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'TEMPORARY' PREFAB HAS BEEN SCHOOL FOR 25 YEARS

By Catherine Fegan

A QUARTER of a century after applying for a permanent school building, a community is still waiting for civil servants to act.

In those 25 years, €1.6million has been spent renting and maintaining 'temporary' prefabs on a 2.5-acre site for the 200 pupils of Gaelscoil Philib Barún in Tramore, Co. Water-

Irish Daily Mail CAMPAIGN SCANDAL OF OUR SCHOOLROOMS

ford. Principal Daithí de Paor says the rent money would have paid for a proper school by now.

Generations of children have now passed through the school without ever learning in a proper building.

Such disgraceful treatment prompted the Irish Daily Mail to begin a campaign

to get the Ministry of Education to spend its building budget. Just weeks after revelations that the Education Department failed to spend €340million of the budget, pleas for help are ignored - though €200,000 is being spent on yet more prefabs.

Former pupils, now adults, tell the Mail today, in a special report, how girls were forced to share toilets with boys, and they wore coats in class.

They are distraught to see their younger sisters still left in the prefabs without a proper school.

FULL STORY: Pages 6-7

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How Marilyn liked it haute

IT'S not the first thing one associates with Marilyn Monroe, but the actress knew how to make a tasty stuffing.

In fact, she is revealed as a talented cook in a new collection of her letters and notes.

The idea of her as a home-maker clashes with her dizzy screen image, but the collection offers the best evidence yet that she had a passion for cooking.

The stuffing recipe is jotted on a letterhead from an insurance company. The 11 ingredients include a bread loaf soaked in water, five herbs, spices and nuts.

She writes that giblets for the stuffing must be 'liver-heart' and stipulates that the ground beef must be 'browned (no oil)'.
From Daniel Bates
 In New York

It also needs '1 handful' of grated Parmesan and an undetermined amount of 'parsarly'.
 Monroe's liking for cooking became evident at an auction of her personal effects in 1999 when two well-worn cookbooks of hers from the 1950s were sold for well above the reserve.

The stuffing recipe features in *Fragments*, a book that collects her letters and musings from 1943 to her death in 1962. The recipes dated from about 1955 or 1956 when she was living in New York. U.S. chefs who tried the recipe said it bore the 'unmistakable balance of fussiness and flexibility that is the hallmark of an experienced and confident cook'.



Love of cooking: Marilyn Monroe

Gordon sticking the knife in... as family feud heats to boiling point

By Darragh Murphy

CELEBRITY chef Gordon Ramsay has twisted the knife in the bitter feud with his father-in-law, branding him 'incastuous', 'overbearing' and 'controlling'.

The fiery TV cook called Chris Hutcheson, father of his wife, Tana, a 'dictator' in a letter made public this week. And yesterday the 44-year-old ignited the simmering feud with the 62-year-old in-law he once regarded as his business partner.

Mr Hutcheson has announced he intends to sue Mr Ramsay for €2.5million for unfair dismissal after being sacked publicly from this position as CEO of family firm Gordon Ramsay Holdings.

GRH runs a string of high-end restaurants, including Gordon Ramsay at Powerscourt in the Ritz-Carlton, Co. Wicklow. Earlier this week Mr Ramsay also suspended his wife's brother and sacked her nephew from their GRH positions.

And last night, in the latest act of a very public family soap opera, Mr Ramsay claimed his in-laws' attempts to turn his wife against him were the final straw.

'My back was turned, and they were jumping on Tana, using her as a target to manipulate and poison. Hoping she would just lift up the kids — my four children! — and jump in with them. And hang me out to dry because I had sacked her father. So it was becoming harder for me to do nothing.'

Mr Ramsay claims that matters reached a crisis last Monday, when Tana received a note from her mother, Greta.

The letter said: 'Tana, you are not welcome anywhere near our door. I cannot believe that you have done this to your father. Until you dispose of that man, you are not welcome back.'

'Basically, she was saying, get rid of Gordon. Get rid of me. That was the thing that tipped me over the edge.'

The tempestuous cook sacked his father-in-law last month after



Angry: Gordon Ramsay



The in-laws: Chris and Greta Hutcheson

losing track of millions he'd sunk into GRH.

Mr Ramsay said: 'The best financial advisers said to me: "Gordon, would you still employ this individual if he was not your father-in-law?" I answered the question in seconds. In the negative. Chris was so controlling, so overbearing, so incestuous that the only way out was to cut the ties.'

This week the chef wrote an extraordinary letter to his mother-in-law containing hints about her husband's 'complex' private life.

Last night, in his first interview on the family war, Mr Ramsay said he did not regret the open letter.

He said: 'His level of concentration. His excuses for disappearing. All matters for concern.'

'Where is Chris?' I would be told he was in Paris, sorting out the restaurant. Fanny, I would think, we have already done that. Then I would ring up, only to be told that Chris hadn't been there for six months.'

The millionaire chef also alleged

that he was in the dark over financial dealings in the family firm.

'It's not that easy. Jesus, where did that money go? I'm talking about pretty substantial figures. Into millions. It wasn't quite right I was working harder. Putting it all in. Then when I was due a big pay cheque, it would be well; you've got this bill and that bill.'

'Everyone was taking from the pot — no one was putting back in, apart from me. I mean, portraying me as a monster? It is total balaoney. You know how fiery I am. I am what I am. A fighter — came up from a difficult background.'

He added: 'Hand on heart, they abused their situation.'

Gordon and Tana could not spend money without clearance from Mr Hutcheson. 'It was so claustrophobic', the chef said. 'Tana knows about 90 per cent. She has been shocked. She struggled. It is a big blow. She had this perfect image of her daddy.'

'However, it has made our marriage stronger and our minds much clearer. I wake up in the morning and this dictator who was planning out my life has gone. I don't want to commit to opening 40 restaurants in the next four years. I want to consolidate.'

reporter@daily@mail.ie

25 YEARS

Irish Daily Mail CAMPAIGN

SCANDAL OF OUR SCHOOLROOMS

by Catherine Fegan

LITTLE Leonora Curran has never seen the inside of a 'real' school. Only seven years old, the young pupil has spent her formative years in education inside a cramped rented box.

Leonora attends the same school in Co. Waterford as her sister Edwina, a bubbly 11-year-old who also has no idea what it's like to go to a school mad of bricks.

As pupils of Gaelscoil Fhíbh Barúin, they are among the hundreds of children who do not know what it is like to receive an education in anything other than a prefabricated classroom.

The girls' older sisters Gilban, 28, and Geraldine, 25, both former pupils of the Tramore Irish language school, spent the entirety of their eight-year primary school education in temporary accommodation.

Now in adulthood, they tell of school days in which they had to wear their coats in class, share toilets with the boys — and they could not put on a school play because they didn't have the rooms.

They hoped their years spent in prefabs would eventually see the provision of a new school for their younger sisters.

But 25 years after opening, and despite the fact that it has been revealed that the department failed to spend half of its building budget this year — €340million — Tramore's Gaelscoil is still no closer to getting its own permanent building.

This is despite an investment of a staggering €1.6million by the Department of Education since 2003, when the site was purchased, in costs

'For the €1.6m spent we'd have a school by now'

relating to the rental, purchase and maintenance of the school's eight prefabs, plus of its building budget price of a site.

Instead of a building, the school's 200 pupils are educated in a maze of prefabs perched on land that was originally intended for a permanent 12-classroom facility.

Holding a cardboard model of what his bricks and mortar school should look like, principal Dathi de Paor describes the waste of the taxpayers' money that has been spent to date as 'scandalous'.

'A 24-classroom school was built up the road for €2.6million,' he says. 'We need a 12-classroom facility, which is half the size of that so I'd say for the €1.6million that has been spent on purchasing land, buying and renting prefabs, we could have had a school by now. This is a national scandal.'

Gaelscoil Fhíbh Barúin started life in 1985 in a room rented from Tramore Town Commissioners.

As numbers grew, the school moved its three teachers and 65 pupils to Stella Maris House in Tramore and rented three upstairs rooms from the Sisters of Charity. But as growth continued, the landlords of Stella Maris



'A national scandal': Frustrated principal Dathi de Paor

House informed the board of management that the accommodation at the time was unsustainable and the process of identifying a site for a new school soon began.

In 2003, the Department of Education purchased a 2.5-acre site for €500,000, opposite a racecourse in Tramore. When that site was initially identified in the Nineties it was being sold for a lot less than what it eventually cost,' says Mr de Paor.

'In 1999 I informed the department of the availability of a new site at Crobally Upper for immediate and quick sale. Delays in valuation officers visiting Tramore saw the price per acre double and the department ended up paying half a million for it.'

'And seven years on it is still lying there. We are 25 years in temporary accommodation.'

'Our latest application to the Department of Education has been stalled since 2005 and last month the Tanaite, Mary Coughlan, wrote to the school board to inform us that a meeting with her would at this stage be "premature".'

'I don't think a 25-year wait is premature at all.'

Frustrated over their fight to see building work started, Mr de Paor, the school's board of management and parents of pupils went over the head of the department and took matters into their own hands.

Last year, they secured the free services of a local firm of architects to design a new building for their children, and then enlisted the help of Waterford County Council in the pre-planning process.

Gaelscoil Fhíbh Barúin also teamed up with Waterford Leader Partnership, which had been looking for a site for a new community centre in Tramore. 'There is no community centre in Tramore so we thought that joining forces with the Waterford Leader Partnership would give the project added value,' says Mr de Paor. 'During the day the hall could be used by the school and in the evenings it could be closed off from the school and made available for community use.'

'We told the department that we could get the designs for free and that there is also a means of drawing down funds for a multi-purpose hall, which would also save them money but we were informed in

IN A PREFAB SCHOOL

Grim: Gaelscoil Philib Barún is made up of rented prehab



Pictures: CHRIS BACON

Generations have passed through this prefab-only school – hoping for something better. They have been disappointed, and what’s worse is that MORE has now been spent on renting the prefabs than the cost of a proper school



Never had a proper school Mary Curran and her daughters

writing not to appoint independent architects.

Instead, in June, the Department of Education granted Gaelscoil Philib Barún €200,000 for the purchase of yet more temporary accommodation. And the prospect of further additions to the prefab pile that is Gaelscoil

Barún says. 'There is a green field lying idle and they are pumping more money into prefabs. Every time one of my children started at I thought they would get a new school. Six of them have passed through here in a 25-year period and still no school. It's every child's right to get full and proper facilities but I've lost hope now that it will ever happen.'

Her eldest daughter Gillian, who left the school 16 years ago, has memories of her time in prefabs. 'I was never in a proper school until I got to secondary level,' she says. 'I definitely missed out. As a child, going to school meant wearing your coat in the classroom to stay warm and sharing a toilet with the boys. We

never had indoor facilities and because of that we were never able to have a school play.'

'I always looked on in envy when I saw new schools being built and I thought we would have one by now. I never expected to see my sister Leonora in a prefab. I just always thought she would be going to school in a new building.'

During a tour of his prefab school, Mr de Faor stops and looks wistfully up at the site chosen for his school, a 2.5-acre green field with stunning views of Tramore Bay. 'The last I heard was that a design team was going to be appointed by the department,' he says. 'That was four years ago and nothing

has happened. Visitors to the school compliment us for keeping the prefabs in such good condition.'

'Other schools have let them rot and they seem to get a school quicker. I can't take that risk, but that seems to be the way it is.'

He adds: 'What is most galling is

was revealed that the department had failed to spend its capital budget for the year, leaving €340million in funding still to be used.'

Angered by the news, Mr de Faor says the money should be devolved to schools whose permanent accommodation needs are not being addressed.

'They [the department] messed up when the county had money so how are they going to cope now that we have none,' he says.

'It's like standing at the back of a queue waiting and watching someone pour money down the drain.'

'There is a tendency in this country to think that children aged between four and 12 don't matter. They don't have a vote so just leave them to it. That's wrong.'

'You wouldn't see universities made up of prefabs, or government buildings. A building says a lot about the institution it represents.'

'If children are meant to feel pride in their school, what does an education given in a rented box tell them about their worth?'

'We had to share the toilets with the boys'

Philib Barún has incensed the mothers an fathers of children who will see even more delays.

One parent involved in the campaign to get building work started is Mary Curran, mother to Leonora, Edwina, Gillian and Geraldine. 'I have walked into TDs' offices with my whole brood to highlight how long this has been going on,' the wea-

Is your school a scandal?
If you are a parent or teacher email your story or picture to schools@dailymail.ie

'What does it tell children about their worth?'

that I have been through the planning process in 1992 and 1994 for other sites and we still don't have a home of our own. They [the department] own the site and they couldn't even go to the planning stage during the reign of the Celtic Tiger – in fact, they have never even come down here to see the site they own.'

To make matters worse, last week it