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Mick Flannery playing O'Donovan Rossa Memorial Park in Skibbereen on August 29 as part of Skibbereen Arts Festival and Cork County Council's "Cork Co Co Pops" series.



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ENVIRONMENT
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Frontline medical staff remember lives lost to Covid-19

Healthcare staff from hospitals throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, including a team from West Cork will cycle to Dublin this week to remember all those who lost their lives to Covid-19.

Before joining up with the main group, the West Cork cyclists will collect white roses at each hospital in West Cork representing those who died from Covid.

After the two-day ICU4U cycle of remembrance, a memorial event will be held at the Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge in front of 7000-plus white roses, including those collected in West Cork, representing the number of lives lost

On Saturday, September 4, members of the public are invited to visit the commemoration site to take a rose and remember a loved one.

The event also aims to raise €150k for those impacted by the secondary challenges of the pandemic through ALONE (older people), Aware (mental health supports), Aware NI (supports for overcoming depression) and Breakthrough Cancer Research (new treatments for cancer patients). To donate or for more see icu4u.ie or text ICU4U to 50300.

Organiser of ICU4U Dr. Patrick Seigne, Consultant Intensivist at Cork University Hospital ICU, said, "My colleagues and I working

in the ICU, hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and other frontline services have witnessed incredible tragedy over the past year because of Covid-19, so we've come together to do a remembrance event for the victims and their families. We have all seen the secondary challenges of the pandemic, in particular with older people, those in nursing homes, those experiencing anxiety and mental illness, and cancer patients so we hope the cycle will also raise much needed funds for four charities supporting these vulnerable people in our society – ALONE, Aware, Aware NI and Breakthrough Cancer Research.

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Peter Drucker, one of the world's most influential thinkers on management



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Wild about nature

Restoring our ecosystems and reversing biodiversity declines has never been so important. While not without some controversy, for example the debate sparked by the concept of ‘bringing the wolves back into the Irish countryside’, ‘rewilding’ our land has been described as a progressive approach to conservation that can bring us closer to realising these goals and help to mitigate the effects of global warming and climate change that is causing our planet to slowly perish.

It’s about helping nature to help itself, which **Mary O’Brien** says can be seen just outside Ballydehob and not far from Bantry, off a quite boreen in the hills of the Mizen Peninsula, where Glensallagh provides just such a wild haven for some of West Cork’s natural world. The wildness of this diverse habitat is its beauty: Buddleia bushes pulsate with the susurrations of literally hundreds of butterfly wings; the undergrowth left to its own devices speaks too in the stridulation of insects under its protection; heads of wildflowers sway, not with the wind, but with the vibration of visiting bees; birds call out overhead or sing from neighbouring trees.

Purchased in 1989 by now retired exploration geologist Richard Speir, this 47-acre property was originally farmland but over the years under Richard’s custody, a mixture of native and exotic plant and tree species have been planted to rewild the land and encourage pollinators. Today the property is a tapestry of wildflower meadows, woodland and glades. However it’s not all

about providing sustenance for our wild friends. Glensallagh is also renowned for its bounty of fruit and vegetables, most of which is sold locally to shops and restaurants, and Richard has been known to cultivate over 200 varieties of vegetable in a good growing season, especially oriental and continental salad leaves and brassicas. There are two vegetable gardens, maintained entirely on organic principles,

two greenhouses with peaches and grapes, an extensive fruit garden, orchard and two polytunnels. In 2019, Glensallagh was acknowledged in the craft category at the respected Euro-Toques Ireland Food Awards for its eco-friendly and varied vegetable production.

Before establishing roots in West Cork, Yorkshire born, Scotland raised, Richard Speir roamed this planet as an exploration geologist, from Australia



Richard Speir’s vision is to set up a ‘Born to Rewild’ Trust to fund an initiative that would see Glensallagh being utilised for academic research and public education.

where he also worked as a sheep stockman, over the Star Mountains in Papua New Guinea and across the plains of Africa. In 1980, his work with a Canadian Company brought him to the green of Ireland for the very first time. It was during this brief sojourn that Richard decided to make his stay more permanent and base himself in West Cork; he bought a property in Castle-townshend before heading off again on his travels with work – back to Australia, Tanzania for the first time, followed by some consulting work in London.

“I never really felt like I belonged anywhere and when you feel like that it’s easy to work in an industry like exploration,” he explains. “It offered me the opportunity to travel and see all these amazing places all over the world, the Serengeti for example, one of the most spectacular landscapes I’ve ever visited...we had it all to ourselves.”

Richard admits that around this time, while he still loved the travelling, he did tire of geology. Intent on making a change, the intrepid explorer bought a 43ft voyaging yacht with the ambition of supporting inshore marine research; and sailed to Azores, supporting Dr Euan Dunn (Principal Marine Advisor at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) et al., ringing Roseate Tern chicks. After a few more years of sailing on the Western Indian Ocean, helping with various inshore research projects on protected species and dodging pirates along the way, his funds began to dwindle. Following a necessary revisiting to exploration work, Richard returned to London in 1990, where he set up a Trust with the aim of funding a ’70 catamaran sailing research vessel, a project

which unfortunately was not successful. It was at this time that he also purchased the Glensallagh property outside Ballydehob.

Richard spent the next few years living and working in Tanzania, until the collapse of the mining and exploration industry in 1997 brought him back to Glensallagh, where alongside doing some consulting work, he threw himself into toiling the land and creating a productive vegetable garden. During this time, he also set up and ran an exploration office in Tanzania for an Irish consulting group, which is where he met Dr Julie Hastings (Jules), a medical anthropologist. Jules

“I never really felt like I belonged anywhere and when you feel like that it’s easy to work in an industry like exploration. It offered me the opportunity to travel and see all these amazing places all over the world, the Serengeti for example, one of the most spectacular landscapes I’ve ever visited...we had it all to ourselves.”

returned with Richard to West Cork and proved the impetus needed to finally relax into one landscape; the couple settled at Glensallagh, growing vegetables and planting up to 200 species of trees and shrubs.

In the early 90s, Richard had planted 18,000 trees on Glensallagh, including a mix of oaks, ash, sycamore and beech, on roughly two thirds of

the available ground. Now in the company of these, there are many more exotic specimens thriving in the temperate climate of West Cork; *Nothofagus antarctica*, the southernmost tree species in the world and the unusual *Carrierea calycina* or goat horn tree, native to China, to name just two.

While Sitka and Lodgepole pine were originally planted on some of the property, these are now about to be harvested and an ambitious rewilding project is planned for the 10 acres.

Richard’s vision is to set up a ‘Born to Rewild’ Trust to fund an initiative that would see Glensallagh being utilised for academic research and public education.

However, he has now reached the great age of 77 and, while still sporting the same enthusiasm for life and his projects; Richard is not as strong in body as he used to be. Glensallagh needs a new energetic custodian to drive it forward. “An academic smallholder would be the perfect candidate, someone with an interest in research,” says

Continued on next page...





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Richard passionately.

“There are so many things we could do,” he says. “The bird and insect population has gone up enormously since we started planting trees and let nature do its thing underneath and around them all.”

Aside from the rewilding project, there is also the opportunity to develop the vege-

table growing business and raise stock under and beside commercial forestry. There is enormous potential at Glensallagh for the right person.

How will Richard keep busy when he does hand over the reins? He has it in mind to find a sound 75ft fishing boat suitable for converting to sail for use as inshore research on

the Atlantic coast.

After all, as a wise man once said: ‘It’s better to live rich, than to die rich’...

If you are interested in getting involved with Glensallagh, contact Richard on info@glensallagholidays.com.

Six county towns to benefit from Streetscape Enhancement Scheme



Cork County Council has been allocated €320,000 to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfront and street facades in six county towns through the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme. Bandon, Castletownbere, Charleville, Fermoy, Macroom and Passage West are set to receive support through the scheme, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Grants of up to 100 per cent, or €8,000, are available to cover works including painting, signage replacement, shopfront improvement, scaffolding, materials, lighting, street furniture and planting. Business and property owners are encouraged to apply through their relevant local Municipal District Office. The closing date for applications is September 7.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan welcomed

Present at the launch of the scheme in Bandon Town were, the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan with, from left: Pat Dooley and Jonathan Kelly from Bandon Tidy Towns; Peter Ableby from the Bandon Business Assoc. and Cllr Alan Coleman. Pic: Brian Loughheed

the scheme saying, “Enhancing building facades and shopfronts can lead to a distinct and memorable identity for towns, reinforcing pride of place for residents and unforgettable impressions for visitors.

“This scheme will enable property owners and businesses in these towns to further partake in the great community effort that goes into creating a colourful welcoming town centre.”

Deputy Chief Executive of Cork County Council, James Fogarty added, “This funding scheme for the successful Cork County towns is most welcome, providing an excellent opportunity for communities and businesses to continue the work

undertaken in the past two years side by side with the Council under Project ACT. The local focus will ensure that the selected towns will be able to best express themselves, and continue their successes in attracting visitors, placemaking, and enriching local economic and community life.”

The Streetscape Enhancement Scheme is a key part of Our Rural Future, the Government’s five-year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland and is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

For information and contact details for Cork County Council’s Municipal District Offices, visit www.corkcoco.ie

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Ireland needs to live up to goal of 'Leave No One Behind' in Afghanistan crisis

I found it hard to sleep last night with the thoughts going around my head. I was thinking, as I lay there in my bed, of the many women, mothers, girls, laying in their own beds or on floors or the ground, or countless other places, in Afghanistan.

My daughters were asleep near me, safely tucked up in their own beds, in their own rooms. Their familiar faces moved through my thoughts:

my eldest, an absolute character whose vibrant personality is matched only by her vulnerability as a young woman with special needs.

I was thinking of my second daughter, a humanitarian and independent woman who has first-hand experience of working with people in extreme poverty and need. My youngest, too, was in my thoughts. She is a creative recent graduate, who is so talented, gifted.

For her final year project in 3D sculpture, she created the most amazing sculpture of her eldest sister. It captured her spirit. But for me it captured something else too, it captured something of the essence of family, of the ties that bind us. That also came into my head, as I lay there trying to get to sleep, and I thought of the trauma and heartbreak so many families are going through at the moment. We have Afghan people living in our midst today. I have been hearing first-hand of what they are going through, thinking of their wider families in Afghanistan.

Thinking of my own three daughters, counting my blessings and hoping, as every mother hopes, that they will continue to be safe and well, I realised, in the sanctuary of my home, in a town, in a country, led by a democratically-elected government, where we live in relative prosperity; the statistics are stacked in favour of them remaining safe, living long, healthy lives.

My thoughts kept returning to Afghanistan. Many individual stories have found their way to me over recent days, but I was thinking of one particular mother. Of the relief she must have felt when she, her many children and her husband got word that they had been granted a visa, which will allow them to leave the country for Ireland. I was thinking, sadly of the horror, the terror she must have felt, having fled her rural home to take shelter with her family and many others in a house in Kabul, when it became clear that it was not



GROUNDLED

An occasional column by
MEP Grace O'Sullivan

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.

safe to travel to the airport. The airport is less than 10km away from where they are now hiding. Those few short miles would be so dangerous for her, her husband, their children, that they could not risk travelling them. It would be particularly dangerous for their daughters, who would have to pass through Taliban checkpoints along the way. They are certain that without official, military assistance, they could not make it onto the plane where their seats are booked.

This story is not unique. For obvious reasons I can't go into too much detail, but suffice to say this is one of many, many families who are in similarly

terrifying and hopeless situations as the current evacuation window closes.

Like so many people throughout Ireland I have been following the news reports with a heavy heart. As a politician I am doing everything I can behind the scenes. I called on government officials to continue efforts to ensure safe passage for refugees fleeing Afghanistan, and to prioritise expanding the reach of the Refugee Programme.

With the situation in Afghanistan spiralling into a humanitarian catastrophe, I would like to see Ireland being leaders and unifiers in the EU and international efforts to come up with appropriate, effective responses.

My team and I have been engaging with NGOs and people on the ground as stories emerge of vast numbers of people desperately trying to flee the country to safety. These are people whose prior work or activism makes them targets for Taliban brutality.

We have been hearing of countless Afghan citizens, even those with documentation, currently in hiding, unable to get through dangerous roads (with multiple Taliban checkpoints) to reach Kabul airport and get on evacuation flights. Planes have been waiting for them, but the window is rapidly shutting down. One of three charter evacuation planes with 345 seats departed from Kabul yesterday with only 50 passengers. It's unforgivable in an already horrific situation. Add to this, yesterday's explosions in the vicinity of the airport and you have a chaotic, life-threatening situation.

It's understandable that, thus far, government focus has been around efforts to evacuate Irish citizens. Of course, I appreciate the very real concerns for their safety, but we must not forget those Afghan citizens on the ground who have worked with

national and overseas NGOs, or national efforts in Afghanistan progressing democracy and equality over recent years. They are in fear for their own and their families' lives and safety.

Ireland has committed to give refuge to 150 Afghan nationals under the Refugee Protection Programme, but this is simply not enough and doesn't honour the pledge we made when we signed up to the overarching principle of the Sustainable Development Goals to: 'Leave No One Behind'. It's deeply alarming that at the moment, even documented people are finding it impossible to get to the airport in Kabul, safely.

In light of the above, along with Ireland's position as the upcoming head of the UN Security Council and with the recent Department of Foreign Affairs delegation, including army rangers, deployment to and return from Kabul, I've called on government officials to keep working on arranging safe passage for those in urgent need of refuge.

I've also called on the Government to immediately set up an Afghanistan Emergency Task Force, bringing together NGOs, humanitarian organisations, the Department of Foreign Affairs and others, to urgently respond to the deteriorating humanitarian crisis, and find ways, in the short-term, to rescue and evacuate those most vulnerable and in immediate or imminent danger and, in the longer-term, develop a strategic response to the crisis, including a concerted effort to foster international unity around establishing a humanitarian corridor for ongoing evacuations, an expansion of Ireland's commitments around accepting Afghan refugees, a strengthening of sponsorship programmes and so on.

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Irish search and rescue team returns to the water with Europe expecting rise in Afghan refugees

After a three-month long detention, Refugee Rescue return to their life-saving work in the Mediterranean as part of the Sea-Eye 4 ship. During their first mission together in May, Refugee Rescue together with Sea Eye saved a total of 408 lives, including 150 children, but were subsequently detained in Palermo by Italian authorities while excessive requirements were demanded of the ship. The ship was finally freed due to assistance from German authorities, but its time in detention left one less vessel in the Mediterranean to assist boats in distress. In 2021 so far, the number of deaths in the Central Mediterranean

are four times higher than that of last year.

Refugee Rescue is an Irish search and rescue organisation that has gained an international reputation for working tirelessly saving the lives of up to 15,000 people off the Greek island of Lesbos. The organisation was formed in late 2015 by ordinary Irish citizens in response to the refugee crisis unfolding on the borders of Europe.

Now, back on the water in the Central Mediterranean—the deadliest migration route off the Libyan coast, their life-saving rescue vessel, named Mo Chara ('my friend' in Irish) forms a crucial part of the Sea Eye 4 ship along with its experienced

SAR crew.

Over 22,069 women, men and children have drowned attempting to cross the Mediterranean since 2014. 813 people have already died at sea this year. On average, five people drown attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean route every day, and without any EU-funded search and rescue missions, these numbers will only continue to rise, as they have done since 2020. The Refugee Rescue team, along with a handful of civil NGO vessels, are working alone, while being regularly detained and often criminalised by local and European authorities. With the troubling events currently unfolding in Afghani-

stan and the increasing number of attempted crossings via the Mediterranean due to the refusal of EU authorities to offer safe and legal pathways to asylum, Refugee Rescue are expecting the number of distress cases at sea to rise dramatically in the coming months.

Refugee Rescue was founded by Belfast natives and its Irish volunteers strongly believe that our own legacy of forced migration by sea throughout the Irish struggles of famine and violence, puts us in a unique position to offer not only deep empathy but also solidarity to those who must do the same as we did in search of a better life.

However, to embark on future



missions, Refugee Rescue are in urgent need of funds. Help them to continue their life saving work by donating through their website: www.refugeerescue.org. Please help by donating what you can.

"At the very core of our Irish consciousness we, similarly, are a people who have had to flee persecution and poverty

by sea. As a result, Irish culture has spread across the world and has enriched and emboldened many cultures and countries. I believe that, despite our physical distance to the Mediterranean, Ireland should be at the forefront of ensuring the safety of these people."—Karen Cowley, Wicklow Musician (Wyvern Lingo) and Refugee Rescue Member.

Relief in West Cork as entertainment sector given the green light to reopen

In his address to the nation on Tuesday, August 31, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said that the sectors still closed due to Covid-19 can “now begin to hope again”. If all goes according to plan, restrictions will gradually ease in September including the return of indoor live music events, albeit with restrictions to capacity.

For the entertainment industry who were met with constant delays to reopening, as they watched indoor sporting events and other organised activities return before them, this announcement has been a very long time coming and has been met with relief and cautious optimism.

Cork South West Deputy Christopher O’Sullivan has promised to keep advocating on behalf of the live entertainment and events sector. “Here in West Cork in particular the change in restrictions means a return to live, indoor music, one of the many gems that puts us on the tourism map. While the crowd size restrictions are not ideal, we can take comfort in the fact that sticking to the plan is working, and will continue to work.”

“From the Taoiseach to minister Catherine Martin and from the start of this pandemic, I’ve been pushing to bring the live entertainment and events sector front and centre of the government’s agenda and will continue to do so.”

Ray Blackwell and Kevin McNally, Clonakilty International Guitar Festival said that while they welcome any further easing of restrictions for live events, they are conscious of patron’s safety and committed to presenting the festival in a responsible manner.

“The past 18 months have not been easy and it has been incredibly draining for those in our industry, something that hasn’t been helped by the mixed messaging of some quarters and in particular some sporting events.”

“As a community festival we are well used to pushing boulders up hills. As always, the imagination and can-do



spirit of our team and town will ensure we present the best festival we can in the climate we find ourselves in.

“We are looking to the future with open minds and a willingness to make it work for our artists, patrons and fans.”

Irish and French indie-folk singer songwriters based in West Cork, Les SalAmandas commented “While the people that make the rules that keep us civilised, safe and healthy have been doing their best in this new and uncertain time of crisis, there is a common feeling across the music industry; we’re being let down.”

“...while 40,000 people watched the Cork and Limerick match in Croke park, we sat in envy at the telly wondering when the uncertainty would end for us?”

“...We need all the help we can get to bring Ireland’s once thriving live music industry back to its old self.”

“Live music is the source of income for so many people, from the stage crew and promoters to managers and artists. The lack of gigs has meant a loss of work for many people. But not only that, it means that so many musicians haven’t been able to share their music, that so many people who’ve loved gigs haven’t been able to enjoy them, and people who

haven’t found out that they love gigs maybe won’t for another while. As people who’ve found their love for music from live gigs, we feel strongly that they get to happen again.”

Joe O’Leary of Leavis’ Corner House in Ballydehob feels fortunate to be part of a community that has rallied together more so than ever throughout this pandemic.

“In the past 18 months due mostly to political decisions, musicians and artists have fallen by the wayside whilst some have soared in their creativity. Musicians, sound engineers, production managers, lighting engineers, promoters, film makers, photographers, arts administrators, crew have all either adapted or left our industry. All because we were put on ice by the powers that be...”

“We are mental wellness, we are survival, we are powerful stuff, we are craic, we are life, we are community, we are art, we are sport, we are empathy, we are music and we are a reason to look forward to the day and often to the night. For us and for many many others, just get out of the way and let us do what we have always done; beautifully, safely and kindly.”

“Long live the music; long live the tunes.”

 
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West Cork's compass through the system

Citizens Information provides an independent, information, advice and advocacy service in West Cork. It is part of South Munster Citizens Information Service, which covers Cork and Kerry. Anne O'Donovan, Manager of West Cork Citizens Information in Bantry, joined the team in 2004. As the first paid employee, she was recruited to develop the West Cork service. Initially volunteer-led, Citizens Information in Bantry has seen queries increase over the years from 2,000 per annum to almost 20,000 in 2021.

With offices in Bantry and Macroom, pre-pandemic, Citizens Information also facilitated weekly outreach services in Bandon, Clonakilty and Dunmanway, as well as a fortnightly service in Castletownbere.

Responsible for the development and delivery of the service in West Cork, Anne describes her role as manager "varied with never a dull moment".

The Kilerohane native loves working for an organisation that makes a real difference to the lives of people and is a trusted source of information for the people of West Cork. "Because we deal with such a wide range of issues, we are in a position to 'join the dots for people' and help them to navigate their way through the system," she says.

"Sometimes people find themselves faced with unexpected issues and feel they are at a crossroads in their life without a compass. Our staff are here to provide that compass by ensuring they have the knowledge about their rights and entitlements. They are able to inform them of their options and empower them to make informed decisions."

A key part of Anne's role is supporting and mentoring staff and making sure that they have the necessary resources and training to carry out their role, while she also networks with other agencies in West Cork to ensure that Citizens Information maximises its resources for the benefit of its clients.

As part of the regional management team, Anne is involved in the strategic development of Citizens Information Service in Cork and Kerry along with the other area managers and the regional manager, who is based in Cork City.

One of the more skilled and challenging parts of the service provided by the agency is its representational advocacy service; this is where it supports clients with social welfare appeals and employment rights appeals.

Despite reduced staffing and restrictions due to the pandemic,

Citizens Information has adapted and continues to deliver information, advice and advocacy to the community.

Of course with the pandemic came a whole new range of issues for Citizens Information to deal with.

"Initially there were a lot of queries from people who had lost their employment or had their hours reduced due to the pandemic," shares Anne. "There were queries from people about working from home or people who had to self-isolate. In addition, we were dealing with queries from employers in relation to the supports for businesses."

More recently, the Citizens Information team has been dealing with queries about Covid vaccinations and rights of employees in relation to same, as well as queries about travel and documentation required.

"Unfortunately, we also have increased calls from people who have been laid off work or are being made redundant as a consequence of the pandemic," says Anne. "There are also queries from people in relation to renewing their driving licence and Public Service Cards – all regular occurrences which were complicated as a result of the pandemic. In tandem with the pandemic related queries, we are also dealing with the other on-going queries which people have in relation to their own regular life-events."

Almost half of queries to Citizens Information relate to social welfare. "These include queries re state pensions, supports for carers, supports for job-seekers and families on low income. We also deal with employment rights, housing issues, consumer issues and immigration," explains Anne.

While there is a great emphasis on training at Citizens Information, excellent communication and the ability to interpret information and present it to client in an understandable and usable way are some of the most essential skills that make a good Information Officer.



"Our Information Officers need to be able to put clients at ease, deal with them in a confidential manner and be empathetic and non-judgemental," explains Anne.

She continues, "A willingness to go the extra mile and persistence in finding solutions is a great asset as sometimes finding the correct information can be difficult."

The Citizens Information Manager puts great emphasis on providing a non-judgemental, confidential space for clients. "Sometimes clients contact us and they may be in a difficult situation. When they speak with us, it may be the first time that they have spoken to anyone about their particular issue or concern. As a result, the client may be upset. Our staff listen to the client and give them an opportunity to tell their story."

Anne's own career story, aside from a brief stint teaching, has always been in the not-for-profit sector. The Kilerohane native started out as a full-time residential volunteer with Cork Simon Community, living and working with homeless people in Cork City. "I volunteered originally for three months during the summer holidays and stayed 14 months because it was such a fantastic experience," she shares. "I learned more there than I did in the four years I had previously spent in UCC and made friendships that have lasted to this day."

Anne then moved to London where she worked as part of a team setting up a resettlement hostel in King's Cross area in central London for homeless people with alcohol and mental health issues. She had risen to the role of manager before leaving to move to Dublin to work as Recruitment Co-ordinator with the Simon Community of Ireland in their National Office.

Prior to moving back to West Cork, Anne was co-ordinator of two information Services, Centrecare and Emigrant Advice, both based in Dublin inner-city.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the September edition of West Cork People,

With our government promising that almost all restrictions will be lifted by October 22, it appears we might be returning to a way of life pre-pandemic. I'm finding it difficult to get excited though; we've had so many false starts over the past 18 months, who knows what way the wind will blow this time!

One cause for celebration however is the news that our entertainment sector is finally allowed to reopen properly. I think Joe O'Leary of Leavis' put it well when reacting to this week's reopening announcement he said, "We are mental wellness, we are survival, we are powerful stuff, we are craic, we are life, we are community, we are art, we are sport, we are empathy, we are music and we are a reason to look forward to the day and often to the night. For us and for many many others, just get out of the way and let us do what we have always done; beautifully, safely and kindly."

I can't say that I would ever have been a regular at live music gigs but last month I did drive 40 minutes to catch the last two songs of an outdoor Mick Flannery gig! We have missed you all, welcome back.

September is also the big return to school. While mask wearing, social distancing and hand sanitising are all part of the new normal at school, there is no dampening the excitement of children, parents and teachers who are happy to put the trials of remote learning behind them. My two have the alarm set for 6.30 every morning...I wonder how long that will last! Here's hoping for a year free from disruption.

Inside this issue you'll find our usual mix of news, views, lifestyle and entertainment.

I hope you enjoy the read,

Until next month,

Mary



Mary O'Brien
Editor



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West Cork People

Cycle Against Suicide

On Friday, September 10, World Suicide Prevention Day, Cycle Against Suicide is inviting local communities to join its 'Bike4Life: One Day – One Goal' to raise awareness and funds for suicide prevention.

Cycle Against Suicide aim to raise awareness that help and recovery from mental struggles is possible and suicide is preventable.

"If you or someone you know needs help, reach out. Speaking up to a trusted person about depression, suicide or grief is the first step to saving a life."

Caroline Lafferty, Cycle Against

Suicide CEO stated. "The risk of suicide is heightened when people are not able to talk about their mental health challenges to others. "Very often men and women at risk feel they have no one to talk to about suicidal thoughts and the conditions that cause them," she said.

As a result, communities battle with high levels of suicide. Research shows that around the world, someone dies of suicide every 40 seconds. In Ireland, one person each day is a victim with tens of thousands of others at risk.

For further details visit: www.cycleagainstsucide.com

Over €100,000 in Clár funding for West Cork projects: O'Sullivan

Coastal wall upgrades and a community car park are among West Cork projects receiving Clár funding.

Leap, Schull, Bantry and Barryroe are among the areas to receive funding for sustainable, small-scale infrastructure projects.

"From the lighting of a walkway around a popular sports ground to upgrading a much needed car park - funding schemes like this are having a direct impact on the ground, making public spaces more accessible and safer," said Cork South West deputy Christopher

O'Sullivan.

"Congratulations to this round's successful applicants."

The flowing projects have received funding under this round of Clár: Bantry Bay Sailing Club (purchase of digital speed signs) - €14,000; Barryroe GAA (lighting of walkway around GAA pitch) - €48,600; Leap Community Car Park (near the church and national school) - €29,700; Schull Community Council - (upgrading of existing facilities new equipment on the coastal walk) - €13,500.

Bantry Credit Union's annual scholarship enters 19th Year

Bantry Credit Union has announced the launch of its annual Third-Level Education Scholarship Scheme for 2021. The scholarship is worth up to €6,000 over four years to the winner.



Set up in 2003, the scholarship is now in its 19th year. It is open to people entering third level education for the first time this year, whether as a school-leaver or a mature student. In addition to that, they must have been either a member or the child of a member of Bantry Credit Union on January 1, 2021.

Announcing the launch of this year's scholarship, Bantry Credit Union Manager Finbarr O'Shea encouraged as many people as possible to apply. He pointed out that there are three second-level schools within the credit union's 'common bond', or qualifying areas – Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí in Bantry, Scoil Phobail Bhéara in Castle-townbere and Scoil Mhuire in

Ballingeary. He urged Leaving Cert pupils from all three schools – as well as people from the area who may have gone to second-level school elsewhere, and mature students – to apply for the scholarship.

Like everything else, the scholarship application, adjudication and award process has changed due to Covid-19. For starters, it's being run a bit later than usual. That's because it is always tied into the CAO Round One dates. This year, the Round One offers are being issued on September 7, with a reply date of September 13. So, the closing date for receipt of completed application forms for the Scholarship 2021 is Saturday, September 18.

The second change compared to pre-Covid days is that the entire application process is going to be completed remotely. The application form will be completed online at www.bantrycu.ie or through email. And the selection process, including interviews with shortlisted candidates, will probably be conducted remotely via Zoom.

Commenting on these changes, Finbarr said, "We were delighted to be able to run the scholarship scheme last year in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. As we all know, some of the changes that have come about in the past two years are here to stay. One of those is the far greater use of digital technology. So this year we will again run the scholarship scheme digitally and remotely."

Full details of the scholarship scheme including application procedure, application form and Terms and Conditions will be available on the credit union's website (www.bantrycu.ie) at the start of September. Alternatively students can email the credit union's Marketing Officer Jesse Cronin at jesse@bantrycu.ie.

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Information for students going to college

It's that time of year where parents and their school leaving children are preparing for going to college for the first time. It can be a challenging time for everybody involved as you may be faced with new situations and unclear about the options open to you. It is important that people are aware that staff at the local Citizens Information Service are there to provide support and to answer any questions that may arise for either students or their parents.

The following are some common queries which may arise for parents and students:

Is there any financial supports for students or their parents if they are perhaps moving out and

starting college for the first time?

Yes, the main financial support for a student attending college is the Student Grant from SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland). SUSI typically accepts late applications up until November. This is a means tested grant which may cover the fees (student contribution) and provide maintenance.

If it means tested, what type of limits apply to the grant?

It varies, but if the student was coming from a family with less than four dependent children, in order to qualify for the maximum rate of grant the total net income in the previous tax year would have to have been €39,875 or less. However, if there is more than one student attending college from the same household, the limit may be increased by €4,830.

Is that the parent's income only? No, that is the parent's income

and the student's income, however €4,500 of the student's income which they earn outside term time e.g. during the summer will be disregarded.

If the student was getting the PUP payment because they lost their part time job because of the pandemic will this be taken into account? I'm afraid it will be taken into account. Currently there are no disregards allowed for PUP payments.

How much is the maximum amount of Student Grant? Well, there are actually two different maximum rates of grant. There are referred to as the adjacent and non-adjacent rate. The adjacent rate is for students living within 45km of the college and the non-adjacent rate is for students living more than 45km from the college. The adjacent rate is €3,025. The non-adjacent rate is €1,125.

There may be a lot of parents who have been on a reduced income because of reduced hours at work or being put on a lay off because of the Covid pandemic, will any special allowance be made to support them? Well, there has always been a special rate of grant for a disadvantaged student. In order to be considered a disadvantaged student one of the parents would need to have been on a long term social welfare payment on December 31, 2020 and their net income would have to be €24,500 or less. If this is the case a special rate of grant is paid. The adjacent special rate of grant is €5,915. The non-adjacent special rate of grant is €2,375.

Is there any help with other expenses such as books or laptops?

Yes, separate from the Student Grant from SUSI the Colleges have access to the Student Assistance Fund. Students can apply directly through their college for assistance with these types of expenses. Typically, this involves completing an application form and going for a short interview in the college. There are no set amounts of funding under this scheme. The college will assess each application on its own merits.

If students want to move out and rent accommodation, is there

any financial support for that?

Typically no, if a student is going to college for the first time and is getting support through the SUSI Student Grant there is no help with paying rent.

However, you may have a situation where a student is aged over 21 and going to college after being on a social welfare payment. If this is the case the student may be entitled to Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) and Rent Supplement.

Who would qualify for Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)?

A student must be aged 21 years or over and must have been on a qualifying social welfare payment such as Jobseeker's Allowance for three months if they wish to do a second level course or nine months if they wish to do a third level course.

Can a person who was on the PUP due to the pandemic qualify for BTEA?

PUP itself is not a qualifying payment for BTEA but if that person were to switch onto a Jobseeker's Allowance payment then the time spent on PUP will count towards the qualifying period, so it is possible...

Can a person on BTEA get Rent Supplement? Yes, where a person was getting Rent Supplement and they move into full time education and are getting BTEA they are entitled to retain their Rent Supplement entitlement.

Can a person on BTEA also apply for a SUSI student grant?

No, you must pick one support, either the BTEA or the SUSI Student Grant.

Can parents get other help for example tax relief on rent they pay for their children? No, unfortunately tax relief on rent was phased out back in 2017.

What advice would you give to a student who was going to rent for the first time? Don't be tempted to pay a deposit or sign a tenancy agreement until you have seen the property. If you are signing a tenancy agreement check if you want to live in the property for the time period stated on the agreement, check for early break clauses. Make sure you have correct contact details for the landlord.

If you chose to leave the property early you may lose your deposit. If you are moving in with friends check the tenancy agreement to see if one moves out are the remaining tenants liable for the full rent. This is a common clause.

It is recommended that you take photographs of any pre-existing damage such as stains on carpets or marks on tables etc when you move in, to avoid any problems when you are leaving the property at the end of your tenancy.

Avoid paying your deposit and rent in cash and always insist on a receipt. Make sure you get a rent book and get all payments recorded even if you are paying through standing order or direct debit.

Make sure you get full contact details for the landlord and their agent where applicable and you know who to contact if there is a problem during your tenancy.

If you are a tenant in student-specific accommodation you only need to give your landlord 28 days' notice when ending a tenancy. You can give your landlord more notice if you want. This came in under the Residential Tenancies (No. 2) Act 2021.

What if a student pays a deposit, signs a tenancy agreement and then finds the property is not up to standard?

Well, all rented property has to meet basic minimum standards. Basic standards would be things like having access to hot and cold water and being able to control your own heating. The Local Authority e.g. Cork City Council is responsible for enforcing these standards. It's always advisable to request in writing that the Landlord carry out any necessary repairs. If the Landlord does not carry out the repair in a reasonable timeframe you can complain to the Local Authority. The Local Authority has the power to send out inspectors and prosecute the Landlord if necessary.

What if a student cannot get their deposit back from the Landlord?

The Landlord should only retain the deposit or part of it to cover any damage to the property beyond normal wear and tear. The tenant should take pictures of the property before they move out as evidence of the condition they

left the property in. They should also check the notice period they are required to give the Landlord.

If the matter cannot be resolved then the student may refer the matter as a dispute to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

Can a Landlord increase the rent after the student has moved in?

There are different rules depending on whether the property is in a Rent Pressure Zone or not.

A Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) is an area where rents cannot be increased by more than general inflation. Lists of these areas are available on www.citizensinformation.ie and www.rtb.ie

At the beginning of a new tenancy in a Rent Pressure Zone, a landlord is required to provide the tenant, in writing, with the following information:

- The amount of rent that was last set, which is the rent amount the previous tenant was paying in the rental dwelling.
- The date the rent was last set, which is the date that the tenancy commenced or the date the landlord previously set and served the notice of rent review.
- A statement as to how the rent was set in the rental dwelling having regard to the RTB Rent Pressure Zone calculator which reflects the latest HICP.

For a tenancy not located in a Rent Pressure Zones a Landlord may increase the rent in line with market value once every two years.

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

If you need further information about any of the issues raised here or you have other questions, you can call a member of the local Citizens Information Service in West Cork on 0761 07 8390. They will be happy to assist you and if necessary arrange an appointment for you.

The offices are staffed from 10am -5pm from Monday to Thursday and on Friday from 10am -4pm. Alternatively you can email on bantry@citinfo.ie or log on to www.citizensinformation.ie



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Has invasive spyware been installed on your phone?

By Clonakilty Amnesty Group

If you have a 'smart' phone and you are a journalist or human rights defender, or one of their contacts or lawyers, it is very possible that you are being watched by Pegasus spyware licensed by the government of Israel.

Amnesty International has a Security Lab in Berlin that has recently reported finding traces of Pegasus spyware from Israeli company NSO Group on multiple phones in many countries. These are 'smart' phones which use Apple iOS (iPhone) and



Google Android software.

This spyware can only be exported under licence from the government of Israel to the security regimes in other countries. It's happening because a lot of governments attack journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers who highlight the efforts of these governments to undermine the democratic, human and legal rights of their citizens.

Pegasus spyware is a powerful weapon for this.

Governments hide behind the claim that they only use it against criminals and terrorists. One is entitled to assume that

this includes the government of Israel itself. The Amnesty Lab report includes the phones of people in France, Hungary, India, Rwanda and Morocco but it does seem possible to spy across borders using networks of servers. It is reported elsewhere

that the Pegasus spyware has been exported to bastions of democracy and human rights such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Mexico with the sanction of the government of Israel. The Pegasus spyware has been

continually improved to make it easier to install, more difficult to detect and more intrusive. This will increase its appeal, and the profits to the international investors behind NSO Group.

What can be done about this doesn't lend itself to simple solutions. The government of Israel should be preventing these abuses but does not. Someone on the Security Council will veto any decisive action by the United Nations. The European Union seems reluctant to sanction Israel. Our Irish Government is still stalling on the Occupied Territories Bill. Technology companies seem so far unable to make their software secure against spyware.

There is reported to be a security app that will detect various security issues including traces of spyware. Otherwise, who is going to stop using their 'smart' phones?

What does work is writing letters in support of prisoners of conscience and the journalists, human rights defenders and others at risk for helping them. Governments do not like being swamped with sacks of protest mail and, in almost half the cases, they back off in some measure. Any Amnesty International website will give details of current letter-writing campaigns. www.amnesty.ie



Reminiscing on the traditions surrounding the end of the harvest



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 harvesting of grain used to mark the busiest period in the Irish farming year. Wheat and barley were ready for reaping in August, while the most widespread crop, oats, was harvested in September.

Before the coming of the combine harvesters, co-operation between neighbours was vital in harvesting the grain crop, as it was very labour intensive. The harvesting of grain has changed utterly since my youth. I don't recall the sickle being used, but I remember a neighbour, Michael O'Driscoll, cutting our 'patch' of corn if my father was away fishing. Once the grain was cut, it was tied into bundles called sheaves. Seven or eight of these were stood to make stooks. Eventually the sheaves were carted into the haggard and made into



a stack.

Some days or weeks later, the big tractor-operated threshing machine rumbled into the yard and the grain was threshed. The threshing day was a 'big' day in the social calendar, hard work, plenty of sweat, but also banter, gossip, bottles of stout and a big meal in the evening.

Everybody was called out to help to save the corn, men and women, young and old. The last bit of corn in the last of the farmer's fields was the visible symbol of the end of the harvest, and the cutting of this last bit was, all over Ireland, attended with some ceremony.

Usually a small portion, enough to make one sheaf, was left standing until the rest of the field was fully finished, then all the workers gathered to see it cut. It was generally said that some living creature, a small animal or bird, was to be found in the last of the standing corn. This was often actually the case, as frogs, corncrakes, partridges and such small creatures drew back before the advancing reapers until finally making a dash for safety. In most cases the creature was, or was said to be, a hare, and 'putting the hare out of the corn' meant finishing the harvest. If a nearby farmer still had standing corn, the hare was said to go there; 'we sent you the hare' was the quip thrown at the farmer whose harvest was last.

Old people recall the old tale of the hag who turned into a hare to steal the cow's milk, and they also spoke of putting out the hag (cailleach), who was driven from farm to farm until she reached the field of the last man in the townland to cut the corn. The last sheaf itself was often called the 'cailleach'.

The last sheaf was usually tied in an ornamental fashion and carried from the field by a chosen bearer, most often by the one who had cut it. In Co. Clare, holy water was sprinkled on sheaf and bearer.

In West Cork and Kerry, the end of the harvest was known as the 'clabhsúr', when the harvest work was completely finished, the oat stacks covered and secured and the potato pits properly made. The men folk of the family brought their harvesting implements, spades, pikes and reaping hooks into the kitchen and threatened to burn them unless the women provided them with a festive meal. The end of the fishing season was also called the 'clabhsúr' on Cape Clear Island.

The reaping hooks used in Ireland in the past had smooth blades, which were sharpened as required during the reaping. Not everybody could produce a perfect cutting edge on a scythe or reaping hook, and those who had the 'gift' were proud of it. There was even a charm, 'ortha an faobhair' (the edge charm) which might be recited to induce a reluctant implement to take a keen edge.

In the southwest of Ireland the potato harvest was celebrated by the giving of a 'stampy party' for the workers and helpers, so called because the main dish was cakes of 'stampy', a bread made from grated raw potato, squeezed dry and mixed with flour and various flavourings. This was followed by a dance.

The use of a sheaf of corn to find a drowned body is well known. The sheaf, usually with a lighted candle set on it, was laid on the water at the spot where the unfortunate victim had fallen in, and allowed to drift with the current until it came to rest where the body could be found. Some held that only a last sheaf had this virtue or that it was far more efficacious than any ordinary sheaf.

Gone forever now is the hum and drone of the threshing machine. Gone also the banter, the tomfoolery and the threshing night 'ball' with its music, recitations, porter, and dancing around the kitchen to the sound of the accordion or mouth organ.

Patrick Kavanagh, in his autobiographical book, Tarry Flynn, writes about his thoughts as walked across the fields to 'Cassidy's haggard'.
*'I'll be carrying bags today,
I mused
The best job at the mill
With plenty of time to talk of
our loves
As we wait for the bags to fill'.*

And 'In Memory of My Mother'
*'For it is a harvest evening now
and we
Are piling up the reeks against
the moonlight'.*



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HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

Afghanistan – the graveyard of Empires

who surrendered without a fight knowing how brutal Cromwell's Model Army had been on towns and cities and people that dared to resist them. The fear of Taliban brutality was enough for many soldiers to lay down their arms. It's still in living memory what they did when last in power, culminating in hundreds of public executions on a regular basis. Now the people of Afghanistan face an uncertain and oppressive future. This has been central in much of the coverage.

I want to take the conversation in another direction and ask how did it come to this in the first place? It won't come as a surprise to many with an interest in history or who have followed this column that the seeds of this conflict germinated from western interference. To the west, the Taliban represent an ultra-extreme form of Islam. To the Taliban and their supporters, it is simply the purest form of Islam and we in the west are the Godless, decadent, sinful infidels. Now don't think for one moment that I am defending them – they had an appalling record when they ruled with an iron fist, particularly against women – but are we so blind here not to realise this has been created by centuries of western colonisation, control, exploitation, and manipulation? When a nation has been trodden on for centuries, it radicalises the oppressed. They become the complete antithesis of what the colonisers or west represents. The values the colonisers bring: (a type of) democracy, freedom

of speech, of free religion that are seen as characteristics of the enemy.

One of the stories that emerged on the radio is that the Taliban are not even Afghans. We were told, 'They are a foreign people, an invading force'. This is the same kind of propaganda the IRA peddled about Black and Tans coming from the jails of Britain, when in reality they were demobilised World War One veterans. It's a way to blacken your foe (not that the Tans needed much help in that department or the Taliban for that matter either!) The point is that many of the younger Taliban fighters spent their formative refugee camps inside the borders of Pakistan. In these primitive and hellish conditions, they were radicalised. Would you blame them? Living in cesspits, as a result of western interference, they were displaced by wars and battles from foreign powers in recent years against the US and their allies. These young men were homeless, had no identity and a crushed culture. The only thing they had in common was Islam. It became the only thing they had left. Their hatred found fertile ground inside these camps to bloom. Their father's generation had to fight against the Soviet Union invasion from 1979-89. Another lost generation. Three times, the British invaded Afghanistan, twice in the 19th century and also a year after World War One, which seems ironic given that the British had involved themselves in the Great War, 'to protect the freedom of little Belgium'. Every invasion was for British self-interests: for control of trade routes, the opium trade and most importantly, their geo-politic attempts to strengthen their hand to protect their jewel in their empire – India. The Afghans have had to fight off Alexander the Great and then, the Mughal Empire, who also possessed most of India, Mongolia, as well as Afghanistan in the 16th and 17th centuries. If you are getting mind-boggled by this list, imagine how devastating it has been for the natives who have been trodden on for centuries. Another western lens that forms our world view is that,



US armed Mujahideen fighters in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan, 1987

In the last few weeks we have seen the devastating advance of the Taliban resulting in the collapse of a USA-backed Afghan government. They had been in power for twenty years. The speed of the military penetration was akin to the Nazi blitz of France in World War Two, in which French, Dutch, Polish and Belgian troops capitulated totally within a mere six weeks. The aforementioned countries knew only too well that Hitler's forces were massing on their borders, yet still were helpless to prevent an invasion. The Afghan government also knew that the Taliban were waiting in the wings, yet there was an inevitable feeling that they were doomed to defeat before a shot was fired.

When the Americans released their roadmap for quitting the country, the Taliban pounced. A highly trained Afghan army with a massive military budget melted in the face of their foe's advancement. Students of 17th century Ireland would know Cromwell's troops had similar effects on their foe, many of

somehow, Muslim countries where Islam is the cornerstone of society, is something that is to be discouraged or be suspicious of. Lest we not forget, most western societies were church/state institution until the French revolution of 1789. Ire-

Lest we not forget, most western societies were church/state institution until the French revolution of 1789. Ireland was a Catholic run country up until a generation ago. In the scale of things, secular states have only been around for a blink of an eye, metaphorically speaking...

land was a Catholic run country up until a generation ago. In the scale of things, secular states have only been around for a blink of an eye, metaphorically speaking, since the dawn of civilisation. Again, I am not inferring any radical form of religion is right, especially one that propels women back to the dark ages. Far from it! What I am saying is that Islamic countries automatically create a natural suspicion in many westerners for upholding what is perceived as a sort of out-dated way of

life. However, for millions of people, from Turkey to Dubai, from the suburbs of Marseille to the Balkan beaches, it's a legitimate way to live one's life. For a lot of Muslims living in those parts of the world, it works well for them. Yet take a place like Afghanistan and suppress it for centuries and what emerges is a form of intolerant, religious fanaticism that crushes our many other freedoms that as humans we are entitled too.

The Soviet invasion in 1979 is case in point and, for many historians, the starting point for the current upheaval. Afghanistan became a pawn in the Cold War, when the Soviet Union and the USA, vied for global control. It even affected the 1980 Olympics when the USA boycotted the games, which were held in Moscow that year. While the States did not go into theatre of war in Afghanistan, (They were still smarting from their defeat in Vietnam a mere seven years earlier) they did arm Afghan rebels. Who did they choose to arm? Islamic fundamentalists. The CIA aided Pakistani leader Mohammad Zia ul Haq to supply and train the Islamic rebels, which would be later called the 'Mujahedeen, literally 'soldiers of God'. Ten years of hard fighting by this force culminated in Soviet withdrawal from the region in 1989. Of course, the west made sure to install a western

friendly government. But what of the Mujahedeen? What of their country and religion? It didn't go away! These people took on other names or formed other groups like the Taliban. Only when one of these Islamic fundamentalist groups struck America on that infamous day of September 11 did the USA decide to invade Afghanistan and displace the Taliban who had ruled, unmolested, for a decade. And so here we are again. Back to square one. A ruined country – abandoned and crushed. Divided between moderate Muslims and fundamentalists, western and eastern cultures, Sharia law and human rights laws. It will fester for another decade until it becomes relevant to a great 'superpower' again. My guess is it will be China creating a ticking time bomb by incarcerating millions of Uighur Muslims within Chinese territories, for 're-education.' We only know too well that the best way to create terror is to crush a people, take their voice, leaving them little option but to fight.

The Taliban, rightly so, are portrayed as a dangerous regime who will kill, suppress and impose a form of Islam that will take away the basic rights of women and men. Take a bow 'the west'. Your Frankenstein's monster has come back to haunt you. And if history is anything to go by, it will never go away.

Christopher O'Sullivan TD

FIANNA Fáil
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY



Constituency office open by appointment.

To ensure the safety of all my office on 40 Ashe St, Clonakilty is open by appointment only.

Please contact me on 023 8811 011 or via email to arrange a meeting or appointment.

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40 Ashe St, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, P85V308.
Tel: 023 88 11011 Email: christopher.osullivan@oireachtas.ie



Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage video

To mark Heritage Week 2021, Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage have made an hour-long film documentary, depicting three cultural and historical sites in close proximity to the town of Clonakilty.

The first port of call is to

Lisselane House and Gardens, once the home of infamous landlord, William Bence Jones and later the celebrated entrepreneur, Charles Orr Stanley.

The second is to the ancient graveyard and ruined church in Kilgarraffe where generations of Clonakilty families lie

buried.

The third and final visit is to the coastal village of Ring with its varied maritime history and ancient graveyard at Ballintemple.

Dúchas Clonakilty hope you will enjoy listening to the stories and seeing some

spectacular views of these sites. To watch search YouTube for 'Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage'.

This project is part of the County Cork Heritage Grant Scheme 2021 and is supported by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Funding 2021.

The tale behind the image

The War of Independence work 'Men of the South' by Sean Keating hangs in Cork's Crawford gallery and is described in gallery literature as "a painting that is not about the grime and pain of war, but about the idealism and patriotism behind it". One hundred years since the painting was finished, **Pauline Murphy** looks into both its origin story and the men it depicts.

The seed of this group portrait of an IRA party was planted by a solicitor called Albert Wood, who had represented Sean Moylan, the Commander of the North Cork Flying Column, at his trial in the springtime of 1921. Luckily for Moylan, the Truce was announced just in time for his trial to be dismissed and he walked free but, by that time, Moylan and Wood had struck up a firm friendship. The two met again in Dublin, in August 1921, where Moylan was attending a meeting of Dáil Éireann.

Albert Wood was a patron of the arts and a friend of Limerick artist Sean Keating. Wood brought Sean Moylan to

the National Gallery where he suggested to the North Cork IRA leader that he should sit for a portrait painted by Keating.

Moylan agreed and met Keating at his studio in the Metropolitan School of Art. Moylan was at first wary but gradually grew comfortable in Keating's presence and, as he sat for the portrait, he talked about the exploits of his men in North Cork.

Keating listened closely to these stories from the rebel county and in his mind was already putting together a composition of men in the hills, wearing trench coats and steely expressions, with weapons at the ready. He asked Moylan to bring some of the flying column to his studio for a group portrait.

Moylan picked column men from the Duhallow area, who arrived at the door of the Metropolitan School of Art with their weapons in hand. "We are here for Keating" they informed the startled porter who had answered their knock. The porter rushed upstairs to Keating's studio to warn him but Keating just laughed and instructed the stunned porter to allow the men up.

'Men of the South' was not an easy creation. Midway through the painting Keating and his subjects had to relocate to a room in the Mansion House, and then back into Keating's studio to continue the work.

Then Keating was not satis-

fied with his first painting; he put it to one side to start another afresh. That first painting today hangs in Áras an Uachtaráin after it was purchased during Douglas Hyde's tenure as the Republic's first President. The second painting is the one we are all now familiar with.

It took 11 months for Keating to finish his iconic painting. 'Men of the South' was first exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy and was bought for £250 by the Gibson Bequest Committee for the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork City, where it hangs to this day.

The 'Men of the South' came from rural farming backgrounds to take up arms against the might of the British empire. They were plain young men who found themselves in extraordinary times and circumstances.

Young men like Jim Riordan from Kiskeam, who is seen on the left of the painting with one hand resting on his weapon and the other resting on his leg. Riordan was quartermaster of the Newmarket Battalion. During the Civil War he was captured fighting against Free State forces in Kilmallock and imprisoned until Christmas 1923. He later married Sean Moylan's sister in law.

The central figure in the painting, dressed in black with his hand resting on his hat, is Roger Kiely from the Millstreet Battalion. He was a school teacher who later became



'Men of the South' by Sean Keating

principal of Cullen national school from the 1930s until his retirement in 1961. Kiely made an impression on Keating who wrote in later years 'Roger Kiely was about the best and finest man I ever knew....I went to look for him in County Cork and found him a poor school teacher in a poor little school near Kanturk....'

Denny Mullane stands on the left of the painting with both hands grasped around his rifle. Mullane came from Free-mount and saw action in many ambushes including Clonbanin and Rathcoole. He later recalled such actions for the Bureau of Military History in the 1950s.

Dan Browne sits at the far bottom right of the painting. He hailed from Meelin and was a clerical student before joining the IRA. Browne was adjutant

in the 6th Battalion Cork no.2 Brigade and was renowned as a skilled rifleman.

Jim Cashman stands at the back of the painting and was lieutenant of H Company Kiskeam. He was a notable athlete and was wounded fighting against Free State troops during the Civil War. The wounded Cashman was taken to Limerick Prison from where he escaped, but his wound slowed him down and he was recaptured and held until his release in 1924.

John Jones sits in the middle of Keating's painting with his flat cap and sand coloured trenchcoat. Jones was just 17-years-old when he joined the IRA in Ballydesmond. In 1920 he was wounded when his comrade accidentally shot him in his leg. Jones recovered

and continued in the fight for freedom. Following the end of conflict Jones emigrated to the US but later returned to his native home in the 1950s.

After the Civil War Sean Keating offered to paint notable events from the War of Independence but government officials declined his offer, telling him that Ireland needed to forget the past and move on with building the Free State.

In 1951 the Secretary at Áras an Uachtaráin wrote to Keating to enquire about the subjects in 'Men of the South'. In his response Keating lamented the ignorance of the Irish State towards the past revolution: 'Revolutionaries should remember that they are making history and that history belongs to posterity and should be documented in paint as well as print.'

people Farming

Three West Cork farming families announced as finalists for this year's 'Oscars of the Dairy World'

Three West Cork farming families have reached the finals of the 2021 NDC and Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards.

The awards, dubbed the 'Oscars of the Dairy World' recognise, and celebrate, the highest standards of excellence in dairy farming with a focus on milk quality, animal welfare and sustainable farming practices.

Nominated by Drinagh Co-op, William Kingston has been working the family farm since 1993. William has always been an avid animal lover, and as a child remembers the first milking parlour being built in 1974. Outside of farming, William is heavily involved in the Skibbereen community. "We have a great love for animals – and if we didn't we shouldn't be at this," commented William.

Nominated by Lisavaird Co-op, James McCarthy, a fourth-generation farmer from Rosscarbery, Co. Cork, has been farming his land for the past 40 years. James considers milking his favourite element of dairy farming and takes pride in ensuring his herd is fit and healthy.

Nominated by Bandon Co-op, Tadhg Hurley's family farm is in Bandon. After working with a number of different farms in West Cork, Tadhg moved home seven years ago and entered a partnership with his father, Finbarr. Tadhg's grandfather purchased some land in the area in 1936; it had a dwelling, a few stalls and 18 cows. Tadhg's father took over the farm and subsequently grew it to the size it is today. "My father is the backbone of the farm," says Tadhg. "All my knowledge and

experience has been learned from him."

Every year, the NDC and Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards showcase and celebrate the dedication of Irish family farms to producing the best quality milk in the world, and their commitment to the highest standards of hygiene, food safety, animal health, and environmental protection. The nominated farm families are role models whose commitment inspires others and previous winners have provided a standard that has helped farms across the country adopt new and more sustainable ways of farming.

The overall winner will be announced at the special outdoor awards ceremony at Moorepark Dairy Open Day on September 15. The theme of this year's event centres around 'Irish Dair-



William Kingston, a fourth-generation farmer from Skibbereen, with his wife, Siobhan, three kids Cathal, Grace and Paul, and his father, also Paul.

ying: Delivering Sustainably' and offers an ideal platform to celebrate farms that are industry leaders in sustainable food production.

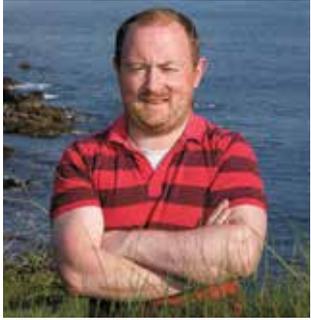
Commenting on the awards, CEO John Jordan at Or-nua said 'Ireland's food and drink sector has won its place on the world stage due to the

quality of our produce and our focus on sustainable production. Maintaining this competitive advantage has never been more important, as our unique Irish grass-fed, family-farmed system is valued by consumers at home and abroad. The NDC and Kerrygold Quality Milk Awards are a great way of celebrating and

recognising Ireland's high calibre dairy farmers and superior on-farm practices that are being adopted throughout the country."

The judging panel for this year's awards included Dr Jack Kennedy, Dairy Editor of the Irish Farmers Journal, Professor Pat Wall from UCD and, Dr David Gleeson from Teagasc.

people Farming

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.

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The sun has returned and grain farmers have had a decent run to get crops harvested. Most sectors need a bit of good fortune when it comes to cashing in on a crop so it's good to see those farmers get a settled spell after a few difficult harvests in recent years. The last month has been an absolute information overload in terms of farm policy: CAP consultations, compulsory EID tagging for cattle, Food Vision 2030 and draft nitrates proposals. Much of it is in line

A challenging time for farmers

to have a relatively immediate impact on the lives of Irish farmers too.

Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme

One of the proposed schemes, the Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme has created some controversy, as it includes a measure to limit and reduce the number of cows a farmer can be paid on. I should clarify this is just a proposal but it is one that has unwittingly placed suckler farmers at loggerheads with dairy farmers.

Since the abolition of dairy quota in 2015 there has been a steady decline in the size of the suckler herd. Smaller families, better education opportunities and increased income expectation in parts of the country are all factors in the beef cow herd's reduction and will remain so. According to the ICBF statistics, the suckler herd decreased by about 144,000 head between 2013 and 2020. Over the same period, dairy cow numbers grew by 378,000 resulting in an overall increase of roughly 234,000 head in breeding cow numbers in Ireland.

The news of capping the suckler herd is a major own goal in my view, as it has become a distraction and pitted both sides of the bovine herd against each other. Suckler farmers are seeing the shackles put on them, even though numbers are decreasing, while at the same time dairy numbers are allowed to rise. That's how it may

appear from the outside but new nitrates directive proposals will act in a similar manner to the dairy herd. That is where there could be a greater challenge for agriculture in West Cork.

Similar to the new CAP, the nitrate proposals are of concern to farmers too. New measures include a shorter time frame for spreading slurry and increased storage requirements.

You have to wonder how successful these will be given the proposed new rules have to be introduced because of haphazard adherence and enforcement of the old ones.

EID tags

While those big-ticket items were being digested by farmers, an announcement was made that Electronic Identification (EID) tags will become compulsory in all bovines born after July 1, 2022. The tags fit all current applicators and cost €1 more than the standard ear tags. These will speed things up in mart and factory lairages and for vets at testing but most farmers will see them as a cost rather than a benefit. In my opinion DNA tagging of all calves at birth should take precedence over the introduction of EID tags. Genotyping to identify sires has potential for more environmental efficiency gains if that's what we're looking for, especially with dairy beef predicted to increase.

Grass growth

It's taken until August for grass



Tommy Moyles' cows on the move at Ballinascarthy

growth to fall into its usual routine this year or at least it seems that way. Spring was too wet; it was too cold until the middle of May, which was followed by a soaking in June before a sense of normality prevailed albeit late in the day. Even in comparison to 2018 where we had to deal with a blizzard and a drought, this year has proved to be a trickery year in terms of grass growth. Only in the last few weeks has growth been what you would expect it to be.

From a farmer perspective you just have to adapt to the conditions as best you can and ensure there is enough feed ahead of stock. While the demand for grass is relatively static on a dairy farm during the grazing season, it's a different ball game for beef farms. As the year progresses, calves and

year old stock increase in size and so does their demand for grass. It might sound simple but it's overlooked on some farms. That means it's critical to build up grass covers from late July, in an effort to keep them out longer. The topsy-turvy nature of grass growth this year meant that I had to feed silage bales to one group to allow grass covers to build up. It's a farming version of pressing pause on the Sky TV remote. Growth picked up, but in an effort to extend my grass supply, I brought forward the scanning day for the larger bunch of cows. They were subsequently split into two groups: one consisting of those with heifer calves and the bull calves in the other group. This is to reduce the risk of what we refer to as a teenage pregnancy. The rest of the cows and heifers

will be scanned between now and the end of October.

Outside of policy, it's not all doom and gloom. Prices are continuing to hold well across all sectors, which makes for a pleasant change.

The arrival of an Arctic walrus proved to be a welcome distraction from the policy pile on. He arrived at Dunnycove on the eastern end of the headland the farm is located on. He was resting up before a journey back to colder shores after completing a tour of the Irish south coast and Bay of Biscay since first spotted in Valentia Island, Co Kerry, back in March. I wonder are we in line to see more ventures south from Wally and his ilk due to climate change.

A West Cork Farming Life: Avril Allshire, Rosscarbery

Interview by Tommy Moyles

The Allshire family, from Rosscarbery, are among the nominees for National Farming for Nature Ambassador Awards 2021.

Avril, how did you get involved in farming?

We began by purchasing 17 acres in 1997; the farm has grown from there to a 58-acre enterprise containing forestry, agroforestry, free-range pigs and an on-site processing plant. All of the produce is processed on-site and sold direct to customers under the 'Caherbeg Free-Range Pork' or 'Rosscarbery Recipes' label.

How did the pig venture begin?

We started in 1997 with a view to getting one or two pigs and we ended up with two litters. We began supplying Drinagh

superstore with freerange pork, which have been selling under the Caherbeg free range pork label. Willie did a course with Teagasc in rural development and that's where he learned the basis of processing. We began processing in 2000.

In 2001, we took on the Rosscarbery recipes brand and use locally-sourced pork and beef for that brand.

Was it difficult to get used to them?

We have about 100 freerange pigs now. The most we ever had was about 200 pigs, from boar to bonhams, but we knew that was too much. Managing the workload with what the land can tolerate and managing your sales market. Finding the balance to that was key and it took time. It's not easy, they have to be fed every day, and you have to keep on top of fencing. Pigs' eyesight could be lousy but their hearing is acute and they

will know when the fencer is off before we will and they are escape artists but they're always back for feed.

Your pork business is well known but you've been getting a foothold in forestry over the years. Tell us about this.

When we bought the farm first there were no trees except for what was on the perimeter. Willie immediately began planting trees in the three acres around

the house including 40 fruit trees, sycamore, alder, willow and Scots pine. He created a microclimate in the orchard by planting these other trees on the perimeter. The orchard is now totally wild and home to a variety of insects and wildlife.

Our sons, William and Maurice were into racing quads during their teens so they repurposed some of the fields into a quad track and Willie planted Eucalyptus trees in the middle of it.

We bought 22 acres of Sitka spruce nearby a few years ago. That needed tidying, as it wasn't thinned at all. We have eight acres of agroforestry and in the field between there's a narrow six-acre field in between that and the Sitka. The department of agriculture said it wouldn't qualify for grant aid. But Willie planted a mix of native hardwood trees there. We're not doing clear fell with Sitka spruce, so it will be continuous forestry. Willie also has a firewood busi-

ness and most of the wood from the Sitka will go towards that. It will be naturally dried and that takes a couple of years.

The plan with the agroforestry is to paddock it and we'll let the pigs in there. We've done a trial under a couple of sections of Sitka spruce. They are great at clearing the undergrowth.

There is also an element of agri-tourism on the farm, tell us about that.

We're one of the four farms involved with West Cork Farm tours and because of Covid 19 we haven't been able to operate since but we are planning to take in tours from 2022.

I had started forest bathing, a wellness practice, to relax, relieve stress and invite joy and pleasure through sensory connection with nature. The advantage we have here is it's a private farm and is not open to the public. This has been largely on hold due to Covid-19.



Pigs among the forestry on Allshires farm at Caherbeg, Rosscarbery. Pic: Joleen Cronin



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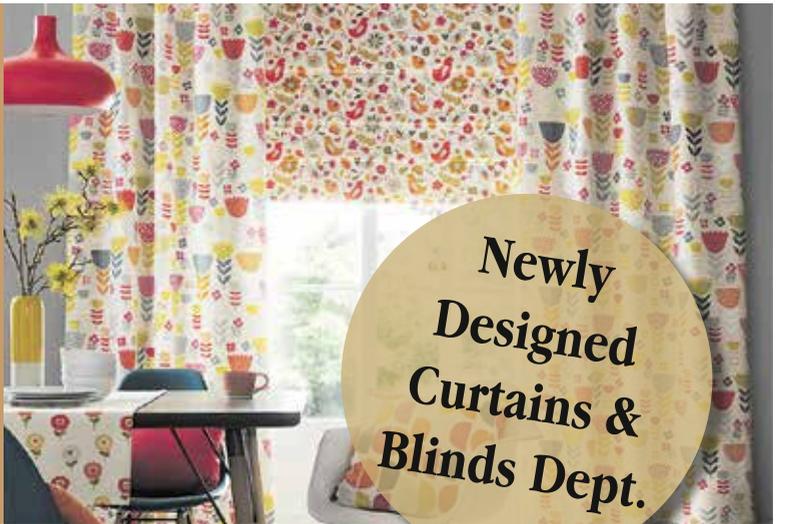
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PERROTTS
HOME LIVING INTERIORS

Recycling
Centre

'Get to School on Your Own Fuel' initiative up and running

'Get to School on Your Own Fuel' is a national initiative led by mothers and grandmothers from across the country, encouraging students and their families to cycle to school and campaigning for safer school routes.

Locally, at the Cycle Sense workshop in Skibbereen and The Bike Circus in Clonakilty, children were invited to bring their bicycles for a free tune up and safety check before they headed back to class. The Skibbereen Cycle Bus is up and running again too. The cycle bus serves children from St Patricks, Gaelscoil Dr. Uí Shuilleabhain and Abbeystrewry who join the bus at eight stops in town before arriving bright and eager to school.

In Clonakilty a 'Kidical Mass Cycle', part of an international movement to help highlight the need for safer cycling for kids, took place on

August 27 with the support of Clonakilty Gardaí, also on their bikes! The next Kidical Mass Cycle will take place on September 18 at 3pm as part of National Bike Week.

"2021 is a great year to start cycling to school! The new school year will see the beginning of the Government's Safe Routes to School programme," said Allison Roberts of the Clonakilty Bicycle Festival. "170 schools supported by Green Schools Ireland, the NTA and their Local Authority will receive funding to support new walking and cycling infrastructure. Following on from the government's lead, we as local residents can help accelerate the introduction of new measures to make cycling to school as easy and as safe as possible. Even if our children cycle once or twice a week it will make a difference on our roads, in our local communities and to the perception of local

authorities. Safety in numbers really does apply here, if we can get small groups together cycling to school it will be easier, safer and more enjoyable for all".

National Cycling Co-ordinator with Cyclist.ie, Dr. Damien Ó Tuama expressed the hope that following two years of pandemic disruption, the 2021/2022 School Year would be a smooth running and happy experience for all. "We in Cyclist.ie also hope that the new school year will see an explosion of interest in getting to school on your own fuel. We are only too happy to support families to do this in any way we can. We urge everyone to register for the Get to School on your Own Fuel promotion and to contact their local advocacy group."

In Galway and Limerick, where cycle buses have been running successfully for years, students, parents and teachers

alike have commented on how cycling to school helps them start the day feeling bright and alert. And with the rising traf-

fic congestion at school gates, cycling to school is a win-win for all involved.



A 'Kidical Mass Cycle' took place in Clonakilty on August 27 with Bodhi La Trobe-Hogan (above) sharing the group's message Pic: Thady Trá

Life on a slave ship



THE HISTORY CORNER

Shane Daly

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

"Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves." Abraham Lincoln

The Atlantic slave trade saw millions of Africans taken from their homeland, shipped across the ocean and forced to work in brutal conditions in the Americas. The conditions on slave ships were abhorrent: they were filthy, cramped, disgusting and terrifying for their occupants.

While slavery was part of African society long before the arrival of European slave traders, the type of slavery practiced in the African tradition was entirely different. Captives, who could be debtors, prisoners of war, or political prisoners, were traded as a sign of wealth. Slaves were not considered chattel. An influx of Islamic

merchants resulted in slaves from Africa being transported to the Mediterranean and later, European merchants came on the scene, trading slaves to the Americas.

When Europeans arrived in Africa they first tried to raid the areas themselves. Those raids weren't successful so Europeans changed strategies and began buying enslaved people from African slave traders in places like the Congo. The arrival of European money was highly tempting and African traders began to raid nearby towns and villages to acquire more people to sell to the Europeans. Captives from throughout Africa were brought together in port cities to be transported across the Atlantic Ocean.

As they moved around from place to place on their journey towards the coast, enslaved Africans were chained to one another in slave trains – usually in shackles joined together by a metal chain, or often by their necks in a type of long continuous wooden or metal collar, spaced less than a metre apart and joined by timber or metal chains. The people in these trains came from a variety of different backgrounds, spoke different languages, and may never have seen the ocean before. But what we can say without question is that they had never been on a ship like the one they were about to board.

Once at the port, city slaves were marched onto the ships and placed below deck. Former slave Oludah Equiano, who

was active in the abolition movement in England in the 18th century, wrote about his experiences: When it came to his journey on a slave ship he described the initial confusion and shock he felt and said that he wasn't sure if the white men were going to 'kill' or 'eat' him. Once he was on board, in his own words he described 'a multitude of black people of every description chained together, everyone of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow'.

Chains used on the enslaved Africans would chafe and cut into their skin making movement painful; with such a high death rate among the middle passage, many of the captives would regularly find themselves chained to a corpse. Slave ships were designed to carry hundreds of people but in the interest of profit, they were often severely and dangerously overcrowded. Captives were often packed into the ships so tightly that they would be unable to move or sleep without touching off another prisoner. Engravings depicting the conditions on the infamous slave ship 'The Brooks', which were later a key exhibit in the argument against the slave trades, showed how the slaves were laid out below deck on the ship. Prior to the passage of the regulation act in 1788 'The Brooks' carried over 700 slaves. After the law was passed regulations restricted the number of captives aboard to 450 prisoners.

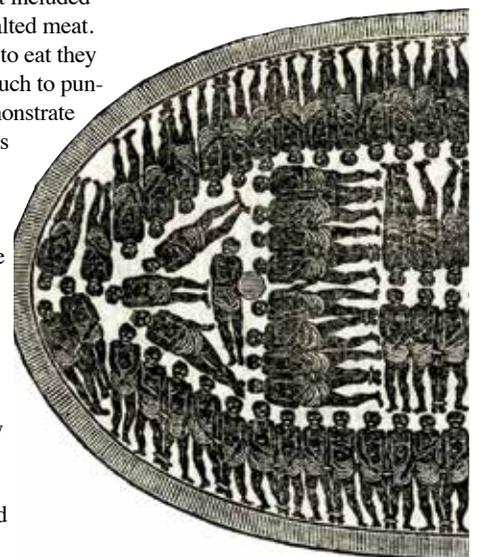
Given the chance, many of

the enslaved tried to end their own lives by various means. Captives would refuse to eat or try to poison themselves. Others would try to jump overboard into the sea. To prevent this, ships were equipped with suicide nets. Even if someone managed to get through the nets, the ship would send boats out to bring them back. To the crew, any enslaved person lost in transit meant a reduction in profits. Because they were considered for labour, the majority of captives were men, but women were enslaved too. On the ships women and men were kept separate from each other. Woman and girls were sometimes not kept in chains like their male counterparts.

For reasons of profitability keeping human cargo alive throughout the journey was essential. Crew members did whatever it took to get them to eat. The slaves' diet included bread, beans and salted meat. If a person refused to eat they were flogged, as much to punish them, as to demonstrate to the other captives that resistance was not tolerated. Take the story of a slave transported on 'The Royal George' a ship that crossed the Atlantic to Barbados in 1727. He refused to eat until he was mostly skin and bones and became seriously sick. This infuriated the ship's captain

Timothy Tucker. He feared that the slave's actions would inspire the other 200 captives he had onboard. He asked his cabin boy to fetch a large horsewhip to flog the slave. But in this case, it didn't work. The slave took the punishment and despite Tucker's threat to kill the man, he did not relent. Crew members would also force feed slaves. They used a special piece of equipment called a speculum oris, which was a long thin, mechanical contraption that was used to force open unwilling throats to receive gruel and hence, sustenance.

Slavery remained legal in America until the implantation of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863; from that day onward, slavery became illegal in the United States of America.



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people Enterprising West Cork

Jelly Fish Surf Shop continues to crest the waves in challenging times

Jelly Fish Surf Shop in Clonakilty is one of Ireland's leading surf and swim specialist shops and has been serving that community, all ages and abilities, for almost 20 years. Since first opening Jelly Fish Surf Shop has recovered from recessionary times, lengthy street closures, flooding and other disruptive weather events but the forced closures due to the Covid pandemic has been the biggest challenge to date, says business owner Nollaig Hurley. Nollaig's determination to never give up caught the attention of the judges of the Network Ireland West Cork Businesswoman of the Year awards and she won the Established Business category. Nollaig will now represent the West Cork branch at the National Awards.

Taking full advantage of our beautiful West Cork coastline is a passion for Nollaig Hurley who spends much of her free time swimming, surfing, hiking and sailing. It's no surprise that she chose to open a shop to help others access and enjoy our waters, no matter the weather.

"My ambition was always to become self-employed," Nollaig explains. "The idea of opening a surf shop was a bit of a light bulb moment that came to me over a pint after a surf session; my surf buddies were bemoaning the fact there was nowhere locally you could buy surf wax, let alone a decent wetsuit. I did a bit of research, secured some suppliers, a business loan and a premises...and as they say, the rest is history."

By taking a calculated risk, followed by sheer hard work and determination, Nollaig has seen Jelly Fish Surf Shop (JFSS) become in her words "the best little surf shop in County Cork (it's the only one!)". This feat was acknowledged in 2019, when the shop won 'Specialist Retailer of



the year' in the Independent Irish Retailer Awards, and this year by being selected to compete in the national Network Ireland awards.

Nollaig emphasises the contribution made by a very competent staff to the shop's popularity with customers. Whether you are beginning your surf journey or you are a seasoned open water swimmer, the JFSS team has the technical knowledge and experience to assist in finding the right product with the right fit. "I work with a great team, with whom I have a great camaraderie. It's never a dull day working here!"

Being a small retailer, even in the dynamic tourist town of Clonakilty, is not without its challenges. "Brexit has certainly impacted on the supply chain, causing delays and increased costs," Nollaig says. "Ensuring stock levels are there to meet the increased demand of so many people embracing open water swimming can be tricky, as Covid restrictions and Brexit still impact on production and

shipping worldwide."

Of course, the Covid pandemic and ensuing forced closures were the biggest challenges the business has ever faced. However, Nollaig has embraced and adapted to these challenges, increasing opening hours at the bricks and mortar shop in Spiller's Lane to seven days a week and developing an e-commerce site, www.jellyfishsurfshop.com. The website meant that the business could offer a 24/7 shopping experience to a national customer base. In addition to this, growing a social media presence keeps customers up to date with all things new in store.

JFSS is a stockist of quality surf/swim/general purpose wetsuits and accessories, surfboards, bodyboards, SUPs and related hardware. In addition the shop stocks a significant range of lifestyle clothing brands such as Roxy, Quiksilver, Protest, Oxbow, Weird Fish, Greenbomb, Billabong, O'Neills and more. You will also find Tilley hats, Stance socks, Buff neckwear, Jack Wolfskin, Didriksons,

Oakley Sunglasses and other specialist technical items that are essential for days spent outdoors.

"Looking forward, the plan is to develop and increase the range of Jellyfish Surf shop own brand products," says Nollaig. "Currently our offering consists of towelling robes and all weather changing robes for adults and kids, own brand clothing, T-shirts, hoodies and Buff neckwear."

Like every business owner, Nollaig says she is still working on improving the balance between work and play. "It is important to take time out but not always possible when the season is in full swing and it is 'all shoulders to the wheel'. I love my holidays and I am lucky that in the off season I can take plenty of time-out and the Jelly Fish Team are more than capable of keeping the boat afloat."

But even when the shop is "manic" she still finds time to walk with her dogs, "It's my absolute favourite pastime and the most rewarding –always time well spent."

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

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people Enterprising West Cork

Casting off self-doubt allows Maura to grow her business

Besides the eyes, what is most unique in a person are their hands. With this in mind, Maura O'Connell, of West Cork Casting Studio, has built an equally unique business, creating bespoke lifecasts of hands and fingerprint keepsake jewellery. Dunmanway-based Maura recently won the Businesswoman of the Year: Creative Professional Award from Network Ireland West Cork, which she says has finally given her full confidence and belief in her abilities.

Describing herself as “arty-farty”, when Maura O'Connell was returning to employment after time out with small children, she was determined to earn a living in a way that fed her creative side. “I ultimately wanted to work for myself, ideally something creative and definitely something capable of creating a steady income,” she recalls. “I explored a couple of options but when I saw a video of a family having their hands cast, I knew I had hit on something very special. I could see straight away the emotional value of such pieces.”

The nearest lifecasting course was a non-runner (being in Scotland and £5,000!) but Maura was undeterred and set about teaching herself through YouTube. There was a lot of trail and error before she got to a point where she was confident in charging for her service.

“Early on, when I was practicing like mad, my sister-in-law asked if I would cast her grandfather's hands. He was 95 at the time and we cast his hands with his five-year-old great-granddaughter. Up to that point I had been practicing on ourselves here at home and I loved the idea that in 40 year's time my children could look at their little hands.

“It struck me that this man would not be here in 40 year's time, but the rest of his family would. That's when the full emotional impact of the pieces hit me. I believe that within families, we are as familiar with hands as faces. All my grandparents are long gone but I can still picture their hands, and when I do, all kinds of memories come to mind. And this is exactly what has happened with Sharon's Granddad; because his hands are on display, the family speak about him often and memories are kept alive. I have many poignant stories but I feel this one is significant because it helped me fully understand why these are emotionally valuable and important pieces for a family to have.”

Once Maura recognised the potential to develop lifecasting into a business, she attended a Start Your Own Business course with the Local Enterprise Office and still attends their business clinics whenever she needs guidance. “Starting out, there usually is not a lot of money available, but take advantage of the excellent and well-subsidised business courses run by LEO and Enterprise Ireland and also local adult education centres,” she advises. “There are so many aspects



of running a business and you need to become competent in all areas. It can seem overwhelming at times but slow and steady wins the race!”

Maura also joined Network Ireland West Cork a few years ago for support and motivation. “The Network gives me ‘colleagues’ that I can turn to for advice and I can always count on support from them. Solo workers shouldn't become isolated. Find a Network that works for you and regularly attend meetings and workshops. This keeps you in the loop and helps keep your mind focused on your business. Being a creative person in business has its unique challenges so I also get a lot of support from an online group of ‘arty-farty’ businesses

called Bite the Biscuit.

“I'm most inspired by people, particularly women, who chart their own course. Who are confident in their choices and are satisfying their own needs rather than just doing what is expected by others. I love to see women support other women and I'm so glad to have found my little business tribe. A few years ago, I did a Women In Business programme with 11 other women. Since then we have been a cheerleading squad for each other and also share tips and advice. In fact, over the past couple of years we have all seen some major changes and growth in each of our businesses.

“The main challenge for me was a lack of confidence that I was capable of running a business. It wasn't until I received the Businesswoman of the Year award from Network Ireland that I truly started to believe in my ability. Receiving that award has boosted my confidence no end and I can now envision a situation where, in the future, I could even take on someone part-time.”

What Maura describes as “significant moments” in her career happen regularly due to the poignancy of the work. “Earlier this year I was asked to make a piece as a gift for somebody who was retiring. Both of this lady's adult children lived abroad with no chance of

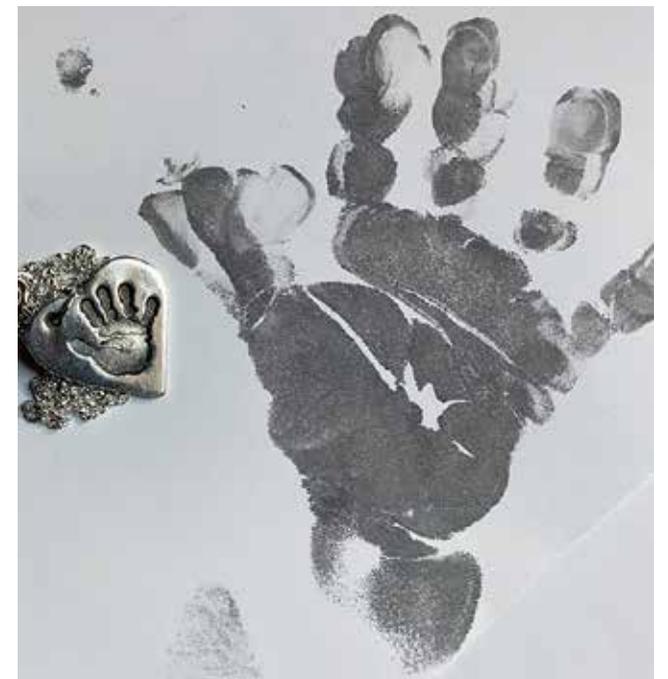
“The main challenge for me was a lack of confidence that I was capable of running a business. It wasn't until I received the Businesswoman of the Year award from Network Ireland that I truly started to believe in my ability...”

getting home for the retirement party. So we contacted them and showed them how to take fingerprint impressions at home; they sent them onto me and I made a heart charm with both the fingerprints on it.

“As we know fingerprints are unique to each of us and so only her two children could have made these prints. It helped bring them a little closer and to quote my customer ‘was the most meaningful gift I've ever given’. I've made several pieces like this that

is a key benefit to being your own boss Maura believes. “Having one parent available at home was important to both myself and my husband and I was clear from the start where the work day would start and end. Of course there are busy times where I have to put in extra hours at work and the opposite, where work is quiet and we can take off on some adventure outside. I regularly see other women very stressed from an overload of homework and work and I'm clear with myself that this won't happen. One very important way this works for my family is that we are a good tag team when it comes to childcare and household chores. The motto here is: if you live in this house you help with its upkeep.”

Maura has big dreams for West Cork Casting Studio, which she now believes are possible: “In ten years time I'll have seen a huge growth in the high end, bespoke keepsake market. I will have expanded my market from local to



went abroad, one to a granny in Chile, with her two Irish grandchildren's prints, and another with a father's fingerprint that went to his son who was unable to travel to see his Dad before he passed away.”

When not on the road casting, customers are invited to Maura's home to have their cast made. “I also hope that in the near future I can move out of the little studio I'm currently in, my children's old playroom, to a purpose built cabin or something similar with designated areas for jewellery making, lifecasting and mould making.”

Balancing work and children

national and onto international and will have developed some new products and ranges. My business will have grown to the point where I have some part-time workers employed including an office worker! I will also have a new premises and possibly a shop front in a larger urban area.”

She'll never become immune to the stories of her clients though. “The work I do now is special because, not only do I hear the stories, I also help the families preserve them. I get so much satisfaction and such a buzz from creating... I know it's good for my soul!”

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people Enterprising West Cork

One-day retreat promises to help you find the right work-life balance in a hybrid model of working

Despite the many complexities and challenges of living and working through the global pandemic, employees have still identified many benefits from working from home, for themselves, their families and their organisations. These benefits include a better work-life balance, greater ability to focus with fewer distractions, more time for family and friends, saved commuting time and costs, IT upskilling and higher levels of motivation.

However there are also challenges to this new hybrid model of working. Employees who have chosen to work some days from home may find the workplace is no longer an even playing field; many will feel excluded just because they are not in the same room as colleagues. There are also challenges when it comes to successful collaboration, effective brainstorming and fresh thinking. Some managers have never had the experience of managing split and remote teams and how to do this effectively and fairly.

A one day Human Growth and Digital Transformation Program in West Cork is offering the opportunity to find out what workplace model will

best work for you. The course, which will take place in the beautiful surrounds of Manch Estate in Ballineen, will focus on helping participants to take charge of their physical and mental wellbeing, re-energise, cope with change, and as a result, reach optimum productivity in the workplace.

Organisers Grainne Bagnall, a Human Development Coach and Michelle Ryan, a Nutrition Consultant and Health Coach say the course is ideally suited to groups of nine-plus professionals in, or returning to the physical workplace.

“It will also be suitable for those who have taken a career break or anyone interested in learning new skills in the digital world. It may also suit working professionals currently in a hybrid work model and looking to manage the digital and work life balance,” says Michelle.

Grainne is the co-founder of the Digital Transformation Lab at UCC and a STEAM Careers Lecturer at MTU. She is passionate about developing transformational programs using ‘Design Thinking Your Life’ – a creative and innovative approach to stand out and be unique in the workplace of the future. She is also a trained

Forest Bathing Wellness guide and practitioner.

The owner of BWELLHIVE, Michelle is adept with helping people with improving their health (getting back on track) through her nutritional, wellbeing packages and programs. Michelle is also trained as a Forest Bathing guide and practitioner since 2019 and says she knows how important the benefits of combining nature, wellbeing and nutrition to achieve a balanced lifestyle and overall optimum health in the home and work life.

Guest speaker at the event will be interior designer Maura Mackey who will share her tips for creating the optimal environment for working from home using biophilic design and principles.

Biophilic design is the practice of connecting people and nature within our built environments and communities.

Participants on the course will walk away with a wellness lifestyle assessment, new tools to help you repurpose your lifestyle, new ways of thinking, nourishing food recipes to support your physical and mental wellbeing and a digital workspace online guide that will help you become more



Organisers Grainne Bagnall, a Human Development Coach and Michelle Ryan, a Nutrition Consultant and Health Coach say the course is ideally suited to groups of nine-plus professionals in, or returning to the physical workplace.

productive and efficient. You will also receive your own sit mat and water bottle!

This program will run for one day every month, mainly Saturdays, at the beautiful Manch Estate in Ballineen, starting on September 18. They will be followed by bespoke and or tailored workshops offered throughout the autumn season for full and half days.

Anyone interested in taking part in a One Day Human Growth Transformation program can find out more on bwellhive.ie/events.



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or email wellness@bwellhive.ie

Resurgence of optimism among business leaders

A new survey of its members by the Institute of Directors (IoD) in Ireland has found that business leaders' optimism in terms of the Irish economy and their organisations' future financial performance has increased markedly in recent months. The Government's effect on both consumer confidence and business decision-making has also seen notable increases in positive sentiment from business leaders.

The IoD research for Q2 2021, published in August, finds that 61 per cent of directors are 'more optimistic' with regard to the Irish economy compared to 30 per cent in Q1 2021.

In respect of financial performance, the IoD research has found that 71 per cent of business

leaders believe the financial performance of their primary organisation will improve in Q3 2021. In addition, 67 per cent of business leaders believe the financial performance of their primary organisation will improve for the year 2021.

Maura Quinn, Chief Executive of the Institute of Directors in Ireland, commented: “We are seeing a resurgence of optimism among business leaders. Towards the end of 2020, it was evident that positive sentiment was returning. The lifting of many public health restrictions in recent months along with the roll-out of the national vaccination programme are playing their part. Crucially, these positive developments are being mirrored in our key overseas markets and

our research reveals optimism with regard to potential market growth opportunities in the EU and US markets, in particular. That positivity is also reflected in the finding that only three per cent of respondents signified that they were not expecting any growth in market opportunities during the third quarter of the year. Many of the trends in our research findings have an upward trajectory, which is good news.

“The Government, too, will be encouraged by these findings. Our research has found that business leaders view more positively the effect of its performance on consumer confidence and on business decision-making.”

Businesses urged to check they still qualify for government supports

Business owners are being urged to make sure they are not missing out on government support still available to them with the next phase of the roadmap approaching fast.

After frequent changes, some confusion around eligibility and when schemes will wind down has set in. TaxAssist Accountants, an accountancy network for SMEs, has launched a free, consolidated, guide that brings together all of the remaining supports, including their planned end

dates. The document acts as a practical checklist for business owners who want to ask themselves; am I still getting all the supports I could be getting?

Speaking about the guide, Managing Director of TaxAssist Accountants, Alison McGinley, said ‘The key thing to say is the support is there so don't miss out. Business owners are busy re-establishing their businesses and they don't have the time to spend online researching the latest updates from each government agency. Add to that the fact that some

information on the internet is now out of date and you can see how business owners are confused. If you want to see at a glance what might apply to you, how much you can get and how you go about applying step by step then this is the guide for you’.

The guide is available to download for free online at www.taxassist.ie and is available via TaxAssist's app. TaxAssist's dedicated Covid 19 www.taxassist.ie/covid-19 hub is also updated weekly with new information.

people Enterprising West Cork

Shaking up a life plan is a recipe for success

Baltimore-based Foxglove Cocktails was the winner of the Emerging New Business Category of Network Ireland West Cork 2021 awards and will now go on to compete at national level this October. The small craft brand produces non-alcoholic craft cocktail mixers and garnishes, designed for creating cocktails (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) at home. Co-owner Tara Copplesstone tells West Cork People how she mixes the right ingredients for personal and professional success.

Tara Copplesstone set off for New York City a decade ago with a Masters in Public Relations and Media and a dream of becoming a hotshot public relations girl. Her experience of part-time work in Irish hospitality served her well in bartending to support her PR job hunt, which ended

when she landed a position with Pernod Ricard as a Promotional and Sales Manager for Jameson. Four years later Tara left Pernod for the new challenge of helping to open a sports bar in Midtown Manhattan in 2018.

Although sometimes tough and tiring, Tara finds the hospitality industry to be an exhilarat-

ing place to work in, "It's fast-paced, good craic and never too far from great food and drinks!" she says. "As a bartender/bar manager in New York, you work primarily off tips; in essence, you need an entrepreneurial spirit to be successful – to fill your bar with customers, get them all to order drinks, and most importantly, to get them to stay at your bar all night. New York is so competitive when it comes to the bar industry, so you have to be on the ball."

When NYC instructed all bars and restaurants to close on March 16, 2020, Tara found herself unexpectedly furloughed with time on her hands. "I was living alone so I decided to come home to Baltimore to ride out the 'two-week lockdown' by spending time with my family, a concept that was so foreign to me as March signals the start of a busy basketball season in the bar; not to mind St Patrick's Day celebrations!"

This 'temporary' move proved pivotal for Tara, as it was during this first lockdown that she made the decision to stay in Baltimore permanently, and not return to her job, apartment and friends in New York. Instead she started a business, Foxglove Cocktails, with her brother Rory.

"I was naturally thinking about ways I could fill my time during Summer 2020, and the idea of non-alcoholic craft cocktail mixers was my lightbulb moment!" Tara explains. "A



Tara and Rory Copplesstone

mix of my bartending skills, my entrepreneurial sense and the ability to work in West Cork with all natural ingredients, it was the perfect storm of ideas."

With fiercely entrepreneurial parents behind them, the siblings had a good grounding in both business and hospitality; Rory had just finished his final exams with Shannon College of Hotel Management but his first job in Atlanta, Georgia, had been cancelled indefinitely.

"We were making cocktails at home throughout the first lockdown and discussed how people love to drink cocktails, but often they need some inspiration, or someone to take the fuss out of the preparation. So Foxglove Cocktails was born on the premise of 'More Fun, Less Fuss'."

Since launching in Skibbereen Farmers Market in June 2020, Tara says she has "been blown away by the support given to small businesses and start-ups in Ireland – it is incredible! If you are starting a business, let your Local Enterprise Office know, and they will give you all the information you need. We have received great support from

them, most notably two grants, the Trading Online Voucher and the Priming Grant, both of which have helped us immensely. LEO offer everything from online courses to funding to mentoring – the support of our LEO has been a game changer for us."

Her other quick tip for startups is Canva.com as the easiest, one-stop tool for creating a consistent and cohesive brand.

Foxglove is aiming to launch a few products with local Supervalu next month through the Food Academy programme, and "we will bring out some fun, seasonal products for Christmas," Tara promises, "as well as a few extra surprises – but we will keep that a secret for now!"

Achieving a work/life balance is important to Tara but it is "a work in progress," she admits. "I am guilty of struggling to switch off on my days off but I'm learning to take advantage of being your own boss. Our dog, Jackson, recently passed away very unexpectedly; Rory and I unanimously agreed to take a few days off work, just to be with our family and process the shock of losing him. We were

lucky to be in that position but taking a break without guilt is my big challenge."

Longterm, the entrepreneurial siblings hope to grow their distribution with Supervalu and local independent stores, and to get involved with events, weddings and festivals.

For the moment they take great pride in the fact that they have conceived an idea and put in the hard work to bring it to fruition in their home village. "I had always assumed I needed to be in Dublin or Cork to pursue a career in this industry," Tara says. "I love that we have built a business in a place that we love and that I can work alongside my brother everyday; he keeps me very grounded and makes me laugh more than anyone else I know so we make a good team."

"In 10 years time, I see Foxglove as a well-established, national brand, both in retail and in the hospitality industry. Personally, I see myself in a fabulously renovated vintage truck, driving all around Ireland (and maybe beyond) serving cocktails at festivals and events. What a joy!"



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Baltimore, West Cork

Dunmanway social campaigner recognised for advocacy work

Yvonne Cahalane, a social campaigner from Dunmanway, has reached the national finals of the prestigious Network Ireland Businesswoman of the Year Awards.

Yvonne was crowned the winner of the Power Within Category at the Network Ireland West Cork branch awards, held in late June, and will now represent West Cork in this category at the national finals, to be held in The Theatre Royal, Waterford, on October 8.

The Power Within Category gives women an opportunity to share their stories of how they overcame difficulties in their lives and discovered their own power for great impact.

Yvonne, mother to two



young boys, shared her story of how she advocated for medical cannabis treatment for her son Tristan in 2015 and was deemed 'the pathfinder' in accessing medical cannabis for

patients in Ireland. Creating history by gaining the first license for medical cannabis in Ireland in 2016, which opened the doors for other patients in Ireland.

Yvonne went on to advocate for safe and wider access to medical cannabis for patients in Ireland and was invited by the Health Department to make recommendations to the health committee for the Medical Cannabis Access Programme (MCAP). She continues her advocacy work today.

While continuing her advocacy work, Yvonne returned to college to study law, taking a deferral after completing year one to run in the local elections. "You can't be what you can't see" says Yvonne, "and I didn't

see anybody that represented what I stood for. Patients, parents, carers, disability, medical cannabis, WOMEN!! I wanted to represent a voice that few spoke for and fewer delivered for."

Although unsuccessful on that occasion, Yvonne stayed involved in politics and was elected into the role of constituency secretary for Cork South West Fine Gael. "It was very important for me to represent women at board level. At present there is a huge gender imbalance," according to data, compiled by search company Accreate, found women represented only 20 per cent of board directors, down from 21 per cent in 2019.

An avid volunteer, Yvonne is

an emergency first responder for the Irish Red Cross and was also promoted to IRC Community Support Officer for the Dunmanway and surrounding areas when the pandemic hit.

Network Ireland, which organises the Businesswoman of the Year awards each year, is a progressive, dynamic organisation supporting the professional and personal development of women.

The membership is made up of a very diverse group of women, from entrepreneurs, SME owners, professionals and leaders in indigenous and multinational organisations to non-profits, charities, arts and the public sector, which promotes diversity and equality.

Network Ireland has been a hugely valuable source of support for Yvonne.

"I am so grateful for the women of Network Ireland, they have been advisors, collaborators and everyone is there to see you succeed. I have gained life-long friends and a support network that resonates with the saying, Find your tribe and love them hard."

"Winning this award, to be acknowledged, validated and my achievements recognised by these strong, accomplished women that I'm surrounded by means the world to me."

people Environment : Making a difference

Irish Whale and Dolphin Group reports on changing trends in our seas

IWDG Sightings Officer, **Pádraig Whooley** on the changing trends in our seas, including a rarely seen Arctic walrus, and the red flags this raises.

Since the start of summer in early May the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) has received and validated hundreds of cetacean (whale and dolphin) sighting and stranding records from the public, researchers and boat operators alike. All of this data, once validated, is invaluable, as these sightings go towards Ireland's longest established, continuous dataset, which dates back over 30 years. This data is used in many ways, but most importantly it is this data that enables IWDG be a voice for Ireland's cetacean and basking shark populations when it comes to protection of both these magnificent animals and their habitats.

At a glance we can see that this summer alone we have documented no less than nine species in West Cork waters and although most of these are the 'usual suspects' of cetaceans that we've come to expect, they also include the planet's second largest shark, the mighty yet planktivorous basking shark and a rarely seen walrus.

There's probably no need to rehash the story of this Arctic vagrant here, as it has been headline news for months since it was first reported to the IWDG on March 14 on Valentia Island, Co. Kerry. Its quizzical expression and boat sinking antics have gobbled up column inches and filled Gigabytes of space on social media platforms in the five countries it has travelled through over the past six months (Ireland, Wales, England, France and Spain), during a 3,000 km saga that has taken it as far south as San Sebastian in Spain and back.

Since returning to northern latitudes (a relative term if you're a walrus) reaching landfall at Clonea Bay, Co. Waterford on August 2, it's been like Groundhog Day. Every harbour it visits is like the first. This was a story that was always going to pull at the heartstrings of a certain animal welfare cohort and the calls for action based on concerns that it was exhaust-

ed, in poor shape, emaciated, stressed, or even injured, were predictable. And of course all this shaped the narrative that somehow this walrus needed human intervention, which ranged from building it a pontoon to act as a safe and comfy sofa to haul out on, so it could rest without causing damage to local boats, to the extreme end of the spectrum, where there were calls for a rescue and repatriation back home, wherever that might be. In fact it needs none of these things and really just needs to be left alone.

IWDG believe that wildlife is resilient and rarely benefits from our meddling. The notion that an aquatic Arctic mammal that has evolved to survive in the harshest of environments, needs us to build it a pontoon, seems wide of the mark, as it increases the risk of it becoming too comfortable and only encourages it to remain longer; neither of which are in its best interest. We all presumably want the same thing, which is the safe return of this individual to its Arctic home, under its own steam. The bigger and more worrying question is what sort of a home will be waiting for it, if and when it does return?

It's great to see people getting exercised about wildlife and IWDG took some online criticism for daring to reveal the Walrus' latest location. We believe that people have a right to witness such rare events, responsibly, and have been over the past 30 years the strongest proponent of whale watching, particularly here in West Cork, and so we don't buy into the philosophy that its location needs be kept secret. Given the wildfire nature of social media today, this is never going to be possible anyway. By the time we wrote about any location, local boat owners were already out in numbers for a closer gawk and that all important selfie. However, we consistently asked people to observe it from land using optics and to be mindful of the predicament the walrus was in and not to approach it on boats due to the risk of disturbing it while hauled out. Some of the behaviour I personally observed in Dunnycove laid bare just how far removed some people have become from the natural world.

This presence of a walrus in local West Cork waters should raise lots of red flags for us, and for anyone still sceptical

about climate change and how it is impacting on the marine environment in particular, this is a really good case in point. Fragmentation of Arctic sea ice may well be the reason why this sub-adult walrus has ventured so far from home, and although this is by no means the first walrus record for Ireland, the previous one being in Clew Bay, Co. Mayo in April 1999, it will indeed be interesting to see if the IWDG documents an increase in sightings of this extra limital vagrant in the years and decades to come.

In recent years IWDG has confirmed sighting of a new whale species for Ireland, the Arctic bowhead was photographed in May 2016 off Carlingford Lough, Co. Louth and then in April 2017 what was a 'probable' bowhead from a local whale watching boat off the Stags near Toe Head. July 2015 produced a record of a beluga whale off Dunseverick, Co. Antrim and since then there have been quite a few Arctic pinnipeds, namely hooded and bearded seals. As I type, there is also at least one Californian gray whale (also called 'Wally') swimming between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and the only route for them to the Atlantic is through the northwest passage which seems to be sufficiently ice free now in summer to allow these leviathans return to the Atlantic, where they've not been recorded since the 18th Century.

So this walrus is in good company and is joining a host of marine mammal species that may be actively seeking a new home well outside their normal range. But it's not just Arctic species that are on the move. In mid August my wife and a friend were walking on Long Strand, where among a host of moon jellies and compass jellyfish, they saw a Portuguese Man O' War washed up. Now there is nothing that unusual about seeing this tropical and potentially dangerous siphonophore washed up along the Irish Southwest, as in recent years this has become something of an annual event, as southerly gales have seen thousands of them wash up on West Cork beaches during late September and October; but as Dr. Tom Doyle UCC says, this is the earliest record he has heard of for this species.

So things are changing in our marine environment and



Walrus on RIB. Pic: Charles Coughlan



Humpback whale with kayaker, West Cork April 2021 Pic: Pádraig Whooley, IWDG

changing fast, as different prey and predator species react to the new conditions they find themselves in. This will likely impact on our native species, the 'Usual Suspects' we referred to at the beginning, as they'll have to co-exist with these exotic visitors, or risk being forced out themselves. We live in interesting times and it has never been more important that organisations like the IWDG with All Island networks of volunteers and established biological recording schemes are out there recording these changes year after year and decade after decade.

We'd ask Citizen Scientists fortunate enough to see whales, dolphins, basking sharks (or indeed walrus) to report your observations using our critically acclaimed new mobile Reporting App, which was launched this summer, or by simply clicking on the 'Report a Sighting/stranding' links on www.iwdg.ie. Your sightings are important and are a key monitoring tool that helps us track the movements of these magnificent mobile marine mammals as they pass along the West Cork coast and beyond. All sightings and strandings data, once validated, are made available in real time on our website and can be

interrogated by species, location or timeframe, with the results available in map or table format. This is an invaluable tool for anyone with an interest in the

conservation of our marine megafauna in West Cork waters.

Happy whale watching in the Autumn ahead.

ESB and dCarbonX launch Kinsale Head Hydrogen Storage project

ESB and dCarbonX has launched 'Green Hydrogen @ Kinsale,' an integrated project to develop large-scale storage for green hydrogen off the coast of County Cork.

This project – pending licence and planning approvals – could have the potential to store up to three TWh of green hydrogen and hydrogen carriers, the equivalent of approximately 10 per cent of current Irish annual electricity consumption.

A proprietary evaluation of the depleted gas field reservoir took place earlier this year to identify the potential for large-scale storage of green hydrogen. Since then, a comprehensive work programme has begun, comprising of subsurface analysis, mineralogy, capacity modelling, injection and withdrawal rates, compression, drilling evaluation, well design, retention assurance, monitoring, electrolysis and infrastructure tie-in.

This is the latest project undertaken by ESB and dCarbonX following their partnership announcement in May, with the companies identifying and developing subsea energy storage offshore opportunities in Ireland. The companies have also proposed the development of a new 'Green Hydrogen Valley,' centred around the Poolbeg peninsula in Dublin, which will enable green hydrogen production and storage that can be used to decarbonise heavy transport, shipping, industry and power generation.

The County Cork region is ideally placed to be a renewable energy hub, having one of the largest natural harbours in the world, excellent energy and transport connectivity, modern global manufacturing and service industries together with power stations, refinery and gas reception terminal.

people Environment : Making a difference

Creating a sustainable future for West Cork

Abi O’Callaghan-Platt lives in West Cork and is a Campaign Manager for the environmental NGO, VOICE Ireland.

Are you passionate about the future of the West Cork community you live in? Are you interested in charting a sustainable pathway for your town or village? If so, the Sustainable Communities Training Programme is for you!

The programme asks communities to think about what they want for the future of their town. To ask themselves questions such as ‘What do I cherish about where I live and how can I ensure it is still there in the future?’ ‘Who are the people in our communities, and what do they need?’ ‘What are the challenges faced by our community, and how can we overcome these?’

The SECAD Sustainable Communities Training Programme is a free programme aimed at community groups, volunteers, businesses, young people and individuals who are interested in developing and nurturing sustainability within their local communities. Funded by the LEADER (2014-2020) Programme, the initiative will support participating communities to identify their sustainabil-

ity goals, while helping them to develop a community plan that strives for social, environmental and economic benefits for all.

The programme will be delivered by the environmental NGO VOICE Ireland. VOICE is an environmental charity that empowers individuals and local communities to take positive action to conserve our natural resources. See www.voiceireland.org for more info.

How does the programme work?

The programme begins on September 15 and will run until May 2022. During this time a core group within the participating communities will be trained in sustainability issues and project management and will work together to develop a sustainability roadmap for their community. One headline project from the roadmap will go on to West Cork based architect, Design Republic, to be costed and developed to planning permission standards.

The programme kicks off with six weekly workshops on different topics within the area of sustainability, delivered by experts within the field:

- Green Enterprise workshop – led by the Clean Technology Centre
- Sustainable Energy and Transport - led by Tipperary Energy Agency

- Biodiversity and Nature Connection - led by Cork Environmental Forum
- The Circular Economy - led by VOICE
- Sustainable Agriculture - led by Farming for Nature
- Sustainable Town Planning - led by Coakley O’Neill Town Planners Ltd

Programme Timeline:

- September 15 to October 20, 2021: Sustainability workshops every Wednesday evening from 7-9pm on Zoom
- November and December 2021: Developing the draft community led sustainability roadmap
- January and February 2022: Eight project management training workshops, held once a week on Zoom.
- March, April and May 2022: Finalising the sustainability roadmap and working with architects, Design Republic, to finalise the legacy project

The programme will run alongside the school year, with breaks scheduled to coincide with school holidays.

Outcomes from participating in the programme

The outcome for the community from participating in the programme is a sustainability



plan for the community, and the capacity to deliver it. By May 2022 your community will have:

- A Community Development Team for your town/village training in sustainability issues and project management
- An expert reviewed community-led sustainability roadmap for your town/village
- A project ready to go with full architect designed specifications and costings

How do I get involved? Anyone can take part and be on the Community Development Team for their town or village! If you are passion-

ate about the future of your community, we would love to have you on board! We invite anyone who lives in West Cork to sign up, whether you work full time, are a business owner, a stay-at-home parent, retired, unemployed or a student the programme is open to you. We hope to have a diverse range of people participating in each community, to ensure the outcomes reflect the needs of the community as a whole! Whether you have lived in West Cork all your life, or have newly moved here we would welcome your voice!

Community Development

Teams are being formed in Skibbereen, Baltimore, Ballinspittle, Kinsale and Clonakilly. Register to join them at www.secad.ie/leader/sustainable-communities

We are also keen for additional communities to participate! If you live in another part of West Cork and would love to see the programme run in your area, register your interest here www.secad.ie/leader/sustainable-communities or contact SECAD via noconnell@secad.ie or 021 461 3432 / 087 967 2515.

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Join in the Big Beach Clean this September

Over 200 clean-ups have already been planned across Ireland for the third weekend of September and Clean Coasts is calling more people to join this international weekend of citizen science

Registrations for the Big Beach Clean only opened a few weeks ago and 5,000 volunteers from all over Ireland have already registered to receive free clean-up kits to tackle litter in over 200 different locations.

In County Cork, over 800 volunteers have already signed up to carry out clean-ups in more than 40 different locations across the county.

The Big Beach Clean is an annual call-to-action organised by Clean Coasts that calls volunteers from communities all over Ireland getting involved to remove litter from our beautiful coast at the end of the bathing season, as part of the International Coastal Clean-up (ICC), operated internationally by Ocean Conservancy. This year, the initiative will run between September 17-19, which is also the same weekend as World

Clean-up Day. Communities and volunteers across the country are invited to register their own clean-ups in any location in Ireland, no matter how far from the coast. Alternatively, Clean Coasts will be facilitating a number of clean-ups in several counties, for people who wish to join them. Places will be limited, so make sure you check the calendar of events and register your interest through Clean Coasts’ website or social media.

The Big Beach Clean is also an opportunity for volunteers to get involved in a worldwide citizen science project, which entails collecting the amount and types of litter on Irish beaches and filling in Clean Coasts’ Marine Litter Data Cards. This will help heighten awareness about the issue of marine litter serving as an indicator of the magnitude of the problem.

Public participation through Citizen Science is the key concept in which everyone does their small part to increase knowledge and provides a lifeline to scientists that would not have the

capacity to carry out this research alone and the data collected contributes to a growing body of knowledge, helping to reveal patterns and trends, identify areas for further research and even inform policy. The benefits of citizen science, however, are not only confined to the scientific community. Taking part in these collaborative efforts also promotes active citizenship, increases environmental awareness, and enables people to be part of a bigger picture.

Statistics show that the number one cause of marine litter is litter dropped in towns and cities. This is why the Big Beach Clean will once more be open to all residents of Ireland, no matter how far from the coast they are based, thanks to the involvement of the National Spring Clean Programme. Getting involved in the Big Beach Clean is a way for residents of non-coastal counties to help prevent litter entering our waterways and seas by holding a clean-up no matter where they are in the country and tackling the problem at source.

Finally, Cully and Sully

will support the initiative again, by providing registered volunteers with the Big Beach Clean kits. Cullen Allen (Cully) said “Cully and Sully are proud to be partners with the Big Beach Clean again for 2021. The work carried out by the teams across the Island of Ireland is amazing and unfortunately very much needed during these times. We all use our local beaches and have spent time on many of the beautiful beaches and waterways across Ireland and are so thankful for the work that the groups and organisations do.”

“Highlighting the importance of taking your rubbish home with you and encouraging everyone to do their part really is critical in the world we are living in. We would urge everyone to get out during the Big Beach Clean 2021. Why not get together with your family, friends, work colleagues or even your classmates and make a fun day of it whilst also helping this amazing initiative. We need maintain our clean beaches and waterways and protect them for future generations.”

people Environment : Making a difference

Getting the garden ready for autumn visitors



BirdWatchIreland
West Cork Branch
www.birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie

There's a lot we can do now to make our gardens more welcoming to overwintering birds says **Nicholas Mitchell**, Birdwatch Ireland West Cork.

August is over and some of our summer visitors, such as the Common Swift, have already left their breeding sites in West Cork for their winter grounds. On average, it can take a Swift up to ten weeks to get to sub-Saharan West Africa, of which about six of those weeks will be stopovers or delays. It will be May next year before we see them again. Over the last few weeks of August, you may also have noticed large numbers of (Barn) Swallows chattering and swooping above your garden feeding on insects. They need to accumulate fat and body reserves necessary to sustain them on their flight southward.

The headlands on the West Cork coast are also on the route of birds that spent the summer further north and are now migrating south. These next two months are a great time to visit one of these peninsulas, such as the Mizen, to witness the migration as songbirds make their way along ditches and hedgerows until the land meets the sea and they head

for the next landfall. A bird that we generally only see here during the autumn migration is the 'Greenland' race of the (Northern) Wheatear that breeds in far north-eastern Canada. It stops here having flown across the Atlantic before turning right to Africa. It may only take four days to cross the Atlantic and in order to fuel its flight it accumulates so much fat that it nearly doubles its normal body weight. The Branch runs outings at this time of year specifically for the autumn migration so, if you are interested, subscribe to our mailing list (details below).

While the migration is underway, there are also a few jobs that can be done in your garden to prepare for autumn and winter. Although some garden songbirds will be migrating south, there will also be the arrival of winter visitors. A good example is the Robin, which migrates from Scandinavia, northern Europe and Russia in the autumn. These birds will spend the winter here, although I once heard tell that it's only the males that stay here to defend their territories and the female Robins fly further south to spend the winter in Portugal. I hope that's true!

The first task is to get the bird feeders ready. Whether or not you fed the birds throughout the summer, this is a good time to clean your feeders before putting them out for the autumn and winter. Ideally, situate your feeders near some cover, and where the birds have a clear view of any approaching predators, but also where you can see them. Fill your feeders with a high-quality seed mix bought from a

reputable supplier and, if you want to attract a greater range of species, augment this with suet cakes, mealworms, and fat balls etc. A supply of water is also vitally important, not just for drinking but for bathing and cleaning. Finally, clean your feeders with warm soapy water regularly to minimise the spread of disease. Moving your feeders to different parts of the garden from time to time will also stop the build-up of bird droppings and discarded seed.

Another thing that you can do to provide food for your garden birds is to create habitats for insects by leaving areas with leaves on the ground and not pruning branches until closer to spring. You could also grow plants such as teasel, holly, ivy, hawthorn and cotoneaster; something to think about when making plans for your garden over the winter months.

The next task is to clean your bird boxes. Most garden birds will have finished nesting by the end of August, so September is a good time to clean your nest boxes. However, before taking the boxes down, make sure that the nest is no longer active! Remove and dispose of any unhatched eggs and any nesting material first. Then give the inside of the box a good brush. Next, pour boiling water over the box to kill any remaining parasites. Do not use any insecticides or flea powders. Let the box dry thoroughly before putting it back. If you put a small amount of clean hay or wood shavings in the box then birds may use it during the winter as a roost site. Do not use straw. If you do not have any nest boxes, then this could either be



Male House Sparrow collecting nesting material from a Cape Restio



Juvenile Song Thrush feeding on the lawn. All pics: Nicholas Mitchell

a winter project or, dare I utter the word so early in the year, a Christmas present.

Providing food, shelter and habitat for birds and wildlife in your garden is not just good for them but also for your own

well-being and enjoyment, whether it is from watching House Sparrows collecting nesting material in the spring or a recently fledged Song Thrush feeding on the lawn in late summer.

For more information about the BirdWatch Ireland West Cork Branch contact Nicholas Mitchell at secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie or join our mailing list by sending an email to mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie.

First Sustainable Market for West Cork at Myross Wood House

To celebrate their recent move into Myross Wood House, the newly opened Centre of Excellence for Climate Action and Sustainability (CECAS) has hosted West Cork's first Sustainable Market.

The people of Leap, Union Hall and beyond were delighted to see Myross Wood House coming back to life after the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart said farewell to the landmark property last year. Young and old arrived early on a warm and sunny day to enjoy the event, which involved over 16 stalls with local West Cork makers, growers and producers who are all committed to working sustainably, and to achieving zero waste.

With locally grown food

and produce on sale, there was everything from Union Hall potatoes to handmade unique jewellery and from West Cork cheese and locally produced arts and crafts to outdoor clothing and sustainable period products.

Castlehaven-based photographer Pete Martin of Red Door Photography was one of the stallholders: "I was delighted to support this new initiative by Green Skibbereen. My approach to photography is both ethical and sustainable and it's great to have a close to home outlet for my work that reflects that ethos."

Green Skibbereen Chairperson Trish Lavelle was very happy with the day. "We had an estimated 300 visitors to the event over the course of the day.

It was a real community gathering, with friends and neighbours having a cup of tea and a scone together outdoors in the sunshine, having the opportunity to buy some lovely food, crafts, flowers and plants and to learn how our local producers are working towards sustainability.

All we had left behind at the end of the day was a bag of compostable paper cups so everyone really respected the zero waste message. We were also very lucky to have a great bunch of volunteers without whom the event could not have taken place, so we hope this will be the first of many such occasions. Keep an eye on our social media and websites for more information about future events."



September plans



A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

I'm writing this on a terrace in the full sunshine in what is probably the last hurrah of summer 2021. All around me people – mostly tourists – are eating and drinking, soaking up the heat. Others stroll down the street eating ice creams, trailed by a line of children in shorts. A backpacker is sitting under a tree reading a map. I could be anywhere on the Med and I'm loving it. If the pandemic leaves one thing behind, I vote for all the new terraces.

Like a wish come true, we got a second heatwave. It's not as spectacular as the one back in July, but I'll take what I'm given, as long as it qualifies as a heatwave. West Cork in a heatwave has a sparkle that is irresistible. It's clearly not a secret either. We've been found out lads. I hope you all had a very profitable summer, because, my goodness, there were a lot of people around. Eavesdropping as I sit writing, I can report

that the tourists are delighted. I listen as two well-groomed women recount the various activities they have taken their kids to. "It's the best holiday ever!" pipes up a well-groomed eight-year-old. "My favourite was the horse riding – and the surfing. The surfing was class." "And the mini-golf!" adds his matching little brother. The Choo-Choo goes by tooting its horn and we all wave. Waving at the Choo-Choo always feels a bit silly, but I do it anyway. It goes with the territory of being a local. After this year's lockdowns, it feels great to be a local outside my 5k again. Especially in the sunshine.

Now that we are fully vaccinated, we've started slowly venturing out. Last weekend we headed down to Baltimore, and what a joy that was! The terraces have totally taken over the square, with a walkway marked out on the street for pedestrians. Sitting facing the water, eating oysters you could almost forget about Covid. The ropes around the terraces and the face-masked waiters were a reminder that we're not out of the woods yet. However, when a two-piece band started to play it felt almost like the Before Times.

We've been to two music gigs and one comedy gig so far. They were all wonderful – though more what I imagine rehabilitation, or convalescence is like. Nothing too big, or too exciting just yet. No dancing. Just sitting. Twenty to fifty people. Outside. Fully masked when walking around. Not exactly festival fit yet, but so

uplifting to be a member of the audience again, no matter how small. I look forward to each and every restriction being lifted until we are all packed into a venue trying to get to the bar while the band rocks on, and some idiot starts jumping up and down in front of the stage. When I feel comfortable in that scenario then I'll know that my rehab is over and that I am healed.

I've been surprised at how much lockdown has impacted on my social interactions. I was always very gregarious. I loved a party. Perhaps it is because we still have some restrictions that being with other people (especially strangers) still feels weird. We went to our first, small party recently and it was both lovely and deeply strange – like an uncanny valley version of the West Cork I know and love. The blue sky melted into a spectacular sunset as we ate barbeque and chatted or listened to someone playing a few songs. It felt like we were shooting a movie. I can't wait for it all to become ordinary again.

Next week is September and that means making plans, which is why I entitled this column September plans. I'm afraid however, that I will not be making any plans just yet. It's the last heatwave and I've lived in West Cork long enough to know that you must drop all plans when a heatwave hits – especially when you know it's the last. I for one am going to take advantage of the sun this weekend. September plans can wait until September.

Antiques Roadshow and Punch and Judy fans catered to in outdoor events in aid of Hope Foundation

The Hope Foundation will host two fun outdoor events at Fota House and Gardens on Sunday, September 5 2021.

The first event, from 12-1.30pm, is a Punch and Judy magical storytelling show and will feature snapping crocodiles and much more! Following on from this in the afternoon, from 2pm to 4pm, there will be an exclusive Antiques, Jewellery and Vinyl Roadshow, where the public will have an opportunity to meet experts Tom Woodward from Woodward's Antiques and Fine Arts; John Byrne, Vinyl Expert, and John Neville, of

Neville Jewellers. These experts will be on hand to lend their advice on any special items.

Fota House, Arboretum and Gardens have very kindly offered exclusive use of the Bell Meadow in front of the House. Hope's work includes its emergency response in Kolkata, where people who were already suffering in the streets and slums have struggled terribly throughout the pandemic.

Hope is committed to the health and safety of all attendees, social distancing and all Government guidelines will be strictly adhered to. With this in mind there are very limited

places available. All proceeds of this event will go to The Hope Foundation.

Tickets for Punch and Judy are €10 per child and tickets for the Antiques Roadshow are €20. Both can be purchased by calling the Hope Cork office on 021 4292990 or you can book your place online at hopeshop.ie. Pre-booking is essential.

*Please note regarding valuations of antique items, no written evaluations will be given on the day, all advice is based on the individual expert's professional opinion.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

Send your photos (with captions) to info@westcorkpeople.ie



Deirdre, Jenny, Cian and Julie Fleming from Bandon pictured at the end of the 2021 Tour de Munster Charity Cycle on Patrick's Hill, Cork City on Sunday, August 8. Pic Diane Cusack



18-year-old Sean Daly from Skibbereen recently broke a world record for most basketball bounces in 1 minute (two balls) that has been confirmed by Guinness World Records. The Record stood at 656. It is now 729.



The Buttimer siblings from Dunmanway were on top form at the Sligo Fleadh Fest last month; Muiris successfully defended his All-Ireland title in Traditional Story-telling; his sisters Kelly Ann and Shannon achieved second place in their respective competitions.

Bike Week 2021 events in Skibbereen and Clonakilty



National Bike Week runs from September 12-18 this year so keep your eyes peeled for events near you! “Bike Week will be great this year,” says Ruth Bullough from Cycle Sense in Skibbereen, “Our programme includes a Mystery Cycle Buffet, Bike Fun and Art Day at our workshop and taster cycle sessions for adults and children.” In Clonakilty the schedule includes a Wellbeing Cycle, several educational workshops and a family day. All events are free, see full details below.

All events are FREE and no booking required unless indicated. For Clonakilty events - get in touch via Facebook @thebikecircus or come to the Bike Circus yard next to Spillers Lane, Clonakilty. For Skibbereen get in touch via contacts above or cyclesense@gmail.com.

Saturday 11: 2-3.30pm

Teach your child to cycle without stabilisers. Learn the stages of cycling and try our balance bikes, we can remove stabilisers if requested. We can also help transition to pedalling. At Skibbereen Sports Centre Booking 087 9242222

Saturday 11: 3.45-5.15

Adult Learn to Cycle Taster Learning to cycle can feel daunting, come and see how the Adult Learn to Cycle course could help you learn in a safe and supportive environment, meet the instructors and try our bikes. At Cycle Sense Workshop, Skibbereen. Booking 087 9242222

Sunday 12: 12.30

Cycle Buffet – An afternoon of mystery and discovery! Cycle with us to enjoy the delights of West Cork food at beautiful West Cork locations. Booking essential - 087 7589716

Monday 13: 11am-noon

Workshop ‘Messing with Mechs’ - Come down to the Clonakilty Bike Circus or visit us via Facebook Live to learn about all things derailleurs.

Tuesday 14: 11:30am

Touring and E-Bikes webinar – tune in on Facebook Live or pop down to the Clonakilty Bike Circus

Tuesday 14: 3pm

Wellbeing Cycle - a leisurely 10-15km cycle, all welcome meet at the Clonakilty Bike Circus

Thursday 16: 11am

Accessibility Cycling workshop and webinar with Jack. See some great cycling options for people with mobility issues, via Facebook or pop down to the Clonakilty Bike Circus yard

Thursday 16: 12-2pm

Cycling without Age - Come see and learn about our Silver Bullet Trishaw and why it is so important to our community. Clonakilty Bike Circus.

Friday 17: 3pm

Family Day - Come down to Croppy park in Clonakilty with your small ones and have some fun.

Friday 17: 6.30-8pm

Women on Wheels Taster Are you a beginner/ novice cyclist? Find out how the Women on Wheels course could be for you. 1.5hr cycle session once a week for 5 weeks. Designed to improve confidence, stability and increase knowledge by cycling with others and on your own. At Cycle Sense Workshop, Skibbereen. Booking 087 9242222 (Skibbereen)

Saturday 18: 2-5pm

Bike Art, Bike Cleaning Station and Cycling Games Through fun and games learn why it's important to keep your bike clean and how to do it. Also learn about bike parts by being creative. Partake in an art installation and take home something made of bike parts. Plus enjoy a cycle round an obstacle course. At the Cycle Sense Workshop Skibbereen.

Saturday 18: 3pm

‘Kidical Mass’ Cycle – a celebratory lap of the town, all welcome – especially kids! Meet at the Clonakilty Bike Circus

Saturday 18: 3:30pm

In Appreciation of our Apprentices - Pop down to the Clonakilty Bike Circus to learn about our free apprenticeship program and meet and mingle with some graduates as well as reconnect with other Bike Circus Members. Drinks and nibbles provided. We will also be launching our new community notice board, for carpooling, bike swapping and gear sharing!



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MSC Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart 2021

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are delighted to announce that this year's Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will be streamed online live from the Sacred Heart Church on the Western Road, Cork, from Tuesday, August 31 to Wednesday, September 8, led by Fr Paul-Clayton Lea, a priest of the Archdiocese of Armagh,

who has enjoyed a wide and varied ministry to date.

Due to ongoing COVID-19 government restrictions, this year's Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart will be streamed online only. All are very welcome to take part by visiting www.mscmissions.ie, where you can watch daily Novena Masses live at 10am and 7.30pm, with a

special Day of Healing on Thursday, September 7.

For further information, or to submit your personal intentions for remembrance in the Novena, please contact the MSC Missions Office by phone on 021 4545704, by email at info@mscmissions.ie, or via www.mscmissions.ie.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

‘Bean’ to India on a plate



A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

I'm a bit of a bean freak and each year we grow a variety of beans in our garden. French beans, borlotti beans, angel beans, coca beans, dwarf beans; most years each of these produces enough beans for us to enjoy but no way overwhelm us, but the runner beans exceed all expectations. They love the Irish climate. Picking them is like magic. You walk one way along the row, picking beans until you think you've got them all then you turn around and

walk back the other way and they reappear. Next thing you have a bucketful.

When I was a kid we ate a lot of runner beans simply cooked as a side vegetable. This would go on for weeks. Lots of beans and no variation in cooking method. I like runner beans but they did lose their appeal.

We now cook them in many different ways but the preparation always has to begin with stringing the beans. There is a 'string' on either side of a runner bean, which needs to be removed. My mum used to do this with a paring knife, which is effective, but a vegetable peeler is faster and more fun. Just top and tail the bean then zip down each side with a vegetable peeler and the string falls away.

Here's a recipe for pancakes that I found in my odd recipe file when searching for runner bean ideas. It's adapted from a recipe by Claire Thompson, which was in the Guardian years ago. The pancakes have a definite Asian hum and make an easy and tasty treat, which I'd

happily eat for breakfast, lunch or dinner. I made this recipe early one morning to check it out and it was like having breakfast in India.

Travel on a plate. Delicious with fresh tomato and chilli salsa.

Runner Bean Pancakes

Ingredients:

350g runner beans
170g gram flour
300mls chilled sparkling water
1tsp salt
1tsp turmeric
1tsp garam masala
1-2 chillies
2-3 cloves garlic
4 spring onions
1tsp nigella seeds
1tsp black mustard seeds
Oil to fry

Method:

Put a large pot of water to boil. Add a little salt.

String the beans then slice thinly on the diagonal. When the water boils add the beans then cook for 2 minutes. Drain and refresh the beans in cold water to stop them from cooking further then drain and put aside.

Peel and chop the garlic and

chop the chillies.

Chop the spring onions. Keep a few green bits aside for the garnish.

Sift the gram flour, turmeric and garam masala into a bowl then stir in the salt and the sparkling water

Heat a small frying pan, add little oil, quarter tsp mustard seeds and quarter tsp nigella seeds then enough runner beans to cover the bottom of the pan. Cook on a medium high heat for two minutes then add quarter of the chopped garlic, quarter of the spring onions and quarter of the chillies. Cook for two minutes more then pour over enough batter to just cover the beans. Put a few extra beans in any gaps. Cook on a medium heat for three minutes or until lightly browned then flip the pancake. The easiest way to flip this pancake is to hold the pan with dry tea towel, put a small plate on top of the pancake then flip it over onto the plate then slip the pancake back into the pan. Cook the other side until golden then put on one side. Repeat the procedure three more times.

Delicious hot or cold with fresh tomato salsa on the side



Fresh Tomato and Chilli Salsa

2 big ripe tomatoes
1 small red onion
1-2 chillies
Juice ½ lemon
A small bunch fresh coriander
Salt

Cut the tomato in half and remove most of the seeds then dice quite small.

Peel the onion and chop very finely. Peel and chop the garlic finely. Chop the coriander.

Put all the ingredients into a bowl. Mix gently and season with a little salt.

Enjoy September!
Karen

Lettercollum Kitchen Project,
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SATURDAY 10am to 4pm

Donal Skehan and Nico Reynolds star in new foodie film set in West Cork

Presenter and food writer Donal Skehan and rising food star Nico Reynolds star in a new film set in West Cork, which launched on RTE Player on September 1. 'Donal and Nico's Cheesy Road Trip' sees the two guys in a vintage camper van travelling the beautiful and picturesque trails of West Cork in search of the perfect grilled cheese sandwich.

Donal and Nico embark on a journey across the home of Irish dairy, West Cork, with a simple aim – to find the best cheese combination for their ultimate Irish cheese toasties. This film is fun, vibrant, engaging and informative, showcasing the best artisan cheeses Cork and Ireland has to offer. Nico and Donal are ambassadors for the EU funded Cheese your Way campaign managed by the National Dairy Council.

Donal said "I really enjoyed working on this mini-film with my pal Nico, I am a passionate advocate of Irish cheese and our farmhouse cheeses are some of the best in the world. It was the ultimate staycation to travel

around the beautiful parts of West Cork and the real prize was making a perfect grilled cheese at the end of the trip. Nico and I used our individual inspiration to create our signature sandwiches with a few quirky ingredients thrown in for good measure!"

West Cork is home to some of the best Farmhouse cheeses in Ireland – from Mileens to Durrus, Hegarty Cheddar to

Gubeen, it's a cheese lovers paradise within this peninsula of great scenic beauty. The film starts at Gubeen Cheese, where the Ferguson family have worked the Farm for many generations now. The 250-acre coastal farm is located one mile outside the fishing village of Schull, the Atlantic Ocean bordering one boundary and Mount Gabriel to the North as a back

drop behind the land, sheltering the pasture that has always supported the Gubbeen herd. Giana Ferguson was one of the first artisan cheesemakers in Ireland in the early 70s and the cheese is now sold all over the world.

They then head off to Ballydehob to pick up more groceries for their cook off before sampling the famous grilled cheese sandwiches from Ron D's food truck in the heart of Ballydehob. This is followed by a trip to Durrus Cheese to meet the cheesemakers and sample the various cheeses on offer. Started by another woman, Jeffa Gill, in the 1970s, Durrus Cheese is situated on hillside valley of Coomkeen near Durrus. The cheese is produced using age old artisanal methods, with a Swiss cheese 'harp' to cut the curd by hand in a traditional copper lined cheese vat.

Donal and Nico's Cheesy Road Trip will be available to stream on RTE Player from September 1 and you can also watch on Donal Skehan's YouTube Channel.



Activating community wellness in West Cork



The 'Staying Fit for the Future' programme promotes healthy ageing through simple physical activity.

On the basis that Active Communities are well communities, 'WellComm Active', an important new health and wellbeing initiative running across Cork, has announced its autumn activities schedule.

The idea is to promote healthier lifestyles by supporting and empowering people in their communities to manage their own health and wellness.

Classes and one-to-one programmes have been developed which are suited to the general adult population. Older adults, inactive individuals and at-risk and vulnerable groups are most encouraged to participate, with referrals also coming via GPS, hospitals and community health professionals.

Project WeightLoss classes begin the week of September 20 in Castletownbere and Ballineen, as well as an online only option for those in other parts of West Cork.

The 12-week community-based weight management programme, developed by health and fitness professionals, is an opportunity for inactive

and overweight people to experience a supervised and structured exercise regime, appropriate to their ability and needs. It supports lifelong behaviour change through participation, encouragement and education.

Find more information at www.corksports.ie/project-weightloss.

Staying Fit for the Future, a weekly exercise class designed to challenge and train the main components needed for good independent movement, also returns to communities across West Cork, beginning September 13.

The programme is delivered by local exercise instructors and classes are tailored for participants to develop their strength, flexibility, range-of-movement, balance as well as aerobic fitness.

Through enjoyable weekly exercises, environmental factors such as steps, paths, hills, darkness etc don't become an obstacle for continued confident participation in society. Suitable participants are those that walk unaided and want to stay strong on their feet.

HSE physiotherapists are involved in developing the 'Staying Fit for the Future' programme and content, which promotes healthy ageing through simple physical activity.

There are 25 programmes running across 20 different locations in Cork City and County. West Cork locations include Ballinascarthy, Beara, Ballineen, Dunmanway, Darrara, Union Hall, Kilmurry/Crookstown and Kinsale.

More information on Staying Fit For the Future and local classes is available at www.corksports.ie/staying-fit-for-the-future.

'WellComm Active' is coordinated by Cork Sports Partnership (CSP), supported by Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH).

Health professionals or interested participants can visit www.corksports.ie for further information or contact Eoin Kaar at: wellcommactive@corksports.ie, or by telephone (021) 434-7096 or 086 1409 225.

O'Sullivan seeks school transport delay resolution with minister

Unacceptable delays in school transport allocations and licence distribution in Cork South West have been brought to the education minister's direct attention for a speedy resolution, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan says.

Ongoing COVID and capacity restrictions are leaving children without places on buses just ahead of the new school year.

Deputy O'Sullivan said while the delays are affecting children across the board, students with concessionary placements being more impacted.



"I've spoken with Norma Foley and urged her to make the steps necessary to rectify and resolve as soon as possible," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"Many children who had places last year are not getting them this year, or tickets aren't arriving on time. It's added stress to parents students at a

crucial time.

"I'm confident following my discussions with the minister a resolution is on the way."

Deputy O'Sullivan has also raised the issue of ongoing delays in issuing article 60 licences for contractors with An Garda Síochána.

Article 60 licences are used by contractors who have a specific role in transporting children with special needs.

"I've been in contact with the guards to ensure these are being issued straight away," Deputy O'Sullivan said.



WEST CORK AUTUMN ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

1 PROJECT WEIGHTLOSS 12-week community-based weight management programme. Classes begin the week of September 20 in Castletownbere and Ballineen, as well as an online option. See www.corksports.ie/project-weightloss.

2 staying fit for the future A weekly exercise class which promotes healthy ageing through simple physical activity. Designed to challenge and train the main components needed for good independent movement.

WEST CORK		
VENUE	TIME	START DATE
Ballinascarthy	Tuesday 10:30am	14 th September
Beara (Online)	Wednesday 7:00pm	15 th September
Ballineen	Wednesday 10:00am	15 th September
Dunmanway	Wednesday 11:00am	15 th September
Clonakilty/Darrara	Wednesday 11:45am	15 th September
Union Hall	Thurs 10:30 & 11:30am	16 th September
Kilmurry/Crookstown	Thursday 6:00pm	16 th September
Kinsale	Thursday 2:00pm	16 th September



Cork Sports Partnership
Comhpháirtíocht Spóirt Chorcaí
SPORT IRELAND

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Cork Sports Partnership
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Microbes turn back the clock as UCC research discovers their potential to reverse aging in the brain

Research from APC Microbiome Ireland (APC) at University College Cork (UCC) published in August in the leading international scientific journal 'Nature Aging' introduces a novel approach to reverse aspects of aging-related deterioration in the brain and cognitive function via the microbes in the gut.

As our population ages one of the key global challenges is to develop strategies to maintain healthy brain function. This groundbreaking research opens up a potentially new therapeutic avenue in the form of microbial-based interventions to slow down brain aging and associated cognitive problems.

The work was carried out by researchers in the Brain-Gut-Microbiota lab in APC led by Prof John F. Cryan,

Vice President for Research and Innovation, University College Cork as well as a Principal Investigator at APC Microbiome Ireland an SFI Research Centre, based in University College Cork and Teagasc Moorepark.

There is a growing appreciation of the importance of the microbes in the gut on all aspects of physiology and medicine. In this latest mouse study the authors show that by transplanting microbes from young into old animals they could rejuvenate aspects of brain and immune function.

Prof John F. Cryan, says "Previous research published by the APC and other groups internationally has shown that the gut microbiome plays a key role in aging and the aging process. This new research is a potential game changer, as

we have established that the microbiome can be harnessed to reverse age-related brain deterioration. We also see evidence of improved learning ability and cognitive function".

Although very exciting Cryan cautions that "it is still early days and much more work is needed to see how these findings could be translated in humans".

APC Director Prof Paul Ross stated that, "This research of Prof. Cryan and colleagues further demonstrates the importance of the gut microbiome in many aspects of health, and particularly across the brain/gut axis where brain functioning can be positively influenced. The study opens up possibilities in the future to modulate gut microbiota, as a therapeutic target to influence brain health."

people Food, Health & Lifestyle



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.



Abi O'Callaghan-Platt is one of the core members of BRÓD. An environmental scientist, Abi was raised in West Cork and returned five years ago to raise her two children here.

Older LGBT+ community no longer ignored

It is estimated that up to eight per cent of over-65s in Ireland may be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. This is a group of people who are largely invisible within our society and have often been ignored. LGBT+ people in this age group experience different challenges to those faced by younger people.

With decriminalisation only occurring in 1993, older people have been raised under the shadow of an unaccepting and conservative society. Owing to the stigma and discrimination faced by LGBT+ people many chose not to come out, with many older LGBT+ people entered opposite sex marriages and going on to have families. For these people coming out later in life has additional challenges, including feelings of guilt around the impact of coming out to their family.

While some entered marriages, many others remained single and face issues around isolation and loneliness. In 2017 the LGBT Helpline reported that 14 per cent of calls were from older LGBT+ people. The main reasons for contacting the organisation were due to lack of social supports, isolation, and loneliness.

Recognising the unique challenges faced by older LGBT+

people has led to a number of supports established specifically for this demographic in recent years. These services are available nationwide or within County Cork:

Older and Bolder Community – Online

LGBT Ireland provides the LGBTI+ Older and Bolder Online Community, offering weekly online coffee drop-in every Thursday at 3pm via Zoom for older members of our community with visiting guest speakers and online social activities, which is a great source of support for many.

For enquiries about this group, contact LGBT Ireland staff, James O'Hagan, at james@lgbt.ie. Or look up the Facebook group 'LGBTI+ Older and Bolder Online Community'.

GOLD Coffee Morning – Online

GOLD Coffee morning is a group for gay men over 50 to meet, socialise and chat with other guys of a similar age. Facilitated by staff and volunteers in a comfortable, safe space.

The Gay Project in Cork offer this virtual coffee morning for community members over 50 on Friday's (12pm-3pm). To sign up, email: community@



gayproject.ie to be sent the Zoom link.

Married Women's Group – Online

A group for women who are, or have been, in an opposite gender marriage or long term relationship offering a safe space for women to talk openly and confidentially with other women about similar experiences.

Every fourth Tuesday of each month from 7pm-9pm via Zoom. To sign-up for this group, please email: peersupport@lgbt.ie

Silver Scribblers

Lesbians in Cork (LINC) is a resource centre for lesbian and bisexual women based in Cork. The Silver Scribblers initiative is aimed at older LB women who would like to regularly

receive a letter in the post from a trained LINC volunteer.

If you or someone you know would like to hear from LINC, please phone 021-4808600 or email ciara@linc.ie.

LGBTI+ Telefriending Service

The Telefriending Service offers a once a week telephone call for LGBT+ people over 50 by a friendly volunteer who is trained and garda vetted. Telefriending provides friendship, security and support to alleviate loneliness, isolation and improve overall mental health and well-being. It is also a great opportunity for members to talk regularly with other people who also identify as members of the LGBTI+ community. Go to www.lgbt.ie/telefriending/ to sign up.

In addition to these resources

specifically for older people, the National LGBT Helpline is available on 1890 929 539 operating Monday-Thursday 6.30pm-10pm and Saturday & Sunday 4-6pm.

Finally, as well as support for older LGBT+ people there is also the **Straight Spouses Online Group** which is a group for people who are, or have been, married or in a long term heterosexual relationship with someone who has disclosed that they now identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity. This group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 7pm-9pm via Zoom. To sign-up for this group, please email: peersupport@lgbt.ie

Actions speak loudest

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!

She is buzzing with excitement. Brimming over. She has no idea what her surprise event might be. Her friend has promised her an experience, an outing she has never had before, or thought she might have. She has tried to guess; however there have been no clues forthcoming, only giggles, "you'll find out, don't ruin your surprise!"

They get the bus to their destination. They need to walk a short way, but she takes her friend's elbow, carrying her cane, and her friend guides her. She can hear the bustle

of people around them, a fine day, children shout, adults chat, traffic rolls by. Her friend negotiates their path easily to their destination. She still has no clue what her surprise might be. She can hear clanging and bells, sounds of laughter, someone cycles past.

Her friend calls someone on her phone and a man's voice speaks beside them. "So you two are the young ladies for the tandem," he says laughing with fun, at the disbelief and then the happiness flooding her face, as the true reality of her 'surprise' hits her. She is going cycling. She is so overcome with joy that she throws her arms around her friend's neck and hugs her. "A hundred million thanks, this is the most excellent, brilliant surprise".

Amid instructions, safety helmets, well wishes, good luck from other first time cyclists using hand cycles, electric assisted cycles, and enjoying trishaws, they get on their tandem and off they go. She can feel the breeze on her face, She laughs, and smiles, never wanting it to end. They cycle on and on.

Her friend shouts back, "are you tired yet?" "Never" she answers. "I should never be tired of such a wonderful feeling". Freedom! Inclusion!

It has been a beautiful day, so hot and sunny. Everyone rang around to meet up to go swimming. "Sure", he said, "we will see you all there". They arrive. She looks deflated at the entrance. "I can sit here and wait, while you go swim with the others". "Forget it," he says. "Leave the bag, I'll come back for it." She picks up her sticks and he scoops her up and strides over the uneven, inaccessible terrain, to where the others are congregated. "You should have called us, we didn't think! Sorry. Let us help. It was a stupid choice. Better planning next time. Last time we will choose here, or any place you two cannot access!"

Their little daughter has gotten bigger, heavier, more difficult to lift. It is not so difficult when they are both there, but on her own with the other kids, well, her back is just not up to it. How that little girl pines to go into the sea. Today she is

getting a surprise. She does not know yet, just in case anything goes wrong. She will not disappoint that precious little heart.

They arrive and, as the kids tumble out of the car, bags, mats, buckets flying, she gently eases her daughter into her chair. Down the ramp to where the beach buggy is to be picked up. The little girl squeals with delight when she realises what is happening. Her joy is palpable, and her laughter is contagious. When the buggy hits the water, the moment becomes meshed in a kaleidoscope of memories of that day, when one little girl gets to access the sea, living her precious dreams once again. Inclusion!

I'll tell you one thing; Mom packs a decent picnic, with something for everyone. Mouth-watering, tasty, some surprises, something unexpected, healthy, maybe a treat. More than enough. We love her picnics. Trouble is, I always have to eat mine off my knee balancing everything, everyone else either sits around a picnic table or on the ground. That's life. At least they hand me food!



Wow! My Mom practically gasps in amazement! I am elated! The rest are slugging that now there is no excuse for my lunch to be on my clothes. We have found an accessible picnic bench! First time I get to eat a picnic at the same level as everyone else, so great to be included!

What defines inclusion? Who is content to watch someone else have all the fun? People with disabilities (PWD) are not aliens who have fallen from the moon. They wish to take part in society, including in leisure sports and activities, just

like everyone else. They eat, drink, socialise with family, friends, groups. They wish to be included, have the same rights to be included. Inclusion should mean inclusion in all aspects of life, not the crumbs, and not as an afterthought. Voice your views where you observe exclusion. Actions speak louder than words; your recognition of inclusion or lack of it now, may be your legacy, to your children, to your community.

To really appreciate what inclusion or lack of it, feels like, spend a day in their shoes!

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Type 2 Diabetes is a repetitive strain injury to the pancreas



Radical Wellness

Freya Sherlock

Freya Sherlock is a professional Chinese Medicine practitioner offering Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Chinese Herbal Medicine prescriptions and Tui Na Remedial Bodywork at her private clinic in Dunmanway. She offers a general practice with additional specialisms in women's health and digestive disorders. Freya is also Ireland's premier WildFit Coach.

There is so much to be grateful for with all the extraordinary advances we now enjoy with modern living. For most of us, even on our toughest days, we have an ease of lifestyle that even our grandparent's generation would scarcely have dared to imagine. Here in Ireland, in many ways, we've never had it so easy – access to food, water, housing, warmth, communications, transport, career opportunities, clothing, medicine, healthcare, entertainment and relative safety – when you stop to consider how different your life would have been even 100 years ago let alone 1,000, a mere blink of the proverbial eye, it is breath-taking how rapidly human society has developed.

However, have our comfortable lifestyles come at a price? In the pursuit of convenience, when it comes to food and food production, has the need to produce quantity and profit led to an increasing loss of integrity and quality?

While we have certainly

evolved with whiplash speed socially and culturally, biologically we really haven't changed that much over the millennia. What this means is that our human biology is still mandated to require our fundamental human diet. Every species has a diet. Pandas have a diet that requires and can make use of bamboo. Beavers have a diet that requires and can make use of timber. And dung-beetles, well, the clue is in the name! We humans couldn't hope to survive on bamboo, timber or excrement. While this sounds obvious and simplistic, what's less obvious is how far we have strayed and how quickly we have forgotten the natural path of the human diet and moreover, how we fail to add to two and two.

So, what is the answer to this particular equation? Our ancestors were hunter gatherers. Consequently, we evolved to require and be capable of processing meat, eggs, fish, certain vegetation, fruit and honey. We gained domesticity, increased certainty in food supply and grain crops with the dawn of agriculture and more recently, with the advent of the industrial age, we entered the era of food engineering and food chemistry. As my elderly neighbour once said, "Too clever isn't clever at all".

Today we are confronted by row upon row of supermarket shelves stacked high with a dazzling abundance of consumable goods. But in truth, these alleged foods contain varying degrees of ingredients that we not only don't need, but our bodies cannot make use of in any meaningful or beneficial way. We simply haven't evolved to need them or make use of them.

Type 2 diabetes is just one of a myriad examples that reveal the extent to which our bodies are adversely impacted by our modern diet and lifestyle. As weight gain and obesity levels soar in global populations across all age groups and demographics, leading to unprecedented rates of pre-diabetic and diabetes type 2

conditions developing, it really is time we add two and two.

While Type 1 Diabetes is a congenital condition that needs careful lifelong management, Type 2 is regarded as a 'lifestyle' illness. This subtly shifts the blame to hold individuals entirely at fault for their diabetic condition. And yet, in truth, we have become blinkered by a food industry that has duped the masses and entrained the 'people' to buy and consume a plethora of non-functional foods; foods that our bodies do not understand, do not require, cannot make use of and are adversely affected by. Perhaps equally accountable therefore, is a food industry that coerces consumption of fake food?

Fundamentally, in simplistic terms, Type 2 Diabetes is effectively a repetitive strain injury to the pancreas. Many of the foods we commonly eat on a daily basis are consistently taxing and depleting the pancreas (with a domino effect and impact on all the vital organs) until the pancreas is simply no longer able to meet the daily challenge of processing modern foods, loaded with hidden sugars, additives and chemicals.

What is remarkable however, is that while we can spend years, decades even, drip-feeding our bodies daily hidden sugars and damaging foods that continually nudge it towards a diabetic condition, given half a chance with the correct nourishment and true human diet in abundance, and the body will usually rally itself and is capable of the most extraordinary repair and recovery.

Just one example from my clinic is that of a woman in her 50s who came to me in June, alarmed by her rapidly worsening condition. Her whole life, she had only ever gained weight, little by little, year after year, until at 20 stone she quickly went from a pre-diabetic range (7.8 -11.5 blood sugar levels) to a dangerously high blood sugar reading of 22.5 putting her at risk of a stroke (normal blood sugar range is

below 7.8, anything above 11.5 is considered diabetic). By the time she reached out to me for help, she had suddenly lost her vision, had repeated styes and irritated eyes, savage insatiable thirst, relentless urination day and night and was on the brink of being put on a range of medications, which she desperately wanted to avoid. She joined my WildFit 90 Day Programme, which gave her the education, understanding in food and behavioural psychology and regular supportive coaching to jump in wholeheartedly with making the necessary nutritional changes.

Within 15 days, her blood sugar level had dropped from 22.5 to 5.9 and has remained stable at around 5.7-6.2 ever since. Her eyesight has gradually reinstated and all other symptoms have completely resolved. For the first time in her life, literally, she is shedding weight. She is delighted to be discovering the outline of hips and ribs she hasn't felt for decades with her clothing becoming looser and looser each week and an increasing level of energy that sees her bounding out the door for daily long walks. We have a year-long plan in place to work with re-calibrating her body and health through WildFit, Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs but she has already dodged the diabetes bullet. This kind of recovery from diabetes is increasingly familiar, so much so that in WildFit and nutritional circles, the term post-diabetic is emerging. That said, remaining in remission does require maintaining a human-friendly diet.

So, let's wise up. We don't have to throw the baby out with the bath water – but we do have to get much more discerning and empowered. We can enjoy all the benefits of modern living but take back control of our nutrition in a way that supports our bodies to be radically healthy. Two plus two isn't such a complicated sum after all, what we put into our bodies will impact, influence and determine our health, for better or for worse.

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Letter to the Editor: Listen to your heart

Dear Editor,

I would be grateful for the opportunity to highlight to readers of the West Cork People a forthcoming webinar taking place on heart valve disease.

As more and more of us live longer, heart valve disease is increasingly an issue that we may need to face. Indeed, it has been described as the next cardiac epidemic.

The webinar, 'Listen to Your Heart', is taking place on Thursday September 16 at 7pm, as part of Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week.

It will be presented by consultant cardiologist, Dr Samer Arnous, and will focus on the signs and symptoms of heart valve disease and how it is detected and treated. The patient perspective will also feature and members of the public will have the opportunity to put their questions to Dr Arnous.

Heart valve disease – where valves in the heart are damaged or stiffened, causing reduced or blocked blood flow – is common, serious, but treatable.

Symptoms include breathlessness and becoming dizzy. If readers over the age of 65 years are finding that small everyday tasks are feeling more

like an ordeal, it might be a good idea to ask their GP for a stethoscope check – at least once a year.

However, symptoms are not always present and, so, as a matter of good heart health management, I would encourage all those over 65 years to try and have an annual stethoscope check.

We know that one in eight people over the age of 75 suffers from moderate to severe heart valve disease. Sadly, up to half of symptomatic patients with severe aortic stenosis – where the aortic valve is not working properly – die within two years of developing symptoms, if not treated.

So, it is clear that early detection and timely treatment is vital for a longer, and better quality of, life. Remember, always, listen to your heart.

If readers are interested in finding out more about heart valve disease, we invite them to join our upcoming webinar – they can register at www.croi.ie/valvewebinar.

Many thanks,
Neil Johnson, CEO
Croí, the Heart & Stroke Charity

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Crossing the threshold into Autumn



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.

This year I imagine many of us had placed great expectations on the Summer months to fill us up, and, in some way make up for, much of what has happened since March 2020. Did the Summer meet your expectations? And how are you feeling now about crossing the threshold into Autumn? I spotted some ripe blackberries the other day and, while they offered a beautiful feast for my senses, I got a bit of a fright at the thought of Summer being almost over and not enough done! Instead of letting the 'panic' set in, I sat and reflected on how I have been spending my Summer. While, for my own personal reasons, and maybe for some of you too, Summer 2021 will not go down in memory as the best of times, instead of writing it off in its entirety, as we can so often do with an experience, maybe we can look for the diamond in the rough. When I did reflect over the last few months, I found many, many, moments of love, delight and friendship to savour.

Special memories included floating in the warm sea near Courtmacsherry, camping in Caherdaniel, early-morning and late-night swimming at Lough Hyne, walking to Baltimore Beacon at sunset with visiting friends, eating 99s with my father, walking and river swimming in Drimoleague, there were so many memories to choose from. So very often, it is the simple things that sustain us, it doesn't need to be anything fancy. And it doesn't matter 'how much' we do, what matters is that we are there for it and not already planning the next thing! If we can be present with these precious, ordinary moments and soak them up, they can rest

snugly in our long-term memory, there to revisit any time at all.

As we make the gentle move from one season to the next, it might be worth reflecting over your Summer, taking a few moments now to appreciate the people, places and activities that made it feel special. Perhaps also taking a few moments to cultivate acceptance for those difficult times, those moments where patience and tolerance were required. Let's set an intention for ourselves as we begin making the annual transition from Summer to Autumn, even if it is one word that comes to your mind now, a feeling or even an image, ask yourself "What is my intention as I move towards Autumn?" My own intention is to plan my work mindfully, with care, balance and attention, leaving plenty of space for self-care, for loved ones and some room for new opportunities. These lines from the wonderful poem 'Hold Out Your hand' by Julia Fehrenbacher come to mind as we step over this next threshold, into this new September, together. 'Life is not a straight line, it's a downpour of gifts, please — hold out your hand.'

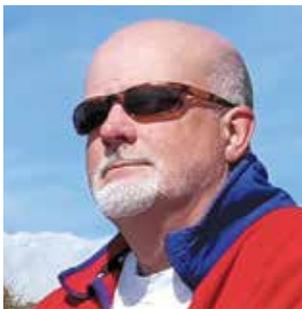
My Autumn schedule of classes is taking shape and, being a Castlehaven native, I am very happy to announce that I will be offering a range of in-person mindfulness classes and workshops, both indoor and outdoor, at Myross Wood House, now home to the wonderfully inspiring Green Skibbereen and CECAS team.

An online mindfulness based living course (MBLC) will begin on Tuesday evenings, 7-9pm, from September 21. This eight-week course includes an in-person full day silent retreat, an optional introductory session and a follow-up session. A course manual and full set of guided meditations are also provided. Please get in touch for more information if you are interested in participating.

My online meditation sessions via Zoom run consistently 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 or group sessions are also available.

If you need any support to begin or to deepen your meditation practice, please feel free to get in touch. For more information on upcoming workshops and courses please like my Facebook page (Mindhaven) or feel free to get in touch by phone: 087 2700572 or by email: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com.

DNA testing for tracing your heritage



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

Mark Grace is a genetic genealogist and family historian at Ballynoe House, Ardfield, Co. Cork

Many of us have given or received a DNA testing kit for a birthday or as a Christmas present, but what are they all about? In this new column, I give an easy, step-by-step guide through the basics of all forms of DNA testing for family history. What do your results mean and how can you use them to research your West Cork (or other) heritage?

This time, I'll go into the three basic forms of DNA testing. There are two detailed types of DNA test that have more specialised use within genealogy and can be used also for detailed historical and anthropological studies. These are naturally more expensive, but something to consider if you are really interested in your genetic roots. Some testing companies provide a basic result as part of their service when doing other tests. YouTube is a reliable source of conference presentations covering all aspects of research into Irish DNA.

Y-chromosome DNA (Y-DNA)

This is available to men and examines the direct paternal lineage only, i.e., DNA inherited from your father, from his father, and from his father, and so on. In modern times,

assuming a legitimate line, these often develop into wider surname studies. Academics are slowly working back through haplogroups (lines of identical genetic inheritance, which include Irish names) connecting historically-documented groups to modern surnames. In any genealogical timeframe, it is true to say (adoption aside) that you know who the mother is but you cannot always be sure who the father is.

It is also fascinating to see the mutations in your Y-DNA on a map of when and where they occurred. As DNA is copied, errors occur, and on the Y-chromosome one may occur every 110 years or so, so you can go back a long way. It is possible to follow the migration of your ancestors out of Africa.

My most ancient paternity started 240,000 years ago in an area of present-day eastern Nigeria. Their descendants migrated and are mapped as having crossed the Red Sea into Arabia about 87,000 years ago. During the Palaeolithic, they were following migrating animals, including mammoths, into the Asia steppe, before retreating ahead of the ice age to 'overwinter' in the Black Sea area for the Mesolithic period. My ancestors were part of the first hunter-gatherers to colonise a post-glacial Europe with my haplotype arriving in the British Isles in the Bronze Age or with the Anglo Saxons.

The genetic path to Ireland for two of the great family names of West Cork, SULLIVAN and DONOVAN, are very different based on their Y-DNA story. Over 700 men (including two Lowneys (aka Sullivan Laune) a common name on Beara) have participated in a Sullivan surname study. Their haplogroup is mainly type 'I', indicating a Scandinavian or Norman origin. Normans were Viking settlers in Northern France, which is why the haplogroup is the same.

For more information on this study, see familytreedna.com. If you compare their results with more than 100 men participating in the Donovan clan study – (familytreedna.com), their haplogroup is mainly type 'R', the same as mine; part of the original hunter-gatherers who colonised Europe and probably settled in Ireland a long time before the Sullivan's ancestors arrived! In terms of ethnicity, does this make the Sullivans less Irish than the Donovans? I will be discussing 'ethnicity' next time.

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)

This test looks at the direct maternal lineage, i.e., inherited from your mother from her mother, and her mother, and so on, as mitochondria are only inherited from your mother. In the earliest times, mitochondria used to be separate lifeforms, which moved inside early cells to form a symbiotic relationship with the host. They became the cell's power stations, enabling higher life forms to develop.

As with Y-DNA testing, you will receive a haplogroup and can similarly follow the history of mutations and the migration of your direct maternal line out of the East African Rift Valley back 160,000 years from what is known as the Mitochondrial Eve. This is a concept or group of early humans, rather than a 'who'.

My wife's mtDNA haplogroup is 'H' (aka Helena), which passed through her most distant maternal line in the HARROLD family from Murragh (Ballineen) from her unknown mother. In the post-glacial period, 'H' came via the Caucasus 15,000 years ago. In contrast, my haplogroup of 'T' (aka Tara) originated in the Levant 20,000 year ago. mtDNA was used to help prove the remains of Richard III of England.

Autosomal DNA (atDNA)
This is the usual DNA test sold and is an affordable present to family or oneself. As shown on the chart, the size of atDNA databases has grown enormously in recent years. AncestryDNA (for genealogy) is being closely tracked by 23andMe whose primary focus is health traits, even though their data can be used for genealogy. MyHeritage is in third place, growing through their own testing kits as well as accepting uploads of raw DNA files from other testing companies, which they take for free.

This type of DNA is inherited through your autosomal chromosomes (autosomes), a random 50 per cent mix received from both your parents; theirs being a 50 per cent random mix from their parents, likewise. Over the generations, the older signatures get diluted and become harder to find. Excluding the sex chromosomes X and Y, humans have 22 pairs of autosomes.

This test finds segments of DNA that have been passed down from relatives on every branch of a family tree, revealing close relationships such as parents/siblings/aunts/uncles/first cousins and so on, with a high degree of accuracy. However, the test has natural limits due to the randomness of inheritance. For example, you may not inherit DNA from all your two times great grandparents. A theoretical limit for this type of testing is about eight generations. My research involving families outside of Ireland has identified genetic matches back to the late 1600s and eighth cousins. If you are lucky, segments survive the generations alike this and can be recognisable as part of certain family lines or from certain geographical areas.

Of course, as 'DNA never lies' you may find that your DNA signature does not match part of that carefully researched family tree built over many years. This is where genetic genealogy gets even more interesting and you should be prepared for surprises!

Next month, I will be discussing the meaning of your ethnicity results. What does ethnicity really mean in terms of your DNA and how reliable are the results?

For any questions that can be answered as part of future columns (genealogy@creativegraces.net) or follow the Cork DNA projects based on my wife's DNA and her genetic cousins, on Facebook 'My Irish Genealogy and DNA'.



Source: SNP Tracker (scaledinnovation.com)

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Training doctors in child's play



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.

It might come as a surprise to readers that doctors are legally obliged to keep up their knowledge and skills every year by spending many hours in training outside of work. The Irish Medical Committee carefully polices this education and woe betide the doctor who falls short with his monitored training!

I recently attended a really good meeting over five hours at UCC, at which we were



updated on issues around managing children in A&E over the coming months. It also provided the opportunity to meet the experts and old friends from CUH and MUH. It is important for A&E doctors to know what to do when treating bronchiolitis as winter approaches, as well as resuscitation, burns, foreign body inhalation, Covid infections and non-accidental injury. We dread these emergencies, as they are so emotional and trying. In training, we acted these situations out with mannequins to be prepared for the winter.

What was news to me is that CUH now has an expert lady, whose name is Rachel, dealing solely with play! She is highly qualified and is now a vital part of the team in A&E to make our children's visit less scary. I am sure all the doctors learned a lot from her. I learned there is more to distraction than playing a cartoon on your

mobile! Offering lots of toys is better. It's also a good idea to introduce the child to a teddy who will go on the same journey with him or her and have the same tests. The teddy is for keeps as well!

We learnt that we should talk on the same level as the child and not direct all communication through mum and dad. We should not give orders like "keep still while I stick this needle in your arm", but instead, in a calmly modulated voice say "it is really important to keep still, as this might hurt a bit" Children appreciate honesty and are usually very smart, picking up very quickly on non verbal cues.

A patient's dad came up with the brilliant idea of mocking up a 'mini' MRI machine complete with sound effects, which could give the child an impression of what was likely to happen when going in the real MRI. Brilliant, as we probably

all find MRIs claustrophobic and incredibly noisy.

As a parent yourself, you may have your own suggestions, tips and observations, so please let us hear them!

Can we all learn from Rachel? Yes indeed – by preparing our children for what is likely to happen at the doctors or in the hospital. Explaining why a test has to be done to make you better. Explaining about blood tests and needles and how we can make this a painless experience with creams applied on the arm beforehand. Let us make it all a bit of fun and bravery awards work as well.

Our A&E Departments usually, and rightly so, prioritise the care of children in child-friendly areas, but if it all does become a bit scary and the doctor is a bit rushed, there is always Rachel on hand to help, educate and console.

Are you ready to come out of your nest?

In a new book, discovered by Gill Books' Director Nicki Howard in the submissions pile, child and young people's therapist Katie O'Donoghue tells the story of Little Squirrel who hasn't left his nest since last autumn.

He needs to gather nuts for the long winter to come but he's too worried to leave his cosy nest. Luckily, Little Squirrel discovers he has lots of friends in the forest, from Wren to Snuffly Hedgehog, Grey Rabbit to Mister Fox, Old Badger to Great Stag. Will their encouragement and words of advice be enough to help Little Squirrel to venture out?

Nicki Howard says of the book, "I was so taken by this story when Katie O'Donoghue sent it to me just before Christmas last year. I thought that it could become a lovely gentle bedtime book for young chil-



dren. But it also made me think of my own mother who has been cocooning for over a year now and has needed a little coaxing to come out as lockdown comes to an end. I hope readers young and old will take comfort in Little Squirrel's

story and maybe even send it to someone in their life who's a little wary of coming out of their nest too."

In a difficult year for many, through the story of Little Squirrel and his adventures in the forest, readers young and old come to learn coping techniques and to realise that, although we all feel worried sometimes, we don't have to face those worries alone. With a little help from his friends, Little Squirrel eventually emerges from his cosy nest, as the rest of us begin to, too.

Written and illustrated by Katie O'Donoghue, 'The Little Squirrel Who Worried' is a comforting story for children and adults alike.

Real costs of returning to school

As schools re-open this week and thousands of children return to school, Cork South West Sinn Féin representative Clare O'Callaghan is encouraging families to get in touch with the party and share their experiences in relation to the issue of 'voluntary contributions' to their children's schools which are often required to fund even the basic necessities.

Clare O'Callaghan said: "As schools re-open this week, the annual requests for voluntary contributions from school bodies/principals to families to fund sometimes even basic necessities such as heating and electricity to keep schools functioning will also be made.

"I know from speaking with many families around West Cork, and as a mother myself whose children have gone through primary and secondary schools, that many families are being crippled by requests for so-called 'volun-

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tary' contributions from schools. Very often sums of between €100 and €200 per child is suggested and even as much as €300-400 in some cases.

"These are huge sums for families to be expected to pull together in a matter of weeks and puts serious strain on families' finances.

"We know that in reality, these contributions are voluntary in name only. In some instances, students and families can be denied certain services and extra-curricular activities and they can face stigma.

"When added to the costs of uniforms, school books, transport, and so on., this represents a very significant and unfair financial burden on families.

"Last week, the Vincent De Paul Society has highlighted that they are receiving hundreds of phone calls from parents every day who are anxious about these expensive costs.

"This is happening because

the Government doesn't fund our schools properly and the schools are forced to seek these contributions.

"It shouldn't have to be this way. Schools shouldn't be so underfunded that they have to seek contributions and fundraise for basic things. We in Sinn Féin want to bring an end to the need for voluntary contributions.

"We want to hear the experiences of parents and guardians with voluntary contributions – how much have you been asked for this year? Or more generally, what are your family's experiences of back to school costs? All contacts will be treated in total confidence.

People may contact myself directly here in West Cork or alternatively our Dáil spokesperson on Education, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire TD, on donnchadh.olaoghaire@oir.ie or on social media, and tell us your story about the real costs of the return to school."



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.

Are you experiencing breakouts on your back? This has been an all-too-common concern I'm seeing in my treatment room of late so I thought it might be an idea to share some tips that may help.

Firstly, what causes back acne (sometimes referred to as 'bacne')? Typically, it's caused by a build-up of oils and dead skin cells in and around pores. The pores can become clogged and attract bacteria, which thrives, and this then leads to an inflammatory response of

Top tips for back acne

the skin causing pustules and bumps. The onset predominantly starts from puberty, and it tends to affect boys and men more. The main areas affected are upper back, lower back, and shoulders. It's frustrating and embarrassing for those affected by it and people often avoid wearing open-back clothing and participating in certain activities as a result of this. Luckily with a few small changes to your daily routine, it can often help to improve things.

1. It's really important to cleanse your skin thoroughly in the shower every day. Try using a cleanser that contains acids like salicylic, glycolic, or lactic, which can prevent dead skin cells from building up and blocking your pores. CeraVe SA Smoothing Cleanser is one that is widely available, purse-friendly and will zap those zits in no time. It has a 0.5 per cent concentration of salicylic acid that allows the cleansing formula to perform a chemical exfoliation, gently dissolving dead skin and pore-clogging impurities to reveal a smoothed surface, without disrupting skin's microbiome, €12.50, available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online. Avène's Cleanance Cleansing Gel, which has recently been reformulated to include the ground-breaking ingredient Comedoclastin, is an



other daily cleanser that reduces excess sebum and unblocks pores. Containing 60 per cent Avène Thermal Spring Water, this calming gel has soothing and softening properties too. Now available in a new 400ml Size Pump, €18.99, available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online.

2. If you exercise a lot and are working up a sweat, it's important to remove your gym clothes and shower as soon as possible after a workout. Even if it hasn't been a fully pumped one, showering immediately after and cleaning off any sweat is key, as the bacteria responsible for causing acne thrives on sweaty skin.

3. When it comes to shampoos and conditioners, flip your hair to the front and rinse forward to avoid leaving shampoo

and conditioner residue on your back (and butt – 'buttne' is a thing too!) which can clog pores and further exacerbate spots. Ensure you rinse your whole body thoroughly before stepping out of the shower.

4. If applying a body lotion, ditch the thick creams and make sure that any products you leave on your skin are 'non-comedogenic', which means that they won't clog your pores. Try The Solution Salicylic Acid Clear Skin Body Gel, which works wonders on breakouts, impurities, and excess oil. Fast acting and non-sticky, salicylic acid targets blemishes and oiliness, niacinamide (Vitamin B3) helps reveal clearer skin while tea tree help combat skin breakouts, €11.99 available from selected pharmacies nationwide and online.

5. It goes without saying, try and avoid squeezing or picking your spots, as this can introduce infection and lead to scarring. Bear in mind too that picking nearly always leads to pigmentation, which is stubborn to get rid of. Instead, reach for a targeted spot treatment. Murad Clarifying Body Spray has purifying salicylic acid that works with other powerful antibacterial agents to penetrate pores and reduce acne blemishes while also helping prevent new breakouts from forming. Skin conditioners soothe and hydrate irritated skin for maximum clarity and its 360-degree, spray works upside down so those hard-to-reach places can be got at! €42 from selected Murad stockists nationwide and online from millies.ie

6. Clean your sheets! And by that, I mean regularly. Every night when you sleep bacteria, dirt, and oil are transferred from your skin to your sheets and can contribute to breakouts or irritation.

7. Lastly, if you are not winning with all of the above and still trying to get on top of the breakouts or you're beginning to see acne scars developing, then a visit to a dermatologist might be worth considering as they can advise an alternative treatment plan.

For all the latest beauty news follow me on Instagram and Facebook @shernamalone.ie.

To make a booking for one of my facial treatments or a skincare consultation head over to www.shernamalone.ie where you can book in online.

Yarrow is a worthwhile addition to your medicine cabinet



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.rosarikingstonphd.com

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is just ready for harvesting now, and it may be found on roadside verges and in stony ground. These kind of conditions are excellent for developing the therapeutic properties of yarrow thus making it a very worthwhile remedy. Some authors contend that yarrow may be a herb that represents a purely Irish tradition in some of its uses. It was very popular as a remedy and still deserves a place in the home medicine chest.

In Ireland it was used to relieve kidney problems and gout. Pembrokeshire in Wales is the only other place where using yarrow for kidney troubles is recorded, whereas there are accounts in Ireland from counties Meath and Tipperary, as well as various parts of Ulster for this use. In Tipperary, the root of the plant is boiled and the resulting decoction drunk, "as a cure for kidney disease" but in Co. Meath, "The juice was drained off and drunk with hot milk."

Another predominantly Irish use was the use of this herb for arthritis and there are plenty records within the National



Folklore Schools Collection (NFCS) to attest to this.

The general advice for rheumatism is that it should be drawn like tea and a glass taken before breakfast, but one account adds whiskey to it.

Old people got a weed called the Yarrow and washed it well. Then they cut it up, stem, leaves, roots, and all and leave it steeping for a day or two in pure spring water. Then it should be simmered for a couple of hours and strained, and people add to it a glass of the best (first shot whiskey, men call it and it is not to be got in every public house) A wine glass of this mixture in water taken three times daily is

a prevention as well as cure for pains.

It was also used for the prognosis of a disease and in this case, three branchlets of yarrow were to be given to a patient for three days. If on the third day he vomits, he will not survive his illness, and if he does not vomit, he will survive. This brief comment illustrates the physician's confidence in the styptic and antimicrobial properties of yarrow, and the timeframe in which he expects it to succeed. If the patient vomits on the third day it indicates that the herb has not been able to staunch internal bleeding or infection and, so, will die.

Today, yarrow is also used as a tea for chills and colds and there are some reports that recognise its specific action, "It is especially useful where the perspiration is obstructed a condition which is often the forerunner of fever." This awareness that yarrow is used early on in a health problem is also captured in its use for inflammation. "Yarrow chopped fine, boiled for ten minutes and mixed with two ounces of suet and one ounce of bees wax will cure an inflamed wound." This description indicates the wound is hot and inflamed but not weeping and reflects the advice in the English herbal by Gerard wherein yarrow is specifically referred for, "[to] close up wounds and keep them from inflammation or fiery swelling." Other uses of yarrow that are recorded in the NFCS are the use of yarrow to ease a migraine, "The leaves being put into the nose, do cause it to bleed, and ease the pain of the migraine." Another use common in the NFCS is the practice of chewing the leaves for toothache, and this use can also be traced to Gerard's Herbal of 1633, "Most

men say that the leaves chewed, and especially green, are a remedy for the toothache."

The other major use for yarrow was for divination, especially to divine who one's future husband would be. Mac Coitir has identified this use in Scotland and England also even though the number of sprigs or quantity of yarrow may vary. The verse most commonly used while picking yarrow was, *Good morrow; Good morrow; fair yarrow*
Thrice good morrow to thee,
Let me know before this time tomorrow,
Who my true love will be,
The colour of his hair,
The clothes he will wear,
The words he will speak,
When he comes to court me,

The yarrow was then placed under the pillow and while they slept, they would see their future husbands in their dreams. This divination practice was customary on May Eve or Halloween, both feasts where the boundary between this world and the other world is permeable.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Boost your body's collagen and see the benefits in the mirror

This September I'm going to continue the focus on mature skin, because the feedback we have been getting in Organico is that there is a lot of interest in keeping glowing and healthy! Last month the focus was on hydrating mature skin, and I discussed a few habits we can all adopt to care for skin and make sure it stays soft and supple. This month I'm going to dive a bit deeper into why taking a supplement containing collagen – in particular Marine Collagen – can help achieve this goal (and how it also benefits your joints and your hair). We had an interesting situation with one of our staff here in Organico who had cracking hands, despite taking plenty of Omega Oils, and using a rich hand cream every day. When she started taking collagen regularly they healed. Given how much we have been washing our hands here over the last year and how damaging that can be for our hands, that was a great result!

The important thing to remember is, no matter your age, it's never too late to start supporting your body's production of collagen and to see the benefits in your skin, hair, and nails.

Collagen is the protein responsible for smooth and firm skin, resilient nails, and strong

hair. The body's natural supply starts to dwindle in your 20s, but throughout each decade, there are plenty of habits you can develop that protect the collagen you already have and boost your body's level of production.

But first, let's talk about why we recommend a marine-based collagen supplement for the appearance and health of the skin, hair, and nails.

There are many different types of collagen throughout the body, but the skin, hair, and nails are richest in Type I collagen which is most abundant in – you guessed it – marine sources.

We love the two supplements below because they provide high daily doses of marine collagen in its most absorbable form, and they include vitamin C which not only helps the body absorb collagen, but assists in its production. We have both on special offer this month in case you feel like treating your skin.

Revive Active Beauty Complex

This Irish Made powdered Beauty complex contains 8 active ingredients, including marine collagen, vitamin C, biotin, and hyaluronic acid, that all help maintain the structure, function, and beauty of the skin, hair, and nails.

And secondly – Your Zooki Liposomal Collagen

This liquid marine collagen has a great lime flavour and is ready to mix into smoothies, yogurt, granola, or water. It offers marine collagen and vitamin C in liposomal form which ensures maximum absorption into the bloodstream.

Although most people won't see the effect of collagen decline until their 30s, collagen levels start to drop about one per cent every year during your 20s. In your 30s, it's likely the first signs of skin aging start to show which can include dryer skin, pigmentation, fine lines, and the loss of firmness, and by your 40s, we all need to start preparing for the menopause, when collagen levels plummet by 30 per cent. Discouraged? Don't be! Here are some simple and practical tips for retaining collagen and boosting its production.

Make a habit of using SPF every day. You won't see the effects until later in life, but the UV rays your skin absorbs now can accelerate the breakdown of collagen.

Something else that accelerates collagen breakdown? Smoking. Kick the habit now, or don't take it up in the first place.

Mind your sugar and alcohol



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

intake. Both cause inflammation in the body, which depletes collagen and dehydrates the skin.

Adopt a gentle exfoliation practice once or twice a week to stimulate the skin's cellular turnover (which has started to decline) and promote collagen production

Consider using an oil-based face cleanser, like Kinvara Skin-care's Absolute Cleansing Face Oil, which is more hydrating than a traditional cleanser.

A daily facial massage helps flush out fluid buildup, boost blood flow, stimulate cellular turnover, and support collagen

production. All you need is your (or a loved one's) fingertips and a few simple massage techniques.

Bring on the antioxidants! High-quality supplements and a diet rich in colourful whole foods will give you a boost of antioxidants that fight oxidative stress, reduce inflammation, and boost your body's collagen production.

Prioritise your sleep. Your body makes collagen while you sleep, but only if you're getting at least seven to nine hours per night.

Start taking a daily marine-based collagen supplement as a proactive method to counteract collagen decline. Studies show that as little as 2.5 grams/

day can produce skin benefits. By the age of 50, it is advised to take up to 20g a day.

For the full article with all the links to research and facial massage techniques, be sure to sign up to our newsletter (there is a sign up box on the bottom of every page on organico.ie) as we have a longer Blog Post called How to increase collagen in your 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond and will be sending the link out soon!

For more advice, visit us in Bantry, we are open 9am-6pm, Monday - Saturday. Visit us online on www.organico.ie. Find us on Facebook and Instagram @organicobantry

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Just did it

DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

The headline this month is a twist on Nike's 'Just do it' slogan, because I did do it! If you read my DIY Fitness column, you'll most likely know, that I signed up for a 27K race this August, because I felt it was time to challenge myself on the distance and the race sounded beautiful. And yesterday I did it.

In spite of or inspired by

As the stars aligned, it seemed that two weeks out from race date, everything pointed to NOT race. My sleep was very poor, down to four to five hours a night; this did take a toll on restitution, which meant my body didn't heal up as well, as it should have after the harder sessions. So two weeks out my hip started to make problems and I was exhausted mentally and physically, sleep-deprived and ready to throw in the towel. Race week came around and I managed to bang my knee in a kid's ride in the funfair park and on race day my period decided to come a day early (just ask any woman in your life how inconvenient that is).

In spite or maybe inspired by all the obstacles, I got myself to the starting line Sunday morning,



half excited, half scared of the task ahead of me. I felt under-trained, injured and out of my comfort zone – because in running there are no short cuts or luck. There's a distance and there is you – and there's a clock that keeps ticking. I had two goals: To run the full race and not to be last.

I ran with a smile on my face for 24 of the 27 kilometres. On my way I chit-chatted with fellow runners and enjoyed words of wisdom and experience from other runners who knew the route well. As promised, the route was beautiful, with a scenic view on the lake and rolling hills making it never boring. After 24km I could however feel my hip quite

clearly and also my shoes seemed to have shrunk half a size; I felt my toes screaming for new shoes or even better no shoes at all.

Lungs and heart felt great. Toes and hip not so much. It became a battle in the mind. At this point I could have walked to the end and still made the cut off time, but I was determined to finish, as I'd started: Running. So I ran. One foot in front of the other. One step at the time.

Since stopping or walking was not an option because I needed, for myself, to finish the race running. I talked both hip and toes into just going a little further and make it to the end. The last 900m were one long, straight ever-inclining steep hill. I'd heard about it from the other runners, and they weren't kidding. It was pretty gruesome. Kind of like the hill you find in Ardfield on the way to Inchydoney that just seem to go onwards and upwards. But I ran it, and ran it 'fast' with my last drop of energy, and finished in upright style, even able to walk around afterwards. Besides stopping and getting a great medal and a bottle of water, the best thing was to see an old friend who came to cheer me at the finish line. A very welcome sight. Seeing a familiar, friendly face after facing a tough challenge, was great. (So if you know any-one tackling a race or competition

of any kind, go out and support them. They'll appreciate it.)

Challenge takeaways

This was my first race to conquer all by myself, as I had no training partner and no race buddy. I didn't even know anyone who had signed up for the race; it was, in fact, just me and my running shoes. It made it a big deal for me, as it really was and felt like 'My own project'.

I know that undertaking challenges are often most fun if done with other likeminded people. But I will encourage anybody who reads this, to at least one time take on an individual challenge all alone. Getting out of your comfort zone and rising to the challenge can make us grow, and we can learn a lot about ourselves in the process. How we react to changes and obstacles? What we need to feel supported and succeed and what (and maybe who) we best avoid to keep optimistic about our project?

If I were to give starting advice to you who are thinking of entering a race, or taking on a test, or any other kind of 'new' challenge, these three points would be the essence.

1. Have a date and a time goal and make a plan according to this. (If you never run, don't enter

a marathon that's a month away.)

2. Make a checklist for the things you need to succeed. (What do you have now, what do you need? Can you buy or borrow? Who are your supporters and who will drag you down?)

3. Be fluid to allow changes and yet still reach your goal. (Be consistent with the plan, but don't fret if you have to push training from Wednesday to Thursday.) For example, if it's a race, make a plan for the months leading up to the race. Know how many days a week you will run, how long and how fast. (Google or Garmin is a good friend to have when looking at training plans if you are new at this. Also: Going from couch to 5K – or more – is totally doable. Give it your time and consistency, and you will get there.) Make sure you get rest and restitution as well.

Regardless of what your goal is, the keyword is preparation.

Also important: Especially when talking about sport specific goals – when the training intensifies, as it does when you enter a race, meet or competition, the risk of injuries will also increase. And if you're unlucky and get injured, is there a new plan to be made? Can you continue on your prep if you modify your training plan? Or will you have to stop and step down, heal up and do it next year/next time?

For me, after getting my hip injured two weeks out, I decided to only do short, slow, easy runs. Keep my legs moving, but at the same time, go so light and easy, it didn't aggravate the hip and cause the injury to get more serious. It worked, as I'm still standing a day after the race and plan to run again tomorrow.

So if you encounter an obstacle, can you adjust and still reach your goal? Perfection often gets the best of us. 'If I miss one training, it'll all be for nothing', 'If I eat this piece of cake, all my dieting is for nothing', 'If I... I might as well give up'.

Instead accept changes and obstacles as part of the process, stick to the plan/training schedule and as much as possible, enjoy the process and get the reward in the end.

I can tell you that coming home yesterday and showing my son the medal and seeing his eyes light up made it all worth it. He might not grasp what 27 hilly kilometres feels like, but he made me feel like the proudest mum for seeing this through and overcoming.

If you have any questions or comments my mail and/or Instagram is open as usual: taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com or www.instagram.com/trainwithadane

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Gluten sensitivity isn't just a gut issue



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic

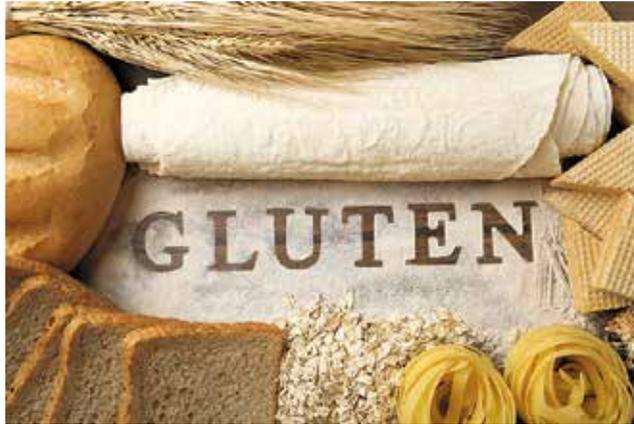
It is a common misconception that gluten issues are primarily gut-related, such as coeliac disease. Research has shown that not all gluten issues manifest in the gut, in fact many people suffer with neurological manifestations from ingesting gluten that affects their brain. Conditions that are caused by gluten that are not coeliac disease are called Non Celiac Gluten sensitivity (NCGS).

Gluten is one of the most immune reactive foods — no other food is more of a trigger for neurological dysfunction and neurological autoimmunity

than gluten. This stems in part from the intimate relationship between the gut and the brain. The foods we eat and our gut health have a profound impact on brain health. So does this mean everyone should give up eating gluten? The answer to that is no, because what really matters is if you are having an immune reaction to the gluten you are eating and that will be different from person to person.

Many people do have gastrointestinal complaints caused by eating gluten-containing foods such as breads and pasta. When that is the case it can be easier to feel the link between eating a certain type of food and the subsequent symptoms of eating it. But if you are in the situation where gluten sensitivity is actually causing other problems being able to feel the relationship between eating gluten and subsequent reactions is harder.

Some of the common symptoms that can be caused by gluten are: Depression; Brain fog; Memory loss; Anxiety disorders; Cognitive decline; Irritability; Poor focus and concentration; Neuromotor issues; Neuropathy – numbness,



tingling, shooting pains.

So how do you tell if you have an issue with gluten? There are two options – do some blood tests or do a complete exclusion of gluten from the diet.

Testing for gluten sensitivity

Many blood tests that are used for testing for gluten issues fall short. That is because they only test for alpha-gliadin, which is only one of many types of gluten found in wheat. Many people have immune reactions to different parts of the wheat proteome. Additionally screens for coeliac disease only look for

antibodies to Tissue Transglutaminase2 (TTg 2), which is found in the gut but they don't look for reactions to TTg3 or TTg6, which are found in the skin and brain respectively. There are specialist tests that do look at these run by Cyrex Labs (www.cyrexlabs.com) and these are the tests that we use.

It is also worth noting here that other forms of testing such as saliva or hair samples are not valid and do not give accurate results so should be avoided.

Removing Gluten from your diet

By using testing you are able to come up with a more definitive diagnosis of gluten issues and differentiate between coeliac disease and NCGS but at the end of the day removal of gluten from the diet is essential in both cases. This is not a simple as it sounds, unfortunately there are a number of additional issues that mean just removing wheat, barley and rye from the diet is not enough.

Many pre-packaged foods that we eat today have gluten in them either as part of the ingredients, or because these foods are made in factories producing other gluten-containing foods where cross contamination can happen. Even a very tiny amount of gluten can cause problems for a susceptible person.

Another factor are cross-reactive foods – whilst these foods are not gluten-containing foods they have a similar amino acid sequence which can fool your immune system into thinking that they are gluten and cause the same immune system reaction and therefore no change in your symptoms.

If you are looking for help with any of the symptoms above or you think you have an issue with gluten please do get in touch with me through www.marketstclinic.com or give me a call on 087 9582362.

Eoin Roe is a chiropractor and functional medicine specialist working at Market St Clinic in Skibbereen.

Tackling tiredness



Amanda Roe
Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

Are you tired all the time? Do you feel like you're running on empty? Perhaps you're pulled in too many directions and are emotionally drained and physically exhausted.

Once upon a time, deadlines may have motivated you to get things done but now, as you keep saying yes to others' requests, you're never getting to the end of your to-do list.

Being under so much pressure can make it difficult to think clearly. The more you have to do, the more you feel stuck; ruminating, worrying and procrastinating.

You may feel guilty, emotionally overwhelmed, with not enough time in the day, so your needs are moving further and further down in priority.

One of the things that has a huge effect on how we feel and manage stress, especially for women, is hormone balance. When I talk about hormone balance most people will assume that I am talking about oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone, but this is only part of the story.

There are a huge number of hormones active in our body not only those related to reproduction and the menstrual cycle. Hormones influence everything from growth and development, heart rate, appetite and metabolism to our mood, sleep cycle, ability to manage stress and more.

Hormones are released through a 24-hour period in sync with nature's circadian rhythms. The production and release of hormones adjust naturally according to the seasons and changes in sunrise and sunset.

Two important hormones are cortisol and melatonin. Cortisol and melatonin are opposing yet complementary hormones. Naturally cortisol will fall, as melatonin increases in the evening, to help us feel sleepy, fall asleep and stay asleep. Melatonin levels reduce in the

morning, as cortisol levels rise to wake us up and keep us alert through the day.

Cortisol is also known as the stress hormone and in times of stress your body will produce high levels of cortisol making it difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep through the night.

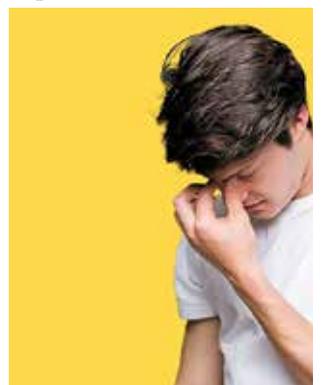
Things that influence cortisol and melatonin rhythms are synthetic lighting, including use of phones, TV and computer screens in the evening, travelling through different time zones, working night shifts, eating late at night, and stress, which could be work-related, emotional or physical stress.

To feel well rested, it is important to get at least seven hours of undisturbed sleep per night or 9-12 hours for your five to 16-year-olds.

Reducing stress and prioritising self-care has many longterm health benefits.

You can improve your energy levels, mood and concentration by sleeping in line with nature's circadian rhythms.

To improve your deep sleep at night, aim to be in bed with the lights off by 10pm; this will help you feel rested and refreshed in the morning. If this is not possible or you are chronically fatigued, then 2pm is a good time for a short 15-minute nap.



If you find it difficult to sleep because your mind is active, then getting support to clear your mind and quiet your thoughts, will help you to fall asleep more easily, reduce dreams and improve your quality of sleep.

The more rested you feel, the easier it will be to manage stress, take care of yourself and find the best work or life balance.

I wonder what would it mean to you to wake in the morning looking forward to getting out of bed?

Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Acupuncturist and Life coach providing natural solutions for your mental, emotional and physical health. For more information call/text 087 633 1898 or email amanda@marketstclinic.com

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West Cork NLN taking applications now for Level 5 Office Administration Programme

NLN's Office Administration course, which is run in conjunction with CETB, uses a blended delivery approach of two days in centre and three days' home study/work experience over two years. This approach is highly attractive to anyone who cannot commit to attending a Training Centre full time. There are two locations – Clonakilty and Model Farm Rd, Cork – which are easily accessible by public transport. For students availing of public transport, NLN can subsidise the costs of travel.

Course Content**Certified Modules:**

- Word Processing
- Text Production
- Spreadsheet Methods
- Database Methods
- Information and Administration
- Personal Effectiveness
- Customer Service
- Work Experience

NLN is aware that it is not only lack of qualifications that prevents people from accessing employment. For many, lack of confidence and feelings of inadequacy can make people fearful of trying to move on or make a change. That is why as well as providing certified training, NLN has additional uncertified training and support in the following: - Career Planning, Confidence Building, Job Searching supports, Manual Handling and Sage Accounts. A laptop is provided for students.

Benefits of blended delivery approach

Not everyone has the availability to be in a training centre Monday to Friday. It can be family

commitments, health issues or even transport difficulties that prevent someone from applying for full time training courses. Office Administration's combination of only two days centre attendance and three days' home study means it is accessible to more people than a traditional five-day a week commitment. The other three days are used by the student to revise work covered in class and to complete the work assigned to them at their own pace and at times that suit them at home.

Who is the course suitable for?

There is no typical person profile for Office Administration. Over the 10-plus years that NLN have been offering this course in Cork County, there has been a diverse blend of people ranging from early school leavers to mature students, people who suddenly found themselves unemployed after working for many years and do not have any IT skills to people whose families have grown and they now wish to do something for themselves. For some, the priority has been to retrain and get qualified in order to find employment, for others it is step one in their plan to gain higher education.

What makes NLN Office Administration different?

While other training organisations offer a similar course, NLN provides a supportive environment where all students have access to wellbeing supports and a psychologist to help them get the most out of their training. The atmosphere in this learning environment is friendly, enthusiastic and supportive and previous students have testified that as well as the obvious gains

from learning and qualification, their personal wellbeing has benefitted enormously from the social aspect of being part of a supportive group. NLN understands that returning to education can be overwhelming so class sizes are kept small to ensure people are comfortable and can concentrate on learning in a safe space.

Progression Pathways- Further Education

The graduate from this course will gain a QQI level 5 Major Award in Office Administration which can also be converted to points for the CAO system. The following are examples of higher education our past students have progressed to:-

- Bachelor of Business in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Business Administration
- EOD Business Studies for Mature Student – Higher Certificate in Business (over 23s only)

Progression opportunities – Employment

Previous students have used their qualification to secure employment in the following areas: Primary Care Centres, GP surgeries, Insurance companies, Remote data entry for multinational companies, Car Sales Office, NCT centre offices. Having the Office Admin qualification does not limit you to just office work. The skills are transferable and can be utilised in so many other forms of employment because most jobs now require people to be computer literate even if it is not the primary role involved in the job.

Testimonials

"I had a very good course tutor and without the course I would not be able to do the office work where I am currently employed. Doing Office Admin has improved my quality of life by motivating me for a career change. I worked as a care assistant but always wanted to work in an office. I was unsure at first if I would be able to do the work but I got so much support and encouragement to not give up even if it got difficult sometimes. As a result of the skills I learned in Word, Spreadsheets etc, I am now employed as an office administrator in the very care home I used to work as a carer. This was only possible by getting in touch with NLN. You are never too old to learn new things and once you have the knowledge no one can take it away from you"

"I actually saw the course advertised in my local GP's office and I really am glad that I applied for it. What made it suitable for me was that the

course is not rushed and groups are small so it allows for help to be given to each student accordingly. It is done at a pace where it is not too fast or slow. I have made loads of friends through doing the course as well which is great."

"I completed the course three years ago and I initially decided to start it, as I was no longer able to continue working in my previous employment due to an illness. I had been working in the medical field for 15 years so I did not have much IT experience. I knew that if I wanted to work again I would have to retrain. Office Admin suited me as with a young family I could not attend a centre five days a week. The support I received from NLN to accommodate me all the way through was outstanding. On completion I was able to stay in the medical field which I loved but in an administrative role in a busy Primary Care centre. I would encourage anyone who is unsure of what they want to do to just enquire from NLN what they can do for you."

"I had developed mental health problems at a young age after I did not receive the points I need in my Leaving Cert. I saw an ad for NLN and made an appointment to meet them. I explained that not achieving my LC still bothered me because it meant I could not attend college. We decided Office Admin was the best fit for me and I was able to use my Major Award to apply and be accepted on the Bachelor of Business in Business Administration"

Office Admin programme is open to anyone over 18 and it is advisable to have some knowledge of basic computer use before starting. However, at NLN, every application is on its merit, so you can call at any time and discuss how your individual needs can be accommodated. There is nothing lost by making a phone call! Call 027 51027.

Cork residents invited to submit their ideas on how to make Ireland better

Residents across Cork are being offered the chance to have their voice heard and contribute to national policy-making through Fine Gael's new Better Ireland initiative.

Senator Tim Lombard said: "Cork residents have the opportunity to contribute their ideas on how we can make Ireland a better place for everyone. Fine Gael is asking people to submit their ideas for a better Ireland, with the winning entrant securing a virtual meeting with An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar to discuss the proposal.

"Entries are open now and the entry process couldn't be any easier; just log onto Finegaele.ie/BetterIreland, describe your idea

in 250 words or less and submit via the website. Anyone over the age of 18 who is a resident in Ireland is eligible to submit their idea.

"We would like to hear from as people as possible, from a diverse range of backgrounds, occupations, areas etc, to share their ideas with us on how we can improve life for residents in towns and villages across Cork."

Speaking at the launch of the Better Ireland initiative this week, An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar said, "I'm looking forward to hearing from people across the country on how they think we can make Ireland a better place to live, work, raise children, receive

an education, start a business and grow old.

"It might be a major policy initiative that will be completely transformative and change our country for the better, but it could also be something smaller; an idea that would make a real difference at a local and community level.

"Whatever your idea is, we want to hear it. I look forward to reading your submissions and meeting with the winning entrant where they will have the chance to pitch the idea to me over a video call – and you're welcome to bring your friends and colleagues along as well," An Tánaiste concluded.

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CERTIFICATION:

Office Administration, QQI Level 5 Major Award or Information Processing, QQI Level 5 Major Award

COURSE OVERVIEW: The aim of this course is to enable the student to acquire the knowledge, skills and competence to work in a range of office administration contexts and/or to progress to higher education and training.

COURSE STRUCTURE & DURATION: 2 days in-centre training plus 3 days home based learning. Students have up to 24 months to complete the course.

**STUDENT SUPPORTS:**

- Personalised Training Plans
- Psychological support
- Social & Community Engagement
- Access to laptops & IT equipment
- Work Experience
- QQI Certified Courses

For more information contact:
National Learning Network
Faxbridge, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
087-2316919 or 087-2447160



people Food, Health & Lifestyle



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

Who else believes that we are caught in an episode of Star Trek, moving along at warp speed? How is it September already? Who gave permission to end our summer just like that? This glorious 'back to school' month signifies finishing those uncompleted tasks and rectifying and improving your current situation. I guess this makes complete sense; it's the beginning of a new phase and a somewhat slowing down in preparation of the 'hibernating' months ahead. If you look at the numerology of September, then it brings along the powerful energy of the magnificent number nine, bringing luck, motivation, enthusiasm, and a mystical vibration that encourages you to realise a clear path to making your dreams come true. This might sound ridiculous but there was a time in our not-so-distant past, when the pace of life was much slower, and people pondered the changing of the seasons from an energetic perspective and

Resplendent September

the direct effect on the psyche. The gemstone connected with the month of September is the resplendent sapphire. The most common colour of the sapphire is a brilliant blue, ranging from a soft pale blue to a deep cobalt blue, although the sapphire is allochromatic – it comes in all colours.

I must admit, after doing a little bit of research into the meaning behind September, I was not one bit surprised to find indigo blue emerging as one of this season's 'must have' colours. It is a distinctive tone that is said to promote high levels of concentration. Find yourself a dress or a puffer in this hypnotic shade because it suits almost any palette or hair colour, especially when you vary the material. Mix it with blue denim for some extra punch. I adore this shade. If I were asked to put a colour to life, then indigo or sapphire blue would most definitely be it. This colour has an energy that is a wonderful mix of serenity and energy, all in one.

I guess I am preaching to the converted announcing that September, undoubtedly, brings along a 'cooling' of temperatures. Whether it is welcomed or not, there is no avoiding the fact that we have to learn to welcome it with perhaps covered arms and legs. Designers are calling this season's version of a warm tan 'clay' and it certainly will warm up your wardrobe, all the while looking sensational when mixed with your existing browns. Have a look for a clay overcoat or sweater dress or perhaps a chunky jumper or a pair of funky trousers. This shade looks

wonderful on blondes, brunettes and most especially redheads! If you want a 70s vibe then mix with mustard or green... for an added bit of pzazz. Clay teamed with mint green is an eye-popping look and might turn out to be a much sought after ensemble. You could simply add a mint green belt to a plain clay dress – the look is refreshing and endearing. For the nervous among you, choose an oversized loop bag, pumps or boots in this earthy tone.

Fuchsia is re-emerging for the bold and confident girl. Scratch that, fuchsia is for everyone, because, like red, it promotes and exudes confidence! Whether you choose a shirt-dress, blazer, cropped knitted cardigan or even

a clutch bag, this fabulous hue gives instant 'sensationalism'... This season, we are enticed to wear it more so than anytime before because we are given the new option to tone it down with neutrals, like grey, camel or ivory. Pink and camel would be my firm favourite, a real 'chic' look for an autumnal day or night.

Oftentimes when loud pink is in, vibrant red is out, but not this season, they are both vying for top spot. This means that we are lucky enough to have both available to us, depending on our mood, the weather or the occasion. Red is a maximalist primary colour that can adapt to minimalist wardrobe collections. You can incorporate red into your classically tailored

pieces in a big way or just keep it to shoes, totally up to you. A glorious full red skirt, pleated or not, will be a great addition to any wardrobe. Make sure that you have a dramatic red clutch bag ready for lots of going 'Out Out'.

Silver is not just for special occasions, now you can parade this invigorating shade on everyday staples like blazers, pleated skirts and cable knits. Silver and cream is a new mix and I must admit I like it very much. Lilac is emerging as another strong contender for Autumn, and like fuchsia, looks adorable with camel or caramel. Mix and match to your hearts content, be original where you can and enjoy blending these 'feel good' colours.

Comfort is still key in elevated knitwear and this is the area that you can splurge on colour. It's all about being and looking vibrant. Designers wanted to give us all a well-earned and much-needed lift. Life can and will blindsides you every so often. None of us know, from day to day, what the next day might bring. We can be happily plodding along one day and the next consumed with anxiety about our health and the impending doom associated with waiting for results. Sometimes all the positive vibes and mindsets in the world can't and won't ease that pressure. The sleepless nights associated with worrying about a loved one's health can leave you helpless, distracted and weary. Do we ever really know what is going on in the life of another? Perhaps the best way to move forward is to tread

carefully with others, you just never know the anguish that might be hidden behind a smile. Compliment everyone that you meet, find something to praise in that person, there is always more than one thing, there is always a multitude of things that deserve recognition and acknowledgement.

As I'm writing this, I am reminded that Leaving Cert results are at the end of the week! Am I worried about my two boys? Not in the slightest, because they, along with the entire Class of 2021, have endured so much already that they all have an emotional intelligence and sense of camaraderie second to none. They have been 'booted' around, had so much cancelled and reorganised, only to be cancelled again, yet they are 'getting on with life'. They had the opportunity to slow down in the middle, of what most would say, are the two most important years of secondary school... they have had time to stop and re-assess what's important, what needs to be stressed about and what doesn't. They have had the opportunity to mature, to grow, and to look at this new world that has emerged in front of them, all the while being expected to focus on an exam that could shape their future. So, here's to supporting them in their celebrations, wherever they might be, or however they might choose to do so. Toast them and wish them well. They are the leaders of our future!

'No one has ever achieved anything truly great without going through extreme adversity.'
Lewis Howes



Back to school skincare routine



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Going back to school or college may feel somewhat more normal this year, but as you begin to prepare everything you need before heading back, don't forget to include skincare as part of your busy checklist! Adding a few crucial skin-care products to your shopping list can help you achieve and maintain clear, smooth skin that will have you looking good whether you're behind a mask or a laptop screen.

Step 1 Prepare Wash your face morning and night. Doing so can help remove dirt, oil and impurities that have accumulated onto the skin throughout the day. The NEOSTRATA Mandelic Cleanser (200ml / RRP €27.90) is a soap-free foaming gel cleanser, formulated with Mandelic Acid, a gentle yet effective Alpha Hydroxy Acid (AHA) that is ideal for exfoliating oily skin. It also contains a Polyhydroxy Acid (PHA) and Salicylic Acid, known

to help clarify pores and improve skin texture.

Step 2 Repair Target clogged pores to eliminate blemishes and promote healing. The NEOSTRATA Targeted Clarify Gel (15ml / €27.85) is a triple-action treatment gel is formulated with an Alpha Hydroxy Acid (AHA) blend of Acetyl Mandelic Acid, Citric Acid and Tartaric Acid, combined with

Salicylic Acid and Provitamin A, to exfoliate the build-up of dead skin cells, help keep pores clear of impurities and reduce potential scarring.

Step 3 Protect Use an SPF every day! The NEOSTRATA Restore Daytime Protection Cream SPF23 (40ml / RRP €56.20) is a gentle age-defying moisturiser with sun protection. This universally suited to all

skin types product contains Polyhydroxy Acids (PHAs) and potent antioxidants to support skin's protective moisture barrier and natural collagen. The skin's moisture barrier will be protected against environmental stressors and the skin will instantly appear firmer and more luminous.

Step 4 Hydrate & Boost Hydrate at night! The NEOSTRATA Restore Ultra Moisturising Face Cream (40ml / RRP €56.20) is a gentle, high-strength, anti-aging face cream with 10 per cent Polyhydroxy Acid (PHA) to lightly exfoliate and moisturise. Contains PHA, known to soothe and strengthen the protective moisture barrier for dry or stressed skin.

NEOSTRATA has been available in Ireland for over 15 years and is available from www.neostrata.ie or leading pharmacies and select aesthetic clinics nationwide.



It's a question of trust



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.

The Boxer greeted her two buddies and played around while the owners watched. There was another family there with two dogs, one of which was on a lead and wasn't too happy about the play going on. The two playmates and the Boxer got close to the two strange dogs and suddenly she found herself surrounded in a tight circle with the two strangers pressing in on her. Her owner was immediately on the alert, as she was beginning to look worried. Then she looked across at her owner asking for help. 'Nutmeg, come', was the immediate response and she jumped out of the circle and ran straight to her side!

That was Nutmeg and myself caught up in what could have been a sticky situation. It might have ended differently with those four dogs getting

confrontational with the one in the middle except that Nutmeg knew she could trust me to solve the problem. We quickly said our goodbyes and walked away out of range.

Sometimes in life you meet a dog that is entirely on your wavelength and there's an invisible bond between you. That was the case with Nutmeg and myself. But, anyone can develop that mutual trust to some degree between him/herself and a canine companion. All my dogs have trusted me enough to let me inspect sore paws, ears, cuts or remove foreign bodies from eyes, and so on. When any one of them stepped on a thorn and started limping, he/she would lift that paw and wait for me to remove it. It became automatic and I'm always deeply moved whenever that confidence in my ability to heal and help is

displayed.

All it takes is to put strong boundaries around our dogs and to be calm and consistent at all times in our dealings with them. That way they know exactly what we want of them and what they can expect of us.

Dogs are pack animals. They are loyal but can lose trust in us if we fail to give positive direction and will then behave in a way to protect themselves. For example, if a puppy gets attacked by another dog through our failure to protect him, then he will more than likely be reactive to every dog he meets after that. It's as simple as that. And, if we tense up at the sight of an approaching dog, then our dog feels the need to defend himself and us. And the situation gets worse until walks become a nightmare instead of a pleasure. That's putting a huge respon-

sibility on our dogs which is extremely stressful for them.

One of my Boxers, Freya, had a dropped heartbeat and she would often just collapse for no apparent reason. It was a form of syncope. It was frightening for her. I learnt to recognise the signs just before she was about to faint. Each time, she would look over to me and try to get back to my side before it happened. She was looking for me to protect her and being near me made her feel safe. She never completely lost consciousness but would lie very still for some time. It comforted her that I would sit by her side talking gently to her, telling her how much I loved her until she could fully relax and go to sleep. That deep trust continued throughout her life.

As I said earlier, dogs are very loyal to their owners if we

reciprocate. Just like people, some dogs take time to trust us especially when they've had a bad experience. Giving them boundaries with training as well as love gives them security to grow in character and reach their full potential.

But trust runs deeper than that. It means that when we ask them to stop playing with another dog, or call them back to our side, they do it because they're trusting us to make the right decision in their best interest. And that happens even when they don't want to stop whatever they're doing.

And that trust works both ways. When we achieve it on a mutual basis with our dogs, we've got the most special relationship. That's worth cherishing!
corkdogtrainingclasses.com

RAWR and WCAWG unite to tackle cat colonies

On a sunny day in mid-June Rural Animal Welfare Resources (RAWR) got a call from their friends in West Cork Animal Welfare Group (WCAWG) that went something like "Hey, we have a situation that I think we could work together on." **Deirdre O'Brien** of RAWR tells us more.

A group of cats in Macroom had gotten out of control, breeding like crazy and becoming sick. They needed to be trapped, neutered and released (TNR) so WCAWG offered to fundraise for vet fees if we could organise the trapping and neutering.

It was a bit of a stretch (and there were a lot of cats) but we decided to go ahead. The two charities have always worked closely together and this was another opportunity for us to co-operate to help the animals; we would do the legwork and they would raise the funds.

The first group of 41 adult cats and 30 kittens was on a farm but, once word got out, more calls started to come in from that area. So RAWR and WCAWG decided to work together on more jobs.

So far our volunteers have made approximately 20 trips from our base in Bantry to Macroom. The second large group of about 20 cats at St Colman's Park is an ongoing operation and there is a third group of

10-15 cats in the Macroom area that need to be TNR'd. We will continue until all the cats have been trapped and treated.

The trapped cats are taken to our vet and examined. Most of the kittens were suffering from flu and, sadly, some didn't make it as they were too sick. There were also ruptured eyeballs, fleas, worms and ear-mites, for which they received treatment.

When well enough, the cats are neutered and kept at the surgery until fully recovered. Next our volunteers make the return trip to take the adult cats back home, where they are released to enjoy life without all the trauma of constant mating, fighting, pregnancy, feeding kittens and ill health. Now they will remain a healthy, stable colony and do



their job of keeping rodents in the area under control.

The kittens are in the care of fosterers until they are grown and well enough to find their forever homes. So far about 80 cats have been neutered.

All this was achieved with the support of our friends in West Cork Animal Welfare Group – a big thank you goes to them.

With kitten season well and truly upon us, it's more important than ever that people get cats neutered – both pets and strays. Cats have also been neutered in Ballydehob, Murragh, Kealkill and Dunmanway, as well as other locations. The RAWR discount voucher scheme has been active throughout the lockdown and now we have been able to re-open our charity shop, we are able to offer a 'Tackle it for a Tenner' event in the second week of September, when we will offer neutering at €10 per cat.

To support RAWR please come and see our shop on Bridge Street, Bantry, opposite the car park, below the library. We sell gift items, greetings cards, and pet treats, doggy jumpers and coats as well as bric-a-brac.

RAWR dog and cat neutering discount vouchers: For

availability contact your nearest participating veterinary practice: Bantry: Fachtina Collins 027 53639; Skibbereen: Castlelands-Hourihanes 028 22211; Dunmanway: Brookpark: 023 884 5777; Castletownbere: Brian Murphy 027 70366

Calling all unneutered cat owners: tackle it for a tenner

Following on from the success of previous neutering offers RAWR are running another programme from September 6-10. RAWR, with the kind participation of The Veterinary Clinic, Bantry and Castlelands/Hourihane in Skibbereen, will be offering the public the chance to avail of the opportunity to have their cat(s) neutered for just €10 per cat.

RAWR has been running a long term subsidised neutering scheme which facilitates the neutering of cats at a reduced rate as RAWR subsidises the balance. For one week this rate will be reduced further to just €10 per cat. Spaces are limited so please phone 027 53639 (Bantry), 028 22211 (Skibbereen) to confirm a space. There is no limit on the number of spaces (cats) per person but spaces are limited so book early to avoid missing out on this super offer.

All cat owners are asked to please ensure the animal is transported in a secure container. There is one stipulation under the scheme and that is that the cat be ear tipped while under anaesthetic. This is perfectly

safe and does not cause the cat any discomfort.

While the minimum charge is €10 per animal we would encourage people to donate more towards the cost if they so wish. The success of all the schemes

and programmes RAWR run are dependent on the support of the community so any additional donations will be greatly appreciated.

Road safety appeal launched as survey reveals most horse riders experience issues on Irish roads

A new road safety appeal is calling on horse-riders and other road users to share the roads safely. The appeal comes as a recent survey revealed that four in five horse riders experienced an incident when on the road with their horse. The Irish Horse Representative organisations, together with the RSA and An Garda Síochána are appealing to drivers to slow down and pass wide when they encounter horse riders and their horses on the road, and have given these tips for motorists and riders when sharing the roads:

For riders:

- Always make sure that drivers can see you at all times regardless of weather conditions.
- Wear proper protective gear, high-visibility clothing and put high-visibility equipment on your horse and give clear hand signals.
- Remain on the left-hand side of the road when both riding your horse and leading in hand. When leading your horse, position yourself between the horse being led and

the traffic so that you have maximum control over the horse.

- Give clear and accurate hand signals to let other road users know your intentions.
- Remain alert, attentive, and observant. Remember the Life Saver Look at junctions – it could save your life.

For road users:

- Be alert when approaching riding schools, racing yards or places where horses are likely to appear.
- Take special care when overtaking horses or horse-drawn vehicles. This is particularly relevant at junctions where motorists are advised to keep a safe distance from horses and riders.
- Pass by slowly, driving wide of the horse and ride, while obeying the rider's hand signals
- Don't use your air brakes, horn or lights in a way that might startle or blind a horse.
- Cyclists should approach cautiously, ensuring that the horse rider can see or hear you approaching.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

West Cork fundraiser in memory of Tadhg Murphy set to pay for eight air ambulance missions

A series of fundraisers in memory of a 19-year-old man from Glengarriff has raised more than €29,000 for the Irish Community Air Ambulance. Tadhg Murphy, an apprentice plumber, lost his life in a car accident on the morning of August 3, 2020. Tadhg's family organised a number of fundraisers during the August Bank Holiday weekend to thank the emergency services and mark his first anniversary. The events included a collection in Bantry Town, a football match between Glengarriff and Adrigole, a sponsored walk and a raffle. A cheque for €29,156 was presented to Mícheál Sheridan, CEO of the Irish Community Air Ambulance, at a small event in Glengarriff on Saturday. The money raised will

fund at least eight missions. The service is Ireland's first and only charity-funded HEMS Air Ambulance. Mícheál Sheridan said, "I want to say a big thank you to the Harrington and Murphy families and the entire community in West Cork for raising such a significant amount of money. We're not government funded so we rely on donations and fundraisers like this to bring hope to people in emergency situations. We're called to the most serious incidents, often in rural and isolated locations like West Cork. Each mission costs approximately €3,500 which means that not only have you remembered a remarkable young man but you have also funded at least eight of our future missions." The family of the late Tadhg Murphy have sincerely thanked

everyone who helped to make their fundraiser such a success, "From those who donated online or in person, played or attended the match, participated or supported the sponsored walk, to the businesses who sponsored fantastic raffle prizes and those who bought tickets. A very special mention has to be given to the people who went above and beyond, Glengarriff and Adrigole GAA clubs, the Lions Club, and Stevie O'Sullivan, Bonane – who did an amazing triathlon. Thank you all so much. The success of this fundraiser, in memory of Tadhg, is all down to this support. Tadhg was an apprentice plumber, a young, friendly, happy man who loved life and generally having the craic. He loved his family and his wide circle of friends. Tadhg was hardworking and



Mícheál Sheridan, CEO of the Irish Community Air Ambulance, receiving a fundraising cheque from Tadhg Murphy's sister Tracey and his parents Patrick and Teresa, from money raised in memory of Tadhg, on his first Anniversary. Pic Tony McElhinney

had great plans for his life that was tragically cut short. The fact that so much money was raised for such a worthy cause shows what an impact Tadhg had in his short life." The Irish Community Air Ambulance has responded to more than 1,000 incidents from its base in Rathcoole, County Cork since it was established

in July 1919. The charity heli-med service is staffed by Advanced Paramedics and EMTs from the National Ambulance Service. It brings most patients to the hospital that best suits their life-saving needs. Each mission costs an average of €3,500. The service is not government funded and relies solely on fundraising. For more

information about the service or to make a donation directly to the Irish Community Air Ambulance visit communityairambulance.ie

In the news Crossword

Across

- 2 Town crier listens for this singer's new name.
- 5 The earth rocked once again in this port for a prince.
- 6 Sunniva is one who flew her West Cork nest.
- 10 Much missed agent looks questioningly at the clock on September 30.
- 11 From east to west these are fanned by change.
- 12 Charlie rolled with them till the very end.
- 13 Kathy now free to express in the US.
- 15 Ellen is one who brought home gold.

Down

- 1 Premier county man who kept the peace between the Rebels and Shannonsiders.
- 3 Phil keeps her choice of ammo for the track.
- 4 This biscuit would put you in mind of a presidential visit.
- 5 Be it a company, pattern or West Cork sensation.
- 7 Double the trouble coming to Virgin.
- 8 Follow the wreckage to find this *Odobenus rosmarus*.
- 9 Unfortunately, it looks like there'll be no charge at this meal in 2021.
- 14 A high capital sadly now laid low.

Answers:
 Across: 2 - ye; 5 - hatti; 6 - eagle; 10 - James Bond; 11 - wildfres; 12 stones; 13 - Zappone; 15 - paralympium
 Down: 1 - Fergal Horgan; 3 - bullet; 4 - macaroon; 5 - Holding; 7 - Jedward; 8 - Wally; 9 - Electric Picnic; 14 - Kabal

Sudoku

The goal of Sudoku is to fill a 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9

1								4
				7		3		
		7	8		2		5	
	8			1				6
4			6					
	2						3	
7	9				5		4	
			2					
		6	1	4		5		

#60557 Difficulty: hard

		3	7	9		8		
	8			6				
					6	3		
	1			8				
7		6						
	9		2	4				
2		5	8			1	9	
				4		3		
6	1		5					8

#198337 Difficulty: moderate

In Place at Uillinn offers a visual feast

Critically acclaimed Croí Glan Integrated Dance Company, whose work highlights the value of diverse bodies and who work with dancers both with and without disabilities, will premiere their latest production 'In Place' in the unique courtyard setting of IMMA – Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin with performances from September 16-19. 'In Place' will then be performed in indoor settings including Uillinn, West Cork Arts Centre on October 30.

Choreographed by Croí Glan Co-Artistic Director Tara Brandel, 'In Place' will offer an aural and visual feast for the senses. Comprising a solo and a duet, the work will play with the relationship between the fragility and durability of the soft human form, and the surfaces and spaces of the architecture of these distinct art spaces around Ireland. Ray Harman is composing the music and costumes are by Angharad Matthews whose previous collaborators have included NoFit State Circus.



'In Place One' is a solo choreographed and performed by Tara Brandel, made in response to the architecture of each space. As someone with dyslexia, Tara experiences her neurodiversity through a heightened sense of spatial aware-

ness, and 'In Place One' will draw upon and embody this distinct experience. Inspired by images by De Chirico, 'In Place One' will also reflect on isolation and our place in the world.

'In Place Two' is an intimate duet for Croí Glan Co-Artistic Director and disabled dancer, Linda Fearon, and male dancer Leighton Morrison, exploring longing and connection within the limitations of place. This duet will offer a complementary insight and experience to 'In Place One', reflecting on our relationship with others and revealing how our environment shapes our trust, attachments and closeness through touch, balance and exquisite movement.

Funded by an Arts Council of Ireland Arts Grant Award and Cork County Council and created with support from IMMA, Uillinn, West Cork Arts Centre and The MAC, Belfast.

For further information please see www.croiglan.com.

Celebrate Culture Night 2021

Still reeling from one of the strangest periods in living memory, we can see that culture is slowly moving offline again: away from the screen and into the streets, parks, and other outside (and sometimes inside) locations. Yet, everything feels – and is – a little more cautious than before. Many people are hesitant about emerging from their shells. But when they do, as recent outdoor Covid-restricted gigs and concerts have shown, these days, whenever an audience is allowed, it is felt to be a special (and even emotional) occasion for those who can be there. Hopefully, this is a harbinger of vibrant and better times to come.

More performers and art-

ists will be venturing out into the public eye on Culture Night, which this year takes place on September 17. A sprinkling of events is due to take place all over the country, also in West Cork of course. Artist Aidan O'Regan will be painting in his shop window in Astna Street in Clonakilty and people can come in and talk to him about his work. The Clonakilty Guitar Festival (clonguitarfest.com) will feature Dani Larkin in its beer garden (although there are only a few tickets available and by the time you read this, they may already have sold out). DeBarra's Spoken Word will stage a spoken word and (Irish) music event in a public space with limited access (www.facebook.com/DeBarrasSpokenWord).



com/DeBarrasSpokenWord you can find out where, when, who and how). Creative Bandon is presenting a Scéal Trail with Spoken word and storytelling featuring modern day storyteller, David Jackson. In fact, there will be events all across Ireland (culturenight.ie) and in County Cork (see culturenightcorkcounty.ie where you can search by location).

It may not be what it used to be in terms of numbers: Performances will occur in parklets. No thronging masses. But perhaps we can expect a higher quality and intensity.

Rembrandt

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Crawford Art Gallery

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Poetry Ireland announces Poet Laureate for Bandon

In August Poetry Ireland announced the names of the Poet Laureates selected as part of the Poetry Town initiative, which will see more than a hundred poetry-related activities take place in 20 towns across Ireland between September 10 and 18, 2021.

Bandon is among the Poetry Towns, and Poetry Ireland, in conjunction with Cork County Council Arts Office, has appointed Matthew Geden as the Poet Laureate for the town.

Matthew (pictured above) is a poet who also teaches creative writing at UCC, and has lived in Kinsale since 1990. He has strong ties to Bandon – as a bookshop owner in the town for years; through his work with many writers' groups in Bandon; and through delivering poetry and prose workshops with Bandon Library. He has also brought many prestigious literary figures to the town for the arts festival 'Engage'.

All Poet Laureates announced are either from the respective local area or have strong connections with it, and have been commissioned to write a poem honouring and reflecting their



Poetry Town and its people.

As part of the weeklong Poetry Town celebrations this month, each Laureate will reveal and present their poem to the people of their Poetry Town at a series of flagship online events, one of which will be hosted in each town. Each event will also feature contributions from other local poets, artists and musicians.

Further activities will include a series of poetry events involving local poets; poetry workshops; public poetry displays, including 'Poetry Underfoot'; and a range of physical activities called 'Poems that Move You', which will vary from town to town. Local businesses, including cafés and chemists, will also be participating in the

activities to celebrate their towns by distributing 'pocket poems' to customers. The full programme of activities for each town is available on the Poetry Town website.

Matthew Geden says he is delighted and honoured to be Poet Laureate in Bandon. "The town has a rich and fascinating history, which will be developed in some of the cultural events due to take place.

"I hope that the programme will demonstrate a diversity and engagement with poetry from different aspects of the community and that my own poem will reflect both on the past and the future of the town. In these difficult times, words build bridges of hope for us all." poetrytown.ie.

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ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.
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www.katearbon.com

September Sun Signs

The first half of the month brings some very positive planet placements that will help us create strong bonds and attend to important details in preparation for further challenges in the coming weeks.

This is Virgo season and the trend is to get organised and attend to the details of life. Preparing for the coming winter season and doing those remaining jobs before the longer evenings set in, is a big part of this month's focus. But the first few days of September may seem unusually perplexing or uncertain. Mars, the planet of assertion and action, is in a direct and difficult opposition to Neptune the planet of illusion, imagination and undefined boundaries. We feel like we have lost our motivation or perhaps we just don't know which direction to take. There is so much conflicting information around. Misunderstandings or unclear intentions have caused confusion. False impressions may have rallied us into supporting a

lost cause or taking up a hero role on an empty promise. Revelations can bring a sense of defeat or disillusionment. There is a need to reconsider and review but it may be into mid October or beyond, before things are out in the open once more.

The current tense Mars Neptune dynamic passes during the first week and a very positive trend develops. Mercury, planet of communications gets a boost in Libra the sign of harmony and balance. There is a fortunate, supportive trine aspect between the two most beneficial planets, Jupiter in Aquarius and Venus in Libra from around the September 5-7. This is a very prosperous pair and together they promote abundance and goodwill. The focus is definitely on social connections and relationships, of all kinds. A harmonious mood is helping to bridge gaps and mend rifts. Now is the time to work out your differences and draw people together. The New Moon

in Virgo on the 7th has a strong positive connection to Uranus the planet of change and inspiration. New unions are formed this week. There's potential for unlikely bonds or a surprising turn of events. It's the perfect time to break patterns and habits, to start a constructive new phase or take a chance on a "wild card" scenario.

Mid month brings an opposition of the Sun in Virgo to Neptune in Pisces. This time, unlike earlier in the month with Mars, the Neptunian clouds are penetrated by the Sun's light, providing some kind of enlightening disclosure. The Virgo ability to discern and evaluate allows for clarity and heightened perception. This dynamic may also signify the downfall of 'false idols' or a fall from that pedestal that someone has been placed on. Seeing people or a situation in its true light is very possible now.

September delivers us into the last quarter of the year marked by the Equinox on August 22. This

significant point in the Solar cycle brings a shift and sharpens our focus, as we navigate an unsettled phase over the following weeks. The Full Moon on September 21 brings a culmination to the events around the New Moon. The new direction or shift in focus that took place earlier in the month is now becoming the trend, at least for a while. During the Mercury retrograde phase in Libra, that begins on September 27 and lasts until October 18, there will most likely be a need to revisit some of the details and perhaps renegotiate the terms and conditions of any recent development, relationship or alliance.

On the day of the Equinox, Mercury forms a tense square aspect to Pluto and this sets a theme for the coming months. Due to the messenger planet going retrograde, this Pluto connection is exact three times in total over the next few weeks and into November. Pluto works to bring uncomfortable and hidden truth

out into the light so we can understand where the power is held and how it manifests its control. On a global level this may create a power struggle between controlling forces. With the current Libra focus on justice, fairness and equality, we can expect to see human rights, discrimination and legality become a theme for the remainder of the year. This planetary dynamic can also initiate a valuable, transformative, personal journey. Relationships with our peer groups and social equals, as well as romantic partnerships will become the area of concern. Any insight into our own unconscious patterns can free up trapped energy, which can then be used for greater wisdom, inner harmony and personal empowerment.

September has a New Moon at 15° Virgo on September 7 at 1.51am and a Full Moon at 29° Pisces on September 21 at 12.54am.



Aries: Make sure you're not demanding too much of yourself this New Moon. You're probably running around like crazy sorting out everyone else's problems. It seems like the phone doesn't stop ringing and the pressure or demand from others is at peak. Pace

yourself so you don't run out of steam just trying to keep up with it all. This month take extra care to be sure of your own motives. Don't over-commit to projects and choose any new path well before you embark or it will be a flash in the pan. Working relationships depend on honesty and integrity.



Taurus: Anything you do for enjoyment will seem extra good now but try not to throw all caution to the wind. Be sure you understand the difference between joyous adventure and risky behaviour. You might be tempted to completely disregard your inhibitions or at

least just overindulge. This New Moon is good time to simply have some fun. To use this creative energy to its best advantage though, consider what is truly meaningful to you in the longer term. There is plenty of opportunity for new plans and projects so start looking towards a brighter horizon.



Gemini: This New Moon marks a day or so of raised tensions at home as moods run high and personal space seems harder to come by. However, used creatively, this can lead to new ways of sharing and arranging your home life so it doesn't overlap that of others. It's a good

time to start new home-related projects as a way to utilise the extra energy in a constructive manner. If you have been considering home improvements or expansion then it could become a bigger project than you originally planned. Be sure that the dreams you conjure up now are what you really want because they may just happen to come true.



Cancer: New ideas and propositions come your way and either your opinion or your decision required. Your challenge will be to find the right direction out of the uncertainty that always surrounds a New Moon. Focus on the smaller choices and make them wisely, rather

than getting carried away with the grand scheme of things. This is a great time for getting involved with local projects as the general air of goodwill makes for strong personal connections and breaks through any barriers of unfamiliarity. Start formulating any writing or communications that need your attention so you can deliver in good time.



Leo: For a day or so you may be under pressure to take on new projects or commitments that require investing funds into them. This is a good time to make an assessment of how and where you'll invest your time, energy and money. Wise decisions made now can bring good

returns in the next couple of weeks, but over optimistic spending could drain you in the same time frame. Stand back and take a second look before jumping in with both feet. Get clear, then go ahead but you won't have the option of indecision or putting it all off until later.



Virgo: All eyes turn to see what you're going to do next during this New Moon. It may be completely different to what you did last month and you'll need to stand up and display your self-confidence in a way that wasn't called on before. In any high pressure situation

have your wits about you as you have a particularly high profile now. The trick is to handle it with grace and not let it go to your head. This will soon pass and you'll want to look back knowing that you made the most of any opportunities that dropped into your lap.



Libra: Flare-ups from your unconscious can be expected this New Moon as both difficulties and profound revelations are brought to the surface. Deeply personal issues that are usually kept a mystery to yourself as well as others might emerge. Hard as it might be, don't

just say the first thing that comes to mind, or you'll have to answer to something regrettable later. You detect things happening behind the scenes and you want to act on this. Hold off until things come out into the open and you can make conscious choices. It's better to know what you are agreeing to before you promise anything.



Scorpio: This New Moon is the right time to renew the goodwill and enjoyment that initiated your personal connections. An extra enthusiasm is available for you to really enjoy getting together with your friends or preferred social group. Feelings can run high and words

spoken now might be the result of things having been taken out of context. It can be worth taking the risk of further confusion to get at what you are really feeling and share it with those that matter the most. An approach of disarming honesty can make you welcome in unexpected places and bring you valuable allies.



Sagittarius: New developments in career matters may have you extra busy for a couple of days and the pressure to perform can be intense. What people are saying to you and about you is a reflection of your personal and professional status and you will want to make sure

that you are being represented honestly. It is as important to listen at this time as to act. There is certainly plenty of opportunity to aim high and getting noticed might get you a step further up the ladder. Thinking big is the flavour of this New Moon.



Capricorn: It's a great time for planning, thinking up new schemes, or rearranging the way you look at things. Patterns you establish now don't need detailed follow-up until later, so you can stick to vague outlines until you've got it all properly thought out. Avoid hasty

commitments however, as you don't want to be held to something unworkable later. Starting new studies or expanding your knowledge on a subject is time well spent if only you can pace yourself for the long haul. The temptation is to go too fast too soon and get weighed down with too much new information.



Aquarius: You may find yourself turning over a new leaf this New Moon. If you are busy throwing out the old and bringing in the new you should take a second look before fully abandoning something you might need or find useful later. Put the emphasis on really get-

ting down to the core of the issue and giving it a complete re-think. You could lose patience especially if you're waiting for someone else to fall in with your way of seeing things. It's worth maintaining the effort though as things start to look much brighter for you later this month.



Pisces: The few days over this New Moon is the perfect time for finding a new partner or turning over a new leaf in a long term relationship. You'll certainly find a flood of emotional opportunities coming your way. How you utilise them could largely shape the

direction of a significant partnership. The message underneath is sincere and needs to be taken seriously. Breakthroughs can occur now as you bring things out into the open. You'll be glad you achieved a new level of closeness, even though you may not be able to keep this focus or intensity going all month.

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people Arts & Entertainment

West Cork electrified with news of return of Clonakilty International Guitar Festival

The Clonakilty International Guitar Festival returns this September 10-19 for its 17th iteration, as organisers attempt to once again electrify the streets and crash the internet of the coastal town with the sweet sound of those six strings.

“We can’t cram like sardines into every nook and cranny of Clonakilty as in previous festivals, so we’ve expanded the length of the event by three days. This way we can continue to honour the depth and diversity of approaches to guitar playing that has been the bedrock of CIGF since our first event back in 2005,” says festival co-organiser Ray Blackwell

For 10 days, the festival promises to do what they always do: celebrate the virtuosos, the three-chord heroes, the freak-out noiseniks and the

bedroom noodlers. Joined by some of Ireland’s most exciting and innovative independent musicians, the festival will stage outdoor performances, virtual premieres and hybrid gigs (livestreamed with audience).

The programme welcomes John Spillane, John Francis Flynn, Windings, Dani Larkin, Clare Sands, Pretty Happy, Kyle Macaulay and Nicole Ní Dhubhshláine, Red Sun Alert and many, many more; and virtual premieres of work from Eve Clague, Joshua Burnside and Laura Quirke, Lonely and the Moose, Myles O’Reilly.

Explore the full programme at www.clonguitarfest.com

A new addition this year is the Guitartown Cinema – a roving outdoor cinema that allows audiences to experience the online festival in a way that recreates the communal

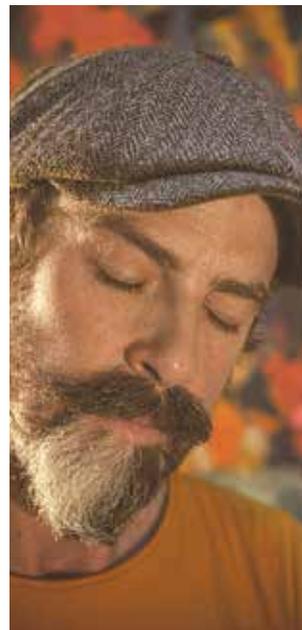
atmosphere of pre-pandemic gatherings.

The festival also continue their longstanding association with Culture Night on Friday, September 17, with some special events “but let’s be serious...every night is culture night here at Guitartown!”

Tickets to the in-person performances will be limited and are on sale now. Go to www.clonguitarfest.com

All of the festival’s events have been prepared in compliance with current health and safety measures.

CIGF is a volunteer-led community group of passionate music fans and can only continue this year thanks to the support of the Arts Council, Cork County Council and committed local sponsors.



Myles O’Reilly



Clare Sands

Clon Film Club returns for autumn with a soulful programme

After a longer than usual hiatus, Clonakilty Film Club returns to the Park Cinema this month with a superb selection from the best that world cinema has to offer. Over the autumn season the club will show six films on fortnightly Tuesdays, plus a very special Saturday feature film that ties in with the musical vibe encasing Clonakilty during its International Guitar Festival weekend.

Due to Covid-related delays, access>CINEMA provided the film club committee with a glut of top class films from which to pick just six – an onerous task. With more films being released this month, the committee elected to select just three initially and go back to the drawing board for the final three films of the season.

Going to print, Public Health guidelines on numbers were yet to be announced but, even with social distancing, Screen 2 in Clonakilty Park Cinema can still safely hold 35 viewers. The larger Screen 1 is available to the Club on its opening night to accommodate a larger crowd. The club will operate on a first-come, first-in basis. For these reasons it is suspending



membership for the 2021/2022 season and all films are €10 at the door with everybody welcome. The selection and dates are:

Sat Sept 18, Summer of Soul (...or, when the revolution could not be televised): A feature documentary about the



legendary 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival which celebrated African American music and culture, and promoted Black pride and unity. Deftly interweaving incredible live footage with a series of revealing interviews, Summer of Soul captures the spirit and context of a watershed

moment while tying it firmly to the present.

Tues Sept 21, Another Round: In a social experiment four high school teachers consume alcohol on a daily basis to see how it affects their social and professional lives. Several years ago the Film Club screened ‘The Hunt’ with the same pairing of lead actor Mads Mikkelsen and director Thomas Vinterberg, so this second outing for the duo is expected to again be very well received by the audience.

Tues Oct 5, Limbo: A wry and poignant observation of the refugee experience, set on a fictional remote Scottish island where a group of new arrivals await the results of their asylum claims. It centers on Omar (Amir El-Masry), a young Syri-

an musician who is burdened by his grandfather’s oud, the king of Arabic music instruments, which he has carried all the way from his homeland.

Tues Oct 19, The Father: Anthony (Anthony Hopkins) refuses all assistance from his daughter as he ages. As he tries to make sense of his changing circumstances, he begins to doubt his loved ones, his own mind and even the fabric of his reality. Led by stellar performances and artfully helmed by writer-director Florian Zeller, The Father presents a devastatingly empathetic portrayal of dementia.

Films start at 8.30pm. Doors open from 8.20pm. Follow Clonakilty Film Club on Facebook for updates.



NEW SEASON STARTS TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 21!
in Clonakilty Park Cinema



8.30pm, €10 per film at the door, all welcome.

More films will follow in our Autumn programme. Follow us on for updates.



Tuesday September 21
ANOTHER ROUND
Dir: Thomas Vinterberg
Denmark



Tuesday October 5
LIMBO
Dir: G Ben Sharrock
UK



Tuesday October 19
THE FATHER
Dir: Florian Zeller
UK

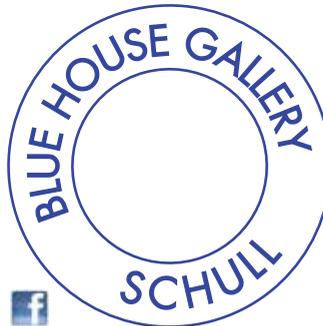


Saturday, September 18
SUMMER OF SOUL
(...OR, WHEN THE REVOLUTION COULD NOT BE TELEVISED)
Dir: Questlove

SPECIAL FEATURE!

people Arts & Entertainment

September at Blue House Gallery



Set in the midst of Schull Village on Main Street. The Blue House Gallery showing local, national & international art is open Everyday between 11am and 5 pm from Easter to October

www.bluehousegallerieschull.com

As September rounds the corner of an unusual year in the life of many Blue House Gallery presents a host of suitably reminiscent shows as well as exciting new work to entice and engage before the season takes a gear change. From the 3rd September – Sunday 15th September there are three shows to enjoy in different mediums and styles. Downstairs Johanna Connor presents ‘Indelible’. Largely produced with the use of polars, paintings and drawings taken and produced from her time spent in New York after the completion of her Masters Degree in Art & Process from CIT Crawford College of Art & Design in 2018/19. Johanna brings together her collected imagery of the overlooked and disused; worn facades and spaces. Their original gloss and relevance still evident and yet on the wane, transformed as current communities stamp their own identities upon them, around and about them, almost like weeds growing over dereliction to create new landscapes and commentary over the old and redundant. Through it all, as the title ‘Indelible’ suggests, retaining a permanence that seems rooted into a continuing history.

Upstairs, there is no doubt that ‘Moving’ belongs in the title of David Seeger’s latest exhibition of works in clay,



‘Moving On’. Taken from the earth and elevated to a class of being far removed from the static and mundane his use of glazes turn surfaces into paintings and mirrors; tricking our senses and perceptions through playful mastery of surface painting of geometrical patterns and designs. Their flow and movement helped in no small part by the sheer brilliance of technical skill employed to create forms that vibrate with fun and playful invitation while still retaining their origins of purpose. Inspired by his surroundings in West Cork as well as a keen interest in diverse philosophies it is this balance between fun and intelligent questioning that makes his work so unique and appreciated, as well as objects of singular beauty.

Upstairs, contained within the concise and considered world of Diarmuid Breen’s imagination. His New Works offering slightly surreal landscapes that

are not entirely unfamiliar and yet have the feel of something dreamlike. Populated by those who seem to be a part of situations that carry the weight of routine and expectation – not necessarily of their own making perhaps. Spaces within the paintings are dominated by buildings that are placed with the weight and aspect of institutions; whether of faith or industry with neither being obvious. Through it all one is treated to Breen’s confident skill of draftsmanship, his gently considered line and colouring; like a creator who watches over his charges with benign care.

Rounding out September, 17th – 29th and taking over the whole gallery there are two very special anniversary shows to enjoy. The Graphic Studio Dublin celebrates 60 years in ‘Diamond Point’. Pioneers in the art of printmaking in Ireland, the GSD provided for the first time the necessary training and facilities for both active and ap-

prentice printmakers. That early commitment has continued to this day with studio spaces and courses designed to educate and promote the processes of etching, stone lithography, wood and Lino cutting as well as contemporary techniques including photo intaglio and screen printing. Similarly providing a vital presence for artists, by artists, is the Backwater Artists Studio in Cork City. Celebrating 30 years of nurturing and encouraging artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. From painting to printing to photography to sculpture, drawing and ceramics and more! Over 400 artists have passed through their doors and continue to expand and enrich their deserved reputation. Both are leading examples of artists co-operatives that have succeeded in remaining relevant in a changing society.

Stop by, have a look! Next stop...the ‘C’ word...



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MOVIES THIS MONTH

Arts Council boosts Agility Award funding by €2.5 million to meet demand from artists

The Arts Council has issued a special call to artists, practitioners and arts workers who have never before received a grant to apply for its Agility Award, and boosted the budget for the scheme by a further €2.5 million to ensure more people can benefit.

The government agency for funding and developing the arts said the original budget for the Agility Award, introduced as a rapid response to the pandemic, was €5.6 million. However, with thousands of artists and arts workers facing extraordinary challenges making a living due to the public health restrictions, almost all of this budget was awarded in the first two rounds. To date in 2021, a total of €5.4m has been awarded to 1153 artists through the Agility Award.

The additional funding means that hundreds of artists

will receive the grant of up to €5,000 in the weeks ahead.

“It has been really inspiring to see the creativity and ambition behind the applications received for the Agility Award,” said Arts Council Maureen Kennelly. “We are delighted to have the opportunity to fund even more applications than originally anticipated, and to be able to broaden our relationship with artists by encouraging applications from any artist or arts worker who may not have been funded previously by the Arts Council.”

The deadline for the award is 15.30pm on Thursday 9 September 2021. The Arts Council said it is in particular encouraging applications from people who have never before been funded by the Arts Council, and noted that new applicants must first register at onlineservices.artscouncil.ie

Make your own poetry video (for free)

By Moze Jacobs

Poet (and former chemical engineer) Colm Scully from Cork City is facilitating a free poetry film workshop (on Zoom) for DeBarra’s Spoken Word on September 8 at 8.30pm (followed by an open mic) where he will show hands-on how to create your own poetry video, which can then be presented at a second session on October 6.

Winner of the Cúirt New Writing Poetry Prize in 2014, Scully has just won an unusual award for one of his poetry videos, Yesterday’s Wardrobe, which was proclaimed ‘Best Micro Animation’ at the MicroMania Film Fest 2021 in New York. While not exactly cuddly or cute, there is a sweetness to it. A lovable ultra-short film that looks simple, but is basically his entire life crammed into two minutes and presented in clear lines and basic patterns. It’s also a tribute to his wife. Colm pictures himself as a stick figure with “blond curly hair” during the early part, when he goes dancing on Saturday night with the boys at the night-



Poet Colm Scully

club, wearing a navy blazer with red silk lining. Dressed thus, he sees the girl who will become his wife. “Put my bottle down/ and asked you out.” Then life takes its course (animated Colm climbs and descends a staircase). “The blazer’s gone” (and the hair) but “you’re still here” (as well as the wardrobe). The pair dance. Colm’s voice is matter-of-factly and his language is straightforward, yet the overall effect is moving. What is the most important to him is implied rather than spelled out. “My mother told me/Never throw

away your luck.”

That’s poetry (film) at its best. Applying the art of suggestion. “The wonderful thing about making a poetry clip,” says the maker in a recent YouTube interview about his work, “is that the sky is the limit. You can do anything.” Sometimes literally so. One of the strongest clips on his Vimeo page is ‘The Cloud Capped Citadels’. It shows footage of tilted clouds, filmed on their phones by his kids through an airplane window that accompanies a text about meeting an older stranger on a plane. “Our far-flung destinies are now entwined.” It describes a fictional encounter that calls up different associations for everyone. “Where were you when the bombs were dropped?” The answer to that question is missing. The last line takes us back to the ‘here and now’ of flying. “The cloud capped citadels. The gorgeous palaces.”

Although often Colm spends many hours on his own films, he is offering a much simpler approach to the workshop participants. “Nobody has to prepare. All you need is a smartphone or a computer. I will

give examples, explain how it is done, what (free) tools you need. You can write a brand-new text or use an existing piece of writing. And then it comes down to choosing the visuals. I will provide four pieces of video and four pieces of audio to play around with but you may also want to start from scratch. Hopefully, I will inspire people to realise it’s pretty easy although you have to put a bit of work in.” Colm Scully is kindly offering to give technical and artistic advice in the period between both workshops.

If you (or someone else you know, of any age) wants to learn how to be creative with sound and visuals on a simple smartphone, why not join the workshop on September 8 to see what it’s all about. The zoom link will appear on the event on the DeBarrasSpokenWord facebook page on the day. Or send us an email at debarrasspokenword@gmail.com and you’ll get sent a zoom link. More information about the upcoming workshop(s) can be found on the DeBarrasSpokenWord YouTube channel.

Lumière and La Machine: Light, motion and the sublime spectacle



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.

A sublime spectacle is typically a combination of awe-inspiring complexity and vertiginous scale. Under this definition we find the man-made ‘wonders of the world’: pyramids, cathedrals, mosques, temples and ancient cities. In this article I reflect upon two experiences of the sublime: the giant mechanical animals of La Machine in Nantes and the stained glass and light displays of Chartres cathedral, both of which I was able to see in France this August.

Ahem: “giant mechanical animals?” Ah, yes, let me explain! In the city of Nantes is to be found a menagerie of mechanical birds and beasts like no other. Drawn, sculpted, engineered, driven, operated and enacted, these birds and beasts are a thrilling double-take in the urban landscape. As if drawn from a Da Vinci notebook, they are the creations of François Delarozier and La Machine, a company whose roots in street

theatre have grown into the most radical projects of urban renewal in the modern world.

La Machine’s project in Nantes, Les Machines de L’île – comprising gallery, workshop, carousels and square – is located in the decommissioned shipyards of the Île de Nantes. Every day Le Grand Elephant, the principal showpiece of the site, carries up to fifty passengers along its water-spraying, elephant-roaring circuit. Three times the size of a real elephant, its inner workings are of lubricated steel, its outer cladding hand-carved tulip poplar and basswood, its ears natural leather. The legs, trunk, tail, eyes and jaws all move in the most wonderfully life-like way, whilst the inner robotics are also intentionally easy to see. My scepticism on first hearing about Le Grand Elephant of Nantes quickly turned to awe the moment I clapped eyes on the beast. It is quite simply astonishing, one of the most poetic feats of engineering, robotics, mobility and street theatre I have ever seen.

One of the core values of La Machine is urban renewal. Their projects typically combine town planning, historical research, natural science, engineering, drawing, sculpture and street theatre, all with the goal of enlivening and enchanting the city-scape. A principle aim of Les Machines de L’île was to revitalise Nantes’ shipyard precinct, whilst retaining a sense of its ship-building heritage. From viewing decks visitors may look down into the La Machine workshop to see, in place of ships, new mechanical creatures being built. In the viewing gallery visitors can see new creations, fresh from the workshop, being demonstrated. Nantes is the city of Jules Verne and in Les Machines de L’île one gets a taste of his “invented worlds”.

Three hours north east of

Nantes is the city of Chartres, home to the cathedral of Notre Dame de Chartres, famed for having the most intact program of 12th century stained glass in Europe, along with the most renowned blues and reds in the history of medieval glass. The sublime orchestration of the stained glass and the corresponding light shows on the exterior façade are a counterpoint to the ‘mechanical sublime’ theatre of La Machine.

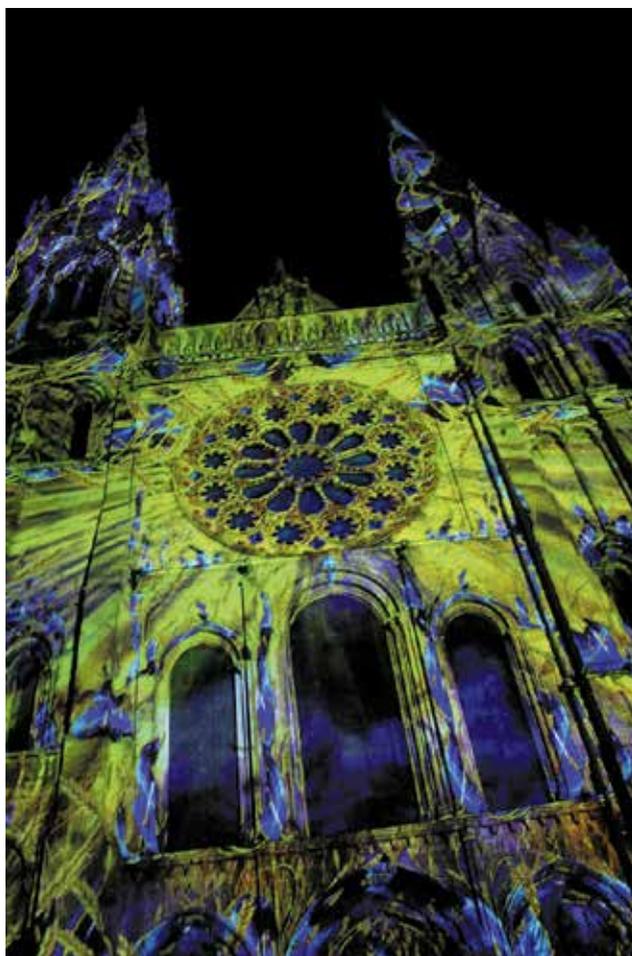
It is often said that through the Middle Ages stained glass was a story book for the illiterate, revealing the lives of the saints and the story of Christianity. But like all great art it has always been so much more than its narrative. The smoldering composition of glass segments, dominated by deep blues and reds, absorbs and transcends the small linear figures submerged in its collective melody. Figures appear and disappear, depending on the viewer’s focus. And herein lies its deeper spiritual dimension: the individual human story is revealed as being at once singular and submerged in the ‘body’ of the whole.

It must have been utterly astonishing in the 12th century, in a world where visual art was otherwise limited to the wealthy, and then only through painting and tapestry. It remains, today, a sublime experience – for Christian and non-Christian alike. For, whilst submersion in its narrative may amplify and focus its power, composition, I believe, is a universal law, one that touches all humanity, irrespective of background or creed.

Just as magical as the interior glass is the animated light display, which blooms nightly upon the cathedral façade through the summer months. Created by ‘Spectaculaires, Allumeurs d’Images’, the show is both an aesthetic delight and a montage of Chartres’ modern



Le Grand Elephant of Nantes



Chartres en lumières

history. The ephemerality of projected light and image whispering upon the solidity of ancient stone is deeply moving; the beauty of the light display could not exist without the beauty of the cathedral façade. The whispering of the one upon the other is the point of contact between two vastly different cultures; one fast, transient, post-Christian, the other slow, solid, and deeply religious. Together they are, of course, the story of one culture, albeit radically transformed.

Both the lumière displays in Chartres and the mechanised menageries of Nantes are creative interventions in the urban landscape, which invite a sense of play, awe and wonder. They are instances of sublime spectacles, which linger in the imagination long afterwards. Light and motion, motion and light, they speak of a culture at play, ever-looking to re-imagine the world, to see it with fresh eyes.

Post Script: To honour the source of its inspiration Les Machines de L’île supports Des Eléphant et des Hommes organisation, for the preservation of elephants in Africa and Asia.

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people Sport

West Cork adventurers undertake seven peaks in a week



Adam Collins and Alan Cremin

Beginning on September 11, West Cork men Adam Collins and Alan Cremin will attempt to summit the seven highest mountains in Ireland, over just seven days.

The men are undertaking this challenge to raise funds for two charities, Pieta House and West Cork Rapid Response. "These charities were chosen for the amazing work they do in their respective fields," they explain, "and we hope whatever money

we raise will help them continue to do so."

Slieve Donard (Down) will be the intrepid climbers first mountain on September 11, followed by Lugnaquilla (Wicklow), Galtymore (Limerick), Baurtregaum, Mount Brandon, Cnoc Na Péiste and Carrauntoohil (all in Kerry).

Anyone that wishes to donate can do so via GoFundMe, search for 'Seven Peaks In A Week'

Follow on social media for updates @sevenpeaksinaweek

First ever adventure race around the Beara Peninsula hailed a resounding success

Brand new adventure race, Quest 12 Beara, took place for the first time last weekend around the Beara Peninsula. Nearly 200 hardened adventurers ran, cycled and kayaked the course with the aim of completing it in the allotted time of 12 hours. Athletes travelled from all over Ireland and the world to take part.

Winners of the 12 hour, 150km event were: Shane Kenny, in a time of 8 hours 9 mins and 14 secs, and Ellen Vittings in 9 hours 7 mins and 41 secs. In the men's race second position went to Gary Lawlor (8 hours 11 mins 45 secs) and third position went to John Magner (8 hours 40 mins 4 secs). In the female race, second position went to Karen Shannon (10 hours 40 mins 23 secs) and third position to Nicole Butler (10 hours 46 mins 30 secs).

Race Director, Oliver Kirwan said, "We are absolutely thrilled with how the event has gone. The participants put in such a phenomenal effort – blood, sweat and tears. We got to showcase the area to hundreds of people who have



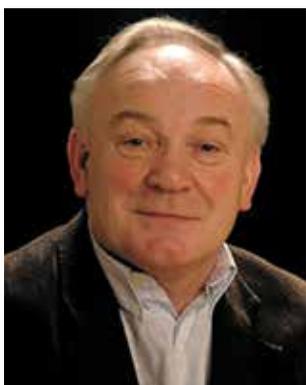
never experienced the rugged beauty of the Beara Peninsula before, and thousands of people followed their journey across social media for the weekend. I want to thank the local community around West Cork and the Beara Peninsula for their fantastic support. Feedback so far has been amazing and we look forward to growing the event in the years to come."

Quest 12 Beara hopes to return again in August 2022.



people Motoring

Tesla 3 doesn't disappoint



CAR REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

Since the second Lock-down ended in May, I have driven a few electric cars, but last week I got to spend a few days in the most high profile electric car in this part of the world, the Tesla.

Tesla have been operating in Ireland since 2017 and I drove their latest model the Tesla 3. Model 3 is Tesla's smaller, simpler, more affordable

car. Designed and built as the world's first mass-market electric vehicle, it's a critical step in Tesla's mission to accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy.

My test car came in a very attractive Ruby Red colour and it certainly attracted plenty of comments from neighbours and from males and females in the various shopping centres that my wife needed to visit.

It's certainly different from any car I have driven previously. There is no key to gain entry, you use a very light credit-card type Tesla card to open and lock the car. There is no stop-start button, you simply drive away once the access card is located near where the gear lever would be in a regular car.

The dash area has a minimalist look and all the controls are located in the massive 15-inch screen. That screen has everything you need to safely navigate your journey.

It's a very safe car and as you drive along you get a picture of the scenario to your left and right and of course in front.

Eight surround cameras allow for 360-degree vision. The cars or lorries on either side of you are portrayed as grey vehicles, while my red car stood out from the traffic.

As you approach traffic lights, the screen tells you if they are green or red.

As with all electric cars the Tesla is so quiet and it just seems to glide along the road. I drove the Long Range version where the estimated range is 580km.

The windscreen looked extra large and thanks to the bonnet being low, there is a great view of the road ahead. Ample room in the back seat for three well-built adults.

I only had the car for a few days and didn't need re-charge the battery, but I'm told that at the Tesla fast charging points you can get a 50 per cent top up in 20 minutes.

Of course you can also charge the car at home and at the Circle K charge points. And boy is there plenty of power as you can get from zero to 100km/h in 4.4 seconds. My



only worry was making sure I didn't lose the card to open and lock the car.

No spare wheel, but there is a huge 'well' in the boot that will accommodate a spare. So once again the advice is if you are buying new to haggle for a spare wheel.

Tesla are different than other car companies as you cannot drop into your local garage and order one. They have only two sales points in Ireland, in Sandyford, near the Beacon Clinic and in Boucher Road, Belfast.

There is also a Model S and a Model X SUV, while prices for the smaller Tesla 3 start at €48,990. The Long Range version I drove will cost you

€58,990. Road tax is €120. It's absolutely gorgeous.

If you are in Dublin drop into Tesla's Sandyford showrooms and take a test drive. There is

a very obliging young man named William Clark there and he will give you all the details on Tesla cars.



people Sport

Skibbereen Rowing Club: West Cork's elite athlete production facility



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.

Paul O'Donovan (alongside his brother Gary) was first introduced to rowing by his father Teddy as a raw seven-year-old in 2001. Teddy had extensive rowing and coaching experience with Skibbereen Rowing Club, and his son's would soon follow him on to the water in Skibbereen colours. Over the following twelve years Teddy would play a vital role in aiding Paul and Gary's rapid progression. He mentored them from their first international regatta on the Ilen in 2008 until Paul's breakthrough bronze medal in the Lightweight Single Sculls at the 2013 U23 World Championship in Linz. Over the following six years, the duo would go on to win silver medals in the lightweight double sculls in the 2016 Olympic Games, and again in the 2017 and 2018 European Championships. They would also capture gold medals in the 2016 European Championships and the 2018 World Championships. Paul would also win World Championship gold in the Lightweight Single Sculls event in 2016 and 2017. Almost as impressive

as the comprehensive list of accolades mentioned above is the overwhelmingly positive impact that they had on the sport of rowing. Both were catapulted into the media spotlight in 2016. In addition to their obvious sporting success, the brothers' natural humility, good humour and endearing self depreciation immediately piqued the interest of the nation, and led to high profile media appearances on the Graham Norton Show and the Late Late Show amongst many others. In doing so, they became the first Irish rowers to achieve mainstream notoriety and drew unprecedented interest to their chosen sport.

From 2019, Team Ireland took a decision that surprised Ireland's non-rowing fraternity when they opted not to pair the O'Donovan brothers together for that year's World Championships. It was a decision that typified both the ruthlessness and fairness and transparency of elite level sport. Paul was instead paired with fellow Skibbereen Rowing Clubman Fintan McCarthy and the subsequent success brought about by the incremental improvements achieved by the new pairing would serve to highlight the immense strength in depth available to both Team Ireland and Skibbereen Rowing Club. Together, O'Donovan and McCarthy would quickly justify Team Ireland's decision to proceed with the new pairing by securing gold in that year's World Championships. After the Covid 19 pandemic forced many elite rowing competitions to grind to a halt in 2020, the pair would resume their winning ways in 2021. They captured



gold medals in that year's European Championships and the Olympic Games. They also set a highly impressive World's Best Time of 6:05.33 in the 2021 Olympic Semi Final. McCarthy would also capture a bronze medal in the Lightweight Single Sculls event at the 2020 European Championship in Poznan.

Despite his demonstrable achievements at rowing's elite level, Paul O'Donovan would be the first to admit that his success has been largely assisted and underpinned by Skibbereen Rowing Club. Since their foundation (allegedly on a whim) in 1970, the West Cork club have won a whopping 181 national titles. Long-time Skibbereen Rowing Club member, Dominic Casey won a highly impressive eight national titles as a competitor in the 1980s. However, it can be strongly argued that his contribution to the club and indeed Irish rowing as a whole has been massively heightened since he transitioned into coaching. He has worked closely with Paul and Gary O'Donovan since the former's aforementioned U23 World Championship bronze medal win 2013, and has been operating as Ireland's Lightweight rowing coach since 2015. Casey was inducted into the West Cork Sports Awards Hall of Fame in 2017, and was subsequently crowned World Rowing Coach Of The Year the following year. It would

appear that Skibbereen Rowing Club have certainly reaped the benefits of having a coach of Dominic Casey's calibre in their midst. The disproportionately high concentration of elite level rowers in an area with a relatively sparse population is a testament to the fact that he has been just as impactful at local level as he has been on the international scene. Indeed one of the elite level competitors in question is Dominic's daughter and Irish Olympian, Aoife Casey. The following facts would appear to underline the importance of the club's impact on Irish Rowing's current golden generation. In the 2019 World Championships, 10 members of Ireland's 16-person

Remarkably, of the 12 World Championship gold medals that Ireland has won in our history, five have been collected by competitors from Skibbereen Rowing Club.

team hailed from Skibbereen. Remarkably, of the 12 World Championship gold medals that Ireland has won in our history, five have been collected by competitors from Skibbereen Rowing Club. At this Summer's Olympic Games, four of Team

Ireland's fourteen rowers hailed from Skibbereen. Given the club's current status as West Cork's premiere elite athlete production facility, it can come as no surprise that International athletes of the calibre of Aoife Casey, Fintan McCarthy, Emily Hegarty, Gary and Paul O'Donovan have emerged from the club. Some of the uninitiated might say that Paul O'Donovan or the O'Donovan Brothers put Skibbereen Rowing Club on the map, however the truth would appear to be that Skibbereen Rowing Club and it's hard working and committed members have had a transformative effect on Irish rowing.

Ted's Opel Run goes ahead



On a hazy Saturday morning late August the cars started to congregate at the Mills Inn Ballyvourney for the fourteenth Ted's Opel Vauxhall Run. The Kevin O'Leary Cup for Best Opel was won by Raymond O'Connor from Churchtown, for his 1983 Opel Kadett D. The Cartell.ie Cup for Best Vauxhall was won by Patrick Sheehan, Middleton. The Rentokil Cup for Best Modified was won by John Twomey Ballinhassig for his 1979 Vauxhall Chevette. The Perpetual Shield was won by David O'Hanlon from Traleew with his 1973 Opel Ascona A.

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GARDENING

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September in the garden

While generally a cooler month than August, with noticeably shorter days, September is a busy time of harvesting, preparation and planting.

Hyacinths and Narcissi for Christmas

Pot up Hyacinths for Christmas at the earliest possible opportunity. It is essential to get Hyacinths planted up now in time for Christmas. Use Bulb fibre in pots, bowls or containers without drainage. Bulb fibre contains grit and charcoal, which assists in the drainage, as well as keeping the compost sweet.

The 'Paperwhite' Narcissi can be brought into flower in as little as seven to nine weeks from the time of planting. Grow outdoors in a cool position, bringing indoors to a cool, bright room, as they come near flowering. Flowers will last longer and the stems will remain sturdier in cool conditions.

Pot up some Freesias in a cool, bright greenhouse. Coming in single and double-flowered varieties, Freesias are a delightful addition to the greenhouse, conservatory or home. If going for named varieties, you may have to source in more specialised outlets. Don't delay in tracking down some of the choicer varieties, as they may be

scarcer than some of the more normal run-of-the-mill varieties.

Start Planting Bedding Plants for Spring Colour

The first of the Spring/early-flowering bedding plants may be planted now.

Remove all weeds meticulously prior to planting into well-prepared soil. Dig in a slow release, organically based fertiliser and some well-rotten manure or Gee-up.

Plant out Sweet William, Wall-flowers, Polyanthus and Forget-me-nots, 20-25cm apart and protecting against slug damage. These bedding plants can continue to be planted right into October but do get some early planting done and take advantage of the warmer soil conditions. Early planting will give you the opportunity to have well-developed, established plants going into the winter.

Primulas

Harlow Carr hybrids are semi-evergreen perennial Primulas producing rosettes of pale green leaves. The flowering stems reach 60cm with whorls of flowers creating a candelabra effect. Colours include lively shades of pink, peach, orange, yellow and purple. Grow in partial shade in deep, humus-rich, moist, neutral to acid loam soil

or peaty soil. They will tolerate full sun if you can maintain moisture at all times. Add generous amounts of organic material at planting time and check for aphids and leaf hoppers. Plant in expansive groups of 5, 7, 9, 11s in a free-flowing informal manner. They will look well in island beds, cottage gardens, stream beds and gardens.

Greenhouse

Continue protecting tomatoes against blight. Remove side shoots and water on a regular basis preferably in the morning. Feed at least once a week with a seaweed-based, organic, liquid fertiliser. If you are considering a new greenhouse or polytunnel, order in plenty of time, as there is a huge backlog on orders due to the popularity of gardening and growing your own. Choose a good, sheltered place for your greenhouse.

Orientate the greenhouse east-west to maximise winter and early spring light transmission. It is best to plan for both water and electricity prior to erecting your new greenhouse. Bring water to a convenient point and get a good, registered electrician to install waterproof, electric sockets.

Choose a strong, robust greenhouse that will endure the worst ravages of winds and storms and

locate to keep your greenhouse back from the shade of trees and falling or shedding branches. The falsest economy in choosing a greenhouse is to economise on the strength and durability of the greenhouse. Adequate ventilation is an important factor too in choice of greenhouse.

Roses

Start pruning of climbing Roses, as the flowers finish.

Lawns

This is the best month to sow a new lawn. Dig over the soil thoroughly and remove all traces of weeds, especially persistent perennial weeds. Level the soil with a rake to break down the soil. Tread the ground with your weight on your heels, keeping your feet close together. Rake over the soil and then tread it again, this time shuffling across it at right-angles to the first time. Check out any hollows and humps that should be taken out. Finally, rake the soil to a fine tilth. Sow seed according to the specification on the back of the packet. Mark out the area in square metres with string and canes to make it easier. Measuring the amount for each square metre into a small plastic cup once and using this as a guide will save a lot of time weighing out the seeds each time.

Fruit Garden

Identify and prepare ground for new fruit trees and bushes. Get the soil tested prior to planting and order new fruit trees and bushes for planting November onwards.

Prepare for fruit storage by cleaning wooden trays and boxes. Continue planting strawberries.

Complete pruning of plums and damsons after picking. Prune blackcurrants. Complete pruning of wall-trained peaches and nectarines. Remove dead wood on wall-trained cherries, shorten pinched-back shoots and complete tying in. Cut out or tie down strong vertical shoots.

Spring Bulbs

Continue to buy new bulbs for planting this autumn. Choose early, dwarf bulbs to flower from January onwards. Dwarf Iris, Snowdrops, Crocus, Dwarf Narcissi will provide early, reliable colour. Early Narcissi include 'January Gold', February Gold and 'Tete a Tete'. You can buy tulips now but planting is best done in the cooler months of November and December.

It is a good idea to secure your bulbs early as popular and unusual varieties sell out quickly.

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'Mixed technology' approach to decarbonisation required for Cork homes says Liquid Gas Ireland

Improving the energy efficiency of County Cork homes through retrofitting and installation heat pump systems could cost in excess of €4.7bn. That's according to a new report published recently by Liquid Gas Ireland (LGI) on 'The role of LPG and BioLPG in a 'Just Transition' for Co. Cork.'

The report sets how €4.3bn can be saved if the 85,232 homes in the county currently using high carbon fossil-based fuels such as oil, coal, and turf for home heating and as an energy source, switch to a lower carbon alternative such as LPG or BioLPG instead of retrofitting for installation of heat pump systems. The savings were based on an average cost of €56,000 for a full scale retrofit including heat pump installation and an industry estimate of €5,000 for switching to a gas boiler with standard system upgrades.

Commenting on the report, Chair of LGI Brian Derham said: "If the Government is serious about achieving Ireland's climate targets, it is critical that people living in both urban and rural communities are brought on the decarbonisation journey. Rural communities should be engaged by ensuring they are given the technology choices that meet their unique needs through secure, clean, and efficient lower-carbon fuels like LPG and

BioLPG. The Government's revised Climate Action Plan must therefore provide for the delivery of a 'mixed technology' approach to decarbonisation which works for rural Ireland, particularly for those living in or operating off-grid rural homes and businesses.

"At the core of the Climate Action Plan is a commitment to install 600,000 heat pumps and retrofit 500,000 homes for improved energy efficiency. However, we continue to express our concern that this 'one size fits all' approach' to decarbonisation is putting significant pressure on those living in rural communities. It simply does not consider the unique economic and infrastructural challenges these areas face in achieving a 'just transition', where over two-thirds of homes currently rely on oil boilers for heating and fuel. Many of these homes are classified as hard-to-treat houses meaning the cost of a retrofit would be 80 per cent more expensive. This prohibitive expense is proved by the continued low uptake of retrofitting grants outside urban centres."

The report, which was conducted using CSO census data names Macroom Urban, Youghal Urban, Kinsale Rural, Rathcooney and Ballincollig as the five electoral areas within Co. Cork most reliant

on high carbon fossil-based fuels for home heating and energy. Of the 15,129 dwellings in these areas, 52pc (7,952) use oil, coal and turf while by contrast only nine per cent (1,299) have transitioned to heat pump technology.

With no connection to the national gas grid and a proposed ban on gas boilers, households in these five rural areas alone will face a combined estimated cost of €445,312,000 to transition to heat pump technology, if this is the only lower carbon heating solution available to them.

Mr Derham added: "A 'mixed technology' approach to decarbonisation, which includes lower-carbon fuels such as LPG and BioLPG could save about 1.9 million tonnes of CO2 emissions per year if 500,000 rural homes currently using oil-fired central heating switched to BioLPG by 2040. We are therefore calling on the Government to reverse its proposed ban on gas boilers so as not to restrict a seamless transition from lower carbon LPG to renewable BioLPG down the line. LPG boilers offer a long-term, cost-effective pathway to decarbonisation through the gradual introduction of BioLPG meaning that over time, carbon emissions will increasingly reduce.

"In addition, we want to see a

reversal on the proposed removal of the eligibility of LPG and BioLPG heating systems under the revised Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme (EEOS). Transitioning from oil to LPG and BioLPG allows off-grid homes and businesses to significantly reduce their carbon footprint without expensive retrofitting or major change to heating systems. It is our belief that rural communities should be given the option to adopt the carbon savings available through LPG and BioLPG, in addition to hybrid heating systems. This could be incentivised through the extension of Government energy efficiency schemes to encourage rural consumers to make a switch from oil boilers to an affordable LPG / BioLPG alternative."

Renewable Energy Ireland recently launched its '40by30 Renewable Heat Plan', which sets out a roadmap where 40 per cent of Ireland's heat can come from renewables by 2030 in line with Government CO2 targets. The plan outlines how there is no single solution to decarbonising heating systems and acknowledged the important role renewable gas like BioLPG should play, alongside other renewable heat technologies.

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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

Sofa satisfaction

carefully considered. You don't want to regret blowing your budget or, even worse, find it doesn't suit your space or your family. In my house we all have different taste in styles and materials, so maybe you need to negotiate that aspect as well, to make sure everybody is happy! Here are some of the tips I give my clients when guiding them to ultimate sofa satisfaction.

Before even looking at styles, spend some time thinking about all aspects of functionality. Which room of the house is it going in and who will be using it? Is it a showpiece in 'the good room' used mostly by adults or will it be knocked about in the family den with kids and pets rolling around on it? And of course, how many bums does it need to regularly accommodate? Would a sofa bed offer much-needed guest accommodation?

Next look at your available space. If you have an open plan home you won't be caught for space but a living room might be surprisingly tight. In an open

plan family space think about a sectional/modular couch in a contemporary style, it will enhance the room hugely.

For all rooms, use newspaper and masking tape to mark out the ideal size you would like to fill. Measure this so that when you visit a showroom you will be armed with sofa dimensions that will actually work in your home. So many people have bought a couch that, when delivered, they realise is too big or too small for the space.

Here's an insider design tip: If you want your room to appear more spacious, buy a couch with proper legs or feet. Block, bracket, bun, cabriole, claw, club and paw styles will all create some light underneath to fool the eye.

What kind of fabric do you like? The range of fabric is immense – luxurious velvet and linen, soft cotton, microfibre – and aqua clean fabrics are ideal for family's with younger children...or anyone prone to spilling! If you have allergies, then avoid natural blends and

fluffy textures and go for a synthetic blend of fabric.

Wipe clean leather is always the best option if you will be battling with pet hair.

Ultimately your budget will determine how expensive a fabric you can go for but there is still so much choice out there in fabrics and patterns for all budgets.

When you visit a furniture shop and sit down for a test drive, keep the following in mind: do I need support for my back and neck or do I want more of a 'slouch couch'? Would a reclining function be used regularly? Similarly, will I use the armrests or are they taking up room unnecessarily? Don't be embarrassed to lie down on it to see how that feels.

Remember that the couch in the showroom is often available to order in a range of other fabrics, colours and patterns so don't dismiss something comfortable just because you don't like the colour.

Which brings us on to colour. A bold colour or pattern can make a dramatic difference to a room, bringing it to life. On the other hand, when redesigning the room, down the road it will be more difficult to come up with a colour scheme around it. Something to think about.

If colour scares you, then choose a neutral colour in an interesting texture or pattern that you can add colourful throws and cushions to. Please note that light-coloured fabrics do show up stains more quickly, so if you fall in love with a such a sofa, choose aqua clean fabric or ensure your fabric is pre-treated to repel stains. Or think about removable covers that wash easily.

If you are looking for a middle-of-the-road solution that

will stand the test of time and tastes, choose a grey or a taupe; these are both very easy to work with when it comes to colour schemes.

I hope you feel more prepared going couch shopping after reading this article. Best of luck and enjoy the process!

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Alexa....Mow the lawn

Manufacturer of outdoor and gardening power tools, Husqvarna has revealed that Amazon's Alexa is giving robotic Automower users the ability to do more than sending voice commands to its Automower using Alexa. The latest features include asking Alexa to set the mower's schedule, explain how to change blades, show where it's currently mowing or already has mowed, and more.

Customers already engage with the mower through Alexa and through the Automower Connect app, but the new Alexa for Apps feature will create a

seamless experience between those touchpoints.

Alexa will now be able to give suggestions or offer to set up features such as Smart Weather Connection, which protects the lawn by automatically parking the mower during bad weather.

Electric powered with no direct emissions, GPS assisted navigation and built-in sensors help adjust the operation of Automower according to factors such as grass growth, weather conditions and tricky areas. Automower automatically detects objects in its cutting path to avoid collision damage,

the guide wire also helps it find the shortest way back to the charging station, saving energy and avoiding visible tracks.



The Husqvarna Automower is available from the Husqvarna dealer network with locations nationwide.

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