

Chairman's Welcome

On behalf of the organising committee of Manulla National School Reunion, it is my pleasure to welcome all pupils past and present and their friends to our reunion day on this the first Sunday in August 2004.

I would like to thank everybody who made this day possible, particularly the hard working organising committee, Mr Tom Armstrong for his school history, Fr Francis Mc Myler for his celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the present staff and Board of Management of Manulla National School, Manulla Community Centre Committee, all our kind sponsors, everybody who helped in any way, and last but not least yourselves the past pupils and friends for whom this reunion is all about.

Tá súil againn go banfaigh muid go léir an- taitneamh as an lá seo. Mollam diabh dian- smaoineamh a dhéanamh ar an saibhreas a d'fhag an toideachas ar an timpeallacht seo na blianta anuas. Déantar cuimhnu freisin ar an taim nuair nach raibh oideachas ar fail do chách. Tá suil againne, an coiste, do dtabharfaidh an teacht le cheile seo deis dúinn go léir, mothucháin ardú meanma a athbheochaint, agus bród I scoil náisiúnta "Magh Fionbhalbha" a chothú.

Míle Buíochas do chuile dhuine.

John Mc Hale (Chairman Organising

Committee)



Organising Committee. Back Michael O Malley, John Hennelly, Jackie Clarke, John Jennings, Bernie Gallagher, Tom Walsh. Front Sinead O Malley, Margaret Walsh, Mary Morrissey, John Mc Hale.

History of Manulla National

By Tom Armstrong

The First National School in Manulla, established under the Commissioners of Education, was opened on 01/03/1852. The girls were taught by Sarah Egan who had previously taught in Cloggernagh N.S. and the boys by Patrick Hughes. The girls section was a thatched room 16' x 18' x 8.5' and furnished with 2 desks, 2 tables and 8 forms for 40 pupils. The boys room was a thatched building 40' x 16' x 7' and the furniture consisted of 3 tables and 8 forms for 50 pupils.

Fees of one shilling per week were requested. Religious Education was provided for a half-hour on Saturdays. School hours were from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. daily. The school manager was Martin Barrett, Land Agent and Farmer of Prizon. He was also manager of Prizon National School.

School Inspector Ed. Mac Creanor visited the school on 15/03/1852 and reported an attendance of 36 out of a total of 90. He reported that the condition of the building was tolerable. The school closed after a short period. The location of the school is unknown.

During the 1860's a wandering teacher named Ellicott frequently visited Manulla. He stayed in local houses and taught in a building (now gone) situated on the south side entrance to Jimmy Staunton's house. At this time there had been some local clamouring for education to be provided in the area on a full time basis. A deputation approached Canon Gibbons P.P. and he got the Commissioners of Education to agree to the establishment of a school, provided he procured both a suitable building and a teacher. The building was donated, free of charge by one Billy Armstrong. It was a long, low thatched building, and had been in use as a dwelling house.

Conon Gibbons persuaded James Kelly who was teaching in Balla National School to move to Manulla as Principal. The school opened in 1868. After some years, walking daily from Balla or travelling by train in inclement weather James Kelly bought a house close to the school, married Joanne O' Malley, a teacher in the Mercy Convent N.S. in Castlebar and raised a family of 8.

The school population increased rapidly. Most of the pupils were between 10 and 20 years old. James Kelly who had taught on his own was joined by Mrs. Biddy Mc Hale (who lived opposite Hennelly's Bar), and later by his wife Joanne.

When the thatched building could no longer accommodate the increasing number of pupils a site at the crossroads was procured from Michael Mc Ellin. A new building was erected and opened in 1894. The old thatched building was sold by Canon Gibbons P.P. for £5.00 and reverted back again as a dwelling. It has remained so to this day and is now the home of Mrs. Ann Rumley

Until well into the 20th century it was common for older pupils to attend school only during the winter, or during slack work periods at home, or in England. A local postman, one Thomas Gavin, attended school in 1910 after returning his postbag to the Post Office where he collected his school bag.

The new building of 1984 was built entirely with a state grant, the amount of which was never revealed, but it was generally thought to be £100.00.

Though joined as one building, there were separate Boys and Girls schools, each having two teachers.

The school manager was Lord Kilmaine, who was a frequent visitor to the school. He was renowned for giving generous prizes for all kinds of schoolwork. Each year he held a special sports and entertainment day - a cart arriving in the afternoon with "goodies". On such days the school enrolment greatly increased as many new, but not so young pupils turned out to avail of Kilmaine's hospitality. The boys especially looked forward to the sports day, as Kilmaine always presented the school with a leather football, an extremely rare object pre World War 1.

In September 1916, the Commission of National Schools agreed to the transfer of infant boys to the girls' school as the boys' school was overcrowded and the number of girls had fallen dramatically. This arrangement lasted until 1942 when both schools were amalgamated into one 3 Teacher school.

In 1940 the Irish Land Commission acquired the lands of Willie McCann (adjoining the school). Very Rev. T. Canon Reidy P.P. staked a claim to a play field and obtained 3.5 roods. The third school (1950) was erected on part of this site, and the rest is now the present playground.

The 1950 school cost £4,600, there being a state grant of £4,400. It opened its doors on 4/11/1950, and was built by Michael Gibbons, Contractor, Belcarra.

Central Heating and new sanitary facilities were added in 1970, the Contractors being Vincent Jordan, Breaffy and Martin Murphy, Roslahan.

In 1981 a new General Purpose Room etc. was added at a cost of £45,000. (Local contribution £6,650). The contractor was Gerry McGrath, Ballinrobe. The present school was completed in September 2002 at a cost of £487,219. There was a local contribution of £25,000.



The Grotto at Manulla National School



Permanent Teachers since

James Kelly	Balla and Manulla	1868-1917
Biddy Mc Hugh (Mc Hale)	Manulla	1875-1916
Joe Kelly	Manulla	1917-1929
Joanne O'Malley (Kelly)	Manulla	1886-1928
Mary J. Kelly	Manulla	1916-1922
Evelyn Sheehy (Galvin)	Tuam and Belcarra.	1912-1916
Mary Barrett	Lisnolan and Balla.	1910-1942
Ann Colgan	Boholia	1890-1916
Mary O'Malley	Carnacon.	1928-1933
Kathleen Kelly (Armstrong).	Manulla	1922-1966
John Nestor	Belcarra.	1929-1967
Margaret Mc Nicholas (Langan)	Balla.	1933-1955
Phil Walsh (Farrell)	Manulla and Castlerea.	1955-1959
Mary Reilly	Belcarra.	1959-2002
Teresita Prendergast (Foley)	Louisburgh and Castlebar.	1966-1983
Tom Armstrong	Manulla.	1967-2003
Angela Forde (Macken)	Balla	1983-2002
Finnuala Costello (Jordan)	Knockmore	1993
Noel Lyons	Balla	1998
Maisie Connolly	Balla.	2002
Maura Higgins	Carnahan.	2002
Helen Costello (Cunnane)	Rathduff.	2003



Kathleen Kelly Armstrong
1922-1966



Mary J. Kelly
1916-1922



Teresita Prendergast (Foley)
1966-1983



James Kelly
1868-1917



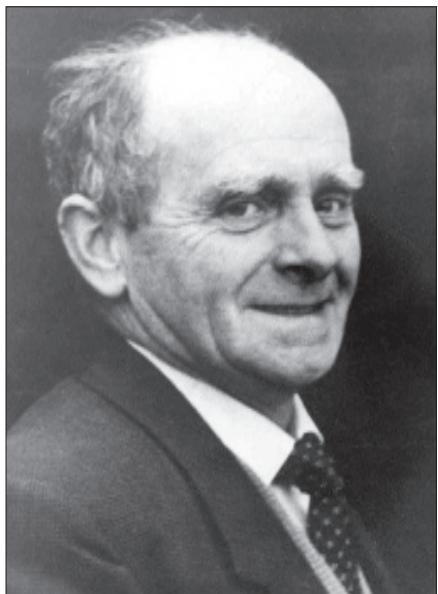
Tom Armstrong
1967-2003



Philomena Walsh Farrell
1955-1959



Margaret Mc Nicholas (Langan)
1933-1955



John Nestor
1929-1967



Mary Barrett
1910-1942



Angela Forde Macken
1983-2002



Mary Reilly
1959-2002



The original Manulla National School Roll Book

Present Permanent



Helen Costello (Cunnane)



Masie Costello



Noel Lyons



Maura Higgins



Fionnuala Costello

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School Photograph 1894-1950

Courtesy of Eileen Enna Leach