Dean Maxwell Community
Roscrea

Fiche Bliain faoi bhláth
Message from Minister of State for Older People – Máire Hoctor T.D.

A Chairde,

I am delighted, as the Minister of State with responsibility for Older People, to be closely associated with the Dean Maxwell Home, Roscrea.

For over thirty years the Dean Maxwell Home has provided a wonderful service to the people of Roscrea and surrounding areas.

Roscrea has always had a strong sense of community and one of the greatest achievements of the Dean Maxwell Home has been helping residents remain part of an active and vibrant community life.

The 7-day care centre, as well as the many activities provided for at the Dean Maxwell Home, has created a lively atmosphere for the people who live and work there. I have been struck by the level of independence encouraged for residents which has enabled people to retain as much control over their lives as possible.

Particularly though, great praise is due to the Laurels’ Palliative Care Unit which has been a comfort to many people, their family and friends, since it opened nearly ten years ago.

I also would like to congratulate all those who contribute to making the Dean Maxwell Home what it is today, a wonderful home with a central place at the heart of the community.

Máire F. Hoctor,
Minister of State with responsibility for Older People.
Introduction

The first booklet was published 6 years ago to celebrate our 25th anniversary, it was called ’25 Blian a’ fas. This booklet is subtitled ‘Fiche Bhlian Faoi Bhlath’, and is intended for older people who are weighing up their options and making major decisions about where they want to live for the rest of their lives. Many of us would like to stay in our own homes, some of us would like to move to a smaller place, maybe nearer our families or the church and shops, some of us may have to move to a residential facility where we will get 24 hour care because of a disability or for security. Whatever the reason, we will need information so that we can make the right decision for us.

Some information is easy to get: where the place is; how many people live there; what services are provided and what the daily routine is. There is other information, however, that is necessary to make the decision. I call this, the information about the spirit of the place, the people who live and work there and how they all get on and what they are looking for in life. This kind of information is much harder to get, yet when you walk into a place you can sense it straight away.

The idea for this booklet comes from the belief that getting to know one another is important when it comes to settling into a new home. There are some personal stories, short pieces about some of the people who live and work here, information about activities and outings, I hope this taste of the Dean Maxwell will give you an idea of what you want from your home and help you not just make your decision but also support you and your family as you make the decision to move from your home.

In the Dean Maxwell we use a care approach called primary nursing, this means that there are small groups established called the Dean Maxwell families. In each family there are 3 resident members and 2 staff members. Throughout the booklet, amongst the many photographs, you will see photographs of our families.

To all new Dean Maxwell community members - staff, residents, day unit and family, my hope is that this booklet will help you feel at home and we will all share the blessing expressed by John O’Donoghue in his poem - ‘For a New Home’.

*Jimmy Gleeson with Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and Anne Keevey*
For A New Home

May this house shelter your life.
When you come in home here,
May all the weight of the world
Fall from your shoulders.

May your heart be tranquil here,
Blessed by peace the world cannot give.

May this home be a lucky place,
Where the graces your life desires
Always find the pathway to your door.

May nothing destructive
Ever cross your threshold.

May this be a safe place
Full of understanding and acceptance,
Where you can be as you are,
Without the need of a mask
Of pretence or image.

May this home be a place of discovery,
Where the possibilities that sleep
In the clay of your soul can emerge
To deepen and refine your vision
For all that is yet to come to birth.

May it be a house of courage,
Where healing and growth are loved,
Where dignity and forgiveness prevail;
A home where patience of spirit is prized,
And the sight of destination is never lost.

Though the journey may be difficult and slow,
May there be great delight around this hearth,
May it be a house of welcome
For the broken and the diminished.

May you have the eyes to see
That no visitor arrives without a gift
And no guest leaves without a blessing.

John O’Donohue (2007) Benedictus

Staff at Dean Maxwell
The Dean Maxwell Home – A Reflection

Fr Tom Corbett

There are many elements by which we judge a culture and a way of living and evaluate it as good or defective. The world of today is a world of action and competition, where success is measured in output and financial results. Such a world in particular struggles for ever and ever greater efficiency and energy sources and could be tempted to forget the older and the tired. But the Dean Maxwell Home sends out strong signals that such is not the case in North Tipperary and where the old and weak could be seen as inefficient and even a burden, Maxwell welcomes them as gift to be loved and appreciated.

John Galtee Brophy stays in my memory of my first days experiencing my neighbour in Roscrea. He had lived a hard life, where comforts were often few and hard work was a daily event. But his spirit and the loving care he received in Maxwell enabled him, as he leant on the front wall, with his Rosary and holy pictures, to entertain and educate the new neighbour in the ways of history and the story of life in recent Ireland and England. I felt a great sense of joy and thankfulness, to see him chat so well and pray so fervently in front of the home, which looked after him so professionally, and yet so personally. It made Roscrea and Ireland a better place to be.

The atmosphere I experienced in Maxwell was one of decent comfort and great warmth for the old and frail, by a great group of active people who did so much to make the older people’s final times one of dignity, comfort and ease. With professional and loving care they soothed complaints and answered demands with smiles, wiles and tea. Presided over by a great lady, who called me Padre (and whom I now call Madre in return) Maxwell Home deserves great appreciation and thanks for the quiet ways it tries to bring out the best in the old, the carers and the priests who visit! The old and the not so old radiate a welcome and sense of wellbeing that is simply great. The appreciation of the place of religion and faith combined with the reverence for the Mass, communion, the anointing of the sick and prayer adds up to a fitting home for people of our place, who like the rest of us, are seeking the eternal home of heaven. Muchas gracias (to keep up with Madre and Padre) and Míle buiochas that our people have made this possible.

Tom Corbett
Parish Priest, Roscrea
Dean Maxwell Artists who held an exhibition of their work in Roscrea Library - May 2008
My reflections on the
Dean Maxwell Community Nursing Unit

Margaret Stanley

The Dean Maxwell Community Nursing Unit was built by the Mid-Western Health Board and opened its doors in 1974. The site was donated by the Parish of Roscrea and was named after the Very Rev. Dean Maxwell who was Parish Priest at the time. The building is located adjacent to the town and is in walking distance of local churches and other amenities. At first the Home had forty extended care beds and catered for the people from the surrounding hinterland.

Over the past few years there have been many changes. In 1987 the Day Unit was built, this unit has developed tremendously over the past decade to catering for over one hundred people per week offering a seven day service, with approximately twenty five people availing of our bus service each day. There is also a respite service and each year up to forty people avail of this service offering a holiday and a break for people who are living at home and being cared for by family.

In 1999 “The Laurels” was opened; this is a support unit for people who Require Palliative care. The services offered include G.P. visits, Pastoral care, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Podiatry. These and other services are offered to all patients along with activities such as Arts and crafts, The Sonas Programme, reminiscence therapy, participation in music and drama activities, day trips with an annual holiday to Co. Wexford each year, table quizzes, card games and bingo.

I first joined the staff of the Dean Maxwell in July 1985 having spent Twelve months in Our Lady’s Hospital, Roscrea prior to its closing. Having worked as amidstwife in St. Lukes Hospital, Kilkenny and The National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street for many years transferring to Elderly Care was a major but welcome change, and I have been most fortunate in meeting and caring for some great characters over the years along with working with a caring and motivated staff.
In 1990 Ann Keevey was appointed as Director of Nursing having trained and worked in the Acute services of the Mater Hospital. Ann brought with her lots of initiative, inspiration, and a vision for the future of the Dean Maxwell and caring for its residents. Education and staff development are resources which have had huge investment, to date fifteen of our staff have upgraded and completed The Fetac Level 5 Health Care Assistants course. Staffing numbers have also increased with a Director of Nursing, a CNM 1, a CNM 2, a CNS, 14 Staff Nurses, 15 Health Care Assistants, 6 Multi-task attendants, 2 chefs, 1 driver and our one and only General Operative.

There have been many building programmes and ongoing refurbishment carried out. We have the latest and most up to date technology and equipment for the needs of our patients’ e.g. Electric beds, hoists for moving and lifting people with physical disabilities, adjustable chairs, and pressure relieving mattresses, flat screen televisions and broadband access.

The aim of our unit is to offer a holistic approach in the care of our Members and an encouraging and supportive environment for families and carers. We hope that all those people entrusted to our care feel safe and secure in their golden years and that we create a warm atmosphere for all those who enter through our doors and that they see this unit as a home away from home.

Margaret Stanley
Clinical Nurse Manager 2

Retired Staff
Trish Treacy, Bridie Gaffney, Myra O’Rourke, Anne McLoughlin, Pat Ryan, Sarah Landy.
Dean Thomas Maxwell

Dean Maxwell was parish priest at the time plans for this unit were set in motion. A land deal with the parish council saw the present site handed over by the church. Sadly before the Home was built Dean Maxwell had died. His name lives on however, as this unit is a testament to his commitment to providing quality accommodation for older people. This glowing obituary tribute was printed in the *Nenagh Guardian*, to whom we are grateful for their permission to reprint it.

17th October 1970

**Death of Dean Maxwell, P.P., V.P., Roscrea**

*Diocese mourns passing of great churchman*

Here is a great priest who pleased God in his lifetime and was found a just man.” This sentiment from the Old Testament could be the epitaph of Rt. Rev. Dean Thomas Maxwell, P.P., V.F., Roscrea, whose unexpected death on Monday last takes from the Diocese of Killaloe an outstanding priest, and from the public and social life of North Tipperary a colourful and lovable personality.

Because of special academic qualifications a long term of his priestly career was cast in the Diocesan College in Ennis; first, as Professor and later as President, and in both of these positions he served with distinction.

His first assignment to pastoral work was as parish Priest of Killaloe about twelve years ago and just over a year ago he transferred to Roscrea to become the first Parish Priest of that important parish since its designation as a mensal parish about fifty years ago.

Though handicapped with indifferent health during this latter period, with exceptional dedication and administrative ability he set in motion an extensive programme of renovation in Killaloe which was almost completed before he left; in his new parish of Roscrea he had already laid the foundation of a reorganisation plan to meet the pastoral and social needs of the expanding centre. The people of Roscrea especially, who had already come to appreciate and love their amiable and efficient pastor, were shattered at the news of his untimely death.

Born in Glenaguile in the parish of Toomevara of farming stock 64 years ago, Thomas Maxwell attended the local Primary School before going to St. Flannan’s Diocesan College. He studied for the priesthood in the National Seminary at Maynooth where he was ordained priest in 1929. He had already taken the B.A. degree and the Baccalaureate in both Theology and Canon Law. He returned to the Dunboyne
Establishment in Maynooth for a two year post-graduate course in Theology at the end of which he was awarded the Doctorate in Divinity. Simultaneously he qualified as a secondary teacher by acquiring the Higher Diploma in Education.

**COLLEGE STAFF**

Appointed to the professional staff of St. Flannan’s College, Ennis, in 1931, he specialised in the teaching of English language and literature. His proficiency and thoroughness as a teacher were soon reflected in the distinctions achieved by his students. He had a special flair for church ceremonies and during his long term in Ennis he was Master of Ceremonies for all important religious functions in the Cathedral, including the Consecration of the late Bishop Rodgers and the celebration of the Episcopal Golden Jubilee of Archbishop/Bishop Fogarty. He was a founder member and the first clerical secretary of St. Flannan’s Past Pupils’ Union, and the drive an efficiency which he brought to all his undertakings stamped the seal of success on the union from its inception.

Dr. Maxwell became a canon of the Diocesan Chapter at an early age and was successively Archdeacon and Dean, being appointed to the latter office by the present bishop, Most Rev. Dr Harty. Because of his expertise in theology, ceremonial and administration, he held many important offices in the ecclesiastical structure, and his considerable talents and devotedness to the interests of the Church were freely availed of by the three bishops under whom he served. As a priest with deep faith and piety and rate apostolic zeal, he literally spent himself in the service of those committed to his care. He was an exceptionally good preacher and his sympathetic nature and good judgement made him a king and helpful adviser. He was also a member of the North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee.

**LOVE FOR HURLING**

A gamesman himself of no mean ability, his first and last love was hurling. No compliment pleased him more than to be credited with being a good judge of a hurler. During the halcyon day of the Harty Cup victories in the College and infectious enthusiasm of the “Doc” as he was affectionately called led to total involvement no only of the College but of the whole diocese. Only ten days ago, having honoured the re-opening of Youghalarra Church with characteristic generosity by acting as a concelebrant of the Mass, he asked to be excused from the banquet so that he could see Roscrea play and win the county final.

On the personal level Dean Maxwell was big minded and warm hearted, sociable and liberally human. In return he enjoyed the respect and affection of this people and fellow priests.
Saol Follain Sasuil

‘A healthy, fulfilled life’

The residents’ action group held several focus group meetings. They were looking at ways of improving the quality of life of the members of this community. There was a strongly held view that people in the wider community had a very negative view of nursing units. One lady told us about a recent admission to a local hospital. One of the other patients in the ward asked her where she was from and when she responded ‘The Dean Maxwell’ the other patient said ‘O, I’d prefer to be dead then live in a place like that’. The Dean Maxwell Resident was appalled, ironically she was feeling sorry for this patient who had to go home on her own to a cold house. The general opinion of the group was that people outside need to know what goes on in Nursing Units, otherwise how can they ever make a proper decision about their care. The group decided to do something about this and local man Adrian Hewson sat down with them and together they compiled the following article. I thought it was a bit rose coloured, but this was not the opinion of the group. The article was published in the local papers.

‘At Home’ At ‘Dean Maxwell’

by Adrian Hewson

“Put up a Christmas tree outside so that people will know we are happy in here”, the words of a resident at Roscrea’s Dean Maxwell Home and encouraging words at a time when residential homes can often received bad press coverage. Indeed the whole article was inspired by the residents themselves who want the world to know at the dawn of a New Year how content and Happy they are with their lot.

“Everything’s the solid finest” remarked one resident, “I couldn’t expect better”, said another, while a third remarked “I never met anyone worse than myself”, and all were agreed that they found safety, care and security within its walls and not only was the food
good, but it was also emphasised that the diet was well balanced with “plenty of it”. And I wonder how many readers know that residents can email family members in places as far apart as New York and Brisbane?

The busy stranger travelling from Roscrea town centre to the Templemore Road roundabout could be forgiven for not knowing at the existence of The Dean Maxwell CNU. It is neatly tucked away with its entrance just a few meters from Rosemary Square and it shares a car park with St Cronan’s Church. Elevated behind it is the tree clad former Sacred Heart Convent building with its roof touching the skyline, and on a Summers day St Cronan’s Church shades it from the western sunset, while opposite is the Moinin River forming a boundary between the car park and local businesses. Named after Dean Thomas Maxwell, Parish Priest at Roscrea 1969-1970 who initiated its birth, its size and scope can give a false impression from the outside. “How can so much go on in there?” one visitor was heard to say, and in reality “inside” has to be seen to be believed! Not only does the building complex provide a home for residents, but also it is home to a Day Care Centre, to a local physiotherapy centre, a prayer room shielded in purple and pink light reflecting from its newly installed stained glass window, has room for a two bed hospice unit, “The Laurels”, and provides respite for people who wish to spend some time there for a change of scenery away from the home routine. Each individual room is equipped with state of the art facilities, and the human touch of care, hospitality and service with a smile shines through.

In preparation for writing this article I visited ‘Dean Maxwell CNU’ on a dull afternoon in early January the bright Christmas tree in the grounds lifted my spirits as I approached the door. No need to knock, it was ajar, emphasising the freedom for residents. I passed the ‘Cead Mile Failte’ sign in the sun lounge and was greeted by some residents relaxing there, as if at home. The only order I had to obey was “no fishing” in the tropical fish tank. I admired the photographs of members of the ‘90’s club hanging along the wall. The number of frames immediately suggested longevity. I patted a nodding Santa on the head and then caused mayhem as Judy the dog heard my voice and believed the “Cead
Mile Failte” sign and barked the place down. No 21st century security system could do as good a job to protect the residents as she does. She made it obvious that she has been warned against strange men! As the “welcome” from Judy was as expected so was the welcome from Staff: warm caring and hospitable.

After some relaxed and jovial conversation I met with the focus group in ‘The Snug’. The antique laden dresser, a reminder of by-gone days, stood in sharp contrast to the computer and other 21st century high tech equipment positioned beside it. The atmosphere was warm and the conversation good-humoured and intimate. Suddenly I realised I was meeting with people who had been visited by a President in the not too distant past and by a Taoiseach in the recent past. I think my first question shocked them as jovingly I asked “who would want to live in here?” If my question raised eyebrows, certainly the answer I got put me in my place! “And who are you?” “Who do you think you are?” I saw immediately that I was on to a loser, as a group of people from all parts of North Tipperary came to the defence of their home. Voices from Silvermines, Clonmore, Kilcommon, Ballingarry, Toomevara, Cloughjordan, Borrisoleigh, Templemore, Rathcabbin united with the Roscrea voices to make me realise that one’s home really is one’s castle.

I had prepared some typical questions to ask the group “Do you get lonely for home?” Do the days seem long?” I didn’t have to bother from the initial discussion I got the impression that days need more than 24 hours strong emphasis was placed on religion, a good focus in a 2006 Celtic Tiger world. Priests and chaplains visits were greatly appreciated, daily mass from the nearby church was broadcast on the big screen as a new innovation, I was told. Some people went out to Mass on Sundays, confessions were heard and the sacraments were brought on a regular basis and prayers were said at intervals throughout the day with great competition amongst the residents as to who would lead them. From the spiritual we moved to the secular. I heard about bingo and other evening games, flower arranging and art classes, the pleasure at welcoming visitors, parties and live entertainment, a
keen interest in spectator sports and the television soaps which were sometimes interrupted by staff “dishing out” tablets. Visitors and Day Centre members brought in fresh news and novel ideas from different places, and some residents even liked to go on the bus for the spin when the Day Centre visitors went home. In the quietness of the evening residents liked to read newspapers or catch up on letter writing. Generally however in ‘Dean Maxwell’, like elsewhere, letter writing is becoming a thing of the past. Mobile phones make it much easier to catch up with the “goings on” at family and friends in Sydney, or the Pyrenees, London or Roscrea. Overall I was distinctly told that “the timetable was well organised”, and that “we do a lot of things that you don’t know about”. Incidentally one resident received 81 photographs of a family event in New York by e-mail!

I heard too about summer holidays and days out. The annual holiday in Co. Wexford is a highlight on the social calendar; the bus trip, the party atmosphere, imbibing, dancing, fancy dress, singing, the seaside. Sufficient to say that an enjoyable time was had and can be had by all! Those unable to go can catch up with the holiday antics of their colleagues by watching the holiday video. A day trip to Dromineer and an excursion on the bog train also formed part of last summer’s well organised timetable. No one to my surprise mentioned Lisdoonvarna! Holidays aside, the summer atmosphere at ‘Dean Maxwell’ can be just as good. Enclosed courtyards provide an ideal location for a bar-b-que.

Gradually the conversation became more serious, I heard about the occasional row, surely good for stimulation! Besides the camaraderie, residents enjoyed the security and sense of safety to be found within the walls. Each was willing to help the other and to be honest with each other and it was during this part of the conversation that to me the real ethos of Dean Maxwell Home was highlighted. It was a place where people, free from loneliness, free from the fear of being unable to sleep safely in their beds at night lest their homes were broken into, it was a place where people could continue to do what they always did, have a drink or a smoke, a read, or a chat, a laugh or a visitor in security and safety. When you move here you have safety and care, but otherwise you can get on with your life. As one resident remarked “Its business as usual”.

During the millennium year we heard much about ‘bridge building’, Dean Maxwell does just that, moving there doesn’t change your life but it does bridge a gap, the gap between loneliness and companionship and the gap between fear and safety.

The conversation lightened again when we talked of reminiscences and by-gone days. Eyes brightened and each person made a contribution.
“Has anyone seen a ghost?” I asked “Never saw anything worse than myself” was one reply, although one resident admitted to a sighting of the Beanshe in her youth. I heard about hurling matches, tug-o-war, skittles and card games with a goose as prize. I heard about house dances, crossroads dancing, threshings, stations in the house and the respect amongst the farming community for the fairy fort or “the fairy ring”. Besides being a residential home and a day centre their place is also a hive of social history. What a social history of North Tipperary could be written if each resident’s memories could be recorded for posterity’. This writer has never seen a real threshing or a dance at a crossroads. Future generations will not know what a fairy ring or a card drive is, or for that matter even, a goose!

Seventy five minutes passed quickly, and as our conversation was about to end the tables were turned on me! “In the years to come” I was asked, “when you arrive here with your bag to become a resident what changes would you like to see?” As Judy barked in the background I answered, “The same Matron but a different dog”! After our chat I joined the residents for their evening meal. We had scrambled eggs and savoury scones. After all that Christmas cooking who in their own homes would go to the bother of making savoury scones in early January I wondered. The diet I was told was well balanced, I agree.

Darkness had descended when I left, but I was more cheerful than when I arrived. The good humour, honesty and cheerful sharing of memories made me leave Dean Maxwell feeling young. The outdoor Christmas tree shone in the darkness. In a few days their decorations will disappear for another year, but while the world around suffers from the ‘January blues’ the residents of Dean Maxwell will be looking forward to what’s next on that well organised timetable”, knowing that they can live life to its fullest within the safety and care of its walls assisted by an accomplished staff, and with a little white dog to give them that extra security. For all in there, it’s as it should be, “Business as usual”.

Catherine Timmons and Simon Healy.

Molly Fitzgerald
Adrian Hewson’s article in the local newspapers was the first action taken by the Residents group, they then started looking at other ways of informing the public and future residents about the ‘Home’. The end result is a welcome programme, to be posh we call it an Induction programme and it is made up of four parts: Information, Introduction, Inclusion and Integration. The whole idea is for you to settle in to your new home but keep all your old contacts and connections.

The Dean Maxwell Welcome Programme

This is a summary of each part

Information

The more real and practical information you have both before you come in and after the better. We decided there were three different types of information we had to have ready.

- Information for the general community about life in the Dean Maxwell.

  The Residents didn’t like the poor opinion some people had. One lady said ‘people out there have no idea what goes on in here’
• People need to know general information, facts about the services available, what the facilities and accommodation are like.

• People need to know what the place ‘feels’ like. This is harder to describe, it means looking at what is important in the place, what the spirit or energy of the place feels like.

We tackled this by doing the following

1 Putting the article written by Adrian and the Residents in the local papers.
2 We organised events that were open to the general public, like the family days and open days.
3 A new up to date booklet was published
4 A booklet to show the spirit of the place.

Introduction

So that everyone can get to know one another new residents and their families will be introduced to the other community members.

• New residents and their families will continue to be invited to see around the home before making up their minds

• The Manager of the Unit or a member of staff will visit and introduce themselves to new residents before their admission

• The new resident member of this community will be introduced to the other residents and will be shown their new home and its facilities.

• The new resident member will receive a welcome pack and card. The pack will contain items such as a selection of toiletries, picture frames, stationary, rug or cushion.

Inclusion

The new community member will be facilitated to ‘settle in’ as against ‘fitting in’.

To make this happen:

• The new resident and their family will be given specific staff members that they can contact if they have any queries.

• All residents will be encouraged to help draw up their personal care plan. Personal wishes in relation to bed time/meals/rooms will be listened to.
• The new resident will be invited to join in group activities
• We are always looking for new ideas, so if you have any we would be only too
delighted to hear them.

Integration

Just because an older person comes to live in a new home and community doesn’t
mean they leave their old friends and community behind.

To make sure this doesn’t happen:

There is a post box in the hall, there are email facilities and phones available;
National and local papers are delivered.
Your family, friends, clergy, politicians, groups from your local community are
encouraged to visit.
Many of your old friends may be coming to the Day Unit so you can meet them
regularly.
Family and friends are encouraged to invite residents out regularly especially to family
and parish events.
As part of the activities programme, outings to local areas are a regular feature.

Art Project 2002 when
each member of the
Dean Maxwell
Community painted a
tile. This project shows
how unique every
member is but how
important each one is to
the whole project.

Jimmy Gleeson, Anne Keevey, Ray McCarthy, Treasurer Friends
of Dean Maxwell, Austin Creaven, Artist, Sadie Downes.
The week of prayer is a very special time for all Dean Maxwell members. The essence of the Dean Maxwell being as a vibrant, ageless community is at its best during this period. Each day there are a number of ceremonies and events all focusing on celebrating the lives we have had, have and will have into the future. We celebrate what is good and meaningful about our lives.

Keeping in touch with our local community and with each resident's home community is important in keeping a sense of continuity in our lives. For the older person in residential care maintaining a relationship with their local church is crucial.

The 2006 week of prayer was organised by our chaplain Father Michael Harding, who conducted many of the ceremonies. On the first morning a number of the Dean Maxwell community members were commissioned as Ministers of the Eucharist. For Eileen who had been a Minister in her parish church there was a sense of reconnection with the past. For Maisie, Angela, Molly, Anne, Mary Elle, Kitty and Kathleen who were joined by staff members Margaret, Margaret, Fidelma, Eileen and Joan this was a new experience, an unexpected but welcome privilege, an opportunity to contribute to our Community. Age and ability need not restrict one from being Minister of the Eucharist.

The tabernacle was blessed and the community members were afforded the opportunity of having exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at times to suit them. The tabernacle is part of the mobile alter crafted in the woodwork class in Colaiste Phobail, Roscrea. A class the members enjoyed so much and that sadly had to be discontinued.

To facilitate the many members who are no longer able to go the short journey across to the Parish Church, daily Mass is now transmitted on a flat screen television in the

Prayer Room - Stained Glass Window by John Wilde
snug, thereby also maintaining a link with our local community. Mass was celebrated daily throughout the week and a number of Ecumenical services were held. We are grateful to Father Corbett, Father Harding, Father Nivard, The Reverend Leslie Robinson, Father Kennedy, Father Treacy and Adrian Hewson for accepting our invitation.

As in previous years Bishop Willie Walsh travelled from Ennis to concelebrate Mass in St Cronan's Catholic Church. He was joined by clergy from the home parishes of the residents. Friends and family from the local community and other residential units joined us for this celebration and for a cup of tea afterwards in the Dean Maxwell. Each ceremony had special meaning for the members. The hour of prayer was held at night and was by candlelight bringing memories flooding back of distant times. The aroma from the incense and from the flowers adding another dimension as Father Harding conducted the prayer ceremony. Margaret and Kevin Maloney sang traditional hymns. The Dunne sisters and Rose Marie Doyle led the Resident and day unit members in song and prayer, encouraging their active participation.

Throughout the week Gail Noonan held art classes the theme of which was to transfer to art form advice you would like to give young people starting out on life. Father Lorcan arrived on Thursday with a group of students. They brought with them artistic representation of the advice they would give one another. The very same advice was given by the two groups. Ironically when pressed the older people admitted they were glad they weren't young and facing out into the today's big world.

As we travel life's path there is a right time for everything. In later years when earning a living is no longer a necessity, when supporting family can be left to the younger generation, people have greater opportunity to think about things, to pray, to come to terms with the past, the future and enjoy the here and now. It is our belief that society has a responsibility to facilitate and support older people to exploit this potential, especially those among us who become bothered in later years.
Thank You

Some comments written back in 1996 following the week of prayer

Our Retreat was great.

It was very nice too.

I thank you.

I'm glad to have seen our Bishop and Parish Mr. Bann.

I enjoyed the week very much. It was wonderful.

I felt like a kid at Mass on Thursday.

Our beautiful Retreat has ended.

Here's my brief letter to Bishop Walsh and all the other residents from the Grace of God and a Blessed Mary.

Our grateful thanks to Rev. Father for all your work and letters from the Blessed Mary.

Dean Maxwell

At Home with the Dean Maxwell Community

Fiche Bliain faoi bhláth

20
Dawn Chorus

This is the morning of the dawn chorus, the young birds are singing strong. It’s so wonderful to hear them, because the air is filled with bird song. Many changes take place as the singing goes on, from solo singing to choir. One young bird will perform above, and the others will soon aspire. As time goes on, changes take place; the noise of the day begins. The singing of the birds gush fades away, and the invasive loud noise always wins. With the evening tide, the noise abates; the peace once more will belong. And in all the gardens, in all the trees, the birds will burst into song. And the beauty of nature, which we all can enjoy from the dew in the mornings to the star filled night sky. Then let’s pause for a while to listen, and the singing of the birds will fill us with joy.

Willie Fitzpatrick

Kitty Brooks painting

Trish Kiely, Aidan McGinn and Maura Scully.

Mary Hayes & Rita Fletcher
A trip to Lahinch had been planned for some time. Dean Maxwell Resident, Matt Hayes, had fond memories of childhood visits and wanted to go back and see if the place had changed. Eventually on a most beautiful September day the long promised trip was to take place. Fidelma was driving and our friend Paddy Scully was co-pilot. It was such a lovely day that there was a suggestion that there was room for one more. Lizzie Joyce was quick to say ‘I’d love to go’. She loved the sea and had really enjoyed her week in Wexford in late August. The little group set off, full of chat and laughter, that drove through Limerick and on into Co. Clare. They arrived in Lahinch at about 12 noon and spent some time on the promenade looking out to sea.

Lizzie’s comment was ‘Isn’t this just heavenly’.

After a while the little group adjourned to a nearby restaurant and had their lunch. As with all trips to the seaside a visit to a souvenir shop is a must so they all went into the shop next door. It was at this stage Lizzie felt unwell. Fidelma brought her outside

‘To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven
A time to be born and a time to die’ Ecclesiastes
to sit down. Within a very short time Lizzie had started on her heavenly journey. For Lizzie's family, for the staff and resident members of Dean Maxwell, this was a devastating loss. For the group that set off that morning full of hope and expectation it was especially so.

As the days passed and we thought about what had happened we were glad that Lizzie was granted such a happy time on her final earthly journey. Fidelma penned the following poem for Lizzie and her family which are her personal thoughts on the day. We are grateful to Lizzie's family for permission to publish it.

**Dedicated to Liz**

She was a lovely lady quiet and refined.  
She is one person who will always stick in my mind.

We laughed and we joked as we set on our way, not knowing what was ahead of us on that fateful day.

The sun was shining as we arrived at our base.  
There were tourists and children all over the place.

And here was the four of us, just another number in the crowd,  
Enjoying the day and chatting aloud.

As I watched Liz looking over the pier, she said ‘this is heavenly’.  
Little did we think her time was so near.

Her guardian angel was with her that day  
As no one could predict who was going to be passing her way.

The priest and the nurse, the doctor and the guard  
Were blessed to be among us to send Liz to her reward.

We all did our best but Liz wanted to journey on  
To a land of peace out there beyond.

I hope that Liz is looking down on us today  
To hear how we enjoyed her company that day.

The day in Lahinch is a day I’ll never forget.  
We all lost a friend we all won’t forget.

Elizabeth Joyce 1922 - 2006

Fidelma Carroll
At Home with the Dean Maxwell Community

Fiche Bliain faoi bhláth

A Valleyed Home
By George Cunningham

The Dean Maxwell Home is certainly situated in a beautiful part of the town, nestling in the valley under Knockbrack. Yes, Knock-brack (Cnoc Breac, the speckled hill) was the ancient name for the hill on which Richard Birch built a big house probably in the 1780s and renamed it Airhill. It was also called Chapel Hill or Priest's Hill. The hill and house were purchased by the Brigidine Sisters around 1832, becoming the Convent of the Sacred Heart from 1842 until now, December, 1999, when the Sisters return to Abbey Street. Over those 157 years countless echoes from thousands of young voices rolled down the hill to meander away on the little river.

The building of St Cronan's R.C. church, started in 1844, and the opening of the 'new' cemetery on the hillside opened up the western end of the river valley. Two mills hereabouts, Abbey (Hastings) and the Valley (Stanleys) were powered by this deceptive 'river'. It also powered the Black Mills at Church Street and the Bunow Mills on Mill (Monastery) Road at Clybanane. And what a proud little river it is with three names: called the Moneen (Móinín, little bog stream) as it enters the town from the foothills of Slieve Bloom in the Killavilla area; it becomes the Mall as it flows through the centre of town – what a showpiece it could become here; and below Burgoo Bridge it changes its name once more to become the Bunow, (Bun Abhainn, the end of the river). Be the Bunow! was a favourite exclamation remark of old Roscreaites.

Up to the late 1960s the eastern end of the valley remained built up. But then the curates' eighteenth century house, Lowrys, Stanleys house, farm buildings, remnant of mill and town lane all gave way to progress. A new parochial residence was erected (now Dean Cuddy's) and the rest of the site was developed as we see today: car park, a small housing development and the Dean Maxwell Home and gardens framed by the wonderful backdrop of trees on lower Knockbrack.

The erection of a home and day care centre for the elderly and slightly infirmed here in the heart of Roscrea was an inspired development.

In its twenty-five years no other institution - and it has become an institution, full of character and characters - in town has served its citizens so well. From the very start it was eminently successful. Now our senior citizens had a place of love and joy of their own. No longer were the aged forced to spend their golden years away from their friends and familiar haunts. Now they had a centre for both day and long-term use in their own place.

But the Dean Maxwell Home refused to become just a home for the elderly or as it became affectionately known 'the old folks home'. It developed its own distinctive
style of care and activity. It flourished and enriched all of us. It challenged and challenges us too to become involved as Matron and staff deliver a top-class service in a most loving manner.

My family and I have first class knowledge of this care and love. Our beloved mother, known to all as Maggie, for many of her latter years, was happily involved in very many of the pleasurable activities of the Home: learning new skills, dancing, singing, partying, going on holidays, meeting old friends and, in her 89th year, playing basketball for Roscrea against Nenagh (they won too). And as she approached her 90th year when her Maker called she died as she had lived, in her own town, surrounded by family and friends and in the loving care of all at the Dean Maxwell Home.

May it always be a Home of activity, care and love.

George Cunningham,

December 1999

Nan Duggan, Bridget McNamara, Terry Lynam, R.I.P., Maggie Cunningham, R.I.P., Marie Healy, Mai Delaney, R.I.P., making Didgee Dodger's with cowslips.
Dean Maxwell Home

Great golden span that’s come and gone
In sweet home for olden folk
and I have some years along
With your gifts to take and soak.

Sheltered sweetly in comfort meekly
There I’ve lived my happy time
All the years a comfort greatly
Sweet as any golden twine.

Good days of time have come and gone
Great years have come and flown away
All true living was made known
In my head now coloured grey.

Willie Costigan

Willie published his book of poems in August ‘89. It was sold out within 3 weeks. The title of his book was ‘Under the Shadow of the Bit’ [the Devil’s Bit].
My Little Church, Clonakenny

Often I think of the little Church, that is standing by the Nore
Often my thoughts go wandering there,
Where I prayed my prayer of yore.
There I rang the little hand bell when there was no other chime
Yes, that was just eighty years ago,
When life had a lovely shine.

All came there were country folk,
For miles away up the hills.
There I ran the grey stone way
Where saints and sinners came.
Time and time again I saw them coming, the lively and the lame.
Seats filled, some with tight squeeze,
To pray their way of yore.
In peace and quiet, in dark and light
In our church close by the Nore.

William Costigan, formerly of Clonakenny, reading his poem.

Carne 2006
Celebrating Paddy Scully’s birthday
Ben and Nora

Some years back Ben and Nora started coming to the Day Unit. Nora would often come to stay for a short break also, but as the years advanced and with failing health, Nora required ongoing residential care. Ben continues to come to the Day Unit, spending the day with his beloved Nora. For the past three years they have holidayed with the Dean Maxwell Community in Carne, Wexford.

Ben and Nora were one of the many Irish couples who immigrated to America. They married and set up home in the Bronx. Ben worked in construction and Nora was a hospital secretary. Over the years they were very frequent visitors to their native Terryglass and when they retired they built their dream home there. Merging their two names they called their home ‘Benora’. The name ‘Benora’ signifies their relationship that continues and grows in spite of the changing circumstances of their lives.

On St. Valentine’s Day they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary and to mark this occasion a celebratory day was planned. Ben and Nora’s family and friends were invited to the Dean Maxwell, some of whom were at their American wedding and some of whom travelled from Cork and Dublin for this occasion. They joined Ben and Nora for a Nuptial blessing and Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Father Tom Corbett. A special meal prepared and served by the Dean Maxwell catering staff followed in the Snug. A wedding planner had been commissioned to decorate the room in the appropriate golden theme. Baronial chairs had been borrowed so that Ben and Nora were regally enthroned and Brian Redmond, prestigious photographer and great friend of the Dean Maxwell was at hand to take photographs.
Resident, day unit and staff members of the community unit joined Ben and Nora and their guests for an evening of entertainment with the music and song provided by the Kennedys of Clonakenny.

Many people were part of and contributed to this fine day: Ben and Nora, they gave us all the privilege of sharing their celebration; their friends and family who came to join them; Father Corbett celebrated this special Mass and delivered a homily that was meaningful and lovely for Ben and Nora; Chef Joan Walsh and catering staff Maura Scully and Patricia Kiely who served, they were joined by Aidan McGinn who donned his tuxedo to add to the occasion. Fidelma Carroll arranged floral displays and much more; Hairdresser Anne Dillon made a special visit; Rackett Hall Hotel provided the Baronial chairs; Brian Redmond, photographer; The Kennedys of Clonakenny our faithful and treasured friends came up trumps, as always.

The Kennedys

Many moons ago- about 15 years- an afternoon outing to the folk park in Bunratty was organised. As morning went on, the rain started falling and the sky looked as if it was down for the day. I decided to cancel the outing as I didn’t feel like running around the cottages in Bunratty dodging the drops. This meant there was going to be huge disappointment, the day unit members were starting to arrive and they were expecting an outing. I wasn’t long in this post and at a loss as to what to organise as a consolation.

Former attendant Josie Scully suggested that I ring Jim and M.B. Kennedy. It was to be a most significant phone call. Not only did Jim and M.B come with all their equipment that evening, they have been coming ever since. They have entertained us with their music and song regularly; they were here for every important occasion, feast day and celebration. They sang and played for President McAleese, who paid them great compliments. They have celebrated birthdays, anniversaries and retirements. They
have entertained us at Christmas, Easter, Patrick’s day, and St. Valentine’s Day parties and more. They have provided music and hymns at Masses and have accepted many invitations to sing ‘Never Grow Old’. We would be absolutely lost in Carne without them. Our holiday would not be the same. Their choice of music and song is ours. Their tempo and rhythm is ours.

The funny thing is that day I first rang the Kennedys turned out to be a beautiful day and as for the day we eventually went to Bunratty, we were drenched.

There are many others who also entertain us throughout the year and to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude. We enjoy and appreciate their talents. Music and song are such a pleasure and know no boundaries. Rose Marie Doyle, Mary O’Meara, Jimmy Carroll, Josephine Cahill, Maura Maloney and Pat O’Meara, Roscrea ICA, Dunkerrin and District Social services, the students from Colaiste Phobail, Junior and Senior Comhaltas Ceoltori Ros Cré, Roscrea Folk, the students from the Cistercian College.

**Paddy Scully**

One morning as I sat at my desk I looked out the window and was horrified to see our dog, the late Maxi, chase a man cycling his bike into the nearby church yard. I was mortified but didn’t dare go out. I pointed out the man to another member of staff and asked his name and was told ‘O, that’s Paddy Scully’, I didn’t know him then but I certainly know him now as does each and every member of this community.

Sometime later Maura, Paddy’s wife came to the Laurels for a short period of convalescence. A great friendship developed between this remarkable couple and the community and even though Maura’s illness was progressing she continued to visit us after she went home and both she and her sister Birdie would come every Tuesday night to help with the Pongo game. In August Paddy and Maura joined the holidaymakers in Carne. Maura wasn’t the only one delighted with the ease...
that Paddy settled into a new role of helper and companion to the members; we were more than happy with his great help. It was a wonderful happy week, warm and sunny; the holiday home is right on the beach and every day we were out soaking up this lovely energy and colour. In the evenings the Kennedy’s led the entertainment. Eileen Carroll as usual was full of devilment; most people opened their bedroom doors at night with dread, including Paddy and Maura. She might have some little delight on the pillow or it could be the dreaded French bed.

Some months later Maura was admitted to the Laurels. She lived her final precious days there reassured, supported and cared for by Paddy, their children and family and neighbours.

In the intervening years Paddy has become a vital part of the community life, whether it is sitting quietly with members, calling pongo, helping on outings and parties, he has joined us for every holiday since that time. I am not sure whose idea it was to have a fancy dress party on the last night in Carne, but it has now become an annual event with a practice run on the second last night. It gets harder each year to come up with new themes. There is one sure thing and that is that Paddy will enter the spirit of the party with gusto. He has been Reverend Mother, Rose of Carne, Mrs Bucket, Princess Diana, mother of the bride and a pirate. Some people have failed to recognise him and wonder who the ‘one’ is, who appears every year.

Last summer on the occasion of his birthday we paid a special tribute to Paddy and acknowledged his wonderful help and support over the years, the generosity and respect he has shown all members of this community- staff, residents and day unit members.
Thomas Keane

Tom was born in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin and lived his very early years in Mountmellick. An only child, he was very young when his mother died. His father brought him home to Lismacrory, Ballingarry to live with his grandmother and uncle. Tom was to serve this local community for years as postman. Sport was Tom’s passion. He loved all types of sport but he excelled at hurling, playing usually on the forward line. Nicknamed the ‘Warrior Kane’, because of his prowess on the field, he was a member of the famous Knocknashegowna team which won the Abbott Cup in 1948. There is a photograph of this team in the Dean Maxwell. In his later years Tom maintains his interest in sport from the sidelines. Attending matches with Teresa O’Meara and Eileen Gohery, he is Knockshe’s greatest supporter. He watches all sports on television and is fond of horse racing, having an occasional wager. When word reached us last year that Charlie Swan had a horse in training called the ‘Warrior Kane’ we were anxious to confirm if it was the Dean Maxwell Warrior. It was. The horse owned by Nicky English and Niall Quinn will not be racing for a while yet but this is one community that will be shouting for him when he is. Among Tom’s other interests are reading, he has read a vast range of cowboy and detective books. The Dean Maxwell pets, Tonic the cat and Judy the dog are a big hit with Tom.

Tom, a quiet, reserved gentleman with a wry sense of humour, he has always been popular with staff and resident members alike, we wish him a long, happy and a sporting life and thank him for his friendship over the years.
‘The Warrior’

“Did Knockshe win their hurling match at the weekend?” Tom asked me as I walked into work Monday morning. “They did Tom,” I said “and are through to the North semi-final on next weekend!” Tom proceeded to ask me who was on the team and who were their parents. As he spoke, it dawned on me that Tom had hurled on that same team many years ago, and had left the village before I moved to live there. I had heard numerous times what a great hurler he had been and had listened to various stories on many social occasions about Tom and how he had saved the day for his team mates. Many a great word was spoken about him. In fact he had earned the name ‘The Warrior’ for his hurling prowess.

“Would you like to go see them hurl, Tom?” “Yes, I’d love to”, he replied. So it was organised with Matron to take him to the match the following Saturday.

When we arrived at the match the team manager who knows Tom well, asked us to come into the dressing rooms before the match. He gave a pep talk to the team and recounted to them Tom’s achievements with the club and the team he played with. It was a speech filled with emotion, and brought a tear to my eye as I watched Tom’s reactions and facial expressions. The most poignant and sweet part of all was when the team stood up and gave Tom a standing ovation, along with taking his photograph with the team for the club’s archives. As Tom and I made our way to the stands all his old neighbours and team-mates came over to say hello to him and to wish him well. For Tom it was a connection with his younger days and I could see he was delighted by all the attention he was given.

It was a great match. Knockshe won and so I had to promise Tom to take him to the ‘North Final’. The following Sunday we headed off again. Before the match started I asked Tom if he thought Knockshe would win and he predicted that they would lose, as they were weak in areas. Alas, he was right, but the team had still qualified for the County final. So, two weeks later, it was to Semple Stadium in Thurles we made our way, hearts full of promise - the memories and the future.
This particular match was of great interest to Tom as he hadn’t been to Semple Stadium in Thurles before. We decked him out to match his team colours with a blue shirt and lemon tie, and eagerly headed off. There was a great atmosphere in the Stadium and I could see the size and vibrant colours of the Stadium amazed Tom. We sat down amongst the Knockshe supporters and once again Tom was welcomed and greeted by everyone. They were delighted to see him there and looking so well. It was a great match, breathtakingly close but Knockshe lost by a point. Everyone was disappointed, even Tom, so on the way home we stopped in Templemore for his favourite sausage and chip supper, and a few pints of Smithwicks to wash it down. Despite the loss, our hurling match excursions were not over yet, Knockshe were still in the Munster semi-finals, so two weeks later we headed off to the Gaelic grounds in Limerick. It was a cold, miserable day in the beginning of October and Tom was right on his predictions on the drive to Limerick that Knockshe would be beaten, but nothing that the weather or score would bring could take the magic from the air and the sparkle from his eyes. We stopped in ‘Finnegan’s’ on the way home and had an enjoyable meal and a few drinks and headed home. Tom slept soundly the nights of the matches as he said himself “from all the excitement, Smithwicks and fresh air”. Life couldn’t get much better than that.

_Theresa O’Meara_
**Carne Diary**

_Eileen Carroll_

**Saturday 19th August**

A big day in Dean Maxwell. We were setting off on our annual summer holiday to Carne in Wexford. As usual the front conservatory was full of bags, suitcases, walking frames and wheelchairs. We all loaded our buses at 1.30pm capably driven by Des, Tony, Fidelma and the people carrier led with our esteemed Director of Holidays and co-pilot Nan, aged 93 years of age.

We had a comfort stop at Thomastown courtesy of the local Day Centre and Hospital, which was very much appreciated, arriving in Carne Holiday Centre in time for a very welcome cooked tea and fresh scones. Firstly we re-acquainted ourselves with the ladies from Mooncoin who make sure to coincide with our booking every year. Rooms were allocated with sea-view for the newcomers. We enjoyed our first walk on the beach that evening, while for others, exhaustion took over and it was early to bed.

**Sunday 20th August**

It was bright and sunny. At 11am Mass Fr Kelly welcomed us for the 15th year in a rom to Our Lady’s Island. Gifts were brought up by two of our youngest members, Karen and Margaret. After a lovely lunch many returned to an open air Mass, blessing of the sick and benediction. Some walked around the Island in the procession and for many it was a very moving experience.

**Monday 21st August**

It’s another beautiful day. Some of the group headed for the quaint fishing village of Kilmore Quay. That evening there was great excitement when our resident band “The Kennedy’s” arrived. Their presence ensured nights of song and dance and great entertainment for all.
Tuesday 22nd August

We go on an outing to Rosslare town and harbour to view the ships and we enjoyed a lively cuppa and scones at a much reduced rate as we watched passengers disembark from a liner.

Wednesday 23rd August

Early morning mist made us decide on a shopping trip to Wexford town where many gifts were bought for family and friends. That evening we went to the local pub “The Lighthouse” to celebrate Marie’s 74th birthday.

Thursday 24th August

We made our usual visit to Yola Farm to view the old machinery, outhouses and farming implements of a bygone era. Many of the group had a nostalgic look! The birds, farmyard fowl, animals and the houses of bygone days entranced us.

Thursday pm

This was a very special evening. We celebrated the 70th birthday of Paddy, our stalwart volunteer, with a comical version of “This is your Life” with some surprising guest appearances. The night was a huge success. Everyone knows without Anne and her organisational abilities this immensely important holiday would never take place.

As we leave Carne we would like to acknowledge the help and support of Paddy, Madeline, Tony, Pat, Des, John, Anne, the Kennedys. Our own members of staff who put so much time and effort to make the holiday enjoyable.

A heartfelt thanks to you all.
Nan’s Story

By Fidelma Carroll

My experience with Nan on her journey home is a day I will always remember. Like others I was wondering what way Nan would react. Would she be lonely, upset etc. but it was quite the opposite.

We had arranged that a next-door neighbour would have a fire lit in the cottage before we arrived. We set off, all three of us, Pat, Nan and myself, with a picnic flask, a flash lamp, as there would be no electricity in the house, and a camera to take a few photos of Nan back home.

When we arrived outside the front door we were met with a gush of smoke. As one can imagine there had been no fire lit for quite a while, not since Nan had left home. We asked Nan did she still want to go in and without any hesitation she said “yes”, no way she was turning back, smoke or no smoke.

We opened windows and doors to let out some of the smoke and then made Nan comfortable with rugs. She gazed around her and you could almost see the memories flit across her face. After a while we wheeled Nan into her bedroom and it was like she had just dropped out for a while. Everything was as she left it on that day when she went to hospital. I noticed a picture over her bed. It was a picture of a priest and this got a good conversation going. I said Nan, “I couldn’t imagine going to bed with my husband and having a priest looking down on me I would not feel right with that”. She burst out laughing but it was then I realised that it was the same priest that Nan met one Sunday when she expressed a wish to go to Mass in her local church a few months previous. It was Father Cantwell who was home from the missions. It just shows us how religion is a very important part of most our residents’ lives. That day when she went out to Mass, Father Cantwell welcomed her and afterwards friends and neighbours also came up to say hello.

We then went back out to the kitchen and asked her if she would like to bring back anything of sentimental value to her new home. She pointed to a press which we opened and took out an old box which contained all her memorabilia, medals, memory cards, photos, prayer books, jewellery etc.

The icing on the cake was when the neighbours called in. It must have been the smoke signals we sent out from all the smoke in the house. We all had a cup of tea, smoke or no smoke. We all wanted to share this moment.

After all the chat and reminiscing we set off home. Nan brought back photos, some of herself and Dan, her mother and father and other ones of sentimental value. We have them now reframed and hanging on the wall in the lounge where Nan sits every day. And so Nan brought something from her “old home” to her “new home”.

37
‘Family Day’

“Now you see it - Now you don’t”

But you will see it for real in the eyes of the residents, day unit members, attendants, nursing staff, care staff and chefs of the Dean Maxwell CNU Roscrea.

“Togetherness”

A wonderful Open Day to welcome family, friends, both young and not so young, of all our residents - a day to laugh, chat, giggle, reminisce, sing, dance, eat, drink and be merry.

All were treated to an hour of “The Great Padini” (Ireland’s magical entertainer) ably assisted by Liz, one of our day unit residents, to the rapturous laughter of grannies, grandkids, granddads and all who came.

Music and song supplied by our very good friends “The Kennedy’s” who cheer us all up with song and story and cause all our feet to tap and twist until we rise on the floor by ourselves or with others and all in the name of ‘Craic’.

Food, glorious food, of every description rounded off a splendid “Party” for all. Presents, surprises and balloons in every corner of our unit where each clan spread out to enjoy their visitors. We look forward to the same next year.

Please God.
Mollie Maher – January 22, 2002
A Rememberance from an American Cousin

Before I speak of my dear cousin, a brief explanation must be given of how an American with an Italian surname found the road to Mollie Maher’s cottage and the discovery of cousins in Tipperary.

My maternal grandmother of Irish American heritage died in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1974. She was the wife of Martin Maher, my grandfather, who predeceased her some years before.

One of my mother’s brothers had the responsibility for sorting through family documents that had lain hidden for decades in an attic of a grand, rambling Victorian house that had seen its better days. In his search, my uncle discovered a cache of old probate court documents in a trunk from the estate of an Irish immigrant--Jeremiah Maher--from Hillsdale, Michigan who died in 1917. My grandfather, a young man of 26, was nominated as executor under the last will and testament of his bachelor uncle, “Jer” as he preferred to be called.

From the meticulous correspondence and court pleadings that had survived the Great Influenze of 1918, a depression, and a word war, it is apparent that my grandfather was astounded to learn of branches of the family in Ireland that had somehow been lost from memory in the crossing to a new world after successive years of the potato famine. Poverty and desperation and the hope for a better life led to the breakup of families and a flood of immigration to America.

A sworn statement from Irish cousins in Tipperary was found among the court documents. This affidavit was the genealogical equivalent of the ‘Rosetta Stone’ that led to a trip to Ireland in 1978, a rent-a-car from Shannon, and a trip down a one lane road in Boulerea--a place so tiny that I needed the assistance of a geodesic map to pinpoint the locale.

L-r: Liz Anne Ives and Molly Maher
My wife and I were informed that a lady named Mollie Maher might be helpful and she was “just down the road” (as everything seems to be in Ireland).

For a half hour, we traveled in circles and finally abandoned the car. We set out on a footpath and, after some length of time, came upon an elderly gentleman sitting by the way. He was breaking sticks, apparently for firewood.

“Do you know where Mollie Maher lives?, we asked respectfully.

“Never heard of her”, he replied curtly.

We shrugged our shoulders in disappointment and continued down the path until we came to an elderly woman who was feeding chickens outside a tiny cottage.

“Can you tell us where we can find Mollie Maher?”, we asked with hesitation.

“Sure, I am Mollie Maher and who might ye be?, she replied with a face full of wrinkles and incredible smiling eyes.

We introduced ourselves and told her why we came and how the man down the path said that he had never heard of Mollie Maher.

She laughed in delight, “That was my brother Jack. He probably thought you were revenue agents! Won’t ye come in for some tea?”

We walked across a fieldstone threshold and travelled back in time and space into the 19th century. There was a huge fireplace of glowing embers with iron utensils which I had only seen in colonial museums back in the States. Every cliché which Americans cling to about the Emerald Isle was thrown in our face. The thatched cottage, the chickens in the yard, the turf fire. It was all there… But so was the stark reality of how hard life had been for Mollie and her brother. There was nothing romantic in this rural setting. But, there was simplicity and dignity and unconditional hospitality which I never witnessed before or since.

For an hour we sat around a small table with tea and biscuits in animated conversation about the Maher family from Boulerea. We could not confirm our kinship, but were given a telephone number for her cousin Patrick Maher who left for America many years before and went to a place called MICHIGAN. Maybe he could help us in our search.

I felt sad when it came time for goodbyes. We exchanged addresses and promised to write often. When we left for Dublin, I told my wife that if Mollie Maher was not a blood cousin, I would make her an honorary one nonetheless.

Within a week of our return flight home, we were able to confirm that, yes, Mollie was my grandfather’s first cousin, making me a first-cousin-twice-removed.

Thus began a 23 year relationship which began with correspondence and ended with a series of occasional return visits with my wife Mary, daughter Christina, my sister
Mary Elizabeth and her husband John. We were relieved when Mollie was able to move to the Dean Maxwell House in Roscrea, watched over with loving care by a devoted staff, her nieces Kathleen and Nancy and their families.

A ‘pilgrimage’ of sorts was made to Roscrea four out of the past five years. It just so happened that we would travel at the end of May in time to celebrate Mollie’s birthday which coincided with my sister Mary Elizabeth’s. We would join in the festivities—the music, song, food and beverages—organised by the Costigans and Ryans and assisted by the Dean Maxwell staff. To participate in this annual gathering of family, friends, neighbours, and residents of the home was a privilege.

The goodbyes and parting embraces were very emotional.

“Sure I don’t suppose I’ll ever see ye again at my age”, her smiling eyes were crying.

I had to think fast: “Mollie, there is still a dance in the girl yet. Invite us back for next year’s birthday and we’ll be back. I promise you”. … I gulped thinking about what keeping my word would involve. I wanted so badly for this to be the truth. And so it turned out to be year-in and year-out until I received the sad news in an early morning telephone call from Eileen Costigan.

I have since learned that Mollie’s death was peaceful and came to her when she was in the presence of Kathleen and Nancy. She was a devout woman who found solace in her faith and affection from her family.

‘May you die asleep on your pillow surrounded by your loved ones’. So goes an old Gaelic blessing. God granted her this final favour.

I am so grateful—my family is so grateful—for the opportunity and privilege to bear witness to the love and devotion and kindness and compassion of cousin Mollie’s family who are my cousins, her neighbours, her friends, and all of the staff at Dean Maxwell.

Thomas F. Schiavoni
Boston, Massachusetts.

Mollie Maher with President Mary McAleese and Eileen Carroll.
Tom Dwyer

Tom Dwyer was a larger than life figure known to everyone in Roscrea. He was born in Annesgift House, Fethard on the 8th September 1904. His mother died when he was very young and his father fought in the great war, in the Dardenelles. In his working life he was a cobbler. He worked as a journey man in the early years and first came to work in Roscrea in 1924, when he worked for Pat Dynan in Grove Street, he later set up business in Rosemount, Roscrea where he lived with his family.

Tom was one of the first people I met when I came to the Dean Maxwell and was to be a very familiar face over the years. Ever popular with the residents he called in several times a day. His first call was after 10 am Mass when he stopped by for a cup of tea and a chat. He would reappear several times during the day, to attend Mass, to deliver messages for the residents, take letters to the post, often armed with great cowboy books to distribute.

The Dean Maxwell wasn’t his only stop, he visited friends in all the nursing homes and took the bus to Nenagh and Thurles regularly to visit Roscrea people in hospital. He had a visitation pattern as he walked through the town, Hartnetts, Liam Moloneys, Ahearns, the Library

Tom loved telling stories and had many to tell, but when it came to politics he had only one story line. He canvassed for every election, covering more miles than the politicians themselves and at a faster pace. He wrote a short biography of his life for our reminiscence group which I treasure. A short account of his visit to Aras an Uachtarain is included in this booklet.

He enjoyed travel and holidays and came to Carne for a number of years. There he would rise early and walk for miles across the sandy beach, during the day he could be found sitting in one of the sand dunes reading a good book. In the evening he always joined in the music and song delivering a recitation when called upon.

When I was compiling the first booklet I asked Tom if he would like to write a little bit about his experience of the day unit. He took this task very seriously and set about getting comments from many people both resident here and those living in the local community. To Tom’s disappointment these comments weren’t included in the earlier booklet so this time a number of these snippets feature.
As Tom’s health deteriorated he came to live in the ‘Dean Maxwell’. He will always be remembered as the kindly gentleman who walked with a spring in his step that mirrored his zest for life.

**Aras an Uachtarain**

*This visit took place in June ‘95 and many years later Tom recalled the visit*

President Robinson has gone to a bigger job on the world stage but when I went with a group of senior citizens to the park, she received us with courtesy and kindness. She spoke to each person in the different groups that had come from all the counties in Ireland, north and south. We were shown over the public rooms and saw pictures of great value. In the first room it was a picture of Thomas Gainsborough called the gamekeeper. In the second room we saw where the ambassadors, heads of state and other dignitaries are received. In the third room we were shown a very valuable fireplace and were told that the first governor general tried to steal it. We left through the front hall where we saw busts of honoured citizens, who had contributed to the arts and other endeavours to the honour of the state.

**Snippets taken from Tom’s Book of Comments**

**Dean Maxwell Home**

Roscrea, you have a treasure, the Dean Maxwell Home. It is situated close to the church beside the council car park on the outskirts of the town. It caters for approx. forty senior citizens with a staff of approximately twenty five. it also has a day centre. There is Mass two days a week and a priest appointed to look after the needs of the people. Beside me now as I write are two sisters from Cloughjordan, one is 100 years old and the other is 85. There names are Kate and Minnie Brophy, beside them is Mick Coughlan, 85 and a number of people from Roscrea. This is the Monday group. The comments from the Monday group is that it is ‘home from home’.

*Tom Dwyer*
Whenever I visit our Dean Maxwell Nursing home, I am always conscious of being warmly welcomed, the Matron and Staff are most friendly and helpful. I like to recall a particular visit to the Dean Maxwell, it was after 10pm at night, I was visiting an old friend of mine, when I reached his bedroom door I realised the nurse was settling him for the night, the nurse was unaware of my presence, as I stepped out on to the corridor. I will never forget how kind she was as she talked to my old friend, who at that stage, was in an unconscious state and unable to converse with anybody. Later that night he passed to his eternal reward. I thank God for his life and for the kindness and love afforded to him as he went to meet his Heavenly Father.

Wesley Beck

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Roscrea Hurling Club is the main supporter of the annual holiday to Carne. Their support over the many years has been invaluable and greatly appreciated. ‘We call every week with out Lotto Tickets for our Weekly Draw. Everyone looks so relaxed and happy there. If one of them win anything, no matter how small, they really appreciate it so much. The atmosphere there is lovely and peaceful. The staff are all terrific and patients are great fun’.

Ml Phelan

Secretary, Roscrea Hurling Club

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The Dean Maxwell is a warm and welcoming place where everyone is cheerful and happy. The people who live there feel at home and make everyone else at home. A wonderful place in the heart of Roscrea with Roscrea at its heart

Canon Condell

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A significant measurement of evaluation of a community is, I believe, the manner in which it looks after its senior citizens. Therefore, we as a community in Roscrea owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Anne Murray, her staff, present and former, and all those associated with providing a loving and caring environment at the Dean Maxwell Home in which our community members in their senior years, and within their own community, are empowered to live full, dignified and happy lives through, the sometimes, difficult process of ageing.

I recall the great sense of community anguish and despair in the mid 1980s when our District Hospital was closed and some of our senior citizens, having resided there for
long periods, were forced out of their community to live out their days in relative loneliness.

We must be grateful to all those who positively responded to the community’s need at that time by ensuring the provision of significant additional facilities at the Dean Maxwell Home which have developed into the facilities which our community is so fortunate to have there today.

However, in the same way as the Dean Maxwell Home cares for our aged, the community as a whole must continue to care for the Dean Maxwell Home and never cease to lobby for additional facilities there to meet with the ongoing needs of our senior citizens and those of tomorrow’s senior citizens which hopefully may include many of us.

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Thank you

It would be difficult to individually name all those who support this Community, there are so many and we are eternally grateful to each and everyone.

I hope you have enjoyed reading through this booklet. For every story that was included there were many, many more that weren’t. When I retire I will write the big book. The purpose of the booklet was to help our new residents to get to know us. We all know that our own home is where we would like to live out our days. The message in this booklet is that, if we decide to enter residential care for what ever reason, health or otherwise, we can continue to enjoy a good life, a happy health life.

Saol Folláin Sásúil diabh go léir.

John Lupton,
July 2nd, 1999

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