr Paddy Roddy. He was born on April 28, 1897, and came to St Mary's in 1910 at the age of 13, following in the footsteps of his brother, Michael. He passed his Junior Grade in 1912 and did the Middle Grade the following year. On leaving school he went to College of Surgeons and qualified as a doctor in 1920. He then spent four years in Manchester and Bristol before returning to Ireland to take up the position of House Surgeon in Mercer's and the Royal Eye and Ear, specialising as an Oto-rhino-laryncologist after studies in Vienna, London and Berlin. He became consultant at the Royal Eye and Ear as well as St. Michael's, Dun Laoghaire.

Paddy was a noted athlete in his younger days. He captained the school at rugby and cricket, and was awarded two Interprovincial caps at full-back in his last year, against Ulster and Munster. After leaving school he played for Bective Rangers and was capped as centre twice in 1920, against Scotland and France. Injury kept him out of the team that played Wales. His opportunity came when the Irish centre, Cullen, had to cry off because of injury and Paddy needed no second urging. The papers stated: "Roddy made a successful début in International football and throughout played with much cleverness. He kicked well and made many good runs". "A clever intercept by Roddy saw the Bective centre pass to Wallis who had a good run before being brought down". The Scottish forwards dominated up front and Scotland won 19-0.

Dr Roddy's medical career took precedence over his sporting activity for some years, but later he took an interest in squash and was runner-up to Arthur Hamilton in the Irish

Championships. He was a keen member of Fitzwilliam Tennis Club and of Portmarnock and Elm Park golf clubs. He died in 1967.

Joseph Aloysius Baptist Clarke

Joe Clarke was born to a well-known business family, owners of the Eagle House, in Dundrum, county Dublin, on August 19, 1896. He came to St Mary's in September 1909 and excelled at games, naturally, but did not neglect his studies. He did Junior Grade (the equivalent of Inter Cert) in 1912 and 1913. In those days boys often did the Matriculation after the Inter and left school to go on to Third Level. Joe left St Mary's in 1914 and went to the College of Surgeons where he qualified as a dentist, a profession he practised in Dundrum for the rest of his life. He never married.

As was customary even in those days just as today, Joe played for his university after leaving school, but after he qualified, like many other St Mary's men in the years after the closure of the Old St Mary's RFC in 1916, he gravitated to Bective Rangers, a club which, since the days of Fr J. J. O'Reilly, CSSp, who had played for them in the 1890s when he was a prefect in St Mary's, had close ties with the college. There he struck up a mid-field partnership with former schoolmates, Paddy Roddy as out-half and Charlie Culhane as centre, at both club and Interprovincial level.

Joe came into prominence in the final Irish Trial in January 1922 in which he played for the Possibles, but was not picked for the game against England, in which Ireland were beaten 12-3. However, Joe got his chance when Cunningham cried off before the Scottish match. Joe needed no second invitation when his chance came. He took it as a good scrum-half should, with both hands. The *Freeman's Journal* said:

Clarke's bull-dog defence marked him early as an outstanding player . . .
Clarke's début was a most pronounced success and his play was the feature of the Irish side.

Clarke's try was the only Irish score and Scotland won 6-3. But Joe had done enough to retain his place on the team to play Wales. Ireland beat France at home to round off the season and Joe did enough to ensure consideration for the following season. However, it was not enough to satisfy the selectors who reverted to their earlier preference for Cunningham in the first three matches. But Joe was picked for the match against France. After the match the papers said:



Paddy Roddy



Joseph B. Clarke

Clarke was quite a success at the base of the scrum and filled that position in a more creditable manner than any of his predecessors this season.

Joe continued to play well during the 1923-24 season for his club and his province. He played what the papers called "a plucky game" in the game against Ulster, after which the teams for the final Irish Trial were picked and Joe was chosen for the scrum-half position on the Probables, but did not make the Ireland team. Scotland won that first match, 13-8, and when the team to play England was published Joe was back in favour and did well. Although England won 14-3,

Clarke at scrumhalf was the success of the back division. Very smart round the scrum, the Bective man went down to every rush and frequently took part in rushes with the forwards. He, as usual, tackled in great fashion and all round played his best international.

Clarke held onto his place for the Scottish match after this sterling display. It was a good display by Ireland although they lost 13-8. Inability to turn superiority into points was the problem. It was no great surprise when the selectors dropped Clarke after this game, but Providence was on his side and in the absence of McDowell through injury, he was chosen for the game with Wales. In the view of Edmund van Esbeck (*The Story of Irish Rugby*), this was really the turning point in Irish Rugby. It was a great day for the Irish. For the first time in twenty-five years they were victorious on Welsh soil, winning 13-10.

It was the back division that won the day. They were cleverer and faster and let no scoring opportunity pass.

Freeman's Journal

The back division that day comprised Ernie Crawford, Tom Hewitt, George Stephenson, J. B. Gardiner, Harry Stephenson, Frank Hewitt and Joe Clarke. Within 15 mins Tom Hewitt celebrated his arrival by scoring a great try which Crawford converted. Even better was to follow:

... a long pass from Clarke inside his own 25 put Harry Stephenson through and the wing-threequarter raced to the Welsh 25 where he passed to Tom Hewitt who returned the pass immediately and Stephenson raced behind the posts.

Freeman's Journal

8-3 at the interval seemed to augur an easy victory for Ireland especially with Frank Hewitt playing so well and Ireland applied the pressure from the resumption. However, their efforts were not rewarded and Wales replied with a drop-goal (4 pts). The Welsh crowd were in full cry for victory but there was surprise in store for them, in the words of van Esbeck: "About 20 minutes before the final whistle, Frank Hewitt received a perfect pass from his scrum-half Joe Clarke and proceeded to make a magnificent run. He beat Griffiths, one of the Welsh half-backs, sold two glorious dummies before crossing for a gem of a try beside the posts ... a milestone in the history of Irish rugby, for it marked the turning point in Ireland's international fortunes".

Clarke worked the scrums splendidly and was better than in any other match this season.

Freeman's Journal

It was a glorious way for Joe Clarke to end his international career. It was no dishonour for Joe to be succeeded by one of the greatest of Irish scrum-halves, Mark Sugden, who went on to win 28 caps, to be the most capped scrumhalf ever for Ireland.

AVIATION

Reference has already been made to the two Russell brothers who became priests, Francis and Edwin. Two more were closely connected with the founding and early years of aviation in Ireland. Charles joined the Royal Flying Corps on leaving school and saw service in France during the Great War. After the war he went to Canada and was in Canada when he was contacted by a fellow-St Mary's man, Sean Dowling, a member of the IRA Executive, to carry out a mission. This was to go to Britain, posing as a Canadian interested in buying an airplane on behalf of the Canadian Forestry. Charles at once answered the call and, with Jack McSweeney, another ex-RFC pilot, proceeded to England where they bought a ten-seater Martinsyde Type A Mark 2 in November 1921. This was flight-tested and brought to Croydon aerodrome and kept in readiness in case the Treaty failed and it became necessary to make a hasty departure for Ireland or France – there was a £10,000 reward out for Michael Collins at the time. When the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in December 1921, the plane was crated and shipped back to Ireland to become the first plane of the Irish Air Force. Later in December 1921, the new Government decided to set up an Irish Aviation Department, based in Beggars' Bush Barracks, Haddington Road. This led to the formation in April 1922 of the Irish Free State Air Corps, based in Baldonnel with McSweeney as O/C and Charles Russell second-in-command. Overnight the two civilians became Major-Generals! At the same time, Charles was appointed Director of Civil Aviation. During the Civil War which followed the signing of the Treaty, Charles was put in charge of a special Corps called Railway Protection, Repair and Maintenance. He had a couple of armoured trains constructed in the Inchicore railyards, and with these it was possible for the repair crews to travel about the country to repair tracks and bridges blown up by the Anti-Treaty forces. In 1924 occurred the Curragh Mutiny, when many senior officers withdrew their services in protest against alleged failure of the government to implement certain promises made at the end of the Civil War. Lt.-Gen. McSweeney was one of them and he resigned from the Air Corps. Charlie Russell succeeded him as O/C. In 1926 the idea of making the first East/West crossing of the Atlantic was mooted. Ever since Alcock and Brown had made the first West/East crossing in 1919, landing in Clifden, county Galway, every flier wanted to do the opposite trip. The Irish Government sponsored the attempt and Commandant Fitzmaurice was chosen as navigator. The pilots were to be the experienced German pilots, Kohl and von Huenefeld. Russell was to be the reserve pilot for the enterprise. In 1927 Charles, disillusioned by the lack of development of the Air Corps, applied to be seconded to the Department of Civil Aviation but the application was refused.

Charlie's younger brother, Arthur, followed him into the Irish Air Corps, but did not match his elder brother's skill or good fortune in obtaining instant promotion. In fact, Arthur's career as a flier was marked with a series of unfortunate accidents, culminating in his death in an air crash in 1934. Previously to this fatal crash, Arthur had managed to damage four airplanes in crashes, two in 1925 and two in 1927. In the official enquiries that followed these accidents, it was stated that in all but one of these incidents, Lt Russell was the victim of bad luck rather than recklessness or lack of ability. In the final and fatal incident, Arthur had gone up on a routine flight from Baldonnel in a Fairey 111 biplane with two volunteer passengers, Pte. Denis Twomey and Sgt. Leo Corcoran as ballast. When the plane was flying over Rathgar it began to lose height and the engine to misfire. It crashed into a tree in the front garden of No. 31, Terenure Road. E. Arthur and Denis Twomey were killed, Leo Corcoran was injured but survived. Fr Cyril Byrne was travelling home from Presentation School, Terenure, on the top of an open No.15 tram at the very moment the plane crashed not 100 yards in front of them, little knowing that the pilot was a past student of the school Fr Cyril was soon to enter. When the Irish Aero



Charles Russell



Lorcan S. Gogan

Club, founded in 1917, revived after the war in 1928, Air Corps personnel were involved as instructors and Arthur supervised the training of famous author and surgeon, Oliver St John Gogarty, who penned the following lines after Arthur's death:

He had the kind and langorous air
Of gentle knights detached from fear;
And he was quiet in his ways,
He who could set the heavens ablaze
And overtake the setting sun
With speed and soar into his throne.
If modesty clothes bravery,
If gentleness activity;
If earth has ever been the pen
Of heaven-aspiring denizen,
Then Arthur comes into his own,
From lowly things released and flown,
And stands for that haut chivalry
Which scorns the world and scales the sky;
So death, which no brave spirit harms,
Let him pass out retaining arms.

A third St Mary's man, related to the Russells by marriage, Lorcan S. Gogan, joined the newly formed Irish Air Force when it was inaugurated in 1922 and spent seven years in the Force before returning to civilian life. A member of the extended Gogan family which we have already met, Lorcan was an active member of the past pupils union all his life and a generous supporter of the college and Union. He was President of the PPU in the '60s and his name is perpetuated in the annual Lorcan S. Gogan Debate between the union and the college.

Chapter Nine

Closure: 1916-1926

THE PROBLEM of supplying personnel for all the colleges the Holy Ghost Fathers were running in Ireland – three lay secondary schools in Blackrock, Rockwell and St. Mary's, and two religious juniorates in Blackrock and Rockwell – was a continuing one because of the demands of the Missions which were the Congregation's primary work. The phenomenal success of the missionary work in Southern Nigeria under Bishop Joseph Shanahan, as well as the successes in Kenya and Sierra Leone, all of which had been confided to the Irish Province of the Congregation, was making great demands on the existing personnel, and as we have already seen, there were many who felt that three secondary schools were far too much for the Congregation to be staffing, especially when one of them had produced only two Holy Ghost vocations in twenty-five years. The primary reason for coming to Ireland in the first place had been the search for vocations. Any means which failed in that purpose was expendable. It might have been argued, and probably was, that simply being there may well have been a stimulant to vocations in young people who did not attend the school, but such an unquantifiable factor hardly carried much weight in face of the insistent demands for men from the banks of the lordly Niger. What brought the matter to a head was the Great War which isolated Ireland from the continent of Europe and cut the Irish Province off from regular contact with France. It also cut Ireland off from the houses of study to which the Irish students had gone for their philosophical and theological studies. It became necessary to find a house in Ireland where some of these students could pursue those studies without fear of being conscripted into the army, as all seminarians were in France and Germany. The Theology students were housed in Kimmage Manor (bought in 1911), together with the Novices. A house was then needed for the Philosophy students, and in particular, those attending university. St. Mary's was the logical answer: it needed little alteration to adapt it; it was within easy walking distance of Earlsfort Terrace, the site of UCD; it would release staff needed elsewhere; and finally it would rid the Province, and the Congregation, of a mounting debt which had hung like an albatross round its neck almost from day one. No. 28 of the General Bulletin published in Paris in 1917 puts the reasons for the closure more succinctly and more diplomatically:

For some years now the suppression of the Rathmines College seemed to be forced upon us as it did not realise the purpose for which it was founded . . . It was difficult to maintain, and absorbed personnel needed elsewhere. Its closure . . . was announced on July 24, 1916, by Very Rev. C. O'Shea, Provincial Superior of Ireland.

The following year came the announcement:

The Mother House, at the request of the Provincial Council of Ireland, has authorised the siting of the Scholasticate of Philosophy in St. Mary's

College, Rathmines. This will comprise for the present 20 philosophers, who are following courses at the university.

The reaction of the parents of boys who now found that they had to find another school for their children, has not been adequately recorded, nor the reaction of the local populace or the local clergy. We do have an inkling in the statement in the Bulletin in 1920, "From all sides there were objections at first: how could a district where Catholics did not have a secondary school and where Protestants retained some, be abandoned? But after some weeks they were convinced that it was impossible to continue the project, and contented themselves with the desire that the Holy Ghost Fathers would not abandon the house."

At the same time, it cannot have come as any great surprise to anyone when the closure did come. For years the possibility had been in the air. From 1906 the correspondence between Paris and Rathmines is peppered with queries about that possibility – Could it not be abandoned? Do you still intend to keep it open? (1906); Could it not be turned into a hostel for the university? (1911); Could the scholastics not be housed there? (1912); The debt mounts, it cannot go on (1913); Would the Christian Brothers not be interested? (1914); What about the Jesuits? (1915); A decision will be given before the end of the academic year, meanwhile try to recover all debts (1916). Even though the general public, and the parents, were not privy to this correspondence, the general tone of the attitude of the authorities in Paris must have leaked to the local clergy and at least some of the parents and past students over the years.

During the year between the closure of the school and its designation as a House of Studies, efforts were made to sell the property, but no one seemed interested. For a while the Irish Bishops considered it for use as a university hostel, but the price proposed by them did not cover one third of the debt contracted in buying the property and extending it. Meanwhile, Kimmage had become unbearably congested with novices, theologians and philosophers all crowded together – about fifty together with their respective staffs.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The departure of the philosophers to Rathmines gave the necessary relief. However, the faculty of philosophy was just one of three categories who now inhabited St. Mary's. Since the foundation of Blackrock College in 1860, the Provincial Administration of the Congregation in Ireland had its headquarters there. It was decided now to move it



John T. Murphy, CSSp.



John Charles McQuaid, CSSp.



Cornelius O'Shea, CSSp.

completely to Rathmines. In July 1917, immediately after the decision of the General Council, the Provincial Superior, Very Rev. Fr Cornelius O'Shea, together with the Second Assistant, Fr Laurence Healy, and the Provincial Bursar, Fr John Stafford, came to St Mary's, which then became the official headquarters of the Holy Ghost Congregation in Ireland.

HOUSE OF PHILOSOPHY

As soon as the necessary adaptations could be made, and they involved the turning of classrooms into dormitories, dining hall and study hall, about 20 philosophy students who were attending the university, and up to to this had had to cycle the 4 km. from Kimmage every day, were installed as the second student body to occupy St. Mary's. They were accompanied by a Director, Fr Edward Leen, and an Assistant, Fr Patrick Heery, whose brother Charles would later succeed Bishop Shanahan as Bishop of Southern Nigeria. The university courses were supplemented by classes given by Fr Leen and Fr Heery; and it is to their work principally, as the Bulletin says, that the scholastics' success in the university examinations should be attributed.

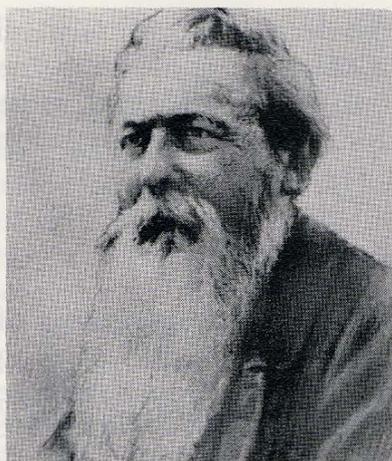
Fr Leen, already a B.A.Hons. from UCD, and a Doctor of Theology from Rome, presented himself for an M.A. Hons., possibly the most difficult examination in the university, and passed brilliantly, his thesis provoking the admiration of the examiners themselves. Two scholastics, Daniel Murphy and John Charles McQuaid, also took the M.A. with Honours, and in general one can say that our scholastics have gained more success than the students of any other seminary or college in the city.

Ill health forced Fr Leen to stop all work in 1919, and doctor's orders found him for a time breathing his native Abbeyfeale air, followed by a sojourn in Rockwell which completely rehabilitated him. A cherished dream was then fulfilled when he was appointed to Southern Nigeria, on loan for two years, where he threw himself into the work of the Missions with characteristic zeal. On his return to Ireland he went to Blackrock as Dean of Studies, and became a major figure in the Irish education scene. His subsequent career as a spiritual writer, lecturer and spiritual director, needs no elaboration here. He was a giant in the field for more than twenty-five years, until his death in 1946. He was succeeded as director of philosophers by Fr Heery, with Fr Denis Fahey as assistant.

The two M.A. students just mentioned were, of course, the future Archbishop of Dublin, Dr John Charles McQuaid, and the future Provincial Superior, Dr Dan Murphy, whose fourteen years of enlightened guidance built up the Irish Province, both numerically and academically. Fr Denis Fahey had taught in Kimmage when the House of Theology began there just before the war, and when the House of Philosophy moved from St Mary's in 1926 to the Castle in Blackrock and later in 1938 to the newly extended Kimmage Manor, Fr Fahey went with it and spent his entire life teaching philosophy and writing well known books on social questions.

PROPAGANDA

The third category occupying St Mary's was the team engaged in propaganda in aid of the missions. This project was begun by Fr Ebenrecht of Blackrock – we have encountered him as one of the signatories of the mortgage taken out on Castle Dawson in order to obtain the loan with which Larkhill was purchased – who was one of the pioneers in the development of Blackrock, and, indeed, of the Irish Province. In 1898 Archbishop Le Roy, the Superior



Archbishop Le Roy
Superior General



Edward Leen, CSSp



Thomas Pembroke, CSSp

General, visited all the houses in Ireland and as a result of what he saw, he decided that a special Work should be established with the specific purpose of making the people of Ireland aware of the foreign missions and their need of prayers, funds and personnel. A house adjoining Blackrock, Clareville, was bought, and a community, completely separate from the educational work, was established with Fr Ebenrecht as Superior, with Frs Con O'Shea and Hyland, and one scholastic/prefect, Mr Thomas Carey. Fr Hyland became the first Director in Ireland of the Holy Childhood, a post held by a Holy Ghost Father down through the years, and held today by Fr Seamus Galvin. The Provincial Administration also moved to Clareville from Blackrock College. The work of the Propaganda Team, sometimes known as the Mission Band, consisted in giving missions, lectures, lantern slides in parishes the length and breadth of the country, bringing home to the people the work being done on the mission fields by Irish priests, brothers and sisters, and how they could contribute to that work by their prayers, donations and the fostering of vocations. The people of God in Ireland owe an incalculable debt to the heroic and unsung work of these tireless, selfless men, who for months on end travelled the highways and byways, summer and winter, standing in draughty parochial halls, sleeping in often unaired spare rooms in parochial houses, in order to bring an awareness of the Church's work beyond our shores that produced a crop of missionaries paralleled only by the Irish church of the seventh and eighth centuries. And it is a work that has continued down to our own day, and is still continued by that same breed of dedicated men.

When the Provincial Administration moved from Clareville in 1917, the Mission Band moved with them to St Mary's. At this time, Fr Thomas Pembroke, whom we have already met as Dean of Discipline in St. Mary's in the 1890s and as responsible for the change in the front avenue which allowed for the levelling of the front field, and also for the funding of that project by the "Bazaar" in 1898, was in charge of the African Missions project. Every week he used advertisements in magazines to request items that could be of use to missionaries: church furnishing, chalices, monstrances etc. In the last year of his life, he realised more than 25,000 Frs in silver, just by his own work. He died on board ship, travelling to England, in 1919 at the early age of 54. But before his death he had conceived an idea which was to bear fruit for long after his departure. Thinking of what the Columban Fathers had accomplished with their *Far East* magazine, he dreamed of publishing, twice a year, perhaps, a magazine in the form of a review of our Missions in Africa, which would give news of our Irish missionaries and details of their work. He only just survived to see the first number of the Holy Ghost Fathers' *Missionary Annals*, which was to become, and still remains, the organ round which all propaganda and fund-raising is centred, and is today edited by a past student of St Mary's, Fr Brian Gogan.

Fr Michael Meagher, former missionary in Sierra Leone, was called from Rockwell to take Fr Pembroke's place, in spite of his uncertain health. The editing and the administration of *The Missionary Annals* often exceeded the powers of one man, because from December 1919, the magazine was published every month instead of just twice a year as originally intended, with a printing of 6,000 a month. Fr James Dowling, also a former missionary in Sierra Leone, and a former prefect in St Mary's, was appointed as an assistant. We shall find him later on the staff when St Mary's re-opened as a secondary school. Among the results obtained by this fund-raising and awareness-raising, we might mention bursaries to the value of £600 each for the upkeep of aspiring missionaries, and sums of money, small and great, from all corners of the country, from schoolchildren, priests and people, intended for the African Missions. Besides the work on the magazine, the lectures, lantern slides, recruiting drives were continued with the aid of the staff members of the scholasticates whenever they could make themselves available.

EASTER WEEK 1916

By far the most important event to occur during the ten years of the closure of St Mary's was the 1916 Rising at Easter Week. The following contains the report sent by the Irish Provincial, Fr John T. Murphy, to the Mother House:

THE REVOLT OF THE SINN FÉINERS IN DUBLIN

The news, so unexpected, of the recent attempted insurrection in Ireland has alarmed some of our confreres. We ourselves, in Paris, have remained fifteen days without receiving a letter from Ireland. Finally, on that date, May 16, Very Rev, Fr. J. T. Murphy, Provincial, was able to write: "We have not suffered in the famous insurrection in Dublin, apart from a certain inconvenience in our house, where the military were installed for two days. Occasionally we were threatened with a shortage of provisions, and we have had to bake our own bread at home. As regards the insurrection itself, the physical results are unhappy, the destruction of Dublin is great! But it is thought, nevertheless, that out of this misfortune some good will emerge.

We have dealt in some detail with the issue of Nationalism and its consequences for many of the past students of the college in Chapter Eight.



FIRE!

Another outstanding event in the life of the community at this time, and, indeed, in the life of the parish, was the disastrous fire which gutted the magnificent church conceived and built by Dean William Meagher in 1850. We quote the *Irish Times* of January 27, 1920:

RATHMINES R.C. CHURCH BURNS DOWN

Fine Building Destroyed

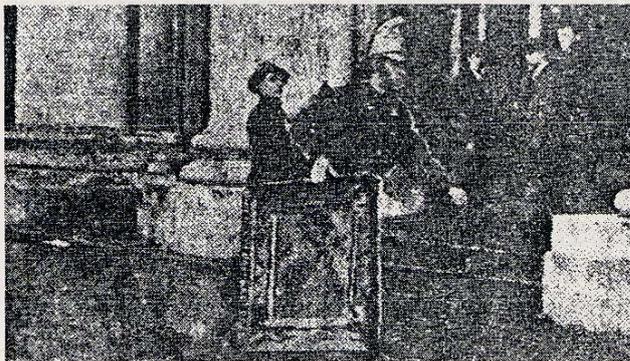
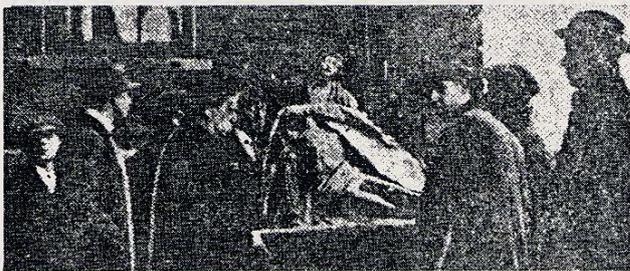
Yesterday morning, the Roman Catholic Church, Our Lady of Refuge, was destroyed by fire. Shortly after 6 o'clock, the Sacristan of the church opened the vestry, when he found that the switchboard which controls the electric light was on fire. When the fire had been extinguished in the place where it



Rathmines Parish Church

was first discovered, it was found that the electric wire in the interior of the edifice had become ignited, and presumably, the wooden panels with which they were in contact, burned quickly, the flames spreading rapidly to all parts of the building, and mounting up the walls to the spacious dome.

The efforts of the firemen to cope with the outbreak were carried on with considerable risk, as the falling debris from the roof, which was alight, made it



Fire Brigade and parishioners help to salvage pictures and statues after the fire, January 26, 1920

impossible to remain near the flames which overspread the sanctuary and the space in front of the altar.

The Dublin Fire Brigade, which had been sent for, worked in unison with the Rathmines Fire Brigade, and placed two engines on either side of the Grand Canal at Portobello Bridge, and soon had a copious supply of water sent in through the rear of the Church by way of Lower Mount Pleasant Avenue. The efforts of the firemen had but little effect for some time in checking the progress of the fire, and when the wooden base of the dome had been consumed, the roof and dome crashed down, and it was feared that some of the firemen might have been underneath, but fortunately this was not the case, as, when the roll was called, all the men answered, but some of them had received injuries from glass which had fallen from the windows. The gallery and the organ collapsed, but the fire had been contained within the walls of the building and did not reach the sacristy and the two other buildings in the rear. For several hours continuous streams of water were poured, both from the hydrants and the canal, so that it was not until late in the afternoon that the outbreak appeared to abate.

One of the clergy of the Church succeeded, at great personal risk, in saving the sacred vessels and vestments, and a number of the parishoners gave their aid very courageously in removing some church property to a place of safety.

The pictures and statues, of which there were many, were, however, all destroyed. It was stated that it was not possible to arrive at an exact estimate of the damage, but it is roughly placed between £30,000 and 35,000, and is covered by insurance with the Irish Catholic Assurance Co.

A large number of people, including the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Archbishop Walsh, and many others, visited the scene and expressed their sympathy with Archdeacon Fricker (the parish priest) and the clergy of the Church.

The church, which was on the plan of the Greek Cross, was built in the middle of the last century, but it was not until 1880 that the portico, with its graceful and lofty columns, was added. There were three altars in addition to the high altar, which was of artistic and impressive design.



The Superior and Community were not slow in offering their sympathy and what practical help they could. We quote from the General Bulletin published in November 1920:

“In the month of February (*sic*) last, a fire broke out in the fine Parish Church of Rathmines, which is situated almost opposite our house, and left it in ruins. It was impossible to put out the fire, and in spite of all the efforts of the firemen, the entire roof and the copper dome which crowns it collapsed. The main altar of white marble and the two other altars were reduced to dust under the debris of the roof. The sacristy, fine and spacious, was saved with its ornaments. The walls alone remained upright, with the facade rising up on strong corinthian pillars and surmounted by a majestic statue of Our Lady, Refuge of Sinners.

Immediately after the disaster, Fr Provincial (Con O’Shea) and First Assistant and Bursar (Laurence Healy) went to visit the Venerable Archdeacon Fricker, parish priest of Rathmines, to offer him and his clergy, with our sympathetic condolences, what help we could, by placing at their disposal the former recreation hall of the school to serve as a temporary church, their parish being entirely bereft of a chapel.

This offer was received with the liveliest appreciation. 'Providence', said the poor Archdeacon, 'has kept you among us. Where would we be without the Fathers of St Mary's? The Holy Ghost Fathers come, always and everywhere, to the aid of the secular priests.'

Until the following July, therefore, the assembly hall in St Mary's became the parish church of Rathmines, and much of the parochial activity took place there. When the parish building fund committee decided to hold a bazaar (called the Restora Bazaar) in order to raise funds for the restoration of the church, it was to St Mary's they turned and the front field became once again, as it would a number of times in later years for other purposes, the scene of hectic activity with 'all the fun of the fair'. In gratitude for the help given, the committee installed electricity throughout St Mary's.

In July 1922, Fr O'Shea had to relinquish the post of Provincial Superior because of ill health, which was diagnosed as cancer. He died in September of that year. He was replaced by Fr Joseph Byrne who would later become a missionary bishop in East Africa. At the same time, Fr Michael Meagher was appointed Superior of St Mary's, a post hitherto filled by the Provincial. This meant a change in the *Missionary Annals*, and Fr Tom O'Brien became editor with Fr Jim Dowling as assistant. But the biggest change came with the transfer in 1924 of the House of Philosophy to the Castle, Blackrock. The establishment of the National University of Ireland in 1908 with its constituent college in Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, made the university college in the Castle, as, indeed, the Jesuit university college, Stephen's Green, redundant. It continued to be used more or less as a university hostel for UCD for some years, but the enforced erection of Irish Houses of Theology and Philosophy during the 1914-1918 War, was so successful that it was decided to continue the experiment, but to bring the two faculties closer together. The Castle was chosen as the venue, and in 1924 the theologians left Kimmage to the novices and the philosophers left St Mary's to the Provincial and the *Missionary Annals*, and the twain met in the Castle under Fr John Kearney, former professor of Physics, and soon-to-be well-known spiritual writer and director. Fr Patrick Heerey remained on in St Mary's as Bursar. Four brothers, Epiphanius O'Leary, Austin Tobin, Kilian Melligan and Declan Mansfield completed the community.

The departure of so many was looked upon by those parents and past pupils, as well as the local clergy, who had never lost the hope of seeing the college open again as a secondary school, as an opportunity of pressing their claims, which they began to do in no uncertain terms. They sought the help of everyone who they thought might have influence in persuading the Holy Ghost authorities to rescind the decision which had closed the school eight years before. And to this end, they focused their campaign on the General Chapter at which a new Superior General was to be elected in Paris in 1926.

DEMAND TO RE-OPEN

In 1925 Fr Byrne's term of office as Provincial Superior came to an end and Fr Richard Harnett was appointed in his stead. Fr Harnett had been on the staff of the school during the presidency of Fr O'Hanlon and those anxious to see the school re-open found a ready supporter in him. Within months of his appointment, we find him writing to the Mother House:

His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin, is forever urging us to re-open St Mary's. His Grace says that many children round St Mary's are going to Protestant schools, and there is grave danger for their faith.

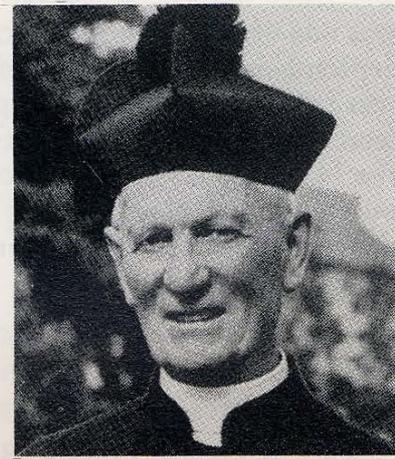
His Grace, the priests, and the friends of St Mary's are asking us to re-open the school. The suggestion has been made that we should re-open and keep boys



Dr Byrne
Archbishop of Dublin



Canon Fricker



Dr Richard Harnett, CSSp

to the age of 16. Two or three Fathers, as many prefects and a couple of laymen, could run the school. We are told that if we decide to re-open the school, the debt will be cleared off. Fr Stafford says that the actual debt was over £6,000, but the debt to be cleared would be nearer £10,000, as the first figure represented the debt at the time the school was closed.

When I was talking to your Grace, I think you remarked that the question could be considered if the debt could be cleared off. The members of the Provincial Council have asked me to put this question to the Mother House: 'Would the Mother House consider the re-opening of St Mary's, if the debt is cleared off? If the Mother House says – Yes – to the above question, then we will be in a position to tell His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin, that if the debt on St Mary's is paid in full, the Mother House will permit us to re-open the school.

The Superior General in question was Archbishop Le Roy, who was just completing his thirtieth year at the head of the Congregation, so he was naturally hesitant about making such a decision just before handing over to his successor, who would be elected in a few months' time. The Friends of St Mary's, probably not without coaching from the sidelines, saw the necessity of getting in on the ground floor, so they arranged to have a formal petition drawn up which a selected delegation would bring in person to Paris and hand over to the newly elected Superior General, while at the same time, lobbying as many of the Delegates to the General Chapter as they could to their point of view. In this they were eminently successful, because, besides the Irish delegates – Fr Harnett and Fr Meagher – there were two very influential members of the Chapter in Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria and Bishop O'Gorman of Sierra Leone. The delegation chosen to present the petition and plead the case were Fr P. Hayden, PP, Francis St, a past pupil of Blackrock College and loyal supporter of the work of the Holy Ghost Fathers, and Michael Corrigan, Chief State Solicitor, also a past pupil.

Among the signatories of the petition were the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Byrne, and the Diocesan Chapter; the three Vicars General, Mgr Dunne, Mgr Wall and Mgr Walshe; the PPs of Rathmines, Rathgar, Dolphin's Barn, and three other adjoining parishes; the Governor-General, Timothy M. Healy; the President of the Executive Council, William T. Cosgrave, and members of the judiciary, the legal and medical professions. It was in a tubular silver casket when presented to the newly elected Superior General, Msgr Le Hunsec, who was to rule the Congregation till 1948. It is preserved here in St Mary's, and

was one of the symbolic objects used in the offertory procession in the Centenary Mass on September 28, 1989, which officially opened the Centenary Year. Besides the petition, there was a memorandum drawn up by Fr Michael Meagher which may well have been the deciding factor. At any rate, all the efforts were crowned with success. The new General Council of the Holy Ghost Fathers decided in principle that St Mary's could re-open, provided the outstanding debt was paid in a reasonably short time, and that the equipment necessary for the running of a school was provided. Assurances given in this regard were accepted, and the General Council was

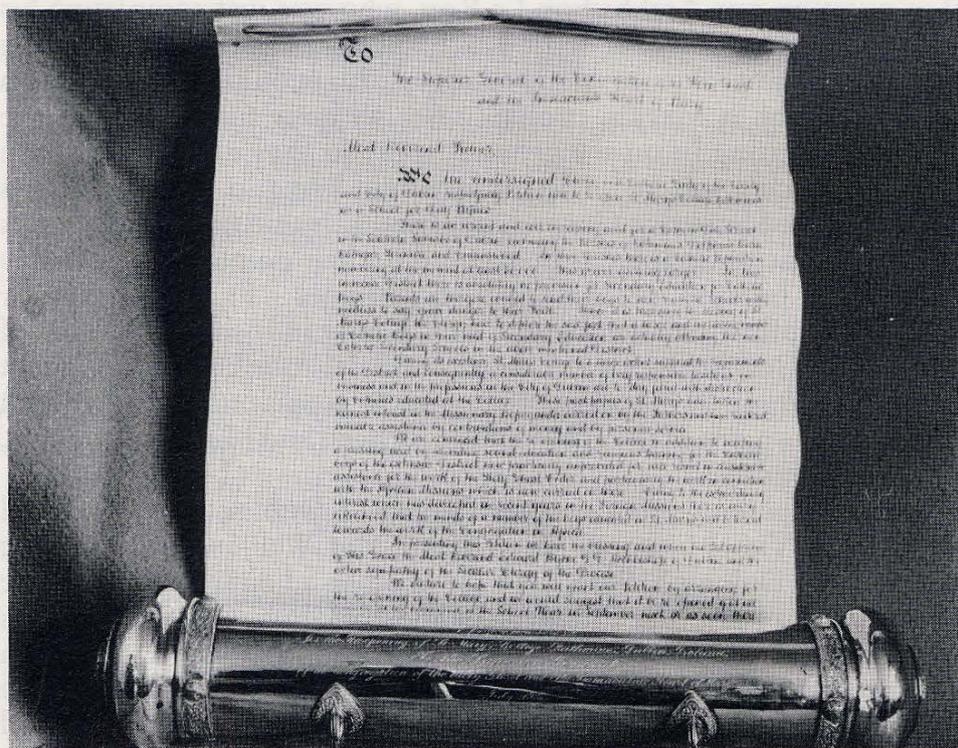
happy to place confidence in the Irish Province by granting their request . . . which far from harming the Missions, will help them to procure material resources and give them in the very near future very numerous personnel.

All was set for a Grand Re-Opening. At the beginning of September, Fr Harnett was writing to Paris:

The Committee formed to liquidate the debt is meeting here on October 1. This Committee is charged with all public appeals for donations from clergy and laity, and there will be a Grand Bazaar, etc. etc. It is the intention that the debt will be paid in a very little time (2 years) . . . A beginning has been made. The Archbishop and the clergy are taking measures to see that parents withdraw their children from Protestant schools. From the moment the news was spread, parents came to ask that the college be opened. The academic year begins in September. If the College does not open this month, we will lose the state subvention, that is to say, 800-1000 pounds sterling.

In opening the College now, we gain all the money the Propaganda team set aside for the maintenance of the Rathmines Community. That Community will no longer be the responsibility of the Propaganda Team, and in that way there will a greater sum for the upkeep of our scholastics.

So, we have decided to re-open the College on September 6. The Provincial Council hope that their decision will be ratified by the Mother House.



Silver casket containing petition to re-open the college, 1926

Chapter Ten

1926-1927



President
Very Rev. Michael Meagher

REVEREND FATHERS

Dr James O'Neill – Dean of Studies
Daniel Leen – Dean of Discipline
Michael Sexton – Bursar
James Dowling – Professor

REVEREND BROTHER

Kilian Melligan – Professor

REVEREND PREFECTS

Kevin Devenish
Patrick O'Carroll
James Giltinan

LAY PROFESSORS

John Gallagher – Lay Professor
Mr Flood – Drill Instructor

COMMUNITY

Very Rev Fr Richard Harnett – Provincial Superior
Fr John Stafford – Provincial Bursar
Fr Thomas O'Brien – Missionary Annals
Bro. Austin Tobin – Cook/Porter



James "Doc" O'Neill, CSSp



Michael Sexton, CSSp



Daniel Leen, CSSp

WHEN THE SCHOOL re-opened in 1926, the Superior of the Community and President of the College was Fr Michael Meagher, and he held the post for one year when the Provincial Superior, Fr Richard Harnett, took over. It was fitting that the first two Presidents of the College should have been the two delegates who had been sent to Paris to argue the case for its re-opening. The first Dean of Studies was Dr James O'Neill, whom we have already met as a prefect of cricketing prowess more than thirty years before in the early days of the school in the Gay Nineties. With him was Fr Michael Sexton, Mr John Gallagher, who had come from the staff of Rockwell, and three prefects, Patrick O'Carroll, Kevin Devenish and James Giltinan. Two members of the Propaganda Team gave their services, Fr Dan Leen as Dean of Discipline and Bursar, and Fr Jim Dowling, who gave Religious Instruction. Brother Kilian helped out in the Junior classes.

Dr James O'Neill

James O. O'Neill was born in Hollywood, county Down, in 1873 and went to school in Blackrock until 1892, when he entered the Castle to do his B.A. in the old Royal University. In 1895 he went to St Mary's as a prefect. There we have seen he established a name for himself at cricket. He went to Rome in 1897 and did a D.D. which gave him his nickname of 'Doc', by which he was universally known. He returned to Ireland in 1902 and was on the staff in Blackrock till 1906 when he went to Rockwell. There he spent twenty years, five of them as Dean of Studies. He was appointed to St Mary's in 1926 as Dean of the re-opened school and spent the rest of his life there until his death in 1948.

Fr Michael Sexton

Fr Michael Sexton was born in Miltown Malbay, county Clare, in 1885, and went to the juniorate in Rockwell for his secondary studies. He did his philosophy studies in France and then prefected in Rockwell from 1908 to 1911, when he returned to France for his theology. He was ordained in 1914 in Chevilly and was sent on the missions to Sierra Leone from 1915 to 1923, when illness forced his return to Ireland. He was on the staff of Blackrock from 1923 to 1926 and then came to St Mary's, taking over the duties of Dean of Discipline from Fr Dan Leen after just one year. He was Dean until 1934 when he handed over to Fr John Nealon, and again in 1935 for one more year. Ill health forced him to retire in 1939 and he died in 1948.



*Group of staff and students on re-opening of the College, 1926
The staff are (seated fourth from left): James Giltinan; Fr Michael Sexton;
Br. Kilian Melligan; Mr John Gallagher; Fr Dan Leen; Fr Michael Meagher;
Br James O'Neill; Fr James Dowling; Pat O'Carroll; Kevin Devenish.*

SCHOOL ROLL 1926-1927

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Edward Colleton | 25. Gerard Molloy | 49. Valentine Buggy |
| 2. Cornelius Creedon | 26. John Mooney | 50. James Jenkinson |
| 3. Hugh Crean | 27. John Nagle | 51. Andrew O'Hanlon |
| 4. Bernard Marriot | 28. Peter Nugent | 52. John Branagan |
| 5. Thomas Murray | 29. Laurence O'Hare | 53. William Boyd |
| 6. Donald Nagle | 30. Richard Quigley | 54. Charles Kelly |
| 7. William Smith | 31. John Ryan | 55. Michael Fitzgerald |
| 8. William Williams | 32. James Prendergast | 56. Francis Culhane |
| 9. Michael Flynn | 33. Frederick O'Hare | 57. Patrick Mooney |
| 10. John Mangan | 34. Bryan Smith | 58. John Dunne |
| 11. Anthony Ashley | 35. John O'Sullivan | 59. Charles Clifton |
| 12. Maurice Branagan | 36. James Ganter | 60. Michael Creedon |
| 13. Arthur Mahon | 37. James Collison | 61. Liam D'Alton |
| 14. Tadhg O'Donovan | 38. Henry Thompson | 62. Thomas Kelly |
| 15. Terence O'Gorman | 39. Matthew Collison | 63. Michael Leahy |
| 16. James O'Neill | 40. Patrick Collison | 64. Robert Pidgeon |
| 17. Redmond Wheeler | 41. Denis Coveney | 65. Richard Pratt |
| 18. Gerard Branagan | 42. Thaddeus Fallon | 66. Edward Quigley |
| 19. Garret Foley | 43. Gerald Robinson | 67. Joseph Rogan |
| 20. Edward Rowan | 44. Charles Wilson | 68. Desmond Schlegel |
| 21. Joseph Aylward | 45. Patrick O'Toole | 69. Frederick Ganter |
| 22. Patrick Branagan | 46. Gerard S. Cox | 70. Thomas O'Higgins |
| 23. Patrick Crean | 47. John Ryan | 71. Michael O'Higgins |
| 24. William Garvan | 48. John Finn | 72. Robert Becker |

As against that we do have quite a number of people still around who were there and are eye-witnesses to the events. In fact, from this point onwards the task of the compiler of the history of the college is to choose what events to recall and comment on and to what extent. The material is to hand, if not in published form, at least in the heads of living witnesses, and from 1940 onwards, the date of the first College Annual, with a few gaps until 1958, but thereafter almost unfailingly, we have a written record of all the happenings in the school and in the union, all the students who were enrolled, their academic successes in the school and afterwards, their exploits on the playing fields in school and afterwards, their extra-curricular activities, the staff who taught them, deaths and marriages. To complete this historic record, a chronological summary of those recorded events will have to be made, which will inevitably involve the inclusion of many people as it will the omission of even more. The compiler realises that no matter what he does, some people will not be pleased with the omissions, and all that he can hope is that the majority will recognise the problem and grant him the good will that he did try to exercise.

EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF RE-OPENING

The following accounts are from the recollections of a number of people who were present at the re-opening of the school after that ten-year gap, including Fr Giltinan, Fr Ned Colleton and Paddy Branagan, who later played an influential part in the formation and early days of the union, the rugby, tennis and cricket clubs, and has remained a steadfast supporter of all things Mary's.

Looking back on that first day of the re-opened St Mary's, Fr Ned Colleton reminisced in the 1958 *College Annual*:

The clock of Rathmines Town Hall struck a quarter to nine as a little boy of thirteen, with long spindly legs, bony knees and an unruly head of hair, trotted up the avenue of St Mary's. It was 6 September 1926, the day the school re-opened after a lapse of ten years.

Eleven boys had arrived before me; we stood around in awkward silence and finally, introduced ourselves to one another with the informality of youth. I have no list before me as I write, but the names and faces come slowly out of the past – Peter Nugent, who was to become our first captain, Denis Coveney, the four Branagan brothers, Paddy, Maurice, Gerard and Jack (who is now like myself a Holy Ghost Father in East Africa; Gerard is dead). Others come up the avenue as the morning wore on – Gerard Cox (dead), John Ryan, Tighe O'Donovan, and others. We were the foundation members of the new St Mary's and the beginning of a tradition which has no reason to hang its head.

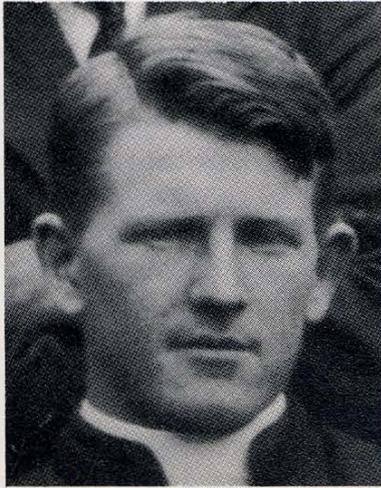
We were beginning to wonder if the staff knew that the school was starting that morning, when suddenly a door opened and a priest came out with a ball. It was the late Fr Dan Leen, the Dean of Discipline. He kicked the ball down the field and we all gave chase. St Mary's had opened!

A school without a bell is really not a school at all. We were soon made aware of the fact that this was a school by the loud clanging of that essential instrument. Three huge men, all over six feet, stood outside the hall and indicated that we should enter. We did not know whether we should call them 'Father' or 'Brother', and finally settled for 'Sir', since they looked too young to be priests and did not have the half-collars of Brothers. We discovered that they were the prefects, who would be the proximate organisers, under the Dean, of everything that happened in the school.

We filed into the hall to await the worst. A white-haired priest appeared on the rostrum and welcomed us to St Mary's. He was Doctor O'Neill, the Dean of Studies – a man he was severe and stern to view. Like every good Dean, he made us work and courted unpopularity in the process. It was only in later years that many of us realised how much we owed him. May he rest in peace.

One of the "three huge men" who waited at the door of the hall for the new boys to file in was Fr Jim Giltinan, who is happily still with us, as large as ever, and living in Kimmage Manor after a lifetime working as a missionary in Kenya. He was preparing to begin his studies in the Castle in Blackrock as the month of September began. Those chosen to be prefects in Blackrock, Rockwell and Trinidad, had already departed, when the word came that three more were to be chosen for St Mary's, which was to open as a day school once more. The three were, Kevin Devenish, Patrick O'Carroll and Jim, all well over six feet. Fr Jim tells us that he remembers nothing of that first day of school, which is scarcely surprising, as he was as much a new boy to teaching as the boys were to St Mary's, and must have faced that first day in class with far greater trepidation than any of the boys. He tells us that he had a crash course in teaching from Dr O'Neill, who told him after a week that he was faithfully following the method taught him, so Fr Jim could then relax a little and enjoy the experience.

Looking back after a lapse of sixty years, he vividly recalls that he found the boys pleasant and easy to deal with, and just wondered if they found him equally so. The other two prefects were Pat O'Carroll (1907-1967) and Kevin Devenish. Pat was born in



James Giltinan, CSSp



Patrick O'Carroll, CSSp



Kevin Devenish, CSSp

Newcastle West, county Limerick and went to Blackrock from 1922 to 1925. He was a prefect in St Mary's from 1926 to 1929 and then went to the Castle to do philosophy for two years and then theology for three. He was then sent to Rome where he attended the Gregorian for his D.D. from 1934 to 1937. He was ordained in Rome in 1934. He returned to Ireland and was appointed Director of Theologians in Kimmage Manor for ten years and Superior for three of them, 1944-1947, when he was appointed Provincial Superior, a post he retained until 1956. He then spent ten years in the United States, in charge of a high school in Chicago and another in Riverside, California. He died in Chicago in 1967.

Kevin Devenish was born in Trinidad, West Indies, in 1906 and was educated in St Mary's, Port-of-Spain. In 1923 he came to Ireland and entered the Juniorate in Rockwell College for one year before joining the Holy Ghost Fathers. He entered the Novitiate in 1924 and was professed in August 1925 before beginning his philosophy studies in the Castle, Blackrock. The unexpected re-opening of St Mary's Rathmines in September 1926 interrupted his studies and he was appointed prefect, a role he filled for three years, during which time he played regularly for the Blackrock RFC 1st XV. After St Mary's he returned to Blackrock to complete his studies and was ordained priest in 1933. The following year he was sent on the missions, to Zanzibar, East Africa, where he engaged in pastoral work until appointed first Principal of St Mary's Secondary School, Nairobi in 1939. The outbreak of World War II that year led to major upsets in the staffing of many of the missions in East Africa and the internment of missionaries from Axis countries. Fr Devenish was appointed Vicar-Delegate of Addis Ababa and Harar in Abyssinia in 1943 and along with a number of other Holy Ghost Fathers from East Africa, remained in Abyssinia for the duration of the war. In 1947 they were relieved and returned to Europe. Kevin returned to Trinidad and went on the staff of St Mary's College for three years until he was appointed parish priest of St Joseph's Parish in Port-of-Spain for eleven years, before transferring to Fatima parish, Curepe in 1961, where he worked until his death in 1974.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ONE WHO WAS THERE

BY P. A. BRANAGAN

The College re-opened in September 1926 with a total of 65 boys on the roll. In the course of the year, new arrivals brought the number up to 69 by June 1927.

Entering the school at this time was quite exciting. Some of the boys had known one another at their previous schools, but for most, they met first as strangers.

In 1926, the top class, Fourth Year, contained about twelve boys. Second and Third Year were somewhat larger.

The small number on the school roll perhaps posed problems in the academic sphere. It certainly did so on the rugby field. It was not possible to select rugby teams in the customary categories, Under 18, Under 16 etc. The St Mary's 1st XV of 1926-27 comprised players whose ages ranged from twelve to seventeen. One of the youngest, and quite a star, was Jimmy Woodcock. Jimmy left later and went on to Blackrock where he captained the SCT and also Leinster Schools.

Perhaps only one of the First XV had ever previously participated in an organised rugby match. This was Peter Nugent, who had come from Blackrock College. He was a sophisticated mature youth with an abundance of pocket money which he used generously to the benefit of his less affluent classmates. Peter was captain of rugby and cricket in 1926-27 and again in 1927-28. If, at that time, there had been an office of Captain of the School, Peter would certainly have held it. He was a born leader.

The first home rugby match was against CUS SCT. As the St Mary's young and jittery team was preparing for the game, the already low morale was depressed still further by observer reports of the monstrous size of the CUS team as they proceeded up the driveway. In the first quarter of the match Peter Nugent took on CUS on his own. The rest of the team applauded his efforts heartily, but contributed little else. On the team-sheet Peter was a forward, in this match he was everywhere.

Inspired by Peter, the other 14 players overcame their stage-fright and supported Peter valiantly until the end of the game. Peter Nugent's part in re-launching St Mary's was quite significant.

In later years, Peter was a distinguished senior counsel. It was he who presented in court the St Mary's College Rugby Club's application for a bar licence. He also served in 1939-40 as President of the Union.

A House League was held at this time, comprising three teams. The disparity in the ages of the players was even wider than in the case of the First XV. Two of the youngest players were fearless wing forwards, Tom and Michael O'Higgins. Both were subsequently members of the Dáil. Tom, as Minister for Health, was responsible for introducing the Voluntary Health Insurance scheme. He later served as Chief Justice, and was Fine Gael candidate for the Presidency of Ireland in competition with Eamon de Valera. He is presently a member of the European Court of Justice.

An activity that was well supported at that time was the Cycling Club. The youngest and most enthusiastic member of the Club was Bobby Pidgeon, who later became a prominent insurance executive. (He also became President of the Union. Ed.)

It appears that in the early years of this century, gymnastics was catered for in some schools. In Leinster, a competition for a shield was held annually under the auspices of the Gymnastic Association. The competition had lapsed during World War I and the Association was moribund by 1926. It is believed that it was Fr Sexton who revived the Association, and with it, the shield competition. At this time the College had a wide variety of gymnastic equipment. However, it was used only intermittently. The shield competition was confined to "Swedish Drill". In 1927-28, St Mary's entered a squad of about 20 boys and were successful. In 1928-29 two squads were entered, and the "A" squad won the shield, beating the "B" squad, Belvedere and Masonic School.

In those years the Headmaster was the Reverend Father O'Neill, CSSp, DD. He was known as "the Doctor". With his rosy cheeks and silvery hair, Dr O'Neill was the picture of benevolence. He was a dominant personality and something of a martinet. He was certainly feared by the boys, but he earned the respect of most and the admiration of many. In the Summer term there was usually a cricket practice net in use during the lunch break. It was the custom for the Doctor to come down to the net, take the bat and then proceed to give a masterful exhibition of the batting art. His style, timing and power would not have shamed Bradman. Strollers round the field had only to have concern for

their ankles. The Doctor never lofted the ball. Dr O'Neill was a reminder that in the early years the Holy Ghost Fathers had some very fine cricketers.

Fr Sexton, assisted by three prefects, Mr Giltinan, Mr O'Carroll and Mr Devenish, looked after the sporting side in addition to their class work.

A feature of the school was the rapport and friendliness that existed between the community, staff and pupils. It was entirely in accordance with this spirit that Fr Sexton's first thought, on hearing the news, was to throw up his window and share his delight with all the boys in the vicinity that "Tipperary Tim" had won the Grand National!

The very fine atmosphere that pervaded the school was, no doubt, due in some measure to its small size. Whatever the reasons, St Mary's was a very happy school.



Those accounts of the recollections of Fr Colleton, Fr Giltinan and Paddy Branagan, of those early days, brings out the flavour of the occasion as no newspaper or any other formal account could do. The Community Journal for the time adds that the opening day began officially with Mass in the college chapel at 10 a.m. It was not possible to hold regular classes at first as the numbers increased every day and the schedule of classes required very careful consideration, because of the disparity, not only in ages, but in previous educational attainments. According to the journal, about fifty boys presented themselves that first day. There were 65 a week later, 71 the week after, and so on. On October 2, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given for the first time in the re-opened college, and it remained a feature of every Saturday morning from then on until after Vatican II.

GAMES

As far as the boys were concerned the highlight of that first month was the arrival of the first batch of football jerseys – royal blue, with a five-pointed white star on the left breast, as of yore. According to the journal also, the first football match played was on October 17 against Blackrock in their grounds. It ended fittingly in a draw, 6-6. Ten days later, Terenure were the opponents and victors by 16-0. The St Mary's boys then did a three-day Retreat! It seems to have had an effect, if not the desired one. That evening they played High School – and won! The score was 10-9. The journal notes, whether for information or explanation, who knows, that the referee was Fr Dan Leen. That was also the day that the school cap (royal blue with silver scroll on gold ground) arrived and was distributed to every boy.

November saw an increase in activity on the rugby field. Fr Sexton, who was in charge of games, was a dynamic personality and was ably seconded by the prefects, one of whom, Kevin Devenish, was an outstanding player, and throughout his prefecting was a regular on the Blackrock Ist Castle XV. On November 1, St Mary's Seconds were beaten 5-8 by Belvedere, but on Nov. 6, beat Rock Day-boys 14-0 (in Blackrock with a Rock referee).

On the 13th, the Firsts beat Mountjoy School 8-6, while, in the first recorded Under-13 match, St Mary's and Terenure shared a 3-3 draw. On the 21st, Rock Day-boys took their revenge with a 14-3 win in Nutley Lane. Three days later, the Rock Boarders also defeated the St Mary's Seconds 6-3. December brought mixed fortune on the field. On the 1st, Terenure were beaten 17-0. The first ever recorded Under-12 match ended in a scoreless draw between St Mary's and Belvedere, but on the 11th, the SCT lost heavily to Mountjoy. All in all, considering the small numbers in the school and the fact that almost

all were without experience in the game of rugby, it was a very satisfactory start to the school's participation in sport.

In the New Year, Mr Devenish set an excellent example to the boys by scoring three tries for Blackrock against Palmerston on January 15. St Mary's Under-12 responded by defeating Rock 20-0 on February 5, but on the following day Rock Under-14s inflicted a heavy 24-0 defeat on St Mary's. High School avenged their defeat at the hands of St Mary's before Christmas by winning handsomely, 14-0 on February 23. That appears to have ended the season for St Mary's who did not enter teams for the Leinster Schools Senior or Junior Cups that year, nor, indeed, the following year.

An interesting feature of the term was the participation in association football. Three matches are recorded. Rock Under-14 defeated St Mary's 1-0 on January 29. Cabra comprehensively defeated them 7-0 in Cabra on February 16, and 2-0 on March 16 in Rathmines.

Immediately after the Easter holidays cricket practice started on a pitch laid out in the front field by Fr Sexton and the prefects, while at the beginning of May, work began on laying out a tennis court on the back field, which was in action by May 14. However, no inter-school matches in either game is reported for that first summer. One reason may well have been that the forthcoming Fête was a preoccupation to the exclusion of almost everything else that summer.

The school was officially, but temporarily, recognised as a secondary school for the academic year, 1926-1927, by the Department of Education on the 8th February, 1927. Full definitive recognition came on May 25, 1928.

ATTACKING THE DEBT

The main condition laid down by the General Council of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Paris in July 1926 for the re-opening of St Mary's College, as we have seen, was that the debt which had contributed to the closure of the college in 1916 would be effectively tackled as soon as possible. The Provincial, Fr Harnett, had promised in a letter in early September that a committee charged with the raising of funds to this end would meet on October 1, and that a Fête would be one of the main fund-raising schemes. This Committee duly met and appointed a sub-committee to look after the Fête. A competition was held to find a name for it and we are told that the name chosen, 'SAMACORA', was Dr O'Neill's suggestion, comprising the first two letters of the name of the school. It is a name which



*Samacora Fête
Ladies Committee,
1927*

is still found stamped on school property to identify it, and it entered the history of the college by being incorporated into the battle-cry of the supporters at cup matches. As early as December 16 the Fête, with its new name, was being advertised in the national newspapers, as due to take place from June 4 to June 12, 1927. As soon as the annual Sale of Work in aid of the Holy Ghost Missions was over on December 18, the college hall was commandeered for the first of a regular schedule of whist drives which continued until the Fête in June. A Concert was held in the Theatre Royal on the Sunday before Lent, a dance in Clery's on the eve of the Ireland/England rugby international. Even a 'Donkey Derby' at Shelbourne Park was considered. In the words of the Journal: "The activities for the Fête have a very satisfactory appearance, and great enterprise is being shown by the committee, under the interested and watchful care of the Provincial, whose desire it is to make an end, once and for all, of this debt, which has from the beginning been an 'incubus' to the Province."

All hopes were being pinned on the Fête.

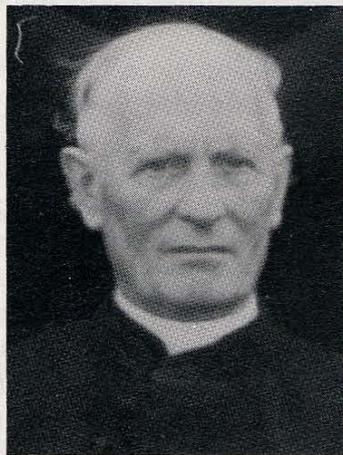
SAMACORA FÊTE

With maximum publicity being given to the forthcoming Fete, serious preparations began on May 17 with the re-painting of the hall, which was to be used as a ballroom. The wooden floor was sandpapered and varnished for dancing. Work began on erecting a hoarding all round the grounds to stymie the free-loaders. This took a week to accomplish. On May 25 a band-stand was erected and Tofts, the Amusement Entrepreneurs, soon after began to unload their gear. May 31, tents were being erected, a merry-go-round and other funfair stalls. All the garden seats were painted green by Fr Dowling, Fr Sexton and the prefects. The garden was turned into a tea-garden, surrounded by trellis for privacy. The kitchen garden was surrounded with chicken-wire to keep the cabbages from being trampled. On June 4 the Fête opened.

It is interesting to note that school continued through all this hustle and bustle. The activities took place in the afternoons, so there was minimum disruption to classwork. The major disruption was to the time-table, in that the classes were reduced to half-hours and school finished at 1 p.m. every day. Grammar I and II classes, whose classrooms had been turned into cloakrooms were accommodated in tents erected on the back field, which delighted the boys concerned. Any change is welcomed by schoolboys. The Intermediate Exams even took place during the Fête, which ended on June 19. The following day, a Supper Dance was held in the hall for the stewards and assistants, by way of a Thank You for all their sterling work. Then the work of clearing up began. School ended on June 23. Most of the clearing up was done by the prefects. Fr Giltinan tells us that they changed into working clothes to disguise themselves and spent three days, from morning until dusk, dismantling the hoarding round the grounds and earning themselves some pocket-money for their summer holidays. By June 30 Mr Toft had removed the last of his paraphernalia and everything was back to normal. The whole affair had netted the college the satisfactory sum of about £3,500.

Chapter Eleven

1927-1934



President
Very Rev Fr Richard Harnett

REVEREND FATHERS

Dr James C. O'Neill – Dean of Studies (1927-34) – Professor (1926-46)
Daniel Leen – Dean of Discipline (1926-28) – Bursar (1926-28)
Michael Sexton – Dean of Discipline (1928-34)(1935-36)
James Dowling – Bursar (1928-41)
Dr David Heelan – Professor (1931-35) – Dean of Discipline (1934-35)
John Nealon – Professor (1936-1938) – Dean of Discipline (1936-38)
Joseph Gilmore – Professor (1933-57)
Dr Denis Kennedy – Professor (1932-33)

REVEREND BROTHER

Kilian Melligan – Professor

REVEREND PREFECTS

Kevin Devenish
Thomas Clerkin
John O'Meara
Joseph B. Whelan
Niall Macauley

Patrick O'Carroll
Austin Lynch
Martin O'Dwyer
William Doolin

James Giltinan
Thomas O'Rourke
Jerome Doody
Michael O'Carroll

LAY PROFESSORS

John Gallagher – (1926-57)
Michael Nagle – (1928-62)
Arthur Barrett – (1928-62)
Miss Burke (Mrs Johnston) – Elocution (1927-31)
John C. O'Brien – Elocution (1931-34)
Mr Flood – Drill Master (1926-36)

HIGHER DIPLOMA CANDIDATE TEACHERS

M. J. O'Reilly
James J. O'Friel
Denis McGrath
James Troy
P. Smithwick
John P. McEnroe
Jeremiah O'Donovan
Charles Reynolds
T. P. Lyng
Eugene O'Rourke

Andrew Quinn
James G. O'Connor
Donal McAuliffe
Liam Houlihan
Thomas Malone
Thomas O'Brien
Francis Drumm
Michael McGuire
Rev. Stephen Kelleher
John O'Shea.

Thomas Keegan
Miss Nuala Burke
Joseph Maher
Anthony Shannon
James Masterson
Michael Walshe
Rev. James Colleran
Thomas Martin
Pat McGrath

COMMUNITY

John Stafford – Provincial Procurator
Michael Meagher – Director: Holy Childhood
Thomas O'Brien – Ed: Missionary Annals



*Group of Prize-Winners with staff, 1927
T. Clerkin; K. Devenish; J. Nagle; D. Leen; J. O'Neill; M. Sexton;
M. Meagher; J. Gallagher; P. O'Carroll.*

DR DAVID HEELAN joined the staff in 1931, coming straight from completing his D.D. in Rome. He remained until 1935 filling the role of Dean of Discipline during his last year. Dr Denis Kennedy also came from Rome in 1932 and spent just one year on the staff while he completed his M.A. and H.DIP. Fr John Nealon was ordained in 1935 and his first appointment was to St Mary's where he was Dean of Discipline for the two years that he spent in Rathmines. Then for one year he was in Rockwell before going overseas to Mauritius for ten years.

STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The first change in the physical appearance of the College after the re-opening in 1926 was the conversion of the garden to the left of the house, now occupied largely by the college chapel, into a lawn – or shall we say, a grass-covered patch. It was sometimes called the priests' garden and had a number of shrubs as well as a tall flag-pole. It now became tennis courts in summer. The present recreation ground at the back of the house was partly under grass, partly poultry yard, partly kitchen garden. During August 1928 a pavilion and bicycle shed were erected where some of the newer Junior School classrooms are now, and there was a toilet block there too. About that time, the hen-run and kitchen garden were both severely curtailed to give more space to football and cricket in their seasons. In September 1929, the gate lodge was vacated by the tenants and it became a useful adjunct to the community's living space, providing quarters for visitors of whom there was a constant stream from both the missions and the provinces. A new furnace and radiators were also installed at this time. It was a great tribute to the foresight of Fr Tom Fogarty who had installed the heating system nearly forty years before, that it was only now that it needed renewing.

By far the most significant event to occur during this period was undoubtedly the Eucharistic Congress of 1932. Every home in the whole of Ireland was affected – with coats of paint, bunting, flags or new curtains. St Mary's was no exception. The railings along Rathmines Road got a new coat of paint. All the windows, in the school and in the house, were painted. Flagpoles were erected right across the front of the house at the top of the field and down the avenue. Bunting was strung between them almost down to the gate. More than a year previously, the idea of having a side entrance opposite Ardee Road was seriously entertained. When the school was asked by the Congress Committee, whose Chairman, Monsignor Dan Molony of Donnybrook, was a past pupil, to allow a marquee to be erected in the back field to serve as a refreshment tent during the week of the Congress, this alternative entrance became all the more imperative. With the Committee bearing half the cost, the side entrance was made which remained until the building of the College Chapel in 1953 made the present entrance necessary.

1933 saw the most extensive internal alterations in the school for over forty years. The assembly hall was extended to give an extra room on the left – the present biology room – and a much larger stage which allowed for more ambitious productions. At this time Fr Gilmore had joined the staff in order to do the H.DIP. He was a keen amateur painter, mainly of water-colours, but agreed to paint the proscenium of the new stage. He had to spend many weary hours at the top of scaffolding in very awkward postures in order to do it, and in later years often compared himself wryly to Michaelangelo doing the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Above the extra room beside the stage, two more bedrooms for the community were built. A new toilet block was also built, bringing the total cost of the extensions to £2,000, £500 of which was advanced by the Propaganda Team as an interest-free loan.



*Confirmation Class, 1927, with staff
T. Clerkin; K. Devenish; J. O'Neill; D. Leen; P. O'Carroll.*

At this time, the school was using ten classrooms. The six corresponding to the present front six Junior School classrooms and the four rooms off the Assembly Hall. When the school re-opened in 1926, the numbers were so small that four classrooms sufficed to accommodate them. Fourth Year was the top class. This became Fifth Year in 1927-28 and Sixth Year in 1928-29. Increased numbers permitted a more even division of the boys according to age, but particularly in the lower classes there was multi-level teaching until a separate Junior School was established in 1934. Because of the small numbers involved, this was not as unsatisfactory as might appear on the surface. Where greater individual attention can be given, the content of the teaching need not be the same for all. Each one can advance at his own pace and from his own starting point.

Outside the classrooms the school was divided into three sections for games and recreation, seniors, juniors and giants, with captains elected for each category.

ACADEMICS

In June 1928 were published the results of the first public examinations ever held in the re-opened St Mary's. These were the Religious Knowledge examinations held by the Diocesan Examiners for the Diocese of Dublin. The report declared that the knowledge of catechism was excellent, sacred scripture excellent, sacred liturgy specially distinguished. "The boys of the college deserve a special word of praise for their work this year. The majority in both classes exhibited a sound knowledge of doctrine and sacred scripture. A few were weak in the words of the catechism. All seemed interested in liturgy and excelled in the knowledge and use of the missal."

In that same summer of 1928 the first candidates for university matriculation, Peter Nugent and Denis Coveney, were successful, giving 100% success. In the case of Denis,

this was a pity because the fact of his matriculation made him ineligible to play in the Leinster Schools Cup the following year although he was still under age.

In 1929 it was decided that the time had come to begin presenting students for the Leaving and Intermediate Certificate examinations. However, Gerald Branagan and Gerald S. Cox were the first two students recorded as having sat for and passed the Leaving Certificate. That was in 1931. Fred Ganter, John Rogan, Donal Hallissey, Harry Clifton, Morgan Kavanagh, Michael Leahy, Richard Quigley sat and passed the Intermediate Certificate. The next year Jimmy Ganter and John Ryan passed the Leaving, while Liam Dalton, Des Kennedy, Denis Kelly, George Gannon, and Bobby Pidgeon got the Inter. The following are the tabulated results in the Leaving and Intermediate Certificates for the four years for which candidates were submitted.

In 1933 'Doc' O'Neill's class won the French Government's prize for the best class in French in the Intermediate in Ireland.

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. Sitting</i>	<i>Hons.</i>	<i>Pass</i>
<i>Leaving Certificate</i>			
1929			
1930			
1931	2	2	—
1932	2	—	2
1933	4	1	3
1934	4	3	—
<i>Intermediate Certificate</i>			
1929			
1930			
1931	7	—	7
1932	5	—	5
1933	13	1	4
1934	4	3	—

DRAMATICS

In 1931 took place the first recorded entertainment by the boys in the re-opened school. The only surprising thing about this is that should have taken so long to happen considering the tradition that had been established in this area before the closure. However, in February the college presented an Entertainment which consisted of song, dance, recitation, instrumental items and physical culture by the very junior juniors. The accompanists were Paddy Branagan, Robert Woodcock and Richard Smyth. It was presented on two nights.

The success of this entertainment, which played to full and enthusiastic houses, put the school once more well on the histrionic path which had characterised it in its pre-closure days and encouraged them to embark on a more ambitious project the next year. Bets were hedged by retaining the concert format, with most of those who had scored successes in 1931 repeating them on April 4 and 5, 1932. Singer Lorcan Foley turned hornpipe dancer for a change (had his voice broken?). But, in addition, a one-act play was presented, *Thompson in Tír Na n-Óg*, the first play from the re-opened School. The players on

*Senior Cup Team,
1927-28*

Back: *M. J. Branagan;*
J. B. Mooney; G. Molloy;
L. F. O'Hare;
P. J. Collison;
M. M. Collison;
J. Dunne.
Seated: *T. O'Donovan;*
P. A. Branagan;
P. O. Nugent (Capt.);
G. A. Robinson;
J. J. Ganter.
Front: *D. J. Coveney;*
F. J. O'Hare;
R. E. Quigley.



this historic occasion were: Frank Purcell, Andrew Leahy, Jerome O'Sullivan, Terry Jackson, Charlie Aliaga-Kelly, Tom Reynolds, Anthony Dudley and Harry Clifton. After an absence of fifteen years, St Mary's College were well and truly back in the entertainment world.

GAMES 1927-34

Rugby

The second year of the new St Mary's opened auspiciously for games with the defeat of Belvedere in a rugby friendly on September 27, to be followed on October 8 by a modest defeat of CUS by 3-0. Rock Day-boys fell the following day by 5-3, while the Under-13s also defeated Rock Day-boys on October 12, the day William T. Cosgrave became President of Saorstát Éireann. The SCT appeared to have possibilities when they comprehensively defeated Mountjoy 31-3, and followed this up by a 3-0 defeat of Terenure College. However, it remained the same old story – some brilliant individuals but a lack of depth because of small numbers. Peter Nugent and Paddy Branagan gained representative honours, being picked for South Dublin against North Dublin. The SCT beat Rock 12-3 on February 1, 1928.

1928-29 was the year St Mary's entered the Leinster Schools' Cup once more. It was the first year they had a 6th Year. After an up-and-down friendly season, they were faced by St Columba's in the first round and survived. It is one of those coincidental quirks of fate that it was St Columba's they met in the first round of the same competition way back in 1899 on their initial appearance in competitive football. On this occasion they were able to reverse the verdict, winning 9-0. At this time there was only one section in the competition. The weakest team could, and often did, meet the strongest team in its



Junior Cup Team, 1933-34

First St. Mary's Winners of Leinster Junior Cup

Back: R. Becker; D. O'Cadlaig; E. D'Alton; L. Foley; D. McGuinn; A. Dudley; F. Walker; E. Nolan.

Seated: P. Scott; G. Boyd; D. Smyth; M. Scott; I. Hooper.

Front: P. Ryan; N. Hooper.

very first match. Paddy Branagan tells us that even before the competition began St Mary's suffered a grievous set-back. One of the very few players whose ability was on a par with with present SCT material was Denis Coveney. Denis, however, had matriculated in fifth year, and, as the regulations then stood, was no longer eligible to play in the Senior Schools Cup, even though he was under age. In the second round Clongowes were the opponents. In those days, if any school were to take the cup from Blackrock it would most certainly be one of three, Belvedere, Castleknock or Clongowes.

"Clongowes," continues Paddy Branagan, "had a good side that year. St Mary's, a mixture of senior and junior players, had taken part in only one cup match prior to the Clongowes game. Inevitably, Clongowes controlled the scrum, the rucks, the line-outs, and with ceaseless good possession, they scored 43 points without reply.

"There was no comparison between the sides for skill, weight and speed. With continuous possession, the fast and skillful Clongowes back-line of Smyth, Crowley, Caffrey and Mullaney opposed to a team utterly inexperienced in cup football, might well have achieved a three figure total.

"That they were restricted to 43 pts, all of which they had to earn, was due to the fact that Mary's never capitulated and strove unceasingly and with much success to halt the non-stop Clongowes attack. In spite of the heavy defeat, Mary's emerged with honour.

"A direct result of the great defensive operation mounted by the team was that one of the team, P. A. Branagan, was selected for Leinster Schools against Connaught.

"The Mary's team in the two cup matches included, besides Paddy Branagan, Richard Quigley (later parish priest Donnycarney), Jimmy Ganter and Gerry Cox, who a few years later were to take the steps that led to the revival of St Mary's College RFC, Matt Collison and Tadhg O'Donovan.

"The Clongowes centre, Chris Crowley, later became President of the Connaught Branch and of the IRFU."

1931-32 was a better year in that the Under-13s came good even if the SCT and JCT were undistinguished. They won all before them that year and ended by bringing the Provincial's Cup to St Mary's for the first time. The Community Journal states that "the boys celebrated vociferously", as well they might!

That victory of the U-13s in 1932 had everyone looking forward to 1934 and the Junior Cup. The team was still intact, captained by Dermot Smyth, and great things were expected of them. They rose to those expectations like heroes. On February 5 they beat CUS in the first round. On February 13 they accounted for St Andrew's. One week later they defeated Pres. Glathule. On February 27 came the first hiccup. They met and were held to a draw by Castleknock. The replay came on March 2 and St Mary's scraped through 3-0. The

March '34.

27. St Mary's for the first time won the Junior Schools Cup. (under 16)
On an ideal football evening, brilliant sunshine, nippy air, and perfect pitch St Mary's realized her efforts of a quarter of a century she secured, amidst the enthusiastic delight of friends old and young, the coveted trophy of Junior Schools hockey. The occasion produced a reunion such as was not staged for a long time past. The many new banners - deep blue and white with six-pointed star - blessed by St. Brigid, recalled many a hotly struggle and noise of battles long ago. An especially pleasing feature of the evening was the full rally of recent past students. Their deep interest and helpful encouragement on the side line augurs well for a continuation of their devotion to Alma Mater.

The active heroes - the gallant little team deserved all the praise so generously bestowed. When it is recalled that our numbers are 165 and the actual debiles for places are only two over the required 15, the victory is shown as very creditable indeed. Moreover the average physique and weight was certainly lower than that of the majority of the seven opponents whose banners were lowered in the strenuous fight to the final. A high degree of pluck, unflinching determination, and a generous spirit were the salient ingredients which Dr. Dixon and Mr. J. Whelan succeeded into a clever team of fighting gentlemen who have brought laurels on stonied St Mary's.

Extract from Community Journal, 1934

final on March 27 was everything that could be wished for. The staid Community Journal devoted an unprecedented twenty-six florid lines to the event – without once mentioning who the opponents were or what the final score was!

For the record, the opponents were Mountjoy School and the final score was 6-0. A less poetic, but more informative, account of the final was given in the press:

St Mary's College (Rathmines) won the Leinster Schools Junior Cup for the first time when, at Lansdowne Road. yesterday, they beat Mountjoy School, who were also making their first appearance in the final, by two tries (6 pts) to nil.

St Mary's, who were playing their seventh cup tie this season, having won their way through the qualifying section before entering the competition proper, were deserving of their success yesterday, for, having had the worst of the first half, they later settled down and gradually wore down a heavier opposition. This they did by a discriminating use of the kick ahead.

Mountjoy had certainly a cleverer back division, but they lacked the speed to turn an occasional cut-through in the centre to advantage, and were repeatedly held up by the deadly St Mary's tackling, in which Smyth and Becker were outstanding.

Smyth as scrum-half was a great source of worry to the Mountjoy defence, and put in some strong bursts from the scrum. The diminutive Niall Hooper, on the Mary's wing, also created a favourable impression, and kicked to touch exceptionally well.

The first half was scoreless, but, fifteen minutes after the interval, D. Smyth, with a strong run from the scrum on the Mountjoy "25", scored a splendid try at the corner. The same player was instrumental in A. Dalton getting the second score ten minutes later.

Irish Independent

Other press reports declared: "The Rathmines boys were well worthy of their victory . . . and showed themselves throughout to be a clever young side".

Another stated: "They are a right good side, balanced in every phase and we wish them every success".

And again: "St Mary's were the smaller side but they were a better trained lot".

As a reward for their accomplishment, the team were brought on a picnic at Fr Ernest Farrell's expense, the past pupils union providing the transport.

Gymnastics

In pre-closure days St Mary's had won an enviable reputation in gymnastics, winning the All Ireland Gymnastic Shield for a record six years in succession. When the School re-opened in 1926, this discipline was not forgotten. The equipment had gone with the changeover from school to seminary in 1917, but this did not prevent Fr Sexton from introducing Swedish Drill for all as a basic requirement for proper deportment and as a preparation for full gymnastics at a later date. Mr Flood was the first Drill Master and did his work so well that St Mary's were regular winners of the Drill Display competitions which were a feature of school activity in those days. On May 31, 1928, St Mary's came second in the Dublin Championships held in the Rathmines Town Hall. The following year they won, as they did the year after. It was not until September 1931 that Fr Sexton

managed to procure gymnastic equipment for the school and gymnastics proper could begin once more. On June 17, 1932, the Drill Display Shield was retained by default. St Mary's were the only qualifiers, although the Eucharistic Congress just about to begin may be the reason no other school qualified.

Cricket

As we have already seen, cricket began immediately on the resumption of school every year after the Easter holidays. Pitches were laid out both in the front field and the back field by Fr Sexton and the prefects. Belvedere and Terenure were the most frequent opponents. Belvedere won 46-42 on May 23 and Terenure on May 26. There were four matches in June, two against Belvedere, one won, one lost; two against Terenure, one lost on June 23, one won by an innings on June 27. On June 20 the Annual Past v Present match was inaugurated with a win for the Present, 137-59. But it must be noted that the Present were bolstered by the presence of Doc O'Neill and two prefects, Kevin Devenish and Tom Clerkin, for the occasion. The good Doctor may have lost some of his suppleness and fleetness of foot, but his technique and power were as devastating as ever.

1929 was an important year in sport for the school. We have already seen that it was the year in which they re-entered the Schools' rugby competitions. For cricket it was memorable for the presentation of a Perpetual Cup for competition between the U-14s of St Mary's and Blackrock Day-boys. It was presented by Fr Denis Joy, a Holy Ghost missionary in Sierra Leone and named the O'Gorman Cup after the Holy Ghost Bishop of Sierra Leone, Bishop John O'Gorman. That competition was the outstanding cricket fixture between the sister colleges but has been in abeyance now for many years. The inaugural competition in 1929 was won easily by St Mary's, captained by Jack Branagan, who went on to become a Holy Ghost missionary in Kenya.

In the Summer of 1932, a group of students decided to form their own cricket club. They wanted to continue playing cricket during the holidays, and the only way to do this was to form a club and affiliate with the Leinster Branch of the Irish Cricket Union. In this way

*Senior Cricket
Cup Team, 1927-28*

Back: *M. Collison;*
P. Collison; G. Molloy;
J. Shiels.
Seated: *Val Buggy;*
P. Branagan; P. Nugent;
D. Coveney; B. Mooney.
Front: *F. O'Hare;*
M. Branagan.





First O'Gorman Cricket Cup Winners, 1929

Back: *F. Constantine;*
P. Byrne; F. Ganter;
J. Keogh.
 Seated: *L. Dalton;*
B. Clifton; J. Branagan
(Capt.); D. Dunne;
M. Leahy.
 Front: *J. Honeyman;*
C. Duffy.

they would have entrée into the Leagues and Cup competitions at various levels. Early in July they met and formed the 'Optimists', leasing a ground on the north side of the City. Everything was financed from the members' own subscriptions. This was the beginning of the Past Students Cricket Club which was to flourish for the next fifteen years. In those days, whist drives were a favourite way of raising funds for any worthy cause, and we find the 'Optimists' staging a whist drive in the college hall in January 1933, which was reported as being very successful. Charlie Wilson was the first Hon Secretary, 1931-32, followed by Matt Collison 1932-33, and Gerald Branagan 1933-34. At the end of April, the Present beat the Past by just one run in the Annual Match, and in June, the O'Gorman Cup was won once again by St Mary's.

Tennis

Tennis, because of the space it occupies in relation to the numbers that can avail of it, is of necessity, a minority sport. A court takes up considerable space while at most only four people can use it at one time and a game can last for hours. Nevertheless, it was a popular sport in St Mary's from the beginning. Before the acquisition of Kenilworth, tennis courts were laid out at the upper end of the front field and in an area now occupied by the senior school. On Prize-winners Day in June 1933, a special Cup was presented to T. G. Kavanagh for having won the college championships for the third year in succession. Bobby Pidgeon and Des McGuinn were players who went on to contest the no. 1 spot in the St Mary's LTC in the '40s.

Athletics

The Annual Sports Day continued to have the important place in the school calendar that it had acquired over the years from the foundation of the school. It was always a gala day, made colourful by the flags and bunting that decorated the front field, while the white lines of the track against the green of the lush grass, thronged with boys of all ages dressed in long white trousers or in singlet-and-shorts, made a brave sight for the passers-by who

paused in their hundreds to view the show. Many of the boys' families attended, dressed in their summer finery, with either the Garda or Artane Boys Band to spice the occasion. Heats were run the days before so that the full programme of field and track events could be run off expeditiously. The President of the PPU generally presented the prizes, and for the years under review at the moment, that meant Fr Ernest Farrell, whose interest in and encouragement of all things Mary's made him the outstanding past pupil of the school. When presenting the prizes in June 1932, he told the boys that he owed a great debt of gratitude to the Holy Ghost Fathers. The boys were now having the same advantages that he had, and he hoped that they would profit by them and always retain a great regard and gratitude for what was being done for them.

The only outstanding athlete of that period appears to have been Fred Constantine who gained 2nd place in the High Jump in the Leinster Colleges Sports in Lansdowne Road on May 13, 1933.

THE PAST STUDENTS

Revitalised Union

On December 3, 1927, a notice appeared in the national papers calling on the past pupils of St Mary's to re-form their Past Pupils Union. A meeting was held in the college on December 6 with about 40 present and the union was re-born. Jack O'Brien was elected provisional President. The press reported:

The St Mary's College (CSSp) Union was successfully inaugurated at a largely attended meeting in the College, Rathmines, last night. Fr Meagher, CSSp, presiding, said he had no doubt that the establishment of the union would rally all the old students, and make for the greater glory of the college, of which all of them were so proud.. A draft of the Constitution was considered and several amendments inserted.

Two days later it was further reported:

The St Mary's College Union – Mr J. C. O'Brien was unanimously elected President and Rev. T. Farrell, C.C. Vice-president, Mr A. O'Reilly, Hon. Sec. and Mr C. Spadaccini, Hon. Treasurer of the newly established St Mary's College, Rathmines, Union. Mr P. J. Hayden, Hon. Sec. of the Provisional Committee, read an interesting report of the work of that committee and said that everything augured well for the new union. They were in communication with many St Mary's men abroad and had promises of their whole-hearted support. The following were appointed to the Committee: Very Rev. R. A. Harnett, B.D. (Provincial of the Order); W. P. Blunden; P. J. Hayden; F. Purcell; G. E. Moore and P. J. Tierney.

With the school re-opened for just one year, it was obviously the old guard from pre-closure days that would form the bulk of the union. The names of the officers and committee-men are those who had given stalwart service in the earlier years of the century to the various activities of the past students. Their presence and interest did much to span that gap of ten years when the school was closed, and, in fact, life in the school and among the past students, went on as if there had never been a break.

There were two deaths that summer that recalled the earlier days of the school. They were of Bro. Honorius, who had been on the teaching staff in the 1890s and died on May 28, and Fr Jules Botrel, the prime mover in the founding of the College when he was



*Past Students
Annual Dinner,
1931*

Provincial Superior, the man who chose Larkhill as the site of the College and organised the loans which made its purchase possible. He died on June 3, 1928 at the age of 83.

The first extant Minute-book of the Union Committee dates from September 1929 and has William P. Blunden down as President. At this meeting Mr Blunden was elected President for the next year with Arthur O'Reilly as Honorary Secretary.

In May 1930 it was decided to play a cricket match with the present pupils of the school on June 7 and to hold a Garden Party on June 15 in the Clydagh Hotel, Greystones, where a meat tea would be provided (3/-) and games of different kinds, clock-golf, tennis with prizes of cigarettes, chocolates and golf balls. 58 acceptances were received for the event which was a great success.

This was an era when the Smoking Concert was one of the main bastions of male chauvinism, like the golf club and rugby club. Smoking was still considered an unladylike practice, hence smoking concerts were out of bounds for ladies. They had the dual purpose of raising funds and of getting the members together in an atmosphere of congeniality and conviviality, whatever about the health hazard of the atmosphere, and binding them closer together. Two concerts were held in October and November 1930, where the members were entertained by artistes from their own number. The proceeds were not great but the profit in camaraderie was considerable. These smoking concerts continued up to 1933 when they became Social Evenings.

A successful Bridge Drive was organised by the wife of the Lord Mayor, Lorcan Sherlock, in May 1932 and realised over £200 and £100 of this was handed to Fr Michael Meagher for the African Missions, who suggested the money be used to open a St Mary's College Bourse for the upkeep of a clerical student for the period of his studies (£600 needed). An elaborately framed picture of The Little Flower was donated by the Lord Mayor for the same purpose.

In October 1932 the union decided that the rugby club could become affiliated to the union by payment of a fee of one guinea. This would entitle the club to a seat on the union executive committee and put it in line for a grant from the union. In return, the union would have a seat on the rugby club committee. The same arrangement was agreed for the cricket 'Optimists', provided they changed their name to St Mary's College Cricket Club. In the Minutes of February 7, 1933, it is noted that the applications and contributions had been received from both clubs and that grants of £10 each had been forwarded to them.

For some time during 1933 a proposal to amalgamate the three unions of Blackrock, Rockwell and St Mary's was discussed and a Draft Constitution was even submitted, but as we shall see in the next chapter it was a long drawn-out affair.

Following the success of the College's Team in the Schools Junior Cup in 1934 the union decided to entertain the team with an excursion to Glendalough. Union members provided the cars to transport the boys.

Annual Mass

November 4, 1928 was the occasion of the first Mass for deceased past students organised by the re-vitalised Past Students Union and the beginning of an annual commemoration that has lasted down through the years. In November 1933, newly ordained Fr Kevin Devenish, former prefect, said the Mass for the deceased past students and staff members, prior to setting out for the missions in East Africa where he was to become the Apostolic Vicar of Addis Ababa during the Second World War.

Turkey Drive

An annual whist drive with turkeys as the main prizes was held every year coming up to Christmas and was a useful money-spinner.

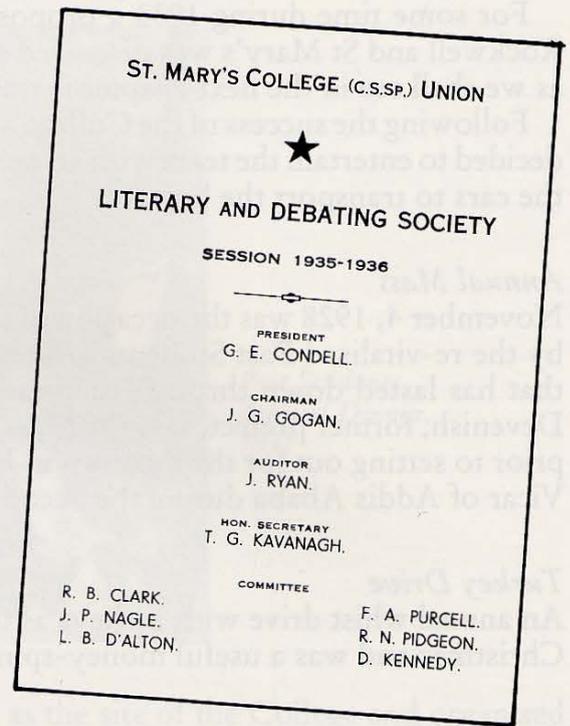
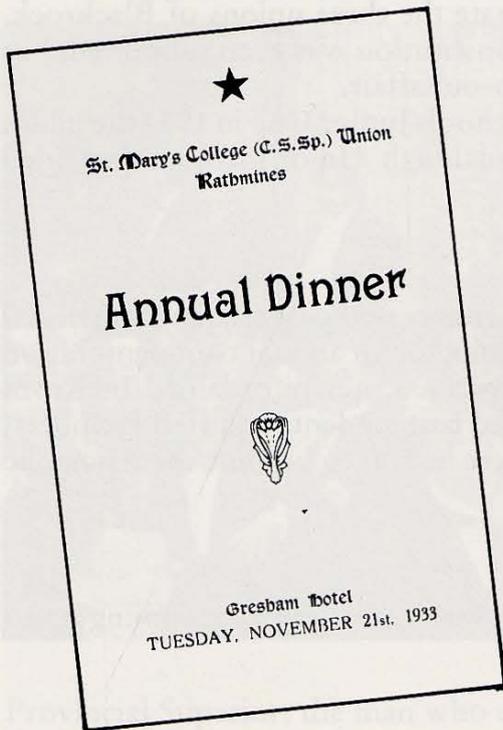
Annual Dinner

Although the first Union Dinner was held on April 19, 1928, and was generously reported in the daily press, the first notification of the holding of an Annual Dinner comes in the Minutes of the PPU Committee meeting held in the committee rooms at Harcourt St, on the 17th October, 1929. The provisional programme decided on for the coming year included the holding of the Annual Dinner on February 5, 1930. It would appear from the minutes that a dinner had been held the previous year at a loss of £10.16s.11d. For 1930, the estimate from the Gresham Hotel of 5/- per head, was accepted and the tickets priced at 7/6. Past student Joe Crofts, brother of actor/singer Gerald Crofts, was engaged as pianist for the evening for 10/-.

In November 1932 Fr Ernest Farrell was elected President of the Union and the activities of the union stepped up a gear. The AGM was reported widely in the press as was the Annual

*Past Students
Annual Dinner,
1933.
Among the guests at the
top table were
Bishop Shanahan, CSSp,
Dr. Crehan, CSSp,
Bishop Neville, CSSp,
Dr. E. Magennis,
and Fr. E. Farrell, CC,
Union President.*





Dinner in the Gresham with a summary of Very Rev Dr Harnett's address. The guests included the famous Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria who resided in St Mary's for a time after his retirement from Africa, and the former Bishop of Zanzibar, Dr Neville CSSp. During his term of office Fr Farrell presented the union with a beautiful Chain of Office to be worn by future Presidents. It was of silver gilt with a medallion bearing the image of the crest of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, and on the obverse is inscribed the donor's name. It was first worn at this Annual Dinner and blessed by Bishop Neville.

In November 1933 the Annual Dinner took place in the Gresham Hotel, at which Dr J. B. Magennis was praised for having been honoured by the French Government with the medal of the Legion of Honour for his medical services during World War I.

Golfing Society

In 1930 the St Mary's Union Golfing Society had joined the Schools Union Golfing Society and took part in the Annual Competition in Woodbrook. In conjunction with that Inter-Schools competition, it was decided that the St Mary's members would compete for a prize being presented by the union president, William P. Blunden.

In 1934 St Mary's were second in the Inter-Schools golfing competition.

Literary & Dramatic Society

At the Annual General Meeting of the union held in the college on October 9, 1930, at which Dr Jim Magennis was elected President in succession to William Blunden, a motion to establish a Dramatic Society was moved and carried. The first meeting of the new society took place in February 1931 when the union committee resolved itself into the new society with the addition of Messrs F. Purcell and G. CondeLL. *Trilby* was decided on as the first production and when the Theatre Royal gave tempting offers of Saturday and Sunday afternoons, it was decided to accept dates for the autumn. However, things did not seem to run smoothly, because at the meeting in the following October it was moved that a Dramatic Society be formed headed by Jack O'Brien with Frank Purcell Snr., A.

A MEMORABLE SVENGALI

"TRILBY" BY ST. MARY'S COLLEGE PLAYERS

Svengali is a villain on a grand scale, and as such he was played by Dr. J. B. Magennis at the Abbey Theatre last night. From the dark "Ha! Ha!" of his entrance to his pictorial last moment, he was drama incarnated. That is the only way in which the part can be dealt with. It was a powerful performance and carried the whole play to success.

In choosing "Trilby" to present, the St. Mary's College Dramatic Society set themselves a severe task. Its period and melodramatic quality and the mixed nationalities of the characters all set problems for the producer—problems which an inexperienced Company could not be expected fully to overcome. Unevenness of style and accent were inevitable.

While Gerard Crofts played "The Laird" with complete naturalness, Martin Power set his "Gecko" to the gesture of a more rhetorical age, and Miss Kitty Burke's Trilby, over-acted at the beginning, was sincerely and charmingly played at the end. Miss Bernadette Plunkett was the one actress who maintained an even excellence. Throughout the play her Madame Vinard was true to life and to France.

Mr. J. C. O'Brien was the producer. He is to be congratulated on the good team work of the company, and on the settings. Particularly effective are the lighted windows of the church outside in the second act. But what in the world, one cannot help asking, was Trilby doing in the afternoon dress of an English house-parlour-maid?

A large audience enjoyed the performance which, whatever its imperfections, was full of the proper atmosphere of drama and romance.

D. M.

"Trilby" at Abbey Theatre

In selecting "Trilby," the adaptation of Du Maurier's novel, as their first production after a lapse of about twenty years, the Dramatic Society attached to St. Mary's College Union set itself a very stiff task. The play, apart from the character of Svengali, is nothing, and that makes it all the more difficult to put across. But since last night's Svengali (Dr. J. B. Magennis) was packed with live melodramatic quality—there were times when one could almost see fire leaping from his eyes; and the disposition of his arms was always fully attuned to voice and situation, not to mention the villainous jet black locks and the malevolent beard jutting out at an angle of forty-five degrees—it follows that the night was highly successful. True, Trilby as presented by Miss Kitty Burke was a trifle milk-and-waterish, and there were characters who might have been timing voice and movement to the strokes of a metronome, but Svengali is the play and does not imply any slight to the very successful efforts of Mr. Gerard Crofts as the Laird, Miss Bernadette Plunkett as Madame Vinard and Mr. J. G. Gogan as the Rev. Mr. Bagot.

E. O'Brien, P. J. Hayden, W. Fanagan and Charlie Spadaccini, to produce theatricals for the union. At that same meeting a Literary and Debating Society was formed with Frank Purcell, Gerry Condell, John Gogan, P. J. Nugent, Gerry Cox and Denis Coveney, to organise debates. Fortunately, by December 1931 better sense prevailed and a halt was called to this proliferation of committees and the two societies were amalgamated as the St Mary's College Literary and Dramatic Society.

In April 1932 the re-vitalised St Mary's Past Students Literary and Dramatic Society produced the play *Trilby* in the Abbey Theatre. This was an adaptation of the Du Maurier novel in which Dr Jim Magennis had scored such a hit in the days before World War I, when as we have seen earlier, there was such a flourishing group of gifted amateur actors from the college treading the boards in Dublin. The play was produced by Jack O'Brien who was the Elocutionist in the school from 1931-34 as well as in pre-closure days, and had produced the play when it was presented in the Theatre Royal in 1916 in aid of the Holy Ghost Missions. Many of the original cast repeated their success of sixteen years before. Dr Jim Magennis was again the Svengali and well supported by Frank Purcell Sr., Gerald Crofts, Leo McCabe, John G. Gogan, Lorcan. C. Gogan and Arthur Spadaccini. Among the female players were Bernadette Plunkett, one of the leading actresses of the

time and lady announcer on Radio Éireann, Josie Deegan, Kitty Burke, Lucy Walsh and Bridie Power. The press notices of the production were laudatory.

In May of the following year, 1933, three farces were produced in the Abbey Theatre, *Flatiron Flynn* by Thomas King Moylan, *Shall We Join The Ladies?* by J. M. Barrie, and *Gringoire the Ballad Monger* by Arthur Shirley. Along with most of those who had appeared in *Trilby* the previous year were some of the more recent past pupils like Gerry Cox, Matt and P. J. Collison, as well as Jimmy O'Dea's sister, Rita.

In February 1934 the Past Pupils Union Dramatic Society presented *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* in the college hall in aid of the missions. This comedy by the humorous writer, Jerome K. Jerome, set in a boarding-house, was produced by Frank Purcell, Snr.

The Rugby Club

We have already seen the contribution made by the Old St Mary's Club to the game of rugby in Leinster from 1900 to 1916, and the fine reputation won by the club for the quality of the football they played and the sportsmanship they showed. During the time that the club was in abeyance after the closure of the college in 1916, that reputation was maintained by a number of outstanding players who were good enough to represent their province and even their country, although they did so wearing the colours of other clubs. Quite a number of ex-St Mary's players joined Bective Rangers, and three in particular did their Alma Mater proud as we have seen.

Within a few years of the re-opening, a trickle of past students began, and it became possible to think of re-activating the club. True, by this time the playing days of the pre-1916 Old Boys were over, but they retained their interest in the college and were prepared to rally round and give what help they could to the revival of the club.

The following is taken from an article in the 1975 St Mary's College Annual, which celebrated the club's 75th Anniversary:

"A very vigorous band of alickadoos from the pre-1916 club were still around and the new Old Boys were at hand, so a fusion of old and new was possible. The catalyst proved to be Commandant Gerry S. Cox, then a freshman in UCD. Undaunted by the fact that only twenty-five potential players were available, he approached Fr Ernest Farrell, then a curate in Aughrim St.

"To Fr Farrell, where the interests of St Mary's were concerned, no obstacle was too big, no effort too great. The club revival was underway within hours of his meeting with Gerry Cox. He gathered a task force consisting of Jimmy Ganter, Paddy Branagan, John G. Gogan, F. A. Purcell, W. Fanagan, A. E. O'Brien and N. F. Power. Within a fortnight this sextet had a ground – a rented pitch located in Mrs Doherty's poultry farm at Kimmage Grove, behind Kimmage Manor, an area now submerged under College Park Estate. Their search for a pavilion led them to a builder's yard in Sandymount. A spacious timber shed was bought for £50 and brought to Kimmage Grove. The internal reconstruction was done by the members under the direction of Nicky Power.

A stream flowed at the rear of the pavilion, a tributary of the nearby Poddle river, and during the first two seasons, the players, plentifully supplied with aluminium basins, had their 'shower'. Then water was laid on and an annexe built, which housed the shower room and the boiler. Located at the back of the pavilion, it provided the structure with support and helped maintain it in an upright position. There was no shortage of seats

as the holding of the Eucharistic Congress earlier in the summer had resulted in a plentiful supply of folding benches.

The immediate needs secured, it was necessary to establish management, finance and match committees. These were manned and supported mainly from the pre-1916 members. They were joined by F. R. Doherty, Lorcan Gogan, Dr J. F. O'Grady, V. E. Becker and others. The college also played an important role. The front field was at the disposal of the club for training. The college hall was available for countless concerts, whist drives and meetings, while from the community itself the team was provided with first class players from among the prefects.

One of the most outstanding prefects to play for the club was Joe Whelan, later to become Bishop of Owerri, Nigeria. His contribution to the club both on and off the field was immense. He led the club into the Junior League and was held in great respect by the team and the alickadoos. The happy relationship that grew between the old and new members was due in no small measure to his influence."

The rebirth of the club is generally taken to be September 8, 1932. Paddy Branagan was elected first captain of the club. Application was made for admittance to the Leinster Branch of the IRFU and accepted. However, at that date it was too late to enter the various League competitions for 1932-33, whose fixture lists were already completed, but the club was admitted to the Metropolitan Cup which was not due to begin until after Christmas, and the draw for it had not yet been made. Friendly fixtures were arranged with junior sides during the season. A quick exit was made from the Cup with a first round defeat by Railway Union, who were a far greater power in junior rugby in those days of private railway companies than they are today.

1933-34 was the first full season in competition and Mr Joe Whelan, who had just arrived in St Mary's as a prefect, was elected Captain for that year. A Seconds team contested the Minor League and Cup. A Present XV, bolstered with prefects, defeated a Past XV on



*Fr Ernest Farrell and
Dr Richard Harnett on
Union Day, 1934,
examining the Leinster
Schools Junior Cup won
that year.*

October 23, and, to show it was no fluke, did it again on December 26. An interesting fixture in the friendly season was with Shannon Buccaneers in Athlone.

In May 1934 the Rugby Club presented a concert in the college to raise funds to improve facilities in Kimmage Grove. A drill display by the pupils was featured as well as musical items by a variety of artistes, male and female, and a humorous sketch which featured the Frank Purcells, senior and junior.

Union Day

A noteworthy union event in that period was the first Union Day, which took place on June 17, 1934 in the college grounds and was widely reported in the press with photographs. It was the first of a long line of very successful occasions when the Past Pupils Union played host to the boys, their families and the families of the Union members. It was a fun day and a family day, with sports and games for all the family, intended to bind the past with the present, the parents and families with one another, and in this way help spread around the spirit that is uniquely St Mary's. The event fell into abeyance for a number of years, but happily it is once again one of the red-letter days in the union calendar.



Chapter Twelve

1934-1945



President
Very Rev. Fr Peter Walsh

REVEREND FATHERS

- Joseph Gilmore – Dean, Junior School (1934-51)
- Dr Joseph Whelan – Dean of Studies (1939-42)
- Patrick Murray – Dean of Studies (1942-53)
- Dr David Heelan – Dean of Discipline (1934-35)
- Michael Sexton – Dean of Discipline (1935-36)
- John Nealon – Dean of Discipline (1936-38)
- Thomas O’Sullivan – Dean of Discipline (1938-40)
- Fred Fullen – Dean of Discipline (1940-45) – Bursar (1945-51)
- Austin Seagrave – Dean of Discipline (1945-49)
- James Dowling – Bursar (1934-45)
- Dr James C. O’Neill – Professor (1934-45)
- Walter Kennedy – Professor (1942-72)
- John Branagan – Professor (Oct-Dec 1943)
- John Cassin – Professor (Jan-June 1944)
- Francis Barry – Professor (1944-88)
- Gerard Healy – Professor (Jan-May 1945)

REVEREND BROTHERS

- Kilian Milligan – Professor (1934-35)
- Benedict Tobin – Professor (1935-43)

REVEREND PREFECTS

Messrs Gerald Foley
John C. Quin
George Lahiffe
Robert Madigan
Francis C. Barry
Paul Cunningham
Thomas Reynolds
Michael Troy
Cornelius O'Flaherty
William A. Maher

James Kavanagh
J. Doyle
William O'Meara
Michael Frawley
Patrick Cremins
Richard Lehane
Ivan Galt
Arthur Lai-Fook
William Walsh
Sean Fahy.

Edward Holmes
Patrick Murray
John Hourigan
John C. O'Connor
Christopher Rooney
Francis McMahon
Patrick Townsend
Brian O'Connor
Thomas Mahon

LAY PROFESSORS

Mr John Gallagher (1926-57)
Mr John Nagle (1927-62)
Mr Arthur Barrett (1928-62)
Mr Flood - Drill Master (1926-36)
Mr Goddard - Drill Master (1936-45)
Miss Medlar - Dancing
Mr John C. O'Brien - Elocution

H.DIP. CANDIDATES

Rev. W. Murphy, C.S.S.R.
F. Duffy
J. Dore
C. Comerford
John Prendiville
Bro. Isidore Dempsey
K. Young
V. Kelly
Bro. P. Byrne
Rev. B. O'Connor

T. Sheehy
F. Henry
C. Fennelly
M. Coffey
Bro. Austin McCumiskey
Bro. Gerald McTiernan
M. O'Connell
J. Kilty
Bro. Doyle
Rev. W. Maher

J. Kennedy
C. Murphy
Rev. Terence Mulloy
James Donnelly
Patrick Brett
M. O'Domhnall
M. O'Meara
M. Brennan
Philip McCabe
Rev. F. Barry.

COMMUNITY

Michael Sexton - Retired (1938-41+)
Hugh M. G. Evans - Retired (1937-43+)
Michael Meagher - Holy Childhood (1926-46+)
Richard Harnett - Retreats, Missions (1934-39)
John Stafford - Provincial Bursar (1934-37+)
Denis Joy - Retreats, Missions
Edward Cleary - Retreats, Missions
Phil O'Connor - Retreats, Missions

THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Ireland severed its physical connection with the college in 1934. For seventeen years, St Mary's College had been the administrative headquarters of the Irish Holy Ghost Fathers and the residence of the Provincial Superior and his staff. For the past seven years, the Provincial was also president of the school. In 1934, Very Rev Dr Richard Harnett was replaced as Provincial by Very Rev Dr Daniel Murphy, former Dean of Studies in Rockwell College, where he had gained a formidable reputation for excellence in studies. Dr Murphy decided to take up residence with most of his staff in Kimmage Manor, where the building of a new senior scholasticate was about to begin. Only the Provincial Procurator, Fr John Stafford, remained on in St Mary's, till his death in 1937. The new President of St Mary's was Rev Fr Peter Walsh.

Fr Peter Walsh

Fr Walsh was born in Claremorris, county Mayo, in 1886 and did his secondary studies in Blackrock College, after which he joined the Holy Ghost Fathers, doing his novitiate, philosophy and theology studies in France where he was ordained in 1916. His first appointment was to St Mary's College, Trinidad, West Indies, where he taught until 1932. On his return to Ireland in that year he was appointed to the staff of Rockwell. Two years later he was transferred to St Mary's as President and Dean of Studies. For eleven years he guided the college, developing and stimulating the entire academic programme with its courses and examinations, its debating and dramatic societies, and the past students union in all its activities. In 1941 he undertook the first major building project since the school first opened fifty years earlier. When he was replaced as president in 1945 by Fr Thomas Maguire he stayed on as vice-president, a post he filled under three presidents until 1960. In that year he retired from active teaching, but his interest and enthusiasm never flagged. His eyesight began to fail him in his final years, but perhaps his greatest cross was the fact that he was no longer personally involved in all the minutiae of college life going on all round him. He died, fully conscious, on September 8, Our Lady's and the college's official birthday, in 1966.

In February 1937 Fr John Stafford, Provincial Bursar for the Holy Ghost Fathers and resident in St Mary's since 1917, collapsed when preparing to go to Lansdowne Road to watch Ireland play Scotland and was brought to the Mater Hospital where he died a week later of Bright's disease. The funeral in Blackrock College was attended by De Valera and William Cosgrave.

In January 1939 came the death of Dr Crehan, the second president of St Mary's from 1900 to 1904.

Bishop J. B. Whelan

The year 1939-40 is memorable for the fact that the former prefect, Mr Joseph Whelan, returned as Rev. Dr J. B. Whelan, having obtained ordination and a Doctorate in Divinity in Rome. He was appointed Dean of Studies and breathed new life into the college with his dynamic leadership and winning personality. To him must be credited many innovative ideas which helped propel the school on a progressive path in educational matters. Dr Whelan's standing with the past students since his days as captain of the rugby club, and in particular with Fr Ernest Farrell, the *eminence grise* behind all the activities of the School and the union, as well as the intrinsic merit of his ideas, ensured him the fullest support, while the force of his personality endeared him to the students. If for no other reason, Dr Whelan will be remembered for the impetus he gave to the study of the Irish language in the school during his three years as Dean of Studies. He himself went to the Gaeltacht every



*Bishop Joseph Whelan, CSSp, DD
 Prefect in St Mary's 1933-35
 Dean of Studies 1939-1942
 Bishop of Owerri 1950-1970*



*Bishop Joseph Whelan standing outside Owerri Cathedral
 after the Consecration of the Cathedral in 1978.*

summer to improve his own fluency and throughout his life continued to use it on every suitable occasion. He started an Irish Debating Society in the College which flourished for many years, first under Dr Whelan himself, and then under his successor, Fr Murray. In this as in so many other areas, his enthusiasm was infectious and spilled over into the usually rather cynical young. It was he who introduced the Legion of Mary into the school in October 1939, when Frank Duff, the founder of the world-wide movement and a past pupil of Blackrock College, came to inaugurate the first Praesidium in the college. It was he who started the boy scouts in the college in 1941 and asked Mr Frank Purcell, Jr, to be the first Scoutmaster. After three years in St Mary's, Dr Whelan went to Rockwell and after a short sojourn there was sent on the missions, where like all Holy Ghost Fathers his heart had been set. Nigeria was the field to which he was sent and he became Director of the Senior Seminary in Okpala, responsible for the training of young Nigerians aspiring to the Priesthood.

After five years at this task, he was selected to become the first Vicar Apostolic of Owerri, the Southern part of the Vicariate of Onitsha, when that populous ecclesiastical territory was deemed ripe for division. He was ordained Titular Bishop of Tiddi in 1948 and two years later, when the hierarchy was established in Nigeria and the vicariates were raised to the status of dioceses, he became Bishop of Owerri, a territory about a third the size of Ireland, with a population of about three million, about 200,000 of whom were Catholics, mainly of the Ibo tribe. For sixteen years, the church in Owerri diocese under Bishop Whelan experienced unprecedented development, not just in the number of baptized, but in the number of parishes established, churches built, primary and secondary schools and teacher training colleges, for both boys and girls, constructed and staffed, vocations to the priesthood and religious life fostered, with every incentive and support of christian life provided. By the time the country was engulfed in the civil war of 1966-69, the number of catholics in the diocese had increased by 300% and there were almost enough Nigerian priests to staff the pastoral works of the diocese. Even if all the expatriate priests had to leave, the basic work of the church could have continued without a hitch. Only in the area of education and, perhaps, administration, would there

have been lacunae, and these could have been quickly filled by competent laymen. That development had been providential, because, at the end of the internecine war, Bishop Whelan and his expatriate missionaries were declared *personae non gratae*, imprisoned and deported, leaving the administration of the diocese in the hands of one of the young men Bishop Whelan himself had trained in Okpala in the years 1943-48, Bishop Mark Unegbu, whose Nigerian clergy continue to grow yearly in numbers. Eastern Nigeria can boast today the largest senior seminary in the world, a title once worn by Maynooth College. Associated with Bishop Whelan in this work in Nigeria over the years was a large number of past students as well as past prefects and past staff of St Mary's, including Fr Tom Reynolds, tragically killed in a motor-cycle accident the very day of Bishop Whelan's Episcopal Ordination, Fr Gerry Healy, Fr Frank Leahy, Fr Willie Maher, Fr Tom Byrne, Fr Cothraigh Gogan, Fr Gerry Gogan, Fr Tom Maguire, Fr Raymond Kennedy, Fr Tony Geoghegan, Fr Colm Murray, Fr Brian Gogan, Fr Savigno Agnoli, all past pupils; Fr Fred Fullen, former Dean and Bursar, Fr Austin Seagrave, Fr E. Darcy, Fr D. Curtin, all members of the staff; Fr Jack Quin, Fr George Lahiffe, Fr Mike Frawley, Fr Frank McMahon, Fr Dick Lehane, Fr Pat Townsend, Fr Vinnie O'Connell, Fr Mick Reynolds, all past prefects.

On his expulsion from Nigeria, Bishop Whelan retired from the missions and began a most fruitful apostolate giving Retreats to clergy and religious all round the country, administering the Sacrament of Confirmation and lecturing on spiritual matters wherever called upon. Only failing health interrupted the exercise of his unfailing zeal. A few years ago he began to suffer from angina and the doctors advised him to cut back on all his activities, even on the gardening which was the one hobby he permitted himself from his later years in Nigeria. The cultivation of roses was his one joy. Some remission of the angina allowed him to return to this hobby, but all too soon the cancer from which he was to die began to manifest itself and for most of the last year of his life he was in daily stress and pain, while never losing his good humour and peace of soul and the gratitude for favours that characterised him at all times. On December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Mother, 1990 he died. He would appreciate that. He was in his 81st year.

Other notable events in the first term of that 1939-40 year were the Silver Jubilee of Fr Sexton's Ordination on September 12, and Fr Hugh Evans' 80th birthday on October 7, followed three weeks after by the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination which was attended by two bishops, the Provincial and the superiors of the five Holy Ghost Houses in Ireland. Later in the year were recorded the deaths of Fr John Kingston, a regular on the staff in pre-closure days and the author of *The Ideal Book of Poetry*, used for many years in schools throughout Ireland, and Archbishop Byrne of Dublin, a key figure in the campaign to re-open the college in 1926.

In 1943 Bro Benedict Tobin, after eight years in St Mary's where he had made himself virtually indispensable in the bookshop and library, but even more so in the staging and production of plays and concerts, was transferred to Rockwell in September. A few months later Fr Hugh Evans, who was the only living member of the original staff of St Mary's when it first opened its doors in September 1890, became gravely ill and, such was his fame, that an endless procession of people from everywhere came to see him before he died. He died two days before Christmas 1943 and the funeral took place in Blackrock College. Two days later, on Christmas Day itself, Bishop Joseph Shanahan of Nigeria, who had lived in St Mary's for some time after his retirement from Africa and was a faithful supporter of any events that took place in the college, particularly those associated with helping the missions, died aged 72, bringing to an earthly end the life of one of the brightest stars in the church's missionary firmament.

In April 1945, Fr Austin Seagrave replaced Fr Fred Fullen as Dean of Discipline.



The Junior School became a separate entity in 1934 with its own Dean, Fr Joseph Gilmore.

*Seated (4th from left):
J. C. O'Connor;
R. Madigan;
Bro. Benedict;
Fr Gilmore;
G. Lahiffe;
P. Cremin.*

Fr James Dowling long-time Bursar in the college became gravely ill and Fr Fullen replaced him.

RE-ORGANISATION

1934 saw the greatest internal reorganisation of the school in its history in the division of the school into Senior and Junior Schools. The Junior School comprised boys from the ages of eight to twelve, in four classes, Junior 1 to Junior 4, with its own Dean, and separate from the Senior School in everything – curriculum, time-table, discipline, games and extra-curricular activities. The Junior School occupied the four classrooms off the assembly hall. At the same time, everything in the Junior School was geared to the Senior School, as indeed, it is to this day, and the intention was, and still is, that the senior class of the Junior School form the junior class in the Senior School, prepared in every way for the educational and every other activity in the Senior School.

The Senior School comprised six classes, 1st year to 6th year, with ages ranging from twelve to eighteen. They occupied the six classrooms which today form the front of the Junior School. It was a small school and remained a small school until after World War II.

ACADEMICS

St Mary's became an Examination Centre for the Intermediate and Leaving Certificates in the summer of 1935. Hitherto the Rathmines Technical School (now the College of Commerce) had been the Centre for the Rathmines area, but that year there were general elections and the Tech was used as a polling centre.

Another innovation that year was regular religious instruction every Saturday morning, followed by Benediction for the whole school in the college chapel, a practice which continued until Saturday class was abolished by the Department of Education. Five boys did the Leaving that year, three gaining honours; seven did the Inter, five gaining honours.



The Senior School, 1940



The Junior School, 1940

There were 153 boys in the school at the start of the 1934-35 academic year, and 180 at the start of 1935-36. A feature of the latter year was the establishment of a Lending Library in the college, from which boys could take home books to read. Bro. Benedict Tobin, who had come to St Mary's from Rockwell College as school secretary and Junior School teacher, was in charge of the Library, which helped to introduce many to the lasting joys of reading.

With 23 candidates for the examinations St Mary's gained a centre in its own right, and from then on public examinations were held in the college every year. 9 of the 10 presented passed the Leaving, while 9 of the 13 who sat the Inter passed, six with honours.

There were 187 in the school in the year 1937-38. Frank Barry made his first appearance in the school the following year when he came as a prefect and started teaching French and cricket, a task he was to continue for the next fifty years – with just a short four-year break for theology and ordination. In 1939-40 the number on the roll topped the 200 mark for the first time in the school's history. There were 103 in the senior school and 116 in the junior, when school began that year on September 1, 1939. World War II began on September 3!

The following are the tabulated results of the Leaving and Intermediate Certificate examinations:

Leaving Certificate

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. Sitting</i>	<i>Hons.</i>	<i>Pass</i>
1935	6	3 (50%)	2 (83%)
1936	10	2 (20%)	7 (90%)
1937	10	8 (80%)	2 (100%)
1938	9	6 (66%)	2 (88%)
1939	10	6 (60%)	– (60%)
1940	12	4 (33%)	7 (91%)
1941	7	6 (85%)	1 (100%)
1942	11	3 (27%)	4 (63%)
1943	16	5 (31%)	9 (85%)
1944	18	2 (14%)	4 (66%)
1945	14	4 (27%)	6 (71%)

Intermediate Certificate

1935	18	5 (27%)	2 (37%)
1936	14	6 (44%)	3 (64%)
1937	13	5 (38%)	5 (76%)
1938	13	2 (15%)	6 (61%)
1939	12	6 (50%)	3 (66%)
1940	15	6 (40%)	7 (86%)
1941	18	14 (77%)	3 (88%)
1942	22	10 (45%)	9 (86%)
1943	21	9 (43%)	9 (85%)
1944	29	15 (51%)	6 (66%)
1945	26	12 (46%)	3 (57%)

The impetus to the teaching of Irish given by Dr Joe Whelan and continued by his successor as dean, Fr Murray, has already been noted. A practical expression of this

concern was shown in 1943 when a course in Irish was organised to run for two weeks during the summer holidays for boys from 1st, 2nd and 3rd years who wished to improve their written and oral command of the native language. Fr Murray, Fr Seagrave and Mr McCabe were in charge. The fee was 7/6 and 44 attended while 40 attended the following year when a native speaker, Mr O'Sullivan, joined Fr Seagrave and Mr McCabe in looking after it.

In 1943-44 one change in the curriculum was the offering of commerce as an alternative subject to French in 5th and 6th years.

DEVELOPMENT

16 did the Leaving in 1943 and 21 did the Inter. With the outbreak of World War II, many Irish children were shipped back to Ireland from abroad for the duration, and the number who came to St Mary's brought the roll up to 280 by the end of the year. With the prospect of even more the following year because of the London blitz, serious thought had to be given to expansion in order to provide for the expected influx. As early as December 1938, a plan had been considered to extend the college buildings, but it was the sudden increase of pupils at the beginning of the war that made it urgent. In October 1940, a house became vacant in Ardee Road and the College Council considered buying it as an alternative to costly building, but this was abandoned and in December 1940, out of five plans submitted by Robinson & Keeffe, architects, one of a block of 11 classrooms with a chapel upstairs was chosen at first and then revised to omit the chapel. It was thought that the existing chapel would suffice for the time being. However, the Provincial Council, after reviewing the plan, decided that a separate college chapel should be incorporated in any new plan, and so, a new plan was drawn up, including a chapel (where the present chapel was eventually built) and an L-shaped block of eleven classrooms joined to it, as it is at present. It was also decided that the new building would not be attached to the old. It was to be a single-storey building with walls capable of taking a second storey in the future. Work began in the



*St Mary's College, 1942
New Senior School extension to left of house. This extension of an 11 classroom block
became the ground floor of the 1953 extension.*

Summer of 1941 and the new building, minus the chapel, which was once more deferred, was ready to accommodate the senior school in September 1941. It corresponded to the ground floor of the senior school as it was before the recent alterations. All the senior school classes from 2nd year up were accommodated in this new building, with 1st year A and B in two of the rooms off the assembly hall.

By 1944-45 the senior school was double stream in the lower classes, and by the end of the decade, the entire school was double stream.

One other effect of the war was in the daily time-table. Because of the shortage of gas, which was severely rationed, thus bringing into existence the 'Glimmer Men' who went about ensuring that people were not using surreptitiously the glimmer of gas which remained in the pipes even when the gas was officially turned off. Since meals had to be cooked when the gas was on, it was decided to close the school every day from 12.30 to 2 p.m. to allow boys and staff return home for their dinners when gas was available. School resumed at 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. for the senior school and 3.30 p.m. for the juniors, an arrangement which continued until rationing ended.

The first permanent addition to the Lay Staff since 1929, when Mr Arthur Barrett joined Mr John Gallagher and Mr Michael Nagle, came when Mr Philip McCabe was appointed in September 1942.

THE LEGION OF MARY

It was Bishop Joseph B. Whelan who introduced the Legion of Mary into the college in 1939 when he was Dean of Studies. The inaugural meeting on October 16 was attended by the founder of the Legion, Mr Frank Duff, and two members from the Senior Praesidium attached to Rathmines parish church, Bro. Crowley and Bro Gaffney. The School Praesidium was named Stella Maris Intermediate Praesidium and intended for boys in the 5th and 6th years. Bishop Whelan was the first Spiritual Director and recited the opening prayers. Frank Duff addressed the assembled members and explained the aims and objects of the Movement and gave an insight into its working and made suggestions as to the type of work that might be undertaken by the members. The first officers elected were Russell Murphy, president, Sean O'Byrne, hon. sec. and Brendan O'Sullivan, hon. treas. Bro. Gaffney was introduced as the Senior Brother who would attend all meetings as Legion Guide and Counsellor.

Meetings were held that first year on Sunday mornings. The membership was made up of eleven from 6th year and four from 5th year. The works undertaken were sacristy work in the college chapel, sale of CTS pamphlets in the school, collection of used stamps for the missions, teaching of Mass Serving to the younger boys, helping to organise the Child of Mary Sodality. Finding suitable interesting work was a continuing problem. The importance of a school praesidium lay in its familiarising boys with the movement and imbuing them with its spirit so that after school they would wish to continue the work. The basic approach of the Legion is personal contact, which presupposes a maturity and self-possession that will not be found in schoolboys as a rule. If this is true, the school praesidium in St Mary's was successful because within two years a Senior Praesidium was formed from among the past students who had been in the Legion at school. It was called Stella Maris Senior Praesidium and the work undertaken was in the Morning Star Hostel for the homeless, a book barrow on Rathmines Road, house-to-house visitation, and later on, Mount St Boys Club.

Both praesidia continued to flourish and when a new work, a Boys Club attached to Rathgar Church, was offered to the Senior Praesidium, it was decided to split and form another. Thus, Virgin Most Pure Senior Praesidium was founded in 1953 for that particular work, to which was added sessions with the book barrow on Rathmines Road.



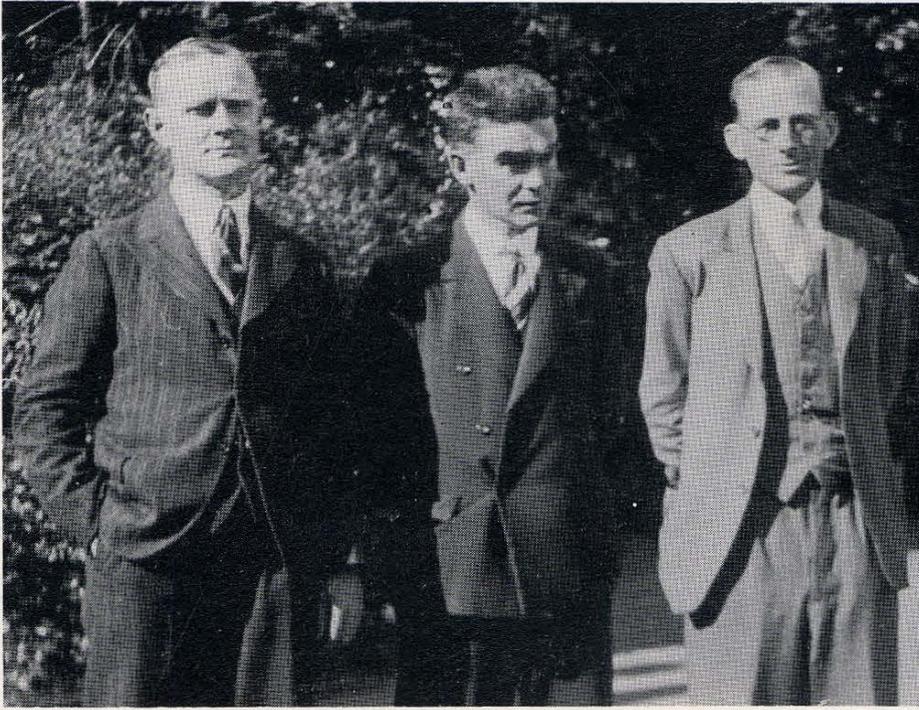
*Inaugural Praesidium of
Legion of Mary, 1939*

Back: *D. Hughes;*
D. Holmes; R. Blake;
S. O'Byrne.
Centre: *V. Stubbs;*
P. Byrne; P. Collins;
A. Lalor; E. O'Kelly.
Front: *W. Maher;*
B. O'Sullivan;
R. Murphy;
Dr J. Whelan, CSSp;
E. Redmond; P. Kelly;
J. Carson.

In 1955 St Luke's Hospital in Highfield Road became available for visitation and again it was decided to divide up and form a third praesidium for this work. This increased senior activity had its effect on the school praesidium which was now guided by one of the senior members, who did much recruiting among them. The Legion flourished in the school to the extent that it was decided to split into two, and thus Virgin Most Pure Intermediate Praesidium was formed in 1956. The principal work here was visitation of the National Children's Hospital in Harcourt St, for which the members collected toys and comics from the boys. The members also helped to organise the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association in the school.

In 1960, the Legion of Mary attached to St Mary's celebrated its 21st birthday. Over the years the membership had fluctuated. For a short while, the two intermediate praesidia had to amalgamate in order to survive, but intensive recruiting solved the problem. The senior praesidia were constantly looking for new members in order to spread the work-load, which was particularly heavy both in the boys clubs and house-to-house visitation. Somehow, and particularly through the hard work of the dedicated members, they managed to survive with the yearly influx from the school.

Misconceptions on the part of clergy and laity during and after the Second Vatican Council, which led to a downgrading of popular devotion to Our Blessed Mother, as well as the jettisoning of many of the supports to daily christian living which had stood the Irish people in particular in good stead over the years, like the rosary, benediction and various sodalities, had an equally deleterious effect on recruitment to the Legion of Mary. Added to this was the lack of attractive, stimulating work for the student praesidia. Membership dwindled and finally fell off to nothing. The College Annual of 1971 is the last in which mention is made of the Legion of Mary in St Mary's College. In 1970 the two intermediate praesidia had amalgamated in order to survive but by 1971 there were only four members in the school praesidium and an organisation that had been for over thirty years a shining beacon in the life of the college, came to an end. But who knows? Perhaps some day in the future, the Blessed Patroness of the college may still find occasion to revive in a school in the city of its birth a movement which has brought nothing but lustre to her name.



Long-Serving Teachers

John Nagle (1927-62)

John Gallagher (1926-57)

Arthur Barrett (1928-62)

SCHOOL DRAMATICS

Christmas 1934 was the occasion of the annual entertainment, which that year consisted of two plays, *The Crimson Coconut*, described as 'an absurdity', and *The Star of Christ*, a nativity play with Paddy Delaney as the Archangel Gabriel, Jack Crean as Our Lady, Jack O'Connell as St Joseph and Ivor Hooper as Herod.

The following year it was *Snobs*, a one-act comedy, and *Tarsicius*, the story of the boy-saint of the catacombs. The latter production was notable for the first appearance on the stage of Dermot Walsh who was a leading actor throughout his schooldays, joined the Longford Players at the Gate Theatre after leaving school and made quite a considerable name for himself on the English stage and on the screen. He first appeared on the screen in 1948 in the lead in *Hungry Hill*, which featured a number of distinguished Abbey actors, F. J. McCormick, Eileen Crowe, Arthur Sinclair, Siobhan McKenna and Dan O'Herlihy, and for the following fifteen years appeared regularly on the British screen and stage, and appeared in a television serial as Richard the Lionheart in 1962.

1936 saw a return to the practice of an entertainment on the occasion of the annual distribution of prizes at the end of the academic year. On May 27, the Distribution of Prizes was preceded by a concert of songs, sea shanties, recitation (by Cyril Byrne) and Sea Scout Drill. After the Distribution there was a recitation by Dermot Walsh and a sketch about pirates called *An Island of Sea Dreams*. The Christmas entertainment that year was a very full programme with a two-act play called *The Four Counsels* set in ancient Ireland, followed by six concert items by the Junior School, three recitations and three choruses, rounded off with a one-act comedy concerning a poacher and a parish priest, played by Michael Coffey and Jerome O'Sullivan respectively.

The Bishop's Candlesticks was the play presented at the annual Distribution of prizes in May 1937, while at Christmas, they were content with a one-act tragedy, *Watchers for the Dawn* and a one-act comedy *The Coiners*. A much more ambitious undertaking was the operetta presented in May 1938, *William Tell*, with Cyril Byrne playing the eponymous hero. This was preceded by the Junior School production of Padraic Pearse's *Íosagán*.

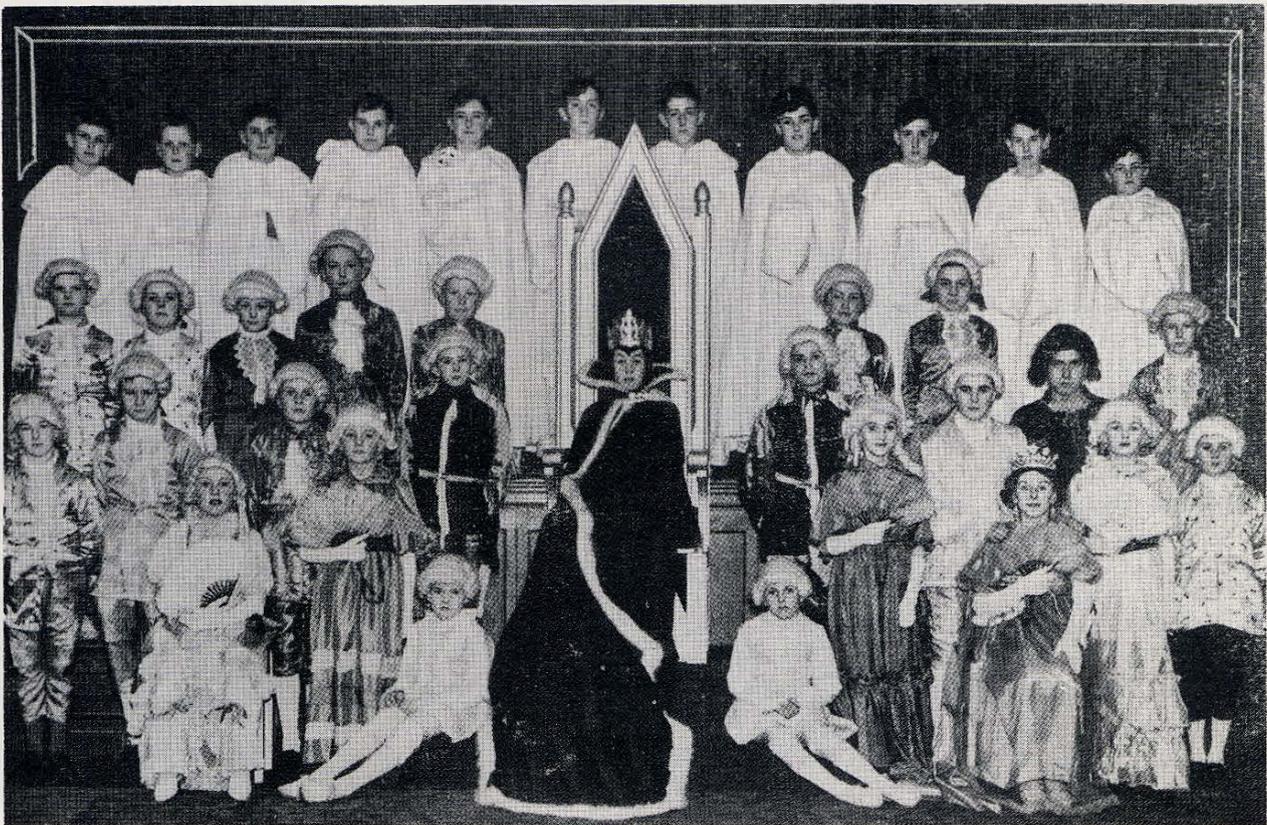
The interval between the plays was filled by Irish dancers, one of whom was Tom Maguire, and the presentation of the Holy Childhood Cups for rugby and cricket in the Junior School by the Director of the Holy Childhood, Fr Michael Meagher, CSSp. The entertainment was in aid of the Holy Childhood. The Sherlock Holmes mystery, *The Speckled Band* was the choice for the Christmas show in 1938 with Jock Harbison playing the famous detective and Sean O'Byrne as his assistant, Dr Watson.

For their summer presentation, the junior school tackled the operetta, *Pearl, the Fishermayden*, with Jacko Sullivan, Reggie Redmond, Cyril Byrne and Dermot Walsh taking leading parts. Dr Douglas Hyde's one-act play, *Maistin an Bheurla* was the pipe-opener and Irish Step-Dancing filled the interval. Again there was a performance in aid of the Holy Childhood.

The Christmas production of the Senior School in 1939 was a detective thriller called *Grumpy*, with good notices in the press for Jim McKay, Dermot Walsh, Cyril Byrne, Bernard O'Kelly and Reggie Redmond. But the palm (or should one say Oscar?) for the production of the decade must surely go to *Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs*. Costumes, scenery, acting, singing, dancing, orchestra (under Michael Lynch, pre-1916 past student) were all superlative and a credit to Fr Gilmore and Bro. Benedict, the co-producers, and their wonderful, enthusiastic helpers. It set a new standard for all future productions, which we are delighted to say has been maintained to this day.

In 1941 it was *H.M.S. Ambassador* with Jacko Sullivan (later eminent surgeon in the Mater Hospital) as the First Lord of the Admiralty. The musical was followed by an Irish translation of *The Monkey's Paw*, which was produced by Dr Joe Whelan. The Christmas offering that year was *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, produced by Fr Paddy Murray.

In September 1941, the first college scout troop was inaugurated with Frank Purcell, Jun. as scoutmaster. Frank was a past pupil, as was his father before him. Frank Senior had been one of the shining lights of both the college and past pupils dramatic scene, and



Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1940

DRAMATIC SOCIETY 1939-40.

"GRUMPY"

By HORACE HODGES AND T. WIGNEY PERCYVAL.



CAST OF CHARACTERS :

MR. BULLIVANT.....	J. McKAY.	ERNEST HERON (grand-nephew).....	R. MURPHY.
RUDDOCK (valet).....	J. SULLIVAN.	MR. JARVIS.....	D. WALSH.
MR. VALENTINE WOLFE.....	B. O'KELLY.	DR. MACLAREN.....	S. O'BYRNE.
KEBLE.....	R. O'CONNOR.	MERRIDEW (butler).....	A. WALSH.
VIRGINIA (Bullivant's grand-daughter)	R. REDMOND.	MRS. MACLAREN.....	A. McGLOUGHLIN.
		SUSAN	C. BYRNE.

βρέιξ-ριότ άπολλο

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs"

AN FHUIREANN.

Pádraig O Domhnaill, (duine uasal, tuaithe)
Master C. Gogan

Cathal O Néill, (a oncaill).....Master F. Ryan

Eoghan O Máille, (a dháileamh)
Master A. McGloughlin

Diarmuid O Brian, (gasóg).....Master P. Wilson

Colum Crofts, (gasóg).....Master F. McQuirke

Caoimhin O Lionsigh, (feadhmannach)
Master J. Fanagan

Gasóga :

F. McQuirke, B. Dodd, R. Murray, J. Doolan, T. Schwarz, G. Fearon, M. Lavelle, K. Gallagher, U. O'Connor, P. Bermingham, C. Cairns, J. Drumm, L. Delaney, J. Hughes, K. McQuirke.

THE CAST.

SNOW-WHITE	...P. Campbell.
DWARFS : DOC.	...C. Brady.
GRUMPY	...M. Cronin.
HAPPY	...N. Murray.
SLEEPY	...B. McAuliffe.
SNEEZY	...V. Joyce.
BASHFUL	...K. Neville.
DOPEY	...G. Montgomery.
THE QUEEN	...R. Redmond.
PRINCE CHARMING	...J. Peters.
CARL (Huntsman)	...J. Sullivan.
COURTIERS : Ladies	...D. Dempsey.
	T. Maguire.
	M. Waters.
	M. Burke.
GENTS	...W. Scott, D. Tannam, B. Lynch, A. McCarthy, G. Gogan, L. Graham, T. O'Brien, B. Kennedy, F. Morris, B. Redmond, J. Kirby, S. O'Reilly, B. Fitzsimon, D. Foley, L. O'Neill, M. Cremin, B. O'Reilly, H. Dowling.
HERMITS	...C. Byrne, Cor. Gogan, T. O'Brien, J. McQuirk, W. Scott, D. Magee, Conal Gogan, P. Bolger, F. McQuirk, S. Coakley, W. Burgess, P. Watmough, F. Fennell, J. Grace, D. Tannam.

indeed of the Dublin dramatic scene with the Irish Theatre Company. Frank Junior was just as prominent in his day, taking the lead in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in Blackrock for decades, and in amateur musical productions all over the city. It was natural that he should turn to a concert to raise funds for the new scout troop, and on St Patrick's Day, 1942, the first of many scout entertainments took place, with Frank himself providing one of the vocal items, and a young Ulick O'Connor doing conjuring tricks!

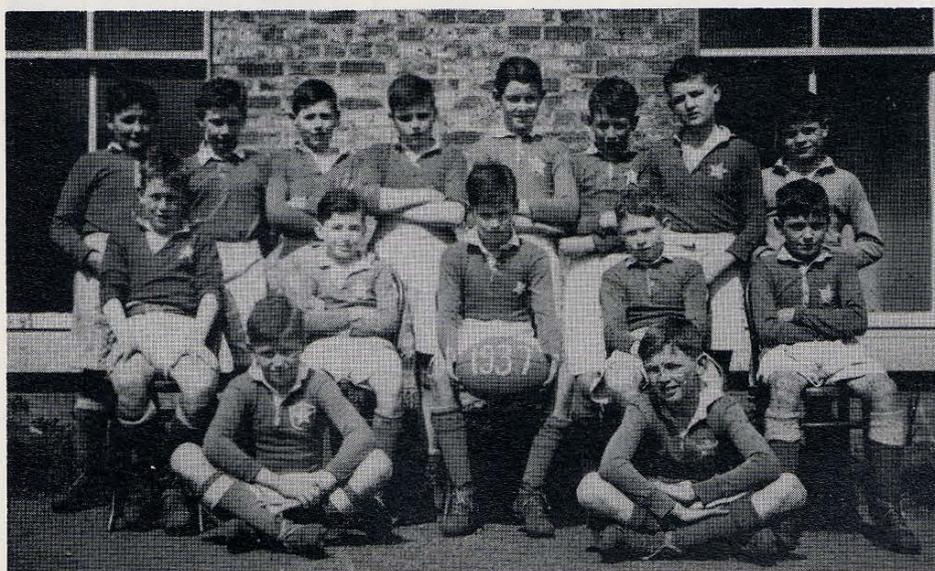
The first of what you might call the classical English dramas to be produced was *She Stoops to Conquer* in December 1942, directed by Fr Murray who had now taken over from Bro. Benedict who had been transferred to Rockwell. Fr Murray also produced *Golden Priest* by Aodh de Blacam, the following December, 1943, with Michael MacCormac as St Oliver Plunkett. The next year, 1944, Fr Murray was joined by Fr Frank Barry in the production of *The Rivals*, and for nearly forty years, Fr Barry was responsible for all the fine productions staged in St Mary's until 1980. The final presentation of the period under review was another classic – Molière's *Would-be Gentleman*.

GAMES

Rugby

The period 1934-45 was not without its share of success in rugby, although the U-13 Cup was the only inter-school competition won. In the 1935-36 season Dermot Smyth was honoured with an interprovincial cap as scrum-half for Leinster against Munster. In the Cup competition, the JCT beat High School 11-3 in the first round and then drew with St Andrew's 11-11, defeating them in the replay 5-3. They then beat CUS 6-0, but were no match for Rock, the eventual cup-winners, in the semi-final, which they lost 15-0. The SCT, which was made up largely of the successful JCT team of 1934 was far too light as seniors to have much chance. They began with a 6-3 defeat of King's Hospital, but when two of their bigger players, Ivor Hooper (the goal-kicker) and Lorcan Foley, were unable to play because of illness, they were summarily beaten by Belvedere 17-0.

In the 1936-37 season, 'flu was rampant in the schools and St Mary's went down by 7-3 to their old rivals Terenure, the four points coming from a dropped goal. The Juniors went down by an even narrower margin, 3-0 to Belvedere, that year's cup-winners.



*Under 13 Provincial's
Cup Team, 1937*

Back: A. Hughes;
J. Waldron; Unknown;
W. Bergin; Unknown;
A. Christian; R. Blake;
L. Donnelly.
Seated: M. Waldron;
D. O'Sullivan;
B. O'Rourke;
C. Fitzgerald;
T. Kearns.
Front: Unknown;
Unknown.

The 1937-38 season opened with wins for the JCT over Rock Day-boys and Terenure, while the SCT beat O'Connell's School and High School. After Christmas, on January 22, they shared the honours with Terenure by winning the JCT match 10-3, and losing the SCT match 3-0. The JCT's good showing in the friendlies gave some hope for a good run in the Cup. It began inauspiciously with a two-time draw with King's Hospital, 3-3 in the first and 0-0 in the second, before St Mary's won through to meet and beat CBS Dun Laoghaire, 15-0. However, O'Connell's put paid to their effort with an 8-3 defeat. The SCT began with a flourish. They beat Wesley 16-0 and CUS 18-0, thus qualifying for the senior section, where they met Newbridge whose three penalties bettered the two tries and a convert of St Mary's. Result: 9-8.

1938-39 would have been rather undistinguished except for the emergence of George Norton as a power in Irish rugby at full-back and Terry Coveney at centre. George's brother, Austin, had already made the full-back berth on the St Mary's Club team his own and was to hold onto it for the next ten years. He was an immaculate fielder of the ball with uncanny positional sense, a crunching tackle, a lengthy touch-kicker and drop-kicker, as well as being a dependable place-kicker. In fine, he was a splendid full-back and it is one of life's mysteries why he was never picked for province or country. George was in the same mould as Austin, with perhaps a shade greater mobility, although Austin's positional sense often gave him the appearance of not moving quickly. George himself was deprived of many representative honours. As a schoolboy he had to share the position on the Leinster Schools team with Jackie Staunton, the O'Connell's out-half. Jackie was a natural footballer, as adept at Soccer and Gaelic football as he was at rugby. After school he played for almost a decade with Garryowen, helping them to a Munster Cup win in 1947, but never really fulfilling the promise the Leinster selectors saw in him. George, on the other hand, had to play second fiddle to Austin in the St Mary's Club. For a period he played as wing-forward in order to gain first-team experience, although at this time St Mary's were only a junior club. However, he quickly gained his due recognition when he transferred to Bective Rangers in order to have senior rugby exposure and became one of the greatest full-backs ever to represent Ireland and No. 1 choice as full-back on the Lions 1950 Tour of New Zealand, the college's first British and Irish Lion.

Terry Coveney got no recognition for his undoubted ability as a centre or out-half while at school, but then it never was easy for a boy from a weaker side to catch the eye of the selectors, who probably felt they had done enough in picking Norton. But after leaving school in 1939, Terry quickly made his mark with the Club, which became a Senior Club in 1940, and was a regular on the Leinster team and on Irish XV's during the war. The only International he played for which caps were awarded was against Scotland in 1947.

1939-40 was equally undistinguished. With just 12 in 6th year and 11 in 5th year eligible, the SCT had to be filled out with some from 4th year, who, in fact were among the better players on the team. The opening match was against High School, whose captain, David Orr, was picked as centre for Leinster. He later went on to become head of the multinational Imperial Chemicals and was knighted some years ago. He scored their try and kicked the rest of the High School's points. Three St Mary's tries, two from Stevie Atkins and one from Seamus 'Jammers' Mulvey, left St Mary's ahead by one point at the end, 9-8. The next round was against the old foe, Terenure. Both sides scored a try in the very dour forward struggle, but Terenure were able to convert theirs while the St Mary's conversion hit the bar and fell back harmlessly into the field of play. Result: 5-3.

With four regulars on the team down with 'flu the JCT, which had acquitted itself well during the year, went down at the first hurdle in the cup, being beaten by Pres Glashule, 11-3. As small a school as St Mary's was then could not afford to be without four regulars on any team.



Senior Cup Finalists, 1943

Back: J. Murray;
 L. Donnelly;
 M. Corrigan; D. Swan;
 A. McGloughlin;
 S. Riordan.
 Seated: V. Keogh;
 M. Waldron;
 L. McGauran;
 A. Hughes; B. Lynch;
 P. Bolger; T. Browne.
 Front: J. Ryan;
 J. Hennigan.

Junior Cup Finalists, 1943

Standing: K. Lynch;
 A. McCarthy; W. Scott;
 B. Redmond; M. Farrell;
 J. Dardis; P. Gogan;
 M. Waters.
 Seated: D. Corrigan;
 L. Graham;
 C. O'Flanagan;
 J. Fanagan;
 U. O'Connor
 Front: P. Funge;
 G. Fearon.



*Under 13s Provincial's
 Cup Winners, 1943*

Standing: B. Fitzsimon;
 F. Fennell; G. McCarthy;
 B. O'Kelly;
 A. O'Connell;
 D. Murphy;
 N. Corrigan; J. Drumm.
 Seated: J. Nestor;
 L. Lynch; J. Hughes;
 D. O'Sullivan;
 Joe Fanagan.
 Front: R. Whitty;
 G. Drumm.

1940-41 began well for the SCT with a defeat of Rock Day Boys in September and a 9-9 draw with Newbridge in October. However, in the cup Belvedere beat them 6-0. Then Belvedere went on to beat the Juniors also, four days later. It was left to the U-13s to salvage something from the season which they did marvellously, beating Rock Day Boys in Blackrock and The Boarders and Willow Park there too to take the Provincial's Cup.

1941-42 seemed to be auguring well for the SCT before the Christmas holidays. Then in January they had a good win over Newbridge and Rock Day Boys before embarking on the cup campaign in which they defeated King's Hospital decisively in the quarter-finals. In the semis they came up against an exceptionally strong Castleknock team who won 12-0. The JCT defeated High School in the cup before succumbing to Belvedere. The U-13 beat Willow Park 14-0 before losing to the Rock Day Boys and then beating the Boarders. This meant a play-off between St Mary's and Rock Boarders and St Mary's won 10-0 to retain the cup.

If ever there was a 'nearly' team in St Mary's it must surely have been the SCT of 1942-43. This was the year when the school began to play all its home matches in Kimmage Grove instead of the confining space in the field in front of the college, which was really suitable only for younger boys. Only the cruellest misfortune kept them from being the first to capture the Leinster Schools Cup. Before Christmas they scored a number of victories against strong opposition in a series of games with Rock, Terenure, High School, St Andrew's and Terenure a second time, losing only once, in a return game with Rock. After Christmas they lost only to Newbridge. In the cup they accounted for King's Hospital in the quarter-final and met a very strong Belvedere team, captained by tennis international Joe Hackett, in the semi. Penalties were exchanged and Louis McGauran got an unconverted try to leave the score 6-3 when Alec Hughes, the St Mary's centre, kicked to the corner flag. Following up quickly was Vincent Keogh, now Brother Brendan CSSp. The ball bounced on the Belvedere try-line between the full-back and wing threequarter, each leaving it to the other while Vincent nipped in between them and grounded the ball for a try which Liam Donnelly converted, and St Mary's were through 11-3. Then came the crunch, a match with Rock in the final! In the words of Paddy Bolger, former President of the Leinster Branch and Hon Treasurer of the IRFU and wing threequarter on the St Mary's team, "Rock didn't lose finals in those days". The *Irish Times* described the game as "the best seen in Dublin this season". In his history of the Leinster Schools Senior Cup, published in the centenary year, 1988, Declan Downs begins his account of the game with a quotation from the *Irish Times*:

In the long history of the cup few more exciting or better contested games can have been played, nor can the standard of play have been higher. Rock seldom can have had to fight so hard to win a final.

He continues:

Centre Alec Hughes' 1943 XV set the tone for future generations by playing champagne rugby during a cup run which ended in a narrow 9-6 final defeat by Rock.

Hughes inspired his teammates by creating the opening for second row Dick Swan to level the scores, 3-3, at half-time, and though Rock stretched their lead to 9-3, St Mary's never wavered, despite losing full-back Myles Kavanagh through injury. Donnelly left the pack to man the last line of defence, but still Mary's gave as good as they got. The *Irish Times* reported: "Their seven forwards beat Rock for the ball, while the backs revealed qualities in attack almost equal to the winners."

Donnelly landed a penalty to further discommode Rock, and interprovincial centre, Benny Lynch, almost raced clear, following an intercept, before time ran out on St Mary's.

The *Irish Times* praised the performance of scrum-half, hard, straight-running backs, McGauran, Hughes and Lynch.

Forward Michael Waldron joined Lynch on the Leinster team against Ulster, while the team was coached by Coalisland's Fr Fred Fullen, a Rock senior medal winner in 1925. Bolger received interprovincial recognition in the centre the next year and also captained the Club's Firsts before injury finished his career at the early age of 25.

It was undoubtedly the school's finest hour on the rugby field to that date, and it was emulated and equalled by the JCT that same year. This particular team had been a very successful Under-13 team, containing excellent players like Michael Waters, Willie Scott, John Fanagan, Charlie O'Flanagan and Ulick O'Connor. But again it was Rock in the final. The result: 5-3 for Rock. But the same players would be back for a shot at the top honours two years later.

In one category at this time St Mary's were supreme, and that was in the Under-13s. They won the Provincial's Cup no less than four times in a row, 1941-42-43-44. By this time the competition had widened to include Blackrock Boarders and Willow Park, as well as Blackrock Day-boys. Later it would include St Michael's and Templeogue.

The 1943-44 SCT was useful without being in any way spectacular, defeating both High School and Belvedere in the run-up to the cup competition. Unfortunately they met a tough nut for openers in Clongowes, with whom they drew, but failed to repeat the effort in the replay. The same school then did the same for the St Mary's Juniors. It was left to the U-13s once more to keep the flag flying which they did by defeating Willow Park in the final of the Provincial's Cup.

1944-45 was a rather mediocre year. The SCT met Newbridge in the Cup and failed narrowly, 3-0. The JCT turned the tables by soundly defeating the Newbridge Juniors, 17-0. However, Clongowes again proved their downfall, winning 11-6 in a closely contested match. And so, for the fifth year in succession it was left to the U-13s under Michael O'Dwyer to bring home the bacon, which they did by the narrowest of margins over Blackrock Day Boys, 10-9.

Fr Barry, whose fifty-year involvement with St Mary's as a prefect and priest gives weight to his opinion, feels that the greatest handicap to any Mary's team in the '30s and '40s was the conviction that because of the school's size, they could never hope to do more than give the 'big guns' a good match. The lack of facilities for games in the school, and even of basic equipment, along with the fact that very few boys outside the team squads, actually played rugby, only reinforced this conviction. It was a conviction which found visible expression in the way the school supported the team in the cup matches, all of which took place in Donnybrook. Instead of filling a section of the stand as they do today, it was the custom to gather round a college flag on the far side of the ground, as though they hadn't gained the right to a place in the stand. Fortunately, there arrived on the staff in 1943-44 the man who would set in motion the process which would eventually break down that inferiority complex. He was Fr Austin Seagrave. Although he arrived in 1943, it was not until the latter part of 1944-45, when he became Dean of Discipline, that he was able fully to put in train the ideas he had in mind for the improvement of both facilities and morale. However, even in his first year on the staff, when he took over the JCT, he began to carry out some of his ideas, and in this he was ably assisted by the prefects, two in particular, Michael Troy (now a Holy Ghost Father in Canada), and Patrick Townsend (who worked as a missionary in Nigeria for twenty years and then in Mexico where he died in 1971). Both

played for the Club Senior XV, a fact that endeared them to the boys, and they set about whipping up organised support for the teams in the cup campaigns. Reggie Redmond was the cheer-leader and singing practices were held for the songs composed by Mick Troy to the tunes of Step Together and Ireland, Boys, Hurray!, and the new war-cry:

Samacora, Samacora, Samacora – Rah-Rah,
Samacoray, Samacoray, Samacoray – Ray-Ray.

In the words of Fr Troy:

St Mary's not merely won for themselves a name for *Rugby*, they won it for *Organised Support*. St Mary's won not only on the field but also on the stand. Practically the whole school to a man rallied round the White and Blue – organised into their ranks, under section leaders, and directed by Reggie Redmond.

All together White and Blue,
Come on, backs, and forwards too,
Fixed in front be every glance,
Forward at the word, Advance.
Rallied round the White and Blue,
Thus prepared, we reck not whether
Foes strike, Bind tight!
Steady boys and play together.
Steady boys and play together.

It ushered in a whole new era for the school's participation in sport, because it involved those who had had previously very little interest in games because they did not themselves play. Now they had an interest because they were participating actively. And it had the added plus of bringing the school together as never before.

Cricket

Cricket was the main summer game in St Mary's from its beginnings and retained its importance until quite recently. Even today, it is enthusiastically played in the Junior School, due in no small measure to the sterling work of Dr Deasy and some of the parents and teachers. During the '30s and '40s its importance even in the Senior School was almost on a par with rugby. But unlike rugby, excellence at it did not depend on physique to any marked degree, although fitness was as essential as in any other game, and all else being equal, a stronger player was a better player. The Leinster Branch of the Irish Cricket Union sponsored three schools competitions, a Senior Cup, Junior Cup and Under-14 Cup, while the O'Gorman Cup as we have seen was competed for between St Mary's and Rock Day-boys. While the 30s did not produce any cup-winning sides apart from the O'Gorman Cup, it did produce some excellent cricketers, notably Fred Scott, who captained the Leinster Schools in 1939, and might easily have had an international career in the game if he had elected to join Leinster or some other senior cricket club rather than throw in his lot with St Mary's C.C. which had only intermediate status. Other very useful cricketers of that era were Paddy Branagan, Charlie Wilson, the Boyd brothers, Bill, Gerry and Cecil, the Pratt brothers, Richard, Frank and Phil, Matt Collison, Con Duffy, John Honeyman, Niall O'Connell, the Hooper brothers, Ivor, Barry and Niall, Tommy Kearns, who went on with Gerry Boyd to join Phoenix when the St Mary's Club folded in 1945, played senior cricket for them and rose to be president in their centenary

year. But it was not until 1945 that the first Leinster Cup was won, and this was the Junior Schools Cup, under the captaincy of John Hughes. Cricket in St Mary's had received quite a fillip from Frank Barry when he came as a prefect in 1938, and even more so when he returned in 1944 after his ordination. He took charge of a JCT that had done well in the O'Gorman Cup the year before. He was aided in his efforts by Fr Seagrave who negotiated with Leinster Cricket Club, just across the road from St Mary's, for the boys to practise on a decent cricket square and receive coaching from the club which was and remains today one of the premier cricket clubs in the country. All this bore fruit in 1945 when the Juniors brought back to St Mary's the first cricket trophy since the Senior Cup win of 1916.

In 1936-37 good wins were recorded over Wesley and Rock, but Rock Day Boys won the O'Gorman Cup despite one resounding defeat by St Mary's, 52-11!

World War II made its presence felt in numerous ways, even in the cricket sphere. Imported luxury items were at a premium during the war years, including cricket balls. It became impossible to get them. The factories in England were geared to far more important matters. The result was that most games were played with balls made from a cork composite which did not stand up to the wear and tear of the game and would soon take on any shape but the spherical. They did little to improve cricketing technique.

In 1939-40 St Mary's beat Rock in the O'Gorman Cup, 65-18, in May and then went on to defeat them in the final in June, 46-28. The Present beat the Past in two practice games but were well beaten, 63-140, by St Andrew's in the second round of the cup. After the cup competition they beat Sandford Park 116-104, and were beaten by High School in friendlies.

The 1940-41 O'Gorman Cup final was won by St Mary's, 96-20, while the following year saw a repeat with another comfortable win.

In 1942-43 the SCT were defeated by CUS by 4 wickets, but the JCT had a good run. They accounted for Sandford by 5 wickets in the cup and then had the narrowest of wins, by 2 runs, over Rock before going under to Belvedere in the semi-final. It was the best run for years.



*Leinster Schools' Junior
Cricket Cup Winners,
1945*

*Back: G. Duffy;
K. Lavelle; K. O'Rorke;
J. Nestor; D. O'Sullivan.
Seated: M. O'Dwyer;
J. Drumm; J. Hughes
(Capt.); F. Fagan;
I. Kidd-Duff.
Front: J. Horne.*

*O'Gorman Cup
Winners, 1940*

Back: *M. McMenamin,
D. Clarke;
L. Donnelly; V. Keogh;
B. O'Rorke; J. Murray.*
Seated: *P. Bolger;
D. Walsh; C. Fitzgerald.*
Front: *C. Byrne;
C. Dillon.*



Gymnastics

1935 saw the last dying kick of the sport of gymnastics in schools in Ireland. Mountjoy, as we saw, won the All-Ireland Schools Gymnastic Shield in 1914, when the competition was suspended because of the 1914-18 war. It was not revived until 1935 when St Mary's under the tutelage of Fr Michael Sexton won it for the seventh and final time. It was never again competed for and rests to this day in the parlour of the college.

Athletics

The Annual School Sports was always the highlight of the summer extra-curricular activity, involving as it did more participants than any other such activity, watched by parents and friends, and enhanced with colour from flags and bunting, and music from Garda or Artane Band. There were probably years when it was even enhanced with summer weather! In spite of this, the school did not produce many outstanding performers, but those it did produce were in the top bracket. Foremost, chronologically, was John Fitzgerald an extremely talented high jumper, who, unfortunately did not pursue the sport after he left school. In the summer of 1940 John won the Junior High Jump in the Leinster Colleges Sports with 5'5 1/2" while winning the Senior at a lower height. In the All Ireland Sports he again won the Senior Jump but was only second in the Junior! In the Leinster Sports that year, Dermot Hughes was 3rd in the Senior 100, Russell Murphy 3rd in the junior Long Jump, while Brendan O'Sullivan won the Senior 880 yds.

In 1940 the more enlightened attitude to sport that was beginning to seep in showed itself in the invitation to Superintendent P. J. Bermingham, who had a son, Tom, in the school, to do some coaching in athletics, particularly in the field events. P. J. Bermingham was one of the outstanding exponents of the shot putt and discus in the country, winner of many Irish titles. That year saw the inauguration of an annual athletics contest between St Mary's and Willow Park for which Fr Michael Meagher, National Director of the Holy Childhood, had presented a Shield, the Holy Childhood Shield, which St Mary's won.

In 1940-41 it was Dr Kevin O'Flanagan who was invited in to help with the coaching. Kevin's younger brother, Charlie, was in the Junior School and beginning to show athletic, tennis and rugby prowess. Kevin had been an outstanding sportsman as a schoolboy in Synge St CBS, where he excelled, along with his brother, Michael, in sprinting, long and



George Norton
Captain of Leinster Senior
Schools' Rugby XV, 1939.



Fred Scott
Captain of the Leinster
Schools' Interprovincial
Cricket XI, 1939.



Terry Coveney

high jumping as well as Gaelic football, and, on the quiet, in soccer. On leaving school they both took up rugby and soccer, playing rugby for UCD and Lansdowne respectively and gaining international honours in both codes, which must be unique. Kevin kept on with the athletics after school and became an outstanding sprinter and long jumper. He was a very useful coach in these disciplines. In an athletic contest with Blackrock on May 7, 1941, St Mary's were beaten by a single point, 23-22. In the Holy Childhood Shield St Mary's beat Willow Park once more, 55-26, but in 1942, Willow Park won the Shield for the first time. In 1943 St Mary's regained it in a close contest 39-32.

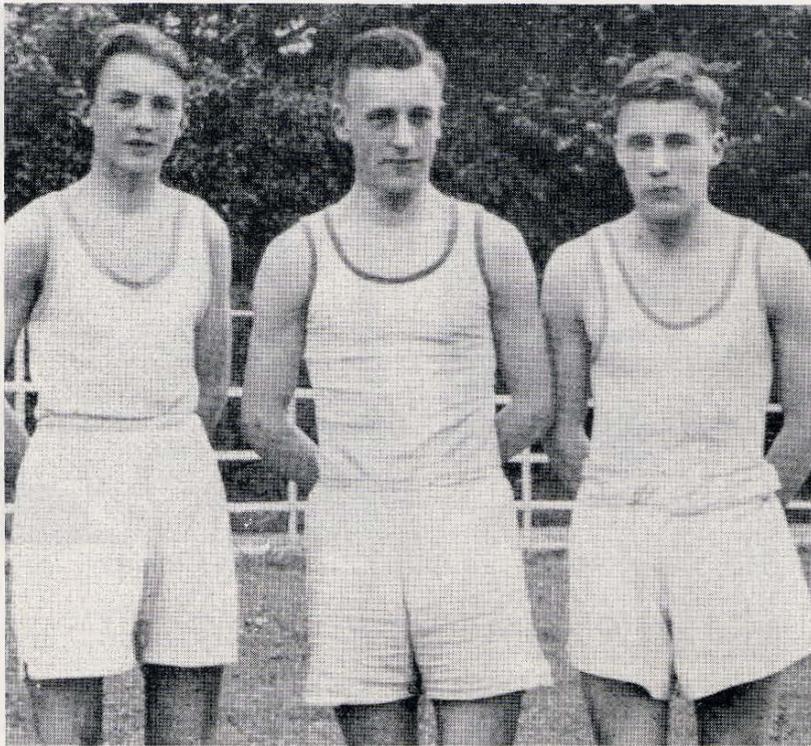
In 1943-44 a triangular contest between Blackrock, Castleknock and St Mary's was organised which St Mary's won comfortably with 87 pts, Blackrock 47, Castleknock 43. So it was no surprise to find St Mary's winning the Junior Shield in the Leinster Sports. They were most unfortunate not to achieve the double. They missed the Senior Shield by just a ½ point! It was in this contest that Jimmy Reardon broke the Irish Schools 220 yd record with 23.6 secs.

1943-44 was distinctive in that it saw the first, and only, athletic contest between St Mary's and Terenure College. Hitherto, and since, they have met only in the Leinster Schools Sports, never in a head-to-head contest. It resulted in a win for St Mary's on April 30, 1944. Jimmy Reardon was the lynch-pin of that team.

Jimmy Reardon

No account of the accomplishments of past or present students of St Mary's would be complete at this period without mention of Jimmy Reardon, the school's outstanding athlete. Jimmy was a brilliant sprinter at school and was the first Irish schoolboy to bring the Irish 220 yard record below 24 secs. Jimmy recorded 23.6 in the Schools Championships in 1943. Present-day readers, familiar with junior times of 21 secs, must remember that Jimmy's times were recorded on grass tracks with heavy spiked running shoes, not with present-day performance-enhancing equipment. He played on the wing for the SCT of 1943. He was a natural flier on the wing, but had two problems, holding the pass and also staying on-side till he received the pass. His acceleration was so great that time and again he would over-run the pass. After he left school, he went from the 100 and 220 to the 440, or as it became for the 1948 Olympic Games in London, the 400 metres. Jimmy won an athletic scholarship to the United States where he was coached by Jumbo

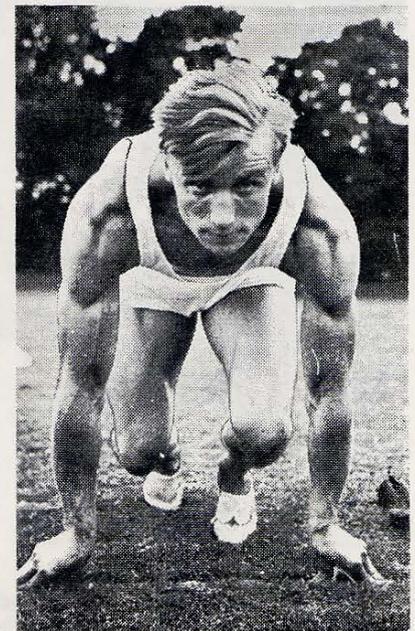
Athletic Champions



John Fitzgerald
All-Ireland Junior
High Jump, 1939
Leinster Senior & Junior
High Jump 1939 & 1940

Tom Bergin
Leinster Senior
Long Jump,
1939

Dermot Hughes
Leinster Junior
Long Jump,
1939



Jim Reardon
Captain, Irish
Olympic Team,
1948.

Elliott of Villanova, who was to have great influence in bringing great Irish Champions like Ronnie Delaney, John Joe Barry, Cummin Clancy and Eamon Coughlin to a peak of performance.

Jimmy was picked for the Irish Olympic Team and represented Ireland in the 400. The most one can ever ask of an athlete in top competition is that he surpass his previous best, regardless of the performances of others round him, and Jimmy did this, returning an Irish record of 47.6 secs for the 400, which, unfortunately, was not good enough to see him into the final, where the great Jamaican, Arthur Wint, won in the world record time of 46.4 secs. St Mary's are rightly proud of their athlete supreme, who was the Irish flag-bearer at those Olympic Games.

Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland

The idea of an organisation which would introduce boys to an outdoor life where they could be trained in self-reliance and responsibility was first aired by Robert Baden-Powell, an English army officer who became a hero during the Boer War for his part in the defence of Mafeking in May 1900 and used the prominence he had thus obtained in order to promote this idea of scouting. He took his first group of 20 boys on a camping trip in 1907. His handbook for training, called 'Scouting for Boys', appeared in 1908 and the movement spread like wildfire, not only throughout Britain and Ireland, but in the rest of the world too. In 1912 Baden-Powell could make a world-tour to meet scouts. While the 1914-18 war slowed the growth of the movement, it was temporary and in 1920 the first Jamboree or international meeting of scouts took place in London. Today there are more than 16 million active scouts in the world and it is estimated that more than 250 million have been scouts.

Even before Baden-Powell founded scouting in England, there were inchoate forms of the idea in Ireland. The Catholic Boys Brigade was active in parts of Dublin, notably under the Capuchin Friars in Church St before the end of the 19th century, but these forms had not been thought out sufficiently to last. Fr Tom Farrell had been one of the leading lights of a play presented by the boys of St Mary's College in the Father Matthew Hall, Church St, in 1898 in aid of the Catholic Boys Brigade. The event and the cause must have made a deep impression on him, while his own experience in parishes in the inner city (Meath St 1908-20; Marlborough St 1920-39) must have made him aware of the great need to provide boys with some character-building activity to offset the pernicious effects of their environment. It is not hard to imagine, in the light of subsequent events, that it was a subject of frequent conversation between him and his younger brother, Fr Ernest Farrell. During his years in Meath St, Fr Tom had been engaged in an apostolate among the working girls of the parish and was instrumental in establishing Our Lady's Hostel where young working girls, particularly those who had come into the city from the provinces with no relatives with whom to stay, could find safe and clean accomodation at reasonable cost. So, it was not until he was appointed to the Pro-Cathedral that he could turn his attention to the idea of a scouting organisation for catholic boys. The Baden-Powell Scouts, while strictly non-denominational, were looked upon, because of their origin, as Protestant in outlook as well as British in politics, and thus, not suitable for nationalist catholics in the atmosphere of those days before and after 1916. Fr Tom and Fr Ernest had in mind a similar organisation, only geared to catholic and Irish boys.

Fr Ernest had temporary appointments in Haddington Road and as Chaplain in the Royal Hibernian Military School in the Phoenix Park (now St Mary's Hospital) before becoming curate in Rathdrum for four years, but it was in Greystones where he served for three years from 1924 to 1927 that he felt ready to put into practice what he and his brother had dreamed and talked about. He gathered a group of boys round him and organised hikes, climbing and drill and other scouting-type activities, while at the same time writing articles in *Our Boys*, the magazine for boys produced by the Christian Brothers to offset the flood of cross-channel comics and boys' magazines, which were considered at best of no relevance to Irish boys. In these articles Fr Ernest promoted the idea of forming an official Catholic Scout organisation. In all this Fr Ernest was encouraged and guided by his brother, Fr Tom, who undertook to seek the ecclesiastical approval which would be necessary if, as they hoped, the movement was to spread to every parish in the country. In the beginning the movement was parish-orientated. It was only in the '40s that school-based troops were permitted. A constitution was drawn up and submitted to the Bishops, whose sanction and blessing was given in November 1926, but the actual foundation of the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland is taken to be 1927 when the first National Executive Committee began to function. That same year, Fr Ernest was transferred to University Church, Stephen's Green, where he started the first troop of scouts under the aegis of the new Executive. The first Scoutmaster of this HQ troop was Seamus O'Higgins, who became the first Commissioner for Camping and was closely involved in acquiring the national camp site in Larch Hill, Co Dublin. In his late 50s he decided to become a priest and was ordained for Cardiff diocese, where he worked till his death in 1979.

The new Executive had barely come into existence when it found itself inundated with enquiries from all over Ireland. Machinery was quickly set up for organisation, registration, supply of uniforms from a central office, and thus the National Headquarters came into being, situated for a long time on Stephen's Green, Sth. but now in 19 Herbert Place. Fr Ernest was appointed National Chaplain and Fr Tom National Secretary, posts they continued to hold during their lifetimes. The first Chief Scout was John O'Neill, car manufacturer of Pleasants St, who had assisted Fr Ernest with that first unofficial troop

of scouts in Greystones. He was a former senator of Seanad Eireann.

As we have said, in the beginning scouting in Ireland was parish-based. For some reason difficulties were envisaged in school-based units, which made the executive hesitate about starting the scouts in schools. As past pupils of St Mary's College, the Farrell brothers were anxious that their alma mater should have a scout troop and approached Fr Joseph Whelan, the Dean of Studies, in 1939 about the matter. He himself was enthusiastic, but there was some delay among the school authorities and it was not until 1941 that the first troop was established with Frank Purcell, a past pupil and member of the Knight Clan of the HQ Unit, as Scoutmaster. During the delay, Blackrock College had moved swiftly to become the first school-based unit in the organisation. Fr Fred Fullen was the first chaplain of the 7th Dublin and the first Investiture took place in the college on September 11, 1941, eight boys being invested. In 1943 a Cub Pack was organised and led by Reggie Redmond who had been trained, like a large number of St Mary's boys before him, in the HQ Unit formed by Fr Ernest in University Church. A Senior Patrol of older boys was formed in 1944 which was enlarged into a full Senior Troop four years later.

The following were the Annual Summer Campsites:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Chaplain</i>	<i>Scoutmaster</i>
1942	St Columban's, Navan	Fr Fullen	F. Purcell
1943	Bellevue Park, Killiney	Fr Seagrave	F. Purcell
1944	Kill, Co Kildare	Fr Seagrave	F. Purcell
1945	Ballyhad, Co Wicklow	Fr Seagrave	D. Tannam

Boxing

The "manly sport of self-defence" was introduced into the school by Fr Michael Sexton in the second year after the re-opening but not in any structured way. Dr Joe Whelan re-introduced it in 1939 when he invited Garda Frank Cooper, one of the greatest of Ireland's amateur boxers in the Golden Age of Irish amateur boxing in the late 20s and 30s, winner of many European Championships and a Golden Gloves Champion of the United States, to come and give lessons. The first school championships were held in 1940. CUS were engaged in a boxing tournament in 1940-41 and beaten. There is no record of any other inter-school engagement, but the sport remained popular in the school into the '50s when it gradually lost favour and died out.

Soccer

Everywhere boys gather to kick a ball, of any shape or size soccer will be played, even in a school like St Mary's where rugby reigns supreme. Soccer can be played in the clothes one has on and on any kind of surface, whereas, by its nature, rugby needs grass and street clothes will not stand up to the rigours of tackling and scrummaging. During the short breaks for lunch during the school day it was customary for the boys to kick a round ball around and organise ad hoc teams and matches. Outside school many boys attained a high level of proficiency both during their schooldays and after they left. The Hooper brothers, Ivor and Niall, who were sons of Dr Willie Hooper, one of the founders of Bohemians Football Club and himself an Irish International goal-keeper; Seamus Mulvey who gained a schoolboy International Cap for Ireland; Fionan Fagan who played Division 1 football for Shamrock Rovers and Derby County and was capped for Ireland. In March 1941, in answer to the boys' own wishes, soccer leagues were drawn up and matches played on a regular basis, mainly after school hours, a custom that has continued unabated to this day.

PAST PUPILS UNION

The period under review was one of continued success for the Past Pupils Union and its activities. Mr Vincent E. Becker took over from Fr Ernest Farrell as President at the meeting of September 7, 1934, with a committee including Fr Ernest Farrell, Dr J. B. Magennis, William Blunden, Gerry Condell, C. V. Spadaccini, John Ryan, Jimmy Ganter, Frank Doherty, Frank Purcell, A. E. O'Brien, Charlie Wilson and Paddy Branagan, the last two representing the Cricket and Rugby Clubs respectively.

The outstanding event at the opening of the period was the Joint Dinner given in the Dolphin Hotel on November 21, 1935, by the three College Unions of Blackrock, Rockwell and St Mary's in honour of Rev Dr Edward Crehan, who was just then resigning as President of Rockwell, having earlier been the second President of St Mary's after Fr Tom Fogarty. The Unions presented him with three chalices for the African Missions. The success of this event inspired the Unions to attempt to organise themselves into a Joint Union, with three representatives from each to form a committee. A number of meetings took place between these representatives over the next few years but nothing concrete evolved.

All the affiliated Clubs and Societies, Rugby, Cricket, Tennis, Literary and Debating, Dramatic, were active, although only just about solvent. With so many committee meetings taking place, the Hon. Secs. of the various societies had to get together with the Union Secretary to set aside nights for the various committee meetings to enable the various interlocking representatives attend them. Monday was Football; Tuesday Cricket; Wednesday Literary & Debating; Thursday Union; Friday Tennis. The Dramatic Society met only when a production was in rehearsal. For Union officers it could be a busy week. Apart from the Annual Union Dinner, which every year registered a greater attendance, with, to modern readers, an amazing coverage by the national press, including lengthy excerpts from speeches, and Union Day, the purely Union activities included dress dances, whist drives, November Mass for deceased members, matches with the School in rugby and cricket, the annual Golf competition with other school Unions. The Literary and Debating Society hosted eleven major debates in the year 1936-37. However, attendance was so poor at some of them that it was not worthwhile to hold them. The following year, seven debates were scheduled with somewhat better results, but it continued to be the least satisfactory of the Union affiliates. Union Day was abandoned in 1939 because of lack of funds, but an "At Home" was held instead in the Cricket and Tennis Club grounds in Cherryfield, Templeogue. A profit of £16 was made on the "At Home". Union Day, under its usual name was back again the next year, but only for a year. Transport was a problem during the war, and it was not easy for people to travel all the way out to Templeogue to the Cricket Club grounds. For that reason Union Day was abandoned for some years.



Past Pupils' Union Annual Dinner, 1939

Photo includes, Fr. Jim Mellett CSSp, J. Gilmore CSSp, E. Leen CSSp, P. Walsh CSSp, P. Nugent (Pres. PPU), Dr. Dan Murphy CSSp (Provincial Superior), Major Gleeson, Mr. Sarsfield Hogan, J. English CSSp.

During the war years, it was decided that, in view of the straitened circumstances of many in the city, the Annual Dinner should be foregone. Instead, an informal supper, without press fanfare, was substituted, to the satisfaction of all. When the war ended in August 1945, the Union reverted to the formal Dress Dinner.

In 1944 there was some dissatisfaction expressed at the apathy with which many of the functions of the Union and affiliated Clubs were attended, and in the ensuing discussions on the topic it was suggested that what the Union needed for itself and its affiliates was a venue capable of accomodating the sports activities engaged in, Rugby, Cricket and Tennis, as well as a premises suitable for meetings and for all the social activities of the Union. Enquiries concerning the availability of such a parcel of land were made to the Planning Officer of the Dublin Corporation, who suggested that the Shaw Estate was being acquired and part of it set aside as a public park (Bushy Park) and it might be possible to obtain sufficient acreage there for the Union's needs. At £200 an acre, with about 15 acres necessary, this seemed beyond the Union's means. The Shaw Estate became Bushy Park. In the course of seeking a suitable place, the Walsh family, who had a large estate just outside Templeogue village, (now Templeville Rd) opposite the Dodder bridge, were prepared to part with some of their land. Miss Roisin Walsh was Chief Librarian of the Dublin Corporation. Examination of the land offered showed that there was no field sufficiently large for a cricket field. But Miss Walsh pointed out a very large field adjoining her property which would be suitable and said that it belonged to the Holy Ghost Fathers in Kimmage Manor, who might be prepared to sell. When this was reported to the Union Committee, Fr Ernest Farrell said that that field had been offered to the Rugby Club previously at a reasonable rent, but that he did not think the Holy Ghost Fathers would part with it now. In fact, the particular field supplied the potatoes which kept alive the 300 students in Kimmage Manor during the war. It is an interesting coincidence that the present RFC grounds in Templeville are part of the land which was in question that time.

The deaths of a number of notable past students occurred during this time. Arthur O'Reilly, President of the PPU died in November 1935. On December 11 a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for the repose of his soul in the College Chapel, with the singing provided by the Kimmage choir directed by Dr Michael Kennedy who later became President of St Mary's. Dr Jim Magennis, whose close connection with the College and the Union has already been recounted, died in November 1940 and Fr Tom Farrell also.

In 1937 the first of the Post-reopening past students to be ordained priest was Vincent Keogh, who left in 1929 to go to Clonliffe where he was ordained for the Dublin Diocese. He was followed in 1938 by Richard Quigley, also for the Dublin Diocese. Then in 1940 came Ned Colleton and Jack Branagan in 1942, both ordained as Holy Ghost Fathers. Gerald A. Healy in 1942 and Lorcan Foley in 1944 joined the Dublin Diocese while Gerard B.Healy became a Holy Ghost Father.

In June 1942 there was a reception in the College Hall to mark the Silver Jubilee of the ordination of Fr Ernest Farrell.

DRAMATICS

Somewhere along the line around this time, the Literary & Debating Society became merged with the Dramatic Society, which is not at all surprising since the same people largely were involved in both. So, in the mid-thirties we find mention of a new society called the Literary and Dramatic Society, run by a sub-committee of the Union.

Their first dramatic offering was *If I Were King*, which played for four nights in the Abbey Theatre, Feb. 27 to March 2, 1935. The cast contained a fair mixture of the old and the young. Dr J. B. Magennis, John G. Gogan, Frank Purcell, L. C. and P. R. Gogan from

the Old Brigade, with Frank Culhane, Bobby Pidgeon, John Ryan, Charlie Wilson, Bill Boyd, Paddy Branagan, the Collisons, John Rogan etc from the younger. The torch was being passed on.

The Football Club also entered the entertainment world to raise funds, presenting concerts in 1935-36-37. And the Cricket & Lawn Tennis Clubs were not to be outdone. They also produced a variety concert in 1937 which included two one-act plays, one of them written by Frank Purcell.

The L & D appears to have faded away after the 1935 production, only to be revived towards the end of 1939 with Dermot Smyth appointed Auditor by the Union and P. J. Kearns Hon. Sec. The Committee was made up entirely of the more recent past pupils. 1940 was given over to debates and the Inaugural address by Dermot Smyth on *Industrialism and the Designer* which took place in the College on February 13, 1940, and received full coverage in the national press. Remarks on art by one of the invited speakers, Monsignor Myles V. Ronan, P.P. caused some mild controversy which filled the letters pages of newspapers for some time. It ensured maximum publicity for the Inaugural Addresses for some years.

In the following year, May 1941, Frank Purcell produced *The Barretts of Wimpole St*, with Frank Jun. playing Edward Barrett and Kevin Young playing Robert Browning. The play was presented also in Blackrock College in aid of the African Missions.

In September 1942 Frank Purcell Sr produced *Lord Richard in the Pantry*, while Jimmy Ganter read a paper on *The Link with Sterling* for the Debating Society at which Mr Liam Cosgrave TD, Mr Peadar O'Curry, Editor of the *The Standard*, and Fr Denis Fahey CSSp (famous author and authority on social justice, former Professor in St Mary's when it was a House of Studies for the Holy Ghost Fathers) were the main speakers.

The Inaugural debate for 1944/45 took place in February 1945 with 250 present. Rev Dr McKevitt, Professor English in Maynooth College (the author of *No Applause in Church*) was the main guest speaker.

RUGBY

1934-35 was the second year of St Mary's in the Leinster Cup and League competitions. After the departure of Joe Whelan in the Summer of 1934, Brendan Arigho more or less took over the running of the team. He was not himself a past-pupil, although an uncle of his was. He learned his rugby in Pres Glasthule, but he immersed himself completely in the Club, "which owes more than it realises to (him). The open style of football that distinguishes the Club today might be said to have been initiated by him." (Paddy Branagan). His three sons went to St Mary's, which makes him more than just an honorary Mary's man. He still follows the fortunes of the Club he helped to form. The Club grew in strength during the 30s, both in players and support. Dermot Smyth, captain of the cup-winning JCT in 1934 and of the SCT in 1936, an interprovincial schoolboy, came to the Club on leaving school and quickly established himself as a regular on the Firsts. At school he had been a scrum-half, but with Arigho already holding that position, Dermot moved into the centre with the same ease he moved through opposing backlines, and in that position gained Junior Interprovincial caps and later Senior Interpros with Leinster. With home players such as he and the Collisons, Ganter, Walkers, Scotts, Branagans, Nortons, and "imports" like Arigho, Colman Mangan (Rockwell), Peter and Bill Meehan (Newbridge), the Club established itself as the leading Club in its grade and ambitions to go higher began to burn in players and supporters.

In the 1939-40 season the 1st. XV won the Metropolitan Cup. They began with a win over Blackrock, 9-6, followed with a win over Clontarf. The final was contested against UCD and resulted in a 6-3 win in a fiercely contested game. Let the *Irish Independent* tell it:

*Metropolitan Cup
Winners, 1940*

Back: M. Collison;
A. Norton; C. Mangan;
J. Quigley; J. Ganter;
L. Ganter.
Seated: J. Walker;
T. Bergin; T. Boyce;
D. Smyth; T. Kelly;
B. Arigho; J. Meaney.
Front: P. Meehan;
P. Branagan.



*Minor League and
Cup Winners, 1940*

Back: C. Duffy;
L. Ganter; G. Norton;
O. Byrne; P. Redmond;
L. Collison; J. Burgess.
Seated: J. O'Connell;
T. Boyce; M. Scott;
P. Byrne; J. Murphy;
J. Manahan.
Front: T. Coveney;
F. Scott.

Senior Team, 1943

Back: W. Meehan;
P. Sullivan;
B. O'Sullivan; O. Byrne;
W. Burke; P. Meehan;
P. Townsend;
Fr E. Farrell, C.C.
Seated: S. Ryan;
T. Bergin; B. Arigho;
A. Norton; J. Mulvey;
F. Scott; T. Coveney.
Front: M. Troy;
D. Smyth.



An excellent last-minute try gave St Mary's College their first success in the Metropolitan Cup when they beat UCD II in Donnybrook by a penalty goal and a try to a penalty goal. Smyth made the opening with a grand run from well inside his own half, Collison carried on the attack and he transferred to Meaney for the last mentioned to cross near the corner-flag.

It was a fitting climax to the match and a well-deserved victory. College had taken the lead with a penalty goal by Horgan from long range in the very first minute and the only other score was a similar one for St Mary's kicked by Meaney just before halftime.

The St Mary's backs showed excellent form in a fast and hard-fought game which had at least one quality lacking in several Senior Cup ties this season. This was the fact that they took and delivered their passes at top speed, and it was a pleasure to see three-quarter movements actually gain ground.

St Mary's: A. Norton, P. Meehan, D. Smyth, P. Branagan, T. Bergin, A. Kelly, B. Arigho, J. Walker, L. Ganter, J. Ganter, J. Quigley. C. Mangan, M. Collison, T. Boyce, J. Meaney.

A dinner to honour the achievement was given in the College Hall on April 9, and the following day, the Second XV were given a reception in the Moira Hotel for winning the Minor League Cup which they did by beating Bective Rangers in the semi-final, 15-0, and Trinity in the final. The time seemed ripe for stepping back into the Senior ranks. However, re-admission was by no means automatic. There was a feeling that there were already more than enough "Old Boy" clubs for the good of the game. And, strangely enough, it was not the oldest clubs who objected. The very oldest, Trinity had no objection while the newest had. However, as always, Fr Ernest Farrell was to the rescue. As the Captain of St Mary's when they last went senior, in 1911, and as a former Junior and Senior Leinster Interprovincial player who had been involved with the game his entire life, he was not unknown to the Executive of the Branch, and used what influence he had to promote the application. And so, eight years after its revival, St Mary's RFC was once more of senior status.

It would be perfect if we could say that from the outset the Club covered itself with glory and honours. But truthfully, it was a hard struggle, and eighteen years were to pass before the Leinster Cup came to the Club. The very first match as a Senior team was against Old Wesley in Donnybrook and ended in an honourable draw, 3-3. So, at least the Club knew they were in the right league. A win against the Cup finalists, Clontarf, on October 12 bolstered this conviction. A win over Bective Rangers on November 9 helped confidence considerably. On November 23 they spread their wings further and travelled to Malone where they were again victorious. After Christmas the Club was honoured by having Frank McMahon, Dermot Smyth and Peter Meehan chosen to play for Leinster against Connaught and on March 1 they were on the team which defeated Ulster 15-3. So, all in all, the Club could look back on the first season in Senior football with quiet satisfaction in the conviction that they deserved to be where they were.

One of the difficulties with going Senior was the spartan nature of the facilities the Club had, both for playing and training. A small school can produce only a small number of keen supporters, for one thing. There is little chance of attracting outside support without proper social activities and facilities, chief among which has to be a bar licence, and there was no hope of a bar licence for the makeshift hut which answered for a club-house in Kimmage Grove. Nevertheless, the Club never did less than give a good account of itself on the field during those early years, and it produced individuals of exceptional brilliance.

We have already spoken of the Norton brothers, Austin and George, and of Dermot Smyth as a Junior Interprovincial. In their very first year in Senior rugby three St Mary's



Kimmage "Grave"

The huts which did duty as a pavilion in Mrs Doherty's poultry farm at Kimmage Grove from 1932 'til the change to Fortfield in 1963.

men were honoured by Leinster, Dermot Smyth in the centre, Peter Meehan on the wing and Frank McMahon in the second row. Frank McMahon, an adept at any kind of game involving a ball, of towering stature, came to St Mary's as a Prefect from Blackrock College where he had already made a name for himself on the 1st Castle XV. It was felt he could give invaluable assistance to St Mary's in their first year in the senior ranks. And they were right. With his 6'4" he ruled the line-out. With his colossal strength he was immovable in scrum or ruck, while he could handle and cover ground like a back. It was his great misfortune that there were not even "war-time" internationals when he was free to play. He was back in the seminary in Kimmage pursuing his theology studies when the war ended. A Clare county minor hurler, he could just as easily have starred at that game, and, in fact., gained a Leinster Colleges Hurling medal along with Fr George Lahiffe when both were in Blackrock. Not many people know that Blackrock College produced excellent hurling teams in the 30s until the GAA banned the mixing of codes even in schools. When he took up golf relatively late in life, without any coaching, he became a single-figure handicap player.

Another Prefect who might have had an international rugby career in other circumstances was Dick Lehane. He was brought from Rockwell to teach in St Mary's and at the same time turn out for the team. He had been, like Frank McMahon, a schoolboy interprovincial. His position was scrum-half and he was as hard as granite. He could soak up any amount of punishment from forwards coming through a line-out and still throw out arrow-straight passes of a length that allowed out-halves to stand well clear of any danger, giving them time to exercise whatever options were available. With his low centre of gravity he was extremely difficult to take down, while he had the strength to burst through most tackles. Dick was capped for Leinster against Connaught in Feb 14 and against Ulster on Feb 28. He was capped for Leinster in 1942 with Dermot Smyth, Peter Meehan and Tom Bergin.

In 1943 Tom Bergin was again capped on the wing for Leinster and Peter Meehan's brother, Bill, was capped as hooker, while that same year saw the emergence of Terry Coveney on the representative scene. Terry had been on the SCT in 1937-38 and 1938-39, where he had proved himself a skillful out-half with an incisive run and side-step and a

devastating tackle. On leaving school he joined the Club and played for a short time on the 2nd XV before taking up a permanent position in the back line of the Firsts. In 1943 he played in all three interprovincials and again in 1944. In fact Leinster played Connaught twice that year and Terry played in both matches. In 1945 he played in the only two interpros played, against Ulster and Connaught. In 1946 he got a war-time international cap against Scotland, and that same year played for Leinster against the Kiwis (as the All-Black Touring Team was known). In 1947 he played for Leinster against Cardiff. A meagre haul of honours, you might say, for a really great talent, but if you knew the unassuming nature of the man, who was every bit a gentleman on the field as he was off it, you would know that he set little store in medals and honours. He just loved to play football.

In 1941, as if to underline the validity of the Club's Senior status, the Second XV beat Wanderers, 13-3, to win the Metropolitan Cup yet again.

In 1942/43 two Prefects playing for the Club were Mr Michael Troy and Mr Patrick Townsend. Mick Troy was a tearaway flanker of boundless energy but, unsurprisingly, prone to injury. The team had its best run in the Cup campaign to date, defeating Old Wesley in the first round by the narrowest of margins, 4-3, then Trinity, 9-6, in what the papers called the best match of the season before going under to UCD, 4-5, in the semi-final. In 1943/44 they met Clontarf in the first round and drew with them, but failed to take the replay.

Mention has been made of Concerts organised to raise funds for the Club. Whist Drives were also held and Sales of Work, but the palm must be given to the man who thought up the idea of the Dog Show that was held in the front field on August 29. It was an idea which was repeated with considerable success later by the Building Fund Committee when funds were sought for the new Chapel.

VOCATIONS

<i>Name</i>	<i>At School</i>	<i>Ordination</i>	<i>Diocese/Order</i>
Vincent Keogh	(1929-30)	1937	Dublin
Richard Quigley	(1926-29)	1938	Dublin
Edward Colleton	(1926-29)	1940	CSSp.
John Branagan	(1926-32)	1942	CSSp.
Gerald A. Healy	(1927-29)	1942	Dublin
Lorcan Foley	(1927-37)	1944	Dublin
Gerard B. Healy	(1929-31)	1945	CSSp.



Frank McMabon CSSp.



Richard Lehane CSSp.



Michael Troy CSSp.



Patrick Townsend CSSp.