



**OFFICIAL OPENING
OF
THE NEW SCHOOL FACILITIES
AT
ST. JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL
2ND OCTOBER, 2015**



**Guest of Honour performing the
Official Opening:**

**Mr Gerry Bennett,
CEO Edmund Rice Schools Trust**

Welcome message from school Principal Mr David Madden.

On behalf of the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Secondary School I would like to sincerely welcome you to the Official Opening of our new school facilities. Today is a momentous occasion in the 157 year history of the school and the school community appreciates your presence in joining in our celebration of the occasion of the Official Opening. Formerly a Christian Brothers School we are now a member school of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust, ERST. We are delighted to welcome Mr Gerry Bennett, CEO of ERST, to perform the Opening.



The existing school building and grounds have undergone major refurbishment over the past 18 months together with the construction of the single storey and two storey extension. The school continued to operate during the 18 months construction stage and credit is due to both the entire staff of St. Joseph's and the main building contractor JJ Rhatigan for ensuring that the construction work had a minimum impact of the education of our students.

The refurbishment work included the demolition of the school offices, corrections room, demonstration room, the stage / classroom 6 and the dressing rooms in the PE hall. This allowed for the construction of modern and spacious offices, a larger student canteen, additional art room, PE hall and staff room.

The new building accommodates four practical workshops, two computer rooms, three science labs, library, additional classrooms and pastoral care offices. The additional sporting facilities now include a mini gym, new dressing rooms, basketball courts and an all-weather pitch.

Current enrolment is 680 students and the increased accommodation increases capacity to 900 students. The new accommodation now allows us to now offer Construction Studies and Technology at Leaving Certificate level.

The Christian Brothers in Drogheda
and the history of St. Joseph's Secondary School
1858— 2015

In **1830**, Most Reverend Doctor Curtis, Archbishop of Armagh, petitioned Brother Edmund Ignatius Rice to send a community of Brothers to Drogheda. Through lack of personnel, the Founder was forced to delay and the school was not opened until **1858**. In September **1857**, at the request of the Primate, Most Reverend Doctor Dixon, the Superior General of the Congregation, Br. M.P. Riordan, agreed to open a school in Drogheda.

Brother Vincent Cronin, who had experience in establishing schools, was appointed Director and with Brothers John Norris, Thomas Leahy and Francis Connolly. They came to the town in September **1857** and they lived initially in No. 9 Free School Lane, opposite the Franciscan Friary. They took over a school previously run by Patrician Brothers at West Gate, in November and on the 18th January **1858** they opened the first Christian

Brothers' School in Drogheda. On the opening day many seeking admission had to be refused due to lack of accommodation.

The impossibility of expansion at West Gate led the brothers to search for more suitable premises. The parochial clergy, inspired by Fr.



Hanratty, made a collection which realised £320 to purchase a site at Sunday's Gate then known as "The Orchard". A house in Church Lane went with the property and it became the community residence for nine years. The foundation stone of a two-roomed school at the new site was laid by Patrick Ternan, Mayor of Drogheda, on 1st March **1859**. The new classrooms were opened to pupils on 25th July. Seven years later, in July **1866**, the school at Sunday's Gate was stripped of its roof and a second storey was raised to accommodate four additional classrooms at a cost of £300. Most Rev. Dr. Dixon donated £115, £100 came from a bequest of Dr. Gernon, and the remainder was collected from the townspeople.

While the schools were now adequate, the Brothers' residence in Church Lane most certainly was not. The accommodation it afforded five Brothers was unsuitable for their requirements as religious and it had become so dilapidated that it was not worth renovating. Showing a deep faith in God's Providence and a confidence in the power of St. Joseph, the virtually penniless Br.



Francis Larkin wrote to the Primate, Most Rev. Dr. Kieran, inviting him to lay the foundation stone of a new monastery on March 19th, the Feast of St. Joseph. His Grace replied by return of post, that he would be most happy to do so. At the conclusion of the ceremonies a subscription list was

opened and it realised a very substantial £600. The architect was G.A. Ashlin, Dublin and the contractor, Thomas Connolly, Drogheda, completed the building in one year. The first mass was celebrated in it on the Feast of St. Joseph, **1868**. The total cost was just over £3,000 but collections in the town and surrounding area as well as a Bazaar and Prize Draw cleared the debt in eighteen months, surely a tribute to the generosity of the people of Drogheda.

Drogheda was one of the first Christian Brothers' Schools in Ireland to have its own sports ground. In May, **1927**, Br. T.A. O'Mahony purchased the Showgrounds in Windmill Lane. As the Showgrounds were rather narrow for games under G.A.A. Rules, Br. O'Mahony acquired an adjoining strip of land in September, **1928**.

The grounds served their purpose well and were in constant use until taken over by the Fuel Board for the storage of turf during the World War 2 Emergency. In **1925**, our primary school affiliated with the new State Department of Education and the long



stand of the Brothers for entire freedom in Religious Instruction was honourably terminated.

In the **1930's**, it became imperative to extend the primary school at Sunday's Gate. A new six-room school was built in **1936** and was occupied by the pupils on 1st September. It was designed by a past-pupil, Louis Turley and built by Joe Healy. The official opening

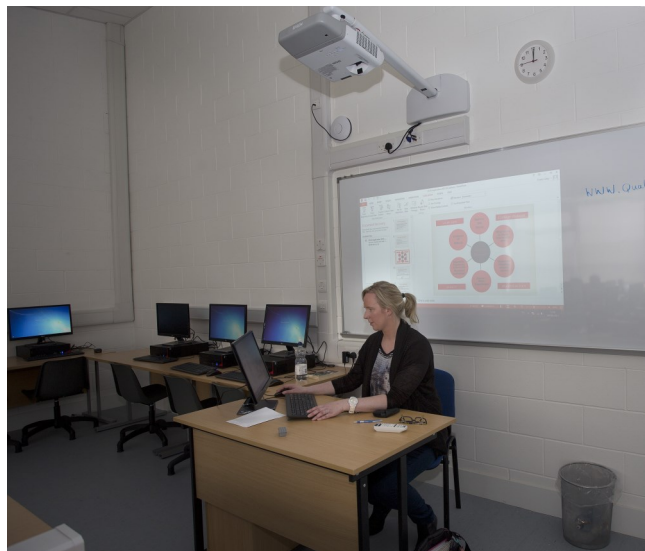


and blessing was performed by His Eminence Cardinal Mac Rory on October 19th. The Roinn Oideachais paid two-thirds of the cost of building and equipping the school – the first occasion it contributed to a Drogheda C.B.S. building. The new building gave what, at the time, was thought to be adequate accommodation to the

primary school pupils but, future increasing numbers created another accommodation problem.

In **1952**, Br. J.D. Houlihan bought St. Brigid's but its four additional classrooms did not solve the problem, for almost immediately he entered into negotiations with the Roinn Oideachais for the extension of the National School. Construction begun in September **1953** and completed in the summer of **1955**. Mr. Joe Healy was the builder of the splen-

did Our Lady of Lourdes School and, despite the Department of Education's very substantial grant in aid, £6,200 had to be raised locally. That the local contribution was met is due, almost entirely, to the energy and generosity of Right Rev. Mgr. Stokes, P.P. V.G., to whom the Christian Brothers in Drogheda and Dundalk owe undying gratitude. The new school with its playground encroached on the monastery garden including the cemetery



where three Brothers had been buried. Their remains were exhumed, on February 20th **1953**, and reinterred in a new plot in St. Peter's Cemetery. With the opening of Our Lady of Lourdes School, the original school at West Gate was closed and the entire Christian Brothers' establishment was centred at Sunday's Gate.

A new sports field at Newfoundwell was purchased by Br. Houlihan and was used for games for the first time in February **1952**. It provided three pitches and a pavilion erected from materials from the old sports field at Windmill Road. For more than thirty years, it was used by both primary and secondary pupils.

When the centenary of the coming of the Brothers to Drogheda was approaching, His Eminence Cardinal D'Alton was asked to preside at



the Mass of Thanksgiving. He graciously consented and, at his suggestion, the celebration was deferred from January 18th, **1958** to the 2nd June. The selected day was one of the few warm sunny days in an abnormally wet summer. The "Drogheda Independent" of **7-6-1958** began its extensive coverage to the 'red letter day' as follows:

"A glorious chapter in the history of the Irish Christian Brothers was written in Drogheda on Monday when the Centenary of the Brothers' advent to the town was celebrated with dignity and splendour. Distinguished clergy and laymen, many of them past pupils of the Drogheda schools, attended the impressive and magnificent Church ceremony, Solemn High Mass and Te Deum, over which His Eminence Cardinal D'Alton Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, presided in St. Peter's Church. Past pupils from all parts of the country were present on the historic occasion".



The centenary year also saw the establishment of a Past Pupils' Union to assist the Brothers and the lay teachers in their educational commitment.

With a view to a future extension of the Secondary School the adjoining premises of Reddan's at Sunday's Gate was purchased. In **1960**, Archdeacon Stokes made two rooms, in the old St. Patrick's

School, available to ease the overcrowding in the Secondary School.

On February 28th **1961**, work began on extensions to the Monastery, the Secondary School and St. Brigid's. A past pupil, Turlough Lynch M.R.I.A.I. designed the extensions and the contractors were Tredagh Building Co., Ltd., Drogheda. The work was completed during the summer vacation of **1963**.

After very protracted negotiations with the Department of Education concerning an extension to the Primary School, P. Rogers and Sons, contractors from Carrickmacross, moved their machinery to the site on June 9th, **1986**. The contract was completed during the summer vacation of **1987** and the extension was occupied for the first time when school re-opened on September 1st.

The secondary school was visited by Mrs Kirk TD and Senator Mr J Mulroy in December **1986** to ascertain for themselves the conditions which the students were enduring in the old



building and deteriorating pre-fabs. They made representations to the Minister of Education Mary O' Rourke. In September **1988** permission was granted and work commenced on the Newfoundwell site in December **1988**. The new school building was completed in **1990** and the students transferred from Sunday's Gate on Monday 23rd of April, **1990**.

With growing student numbers and need for Junior Cert subjects to be offered at Leaving



Cert level the Board of Management in **2011** sought the construction of an additional woodwork room and science lab from the Department of Education and Skills, DES. The application coincided with proposals from the Forward Planning Unit in the DES who had

identified St Joseph's for substantial expansion to accommodate 900 students. On the 19th of January **2012** a design team from the National Development Finance Agency, NDFA, arrived at the school to review the existing accommodation and draft proposals. The design process, site investigation, planning process and tendering competition passed quickly and our esteemed past pupil Dr TK Whitaker turned the sod on the 28th

of January, **2014**. Construction work commenced by the main building contractor JJ Rhatigan and the refurbishment and extension were completed in August **2015**. St. Joseph's Secondary School has now served Drogheda and its neighbourhood for 157 years. We like to think that the Brothers and lay teachers who taught and teach in St. Joseph's have "instructed many unto justice". Ave vale atque!

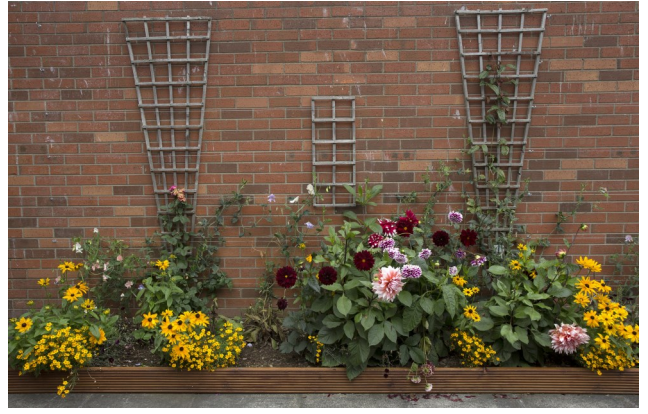


The Time Capsule

The centre of the paved area contains a chamber which now accommodates a Time Capsule. The items in the Capsule have been chosen by the second year students and their History teachers. The Time Capsule will be re-opened on the 18th of January

2058, 200 years after the opening of St. Joseph's Secondary School in Drogheda.







The Board of Management 2012 -2015

L – R: Mr David Madden Secretary to the Board of Management, Mr Sean Kelly teacher rep, Ms Linda Breen parent rep, Mr John Mc Eneaney Chairperson and Trustee rep, Ms Anne Mac Namee teacher rep, Mr Ray Mitchell parent rep, Ms Mary O Keefe trustee rep, and Ms Catherine Costello trustee rep. Missing from photo: Mr Frank Bradley trustee rep.



The teachers, student teachers, SNAs, office staff, caretakers, supervisors and cleaning team

Staff list 2015—2016

Mr. David Madden— Principal

Mr. Jim Mathews

Mr. Tom Ryan

Mr. Bernard Sharkey

Mr. Walter Crummey

Ms. Gillian Burke

Ms. Anne Mac Namee

Ms. Fiona Radford

Ms. Joanne Mc Keever

Ms. Sinead Callaghan

Ms. Sonja Thornton

Ms. Kathleen Mc Manus

Ms. Tracy Murray

Ms. Deirdre O Doherty

Ms. Evelyn Daly

Ms. Sinead Clinton

Mr. Seanie Vaughan

Mr. Niall Heeney

Mr. Emmet Kent

Ms. Maeve Hackett

Mr. Cian O Neill

Mr. Niall Murphy

Ms. Laura Mathews

Mr. Nathan Mc Manus

Ms. Bernie Matthews SNA

Ms. Antionette Sharkey SNA

Ms. Celine Irwin SNA

Ms. Noeleen Kevitt-Murphy secretary

Mr. Jim Murray caretaker

Mr. Niall Shevlin, cleaning team

Ms. Nicole Corry, cleaning team

Mr Tommy Mc Cann, cleaning team

Mr. Michael Callaghan supervisor

Mr. Michael Cowley supervisor

Mr. Paul Savage— Deputy Principal

Mr. Mark Stephenson

Ms. Geraldine O Carroll

Ms. Ann Mc Gowan

Ms. Mary Jo Wynne

Mr. Sean Kelly

Ms. Siobhan Moore

Ms. Mary Mc Gee

Ms. Aisling Flood

Mr. Brian Mc Cole

Mr. Brian Lynch

Ms. Maria Mahony

Ms. Ailish Grimes

Mr. David Carolan

Ms. Andrea Conlon

Ms. Karen Murphy

Mr. Anthony Mc Creery

Mr. Damien Mc Donagh

Mr. Eoin O Connor

Mr. Briain O Suilleabhain

Ms. Nuala Uí Cheallaigh

Ms. Antonia Williams

Mr. Adam Doran

Mr. Jack Mac Namee

Ms. Carol Keeley SNA

Ms. Mary Farrell SNA

Ms. Patrice Brennan secretary

Mr. Niall Leonard caretaker

Ms. Pamela Mc Cann, Breakfast Club

Ms. Shirley Brannigan, cleaning team

Mr. Xiang Rong Zhao, cleaning team

Mr. Eamonn Hennessy supervisor

Mr. Brendan Reilly supervisor