

## Glenstal Society AGM 2009

The AGM was held on Palm Sunday April 5th 2009. It was the sparsest attendance at an AGM in living memory – twelve just men – who did, however, make up in quality what they lacked in quantity. We met in the Music Room in the School (The Athanasium).

We started with a commemoration of Old Boys who had died during the year (eight) and members of their families and of the school staff.

In his President's Report, Noel O'Gorman chronicled a busy two years which encompassed the 75th anniversary of the School: Shelbourne Lunch, Banquet in a Marquee, the visit of President Mary McAleese. By chance, we were meeting in the Music Room which houses the superb grand piano and various instruments which a group of Old Boys had presented to the School to mark the anniversary.

The Treasurer's Report was predictable: In round figures, income of €12,000, expenditure of €10,000, and a balance going forward of €20,000. Expenditure foreseen includes upgrading our website, and also, probably, a new print edition of *Ubique*. The idea of a (modest) regular subscription for the pleasure of membership of the Society was mooted. Although some people are



extremely generous, the truth is that most members contribute nothing at all for various services (*Ubique*, Newsletters, Funds for scholarships or for members who have fallen on hard times). **Let us, at least, acknowledge the generosity of those who DO contribute, and thank them warmly for their support.**

Abbot Patrick manifested himself at this point and – for better or for worse – was treated as one of our own.

We did not proceed to the designation of a new President. Instead, it was

*Hazel O'Herlihy, Fr. Simon, Prior Brendan, Noel O'Gorman, Br. Cyprian with a beautiful piano, one of several musical instruments presented to the school by a number of Old Boys in honour of our 75 years.*

decided that the four ex-Presidents of the Society in attendance should form an electoral college to designate a worthy successor to Noel O'Gorman.

In conclusion, Fr. Andrew and Noel O'Gorman said nice things about each other, and we adjourned to Croker's hostelry for an excellent lunch.

## GOLF DAY

On Friday last 18th September the Glenstal old Boys Annual Golf outing was held in the Castle Golf Club in Dublin.

The day was special in a number of ways: Firstly, in deference to the straitened times, we negotiated a reduced green fee, and also removed desert from the menu! Secondly we spent no money on prizes – but accepted whatever donated items could be mustered from those involved in enterprises more recession-proof than others. This produced more prizes than we have been able to afford in normal years – and will be continued from now on!

It was a delightful, sunny day, and a reasonable 25-30 had promised to play. We had the usual few defections from

the over-worked and the bewildered, but a trusty core of 18 ventured out to battle: a good cross section of old boys from the class of '56 to the class of '96. The winner this year was Des Collins with a great score of 37 points. He was presented the cup by last year's winner Walter Halley, who turned up for dinner – still looking for last year's 1st prize, which I assured him was collected by 'a very good friend'.

This is always a pleasant way of catching up with a cross section of generations that all have that little something in common. So make the effort to join us next year!

Many thanks to our sponsors on the day, including: Henry Anderson, Ronnie Cosgrave, Mark Ryan, Peter O'Reilly, Jeremy Svejdar, Rory Crerar.

**Peter John Crerar**

## Wedding Bells

Benedict Kelly (1990) & Justine Mitchell  
David Gleeson (1995) & Ruth Cody  
William Prendergast (1997) & Alina Jokinen  
Fred Tottenham (1997) & Louise McArdle  
George Kennedy (1999) & Ellie Gabbett  
John Caraher (1982) & Karina McAree  
Mark Cullen (1995) & Jean McNamara  
Shane Leonard (1992) & Zoe Verhasselt  
Paul O'Callaghan (1990) & Paula Guerin  
Miles O'Reilly (1984) & Karen Craig  
Edward Grant (1991) & Rachel Hegarty  
Ian Sutherland (1992) & Eva O'Reilly  
David Leyden (1994) & Aileen Cahalane  
Jonathan Hayes (1997) & Cheryl English  
Mark Whelehan (1996) & Jill Matthews  
Paul Brosnan (1994) & Deirdre Cooper  
Thomas Oda (1994) & Alessandra Mazzarini  
Simon Collins (1986) & Kate Carbery  
Mark Roche Garland (1995) & Lauren Moore  
Eric How (1995) & Sandra Molony

# Out of Africa

(Simon Collins came home from Africa three years ago, having spent several years working as an aid agency doctor in Sudan, Congo and the Central African Republic).

People say to me “you were great to do that”. But no. I went because it was interesting and anyway, most of whatever good was achieved was because of local staff I was privileged to work alongside. I may have brought some management skills but the hard slog of day-to-day medical achievements was the work of local nurses, warehouse staff, translators, drivers, guards and cooks who make up 90% of most aid agency projects.

Is aid to Africa a waste of time? The situation in Southern Sudan is a lot better now than when I lived there ten years ago. Life in Congo goes on, less precarious than when I left in 2003. I am optimistic because I know now that there are many Africans who have the necessary qualities to make their countries succeed and I believe they will come increasingly to the fore in the next couple of decades. Those I met are just a small sample of a growing constituency of increasingly educated professionals.

I think of Lazarus Deng in Southern Sudan, a Nurse Trainer of the Dinka tribe who could have remained in Egypt in a safe, well-paid job but chose

to return to his home village during the North-South civil war, putting his life on the line so that he could serve his own community.

I think of Abdul Hamid, my translator in Darfur. He was with me every day so that I could communicate through Arabic and Fur with the patients at an MSF (*Médecins sans Frontières*) project. Every time we transferred a patient by Land Cruiser to our main hospital, five hours across deserted terrain, he and the driver came with me, knowing that if we were stopped by bandits, it was they more likely than I who would take a bullet.

I think of Yvon a male nurse I recruited in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic. Urbane and sophisticated, he probably applied for a job at an MSF project in the insecure north of the country more out of economic necessity than humanitarian idealism. Two months later, after he had been at the receiving end of an armed robbery, I was sure he would flee to safety. I was to be surprised. *Il me faut rester ici*, he told me. “I will remain in the project. I had no idea before I came here. My skills are needed”.

So, is aid to Africa a waste of time? We’re told that the new paradigm will be African solutions to African problems. Well it’s happening already: each of the people I’ve spoken about

was a living, breathing African solution. They would recoil at being offered a handout. But they do want and need our solidarity. They have a struggle on their hands and they need all the help they can get.

Simon Collins (1986) recently opened the Travel Health Clinic on Dawson Street, Dublin 2 ([www.travelhealth.ie](http://www.travelhealth.ie)). More on the Irish office of *Médecins sans Frontières* at [www.msf.ie](http://www.msf.ie)

## Let Us Remember

- Patrick Stokes (43-48)
- Jimmy Ennis (46-53), Father of James
- Michael Stokes (46-50)
- Don McCarthy (54-59)
- Sibyl Keane, Mother of Denis, Nigel (†), Alan
- Mrs. Hanrahan, Mother of Ciaran
- Pat O’Brien, Father of Padraig
- Barbara O’Hanlon, Mother of Andrew, Paul (†), Deniz (†)
- Peggy Delany, Mother of Brendan, Michael, Barry
- George Coleman, Father of Eoin, Marc, Rori, Ronan
- Eddy Blanker, Father of Paul and Ivar
- Gwen Glynn, Mother of Charles (†), Raymond, David, Bryan, John
- Mary Corballis, Mother of Seamus and Timothy, Grandmother of Anthony, Christopher, James.
- Mary Hegarty, Mother of Michael, Johnny, Grandmother of Michael.

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

After seven years of dedicated service as Headmaster, Br. Denis Hooper is enjoying a well-earned change and (we hope) a rest on the other side of the world. We hope to secure the lucrative contract to publish his ‘memoirs and impressions’ in our next Newsletter. Meanwhile we are happy to welcome Br. Martin Browne as his successor.



Headmaster, Deacon Martin

A Clareman, Martin was educated at St. Flannan’s College, Ennis. He studied History and Political Science at TCD, graduating in 1994. Thereafter Religious Affairs journalism ran in parallel with postgraduate research. He spent several years as a part-time broadcaster with Clare FM. From 1999

to 2001, he worked with a radio syndication service based at the Jesuit Communication Centre in Dublin, being also the Dublin correspondent of ‘The Tablet’.

Br Martin entered Glenstal in September 2001 and was solemnly professed in 2005.

From the start he was much in demand in both monastery and school. Chanter, manager of the monastery shop, secretary to the Glenstal Ecumenical Conference. In the school, he was teacher, housemaster, secretary to the Board of Management, director of the school choir. He was also co-editor, with Br Colmán, of ‘The Irish Benedictines: A History’ (Dublin: Columba Press, 2005).

In 2006, Br Martin went to Durham for theological studies. He was ordained deacon in Glenstal in the summer of 2008, and, by his own choice, will remain a deacon indefinitely, rather than proceeding to ordination as a priest. He returned to Durham University last autumn for a further year of study, working for an MA in Catholic Theology.

## 50th Anniversary Celebrations *for the class of 59*



*The Class of 1959 planting their Oak Tree*

It was an enjoyable task contacting the class of "59" to see what interest there might be for a 50th Anniversary dinner. The response was encouraging and many letters later the arrangements fell into place. All the living were tracked down and contacted – except Barry Timmons – who was last sighted, late at night, by Henry Blake close to Heathrow, cooking sausages on a brazier, and chatting away to the night watchman.

The Dinner was held at the Dunraven Arms Hotel on the 25th June 2009. It was a merry affair. 33 old boys attended. Our guests included Fr. Philip, Fr. Andrew, Anne O'Reilly, Brigid O'Loughlin and Tom and Mary Seaver.

On the 26th June 2009 we attended mass at Glenstal Abbey followed by a most pleasant lunch in the school refectory. Fr. Abbot Patrick greeted us and it was great to meet with many members of the community after so many years.

Patrick Hickey's daughter had grown an oak tree from a Glenstal acorn and it is planted on the Monastery lawn. Brother Anthony supervised proceedings ably assisted by the gardeners among us. Later we walked around the school and the grounds where every corner turned produced some new

memory and none more vivid than the time when Fr. Matthew ('the Bear') caught Eddie Dunlop and myself burdened with fire extinguishers as we struggled back up the hill from the Clare Glens.

"Well Brothers! Where are you taking the fire extinguishers?"  
"We are taking them back to the library Father", we replied.  
"Blithering idiots, report to my study this evening"

As we fled we called out: "And by the way Father we tested them and they don't work."

We heard a growl as we ran by. The rest is too sad to relate!

Now that all the fun is over the class of 59 have one objective: that is to keep going until 2034 when, what is left of us, will celebrate the 75th.

**We remember in our prayers: Peter Cahill, John Coffey, John DeBromhead, Frank Fletcher, Richard Gallagher, John Hederman, Nicholas Keane, Donal McCarthy, Michael McCarthy, Barney Nagle, Patrick Nugent, Frances Neerman, Dan Quinn, Alan Russell,**

John Gore Grimes

### **Charles Glynn (1959 - 1964)**

Charles – or Charlie – was an early electronic technologist using a simple phase tester, dimmer switch and a scratchy 78rpm record of the Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries." This combination provided some of the most memorable dramas and comedies in the glorious history of Irish Theatre! For many years, he and co-conspirator Père Athanase did all they could to burn the Cinema Gym to the ground, only thwarted by a very vigilant fuse deep in the bowels of the stage.

Charles went on to live an extremely active and composite life in his beloved Kiltrush. As Fr. Michael Collins noted at the moving and eloquent funeral service, the great love in Charles' life was his family. All other activities, especially photography and the Lifeboat Service

complemented but never competed with this first love.

To paraphrase Fr. Michael's words: It is interesting to look at the talents that make for a good photographer. He or she is somebody who notices, somebody who goes quietly about his or her work, never taking the limelight, somebody who is happy to work in the background and let the picture form itself. And when the picture is taken the photographer is willing to hand over the film for somebody else to develop.

These are also the traits that make for a good husband, a good father, a good neighbour – and, in the context of this morning's celebration – a good Christian. As followers of Jesus we are called to notice, and do something in answer, to go quietly in our service of others. As

followers of Jesus we too are called to do what we can to let others express their talents. We are called to help others form their own picture of life. And as followers of Jesus we are called to be open to help others, to be willing to hand things over so that all can be complete.

As Charles was returned to the earth in the wild winds overlooking Kiltrush, the Rescue Helicopter hovered over the grave and dipped once in recognition of a great servant of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Once again the words of Fr Michael:

"Thomas Moore once said that 'by being curators of our images we care for our souls'. Let us hold dear the different images we have of Charles. Let us remember him in prayer and in doing so care for his soul."

**Timothy McGrath OSB**

## My Dramatic Career

A feature of life in Glenstal in the early 'fifties was the theatre evenings put on for parents and other victims, usually at the end of the Christmas term. There were three plays, junior, intermediate and senior. I played suitably low-key roles in the early years — a demure Queen Emer in Yeats' *The Green Helmet*, a raucous telegraph boy in Lady Gregory's *Hyacinth Halvey*, an insubordinate valet in Molière's *Miser*, and a tweed-clad fly-fisherman in Lennox Robinson's *The Lost Leader*. However, in my final year, I was catapulted into the big-time when Michael Walsh, a popular teacher, produced and directed *Journey's End* by R. C. Sherriff before Christmas 1955. This excellent drama is set in a British dugout in World War One and charts the decline of Captain Stanhope, a clean-limbed rigger skipper at his public school a few short years earlier, now a shell-shocked wreck of a man nursing his Scotch bottle as the guns shake the earth and the death toll in his Company mounts. He is forced to face up to what he has become when the fresh-faced Second Lieutenant Raleigh is sent out from England to join the unit: Raleigh had been a junior at Stanhope's school and worships him.

Needless to say, I was cast as the naïve Raleigh, while Ricky Johnson, now sadly reduced to working as President of the High Court, was cast equally to type as Stanhope. The early scenes went smoothly enough. However, what really gave

the evening its enduring reputation as the most disastrous theatrical production since Ford's Theatre put on *Our American Cousin* in 1863 was the finale. In the last scene, the dying Raleigh is carried back to the dugout, mortally wounded during a failed raid on the German lines, and Stanhope kneels beside his camp bed comforting him as his life ebbs away. As written, Raleigh dies, Stanhope exits, and the dugout sustains a direct hit from an artillery shell — a ruinously expensive scene which would have taxed the resources of the Abbey, so we had never rehearsed it.

Consequently, I was lying on my pallet thinking: *thank God that's over*, when there was the most tremendous explosion and all hell broke loose. The wings tottered and fell over on top of me, prompting the corpse of Lieut. Raleigh to throw up its arms with a cry; then the backdrop fell, and worst of all the lights didn't go off as they were supposed to, allowing the enthralled audience to relish the sight of John Louis Goor, the stage manager, in his shirtsleeves hurling pieces of lumber and bags of sand onto the stage to enhance the impression of devastation, and, most appealingly of all, the brilliantly illuminated backdrop from the Intermediate play — a Connemara thatched cottage with a wisp of turf smoke curling from its chimney.

We never made it to Broadway.

by Peter Kelly (1956)

## THE CLASS of '83 Reunion

The idea started as a few beers and a game of cards in Billy Ryan's London apartment and developed into a get-together of the majority of the Class of 1983. The chief organisers, McGuire and Lind, chose a pub, the Slug and Lettuce in Islington, as the venue for this 25th silver reunion — Lind's original choice, "Madame Von Schwartz's Gentleman's Disciplinarium", sadly having been unavailable.

The bar was quiet enough when we arrived. A group of elegantly-attired middle-aged gents in the corner looked a little out of place. The polite and refined nature of their conversation soon blew their cover as fellow classmates. Helpfully the mothers of all present had carried out pudding bowl haircuts to make it easier to recognise the men we knew as boys. Some of us hadn't seen each other in 25 years, but their voices, personality, familiar and well-worn stories (and those special haircuts) made the passage of years irrelevant. It was striking how little everyone had actually changed.

Thankfully our Class has weathered well and we soon picked up where we'd left off. Legends of yesteryear,

Lionel Lyster and Paddy Nugent to the fore, added their customary wit and joviality; Richard Hutch phoned in from Australia as did Richard Martin from Cork — it was great to talk to both of them. We raised a glass to all who couldn't make it and particularly to Pierce Lett (RIP). Pierce was remembered fondly for his habit of shouting down a 12 foot hosepipe from the washroom dormitory window at any monk or teacher who dared to walk across the courtyard after dark. Your classmates miss you, Pierce!

As the evening wore on it was clear we're all a little more "mature", as pints were increasingly replaced by bottled beer, and then by fizzy water — not to say that the services of Nurse Emily Supple couldn't have been utilised when we staggered outside into a cold North London night well after closing time.

Despite the challenges of life, everybody seemed content and positive, as well about the future, and the past. What's more, no-one seemed to have lost their ability to laugh, both at themselves and at the rest of us. We are looking forward to the 30th

Reunion, and another evening in the company of our oldest friends. To those who couldn't make it this time, you were sorely missed. You have five years to prepare. We look forward to seeing you next time.

### Glenstal Old Boys Society LONDON DINNER

**DATE:** Fri. 20th November 2009

**VENUE:** Soho House, 21 Old Compton Street, London W1D 5JJ

**TIME:** 7.30pm for champagne reception, dinner at 8.15pm

**PRICE:** £80 (including wines)

**DRESS CODE:** Lounge suit

*If interested*

**Please make contact immediately with Ian Lynam**

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**NUMBERS ARE RESTRICTED TO 42 AND THERE ARE OVER 25+ COMMITTED TO DATE.**

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