

Background to Adamstown and Coláiste Abbain Secondary School

Adamstown Village

Adamstown (Irish: *Maigh Arnaighe or Maigh Arnaí*, meaning "The Plain of the Berries") is a village in the heart of County Wexford. It is about 24 km (15 mi) north-west of Wexford, 20 km (12 mi) east of New Ross and 20 km (12 mi) south-west of Enniscorthy. It is surrounded by the beautiful rolling agricultural countryside of central Wexford.

The village contains a primary school, a secondary school, a GAA pitch, a community centre, two pubs, a shop, a Catholic church and an adjoining cemetery. Almost adjacent to the village is Adamstown castle, which dates from the 16th century. Also, located in the graveyard stands an early high cross.

St Abban

St Abban (aka St Abban of Magheranoidhe, Eibbán and Moabba), after whom the college is named, established an early church in Adamstown. St Abban According to tradition Abban was born into the Uí Chormaic dynasty in Leinster and is the alleged brother of St Gobnait of Ballyvourney. As well as establishing the church at Adamstown he is also associated with Killabban in County Laois and is credited with founding the church at Ballyvourney before surrendering it to St Gobnait. There is also an association with Killagh Abbey in County Kerry. There is a grave marked with two ogham stones and a bullaun stone in the woods near Ballyvourney traditionally believed to be the burial place of St Abban. He died c.620AD.

High Cross

Located in Adamstown graveyard is a stunning high cross. The 3.8 metre cross towers above the surrounding grave markers. The plain latin cross is cut from a green coloured stone and sits in a rectangular base buried in the ground. This cross is similar to an early cross at Killiney in Kerry, though this possible 8th century cross is a lot cruder. There are the remains of a medieval church also present in the graveyard.

Coláiste Abbain Secondary School, Adamstown

Motto: Reach for the Stars!

In Coláiste Abbain, we endeavour to provide a school where all students are valued and respected, in a welcoming, happy, caring, secure and challenging environment. Every individual is a valued member of our school community, and, through the provision of a comprehensive curriculum, we ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

We aim to create a centre of excellence in education with high academic standards, high expectations, whilst fostering the emotional intelligences and talents of all our students. Our level of care and support for students is unparalleled. Students at Coláiste Abbain thrive because they are supported, encouraged, cared for and feel a real sense of belonging. An important factor in student success in our school is the nurturing of a proactive partnership between the pupil, the school and the home. Such a relationship between school and home is especially important in first year during the transition from primary to post primary.

The school offers a team of committed and dedicated teachers and non-teaching staff whose prime concern is to help students achieve their dreams with their mantra "*Dream, Believe,*

Achieve". The school has an enviable reputation in a wide range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities and, again, this is facilitated by the personal dedication of our teachers.

Coláiste Abbain - A Brief History of the College

Coláiste Abbain is non-denominational and coeducational. It provides second level and third level courses. At present it has an enrolment of approximately 140 second level students and 40 third level students. It is administered by Waterford and Wexford ETB.

Adamstown Technical School was built in 1935 after a suitable site was secured by the then CEO, Mr. Sean Wilmot from local publican, Mr. Michael Fortune. The first Teacher in Charge was Mr. Sean Little of Berkley, New Ross and he had the unenviable task of recruiting pupils from the surrounding primary schools. The idea of fourteen-year-old rural children still going to school, even in the thirties, was ridiculous in the extreme as far as most parents were concerned. For many years the roll boasted of 30 pupils but in reality, particularly during the sowing and harvesting seasons, numbers often dwindled to three or four. Night classes, however, were a different proposition and classes such as Woodwork, Gaelic League, Drama, Needlework and Cookery were a regular feature during the dark dreary nights of winter. Many of these classes had been the brainchild of the second Teacher in Charge Mr. McInemey who, incidentally, died tragically in a turbine accident near Scark, New Ross. He was replaced by Mr. Frank Barry who was subsequently transferred to Enniscorthy.

The next Teacher in Charge was the school's Irish Teacher, Mr. Tommy Carey. These were the days of want during the Emergency of 1939-'45, when war ravaged the World, particularly Europe. Supply of essential foodstuffs was guaranteed by the rationing system. Very often the ingenuity of Tommy Carey was equally important in keeping the doors of the Technical School open. At one point when closure seemed imminent he arrived back from 'god knows where' with sixteen pairs of bicycle tyres which enabled the students to continue their education and cycle to school.

The advent of free education and transport in the mid sixties revolutionised Irish Education, not least the Vocational Schools as they had now come to be known. Mr. Vincent O'Dwyer replaced the retiring Mr. Carey as Principal in 1973. Two years later the school's first Vice-Principal, Mr. Terry Nagle was appointed. They both spearheaded a massive upgrading of the school buildings, student facilities and the curriculum.

The first Leaving Cert. students sat their exams in 1979. Enrolments continued to increase and staff numbers likewise. Mr. O'Dwyer launched the school to new heights. His untimely death in 1984 was widely regretted among staff, pupils, and parents alike. His work was continued, enhanced and even surpassed by the new principal, Mr. Nicholas Sweetman who took charge in November 1984. Staff, students and parents strove to make the school one of Wexford's finest. Adamstown Vocational School became Coláiste Abbain in 1991.

In Sept.'93, Mr. Ken Quinlivan, took over at the helm and continued the pioneering philosophy of his predecessors. The era of Coláiste Abbain as a PLC centre was about to dawn. With the help of Deputy Principal, Mr. Terry Nagle, many Further Education courses were developed including the highly acclaimed Accounting Technician course. Mr. Joe O'Brien succeeded Mr. Nagle as Deputy Principal in February 2004. An Enniscorthy

man, Mr O'Brien took over the position from his eminent predecessor. He had a long and distinguished career as a woodwork teacher and IT teacher. He was a member of staff since the time of the first principal, Mr Tommy Carey.

Senan Lillis took over as principal in August 2004 with Joe O' Brien as Deputy. In Coláiste Abbain since Sept 1984 Mr Lillis has taught History, Geography and Folklore. A native of Clare, he has a deep interest in GAA, drama, Irish music and song and drama. Since then Brigid Cadogan, Eddie Crean and John Nolan have been Deputy Principals in Coláiste Abbain.

Leaving academic achievements aside, the college over the years has competed and taken part in several extra-curricular activities. Field sports such as hurling, football, camogie and soccer are catered for. Whether on stage in a musical, All Ireland Slogadh or on the public speaking rostrum in TCD or UCD, pupils from Coláiste Abbain can mingle with the best. Our pupils are indoctrinated in the motto "*Reach for the Stars*", a motto which serves them well as future participants in a vibrant modern Ireland.