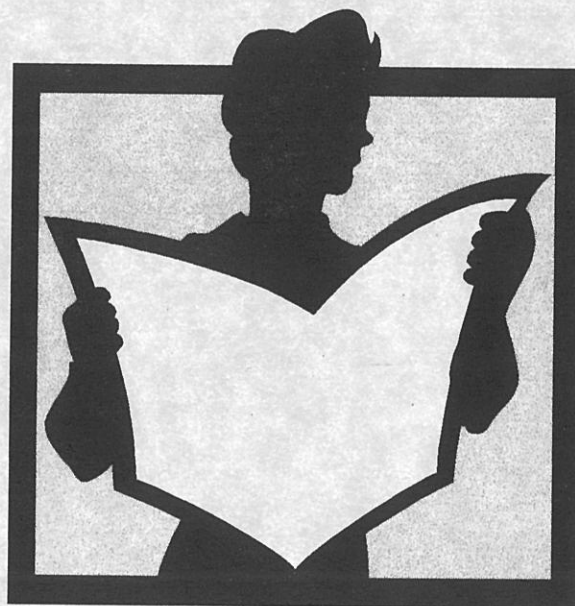


Simply Said '99

Issue 11



Co. Clare Reading & Writing Scheme
Co. Clare V.E.C.

*A Collection of Writings
by Students
of the
Co. Clare
Reading & Writing Scheme*

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FOREWORD

The students, tutors and staff of the Clare Reading & Writing Scheme are very pleased to present the eleventh issue of **Simply Said**, our annual student magazine.

Over ninety students have contributed to this issue with writings on work, family, sports, travel and reflections on life in general. Due to the increase in student numbers the magazine has got bigger and better. We hope you like this new look for the 1999 **Simply Said**.

On behalf of the scheme, I would like to thank the students, tutors, staff members and other supporters who have helped in the organisation and production of this year's magazine, and in other ways throughout the year.

Most especially, congratulations to all the students whose work is represented here. Well done and best wishes for continued success!

Maira

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Sunshine

Today the sun is shining so everywhere feels
nice and warm.

On the bus this morning everyone was smiling,
even those who do not like getting up early.

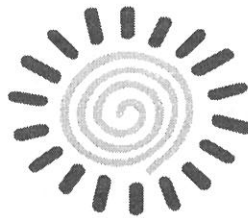
No more heavy coats and wet shoes.

No more coughs and sneezes.

No more storms and breezes.

Only lots of bright happy colours, if only this
weather could last.

By Paul



Ardnacrusha

I worked in Ardnacrusha power station on and off from 1976 – 1979. I started on the “pinstalks” which carried the water from the top of the dam to the bottom. These “pinstalks” were made of solid steel and were 150 ft. high by 20 ft. wide. My job was to clean the “pinstalks” and repair any cracks before they burst under the pressure of the water.

Scaffolding was built up the height of the “pinstalks”. There were five of them. We repaired one every year. They were covered with pitch, which we cleaned off the steel with air guns. This took about 4-6 weeks each. The welders came in next and fixed any cracks in the steel and then they were re-sprayed with silver paint and re-pitched.

Next I worked on transformers which are the size of an average room. The oil had to be replaced in these. Then I worked on the “headrests” where the water came in.

I was amazed at the size of everything when I went there first.

By Larry

New Runners

I bought new runners in Ennis.

This is my first pair of runners and I love them.

I want to keep them clean so I only wear them
going to work in the Brothers of Charity.

They are very comfortable to walk in.

By Bridget



The Team

The team was at the bottom of the league. The club house was broken into and we fixed it up. They now have showers and changing rooms.

I took it over as trainer this year. I said, "I'll get ye up to the top of the league". The team made a banner for me. It says "HORSE IS MAGIC".

There is a computer, full of the team information, e.g. their dates of birth, age, family name and phone numbers. I have a MOBILE PHONE in my pocket.

Their jerseys are cool. My jersey has a song written on it that the team and I wrote.

There are 20 players on the soccer panel. They made a banner of me and the girl friend. They gave me a present when we won the match, a plaque of a horse wearing a jersey and kicking a soccer ball. (My nickname is HORSE).

By Darragh

Up the Banner

I like sports. Hurling is the best. I hope Clare wins again this year.

I watch a lot of telly at night. I go to bed at 10 o'clock.

I go to the Friary every day. We do a lot of things every day.

By Celia



My Holiday

Last year I went as a helper to Spanish Point with 45 travelling children for the weekend.

My job was to keep an eye on the children and play with them. When the weather was fine, I brought them down to the beach and keep them busy swimming and playing with them in the sand. All the children and myself enjoyed it.

I supervised the children at all times and helped serve their meals. We watched some videos and got them ready for bed. I also helped to clean up after the children and helped out in the kitchen cleaning up.

On the last night we had a disco which me and all the children enjoyed very much. Next morning we all got read to pack and clean up the place before we left. Then the bus came and we got on it to go home.

By Helen

Growing Up In Carrigaholt

Carrigaholt is my home place in West Clare. It is by the sea. It is a beautiful place in Summer time or at any time of the year. I grew up there and I love to go home.

When I do, I go for a walk and just feel the sea air blowing on my face. It is lovely. There are great places to eat in Carrigaholt.

An Oyster Festival is another great event that goes on there, but above all I love to "Dolphin Watch" in Carrigaholt.

By Margaret



The Time I Went Camping

When I was 12 years old, I went on a school tour with my class to the Burren.

There was a man and, a woman whose name was Jill. They helped us to set up our camps. On our first day we went into the caves. We were split up into groups of two.

When we got into the caves, it was freezing, which surprised me because it was warm outside. If you go into a cave when it is cold outside it will be warm inside and if it is warm outside it will be cold inside the cave.

We were there only two days. On our last day we went rock climbing and ab sailing. It was fun until I hit my hand off a rock and broke it. I was rushed to hospital, which ended my school tour.

By Declan



My Weekend

This weekend I will be going to Waterford.
I am going with Maria Cahill. I will be taking
part in the sports competitions.

I will be in the walking competition and the
softball tournament. I am looking forward to
going to Waterford.

By Martina



Home and Away

The actors are very nice in Home and Away.
Sally is my favourite actor.

It is filmed by the seaside. Sometimes it looks
cold.

It is on everyday at 1.30 p.m. and again at 6.30
p.m. in the evening.

They are always fighting on the programme.

By Teresa



Work at Quinnsworth

I started at Quinnsworth about three years ago. I was buffing the floors and sweeping up to start with. Then I went on to mopping the floor in the mall.

One night after work I went to Extra Vision for a video, when I discovered I had lost £50 out of my pocket. I looked all around Extra Vision but it wasn't there. I went outside and walked back towards Quinnsworth the same way I had come but there was no sign of the money. I got back to Quinnsworth but it was closed for the night. I looked in the front door and saw the security guard was still there. I banged on the door and he let me in. I told him what had happened, so we both searched the shop. We didn't find the money. He said he would check with the manager in the morning. I went home unhappy.

The next evening when I went in to work I met the security guard. He told me the money had been found and handed in. That put a smile on my face. He told me one of the guys that swept the floors had found it. I went straight over to thank him, then I went to the managers office and got my £50 back.

By Michael

If I Won the Lotto

If I won the lotto, first of all I'd take care of blind children. When I'd done that, I'd like to go on a holiday to Italy with my family. I don't really like Italian food but I would hope that there would be Irish food there as well.

What I'd really go for is the sun and to relax with my family. I don't know if I'd like being on a plane but I'd give it a go if I won the lotto.

By Mary



The Famine Times in Feakle

I have been reading about the Famine in Ireland, in a book my tutor lent to me, which was written by her brother Michael O'Gorman of Derg View, Scariff, Co. Clare and in particular how it affected the village of Feakle in Co. Clare.

I found it horrific that people had so much hardship to endure, when I believe that a lot of the problems could have been avoided. The relief committees of Feakle and Baurae on average distributed ten tons of Indian meal each week to the poor of these areas.

Among the people who contributed to the relief committees were James Moloney Esq. the sum of twenty five pounds and ten schillings. James McNamara Esq. Ayle House the sum of ten pounds and Pat Moloney Esq. Cregg, the sum of ten pounds. These sums give some ideas of the value of money in those days.

Feakle ladies formed an employment society, which was set up to help the women of the parish, to do dressmaking and knitting to aid the poor and needy people of Feakle.

By Anna Marie

My Best Friend

I have a best friend called Ann Gorman. We talk about different things together. I tell her my secrets and she tells me hers.

We like to go for walks together. Sometimes we sit together in the canteen.

We work together in the sewing area. We make the coats. I put the zips on the coats and Ann does the collars.

It's good to have a best friend.

By Elizabeth



Bewleys

I started working in Bewleys on Monday 28th July 1998. I like it there. I do the washing up and waitressing.

The staff and the manager are very nice. I start work on Mondays at 9.30 a.m. until 6.00p.m. The other days I work from 10.00a.m. To 6.00p.m.

I get a 10-minute break in the morning and 30 minutes break in the afternoon for lunch. We wear a uniform at work.

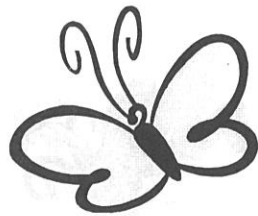
By Joan



Simply Said

I am looking forward to seeing my name in
"Simply Said" and that is simply all I want to say.

By Mary



Easter

Easter comes once a year. It comes in Spring time when the flowers are in bloom and the leaves are on the trees. We go to Mass on Easter Sunday. We have a special dinner and after dinner we each have our own Easter eggs.

In the afternoon we go for a drive to Kilkee. We have a treat while we are there. Then we would go for a lovely walk on the beach. I like Easter best of all. I would like to thank Nuala and all the staff in Avonree.

By Annette



A True Story

Now this is a true story.

When I was very little I used to dream I would have two children. In all my time that I had dreams, the one and only dream was to have children. Then I met my boyfriend. I had my first boy when I was 20, I adored him. Then I had my second boy when I was 23. Then I got sick with depression. My baby was taken from me and also my first boy.

I was so sad for three years till I got well with the help of injections and tablets. I now am trying to get the two boys back with me. I am looking forward to the day I get them back. Then I will be very happy.

By Martina

A Day in Limerick

On Saturday we went to Limerick to participate in the Special Olympic Games. Boys and girls were there. They were involved in different events.

The boys from the Brothers of Charity were involved in the soccer and running and we had a good day. We came second in soccer.

We had a brass band and marched around the track and then split into the different events.

I hope to go again next year.

By Patrick



Discrimination

This word which begins with "D"
Had made our lives a misery
Into a pub to have a drink
The bar man doesn't have to think
He shakes his head no, no, no
Out of my pub you have to go.

Go to a hotel to book for a wedding
The manager says "your kind I'm not having"
When we asked, "what is the reason"
The only excuse is we're booked for the season.

I could go on
But what's the use
Unless the laws are changed
We'll always be refused.

By Mary

Changes

I came back to Ireland a few years ago. I am from Ireland but I lived in England. I met my husband there. He is an electrician. I joined the Reading & Writing Scheme because my English was not good. The Reading and Writing Scheme has helped me a lot to improve my English.

I like to go to bingo now and again because I can read the numbers on the cards. I am very happy with my class on Tuesday.

I like my tutor, she is very helpful to me.

See you all next year.

By Kathleen

Summer Holiday

I am going to California with my sister-in-law in June. It is very hot there.

I will need to get new summer clothes.

I will be there for three weeks.

By Kathleen



June

June is the middle month of summer. All the flowers are in bloom. The hay in the meadow is cut.

My birthday is in June. In the start of June I plant some flowers for the rest of the summer.

Maura Fennell brings the children on holidays. She is very good.

By Ellie



The Garden

I planted flowers with Pat, and Celia helped as well. The man cut's the grass.

There are nice walks around the garden but not in winter.

It is lovely to see people sitting on the bench and small children running about as the leaves fall off the trees.

By Marie



Our Birthday Party

My brother and I celebrated our 40th Birthday party on the 15th January. We had a night at the West County Hotel for our family and friends. We had two hundred people at the party. We had music by Charlie Reynolds and a disco with Gerry Sexton.

We all arrived at the West County at 9 o'clock. We met our friends in the front bar and had a few drinks with them.

Charlie Reynolds started to play at 10 o'clock. He played sets, jives and waltzes for the party.

We had food served at 11.30 and Charlie stopped playing while the people were eating. We had sandwiches, cocktail sausages, drumsticks and tea or coffee.

We met the people and talked to them during the break. They all told us that they were enjoying the party.

My family presented us with a present of a video, it was a big surprise to us. Then there was a big birthday cake rolled out on the dance floor and we had to blow out the candles. Then we shared the cake with the guests.

Then we went dancing again, Charlie played until 1.00 o'clock. Then the disco took over until 4.00 o'clock in the morning.

People enjoyed the disco and then started to go home. Our coach arrived and we had a lovely singsong on the way home. It was a great night because we were all together on the night.

We hope we enjoy another 40 years.

By Patrick



My Best Friend

My best friend is Paul. We are friends for three years. He is very kind and good-natured. We talk a lot about different things.

He understands me and gives me good advice. I have great time for him. Paul has a lovely family.

We only argued once in the three years that we know each other.

By Marian



My Social Life

I go out with my boyfriend to the disco on Thursday nights and to the pub on Monday and Wednesday nights. He drives down from Miltown to take me out. We stay in to look at videos sometimes. He doesn't drink because he drives back to Miltown.

We are going together for three months. We get on very well. Next week I am taking him out for an Indian meal in the restaurant in Parnell Street.

By Anne Marie



My Stay in Hospital

I recently spent 5 weeks in hospital. 2 weeks in Ennis hospital and 3 weeks in Galway hospital. Apart from the pain, I really enjoyed my stay.

I had a lot of visitors and get-well cards. My mother and family stayed with me as often as they could, so I was never lonely.

By Noel



Music to My Ears

I love listening to music especially from the 70's and 80's. From now on I will be able to listen to music whenever I want to as I just bought a new radio for my bedroom. It's a small neat one.

These are some of favourite songs, "Bright Eyes", "Bridge Over Troubled Water", "Hello Mrs. Robinson" and "The Green Fields of France" by D. Arthur.

By Nuala



"45"

My father was a great gambler. He played cards at the Temperence Hall, for 30 years. When I rose up to about 15 years, I followed in my father's footsteps – gambling in Temperence Hall.

I was not a great card player at 15, I improved as the years went by, and after 7 or 8 years I became a professional card player. My two card partners were contrary and not so great at the cards.

When the Temperence Hall shut down, I started going to the pubs to play cards. I won plenty bottles of Whiskey, Brandy, and turkeys, you could take the money instead of the prizes.

We had a bit of an understanding, my partners and myself. When we were able for our lift, we would keep our cards opened, and, when we weren't able for our lift we would keep our cards closed. If we had something good like the King, Queen or Trumps we would still keep them open, if we hadn't anything we would keep them shut and down.

Years later I still play "45"

By Michael

Colouring and Writing

I love to colour.

I love to write.

I love doing exercises with keep fit on T.V.

I love being in Avonree with all the great nurses
and helpers.

By Martin



A Day Beside the Sea

It was Sunday the 21st of June 1989. I woke at 7.30 a.m. to find the sun shining through my bedroom window. It was already hot so early in the morning. I jumped out of bed and I washed, dressed and ate my breakfast. Then I packed my beach bag and ran to the bus stop to catch the bus to Lahinch.

In Lahinch the beach was packed with people. I eventually found some spare grains of sand. I spread out my towel and lay in the sun for an hour. There was a cool breeze blowing and before I knew where I was I was fast asleep. Three hours later the incoming tide tickling my toes woke me up. I was burnt rosy red from head to toe and stiff and sore all over. I gathered my things together and limped back to the bus. I arrived home in the evening unable to walk and in great pain. I spent all that night applying cream to my burns. I will never forget Sunday the 21st of June 1989 for the rest of my life.

By Bernadette

Learning to Drive

I was 32 when I took my first driving lesson. I was on a C.E. course and my supervisor organised for me to have lessons.

I was very nervous. Experienced drivers make it look very easy, but I had a lot of trouble getting into first gear without stalling. My instructor was very patient. He kept saying "if at first you don't succeed try and try again".

Well I did plenty of trying and eventually I started to get the hang of it. I still don't have my full licence, but I'm hoping to do my test before my instructor retires.

By Patricia



The Drama

We practiced our drama in Cois na Habhain. Sonny, Dorothy, Paddy, Danny, Susan and Paul were the main players in the drama. Danny was the father of the bride and Paddy was the best man. Paul was Bishop, Susan the bridesmaid. Sonny and Dorothy were the bride and groom.

We had real thing in the Auburn Lodge on Wednesday 2nd September 1998. It was a full house, all our friends and families were there. At the end we had a singsong. We have our own choir.

I work in the pottery area. I like it very much and I get on great with Owen who is the boss.

By Paddy

My Accident

A car hit me on my birthday. The ambulance came and took me to the Limerick Regional Hospital. I went down for my x-ray at 4.00am and went to the operating theatre at 12 noon. I was back in my ward at 4.00 p.m. They put a steel pin in my leg.

I went to Croom Hospital for two weeks. All my family came to see me. I went home for 3 days. Then I went to stay with my brother in Galway for 2 weeks. I went home on the 9th May.

By Charlie



Northside

I come from the northside of Dublin, which is fifteen minutes from the city centre by bus, or ten minutes on foot if you are being chased by dogs.

I love Dublin. It is the place where I was born. My Mother still lives in the family home where I was born. All my neighbours were there that day and they never miss a chance to remind me and any girlfriend I ever brought home, that they have seen me in all my glory. There wasn't much left to the imagination. That's why I moved out of Dublin – half the city seemed to know about my wobbly bits!

But seriously, Dublin was a great place to live. Although I lived in a housing estate a few minutes from Irelands capital city, I had horses, dogs, chickens, hens, ducks, geese, cats and rabbits all living in my back garden from time to time. I also lived only a few minutes away from three of the countries most beautiful beaches. That's Dublin – a wonderful place really.

I now live in Ennis. I had been coming to Ennis for years before I decided to move here. I love Ennis too, it is much different to Dublin, quieter and more relaxed, even the dogs are more laid back. I moved here three years ago because I fell in love with the lovely rose of Clare, a fantastic lady who I love more and more each day.

As a child I always believed Clare was a country place and yet I never see farm animals or horses in Ennis and I seem to have to drive miles to the beach. Dublin and Ennis are so different, poles apart and yet with one thing in common, they both share a little place in my heart.

By Brendan



My Job

I work in a chip shop in Sixmilebridge. There are about six people working there. I work every Sunday night. I start at 5 o'clock in the evening and finish at 2 o'clock in the morning. Lots of people come in to the chipper and buy lots of different things. We have a lot of drinks and different food. We have curry and gravy and coleslaw. I work with the same girl every Sunday night. I am very happy working there.

My boss is very nice to work for. We went out about two weeks ago on a night out. Our boss took us to Tulla for dinner and after we went to her brother's pub for one drink. After that we went across the road to one of the other pubs. We had a very good night out and our boss paid for everything. The next day I had to go to work and we had a good laugh talking about the night before.

By Ann



Wheels

I like everything with wheels, cars, buses, trucks and motorbikes. I like motorbikes the best. I like the noise they make. If there were a car rally on the road I would go to see it.

Some trucks are bigger than others, so their wheels would be bigger.

By Gerard



The West Clare Railway

The first day the train ran they gathered sticks and turf. The train backed into a truck in the Corofin station. My uncle Jim Murphy was the first man to drive it.

I myself used to open the gates for the West Clare Railway.

By Patrick (Sonny)



Bog Work and Gear

To be done before the 17th of March (weather permitting).

Tools Required

Wooden Barrow

Hay Knife

Box Barrow

Reel of Twine

Shovel

Wink Slane

Two Prong Fork

Breast Slane

Clean the bank for cutting the turf.

Cut the turf out sod by sod onto its bank.

When the bank is full of white turf, start at the cellar and cut the brown turf out.

Then go on to the black turf (which is very good for cooking and baking).

Foot the turf after 1 to 2 weeks if the weather is very good.

After another one to two weeks take the turf out to the road.

Then get a lorry and help to take it home.

Clamp it up for the winter.

By Paddy

Lisdoonvarna

Lisdoonvarna is a good place to live.

The people living near me are very good neighbours.

The town gets very busy during the summer as the tourists arrive.

It is near the Burren and Doolin.

By Willie



My Best Friend

My best friend is Phil. She lives in the same house as me. She helps me at work when Bridie is out sick. She is good fun to be with. She always has a smile on her face. She makes me laugh.

When I have a problem or I am feeling sad Phil is a good person to talk to. If Phil can't help me she will always find someone that can. She is a very jolly person and I am glad to have her as a friend.

By Anna



My Grandmother's House

My father came from Doora and when he got married in 1942 he moved up to Ennis. He got a house in Hermitage and it was there that my brother and I were born.

When the summer would come my father and mother would take us down to Doora. It is about four miles from Ennis and on the way we would pass Doora Church.

My fathers' mother was living in Doora in a small house in the woods. It was about two hundred yards in off the main road and we would stay there all day.

When my brother and I got older we would go down to see my grandmother's on our own.

I can remember on Sunday evening coming back after being there all day. It was getting very dark and late when I got this terrible toothache. We were passing the Church when I said to my brother "I will go in and put some holywater on my tooth. It might take the pain away". When I came out of the Church my brother was not outside. I went to look for him and I took the wrong road. When I could not see him I started to cry. I called out his name "Christy, Christy". He heard my voice and came back for me.

Christy is now living in England. I was thinking the next time he comes home we must go

down to see if my grandmother's house is still there in the woods. I would like to see if it is because my brother and I had great times in my grandmother's house.

By Tom



Sewing

I first started sewing at St. Joseph's training centre. The first thing was a patch work cushions. That's when I found out that I liked working with my hands. Cushions are sewn both by hand and sewing machine. I moved on to children dresses and quilts.

We received a contract from an Ennistymon factory to make leather harness's for horses stirrups, sometimes known as "belly guard". This work was very hard especially when the leather was hard. Because of the training I got at St. Joseph's I now can make my own curtains and clothes.

By Margaret



Wishes

No more unmade beds
Clothes thrown around my room,
If I were a witch,
Just a twitch of my nose
Would make everything fit.

Just sitting and dreaming
Taking my ease,
While sipping my drink
Outside with the bees.
But alack and alas
A witch I am not
I will have to get up
And start into this lot.

By Caroline

My Christmas Holidays

Last Christmas I went to London to stay with my sisters, Helen and Kathleen. There were 10 people for dinner on Christmas Day. We had great fun. It was great to spend time with my relations.

I went to see my niece Sharon on the 27th and I stayed with her for a few days.

My sister, Kathleen, brought me shopping one day. We had, Ruby, her granddaughter with us. She is only 2 years old. She was very tired and cranky.

I only bought a few clothes for myself. I did enjoy my holiday and I might go again next Christmas.

By Phil

My Life

I went home for a week and enjoyed myself.

I go to the day centre. I like to go for walks with Brendan and Marie, they are my best friends.

We are going to have a nice summer.

I am going to Lourdes on the 26th of June.

I like cats, they are furry animals. I like reading books about cats.

By Mary



My Dream

This is my dream and I hope it comes true one day.

My dream is that I would love to go to Manchester and see Manchester United play a game. I watch most of their games on the television.

My favourite player is Ryan Giggs. He is playing very good football now. He knows one or two tricks when he gets the ball. He takes the corner kicks.

When Beckham gets the ball he has a fine kick and he always kicks straight across the goals. It would be a dream come true if I got to see them play in their home ground.

By Gerard

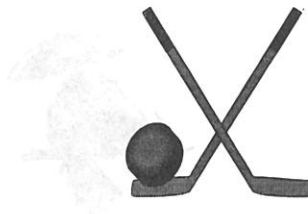


Hockey

I like playing hockey. I enjoy playing with a team. We went to Tipperary to play our matches. We played six matches and we won five of them. I have great fun when I play.

I work in the kitchen with Nora, and she is very nice to work with.

By Teresa



Summer Sun

I like nice summer days with the sun shining and
the birds singing.

I have to be careful in the sun or I'd burn.

My face got burned last year.

There's a birds nest in the tree down the back.

The birds love the sun.

By Bernadette



My Sister

My sister lives in Lisdoonvarna.
She is married and she has two kids.
Last Saturday I went to Lisdoonvarna to visit her.

By Ann



Liscannor

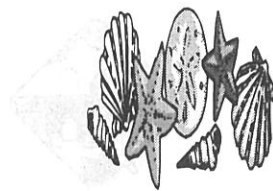
I live in Liscannor with my Mammy and Daddy
and my sisters and brothers.

Liscannor is a small town beside the sea.

It has four pubs, a school and lots of shops.

I like living in Liscannor.

By Brid



Holidays

We will be going to the Old Mill in Westport in August. We will be going with Gerard, Anne and family and we will stay for a week. My mother and I will share an apartment. Gerard, Anne and family will stay in their own apartment.

We will go out early in the morning and won't be back until late. We will go to Knock Shrine and do the rounds. Then later we will go back to Westport for dinner.

The last time we were there we went to Cong, Achill and lots of other places. I would like to visit these places again.

By Frank



Hurling

Clare will meet Tipperary on Sunday for a championship warm-up game. This clash is the semi-final of the National Hurling League. The winners of the game will play the winners of the other semi-final between Kilkenny and Galway.

These two games should attract big crowds for the double header at Pairc na nGael on the Ennis Road in Limerick. I hope to go there myself on Sunday as the atmosphere will be hectic. The match has been made an all ticket affair so there will be much interest in it.

By James



The Brothers of Charity

There are four different areas in the Brothers of Charity. In the sewing area we make bean bags, cushions and baby quilts.

I work in the altar bread area and we make the Holy Communion that goes to all of the churches in the Diocese.

In our gardening area we grow shrubs and plants for sale.

In our pottery area we make vases, cups, oven dishes and candleholders.

By Dorothy



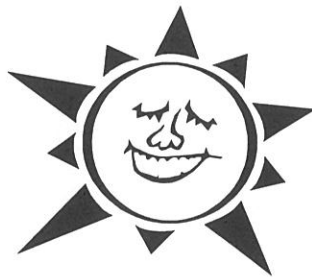
May

May is the first month of the Summer.

The green grass is fresh.

It is a beautiful month and
I look forward to the rest of the summer.

By Margaret



Country Music

I like Daniel O'Donnell. He is coming to Ennis the 28th August it is on a Sunday. I am going to see him with a friend. I have all kinds of Country music, tapes, c.d.'s and videos. I also like Sandy Kelly. She has a new single out at the moment. When I go home every day I play my c.d.'s on my c.d. player. I can also mind children with my mother when I am at home in the evenings.

I like working upstairs making communion bread and I also bake.

By Susan



My Life

In 1990 I lived in Manchester. I was a lone parent. There were good times and bad times. I saw all of England because I travelled around. In 1996 I came home to Ireland. I was homeless. I lived with my family.

In ten years my life has changed. Some of my family has died. My two sons got married. I have a grandchild. I have a job and a social life and I want to learn new things. Life is better.

By Winnie



My Nan

I like my Nan because she is kind to me. She lives in England. She comes to visit every year. She remembers my birthday and she sends me Christmas cards every year.

She stays with my Mum for 3 weeks when she comes over every year. My Nan is fun to be with and I love her very much.

By Paul



Kosovan Refugees

I feel very sad for the people of Kosovo who are being hunted out of their homes and country by Serbia. The leader of Serbia is Slobodan Milosevic who I think is evil. He sends his soldiers into the Kosovoes homes to move them out at gunpoint. Sometimes they take the men away and shoot them. The women and children and the old people have to walk hundreds of miles to safety.

NATO forces tried talking to S. Milosevic but he wouldn't listen. In the end, they had to use stronger persuasion. So far this hasn't worked either.

It looks at the moment like there might be some hope of peace talks. If these talks don't work, then NATO will have to send in the ground forces. This would be devastating for everyone. We here in Ireland can help by giving money to the Kosovo appeal.

By Jamie

Elections

I have great interest in all elections.

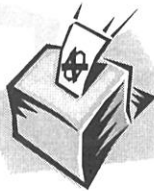
Tommy Brennan is going for the Urban Council.

I would like him to be elected.

It is good to have elections to give different people a chance.

It is good that people get a say on who is elected.

By Kevin



Running

Before you start running you should stretch your legs and do some warm up exercises.

Don't eat before you run a race.

I can run 200 metres. I like running.

By Gerard



My Class

I like coming to my class. I am learning here. I have learned a lot.

I am working with my tutor for 6-8 weeks and I have now read one full book.

I do my reading every night at home when I have my glasses. I like this new learning.

By Michael



Stephen

Last month I met my son Stephen for the first time in eight years. My husband had taken him away when he was only three years old and I didn't know where he was until the police traced him to Derry. I went to look for him there but I couldn't find his address at the time.

I asked social workers to help me but it took them eight years to find him. They arranged for me to go to Derry and meet Stephen at last. It is a long journey from Ennis to Derry but I felt great. When I saw Stephen first I didn't recognise him. He looked very different from the three year old boy that I had lost. He was wearing glasses so it took me a few minutes to recognise his big blue eyes. Because we didn't know each other very well we just played games and took photos, but it was great to be with him again. I felt like laughing and crying at the same time.

Now that I have found him again I am very happy. Every night I take out the photos and look at my handsome son. I hope to go up to Derry to see him a couple of times a year from now on. In the meantime I will write to him as often as I can. Since I met Stephen in Derry I have changed. I can face life better now that I know he is safe and well.

By Ann Marie

My Home Town

I love Miltown Malbay because in the summer it is nice to be beside the sea.

In July the Willie Clancy Festival is on. There are lots of people from all over the world.

Miltown Malbay is a great town.

By Gerard



Beautiful Christmas in Dublin

Last Christmas my sister came from Dublin to take my Mother and I up to her home for Christmas. It was a long drive, we stopped to break the journey and had tea.

We arrived at my sister's house and she has three children and there was great excitement in seeing us. We stayed over Christmas and we had a wonderful time and we all shared gifts. I really enjoyed my Christmas in Dublin with my family.

By Margaret



My Family

I have one brother and his wife, four sisters and their husbands in my family. They are very nice and they are very good to me. Any problems I have they help me out. I visit them all often.

My brother and two of my sisters live near me. I have nine nephews and nine nieces. I have one Godchild. My family always remembers my birthday. My Aunt and niece have the same birthday as I.

My young sister celebrated her 25th wedding anniversary and all the family were there for the party. My brother helps me with any forms I have problems with.

I am going to do a computer course in May in Limerick. I am looking forward to this course. I love all my family.

By Robert

My Nephew's Confirmation

My nephew, Mark, made his confirmation on Saturday 1st May. The confirmation was on at St. Paul's Church. There were a lot of people there.

We went to Fibbers for a meal in the evening. I had a great day and I wore my new clothes. There were a lot of photographs taken.

By Veronica



My Training Course

When I was 14 I worked for 18 months in a training centre in Limerick. We trained in many different skills but my favourite was swimming, volleyball and domestic skills. We could only do swimming once a week. I was good at it, I would like to have done it more often. We played volleyball competition with other training centres. We won the finals the year I was there. We got a medal each and we had a party next day in the centre.

We also did gardening, secretarial work, art, music and literacy. I enjoyed gardening even the digging. We had three lawn mowers and each had their own section. We'd race to see who would finish first. I was sad when the course finish.

By Margaret



Things I Like

I like reading and writing and going shopping.

I like walking.

I like adventure stories.

I like Coronation Street and Fair City and the News.

By Phil



My Soccer Game

My school is in Ennis. I left school 10 years ago. I was delighted to be there. One day my teacher said to me that we are all going to a soccer game in Cork.

The day was fine and the sun was shining. So, away we went happy as Larry. We had a one and a half-hours trip to Cork.

Finally we reached the match, we all toggled out and then the whistle blew to start. The game went on and on until I made up my mind we must win. So I ran and ran until I got the ball. I scored 3 goals, I was thrilled with that. I was the lady of the match. I really enjoyed my day in Cork.

By Geraldine

Ryan Giggs

On Ryan's 14th birthday Alex Ferguson came to his house to sign him up for Manchester United.

Ryan Giggs is set to be one of the most famous players in the world. Ryan has also played for Wales. In fact he was the youngest player ever to play for Wales and he is one of the youngest international players in the world. Lots of clubs want Ryan Giggs to play for them but Ryan wants to stay with Manchester United. He says, "It's the greatest club in the world".

This year Manchester United won the Premier League, The Champions League and the European Cup.

Well done Manchester United.
Well done Ryan Giggs.

By Pen A

Hobbies

I like watching television, walking, cycling and games such as hockey. I am playing a hockey match this evening at 3.30pm with my friends. We are going to win. We are going to May Kearneys afterwards for refreshments.

I am going to Daniel O'Donnell with my friend in the summer. I am also going to Mosney in the summer time and I am looking forward to it.

I work with Kathleen in the altar bread area. I like Kathleen very much.

By Máireád



My Best Friend

My best friend is Marian. She is very good to me. She looks after me and gives me anything when I need it. I ring Marian every Sunday night and we talk for almost an hour about this and that. I buy her presents.

I wouldn't give her up for anything and if she gave me up I wouldn't go out with anyone. I would just keep coming in to work every morning.

Every Friday Marian goes home and I see her off at the station. I'm very happy with my friend, Marian.

By Paul

Autumn

August, September and October is my favourite time of the year.

All the fruit and vegetables are ripe.

All the harvesting is done. The leaves on the trees are going brown, yellow and reddish.

All the kids are back at school.

In October we have Halloween.

By Winnie



The Best Day of My Life

The best day of my life was when I heard I had Aunts, as my Mam had passed away. I was sad, but it was good to know I had family.

I have met one aunt in west Clare, her name is Annie. She is lovely and homely. There are another two aunts calling to see me in June. I look forward to meeting them.

It is nice to have a family at last. Thanks to a good friend for helping me find my family.

By Nora



Christmas Time

I love Christmas time.

It is a lovely time of year, and a sad time.

It brings back a lot of memories for me.

It is a time for families to get together.

We give and receive presents.

By Teresa



Hurling

I went to Croke Park St. Patrick's day to see St. Joseph's v's Rathanure. It was a good game. St. Joseph's won their first ever All Ireland club final.

St. Joseph's captain is Lorcan Hassett. St. Joseph's had three All Ireland medal winners on their team. Lorcan Hassett scored 1-5 from play. St. Joseph's final score was 2-14 Rathanure 0-12.

St. Joseph's went around with the cup in the field after they had won the match. It was a great win for St. Joseph's.

By John

Irish Music

I like Irish music. I play tapes and c.d.'s of Irish music. Sometimes I might go to the pub to listen to the music.

I would like to learn how to set dance. I think Irish music is the best in the world.

By Martin



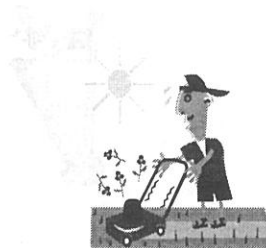
Gardening

I am in charge of the all the tools and also the cutting of the lawns.

I put in a new fish pond at the back of the garden.

We put in all different kinds of fish in the pond.

By David



My Job

I work in Ceramics in Clonroadmore. I start at 9 o'clock in the morning. In the moulds we make cups, plates, teapots and lamps.

My job is to "fettle" the mugs then when I have that done, I sponge them down. They are then fired in the kiln. When they are fired we take them out of the kiln. We sponge them. If they are not sponged the glaze will not stick to the mugs.

I finish at 4 o'clock every day. We have a canteen. We get our lunches from the Sherwood Inn. We are connected with other companies – Fingal, St. Michael's House and Camphill. We sell their products and they sell ours. I have worked there three years and I still like it.

By Helen

My Day Out

I got up at 5am on Saturday morning. We had our breakfast before we started on our journey to Dun Laoghaire to get the ferry. We drove for four hours. We parked the car at Dun Laoghaire and walked on to the ferry. The ferry left at 10.30am. The sea was blue and very calm. There were very few people on board the ferry. It landed at Holyhead, North Wales, around 1.30pm.

The first thing we did was go shopping in Holyhead. After a while we met friends for lunch in a restaurant. We went back to their house for tea. The ferry was leaving again at 4pm for Dun Laoghaire. I was starting to get tired and looking forward to getting home.

I am going to England on the 26th of May and coming back on the 27th. We will stay at my Nan's. We will be bringing back new furniture for our new house. I will also see my friend Claire. On this Saturday I am getting a playstation in Galway.

By Kevin

Songs

I love to sing songs.

I love old songs.

When I sing I feel happy.

I love to bake. I bake brown bread.

By Breda



My Brother's Wedding

I went to Robert's wedding in Galway at the Glenlo Abbey Hotel. There were about 100 people at it. It was a fine day, the sun was shining. Everyone was very happy.

We had a four-course meal. Roast leg of lamb with a herb and onion stuffing and provencale sauce. Baileys and chocolate Bavarian cream served with a medley of exotic fruits. Tea/Coffee. There were two tiers in the wedding cake.

It was a lovely meal and I really enjoyed the day.

By Charlie

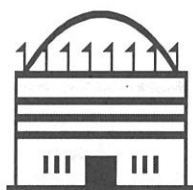
Matches

I went to a lot of hurling matches in Thurles years ago. We went to Tulla as well.

I like walking. Sometimes I walk to the Fairgreen and watch the matches.

I enjoy it when the weather is fine.

By John



My Holidays This Year

I am going to Lourdes on the 6th of June for 5 days. It is a lovely place. We go shopping in Lourdes every day.

I am going to London for 8 days with my mother. We are going to visit my brother in London. I have four aunts living in London. We will go shopping in the markets. I hope to buy a new jacket.

We will go out to dinner most nights in different restaurants. I am looking forward to seeing my two brothers and having a nice time with them.

By Irene



Avonree House

I moved to Avonree House almost three years ago. It is a beautiful house where we live with our friends and wonderful nurses and staff.

My friend Annette and I share a bedroom. We have a lovely sitting room with television and video. We have lovely grounds to walk about. I love been with my friends in Avonree.

By Anne



Television Programmes

Cornation Street is my favorite programme. I never miss it.

I like Glenroe as well on Sunday nights.

I watch Mike Murphy as well.

By Martin



Work

I work at the Burren Outdoor Education Centre Turlough. I work from ten until four. I work five days a week (Monday to Friday).

My boss is called Joanna. She is from Cork. There are seven others working with me. Their names are Margaret, Marie, Yvonne, Colette, Colette, Colin, and Sean.

I do hoovering, clean all the shelves in the front kitchen, answer the telephone, help on the computer, use the photocopier, do the stocktake, use the fax machine and make beds for the groups coming in.

The centre is half way between Bellharbour and Carron. We do rock climbing, canoeing, bodyboarding and team challenges. I have to get up at 9.00 a.m. every morning.

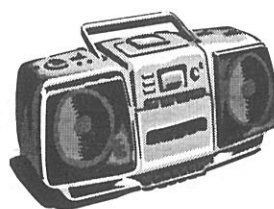
By Majella



The Spoons

When I was young I used to watch my sister playing the spoons and loved the music they made, so I started practising playing them myself to ceili music on the radio, tapes and record player. Now I can really enjoy a seisiún of music by joining in or simply sitting in the kitchen playing with the radio.

By Angela



My Daughter's First Communion

My Daughter made her First Communion 15th May 1998. It was a beautiful sunny day. All the children were excited about it. My little girl was a bit nervous about it. But when the Mass started she relaxed.

She was very happy and excited about her dress. We had some photos taken outside the church and then we went to a party for the kids in the school hall. After that we went for a meal in the restaurant.

In the evening my sister babysat the kids for me, so my husband and little girl and myself could go to the pub and we had a great night.

My children still talk about it. They are looking forward to this year for my little boy.

By Bridget

My Own Place

Canada

In 1969 the troubles broke out in Northern Ireland and there was much violence. My parents who were born in Belfast did not like it and decided to emigrate to Montreal in Canada. They were glad to be in Canada.

My early years in Montreal were pleasant. I went to school there and I had great fun with my friends. We played some games and the teachers were kind and encouraging. I learned a lot while I was in school. I started to read and write.

I enjoyed the stories that my parents used to read to me when I was going to bed.

Lahinch

My own place Lahinch is a very popular resort on the west coast of Clare.

In 1993 my parents decided to leave Canada and to buy a house adjacent to shops, church, hotels, cafes, restaurants and golf course. My father always liked to play golf and he would be happy to play it in Lahinch.

My early impressions of Lahinch were that it was a lovely resort but very small by comparison with Montreal.

Our house has two dormer windows and it is situated on the Ennistymon road as you go out of Lahinch. From our early days our neighbours were always very friendly, kind and helpful.

By Patricia



