

Mainstream

About 1981 we introduced the Leaving Certificate Computer Option on the Mathematics Syllabus. For this we acquired an Apple Network of eight computers. This option consisted largely of computer programming in the Comal language with an overview of Pascal and other high level languages and some machine code programming. Students who successfully completed the program received certification from the Department of Education.

In 1995 we acquired 19 PC's and started more general computer work with students focusing on Word Processing and Spread Sheets and using computer for doing CV's etc. Then in conjunction with LCVP class we used these computers to prepare portfolios for LCVP exam.

WWW www.iol.ie/~bricin

About 1994 Mr F Gilleece set up our first web site which was hosted by NITEC at Dublin City University. The first pages were written in HTML and contained simple text. This data was transferred manually to DCU computer on floppy disc.

Later we transferred to IOL and were then able to upload our own pages on line, meaning that we could include pictures and update regularly. The aim of the website is to keep students, past pupils, parents and the community informed of events and happenings in the school.

Cross Connect Project

In 1998 we were invited to join the Cross Connect Project funded by EU Peace program.

This initiative was lead by the University of Ulster and connected three schools in the Republic and three in Northern Ireland. ISDN lines were installed in each school and Video Conferencing was the main technique used to communicate. One of the main practical applications was language learning. The University had native French speaking students and some of these were asked to take classes with students studying French for Leaving Cert in the schools. They first visited the schools and spoke to our students and French teacher. Then they continued with one class a week in oral French using the Video Conferencing facilities. Mrs J Johnson organised the classes from our side and Dr Sarah Quilty arranged the instructors in the University. Both the principal Mr L Mc Énri and the CEO Mr J Mc Kay were closely associated with all stages of the project and contributed greatly to its success.

We reported the progress of the project on our website leading to interest from many parts of the world. Contact with many schools in Europe lead to Video Conferences with England, Germany, Finland and the USA.

USA

Further contacts with America lead us to the One Planet Education Network. We became friendly with the chairman, Mr George Newman and he visited us in Belturbet and set up many good video conferences like the one with Harvard University. The biggest conference we had was lead by George and had schools from USA, England, Bahrain and Belgrade.

Without some very sophisticated networking technology this "live" international education exchange would not have been feasible. All

sites for the session were linked through an advanced technology called a 'multipoint bridge'. This technology was generously provided by the City of New York. St Bricin's were already familiar with this technology having experience of it for several years in their Cross Connect Project with the assistance of the University of Ulster.

For six weeks before the event a special website was set up so that the participating schools could share ideas and get to know something of each others' country and culture. It also allowed material to be viewed beforehand so that it could be better understood on the day this applied especially to poetry, artwork or song lyrics. Film/Video production crews and technology support teams at each live videoconference site documented the experiences of the students as they participated in the live event. From this body of work, a video program was edited, which is available for Webcast, and possible television, cable and video release.

The website was then available for follow-up discussion and analysis of the event and for further development of some of the ideas which were introduced on the day. The event was a major success. Three continents and five countries were successfully brought together in what can only be the beginning of a new educational era. George Newman

Three-way Cross Connect Video Conference

Belturbet, Roslea and Harvard USA.

Wednesday 17th May 2000.

The conference was organised by Dr. Sarah Quilty, University Of Ulster, as part of the Cross Connect project between schools from

North and South of the border. Taking part were Harvard USA, St Eugene's Roslea Co Fermanagh and St Bricin's Belturbet. From Harvard was George Newman Project coordinator, Andrew Krueger, President of Celtic Studies society, students of Harvard University, and students from the nearby St John's College.

In St Bricin's, Mr John Gildea, school principal thanked both students and teachers and complimented them on the marvellous image of the school and of Ireland which they presented to the world.

Comenius European Project

(Supported by the European Commission through Comenius Action 1 European Education Projects)

The first stage of the project involved teachers from each school coming together to plan the content. The first of these meetings was held in Helsinki where our coordinating school – Korso High- is situated. Mr Gilleece, Mrs Brady and Mrs Johnston attended from St Bricin's.

Project activities

- E-mail communication between schools to set up the project.
- Seeking approval of National Agencies.
- Meetings at National level to assure the rules and objectives of Comenius are adhered to.
- Teacher travel between the partner schools.
- Setting up a website, Forum Europaeum, to help students in the four school share educational materials.

- Encouraging e-mail contact between students.
- Exchanging written and printed materials between groups of students on specific topics.
- Set up point to point Video Conferencing and lead up to a four way conference where cultural differences can be investigated eg sports, music, dance, folklore etc
- Arrange student exchange between the schools.
- Any other activities which will help students and teachers to get a better understanding of the language, culture, sports, history and way of life of each other country.

Coordinating School:

Korso School, Helsinki, Finland.

Partner Schools:

South Lee, Prep School, Bury St Edmunds,
England.

Gesamtschule Sulzbachtal, Saarbrücken,
Germany.

St Bricin's, Belturbet, Co Cavan. Ireland

Title of project;

The Identity of the Young European

General Aims Of Comenius;

To give both pupils and teachers a practical and dynamic experience of the European dimension of education, through the opportunities

provided by regular contact with counterpart pupils and teachers in other countries.

The project was lead by Mr F Gilleece, Mrs J Johnston and Miss M Stafford but all teachers in the school participated fully. For the visitation of the overseas students all teachers, students and parents were very much involved in arranging accommodation, planning activities in school, sightseeing trips, boat trips, cultural activities and generally making guests welcome and showing them what Belturbet and Ireland had to offer.

A group of four teachers and six students from Gesamtschule Sulzbachtal Saarbrucken visited our school as part of the project. The student visitors stayed in our students' homes. The itinerary included Newgrange, Share Centre Lisnaskea, Slieve Russell and Windmills.

Evening entertainment included the Kinnypottel drama group in Cavan and the Ramor Theatre Virginia. They spent a full day in school, attended some classes and gave us a resentation on their area and school including pictures, music and song.

One of the highlights of the school visit for the Germans was a demonstration of Irish dancing by Emma Prior, Grace Mc Donald, Aileen Fitzpatrick and Gemma Mc Gerty. They have no traditional dance in Saarland and were really impressed by the Irish tradition. One of their group was a Flamenco dancer and they were interested in comparing the steps of the Irish dance with the Spanish. They hoped that this type of cultural activity may be at the chore another project.

The visitors felt that they had seen much of the real Ireland in their four days then many tourists see in several weeks. Mr Ulrich Basselli (Comenius Coordinator for Gesamtschule)

said on his return to Germany "this trip was a unique experience. Now we can understand much better what people mean when they talk about Ireland and its people".

Korso High School has a very strong focus on teaching music and therefore music was the theme of their visit to Belturbet. A combined concert was organized and our students performed a selection of traditional dance, music and song and the visitors performed many folk songs and musical pieces from Finland. The highlight was a combined choral performance. The students attended classes in Science and English. Took part in a table quiz and even learned some Irish phrases. After school the visitors and the host students travelled to Quinn Glass for a special guided tour of this modern sophisticated glass production plant. The massive scale of the operation and the extent of its automation as well as the helpful direction of the staff made this a memorable visit.

Miss Vogan had prepared some special choir music and they are joined here by the Korso group in some Beatle songs- particularly suitable as this was the weekend of the death of George Harrison. On our return trips to Finland and Germany we were quite fascinated at the impression that the Irish visits had made on our guests. Clearly the information they had gained on Ireland and St Bricin's had disseminated through the whole schools and they eagerly awaited our visit so they could return the hospitality and make our visit as pleasant as possible.

Our students and teachers really enjoyed the Finland visits. They were fascinated by the snow, the friendliness of the people, the saunas in every house, eating reindeer meat and of course the skiing.