

ANNA'S account of her LIFE RIP

On the 3rd of March 1919, the cries of a new baby sounded in the Mahony household, near Killarney, Co Kerry, Ireland.

It was **myself!** - *Very* welcomed after the three boys. Two brothers followed, and last, but not least, my only sister, Eileen.

I attended National School for my early years of education. Then, I went by bus (the non- catholic or 'protestant' one, as we called it) to the Mercy Convent in Killarney.

From there I went to Scarborough, where I spent two years, and succeeded in passing my school leaving exam.

I enjoyed those years, and was so impressed by the sisters that I felt the Lord was beckoning me to be a Lady of Mary.

On the 1st February 1938, I said farewell to my family, believing then this would be my last view of the lakes and mountains around Killarney. Little did I dream of Vatican II, which brought so many changes into our lives.

With Joyce Tomei, I entered as a postulant at Forest Hill, where there were seven or eight very 'holy' novices.

After six months, I became a novice – not so holy!

War was looming in the distance. We prepared our 'gas free' room, were fitted with gas masks, et cetera.

It was then decided we would be safer in Hatchlands where St Anne's school was evacuated to.

Life there was different: we enjoyed the change, the freedom- the life and plenty activity about us with so many resident children, for whom we daily cut bread, etc, etc..

On August 17th 1940, we travelled by bus to Coloma, Croydon and there Marie Paula and myself prepared to make our first vows.

In September, I went to St Charles' College, which evacuated to Cold Ash - they were memorable days!!

My teaching life began in September 1942, spending it at Forest Hill, Coloma, Merrow, and then back to Forest Hill, where I became Headmistress from 1952 to 1961. These were great days building up the school (which had been bombed) to recognition standard.

It was a joy working with the parents, pupils and a good community, where we had plenty of quick change with Sr. Mary John.

In 1961 I was asked to go as superior to Scarborough, as my assignment to go to Uganda in 1960 never came off. I was in hospital recovering from a hysterectomy op in hospital as my plane flew out.

After a sabbatical in Ladbroke Grove and Dublin I went back to teaching in Basingstoke. During my stay I was asked to be provincial bursar. I was handed an exercise book, a few pages of which showed the accounts. See where we have grown since then; budgets, red account books, details of bank statements, minute details of cash spent, etcetera etc.!!

After two years at Forest Hill as superior, I went with Elizabeth to Portsmouth and in 1978 to West Wickham to pick up the pieces after the closure of the college. We had to discern what best to do with the students' resident quarters, having sold the education section and the Manor house. Some worries, some excitement, some prayers to heaven.

In 1984 I journeyed to Middlesbrough, where I carried on various activities. At this point I was replaced as Provincial bursar.

With the hurricane of October 1987, I came to Herne Bay, and here I am.

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Anna celebrated her golden jubilee 27 August 1990.

In 2007 Anna moved to St Joseph's. When her health deteriorated she moved to Coloma Court care home in 2011,

Precious, one of her carers, remembers:

Anna knew all the staff names. She was their 'watchdog, looking out for the residents. Anna walked around, very observant and aware of what was going on. If she thought something needed attending to, she would beckon a staff member with a crooked finger and discretely whisper in her ear that something was wrong.

She was proud of being a teacher and a headmistress.

Anna was much loved by the staff at Coloma Court and they will miss her.

May she rest in peace.