

The St Enda Kilt

We were pleased to visit St Enda's with a group from England in 2004. Brian Crowley controller of the Pearce collection was kind enough to take us on a tour.

The kilt display (as part of the new display) is nearing completion and is just waiting the brat and the interruptive information.

The new museum display which will tell more about the life of the school will be formally opened on the 17th of November 2004 and to the public (with free entry) the following day.



This is a wonderful change from the kilts as they were held before in store.

This picture was taken in March and shows both remaining kilts with one opened out to show the pocket hidden in the kilt apron.

What was it like to wear these kilts?

Brian was able to provide an extract from a book called "Dublin made me" by C S Andrews which spoke of his time as a pupil at St Enda's.



"The only distinctively Irish threads in my consciousness before I went to St Enda's were the faint ones derived from my grandmother's references to the Famine and the evictions, and my father's Ivy Day references to Parnell.

When my grandmother wanted to protest against the waste of food in the house she would say 'You will follow a crow a mile for that yet' - an echo of the Famine.

St Enda's was a bilingual school and that meant what it said. Irish dominated the place. For many of the boys it was their mother tongue and many more knew it well and used it enthusiastically. Nearly all the boys knew some Irish, but to me, who did not know a single word, its all-pervasiveness was an embarrassment. Even the English spoken by the boys, most of whom were from the country, differed so much from the accent and argot of the Parish of St Mary's in the centre of the city that it seemed a different language.

From the beginning I felt an outsider in the place and behaved as one and was treated as one by the boys. My situation was not helped by my expressed contempt for Gaelic foot ball, which to me appeared as a game where all the players were goalkeepers, and hurling, which seemed little better than an organised faction fight.

A number of the boys in St Enda's wore kilts. This they probably hated doing and for that reason were all the more ready to resent derogatory remarks about them - remarks which no Dublin boy could resist making, and I made them.

Between the language, the games and the kilts, I seemed to be always involved in quarrels and was thoroughly unhappy in a situation for which I had no remedy. It would never have occurred to me to complain to the teacher.

In the beginning of the school term a brake was used to pick up the day boarders. It picked me up at Terenure. I was the only one from there. As soon as I got on board, the boys coming from Rath-mines, who had been pupils of the school when St Enda's was located there, began to bully me. Two of my worst tormentors were the brothers Dowling, both a few years older than I and both wearing kilts. They had one particularly unpleasant form of inflicting pain; they pressed a knuckle under my ear. I have never forgotten it for them. As it happened. I met the Dowlings again in the IRA and became an intimate friend of themselves and their families. John, the older of the two was the O/C of the Fourth Battalion of the Dublin Brigade and has a powerful influence on developing my tastes in literature, painting and history. Frank the younger brother died in 1973 . . .

All schoolboys not accepted by the group are unhappy. My problem was that I did not want to be accepted by the group. I despised them and, from their point I was a “stinker”. I did not want to talk Irish, I did not want to play hurling or Gaelic football and I thought kilts were funny. I had only one friend, a London-Irish boy who did not know or want to know Irish any more than I did, who disliked all games and tried to avoid them, and who thought that kilts should be worn only by Scots Highlanders.” *Source - Dublin Made Me CS Andrews - Lilliput Press Ltd 2001*

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