



Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan



Celebrating **150** Years





Foreword



As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, I would like to congratulate Ms Caffrey and Ms McMaster's Transition Year History classes and Sr. Rosaleen's Third Year Irish class on this marvellous commemorative booklet. I extend our thanks also to Mr Kevin Kimmage for his production advice and expertise.

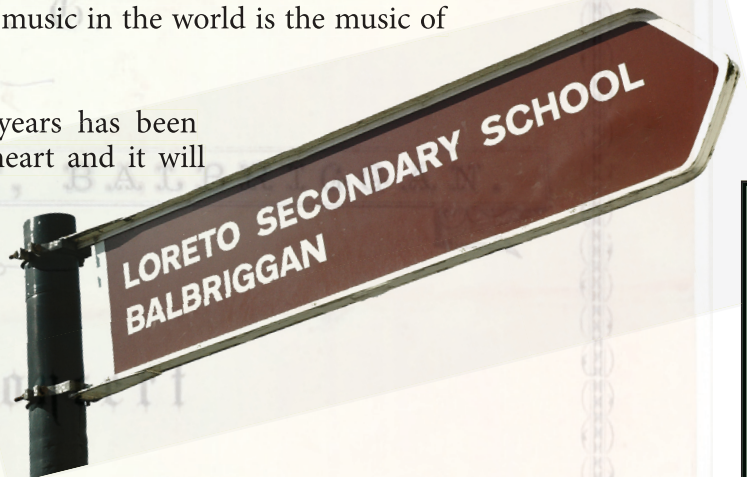
When the Loreto sisters founded our school in 1857 Ireland was a country still recovering from the ravages of the famine, emigration was rife and opportunities for women were limited. However the education provided by the sisters opened possibilities for many. Indeed the school, even then, was a haven, a home and a centre of excellence for its many students.

As we celebrate 150 years of education, it is worthwhile not only to reflect on the past but also to move forward into the future with confidence and optimism. The challenges of helping each student develop their potential in a positive and caring learning environment will continue to guide us in the years ahead. Sisters, staff and Boards of Management who have given so much in the past will, I know, continue to support and enrich the Loreto ethos here in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan.

In the old Irish tale Fionn McCumhail says "The best music in the world is the music of what happens".

What has happened in Loreto Balbriggan for 150 years has been wonderful. Let that music continue to live in your heart and it will always play out in your lives.

*Edward Fynes,
Principal*



Annual Report
AND
DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES,
22nd JULY, 1875.



Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Fearless Founding Mother | 4 |
| The Religion Connection | 6 |
| School Tours | 8 |
| Loreto's Junior School | 10 |
| Boarding School life | 12 |
| Picture Galleries | 14 |
| Past-Pupil Staff memories | 20 |
| A Boarder's day in the life | 22 |
| The Numbers Game | 23 |
| Sporting a Smile | 24 |
| Agallaimh | 26 |
| Sounding a Positive Retreat | 28 |
| Agallamh: <i>Iníon Ní Bhroin</i> | 29 |
| Interview: 70s Past Pupil | 30 |
| Interview: Transition Year | 31 |

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Loreto Secondary School

Balbriggan

Founded 1857


By Ignatius Barrett

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Page 4

Fearless Founding Mother



Over time as a catalyst of England, Mary Most Holy was venerated in England. She was impressed by the Church's message for spreading the faith, but she appeared to have the...

Aoife Hughes profiles a woman who set up schools all over Europe, until Sarah Behan outlines the importance of her mission, and believes that "women in color will come to do more".

Church officials labelled her a dangerous heretic.

Page 8

Getting away from it all




James' life isn't all about the books, Kate Nagan recalls some of the school's first winter holidays from Malton to Malton, via New York.

The highlight was appearing on the weather bulletin outside the CBS Centre in New York.

To Friends with Love

Page 10

Primary Importance



On their thirty years, the girls of Loreto Primary School have celebrated for each and every month. A special day for the school...

My class is there and starting, but my mission of the school and that means, unless I have a plan to be a teacher, I will not be able to do it.

Page 24

Sporting a Smile



Nothing at sport has always been secondary to taking part at the school, but, says Sr Genevieve, we haven't been out at it...

Culture

Page 26

Ag macnamh siar...



Agallamh leis an míneoir agus léiritheoire Áine Ní Héachain le Sarah Kelly, Orlaith Stone agus Ruth Huban.

Alice Donnelly agus a mháthair, Alice Gubbins, a cinnéalaithe ar an t-oidhre.



Fearless Foundin



Growing up as a Catholic in England, Mary Ward was persecuted. In mainland Europe, she was imprisoned by the Church hierarchy for expanding the role of women spreading the faith. Yet she persevered to found the Loreto order

Aoife Hughes profiles a woman who set up schools all over Europe, while Sarah Behan outlines the milestones of the pioneer who believed that 'women in time will come to do much'.

On 23rd January 1585 the world was graced with Mary Ward. She was the eldest daughter of Marmaduke Ward and Ursula Wright, and connected by blood with most of the great Catholic families of Yorkshire.

At age fifteen she felt a spiritual calling, so she spent her life following God's guidance in seeking something new.

At the age of 21 she entered the convent of Poor Clares at St Omer, in Belgium, as lay sister.

In 1607 she founded a house for English women at Gravelines, but not finding herself called to the contemplative life, she resolved to devote herself to active work.

A few years later, at 24 years of age, she found herself surrounded by a group of devoted companions determined to labour under her guidance.

Leaving the Poor Clares, she worked in disguise to preserve the Catholic faith in England before establishing a community of active sisters in 1609 at St Omer. Without cloister, she and her companions educated both rich and poor young women.

They also helped persecuted and imprisoned Catholics and spread the word of God in places priests could not go.

The Sisters lived and worked openly on the Continent, but in England they worked in secret to nurture and preserve the faith.

At one time, she was imprisoned in England for her work with outlawed

Catholics. Many people knew and admired her courage and generosity. In days before modern means of transport she travelled widely around Europe on foot - in dire poverty and frequently ill - founding schools in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Criticised for her efforts to expand the role of women in spreading the faith, she was imprisoned by Church officials who labelled her a dangerous heretic.

Her work was destroyed, her community suppressed, and her sisters scattered but she never abandoned her faith in God's guidance.

She died in York, England in 1645 during the Cromwellian Civil War.

It wasn't until 1909 that the Catholic Church recognised her as founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary - the order that would become better known as the Loreto Sisters.

Church officials labelled her a dangerous heretic



ng Mother

Mary Ward Milestones

1585

Born in Yorkshire, England

1590 - 1594

Lived with her grandparents until she was nearly 10 years old

1599 -1601

Living with relative, she learned Latin, French Italian and German.

A man named Edmund McNeville became a suitor for her hand in marriage, but she turned him down. At this point she declared her desire to follow a religious life.

1609

Mary visited Catholics in prison and in hiding in London.

1610

She began to teach English girls in St. Omer, who were seeking refuge from persecution of Catholics in England

1611

Had vision of the spiritual foundation of her Institute. The words she gathered were, 'Take the same of the Society' (that is, of the Jesuits)

1615

Pope praised the work of Mary Ward's Institute and promised to consider it being confirmed

1618

Upon her return to England, captured and condemned to death without trial. However, money was raised by friends and she was released.

1621

Mary and four sisters made their first journey to Rome on foot, crossing Europe, even over the Alps, arriving on Christmas Eve. She was granted an audience with Pope Gregory XV.

1645

On 30 January Mary Ward died peacefully surrounded by faithful companions and buried in a small cemetery near Hewarth.



Omer hat Maria zu St. Omer eine große Clergy hochachtung gemacht, und sie ihm geschrieben, für erwidern. Da wird in thürze fachen, und den Leben wird auch sein.



Above: Led away by God after her death - one of a series of 50 paintings depicting Mary Ward's life on display in Augsburg, Germany

Left: Mary Ward leaves for St Omer, Belgium



When Religion al went hand-in-har



Megan Coghlan outlines the central role the Catholic Church played in the foundation and running of Loreto, Balbriggan

This is the crest familiar to Loreto pupils worldwide. It is surmounted by the words “Maria Regina Angelorum” which indicates the patronage of Our Lady, Queen of Angels.

The bottom scroll is “Cruci dum Spiro fido” – Throughout my life, I shall place my hope in the cross”.

Loreto, Balbriggan was established on 16th April 1857 with Mother Ignatius Barratt as the first superior. Cardinal Cullen, who had come into possession of Gracefield House and six acres, donated the site to the sisters.

The priority of the school – in the tradition of the foundress Mary Ward

– focused on the Catholic education of young girls. The move towards providing Catholic education was very much at the heart of late 19th Century Catholicism.

However it was the emphasis on educating women that made the Loreto Order very much a radical movement in the context of its time.

It is worth noting that although Catholic schools were legally allowed to operate, a licence still had to be obtained from the local Church of Ireland and that can be seen, along with an Oath of Allegiance to the King which the sisters had to take in order to run the schools in Ireland, in the Loreto Archives to-

day in Navan. As the Loreto Order was closely linked to the Jesuits the idea of a “follower of Christ”, and working in the service of others was a crucial part of the ethos.

Not surprisingly, present day students in Balbriggan are very focused on helping others less well off than themselves. Charity fund-raising and social awareness forms a major part of their religious faith.

The new school in Rumbek in South Sudan has been a particular focus of fundraising. The JPIC group is also very much a part of school life.

The religious ethos continues to play a part in a modern way in the school.

‘We are a group of women, followers of Jesus Christ. We are inspired to be characterised by sincerity, freedom, justice and joy and that we were founded by the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary although we are more popularly known as Loreto.’



and Education

and

"This picture is about Mary Ward and the help she gave to those around her as she travelled around the world. She helped, especially, many young girls. She believed that women could do great things." - Kerry Guinan 3rd Year



Liturgical celebrations such as the opening school Mass and the Sixth Year Graduation Mass are most important.

The Religion Education Department also organizes many events during the year to match the Liturgical calendar. Indeed the school also has a lay chaplain.

Accordingly, over the past 150 years religion has played a very significant role in the school.

From the grant of land in 1857 through to the many activities today the Catholic ethos lives on and adapts and changes with the challenges of the time.

*ed by the vision of our foundress, Mary Ward, who desired that we
e work for the glory of God in all creation. Our official name is the
y known as Loreto Sisters'* - Old motto of the Loreto Sisters



Getting away from

*Loreto life isn't all about the books.
Kate Hagan recalls some of the school
trips that have taken our students from
Moscow to Norway, via New York*

Throughout the years at Loreto Balbriggan Secondary school there have been many trips abroad and around Ireland. It all started back in the 1980s when the first ever trip abroad was the French trip in 1981. Ms McCaul had this to say: "Oh my God it was great! We went by boat which was a long journey.

"We travelled to Paris which was so exciting to see. I was one of the many French teachers that came along. There was also Ms Moore and Ms Branigan. For the the next eight years we travelled by boat. It was such a fantastic trip."

The last French trip the school went on was a five day visit in February 2006.

Christina O'Byrne of 5E was one of those who travelled. "It was brilliant," she says. "We saw all the sites of wonderful Paris. The only problem was that we all had to stay with families!

"The teachers that came along with us were Ms McCaul, Ms Branigan, Ms Donaghy and Ms Ahern.

Another trip Christina O Byrne enjoyed was her Transition Year trip to Delphi, Co Mayo, in 2005 - the last trip the school took to this adventure centre - now they go to Killary.

"It was the best part of fourth year. I will never forget the experience and my fellow 5th years will definitely back me up when I say that!"

*'The highlight was
appearing on the weather
bulletin outside the CBS
centre in New York'*

The 2004/2005 Transition Year art students headed to New York in the February mid term.

"It was really good," says Fiona Mac Namara. "We got to see loads of cool paintings and the highlight of it all was being on TV outside the CBS centre.

"It was the weather part and we got to say: 'What's going on in your area!' Oh I had such a ball!"

Fiona also went to Delphi in her Transition Year trip, in 2004.

"I loved the whole friends-being-together-in-the-same-room and all, but I didn't really like the cold and the wetness! But it was a fantastic experience!"

One of the most unique school trips was the journey to Russia in 1989, two years before the collapse of the old Soviet Un-



om it all

Main Picture: The trip to Norway went downhill fast...

Top right: The class congregates in front of St Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, Moscow

Bottom Right: The changing of the guard outside Lenin's Tomb, Moscow

ion. Ms Moore along with many other teachers went along.

In 1998, the school went to Italy, attended by Mr Kilgarriff, Ms Moore and Ms Magliocco.

Past pupil Jennifer Thompson, a Transition Year student at the time, remembers the trip fondly: "We went to Milan, Florence, Venice and Rome. They were all very beautiful. My favourite was Venice as it was right beside the waters.

"I got to see the statue of David and the museums were all amazing."

Last year a small group of Transition Years went on a circus trip to Germany with Ms McHugh and Ms McCartan.

There have been three ski trips so far - the last in Norway last February from which our main photograph was taken. These trips have been organised by Ms Gallen and hopefully will continue in years to come.

Just a few months ago there was a day trip for all Transition Year students to Monaghan to see Patrick Kavanagh's Birthplace. "It was wonderful to see where a great poet was born," said Monica Monihan. "It was an educational day and it was amazing to find out all about Patrick Kavanagh."

Since the pioneering French trip in 1981, more and more trips have taken place.

The above mentioned are only a few, and hopefully these magnificent trips will continue for many years to come.

School Tours



To Russia with Love

By Ms Resa Moore

Russia had just opened up to tourists and, in March 1989, we were one of the first schools to take advantage of the opportunity to visit the country.

At that time it held a lot of mystery for the West as very little was known about it.

So it was with a great sense of adventure and excitement that we set off, curious about the customs, language and food of the country.

It turned out to be one of the most exciting and enjoyable ever undertaken by the school.

Our trip took in the cities of Moscow, Novgorod and what was then Leningrad - St Petersburg today.

During our trip we visited a school in Moscow and a youth club in Novgorod as well as seeing all the famous sights such as St Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, The Kremlin, Lenin's tomb and the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.

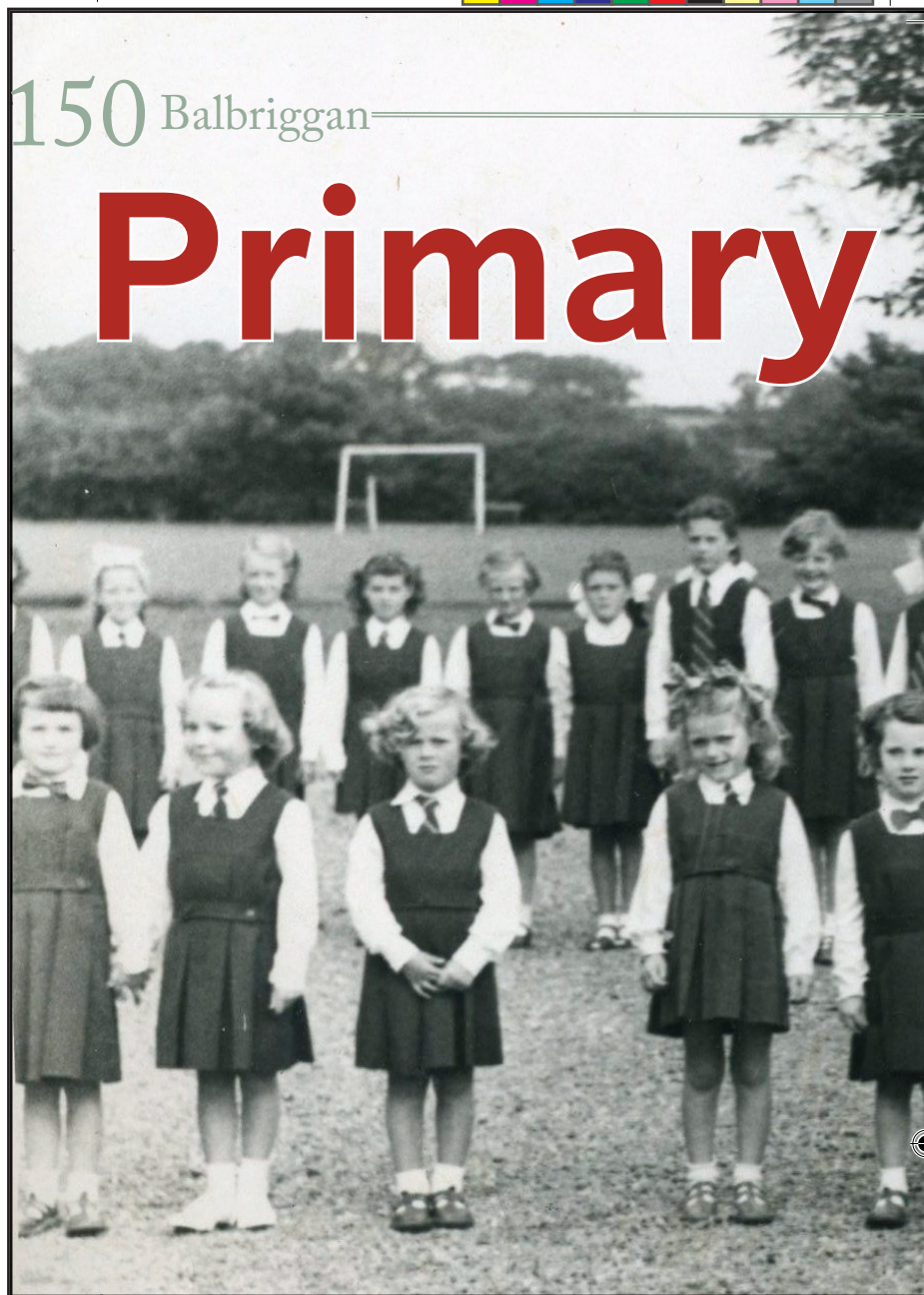
One of the most memorable experiences was taking the overnight train from Moscow to Leningrad.





Primary

For over thirty years, the nuns of Loreto Balbriggan ran a highly successful Junior school that catered for girls and boys. Meadhbh McIlgorm charts its rise and fall



Above: Junior students line up to welcome the Mother General during Balbriggan Loreto's Centenary celebrations in 1957

Loreto Junior School opened in the early 1950s and was very popular despite the fact that, as a private primary school, it was fee paying in a community that also had two public schools.

Its reputation was such that at its peak it attracted students from Balbriggan, Skerries, Rush, Lusk, Swords, Donabate, Julianstown, Laytown and Bettystown with some even travelling from as far out as Drogheda and Malahide.

It was a large enough school for its time, consisting of eight year-groups from Junior infants to 6th class, though until the 1960s 6th class was used as a preparatory year for the transition to secondary level.

The classes were average in size - around 30 per class - though this dropped in the years nearing its closure in 1986 as the staff and students were gradually phased out and relocated to other primary schools.

Loreto Junior's proper building was a

prefab school with a flat roof. Its construction was overseen by Principal Sr Imelda Louge and opened in January 1971.

The building was situated in what are now the private convent gardens and had six classrooms of a traditional style with lift-up desks and a big teacher's blackboard, a staff room, a large cloak room and girls and boys toilets.

There was rarely a speck of dirt to be found as Sister Imelda reportedly cleaned every inch herself and past pupils would be the first to admit that they were petrified of making a mess.

The buildings formed a backwards 'E' or 'U' shape and looked out on a huge field which is where the main building of Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan is now built.

The field was technically part of the convent gardens and had paths around it.

It was used by the children as a yard for playing and once a year, on the 5th of May, Sr Imelda organised a Rosary

procession with the whole school in honour of Our Lady.

Before this prefab school was constructed to facilitate the growing number of pupils attending, the Junior School was housed in the convent complex alongside the senior school. There were three classrooms downstairs and one upstairs provided for the use of the junior section.

At this time there were only five lay teachers present but shortly after moving to the new building that number rose to seven.

Though the Secondary School was all girls, the Junior School was mixed, in early years until 3rd class and then later up to first communion.

However the girls greatly outnumbered the boys and any boarders attending primary level were also female.



Junior School

Importance



“My time in there was fleeting. But my memories of the school will last forever. Loreto allowed me to reach my full potential and made me the person I am today”

- John O'Carroll, Junior School pupil 1966

Unlike the girls, the boys had no uniform and simply wore their own clothes. It was a smaller version of the secondary school - bottle green skirt, jumper and gabardine jacket.

This was expensive for small children and later on Sr Imelda changed it to a simple bottle green pinafore with a V-neck.

The school day ran from 9.30 to 12.30 for the juniors and continued until 2.30 for the older classes.

It was considered one of the best schools in the Balbriggan area. The students were taught the basic primary curriculum of English, Irish, Maths, History and Geography and also knitting but in addition the school had spe-

cial elocution, dance and music teachers. Both of these teachers worked with the pupils each year to produce a drama or musical which they performed in the big hall in the secondary school at the end of the year.

These were always of an excellent standard and provided wonderful entertainment for the families and friends who went to watch.

Religion was obviously an important subject in the school and they were privileged to have access to the convent's own chapel for school masses, First Communion and confessions. In the school's early days the chapel was used for the Mass and ceremony and then the 'communicants' and their fam-

ilies would be given tea and sandwiches in the gardens. In those days the nuns would provide lunch and tea for the teachers but as the school grew bigger this became unfeasible.

The Convent decided to close the school in 1986 because of financial difficulties and the dwindling numbers of resident teaching sisters in Balbriggan.

Many people regret this because it was a lovely community and very enjoyable both to teach and learn in.

Sr. Imelda is highly credited for her work in the school. She was a teacher 'of the best sorts' who even made homemade strained soup for the students in winter.

After she left Sister Helena became principal, followed by Sister Cora and finally Sister Anne McLoughlin. Then the school closed its doors forever. After time the buildings fell into disrepair and were eventually demolished to make room for the new convent and secondary school buildings which are still active and in use today.



For over 120 years Loreto Secondary School took in boarders. *Shereen Mahomed* reveals what life was like for residential pupils

One of the towering figures of nineteenth century Catholicism was Cardinal Cullen. He was most anxious to develop the Catholic Church in Ireland. When the Cardinal came into possession of Gracefield House and six acres in Balbriggan he saw it as an opportunity to extend the educational work of the Loreto sisters.

Mother Paul Finn, from Loreto Navan, agreed with the proposal that a foundation be made from there at Balbriggan. The new community took possession on 16th April 1857 with Mother Ignatius Barratt as the first Mother Superior.

The Boarding School in Balbriggan was opened on November 1857 and closed in 1980. The Boarding School consisted of many dormitories.

For a child to enter the Loreto Boarding School, parents would first enlist their child for the school. A list was then sent to the parents for their children's necessities for her stay in the school.

The uniforms were purchased from Arnotts. The uniform was green, comprising of a tunic, hat, cream socks, brown shoes, green blazer with school crest, cream blouse, gabardine and pumps (only to be worn indoors on polished wooden floors so as not to mark floors).

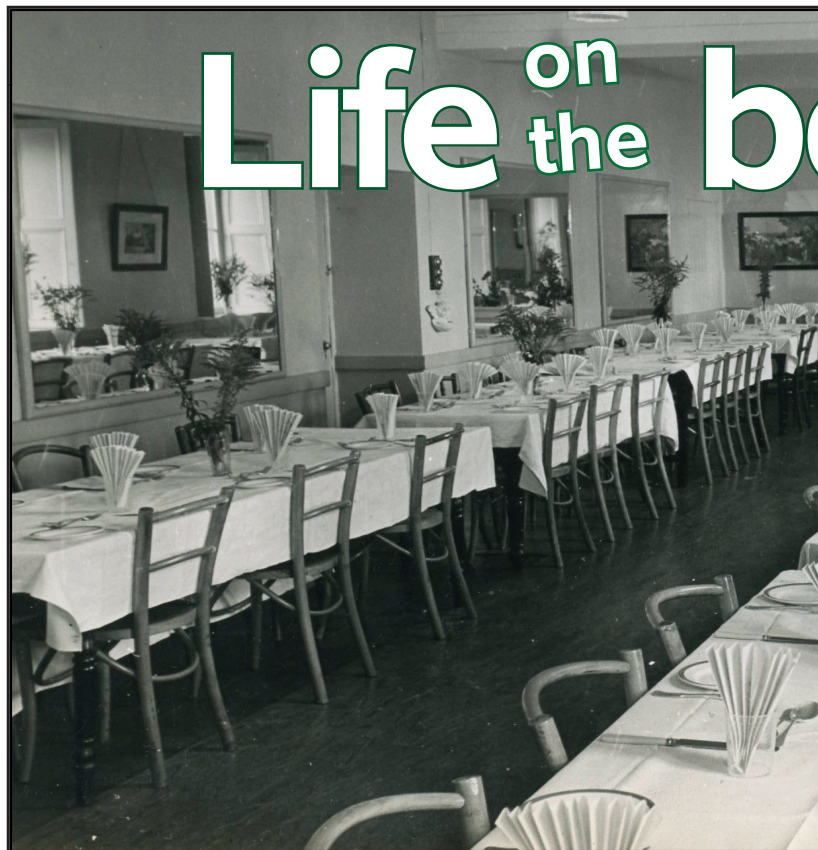
It was necessary to purchase three sets of socks and undergarments. The gym gear consisted of a tennis racket and a hockey stick. Students also had gym slippers which had a green skirt below the knee. Shorts were worn under the skirt.

Students had to purchase a quilt, pillows, sheets, blankets and a laundry bag. Everything that students purchased had to have their names sewn onto each item.

Girls were sent to Boarding Schools due to parents' long working hours, or so their child would not be left alone in the house out in the country.

After the student's uniforms were purchased, the parents and child went for an interview to the school. This was done in the school parlour where school fees were discussed and this would be around £260 - £280 per annum. School fees would vary every year.

Before first year students entered the Boarding School they undertook an assessment test. For first year students entering



During lunch, Mother Superior would ring the bell that signified pupils could talk to each other for ten minutes

the school for the first time, parents dropped their child off at 3pm on Sunday and leave. Children were told to line up with their luggage beside them in total silence. Almost everything was done in silence.

Students were then shown to their dormitories and told to unpack their belongings, but everything had a place - the laundry bag, for example, was hung on a hook. Students were not allowed any personal belongings such as hair dryers and make-up. Although students had money etc in their lockers, theft was unheard of and there was little dishonesty in the dormitories.

The dormitories consisted of a bed, a locker, curtains around the bed for privacy, a mirror and on their locker there was a vanity set (jug and basin). A sister would sleep in a separate room to keep an eye on students throughout the night.

Students awoke at 6.30am to go to mass at 7.00am; on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays the students were allowed to lie in until 7.30am.

Breakfast was served at 8.00am in the refectory dining hall. The procedure for all the students was to line up in a mannerly fashion, starting with the first years. The students would enter the hall in total silence, stand at their tables and wait until





The Refectory, where boarding school pupils ate their meals, photographed prior to the Centenary celebrations in 1957

the bell was rung by the Mother Superior. When students were seated, Grace was said and then students ate in silence. After breakfast students walked out of the refectory dining hall using a one-way system which is still used today in the same way. Breakfast would consist of cereal, brown bread, juice and tea.

Lunch was served at noon and would be the main meal of the day. The students ate chicken, meat or fish with potatoes and mushy peas. Dessert was jelly and ice-cream, or rhubarb pie. Mother Superior rang the bell ten minutes during lunch to indicate students could talk for ten minutes or until the bell was rung again.

Tea, which consisted of chips, boiled egg or bread and butter with tea, was served at 6.00pm.

Students had free time from 4.00pm until 5.00pm. This consisted of extra curricular activities such as sports, choir, orchestra and debating. Students could also use their free time for extra study. First year students had to be in bed strictly by 9.00pm sharp.

Students washed down before going to bed - baths were only allowed on the weekends in the infirmary room when students were not going home.

Once students were in bed, hands were crossed across their chests and a sister would pull back the curtains and bless them with holy water. Students would say prayers first thing in the morning and last thing at night. If one was caught talking when they were not supposed to, they were made to stand outside in the corridor until they were summoned back to bed.

Main subjects were Business Studies, Maths, Irish, English, French, History, Geography, Home-Economics and Art. Each lesson would last up to forty minutes. Subjects were taught throughout the school - mostly by the nuns, but occasionally by some lay teachers.

Students who did not go home to families on the weekends were allowed into Balbriggan on Saturday with hats and uniforms from 2-4.30pm. The students often went to the pictures or walked around the town.

Only Roman Catholic students were allowed to attend the Boarding School and Mass would always be conducted in Latin. All students were allowed home one weekend every month but as months passed, students were allowed home every weekend.

Daytime students also attended the Boarding School, but did not stay at night. Those who did board at night came from all over Ireland.

Easter and Christmas holidays were the same as today's holidays, but the summer break was slightly longer.

Students participated in school activities such as hockey, tennis and choir, where they competed with other schools.

If a student became unwell they were sent to the infirmary where she was looked after by a nun with nursing skills.

But if she was very sick her parents were summoned to collect her. Letters were the only form of communication for students to keep in contact with family.

There was a tuck shop on school grounds where students could purchase stationery, postage stamps and other luxuries.

If a student was ever summoned to the Parlour, it was either because of bad news from relatives or misbehaviour - so they were always terrified when summoned to go there.

The Nuns were classed in order of their title, e.g: Mother Superior - Mother - Sisters etc. They wore black and white garments, heavily starched.

All the Nuns wore pumps, so students were unable to hear them approaching along the corridors - all they could hear was the swishing of their garments.

• All the information gathered for this project was provided by Sandra Cervi (now Sandra O'Reilly), a pupil in the Boarding School from 1977 until 1979

Did You Know...

In the 1950s, girls from England, Spain, Cyprus, the Philippines, California and the Western Pacific were boarders at Loreto Balbriggan



Loreto 150 Balbriggan



▲ Loreto students line up in the grounds of the school in the 1950s. In the background is the Railway Station's signal box. The Order donated the land on which it stands to CIE

▲ The front entrance of the old convent

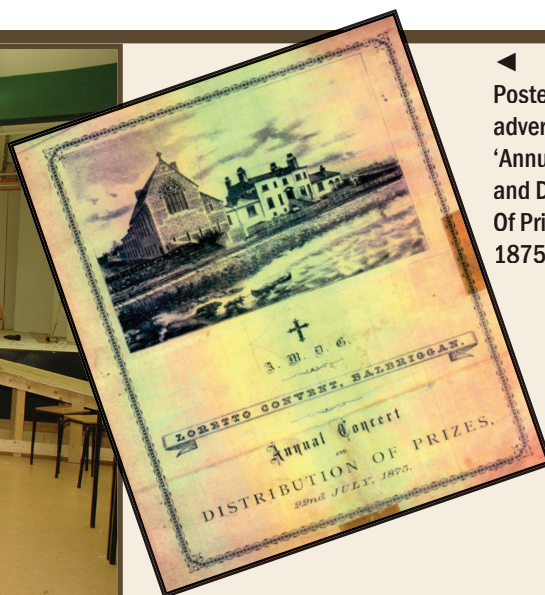
▶ The new convent, where the Loreto community now reside, built in the early 1980s



Gallery



▲ Womanual labour...
Students prepare the ramp for the 2006 Loreto Fashion Show



◀ Poster advertising an 'Annual Concert and Distribution Of Prizes' in 1875

▶ Prospectus outlining school fees and uniform requirements from 1935

LORETO CONVENT, BALBRIGGAN.
DAY SCHOOL.

| FEES: | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Senior Department | Nine guineas per year. |
| Junior Department | Six " " " |
| Extras | " " " |
| Instrumental Music | Three " " " |
| Drill | One " " " |
| Games | One " " " |

Fees payable three times a year, no reduction for short absences.

UNIFORM:
Pupils are recommended to wear the FULL School Uniform, particulars of which may be had on application; but the MINIMUM obligatory on ALL pupils, includes:—
TWO green overalls (uniform in colour, material, and make).
Brown stockings (uniform in colour and texture).
Brown house shoes with rubber heels.

REPORTS of the pupils' progress are sent to the Parents at intervals. For absence from school, a note of excuse from Parent is requested, a similar note is requested if permission is sought to leave school before the appointed hour. Parents are earnestly requested to see that their children attend school regularly and punctually.

COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT:
Tuition in TYPING, SHORTHAND and BOOK-KEEPING can be arranged for pupils who have followed the ordinary Secondary Course up to Intermediate Certificate standard, and do not intend to proceed with the Leaving Certificate Course.

Rear view of the old school, Convent and tennis court circa 1920 ▼

Ms Gemma Magliocco with the Senior Hockey team, winners of the 1990 Loreto Hockey Shield





Loreto 150 Balbriggan



Politicians, Clergy, parents and staff members celebrate the opening of the new school in 1985

The present community of Loreto Convent, Balbriggan

L to R Back Row: Sisters Angela Higgins, Cora Grimes, Pat Heron, Paulinus O'Connor, Rosa McLoughlin, Teresa Bradley, Rosaleen Hayes, Anna McAuliffe, Redempta Kenny
 Front: Claud McHugh, Joanna Cloran, Benedict Byrne, Thomasina Donelan, Columbanus Kerrigan. Missing from Picture - Aidan Caulfield



The 'Emperor' rejects the tailors' fabric - 'The Emperor's New Clothes' a school play circa 1950

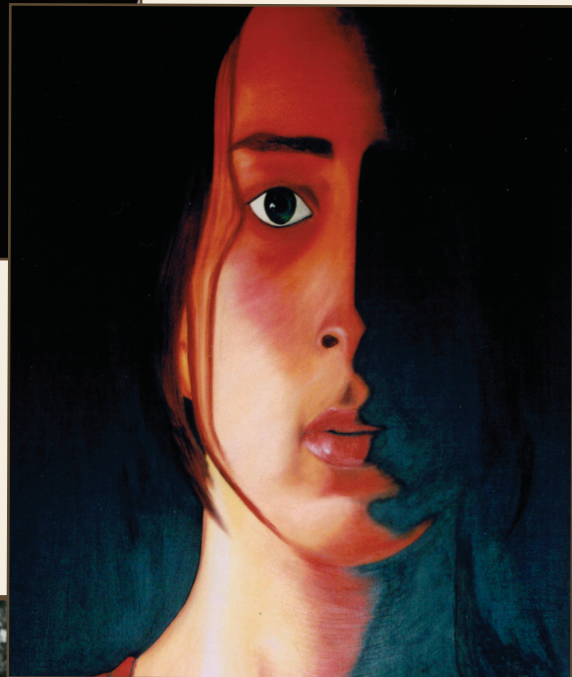




Gallery



◀ The Mother General, Pauline Dunne, greets visiting nuns on the Convent steps during the school's Centenary celebrations in 1957



▶ 'Self portrait' painted in fifth year by Fouz Elneihum, 2005



◀ The Leaving Cert year of 1948 taken at a class reunion in the grounds of the old convent in the early 1950s
 Back Row: Chris Broe, Bridie Lenehan, Maura De Largy, Elsie McEnroe, Anne Harris
 Front Row: Margaret Ward, Anne Duffner, Maura Keavney, Francis O'Connor, Mary Corry

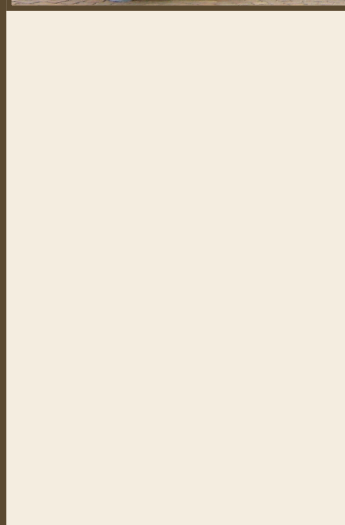




Loreto 150 Balbriggan



◀ 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th year German students outside the Swarovski Crystal Factory, Innsbruck, Austria 2005



▲ Loreto girls on the Balbriggan seafront, circa 1950s



◀ Fifth year history students with teachers Ms Fiona McMaster, left, and Ms Denise Caffrey outside the Imperial War Museum, London, April 2007





Gallery



▲ Senior students hit the slopes on a ski trip to Lillehammer, Norway, February 2007

▶ Ms Michelle Briscoe, left, Yvonne Laffey and Denise Caffrey survey the stony grey soil of poet Patrick Kavanagh's grave in February 2007



◀ Ms Linda McKenna at the summit of Zugspitze - Germany's highest mountain - Bavarian Alps, 2005





Ms Angie Flynn

My days were filled with music, good fun and lots of sport. There are twice as many girls in the school now as there was then. Marian house hasn't changed a bit.

Memories are

The ultimate compliment any student can make to their school is to come back and teach there. Loreto Balbriggan has no shortage of those who fondly remember their days on the other side of the desk



Ms Ciara McGuirk

Every time I see the film Steel Manolias reminds me of my time as a pupil - we were shown it as part of a school Retreat.

There was no Transition Year when I was in there but I would have loved to do it.

In my 3rd year (1989/90) we performed Oliver. I was the strawberry seller and the policeman who shot Bill Sykes.

I also remember a trip to the Burren, Co Clare. It was the first time I was away from home.



Ms Geraldine Parsons

My six years flew. I got lots of work done and got so much help from teachers, even after I'd left school.



Ms Anne Marie McDonough

I am proud to be a past pupil of Loreto Balbriggan. The school is very much part of my life, I have made great and lasting friendships both as a student and a teacher.

Loreto Balbriggan has always been a happy place for me. As a student, the atmosphere was brilliant and I got involved in lots of activities - we were always encouraged to fulfil our talents.

As a member of staff I feel privileged to work with others who are so dedicated to keeping the spirit of Loreto alive. I have made friendships that will last forever.



Ms Geraldine Barnett



Ms Rachel Gallen

I loved it so much I'm still here!



Ms Niamh Grehan

Apart from the academic side, there is also a great spirit for sport and I especially enjoyed playing hockey. I feel lucky now to be in a position to give a bit back by coaching some of the teams in recent years.



Ms Ann Kimmage (nee Nolan)

I regret that I didn't get more involved in school activities as a student because I couldn't wait to get out of school.

As a teacher I couldn't wait to get back here. It took 15 years before I achieved that goal.

Past pupils

ire made of...



Ms Dearbhla McCartan

I remember a trip to a school in Northern Ireland for a Retreat where we used the workshops to share our hopes and dreams.

I was comforted by the knowledge that my friends and classmates shared the same fears as myself.

From talking and listening in this way, the Retreat opened up new depths in our understanding of each other.

Our friendships blossomed throughout the remainder of our days in school



Ms Sinead Nally

My first year was Mr Fynes's first year as Principal. It was a wonderful experience.



**Ms Mary Harford
(nee O'Loughlin)**

Being terrified the first time I came to the school because of its sheer size... Walking in single file on the left hand side of the cor-

ridor every time we left class... Running like a herd of elephants down the top corridor and being caught by Sr Sebastian... Playing jokes on Mr Cullen... A different, slightly more relaxed style of Principal when Sr Marie Rose took over... Not wanting to leave when I did my Leaving Certificate and when I came back to work here, it was like I never went anywhere else.



Ms Ann Ahern

I couldn't get enough! Great fun, lots of hard work, great teachers, great friends.



Ms Denise Caffrey

My year-group was the first to do Transition Year. We put on My Fair Lady, I played a maid in the chorus - we set the standard for all who followed!

In the same year we participated in the Slogadh competition in Ennis Co Clare - and we won, no doubt down to the quality of my Sean Nós dancing!



Ms Abina Ferris

I really enjoyed my school days in Loreto Balbriggan. School was great fun and there was a lovely atmosphere here. I made some wonderful friends and I am still in contact with them today.



Ms Ruth McKenna

I made great friends that I'm still in touch with. You have to make the most of good and bad experiences.



Ms Susan Scully

I always looked forward to the Teacher's Christmas Concert. It's still a great tradition in the school. Each year it's different but full of the same fun.



Ms Sinead Fitzsimons

Great fun, great years, great teachers

Friday 6th February 1956.
For one boarder at Loreto
Balbriggan, it is just another...

Day *in* the life

7am

I awake, wash and change into my school uniform - a box-pleated gym slip, long brown stockings, a white blouse and a green jumper with a green, white and yellow collar buttoned at the neck.

Our dormitory is located on the top floor of Marion House. There are endless rows of beds, each one surrounded by a curtain on a rail.

At least 4 sisters sleep in each dormitory- one in every corner, so we have little privacy.

I pull back the curtain surrounding my bed and step neatly into the orderly line of students heading towards the chapel. Like every other morning, after breakfast, we have to attend the 7.30am mass. This is compulsory.

I am still half asleep and my principal, Mother Francis, notices. Even though I am in second year I still am not used to the early mornings. She gives me a scolding.

With mass finished, I return to the dormitory, collect my school books and get ready for my first class.

9am

This morning, my first subject on the timetable is Irish. In almost every subject, including Irish, my teacher is a nun. Each student address her as 'Mother'. Nuns who are domestic workers are called Sisters.

My core subjects are Irish, English, French, Latin, Maths (Algebra, Arithmetic and Geometry), History, Geography, Botany and Religion, Drill and Art.

French and Drill are the only subjects I have a lay teacher for. We have French at 9.45 class.

My teacher is the Reverend Mother's sister. She has a different way of teaching the subject which makes it more enjoyable and interesting.

After French we have a 5 minute break (10.30am) during which a student can go to the bathroom or say a prayer in the chapel.

Occasionally I visit the chapel, however I usually give priority to a visit to the bathroom.

Classes begin again, at 10.35, with Maths. Although I have a very strict teacher I still love the subject, and today is especially enjoyable, because we concentrate on Algebra - my favourite topic.

Noon

English is next up, before lunch. Like the rest of the boarders I sit in my own special seat at the long table for each meal.

For lunch we only have a small snack of sandwiches as our main meal follows shortly afterwards.

Even though lunch is supposed to be 40 minutes of freedom we are constantly monitored and everyone has to eat in silence.

Classes resume at 12.45p.m. Today our last three subjects are Religion, Latin and Botany.

In Religion we read some parables and a little on Church History. I have chosen Latin as an option subject as it is needed in order to apply to University, which I plan on doing.

Botany is my final class, which I thoroughly enjoy.

3pm

Formal classes end. As it is Friday we have fish for dinner. Most of us detest fish and we're usually still hungry afterwards. The Reverend Mother knows about this, so she insists that a large steamed pudding should follow for dessert every Friday.

We have another special treat in store today. It is my friend's birthday and one of the Sisters baked her a cake, so we all had an extra dessert serving!

After dinner all the boarders have to participate in elocution lessons, music lessons and drama.

Music is my favourite - I love to play the piano. In drama I am often scolded for not paying attention to advice - I don't think I'm able to act anyway.

Today, however, I have been assigned to the stage design group, much to my relief. Then we have elocution. Although the teacher was strict I felt that the class was actually worthwhile.

5pm

For the next two hours we have a study period. Then from 7.00 - 8.00 games and recreation are held in the concert hall. I always enjoy that time of the evening - at least I feel I am in a more relaxed environment.

At 9.00p.m. we have bread and jam with tea for supper and after a few prayers it is bedtime.

● Compiled from information gathered during interviews with past pupils, teachers and Sisters.

Student numbers



From humble beginnings, the student population has risen inexorably to over a thousand at the turn of the millennium. Jane Bermingham examines the figures

When Loreto Balbriggan first opened its doors in 1857, the total student population was only 12. By the end of the first academic year, there was a total of 42 students.

However over the years, the number of students attending has grown considerably - particularly so in the past 50 years.

In the year 1959 to 1960 the total number was 145.

That rose to 172 in 1964. The school only did well from that stage onwards. It grew to a further 216 by 1970 and by the mid 80s, had reached over 500 students.

Not only did the student ratings go up, but also the amount of year-groups. The school changed from having a four year Intermediate (Junior) cycle and two year Leaving Certificate cycle to five compulsory years (three junior years and two senior years) in 1979.

Finally, in the year 1994-95, the school introduced its first six years compulsory course. Three years to the Junior Certificate Transition Year and two years to the Leaving Certificate.

Meanwhile, the school was growing bigger and bigger each year. In the early 90s, the student population had reached 628, and by the mid to late 90s, had grown by 300 more. At the turn of the century, the numbers rose to 1,000 and four years later was 1035.

In 2006 we had 1101 students and this year, there are 1115.

Each year has seven classes in it, except for 6th year which has one less. Next September, though, we will see each year have seven classes in each year for the first time.

With our new building being extended in the near future, we hope to soon have 1500 students - and more one way systems!

The Numbers Game

Sporting a Smile



Winning at sport has always been secondary to taking part at the school. But, says Ms Gemma Magliocco, we still haven't been bad at it...

As with all of the Loreto Schools, participation in sport has been encouraged and supported in Balbriggan from its foundation.

Historically the ladies played Croquet, Tennis and Rounders - The fashion of the day limited participation in more robust and less 'ladylike' activity.

The school grounds at Balbriggan had six Lawn-tennis courts and a large level lawn area for Croquet and Rounders.

As the century progressed this large lawn was re-laid as a magnificent grass hockey pitch and was also used for athletic activity.

Some time in the early 70s a second all-weather pitch was laid at the grounds of the Loreto School, along with some hard court areas laid for Basketball and Tennis.

Throughout the 70s and 80s Basketball grew as a sport in the school and Balbriggan became a force to be reckoned with in the Dublin district.

Hockey also became more popular and by 1984 the school was fielding 12 hockey teams and 12 basketball teams for Leinster competitions.

Athletics were also on the rise and the grass pitch became the centre for athletic training. There was even room for the introduction of a new sport - cricket.

Throughout the 80s and early 90s the school experienced success across all of these disciplines, with tennis players being selected to Leinster squads and our cricketers and hockey teams reaching the final of, and winning, Leinster Schools Championships. Some of our players were selected to play for their

province and even made Irish selections after leaving school.

The Basketball teams were regular winners of the Loreto Leagues and Leinster finalists; the Athletes were showing prowess at the Loreto Athletics meets in the Guinness grounds and later in Santry Stadium.

Throughout the 90s, the extra-curricular programme expanded in accordance with the school's growing population.

It now boasts Soccer teams at senior and junior level, Gaelic football teams at senior and junior level, Camogie, Tennis Hockey and Basketball teams at all levels.

Athletics, Cricket and Badminton are still going strong and this year a new sport is being launched - Volleyball.

The school also facilitates student par-

Sport/Culture



Main Picture: For those watching in black and white... A hockey game, played on the old grass pitch, in 1957

Insets: A selection of some other sports played at the school nowadays

participation in equestrian and golf competitions from time to time.

The long tradition of striving for excellence, participation in sport and encouraging the girls to enjoy the social aspects of sport is alive and well. The school's outlook mirrors that of the Olympic motto – participation is the goal, winning - when it happens - is the bonus.

This long established tradition looks set to continue into the future with the students of the 21st century enjoying the sporting life as much as those of the past. We now stride forward with a new project to upgrade the all-weather hockey pitch and, finally, to have developed on the grounds a purpose-built sports hall to enhance and reward the enthusiasm of the students in this wonderful school.

Music has always been a big part of life in Loreto Balbriggan. There are many groups in the school for students of all abilities.

There are senior and junior choirs, a school orchestra, a traditional group, the clarinet quartet, and even private individual lessons.

There is also the Dublin Secondary School Girls Choir, which is made up of around 20 schools from Dublin.

In recent times although the numbers attending these has gone down - for example in 1996 there were nearly 75 members in senior choir and now there is just over 30 - the enjoyment and passion displayed by those who do it has increased.

- Claire Nugent

Music

Culture

If sport and music wasn't your thing then there was always other activities for students to get involved in.

Debating has always been a strong, popular and successful activity in our school.

The Gaisce award (the President's Award) is also another activity that students can get involved in. It gets students involved in new sports and volunteer work among many other worthwhile and character building 'challenges'.

In the past the schools extra-curricular activities included things like Taize, which was done during lunch where a small group met to chant songs and prayers in Latin.

They met up once a week at lunchtimes for 15 minutes and there was an optional Friday morning session.

This was established in 1991 by Sr Teresa. Unfortunately this activity is no longer practised.

There was also Craft classes where students would weave, embroider, sew, make rugs, lamps and learn many other useful techniques.

Nowadays we have a wide range of other activities for students to get involved in school life, away from sport and music - for example fundraising groups, debating, public speaking, the Young Scientist competition and Student Council to name but a few.

The variety of different activities that students can get involved in has grown hugely since the school was set up. There is now something for every type of character.

If the extra-curricular activities in the school grow as much as they have in the past 150 years then we are looking at a very bright, enjoyable and successful future.

- Claire Nugent



Ag macnán

Agallamh ar an múinteoir agus iarscoláire Áine Ní hEacheirín le Sarah Kelly, Orlaith Stone agus Ruth Huban

Ar dtús an féidir leat insint dom faoi na blianta atá caite agat mar scoláire anseo?

Thaitin mo laethanta scoile go mór liom. Bhí mé ciúin ar scoil. B'aingeal mé.

Cé mhéad múinteoir a bhí ag múineadh sa scoil sna blianta sin?

Bhí timpeall cúigear is tríocha múinteoir sa scoil agus bhí cúig chéad dalta, mar sin bhí sé an-difriúil.

Cén sórt saol a bhí ag na daltaí scoile sna laethanta sin?

Chuaigh na daltaí amach lena gcáirde ag an deireadh seachtaine. Ní dheach-aigh mé amach mar bhí mé ag staidéar i gcónaí ach, ag an deireadh seachtaine bhí mé fiáin.

An raibh gaeilge maith ag na daltaí a bhí sa scoil sna blianta sin?

Ceapaim go raibh gaeilge maith acu ach,

bhí gaeilge líofa ag na daltaí a ndeach-aigh go dtí an ghaeltacht.

An bhfuil aon scéalta greannmhara agat faoin am sin?

Nuair a bhí mé sa chéad bhliain d'imir mé haca ach bhí an pháirc rófhada domsa agus d'eirigh mé as!

Cad iad na cluichí a d'imir sibh ar scoil sna laethanta sin?

D'imríomar haca, cispheil, leadóg agus peil ghaelach.

Cén saghas éide scoile a bhí agaibh nuair a bhí tú ar scoil?

Bhí an sean-éide scoile againn- sciorta glas, agus cóta fada glas againn.

Cad é an t-athrú is mó atá idir na laethanta sin agus inniu?

Ar dtús tá an scoil níos mó anois. Nuair a bhí mé ag dul ar scoil bhí aithne ag

gach dalta ar gach múinteoir. Tá níos mó daltaí anseo anois.

Tá sé níos neamhphearsanta anois agus níos deacra siúl timpeall na scoile. Ní raibh sceallóga prátaí ar díol sa scoil. Ní raibh an t-Uasal Fynes ina príomhoide nuair a thosaigh mé sa scoil. Ba í an tSiúr Ancilla an príomhoide ag an am.

Anois inis dom faoi do phost mar mhúinteoir.

Bhí seasca múinteoir agus ocht gcéad dalta sa scoil nuair a thosaigh mé ag múineadh anseo sa bhliain 2002.

Tá mé ag múineadh Gaeilge agus Fraincise. Nuair a thosaigh mé ag múineadh bhí eagla an domhain orm ach anois tá mé an-sásta agus is aoibhinn liom mo phost. Tá na múinteoirí agus na daltaí an-deas ar fad.



Ruth Huban, clé, Sarah Kelly agus Orlaith Stone leis an múinteoir, Ms Ann Ahern





Agallaimh

mh siar...



'Submerged... a self portrait.' Pictúir ó Lila Marie Hamilton a chruthaigh sí i 2005

Alice Donnelly agus a máthair, Alison Guildea, a d'fhreastail ar an scoil seo

Alice: Ar dtús cathain a bhí tú ag freastal ar an scoil seo?

Thosaigh mé ag freastal ar Loreto Baile Brigín i Meán Fómhair 1979 agus chríochnaigh mé i Meitheamh 1984.

Cé mhéad múinteoir a bhí ag obair sa scoil sna blianta sin?

Ceapaim go raibh tríocha múinteoir ag obair sa scoil.

Agus cé mhéad dalta a bhí anseo?

Bhí cúig chéad dalta ag freastal ar an scoil seo ansin.

Cén sórt saol a bhí ag dalta scoile sna

laethanta sin?

Bhí an éide scoile an-difriúil. Bhí rialacha dochta ann freisin. Bhí na siúracha dea-chríoch.

An raibh scoláirí cónaithe sa scoil ag an am sin?

Nuair a bhí mé sa chéad bhliain ar scoil bhí scoláirí cónaithe ann ach b'shin deireadh leis. Scoláirí lae amháin a bhí sa scoil ina dhiaidh sin.

Cén saghas saol a bhí acu?

Níl a fhios agam. Tá brón orm.

An raibh an spórt sa scoil go maith?

Ní raibh an t-ábhar corpoideachas

againn, ach d'imir mé leis an bhfoireann haca. Bhí foireann cispheile sa scoil freisin.

An raibh tú go maith?

Ní raibh, ach bhí an fhoireann ceart go leor.

Cad é an t-athrú is mó atá idir na laethanta sin agus inniú?

Tá na daltaí níos saibhre anois agus nuair bhí mé sa scoil seo bhí beagnach gach cailín sa scoil ina cónaí i mBaile Brigín. D'athraigh an scoil ó shin.

Sin mar a bhí an scoil nuair a bhí mé ag freastal uirthí.





Sounding a positive Retreat...

Erin Callinan looks at the role Retreats have played in developing students' understanding of their spiritual side

Retreats have always been a very important part of school life in Loreto Balbriggan.

They are the one time in the academic year when students have the opportunity to detach themselves from the school day and become closer to the religious origin from which our school was founded.

Because of the school's ever growing size, religious Retreats take place over a number of different days for each year group.

In the past, when the school was much smaller, Retreats would commence from Monday to Friday in a typical school week, each year having an allocated day.

Many past pupils have differing memories of Retreats in Loreto Balbriggan. One aspect that struck me from hearing of past Retreats was how the religious reference has adapted.

Biblical reference still exists, but the approach is different. Before, Retreats were conducted by the clergy and resembled a Mass. They all gathered in the schools hall and sang hymns such as "It's beginning to rain".

"It's beginning to rain

Hear the voice of the father

Saying whosoever will

May come to the water

I promise to pour my spirit out on my sons and my daughters

If you are thirsty or dry

Lift your hands up to the sky

Its beginning to rain."

Class groups may have only contained 15 to 20 stu-

dents so space was plentiful. The day revolved around a religious concept detailing mainly from readings and the bible. There was little interaction between students and the people who led the Retreat - that differs greatly today.

Now, Retreats are not led by clergy, but by people who have had inspiration from the church or who have found God through their own suffering or happiness.

Hymns and prayers used to be the main focus - now it's discussion and the learning of people's lives.

The 2nd Years retreat to Armagh was an important event as they learned about our patron saint, St. Patrick and also visited St. Patrick's cathedral.

It taught them what an immense role religion has in our society and how they are a part of that.

Retreat trips were not as frequent in the past as funding was difficult to come by.

For many past pupils, Retreats have had a positive, long lasting influence.

Some remember watching films that were screened, such as "Steel Magnolias", which still reminds this person of school friends and that particular retreat.

Trips to Northern Ireland were also held. On one such trip, students were given the rare opportunity to go on a school outing, allowing them to spend quality time together. It helped them to open up and explore new depths to their relationships, allowing them to become even closer as friends.

This was very important - it allowed them to learn who they really were on the inside, which is what Retreats are about.



'You put your right hand in...' Students learn the art of self defence in the grounds of the school



'Níos mó brú ar dhaltaí scoile anois'

Sarah-Louise Brogan agus Shauna Morgan ag caint leis an múinteoir Iníon Ní Bhroin atá ag múineadh sa scoil seo le timpeall fiche bliain



Shauna Morgan, clé, agus Sarah-Louise Brogan leis an múinteoir Ms Máire Ní Bhroin

An féidir leat insint dom faoi na blianta a thosaigh tú ag múineadh sa scoil seo?
Bhuel thosnaigh mise ag múineadh sa scoil seo i mí Meán Fómhair 1981. Ag an am sin ní raibh ach thart ar 300-400 dalta sa scoil. Bhí an scoil lonnaithe sa tsean-chlochar.

Cé mhéad múinteoirí a bhí ag obair sa scoil ag na blianta sin?

Ní cuimhin liom go díreach cé mhéad múinteoirí a bhí ann ach déarfainn go raibh thart ar fhiche ar a mhéad. Bhí seomra suite nó parlús mór mar sheomra foirne againn. Bhí bord mór i lár an tseomra agus shuigh na múinteoirí timpeall air.

An raibh scoláirí cónaithe sa scoil ag an am sin?

Ní raibh. Níor glacadh le scoláirí cónaithe níos mó tar éis na bliana 1980, measaim. Bhí na suanliosanna á n-úsáid mar sheomraí ranga. An bhfuil a fhios agat seomraí 16, 17 agus an seomra ceoil i dTeach Mhuire?

Bhuel bhíodh siadsan mar shuanliosanna ag na scoláirí cónaithe uair amháin.

Faoin am gur thosnaigh mise ag múineadh anseo áfach bhí siad á núsáid mar sheomraí ranga. Níl dabht ar bith ach go bhféadfadh na ballaí ansin cuid mhaith scéalta a insint!

An raibh caighdeán maith Gaeilge ag na daltaí nuair a thosnaigh tusa ag múineadh anseo?

Ag an am sin bhí i bhfad níos mó den litríocht le déanamh don Árdteist sa Ghaeilge.

Is dócha go raibh caighdeán árd-scribhneoireachta ag na daltaí. Is dóigh liom mar sin féin go bhfuil an caighdeán i labhairt na teanga níos fearr i láthair na huair.

Cén sórt saoil a bhí ag daltaí scoile ag an am sin?

Ní dóigh liom i ndáiríre go bhfuil mórán difríochta idir an saol scoile a bhí ag daltaí an uair sin agus an saol atá agaibhse.

An difríocht is mó atá ann anois, dar liom, ná, córas na bpointí. Ceapaim go bhfuil i bhfad Éireann níos mó brú ar dhaltaí scoile anois de bharr na deabhail

pointí sin.

Cad iad na cluichí a d'imir siad na laethanta sin?

Chomh fada agus is eol domsa, ní raibh aon mhúinteoir corpoideachais sa scoil seo go dtí gur tháinig Iníon Magliocco. É sin ráite, sé mo thuairim go bhfuil traidisiún fada haca ag an scoil seo ag dul siar sna blianta. Táim ag ceapadh gur imríodh an cluiche líonpheil nó netball freisin.

Bhí múinteoirí agus daltaí níos mó ar a suaimhneas ag an am sin agus bhí níos mó spraoi eatarthu ar shlí eigin. Osclaíodh an scoil nua sa bhliain 1985 agus tá dhá fhoirgneamh nua eile againn ó shin i leith gan trácht ar na foirgnimh réamhdhéanta.

An maith leat a bheith ag múineadh sa scoil seo?

Is breá liom an scoil seo. Is daoine macánta díograiseach iad na múinteoirí ina nduine is ina nduine. Maidir leis na daltaí tríd na blianta, caithfidh mé a rá gur cailíní den scoth iad agus léirigh siad meas agus omós dom i gcónaí.



'A half day on Wednesday? No such luck!'

Kerry Cahill asks her mother - and past pupil - Joan about school life in the 70s



Glory Days... Joan Cahill (Centre) with Carol Wickham (left) and Moira Cassidy made up the 1977 Loreto Balbriggan golf team that won the National title and represented Ireland at the inaugural Schools' Golf Championship For Girls in London

What years did you attend Loreto Balbriggan?

I was in Loreto from 1973-1977.

What time did the school day start and finish at?

School started at 9.15am and finished at 4pm. I cycled to Laytown train station and then got the train the rest of the journey. Other children either came by bus, car or on foot.

Were there a lot of pupils in the school?

Perhaps about 400. Loreto was also a Boarding School then. We had a lot of nuns teaching us. Some were great and others very strict. Mother Sabastian was the Principal but I cannot remember who the Vice-Principal was.

What subjects did you study?

For my Inter Cert (Junior Cert) I studied Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, Art and French. For my Leaving I studied Irish, English, Maths, Geography, Spanish and French.

How many classes would you have in a day?

We had about nine classes each day. Each class lasted 40 minutes. Our lunch break lasted about 50 minutes I think

'The nuns wanted us to wear our school uniforms playing golf. It took a lot of effort to persuade them to allow us wear green cords instead'

and we had a short break in the morning as well.

Did you have a half day on Wednesdays?

No, we were never that lucky!

Did you have to do Transition Year?

No, TY was not available then. We did go on school trips, though. I went to France and Switzerland.

Did you have Christmas and end of

Year exams?

Yes we had both.

What was your uniform like?

The blouse and jumper has not changed but we wore green tunics and green gabardine coats.

Did the students ever have any Ceol Loreto Gigs or any other shows?

I just remember having sports days and prize-giving at the end of the year.

For sports and extra curricular activities, we had hockey, basketball and tennis in the summer, as well as athletics. We also had debating.

What sports did you play?

I played hockey, tennis and I also played golf. I was lucky because two other girls played golf and so we formed a golf team.

In 1977 we won the All-Ireland Schools golf Championship. It was sponsored by Aer Lingus and so we got to London to play against England, Scotland and Wales.

It was great fun and very exciting. The nuns wanted us to wear our school uniforms playing golf and it took a lot of effort to persuade them to allow us to wear green cords instead of our tunics.



A Different Angle

Introduced in 1994, Transition Year allows students to take a break from formal study and learn more about the wider world. **Aisling O'Carroll** gets the lowdown from Ms Roisin Scally

When was the first year that Transition Year (TY) started?

The first transition year was in 1994/95. A meeting was held by a group of teachers and the Department of Education. It was decided that a Transition Year was needed for Loreto Secondary School.

Why was it set up?

It was set up to give students an opportunity to do a six year cycle for the Leaving Certificate and we felt that this option was best suited to needs of our students.

What are its aims?

Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development, including social awareness and increased social competence. The pre-eminence of general,

technical and academic skills with an emphasis on inter-disciplinary and self directed learning.

Education through experience of adult working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

What teachers are involved with the T.Y. board?

Ms Scally, Ms Moore, Ms Branigan, Ms Mc Hugh, Ms Clerkin and Ms Sheridan.

What modules are available to the students during Transition Year?

Self Defence, Dance, Health and Beauty, Care in the Community, Digital Imaging, Theatre Make-up, Life Skills, Italian, Environmental Studies, Horticulture, Spanish, Crime Studies, Road Safety, Forensics, Substance Abuse and Amnesty.

Are there any courses / trips available to the students?

Public Access To Law Course, Rosemary Smith Think Awareness Driving Course, GAA Coaching Course, Volleyball Course, Gael Linn Course.

Has there always been work experience since Transition Year was set up?

Yes. But it was only for two weeks, unlike now where the students go out to work for three weeks.

Has Transition Year been a success? Do you get any feedback from the students or parents?

Yes, it has been successful. Each year we survey the students and we have found that overall they have enjoyed Transition Year.



Laughing matter... 2006 Transition year students prepare for the play, Oklahoma

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