

# Parish



# Review

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YEAR ENDING **2010**

**THE BELLS OF OLD ST. MEL'S** is the name of the recently released single by the Busy Fingers Band. The song is a lively upbeat number which includes choruses with children from Stonepark and Drumlish schools. CD's are being sold in aid of St. Mel's Cathedral Restoration Reserve Fund at €5.00 each in local outlets. Thank you to Busy Fingers for their generosity and goodwill.



**FLANCARE FAMILY DAY:** All roads led to Flancare Park on the 9th of May as Longford Town FC hosted a parish family day out in aid of the cathedral restoration reserve fund. Crowds many in the familiar red and black, attended Mass there at 1pm celebrated by Bishop Colm and afterwards the stand and sidelines rocked to the sounds of country music stars from near and far. See page 5



**CONFIRMATION and FIRST HOLY COMMUNION IN ST. MEL'S CATHEDRAL CENTRE**



# Growing up in the Cathedral Parish

— Tommy Vaughan remembers —

When I asked directions to Tommy Vaughan's home everyone said to look for the neat hedges and lovely clipped armchairs and sure enough there they were surrounding a delightful garden in front of his home in the townland of Derryharrow. Tommy has lived here all his long life of 95 years which makes him one of the oldest people in our parish.

Born on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1915 Tommy went to Melview school 'just across the fields' where Master Kilemade, Miss Griffin and Miss Newman taught. "Oh! we got great training in Religious instruction especially for First Holy Communion and Confirmation" says Tommy. "Every day a full half hour and every Sunday all the children were 'kept in' by all the masters after Mass for half an hour for catechism". He mentioned Masters Matthews, Timlin and McKenna. "You went to your own Master for instruction". "Is there any Religious instruction at all in the schools now?" he wondered. At Confirmation he took the pledge and kept it from that day to this "I never broke it and me and Rosie (his sister) got our gold Pioneer pins."

Those were hard but happy times. The Vaughans were farmers and everyone took a hand with the work. It was his mother who first started making the lovely shapes in the hedge and Rose continued this lovely craft. Sadly Rose died recently RIP. "Oh sure people were happier long ago, no lock on the door in the daytime and neighbours dropped in. We have good neighbours here."

Tommy went to Mass in St. Mel's Cathedral where he also served Mass for several years. Fr.



95-year-old Tommy Vaughan pictured at home in Derryharrow.

Flynn taught a crowd of us to serve. I remember Fr. Gray and Fr. Pinkman too. There were seven or eight in a team including several fellows from the town. Tommy Bartley showed me the 'move-

ments', only two did duty and you waited your turn till you knew exactly what to do. Jimmy Reilly, the sacristan, showed us how to lay out the priest's surplice or the alb "leave it open like a boat", he said

and "lay the cord zig zag beside it with the tassle in its place. Everything had to be exactly exact."

"That fire was shocking. I don't go out so often now but Seamus brings me in the car. I listen to

Mass on the radio and Fr. Healy calls in every first Friday. Oh I remember midnight Mass in the Cathedral it would be packed out. The altar was beautiful with candles and brasses and I always admired it at Christmas.

Christmas? We looked forward to that - it's everyday now! says Tommy. My mother cooked a goose. We kept geese and a gander every year and she fattened about 30 geese for the Christmas market. They were sold before Christmas. Times were hard and often the price of turkeys and geese dropped and you were lucky to maybe get five shilling for a goose. How much is it now? €60 or more! And during the Economic War cattle couldn't be sold at all, maybe a £1 for a heifer calf - for it's skin. People couldn't afford a vet if an animal was sick. But neighbours John and Charlie Duignan were great men with sick animals. Sometimes men got a fortnight's work with the Council. People were glad to get even a little. Everyone 'joined' for mowing and ploughing because you needed two horses for this work and it was a big thing to feed two horses so you 'joined' with a neighbour explained Tommy. "All those people are surely in Heaven for they lived a frugal life, Lord rest them".

And what about Santa? Very small, compared to what they get now it was just a token.

Tommy loved to céili especially at Nertney's where they told stories of times long ago like the Master whose salary was so low that he earned a bit extra measuring land

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## Parish Review 2010



### Take Heart!

*'Oh my friend, it's not what they take away from you that counts. It's what you do with what you have left that matters'* — Hubert Humphrey.

Last Christmas a fire took away our beloved Cathedral. Its flames shook us to the core. But all that day we talked of what it stood for, what it had meant to us. Wasn't it the most religious Christmas day in every home for decades? 'Enkindle in us the fire of your love' we often pray and so it did... good neighbourliness and support came flowing in abundance. God was present to us in the warmth of the response of people at home and abroad to this calamity.

It's been a trying year in our parish but also one of togetherness. So, coupled with the economic uncertainty threatening to engulf our nation as the year ends, it is important that we value what we have. Through the pages of our Parish Review take heart as you read of all the volunteers, the good people and good deeds happening all around our parish in Longford. Maybe you'll become more involved too. May your spirits be lifted as we face into 2011 a new year with its hopes dreams and aspirations. Let 'heart speak unto heart' because time flies but don't forget you're the pilot.

Parish Review Committee:

Tom Chapman, Deirdre Dalton, Tiernan Dolan, Leo Donlon, Fr Tom Healy, Kitty Hughes, Sive McGuinness.

### Parish Reviews

The Parish Review was first published in 1990 and ran for the next five years. Its aim was to highlight the good work of the many voluntary organisations in our Parish. It was revived last year and the publication came in for much praise. Unfortunately the fire in St. Mel's Cathedral on Christmas Day destroyed our copies of previous publications so we ask you to look in the attic and dust off the book shelves to see have you any edition from 1990-1995.