

From the Beginning

Belturbet Vocational was officially opened on 7th January 1937. At first it had only three teachers and forty six students and prepared students to Group Certificate standard. The Headmaster was Mr E J Mc Donnell. The building had three rooms – Kitchen, Woodwork room and Commerce room. The school did exactly as the act prescribed; prepare students for employment and trades. The school attracted students from a wide area which included Northern Ireland. The nearest similar school in the north was in Enniskillen and as students travelled mostly by bicycle it was much more convenient for those on the northern side of the border to come to Belturbet. With the introduction of free education and transportation in 1967 the numbers increased. Extra accommodation was rented in the Town Hall and the old Boys school. By 1969 the school had 12 teachers. The Intermediate (Junior) Certificate was introduced. Results in this examination were of the highest standard leading to even higher numbers of students. With numbers approaching the 200 mark it became clear that a new building was a necessity. In 1977 a new extension was built and around the same time the Leaving Certificate was added. This progression to Leaving Cert was not a simple one and involved much lobbying by Parents' groups and others but eventually it was sanctioned by the Department of Education. The principal, Mr E. J. Mc Donnell, had a keen interest in local history and he decided that the extended school be renamed St Bricin's after a famous scholar who had established the nearby University of Tomregan in the early years of the seventh century (see section on St Bricin). The official blessing was performed by The

Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore and the Church of Ireland Bishop of Kilmore. The opening ceremony was conducted by Mr Tom Fitzpatrick TD and Mr John Wilson TD.