

1959

1959

Beaten 11-8 by Ballyclare in Cup.

Played Koro in the Mikado. School production. W. Young, G. Schuster Foster.

2nd in 440 Cademy Spts, 2nd in 440 School Spts

Senior Advanced Level. General Maths (343), Pure Maths (325)

Applied Maths (352), Physics (333), Chemistry (355) 3rd in  
6th State Exhibition, County School, 4th in State, Exh. N.I.

Summer Hols: Caravans (2) + Shed on Potrush Rd, Portstewart  
and house off Strand Road, Portstewart

~~Donna Maria~~ ~~Donna Maria~~ ~~Donna Maria~~

Term: Accident M badly hurt, Adele, Yvonne in Hosp. Fw knocked out.  
Hysteria.

Played for 1st XV first on wing then wing forward (also centre)  
(Darrick capt.)

18th Birthday

Purchased "Henry"

# TRAVELS NOW AND THEN

© Christopher Earls Brennan

## MOYOLA 1959

In the early 1950s my father decided to construct a two-man canoe in which to paddle the waters of some bucolic Irish river. I think the inspiration for this was derived from a canoeing holiday that one of my uncles had enjoyed on a river in southern Ireland. Indeed my father seemed to have inherited the remains of my uncles collapsible canoe that consisted of a foldable canvas shell within which a frame of wooden rods was to be assembled. However, we never managed to complete this assembly and so my father decided to construct his own canoe that would not be collapsible. It would still be canvas on a wooden frame but a rigid rather than removable frame.

This new canoe was constructed in one of the attic rooms in our house. It was carefully fabricated and a few test paddles were nervously but successfully conducted in a nearby pond. After that my father's interest waned and he moved on to other activities. However, a year or two later, I had just begun my lifelong adventuring with a hike over the top of Slieve Gallion (see "Flowers on the way to Slieve Gallion"). Casting around for more adventure, my friend Frank Johnston and I decided to see how far we could float down the nearby Moyola in the "new" canoe.



*Starting point: Tobermore/Maghera bridge.*



*Looking downstream from starting point.*

The Moyola was the only river of any size close to Magherafelt. Rising near Mullaghturk peak in the Sperrin Mountains, the Moyola winds its way through the rolling farmland of southeast County Derry for 27 miles before emptying into Lough Neagh. A little preliminary scouting revealed that the river upstream of the road bridge on the Tobermore/Maghera road was too shallow for reasonable canoeing and so we decided start our descent at that point. We knew of several other road bridges further downstream and had reconnoitered the river from those vantage points; but we had little information on the river in between. Nevertheless, with the confidence of youth, we decided that we knew enough. Therefore, in the early summer of 1959, we began preparations for this canoeing adventure into the unknown. What attracted me to this exploit, indeed to all the adventures in the fifty plus years that followed, was precisely the thrill of venturing into the unknown, of finding out what was round the next corner or over the next hill and of meeting the challenges that followed.

Having obtained my father's approval to use his canoe and his willingness to deposit us at our starting point, we began collecting the gear we would need. Food and water were obvious. But we also knew that the canvas surface of the canoe was not particularly rugged; it could easily be penetrated if we made contact with rocks in the shallower parts of the river. Fortunately, we knew of adhesive and waterproof bandage tape called "Elastoplast" that my father made use of in his doctoring activities. We obtained a liberal supply of Elastoplast and set off one Saturday morning for the Tobermore/Maghera road bridge.

I do remember the mild but exciting apprehension with which we slid the loaded canoe into the water downstream of the Tobermore/Maghera road bridge. It was a beautiful, sunny Irish day. To the west of us the heather-encrusted Sperrin Mountains glowed purple in the sunlight and all around the lush green fields seemed to welcome us. As long as rain and misfortune stayed away it promised to be a glorious day. We bade goodbye to my father (who must have wondered if he would ever see his canoe again) and started downstream, Frank in front and me in the back. Not much paddling was needed but we soon encountered the first of many small rapids, some of which we needed to wade in order to negotiate. Inevitably the first rip in the canvas occurred, the Elastoplast came out and the canoe received its first badge of honor. On we drifted with kingfishers flashing past us and startled herons rising majestically before us. Though farm fields lay all around I don't think we saw a single person all day long. The river was its own sanctuary and we felt we could slip respectfully through this ribbon of near-wilderness. More riffles were encountered and negotiated but the bottom of the canoe began to look like a canvas war-zone; the Elastoplast supply was dwindling fast. We passed the junction with the Grange Water river and pressed on downstream.





*Curran bridge.*



*Looking downstream from Curran bridge.*

Several hours into our adventure and just beyond the Grange Water junction, we came to the lovely old Curran bridge, named after the nearby hamlet that recorded a population of 130 in the 2001 Census. A beautiful old stone, four-arch bridge carrying a single lane across the Moyola, the Curran bridge must date back at least to the 1800s if not long before. Instantly recognizable, we floated through it relieved to know where we were. The river was now fuller and easier to negotiate. However, a little over 1/4 mile downstream of the Curran bridge we came to an old weir or dam that dropped about 6ft in two stages. Throughout Ireland (and indeed Europe) dams like this were built in conjunction with a "race", a diversion of part of the flow used to drive a water wheel and mill in order to process the local agricultural produce. They represented the first mechanization, the first industry, and were an essential and fundamental step in the development of civilization. The sluice gate that regulated the flow into the race of this first weir is still extant though overgrown and long forgotten. During our long-ago adventure this weir was our first significant obstacle and initially caused us some trepidation. But it was easily portaged and we were soon on our way.



*Upstream of first weir.*



*First weir.*





*Sluice gate entrance to race at the first weir.*



*Downstream of first weir.*

Not far downstream of that first weir we found ourselves surrounded by woods. Until the middle of the 1700s, this whole region of County Derry was a dense forest, notorious as the haunt of wolves. The last wild wolf is reputed to have been killed in the middle of the 18th century. In 1633, part of that forest was obtained by the settler Thomas Dawson and became the private domain and estate of the Dawson family who called it Moyola Park. As with many of the private estates of the landed aristocracy in Ireland, a substantial stone wall was built around this domain in the 1800s. The purpose was twofold - to clearly define that estate and to provide some employment and relief during the terrible years of the famine. Most of these tall stone walls remain. While the relief they provided is long forgotten, their stark statement of segregation still resonates, still generates inevitable resentment.

On that day in 1959, we did not know when we entered Moyola Park and the demense of the Dawsons for there was no stone wall across the river nor any other sign of the boundary along our route. We did suspect that we had entered grounds where we were not welcome but it was still a surprise when we suddenly found ourselves floating past the manicured lawn at the foot of a great mansion. We ducked down to reduce the possibility of being seen as we floated by, trailing streamers of Elastoplast in our wake. My mother would have been mortified if she had known where we were!

That great house in Moyola Park, the seat of the Dawson family, was built in 1713 by Joshua Dawson who was the Chief Secretary of Ireland in 1710. Both the house and the adjacent village became known as Castledawson. Joshua's descendant, George Robert Dawson (1790–1856), son of Arthur Dawson, was born at Castledawson, and married Mary Peel, the daughter of the British Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel. Their son, Robert Peel Dawson (1818-1877), was the father of Mary Dawson, who became the heir to the Moyola estate. Mary was the great-grandmother of the brothers James Chichester-Clark (1923-2002) and Robin Chichester-Clark (1928-) who grew up in Moyola Park. Robin was the MP for Londonderry in the British House of Commons from 1955 until 1974. After an army career, his brother James retired to Moyola Park in 1959. He was a member of the Northern Ireland Parliament for South Londonderry for 12 years beginning at the by-election to replace his grandmother Dehra Parker in 1960. James went on to become the penultimate Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. He married the widowed Moyra Houghton (they had two daughters). In the aftermath of his political career James was created Lord Moyola in 1971 and died in 2002. Though the father of James and Robin Chichester-Clark died in 1933, their mother, Marion Caroline Dehra Chichester-Clark, lived at Moyola Park until she died in 1976.



*Fields around the first weir (in white).*



*Region around Moyola House weir (in white).*





*Moyola House.*



*Moyola House weir.*

Therefore, as far as I can tell, at the time of our adventure in 1959, the Moyola Park mansion was occupied by the 55-year-old widow, Marion Chichester-Clark, though her son, James, would shortly be moving in with his family. Of course, neither Frank nor I had any clue as to who lived in the great house that neither of us had ever seen before. But the drift of the river and the need for silent passage left us little alternative but to slip past as quietly as possible. Just a few yards beyond the house, the Moyola encounters its second weir, a larger drop than the first weir. We portaged around this on the right-hand side, the side furthest from the house. I think we were now out of sight. Continuing downstream through the woods, we negotiated several small rapids before signs that we had left the park were encountered. Soon we came upon an old, somewhat familiar single-arch bridge.

This stone bridge over the Moyola connects Castledawson village to the wooded Dawson demense. Built in 1796 by Joshua Dawson, it replaced an earlier wooden bridge that was carried away by a flood in 1795. It has a single arch spanning 116ft, once the widest single span bridge in Ireland. Today that bridge is signposted "Weak Bridge" presumably because the arch would have difficulty supporting heavy modern vehicles. At that time in 1796 the road leading down to the Weak Bridge from the village (Bridge Street) was the main road to the neighbouring village of Bellaghy, a few miles to the northeast. But to preserve their privacy when they built the enclosure wall around their property in the mid-1800s, the Dawsons diverted that route around the outside of their domain. This required a new bridge over the Moyola and the present Castledawson/Hillhead road bridge dates from that time.



*Weak Bridge.*



*Just upstream of Castledawson/Hillhead bridge.*

By the time we passed under the Weak Bridge we, too, had been weakened by the struggles with the weirs and other small rapids. It was also getting cold as night approached. Moreover, our supply of Elastoplast was now completely exhausted and the bottom of the canoe was beyond repair. I remember struggling unnecessarily with one small rapid where the canoe drifted sideways and filled with water. It was time to end the adventure. The next bridge just a short way downstream of the Weak Bridge was the road bridge carrying the Castledawson/Hillhead road and here I climbed up to the road, found a telephone and called my father to ask him to come and get us. I recall he was none too pleased with the soaking wet load he had to transport home; nor was he pleased with the condition of the canoe. But it had experienced an adventure greater than that for which it was built - and given us a taste for adventure that would last a lifetime.

Frank went on to college in England and to establishing a business in South Africa and Malawi. He became well-known for his photographs of those countries and for his unofficial diplomacy. His book of photographs of Malawi entitled "Malawi. The Warm Heart of Africa", became Malawi's window on the world. He once asked me to circumnavigate Lake Malawi with him on a photographic expedition but other commitments prevented me from accepting his marvellous invitation. I dearly wish I been able to accept for we were fellow travellers in the realm of adventure.

*Last updated 10/1/01.  
Christopher E. Brennen*



# RAINEY ENDOWED SCHOOL, MAGHERAFELT.

Reports for Term ending Easter 1959

Pupil's Name C. Brennen

SUBJECT	Percentage Marks obtained	Place in Subject	REMARKS
English —			
History —			
Geography —			
<i>adv.</i> Arithmetic <i>Maths 1.</i>	85	2	<i>Excellent.</i>
Algebra <i>Maths 2</i>	90	2	<i>Excellent.</i>
Geometry —			
Trigonometry —			
French —			
German —			
Latin —			
Greek —			
Chemistry —	72		<i>Very good</i>
Physics —	76		<i>V. good.</i>
Domestic Economy			
Drawing —			
Music —			

General Remarks:

*Excellent.*

Signed W. R. Todd



# RAINEY ENDOWED SCHOOL, MAGHERAFELT.

Reports for Term ending Christmas 195 9

Pupil's Name C. Brennen

SUBJECT	Percentage Marks obtained	Place in Subject	REMARKS
English —			
History —			
Geography —			
Arithmetic —			<i>Excellent; both in ability and application.</i>
Algebra —			
Geometry —			
Trigonometry —			
French —			
German —			
Latin —			
Greek —			
Chemistry —			
Physics —	—	—	<i>A very good term's work - has developed a second attitude to advanced work at University level.</i>
Domestic Economy			
Drawing —			
Music —			

General Remarks:

*Excellent as always - deserves every success.*

Signed L. H. Todd



SEASON 1959-60



GAMES CLUBS

MEMBER'S CARD

and

FIXTURE LIST

Chrisne, Printer, Magherafelt



Chris Brennan.

Mark Greenberg.

RUGBY CLUB

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1959—60

Captain of Rugby  
Vice-Captain  
Secretary

**D. CROTHERS**  
**F. HARTLEY**

## 1st XV

Date	Opponent	Result
Sept. 19	Dalriada	A 3-3
26	Foyle College	→ H 9-0
Oct. 3	Regent House	→ H 12-15
10		
14	Ballyclare H.S.	A 8-0
(Wed.)		
17	R.B.A.I. <u>1st XV</u>	H 3-0
24	Limavady G.S.	A 6-3
31	Hallowe'en Break	
Nov. 4	BALLYCLARE H.S.	H 19-3
7	ANNADALE G.S.	H 0-8
12	M.C.B. 1st XV	A 0-32
(Wed.)		
14	Ballymena Acad.	→ H 8-3
21	B.R.A. 2nd XV.	H 17-5
28	OMAGH ACADEMY	A 3-0
Dec. 5		
12	M.C.B. 2nd XV.	H 9-6
	Old Boys	→ H 14-8
Jan. 9	CARNE G.S.	H CANCEL
16	Dalriada	→ H 14-3

## 1st XV

Date	Opponent	Result
WED. 23	PONTERRA ROYAL SCHOOL	H 0-3
FEB. 2	OMAGH ACADEMY	H 9-0
Feb. 6	R.B.A.I. 2nd XV.	A 0-3
13	Limavady G.S.	H CANCEL
20	Ballymena Academy	A CANCEL
27		
Mar. 5	Coleraine A.I.	A 0-17
12	M.C.B. 2nd XV.	A CANCEL
19	DUNCANNON R.S.	A 0-8
26	Foyle College	A 14-3

## 2nd XV

Date	Opponent	Result
Sept. 19		
26	Foyle College	A 0-14
Oct. 3	Regent House	H 0-0
10		
17	R.B.A.I.	A 0-20
24		
31		
Nov. 7	Annadale G.S.	H CANCEL
14	Ballymena Academy	A CANCEL
21	BRA 4THS.	A 17-0
28		
Dec. 5		



# Under 14 'B' XI

Date	Opponent	Result
Mar. 5		
12		
19		
26		
Apl. 2		

## POINTS

	TRIES	CONV.	PEN
D. CROTHERS	1.1.1.1.	1.	1.
C. BRENNEN	1.1.1.1.1.		
M. BROWN	1.1.1.1.1.1.		
N. STOCKMAN	1.1.		
E. M'KEEVER			1.
T. KENNEDY	1.1.1.1.		
T. O'NEILL	1.1.	1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1	
T. FULTON	1.		
L. GREGG	1.1.1.	1.	1.
J. O'FLYNN			

T. ARCHER	1.1.
M. M'SWIGAN	1.1.
P. BROOKERTON	1.
R. GORDON	
F. HARTLEY	1.1.
R. MCLEAN	1.
F. JOHNSON	
J. FORSYTH	
J. HINFEE	
C. BROWN	
D. KENNEDY	
T. MCLOD	
E. MCCLURE	
J. BRENNAN	
M. BRENNEN	

## 3rd XI

NOV 21 DALLYCASTLE 2nd XI A 3-2

# Rainey deserve their win over Foyle College

FOYLE COLLEGE 1st XV were in disappointing form and lost to Rainey E.S. at Magherafelt by three tries (9 points) to nil. Rainey, who led 6-0 at half-time, thoroughly deserved their win.

Rainey's first serious attack led to left-winger McClean scoring an unconverted try, largely because of the Foyle defenders' inability to tackle effectively. Another try followed in the corner before half-time.

Rainey kept the visitors pinned in their own "25" for most of the second half and only occasional breakaways relieved the pressure. Foyle failed to match their opponents' fitness and rarely looked like penetrating deep into the Rainey "25".

# Inst defeat Rainey 6-3

ON a soft pitch at Magherafelt, R.B.A.I. beat Rainey Endowed by two tries (6 pts.) to a penalty goal (3 pts.).

Both Inst's tries came in the first half when they had territorial advantage. Johnston crossed for a fine try when Gilpin opened out from a misjudged touch kick and the second was added by a forward from a loose ruck. McKeown missed both conversions.

Neither team used backs, the out-halves kicking. In the forwards honours were fairly even. Rainey were quick to the loose ball with O'Neill and Stockman outstanding. Martin for Inst was in fine form in the line-outs. In the tight Inst used their superior weight to advantage.

Early in the second half Gregg kicked a penalty for Rainey. Gilpin missed a similar chance for Inst. The light country forwards lasted the pace well having the edge on Inst for the last 15 minutes.

Driving the ball through paid dividends. Brennan, Loan and Brown making Gilpin save from several dangerous situations.



# UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CO. DERRY PUPILS

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE MAKES FIFTY-ONE AWARDS

COUNTY Derry Education Committee, at a meeting in Coleraine on Saturday, decided to award university scholarships to 51 pupils of grammar schools in the county who had obtained an average of 55 per cent. or more in three subjects taken at advanced level in this year's senior certificate examination. There were 103 applications for scholarships.

The successful applicants were, in order of merit:—Christopher Brennan, "Cranagh Dha," Magherafelt, 81.5 per cent.; Felix Paul Boyle, Drumminick, Upperlands, 80.7; Peter L. Burton, Monaghan Road, Magherafelt, 78.7; Joseph A. Nelson, "Eveland," Blackburn Road, Shantallow, Derry, 78.7; Margaret R. McCaughy, 39 Roscarr Gardens, Limavady, 78.7; Gerard J. Dwyer, St. Patrick's Terrace, Colton, Derry, 72.2; Russell T. A. Farrelly, Portrush Road, Coleraine, 71.2; Bernice E. Woodcock, Artichoke, Castlerock, 71.2; Adrian A. Martin, Hillview, Maghera, 71; Robert A. F. Graham, "Rocles," Albert Park, Derry, 70.6.

Kathleen M. Kane, "Roemar," Dungeness Road, Limavady, 67.8; Margaret S. Leary, B.P. Manor, Limavady, 67.6; Margaret A. Nelson, "Casta," Portlough Road, Coleraine, 65.3; Margaret E. Beerman, Ballyke, Cogh, Cookstown, 64.5; Hugh D. McCann, Ballinacree, Strand Road, Portlough, 64.4; James Nixon Logan, Portrush Road, Coleraine, 63.5; Dermot C. Devlin, Ballyvett, Loup, Monaghan, 63.

Ian B. McQuiston, Belfast Bank House, Monaghan, 63.

Anne M. E. Sullivan, 18 West Avenue, Portlough, 64.3; Victor G. Jeffers, Ballymaguill, Ballymaguill, 64.4; Patrick J. Quinn, Monaghan Road, Maghera, 64.4; Michael L. Kerr, Riverside, Dungan, Cookstown, 64.3; David J. McClean, Dispensary House, Clady, 64.3; Wm. A. Begley, Mount Street, Coleraine, 62.4; Hugh W. Garry, Loughmuck House, Clady, 62.4; Michael J. Kingston, The Rectory, Dungiven, 61.9; Daniel J. O'Hara, Ball Street, Maghera, 61.8; June Ritchie, Beatholies, Castlerock, 61.2; Matthew J. Foster, Creevyagh, Derry, 61.2; Bradfoot M. T. O'Neill, High Street, Danganstown, 60.8; Jack D. Jones, Maghera Street, Killybegs, 60.7; Ivan J. E. Lake, Bushmills Road, Coleraine, 60.4; Jennifer M. Egan, The Rectory, Castle Dawson, 59.2; William G. McCarron, Ballymaguill, Coleraine, 59.2.

John E. Ward, Galloway, Cogh, Derry, 58.6; Gerard McCracken, Ballymaguill, Ballymaguill, 58.3; Patrick P. Murray, St. Malachy's, Coleraine, 58.3; David N. Chadwell, Belmont Drive, Derry, 58.3; Helen M. O'Kane, Bridge Street, Killybegs, 57.8; Michael A. Doherty, Clady, 57.8; Liam Wray, St. Patrick's Terrace, Ballymaguill, Derry, 57.8; Thomas D. Kingston, The Rectory, Dungiven, 57.3; Victor Crawford, Bell's Hill, Limavady, 57.1; Andrew L. Montgomery, Coleraine Road, Derry, 57.1; Peter Conway, Fallowfield, Maghera, 57; John J. Murphy, Ballymaguill, Belfast, 56.7; Harriet P. J. Anderson, Loughmuck, Castlerock, 55.8; W. J. Maxwell Blair, Millburn Road, Coleraine, 55.8; J. Achison, Drumard Drive, Coleraine, 55.5; Frances M. Milson, Westland Drive, Magherafelt, 55.4; Samuel J. Blair, Killybegs Road, Limavady, 55.3.

## As in former years

With regard to Grammar School scholarships the director of education said that in the past those who passed their Certificate examinations were automatically awarded scholarships. It was a matter for the Committee to decide what awards, if any, should be made to pupils who failed the examinations either badly or narrowly.

In the past the Committee had asked him to obtain the views of the principal teachers as to whether those who failed had any chance of passing the examinations the following year. These awards had always been dealt with at college level and if anyone was not satisfied there had the right of appeal to the Committee to have their case reconsidered.

It was agreed that the question of the awards to those who failed the

# THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

J. M. FREELAND, B.Sc., B.Com.Sc.  
SENIOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
(ADMISSIONS, CAREERS AND APPOINTMENTS)



TELEPHONE:  
BELFAST 30111

17th April, 1959.

Dear Mr. Brennen,

The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine has asked me to inform you that on consideration of your application for admission, the Faculty has decided to offer you a place, provided that, before the commencement of the new academic year, you will have complied with the requirements for matriculation and entry to the Faculty, and provided also, that there is a satisfactory outcome of your interview with the Dean.

You have already been advised to make yourself familiar with the regulations and you should not be in doubt about what is required.

You must note specially, that the second leaf of your application form, giving your additional examination results, must be sent to me as soon as you have obtained your examination results.

When you send your examination results to me, you will, if the results are satisfactory, be given an appointment for your interview with the Dean.

Yours sincerely,

*J. M. Freeland*  
Clerk of Admissions.

Mr. Christopher Brennen,  
Cranagh Dhu,  
Magherafelt,  
CO. LONDONDERRY.



THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

Faculty of Science,  
Dean's Office.

20th March, 1959.

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Dean of the Faculty of Science would be grateful if you could come for an interview to the Chemistry Department, David Keir Building, Stranmillis Road on **Tuesday, 28 April**, at **2.25p.m.**, in connection with your application to enter the Faculty of Science in October 1959.

Will you please let me know as soon as possible if you are unable to come at the time stated above.

Yours faithfully,

Nora H. Strain

Clerk to the Dean,  
Faculty of Science.

Mr. Christopher Brennan

Telephone: BELFAST 63041

Telegraphic Address:  
"EDUCATION, BELFAST."

Any reply to this communication should be addressed:

"THE SECRETARY"

and the following reference number quoted:

REF. No. G.1904.....

YOUR REF. No. ....



Ministry of Education,  
Netherleigh,  
Massey Avenue,  
Stormont,  
Belfast.

State Exhibitions, 1959

21 SEP 1959

Sir/Madam,

I am directed by the Minister of Education to refer to your application for the award of a State Exhibition under the State Exhibitions Regulations (N.I.), 1957, and to inform you that, subject to verification of your age, the Ministry has pleasure in awarding you a State Exhibition tenable at the university named in your application form.

It is noted that you propose to defer your entry to the university until the beginning of the academic year 1960/61.

It will be a condition of the award that you follow an honours course (if available) at the university which you have chosen, and subject to your fulfilling the conditions contained in the Regulations the award will be tenable for a period not exceeding four years.

An extract from the Regulations is enclosed for your information.

Please be good enough to furnish to the Ministry without delay:-

- (a) evidence of your age in the form of a certified copy of the entry in a public register of births; and
- (b) particulars of the course of study which you propose to follow during the coming year.

*Christopher Brennan, Esq.,*  
*"Cranagh Dhu,"*  
*Castledawson Road,*  
*Magherafelt.*

E22/8/236&236/50&50/6/57.

I am, Sir/Madam,  
Your obedient Servant,







