



## Piercestown

*Mass Times*

*Daily: 9.30am*

*Vigil: Saturday 7.30pm*

*Sunday: 10.00am*



**V. Rev. John O'Reilly P.P.  
St. Martin's, Piercestown.  
053 9158851 087 2024030**



## Murrinstown

*Mass Times*

*Daily: 9.30am*

*Vigil: Saturday 6.00pm*

*Sunday: 11.00am*



# Christmas 2020





# Christmas 2020

## CHRISTMAS EVE



**Murrintown 8p.m - confined to 50 people**

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**10a.m Piercestown Church -**

**50 people transmitted through web cam**

**11a.m. Murrintown Church -**

**50 people and transmitted to car radios in Car Park**

*We invite you and your family to join us to celebrate the Birth of the Saviour*

### MISSION STATEMENT

That, we, the Faith Community of St. Martin, Piercestown and St. Catherine, Murrintown, commit to grow closer to God in Love, Prayer and Obedience, to grow closer together in caring and sharing, to grow closer to others in Friendship and witness.



In Jan 1993 Queen Elizabeth described 1992 as an Annus Horribilis. It had been a disastrous year for the Royal Family. As we look back at 2020 we can truly say it was an Annus Horribilis for both the human family and the Christian Family of the Parish.

Thinking back to Jan or Feb the last time we might be able to say life was normal, we went about our business of working, enjoying the simple pleasures of life, meeting for coffee, going out for lunch or a meal, going to Mass or a match, preparing to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and looking forward to the seasons of Lent and Easter. Our children and young people were beginning their second term at school, Confirmation and First Communion programs were being organised Junior and Leaving Cert Exams were a priority for many, Wedding and Foreign Holidays were being planned and looked forward to.

Some of us at that time may have heard of a new strain of virus that had broken out in China but we paid very little interest. Little did we think or imagine that within a few short weeks our lives would be turned upside down.

The virus quickly disrupted our daily lives by closing our schools and churches, our shops and businesses, packing hospitals, restricting travel and putting social gatherings, sporting events and travel plans on hold indefinitely. New strange words and phrases like quarantine, lock-down and social distancing came into everyday use.

Within our Parish the first to go was Daily and Sunday Mass. For 16 weeks there was no public celebrations in our Churches. The great Feasts of Holy Week and Easter were very low key indeed. It did force us to go digital and the introduction of the web cam proved an important link between people and Parish. However it is not the same, celebrating Mass alone in an empty church is no real celebration. Simple natural things we always took for granted are no longer socially acceptable the simple shake of hands when greeting someone or offering condolences at a funeral or the sign of Peace at Mass are all gone by the wayside.

Funerals have become lonely places for the bereaved without the comfort of friends and neighbours. Visits to the schools and hospitals has diminished our ministry as priests.

Confirmation and First Communions were confined to just children and parents all keeping their social distance.

Yet in our darkest hour we saw the light in so many ways in the courage and care of our Medical people and their support staff, in the genuine outreach of local shops to their customers, in the scientific rush to discover a vaccine, the teachers and staff of our schools who did so much during lock down and in their preparation for re-opening our schools, the real meaning of religious services became apparent without the fuss and clamour of huge crowds and intimacy returned to family life with parents and children spending more time together.

And no one knows what our Christmas will be like.

It has been a difficult year for all but with the help of the Christ Child we will see better days.

I am eternally grateful for your support throughout the year, I thank all those who contributed financially, who sent letters and messages of support and I will be offering Christmas Mass for all your intentions.

**A Blessed Christmas to one and all**

**John O'Reilly P.P.**



*Fr. John O'Reilly P.P.*

# LOCKDOWN IN AN IRISH RURAL COMMUNITY

## The story behind the book

*By Alan Mahon*

March the 27th 2020 will be a date that will stay in the minds of many people all over Ireland. This was the day that full lockdown began. It was implemented by the Irish government as an effort to try and curb the spread of the deadly virus, Covid-19.

For me it was a situation made worse by the fact that I had been unemployed for about a year beforehand. In my 'spare time' I would often travel around County Wexford and beyond taking photographs - a hobby I developed since leaving school. Now, all of a sudden, I found myself out of work and nowhere to go. In order to keep myself sane I began to do a lot of walking, all within 2km of my home, as that was the limit anyone could travel.

I would meet other people out walking, jogging or working in their gardens. I would often stop to have a chat with them and many would have interesting stories to tell of how this sudden change in lifestyle affected them. As I always carry my camera with me, I began taking photographs of them and writing about their situation. As time went on, the restrictions began to ease, which meant that I could travel that bit further. It wasn't just people I photographed, but also events that took place during the lockdown such as outdoor bingo, street singing and even a french horn recital in a cornfield.

It was interesting to see how people managed. For the most part everybody was in a good mood. We had exceptionally fine weather during April, May and June, which enabled people to get outdoors to walk, cycle, jog and even do some gardening. The coronavirus brought out a lot of good in people. They helped one another, started to talk to each other and got involved in community activities. One person said to me that they had the first real conversation with their neighbour in almost twenty





years. It wasn't that they didn't get on but they were so busy with the hustle and bustle of normal life that they never found the time to stop and have a chat.

With the fine weather we had, people would say that nature did better during the lockdown. I'm not so sure about that. I think it was more of a case that nature always thrived. It's just that we never noticed it before as our lives, beforehand, were so busy with the distractions of modern living.

The weeks rolled into months and it wasn't long before I had quite a collection of photographs and stories compiled. With so many photographs taken I thought of the idea of creating a photo documentary on how the lockdown affected the people in my community. For years I always wanted to produce a book showcasing my photography but I never had the courage or confidence to do it. It's funny how being out of work, nothing to do and a virus forces your hand.

Even though the book shows how people adapted and helped one another, it also portrays the tough times that occurred in my community during lockdown. The

closing of pubs, schools, guest houses and sport facilities was a big blow to us. I even documented a funeral during the lockdown. It was tough for families that found themselves bereaved. Families had to restrict numbers of their own relatives attending funerals. It was awful witnessing the bereaved being unable to hug and embrace each other.

I was very pleased how the book turned out and the support I got from people was amazing. I would like to acknowledge my wife, Geraldine, for pushing me into seeing out this wonderful project. To the people that are featured in the book, I would like to pay tribute to them for agreeing to be my 'victims'. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support I got from Councillor Lisa McDonald and Wexford County Council. Lisa wrote a lovely Foreword in the book and she only lives up the road from where I live so her inclusion in the book is very appropriate and fitting. I'm sure we will come out of all this strange time very soon but in the meantime stay safe and I hope that you and your family have a happy, albeit different, Christmas.



*First Communion children donate their toys.*



*Second class children donate their toys.*

# A Country Practice

When I think back to March of this year it's fair to say the sudden arrival of a global pandemic lockdown caught us, as healthcare professionals, just as much as you by surprise. Never did I think I would both live and work through such unprecedented times. Writing letters for my staff in case they were stopped at a garda check-point was a new experience for me. Over the past nine months the unnatural challenge of staying away from the ones we love and care for has led to understandable levels of fear, anxiety and loneliness in our communities which we as healthcare workers have seen regularly on a day to day basis. Whether waving to grandparents from beyond a pane of glass, homeschooling our children or to simply saying farewell to a deceased friend or loved one it has all taken its toll. Although these

have been tough times I feel there have been positives that have arisen. People are more aware of the vulnerable in our communities and have checked up on neighbours and our elderly. We appreciate more than ever the sometimes taken for granted natural beauty that surrounds us in this part of Ireland and have taken to the outdoors more than ever before. I believe that our strong sense of family and togetherness that is a natural trait of being Irish has served us well and our overall communal response to this challenge has been excellent. Hope is a very powerful entity and with a new vaccine just around the corner I do see light at the end of the tunnel. I feel it's vital we continue to stay the course for now and dig in for one final push. We will get there.

*Dr. Kilian Hooper*

## *A Lonely Patron*



*We would like to acknowledge the great kindness, courage and professionalism of Dr. Kilian and his team and all medical personnel in the community who helped us cope with the huge health risks of 2020. Thank you one and all we are truly blessed to have such people in our community.*

# ST. MARTIN'S CAMOGIE



As the 2020 camogie season draws to a close, we reflect back on what has been a significant year for the history books. Our teams had only just taken to the field when national lockdown happened and so preparations for championship season were somewhat hindered. However when training did eventually resume, our u8s, u10s and u12s took the field with great enthusiasm and although they had no official games, they enjoyed plenty of training sessions and in-house matches amongst themselves. Our u14s, u16s and minors lined out in their

respective championships and put in some fine performances while our junior camogie girls reached the county semi-final having topped their group but unfortunately lost out to the Rapparees.

Our senior women secured a county final spot against Oulart but their strive for four in a row unfortunately came to an end after what has been a hugely successful number of years for them. They were also busy off the field as they ran over 1300km during lockdown and managed to raised €3000 for Wexford Marine Watch.



# 25th WEXFORD PIERCESTOWN SCOUT GROUP

Well we had approximately 6 months of scouting from Sept 2019-Feb 2020 when the world stopped!... during those months we had weekly meetings, completed some badge work and participated in the County Events of Quiz, Orienteering, held our own Investiture ceremony with a little party afterwards. we had to close at end of Feb and have only had 3 meetings since then when we opened in Aug - but unfortunately we were unable to continue meeting again. Some of the Beavers and cubs did some work online and at home, cooking on campfires, and completed some badge work so well done to all who completed that. Our leaders have updated their Safeguarding training so everyone upto date. Currently we have 14 beavers, 12 cubs and a new section of Venturers with 7 members and 2 leaders in this new section so welcome to all the Venturers. This section have continued to go on hikes and camping individually in own tents in accordance with HSE Guidelines. our campfire is waiting for us see photo, all ready to go!! The Centre board Directors

and Trustees and scouters have been busy upgrading the Centre with complete new kitchen presses and white

goods, new furniture (Tables Chairs and benches). New outdoor BBQ built and surrounds. Thanks to Wexford Local Development, Wexford Co Co for grant aid which helped us upgrade the facilities at our centre, and ETB awarded to our Scout Group for much needed equipment for our group. Thank you to all our parents for their support during these difficult times and to the leaders for their dedication. we look forward to returning to Scouting on weekly basis in early 2021. We wish everyone a Happy and Safe Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy new year for 2021.



*From Leaders and all members of  
Piercestown Scout Group.*

## THANKS

*We thank all the many different people who give of their time and talent in building up our Community, our Readers, Ministers of the Eucharist, Collectors, Adoration members, Choirs, members of Parish Councils and other committees and this year we particularly thank those who volunteer to sanitize our churches every night and those who act as stewards for our Masses.*

*It has been a difficult year for all but your efforts have made it possible to provide services however curtailed, during the year. Thanks particularly to all who helped their neighbours and elderly during our two lock-downs, your help meant a lot to so many people.*



# Piercestown School News

This school year is one that will go down in the history books all over the world. As this article goes to press, we are currently in the middle of a second lockdown in our country. As we took to the altar last December 2019 to participate in our annual Carol service to get ourselves into the festive spirit, little did we know the journey that lay ahead in 2020. While we all looked forward to a new decade, nobody could have foreseen the lifechanging experiences that would face us all and indeed shape us all in the months to come. But while it felt that the world was about to grind to an eerie halt, the journey for all of us continued. So, let's reflect on the last school year from December 2019 to November 2020 and write the chapter that none of us could have predicted.

December 11th 2019 saw St. Martin's Church fill to capacity for the much-loved Christmas Carol service. And it was safe to say that nobody was disappointed. From the ambience created by Fr. O' Reilly's festive lighting to the innocence of the children in their performance, it was a night that we only wish could be 'bottled and sold'. Looking back, how true is the saying, "sometimes you never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory". Let's treasure this memory until this COVID will pass and we will unite carefree once again to create more memories.

2019 also saw the election of the first ever Student Council at Piercestown N.S. led by officers Rianna Gooden, Mollie Quirke and Kate Roche. They managed to compile some great ideas and work at our 'Grandparents' / Special Person's Day' before their efforts

were grinded to an unexpected halt.

Grandparents and special people in our children's lives were celebrated before the February midterm break. Miss Sinnott's class kicked off the celebrations by hosting a small event in their classroom. Ms. Hearne and Ms. Walsh brought the 'British Bake off' into Piercestown N.S., as 6th class took over the staff room and prepared scones for their special guest's arrival. We ventured from 2020 back to a few decades ago as the children shared their current school experience and asked their parents/grandparents about school in their time. There were stories of long lunches, harsh punishments and even skipping school!!!!!! Junior infants welcomed their special guests in and performed songs, actions and presented their special guests with a special gift. Miss Taylor's class was transformed into a cinema then as she had put together two movies to show ALL of the 'nothingness' that takes place in Junior infants every day.

First Confession took place on February 12th and the ambience on the night was gorgeous. This, we thought, was part one of our journey to Saturday 16th May and the special event of the sacrament of Holy Communion being completed.

At this point of the year, the murmurings of COVID making its way across the world were becoming worrying but Piercestown closed for mid-term and we returned with a pep in our step and more to achieve.

5th class set their alarm clocks early on Tuesday 3rd March in order to make their

way to the RDS in Dublin to exhibit their science project as part of the ESB Science Blast. This year all eyes were on the results as ironically their chosen question from 5th class was “The Invasion of Bacteria – How Clean is our School?” We all waited with bated breath for the results to come in and are busily scrubbing our hands since!!

The book fair arrived on March 6th. There were murmurings about its ability for dramatic events to follow it. In recent years, we have had a storm, a large snowfall and little did we know what lay ahead 6 days later. Highlights from this week were storytelling by Billy Roche on March 10th at our evening event of pyjamas, storytelling and golden tickets. 2020 also saw our second ‘We are Writers’ book published with Mollie Quirke being our second successful illustrator!

Spelling Bee took place for the 6th year in a row and saw Tadhg O’ Leary crowned the Piercestown Spelling Bee Champion 2020 on March 11th.

Literally right up to the 12th hour, we were forging on with our creativity and commitment to teaching and learning. It was actually in the midst of a socially distanced Lá Gaeilge on March 12th, when we would receive, via social media, the message from our Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, that schools would close with immediate effect that very day. While, the cúpla focail caint continued on with the children, the teachers put their shoulders to the wheel to finalise packs that we had pre-empted ‘may have been needed’ in the coming days. Ms. Walsh visited all the classes to reassure the children that we needed to close for some time but not to worry, this was to keep everyone safe. The staffroom was eerily quiet, as we took a breath (and ate some chocolate), reflecting on the hours that had just taken place and

worrying about what lay ahead. With hope in our hearts, we bid each other farewell, hoping to return post Easter at the latest. None could have forecast the future!

We all watched anxiously as each announcement was made by our Taoiseach, still holding on to hope until the conclusion was that schools would not re-open and our community wept at the thought of our prolonged separation. But we dried our eyes and dusted ourselves off and recreated our much-loved school events, virtually and socially distanced and brought COVID style events to another level!

Lessons were sent via email and overnight ‘zoom’ was transformed from a term used to describe the pace the children went up and down the pitch in Rackard league matches, to an online form of teaching and connecting with each other; ‘Seesaw’ transformed from a piece of playground equipment to a mode of teaching and learning! And the list went on...

April saw Active Week take to our computer screens and then to our gardens and safe spaces. There were videos galore, daily competitions and talent in abundance. In staying apart, these events helped us to stay connected. The videos were shared on our website and we saw our viewings go through the roof. May 16th saw our Holy Communion date being postponed, but in the technological era, Mrs. Corrigan, Ms. Walsh and Fr. O Reilly, helped by Miss Sinnott, sent the children a special video to mark their day. The same took place for the postponed Confirmation class on May 28th. For many, this school closure was difficult, but it pulled even more on our heart strings for one class in particular - the ‘Class of 2020’. However, we were determined not to disappoint and remained firmly connected right to the end of their school journey. Graduation for the



and it did not disappoint. There were videos, music, speeches and presentations galore. There was even the surprise arrival of an ice-cream van. And in true Piercestown style, it was finished with the legendary water fight! This was followed just days later by a beautiful and intimate Confirmation ceremony on July 25th. With thanks to the efforts of Fr. O'Reilly and

'Class of 2020' in many ways was more celebrated than ever. June 26th saw the first 'online' graduation take place and include famous faces from our own Parish to wish the children well on the 'first' part of their graduation. They also received post with a 'water balloon' to remind them that when it was safe to do so, tradition would be upheld and the water fight would commence!!!

June 29th saw further history made in Piercestown as not only did we technically re-open our schools doors, but we did so to a very important cohort of our school community as July Provision took place on our school grounds for the very first time. There was baking, horse riding, playground trips, art and crafts, fun, learning and so much more. A team of Piercestown staff could not have worked harder to ensure a safer, more enjoyable experience for all involved.

And so, with the lifting of restrictions and glimmers of hope, plans were made for socially distanced and COVID style Confirmation and Graduation 2020. And while it may have been different, the experiences were certainly not lesser. Graduation took place outdoors on July 23rd, with full public health guidelines adhered to

modern technology, people from 'down under' even tuned into our Confirmation ceremony! The 'Class of 2020' while having had their last few months of 'normality' stolen from them, finished on a high with many memories created.

And with the final events of the year under our belts, it was now down to Ms. Walsh and the Board of Management to work their way through the Departments publication on the safe reopening of schools. With only four weeks to ensure full compliance and all was in place, there was no time to lose. We also needed to welcome our newest members to school in a friendly and safe manner before 'big school' officially opened for everyone. August 20th saw two groups of 11 pupils enter the Junior infant classes. It was different than before, but with the friendly faces of Ms. Taylor, Ms. Walsh and Teresa, our youngest crew were happy out! Bubbles, pods, line marking, sanitisers, isolation areas, new entrances and exits, risk assessments, COVID statements, communication with all stakeholders, the list seemed endless but, with the help of in-school management and a staff enthusiastic to return, August 27th saw the much missed school bell chime once again! We had made

it! Junior infants arrived for their memorable day to get their photo taken in the 'First Day of School frame' under Ms. Walsh's umbrellas. The new policies required to keep our children safe, or the arrival of rain on the morning, did nothing to dampen the spirits of over 200 children who all agreed that they HAD missed school and couldn't wait to be back! And that is the greatest evidence of success in any school!

A final event cannot go without mention, as the Holy Communion took place on September 12th. With even tighter restrictions than the Confirmation, as COVID reared its head again, all efforts were made to ensure this occasion was even more special. And all agreed that it was! And we have arrived back after midterm, with our school community safe and happy and our school 'COVID friendly'. It may not be how it was, but we are certainly rethinking how we do everything to ensure



the best year ever for the children. With virtual assemblies, outdoor discos and much more, our learning and experiences continue. So, while it wasn't the storyline any of us hoped for, we have written this chapter to be the best that it can be. And so, I sign off with hope in our hearts for brighter days to come and with pride in our school for the experiences that we continue to offer despite obstacles to overcome.

**"It's amazing what we can accomplish when we are in it together" – Rhea Freeman**

*Ms. Laura Walsh Nov. 2020*

## NEW PARISH WEBSITE

**Log onto [piercestownmurrinparish.ie](http://piercestownmurrinparish.ie)**

**Mass live on webcam - Sunday 10am, Tues, Wed,  
Thurs @ 9.30am**

**Prayer before Blessed Sacrament for protection  
against Covid Wed @ 7pm**

***Compliant with all GDPR regulations***



# FORTH CELTIC AFC



It has been a long a difficulty year for our village and community with the onset of COVID and the subsequent lock downs. Unfortunately, this meant that from February until May there was very little activity at Forth Celtic.

However as the restrictions were slowly lifted small chinks of light were visible on the sporting front.

The first signs of activity were from our fantastic coaches & volunteers who spent many long hours cleaning the club facilities, arranging COVID signage, hand sanitizer and rewriting health & safety procedures to keep all safe at the club. In June we welcomed back the kids to training in a safe and supported environment.

As a club we were acutely aware of how important exercise is to the emotional well-being of the children and young people so our initial focus was on fun based exercise where the kids could again get to spend time with each other. This in turn gave parents a much-needed chance to get out and get some fresh air.

As the summer progressed and COVID number reduced the club arranged various friendly matches with other local sides. These proved to be great fun and again the focus was on fun, good emotional health and spending time with friends

Our adult mens & ladies section also returned to action and had opportunities to finish their season. Just like the kids the adults were delighted to get back to the action where they could get some exercise and see friends and colleagues again.

As we know another level 5 lockdown occurred which we are currently all trying to cope with.

However, the good news was that children got permission to continue training. While not ideal, the kids now continue to train in a fun and safe way at the club. On any given eyeing the club is a hive of kids enjoying their sport.

One huge positive for the kids this year was the development of the village field and playground. The club now try to ensure that underage games are scheduled on the field on Saturday mornings in an effort to bring life back into our village and community.

It has been heartening to see children and their parents enjoying sport while younger siblings play safely in the adjacent playground.

As you see from the photographs attached our kids and young people are very resilient despite the difficulties and are continuing to enjoy sport in the heart of our community.



# There is always light

Covid 19, the coronavirus or as my three year old grandson calls it “the coconut virus has brought our world to a standstill. Who would have thought that World War 3 would have been a fight against something so powerful and yet so miniscule that it can’t even be seen by the human eye. It has brought pain, sorrow, grief and uncertainty to our world and we are very mindful of all who are still hurting as a result of this virus. Ironically this dark stranger came amongst us at the springtime of the year a time when our days were becoming brighter and Mother Nature was showing us the new life all around us. Once again the hand of God our Father always leading us from darkness into the light.

Our world as we knew it had changed overnight. Planes were grounded, schools closed, there was little traffic on the roads, and our churches were closed except for private prayer; only essential services and supermarkets remained open. We had entered what we now know as lockdown. The world may have stopped but life continued albeit in a different way. Many things that had seemed so important paled into insignificance. Depending on what level restrictions we were in we could only travel two or five kilometres from home. Many of us took to walking in our own areas, we met neighbours and had conversations over walls and garden gates, long and many overdue conversations took place on the phone, people reached out to each other and kept in contact and many candles were lit in our churches; families once again had time to be just that...Family!

The things we are all still missing are the simple things in life but essentially the most important things. The hugs, handshakes, calling to friends and family for a chat and a cup of tea and running around with

grandchildren who love to see us trying to jump on trampolines or drawing pictures and reading stories with them and giving cuddles before going to bed. We are all missing each other in so many ways. As I write we are halfway through our second lockdown and there is talk that those of us who have loved ones away may not have them home for Christmas. Air travel may be curtailed in order to prevent a spike in the numbers of new cases of the virus, please God that won’t be the case. The good news is that we now have a vaccine.

We are living in a time of waiting and longing yet every shadow we encounter is ultimately replaced by light which right now is very significant as we approach the season of Advent.

Yes, there is always light. In this season of Advent we are waiting and longing to celebrate the birth of Christ the “Light of the World.” The little infant born in the stable in Bethlehem who became a child on earth for us and who told us, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

The birth of Jesus gave to the world a new beginning. In this last year the coronavirus has made us aware of the really important things in life so as we celebrate the birth of Christ this Christmas let us remember what we have learned and realise that we are being offered a new beginning to start a new way of life. May we live so that the presence of Jesus may be present to us not just at Christmas but throughout the coming year.

*“The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase.” (Isaiah 9: 1-7)*

**Sara Ann Quirke**

# Murrintown Environmental Group

This has been a strange year for our group due to Covid-19. Due to limits on group gatherings at various stages we have done a lot of individual work around the village. A big thank you to all the litter pickers out there who trudge the roads throughout the year to keep our countryside clean and tidy. Once more we have collected roughly 100 bags of rubbish. Also a thank you goes out to Wexford County Council who come and collect the bags of rubbish. Other work carried out during the year was mowing, filling the containers in the village with both summer and winter bedding, edging the graves, sweeping the leaves, hedge planting

and painting of containers and benches. Thank you to all who came out to help with all of these activities. We get funding from Wexford County Council through Councillor Lisa Mac Donald to cover the cost of plants, paint and materials.

Finally we were delighted to learn that Councillor Mac Donald also secured funding this year for Christmas Lights to decorate our village. We will also put up a Christmas Tree. The Community Centre Committee gave permission for their premises to be used as our source of electricity.

This year more than any other, it will give a much needed boost to us all.

## Back to Worship





# THE SHORTALSTOWN GIANT IRISH DEER

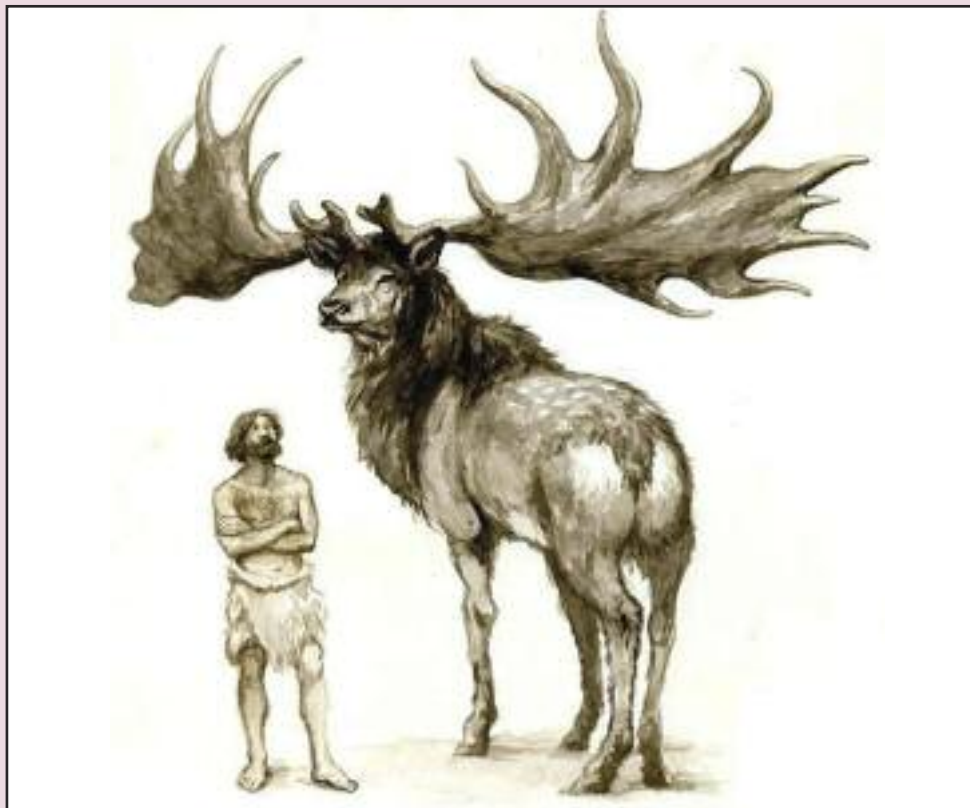
*Peter Miller*

During drainage work in 1968 on the lands of the Miller family, in a field known locally as the “Pathfield”, some 300 yards south west of Shortalstown House, bones were noticed on top of the heaps of spoil by a neighbour, Michael Goodwin, of Mayglass, who immediately realised that they were not those of a cow or horse.

These bones were sent to Dr. John Jackson of the National Museum and identified as those of the Giant Irish Deer. Further careful excavation of the area, directed by Professor Frank Mitchell, Trinity College, revealed some almost complete heads and antlers, along with some more bones. This is the most southerly find of the Giant Deer in

Ireland to date. Giant Deer roamed Ireland between twelve and eleven thousand years ago, at the end of the Ice Age. This male deer was very large and had massive antlers which were shed annually. The legs for the size of the body were relatively small. Many of these animals perished near to drinking holes where they had become stuck in the boggy ground. The marks where the deer had thrashed around trying to extricate himself could be clearly seen during the excavation. Over the centuries the carcasses became covered by peat which helped to preserve the bones.

*From By Bishop's Rath & Norman Fort  
The Story of Piercestown – Murrintown*



# MURRINTOWN NS

## 2019/2020



*Acting Principal Maureen Kilbane welcomes new Principal John Colloton.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the people of the parish who do not have children in Murrintown NS. My name is John Colloton and I have taken over from Maureen Gilbane as school principal since Halloween. I am very proud to be principal of an tremendous school in an incredible parish. I look forward to working with everyone in the community and I look forward to getting to know you all. I would like to sincerely thank everyone so far for the kind and warm welcome that has been extended to me. In particular thank you to the staff in the school, Fr O Reilly, the parent body and above all else the children. I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas where hopefully we will all get to see and meet and spend time with our families. Every good wish to you all - John.*

We were delighted to open the doors of Murrintown National School again this September after our extended closure due to Covid 19.

Even though the school closed on the 12th of March our school year had already been packed with so many special occasions, events and celebrations. We are blessed in our school community to have so many to share of their gifts and talents all for the benefit of the children in our school.

We are delighted to welcome our new principal Mr. John Colloton to this amazing team and we wish him many years of happiness working in Murrintown NS.

You will see some of the highlights of our school year below.

### DRESS UP FOR HALLOWEEN



## SPORTS: RACKARD LEAGUE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS



We were delighted to bring home the football Rackard League cup.

The two Mr Murphy's and Mr Whyte put in so much work with these boys and deservedly the work from the players paid off on the night against Glynn.

## SCIENCE WEEK

We had scientist Orla Fenelon visit to carry out experiments



## TOURS AROUND WEXFORD



3rd Class: A tour of Wexford by local Archaeologist and parent Catherine Stafford

*Right:* 4th Class visit Wexford Opera House for a Christmas Show.



## SANTA VISIT

As always, our fabulous parent's association organised the annual Santa visit in December. A great day was had by one and all.



## DEBATING TEAM 2019/20

Nicole, Éabha and Amber with researchers Sarah-Kate and Naomi, Ella, Elise and Sadhbh with researchers Madison and Síle: Our 2019/202 debating team



## CREDIT UNION QUIZ TEAM

Our under 13 team Naomi, Rúairí, Keane and Joe.

Our U11 team, James, Hannah, Barry, Liam. Sophia and Kate. Well done to the children and their parents and their teacher Mr Murphy.



## MUSIC

This was the school's first year to compete in Scór Primary. They went all the way to the final show and performed to a packed audience in Oulart.



They competed in Ballad group, solo singing, instrumental groups recitation and a novelty act.



Our Grúpa Ceoil resumed every Thursday. Over 50 pupils took part and learned the tin, whistle, flute, banjo, fiddle or guitar. New music teachers Tommy Rennick on Guitar and Alice McIntyre on fiddle joined us.

Elizabeth Drwal with *Music Generation* was working hard with the children from 1st class to 4th right up until we closed. It was super to have a vocal teacher in the school with such expertise.



## SING OUT LOUD

Our 5th and 6th class children performed in the National Opera House in November.

## CREATIVE SCHOOLS

Our creative director Orla Bates visited the school to talk to each class about the meaning of 'Being Creative'. A committee was established led by Ms Frayne and Ms Monahan to lead the project. The children of the school voted on the theme of 'Den building' and work is ongoing into this school year.



## OUR CONFIRMATION CLASS

We were one of the few schools that were lucky enough to celebrate the Confirmation just before closure on the 5th of March.



## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2019/2020

Our current 3rd class were so relieved and happy to celebrate their special day on the 19th of September this year after their original date had to be changed due to Covid 19.

A special day was celebrated. We thank Fr John for all the times he has shared with us in the school.

So as you can see, although the year was cut short, we managed to pack a lot in during the time we did spend in school. We look forward to the year ahead and can't wait to make new memories!



# St. Martin's G.A.A. News

Dickens' famous opening line from "A Tale of Two Cities" was never more apposite than in 2020. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" really sums up a chaotic year of changed plans, lockdown, condensed championships and, shining through, a community spirit that made sure every member of the parish was taken care of during this strangest of years. During lockdown, St. Martin's club members helped with grocery and other deliveries to vulnerable members, people really looked out for each other and our senior camogie team ran a combined 1300km within their 5km bubbles to raise over €3000 for Wexford MarineWatch.

Our new club gym opened in January and then Covid closed it, a fate that also befell our "Live at the Marquee" music weekend. As fundraising opportunities disappeared, the loyalty of our club lotto members and of

our club sponsor, Pettitt's SuperValu, was never more important. That said, winning a new car in the Club and County Draw in the autumn was an unexpected but very welcome boost to the finances!

When playing action resumed, our brave camogie women fell just short in their bid for a 4-in-a-row of county titles, losing in the final to a really strong Oulart-The Ballagh in an empty Bellefield. The defeat gives us time to appreciate their fantastic achievements since 2017 when they won their first senior county title before going on to win three in a row and reach an All Ireland Final in 2018. After seven years at the helm it is only right to pay tribute to their coach, JJ Doyle, who is stepping down now this year and of course to his selectors, Noel Cardiff, Benny Ennis, Maire O'Connor and, this year only, Martin Quigley.



2020 also saw a change of management for our senior men with John Meyler taking over in January after Tomas Codd's very successful 5-year term came to an end. Early season training, practice matches and Leinster League all went very well and, post-lockdown, momentum was maintained with good wins against Oulart-The Ballagh (live on TG4) and Cloughbawn.

However, in the quarter-finals our near neighbours Glynn-Barntown were better on the day and the short season came to a quick end but we look forward to what 2021 might hold. On the football front, our seniors battled back bravely to draw level at the death with Castletown in the county semi-final only to lose out by a single point.

A huge highlight for the club was the promotion of our second team from the Junior grade to intermediate after a fantastic series of performances that culminated in a county final win against Horeswood on a scoreline of 2-20 to 1-10 on Saturday 29 August.

This win gives our up and coming players a higher level at which to compete and learn their craft and was a credit to the

management team of Ian Waters, Joe O'Byrne and Colm O'Leary.

Participation was the watchword in 2020 with huge numbers only too happy to return to training post-lockdown from young to old. This year, for the first time, we fielded a fourth adult hurling team and it was great to see upwards of 90 adult men playing every weekend. It was a similar story at underage as boys and girls flocked back to the fields to meet friends and play the sports they love.

In September, a hugely momentous development was the appointment of Seamus Casey as the club's first ever Games Promotion Officer. Seamus, the well-known Oylegate and Wexford hurler, is busy coaching kids in Murrinstown and Piercestown schools and working with the club's coaches to raise the bar across the club. In parallel with this, the club coaching committee has developed a clear pathway for all our underage coaches which, we hope, will strengthen the pipeline of good players for years to come. 2020 will certainly never be forgotten but we will hopefully look back on it as a key year in the future growth of our club.



## PIERCESTOWN

### BAPTISMS

Billy Furlong	Finn O' Connor
Evie Moran	Freddie White
Sam Quigley	Aire Simpson
Carragh Sane	Furlong
Ruby Walsh	Oisin King
Culleton	Genevieve Roche
Georgia Kelly	Callie Furlong

### DEATHS

Baby Masie Hausjell  
Margaret Gallagher  
Christine Flood  
Michael Coleman  
Mary Ennis  
John Kehoe  
Michael Kirby  
Ann Staples  
Gerard Stafford  
Elsie Dempsey  
John Kirwan



## MURRINTOWN

### BAPTISMS

Katie O'Keeffe	John Carmody
Lana Wadding	Sam Whitney
Louis James Lett	Cleary
Katie Coady	Hallie McCurtain
Zara Kate Radford	
Alex Joseph Bradley	

### MARRIAGES

Eoin Boggan & Sara Pitt  
Aoife Waters & William Cullen



### DEATHS

Eithne Malone  
Nancy Fallon  
Mary Fielding  
Margaret Lacey  
Jim Roice  
Ann Connelly  
Matt Ennis  
Dolores Ennis

## Provisional Dates for your Diary 2021

### WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

11th February - Piercestown

### MURRINTOWN

Confirmation 11th March

1st Communion 1st May

Patron 1st August

### PIERCESTOWN

Confirmation 27th May

1st Communion 15th May

Patron 6th August

