

***Catherine Beatty* has lived in Johnstown (a village about two miles from Kill) all her life. Catherine went to school in Kill in the late 1950s and early 1960's. These are her memories of her youth:**

**"There was always great rivalry between Johnstown and Kill, even when I was going to school. In those days we had the "Kill Slashers" and the "Johnstown Rashers".**

**I was the youngest in my family and my two brothers and sister had been to school in Kill before me. They went to the "old school", the one on the corner. The other families who went to school there from Johnstown were the Leavys, Dowlings, Birchalls, Kellys and Burkes. The teachers I remember were Mr. O'Flynn, Miss Dwyer and Miss Minogue.**

**In those days you did an exam in Sixth Class and you got a Primary Certificate and most people tended to leave school after it. Very few went on to secondary school so some things have certainly changed for the better since then.**

**I also remember the Guards coming in to check the school attendance rolls so there was very little scope for "mitching", even if we had wanted to!**

**We used to walk to school and home again, sometimes we would get a lift from the priest who used to say 8.30 am Mass in Kerdiffstown House every morning. The gates of Kerdiffstown House were in the middle of the village beside our house. It was a training convent for the Dominican nuns. The nuns were not allowed out so we used to post their letters and get things for them. Our window was alongside the avenue, as it was then, and that was as far as they were allowed to go.**

**At Christmas they used to come down and sing carols outside our window. It was lovely to hear all the little novices singing. My father used to always make sure to have a little crib prepared and sitting in the window. We used to go up there after our First Communion and Confirmations and get sweets. It was great.**

**I remember Confirmation was a big thing then. It went on all day. They asked lots of questions. They used to take a break for dinner in the middle and then back to the church for the ceremony itself.**

**You were confirmed as "a soldier of Christ" and the Bishop usually gave you a symbolic tap on the cheek.**

**Johnstown itself has certainly changed greatly since the building of the dual carriageway. Prior to that the gates of Palmerstown House were at the northern end of the village and, in fact, one of the gate lodges was situated right in the middle of where the road runs now - right beside what was Neills shop. The dispensary was beside Neills and we went there to get cream or ointments if we fell and hurt our knees!**

**There was a Post Office in Johnstown then as well. At first it was in Paddy Behan's house but then Mrs Leavy took it across the road to her cottage. We sometimes used to have to deliver telegrams from the Post Office up to Rathmore and Killeel and places like that, on our bikes. Eventually the Post Office was closed and we were left with just a Post Box.**

**I also remember The Forge on our side of the street, and the horses being shod there. A huge bellows was used to keep the fire constantly hot, so that the horseshoe would be - before they were put on the horse's feet. I always used to wonder why the iron nails never seemed to hurt the horses when they were being shod.**

**The Garden Centre, of course, was not in Johnstown then. It was just a piece of land. I remember sheep, cattle and even chickens being kept there at different times. Where the Conservatory Centre is now was a plant for making concrete blocks, owned by the Burke Brothers. There was no road over to Sallins. My father and his brother had a sandpit beside Kerdiffstown House, and they helped build the road with the sand and gravel from the pit. We used to help in the pit on our summer holidays loading lorries by hand using just shovels.**

**There was a garage with petrol pumps which was owned by Bob Rose where Craftspun yarns is now. Lawlors farm and hayshed was our favourite place for playing, but that is now turned into a housing estate.**

**Growing up in Johnstown was great fun even though we were on the main road from Dublin to Cork with two-way traffic passing our door."**