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Ardfield students Lucie Hodgins and Julia Soden at the 2020 ESB Science Blast, developed and delivered by the RDS, Dublin. Lucie and Julia, with their classmates, researched the question 'how can we improve our local environment?' Pic Orla Murray/ SON Photo

## Enterprise Ireland approves €1.14m co-funding for projects

This week, Enterprise Ireland (EI) approved a total of €1.14m joint funding to drive collaborative projects, or 'Challenges', between innovative companies and the public sector. The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programme encourages businesses to explore and co-design unique solutions with public sector teams, through competitive Challenges. Twenty-three applications from public sector bodies to participate in the SBIR programme were shortlisted to five Challenges.

Enterprise Ireland's approved SBIR Challenges for 2020 are:

Climate Action - Environmental Protection Agency - Innovating a circular economy for soft plastic waste in Ireland.

This Challenge is seeking

solutions to counter the problem of plastic waste and look at opportunities for closed-loop reuse systems, with an initial focus on reducing plastic waste from school lunches. Total fund €240K

Health - Mater Misericordiae University Hospital and National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh as part of Ireland East Hospital Group - Reducing the incidence and impact of inpatient falls within the hospital.

This Challenge aims to address the prediction, detection and prevention of falls in the Mater Hospital initially, with potential to extend a solution nationally. Total fund €200K

Health - Tallaght University Hospital - Improving the care of, and empowering, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) patients

in the community. Total fund €200K

Biodiversity - Marine Institute - Innovative solutions to map coastal seaweed resources in Ireland. Total fund €300K

Transport - National Transport Authority - Vehicle Capacity Information for bus and coach passengers with a focus on improved accessibility.

The Challenge is seeking innovative solutions to encourage and support mobility impaired passengers when using public transport in Ireland. Total fund €200K

The new Challenges are expected to be live on e-tenders no later than May 1, 2020. More information on SBIR Ireland and the Challenges will be available soon on www.sbirireland.ie.



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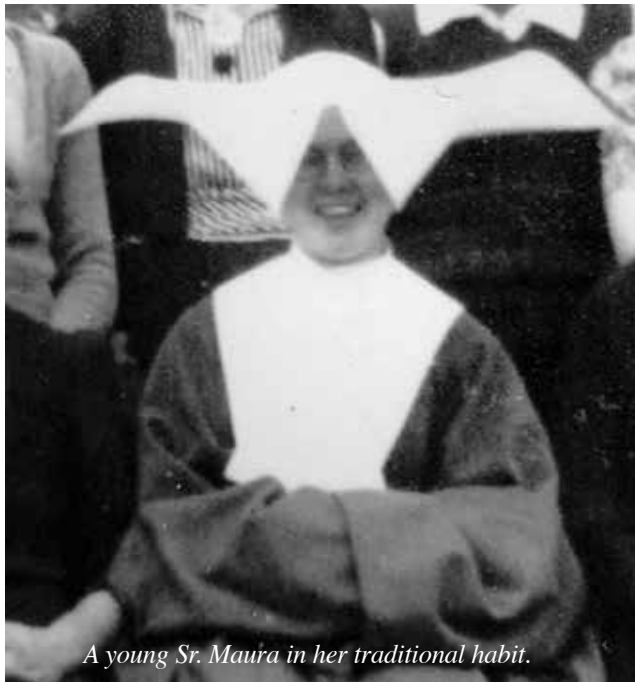


# One hundred years and still flying free

*"The Daughters of Charity live their commitment to God through service to people in need and through working for a more just society. In the spirit of their founders St Louise de Marillac and St Vincent de Paul they strive to make a difference in the world of people who are poor, disadvantaged or discriminated against. In partnership with others they provide comprehensive, caring and collaborative services in a transparent and responsible way."*

Sr. Maura Cullinane from Kealkill in Bantry celebrates her 100th birthday on March 20. A member of the Daughters of Charity community since December 1, 1938, Sr. Maura, now retired, resides in a nursing home in Dublin.

Referred to affectionately by many who knew her in Bantry as 'the flying nun' for her swiftness on the road, Sr Maura loved the freedom that being able to drive afforded her. She was a common sight on boreens on trips home to Bantry, often referring



A young Sr. Maura in her traditional habit.

to herself as being as "free as a bird", especially when in the driving seat.

Members of the Daughters of Charity make annual vows throughout their life, which leaves them always free to leave, without need of ecclesiastical permission.

The traditional habit of the Daughters of Charity, which Maura wore in the early days, was one of the most conspicuous of Catholic Sisters, as it in-

cluded a large starched cornette on the head, from which they became affectionately known as 'God's Geese'. This was the dress of peasant women of the neighborhood of Paris at the date of the foundation.

Sr Maura's nieces, Mary O'Sullivan and Mary McCarthy, both fondly recall their aunt as being a very open-minded and good-natured spirit with a great sense of humour, who loved her homeplace and her



Sr. Maura, with her sisters Sheila and Nell, 20 years ago.

family dearly. "Her pockets were always filled with sweets," recall her nieces nostalgically.

"Twenty-one-and-a-half years," replies Sr. Maura with a twinkle in her eye when asked her age today.

In reality approaching the great age of one hundred years, Sr. Maura looks back with joy on her life, which she says she has "thoroughly enjoyed".

One of seven (her siblings

were Kitty, Sheila, Eddie, Nell, Dan, Den and Anne), "I'm from a very happy family," she comments. "I'm very blessed."

"I'm very grateful to God for it," she says. "Being a Sister of Charity was the one thing that I chose for myself and it made me very happy. I was free as a bird."

After getting her calling, Maura spent over seven years in the Daughters of Charity community in Blackrock, Co.

Dublin. Her mother and sister Sheila would have travelled up to see her before she spread her wings to the community at Rosewell in Scotland and she also spent time in the Daughters of Charity house in Paris where she trained as a nurse. She spent a number of years at different locations in the UK, and in Scotland where she learned to drive.

Sr. Maura eventually returned to Ireland, living at

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various communities in Dublin – Fairview, Coole, Mountmellick, Kylemore West and finally St Catherine's in Dunardagh, Blackrock. Working as an occupational therapist, she spent a lot of time helping elderly patients in the community.

She was well into her eighties before she retired; her final years working were spent caring for Alzheimer's patients in Rickard House on the grounds of her convent. Her amazing ability to connect with her patients spoke of her open and loving nature.

After spending a short time as a patient herself at Rickard House, in 2013 Sr. Maura moved to Highfield Healthcare nursing home, where today she happily resides and with great affection on a daily basis recalls the olden days in Bantry.

For years she returned to Bantry every August for two weeks, travelling the length and breadth of West Cork visiting friends and relatives during each visit.

"She loved home and she loved family and seeing and hearing about all her nieces and nephews and later on her gran and great gran nieces and nephews. She came back to Kealkill any opportunity she got," says Mary (O'Sullivan).

Shanacrane, where her mother came from, was a favourite spot, to visit the late Dan Manning and then on to see the late Ted Hurley, her first cousin. Lady's Well in Kealkill, Gougane Barra, Barley Cove and Eagle Point in Ballylickey were all preferred haunts – anywhere that was by the sea.

When she wasn't home, she was a voracious letter writer; there are few who haven't received a letter from her over the years.

"She must have written hundreds and hundreds of letters," say her nieces.

One of her letters, to her younger sister Nell on December 1, 1951, mentioned their bother Dan who was stationed in Korea with the US army at the time.

It read, "No doubt you will have heard the good news of Dan's homeward trip. There has been a weight lifted from my mind since I got word and poor mother says it is the best tonic she could get after her illness."

Further down, "I had a long letter from Dan about a week ago. He was just sitting out on a 36-hour train ride to Tokyo and expected to leave there either by plane or by boat for USA, intended to get discharged from California and to pay a visit to the Kearney family and Bishop Manning and also to greet that lady who seems to be so interested in him (Dan went to marry said lady) I'm looking forward to his next letter."



Sr. Maura with her sister Sheila. It was Sheila's 97th birthday wish to travel to Dublin to see Sr. Maura; Sheila passed away just six weeks later.



Sr. Maura's nieces, Mary McCarthy and Mary O'Sullivan

Her sense of humour is evident in the letter!

The last time she drove to West Cork herself was in 2001. After that, she got the train to Cork, the bus to Ballylickey and then she drove herself around West Cork on the visit. She celebrated her 90th birthday in West Cork in 2010 and made her last trip down from Dublin in 2011.

After retiring, she continued to hop on the bus into the centre of Dublin and walk 'free as a bird' around the city.

To this day, she loves arts and crafts, reading, music and

theatre. "She was often heard singing 'One day at a time sweet Jesus' in the car," recalls Mary (O'Sullivan) smiling.

She still gets out and about every Sunday when a very good friend comes to take her for a drive.

"You'll hear Maura before you see Maura in the nursing home," says Mary (McCarthy) "because she is always laughing."

She is perhaps closer in spirit to twenty-one-and-a-half years than one hundred!



Sr. Maura on holidays in West Cork wears the simpler habit style of 1965.

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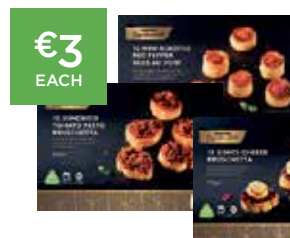
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# Extreme spring clean



## A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

It's that time of year again. The light is back. The winter cobwebs are suddenly visible everywhere, and I am infused with house cleaning energy. It seizes me every Spring, but this year it has started early and threatens to actually make a big difference.

It's not the weather, which has been rather abysmal – though we have thankfully been spared the worst of it. It's not the daffs, which are bravely being battered by the fourth storm in a month, as I write this. It's not even the amazing display of snowdrops this year, nor the shy return of our single crocus. It's having a project manager. Like 46 per cent of parents of 25 to 30-year-olds in this country, I have an adult child who has moved back home. Daughter #4, youngest and perhaps the most attached to the family home, is back, and has taken on spring cleaning as a personal crusade. Move over Marie Kondo. My daughter is in the house.

By the way, talking about Marie Kondo (the house tidying guru, I am not a fan of her Kon-mari method of decluttering. Here is Marie Kondo herself explaining how she came to formulate Konmari:

"I was obsessed with what I could throw away. One day, I had a kind of nervous breakdown and fainted. I was unconscious for two hours. When I came to, I heard a mysterious

voice, like some god of tidying telling me to look at my things more closely. And I realised my mistake: I was only looking for things to throw out. What I should be doing is finding the things I want to keep. Identifying the things that make you happy: that is the work of tidying."

The idea is that you pick up each object and ask yourself if it sparks joy. If it does, you keep it. If it does not, you get rid of it. That is a problem right there. There are no shades of grey in my materialism. I could keep it all or throw it all away. Yes, I would be upset to lose family photographs, or my children's drawings and letters; but I would get over it. It's not as if I look at these things every day. In fact, most of these mementos are only rediscovered when you are having a big spring clean – which is why it takes so long. On the other hand, I could weep at giving up a bit of broken pottery I found while walking in the Alpujarra mountains and which sits in the porch, along with some very interesting rocks from the river in Coomhoola, and pine cones I picked up in the front field. The fact is that the vast majority of objects, books, and bits and bobs that have accumulated around the house over the past 25 years all spark joy. Then again, I could happily live without them.

And that's the problem. We think that we keep stuff because they are pleasing, or useful, or show us in a good light to visitors. I keep things because of stories... It must be a professional hazard. I could keep an old lighter that does not work because it tells a story of when we went to Tobago.

My criteria for de-cluttering is very different. There are two questions: "Could this be useful some day?" and "How will this be disposed of if I chuck it? Will it end up in landfill?"

The first question is why I battled to keep a length of old blue rope that we found when clearing out the back-back hall. It's a really handy length for ty-

ing up a gate, or holding down the boot when transporting a ladder, or tied into a bridle to catch a horse (which is probably what it was last used for, considering the way it's tied). The second question started out being the reason I had a large pile, now a neat large bundle, of dirty plastic coal bags. I was loath to chuck them knowing that they were too dirty to be recycled. However, when we were laying new garden paths, I decided to use them instead of that very expensive black plastic you buy to keep down the weeds. #Winner. I now keep the old bags for the garden (BTW I have loads if anyone is planning some garden paths.)

I have explained this to my project manager, and she has been very understanding. She does however demand that I consider how to store the stuff that I feel might come in handy, or can't bring myself to take to landfill – hence the neat bundles of coal bags.

So far, we have re-organised the pantry and the back-back hall. She has gone through all the kitchen knives (we had close to twenty – most not very sharp) and bought one of those magnet thingies that you put on the wall to hold the good ones. We are slowly going through the garage. The rest of the house is being re-organised as well. The lounge looks like Victoria station's lost luggage, as we park stuff that I can't quite decide what to do with yet, but we'll get to them. Our trips to the charity shops and recycling centres are becoming almost daily as we plough through it all.

It's already made a real difference. Roll on summer in a tidy, de-cluttered house!

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the March edition of West Cork People.

This time last year Brexit was very much in people's minds. A farmer said to me recently 'that turned out to be a bit of a damp squib'. Whether that's true or not, Brexit is very much to the back of people's minds now with coronavirus challenging the world's health and economy. Not to mind, when will we have a new government and what kind of mix will it be? Challenge and change I think are the two words that are already defining 2020. I read somewhere recently that 'if it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you'. Perhaps as the quote suggests, one is never very far from the other.

On a positive note, whatever the challenges, West Cork has a wealth of enterprising men and women ready to take on anything. With Enterprise Week drawing to a close, inside this issue we have highlighted just some of the inspiring people who have set up their own businesses in West Cork. You'll also find an interview with Paul Healy of the Rubicon Centre in Cork, Ireland's largest business incubation centre and Richard Linger of Nimbus Research Centre.

We celebrate International Women's Day on March 8 by talking to some of West Cork's inspiring women. Máire Ahern McCarthy, who is taking on the position of Branch Manager for Bank of Ireland Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Bantry, tells us about her passion for agriculture; Schull based author and professor Kathleen Kelley Rardon talks about her new crime book and living with Parkinson's; and Holly Cairns TD talks about life as Cork County's only woman TD.

Although you wouldn't know it by the recent weather, it is actually spring! To mark it, we have a very informative spring gardening feature. From growing fruit to gardening sustainably, there is plenty of advice and lots of growing tips to get you motivated, whatever the weather!

If we can get through the March winds and April showers, let's hope for flowers in May.

For this and lots more, see inside...

I hope you enjoy the read,

Mary



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West Cork People

## Our hidden medieval history

Dunmore Golf Club invites you on a journey through West Cork's hidden Medieval History on March 11 with a talk at Dunmore House Hotel from 7pm.

The Keynote speaker for this event is renowned historian Dr. Paul Mac Cotter and his talk will look at the medieval history of Ardfield, Bandon, Barryroe, Clonakilty, Courtmacsherry and Timoleague.

Kieran Doyle MA, historian and author, will also speak on the evening, his topic being: 'Behind the Wall: The Rise and Fall of Protestant Power and Culture in Bandon. It should prove to be a most interesting evening and tickets are available at a number of local outlets including Dunmore House or by contacting Willie Murphy on 087 2618819.

## Discover DNA at Symposium in West Cork

DNA testing for genealogy is becoming increasingly affordable and popular, especially as gifts, not just to provide an indicator of ethnicity, but also to support research into family histories. The types of DNA testing and how to use the results fully is still not widely understood. The advancement of the new citizen science of genetic genealogy is limited to a small group of individuals who are open to sharing their results, and usually it costs nothing. The West Cork DNA and Family History Symposium 2020 has been arranged to better this understanding, the importance of increasing

data sharing, and specifically for West Cork where the paper trail is not always clear. Organised by Ballynoe House and the Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce, the all-day event will take place at Fernhill House Hotel on Monday, June 8.

Speakers from the US, UK and Ireland will be making presentations throughout the day. They will also be on hand to answer questions. The day starts for the beginner, explaining the various types of test, providing case histories and online resources. There will be detailed presentations of DNA studies into the West Cork families of Collins, Bar-

ry and Mennis, as well as the Irish DNA Surname Mapping Project. Presentations will also discuss the diaspora and emigrants from Drimoleague and Dunmanway.

Attendees will be entered into a prize draw, which includes more than €1200 worth of DNA testing kits, annual memberships and books about DNA testing & genetic genealogy.

For more information contact Mark Grace at Ballynoe House or Facebook 'My Irish Genealogy' to download a copy of the programme.

Ticketing through clonakilty.ie events or Facebook.



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# Bantry Credit Union Schools Quiz a great success

Bantry Credit Union participated in the Irish League of Credit Unions' National Schools Quiz this year for the first time in many years. Held on Friday

night, 31 January, the event was a brilliant success. There were 27 teams took part (108 pupils), with schools from Beara to Sheep's Head and all points in between represented!

There are two strands to the quiz: Competition A for pupils up to the age of 11 and Competition B for pupils aged 11 to 13.

The quiz master for the

evening was Cathriona Tobin (a member of the credit union's Board of Directors). And the credit union's Brand Ambassador Darragh McElhinney was on hand to present the prizes to the first three teams in each category.

The winners in each Competition went on to represent Bantry Credit Union in the Cork Regional Final in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork, on 1 March.

**Competition A – up to age 11**  
**Winner – Our Lady of Mercy National School, Bantry.** Team members – Ella Foley, Neha Ginesh, Maggie Murray and Sarah Wiseman  
**Joint Runners Up 1 – Coomhola National School:** Team members – Grace McSwée-

ney, Dervla Morris, Maggie O'Donoghue and Emily O'Sullivan  
**Joint Runners Up 2 – Kealkil National School.** Team members – Sean Collins, Max Flynn, Grace Mears and Steven O'Sullivan.

**Competition B – age 11 to 13**  
**Winner – St Finbarr's Boys' National School, Bantry.** Team

members – Danny Murphy, James Murphy, Tom Murphy and Luke O'Sullivan  
**Runners Up – Coomhola National School.** Team members – Oran Brady, Josh Cosgrave, Cian Hayden and Lisa O'Sullivan  
**Third Place – Dromore National School.** Team members – Ria Buckley, Daniel McGrath, John Mulhall and Darragh O'Regan.



## Fairtrade fortnight in Clonakilty

Fairtrade town volunteers have visited schools in Clonakilty this week to spread the message of Fairtrade: farmers deserve a fair price for their work. Fairtrade International's focus this year was on female cocoa farmers, with women producing around 65 per cent of cocoa globally, growing the main ingredient in the chocolate that we love, the goal is to inform consumers and businesses about the real life situation for these women, they are living on less than €1 a day.

Clonakilty is also home to Ireland's only Fairtrade chocolate producer, Exploding Tree, and Allison, a passionate advocate for cocoa, thinks that it's

only fair that farmers get paid a fair-share. "Farmers in West Africa; in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, grow 70 per cent of the world's cocoa. The industry in this part of the world was developed to take advantage of slave and child labour, and young people are still smuggled across

borders, forced to work with no contact with their families and no access to the basics, running water, education, healthcare, there are still over 30,000 slaves in the chocolate industry in West Africa as documented by the WHO, these are just the facts. Chocolate is something we

love in Ireland, we are the third largest consumers per capita in the world, it is a luxury and something we often give as gifts to show our gratitude and love. It only makes sense that it shouldn't be rooted in injustice. This isn't about buying any particular brand of chocolate, but about asking all chocolate makers to join in the movement to create '100 per cent slave-free chocolate'. A movement coined by radical chocolate brand Tony Chocology, check them out they are transforming the industry."

*Pictured: Fairtrade representatives at Kilgariff School, Clonakilty*



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## THE HISTORY SHOW

Kieran Doyle

# Civil war politics

One of the sound bites to emerge after the 2020 election is that the 'old civil war politics is dead'. This reflected the emergence of Sinn Féin (SF) as a party equal in strength to the traditional big two, Fianna Fáil (FF) and Fine Gael (FG), who have dominated government in Ireland since its foundation. It was taken an indicator that young people

in particular, were no longer willing to simply tick the ballot paper to reflect the historic voting patterns of their families and were willing to make a change. This week, I want to reflect on a great lecture given by historian Tom O'Neill, (author of *The Battle of Clonmult*) who spoke about the Civil War in his lecture to the Rosscarbery and District Historical Society. The organising of his lecture could not have been better timed, as we look to emerge from our civil war chains and its haunting ghosts.

On the first sitting of the thirty-third Dáil, the Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou MacDonald asserted that Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have run the country for a century and are unwilling to let go. Now it seems that a grand coalition involving FF and FG is a distinct possibility and therefore perhaps the end of civil war politics? Though the irony of FF and FG accusations of SF being undemocratic is not lost on people. For three years, southern politicians bemoaned, complained and



*Desertserges man Dick Barrett was quarter master for the third Cork Brigade during the War of Independence.*

pressurised SF to get back in to the Northern Executive and do business with the DUP. In this case, it didn't seem to matter that those two parties are on the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of policies and political outlooks. The message was clear, suck it up and get on with it. Yet FF and FG are refusing to even talk to SF because of their differences? If the landscape of our politics has changed irrevocably from single party rule, then surely it is undemocratic to refuse to speak with, or even ignore, other parties? But here's one to tease out. Micheál Martin told the whole country before the election that he would not consider entering a coalition with FG because he believed that the people wanted a change and that his party was unwilling to support Fine Gael in order to facilitate this change of government. He may still keep to his word. Yet for many observes, the two parties mirror each other in so many ways. If they do decide to go into coalition, then surely their identities will become fused?

When will we finally say that the past must no longer dictate our current emotions? If we hold onto the past too long, then Sinn Féin's dark and somewhat murky history will forever weigh them down. Likewise, Fianna Fáil's total mismanagement of the country, resulting in a complete economic collapse and loss of economic sovereignty, will always be a stick to beat them, despite personalities and policies changing. Will we look back in twenty years' time and still punish FG for allowing, perhaps even facilitating an escalation of a country's housing crisis so great, that a generation has been ruined? One hundred years later, since the foundation of the state, we can no longer look back and trade on the viciousness of the civil war that shaped our country's affairs. So let's reflect on Tom O'Neill's

insightful lecture about the civil war to understand what drove the FF and FG division a hundred years ago.

O'Neill's lecture centres around Desertserges man, Dick Barrett, who was quarter master for the third Cork Brigade during the War of Independence. Barrett was an essential player in West Cork, procuring arms, fuel, and provisions to keep the brigade going. He also organised an Irish version of escape from Alcatraz, when he absconded from his imprisonment on Spike Island in November 1921. But Dick Barrett is probably best known outside of West Cork for more tragic reasons. He was one of four

One hundred years later, since the foundation of the state, we can no longer look back and trade on the viciousness of the civil war that shaped our country's affairs.

Republican prisoners executed by the Free State authorities on December 8, 1922. While there were many local atrocities on both sides in the civil war to fuel a generational hatred, none was so bigger than these executions. O'Neill gave us a background to their execution. In an attempt to quell the escalation of violence, the Free State arranged an amnesty, whereby anyone who had arms, could hand them over without retribution. However, after two weeks, anyone who was found with a gun that was to be used against the State could be executed. This was voted on in the Dáil and, as O'Neill explains, was quickly dubbed the 'Murder Bill'. In response to this the Republicans decided to assassinate any TD who voted for the legislation. In another twist related to West Cork, Séan

Hales – an elected TD from Ballinadee, who had fought with his brother Tom against the British in the War of Independence – was assassinated by the Republicans on account of him voting for that same Bill. For what was descending into more vicious hatred for each other, the Free States reprisal was quick. Four high profile Republican prisoners, one from each province, were chosen for execution: Liam Mellows from Connacht, Joe McKelvey from Ulster, Rory O'Connor from Leinster and Tom Barry from Munster. O'Neill explains that Barry was the most prominent prisoner they had from Munster, but he had made his escape before any of this came to light. Dick Barrett was seen as the next most prominent figure in the prison and so his fate was sealed. O'Neill also referred to Kevin O'Higgins, who signed the execution orders. His best man at his wedding some years before was Rory O'Connor. The four men were taken out at 8am to face the firing squad, only for more tragedy to occur. The soldiers had not been told whom they should aim for and most of the fire was trained on O'Connor; the result being, he died instantly, and the other three laying wounded and in agony on the ground. O'Neill explained that the soldiers had only one round, as is custom in a firing squad, so the officer in command had to 'finish' the men. Sickeningly, it took six more rounds to kill the men. O'Higgins stayed in politics, and while serving in the government as Minister of External Affairs, he was assassinated by the IRA in 1927. He couldn't escape his past. Republicans blew up Free Staters outside Macroom, Free Staters blew up Republicans at Ballyseedy. It was murderous, repulsive and damaging and it led to civil war politics. It's very easy to see how that generation was scarred and their differences irreconcilably linked to those events. It is less so today. It's time to talk to everybody – so we can all move on from the past. Listen in to the history show on westcorkfm.ie.

On a side, Dunmore Golf Club is having a fundraiser at 7:45pm, on March 11 at Dunmore House Hotel. I have been asked to give a lecture on the night about some of the topics in my book *Behind the Wall – The Rise and Fall of Protestant Power in Bandon*. The Key Note speaker on the night will be Doctor Paul MacCotter from UCC, an expert on medieval history, with a focus on West Cork for his lecture. Hope to see you there.



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# Hope on the horizon

by Clonakilty Amnesty Group

Last year we wrote about Vitalina Koval from Ukraine, a young woman activist who went to a peaceful protest on International Women's Day 2018. But she was met with violence and came home with chemical burns to her eyes. We return to her story with some hope and a request for your assistance.

Vitalina spoke of her experiences at the Amnesty International Annual meeting last spring. It is humbling and inspirational to hear of the struggles and abuses that people have endured for Human Rights and we imagine that these brave people are different, that they are super-human, have special reserves of courage. Possibly they are and they have, but two of us from our Amnesty Group found ourselves sitting with Vitalina in the bar, to which many of the participants go after the long, intense day.

How does one engage in conversation with someone who has had to move towns because of her address being given by police to her attackers? Or to someone who, owning her difficulties and confusion in her sexual preferences when growing up, talks about this on



the radio and finds that her mother has been spat on in the face on the street. Or to someone who suffered the pain and fear of being blinded for many months, unprotected by the police, but who repeated her right in 2018 and 2019 to again attend a Woman's March?

We met a very pleasant, funny but unassuming and apparently ordinary young woman who was pleased to tell us more of her story. She had been allowed to come to Europe to gain support for Gay Activists in Ukraine where persecution is the norm, not by Ukraine but ironically via Russia where her profile is less high. We asked her what made her stay and fight this prejudice and abuse



in Ukraine. She simply said, "My country can be better than this; that is what I want" And she continues to refuse to hide. She also has stated "I've been attacked so many times but I'm not afraid anymore."

Recently we have learned that we are making an impact! It appears prosecutions have taken place as the trial against two perpetrators of the attack on Vitalina is ongoing. There is new investigation into whether the attack could qualify as a hate crime. This could give hope of increased tolerance or at least less abuse of LGBT people.

When we asked her what more could we do she said "Please do not forget us and keep the pressure up". Go to amnesty.ie and type in 'Protect Ukrainian activist Vitalina Koval' and you can sign a short up-to-date letter to the Head of the National Police and the Minister of the Interior. Thank you.

We shall be sending this piece to Vitalina in Ukraine, thus showing her that we are still with her and her activists for justice.

Join us on the second Monday of each month at O'Donovan's Hotel Clonakilty to continue lobbying for Human Rights. Phone Sue 023 8845056 or Mary 086 855 9199.

# Clonakilty Special Olympics AGM

The 2020 AGM of Clonakilty Special Olympics Club took place recently at O'Donovan's Hotel with a large crowd in attendance.

Chairperson Stiofán Ó Brion welcomed all and reviewed a busy year for the club. Stiofán gave special mention to the wonderful success of athlete Aoife McMahon on her achievement in the world games in Abu Dhabi, winning Gold in table tennis. He congratulated Aoife on being a wonderful ambassador for the club, Clonakilty, her family and sport in general, with her many appearances in schools and events following her win. The club was proud to have jointly organised the community homecoming with COPE for Aoife, which was a great occasion.

Stiofán thanked his fellow committee members for their work throughout the year, all volunteers, parents and athletes for their support and commitment to the club. He also acknowledged the owners/managers of Clonakilty Sports Hall, Skibbereen Golf Club, and Smuggler's Cove for providing their facilities throughout the year. A special mention was given to Sinead and Camilla in the Brewery Bar for giving the space for the committee meetings, and of course for wonderful Rings Tournament, which is such a beneficial fundraiser and social event for the

club and the wider community.

On a sad note, the Chairperson remembered the passing of club family members, John O'Brien, Jean Buttimer and Cameron Blair and founding member Fr. Eddie Collins over the last year. He expressed condolences to all of their families on behalf of the club.

He also bid farewell to athlete, Róisín Gilbert whose family has moved to Uganda for a few years.

Outgoing secretary Lisa Hodnett in her report noted how great it is to have an active club. Some of the basketball events attended this year was the tournament in Killarney, which was organised by the Kerry Stars Special Olympic Club, and the basketball development day in Ballincollig this year, many of the club athletes attended the days, which were the perfect blend of involvement, sport and of course fun.

This year also saw some of the athletes try out 'on course' golf in Doneraile GC, which was great to get an opportunity to try a new angle in golf. Lisa thanked the volunteers for supporting the athletes on these outings.

Finally she said the club is always hoping to attract new athletes requesting everyone to spread the word to anyone that may be interested and invite them to come along to a training

session.

Treasurer Bernie Farr was delighted to report the good news of the club being in receipt of a number of donations during the year including €100 from Clonakilty Black Pudding, €1,000 from Joseph's Charity Shop and €1,000 from The Children's Project. The incredible Rings fundraiser realised a total of €2,874. While a healthy balance, Bernie emphasised that there were always outgoings in the club and it was important to always have a healthy 'nest egg'.

Golf Coach Seán Dineen extended his thanks to Geoff Wycherley and his fabulous staff at Rosscarbery Driving Range for the Saturday morning sessions and to Skibbereen Golf Club and golf professional Sarah Claridge for some beneficial coaching sessions during the year. The sessions were always fun and worth the effort - even in inclement weather! He thanked all the volunteers who help make Saturday mornings possible and wished everyone the best for the year ahead.

The Election of Officers resulted as follows: Chairperson: Stiofán Ó Brion; Secretary: Audrey O'Mahony; Treasurer: Bernie Farr; Sports Officer: Lisa Hodnett; PRO: Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin; Athletes Protection Officer: Rose Dempsey.



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## THE HISTORY & POLITICS CORNER

Shane Daly

Shane Daly is a History Graduate from University College Cork, with a BAM in History and an MA in Irish History.

“Privileged young graduates of sixteenth-century Europe pioneered a trend wherein they travelled across the continent in search of art and cultural experiences upon their graduation. This practice, which grew to be wildly popular, became known as the Grand Tour.” – Matt Rosenberg

The Grand Tour was essentially a rite of passage for the very wealthy youth of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Usually after finishing university the young man or woman would travel all over Europe and beyond. The idea was that they would get to see the things that people at the time read about in books. Sometimes it can be difficult for us to appreciate the different viewpoint people at this time had, because everything we could ever want to

know, can be answered by the phone in our hand. Nowadays, if we read about a picture or a piece of music that we have never heard of, we can simply ‘Google’ it or type in into YouTube. At this time, if you read about the Pyramids, the ruins of Pompeii, Venice or any specific piece of art, you had to imagine it in your mind’s eye – unless, you came from nobility or a very wealthy family.

If you had the means, then you could travel to see these places and things in person. This allowed the person travelling, the joy of seeing the things they had previously read about in books, in person. But as well as this, when you are so wealthy sometimes you need things that money cannot buy, in order to posture to your peers. This is what the Grand Tour afforded the very wealthy. It allowed them to buy ‘Culture’ – after returning from the Grand Tour, imagine the stories you would have to tell. This is how Roman architecture found its way into the living rooms of Irish homes. It is how we have Chinese, Japanese, French and Italian items in our homes today. We have them because they were brought home first by teenagers from their Grand Tour. This is also true of plants and flowers that have worked brilliantly in some cases but have been a disaster elsewhere as many invasive species of plants were brought back to Ireland by very well-meaning but ignorant teenage botanists. Similarly, at this time, people that were not wealthy had to find alternative ways to travel. If you were inquisitive in nature,

or intellectual, the priesthood was often the answer. The priesthood would allow you to travel as a missionary and see the World.

Arthur O’Leary was born in 1729 in Dunmanway. Meaning he was born in the middle of the Penal Laws in Ireland. The Penal Laws were an indescribably difficult period in Irish History and many people, if they survived to teenage years or adulthood, would look for a way out of Ireland by any means necessary. For Arthur O’Leary, this was the priesthood. He decided to move to France. He practiced as a priest, as well as becoming a writer and a political commentator. Over the course of time he became particularly well known for the fact that he travelled everywhere on foot. Below is a quote from the book ‘Irish Footprints over Europe’ in which Fr. O’Leary features heavily:

“Fr. O’Leary during his twenty-five years sojourn in France used to spend his holidays exploring the country on foot. He used to walk from the convent of St. Mallow to the feet of the Pyrenees or promenade all the way to the gates of Paris to the banks of the Rhine backwards and forwards within a month.”

As he was walking along the Quays one evening in Boulogne-Sur-Mer, he noticed a huge crowd gathered in a semi-circle. When he walked over to investigate, he saw that the crowd was being entertained by an incredibly well-trained brown bear. The bear was on a large leash and was performing several tricks for the crowd in return for money. Everyone was fixated. Fr. O’Leary had planned to stay in Boulogne-Sur-Mer for a few days and he noticed over his stay there how popular the bear had become.

O’Leary went down to the Quays everyday during his stay. Every time he went to the Quays, the bear was there performing with his owner by his side. Over the course of a few days, Fr. O’Leary noticed that both the owner and the bear were on the quays entertaining huge crowds for very long periods of time. He noted in his diary that the bear was exceptionally well trained and was performing tricks that were enormously impressive. The bear had learned to nod back to you when you waved at it. When given a clock the bear was able to point to the hour of the day that it was at that time. O’Leary noted in his diary that the bear was now so popular that it was bringing crowds from neighbouring towns and villages.

On the fourth and final day of his visit, Fr. O’Leary again went

down to the quay to see the show and the bear and trainer were enclosed in a giant circle of spectators that were tossing money into the trainer’s basket in return for ever more elaborate tricks. By now the bear was very obviously tired. It began to lie down between tricks. Whenever it did, O’Leary noted the trainer would poke it with a sharp stick and get it to stand up on two feet. On one occasion, instead of rising to its feet, upon being prodded by the stick, the bear roared. It roared in what seemed to be a language. A language that no one understood. Except for Father O’Leary. The Bear had just shouted something as Gaelige!

The Bear was now screaming at its trainer in what appeared to be the Irish language. Fr. O’Leary, not believing his eyes or ears, shouted at the bear “Conas atá tu, a chara?” Upon hearing this, the bear stopped and turned towards Fr. O’Leary. Still standing on two feet he replied, “Maith, go raibh maith agat”, O’Leary in disbelief, leaves the promenade and requests to see the Mayor of Boulogne-Sur-Mer. The Mayor and Fr. O’Leary return and O’Leary strikes up a conversation with the bear to demonstrate to the Mayor. Upon hearing this, the bear’s trainer drops the lead and runs away. It turns out that the ‘Bear’ was a monolingual Irish speaker from Waterford.

He was from a famine-stricken area in Waterford and had gotten work on a boat as a labourer. The boat was travelling from the port in Waterford to Spain when it got into difficulty in the ocean. When the boat capsized, he was able to keep himself afloat at sea by holding onto the boxes that the ship’s cargo was being transported in. Eventually, he was found by fishermen and taken advantage of when they got to land. He was sewn into a life-like bear costume and made to perform on the Quays of Boulogne-Sur-Mer; they paid him in food. Fr. O’Leary asked him why did he allow this to continue. His reply was that he didn’t mind because he had enough to eat.

Admittedly, as far-fetched and bizarre as this story sounds, it becomes much more believable when you look at it through the eyes of a 17th century poor French villager. Unlike the wealthy and the nobility previously mentioned, that might have seen a bear on their Grand Tour, the villagers of Boulogne-Sur-Mer simply would not have. They would have taken what they were seeing at face value. This true story is documented in the 18th century book ‘Irish Footprints over Europe’ written by Eugene Davis. Truth is stranger than fiction.

## My Inchigeela Lass

As we celebrate International Women’s Day this month, **Pauline Murphy** tells us about a little known West Cork heroine who is the inspiration behind a well-known local ballad.

Múscraí boasts an abundance of local poems and ballads, one of which has become an anthem for the village of Inchigeela. ‘My Inchigeela Lass’ was written by exiled Fenian Harold Delaney in the 1800s. The ballad recounts his escape from British authorities with the aid of Maire Ui Rathailigh (Maureen O’Reilly), a local lass in Inchigeela.

One Sunday morning Delaney boldly came out of hiding to attend Mass in Inchigeela. Unfortunately for him, the authorities were closing in and, as Mass ended, word reached the priest that a band of Redcoats had surrounded the church and were poised for a raid. Panic swept though the congregation, who feared an onslaught of ‘Redcoat terror’.

Delaney agreed to hand himself over to save the people of Inchigeela. Then Maire Ui Rathailigh stepped forward, her cloak in her hand, and a plan of escape was hatched.

As the redcoats lined up around the graveyard, the congregation (apparently minus Delaney) filed out of the church. The soldiers were left perplexed, as it seemed their quarry had evaded them. Delaney had slipped through the net dressed in Maire’s cloak and huddled amongst the other women. This simple disguise had worked!

Delaney quickly left Inchigeela and made his way to Cobh, where he boarded a ship that took him safely across the Atlantic.

Harold Delaney would spend the rest of his life in Boston, never returning to his beloved ‘Inchigeela lass’ who, sadly, succumbed to TB some months after assisting in his escape.

Delaney wrote his Fenian love ballad in Boston and it became a popular ditty amongst the Irish community in America before it crossed back to Ireland and became a standard for many ballad sessions in Cork. Its air is similar to that other great Rebel County ballad, ‘Revenge for Skibbereen’.

In the song the narrator sings about ‘the Inchigeela lass’ at the annual gathering of Irish immigrants in the South-End Club in Boston. The narrator also recounts the rugged beauty of Gougane Barra, where the fawn roams its highlands, and how he was hunted through the Pass of Keimneigh.

The heroic act of Maire Ui Rathailigh was honoured in 2016 when a plaque was placed over her resting place in the old cemetery in Inchigeela – near the church where she helped a Fenian escape certain death in the 19th century.



### My Inchigeela Lass

*I greet thee proud Ivelearys sons and daughters fair and true,  
Assembled at the south-end club, old friendships oer renew,  
This annual opportunity I’m loath to let it pass,  
E’re I recite my tale tonight of my Inchigeela lass.*

*Iveleary oh how sweet your name rings in an exiles ear,  
Oh I’ve not seen those heath clad hills in five and twenty years,  
Twas there I met my heart’s delight one Sunday morn at mass,  
As I knelt in prayer in that chapel there with my Inchigeela lass.*

*She was modest as the cooing dove and as gentle as the fawn,  
That roam oer Desmond’s storied heights or highlands oer Gougane,  
No goddess fair or Grecian days in beauty could surpass,  
That winsome rogue my Maureen Og my Inchigeela lass.*

*Like all the boys along the Lee I joined the Rebel band,  
And pledged myself to freedoms cause for dear old motherland,  
As an outlaw I was chased from Cork to Keimaneighs famed pass,  
I was forced to flee from Erin’s Lee and my Inchigeela lass.*

*Before I from my native land forever would depart,  
I slipped beyond the soldiers’ lines to the darling of my heart,  
Her pictures on the moonlit lake that mirrored as in glass,  
The pattern queen of sweet Keimeen my Inchigeela lass.*

*Over Muskerry’s heights and Shehy slopes a waning moon shone pale,  
As I clasped her to my heart that night in Keimeen’s emerald vale,  
And when inside her cottage door her nimble form did pass,  
Twas the last I saw of my cailin brea my Inchigeela lass.*

*I sped through Inniscarra’s groves before the break of day,  
To a passage on a Yankee ship that in Queenstown harbour lay,  
The captain being a Fenian bold my safety to compass,  
So my ship set sail from Grainne Mhaol and my Inchigeela lass.*

*Oh what became of Mairin Og Ivelearys fairest flower,  
She drooped as drops the May bloomed leaves belated Winter showers,  
The Autumn trees had shed their leaves as they laid her neath the grass,  
My promised bride Ivelearys pride my Inchigeela lass.*

*Where I beside the Lee tonight I’d quickly find the spot,  
Where Mairin’s smile brought sunshine to her widowed mother’s cot,  
The smile that lit the eyes of my sweet Caitlin boa  
Still cheers my way I will always pray for my Inchigeela lass.*

*Iveleary oh Iveleary far away across the wave,  
You hold what I prize most on earth my Mairin’s moss grown grave,  
My present habitation is in Broadway Boston Mass,  
But the Buchaill Rua is always true to his Inchigeela lass.*

## CHRISTOPHER O’SULLIVAN T.D.

### Thank You! To the people of Cork South West.

Thank you for showing me so much respect and courtesy during canvassing.

To the incredible team of people who knocked on doors, put up posters, tallied, made phone calls, shared social posts or supported me in any way, thank you!

To everyone who voted for me, whatever the preference, thank you!

It’s an honour to have been elected to the 33rd Dáil. Representing you as a TD will bring with it a huge responsibility.

I will work tirelessly for the people of Cork South West both on the ground and at national level.

I also want to commiserate with my running mate Margaret Murphy O’Mahony on losing her Dáil seat. I wish her the very best of luck for the future.



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## CROSSBARRY COMMEMORATION

99th Anniversary of the Battle

Sunday 29th of March, 2pm

Guest speaker: Aindrias Moynihan TD

*Followed by Dinnéar agus tráthnóna cheoil*  
in the Munster Arms, 3.30pm

*Tá fáilte roimh chách*

Eagraithe ag an gCoiste Chomóraidh Chill Mhichíl  
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**South Munster Citizens  
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## Information Talk for Family Carers

**Wednesday, 1st April 2020  
Maritime Hotel, Bantry  
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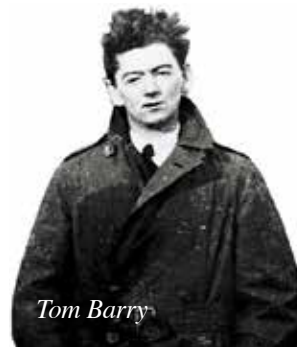
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## Battle of Crossbarry commemoration

The 99th anniversary commemoration of the battle of Crossbarry will be held on Sunday March 29 next at 2pm at the monument.

On March 19, 1921 the flying column of the third Cork brigade of 104 volunteers under the command of Tom Barry won a famous victory when they smashed through an encircling British force of over 1000 soldiers at Crossbarry inflicting heavy casualties on them.

British newspapers reported at the time that there were between 35 and 39 British soldiers killed and many more wounded. The British themselves did not give figures for their casualties at the time such was the shock to their confidence in the power of their armed forces. It would be considered to have been the biggest land battle during the war of Independence and the flying columns finest hour. The three IRA volunteers who died fighting for Ireland that morning at Crossbarry were Peter Monahan, Jeremiah O'Leary of Corrin, Leap and Con Daly,



Ballinascarthy.

The guest speaker this year is Andrias Moynihan, Teachtaí Dála (TD) Fianna Fáil for Cork North West. Is cainteoir dúchais ón nGaeltacht Cúil Aodha Aindrias agus bhí baint ag a shinsir le ceann des na céad eachtra a tharla i gCogaidh na Saoirse ag Béal a' Ghleanna, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh nuair a d'ionsaigh siad buíon den RIC agus fuair an lámh is fearr orthu ar an 7u lá Mí Iúil 1918.

The commemoration will be followed by a dinnéar agus tráthnóna cheoil in the Munster Arms Hotel Bandon agus tá fáilte roimh chách.

## New private bus service gives more choice in West Cork

The Green Party in West Cork has welcomed a new private bus route that services towns in the county from Skibbereen in towards the city centre, but have said that this must be the beginning of more options for public transport in West Cork, not the end solution.

Speaking this week, Green Party representative for Cork South West Bernie Connolly said that a successful private service must be followed up by expansion of services provided by Bus Éireann, as well as a reduction in fares:

"It was great to see the new West Cork Connect service start running in early-mid February. It's something that consistently came up on the doors during the election, and it's something you just know if you live West of the city: the buses need to be better, and they need to be affordable.

"It's a hugely important issue for people, young and

old," Ms. Connolly continued, "being unable to get into the city if you have work, college, a hospital appointment, or anything else that's pressing that requires the commute if you don't drive.

"A bus from Skib to the city with Bus Éireann will set you back around €30 for a return ticket. The same ticket on the private service is about €18 at present. Hopefully it will get Bus Éireann and the National Transport Office to seriously examine how it operates in the area."

The West Cork Connect service, which began running in February, serves Skibbereen, Clonakilty and Bandon, with stops in Leap, Connonagh, Rosscarbery, Lisavaird, Ballinascarthy and Innishannon along the way. The bus stops in the CUH and the Western Road, with the last stop being St. Patrick's Quay in Cork City Centre.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Rent pressure zones

**Question: What is a rent pressure zone?**

Answer: A rent pressure zone (RPZ) is an area where rents cannot be increased by more than four per cent each year. They are areas where rents are above the national average and rising quickly. Rent pressure zones are intended to control the rise in rents in these areas. An area must meet specific criteria to become a rent pressure zone.

Most rent increases in rent pressure zones are capped at four per cent and there are limits on how often the rent can be reviewed. There are different rules about the limits and frequency of rent reviews, depending on whether the tenancy in the rent pressure zone is an existing or new tenancy.

However, not all properties in rent pressure zones are subject to the four per cent restriction. Some properties are exempt. A landlord can seek an exemption for:

A property that has not been let at any time in the previous two years; A property where no previous tenancy existed that is a protected structure, or in a protected structure or

proposed protected structure and has not been let in the previous 12 months; Properties that have been substantially changed (the RTB website has full details of the types of substantial change required).

Designated rent pressure zones will be in place until December 31, 2021. You can find out if you live in a rent pressure zone by visiting [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie). Further information on rent pressure zones and a calculator to calculate the maximum allowable rent in a rent pressure zone is also available from onestop-shop.rtb.ie/rent-pressure-zones.

Further information is available from the Citizens Information Centre below.

### School Transport Scheme

**Question: My daughter is starting secondary school in September and we live five kilometres from her school. Am I eligible for the School Transport Scheme?**

Answer: You may qualify for the School Transport Scheme. The scheme provides subsidised school transport for both post-primary and primary

pupils. Bus Éireann runs the school bus service and the Department of Education and Skills decides the annual fares.

The service is only provided where there are at least 10 eligible pupils in a distinct locality that can be economically serviced by a bus route. Even when a pupil meets the age and distance criteria for school transport, there is no legal entitlement to it.

Your daughter is eligible for the Post-Primary School Transport Scheme if she is attending her nearest school and lives 4.8 kilometres or more from the school. The Department and Bus Éireann determine the appropriate nearest school with regard to ethos and language.

Parents must arrange to bring their child to the nearest pick-up point on the bus route. Generally, bus routes are organised so that no pupil has more than 3.2 kilometres to travel to a pick-up point.

There is a single annual charge of €350 per pupil. However a family does not pay more than €650 per year. The charge is due to be paid in full by the end of July or else in two installments: by the end of July and the start of December. Pupils who are eligible for school transport and who

hold a valid medical card are entitled to free school transport to the nearest school.

Since your child is enrolling in post-primary school for the first time, you should either apply for school transport online or download the form from Bus Éireann's website, [buseireann.ie](http://buseireann.ie). Applications are now being accepted for the 2020-2021 school year. You should apply by Friday, April 24, 2020.

Further information is available from the Citizens Information Centre below.

*Know Your Rights has been compiled by Citizens Information West Cork, which provides a free and confidential service to the public.*

*Bantry Address: Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Co. Cork. Weekly outreach, in Clonakilty, Bandon, and Dunmanway. Castletownbere second and fourth Thursday of each month. Macroom Address: South Square, Macroom Co. Cork*

*Information is also available online at [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) and from the Citizens Information Phone Service, 0761 07 4000. West Cork Helpline: 0761078390.*



## Councillor co-opted

Gooleen native Ross O'Connell was co-opted to Deputy Holly Cairns' seat on Cork County Council on Monday, February 24.

Social Democrats Councillor Ross O'Connell is an environmental scientist and PhD researcher. He is from Goleen on the Mizen Peninsula and attended Schull Community College.

"I am honoured to be co-opted on to Cork County Council to represent the people of Bantry Local Electoral Area. I'm committed to continuing Deputy Holly Cairns' work on increasing transparency and accountability in local government. I am passionate about making West Cork a place for people to stay and live through the development of sustainable communities," said Councillor O'Connell.

"I'm really excited to work with Councillor Ross O'Connell and I think we will make a great team for West Cork. Thank you so much to Councillor Liam Quaide (Green Party) and Alan O'Connor (Green Party) for proposing and seconding Cllr. O'Connell's nomination."

## Skibbereen youth volunteer honoured for giving back to her community

Jessica Collins from Skibbereen has been recognised as one of 20 exceptional young people from across Ireland, who have been chosen as some of the country's most outstanding youth volunteers, working to make a positive impact on their local communities.

A Fourth-Year student at Skibbereen Community School, Jessica is a passionate animal lover and was given the opportunity to volunteer for five weeks in China at the Slaughterhouse Survivors, Harbin Animal Rescue, looking after ill and unwanted dogs and cats. As well as playing with the animals Jessica worked in grueling heat every day giving the dogs and cats water and their vaccines, shaving and bathing dogs that had matted hair, transporting dogs between rooms as well as power washing and cleaning the yard.

Over the course of her trip and as one of the youngest volunteers, Jessica became

an integral part of the animal Rescue Centre even mentoring some of the new volunteers. Jessica overcame the daunting task of travelling to China on her own and following a visit to a dog shelter which housed thousands of abused dogs she was determined to come back to Ireland and raise awareness of the cruelty that these animals were facing. She has set up an animal cruelty project and overcoming her own mental health difficulties is working to promote this within her school. She will also travel back to China giving up her summer holiday in 2020 to work with the animals once again.

The top 20 local students were revealed as Pramerica announced its top 20 finalists for the 2020 Spirit of Community Awards, the only all-Ireland youth initiative of its kind that rewards post-primary students for their exemplary acts of volunteerism.

Passionate about a range of topics including homeless-



ness, mental health, disabled rights, climate change, animal cruelty plus many more, the 20 finalists will gather for this year's awards, which will take place at Titanic, Belfast on Tuesday, March 31. Carefully

chosen by a judging panel, including people from charitable organisations, education and Pramerica, the lucky top 20 finalists will each be presented with €500 at the Awards ceremony. Not only that but

the top two Junior Honourees will also receive an additional €500 for their chosen charity and two of the 20 students will be named All-Ireland Youth Volunteers of the Year. These two students will each receive €1,000 for their chosen charity, a gold medallion, a crystal trophy for their school and an all-expenses paid trip to the United States in May to participate in the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards ceremonies.

The programme, which is run in partnership with the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) and the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), is one of Ireland's largest youth recognition programmes, this year's awards received a remarkable 250 applications from across Ireland.

## Cork targets tourists from France and the Netherlands

Visit Cork, the official tourism body in Cork, has announced ambitious plans to increase the number of overseas visitors to the Cork region by a further eight-ten per cent per annum.

More than 200 people working in the tourism and hospitality industry in Cork attended the event at Radisson Blu Hotel and Spa, Little Island on February 12, which gave an overview of Visit Cork's achievements to date and announced future plans for the promotion of Cork for leisure tourism (Pure Cork) and business tourism (Cork Convention Bureau).

Seamus Heaney, Head of Visit Cork, revealed that significant international marketing and engagement campaigns are about to commence for Pure Cork in the UK, France and the Netherlands. These will be run in collaboration with Tourism Ireland, Cork Airport, and the Cork branch of the IHF, and will tap into the huge potential of these crucial direct flight route locations.

The French tourism market is the fourth largest market to Ireland, after the UK, US and Germany, generating 5.4 million bed nights with a 10.2 night average length of stay.

This follows on from a

successful targeted campaign that took place in the US late last year, in association with Fáilte Ireland and a US Tour Operator that focused on winning businesses in the shoulder season from October to March. It has already driven an additional 3,500 bed nights in hotels and 1,200 entries to attractions in Cork since October 2019.

Visit Cork also facilitated 10 overseas media trips to Cork in 2019.

Mr. Heaney sees huge growth potential in immersive experiences, dynamic packaging (hotels and attractions working together) and the night-time economy and he encouraged businesses to create exciting experiences and offers in the evening to ensure overnight stays and a longer dwell time for tourists in the region.

He also encouraged businesses to submit offers to 'Green is the New Black', a new tourism Ireland initiative for St Patrick's Day.

Sustainability was a key theme on the day. Visit Cork is now ranked on the Global Destination Sustainability Index and stressed that sustainability it is paramount to everything that tourism businesses do going forward.

Meanwhile, Sam Johnston

Manager of the Regional Convention Bureau of Ireland, said, "Sustainable tourism and our 'green credentials' are crucial to future proof our industry. All businesses need to consider what they are doing in this area".

He said that Fáilte Ireland is committed to growing regional business tourism even further, through an SLA (Service Level Agreement), funding a new resource for Cork Convention Bureau, destination development strategies and a new Ireland Directory.

Cork Convention Bureau announced a new collaborative event called 'A Tale of 3 Cities', which will see Cork, Dublin and Belfast work together to pitch for overseas MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Corporate and Events) business in the Netherlands.

Summing up the value of tourism to the Cork economy, Seamus Heaney said, "One in ten jobs are currently in the tourism and hospitality sector, and 22 cents from every euro that a tourist spends goes back into the exchequer. Tourism supports 22,500 jobs in Cork, with almost 1000 tourism businesses, festivals and events currently listed on the purecork.ie website, the official City and County tourism website."



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## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Now in it's 16th year, The Sinéad Barry Memorial Essay Competition is held annually for 6th class students of Timoleague National School to remember past pupil Sinéad who sadly passed away in 2003. Sarah Murphy was deemed this year's winner; she is pictured with her teacher Anne McCarthy and Helen and Jim Barry, who presented Sarah with her plaque on February 5.



Mairead O'Donovan, Dunmanway and Mary O'Neill, Kilbrittan celebrate after graduating with a Masters (Msc) in Marketing and Management in UCC. Pic. John Allen/Provision



Fiona Collins, Sherkin Island and Mette Schioenning from Denmark who graduated with a Masters (Msc) in Marine Biology at UCC. Pic. John Allen/Provision



The West Cork Campus QQI Level 6 Professional Practice students at the opening of their recent exhibition 'Vision 2020' in Daly's Storehouse at the West Cork Hotel. Catherine Hammond, renowned in the art field, gave an inspirational and encouraging opening address to the students, their teachers and guests. Pic: Anne Minihane



Chairman of Rathbarry & District Vintage Club, John Hayes (left) and Michael Kearns presenting a cheque for €5,500 to Pat Shannon, Rose Jennings and Caroline Murphy of CUH Charity For Paediatric Cystic Fibrosis, the proceeds from their annual Tractor, Car and Motorcycle Run.



27 February 2020; Skibbereen Community School players celebrate with the cup following the Basketball Ireland All-Ireland Schools U16C Boys League Final between De La Salle Churchtown and Skibbereen CS at National Basketball Arena in Dublin. Photo by Eóin Noonan/Sportsfile

Send your pictures of people events in West Cork to West Cork People's Out and About page:  
email: [info@westcorkpeople.ie](mailto:info@westcorkpeople.ie)



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## people Environment : Making a difference

Welcome to the **West Cork People Environment** section where we highlight the positive stories that are happening in West Cork in relation to climate change, carbon emission reduction, reduction in plastic use and much more. Though the headlines are constantly warning us of the dangers of inaction, we are starting to see throughout West Cork the beginnings of a new awareness



about how we all need to change our ways and practices.

We believe that the best way to encourage change is to write about the people who are making changes. If your business or company has started to do things in a better, environmentally-friendly way, we would love to hear about it!

## West Cork schools protecting our coastline



### ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes



**Y**ou may have read in the Irish times January 16, 2020 that Coastwatch reported a 50 per cent reduction in litter caused by drinks containers like plastic bottles and aluminium cans on Irish beaches.

Whilst this is excellent news, the 2019 survey also found an increase in plastic shopping bags, single-use cups, cotton bud plastic sticks, cigarette butts and wrappers, balloons, golf balls, farm plastic and 'full dog poo bags' adding to the abandoned fishing gear.

Of course, even if the plastic waste on our beaches has washed up in a high tide or in a storm, unless it is picked up, it inevitably ends up back in the ocean. Scientists have shown that most of the plastic entering the seas around Western Europe turns up just two years later in the Arctic, where it does extreme damage to the fragile ecosystems.

As interesting as where our coastal plastic rubbish travels to, is what type of plastic it is and where it comes from?

A voluntary organisation called Ocean Plastic Projects, based in West Cork is working with Transition Year Students, expanding on the Coast Watch work, collecting plastic from around the Irish Coast, logging it and analysing it, along with samples of fresh water from the coastal streams.

Three schools in West Cork are currently taking part, Scoil Phobail Bheara CC, Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí CC and Skibbereen Community School, where the project started with Transition Year 2017/18.

The aim is to research and understand the coastline, monitoring the amounts of plastic waste around local shores and looking for the most affected beaches. The students identify and map the types of plastic waste from micro to large scale, noting where it was found and researching where it might be coming from. Samples of stream water are also collected and analysed for toxins. The waste collected on field trips is taken back to school for analysing and the students also identify sustainable projects that would give future employment. Some of the waste is up-cycled in the schools art projects and 'Junk Kouture'.

Although students from Skibbereen Community School presented their work at the Irish Oceans Literacy Network in Dublin in 2019 where they were well received, the founder of Ocean Plastic Projects, Rory Jackson, believes they could do so much more with funding. He has applied for grant funding from Cork County Council in order to build a website and is planning on crowd-funding to expand the project and enable many more schools to take part.

Of course the global backlash against plastic is not simply about picking up trash from the beaches and sending it for recycling. Knowing where plastic trash originates is a vital part of mitigating against climate change.

Plastic is part of everyday life for all of us; having replaced paper, tin, wool, cotton, glass, hemp, clay, stone and many other recyclable materials in all walks of life. Plastic provides a cheap, light and highly versatile alternative to many natural products.

Initially creeping in to every day life, it soon promoted whole scale change to our way of living, enabling the markets for take away food, for fast, easily replaceable clothing, for single use disposable medical equipment and mass production of a host of other objects that we now take for granted. The throw away culture became the norm. Plastic based clothing material and fabrics became unavoidable. Even the flag that Neil Armstrong planted on the moon in 1969 was made of nylon.

Sixty-five years ago the economist Victor Lebow wrote in The Journal of Retailing, "Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction and our ego satisfaction in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate."

This throw-away culture and consumer based economy was and still is, driven hard by the oil industry and plastic manufacturers; and the poster boy for all of this is plastic packaging.

Between 2000 and 2015 plastic packaging as a share of global packaging increased from 17 per cent to 25 per cent. In 2013, the plastics industry put 78 million tonnes of plastic packaging onto the market, with a total value of \$260 billion. Plastic packaging volumes are expected to continue their strong growth, more than quadrupling by 2050, to 318 million tonnes annually – more than the entire plastics industry today.

Any plastic that gets recycled is recycled into lower-value applications that are not again

recyclable after use. Thus to feed this increase in plastic production requires that over 90 per cent of plastics produced are derived from virgin fossil feedstocks. This represents, for all plastics (not just packaging), about six per cent of global oil consumption, which is equivalent to the total oil consumption of the global aviation sector.

It is expected, the plastics sector will account for 20 per cent of total oil consumption and 15 per cent of the global annual carbon budget by 2050.

The focus on plastic packaging has enabled the responsibility for ALL plastic pollution to be shifted from the producer to the consumer. It has become the consumer's responsibility to refuse plastic packaging at the supermarkets, to sort through and recycle, to find ways of up-cycling objects that cannot be recycled but have a short life. Meanwhile the same economic systems that prevailed in Lebow's day continuously promote and encourage the consumer spending that enables the current system to survive. The oil and plastics industries propped up by global investment and massive fossil fuel subsidies granted by many governments, green-washes its public face, sponsoring climate change conferences whilst stampeding the world towards the cliff edge of irreversible global warming.

The transition year students in West Cork, collecting and analysing the plastic on our beaches, are providing a sign post towards the most polluting plastic manufacturers, those who require that we continue to drill for oil. They are spotlighting waste involved in our current economic model. They are highlighting that this is not a consumer led catastrophe, but a whole system failure requiring radical large-scale change.

Point of pollution is point of manufacture. Please look out for the call for crowd-funding to expand this project by following 'West Cork Oceans Plastics' Project' Facebook Page. Go to Facebook and type @westcork-oceanspp into the search.

The New Plastics Economy; Rethinking the future of plastics: World Economic Forum.

## From little seeds grow mighty trees



### A MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Michael O'Neill jnr.

Mayor of Clonakilty Michael O'Neill jnr highlights some of the important issues facing Clonakilty and West Cork and how we can make improvements to our local areas.

**F**ebruary was a month where the climate was never far from our attention here in West Cork. Firstly we had the political climate reach its height with an exciting election. Then we had one storm after another roll in off the Atlantic. It seemed like we went from one weather warning to the next. Thankfully there was no major damage but it does make you think are we seeing the effects of climate change?

We also had the people of Clonakilty showcase the amazing things that they are doing to combat climate change in front of the RTE cameras on nationwide. It made me so proud to see Clonakilty featured out of all the towns in Ireland for such an important issue like climate change. Once again Clonakilty is leading the charge! It was also great to see the whole community get behind it, from the children of the Gaelscoil to the business community of the Chamber of Commerce with its Cool Clon initiative.

I was honoured to be able to speak on the programme about the Clonakilty Tree Planting Project. Of course trees are one of our most important protectors against climate change.

The Clonakilty Tree Planting

Project was started by Christopher O'Sullivan and myself so it is great to be able to continue working with him seeing that he is no longer mayor of the county after having been elected as a TD. It must be rare for a town to have two mayors and it was great to share so many events with him.

From the acorns of a group that Christopher and myself planted, the Clonakilty tree-planting project has evolved into a really special group of people. It is amazing to see the huge amount of talented people from across West Cork who turn up, week in, week out, eager to help plant trees around Clonakilty. It really is hugely inspiring and a testament to the truly special volunteer spirit here in West Cork.

We have already created some fantastic forests around Clonakilty where there was none before and there were wonderful days of planting by the people of West Cork. March is the key month for the project so please do get involved in one of the ways below. Let's get planting, let's do something special for 2020 and let's put the Coillte back in Cloich na Coillte!

Follow our facebook page clonakiltytreeplanting and help spread the word.

We are looking for volunteers to help plant the trees in March and also tree experts to help design the planting areas. We are also looking for land to plant, so if you could fit some in your garden, business, club or housing estate, please contact us on clonakiltytreeplanting@gmail.com.

Keep an eye out for our gofundme page and please contribute.

If you would like to sponsor trees or plant trees yourself on your own land to be included in the project please let us know. The more a success we make of this project, the more likely that it will spread to other towns and create something truly important.



## people Environment : Making a difference



## GROUNDED

An occasional column by  
**Grace O'Sullivan** – mother,  
environment and peace  
activist, ecologist, MEP

Grace, a mother of three from Tramore, Co. Waterford, spent 20 years working with Greenpeace and was a crewmember of the Rainbow Warrior, when it was bombed by the French Foreign Intelligence Service in 1985. She served as a Senator for three years, before being elected to the European Parliament, where she is a proactive and outspoken member of important committees on Fisheries (PECH), and Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). She is also a member of delegations on Mercosur and Palestine, and a member of a number of working groups. She is Green Party Spokesperson on Environmental Protection, Natural Resources, Marine and Tourism.

## Living in the Old Testament?

I'm in Ireland for a few days for what's known in the European Parliament as a 'constituency week'. This is where, about every couple of months, MEPs are given the option of returning to their home bases to carry out the important work of attending meetings, travelling around the constituency to see various projects and meeting people on the ground etc.

Over the course of my few days I've been on the road a lot, attending meetings and events in Galway, Dublin, Limerick, Wexford and, of course, my native Waterford. Over the course of my travels, I've had several conversations about the weather.

There's nothing new when it comes to talking about the weather in Ireland. Weather, as a topic of conversation, is something of a national speciality for us! Of course, with the range of weather we experience, there's plenty to talk about.

We're well used to changeable weather. There are days when it would be handy to be a magician capable of producing woolly hats, scarves, umbrellas, wellies, sandals and shorts. And all that in the space of just a few hours!

We could be light-hearted about our fickle Irish weather, and generally we are, but in the early months of 2020, our conversations about the weather and other 'natural' events, have taken on a more ominous tone.

I read a tweet from John Creedon a few days ago. "Listening to the news in 2020," he wrote. "You'd be forgiven for feeling like we're living in the Old Testament. Floods in Ireland, burning bushes in Oz, a plague of locusts in Africa and now the plague of Covid 19." We're certainly not alone in the world when it comes to extreme weather and natural events in these, the opening months of 2020. John Creedon finished his tweet by saying: "We could do with a break." He's right there.

On the home front, with farmers and families and business owners facing another year of flooding, there's a real danger that a sense of complacency can set in amongst those of us lucky enough to be at some remove.

The big headlines at the moment are focused on the Corona virus and its international spread. Of course it's right and proper that we should be

informed and reassured that our health facilities are briefed and ready in the event or likelihood that it reaches our shores. Naturally people are worried and need good, reliable information.

We could be light-hearted about our fickle Irish weather, and generally we are, but in the early months of 2020, our conversations about the weather and other 'natural' events, have taken on a more ominous tone.

So while I do understand the attention that is being given over to Corona Virus coverage, what I'm a bit more concerned about is why we don't seem to be seeing quite so many headlines about the fact that we are facing into the depths of another winter season, with extreme weather conditions kicking in, and people yet again, particularly in Western counties, suffering untold stress, as they face threats

that can impact in many ways.

With Storm Jorge over the weekend triggering Orange weather alerts along the Western counties and beyond, including Galway, Mayo, Clare and Kerry; and status yellow warnings in other counties including Cork, Limerick, Kilkenny and Waterford, we were set for another battering.

Listening to reports of people in Galway, as they were preparing for another traumatic battle against the elements, was upsetting. On Thursday, reports were coming out that the Sligo train line might have to be closed in the event of further flooding. For anyone in the vicinity of the Shannon, it's been a worrying time.

People's lives have been deeply impacted already. Insurance is a thing of the past for many living in areas where the worst effects of weather emergencies and the resulting

increased flooding have been seen over recent years.

Climate change is not new. It's been happening for many decades. I've been an activist in this area for over 30 years. It's only now that the message is starting to get through.

It's a pity it takes us coming to the brink of total catastrophe before action starts to happen. It is happening. Responses have been kicking in. But there needs to be more. Much more. We need robust, modern, innovative and rapid reactions. Now.

Nobody should not have to suffer the sort of stress or the financial and emotional damage many vulnerable people are in the thick of at the moment. Let's hope that a government and robust opposition will come to fruition soon, so they can get on with the job of tackling the biggest and most life-threatening danger of our times – Climate Change.

## Water quality in rivers and lakes in West Cork



## THE FRONT LINE

The Environmental Protection Agency is at the front line of environmental protection and policing. It ensures that Ireland's environment is protected, and monitors changes in environmental trends to detect early warning signs of neglect or deterioration.

West Cork has a higher proportion of high and good quality rivers than any other part of Ireland. Two catchment areas drain West Cork – the Bandon-Ilen catchment and the Dunmanus-Bantry-Kenmare catchment. The proportion of high and good quality rivers nationwide is currently just over 50 per cent but stands at above 80 per cent in the two West

Cork catchments. Caroline Plant, EPA tells us more.

Freshwater ecological monitoring is undertaken by the Environmental Protection Agency, as part of the Water Framework Directive. Every three years 224 lakes and 2,355 river sites are assessed to determine their ecological status. As part of the overall ecological assessments, the animal and plant communities of rivers and lakes are examined by the EPA to identify what species are present.

The animals that are assessed are aquatic macroinvertebrates. These are small animals such as insects, including species such as mayfly and caddisflies that would be familiar to anglers; and other groups such as snails, leeches and freshwater shrimp. These animals live under and among the stones at the bottom of rivers and at the lake edge, where the water is shallow. They form part of the food chain and are an important source of food for fish and some birds, such as the Dipper for example. The type and abundance of macroinvertebrate species found in a sample indicate the health of

the water body, and changes in the species composition and abundance can indicate if there is a problem.

Aquatic plants are also recorded and assessed. Everything from mosses to the large reeds that surround lakes are identified. Different river and lakes will have different communities of plants. For example, small streams that are shaded by river bank trees are often dominated by mosses, whereas larger rivers and most lakes can have a wide variety of plants both under the water and at the water's edge.

Phytoplankton are microscopic algae that occur in the water. These can become noticeable when a 'bloom' occurs causing the water to become visibly green in colour. However, they are always present in the water, even when they are not noticeable. Samples are taken to the laboratory and examined under the microscope so that species can be identified. The type and abundance of species present can provide an indication of the quality of the water. When a phytoplankton bloom occurs, it is usually be-

cause there is too much nutrient in the water. However, before the bloom occurs the composition and species present will have changed due to the changing water conditions. Phytoplankton sampling is usually carried out on lakes only.

Phytobenthos are probably the least noticeable groups that are sampled. These are again microscopic algae, but they cling to rocks and other surfaces rather than floating free in the water column. Samples must be examined under the microscope in order to identify the various species present and these change with changing water quality.

The information gathered from assessing the species composition of these groups contributes to the overall ecological assessment for the waterbody. A more comprehensive overview of rivers, lakes and other waterbodies can be found in the EPA's Water Quality in Ireland 2013 – 2018 report, which came out on December 10. It can be found at [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie). More information can also be found at [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie).

## Locust swarms creating food crisis for struggling communities

Massive swarms of locusts are devouring entire fields of crops in as little as 30 seconds and fuelling fears of a major food crisis in some of the world's poorest countries. Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide has warned.

The Irish charity said communities in Pakistan, Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia are facing alarming food shortages with the crops they grow to survive being eaten in seconds by flying desert locusts.

"It only takes 30 seconds for a swarm to eat an entire field," said Concern Kenya Country Director Amina Abdulla.

"Millions of locusts are eating all vegetation in their path including food crops that are absolutely crucial for survival here."

Amina said the devastating swarms – which have made headlines around the world as affected countries declare national emergencies – recently split into two directions in Kenya, heading west and south.

"This is extremely worrying and has major implications for Kenya in terms of food security," she said.

Concern staff in Kenya are assessing the damage and planning to support families through cash aid and seed distribution to try and avert a food crisis.

Similar locust swarms in Ethiopia are the worst the coun-

try has seen in 25 years, with an estimated 235,000 hectares of crop, pasture and forest invaded by the infestation so far.

Meanwhile, Concern staff in Somalia are also assessing the damage caused there after swarms destroyed food crops in areas already devastated by drought, conflict and extreme poverty.

In Pakistan, locust swarms are testing the resilience of people in drought affected areas of the southeast and west.

"These are troubled times," said an elderly man from Tharparkar in the Sindh province.

"First, we suffered from long years of drought and now this locust attack. Last year's rainfall had raised our hopes for a better crop yield, but the locusts have destroyed everything."

"They are eating the newly grown grass at a very fast rate, which means that there will be no fodder available for our livestock."

"The locust attack has deprived us of our crops, our livelihood and is risking our very survival."

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has estimated that the locust swarms will grow up to 500 times their current size by June if sufficient measures to tackle them are not taken soon.





## people Environment : Making a difference

## Obtain a yield



## PERMANENT CULTURE

Allison Roberts

The permacultural momentum is gaining, spring is in the air and fresh ideas are bubbling out of hibernation, but before I move onto our next principal 'Obtain a Yield', I want to share last month's progress. Over the last month I have been chatting to everyone and anyone about the last principal, 'Catch and Store Energy' and mulling over how to make it come to life in a 'Cool Clon' context. Trying not to overstretch or to force change, both of which are intrinsically opposed to the Permaculture way of finding

solutions, and continually return to the overall goal – one of sustainable growth, promoting people-friendly towns and the celebration all that is unique about our town.

I thought about how wild garlic makes great pesto, the health benefits and store-ability of seaweed and, in community terms, how the mayoral awards each year are a great example of how community groups are 'caught and stored'. Volunteers are publicly appreciated and their contributions documented, to be stored in the very fabric of the town, a part of the Clonakilty Story, creating new energy for volunteers – motivation to keep going as well as inspiring others. Katie from Cycle Sense in Skibbereen had this to say after reading last month's article "Starting from the macro and working towards the micro, is in line with the encouragement from Social Enterprise principals, to start with the big picture, the 'why' followed by the 'what' and... catch and store, I feel, moves us to the 'how'. The catch and store principal seems aligned with making those first steps. Catch (a very active word) and

Store has reminded me to start where I am and work with what I have."

One idea that keeps surfacing is that Clonakilty (and most towns) could use more opportunity for people to meet, in a non-commercial setting, to in order to Catch and Store the energy of our community, the enthusiasm of volunteers that can wane if not supported and encouraged by other members of the community, the opportunities to chat casually, test the waters on new ideas, to organise, to socialise and as an antidote to isolation. We could also Catch and Store Energy by sharing food – often preparing food for one family or one individual can lead to more food waste, and especially during seasons of glut – when apples, greens or even tomatoes are a plenty sharing is a great way to make good use of our resources. With all that in mind we are approaching local spaces, with the aim to start a monthly pot-luck, completely open to the all in the community and with no agenda, but in the hopes that new friendships are made, old ones renewed and more community projects find

footings to grow.

This idea also fits into this month's principal 'Obtain a Yield'; this third principal highlights the importance of rewards for hard work. It uses the catch phrase 'You can't work on an empty stomach' to point out that in any (sustainably-minded) design, it is crucial to factor in that people do need to have their basic needs met, that we need food, clothing and shelter, and so need to be paid/rewarded for our labour. When we plant apple trees, the yield is apples. No system can work sustainably in the long-term if it relies solely on work and no reward; so many community organisations fail because of burn-out; we need our needs met. Planting a garden with food crops in the place of ornamentals is a great idea, and making sure volunteers feel appreciated, and are getting some reward is essential, but it equally essential to try to lay the foundations for paid positions within organisations, and to make sure that in our own personal lives we do not overwork ourselves without the regular rewards of breaks and treats! Often we

might work at one thing for money, and another for passion, but perhaps we can find ways for passions to provide what we need to survive. From planting fruiting hedgerows and fruit trees, to charging a fair price for your time and efforts, this principal is all about self-care and long-term sustainability. It is also a principal of enough – not taking more than we need, as it needs be viewed within the overall Permaculture framework of 'Earth-care, People-care, Fair-share'. So for the rest of the month of March, I will be chatting and thinking about this principal, about how we can 'Obtain more Yields' in Clonakilty and West Cork. I would love to hear your ideas, why not pop over to the blog and share some?

And finally, in permaculture fashion, I have dreamed up an event for this month that celebrates our first three principals: a visit to the Clonakilty forest project on bikes. So on Sunday March 8 at noon you are invited to meet us at the Bike Circus,



where we will meet the founders of the forest project, cycle up to the forest together and do some timely maintenance – there are plastic protectors around some of the trees that now needs to be removed (the forest is located just outside of town along the new cycle path). So come along pack a picnic and let's chat about how this project is permaculture in action. Catching and storing energy from the sun, obtaining a yield in making a formerly unused field, slowly becoming an amenity for the whole community to share! For more information on this event check out The Bike Circus on facebook.

If you want to catch up the previous articles in this series visit [www.explodingtree.com/permaculture](http://www.explodingtree.com/permaculture)

## Ecological evolution

As battles rage in the media (wildfires, then elections, now the coronavirus) **Moze Jacobs** points out that what consumed us last spring has receded into the background: The biodiversity crisis. 'A million species threatened with extinction,' the IPBES reported in May. 'We are sleepwalking into catastrophe.'

It shocked quite a few people. Many may now consider it old news.

Yet it is not. The threat is still there. Pollinators in Ireland and elsewhere, which play such a vital part in global food supply, continue to disappear. Their habitats (natural environments) suffer from 'loss and degradation [...] due to wildflower decline, disease, poisoning by pesticides and other chemicals, and climate change.' (Irish Examiner).

The big problem is – just as in politics – that people hold such diametrically opposed

views. Numerous homeowners think that mown lawns and well-clipped hedges are well worth striving for. That manicured grass sends a message to passers-by that the occupants of the house know how to properly look after their surroundings; that they care and are prepared to pay contractors to carry out the work. Tidiness is often still the norm; neighbours may take umbrage if it is not adhered to.

Likewise, many farmers painstakingly maintain their lands in what is often seen as the only acceptable way, using chemical substances such as herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers, because they think it is the right thing to do.

Those with an ecological mindset may look at large expanses of neatly cropped grass with very different eyes. They are aware of the absence of wildflowers and birdsong, decimated insect numbers, damaged and depleted soil. The smell of roundup is like poison in their nostrils.

All of this is not just happening in this country, of course. Far from it. But the impact may be greater in Ireland, which has the largest percentage of grassland cover in the EU.

Calculations, statistics are pretty abstract. People know these can be manipulated. Many are equally suspicious of scientists proclaiming that climate change exists and that change is imperative. They fear that it will be imposed from above and prefer to continue with 'business as usual'.

This may have to do with deep-seated survival instinct. Plus, the idea of change can be scary: Maybe for the simple reason that chaos and disasters are fairly easy to imagine – more so than a 'boring New World', full of flowers and wildlife. Or, for that matter, an economy that offers equality for all.

There is also the time factor. With the coronavirus, the danger seems imminent and universal. The figures change overnight, almost in real-time, and seem hard as nails. The authorities take resolute measures that everyone can understand. By contrast, almost every aspect of the climate change and biodiversity crisis is disputed and expected to unfold 'over time'.

And yet, slow shifts are underway 'on the ground'.

Call it an evolution. Spear-



*Plant a wildflower garden to encourage biodiversity*

headed, in part, by ecologists, permaculturists, wildlife gardeners, agroforesters, farmers for nature, environmentalists. The scale is still relatively small but we could be seeing the thin edge of the wedge. Perhaps surprisingly, Tidy Towns seem to be in the vanguard. Many groups across Ireland are focusing on biodiversity, for which points are now being awarded.

In West Cork, the Clonakilty group plays a pivotal part in the ambitious Clonakilty Tree

Planting project '20,000 trees for 2020'. Skibbereen Tidy Towns, proactive in SECAD, as well as Sustainable Skibbereen, are developing a biodiversity plan in partnership with Cork Nature Network. Bantry Tidy Towns has started work on a sustainability roadmap for the community, together with the environmental charity Voice. Kinsale has a wildflower garden and is planting trees. And these examples are merely the tip of the (melting) iceberg.

In reality, not just West Cork or Ireland, but the entire planet, will have to make such a paradigm shift if humans are to survive as a species (which seems to be our prime objective). Most of all, we have to become aware that the (natural) world around us is made up of ecosystems that are being destroyed but need to be restored. Even though we cannot see them at first glance.

Trees are more than just trees. Like us, they are part of complex networks that cannot exist in isolation and have developed over time. Therefore, it should be a crime to murder mature trees unless they pose an acute danger. And if they have to come down, the dead-

wood should be left in a safe place so it can offer shelter (a habitat) to the many creatures that depend on it.

Untidy? Perhaps. But the planet will become healthier and so will we.

## Upcoming events

**Biodiversity workshops** run by Skibbereen Tidy Towns in partnership with Cork Nature Network on March 12, 21, 26. You can sign up at [www.eventbrite.com/e/93816011215](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/93816011215).

**Clonakilty Tree Planting** organises planting sessions until early April, mostly at weekends. Send an email to [mr\\_compass@hotmail.com](mailto:mr_compass@hotmail.com) to receive information on upcoming activities.

**'Dreamin' Skibbereen'**, public meeting to imagine a sustainable future for Skibbereen, organised by Sustainable Skibbereen and Cork Nature Network (West Cork), as part of William Bock's exhibition 'Land Walks, Land Talks, Land Marks' in the West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen. March 25, 5-8pm.



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK : FARMING

# Saving farmers time with a measured approach to grass

Under new regulations announced in February, derogation farmers will either have to train in grass measurement or hire a trained specialist to carry out at least 20 farm walks a year to calculate grass covers.

The timing couldn't be better for Innishannon native **Tim Casey**, who recently left his job as a grassland technician in Teagasc to drive his own business, Cork Grassland Services, forward.

**T**im's interest in grassland management came about in the summer of 2017 on a work placement with Teagasc, as part of his Plant Science Degree in UCC.

Spending the summer doing clover trials in farms across the country, Tim's 'light bulb' moment happened as he was out walking one of the farms. "The farmer asked me to measure his grass with a plate metre, as I was walking the farm anyway," explains Tim. "I thought why can't I do this for other busy farmers."

"When my greatest critic, my dad, didn't dismiss the idea out-of-hand, I knew I was on to something."

Tim went away and bought his own plate metre. "There are three methods of measuring grass – eyeballing, cutting and weighing and using a plate metre," explains Tim. "The more experienced farmer would eyeball and cut and weigh, as it's faster."

Tim spent his final year at college planning and developing his business idea.

"I had been milking for a local dairy farmer in Innishannon, so he agreed to be my guinea pig. At the time, I didn't know much about the advisory side of things," says Tim.

By January 2018, word had spread and Tim started measuring for other farms. By the end of May, this number had increased to 20 farms. At the same time, he was in college and working weekends on a pig farm in West Cork.

The following month, Tim successfully applied for a job with Teagasc in Moorepark as a grassland research technician. Not one to stand around, Tim finished college on the Friday and started work on the Monday.

He took on two local lads to help measure the farms and help keep his own business going.

"That first year was fairly chaotic," says Tim.

Last year, Tim's client list had increased to 80 farms and

he was still working fulltime at Teagasc.

Something had to give, so Tim handed in his notice in January this year. The day after he finished, the Department of Agriculture announcement that all derogation farmers had to start grass measuring.

By the end of this year, Tim hopes to have 150 farms at least to measure during peak season (April to September) and 20 technicians employed in measuring grass.

"You need to be doing a minimum of 20 walks across the year to get any kind of meaningful data," says Tim. "With the data you want to identify the poor performing paddocks and then recede them the following year."

"The biggest problem with grass measuring is the time it takes," says Tim. "It's massively time consuming, although in my view, it's one of the most important jobs on the farm and the easiest job to skip. The better the grass, the better the milk, the more money that can be made. Top farmers will walk it every four or five days and very good farmers once a week because grass is growing so fast."

Tim uses the PastureBase app. "As we walk, we measure, and as soon as we finish, we upload the results. Based on the results, we send the farmer on a grazing plan," he explains.

"Fifty per cent of our clients are very good grassland managers but just don't have the time," says Tim. "Our service suits them, as we can just give them the results each week and they have the skills to analyse those themselves and put a plan in place."

"The other 50 per cent are very new to grassland management, so we're breaking it down very simply for them. Some farmers are implementing a low-cost grass driven system where they want to feed and grow as much grass as possible using as little concentrate as possible. On the



flip side of that, you have very high yielding herds, big feeders, so you'd be supplementing an awful lot of feed. We tailor our management to suit them.

"Our business is to get farmers to grow and utilise as much grass as possible, so it doesn't matter if you're a high-yielding herd who's going to feed over a tonne and a half of meal or a spring based system that's feeding 300, we're trying to help farmers be as efficient as possible with the grass they have."

Covering all of Cork, Waterford and South Tipperary, Tim also offers one-on-one consultancy for farmers, soil sampling, farm mapping, a recruitment service, facilitating of contract rearing of heifers and sells grass measuring equipment.

"Farm mapping is very important," adds Tim. "A lot of farm measurements are very general and inaccurate, ending in a zero or a five for example instead of a more accurate number. If I do a grazing plan, all my measurements are per hectare and I multiply my per hectare reading by the area of the paddock, so if you tell me there are 2.5 hectares in the paddock when there is actually 2.1, my calculations will be off."

"By talking to farmers, we find out what they need," says Tim, who is hoping to massively grow his business this year, after the recent derogation announcement.

Cork Grassland Services.  
www.corkgrasslandservices.ie for more information or call Tim on (086) 1264542.

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# Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK : FARMING

## Come on spring



### FARMING IN WEST CORK

Tommy Moyles

In his farming diary, West Cork suckler farmer and columnist with the Irish Farmers Journal, Tommy Moyles covers the lay of the land across all agri and farming enterprises – news, views and people in farming across West Cork and further afield.

In association with



At least it's only February. I've said this phrase countless times over the last few weeks to console myself when there appears to be no let-up in the wind and rain. I'd much rather it now than in April, that's for sure. With little respite from the incessant rain and gales, the past month has been similar to February 2014.

Storm Darwin was among one of the storms to come through and it took with it part of the calving shed roof. I was in there at the time and it was a

scary place to see with no let up in the gale, as it shook the roof before ripping of a bay of it and landing it 200 metres away on a ditch. There were a handful of shed roofs lost in the locality back then.

#### Calving

I'm glad we've pushed the calving date back since then. There was a time when over 50 per cent were calved before the end of February and I was flat out bedding down sheds as numbers grew and there was pressure on to get cows and calves out due to space even when weather was bad. I'll hardly hit five per cent calved for February 29 this time around. Fertiliser spreading from where it used to be; otherwise it would be washed away.

If weather conditions improve, grazing for the young stock will get underway, and with fences in order, it looks like there should be a few empty pens in the shed over the next fortnight.

#### BVD eradication

Time can pass fast in the lifetime of a farm. A heifer calf born recently displayed the speed of genetic change that can happen. She is the fourth generation born in her line since 2014. Her mother was the third first-calver in a row in her family to have a heifer calf; and all of them were kept for breeding. She's also the fourth generation to be tested for BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea). There has been a national eradication scheme in place for this disease that affects the immune system in cattle since 2013

Having taken part in the voluntary year of BVD eradication in 2012, we are now in the ninth year of testing. I was talking to a friend of mine about it recently, when I got curious about how many generations were tested here on this farm and realised the calf born that morning was the fourth: I'm a terrible man for boring stats like that.

While the number of positives has greatly reduced, the BVD eradication programme should be a valuable lesson to all stakeholders on future disease eradication measures. It is in danger of becoming an industry of its own – indeed, there are some who would say it already is. Hopefully it won't go down the same road as TB eradication. It would make me think twice about doing another voluntary scheme anyway.

#### Audits

Between October 2018 and June 2019, I hosted three separate inspectors or auditors. One was for TAMS, another for spot check and the third for a Bord Bia audit. There was nothing overly strenuous about any of them, but it made me wonder about the role of the farm in the economy.

I fully understand that, as farmers, we are the primary producer and our basic economic function is to provide the raw materials for the other parts of the industry. But there are times where it feels like we're being used to create tertiary sector jobs, almost for the sake of it.

The anger felt over this bubbled to the surface, or some



There have been large numbers of calves traded through the marts so far this year.

might say erupted, in 2019 and resulted in a series of protests because a significant proportion of farmers got fed up of it.

Because of reduced EU money and the future income needs of the younger generations entering farming, I think we are likely to see a fall-off in farm numbers, particularly in dry stock over the next decade. Will that lead to more on-farm inspections or audits for those left farming?

A fall in farm numbers means that those outside the farm gate will have to ask themselves – how do you make money from those who aren't making money?

#### The mart

Calving on a lot of farms is well under way with a significant proportion well past the halfway stage. It's beginning to show in marts with over 1,300 calves on sale in Bandon marts last February sale.

Rough seas have impacted on prices for export type Friesian bull calves. If sailings are cancelled or trucks aren't allowed to travel the knock on effect at sales is resulting in those calves being back about €20/head on sales held during calmer weather.

#### Milk Price

While stagnation remains the order of the day for beef prices there has been a bit of good news for West Cork dairy farmers with both Carbery and Dairygold increasing their prices for January milk. The board of Carbery Group increased its milk price by 1c/l. The increase of 1c/l reflects a rise in the base price of 1.5c/l and a 0.5c/l reduction in the support being paid from its stability fund.

The January 2020 price equates to a 30.7c/l excluding VAT.

Dairygold suppliers saw its base price for January milk sup-

plies rise by 0.5c/l to 30.06c/l, excluding VAT.

#### Hedging

I walked past some of the new hedging planted over the winter and it's beginning to get its Ardfield, windswept look. It's currently sitting at a variety of angles away from the prevailing south westerly winds, so a bit of hedgerow management will be required to get it back in shape.

Due to the mild temperatures, it's beginning to bud. Once it gets going, it will be a good shelter option for calves, but it will need a bit of looking after before it thickens out. If the rain would stop I might get after that job or at least work it in around calving duty over the next few weeks. There'll be no shortage of things to do over March.

## Farm Life: Joseph O'Sullivan, Brookpark Veterinary Clinic, Dunmanway

### Where was your first veterinary work?

I qualified in 2015 from UCD and I went straight to Canada. Myself and a friend from Westmeath went to mixed animal vets about an hour outside Vancouver. There they had designated large animal and two small practices.

I worked three days large and two days small. When I was on small animals days, you spent the whole day in clinic designated completely towards small animal. If it was a large animal day you spent the whole day at it. I suppose here in mixed animal practice you could see cats, dogs, cattle, sheep, goats, all in the one

hour. It was mainly dairy but there was a few pedigree beef breeders as well. They were averaging 150 cows and, with the exception of two farms, were all indoor systems.

It was a two-year visa. I came back then and started with Brookpark vets in Dunmanway. So this is my third spring working here.

### What is the catchment area for the practice?

We go down as far as Adrigole and east to around Ahiohill, north to Inchigeela. We have three vets in the practice so when all three are working it's manageable enough. It's in spring that it can be tough. We



do a lot of routine work

If you can head west for the day, it's fine; but if you have to do two calls around Dunmanway and two around Glengarriff, there's a lot of time spent on the road. Vets are slack on the ground.

### How has 2020 been so far?

It's been busy. February looks like it was 15 per cent busier than last year. A lot of it is compounded by the weather with animals in or they are in and out and the diet keeps changing. There haven't been too many calving issues.

We don't tend to see most of them most farmers are well able to deal with most diffi-

culties. The concentration of dairy calving is mainly smaller calves. Before calving used to be a huge thing now we tend to see the more extreme cases.

Due to the in and out nature of this spring, we're seeing a lot of dietary issues on the back of this. We've seen a lot of milk fevers, which is unusual for this time of year. You'd see that more in March and April but silage is good quality this year and there's higher potassium and calcium levels in it because of the good harvest last year and that can cause a few dietary upsets.

### What are the hours like?

In a busy week in the middle of spring you could go

up to 100 hours. I'm on call two nights a week and every second weekend. There's no real south doc type system for vets yet. Sometimes you could have a night with no calls at all and other times, you're up the whole night and then work through till five or six o'clock the next day.

My biggest thing on a day like that is that you've got to eat. If you're hungry that day you'll fade so you have to keep the energy up. Coffee is important too, adrenaline will get you going sometimes, but you need that pick-up.



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK : FARMING

## A hands-on approach

West Cork woman **Máire Ahern McCarthy** is due take up the position of Branch Manager for Bank of Ireland Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Bantry at the beginning of April.

A Qualified Financial Advisor and the current Financial Manager of FBD in Bandon, Máire hails from a farming background – when she's not talking figures, she's out milking cows in her wellies – and is looking forward to bringing her passion for agriculture to the table at Bank of Ireland.

"At present, the competition has a stronger presence on the ground with the agricultural sector in West Cork," says the straight talker. "My role is to develop Bank of Ireland as a choice bank for people interested in developing their farm or business and looking for good value and good service."

She's well aware that it won't be an easy job. "Farmers tend to be very loyal. We don't like change as a rule, but I would say that price, value for money and knowing that the person you're dealing with understands your business is very important," she says.

Immersed in farming all her life – she grew up on a farm in Kilbrittain and today operates a dairy enterprise with her husband Brian in Crossbarry, Innishannon, supplying Bandon Co-op, of which she's been a serving member of the Board for the past 10 years – Máire is well-positioned to know exactly what farmers in West Cork need.

"My passion is agriculture," she says simply. "I farm every day, I'm at the coalface of it, I'm involved in the co-op, I understand the challenges that face farming and I'd like to think that if Bank of Ireland can offer value for money and perhaps a loan structure that will work in the farmer's favour."

"People need to be valued and we really do realise that agriculture is a very, very valuable asset in West Cork. It is keeping rural Ireland alive and we need to manage it and mind it. We need to make it possible for people to be able to afford to expand and maintain a valuable industry, whether that's the

part-time farmer or the large commercial one."

Máire passionately believes the bank needs to put its arms around people. "I think it's really important that the bank is there to support people, to say we know you're exposed, we know you have a lot of borrowing: Do you need help? Do you need to take interest only in the spring when you don't have cash flow? Do you want us to look at perhaps doing seasonal payments over the summer months when you have cash flow?" It's common sense but you'd be amazed by how many people don't have that structure in place."

Growing up, Máire always wanted to be a farmer. The eldest of seven, she won a scholarship to attend Gurteen Agricultural College in Co Tipperary, however at the time farming was a difficult path for a woman, so instead she spent a year in Dublin studying hotel management. In 1988, she applied and was accepted to AIB, where she stayed for the next 21 years, starting out as a junior bank official and finishing as Financial Planning Manager for West Cork. In 2008, she left AIB for CMOR, the financial services arm of McCarthy Accountants, where she worked for four years.

In 2011, she joined the board of Bandon Co-op.

After successfully battling a bout of ill health in 2013, that same year, through ICOS, she completed a Food Business Diploma at UCC, which she says was life-changing. She applied for and was appointed to the position of managing the Bord Bia contract in Capita Customer Solutions in Clonakilty. While working there, she was awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship, which enabled her to travel around the world studying farming practices in France, Japan, Israel, Australia, Malaysia, Netherlands and the US. "I saw what compliance systems other countries had in place and how they differed from ours. It gave me great confidence in how high the standard in Ireland is," she explains.

In 2018, Máire moved to FBD. "I think the older I get, the less afraid of change I am," says the 52-year-old honestly. Although she loves a challenge and is excited to take up her new position, Máire admits that she's also nervous. "It's a huge responsibility," she emphasises. "The farmer/business owner



needs to feel that he or she can pick up the phone and talk to someone who lives locally, understands their industry and can sort them out."

Máire's approach will be hands-on. "If someone comes to me for a loan, I'd love to go out to meet them and see their business and how their operation runs in order to get an understanding of their needs."

Recently, the future bank manager was feeding calves every morning before coming into the office. She also milks the cows every Saturday and Sunday. "I think that if you enjoy what you do...if your work is your farm and that's also your passion, then your life and your work are very closely interlinked," she says. She's hoping to put a new parlour into the farm in Innishannon this year. "For me it's about improving quality and the welfare of the farmer and the animal through technology and modernisation."

Máire believes that the biggest challenge for farmers is the isolation of the profession and the difficulty in finding labour. As chairperson of her local IFA branch, in April 2018, after a very difficult spring for farmers, she arranged a talk on mental health, which was very well attended. "I was surprised by how many people put up their hand and said they did find it very lonely and difficult to get up in the morning knowing how much there was to be done and with only one person to do it."

"I'm meeting people very day who don't have a natural successor so we will end up with a lot of change in rural

Ireland. Therefore I think we need to support farmers and business owners to maintain their business."

She sees her position at Bank of Ireland as being about

"I know what it's like to calve a cow in the snow, to give a cow a bottle because she has milk fever; I know what it's like to have your priority being to keep the animal alive and look after it. It's about the welfare of the animal and the welfare of the farmer – the money is secondary."

community, being local and being a friendly face that's recognised by local farmers and businesses.

"I know what it's like to calve a cow in the snow, to give a cow a bottle because she has milk fever; I know what it's like to have your priority being to keep the animal alive and look after it. It's about the welfare of the animal and the

welfare of the farmer – the money is secondary."

She's looking forward to being involved in the launch of Bank of Ireland's Begin Together fund – a fund of €500k in 2020 to support local clubs and organisations.

Máire stresses the need for the farming industry to protect Ireland's green reputation and worldwide recognition for producing a welfare-driven and quality product, above anything else.

"Farmers are custodians of the land and we have a very valuable reputation worldwide as having green nutritious grass-based dairy and meat products."

Máire was involved in the set up of the West Cork Farm Tours, which sells the farm experience in West Cork. "If we can get our tourists to taste our product, as part of their holiday, they'll want it when they go home. There is so much opportunity once there is joined

*continued on next page...*



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## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK : FARMING

...cont'd from previous page

up thinking," she explains.

She stresses that "just one bad story, especially in this age of social media, could take the shoes off the industry, which is so wrong, as the majority of farmers would put their own lives on the line to save their animals."

The climate change issue and derogation is a train that's coming fast down the track. "We're going to have to have slurry storage for the closed period, adequate housing for our calves," says Máire. "This is an opportunity for the bank but it's also an opportunity for the farmer. Working together we



can achieve market share and get good value loans out there. In the same breath, the farmer will get value for money, a loan that's affordable and is designed to suit their system."

Máire explains that there are SBCI loan schemes available at Bank of Ireland that have been earmarked for the farming industry. These offer a very low rate. "Our number one priority is to make sure that you can afford that loan," she says.

"We've seen huge expansion in the industry. There are lots of opportunities for sustainable farming, so I'm very optimistic for the industry."

Máire is married to Brian and they have three children, two in college and one in fifth year at Hamilton High School in Bandon.

Where does she see herself in ten years time? "I'd like to drive on this job for the next eight years and then I'd like to go out to grass when I turn 60," she says smiling.

More seriously, she answers, "I believe in living for today."

*Pictured left: Máire on her farm in Crossbarry.*

## Enterprising Cotter brothers on fire

Nick Cotter has been an entrepreneur from a young age; setting up his first business Cotter Bros Firewood, aged 11, with his older brother Jack. The business has gone on to become an industry-leading firewood supplier. Recently, Nick received recognition for the Cotter brother's entrepreneurial successes from UCC, being awarded a Quercus Innovation/Entrepreneurship Scholarship in 2019 and also a WFQA (Wood Fuel Quality Assurance) certification at the National Ploughing Championships in September 2019. They have maintained WFQA certification since 2013.

In 2019 the brothers started their second business, 'Cotter Organic Lamb', launched in August 2019 at the Cotter Bros Firewood Open Day by Sean Kelly MEP, Councillor Michael Collins and chef Tom Flavin. They direct sell the organic, 100 per cent grass-fed, seven day, dry, aged lamb

produced on their farm outside Abbeyfeale. This business won the 'Rising Star' award at the Irish Quality Food Awards 2019.

Jack and Nick are currently working on 'The Cotter Crate', their third venture. The Cotter Crate was named as one of 'seven agritech and food start-ups revolutionising the world of farming' by Silicon Republic in November 2019. The brothers won 'Best Agri-Engineering Start-up' and the Alfred Cox Founder's Perpetual Trophy for the 'Best Overall Start-up Innovation' at the 2019 Enterprise Ireland Innovation Awards at the Ploughing Championships. They also won the 2019 Engineers Ireland Student Innovator of The Year Award for The Cotter Crate. Nick is the only non-engineering student to ever win the award in its 21-year history.

In the meantime, they continue to expand Cotter Bros Firewood and are helping develop policy to grow the



firewood market nationally through Government support (Domestic SSRH). They are marketing and promoting Cotter Organic Lamb and working to launch 'The Cotter Crate'

in 2020 along with meeting their own high standards in university studies at LIT (Jack) and UCC (Nick).

*Nick Cotter speaking at the IrBEA National Conference alongside (left to right) - Thomas Duffy - President of Macra na Feirme, Laura Burke - Director General of the EPA, Billy Costello - Green Generation Ltd, Donal Hayes - Tipperary Cheese and Donna Gartland - CEO of Irish District Heating.*



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## Ireland's potato consumption is relatively steady

Farmers and industry from across the country attended the National Potato Conference and Trade Show on February 18, organised by Teagasc, IFA and Bord Bia in the Red Cow Hotel, Dublin where they heard that potato consumption in Ireland has been steady over the past five years.

The conference addressed a number of technical issues for potato growers and the industry. "Growing and storing potatoes requires a high level of technical expertise and growers must keep abreast of these developments," according to Michael Hennessy, Head of Crops Knowledge Transfer in Teagasc.

Dr Adrian Briddon, Sutton

Bridge, AHDB, UK, updated the conference on store management following the loss of one of the main tools to prevent sprouting in store. He said; "New products such as mint oil and orange oil are not as effective as the current standard. However DMN, where carefully applied, is currently the best tool available to Irish growers".

Growers are facing the loss of a critical management tool (diquat) this year. Shay Phelan, Teagasc Crops Specialist, brought growers through management options in the absence of this desiccant. "Crop planning plays an important role in managing potato maturity at harvest and this can be combined with new man-

agement techniques to control potato haulm prior to harvest". Shay Phelan added; "Growers will have to upskill their knowledge, and possibly incur extra machinery costs, to ensure a timely harvest while maintaining potato quality".

Energy use in the potato sector was also in focus at the national potato conference. "Potato farms have a large energy requirement when storing potatoes though the year in large fridges," according to Barry Caslin, Teagasc. "There are many ways to improve efficiency in stores and using solar PV combined with battery storage can produce a significant proportion of their energy as renewable," he added.



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

## Drawing my own business

Audrey Cantillon, the artist and business owner, posted her first picture to Instagram on February 14, 2018, and so began an enterprise that would become 'Cantillona Design'. For anyone familiar with Kinsale, you might have seen or photographed yourself against the backdrop of her Kinsale mural.

"I am a visual artist," Audrey says. "I have two very different styles of work – one is very detailed graphic style illustrations done with a fine nibbed pen. The other style is portraiture – faces and animals done with pencil."

Originally from Shannon in Clare, Audrey now lives and works in Kinsale with her husband, Dom, her three children Sam, Izzy and Ted. And of course, Buddy their Cockerpoo.

"Three things led me to where I am today," Audrey says. "Art was my favourite subject in school, but I never really drew until I was in my 30s and it was my eldest, Sam, who was my inspiration. Sketching and colouring with him reawakened my love of drawing."

Secondly, with her friends, Natalia and Sibeal, they started a drawing club. "We used to get together and chat and draw and from their suggestions my own drawing became something changed. Our club was short-lived, but it had a profound effect on me."

"Two years ago," Audrey says. "I was listening to an artist being interviewed and she said that if you were creating something – you should share it. So, I did, and I was shocked, surprised and delighted with the reaction when I first posted my work on Instagram."

Her journey to Kinsale has taken Audrey to many places. She completed a BA in Applied Languages in DCU in Dublin, the final year of which was spent in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Her career took her around Europe working in the corporate world.

"When I was young, I remember listening to Mary Robinson being interviewed and thinking that I wanted to be President of Ireland! That changed my ambitions and what I thought I could achieve."

A career in London in private banking followed and there she met her husband, Dom. "We got married and when Sam was born, we moved back to Kinsale. We've been here for nearly 13 years and I consider myself beyond lucky to live in such a gorgeous place filled with so many lovely and inter-



Audrey started designing cotton t-shirts with her now, very famous, Kinsale design.

esting people."

In June 2018, Audrey was made redundant from the global events company she was working with.

"By then, I was getting a bit brave with my art," she says. "I applied to Kinsale Art's Weekend and was accepted for the artists trail around the town. Four of my pieces were hung in Poets Corner cafe. They sold! That was a huge moment, I felt I had laid bare my soul!"

From there, Audrey started designing cotton t-shirts with her now, very famous, Kinsale design.

"I set up at the local farmers market one Wednesday to see if they would sell. And they did!"

"Because I had been made redundant, the department of social welfare had encouraged me to upskill, so I did a Digital Marketing Course and found out about the supports there are for people like me who wanted to start their own business."

They put Audrey on a Start Your Business Course where her teacher encouraged her to reach out to the Local Enterprise Office. Audrey booked a free advice clinic session in Kinsale and has had a mentor since then.

"My mentor in the LEO, Jackie Gowran, told me to trust my gut, and to follow my instincts – I find I do that more and more."

Her t-shirts are now stocked in Granny's Bottom Drawer and Chaac in Kinsale. My artwork is available from Old Quay Gallery Kinsale or on her self-built website [www.cantillonadesign.com](http://www.cantillonadesign.com).

Since November 2019, Audrey's Cork design has been hanging on the gable end of Earth Cafe in Cork city where Grand Parade meets South Mall but her greatest pride so far is her Kinsale mural.

"When I completed the Kinsale design," Audrey says, "I thought it would look amazing on a wall in Kinsale. It was though the amazing support of Kinsale Arts Weekend who approved it as an art installation for arts weekend and even contributed towards the cost of printing. I approached Fishy Fishy and Kinsale Gin to see if they would sponsor it and they got right behind it. Rhino Print in Kinsale printed my design on a PVC Banner. I love seeing people posting pics beside it on Instagram."

In looking back on how it has all come together so far, Audrey is reflective about her new business and how it came together.

"It's ok to not know what you want to do yet. I'm coming to all of this in my 40s. There is time to figure it out. I am very lucky that I have an amazing supportive husband and teamwork at home is very important."

Her ambition is to see her work hanging in more towns, in airports, at festivals and in clubs and bars. Her last tips for success?

"I try to walk our dog as often as I can. I walk with my girlfriends and they are like my therapy and I walk with my own thoughts and sometimes that's my best thinking time."

## Network Ireland West Cork opens up business opportunities for West Cork Women



The Network Ireland West Cork March event will open up many opportunities for women in business with a free networking event at The Maritime Hotel, Bantry on Tuesday, March 31. To mark this event, Dr Jean van Sinderen-Law, Associate Vice President Director of European Relations and Public Affairs, UCC will be returning as keynote speaker and facilitating the networking session. Dr Jean is key in establishing partner-

ships for University and other Government agencies, she has many other accomplishments including winning many awards throughout her career.

Network Ireland West Cork recognises that networking is a great way to make new business connections which could advance your career and lead to business opportunities. It also helps you gain new perspectives and insights to assist you in your business and #bethebestyou.

We all know that network-

ing can be daunting for many women but the Network Ireland West Cork is a warm and welcoming experience designed to help attendees increase their confidence and learn new skills, to empower them to get the most out of networking on the night and into the future. This is event is open to members and non members, tickets are free and can be booked via Eventbrite. For more information see <https://networkireland.ie/west-cork>



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Local Enterprise Office

Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West

## Trading Online Voucher Scheme 2020

To support small Irish businesses to enhance their online trading presence, Trading Online Vouchers to the value of **€2,500 (up to a maximum of 50% of the total cost)** are available to Cork businesses through a programme under the Government's National Digital Strategy and delivered through the Local Enterprise Offices.

If you are a small business, employing under 10 employees and are planning on upgrading or developing a new website, contact us to find out about the Voucher. Eligible businesses can apply for a Voucher of up to €2,500 matched by own funding to invest in developing their e-commerce capability. In addition, photography and videos can be included in an application. The Voucher is open to those trading and in business with 6 months plus. You must attend an information seminar before applying for the scheme. Contact us today to find out more about the Voucher.

Cork County Council's Local Enterprise Offices provide a variety of business supports to the micro-enterprise sector, please contact us at:

**A:** Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West, 8 Kent Street, Clonakilty

**T:** 023-8834700 **E:** [westcork@leo.corkcoco.ie](mailto:westcork@leo.corkcoco.ie)

**W:** [www.localenterprise.ie/corknorthandwest](http://www.localenterprise.ie/corknorthandwest)

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# Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

## The Nimbus Research Centre – developing technologies that address real needs

### What is Cyber Physical Design and the Internet of Things?

These are devices that connect the physical world with the cyber world. They are found in cars, phones, washing machines to name a few examples. Nearly everything that uses

electricity now has sensors, processing and communication capability.

### What is your role at Nimbus?

I manage a portfolio of about 70 applied research and development technology

The Nimbus Research Centre is part of the Cork Institute of Technology. They are at the forefront of cyber-physical systems (CPS) and Internet of Things (IoT) research, innovation and learning. They are developing technologies that address the real needs of industry, people and society. **Brendan McCormack** speaks to Richard Linger, the manager of Nimbus

projects per annum for Irish and international companies. I am a graduate of Civil Engineering in UCC from over 30 years ago. I then left and worked around the globe with cutting edge technology companies and latterly with Deloitte Consulting. I joined Nimbus in 2013. Nimbus is part of CIT and has about 60 full time technology researchers. We have Software, Hardware, Artificial intelligence, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality experts.

### What kind of areas of society is your research seeking to change and how will these affect society and people's interaction with technology?

We do several things with our technology. We make processes work better in factories – what we call Industry 4.0. We develop new technologies that help protect people from cyber-at-



tack using AI – a cyber-attack may be someone trying to hack your devices OR someone using social media to bully you. We build new technologies to detect water impurities. We build digital virtual models and feed in sensor data then can put you in this world using our AR/VR equipment. We generally strive to produce software and hardware systems to help industry and to help people with new or improved services and products.

### What are the new areas for career and business opportunities?

We are seeing an explosion in the use of Applied Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence across healthcare, social media, consumer products, energy management and gaming. Clients are coming to us from all over the world. There are global shortages of AI experts

Technology Gateway, to find out more. Richard directs the industry-led research and technology-transfer programmes for new and established companies in the domain of next generation software systems, embedded software and hardware computing technologies.

and people that can see the opportunities to bring AI to areas like health, manufacturing, and food and similar sectors.

### Are there one or two projects that are now up and running as businesses that you could give us examples of?

We have developed a special scanner for operating theatres to scan QR codes on all items that are implanted in people. The QR codes vary in size from 0.5mm to 15mm across and are often wrapped in plastic. We developed the hardware and the AI platform to help read the code. Another example is analysing college student's social media text, video and pictures to help identify self-harm, depressive and abusive behaviours. Help can then be provided earlier to support the student.

### How is the centre reaching out to young women to encourage more gender balance in STEM careers?

We support outreach projects across the community with a big focus on gender balance. Our annual summit – 'Beyond IoT' brought some of the biggest female names in technology – Lauren Knausenberger from the the US Pentagon and

Sally Eaves, UN Technology Strategy Advisor – to name two great examples.

### How do people – students, business owners and innovators – get involved with Nimbus?

If you are an entrepreneur or businessperson with an idea or just want to understand what is going on out there – just come and talk to us. We will then guide you through how we can develop the technology and apply for government grants. We often write the applications for you. If you are a student and want to do an internship, then talk to us and we will guide you through our internship programme.

### What kind of Ireland/Cork is Nimbus working towards?

Nimbus is at the heart of putting Cork on the Global Technology Roadmap. We want to attract the best companies and ideas to Nimbus to help future-proof the regional and national technology economy.

### For more information:

[www.nimbus.cit.ie](http://www.nimbus.cit.ie)  
or contact  
[Richard.linger@cit.ie](mailto:Richard.linger@cit.ie).

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Louise Bunyan, Shkurta Lisa Hasani, Sherna Malone, Sharon Huggard, Anna Healy, Anna Groniecka. Announcing the launch of Powerhouse Collective in Clonakilty, a new Cork collaboration of six self-employed female industry experts who have combined their services across photography, skincare, beauty, hair & make-up, personal styling, executive coaching and online personal branding through LinkedIn, to create a one-stop-shop for professionals from all industries who are in need of an executive reboot, offline and online.  
Pic: Anna Groniecka



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

# Network Ireland West Cork launches Businesswoman of the Year Awards

Network Ireland West Cork launched their Businesswoman of the Year Awards on February 27 in AIB Bandon, entitled 'How to win business awards', and sponsored by AIB. This incredible event was presented to inspire members of Network West Cork to enter the businesswoman 2020 awards. Opening the launch President, Caroline Murphy and Owner of West Cork Eggs, said that entering and winning a National award brought her business to a new level, and to people who never have heard of West Cork Eggs before. It also strengthened the overall brand through the power of the network. She added once you enter the award process the Network will support you every step of the way through mentoring, building your confidence and for you to shine. She encouraged every member to read the award categories as they had nothing to lose and everything to gain!

Also speaking at the launch,

Helen Wycherley, Director of Celtic Ross Hotel said entering the awards will show growth and passion in the business and each step of the process acknowledges your achievements and journey along the way. Speaking as the panel facilitator John O'Doherty, Head of AIB Cork acknowledged that he was delighted to be involved with the Network West Cork community as a judge and mentor, highlighted winning an award can bring visibility, financial rewards and business benefits.

The event included advice from the panellists, Avril Allshire Howe, Caherbeg Free Range Pork Ltd, after winning an award herself said entering the awards is a 'must do' for every member and added it's a working 360 review on your business. Helen Walshe, EmployFlex and winner of the Rising Star category in May 2019 advised that you come away with growth, passion and learnings about your-

self and your business, and Maria O'Donovan from Maria O'Donovan and Co Solicitors mentioned it upskilled her confidence to enter other law awards where she received great business leverage from them.

All members of Network Ireland West Cork are eligible to enter the regional awards, which will take place in May 2020. Winners at that level will be put forward to the National Awards. There are eight categories small SME (10 employees or less), Large SME (greater than 10 employees), Emerging New Business, Employee – Rising Star, Employee – Shining Star, Arts, STEM and a new category introduced this year, Solo Businesswoman.

A number of mentors are available to advise and talk through each step of the process with entrants. For further information about the awards, visit: [www.networkireland.ie/awards-information/](http://www.networkireland.ie/awards-information/)



NIWC event 'How to Win Awards & Business Launch', hosted by AIB in Bandon. Left: speakers John O'Doherty - Head of AIB Cork, Helen Walshe, EmployFlex, Kate Ryan, Flavour.ie and NIWC President Caroline Murphy, West Cork Eggs



E Bantry Enterprise Centre boasts state-of-the-art Hot Desk Facilities for new and existing businesses in

West Cork, as well as those working remotely from their head office. Our aim is to provide a high quality, low cost environment for businesses to start, maintain or grow in our local community.

The Centre has 24/7 access, reliable high speed broadband, a break-out area, free parking and comfortable meeting/training facilities - everything a business would require without any of the inconvenience of setting up an office or taking out a long term lease.



One of the big advantages of the ECentre is that businesses will meet peers in a similar situation, establish and develop supportive contacts with them and the state enterprise bodies.



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- Free parking



For further information, please contact 021 4285547 or email [imelda.kind@corkcoco.ie](mailto:imelda.kind@corkcoco.ie) or see [www.ecentres.ie](http://www.ecentres.ie)



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

# Rubicon – supporting Ireland's next generation of start-ups

Located on the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) Campus, close to Cork City, the Rubicon Centre is Ireland's largest incubation centre and part of a growing business community, which today is home to over 40 companies and 160 employees. Innovation Centre Manager Paul Healy has led the start-up team at the Rubicon since its inception in 2006. Paul explains how the Rubicon is here to support Ireland's next generation of start-ups in taking a unique idea and helping to develop it into a successful business.

Prior to joining the Rubicon Centre, Paul ran his own venture consultancy business supporting companies across the region, as well as delivering training and mentoring supports on behalf of the development agencies. He has worked in the establishment of a number of Incubation and Enterprise Centres, including the establishment of the Dingle Business Park, NSC, Midleton and Carrigaline Business Parks and Acorn Business Campus and has acted as advisor to a

number of other Incubation Projects.

"People come to us with early-stage business ideas," explains Paul. "We act as a sounding board for these ideas, taking people from the idea stage, through training and mentoring, raising business finance, helping them to get their first customers, and then scaling up their business."

After 14 years in existence, the Rubicon Centre has helped to create 1041 jobs. Many of these clients and former clients have established operations at home and abroad in other countries such as the UK and US.

"Our alumni is in excess of 400," says Paul. "We've supported many well-known companies such as Abtran for example." Abtran is Ireland's leading provider of customer and business process management and outsourcing services.

Crest Solutions, based in Little Island is another client of Rubicon. Crest delivers leading technology to regulated packaging and manufacturing sites in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

"The list is endless," says



*Innovation Centre Manager Paul Healy has led the start-up team at the Rubicon since its inception in 2006.*

Paul. "We work across all sectors. The only areas we don't get involved in are retail, distribution and consultancy."

Of the successful businesses formed through supports from the Rubicon Centre, 73 per cent are still in operation today;

some have gone on to employ between one and three people and many others are employing hundreds.

The Rubicon is part of the CIT entrepreneurship ecosystem, which was first established with the establishment of the Graduate Enterprise Programme in 1998.

Today, as well as working with CIT, the Rubicon Centre works with the other development agencies in the region, including Enterprise Ireland, the four Cork City and County Local Enterprise Offices, SECAD and Udaras Na Gaeltachta, to ensure entrepreneurs have access to a wide variety of supports.

With the economic downturn in Ireland post-2007, the Rubicon Centre provided an invaluable source of support for entrepreneurs. For instance, in March 2007 when American-owned electronics and mobile phone company Motorola announced that it was closing its Cork operation with the loss of 330 jobs, Rubicon stepped in to offer assistance to the workers facing sudden unemployment. "It was a big closure for Cork and we went in and worked with Motorola," says Paul. "At the time, a number of people who had lost their jobs, with our support, went on to start up their own businesses," he explains.

"During the recession, so many people, through no fault of their own, lost their jobs and found they had to go into business for themselves or face long-term unemployment," says Paul. "As a result, we saw a lot of activity in those years after the crash."

One of the main difficulties for start-ups during the recession was raising finance. This still remains a challenge for early stage companies

"As a start-up business you need two things to be successful," explains Paul. "You need a customer or potential customer and you need funding. We're very fortunate in Ireland that we have a huge suite of supports from the State but you also need to be able to raise finance through banks, credit unions, angel investment and so on. When the recession happened, that became more difficult. As a result, we started our own Rubicon Angel Investor Group, which is still running today."

West-along, O'Neill's Irish Atlantic Sea Salt based at the end of the Beara peninsula or Cook + Cure in the Mealagh Valley, are just two success stories in Cork County to come out of Rubicon. O'Neill's Irish Atlantic Sea Salt has won numerous awards since its inception in 2010. Its product range is sold in Ireland and internationally. The Cook + Cure app – the first platform that provides tailored nutrition advice based on an individual's different health problems, health goals, and diet preferences – has been downloaded over 10,000 times since it launched in January 2017.

### NEW FRONTIERS

Kate Hausman, creator of Cook + Cure, initially took part in the New Frontiers programme funded by Enterprise Ireland and delivered through the Rubicon. The three-phase is programme designed to provide an integrated and comprehensive set of business development supports to participants.

"We're actively recruiting for New Frontiers at the moment," says Paul. "The first phase consists of 30 hours delivered in the evenings over three weeks. It's an opportunity to explore and investigate your idea with people in similar business situations. After 30 hours, you'll have decided if your idea is feasible. I'd encourage anyone with an idea to do some minimal exploration on it, as there is nothing worse than looking back with regret and wondering what if."

Phase 2 of New Frontiers is a six-month intensive programme, which requires a full-time commitment. There is up to €22,500 in funding to cover full-time participation in the course. This part of the programme can be extended by

three months if necessary.

The third phase of the programme gives participants the opportunity to grow their business, their customer base and to generate more sales

"Our clients in the current programme are at the stage of pitching to investors, establishing if their product is viable and talking to customers," says Paul.

### SCALE CORK

Scale Cork, a partnership between Rubicon and Cork County Council is an exciting new initiative and the first of its kind in Ireland.

Supported by Cork County Council's economic development fund, the nine-month Scaling programme is open to just six companies in the med-tech, agritech and digital health sectors who are willing to scale beyond their current capability and interested in increasing sales, developing exports and building relationship with FDIs in the region.

Ag tech is a very interesting sector," says Paul "which offers huge potential for County Cork and In particular for West Cork, which has leading co-operatives and a number of hugely successful agricultural ventures.

The only criteria is that the companies must be based in Cork County, have a turnover of half a million and be interested in driving the company on," says Paul. A team of eight professionals at Rubicon will deliver mentoring and training to the six successful applicants.

Ag tech is a very interesting sector," says Paul "which offers huge potential for County Cork and In particular for West Cork, which has leading co-operatives and a number of hugely successful agricultural ventures. One of our current New Frontiers programme participants, Michael McInerney, whose company is Strongbó Agritech, has developed an automated weighing system, which monitors the weight gain or loss in beef cattle or dairy." The son of a farmer, Michael gave up his job with a mul-

*continued on next page...*

# SCALE

CORK

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN - RUBICONCENTRE.IE

Scale Cork is Ireland's first Scaling Programme for SMEs supported by Cork County Council through its economic development fund and operated by the Rubicon Centre at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT).



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# Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

...cont'd from previous page

tinalional in Cork to develop his idea and business. He is currently seeking investment and taking on customers.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for businesses," says Paul of the Scale Cork programme, which starts in April and will be delivered on-site. "Cork City and County Councils are very progressive," he continues "and we work very closely with the Local Enterprise Offices. The advantages for start-ups in this region are amazing, far above those in other regions in Ireland."

## EXXCEL FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Another very strong initiative offered at Rubicon is Exxcel, a part-time programme aimed at busy female entrepreneurs who have a business idea with high growth and export potential, within the STEM sector (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). The programme, run by Lucy O'Donoghue, is over six months, taking clients from idea to investment stage.

## STUDENT INC

The Student Incubation Programme also known as Student Inc. is a programme set up to encourage CIT, UCC or ITT Registered Students to develop their business ideas in CIT. It is a full time programme from June-August. This month the CIT Innovation Prize for Innovation takes place across all Campus's.

With start-ups, one of the main mistakes Paul sees businesses making, particularly in the tech sector, is that people do the development work first and

talk to customers afterwards. "Nothing, not even the worldwide web, replaces talking to people," says Paul.

Another common mistake is spending hard-earned savings before looking at the funding available. "A lot of people come to us because they've run out of money," says Paul. "I'd look at what they've spent their

In relation to existing companies, most entrepreneurs work in their own business. "My advice is that you need to be working ON as well as IN the business," says Paul. "It's so important to step back and develop the business.

money on and in many situations they could have applied for funding to match their own investment or had a number of things for free. Instead of using their seed capital.

In relation to existing companies, most entrepreneurs work in their own business. "My advice is that you need to be working ON as well as IN the business," says Paul. "It's so important to step back and develop the business. This is one of the objectives we hope to achieve with Scale Cork

Anyone is welcome to pitch an idea to the team at Rubicon. "We have supported a lot of very young entrepreneurs and I see that continuing but also old-

er entrepreneurs many of who have enjoyed successful careers but now want to do something for themselves.

Attracting talent is still one of the main challenges in business. Location, company ethics, lifestyle all factor in to that today. However, going forward Paul believes the climate is good for start-ups. "But the new government must have a strong entrepreneurship policy and continue to develop the enterprise culture – this is very important," he emphasises. "When you go abroad and stand up and tell people what's available for start-up businesses in Ireland, more often than not they're amazed!"

From West Cork, Rubicon has seen the emergence of a lot of web-based companies and food companies.

We don't want people to migrate to Cork City," says Paul. "We're very interested in regional development and we want to provide the supports for people to be able to develop their business in their community." CultureArk on Sherkin Island is a prime example of such a business supported by Rubicon. The company provides a number of digital services to protect and share your fine collections of art, books, manuscripts and artefacts.

"When we started in 2006, no one knew what a business incubator was," says Paul. "We had to deal with a fair amount of wisecracks about chickens and so on!" he continues laughing.

Today Rubicon is Ireland's largest business innovation centre, renowned and admired for




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hatching so many entrepreneurs and start-ups and supporting them on their exciting and challenging journeys.

## Wheels of change spinning in Glengarriff

A well-known West Cork landmark business premises has recently changed hands; The Spinning Wheel shop premises in Glengarriff village has passed to new owners after 31 years of being operated by Andrew and Mary O'Shea, who intend to relocate their trade to another premises next door.

The O'Sheas bought the established premises in 1989 and in the years since have operated a very successful business there, welcoming a huge number of shoppers through their doors.

The Spinning Wheel has encompassed a wide range of products over the years in its ladies fashion boutique, which specialised in high-end labels, and gift shop, which was noted



for stocking a range of the best known brands such as Waterford Crystal, Newbridge Silverware, Tipperary Crystal and more.

The premises was also home to a coffee shop, filling station, tourist information point and Bureau de Change on occasion!

Speaking to West Cork

People, the O'Sheas confirmed that the decision to sell was taken after deep deliberation. When the premises was put on the market in mid-2019, the immediate interest from several genuine parties, both local and national, was a huge vote of confidence in Glengarriff.

The new owners, Paula

and Christopher, have already moved in and will shortly unveil their business model, which will be a welcome addition to Glengarriff.

An overriding sentiment from Andrew and Mary, as they make this move is to express their gratitude and appreciation to their many associates over the years, and especially to the customers who have supported them. On a note of sadness they recall those people who have since passed on but whose memory will always be cherished by the couple.

The O'Sheas are relishing the challenge of getting their new premises up and running and look forward to welcoming their many customers and friends there in the near future.

The

## Spinning Wheel

Glengarriff



We would like to thank all of our many customers and friends and we look forward to seeing you again soon in our new premises.

*Andrew & Mary O'Shea*



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

## RoboThink inspires children through STEM education

Aishling and Adrian Collins run RoboThink Ireland, a global STEM education provider that prepares children for a fast changing, digital world. Based in Enniskeane but with afterschools in Bandon, Clonakilty and Kilcolman NS, the couple's future aim is to run a

network of STEAM education programmes throughout Ireland to train young Irish people who are interested in coding and robotics. West Cork is RoboThink's first location in Europe, something that Aishling and Adrian are very proud of.

Aishling from Courtmacsherry and Adrian, a native of

Ballinascorthy, started the business by accident five years ago. "We both noticed that our daughter, who was five at the time was losing her creativity," explains Aishling. While working abroad, Adrian heard about STEM education for kids. They researched it a lot and decided to contact a few companies who

were promoting it. "We both looked at what these companies had to offer and picked RoboThink, as we felt they mirrored our values and had the best overall package. The Founder Danny Park came to Ireland to meet us and it grew from there."

Both Aishling and Adrian have aspired from a young age to make a positive impact in their community and wanted to give something worthwhile back to their future. A combination of forward planning, hard work, setting realistic and achievable goals and never giving up on achieving them and also support from family and friends and the local community has led this husband and wife team to where they are today.

RoboThink is a stand-alone STEM education provider; it is in complete control of all its parts, curriculum, design and R&D; and has a global network, which is growing rapidly.

"Our future plans are to develop RoboThink to the stage of it being accessible to anyone who wants to take part in our



programmes," they explain. "We hope to offer full-time and part-time employment to members of local communities who are retired or semi-retired or looking for work experience to complete the college courses. We would also like to extend our programmes to companies (ie. Bring your child to work day) and programmes for the elderly to keep their minds active. We are also working on a pre-school programme with our local pre-school provider."

Life is very busy as they

work at building up the business but they try to spend as much time as possible with their two children, Saoirse (10) and Donnacha (4). The family loves doing outdoor activities together, like camping, walking in the woods and touring Ireland.

Their advice to anyone thinking about setting up a business is to set realistic goals and focus on achieving them; never be afraid of failure, instead use it as a learning tool to start again, better informed."

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The RoboThink Robotics Program is a hands-on learning experience where students can use our amazing robotics kit to design and build robots of all shapes, sizes and functions!

Our step by step curriculum provides engaging and unique lesson plans for budding robot engineers of all ages and skill level.

**We offer robotics and coding education camps, afterschool programs, workshops and birthday parties for kids aged 4 to 16.**



## Extracting the best from nature

Tracey Ryan started Bia Beauty in 2011 with a small loan from Skibberdeen Credit Union and support from her Local Enterprise Board. She is now Managing Director for Ireland and Master Formulator at Codex Beauty. She lives in Tower, Cork, with her husband Gavin, and their two sons, Feidhlim and Milo. She has come a long way from her home in Thurles, Tipperary.

"I ran Bia Beauty as a small Irish business for seven years," Tracey says. "We sold into around 100 stores across Ireland. We won lots of awards and had a loyal following."

Eighteen months ago, Tracey was approached by Barb Paldus, a serial entrepreneur from Silicon Valley, who was setting up a global skincare collective, Codex Beauty.

"It is a collection of skincare lines from around the globe based on both traditional herbal knowledge, native plants and modern science," Tracey says. "We agreed to join, and we sold Bia Beauty to Codex and became part of the collective. Now I'm the MD for Codex Beauty Ireland and work as a Master Formulator for Codex. We still make the Bia line here but now we are part of a global team and the Bia line is sold all over the world."

Her first job, at the age of 15,

was in a shoe shop at home in Thurles working weekends and school holidays.

"I worked all the way through secondary school and loved the independence it gave me."

Finding her path to where she is now, took time, some thinking and the experiences from travelling.

"I had a huge love for animals and nature when I was a child," Tracey says. "I was always reading about endangered animals and environmental issues and became a vegetarian at 12! I loved plants and studying biology at school, but it took me a long time to figure out what I wanted to do as a career. I tried an Arts Degree in UCC but dropped out in my second year, as it really didn't interest me. I travelled for a bit and came to the realisation that my love of plants and nature would have to be part of my career."

Tracey changed course and went to a small little college in Drumcollogher in Co. Limerick and did a course in Organic Horticulture and Sustainable Development. From there she went onto to do a degree in Herbal Science in CIT.

The idea for her business came while she was working on her final year college project.

"I had an idea for a range of skincare products based on



Eighteen months ago, Tracey Ryan of Bia Beauty was approached by Barb Paldus, a serial entrepreneur from Silicon Valley, who was setting up a global skincare collective, Codex Beauty.

edible ingredients. My oldest son was a baby and I was really conscious of what ingredients we were putting on our skin, so I started making our own toiletries. I was learning so much in college about different herbs and the effect that they could have on the skin, so I started

adding herbal infusions to the skincare. That's how my business, Bia Beauty was born."

She now works in the Codex Beauty offices in Cork city where they have a lab for developing new products. Her work now is multi-faceted. Her passion is engaged by the

search for new plant materials, the constituents that can be extracted, and the eureka moments when creating the first batch samples.

"It's an exciting role that can take me from the lab to a field of organic herbs or to conferences around the world."

For anyone starting a business, Tracey recommends that you get your pricing right from day one.

"You need to factor in all your costs and make sure that you are charging enough to cover all your costs," She says. "I find most people who start out in a new business completely undervalue themselves, their time and their products or services."

With such a busy work life, Tracey tries to take two weekends completely off each month so that she can really unwind. Cooking, hanging out with her family or heading off on little adventures helps even out her work-life balance.

"I don't take anything for granted," Tracey says from experience.

In 2016, her concern for the plight of refugees took her to Calais where she ended up organising three articulated trucks of aid with the help of 60 volunteers. A simple Facebook post looking for donations of clothes going viral set it all off.

"Within a day or two Marian Finucane asked me to go on her show and speak about what we were doing," Tracey says. "We spent a week in the refugee camps dispensing aid, building shelters and feeding people. We had a team of healthcare workers with us who set up a temporary health centre."

The project raised almost €250,000 and tens of tonnes of aid were shipped to Syria and other countries where refugees were stranded. They succeeded in getting aid to the people who needed it most.

Her own heroes are Countess Markiewicz and Sinead O'Connor.

"One was a revolutionary, a suffragette and a socialist at a time when women did not have a voice and she gave up wealth and comfort to fight for freedom. Sinead has made an amazing comeback and her voice is like nothing else, it's pure emotion."

"I've always dreamed of self-sufficiency," Tracey says, when asked about her plans for the future. "I'd love to have a big vegetable garden, some hens and an herb patch that I can create lots of new lotions and potions from."

No doubt she will!



## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

## Celebrating ten years of dressing West Cork kids for the outdoors



**Barbro Fahre's** journey into retail was a serendipitous one. A student of history and philosophy, the Norwegian had set her sights on becoming a teacher. Instead her travels around Europe and further afield drew her into the retail trade, shoes to children's clothing, and inevitably to setting up her own business – not in Norway but in Clonakilty, West Cork, where she and her teenage daughter Ella now call home.

Ten years on and Grasshopper Clothing in Clonakilty continues to bring the best of Norwegian and Scandinavian fashion to West Cork.

Carrying brands like Molo, Katvig, Joha, Lasticot and Småfolk to name a few, as well as a selection of quality handmade local lines like Little Green Dot, Cake & Elf, Rosie's Orchard and Cailín – Grasshopper draws customers from all over Ireland and even delivers packages across the Atlantic.

"One thing that's really great about Norway is that it's so outdoors...kids are encouraged to go outside from an early age," says Barbro. "That's what I am trying to do through my clothes – I want people here to do the same and understand that there is no such thing as bad weather when you're dressed right."

One of the big attractions to living in Ireland for Barbro was the entrepreneurial spirit that's encouraged here. "That doesn't exist in Norway," she says. "There everyone follows the mainstream and you feel like you have to keep up with the Joneses. I've met so many



creative people here who have done interesting things, which in somewhere like Norway would be a lot harder.

"It's a much more relaxed and friendly way of life here in West Cork, which both I and my daughter love."

It's apt that it was in the children's playground in Clonakilty that the vision for Grasshopper was born. "Ella was three at the time and on each occasion we went to the playground, other mums and dads would comment on her clothes, the fun patterns, the comfort, practicality and the quality," says Barbro, who dressed her daughter in Scandinavian brands.

At the time Barbro was working for a high-end furniture shop in West Cork, which closed after the recession hit. So Barbro, like so many others during the post-crash years, took the plunge and set up her own business.

"I saw a gap in the market and I was very inspired by POP, a Swedish franchise brand, so I wanted to do something similar – bring colourful, comfortable and fun prints and practical outerwear for kids to Clonakilty," she explains. "Waterproof, windproof and breathable is possibly the sentence I've said most since opening ten years ago," she says laughing. "It's



very important to me that kids can play outside comfortably."

"The biggest challenges in my business are the seasonality of it, the different sizes (up to 20) and having to pre-order a year in advance," says Barbro. "Most of the brands that I carry are produced only after orders are placed, which makes it difficult from a sales point of view but the upside of this is that it's very environmentally friendly, which is something I'm very proud of – there is no waste."

Barbro has played with the idea of changing her business model slightly and expanding but the shop is doing so well that she is slow to take that jump into the unknown. "I'm really proud that I'm here after ten years and I really believe in the concept reduce, reuse and recycle, so selling good quality kids wear is very important to me, even if that means I sell less."

There are of course ups and downs in every business. In 2012, the town of Clonakilty flooded and so did Grasshopper. "We had to gut the entire shop," says Barbro. The wooden floor, shelving, 80 per cent of the stock was destroyed. However, although the shop was destroyed, as is in her nature, Barbro persevered. "People I'd never seen before came into the shop and offered to help. That local support and a busy summer helped us get back on our feet again," she shares.

"You'll always have days where you feel like chucking it in, when the footfall is really slow, but then you'll just have someone really nice come into the shop and that's what keeps me going. I love what I do and the quality of the clothes...it's fun stuff to sell...but it's my customers who keep me going. I am so very thankful for all the local support I've received

in the shop over the past ten years."

There is huge job satisfaction. "It's very satisfying to create something on your own. While I don't make the clothes, I've become a personal shopper for so many of my customers. I know their sizes and tastes and I think of them when I'm putting in my orders," says Barbro.

All of Grasshopper's clothes, except the raingear, are organic and the raingear brand she carries, Mikk-line, is now working really hard to only use recycled plastic.

So many of Barbro's cus-



tomers are returning visitors.

"Part of their holiday experience is to come here and that's so lovely," she says. "A lot of them come from cities and they really appreciate the small interesting shops we have here in Clonakilty."

There is of course a part of Barbro that misses Norway, her friends and her family, but she says she wouldn't be anywhere else. There are only five million Norwegians in the world and at least four live here in Clonakilty so she does at least still get to speak her native tongue now and again!

When she does get time off from the shop, she's most often to be seen outdoors in the thick of nature, which she loves, but she also admits to having an indoor passion for collecting vintage Scandinavian clothing, most of which doesn't fit her! "I have a whole roomful, I just love it, the quality of it and the history of fashion," she says.

"I believe that clothes should be made to last."

And the rest is history!

*Grasshopper Clothing,  
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## Special Feature ENTERPRISING WEST CORK

### Finding the way

Thanks to its unique economy and environment, West Cork is home to many multi-skilled, entrepreneurs who have integrated more than one profession to create a career unique to themselves. Samira Branch epitomises this in her business; Samira Branch - Acupuncture and Yoga. She shares her experience.

Breaking away from the traditional career path I'd followed took a huge amount of courage and brought up all sorts of confronting emotions but when I asked myself the question, 'why would you not do it?' The answer boiled down to fear. Frankly, the prospect of getting to the end of my life and not having really 'lived' felt

more frightening. So, in 2010, I decided to swap Manchester for Nanjing and become an acupuncturist. It was something I'd wanted to do since my early twenties and the fear quickly turned into exhilaration once my plans set into motion.

Fast forward to 2018. I'd been taking Jessica Hatchett's yoga classes for several years when she decided to run her teacher training course. One autumn night I came home from class and had a look at the curriculum. I was fascinated about learning the reason for the asanas, the history and philosophy and developing my own practice. It's been a challenging, life-changing year and I've gained so much from it. I took the course for personal interest, but really enjoyed the teaching practice during the year and now teaching my classes lights me up.

What delighted me most was realising how very similar and complementary Indian and Chinese approaches are. I knew they developed from the same root but was pleasantly



surprised that they correlate in such a harmonious and practical way. This means I can draw on one to inform the other and vice versa, which adds a unique richness to both of my practices. My values are living in harmony with nature, connectedness and support; all of which are the foundations of Chinese Medicine and Yoga.


Since committing to my acupuncture career amazing things have happened. In a few short months, I have set up my new clinic above the Green Dot and am hosting Community

Acupuncture sessions with my friend and fellow acupuncturist Bairbre Crowley, as well as teaching weekly yoga classes. I'm blown away by the kindness and goodwill of my local and extended community; everybody wants to help and see me succeed. It's been a beautiful, humbling experience and I feel so blessed because I couldn't have done it alone.

My advice to anyone thinking of setting up their own business is to figure out what you really want to do and why. A strong sense of purpose gives

you the confidence you need to keep moving forward. Start doing what you love, achieving even the tiniest goal is evidence that you can do it. Get as much help as you can and be flexible, the best opportunities often come from unexpected places. Make mistakes! As Thomas Edison once said, 'I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work'. May you have fun finding the way that works for you!

Contact me on 087 9024274 for more information on acupuncture and yoga.



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### The future is bright for Skibbereen Students



Zoe McCormack, Deirdre Calnana, Ella McCormack and Molly Walsh winners of the Junior Category from Sacred Heart Community School, Clonakilty. Picture Clare Keogh



Eoin Murran and teammates of "Be Bright" celebrate their overall winners of the Senior Category from Skibbereen Community School. Picture Clare Keogh

Students from Skibbereen Community School took the overall senior prize at the recent West Cork Student Enterprise finals, which were held in Fernhill House and Gardens. They will now take their business 'Be Bright', a unique company creating safety lights for rowing boats to County Hall on March 24. The winners of the Junior Category, 'Beez Wraps', from Sacred Heart Secondary School Clonakilty will also compete against the North Cork winners for a place at the Student Enterprise National

finals in Croke Park in May.

The winning teams have worked hard on creating their respective businesses since last September and beat off competition from more than 450 pupils throughout ten secondary schools in West Cork.

Speaking of their win, Oisín Boyle, Managing Director said, "To take first place in the West Cork finals is a huge achievement. We are delighted to represent West Cork and hopefully will also be chosen to represent the Cork North and West region at the national finals in May.

Either way, we are going to continue on with the business, which we love working on, as it is the perfect solution to staying safe on the water. We are currently looking at new routes to market and have received many enquiries from rowing clubs both at home and abroad so the future is definitely bright!"

Other prize winners on the day included 'Éire le Chéile', a board game for the visually impaired who took second place and the award for Innovation from Mount Saint Michael, Rosscarbery, 'Smashed' from

Sacred Heart Clonakilty and 'Cartaí Choiche', Colaiste na Toirbhirte Bandon (joint third place), 'McCarthy Sports', (Best use of Social Media) Clonakilty Community College, 'Bam Cups', (Best Display), MICC Dunmanway, and "Button Up" (Social Enterprise Award) Kinsale Community School. Madeline Stanley and Lauren Brampton from Schull Community College were awarded a special Entrepreneurs of the Future Award for their business venture 'Sustainable Trees'.

Speaking at the final of the West Cork Student Enterprise Awards, Ian Doyle, Mayor of Cork County said, "It is extremely encouraging to see the level of enthusiasm of the students at the end of a programme, which has given them the invaluable opportunity to see for themselves what it takes to build and grow a business. I congratulate all the teachers and commend them for their hard work and dedication, and giving their students the opportunity to partake in the programme, which teaches

them lifelong lessons.

Kevin Curran, Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West congratulated both students and teachers for their participation in the programme while also praising the immense task given to the judges, Stephen Rowe, Manager, AIB Clonakilty, Sandra Maybury, NetAassist and Kieran Collins, Ludgate Centre of choosing the winners.



## people A flavour of West Cork

## West Cork culinary student announced as Chef Takeover 2020 participant

A showcase of years of hard work, creativity and finesse is on the menu when the final-year BA (Hons) in Culinary Arts students from Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) take over the kitchen of Bellissimo restaurant in Waterford for four unmissable nights in March.

The 12 students have created tasting menus with a strong focus on exceptional local produce and will be working the kitchen at the event in a variety of roles, from head chef to pastry specialist.

One of those students is Shannon Kingston from Ardfield, Clonakilty. Growing up, Shannon had her heart set on being a primary school teacher but in secondary school she took Home Economics, which led to her competing in and twice winning the school cooking competition for 'A Taste of West Cork' festival. This sparked her interest in the world of food, which led to her attending Waterford Institute of Technology. Shannon is in her final year of BA (Hons) in Culinary Arts but has previously graduated with a higher certificate in Culinary Arts from WIT. Shannon has also ventured to Canada where she spent a semester studying in Humber College, Toronto, which opened her up to expe-



rience a new part of the world.

Throughout her culinary career, Shannon has worked in a variety of different businesses, from cafes to restaurants to hotels. She started her career in the four-star Inchydoney Island Lodge and Spa, where she found her love for the fast-paced kitchen industry. She has spent the last seven months working in the Cultra Inn on the grounds of the 5-star Culloden Estate and Spa. This has helped her further her skill set and produce dishes in a faster paced environment.

In the future, Shannon

hopes to graduate with a BA(HONS) in Culinary Arts with a specialisation in pastry. Which will lead to her putting the foundations on her plan to own her own bakery. Where she will produce freshly baked classic pastries and cakes with a modern twist.

This event is presented by the Waterford Institute of Technology, Pallas Foods and ABP in partnership with Bellissimo. It marks the inaugural stage of a much bigger project that aims to design a brighter future for Ireland's food industry.

[www.cheftakeover.com](http://www.cheftakeover.com)

## Innishannon House Hotel celebrates 300 years

New season begins Friday, March 6



This year, Innishannon House Hotel celebrates 300 years. Built in 1720, Innishannon House, originally Frankfort House, stands on the banks of the River Bandon amongst beautiful landscaped gardens. Innishannon House Hotel has been operating as a hotel since the 1960s.

Innishannon House Hotel will reopen for the new season on Friday, March 6 and will be serving food from 12pm to 9pm, Wednesday to Sunday. The hotel also welcomes celebrations and gatherings such as confirmations, anniversaries and birthdays. Private dining menus can be

viewed online.

Commenting, Shane Roche, General Manager said "visitors regularly enquire about the history of Innishannon House and throughout the years we have accumulated bits and pieces about it's history. The house was built in 1720 by the Orpen Family and sold to F.Prescott, a prosperous local land owner, who titled it 'Frankfort House' It was later renamed 'Innishannon House.'

"We also know that Winston Churchill did spend summers at his Aunt's house in Innishannon and the bath which he used, was acquired by Innishannon House at

some stage. That bath is now standing in Room 2 in the House! We intend to mark this milestone of 300 years in 2020 and we are always very interested in hearing local knowledge on the history of Innishannon House."

Innishannon House Hotel is an intimate family run Country House Hotel located in the village of Innishannon, Co Cork. For over 60 years, this popular West Cork venue has been hosting weddings and functions of up to 200 people. Innishannon House is open from Wednesday to Sunday for casual dining. Visit [www.innishannonhousehotel.ie](http://www.innishannonhousehotel.ie) for further information.

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## people A flavour of West Cork

# Fish cooked in a coconut sauce



### A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

Baracoa, in Guantanamo province, is the oldest and most remote town in Cuba. At the very easterly tip of the country it's the most Irish of Cuban towns. Add on twenty degrees and you could be home. The weather changes constantly, clouds rolling in dumping rain, the wind from the sea and then sunshine – you never know what you're going to get. This of course means that it is green. Very green, lush with vegetation and jungle.

We travelled there from Santiago de Cuba crawling along on a bus that winds up and down the densely wooded mountains on a concrete seamed road. It's the kind of ride where the gears grind and you know that you are doomed if the brakes fail

as the bus climbs higher and higher and the jungle turns to Pine trees.

The bus arrives at a tiny bus station beside the bluest sea with the town stretching back a few blocks, all higgledy-piggledy, it's still recovering from Hurricane Mathew, which made a good attempt at leveling the town. The houses are single-storey and colourful with the obligatory verandas where families sit and everyone shouts and laughs with the neighbours. In the centre of the town is the Plaza Independencia with a church on one end, the post office, telephone centre and bars all around the tree-shaded centre, where the benches are full of people trying to get an Internet connection, and there is music and dancing at night. The fridges in the bars are empty bar water and rum. The embargoes are really hitting this small town, perhaps because it's the last on the delivery route; but the rum is good and there's ice for the mojitos.

We stayed in a casa particular, a Cuban bed and breakfast, which is the best bet for breakfast and dinner. Our host, Leonardo, let me into his kitchen so that I could watch him prepare this dish for our dinner. It's a traditional recipe from Baracoa, a 'Lechita', which is fish cooked in a coconut sauce. He made the coconut milk from fresh coco-



nuts and cooked the fish for one hour in the sauce, which had me pretty horrified, as that's a long time to cook fish. It tasted fine but the texture became a bit like meat. Personally I'd cook the fish for far less time but that is optional. One of the ingredients is achiote, which is the ground

up seeds from an indigenous plant that grows in Cuba and Mexico. It gives colour and a little earthy taste. We'll have achiote in the shop soon, as we need it for Mexican cooking, but I think paprika could be used as a substitute

### Lechita de Pescado

- 1 can coconut milk plus half can water
- 1tbs achiote paste or paprika – sweet, not smoked
- 1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- A large handful fresh coriander, chopped, leaves and stems
- 1 green chilli, seeds removed if you don't like hot
- A little oil to fry
- 600g firm, white fish, like ling or monkfish
- Salt and black pepper

Gently heat the coconut milk until it begins to boil then add the achiote/paprika, chopped onion and garlic, chopped coriander and chilli. Simmer for fifteen minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide the fish into four portions. Heat a frying pan and add enough oil to just cover the bottom, then fry the fish on each side for a couple of minutes. Carefully lift the fish and submerge into the sauce then leave to cook for a further 10-15 minutes.

Serve with rice.

We'll be home by the time you read this. Looking forwards to the Irish Spring, Karen

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**LETTERCOLLUM**  
kitchen project

*Cooking Classes Spring 2020*

#### Saturday 21st March MEXICAN

We are taking a wander around Mexico and Cuba this winter so I will have some exciting new recipes to share, think tacos, quesadillas, salsas, ceviche, frijoles dormidos (sleeping beans). The menu is not made yet but we'll find one!

#### Saturday 28th March LEBANESE

Enjoy the wonderful fresh Mezze, Pilafs and Salads of this beautiful country and learn how simple they are to put together.

Sat 4th April

#### RECIPES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Plant based diets are big news these days. A lot of the world always eats in this way, there's a surprising amount of healthy and fun eating out there. Today's class will be about recipes to inspire you.

#### Saturday 18th April THAI

Fresh and zippy recipes for noodle and rice dishes, curries, stir fried vegetables, fresh salads and seafood.

#### Saturday 25th April INDIAN VEGETARIAN

Lots of easy Indian recipes for every day dinners or to make a feast. The spices are aromatic, not the blow your head off chilli type that many people fear.

#### Saturday 9th May SALADS & SUMMER RECIPES

Lots of fresh ideas and recipes, using seasonal ingredients to make delicious and nutritious salads, salad dressings and summer meals.

The classes are held at Lettercollum in Timoleague. They begin at 10am and finish around 3pm. The cost is €95 and includes all recipes, tastings and a large lunch  
22 CONNOLLY STREET, CLONAKILTY, WEST CORK  
Tel: 023 8836938 info@lettercollum.ie www.lettercollum.ie

## Awards season at The Maritime Hotel

Staff members from The Maritime Hotel in Bantry travelled to Killarney recently to celebrate the annual Gleneagle Group Employee Awards.

The Gleneagle Group employs over 500 people including 90 staff members in The Maritime Hotel and the annual employee awards aim to appreciate and celebrate the hard work and dedication of the whole team.

Speaking at the awards Gleneagle Group CEO Patrick O'Donoghue said, "It has been an incredibly busy year across the group and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your dedication to your work throughout."

The top accolade of The Maritime Hotel's Employee of the Year was awarded to Clodagh Lynch who is a member of the restaurant team. General Manager Elaine Dempsey said "Clodagh has excelled within the restaurant, taking a leadership role for large events, while receiving continuous guest survey mentions for her all round customer service skills."



Employees of The Maritime Hotel in Bantry pictured at The annual Gleneagle Group Employee Awards (Front l-r) Rita Botas, Irina Filiminova, Patrick O'Donoghue, Helen O'Shea, Elaine Dempsey, (Middle l-r) Rudi Gaffney, Zsuzsa Marjai, Alan Brooks, Noel O'Donovan, Christine O'Sullivan, Clodagh Lynch, (Back l-r) Ron Gutierrez, Mark O'Sullivan, Shane O'Sullivan, James Gingell, Creven Harrington, Eoin Schwarz. Photo: Don MacMonagle

While Manager of the Year went to Events Coordinator Helen O'Shea. Also representing The Maritime, Shane O'Mahony won Best New Starter, Rita Bo-

tas won the Leadership Award, Eoin Schwarz won the Back of House Award and James Gingell won the Excellence in Customer Service Award. Christine O'Ma-

hony and Irina Filiminova both received special recognition awards.



## people A flavour of West Cork

# Everything coming together for grand opening of new O'Connor's Bantry

## Grand opening on Friday, March 6

Why Bantry? Shane Spillane knows why. "The welcome we have received has been amazing. I've had over 50 locals ringing me to wish me well. That's special. There's a real good atmosphere down here."

He was last in Kerry running a boutique hotel.

"This is as good and as beautiful a place as Kerry is. It has everything. We have the magic of West Cork, the magnificent Atlantic and the local ingredients are second-to-none."

When he found out O'Connor's was closing, he saw the opportunity to move his family to Bantry. It was too good an opportunity to miss.

"There is a great future here for us."

He has travelled the world. Worked in Australia. Taken on all jobs from bottle washer to front of house.

"I want a place that has great food. We have local produce that is full of incredible flavours. The restaurant has great atmosphere. And that is what we are about – great food, great service, and giving people a great night out."

They are going to open daily from 11am for cakes and coffee. Lunch is served from noon until 4pm and after a short break, dinner service starts from 5.30pm until 9pm.

"It's been a hectic few months. We've a ten-week-old baby as well. So, it's all go but we're ready and excited to be opening on Friday, March 6. It

should be a great night. We're giving 50 per cent off and we hope that people enjoy the night. It's a soft opening. Might be a few issues but we've a great team raring to go!"

Bantry is due another significant boost from Fáilte Ireland, which has identified it as a tourism destination town. New funding will facilitate the delivery of new public realm works to provide improve wayfinding to Wolfe Tone Square and Bantry Tourist Office, along with improved story-telling signage, up-lighting and seating around and leading to the main square. It's a good time for O'Connor's to be re-opening.

"Bantry is a great place both to live in and to visit and the Destination Town project will help it to develop to its full potential," said Mayor Christopher O'Sullivan at the time of the announcement. "It's set to make Wolfe Tone Square more attractive and should bring about an increase in visitors' numbers and dwell time."

And the food? What can customers expect?

"We are going to serve modern Irish seafood with a twist using and sourcing the finest West Cork ingredients. Our team of five chefs all come from seafood backgrounds," Shane says. "We will be working closely with our local butchers, fish mongers and vegetable suppliers in Bantry. Our motto here is to keep it simple. We want a menu that attracts all ages. Our breads and pastries

will all be made on site."

"We have some really delicious choices. Starters like King prawns and Gubeen chorizo with Bantry Bay salsa. Main courses include Herb crusted smoked Hake with Basil Tarragon volute and a West Cork black pudding bon bon. It's really good food. I couldn't be happier. We will also be introducing Sous Vide cooking."

From December to now. Hard work. Bringing everything together. Using all his experience. Creating a new team.

If you are in Bantry on Friday night on March 6 – check out the new O'Connor's.

"O'Connor's was known for great seafood and a great atmosphere. With some new twists, that's what we are bringing, and we think people will really enjoy dining out with us." Shanes adds at the end.

But before he goes.

"And tell them all thanks for the support. Bantry people have been great. We are really looking forward to meeting everyone and most importantly, for our chefs to create great working relationships with suppliers in and around Bantry."

And then he is gone. Things to do. A big opening to get ready for.

O'Connor's Seafood Restaurant, Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Cork – For bookings and events 027 55664.

## Special Mother's Day Lunch to raise funds for unique Neonatal Family Sanctum at CUMH

CUMH Charity is to hold a special Mother's Day Lunch on Sunday, March 22 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Little Island, Cork, to raise funds to provide a unique Neonatal Family Sanctum for mothers, babies and families at CUMH (Cork University Maternity Hospital).

The Mother's Day event promises to be a warm, fun event which celebrates women, motherhood and their pivotal role in all our lives. The organisers are urging Cork people to come out in their numbers and make this a meaningful and memorable day.

Approximately 1 in 10 of all babies born in CUMH

will require admission to the specialised Neonatal Unit. This can be a very distressing time for parents, for example when babies are born very early, and their needs are very complex.

This is when clinical and technical care needs to be surpassed by compassionate, holistic and supportive care. To support this end, the Neonatal Unit wishes to build a multi-faceted family sanctum to care for mothers, babies and their families.

Proceedings will be overseen by the dynamic TV Presenter and Reporter Sinead Kennedy, partnering with auctioneer Andy Moore to create a fun experi-

ence for all those in attendance. With a prosecco reception, three-course lunch, a Mother's Gift, and an opportunity to bid or buy tickets for amazing prizes (flights to Paris, tickets to Live at The Marquee, luxury hotel breaks and other surprises), all donated by those who appreciate the excellent work of CUMH Charity and the new project; the Neonatal Family Sanctum and Parents room at CUMH.

Tickets for this event are available now on Eventbrite. ie at €65 plus booking fee or through mary@hopkinscommunications.ie.

Visit [www.cuhcharity.ie](http://www.cuhcharity.ie).

# O'C

## O'CONNORS

### Seafood, Bantry

Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Cork

Modern Irish seafood with a twist using and sourcing the finest West Cork ingredients.

We take bookings for any occasion.

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## Grand Opening

### Friday March 6<sup>th</sup>





## people A flavour of West Cork

## Getting the recipe right at Organico

A celebration of all that's good and in season in fresh organic produce, local where possible – the food at Organico Café in Bantry is renowned for being wholesome, healthy, and full of flavour. Sisters **Rachel and Hannah Dare** have now added something new with the introduction of a more efficient kitchen system that means less food waste and an exciting new menu.

“When we moved the Café downstairs five-and-a-half years ago, we moved the kitchen in from the shop next door, which was a big change but we still had our old system in place,” explains Rachel (pictured above). “The only way we could change it was to remove the salad bar and take control of the food and plating up from the kitchen. I was really nervous because of the visual aspect that the salad bar lent to the café, but it is working: We're able to provide more interesting food and the quality has also improved. We made little changes to a lot of things.”

Rachel is now in a position to add more exciting options to the menu and the front-of-house team has more time to look after customers. “We can cook to order now, so some-



thing like grilled halloumi or a warm poached egg on a salad is possible,” she explains.

“I'm also attempting to challenge people by trying out new toasted sandwiches,” she says. Last week's menu sported a toasted sandwich on their sourdough bread with roasted local pumpkin, house made beetroot apple relish, Durrus cheese, mayo dressing and a side of pickles.

“We have lots of warm salad plates and rice bowls with vegetables, pickled and fermented in-house. For example ‘warm salad of roasted veggies, local leaves our own chorizo, Mac-room buffalo ricotta, a fried egg with our mayo dressing and house made sauerkraut’. For those in need of comfort, the ‘seasonal hash: roast potatoes, local leeks, Ballinrostig cheese, fried Gubbeen ham and a fried egg topped with house sauer-

kraut’ is sure to satisfy.

Many of the old favourites are still on the menu – the falafel salad and lots of soups, stews and curries. “A lot of these are soups and curries that I would have grown up eating,” says Rachel. “They're not written-down recipes.

“My mum was a great inspiration to me,” she reveals. “Our parents ran a yogurt making business from home and mum home-schooled us. Twice a week other kids came over and we had a home school and cooked together.”

It was at home that Rachel's respect and passion for food developed. “Anyone who has a parent who grows their own food has a built in respect for ingredients. As kids, all had a little patch of ground in our garden, which we would successfully and not-so-successfully grow things in. That was



the foundation of my interest in food, a real life-lesson,” she says.

Rachel left school before her final exams and was working full-time in the family business from the age of 16. “I'm not very academic so I really struggled in school,” she says. “I hated the rigidity of it and I knew I needed to do something practical.”

It was around this time that Rachel also met her future husband, Keith. “Our food experiences at the time were polar

opposites. He only ate pasta for the first time after meeting me,” she says laughing.

After spending some time travelling (Australia, Thailand, Malaysia) while also working and saving hard, Rachel, 21, enrolled at Ballymaloe Cookery School, which she said was an amazing experience. Hannah was on a more academic path, doing her Masters in UCC at the time.

The café opened in 2004. Rachel was already working in the Organico bakery between

travelling.

Sadly, both their parents passed away, Caroline and then Alan, so the girls had to make a decision about running the business. “About fifteen years ago we decided to really make a go of it,” says Rachel.

“Hannah is the real thinker and planner, who is great at looking at the bigger picture and overseeing things. I'm kind of the opposite and I just want to get stuck in and make things happen,” says Rachel. “The challenge of siblings working together is learning to appreciate those differences. We make a good team. The differences are what makes it work – we can't all be everything!”

Although life is busy enough right now, the sisters are always looking ahead and cooking up something new, so don't be surprised if you see an ad for supper clubs in the future. “I'd also really love to restart our cookery classes,” says Rachel, who admits to having an embarrassingly large collection of cookery books. “You can never have too many recipes,” she says laughing.

## New Cocoa report leaves a bitter aftertaste

Fairtrade Ireland has published a report, ‘Craving A Change In Chocolate’, that delves deeper into the plight of cocoa farmers in West Africa.

Ireland is a country that loves chocolate – we each ate 7.7kgs of chocolate per person in 2017 which makes us 3rd in the chocolate rankings in Europe, just behind Austria and Switzerland.

Ten percent of people in developing countries still live below the UN poverty line of \$1.90 per day – about €1.70.

The majority of people who live in poverty are in rural areas, and people working in agriculture make up almost two thirds of people living in extreme poverty. This includes the average cocoa farmer in West Africa who earns about €0.90 cent a day.

Over 90 per cent of the world's cocoa is grown by small farmers amounting to between 4-5 million farmers globally. About two-thirds of the world's cocoa is

grown by smallholder farmers in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Low incomes prevent farmers from investing in and developing their farms, fuelling a vicious cycle of low productivity and declining incomes. In Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, farmers harvest on average approximately 50 per cent below what their farms could produce per hectare.

The report sets out Fairtrade's approach towards achieving Living Incomes for cocoa farmers which includes increased productivity; farm efficiency; and importantly prices received by farmers. Fairtrade has also developed a Living Income Reference Price which it believes needs to be paid if Living Incomes are to be met.

In Côte d'Ivoire, women carry out 68 percent of the labour involved in cocoa farming and yet the Africa Development Bank estimates that they earn just 21 per cent of the income generated.

It is estimated that the retail value of the chocolate sold in Ireland is approximately EUR615 million.

Of this it is estimated that the Irish Government earns €115 million from VAT on sales of the chocolate.

Exclusive of VAT, the farmers receive less than seven per cent of the value of chocolate, whilst manufacturers take 35 per cent and retailers 44 per cent.

Just six brands control about 50 per cent of the global chocolate market.

It is estimated that Fairtrade sales globally account for less than seven per cent of total chocolate sales.

Higher Fairtrade price boosts Ivorian cocoa farmers' incomes by \$15 million in Q4 2019

Notwithstanding the extreme poverty levels endured by many cocoa farmers, some positive developments have happened in recent years. In 2019 Fairtrade

increased both its Minimum Price and Premium by 20 per cent to US\$2,400 and US\$240 per tonne respectively.

The Ivorian and Ghanaian Governments have brought in increased minimum farm gate prices, and, from October 2020, a new Living Income Differential (LID) of US\$400 a tonne.

Separately, Fairtrade International have just announced that, based on preliminary figures for the fourth quarter of 2019 in Côte d'Ivoire, Fairtrade sales of cocoa increased farmers' earnings by approximately €13.8 million compared to non-Fairtrade cocoa. This amounts to an increase of nearly 17 per cent compared to non-Fairtrade cocoa.

In addition to this extra income from the Fairtrade minimum price, the Fairtrade premium of US\$240 a tonne continues to be paid to the cooperatives for business and community development projects decided

on by the coop members. This amounted to over €14 million in the fourth quarter 2019 for the 140 cooperatives registered with Fairtrade.

Whilst these increased incomes for the 140,000 cocoa farmers in the Ivory Coast are very welcome, creating the circumstances through which all cocoa farmers can earn a Living Income will require significant changes in how the chocolate industry generally pays farmers for their cocoa.

This report, Craving a Change in Chocolate, outlines an ambitious agenda for action, setting out how governments, chocolate companies, traders, retailers and shoppers can all help make Living Incomes for cocoa farmers a reality.

Fairtrade welcomes recent industry and Government initiatives including the fact that:

- In December 2019, some of the largest chocolate

companies came together with Fairtrade, the Voice Network, and Rainforest advocating that the EU adopt binding human rights regulations for the cocoa industry in Europe.

- In January 2020 the ‘The Alliance for Living Wages’, representative of a large group of German retailers, and supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) agreed to work towards the realization of living income and living wages for farmers and workers in global supply chains. This initiative is now being supported by the Dutch, Belgian and Swiss Governments.

Fairtrade is calling on the Irish Government and Irish based chocolate companies to act with ambition, and join us in ending the exploitation of all cocoa farmers, whilst not forgetting about cocoa's invisible women.



## Special Feature INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020

## First International Women's Day Festival coming to Kinsale

Taking place on March 8 at the Trident Hotel in Kinsale, International Women's Day Festival 2020 is the first festival of its kind in Kinsale, and indeed in Cork, with a full programme of talks and workshops centred around women's health and wellbeing and a marketplace of women business owners.

This event is organised by women, for women, and will showcasing talented women in all areas of health and wellbeing, including selfcare and emotional health. Podcast episodes are available with interviews with key speakers.

There will be one large marketplace and social area and three talk/workshop spaces with the themes 'think', 'move' and 'feel'. The marketplace will also hold panel discussions on 'How do I choose support for my health?' 'Parenting teenagers, help!' and 'How do I turn my passion into a business?' There will also be free treatments, demonstrations and discounts on the day.

Tickets (€45) are on sale with 'buy one get one half price' and 'buy four for €120' offers available. The event will run from 11-5pm with participating local businesses also running promo-

tions for ticket holders on the day. Tickets are on sale now via eventbrite ([www.eventbrite.com/e/international-womens-day-festival-tickets](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/international-womens-day-festival-tickets)) and can be found on International Woman's Day Festival facebook event page.

International Women's Day (IWD), March 8, 2020, is now widely celebrated around the world. It's a great day for inspiration and celebration of women and all their achievements, to raise awareness and to talk about factors surrounding life as a woman in today's world.

Profits of the event are being donated to Kinsale Youth Support Services (KYSS), Cork Arc Cancer Support House and Cuanlee Refuge in Cork.

This event is aiming to be a zero waste event.

The theme of this year's IWD festival is #eachforequal. The Kinsale event is using this theme to highlight that every woman is supported and cared for within the community #yourcareisselfcare #iwdkinsale.



(l-r) Louise Buckley and Tracy McCarthy, event organisers.  
Photo: Mariana Wirsam Photography

## Life as Cork's only female TD

Farmer and TD Holly Cairns grew up on a farm on the Turk Head peninsula in Lisheen, West Cork. The newly elected Social Democrats TD, who describes herself as a feminist farmer, is looking forward to getting her teeth into the job and being the best TD she can be for Cork South West. Her hope is that in the future she will be leading the change to transform agriculture and the way we think about how we produce food – in a just, sustainable way. Holly takes time out of her busy schedule to talk to **West Cork People** about her move into politics and some of the challenges and highlights.

#### Tell us about your background

I grew up on our family farm on the Turk Head peninsula. Like many at the time, I moved away for work. After a few years working in disability support services in Malta, I returned home to take on the family farm and did a Masters in Organic Horticulture in UCC.

#### What did you aspire to be when you were younger?

I wanted to be the red Power Ranger!

#### What was your first job?

A waitress in Gannet's Café (on the way out to the Mizen) when I was 12.

#### Where were you educated?

Lisheen National School, Schull Community College and University College Cork.

#### Your background is in agriculture. What inspired or motivated you to get into politics?

Similar to many other Irish people, I became active in politics through the two recent social referendums – the Marriage Equality referendum and the referendum to Repeal the Eighth. My involvement in

those campaigns showed me the power of grassroots activism to address inequalities.

#### How did you get where you are today?

Through lots of support and lots of hard work.

#### What have been the main challenges for you to-date and what do you foresee as being future challenges?

Sexism in politics remains the most significant challenge facing me and other women in politics. From passing comments to dismissal of our voices, it is an endemic part of the way Councils and the Dáil work. Changing this is not just about gender quotas and having token women, it is about a larger cultural change that enables women and other under-represented groups to participate equally in decision-making.

#### What have been some of the highlights of your political journey to-date?

The main highlight has been getting the seat in the Bantry area by one vote! It was a long hard journey to get all those votes and we were certainly thrown in at the deep end with the counts and recounts! The second has to be taking my seat

in the Dáil recently, alongside five other Social Democrat deputies, with my grandparents and family supporting me.

#### What are your future plans/ambitions etc?

To be the best TD I can be for Cork South West.

#### What do you consider to be the most significant accomplishment to-date?

Getting elected! From once we began the locals campaign, right through to the general election, we were written off by commentators and most of the media. It has required a lot of work and dedication from myself, my team, and family, but it shows that perseverance and giving people new options can lead to real change.

#### What issues are most important to you, on a local and also a national level?

Environment and equality. These are the key issues facing us as a country, the climate emergency will require us to change the way we do business and live our lives, and these changes will need to be implemented in a fair way that will not disproportionately affect rural and disadvantaged areas.



#### Based on the current political climate and the current stalemate as such, do you believe there will be change and in your opinion what needs to be done for this to happen?

A lot has changed already with the results of the election; there is a clear indication that many people are looking for a new progressive form of politics. I am looking forward to the challenge of being involved in this evolving situation and making sure West Cork is represented.

#### What do you enjoy most about your work?

The people, I got into politics to help the people of West Cork, and for me the most important and best thing is to get to meet different people and work with them. Sometimes it is very challenging and upsetting

seeing how hard life is for families, but being able to help them and ensure their voice is heard is central to my role as a TD.

#### What advice based on the lessons you've learned so far would you give to young people interested in pursuing a career in politics?

Don't listen to the vast majority of advice you get, stick to your principles and know that change is possible.

#### As Cork's only current female TD, what changes do you believe have to be made for more women to enter the political arena in Ireland?

Gender quotas in Council elections, maternity leave for elected representatives (can you actually believe there is no

maternity leave?), parties with gender balance, such as the Social Democrats, to grow.

#### You've been running Brown Envelope Seeds with your mum Madeline for the past few years. Will you miss life on the farm? How does your mum feel about your new career and exodus to Dublin?

Yes. If I had a toss up between the farm and being in the Dáil, I'd chose the farm; I never decided to enter politics, it has just happened, and it feels like the right thing to do which is hard to explain.

My Mum couldn't be more supportive, I couldn't have gotten where I am today without her and feel incredibly lucky.

#### Do you have a good work-life balance? How do you achieve this?

No, tips welcome!

#### When you do have time off, what do you enjoy doing?

Hanging out with my two girls, Hei Hei, my dog, and Blaze, my cat! Long walks around West Cork with Hei Hei and friends, we're so lucky we live in the most beautiful constituency in Ireland with fantastic routes.

#### Who/what are your inspirations?

My Granny McKeever, she took the train to Belfast from Dublin when she was 21 and joined the Royal Air Force in WWII, against her family wishes. She trained with a group of women to become the first female electricians in the RAF. She was an incredible woman.



# Special Feature INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020

## A life less ordinary

Kathleen Kelley Reardon has just published her second crime mystery novel, 'Damned If She Does'; described by Kirkus Reviews as "informed and searing" and a "page-turning success". The first book in the trilogy, 'Shadow Campus', made the top of Amazon's Top New Releases and was described by Forbes as a "fast-paced" and "masterful" debut.

Kathleen was recently invited to become a member of the International Women's Forum – Ireland chapter, joining 100 women in Ireland and 7000 around the world, all accomplished leaders in their fields. "One of our goals is to foster leadership in young women and also to help each other have an influence in areas that are important, particularly to women," says Kathleen. The Irish-American professor emerita, author and artist has lived in Schull for most of twenty years with her three children and husband, Chris, who designed the cover of her latest novel.

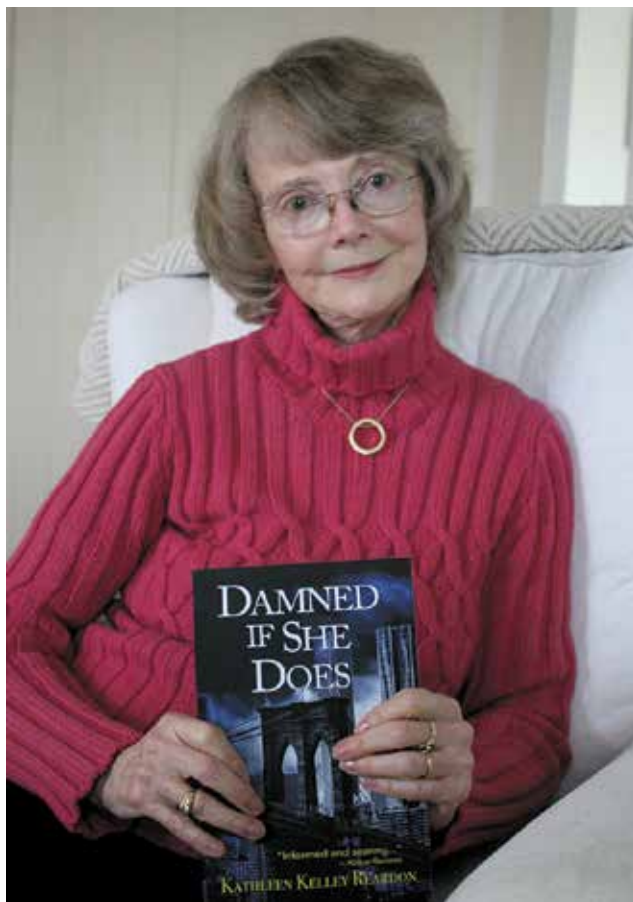
She talks to **Mary O'Brien** about her new book, her journey into writing fiction, and living with Parkinson's Disease.

Author of 10 nonfiction books, Kathleen was the first woman to rise through the ranks to tenure and then promotion to full professor at the USC Marshall School of Business. She was a featured blogger at The Huffington Post from 2005 to 2016, and a writer at HBR online, Big Think and The Conversation.

Kathleen's work includes influencing the careers of women through her research and writing, such as the Harvard Business Review case reprint bestseller, 'The Memo Every Woman Keeps in Her Desk'. This led to her book, 'They Don't Get It, Do They? Communication in the Workplace – Closing the Gap Between Women and Men', which explored how women and men don't 'get it' when conversing and working with each other. It was recently rereleased as an

e-book.

Although her accolades are many, Kathleen feels her greatest sense of accomplishment derives from coming up with the concept of creating university-based academies to prepare foster children for college (of whom only approximately three per cent graduate). This has already resulted in the creation of a number of such academies at major universities in the US and UK, and Kathleen's hope is that it will be introduced in Ireland in the near future. At First Star, the nonprofit that initiates and develops those academies, she was a co-founding board member and is its Distinguished Research Fellow. She also received the University of Connecticut Alumni Association 2013 Humanitarian Award. "It's something that is making a difference in the lives of chil-



dren," says Kathleen. At most of the academies at least 90 per cent of graduates are going on to higher education.

"My path has been a meandering one," she explains. Of her journey into writing fiction she says "Years ago I was an English teacher in secondary school, so I always had a love of literature. I'd like to say I always had a love of reading but as a child I was not a voracious reader. I read what I found interesting and it was my father in particular who kept nudging me. He would ask me to take a book and read it aloud so he could hear me reading. At first I was kind of annoyed but eventually it drew me in."

Fiction or non-fiction, everything Kathleen pens is related in some way to human relationships and communication.

In her latest book, 'Damned If She Does' – part of a trilogy, with the next book based in West Cork – young professor, Meg Doherty, has kept a dark secret. When she stumbles upon the viciously murdered colleague at the heart of that secret, she quickly becomes the primary suspect.

The primary characters in this novel and the first one are brother and sister," explains Kathleen. They were initially estranged in the first novel, due to a significant falling out in the family early on."

Kathleen's primary areas of scholarly interest have been communication, persuasion, politics in the workplace, leadership, and negotiation.

She has taught negotiation, politics and leadership at The Irish Management Institute and also spent time at Trinity and UCD as a visiting professor.

One of her inspirations is Betty Friedan, author of the *Feminine Mystique* and one of the originators of the modern women's movement and the

national organisation for women. Kathleen and Betty taught leadership diversity together. "Just being around Betty, you couldn't help but learn how to influence change," says Kathleen. "She was an inspiration."

A mother-of-three, Kathleen successfully battled breast cancer in her early 30s and was later diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, a condition that eventually prevented her from teaching.

"I lost a year and a half to misdiagnosis of my breast cancer so to be here at all is good fortune," she remarks. Kathleen underwent radical radiation therapy, a clinical trial at the time. "That knocked me for a loop but I gradually got back on my feet. It is a distinct possibility that the onset of my Parkinson's was related to that treatment," says Kathleen, who used to work in preventative medicine. "Research indicates that these kinds of conditions, especially Parkinson's, can be brought on by an insult to your system."

"I was trained to look at an illness objectively," she continues. "My oncologist told me that I was treating breast cancer like a research project but that was my coping strategy."

That same oncologist introduced Kathleen to Bernie Siegel, an American writer and retired paediatric surgeon, who writes on the relationship between the patient and the healing process. He is known for his bestselling book 'Love, Medicine and Miracles.' "I would say that Bernie changed my life," admits Kathleen.

"He was a surgeon working with cancer patients. He discovered that if you play music that people like or guided imagery meditation while patients are undergoing surgery, they recover more quickly. Fortunately I was blessed to be able to meet him at that time."

Kathleen listens to Bernie's medications every morning and evening as a way of pushing back the fatigue that Parkinson's disease brings.

"It helps to clear my mind. I listen to Bernie before I paint. It gives me another three or four hours of being able to concentrate better," she explains.

Asked about how she's doing, Kathleen said, "I can't complain but I can feel and see my Parkinson's increasing. My balance is worse, I shake more. It's a normal progression. Meditation and exercise are a few of the things that help."

"I feel that if I can understand my illness, then I can do something about it. That's really important to me," says Kathleen.

Exercise is very important in the treatment of Parkinson's. "There are a set of exercises offered in Bantry Hospital for patients with Parkinson's, which were a life-changer for me. I went from being curled up and not looking too good to being much better," says Kathleen.

There is a brighter side to Parkinson's. Research has shown that people diagnosed with the condition can experience more creativity. Kathleen has become a painter. Ever since I've had Parkinson's, I've been more aware of colour," she says.

Every morning, Kathleen gets up and determines what type of day it will be based on how she is feeling.

"I do have bad days. On a bad day, I've begun to try to teach myself that it's not really a bad day, just not really a good one. I don't expect to be able to paint a big oil painting or write on a day like that. She just published an article on Arianna Huffington's Thrive Global website on just this type of decision and how it can alleviate stress to recognise that not all days are meant for big things."

"There are peaks, valleys and plateaus in life; it's not always smooth, especially when there are tunnels," says Kathleen smiling. "I like to say to my students that I've seen the light after being in a number of tunnels. I feel fortunate to have seen it, that's what keeps me going and it will keep them going too."

**'Damned If She Does' will be launched at Anna B's Bookshop in Schull on Saturday, March 7 at 3pm. All welcome.**



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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Connecting through sound

From her home overlooking Long Strand near Clonakilty in West Cork, **Claire Marie Barton** gives sound healing sessions and offers private retreats. She shares some of the special qualities of sound healing and explains what drew her to this experiential healing therapy.

**S**inging has always been Claire's passion and, although she veered off that path for a while, she inevitably came back to it later in life.

Claire studied Applied Ecology in UCC and worked as an ecologist for close to 20 years: Her job regularly took her out to sea to count sea birds and whales and dolphins.

After living in Aberdeen for a while, she moved back home with her Scottish partner, Colin, also an ecologist, and they set up Cork Ecology, their own environmental consultancy firm in Cork.

In 2005, Claire had her first baby, a little boy called Alan, who was born prematurely at 27 weeks and died very shortly after birth. That was a turning point in life for Claire.

"Motherhood and the passing of Alan changed everything for me...it opened me up spiritually and creatively," she explains. "When he was with me in the hospital, I felt I could connect to him spiritually. What was supposed to be the worst thing that happened to me turned out to be the greatest blessing. I have learnt so much from Alan – joy, pain, heart-breaking



sorrow, grace, acceptance, love, compassion and empathy. Most importantly he showed me how short and precious this lifetime is and not to waste it wondering what could have been."

In 2006 Claire's son Cillian was born and three years later she had Jamie.

"After becoming a mother, I didn't really feel drawn back to my environmental work," she explains. "With a young family, it wasn't practical to be going out to sea all the time."

Claire did a lot of energy work with some wonderful healers and started singing again and writing songs and poetry. "Everything I wrote was informed by what had happened with Alan," she explains. In December 2016, she self-published 'Letting Go', her first book and CD about her experience of Alan through diaries, poetry and songs.

"I realised that when we sing, the essence of who we are, not who we portray ourselves to be,

really comes out."

After taking a Sound Healing workshop, Claire enrolled on a course, training with Chrys Blanchard in Wales.

In 2017, she qualified as an accredited Sound Healing practitioner with the UK College of Sound Healing, specialising in vocal sound healing. She also completed 'Gong Wisdom Training' with Chrys. She is a current member of the College of Sound Healing, undertakes CPD every year and attends the annual college conference in Great Malvern, England.

"If you are open to it and let the sounds in, they can really help with all sorts of issues, but especially emotional ones," she says.

"One of the special qualities of sound healing is that it goes beyond the conscious mind and doesn't require someone to talk about whatever is going on for them if they don't want to. There is no belief required just an openness to trying some-

thing new."

There is nothing airy-fairy about sound healing. How it works is based on a physics process called entrainment. Everything has a vibrational frequency. The sound waves or vibrations created by certain tools, like the gongs, tuning forks, and singing bowls that Claire uses and also her singing voice, can actually entrain your brainwave frequencies by providing a stable frequency, which the brainwaves can synchronise to.

"For example," explains Claire "If you put a group of grandfather clocks into a room and they're all ticking to a slightly different time, after a certain period of time, they will all tick together. That's entrainment. We naturally want to come into harmony and balance."

Research has shown that by using specific rhythms and frequencies, you can downshift your brain from the beta state (normal consciousness) to the theta state (relaxed consciousness) and even the delta state (where internal healing can occur).

"Being in delta state is really good for our immune and nervous systems and lowers blood pressure," says Claire.

"I feel really alive after giving a session. It makes me feel like the best version of myself and I love it."

"It can be a very spiritual experience. Many people have told me they've gotten clarity after a session and reconnected with themselves. It's an opportunity for retrospection."

"It's time that's just for you."

For more information go to [www.clairemariebarton.com](http://www.clairemariebarton.com).

Claire Marie Barton

## CONNECTING THROUGH SOUND

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## ADVERTORIAL : GEOPACE TRAINING

## Phlebotomy courses in Cork

**M**ost have experienced it. A doctor says you need some blood tests and a half a dozen stabs and prods later – sometimes more – the doctor has your blood sample and the patient has a sore arm that resembles a pincushion.

Many healthcare institutions such as GP surgeries and hospitals now employ phlebotomists to perform the role of collecting blood from their in-patients and out-patients. Skilled phlebotomists – the healthcare professionals who take your blood – are the experts who have been gradually replacing nurses and doctors and who specialise in

just collecting blood samples. Phlebotomy posts are usually very flexible and can vary from full and part-time hospital posts to part time work in surgeries and clinics.

Geopace Training has built a nationwide reputation for teaching phlebotomy the right way and Geopace tutors travel from across country and even internationally to be train phlebotomy students.

Each Geopace class lasts two full days and at the end of the course students will have attained an accredited certificate in phlebotomy. Students need no prior experience in healthcare

and come from all walks of life and all ages. The Introduction to Phlebotomy Course provides a very thorough grounding in both theory and practical elements and prepares students up to the point of 'live blood draws'. "It's also a lot of fun" says Amy, admin manager at Geopace Training. "Many students email us after completing the course to say how enjoyable it was whilst others email us to let us know that they have been accepted for phlebotomy jobs".

Geopace instructors are some of the most elite in the industry and the training programme is constantly updated to keep up

with new developments and changes, so students receive the most current information and training available.

Students attending the course are very hands-on, practicing on artificial arms, which pump fake blood, with a choice of veins to perform and practise on. There is also a theory element to complete although there are no exams at the end. Students complete modules as they process through the course and it's almost impossible for anyone to fail. Once completed the course awards a nationally recognised and accredited certificate in phlebotomy (accredited at Level



5 in Ireland).

If you like the idea of working in the healthcare profession then why not visit the Geopace Training website for more information at: [www.geopace.net](http://www.geopace.net)

Courses are running in Cork on March 23 – 24 and April 30 – May 1.



## people Health &amp; Lifestyle



## IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer  
Image Consultant

January and February are done and dusted, the two months of the year that most people are very glad to see the back of for one reason or another. Magnificent March is upon us, this is my favourite month and not only because it's my birthday month but also because there is new life emerging everywhere! There is, undoubtedly, a certain comfort in knowing that brighter days are so close you can almost smell them. That said, many a St. Patrick's Day would leave you confused, as to when you had unknowingly moved to a dark Siberia...

From a tourist's perspective, if you google what to wear in Ireland in March, the list wouldn't exactly encourage you to come here, warm fleeces, waterproof pants, mix of long and short sleeved cotton t-shirts, thermal layers, quick dry pants and a woolly hat, scarf and gloves. Thankfully, most Irish people have a much better sense of style than that. We now take excellent care in choosing flattering out and about clothes, snugly fitted jackets, exceptionally cute bobble hats, streamline and supportive walking pants and the trendiest of footwear.

Despite the fact that the weather may dictate 'cover up' attire for a little while longer,

# Magnificent March

what should we be looking to buy in the shops now? Lingerie is taking centre stage in the ready-to-wear world, as opposed to its usual seat underneath it all. While most of us will avoid this trend, you will see lots of dresses, skirts, and tops, with garter-like straps dripping from the hem, a look that will carry on all season long. Big blazers with a wisp of material or a little piece of lingerie underneath, perhaps a look for the 'younger ones' but the rest of us will find lots of pretty tops with boning and hook and eye detail, very sweet for a night out! Flimsy little slip dresses will cover lots of racks in the shops, the hope is that 'melting hot' days are ahead and we will all snap them up.

Little House on the Prairie dresses are everywhere; they are so versatile and feel good. The variety of floral patterns is breathtaking and you are sure to find a colour combination that you will adore. Sometimes we wonder what type of footwear to wear with them; I suggest flat long boots or flat ankle boots. When the weather picks up a little you can wear with pumps or converse (to add a little bit of attitude) and of course, flip-flops will be a sensational add-on in warmer months. These dresses are relaxed wear and can tend to look a little stuffy when you dress them up – keep them casual, it can be a very flattering look.

Suits are very much still 'on trend'. This season the designers decided to add in waistcoats and some are even giving you the option of Bermuda short suits for the more casual gal! I have to say that a trouser suit is a MUST HAVE for any professional woman and they don't come cheap if you want an excellent fit, but will be well worth investing in. That said, I struggled to find one myself, I went on a mission and unfortunately had to buy outside Ireland to get exactly



what I wanted. A suit with a pair of long shorts will definitely be a trend to watch this season, obviously not a look for all of us but there is a certain woman that will crunch this bold look, especially in a khaki or biscuit shade! A three-piece suit is very definitely a power look for any woman who has the confidence to wear it and if you don't have the confidence, fake it until you do and wear it anyway.

You either love pinstripes or you hate them but I have a feeling that some of you may be persuaded to re-think your dislike of them with the current season's must-have loose pinstripe trouser. The print is subtle and versatile and it has been a while since pinstripe has graced the runways so it was welcomed back with lots of open arms this time around. Whatever your personal style, there is room for a pair of pinstripe trousers, just find the shape that flatters you. Michael Kors went with a very classic pinstripe suit whereas Balmain chose to run with the trendier loose trouser and the high street stores are sure to follow on suit with affordable copies.

If you like 70s-style, it is everywhere, so you can shop to your heart's delight. From retro minis to decadent accessories and mod prints – I'm really looking forward to seeing this style on the streets. Groovy button-down shirts with the bigger-the-collar the better, 70s-esque style are to be worn hanging well outside your blazer, it's a screaming 70s style! Cropped sweater vests may not be the easiest item of clothing to know what to pair with, so look at what the designers have done for ideas. Imagine a shearling-lined suede vest over a mod floral mini dress... a major 'WOW' look but very cute when executed properly. Suede

was everywhere during that infamous decade so we are seeing the return of the suede-fringe jacket. They can look very chic over denim. Suede skirts will make an appearance in the office with many designers opting for a more professional than street-wear cut. Every single piece of 70s style clothing puts a smile on my face; it was the era of non-rigidity and 'who the hell cares'... a wonderful time it seems!

Summer tropical prints are sure to get you booking somewhere steamy and remote and craving some sunshine on your skin. There are so many dresses with fruit or nature-inspired patterns, some even look good enough to eat or take a picture of! While many of us, me most definitely, will not be purchasing the biggest 90s comeback of the season – The Tube Top – there is another option for us to show a little skin but not too much – scarf print pieces or giant scarves tied into a top... they can be sensational and best of all unique. Be sure to find yourself a slinky silky number for those balmy nights out that we hope are not too far away. Have a good long look around the shops, take your time, choose what you like and then encourage yourself to be a little brave also and step, ever-so-slightly, outside your comfort zone. One thing is for sure, this Spring/Summer season has an endless supply of 'fun' clothes and you need to make sure that you pick some up, make 'fun' your new wardrobe must-have and the best accessory you could ever wear!

"You gotta have style. It helps you get down the stairs. It helps you get up in the morning. It's a way of life. Without it, you're nobody. I'm not talking about lots of clothes, just enough." Diana Vreeland

## OUT & ABOUT

at the Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa  
Wedding Showcase on Sunday March 1.



Marie O'Shea, Brown Thomas and Anne O'Neill,  
The Flower Basket, Clonakilty



Jessica O'Reilly and John Collins from Ballinspittle.



Orla Phelan and Dolores O'Shea from Adrigole.



Nuala and Nicola Whelton from Ardfield.



Kathryn Thomas with Katie O'Dowd from Clonakilty.

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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

ADVERTORIAL : SNUG IRELAND

# Snug Ireland – The Italian connection

## Would you like more guests to stay at your holiday home?



Bantry based Giovanni Vallone and Silvana Recupero are launching a new website for Ireland's holiday homes. The husband and wife team, with over 20 years' experience in the holiday sector, are excited about launching 'Snug Ireland'. They have enjoyed great success with their 'Mamma Sicily' business, which connects people from all over the world with exclusive holiday properties and experiences in Sicily and also have a customer base in Stockholm, Sweden. Now, they are expanding to bring guests to their newfound and much-loved home in Ireland.

"We are now based in Bantry," Giovanni says. "With all our contacts and experience in Italy and Sweden, it makes great sense for us to now start marketing Irish holiday homes. If you look at our mammasicily.com website, you will see the quality and experience that we bring to this business."

"We are meeting with holiday home-owners, to ensure they maximise this excellent opportunity and that we make our holiday rentals the best on



the market," Giovanni says. "If you are serious about booking consistently good clients for your holiday accommodation, then book an appointment with us."

Their business model for owners is simple and direct with superior payment terms. When bookings are confirmed, the owners get a 20 per cent payment followed by another 30 per cent payment two months in advance of the guests arriving. The final payment of 50 per cent is paid three days after the guests arrive. 'Snug Ireland' charges 10 per cent commission and will use their

experience and knowledge to source guests who stay longer, thus reducing short stays and the costs associated with more change overs.

"All our guests are required to give a minimum of two months' notice if they need to cancel a booking and any later cancellations will incur a 20 per cent cost, which goes to the holiday homeowners," Giovanni adds.

Their website is based on their existing model which has been very successful and has been developed through years of experience. Customers will be able to easily navigate around a wide range of quality accommodations.

For anyone already registered with on-line holiday rental sites, Giovanni can easily integrate their service with the existing providers.

"We really want to meet as many people as possible and help them to get the maximum return for their holiday homes," Giovanni says. "Our website is not complicated. We keep

it simple so that your holiday home looks and sounds perfect to our customers."

And the first step to signing up to this exciting new business?

"Give me a call or send me an email. I can't wait to meet you and start a great business relationship with you!" Giovanni says. "Let's talk without obligations!"

Contact Giovanni Vallone  
083 401 9475 or info@snugireland.com

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## Anam Cara parent support evening in Bandon in March

Anam Cara West Cork, will host a parent support evening in the Munster Arms Hotel, Bandon, West Cork on March 10 at 7.30pm. Registration is from 7.15pm.

With the spring months now coming into view, it's a time for reflection and planning for the year ahead. But this isn't always easy, especially if you are lost in grief and even more so if it's the death of your child you are grieving.

Being a bereaved parent is a feeling that no one except another bereaved parent will understand. The loss, pain and grief are immeasurable. Anam Cara is there to offer support information and resources.

At the parent evenings, a safe and comfortable space is offered in which to remember our children: To talk openly without making people feel uncomfortable, to offer advice and to hear stories from other parents on how they have journeyed through this unimaginable loss.

One bereaved Mum recently commented that "Knowing that many other parents had experienced what we were going through helped us to put our grief in perspective. We have a safe environment in which to share our memories, both sad and heartwarming, of our wonderful daughter".

Anam Cara CEO Sharon Vard stressed that this event is open to all bereaved parents

"regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death or whether the death was recent or not. Anam Cara gives bereaved mothers and fathers a chance to meet and connect with other bereaved parents in a safe and comfortable setting. Here we can find a level of support and understanding that – even with the best will in the world – it can be difficult for family and friends to offer."

On the website, www.anamcara.ie, you can access information about other events in your area, and Anam Cara resources. All Anam Cara events are provided free of charge for as long as necessary

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## people Health & Lifestyle

### Learning to talk to Teenagers – upcoming events throughout Cork

Mental health events for parents and those working with young people will be run by Cork County Council all around Cork in March/April. At such a crucial time in the world when it comes to mental health, everyone is encouraged everyone to attend.

Healthy Ireland at Cork County Council are coordinating these events with local Skibbereen advocate Alicia O'Sullivan, following the on-going success of 'Teen-Talks', a mental health event for teenagers which encourages them to speak up about problems or worries in their lives.

The events, which are taking place in Bantry, Charleville and Little Island, will host a range

of speakers including – digital entrepreneur Harry McCann, Youth Officer TJ Hourihane, LGBT advocate and full-time mum Kirstyn Donoghue, Mental health youth activist Aleesha Weigandt and more.

The aim of these events is to open up communication between parents and their children on important issues. Commenting on the upcoming events Alicia says "We are in a time where unfortunately, young people hide a lot from their parents. Especially now when the internet plays such a huge role in our lives. Sometimes it is the normality of being a stubborn teenager, but, as we've all realised in Ireland, more and more teenagers are hiding very concerning issues from their

parents and we need to start this open communication now to prevent any more horrible news stories."

The events will take place in Charleville at the Charleville Park Hotel on March 26, in Little Island at the Radisson Blu Hotel and Spa on March 31, and in Bantry at the Westlodge Hotel on April 2. All the events are at 7pm.

"The sad truth," Alicia adds. "It's usually the parents who least expect it to be their child who are the ones who have to face a harsh truth. We want to overcome this, and we invite all parents to attend."

Tickets for the event are free and can be found through Eventbrite and through the @GeneretionZ1 Facebook page.



Niall O'Callaghan Healthy Ireland Coordinator at Cork County Council, Abbie Salter Townshend and Alicia O'Sullivan. Pic: Anne Minihane

### Free service to dispose of unused medicines properly (DUMP)

Used or out of date medicine can pose a danger in the home, and Cork Kerry Community Healthcare is asking the public to use a free service to dispose of them over the next few weeks.

The free 'Dispose of Unused Medicines Properly' (DUMP) campaign is running until Saturday, April 4 and will allow everyone to bring unused or out-of-date medicines to participating pharmacies to make

sure they are disposed of properly. These medicines shouldn't be put in the bin or flushed away, as this poses a danger to children, pets, the environment and our water systems.

Cork Kerry Community Healthcare has organised the 'Dispose of Unused Medicines Properly' (DUMP) campaign with pharmacists in Cork and Kerry. The campaign is supported by Cork City Council, Cork County Council, and Kerry County Council.

Almost all pharmacies in Cork and Kerry are taking part in the campaign and are encouraging people to return unwanted or out of date medicines to them so that they can be disposed of safely and properly.

Louise Creed, HSE Pharmacist explains why people should take this opportunity to safely dispose of unwanted medicines and said: "We would strongly urge people to take this opportunity to get rid of out

of date or unused medicines. Medication can pose a real hazard in the home, particularly to children or other vulnerable people. Clearing out your medicine cabinet is something that should be done on a regular basis. Check all the dates and remove anything that is out-of-date or no longer required. Medicines have an expiry date for the same reason food does and out of date medicines could do more harm than good."

She added that it's important

that medicines are disposed of correctly. "Disposing of medicines in the rubbish bin means that they could be accessed by children or pets. Flushing medicine down the sink or toilet means that medicine residues can enter the environment and even small amounts of medicines can affect freshwater ecosystems."

Medicines can build up in the home for a variety of reasons for example you might have an unfinished courses of

antibiotics or have medication for a condition/illness that is no longer a problem. Also, older people or someone with an ongoing illness can often have large amounts of medicine at home. Whatever the reason, the HSE, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare and pharmacists urge householders to take this opportunity to dispose of these unwanted medicines (prescription or over the counter) safely.

### Create the life you deserve

Have you ever felt yourself repeating the same negative behaviours, day after day, often against your own will? Perhaps you had decided to give up smoking, lose weight, or control your temper,

only to find a cigarette in your hand, a biscuit in your mouth, or an argument erupt totally out of your control. Many people feel a lack of control in their lives and wonder is it possible to break the cycle? The answer

is YES you can break the cycle and feel in control of your life!

So why is it that some people change their habits and behaviours and others don't? The answer to this question is rooted in their belief system.

Your belief system is the frame that helps you to achieve your goals. The different types of beliefs are to:

Believe something is achievable but that you don't have the necessary resources to make it happen; Believe something is achievable and you have the resources to make it happen; Believe it is achievable for others but not for yourselves; Believe it is not achievable.

The strongest scaffolding is to believe you can achieve your goal. Then surround yourself with resources. Take action and give yourself time to see results. All of these steps are important, i.e. you may believe you can lose weight, you can clearly see how you will look, how this change will effect your life. You know what a healthy diet is and understand which exercises are best for fat burning and promoting health. Then you take action but if you expect to see immediate results within a few days you haven't



Amanda Roe  
Trauma therapist  
& Mind coach

given yourself the time needed for the change to be effective.

Additionally Internal interference can sabotage our belief system if: We are afraid to change; We don't know how to change; We don't give ourselves the chance to change because of limiting beliefs; We don't want to change i.e. you might think you should do something like quit smoking for health reasons, when in reality you actually want to keep

smoking because its the only thing you do for yourself.

For effective change the first questions to ask yourself are: How do I know I want to change? What will my life be like when I have made the change?

These questions help you to feel if you really want this change and then help to create a roadmap to guide you on the journey to your goal.

Do you want to believe in yourself and shape your own future? Would you like to recover from Trauma, Anxiety or Stress? Amanda Roe is a Clinical and Medical Hypnotherapist who uses a range of holistic therapies to help clients transform chronic mental, emotional and nutritional stress into health and vitality? If you would like more information or book a session or free telephone consultation call/text 0876331898 or email amanda@marketstclinic.com.

## Heal Body, Mind & Emotions

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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Kama Hemp Juice – CBD in its natural form



## HEALTH

Hannah Dare  
Organico Bantry

Recently, I've become very interested in the detail of how CBD is extracted and measured, (lots of chemistry, HPLC columns and frankly processes I don't fully understand!). This got me thinking about where CBD comes from and whether there are more natural forms of these compounds available.

I came across an Irish company called Kama Hemp, who produce an organic cold pressed Hemp Juice supplement from hemp they grow on their farm in Co Monaghan. It's a unique product (certainly in Ireland, but also possibly in the world!) and it's practically the only way of obtaining CBD in its natural form (CBDa). But interestingly it also contains all the other cannabinoids and phyto nutrients that the hemp plant contains, which are often discarded when CBD is extracted and purified in other processes.

Kama hemp was founded by Kate Mullaney and Marcus McCabe, and in order to get a fuller picture of what Hemp Juice is and how it might benefit us, I had a chat with Kate, and asked her all about how she got into the Hemp farming business and why.

**Background:** Before they started farming and juicing Hemp, Marcus and Kate did a Permaculture Course, here in West Cork. This led them to building a straw bale home in Co Monaghan, where they started a business growing reeds for Permaculture Reed beds. Then they started growing Hemp, first as an alternative building material. They quickly realised that the hemp plants nutritional properties far exceeded its importance as a building material and they began to explore how they could develop it into a food business.

**When did you first start your business?** In 2013 Kate and Marcus started getting involved



in the food side of hemp. This was before the benefits of CBD were well known in Ireland – they were a bit ahead of the rest of us! They grew a lot of their own food, and had a strong interest in raw food and in juicing so when they learned about the benefits of hemp as a food it seemed like the obvious move to start juicing hemp. They did a lot of research about what others were doing around the world and they came across William Courtney (MD) in California, who was juicing hemp and getting excellent results with his patients. Dr Courtney is still a strong advocate of raw hemp juice (or cannabis juice as they call it in the US) – he thinks it could be argued that hemp juice is so important it should be considered an essential part of a healthy diet, particularly for anyone over the age of 40.

In the standard processes that are employed to extract CBD, the plant is dried and then the CBD is extracted in a purification process that involves heat. Dr Courtney believes that this denatures the compounds and that it is far better to extract the compounds from the raw plant thus keeping all the enzymes and nutrients in their original state. So Kama Hemp juice their hemp using slow, masticating juicers. This is a hugely time consuming process but the results are vastly superior to a fast juicer which tends to heat the juice and denature the sensitive enzymes.

**What is special about Hemp Juice?** As well as CBDa, Hemp contains a huge array of other nutrients that are beneficial for health, along with the alkalizing properties that fresh juice has. Kate told me 'for us it's the whole plant that works together, all the elements are important'.

**Is hemp juice calming or energising?** Interestingly, Kate says people find Hemp Juice both energising and calming – it can take the edge of people's anxiety, so they feel less stressed, and it also gives them the energy to get through their

day because of the concentrated nutrition it provides.

**What are the benefits of Hemp Juice?** Because it is such a nutritional powerhouse, Kama Hemp juice contributes to normal blood clotting; the normal release of energy; the reduction of tiredness and fatigue; normal sleep patterns; normal digestion; the maintenance of bones, skin, nails, hair and vision; the normal function of the immune system; and electrolyte balance.

Kate also said: 'Hemp juice feeds our brain and nervous system, and nourishes our endocannabinoid system. It gives the body the nutrients it needs to help keep inflammation under control. People with minor joint issues can see huge improvement in their aches and pains – once they don't just buy

it and leave it in their freezer!'

Kate and Marcus have a lot of people coming to them for support with ongoing health issues. 'We always advise people that it's not a magic bullet, it's part of a diet and lifestyle change, but it's great because it's so alkaline, and it can help with bone regrowth. It does not help everybody, but people who are prepared to make a change – we always advise giving up tea and coffee, and sugar and white flour – most people who follow basic good nutritional advice and take hemp juice daily will notice a huge difference in their health'.

In terms of the benefits of taking raw hemp, certainly CBDa is important, but the juice is also very alkalizing, and contains lots of phyto-nutrients (plant nutrients) and has all the other benefits of consuming a fresh raw food.

#### How do people take the juice?

Kate advises people to take one to two cubes a day if they are mostly healthy but looking for a boost, of three to four cubes a day if they are trying to improve a health condition. You can take it neat (if you are hardcore!) or mixed with juice, water or in a smoothie. You can find the Juice in our Freezer



#### DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Dr Jeff Featherstone

Dr Featherstone is a highly experienced medic and award-winning doctor who works in a busy GP practice in West Cork, as well as at Mercy University Hospital and Cork University Hospital, as an A&E doctor.

Like everyone else in Clonakilty, I am pretty excited about the new Primary Care Centre built on the site of the old GAA field.

Rumours abound that all the GPs will be working together assisted by all their support staff.

My patients are under the impression there will be X-ray

## Making the most of your General Practice

facilities, ultrasound, a small operating theatre and consultants will be doing clinics with GPs in the Centre, as part of an eminently sensible trend towards outreach clinics, to save travelling all the way up to Cork and getting a second mortgage to pay for car parking there, in CUH and so on! Sorry but this is not how I see it!

Only one Practice from Clonakilty is relocating there. Of course, in true HSE fashion the opening date for relocation is months behind schedule. Thus the Primary Care Centre is really a misnomer so far...

It is a spanking new building housing one practice, with physiotherapy and public health nurses relocating. If I am wrong would someone please tell me! I am a GP in Clonakilty and Timoleague and we have not been invited to move!

I hope, as time goes by, this can all be put right. I have huge respect for my GP colleagues and teams; give us

the services that truly belong in a Primary Care Centre and we can achieve so much more.

I get so frustrated trying to book scans and appointments in the hospital; it wastes so much time. As an aside; know how long it takes to do a brain scan? One hour, two hours? It takes 10 minutes and most CT scanners and MRI machines lie idle over the weekend. That is a lot of scanning time lost. Trying to negotiate and book a scan through the public system is measured in light years and aeons. Moan over...sorry about that!

Back to my point – many of your local GPs have had extra training; somebody just needs to ask us how we can make the Primary Care Centre live up to its potential.

On an amazing yet poignant note, when I worked in Liverpool, I did a skill survey of the local GPs. There were many surprises. None more so than a GP working right next to Anfield Football Club who had actually been a senior registrar

in heart surgery at Broad Green Cardio Thoracic Centre in Liverpool.

He had to give up in order to bring up his daughter alone. General Practice suited him better in this new single parent role, and with a bit of will and co-operation, we got him doing advanced minor surgery from his own premises. It was hugely successful.

He later said to me that in his long career he had saved more lives taking off early skin malignancies than he ever would have done doing heart surgery. His youngest patient with a malignant melanoma, completely cured, was 10-years-of-age, giving her a normal 70-year-plus life expectancy. Serious food for thought.

That was just one example. We were very proud. Proper collaboration, asking the right questions, and taking a leap of faith, worked.

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people to be able to try smaller amounts to start off with. Also available on [www.organico.ie](http://www.organico.ie).



## people Health & Lifestyle

# Dunmanway CFR moves forward with the help of donations

By Yvonne Cahalane,  
Secretary, Dunmanway CFR  
Group

**D**unmanway CFR has received very generous donations to enable the group to become operational, for which a presentation night was recently held on February 13 in Brookpark Business Centre.

Daniel Power of Power Farm Services is not only a responder himself but he donated €1,000 to the group, with which the first defibrillator was purchased. Dunmanway CFR will be covering a 5km radius for Dunmanway town to begin with, until all volunteers are trained up and a second defibrillator purchased to cover a 10km radius.

The group has been very

fortunate to have so many volunteers sign up to become responders; a family member or friend in your community has a much better chance of survival the sooner CPR and defibrillation is given.

The group is also very grateful to Tim Buckley of Buckley Financials in Dunmanway who has donated a phone and is covering the running costs of it. This is a vital piece of equipment as this phone will be linked to the National Ambulance Service. When there is a call out in the area, a notification will be received from the NAS and the response team will be able to begin lifesaving CPR and defibrillation before handing over to paramedics when they arrive. This is the first group in West Cork to be linked in this way with the NAS.

Dunmanway CFR is working closely with CFR Ireland and the National Ambulance Service and many of the volunteers are medically trained, which is a huge advantage, but also shows their dedication to their community.



Dunmanway CFR committee, which consists of Maebh O'Neill, John Forde, Yvonne Cahalane, Kimberlee McNamara, Claire Cahalane, Willow Wilkins, Justine Wilkins and Ferdia Woods, has been working tirelessly to move this initiative along and these donations mean it can move on to the next level.

The group is also awaiting another great donation of €1,000 from Belfast Hospital Group. This donation will cover

the costs of training volunteers, vetting and certification.

Dunmanway CFR would like to thank all its donors, along with the standing support of Dr. Jack O'Connell and Dr. Tom O'Donnell, who have offered their full support for Dunmanway CFR and donated supplies for the responder's bags. Also thanks to Crowley's Chemist for their donation of €100 and Henry Duggan who has donated €20.

Most importantly, the group

would like to thank all the volunteers who have signed up. Given that every day 13 people die in Ireland from cardiac arrest and 70 per cent of cardiac arrests occur in the home, this new community group could save the life of your family or friend.

If you would like to support this initiative or would like to volunteer contact us on Dunmanwaycfr@gmail.com or 087 2961674.

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**Clonakilty** 086 8395058 and 086 6031335

## The root cause



Eoin Roe  
Chiropractic

**T**he root cause of a client's health issues is something that I give a lot of consideration to, particularly when it refers to pain, lack of mobility or energy and muscle and joint problems.

I often find that patients will come to me with a story about how they have a bad back, hip, and knee or shoulder problems. The story will usually include something about age or playing too much sport, having had a bad accident or fall and not

being able to do the exercise to keep things moving. They will often have been to see many therapists, physiotherapists, and chiropractors etc. that are all quite happy to buy into this story and keep people coming back for regular treatment or maintenance.

It is not a story I agree with, for three reasons. Firstly, the body is very good at healing itself; secondly, when you identify the root cause of any issue, then it is possible to support

the body to heal itself. Thirdly, if you focus on the story of why you have the health issue i.e. reduced mobility, pain, headaches and so on, then you are giving yourself permission to keep the problem rather than take the steps that are available to free yourself from that story and get back enjoying life and doing the things you want to do with new vitality.

The nervous system is responsible for our co-ordination, mobility, pain messages, reflexes, communication between all the systems of the body and much more. During a consultation, I investigate how the muscles are working and whether they are responding properly. This is often mistaken for strength testing when it is actually testing the nervous system and the patients reflex ability to function optimally. Reflexes are important because they protect the body from outside forces and protect us from injury. It is my belief that many injuries happen after reflexes become dysfunctional, not as a result of the injury incurred. This is particularly true of injury where the mechanism of injury is unknown.

It is more difficult to apply this principle to a physical sport

such as rugby where you are always going to have collisions that can end in injury, but again I will reiterate, it is reflexes that help our body respond and absorb an impact when we are playing. As yet there are no studies that I am aware of in this area but there are studies linking strength training reduces neck injury risk in professional rugby players and concussion risk in high school athletes (Hrysomallis C., 2016).

The other advantage of testing the whole bodies nervous system and reflexive ability is that it can help us to understand if a problem is isolated to a particular joint or area of the back or if there is a more systemic problem affecting the whole body, which means that the person is at a higher risk of injury and ill health.

The possible cause of dysfunction are huge but they can include things such as, nutritional deficiencies, toxic exposure to chemicals, extreme stress, poor diet, not drinking enough water etc. the list is endless. If I take one example from the list toxic exposure, this is everywhere even though we live in a part of the world with great air quality. Elements such as heavy metals like alu-

minum, cadmium and mercury can cause real problems for our health. Mercury is an abundant toxin, it is extremely toxic to our system and although the majority of exposure comes from fish consumption and dental amalgam (Bernhoft R, 2012), it is also present in exhaust fumes and from certain industrial processes. Exposure to large amounts of mercury can cause very serious lung or gastrointestinal conditions. Lower levels of exposure are less well understood, but if the body's natural ability to rid it of mercury through the glutathione system is impaired it can build up and cause health problems (Patrick L, 2002).

If you have been living with a story about why you have a certain health issue then finding the root cause can be a big part in helping change that story from one of living with a problem to finding solutions and getting your health back on track and in your control.

If you want to get your health back on track, I have clinics in Skibbereen, Douglas and Kinsale if you would like an appointment please call me on 087 958 2362.

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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Our baby is about to come



## DO WE UNDERSTAND OUR CHILD?

Diana Radeva

Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

In this series of articles Diana Radeva sets out to consider the emotional life of children from birth onwards; and how relationships between children and parents evolve over time. It is a view of human growth, which recognises the importance of strong feelings experienced at each stage of development; thus offering ways that parents might find helpful when wanting to better understand their children's growth.

This is the extraordinary story of the 'ordinary development' as seen and experienced by a parent and a child psychotherapist.

The first year of life is such a key time. Adults know that babies need the physical essentials of warmth, food and good care. But more and more we are starting to see that babies do not just need that. They have an intense emotional life and can only grow in mutual relationship with their parents. As parents, we are deeply affected by our babies' strong feelings, sometimes filled with pleasure and delight, and sometimes frightened or anxious.

A baby has a powerful need to be understood. At times we will find that task easy. But it is inevitable at other times to feel that it has gone wrong. Like any other relationship, relationships between parents and babies

cannot just be easy and straightforward. Recovering from the difficulties and misunderstanding is an essential part of getting to know and love each other.

## Beginnings

Perhaps we all enter parenthood filled with a strong, almost instinctive wish to satisfy the needs of our growing baby and to offer the best start in life. Often we feel the need to get things 'right' for the new baby – from eating the right things during pregnancy (or feeling tranquil or playing classical music) through to having a 'natural' birth followed by immediate skin-to-skin contact in the loving arms of two calm and happy parents.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with aiming for this kind of ideal. However we need to be wary of feeling that any kind of deviation from this means that we have failed our baby or ourselves. 'Bonding' takes many forms and does not only happen when things are



going smoothly. The process of bonding involves enjoying the good moments as well as facing painful experiences and finding ways through them together.

## Pregnancy

A wanted pregnancy can bring strong pleasure and joy. Sometimes if there have been earlier miscarriages, medical interventions or anxieties, parents can feel overwhelming gratitude towards the unborn baby. But even when there were no complications parents often feel

that the baby is a gift and this can increase the warmth and the tenderness.

However, it is also natural that the anxieties about the well-being of the baby are at their height, a woman can be feeling half-dead with sickness and exhaustion. The needs of the new baby are intense and seem to overshadow everything else. And while the baby is completely looked after inside the womb; the mother and father might be feeling much more drained from their own resources, worried and vulnerable.

It is important to bear in mind that such feelings are normal and might appear from time to time, both before and after birth. Looking after the needs of someone else is a challenging prospect.

Turning to the baby's experience: common view is that life in the womb is idyllic – no frustration, no unmet needs, just peace and tranquillity. At the same time that is no easy for the pregnant woman: Lugging extra weight around, unable to sleep,

sick, exhausted, hungry.

Towards the end of pregnancy, we tend to assume that life has become pretty uncomfortable for the baby, as it certainly has for the mother. Whatever we might imagine about life inside, we can be sure that the baby has become accustomed to the their own little world. As far as the baby is concerned, this is the world. Approaching the moment of birth is a massive shock. The baby's little world is not only about to be turned upside down and changed


beyond recognition, but actually lost forever and replaced by something altogether different.

## Labour

So much importance is ascribed to the way in which a baby enters the world. Perhaps this is because birth is the first dramatic separation – mother from baby and baby from mother. Even though most parents will be counting the weeks and the days until they finally meet their baby, anticipating that first moment of separation can stir up all sorts of anxieties. Attitudes towards childbirth – pain relief or not, medical versus natural, hospital versus home – are all linked to our fantasies about what that first moment of separation. Some parents project their fears onto the medical profession, seeing doctors as interfering presence threatening the fulfilling experience they long for. Others see the dangers more inside their own bodies: the physical pain and the medical risks fill them with dread and they are glad to place themselves in the hands of experienced professionals to get them safely through. Many parents find it reassuring to try to claim back some control for themselves through detailed birth plans and child classes.

However much we prepare ourselves for childbirth, finding ourselves in completely unknown and unpredictable territory is something we all have to deal with, both during the birth and afterwards with our newborn baby. The experience of childbirth challenges many of our assumptions about ourselves, at the deepest level. There is no way to predict how we will feel or react. We just have to accept that both baby and parents are entering one of the most demanding transitions of their lives. We can only try to manage what is thrown at us, appreciating that we, like the baby, may need plenty of time and space to find our bearings afterwards.

*Continued next month.*



**Why do we sometimes find it hard to understand children?**

**When we struggle with our child's emotional distress or behavioural problems what can we do or what can help us?**

Child psychotherapy practice is a proven and reliable method of addressing and treating a number of issues including:

- **Pre-school children:** difficulties within mother-infant relationship, eating, sleeping, and toileting, separation and developmental difficulties.
- **School-age children:** social difficulties, difficult behaviours such as defiance and aggression, ADHD, ASD, learning and attention problems, emotional problems such as anxiety and fears, family breakdown issues and relationships at home and at school.
- **Adolescents and young people (up to 27):** trauma, anxieties, worries, depression, low self-esteem, peer and family relationships problems, gender identity difficulties.

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Over 15 years of experience. ICP Registered, MACP  
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## Cork County Council re-releases road safety book for children

Cork County Council has launched a book entitled 'Sally & Jake – Think Road Safety', providing primary school children in second to fifth class a new way to learn about the importance of Road Safety. The book has been written and produced by the Council's Water and Road Safety Development Officer, Caroline Casey, whose work in safety awareness has garnered two RSA Leading Light awards.

Within its 18 colourful pages Sally and Jake teach road safety with the help of Mum, Garda Nell, and Dazzle the Unicorn. The tips, information, poems and songs provide helpful advice to readers of all ages and each chapter ends with a worksheet to help readers remember what they've learned.

The book will now form part of the Resource Pack, which the Council provides for schools who participate in the Safety Flag

Program. The pack contains Story Books, Board Games, Songs, Activity Books, and a Safety Presentation. These resources foster student led learning in which young people of all ages take the lead in learning and teaching road safety in their homes and schools.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Ian Doyle said, "I am delighted to see another fun, clever and innovative resource available for teachers, parents and young people to promote road safety in

schools and communities. I would also like to acknowledge the family of Fionn Doyle to whom this book is dedicated."

Fionn Doyle fought a brave courageous battle against Leukemia for almost six years, before sadly passing away at age seven in January 2019.

Attending the launch, Fionn's mother Eimear Doyle said "He was a very happy chatty little man

and no matter how hard things got; he always had a smile on his face. He was thrilled when he became an honorary guard; he loved to wear the uniform. Fionn would be so proud to see this book dedicated to him, and all the other heroes who fought so hard but sadly didn't make it, with a picture of him inside at his happiest in that uniform."



## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

# Flourishing in the workplace

**M**indfulness is increasingly being linked to well-being and human flourishing, as well as physical and psychological health, at home and at work. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) most of the world's population spend approximately one third of their adult lives at work. As this is such a large proportion of our lives, isn't it important then to be happy at work? It has been very encouraging in recent years to witness mindfulness being steadily introduced into the culture of our workplaces. Influential policy documents and processes such as the 2015 report by the UK mindfulness all-party parliamentary group made recommendations for the roll-out of mindfulness in four key areas, one of which was the workplace. In Ireland, changes are also occurring in the area of health and well-being at work, with innovative, authentic managers and ethical organisa-

tions like the sanctuary taking the lead.

Work burn out is one of the most recurrent health issues in Europe and the US, while in the UK, mental ill health is the leading cause of sickness from work (Mindful Nation UK, 2015). The Irish picture is no different with work related stress doubling between the years 2010 and 2015. Workplaces can sometimes be stressful, toxic places and full of distractions making it a challenge to maintain a mindful disposition.

Employers have a responsibility for the health and safety of their staff. Stress seems to have become a regular feature of working life. The cost of workplace stress to employees and employers can be huge. It would make sense therefore on many levels, for employers to take meaningful measures to enhance employee well-being. Mindfulness can really work when embedded into the culture



## MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

Susan O'Regan

Susan O'Regan teaches mindfulness and self-compassion courses and workshops throughout West Cork. For more information contact: [susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com) Mob: 087 2700572.

of organisations that take the well-being of their employees seriously.

Evidence suggests that when an organisation commits to training its employees in mindfulness the results are beneficial for the individual and the organisation as a whole. So not alone does the individual become more resilient and able to perform more sustainably, but the organisation as a whole does so too. In my own professional practice, I am delighted to be working directly with some large employers in weaving a culture of mindfulness into the fabric of their organisations. It is an area that I am greatly interested in. Through training staff members across different teams and working with organisational leaders, I am seeing entire institutions gradually begin to change from the inside out.

Research studies have shown that employees pay attention to ethical leadership and respond positively to fairness and integrity. My own practice evidence supports the current research,

in that employees respond to authentic gestures by leaders. Introducing mindfulness to the workplace promotes an environment where people feel valued, a workplace where staff are encouraged to be friendly and kind and where creativity and innovation have space to thrive. Self-awareness increases, relationships improve, communication skills grow as well as an ability to manage stress. Productivity is enhanced by a growth in problem solving, decision-making and relational skills.

A 2016 research study focused on the emotional culture of an organisation and how employees can tend to model the emotions they perceive in leaders. Their study found that positive, kind attitudes from leaders or managers can spread like emotional contagion, to the workforce. Unfortunately, the opposite can also be the case in terms of negative emotions (Barsade & O'Neill). What

kind of person are you at work? Are you mindful or mindless in how you interact with others? Mindlessness, for many of us, can be our default setting or autopilot mode and can result in conditions such as boredom or apathy, approaching each day at work as if it were just like the one before. Given the fact that we spend so much of our lives in the workplace, whether as employers or employees, the important point is that we all play our part in making our workplaces more compassionate and health promoting.

Drop in mindfulness classes run weekly in Skibbereen and workshops run regularly throughout West Cork. For more information on future workshops, courses or introductory talks/programmes for staff teams call Susan on 087 2700572 or email: [susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com).

## RAWR achieves a huge amount in a decade of commitment to animal welfare

**2**020 marks the 10th anniversary of the foundation of Rural Animal Welfare Resources - RAWR for short. The idea was conceived in 2010 by a group of like-minded people, who had all volunteered in animal welfare and animal rescue. They saw the overpopulation of feral cats in the towns, villages and countryside of West Cork, the unwanted dogs and puppies being dumped and drowned, the animal rescues bursting at the seams and they sought a different solution. The idea they came up with was to tackle the problem at its source: through the neutering of feral and pet animals and by providing information on the benefits of this – benefits to both humans and animals.

With limited resources the group took this idea and moved forward. They started with trap, neuter and return (TNR) of feral cats. This is just as it sounds: the cat is trapped, neutered and returned to its home territory. No longer breeding it is healthier; it keeps the territory free of breeding animals; it no longer fights or exhibits other (to humans) anti-social behaviours associated with breeding; it continues to keep the rodent population in check.

In the process of TNR, it was

inevitable that kittens that were too young to become feral came into RAWR's hands and these were placed with fosterers who nurtured them, often bottle feeding the kittens, until they too were old enough to be neutered and rehomed.

As the numbers grew, raising money to fund this work became a challenge so RAWR volunteers started collecting and selling bric-a-brac on a stall in Bantry Market. They found that this was also a good way to meet people and pass on information on how to look after their animals. The stall grew in popularity and a shop was opened in Bantry. Small and temporary at first, the shop is now thriving in premises on New Street, selling pet products and gift items along with the goods donated by supporters.

As the RAWR shop became more successful, the group was able to add new strings to its bow and began to offer subsidised neutering for pet animals. Working with the valuable cooperation of four veterinary practices: Fachtna Collins in Bantry, Castlelands-Hourihanes in Skibbereen, Brookpark in Dunmanway and Brian Murphy in Castletownbere, RAWR is able to offer cat and dog neutering via a voucher scheme at a discounted rate to members



of the public with limited funds. Even before the Government introduced legislation, RAWR required all dogs neutered under the scheme to be microchipped and registered, to encourage responsible ownership.

In 2013 RAWR worked with Bantry Council to clean up the dog faeces problem on our streets. Together they researched and sourced the best product for the job, erecting poo bag dispensers at various locations in the town and organising a poster competition for local school children, to publicise their existence and encourage people



Volunteers at the RAWR shop in Bantry. Left: A pet food donation bin in O'Keefe's Supervalu, Bantry

to be responsible for their pet's behaviour. RAWR volunteers check and refill the dispensers and Bantry is a cleaner place today because of their efforts.

RAWR is now at the beginning of its fifth year of a special initiative to encourage neutering of pet cats, from whom the feral population descend. When funds permit, 'Fix It For A Fiver' offers neutering for €5 per cat and is enabling both owners and guardians of strays and feral cats to curtail breeding.

Pet food donation bins in local supermarkets generate supplies of cat and dog food and treats, which are collected

and distributed to fosterers, carers and guardians and rescue centres.

Communication with the public on animal welfare is another area to which RAWR is committed. With information leaflets, talks for children, articles in the press, newsletters, radio and on social media RAWR aims to get the message across on the importance of caring properly for animals. Vaccination, neutering, health care, responsible ownership are not just beneficial to the animals concerned but also to the health of their humans and the environment in which we live.

Wildlife too is important to RAWR and the group has tended many and varied species of sick and injured wild animals.

RAWR dog and cat Neutering Discount Vouchers: for availability contact your nearest participating veterinary practice: Bantry: Fachtna Collins 027 53639; Skibbereen: Castlelands-Hourihanes 028 22211; Dunmanway: Brookpark: 023 884 5777; Castletownbere: Brian Murphy 027 70366

RAWR today is still run entirely by volunteers and is a registered charity. Any support is greatly appreciated.



# CNM graduate reveals the secret to glowing skin

**Camille Knowles** has conquered her lifelong battle with eczema through healthy and nutritious food choices. Here, she shares her story and reveals how her new book, achieved with the help of CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine), can help others live a life beyond eczema.



where I would be constantly covering up my skin, hiding away and avoiding social occasions. The condition became so debilitating that I was hospitalised and told that there was nothing anyone could do



to cure my eczema. So, I turned to my diet and attempted to manage my skin through food and drink intake. However, this obsession surrounding food took its toll on my health and instead of healing my skin, I

developed a huge fear of food.

Fortunately, CNM ignited my passion for all things natural and I trained to become a Natural Chef. I quickly discovered that eating well and nourishing my skin from the inside, as well as the outside, was a key principle in reducing my eczema symptoms. The course not only helped me fall back in love with food, but the expertise and knowledge I gained allowed me to design recipes, which could benefit others too.

'The Beauty of Eating Well' by Camille Knowles™ is a recipe book that puts the freedom and fun back into food but with a huge focus on nutritional value. The dishes are all designed

to make skin glow, not just for those with eczema, but for anyone who wishes to transform dull, sensitive and dry skin.

I am so grateful to CNM. Not only has it helped me become an eczema warrior, but the courses have helped me build a thriving business which truly helps others apply a holistic approach to living a life beyond eczema.



**Do something life-changing. Gain new skills. Change career. Help others.**

Study to become an ICSA-accredited CNM Natural Chef: [www.naturalchef.com](http://www.naturalchef.com)  
CNM has a 22-year track record training successful health professionals. Attend the next FREE CNM Open Event in Cork. Call: 01 878 8060 or book: [naturopathy.ie](http://naturopathy.ie)

## Therapeutic and educational services for children at Hairy Henry



**H**airy Henry Care Farm in Ballylickey provides a wide range of therapeutic and educational services for children from the age of two, as well as adults. Specialising in interventions for persons with additional developmental, emotional, social and educational needs (e.g. ASD, ADHD, sensory processing difficulties, anxiety, GDD, dyspraxia etc.) Hairy Henry Care Farm welcomes everyone – with or without specific diagnosis – to enjoy the benefits of engaging with the therapy animals and natural environment.

Some of the activities might be of particular interest to schools with Special Needs Classes and ASD Units and include: Therapeutic School Visits with therapy animals (donkey, sheep, dog, rabbits, guinea pigs, horse); Educational School Visits with an experiential learning session on traditional farming and/or farm animals (featuring Henry, the plough horse); School Tours to the Care Farm in Ballylickey (up to 10 pupils); Group Sessions on our Care Farm for small groups of pupils with either educational

of animals and farming with a child-friendly and person-centred approach.

Special focus lies on creating opportunities for each child to build on their personal, interpersonal and cognitive skills: Self-awareness and Sense of self-worth; Social Confidence, Social and communication skills; Self-regulation, Relaxation and Stress management; Empathy, Team work and Helping others; How to deal with conflicts; Turn-taking and Sequencing; Dealing with difficult emotions.

The sessions provide a safe, calm and supportive environment where children can learn at their own individual pace and access the therapeutic benefits in their own space and time. Children are supported to progress according to their individual ability level.

Sandra Schmid, who runs the Hairy Henry farm, is also a registered teacher and has been providing July Provision to individual children for a number

of years. As a new service for this summer, she is planning to run a July Provision group for up to four children who qualify for this scheme under the Department of Education guidelines. In this group, children

will be offered a wide range of educational outdoor activities tailored to meet their specific learning needs. Hairy Henry is now open for expressions of interest from parents and carers. If you are interested in

finding out more about any of our services, or if you have any specific questions, please contact Sandra on 087 9389867 or go to the website [www.hairyhenry.com](http://www.hairyhenry.com).



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## ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.  
email: astro@katearbon.com  
www.katearbon.com

# March Sun Signs

March will bring a shift in perspective and put a focus on the other issues that need your attention now. The main action happens after the Sun moves into Aries at the Equinox on 20th March. This month will bring us a taste of the energy that will be around at the year end and into 2021.

The first week of the month is pretty action packed too. We are off to a running start as both Mercury and Venus change signs. The good news is that they are going to be much happier in these new positions and this means we get the most positive effects over the next few weeks.

Mercury, still in a retrograde until the 10th, moves backwards into Aquarius once more. This can bring clearer communication and ease some of the tensions of this recent retrograde phase. There may be a need to re-address some issues or situations

that were part of our life in early February. The last couple of weeks have seen us with so many misunderstandings, working at cross purposes and an over-complication of tasks that are usually straightforward. Mercury does return to Pisces on 16th March but in a forward motion by then, so it will not cause so much confusion. Things, or people that we thought were left behind or no longer relevant to our life, may return or we get some welcome resolution in all kinds of matters.

On March 5, Venus moves into one of her own signs, Taurus, and will travel through this steady and peace loving sign until early April. This is much more positive for our social relationships and for the enjoyment of things or people that we value. The simple pleasures matter and this is what Venus in Taurus is all about. An indulgence in the sensual delights and social harmony is on the

agenda now. For the second half of March Venus is also moving towards a flowing connection with the 'feel good' planet Jupiter giving a practical and future proofing element to the lighter side of life. Plan to have some fun with your closest friends and best loved ones.

On March 7, Venus briefly, for a few days, joins with Uranus which may bring an unexpected event or a need to make a change or diversion. Venus is likely to make sure these are all of a pleasing nature so it could just be a sudden and impulsive display of affection or kindness, and you may be the giver or the receiver.

March 9 is the Full Moon, which will have a big impact this month even if it feels subtle. The Sun is joined with Neptune in Pisces whilst opposite the Moon. This can bring dreams and imagination to the forefront or inspiration and creativity keep you up

all night. With the Moon in Virgo there may be an urge to get things in order and tidy up any chaotic area of your life, paperwork, health or personal matters. Now is the perfect time to do that.

The Sun moves into the Mars sign, Aries at Equinox on March 20, just as Mars is joining with Jupiter. So expect the Astrological New Year to start with a big energy surge. The desire and drive to make some real impact is certainly there now. But Saturn in Capricorn ensures containment and a slow steady pace. So give your goals and aspirations a push forward but attend to the details whilst the focus is on time, commitment and getting it right.

The New Moon on March 24 marks the beginning of a new phase that will play out into the next six months and next year. Over the last couple of years we've had Saturn with Pluto in Capricorn. We have seen the

restructuring and breaking down of many areas of our life, personal and global. Saturn moves into Aquarius on March 22 and although there will be a short return to Capricorn in July, Saturn will finally move on leaving Pluto behind, to where it will join with Jupiter at the end of 2020, marking a new social era.

The Month ends on a dramatic note with Mars entering Aquarius and joining with Saturn there on the 31st. The feeling is all about what is just around the corner. There is potency and potential. We know what we want to move away from and leave well behind, but the energy has us held in our current position for just a short while longer.

**The March Full Moon is at 18° Virgo on March 9 at 5.47pm and the New Moon is at 5° Aries on March 24 at 9.28am**



**Aries:** You may waste energy on menial tasks, thus getting distracted from the broader visions in your life during this Full Moon. You are likely to make yourself indispensable through being of service, tuning in to the physical needs of others, and generally happy to take on a lot of tasks. If you are not careful however, other people will take advantage of you. This is the time you should be really getting things together for yourself whilst you can keep the focus on the details. Once you've put on the finishing touches, you'll be able to stand back and take pride in your accomplishments.



**Taurus:** Enjoyment is the keyword for you this Full Moon and it's time to loosen up and have some fun, especially with close friends and children. If you are socialising you can even risk going a little bit over the top, as this is a general time of celebration for all. Passion and intensity, on any topic you choose, can run rampant and your enthusiasm overflows. You have a strong emotional need for some romantic encounters but you also know how to nurture and maintain the romance in an existing relationship too. So make the most of it and enjoy!



**Gemini:** This Full Moon you may spend a lot of time at home, finding great pleasure in looking after your children or family, cooking, making home improvements etc. You are especially sensitive to the moods of others who share your personal space. Although you will be strongly motivated to create a caring and secure environment around you, a crowd can be claustrophobic and you can get on each other's nerves. This is a time to acknowledge how the comfortable and familiar supports you. Draw on it as a source of strength as you prepare to achieve some great things out in the world.



**Cancer:** Uncomfortable feelings you experience during this Full Moon phase could result from strong differences of opinion with someone. You can be easily swayed by irrational arguments and emotions if you have to state your case now. It can seem that everybody is trying to get their message through but no one is listening. Try not to be distracted whilst you tie up important loose ends and meet deadlines. You need to keep some time available for a new project or mental challenge. You could be making plans for travelling or starting a new class or training programme.



**Leo:** Learning to adjust to economic fluctuations is part of the process of maturing and this Full Moon will find you focusing on personal resources. You can be a very kind and giving person but you also need to feel secure. Being concerned with your own financial status now is probably a good thing. Some people may view you as unusually materialistic and possessive but it's time to cash in on some of your hard earned investments and name your price for your efforts. Be confident in your skills and abilities and turn them to good use now as others will notice and reward you later.



**Virgo:** The pressure is on to bring critical projects to a conclusion during this Full Moon. The emphasis is not so much on what you've done, but rather who you are. It's the right time to let your true personality shine and show the world exactly what you're all about. You understand how important a sincere personal expression is. You may be seen as over-emotional or sentimental but you can have a powerful impact on your surroundings through your moods. You instinctively know how to provide a truly nurturing environment for people to grow and you're motivated to show how much concern and care you have for others.



**Libra:** During this Full Moon you are extremely sensitive to your environment. You have a strong need to withdraw from the world and commune with nature or your inner feelings. You might want to retreat to a very private emotional world and other people may have difficulty getting in contact with you. Ideally create a place, which is sacred to you where you can be alone. In this private space you can become aware of your true dreams and longings. Try to work more consciously with the inner world of your imagination through creative work or meditative practice for a few days.



**Scorpio:** You are extremely sensitive to how people treat you over this Full Moon. You'll want to know if you have forged strong bonds with your friends. You are both caring and concerned as regards their wellbeing but easily hurt if they let you down in any way. Ensure that you spend time only with people that elevate and support you. Disconnect from the daily grind and indulge your personal happy side for a while. Good food, pleasant company, shared experiences and mutual understanding bring an inner peace that makes you realize that quality of life is not about money, status or possessions.



**Sagittarius:** Recently a strong sense of loyalty made you conform to family or social expectations. This Full Moon you realise that in your past a lot of your unconscious motivation has been aimed at living up to other people's standards. Now is the time to reach out for what you want for yourself and stand in the spotlight whilst acting the part of your unique self in all your glory. Take time out during these few days to wave your own flag and get noticed for your current contribution before a new surge of personal creativity rolls in.



**Capricorn:** During this Full Moon phase your interest in philosophical and spiritual areas is heightened. Use the time to expand your inner window on the world and break new ground. Convictions and values of those close to you will have unconsciously influenced you so discovering beliefs that are true for you personally now takes your whole attention. Travelling or studying will be a strong urge so seize the opportunity to take off in a new direction. It will bring a welcome relief from deeper concerns and you may realise that there is a lot less to worry about than you first thought.



**Aquarius:** Experiences during this Full Moon will show you how other people have provided emotional security for you. Seeing clearly where you have been dependant in your relationships gives you a new sense of freedom and the release of energy will propel you into a fresh creative phase. You might unearth resources within yourself that you were previously unaware of. This new knowledge will be of great help to everyone you contact on an intimate level. You no longer need to rely on certain items or possessions as you move on, so clear off the cobwebs, throw out useless things you've been hoarding and enjoy the liberation.



**Pisces:** You have difficulty distinguishing between what you feel and the feelings of those closest to you during this Full Moon. Tune in to yourself, and allow your intimate friends to have their moods without imagining they always have something to do with your own actions. You sense that you have all got a little too close and caught up with each other recently and soon you'll need to stand back. Giving yourself time to recognise your true individuality will allow you to fully connect with others in your own unique way. The support and equality you sense as a result will produce welcome rewards later.

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# Banish breakouts



## INSIDE OUT BEAUTY

Sherna Malone

Skincare and beauty expert Sherna Malone shares her knowledge and expertise of all things beauty – from skin care do's and don'ts to the latest products out there.

Spots, pimples, blemishes – no doubt you'll be familiar with what having a spot or two is like. Unfortunately, when it comes to breakouts, these aren't solely confined to our hormonal teenage years, many adults still suffer from spots. However, this doesn't mean that you're powerless against them. Whether it's one blemish that decides to spring from nowhere or a breakout all over your face, there are some immediate steps you can take to help maintain a clear complexion. Bear in mind, acne is a bit more complex, and if you're affected by it, you should consult your doctor or a dermatologist. Here are my top tips to help keep blemishes at bay....

### Cleansing

Ensure you cleanse thoroughly, twice a day, to remove excess oil, makeup, sunscreen and dead skin cells, which all contribute to clogged pores and create the perfect conditions for spots to occur. A big no-no is over-washing or over-scrubbing your

face, as you don't want to strip skin of essential oils, and cause rebound over-production of oil. Gently gently is the approach. CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser, Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser and Avène Extremely Gentle Cleanser are some great options. Oilier skin types might require a little more oomph, so something like NeoStrata Clarifying Cleanser or Eucerin Facial Skin Dermopurifier Cleansing Gel will work to decongest pores, improve skin texture and won't leave skin feeling tight.

### Treating Breakouts

If spots and breakouts are a recurring problem for your skin, it makes sense to introduce some well-known spot fighting ingredients to your skincare routine for long term benefits. Those proven to be beneficial in treating breakouts include...

- Salicylic Acid, a BHA (Beta Hydroxy Acid) is oil-soluble, meaning it has the ability to penetrate deep into the pores to remove dead cells and sebum. By keeping the pores clear of debris, breakouts are less likely to occur. It also has anti-inflammatory and mild anti-bacterial properties, so it reduces inflammation and reduces the chance of further breakouts. I like best-selling Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant, it also comes in a lotion and gel formula. Available from Irish website cloud10beauty.com

- Normally associated with treating Rosacea, Azelaic Acid inhibits the growth of acne-causing bacteria, helping to keep your skin clear and breakout free. It also works as an exfoliator to reduce the build-up of dead skin cells and has excellent anti-inflammatory properties, which will help reduce redness. Another bonus is that it lightens any hyperpigmentation (those dreaded acne scars) by targeting and breaking down the pigment that creates them. Budget buy



Garden of Wisdom Azelaic Acid 10% Serum gives great results, available from victoriahealth.com

- Benzoyl Peroxide is an effective over-the-counter ingredient for treating mild to moderate acne. When applied to the skin, it works by reducing the amount of acne causing bacteria, removes excess oil, and exfoliates dead skin cells. It can be especially helpful for the red, sore, inflamed bumps. You'll find it in strengths ranging from 2.5 up to 10 per cent, the difference is that the higher percentages run the risk of irritating or drying out the skin too much. While everyone's spot situation is different, in general, I advise to stick within the three to five per cent range.

- The use of a retinoid product (Vitamin A) will not only deliver some serious anti-ageing benefits like targeting fine lines and wrinkles and improving the appearance of uneven skin tone and texture but it will also help unclog pores and reduce the formation of spots. The new La Roche Posay Retinol B3 Serum, is a great entry level into retinol use, and also suitable for sensitive skin types. It combines 0.3 per cent retinol with soothing Vitamin B3 (aka niacinamide) and hydrating glycerin. Available in selected pharmacies nationwide. And remember, always use an SPF in the morning, as retinol may increase skin's sensitivity to the sun

### Quick Fixes

If spots do pop up and make

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Discover why Dr. Hauschka's unique approach to skin care is trusted for almost 80 years across the globe and learn how to keep your skin looking radiant this spring.

**A Dr. Hauschka Skincare Expert, will be visiting Crowley's Pharmacy on Friday 4th April from 10am to 5pm, offering FREE skincare consultations.**

Book your place if you'd like to learn from our experts! Bookings can be made in store or by phone 023 8895055.

an impromptu appearance, zap them with some of these rapid spot treatment products to take the inflammation down and help heal. Murad Blemish Control Rapid Relief Spot Treatment is a spot treatment gel formulated with a hefty two per cent salicylic acid, plus oat extract to soothe, nourish and reduce redness and blemish size in just four hours! available from cloud10beauty.com. My Clarins Clear Out Targeted Blemish Treatment available in selected pharmacies and department stores nationwide, dries up and visibly reduces the appearance of blemishes while at the same time soothes and relieves the affected area. And good old Sudocrem, normally associated with nappy rash, when applied directly to spots, a small

amount can reduce both size and redness and help clear skin quickly, available in pharmacies nationwide.

### Keep things clean

Makeup brushes, washcloths, pillows, sheets, phones, the list goes on. Take your bed sheets for example, how often are you cleaning them? Every night you have a build-up of sweat, dust mites, bacteria and dead skin cells. Need I say more? And as for phones, a recent study in the UK found that mobile phones carry ten times more bacteria than a public toilet seat, meaning your smartphone is a big source of skin contamination and can lead to skin problems. Lastly, as tempting as it might

be, avoid picking or popping pimples with your fingers, it can cause scarring and spread bacteria, which can lead to more breakouts. Cleanliness and good hygiene habits are key when it comes to skin health and breakouts.

If you would like to begin your journey to healthy beautiful skin, I am available by appointment in Solace Holistic Centre Clonakilty where I offer Skincare Consultations and facial treatments – all details of these and my classes are on shernamalone.ie You can also follow me on Instagram and Facebook @shernamalone.ie.

## Botanical French haircare brand Klorane re-launches its iconic range of dry shampoos

Klorane dry shampoos are getting a new look. The iconic range by the botanical French haircare brand has developed something of a cult status across the globe with one bottle being sold every 10 seconds.

This month, Klorane is excited to announce the re-launch of its dry shampoo range with a new look, while keeping intact the unique formula it's known for.

Klorane's formula is composed of plant-based active ingredients (Oat Milk or Nettle) and 3 gentle and natural powders with very high

absorbency. It leaves hair clean and adds volume without the need for water.

Klorane uses a range of botanical extracts to benefit all hair types - Oat Milk for its gentleness and Nettle for purifying oily hair. Both are available in classic and tinted versions. The natural beige tint (non-colouring) is perfect for darker hair and doesn't stain the scalp, hands or clothing.

Klorane dry shampoos clean hair gently, without water, in 2 minutes, just as well as a liquid shampoo. In an instant, hair's texture and

volume is restored, saving water, time and your hairstyle.

Klorane's brand ethos has always focused on a commitment to the environment while creating great botanical based products that work, using sustainable farming methods. With the re-launch of the brand's hero product, Klorane is encouraging customers to save water by using dry shampoo in place of a usual hair wash just once per week and adopting easy, everyday changes that make a difference.

Klorane supports the work of Klorane Botanical Foundation,

which is committed to preserving water and preventing the soil from drying out. The Foundation participates in reforestation programs, like the Great Green Wall in Africa where almost 80 000 trees have been replanted to push back the desert, and also initiatives to improve agricultural methods, notably in the Amazon region.

Klorane products are available from pharmacies nationwide. All items are priced at €11.50.





## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Butlerstown comes out top with new show



Pic:  
denisoregan.com

Butlerstown Variety Group is busy rehearsing for a brand-new show 'What a Feeling', which will run for seven consecutive nights beginning on Easter Sunday night. The show has been part of the fabric of the community for five decades and has stood the test of time, with each production constantly raising the bar in terms of performance and variety. Of course, things have changed since the very first 'Tops of the Parish' show in 1978 (when it was a fundraiser for Barryroe GAA) but some of the people who were in that show are still involved... and some families now have a third generation taking part!

Anne-Marie O'Brien is the producer and musical director and she is ably assisted by her sister Evelyn. The script writer is their dad, Michael O'Brien. The show is noted for its backdrops and sets, which are the wonderful creations of John Madden, Artistic director. The artwork is done by John and Pat O'Brien.

This show is unique to West Cork; the vast array of talent on offer has been nurtured by Anne-Marie, whose keen

aptitude for knowing how to bring out the best in each cast member is very evident. Anne-Marie's own experience helps her put this show together; from an early age she grew up with music, song, drama and dance all around her. This in turn was the catalyst for her journey through the world of stage and theatre. Anne-Marie's musicality has been witnessed throughout West Cork, Cork, Munster and Ireland. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Anne-Marie for all she does for the promotion of the arts in West Cork and people will be looking forward to her latest production with fervent anticipation.

Logistically, nothing is left to chance in 'Tops' – the cast has over 120 participants, ranging in age from three to 75, a live band, a back-stage crew, along with many other volunteers, hair and makeup ladies and those who oversee traffic arrangements.

The show lasts about two hours with a 20-minute interval.

Bookings can be made each evening from Monday March 23 from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Telephone 087-3929917. Tickets €20.

## Local dancers give performance of a lifetime for Strictly Come Dancing 2020 Bantry

Bantry is all set for its third Strictly Come Dancing fundraiser this March. Hosted by St. Finbarr's Boys' NS, to raise funds for this local school and this year, the school have partnered with Pieta House and in appreciation for the great work that they do, the committee will make a donation from this year's profits to Pieta House.

Twenty-two hopefuls are fired up and ready to dance, directed by local choreographers Theresa O'Donoghue and Josie McAuliffe and are set to put on the performance of a lifetime. The theme for this year is 'Strictly Goes To The Movies' and will see the 11 couples replicate

scenes from famous movies through the decades from Mamma Mia to Pulp Fiction and many more.

Richard Harrington 'PACO' returns by popular demand to take centre stage as Master of Ceremonies; he will be joined by none other than The Young Offenders actress Demi Isaac Owaive for the Semi Final. The man who gave Bantry 'Strictly Fever', Brian Gleeson, will duo with Paco for the final show.

Brian Gleeson, principal at St Finbarr's Boys' National School thanked this year's dancers as he welcomed them to the Strictly Family. He also congratulated the whole community of Bantry for their amazing support of

all local fundraisers, as well as thanking the sponsors, especially The Westlodge Hotel. Sandra Maybury, Event Co Ordinator, referred to the school principal as the driving force behind Strictly Bantry, saying his enthusiasm for Strictly is infectious.

The live shows take place at The Westlodge Hotel, Bantry

with a semi-final on March 7, followed by the grand final on Saturday March 14, when Strictly Bantry Winners 2020 will be announced. For ticket details, call 087 3657821.

*Pictured from top Cathal McCarthy and Mags Donaldson; Liam Young and Lisa Spillane*



**Dunmanway Sings**  
Hosted by Dunmanway Community Choir  
Fundraiser in aid of  
Dunmanway Co-Action & Dunmanway Day Centre

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**MOVIES THIS MONTH**

**Sensory Friendly Screening**  
1st Saturday of Every Month at 11.15am



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Bantry has its King and Queen

After a night of thrilling entertainment, Bantry and West Cork have their first King and Queen of the Jungle. Our Lady of Mercy NS Parent's Association organised for 24 contestants to battle it at The Westlodge Hotel, in front of an audience of 500, until just two were remaining – Paddy Casey and Theresa O'Shea.

A gruelling final task in-

involved drinking shots of liquids that would turn the hardest stomach, after which the two finalists had to drink a pint of 'meal worm smoothie'. It came down to the wire and no clear winner could be decided, so the honours were shared.

The Parent's Association at the time of print hadn't totalled the funds from the night but are aiming to raise around €20,000 to purchase and install fixed

low ropes adventure equipment for the children in the school.

The Parent's Association would like to thank every business who helped them with sponsorship, as well as the 24 brave contestants for participating.

See the Parent's Association OLM Bantry page on Facebook for pictures and videos of all the high jinks!



## Clonakilty Bike Circus Events

**Sunday March 8, 12pm** - Forest Tidy Cycle - Starting at the Bike Circus. We will meet the founders of the forest project, cycle up to the forest together and help remove some plastic protectors from trees – don't forget to pack a picnic!

**March 17** - St Patrick's Day Parade Clonakilty – Join us on your

bike in the parade! This year our theme will be cycling to school, with the aim to find others interested in starting a 'Cycle Bus' in Clon. We want kids, their parents and all bike lovers to join our group so we can show that there are plenty of cyclists in town that would love more cycle friendly school routes!

For more information visit The Bike Circus, check us out on facebook or ring 085 757 4338.

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## 59th West Cork Drama Festival

While Clonakilty is gearing itself up for the West Cork Rally, Rossmore has its bonnets shining, engines oiled and is getting all revved up for the annual West Cork Three Act Drama Festival.

The festival opens on Friday March 13 with Dundalk Theatre Company presenting 'Duet for One' by Tom Kempinski. This deeply moving drama about a brilliant concert violinist stricken by multiple sclerosis revolves around sessions she has with her psychiatrist; it makes for compelling theatre. The play is loosely based on the life of cellist Jacqueline du Pré and was adapted for film in the 1980s and starred Julie Andrews and Max von Sydow.

Saturday March 14 sees Bridge Drama Group from Wexford make a welcome return to Rossmore with Ena Lamont Stewart's 'Men Should Weep'. This popular political and humorous Scottish classic about tenement life in 1930's Glasgow is hard-hitting, exploring the impact of poverty upon family life and is sure to be compelling and provocative.

Another Wexford group, Wayside Players, take to the stage on Sunday, March 15 with their production of popular Martin McDonagh play 'The Cripple of Inishmaan'. The well-known dark comedy is set on Inishmaan off the West Coast of Ireland in 1934, where the inhabitants are excited to learn of a Hollywood film crew's arrival in neighbouring island. With resonances from Synge's 'Playboy of the Western World', this comic, endearing and at times very poignant play is sure to have the audience enraptured with its lyrical dialogue and witty banter.

On Monday, March 16, another regular to the West Cork Festival, Palace Players from

Fermoy are sure to receive a warm welcome again when they stage contemporary Galway playwright Christian O'Reilly's 'Chapatti'. This tender, warm and gentle play exploring companionship has won great acclaim.

With the festival 'in full throttle', Sliabh Aughty Drama Group from Clare will perform Bruce Graham's 'The Outgoing Tide' on St Patrick's night Tuesday, March 17. Interestingly this play, about dementia and a family, was a popular success in Galway in 2012 when John Mahony again took the lead in it. This poignant family drama is absorbing and laced with humour throughout to make it a memorable night out.

On Wednesday, March 18, another festival regular, the neighbouring Skibbereen Theatre Society present Robert Harling's popular 'Steel Magnolias'. This comedy-drama explores the camaraderie of women in the American South in the face of personal tragedy.

Charleville's Shoestring Theatre group make a welcome return to Rossmore on Thursday, March 19 with the Northern Irish playwright David Ireland's recently written 'Cyprus Avenue'. This black comedy explores the madness of the sectarian divide in and absurd and darkly humorous way. Winning numerous awards this play has received much critical acclaim and will no doubt have the audience laughing and talking about it well after the curtain closes. Please note this play is recommended for adult viewing only.

The local Kilmeen Drama Group takes to the stage on Friday, March 20 with the Irish classic, John B. Keane's 'Sharon's Grave'. This folk play abounds with beautiful imagery,

myths, poetry within prose, as well as a host of memorable characters.

Saturday, March 21 sees the Brideview Drama Group from Tallow tread the boards with Irish playwright Tom Murphy's 'Bailegangaire'. The play focuses on Mommoo who tells over and over again, to her ever attendant granddaughters, an unfinished tale of how the town came to be known as Bailegangaire, the town without laughter. This lyrical and intriguing play is considered by many to be the playwright's masterpiece.

The festival closes on Sunday, March 22 with Kilworth Drama Group's production of 'The Quiet Moment' by Mike Finn. Set in a nursing home in Limerick, this play examines relationships and memories in the Conway family. Altercating between despair and farce, with sharp shifts in mood, this touching play looks at how the family come to terms with the father's progressive Alzheimer's.

Helping all to 'navigate' this year's festival will be the adjudicator, Mr Paul Brennan who makes a welcome return to Rossmore to adjudicate. Paul has worked professionally as an actor, director, playwright, adjudicator and teacher of acting for more than forty years. He has directed plays at the Abbey, the Gate and other Dublin theatres, as well as with Druid in Galway, Island in Limerick and Red Kettle in Waterford. No doubt his nightly adjudications will prove to be interesting and insightful.

For the groups who emerge on the top of the leader-boards after the festival circuit, all roads lead to Athlone (Open) and Ballyshannon (Confined) for the finals after Easter.

All plays start at 8pm and tickets (€13) can be booked online from [www.rossmoretheatre.com](http://www.rossmoretheatre.com).

com or contact 086 4481086.

The Festival Committee would like to thank all the festival sponsors and supporters for their continued support.

**59th West Cork Drama Festival**  
Adjudicator Paul Brennan  
Friday March 13th to Sunday March 22nd

<b>Friday March 13th</b> <b>Dundalk Theatre Company</b> <i>"Duet for One"</i> by Tom Kempinski	<b>Wednesday March 18th</b> <b>Skibbereen Theatre Company</b> <i>"Steel Magnolias"</i> by Robert Harling
<b>Saturday March 14th</b> <b>Bridge Drama</b> <i>"Men Should Weep"</i> by Ena Lamont	<b>Thursday March 19th</b> <b>Shoestring Theatre Company</b> <b>18+</b> <i>"Cypress Avenue"</i> by David Ireland
<b>Sunday March 15th</b> <b>Wayside Players</b> <i>"The Cripple of Inishmaan"</i> by Martin McDonagh	<b>Friday March 20th</b> <b>Kilmeen Drama Group</b> <i>"Sharon's Grave"</i> by John B. Keane
<b>Monday March 16th</b> <b>Palace Players</b> <i>"Chapatti"</i> by Tom Kempinski	<b>Saturday March 21st</b> <b>Brideview Drama Group</b> <i>"Bailegangaire"</i> By Tom Murphy
<b>Tuesday March 17th</b> <b>Sliabh Aughty Drama Group</b> <i>"The Outgoing Tide"</i> by Bruce Graham	<b>Sunday March 22nd</b> <b>Kilworth Dramatic Society</b> <i>"The Quiet Moment"</i> by Mike Finn

Tickets €13 - Shows start at 8 pm sharp - no admittance once show begins  
Online Booking opens Monday February 24th  
[www.rossmoretheatre.com](http://www.rossmoretheatre.com)  
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## Fleadh Cheoil Chorcaí 2020

By Tommy Collins

The Dunmanway Branch of Comhaltas will host Cork County Fleadh Cheoil again this year after a very successful event in 2019. The weekend starts on Friday, April 17 with the County sean-nós dancing competition and continues through Saturday and Sunday with competitions in music, singing and story-telling and comhrá gaeilge.

Over 250 competitions will be held over the weekend between Maria Immaculata Community College and The Parkway Hotel. Competitions are divided into age categories, under 12, 12-15, 15- 18 years and Senior. All competitions are open to members and non-members of Comhaltas, and include the full range of musical instruments. In fact there is a competition for every conceivable instrument. There are also competitions for singing in sean-nós and English, as well as whistling and lilting. Storytelling in Irish and English and comhrá gaeilge play a big part in the Fleadh.

There is an air of anticipation in Dunmanway; upwards of 3,000 people are expected to visit for the Fleadh and the town is busy preparing for an influx of musicians, singers and dancers – a welcome early start

to the tourist season. The attention that the Fleadh attracts to the area will repay the support of the local community and be a welcome boost to the local economy.

Besides the competitions there is a selection of events to suit all tastes. The official opening of the Fleadh on Friday night at Atkins Hall will be followed by an Oíche Cheoil, when all musicians are encouraged to take part. The Greyhound Bar on the East Green will also host an evening of singing and storytelling on Friday night and again on Saturday night. Whether you are a singer, storyteller or just a good listener, everybody is urged to participate.

Saturday night has sessions in as many pubs as possible in the town.

A unique feature of the Fleadh this year will be the

ringing of the Sam Maguire Community Bells at St Mary's Church at 10.40am on Sunday morning. The bell tower will be open to visitors on Saturday afternoon from 2pm to 4pm and again on Sunday, where Rev Cliff Jeffers and his troupe of bellringers will be delighted to introduce people to the skill of ringing bells, and when everyone will get the opportunity to try their own hand at it.

Comhaltas has hosted the County Fleadh in Dunmanway on seven previous occasions, as well as the Munster Fleadh in 1982 and 1983. Dunmanway Comhaltas has the reputation of being very active, and the attention to detail in this year's preparations is second to none.

The Fleadh Committee is led by cathaoirleach Colette McCarthy, leas-cathaoirleach Gerry Murphy, rúnaí Derry McCarthy, leas rúnaí Carmel

foynes, Cisteoir Tommy Collins, and oifigeach poiblí Margaret Collins. They are making every effort to ensure this year's fleadh is a memorable occasion for all. Like all voluntary organisations they must look to the local business community for financial support to augment their own funds. They are on target with their fundraising and greatly appreciative of the kind response their efforts have received.

The Fleadh Cheoil is a familiar scene where music is presented by young and old to the best of their ability, and while winning is foremost in each competitor's mind, presentation of traditional music to the best degree of individual effort is the most important feature.

The long hours of preparation for a few moments of competitive music is sometimes forgotten and indeed very often

not appreciated especially where young performers are concerned. These young musicians, their parents and teachers are a team striving to expand the repertoire and improve techniques so as to fully enjoy playing the music. It is heartwarming to hear these young musicians discuss and assess each of their performances; and it is a source of great satisfaction to see exponents of other years advising and counselling the youth of today.

The Dunmanway branch of Comhaltas was founded in 1974, when traditional culture was at a low ebb. Through their determination to pass on the culture to a new generation an enormous interest in music and dancing emerged throughout West Cork. This is due to their arranging regular classes in music and singing and dancing.

## Bandon shows prove West Cork's got talent

Magic, music song and dance are coming to Bandon on March 14 as West Cork proves it's got talent and lots of it! With an under 13s show at 1.30pm, and a seniors show kicking off at 8pm, Bandon's GAA hall is set to be the equivalent of Carnegie hall.

The two shows will feature people from all over West Cork who hope to walk away as the victor or victors, as there are many groups and solo performers.

The people with the most difficult jobs that weekend will be the judges, who include Brendan Hayes, Shelly Burke, Sarah Callanan and Graham Craig Brady.

Two separate audition days saw scores of people aiming for a spot in the finals. Judge Brendan Hayes said after the auditions, "The talent on display was phenomenal and I'm thrilled that West Cork has an abundance of such awesome,



Left to right are Sarah Callanan, Graham Brady, Brendan Hayes and Shelly Burke.

budding superstars."

All proceeds on the night will go to Jack and Friends Centre for Autism Bandon, which is a support hub for families and their children with developmental disabilities from all over Cork county.

Claire Desmond said when

opening the centre last year, "The support we have received from people locally and further afield has astounded me and my endless gratitude goes towards them. It's amazing to see how big people's hearts are when it comes to community spirit."

Tickets for each show are ex-

pected to sell out swiftly. They will be available for purchase at O'Farrell's Newsagents Bandon, Eventbrite and The Old Market Bar Bandon and prices are €20 Adult/ €12 Child (U16).

## Documentary traces the path of John Footman from Clonakilty to India during the Great Famine

A once-only screening of the documentary film, titled 'An Gorta Mór – Passage to India' will run at the Park Cinema, Clonakilty on Saturday, March 28, 2020, at 10.30am.

The film traces the migration of the Irish population during the Great Famine that took place between 1845-52. Most Irish went to North America (USA and Canada), UK, and Australia, and a minority sailed to India, most of them joining the British East India Company as army recruits and other army units like the Irish and Scottish Fusiliers.

Revealing greater truths about the history and impact of immigration on the world that resonate today, this is the story of one man, John Footman, who left Ireland at the peak of the potato famine. However, unlike so many Irish immigrants who fled deprivation for the Americas, Footman found the passage to India. The story follows a seventh generation descendant of Footman from India, who traces his Irish roots back to Clonakilty, County Cork, where Footman, was born, raised, and departed for a new life in India over 170 years ago.

The film includes interviews with local descendants of the Footman family, local parish priests, local historians, and local people acting in reconstructions of the period.

Producer: Ian Michael, Director: Fokiya Akhtar, Cinematography: Michael Ogden. All welcome to attend.



## ST PATICK'S DAY IN WEST CORK

## Kinsale hosts fun-filled two-day spectacle



By Niamh O'Connell

The Kinsale St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee is all systems go for the 2020 celebrations of our National Holiday! The festivities begin on Monday, March 16 from 7.30pm with the unique Maritime Parade in the harbour, where you can enjoy the wonderful sight of beautifully lit boats, sailing in under the night sky. There will be music, family fun and, of course, the evening will culminate in a spectacular fireworks display. Once again spectators are invited to dress up for the occasion with prizes for the 'Most Brightly Decorated' adult and child.

Last year the Maritime Parade featured on RTÉ Six One's St. Patrick's Day Parades round-up; this was wonderful publicity for our beautiful town at the start of the tourism season.

The committee is delighted that the Grand Marshal for

this year's street parade on St. Patrick's Day is Paul Shea of Newport, Rhode Island, USA. Paul has been very actively involved in the Newport – Kinsale Twinning Association since its inception, and indeed continues his involvement by organising the Newport/Kinsale Chef Exchange. Many parents in Kinsale and surrounding areas, whose children have travelled to the US on J1 visas, will also know that Paul and his wife Janet have been wonderful hosts and mentors to the hundreds of college students who have travelled to Newport over the years.

On St. Patrick's Day itself the Blessing of the Shamrock will take place at 12noon Mass in the Parish Church. Festivities will then commence around town from 1.15pm with free face painting, balloon modelling and music. Buskers are also welcome to come along on the day. The prizegiving for the Children's Art Competition will take

place at 1.30pm in the Tourist Office before the Street Parade, which will start at 3pm from the New Road car park. The theme for this year's Parade is 'Inspire Local Change' and participants are welcome to interpret this in a multitude of ways.

The Parade will weave its way along The Glen, Pearse Street, Barry's Place and the Pier Road to the reviewing stand near the Pier Head. In addition to various prizes for parade entrants, there will be prizes for 'Best Dressed' adult, teen and child spectators!

Since the revival of the Parade in 2012 it has been wonderful to see the support from local businesses who 'Go Green' for the occasion in the weeks before the event. Combined with the wonderful effort the businesses make to decorate their premises, and the flags and bunting erected by the Parade committee, Kinsale always looks spectacular for our National Day. Once again there will be prizes for the 'Best Dressed Window' in advance of the festival weekend.

If you are interested in sponsoring or contributing funding for the many events or wish to help out with stewarding on the day please email kinsaleparade@gmail.com

Check out how much fun we've had in previous years on youtube and come along and enjoy the fun yourself in Kinsale on St. Patrick's weekend!

## Clon's theme is 'cool'

Clonakilty Town Twinning Association, which represent the town internationally, is organising the 2020 St. Patrick's Day Parade on Tuesday, March 17. The theme this year is Cool Clon/Climate Change with the Pauline Lowney Memorial Prize being awarded to the 'Most Colourful/Cultural Display'.

The parade begins at 2pm from Faxbridge and continues along Pearse Street before finishing at Emmet Square. Participants are asked to assemble at 1.15pm at Faxbridge.

The parade, whose main sponsor is Clonakilty Credit Union, has gone from strength to strength each year, and the

Association believes it brings a great sense of community to the town at the beginning of spring.



## Dunmanway introduces new sensory initiative to this year's parade

By Tommy Collins

Dunmanway Community Council has plans for an extra special St Patrick's Day Parade this year. To mark the occasion they are urging all clubs, businesses and schools in the locality to join in the parade. The theme of this year's parade is Climate Change and all aspects of that theme. They particularly ask all business people who have a van or vehicle with their name displayed to take part in the parade; in so doing you will have the opportunity of displaying your business and at the same time combining the commercial and social aspects of the occasion.

Bill Kelleher, accomplished member of Ballingearry Pipe Band, will lead the parade, which will assemble at St Patrick's Church at 1.30pm. The parade will start at 1.45pm and proceed up Chapel Street and Main Street to the reviewing stand at Sam Maguire Plaza. There will also be a display



of vintage tractors and farm machinery at the Plaza, and vehicles from the local Car Club.

This year the organisers have announced a fantastic new initiative; they have designated a part of the route through the town as a 'Sensory Street', which will cater for children and adults with special needs or sensory issues. The bands and floats will be quieter, to allow for a more relaxed experience

for members of the public.

There will be prizes, sponsored by Tar Isteach Charity Shop, for the best contribution to the parade in various categories, such as the best float and the best group/club entry. The much coveted Siobhan Duggan Kingston Cup will be presented again this year for the most appropriately decorated shop window.

This is an opportunity for all businesses in the town to showcase their wares and both participants and spectators are encouraged to dress up in the spirit of the occasion. It is important to show that Dunmanway is alive and well!

There will be live entertainment provided by Dura Ceoil before and after the parade on the Plaza with bouncing castles, and face painting. Healy's SuperValu will provide treats for the kids as usual, as well as free face painting at their Main Street supermarket from 10am to 2pm.

The Community Council urges everybody to come out and support our parade, which would help to make the event such an enjoyable occasion for all the family

## Colouring Corner





## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## COMPETITION

## The Lonesome West

Presented by The Everyman

The Lonesome West by Martin McDonagh returns for 10 performances only! In 2018, under the direction of The Everyman's Artistic Director Julie Kelleher, McDonagh's vicious comedy was a hit with audiences and critics alike and scored a nomination in the Best Supporting Actor category for John McCarthy at the Irish Times Theatre Awards.

Martin McDonagh is well known by now as an Oscar-nominated writer for screen and as Olivier Award-winning writer for stage. The third play in his smash hit Leenane Trilogy, The Lonesome West is everything you would expect of his black comedy: it will make you laugh when you really really shouldn't. With explosive moments and the darkest humour, it tells the story of two feuding bachelor brothers Valene and Coleman and attempts to civilise them by despairing local priest Fr. Welsh, and his devoted sidekick Girleen.

The Everyman is proud to continue their tradition of producing top-quality theatre and delighted to reunite the same cast and creative team for this must-see revival of McDonagh's modern Irish classic.

\*\*\*\* – Irish Examiner

"finely tuned performances ... are a tour de force" – Sunday Times

"gleefully grotesque" – Irish Times



By Martin McDonagh

Directed by Julie Kelleher

Starring Gus McDonagh, John McCarthy,

Andrew Holden & Amy McElhatton

Set & Costume Designer Deirdre Dwyer

Lighting Designer Brian Mitchell

Sound Designer Chris Schmidt Martin

Date And Time Tue 7 – Sat 18 April, 7.30pm

Price €32, Concession €29, Student €9

Be in with a chance of winning a pair of tickets for The Lonesome West on Tuesday 7 April at 7.30pm at The Everyman. Send your name and phone number with 'Lonesome' in the subject line to [info@westcorkpeople.ie](mailto:info@westcorkpeople.ie) before March 12.

## Awards night at Clonakilty Camera Club

The N71 was the theme of the 2019 Clonakilty Camera Club 'Photography of the Year' (POTY) competition, with winners announced at the club's awards night in O'Donovan's Hotel on February 8.

Joe Dolan was awarded

'Photographer of the Year'; second place went to Geoff Greenham and third place to Elmarie O'Riordan.

Chairperson Kathleen Hayes, who recently received a Silver Medal at the Southern Association of Camera Club (SACC), presented the award for 'Club

Person of the Year' to Joy Larkcom. 'Most Enthusiastic Person' was Patricia Costello and 'Most Improved' was Noreen O'Donovan. The Liz Doyle Memorial Award went to Dave Sheehan for innovation.

## Collaborative sound project explores experiences of belonging and uprooting in West Cork



'Land Walks' is a collaborative sound project created by artist William Bock. It explores experiences of belonging and uprooting in the West Cork landscape through walking and field recording. The project forms part of an exhibition by the artist, 'Land Walks Land Talks Land Marks', which is running at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, until April 4, 2020.

Over six months William has been walking with individuals living in Clonakilty Lodge Direct Provision Centre and local residents, recording their conversations as they explore the landscape together. William is interested in observing how this natural landscape and its plants hold their own stories of migration and displacement, questioning what or who is native/foreign. Together with William, musician Justin Grounds and artist Michael Holly, the group edited and composed the resulting recordings into a soundscore for others to listen to while walking in the same locations.

The Clonakilty launch of The Land Walks Project takes place at The Emmet Hotel on Saturday February 7, at 7pm, and all are welcome to meet and chat to the participants. The Land Walks Project tracks will be available to listen to on [www.landwalkslandtalkslandmarks.com](http://www.landwalkslandtalkslandmarks.com) from March 7.

William Bock is an interdisciplinary artist born and raised in West Cork. Working in the UK



Land Walk Project participants in Lough Hyne walking with local farmer and botanist Michael Burke Pic: William Bock

and Ireland, his practice delves into the experiences of living between cultures, landscapes and identities. Bock uses photography, painting, sound recording, performance and installation to explore the connections between people, land, memory, ecology and identity.

William is driven by a collaborative, process-led approach to working with people, to materials and specific sites. His practice encompasses the production and curation of public events, workshops, exhibitions and residencies. He is a founding member of award winning

artist group Dig Collective and a member of 'Wilderness Art Collective'.

[contact@williambock.com](mailto:contact@williambock.com)  
[www.williambock.com](http://www.williambock.com)  
Instagram @bockworks

The Land Walks Project is funded by The Arts Council in the Community Scheme, managed by Create, supported by Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, West Cork Development Partnership and Cork County Council.

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Clonakilty Community Arts Centre

Life Drawing : Saturday March 28, 2.30pm. Booking essential.



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Dreams come true: An interview with singer Damien Dempsey



## MUSIC

Gary Hannon

Gary plays with the Clonakilty Jazz Collective every Monday night in the Emmet Hotel in Clonakilty.

It was my pleasure to interview Damien Dempsey before he comes to play West Cork.

**WCP:** I was reading the liner notes to Ronnie Drew's last album, 'The Last Session A Fond Farewell'. The producer rang you up to ask you if you'd like to do a duet with Ronnie of The Pogues song, 'A Rainy Night in Soho'. You had just recorded the song with Barney McKenna and John Sheehan (also of The Dubliners) that afternoon. That's some coincidence!

**DD:** "A bit strange alright! [laughs] I was pinching myself. Dreams come true – that's what I tell people!"

**WCP:** Have you any nice

memories of working with The Dubliners, as I know they're heroes of yours?

**DD:** "We organised to record with Barney and John for the following April after I played with them the October. Around March, we were trying to get hold of John to make sure he could still do it, you know? We couldn't get a hold of him or Barney. We thought that it wasn't going to go ahead, that they wouldn't show up. So we went in to record the album, as we had the studio booked. And we went in and they were there before us – the two of them! [laughs] It was an old school way of doing things – no texting back and forth, no e-mails and all that. They said that they were gonna be there and they arrived. No messing around."

**Sitting at the feet of masters**

"They were just grafters, you know? They stayed there all hours every day. They wanted to make it good. They were knocking on a bit even then. Barney hadn't that long to go. They put the work in, but it was great to hear the stories. Sitting at the feet of Masters! How they worked, how much enthusiasm – the love they still had for the music!"

**WCP:** Would you hope to be doing music when you're in your final years?

**DD:** "Oh Jesus, yeah, absolutely! I'll never stop. I never see myself retiring. I'll be singing, as long as there is breath in



me! I'd say if it's my last few minutes I'll sing my death song. I have a death song picked out and all! It's called 'The Streams of Bunclody', A beautiful old Irish song; Luke Kelly recorded it. It's not very well known. It's about dying or emigrating or both, I don't know".

**WCP:** You seem to put

everything into your performances. Is that it, or does it just seem that way?

**DD:** "I feel very lucky to be up there doing it at all. I come from a long line of sort of labourers. So, it was very rare for anybody in my line of people to be doing anything like I'm doing, you know? So to be doing

art, I feel very privileged. So I can't help but give it everything when I'm up there, you know?"

**WCP:** You're successful – you've had a number one album. How hard is it to make a living from it?

**DD:** "Don't let the number one fool you! You can sell a few hundred albums and be number one in this country and you may not make any money at all, you know? It's tough financially. As I said before, I'd work in a low-income job with a bad boss just to be able to go out at night and do what I do. Absolutely! I used to have to do a bit of labouring and bar work, you know? That's all learning – you realise how lucky you are when you have to do proper graft – physical work, especially in the winter".

**WCP:** Do you have favourite memories of performing?

**DD:** "I remember performing in a club called Water Rats in King's Cross in London and Morrissey and Chrissie Hynde were in the audience. Morrissey came backstage afterwards. I think a Dublin cousin of his gave him my album and he loved it, he got into me and came to see me. The next thing was I'm on tour with him in America, playing Radio City Music Hall, the real Grand Ole Opry and all these places. It was really incredible!"

**WCP:** What do you like about West Cork?

**DD:** "I love the place! I love

its history – of the chieftains – of the McCarthy's and the O'Sullivan's and the history of rebellion and the war of independence. I love the people. I have some great friends. And the sense of freedom down there. The food in West Cork is the best I've tasted in Ireland. I've never tasted food like it anywhere else. I love the Murphys too!

"The crowds are great. I'm playing for a lot of years in De Barra's. It's just a wonderful vibe. It's one of the nicest rooms in the world I've played in! They're finely tuned into music and the people that come to listen to the shows, they're musical minds and musical spirits. And Ray and all the staff in De Barra's. And the stay-ins afterwards, the craic, and you sing a few songs. It's just a beautiful vibe. It's like an extended family down there or something!"

**WCP:** Anything else you'd like to add?

**DD:** "No, It's All Good".

**Damien Dempsey plays the Maritime Hotel, Bantry on April 3, tickets €30 from the Hotel or Ticketmaster, show at 8.30.**

My gig of the month is Séamus Begley and Jim Murray in De Barra's Friday, March 27, Tickets: €15.

## Clonakilty and Skibbereen included as Cork County Council approves record number of grants to arts organisations

Cork County Council's Arts Grants Scheme and Municipal Districts Arts Development Fund will provide financial assistance for 167 artists and arts organisations this year.

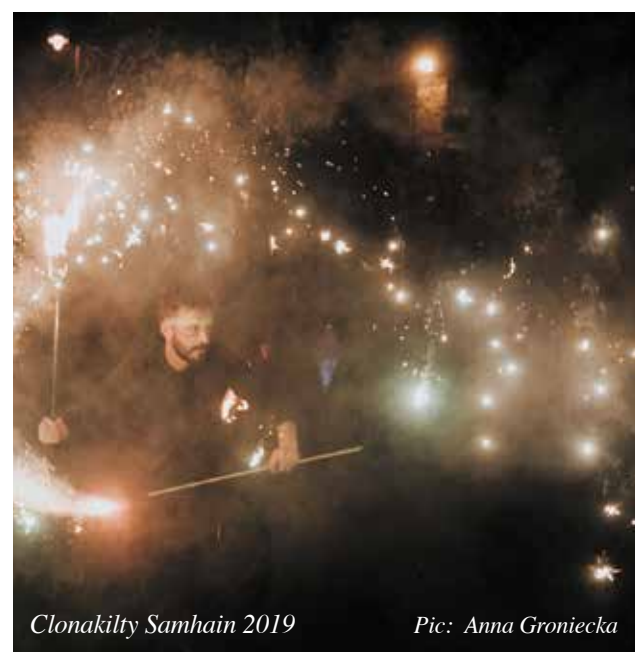
A total of 35 arts festivals across the county, including Skibbereen, Kanturk, Middleton, Mallow and Clonakilty submitted successful proposals for expanding their activities and developing innovative new programmes.

With a budget of €162,000, the Arts Grants Scheme is the Council's main scheme for funding arts events and activities while the Municipal Dis-

trict Arts Development Fund, totalling €150,000, supports new initiatives that enhance public access to the arts and support cultural development in each of the eight Municipal Districts.

Cork County Council is one of the few local authorities in the country that has a specific scheme supporting Irish Language Arts. The purpose of this scheme is to encourage artists to develop projects using the Irish Language and to encourage organisations to programme Irish Language events and activities.

Welcoming the Council's funding decision, Mayor of the



Clonakilty Samhain 2019

Pic: Anna Groniecka

County of Cork Cllr. Ian Doyle said, "This year we have seen a record number of applications for funding, which points to a vibrant arts and culture sector across Cork County. The funding we are able to allocate this year will be put to great use enabling festivals, artists and voluntary arts organisations de-

liver projects which will have real impact in local communities. As a Gaeltacht county, we have an important role in promoting Irish language use and supporting gaelgóirí artists. We are very proud to have a scheme in place to accomplish this"

Chief Executive of Cork

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County Council Tim Lucey highlighted the role of the Council in making Arts accessible throughout the county, "Last year Cork County Council's support of the Arts enabled over 23,000 people county-wide to actively participate in the creative arts, including the elderly, young people and those with special

needs. Arts funding has helped organisations and artists to reach an audience of at least 250,000 both locally and visitors. While the economic benefit of Arts Festivals funded by the Council is estimated to be in excess of €4.3million the social, cultural and community impact is invaluable."



# Special Feature SPRING GARDENS

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## Editor's favourite:



For a low maintenance Architectural plant choose a Cornus 'Ed-

die's White Wonder' or Cornus Kousa Chinensis from Shanahan's Nurseries in Clonakilty.

Cornus 'Eddie's White Wonder' is a compact tree that produces flowers with large, elegant white bracts in May. The fresh green leaves turn bright orange, crimson and purple in autumn. This plant is ideal for almost any size garden, be it courtyard, cottage or large informal. It can also be grown in patio containers.

Cornus Kousa Chinensis or Chinese Dogwood is a beau-

tiful summer flowering small tree/large shrub. Perfectly hardy, it has magnificent large white flowers heads along spreading branches. Again it provides superb autumn colour, increasing in brilliance for a month before its leaves fall. Expect to grow up to 10ft over 10 years.

Grow both these wonderful plants in well-drained soil in sun or partial shade.

## March in the garden

As the year moves on, so does the day length increase and our hope more sunshine hours. Do watch out for frosts – we are only in March and are not out of the woods as regards cold and frost yet: This time two years ago, our gardens were covered in snow!

Have frost protection/cover available for tender, frost sensitive plants and flowers and keep a regular eye on the weather forecast. The meteorological app is very good and can be configured to your local area to make it more relevant to your specific geographic area.

Protect new spring shoots, especially perennials, with soft, succulent growth, such as Delphiniums and Lupins



### GARDENING

John Hosford  
The Weekend Garden Centre

against slug damage. A slug attack at this stage of the year could wipe out your plants and display. The advice is to be vigilant and take adequate precautions in time: You should arrive before the slugs arrive.

Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes. Do be careful in more inland, frost prone areas to protect seed potatoes against frost. Use frost protection fleece, cloches or cold frames.

Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials. Take advantage of the move to add an organic fertiliser and some well-composted organic material.

Top dress containers with fresh compost and a slow release organic fertiliser.

If you are topping up containers with acid loving plants ensure you use an ericaceous

compost.

Cut back Cornus (dogwood) and Salix (willow) grown for colourful winter stems.

Hoe and mulch weeds to keep them under control, using a good sharp, Dutch hoe for best results. Hoe early on in the day and choose a bright, dry day for best results.

Complete pruning of bush and climbing roses. Remove some of the older shoots to encourage vigour and rejuvenation of your Rose bushes.

### Greenhouse, conservatory and houseplants

Move Cymbidium orchids, Yucca, Ficus and Citrus outdoors during warm days ie above 10 Degrees C. Bring in again before temperatures drop. Pot up houseplants showing signs of being rootbound. Pot on any Begonia, Gloxinia, Pelargoniums, Fuchsias.

Give greenhouse plants more space, as they put on new growth. This will help to prevent disease and to contain early pest infestations. Check plants daily to check if water is required. Use luke warm water if weather is cold. Young seedlings should be checked for water at least twice a day. It is very easy to forget seedlings after the short days of winter now disappearing. Transplant and pot on new seedlings and young plants.

Open doors and vents on greenhouses to increase ventilation on warm, sunny days.

Remember to close up vents before temperatures drop for the night.

### Pest and disease watch

Vine weevil larvae can be a serious pest of containerised plants and become active this month. Tip out the rootball of suspect plants and check for the suspect plants, and inspect for the creamy, orange-headed



maggots, which tend to curl up into a 'c' shape. Check out biological parasites to control the vine weevil infestation. Do remember that the parasitic nematodes perform best when the temperatures are above 10 C. Check for infestations of red spider mite, whitefly, thrips, aphids, scale insect. Yellow sticky traps suspended strategically overhead in the greenhouse will give you a chance to monitor and identify what pests are present. Brush up fallen compost and debris and pick off dead leaves from plants. This will help prevent pest and disease spreading.

### Fruit garden

Finish all planting of fruit trees and bushes this month. Continue mulching of currant, gooseberry and cane fruits. Protect blossoms of wall trained fruit trees and bushes.

Plant strawberry plants. Don't plant strawberry plants where previously grown.

### Summer flowering bulbs

Start Dahlias and Begonias into growth. Start off indoors in a frost-free place.

Plant in a pot or tray in moistened compost. These can be planted outdoors after being thoroughly hardened-off when

all risk of frost is over at the end of May/early June.

### Vegetable garden

Start off a few courgettes indoors in a warm, frost-free greenhouse or conservatory. If you are going to start this early you would need to have a glasshouse, conservatory or sun room at the ready preferably with some background heat to protect against frost. However if you are going to grow outside, it is better you would delay sowing until the latter days of April/early May. Sow one seed per pot on its side in a three or four inch pot. Biodegradable pots are ideal – they cut down on plastic use and allow planting with the minimum of disturbance.

Sow a few flowers such as Marigolds, Nasturtiums to help in combating pests. The bright flowers of marigolds and nasturtiums attract predators that eat greenflies and whiteflies seem to be repelled. These colourful additions to the vegetable garden are a colourful and tasty bonus! There is a great selection of varieties available to spice up your vegetable garden!

Don't plant tomatoes outside until all risk of frost is over. You can start off tomatoes in a frost-free greenhouse but ensure it is frost-free as you can get late frosts sneaking up on you until late April/early May. Tomatoes may be grown in large pots, grow-bags or deep troughs. Always use fresh, clean compost. There are a huge array of tomato varieties available.

Factors colouring your choice will include fruit size, fruit colour, fruit size, flavour, outdoor or indoor growing, disease resistance. Do look out for blight and disease resistant varieties. Choose Tumbler or Tumbling Tom for hanging basket and window boxes.

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Special Feature **SPRING GARDENS****A COTTAGE GARDEN PROJECT**

Jean Perry

Over the coming months Jean Perry of Glebe Gardens will share the ongoing successes and failures of growing a small cottage garden using no-dig and organic principles to see just how much food she can get out of such a plot. Join her on this journey...

**Gardening despite the weather**

I had hoped that by now I would be writing about how well my garden was looking, after I had cleaned it all up, mulched and prepared it for planting. However, given the atrocious weather we have endured for practically the whole of February, nothing much has changed. The ground is sodden, the weeds are growing through the once immaculate woodchip paths, and nothing has been planted. Gardeners are renowned for their hyperbole when it comes to the weather, but as I sit here writing, hail is lashing against the window and the trees are rocking in the gusty wind. A plant outside my window that I have been propping up all winter is now horizontal. Ok, enough you say, we get the picture. It is all very disheartening though. So, sitting here with a cup of coffee and a slice

of my granddaughter's birthday cake, I am thinking about what can and should be done, despite the weather.

Sowing seeds inside is the obvious place to start. If you haven't already sown peppers and aubergines, now is the time to do it. They need some heat, a windowsill propagator or at least the hot press. Peppers will take about two weeks to germinate even at 20 degree Celsius, so patience is needed. Next around the middle of March, sow tomatoes. If anything, try to keep them a little bit warmer and they will germinate more quickly. Hopefully by then the weather will have improved and we will be in full flow of sowing seeds inside and out.

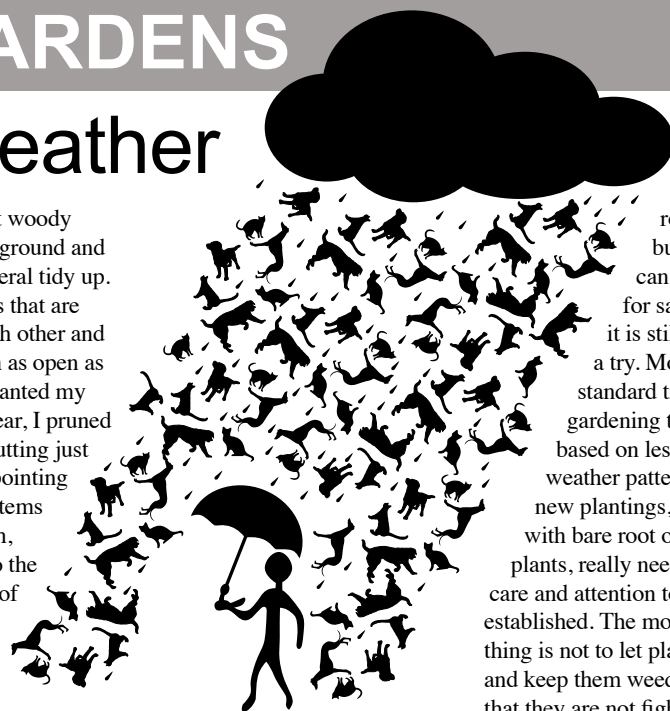
Another timely job that can be done is pruning. I love blackcurrants and they produce most of their fruit on younger shoots. As a rule of thumb,

I take out the oldest woody stems, down to the ground and give the bush a general tidy up. I just take out stems that are rubbing against each other and try to keep the bush as open as possible. When I planted my small bushes last year, I pruned them right down, cutting just above an outward pointing bud. I had several stems of quite good length, which I pushed into the soil in a corner out of the way, and they all rooted. I now have about five or six bushes ready to plant in a space where I would like a short length of hedge. What could be more useful than a blackcurrant hedge?

I would also like some raspberries, but don't have the space for a long row. I am going to experiment with a circle

of raspberry canes. I would prefer autumn raspberries as they are very easy to look after. They fruit on the new growth and should be cut to the ground in February and then the new growth tied up as usual. It is getting a bit late to plant bare

root plants but if you can find some for sale, I think it is still worth a try. Most of the standard timings of gardening tasks are based on less erratic weather patterns. All new plantings, whether with bare root or pot grown plants, really need a little care and attention to get them established. The most important thing is not to let plants dry out and keep them weed-free, so that they are not fighting for nutrients. But anyway, who knows what the weather will throw at us next, didn't we have snow in mid-March a couple of years ago? Just a minute, the sun is shining!

**Let nature be your medicine**

The motto in the headline of this article underpins everything The Hollies Centre for Sustainability offers, as **John Conway** explains.

Another year, another season and another Spring, Summer and Autumn to look forward to. As the sun rises in the sky a little bit more each day and the days gradually get longer, we can look forward to getting out into nature and making those necessary connections with the natural world.

Primary and Secondary Schools have started booking their tours for learning about how to live more sustainably, eat more local and healthy food, and build a life that doesn't cost the earth.

Our 2020 program at The Hollies offers courses on natural building, organic gardening, family communication and nature connection every month from February through to November. In our natural building courses, we have workshops on cob building. This is an ancient method of building that is part of our heritage and may become part of our future. Cob is made from the subsoil under our feet, mixed with straw and water and sculpted and moulded into beautiful shapes that we can live in. Cob is carbon neutral, ecological and accessible. We have one-day introductory courses and a week-long intensive course,



after which many people have started on a journey to building their own homes. Our program also includes workshops on timber framing and building dry compost toilets.

We offer a range of gardening courses for beginners to more experienced gardeners, all approached from a holistic perspective in which the Earth is treated with the dignity and respect it deserves. Our philosophy and approach is a simple equation of healthy soil, which means healthy plants equals healthy people. So, if you would like to grow food but are not sure where to start, the 'Starting a Veg Garden from Scratch' course could be the one for you. Teachers and educators who would like to bring new skills into their schools may also be interested in our gardening courses. We also offer consultancy for starting school gardens.

'Wild Food Foraging' and 'Making your own Herbal Remedies' from common plants growing around you are garnering enthusiastic interest. This is a great day out exploring the gifts that nature has to offer, after which a feast is made from the gathered produce. Many wild herbs that grow abundantly around us offer medicine, when you know how to prepare and use them. This is also part of the offering at The Hollies Centre.

The 'Family Communication' courses at The Hollies are a well-established part of our program. Many people have learnt new ways and techniques for improving communication

and listening. Some even bring their teenagers along – when the whole family invests in learning a constructive way of building and maintaining harmony at home, the benefit can be huge: less conflict and more enjoyment. Why not try out a family conference based on compassion and mindfulness once a week or once a month. How to do it isn't common knowledge yet but it isn't rocket science either.

Nature connection exists in many aspects of the work at The Hollies. This intrinsic connection is simply engaging with nature in a holistic, respectful and peaceful manner. This can be expressed in many ways often out of a desire to feel a part of something bigger than ourselves; in acknowledging the passing of the seasons and marking the four cardinal points of the year. These are marked at

The Hollies at Imbolc, Bealtane, Lughnasa and Samhain. At these seasonal festivals we offer meditative nature walks using our labyrinth in the landscape.

This awareness can also be cultivated by spending time with animals. 'The human – horse connection' course at The Hollies is a new venture offering an insight into how being with horses can be a powerful tool for self development.

All the courses at The Hollies are facilitated by experienced practitioners in their field. Our courses are mostly hands-on and practical in the 'learning by doing' approach. A vegetarian lunch is provided in all our workshops.

The Hollies Centre for Sustainability is located near Enniskeane.  
[www.thehollies.ie](http://www.thehollies.ie)

**Training courses and school tours****22 March Starting a Veg Garden from Scratch****28 March Family Communication****18 April Edible Wild Plants****18 April Composting Toilet Course****19 April Intro to Cob Building**Bookings: [info@thehollies.ie](mailto:info@thehollies.ie)[www.thehollies.ie](http://www.thehollies.ie)



Special Feature **SPRING GARDENS**

# Starting with fruit

Starting to grow fruit sounds daunting, but fruit-growing is less demanding than growing vegetables or annual flowers, and most soft fruit is really easy, as **Deborah Ballard**, Future Forests explains in the first of a two-part series.

If you have the space for a couple of trees, fruit trees have two seasons of real beauty – in blossom and when the fruit is ripening – and make lovely specimen trees – you can plant spring bulbs underneath. Because fruit-trees are grown on rootstocks that control the size of the tree, there are ones for even the smallest garden, or even for a patio. Strawberries can be grown in the smallest bed or in pots. And nothing tastes as good as fruit from your own garden!

I'm going to give an outline of what you have to think about when starting to plant fruit, and from there, you can check out the various cultivars (named varieties) on the Future Forests website to find the cultivars that are right for you and your garden; you will also find there more information about rootstocks, onto which most tree-fruit is grafted. (When you plant your fruit-tree, be sure to leave the graft-union – the swollen-looking bit on the trunk where the cultivar is grafted onto the rootstock – a couple of inches above soil level).

When it comes to tree-fruit, beginners often worry about pruning, but it's easier than you might think, especially at the important stage, when the tree is young. If it really spooks you, ask an experienced



gardener to come and show you how.

To start with, think about your micro-climate and soil. Fruit generally prefers a deep, fertile, slightly acid to neutral soil, but most fruit will tolerate an alkaline or poor soil if plenty of organic matter – well-rotted manure or compost – is added to the soil. Also important is a reasonably sheltered site, and plenty of sun, although some fruit – gooseberries and sour cherries, for example – will tolerate some shade. Frost pockets should be avoided if possible, as a late frost can destroy the blossom.

## Tree Fruit

**Apples:** Apples usually do well in our climate, and there are several cultivars that cope with colder or wetter areas, and are resistant to scab, that curse of damp climates like ours.

Firstly, you will need two different cultivars, which must be compatible (i.e. that flower at more or less the same time), although one tree will probably be enough if close neighbours have apple-trees of their own. Note that Bramleys or other 'triploid' apples do not produce viable pollen, so if you live in an isolated spot you will need two different pollination partners, to pollinate the triploid apple and each other.

Apples come on dwarfing rootstocks, and will need to be staked for the first few years, and for life if on very dwarfing rootstocks (for a pot-grown patio tree, for example) – see the website for advice.



Check the vigour of the tree – a Sunset, say, will be two-thirds the size of a Bramley when grown on the same rootstock. Look for a cultivar which is compact and not lanky – they're easier to prune (and harvest).

Choose a hardy, healthy cultivar: You need a canker- and scab-resistant cultivar in most parts of Ireland, and a cold- and wet-resistant one except in very mild areas.

Apples bear their fruit on little 'spurs' growing from the branches, or at the tips of the branches, or on both (a 'partial tip-bearer'). Choose a spur-bearer – they're easier to prune (and can also be trained if you'd like to give it a try).

Choose a reliable cropper, which is not prone to biennial bearing if not ruthlessly thinned.

Don't choose an early apple unless you're planting several apple-trees. Early apples only

keep for a week after ripening, although the ones on the shady side of the tree ripen later, and leftovers can be juiced and frozen. Look for a mid-season apple, which will ripen in September and keep until December, or a late one, which you pick in late October and will keep well into the new year, sometimes as late as March, if stored properly in cold but frost-free conditions.

If you only room for one tree, consider planting a dual-purpose apple, for eating and cooking. These slowly sweeten in store for eating, and generally keep their shape well when cooked, instead of dissolving into a purée.

Finally, choose one with the RHS Award of Garden Merit. There are many other excellent apples, but an AGM tree will usually be best for beginners.

For most Irish conditions, I'd recommend Sunset and Egremont Russet (mid-season

eaters), Winston and Winter Gem (late eaters), Charles Ross (lime-tolerant) as a dual-purpose apple, and Lane's Prince Albert as a cooker. If you have room for an early apple, Katy is very good. But of course, there are hundreds of other really good apples out there, so do browse the website and pick the one that suits you.

## Pears, plums, greengages, damsons and cherries:

Pears, plums and cherries need warmer, sunnier conditions than apples to fruit well and they come into blossom earlier, so can succumb to frost in colder areas. Choose a late-flowering cultivar if your garden is prone to late frosts. They will often fruit much better if trained as a fan (pears, cherries and plums) or as an espalier (pears) against a warm, south-facing, sheltered wall – but that's a bit daunting for beginners! They, too, generally need compatible pollination partners, but there are self-fertile or partially self-fertile cultivars if you haven't room for two.

Pears are mostly spur-bearers, and form spurs very readily, although there are a few tip-bearers. Most need a pollination partner, and there are a few triploid varieties, which should be avoided unless you're planting an orchard (see under Apples for explanations). If your garden is prone to late frosts, choose a pear in Pollination Group 5, like Beth.

Pears tend to have a very upright habit, but it's really easy to keep pruning to an outward facing bud when the tree is young, to encourage a more goblet-like shape.

Pears are picked when they're fat but still hard – check the picking time on the website – and ripened indoors; they don't store well.

If you want to try growing a single, free-standing pear-tree in less than perfect conditions, Conference is the one to go for, as it can produce seedless pears

*continued on next page...*

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## Special Feature SPRING GARDENS

...cont'd from previous page

without being pollinated, is reliable, and is very well adapted to the Irish climate. If you have room for two, choose a hardy, compatible one – Concorde is very good, being compact, reliable and early into bearing, with a delicious flavour.

Like pears, *plums*, *greengages*, *myrobalans* (cherry plums) and *damsons* bloom early, so a warm site is preferable; choose a late-flowering cultivar (pollination group 5), like Blue Tit, if your garden gets late frosts. They like a deep, fertile, clay soil, just on the acid side of neutral. Many plums are at least partially self-fertile, but all will fruit better with a pollination partner; fortunately, all these cousins fertilise each other if they bloom more or less at the same time. Plums must only be pruned in summer, as they are prone to silver-leaf disease if

pruned in autumn or winter.

Fresh plums do not keep, but cooked plums, frozen, will see you through the winter, so do consider cooking plums like Czar or Rivers' Early Prolific; both can also be eaten fresh when fully ripe.

An old, popular plum that does well in our climate is Victoria, perhaps better eaten cooked than fresh; Opal is quite hardy, too, and has a better flavour for eating fresh. Both come into flower mid-season; the culinary plum Yellow Pershore flowers a little later.

Luscious greengages need even warmer conditions to fruit well than most plums, and are unlikely to fruit well except in the warmest areas.

Myrobalans (cherry plums) are smaller and tougher, and damsons are super-hardy and disease-resistant, and will grow

anywhere, often producing so much fruit that it can break the branches if the fruit is not ruthlessly thinned. Some damsons, like Farleigh (very good in colder, wetter areas), are sweet enough to eat fresh in a good summer, and all are wonderful for pies and jam. A lovely way to grow myrobalans and smaller damsons and their cousin the bullace is to grow them as part of a fruiting hedge.

Sweet cherries make quite big trees, and have spectacular blossom. They make lovely specimen trees, the only disadvantage being that the birds are likely to take all the fruit before it's ripe enough for you. If you want fruit, it's better to train them against a warm wall. Cherries are quite tolerant as to soil, as long as it's well-drained and fairly deep. They must only be pruned in summer.

Most cherries need a pollination partner, but if you only have room for one, the delicious sweet cherry Stella is self-fertile; Sunburst is partially self-fertile, although it may crop better with a pollination partner. Like plums, cherries don't keep, so do consider a culinary cherry like Morello, the delicious, sour cooking cherry, for pies, bottling and Black Forest gateau; it's small, partially self-fertile, and shade-tolerant, a great pollinator for other cherries, and birds aren't so keen on the fruit.

Next month we'll continue with soft fruit.

To see all the fruit that Future Forests offer, see [www.future-forests.ie](http://www.future-forests.ie) for more info or call 027 66176.



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## Bring some living architecture to your garden with topiary from Clonakilty Garden Centre

Topiary, the art of training evergreen shrubs and trees into intricate shapes and forms, has been used historically in many different European gardening styles, from early Roman gardens to lavish Italian renaissance gardens through to modern day. With spheres, pyramids, spirals and lollipop-shaped plants available locally from Clonakilty Garden Centre, topiary is so versatile and striking that West Cork gardeners should consider including a piece of living architecture in their gardens.

Traditional subjects for

topiary have usually been evergreens to retain a permanent feature throughout the seasons. Clonakilty Garden Centre stocks box topiary in spheres and pyramids; Photinia Red Robin (spectacular evergreen glossy leaves with brilliant red tips) and bay trees in a lollipop shape; and Cupressocyparis leylandii Castlewellan Gold (lime and gold foliage) in spirals.

Particularly beautiful are their cloud pruned Cupressus arizonica Fastigiata, which is an elegant type of cypress with dense silver/blue, fragrant foliage. Cloud pruning is a Japanese

method of training trees and shrubs into shapes resembling clouds. This evergreen tree is drought tolerant, perfectly hardy and low maintenance. A light trim once or twice a year will keep its elegant form.

Care of these pre-shaped plants is not difficult, just trim once or twice a year to maintain their shape. A feed can be applied once a year in spring if desired to help maintain the plant's vigour and appearance and mulch with bark or organic matter if the plant is not surrounded by ornamental gravel.

Our lives can get busy and if you find your once beautiful topiary specimen has been neglected, all is not lost. The majority of evergreen plants will respond to hard pruning in early or mid-spring, especially yew and box. Once it has been hard pruned, help promote new growth by feeding and mulching, and avoid drought stress in the following seasons. Depending on the species, it can take a few years for the specimen to

grow back into its desired shape but good things always come with patience and time!






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Special Feature **SPRING GARDENS**

# Is gardening sustainable?

As a new gardening season starts, I thought it would be interesting to have a look at just how sustainable gardening and the plant growing industry is. With the current issues of global warming, use of fossil fuels and plastic, I feel it is up to us all to question our everyday use of resources at home and at work and their effect on the environment. For me, this is all about gardening and just how sustainable it is?

Here at Deelish Garden Centre, one of the most talked-about areas regarding sustainability in gardening is the use of peat. I am being

asked about peat-free substitutes every week for all uses, from seed sowing to multi-purpose compost. Exploitation of peatlands for fuel has been under way in Ireland for over 400 years. Today traditional turf cutting, mechanical turf cutting and industrial peat extraction have accounted for a staggering loss of 47 per cent of the original area of peatlands in Ireland. This represents over half a million hectares of land. This is not sustainable in any way and alternatives will need to be put in place as soon as possible. Peat is the most damaging fuel in terms of global warming; even worse than coal. Peat

was responsible for 3.4 million tonnes of emissions in Ireland during 2016, of which 75 per cent was for electricity and 25 per cent for residential heating. After these findings and continued pressure, state-owned Bord na Móna has committed to getting out of peat by 2030. The interesting figure here is that less than three per cent of peat harvested is used in horticulture and most of that three per cent is used in industrial growing of crops. Around one per cent of the total peat harvested in Ireland is used to fill the peat compost bags you see sold in garden centres! Based on these figures, the best way to protect our peatlands is to lobby for cleaner alternatives to produce electricity and think twice about burning peat products and turning on that light! We do stock some excellent peat free organic composts made here in Ireland. However we are always a bit surprised at how passionate some of our customers get about this issue, and even more surprised that they are happy to use the peat



## THE NATURAL GARDENER

Noah Chase

Noah studied horticulture at the Eden Project in Cornwall, England. He now co-manages a family run nursery, Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen, specialising in rare, unusual and edible plants. His passion is sustainable gardening, useful plants and care of the environment.

free alternative that has been shipped in from Germany! Another common problem

I am very aware of in the gardening industry is the use of plastic pots. Most of the pots used to house the plants we provide are made of single use black plastic. I have approached many of our suppliers regarding this issue, and I am happy to report at least three of our main suppliers have now started to supply their plants in 100 per cent recyclable pots. I hope to see this figure increase to all our suppliers in the next few years and plan to keep the pressure on to use recyclable pots. For plants that only need to be in a pot for a few months, I see no reason why they cannot be supplied in a biodegradable pot but so far none of our suppliers are providing this service. I have sourced a biodegradable pot for small plants and these are now available here at Deelish. We also encourage our customers to bring back their (clean) used pots for others to reuse, as these pots can be used many times and to only use them once seems like a real waste of resources to us. Ask for the free pots next time

you're in!

Many plants that are grown for the garden centre trade are raised in 'Intensive horticulture', using artificial feeds and pesticides. This type of artificial horticulture can adversely affect the soil environment. In this case the basic problem is, the use of very high doses of fertilisers, and the heavy metals contained in some of these fertilisers. Pesticides and weed killers are also used in these intensive growing environments, which all have negative effects on the surrounding soils, including the mycorrhizal fungi, earthworms and many other insects and animals (including humans). According to some estimates, over 98 per cent of sprayed insecticides and 95 per cent of herbicides reach a destination other than their target species. Such undesirable effects have led many pesticides and herbicides to be banned, while regulations have limited and/or reduced the use of others. Over time, pesticides

*continued on next page...*

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## Bee kind

by Mags Riordan  
of Bumblebee Farm

As I'm writing this, the sun is shining and it's a glorious spring day. It says it's eight degrees but it feels like 15. Hoverflies, bumblebees and a myriad of other flies are revelling in the sunny calm day. For all of us, it's a welcome respite from what we've been used to! My tips for this month are on emerging queens, from bumblebees to hoverflies.

The next few weeks are critical to successful colonies being raised and an abundance of pollinators from mid-April onwards.

While they have been out and about foraging over the winter months this is the natural time for nest building and the first colonies; we can do so much to help make their lives a little easier no matter what size your garden is. If you're considering making changes or expanding your planting areas, there are a few things you could consider, such as nesting sites, shelter and food sources for pollen and nectar.

Each species has its own needs but if you can incorporate a mix of habitats, then all the better. These could include raised beds of dry-stone

walls with pollinator-friendly plantings like dandelions, primroses, heathers and spring bulbs like muscari, crocus and species tulips: Covering two needs. Patches of bare ground are necessary for some solitary bees and tufted grass for others. Wildflowers are the most important sources of food for our pollinators; they have co-evolved to support each other and flower at a time when they are needed most. If you have room, mixed hedges will provide rich food sources and shelter, including nesting sites. So many of these foods are edible for humans too, including dandelion, primrose, daisies, gorse, willow and hazel.

Bumblebee queens, which I'm most familiar with, are getting ready to start their colonies, but need to have a readily available source of nectar and pollen. Nectar for energy and pollen to plump up her ovaries and feed her brood. Willow, hazel and Alder are incredible sources of pollen, all of which are edible in varying degrees.

As she begins her nest, she will lay eggs and fashion a honey pot for herself and, just like birds, she will brood them and feed from her honey pot. As they progress, she will need to forage for pollen to feed them but can't be away too long,



as maintaining temperature in vital. Food sources near the nest are critical. Until she successfully rears the first batch, she must do everything. From mid-April, the first female workers emerge, and she will then remain in the nest rearing her young.

I have only touched on the importance of wild food here. If you would like to know more, we have an extended blog post going into more detail, which we hope will give a better understanding of their needs and what we can do to help.

We have also included tips and suggestions for pollinator-friendly summer bedding schemes.

If you would like to know

more and get a peak into our world, then we would love to see you at the first of our open days on the farm on March 29, where we will have a talk, a tour explaining different habitats and also how to make a bug hotel that suits our native species.

Eddie Attwell from the Glengarriff Eccles will be on hand with incredible products using produce grown on the farm and foraged locally. Eddie's knowledge, passion and creativity are unsurpassed in West Cork!

Eva Milka from Gaelic Escargot will also be in attendance sharing her incredible journey into snail farming.

Looking forward to meet you all.



# Special Feature SPRING GARDENS

...cont'd from previous page

have generally become less persistent and more species-specific, reducing their environmental footprint somewhat. In addition, the amounts of pesticides applied per hectare have declined, in some cases by 99 per cent. Many Irish and European growers are now using natural predators to target specific pests in the growing trade. Another encouraging development in recent years is the use of natural fertilisers and use of mycorrhizal fungi in soils. It is also worth noting the percentage of land used for the growing of plants for the garden centre trade is tiny in comparison to other intensive agriculture and horticulture land use.

Neonicotinoids are a class of insecticides chemically related to nicotine. The name literally means 'new nicotine-like insecticides'. They are much more toxic to invertebrates, like insects, than they are to mammals, birds and other larger organisms. Many large growers and suppliers of garden centre plants used these chemicals in their compost mixes to avoid damage to their plants from pests, without caring about the effects to our pollinators and other insects that actually help the plants they are trying to protect. Many plants are now specifically labelled as bee or pollinator-friendly, with a picture of a cartoon bumblebee on the label, such as the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) provide a 'Perfect for Pollinators' logo, which can be added to the label of any of the long list of garden plants that they judge to be good for pollinators. The irony is that many of these plants with the logo continued to use these neonicotinoids in the compost! The good news is, from 2018 there has been a European ban and now neonicotinoids can now only be used in greenhouses where the crop stays inside for its entire lifecycle. Many beekeepers are already seeing some positive

signs in the last few years and I hope we will all start to see all insects start to increase in numbers over the coming years.

One of the most satisfying parts of working at a garden

...the amounts of pesticides applied per hectare have declined, in some cases by 99 per cent. Many Irish and European growers are now using natural predators to target specific pests in the growing trade.

centre for me is seeing our customers' gardens grow, literally! There is no doubting that many of the plants we supply are adding to the biodiversity of the local land, as well as feeding and providing shelter for the various creatures we are sharing the landscape with. I love to supply our customers with native trees and plants, as these plants can support a diverse range of our native wildlife, which need all the help they can get. I respect gardeners wanting to plant native species (defined as having been in Ireland at the end of the last ice age). However a garden with only native plants can be a bit limited in many regards. A garden with a healthy mix of native and other plants can greatly increase the availability of food through the year and habitat for the wildlife, as well as the enjoyment of the garden! A great example was last year when not much else was flowering, our giant Echiums were covered with thousands of pollinators including humming bird hawkmoths, various bumble bees, honey bees and many more. They continued to flower for many months and I am sure the pollinators were not complaining! I would also always encourage gardeners to allow some native Ivy to grow

in their garden as this plant flowers during a 'hungry gap' for many insects as well as berries for the birds. Be aware of potentially invasive plants, as care and common sense should always be taken if considering planting these, as they can quickly dominate your garden and hugely reduce the diversity of the flora and fauna.

Here at Deelish Garden Centre we try and grow as many of our own plants as possible. Many of these are grown from seed. On a side note, we are proud to have been selling organic seeds for over 30 years! Some of our other plants are grown from cuttings, bulbs and divisions. We are the sole supplier of some of these plants in Ireland and, as well as supplying many gardens across Ireland, a few have even found their way to Buckingham Palace! We only use natural pesticides on the rare occasions of a greenfly, whitefly or scale bug infestation. Generally the ladybugs, birds and other natural predators take care of any unwanted visitors for us! Slugs and snails rarely get out of control and we find the natural ferric phosphate pellets work really well when protecting young seedlings. For weeds in the gravel car park and around the garden centre, we only use coarse sea salt and pull by hand. For other weeds we have been getting fantastic results with our 20 per cent vinegar spray. We are always happy to show our customers all the above methods of natural gardening techniques. All the products you will need are here at our newly built shop, which we decided to add extra insulation, PV solar panels and low wattage heaters, all in an effort to do our best to try and make our own business as sustainable as possible!

There is undoubtedly a lot of change needed in the horticultural industry with regard to peat, plastic, artificial fertilisers and harmful chemicals but

there have been many progressive changes over the past few years. I am very hopeful that the seeds of change have been sown and over time, the horticulture industry will naturally grow back to its organic roots.

I would also always encourage gardeners to allow some native Ivy to grow in their garden as this plant flowers during a 'hungry gap' for many insects as well as berries for the birds.

In conclusion, after taking a good look at the nature of just how sustainable gardening and my work is for me, I am quite happy to say, I am proud of the service, products and plants that we, at Deelish, provide to the people of West Cork and beyond. So here is to another gardening year ahead, and remember gardening doesn't have to cost the earth.

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## people Sport &amp; Fitness

## Short and efficient home training



## DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

Danish freelance journalist and fitness professional Tania Presutti, who now resides in Clonakilty, delivers a series of efficient DIY fitness exercises you can do at home.

While we wait for better weather, there is no reason to sit still at home when you can be working on getting stronger and ultimately gaining better health. Bad weather is often the excuse to avoid any kind of physical activity that involves going outside: It's cold, it's wet, it's windy, and it's often dark – in short, not very inviting. So for March – while we wait on the sun, here are three short, but highly efficient home training sessions to do indoors, which will strengthen your core, legs and arms, and fuel the fat burn. For the first one, you only need your body weight and a watch; the third session involves weights. And if you put on a good tune, these sessions will be done in no time and you will feel great for the rest of the day.

**Tabata drill for a strong core and strong legs with Mountain**

**Climbers:** Tabata is a HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) session and it will have you working hard for 20 seconds, followed by a 10 second break – for a four minutes set x 3. Take one-minute break between the (4 minutes) sets. Tabata is good for both beginners and the more experienced, as you decide what number of repetitions you will try to make in your 20-second workout. But if you choose to be too kind to yourself (not push yourself hard enough), you will not get as much out of the drill, in terms of muscle and heart activity and the holy grail of fat-after burn. So, if you're a beginner, you can set your number low for the first four minutes set, and if it's too easy, add one or two more repetitions in your second and third set.

Start in the Push Up position; up on straight arms, body in plank position with straight back and legs. While keeping your back straight, 'kick' your left knee up to your chest and 'kick' it right back down again, while simultaneously 'kicking' up your right knee to your chest. And you 'just' keep kicking your knees up and back out again for 20 seconds, taking 10 seconds rest. Count how many kicks you can do and try to reach the same number on every 20 seconds, for all the sets.

If it feels long and hard, which it most likely will, given the nature of Tabata drills, just remember it's only four minutes of work for only three sets. You can do it! You can survive four minutes of high intense training, take a full minute break and go again for another two sets. Afterwards, you'll feel relieved and proud of yourself and you will also have boosted your metabolism sky-high for the rest of the day.

*Mountain Climber tip: Watch out that your butt is not sticking*



Standing bicep curl

*upwards, as this will cause you to relax too much in your core.*

If you're new to training, you can choose a less demanding exercise, such as squats or lunges (for legs) or push ups/ dips (for core and arms).

**20 - 20 - 10x 3: Abs, back and legs:** This one is less intense, but demands just as much from your core, if you're doing the exercises with correct form. Both the abs and the back exercise are to be done thoroughly in a pace that allows for deep contractions of the core muscles involved. The Squat Jumps will obviously make your heart go a little faster and hopefully a little 'burn' on the quads, but due to the numbers (10) of repetitions it won't fatigue you so much, so you can't do three sets total.

**20 Abs 'Touch your toes':** Lie flat on your back, arms above your head and legs straight out,

feet together. Lift legs and arms up at the same time, and try to touch your toes without bending your legs. Lower legs and arms controlled and raise up again to do a new repetition. Do 20 total and move straight into the next exercise:

**20 Supermans:** Lie flat on your stomach. Arms above your head and legs flat and straight. Lift arms and legs as high as you can and lower with control. Do 20 repetitions total and move onto the last exercise:

**10 Jumping Squats:** Stand up straight, feet shoulder width or a little more apart. Jump up from the position and land with the same width between your feet in a squat position. Jump up again for the next repetition, do 10 total. Take one-minute break before doing the three exercises again – repeat for three sets of each in total.

#### Dumbbell Workout: Standing bicep curls, shoulder press and rows:

To tone those arms and give you strength to carry groceries, kids, stones and bottles, here is the last session involving dumbbells. If you don't have any, you can use half or full litre bottles (fill them up with water) or kettlebells. As long as there's a handle and it has a bit of weight, you can use it.

**12 Standing Bicep curls:** Start standing up straight. Feet shoulder width apart and take a dumbbell in each hand, arms hanging down the sides, relaxing apart from gripping the weights. Lift hands and bend elbows upwards, to bring the dumbbells up to your chest, fingers pointing in towards your body in top position. Lower slowly with full control.

**12 Standing Shoulder press:** Stand up straight, feet shoulder width apart, a dumbbell in each hand. Bend elbows and lift weights up so they are in line

with your shoulders, straighten arms up along side your head (keep weights on each side of your head, so you don't hold them directly above your skull). Lower weights with controlled movement to shoulder height to finish the lift. Repeat for 12 times. If the last repetitions feel hard, take a deep breath and press the weights up, use the strength from your legs and core in the lift as well. *Tip: Don't use weights you're not confident you can lift above your head 12 times.*

**12 Standing rows:** Stand up straight, feet shoulder width apart, a dumbbell in each hand, bend slightly over by the hip, so your upperbody is leaning a little forward. *Tip: Important to keep your back straight while doing this.* Let your arms hang down from your shoulders, bend elbows and lift weights up to your chest, while elbows are aligned with your body. Remember the lift comes primarily from your upper back and shoulders. Your forward leaning position is strengthening your core muscles and helping your lowerback posture.

Do all three exercises with minimum break between them, and then take a three to five minute break before doing another round. I recommend doing three rounds total if you have the time.

I hope you will give one or maybe all three sessions a try, while we wait for better weather. Time spend training, is time spend on bettering your health and ultimately your life, so it's well spend and I promise you, you'll feel great afterwards.

If you have any questions or comments to this month's column, you're welcome to contact me on: [taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com](mailto:taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com) or via my Instagram: [@trainwithadane](https://www.instagram.com/trainwithadane)

## Skibbereen adventure race (SCAR) to feature in the 2020 Continental Tyres National Adventure Race Series

Building on a hugely popular series last year, the 2020 Continental Tyres National Adventure Race Series was launched last month with some exciting additions for the year ahead.

The multisport adventure race series includes running, cycling and kayaking across some of Ireland's most challenging – and picturesque – terrain including the Skibbereen SCAR race route, the Dingle Peninsula in Co. Kerry and Killary Fjord in Leenane, Co. Galway. The 2020 series starts on March 7 at Quest Kenmare, with thousands of adventure racers expected to take part in the 11-event series between March and November.

The National Adventure Race Series features two competitive category options including Expert level where participants climb higher, cycle longer and paddle further. Sport level is shorter in all elements, but somewhat faster and highly competitive with some of the country's fittest athletes participating. visit [www.masi.ie](http://www.masi.ie) or [www.kayathlon.ie](http://www.kayathlon.ie) for regular updates.

## Over 150 crews enter Clonakilty Park Hotel West Cork Rally 2020

As the days draw nearer to one of the highlights of the 2020 Rally Calendar, the organisers of the Clonakilty Park Hotel West Cork Rally are proud to announce that the entry has now reached over 150 crews across all categories. At the recent rally launch, Cork Motor Club made several key commitments, which have clearly resonated with competitors.

One commitment was to pass on any additional savings if the opportunity arose. During a recent meeting with all Motor Clubs in Dublin, a democratic vote by Rally clubs yielded further savings for 2020 events. CMC and the West Cork Rally

are proud to announce that these savings will now be redistributed back to competitors as promised. Each crew will receive a voucher to the value of €60 at documentation scrutiny. This voucher may be redeemed in dozens of business in Clonakilty and surrounding areas over the weekend of the rally.

Among those who have entered to date are multiple West Cork winners Donagh Kelly and Conor Foley in their VW Polo R5. They will face stiff opposition from drivers such as Alastair Fisher, Meirion Evans, Sam Moffett, Desi Henry, Tom Cave and Matt Edwards to name but a few. There is, as

always, a strong geographical spread of entries from across the island of Ireland, as well as the UK, and the modified entry already reflects this in abundance. John Dalton, Kevin Eves, Kevin Gallagher and Wesley Patterson are among the modified crews to have entered. David Guest, Vincent McSweeney, Gerard O'Connell and William Buttner are among the locals who intend to take part.

The 2019 Irish Tarmac Historic Champion Duncan Williams is among the historic entrants, as well as the 2005 West Cork Rally winner Denis Cronin. With the famous Ring stage running as the first stage on the Sunday morning for the

first time in a number of years, the Junior and Historic crews will get a chance to tackle this fabulous test. Live end-of-stage reports will be provided by Killian Duffy and Andy Walsh of [onthepacenote.net](http://onthepacenote.net) and live coverage of stages will be provided by Special Stage Rally Review, beginning with the opening stage of the event at Ardfield. More details on the live coverage will be available shortly.

Cork Motor Club is also delighted to announce that Calor have come on board as associate sponsors for this year's rally.

The closing date for entries has been extended and a



Last years National Rally winners Mikko Hirvonen & Jarno Ottman in Ford Escort Mk2

*Pic: Kevin O'Driscoll.*

seeded list was published on Wednesday, March 4, as per regulations. A reminder to those that may still require accommodation, that any enquiries

for accommodation should be directed to Mick Hanly at the email address [chamber@clonakilty.ie](mailto:chamber@clonakilty.ie).



## people Sport &amp; Fitness

## Bantry ladies return to basketball court success after lengthy exile



## SPORT

John Bohane

Bantry ladies basketball club fielded an adult ladies basketball team this year in the Cork Basketball League following an absence of twenty years. They have subsequently enjoyed a great season, as they recently secured their place in the championship final. The ladies team are also on the cusp of securing their place in the top four of the league, which maintains their hopes of automatic promotion. **John Bohane** reports on the great success they have enjoyed this season.

The Bantry adult ladies basketball team entered into Division One of the ladies league this year with a mixture of enthusiasm and nerves following their lengthy exile. They have enjoyed a great journey so far. Their league form has been scintillating, with the club still maintaining hopes of securing promotion.

They have embarked on a great odyssey, which will culminate in them taking on Donoughmore in a championship final in Neptune Hall on Saturday, March 7. A huge crowd from West Cork are expected to travel to the city to cheer on their local heroes and heroines. One of their key players is Niamh O'Neill, who is eagerly looking forward to the occasion. "It will be a great experience. We are all looking forward to the final. There will be a few nerves, but hopefully we will enjoy the occasion. We have trained hard and we are ready for the big game. It is a huge achievement for the club to get this far. There will be a big crowd and great atmosphere in Neptune Hall."

There has always been a very strong tradition of basketball in Bantry. In recent years, the Bantry adult men's team have enjoyed great success, while the local secondary school team Colaiste Pobail Bheanntai have reached All-Ireland finals in successive years. The adult ladies team however, for a variety of reasons, didn't re-enter competitive basketball until the start of last season. They initially reformed seven years ago, as a social club, but such was the demand from the players for a return to competitive action, they were determined to return to league action this year.

Niamh O'Neill, who also acts as the coach with the adult ladies team, originally came up with the ideal of re-establishing an adult team for the ladies club. Niamh was delighted with the positive reaction to her idea. "It's been twenty years since Bantry had a competitive ladies team. My mother and sister both played on that team. Seven years ago I set up a social basketball

group for ladies in Bantry. As time went by we ended up getting many old club members back. Last year, we decided to take the plunge and enter into the Cork Ladies Division One league," revealed the basketball ace.

The weekly social meetings sparked a renewed hunger amongst the players to get back into competition action and attract new players so they could return to league action in the Cork Basketball League. Niamh was thrilled with the re-establishment of the adult ladies team. "When I moved back to Bantry, I wanted to get back into playing basketball. We would meet up every Thursday evening for a run around. We often spoke about entering the Cork league, but it never seemed to take off as many of the social players at the time had young families. It is a big commitment to re-enter the league, as there is a lot of mid-week travelling. Last year our social numbers were incredible with a great mix of players ranging from secondary school students, college students, local football players and the original group who have been playing basketball down through the years. The demand and interest from the players was there and the mix seemed right so we decided to go for it."

The Bantry adult ladies team features a nice blend of young and hungry players, coupled with a number of established and experienced players determined to enjoy more success with their local basketball team. Twenty-six players registered for the team for this season's league campaign, a great indication of the desire amongst the players to play competitively. Niamh, who recently returned



to competitive action, is very pleased with their dedication and attitude. "We have a great mix of players on the team. There was a big turnout to the registration night. Six of our players coach at underage level and two play with a Cork Masters team. We had one player who played for Limerick Celtic. The younger girls are fantastic. Their fitness levels are exceptional and they just want to play the game. They want to be on the court. They really are a great bunch of women. The team spirit, enthusiasm and support for each other is fantastic."

To set up a team in a competitive league requires a lot of planning behind the scenes with regards sponsorship and registering players. A lot of hard work from various people goes on behind the scenes, which has ensured they have enjoyed a successful season. Niamh

is grateful to all who have helped make their dreams come through. "We were starting from scratch as a team and many players had to transfer back from other clubs. We were delighted to bring them back. Danny Collins from the Boston Bar did not hesitate when we approached him to sponsor our team. His generosity set us up with regards getting gear and basketballs. Our goal for the season was to be competitive. Our main aim was to try and make the top four play-offs. We have only lost one league game all season. If we win two of our remaining league games, we will also be promoted which would be great. Our success this season has totally surpassed our expectations."

Bantry Basketball Club at both adult and underage levels is thriving at present. Their adult men's team captured a unique

treble last season. They won the league, championship and top four trophy. Their underage teams boast very strong numbers, which augurs well for the club going forward revealed Niamh. "Basketball in Bantry is flourishing at the moment. We have excellent coaches who give so much time to their teams. We have underage boys and girls on Cork Academy teams and many are in the process of attending trials for Cork development squads. Every underage team in the club is full. We have two adult men's teams who also have great numbers. The younger members really enjoy seeing their parents and coaches playing. They really get behind the teams. The basketball committee put in great work behind the scenes and their work often goes unrecognised. The future is very bright for the club."

## Kingspan backs Drimoleague athlete Donnacha McCarthy's bid for triathlon qualification in Tokyo Paralympics



Donnacha McCarthy and guide Eamonn Tilley.  
Pic: Stephen McCarthy

Kingspan, the maker of high-performance insulation and building envelope solutions, has announced a partnership with para athlete Donnacha McCarthy as he aims to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games. A native of Drimoleague, Donnacha, who is completely blind and competes in para-triathlons, is aiming to become just the second Irish para-triathlete to compete in the Paralympic Games.

Donnacha has only been competing in para-triathlons since 2017 but in that short time has already won national titles in 2018 and 2019. He was also named 2019 Para Athlete of the Year by Triathlon Ireland,

and was a bronze medallist in the 2018 World Paratriathlon Cup. He lost his sight aged just 10 following a battle with leukaemia and now competes with the support of his guide. The pair are tethered for the running and swimming parts of a race and use a tandem bike for the cycling section.

The Olympic hopeful will be stepping up his training over the coming months in a bid to book his spot among the Irish contingent for the Summer games, beginning in August this year. Should he be successful, it will be his latest achievement in what has been a remarkable journey in coming to terms with, and overcoming, the loss

of his sight.

Donnacha said: "I'm really pleased that Kingspan is supporting me in my Paralympic goal to represent Ireland at the highest level, and come back with a medal. With a rigorous training and competition programme over the coming months it's reassuring to know I have their support in the background, allowing me to focus on qualifying and getting on that plane to Tokyo."

Gene Murtagh, Chief Executive of Kingspan said: "Donnacha is a superb athlete who delivers the type of high performance Kingspan is eager to support. His story is inspiring, competing in a hugely challeng-

ing discipline and maintaining his focus on qualifying for the Tokyo games. We're looking forward to keeping track of Donnacha's progress through the qualification events and sincerely hope to see him succeed in Tokyo come August."

Kingspan have a strong history of supporting some of the biggest and highest performing names in Irish sport, with golfers Shane Lowry and Leona Maguire, Ulster Rugby and Cavan GAA among the teams and stars to wear the Kingspan logo at events and competitions around the globe.



## people Motoring

CAR  
REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

## New Corsa brings Opel back in the game

With new versions of old reliables and several electric cars on the way, could the good times be on the way back for Opel in Ireland? Around 30 years ago when the Republic of Ireland soccer team was qualifying for European Championship and World Cup finals, the 'Boys in Green' were sponsored by Opel.

Arnold O'Byrne, who was the MD of Opel back then became almost as well known as Irish manager Jack Charlton as he was seen on Irish television screens as often as Big Jack. The German brand has had several different bosses since then and unfortunately while they continued to make good

cars, somehow their share of the Irish market really shrunk.

Recently Opel in Ireland became part of the Gowan Group, who already hold the franchise for Peugeot and Honda cars in Ireland. So will we see James Brooks, Opel's new MD become the 'new' Arnold O'Byrne. James is a big sports fan, but I don't think we will see him become the face of Opel's television campaigns just yet.

Last week I drove the new version of the Opel Corsa, which was a favourite back in the eighties and nineties. The Corsa was launched in 1982 and I bought a skinny looking version around 1988. Now the designers have managed to make this new model look bigger, despite the dimensions being much the same as the previous version.

The sixth generation of the nameplate is longer, lower, and has a longer wheelbase than its predecessor and is 108kg lighter than the previous version. This is the first new Opel produced since the marque was taken over by the PSA Group.

Inside there was a nice touch of red and white stitching on the seats and the dash had a



touch of red and grey which looked very tasty. Those touches of colour are needed in the interior as the roof is very dark.

We drove the car from Gowan's headquarters in Bluebell to Kilkenny and took the scenic route which meant less motorway driving. I found the car very sturdy and there wasn't much road noise. The digital instrument cluster is well placed to ensure that you only have to take your eyes off the road ahead for a second or two to check your speed.

There is room in the back for

back seat for three people, but leg room is a bit tight. The boot is average, but the good news is that you get a proper spare wheel.

Meanwhile the electric Corsa-e is due here in April and will have a range of around 337km. Along with the recently renewed Astra and the Corsa, a new Grandland X hybrid is due here in April and it will be followed by a facelifted Crossland and a new generation Mokka in December.

For the Corsa there will be three trims SC, SRi and Elite

with prices starting at €17,975 for the 1.2-litre petrol; also available in 1.5-litre diesel with the top price of €25,445. All come with LED headlights and auto-dip as standard.

The Corsa faces stiff competition in the supermini class from the likes of the Ford Fiesta and Renault Clio, but at least they are now back in the game. With Brooks now in charge and Emma Toner joining their marketing team from Peugeot, I think we will see Opel compete in the top league once again.

## Renault Clio has some nice tech features

I'm sure most of you will remember the Renault television ads from the nineties where Papa gave Nicole the key to his new Renault Clio. The series of ads were one of the most popular car ads ever seen in Britain and Ireland. Indeed I know of some young ladies, who got their Christian name from that famous ad and they have no complaints.

The Renault Clio has been with us since 1990 and is one of only two cars, the other being the VW Golf, to have been voted European Car of the Year twice. Now we have got Mark V of the Clio and naturally it has some improvements from the previous edition.

Clio can boast of impressive sales of one a minute for the past 30 years. This year Renault expect to sell around 2,000 units of their five-door Clio in Ireland.

Colour is really important when buying a new car and my test model came in a bright orange colour which meant there was no problem finding it in the supermarket car park. The official colour was 'Valencia Orange.'

I love the key fobs that Renault now supply. In the old days we had a system with



which you started the car by putting the key in the ignition. Then along came a system whereby the car will start once the key is in your pocket or handbag.

However, with Renault you need never wonder where your key fob is. Just leave it in your pocket or handbag; the car will automatically unlock as you approach it and then it will automatically lock when turn off the engine and walk away from the car. Brilliant.

This new version naturally has a few tweaks and improvements front and back. It's based on a brand-new platform, has new suspension and has a completely new and upmarket interior. I would give the infotainment-screen on the

dash nine out as I could easily find the volume for the radio, but the radio stations kept 'disappearing.' However, i-phone connectively was great and I was able to play music from YouTube rather than listen to boring political debates.

I liked the old-fashioned style handbrake. With an old style handbrake you are not wondering if it has engaged and do you need to press the button to release when you want to drive off. You simply press the old fashioned button and release the hand-brake like we did when we were young!

There is a decent boot space and the good news is that underneath there is a spare wheel, not a repair kit. Mind you it took me a little while to find the



button to release the boot door. The release button used to be embedded in the Renault logo on the boot, but now the release button is underneath and if the weather is wet you may get your fingers dirty opening it. But that I think that's a small price to pay for something that now works very well.

I found the 1.0-litre Clio very lively, especially around town. Prices start at £17,195, but my top of the range test model will cost you €22,065. Its main rivals are the Toyota Yaris, Ford Fiesta and VW Polo. But as Paddy Magee MD of Renault Ireland said recently it's good to see manufacturers competing with one another for sales.

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