



# westcorkpeople

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St Joseph's GNS, Clonakilty raised €1,700 with their 'Wear Yellow for Daffodil Day' fundraiser.

## New Outdoor Dining Scheme positive but longer-term plan needed says O'Sullivan

A new €17 million grant scheme to allow tourism and hospitality businesses to develop outdoor dining capacity will help prepare businesses for reopening, but more work is needed to provide struggling businesses with long-term certainty according to Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan.

The government's Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme launched this week comprises two parts, and will be delivered in partnership between Fáilte Ireland and Local Authorities across the country.

"This scheme serves two purposes – in the near term it will allow businesses to offset the cost of building this outdoor dining and increase their capacity, and in the long term it will allow local authori-

ties to develop a strategy to develop permanent, weather-proofed, outdoor dining infrastructure," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"Developing outdoor infrastructure is key to answering consumer demand for more flexible dining options. When the sector re-opens, enhanced outdoor dining will provide an attractive option to locals and visitors alike."

The scheme comes in two parts: 1) Grants are available for tourism and hospitality businesses and 2) funding for Local Authorities to develop permanent longterm outdoor facilities.

Deputy O'Sullivan said while the scheme will help reinvigorate spaces and make them more attractive to visitors in the long term, more work is needed give the

hospitality sector certainty for the future.

"I appreciate the impact of this will have its limitations, as there are a number of premises, particularly in this constituency, that do not have scope for outdoor dining. There has to be measures introduced to facilitate those premises as well," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"First and foremost, what's needed here above any funding is a solid plan for the hospitality sector; for restaurants, for cafes, for hotels, for pubs. That's what's needed more than anything, as these businesses crave certainty. That's something I will continue to shout for."

The Scheme opens for initial applications on April 12, 2021.

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# Making it right

Living in Ireland since 1998 and working with asylum seekers and refugees since 2013, Roos Demol can't remember a time when she hasn't been very active in her community, from organising concerts for the local schools to organising events to raise funds for breast cancer. Her main passion however lies with human rights and the challenges faced by migrants.

It was after running a radio programme called The New Rebels on the online station Irish Radio International, where she learned about the life experiences of migrants in Ireland, that Roos' work with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers began.

Around that time she remembers reading an article about direct provision centres written by Nasc in the Irish Times. "My immediate reaction was 'not again'," she says referring to the Magdalene Laundries and the institutionalising of people. "I was

determined to find ways to help." When the protest in the Kinsale Road Accommodation centre happened in 2014, Roos decided to bite the bullet and go and support it. "I never looked back after that," she says.

Since then Roos has become the co-founder of International Community Dynamics, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and is the founder of Recruit Refugees Ireland, a recruitment social enterprise assisting refugees and asylum seekers seeking employment. She is also an active member of the Cork City Sanctuary Movement steering committee, whose work is centred on making Cork a place of welcome, support and safety for refugees. More recently, she has been raising funds to buy laptops for residents in direct provision across Ireland as part of the Windows4Opportunity campaign.



In the course of her work, Roos has heard many distressing stories, made all the more upsetting by the lack of awareness surrounding them. "There is a lot of ignorance around the subject of migrants and asylum seekers," she says. "I have heard so many heart-breaking stories of what some people have suffered, and if you then read some of the comments underneath the articles online, it is very sad. People should get more informed."

She believes that while most Irish people are happy and

In March Ballinspittle resident Roos Demol shared the Cork Person of the Month Award with Breda Keane Shortt for their efforts in supporting migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and those in direct provision in Cork. The Flemish human rights activist, who has created several integration initiatives within the Irish community, as well as supporting victims of war both in Ireland and abroad, chats to **West Cork People** about her voluntary work.



willing to help, they are simply impeded by the lack of information available. She explains: "For example, the work permit for asylum seekers has never been properly communicated to employers, which causes a lot of confusion and inhibits job seekers in direct provision centres from finding suitable work. Then there is the strange rule that asylum seekers are not allowed to drive. It is very hard to get anywhere in


Ireland without a car and some of these centres are in very remote areas."

The response to Recruit Refugees Ireland – a recruitment social enterprise that Roos counts as one of the projects she is most proud of – has been phenomenal. "Since we started the employment enterprise, we have had people signing up from all over the country," she says. "Asylum seekers are not econom-

ic migrants, as some want to claim, they want to work and contribute to society. Not to go and celebrate, but very often to send money home to their children and spouses, who are often in hiding and waiting to be brought to safety through family reunification which, unfortunately, can take years."

Roos set up International Community Dynamics with

*Continued on next page...*



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...Cont'd from previous page

Norbert Nkengurutse, a Burundian refugee, to offer support to people living in direct provision centres and refugees. The organisation supplies clothes, from a second-hand shop run by Mary O'Donoghue in Bandon, to people living in direct provision. "We have also run workshops to prepare people for life in an Irish home," says Roos. "You can imagine that people coming from often very warm climates are not used to central heating and even to cooking in the house on a gas cooker; these are all things they need to get familiar with together with fire safety in the home and how to set up an electricity account and so on."

Citadel, World Music from Kinsale Road is another project run by International Community Dynamics, following on from a campaign to collect guitars for people living in Direct Provision. "I'm very proud of this project. We went all the way to the National Concert Hall in Dublin," says Roos.

Another initiative Roos is involved with, The Cork City of Sanctuary movement is committed to making Cork a place of welcome, support and safety for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and persons of migrant origin. "We have supplied great help to people seeking asylum during the lockdown period," says Roos. "Currently, we are reorganising, but hoping to get back in full action, making sure that Cork becomes a place where everyone can feel

"I believe a lot more needs to be done for the less fortunate, like the homeless, those in poverty and the migrants who want to make Ireland their home,"

at home and be safe."

Roos is concerned about the rising amount of people with racist views who want to hamper progress in Ireland.

"I believe a lot more needs to be done for the less fortunate, like the homeless, those in poverty and the migrants who want to make Ireland their home," she says passionately. "Having 13,000 charities is a sign of what Ireland is like – a country of very good people and a government who is not taking care of the vulnerable as they should."

"I hope the government's promise that direct provision will end will come true and I also hope that the whole asylum system will change. People shouldn't be in direct provision for five years; that is inhumane. Children should not be there at all, as it is a very toxic environment."

Roos would like to see an equal society where everyone in Ireland can thrive. "My hope is that Recruit Refugees Ireland will contribute to that."

"For me the most important thing in life is love," she says passionately. "To take care of each other and to stand up for what is wrong and needs to be made right."

## Donal McCarthy recognised as a Community Hero at Mayor's Awards

The annual Mayor's Community Awards celebrate and acknowledge the volunteers and communities who work together across Cork County. Now in its eighth year, the 2021 awards were held virtually on March 24.

Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley presented a total of eleven awards; three from each division of the county, South, North and West Cork with one overall community and voluntary group award and one overall individual award selected from these nine divisional award winners.

In West Cork, the individual Award nominees were physiotherapist Darren Kelly of Dunmanway who raised over €12,000 for charity, Donal McCarthy, Secretary of Clonakilty Agriculture Show, Niamh O'Connell, fundraiser and founder of the Kinsale Covid-19 Volunteer Group and Deirdre Fitzgerald, Chair of Bantry Project Group. The winner of the West Cork individual award went to Donal McCarthy, nominated by Cllr John O'Sullivan, for his work in Clonakilty

Agricultural Show and mentoring many community leaders, as well as his involvement in numerous local initiatives.

Community Group nominations for West Cork were; Skibbereen Geriatric Society - Meals on Wheels Service, Fastnet Trails, Dunmanway Community Meals – Dunmanway Resource Centre and Bantry Tidy Towns. The winners were Skibbereen Geriatric Society, nominated by Cllr Karen Coakley, for their meals



Donal McCarthy

on wheels extended services reaching Skibbereen, Baltimore and Rosscarbery and the Fastnet Trails group, nominated by Cllr Ross O'Connell, for the walking trails which started in 2015 with loop walks in Kilcoe and Lisheen, later extended to Ballydehob and Schull, and in recent years four linear walks now connect Kilcoe to Goleen with further expansion plans.

Mayor Foley commended all nominees on the night for their commitment and dedication to their communities, "These annual awards celebrate the best of our county's goodwill, generosity and altruism. It's an important opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the selfless work of volunteers who've supported our communities, our vulnerable or those impacted since Covid-19. We celebrate too those who have committed their energy to long term projects that make Cork County a better place to live, making real measurable difference to people's lives. I congratulate you all on your nominations."

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## Actor Liam Cunningham speaks of love for West Cork in new tourism video






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Tourism Ireland has teamed up with the Irish Film and Television Academy (IFTA) to create a new series of short videos to showcase Ireland. The latest video in the series, unveiled on March 29, features actor Liam Cunningham.

In the video, Liam speaks about his love for Ireland and, in particular, for West Cork. Viewers will see our spectacular scenery and some of our top attractions, like Galley Head Lighthouse, Sherkin Island, Sunday's Well, Glandore, Clonakilty, Garnish Island, Gougane Barra, Mizen Head and Bantry House.

The video will be shared with Tourism Ireland's millions of fans and followers on its social platforms.

This video is part of Tourism Ireland's #FillYourHeartWithIreland (#FYHWI) online campaign. At a time when international visitors cannot travel here, Tourism Ireland is rolling out its #FYHWI campaign – sharing inspirational content

about the island of Ireland with its millions of fans and followers on social media. The aim is to keep Ireland 'top of mind' with prospective international visitors. This will ensure that we are in the best possible place to immediately start converting business for Irish tourism operators, when the time is right.

Siobhan McManamy, Tourism Ireland's Director of Marketing, said: "Tourism Ireland was delighted to work with the Irish Film and Television Academy, and with Liam Cunningham, to create this wonderful video. We are sharing the video with our millions of fans and followers on social media around the world – allowing us to keep the beauty of Ireland and Cork to the fore. While we may not be able to travel just now, this video will inspire people for their future visit."

In the video, Liam Cunningham praises Ireland, saying: "My favourite place in Ireland? Well, there's got to be more than one, it's a big place – or it's a little place with a big heart. Two



places, the Kingdom – Kerry, it's heaven on earth – and beautiful West Cork. If they weren't on the planet, the place probably wouldn't be worth being in. What I love about Ireland is a no-brainer, it's the people. When I'm away I miss ... bizarrely, I miss the rain – is that weird?" Áine Moriarty, CEO of IFTA, said: "IFTA is delighted to partner with Tourism Ireland to showcase the beauty of the Irish landscape alongside the voices and sentiments of our leading Irish Academy members such as Liam Cunningham. Ireland has given so much to international

film; our wonderful actors, filmmakers and spectacular filming locations. The Academy is proud to help showcase our beautiful country to the world."

To date, Tourism Ireland's #FillYourHeartWithIreland campaign has achieved excellent engagement with its fans and followers on social media – delivering 1.93 billion impressions (or opportunities to see), 56 million video views and around 9.4 million engagements on Facebook, as well as 8.6 million likes on Instagram and 252,000 engagements on Twitter.

## New Skibbereen Heritage Trail Map launched

A new heritage trail asset for Skibbereen, featuring videos and blogs on sites of interest around the town, has been launched by Cork County Council. The 'Skibbereen Heritage Map' provides in-depth historical and heritage information on more than 60 local sites, researched and compiled by Council-owned Skibbereen Heritage Centre.

Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr Mary Linehan Foley, congratulated Skibbereen Heritage Centre on the map, saying,

"This is a fantastic asset for County Cork and provides a forum to share the history of Skibbereen with a global audience. The demand for online resources continues to grow and Skibbereen Heritage has been working hard to provide that content, from digitising burial registers to making videos of local sites and now providing this informative heritage map. Skibbereen Heritage Centre's work receives great

feedback from users all over the world, some of whom will, hopefully, have opportunity to visit in person soon."

Along with informative history of notable buildings, the map links to stories of historical characters who lived in Skibbereen, such as Walter Kindred who opened a sawmill in Ilan Street after returning from a grand tour of India in a Rolls Royce.

The Skibbereen Heritage Centre team plan to add to the heritage map over time and are continuing to digitise further local burial registers and create more video resources. The map is free to use and available here [www.skibbheritage.com](http://www.skibbheritage.com).

The website also offers 'vintage videos' of other sites around West Cork, as well as graveyard and Famine videos and a range of other genealogy resources.

## News to lift the heart

By Clonakilty  
Amnesty Group

'NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEAL'. When we find these words printed across the weekly Urgent Action Appeals, our hearts can lift. They often mean success or partial success on behalf of those we work for. So this week we share the good news. There is so much that it will not fit into this brief piece.

Siberian shaman Aleksandr Gabyshev was released from psychiatric detention on July 22 in Russia after his defence team succeeded in their request for a psychological and psychiatric examination on July 21. Aleksandr Gabyshev was targeted for his open criticism of the authorities and spent more than two months arbitrarily deprived from his freedom.

Narges Mohammadi, 48, a wife and mother of two, imprisoned in Iran since 2015 for



meeting a EU representative and for human rights work, has been freed, and is very sick. She is a campaigner against the death penalty and was the spokeswoman for the Defenders of Human Rights Centre in Iran – founded by Nobel Peace laureate Shirin Ebadi. She had no protection even with this prestigious connection. Nasrin Soutedeh, whom you may remember has been released conditionally.

On October 2, 2020, five activists, who were charged for "unauthorised gathering" were granted a discharge, but not amounting to acquittal (DNAA), by the Ipoh Magistrate in Malaysia. The charges stemmed from the activists' participation in a peaceful picket on June 2, 2020 by a cleaning services company. During the picket, they called out the alleged unfair treatment of union members and insufficient personal protective equipment for cleaners.

Magai, aged 15, was re-



Nargea Mohammadi

prieved from his death sentence in Southern Sudan. A massive 750,000 people took action in our Write for Rights campaign.

Human rights abuses in China regularly make the headlines focusing on the Uighur people, but there are many others who languish in Chinese prisons. It is not often that we are as effective as we would like, but Wang Quangzhang, a Chinese human rights lawyer imprisoned in 2015, has been freed. It was three years before his family were told that he was still alive. He was arrested as part of the '709 crackdown' on human rights lawyers instigated

by General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping, and, he was put on trial for subversion of state power defending political activists and victims of land seizures in December 2018. We told his story to journalists and he became an Urgent Action, a Prisoner of Conscience.

Briefly, but incomplete, we add that no child refugees are held on Nauru any longer; 500,000 expressed outrage against family separation in the US by endorsing the 'I Welcome Global Action'. Now President Biden is to allow migrant families separated under Trump to reunite in the US; we took part in solidarity protests in Ireland calling for an end of Direct Provision.

To finish, Ruben Gonzales, a Venezuelan trade union leader targeted for fighting for worker's rights, was arrested in 2018. Despite lack of evidence he was sentenced to six years. He has been freed, and writes, "Reunited with my family after 21 months deprived of freedom,



Wang Quangzhang reuniting with his wife and son.

I want to thank deeply in my heart and from all my family, for the support I received from all of Amnesty International. For me, it is an honour to thank you and we want to tell you that we have you in our minds, in

our hearts, for that great support'." No need for comment!

Monthly meetings are suspended due to Covid but contact Sue 023 8845056 or Derry 028 33028 for any other information.



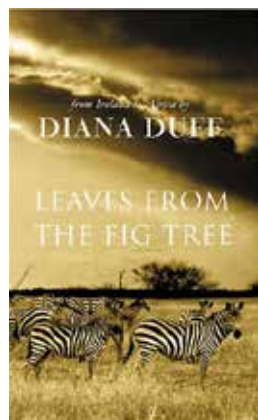
# A fascinating memoir spanning countries and cultures

**D**iana Duff's incredible memoir 'Leaves from the Fig Tree' covers the world of Anglo-Irish gentry: life in colonial Kenya, Tanganyika, and life at the height of Apartheid in South Africa.

In Ireland, Diana – the granddaughter of the Lord of the Manor at Annes Grove – grew up in a stately County Cork home with world-renowned gardens. Raised conservatively by her aloof grandparents, Diana says the one regret she has in life is not having the normal experiences of a teenager. "The greatest excitement was the occasional point to point or a trip to the city," she explains. The rest of Diana's life however was filled with exciting adventures. Her father remarried and, after travelling to Africa at the age of 17 to meet his young family, Diana ended up staying. "I fell in love with the magic of Africa: It gets under your skin, as it's a pretty fascinating and beautiful place," she explains.

The young woman embarked on a nursing career and met her husband at the hospital where she was working. "He was in bed with tick fever and I used to play chess on his chest. I was engaged to somebody else at the time but I fell in love with him."

During the Mau Mau uprising Diana slept with a pistol at her bedside while her enigmatic cook was none other than a Mau Mau elder who administered the hideous initiation rites. "I was really, really, frightened during the Mau Mau uprising," recounts Diana. "We were in a very rural area on 12 acres with nothing except our house



and the forest below where there were gangs of Mau Mau fighters. Robin, my husband, was a district officer, and he had to go out if a gang moved into the forest. Sometimes it would be two or three in the morning and he would leave me at home with a hand grenade and a pistol. Meanwhile I was unaware having cosy little chats with our cook about rice pudding and such that he was a Mau Mau administrator."

Peace came and Diana moved with her young family to Tanzania, to the hot, sweaty Dar es Salaam where she opened the first multiracial school in East Africa. After rubbing shoulders with ambassadors and government ministers, and of course their children, they moved again, this time to South Africa where she and her family fought the repressive, hateful apartheid regime at any opportunity.


In her lifetime, Diana has worked as a nurse, teacher, journalist, wife and mother and even doubled as Grace Kelly. "I would say that life is full of excitements," she says. "Any opportunity that comes that's exciting and different, one should take it with both hands."

Today, Diana is in her nineties, lives in Johannesburg near her family, buys and sells semi-precious stones, speaks Kikuyu and writes several long letters – the old fashioned way – every day. Her wit and astonishing recollection are undiminished. Her sense of fair play has remained with her throughout and she continues to stand up for what is right.

'Duff is a natural storyteller. Her deadpan humour, ear for the vernacular and shrewd insight into the history of Ireland and Africa raise it above the genre of misty-eyed nostalgia. It's a terrific read.' – Michele Magwood, Sunday Times (South Africa)

*Published by Lime Tree Press, 'Leaves from the Fig Tree' by Diana Duff retails at £12.95.*





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## Ludgate awarded €8,500 under ESB's Energy for Generation Fund

**T**he Ludgate was successful in a recent application with the ESB for the Energy for Generation Fund. Ludgate was awarded €8,500. Dr Kieran Collins Education and Innovation Manager with the Ludgate Hub, said "We are delighted with the successful outcome of the Energy for Generation Fund application and the money will be used in our Lego for Education programme, for the acquisition of iPads. The Lego kit has been kindly sponsored by Spearline."

"During uncertain times, play is one of the most important ways for children to cope with stress and anxiety. Play stimulates multiple brain networks, so it is particularly effective in developing and maintaining those skills for both children and adults. Building students' resilience through purposeful play is more crucial than ever. It helps with social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skill development."

"Additionally, it can enhance academic outcomes and be utilised in a variety of instructional models in the classroom and at home. Using purposeful play as an instructional strategy through structured or unstructured hands-on activities is a proven way to help students develop the four Cs – critical thinking, creativity,

communication, and collaboration skills. Purposeful play and hands-on learning lend themselves to problem solving, which helps build the resilience that students will need as future employees, inventors, and lifelong learners. Incorporating a playful approach to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) projects, for example, it leads to student collaborations where they learn by doing and connect concepts and content with real-world situations."

"Developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning through play has benefits across the curriculum as students use a wide range of skills to solve problems. A learning through play approach can also help drive academic outcomes."

"Lego For Education is a groundbreaking education initiative that is focused on developing the four Cs. We are delighted to be partnering with the ESB on this unique initiative."

The Ludgate Education programme will be delivered to a cluster of 16 primary and three secondary West Cork schools. This is an immersive playful programme of robotics, coding, and creative skills for schools involving iPads and Lego.

Maura Collins, principal of

Rath National schools, one of the schools involved in the programme said "the importance of children being actively engaged in their learning through play so they understand how to get along with others, problem-solve and think critically, is fundamentally important to their development. A programme like this gives the best possible start in life to children by helping them explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) and other subjects in new, fun and innovative ways that supplement and enhance their school education."

After a year that involved a global pandemic, school closures, nationwide remote instruction, protests for racial justice, the role of education has never been more critical or more uncertain. When the dust settles from this year, what will education look like – and what should it aspire to? On March 18, Ludgate will be hosting a 60 minute roundtable discussion with Lord David Puttnam, Atticus Education, Prof. Maggie Cusack, President of Munster Technological University, Prof. John O'Halloran, Interim President of UCC and Dr. Kieran Collins.

Register for free on eventbrite. [www.ludgate.ie](http://www.ludgate.ie)



# Suspended in lockdown limbo



## A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco



managing to get out there. You are made of stronger stuff than I.

I apologise for being so grumpy. It's the result of being suspended in this lockdown limbo for far too long. I wish the deadline for this column was the first weekend of April and not the last weekend in March. Not only is there a chance that the weather might be better, but we will finally know next week if we are to remain cloistered in our 5km, or if some of the restrictions will be lifted. The last few weeks have not been very positive. The Covid numbers, though moving downwards, are still high. The vaccine rollout is more of a slow treacle pace, than the sprint to immunisation I was hoping for back in January. Last week the government was warning us not to get our hopes up. Today they are saying they might lift the 5km restriction, but then again, they might not. It's not that I've given up hope. I'm just taking a zen, grin and bear it approach until things become clearer. I'm just not very good at it – hence the grumpiness.

Though frustrated, I'll admit that my frustrations are few compared to many others stuck in lockdown limbo. That only adds to the guilt of not going out for walks, or not doing yoga. I feel guilty for feeling so fed up. That and envy. I feel envy for those who live in sunnier climes. I feel envy for those who live in countries where the lockdown

has not been so restrictive. The Germans have a word: Impfneid. It means vaccine envy and I feel it every time a friend in the UK, or the US posts a picture of them getting vaccinated. The Germans also have a word for that fed up feeling: Coronamude, which translates as Corona tired. We are all coronamude.

I've developed various coping mechanisms over the last year. I listen to playlists while I work, which I would have never listened to before. They are mostly jazz/bosa instrumental mixes with names like 'Amsterdam coffee shop', or 'NYC cocktail lounge'. Along with the music are sounds of espresso machines, cutlery, and people chatting. I find them very soothing. As I write this, I am listening to a playlist entitled 'Songs for imagining your Parisian Life', which is odd because I have never wanted to live in Paris. As for pandemic insomnia: one Zirtex and an episode of Ru Paul's Drag Race and I sleep like a baby. Go figure.

I had a look at my column from one year ago, during the first lockdown and was surprised to see that not much has changed: 'I wish I could get in my car and drive far, far away. I miss my friends. I miss the ocean. I miss the pub. I miss gigs. I miss Brussels and Madrid, Thessaloniki and London. I miss places that I have never been to. I am scared to look forward to the summer. Will we be able to go back to the beach? I think I could fare better if I could just go to the beach again. When will be able to meet up with friends – even at a distance?'

The gale is howling around the house. The rain is battering the windows like an automatic machine gun. The dogs took one look outside and went straight back to bed. Eartha Kitt is singing 'C'est si bon' on my playlist. I close my eyes and take a deep breath. It's going to get better; of course, it's going to get better. Next week is Easter, and who knows? The sun will shine. The temperatures will rise and the restrictions will be lifted to at least 20km, which means that I can go to the beach again. Here's hoping...

# Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the April edition of West Cork People,

With warmer weather, longer days and the promise that the vaccine holds, we live in hope of a time when Covid, lockdown and restrictions are words not used in early day conversation. Level 5 has taken a huge toll on all of us but through individual and community efforts we have persevered and, if we can continue to keep the numbers down, there is hope of a good summer ahead in West Cork, a summer where our hospitality and retail industries can open and increase their business with the help of the new Outdoor Dining Scheme and we can all enjoy the 'place apart' that we are so fortunate to have on our doorstep.

Once the 5km restrictions lift in April, we will all be able to explore what West Cork has to offer. If you haven't already, check out our website [explorewestcork.ie](http://explorewestcork.ie), which covers from Kinsale to the three rugged westerly peninsulas reaching into the wild Atlantic. There are hundreds of inlets, tiny coves, safe harbours and beaches just waiting to be discovered. The best way to take in all that West Cork has to offer – its scenery, wildlife and history – is to walk it and [explorewestcork.ie](http://explorewestcork.ie) has everything from short looped walks to multi-day national way-marked trails or strolls through national parks and forests. Plan your days out now to have something to look forward to.

Inside this issue we have plenty of positive news and views to keep you going until then. We hear from Cork Person of the Month Roos Demol on the great work she is doing with asylum seekers and refugees. In Politics, Kieran Doyle asks the question 'Do you want a United Ireland?'. Fiona shares research showing that removing animal-based product from our diets would not solve the problem of the effect of greenhouse gas on climate change. Karen gives us a flavor of Mexico and Sherna shares some excellent DIY beauty products while we wait for our salons to open. We also have our ongoing Enterprising West Cork series, showcasing some of the innovative and inspiring businesses that shape the local economy. If you are a business based in West Cork and would like to feature in this, please email [mary@westcorkpeople.ie](mailto:mary@westcorkpeople.ie).

For this and lots more, see inside.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Until next month,

Mary

# Letter to Editor

A Chara,

My name is Kevin Whelan from Nenagh Co Tipperary and I am seeking help in tracing relatives of mine who came from the Clonakilty area.

My grandmother was Norah O'Leary born c1883. Her father's name was Lawrence and he was a labourer. Mother Ellen. I have some anecdotal evidence of Norah being from Peddler's Cross near Clonakilty. I found a family living in Desertserges who were I believe publicans. They had a daughter Norah who was in either the Church records of Enniskeane or Desertserges but no mention of her in the 1901 census.

The 1911 census shows that Norah worked for solicitor Henry Francis Powell in Castle St Nenagh. Norah was the youngest in her family. She had two brothers, both bachelor's, John and Bartholomew. Both died in their 40s and 50s. She also had a brother Cornelious. It may be that Henry Powell's wife, who was a Margaret Geraghty, may have been from the Clonakilty area and brought Norah to Nenagh to work as a house maid.

Norah married a James Whelan (my grandfather) who tragically died of the Spanish flu in 1918 thus leaving her a widow with two young children, James and John (my late father). Unfortunately, Norah contracted TB and died in Nenagh workhouse in 1922.

I would be most grateful if any of your readers would know more about the O'Leary's or if there are any relatives still living in the Clonakilty area. All help will be dreadfully received.

Thank you to the West Cork People for giving me the time and space in your esteemed newspaper to enable my search for relatives in the beautiful West Cork area.

Is mise.

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**Clonakilty** 086 8395058 and 086 6031335



## Global Shares shortlisted in Cork Business Association awards

**G**lobal Shares has been shortlisted as 'Best Professional Services' finalists in the 64th annual Cork Business Association awards. The company now needs public votes – which counts towards 40 per cent of the judging process – to help it win!

This award recognises 'leading professional services businesses that offer customised, knowledge-based services to clients and demonstrate a commitment to customer service excellence'.

Cork Business Association received a record number of

entrants this year. The judges include the Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Joe Kavanagh, Seamus Heaney Head of Visit Cork, Alan Healy editor of the Business Hub in the Irish Examiner and five others.

Global Shares is shortlisted against Breakthrough Cancer Research and B2B Signs & Print. Voting is limited to one entry per email and will end on April 5. The winners will be announced at a virtual ceremony on April 17.

To vote go to: [cbaawards.ie/vote](http://cbaawards.ie/vote)

## Lombard calls for revision of private water supplies grants

**C**ork Senator Tim Lombard has said that grants for private water supplies need to be revised as to reflect the true cost of installation.

Varying levels of grants are available under the Rural Water Programme to carry out works to a private water supply – for sinking a new well, rehabilitating an older supply, or putting in treatment to improve the water quality.

"The level of grant available for the treatment element of the scheme is often not sufficient to cover the costs involved, particularly in areas where ground water is poor," Senator Lombard stated.

"Over one in ten Irish people get their water from private water supplies, and under the scheme an applicant is entitled to apply for a maximum of €1,000 for treatment to improve water quality.

"The €1,000 grant level is


usually insufficient to cover the treatment works required – typically consisting of the installation of filtration and/or UV treatment.

"I am supporting the suggestion of my colleague, Senator John Cummins, that the scheme should be restructured.


"Instead of a household being able to apply for €3,000 for works on an existing supply, or €5,000 for a new well, or the €1,000 treatment grant, the scheme could provide access to a combined figure of €7,000 for these works.

"This would enable a household who incurs significant treatment costs to have them covered in full by having access to the unused part of the grant for new or rehabilitated wells.


"The scheme is to be reviewed in June, and Minister Peter Burke, with responsibility for this area, has confirmed this will be taken into consideration."




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## 'The Young Fella' documentary uncovers the deeper story of Michael Collins



**M**uch has been said about Michael Collins' life but the focus is nearly always on his later years. Biographies of 'The Big Fella' tend to dwell very little on the first two thirds of his life and focus heavily on the revolutionary activity that dominated his final decade. But what about his younger years?


A new documentary, 'The Young Fella', which will premiere on April 16, explores the key events and influences of his formative years and uncovers the deeper story of Michael Collins. Directed by Clonakilty native Samuel Kingston (The Brigade) and funded by Cork County Council and Michael Collins House Museum, Clon-

akilty the story of 'The Young Fella' is fittingly produced in Collins' hometown.

The documentary is centred around a group of six secondary school students who go on a journey to discover the local history of Michael Collins. History is brought to life and Collins story is told through the students' intrigue, as they visit local sites, meet with local historians and even sit the 1906 Civil Service Exam that Collins passed. They learn about his day-to-day life, his school life, his friends and family and what influenced his early political beliefs. Collins' teenage years are put into perspective, as they unveil the story of a normal, rural West Cork boy, as he

develops into a young man with an extraordinary and tragically short life ahead of him. Michael Collins was just sixteen when he left Clonakilty for London, the same age as the students who reflect on life now and life then and help to get a sense of what life was like for 'The Young Fella'.

The documentary will premiere on the Michael Collins House Youtube channel at 8pm on Friday April 16, 2021. This will coincide with the 100-year anniversary of the burning of Michael Collins childhood home at Woodfield by members of the Essex Regiment of the British Army.





**The Young Fella**

April 2021

**The Early Years of Michael Collins**

Directed by Samuel Kingston in association with  
Ambiguous Fiddle Production

Funded by Michael Collins House Museum &  
Cork County Council Commemorations Committee



# Government needs to improve CE schemes in rural areas

The Community Employment Scheme, or CE scheme, is an invaluable government programme, but it is not without its flaws says South West Social Democrats TD Holly Cairns.

The CE scheme is designed

to help people who are long-term unemployed to return to work by offering part-time jobs within local communities. Individuals gain experience, develop skills, and build up their confidence. Simultaneously, communities and local

organisations benefit from the additional help.

Across West Cork, CE workers are vital. Without them, many rural services and organisations would be forced to close. Many different charities, sports clubs, and tidy town

groups benefit from the labour of CE workers. I believe this is the type of Government policy we should support.

I recently raised a number of matters to help improve CE schemes in rural areas with the Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien TD. Changes to the scheme and the challenges of the pandemic have raised issues that need to be resolved.

Firstly, participants need to be allowed to stay in the programme for longer periods of time, especially those over 55, whose participation was limited under the previous government. Many individuals do good work and help their community but have to leave their role because of changed conditions. I received figures from the Department that show that over 40 per cent of the 8,000 people who exited CE schemes remained unemployed.

This is also having an impact

on community groups during the pandemic who are having difficulties finding replacement workers. The Department has allowed for an extension of the scheme during the Level 5 lockdown, but this needs to be extended further. It does not make any sense to force a worker out of a role when there is no one to replace them.

Secondly, following requests from CE projects and sponsors, I have called on the Minister to reduce the qualifying period from 12 months to six months unemployment. This would enable a whole cohort of people to participate in the programme. There is no point in making people spend an additional six months unemployed rather than giving them the opportunity and dignity of taking up meaningful work. This issue is even more relevant during the pandemic, when employment prospects are bleak.

Thirdly, I am seeking that special conditions for inhabi-

tants of offshore islands, such as an exemption from the participant duration limit, should be expanded to peninsulas and other remote areas, who experience similar conditions to islands. The Department has informed me that this would require additional analysis, and I will be following up with them.

The programme is incredible value for money for the state. For almost 20 hours of work a week, participants get only €22.50 more than their social welfare payment. The Government needs to revisit this remuneration, which does not reflect the work involved. The cost of the programme is vastly outweighed by its impact on the ground and it needs greater flexibility to meet the needs of workers and their communities.

You can find out more about CE at [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie). Also, CE scheme vacancies are advertised on [JobsIreland.ie](http://JobsIreland.ie) or by contacting a case officer in your local Intreo Centre.



**HOLLY CAIRNS TD**  
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My constituency offices in Bandon and Skibbereen are closed during the pandemic but please get in touch if there's anything I can do to help you.

☎ 086 3615830  
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🐦 @HollyCairnsTD  
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## Additional classrooms for Kinsale CS

Kinsale Community School has been successful in its application to build 10 additional classrooms and toilet facilities.

Congratulating the school and principal Fergal McCarthy, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan said, "This is a school that keeps going from strength to strength. I attended the official opening of the school back in 2019 by president Michael D Higgins. I was blown away by messages of inclusivity and wellbeing dotted around the school."

"At the start of the pandemic the students showed so much innovation when they began producing face masks for front line workers using their 3d printers. The musical talent in this school is also incredible."

The funding to build the additional facilities was awarded through the Department of Education's Emergency Works and Additional Accommodation schemes.

## Daffodil Day raises incredible €6m for vital cancer services and research

An incredible €6m raised on the 'most important Daffodil Day ever' will fund vital services for cancer patients and life-changing research, the Irish Cancer Society has said.

The Society has confirmed that support from the public through the Late Late Show on Friday, March 26 and in the

days leading up to Daffodil Day will allow for investment and improvements in four key areas, including: research, counselling, Night Nursing, and childhood cancers.

Due to increased demand for mental health services during the pandemic, funds raised will allow expansion of the Society's Counselling Service. An extended local counselling fund will ensure cancer support centres nationwide can support more people affected by cancer in their community.

The generous support shown by the Irish public will also allow the Society to fund more life-changing cancer research with a pledge to significantly increase their support to Cancer Trials Ireland.

To meet increased demand of terminally ill patients wishing to die at home, the Society will expand capacity in their Night Nursing service and continue to recruit additional nurses nationwide.

The Society is now able to also increase its support and services for families impacted by childhood and adolescent cancers. Counselling, peer-support, advocacy, survivorship research and supports, are all areas that will be expanded, thanks to the funding from Late Late Show viewers.

Lorraine Alcock, Mum of Caoimhe who died from Ewing Sarcoma, aged 19, is delighted that additional funding will go towards childhood and adolescent cancer supports and

services. Lorraine, who shared Caoimhe's story on the show, says that Caoimhe made her make a promise months before she died to talk about childhood cancer and advocate for nationwide support. She says; "Caoimhe wanted childhood and teenage cancers spoken about. Her wish before she died was that there would be proper adolescent services for teens and children so they were not forgotten. The incredible donations raised through Daffodil Day will allow the Irish Cancer Society to do this for our kids".

If you or anyone you know has concerns or questions about cancer, contact the Irish Cancer Society Support Line on Free-phone: 1800 200 700.



Brendan Hayes, Bantry, has recently been appointed Commissioner for Oaths by Chief Justice Frank Clarke. Brendan has held the position of Peace Commissioner for a number of years now upon being appointed by then Minister for Justice Charles Flanagan.

He joins his father Michael Hayes from Dunmanway, who also undertakes both roles, and together they are available to assist people east and west and all over Cork county.

Mr Hayes said "It's a wonderful honour to be appointed to a position that holds such significant responsibility and I'm very happy and willing to

assist anyone who requires my assistance in matters pertaining to the role. I have strived to help my community in every way for many years now and feel privileged in doing so"

His father Michael (pictured left), having held the role for many years, stated "I'm very proud of Brendan, he has always been incredibly motivated in everything he does and I'm confident he'll make an excellent commissioner."

Brendan can be contacted on 087/3505729 or [brendanhayes49@gmail.com](mailto:brendanhayes49@gmail.com).

## Inchydoney hotel takes the lead with regular Covid Antigen testing

Inchydoney Island Lodge and Spa have taken the lead in ensuring its full-time lockdown staff are feeling protected in the pandemic. Staff at the hotel are being regularly tested for Covid-19 using Covid Rapid Antigen testing equipment. Since January, the hotel have invested €4,000 in PPE and testing equipment and commit to continue this regime as hospitality opens up and those who have not yet received the vaccine return to work.

"We can't control the speed of

the roll out of the vaccine across our staff, but we can take steps to protect them and our customers now and when things do open up further, and hopefully in the not too distant future," said Des O'Dowd owner of Inchydoney Island Lodge and Spa.

The resort continues to employ 50 staff full time, some of those are working in admin roles and others operating a takeaway food offerings from the hotel, as well as the Silver Surfer mobile takeaway unit outside the hotel which means they have some

interaction with customers.

"We've already had a great reaction to the testing from staff, as everyone feels more protected while they are coming into work with others. I feel it's the right thing to do. I would view it as a great tool, like mask wearing and social distancing, to help us keep people as safe as possible we would plan to continue this when we reopen to ensure the safety of all employees coming back to work," said Des.



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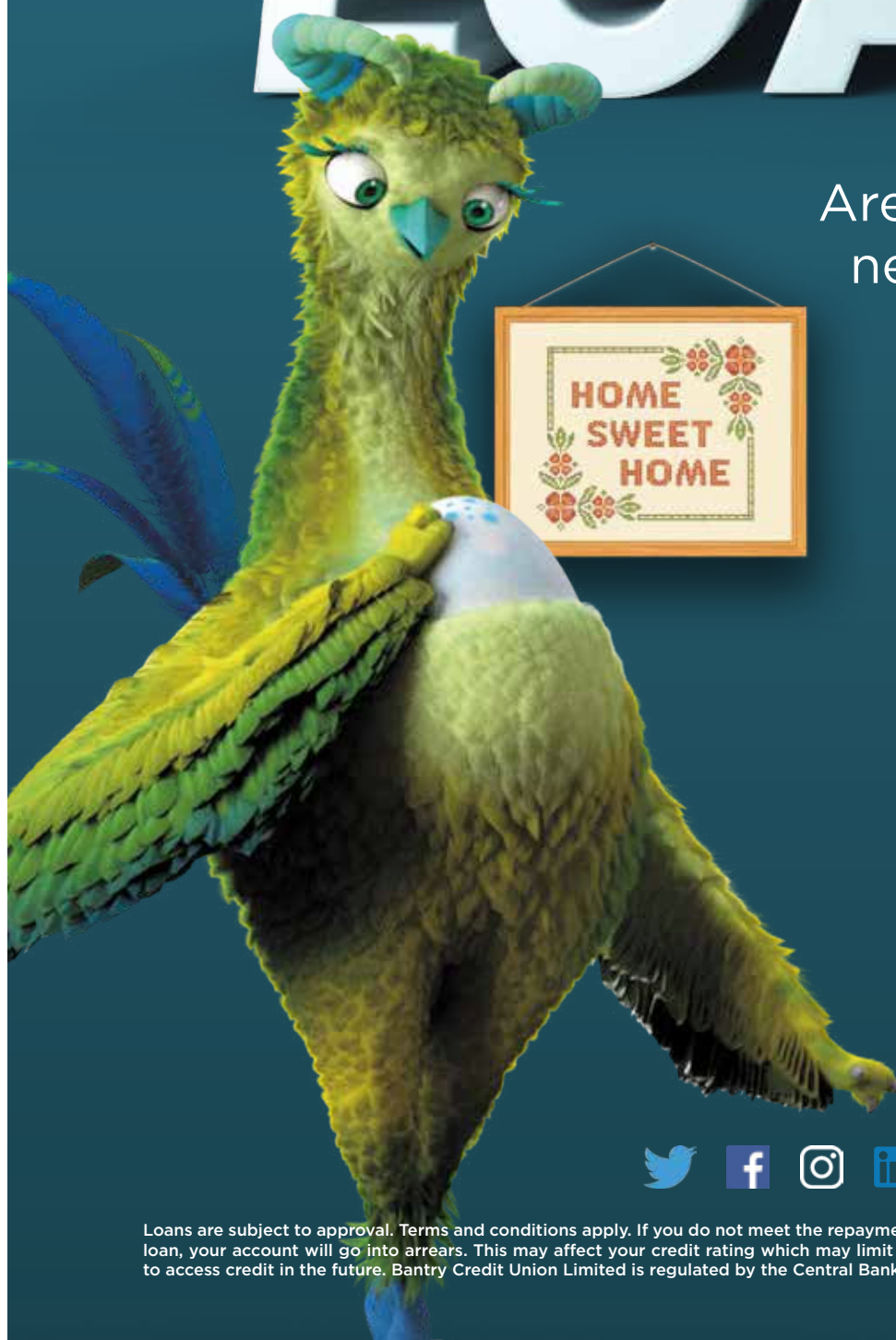
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# Tax is a hot topic this month for CIS

The Citizens Information Service is currently receiving lots of call and email queries regarding the CPUP (Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment) and Tax Credits and in particular Joint Assessment. The biggest concern people are having is how CPUP received in 2021 is taxed. In contrast to last year, PUP is now taxable in real-time during 2021 meaning you are taxed as you

are paid.

This new process ensures tax is collected on the payment at the right time and limits any additional liabilities at the end of the year. The Department of Social Protection informs Revenue on a weekly basis the amount of taxable PUP paid to each person and the tax due is collected by reducing the person's tax credit and rate band. In some cases, this may affect your spouse's tax

credits. The adjusted tax credits and rate band are applied on a week one basis and any revisions are shown on the employee's Tax Credit Certificate. In most cases, there will be no additional tax liability at the end of 2021.

## Joint Assessment

Some may be taxed under Joint Assessment, which can be of benefit to most couples. Under Joint Assessment, you are chargeable for tax on your combined total income. This option is applied when someone notifies the Revenue that they are married or in a civil partnership. It's important to note that the Joint Assessment option

does not prevent anyone from choosing the options of separate assessment or separate treatment. All updates to civil status and requesting joint assessment can be recorded through the 'Manage My Record' in 'MyAccount' on the Revenue's website.

Anne O'Donovan, West Cork's Citizens Information Manager, stated, "This month has been very busy with queries about the new process of taxation on the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment. If anyone requires information or advice around this issue, they can contact us in complete confidence, we provide free, independent, and non-judgmental

assistance and advice. Even though due to Covid-19, our drop-in services are not currently available, the offices are still staffed and we are busy assisting callers and giving them the tools to make informed decisions and help them to explore options and solutions to any issues they may have."

For anyone needing information, advice or have an advocacy issue, they can call a member of the local Citizens Information team in West Cork on 0761 07 8390, they will be happy to assist and make an appointment if necessary. The offices are staffed from Monday to Thursday from 10am to 5pm,



and 10am to 4pm on Friday. Alternatively, you can email on [bantry@citinfo.ie](mailto:bantry@citinfo.ie) or log on to [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) for further information and contact details.

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## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Benefits for carers

**I need to take time out from work to care for my father. What supports are available for people in my situation?**

There are several supports available to you. To qualify for these supports, the person you are caring for (your father) must need full-time care and attention.

If you are working at present and want to take time off to care for your father, you may be eligible for carer's leave of up to 2 years. You must have worked for your employer for a continuous period of 12 months to qualify for this leave.

Your employer does not pay you while you are on carer's leave but you can get credited social insurance contributions to maintain your PRSI record.

You are entitled to annual leave and public holidays for the first 13 weeks of carer's leave. Your employer cannot dismiss you or victimise you for exercising your right to carer's leave.

You may also be able to get Carer's Benefit from the Department of Social Protection, if you have enough PRSI contributions to qualify.

If you do not qualify for Carer's Benefit, you may qual-

ify for a means-tested Carer's Allowance. If you get Carer's Allowance, you may be entitled to a Free Travel Pass. If you live with the person you are caring for, you may also qualify for the Household Benefits Package.

There is also an annual Carer's Support Grant which is paid to full-time carers in June each year. From June 2021, the grant will increase from €1700 to €1850. Even if you are not getting any other social welfare payment, you can qualify for this grant if you meet the conditions.

You can find more information about support for carers by contacting Bantry Citizens Information Centre and an Information Officer will make you aware of all your options.

### Bullying at work

**I think I'm being bullied by my boss at work. What exactly is bullying and what protections do I have?**

Bullying is defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could be reasonably regarded as under-

mining the individual's right to dignity at work.

Bullying can take many different forms such as:

- Social exclusion and isolation
- Verbal abuse and insults
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues in similar roles
- Belittling a person's opinion
- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Intimidation and aggressive interactions
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding information needed for the person to perform their job properly
- Repeatedly manipulating a person's job contents and targets
- Blaming a person for things beyond their control
- Use of aggressive or obscene language
- Other menacing behavior

Your employer has a duty of care for all their employees to prevent bullying. They also have responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2005 (as amended) for the welfare of employees.

A new Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work came into effect on 23 December 2020. Under the Code your employer

must:

- Take reasonable steps to prevent bullying in the workplace
- Have an anti-bullying policy for dealing with complaints of bullying
- Develop the anti-bullying policy in consultation with employees
- Prepare a Safety Statement based on an assessment of the risk of bullying

A summary of your employer's anti-bullying policy should be displayed within your workplace.

The new code sets out a detailed procedure for dealing with informal and formal complaints. You can read more about how to make a complaint on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) or contact your local Citizens Information Centre and an Information Officer will talk you through the process

During COVID-19, you can find comprehensive integrated information online at [citizensinformation.ie/covid19/](http://citizensinformation.ie/covid19/) and you can get daily updates on what's changed on Twitter at @citizensinfo. You can also get information and advice from Bantry Citizens Information Centre, which provides a free and confidential service to the public. West Cork helpline number is 0761 07 8390 or email: [bantry@citinfo.ie](mailto:bantry@citinfo.ie)

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## Scrap clock change – MEP Kelly urges renewed action

**S**éan Kelly MEP urged the EU to renew its effort to scrap the bi-annual clock change, ahead of last weekend's time change when the clocks went forward by one hour.

As Ireland's only Member of the European Parliament's Working Group on the bi-annual Clock Change, Mr. Kelly has been campaigning for the best part of a decade to scrap Daylight Savings Time.

Speaking from the Parliament in Brussels, Kelly dismissed claims that the plan to end Daylight Savings Time could not proceed due to Brexit: "84 percent of EU citizens overwhelmingly supported the proposal to abolish the biannual clock change, in a 2018 EU-wide public consultation. In fact, 4.6 million citizens responded to the survey showing how strongly our citizens feel about this outdated practice. This is an issue of great interest to Irish people too", Kelly said.

The Fine Gael MEP pointed to studies which have shown that the disruption caused by the clock change has a detrimental impact on our health. It can lead to weakened immunity and sleeping patterns and in some cases, increased anxiety and depression. It can also impact tiredness in drivers, increasing the risk of accidents.

"Brexit and of course the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a pause in plans to tackle this issue, but we need to look forward and a renewed discussion is needed at EU level on this. I urge the Commission to reignite the debate with EU leaders in order to progress it and I will continue to lobby for that at EU level and in talks with the Commission."

Kelly added that the UK is likely to follow the other 27 Member States in scrapping the bi-annual clock change should they proceed, in his view.



# Rescue centre calls for ban on tethering

Kelly Mellerick, one of the volunteers who helps run the My Lovely Horse Rescue (MLHR) Cork centre, talks to **West Cork People** about why the charity is calling for a ban on animal tethering.

Based in Cobh, on the family farm of Jeannette O'Connell, My Lovely Horse Rescue centre is currently home to around 30 equines. A number of other horses rescued by the charity are fostered out to homes in Cork and Kerry.

Kelly, a full-time property manager, started fostering horses seven years ago. "Over the last 15 years or so I've become very aware of the equine crisis throughout Ireland and particularly in my own area in Cork City and County," she explains. After attending a seminar that highlighted the plight of urban horses, Kelly's interest and awareness increased and, in October 2018 the My Lovely Horse farm was set up when Jeanette O'Connell donated a seven-acre farm, along with 22 acres of land donated by Louisa Heckett in Cobh to My Lovely Horse Rescue.

"We're very lucky that our team has grown and we now have a 12-strong volunteer group in the Cork centre," she says. "Everyone pulls their weight and it's only because of the number of volunteers we have that we can house the number of horses we have."

Fundraising activities have been severely impacted by the pandemic so the charity has had to rely on public donations to keep it going.

"It doesn't take a lot to look after an animal properly," says Kelly passionately. "When it comes to the urban horse, our biggest concern is that they are being tethered in unsuitable sites and injuring themselves as a result. In some cases, they are even being taunted and abused by kids."

"Horses are flight animals and get scared easily, by loud noise or quick movement and their instinct is to run, which is impossible if they're tethered," says Kelly.

They are also grazing animals and need a constant supply of grass, which at this time of year doesn't provide enough nutrition and needs to be supplemented by hay. Some of the lands that horses are kept on in urban areas don't provide adequate foraging and they should always be subsidised with hay."

Worming or rather lack of it is also an issue for horses.



"Worms can cause serious blockages in the gut, causing colic, and death, if not treated in time," explains Kelly.

"Tethering is not illegal and doesn't get sufficient coverage in the Animal Health and Welfare Act," she says. The My Lovely Horse Rescue team had to deal with a horrific case involving a tethered cob pony in March. "We were called out to a little cob pony that was tied in a 20-acre field." The horse, which the volunteers named 'Lady Jane' had become so tightly bound up in her rope for a week or more, that the rope had cut through three of her legs. "She was cut so badly on one of her forelegs that the cannon bone was exposed," says Kelly.

The little pony was saturated in bog mud and suffering from hypothermia when spotted by a man out walking his dog. "It took seven of us to get her up out of the bog and back to the Rescue," says Kelly. "I've never felt a horse so cold."

"Obviously whoever tied her up and left her there, walked away and never looked back," she says. "We found no evidence of buckets for water and the area she was confined to with the rope was pure muck. It was heart-breaking to see."

Unfortunately it was too late

for 'Lady Jane', who had to be put to sleep two days after being rescued.

"We want a ban on tethering; we've had too many cases of hurt horses come our way because of it. There is no reason that any animal should be tethered. At the end of the day it goes against the 'five freedoms' that an animal should be granted." Under the Animal Welfare Act 2013, people are obliged to provide the 'five freedoms' to animals under their care: freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from discomfort (by providing adequate living conditions), freedom from pain, injury and disease, freedom to express normal behaviour, and freedom from fear and distress. "'Lady Jane' was denied every one of those freedoms," says Kelly. The Act isn't sufficiently covering those freedoms. We come across so many animals that have choked to death, severed through tissue to the bone or suffered permanent damage to ligaments or tendons. It's just crazy that there isn't an all-out ban on any kind of tethering."

Kelly's advice to the public on seeing a tethered animal is to report it to the ISPCA or the Department of Agriculture who then, if necessary, liaise with the

My Lovely Horse Rescue team.

"A tethered horse should be ideally checked two or three times a day and that's not happening. The sickening thing about Lady Jane is that she was tethered in the middle of a 20-acre field, without shelter, exposed to the elements. She couldn't do anything to save herself and her injuries were horrific."

"A horse can drink up to 50 litres a day and these owners are just leaving them there without sufficient drinking water or food and unable to defend themselves from animal or human because they are tethered. It's just wrong on every level," she says passionately. We have an over-supply of horses in Ireland with indiscriminate breeding. There isn't enough resources for successful enforcement of the current licencing laws and this needs to change."

Kelly is appealing to anyone in the West Cork area with the land and inclination to foster a horse. "West Cork is very supportive of us and we already have a number of people fostering horses in the area," she says. "We recommend one acre per horse but we do a home check and give support and advice." Anyone fostering a horse has

CHRISTOPHER  
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the full support of the My Lovely Horse team behind them and veterinary charges and so on are all covered by the charity.

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# The story of Cynthia Ann Parker



## 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.

*"Parker never fully reintegrated and repeatedly asked to be allowed to return to her sons and husband, but her requests were denied." – Treva Elaine Hodges*

As mentioned in last month's column the Comanche Indians are widely regarded as being one of the most violent groups of people in history, scalping people they had captured, cutting their throats and torturing them for weeks was all part of the *modus operandi* of the tribe. One particularly gruesome technique was to tie a detainee to a poll and face him or her towards the sun, then remove their eyelids so the sun would burn them to blindness. Paradoxically, they are

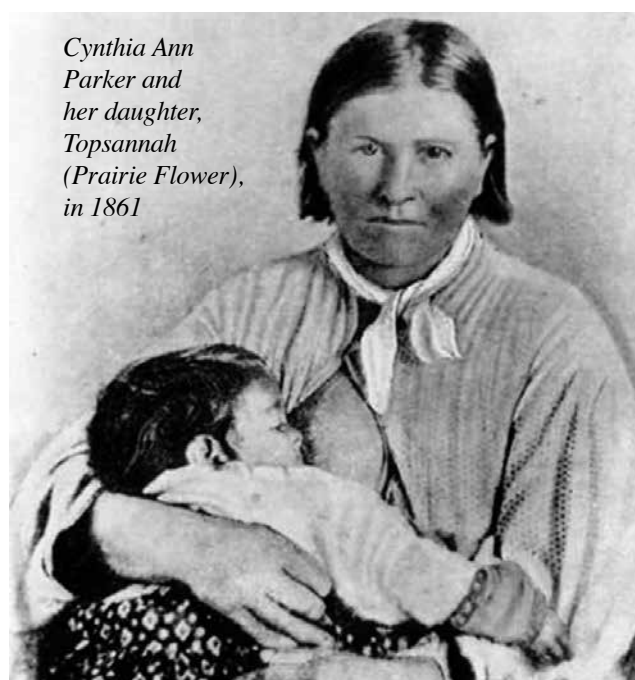
also known to be kind, to certain people they have captured. So much so, that often the POWs would rather stay with the tribe than return to their previous family or life: Often marrying a Comanche Indian, having children and staying with the tribe for the remainder or for most of their lives. One such detainee was Cynthia Ann Parker. She is commonly known as the most famous POW in history. Cynthia Ann Parker had blonde hair and blue eyes and was nine-years-old when she was captured by the Comanche Indians in a raid on her home.

The historian TR Fehrenbach, author of 'Comanche: The History of a People', tells of a raid on an early settler family called the Parkers, who with other families had set up a stockade known as Fort Parker. In 1836, 100 mounted Comanche warriors appeared outside the fort's walls, one of them waving a white flag to trick the Parkers.

'Benjamin Parker went outside the gate to parley with the Comanche,' he says. 'The people inside the fort saw the riders suddenly surround him and drive their lances into him. Then with loud whoops, mounted warriors dashed for the gate. Silas Parker was cut down before he could bar their entry; horsemen poured inside the walls.'

Survivors described the slaughter: 'The two Frosts, father and son, died in front of the women; Elder John Parker, his wife 'Granny' and others tried to flee. The warriors scattered and rode them down.

'John Parker was pinned to



Cynthia Ann Parker and her daughter, Topsannah (Prairie Flower), in 1861

the ground, he was scalped and his genitals ripped off. Then he was killed. Granny Parker was stripped and fixed to the earth with a lance driven through her flesh. Several warriors raped her.'

Contemporary accounts also describe them staking out male captives spread-eagled and naked over a red-ant bed. Sometimes this was done after removing the victim's private parts, putting them in his mouth and then sewing his lips together. One band of Comanche sewed up captives in un-tanned leather and left them out in the sun. The green rawhide would slowly shrink and squeeze the prisoner to death.

'Silas Parker's wife Lucy fled through the gate with her

four small children. But the Comanche overtook them near the river. They threw her and the four children over their horses to take them as captives.'

Cynthia Ann Parker was soon integrated into the tribe. Her Comanche name Naduah, translates as 'someone found' in Uto-Aztecan the Comanche language. She was adopted by a Tenowish Comanche couple, who raised her as their own daughter. She forgot her original ways and became Comanche in every sense. She married Peta Nocona, a chieftain. Peta had actually taken part in the raid on fort Parker the day Cynthia was captured. They enjoyed a happy marriage and, as a tribute to his great affection to her, he never took another wife, although it

was traditional for chieftains to have several wives. They had three children Quanah, Pecos (Pecan) and Topsannah (Prairie Flower), Quanah later became a Comanche chief, which was an incredibly difficult distinction to achieve. He became one of the most feared Comanche warriors in history and his story is incredible in its own right.

This practice of adopting captured children was quite common among the Plains Indians, as low birth rates combined with the hard nomadic lifestyle resulted in dwindling numbers in several of the bands. Some of the captive children, like John and James Parker, lived with the Indians for several months or years before eventually being killed or ransomed back to white society. In December 1860, after years of searching at the behest of Parker's father and various scouts, Texas Rangers led by Lawrence Sullivan Ross discovered a band of Comanche, deep in the heart of Comancheria, that was rumored to hold American captives. In a surprise raid, the small band of Rangers attacked a group of Comanches in the Battle of Pease River.

After limited fighting, the Comanche attempted to flee. Ranger Ross and several of his men pursued the man who had appeared as the leader, and who was fleeing alongside a woman rider. As Ross and his men neared, she held a child over her head. The men did not shoot, but instead surrounded and stopped her. Ross continued to follow the chief, eventually shooting him three times. Although he

fell off his horse, he was still alive and refused to surrender. Ross' cook, Antonio Martinez, identified the man as Nocona and killed him. Cynthia Ann and her daughter Prairie Flower were captured. Cynthia Ann had spent twenty-four years living as a Comanche before being unwillingly reunited with her Anglo family. Cynthia Ann never fully reintegrated into white society. Parker's return to her birth family captured the country's imagination. In 1861, the Texas legislature granted her a league, which is rough 4,500 acres of land and an annual pension of \$100 for the next five years.

Her son Pecos died of smallpox and her daughter Topsannah died of pneumonia. This increased her longing to return to her tribe to be with her surviving son Quanah. Cynthia tried to escape several times to return to her Comanche tribe but was recaptured by the Texas Ranger and returned to her new residence. In defiance of being returned and in a last ditch attempt for her desire to be returned to be taken seriously, she went on hunger strike. She died in March 1871; she was forty-three years old. She is buried in Oklahoma.

Next month's column will focus on the Texas Rangers organisation that was formed because of the Comanche Indians and were the same force that found and returned Cynthia Ann Parker to her original family that she lived with prior to being captured, as well as killing her husband Peta Nocona.



## FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

A retired primary teacher, West Cork native Eugene Daly has a lifelong interest in the Irish language and the islands (both his parents were islanders). He has published a number of local history books and is a regular contributor on folklore to Ireland's Own magazine. Eugene's fields of interest span local history, folklore, Irish mythology, traditions and placenames.

## The return of the Swallow

Skimming low over our fields and lakes in pursuit of insects, the swallow is a familiar and welcome sight. Its confiding nature and its habit of building a nest so close to our homes endears it to everybody. We eagerly await the return of the swallow each spring and its departure in autumn is sad – a reminder of the dark days of winter. In Latin the swallow's name is 'hirundo rustica rustica' meaning rural, of the countryside. The name 'swallow' is a very old one, derived probably from the old English 'swell', meaning to swirl, a reference to the bird's swooping flight, or from the old Norse 'swala', meaning a cleft stick, which refers to its tail. The Irish 'fáinleog' may come from 'fán', meaning wandering or migrating.

The swallow can easily be confused with its cousin, the house martin. Quite similar in appearance, the swallow has a longer forked tail and has a red

forehead, chin and throat, which the martin hasn't. Swallows nest mainly in old barns or outhouses, always inside, returning to the same nest year after year. Martins build their nests outside, under the eaves of houses. Modern buildings, with smooth plaster and sealed doors, are not suitable nesting sites for the swallow or the martin. The old barns always had room for entry for the swallow; the smooth walls of modern buildings are unsuitable for the martins, as they need a rough surface to attach their nests to. The Irish name for the martin, 'Gabhlán Binne' (forked one of the gable of a house), is very appropriate.

Humans have had a close relationship with swallows for thousands of years. Because they originally built their nests on cliffs or in caves, they have readily taken to using the artificial 'rock faces' of our houses and outbuildings as nest sites and they have thereby infiltrated our language, customs and beliefs.

Swallows are widely seen and celebrated as heralds of summer with its promise of warmth and fertility to the cold winter landscape. In parts of Germany, it was the custom for the head of the family to ceremoniously open the doors of barns and sheds on the day the swallows returned, to show them that their nests were awaiting them.

There are many Christian legends connected with the swallow. In the Garden of Gethsemane, swallows tried to lead astray those coming to take Christ. They are said to have removed the crowns of thorns from Christ's head on the cross, staining their throat and forehead red in doing so. Other legends have them removing the nails from Christ's hands and feet, wiping blood from his wounds, consoling him with their song. The swallow is clearly seen as a 'good' bird, in God's favour and protected by him. As a reward for their help for Jesus, they were allowed to nest in our

homes, under our protection. In places there is a saying that swallows are consecrated to the Mother of God; one saying goes, 'The swallow and the swift are God's precious gift'.

In Eastern Europe and Asia, swallows are traditionally the birds that brought fire from the gods to humans, losing their middle tail feathers in the process. In Western Europe, the swallow is said to have fetched the fire, but the wren or the robin took it and brought it to earth. In Japan gifts are offered to the household gods on the day the swallows arrive to ensure fertility in the family. In many places a swallow nesting in the house brought good luck; in other places swallow nests were thought to protect buildings from fire and lightning. Disturbing a swallow's nest would bring bad luck and would make the cows' milk bloody or dry up altogether. In parts of Africa, swallows are considered to be sent by the tribe's ancestors to comfort

the living and in Russian and Eskimo mythology they are the spirits of dead children.

In recent years the number of swallows, like many other birds, seem to have decreased. The use of pesticides has also banished their insect food from the fields. Nest sites on modern large farms are also scarce because old brick or stone outbuildings have been replaced with modern smooth constructions, which are unsuitable for the attachment of mud nests.

Hopefully, man will come to his senses and we will not allow the disappearance of the winged creatures that share our world. A countryside without swallows twittering in the farmyards and flying with such grace and beauty over the fields is a bleak prospect.

Uniquely graceful, streamlined and masters of the air, swallows and martins have a special place in folklore and human affection.





## HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

*“No man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation,”*  
– Charles Stuart Parnell

There was a time when that question would have been a resounding yes.

For generations Irish people have grown up on a diet of history decrying the colonisation and division of the country. We have been lulled by songs lamenting the loss of sovereignty. The more senior of us will remember the gerrymandering of Catholics so their votes were nullified, the attack on the Civil Rights march in 1969, and the horrors that followed.

The Act of Union in 1801 cemented British rule and heralded the end of Grattan’s Parliament. The consequences of a country not being allowed to make its own decisions, was crystallised by the British governments completely inapt and inhumane attitude to the Great Hunger, within a generation of that union. The Westminster bubble stood by as millions starved, despite the surplus of food in the country. There is not an Irish person alive who doesn’t know what happened next.

Ireland’s greatest statesman Daniel O’Connell foresaw those dangers. After successfully getting Catholic emancipation in 1829, he spent the rest of his life trying to repeal the Act of Union. Other giants of Irish history, Butt, Parnell and Redmond, endeavoured to achieve Home Rule for the country so we could be in control of our own affairs. Just as the nation was on the cusp of achieving this, the Germans decided to invade Belgium precipitating a conflict that would turn the world upside down for the next four years. In the midst of that fury, a new generation hungry for more than just Home Rule emerged. WB Yeats captured the zeitgeist of that generation when he penned in his famous poem Easter 1916, writing, ‘A terrible beauty is born’. His oxymoron that is fused beauty

and terror in one phrase was not a mere fanciful poetic conceit. That terrible beauty were the grand ideals of a republic – beautiful for all what it wanted to achieve – and terrible for it ultimately resulted in – a divided nation. Within five years of the Easter Rising, the world map was redrawn. It gave birth to new nations and repackaged imperialistic land grabs. Somewhere in all that, a small little region called Northern Ireland was created as a separate legal entity, on May 3, 1921. And so, the debate continued that no one has been able to answer since Yeats posed the question in that same poem: ‘Was it needless death after all? For England may keep faith.’ Would Ireland be united today if we had taken the Home Rule path a hundred years ago?

WB Yeats captured the zeitgeist of that generation when he penned in his famous poem Easter 1916, writing, ‘A terrible beauty is born’. His oxymoron that is fused beauty and terror in one phrase was not a mere fanciful poetic conceit. That terrible beauty were the grand ideals of a republic – beautiful for all what it wanted to achieve – and terrible for it ultimately resulted in – a divided nation.

Once the desire for Home Rule was replaced with a desire for complete independence, Unionism became more entrenched. It may have been coming anyway when the Ulster Volunteer Force raised a militia 100,000 strong in defiance of Home Rule in 1912. Even so, would England have kept the faith and granted an independent parliament for the thirty-two counties? But given the extreme opposition by unionists to Home Rule of any shape or form, its implementation could have sparked a civil war that would have dwarfed the events of 1922-23. One can’t simply ignore the four hundred year heritage that loyalist communities had sown in the Ulster soil: One that they were prepared to defend to the death.

One hundred years on, the North is about to mark its birth this May. Their proposal for a six-county stone memorial in

the grounds of Stormont has been vetoed by Sinn Féin. Politically this is an understandable stance. It’s hard to be diplomatic if the memorial represents everything your party is opposed to. It is the different side of the same coin when unionists opposed state recognition of 1916 celebrations. The same logic applies, but in the latter case, it’s a unionist perspective. For all the progress the north has made, divisions have never been so clear. Sixty-one per cent of the north voted to stay in the European Union. Yet since the pandemic, many voters may now see the advantages of the union with Britain, predicated on issues such as the successful roll out of the British vaccination programme compared to the Republic’s. The European Union’s ill-advised decision to implement a clause in the Northern Protocol has hardened unionist attitudes, including some moderate unionist opinion, about co-operation with the south. It has created more suspicion and driven a wedge between communities.

The Good Friday Agreement allows people in the Republic to also have a say on the future of Irish unity. This means that consent for a united Ireland would need to be given “concurrently”, not just in the north, but also in the south. With regards to the communities in the six-counties, it states that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland shall call a border poll, “if at any time it appears likely to him/her that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland”. All these recent

events are propelling us closer to this moment of decision.

Emotionally and historically, there will always be a pull for reunification in the Republic. However, the economics and ‘realpolitik’ might not be as persuasive an argument. Nearly a third of the population of the North are employed in the public sector, i.e. from the British exchequer. Subsidies to the state amount to nearly eleven billion a year. That makes it a costly transfer of land. There are other considerations too. While it’s difficult to know what unification would mean until it happens, compromises would have to be made. South Africa is a good example. A divided country was unified when apartheid fell. They had to change their flag and every rugby fan can tell you about their very long, hybrid anthem, that compromises of a new version and the old Afrikaans version.



Love it or loath it, the twelfth of July is a cornerstone of Unionist heritage and a united Ireland would most likely have to include this in their calendar alongside Saint Patrick’s Day and Easter 1916. These may be simple compromises for some, more painful for others and non-negotiable for more again.

Unification would certainly mean a change of flag, anthem and possibly even parliament? Whatever happens, people can’t expect it to all go one direction. More problematic is the twelfth of July celebrations. When the ‘Love Ulster’ organisation marched in Dublin on July 12 back in 2006 it had to be abandoned due to aggressive attacks and riots. For decades we witnessed the animosity it created in the north between communities because of its polarising symbolism. For unionists, it celebrates the preservation of their people; for nationalists, it is an antagonistic celebration of victory over your foe. Love it or loath it, it’s a cornerstone of Unionist heritage and a united Ireland would most likely have to include this in their calendar alongside Saint Patrick’s Day and Easter 1916. These may be simple compromises for some, more painful for others and non-negotiable for more again.

The IRA ran a terror campaign for thirty years to force the British to give up the North. Would there be anything stopping disgruntled loyalists waging a similar war against the Republic? The last time I was in the north, I walked the ancient

walls of Derry. From the wall you can see one of the Protestant communities in the heart of a Catholic enclave. They have a mural with the words: ‘Londonderry West Bank Loyalist. Still under siege. No surrender’. Tricolours and Union Jacks pockmark the region each claiming a hierarchy of superiority. How can you have a united Ireland until the north is united? Thirty years ago, the demographics pointed to a future Catholic majority in the north. It’s nearly there now, but thirty years on, Catholicism isn’t as strong an indicator. Economics, Brexit, the pandemic, European identity are now bigger factors.

For twenty-five years, an open border and the decommissioning of the British army from the north has eliminated tension and allowed freedom of movement. The Good Friday Agreement allows people in the north claim to be Irish, British or both. Does unification matter anymore beyond a historical desire for retribution? On the other hand, Brexit has certainly made it harder for goods to travel freely between the two jurisdictions and movement is not as free flowing as it once was. The pandemic has highlighted the dangers of two jurisdictions on one island not pulling together. A united Ireland eliminates these problems.

Certainly, we must be prepared for this decision. A clause in the Good Friday Agreement states you can only have a border poll every five years, meaning politicians won’t trigger it unless they can be assured of victory. The emotional and historical sentiment leans towards a desire for unification in the Republic. Time has blunted some of these sentiments and new issues have surfaced that may even be more relevant when it comes to making a choice. What do you want? Time is ticking.



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## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Bonnie Aspell, Elianna Vinten and Olivia Kingston celebrating St Patrick's day at Bandon Bridge NS. Pic: Denis Boyle



Pictured in Clonakilty at the new public amenity area (on the site of the former Town Hall at Kent street) was Mayor of Clonakilty Pdraig O'Reilly. Pic: Denis Boyle



Adam, Irene, Lauren and Sophie Mawe-Downey take part in the Dunmanway St. Patrick's Day 2021 Doheny Fundraiser



Teresa and Conor Cahalane from Dunmanway celebrate St. Patrick's Day 2021



(l-r) Mike Muiji and Michael Mitras celebrate St Patrick's Day at Bandon Bridge NS. Pic: Denis Boyle



Pictured at the weekly farmers market in Clonakilty were Maeve McCarthy and Carlos Delrio. Pic: Denis Boyle

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)



# Bandon girls scoop top honours at West Cork Student Enterprise finals



Kate O'Connor and Emily Barry with their 'Hook R Strike' sports storage solution.

Two students from Colaiste na Toirbhirte Bandon took the overall prize at the recent West Cork Student Enterprise finals, which were held virtually on Thursday March 18. Hook R Strike is a handcrafted sports equipment holder for the home. More than 350 students from ten participating West Cork schools took part in the annual programme this year. The winning duo will represent the Local Enterprise Office Cork West at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Final on Friday, May 14.

The enterprise education initiative, funded by the Government of Ireland through Enterprise Ireland and delivered by the 31 Local Enterprise Offices

in local authorities throughout the country, saw over 29,000 students from just under 500 secondary schools across the country take part in 2020/2021. The programme supports students to create, design and market their own business, all with the hope of reaching the National Final.

Kate O'Connor and Emily Barry have been building their business 'Hook R Strike' since last September as part of the Student Enterprise programme. Their aim was to design a multi-purpose customised sports rack which neatly stores a range of sporting equipment for a tidier home. The idea for the business came from their own experiences of having sports gear all over the home,

which creates clutter and makes finding the equipment in a hurry difficult.

Speaking of their win, Kate O'Connor said, "We are thrilled to take first place in the West Cork finals. We now have lots of work to do, as we progress to represent West Cork in the National finals in May. So far our product has been shipped all over Ireland, the UK and the US with well-known celebrities also among our customer base including RTE sports presenters Evanne Ní Chuilinn who said our rack was the best thing she ever bought through Instagram and Jacqui Hurley. Our Hook R Strike sports holders can be purchased through our website [hookrstrike.com](http://hookrstrike.com) or via Face-

book and Instagram."

Other prizewinners on the day included 'The Beara Way' (Innovation award) from Beara Community School, 'Western Wood' (Best sales), Ardscoil Pobail Bantry, 'Garran Handcrafts' (Communication awards), Skibbereen Community School, 'Patched' (Marketing award), Sacred Heart Secondary School Clonakilty, 'Bumblebee Crafts', (Best Business Plan) Ardscoil Pobail Bantry, while Sustainability awards went to 'The Eco Wash', MICC Dunmanway and 'Guardian Angels', Schull Community College.

Speaking at the final of the West Cork Student Enterprise Awards, Kevin Curran, Head of Enterprise, Cork County Council's Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West said, "It is extremely encouraging to see the level of enthusiasm among the students in what has been a very challenging year for them. I highly commend them and their fantastic teachers for all the work they put in to the programme. They are testament that there are ways around every obstacle and I hope this learning will stand to them throughout their lives. Our national finalists are excellent ambassadors for the programme and we wish them the very best of luck on Friday, May 14, we'll all be logged on to support them."

## West Cork businesswomen encouraged to celebrate achievements

West Cork is full of talented and dedicated female professionals. They have successful careers, run successful businesses and, in many cases also juggle the needs of their families. Network Ireland Businesswoman of the Year awards are designed to recognise the achievement of these women. Whether you are an employee or self-employed, working for a small or large business, whether you're new to your career or business, or been established a while, with eight categories to choose from, there is a category for everyone. The awards process invites applicants to review their current position, think about their future direction and improve strategic focus.

Network Ireland West Cork Branch President Katherine O'Sullivan, who was a National winner in 2019 is encouraging all women in business to enter these awards, "Network Ireland Businesswoman of the Year Awards are a fantastic way of celebrating the many talented and dedicated women in business. You really have nothing to lose and so much to gain by just telling your story of your career-to-date."

The Network Ireland West Cork branch has gone from strength to strength, becoming the fastest growing branch Nationally in 2019 and can boast of two National winners in 2018 and 2019, along with Mags Riordan who was Highly Commended in 2020 for her work at Bumblebee Flower Farm. This is an incredible achievement for such a newly formed group.

Award winners are chosen by a panel of business experts based on the information supplied in the application form. The judges are looking for women who understand business, who are passionate about their career or business, and show a determination to succeed no matter what life throws at them. Branch winners will go forward to represent West Cork at a national level.

To find out more, visit [www.networkireland.ie](http://www.networkireland.ie) or email [westcorkbusinessawards@networkireland.ie](mailto:westcorkbusinessawards@networkireland.ie). A dedicated West Cork awards team are ready to provide whatever help or support is needed. Closing date is Friday, April 16 at 5pm.

## Whether you are a start-up or an established business, we are here to support and assist you throughout 2021:

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### Women in Business Programme 2021:

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### Start Your Own Business Programme:

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## people Enterprising West Cork

## CL HR Consultancy makes all the right connections

Bandon native Claire Lehane is the determined entrepreneur behind CL HR Consultancy. Through a combination of hard work and persistence, the HR Consultant and Workplace Mediator has built up a successful business providing tailored, solution-based services helping businesses meet their HR legal responsibilities. CL HR Consultancy is currently renovating a new office space to accommodate its growing business needs.

CL HR Consultancy was a runner up in the West Cork Business Tourism Awards 'Best New Business' category in 2019 and a finalist in The Network

Ireland Businesswoman of the Year Awards 'Emerging New Business' category in 2020.

Claire says she grabbed every opportunity when working in the corporate world as a HR Manager: As a result, she gained a wealth of knowledge in her field and is well placed to understand the needs, concerns and challenges that employers face when it comes to their employees. "I am passionate about making a positive impact culturally and ultimately in productivity for businesses," she says.

"I want businesses to have peace of mind, the ability to manage employee relations, which ultimately attracts and

retains employees. I also endeavour to help create an engaged workforce improving morale, productivity and profitability. Employees are the greatest asset in any business but can also be one of the greatest challenges if not managed correctly."

The services offered by CL HR Consultancy vary from day-to-day HR operations and support to HR strategic projects and include some of the following: HR legal compliance, managing employee relations, absenteeism, performance, wellness and engagement at work and conflict resolution.

After years of studying and working in HR, from starting out in a voluntary HR role in West Cork over 12 years ago, to quickly working her way up the ladder in companies across Cork and Dublin, Claire decided to take the plunge in 2018 and set up her own HR Consultancy business.

"Initially, I approached the local enterprise office and through their services, completed a 'Start Your Own Business' course, and soon after a 'Women In Business' course, which were both invaluable to me," she says. "I recently upgraded my website and they also funded 90 per cent of this. Their door is always open to give you advice or to steer you in the right direction – I can't speak highly enough of their support to me and my business."

Claire started connecting and networking daily. "I understood that people needed to learn about my business and to have trust and confidence in me and my services. This is when I became aware of Network Ireland West Cork and I immediately joined," she explains. From that first meeting, Claire felt welcomed and supported. "I knew that my business would be supported and

encouraged by these likeminded business women. Through our Network, there are many opportunities to network, to receive mentoring, to make friends and to promote your business so it ticked all the boxes for me.

At the time, she also joined Cork Chamber, making further connections. Claire is also an active chartered member of her HR Professional body-CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) which she says allows her to keep up to date with changing legislation and best practice.

Soon all of Claire's networking started to pay off and CL HR Consultancy gained more and more clients.

It was through this networking and speaking with businesses that Claire also recognised the growing need and interest in workplace mediation and so she completed a three-month intense training course, becoming a certified qualified workplace Mediator in 2019.

As well as holding a Business Studies Degree from UL, Claire also has a Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from Dublin City University and a Diploma in Employment Law from Dublin Business School. She is a Chartered member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and a qualified workplace Mediator through the Mediators' Institute of Ireland (MII).

Married to a dairy farmer with two young daughters, life is busy but fulfilling. "No two days are the same," says Claire. "I work with a variety of clients from different industries and business sizes, so I love seeing the differences in working cultures and the different approaches that work in each. It sounds a bit cliché but I do love working



with people and being able to make a positive impact in the workplace."

In 10 years time, Claire's hope is that CL HR Consultancy will be established throughout Cork and beyond, providing a top-class tailored service for businesses. As CL HR Consultancy continues to grow and expand, she would like to employ additional HR specialists and to be the 'go-to' HR experts advising and providing solutions to businesses.

But most of all, she hopes to have maintained a good work-life balance, spending happy times with family and friends. Her independent young

daughters she says are her inspiration and keep her on her toes everyday! "They have taught me to be patient, to appreciate the little things in life, to have some fun and to be fearless!"

Claire's advice to anyone starting out in business is to be persistent. "You will have bad days but just learn to walk away from it and start afresh the next day. Always ask for help; there is plenty of it out there. Finally be patient with you and your business – sow the seeds, nurture and care for it and wait for the results."

[www.clhrc.ie](http://www.clhrc.ie)



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## Social entrepreneurs invited to apply for funding and support from SEI

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI) is making €50,000 seed funding available through its Ideas Academy to individuals who have an early-stage innovative idea to solve a particular social problem. A further €100,000 will be awarded to high potential social entrepreneurs through its Impact Programme. The funding is part of a suite of supports on offer through these programmes, both of which are currently accepting applications. Participants on the

Ideas Academy will have the opportunity to pitch for a portion of the €50,000 seed fund to pilot their idea. Awardees on the Impact Programme will receive €20,000 in direct funding each to grow their impact in addition to bespoke non-financial support.

SEI, which is dedicated to supporting social entrepreneurs in Ireland, is encouraging people from West Cork to "see the challenge, be the change," by applying to the Ideas Academy – aimed at those with an early-stage

idea to solve a social problem, or the Impact Programme – aimed at high-potential social entrepreneurs looking to grow their impact. Some of SEI's alumni based in Munster include Change By Degrees, Alex's Adventure and Irish Community Rapid Response (ICRR).

Commenting, SEI Interim Director of Impact, Siobhán O'Keeffe said: "All across Ireland there are people with ideas to solve social problems – in some cases, these are people who

have direct experience of a problem – and the courage and insight to put forward a solution, and act on it. Often it is through real challenge that innovation is inspired, and we are anticipating seeing that in this year's applications in response to the global pandemic. We're calling on people from all backgrounds who need support to realise their vision to apply to SEI. We know that the first step of the journey is often the hardest one to take. We are here to help, and we hope that the supports we have available on both of our programmes, along with the availability of €50,000 in seed funding on the Ideas Academy and €20,000 in unrestricted funding for each of our five Impact Programme Awardees will further support our social entrepreneurs to pilot their ideas and grow their impact."

Up to 60 places are available on SEI's Ideas Academy. The three-month programme will provide budding social entrepreneurs with the support and direction they need as they take the first steps from idea to action. In addition to having the opportunity to pitch for seed funding, participants on the Ideas Academy will be supported to clearly articulate, refine and progress their solution, to build skills and accelerate learning in core areas of importance to social entrepreneurs, and to move from idea to action. In response to current public health restrictions, the 2021 programme will be delivered online.

Up to five places are available on SEI's prestigious Impact Programme, aimed at high-potential social entrepreneurs. In addition to €20,000 in unrestricted funding to grow their impact,

Awardees will receive mentorship, training, and consultancy in areas such as leadership development, fundraising, governance, strategic planning, and communications. They will also have access to pro-bono support from partner organisations throughout the nine-month programme. The Impact Programme will be delivered primarily online in 2021-22, with in-person elements included when, and if, it safe to do so.

DCC plc, the international sales, marketing and support services group, is the flagship supporter of SEI's national call for applications.

Applications for the Ideas Academy and Impact Programme are open until midnight on Wednesday, April 7. Interested candidates can apply or find out more at [www.socialentrepreneurs.ie](http://www.socialentrepreneurs.ie).



# Tips for working well from home

Moving regularly and being physically supported with ergonomically designed furniture are key to working well at home. The benefits are numerous and include promotion of circulation, improved memory and concentration, elevated mood and reduced stress, and healthier joints and muscles. All of this leads to a more productive home office environment and healthier employees, and should therefore be a top priority for employers this spring.



As workers and students alike spend more hours than ever in a static seated position at home, Trevor Kingston of High Resolution, West Cork's mobile office suppliers, has experienced a big uptake in orders for ergonomically designed office furniture to combat common issues like neck and back pain. "When not working or studying from home, people normally get up and move regularly – to speak to a colleague, use the photocopier, switch classrooms – but none of that is necessary now so they are finding themselves crouched for hours at the kitchen table or a makeshift desk and not good for your wellbeing," Trevor says.

"From an employer's perspective, it's like giving an employee a slow computer. .... the work productivity is going to be limited."

The Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) has a whole section on working better from home on its website in which it provides advice if buying an office chair: To help you keep your focus and work productively and comfortably, choose a five-star base with a height adjustable seat, backrest and arms (or no armrests if not adjustable). The backrest should also be tilt adjustable or have lumbar support.

High Resolution has a range of chairs that fit this brief but also fit a range of budgets, from just €150. The most popular is the Positura Chair, which comes in at €270+VAT (not a bad investment when you think of potential savings against Physio bills). "This is a really great chair that has deep contoured

cushioning with an ultra ergonomic contoured backrest," Trevor says. "Most popular is black and blue but it is available in a huge range of colours to personalise your office space. However, we are all different and you might have to try a few different brands before you find the perfect fit. I bring a selection of chairs to your home to 'test drive' to make sure you choose the right one."

To get the most out of your chair, the ISCP advises adjusting the chair height so that your upper arms are relaxed by your side, and your wrists are in a neutral position when your hands are on the keyboard. If you need to raise yourself up to achieve this, then your feet should still be supported to

## More ISCP Tips to to work well from home

Stand up and move around at regular intervals (minimum once an hour and more often if possible).

If possible, take a walk at lunchtime.

During virtual meetings, try to turn off the video and stand up and move around.

Stand up and move around when you are on phonecalls.

Climb the stairs often if you have one.

Keep hydrated to reduce fatigue and promote concentration.

Give your eyes a break from screen as often as possible to promote restful sleep.



support your back – if they fall short try one of High Resolution's foot rests.

Now adjust your backrest height and tilt for your comfort. Finally move your chair as close to your desk as is comfortable (this is why adjustable armrests are necessary) and try to always sit with your back against the backrest. A proper work desk is of equal importance, High Resolution has a wide range starting from just €100+VAT.

While a good chair and desk will certainly help, ultimately staying seated for long periods causes weight pressure to be unevenly distributed over the spine, and the leg and gluteus muscles become inactive, thus reducing your ability to sit up straight. We often think that it is just standing for long periods that causes swollen ankles and varicose veins, but actually remaining seated for too long also causes fluids to sink down into the legs!

This is where a sit/stand desk comes in and High Resolution has a number of solutions. The Leap desk (from €475+VAT) is electrically adjustable and goes from 655mm to 1255mm in height with simple touch-sensitive controls.



The Leap has three memory features which enables the user to save their preferred sitting and standing heights, so there's no faffing about.

An alternative is the Cor-sivo, which converts your existing desk into a sit-stand workstation with a spacious upper platform that holds two monitors, or a monitor and

laptop, and the bottom level that holds a keyboard and mouse. High Resolution currently has 60 per cent off this model making it very affordable at €210+VAT.

There are lots of other ergonomic products available from High Resolution that will help you achieve an optimal work/study space such as keyboards,

computer mice and gel wrist pads. See [www.highresolution.ie](http://www.highresolution.ie) for the full range or contact Trevor on 023 8858888 / [office@highresolution.ie](mailto:office@highresolution.ie) to get his advice on all office furniture – you won't find a more knowledgeable source for what office aids are available.

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## people Enterprising West Cork

## Teaching people how to shine in life

Susan Collins Duggan believes in educating in a fun, friendly, creative and safe environment, where students are encouraged to express themselves. Her successful business Theatre Tricks Drama and Communications not only gives students self-confidence, self-esteem and employability skills but will benefit them throughout their lives. “I aim to give each student or client the opportunity to shine in their own way,” explains Susan, who has over 15 years of teaching Speech and Drama, running her own school and teaching students privately on an individual basis or in small groups.

“We are all more proficient

at communicating through social media, email, or various technology platforms than we are speaking in person. Many people would prefer to hide under a bush than to speak in front of an audience, yet most people will experience this at some point of their lives whether that is in person or online. The fear of presenting is often pervasive and problematic but with good practice, persistence and direction, I help clients to manage anxiety rather than it controlling the person.”

Susan also delivers tailor-made programmes to companies, schools – both primary and secondary, and to third level facilities. The secondary

school programmes focus on the CBAs and on Effective Communication delivered through Drama and Presentation exercises.

One-to-one tuition is available to primary and secondary children and Susan works with many of them on a weekly basis with various different communication needs, from dyslexia, to a speech fault, to improving reading skills, to building self-confidence.

Theatre Tricks offers bespoke courses in Presentation Skills and Public Speaking to adults in both group and individual settings. It also provides tutoring to individual clients in Diplomas in Speech and Drama with the London



College of Music, LAMDA or VCM. “I have some clients who just want to reignite their inner actor and we enjoy a group session of Introduction to Acting,” says Susan, who enjoys treading the floorboards on a stage herself when she gets the chance.

In the past 12 months, like so many other businesses, Susan has faced the challenge of moving her business online. “Having previously worked in an international company where conference or video calls were the norm and having some adult clients already online for tuition, I decided to bring all my work online and thankfully it has been a great success to date,” she shares. “Challenges are good so it has taught me to adapt and to be-

come even more creative than I would already be. I have also gained invaluable support from the West Cork Network Group and the Speech and Drama Teachers of Ireland group which I am currently a serving board member of.”

Prior to Covid-19, each year Theatre Tricks held its annual productions at the Rossmore Theatre with casts of up to 100 children and teenagers. “While it was a stressful time in the job,” explains Susan, “it was also the most rewarding time seeing students from age two-and-a-half to 17 years shine while on stage and grow with each year’s productions in confidence. I look forward to seeing those smiling faces on stage again in the future.”

Susan takes great pride in

the accomplishments of her students, on and off the stage. “Having students complete both their Associate and Licentiate qualifications with the London College of Music and go on to work in the arts industry but for others they have used their qualifications in other industries such as medicine, primary and secondary education and international communications.”

Her passion for her work means that she has worked hard to get where she is today. “Never give up on your dreams and goals and believe in yourself,” she advises.

“In my business, you need boundless energy but it is so rewarding to see the smiles on people’s faces. Regardless of what life brings to you, there is always a way if you are willing to give it a go. Susan is aiming to expand her online presence and empower more people to overcome their fears of public speaking and presentation skills.

“I got to where I am today, through hard work, determination and the wonderful support from my husband, children and good friends. As the saying goes ‘anything is possible’ and I believe that it can be. I also drew from my life experiences to date and it has shaped the path to where I am now.”

[www.theatretricks.ie](http://www.theatretricks.ie)



### Adult & Corporate Training

Whether it is being asked to deliver a speech, a virtual presentation or going for a job interview, the fear of presenting is palpable, pervasive and often problematic.

Our courses can help:

- Public Speaking & Communication Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Introduction to Acting
- Mentoring for London College of Music (University of West London) Drama & Communications Diplomas
- Wellness

For children we offer group **Speech and Drama** classes and also individual classes either online or in person (when restrictions allow). We also deliver programmes in primary, secondary and montessori.

For more information on the content of our classes and programmes please go to [www.theatretricks.ie](http://www.theatretricks.ie) or phone Susan on **087-8398758**  

## Champion Green 2021 launch rallies support for small business

Champion Green, the national movement to drive recovery of small business, has launched its 2021 programme in support of the local economy, with the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar TD, welcoming the ‘support local’ initiative.

New plans for Champion Green include a local loyalty app and a National Champion Green Week, all of which will encourage and reward consumer support for local brands and businesses, as well as facilitating SME recovery.

The initiative is backed by a €1m investment to drive consumer support for local enterprise and to help SMEs adapt their businesses.

Supported by Kilkenny Design and Visa, in association with Retail Excellence, Small Firms Association and Cham-

bers of Commerce Ireland, the #ChampionGreen movement is about highlighting the simple ways everyone can make a difference. The campaign encourages the public to shop and to ‘click local’ to help businesses in their community bounce back and thrive again.

Welcoming the campaign, the Tánaiste said:

“This year’s St Patrick’s Day will be a lot different than previous years unfortunately, but we can still make the most of it. A great way to celebrate would be to support your local businesses, and this Champion Green campaign is a great reminder to people to consider what is on their doorstep and shop local. Hope is on the horizon. There will be brighter days ahead and, in the meantime, we need to all look after each other and support our local communities.”

Commenting on the launch, Champion Green founder and Kilkenny Design CEO, Marian O’Gorman says; “Change is in the air as we look forward to the country reopening in the coming months. We are encouraging business owners to keep their spirits high, keep driving their business online, and grasp the green shoots of recovery”.

Announcing the new national Champion Green marketing support and consumer advertising, Marian O’Gorman said the movement’s continuing priority is to drive the renewal of local communities and local enterprise.

#### Marketing Toolkit

To support SMEs’ consumer marketing, businesses can access a new marketing toolkit on [championgreen.ie](http://championgreen.ie), free of charge. By signing-up on the Champion Green website

they can also avail of business support, webinars and the latest news, while national campaign advertising explains how money spent locally supports local jobs and services.

Champion Green social media channels are also used to motivate support for local businesses and to communicate offers from small businesses countrywide.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our local communities, but so many have been hit hard by the pandemic,” said Dominic White, Acting Country Manager, Ireland, Visa.

“We’re committed to supporting small businesses in Ireland, and proud to be working hand in hand with Champion Green to celebrate our small businesses and the value they bring to our local communities.

“Our partnership with Champion Green forms part of

Visa’s long-term commitment to champion small businesses. Visa has been drawing on its network of industry, technology and community partners to provide much needed assistance to the small business sector as they rebuild for recovery.”

Recent research commissioned by Visa indicated that consumers are keen to support local business wherever possible, with 75 per cent of people saying they feel better about themselves when shopping locally.

Businesses and service providers across Ireland are rallying to support the renewal of small firms. An Post created a Champion Green postmark and display material for Post Offices, encouraging people to shop locally, while also providing parcel delivery support to local businesses newly adapting to ecommerce.

Aviva Life and Pensions Ireland DAC rolled out an innovative scheme whereby a vacant shop unit from its Irish commercial property fund portfolio was awarded to a small business, free of charge, as a pop-up shop last summer. The recipient was Irish design brand, Jill & Gill, who have been allocated a short-term licence for a pop-up shop in a prime location at No 5 St Stephen’s Green in Dublin city centre. Aviva continues to be supportive of Champion Green.

Small business owners can register to avail of PR and marketing support, as well as business advice, as part of the national Champion Green campaign. Detail is available at [championgreen.ie](http://championgreen.ie).



# Supporting women post Covid

The global pandemic has been disproportionately unfair to women, highlighting the inequalities between men and women in nearly every aspect of life; from the home place to the workplace and everything in between. **Karen O'Reilly**, founder of Employum and Employflex, gives her top tips to help women post Covid in the workplace.

The vice president for Values and Transparency in the EU Commission, Vera Jourva states "Women are at the frontline during the pandemic and they are more affected by it. We can't afford sliding back; we must continue to push for fairness and equality. This is why EU has put women at the heart of recovery and obliged Member States to include gender equality in investments funded from Recovery and Resilience Facility." VP Kamala Harris has called it a 'National Emergency' and the theme of this year's IWD was #choosetochallenge this frankly embarrassing and virtually worldwide status quo of female inequality."

There is much wringing of hands and shaking of heads, but are we all just screaming into the void? Real action needs to be taken in the workplace so that all the strides we have made towards gender equality are not eradicated by the impact of the last 12 months of lockdown. Unfortunately, women traditionally work in sectors that were badly hit by the pandemic (hospitality, caring, retail

and beauty for example) and as many of these jobs cannot be done remotely, recovery is going to be trickier. Add to that the fact that women spend approximately twice as much time on unpaid care (looking after children or relatives) than their male counterparts and on average 23 hours doing housework compared to 15 hours for men, the second shift for Mothers is actually crippling them. These are the facts.

Inequality also exists with the underrepresentation of women at decision making level. Of 115 national dedicated COVID-19 task forces in 87 countries, including 17 EU Member States, 85.2 per cent were made up mainly of men, 11.4 per cent were women, and only 3.5 per cent had gender parity. Maybe this is down to the fact that women just do not have the time to get involved in politics, a role which is not flexible and demands long hours as well as non-existent maternity leave until recently in Ireland.

All pretty depressing from a female perspective – once again, we draw the short straw – at work and at home.

All of this is not news, what can we do as a society, as an individual and as a responsible employer to right this?

**Flexibility** – Chambers Ireland and UNICEF made a joint press release this week stating "flexibility is crucial" when it comes to supporting working families post-pandemic. "Our message today is that this flexibility will be needed not only for the duration of the pandemic, but also in the longer term."

This joint message from Chambers Ireland and UNICEF is a 'call to action' to the business community. By addressing the needs of working families – and supporting global relief efforts – we will ensure a faster collective recovery from the

crisis and bolster your reputation and credibility as a trusted employer."

By offering flexibility, women can stay in the workplace. With over 450,000 women in Ireland stating their role as 'home duties' as opposed to less than 9,000 men, this needs to be addressed.

**Returnships** – These are programmes designed like internships but for people returning to the workplace. For women who have, for economic or personal reasons, taken time out to care for their family, this is a practical way to open the door to back to work that seems slammed in so many faces when they try to re-enter the workplace.

**Family Friendly workplaces** – Companies and organisations who are genuinely family friendly will attract parents.

By getting the message out there that your company adopts family friendly policies like flexibility/school time friendly/family days and community values. Ask yourself what are the values of your organisation – what is your reputation like in the market – are you thought of as a place where work comes before all else – is there work/life balance within your company and is that reflected in your overall messaging on your website/social media?

**Leading with empathy** – There have been some advantages to our working life because of Covid and the realisation and acceptance amongst leaders that there is more to life than work is one of them. As we have been invited into each other's homes while we Work From Home, leaders have witnessed another side to their employees' lives, sometimes messy and always busy while we work from home during a pandemic. Employers should have learnt to check in more often with their employees, to lead with empa-



## NEW FRONTIERS

### NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURS

**From Business Idea to Successful Start-up.**

New Frontiers is the National Programme designed to develop entrepreneurs delivered on behalf of Enterprise Ireland by the Rubicon Centre in MTU Cork Campus, Bishopstown.

Phase 2 of the programme is full time over 6 months with a support package worth up to €30,000 and no equity taken. It helps early stage entrepreneurs gain the confidence and skills required to develop a business idea within a supportive and encouraging environment.

Consisting of practical and

interactive workshops, personalised mentoring, financial support and co-working space, New Frontiers is a game changer for anyone serious about developing their business idea into a successful start-up.

Designed for individuals who:


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- Can show evidence of a commercial market for the proposed product or service
- Are ambitious and growth-orientated


**NEW FRONTIERS at The Rubicon Centre, MTU Cork is now taking Expressions of Interest**

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**Closing date: 7 June 2021**

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thy and understanding and also realise that there are, actually, more important things in life than work.

**Decision making in organisations** – for a female looking for work or seeking to return to work, can they see that there are females in the leadership team – are females visible in the organisation – are females promoted and is there transparency on female progression within your organisation? Do you actively support, encourage and sponsor women through all stages of their career journey?

**Education** – Gender balance within all companies and organisations is only possible if girls are being taught at a young age about the opportunities that are available to them outside of the traditional role models. Events like iWish, encouraging young women to get involved in STEM are so important. A real effort needs to be made to educate young women, to have the same opportunities in girls' schools as there are in all boys schools. It is impossible to have gender parity in industries where the talent pool is tiny to

begin with.

**Role models** – we need to seek out strong women who have succeeded in their careers and tell their stories – show young women that it is possible to pursue a career in engineering/finance or tech and rise to the top. We must challenge stereotyping wherever possible.

Gender pay gap reporting – once this becomes mandatory, companies will literally have nowhere to hide. The gender gap exists because of a myriad of reasons, i.e. women account for 70 per cent of part time roles in Ireland while men dominate higher paid roles and women are attracted to caring roles such as nursing. Women also take more time out to care for families, resulting in a gap in their careers and ultimately a pay gap. Companies need to address these points and ask themselves what we can do to level the playing field at work for everyone.

**Education of males** – men need to step up and play their part as well. Support your women, put the egos aside and by leaning in to welcome women

into the workplace, nurture a more positive and inclusive workplace for all. Society would work very well with 1.5 jobs per household. How could that work for your family?

**Choose to Challenge** – There was a lot of talk around International Women's Day this year as companies fell over each other to portray themselves as Female Friendly. IWD is more than just a clever acronym. We need to push this to the forefront every other day of the year as well.

**EmployKind** – we here at Employum and Employflex speak to women every day. They tell us stories of secret parenting, of being overlooked for promotions, of being expected to do 50 hour-plus weeks, of being desperately unhappy. The future of work should not look like this – we have an opportunity now to get it right and develop a kinder world of work.

For more information contact Karen O'Reilly, founder of Employum and Employflex - 087 9722498.



## people Farming

# New Teagasc contract calf and weanling rearing agreements

There is growing interest in contract arrangements between farmers to rear calves and other young cattle. Teagasc has responded by developing new contract agreement templates.

With growing dairy herds, many dairy farmers are now beginning to encounter difficulties in sourcing high quality skilled labour. Also the lack of available lands to lease/purchase, and in cases limited or inadequate calf/heifer rearing facilities, is leading to more dairy farmers looking to outsource the rearing of calves through contract rearing agreements.

In other farming enterprises, poor and volatile market prices have resulted in poor profitability of other main farming enterprises. This has paved the way for increased opportunity for contract calf, and/or weanling, rearing arrangements to be formed in the upcoming years.

Teagasc in conjunction with Diarmaid O Cathain, Solicitor, Ben Roche, Collaborative Farming Consultant and Gordon Peppard, Teagasc Collaborative Farming Specialist have developed two key contract rearing template agreements.



## 1. Contract Calf Rearing Agreement

This template agreement provides for the contract rearing for calves greater than 10 days old up to weaning. It is predominantly intended for, but not restricted to, the rearing of bull calves from the dairy herd.

In removing bull calves from the dairy herd at 10-plus days of age from the dairy farm, it removes the need for additional facilities and labour requirement to deal with these animals. With very compact six-week calving rates now on dairy farms, the numbers of calves can be very significant if all male and female calves have to be held for four weeks, or longer, before they are moved on.

At the end of the rearing pe-

riod the calves can be retained on the contract rearing farm, returned to the dairy farm, or sold to a third party.

## 2. Contract Calf and Weanling Rearing Agreement

Similar to the contract calf rearing template agreement this agreement outlines that the calves, once weaned, will remain on the contract rearer's holding for an additional period for further rearing. The length of this additional period is agreed between the animal owner and the contract rearer in advance.

During the rearing period the animal owner pays an agreed fee per head, per day, to the contract rearer and the animal owner retains ownership of the animals at the end of the rearing period.

There are four key areas to be addressed during the formation of these agreements.

1. Outline – Animal owner and contract rearer's details.
2. Duration – Establish the commencement and end date of the agreement.
3. Payment – agreed payment rate per head per day and decide on method of payment.
4. Terms and conditions – establish a management protocol of

the animals for the duration of the agreement.

Gordon Peppard, Teagasc Collaborative Farming Specialist said: "These agreements provide an excellent opportunity for non-dairy farming enterprises to devise a different system of production, in the knowledge that in return for a good performance of the contract reared stock that they will be rewarded for their land, labour, facilities and management through a pre agreed monetary rate per head per day. This allows them to better plan their cash flow, and they are not dependant on the sale of stock on two, or three, main selling days in the year. For the dairy farmer, they have the advantage of removing a number of animals from their holding at an early age, reducing the need for additional facilities, labour and so on, and providing them the opportunity to allocate more time and resources to the main cow herd."

The Teagasc Contract Calf Rearing and Calf and Weanling Rearing agreements can be found on the Teagasc public website.

[www.teagasc.ie](http://www.teagasc.ie)

# Cork farmers reminded to take advantage of the Organic Farming Scheme

Cork farmers considering an application to the Organic Farming Scheme have until April 30 to do so, following the re-opening of the scheme earlier this month with an additional budget of €4 million for 2021.

This additional funding was confirmed by Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Senator Pippa Hackett when she confirmed the continuation of the scheme last month.

1,460 farmers participated in the last scheme, and it is envisaged that approximately 500 more may be successful in their application this Spring.

Philip O'Connor, Head of Farm Supports at Ifac said: "Applications for the scheme must be made online through the Department's online system at [agfood.ie](http://agfood.ie). I would encourage every farmer to inform themselves of the opportunities that the Organic Farming Scheme offers and give it full consideration."

Payments of up to €220 per hectare are available for farms undergoing conversion to full organic status, a process that takes two years, or €170 per hectare for farms that have obtained that status.

Higher payment rates are available for organic horticulture and tillage farmers.

The minimum farm area allocated is three hectares for dairy, dry stock and tillage, or one hectare for horticulture, with rates of payment decreasing for horticulture farms over six hectares, tillage farms over 20 hectares and all farms over 60 hectares.

All applications must be processed through [agfood.ie](http://agfood.ie), and to be eligible, farmers must submit an annual Basic Payment Scheme application and must be registered with one of the two Organic Control Bodies that certify land-based organic operators; The Irish Organic Association and Organic Trust CLG.

# A West Cork Farming Life:

Patrick Deasy, Reacarrigeen, Ballinascorthy

## Describe the farm?

I'm currently milking 130 cows in partnership with my parents, Liam and Mary, and we're farming 160 acres in total. We own 110 acres of it and the rest is on a long-term lease. I am the seventh generation of the Deasy family farming in Reacarrigeen. The cows are all pedigree Holstein Friesians and our pedigree prefix is 'Reacarrigeen'. My father established the 'Reacarrigeen' herd in 1976. Milk is supplied to Barryroe Co-op and 70 per cent of the herd is spring calving while we also supply 30 per cent of our milk on a winter milk contract. Cows are milked here every day of the year.

## What's been happening on the farm lately?

The cows have been getting out to grass by day since the start of March and they were getting a buffer feed of grass and maize silage, which was fed indoors by night. I'm hoping to have them out by day and night shortly, weather-permitting.

Calving is still on-going, any of the cows in calf to Holstein Friesian AI finished on the first week of March. This is to try and get enough heifer calf replacements. It's better when you get heifer calves earlier in the spring, as we can maximise their ability to calve down as two-year-olds in 2023. All the calves since have been from Aberdeen Angus sires and those calves will be sold later.

I got urea fertiliser spread on grazing platform and got the fertiliser out on the fields intended for first cut silage too.

In early April we'll be getting ground prepared for sowing of maize. This is done on contract. Young stock will be turned out to grass too.

## You've been a regular on the cattle showing scene...was it strange to not have any shows last year?

We'd been doing it for a few years, so it was strange to not have any last year. Summer show season would normally

be the highlight of the year for many pedigree livestock breeders in West Cork. You would always look forward to the fun and camaraderie inside and outside the ring on show day. It's unlikely that we're going to see any return under current Covid restrictions though unfortunately.

## Could you describe stock judging to those who would be unfamiliar with the concept?

Stock judging involves placing, in order of merit, a group of animals, usually four and sometimes six, from first to last, based solely on their physical appearance or desirable breeding traits. Each competitor's list of placing will then be compared to those of an overall master judge on the day. Points are awarded based on a scale of how close a person gets to the master judge. For example, 10 points if in full agreement on a placing, or one point if they're in complete disagreement. The person with the highest score

wins. After the results are announced the master judge gives their detailed reasons to back up their opinion. There's a lot to be learned from this.

## How did you become interested in the competition?

My interest in stock judging stems from the deep knowledge of cows and pedigrees I inherited from my father. As a member of the Cork Holstein Friesian Club, in pre-Covid times, we used to attend a number of summer field evenings hosted by pedigree breeders all around the county. At those, judging of dairy stock was always a challenging task.

## You've been successful in those competitions over the years. Have you any advice for those interested?

Practice would be the big thing. Attending the Cork IHFA (Irish Holstein Friesian Association) field evenings, there's three every summer are a help. There is a YMA (Young Members



Association) of the IHFA and they hold workshops and competitions throughout the year. Each county has their own YMA, which comes under the umbrella of the IHFA.

As an active member of Ballinascorthy Macra Na Feirme for a number of years, I have been lucky enough to take part in many national competitions in my time. It helps that compe-

titions in Carbery Macra are so competitive. In 2019, I became the first person to successfully win the Senior National Dairy stock judging title on two separate occasions. It's held in conjunction with the Irish Holstein Friesian Association open day. I had previously won it in 2009.

Interview by Tommy Moyles



# Uncertain times



## 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



It's been a funny time in agriculture lately. Prices across most sectors have been improving or holding steady. Despite this, there is an air of uncertainty in the background, as the new Climate bill is digested and CAP negotiations continue. The final details of both and how they will impact on farmers on the ground are yet to be decided.

Also in the southeast, Glanbia, one of the largest milk processors in the country is proposing introducing restrictions on its milk producers at peak



*The pleasant weather has seen calves get out to grass at Tommy Moyles' farm at Ardfield, Clonakilty.*

milk supply. This is in part due to a delay in Glanbia getting planning for a new cheese plant. The proposals have dealt a major blow to suppliers in the region. Dairy farmers around the country are watching how this unfolds and will be concerned that there could be a precedent set.

The southeast of the country saw a lift in the level of milk supplied when quota restrictions were lifted in 2015. Dairy farms expanded and a good number of new entrant suppliers converted from dry stock and tillage.

### Price

It's not all doom and gloom, Milk suppliers in West Cork benefitted from Carbery lifting their milk price by 0.5c/l and Dairygold raised their price by 1.6c/l.

Sheep prices have reached unprecedented levels with quotes in the region of €7.80 to €8/kg being quoted for early season lamb. Prices have been on the rise since the middle of last year and it remains one of

the good news stories. Beef prices took an unexpected hit in factories in early March but have recovered a little since while the trade for live cattle has been on fire in the marts.

### New appointments

Speaking of marts, two of Cork marts' West Cork premises are under new management. The previous incumbent Tom McCarthy covered both roles before recently leaving to take up a role on the Axa agri-insurance team.

Sean Dennehy has been appointed the new manager at Bandon mart, taking up the role from March 29.

Describing the new Bandon manager, Cork Marts CEO, Sean O'Sullivan said "Sean has a strong background in farming business, farm management and as a national commodity chair in IFA. He is currently national sheep chairman and vice president of the COPA sheep-working group in Brussels. He has developed good leadership and teamwork skills

as well as in-depth knowledge and understanding of farmers in selling their livestock."

Further west in Skibbereen, Terelton native Denis O'Donoghue is the new manager. He began working for Cork Marts in 2012 and worked as livestock auctioneer in recent years. Alongside in-house training he has also completed an auctioneering course through Tallaght IT and Mart managers' development course with ICOS/Skillnets.

Both men will be reporting to Cork Marts' recently appointed general manager of livestock services, Jonathan O'Sullivan.

### Marts

The environment the marts now operate is very different to that of February 2020. Ringsides that would traditionally be packed are now empty, as the sales service is strictly online during Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions. Those wishing to buy stock can view what is available before the sale starts but the pens must be empty of all bar

staff before a sale commences. Department of Agriculture officials have been maintaining a strong presence in marts in West Cork to ensure lockdown regulations are abided. Even before Covid-19 raised its head, the last decade has seen changes in how marts conduct their business. Online sales websites and lots of competition for business in the South West region has made it a more time consuming role for mart staff.

### Calving

Out on the farm, calving is ticking along nicely and a dry spell of weather makes life on the farm much easier. Despite it being busy, the good weather made work on the farm a pleasure. The cold easterlies and run of sunny weather early in the month made a huge difference to ground conditions. Due to this, it was the earliest that I was ever able to get all the yearling heifers to grass.

To date, there was only one cow went beyond her due date with only three not calving

ahead of when they were due. The good weather meant that most calves got out to grass within a day or two of being born. You'd be grateful to the ditches around the place, as they provide a haven from the different winds that we experience around here. The calves aren't long working out where the shelter is either.

It's only a few years ago that we had half the cows calved by the end of February and almost had single figures left to go by St Patrick's day.

In recent years, that third week of March is when calving gets busiest and if the weather is bad, then you know a dry spell can't be too far away. The middle of February is an early enough starting point for us to get going with calving. We just have to get the calendar out and get planning now.

Maybe it's because I'm getting older, but the current ways are more relaxing than having to bed pens two or three times a day.

## Young farmers must not be cut off from a future by climate action

Macra na Feirme's National President has said young farmers must be put at the front of any action on climate change with clear supports.

In response to the publication today of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021, President Thomas Duffy has said that the challenges facing agriculture can only be overcome by supporting young farmers to adopt new practices.

"The comments by Minister Ryan that farming cannot reduce in the same way as energy or transport is welcome, the complexities of our food system are far greater than any

other sector," stated President Thomas Duffy.

Macra na Feirme stated divisive rhetoric around mandatory herd culls or a return to herd limits were entirely unproductive, saying the focus must be on reducing methane not herd numbers. Better herd management, livestock genetics and reducing breeding and slaughter ages can achieve significant reductions in national methane emissions, while protecting farm incomes. Further measures such as changing to protected urea, reductions in feed protein and better incorporation of clover have all been shown to reduce nitrous oxide emissions. Many of these key elements

are laid out in the government's Ag-Climate strategy and the Teagasc MACC. However, concerns have been raised by the young farmer organisation about the potential success of these unless key issues are addressed.

"If we want to change practices the first thing we must do is look at the makeup of farming. Less than five per cent of farmers are under the age of 35, this is because young trained farmers are not able to access the land or credit they need. If you want to change practice, young driven farmers are what is needed," President Duffy stated.

Inconsistency between

European and Irish governmental ambition and many of the policies currently in place has often been regarded by farmers as a major obstacle to any environmental improvement.

"The most essential thing Irish government can do is to offer support for change and remove the many roadblocks and contradictions to more climate friendly agriculture," President Duffy said.

The loss of products, which protect certain crops, such as Irish grown protein feeds and clover, while reducing weeds have been highlighted as a lack of consistency between government intent and practice on the ground. The failure to promote under 16 month bull beef or ensure investment in sexed semen are also highlighted as lacking in government policy.

## Teagasc launches The Environment Edge podcast

The Environment Edge will focus on challenges and opportunities in agriculture. Presented by Cathal Somers and Deirdre Glynn from Teagasc, this podcast will bring the latest information, science and opinion on farm sustainability.

In the first episode of the podcast, Jenny Deakin, Environment Protection Agency (EPA), joins Cathal and Deirdre to discuss the past, present and future of water quality in Ireland and how climate change will challenge us all.

In the second half of the podcast, Teagasc's Head of Environment Knowledge Transfer, Pat Murphy, explains why he believes farmers are up to the challenge of improving water quality through research, advisory, education, collaboration and improved efficiency on the farm.

Speaking about the challenges facing agriculture, Pat Murphy said: "It has become clear that the environmental footprint of agriculture must be reduced. This entails reducing gaseous emissions, improving water quality and enhancing biodiversity. In Ireland, agriculture has a profound impact on the environment. A huge amount of research has provided us with a good understanding of these impacts, as well as providing an insight into technologies and farming systems which can reduce gaseous emissions, lead to improved water quality, reduce biodiversity loss and improve soil health. While further research is needed, there is now an urgent requirement to improve the implementation of practices that improve environmental outcomes."

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## people Environment : Making a difference

# To cow or not to cow: That is the question



### ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes

I have been lacto-ovo vegetarian for 43 years. I have the advantage of not really enjoying eating meat and of finding it difficult to digest, so switching to a meat-free diet was relatively simple for me and I continue to eat dairy products and eggs.

Talking to someone about farming the other day, I discovered they had stopped eating any meat or dairy products because of Climate Change. They had switched to almond milk and vegan cheese made from almonds.

Indeed, research indicates that each year a single cow can belch 220 pounds of methane, which is 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide in warming the atmosphere. In fact livestock are responsible for 14.5 per cent of global greenhouse gases.

Whilst there are claims that grass fed beef helps the land to sequester carbon and so is better for the planet, there are counter claims that the methane produced by cattle more than offsets the sequestration of carbon from grassland.

Dr Frank Mitloehner, the director of the department of animal science at the CLEAR (Clarity and Leadership for Environmental Awareness and Research) Centre at UC Davis, California, and a professor and air quality specialist, believes that removing animal-based product from our diets would not solve the problem of the effect of greenhouse gas on climate change. Research from 2017 demonstrates that if the whole population of America switched to vegan diets, it would reduce Green House Gas emissions in the USA by a mere 2.6 per cent, yet 89 per cent of CO2 emissions come from the fossil fuel industry. What is more, whereas methane, produced by cattle, has a relatively short atmospheric life, around 12 years, CO2 stays in the atmosphere, building and building for hundreds of years.

The significance of this short atmospheric life is that as bio-methane (from animals) is being emitted, it is also being

destroyed; it is a flow gas. Nevertheless it is important that we do not significantly increase methane emissions into the atmosphere.

One of the main reasons we are being urged to plant trees, is that plants (all plants, not just trees) sequester carbon by removing carbon dioxide (CO2) from the air, absorbing the carbon and harnessing the sun's energy through photosynthesis to produce cellulose and thus to grow. The Oxygen, O2 is released back into the atmosphere.

Cellulose is essentially a carbohydrate and is the most abundant organic compound in the world. Present in all grasses, shrubs, crops, and trees, it is an important food source. Cellulose content is particularly high in grasses and shrubs found on marginal lands, which are places where grains and other human edible crops cannot grow. Two-thirds of all agricultural land is marginal, full of cellulose dense grasses that are indigestible to humans but a major food ingredient for ruminants such as cattle who can break it down. As the cattle break down the cellulose, they emit a portion of the carbon into the atmosphere as CH4, methane gas, thus returning the carbon sequester by the plants back into the atmosphere. Ten to twelve years on, that methane reaches the end of its

It takes 1000 years for CO2 released from the burning of fossil fuels to be re-deposited back into geological reserves. That is ten times as long as it takes methane belched by cattle to be re-deposited back into plant matter. To put this in perspective, the CO2 released from driving your car to work each day will remain in the atmosphere, having a warming effect on our climate, for longer than the lifetimes of you, your children, and your grandchildren. The burning of fossil fuels has a long-standing impact on our climate, whereas methane from cattle is part of a short-term biogenic carbon cycle.

atmospheric life and is broken down and converted back to CO2, to once again be used by plants to create cellulose; and thus the biogenic carbon cycle continues as a relatively fast cycle.

On the other hand the carbon exchange between the atmosphere and geological reserves such as deep soils, the deeper ocean, and rocks takes 1000 or more years, thus extraction and burning of fossil fuels has a much greater impact on our climate than the biogenic carbon cycle.



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diet. All of these amino acids are found in animal protein but in order to obtain them from plant sources we must mix our protein sources. For example we must mix nuts or beans and peas with grain. If we fail to mix our plant proteins we fail to absorb the full range of essential building blocks for protein that keeps us healthy and thriving.

The plant protein sources that we can digest and that we need, grains, pulses and nuts cannot be grown on marginal lands that can grow grasses, high in cellulose and good food for cattle.

According to Fortune Magazine the market for almond milk surged by 250 per cent between 2010 and 2015 and has continued to rise. So, to the popular discussion about stopping climate change by substituting dairy products with almond products.

Eighty per cent of the world's almonds are grown in California!

I will state that again. Eighty per cent of the world's almonds are grown in California.

According to the Almond Board of California production is growing at six per cent per year and will be three billion pounds of almonds this year, 2021. Exported almonds account for 70 per cent of the crop.

Almond blossom is pollinated by bees and California requires two million hives of bees. More than 70 per cent of all commercial honeybee colonies in the USA are used to pollinate almond orchards and almost all the hives are brought in to California from across states or from other countries. Each year the bees have to be replaced because of the pesticides used on almond trees. Nine different pesticides have been found in

almonds and four of these pesticides are toxic to bees.

Once the bees have been transported via truck or plane into California each year and have done their job and died from toxic pesticides, the almonds have been produced and now need to be distributed across the USA and the World. It takes 70,000 kilos of fossil fuel to fly a jumbo jet across the Atlantic from New York to London. Suddenly the Carbon footprint of a pint of almond milk or a hundred grams of vegan cheese has risen dramatically.

Whilst Dr Frank Mitloeh-

ner, who has been called a controversial figure because of his links to animal agriculture, states that he does not tell people what to eat, nor does he judge them for those choices; he focuses his research on how to feed livestock better such that they produce less methane. It appears for instance that certain supplements made from seaweed reduce the methane produced by a single cow by up to 67 per cent.

ner, who has been called a controversial figure because of his links to animal agriculture, states that he does not tell people what to eat, nor does he judge them for those choices; he focuses his research on how to feed livestock better such that they produce less methane. It appears for instance that certain supplements made from seaweed reduce the methane produced by a single cow by up to 67 per cent. He argues that cutting out all animal protein may not be the environmental panacea that many would have us believe.

I suspect that producing and eating animal based food products will continue to be controversial for some however, as the case of almond milk versus dairy demonstrates, we really need to dig and dig to find the facts behind our choices.

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## people Environment : Making a difference

# The Common Swift: 'Life on the Wing'

Of all the species in the animal kingdom, birds can lay claim to some of the most incredible feats of physical achievement; whether it's the Peregrine Falcon, the fastest animal in the world with a diving speed of 389kmh, or the incredible annual 90,000km migration of the Arctic Tern, as it flies from its Arctic breeding grounds to Antarctica and back again.

The Common Swift (*Apus apus*) is another of these 'high achievers', explains **Claire Deasy, West Cork Swift Officer**, holding the record for the fastest bird in level flight at 111.6kmh and living its whole life on the wing, stopping only to nest and rear its young. According to new research, Common Swifts can stay in the air for up to 10 months without stopping.



Swifts are part of a very ancient family, the Apodidae (meaning 'footless'); that is thought to have separated from all other birds 65 million years ago. The Common Swift is sooty brown all over, but appears black in flight and has long sickle-shaped wings and a short forked tail. It is sometimes mistaken for a Swallow, but the Swift lacks the off-white undersides and long tail of the Swallow and Swifts never perch.

Swifts migrate from Africa every spring, arriving here in May to start their summer breeding season. They pair for life and only stay here for two to three months, departing by late August. Very much a town bird, it builds little cupped nests inside small crevices or eaves of buildings with materials such as feathers and grass that it finds on the wing. Unlike Swallows, Swifts do not nest on the outside of buildings. A tell-tale sign that a Swift has a nest is when you see it dive at high speed towards the eaves of a house

and apparently disappear into thin air! This is not a vanishing act. When rearing young, Swifts approach their nests at over 60kmh. They fold their body down from the neck and use it as a massive air brake in order to enter the nest hole.

Swifts are site-faithful and colonial nesters, meaning they will return to the same nest site for many years and like to nest in groups. As supreme aerialists, Swifts spend most of their lives in flight; drinking, feeding, mating, preening and even sleeping 'on the wing'. How and when they sleep is not fully understood. One idea is that they take brief naps during daily dawn and dusk ascents to altitudes of 3,000m or more, after which they gradually glide down. Another is that, like whales, they switch off half their brain for short periods. The Swift uses its incredible flying skills when hunting for food. These birds can consume half-a-million flying insects during their summer stay in Ireland. They are also the perfect house guest, making little or no mess. Parents even eat their own chicks' droppings (to recycle mineral content). Please don't try this at home! Swift chicks display early signs of their future elite athleticism, as they get ready to leave the nest. They train by doing push-ups on their wings and tails to make them strong enough for flight. Once



they can hold a push-up for ten seconds and weigh about 45g, they are ready to fly away. This training regime is vital; a young Swift will leave its nest at six to eight weeks of age, and its tiny feet won't touch the earth again for at least two years.

The call of the Swift is a loud scream. On a balmy summer evening who can resist the sheer energy and vibrancy of a Swift party, as they display their flying skills by careering and screaming above buildings and along streets within towns and villages. Luckily, here in West Cork, this is still a regular occurrence in some of our towns.

Despite surviving tens of millions of years on this planet, today the Swift is sadly in serious decline. Swift populations are falling dramatically across the globe and in Ireland the trend is no different. Since 2008 numbers have declined by 40 per cent. A number of factors are contributing to this: the



renovation and demolition of old buildings where Swifts nest is a key factor. Another is the worldwide decline in insects, its main food source. This is due to the destruction and clearance of the wild habitats that support insects and also the widespread use of insecticides.

What can we do? Lots thankfully, and it's happening right here on our West Cork doorstep! Birdwatch Ireland West Cork Branch started the West Cork Swift Project in 2019, with the aim of identifying nesting colonies and helping to erect nest-boxes nearby to encourage further nesting. With the help of local volunteers

and community groups such as Tidy Towns, the Branch has been surveying Swift nest sites across the towns and villages of West Cork. Now, with the help of funding from Cork County Council, Tidy Towns Groups and individual sponsors, over 30 Swift nest-boxes have been acquired. Because Swifts like to nest where other Swifts are already established, conservation is key. Towns like Clonakilty, Ballydehob, Bandon, Bantry, Dunmanway and Skibbereen, that are lucky enough to still have nesting Swifts, should do all they can to hold on to them. Once they leave an area, it's very hard to get them back

again; and thus their territory continues to shrink.

If you would like to help out with these Swift conservation efforts by volunteering for surveys, sponsoring a Swift Nest box, or if you think your building would be suitable for a nest-box, please get in touch with Claire Deasy, West Cork Swift Officer, at the following email address [swiftproject@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie](mailto:swiftproject@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie)

For more information about the Branch contact Nicholas Mitchell at [secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie](mailto:secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie) or join our mailing list by sending an email to [mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie](mailto:mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie).

## More resources and funding needed to research and deal with beached whales

There have recently been many reports of dead marine mammals turning up dead along the Irish coast. We sadly saw a young Humpback whale come ashore near Lowertown, Schull, and then most recently a young Beaked Whale washed up on Tragum-na beach near Skibber-

een. It is not unusual at this time of year but it is always a terrible sight to see. What happens to the carcass? This is a problem we need to resolve. **Rory Jackson, Cork South West Green Party representative**, on the problem posed by beached whales.

In most cases samples are taken for the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) and the whale is either left where it is or removed by the council who have no expertise other than to dispose of the carcass by incineration. This is a sad, tragic fate, as well as very insensitive approach to the life of these mammals and we are not learning anything about why they have died.

As we begin the process of creating Marine Protected Areas, we need also to create an intel-

ligent response to dealing with and learning from these marine fatalities that are washing up on our shores. What knowledge is being lost? What research is not being done?

The state, if we are serious about becoming guardians of our seas, must provide more resources and funding to its own agencies and to coastal NGOs. In most cases, the deaths of these cetaceans are caused by being caught and drowned in fishing gear. This is not difficult to establish when an autopsy is carried

out, but this requires expertise, a dedicated service, and funded skills. We need a designated research area to carry out this research.

When death comes to our shores, we owe it to the health of our marine life to discover the causes, learn about trends that are emerging, and feed this research back into better policies and better practices. In West Cork, we are used to seeing such death. It is time that we use these tragic occurrences to learn and educate ourselves.

Our Wild Atlantic Way is known all over the world, but we know very little about it and for an island nation, this is a real blind spot that needs new focus and vision. It is time to make West Cork a place of the whale, a place of the dolphin, and not just for photos or videos but for deeper research into these lives that could tell us so much about the world that is washing up against us daily.



## people Environment : Making a difference

# Forgotten children



## GROUNDING

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.

As the restrictions, hardships and widespread global tragedy of Covid-19 continues, this week I've been looking at an area of such particular poignancy, it has thrown some perspective on the limitations and challenges we, in developed and peaceful countries, have been contending with.

March 15 marked 10 years

since the war in Syria began. Few will forget the shocking scenes of extensive parts of Aleppo, a once beautiful Syrian city, razed to the ground. The images of human trauma and decimation were hard to process. What's even more difficult to believe though, is the extent of suffering that is still impacting the lives of those most uprooted by the carnage this brutal conflict has left in its wake.

Whether because of (conflicting) reports that the war may be drawing to a conclusion, or crisis fatigue, or other reasons, the situation in Syria is not hitting the headlines these days, the way it did when footage of the human and infrastructural devastation being wreaked on the country first reached our screens. The hardship and trauma in the region – that still continues at an alarming rate – doesn't look set to end any time soon.

In a current population of 17.8 million (down from over 21 million before the war), an estimated 6.7 million people are displaced within the country, including up to 280,000 Palestine refugees, already displaced and suffering long-term hardship. Of Syrians still in the country, over 11 million need humanitarian assistance. Over 12.4 million are food insecure, with 1.3 million being severely food insecure. Malnutrition is a major health problem, with many children suffering from acute malnutrition.

Over the course of the conflict, the UN reports that 6.6 million Syrians were forced to flee their country. Of those, approximately 5.6 million Syrians are refugees, who have found

refuge mainly in neighbouring countries – Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. At its peak in 2016, almost 500,000 of those registered Syrian refugees were in refugee camps. That figure now stands at an unacceptable 300,000. Most disturbing of all, around half of the people affected by the long-term refugee crisis are children.

The European Parliament recently adopted a Resolution on Children's Rights, as well as a resolution on Syria, which included a Greens/EFA amendment calling for the repatriation of children who are EU citizens. The conflict in Syria is a complex one, encompassing social, racial, religious and human-rights issues. When children, the most innocent victims, are still unwittingly caught up in this chaotic and upsetting environment, something more than talk and resolutions and good intentions needs to come into play.

In our amendment we called on EU Member States to take into account the specific situations and the best interests of the child as a primary consideration, and to provide the necessary support for their rehabilitation and reintegration in full compliance with international law.

For many Syrian children, their entire lives have been lived under the ominous cloud of conflict. But it's not just the obvious hardships this presents, with children being denied childhoods or any semblance of normal life. The impacts are deeper, with issues such as disease and malnutrition brought on by poor sanitation and outbreaks of life-threatening diseases like cholera.



Syrian refugee camp.

Pic: Julie Ricard on Unsplash.

While we worry about vaccine rollouts and keeping each other safe, these children are dealing not just with the added impacts of Covid-19 hitting their already hard-stretched families, but with a backdrop of years of physical and emotional distress. It's hard to imagine the depths of psychological damage.

Many Syrian children living through these trying times have already lost family members and friends and neighbours in violent circumstances. Many have to work to help their families get by in the most impoverished circumstances. Many are subjected to degrading or dangerous work, and forced to make impossible choices to accomplish a meagre survival. There are reports of child marriage and abuse. There is lack of education, with one third of the school age population out of school.

While we complain about the hardships of being confined to our homes and a 5km radius

of movement, many children and their families are living in cramped refugee camps in makeshift tents and structures, where they have spent the past decade battling to survive one after another crippling cold winter without adequate heat or nutrition.

Under the terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child in the world under the age of 18 is entitled to equal rights around civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. These are rights they are entitled to irrespective of their religion, ethnicity, gender, migration status, sexual orientation or any other status.

Under the terms of the Treaty on European Union, the protection of children's rights is fundamental and guaranteed. In reality, more needs to be done.

The new EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, published in recent days, commits to support, protect and empower children globally, including during crisis and conflict. It offers, in the

words of UNICEF: 'a unique opportunity to make child rights part of the political agenda of the EU, of its policies, actions and investments with a holistic, comprehensive and rights-based approach.'

With the EU hopefully making child rights a stronger part of the political agenda, and children and refugee rights being very much on the political agenda back home in Ireland, I'm making a personal appeal that we might all try to put the plight of children displaced and forced to become refugees in response to the Syrian conflict, on our own, personal agendas.

For those who can afford it, agencies such as Concern, Irish Red Cross, UNICEF and the World Food Programme are calling for donations to support their work on the ground. But even if your own finances are stretched in these trying times, you can help by raising awareness of this heart-breaking situation. Thank you.

## West Cork Tree Festival launched

West Cork Branch of Cork Nature Network is delighted to announce the launch of their six-month long West Cork Tree Festival 2021, which runs from March to September and includes a range of exciting activities and discussions on the importance and value of trees and how they impact on our heritage and our every day lives.

Activities organised for the festival include: the West Cork Tree Map, the West Cork Tree Charter, in which anyone will be able to contribute their ideas, principles, and thoughts for a new Charter and the Festival Closure Conference on September 25.

"People love trees and woodlands and value them in so many ways. They can provide so many things from fruit, timber, to all the biodiversity that thrives around them, to a feeling of well-being" explains one of the organisers, Mark Robins. "In this six-months Festival the West Cork Branch of the Cork Nature Network is planning activities for everyone who wants to share, enjoy and learn about trees and we hope all contribute to a better future for our trees and woods."

Visit [www.corknaturenetwork.ie](http://www.corknaturenetwork.ie) for more details.

## Future-focused climate action bill approved by cabinet

Cabinet has approved the revised Climate Action Bill, proposed legislation that will strengthen Ireland's response to climate change, Cork South West Deputy and Fianna Fáil climate spokesman Christopher O'Sullivan says.

The bill was approved by cabinet on Tuesday last week following months of scrutiny in committee.

"The way I see it, this is the important bill to come before the 33rd Dáil. Today is one of the best days for climate action in this country," said Deputy O'Sullivan, who is also Vice

Chair of the Climate Action Committee.

"Compared to the version we had in November, this bill is vastly improved. Key among the changes is that Ireland will not just pursue, but will also achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

"A goal of a 51 percent reduction by 2030, one of the most ambitious on the planet, has also been set. The Bill also has provisions for protecting biodiversity. It's just such an important occasion."

Deputy O'Sullivan paid homage to the passionate youth voices who reached out with

their concerns during the committee phase.

"I'm thinking here about movements like Friday's for Future and other passionate young voices. This bill is a commitment to them that we are serious about tackling climate change and decreasing greenhouse gasses.

"I really hope this bill goes through the Oireachtas as soon as possible so we can achieve our targets."

The legislation will pave the way for Ireland's first carbon budget to be introduced later this year.

Under the legislation all

carbon budgets – which include limits on how much carbon can be emitted per sector – are required to be consistent with the Paris climate agreement.

"If you look at it, half the planet is on fire and the other half is under water. Look at the fires and floods in Australia. Texas froze over this winter," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"You don't have to go too far afield to see what's happening before our eyes. Villages are experiencing floods and coastal erosion.

Public consultation about the Bill will run for eight-weeks until May 18.



## people Environment : Making a difference

## Cork households going green with Tru Eco

Cork households are seeking a safer and kinder way to clean their homes.

**V**ivaGreen, the Irish manufacturers of Tru Eco, a range of eco-friendly, refillable household and laundry cleaning products, has seen significant demand for their products since launching the range in 2020.

The Tru Eco range is made from plant-based and biodegradable ingredients and each bottle is made from 100% recycled plastic, creating a circular economy product that is reusable, recyclable, and refillable. Products include an All-Purpose Cleaner, Washing-Up Liquid, Non-Bio Laundry Detergent, and Fabric Conditioner.

Russell Walsh, Joint Managing Director, VivaGreen says: "People are actively looking for eco-friendly solutions. The feedback from our Tru Eco customers has been fantastic with lots of interest in the refill option, which is very encouraging. We work hard to develop products that meet peoples' needs, while also trying to protect the environment. By buying the Tru Eco range, consumers can reduce their environmen-



tal footprint, minimise plastic waste as well as lower their carbon emissions."

He adds: "We have been in business for over 25 years, and delighted to see an increase of environmental awareness in recent years. Awareness days such as Earth Day, the world's largest environmental movement, which is celebrated this month on April 22, have gathered huge momentum. These awareness days give the media and organisations opportunities to educate people about environmental issues and on how we can all do our part."

Dr. Anne Marie Mahon, Lead

Scientist in VivaGreen, who ensures sustainable practices and naturally derived ingredients are central to the product development, has provided her top 3 tips for a greener household:

#### Reduce the number of single-use plastic bottles in your household

Choose products that have a refill option, and even better if they are eco-products. Use all-purpose cleaners for the kitchen, bathrooms, and floor. Go back to basics if you are ready and use soda crystals and vinegar to clean your floor.

#### Reduce the amount of product you use - "just add a drop"

There is no need to use a generous squirt and we often use more than we need of products such as washing-up liquid, laundry detergent, and cleaners. This will save you money and reduce your carbon footprint as well and your plastic footprint on our planet.

#### Use laundry liquid instead of laundry powder

There are fillers in laundry powders that can cause clogging in the treatment process and prevent the wastewater from being treated properly. The effects of this are likely to have a greater impact on those with on-site septic tanks but fillers also increase the sludge burden at larger treatment plants which must be separated, transported, and sometimes heat or chemically treated. Then the sludge is transported once more for land application. Using laundry liquid helps to reduce these energy-intensive processes.

The Tru Eco range is available in Cork SuperValu stores and nationwide with refill stations dotted around Cork. Visit trueco.ie to find a nearby store and refill station.

## Repairing the hole in the middle

The word 'economics' makes many people's eyes glaze over. It all sounds so...abstract: Aggregate demand, Keynesianism, negative deflationary spiral, fractionally higher highs, liquidity preferences But what does all that have to do with real life? Everything of course explains **Moze Jacobs**.

**I**t's the language of industry leaders, investors, finance ministers, central and other bankers who have a huge effect on jobs, prices and health, not to mention the environment that we inhabit. Apart from words, they also make extensive use of visuals. Charts. Graphs. Prices going up and down. Supply and demand.

This creates a seemingly safe world, which is completely illusory...and all about maths.

Prices are said to be 'in an equilibrium' when 'supply and demand are balanced'. Wikipedia texts wax lyrical about a 'perfect market' under the heading 'perfect competition'. Looking at those pages, you'd say we live in a perfect world with (eternal) economic growth as the greatest good. Except we don't.

The economy is like a wilfully blind and amoral many-headed monster that has the world in a stranglehold.

It turns a blind eye to greed.

It ignores the need for (and needs of) a healthy community

It is in total denial when it comes to the state of the 'mother of all resources': nature.

Nature is an externality to the so-called science of economics. It doesn't count. Its destruction isn't factored in. It's visible all over the world (just think splintered rainforest, dead orangutans, polar bears in a sea of trash). But it's nowhere to be seen in those economic graphs.

That's why we (as the West Cork Doughnut Economy Network) like the doughnut

diagram, created by Professor Kate Raworth, who calls herself "a renegade economist focused on making economics fit for 21st century realities". Just like that eternal growth fantasy curve, the picture tells us what an economy should (and hopefully could) be like. No longer a money-generating machine for the (happy?) few but a circular sweet spot for the many in wholesome green.

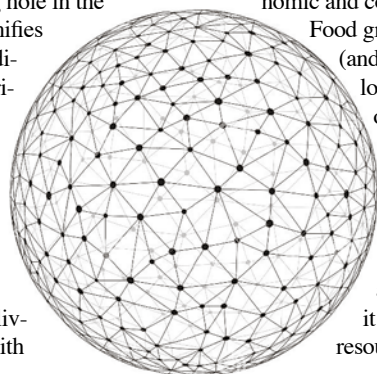
But how do we get there? Raworth shows us, in hazardous red, the deficiencies that are glaringly obvious under the current economic system. On the outside it shows the dangers of living beyond nature's means. The gaping hole in the middle signifies areas of individual deprivation. In Raworth's words, "Many millions of people still lack life's essentials, living daily with

hunger, illiteracy, insecurity and voicelessness." She wrote that in 2017 when business as usual was expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Our 'now' looks very different.

What to do? Does anyone have a clue what a vital and 'better' economy would look like? Thankfully, Kate Raworth does. She has provided us with another graph that might help repair the hole in the middle and the devastation at the edges: A network of flows.

"Imagery is incredibly powerful," she states. So let's imagine a thriving economy consisting of numerous (and mutually connected) local economic and community hubs.

Food grown locally (and chemical-free), local employment opportunities identified (what services would local people value?), waste recycled and reused (so it becomes a resource). Money



#### €500,000 funding announced for link to Glengarriff Nature Reserve

Cork South West Green Party welcomes the funding for phase 1 of the new link to Glengarriff Nature Reserve. This will begin the process of constructing a safe pedestrian and cycle link between Glengarriff Village and Glengarriff Nature Reserve.

More than €6 million has been announced for 14 large-scale projects under Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. The investment involves a significant development of many of our most popular outdoor amenities such as trails, walkways, cycleways, and blueways throughout Ireland.

"This is an excellent investment for Glengarriff and West Cork and will not just attract tourists but will provide an excellent outdoor recreation facility for everyone in the locality. It is very welcome to see such investment in West Cork and we will be looking for more projects like this to be funded in the coming years," said Rory Jackson, Cork South West Green Party representative.



## people Environment : Making a difference

# Pesticides detected in several drinking water supplies in County Cork

Public urged to consider the environment and alternatives to pesticides when gardening, farming and maintaining sports grounds

Exceedances for pesticides including MCPA, 2,4-D, Mecoprop, Fluroxypyr, Glyphosate and Triclopyr were all detected in water supplies in County Cork in 2019 and 2020. These exceedances were detected as part of Irish Water's public water supply monitoring programme.

The National Pesticides and Drinking Water Action Group (NPDWAG) is asking users of any herbicide, or pesticide products to consider the vulnerability of their local drinking water supplies to pesticide contamination and the importance of these supplies to the local homes and businesses in the community.

In Cork, the water supplies with pesticide exceedances were Bantry/Cahernacrin (MCPA exceedance), Glanmire

(MCPA, 2,4-D, Fluroxypyr and Mecoprop exceedances), Glashaboy (MCPA, Mecoprop and Triclopyr exceedances), Glengarriff (Triclopyr exceedance) and Macroom (Glyphosate exceedance).

The Bantry/Cahernacrin water supply abstracts raw water from the Inchilough river and Drombrow lake, part of the Inchilough river catchment; the Glanmire water supply abstracts raw water from Coolquesk Bridge, Kilquana Bridge, Butlerstown and the Butlerstown river tributary, part of the Butlerstown River catchment; the Glashaboy water supply abstracts raw water from the Glashaboy river, part of the Glashaboy river catchment; the Glengarriff water supply abstracts raw water from the Barony river, part of the Barony river catchment and the Macroom water supply abstracts raw water from the River Sullane, part of the River Lee catchment. As these catchments are vulnerable to runoff from land, Irish Water is asking users of any herbicide or pesticide

products to consider the vulnerability of the water supplies to pesticide contamination and the importance of these supplies to the local homes and businesses in the community.

Irish Water, working in partnership with a range of organisations involved in the NPDWAG, is asking the farming community, greens keepers, grounds keepers, and domestic users, to consider in each case whether they need to use pesticides at all. Minimising pesticide use not only helps to protect water quality but also has wider environmental



benefits. For example, leaving areas unsprayed can help native flowering plant species to grow and support a range of insects including bees and other vital pollinators. One third of Ireland's bee species are threatened with extinction and by helping the bee population survive and thrive we are also helping to protect our precious water sources. For more information on practical ways to help bees and other pollinators, check out the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan at [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie).

Where pesticide use is considered necessary, the NPDWAG is working with the community to ensure that best practice measures to protect drinking water sources and biodiversity are always followed. Farmers and other landholders dealing with the challenge of tackling rushes should note that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) has developed new guidance on the sustainable management of rushes. The new approach is based on the concepts of containment or suppression and

aims to minimise the use of pesticides. More information on this can be obtained from your local farm advisor or on [www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/waterprotection](http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/waterprotection)

The efforts to reduce the incidence and level of these detections are being coordinated by the NPDWAG. This group is chaired by the DAFM. All of the key stakeholders are represented in this group and include other Government departments and agencies; local authorities; industry representative bodies; farming organisations; water sector organisations; and amenity sector organisations.

Deirdre O'Loughlin, Irish Water's Regional Drinking Water Compliance Specialist said: "In County Cork, there were exceedances of the drinking water regulations for MCPA, 2,4-D, Fluroxypyr, Mecoprop, Triclopyr and Glyphosate in public water supplies following routine sampling. While our consultation with the HSE concluded that the levels seen did not represent a threat to public health, they are undesirable, and it is impera-

tive that users of pesticides are mindful of best practice when using herbicides or pesticides and seek out alternatives."

Adding to this, Dr Aidan Moody, DAFM and Chair of NPDWAG commented: "The continued engagement of all stakeholders, working in partnership, is needed to tackle this issue. Users of pesticides should always consider alternatives in the first instance and if the application of pesticides are considered essential make sure that they are aware of the best practice measures that should be followed to protect water quality."

Recent drinking water monitoring results for Ireland show that a number of active substances contained in herbicide products used in agriculture, amenity and gardens, such as 2,4-D, Fluroxypyr, Glyphosate, MCPA, Mecoprop and Triclopyr, are being regularly detected.

## BEAG branches out during National Tree Week

BEAG, Bandon Environmental Action Group, is a relatively new group to Bandon but one that has deep roots in the community. BEAG, which aims to assist in making a positive contribution to its local community on a range of issues that affect the environment, used National Tree Week last month as an opportunity to introduce itself to the wider community and tell people what kind of projects it has thus far been involved in.

As part of The Urban Tree Planting Initiative run by Trees on the Land, BEAG has already planted over 2,000 native trees around Bandon. With the help of Bandon Tidy Towns, the group identified three locations in the town suitable for planting native trees and hedging. Each location was different, so Niki Keeling from The Manx Project/Green Economy advised BEAG throughout and assisted it in coming up with an individual proposal for each site: a native hedge was planted beside the Skate Park to encourage biodiversity and foraging in this much loved public amenity; a band of native trees were planted along the bypass below the Community Hospital with full support from the HSE to provide a natural noise barrier in the years to come, improve biodiversity, create habitat and improve wellbeing for the residents at the hospital; Bandon Grammar School has also transformed a stretch of grassland

into native woodland – the space will also include an orchard and a wildflower meadow.

Throughout this project BEAG has always had the help and support of local groups; in particular the Tidy Towns group but other local groups also helped out: Bandon Allotments, Bike Friendly Bandon, Bandon Sustainable Energy Communities, Creative Bandon and Sustainable Bandon to name but a few.

Bernie Connolly, Cork Environmental Forum Development Coordinator commented that "Groups such as BEAG are not only making a difference by taking valuable action through this impressive tree planting initiative but are creating the collaboration necessary in all communities to help address the environmental crisis."

To mark the occasion of National Tree Week in March, BEAG invited local public representatives Bernie Connolly, Gillian Coughlan and Sean O'Donovan to plant a tree. Cllr Coughlan was delighted to support the initiative: "Beag may be the Irish word for small but the energy, activism and ambition of this group is immense. As we celebrate National Tree Week, I thank and commend Bandon Environmental Action Group for their commitment to the planting of trees at various locations around Bandon. The beauty of trees has long been celebrated in poetry and song but with natural attrition

and removal of hedgerows and woods, this beauty was slowly disappearing from the landscape. Now, we can be assured of a rich legacy of improved air quality, as trees soak up carbon dioxide and emit oxygen, as well as providing improved habitats for our birds and wildlife and bees. The biodiversity of the Bandon area, long a renowned wooded river valley will slowly improve. This is a worthy endeavour indeed and I am very pleased to support the Bandon Environmental Action Group in any way that I can."

BEAG would like to remind West Cork People readers that you can still take action to mark National Tree Week. "We can give back to nature by planting a tree, a native tree preferably. It's one of the easiest but greatest actions you can take to help our planet. Not only do trees create a wonderful environment for us, trees are an investment for future generations, they prevent flooding and soil erosion, create habitat, improve biodiversity, improve air quality, create natural weather barriers and improve wellbeing.

"Did you know that planting an oak tree can have a huge impact on the environment, by providing a stable habitat for countless species? They are easy to grow, will grow in most locations and can live for 250-300 years. Plant a Rowan tree in your garden, or plant a Hawthorn hedge, these will provide food



Pictured at Bandon bypass planting trees for National Tree Week are Gillian Coughlan MCC, Sean O'Donovan MCC, Bernie Connolly Cork Environmental forum and BEAG members Anna Roycroft, Wendy Bond and Geoff Dickson.

Pic: Denis Boyle

and refuge for birds and will be a welcome sight in your garden. Protect and maintain hedgerows, as they provide vital habitat for our local wildlife."

BEAG members are Gef Dickson (Chairperson), Wendy

(Secretary), Donal O'Riordan (Treasurer) and Anna Roycroft (Communications Officer). If you would you like to become a member of BEAG and get involved in a variety of projects follow them on Facebook @

Bandon Environmental Action Group, or get in touch at [bandon.beag@gmail.com](mailto:bandon.beag@gmail.com).



# Mexican to go



## A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

Tyaludas (tai-uoo-das), a simple Mexican street food, are sometimes referred to as Mexican pizzas when they are served open faced, but they are more often folded in half and eaten on the go.

This dish, which hails from Oaxaca in the south of Mexico is a delightful construction made of tortillas spread with refried beans, other various fillings-of-choice such as shredded meat or crispy grasshoppers, then grated cheese, avocado, salad and salsa. The tortilla is gently folded in half, like a calzone, then cooked on a dry pan so that the cheese melts but the salsa retains its fresh bite. Oaxacan cheese is fresh and stretchy, a little salty and melts beautifully. We use mozzarella, which behaves well as a substitute.

When we put Tyaludas on the menu at our shop everyone thought they were delicious but

it sparked a conversation about avocados. We originally made our salsa with avocado, red onion, tomato, fresh coriander and lime, which was absolutely yummy. The avocados were a problem though, as they don't grow here and, although we can buy them the quality is unpredictable, so we put our thinking caps on and decided to use kale instead.

Right now we have a lot of kale in the garden. As the days have become warmer, it has picked up and is producing like crazy. Kale is like a sustainable avocado in this part of the world: The same high-powered nutrients of avocados to feed our bodies and brains without the air miles. It loves our climate and grows prolifically for much of the year. It's a little sluggish in December but as soon as the daylight increases it's off again.

Kale is very versatile – we use it in so many ways – but I think my all time favourite is stir-fried kale. We grow soft leaf varieties such as Raggety Jack and Asparagus kale, which are excellent for everything. Curly kale and Cavalo di Nero are more suited to cooking. All of these kales work well for this recipe and are delicious sandwiched with refried beans and cheese.

The refried beans can be cooked from scratch but you can also buy pouches or cans of refried beans, which work well and cut down the cooking time. We cook our black beans from scratch as we use a lot of them but a can of black beans is very

convenient if you want to make your own refried beans – super easy and worth the little extra effort

The recipe might look lengthy and complicated but really it's just a couple of quick procedures and an assembly job. This is a vegetarian recipe but add cooked chicken, pulled pork or beef if you feel the need.

Serves 4

### Refried Beans

- 1 onion
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 400g cooked beans (1 can)
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (optional)
- Oil to fry

Peel and chop the onion. Heat a frying pan, adding a little oil and the onions, then fry gently for five to 10 minutes without browning.

Peel and chop the garlic, stir into the onion then cook for a couple of minutes. Add the cooked beans and smoked paprika. Mash everything together with a fork or potato masher, adding a little bean cooking liquid or water if needed to help it along. A hand held blender will also do this job. Season with salt.

### Stir Fried Kale

- 10 large leaves of kale
- Half tsp fennel seeds
- Half tsp chilli flakes
- 1-2 cloves garlic – peeled and chopped
- 1-2tbs olive oil



Wash the kale and strip out the centre stem then slice into ribbons.

Heat a frying pan, adding enough olive oil to cover the bottom; turn the heat to low, add the chopped garlic, fennel seeds and chilli flakes and allow the flavours to infuse for a couple of minutes without burning then turn the heat back up and stir in the chopped kale. Do this in batches to allow the kale to wilt down in between additions. Stir-fry the kale for two to four minutes – depending which kale you are using. Add 1tbs water – the steam will make the kale relax – and you're ready to go

### Salad/Salsa

- 3 ripe tomatoes
- 1 red onion – peeled and finely chopped
- 1-2 chillies- finely chopped
- 1-2 cloves garlic – peeled and finely chopped

- Juice of 2 limes
- Handful chopped coriander

Cut the tomatoes in half, scoop the seeds out with a teaspoon and discard then cut the tomato into 1-2cm dice.

Put all of the above into a bowl and gently mix together. Season with a little salt.

### Tyaludas

- 4 tortilla wraps
- 150-200g grated mozzarella
- Plus all of the above

Heat the tortillas on a dry pan so that they soften. Lay them out on the counter then spread with the refried beans, on one half put a layer of kale then add the tomato mix and grated mozzarella. Carefully fold in half. Heat a large heavy pan then turn the heat to low. Slip in the prepared tyaludas and cook each side until golden, crispy

and the cheese has melted. You'll probably have to do this in batches.

Eat with hot chilli sauce.

We're hoping that by the time you read this recipe we will have re-opened. We are just waiting for the current Covid situation to improve and the government to change the restrictions. We're ready to go in our newly painted shop and looking forward to see everyone.

Here's to an open April!

Lettercollum Kitchen Project,  
22, Connolly Street, Clonakilty  
0238836938

info@lettercollum.ie  
www.lettercollum.ie  
lettercollumkitchenproject.com

## Come Dine with 18th Century Me

COME DINE WITH 18th Century ME



If you suddenly found yourself in 1780s Cork and were asked to throw a dinner party, would you display yourself to be a woman of style and taste? Would you know how to dress and what food to serve? Would you be au-fait with current affairs and social etiquette? Could you successfully navigate your apothecary chest to cure your aching head the morning after?

The LHQ gallery, Cork County Council Library and Arts exhibition space, is delighted to present its second virtual exhibition of 2021, 'Come Dine With 18th Century Me', by West Cork based artist and designer Jenny Dempsey. 'Come Dine with 18th Century Me' invites the modern viewer to step back in time and take a light-hearted look at life in 1780s Cork. By showcasing familiar activities with which we still engage, we can compare life then with life now and the unfamiliar past becomes relevant. Eighteenth century Cork was an exciting place. Trade with far-flung places brought many luxuries to our shores. Exotic foods, fine china, and sumptuous silks were all the rage.

Previewing the virtual exhibition, Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley congratulated the artist on her new work: "Jenny Dempsey offers a unique and refreshing perspective on women's history. Her research is presented through beautiful artworks and engaging, humorous text. While we regret that we cannot welcome visitors into the LHQ Gallery, we hope that this virtual exhibition by the artist will connect with people in County Cork and beyond."

Visit the 'Come Dine with 18th Century Me' virtual exhibition at [www.comedinewith18thcenturyme.com](http://www.comedinewith18thcenturyme.com)

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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle



## 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 Mob: 087 2700572.

*"Nothing is so beautiful as Spring"*

The seasons remind us of the notion of impermanence, that everything changes, nothing stays the same, and by aligning ourselves with the seasons and the changes each one brings, we can be

# Mindfulness in nature

more at home in ourselves and more accepting of the ups and downs of life. This past month of March has been a real benchmark, a yardstick to measure how far we have come this past year. It is a rich time to reflect on the many challenges and losses, along with the triumphs and gains of the past year. It is not a case of business as usual now but rather adapting to a new way of living, maybe, for some of us, a more mindfully aware, intentional and simpler way of life.

When connected with nature, there is rarely a feeling of lack but one of abundance. Having grown up on a farm, I felt a deep connection with nature as a child and young adult, and I learned the support that nature can offer and how it can hold us up in times of grief, loss, and change. Somewhere along the way to adulthood though, I think we can disconnect from nature, and, as life gets busier, often from ourselves. One of the offshoots of the past year is that many of us have become much more closely attuned with the

seasons again and re-connected with nature. Exploring a 5km radius is a never-ending adventure if you are fortunate enough to live in a rural area, and especially one as beautiful as West Cork. If we remain curious about where we are, and what surrounds us, no walk, swim or cycle ever feels the same.

For many people I know, including myself, being in nature has proven to be one of the most stable supports over the past year. Because everyone was struggling, the natural environment seemed sometimes like the only support available and it was still more than enough. The sea held us up, buoyed us, the trees provided solace and shade, as we fell in again with the natural pace and rhythm of rural life. Life slowed down and we began to pay attention to the patterns of the natural world more fully. There is a giant horse chestnut tree in the yard of the farmhouse where I grew up. I had been glancing hopefully up at its bare branches for the last few weeks, until I got my reward last weekend when

I looked up and noticed that some tiny buds had appeared. It almost made me cry, their return was so reassuring, bringing back memories of this whole year where we had watched it change with the seasons – buds, blossoms, and fruit, then death and decay, the cycle of life.

It is good to take a pause now and then, to notice how we too have adapted and changed this past year. What are the habits that have sustained us and kept us well? What new ideas or habits are budding and blossoming for us? Are there any habits or patterns that are not working for us, and that we can let go of? I have recently been marking and celebrating a full year of evening meditations on Zoom and am so grateful to the wonderful community of people who have created this supportive space with me. Their feedback has encouraged me to continue these online evening sessions and possibly introduce one or two morning sessions. I have also been hugely inspired lately by some online workshops on engaged mindfulness,

drawing on the wonderful work of Joanna Macy. It is my intention, when things open up again, to re-introduce some outdoor mindfulness in nature sessions.

Somehow, there seems nothing nicer now than a flask of tea or coffee sitting outside, feeling the contact of your body on the ground you're resting on, listening to the sounds of the birds, feeling the touch of the air on your face or the warm sun, noticing any scent on the breeze, the taste of your drink. It is the simple, precious moments in life that cost so little, yet so restore and resource us if we are fully present in them. Primroses, newborn lambs, longer days, new life and energy... I fully agree with that opening line taken from a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem – there really is nothing so beautiful as Spring, a time of renewal and hope.

Online meditation sessions via Zoom will continue on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8pm, please do consider joining in, whether you have tried mindfulness meditation before or are new to it. These



small group sessions are personal, down-to-earth, informal and donation based. Individual sessions are also available.

For more information on upcoming workshops and online courses please like my Facebook page (Mindhaven) or feel free to get in touch by phone: 087 2700572 or by email: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com

## Controlling your blood sugar: Part 1



Eoin Roe  
Chiropractic

In part one of a three-part series, Eoin Roe looks at blood sugar control, what can go wrong with this and what can be done to help correct it.

### Normal Blood Glucose control

The normal glucose levels in blood are controlled by interactions between hormones and various organs in the body.

When we eat a meal, a snack, a drink, or anything other than

water, our blood glucose levels rise. The immediate response in the body is for the pancreas to release insulin into the blood. Insulin's job is to take any excess glucose that is not being used by the body and store it in the liver and skeletal muscles in a form of glucose called glycogen and your blood glucose will return to a normal level.

When we fast for a while, namely the gap in between meals or when we sleep, blood glucose levels drop. This is monitored by part of the brain called the hypothalamus, which starts a cascade of hormones

that restabilising your blood sugar.

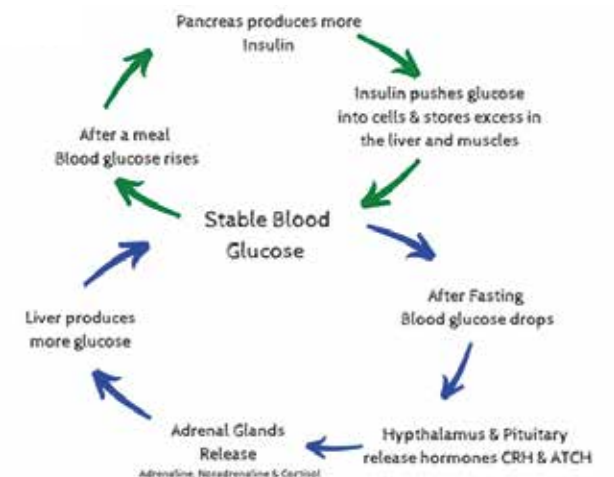
The hypothalamus releases a hormone called CRH, which in turn stimulates the pituitary gland to release ATCH, which stimulates the adrenal glands to release three hormones adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol. These all have an action on the liver to release the stored glycogen and convert it back to glucose therefore rising your blood glucose back to a normal level.

The above is a very basic overview of the process of blood glucose stability. There are some other interesting factors that will also impact on your body's ability to handle glucose well. In the diagram attached to this article it seems that there is a linear progression from one process to the next; but it is more complex than that, with multiple communications between different organs in the body.

For example when you think about eating something sweet your brain will stimulate the pancreas to release insulin in preparation for having that food.

There are other pathways that involve the relationship between the brain and the pancreas.

Circadian rhythms respond to light and dark, sleep and wake cycles, and have an effect on



Normal blood glucose control

how much energy your body needs, these all feed back into the brain through a region called the hypothalamus and help to control blood glucose levels.

You will hear many people supporting the idea of gut health and the microbiome; one of the most important reasons for this, is that it has a role to play in the correct management blood sugar though a hormone called incretin. Incretin stimulates endocrine glands to release insulin, glucagon and somatostatin. Healthy incretin levels are related to having a healthy microbiome and this is related to your diet specifically how much fibre is in your diet?

As you can see the control of blood sugar levels is of vital

importance but requires complex interactions between many of your bodies organs. With so much happening it is easy to understand how this system can go wrong.

In the next part of this series, I will go over Insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome, which are stages on the path to Type 2 Diabetes.

*Eoin is a Chiropractor and Functional Medicine specialist working in Skibbereen. If you would like help to manage your blood sugar or any health problems please contact me on 087 9582362.*

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# Three West Cork schools take part in university study on alcohol education and behaviours

Over 13,000 students, including pupils from three secondary schools in West Cork, have to date participated in Drinkaware's Junior Cycle Alcohol Education Programme (JC AEP) which was the subject of the three-year longitudinal study carried out by Maynooth University.

This significant study, for the first time, tracks first to third year students' experiences of alcohol education in Ireland in real time. As the national charity working to reduce and prevent alcohol misuse in Ireland, Drinkaware commissioned Maynooth University's Centre for Mental Health and Community Research to investigate the programme's effectiveness and, in particular, its primary prevention goal to delay the age of first drink.

The programme involves eight to 10 lessons delivered on a weekly or fortnightly basis by the trained teacher and to date 134 schools have undertaken the programme including Clonakilty Community College, Bandon Grammar School, and Coláiste Pobail, Bantry.

Over 350 students from 19 schools across the country took part in the evaluation that was conducted over the three-year period (2018 – 2020).

Marian Carey, Principal at Coláiste Pobail, Bantry said of the programme: "We have seen a noticeable shift in students' attitudes to alcohol, especially when it comes to understanding the range of harm that drinking can cause. Pupils are impressionable at this age, and peer pressure is a reality. Programmes like Drinkaware's JC AEP play a huge role in helping teachers engage with young people to give them the infor-

mation, and the personal and social skills they need to make better decisions long term."

"Teachers are a major touch-point in teenagers' lives, but we are only one. It is important that alcohol education comes from all angles – from the home, from peers, and from the wider community."

Increase in intent not to drink and improved understanding of impact of alcohol consumption on health

The report found that as the students progressed through the JC AEP, the proportion who expressed no intention or interest in drinking, rose from 30 per cent in first year to 54 per cent in third year. The findings also show that participation led to substantial and sustained improvements in students' knowledge and understanding of alcohol when compared with pre-programme delivery data.

Students' knowledge of the impact of alcohol on overall health and wellbeing increased substantially and progressively from 22 per cent pre-programme to 50 per cent in third year. A similar increase was found regarding students who reported 'knowing a lot' about alcohol's impact on mental health, which also doubled from 23 per cent pre-programme to 46 per cent in third year. Furthermore, nearly half (46pc) of participating students identified the negative impact of alcohol on physical and mental health as a 'reason why teenagers do not drink'.

Tipping point for underage drinking is second to third year

As the study followed participating students through their three formative years of secondary school, there was a marked shift across some of

Cork teenagers more likely to delay age of first drink with in-school alcohol education – study reveals tipping point for underage drinking happens between second and third year.



the results when comparing second and third year data. For instance, the 60 per cent (approx.) of students who indicated that they had never drunk alcohol remained fairly stable between first and second year, but then decreased sharply by 17 per cent as students went from second to third year.

A disturbing result revealed in the study was that 38 per cent of third year participating students who drink, have already experienced one or more negative effects of alcohol consumption, such as physical fights, arguments, accidents/injury, and/or feeling physically

sick/vomiting.

Home setting can facilitate or deter underage drinking

A recurring theme identified within the report, was that of parents' role in underage drinking. Parental permissiveness – even if this is only perceived by the student – and the ease with which alcohol can be accessed in the home setting, may either inhibit or enable underage drinking. For instance, 57 per cent of third year students had first consumed alcohol either in their own or someone else's home, most saying they did so with little difficulty whilst only one in four said they got

into trouble with parents for drinking.

In contrast to the 44 per cent in third year who cited tolerant parental views regarding alcohol, 19 per cent indicated that their parents do not like to see them drinking, and 17 per cent of those in third year who had not started drinking cited concerns over their parents' reaction as a deterrent to drinking.

The findings on the views of teachers reflected a general consensus that parents or guardians should take primary responsibility for alcohol education (63pc) and, that they either were not fulfilling this role or needed support to do so.

With regard to the participating students and teachers' views of the JC AEP, the study reveals consistently high proportions of students in each year of the evaluation, rated the JC AEP highly, for example 63pc of students in Year 3 rated it as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good'. Sixty per cent also said that they would recommend the programme to other students/schools.

Commenting on the report findings, Sheena Horgan, Drinkaware CEO said: "15 years of age is the 'average' age of the first drink in Ireland. But average doesn't tell the full story. This study shows how attitudes, and behaviours shift markedly across 13- to 15-year-olds (first to third year), meaning alcohol education before this age is vital. Maynooth University's rigorous and independent evaluation shows how programmes like Drinkaware's JC AEP can make a significant contribution to the prevention/delay of underage drinking."

Lead author of the study, Professor Sinéad McGillo-

way, Founder Director of the Centre for Mental Health and Community Research at Maynooth University's Dept. of Psychology said: "To date, public policy on alcohol has primarily focused on older teenagers. However, our research clearly indicates that we need to engage with our children at a much earlier age. The collective findings of this study suggest that Drinkaware's Alcohol Education Programme is a useful, feasible and high quality programme that is successfully engaging and empowering young people to develop sustained improvements in knowledge, awareness, understanding, confidence and appropriate decision-making skills around the consumption of alcohol. The results also highlight the important role that parents play in protecting and educating their children on alcohol, and a need to provide better support to them in this regard".

Commenting on the next steps for Drinkaware and the Junior Cycle Alcohol Education Programme Horgan said: "With this research clearly indicating how alcohol education can be effective, the time to act is now. We must progress and scale evidence-informed education programmes, such as the JCAEP, at a national level and also look at potential programmes for 11- to 12-year-olds if the disturbing trajectory of underage drinking and continuance of alcohol harm is to be halted. There is no place for alcohol in childhood, and through the collective efforts of Irish society, from educators to parents, to charities such as Drinkaware, we can make a difference to the next generation's relationship with alcohol."

## Channel your unique flair and skills through We Are Cork Youth Challenge

In response to the impact of the Covid 19 crisis on second level education, Cork Education and Training Board (Cork ETB), as the provider of Youth Services in the region, working with other agencies and voluntary bodies, is co-ordinating the provision of a range of supports and initiatives for young people in 2021 and beyond.

One such initiative, run in partnership with Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Music Generation Cork City and Cork Sports Partnerships, is the We Are Cork Youth Challenge, where young people in Cork (13- to 18-year-olds) have been

called on to put their talents and skills into practice by completing a series of educational challenges through the campaign.

The challenge gives teens an opportunity to explore their creative capabilities and acquire a new skill or refine existing talents. Over 50 challenges across music, arts, society, environment, sport and technology have been set with participants asked to complete 20 tasks and record their experiences for others to see by downloading Microsoft's free, accessible, and secure FLIPGRID app and social media channel, which will be moderated by Cork ETB.

The challenges aim to give participants an opportunity to focus their energies on positive activities from now up to the start of August.

A special Lord Mayor and County Mayor's medal will be presented to each successful participant and various challenge spot prizes are available for the most creative and exciting challenges.

During the virtual launch, Lord Mayor Cllr Joe Kavanaugh said: "Travel restrictions, the widespread cancellation of activity programmes and sports have made this a very different year for many young people.

Cork ETB has moved quickly to help fill the void, and I encourage as many teens as possible to participate in what will be a fun and worthwhile experience and a chance to discover a new skill or hobby."

County Mayor, Cllr Mary Lenihan-Foley also paid tribute to the collaborative efforts of the organisations supporting the challenge and added: "It is our combined efforts that will make the difference for this campaign and it is so important that we are proactive within all our local community organisations to support young people during this challenging time. The challenge

represents a great way for younger people in Cork to be proactive in their own self-development – as they continue to thrive during this academic year. We hope that many Cork teenagers will get involved, focus their energies on the challenges and have some fun in the process."

Cork ETB Chief Executive, Denis Leamy stressed that the challenges are not a competition but added that creativity is encouraged with specific spot prizes awarded to those with the most innovative challenges.

He said: "The overall aim of 'We are Cork' is participation, engagement and fun – lots of fun.

The challenges should be kept simple and could be anything from completing a 3km run, compiling a Spotify list, cooking a meal traditional to another country, or composing a rap, song, or poem. We know that our Cork youths are bursting with talent and we welcome their own unique individual interpretations of each challenge."

The We Are Cork Youth Challenge encourages young people to upload videos of their completed challenges to Microsoft's free, accessible, and secure FLIPGRID app and social media channel, which will be moderated by Cork ETB.



## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Finding peace in your own private West Cork retreat

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*"Claire and Colin's chalet was the perfect getaway - super comfortable and the location is wonderful. Perched on a hill with views of both the Long Strand beach and Castlefereke woodlands and lake, you'll be only a few minutes walk to either. Super quiet and peaceful; there's a skylight over the bed from where you can see the stars on a clear night. I wanted for nothing. Claire and Colin also provide some basics to get you going. Overall, one of the best value Airbnb's I've stayed in and I hope to return, if only to indulge in another sound healing session with Claire - highly recommended." Jennifer, Cork*

**To find out more & book your retreat visit**  
[www.clairemariebarton.com](http://www.clairemariebarton.com)  
 Any questions, contact Claire on 087 2323 623

“When my head is full of all the things on my ‘to do’ lists and the kitchen is stacked with dirty dishes, it’s time to head to the beach. I take the new high path that looks out over Kilkerran Lake and onto Galley Head lighthouse. I see fresh leaves opening like flowers on the wild roses and the velvety catkins of the pussy willow are out. In no time, I am happily wandering through the dunes with my puppy without a care in the world. There’s no-one else on the beach and while Pippin runs around in big joyous loops, I face into the wind and look out to sea. Taking big deep breaths I feel grateful to be alive and to have nature on my doorstep.

“I know the pandemic has been very difficult for lots of people cut off from nature. Hopefully soon the restrictions will ease and everyone will be free to visit the countryside again.” Claire Barton.

Claire Barton and her family have been welcoming Airbnb guests for the last five years to their cosy self-catering studio. At the same time, Claire has been offering sound healing sessions

with angel card readings. Sound healing is a gentle but powerful energy healing therapy, which changes your brainwaves and triggers your own innate healing ability.

It has been a natural progression for her to create a deeper experience with the introduction of private retreats. “Spending time close to nature by the sea, you can connect more deeply with yourself and experience relaxation through sound healing,” she says.

“The sessions can also be quite spiritual, as it allows you the space to see your life situation from a higher perspective and explore the deeper meaning behind it.”

There is also the option to learn the ukulele during your stay! The rest of the time, you are free to walk the beach, journal and take time out for yourself in nature.

The Airbnb is just two minutes walk from Long Strand just outside Clonakilty on the Wild

Atlantic Way. There are also forest and lake walks on the doorstep, as well as award-winning restaurants in the nearby towns of Rossbarbery and Clonakilty.

“We are so looking forward to welcoming guests once the restrictions ease,” says Claire. The retreats are for individuals and couples and run for two to three nights with the option of extending your stay. To find out more or to book your retreat, please visit [www.clairemariebarton.com](http://www.clairemariebarton.com)



## Changing life up a bit



## NATURE TALKS

April Dannan

April Dannan is a food influencer, creating new trends in healthy sustainable living as part of her clinical practice as a Naturopath Herbalist Herbal Nutritionist Intuitive. She lives in West Cork where she is a natural bee keeper and can often be found in the hedgerows.

I am going to let you in on a secret... We all have blocks or those areas in our lives where we feel stuck.

Can't seem to get going with your garden, your taxes, your evening walk or starting a healthy habit – yep, that's a block! They can be big or small. Some are not interfering that much in our lives or so we tell ourselves.

Other types of blocks are so intertwined and linked deeply within our body-mind-spirit, that all aspects of our relationships, family, work and life are bogged down in that ‘what shall not be named’.

Feeling stuck in life can play out in so many different ways – sometimes we don't even realise we are blocked. We often refer to ourselves, and others, as ‘set in our ways’. You all know at least one person like this and we all have at least one area of our own lives exactly the same.

Couldn't be clearer than that!

Over this past year, we, at the very least, have had a lot of time to reflect on our lives and hopefully a new sense of what was working and what wasn't doing so well. Actually, those areas might have been glaringly obvious and needed addressing or some sort of new approach.

We need to mix it up a little, because breaking out of these habits and thought patterns are not only liberating; they most often are transformative.

The real change comes about because for the most part, these blocks are functioning in a direct feedback loop into our deepest fears, worries and huge amounts of often unnecessary stress.

So, let's get down to business here shall we?

The exact method I use for releasing or removing or dissolving or even just getting at the process of breaking apart an internal block isn't complicated – let me tell you what I teach in my clinic and do for myself.

Most weeks, unless it is Christmas, I do a wee fast day or two – usually this goes fairly well and is easy enough. I drink juices, smoothies, herbal teas and water. Or any liquid broth would be great too especially on cold days.

My one item that I always add in to my warm (not hot!) herbal tea or water or juice is apple cider vinegar and one supplement such as vitamin C. I plan out my day – often with a flask full of liquid and top it up with around one tablespoon of vinegar per half litre or pint of water and my selected vitamin.

I sip on this throughout the day.

Then I carry on as usual – I walk a little more, or any type of exercise you are or are not doing. Push yourself a tiny bit. Not much – but these blocks do need a push.

I write down things daily, so this often helps me sort out the process of exactly what it is I

am trying to dismantle in my life. You can get really creative here – make a list, break it into parts, write down a goal or ten and then narrow these down into targets for the day or week or month.

Another thing that I found myself doing, certainly in times past when we could travel a little further – was to go some place new and different. Like an unusual walk in the woods, a trip to a beach you have never seen, or even a long drive around a mountain.

These days, I get really adventurous and go shop at a store I don't often visit or walk down a street or laneway that I've never been (go wild!). In other words, get completely out of your comfort zone.

What we are doing is changing life up a bit... Encouraging our minds to create new neurons and pathways, while we delve deeply into what and why we are doing things and seeking a better or easier or often healthier approach.

Although these are just a few ways to tackle change – breaking through a block that is holding you back can set you on a path to reaching your potential.

## FitLine helps users take that first step

FitLine, an Age and Opportunity initiative, is a volunteer telephone line designed to help older people who want to feel healthier, but perhaps don't have the motivation, confidence or information on where or how to take that first step. The service is completely free.

The FitLine team is encouraging people to give them a call and learn more. After you've made the first call, a FitLine mentor will arrange a time to ring you every two weeks until you're happy with your progress.

“I have been with FitLine for a few years and it gives me a great lift to get a phone call every couple of weeks. They have good advice. I live on my own and I love having someone from FitLine ring me regularly,” said Joe, a FitLine participant in Dublin.

Some find it easy to be physically active but for others it's not so simple. Perhaps you don't know what activity to do or you lose motivation. This is a difficult time for people worldwide as Covid-19 has forced us to change the way we live, but Age and Opportunity

are continuing to provide safe opportunities for people to be more active.

“FitLine gave me the push I needed to stop making excuses to get up and get active,” said Anne, a FitLine participant in Cork.

FitLine mentors are volunteer older people who understand the challenges of getting active. They'll give you information, advice and gentle encouragement to get moving over the phone.

To find out more free phone 1800 303 545, email [fitline@ageandopportunity.ie](mailto:fitline@ageandopportunity.ie) or visit [www.ageandopportunity.ie](http://www.ageandopportunity.ie)





# Irish Wheelchair Association adapts brings creativity and support to the homes of service users

For just over a year local staff and teams at the Irish Wheelchair Association in West Cork have been supporting members to cope and adapt to the restrictions and health concerns brought by Covid-19.

It has been a long year for people who are living with a disability. Since the first lockdown in March 2020 many people and their families around West Cork have become very isolated. Local staff and teams at the Irish Wheelchair Association have been working across the community to make sure all its members are connected and that no one is forgotten.

The most recent lockdown has proven more difficult and has really challenged people's wellbeing. Sinéad Burke, Service Support Officer at the Clonakilty-based centre explains:

"We phone our service users daily, just to check in, have a chat, see how they are, checking if there is anything we can support them with. Service users will readily say they are struggling with the social isolation, with the lack of personal contact with the outside world, and for many, they have not left their house during lockdowns out of fear of getting Covid. Our role is to try to lift their spirits, bring something positive to their day, try to have a laugh, and lighten their day a little".

At the IWA Clonakilty, based in Clogheen Business Park, a three-day a week service was run with a fourth day supporting Outreach for service users, offering programmes and courses along with individual supports. Due to Level 5 restrictions, this service is currently closed to service users. So the IWA decided to bring the service, as best as they can, to the homes of service users. This is done through 'Entertainment Packs' and a 'tailored service to meet the needs of service users'.

Each week the team at the Clonakilty ROC put together quizzes, art therapy drawings, delicious recipes to try at home, local and community news and a weekly newsletter to update their service users. Zoom activities are on the go, including exercise, table quizzes, bingo, drama and arts and crafts. Art



Annie Tanner after doing her painting with her dog 'Buster' and staff member Elaine Connolly.



Ruadh Bancroft receiving his weekly entertainment pack.



Deirdre Harrington receiving her hand made nesting box.

packs like stained glass and collages are delivered to those who are interested in doing it as a hobby at home.

"It keeps our service users feeling included and still part of the service, giving them something to focus on and immerse themselves in," explains Sinéad. "We produce seasonal craft made by our creative team that we include in our deliveries. The St. Patrick's Day packs included felted shamrock brooches and ceramic Irish Maps along with handmade lucky charm bags filled with chocolate coins. For Easter we will be delivering homemade brown bread made by one of the ROC staff and chocolate, kindly donated by Dealz, Clonakilty. We are very lucky to have a team of creative staff working at the Centre who make such a fantastic effort to

meet the needs of the service users."

These are the kind of things that bring some joy and positivity to the service users at the Clonakilty ROC; staff deliver these packs weekly, and stay for a social distance chat with service users.

"Often the only person I see in the week is the visit from the IWA staff member; I look forward to it and have a laugh, which I really need. We reminisce on the 'good old days' and try to look forward to what plans may lie ahead at the Clonakilty ROC," says Pat O'Brien, a regular service user at the Clonakilty ROC.

Shopping and chemist calls are carried out daily for the service users who rely on IWA staff to pick up their essential items.



Harry Bennett receiving his shopping with staff member Pat Footman of IWA.

"I can honestly say having IWA staff to do my shopping is an invaluable support that I could not do without during this lockdown. I know that I can call them if I need anything and they will just drop it out without any hassle and it's always delivered with a friendly face and a good chat, which means a lot to me. I'm so grateful for what IWA have done for me over the past 12 months," explains Harry Bennett, Service User of the IWA Resource Centre, Clonakilty.

Recently one of the IWA staff handcrafted some beautiful nesting boxes that were delivered to service users' homes last month. "This idea came about from speaking to service users daily and noticing how much time they spend looking out their windows and we thought how nice it would be to have something like a nesting box outside where you can watch the magic of nature and get to know your garden and migratory birds. An illustration of garden birds that might nest was also included with the nesting boxes," says Sinéad.

"It was such a lovely idea and

they are so well made, we are delighted to receive it. I have some birds already checking it out," reports Dee Harrington, service user at the Clonakilty ROC.

"Our members are really looking forward to the vaccine becoming widely available and they are hopeful for a better 2021 over the coming months. We have campaigned and lobbied at government level to make sure that people with disabilities are included on the priority list for Covid-19 vaccinations. It is encouraging to see some of our members getting their appointments and we hope to see this increase significantly over the coming weeks."

The IWA looks forward to opening its doors again and has mighty plans in the pipeline for upcoming community projects at the centre – there will be a beautiful music community project coming to the doors of service users' homes and to the local area. There is also a group project focusing on service users telling their life stories that will be printed in a book form, together with holistic days at the centre, arts, crafts and mindful-

ness programmes. So next time you see the IWA bus in your area, give a thumbs up as you can be sure they are delivering a quality service to people with physical disabilities.

The Irish Wheelchair Association currently has 1,500 frontline workers across Ireland visiting 4,000 homes each month, caring for individuals with disabilities, in their own homes. Like many frontline workers across Ireland, IWA staff continues to work even during the darkest days of COVID because their members need them and rely on them.

Irish Wheelchair Association has 57 community centres across Ireland that provide social and training activities for thousands of people with disabilities every week.

Irish Wheelchair Association is Ireland's largest organisation supporting people with physical disabilities to lead active and independent lives and has 20,000 members. It is the leading provider of home support for people with physical disabilities in Ireland.

## Darrara Daffodil Day appeal raises €1,500

The committee of Darrara Community Centre was overwhelmed by the generous response to their Daffodil Day appeal. Like most, they were unable to organise their traditional coffee day for the Irish Cancer Society, but instead created an online donation facility for people to support the cause. They had a modest target of €300, as they were aware of so many other ways that people could contribute to Daffodil Day. However, by the time the fund closed at midnight on Sunday last, they had in fact raised five times that amount. A spokesperson paid tribute to the generosity of the people of the area and those from outside it, who contributed a total of €1,500. She paid tribute to local resident Damian White, a community Garda based in Bandon Garda Station, who in a recent webinar they organised, spoke so honestly about his own cancer diagnosis he received a few years ago. Damian's talk is still available to view and log-in details are on the 'Darrara CC' Facebook page.



## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## Anxiety in children

I speak to a lot of parents who are worried that their son or daughter is suffering from anxiety.

Their child may still be in primary school, or a teenager, and they have heard that anxiety is normal and that their child will grow out of it.

However it seems ages since their son or daughter loved to play, was outgoing and confident, was keen to learn, to

laugh, to sing, play sports and enthusiastic to do things with them and others.

It can be very worrying when they see their wonderful child withdrawing from them and their friends. It can also be very difficult when a child is not eating properly, having trouble sleeping, finding it difficult to concentrate, not wanting to go to school and suffering from panic attacks. Parents can feel

a sense of fear, as they wonder what if they don't grow out of it?

It is possible at any age to learn coping skills and techniques to manage and reset anxiety levels.

If you feel your child's childhood should be the best years of their life, then my question is why wait?

Anxiety is a feeling that we all experience from time to

time. It starts in the chest and feels like your heart is racing, or pounding. It can also be felt in the throat the neck and ears, as the sounds seems to amplify. It can cause your mouth to feel dry, affect your breathing and may even cause you to sweat.

Although it initially feels like a negative emotion it actually has a very important job. It is there to tell us when things maybe challenging, dangerous or unsafe. It is there to motivate you, to give you the opportunity to evaluate a situation and make the best decision possible. Whether that is to get away or stand-up for yourself.

Anxiety should be like a good friend, tapping you on the shoulder, or in this case tapping you in the chest to say, ok I don't feel so comfortable. What is it about this situation that's not right? Let's pay attention, let's listen to what's going on, and let's look around. Should I leave? Should I stand up for myself? Now is the time to make a decision and trust in myself.

If you learn this gradually from childhood, then confidence and resilience can grow



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist  
& Mind coach

from these anxious feelings. However if anxiety becomes a normal part of your child's life, and starts to impact on their daily activities, affecting their mood, sleep, behaviour, ability to study or begins to develop into depression, fear, phobias or panic attacks then it is time to seek help.

There are things that your child can do to feel better. Talking to someone in confidence about how they are feeling and any life challenges will help them problem solve and find their own solutions. They can learn life skills and tech-

niques such as, breathing and acupressure, which will reduce anxiety. They can learn to relax and feel better with visualisations and hypnotherapy.

If your child wants to feel better but is reluctant to talk then acupuncture or acupressure is a great way to balance emotions, calm the mind, support sleep and reduce stress.

As a parent your role is really important, you can support them to get enough sleep, encourage them to spend time doing activities that are fun, provide regular meals that will help them to feel stronger; and there are supplements that will nourish their mind and body, which helps them to concentrate better.

If you have any questions on what the right approach is for you and your family, then get in touch...I am looking forward to speaking to you.

*Amanda Roe is an Acupuncturist, Clinical hypnotherapist and Life and Health Coach. For more information or to book a session call or text 087 633 1898 or email amanda@marketstclinic.com*

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## Glaucoma expected to rise by 33 per cent in Ireland over the coming decade

Glaucoma is now more prevalent in people over 50 and if left untreated can result in blindness.

World Glaucoma week took place in March, during which Mater Private Network Cork Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dr Niamh Collins urged patients not to cancel or delay appointments related to their eye health and to #TreatYourEyes.

Glaucoma is the name of a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve. It's usually caused by problems with the fluid drainage system in the front part of the eye, which often leads to increased pressure inside the eye. Damage to this nerve can cause sight loss or even blindness if left untreated.

An estimated four per cent of people over the age of 50 in Ireland already have Glaucoma, and it is increasing all the time with our ageing population.

Glaucoma can have a significant impact on quality of life if left untreated, leading to an inability to drive, a reduction in physical activity, an increased likelihood of falls and social isolation. However, Glaucoma is treatable if caught early, and

further deterioration in vision is preventable. The vast majority of glaucoma cases have no symptoms in early stages, hence the vital importance of regular eye checks to pick up glaucoma early and prevent avoidable sight loss. People above the age of 60 are most susceptible to the condition, as well as those with a family history of glaucoma.

Most people can be treated with eye drops when taken regularly. Laser treatment can also be very effective for patients. For other patients, an operation called trabeculectomy can vastly improve fluid drainage from the eye, alleviating their glaucoma.

If caught early, further deterioration in vision can be preventable. Glaucoma was once a disease that would almost always lead to blindness but huge advances in diagnosis, monitoring and treatment now mean that most people with glaucoma will keep useful sight for life.

Commenting during World Glaucoma Week, Dr Niamh Collins, Consultant Ophthalmologist at the Mater Private



Network Cork said: "Early detection and intervention are the key to preserving patients' vision. If people are concerned about their vision, I strongly encourage them to schedule an eye test without delay."

"Unfortunately, any sight already lost due to glaucoma can't be regained. However, with effective medical treatments readily available, we now have more treatment options than ever before."

"I would encourage the Irish public to take charge of their eye health this World Glaucoma Week and schedule an eye test if they have any concerns about their vision or are over the age of 60."

## Same sex couple from Cork become the first in Ireland to be legally recognised as co-parents of their children

In an historic event last week, a female same sex couple from Cork were the first in Ireland to register the birth of their babies with both their names as parents on the official birth certificates, following enactment of legislation in May 2020.

Twin girls Réidín and Aoibhín were born to delighted parents Niamh O'Sullivan and Geraldine Rea on February 4, 2021 following donor sperm treatment at Waterstone Clinic.

The couple attended Waterstone Clinic over a period of two years and Geraldine became pregnant with the twins in summer 2020. "We had been due to have the frozen embryo transfer in March 2020, but the week of the scheduled procedure the government lockdown came into place. We were rescheduled and thanks to good timing and the hard work of the team at the Clinic, the transfer took place two days after restrictions were lifted for fertility clinics, and we finally became pregnant," said Geraldine.

In May 2020, the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 commenced, which allows for same-sex female couples to be legally recognised as



Pic: Gerard McCarthy

co-parents of their children. This means that the birth mother and the intending co-parent (the mother's spouse, civil partner or cohabitant) can now register with the Registrar for the Births, Deaths and Marriages, as the parents of a child born as a result of a Donor Assisted Human Reproduction (DAHR) procedure. This registration reflects the couple as parents on their children's birth certificates.

"We were delighted when the

legislation was enacted in May last year at a time when we were dreaming of becoming parents," said Niamh. "Little did we know then that fate would lead us to being the first to benefit from this new law. It is monumental for us and an historic step towards LGBT+ equality, as many children with same sex female parents can finally vindicate their right to have their family recognised."



## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

# Don't take your sight for granted

Thousands of people across Ireland have missed out on vital eye tests during lockdown, potentially putting their eyesight and wider health at risk, warns local opticians Specsavers Bandon.

Specsavers optician and Bandon store partner Marie Burke says: "Fifty percent of sight loss is avoidable with early detection, however, during the pandemic many people may not have had access to these diagnostic tests. Not only does this mean their eyesight is at risk but potentially other aspects of their health too."

"That's because while there are several changes we may notice in our vision which could be a sign of a wider health condition, there are also some things that can only be detected during an eye test."

"It is important to make an appointment with your optometrist if you are seeing certain things, such as persistent floaters, or notice changes with your eyes such as blurred vision or yellowing of the eyes. However, it is also important to keep up your regular eye checks – even if you don't think there is anything wrong with your vision – because something could be happening which you are completely unaware of."

One of these conditions is glaucoma. Often called the 'silent thief of sight' due to its gradual onset, the number of people suffering with Glaucoma in Ireland is predicted to increase by 33 per cent over the next decade due to the growing and ageing population. Yet, because it's often symptomless 50 per cent of glaucoma cases go undetected. Many don't realise they have the condition before it is too late, which is why regular eye tests are so important.

"At Specsavers Bandon we use advanced diagnostic equipment called OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography) to examine the eye in more detail and are able to pick up any damage to the optic nerve which is typical of glaucoma," commented Ms Burke.

Local expert optician Marie has shared five changes you may notice in your eyes and what they mean:

## Five eye health signs to look out for:

### Red spots/blood vessels

While in most cases red spots are nothing to worry about, if your eyes remain red for some



Optician Marie Burke, Specsavers Bandon

time it is important to get them looked at as it could be an indication of high blood pressure.

High blood pressure can mean you have a higher risk of a heart attack or stroke and it can also lead to complications with your vision.

### Persistent floaters

Floaters are spots in your vision and usually look like black or grey specs or cobwebs that drift about when you move your eyes. Most people will experience floaters in their vision at some point in their life however if you notice more eye floaters than usual, a sudden onset of new ones, flashes of light in the eye or darkness on any side of your vision, you must get it looked at immediately as it could signify a tear in your retina or injury in the back of your eye. In some cases, it can also be a symptom of diabetic retinopathy or high cholesterol.'

### Blue ring

Some people may notice a blue-tinted ring appear around their iris, particularly as they age,' says Ms Burke. 'This is caused by cholesterol deposits in the eye. They are more common in those aged 60 and above and aren't usually something to worry about. However, if these develop in the under 40s, there may be a greater risk of developing heart disease.'

### Yellow tinge

Typically, yellowing of the eyes is caused by jaundice. The condition occurs when haemoglobin (part of the blood which carries oxygen) breaks down into bilirubin, which isn't

then cleared from the body. It is meant to move from the liver to the bile ducts, but if this doesn't happen yellowing of the skin – and the eyes – can occur and could signify there is a problem with the liver, gallbladder or pancreas.

### Blurred vision

Blurred vision can be caused by many things and it is vital you get it checked out. Diabetes raises the risk of experiencing diabetic retinopathy where high blood sugar levels damage tiny blood vessels in the eye that sense light which can result in blurry vision.

The sudden onset of blurry vision could also be a sign of stroke, particularly if combined with some of the other key signs such as slurred speech and dropping of the face. Blurry vision could also indicate other eye conditions such as cataract or age-related macular degeneration too.

Specsavers Bandon is urging anyone who is experiencing issues with their eye health such as persistent floaters, blurred vision or yellowing of the eyes to make an appointment with their local Specsavers store.

At Specsavers, customers are always guaranteed expert eye care and hearing services, exceptional choice and outstanding value for money.

For more information or to request an appointment Specsavers Bandon call (023) 882 0382 or visit [www.specsavers.ie/stores/bandon](http://www.specsavers.ie/stores/bandon).

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Specsavers



# Walking your dog: Part 2



## CANINE CORNER

Liz Mahony

Liz Mahony is an experienced Dog Trainer and Holistic Therapist for all animals. In her monthly column, Liz aims to promote mutual respect between carer and dog. Contact Liz at [corkdogtrainingclasses.com](http://corkdogtrainingclasses.com)

Last month I talked about getting your dog to focus indoors so that he automatically listens to you outside where the distractions are greater. If you've fostered a good training relationship with your dog, he will be happy paying attention to you whenever and wherever.

Start as you mean to go on: That sounds so obvious but it's a fact that few people have a fixed idea what they want their dog to do out walking. All they can think of is pulling their dog back

to their side or yelling 'No'. There's nothing positive about that. And you're not offering your dog an alternative. Your end product should be a dog walking quietly on a loose leash. So keep that in mind. If your dog does his own thing and pulls you every which way, he's not bothered who's on the end of his lead. That means he's still not listening and has neither respect for you nor self-control.

It's also very important that your dog walks in balance. Pulling and straining from side to side on a collar and lead or a harness that inhibits the dog's gait can cause or exacerbate skeletal problems especially in dogs that are prone to hip or elbow dysplasia or have weakness in the back.

As you'll see from the photograph, the double-ended lead attached to the harness that Juno is wearing makes a rein for you to hold. You can hold that 'rein' in both hands at the beginning. For example, if your dog is on your right, then your right hand should be on the part of the lead nearest to his back and your left hand towards the front attachment. Hold the lead with your thumbs facing downwards otherwise you'll be gripping the lead and putting a strain on your arms. And the front part of the lead should always be under the dog's neck and not over his back. (If you want to walk your

dog on the left, then you reverse your hands.)

**Counteracting the pull:** Ask him to 'walk on' but if he begins to pull, you stop while at the same time bending your knees so neither of you gets jerked. Wait until the lead goes a bit slack, then ask him to 'walk on'. You keep doing that until he gets the message.

**Staying grounded:** It's important that you stay relaxed in the face of any distractions. You want to concentrate on keeping your hands soft. If you use the lead as a rein, as described above, it's much easier to keep them relaxed. However, if you tighten up, you set up tension in yourself and your nervous reaction goes straight down the lead to your dog. He immediately senses that and searches for the cause.

If he sees a person or dog approaching, he may interpret your nervousness as fear of what's coming. He then may feel he has to protect you and starts to pull, bark, or generally react to make the 'perceived threat' go away. That's how easy it can be to make a dog reactive to people or other dogs. And it started with your tension!

In between stopping, you might even ask him to sit and look at you so you can feed him a treat. That's keeping the connection between you. It also tells you how your dog is feeling

at that moment. If he's cool, your dog will take the treat in his normal fashion; slightly aroused, he might take it but gulp it down without chewing it. If he's highly excited or nervous, it's likely he will take the treat but immediately spit it out or refuse it altogether.

Any of those actions informs you about his state of mind. That's important. If he's worked up, then see if there are any outside influences such as people or dogs approaching that are occupying his attention. If he's bothered by something, then you can make the decision to either walk past it, sit him in a gap to let whatever it is pass or turn back and/or cross the road. If you choose the latter, you've made a conscious decision to give your dog the space he needs to process whatever is approaching.

If you do stop to let something pass by at a distance, it's important that you stay calm. Your dog gets the message that you aren't concerned by whatever is passing. You want him to take his cue from you.

Having crossed the road, place your dog on the inside so you are in between him and the 'threat' and another option is to walk him very fast in either direction. It's hard for a dog to bark or screech if he's trotting fast!

In Part 3, I'll set out further options.



## Not-for-profit launches call to participate in active global citizenship

SERVE in Solidarity is calling for applications to Think Global, Act Local, a new initiative for people living in Ireland who want to make a positive difference both in their local community and globally.

The initiative is an exciting opportunity for individuals passionate about social justice to take steps towards making a positive mark in the world by volunteering their time as active global citizens.

At the launch of the programme SERVE Chairperson Gerry O'Connor said, "The Think Global, Act Local programme is meant to open our eyes to all we can become by being proactive about social issues and showing solidarity to help reduce inequalities".

These inequalities are meant to be addressed by shattering the 'Us and Them' mentality and building a culture of advocacy and active engagement around global issues. "The barriers that exist between people from different background and cultures need to be broken down," added Nollaig Hulme from the Think Global, Act Local Steering Committee.

In addition to volunteering opportunities, the initiative also provides the space to network with like-minded peers and learn about critical issues such as Poverty, Gender Equality, Responsible Consumption, and the Ethics of Volunteering. A strong emphasis on personal development is pervasive in this programme.

Fiachra Brennan, SERVE's Volunteer Coordinator explains, "Think Global, Act Local is an interactive programme. It's a great opportunity to come together with people who have varied experiences and explore the Global Goals and Social Justice together. The complete programme is centred around the inputs of participants so there is a huge scope to build one's learning around their specific interests".

Everyone is encouraged to apply, and it is open to anyone over 18. People of all ages are welcome.

For more information about this exciting opportunity, check out the website [www.serve.ie/thinkglobalactlocal/](http://www.serve.ie/thinkglobalactlocal/)

## Dogs Trust creates ethics-based workshop to teach secondary school students about animal welfare through critical thinking

Dogs Trust, Ireland's largest dog welfare charity, is bringing a brand-new ethics workshop to secondary schools nationwide. Run by the charity's Education team, the ethics workshop will teach teenagers about animal welfare through critical thinking and ethical dilemmas. Research has shown that this helps children to make sound decisions, discover and evaluate their opinions and helps them to make thoughtful and confident decisions.

Fiona Gregan, Education and Community Manager, Dogs Trust Ireland explains: "Dogs can play such an important role in our lives, offering unconditional love and companionship, which has been especially valuable over the past year. We want to nourish this bond and create further understanding of dogs and animal welfare, so



Education dog Piper

what better medium to engage teenage minds than that of ethics? To offer hypothetical scenarios and encourage healthy discussion is something our team is immensely looking forward to and we plan to then continue to educate these pupils with annual visits, offering

brand new workshops every year."

The new workshop follows on from the success of the charity's current nationwide primary school programme of workshops that educate children on safety around dogs and also touch on responsible dog

ownership.

To coincide with the launch, Dogs Trust has launched a new online platform in which live online workshops can be booked for both primary and secondary age groups. Downloadable workshops are also available for the primary school audiences and fun exciting and engaging activities can be accessed for both age groups via the 'Kids Space' section of the charity's website.

Workshops are also available face-to-face, where possible, in line with Dogs Trust's rigorous Covid-19 guidelines and also through adhering to the schools COVID-19 response plan.

Please visit [LearnWithDogsTrust.ie](http://LearnWithDogsTrust.ie) to make a booking and access the new exciting online platform.



# Having a healthy menopause



## HEALTH

Hannah Dare  
Organico Bantry

Did you miss our recent webinar on the Menopause and Osteoporosis? We were amazed and delighted at the response – we had nearly 500 sign-ups, which is a record for us, and just serves to underline how important these subjects are and how many people they affect.

If you missed the webinar but would like to watch it, it's available as a playback until April 25, so just drop us an email and we will send you the replay link. Here's a few of the key lifestyle and dietary points Marilyn and Heather discussed though, to get you started!

Firstly, Marilyn is very clear that the menopause is not an illness. If you subscribe to the standpoint currently held by the conventional medical profession, you'd be forgiven for thinking it was. Women in many other cultures do not experience the menopause as a crisis demanding medical intervention – and yet we all have the same set of hormones. Many of them simply do not suffer the physical and emotional symptoms that women in the West are programmed to accept

as inevitable. In our society the focus of the menopause is one of loss, to which the answer is often to 'replace' hormones, using HRT.

Marilyn's approach is to consider the menopause a perfectly natural and normal experience, and in her experience, if we combine lifestyle changes with dietary and herbal solutions, we should be able to reduce the challenging effects of this transition without resorting to medication. Preferably she would like to see us start the lifestyle adjustments early on in our 40s or even 30s though, to give ourselves the best chance of sailing through it:

The menopause is a time of change and the female hor-

mones are going to be fluctuating up and down until a woman comes out the other side and into the post-menopause, when the hormones will stabilise.

What a woman eats at this stage can make the difference between having a difficult or easy menopause.

To start off with she talked a little about HRT, about the different types and about the benefits and the risks involved. Overall, she would prefer to see women trying natural solutions, because there are considerable risks associated with HRT, particularly if it is started young. If you are interested in learning more about Marilyn's views on HRT, please watch the talk, as she shared several slides detail-

ing research you can look up for further information.

In terms of diet and how it affects our experience of the menopause, and our chances of developing osteoporosis, there are a number of things we can do. Firstly, Marilyn talked about phytoestrogens and discussed research, which concluded that a diet high in phytoestrogens protects women from breast cancer as well as osteoporosis. Phytoestrogens are found in soy-based foods and all beans and lentils, as well as flax seeds, and herbs like Red Clover and Hops.

"Research has shown that a daily intake of soya (about 100ml soya milk or the equivalent) reduces the risk of hip fractures by 20-30pc. But don't just focus on soya; have a good variety of all the legumes including chickpeas, kidney beans and lentils."

She also discussed the importance of balancing our blood sugars, how the blood sugar rollercoaster disrupts our sleep, and how to achieve balance through diet:

"From the dietary point of view, the most important factor is to get blood sugar under control. I would like women to know that sugar and foods that are broken down into sugar quickly (e.g. white flour etc) are the major culprits behind most women's health problems."

Then Marilyn moved on to discuss osteoporosis, which she described as a silent killer of women, and how if we aren't active enough, if we smoke, or are on certain medications, our chances of suffering from bone loss increase significantly. She also talked about what we can do to reduce our risk and retain our bone strength, in particular avoiding or reducing certain foods (mainly fizzy drinks/co-

## ESSENTIAL NUTRITION FOR FERTILITY *with* WILD NUTRITION

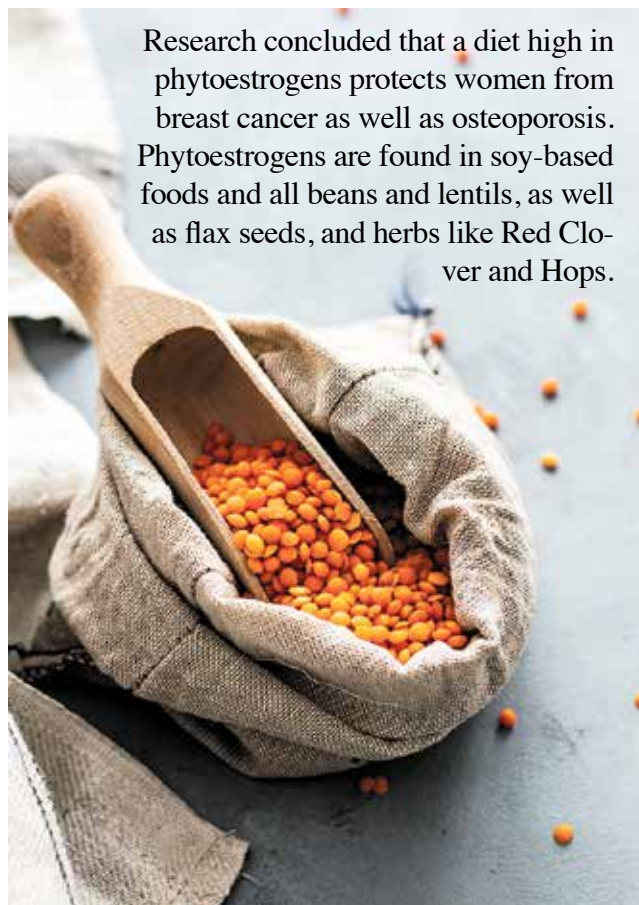
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Research concluded that a diet high in phytoestrogens protects women from breast cancer as well as osteoporosis. Phytoestrogens are found in soy-based foods and all beans and lentils, as well as flax seeds, and herbs like Red Clover and Hops.



las, coffee, and animal proteins).

Basically, because these foods are so acidic, our body needs to draw calcium and other minerals from our bones to get back to the alkaline state it thrives in, and this leaching of essential minerals is very detrimental to our bone health. She also talked about the crisis that is being caused by drinking cola and other fizzy drinks – again, the acid in these drinks causes minerals to be leached from our bones and it is causing even teenagers to have weak and brittle bones, which is terrifying, and could cause you to wonder how these drinks are even allowed to be on sale in the first place!

She discussed research on diet that showed that women on a highly acidic diet (lots of animal protein, cheese, colas) were 4 times as likely to have hip fractures than women on a less acidic diet.

She was careful to point out that oranges and lemons are actually alkalising when we eat them, so it pays to take a careful look at what foods have an acidifying effect and which

don't, as it can be confusing. Coffee is also acidifying and causes calcium and magnesium to leech from our bones, but Apple Cider Vinegar is alkalising, hence it being such a good drink to soothe an acid stomach.

Marilyn also discussed supplements, both herbal and vitamin/minerals, and how essential they are to maintaining bone health, staying calm and keeping well during these years. And Heather gave us some examples of case studies with women she has worked with, showing the power of dietary and nutritional adjustments in overcoming difficult symptoms. In particular, we learned about the importance of Omega 3 supplements, magnesium, and calming herbs such as valerian and Theanine.

If you'd like to watch the whole talk, we will happily send it on to you. As Marilyn said, we are all different – but there are some basic changes that can be made to improve our chances of having an easy menopause. And it's never too late to start.

Take care and stay well, and have a good April!

## New programme to help college choices launched

A new programme designed to help school students make the transition to third level education has been developed by University College Cork (UCC).

'Nurturing Bright Futures' (NBF) is an innovative online programme, designed for secondary level students from Transition Year to Leaving Certificate to help them become future-ready as they navigate the next step in their education journey. UCC is working with Guidance Counsellors in

schools across Ireland and international High School Counsellors to roll out this programme to their students.

The six-module programme guides students on how to choose a course that is right for them, degree choices and future careers, decision-making styles, transitioning to higher level education, and the realities of university life. The self-directed programme is designed to be taken over the course of a number of weeks, in bite-size format. The multi-media content

– including videos, podcasts, articles, worksheet exercises and quizzes – has been created to help students acquire the skills and tools they will need as they make the transition to third level.

NBF is relevant for all Senior Cycle students, from Transition Year to Leaving Certificate, and is designed with all pre-entry student cohorts in mind – both domestic and international. The programme also contains bespoke content for students accessing third level as Mature Students, International Students, and through the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) scheme.

While the programme is designed to empower and enable

Senior Cycle students to make informed choices and decisions for their next step, NBF also serves as a resource for Guidance Counsellors, educators, and parents and guardians, and bespoke guides are available for those in supportive roles both in school and at home.

Claire McGee, Head of Education and Innovation Policy at

IBEC, added: "The Nurturing Bright Futures programme is a fantastic support to help students to hit the ground running as they make the first big transition of their lives, from school to the world of college, university or further study; to set themselves up to consider careers that suit their interests and their skills.

"I really like that the programme prepares students to become reflective learners; to build an experience and see that learning doesn't just happen in a classroom or lecture hall, but all throughout college. It helps people to see the value in learning and developing a personal learning journey."





## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

# The invisible shoes

## WALKING IN MY SHOES

Elizabeth Walsh

*Walking in my shoes – accessibility explained. Each and every day our lives impact on each person's life whose path we cross, metaphorically and physically, positively or negatively!*

It is a beautiful bright sunny morning, in the autumn of 2015, at Ballinasloe horse fair. The fair green is a virtual sea of horses and ponies, every size and colour, every age, thick manes, long manes, hairy horses, plaited horses, cobs, mares, stallions, colts, foals, show jumpers, leisure horses – a sight to dazzle any spectator.

Along she comes, slower than others, but steady, moving carefully among the horses on the green, careful of her step. Her walking sticks are noiseless on the grass. She watches for the riders, who are oblivious of her; might just keep coming, not cognisant of her lack of speed or lack of ability to change direction quickly. As she meanders around the green, she pauses often to admire the many beautiful horses and foals, exchanging conversation and banter with the owners or handlers. Equine skills in Ireland are such that one handler might hold anything, from one horse or pony, to a veritable string of

animals, all munching whatever is nearest to them, or surveying the landscape, grooming each other, or simply resting. This skill of handling many horses, who are socialised to each other and to the environment in which they find themselves, is indeed recognised as a feature of Irish handlers and their equines; and valued within the horse industry.

The fair green is a spectacle, buzzing with activity, with anticipation; eager faces scouting for a horse or a pony, owners anxious to sell one. However, everyone exudes an air of calm, as though it were all a picnic, no rush, and conversations go around in circles, saying everything but telling nothing.

The aroma of horse is intoxicating, their beautiful muzzles and calm eyes, watching intently, the bustle and movement, the exchanges around them. Mares nuzzle their foals. Stallions stomp.

She moves on up the field to the arena where the loose jumping is about to start. Several local horses will be taking part. There are no seats; however, an organiser, on noticing her, finds a barrel for her to rest on. The loose jumping is thrilling. It goes well for some, not so good for others. Sometimes, it is just all about luck on the day.

She turns back down the field; at the end she heads left, to where her friends are gathered with horses on show for sale. It is very warm. She takes a seat on the chain fence, which,

in itself, is a feat of co-ordination and balance. The sandwiches and water come out of the rucksack and, as the horses tuck into fresh hay, she picnics with her friends, chatting happily in the sun. She has taken an inventory and photos of the horses, which should be seen on the fair field; and when the picnic is finished, she takes her turn to hold the horses, while her friends make their way up to form their own opinions of what is on offer.

She holds her two horses, talking to them and gently petting them, chatting with passers-by who make hopeful enquiries. Eventually, her friends return, with reports of their views of what is on offer. They debate this for a while. She decides to go for a walk up the main street. This is like a trek into a market crossed with the fair green: Add in congestion with colourful chatting people and laughing children. Stalls line the street selling all things horsey, from colourful, actual, horse products, to toys and ornaments, clothes, food and novelty items. Behind these, the shops, restaurants and pubs churn out food and meals. People meander, stopping unexpectedly, as something glistens and catches their eye.

As nonchalantly as though they were walking a dog, owners walk slowly through the crowd, with one, perhaps two, ponies or horses trailing behind them. They might halt to browse at a stall,



Ponies browsing the stalls at Ballinasloe Fair

while their equines obligingly rest, surveying the shoppers. Overseas visitors to the fair stop to take photos, amazed at the ease with which the gentle equines are handled. "It would never happen in Italy," a lady, who identifies as an Italian veterinary surgeon, remarks to the girl, "our horses do not receive adequate socialisation, with each other, humans or the environment."

As the girl makes her way, browsing, along the crowded street, she is struck by the courtesy and kindness of ethnic Irish Travellers. She had noticed it on the fair green, however in this street it jumps to life. A child tries to dart in front of her and a hand reaches out to stop him "mind the girl, watch where you are going, I am sorry Miss". A teenager walks aimlessly texting, about to crash into the girl sideways; she has not seen

him, an arm shoots out to buffer her "be careful, look in front of you" is thrown at the youth. Some youths have spilled out onto the road watching an auction of horse ware; she cannot get through, her dilemma is noticed, "make way there, lads, let the girl through".

However, it is on her return journey, back up to her friends, that the girl really comes to appreciate the ever-watchfulness of these good-humoured people. As she makes her way, now very tired, rather slowly, she is suddenly pushed from behind and her left walking stick is knocked from her hand, flying onto the ground. As she regains her balance, she can see a well-dressed, beautifully coiffed woman, walking smartly away. A hand extends to assist her. "Are you OK Miss, can I help you?" the young man retrieves her stick. "Are you sure you are

OK, do you need to sit down, do you need some tea?"

The girl did get a fright when the woman pushed into her and knocked her walking stick from her. As she makes her way back to her friends, she is more alert, trying to develop the proverbial eyes in the back of her head.

That evening, when the horses are gone to B&B and everyone is washed and changed, they head out to a local hostelry, known for its food. It is jammed. However, on seeing the girl and her sticks, a pathway appears towards the snug, where tables are served: All six of them are heaving.

Some avert their gaze, as the girl balances, tired after her long, but enjoyable day. Then, a young man, sitting with his group of family and friends, ethnic Irish Travellers, looks around, glimpses her, and is on his feet in one swift movement. He whips his chair off the ground and plants it firmly beside the girl, "I'm well able to stand", he laughs, "take the weight off your feet, didn't I see you admiring Johnny's piebald earlier?" and they launch into a conversation between the two groups about the horses for sale, what they had made, what they might have made, and what they should have made.

Walk in this girl's shoes... experience what invisibility feels like...and true courtesy and kindness.

## Fundraising campaign launched for new playground and skatepark in Clonakilty

A fundraising campaign for new play facilities was launched in Clonakilty in March. Plans include the full refurbishment of the playground, a skatepark and improved seating and safety measures. The campaign – overseen by Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce – has begun with a series of online and social distanced fundraisers with a view to running a more traditional set of events over the summer months.

As the only public play area in a rapidly growing town, the playground is an important feature for the local community. Whilst several generations have grown up with the current playground, it has now become quite dilapidated, with some

items having fallen completely into disrepair. Research with the local community has found a high level of dissatisfaction with the playground, as well as concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour. This was especially high amongst parents of children with disabilities. Although almost 40 per cent of parents of children with disabilities said that the playground was a source of respite for them, 85 per cent of respondents considered the provision for children with disabilities as inadequate or poor. The vision, therefore, is to create a fully inclusive space that meets the needs of all children – from toddlers to teens – and of all abilities.

The total fundraising target is

€225,000, which will be raised from a combination of public and private sources. A committee has been established by the Chamber to oversee the fundraising and development for the initiative, with a plan to raise €100,000 directly from the community. The first successful fundraising campaign took place on St. Patrick's Day and a virtual Easter egg hunt will take place on Easter Sunday. Boxes have been created for purchase in local shops with all proceeds going to the playground. Further details of this and other events can be found on the Facebook page: Clonakilty Playground

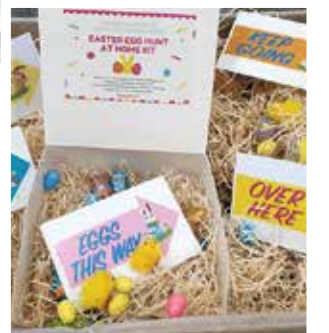
Several funding bids are also underway to reach the target. However, even if successful, the organisers say that these alone



Marian O'Hara, Eilish Lawlor, Oonagh Croke O'Donoghue with their fundraising Easter Egg Hunt boxes, on sale locally.

are insufficient. It is estimated that €100,000 will need to be raised locally to complete the project. For those that would like to support the campaign

a fundraising page has been established at ifundraise.ie – search for 'Clonakilty Playground and Skatepark'.







## DO WE UNDERSTAND OUR CHILD?

Diana Radeva

Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

In this series of articles Diana Radeva, child and adolescent psychotherapist 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.

**C**aught between lost childhood and unrealised adulthood, 12- to 14-year-olds often experience the most conflict-laden, bewildering and challenging years of all. These years may be quite as bewildering and as full of conflict and challenge to parents attempting to understand what

# Understanding our 12- to 14-year-olds



is happening, as they are to the young adolescents themselves – torn between wanting and not wanting to be understood. This is a period of new kinds of friendships, of burgeoning sexuality, of changing interests and beginning awareness. It is a time of transition from a place in the family to a place in the outside world.

This process of transition and the extraordinary different forms it takes, can become all-consuming. It is a time of anxiety, apprehension, of the fear and thrill of the unknown. It is a time when, physically, growth is occurring more rapidly than in any other stage except in the womb and when, alongside that, changes in mental and emotional growth are at their most insistent and most demanding.

Boundaries are being tested,

assumptions questioned, losses endured. The 12-year-old 'child', newly out of junior and primary school, is struggling to relate the old world to the new, undergoing and intimidating and intoxicating rite of passage, clinging to the familiar, fascinated by the untried. By 14, 'the young person' may seem to have abandoned childish things and be precariously launched into personal and social world of immense complexity, but as yet with no certainty, no clear goals, no firm direction. The central pre-occupation is one of personal identity: 'Who am I?'

Most parents will recognise that the 12–14-year-olds, each in his or her own way, are going through dramatic changes and that the task of adapting to these changes is a turbulent one, for

child and parent alike. Perhaps harder to recognise is the fact that change is involved for themselves as well. Many parents will have been developing with their child all along. At this age, however, it becomes evident that the understanding that is so crucial to the child's sense of security and self-esteem is based more firmly than ever in the parents' continuing ability to share what they thought they knew, to bear not knowing, to examine themselves, to learn from experience and perhaps especially, to tolerate rejection – be in the form of withdrawal, negativity, abuse or duplicity – in the hope that this may temporarily be the path that separation takes.

How can all this be thought about, be understood? Despite the multiple problems that assail

child and parent alike, understanding what is likely to be going on for young people of this age may suggest ways in which parents may better enjoy, help and protect them. Young people are finding their own unique ways of negotiating the strange process of finding a sense of authenticity, which may turn out to be very different from what they or their parents expected. This is an age that is increasingly dreaded by parents, and increasingly

marked by intense struggle on the part of the youngsters. The result of the struggle can be both enriching and damaging. At best, the weathering of these turbulent years, through resilience, understanding, tolerance and honesty, may often expand and deepen relationships between parents and children, enabling each to separate, to grow, to change and to establish the basis for lasting friendship and mutual respect.

### 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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## 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.

## SOS for health care

**T**his month I might just share with you some of the worrying trends in the hospitals and General Practice.

I was on duty the weekend of the demonstration in Cork: I suppose it is fair to say those out were in complete denial around the true Covid situation and felt hard done by.

We had extra staff on to cope with extra casualties. As it happened, our worst fears were not realised – just the odd Garda who had been assaulted – but it remains to be seen whether this demonstration constituted a super spreader event!

It is no coincidence that after this event four senior and pretty irreplaceable nurses have left A&E at the Mercy.

The most senior, and worth her weight in gold, said she felt "marooned working and caring on an island where outside the hospital nobody else cares."

The complete selfishness of people who flout common sense precautions, fly off on holiday, and drink in 'shebeens' beggars belief.

Never mind if you do get Covid by being bloody stupid, the nurses and doctors will be there. True at the moment, but most of us have not had a break now for 12 months and some are leaving.

The medical profession are paying the price for Government inaction around the lack of enforced quarantine for the thousands flying into Ireland from high-risk countries.

I have NEVER seen a TD anywhere near any of the units that I have worked at. Poor dears might catch something nasty or wake up to the real world!

I feel the system is being taken for granted. It is so precious and I work with some wonderful people. It must be nurtured,

valued and protected.

Early on in my career, I learned a new word: That was 'litigious'. This describes a patient who knows how the system works and threatens to sue to get exactly what they want. Given the present system and the misery of dealing with complaints my end, they tend to get exactly what they want. This clearly disadvantages the more reasonable patient.

Some time ago I received a complaint from a patient; the essence of which was, I asked her where she came from and this, she interpreted as a racist remark. I thought she had a French accent, was mistaken, and this triggered two years of endless letters to the Irish Medical Council. It was horrendous and the complaint was ultimately seen as 'vexatious'. She had submitted similar complaints to all her previous GPs. I seriously

contemplated giving up medicine! This is why of course GPs pay up to €12,000 a year for legal protection.

After two years of distracting misery, can I submit a counter claim for my distress? No way! A doctor just takes it on the chin. Paradoxically, those who go the extra mile for their patients are most vulnerable. Defensive medicine rules just send everyone to A&E to avoid hassle.

Look at the level of personal injury claims. We in Ireland hold the record. If you slip over in a shop, solicitors are just lining up to help you sue. By the way that is likely to take an eternity as well. I meet patients who specialise in having accidents and suing. They get their money; I get ulcers!

Go to a hospital in the USA the first question asked is, 'Who are you insured with?' Can you imagine, as you clutch your

chest in agony and just need help, how inappropriate and uncaring that sounds?

I take great pleasure in teaching medical students in the hospital. It is a great honour and I want them to work in a system where they are appreciated for their hard work and dedication. Can we not stop this utter selfishness and the world owes me a living nonsense attitude before there is nobody left working in the hospitals.

On a lighter note, I see there are moves to change the name of the Kerryman Newspaper to the Kerryperson! A burning issue for some of our TDs. I have to ask, is all this political correctness making Ireland a better place? I think I will just throw myself down the nearest personhole!



## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

# Elliot Page: Star of Juno felt a sense of responsibility to share his truth



## LGBTI+ MATTERS

BRÓD is an LGBTI+ Community Group based in West Cork. A mix of LGBTI+ people and allies, the group's mission is to 'Support, Advocate and Increase Visibility' for the LGBTI+ community in West Cork.

By Mark Holland

Canadian actor Elliot Page features on the cover of the Patrick's Day (week) edition of Time Magazine to talk about his life's process transitioning. At around nine years of age he remembers the feeling of triumph at getting his hair cut short for the first time and asking his mom if he could be a boy some day? Twenty-five years later he has transitioned into Elliot and it's been a complicated journey. He says that feelings of excitement and

gratitude to have made it to this point are mixed with fear and anxiety. In the context of the US, increased social acceptance for transgender people comes with a conservative backlash at a 'craze', and artists like JK Rowling are using their profiles to oppose transgender equality in the name of feminism. In the States, now gender identity is becoming a political football; but for us here the details are less important than opposing discrimination against anyone for what they are, particularly vulnerable minorities; and always keep in mind that to do nothing is to side with the powerful elite.

Currently starring alongside our own Robert Sheehan in the hit Superhero series The Umbrella Academy, Page has had a long, hard road to stardom. Long in that he landed his first role in Pit Pony at the age of ten, hard in that some of the roles along the way required a pretty deep dive. Like 2005's Mouth to Mouth, and later that year, Hard Candy, where he played a fourteen-year-old vigilante girl's entrapment of a predator in his own home. And though we all eventually

came to love him for playing the quirky Juno two years later, popularising the term 'pork sword', there was a lot of himself in that role, which had to be unguarded and revealing to make it real. By the time it came to Inception three years later, he, as anyone would, was struggling to cope with the spotlight. Page refers to the industry placing crushing standards on actors and viewers alike, imposing stereotypes of how females and males are all supposed to act, dress and speak, that serve no one.

He came out as gay in 2014, and married choreographer Emma Portner in 2018. This was an empowering process that also gave him more professional agency, getting into production, and getting cast in more appropriate, relevant roles. He felt better but the discomfort in his body did not go away. The isolation forced by the pandemic, Page says, gave him time to really focus on things he had subconsciously been avoiding and eventually embracing the revelation that he is transgender let him fully become himself. "Fathoming one's gender is complicated"



Mark Holland waves the Transgender Pride Flag at Clonakilty's Whale's Tail monument to mark International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31. International Transgender Day of Visibility is an annual event dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebration of their contributions to society.

and he acknowledges the inspiration he got from people like Janet Mock and reading books like P. Carl's Becoming A Man. In a heartfelt letter posted to Instagram last December he disclosed that he is transgender and this interview with Time is the first public comment he has released since then. He divorced from Portner earlier this year but the two remain friends. He expected applause and vitriol, anticipated support and phobia but not quite this much of it; he gained 400,000 new followers on Instagram on the day of his announcement and thousands

of articles have been written, apart from this one, worldwide! Bigots lambasted their rhetoric about 'women in men's lockers' while casting directors reached out to say it would be an honour to have Page in their next project. Netflix were the first to come out on the day of his announcement to offer to change the credits on The Umbrella Academy so that now the first thing you see written on the screen at the end of each episode is 'Elliot Page'.

In the US, with increased transgender visibility, transgender rights are being used

to promote political agendas. Transphobia is also on the rise in the UK, as discrimination in employment, housing, medical care and the associated poverty. Page implores people to educate themselves about trans lives, and the crucial role that medical care plays in them. He is "... really excited to act, now that I'm fully who I am, in this body. No matter the challenges and difficult moments of this, nothing amounts to getting to feel how I feel now".

Just celebrate all of the wonderful complexities of people!

## ADVERTORIAL : CNM

# Studying with CNM is one of the greatest experiences you'll ever have

Kelly Mulhall, Nutritional Therapy graduate

I worked for many years in events and marketing which was very stressful. My diet was poor, I lived off ready meals, pastries, crisps and coffee. I had suffered long-term with IBS, eczema and adult acne after coming off the pill for 15 years. I was run down and kept getting ill all the time. After countless trips to the GP and fruitless medical testing to get to the bottom of it all, I was so confused and upset as to why my body was completely out of sync. I'd finally met my tipping point. From then on, I decided to start taking my health into my own hands and exploring ways to improve my symptoms.

I was sure that my poor diet and prolonged hormonal contraception were not good for

my body and wanted to make changes to my diet and lifestyle. Whilst talking to a friend, the topic of nutrition came up and it

really resonated with me. There I was, struggling to enjoy full health and stumbling across Naturopathic Nutrition was like an

epiphany moment. I could get to the root cause of my symptoms, and improve my health through food; a win-win! I went on to

research different functional medicine degrees and realised none of them had any real-life clinical experience. CNM's 200 clinical hours meant I would be confident in my own practice as soon as I graduated. It was a huge bonus to have so much real life clinical experience rather than just academic learning and case studies.

Nutrition has changed my life in every way possible. I think, feel, look and sleep better and I am constantly rewarded when I am able to help those around me to live a better life. Whether you are interested in learning more about nutrition and health for yourself, to help someone you know, or even to become a practitioner, studying with CNM is one of the greatest experiences you'll ever have. The knowledge you gain is invaluable and the ability to help others is everlasting.



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# A common plant with much value



## HERBAL HEALING

*Dr. Rosari Kingston*

Dr. Rosari Kingston PhD, M.Sc (Herbal medicine) is a medical herbalist practising in Dr. O'Reilly's integrative clinical practice in Clonakilty, Co. Cork as well as Church Cross, Skibbereen. Dr. Kingston's area of research are the healing modalities present in Irish vernacular medicine and she incorporates them, where possible, into her clinical practice. In her clinical practise she specialises in infertility and digestive issues.

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

This morning I noticed the above plant growing on the wall of an old stone building. It is a familiar plant and its botanical name is 'Umbilicus rupestris'. It is more commonly known as wall pennywort or 'Cornán chaisil', 'Cornán Leacáin', and 'Lus na Pingne' in Irish.

This is a very useful herb to demonstrate the diverse sources that contribute to our knowledge of a herb today.

Before the fall of the old Gaelic order in the seventeenth century, the hereditary medical families were busy translating the new European medical texts, from the universities of Salerno and Montpellier, into Irish for use in Irish medical schools. These translated texts would build on the oral tradition that formed the basis of indigenous medical learning up to this point and would add another layer of expertise. Wall pennywort is one herb mentioned in a manuscript written in 1415 and it is one for which no Galenic tradition exists. The writer of this manuscript, Ó Cuinn, tells us that wall pennywort is cold and wet and that it softens and disseminates swelling. He also advises the application of this herb in a salve...there are other herbs in the formula also...for all chest troubles.

However, Culpeper's herbal, written in 1653, tells us that wall pennywort is useful in hot distempers of the liver, that it

provokes urine and takes off the heat and sharpness thereof. Culpeper also tells us that the juice applied externally helps shingles, St. Anthony's fire, and the 'pin' and inflammation of the piles. It was also deemed helpful against kibes (ulcerated chilblains especially one on the heel) and chilblains.

The seventeenth century was a tumultuous time in Ireland and by the middle of that century the Irish medical schools were no more. A lot of land had changed hands and the immigrants had no knowledge of Irish or the flora of the Irish countryside.

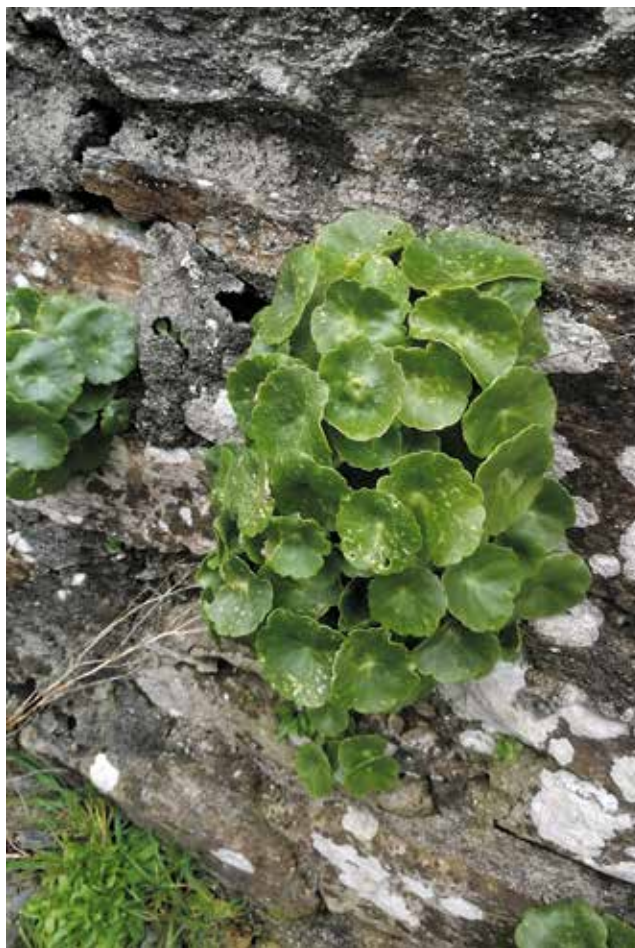
We may assume that Culpeper's herbal, written in English, was a very useful item to have in one's baggage coming to this 'barbaric isle.' The lack of Irish must have been a problem for these early settlers because if they could not identify a herb, not being versed in Irish, they had no way of finding it. Keogh, a clergyman in Mitchelstown, resolved this problem when he wrote his herbal in 1735, as he spelt the Irish word for the herb phonetically. This allowed his reader to pronounce the word correctly, or at least in some fashion, thus allowing them to ask an Irish speaker to locate it for them. Keogh's information on wall pennywort is much the same as Culpeper. Three centuries on, Allen and Hatfield's excellent tome on 'Medicinal Plants in Folk Tradition' tells us that this herb was used for,

- Corns (Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow, Cork)
- Chilblains (Tipperary, Carlow, Wexford, Wicklow)
- TB (Wicklow)
- Jaundice (Waterford)
- Sore eyes (Leitrim, Wicklow)
- Earache (Mayo)

And Wyss in 'Ireland's Generous Nature' (2014) adds to this account by telling us the following.

- Lumps and swellings, sore eyes, TB, jaundice, headaches, worms, kidney trouble and earache (Allen & Hatfield, 2004)
- Mixed with ivy to treat warts, corns in Waterford, and bladder stones (Williams 1993)
- Sap put on bee stings in the Mizen region of West Cork. (McCarthy & Hawkes 2007)
- Fleshy leaves used in sandwiches (Phillips 1983)
- High fevers, inflammations, piles, chilblains, liver complaints, kidney stones, diuretic (Uí Chonchubhair 1995 Flóra Chorchá Dhuibhne)

I love the idea of using pennywort for corns, which are hard and dry. As Ó Cuinn says, this herb softens and disseminates, so it is the perfect anti-



dote to those little hard pebbles that plague us at times.

The table at the end of this article shows how the use of 'Umbilicus rupestris' for chest complaints continued in the oral tradition for over five centuries and reappears in the National Folklore Collection in 1938, which is also cited by Allen & Hatfield. It is also possible to see in this chart how Culpeper's use for this herb entered into vernacular use or may reflect an Irish indigenous tradition.

Current research into this herb is rather sparse but the leaves are eaten raw in Sicily; (Garacia et al 2018) and Massinissa et al (2017) have concluded that it has a "significant effect on urinary excretion of electrolytes but the molecules responsible of this effect have to be determined". Whether this experiment on rats will be the same with humans remains to be seen.


All in all tradition, and current research is telling us, there is a lot more potential in this common plant than we realise.

## 'Think Before You Pour' campaign

Clean Coasts and Irish Water are delighted to announce that celebrity chef Donal Skehan is supporting this year's 'Think Before You Pour' Easter campaign. 'Think Before You Pour' is a public awareness campaign run by Clean Coasts in partnership with Irish Water. The campaign discourages the public from pouring Fats, Oils and Grease (FOGs) down the kitchen sink, as one in three people living in Ireland admit to doing so.

In the Easter video, launched on his social media pages, Donal shares the most environmentally friendly ways to dispose of your FOGs after cooking, such as pouring them into a reusable container like an empty egg carton or yoghurt pot, and then emptying into a food-waste bin. Donal reminds us how making small changes in our kitchens can prevent big problems in our wastewater systems and environment.

Although FOGs might seem like liquid when poured, once they cool along the wastewater pipes this can cause blockages in homes, the public wastewater network and at wastewater treatment plants.





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## people Health &amp; Lifestyle

## At-home treatments while we wait for salons to re-open

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.

It's safe to say we are all in need of a little self-care right now and while you might not be able to escape to a real-life retreat and have a professional work their magic on you, here are a selection of products you might like to try at home while we wait for our salons to re-open.

**Seoulista Beauty Diamond Radiance Instant Facial**

They say diamonds are a girl's best friend and this Diamond Radiance Instant Facial from Seoulista might just come a close second! This is a natural coconut, gel-like mask infused with a high-tech formula to deliver professional skincare results at home. The advanced, clinic-quality formulation contains a powerful cocktail of over seven botanical ingredients, which work together to exfoliate, tone, and brighten the skin. Using a second-skin transfer system, the next-generation bio-cellulose mask transmits the powerful serum deep into the dermis, infusing your skin with the nutrients it needs. After just 20 minutes, the appearance of dark spots and pigmentation

is reduced, revealing a more radiant and youthful-looking complexion, €14.99 available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online.

**Sally Hansen Insta-Dri Nail Polish**

The number one quick-dry polish in the USA has landed in Ireland. Sally Hansen Insta-Dri Nail Polish quick-dry formula makes it easy to do your own manicures at home. The polish offers full coverage, longer lasting results, is streak-free and comes in a range of shades from soft, subtle neutrals to bright tones that pop. The formulation boasts many benefits, including a touch dry finish in 60 seconds flat and a three-in-one formula with built-in base and top-coat, great when a lightning-speed mani is what you need. Easy to apply thanks to the brush shape that perfectly covers your nail in one single stroke and with up to 33pc more chip resistant, you'll get longer out of your mani (and pedi) €6.99, available in selected pharmacies and supermarkets nationwide.

**KISS Falscara**

For those who are missing their lash extension appointments, then Kiss Falscara will take your beauty game to a whole new level. These unique falsies are attached from underneath, that's right, underneath. Get an ultra-fluttery result that's closer to the look of salon lash extensions, right from the comfort of your home. These beginner friendly lengthening wisps come with an intuitive mascara-like applicator making it easy to use even for false lash newbies! Unlike traditional strip lashes, Falscara comes with two wispy sets of lashes that are divided into five sections each. They're designed to be bonded and sealed underneath natural eyelashes instead of on top. Halfway between false eyelashes and lash extensions, they are customisable, natural looking and long lasting, but not permanent or reliant upon professional assistance. To remove them, Falscara Remover is recommended. This is infused with soothing rosewater for gentle, easy removal all while nourishing the eye area. Falscara, €25.99) and Falscara Remover, €10.99, available in

selected pharmacies nationwide and online from McCauleys and McCabes pharmacies.

**Ground Sleep Bath Salts**

All good at-home spa sessions should involve a long, hot soak – whether you choose to dive into a good book or simply lie still and submerged for a while. Upgrade your bath from every day to exceptional, with Ground Bath Salts, an enveloping blend of mineral-rich pink Himalayan salts and magnesium, infused with soothing botanical extracts and essential oils. Bathing in salts rich in magnesium and essential oils gives these therapeutic ingredients a double route into the body: through inhalation diffused in steam, and through the skin. Once absorbed these botanicals and minerals can rejuvenate, and invigorate tired bodies, boost circulation, detox and stimulate the immune system, and relieve stress while lifting your mood. Handmade in Ireland in small batches with natural vegan ingredients, add a generous handful to a warm running bath - immerse for at least 15 minutes, breathe deep and give yourself permission

to be still. Choose from Sleep, Breath, Balancing or Comfort Bath Salts, €45 (refills €30) available online from brownthomas.com

**Filorga Time-Filler Absolute Correction Wrinkle Cream**

If Botox is your friend, and with clinics closed you have been unable to get your top-up, this advanced daily moisturiser from Filorga, harnesses the power of a Botox like tripeptide. Shortlisted by Irish Pharmacy News for Best Beauty Product of the Year, this highly concentrated formula helps to visibly correct all types of wrinkles for a revitalised younger looking complexion. Encapsulated Hyaluronic Acid delivers deeply penetrating moisture and fills the appearance of wrinkles, while an NCTF®-infused peptide works to stimulate collagen synthesis for tighter and firmer feeling skin. Delivering both instant and long-term results, it leaves skin feeling soft and supple with a refined smoother surface texture, €72 available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online from LIFE and Allcare pharmacies.

**Sugar Coated Full Body Hair Removal Kit**

Sugar Coated provides an ultra-effective at-home hair removal treatment that is easy to use and gentle on your skin. It is completely water soluble, with easy to use washable and reusable strips - no more messy spills ruining carpets and clothes. One hundred per cent natural and made from just sugar and water, you can say goodbye to those super sticky waxes, burning creams and painful epilators. Before you begin, make sure the hair is long enough to wax – ideally a half cm long. It can also be beneficial to exfoliate the day before to get rid of any dead skin cells, as they can clog up the wax or lead to ingrown hairs. Always apply in the direction of hair growth and pull against hair growth and afterwards apply a non-scented lotion – anything with aloe vera is best, as it is cooling as well as anti-bacterial, €14.99 available in Dunnes (Beauty) Stores, selected pharmacies nationwide and online at LIFE and McCauley pharmacies.

**OGX Extra Strength Hydrate & Revive + Argan Oil of Morocco Hair Mask**

OGX have just unveiled their new upgraded hair care collection with pH-balanced formulas to help give you stronger hair strands with more shine, less frizz and long-lasting smoothness. To keep hair in great condition until we get to visit our hair salon, give it an at home treatment with this super creamy Argan Oil of Morocco Hair Mask. This powerful formula with Argan oil of Morocco and silk proteins, instantly penetrates the hair shaft and helps to intensely deliver superior hydration, detangles whilst also strengthening hair. You might also like to use it in conjunction with the OGX Renewing Argan Oil of Morocco Shampoo and Conditioner, €9.75 available in selected pharmacies and supermarkets nationwide and online.



## Less than half of school staff feel confident responding to a young person with mental health difficulties

Results of a survey conducted by the leading youth mental health charity, Jigsaw, shows that less than half of the staff in Ireland's schools report that they feel confident about responding to a young person with mental health difficulties. And over a quarter report providing regular ongoing support to a student experiencing mental health difficulties.

Jigsaw is sharing these results as it reveals the Jigsaw Schools

Hub, their new online resource that offers schools across Ireland the latest tools and information to help them support young people's mental health and wellbeing.

The launch of the hub comes at a challenging time for schools and their staff, managing the current level of restrictions and living with the ongoing uncertainties of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many young people, and school staff themselves,

will be experiencing feelings of anxiety, stress and loss.

The charity recognises the demands faced by school staff, and wants to ensure that in these challenging times they have access to the support and resources they need to feel confident and comfortable exploring mental health and wellbeing with young people.

Previous research by Jigsaw has shown that school teachers are the most frequent informal

source of support used by adolescents for their mental health. Research also shows that there is a demand amongst teachers for quality online resources to help them support the mental health and wellbeing of their students. Yet teachers often feel they do not have the resources they need.

At [jigsaw.ie/schools](http://jigsaw.ie/schools), school staff will find a growing range of resources created in collabora-

*Continued on next page...*





## IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer  
Image Consultant

**A** new month: Push yourself: Rejuvenate: Inspire others: Laugh lots.

I think that we are all fading a little, a bit like a vase of flowers that you really need to throw out or a shabby tea towel (and we all have a few of those). We all need a boot camp of positivity and motivation. Some have turned into snarly teeth-showing dogs and others have just 'checked out' – you know when the light is on but no one is home – this never-ending lockdown is soul destroying! There, I've said it. It needed to be done. I'm completely finished with 'social distancing'; I'm doing the 'physical distance' thing. We need to be in contact with each other more than ever before, just carefully. We need to look into each other eyes and be reminded that everything will be ok...sometime soon. My other life involves the world of science; neuroscience in particular this last while and, as a result, I am concerned about the long-term effects of a 'lack of joy' and continual disappointment and how this will impact on our mind-set and neuroplasticity moving forward. So, now, more than ever before, it is crucially important that we 'connect' with each other. Be silly, be ridiculous, watch loads of comedies, tell funny stories and remind your brain what it is like to laugh long and hard. A LAUGHING BOOT CAMP, that's exactly what we all need,

so I really hope that you have as many funny friends as I do, they are better than any multivitamin tonic.

The lack of a social life and working from home has turned many of us into sweat pants-aholics. Be careful, they might feel really comfortable but they invite you to stretch them...as much as you want, until you realise that there is a whole lot more of you in them than you had hoped! Start off this month of longer evenings by waxing or shaving your legs, belittled to the home kits I know, but we are warriors and warriors battle on and do what is required. Remind whoever else lives with you that, no, you are not being murdered in the bathroom – no need to call the guards, you are just waxing your legs, or trying to. It will be worth it. We have to look forward, those legs will be on show soon, so victorious we must be.

The dreaded subject of fake tan. Dare I even bring it up? Well, it's as simple as this, you either decide to go for the 'pale' look or you learn how to flawlessly put on fake tan. I struggled for years with coverage on my legs; then I found Bondi Sands with a top up of Sally Hansen spray to cover any missed bits. This was the perfect solution until our weather graced us with enough sunshine to naturally tan the skin. Now a 'tan primer' has fallen into my lap and I just can't say enough about it. This is for anyone who exfoliates, moisturises and follows all the instructions but still ends up with blotchy fake tan legs. The rest of our bodies are so much easier to tan, it's always our bloody legs that throw a tantrum because the skin is so different there. Most tan producers remind us that it is after tanning, not before, that you should apply plenty of moisturiser, except for those critical knee, ankle and elbow parts. When the tan has devel-

I have the Lusso Tan Primer and it is fantastic and very cost friendly at about €18. This wonderful product contains Organic Witch Hazel, which refreshes the skin, locks in moisture and cleanses away impurities. I'm 100 per cent recommending, do give it a go!



oped, that is when you should lash on moisturiser – otherwise it will hinder tan development.

Similar to a primer that you would use before applying make-up, a body primer creates a base on the skin that not only ensures your tan stays put and develops evenly, it also fills out pores, blurs any imperfections. Hey, it's a win-win and they really work. I have the Lusso Tan Primer and it is fantastic and very cost friendly at about €18. This wonderful product contains Organic Witch Hazel, which refreshes the skin, locks in moisture and cleanses away impurities. I'm 100 per cent recommending, do give it a go! Always remember that the golden rule to applying tan is that 'less is more'...it's easier to add tan than remove it. Get practising now. Grab onto anything and everything that will make you feel better and look better!

This is the best time to take out all of your summer clothes. Have a good look through everything. Be gentle with yourself if your body shape has changed, a woman's body is a work of art, sometimes added to and sometimes there is less! Scattered in among those bits and pieces will be a few items that can be incorporated into your wardrobe now, while you will have to wait a while to wear most of it. Check all

of your white shirts, blouses, t-shirts, trousers – and decide if they are still white-white, otherwise they may have to be replaced. When I lived in New York, my friend Martha would put on a 'vinegar white wash' at the start of the summer. The key was to do it on a day that the sun was splitting the stones (and there was no shortage of days like that in New York) and hang them out to dry in the sunshine after. You were guaranteed the 'whitest' of whites for another season.

Long paisley dresses, cinched in at the waist with a belt have to be the 'must-have' of the season. They are so easy to wear, no fuss and can be very flattering. Choose a pattern with your favourite colour as the pre-dominant colour. A bright 'illuminating yellow hue' and 'ultimate grey' are the colours of 2021; both represent unity, stability and hope. Mix them together with tan or biscuit and they look sensational. Bold red and fuchsia fedora are hot on their tails, the brighter the better. The brightest of blues, mirroring the Aegean Sea is a wonderful colour to uplift and change your mood...and we need that. Consciously choose to wear the brightest of colours; they do impact on how you feel in a very big way. The trousers are loose, the tops are loose and

the cut is asymmetrical at times. Slits are back and high. There are a lot of open backs, lovely on the 'young ones' but the rest of us need to choose a billowing fabric for a more tentative take. Big puffy shoulders and sleeves will bring a big smile to the face of the girl who loves OTT fashion. What I do like about this take on the look is that it cinches in at the elbow so that you are not left drowning in fabric around your wrists. I've fallen in love with the Chanel wide-leg suit trousers in grey – I guess it will have to be a long-distance affair! They are the ultimate in suave.

It is time to start hunting for your favourite Birkenstocks and flip-flops, no matter what is ahead, they are like a 'boo-boo-kiss', making everything feel better before you get married twice! Click and collect to your hearts content.

Good quality eye-catching cloth bags have taken over. I

have been gifted a gorgeous black and red Samui canvas tote bag that was specially commissioned with Cork artist Deirdre Breen, with a 20-year anniversary logo and I adore it. So practical, a statement piece and perfect for small shopping trips too. Bags like this make a hell of a lot more sense than a little handbag; they are so perfectly practical while being incredibly stylish at the same time. I also think that it is such an organic way to advertise a shop, your favourite boutique in particular.

So, getting waxing and stripping and painting your toes, soaking in the tub, smothering yourself in moisturiser, deep conditioning your hair and saying beautiful things to that goddess in the mirror; yes, the one looking back at you – this is the agenda for April. We are all miracles, against all the odds we have survived and thrived. Hold up your head, flick back your hair and work that miracle, girl!



...Cont'd from previous page

tion with young people, school staff, and parents. The resources contribute to delivering a mental health and wellbeing programme as part of the school curriculum. And they have been tailored to support school staff and students during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Jigsaw Schools Hub is supported by Rethink Ireland through the Innovate Together Fund, a collaboration between Rethink Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community

Development (via the Dormant Accounts Fund).

Jigsaw's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Joseph Duffy, says: "Our Jigsaw Schools Hub at jigsaw.ie/schools is a response to what school staff, parents, and young people have been telling us they need. We know that schools and their staff do hugely important and amazing work in helping to support young people's mental health. And in the Covid-19 pandemic we

know that this has become much harder. On top of all this school staff are facing greater demands. This is why, with the support of Rethink Ireland through the Innovate Together Fund, I am delighted to be launching The Jigsaw Schools Hub, with vital mental health and wellbeing resources to support educators at this uniquely difficult time.

"We believe that the Jigsaw Schools Hub will help school staff to feel more confident and

better equipped in how they respond and support young people with their mental health. And we hope that it will grow to become an indispensable resource that will contribute to the delivery of wellbeing as part of the school curriculum."

School teacher, Fiona Temple, says: "Having the Jigsaw Schools Hub is an invaluable support to all members of our school community. Supporting young people's mental health

and wellbeing is all about providing staff, young people and parents with accessible support and resources. A whole school approach can only be reached when all members of the community embrace the idea of minding themselves and others.

"From the previous support Jigsaw have given us in Mulroy College, Donegal, we are very aware of the practical resources, the information and accessible toolkits they provide. They are

both user friendly and impactful. For so long schools have been looking for direct access to real resources produced by skilled clinicians and mental health professionals, this Jigsaw Schools Hub will provide direct access to a very professional support service to all students, parents and school staff. It is greatly welcomed."

To find out more about the Jigsaw Schools Hub visit jigsaw.ie/schools





## 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

# April Sun Signs

**M**ars is the planet stealing the show this month. The pace is fast and furious for the first two weeks with an easier flow after the New Moon when we finally get some time to relax and review. Use the extra energy to get ahead with some of the tasks or projects that were put aside earlier this year. Things can take some interesting turns and unexpected re-routes from mid-month and it may be harder to keep the focus on practical matters after April 23. The month ends with a high energy Full Moon that has the potential for breakouts, breakthroughs and a release of pent up tension. Things get moving into a different groove when Mercury the planet of connection, communication and thinking, moves into Aries to join the Sun and Venus. This sign has a focus on personal goals and actions making this our main motivation over the next few weeks. Mars is the planet that rules Aries and

represents the drive and physical energy needed to get stuff done. Mars is currently in Gemini, an air sign that has two sides and is always looking for a union and connection between opposing possibilities. Gemini is ruled by Mercury the quicksilver planet. So for about three weeks Mars and Mercury are in the sign that the other planet rules in what we call 'mutual reception'. This really puts their combined qualities to good use. Expect to see a lot of ideas and talk being asserted and directed towards future expectations. The first half of the month gets the benefit of Jupiter being in a very supportive aspect to Mars and this helps to ensure that all the extra drive and feisty Mars energy is generally being directed towards beneficial ends. There may be a sense of optimism and a more positive outlook than in recent months and the feeling that action is achieving good results. The Mars theme continues with the New

Moon on the 12th in Aries adding to the existing planet line up in the sign of direct action. Things can become emotive and even get blown out of proportion due to Jupiter, the planet of expansion, casting rays to both the Sun-Moon combination and Mars too. The Sun makes a challenging connection to Pluto during April 15 and 16, which acts to remind us that there is unseen and under the surface, secrets and hidden agendas, cover-ups and scandals may get highlighted around this time. On April 15, the energy of fierce and determined Aries focus begins to yield to a slower pace when Venus moves into her own sign of Taurus. This gives a gentler touch to getting what we want. There can be a tendency to step back and take time out with this placement, as Taurus loves a quiet life and simple pleasures. Our attention turns to basic needs and practical activities. There may be more discussion about the everyday requirements of life.

Fundamental needs and wants are a Taurus theme and this could become a hot topic by April 19/20 when both the Sun and Mercury have joined with Venus there. As these three connect in early degrees of Taurus they also touch in with the revolutionary planet of change, Uranus. This third week of April can bring some unexpected changes and twists to the story and there may be some new developments in practical areas of our lives and our social connections. We can expect some of the major themes of 2021 to be highlighted this week as the longer-term challenging square aspect of Saturn to Uranus is triggered. Change and reform of the social structures and the traditional or established way of life is a keynote for this year and we get to see how well this is working for us this week. The restrictions, limitations and lack become apparent whilst the benefits are enthusiastically promoted. Mars moves into the sign of Cancer on

April 23 and this really pushes all the caring and concern buttons over the next couple of months. This brings us right back to the priority issues that make us want to protect what is important and of value. The Full Moon on April 27 in Scorpio is ruled by Mars and in a very tense dynamic with this feisty planet. In the last few days of April, we could see that many boundaries get crossed and the opportunity for inactivity or passivity is diminished. There is potential for a sudden release of emotion. The Sun joins with Uranus on April 30 and this combination could provide a bolt from the blue or a wild card. It can be positive or negative depending on perspective but either way it has the potential for shifting the course or derailing plans in unexpected ways. March has a New Moon at 23 degrees Aries on April 12 at 3.30am and a Full Moon at 8 degrees Scorpio on April 27 at 4.31am.



**Aries:** With last month's Full Moon opposite your Sun sign, the spotlight has been on dealing with any relationship issues. Personal and professional partnerships will need your attention for the next few weeks. Finding a win-win situation for everyone has to be your goal. Interesting and inspiring people may come into your life now and you'll want to find more time for intimate encounters or shared experiences. Your personal style and self-expression gets to be the issue later in April and you won't want to be dictated to by other people's demands. Being seen and accepted on your own merit becomes priority.



**Taurus:** This is a good month to organise your work or focus on the tedious but necessary tasks that don't reap obvious rewards. You'll benefit from making adjustments especially if you've been overdoing it lately. Treat yourself with care and pay attention to your physical needs especially up until New Moon on April 12. Take a few days mid month for some solitary or down time to reflect and restore your spirit and physical vitality. After April 19, when the Sun moves into your own sign, you will get the boost you need, as life throws you some new or exciting challenges.



**Gemini:** Your imaginative powers are strong and you enjoy a chance to express your creative talents during the next few weeks. Whatever you do it needs to give scope to your originality and get you noticed. Your feelings for loved ones are more intense now and children may take an important role in your life at this time. You want to have fun and taking chances might pay off. Don't take yourself too seriously and you may surprise yourself at what you come up with by just playing around. Expect rewards from past efforts as we approach the month end.



**Cancer:** During early April you may feel like staying home. Build up your reserves so you have plenty spare for later. Use this time to complete unfinished tasks and don't expect to get started on anything new until mid month. Your work or social status takes on greater significance after April 12 and you'll want to put your best effort into making the most of your situation. Putting your energy into any project that gives you some sense of achievement will feel important now. The real rewards will become more apparent after April 19 when you can expect some well-deserved recognition.



**Leo:** Follow the urge to get out and about and make connections over the next two weeks. Expect opportunities to get more involved with your neighbours or local events. This is also a good time to catch up on correspondences or to do some writing. You may feel restless if you don't find activities that stimulate your mind. Travel, foreign visitors or starting a new study course will likely be a feature mid month and you'll want to seek out more information or alternatives to what you already know. A boost to your work life or career is likely after the Full Moon.



**Virgo:** Early April finds you concerned with your material and financial security. Take time to consider if you are making the best of your natural skills and talents, you might be underestimating yourself! Actual money isn't the only source of wealth and you'll probably find you have abundance in another form. Concerns or anxieties about being dependent on others may trouble you mid month. It's a short lived phase if you don't dwell on the negative and your world will open up with new opportunities after Full Moon on 27th. Make plans, think big and remember to include your dreams.



**Libra:** During the first weeks of April expect some extra attention as others want to see what you're going to do next. This month you'll need to stand up and display your self-confidence in a way that wasn't called on before. Make adjustments if you are not representing yourself accurately or in a way that is most true for your character. Relationship matters occupy your mind around New Moon on the 12. What's important is how these areas of your life are impacting on and your lifestyle and self-expression. The trick is to handle any tense moments with grace, state your position and move on quickly.



**Scorpio:** During early April your inclination is to shun the limelight and keep pretty much to yourself. You can be very productive in the next few weeks by just quietly working away behind-the-scenes in seclusion. Reconnecting with your inner world is important for your sense of equilibrium. Valuable insights and breakthroughs are possible. Enjoy the quiet 'alone time' whilst you can as the demands of your outer world will encroach again soon enough. Simple practical concerns about health, money or everyday responsibilities must be given your attention but don't allow yourself to become over anxious later in the month.



**Sagittarius:** This month it's who you know rather than what you know that matters. The spotlight is on your position within your community, in group ventures, or work projects, which involve others of like mind. Make the opportunity to meet new people; the benefits will soon follow. It's also time to change up a gear in your social life. The focus shifts after New Moon on April 12, as you get out the party gear or just take some needed leisure time. Having fun is the theme and allowing the inner child some freedom to run loose now brings its rewards.



**Capricorn:** Now is the time to make plans for your future. Personal status or vocational concerns are likely to dominate your thinking into mid April. If you want to fulfill your ambitions or go a step further then make some positive moves. Getting yourself some recognition for what you do well takes on extra significance. Remember to balance the demands of work or public life with the needs of your home life especially from mid month onwards. Family or domestic arrangements need your attention but you get the support you need to create a secure foundation to work from.



**Aquarius:** Travel, study or spiritual matters have been taking your attention. Not content with anything repetitive, you're likely to want the freedom to explore new ground or invite new experiences into your life. This is a great time to think big and make the most of opportunities that come your way. An overseas contact may get in touch or new information provides the chance to break out from any restricting routines to try something different. Be prepared to open your mind to new ideas and lifestyles. Life could get hectic around mid month so pace yourself whilst you still have some time available.



**Pisces:** The next two weeks might be a trying period; you may feel anxious and worried about money, health or concerned for other people. It will pass. You are simply focused on the negative side of a cycle at the expense of the positive. It's a great time to clear out what doesn't work well in your life in preparation for the next phase. After the New Moon April 12, you begin to acknowledge what you have in terms of real assets and how you can make the best of them. Finances, accounts and money matters improve when they get your full attention after mid month.

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## 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.

How are you? How are you and your loved ones holding up? The past year have been tough on all of us in different ways and, as an active person, who enjoys training and running, the past year has tested my resolve to stay active many times. With gyms closed, no clubs, and at some point only a short distance around home allowed for running, I had to devise home training for myself and my toddler, finding new running routes (often in circles) and come up with tons of home training programs.

This April is no different for me. I'll be running and looking into new strength training exercises at home – and in this column I will look into one of the most overlooked areas when it comes to weight loss and wellness. I hope you will learn as much as I have, when I started to look into this area of health.

Fitness trainers, personal trainers, coaches and nutritionists are the go-to people when it comes to weight loss, muscle gain, improving sports or fitness performance

and lifestyle changes. And rightly so, they can tailor training programs and diets to fit your goals, lifestyle and time schedule.

Find the right exercises to get stronger core, a good diet to show the abs, and put it all into a schedule that still allows you time for life outside of the gym and the kitchen.

However, the one thing that almost everyone forgets to mention is the one thing that can overturn even the best diet and the most efficient training program: Sleep. Or rather lack of sleep.

Lack of sleep often comes when we are stressed or just have gotten into a 'bad pattern' of late nights or early mornings. Or maybe you've subscribed to the persistent myth that efficient people only sleeps a few hours every night?

While individual exceptions exist and it's true some few individuals manage well on less sleeping, most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep every night to function best. There are of course a boat-load of benefits that comes with getting enough sleep, from more mental clarity to better impulse control. In this month's column, I will look into some of the negatives lack of sleep is responsible for, namely in regards to weight loss and muscle gain.

There are three big keys to weight loss, which are affected by too little sleep: Metabolism, appetite and food choices.

**Metabolism:** Lack of sleep messes with the metabolism. When we eat food, the body produces insulin to take glucose (sugar, starch and other foods) from the blood and stores it in cells using glucose as energy, but lack of sleep reduces the body's ability to response to insulin,

and the insulin stores the glucose in fat deposits instead of cells using it for fuel. Dieters in sleep studies showed 55 per cent less weight loss of fat during a 14-day

study, with an increased amount of weight lost from muscles, and English researchers found that the insulin efficiency was declining after just one night with sleep restrictions (four hours) in young men.

**Appetite:** Sleep or lack of also influences two appetite hormones Leptin and Ghrelin. Leptin is the hormone that makes us feel full, and Ghrelin is the hormone that stimulates appetite. Two sleep studies found that lack of sleep increased Ghrelin hormones and decreased Leptin. So following these findings a sleep deprived person is more likely to feel hungry and eat bigger portions, than a person with a good, solid nights sleep. But it's getting worse, because lack of sleep also seems to boost the 'Reward centres' in the brain.

**Food choices:** Sleep studies also show people with less than

sugary snacks

So basically after a while (six nights according to one study) lack of sleep will have your brain acting like 'you're a little drunk' – you're more prone to make bad decisions and lose impulse control, all while your reward centre is in full gear mode and ready to be fulfilled. In other words saying no to a piece of cake, and second piece of cake, gets increasingly more difficult with the reward centre running rampant and appetite regulators working against you.

And to add insult to injury, the problem of insulin not storing energy in the cells as fuel, but instead in fat deposits, makes you gain weight faster.

For muscle growth, the same picture dominates the research findings. A huge study conducted in China amongst 10,125 students



seven hours of sleep to be more inclined to choose carbohydrate rich food and snacks. So not only are we feeling more hungry, we also crave all the fatty, salty,

found that too little sleep results in decreased muscle mass and less muscle strength. As mentioned earlier, less sleep also causes the body to tap into the muscle mass

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for fuel. What happens in the body when we train in the gym (or use the muscles in repeated exercise) is the muscles break down (microscopically), and need growth hormones and pro-inflammatory compounds to repair the damages. One major hormone, which mediates this process, is HGH (human growth hormone), which is controlled by circadian rhythm, which means most of the hormone is released by night. So if you are training hard to get the abs popping for summer or strong arms for the gun show, remember to eat your proteins and sleep well. As the saying goes 'muscles are made in the kitchen', and one could add 'used in the gym and recovered (and grown) in your sleep'.

So sleep better and be more successful with your training and see better results, it will also be easier to make the healthier choices in the kitchen and keeping portions normal sized.

If you're struggling with sleep, I found these tips to be useful:

- \* Have a routine for going to bed at the same time each night, and getting up the same time each

morning. Even on weekends.

- \* No screens one hour before bed; read a book instead, knit, or if you have to look at a screen, turn the light down and use a night filter if your device has one.
- \* Sleep in a dark room. Darkness cues the body to release melatonin (a natural sleep hormone), while light suppresses it.
- \* Avoid big meals close to bedtime, as this can cause heartburn, and makes it hard to fall asleep. Also avoid tea or coffee (caffeine rich drinks) in the late afternoon and evening, as this can stay in your system for up to five to six hours.
- \* Create a nice bedtime ritual, which put you into relaxation mode. This could be a warm bath, meditation or a good book.

I wish you a happy Easter, a wonderful April and a good night's sleep. Comments and questions are as always welcome at [taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com](mailto:taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com) or via @trainwithadane on Instagram

## Spring into Storytime at Cork County Library

Cork County Council Library and Arts Service is delighted to bring 'Spring into Storytime' 2021 to the children and families of County Cork. 'Spring into Storytime' is Ireland's public libraries annual celebration of families reading together. During the month of April 2021, 'Spring into Storytime' events will be delivered online by Cork County Council Library and Arts Service to bring the magic of storytime directly to your home.

Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr Mary Linehan Foley, commented "Children have wonderful imaginations and reading feeds their creativity. Reading a book with your child, at all ages, boosts their brain development and is a great bonding activity. Our Cork County library service is here to guide and support you in your reading adventures. During Spring into Storytime, this April, you are invited to celebrate storytime with online readings from library staff. There's a host of other activities planned too, with instructional craft videos for children to celebrate Easter and Spring and online storytime book recommendations from staff featuring titles available on the library BorrowBox E-Book and E-Audio app."

There will be an online storytime workshop for parents and teachers presented by literacy expert Catherine Gilliland and online 'Rhyme and Sign' storytime sessions for parents and babies presented by Claire Glynn.

'Spring into Storytime' launches April 1, 2021, visit Cork County Council Library and Arts Service Facebook and Twitter channels for story-time and children's craft events throughout the month of April.

## Bantry Protect Our Native Kelp Forest campaign launches sale of original arts and crafts

All artists and crafts people in West Cork and beyond are invited to use the current lockdown to get creative to 'Help the Kelp'

The Campaign to Protect the Native Kelp Forests of Bantry Bay will be holding a display and sale of art and craft works at the Bantry Bay Hotel, as soon as restrictions allow, with all donations going towards the cost of the on-going legal case to prevent the mechanical harvest of the Kelp Forest of Bantry Bay.

Everyone, including children, is encouraged to take

part – there is no need to be a professional! Prices can start as low as €5, or be as high as €500 or more, pieces can be framed or unframed, and be of any subject.

Contributors are asked to drop off their work at Fastnet Printing, Bantry by April 15, 2021 or call 085 8308918 to make an alternative arrangement. A label should be 'firmly' attached to the work stating the artist or craft person's name and contact number (or anon if preferred) with the Title, Medium, Size and Price of the piece. Any work that is unsold can be

returned to the artist at the end of the sale if desired.

More information about the Campaign

The Bantry Protect Our Native Kelp Forest campaign was formed in response to the granting of a licence to permit the mechanical harvesting of kelp forests in Bantry Bay, Cork. The license to extract 1860 acres of Kelp seaweed was granted with no public consultation, no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment and inadequate advertising. Kelp forests are the foundation of many marine

ecosystems, and members of the community were concerned about the detrimental effects to marine life, local business and tourism. As well as supporting an on-going legal case, which opposes the licence, the group actively takes part in citizen science surveys, beach cleans, and is forming a snorkelling/scuba club.

For more information about the Art Display and Sale, please call Emily: 086 8879766 or Catherine: 085 8308918.

For the Kelp Campaign visit [www.bantrybaykelpforest.com](http://www.bantrybaykelpforest.com)



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## West Cork artist participating in PLATFORM 31

Visual Artist Tomasz Madajczak has been awarded Cork County Council's PLATFORM 31 bursary. He is one of 31 artists across Ireland awarded the €8,000 bursary to invest in their practice, participate in an advisory, developmental framework and be part of a peer network.

PLATFORM 31 is the nationwide artist development scheme created by the 31 Local Authority Arts Offices, in collaboration with the Arts Council.

Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr Mary Linehan Foley commented, "For over thirty-five years Local Authority Arts Offices have worked directly with artists to ensure the arts thrive in all communities. Working in a grass roots and foundational way has allowed Cork County



Council Arts Office to identify and respond to the needs of Cork artists, keeping the arts and cultural agenda relevant in changing environments. PLATFORM 31 recognises the central place in our culture occupied by creative artists. Artists

help to bring meaning and new perspectives to our lives."

After receiving his MA from the Fine Arts Academy Poznań in 2003, Tomasz emigrated from Poland to Ireland and now lives in West Cork. His art practice consists of photography, drawing, video and installation. He often collaborates with Irish and international artists and is an established figure in the Irish arts community. Tomasz has also exhibited in Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Pakistan.

Madajczak's current project, "No Space" will be the focus of his participation in PLATFORM 31. Starting in 2020 shortly after the pandemic began, it was initially supported by the Arts Council's Covid-19 funding scheme. He invited artists and



individuals to collaborate with him, where they shared the experience of spaces (physical and mental) and their specific nature.

The Platform 31 bursary and developmental programme

will allow Tomasz's project to evolve in a new direction, of land and connections with place and how this influences culture. For Madajczak, the pandemic has created a space for deep reflection and new ways of

approaching his art practice and he hopes to share and move the project further through new collaborations, transcultural experiences and different approaches to art as an alternative language.

## 'Ginger Nuts' enjoys successful radio debut

'Ginger Nuts' performed by members of Gaggin Drama Group was one of three Cork plays accepted into the inaugural Clare Radio Drama Play Festival in March, the results of which will be announced on April 4.

Described as a comedy with a poignant twist, the play, which is set in a hospital ward in West Cork, was written by local teacher Donna O'Regan and performed by Gaggin Drama Group. It is available as a podcast on Spotify and iTunes.

The main character in the play, protagonist Bridie, gets a lot more than she bargains for after being admitted for surgery. A strange yet familiar face comes to Bandon during lockdown and her furtive behaviour soon sets tongues wagging.

Playwright Donna O'Regan says the play was inspired by her childhood. "The setting, the characters, the comedy are all fragments of my own reality as a child. My friend Pam Golden was certainly a muse for the antics of the protagonist Bridie," she explains.

The play is named after the main character who has three red-haired children she likes to refer to as her 'ginger nuts'. The infamous biscuits also make an appearance.

"Bridie is the local busy body and has a roguish charm," says Donna. "She is liable to say and

do anything but we do learn that she has a softer, more serious nature too."

A native of Bandon, Donna O'Regan is a German and Spanish teacher at Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty. Acting since childhood, she's always had an interest in musical theatre and started producing the annual school musical at Sacred Heart under the direction of Mrs Eileen Nolan of Montforts. She has since completed a Diploma in Speech and Drama teaching. Donna has been a member of Gaggin Drama Group for a number of years and in 2016, on relocating to Toronto in Canada, she joined the Toronto Irish Players; during this time she was nominated for two ACTRA awards for Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor. While living in Toronto, she also wrote her first play 'Sinking Feelings', which was accepted into the

INSPIRATO theatre festival. 'Ginger Nuts' is Donna's second play.

Donna describes writing for radio as "challenging and vastly different to writing for stage."

"The first main difference was establishing characters," she says. "I ambitiously wrote the play with eight different characters: Six female roles and two male roles. There are not too many comedies that I have come across with multiple female roles so that was important to me. I needed the audience to know who the characters were without the aid of visual clues."

"On stage we have facial expressions, body language, props, lighting, costumes, and movement. For radio, we must create a whole world just using sound. It was important to me in rehearsals that the actor's voices were distinct and crystal clear when it came to the recording

stage."

The second challenge was the scene changes. "When on stage, it is quite easy to know when a scene breaks and a character leaves or enters the stage," she explains. "When writing for radio, I had to consider the sound effects and how I could announce a character's arrival. One of the characters Tony, who is the hospital porter, constantly whistles and Dolly who works in catering has a squeaky tea trolley. These subtleties helped creating the atmosphere and with the story telling."

'Ginger Nuts' was broadcast on Scariff Bay Radio on Saturday, March 13 and received a great reaction. Gaggin Drama Group has never entered a national festival with the Amateur Drama League of Ireland so this was a first for the group. "The competition is very stiff with groups such as the Ennis Players, Balally players and Kilmeen involved and they would all be big names on the circuit," says Donna.

"The result will be announced on Easter Sunday, April 4 and we remain hopeful! Above all else, we are very proud to have put Gaggin on the map and we hope to take our future plays on the circuit."

Donna has recently started writing her third play, which is keeping her occupied during lockdown. Next for the Gaggin Drama Group is to put 'Ginger Nuts' on stage. The group has also been rehearsing 'Lucy in the Sky' a wonderful one act and we are looking forward to bringing it to an audience.

Gaggin is a creative and

energetic group, who Donna says like to "work hard but love to laugh". New members are always welcome. "We need writers, actors, producers, directors, backstage managers, lighting

technicians, sound technicians and marketing gurus. I would encourage anyone that is interested to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages and get in contact."

## Ardfield's Samuel Heffernan receives special commendation in national art competition

Seven-year-old Samuel Heffernan from Ardfield, Clonakilty was recently selected for a Special Commendation in the 'This is Art' competition, an exciting new online art competition created in partnership between RTE and the Creative Ireland Programme.

One of the judges of the RTE and Creative Ireland Programme, Fatti Burke commented: "The 'Wild Life' is a really exciting artwork, and the most striking thing about it is Samuel's use of the markers to create movement and texture in the scene. I loved the pink sky contrasting with the greens and browns of the woods where the squirrel sits. A lot of care has been put into the animal's fur, and it shows a great imagination and creativity by the artist."

The competition was launched to allow art to unite people and at the same time to fill our world with beauty. An overwhelming amount of 9,000 entries were received from all across the country.

Samuel was delighted to receive his special commendation along with a voucher to spend on art supplies and his certificate which he will treasure.

Samuel loves art and is always encouraged to be creative at home with his family and at

his school, Ardfield National School. He is often found sitting outdoors sketching landscapes of the sea, farmland and cliffs. If he isn't sketching, he is busy on his tractor, which he loves. His hopes are to be an organic farmer and an artist.





# Shadow Play: The ink paintings of Laura Wade



## THE SHAPE OF THINGS

James Waller

James Waller is an Australian born artist and poet based in West Cork. Through this column James explores the world of art, introducing the reader to major works of art and artists and reflecting on what makes them so engaging.

Shadows are the drawings of the sun, blooming shapes cast by the body against its brilliant light, whilst silhouettes are the body-as-shadow, limned by the sun's perfection. Art is literally everywhere we walk, for whenever we cast a shadow we create a magical other, a fluid, animated impression, like ink flowing on stone.

Shadows simplify and flow, like ink from the brush, which is perhaps why the black ink works of Cork-born artist Laura Wade gravitate towards the silhouette, medium and optics being naturally aligned.

The magic of Laura Wade's ink work is, likewise, aligned to the magic of the shadow, for

whilst the shadow's edge may define the figure or object from which it is cast, within its dark lake there is a night sky, a void, a well, pulsing with mystery and promise. Anything may emerge from the void, and this potentiality charges the imagination with a latent excitement.

The silhouetted figure becomes a portal, a dark beam into an endlessly watchable night. And so begins a metamorphosis from what is cast into what could be, a transfiguration of shapes, both other-worldly and utterly of the world. This is the story of 'Unfurl' from 2019, part of Wade's collection 'Unfurling' of the same year. The ink-black silhouette profile of a head unfurls backwards into the curling silhouette of leafy fronds. Head and foliage are conjoined, the impossible becoming the possible in the play of the dark.

Her work, 'Reflect', from the same series, inverts this play of silhouette and light; the profile of nose, lips and chin is deftly defined by a flow of 'background' dark, the full profile thence emerging as a paradoxical gap of light amidst black foliage.

As if to accentuate the starry, organic promise of her inky worlds, Wade employs what has become two signature elements in her work: the perforation, and the geometric overlay.

Perforations are a key element in Wade's 2021 collection of ink works, titled 'Quell'. 'Quell' is a series of softly silhouetted tree and river-scapes, which the artist started in January "as a personal response to these strange times." Wade states that she "wanted each piece to be like a gentle line of poetry, offering a pause

or place to sooth, both for" herself "and the viewer."

Each of the works are punctuated by rings of pinholes, which cluster like spherical murmurations, simultaneously focusing on and veiling the scenes they puncture. The beauty of Wade's puncturing lies in the carefully considered optics of her design: together the pinhole clusters form perfect spheres, the illusion of form arising from a greater number of holes punctured closer to the circular 'edge', giving the impression of a core shadow on a spherical mass. In darker works, such as 'Unfurl', the pinholes take on a stellar dimension, breathing out of the black ink like glimmering stars in the night sky.

Of her pinhole technique Wade says that "the perforations add another layer of intrigue and maybe refer to something other." She says she enjoys "how the tactile quality of the little minute pinholes draw the viewer into the painting."

Wade's use of a spherical overlay in 'Quell' is indicative of a broad use of geometric overlays throughout her work. In 'Sequence I' (2017) triangular 'windows' float over a peach-pink-sky-tree-scape. The triangular 'windows' are formed in the negative, by clusters of pinholes along and around their edges. These perforated overlays are complemented by solid black triangular forms at the bottom edge of the composition.

'Temple III', a paper collage from 2018 takes the overlay further, by cutting and pasting elements of inked landscape into pyramidal forms, as if the landscape itself had been folded up,



Sequence by Laura Wade

origami-style, into an Egyptian pyramid. Perforations play their part here as well, 'backlighting' the main pyramidal form and echoing its lines in a second perforated structure. The minimal colour and somber tonality add a wonderful gravitas to the image, underscoring its quasi-mystical feel.

The geometric overlay is a deeply intriguing device and propels Wade's work beyond neo-romantic gesture towards the neo-modernist sublime. Asked about this aspect of her work Wade suggests that the shapes "relate to a sense of navigation or search for place," adding "another layer of mystery to the painting."

There is a beautiful restraint in Laura Wade's creative language. The diverse formal elements, including ink wash, silhouette, perforation, geometric overlay and collage are combined in ever-inventive and stimulating ways. Whilst shadows may be the drawings of the sun, geometry is the star of the human mind; in the shadow plays and overlays of Wade's ink paintings the two converge.

James offers a range of studio-based courses for children and adults in Classical painting, drawing and printmaking at Clonakilty School of Painting. See [www.paintingschool.jameswaller.org](http://www.paintingschool.jameswaller.org) for details.

## Poetic Beats: Enter the world of Insomnia's Gates

James Waller's debut poetry collection lights up the page with searing images of love, loss, tenderness and enchantment. Written with a painter's sensibility, *Insomnia's Gates* takes the reader on a colour-filled journey from the environs of Melbourne and the Australian bush to the painted canvases and mythologies of Europe. The book collates James' first three collections of poetry written in the summer and autumn of 2005. Based in West Cork, James runs the Clonakilty School of Painting and is a full time artist and writer. For more of his work and for links to the book, visit: [jameswaller.org](http://jameswaller.org). *Insomnia's Gates* is available now on Amazon for €12.

"Waller's exquisitely weighted lines have a precise and spry musicality that never jars. The integration and accretion of image and sound...lead to moments of astonishment that are not infrequent."

—Nicholas Powell

### For Osip

"...and the centuries / Surround me with fire."  
— Osip Mandelstam

*A hand from a passing boat  
Lifts shadow  
Cold is sung  
And lifted  
Into the boat of night  
Bars creep along the moon  
Silver cigarettes  
Flaring in a cool torch  
You wandered among  
Reflections  
A shadow of the song you were  
Passing  
Fragments of heaven  
To those who stood with you*

**Insomnia's Gates**  
James Waller



POEMS



Temple III by Laura Wade



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## New shows at The Everyman

The Everyman has gone digital. It will be a while before audiences will be back in the theatre for a real live, interactive, experience so The Everyman have launched the next best thing – and it's all Made in Cork.

"I'm thrilled to announce a varied programme of digital work for The Everyman, while the doors to the theatre continue to stay closed," says Sophie Motley, The Everyman's Artistic Director. "With The Corner House Session, our collaboration with Islander, we bring the very best of live music to your eyes and ears, plus the cheeky reminder of how wonderful it will be to be back in the pub ourselves. There's some excellent local directors and performers presenting audio recordings of brilliant contemporary theatre, and a five part audio treat for young audiences from Graffiti, alongside a world premiere of John McCarthy's new play City. Artists are our life blood, and theatre needs to remain in our veins. Having streamed performance is the next best thing to experiencing it in person, and reminds us of the importance of artists in our society, and our community. I'm delighted to be virtually meeting and presenting the very best of Cork's music and theatre community."

A collaboration with Islander will launch the first in a series of Behind the Curtain live music events which will have



music streaming from the most iconic Cork venues, beginning with The Corner House Session, featuring piper Eoin Ó Riabhaigh, fiddle and flute player Johnny McCarthy, box player and songwriter Con Fada Ó Drisceoil and guitar and bouzouki player Pat 'Herring' Ahern. For years, The Corner House on Coburg Street has been known as the home of the best traditional musicians in the city. Its hospitality, and open-armed welcome have made it the stomping ground for visiting musicians to call and engage with the high-quality sessions that take place on a weekly basis. The coming together of these four musicians brings together the Thursday

evening session, a major lure for traditional music enthusiasts, with the well-established Wednesday night residency. A highly energetic, and entertaining, performance full of musical magic and humour can be anticipated with the live video stream of Behind the Curtain: The Corner House Session on Friday, April 2. This is a free event, with ticket holders asked to donate what they can with all monies going directly towards employing local musicians and artists to develop, and present, new performances.

The Everyman continues to support artists with CITY, a new solo work written, and performed, by John McCarthy on The Everyman stage, which will

be available as an on-demand video stream from Friday, April 16, for ten days. John McCarthy is a familiar face for The Everyman audiences and was nominated as Best Supporting Actor at the Irish Times Theatre Awards in 2019 for his performance as Valene in The Everyman's production of The Lonesome West in 2018.

There are two audio streamed productions to enjoy as part of The Everyman's well-received Play It by Ear series. Gavin McEntee directs a live rehearsed reading of the hilariously creepy A Skull in Connemara by Martin McDonagh on Saturday, 10th April. Martin McDonagh's trademark black humour will have you squirming in your seat and howling with laughter as it delves in to the underbelly of rural Irish town rumours.

Graffiti Theatre Company and The Everyman present a five-part adventure for young children and schools with an audio streamed production of This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing by Finegan Kruckemeyer, made available throughout the month of May and supported by a resource pack. There's something different every week, so plug in, charge up, sit back or go for a walk and enjoy The Everyman, your local theatre, wherever you are.

Book at [everymancork.com](http://everymancork.com)

## Digital platform for contemporary Irish writing

The Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI), in association with UCD's School of English, Drama and Film have launched a new digital platform for Contemporary Irish Writing. The online platform – at [www.ContemporaryIrishWriting.ie](http://www.ContemporaryIrishWriting.ie) – features an exciting selection of 100 titles from the wealth of contemporary Irish literature. The website is a must-use resource for readers, book club members, teachers and enthusiasts!

The platform launched on April 1 with an online event featuring readings from Michelle Gallen, Anna Heussaff, Peadar Ó Guilín and Emilie Pine.

ContemporaryIrishWriting.ie features books written in both English and Irish, ranging from fiction and poetry to memoir, young adult fiction and children's literature. Each of the 100 entries offers the opportunity to enjoy interviews and conversations with the author, to read reviews and responses to the literary works, and to explore other online resources relating to this dynamic field of contemporary writing.

Featured authors include well-known novelists ranging from Anna Burns to Colm Tóibín, memoirists Doireann Ní Ghríofa, Emilie Pine, Sinéad Gleeson and Patrick Freyne, and also more recent

arrivals to the Irish literary scene including Dara McAnulty, Emma Dabiri and Michelle Gallen. Members of the Museum of Literature Ireland have nominated a number of these titles, warmly endorsing them for future readers.

Speaking on the launch of the platform, the project leader Professor Margaret Kelleher, Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin commented: "We have created ContemporaryIrishWriting.ie for the enjoyment of readers everywhere, and to address the challenges particular to research and teaching in contemporary writing, including the difficulty of access to some source material, especially for international readers. It has been a pleasure to capture, through this digital resource, the dynamism of contemporary conversations regarding Irish writing, and to promote not only these 100 titles but also their hundreds of siblings."

Simon O'Connor, Director of MoLI, added: "Creating and diversifying access to the treasures of Irish literature is central to MoLI's mission, driving much of our digital and learning programmes in particular. ContemporaryIrishWriting.ie creates so many opportunities for readers to discover new work, and to deepen their interest in familiar books and writers."

## Reimagined Cork International Choral Festival invites choirs from around the world to compete without needing to travel

The world-renowned Cork International Choral Festival has announced that it will go ahead this year in a reimagined format.

The prestigious choral festival, which normally attracts 5,000 singers and 50,000 visitors from all over the world to Cork city and county, will be held virtually for the first time ever, from April 28 to May 2, allowing international choirs to compete and participate without the need to travel.

The globally renowned Choral Festival was founded in 1954, making it Cork's longest running festival. Last year was only the second time in its history that the festival had to be cancelled. Noted for its high competitive and non-competitive standards, it is one of

Europe's premier international choral festivals, and this year will be no exception. With over 30 international choirs scheduled to take part.

Usually concerts, events and competitions would take place in over 90 venues across Cork. This year, four specially curated gala concerts will be staged online during the festival, which attendees can enjoy from the comfort of their own homes, wherever they are in the world.

The Festival will open on Wednesday night with a specially commissioned poem by Corkonian Billy Ramsell. Thursday evening (April 29) will see an online broadcast performance by Ireland's best known and most diverse choral group, Anúna, directed by Michael McGlynn.



Chamber Choir Ireland, the festival's choir in residence, will perform from Cork's St. Fin Barre's Cathedral on Friday April 30, with what is antici-

pated to be an exhilarating performance including with world premiere of 'On A Quiet Day In the Future', Dublin composer Norah Walsh's prizewinning

work in this year's Séan Ó Riada Composition Competition.

Saturday night will see one of Ireland's most acclaimed vocal ensembles, Resurgam also in St. Finbarre's Cathedral. The Sunday closing gala concert will see a performance from a group that was scheduled to play as part of the cancelled 2020 Festival with German group ONAIR taking to the stage.

Gala concert tickets will be available to book online from [corkchoral.ie](http://corkchoral.ie).

The competition strand of the festival is expected to remain fiercely competitive, with a newly expanded national and international programme via video submission. This year, the festival launches its inaugural Ibec Workplace Choir of the Year Competition, as well as

national and international A Cappella Video Competitions, while entries for the National Open Competitions remain strong.

Anyone, musical or not, can also join in with the festival's FREE online workshops in partnership with Sing Ireland, including the ever-popular Big Sing, a group singing experience led online this year by Ardú contemporary ensemble director, Ciarán Kelly, who will prepare participants for one big uplifting online performance.

Details of all concerts, workshops and competitions are available on the festival website. For more information or to book tickets see [www.corkchoral.ie](http://www.corkchoral.ie) #CorkChoral



# Not so disposable

by DeBarra's Spoken Word team

On Wednesday, April 21, from 8.30pm onward, De Barra's Spoken Word will host a reading of the 'The Disposable Stories', a new multimedia literary magazine, created by Emily Titsworth. Originally from Mount Olive, Illinois in the US, Emily has been resident in Cork in the past year. The ten contributors on the night – including DeBarra's very own Lauren Cavanagh – are all students on the Creative Writing MA programme at University College Cork and also contributors to the magazine.

For this particular project, each participant took two photographs using a disposable

camera. Once developed, the photos were randomly distributed among them, the pictures serving as ekphrastic writing prompts: Hence 'The Disposable Stories' title.

Ekphrasis is a Greek word. According to the dictionary it means, 'Calling up a subject before the eyes with visual vividness'. So words are used to create a 'picture in the mind' but one that can be compared to the actual picture that inspired it. It says something about how all our minds can work so differently, even when faced with the exact same visual (or crime scene, but that's a different story).

Further information about the event can be found on DeBarra's Spoken Word YouTube

channel that features a video. Emily explains on the video how a search for inspiration led her to come up with the disposable camera idea and why she likes the restriction of "having to capture something in just two shots" instead of the seemingly endless (but often meaningless) possibilities of a digital phone camera. Plus, how her home town is connected to this part of Ireland via a remarkable woman called Mother Jones, aka Mary G. Harris, 'the most dangerous woman in America' who was probably born in Blarney Street, Cork, and buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in Mount Olive. Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* also gets a look-in.

Following the readings, a brief exercise that will encour-

age audience members to write their own piece in response to one of the 'disposable photos' that hasn't been used yet. They can then read out loud what they've produced, if they so want. The prize? A virtual pint of genuinely Irish Guinness "from the comfort of your own home". The evening will close with an Open Mic that is open to all-comers from everywhere.

A Zoom link will be sent to the mailing list and posted on DeBarra's Spoken Word on the day. If you wish to be added to the list, please email [debarrasspokenword@gmail.com](mailto:debarrasspokenword@gmail.com).

*Right: Cover of The Disposable Stories by Mahito Indi Henderson*



## A celebration of the short story



Join West Cork Literary Festival on Tuesday, April 6 at 7pm, for a celebration of the short story to mark the publication of Jan Carson's 'The Last Resort'. Jan is joined by fellow Irish short story writers Lucy Caldwell, Adrian Duncan, Louise Kennedy, and John Patrick McHugh, whose new collections are also published this year.

In Jan Carson's new collection, 'The Last Resort', residents of Seaciff Caravan Park visit their caravans for the first half-term of the year. In this stunning linked short-story collection, Jan explores complex family dynamics, ageing, immigration, gender politics, the decline of the Church and

the legacy of the Troubles.

Lucy Caldwell's 'Intimacies' exquisitely charts the steps and missteps of young women trying to find their place in the world. These are stories of love, loss, and exile, of new beginnings and lives lived away from 'home'. Intimacies offers keenly felt and subtly revealing insights into the heartbreak and hope of modern life.

Midfield Dynamo is the first collection of short stories by award-winning author Adrian Duncan. Patterning and happenstance make up the rich quotidian lives of the characters portrayed in these strange, energetic tales.

In 'The End of the World is a Cul de Sac', Louise Kennedy's

visceral, stunningly crafted stories, people are effortlessly cruel to one another, and the natural world is a primitive salve. Announcing a major new voice in literary fiction for the twenty-first century, these sharp shocks of stories offer flashes of beauty, and even humour, amidst the harshest of truths.

Set on an imagined island off the west coast of Ireland, 'Pure Gold' is John Patrick McHugh's debut collection of stories and it conjures a complete and varied cast of characters – some lost, some lonely, many dreaming and others self-deceiving.

*Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 7pm  
Admission €5. To book, visit [www.westcorkmusic.ie](http://www.westcorkmusic.ie).*

## West Cork Arts Centre announce Isolation20

Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre is delighted to present "Isolation20", a new composition by Clonakilty based composer Justin Grounds at Uillinn Galleries, funded as part of Cork County Council's Creative Ireland Programme.

Following a public call in July 2020, twenty singers came forward to participate in the project which focused on their experience of life in isolation following the onset of Covid 19. The project was developed and created with a diverse group of volunteers from throughout County Cork, over a period of eight months.

Composer Justin Grounds worked with the singers,

encompassing their individual voices to create a collective voice. The result is a composition that uses digital technology in a creative way to enable all twenty members to participate. The project dealt creatively with the theme of isolation and focused on each person's experience to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, practically, symbolically and creatively in a collective manner.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley welcomed the project saying,

"In a time where we have had to stay apart to keep each other safe and well, this piece explores the isolation felt by many during the pandemic but

also shows that collectively, even while apart we can share a togetherness and sense of community. The "Isolation20" project represents the power of collaboration and the strength of music when harnessed to address challenges such as loneliness. The Arts has been an enduring source of comfort and hope for many over the past twelve months. I congratulate all involved on bringing this unique musical project to fruition and have no doubt that it will bring joy to many in Cork County and beyond."

For further information on "Isolation20" visit [www.uillinn-galleries.com](http://www.uillinn-galleries.com)

## New decade for Reeling in the Years

The new series of 'Reeling in the Years' will air from Sunday, April 11 at 8.30pm on RTE One and RTE Player.

From Katie Taylor to Kodaline, from Mrs Brown's Boys to the marriage referendum, from 'Fake News' to Fidget Spinners, Reeling in the Years showcases the stories and the soundtrack of Ireland over the last decade. Each half-hour programme features a specific year between 2010 and 2019, combining contemporary chart hits with some of the most memorable moments in news, current affairs, sport and entertainment.

This is the sixth series of Reeling in the Years, with the years from 1962 to 2009 covered to date. Reeling in the Years is consistently one of RTE's best-loved



shows, with its repeats regularly performing strongly in the ratings. The IFTA-nominated show has also been voted the 'most popular home-produced TV show ever' in an RTE Guide poll of Ireland's Top 100 TV shows.

Producer John O'Regan says: "The end of a decade is a natural

time to look back. We made the Nineties series in 2000, the Noughties series in 2010, and now we're adding another 10 years to the collection. We're pleased to offer viewers this latest selection of music and moments from RTE's archives."



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Kinsale based furniture maker wins 2021 RDS Craft Award

Five of Ireland's most talented emerging craft makers have been recognised with a €10,000 bursary each for the development of their craft and/or business skills as part of the 2021 RDS Craft Awards. One of the most prestigious awards in the craft sector, this year the RDS Craft Awards recognised makers ranging from fashion to furniture, knife-making to glass-making. With a total fund of €50,000, the awards are the largest annual prize fund for craft makers in Ireland and are given at a critical time in early professional careers. In addition to the €10,000 bursary, the award winners are provided with a free stand at Gifted – The Contemporary Craft & Design Fair held in the RDS in December.

One of the five was Paul O'Brien, a furniture designer and maker based in Kinsale. With a background in visual

art, Paul trained as a furniture maker in London before returning home to Ireland to work with Joseph Walsh Studio for two years before establishing his own business in 2017. His approach to design is contemporary, minimal and elegant. Paul endeavours to make beautifully crafted furniture with a lightness of touch incorporating subtle details such as shadow lines and organic curves. He plans to grow his business, create new work and move into the international export market. Paul will use the bursary money to purchase new equipment which will allow him to increase the scope of what he could make in a more efficient manner. [www.modet.ie](http://www.modet.ie)

This year's other recipients are Sam Gleeson (Bladesmith) Co. Clare; Jenny Mulligan (Glass), currently based in Sweden; Katie Spiers (Glass), Dublin/Wicklow; Ciara Allen

(Fashion Design) Dublin.

Dr Jennifer Goff of the National Museum of Ireland chaired an experienced independent judging panel: "The panel was overwhelmed with the quality of work to choose this year's winners from. Craft makers from Ireland are increasingly sought after around the world. Irish craft is having a moment and this year's winners, and indeed the longlist too, are testament to that. I know that all five winners will use the prize money to accelerate their career progression and I look forward to seeing their future success."

Geraldine Ruane, RDS Chief Executive said, "Irish craft businesses are characteristically small in scale and are geographically widespread, however the industry is a key employer and makes a significant contribution to the Irish economy. The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI), which the



Furniture-maker Paul O'Brien.  
Pic Shane O'Neill/Coalesce

RDS helped establish 50 years ago, have over 3,000 registered client enterprises and engages with over 150 retailers across the country who specialise in selling Irish craft products."

The bursaries were presented following a competitive

virtual interview process in mid-March. The funds can be spent on further education and training, research, development of new work, mentoring, purchase of equipment, studio improvements, technology, website and residencies. To be

eligible to apply for the RDS Craft Awards, emerging craft makers must have won a Design & Crafts Council Ireland, Future Makers Award or Support in the preceding year.

## Express your creativity with the Irish Wildlife Trust WildArt competition

The Irish Wildlife Trust has launched the second edition of their children's art competition WildArt. The competition will engage children in the wonders of local wildlife (within their lockdown surroundings of course!). Children up to the age of 18 years of age are invited to enter by creating a drawing, painting, model or collages on the theme: 'Irish Wildlife within my 5k'.

There are four age categories with a prize for the winner in each category. The age categories are 6 and under; 7 to 10; 11 to 14 and 15 to 18 years.

"We were delighted with the engagement we had last year, so we decided to run the competition again. This year, even though we are unfortunately in a similar position with regard to the lockdown, we still have a chance to enjoy nature thriving and to encourage more young people to pay attention to their local environment. We would like to see how local Irish wildlife is represented in children's art and that is why we decided on the theme" says Fabiola Vieira, IWT administrative assistant.

According to the Irish Wildlife Trust Co-ordinator, Kieran Flood, "Young people have a great interest in nature. With the current lockdown, our young people will not be traveling as far to explore wildlife. We hope this art competition will inspire children to explore nature

through their imagination and creativity."

Art and nature have always gone hand in hand. From early cave drawings to modern fashion styles, nature is a constant source of inspiration. It is hoped that this project will inspire young people to learn about Irish wildlife in their area and then

create an art piece inspired by that wildlife.

So get informed, get creative and have fun. For details of the competition rules as well as instructions on how to enter, see the competition webpage here [iwt.ie/wildart](http://iwt.ie/wildart).

The competition is open from now until 19 April.



## 2021 West Cork Chamber music festival to move online



Flautist Mary-Ellen Nagle Pic: Darragh Kane

West Cork Chamber Music Festival, which is due to take place from Friday, June 25 to Sunday, July 4, has had to move online. West Cork Music (WCM) has said it is devastated to have to make such a decision this year.

Since last summer the team at WCM have been making every effort to produce a live festival for 2021 – upending the normal timetable by scheduling 130 concerts and recitals, the largest ever programme. The idea was simple – to enable audiences to experience a full festival despite the strict limitations imposed by social

distancing.

The festival's plans for a live event were just completed with a full programme available on the website when the pandemic's third wave struck. Once it became clear that the uncertainty around restrictions would not be resolved, the team had to accept that a live festival, with a live audience, would not be possible. After more than a year listening to music through the veil of a computer screen, the 2021 festival was intended as a celebration of live music and to cancel it is a blow to everyone involved.

The WCM team is now focused on curating a Virtual Fes-

tival. Building on the experiences of last year, a larger online programme will be created with a more engaging and interactive online experience. Almost all the musicians engaged for the original programme will present at least one filmed concert from venues around Europe and the USA.

The programme for the 2021 Virtual West Cork Chamber Music Festival will be announced over the coming month. Keep an eye on [www.westcorkmusic.ie](http://www.westcorkmusic.ie) and West Cork Music's social media channels for further updates.



## people Home &amp; Garden

# Check your home insurance reflects rise in costs of rebuilding in Cork

The latest Guide to House Rebuilding Costs published by the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) shows that national average re-build costs have increased by an average of 7.3 per cent over the past 18 months. The average increase in Cork across all house types was 6.5 per cent.

Peter McCarthy, Chair of the Southern Region of the SCSI, said the main reason for the cost increases was compliance with new Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) standards, as well as a rise in the cost of building materials.

"We fully support the introduction of NZEB standards and recognise the key role they will play in helping to reduce CO2 emissions and reducing energy costs over the long term. However, from a building perspective, they do come with an upfront cost. For example, if

you're rebuilding a house – or 25 per cent or more of it – the 'envelope' or surface area of the home has to be bought up to a B2 BER rating. The envelope is the total surface area of the house, which leaks heat, so it includes external walls, windows, doors, the ground floor and roof or ceiling. Replacing heat pumps, temperature control systems, heat recovery systems all adds mechanical, electrical and plumbing costs to the rebuild process."

"In addition, Brexit has led to supply issues with building materials and increased the cost of a range of products, including insulation and timber products, mesh, structural steel, plasterboard and metal studs, to mention just a few. The construction industry has adapted well to working safely in the era of Covid and the new protocols have not led to significant cost increases for one off residential

rebuids."

TJ Cronin, who is Vice President of the SCSI warned Cork homeowners they may well face pro rata increases on their home insurance premiums due to the rise in rebuild costs and said it was really important that householders check they have adequate insurance.

"The reality of the situation is that if the rebuild cost of your home is €280K and you only have it insured for €210K, in the event of a catastrophic event such as a fire, you will be facing a shortfall of €70K. However, what a lot of homeowners don't realise is that if in that situation there was a partial loss, which cost €80K to repair, the insured party would only receive €60K and face a shortfall of €20K. This is because the homeowner in question has only insured their property to three quarters of its rebuilding cost."

"That is why it is important

for homeowners to put aside ten minutes, to check our easy to use rebuild calculator and to ensure the reinstatement costs required on their home insurance premiums are adequate and fully in line with current figures with regard to house type and location."

"It's also important that homeowners reassess their cover to take account of any changes such as home office extensions or garden offices. These have become increasingly popular with more people now working from home, but they need to be included in the house insurance. While premiums may rise as a result of these rebuilding cost increases, I would advise consumers to shop around to ensure they are getting the best value" Mr Cronin said.

The SCSI said that it's very important that homeowners understand the difference between



a valuation and rebuilding costs. A market valuation is the expected amount another person would pay for your property if it was placed on the open market.

The rebuilding costs are associated with the cost of building or replacing the dwelling. The SCSI says these figures can be very different so it's important that the SCSI calculator is not used for valuation purposes. If you require a market value

assessment go to [www.scsi.ie](http://www.scsi.ie) and search for a valuer or auctioneer/agent using our 'Find an Expert' search facility.

A House Rebuilding Calculator and the 2021 Guide to House Rebuilding Costs is available free of charge at [www.scsi.ie/consumer/build/house-rebuild-calculator/](http://www.scsi.ie/consumer/build/house-rebuild-calculator/)

## Riai architects launch annual charity initiative for Simon Community

RIAI Simon Open Door is back and ready to make a virtual impact on your real-world living space. Ireland's architects are ready to offer professional advice on your home improvements and it is all in aid of the Simon Communities. The RIAI and the Simon Communities are calling on members of the public to support the annual RIAI Simon Open Door campaign. Now in its 17th year, the campaign will run from Tuesday, 4th May to Friday, 14th May.

In return for a €95 donation, homeowners can receive an hour-long consultation with an RIAI-registered architect to discuss building, rebuilding or renovating their homes. All consultations take place online and all funds raised go directly to the Simon Communities to support their work in tackling homelessness.

Registration for the event is now open and people are encouraged to book a consultation with a RIAI-registered architect in their local area by visiting [www.simonopendoor.ie](http://www.simonopendoor.ie).

Commenting on this year's campaign, Ciaran O'Connor, RIAI President said: "RIAI Si-

mon Open Door is the perfect opportunity for homeowners to get professional advice from a Registered Architect on how to achieve a more flexible home for the times we live in. Over the last twelve months, we have spent more time than ever in our homes. From working to working out, our homes are being used in so many different ways. Now is the time for planning, this is a unique opportunity not to be missed. Registered Architects are standing by in every county to donate their time and support the Simon Communities. The RIAI and its members are proud to partner with the charity across Ireland to support its vital services at this time."

Jennifer Kitson, National Partnerships Manager for Simon Communities said: "The understanding that 'home' is more pronounced than ever as we continue to face the challenges of COVID-19 in 2021. Homelessness, already a deeply traumatic and isolating experience, has only been heightened by the pandemic. Shockingly, in the midst of this health crisis the number of single homeless adults increased 7%. The generous support of the public

and architects through the RIAI Simon Open Door campaign will help Simon Communities to continue to respond to homelessness during this COVID crisis, ensuring the safety of our clients and that we can continue the work to support people into a home of their own."

Registered Architect and RIAI Simon Open Door Ambassador, Dermot Bannon, MRIAI, said: "Lockdown has taught us all the value of our homes but also highlighted the issues within them. We have all struggled with space and functionality over the last 12 months. Our homes have become not only the place we live but the place we work, teach, exercise, entertain ourselves and get some head space. The RIAI Simon Open Door Event connects homeowners and Registered Architects up and down the country. Over the years people have got so much from the consultations, getting advice on everything from storage solutions to building a new house. All money raised goes to the Simon Communities to support them in tackling homelessness. Consultations are limited, so don't miss out."

The support received from



the RIAI Simon Open Door campaign in 2020 enabled the Simon Communities to provide essential resources to respond to COVID19, most critically by helping to fund supplies of PPE and to address the increased demand for Simon Communities services across the country.

RIAI Registered Architects can pledge to donate an hour of their time by signing up at [www.simonopendoor.ie/architects](http://www.simonopendoor.ie/architects).

## Consumer gardening spend reached highest-ever level in 2020

Bord Bia research released in March shows that consumer spend on gardening reached its highest-ever level at €1.2bn in 2020, an increase of more than half compared with 2018. The surge was driven by record levels of spend on garden products and outdoor plants. However, all products measured recorded double digit growth and total market spend is 14 per cent higher than the previous record high reported in 2007/08.

Carol Marks, Horticulture Sector Manager, Bord Bia said, "2020 was an extraordinary year for gardening activity due to Covid 19, amplified by a particularly warm and sunny spring. It is a hugely positive story that, in spite of a period of closure last year, the category has managed to achieve record growth. The garden became the focus of much of our attention during lockdown, and with the longer term prospect of remote working, consumers began to invest in their gardens, undertaking projects which heretofore were either on the long finger, or deemed low priority. Additionally, the positive sense of wellbeing along with the recognition that our gardens, balconies and outdoor spaces were a safe place for gatherings, made the garden an even more important part of life during 2020."

The research highlighted a number of key consumer gardening behaviours as a result of societal changes brought about by Covid-19. These included:

- **Reimagining outdoor spaces:** The biggest uplift in spend in 2020 (up 75 per cent vs 2018) was on garden products such as BBQ equipment, garden structures (such as sheds, trellising, and pergolas), garden accessories and other hard landscaping products as consumers rushed to build and re-develop new outdoor spaces.

- **Investing in the 'outdoor room':** Spend on outdoor and flowering plants increased by 51 per cent as people invested in making their outdoor space as attractive as indoors. Consumers focused on longer term investments in shrubs and herbaceous perennials in order to add colour and depth to their gardens.

- **Growing your own:** Spend on herbs, fruit and vegetables for growing at home recorded its highest level since measurement began 20 years ago, as consumers became more concerned about sustainability, the environment and health as a result of Covid 19. Planting food was also a positive way to engage young children for many parents, in the same way cooking from scratch and baking became enjoyable ways to pass the time.

- **Garden maintenance and makeovers:** Spend on garden maintenance rose by 57 per cent compared with 2018, as consumers tackled important maintenance jobs, which had previously been put on the long finger.



## people Home &amp; Garden

## Gardening in April

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April is an exciting month in the garden, which suddenly takes on a tapestry of fresh green. There is also great colour with dramatic flowering trees and shrubs in bloom: rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias will be providing splendid colour and later in the month, tulips should also be in full bloom.

Do keep up to date with weeding and deadheading, as it is important not to let weeds race ahead of you at this time of the year. Don't allow them to go to seed and perpetuate a decade of weeds. Some weed seeds with their light, fluffy seeds are dispersed widely with wind. Be especially careful of willow herb and thistle, as if these are allowed to go to seed you will have a legacy of several generations of persistent weeds. Hoeing early in the day on a warm, dry day is recommended.

#### Jobs for the month

Protect fruit blossom against frost. Tie in climbing and rambling roses. Sow hardy annuals such as calendula, escholtzia, nigella, night-scented and Virginian stock.

Feed citrus plants with a summer feed and continue until late October.

Increase watering for houseplants and indoor plants, using lukewarm water. Shrubs, perennials and roses will benefit



## GARDENING

John Hosford

The Weekend Garden Centre

from a feed this month. Choose a calm, dry day for application, preferably when rain is forecast.

Sow new lawns and repair bare patches.

Divide bamboos and water-lilies.

Protect roses against black-spot and mildew.

Give grey-leaved shrubs a trim to keep them bushy.

Divide perennials and stake tall growing varieties.

Protect emerging perennials against slugs, especially alstromerias, delphiniums, lupins, helenium and rudbeckia. Cut down any dead growth of perennials if you have not already.

Plant a succession of gladioli in a sunny, well-drained site to keep a continuous supply of very attractive cut flowers for the house and special occasions. They will also appreciate a sheltered site.

Get dahlias, canna and begonias off to a good start by placing them indoors in a tray or pot with moistened compost. The aim then is to plant outdoors into their flowering quarters when all risk of frost is over at the end of May. They should be well hardened-off/acclimatised before planting out.

#### Hanging Baskets/Window Boxes

If space allows undercover you can plant up hanging baskets, window boxes and troughs.

This will give your containers a headstart for the summer, allowing the roots to become established before placing outside for summer display. Use fresh, clean compost when planting up your containers and feed weekly with an organic, seaweed based liquid fertiliser. Check that all chains and brackets are in good condition and replace any that have expired their useful life.

#### Rockery/Alpine bowls/sinks

Choose some colourful alpines for your rockery/banks. It is hard to beat the display of



cascading, colourful aubretia, arabis, dianthus, saxifragas and helianthemums (rock roses). Get the area 100 per cent clear of weeds prior to commence planting. Strong, persistent perennial weeds can prove too competitive for newly planted alpines and rockery plants. Grit or decorative stone will provide an attractive finish to your display and will suppress weeds and help drainage.

#### Vegetable Garden

Sow tomatoes for outdoor planting now under cover. Flavour, yield and blight resistance are some of the key factors in choosing tomato varieties. Try the delicious 'Tumbling Tom', which is a delicious, sweet cherry variety. Sow the seed in trays or small pots containing fresh, clean compost. Water the compost thoroughly before sowing using a watering can with a fine rose. Allow to drain off for a few hours before sowing. Place in a propagator at 22 degrees celcius and cover with a sheet of glass or polythene and newspaper. Remove the cover immediately once the seeds emerge.

seed per pot or you can sow two seeds per pot – removing the weakest seedling and retaining the strongest seedling.

#### Seed Potatoes

Maincrop seed potatoes need to be planted now to get a decent crop. Plant in trenches 60cm (2 ft) apart to the depth of the spade, heaping the soil to one side. Put some compost or well-rotten manure in the trench, spacing the tubers about 38cm apart. Sprinkle organic fertiliser along the row before filling in and cover the tubers with soil, leaving it slightly mounded up.

Carrots may be sown this month. Protect against carrot fly with enviromesh. Carrots may be sown in succession until mid-July.

#### Successional Sowing

Continue successional sowing of lettuce, radish, beetroot, peas, broad beans, salad onions and turnips and salad leaves.

#### Fruit Garden

Early-flowering fruits may need some protection from frost by covering with hessian, old sheets or blankets, sacking or frost protection fleece. Uncover immediately in the morning to facilitate insect pollination. Ventilate protected strawberries on sunny days. Finish planting of new strawberry plants by mid-April. Tuck straw under strawberries to protect the fruits from rotting and soil.

Hand pollinate wall-trained peach and nectarine flowers using an artist's brush.

Spray at midday with a fine mist to help setting in dry conditions.

#### Lawn Care

Use an organic lawn feed at the end of April.

## Grow It Forward this Spring

A new initiative enabling half a million people across Ireland to enjoy the wide range of benefits that come from growing food at home has been launched by GIY – Grow It Yourself, in partnership with Healthy Ireland and Libraries Ireland.

The campaign will be supported by 25 library branches in Cork County, as part of the Government's Keep Well programme. Grow It Forward is designed to help the nation eat well by inspiring and supporting people to grow some of their own food at home while connecting with friends and family to join them.

Cork County Council's Library Service will distribute over 800 seed packs countywide. Each food growing pack includes seeds for beetroot, carrots, salad leaves, peas and tomatoes; a guide to help grow them and a postcard and gift tags to help share them. Those who sign up will also receive regular e-mails with growing support, video clips and ideas for how to 'grow it forward' by passing on seeds, seedlings or produce in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

The Grow It Forward initiative will see 50,000 free food growing kits given away, with participants asked to use the kits to share the



experience with ten people, enabling half a million people across Ireland to enjoy the wide range of benefits that come from growing food at home.

Contact your local Cork County library while packs last. See [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie) for contact information.



## people Home &amp; Garden



## A COTTAGE GARDEN PROJECT

Jean Perry

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...

I'm waking up earlier and earlier these days, which is just as well, as there is so much to do in the garden in spring. Most mornings it is a joy to be up and outside with the only distraction being birdsong. No traffic noise or phones ringing, just mooching about, checking the propagator to see if anything has germinated overnight, or if we've had another overnight visit from mice or slugs. In the outside garden there is lots to see already, lots of narcissus, tulips and my favourites at the moment fritillaria meleagris or snake-

## Blossom time

head fritillary. Over the last few years I have planted some each autumn in grass alongside a shaded path and they are so exotic at this time of year. The flowers are mostly dark purple with an almost chequered pattern, though occasionally a white variety pops up. These nectar rich flowers provide early sustenance for bumblebees and are easy to grow in grass or woodland edges. They are relatively inexpensive and the bulbs are available from most specialist bulb suppliers in the autumn. I have been planting some each autumn for the last three years and they seem to return reliably each year.

Spring is my favourite season, bringing daily changes to the garden, but the workload can also be overwhelming. I am

at an age where I have to try to pace myself a little, and one sunny day when I lose track of time and the dog has to come and find me to remind me it's dinner time, can lead to a day or even two of recovery. But timing is everything with jobs such as pricking out and potting on tomatoes, so I try to prioritise by pricking at least a couple of trays of salad or annual flowers each day, and gradually working through the 25 varieties of tomatoes we grow. There is also keeping up with the sowing of vegetable seeds, it pays to be organised, a trait I am not generally known for. My loved ones will tell you that this is an understatement. My greatest aid in organising my sowing plan is a planting by the moon calendar. This year I have found

one that is in the form of a large poster, decorative enough to pin up on the kitchen wall, which so far has already saved me hours as I haven't had to search for the book most days which was my normal way of doing things. Whether you believe in the efficacy of planting by moon cycles or not, it certainly puts some structure into sowing plans. I know for instance that today, as I write, is a fruit day and I could sow peas, beans or cucumbers and so on; and by the weekend it will be a root day, ideal for planting potatoes, parsnips or any other root crop. You could explore the subject further, for instance whether it's a waxing or waning moon, but I am definitely not qualified to go into more detail. I just know it works for me and I follow the instructions.

Spring is also blossom time and the first thing to blossom in my garden was a wild cherry, prunus 'Woodfield Cluster'. I cherish this plant for its tenacity as well as its really pretty white blossom. I can't call it a tree, as it was inadvertently pruned, when only a couple of years old. It wasn't done by me; least said soonest mended. Then it was caught by the strimmer; I don't use the strimmer either. It is now more or less a shrub, but quite beautiful in full blossom and I saw my first bumblebee of the season happily feasting inside one of its flowers. Long may it survive!



## April is all about potting on

Mags Riordan of Bumblebee Farm is guiding us through the planning, planting and caring of a bed for cut flowers. By the time summer arrives the bed should boast an abundance of pollinator-friendly flowers ready for cutting and enjoying. This month she focuses on potting your seedling on.

With the equinox behind us growth will really begin to take off. Seeds germinate and develop true leaves at different rates, so potting on will happen over the course of the month, which is perfectly natural. The key is to move them on before they get leggy and start competing with each other: I multi-sow but not too thickly with the smaller seeds.

Water seedlings at least 15 minutes beforehand and allow excess water to drain away. This helps by making it easier

to tease seedlings apart and reduces the risk of damaging the fragile roots.

Fill your module trays with compost, level off and tap down by tapping the container on the work surface; watering beforehand is helpful – this also helps settle compost and eliminate air pockets. I gently remove the cell from my module tray containing my seedlings and again, very gently, tease the

seedlings apart. Always hold by a seed leaf, being very careful not to damage the fragile stem. Use a dibber, pencil or your finger to make a hole to drop the seedling in, making sure it's planted deep enough that the seed leaf is flush or if stretched below the compost level. Gently firm compost around the stem being careful not to compact thus allowing free movement of fine root hairs.

If you're growing on, on a sunny windowsill, be sure to turn trays every few days, otherwise plants will stretch reaching for light. At this stage of development light and moisture are critical. Keep seedlings moist but never waterlogged.

As they develop and roots become visible at the bottom of the container, they can be hardened off by placing outside by day, but bring them back

in under protection by night. This process needs to be done for about two weeks. Knowing your last frost date will determine when you will be planting out into their final position.

Our next Instagram live is Sunday, April 18 where we will be going through potting on, caring for your new plants and hardening off. As the insect timed count kicks off in April, we will be doing this and

encouraging you to join in and submit your findings to [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie). We will also be chatting with garden designer Leoline Cornelius about designing a border with pollinator friendly plants. Any questions can be submitted on Saturday, April 17 and we will answer these on Sunday.

Bee Kind



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# Wardrobe storage solutions



## INTERIORS

### Maura Mackey

Maura Mackey is a Cork-based interior and retail display designer. A professional with an eye for detail and interior styling, she thrives on giving any home the 'showhouse feel' when up for sale or rental from a home staging point of view. On the other hand, if you are looking to give your home a makeover or restyling, 'Maura Mackey Design' will help you achieve the home of your dreams. P: 087-7699714. [maura@mauramackeydesign.ie](mailto:maura@mauramackeydesign.ie)

Storage is a very popular topic in the interiors world; whether you're renovating an existing bedroom or moving into a new home, a carefully planned and designed wardrobe should be high on your priority list.

One of the most used furniture pieces in homes, a wardrobe doesn't have to be just functional – its design, colour and finish should be a big consideration in the overall décor of a bedroom. When investing in a wardrobe, always ensure it is of good quality and will stand the test of time.

The first thing you need to decide on is where you are going to place your wardrobe in the room. Consider the following:

1. Is there any damp on the wall where I want to place my wardrobe? If so, address this issue before you commence, as you don't want damp clothes in your wardrobe! Keep in mind that fitted wardrobes are often a magnet for damp and mould because they can cut off the circulation of air behind them.
2. Don't place your wardrobe where it will block the natural light coming into your room – think about how natural and artificial light work in this space.
3. Don't pick a dark finish for your wardrobe if your bedroom is a dark room. Keep in mind that mirrored and panel doors optimise light by bouncing it around the room.
4. Decide on a paint colour

for your room before you decide on a wardrobe colour – neutral is a good choice for closets normally but if you have a really bright space then you afford to be bold. A few (lighter) colour options if you are painting your wardrobes are Skimming Stone or French Grey from Farrow and Ball. I also love De Nimes from Farrow and Ball – this has a deep teal/blue tone in it. Remember when picking a wardrobe colour that it will have to evolve with you; if you change the paint colour on the walls, your wardrobe colour may need to be changed too – unless it's a neutral tone to start with of course. Don't play it too safe – go with what you love.

5. The height of your ceiling

will determine the functional layout of the interior of your wardrobe – you should ensure that there is a minimum of 1100mm hanging space for shirts with a hang space for shorter tops below.

6. If there is limited space available, you could always consider adding external drawer units, as this will maximise your internal hanging and shelf space.
7. For those who have a big enough room but perhaps lower ceilings, a central island is a great solution for additional storage, especially if you have a lot of accessories to store.

#### Free standing wardrobes

Available in wood, metal, and many more materials, traditional free-standing wardrobes

are perfect if your house leans towards being retro-inspired. Inexpensive yet classic they are a good option if you do not want to invest too much. The only drawback is they do occupy more space than fitted or wall-mounted...but a plus is that you can move them around as necessary.

If you like a bohemian look try scouring antique stores and secondhand shops for intriguing dressers and armoires that tell their own story. Unlike other design styles, furniture in boho chic doesn't have to match – the more eclectic the pieces are, the better. You can even take plain pieces and change out the hardware and paint colours for something more your style. If you have bright and bold jewellery, don't hide it away. Instead, consider open storage options such as hooks or bowls to make them part of your décor.

#### Sliding door wardrobes

Without hinged doors, sliding door wardrobes allow you to make more use of floor space. Many sliding door systems integrate mirrors to give the impression of even more space in the room. These are perfect for a minimalist contemporary decor.

#### Custom-made wardrobes

If you want a colour-coordinated wardrobe, go for customised closets that can be fully matched to your needs and the décor of your room. Dictate how many shelves and drawers you need, add extra lighting, pull-down hanging options (if you are not tall like me!) and more. It's a good option if you are creative and like things a certain way.

#### Walk-in wardrobe

These are the most luxurious and the most spacious of all; the walk-in is the best in town. Build a walk-in wardrobe if you want to display your closet in an organised way; a full-length mirror, sit down area, jewellery section, shoe area, bag and accessories section can all be added. It's also possible to create different compartments to put outfits in, separating your formal and casual wear. Add in your own personal touches: I love to see a vase of flowers somewhere in there! This choice can be expensive but should be considered when building a new house if you have the space.

With so many different types of wardrobes available choose wisely and according to your budget, but whatever you do, choose a piece you'd love to live with!



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SPORTING  
TALES

Paul Lordan

Paul Lordan is a sports and history enthusiast, and he is delighted to combine his passions in his column. Paul is well placed to comment on sport as a former hurler and footballer with Shamrocks. He is also a former Munster Senior League soccer player and manager with Avondale United, Casement Celtic, Garryduff and Passage AFC. Paul's grá for all things West Cork results from the fact that he is descended from a family of farmers in the Coolmountain area.

George Cornelius 'Con' O'Kelly was born in Gloun, near Dunmanway in 1886. Like many young men from Dunmanway and its surrounding areas at the time, Con O'Kelly was forced to venture abroad to gain employment. He settled into a thriving Irish immigrant community in Kingston Upon Hull, England. Con lodged with the Larvin family in the Old Town area, and later went on to marry their daughter Sabina. O'Kelly joined the Kingston Upon Hull City Police in 1902 and became PC249. He settled in to a role with the local fire department, which at the time functioned as an arm of the local police force. Whilst settling in on Humberside, Con's colleagues introduced him to wrestling via his local club, the Hull Amateur Wrestling Club.

Con O'Kelly's natural wrestling ability was quickly noticed by the club instructors and he was promptly entered in to a series of local competitions. He stood at an imposing six foot three inches in height, and weighed in at 220 pounds. Contemporary descriptions indicate that O'Kelly's ample frame was reinforced with a plentiful supply of lean muscle. He was immediately successful, and after a short period of intensive training, Con put his name down to take on the Northern Counties champion in Liverpool. Although still a relative novice in terms of experience,

The oft told story and laudable accomplishments of Ballydehob's resident professional wrestler Dan 'Danno' O'Mahony were actually pre-dated by the equally impressive and decidedly more authentic achievements of an enthusiastic amateur from Gloun. Twenty-seven years before the Irish Whip's AWA and NWA World Heavyweight title wins, Con O'Kelly was the biggest name in world wrestling... **Paul Lordan** finds out the true extent of West Cork's unlikely dalliance with the sport of wrestling.

he defeated his opponent within three minutes, establishing himself as a contender within Britain's wrestling community. This win was followed up with three successive wins against experienced, high ranking opponents. In 1907, the Hull Amateur Wrestling Club took the decision to enter Con into the British Amateur Wrestling Heavyweight Championship, and he rewarded their faith by delivering the club's first national title.

As the British Amateur Wrestling Heavyweight champion, Con O'Kelly was rewarded with a place on the British Olympic team for the 1908 Olympic Games in London. However, his preparation for the games was severely disrupted in dramatic fashion by a work place injury, incurred when a wall collapsed on him as he was fighting a fire at Soulsby's sawmill in Hull in March, 1908. Thankfully, O'Kelly recovered quickly from a badly bruised back and shoulder and many facial lacerations and managed to regain his fitness before the commencement of the games. Con defeated the American Lee Talbot, and Englishman Harry Foskett before facing fellow Munster man, Edmond Barrett. Barrett hailed from Ballyduff, near Listowel in County Kerry. He was something of a sporting all-rounder, and also competed in the shot, javelin, discus, and tug of war competitions in the 1908 Olympic programme and achieved a gold medal in the latter. He also famously helped London to a 1-5 to 0-4 victory over Cork in the 1901 All Ireland Hurling Final. Although defeated by O'Kelly, he went on to claim the bronze medal, and would compete on the British Olympic wrestling team again in the 1912 games in Stockholm. His victory over Barrett meant that Con faced Jacob Gunderson of Norway in the final. Although 11 years O'Kelly's senior, it was reported that he had a major physical advantage over the Corkman.

An experienced matman, Gunderson was the Scandinavian and United States champion. It took Con all of 13 minutes to pin the Norwegian in the first bout, before he eased to victory in the decisive second bout and became the first Irishman to win an Olympic gold medal in wrestling.

Con received his gold medal from Queen Alexandra, who also presented him with a green oak leaf badge in recognition of his great feat. After the conclusion of the games, he returned to his adopted city of Hull amidst a great deal of fanfare. He was greeted by the Chief of Police Major Malcolm, the Chief of Worship Street Fire Station, and a cheering crowd of over 12,000 people. He was chaired aloft by several of his fire station colleagues, and placed upon a patriotically decorated, horse drawn fire engine, on which he toured the city. Con continued to wrestle sporadically after his Olympic victory. This included a professional bout where he squared up against Galway native Pat Connolly in Grand Central Palace, New York in 1909, which made headlines for all of the wrong reasons. The match degenerated in to a fistfight, and



'It was conceded to be the worst wrestling bout that has been held in this city, and the Irishmen, of whom there were many in the house, hissed from the beginning, and finally were loud in their declarations that neither of the contestants was an Irishman'.

*The New York Times*

ended in a double disqualification for both men. The New York Times report on the bout from November 23, 1909 was particularly damning. It stated that 'It was conceded to be the worst wrestling bout that has been held in this city, and the Irishmen, of whom there were many in the house, hissed from

the beginning, and finally were loud in their declarations that neither of the contestants was an Irishman'. Clearly unperturbed by his New York experience, Con would emigrate to the United States after retiring from active competition in the early 1920s. He later spent some time on the family farm in Gloun, before returning to Kingston Upon Hull where he died in 1947. Sporting excellence clearly ran in the family, as O'Kelly's son, George Cornelius 'Con' O'Kelly Junior would represent Britain as a heavyweight boxer at the 1924 Olympics. A medal

would elude O'Kelly Junior, who later became a priest and passed away in 1968 in Stockport.

The fact that we have won a mere nine Olympic gold medals since the foundation of the state proves that an Olympic gold medal is a rare feat for an Irish athlete. Although his medal was won whilst representing Great Britain, this observer feels that such a technicality should have no bearing on our willingness to tell the story of Con O'Kelly of Gloun. He is rightly regarded as an Irish Olympic hero!

## Correction



In last month's edition we incorrectly identified the player to the right of Eamonn Young as Tadhgo Crowley. It is in fact Cork and Clonakilty player Fachtna O'Donovan. Many thanks to Thomas Connolly who played with both men and got in touch with the correction.

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## Fairyhouse Easter Festival Preview on Paddy Power Media's podcast 'From The Horse's Mouth'

In this week's absorbing Fairyhouse Easter Festival Preview on Paddy Power Media's podcast 'From The Horse's Mouth' starring Paddy Power ambassador and ITV and Racing TV pundit Ruby

Walsh, the former top pilot is joined by Paddy Power trader and up-and-coming media star Frank Hickey in a show that looks forward to three days of superb Jumping action at the Meath venue this coming

weekend.

This week's episode, as usual brilliantly hosted by Patrick Kennelly and recorded on Tuesday, covers Ruby and Frank's verdicts on the Irish Grand National, the two

top-class races on the Sunday and one of Saturday's contests and to listen to the whole of this week's hugely-entertaining show:

Head to: [podfollow.com/horsesmouth](http://podfollow.com/horsesmouth)

## Inland Fisheries Ireland launches Go Fishing Week

For the first time ever Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) launches a virtual Go Fishing Week 2021, a national celebration of fishing with a programme of online events taking place. Running from Sunday, April 25 to Monday, May 3, Go Fishing Week provides an opportunity to connect with people virtually across the country to encourage them to try fishing by making information accessible to all. The programme of events will spread awareness of a series of themes during the course of the week including sustainability, protecting habitats and wellbeing benefits.

Francis O'Donnell, CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland said: "This year Go Fishing Week aims to encourage people to learn more about angling while also having important conversations around sustainable fishing, climate change and the cultural significance of our inland waters here in Ireland. We are delighted this year to be able to bring our events into a virtual capacity and make them accessible to everyone by doing so. From webinars, podcasts and videos to virtual competitions we hope that people of all ages will get involved and join us in celebrating Go Fishing Week 2021."

ing Go Fishing Week 2021."

Go Fishing Week 2021 events will take place online and are free to join, but registration may be required. A sample of the Go Fishing Week 2021 events taking place and available to join online are:

- Specimen Fish – Join the Irish Specimen Fish Committee in a webinar to learn all about specimen fish and the records of Irish specimen fish. The webinar will take place on Sunday, April 25.
- Free a Flounder – Watch a video to show you how to safely remove a hook from a flounder and release it back into the water.
- Safety on the water – Join a webinar on all things around how to be safe around water especially as we come into the peak angling season and raise awareness of safety among all the new anglers we have met recently.

To learn more about what is happening and how you can get involved, visit [www.fisheriesireland.ie/gofishin-week](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/gofishin-week). Also details will be posted in the run up to the week on Inland Fisheries Ireland Facebook page: and Twitter.

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Sean Creedon

## Nissan Qashqai flexes its muscles with hybrid and electric versions

The Nissan Qashqai has been one of the most popular crossover cars in Ireland since it was launched here 13 years ago. That's not just PR speak, the company have figures to prove it, as 50,000 Irish motorists drive a Qashqai and Nissan has sold over three million units of the car in Europe since it was launched.

Recently Nissan launched the third generation of the car that became known as their 'cash-cow.' The new version is slightly bulkier looking, but the

big attraction this time is that the new Qashqai for the first time will offer hybrid and electric versions. I suppose that was an obvious addition, as Nissan have been pushing their electric Leaf for a few years now.

Nissan say that the all-new Qashqai is a key part of the company's strategy to achieve 50 per cent electrified sales in Europe by 2024. Similar to the Leaf, the new Qashqai e-power benefits from the 'one-pedal' driving experience called e-Pedal. Drivers can start, accelerate and decelerate using only the accelerator pedal. I tried the e-Pedal in the Leaf and it takes a little time to get used to it.

The third generation is definitely more muscular, sharp and modern. On the exterior, the Qashqai's enhanced body stance is more purposeful, with prominent shoulder lines, an extended wheelbase and imposing 20-inch alloy wheels introduced to Qashqai for the first time.

The new version will not only be available with a 1.3 DiG-T petrol engine equipped with mild hybrid technology, but it also represents the European debut of e-power, Nissan's innovative and award winning powertrain, that draws technologies from the Leaf.

The 12V mild hybrid system available on new Qashqai is a more affordable hybrid technology that provides torque assist, extended idle stop, quick restart and coasting stop with improvements to both fuel economy and CO2 output. It's mated to the refined 1.3 DiG-T petrol engine that was introduced to Qashqai in 2018.

The 1.3 petrol motor will be offered with two power outputs, 138hp and 156hp, with either a 6-speed manual transmission, or new Xtronic gearbox. Max engine power arrives at 5500rpm, with maximum available torque of 270Nm at a convenient 1750rpm on 156hp Xtronic and high power MT variants.

The Qashqai also offers an advanced infotainment system with a broad portfolio of connected devices including effortless integration of smartphones, in-car Wi-Fi for up to seven devices and Nissan Connect Services, a dedicated app with which to interact with and monitor the vehicle.

Inside an innovative new 10.8-inch heads up-display (HUD) provides the biggest-in-segment image size. Key navigation, driver assistance and road information are projected onto the wind-



screen within the driver's line of vision. Home-to-Car features are compatible with Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa devices.

Pricing will be announced this summer. Further information and details about Qashqai are available by contacting your local Nissan dealer or by visiting [www.nissan.ie](http://www.nissan.ie).

The first customers who order are being offered a special launch version called the Premiere Edition, which will offer an extended palette of two-tone

colour options and advanced technology convenience features.

Seamus Morgan, M.D. Nissan Ireland said: "The new Qashqai combines the best of Nissan's pioneering crossover and EV expertise. It allows new and existing Qashqai drivers to experience hybrid and electric driving without range or charging concerns in an unmistakably stylish crossover that continues to deliver everything they would expect from a family car."

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