



*Established 1967*

[www.lucannewsletter.ie](http://www.lucannewsletter.ie)

*Online only*

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## Hope springs.....

There purports to be a Chinese proverb which wishes that people live in interesting times. However many might prefer a quiet time and less excitement. Many of us knew relatives who lived through the wars and they spoke longingly of the community spirit and togetherness that occurred. However time can dull the angst and the horror of those difficult years.

Some of us, though feeling hale and hearty have been stood down from work, from caring and from regular social contact. Normal life now involves a repeated awareness of distancing and hygiene unheard of in recent times. Some of us have distanced ourselves in isolated walks in this lovely Lucan area we call home.

There are a plethora of walks, many of them along the river banks, bereft of people and contact dangers. Even for those of us who lived here for decades we have discovered woodland walks with a carpet of flowers and wild garlic along the river east of the village.



While walking in an early morning recently the lands of St Edmundsbury were busy with machines ploughing, harrowing and seeding. Neat rows of drills displayed the efficiency of modern farming. It is marvellous to see the land being used.

Planting is a belief in the future; in planning for later in the year; in preparing for the necessary harvest. It is a statement for the future, a belief in the deliverance from the Pandemic and in better and more normal times ahead.

It's not unlike the Christian message - we will get over all this, there is a future and we will all be able to hug our grandchildren and indeed our friends, neighbours and families again.

*Tony Feeney*



“Lucan Live” is back on-air every Monday at 3pm and repeated at 10pm that night. Thanks to the huge efforts

of volunteer, Maria Murphy & Jon White, Liffey Sound's techy who devised a way for it to be recorded at home. This week Maria spoke with CEO of Lucan Credit Union, a third level student studying from home and a teacher who has started a history blog for children. The programme is available on podcast on our website.

Earlier this year, volunteer, Teresa Quinn produced an insightful radio documentary about The King's Hospital school. This programme is also available on podcast on our website.

We will soon be launching a short story competition for primary school children. More details will be available here and on Teresa Quinn's "Bookline" on Sundays at 11am in the coming weeks.

Here at Liffey Sound we know how important it is at times like these to get the word out and stay in touch with everyone. That's why we're offering a temporary free service to charities and community groups in and around Lucan.

If you need to get a message out to your volunteers, clients or service users, please email a short script to our manager Mairéad at [stationmanager@liffeysoundfm.ie](mailto:stationmanager@liffeysoundfm.ie)

*Stay safe & well! The Liffey Sound team.*

[www.liffeysoundfm.ie](http://www.liffeysoundfm.ie) or catch up on Facebook

*Liffey Sound 96.4FM- Lucan's Community Radio Station!*

## Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to Anthony and Angela Prizeman

Their 4 daughters had a family celebration planned which unfortunately could not go ahead last weekend and is now on hold until safer times.



We all can't wait to get together with you both and celebrate!

We love you both!

*from Karen, Deborah, Paula, Yvonne, Daragh, Diarmuid, Ken, Amedeo, Conor, Evan, Rossa, Sadbh, Gavin, Emma, Rory, Leah, Freddie, Lewis, Fionn, Freya and Gaia x*

## Citizens Information Centre



The CIC office is closed for personal callers until further notice.

People can ring **0761 07 5000** and leave a message, and someone will return their call, or they can email [Ballyfermot@citinfo.ie](mailto:Ballyfermot@citinfo.ie) and someone will reply to their email.

## Hillcrest, Beaumont & Newcastle Road Residents Association

On behalf of all residents we wish to pay tribute to our many residents who are at/on the front line of delivering services in our hospitals, our nursing homes, carers, supermarkets & stores, pharmacies, clinics, transport services, waste collection, an Post and our post people, our Gardai, Ambulance and Fire Service, our Banks and Credit Unions, indeed all those who are involved in the provision of essential services at this extraordinary time in living history. We also salute our families, friends and neighbours who are diligently following the advice of the HSE, and in following this advice are caring not just for themselves and their family but also for our community.

**Update:** To STOP the spread of Covid-19 we have been asked to take extra precautions, full details are available on [hse.ie](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html)

**Lucan Community Gardai ARE there for us.** Contact 01 6663720 or email [lucan.community@garda.ie](mailto:lucan.community@garda.ie)

*Keep cocooning and Take Care of yourself and your families.*

## History/ Photos of Sarsfield Park

Gerard Byrne is writing a book entitled: **“Memoirs of Sarsfield Park ... and Us”**

It will be about the Park/Village, covering characters, incidents, talents, places, funny stories etc.

To this end he is sourcing photographs of Sarsfield Park – the families, groups and individuals, especially those from yesteryear.

If any reader has such material, kindly forward to Gerard at the following email: [byrne@hotmail.com](mailto:byrne@hotmail.com)

## Parish Notes

### St Mary's, Lucan

[www.lucanparish.com](http://www.lucanparish.com)



## Masses at St Mary's

Mass will be available on the Internet only each weekday Monday to Saturday at 10am and on Sunday at 11am.

[WWW.LUCANPARISH.COM](http://WWW.LUCANPARISH.COM)

**The Church is now closed at all times until further notice**

*Thank You*

**The Parish Centre remains closed until further notice.**

**Deepest Smpathy** to the husband, family and friends of *Pauline Donohoe*, The Orchard and to the wife, family and friends of *Patrick Mooney*, Beech Grove.

*May they rest in peace.*



## Divine Mercy, Lucan South

[www.lucansouthparish.net](http://www.lucansouthparish.net)

## Coronavirus Measures

Following the Government Directive announced by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March, the Church of Divine Mercy will remain closed until further notice.

We don't have live streaming here but you can tune in to Mass on many Parish Websites;

<https://lucanparish.com/live-webcam-broadcast>:  
Weekdays at 10:00am & Sundays at 11:00am

<https://www.churchservices.tv/ballyfermotassumption> Daily at 10:00am

<http://www.wicklowparish.ie/sacraments-services/live-mass-services/>

Mon – Fri 10am & Sundays 11:30

<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/st-jude-the-apostle2>

Weekdays 9:30am & Sundays at 10:00am

**RTE News Now** will also broadcast Daily Mass at 10.30am for those of you who don't have access to the internet.

## St. Patrick's Esker/Dodsboro/Adamstown

[www.stpatrickslucan.ie](http://www.stpatrickslucan.ie)

Due to the ongoing corona emergency  
**Mass** will be available on Sundays at  
10.30am on the web at  
[www.stpatrickslucan.ie](http://www.stpatrickslucan.ie)

## Livestreaming Services for Easter



### Holy Week

#### HOLY THURSDAY

Children's Mass at 5.00 p.m.  
Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7.00 p.m.  
followed by  
Solemn Procession to the Altar of Repose.

#### GOOD FRIDAY

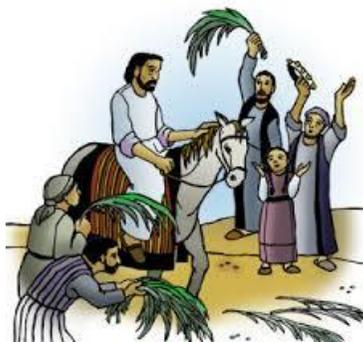
Stations of the Cross for Children at 12.00 noon  
Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion,  
at 3 p.m.  
Stations of the Cross for Adults at 7.00 p.m.  
The Seven Last Words of Jesus, 8.00 p.m.

#### HOLY SATURDAY

EASTER VIGIL at 9 pm

#### EASTER SUNDAY

Family Mass at 10.30 am  
Mass at Noon



## St. Mary's Church in Lucan, Co Dublin, opened in 1840

On Sunday 28 March 2020, when celebrating Mass in an empty church but with lots of parishioners participating online from their homes, Fr. Philip mentioned that he had chosen to use Fr. Fay's chalice which dates from 1761 (*see earlier article in the **Lucan Newsletter Archive***). Many of us welcomed the idea of joining our prayers to those of earlier generations who have prayed in Lucan (and elsewhere) for hundreds of years before us. I thought it might prompt some queries about the history of the building itself and I did some research online and, in particular, in the newspapers collection on FindMyPast (*a subscription website for genealogists*).



From the *Dublin Morning Register* of 14 April 1838, I learned that 'the first stone of the new Roman Catholic church of Lucan' was laid at noon, on Monday 16 April 1838, by Colonel Thomas White of Woodlands (now Luttrellstown). The article mentioned that Colonel White had already contributed valuable building materials, that this was 'one of many instances of his liberality and kindness' and that he and 'his excellent lady' were generous in alleviating 'the wants of the distressed'.

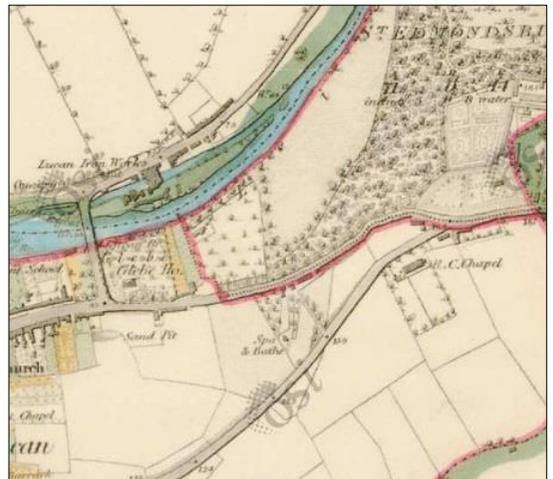
The rationale for building the 'new' church was set out clearly in an article in *The Pilot* newspaper of 27 September 1839. The chapel they had at that stage, 'built about a century ago' and 'situated in the centre of the village', had become a complete ruin and it was no longer safe to venture under its tottering roof! Broad day light shone through and 'the crazy walls' were no longer able to support 'its mouldering rafters'. The author goes on to say that, seventeen months earlier, thanks to 'voluntary contributions of a faithful people and a generous public, for the adoration of one true and living God', at a cost of £1,300, the curate, Fr. Michael B. Kelly, started the building and 'has now the pleasing gratification to behold, in a nearly finished state, the reward of his pious and indefatigable exertions. The adjoining scenery is beautified by this chaste and classically designed edifice. Its modest head may be seen at a great distance, raised above the surrounding country ...'

Sunday 13 October 1839 was appointed by the Archbishop of Dublin, His Grace the Most Rev Dr. Murray, for the dedication of the church and the Rev Thomas Maguire, (*the parish priest of Ballinamore, a very interesting person*) who was

known as the 'Champion of the Faith' because of his religious zeal and powerful eloquence, was to officiate. The consecration ceremony was to begin at eleven o'clock followed by solemn high Mass and benediction. The October deadline seems to have been missed but the church was consecrated on Sunday **5 January 1840**. The *Dublin Morning Register* of the following day carried a very detailed article on it and even went so far as to say that the church was 'one of the most admired within ten miles' of the city. It describes the ceremonies outside and inside the church, all the celebrants, the music, the choir members and the organist (*from Marlborough Street, another interesting person whose wife and sons were singers*). Large extracts of Fr. Maguire's sermon (*which took some time to deliver and was intended for a pamphlet*) were published later in the week – such was the interest in what he had to say.

Some ten days later, on 17 January 1840, the same newspaper agreed 'that the Catholic inhabitants of Lucan owe their beautiful church principally to the exertions of the Rev. Michael B. Kelly, Catholic curate. His services in its regard cannot be too highly praised or appreciated.' Today we too very much appreciate all that the current parish team are doing to support us through this very unusual and difficult period. To have access to daily Mass online from our local church is comforting and the emphasis on our Christian Hope and the love of God is very calming.

To conclude, I could not locate a map showing Fr. Fay's church of 1761 but this extract, from the Ordnance Survey website, may have been drawn shortly after the consecration of Fr. Kelly's church.



OSI 6 Inch Colour (1829-41), downloaded on 1 April 2020 from <http://geohive.maps/>  
Mary Jackson, 1 April 2020

## And the people stayed home

And they read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still.

And they listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed.

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

*By: Catherine (Kitty) O'Meara (2020)*

The above poem was written recently by Irish American retired teacher, Kitty O'Meara, who lives in Wisconsin, USA. In an effort to curb her own anxiety, she wrote the poem and posted it on her personal Facebook, leading to the piece going viral, if you'll pardon the pun!

There has been some confusion about the author, as her name is the same as an Irish writer, Kitty O'Meara who lived in the 1800s around the time of the Great Famine.

## COVID-19 Support Line for Older People

**ALONE** has launched a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Professional staff are available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line is open Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, by calling 0818 222 024. Hours may be extended to meet the demand.

## A New Tomorrow

"Not enough hours in every day"

Is what I used to always say!

From match to Feis and training to race,  
Our life moved at a hectic pace.

Then in March with quiet a BOOM

Came COVID19 bringing fear and doom.

Death tolls rising and life on lockdown  
gives us time to look around...

A roof, a home, a happy place

Fabulous families bringing smiles to my  
face.

Be grateful for happy children at play

Baking, drawing, dancing all day

Parents, family, neighbours and friends

Can't wait to party when this all ends.

So in the mornings when you wake up sad

Breath, relax and try to be glad

Look forward, dream and plan ahead

Stay strong and positive and get out of  
bed!

*Ciara Lenihan*



## Healthy 70 year olds

The silence is deafening from elected T.Ds and Councillors for Dublin Midwest which covers Lucan residents regarding healthy 70 year olds with no diagnosed underlying illness not being allowed to go for a short walk go to the Post Office or go to local Supermarket to buy food! Dogs are allowed go for a walk but not healthy 70 year olds who need to get out for a while

If everybody wore a face mask healthy people should be able to go back to work as most of the cases of Corona virus we are hearing about are people in Nursing Homes and long term care hospitals!

*Mairead Hilliard*



**It's the strangest Holy Week ever** – whoever would have thought we'd be where we are today! At a time when people are asking: "Where is God?" - I hope he shows up!

We are all doing our best to beat this thing, and lovely stories abound of acts of kindness, it is bringing out the best in us. Maybe God is showing up!

**Even celebrities are doing their bit to lift us** – one lady just given the all clear from cancer, was so chuffed to receive a message from Ryan Tubridy. A pal had left a message for the star who promptly made a short video and sent it with all his love. It was just such a nice thing to do.

**Well done to whoever it was set the online Quiz** at Lucan Sarsfields on Sunday last. There was murder in our house, but it was great crack!

**An Post men and women** are going the extra mile also. Instead of just popping a letter in the post box of an older person, they will knock on the door to check if everything is ok.

**Remember, if there are any announcements** you would like broadcast, just contact Mairead at Liffey Sound [stationmanager@liffeysoundfm.ie](mailto:stationmanager@liffeysoundfm.ie)

**Don't forget, you can join the Libraries online!** Just log on to South Dublin Libraries and follow the online instructions – lots of books, magazines and newspapers at your fingertips!

**Society for Old Lucan (SOL)** have interesting little snippets on twitter if anyone is interested in the history of the locality.

**You'd miss the noise of the planes** from Dublin Airport in the early mornings, they woke Birdie up regularly at 6am – have to get a new alarm!

**Where have all the Seagulls gone!** Remember the nests in the housing estates from last summer into winter – hope they're gone on a long holiday – nice and peaceful without them.

**Keep your poems and stories coming!** We're running out of religion, sport and schools, as well as other usuals, so drop us a line of what you might like to see in Lucan Newsletter, and root out those old photos now that you have time on your hands! As the fellow said:  
*We're knitting it these days!*



**World Autism Day** took place on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, and **Tadhg** and **Seán** took the opportunity to show off their new Lucan Sarsfields jerseys. The Under 16 Footballers and Hurlers will be sporting these when they take to the field again!



## Exercise for People over 60!

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room on each side.

With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.

After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags. Then try 50-lb potato bags, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms out straight for a full minute (I'm at this level).

After you feel confident at this level, put a potato in each bag!





## Cumann na Sáirséalaigh Leamhcáin



We hope everyone is staying at home, safe, and following the HSE guidelines. Lucan Healthy Club continues to offer support to those in need, please see the Club website for more information,

[http://www.lucansarsfields.ie/content\\_page/10035503/](http://www.lucansarsfields.ie/content_page/10035503/). A reminder also that the Club is closed to everyone except the HSE staff during the current restrictions. The Luke Kelly tribute planned for Easter Sunday has also been cancelled.



**U10 Boys Mentor, Nurse Clare** has been busy at the testing facility. Our sincerest thanks to her and all the staff.

**The GAA Motions** that were passed at this year's Congress came into effect on March 28<sup>th</sup>, they include the ban on metal bands on hurleys unless they are taped over, and in football, a pass back to the goalie from a kickout is outlawed, resulting in a free to the opposition.

**The suspension of the injury fund** during the Covid-19 crisis has been extended until April 19<sup>th</sup>, and may be further extended. The five U15 Football championships have been deferred until the autumn. As and when the restrictions are lifted will determine when the other competitions will restart.

**To help coaches through this difficult period**, the GAA, An Cumann Camogaíochta and the LGFA have created a series of coach development sessions to take place over the coming weeks. The sessions will run every Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30pm, which began Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>. See <http://learning.gaa.ie> and social media for more details. Well done to

all the mentors for providing tips and advice and posing challenges to their teams, keep it up!

**Did you enjoy the 'just for fun' online Quiz** last Sunday? There may be another one soon, watch social media for more info.

**The team from Operation Transformation** have a plan to help people stay healthy, mind and body, as people are having to live apart from family and friends and the normal routine of everyday life. Kathryn Thomas and the team of experts Aoife Hearne, Karl Henry, Dr Eddie Murphy and Dr Sumi Dunne will be helping households deal with the reality of isolation and how we can all play our part in supporting the most vulnerable by our own actions. Four households will be chosen for this series. The production will install unmanned cameras in your home to see how each household is living day to day. Each household will be paid an appearance fee for participation in the series. The strict social distancing guidelines will be followed by all production team members to avoid any contact with the household members. Should you and your household wish to be considered for this unique series, please visit [www.rte.ie/ot](http://www.rte.ie/ot) where you will find the application form. Applications must be in by April 3.

### Lucan Sarsfields Lotto Jackpot €20,000

**IMPORTANT:** For the duration of the current restrictions due to the COVID-19 outbreak the lotto draw will take place on **Thursday nights at 9pm** behind closed doors and will be live streamed on Facebook.

You can still enter the draw by clicking on the following link: <http://bit.ly/LucanSarsfieldsClubLotto> or on the local lotto link on the Lucan Sarsfields website.



**Make sure to get your entry in before 6pm on Thursday to be included in that night's draw.** These are very challenging times, so please continue to support your Club by playing lotto online.

There was no winner of the **Lotto Jackpot** held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The numbers drawn were **4, 9, 11** and **22**. **Lucky Dip winners (€30):** Patti Brady, Dermot English, B. Young, Shane Biggs and Niamh Brophy.

**Next Draw: Thursday 2nd April 2020,** Sponsor: **Lucan Village Pharmacy**, Managed by **Mary Flannery**

# Political Notes

## Emer Higgins TD – Fine Gael

Ph: 087 921 7741 [emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie](mailto:emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie)

The Orchard, Lucan

### **Covid 19 Information:**

I have created a Covid-19 Information Pack which is being updated every 48 hours and available to download from my website [emerhiggins.com](http://emerhiggins.com).

### **Fuel Allowance:**

The fuel allowance payment will be extended for an extra four weeks, from Friday 10th April until Friday 8th May. This extension will ensure those in receipt of this payment have one less thing to worry about and can remain safe and warm in their homes during the coronavirus outbreak.

### **Support During Covid-19:**

If you need help or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. A new Government initiative to support residents in Lucan has been established. It is being managed by the Council and you contact the helpline on 01 414 9043 for assistance with shopping or just a chat.

*Thank you to everyone - Stay Safe, Stay at Home.*

## Councillor Shane Moynihan - Fianna Fáil

E: [smoynihan@cllr.s.dublincoco.ie](mailto:smoynihan@cllr.s.dublincoco.ie) Ph: 087 7840898

[facebook.com/cllrshaneMoynihan](https://www.facebook.com/cllrshaneMoynihan)

Twitter: @shaneMoynihan

Instagram: cllrshaneMoynihan

### **Prepaid commuter tickets extension and refunds:**

Following representations from commuters in Lucan, I have written to the National Transport Authority and the Minister for Transport asking that the validity of prepaid annual and monthly commuter tickets be extended or refunds be made available, given the restrictions on travel to work at the moment.

### **Fuel allowance extension:**

I was happy to see the extension of the fuel allowance season by four weeks, following lobbying by my Fianna Fáil colleagues Willie O’Dea and Mary Butler. This is of crucial importance to older people who are currently cocooning to protect themselves from COVID-19. Contact me if I can help with this.

### **Railings on R136:**

I have been informed by the Council, following my representations, that the areas of fencing requiring repair between the R136 and Larkfield and Droim na Coille will be addressed in the near future.

## Cllr. Ed O’Brien - Fianna Fáil

Constituency Office 8A The Village Centre,  
Lucan. Ph: (01) 6105811. Mob: 087 7997609

Email: [eobrien@cllr.s.dublincoco.ie](mailto:eobrien@cllr.s.dublincoco.ie)

[www.facebook.com/edobrienlucan](https://www.facebook.com/edobrienlucan)

[@EdOBrien1](#) Leader Fianna Fáil Group on South  
Dublin County Council

### **Covid 19 Outbreak:**

This week have moved to a new stage in the effort to combat the Covid 19 pandemic. Everyone is being asked to stay at home except for certain specific exceptions. My office continues to offer assistance to residents in relation to all matters but in particular we are assisting with all Covid 19 related social welfare payments and applications.

### **Demense Wall:**

I have again been in contact with SDCC in relation to the repair of the wall opposite the Maxol garage. I have received a commitment that they will work with the Ambassador in order to repair and reinstate the wall and footpath as soon as is possible.

*Please stay safe*

## Lucan Credit Union

### **COVID-19 OPENING HOURS**

These revised opening hours take effect from Thursday 26th March until further notice

Due to the on-going Covid-19 health crisis we have experienced considerably reduced footfall in both of our offices. The decision has been taken to close our Finnstown office from Thursday 26th March until further notice. Our village office will remain open per the hours below:

**Monday to Wednesday** - The village office will be closed to members. However, we will be available for phone payments, phone and email queries, loan repayments advice and assistance and registrations for on-line banking between 9.30 and 4.30pm. Cash withdrawals may be made by appointment only. Phone 628 1642 or email [info@lucancu.ie](mailto:info@lucancu.ie)

**Thursday** - The village office will be open to members as follows:  
9.30am to 11.30am - Over 65s and at-risk members.  
11.30am to 4.30pm - All members.

**Friday** - The village office will be open to all members 9.30am - 4.30pm

**Saturday** - The credit union will be closed on Saturdays until further notice.

## Society for Old Lucan (Sol)

SOL is the **local history group** for Lucan; open to everyone. Free to join - email [OldLucan@gmail.com](mailto:OldLucan@gmail.com). Facebook group; “Society for Old Lucan (SOL)” & Twitter: @Soc4OldLucan.



### COVID-19 UPDATE:

We have been working for the last 2 weeks on ways to keep connecting with our followers in this online environment, as well as carrying on our lobbying work behind the scenes to help research and preserve our local heritage. We have a guided tour (on Twitter), a local history lecture (narrated powerpoint presentation online) and more coming up. We hope everyone can join us for these events. Maybe you have always meant to find out more about Lucan’s ancient history? – now’s your chance.

### Sol April Events: Online Only

#### 1. “Tweety-Tour” of Lucan Village Medieval Church & Graveyard

**Sunday 5 April 12.00 – 13.00** (but accessible on our Twitter feed afterwards, if you miss the live tweets)

- Twitter home: @Soc4OldLucan
- Tour hashtag: [#TweetyTourSOL\\_BVM](https://twitter.com/Soc4OldLucan)

If you missed our graveyard tours during Lucan Festival and Heritage Week last year, this is your chance to go on a fascinating guided tour from the distance of your own home, via Twitter, of the hidden medieval graveyard in Lucan village. Go to our Twitter account @Soc4OldLucan to see us guide you via 20 tweets (photo and information) around the graveyard. Find out more about how old it is, interesting finds, people buried there and connections to the wider world. Make sure to ask us questions by replying to our tweets. Email [oldlucan@gmail.com](mailto:oldlucan@gmail.com) if you need our assistance with this.

#### 2. The Hermitage Shell-Shock Hospital: Ww1 Auxilliary Red Cross Hospital 1917 – 1919, Lucan

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April Onwards, Online**

Elaine Hurley, local historian and Committee member of SOL has carried out some fascinating research into the history of the Hermitage, Lucan, when it was used as a hospital for WW1 soldiers suffering from shell shock. This presentation is online with narration and slides by Elaine. It will be available from **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April onwards** on our website:

<https://societyforoldlucan.wordpress.com/> and on our Facebook page. *Cont’d next week....*

## Those were the Schooldays

*By John Kelly*

The years I spent in St Mary’s BNS seemed at times a sample of eternity - would three o’clock, the weekend, the holliers, never come? - But I can say in retrospect they were golden times. I was never the class swot, but what the school and its long-suffering teachers taught me was more important than anything you might learn in English or Arithmetic or for that matter History books. It was about life in general and how to embrace it, especially family and friends.

I can only imagine how frustrating it must have been for those dedicated teachers as they struggled to knock some book learning into us unruly pupils (I almost said ‘students’, but that would be to suggest we actually studied) before we graduated to Coláiste Phádraig or the Tech or some other academy of higher learning.

But somehow they managed it, and without ending up in institutions for the very, very nervous. And despite ourselves - and thanks to their diligence and example - we imbibed, without necessarily being aware of it at the time, knowledge and standards and ideas that would stand to us in the long run. Although we didn’t realise at the time, teachers like Mr Roche (Tom), Mr Noonan (Noel) and Mr O’Connor (Vincent) had a profound influence on our lives.

We shared our hopes and dreams, and we laughed and cried together. But perhaps the greatest lesson I learned was never to take yourself too seriously. I will always cherish the friendships I made in “Mary’s”, and fifty years on they still mean the world to me.

I remember with a smile Mr Downing (Paddy), small of stature and bald of head, who would occasionally nod off while reading the morning paper with his feet perched perilously on a large desk stacked with copybooks, pencils, chalk and steel nibs.

It was the funniest thing for youngsters to witness; as the snores grew audible the Irish Press would gradually sink down to rest on his legs - before he would suddenly come to attention with a little start, almost knocking over the inkwell that he had topped up earlier with ink powder and water.

Then there was the day when, having perused the headlines, he got up to open a window and was stung by a wasp. Much to our amusement he



panicked, flapping wildly at his aggressor and howling in pain and anguish. Now Mr Downing was well into his 50s but for those few minutes that afternoon he was just like one of us kids.

I will always remember him, however, as a competent teacher, warm and affectionate, who loved and respected those in his care. And as far as most of my classmates were concerned the feeling was mutual.

On another occasion myself and Larry Pierce, my near neighbour in Sarsfield Park, were put outside the class for misbehaving. To pass the time I resorted to a favourite trick of mine - but on this occasion it almost ended in tragedy.

In the cloakroom next to our class I would regularly climb on a bar below the coat hanger, hiding behind the coats with my feet out of sight. Teachers who might come looking for me there would find only the obligatory ranks of anoraks and assorted hats, scarves and mittens.

It baffled them for several weeks - until on the day of our expulsion from the class the trick went pear shaped. The little hanging tag on the back of my jumper got caught on a hook and I was left dangling and choking in mid-air. It was only after much flailing and screaming on my part that Larry was persuaded that an urgent SOS call - to the headmaster's office - was in order.

Mr McCarthy hurried to the rescue, but my antics did not go down well with either him or my parents, who failed to see the funny side of it.

Then there was the time I was caught with a very dead fish in my pocket. No, that's not a misprint.

There was a tradition in the school that if you were extremely lucky you got the job of collecting and delivering the headmaster's tea. Mr McCarthy, Larry to his colleagues, was a formidable figure who enjoyed his cuppa with his sandwiches during lunch break, and in those early days there was no such luxury as a staff room with electric kettle. So his adoring wife would fill a Taylor Keith lemonade bottle with tea and wrap it in a stout woollen sock to keep it warm.

And since the couple lived on the other side of Lucan village, in an old stone building opposite Bob Carroll's pub (now Courtney's), the errand took at least half an hour - and such an opportunity to skip lessons was eagerly hoped for.

Mrs McCarthy was as genial as her husband and would ply the lucky messenger with Bourbon Creams (the biscuits) while she prepared the

steaming brew and filled the bottle amid repeated assurances that there was no need to rush.

But back to the deceased river dweller. I was a keen angler in those days, and once when it was my turn to do the tea run I decided, on my way back to the school, to take a detour and check out a night line I had set the previous evening in the Griffeen River.



To my delight I found at the business end a handsome brown trout, which I unhooked and shoved into my trousers pocket, supposing in the excitement of the moment I could conceal him until school finished at three o'clock. It wasn't a genius move.

A few quizzical looks from the headmaster on my return suggested I had taken a bit too long to complete the task, but he seemed to accept my explanation that his wife's kettle was on a go-slow that morning. What I didn't bank on was Liam Fleming, who lived in one of the posh estates up the Chapel Hill, letting the cat - or rather the fish - out of the bag. Rising to his feet he announced to a startled teacher and class: "Sir, sir, sir! Johnny Kelly has a trout in his trouser pocket and it's still alive."

At first Mr McCarthy dismissed the revelation, ordering Liam to sit down and desist from telling fibs. But soon the ripe smell of my specimen catch began to waft through the small classroom - and the headmaster's keen sense of smell did the rest.

Just another of several occasions when Mr and Mrs Kelly were politely requested to drop in for a little chat with Mr McCarthy at their earliest!

Anyway, to put it all in perspective - we now know those early years of our lives are the most formative of character and values, and so I can claim unequivocally to have been greatly blessed not only in my home life and boyhood friendships but also in my primary education: the lovely school and its excellent teachers.

**Thank you from the heart, St Mary's BNS!**

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