

Communion & Confirmation

Portstewart Parish St Mary's Star of the Sea 2013



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Cover photograph: Aaron Doherty

*We wish all participants in the Diocesan Congress a fruitful day,
and look forward to the renewal it will bring.*



**Pope Francis –
the first six months
On Site in Romania
Catholicism in Poland
Thank You for the Music**

Summer 2013



What a Summer! Inside these pages you'll read how some of our parishioners spent the wonderful summer but there are many more stories which couldn't be included due to the space restrictions of a small parish magazine. Stories like how families spent a glorious time here on Portstewart Strand, in the water, building sandcastles, and have happy memories which will last a lifetime. Who will forget the traffic backed up out the Mill Road and as far back as Tescos with cars full of people waiting to get on to the Strand? Wasn't it on the radio that the beach was full and no more cars would be admitted? Or, how that ice-cream was saved after the child bit the bottom of the poke and the melting ice cream started to run out! Disaster averted. Parental intervention at its best. The North-West was a washout – again, but suddenly the weather blossomed into a hot June and July going straight from winter to summer, just in time for a most successful Red Sails Festival. Looking from the Parochial House at the huge crowds who gathered for the fireworks that Saturday night I found them just as interesting as the fireworks. It seemed like every available spot was occupied on the Green Hill, along the Prom, down by the rocks, along the Crescent – easily five or six thousand people on a warm, still, July night. Unforgettable.

Yes, there were lots of small miracles brought about by generous, creative people working with God's grace in the gift of the good weather. Once again in Stella Maris we offer you photographs of the new parishioners, the baptisms as well as the joyful weddings. We try to include all photographs. There were also the painful events of great parishioners leaving us and going to God. Every one of them was a character. Every one is missed and grieved for. We include a word in this issue on two of them, John Corrigan and Cassie Murray. They in their way created miracles especially in helping others to grow in faith. Dan 12:3. All of them are stars.

Father Austin

'Late August, given heavy rain and sun. For a full week, the blackberries would ripen. At first, just one. a glossy purple clot. Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.'

Seamus Heaney

Yes, it is that time of year again, 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun', to quote another poet, John Keats. For some it is back to school time; for others time to pack away the T-shirts and barbecue, to tidy the garden in preparation for the long dark winter days ahead. And after such a splendid summer, some may only see the darkness coming. But recall the words of Martin Luther King in his Testament of Hope speech some fifty years ago: 'Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that'. So let us all together embrace with love what lies before us.

And let our contributors continue to supply the editorial team with such interesting copy. Some may even fear coming out on Sunday in case they get pounced on at the chapel gates with yet another reminder that the deadline is only two months away. We thank the following for information supplied, Joan Kerr, Sheila Conway, Rosemary McElhill, Linda Mulholland and lastly, Chris Roberts for supplying the Confirmation photograph. On the editorial team with me are, co-editor, Eugene Kelly, photographer Aaron Doherty, and graphic designer Adrian Hickey. We can be reached through the parish office, 4 The Crescent, Portstewart, telephone 028 70832534, e.mail secretary@portstewartparish.co.uk. Or contact me direct, 70833042, e.mail farren@myway.com.

Patricia Farren

1978 Parish Concert



1978 Parish Concert
(Back row) John Corrigan, Breige Roughan, Janine O'Brien, Margaret Campbell, Mary McKeever, Teresa Ward, Margaret Haughey, Breige Dunn, Sean Farren.
(Kneeling) Bernard Loughrey, John Donnelly, Paddy Mestrury, Chris Underwood.
(On floor) Rosemary McElhill, Bridie McGarry.

Peace is seeing a Sunset
And knowing Who to thank

Pope Francis – the first six months

When Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina was announced as the 256th successor of Saint Peter last March, he scored a number of firsts. He is the first Pope from South America, from the New World. He is the first Jesuit to be elected Pope. And he chose to be named as the first Francis – not after his fellow Jesuit and patron of missionaries, Francis Xavier, but after Francis of Assisi, the founder of the order committed to a life of poverty and simplicity.

Perhaps the most immediately striking feature of the new Pope is precisely his simplicity. He seems to have renounced the use of all titles except that of Bishop of Rome. He has set aside the notion of a Pope as the monarchical ruler of the Church, instead living as the 'servus servorum Dei' – the servant of the servants of God. He has declined to occupy in solitary splendour the papal apartments of his predecessors, instead living a communal life at the Domus Sanctae Martae in Rome with other priests and bishops. Sometimes it seems that – to the consternation of some around him – he even makes his own phone calls! And the story spread that he declined to accept the traditional ermine trimmed papal cloak with the words "No, Monsignor, the carnival is over!"

So the style is simple. So far, there has been little evidence of any substantial doctrinal or theological development. But a highly significant signal has been given in terms of church governance. Francis had established a group of eight Archbishops and Cardinals from a wide geographical sweep – nine now following a protest that the Eastern Rites were not represented – to help him in his leadership role in the Church. This is clearly a counterweight to the inward looking Roman Curia, seen as the Church's governing bureaucracy. The first meeting of this group is scheduled for October. It is also noteworthy that most of this group have been elected to leadership roles in their areas – an interesting note of democracy, perhaps? Recently a strong hint was given that the Synod of Bishops, envisaged by Vatican 2 as a crucial part of collegiality within the Church but ignored by previous Popes, is on his agenda when he said: "We trust that the Synod of Bishops will be further developed to better facilitate dialogue and collaboration of bishops among themselves and with the Bishop of Rome."

There are signs of a new era in ecumenical dialogue under Pope Francis. His close friend in Argentina was a Jewish theologian, Rabbi Skorka, with whom he published a book. He has issued a call to all believers – Christian, Jewish, Muslim and others – to focus on what they hold in common, particularly in the field of social justice. There are, however, signs that dialogue with the breakaway traditionalist group who follow Archbishop Lefebvre, still defying the Vatican by ordaining their own bishops and priests, and whom Pope Benedict sought to persuade, may soon come to an end.

Typically, ecumenical outreach under Pope Francis has a practical edge. On Holy Thursday last, he broke with tradition by choosing to wash the feet of a woman – and it turned out that she was a Muslim. And he has recently encouraged a joint Catholic – Lutheran commemoration of the Reformation.

It is too early to discern where Pope Francis will lead the Church in the face of severe crises facing it. It is clear that one focus he will choose is on Catholic Social Teaching, in particular on issues of social justice and poverty. "Money" he insisted recently, "is not the image and likeness of God". While he does not seem to be influenced by Liberation Theology of South America, he certainly seems to underline the need for the Church to embrace the 'option for the poor'.

One crisis he will need to engage with is the collapse of religious vocations, especially to the priesthood, in the West. No doubt this is caused by many factors but much attention is given to the canonical requirement of celibacy. In this debate, it is often forgotten that within the world-wide Catholic Church, there are a number of non-Latin Churches in the East, in communion with Rome, who have always had married clergy. And there are increasing number of married priests with their families who have opted to leave the Anglican Church and been received into the Church. They have been re-ordained and are ministering successfully with their wives and children to parishes in English-speaking countries. A choice will need to be made soon about ordaining married men or depriving congregations of their Eucharistic celebration.

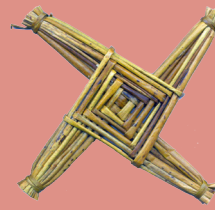
Francis himself has recognised that there is a pressing need to find a voice for women in the Church. There is an on-going debate about the possibility of ordaining women to the diaconate – indeed there is still extant in the Roman Ritual a rite of ordination to deacon for women – and this feeds into the vocations crisis. Pope Francis has said that ordination of women to the priesthood cannot happen. So thought needs to be given to enhancing their role. (Cardinals of course need not be ordained as priests so some female cardinals could be one solution!)

Finally, there is the issue of the Church's response to society's changing attitudes to homosexuality. Pope Francis, speaking to reporters on his flight back from Brazil, surprised many in responding frankly to a question with an answer with pastoral implications: "If a person is gay and seeks God and has good will, who am I to judge him?"

Francis the First has already given us food for thought in his six months as Pope. He clearly is insisting on being a different sort of pontiff. A photo of him leaning out of his vehicle to catch a set of rosary beads thrown to him will have given his security guards nightmares but captured a man who seems determined to live close to his people without ceremony or fuss. May he be with us for many years to come.

Terry O'Keefe

Beannacht Leat



In a tribute from her friends, Cassie Murray, who departed this life in August at age 96, is fondly remembered. She was a 'character', they said, 'a complex individual who fascinated all who met her; someone who knew everyone, and everyone knew her. People never forgot her warm, open nature, particularly the strength of feeling in her handshake. She communicated with us all, with bishops, doctors, politicians, students, parents or children, telling them who their relations were generations back. A fluent Gaelic speaker, she used the language whenever the occasion occurred. Although her first love was her deep Christian faith, followed by an ardent pride in Ireland and all things Irish, she was also partial to a fairly generous glass of whiskey if the occasion merited'.

Cassie loved tradition, and will be remembered in particular for the custom of making crosses for the feast of St Brigid. On the eve of the feast she would call out to a friend who knocked on her door by prior arrangement. 'Who is at the door?' 'It is me, Brigid,' the friend would reply – all spoken in Gaelic. Then the weaving of the fresh green rushes would begin.

Cassie, contrary to rumour, was never married, although a photo of a handsome man was sometimes displayed on her mantelpiece in Ardmore Drive. Dressed in a sharp suit of clothes, tie and well ironed shirt, she would remark, 'I like a man with a neat collar and a Pioneer Pin'. Cassie's entertainment was the radio. She never had a TV or a phone and may not have bothered much with electricity. Yet she made the limelight when she became a studio model for the acclaimed artist Michael McGuinness, by gracing a four-by-three foot canvas. Her remark when she saw the

finished work, 'Don't tell me he wasted that much canvas on me'. Inwardly her friends knew she was chuffed, while outwardly her main concern was that Michael would make some money out of her.

Above all Cassie was kind and generous. Her love of people, particularly the parishioners and their intentions, always foremost in her prayers. Touch of the Master's Hand was her party piece, printed in full in this issue.

One lasting memory of Cassie is her standing at the rear door of the chapel facing Our Lady's statue, her staring towards the Tabernacle on the altar repeating, 'Beannacht leat a Iosa.'

Her Friends.



Cassie with fellow tippler, Mary Deighan

Reel Rhythm

In July, the Dominic Graham School of Irish Dance was honoured to become the first Irish dance school to be invited to perform for a third time at the Celtic World Festival in Ortigueira, Galicia, North-west Spain. The group included parishioners, Catherine Maguire, and Joseph, Ellen and Katie Mulholland.

They had a busy 4 day schedule – dancing before the opening ceremony in Ortigueira town square, holding workshops teaching team dances to willing participants, appearing on television, as well as final rehearsals for their main appearance on Saturday evening at 11:15pm.

Their headline dance act, created especially for the event, was entitled 'Reel Rhythm', and it left the 40,000 strong audience screaming and chanting for more as the dancers left the main stage. The thunderous applause followed them as they were then escorted along the edge of the harbour and continued

until they were almost back at the high school, their accommodation during the tour. Stopping along the way to sign autographs and have photographs taken with members of the audience, it was an amazing experience for all. The show was described as powerful and magical by the Spanish newspapers.

Their final night ended in Santiago de Compostela. There they visited the famous cathedral which houses the relics of Saint James. When they toured the Old Town's narrow cobbled streets quite late that night, outside a café the musicians began an impromptu performance, and of course, to the delight of everybody, the dancers just couldn't help but entertain the increasing crowd who gathered to watch.

'It was fantastic', they said, 'an experience that will live long in the memories of all involved'.

From our Roving Correspondent



Catherine Maguire



Ellen, Joseph and Katie Mulholland

The Catholic Church in Poland today

'Polonia semper fidelis' ('Poland always faithful') and 'Antemurale Christianitatis' ('the bulwark of Christendom') - these concepts have for centuries been used to describe the role played in the history and culture of Poland by its Christian, and more specifically Roman Catholic, heritage. Indeed, since adopting Christianity, from the neighbouring Duchy of Bohemia, in 966, religion has played a central role in the life of the country, although the nature of that role changed over the centuries. Thus, for example, the early modern (15th-18th c.) Polish-Lithuanian monarchy, known as the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, was a multicultural, religiously tolerant state, in which Christians of all denominations, as well as Jews and Moslems, peacefully co-existed, avoiding religious conflicts of the kind so familiar to other countries of Europe. However, in more recent times, loyalty to the Catholic faith - as opposed to the Lutheranism of the Kingdom of Prussia to the west of Poland, and the Orthodoxy of the Russian Empire followed by the subsequent atheist doctrine of the Soviet Union to the east - became a symbol of the Polish national and cultural (rather than merely religious) identity, helping the country to survive the loss of independence between 1795 and 1918, and the political upheavals of the twentieth century.

In consequence, modern Poland's religious identity is firmly linked to its Catholic heritage, even if the stereotypical assumption that being a Pole inevitably means being a Catholic has proved rather controversial,

particularly in recent years, when one of the key themes of public debate in the post-1989 democratic Poland has been the issue of the public presence and role of the Church in the social and political life of the country, and the extent to which the teachings of the Church should influence public policy, particularly in contentious areas such as family life, education, women's rights, gay rights, bioethical issues etc. This is perhaps inevitable in a country where 95% of the population identify themselves as Catholics, but where the percentage of those actively practising ranges from 70% in the most staunchly religious areas in the south of the country to below 30% in the north and in some industrial cities. While the Catholic tradition is still vibrant in many of its public manifestations - first-communion celebrations, Corpus Christi processions, annual pilgrimages to major shrines such that of the Black Madonna of Człstochowa - and while the great majority of Poles are still baptised in infancy, married in church, and given a religious funeral, there is an increasing sense that the invariably conservative voice of Poland's highly hierarchical and strongly institutionalised Church (the bishops who pass for 'liberals' in Poland would be seen as very traditionalist in Western Europe) is at odds with the new, modern society of twenty-first century Poland. With the memory of Pope John Paul II, for the twenty-seven years of his pontificate a national hero, a symbol of Catholic unity, and an unquestioned authority for the great majority of people in Poland (with streets named after him and statues

erected of him across the country even during his lifetime), slowly receding into the past, the Catholic Church in Poland is now approaching a time when it will need to reflect on its place in the life of the country and on its religious and pastoral practice. It is to be hoped that the message of renewal coming from Pope Francis is translated into reality in the everyday life of millions of Catholics in the dioceses and parishes across Poland.

Jan Jędrzejewski



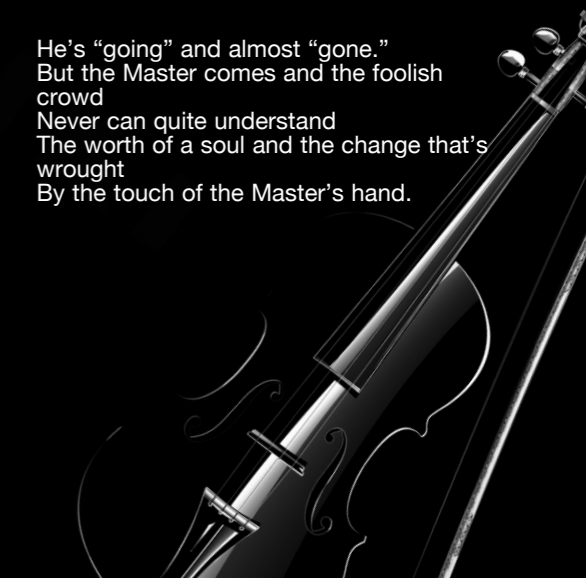
St. Mary's, Cracow

Touch of the Master's Hand

'T'was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar, a dollar," then, two! Only two?
"Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"
"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three . . . "But no,
From the room, far back, a grey haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loose strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As a caroling angel sings.
The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"

And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?
Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice;
And going and gone," said he.
The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:
"The touch of a master's hand."
And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd.
Much like the old violin.
A "mess of potage," a glass of wine;
A game, and he travels on.
He is "going" once, and "going" twice,

He's "going" and almost "gone."
But the Master comes and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.



Charity and Love

Habitat for Humanity Youth Build arranged for sixty young people to travel to both Romania and Armenia this summer. The Habitat ethos is simple, 'A world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live'. And with this in mind, plus the amazing support from our school, family and friends, coupled with remarkable contributions from Star of the Sea congregation, four of us from Portstewart, Rosanna McAleese, Ellis McNamee, Olivia McCullagh and Saryah McCrossan were able to join in. Our team of sixteen worked on a block of four apartments that an American team had begun, and a German team would finish. Alongside these young volunteers where local Romanian teenagers, who following our example were now keen to help the poor in their communities - volunteering is not a virtue highly cultivated in Romanian society.

Following a five hour flight from Dublin, our commute from the airport to the town of Comenesti, where we were located, was broken by a stop for a meal in a restaurant, which was made entirely from goat skin - the restaurant, not the meal. Let's just say it wasn't exactly the Ramore we four were used to! A bit of a culture shock, to say the least.

We soon arrived in Comenesti, a town with a 10% employment rate, a questionable political system, and a huge Romanian gypsy population. The four of us found the poverty in Romania very hard to comprehend. On one side of town you had beautiful houses, and on the other homeless families. As far as we could make out there was little or no interaction between the two sides of the economic divide.

The street we built on was made up solely of Habitat housing. It was amazing to see the house we were working on begin to rise and take shape, and the memory we will most cherish is meeting the loving families who were already availing of Habitat's work. To witness the love, stability and hope evident in this Habitat community was so inspiring and fulfilling. We met with the four families who would be moving into our finished housing. The families do not simply get a donated house, but have to offer financial and time commitments in the building and maintenance of their house and future. Alan was the name of a member of one of the families. Alan had lost his arm in a work accident a month prior to the build, yet he was still on site every day, helping in any way he could. This just shows how important these house builds are for families desperately in need.

The houses we built contained one bedroom, one bathroom and a kitchen/diner. Alan, his brother, his elderly mother and his wife would all be sharing a small bedroom in the Habitat house, yet we were greeted with overwhelming joy and gratitude. I don't know if we all would take the same 'where love is, no room is too small' attitude.

The house build was a life changing and incredible experience for us! Despite coming home and swapping our hiking boots for high heels and enjoying the rest of the summer in Portstewart, we will never forget the lessons learnt and memories gained on Romanian soil. Without the support of the parish, we would have struggled greatly, we are forever thankful!

Rosanna McAleese

Ellis, Olivia Rosanna and Saryah



Thank You for the Music

To write an appreciation of John Corrigan would require more space than a parish magazine can afford me, nor can I hope to cover all of his lifetime, only the very many years that I had the privilege of knowing him as a good friend and a musician.

John assumed the post of Headmaster of St Colums Primary School and choirmaster of Star of the Sea choir in 1976/77

The choir, though long established, had very little in the way of printed music. John remedied this by producing a booklet of Hymns in English, a booklet of Latin motets, a booklet for the Holy Week ceremonies, and finally a collection, composed by himself, of Mass settings. These are still in use today, and will be for the foreseeable future. His love and enthusiasm for Church music was infectious, and much to the skepticism of choir members he set about training them in the Mass setting by Mozart, Haydn and Schubert, while introducing motets by Vittorio and Palestrina. He was passionate about producing well prepared music to enhance the worship, and improve the performance of the choir. He added many pupils from school, forming an orchestra which performed with the choir at the Christmas and Easter ceremonies. That was the serious side of John. On a lighter note he organised a cabaret show from members of the choir to perform at a Parish function in the former Carrig-na-cule Hotel, the men resplendent in straw boaters, massive bow-ties and walking canes. Some twenty-five years ago to celebrate Fr Neil McCamphill's Golden Jubilee a Mass was celebrated in Star of the Sea with music by the church choir. At the function held that evening in the Dominican Assembly hall a group was formed by myself, Bernard Loughry, Seamus McClean, Barry Burgess and John Corrigan (on keyboards), known as the Brassnecks. John was to remain an enthusiastic member of the group for the rest of his life. The group rehearsed every Tuesday in John's kitchen and his

enjoyment was only surpassed when the group appeared on stage at various concerts around the North of Ireland. He enjoyed the repartee between us on stage even when he was the butt of some ageist comments!!

John Corrigan IS remembered every Sunday when the choir sing the opening hymn. Every time a former pupil sits down to play an instrument, John's legacy lives on. So in the words of another word smith I say, John, thank you for the music.

John J Donnelly



EOGHAN RUA – Having fun in spades

Looking back it was a glorious summer and another busy time for Eoghan Rua. Literally hundreds of our young players have enjoyed a great season in competitive league, championship games, blitzes, challenge games, or simply training with their friends. There were a number of highlights during the summer at Pairc Eoghain Rua. Two events spring to mind:

The Oak Leaf county hosted the All-Ireland Peil na nÓg for under-14 footballers - boys and girls from across Ireland and further afield. Eoghan Rua hosted two teams over the Féile week, boys from Dromore in Tyrone and a girls team from London. A number of local families hosted the young players, along with their mentors, adding hugely to the success of the weekend. The boys and girls at the club will have a host of fantastic memories from the

Féile weekend.

And another highlight was the annual Cúl Camp at Pairc Eoghain Rua, its popularity exceeding expectations. Once again the numbers attending were up on the previous year, with almost 150 boys and girls attending the week-long camp to hone their skills in football, hurling, camogie and ladies football. There was a real buzz of frenetic fun the whole week, with enjoyment at the heart of everything that went on.

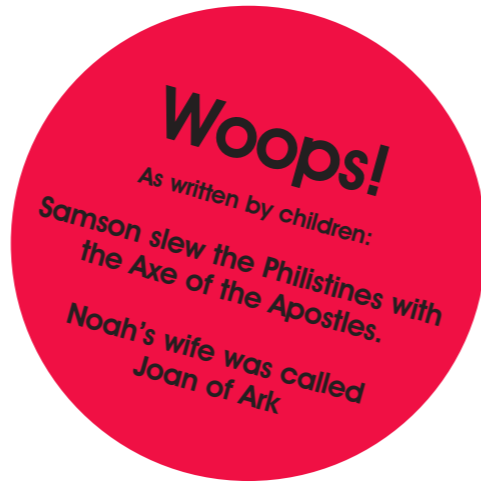
Really, this is what it is all about for the young people involved in Eoghan Rua club. While coaching the skills of our great Gaelic games is a key part of what we do, central to all of that is a sense that our young players have fun and enjoy the whole process...and that they do so in spades!

Kevin Mullan



Outside the Chapel Gates

With Eugene Kelly



New Start

While on the subject of back to school it is all change in Dominican College which has a new principal, Ms Rosemary Ronan the former vice-principal. Ms Ronan has been a long standing member of the staff with many years of experience as a teacher and administrator. We wish her well in her new post especially when second level education is about to go through the process of change.



Summer's Over

And what a summer it was! This time last year we were all complaining that it was one of the worst summers we had in a long time but, thankfully we do not have the same complaint. It was great to see the throngs of visitors on the beach and in the town. There was a great buzz around the place and everyone seemed to have a smile on their faces, except those of us looking for a parking spot.

Generous Donation

On behalf of St Mary's Conference of St Vincent De Paul, I would like to thank the Staff and Pupils of Dominican College for their generosity. The School nominated SVP as one of its main charities, and through various activities they raised a large amount of money which they ask to be put to good use. The conference will see that the money donated will go to those in most need.



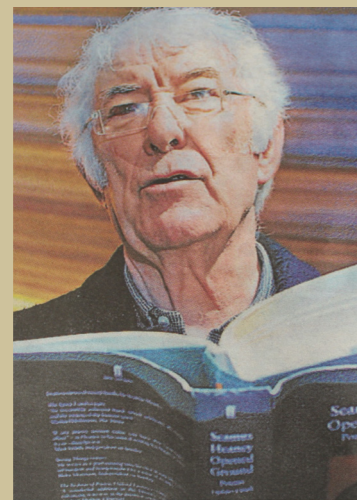
City of Culture



Did you make the Journey to Derry for the Fleadh? On the day I went I must have met half the population of Portstewart there. It was exhilarating to see so many people gathered together to celebrate their musical culture in all its shapes and forms. The organisation that made the fleadh the success it was is to be commended.

Back To School

September means back to school time and the settling back into a daily routine after the freedom of the summer. Spare a thought for all those who are just starting into a new school, from those starting playschool, primary school, secondary school right through to further education. It is a big challenge on the journey of life for all those young people in our community.



Death of a Naturalist

It was with regret that we heard of the recent death of our Poet Laureate, Seamus Heaney. There are few people who have not heard of this great poet and his empathy with the ordinary person. The old saying, 'a gentleman and a scholar,' certainly applied to Seamus. I had the privilege to sleep under his roof on my first night as a student way

back at the beginning of the troubles, while he was still a teacher in Queens. Many people have benefited through their association with Seamus, and have their own stories about him, particularly his generosity of spirit and his genius with words. He will be sadly missed by his family and the rest of us.

Requiescat In Pace.

Baptisms at Star of the Sea



Kit Knowles – parents Katie and Christian (Grandmother, Sally Andrew)



Annie Murphy – parents Katrina & John



Daithi Carey – parents Ria & Richard



Ronan Stanfield – parents Brenda & Russell



Tiarnan Lundy – parents Jennifer & Greg



Conor Warburton – parents Steven & Shauna



Akino Smith – parents Onika & John



Noah Loughran – parents Dermot & Jayne

Weddings at Star of the Sea



Louise Kernaghan & Kieran O'Reilly - 25th July



Ailbhe McCombe & Stephen Harper - 8th August



Tracy McMahon & Niall Adams - 20th July



Barry Trolan & Elisabeth Breadon - 10th August

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