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Glin's 'brutal' ghosts keep haunting Danny

By EUGENE PHELAN

THE "terrible horror and cruelty" allegedly bestowed on thousands of young Limerick boys at the former St Joseph's Industrial School in Glin was relived last week by Danny Fitzgerald, 64, from Granagh, who openly wept when he recalled his six years there.

"It was absolutely terrible the Christian Brothers were very cruel to us," said Danny, who has compiled his own personal file on the industrial school which was run by the Christian Brothers.

Danny now lives in Southend-on-Sea, England, and produced hoards of correspondence from fellow "slaves" of the County Limerick school.

It all came about some months back when a letter was sent to the Irish Post about the school in Glin. Then Danny wrote in and has had numerous letters from fellow past pupils. While some letters defended the Christian Brothers, others agreed with Danny - especially those who were in Glin.

"I was born in Granagh, but I was sent to Passage West in Cork when I was five as my mother died. When I was 10 I, like so many others, was sent to St Joseph's Industrial School in Glin. This was around 1934," he recalled.

He said that there was 200 to 300 boys aged from 10 to 16 in the school, which along with educating the boys, also had a shoe and tailor shop for the older boys. And some of the boys aged 14 upwards worked at 5am each morning with local farmers.

The boys were either orphans or from very poor homes. Many came from Limerick city, according to Danny.

"I was back in Glin this week, but the local people there had no idea what went on in that school. Of course all the Brothers involved are dead now," said Danny.

"I took a video film of the ghost of what remains of the school this week. It certainly did not bring back happy memories," he said.

"I remember them stripping boys down and giving them terrible beatings", he recalled.

He alleged that the Christian Brothers took great pleasure in dragging boys out of bed and beating them.

"Then they had the nerve to walk up to the altar rails the following morning to receive Holy Communion.

"I well remember one boy who was being beaten one night and he put his hand to his face to protect himself and accidentally caught the Christian Brothers lip. The Christian Brother waited until the following night and sought the help of another Brother. Between them they almost killed that boy. The poor chap had no parents to run home to complain to and that was the case with all the boys," he claimed.

He said thousand of boys from Limerick went to the school and received a good education, but at a terrible price.

Danny, who gladly left the school at 16, said he still has terrible mental scars and memories of the brutality.

"Many boys ran away but were caught and brought back and given terrible beatings," he said.

To back up his claim, he showed me his file and cuttings of letters and cuttings from the Irish Post.

He revealed that a film company was how researching the subject of Glin school with the intention of making a film about it.

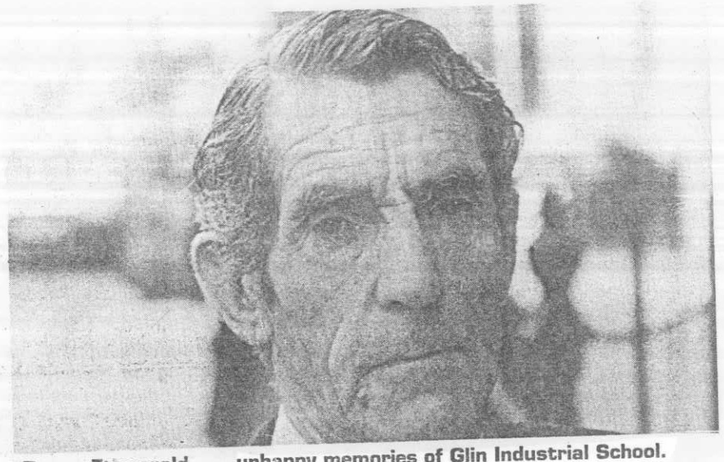
"My two brothers and I spent seven arduous years in St Joseph's, Glin because our mother died when we were very young. Glin has left a mark on us forever," he added.

Another former "Glin inmate," as he described himself in a letter to Danny, said that in the Christian Brothers favour they did cloth and make sure the boys were clean, if not well fed.

"I can't say I was ill-treated except for one instance when I was repeatedly kicked by a Brother" the letter writer recalled.

When he left the school, Danny went to work for a local farmer for five shillings a week. He later moved into Limerick city and worked in Hanratty's hotel and then headed to England where he worked in the civil service for most of his life. He got married and has had a happy life in England.

Dannys says he would love to hear from former "students" at Glin. He can be contacted by writing to him at Oranmore, 6, victoria Road,, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2TQ.



Danny Ftizgerald . . . unhappy memories of Glin Industrial School. (LL).

Kevin Rafter

Policital Who's Who has local connection

McMahon: The Master's voice

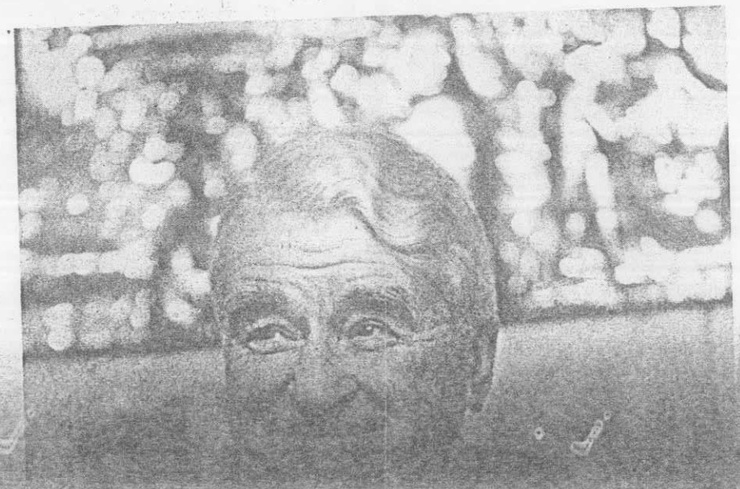
By NORMA PRENDIVILLE

IT is an awesome thing to bear the responsibility for shaping the mind and heart of a child.

But even yet, 17 years after he left his classroom in Listowel for the last time, you get the distinct feeling that any young lad would be safe in the hands of teacher and writer, Bryan McMahon. There is a kindliness about him, a preparedness to listen, a willingness to wait and wait again until a person finds his or her true centre that inspires trust and confidence.

But as he says himself: "Teaching is in my blood."

He got it from his mother and prompted by her, he launched himself into the world of teaching where a passion for the job and craft took strong hold. And for 45 years, [illegible]



teaching itself.

"I am presumptious in that," he admits with a laugh, but yes, he does want to influence other teachers, who, in their turn, will influence children. "But," he insists, "I am not being parochial."

The issues are universal ones — and he has a lifetime of experience to draw upon.

Since he began as a teacher back in the 1930s, Bryan has seen many changes in schooling. But he holds himself to the unconventional and to seeking out the secret gift that a child might have and to making it shine. That, for him, is the real art of the teacher.

"Teachers," he says, "should be carefully selected, for their [illegible]

EC aid for Somalia is a little too late – MEP

THE FAMINE in Somalia is being ignored by the EC, according to Munster MEP John Cushnahan.

He has condemned EC aid as "too little, too late".

Speaking in a debate in the European Parliment, Mr Cushnahan, Fta, said that [illegible]

the borders of the European Community undoubtedly it would have had a higher priority on the European agenda. Europe [illegible] only a [illegible]