



# Clongowes Union Newsletter

Edition No. 2

October, 2021

## Dear Fellow Clongownians,

Welcome to our second publication. As previously mentioned we hope to be able to update past pupils on news, events and happenings within the Clongowes family.

It is my honour to serve as your President for a second year, as Covid restricted our activities, with no functions either held or attended. However your committee (listed below) held many Zoom meetings and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their continued support.

### OFFICERS:

President: Paul Maher (OC '61)

President Elect: Tom Lane (OC '81)

Junior Vice-President: Peter O'Meara (OC '88)

Past President: Maeliosa Power (OC '89)

Hon. Treasurer: Dan O'Leary (OC '83)

Hon. Seretary: Shane Dowling (OC'83)

Registrar: Barry Bowen (OC '01)

### COMMITTEE:

Fr. Michael Sheil, S.J. (OC '59)

Chris Lumb, Headmaster

Brian Cusack (OC '90)

Richard Feighery (OC '03)

Padraig Whelan (OC '89)

Ronan Sharkey (OC '01)

Coming in as President-elect next June will be Peter O'Meara (OC '88). The O'Meara family have strong links with the school with his father, Barry M. O'Meara a former President of the Union 1964-65.

Subject to guidelines, we will be proceeding with our Annual Business Lunch in the Conrad Hotel on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November. You should by now have received a notice concerning this event. Please find further information here: <http://clongowesunion.ie/business-lunch/>

As this is part of our fund-raising for the Peter McVerry Trust we would welcome your support on the day but if you are unable to attend and would like to contribute, as so many of you did last year when we raised over €5,000 for this cause, you can do so via the following link: <https://>

[www.gofundme.com/f/bd6sxs-clongowes-union-fundraiser-for-peter-mcverry-2021?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf+share-flow-1](http://www.gofundme.com/f/bd6sxs-clongowes-union-fundraiser-for-peter-mcverry-2021?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)

## School News:

We welcome the new School Captain, Andrew Percival and Vice-Captains Fiachra Lambe and Josh Dunne into their new roles and wish them every success.

We welcome Tomás O'Leary to the school as Director of Rugby and wish him every success. Tomás is a former rugby international who played as a scrum half, winning 24 caps for Ireland at senior level. Career highlights include playing a pivotal role as Ireland's number nine in the Grand Slam winning 2009 campaign. He represented his native Munster and enjoyed great success winning European cup titles in 2006 and 2009, as well as two league titles. He is one of a select few players to play in the three top professional Northern hemisphere leagues. He enjoyed a spell with London Irish in the English Premiership and finished his playing career in 2017 playing with Montpellier in the Top 14. O'Leary had the great honour of being selected by the British & Irish Lions in 2009. However, a cruel injury prevented him from touring with the squad to South Africa. Tomás hails from a sporting family. His father Sean won 4 All Ireland Senior hurling medals with Cork in the 1970s and 80's. Tomas also had the honour of captaining Cork to an All Ireland minor hurling title in 2001.

Finally a date has been set for the long awaited presentation of medals to the Senior Cup Team 2020 on reaching the final of the Leinster Senior Cup, a game that was not played due to Covid-19. On Sunday November 7<sup>th</sup> a graduation mass will be held for Rhetoric 2020. This will be followed by lunch where the presentation of medals will be made. Parents will be in attendance.

## Re-Unions:

Class of '61 and Class of '91 are due to take place during October.

## Dates for your diary:

November 5<sup>th</sup>: Business Lunch, Conrad Hotel.

November 14<sup>th</sup>: On line Mass for deceased past pupils.

February, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022: Annual Dinner, Marker Hotel.

Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2022: Union AGM

As our next publication date is scheduled for early February we would appreciate hearing from readers of any news/re-unions/stories that can be included in that issue. Please forward to [union@clongowes.net](mailto:union@clongowes.net) marked Newsletter.

## ***Open-for-business once again!***

We have got off to a great start to the year, blessed as we were with fine and dry weather in September, which is always a great help to the settling-in process, especially for Elements boys. The numbers on roll are very encouraging – up on last year's Covid-blip – and reached our hoped for target of 440, including the healthy number of 68 into Elements.

Covid restrictions are still, to some extent, in place and we were helped by having fully negative results in the PCR testing which took place a few days after we re-opened. Boys have been receiving their Covid vaccinations in school during the past month, and we are expecting to have 85% or so fully vaccinated by Hallowe'en.

The Mass for the opening of the Academic year saw what we think is a first for Clongowes with the whole school, students and staff, coming together in the 1929 Quadrangle. Fr Rector was the Celebrant and Cyril Murphy produced his usual high-quality contribution to the celebration with the unexpected, but excellent, acoustics doing justice to his *Schola Cantorum*. The old bell which formerly adorned the People's Church roof provided a dignified call to reverence the Presence of the Lord at the Consecration. With the spiritual celebration concluded, the more down-to-earth Inter-House Sports Day took centre stage with the sun making for another very pleasant, whole-school experience of participation and effort, with Arrupe House the eventual winners of the Aloysius Bowl.

Sports fixtures are finally up-and-running after a hiatus of almost eighteen months. For all of Third Line, it is their first time pulling on the *purple-and-white* to maintain our proud tradition. All of which will be, for them, a never-to-be-forgotten memory of their time in Clongowes.

Our Rhetoric 2021 leavers received their Leaving Cert results in the first week of September. The overall picture was very positive, though there was some individual disappointment as a result of this year's exceptional mix of accredited and examination grades. The vast majority of boys declared themselves to be pleased with their places on Third Level courses, in Ireland and overseas.

There has been a good number of new faces among the teaching staff and within the enlarged prefecting team – now 15 in number – to cater for the greater demands of this important and core aspect of Clongowes as a boarding school.

We record our thanks to three long-serving members of staff who, between them, gave over a century of service to CWC: Seamus Aherne (teacher of maths and Irish for all of 41 years); Frank Kelly (prefect in all three Lines over his 33 years and who succeeded Fr Sheil as our Higher

Line Prefect for the past 17); and Tony Egan (OC and Third and Lower Line Prefect also over 33 years).

Another OC, Joe Rooney, who has given marvellous *bona fide* service to the Clongowes Foundation – as well as a member of the Board of Management – is passing its day-to-day running onto his successor shortly, though we are grateful that he will continue to have oversight of our fundraising.

**Chris Lumb,  
Headmaster**

The whole Clongowes Family – Students – Staff – Parents – OCs and many others have been living a roller-coaster ride over the past fortnight after news arrived that our intrepid Master-Mountain-Man, Declan O'Keeffe, had suffered a stroke while engaged in his favourite pursuit – walking the Camino.

The bad news [roller-coaster down] came through his Sister, Deirdre, who contacted Fr Rector as she prepared to set off with Dee to join him in hospital in Bilbao. He kept us all informed as he received the latest news from Spain.

After the initial shock and uncertainty came the good news [roller-coaster up] that he had been moved out of the special stroke unit to a two-bed room. But this was quickly followed by the more serious news [roller-coaster down] of a second stroke which saw him return to ICU – and saw us redoubling our prayers as we stormed the heavens for him.

The next day – as we waited anxiously – came the news [roller-coaster up] that, while critical, he was stable. The following day [roller-coaster unexpectedly rising faster!] came a photograph of a smiling Declan *sitting-up-and-taking-notice* !

As we go to print, the roller-coaster is maintaining height – and our thoughts and hopes are turning towards his return to Dublin for specialized treatment for the sequelae of the stroke – and to his full return to health.

It has been an amazing, wonderful, heart-moving experience to receive a tsunami of messages of good wishes and prayers from all sections of the CWC Family for Declan, who has made such a contribution to the College for 40 years since 1981! - as Teacher, Coach, Editor of *The Clongownian* and Assistant Archivist – and who now knows how well-loved he is !

We continue to hope and prayer for his safe return home to full health – and look forward to welcoming him back to our Alma Mater. **Fr. Michael Sheil, s.j.**

**Data Collection:** As part of the ongoing preparations for the upcoming 125 years anniversary of the Clongowes Union it was deemed a worthy exercise to gather and update as much information as possible so that we could share exciting news with the many OCs based throughout the world.

Between February and May of this year quite a significant number of people supported the Union in reaching out to their year group to ensure we had as much relevant data as possible.

Thanks to a large cohort of very helpful OCs we have now updated contact information for some 2600 Clongownians throughout the world, with past pupils going as far back as 1945 receiving information such as this newsletter.

If your details (email address, location, telephone number) change for whatever reason don't forget to email [uniondata@clongowes.net](mailto:uniondata@clongowes.net) and we will endeavour to update our contact list as soon as possible.

If you know of any OCs who have not received this newsletter please feel free to share the data collection link. <http://forms.gle/UrAVDGyneLq3bdew6> with them or direct them to the Clongowes Union website. <https://clongowesunion.ie/>

### Back To Whaler School

For a brief moment during the summer the Gollymocky Whalers glimpsed a future in Hollywood. Sadly, the BBC filming crew directed by Sharon Horgan at the Forty Foot failed to spot our big screen potential despite plenty of early morning Whaler loitering. Back in the real world of post-lockdown freedom this motley group of OC sea swimmers continues to take the daily sea water plunge and the numbers have held up remarkably well despite the opening up of other leisure opportunities.

The holiday season meant swimming venues and timings were more flexible, even international, but a recent weekend dip and sip(coffee) session indicated there could be up to 30 swimmers making their way back to early morning Whaler school this winter. The range of OC vintages from 1978 to 1999 continues to provide healthy banter and disciplinary hearings, usually conducted in the absence of the defendants!

Messrs White OC '86, MacNulty OC '88, Power OC '89 and Rafferty '85 are the shadowy committee members monitoring recruitment, events, discipline and merchandise. However, the self-styled 'Junior Branch' drawn from 1990s OC stock have started to air strong fashion views ahead of the launch of a new range of branded GM Whaler winter merchandise. It would appear that the 'Junior Branch' have a rather vocal leader in the guise of the Wolf of Lanesborough (OC '95) so it will be interesting to see how this generational challenge plays out given the chief enforcement officer, Mr Rafferty '85, is

currently struggling with injury. Note the calming influence of our senior Whaler, Mr O'Sullivan OC '78, may be required.

As always, all will be sorted with the world in the early morning water and any new joiners will be welcomed by our recruitment officers still smarting from the failed stalking of former OC rugby internationals. We will battle on as the temperatures drop. Indeed, Mr Halpenny OC '83 is always looking to add talent to his "Buoy Band" of distance swimmers and, of course, the February "Freezebury" challenge looms once again. Lots to look forward to in the new term. Not Hollywood, but bloody good. **Maeliosa Power**

### Peter McVerry SJ Berkley Street Coffee Shop:

Due to Covid our involvement in the coffee shop has been halted. However we expect that by November it will re-open and again our committee members will be involved on a weekly basis.

### Deceased Old Clongownians

On Sunday 15th November 2020 at 11.00 am a special Mass was celebrated online for all of our deceased Alumni. We keep them in our prayers.

1940	Henry J. PLACE	Limerick	15/01/21
1941 ??	John [Gog] BYRNE	Tyrone??	??/??/??
1946	Thomas L. CALLAN	Boyle	30/03/21
1946	Michael MULCAHY	Laoise	02/01/21
1952	John MOORE	Dingle	15/11/20
1952	John O'DONNELL	Dublin	09/05/21
1952	G.Willie ROBINSON	Kilcock	14/08/20
1953	Gerald KILDUFF	Dublin	19/06/21
1955	Jeremiah O'CONNELL, S.J.	Mallow	17/11/20
1956	Hugo Van den BERGH	Kilcoole	30/11/20
1957	Diarmuid GALLAGHER	Sweden	02/08/21
1960	Arthur McMAHON	Limerick	30/07/21
1961	Jeremiah HARMAN	Ballsbridge	01/06/21
1961	Patrick J. MORAN	Mayo	26/08/21
1961	Kenneth O. WHITAKER	Dublin	24/06/21
1962	Fergus M. MOYLAN	Ennis	24/05/21
1963	William O'KEEFFE	Ennis	24/01/21
1966	Eoin G. CASSIDY	Dublin	10/03/21

1967	Gregory LITTLE	Galway	16/08/21
1967	Peter J. NEARY	Drogheda	20/06/21
1969	Niall M. Joyce	Dublin	5/10/21
1975	Tom MEAGHER	Cobh	?/05/21
1970	David BURDON	Cork	23/04/21
1971	Paul WEIR	Mullingar	07/12/20
1975	Gerry Burns	Birr	07/06/21
1977	Niall POWER	Wexford	21/02/21
1982	<i>Patrick CASEY</i>	<i>Lucan</i>	<i>17/03/17</i>
1984	<i>Colman DOWLING</i>	<i>Carlow</i>	<i>21/11/19</i>
1988	Roger BLAKE	Bahrain	23/06/21
2008	Patrick DINGMAN	Nassau	19/04/21
2018	James LAMBE	Drogheda	17/05/21
[1965-1972]	Patrick BURKE	? ? ?	??/??/??

If you know of any other deaths of OCs or former members of Community/Staff – please forward their names **with a Family contact address** - to Rector [[mshail@clongowes.net](mailto:mshail@clongowes.net)] + Foundation [[foundation@clongowes.net](mailto:foundation@clongowes.net)]

**2021 Annual Mass for Deceased Old Clongownians is on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November. Unfortunately given the Covid 19 restrictions this mass will be online and can be viewed on the following link:**

[churchservices.tv/clongowes](http://churchservices.tv/clongowes)