

# Simply Said 2001

Issue 13



Co. Clare Reading & Writing Scheme  
Co. Clare VEC



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

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Your comments and suggestions are very welcome.  
Please contact us at: 065 6841183

Co-ordination:  
Design & Typing

Mary Lyons  
Aoife Mahony

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## Foreword

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

Over one hundred students from around Co. Clare have contributed to this year's Simply Said. Their stories of bygone years and times to come, along with poems and songs make the 2001 Simply Said a most enjoyable read.

A sincere thank you to 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!

*Moirá*

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## A Day to Remember

It was the summer of 1976, and I was thirteen years old, when my parents decided to move back home to Ireland. "Back home to where the heart is" my Dad would say. My brother, Sean, was twelve years and our sister Mary was three. There were very mixed feelings for both my brother and I as we were saying goodbye to all our old friends and then we had that other feeling of excitement. We were to meet new friends and start in a new school. It was to be a new beginning for us all.

When we arrived at my grandparents cottage it wasn't what my brother and I had imagined. As we entered the kitchen, there was a big open fire with big black pots hanging from it, with a strong smell of turf burning and stew cooking. I wouldn't mind but as it was around thirty degrees outside, a salad would have been nice. Now I know what my parents meant when they said "in Ireland you are always made feel warm and welcome."

The next morning my uncle invited my brother Sean and I to the bog. We said "yes please" all excited jumping about thinking it was some sort of shopping mall or games centre. We should have copped on when he said "don't dress up, you can wear your wellies if you like." We thought he was only joking. Yeah right!

We were almost six hours at the bog with a lot of work done. The donkey was quite loaded down with a cart of turf, all going well that was, until the donkey decided to take a few too many steps back, tipping the cart over the edge of the bank. Our uncle was out of sight so we started to shout for help when we saw the donkey holding on to the bank with just two front legs, his other two legs were out of sight down the bank. The cart had come off.

My uncle came out of nowhere running like a hare. He was shouting for us to pull the winkers, so my brother Sean and I pulled his ears as hard as we could. The donkey was in so much pain he decided to kick loose so that was the turf gone, the cart gone, and the donkey gone. All that was left was our uncle still running towards us shouting at us in some other language. So my brother and I did the smart thing and ran like crazy in the opposite direction from our uncle. It was a day to remember. We haven't been invited to the bog since. Never mind, he knows we will always be happy to say yes.

*By Bernie*

## **Man's Rock**

When I was young we used to swim in a place called Shaughnessy's. It is a river that flows into a pond and out again. In the pond there are two big rocks, one called Baby Rock and one called Man's Rock. Most of the time we swam around Baby Rock. One day I said to the lads "I'm going to Man's Rock," so we swam to Man's Rock. When we got to Man's Rock we swam round it. We dived off it. We felt like men, king of the rock.

Man's Rock is like the Clare Reading & Writing Scheme, once you get there it's not so hard.

*By Jacko*

## **The Advocacy Committee**

I joined the Advocacy Committee this year. I represent The Brothers of Charity houses at regional and national meetings.

We discuss various matters relating to the service users, e.g. transport, wages, bullying, etc. I am always accompanied by a support worker/carer at these meetings. I am delighted to be given a chance to have my views heard.

*By David*

## Holidays

I love going on holidays. I like the sun. We like to go abroad. I have been to Salou and Barcelona in Spain. I really enjoyed myself, even though my auntie's bag was stolen in the hotel.

There was no pool in the hotel, but the beach was very near, and everyday I would walk to it. The beach was very busy with plenty of people. The children were playing with the sand and making sandcastles and playing in the water. The water was lovely. It was as blue as the sky and nice and warm, warmer than the water in Kilkee. I loved paddling and walking in the water.

On Mondays there was a market in the town. We bought presents for home, a T-shirt for my brother who didn't come.

We went for a day trip to Barcelona on the train. It only took an hour. Barcelona is a big city. We saw the sights and did some shopping in the shopping centre, but we had to watch the time so that we would not miss the train.

The food was all right, plenty of fish and chicken, but they can't cook potatoes, they are nicer back home.

The week went too fast. I am looking forward to my holiday this year. We are going away again.

*By Maeve*



## Fair City

Bella Doyle is my favourite character. He is a great actor. I watch Fair City four times a week. All of the actors are very good in it.

Bella is very good to his family. He has six children, Helen, Jimmy, Suzanne, Yvonne, Darren and Louise. His wife's name is Rita. He is a good father. He works in a nice shop in Carraigstown. He and Rita have been parted for a couple of years.

His eldest daughter, Helen, died a couple of years ago. She was living with Paul and they had a baby girl called Rachel. Jimmy works in the garage. He was married to Lorraine. Yvonne is married to Mike. They own the Bistro. Mike was engaged to Helen, but she left him for Paul. Suzanne is a student and her boyfriend's name is Damien. Darren comes next. He is friends with Lorcan. Bella and Rita are not happy about their friendship, because they think that Lorcan is a bad influence. Finally, Louise is the youngest. She is very friendly with Damien's little sister.

I would like to meet Bella and go for a drink with him. I think that he is very handsome.

*By Phil*

## My Perfect Day

If I could do anything I would like to go go-karting and horse riding.

Go-karting is good fun. There are many people there and you each go in a kart. It can be very fast and dangerous. I went to Limerick to the go-kart track. I wish they had one in Kilrush.

Horse-riding is great craic too. The horses go fast and they sometimes jump up. I like horses because I always used to ride them since I was small. My brother had one mare and three foals but he has sold them now.

I like all animals except cats, they look creepy.

*By Thomas*

## **Teddy Bear is Naughty**

I love reading short stories. 'Teddy Bear is Naughty' is one of the many stories I have read. This is what the story is about.

Alice was asked by her mother to tidy out her toy cupboard. Alice began and found a lot of broken toys, some old tubes of paint and old torn books. Anything she did not want went into the box.

That night Teddy Bear went and looked in the box. He found the old tubes of paint. He unscrewed the tops and squeezed out the different colours into worms. He had paint everywhere and on himself too. He was a dreadful mess when Alice found him next day. She was very cross. She washed and scrubbed Teddy Bear and hung him on the line by his ears to dry. He did not like it. The other toys looked out and saw him swinging sadly on the line.

"That is what happens when you are naughty," said the rag doll.

*By Margaret*

## **Where I Work**

I work in the Youth Centre. I like my job. I like the kitchen. The staff are very nice to work with. We prepare stuff for the coffee bar like scones and salads. I work from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm. I go to reading and writing classes two days a week. I like them.

*By Eileen*

## The Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretch'd in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay;  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

*William Wordsworth*

This is my favourite poem. I would like to share it with everyone.

*By Robert*

## How My Life Began

I started in the ground and was dug up by someone. I was treated and I was taken to what is called a pottery factory.

I was put onto a wheel and spun around. Water was poured onto me and skilled, caring hands moulded me until I was a pretty shape. I was then taken from the wheel and put into a very hot oven, called a kiln. After some time in there I was taken out and I looked really shiny, they said I was now glazed.

I was then placed on a stand and some skilful artists painted me in very pretty colours and designs. After a few days drying, I was then ready to be carefully packed and despatched with other pieces of pottery, (for that was now my new name) to several far distant and exotic places.

When I arrived at my destination, I was put on a shelf in a shop and admired by lots of potential customers.

One day a very sweet old lady looked longingly at me, she took me off the shelf and carefully turned me round and round until I felt quite dizzy. She asked what price I was and then requested the assistant to wrap me up very safely. She carried me home and placed me on her dressing table, after filling me with lovely flowers. Then she stood back to admire me and said, "You are a very pretty flower vase and I am so lucky to have found you."

I am so happy and love my new life as a flower vase.

*By Anne Marie*

## Tommy the Fen Tiger

I read a book a long time ago, it was called 'Days and Nights on Hunter's Fen'. It was about the people who lived and worked on the Norfolk Fens, the hunting, shooting, wildfowling and the reed cutting for the thatching of the small houses.

The fens are a marshy, wet place. The men who hunt and work there were very tough, hard men and the toughest and hardest of these men were called Fen Tigers. I never thought I would meet one of these Fen Tigers, but twelve years ago I met Tommy. He was twenty-four years old, strong, fit and a tough, hard man. He lived on the Limerick side of the Shannon Estuary. He worked, hunted and fished the estuary all his life. In the summer he would driftnet fish for the salmon. From a boat he built himself a twenty-foot long Gondalo. The Gondalo is a boat that is unique to the Shannon Estuary. It has a flat bottom so it can be pushed along the mud flats when the tide is out.

The Shannon Estuary is a fantastic place. In the winter months, wildfowl from Greenland and Northern Europe come here. The Estuary is tidal, when the tide is out the mud flats are exposed. There are miles and miles of mud flats and reed beds, just like the Northern Fens. From September to February, Tommy is a great shot. He bags a lot of wildfowl every season, mallard, widgeon, teal and pheasant, mostly.

In December the thatching reed loses its leaves and is ready to be cut. They wait until the leaves fall off because the leaves are extra bulk you don't need. Tommy cuts reed, it is tough, hard work. He cuts it with a hand-held sickle called a reed hook. He cuts and ties the reed into bundles with string. Then he puts the bundles into the boat and when the tide is right, he rows the boat of reed up to the nearest road. There it will be collected by a truck and delivered to the person who bought it.

People are importing reed from as far away as Turkey and other countries. They are selling it at half the price as the Shannon reed. The reed cutting and the driftnet fishing on the Shannon Estuary will soon be a thing of the past, I am sad to say. Tommy was never out of Ireland, he never heard of the Norfolk Fens. He lived all his life on the Shannon Estuary. A tiger, a real life Fen Tiger.

*By Brendan*

## Questions

Find the answers to the first two questions by arranging the letters in the right order.

**Q.** Who gets the sack as soon as he starts work?

**A.** A mnastpo

**Q.** What begins with 't', ends with 't', and has tea in it?

**A.** A optaet

Here are some more questions:

**Q.** What's a coat that has no buttons and must be put on wet?

**A.** A coat of paint

**Q.** What goes all around the world and stays in one corner?

**A.** A postage stamp

**Q.** What goes up and down and still stays in one place?

**A.** A stairs

*By Thomas*

## Work

I come to Kilrush to the workshop and I love it very much. I have good friends here and we are getting on very well in Kilrush.

I am working in Kelly's restaurant for three days a week and I love it. My friend John brought me for a meal in Kelly's for my birthday. We had roast beef and we enjoyed it very much.

At the workshop I help people and speak for them. I love the pottery and I do that every Tuesday and Thursday. I live with my family at home and I love them very much. My sister takes me out to Quilty at the weekends and I help my Mum at home every Saturday. I watch TV every night.

*By Kathleen*

## Liverpool

My favourite football team is Liverpool.

I have supported Liverpool for ten years.

I went to a Liverpool match in Dublin last year. I met all the players and the manager.

My favourite player is Owen.

*By Anthone*

## Things I Like to Do

My name is Maura and I live in Cooraclare.

I have two brothers and two sisters and I go to the workshop at the Brothers of Charity in Kilrush.

I like doing sewing, computers and reading books – my favourite book is by Patricia Scanlon. The name of the book is 'Family Affair'.

I like doing pottery and I like watching television especially Fair City and Home and Away.

I went to Lourdes in 1994 and we went out to the Grotto – it was big and warm and we said our prayers. I went to the baths. I went with my Mammy and it was very warm. We went to lots of places and I enjoyed it.

*By Maura*

## Read Write Now

I love having my own 'Read Write Now' workbook. I didn't see the TV programme but with the help of my teacher I am working my way through the book in class.

I often read the workbook during my spare time at home. I hope there will be more books produced as it covers everyday situations that I can identify with.

*By Jill*



## Trip to Lourdes

Last year, I went on a trip to Lourdes. There were seventy-five invalids on the trip.

We went in June. We left Shannon at 8.00 am in the morning and we had a lovely flight. We stayed in the Hospice in Lourdes. The Hospice was beautiful. It was overlooking the Grotto. The weather was pleasant and the food was excellent.

We had Mass at the Grotto everyday. We took part in the Torch Light Procession every evening with thousands more. The rosary was recited during the procession. It was a wonderful sight to see the huge crowd carrying the lighted candles as darkness fell.

During the day, we did the Stations of the Cross outdoors. We went in the baths, and that was an experience I will never forget. I felt wonderful after it. The nurses took us shopping and we bought souvenirs for our friends back home.

I went to the Grotto at night and found the peace and quietness very spiritual. I lit candles for friends I had promised. I left petitions at the Grotto that I had brought for people.

We returned home by Concorde, and that was a fantastic experience. It was a wonderful end to a fantastic holiday and one I hope I will be able to go on again.

*By Margaret*

## **My Family and Friends**

I am one of nineteen children. I was the second child to be born to my parents. When I was young we travelled around for five years. My Grandparents looked after me for a while, when I was young. They lived between Corofin and Gort in a wagon. When they died I was very upset. I am known as Young Paddy at home, even though I am in my thirties.

My cousin Mary Frances on my mother's side is a lovely singer. She sings a lot at weddings and in pubs.

Bridget also on my mother's side, was picked to go the Dublin to sing at a conference three years ago. She is a beautiful singer and she also sings at weddings and out at the pub.

Mary Ann is a good friend of mine. She looks like a film star. When we are back in Lahinch in the summertime, she will take me in the bumpers. She is very kind to me and I have a great time for her.

My father's stepbrother is Martin Ward. He lives in England. He has great time for me. He is a decent and honest man.

My sister Maureen is a beautiful girl. A lot of callers to our house would like to marry her. She is not interested. She looks like Lisa-Marie, Elvis's daughter.

*By Young Paddy*

## **Making a Jug**

This is how you make a pottery jug. First you put the clay on the wheel. Then, using your hand you have to shape the clay. You need a basin of water beside you while working. The water is used to keep the clay wet.

When you have the jug shaped/moulded, it has to be left aside to dry for about one hour. Then the jug is put in the kiln for a couple of hours. The jug is left to cool overnight.

The next day you paint the jug. The paint needs to be left overnight to dry. It is then ready for glazing. When the jug is dry it is then ready to be sold.

*By Seamus*

## **Keyboard Lessons**

Every Monday, I go to keyboard lessons in Ennistymon. The music teacher taught me how to read music and then she showed me how to play the notes on the keyboard. I have learned how to play three or four tunes on the keyboard so far and I hope to learn more. My favourite tune is 'Oh When The Saints Go Marching In'. I practice every evening when I go home. I would love to join up with a band when I am better at the keyboard.

*By Martin*

## **How to Make a Wheelbarrow**

The first thing we do is cut the timber to the right size and shape it out. Then we screw it together and put a timber wheel and two timber handles on it.

We use an electric plane to remove all the rough edges and we use a sander to smooth the sides. The wheelbarrow is now ready to be painted. We paint some of them green and some others we paint brown.

When they are finished people can come in to the centre and buy them.

*By Patrick*

## **Eastenders**

I like Eastenders. It is on three nights a week.

The pub is up for sale. Frank took all the money. Peggy is broke. The staff will all be let go.

I had a dream I bought the pub and I kept Peggy on as manager. I kept Barry and Natalie on as staff and would like to take Melanie on as staff as well.

I would like to own a pub one day.

*By Paul*

## Tea-Dances

Tea-dances are run during the day, usually from 4.30 to 6.30 pm where live bands play either traditional or country and western music.

People can sit and listen or dance to the music. There is tea and cake served after the dance.

I went to my first tea-dance on St. Patrick's Day this year in the Kilmurray Lodge Hotel, Limerick.

P.J. Murrihy and Seamus Shannon had their captive audience either dancing or tapping their feet for two hours. The hall was packed. My friends and I had the most enjoyable day. We finished with tea at 6.30 pm approximately, exhausted but happy.

I'm already looking forward to my next tea-dance.

*By Teresa*

## Going for Walks

I walk with Marie around the garden.

I walk into the Day Centre every morning, and home every evening.

I like walking because of the fresh air. I like looking at all the flowers in the gardens.

*By Celia*

## Ploughing

If I could build a machine, I would build a ploughing machine. I come from a farming background. We all live on the family farm.

We keep a lot of cattle, most of them are sucklers. There are also weanling calves. They are fed morning and evening, in the winter months. The silage is put into a feeder which the cattle are fed from. We don't do much ploughing on the farm because we don't plant crops.

I love to watch Ear to the Ground, they cover all aspects of farming life. The programme also covers The National Ploughing Championships. They have very big tractors with ploughs behind them. It is a great three-day outing for all the family. I would love to go this year but with Foot and Mouth, I don't know if it will be on.

*By Edward*

## Hospital

Last autumn I was in hospital for five days. I had surgery on my nose. I was in a lovely ward with one more patient.

The nurses and staff were all very nice to me. I still visit outpatients every few months and I have a lovely day out when we go.

We always have our dinner out in a nice hotel.

*By Annette*

## The President's Visit

We had a great day when the President came to visit. Our relatives were invited but they were not able to make it.

All the staff looked very well. We all wore our best clothes. There was a lot of security minding the President. There were plenty of speeches made and the President said some lovely things about the factory and us.

I had to show her some of the vases. She was very impressed with our pottery. I really enjoyed the day.

*By Marion*

## Music

I like country and western music. I play lots of tapes at home. I really enjoy listening to Mike Gardener on Clare FM. His show runs from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, each Saturday and Sunday.

I went to a concert in the West County Hotel. Phil Coulter, Claire Gallagher and Sean Keane were there. Phil Coulter and Claire Gallagher played the piano while Sean Keane sang. It was an excellent concert and both my family and I really enjoyed the night.

*By Dorothy*

## Part of Baghdad

We lived in Baghdad in the city centre, there is a river passing there. The street beside the river was always busy because there are a lot of shops, coffee shops and restaurants and there is a traditional fish restaurant with fresh fish. Fun World is a games park on the riverside and across the road there are a lot of pubs. Everybody enjoys going there because you can see the families in the gardens and kids playing. You can enjoy your drink and your lunch.

*By Mageed*

## Fair City

I went up to see Fair City. I saw Malachy and Kay. Mr. Good drove us to Dublin in his car.

They took photos of Darren, Mairead and Phil. We had dinner in the canteen in RTE.

I saw Nicola and some of the cast having their lunch in the canteen. I enjoyed the day.

*By Phil*



## Personal Reflection Task

I enjoy doing Art & Craft in Liam's class. Before I came in to Liam's class I had no skills or ideas in this area. Before I came in to Liam's class I had no interest in anything.

The reason I came to Youthreach was to get a good education and a good job. I came here because the group was smaller and I had free space. Because I had no skills I thought I had no future. I was very confused when I didn't know what to do for the future.

The skills I had when I came to Youthreach were good attendance, punctuality and responsibility. I needed to work on my literacy and numeracy, and I had never worked on computers or in the craft area. I didn't know I had Art & Craft skills until I tried it. I used my computer skills as part of my craft design. I used Printmaster to research ideas for projects. I printed out the images, then I traced them onto paper. I used the I.T. for projects like Christmas designs for the windows, St. Patrick's Day and a lamp. On the Youthreach windows we painted Santa, reindeers and Christmas trees. This was part of our Craft & Design task. The public were very impressed with the way the windows turned out and we were asked to decorate the windows of the public library. I am very pleased with the way my work has turned out.

I feel very confident working by myself with I.T. and Art & Craft. I would like to do more of the Art & Craft in the future. When I come back next year I would like to put a lot more work into it. I am not sure about working full time. I have spoken to Josephine about this and to my Craft & Design teacher. I would like more craft work and training. I will be spending more time in these classes and part time work experience.

Since I came to Youthreach I have more confidence. My work skills have improved. I have learned a lot over the two years.

I think that the Leaving Certificate Applied is great for Youthreach and I am delighted to get the opportunity to do it. I would like to thank all the tutors for helping me during the two years I have been here.

*By Tomas*

## **My Work Experience**

I went on work experience for six weeks in the Sherwood Inn, beside Tesco in the Shopping Centre. I started at 9.30 am every morning and finished at 4.00 pm.

While I was there I helped in the kitchen. Everyday I coated the chicken, fish and mushrooms with flour, egg wash and breadcrumbs. I cut up the tomatoes and sausages for the breakfasts and every evening I helped with the wash up.

I really liked working at the Sherwood. Everyone was very nice to me there.

*By Ann*

## **Our New Home**

We have a new house.

We have to do our own cooking on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. We also have to do our own shopping. We go down to the Town Centre every Thursday. Anna washes and cooks the potatoes for the rest of the girls.

The girls buy their own groceries, also toilet rolls. The girls stay back in the house some weekends.

*By Anna*

## **My Holiday**

Some people go on foreign holidays but I love holidaying in Ireland.

I've had great breaks in Clare, Mayo, Cork, Kerry, Galway and Kilkenny. Sometimes I visit relations but I often stay in hotels.

I've been on a plane twice, once to Lourdes and once to Denmark. I enjoyed both trips, but I'm looking forward to seeing many more beautiful places in Clare and in Ireland.

*By Angela*

## **Peace Keeping**

The troubles in the north of Ireland make me sad. Many people both north and south of the border feel as I do.

I think that if the U.N. put peace keeping forces into Northern Ireland, then there would be peace there full time.

I hope and pray that the troubles will be solved soon.

I pray Our Lady's Prayer for peace everyday.

It is with me at all times and it is the prayer I love the most.

It leads me on the right path in this world and one day onto the path to heaven.

*By Patrick*

## Scuba Diving

My hobby is scuba diving. Every Sunday I go to Kilkee. I go with my sister, she also scuba dives. We start out at 9.00 am in the morning, and we arrive in Kilkee at 10.30 am. We then put on all our diving gear. When we are ready, we go out in the boat to the reef where we dive. I love being down deep in the sea. It is wonderful to see all the fish and sea life.

I hope to take my exam to enable me to take out the boat and navigate it on my own.

*By Noel*

## My Hobbies

My name is Pat. I live in Cloughleigh. I like playing football. Indoor soccer is my favourite. Roy Keane is a good player.

*By Pat*

## Patchwork Quilt

Back in December 2000, I started in a sewing class for the first time in the D.P.O.C. Nearly all the sewing I have done to date is by hand. Theresa, Mary, Bernie and I started with a potpourri, which took one class. After that, we moved onto more difficult things. Here are just a few examples; oven gloves, a tissue box, a heart, a pincushion and of course, the quilt.

The quilt itself took two weeks from start to finish. I started with one patch, joining it to another and so on. I stuffed it with wadding and put frills on the edges. I made this patchwork quilt for a very beautiful baby girl who I love very much. Her name is Aoife and she is eight months old. Aoife's parents were overwhelmed by the quilt. I had also sewn her name onto it, to give it the finishing touch. Sewing to me is very relaxing and rewarding. Since the quilt, I have made other things like shopping bags and a bedside lamp.

*By Pauline*

## Cars

### Nissan Almera:

It has three doors. It has alloy wheels and it's small. It's a blue car with five speeds.

Lexus 300 SL:

It's white and has four doors. It has alloy wheels. It's big and white and has six speeds.

*By Andrei*

## Motorbikes

I did a project on motorbikes because I am very interested in motorbikes. I wrote about different kinds of bikes and what you must wear when you ride them.

I like motorbikes because my friends have motorbikes. They come in different colours, sizes and makes. They are very fast but I have never been on one. I would like to ride one, but I would be nervous in case I fell off and got hurt.

I can ride a bicycle, but I don't think its the same as a motorbike. I fell off my bicycle when I put on the brake too quickly coming down the hill. I hurt my leg but I was all right.

*By Orla*

## The Nightmare

Last week I was in Limerick Hospital. It was midnight. My daughter had a very high temperature. We went to the waiting room at 9.30 pm and we waited four hours for the doctor. Just at 3.00 am in the morning we came back home. My daughter was better. I was happy.

*By Natalia*

## **The Old Ground Hotel**

The Old Ground Hotel is a beautiful old hotel in the centre of Ennis. It is owned by Mr. Flynn.

I have worked there for a year now and I really like it. The boss and the staff there are all very nice. The customers are all very friendly too.

I work in the kitchen. I make sandwiches, prepare tea trays, do the washing up, sweep and wash the floor. I also help out when we have weddings.

We are very busy at this time of year as there are a lot of weddings on and tourists about. Normally, I work from six pm in the evening until eleven pm at night. Sometimes I start at six am or seven am in the morning, so thankfully I live close by.

The hotel has a restaurant called O'Brien's and a bistro called The Town Hall. The food in them is very good, but very expensive. Some day I would like to waitress in one of them.

*By Anne Marie*

## **My Family**

I went to visit my sister Fiona. She lives in Ennis and works in a factory. I stayed one night with her. She is very good to me. My father and mother went out for a meal with her to the West County Hotel. I had roast chicken and vegetables and a soup. It was a lovely meal.

Fiona is older than me and she is married. She gave me a big Easter egg and gave me a birthday card, a jewellery box and a chain. My other sister Moira gave me some earrings and my brother Gerry gave me some money.

I love all my family very much and they take good care of me. I like coming to the workshop in Kilrush everyday where I do sewing, reading and writing. I like going to the library and swimming in Kilkee.

*By Collette*

## The Grotto

The best thing that ever happened for me was when I got a grotto built at the back of my house. It was a dream come true.

Why I wanted a grotto is a long story. I had a dream, and I saw Jesus in the dream. He told me he would always help me, and I also spoke to his mother Mary. It's a long time since that happened, and I say my Rosary every day.

How I got around getting the grotto is I said to my sons, "I'd like it built." They said, "Why not, it's a lovely idea." I said to my husband, "I'd like my grotto built." He said, "OK, I'll find someone to build it for you." Two weeks later, a man from Corofin came and said we'd have to get rid of the cherry blossom tree in the corner. It took the boys a few days to dig it up, because it's been there for years. The man brought down his wife to do the sketching the following day. The builder and my son Gerard did the stonework between them. That was the base of it. They built a low stone wall around it, with flags to sit on it. It looked lovely.

I needed a statue of Our Lady, so my other son, Tom, got the phone book and rang a few places. A man put him on to a priest in Corofin, who knew of a place in Cork that did statues. He made one for us within a few weeks. Tom brought it home in the van. The grotto was all ready at this stage, and when they put the statue up it was a remarkable sight. It wasn't painted, so a few weeks ago a neighbour two doors up, Dereck Wills, who is gifted, painted it for me. He made a beautiful job of it.

When I look at it now, I feel very peaceful. You would swear she was talking down to you. You can see it from all the back windows. All that's left to do now is get it blessed, and to put a halo of stars lit up around her head. We light candles every night to her and they burn for days. It has brought great comfort and blessing to our family.

*By Ellie*



## My Dog Sammy

Sammy is brown and white and I got him in Tipperary. He is a King Charles terrier.

Sammy is five years old going on six. His birthday was in March. He is a good watchdog because he barks when strangers come near him.

We live in Cappa with the other boys and girls and our house parent. Sammy gets on with everybody, he is my special friend and he is good to me. I would miss him very much if anything happened to him.

I brought him for a walk last night. I bring him for a walk most nights. We go down by the water and back again. Sammy doesn't like the water. I love Sammy.

*By Mary*

## Films

I like comedies and westerns.

My favourite actors are Eddie Murphy, Clint Eastwood and John Wayne. I like action films.

Eddie Murphy was very funny in 'Dr. Dolittle', where he spoke to the animals and they spoke back to him.

John Wayne is a big favourite. Every week there is a film on the TV with him in it, usually on a Saturday afternoon.

The best film I ever saw Clint Eastwood in was 'Dirty Harry'. He plays the part of a policeman. It doesn't matter how many times I have seen it, I love when they show it again. I won't budge off the chair for anything.

*By Ger*

## **My Sister's Wedding**

The wedding was in Maghara church. The wedding was on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> of September and the reception was in The Auburn Lodge. The bridesmaids were Geraldine and Helena.

We got ready for the wedding at home. It was at 2.00 o'clock. The groom was Matt and the bride was Noreen. They looked beautiful.

We had a meal afterwards in the hotel. The meal was lovely. The disco was over at 4.00 am in the morning and we went home.

*By Gerard*

## **My Trip to Lourdes**

I went to Lourdes on Easter Sunday. I went with group 163. I stayed in the Alba Hotel.

I went to the baths and I visited the Grotto. For the first time in my life I saw a real life fireworks display. It was fantastic.

I did the Stations of the Cross, which were very hard because we had to walk up around the mountain and come back down again.

I didn't like the food at all because mostly they seem to eat salads in France. I would love to have had more chips. We went to Mc Donald's one night and on our last night we had a party.

I really enjoyed my trip to Lourdes and I'd love to go back again sometime.

*By Joseph*

## **My First Day in Ireland**

My first day in Ireland was a strange day in my life. When I arrived at Dublin Airport, I was surprised to meet people that did not speak my language.

I had never heard of Ireland before, I did not know what the weather would be like and I was wearing an African dress called 'Liputa'. This did not protect me from the cold. It was the same for my three girls who started to hold me because of the cold. Tears were coming from my eyes without crying and my hands were shaking.

Then we went to the Department of Justice and spent the rest of the day there. At 9 o'clock in the evening, we went to sleep at Sailing Hotel for one night and the next day we were sent to Ennis where we have been living for fourteen months. We love Ennis.

*By Anto*

## **My Favourite Sport**

My favourite sport is swimming. I have been swimming since I was going to school.

At the Dulick Centre, we started a couple of weeks ago, swimming every Wednesday from 3 to 4 o'clock. We hadn't been swimming for a while, as the new pool was being built.

The new pool is beautiful. It has a steam room, sauna and a baby pool. It also has an overhead balcony where people can sit down and read or look down at the people below swimming. It also has new lockers and dressing room. I look forward to going to the pool every Wednesday.

*By Karen*

## An Experience of Danger

There is a time in everyone's life when they have to face the elements of some kind of danger. I would like to tell you of one experience that I had. It was a beautiful summer's morning and I was on my way to school, half way down the road. I decided that I was not going to go today. I was just twelve years of age and this would not be my first time missing school. My friends and I had done this before, but this day I would be on my own. I could not stay around town in case someone might see me, so I just started to walk not knowing where I was going.

Somewhere outside of Ennis, I am sorry to say, I stole a bike. As I went on I was thinking, what was I going to do when it got dark? I had no money, nothing to eat. Was I going to turn around and go back home no, it was still daylight. I came to a house at the side of the road, when I spotted a brand new bike outside the front door. I left the bike that I had and I took the new one. I knew this was wrong, but it was better than walking. As I was cycling along the road, a car passed me out going the other way. It started to slow down and then it stopped. A man got out of the car and started to call me back. I must have known that the bike was his. I left the bike on the road and started running. This man came after me but I was too fast for him. He could not keep up with me, so I got away and now I was back walking again. As I went on I came to a signpost, and it read twenty miles to Ennis, so this was the road I took. As I headed for home, a guy in a lorry stopped and gave me a lift. He asked me was I working for a farmer back there, I said I was. We then started talking about something else. He was a very genuine man to stop and give me a lift.

Ten years had passed and I was now twenty-two, I was going out with a girl at the time. She was living about four miles outside Ennis.

One day I was going to meet her when I passed this house and there was a man standing at the front door. It was the same man that gave me a lift that day ten years ago. I asked my girl friend what was his name, she told me. Then she said, "You don't want to know this man, he is bad news."

I did not tell her that this was the same man that gave me a lift that day, and brought me home safely.

*By Michael*

## **Blackrock**

Next Thursday, I am going to Blackrock in Dublin to spend the Easter Holidays with my son John and his wife Deirdre. I'm getting a taxi into Limerick, where I will get the train to Dublin. John will meet me when I get off the train.

I am looking forward to the holiday. I will go shopping for Easter eggs, go to Mass and on Easter Sunday we will have a big turkey dinner. Then on Bank Holiday Monday, I will get the train back to Limerick.

I like going to Dublin. It is great to see my son and his wife, and I love going shopping up there too. Maybe someday I'll move there to live.

*By Kathleen*

## **My Trip to London**

I went to London on my Easter trip. I went shopping and bought lots of clothes in London. I went around to all the shops in London and I met my friends. We went to an Italian restaurant to eat our dinner and it was very nice and delicious.

The hotel I stayed in was very big. London is a great place to visit. I would like to go back and visit London again because it's a beautiful place to visit during the summer holidays. I went to London Zoo as well, there are lots of animals there.

*By Brian*

## Galway

A few years ago, we all went to Galway for a day out. We visited a theme farm in Loughrea, and we saw a lot of different animals like pigs, rabbits, goats and hens. We spent ages walking around looking at everything.

Afterwards, we had our lunch in the restaurant there. The food was lovely and we were all starving from being out in the fresh air all day. We also visited Coole Park that day, and it was lovely.

When we arrived back in Ennis that night, it was late and we were all tired.

Next year, I would like it if we went to Dingle in Kerry for our day out. I'd like to see the dolphins and maybe go for a walk along the beach. I always enjoy our days out and I'm looking forward to the next one.

*By John*

## My House

I live in an old house outside Ennis.

We had a lot of work to do inside and outside. I have a lot to do in the garden. There are very old trees and I have started to do some work on it. We have made a nice decking to sit on.

I am enjoying doing the garden and I have lots of old stones around it.

*By Ann*

## My Favourite Place

It's spring again and summer is just around the corner as they say. My favourite time of the year and my favourite place is out in the open air, preferably in the woods. I love to stroll in the woods with my lunatic dog. He is always harassing me to play with him. Sometimes, I let him loose for a bit of a run. He doesn't go far from me but he stops at every tree to mark it the way dogs do. I know it's his favourite place. I get a kick out of him watching him sniffing and playing with the bugs he finds on the forest floor. I love his curiosity when he finds a frog and then the frog jumps away from him the amusing look on his face. He can't understand why this creature does not want to play with him.

It's a warm sunny Sunday in April. I always feel at peace and very relaxed in the woods away from all the hustle of everyday life. Strolling through the woods I think how wonderful the trees are the glory of nature. It really is beautiful. Trees stretching up high maybe a hundred feet or more you would think they were touching the sky. Some of the trees are hundreds of years old so old their roots burst up through the forest floor. Their trunks are huge, their branches are like arms stretching out and inviting you to climb up and sit in them and be nestled by mother Nature.

I love the sounds and the smell of the woods. The woodpigeon always calling and letting you know he's there, other smaller birds swooping upwards and downwards challenging one another eventually resting on the outstretched arms of the trees. The smell of the pine trees and the scent of the wild flowers is so sweet in my nostrils.

I thank God for the wonderful earth he has given to us, but I am sad at the knowledge that man is slowly torturing the planet to death. I will never understand why. But, in the meantime, I will continue to enjoy the wonderful nature around us.

*By Catherine*

## Killing a Pig

I'll never forget back when I was a young fellow on the farm, the days when we killed a pig. It was a special occasion because people were short of meat and money and the local people used to gather for the killing.

From the age of six or seven, I was allowed to take part in the killing. Looking back on it now, the method used was very cruel but that's the way it was done long ago.

In the morning I used to go to the creamery with my father, and we brought home the boiling water in the empty milk tank for the scalding of the pig. The local people would gather after breakfast and tie the pig to the pony car. My mother brought hot water to wash the pigs 'jowl', i.e. it's neck.

There was a man who killed all the local pigs. He would stab the pig in the neck and my mother would catch the blood in a pan with salt and half an onion in it. She kept this stirred in case it clotted.

Next the pig was dropped into a barrel of boiling water to soften the hair so it could be easily scraped off. Then it was washed off with cold water and hung up on the shed. His belly was slit open and his guts removed. This was the bit myself and my brothers and sisters liked best because we used to get the bladder, which when dried and filled with air, made a fine football.

The heart, liver and sweetbread were used in the making of the pudding. My mother washed and scraped out the intestines in the river. These were later stuffed with the black pudding. This was made in the evening by boiling the heart, liver and sweetbread until tender. These were chopped finely and mixed with bread, onions, oatmeal and spices. This was all mixed into the blood. Then my mother used a funnel to fill the mixture into the cleaned out intestines. She'd make about forty rings of pudding this way. These would be boiled and hung to cool on the handle of a brush suspended between two chairs. Us children used to sneak in and help ourselves to some of it. We thought this a real treat.

Next day my father would cut up the pig. The pork steak was cut off and some of it was given to the neighbours who helped with the killing. I was always hoping to get asked to deliver this, as there was usually a few pence in it for me. We all gave a hand with salting the bacon and putting it into a timber barrel to cure. A white sheet was always put on



top under the cover. Ten weeks later the bacon was taken out of the barrel, wrapped in brown paper and hung on the kitchen ceiling until it turned yellow. That gave it a great flavour. My mother 'rendered' the lard. This meant putting it into a roasting tin in the oven to melt. This provided us with dripping or lard, and was used in cooking for the rest of the year. Thank God life has got much better for people since then.

*By Michael*

## **Let Me Share**

I am from the country and I live in Cree. I go to the workshop in Kilrush everyday. A bus picks me up in the morning at 9.30 am and takes me back home again in the evenings. I live about ten miles away from the workshop. I was born with spina bifida and cannot walk.

I am in the pottery section of the workshop in Antonio's pottery group. He teaches us how to make pottery. We make nice things that are sold in shops around the town. I do computers two days a week with my teacher Kala and I like this very much. I like to read books and magazines, my favourite book is 'A Circle of Friends' by Maeve Binchy. I have also watched the film version of this book.

When I come home in the evenings I like to watch T.V programmes such as Home and Away, Emmerdale and some videos. Sometimes I go to the cinema with my friends from the workshop and I also go with my sisters. I enjoy going to the workshop everyday and meeting people and my friends. I like making pottery and learning how to do things on the computer. I also love living at home with my family.

*By Patricia*

## **The Third World**

There are people starving all over the world looking for some food. The children get very thin.

People here in Ireland throw money in the Trocaire box to help them. They get some corn to help them through the winter. It is very hot in the summer.

A lot of missionary priests and volunteers go out to the Third World. They set up hospitals to help the people there and schools to educate them.

The Pope went out to the Third World. He went out to help. Workers organise a fast every year to help them. It is very hot in that country. They bring toys for the children and clothes to wear. They are doing great work and we would like to help them, so give lots of money to help them to keep their dignity.

*By Marie*

## **My Family**

One Sunday I had to take a trip to Kenmare, Co. Kerry. It was my Granny's Anniversary Mass.

Mass was on at 11 o'clock in the morning, so we had to leave early. We arrived in Kenmare on time. After Mass we went to visit some friends and we all went to the hotel for lunch. I had fish, mashed potatoes and carrots. We all enjoyed our meal.

We had a good day with our friends. It was very late when we got home that Sunday night and I was very tired so I went straight to bed.

*By Paul*

## **A Little Bit of History**

In the seventies, the CEO of Clare VEC, The Sisters of Mercy and other interested parties proposed that Spanish Point Secondary School would co-operate with Miltown-Malbay Vocational School, regarding the introduction of the Senior Cycle in the Vocational School.

This was rejected by the Department of Education on the grounds that it would be uneconomic and that it would adversely affect the numbers attending Senior Cycle classes at Ennistymon VS.

An appeal was made to the Department to reconsider its decision. In the meantime Mr. Sean Minogue, my father and school principle, and the management of the secondary school organised the course and the students were transported between the two schools each day by the teachers at their own expense.

*By Ger*

## **My Family**

I love my family. I have three sisters and no brothers. I have one niece but no nephews. One of my sisters works in Dunnes Stores my other sister works in a chip shop. Their names are Karen, Mary and Sandra.

My mother is a housekeeper. My father works in a factory. One of my sisters stays at home to mind my niece, she is two years old on Sunday

My niece is pretty. I love my niece.

*By Richard*

## Boiled Fruit Cake

### Ingredients:

3 mugs of flour  
1 mug of sugar  
2 mugs of mixed fruit  
½ lb of margarine  
3 eggs  
1 spoon of bread soda  
1 spoon of mixed spice or nutmeg  
1 bottle of Guinness

### Method:

Melt the margarine; add the sugar and Guinness into a saucepan. Bring slowly to the boil. Take off the heat and leave to cool for a half hour, stirring occasionally. Beat the eggs and sieve the flour. Add to the cooled mixture. Add the mixed fruit, spice and soda and mix them all together. Put into two lined loaf tins and bake for one hour in a moderate oven.

*This cake is made regularly by Margaret and is enjoyed by everyone*

## **My Favourite Recipe**

My favourite recipe is Rice Krispie Buns. They are very easy and quick to make and they taste lovely.

To make the buns you need:

1 bar of cooking chocolate  
250 – 300g of Krispies (½ box)

Break the chocolate into a bowl. Put some water in a saucepan over some heat. Place the bowl on the saucepan. When the chocolate has melted stir in the Krispies. Spoon this mixture into individual bun cases. Leave to set in the fridge for approximately one hour.

*By Teresa*

## **My Favourite Recipe**

My favourite recipe is Baked Alaska. Mary showed me how to make it. We have made it in our house a few times for dessert. It tastes absolutely gorgeous.

There is ice cream, swiss roll and whisked egg white in it.

Put one block of ice cream into a dish. Slice the swiss roll and place it on top of the ice cream. Whisk the three egg whites and add one tablespoon of castor sugar. Spread this around the top and sides of the swiss roll and ice cream. Bake in a hot oven for about five to ten minutes.

*By Nuala*

## **A Holiday I Never Had**

I have never been on a holiday. Some of my children are too young to bring on a long trip. I would love to go on a sun holiday to Gran Canaria. My son and his wife were there last year, for a week. They were on their honeymoon.

My friends were there last year as well. They had a brilliant time and they brought back a video. They had recorded some Irish bands that were playing out there. A lot of Irish people visit Gran Canaria. My wish is to visit this holiday resort some day.

*By John*

## **I Wish I Was Famous**

I wish I was famous, because it is something I've always wanted. I'd like to perform and I would like to travel. I would get to meet loads of new bands and even friends.

Nowadays, dreams or hopes seem to get knocked back a lot, whereas in the olden days people used to go for what they believed in. As for me, I'm never going to give up hope. Hopefully in a few years time I'll get my break....

*By Taz*

## **My Street**

My street is a very happy street because there are people moving all the time; cars parked up outside houses and people coming and going all the time to each others houses. Children play all the time on the green.

There are twenty-eight houses in my street and I live in number twenty-eight. I have a three-bedroom house. There are fifteen children in my street and they are all very nice children to talk to. I have a big nice dog and I took him in because he was a stray. There is a big line up in the back of my house and it was to be a playground, but it did not continue.

*By Michael*

## **My Best Friend**

My best friends name is Rosie. She lives in the John Paul Estate in Kilrush, Co. Clare.

The reason she is my best friend is because she has helped me through a lot of my problems in my life. I think if I didn't have her to help me, I would have been lost without her.

That is the reason why she is my best friend.

*By A.M.*

## Muriel

My name is Muriel. I have two sisters Pearl and Sian. They got all the beauty. Pearl is dark and beautiful with big brown eyes, long dark hair and a figure you would die for. She works as a medical secretary and has a very good social life. Sian is really lovely, like our own mother who is Welsh hence the name Sian. Her hair is blond and she has big blue eyes. She was always considered a bit frail. Both sisters had tons of boyfriends, along comes me a big boned girl, some say like our great aunt Biddy, a broth of a girl who never married, as my mother used to say, because she was too bossy and had a rough way with words, no man would put up with that.

When I came to sixteen, I wanted to socialise. Pearl at this time was engaged to Paul, the local counsellor's son and certainly did not want the ugly duckling hanging around.

I cried myself to sleep most nights. Sian had a lovely personality kind, gentle and generous and she would ask me out to discos and clubbing with Billy her boyfriend and herself. Once or twice I went but I was like the 'wallflower' of the eighties. Mother would say some man would be proud to make me his wife. I was great at cooking, cleaning and baking. Dad had a local farmer lined up for me. Dan was at least forty years old, thanks but no thanks! I was a treasure at home and on the farm, but I did not want to end up like Great-Aunt Biddy, I longed to be like Pearl or Sian. One day I got mad, I had a plan in mind, I decided to diet, let my strong wiry hair grow long and soften my features with make up.

Father kicked up a fuss, the son he never had (me) who helped on the farm baling hay, milking cows and Mum, who I had stayed at home to help with the housework, well no more. I was off to England. Tears and rows followed at home, but I stuck to my plan. I was off and soon I would be swanning home with money, poise and hopefully a husband. I went and after many false starts I found a job in a hospital helping nurses. After many months the matron told me I was good enough to train as a nurse. Things were looking up. Four years passed, the ugly duckling turned into a swan. I was Nurse Muriel Shaw. I met a visitor to the hospital, a widower and a kindly man. We married and had two boys.

So long Great-Aunt Biddy. Hello Muriel, I finally made it.

*By Marie*



## Writing a Book

I will never forget when I had to come up with a story for my first book. It was back in 1993. I had been coming to the Clare Reading & Writing Scheme for a few months when it was suggested that I write a book. I called it 'Murder in Belton'. First I had to come up with characters and a good story line. The hardest part of the book was handwriting it.

The second book was different because it was typed on the computer. The other difference between the books was that the second book was a collection of short stories about my life. I had to brainstorm first on where I would begin. Work, to me, was the obvious place to start, because it comes before hobbies. I enjoyed working on this book and I am looking forward to writing another book!

*By Jamie*

## The Special Olympics

Every Monday I go training in the Fairgreen for the Special Olympics. I will be taking part in two events, walking and the softball throw. For our training session we have to do some warm-up exercises and then we walk around the track three times. After we have had a short rest we do three more laps of the track. Then we come back to work on the bus.

Training for the softball throw has not started yet. I took part in a softball throw event for the Special Olympics in Waterford in 1999 and I won. I won a gold medal for this competition.

I hope everybody has a good time in Dublin. Maybe we will even bring home some medals.

*By Martina*

## Friendships

Our friendship goes back to when we were young lads. We all lived on the side of the road in wagons and tents. Our parents were first cousins. When we were young we played handball, skittles and bowling. We hunted for rabbits and hares and we did a lot of fishing.

As we grew older our friendship stayed the same. In our teens we started to get married and settle down. In time we started to have children.

Now that we are older, we work together and socialise together. Our forefathers were the best of friends and we carried on from them. Now our children are carrying on the tradition.

*By Michael, Tom and Patrick*

## My Hobby

I like painting. It is my hobby.

I like to paint pottery. I paint the designs on the pottery.

I have a picture of a lighthouse in my bedroom at home and I like to look at it.

*By Veronica*

## **The Places I Lived In**

I was born in Corofin and lived in Back Street which is now called Market Street.

I lived there with my mother and Grandmother until I was thirteen. We then moved to The Railway Crossing House, which I wrote about in *Simply Said* 2000.

I am now over fifty years of age and live in Ennis. This really suits me as I can walk to the shops, to Cloughleigh Church, to Cusack Park for the matches, and to the showground for the dog shows and to enjoy the visiting circuses.

Aren't I lucky to have such happy memories of the places I lived in and loved.

*By Sunny*

## **A Day Out in Clifden**

I went with my parents and my sister Martina on this outing.

The weather was beautiful, warm and sunny for most of the time. We walked around the town looking at the sights and all the shops. There was what looked like a giant grater in the square.

We did not rush home but enjoyed the scenery and had a lovely meal.

*By Breeda*

## People in Pain

I encounter many people who are in pain, mental pain and physical pain. People, men and women, boys and girls who have forgotten the freedom of choices in their life, choices that would make them happy, healthier human beings.

When did this happen? When and what happened to them that they lost their sense of control or choice for their own lives?

If I had the power and the ability I would love to help them. I would heal them by giving them the power to heal themselves, restoring the right to that boy or girl, man or woman to think it's OK to take care of herself, himself or themselves.

Life is a gift, we get one shot at it. It's for living, loving, laughing and even making mistakes. It's OK. So many need to hear those words, it's OK or tell themselves it's OK. It's OK not to be perfect. It's OK not to be always right. It's OK to think 'what can I do to please myself?'

Everyone is unique made from a 'once only' pattern. No one else is like you. You are special. You are you and you can celebrate who you are.

Do not give power to another to tell you how to think, how to love. Be true to yourself. Ask yourself are you OK with how someone treats you. Have the courage to say when you are not happy, not comfortable or not safe.

Find a place in life for yourself and live it in a way you wish. You have the right, the right to be you, go for it, good luck.

*By Carmel*

## Crossword

1				7			
				2		10	
			9			4	
3	8						
	5					6	

Across:

1. A stop sign is \_ \_ \_
2. The opposite of 'on'
3. A big animal
4. \_ \_ and out
5. A liquid measure
6. She without the 'S'

Down:

1. A red flower
8. To jump
9. The dish ran away with the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
10. To end
7. \_ \_ be it

*By Noel*

## A Day at the Beach

We drove to Kilkee beach and it was packed with tourists. The sand was a golden brown and it was hot. The water was a mixture of blue and green and it was lovely and warm.

There were people walking, running, and paddling on the beach and children were playing ball and making sand castles. Their laughter filled the air and a lot of people got sunburn. In the evening many people got big ice cream cones. When it got cooler a lot of people went home.

*By Liz*

## The Wedding

In three weeks time my niece is getting married.

There are great preparations in the house for the wedding. The house has been decorated from top to bottom. I'm tired of cleaning and decorating.

We all got new suits. My suit is black. There are a few alterations to be made. My sister Angela is doing them.

I have already bought the present. It is some pottery from the workshop where I work. It is a large bowl and is blue in colour.

*By Paul*

## **The Things I Like**

I like pussy cats,  
because their coats are furry and soft.

I like going shopping,  
for nice dresses and shoes.

I like cake,  
especially currant cake.

I like holidays,  
because I go swimming then.

I like music,  
especially music that I can dance to.

I like Teddy Bears,  
because they are cute and cuddly.

I like a lot of things,  
but most of all I like my friends.

*By Bernie*

## **My Granddaughter**

Three and a half years ago my daughter gave birth to my first grandchild. Her name is Chloe. I am so proud of her.

She is cute and playful but yet very intelligent. God bless her.

She brings joy and happiness to us all.

*By Mary*

## My Trip to London

I went to London on Holy Thursday. We stayed for five days. We stayed with my sister Connie. She works in London.

Connie and I went shopping and I bought a key ring for myself, a new diary and a pair of pyjamas. I also got a new bracelet and a pink T-shirt for the summer. My Mum bought a new jumper and a teapot stand.

It was the first time I had been on an airplane. I thought it was grand. I got a diet coke to drink.

I went dancing with my sister and my Mum. It was fun and we came home after 10.30 pm at night. The next day we went to an activity club and we got our faces painted. We did colouring and watched cartoons on a big TV screen.

I like coming to the Brothers of Charity because we do sewing, reading and writing. I like colouring. I miss my friend Carmel who has left now but Kala helped me write a letter to her. I might be getting a job after the summer, maybe in a workshop.

*By Ann-Marie*



## **Our Advocacy Group**

I work in Kilrush at the Brothers of Charity. I do pottery and computers.

I am also involved in an advocacy group. This is for speaking out for ourselves and for others and getting things done. It is important for people with disabilities to be able to speak up for themselves.

We also do things like planning outings and social clubs. Later this week we are going to the local radio studio in Kilkee with the advocacy group to do an interview. There are four of us going Kathleen, Orla, Mary and I. It will be interesting.

*By Maureen*

## **The Red Devils**

My favourite soccer team is Manchester United. They are the best team in the world.

They are the champions of the Premier league and they are very good.

My favourite players are David Beckham and Roy Keane. Their manager is called Alex Ferguson.

*By Beckham*

## Travellers Times and Culture

I will always remember my father telling me about his upbringing during the 40's and 50's.

When he was young, he'd have an awful job minding horses for his uncles. Times were very poor then and he often had to ask farmers for work to keep the family fed. There was no dole at the time, so they got work from farmers digging trenches and cutting hedges etc. He had to move with the work and if there was no work they had to beg for food and work to feed the family.

Travellers lived in large groups back then and their skills as tinsmiths were in demand. The farmers kept the Travellers in work mending buckets and banding cartwheels. Both the farmers and travellers needed one another back then. Plastic buckets and basins put an end to all that.

Travellers seldom went to school because they were always on the move. Very few could read or write, so the local farmer's wife or priest read or wrote letters for them. Children usually went to school for a few weeks before Confirmation and Communion to prepare for the sacraments. Thankfully, times have changed for the better.

Travellers had their own pastimes. These were the days before television. They played skittles with six twelve-inch sticks standing straight in a circle. They made iron bars out of old threshing machines for holding kettles and pots over the fire. They used these bars for playing horseshoes and for throwing like a javelin. Marbles and cards were also popular games. Quoits, which resembled bowls, was played with round stones instead of balls. Hunting and snaring rabbits was done for sport and it also provided food. Horse riding, which the Travellers called 'jockeying', was popular in the evenings.

Back in my father's time, a family of Travellers would have a food box each known as a 'grub box'. The family's food was kept in this. If anyone was short of food they could help themselves from their neighbours box. In this way food was always shared around.

Travellers lived in makeshift camps made out of hazel sticks covered with canvas and they used straw for bedding. These were built on the side of the road and if they were beside a drain or river they would flood if it rained. They could have twelve children in one of these camps and when it flooded in the middle of the night, the family would have to move. In the winter, shelter from the wind would have to be

found or the camp would blow away and the family would be homeless. It was very hard, especially on the children. All the members of this literacy group lived like this at one time.

If a person who owned a caravan died, that caravan would be burned with all the person's possessions in it. Travelling people believed that by doing this the dead person's soul would rest in peace. If the family couldn't afford to replace the caravan or to pay for the funeral, other Travelling people would help them out. Traditions around death are very important to the Travellers and have changed very little over the years.

*By Martin, Paddy, Thomas, John, Jimmy and Bernie*

## Hurling

Hurling is my favourite sport. My brother plays for the Clare Senior Team. Sometimes I have a puck-around with him.

He joined the Clare Team in 1996. That year, they were beaten by Limerick in the Munster semi-final. Then in 1997, they won the All-Ireland, beating Tipperary. The match was played in Croke Park. I went to the match with my parents and my sister. He played very well, and he even scored a point.

Last Sunday they beat Kilkenny in the league semi-final. The match was played in Thurles and I was there. It was a good match but unfortunately it rained from start to finish.

Now I am looking forward to the league final against Tipperary which will be played next Sunday in Limerick. Hopefully the weather will be better that day.

*By Cathal*

## My Trip to Paris

My trip to Paris was a good trip, but I lost my bag. It was left in Shannon at the airport and it took two days for it to come to Paris. They gave me some clothes at the airport in Paris.

Paris was a really nice place and it is a romantic place. The Eiffel Tower was the best place we went to but Euro Disney was an even better place to visit.

The days were beautiful and the nights were good because we were running up and down the hall into each other's rooms at the hotel. The hotel was not really nice because it was like a jail; there were bars on the doors and windows. But we had some good craic.

The food looked all right but we didn't have any of it. We went to the shop every morning and got a bottle of coke and maybe something to eat. We took a boat around Paris and it was really nice. At first I didn't really want to go on the boat but then I enjoyed it.

Paris is a really nice place and I would go back again if I could.

*By Gerdette*

## Song

My favourite song is 'Will You Go Lassie Go'. I have the song on cassette at home and I listen to it everyday.

*By Jude*

## Computer Course

I have just finished an NCVA computer course. I went to classes every Monday night for five months. The classes lasted for two hours.

I decided to do the course because I wanted to learn a little more about computers. After all, they are everywhere these days. Also, I was interested in the Internet.

On the course, I learned how to use three different programmes, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher and Microsoft Excel. At the end of the course we had an exam. For it, we had to use the three programmes and print out a letter, a menu, a greeting card, a calendar and a sample accounts ledger.

The whole class passed the exam and we were all delighted. I am glad that I did the course as I can now use a computer for word processing, creating and designing cards, posters, calendars and also for keeping accounts. Also, it was a great opportunity to meet new people.

*By Martin*

## Losing My Temper

I have two cars. They are broken.

I hit my car in a temper. I don't know what to do with my cars. I will have to dump them.

I hit my Mum's plastic chair and I cursed at the chair, because it was in the way.

*By Alfie*

## **Féile 2000**

Last year my local team, Kilmurray Ibrickan Boys U14, represented Clare in Dublin at the football Féile. They succeeded in winning out the competition.

I had three relations on the team, Derek, Martin and Noel. Everyone in the parish came out to give a hero's welcome home to the team on their return. There were bonfires, flags and bunting galore, and a stage was set up in Quilty just for the occasion.

It was a great honour for the U14 boys and their management team, to bring an All-Ireland title to Clare.

*By John*

## **Saturday**

I think the best day of the week is Saturday, because I can do what I like. I like to go down town with my mates. We go on our bikes if one of us hasn't got a puncture.

First we get some sweets and then we have a look around the shops. Then we just hang around.

*By Patrick*

## A Riddle and Joke

### Riddle

The man that made it never used it.  
The man that used it never saw it.

What is it? *To find out the answer, put the letters below in the right order*

O F F I N C

### Joke

In the doctor's surgery.

Invisible man: "I need to see you, doctor."

Doctor: "Sorry, I can't see you at the moment."

*By David*

## My Lovely Rose of Clare

My favourite song is 'My Lovely Rose of Clare'. I like it because I enjoy listening to the tune of it. I remember hearing this song on the radio when I was younger. I think the song is sweet. The song was released in 1984 by Micko Ball.

*By Elizabeth*

## Things I Would Like to Change

If I could change three things in this world it would be to have good health, because I can't work.

The traffic is too heavy, it's impossible to cross the road. It will be no harm when the bypass comes.

I would like if appointments were made to be kept, because I have to travel forty-two miles to Galway.

I don't like folk music at Mass. It isn't suitable for church. I like the hymns. Organ music is suitable. I think instruments like the tambourine, mandolin, guitar, tin whistle, flute and violin are not suited for Mass. The organ is only used a few times a year. Nigel Bridge is a very good organist. He plays at Easter and Christmas. Everyone listens to him playing the hymns. I would like to hear more organ music in the church. At one time it was all organ music at Mass. Things have changed in the last six to seven years. I would prefer the organ, choir and hymns.

*By Frank*



## If Time Would Stand Still

Time in a child's eye is so long, two minutes are like two hours and for an adult two hours is not long enough.

As an adult you are always looking at the clock. You must get so many things done by a certain time.

I remember as a child time meant nothing. The day was my own.

The school holidays would come around and Mum and Dad would be off work for two weeks. We would go away for the second week.

The first week of the holidays would seem like a lifetime, waiting and asking every day "Is today the day we are going away to see Granny and Grandad." "No, only four more days to go, stop asking." Mum would reply, as she would be getting the things ready for the holiday.

As a teenager I started to wish my life away. On my twelfth birthday I wanted to be sixteen and when my sixteenth birthday finally came around I wanted to be twenty-one. Now as an adult, I see things differently. There are never enough hours in a day. If only time would stand still.

*By Kitty*

## **My Life**

My name is Janice and I am English born. I have been living here for the past twenty-five years.

I have two children. One is thirty years old and is married in America, the other one is twenty-seven, and living at home now and then. My husband is called Matt.

My daughter got married last September the 28<sup>th</sup>. It was raining when she went to the church, but when she came out of the church the sun was shining, thank God. We had a lovely day.

I go to the Day Centre five days a week. Carmel is the nurse there. At the Day Centre I am learning computers. I like typing because I worked in an office before I got married.

*By Janice*

## **Snooker**

Ray Riordan won the Top Championship in 1982 and 1983.

Denis Taylor won in 1985. Nowadays Denis does the reporting on the TV

You always had fun and good craic watching them on the telly. The matches have no craic now, it is very serious. I miss the old days.

*By David*

## Dying Environment

The environment has definitely changed over the last thirty years.

Six years ago I fished a river called Kilnaboy. I went there on a warm evening about half-past seven. I often caught four or five trout with a fly or worms. Those days have changed, today the farmers don't realise what they are doing to the environment.

The farmers are buying too many fertilisers from big companies. They are spreading too much nitrates, phosphates and slurry in one area. These chemicals seep through the clay and sand into the lakes and rivers poisoning the water, resulting in the growth of algae bloom. This algae bloom goes blue, it lets off gases that kill all plant and fish life. This affects all people who live in the area around Corofin. If this continues to happen to all of our lakes and rivers, no one will be able to drink the water or fish the lakes.

The farmers are butchering too many young trees and hedgerows. That means there is hardly any bird life at all. The trees help to keep the air non-toxic keeping the air pure for us to breathe. They stop soil erosion and support insect life for the birds to live on.

So without a healthy environment say good-bye to humanity.

*By Tom*

## Summertime

I have three girls. I love the summer, because they can play all day and we can walk every day. We walk in the woods and have a picnic and we go to Cappa with Pap and Mam. Mary, my daughter cycles out and I bring drinks, biscuits and snacks.

The last time we were there we met our aunt and cousins and they played out all day. They were on the slides and bars and went into the water. They collected shells and later at home they painted them all different colours.

Sadly, all three of my children have asthma and are allergic to the grass and heat. I have to take their asthma pump with me in case I need it.

*By Jacinta*

## Lourdes

Last June I was in Lourdes.

It was my second visit there.

I had a lovely time.

The nicest part of my visit was the candle light procession.

We stayed in a beautiful hotel.

I would love to go again soon.

*By Anne*

## My Home

I go to my home every two to three weeks. I stay for two nights. My husband is on his own now. My daughter is married in Shannon and has three children.

I do some housework when I go home. I tidy the house. I usually change the beds and put on a wash. I cook the dinner and make brown bread. I always enjoy my visit home and look forward to going again.

I enjoy reading Ireland's Own and the songs are my favourite. Here is one for you.

### The Black Velvet Band

Her eyes they shone like diamonds  
You'd think she was queen of the land  
With her hair flung over her shoulder  
Tied up with a black velvet band

As I went walking down Broadway  
Not intending to stay very long  
I met with this frolicsome damsel  
As she came tripping along

A watch she took out of her pocket  
And slipped it right into my hand  
On the very first day that I met her  
Bad luck to her black velvet band

'Fore judge and jury next morning  
Both of us did appear  
A gentleman claimed his jewellery  
And the case against us was clear

Seven long years transportation  
Right on down to Van Dieman's land  
Far away from my friends and companions  
Far away from the black velvet band

*By Breda*

## Book Review

*'Maggie's Story', by Sheila Flanagan*

Maggie is over forty. She feels that all the romance is gone out of her marriage. Her husband's name is Dan. They have two children. He thinks he is very good to her.

Maggie has a job that she loves and it also gives her extra money to buy things for herself. One day she interviewed a man. His name was Chris Casey. He was also in his forties. She liked him right away.

One wet day when she was carrying her computer she met Chris Casey again. He offered her a lift and she said yes. They decided to take the day off and go to the beach and then a movie.

When she got home she was feeling guilty about going off for the day. Her family started to notice that she was in a bad mood all the time. They got together and bought her a car and a course of driving lessons. She realised how lucky she was to have a family that cared so much about her.

I would give this book ten-out-of-ten. I really enjoyed the story and it had a happy ending.

*By Adrienne*

## **Why Blondes Have More Fun**

Blondes are supposed to be stupid, but they are not.

Blondes get blokes hitting on them old and young. Blokes think blondes are easy so they chance their arm.

You go out and if you are blonde you have blokes hitting on you left, right and centre. They could be dirty old men or nice looking young men!!

They keep buying you drinks and then they ask if they can walk you home and if you like them you say yes - if they are old you go running!!

*By Priscilla*

## **Motorbikes**

I like motorbikes because they are good fun for riding on. My favourite kind of bike is the CTR 600, which is made by Suzuki. This is a big bike for racing speedway. I would like to drive all the racing bikes.

My friend has a scrambler, the colour is green and his name is Francis. He goes scrambling in his father's field.

*By Michael*

## A Ghost Story

It was one of my friend's birthdays, so my other friends and I decided to have a party for her. We met at a café in town to make plans. After the plans had been made we organised a place to have the party, it was an abandoned old house.

So the night had come and we were very excited about this party. I went and called for my friends and off we went. When we had got to the house there was a lot more there than I had thought. When I went into the house it was very creepy, but we carried on with the party.

After a while I decided to go upstairs to see what the rest of the house was like. When I was upstairs I felt a cold breeze come over me. When I looked around I thought that there was a person standing by the wall - maybe it was one of my friends playing a trick on me, perhaps. But I looked closely; it seemed to be a ghost!

When I asked my friends if they had been upstairs, they said no. I told them what I had seen and so we went upstairs to see and to our surprise there was the ghost, still standing by the wall with a pipe in its mouth!

My friends and I ran down the stairs and ran all the way home and we never put a foot inside that old house again!

*By Elizabeth*



## **VTOS**

I started on the VTOS course in September. I like attending VTOS.

The subjects I do are work experience, art and crafts, computers, communications and stained glass. The subject I like the best is stained glass because it is interesting and you get to know how to make things with special glass. I will be attending VTOS for two years.

After VTOS I would like to get a job as a kitchen assistant in a hotel. I have just finished a course at the Kilkee Bay Hotel with a Certificate in Food Service. I enjoyed it very much and I learned a lot from the course.

I am working in the Kilkee Bay Hotel at the weekends.

*By Bernadette*

## **My Favourite Pop Group**

My favourite pop group is Westlife. They are an Irish band. Their names are Bryan, Mark, Kian, Shane and Nicky. They have released lots of CDs. 'My Love', 'I Have a Dream', 'What Makes a Man' and 'Uptown Girl' are some of their best songs.

I have four of their CDs at home. 'Coast to Coast' is my favourite, because it has some really good songs on it. I listen to their CDs everyday at home.

*By Desmond*

## Christmas

Christmas is a time of the year that I enjoy very much. Everyone says that it is really a time for children, a time for Santa Claus, a time for presents. Even though I like Christmas very much, there is far too much advertising on radio and on television and there is far too much commercialism.

I hope to spend a nice quiet Christmas with my Dad in our new house on the Kilrush Road in Ennis. When Christmas time comes we will all send cards and greetings to one another. People usually cook a turkey or a goose for dinner on Christmas Day. I really like the smell of the Christmas dinner. The desserts are so good with plum pudding and custard and ice cream.

Christmas is a great time for giving gifts and Christmas good wishes. It is also a time for parties and celebrations.

My favourite dish at Christmas is shepherds pie with different vegetables and with mash and chips. I also like and enjoy Christmas crackers and I like to read the jokes on the back of the crackers.

Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*By Carl*

## Youthreach

I have been attending Youthreach for nearly a year. I prefer it a lot more than school. I like most of the subjects.

We work about six hours a day and we do art, music, English, maths, childcare, literacy, personal effectiveness and health education. The one I like the best is health education because I find it very interesting.

Every two years we get to go on holiday, last time they went to Paris.

*By Carmel*

## **Buying a Wedding Outfit**

I needed to buy new clothes for a family wedding, so my father drove my mother and I to Limerick where there are plenty of shops.

We went to Dooradoyle shopping centre. I was excited because I had never bought an outfit for a wedding before. We went into Shaws and we were looking around, but I didn't like anything there.

We decided to go next door to J.R.'s. They had a very good selection there. My mother picked out a lilac suit for me but I didn't like it very much. The girl came over then to help us out. She was very nice. She brought me a blue suit first, but I didn't like that one very much either. I tried on a few more things and in the end picked out a grey trouser suit with blue pinstripes. We bought a blue top to match. A few days later we went to Galway and got a scarf and bag there. I got the shoes to go with the outfit here in Ennis and they are very nice.

We had a good time shopping. The wedding is coming up next weekend and I hope the day will be fine.

*By Helen*

## **President's Visit**

Mary McAleese came to the factory at 11 am on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April.

She went to the machines and the casting area.

She went to the fettling and the glazing area.

The President spoke to me, "How are you Charlie." She gave a speech and left at 11.45 am.

*By Charlie*

## Local Myths and Legends

There is a myth in my parish very similar to the myth of the Loch Ness Monster in Scotland.

There is supposed to be a Monster in the local lake that comes out once every seven years at night so that it won't be noticed by the locals. People in my local parish believed that every time the Monster came up out of the lake, it devoured many cattle, sheep and horses in the parish. If the Monster came up on any other occasion, they themselves might be added to the Monster's menu. In my grandfather's time the people were terrified of the horrific Monster. In recent years, the myth has almost been forgotten.

A certain house in my parish is reputed to be haunted by the ghosts of people who were hung during the Penal Times in Ireland. The ghosts appear on a Tuesday night in the upstairs window, when the moon is full. The older people believe that they are coming back for something they left behind.

*By Marley*

## My Visit to the Circus

On Saturday afternoon, our houseparent took us to the circus in Limerick. There were lots of animals in the circus ponies, tigers, giraffes and elephants.

The Circus Master showed us some tricks with the elephants and the tigers. There were three or four clowns running around the audience spraying them with water guns. Luckily, none of us got wet.

We all enjoyed the circus and we hope to go again soon.

*By Ann*

## **My Darling Mary**

On those glorious summer sunny days I can still see you lying on your lounge all wired up listening to your walkman, your can of coke by your side and maybe making a request for a 'coney ice' and we having a little argument about putting on some sunscreen. Every now and then I might suggest you come indoors for a little spell, all to no avail of course, you adored the summer and loved the sunshine even though you were an autumn baby.

My God Mary, we miss you so much. The heart ache will never leave.

*By Teresa*

## **My Nice Job**

I work in the Lady Gregory Hotel in Gort. I go to work every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

My job is barman and I have to stack the bottles into the crates. I bring in the barrels on the trolley into the cold room. It is my job to bring out the rubbish and I help to set up the function room for weddings and dances. I like washing the floors, but I don't like doing the hoovering. Sometimes I strip the beds and bring up the linen. In the summer time I help put out the cases on the bus for the guests.

Since the start of the Foot and Mouth disease, I have been in charge of mixing the disinfectant and pouring it onto the mats at the hotel.

I like my job because the people are nice to work with and the hotel is lovely. I really like getting paid every Friday. I get to meet people from England, America, Wales and lots of other countries.

*By Kieran*

## Woodworkers Group

We are seven men working together in St. Joseph's Training Centre. Our week in St. Joseph's is twenty-four hours long. We started in September 2000. We have known each other all our lives. Since we've been there we have been doing woodwork, maths, décor painting, literacy classes and we passed our NCVA in computers.

I loved doing the woodwork class, because I am working with my hands. We have made plant holders, big and small corner units, bird boxes and a baby chair. The instructor is very good, he helps us as much as he can. His name is Danny. I have also learned that it is up to yourself if you want to learn.

Martin

I enjoy my pastimes outside of the centre. Three or four of us might go to Galway City once or twice a week to play pool. In the summertime, I would play soccer in the Fairgreen. We would play seven a side. Now and again I would go to bingo in Clarecastle.

Michael

I am very interested in woodwork, computers, maths and literacy. All the staff in the centre are very nice. The courses I am doing are helping me to help my children with their homework. I am really looking forward to learning how to swim as part of our learning in the centre.

Peter

When I started working in the workshop I hadn't much confidence in myself. I started doing woodwork, literacy and computers. I now find myself buying the newspaper now and again, which is something I would never have done before starting in the centre. I find myself more settled now.

John

I started working in the centre later than the other lads. Before that I had searched a lot of places for work, but could not get any. I come from Galway, on the Headford Road. My sister-in-law is getting married on the 28<sup>th</sup> May. I am very happy that she had no difficulty getting her wedding sorted, like some of the travelling people.

Pat (Smurf)

Since I started in St. Joseph's, my literacy skills have improved. I find we give great support to one another at the centre. I love music and singing. Playing the guitar at social events gives me great pleasure.

Sometimes I do D.J. work in the pubs and nightclubs. In the future I could see myself doing tiling and general home decorating.

Tom

Back in March I decided I had to lose weight. I had put a lot of weight on over the winter months. I go to the gym twice a week for two to three hours at a time. Since the new swimming pool has opened I go there twice a week as well. So far I have lost a stone and a half, but I have a half stone to go. I feel a lot healthier.

Paddy

*By Martin, Michael, Peter, John, Pat (Smurf), Tom and Paddy*

## **The Crèche**

I love taking my children to the crèche every day at Glebe House. My children are fifteen months and three years old and they enjoy the crèche. They play games and paint pictures and they learn songs and poems and play instruments.

Every Thursday, I go to the crèche myself, for work experience. I help the children by reading to them and playing games with them. I love going to the crèche because it's great to see the children happy. I love watching them playing their games and having fun.

I have learnt a lot from going to the crèche and I feel confident about looking after my children. I would like to be a child-care worker some day and I would love to do a course that would help me do this. I love children and looking after them. I love my own children and want to see them growing up and being happy.

*By Linda*

## **A Trip to Kerry**

I went to the Ring of Kerry to stay in the Castleross Hotel. I looked at the Kingdom of Kerry on the way. I went swimming in the leisure centre every evening before going out for a meal. I sat up on a horse trap for a spin. I spent two nights in Killarney. There were lovely walks around Killarney town.

It was a lovely drive to Kenmare. I enjoyed the drive on the narrow road to Dingle Bay. I took a drive to Tralee town and saw the Rose of Tralee. It was lovely to see the boats being built and the yachts being made. I looked at the cars in the town of Tralee.

I took a drive to Listowel town, to have a meal in a restaurant. I went swimming in the sea and had a good time on the beach.

I enjoyed the drive to Ballybunion too.

*By Danny*

## **My Life**

I like country music. I have a good lot of friends.

I am working in the factory for twenty-six years. I enjoy doing my work. I work very hard for my money.

My two favourite days of the week are Thursday, payday and Friday, the start of the weekend.

*By Christy*



## African Music

African music is the music of Africans living south of the Sahara Desert, a rich musical tradition of more than fifty nations, each with its own history and mixture of culture and language.

Although diverse, African music has certain distinctive traits. One is the use of repetition, that is, a repeated pattern used as a basis for the instruments.

One of the people who made African music popular was the American folk singer, Paul Simon. When he recorded his famous album 'Gracelands' he used as a backing group 'Ladysmith Black Mombasa'. They have since gone on to become famous performing all over the world. They have also done some backing on TV advertisements.

Another thing that made African music popular was the imprisonment and later the release of Nelson Mandela. Many songs have been written about him, especially the song sung by Dolores Keane 'Mandela Will Be Free'.

Drums play a big part in African music. In southern Africa herders use flutes and other instruments to help control the movement of cattle.

The most influential style of popular music within Africa is Congolese guitar band music. The most common musical instruments used in African music are drums, guitar, bass, saxophone, accordion and organ.

*By Enda*

## **Training for the Special Olympics**

Every Monday, we have training for the Special Olympics. We get a lift up to the Fairgreen on the bus. There are three of us training together, Teresa, Martina and myself. We are training for the 2000 metre race. The Olympics are being held in Dublin in 2003.

We start our training session with some warm-up exercises. We do press-ups and stretch the muscles in our legs. Then we jog around the track three times. After this we run as fast as we can around the track. We do some more exercises to cool down before we go back to work.

*By Gerard*

## **My Visit to the Hairdressers**

Every Saturday I go to the hairdressers.

Mary is the name of my hairdresser. She washes my hair first and then she cuts it. When Mary has my hair cut another girl in the salon blow-dries it for me.

Before leaving I pay Mary for doing my hair. Then I go around the town and do some shopping.

*By Bridget*

## **My Mother**

I was two years old when I was adopted. This happened fifty years ago, and times were very different and difficult then. I was in a home, an orphanage, in Co. Clare. It was known as the County Home and it had a mixture of elderly people and young children. There were many children in the home.

My parents used to visit regularly, as my father used to do some business there. While on these visits, my mother met the children in the home and got very friendly and fond of us. She used to bring sweets, this was a big treat back in those days.

My mother had three boys of her own and was told by the doctors that she could have no more children. On her visits to the orphanage she became very friendly with a little girl. They decided they would try and adopt this little girl but when they went to the orphanage, the little girl was already destined to be adopted by an American couple. This did not put my mother off, she really wanted to adopt, especially a girl as she had three boys.

The home suggested me and my parents met me. It was decided I would come and live with them. I arrived at my new home by ambulance. My mother said I was a right pet and was very insecure in the beginning. I would never let her out of my sight, especially at night.

I had a very happy childhood, full of love and fun, playing with my brothers and my sister, which my mother had a few years after me.

*By Phillis*

## **My Trip to Salthill**

Last summer, one Monday I went on a summer camp with a few friends and staff. We travelled by bus to Galway and changed to another bus for Salthill.

We stayed in a B&B where we arranged to meet for lunch. Later that evening we went to the bumpers and other amusements. That night we returned to the B&B, got dressed up and went out for a few drinks.

The next day was spent shopping in the city. We went out for dinner later and ended the day with a few rounds of bingo.

On Wednesday we met up with another group after breakfast and we all travelled by boat to the Aran Islands. Some of my friends hired bicycles, whereas I went on a horse and pony trap tour of the island. We had a great day and a lovely crossing back to Galway that evening.

We returned home the next day after a very enjoyable holiday.

*By Mairead*

## **The Library**

I like reading books.

My favourite books are about animals. Cats are my favourite animals.

I get my books in the library. I like taking out books every week.

In the library there are lots of books on the shelves. There are computers in the library too.

I would like if they got some nice new books in the library soon.

*By Mary*

## My Church

I go to Galway every Sunday, to a Born Again Christian Church called the Abundant Life Christian Centre.

Let me go back to the beginning. Friends of mine introduced me to the church many years ago. I wasn't that keen on it at first but I was looking for something to put meaning in my life at the time. I went along not expecting anything very much and I ended up giving my life to God. It turned out to be the greatest thing I ever did.

Pastor Kevin and his wife Heather, are the pastors of our group. They came over from the States about four years ago to lead the group. God led them here to Ireland. They are the best thing to have happened to me in the last four years. Pastors Kevin and Heather are affectionate and God-loving people.

About one hundred and twenty people attend the weekly meetings and the numbers are getting bigger all the time. The mother Church of the Abundant Life Christian Centre is in Texas and I have been over there several times. I go to their annual meeting in November. Huge crowds attend and people's illnesses are healed.

There is a great warmth and welcome at the services in Galway. We sing and pray our love for God. Pastor Kevin gives a talk and afterwards we have a chat and a cup of tea.

*By Connie*

## Going to Lourdes

We'll be going out at the end of June. We will go on the aeroplane from Shannon Airport. We will stay at the hospital over in Lourdes.

Every morning we will go to Mass at the Grotto, and have confessions. Five o'clock is the time to get up for breakfast. It's very early, but I don't mind.

One part of Lourdes is going for a bath in the cold water. You would be perished after it!

The last time I was there, I got my photo taken with Mary down beside the river.

I'm really looking forward to my holiday in Lourdes.

*By Brendan*

## My Family Reunion

My family had a reunion on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2000 in the Auburn Lodge. It was the first time for me to meet my cousins from America. Some were older and some were younger than me.

We all met in the hotel at 5.00 pm. First we met each other and talked and then we had a drink. At 6.00 pm we went into the restaurant for dinner. We had turkey and ham. We had trifle for dessert.

That evening we had a band playing named Country Fever. The band was over at 12.30 am and then there was a disco. The disco was over at 3.00 am, then some of us went to the bar and talked. We did not get home until 5.15 am. I had a nice time.

*By Joan*

## Rhymes for all Occasions

You were standing on the balcony,  
With a rose between your teeth.  
You threw me down the rose,  
I threw back your teeth!

If I was a head of cabbage,  
I'd split myself in two.  
The leaves I'd give to others  
And the heart I'd give to you.

I sent a message to God above  
To send me someone I would love,  
He picked you from all the rest,  
Because He knew I'd love you the best!

If I'm in heaven and you're not there,  
I'll carve your name upon the golden chair,  
For all the Angels there to see,  
That you're the only one for me!

These are rhymes that I have chosen

*By Mary*

## Discrimination

My friends and I walked into a bar and I called for a drink. The bar tender came up and said he couldn't serve us.

The only reason I can see for this is that we are Travelling people. The bar was full at that time, and I felt very embarrassed.

My wish for the future is that we won't be discriminated against.

*By David*

## My Holidays

Last week I went on my holidays to Galway. Five of us went on the bus with our houseparent. We stayed in a hotel beside the sea. We ate in the hotel most nights. One night we went out to another hotel for our dinner. I had chicken, potatoes and vegetables. For dessert I had ice cream. We all had a great night. During the day we went for a drive around Connemara. We went for a walk every evening before dinner. We went shopping in Galway city and I bought a T-shirt and a music cassette.

I hope to go back to Galway on my holidays again soon.

*By Martina*



## Littered Memories

There ...under the olive tree.  
Halema sat and gathered her littered memories.  
She picked some little stones from the ground.

*She threw one:*

"I can hear my mother," said Halema, "she is saying that ...Now you will become a mother, you will know how we worry when children are growing up." (She smiled).

*She threw the Second Stone:*

"I have got five children, four sons and a daughter...  
We are very happy...Over night...They killed my husband."  
(She cried).

*She threw the Third Stone:*

"They came...They asked about my youngest son...  
He had escaped, but they took my other two sons from me.  
I asked about them, but nobody answered me."

*She threw the Fourth Stone:*

"They tell me that my oldest son was killed in prison...I do not know  
what happened to my other son...The third went to fight them.  
The youngest, he emigrated."

*She threw the Fifth Stone:*

Her daughter came and sat behind her.  
The mother said, "Karema...You will become a mother and you will  
know how we worry when you and your brothers are growing up."  
Karema said "Ooh Mam...If you could change your life, what would  
you change?"  
She said "Nothing...I loved my life...my memories...I would not like to  
change it...Maybe, one day, we will all be together again."

*She threw all the Stones and clapped her hands.*

*By Sallahedin*

## **My Wish for You**

May you have enough happiness  
to keep you sweet,  
  
trials to keep you strong,  
  
sorrow to keep you human,  
  
hope to keep you happy,  
  
failure to keep you humble,  
  
success to keep you eager,  
  
friends to give you comfort,  
  
wealth to meet your needs,  
  
enthusiasm to look forward,  
  
faith to banish depression,  
  
and determination to make each day  
better than yesterday.

*By Susan*



