



CUAN NA GAILLIMHE CNS

A STEINER EDUCATION

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2020



We would like to wish you a wonderful welcome to the new 2020 / 2021 school year.

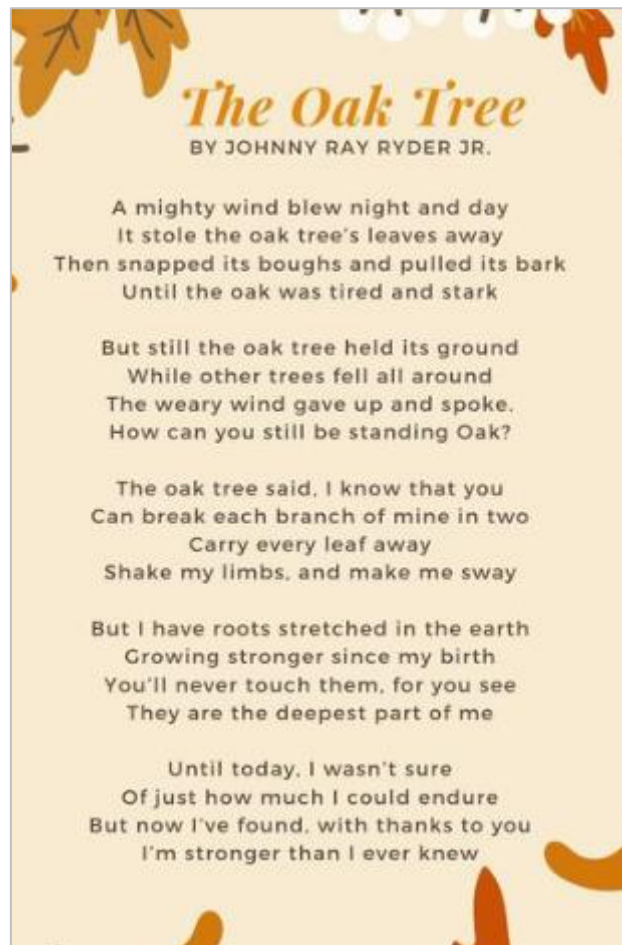
It was with great delight, after a lot of hard work behind the scenes, that we welcomed the children back to the school at the end of August. Who could have foreseen last March that we wouldn't be together again for nearly six months.

We are delighted to welcome 17 new Junior Infants as well as the children who have joined the older classes.

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VERSE



MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Mark Canning

Mark is from Donegal (Letterkenny to be specific) and has been teaching full time in several primary schools since graduating from St. Patrick's College, with a B.Ed.

Mark recently enjoyed three year career break, two of which were spent teaching in Thailand, with the remaining year exploring India and South America. Since returning Mark was delighted to be given the opportunity to work at Cuan na Gaillimhe. In Mark's experience smaller schools tend to provide a warmer sense of community and he would like to thank everyone for providing such a warm welcome and for helping him settle in.

Mark has said ‘that there are many, many areas of knowledge and many paths to reach these areas. Perhaps the most important thing a teacher can do is foster a sense of curiosity in their pupils and perhaps show them a few proven tools that will help them explore and navigate the world around them’.

VOLUNTEERS & INTERNS



Galway Volunteer Centre provides a placement service between individuals and groups who want to undertake voluntary activity and organisations that are seeking to involve volunteers. Their primary function is to match individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate volunteering opportunities. Galway Volunteer Centre offers advice and support to both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations through a range of services that include information provision, consultation, training and Garda Vetting.

Volunteer Centres believe passionately in the value of volunteering and the benefits of volunteering for all: the individual, the volunteer-involving organisation and the wider society. They contribute to community development, active citizenship and social capital and are a vital component of any national volunteering infrastructure, providing local support at the same time as informing future initiatives and national policy.

In addition to placing volunteers, Volunteer Centres stimulate and encourage volunteering by promoting volunteering at local, regional and national events and in local, regional and national campaigns. They work towards breaking down the barriers to volunteering, targeting specific groups of people who are under- or unrepresented in volunteering. Volunteer Centres develop volunteering opportunities through consultation with local voluntary and community organisations. They recognise the potential of volunteering and encourage groups and organisations – be they private, statutory or voluntary and community – to think creatively about volunteering roles and to develop imaginative, non-traditional opportunities for potential volunteers.

In addition, Volunteer Centres work to promote good practice in working with volunteers through the delivery of training and support. They campaign and

respond to legislation that may impact on volunteering and, as local experts on volunteering, inform planning and policy at regional and national level.



Unfortunately, due to the world-wide effects of the covid-19 global pandemic we have been unable to welcome volunteers through Erasmus+, URV (Universitat Rovira and Virgili University) in Tarragona Spain and University of Münster. We will continue to hope that we will be able to welcome students from these Organisations in the very near future.

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM AND CREATIVE SCHOOLS AWARDS



Thanks to the hard work of the PTA and Garden Committee who recently secured funding for a *Community Classroom*.

Supported by the Tomar Trust, our Community Classrooms campaign aims to establish, support and fund a network of 30 community gardens around Ireland over the next three years (2020-2023) that directly engage with primary schools and provide outdoor, living classrooms for pupils, staff and community members.



Creative schools

We are very excited to announce that the school has been granted an opportunity to participate in the Creative Schools programme 2020-22, as funded by the Arts Council.

Creative Schools is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme to enable the creative potential of every child. Creative Schools is led by the Arts Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Creative Schools, formerly

Arts Rich Schools/Arís, draws on the commitments set out in the Arts in Education Charter.

This initiative will understand, develop and celebrate the arts and creativity in schools. It will establish a range of collaborative opportunities for schools and will develop and strengthen the relationships between schools and the broader cultural and community infrastructure within which they operate. The long term aim is for every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity, ensuring a positive experience and strong outcomes for children and young people.

More information will be shared with the school community once it becomes available to us.

SCHOOL EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIP



A lot has changed in the world we live in since we hosted teachers from Estonia, Finland, Bulgaria and Spain last February. We did not realise at the time that it would be one of the last events that would be held in the school. There were great plans for the exchange to finish up in Spain over Easter but, as with many other plans, covid-19 put a (hopefully) temporary pause on the programme.

This two year project involves our school and four schools in Spain, Bulgaria, Estonia

and Finland. The other partners are all mainstream national schools. Some are small and others big, some placed in the countryside and others in urban areas - but just like us they are interested in exploring and learning from their European neighbours and in this case; focusing on the transition and collaboration between kindergarten and school - sharing good everyday practices.

As most European countries have a school starting age of six, Ireland stands out having a much earlier school start. However, as we in our Steiner National Schools begin the formal education in 1st class, the focus is relevant. According to educational studies, schools and kindergartens differ both in practice as well as social and physical environments which can bring out challenges for children. With this Erasmus project we allow ourselves to take a look at how we already support and might improve this early transition, making children and adults in our educational communities aware of the possibilities that a strong co-operation gives.



OPENING EVENING



Due to covid restrictions the details of this event have yet to be finalised.

More details will be posted on our website and [facebook page](#) closer to the event.

UPCOMING FESTIVALS

MICHAELMAS

Michaelmas is a celebration of the harvest and the abundance of nature in its exhaling phase. Celebrated few days after the autumn equinox, it marks the



time when the days are getting shorter than the nights. It is a time of preparation for winter, not only by harvesting, baking and preserving food but also by consciously taking in the warmth and light of the summer and retaining it in our hearts.

At the equinox, where light meets darkness, the Archangel Michael symbolises the victory of Good over Evil. This conflict is the theme of the stories told to the children instilling in them the certainty that the Good always wins and prevails.

Michael is the avatar of courage. He does not yield and carries out his task to defeat the dragon with the strength of his soul. Depicted with a lance, a sword and a weighing scale, he stands for aiming and considering as well as for taking initiative. He is a role model for managing our own tasks and conflicts.

BRAVE AND TRUE I WILL BE
EACH GOOD DEED SETS ME FREE
EACH KIND WORD
MAKES ME STRONG
I WILL FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT
I WILL CONQUER THE WRONG

Brave and True

This is the verse the children will learn to recite while marching out the rhythm.

MARTINMAS

Martinmas marks the burial of St Martin of Tours (316-397 AD). St. Martin was “known as friend of the children and patron of the poor” in the fourth century. Legend has it that he shared his cloak with a beggar by cutting it in half, so the beggar would be saved from the cold night.

Traditionally, Martinmas coincided with the many busy activities around farms in late fall. Any remaining late crops in the fields, such as winter squash, would be harvested before the deep snow falls; it was also the time to plant winter wheat, which came up in early spring and provided flour for the new year.

As we journey into the darkest time of the year, it is increasingly important for each of us to kindle warmth and light in our hearts. Martin’s cloak can remind us to share with those in need. The gently glowing lanterns of Martinmas will give way to the candles of the advent spiral as we draw nearer to the Solstice, showing how our inner light must shine ever brighter against the cold. As nature sleeps, we must be wakeful!



Lantern Walk

The traditional symbol for the Martinmas festival is the lantern. The lantern is the symbol of our own light which we can shine on a dark world. Previously in our school we celebrated the festival with a lantern walk through Barna woods. As public events are restricted at the moment we will celebrate this festival in each class with the children.

The little flames symbolise the power of light as the darkness of winter encroaches.

MARTINMAS VERSE

MARTIN, MARTIN, MARTIN
RODE THROUGH WIND AND SNOW,
HIS HORSE CARRIED HIM SO QUICKLY ON
IN COMFORT AND WARMTH THROUGH THE COLD HE DID GO
HIS THICK CLOAK AROUND HIM TIGHTLY DRAWN.

IN THE COLD SNOW, IN THE COLD SNOW, IN THE COLD SNOW
THERE SAT A POOR BEGGAR BY THE ROAD
HE WORE ONLY RAGS AND WITH CHOKED BREATH CALLED,
"OH HELP ME PLEASE – PLEASE FORM UPON YOUR HORSE SO BOLD,
SAVE ME FROM THIS BITTER COLD."

MARTIN, MARTIN, MARTIN
REINED HIS HORSE TO HIS SIDE
IT STOOD QUIETLY BY AS IF IT KNEW
HOW WITH HIS SWORD, MARTIN WOULD DIVIDE
HIS WARM, THICK CLOAK RIGHT INTO TWO.

MARTIN, MARTIN, MARTIN
GAVE ONE HALF TO THE BEGGAR TO PUT ON
THE GRATEFUL MAN TURNED, BUT BEFORE HE SPOKE
NOBLE MARTIN HAD ALREADY GONE
WEARING HIS HALF OF THE DIVIDED CLOAK.

MARTIN, MARTIN, MARTIN
HE TOOK TIME TO CARE
MARTIN, MARTIN, MARTIN
HE TOOK TIME TO SHARE.

A MICHAELMAS STORY FOR BEDTIME

by Floris Books (20 September 2017)

The Michaelmas story is one of bravery, acceptance and, of course, dragons.

You can celebrate Michaelmas by reading this tale aloud from Bedtime Storytelling. This Michaelmas story is particularly suited to children aged six and seven, but can be enjoyed by the whole family.

A Michaelmas story

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a small town with a wall all around it. The people lived happily there. At evening they closed the gates and in the morning they opened them again.

Imagine their surprise when they woke up one morning, looked over the wall, and what did they see? A dragon outside their gates! It wasn't a small dragon, no! It was a big dragon; it was a huge dragon.

Have you ever seen a dragon?

Well, I'll tell you what this one looked like: it had scales all over its body like a fish but very, very hard. It had a long swishy tail and from its mouth came fire and smoke.

"Don't open the gate this morning," said the people behind the wall. "We don't want a dragon in our town!" But they watched him over the wall, for they were curious what he would do.

Well, first he started to eat the grass but, of course, that was not enough for a dragon, so he started on the flowers and bushes.

At night-time he found a hole in the mountain and went to sleep there. The people of the town kept their eye on him. They could see he was still there, for there was fire and smoke coming out of the hole in the mountain.

Next morning out came the dragon again, looking as fierce as ever. As he had already eaten all the grass, the flowers and the bushes, he started on the trees. How awful it began to look outside the town. It was all bare! Then he got thirsty and he drank and drank until the river was empty.

When there was nothing left to eat or drink, he began to crawl towards the town. The people, who had never stopped watching him, became quite

anxious. What was he going to eat next? Would he like the taste of people perhaps?

Well, when he got to the gate he started to make a terrible din. He swished his tail, he ground his teeth, he stamped his four big feet and he blew lots of fire and smoke into the air. It was very frightening and the people did not know what to do. All that day the dragon went round and round the town making more and more noise. At night he went back to his hole in the mountain, but he couldn't sleep as he was so hungry.

That night the people held a meeting. They asked the wisest man in the town for advice. His name was St Michael because he was a holy man. The people begged St Michael, who was not afraid of anything, to go out and slay the dragon with his sword. St Michael said that he would go out and meet the dragon the next morning.

And he DID!! All the people in the town, young and old, rich and poor, were standing or sitting on the wall watching him. On he went, St Michael with his shining sword. They could see that he had reached the mountain now.

Oh, out came the dragon. St Michael held his sword up high and the dragon did not harm him. No, he lay down and looked up at St Michael sadly. St Michael spoke: "Do you know, dear dragon, that you are frightening the people of this town?" "Frightening?" answered the dragon. "Why?"

"Well, your noise, your swishing of tail, your stamping of feet, but most of all your smoke and fire."

"But," said the dragon, "all dragons breathe smoke and fire. That is how they breathe and, you see. I am terribly lonely and I would so like to play with the children."

St Michael was astonished. "Is this really true? Play with the children? They think you're going to eat them!"

“Yes,” said the dragon, “it is really true, I promise you,” and he licked St Michael’s hand to show he was telling the truth.

“Well,” said St Michael, “we’ll see if the people will let their children play with you, and if the children want to play with you.” And so St Michael and the dragon walked towards the town together, St Michael in front and the dragon behind.

The people who were watching could hardly believe their eyes! But when they heard what St Michael had to tell them they could not believe their ears!

Now, there was a small girl who was always very brave, and she said, “I’ll come and play with you”.

“No! No!” shouted her parents, but she had already slipped through the gate, and the small, brave girl went out to meet the dragon. When she came near, she gave him a great big smile.

“Come here,” she said. He came.

“Why don’t you climb on my back and I’ll give you a ride?”

St Michael lifted her up. How hard and sore the scales were. “Here,” said St Michael, “take my cloak to sit on.” And off she went, hanging on to his ears. It was great fun.

Soon a second child came out then a third, all wanting rides.

“Me next ...”

“Can I ...?”

“My turn ...”

In the end, almost all the children, except the shyest and the smallest, had a ride, and the poor dragon got so tired that he had to lie down.

Then the same little girl who had been so brave said, “Let’s give him something to eat.” And they all ran home and soon came back with leftover porridge, apples, old rolls, herrings and pancakes, and the dragon ate everything, even some old boots. And he felt so happy that he cried big dragon tears, and from that time onwards he became the pet of the town and everybody just loved him.

But do you know who the dragon loved most? St Michael, of course.

WORKSHOP

We hope to be able to provide a face to face workshop in Winter or Spring 2021.

Please keep an eye on our [facebook page](#) where more details will be available closer to the time.

UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS



Please use the [link](#) to view the Baboro 2020 programme. Due to covid restrictions there will be a limited number of ‘In Person’ Performances. There are also some online events this year.



The [Slieve Aughty Centre](#) in Kylebrack West, Loughrea, Galway has some lovely events coming up. This includes *Autumn Wreath Making* on Saturday 26th September. More information on this [link](#). On Sunday 27th September they are running a Wild Mushroom Foraging [event](#).



Brigit's Garden has published their [opening hours](#) for the autumn. Some upcoming events can be found on this [link](#) include a *Nature Meditation Walk* and *Mid-term Treasure Hunt*.



As part of the Galway International Arts Festival the [Mirror Pavilion](#) exhibition continues at The Claddagh until 26th September and resumes in [Derrigimlagh Bog, Connemara, Co. Galway](#) from 11th to 31st October 2020.



The local [This is Galway](#) website has a wealth of information about local events in the city and county.

Some interesting items from their website includes information on an upcoming documentary in Pálás Cinema titled [David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet](#).

There is a live online stream at the Site of Mirror Pavillion of the [Autumn Equinox](#).

OUR STORIES AND THE STORIES OF OUR FAMILIES

How can the simple stories we recount and share be useful in our daily lives?

Article By: Jordan A. Booker Ph.D., August 2020

How do we come to make sense of our daily lives? How can we gain a strong grasp of who we “really” are and how we fit in the world? And how can we naturally connect to important others in our lives? Life stories are one of the prime tools we have for understanding ourselves and the people important to us.

Humans are natural storytellers. We use stories to make sense of our daily lives, to draw insights from our pasts, and to anticipate future goals and opportunities. Thus, storytelling is central to our lives—whether privately recounting an experience years ago, journaling something that happened earlier in the day, or sharing mundane stories at dinnertime.

But it is not only our personal stories that are important for us. The stories of our families are critical in many ways.

Family storytelling is key for many aspects of development. Storytelling is a form of rich engagement between family members. Sharing bedtime stories and talks after school, walking through an event that left a child crying—these are all opportunities for parents (and other caretakers) and kids to become closer through warmth, understanding, and support. Research by Robyn Fivush and colleagues has underscored the importance of parenting in storytelling with young children. The ways parents support children’s emotions and help children recount more vivid, richly detailed stories have lasting impacts on children’s cognitive and emotional development.

Children learn how to talk about their lives and what is important to talk about from family stories. For example, they learn customs and normative behaviours. An early example that we take for granted is learning how to present a detailed story with a beginning, middle, and an end—to give it a clear structure. Further, children learn what is appropriate to talk about or avoid and

stay silent on. What topics are appropriate over dinner or out in public. What feelings are appropriate to share with others? It takes time and effort for inexperienced storytellers to do this, but children are surrounded by stories that present this structure and give a model for them to work with.

Children are surrounded by individuals who can help make sense of their rudimentary stories, who can repeat and gently correct details, and who can help ask questions that nudge children along in thinking about events in more complex ways than they can do on their own. With these supports, a toddler is able to recount going to the park earlier in the day, a third-grader can recount some of their favourite birthday parties over the years, and a high schooler can point to the past experiences that helped them realize a passion for volleyball and the ways they have grown as a person from the past few seasons.

As teenagers and adults—individuals trying to figure out (and hold onto) our place in the world, and the values and roles that help define us—we use our life stories to build complex and stable views of ourselves. We make connections between our past successes and failures, our relationships over the years, and the kinds of activities that hold meaning to us to frame our identities. These identities reflect our roles as community members, as siblings, as co-workers, and so on. Our personal stories are vital to this. As we can make connections between our many different stories, we can frame and share a more complete view of ourselves. A number of researchers have studied this idea. Tillman Habermas and Susan Bluck provided a clear idea of the roles of life stories and the emergence of a coherent identity during the teen years that has guided other research in this area.

But it is not just that family members share stories and help provide feedback and insight on how to talk about life. The stories about our families are informative and valuable to us. These include stories about our parents' upbringing as children and how they acted (or acted up) with siblings, the traditions our families have maintained over the years, and the journeys of our ancestors' immigration. These stories about close others provide a foundation for ways we can understand and appreciate our broader histories.

And just as we hold onto our own precious experiences, we hold onto the hilarious tales of our aunts and uncles as children, the stories about how our

parents met, and the times that our loved ones also lost a favourite toy, or struggled in their classes, or were sad when they moved from an old home. Our families share these wonderful insights that tell us so much about the world, about our cherished relationships, and ultimately, about ourselves. I was able to recently collaborate with Natalie Merrill on research that addressed this very idea, pointing to the ways teens and young adults carry forward vivid, richly detailed stories about their parents as children, and the ways they point to their own growth and identities in talking about their parents.

Lastly, there is value in receiving stories as well as sharing these stories. As we become more experienced storytellers, we step into roles as guides and sources of insight for our loved ones. We become the ones to share stories with life lessons for our kids over meals or during rides to the store. When our child is frustrated or confused, our stories can help them better understand the world and themselves. We can help give young storytellers the practice they need to handle talking about life on their own. We can also give older storytellers—school-age children and teens—the opportunity to problem-solve while they recount events, while giving them hope and insights for challenges at hand.

Getting to share our knowledge and values (and having someone actually hold onto those experiences and beam with pride when they end up sharing your story down the road) is incredibly rewarding. Just as our stories ground us with purpose and insight, they can help us make a lasting impact by uplifting those around us. These ways of using our experiences to uplift and support others—to guide rising generations—fit with Dan McAdams' and others' views on the roles of life stories further into adulthood.

Our stories—the simple stories we privately recall and those we share over a simple meal—are filled with meaning, insight, and value. What's a story that stands out to you from a recent meal or chat with a loved one?

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