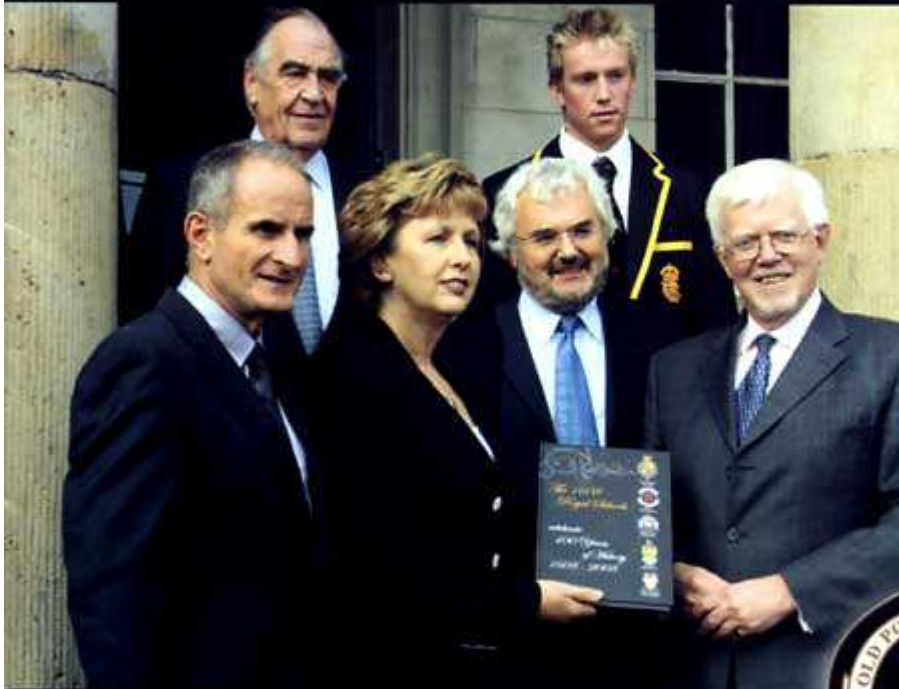


*Quatercentenary  
Celebrations  
1608-2008*



*The President, Mary McAleese was presented with the first copy of The 1608 Royal Schools book by the Headmaster Neill Morton when she paid a visit to Portora on Tuesday 23rd October 2007.*



*Old Portora News 2008*



Dear Friends

I am now in the final quarter of my 2-year term of office, (actually 2.33 years) when I hand over to Robert Northridge at our Annual Dinner on Saturday, 13 September 2008.

I am enjoying every minute of it and I don't know where the time has gone! But the magical year is here '2008' and we are in the midst of all the celebrations across the five Royal Schools for our Quatercentenary.

I have been fortunate to be a member of the 1608 Royal Schools Committee representing Portora, along with the Headmaster, Neill Morton, Former Headmaster Richard Bennett, Vice Principal Robert Northridge and Jane Fisher-Holland our Marketing and Development Manager.

For the past two years we have met on a monthly basis with the representatives from the other four schools and it has been a wonderful experience meeting and making new friends as well as visiting the other four schools and getting to know the inner workings of these wonderful old establishments.

They were quick to recognise my childish habits and I was given the task of designing a suitable lapel badge for all the students and of course the adults had to have one too! Good news, the badges are sold out and we have had to order an additional 750. We also



produced the Quatercentenary Crest on presentation plaques and an extra large one is on display in the Stone Hall.

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### Subscribing Members

We have had a very positive response from my appeal over the past year for Life members to commence paying the annual membership fee of £20. An additional 60 members have signed up in 2007 and once again I appeal to those not subscribing to give it their favourable consideration in this special year.

Our target is to convert 1000 of our 1800 members into subscribers and then the future of the Old Portora Union is guaranteed for generations to come. To date we have achieved 25% of our target so there is still a long way to go before we can start making substantial donations to activities within the School.



Fund Raising – I have commissioned a new Old Portora Union wall/desk plaque which is now available to members at £40 from the school or by placing an order with our Secretary or myself. It is a very attractive plaque in light oak finish and will hopefully be displayed with pride. All proceeds will go to the OPU Funds.



We also request members to update our Secretary Hamish Logan on current addresses, telephone numbers and emails. I am pleased to report a good response on this front as too many newsletters have been returned in the past as 'not known at this address'.

#### **Annual Dinner**

**Saturday 14 September 2007**

Our Annual Dinner was once again a great success with 86 members and guests sitting down to a right Royal Meal washed down with our special branded Old Portora Red and White wines in celebration of our Quatercentenary. We were also joined by members of the 1957 day boy class who were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, one of whom, Gordon Finlay, travelled over from Canada for the event. Now a Methodist Minister, Gordon spoke warmly of his boyhood memories of his home at Derrylin and his early experiences of life at Portora from 1957.

Our guest speaker was Mr Brian Gallagher, one of Co Fermanagh's best-known writers and broadcasters, who thrilled his audience with a wide variety of folklore and experiences of a lifetime spent in education in Co Fermanagh. I was particularly pleased with the compliments from our guests and the substantial financial return from this event.

#### **Dublin Luncheon**

**Saturday 3 November 2007**

With the help of old Portoran, David Brady, I organised a luncheon in the Conrad Hotel for all Old Portorans within a 50-mile radius of Dublin.

Over 120 invitations were circulated and it proved a wonderful success with 23 attending and none wanting to leave when their wives arrived to collect them later on in the afternoon! I was fascinated by the camaraderie and sense of delight at old boys being reunited after many years. People like George Briscoe and Patrick Moss who recounted his experience of bringing a performing bear into the school, to be confronted by the late George Andrews on the second floor landing! Plans are being made for another event in Dublin this year.

I thank George Briscoe for copies of his books, which I will pass on to the school library in due course - a great record of a life well spend and enjoyed. I am also pleased that this wonderful group of people had the privilege of purchasing the first copies of The History of the 1608 Royal Schools, the lapel badges and the Old Portora Wines.





I thank David Brady for all his efforts and it is hoped a small committee can be formed to establish a permanent Dublin Branch to organise an annual event.

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**Portora Christmas Cocktail Party  
10 December 2007**

After a lot of publicity in the press for the above event only 21 turned up! Needless to say it lacked atmosphere and the disappointment of those involved was hard to disguise. We may have to reconsider switching this event, as we seem to be competing with a lot of Christmas parties during December. The good news is we didn't lose any money on the event but instead made a small profit of £40!

The Quatercentenary celebrations commenced at Portora in January with the cross-country event. Portora boys featured amongst the prizewinners and the event was acclaimed as a great success.

I was privileged to represent the Union at the major event of the celebrations in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh on Wednesday 5 March when 600 people representing the five Royal Schools joined together for a wonderful service of thanksgiving. The chief guests, The Duke of Gloucester and President Mary McAleese, read lessons. Lord Eames gave the address. The OPU was well represented in the robed procession of clergy by Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson and Rt Revd Dr Sam Poyntz. The musical items by the joint school choirs were outstanding and a great day was had by all.

### New Rugby Hut

I am delighted to inform you that a new secure 30' x 10' state-of-the-art steel hut is now in place for the use of the Portora Rugby Club. It was agreed at our 2007 Annual General Meeting to make an offer of joint funding for this project, to replace the old wooden huts which have fallen into disrepair and were very insecure. Sporting our School colours the new amenity has two compartments, fully insulated and a laminated interior finish. We can only hope that the hut will receive adequate care and attention to maintain it for many generations of rugby players. The next project in 2008 will be for the Rowing Club.

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### New Facilities for Portora Rugby Club



Pictured above handing over the keys to the Chairman of the Parents Support Group, Tessa Deans is Ian Crawford, President of the Union with left, Robert Northridge (Deputy President) and on right Lachlan Ferguson (Director of Rugby). Front Row - The Vice Captain and Captain of Portora Rugby Club.



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **OPU Quatercentenary Annual Dinner and Ball Saturday 13 September 2008**

The beautiful Lough Erne Golf Resort Hotel at Castlehume, Enniskillen, has been chosen as the venue for what should be the biggest and most important event ever undertaken by the Old Portora Union.

This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for old Portorans from all over the world to unite in a beautiful setting to celebrate 400 years of our 1608 Royal Schools Charter. Activities on offer over the weekend are as follows:

#### **Friday 12 September 2008**

1958 Day boy class reunion - Lough Erne Gold Hotel  
OP Masonic Lodge 859 Dinner - Portora Royal School

#### **Saturday 13 September 2008**

see enclosed booking form for full list of activities

Please note there is a limit on the number of places available for the Dinner and Ball to a maximum of 250 and we will have a large number of special guests to invite from the other Royal Schools, plus our normal guests. We will have no option but to accept replies on a first come first served basis together with a covering cheque. See reply slip.

Couples attending who wish to avail of the special weekend offer from the Lough Erne Golf Resort should contact the Hotel directly in order not to be disappointed as demand for rooms will be brisk over the weekend. For those requiring accommodation elsewhere in the Enniskillen area, we have included a list of Hotels, Motels and recommended Guesthouses for your convenience.

I am appealing to members of the Union to make a special effort to support this unique event and remember you are encouraged to bring along guests. Mr Robert Northridge will be installed as the new President at our Dinner for the incoming 2-year term. Robert has spent the greater part of his life at Portora and Gloucester House since 1955 and has made a mammoth contribution as a teacher and Master in charge of the Rowing Club. His endeavours on a voluntary basis to rowing nationwide will never be equalled or surpassed and old boys from many generations should make a commitment to support Robert in his endeavours over the next 2 years to generate financial support for the OPU and in particular to complete his dream of a new state of the art Club House for the Portora Rowing Club.

**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**  
**Thursday 26th June 2008**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**Old Portora Union at 8.00pm**  
**in Portora Royal School,**  
**Enniskillen**



I thank all the members for supporting me so well during my period of office and in particular Timothy Quinn for proposing me and Sir Anthony Hart for supporting me. It has been a great privilege and honour to serve as President and I would also pay tribute to the wonderful work carried out by Jane Fisher-Holland.

Jane has taken up a new appointment in Publishing and will be sorely missed as she made a major contribution in the production of our Newsletter. However, I am quite sure Jane will still be seen around the Rowing Club, supporting her husband Derek, in coaching the large number of young ladies who play an ever increasing and successful role in the Club. We wish her well.



*Jane Fisher Holland pictured with The President, Ian Crawford (on right) and Robert Northridge, Deputy President.*

## Headmaster's Report

Last year, in May, I gave an outline of some of the changes we had made at Portora since 2002. Several weeks later, we achieved Specialist School status. This was a recognition by the Department of Education that Portora had the capacity to be the leading school in the community in Art, Music, The Moving Image and Drama. With the extra resources that Specialist Status has brought we have built new relationships with other schools, primary and post-primary.

Through initiatives such as this, we have set out our aspirations for Portora and its pupils. We want a school which is characterised by flair, panache and innovation. We want to develop young people with intelligence, courage and leadership, who are able to manage, with support, their own learning and their own lives, and to contribute positively to the society and the economy.

Our specialist status allows us to re-think the boundaries between education and life. We want the school to be involved at the heart of the community. Our partnerships with other schools in the county will be vital to us.

We must continue to seek ways in which we can sustain high excellence in education. We want our contribution in learning, teaching, innovation and leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to benefit all students in Fermanagh.



While we are proud of our past we recognise that the value of what has gone lies in how it has prepared us for what is to come: we want a school which looks to the future. Hence, while we celebrate 400 years of the Royal Charter, we recognise that our longevity is only of value if we look to the future; that is, if we are sustainable.

With the publication of a government-initiated report into the schools estate in the North, George Bain set parameters for sustainable schools. By his figuring, both the Collegiate and Portora were sustainable, that is of a size to offer a broad and rich curriculum. One year after his report was published, we were offering our post-16 students a choice of 23 subjects, the broadest curricular menu in Fermanagh.

While we can respond imaginatively to challenges around curricular provision there is little we can do about renewing our buildings. We are in the same position as two other schools in Fermanagh in needing extensive rebuilding. This will not happen, however, until a radical consultation on post-primary provision has taken place. We are in the midst of this at present. It is not a problem for us at Portora because we have been under review for almost 400 years and we are still on the hill, on the finest site of any school in Ireland. Unlike the other schools involved in the review, we are sitting on 100 acres and have plenty of room for development. We believe in review: it is a healthy way to seek what is best for the pupils in our charge.



## Headmaster's Report

- We are one of the smallest Boys' grammar schools in the North yet our results us as one of the best. This year we supplied the top two students in NI in Technology at GCSE. Another was ranked third in A2 in Design and technology. Two students achieved the top mark at GCSE Art. Five students achieved the top mark at GCSE English (Edexcel) an examination which had over 36,000 candidates.
- Our Art department was the first west of the Bann to introduce the new applied IT course in Moving Image and achieved the best results of any school.
- Our teams and athletes are recognised as being among the top squads in Ireland:
  - This year the 2<sup>nd</sup> XVs won their Plate competition, the Thirds were semi-finalists in their main competition and the Medallion XV reached the quarter-finals of the Shield. We supplied no fewer than three regular players to the Ulster Schools' U19 team.
  - The Rowing Club continues to flourish: our Junior 16 Eight was named Fermanagh Youth team of the year after its success in the National Championships last year and at the beginning of May this year it won the International regatta in Ghent.



### The Portora Gold Medal winners at Ghent championships.



From bow

Ryan Magwood, Nathan O'Reilly, Stephen Prentice, Alex Stephens, Michael Humphries, James Houston, Matthew Monteith, Mark Coalter and cox James Byrne

- o Our soccer team has not been out of the top 8 teams for the past three years. This year, Grant Hutchinson captained the NI Schools' team which beat Australia in February.
- o Cross Country and Track and field teams have enjoyed a resurgence under the aegis of Mr O'Shea, himself an International athlete. Portorans won four County school titles out of five entries.
- We had three dramatic productions last year and are running twilight courses in GCSE and AS drama for other schools. In February all year 9s and most of Year 8s – about 120 boys – performed in a vibrant and innovative production of Hiawatha.
- Our musicians – solo instrumentalists, pipe band, brass band, choir, have busy performing commitments in the community throughout the year. Particular highlights have been the carol service, the Royal Schools' Concert in Letterkenny and the Spring Concert.
- The work we undertake with our partner school, Elmbrook, has won National recognition and awards
- The exchanges and projects conducted by the MFL department has won for us the title of International School: we have partner schools in France, Denmark and Germany and are looking to extend partnerships to China. Last year students in this school studied French, German and Latin. Next year, I hope to add Mandarin to that list.
- It has been acknowledged by those responsible for the ICT network in schools throughout NI that our use of the online Learning Network is exemplary.
- We have extended our curriculum to include innovative courses in the application of ICT. These include animation and film making (The Moving Image A), web design and games programming (iMedia) and music technology (National Diploma).
- We have been awarded Specialist Status by the Department of Education in Art, Moving Image Arts, Music and Drama, one of only 25 schools to be so recognised. This means that our teachers are acknowledged to have



special skills of value to the community and we receive extra money to share those skills with five partner schools in Enniskillen;

- We have just received a very positive Inspection Report in which the quality of teaching was adjudged to be "Good" with 20% of lessons observed being "Excellent". As well as Pastoral Provision, the Inspectors focused on Maths, ICT and Art. The Mathematics Department was rated first-rate and our ICT and Art provision were recognised as excellent. One Inspector described the school as "buzzing" (I took that as a compliment).

We are not a small school under threat of closure; we regard ourselves as educationally very big indeed and we have the evidence to prove it.

Schools are remarkable institutions; they are required to contain and channel the creativity of their pupils while delivering curricula which has been designed by a generation educated up to half a century previously. It is not always a happy combination. From next year it is expected that our present heavy curricular content should be leavened by active collaboration in the classroom, self-reflection and independent learning. Schools will be required to contribute to the development of a healthy new economy enriched by equality of opportunity and served by creative and adaptable individuals.



## 1608 Athletic Match

At Portora, we have embraced the new curricula with enthusiasm. Over four years we have added six new subjects and reintroduced Additional and Further Mathematics and – of course - we have been successful in achieving Specialist School status in the Creative Arts. It is a clear recognition of the readiness of our teachers to embrace new challenges and an acknowledgement that the school is leading in key elements of the curriculum.

We have taken the opportunity to restructure the academic and pastoral systems to accommodate the new demands from September 2007. We have a cohort of teachers in their second decade of teaching that will be charged with quality ensuring the new structures. This has been possible by the decision of a number of long-serving teachers to take retirement since 2002: the contributions of teachers of the calibre of John Beattie, Miles Hulme, John Caswell and Billy McBride have shaped a very successful school, adaptable and ready for change. It is on their achievements and those of their generation that we have been able to build.

If you remember, some time ago I reported that we had convened a meeting of the Royal Schools – Raphoe, Cavan, Armagh and Dungannon as well as ourselves – to prepare for the quatercentenary of the granting of the Royal Schools' Charter. The result has been a rich and busy year with links being established between the schools in cross country, debating,



music, athletics, Tag rugby, swimming, hockey and golf. In March – within eight days – we celebrated the Royal Schools by a special service in Armagh cathedral with Lord Eames as preacher. We were honoured by the presence of the Duke of Gloucester and the President of Ireland who read lessons together with the heads of the main churches and many other luminaries. It was a fitting tribute to our schools.



1608 Choir Armagh - 5th March 2008

Eight days later we returned to Armagh for a reception with Her Majesty and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

It is an exciting time to be a Portoran. A group of 42 of Portora Royal School's finest athletes travelled to Dungannon Royal School on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April to take part in a match between the five Royal Schools as part of the Quatercentenary celebrations. The boys had outstanding success.

In the minor boys competition there were victories for Jordan Hylton in the 100 metres and Gareth Carrothers in the High jump. Jordan had a great start in



the 100 metres and by the time he had crossed the finish line he had opened up a 5 metre lead. He stopped the clock in just under 13 seconds which for a 12 year old was a fine accomplishment. Jordan Carty also had a swift race as he placed third. In the high jump Gareth soared over 1.35. Gareth is a fine athlete who with consistent training can go on to achieve great success. The minor boys relay team of Gareth Carrothers, Jordan Carty, Jason O'Brien, Jordan Hylton romped to victory winning by almost 30 metres.

Other notable performances in this age group were Jason O'Brien, Stuart Rainey and Mark Campbell in the 800 metres.

Portora's greatest successes came in the Junior Boys age group as they won six of the nine events. Jonathan Magwood demonstrated why he has potential to be a star in the future. He scored an impressive double over 100 and 200 metres. He was dominant in both events opening up sizable gaps and his relaxed form resulted in a swift time of 12.1 in the 100 metres. Jonathan went on to win the e-districts in under 12 seconds (not bad for a 14 year old!). Jonathan also won the shot putt which demonstrates clearly his all-round athletic ability. Clive Acheson placed third in the 100 metres and with consistent training will also feature in the future. In the 800 metres Matthew McVitty set a blistering pace. He carved up the track with his long relaxed stride and his punishing pace meant that he crossed the finish line 40 metres ahead of second place.

In the long jump Ben Smith leaped out to



five metres to claim victory over Jonathan Magwood in second place. The junior boys relay team were imperious as they stormed to victory by over 40 metres. The team consisted of Clive Acheson, Nathan Rutledge, Daniel Sheridan and Jonathan Magwood. Other notable performances on the day included Connor Donaldson placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1500 metres, Ryan Magwood placing third in the Discus and Alex McCurry placing third in the 800 metres.

There was also considerable success in the Intermediate boys events. Craig Hill ran an aggressive race to win the 200 metres in under 25 second. Stephen Prentice meanwhile ran a tactically astute race to win the 1500 metres. Stephen shadowed the leaders until the final lap before moving on to victory. Joshua Bingham placed second in the 100 metres and Gareth Hillard finished in third place. John McKenzie placed third in both the Long Jump and the Javelin with consistent performances. In the 800 Metres Matthew Montieth ran a strong race to place second. The relay team of Joshua Bingham, Gareth Hillard, Daniel Dunbar and John McKenzie were unlucky not to win as they were pipped at the post by Dungannon Royal School.

Although there were no victories in the Senior Boys competition there was some strong performances. Ben Bingham, who is developing into a fine athlete, placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the 100 metres and 200 metres. A poor start cost him the win in the 100 metres. Stephen Duncan won his race of the 200 metres but

finished third overall when times were considered. In the 800 metres and 1500 metres Glenn Phair had two very strong performances. He placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in both events and stopped the clock at 4.28 in the 1500 metres. He had to give way to J.Ward of Raphoe who is an Irish International Middle distance runner and a name to watch out for in the future. Ward only broke clear of Glenn on the final lap in both races. In the High Jump Finn Gebler, one of Portora's Rowing stars showed excellent all round ability by placing second in the High Jump and third in the 800 metres! The relay team of Grant Hutchinson, Craig Hill, Ben Bingham and Stephen Duncan placed second after poor changeovers cost them the race.

Well done to all the boys that competed.

### GSCE Top Results



*Back row*

Matthew Lappin, Head of English Nicola Heap, Thomas Brunt

*Front row*

Christopher Hall, Michael Graham, Nathan Kerr



William Melanophy, Headmaster Neill Morton, Stephen Goodall

In the English GCSE class at Portora this year there were five A\*s. Matthew Lappin, Christopher Hall, Michael Graham and Nathan Kerr scored in the top five within the AQA exam board, three of them with full marks in each exam and in their coursework.

In GCSE Technology Portora students William Melanophy came first in Northern Ireland and Stephen Goodall second. Both their projects reflected the influence of growing up near the lakes of Fermanagh, William's was a stroke metre, measuring rowing stroke rate and Stephen's was a water speed measuring device, measuring water flow in a river.

William also scored 100% in GCSE Art along with Stephen Trimble.



Nuclear Physicist Dr Jędrzej Iwanicki, formerly of Warsaw University and now living in Fermanagh, was recently invited back to his old University to help with a current student's experiment for her nuclear physics doctorate.

Jędrzej has been coaching some of the top set maths and physics students at Portora and invited Portora pupil John Sheridan to join a team of physicists for the experiment. There were several teams involved in the running of the experiment - an operators team, physicists team, moderators teams and an analysts team.

The experiment was carried out in Warsaw University's 'Heavy Ion Laboratory' (HIL) using a particle accelerator with sulphur ions and the target was to collide sulphur ions with molybdenum nuclei to learn more about the shape of the nuclei by observation of the ion scattering. The study observes what is happening by use of gamma rays and provides data to be used as evidence and information for nuclear theories.



The particle reactor is five meters tall, weighs 250 tonnes and requires  $\frac{1}{4}$  megawatt of power to run. In the 1980s and 90s many British nuclear physics laboratories were closed down as they were too costly to run and in Ireland there has never been adequate investment to fund such a lab, so this was very much a unique experience for a Portora student.

In his everyday life John is a Year 13 AS student studying Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Economics.

### **Portora Royal School Triumph in 400 Year anniversary Race**

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008 a very special cross-country race took place at Portora Royal School to celebrate the Quatercentenary of the Royal School Charter. Over 200 athletes from the five Royal schools, Raphoe, Dungannon, Armagh, Cavan and Portora took part. This event proved to be a great success for the hosts Portora.

Competition was fierce as runners battled blustery conditions and a challenging course. The largest field of the day was in the U13 boys' race as almost sixty athletes battled it out. Portora won the team prize with Matthew Kells placing second, Ben Parkinson placing fourth and Alex McCurry finished a stride behind in fifth place. Portora packed tightly with eight finishers in the top ten. Kells has improved rapidly over the last couple of months and his training now



seems to be finally paying off. McCurry, who had been involved in a tight battle the previous week when placing second in the Fermanagh schools cross-country race, was also pleased with his run. Both these runners are names to watch in the future as is Ben Parkinson, who like his sister Lucy, shows fierce competitive instincts.

In the U15 boys race Matthew Monthieth excelled. Matthew, an outstanding oarsman, stormed to victory with a strong and powerful display of running. He led from the gun and opened up a one hundred yard lead by the end. Another Portoran, Conor Donaldson finished fourth, while rapidly improving Matthew McVittey finished in sixth place. This tight packing from the Portora boys meant that they also won the U15 boys race.

In the U17 boys race Glenn Phair from Portora triumphed with a strong run with Stephen Duncan in second place and another rowing star Stephen Prentice in third. As Portora filled the first three places in this race they also won the team prize.

The Athletic club at Portora now look to the summer track season with a number of exciting talents including Jonathan Magwood who had an excellent run in the Irish Indoors Age-group Championships. With large numbers of athletes training regularly they have reason to be hopeful for the future.



As with rowing, Portora's training sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday are open to any young athletes in the community who wish to avail of specialist coaching in sprints, the middle distances and the jumps. In fact, the girls in the Collegiate team who won the Senior District Championships, have been training at Portora for several months.

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### Portora Pool

The Portora Pool was opened on Speech Day, June 1958 by Lieutenant General Sir Brian Kimmins, General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland District. It was a gift from Old Portorans in honour of those from the school who gave their lives in the Second World War and at the opening Brigadier GC Ballentine, President of the Old Portora Union, commemorated those from the School who had fallen by reading their names.

At the opening a swimming and diving display was given by the boys, trained and directed by Captain JT Wheeler, however, the ceremony was marred by heavy rain and high winds, which made conditions very unpleasant both for spectators and those taking part.

By 1954 Old Portorans had raised about £2,000 for a war memorial. A further appeal, assisted by parents and benefactors added another £1,500 and the Minister of Education granted the remainder to construct the first grant aided school swimming bath in

the Province. The diving boards were presented by Edith McCulloch in memory of John Stuart McCulloch who entered Portora in 1879.

At the time the pool was one of the best of its kind in Northern Ireland and was regarded as a great asset to swimming and diving in the school. It was far superior to the old pool and as a consequence swimming became a very popular past time.

At this stage there were no permanent changing facilities, these were added at a later date. When it was opened it was also hoped that at some stage the pool would be covered and heated making it an all year round amenity. Heating was added but it has never been covered thus restricting it to Summer use.

This era was one of a lot of building work at Portora, the new dining hall and biology lab were built, the reconstruction of the upper playing field was under way and the new classroom block or Tuition Block was completed shortly afterwards. There were also plans in place to build the six houses on Castle Lane which still stand there.

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***From the School Magazine  
Summer 1958***

*The New Swimming Pool*

The pool is deep, and blue, and wide,  
Filled by the Borough Council's tide.  
And, due to being cleansed with acid,  
The water tastes a little flaccid.



Not Grantchester's mysterious pool,  
This lieth open, clear and cool.  
No mysteries defy detection,  
Save for the paintwork's slow defection.

No Byron smiled upon its birth,  
It is by Stormount, out of Earth.  
The East wind, foe to man and beast,  
Brought rain to mar the opening feast.

But, though the tempest lash the path,  
The School runs cheerful to the bath,  
And from the board it shouts 'lo!'  
In praise of blessed H2O.

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### **Silver Jubilee Year for Swimming Pool**

*by Ian Crawford*

Many Old Portorans will remember the excitement of pupils in 1958 when we experienced the switch from the old swimming pool at the bottom of Castle Lane to the new 'State of the Art' pool, which has served the young people of Co Fermanagh for the past 50 years. Our thoughts and thanks go to the old Portorans back in the 1950's who had the vision and commitment to mark the sacrifices made by Old Portorans in the second world war.

We also think of the many thousands of young children who were taught and continue to be taught to swim in the pool by committed tutors and helpers. We remember in particular the life long service given by the late Major Jack Wheeler and his wife Kay, who

practically camped in the pool complex every summer for over 20 years on a totally voluntary basis. The existing changing rooms were the result of the Major's endeavours.

For the past number of years the pool has managed to open during the summer months due to the commitment and hard work of a small group of people known as 'Friends of Portora Pool'.

The Friends of Portora Pool have had to raise a substantial amount of money each year ranging from £12000-£16000 depending on the extent of repairs to equipment, etc. This has been mainly achieved through voluntary donations and an annual Sponsored walk. I am pleased to report that this year the fund will benefit from generous donations from the Old Portora Union, The Old Portora Charity Fund and the Old Portora Masonic Lodge No 859, in order to mark this milestone in our history.





## PRS Y400



As Portora begin their quatercentenary celebrations this year they have received a very appropriate gift from Old Portoran Alan Evans (1976-1982) of Western Registrations. A personalised number plate - Y400 PRS. 2008 is also proving to be a significant year for Western Registrations which has recently moved to new premises on Head Street and are in the process of launching a new website.

Pictured from left – Deputy Headboy Robert Herdman, Headmaster Neill Morton and Alan Evans of Western Registrations.

### **Matthew Stuart (2005)**

Received the President's Award at the annual Harper Ireland Dinner. The award is presented to the student from Ireland who has made a significant contribution to student life at Harper Adams University College. Matthew is currently in the second year of an honours degree programme studying Rural Enterprise and Land Management. Matthew has played an active part in student life,

holding the post of secretary of the Students Union and actively involved in the Harper Ireland Club and its committee. Matthew is one of five Portora students currently attending this university.

### **Gavin Noble**

Full time tri-athlete and winner of the Irish Elite Championships in 2007, Gavin is in qualifying spot for the Olympic Games although he still has a series of gruelling races ahead of him to maintain that position. His progress can be followed on his website - [www.gavinoble.com](http://www.gavinoble.com)

### **James Hamill**

Became the first Northern Irish dentist to win the prestigious 'Best Young Dentist UK'. This latest accolade follows on the back of winning 'Best New Practice in Northern Ireland' in 2006. His private practice in Belcoo, Blueapple Dental Practice, offers advanced and restorative dentistry. James qualified from Dundee Dental School and worked in Cheltenham as well as doing postgraduate study of reconstructive dentistry before opening his own practice in 2005.

### **WR Trevor Harron**

After three years as Head of Food and Textiles in Rickmansworth, has recently opened a bed and breakfast at 4 Rydon Lane, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 7AQ and would like to welcome any OPs from any era to the south west of England.



## The Birthday Boy



### **Desmond Creery**

The President sends birthday greetings to Dr. Robert Desmond Gibson Creery who will be celebrating his 87th birthday on the 12th June 2008.

Desmond was a boarder at Portora from 1930 to 38 when he advanced to Queens University to study Medicine. He has vivid memories of his life at Portora in the 1930's and the many characters he encountered both as teachers and fellow boarders.

Desmond now resides with his wife Annette in Guernsey.

### **R. Mark Lowry**

He took up office as Chairman of the Institution of Civil Engineers. He graduated from Queen's in 1982 and spent a short spell working at Marble Arch Caves before emigrating to South Africa where he worked with a consulting engineering firm. He returned in 1987 to work with Farrans (Construction) Ltd where he is now chairman. A fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers he has been actively involved locally with ICE for several years. He is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Building, a board

member on the Construction Industry Training Board, a council member with the Construction Employers Federation and sits on the executive committee of Constructing Excellence (NI).

### **Dr James Morrow (1976-1983)**

A medical graduate of Cambridge and Oxford Universities has graduated with a first class honours degree in Law from the Open University. He is a partner in General Practice in Sawston, near Cambridge. His wife Nicola, is a consultant surgeon and both a keen sailors. They sailed their yacht, during a sabbatical in 2005, from Gosport on the south coast of England via Portugal can the Canaries to St Lucia in the West Indies.

### **Wilf McOstrich**

He is a well established Canadian artist. He is an elected member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour, the Willowdale Group of Artists, Aquarella, the Minden Circle and the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. He is also a graduate of the Haliburton School of Arts. His work is sold and collected across Canada, the United States and Europe. [www.yessy.com/wilfmcostrich](http://www.yessy.com/wilfmcostrich)

### **Jeremy Rush**

He left Portora in 1959 and emigrated to Perth, Australia where he became a journalist and studied part time for his BA at the University of Western Australia. He spent four years in the UK working with British Leyland Motor Corp but returned to Australia to work interalia



as a political press secretary for two Federal Cabinet Ministers, PR manager for Alcoa and owner-entrepreneur of his own PR company. From 1990 he worked in South East Asia running several US PR firms. He now spends eight months of the year in Australia and four between Bangkok and the Philippines where he maintains residences, also visiting Oxford and London.

**Dr Alister H Scott (Connacht 1980-85)** after 10 years as co-ordinator of research at the Global Environmental Change Project, has written his PhD thesis on how to make science relevant to society's most pressing challenges. He now runs his own company, The Knowledge Bridge, communicating specialist knowledge, and works part time at the University of Sussex Social Policy Research Unit. He lives in a wood in Sussex with his wife, son and daughter. In 2006 he was awarded the prize of top charity fund raiser in the London Triathlon.

**THE OLD PORTORA  
MASONIC LODGE NO. 859**



The Lodge continues to flourish with some 75 members currently on the books. We attract our membership from the old boys and masters of the school, both initiate and affiliate and from as far away as Coleraine to Cork and all points in between, we even have a member who lives in Canada.

The installation of the current Worshipful Master took place in March of this year, when John Rutledge was installed along with his officers for the year, after which the usual fine festive board was enjoyed by all present. In the absence of the Provincial Grand Master, who was unable to attend due to other Masonic business, he sent his representative, the Provincial Assistant Grand Master, and our very own Norman Humes, who is a founder member of the lodge.

Our third communication for the year will be on Friday 12th September as part of the Quatercentenary of the Ulster Royal Schools celebrations being held that weekend at the Lough Erne Golf Resort, any masons who are attending the ball on the Saturday may wish to join the brethren of the lodge 859 on the Friday evening, (again please contact Ian for further details).

A very fine history of the lodge was researched and compiled by John Hughes. This publication which stretches to some twenty four pages is available upon request and at the very reasonable cost of £5.



## BOAT CLUB



*Sir Anthony Hart and his wife Mary naming one of 13 boats on 15 March 2008*

The Boat Club is in the middle of its most successful season for decades. There are 40 boys and 30 girls from other schools in the town training under a team of coaches led by Olympian Derek Holland. There have been wins at Junior 18,16, 15 and 14 for both boys and girls in eights, fours, quads, doubles and singles at Carrick, Lagan, Lagan Scullers and Erne Heads, and at Neptune, Commercial, Gent (Belgium), Portadown and Portora Regattas. At the Gent International Regatta we won a gold and three bronze medals, the gold being in the Junior 16 eights. At Portora Regatta the Boat Club won 15 of the 22 events on the programme showing our dominance at Junior level in the north of Ireland. The next events are Athlone Regatta on 14 June, the Wray and Craig Cups at the Killyhevlin at 7.30pm on 17 June, and the Irish Championships at Farran Wood, Cork on 5 and 6 July. Two of our rowers are on the squad for the Irish team at the Coupe de la Jeunesse. These wins have been achieved with the help of support from Old Portorans, Parents and the Local Community. In the spring our President Sir Anthony Hart named 13 new boats, many of them donated by sponsors.

## GRADUATES

**Derek Andrews** – Master of Pharmacy, Queen's University Belfast

**William Armstrong** – BA Arts Honours degree in Graphic design, University of Bolton

**Alan Dourish** – BA Honours degree in Modern History and Theology, Queen's University

**Matthew R D Martin** – LL.B. (Hons) in Law, University of Glasgow

**John R Neill** – B.Sc (Hons) in Geology, University of Edinburgh

**Trevor Robinson** – PhD in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Queen's University Belfast

**Mark Stockdale** - LL.B. and LL.M. in Computers and Law, Queen's University Belfast

**Stewart Hamilton** - B.Eng Agricultural Engineering, Harper Adams University College. Currently working with JCB as a Technical Service Product Specialist having completed their scholarship scheme.

**David Andrew Henry** - BSc Hons Geography, Newcastle University

**William A. N. Irwin** - B.Eng University of Glasgow

**Alastair K McFarland** - B.Eng Cranfield University & Oxford University Air Squadron Currently a commissioned pilot officer in Cranwell, Lincolnshire

**Matthew R. D. Martin** - LL.B University of Glasgow

**Martin A.G. Tisdall** - BA Hons Broadcasting and Sound Design, Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication

**Alan T Wilkinson** - MA University of Glasgow



**DEATHS**

**David Breen (1968)** – has died

**Geoffrey V Drought OBE**

**John S McCullagh** – died 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 in London aged 65

**David R J McVeigh** – (1956-1961) – died February 21<sup>st</sup> 2007, in Australia suddenly as a result of a road traffic accident

**J.C. Erskine** has died

**John R. Haslett** has died

**Raymond Laird (1939-43)** has died

**Canon Gerald McGahey** has died

**George McMeekin** has died

**George Trevor Mawhinney** has died

**R. L. Portlock** has died

**Douglas Vance (1936-1939)**

Piece for Old Portora News

Submitted by Mrs Barbara Vance, November 2007.

“A young man who will always do his best and never let his boss down” was Headmaster Ian Stuart’s judgement of Douglas Vance who died on September 20th 2004.

Douglas was born in Castleblaney, Co Monaghan in 1921. While his

achievements at school were more sporting than scholastic – he played in the first Rugby XV and captained the lawn tennis team – he nevertheless soon outshone Mr Stuart’s modest expectations by becoming manager of the Cork Metropole Hotel at the unusually young age of 23.

He came there from the Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin, his sister, Betty Crooks having spotted in the newspaper a training opportunity there under renowned hotelier Paul Besson. The world of hotels and tourism was not an early identified ambition, (unlike a career in the Canadian Royal Mounted Police), but it was a fortuitous choice for it made full use of Douglas’s drive, geniality and natural management skills.

For Douglas, customer care, quality and standards, and the importance of people were watchwords long before they became popularised in management classics. The Metropole developed tremendously, becoming known for wholesome food, courteous staff and a warm welcome. A popular venue for events, it was not unusual for the hotel to be serving one thousand customers on any given day.

Douglas inspired hard work and loyalty in generations of employees; many who benefited from his excellent training went on to run major hotels themselves. He was also held in great respect by his fellow hoteliers who elected him Chairman of the Irish Hoteliers Federation for 18 consecutive years. Douglas was a founder member of Cork-Kerry Tourism where he served for some 20 years,



and was a Director of Bord Failte from 1974-1978.

Douglas had a long and happy marriage to his English wife Barbara, who survives him. Student bursaries and a research project on the future of Irish tourism have been established at the Cork Institute of Technology in Douglas's memory.

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#### **Richard Frederick Alston, OBE**

(Prep School & Leinster, 1931 – 1940)

Freddie, as he was known to everyone all his life, was born on March 27th 1921 in Newry where his father was the Manager of the Bank of Ireland and died August 16th 2007. He went to the Prep School at Portora in 1931 where as a boarder he met Miss E E (Lizzie) Hunt, learning a discipline of life along with everyone else who ever came under her command. From Prep School he moved to the Leinster House of Major Butler, boarding in Liberty Hall.

Under such tutelage it was inevitable that he joined the OTC, rising to Sergeant, a reflection of his career at school where he was only just able to pass exams in class but, despite his small stature, was outstanding at sports, representing the school at rugby, cricket, boxing and cross-country.

Determined on a military career and with a Cert A safely won, he joined the Army in 1939, taking a commission in the Royal Irish Fusiliers and later in the war with the King's African Rifles in the Far East and East Africa. In 1946 Freddie became an instructor at Sandhurst, then

moving on to being a Staff Officer at Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence. In 1955 he volunteered to transfer to the Royal Army Pay Corps, dealing with pay, finance and accountancy and from 1969 to 1972 was Officer in Charge of the Army Pay Corps in Omagh before moving to London as District Paymaster and for the Household Division. In every posting he proved his wisdom, giving guidance based on his extensive experience. He retired from the Army in 1973 after 34 years service, being made an OBE for his work.

Freddie then took the job of bursar at a school in Bristol, turning round its finances and putting it in the black within three years. He then started another career, taking a role with the British Council when the family had moved to Bath, officially welcoming visitors, students, teachers, public servants, historians and engineers to this historic city, seeing to their accommodation and well being.

Before the war he had briefly met Betty who was serving in the WRNS and when he went to Sandhurst in 1946 he met her again; they married later that year and celebrated their Diamond Wedding in October 2006. They had two daughters, six grandchildren and one great-grand-child.

Freddie died suddenly, active to the end of a long and useful life, beloved by all who knew him.



**Geoffrey Victor Drought, OBE**

Geoffrey Drought was an outstanding teacher and senior regional government figure whose life long passion for education served to enthuse and enrich the lives of many in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

After Portora Geoffrey went on to study Latin and French at Trinity College Dublin. While at university he took his first step in teaching, in a part time post at Castle Park. After graduation he spent some time in a small secondary school in Lyon, France before taking a full time post at Wrekin College, Shropshire teaching French, Latin and Greek.

In 1966 he was appointed assistant education officer in Warwickshire and three years later junior deputy with Dundee Corporation. His record of innovation in Scottish further education culminated in his appointment as deputy director of education for Tayside. It was during this tenure that he was awarded an OBE for services to education in Scotland.

In 1985 he moved to Gwent as director of education. He resigned in 1993, partly in protest at government reforms to education.

Outside of work he was an accomplished public speaker who donated all his fees to charity. His father had introduced him to the delights of fly fishing and he continued to fish throughout his life, accompanying friends on regular trips.



Throughout his time in Scotland and Wales he played an active part in local associations and organisations.

In retirement, after a brief spell in Devon, he and his wife Jill returned to Scotland and lived in Crieff, Perthshire where he became a central figure in the Episcopalian Church community.

He is survived by his wife Jill and their four children.

**Richard Colles Brehon Henderson**

Dickie Henderson was the eldest of three brothers who were all at Portora together. Jerry, the youngest, Niall Bell and I went up to Trinity for Michaelmas Term in 1943 and rowed together. Dickie was captain of DUBC that year. As junior freshman we were very impressed with Dickie as a person and as captain. The club was run very efficiently and all outings took place promptly. Training routines were strictly adhered to and we all enjoyed our rowing. Dickie devoted a great deal of time and energy to coaching and encouraging us in the Maiden VIII.

Dickie rowed at Portora and he was also the senior patrol leader in the Scouts and was awarded the Kings Scout Badge.

He had a distinguished professional career as an Engineer, building a legacy of multi-million dollar dams on some of the world's largest rivers from Kamano BC to Kaptai, Bangladesh to the Squaw rapids, Saskatchewan to the tropical waterways of Brazil. He remained in



Brazil for 27 years taking the small Brazillian firm Mendes Junior to be the eighth largest construction company world wide.

Like his father he was a Mason and he became District Grand Superintendent.

Predeceased by his wife Joy. He is survived by his daughters Cecilia and Anne. Anne cared for him throughout his illness and he died of cancer aged eighty four on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in Canada.

*Submitted by Johnny Cockrill*

### **The Very Reverend Thomas Robert Moore**

From his earliest days Tom associated himself actively with the Church of Ireland and the constant service and methodical care he has given to the Church and Clogher Diocese is incalculable.

Much of his theological education was in England and he served curacies in the archdioceses of Dublin and Armagh. While rector of Trillick and Kilskeery, he studied for the Lambeth MA. He always remembered the people of his parishes and he could speak of them with real knowledge and care.

Part of the strength of his contribution to the Diocese of Clogher was that he knew it as both a lay and an ordained person. He knew it from both perspectives and that gave him an assurance and authority which facilitated his contributions to the life of the Church at every level.



Whatever the Church of Ireland asked of Tom, he never ceased to be rector of a parish. As a canon of St Paul's Cathedral, a member of the General Synod and Standing Committee and as chairman of the Priorities Fund, he gave much to the wider church and had much to bring back to his home diocese.

It was a wise and farsighted thing when Bishop McMullan spotted his talent and invited him to be Diocesan Secretary, a post he held for over two decades. His genius in administration was matched with his ability to engage with the people around him, whatever their class, creed or conviction.

A canon and prebend of Clogher Cathedral for six years, he returned to be Dean of the Diocesan Cathedral for the best part of ten fulfilling years, after four fruitful years as a canon of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

In his retirement Tom made time to complete the revision, editing and updating of Canon Leslie's Clergy of Clogher which was launched in 2006.

The dignity with which Tom reacted to the knowledge of his illness and his unwillingness to complain were tokens of his trust in the future which is in God's hands. The carefulness which he showed to all members of Moore family throughout his period of sickness was indeed of a piece with the love and practical provision which he made for them throughout his life.



Based on the sermon of Bishop Michael Jackson at the funeral service of the Very Revd Tom Moore.

**Henry Pierce**

Henry Pierce who died recently at his home in Helen's Bay, aged 83, was a member of the old Enniskillen family and true Enniskillen having been born 'between the bridges'.

Like his father who had joined in the First World War, Henry joined the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers aged 18 in 1943 and served for the next 3½ years. In his lighter moments he would contrast the distinguished military career of his father (who became a captain and was awarded the MC) with his own (he rose to the rank of lance corporal).

Following Portora and his war service, Henry graduated in law from Queen's and was admitted as a solicitor in 1949. He spent his entire professional career with the Belfast firm L'Estrange and Brett where he became a senior partner. He was a member of the Law Society of Northern Ireland and became its President in 1969/70.

From 1989 to 1994 Henry was chairman of the Mental Health Commission for Northern Ireland, a job he greatly enjoyed. He served as Church Warden in both his Belfast and Holywood parishes and for over 20 years was a Governor of the Church of Ireland Trustees. He was also a keen sportsman and played rugby and soccer and, in later years, golf.



Henry is survived by his wife Mavis and their three children.

Based on the obituary Henry wrote shortly before his death.

**Tan Soon Ann M.I.C.E. C Eng**

Tan Soon Ann came to Portora from Singapore in join the sixth form in the early 1960s and from there went on to study engineering at Kings College London. He enjoyed a successful career in civil engineering, real estate development and later in banking. In his later years he loved sailing his catamaran in the waters of South East Asia. He often spoke of his school days at Portora and particularly remembered the family of his school mate Ronnie Tucker who treated him warmly as a member of their family. He died of lung cancer on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2007, aged 61, and is greatly missed by his wife Elizabeth and their four children.



Old Portora Union Dinner 2007

The 2007 Old Portora Union Dinner was held at Portora Royal School on Friday 14th September and included a Day Boy class reunion from 1957. The Dining Hall was filled to capacity, where a grand Royal Buffet was served by Mrs Jean Maguire and her staff. Local Author, historian and radio personality Mr Brian Gallagher was the Guest Speaker and the visitors were well entertained by his witty stories and folklore of County Fermanagh.

Pictured above are the President's Guests (from left to right):  
Mr & Mrs Fred and Deidre Brown, Campbell College, Belfast;  
Mr & Mrs Adrian and Felicity Huston, Coleraine Inst;  
Mr & Mrs William and Georgina McVeigh, Methodist College, Belfast;  
Mr & Mrs Scott and Olivia Marshall, Foyle College, Londonderry;  
Mr & Mrs Ian and Margaret Crawford, President, Old Portora Union;  
Mr & Mrs Spencer and Allison Lawson, RBA;  
Mr & Mrs Keith and Millie Patton, Royal School Dungannon;  
Mr & Mrs Neill and Linda Morton, Headmaster, Portora Royal School  
Back row: Mr Patrick Gilbride representing Clongoes Wood College and  
Mr Brian Gallagher, Guest Speaker.

50 Year Class Reunion



Remnants of the Day Boy Class of 1957 joined the O.P.U. at their Annual Dinner in Portora on Friday 14th September to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the starting of their education at Portora in 1957. One member, Gordon Finlay originally from Derrylin, travelled all the way from Canada and a fine evening of reminiscing and celebration was enjoyed by all.

Pictured below on the steps of Portora are, from left to right

Front Row:

Freddie Pyne, Victor Brennan (Guest Speaker), Brian Dane and Ken Dennison

Back Row:

Neil Rutherford, Dennis Geelan, Brian Dickey and Rev Gordon Finlay