Compiled by Bray Cualann Historical Society for National Heritage Week 2021

Boghall Paper 7 (The Saints, Fergal and Kilian, Germany & Austria)

St Fergal's Parish was constituted in May 1976 from the Parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace. In 1975 the Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Ryan invited the Franciscan Friars to run a new parish at Ballywaltrim, Bray. It was decided to call the new parish St. Fergal's after the Bishop of Salzburg, Austria in 767.

In 1975 Fr Roderic Ahearne arrived in Bray with the task of setting up the new parish of St Fergals, his assistant was Fr John Bosco O.F.M. The Kinsale born priest had very little money and nowhere to say mass. Roderic was a great worker and organiser, he managed to find an area in a warehouse of the old Portland Glass Works, Boghall Road that had been used as a paper store. The space was cleaned up and used to say mass, this site was used for about a year before a more suitable temporary location was found.

The new temporary church was set up in an old nissen hut (military style half-cylindrical skin of corrugated iron) which was located close to the glass works site.

The old nissen hut (St Fergal's Hall). The Ballywaltrim Community Centre now occupies this site.

The structure was modified, an altar and confessional boxes were constructed, and the curved roof was internally lined with ceiling tiles. Mass was said in the building and the rooms at the front of the building were often used for meetings and fundraising activities including a 300 Club raffle.
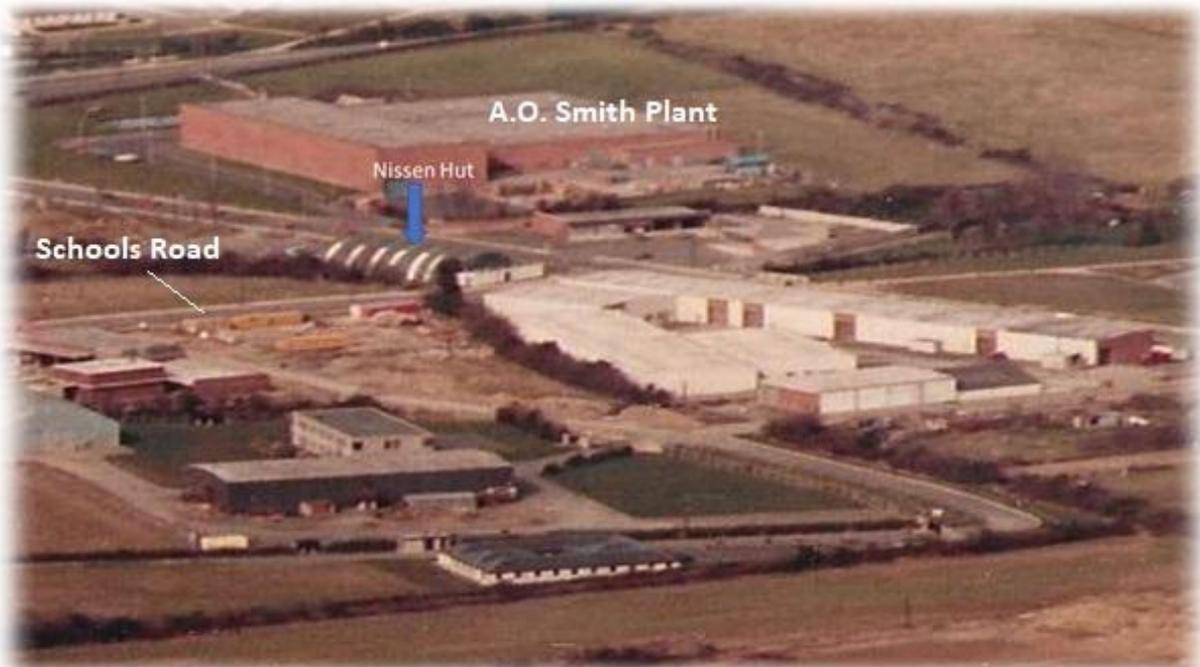

Inside the nissen hut structure. It was later used as a community centre, Bingo Hall and used by the St Fergal's Stage & Variety Club for their stage productions.

With fundraising activities well under way, the intention was to build a permanent church and schools in the parish. A site was chosen (now Lidl supermarket) for the new schools, on the opposite side of the Boghall road to the temporary nissen hut church.

A painting by local historian Ray Cranley from his childhood memories of the junction of Boghall and Killarney Roads. The site chosen for the new church and school development to the right of image.

The Franciscan Friars were called to a meeting with Wicklow County Council and they were informed that the proposed schools site was required by the Industrial Development Authority (I.D.A) for an American company who manufactured electrical motors (A.O. Smith). The Friars were offered new sites on now Schools Road for what would become St Fergal's Schools and St Kilian's Community School.

St Fergal's Hall (nissen hut) at Schools Road, with the red brick A.O. Smith plant behind.

A site was chosen at the junction of the Boghall Road and the Killarney Road for the new church. The foundation stone was blessed at Maynooth by Pope John Paul II during his visit to Ireland in 1979, and building of the church began in 1980. The foundation stone was placed on 8th July 1980. The architect on St Fergal's Church was a local man Eamonn Murphy from Delgany.

THIS FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE CHURCH OF
ST FERGAL AT BALLYWALTRIM, BRAY,
WAS BLESSED BY
POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON 1ST OCTOBER 1979
AND WAS PLACED IN POSITION BY
ARCHBISHOP DERMOT RYAN
ON TUESDAY 8TH JULY 1980

The foundation stone of St Fergal's Church

The blessing of St Fergal's Church by Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Ryan, Fr Roderic Ahearne(centre).

The Queen of Peace church was built in 1946 and was made a separate parish from the Holy Redeemer in 1952. St Fergal's Church, like the Holy Redeemer Church, has works designed and executed by the Breton artist Yann Renard Goulet, who lived on the Herbert Road, Bray. Yann provided the Stations of the Cross for St Fergal's church, Bray (1981).

The dedication of the foundation stone of St Fergal's Church.

Interior of St Fergal's church with and without seating, the bronze crucifix (almost life-sized) was donated to St Fergal's by the Archdiocese of Salzburg, it was designed and cast by an Austrian artist Josef Zenzmaier.

Exterior of St Fergal's Church in the Ballymorris Townland (locals described the roof as the ski slope)

One of the stained-glass windows in St Fergal's Church.

List of Parish Priests at St Fergal's

Fr Tony Deane, Parish Priest 2002, first non-Franciscan PP of St Fergal's Parish, he was a former curate in the Holy Redeemer Church, Bray.

In May 1978 a 16-classroom school was opened in the parish, the remaining classes were expected to be completed by September 1979. In March of that year (79) Roderic turned the first sod on the site for a new 16 classroom primary school in Ballywaltrim parish; it was expected it would be ready for occupation in September 1981.

With the opening of the new church the nissen hall became St Kilian's Community School in 1981.

The new school was ready in 1982 and by 1986 there were twenty-seven classes. One of the high profile students was Katie Taylor. The Community College excelled in the Aer Lingus Young Scientist competition. The school also performed well in sports and athletics with seven pitches and a sports hall. In 1983 the Bray school twinned with a school in Würzburg Germany and this was put on a formal footing when Bray Town Council and County Wicklow twinned with Wurzburg in 1999. Bray is also twinned with Begles near Bordeaux in France and Dublin California. In Würzburg, Germany there is a Wicklow Park with its own Round Tower and Celtic Cross.

Bray/Wicklow | Würzburg grüßt seine Partner- und Freundschaftsstädte!

As an interesting piece of nostalgia, the first ever pupils in the new St Fergal's parish started their school life in the prefabricated parochial rooms on the grounds of the Queen of Peace Church in the Vevay. Their teacher was Mrs Meaney, from this temporary location they moved to the nissen hut before moving to the new permanent St Fergal's schools. They then progressed to St Kilian's Community School for their secondary school education.

St. Fergal's National School opened officially in September 2015, it was an amalgamated school between St. Fergal's Junior School & St. Fergal's Senior School. Close to both schools off Schools Road is Würzburg Road.