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Finn Ryan (8) from Waterford pictured on RTE's The Late Late Toy Show 2021 having broken The Cancer Bell because he rang it so hard for "all the children in the world". Picture Andres Poveda

Christmas comes to Dromkeen woods

West Cork families have the opportunity to experience a fun free family experience at Dromkeen woods in Innishannon this Christmas.

Corks Sports Partnership has teamed up with Wonderful to offer this interactive outdoor walk where families can meet Christmas characters in a beautiful woodland setting.

All you have to do is download the Wonderful Christmas app and seek festive symbols placed along the trail. When found, use the app camera to unlock a 3D animated experience of Santa or one of his helpers. Your task is to find all sym-

bols to complete elf training. When all are discovered, you get the opportunity to take a picture with an elf hat and certificate. When the animations are found, it is also possible to get pictures interacting with them – families can capture pictures with Mrs. Claus, some elves or even some dancing snowmen in the woods this Christmas!

This experience is also a Healthy Ireland initiative. The aim is to get families out and active this Christmas, along with providing some safe festive fun during these difficult times.

The trail is a follow-on from the hugely successful Wonderful Wild-

life and Halloween trails that have been running in Dromkeen woods since the summer months. To date over a thousand families have enjoyed the active and educational Wonderful experiences.

Wonderful is a digital education method coupled with a new approach to get children active while making learning fun.

Creator of the Wonderful app Lena Angland lives in Innishannon and is a mum to three young children.

For more information visit www.wonderful.ie/Christmas. Follow WorldofWonderful on Instagram and Facebook.

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Paddy brings Christmas cheer to Bantry patients

Paddy Cronin's attention is drawn to the wail of the ambulance, as it passes his window on the way in to Bantry General Hospital. Living just a stone's throw from his workplace, it can be difficult sometimes to switch off completely. The Bantry native has worked as a porter in the hospital for the past 31 years but has a much longer association with the institution: Collectively the Cronin family has put in over 100 years of service, with Paddy's father, mother, and aunt all employees of Bantry General Hospital (BGH) before him.

“My father met my mother at the hospital and I practically grew up on the grounds; as children, we played many a game there, out of sight of the nuns of course,” he says laughing.

A real people person, Paddy brings compassion and professionalism to the role, as well as a dry sense of humour.

From fielding calls on the switchboard to general maintenance to moving medical equipment to looking after the safe transfer of deceased patients from their place of death to the hospital mortuary; it's a varied and often challenging role that requires an ability to work quickly and calmly, particularly in emergencies.

“I don't do drama,” says Paddy matter-of-factly.

The challenges have included transporting the remains of his

father to the mortuary. “I was a week on the job when dad had a heart attack and passed away in November 1990,” says Paddy. “He was only six weeks away from retirement.”

Paddy's father worked at BGH for 41 years: Joining the old hospital in 1949 as the boiler maintenance man, he looked after the heating and plumbing.

Pre-Covid, Paddy, who also throws his hand to event planning, might have been busy organising the Christmas staff social at this time of year but rising Covid numbers means that Christmas will be a quieter affair in 2021. “We have really missed the carol singers the past couple of years,” says Paddy. “They were always one of the highlights.” While the festivities might be more subdued due to the pandemic, Christmas will be made as joyful as possible for the patients at Bantry Hospi-

tal. “It's a tough time of year, especially if you're in hospital away from family, so we put a lot of effort into decorating the hospital to make it as uplifting as possible for the patients,” he says.

Paddy has worked 25 Christmases out of his 31 years there. “We usually try to arrange that the porters with young children get to take Christmas Day off,” he explains.

Over the years people from all walks of life have passed through the hospital doors. “Sportspeople, movie stars, I'm not going to mention any names,” says Paddy smiling.

He does however share a funny story passed down from one of the retired porters who worked at the hospital in the 60s. “A very well-spoken English lady visiting the hospital asked this porter, who was known for having a ‘gra’



for Guinness, if it was raining outside.”

“Porter! Porter! Is it raining porter?” asked the lady.

“He replied ‘Well mam, if it was raining porter, I wouldn't be in here!’”

On a more serious note, Paddy was one of the founding members of the Friends of Bantry Hospital, set up in 2014 to raise funds for a CT scanner. Since then, the group has raised a massive amount of funds for many different projects and equipment for the hospital.

He shares some of the many positive changes he's seen made at the hospital over the past 31 years. “A modernised theatre, modernised medical assessment unit, new security system and personnel, ambulance service, improved psychiatric services, high dependency unit replacing our ICU, a new stroke and rehabilitation unit and we're a teaching hospital since 2000.”

It's a job that instills mixed emotions. There is joy – when a stroke patient makes a good recovery and goes home to their family; sadness when a patient passes away; and anticipation – when the organ retrieval team lands on the helipad.

“No two days are ever the same,” says Paddy.

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Clonakilty women honoured for bravery

Beth Darrer and Niamh McMahon from Clonakilty were among 25 people presented with National Bravery Awards by Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD in November.

The Bravery awards were set up in 1947 to recognise those who risked their lives to save others and are administered by Comhairle na Míre Gaile – the Deeds of Bravery Council – which is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle.

This year's recipients spanned Counties Cavan, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Kilkenny, Offaly, Sligo, Tipperary and Waterford, and the United States of America.

On May 27, 2020, Beth Darrer and Niamh McMahon were involved in the rescue of three young swimmers caught in a deadly rip current off Inchydoney beach in Clonakilty. At approximately 2.10pm on that day, four young males got into difficulty while playing in the water. Beth Darrer heard shouts for help, and she urged people along the beach to raise the alarm and grabbed a lifebuoy as she ran towards the water. Beth waded out to one of the young men who was being helped out of the water. He explained that his three friends were still in trouble further out to sea. At this time Niamh McMahon was paddling over to where Beth was, and they began swimming out to the other young men. There was a strong rip tide that Beth and Niamh had to swim around to get to other young men. Niamh had managed to get one of them up onto her surfboard and he was vomiting, and she had another clinging to her surf board. They managed to get to the fourth man and brought all of them back to the shore safely.

For their actions Beth and Niamh were each awarded a Bronze Medal and a Certificate of Bravery.

The Ceann Comhairle said: "The deeds we honour here are exceptional acts of bravery. They mark the moments where people saved the lives of others through their actions, risking their own lives doing so. What these awards celebrate is the noblest impulse within a human being, to risk their life in order to save another. We honour people who leaped into stormy seas, who braved swollen rivers, climbed down cliffs, assisted



Niamh McMahon, who received a Bronze Medal, with her partner Fergus Moynihan at the National Bravery Award at Farmleigh House.



Adrian O'Hara, from Lismore, Co. Waterford who received a Certificate of Bravery, for his actions in the rescue of a crew from a fishing vessel in high winds and heavy swell off the coast of Bantry Bay, with his mother Phil O'Hara.

at road traffic collisions and performed other remarkable deeds. Through their actions there are people alive today, who would undoubtedly have died.

"I am of course conscious that we mark these deeds at a time when the world is still under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. This virus has brought great pain to many families throughout the country and our hearts are heavy for the loss suffered over the last 20 months. But the exemplary service given by our doctors, nurses and frontline workers across the health service, the fire and rescue services and An Garda Síochána has brought great hope and also pride, to us all.

"Today we rightly acknowledge the brave acts of heroism that our honoured guests have performed. But it also a day

for remembering and acknowledging the very many acts of bravery carried out day in and day out throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However small or big those acts were and continue to be, collectively they contribute to keeping us all safe during an unprecedented time in our lives.

"The collective sense of good and indeed bravery displayed nationwide from many walks of life throughout the pandemic rightly allows us to be both proud of our communities and grateful for their existence. An Irish language expression whose literal meaning is 'It is in each other's shadow that people live' but which, more broadly, invokes a sense of community and interdependence is most apt for the times we live in – Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine."

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Covid Christmas (part two)



A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

How little we know. I had no idea that we'd still be in pandemic mode when I sat down to write my 2021 Christmas column. I was slowly starting to try and feel my way back to some semblance of pre-Covid normality, and it was working. Despite my reticence, going places and seeing people was starting to feel enjoyable again. We went on holiday to Sardinia. We went up to Dublin. We went to the cinema. I had a few old chats, sitting outside in a beer garden. We still masked. I got my booster. We still avoided large crowds. We sanitised our hands a dozen times a day, but we were trying to be optimistic. Things were going forward not backward.

I even thought to myself how nice it would be to write a column and not mention Covid. I might write my Christmas column about the environment, or about local developments, or even just about Christmas. Alas, 'twas not to be. As I write we're all worried. The figures keep going up. Two of my daughters have caught Covid and had to isolate (They are both fine, so far.) We cancelled Thanksgiving. I'm in denial about a big birthday in two weeks, and Christmas is looking hazy. I don't want to even think about

birthdays or Christmas. That's because I don't know what is going to happen. Restrictions? No restrictions, but it's not really safe to have a party? Pub packed, but closed at midnight because of Covid? I am worried and confused. Not the best way to get into the festive spirit.

I read my 2019 Christmas column to see what I was up to before the world changed. It was full of anticipation and Christmas cheer: "Nothing warms my heart more than to go into town on Christmas Eve. If you could bottle the Christmas spirit that one finds in the pubs, on the street, and in our homes – you'd make a fortune. Lucky for us, it's free for all to enjoy."



A year later we had been under Covid's yoke for eight months, and things were looking dodgy. In December 2020, I wrote: "There is little chance that my 2020 Christmas column will repeat anything I've written before. Christmas is about excess. Excess and pandemics do not mix. As I write, we are just coming out of a six-week lockdown. I should feel elated, and ready to jump into the mad swirl of the season, but the uncertainty of what exactly the situation will be makes looking forward to the holidays a bit difficult. The government has warned us that it will not be like other years. It has tried to comfort us by saying that we can still have a 'meaningful' Christmas. Whatever that means..."

We know what that means now. A quiet, more subdued event, grateful for family but

missing friends. Missing the craic in town. Missing the spontaneity of the season. I remind myself that I should be happy. Others are missing loved ones that have passed.

Frankly, I'm sick of it. All of it: the masks, the hand sanitising, the sitting in a cold beer garden. I know that compared to some others, my Covid life has mostly been about inconvenience. It's still annoying. I am fully committed to following the guidelines. I think that it is our best line of defence. But that doesn't mean that I like it. It's been almost two years and I want to get back to feeling properly festive. Not knowing is making me grumpy and anxious, which is not a good combo. I call it 'gr anxious'.

We are all suffering it to various degrees. There is a lot to be anxious about and a lot to be grumpy about. Tempers are fraying. In the last few weeks, I have heard of arguments between friends and families that only makes things worse. We are all living in difficult times, and we've been doing it for almost two years. Let's cut each other some slack. Being 'gr anxious' feels cramped and tethered. Let's help each other unwind a bit.

I know it sounds obvious, but the best way to feel joy at Christmas is to spread some Christmas joy. Be kind. Be generous. Even when you have a difference of opinion. Remember that we're all fed up, for many different reasons, and that we all could use a bit of holiday cheer. So put on that Santa hat. Strap a red nose to the car. Sing along to the Carols behind your mask. Just wait a few weeks before hitting the joy button. Say until around December 8. Then let the jumpers loose, even if they must stay two metres away from each other. Wishing you and yours a merry Christmas and a happy, hopeful New Year.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the December issue of West Cork People,

This time last year we brought out the December issue on the back of a five-week lockdown. This year was supposed to be less turbulent, and there have been periods where we've all breathed easier, but unfortunately Covid is still digging its teeth in. We head into the festive season this year on another wave with the looming threat of more restrictions and a pandemic that just keeps on going.

On a positive note – it's Christmas: Our shops and restaurants are open for business and we're all more aware of giving them our support. The lights are on and there's a festive buzz around the streets of West Cork that is cheering. This pandemic has given us all more of an appreciation for the little things – most of Ireland sat down to watch Ryan Tubridy do a fabulous job again on The Late Late Toy Show last Friday night. This week we received a little postcard in the post from a reader that simply said, 'Thank You' – nothing else, just a name and a simple message of gratitude for the paper. It made our day! A little random act of kindness from a stranger.

This Christmas we all need to think more sustainably; support local, create less waste and hand out more kindness. Consider supporting some of the local charities like SVP that are there to help in times of need.

Inside this issue, you'll find a festive feast of stories and news from around West Cork.

Our annual Gift Guide highlights so many of the wonderful shops and makers, creators and producers across West Cork towns and villages. Our local bookshops and authors recommend some of their top reads and our restaurants serve up a selection of festive recipes.

We meet the man himself, Santy, at his holiday home in Kilbrittain, talk to Mick O'Sullivan of Clonakilty Recycling Centre about his passion for the environment and meet the unflappable longstanding Bantry Hospital porter Paddy Cronin.

Clonakilty native Julie O'Brien talks about carrying on some of her Christmas traditions from home in NYC; Noah tells us more about where the tradition of bringing a tree indoors to celebrate Christmas comes from; Karen shares a delicious vegetarian recipe for the Christmas table; and Hannah and Tania keep us in good health with their Christmas tips on remedies and fitness.

In this issue we welcome our new sports writer Matthew Hurley, who talks to Clonakilty footballer Tom Clancy. The Clon colours were out in pride last Sunday when the Clonakilty footballers, after an outstanding season and performance in the final, lost out by just a single point in the end.

Thank you sincerely to all our columnists, contributors, readers and business supporters who make West Cork People possible. We really appreciate your support and look forward to bringing you the 'best free read in West Cork' again in 2022.

Wishing you and your family health, happiness, peace and prosperity this Christmas and in the coming New Year.

Enjoy the read,

Until next year,

Mary



Mary O'Brien
Editor



Sheila Mullins
Creative Director



Natalie Webb
Sales Consultant

Contributors

Kate Arbon
Karen Austin
Hannah Dare
Tina Pisco
Louise O'Dwyer
John Hosford
Sean Creedon
Tania Presutti
Noah Chase
Shane Daly
Pauline Murphy
Kieran Doyle
Sherna Malone
Tommy Moyles
Fiona Hayes
Grace O'Sullivan MEP
Dr Rosari Kingston
Dr Jeff Featherstone
Matthew Hurley
Eugene Daly
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 Cllr. Gillian Coughlan**



A Real Cork Christmas

 Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
 Cork County Council

“Be good to your mammy”

While much of Ireland only discovered the joys of West Cork during this pandemic, with house prices surging as a result, Santa Claus was well ahead of the posse, having acquired his holiday home in the sought-after coastal location of Kilbrittain a number of years ago. Santa Claus, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, Père Noël...this legendary character, known by so many names all over the world, goes simply by Santy in West Cork, a place that tends to, more often than not, bring out the funny side of him.

“Some of the grand-mother’s tend to be more excited than the children and can be a bit of a handful,” says Santy. “You’d need a strimmer to keep them back!”

For the past five years, Santy has somehow found time in his busy schedule to meet all the lucky girls and boys... and grandmothers... visiting West Cork Secret at this time of year for a magical and sustainable Christmas experience.

“There is lots of space at

West Cork Secret and the different terrain – the woodlands, grass, stone and so on – provides the perfect training ground for the baby reindeer,” explains Santa seriously.

Pre-Covid, families were always invited inside Santy’s cosy little house built from branches and boasting a cosy open fire. Helping Santy – who has a bad back from lugging that big bag of toys – into his armchair often provided the perfect icebreaker with a nervous or shy child.

Now the fun has to stay

outdoors but there’s no problem keeping warm with the elves often starting a conga line and Santy joining in!

While Mrs Claus usually heads into Bandon to pick up the dinner from Billy’s, Santy loves hearing all the news from his little visitors and says some of the requests he gets are “gas”.

“When a boy or girl asks me for a ‘tablet’, it throws me off completely,” he shares. “I mean kids shouldn’t be playing with tablets.”

“Or a ‘wee’...I’ve had a fair few having me on and telling me that it’s something you play with. I’ve been around a long time you know,” he says with a wink.

“Then there are the kids who are completely thrown when they find out I know everything and everybody,” he says. “There was one little boy who was doing karate with Ray Payne in Bandon and he couldn’t get over that I knew him and had

heard that he’d won a trophy. Sure I taught Ray everything he knows,” says Santy, his chest puffing out.

In the midst of the joy, there is often sadness too. One family brought in a photograph of their child who had passed away. He was included in the family photograph, remembered in the giving of a live tree and his name was included on the ‘nice’ tree. “It was very emotional and had us all crying,” says Santy.

Throughout the year, the team at West Cork Secret works with a lot of children with special needs or on the Autism Spectrum. “They lead and we follow,” says Santy. “One child last year didn’t want to talk to me, he just wanted to touch my beard, so at the request of his mother, I let him touch it, at arm’s length. He was happy with that.”

Very young children are invited to place their dodos or soothers and bottles under a special tree and Santy gives

them to the baby reindeer.

There are always questions, so many questions, but Santy has an answer for everything.

“I really twisted my back when I got stuck in the chimney one time.”

“If there isn’t a chimney or a stove, I have a special key to let myself in.”

“Dogs love me and I love them.”

“I wear red so the children can pick me out of a crowd.”

“My sleigh runs on hot air!”

“Two chocolate chip cookies, one sweet, carrots for Rudolph and he likes a cookie and a sup of lemonade too!”

This year a meandering path of Christmas trees will light up the path to Santy’s house at West Cork Secret. You might even be lucky enough to meet the Christmas fairy and some of her friends along the way.

In the true spirit of Christmas, Santy will present children with a baby live Christmas tree to look after and watch, as it grows

up with them.

After visiting with Santy, families can warm up indoors by the open fire, take part in story-time with the woodcutter or enjoy a hot chocolate from Frosty’s North Pole Cafe or some lunch from Monty’s.

After his busy day draws to a close and once Mrs Claus returns with the dinner, Santy likes nothing better than to let off some steam playing the banjo or guitar. He’s even tried his hand at the bazooka.

His parting message to West Cork children: “Be good to your mammy and do what she tells you.”

The bad news is that Santy is fully booked this year at West Cork Secret but he has every intention of returning to Kilbrittain next year, so for one of the most magical, sustainable, memorable Christmas experiences ever, one without all the usual bells and whistles, be sure to book early next year.



Santy listens closely to a special request at West Cork Secret in Kilbrittain where he has a holiday home.



Cllr. Paul Hayes

“Nollaig Shona! Looking forward to working on your behalf again in the New Year”

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Cllr Paul Hayes

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Tina Pisco appointed Frank O'Connor Fellow

West Cork author Tina Pisco has been appointed the sixth Frank O'Connor Fellow. This highly competitive international literary award is awarded through the Munster Literature Centre and made possible through generous sponsorship by Cork City Council.

The generous stipend will allow Tina Pisco the time and money to write full-time for four months, from November 2021 to March 2022, time in which she hopes to finish the short story collection she is currently working on. She also hopes to give four lectures on Frank O'Connor's work, ideally in person, after Christmas.

“As a blow-in, it is an incredible endorsement,” says Tina. “Frank O'Connor is internationally recognised as

a master of the short story. To be awarded the fellowship that bears his name, by the city that he wrote so eloquently about, is a huge boost to my confidence as a writer.”

In 2021, Tina was appointed the first ever Writer-in-Residence at Cork City Libraries.

Tina's collection of short stories that she is working on is titled ‘The Dithering. Tales of the peri-Apocalypse’. “It means just before the End Times, which is kind of nowish, or just a little ahead of now,” explains Tina. “Since I’ve been writing it, current events seem to be catching up to my stories. I started writing stories that I thought were ten or twenty years ahead and which keep turning out to be tomorrow.”

Tina Pisco has been a professional writer for thirty years,

publishing novels, poetry and short story collections, a collection of newspaper columns, as well as comics, screenplays and internet drama scripts. She has taught creative writing all over Ireland and works as an editor and mentor.

“I came to West Cork nearly thirty years ago determined to be a writer, so when one of my stories was chosen for the Fish anthology in 1994, that was the first highlight. My first novel, ‘Only a Paper Moon’, was definitely a highlight...The Frank O'Connor Fellowship is a very welcome highlight, especially after a few leaner years, when I had to put aside my writing because of family commitments.”

For now Tina is focused on the short stories and she hopes to have the collection ready

by March. She also plans on collating another collection of her ‘A West Cork Life’ columns published every month in West Cork People. She is also toying with the idea of a memoir.

Her advice to budding writers: “Write. Just write. Write a lot. Write more. The more you write the easier it gets – most of the time. Wanting to write is less of a vocation, and more of an affliction. Join a writing group. Take workshops. You’ll meet others who are similarly afflicted, and you’ll write more.”

Tina Pisco's first short story collection: Sunrise Sunset and other fictions (Fish 2026) can be ordered from Fish Publishing www.fishpublishing.com/book/sunrise-sunset/

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Christmas unwrapped

Packaging waste inevitably goes up a lot at this time of year, with January a peak month at Clonakilty and other recycling centres across West Cork. With consumerism driving climate change, recycling has an important role to play in relieving the pressure on our landfills, reducing emissions and increasing our quality of life. When Michael (Mick) O'Sullivan was growing up in Clonakilty, before our 'throwaway' society really grew teeth, recycling was a common household activity. Items were rewrapped in newspapers, glass milk bottles and other liquid products were refilled, shopping was placed in a basket instead of a plastic bag and holidays were to 'The Miles' and Inchydoney, not Malaga!

Today, with our planet in crisis and rubbish piling up, it's imperative that we protect our environment for future generations. In Ireland our reliance on plastic is incredible: we generate the highest amount of plastic waste in the EU and yet we're fourth lowest when it comes to recycling. We need to consume less, refill more, increase our recycling waste and also act more responsibly when separating it.

Mick O'Sullivan has always had a respect for the environment. In fact, when he's not busy sorting through the recycling at Clonakilty Recycling Centre, where he has worked as a general operative since 2006, you'll most likely find him out birdwatching around Clonakilty Bay or trapping moths in his garden and at a few favourite locations near his home.

Moths are night-time pollinators and are crucial for birds and other animals with many bird species relying on caterpillars as high-value food to sustain their young, while other species, including bats, spiders and birds, consume adult moths.

Always a keen birdwatcher, Mick's fascination with moths grew after he attended a bioblitz in Glengarriff in 2012. He came home that night and told his wife he was building a moth trap. Now he has seven! He was also a co-founder, in 1989, of the West Cork branch of Birdwatch Ireland. On any given day, ideally with a warm south-easterly wind blowing species up from the continent, Mick will be out placing his moth traps in a few ideal locations on the cliffs around his home in Ardfield, trapping, identifying, photographing and logging species like the Scarce Bordered Straw (*Helicoverpa armigera*), Pearly Underwing (*Peridroma saucia*), Vestal Rhododetra (*sacra*) or Hawker Dragonflies to name a few. "It's an interest that keeps me sane," he says laughing.

Weekends away are organised around wildlife activities, as are his holidays abroad, – a portable moth trap packed safely into his luggage – which are usually taken high up in the Pyrenees; or in the Alps, where he can find up to 90 species of butterfly



Mick O'Sullivan.

over 10 days. There are only 36 species native to Ireland.

With the increase in recycling and waste activity last year due to the pandemic and working conditions made difficult by Covid restrictions, Mick's moths provided him with a quiet respite from the manic pace at the recycling centre.

928 tonnes of recycling was collected at Clonakilty Recycling Centre in 2020 – an increase of 66 tonnes from the previous year.

"The past year and a half was tough going," says Mick "I think every shed, attic and garage in the country got cleaned out during the pandemic."

Throughout it all however, the operatives at Clonakilty Recycling Centre and in fact at all the recycling centres throughout West Cork provided the same calm, good-humoured and helpful service that they're so well known and appreciated for in the community. "We'll never see someone struggle," says Mick. "We're there to help if help is needed."

While contamination levels in cardboard at the Clonakilty recycling centre are very low, Mick reminds us that cardboard and paper has to be clean and dry so it can be recycled. The same applies to food cans and plastic, including soft plastic. 'Clean' is key when recycling.

Mick works behind the scenes sorting through the piles of recycling and keeping the recycling chambers free from obstructions. Items like 'compostable' cups, which should be placed in your food waste recycle bin, have to be regularly

picked out of the cardboard.

According to the EPA, the average Irish household throws out just under one tonne of rubbish each year. Currently we are recycling just under 50 per cent of this.

Of the waste that goes to landfill, almost 40 per cent is organic waste, the majority of which is food waste. In landfill, your rubbish emits methane, a harmful greenhouse gas, far more potent than carbon dioxide, when it comes to the global warming effect.

"It's easy to feel disillusioned but if all do our little bit, we can collectively make a great difference" says Mick.

Research from WEEE Ireland shows that since 2019, just 33 per cent of end-of-life beauty and consumer electricals such as hair straighteners, shavers, instant print cameras, headphones and bluetooth speakers were diverted from landfill. That figure drops dramatically to just under 10 per cent for electronic toys including gaming consoles, action figures, e-scooters and e-bikes.

All of these electrical items, along with old electronic toys, can be returned for free recycling at your local authority centre rather than dumping them in household rubbish bins.

In the spirit of Christmas, this year consider reducing your consumption and recycling more responsibly. Reuse or re-gift items where possible and where not, then recycle. If our individual behaviour doesn't change, Christmas could look a whole lot different in 2050.



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Corcaigh Thuaidh & Thiar



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office

Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West

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Contact us at our Clonakilty, West Cork office on:

T: 023-8834700 E: westcork@leo.corkcoco.ie

Personal information collected by Cork County Council is done so in order for us to process your representation/enquiry and legally we can process it as it is necessary for us to comply with our statutory/legal obligations. The information will be processed in line with our privacy statement which is available on our website: www.corkcoco.ie



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Asking the right questions and responding to important issues

By Clonakilty
Amnesty
Group

Is my information correct? Do I really understand the issue? Have I the whole story before I shoot ahead and do something about it, whether just at a personal individual level or even by joining a protest? Or should I just ignore it and do nothing? Let somebody else decide for me? Or should



I bother asking myself any of these questions at all?

What about Badr Baabou, an LGBTI activist in Tunisia? Or getting my Covid vaccination?

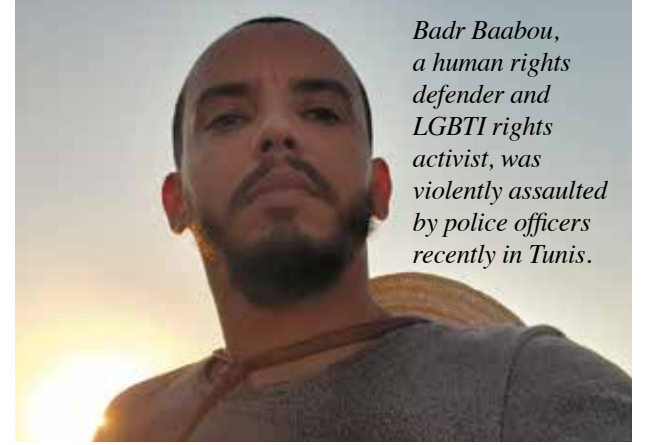
We read, see and hear about an awful lot of issues in the media around us. Some of these issues may be irrelevant for us, some may have a direct bearing on us, some may be important but not quite on our doorstep. We do need to ask ourselves the questions above, to sort out and respond

correctly to these issues. We cannot afford to be just passive recipients of the information. If we are, we can get tripped up on bad decisions and wrong courses of action. As a minimum we need to check our sources of information and to look at more than a single source on any one issue. Apart from word of mouth, official government media and national press and TV, we are fortunate in West Cork to have excellent local newspapers that are a reliable source of information on many

issues that can affect our lives. These sources can help us find the right information about issues that have arisen in our awareness and to discover issues that deserve our attention.

Beyond checking our sources of information to get our position clear on day-to-day issues, when it comes to human rights issues we may need to search out the issues because they can sometimes seem remote from us. A good way to be in the loop on human rights issues is to join the Urgent Action Network of Amnesty International Ireland (amnesty.ie). By joining the Network you will get email notification from Amnesty International of cases of human rights infringements that can benefit from your involvement as a letter-writer appealing to the authorities involved. Don't underestimate the power of the pen!

Take the following case. Badr Baabou, a human rights defender and LGBTI rights activist, was violently assaulted by police officers on the night of October 21, 2021 in downtown Tunis. The men who attacked Badr Baabou identified themselves as 'cops', insulted him, accosted him, and beat him severely. They told him the



Badr Baabou, a human rights defender and LGBTI rights activist, was violently assaulted by police officers recently in Tunis.

beating was retaliation for filing complaints against the police and "defending whores and homosexuals". Tunisian security forces have been targeting Badr Baabou for his work and LGBTI activism in promoting the rights and freedoms of LGBTI people in Tunisia. This attack is the latest in a long series that spans several years. Several complaints have been filed but to no avail.

This human rights defender needs your support. Demand that the Tunisian authorities investigate the attack and bring those responsible to justice. Amnesty's website has a ready-made email appeal to the relevant minister in Tunisia. To use this appeal message, type

amnesty.ie/badr-baabou/ in your browser and send the appeal to the minister in question. You can also find information about this case from other sources by just typing the name Badr Baabou in your browser search.

NB: December 10 is International Human Rights Day.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world." – Eleanor Roosevelt

I wish you a very safe and Happy Christmas season and a peaceful New Year.

Cllr. Gillian Coughlan
Mayor of the County of Cork

✉ gillian.coughlan@cllr.corkcoco.ie

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Sherkin Islanders launch campaign to raise funds to purchase national school

Sherkin Island Development Society (SIDS) has launched a fundraising initiative to purchase Sherkin Island's national school buildings and gardens for island community use.

Under the 'Neart Initiative', SIDS wants to keep the school in community ownership and is asking for public donations to cover the initial purchase of the school to create a Neart Hub for the island community.

'Neart' is the Irish word for strength and has been taken from the Irish saying, 'Ní neart go cur le chéile' which means 'there's no strength without unity'. The fundraising target is €80K to cover the purchase of it, after which a decision will be made by the community regarding its upgrade, development and future use as a hub for diverse use such as educational, heritage or cultural activities.

Sherkin Island National School closed its doors for the last time in 2016 after 128 years educating island children. Since then, the island community has set its heart on purchasing the buildings to secure their future use.

Aisling Moran, project co-ordinator with SIDS, said: "Schools are full of connections, hopes and dreams. Sherkin Islanders want to keep the school



Ní neart go cur le chéile. Deirdre Ní Luasaigh (chairperson of the Neart Initiative fundraising committee) with the O'Neill family, Christopher (6) in the foreground, Anna (4) and William (8) O'Neill outside of the primary school on Sherkin Island. Pic: Robbie Murphy

building at the heart of the community as a place of connections and life for future generations. The Neart Hub will be for the Sherkin Island community, diaspora and friends of this much-loved island.

"We are asking people to be part of this journey and connect with the island, its heritage and its future by purchasing a dot so that we can connect those dots and create a wonderful additional resource for Sherkin Island."

Under its five-year plan, SIDS hopes to build a new community

hall on the island but the Neart Hub will provide an additional physical community space, doubling the amount of indoor space and land available to the community. It is hoped that part of its development will include a large, seafront garden on the shores of Cuinne Harbour for all to enjoy.

The community will also be organising a series of fundraising events in the coming months to help them to reach their fundraising target. Donations can be made through sherkinisland.ie.

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West Cork
Supported Employment Agency

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Please contact your local office for more information

Bantry (Head Office)
086 8126324 and 086 8079953

Skibbereen 086 8158786

Bandon 086 8101795

Kinsale 086 6007964

Clonakilty 086 8395058 and 086 6031335

An Roinn Coimíre Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

EmployAbility Service West Cork's Clonakilty Office has a new home at 15 Wolfe Tone Way. This service is funded by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and provides employment supports to people who are unemployed or have been out of work through illness, injury, disability, or any other disadvantaged groups most distant from the open labour market who wish to find meaningful employment. EmployAbility also provides supports for employers to employ persons facing obstacles and to assist with employee integration into the workforce.

Emer Sweeney, Job Coach in Clonakilty, explains that "EmployAbility Service West Cork has five offices throughout West Cork and services from Castletownbere through to Kinsale. The role of the Job Coach is to provide critical supports for jobseekers to join the open labour market. We work on a one-to-one basis with clients of the service, providing an individual support, considering attributes and aspirations whilst planning how to address the barriers that clients may face in gaining and maintaining employment. In my role I



Job coaches Emer Sweeney and Mags Donovan at thier new office in Clonakily.

help to match skills, interests, and talents with employment opportunities; examining tasks involved in the job and planning the supports that the client will require and provide assistance in developing the technical and social skills required to do the job".

Job Coach Mags Donovan Daly add that "The EmployAbility Service Job Coach also provides supports for employers to employ clients of this service, liaising and engaging with employers to identify potential opportunities for clients, as well as the

needs of employers. They play an active and leading role in informing and influencing employers with regard to the benefits of employing clients of the service and assist with employee integration into the workforce".

If you are looking for support in gaining employment in the Clonakilty region and would like to speak with a job coach please call Emer on 086 8395058 or email emer-sweeney@empwc.org, or call Mags on 086 6031335, email margaret-donovandaly@empwc.org.

For further information visit www.empservice.org

EmployAbility Services are funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Social Protection. Tá Seirbhísí Infhostaitheachta maoinithe ag Rialtas na hÉireann tríd an Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí

The new office address is: 15, Wolfe Tone Way, Clonakilty, P85 HY24.

Cllr. Declan Hurley
INDEPENDENT

I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

I look forward to working with you in 2022.

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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



Helen Collins, Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin, Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney at Woodfield, Clonakilty for the official handover of Michael Collins diaries to the National Archives.



West Cork award-winning author and columnist Louise O'Neill, who received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Law from University College Cork at its School of Law conferring ceremony last month.

Pic Daragh Mc Sweeney/Provision

Dear Santa please bring a house

An annual challenge for the staff of Edel House, Cork's emergency shelter for women and children, is to make sure that all the children in the shelter have a merry and memorable Christmas.

One major improvement on all previous Christmases in Edel House is the impressive new building the service moved into in spring of this year.

This year there will be plenty of space for the Christmas tree, the carefully wrapped gifts, the traditional crib, the elves that pop up in strange places and all the other Christmas trappings that excite children in homes across the country.

In the old Edel House, three women would often have to share a small, single room and a family room was a small room with bunk beds. This Christmas everyone in Edel House has their own, comfortable space, as the new building provides individual ensuite rooms for all single women as well as well-equipped family apartments.

A major refurbishment of the old Edel House is ongoing and due to be finished early in the New Year. The brand new and the newly refurbished buildings will then be joined together and the expanded Edel House will be a state-of-the-art facility providing modern facilities and a dignified environment for all the women and children that need shelter there.

But it is a home – their own home – that every child in homeless services really wants for Christmas.

This year Good Shepherd Cork expects to bring Christmas to more than 100 children who will spend the season in emergency accommodation – either in Edel House, in Redclyffe Family Hub, also run by Good Shepherd Cork, or in B&B accommodation (because all the beds in Edel House and Redclyffe are full almost every night).

The Cork-based charity is supporting over 200 children – when all the children who have moved on from Edel House and Redclyffe, but whose families need on-going assistance to avoid a return to homelessness, are counted in.

CEO of Good Shepherd Cork, Allison Aldred, explains: "Women and children come into Edel House for many



The new Edel House building

different reasons. Some are fleeing violent relationships, others have lost their homes because of health or addiction challenges, many simply cannot find an affordable place to live. But we know that for everyone here, Christmas is an especially tough time to be homeless.

"A house for me and my family" is the number one item in the letters we help children to send to Santa. We might not be able to provide that, but we can make sure that all our residents feel well cared for at Christmas and that the children get to have a magical, memorable time."

Nearly every year since Edel House first opened, almost 50 years ago, Christmas has brought the residents together for a traditional feast. But last year, and again this year, Covid-19 means Christmas is a less communal event. Everyone will be offered a delicious Christmas meal, but it will be enjoyed in small and family groups. So too in Redclyffe. And for all the families being supported in B&Bs, Christmas dinner will be delivered to their bedroom door.

Head Chef at Cork's Briar Rose restaurant, Bryan Clarke, decided last year to make sure that all the children in homeless services in Cork would have a proper Christmas dinner. Working closely with Good Shepherd Cork, he and his team of helpers prepared and delivered Christmas dinner to dozens of families in Edel House, Redclyffe and in B&Bs. Bryan and his team have generously offered to do the same again this year.

For many years, the main fundraising event for Good Shepherd Cork has been the December Church Gate collection. Staff, volunteers and supporters of Good Shepherd Cork have traditionally turned out in large numbers to shake collec-

tion buckets at Church gates across Cork to raise money for the charity. Regrettably, Good Shepherd Cork has cancelled this year's collection, as it had to do last year, in the face of the deteriorating Covid situation.

But mindful of the needs of children in the service, Good Shepherd Cork has just launched an online fundraising campaign – the Christmas gift that keeps on giving.

Claire Harrington, Volunteer and Events Coordinator for Good Shepherd Cork explains: We provide many different types of educational and therapeutic supports to the children and families we work with. This year we are asking the people of Cork, who are incredibly generous to us every year, to consider gifting such supports (including school supplies, educational outings and play or art therapy sessions) that can benefit our service-users not just this Christmas but for many years to come.

No child should have to spend Christmas in homeless services but until there is sufficient affordable housing in and around Cork, many children will. For those children in Edel House, Redclyffe Family Hub and other services provided by Good Shepherd Cork, Christmas 2021 will be as merry as its possible to make it.

If you would like to support Good Shepherd Cork this Christmas you can donate via the website: www.goodshepherd Cork.ie or by post to Good Shepherd Cork, Edel House, Grattan Street, Cork. To donate directly to the 'Christmas gift that keeps on giving campaign' you can also donate via idonate.ie. For any queries please contact: Claire on 086 6045241 / 021 4274240 or harrington@goodshepherd Cork.ie.



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Wishing all of the
people we support in
our community health,
happiness, peace and
prosperity this Christmas
and in the coming New Year.

A helping hand in a time of 'Impossible Choices'

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Annual Appeal launched in November will be one of the most difficult in the Society's 177-year history: According to the Society, calls for help this year will be at their highest level ever and could reach almost 200,000 by the end of December.

Christmas will be different for everyone this year but the theme 'Impossible Choices' reflects the really hard situation families on low incomes face in the lead up to Christmas. With massive increases in energy costs and living expenses, the situation for those already struggling financially has worsened.

The Clonakilty branch The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has been working with people in need in the local community for 160 years and the work done by the organisation and its members has never been so important as now, when people are under such severe fi-

nancial and psychological stress due to the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

If you are struggling to keep a roof over your head, how do you choose between a decent dinner and a warm house? What do you sacrifice to buy your children those precious gifts after such a tough year?

St Vincent De Paul Clonakilty helped nearly 300 families to keep their heads above water last year, to the tune of €130K. Poverty is never easy to confront and yet, every Christmas, it is impossible to ignore. Never has it been so important as in 2021 when we are still living with the pandemic, and when people are on their knees wondering what to do next, how to pay the next bill or fill the schoolbag with books and how they will feed their family every night.

"It can be very difficult for people to make that initial contact with the Society, especially if they haven't been in a position where they have needed to ask for help before," said Agnes Cahill, President of the Clonakilty branch of St Vincent de Paul.

"But based on the need of the individual or family, assistance is given in a non-judgmental spirit of compassion," she emphasises.

Our members are very accessible, and our door is

always open to anyone," adds Noel Lawlor, the organisation's education officer.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul provides practical financial support and advice, assistance with grants for fuel and a short-term safety net for those who fall outside the welfare state. It also provides social housing to the over-50s at affordable prices: There are 24 housing units in three locations around Clonakilty town.

There is also an Education Grant scheme provided by the Society to which people can apply for financial assistance to pursue third level education. Anyone is welcome to apply. "We have a bursary available to third level students," explains Noel. "Once you qualify for the grant, it's made available for the duration of the student's course."

Most of the students who qualify for the Education Grant would already have been accepted for the Susi scheme. However, as Agnes points out, "the Susi grants would probably not stretch to cover accommodation costs if the students are attending third level colleges far from home.

"The bursary is there to cover whatever they need, whether that's travel costs or course materials," she says. "It's fantastic

to see the recipients of these grants progressing and achieving their goals in life," says Noel. "Many of them now in fact support the Society themselves."

Last year alone, the Clonakilty branch invested over €50,000 in supporting more than 30 students attending college and university.

This type of investment is only possible as a result of the generous donations and fundraising efforts of the public throughout the year and in particular during the annual appeal in December. The need for donations this year has been exacerbated by the fact that due to COVID there may not be any SVP church gate collections due to the Pandemic. Instead, anyone who wants to make a donation in person can do so on Saturday, December 11, at any of the locations listed below.

"Everyone deserves a helping

hand when needed and all help is given with the utmost respect to the privacy of the individual or family," says Agnes.

"We'd like people to approach us as if they were approaching a family member who is in a position to help them financially through a difficult period," says Noel. In what has been a difficult year for charities all over Ireland, Agnes and Noel would like to assure people that any monies donated to the local branch of St Vincent de Paul are distributed in the immediate locality.

If you wish to make a donation to Clonakilty St Vincent de Paul you can do so through any of the following:

1. On the Clonakilty Saint Vincent de Paul Fundraising Pages svp.ie/stannesclonakilty.

2. Call the following number ROI 0818176 176. It is important that you specify that your donation is to go to SVP

Clonakilty

3. Donate on the local fundraising day on December 11 at any one of the following locations:

Astna Square Clonakilty; Timaleague Church; Barryroe Co-Op; Clogagh Church; Lisavaird Co-Op; Barryroe Church; Clonakilty Church; Courtmacsherry Church.

4. Contact a member of the conference. All donations greatly appreciated.

To contact the Clonakilty branch directly for assistance call 087 3769935. The numbers for the other branches in West Cork are as follows:

Bandon 086 8255092; Bantry 086 1710559; Dunmanway 086 3458037; Skibbereen 0879182698.

One-hundred-year-old letters turned into fascinating podcast

A new podcast featuring the letters passed between Michael Collins and Kitty Kiernan has been created by the Michael Collins House Museum, Clonakilty to mark the centenary of the signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty. 'My Dearest Kitty' is an eleven-episode series funded by Cork County Council's Commemorations Committee.

One hundred years ago, as Michael Collins assisted in leading the Anglo Irish Treaty negotiation in London, he was also negotiating a new and long-distance personal relationship with Kitty Kiernan. This podcast tells the story of their evolving relationship, as well as the developing story of the Anglo Irish Treaty negotiations through their 300 letters and telegrams.

Episode one is now available on the Michael Collins House website and YouTube channel. Episodes will be released daily until December 6, the centenary of the signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty.

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan said, "'My Dearest Kitty' is a fascinating podcast looking at Ireland's most tragic love story. Michael Collins and Kitty Kiernan wrote more than 300 letters to each other and their words have been brought to life in this beautifully produced series. The correspondence is affectionate, loving, and romantic, yet it also reveals elements of the couple's power dynamic as they seek to establish their relationship. It is wonderful to hear about the personal and political lives of Michael Collins in this way,

as we begin to understand the weight of issues occupying his mind in the momentous weeks of the Anglo-Irish negotiations. Cork County Council is proud to support the creation of this podcast series through the Commemorations Committee, as we mark the events that define our history and inform who we are as a nation today."

'My Dearest Kitty' is based on a script by Michael Collins House Museum, Clonakilty. The podcast and accompanying videos have been professionally produced by Mirador Media and its team of voice-over actors. Episodes will be uploaded daily to www.michaelcollinshouse.ie and the Michael Collins House Museum YouTube channel until Monday, December 6.



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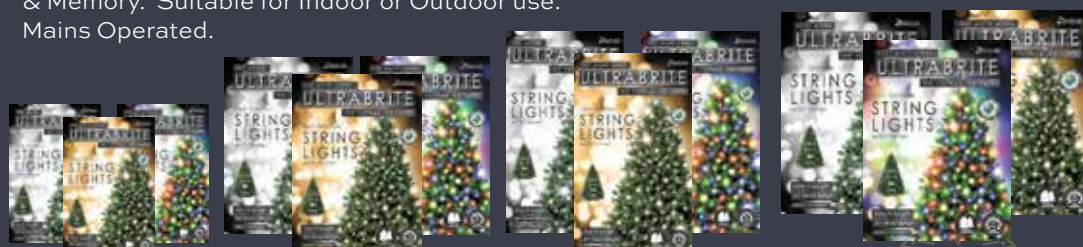
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THE HISTORY CORNER

Shane Daly

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

"I only did my duty, and what I was told to do as well as I could." – Simo Häyhä

The Winter War, sometimes referred to as the First Soviet-Finnish war, began on November 30, 1939 and ended 105 days later on March 12, 1940. Out of this war, which Stalin wrongly predicted would be an easy victory for the Red Army, came the deadliest sniper the world has ever known, Finnish sharpshooter Simo Häyhä, who recorded 505 confirmed kills in his 98 days of fighting in this war. The Soviets called him 'Belaya Smert' meaning 'The White Death'.

The Winter War started because the Soviets wanted

The White Death

sections of Finland – they said in order to protect Leningrad from the attacks of the Nazi's. The Soviets were willing to exchange land with the Finns but Finland, under Hugo Österman, refused and therefore the USSR invaded. Stalin sent close to a million soldiers into Finland knowing that, at their maximum capacity, they had roughly 300,000 troops. The aim was to steamroll Finland and take control with limited casualties, as the Red Army was superior in every aspect. It was considered a formality, with Stalin so confident that victory was inevitable that he planned his 60th birthday celebrations for December 21.

It was not as straightforward however as the Soviets expected, as the Finnish Army had a number of things in their favour. The landscape was covered in snow, which suited the Finns, as they were all competent skiers and used to the environment. The Finnish soldiers were supplied with heavy, white, winter uniforms. This allowed them to be almost invisible when moving across the terrain. The Red Army was still using a khaki green uniform, which made them highly conspicuous to the Finns, even from large distances, when they were marching crossing the landscape. Furthermore, the USSR lacked any leadership skills, as Stalin had anyone deemed to be a political opponent executed when he purged



Simo Häyhä at Loimola, Karelia, 1 February 1940

the USSR. All of the above, coupled with the fact that the Finnish army had an incredible marksman in their ranks put the Finns at an advantage.

Simo Häyhä was born on December 17, 1905 in Karelia Russia. He was a farmer and hunter. At 17 he joined the voluntary Finnish Civil Guard where he honed his shooting skills, winning many local sharpshooting competitions. In 1925, age 19, Häyhä began his

15-month compulsory military service in the Bicycle Battalion Two in Raivola, Viipuri Province. He attended the Non-Commissioned Officer School and served as a conscript officer in the Bicycle Battalion One in Terijoki. However, he did not get sniper training until 1938, a year before the war, at a training centre in Utti. After completing his service, soldiers were given the opportunity to buy the rifle they had trained with during their compulsory service. Häyhä bought the SAKO M/28-30 that he had become so proficient with and when the USSR invaded in 1939, Häyhä he declined the use of the more modern weapon offered to him, instead favouring his own rifle. Assigned as a sniper in the Finnish arm, Häyhä was tasked with repelling as many Soviet soldiers as he could. Dressed entirely in white and choosing to work alone, Häyhä would take a day's supply of food and water along with his weapon and rifle out into the snow-covered terrain and pick a spot to sit and wait for USSR soldiers to appear. While his comrades used state-of-the-art telescopic lenses to zoom in on their targets, Häyhä fought with an iron sight, which he felt gave him a more precise target. He also noted that several targets had been tipped off by the glint of light on the newer sniper lenses.

As well as this, Häyhä had

developed an ingenious method of not being sighted. On top of his white camouflage, he built up snowdrifts around his position to further obscure himself. The snowbanks also served as padding for his rifle. He would pour water on the snow in front of him prior to taking a shot, which prevented the force of his gunshots from stirring up a puff of snow that an enemy could use to locate him after he had fired. Moreover, as he lay on the ground in wait, he would put snow in his mouth to stop his breath being visible and betraying his position. Häyhä's strategy kept him alive, but his missions were never easy. For one, conditions were brutal. The days were short, and when the sun set temperatures dropped as low as minus-40 degrees Celsius.

During the war, Häyhä became somewhat of a mythical figure in the Soviet ranks. They gave him the name 'Belaya Smert' meaning 'The White Death' and his own comrades dubbed him 'Taika Ampuja' (The Magic Shooter). He was so proficient that even though the Red Army could not see him, Stalin decided to bomb the general area in which they believed him to be operating from. After the bombs, the Soviets would pepper the area with bullets in the hope of eliminating his threat. Häyhä fought for 98 days of the 105-day war;

he has 505 confirmed kills. His most successful day on record is one where he shot and killed 25 Soviet soldiers. On his 98th day in service, he was seen by a Soviet sniper and shot with an exploding bullet in the face. The bullet hit Häyhä in the jaw, completely shattering it and removing close to half of his face. He was removed from the battlefield relatively quickly and survived. However, the injury placed him in a coma for seven days. When he awoke, the war was over and the Moscow Peace Treaty had been signed, bringing an end to the war.

It took several years for Häyhä to recuperate from his wound, which required lengthy treatments and twenty-six facial reconstructive surgeries. Although his face remained disfigured for the rest of his life, he otherwise made a full recovery and, after the Second World War, he was given his own farm in Valkjärvi, Ruokolahti, a small municipality in southeastern Finland, near the Russian border. As well as this, he was decorated with several medals of honour including the Medal of Liberty: first class and second class, the Cross of Liberty: third class and fourth class and the Cross of the Battle of Kollaa.

Häyhä lived for 60 years after the war and died on April 1, 2002 at the age of 96, still holding the title of the deadliest sniper in history.

Ballinhassig and the final attack

During the War of Independence, the last IRA attack on an RIC barracks in Ireland occurred in Ballinhassig on the morning of July 7, 1921. In the attack, the Ballinhassig IRA company launched a gun attack on the barracks, which resulted in the death of one RIC constable and the injury of another. **Pauline Murphy** tells us more.

A mixture of Irish and British, the presence of the 16 RIC men stationed in Ballinhassig Barracks – situated just outside the village on the road heading towards Halfway – was not warmly welcomed. The RIC were renowned for harassing any members or supporters of the Republican movement in Ballinhassig. As a result, shops and pubs refused to serve RIC members and ordinary civilians refused to co-operate with them

on any matter.

The toxic relationship between locals and the police force worsened in February 1921 when the IRA ambushed a patrol of RIC men at Paddy's Bridge, situated on the road between Ballinhassig village and Five Mile Bridge. Following on from the attack, the barracks in Ballinhassig was beefed up with extra men, steel shutters were fixed on the windows of the building and layer upon layer of barbed wire was laid, fortifying the ground outside it.

The Ballinhassig IRA company kept watch on the barracks, noting the daily habits of its occupants, for example how early in the mornings, just after sunrise, the RIC men would file out of the barracks and line up outside. Due to the cramped conditions in the barracks some of the RIC men sat outside the barracks while others tended to business inside. Sometimes one or maybe two RIC men would go out on foot or cycle patrol.

For a long time, the IRA hoped to find a way to strike at the heart of the Crown's law and



order in Ballinhassig. On a fine summer's morning in July 1921, the decision was made to carry out their plan of action and Sean Hyde led 22 IRA Volunteers to positions behind a ditch, just 300 yards from the front of the barracks.



British General Higginson standing outside Ballinhassig barracks and the barracks following the attack. © IWM Q 71722

IRA Battalion Quarter Master, John Barrett, described the events in his Bureau of Military Witness Statement:

"On this particular morning, about nine RIC men came out as usual, but one of them left the vicinity at once and proceeded along the road out to the village. Mick Walsh and another volunteer left our party and followed him. It had been arranged that as soon as Walsh and the other volunteer had intercepted this policeman by opening fire on him we would open the attack on the RIC barracks.

After a short time we heard the shots fired by Walsh and the other Volunteer as they shot the policeman dead. The RIC outside the barracks also heard them and rushed in to the bar-

racks before we opened fire. As they got inside we opened fire on the windows firing five rounds each. The RIC returned fire with machine guns and rifles. We withdrew as they did so."

Constable James Cronin received a bullet in his leg but survived. Constable James Connor who went out on that lone foot patrol was instantly killed when he was shot. Connor was a Tipperary native who, before joining the RIC in November 1920, had previously served with the British army. He was married with two children and following his death, Connor's widow was awarded £2,000 compensation while his children received £1,000 each.

The IRA party got away unscathed and some days later

British Brigadier General HW Higginson arrived at Ballinhassig barracks to survey the damage and take photographs. Today those pictures form part of the Imperial War Museum collection in London.

Higginson was a notorious figure well known (and well hated) for carrying out brutal reprisals in villages and towns across Cork. Thankfully for Ballinhassig, it was spared an expected reprisal by Higginson and his crown forces, as the Truce was called just four days after the attack on the RIC barracks.

From 1919 until the end of the conflict in the Summer of 1921, the IRA attacked a total of 267 RIC Barracks across Ireland. Ballinhassig has the distinction of being the last one.

Funding available for heritage conservation projects

Cork County Council is inviting the owners and custodians of historic and protected structures to apply for funding to safeguard, maintain and enhance their properties. The Council's Conservation Office is administering two grant schemes on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

A total fund of €8 million is available nationally under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund 2022. That is an increase of €2 million from 2021.

Grants of between €2,500 and €15,000 are available under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2022 for small-scale conservation projects. Large-scale projects to repair and conserve the historic built environment can apply to the Historic Structures Fund. Up to €50,000 is available for essential repairs and capital works. Projects where a clear residential or public benefit has been demonstrated can apply for funding of up to €200,000.

The deadline for submission of completed applications is 4pm on January 31, 2022.

Clonakilty Credit Union at the heart of it

While ultimately a financial institution focused on savings and loans, a major part of the ethos behind Clonakilty Credit Union is supporting its local community in a myriad of ways.

From golf classics to ploughing matches to the St Patrick's Day parade, throughout each calendar year, Clonakilty Credit Union donates money towards and sponsors so many clubs and organisations in its common bond. This year the Credit Union also kitted out local clubs Clonakilty Ladies Football, Clonakilty AFC and Comhaltas Ceoltoiri with jerseys and sponsored a set of oars for Rosscarbery Rowing Club.

Clonakilty Meals on Wheels, which provides nourishment and social support to the elderly and vulnerable in the local community, really appreciated the cooler bags it was gifted by Clonakilty Credit Union.

There are 20 primary schools and three secondary schools locally who benefit from the generous spirit of this Credit Union. Each year, Clonakilty Credit Union runs a range of competitions for the local schools who, together with the Cope Foundation, are invited annually to participate in an art competition with a number of cash prizes.

There is also a fantastic essay competition and quiz held each year for the primary schools (subject to health guidelines).

The Kevin Mullen College Bursary organised by Clonakilty Credit Union gives three students, one from each of the local secondary schools, a chance to win €500 per student towards college costs with a runner-up prize of an Annual Free Travel pass to Cork.

The much-anticipated Clonakilty Credit Union calendar is produced each year with pictures of the local community contributed by members. These are available in the CU office from December 1.

The Clonakilty CU social media competitions are always hugely popular with an assortment of prizes given away. This also serves to support the shop local ethos, as the prizes are usually vouchers from retailers and businesses in Clonakilty and surrounds.

One of its biggest social media competitions run this year was the 'Ice-cream competition', which saw 19 primary schools battle it out for the most votes on facebook. Ardfield National School and St Mary's NS Enniskeane shared the coveted prize, topping the leader board with over 1,000 votes each.

Each school was awarded an ice-cream cart for a day so staff and pupils could all enjoy a cool treat before finishing up for the summer holidays. The local business sponsored by Clonakilty CU to provide the prize on this occasion was Clonakilty Homemade Ice cream.

Be sure to keep a close eye on Clonakilty Credit Union's facebook and Instagram pages over the coming weeks for news of a fantastic Christmas competition!

Last but not least, Clonakilty Credit Union is delighted to be the main sponsors this year of Clonakilty's The Polar Express running at the West Cork Model Railway Village.

"When we were approached about sponsorship for the Christmas event, we did not hesitate to jump on board," commented Clonakilty CU staff member Sinead McCarthy. "It's a fantastic event for our community to enjoy after a tough 20 months. We also take pride in supporting the Model Village, as it is such a fantastic asset to the town."

Orla O'Donovan, Chairperson Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce expressed gratitude at the support given without question to the event by Clonakilty Credit Union. "We're deeply appreciative that whenever we do anything, even if it is

something a bit outside the box, our local Credit Union is there to offer support. The business that this community event will generate for Clonakilty in December is unprecedented. While our

world is slightly turning online, we want to keep our town vibrant, which is something that Clonakilty Credit Union strives towards also."

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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Tel: 023 88 11011 Email: christopher.osullivan@oireachtas.ie



*Wishing all our members a
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in supporting our Community.*

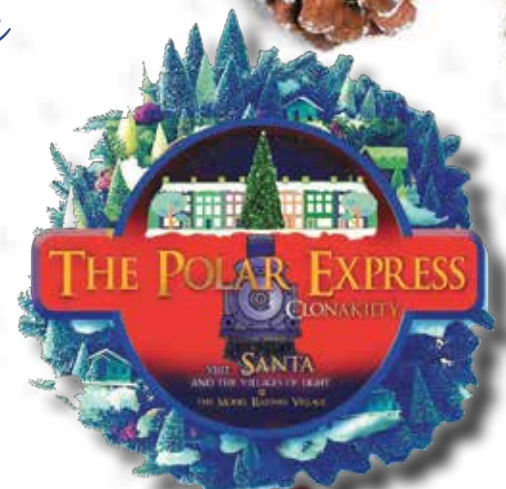
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FACT & FOLKLORE

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.

Christmas as a time of celebrations and revelry goes back to the customs of pre-Christian times. Mistletoe, yule logs, holly and evergreen trees are of pagan origin, sacred to the Romans and Celts.

Of all the Christian festivals, Christmas was considered the most important in Ireland, and preparations began some weeks in advance. Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, was a time of fast, like Lent, up to 1917. Advent brings us from a time of remembering the dead (November) into the joyful anticipation of the birth of the Saviour, Jesus.

In rural Ireland the men tidied and cleaned the farmyard and whitewashed the house during Advent. Inside, the women scrubbed and polished, washed the linen and made the house as clean and tidy as possible. Often

Christmas of yore

cattle and pigs were slaughtered and some of the meat shared with neighbours. The woman of the house raised flocks of geese and later turkeys, which were sold at the Christmas Markets, often held on December 8. Christmas was anticipated with joy by young and old alike. Most families had relations 'abroad' in the USA and they eagerly awaited the 'American letter', which always contained some dollars.

By today's standards the Christmas shopping was meagre enough but everybody did their best to buy luxuries not eaten during the rest of the year. With the money earned at the Christmas Market, the women 'brought home the Christmas' – toys and sweets for the children, new clothes, sometimes tobacco, fruit cakes, barm bracks, as well as sherry, whiskey and stout. The Christmas cake and pudding were baked weeks before Christmas. Rural people gave presents of farm-produce – potatoes, vegetables, a chicken, a turkey to relations living in the town. Shopkeepers always gave a Christmas 'box' to their customers – usually a fruit cake, barm brack, a big candle or a box of biscuits.

By Christmas Eve all the preparations would be completed. The house was decorated with holly, ivy and colourful decorations. Holly, with its glossy green leaves and festive red berries, was perfect for the holiday. It was placed in many parts of the kitchen and the 'parlour'. Sprays were placed over the door, on the dresser, on the mantelpiece, the cleddy, on picture frames. It was believed that an angel occupied each spike of a holly leaf.

Christmas Eve was probably the most magical day of the year. The traditional dinner in West Cork and in other parts of the country was 'stock-

fish' (usually salted ling) with potatoes and onion sauce. This old custom is still practiced by some. The dish is known as 'priail' in parts of Ireland.

As darkness fell on 'Oíche Nollag' (Christmas night) a big candle – 'Coinneal Mór na Nollag' – was lit and placed in a hollowed out turnip or a jar filled with sand and positioned in the kitchen window. It was usually lit by the youngest of the family, with help if necessary. The father would lead the family in prayer. The usual blessing was: 'Go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís (May we all be alive this time next year). Soon after lighting the candle, the Christmas celebrations started with the Christmas supper. This began with the cutting of the rich Christmas cake and production of tea, punch and bottles of stout. Sweets and apples were given to the children and the whole family sat around the warm glow of the fire. Sometimes a neighbour dropped in and was treated to whiskey or stout.

The children were 'packed off' to bed early, with threats that Santa Claus wouldn't bring them anything if they were not in bed when he called. Before bedtime they hung their stockings at the fireside or sometimes at the end of the bed. Santa didn't arrive in Ireland until the early 20th century. His popularity was increased by the 1947 film 'Miracle of 34th Street', and later, 'It's a Wonderful Life' starring James Stewart. From Dickens we get many images – sleigh-bells sounding over the snow and carol singers with lanterns walking our streets and so on.

A light in the window lighted the way of strangers out after dark. It goes back to ancient times, when the laws of hospitality were stronger and not abused. It also meant that

you were welcoming the Holy Family.

At midnight, on Christmas Eve, according to a belief held in most parts of Ireland, the cows and donkeys kneel in adoration of the Christ Child. Nobody, however, should spy upon their devotions. The cock is overwhelmed with joy at Christ-

mas and will crow at unusual times – to hear him crow at midnight was a particularly good omen. At any other time of the year to hear the cock crow at night was a bad omen.



OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



Gillian Coughlan MCC County Mayor officially opened the extended playground at Dunmanway with Cllrs Declan Hurley, Karen Coakley and local children.

Pic: Denis Boyle

Christmas in NYC



Julie with her husband Stevie, daughter Izzy and dad Noel.

“The holidays are upon us, Thanksgiving and Christmas. I have a lot to be thankful for this year,” says Clonakilty native **Julie O’Brien**. “As I look at my beautiful upside-down Christmas tree, back where it belongs on the ceiling of The Junction, my bar, my home away from home, in Midtown, NYC; I feel a strong sense of joy, as I contemplate on how my life is starting to turn the right way up again.”

A year ago, November 2020, in the height of the Coronavirus pandemic, my days were quieter, without the hustle and bustle of the New York City lifestyle that I had grown accustomed to since my move here from Ireland in 2002. Grand Central felt abandoned and the customers who normally helped turn the wheels on my business were absent, ordered to stay home because of rapidly spiralling Covid numbers. Like so many others, with the world on pause, I found myself presented with the opportunity and time to turn my focus to my family.

Where in previous years, I’d be trudging through snow to get to work, I found myself sledding on the hill behind my apartment in Stuyvesant Town and building snowmen with my daughter and her friends. Of course there was fear of the unknown but, as we lay together in the freshly fallen snow drawing snow angels with our arms, there was hope too. It brought back childhood memories of ‘home’. I grew up in a place called ‘The Miles’ on the outskirts of Clonakilty town. Today its landscape has changed to a more urban one, but when I was growing up, wide-open fields, often blanketed by snow in winter, surrounded our house. My sisters and I would disappear into the white and be gone for hours, until hunger or the cold drove us home. I was always the last in

the door, my fingers blue from spending hours rolling the head of a snowman. My Dad would bring out one of his scarves and a carrot and some lumps of coal and help me to give him a face before I joined my sisters by the open fire.

This November was made extra special due to the reunion with my dad. After a two-year forced hiatus since his last visit, he was on the first flight out of Ireland to NYC once international travel resumed to the US.

Dad had missed his trip over to us in March 2020 due to lockdown and we had to cancel our planned trip home to Clonakilty last August, so our daughter Izzy was an infant when she last saw my mum who is unable to fly due to health reasons. Dad arrived this November just after Izzy’s fourth birthday.

My daughter has passed many milestones since their last meeting... she is now running around, going to school, climbing jungle gyms and has her own opinions. She is a mischievous, affectionate little girl, who loves to sing, dance and chat. It’s been with a mixture of sadness and happiness that I’ve watched her finally form a bond with her Grandad towards the end of his trip. Sadness because of all the time, special moments and other family members – Izzy’s Nana, her aunties and her cousins – missed due to this pandemic.

I am back to work since April of this year. The bar is open and business finally looks like it’s getting back to what it was pre-Covid. We have staffing issues like most businesses in hospitality and right now I have to work long hours, sometimes 70-plus in a week. There are times that I yearn for those slower paced days when the bar was closed.

A positive in the midst of all this madness over the past two years has been that I grew to acknowledge the things most important to me in life. Time spent with my husband, Stevie, and my daughter, Izzy, have only made us closer. It’s nice to

see customers, some old, some new, walk through the door of The Junction again. To have my Dad be able to visit and stay with us, to see him holding my daughter’s hand coming down the steps of the bar to visit me at work, is almost surreal. My family is healthy and safe.

This Christmas I’m taking time to smell the roses, or rather pine trees, and remember all the things that made growing up in West Cork so special. I want to share all those Christmas traditions with my daughter like lighting the candle on Christmas Eve, decorating the tree together, dancing around to Christmas songs, mailing Santa’s letter, praying for it to snow with our noses pressed against the icy window, toys and treats and of course the mandatory mandarins spilling out of the Christmas stocking at the end of the bed and the spirit of sharing and giving. My favourite part of Christmas day was something so simple but I looked forward to it every year; it was the time spent playing board games with my late Uncle Tim and the rest of my family. My uncle would purposely cheat just to wind me up and he would have us all laughing for hours.

The lights may shine a little brighter in NYC and the smells and sounds might be different to those in West Cork but the Christmas Spirit is the same no matter where you are. Growing up, there was always space at our Christmas dinner table for someone who would otherwise spend Christmas alone. Across the Atlantic Ocean, I have found myself on the receiving end of this act of kindness.

In New York it’s easy to get caught up in the fast pace of the city. November to December is our busy season in the restaurant industry, which is why I haven’t made it home to Clonakilty for the holidays in 20 years. This makes it even more important for me to carry over some of my Irish traditions in New York and to give thanks at the dinner table for the smaller things in life we so often take for granted.

Help 'Make Christmas Special' for the children at Clonakilty Lodge Direct Provision Centre

In Clonakilty Lodge Direct Provision Centre, like everywhere else, 35 or so families are starting to think about Christmas. In homework club, the children are busy ticking off the days until the holidays on their calendar and are looking forward to making decorations with new Homework Club Facilitator, Sally Ann Lenehan. Santa will be making an appearance in the Community Dome on December 19 and there are plans afoot for other treats and surprises.

The past two years have been especially difficult for the Lodge residents who have continued to share their communal spaces with each other as safely as possible during lockdowns. Clonakilty Friends of Asylum Seekers (CFOAS) has been working throughout this time to support families living, working, and going to school and college, all the while contending with the huge challenges of life in Direct Provision. Despite the difficulties presented by Covid restrictions, the families from Clonakilty Lodge, members of CFOAS team, and friends in the community have managed to organise several events this year. As the country emerged from lockdown in June, a Mid-Summer International Bazaar celebrating food, fashion and music was hosted in Spiller's Lane. The well-supported afternoon led to a regular slot in the Clonakilty Farmer's Market where traders were able to sell gorgeous African clothing and jewellery, and adorn arms with henna tattoos.

During the summer the children took part in numerous activities and were welcomed into many community-organised sports camps, as well as making great use of local beaches and

outdoor amenities. Kitty Sisson, Service Coordinator with CFOAS particularly thanked Clonakilty RFC, Clonakilty Camogie Club, Clonakilty FC and FeelGood Sports for their generous inclusion of all the young sports players in camps and training throughout the season. "Playing sport and training with your school friends is a great way to feel part of the community," she said. She also acknowledged the on-going support of the West Cork Development Partnership (WCDP)'s Kathryn Kingston and Mark Gaffney whose practical contribution made the CFOAS Summer Programme possible.

The Summer Programme came to a close with another fabulous food and culture event hosted by the Clonakilty Lodge Residents in the Community Garden, which provided the perfect environment for a safe gathering. Entertainment was provided by Cork Co Council Outdoor Performance Scheme, and once again talented cooks prepared a huge spread to share, representing many countries and continents, and welcomed friends from Clonakilty and further afield.

A great addition to the town can be found in Deasy's Carpark



Santa and Divine



Silly snowmen

where a brightly painted mural now covers the back wall. Project co-ordinator Kathryn Kingston (WCDP) said: "This is the product of another joint initiative with local groups and many

of the younger residents of Clonakilty Lodge were excited to be able to make a permanent mark on the town." WCDP and CFOAS were delighted to work with Sheila Kelleher, Artist,



The elf and his reindeer

Courtney Canning, formerly of YMCA and Sinead Burton West, Cork Community and Environment Project Supervisor in this wonderful Cork County Council Arts Funded Project.

All through the year CFOAS works with families offering support and advocacy across the large range of issues and challenges that come with seeking International Protection and living in Direct Provision. Groups such as St Vincent de Paul and other philanthropic organisations offer their generous assistance throughout to the team. But how can YOU help? The simple answer is that you can help 'Make Christmas Special' by donating to the CFOAS gofundme page in aid of their Christmas Appeal. The group is aiming to give all parents vouchers so that they can buy their own Christmas gifts for their children. All donations, however small, will be put towards making Christmas special for everyone in Clonakilty Lodge. CFOAS is also planning to help Santa by providing a toy or gift

for his visit. If you would prefer to sponsor a gift, please be sure contact the team so that they can make a suggestion – this avoids duplication and makes sure the children get something they really want. You can donate through the Clonakilty Friends of Asylum Facebook page, by Facebook Messenger or by emailing kitty_sisson@hotmail.com.

CFOAS would like to thank everyone who supports their work: SVP, WCDP, Cork ETB, West Cork Model Railway Village, local businesses, private donors, elected representatives and Clonakilty Mayoral Council's 2021 Mayor Anthony McDermot who so graciously participated in many CFOAS activities this year.

Last but not least, the residents of Clonakilty Lodge and the CFOAS team would like to wish all their friends and supporters and volunteers a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and Healthy and Happy 2022.

Life-changing impact of drink driving at Christmas and New Year highlighted in road safety appeal

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) and An Garda Síochána have called on drivers to act responsibly and to not be tempted to drink and drive this Christmas and New Year period. This year's Christmas and New Year road safety appeal was launched at An Garda Síochána Headquarters in Dublin and focuses on

the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and the devastating loss of life and serious injuries it can cause.

Research published at the launch showed that over the last five years there were 83 fatalities and 709 serious injuries over the Christmas and New Year period. This means that an average of 17 people die

and 142 are seriously injured each year at this time. Almost seven out of ten fatalities were male, while almost two thirds of serious injuries were male. The time period 4pm to 8pm was highlighted as the highest risk for fatalities. Serious injuries tended to occur predominantly late afternoon/evening, with over half occurring from 12pm through to 8pm.

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Hildegard Naughton said: "While the majority of drivers don't drink and drive there are still some who persist in this dangerous behaviour. Research from 2013-2017 shows that 36 per cent of drivers killed had a

positive toxicology for alcohol. To anyone who thinks it's ok to drive after drinking alcohol I say you need to understand that if you commit a drink driving offence you will face disqualification from driving for a minimum of three months.

"Think about how a driving ban would impact your daily life. You will no longer be able to drive to work, drive to the gym or drop the kids off to school. If you are planning on having a drink this festive season or anytime, remember that alcohol and driving do not mix. Designate a driver organise a taxi, hackney, minibus or use public transport."

Warning of the danger of

drink driving the morning after Mr. Sam Waide, CEO, Road Safety Authority said: "The morning after is a real danger zone for drink driving. A previous analysis of Garda Síochána Investigation Files for fatal collisions, by the RSA, shows that 11 per cent of fatal collisions, in which a driver had consumed alcohol, occurred between 7am and 11am. Our own research also shows that one in four drivers admit to driving over the limit the morning after.

"There is no hard and fast rule about when it is safe to drive the morning after if you have been drinking the previous night. But motorists should allow at least one hour per

standard drink for the alcohol to clear their system. A standard drink is a half-pint, a small glass of wine or a standard measure of spirits. Also, if drinking at home, you may be unknowingly drinking larger measures and therefore increasing the risk of being unsafe to drive the following morning. The key is never to take chances, don't risk it, you could end up losing your licence or worse."

The HSE has a useful website called askaboutalcohol.ie which is full of very valuable resources on the impact of alcohol on driving and drivers are encouraged to visit the site for more information on the subject.

Thousands of homeowners can now go green with a Greenify credit union loan



Finbarr O'Shea, Manager Bantry Credit Union

Bantry Credit Union is one of a group of eight credit unions that recently launched a new green home improvement loan. Called Greenify, this is an exciting new brand that will provide access to green finance for retrofit and other green home improvement works.

The eight credit unions are spread across the country, including Birr, Borrisokane, Ennistymon, Mitchelstown, Mullingar, Tuam and Tullamore.

The launch event featured some of the industry's leading experts in an online webinar hosted by Helen Carroll of RTE's 'Ear to the Ground'. The

event included a thought-provoking keynote from well-known architect and environmentalist Duncan Stewart, as well as an address from Seán Fleming TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Financial Services, Credit Unions and Insurance.

Bantry Credit Union's Manager Finbarr O'Shea represented the eight Greenify credit unions as official spokesperson at the launch. These presentations were followed by a panel discussion, which featured industry experts Colin Tynan from the Waterford Institute of Technology and Ruth Buggie from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, as well as Stewart, O'Shea and Minister Fleming.

Speaking after the launch, Finbarr O'Shea said: "Bantry Credit Union is delighted to be part of the launch of Greenify because we believe there is significant demand for green

finance amongst homeowners in our area. We want our members to be able to start their green journeys at home – investing in a retrofit project that will both enhance the comfort of their homes and do their bit towards protecting the environment.

"Having an expert panel with the likes of Duncan Stewart really confirms what we have long believed: there is a need to change our collective behaviours and that homeowners need financial support to do this. The green transition will not happen without finance. The Greenify loan will be a core part of Bantry Credit Union's offering."

Flexible green financing

Greenify loans can be used for a range of projects including a home retrofit project (from shallow to deep), exterior or interior wall insulation, attic insulation, heat pump installations or solar panels/systems. Participating credit unions are willing to look at any energy-efficiency or energy-reduction project which results in an improvement in the BER of the home.

Finbarr O'Shea added: "We are responding to both a climate and a financial demand. Credit unions are passionate about this because our members are. What we do now or indeed fail to do will affect future generations. Our members are conscious of the big climate challenges that we are all facing, but they are also concerned about the rising costs to heat their homes.

We are confident that this path towards greenification is the right one to help our members and our planet. We are just at the beginning of our green journey, and we are excited to work with our members to help them to greenify their lives."

An inclusive approach

Participating Greenify Credit Unions want to make the Greenify home improvement

loan accessible to as many homeowners as possible. As part of the initial launch phase, Greenify Credit Unions will be working with local tradespeople, engineers, BER assessors, energy groups and others to get them involved in the Greenify initiative. They are also keen to work with their local communities and schools to help educate

and inspire them to go on their own green journeys.

Summarising the Greenify attitude to business, the Bantry Credit Union manager said: "Our approach is to keep the application process simple for the homeowner, support local tradespeople, deliver a professional service and above all, keep it green."

He concluded: "We look forward to welcoming more credit unions who are excited to offer Greenify loans across the country. For any homeowner who wants to find out more about how to access a Greenify loan, they can go to www.Greenify.ie."



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Garinish Island awarded Green Flag Award

Garinish Island has been acknowledged as one of Ireland's best public parks and gardens in the 2021 International Green Flag Awards.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) welcomed the news that 11 OPW sites were among a group of over 100 Irish public parks, gardens and voluntary-run green community sites across the Republic of Ireland who received their 2021 Green Flags. These were Altamont House and Gardens in Co. Carlow, Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre in Co. Meath, Castletown Demesne in Co. Kildare, Derrynane Historic

Park in Co. Kerry, Fota Arboretum and Gardens and Garinish Island in Co. Cork, Grangeorman Military Cemetery, Irish National War Memorial Gardens, St. Stephen's Green Park, The Iveagh Gardens and The Phoenix Park in Dublin.

This year, An Taisce implemented the national roll out of the Green Heritage Accreditation Award with the support of the NPWS and the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. These accreditation awards are given to green spaces of specific historic significance, with seven Green Heritage Sites

in Ireland receiving this merit in 2021. Among the recipients of this inaugural award are the Irish National War Memorial Gardens and the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre, two exceptional sites with their own unique cultural significance and historic importance.



The Green Flag Awards, administered by An Taisce in the Republic of Ireland, recognise and encourage the provision of good quality parks and green spaces that are managed in environmentally sustainable ways.

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Tech company looking for West Cork companies to join its startup program

Teamwork, a leading global Project Management SaaS solution focused on Client Services companies and founded by West Cork native Peter Coppinger, is looking for companies in West Cork and across Ireland to join its startup program, which offers one year of free project management software, including help desk, document management, CRM, and chat software. Over 500 startups have benefitted from this program to date, including web design and marketing agencies, medical tech startups, online stores, and more.

West Cork is fast becoming a hub for remote workers and startups, thanks to facilities like the Ludgate hub in Skibereen, the various E-centres across West Cork, as well as Bantry Bayworks (which Coppinger supports) and Mix Co-working in Clonakilty, this program should be ideal for West Cork based startups who want to boost their productivity and get a headstart.

Eligibility for the program is determined based on length of time in business, revenue, and employee numbers. Companies in their infancy (two years or less) tend to be approved, as the goal for the program is to help businesses to take off.

After one year, companies can choose a paid plan or continue using Teamwork's free plan. To join, startups must apply on Teamwork's website.

Within two weeks of applying on Teamwork's website, startups will be notified about whether they've been accepted into the program, and will immediately gain access to the platform.

Tom Fellner from Bryt Idea Consulting who has been using Teamwork for managing projects for over two-and-a-half-years and has been using it as a digital project manager, and now as a business startup consultancy said: "I've always been impressed with the scalability and power of the platform as well as its user interface."

"It's great for simple projects, or full blown complex agile workflows and everything in-between," Fellner added.

Teamwork's plan is to double the number of businesses on the startup plan in the next 12 months. The company also runs a separate program called Teamwork Catalyst, a SaaS incubator for early stage startups in Ireland, providing access to Teamwork software, events and free office space in Cork City centre.

This program, however, is

limited to Irish companies. Applications for new companies will reopen in February 2022.

Peter Coppinger, Co-Founder and CEO of Teamwork Coppinger first displayed an entrepreneurial spirit at just 10-years-old, selling computer games he made himself, from his bedroom in Bantry. "When we started in business, we were stuck in the 'consultancy trap' for years before we broke through into product. Looking back, if somebody had put a roof over our heads and given us internet, coffee and a tiny bit of advice, we could have got going a lot faster."

"The incubators and other incentives available in Ireland today all push early founders to take on funding. It's not the right path for many founders who are still figuring things out and equity is a precious resource," he added.

"We'd like to see some more support for bootstrapped SaaS founders and to that end, Teamwork Catalyst is the programme we wish existed when we started. We're 'paying it forward' and we're doing our small bit to help make Ireland more 'sassy'."

For more information, please visit www.teamwork.com

Global Shares named Technology Ireland Company of the Year 2021



Global Shares' Corporate Communications Manager, Aisling Riordan, and Director of Global Solutions, Mark Griffin at the Technology Ireland Industry Awards 2021,

West Cork company Global Shares has been named Technology Ireland Company of the Year at the Technology Ireland Awards 2021. This was the 29th annual Technology Ireland awards, which was supported this year by platinum sponsors EY, and gold sponsors Fidelity Investments, Workhuman and Enterprise Ireland.

Global Shares manages employee stock plans for some of the world's biggest companies. With headquarters in Clonakilty and 17 offices worldwide, its team of 550 employees and award-winning fintech solutions help companies harness the power of employee ownership to attract, retain and reward key staff. Exporting to over 100 countries, it is on track to exceed a \$1Bn 'uni-

corn' valuation by 2024.

Marking the announcement, Technology Ireland Director Una Fitzpatrick said: "Global Shares were ambitious from day one to be a disrupter in a large global marketplace. Their forensic knowledge of the market led to significant investment and persistent innovation to bring a next gen platform to the market. Global Shares' relentless focus on a sustainable culture of innovation, diversity, inclusion, professional development and wellness truly encompasses what it means to be the Technology Ireland Company of the Year."

EY Ireland sponsors the prestigious Digital Technology Company of the Year Award. Marie Treacy, Technology Sector Leader and Partner with

EY Ireland, commented: "In spite of weathering a year with more than its fair share of challenges, it's quite remarkable to see the level of ingenuity and innovation demonstrated by the technology sector, not alone through the winning entries, but across the full spectrum of nominees."

"The sector is a true linchpin of the Irish business landscape, and played a significant role in keeping businesses, communities and vital services connected in the midst of the pandemic. All of this year's winners have a huge amount to be proud of, having achieved what they did in such a challenging environment. On behalf of EY, I'd like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to everyone involved."

Cork County Council approves 2022 Annual Budget of €372m

Cork County Council has approved an Annual Budget for 2022 of €372 million, an increase of €24 million on the budget for 2021. In contending with the worst global pandemic in a century, the Council has pledged to continue its approach of supporting citizens and communities, while ensuring the highest levels of service delivery.

The priority for the Annual Budget has been ensuring the provision of existing service levels despite the challenges of COVID 19. This was undertaken with an emphasis on economic development and support for business communities. There is also a renewed focus on climate adaptation across all operations, as Ireland transitions to becoming a carbon neutral society.

Commenting on the passing of the 2022 Annual Budget, Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Gillian Coughlan high-

lighted how, "Cork County Council's approach is one that is very conscious of the need to support the business sector and is designed to underpin the sustainability of communities. A number of important funding initiatives are being fully retained, such as the General Municipal Allocation for our 8 Municipal Districts, ensuring continue supports are available for our county's towns and villages."

Mayor Coughlan went on to say, "Funding through the Economic Development Fund which drives our tourism and strategic marketing initiatives as well as further town centre rejuvenation to address issues such as vacancy and dereliction has been ringfenced. Further investment will also follow into our Rural Digital Innovation Hubs, which are essential to the resilience of towns and will ensure balanced economic growth across Cork County."

Some of the initiatives in Cork County Council's Budget for 2022 include;

- Additional funding for the maintenance and improvement of Local Authority Housing with provisions to refurbish in excess of 150 vacant properties during 2022.
- €1.2m for Economic Development Fund and to address town regeneration issues.
- €8.2m for Libraries, and a fund of €150,000 for the Arts Program for Creative Towns and Spaces.

Cork County Council's Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) has remained unchanged since 2008. This has run against inflationary pressure, with the consumer price index recording an increase of 9.24pc in the decade from January 2011 to September 2021. Budget 2022 will see a three per cent increase in the ARV. A profile of Cork County Council's rate base in September 2021 shows that the

bulk of ratepayers represent small businesses with 30 pc have rate bills less than €1,000 per annum. Under Budget 2022, those ratepayers would see their rates increase by €16.90 over the course of the year, or 4c per day.

Mayor Coughlan highlighted how, "An increase in rates is never a decision that is taken lightly. However, this small increase is necessary in order to to present a balanced budget that will secure continued service delivery, economic investment and support."

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act for 2021 commits Ireland to move to a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by 2050. Cork County Council continues to play a pivotal role in adapting to climate change.

Budget 2022 contains provisions for;

- The Public Lighting Efficiency Project to retrofit upwards of 31,000 lights to LED by 2024 achieving at least 38pc energy reduction and significant cost savings.
- A ringfenced fund for Climate Action and Biodiversity with €400,000 being provided for 2022.
- A Fleet Replacement Programme to upgrade to newer more fuel-efficient vehicles to meet the 2030 climate change targets.

Chief Executive of Cork County Council, Tim Lucey, said, "Presenting Budget 2022 has required some difficult decisions and a fine balancing of priorities. When considering the financial resources available, the

Council had to reconfigure the budget to ensure there was no impact on service delivery for 2022. Sound financial management and prudence in previous years ensured the Council built up reserves for purposes such as playground improvements, burial ground extensions, and ICT infrastructure. However, the expenditure provided for in Budget 2022 exceeds the projected income, leaving a gap that must be bridged. Every effort has been made to support businesses throughout the last 12 months while the modest rates increase has been designed to ensure a minimum impact on ratepayers while prioritising continued service delivery and growth."

The man with the price of the farm on his back

In one of the many wonderful stories shared in this year's Innishannon Candlelight, **Con Hurley** recounts his memory of the move back 'home' to Ireland from London in 1961.

Christmas 1961; sixty years ago and the weather was bitterly cold where we lived in Ilford an easterly suburb of London. At thirteen, I was the eldest of five and, apart from the arrival of Santa Claus for my younger brothers and sister, this was a very special Christmas. Special because this was to be our last Christmas in London and sometime in the New Year we were moving back 'home' to Ireland.

I often think that it is amazing that emigrants always refer to where they came from in Ireland when they say 'home'. Not London, New York or Liverpool, no matter how many years they had lived there. And we were no different; home for us was County Cork, and after seven years in Dagenham and Ilford the Hurley family was packing up and returning to live on a farm called Annagh Beg, which our father had bought half way between Ballinhassig and Innishannon.

But in January 1962, that was months away. The weather had worsened in the New Year and we had days of snow and slush left by the traffic on the busy roads of Ilford. We wondered what life would be like on a farm with cows, pigs, chickens and a dog. And school? My brother and I were attending a non-Catholic school while the other three walked to St Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School in Ilford. What would school be like in Cork?

The excitement mounted as our departure for Ireland approached. The house we lived in was sold and the eight lodgers that my mother kept had to find somewhere else to lay their heads. Many of them were envious that we were returning 'home' while they had to remain in London longing for their real 'homes' in places like Kerry, Limerick and Galway. Many of them never went 'home'.

In February, I turned fourteen and the countdown to our departure began in earnest. Then one night, when the house was asleep, my mother came into the room where I slept with my brother and two lodgers (all in single beds!) and gently shook me awake. It was well past midnight and all was still. She led me down the hallway and into the front room, which was the communal living and dining room. My father was standing there. I wondered what was going on as he locked the door and my mother closed the curtains on the bay window leaving just the three of us; a coat, a shoebox, an electric iron.

Mammy, as we children called her, laid the coat out on the dining table. It was a heavy woollen Crombie coat, tailored to keep out the biting cold that permeated the winters in East London.

"How much did you pay for it, Kathleen?" daddy asked.

"I got it for £2 in the second-hand store and it was bargain at that. A new one would set you back about £10."

"Good God, that's a week's wages."

Mammy opened the coat and wiped her hand across the satin lining. "Now Jerh, I've marked out where I want you to cut. I've already sewn in a false lining with hidden pockets and I want you to cut a slit about four inches long at the top of each pocket."

She handed a scissors to my father and turned to me.

"Now Connie, I want you to do the ironing."

I was mystified until mammy took me to another table on which there were two pieces of cloth about a foot square, an iron that was already plugged in – and the shoebox. She opened the shoe box and, carefully transferred the contents onto the table. I stared at the small pile of white notes and much larger pile of coloured notes. I had never seen so much money in my life. Each white note stated clearly that it was worth £50 while the coloured notes were worth £5 each. Both denominations carried a picture of Britannia alongside the words 'Bank of England.'

Ignoring my astonishment, Mammy handed me the iron and showed me what to do. Lifting the upper cloth, she picked up a £50 note, laid it down and covered with the other cloth. 'Now run the iron over it a few times to get rid of the creases,' she instructed. I could feel the note flattening as I moved the iron back and forth. I stopped and she lifted the cloth and there sat a perfectly flat white English £50 note.

I reached for the next note and continued ironing out the wrinkles and crinkles until I had thirty notes ironed. One-thousand, five hundred pounds. A huge amount of money in 1961. About twice the value of our house. And I knew where it was going.

When the first ten notes had been ironed, daddy took them and inserted the flat into one of the secret pockets. Threading a needle, mammy sewed the top of each inside pocket, sealing the money tightly into the coat. When I had finished ironing the white notes, I started on the stack of £5 coloured notes with the helmeted head of Britannia peering out at me a hundred times – another £500 bringing the total to £2,000.

We had worked steadily for about fifty minutes, ironing, packing and sewing. Nobody spoke after the initial instructions and, without thinking I started humming a song and was embarrassed to see the moistness coming to my mother's eyes.

"Sing a verse, Connie."

So I did.

*I'll take you home again, Kathleen
Across the ocean wild and wide*

To where your heart has ever been

Since first you were my bonnie bride.

The roses all have left your cheek.

I've watched them fade away and die

Your voice is sad when e'er you speak

And tears bedim your loving eyes.

Oh! I will take you back, Kathleen

To where your heart will feel no pain

And when the fields are fresh and green

I'll take you to your home again!

I stopped and remembered how often in the past this song had brought tears of longing to mammy's eyes. But the tears were different this time; tears of anticipation and love, because my father was indeed taking his Kathleen home; to the farm he had bought in County Cork a few months earlier. He had paid the deposit of £200 and was now bringing the final payment in cash in the coat, whose value had shot up from £2 to £2,002 in less than an hour.

"Try it on."

Mammy held the coat and daddy slipped his hands in and closed the buttons in front.

"Perfect," she said

The knock on the front door signalled the arrival of the taxi. My father kissed mammy, unlocked the door and picked up the suitcase.

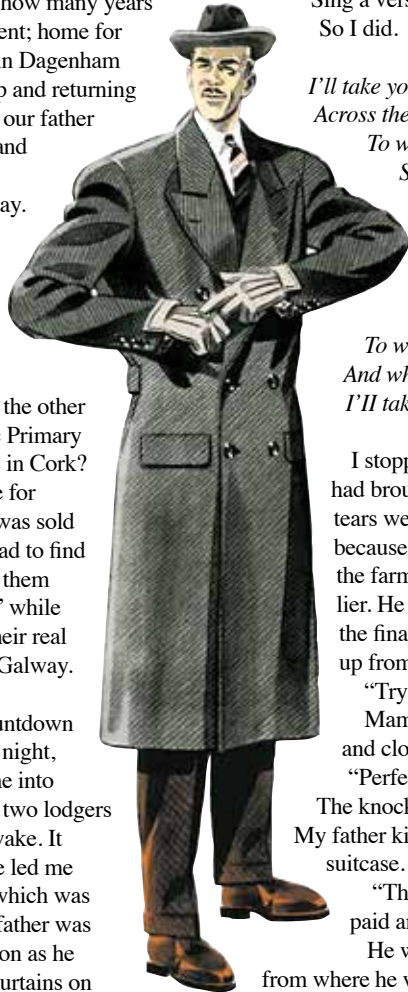
"This time tomorrow, I'll be in Cork. And I won't have paid any tax to Her Majesty on what is on my back."

He waved as the taxi headed off to Paddington Station, from where he would take the train to Fishguard in Wales and then the Innisfallen ferry to Cork, with the price of the farm on his back. He later told us how he didn't sleep a wink on the 24-hour journey or take a drink. His sole focus was on getting the cash-rich coat to the astounded solicitor in Cork, where he paid for the farm in cash.

In June 1962, we all crossed the Irish Sea on the Innisfallen and settled into our new home in Annagh Beg. There have been many moves and adventures since then, but I will always remember the night I ironed the £50 and £5 notes and saw them sewn into the Crombie coat. I later discovered that the reason my parents took this very unorthodox approach to paying for the farm was because of the very strict exchange controls operated by the British Government since the end of WW2. It was illegal to take large amounts of sterling out of the country. My parents' solution was to cash the proceeds of the properties they had sold and simply carry it across the Irish Sea in the lining of the Crombie coat.

Following a successful career as Dairy Editor of the Irish Farmers Journal, Con Hurley has written five biographical books. His latest book 'A Life Examined – how I learned to make more effective decisions about life and money' is available on Amazon.

The 38 edition of Innishannon Candlelight is now on sale in retail outlets in Innishannon and Bandon. This is another bumper edition featuring many new contributors including Sean Og hAilpin, and Con Hurley who previously lived in Innishannon and went on to become editor of The Farmer's Journal. Charlie Wilkins writes about the magic of the winter garden, Paul Callahan about the wonder of the night sky and Steven Hanley takes us night fishing on the Bandon River. It's full of articles of historic interest and also of recent happenings with many fascinating photographs. Give yourself a gift of Candlelight and also send a little bit of home to someone who is far from home this Christmas.



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I would like to wish everyone in West Cork a safe and Happy Christmas.

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Seaweed supplementation to reduce methane emissions in ruminants

Reducing methane emissions from cattle and sheep is one of the biggest challenges currently facing the agricultural sector. Researchers at Teagasc are investigating whether the addition of native seaweeds and seaweed extracts to the ruminant diet can reduce methane emissions.

Seaweed is a renewable, natural resource found in all of the Earth's coastal climatic zones. It is naturally rich in protein (as much as 47 pc of the dry weight) as well as other bioactive compounds, such as polyphenols, phlorotannins, saponins, alkaloids, fibre and peptides. Seasolutions is a multinational, EU-Canadian collaborative project, led by Dr Maria Hayes at Teagasc Food Research Centre, Ashtown, Dublin. The project investigates whether seaweeds that are abundantly found around the Irish coast can be used as feed additive ingredients for sheep, beef cattle and dairy cows.

Dr Maria Hayes explains: "Initially, seaweeds are characterised for bioactives such as polyphenols and phlorotannins and peptides. Based on the level of actives, seaweeds are then selected for screening in

vitro using different gas models including the RUSITEC (artificial rumen) model at Teagasc Grange. The best seaweeds at reducing methane emissions 'in vitro' are then selected for use in animal trials in sheep, beef cattle and dairy cows. To date we have completed one sheep trial and further sheep and dairy trials are ongoing. Other work is focused on the effect of seaweeds and extracts on the rumen microbiota, which ultimately generate the methane. We are also developing feed formats including actives and looking at the economic potential and life cycle analysis of developed products containing methane-reducing seaweeds and seaweed ingredients".

Part of the Seasolutions project involves feeding trials at the Teagasc Animal and Grassland Innovation Centres at Grange, Co. Meath and Athenry, Co. Galway. Researchers David Kenny, Sinéad Waters, Stuart Kirwan and Emily Roskam use ingredients supplied by Teagasc Ashtown in feed formulations and assess the reduction in methane emissions in beef cattle and sheep.

Professor Sinéad Waters comments: "We examined the

effects of supplementation of mature ewes with seaweeds and seaweed extracts in Teagasc Athenry for their ability to reduce enteric methane emissions, while at the same time ensuring there were no negative effects on the digestion of feed or animal productivity. As part of this trial we are also testing meat samples for residues to ensure consumer acceptance and food safety. The best candidates at reducing methane emissions arising from the sheep study will be further investigated in a large beef cattle trial in Grange in Spring 2022".

Professor David Kenny added: "Our ultimate objective is to identify specific bioactives within seaweed that could be harnessed as potent and reliable methane-suppressing dietary supplements. These need to be tested in a holistic fashion prior to potentially seeking legislative approval for their inclusion in animal feed. A critical aspect of this project is to test such supplements with the context of a pasture-based production system, which underpins the Irish beef and dairy industry, as opposed to relying on data generated from higher input, grain-based international studies."

Clonakilty farmers this year's Carbery Milk award winners

Ronald and Brian Shorten, farming in Woodfield, Clonakilty, were the overall winners of the 17th Carbery Milk Quality and Sustainability Awards. The Shortens are members of Lisavaid Coop. Ronald and Brian are the third and fourth generation to farm the land, originally purchased by Ronald's grandfather in the 1930s.

The family, consisting of Ronald and Brian, Ronald's wife Betty, and Brian's brothers Mark and Andrew, is farming 120 cows on 173 acres, producing an average of 592kg of milk solids per cow.

Ronald would describe himself as having always adopted new farming approaches since the eighties: "Farming is constantly evolving, and we want to evolve with the science as it changes." Brian focuses on breeding, while Ronald likes to see happy healthy cows, with quality grass in front of them and producing well.

The Shortens also have a

focus on sustainability, planting clover and use a trailing shoe for slurry spreading to reduce emissions. They also have newly planted hedgerows. Of this, Ronald says: "Everyone in the farming sector will need to pull together as a team to manage sustainability".

Jason Hawkins, Carbery CEO, said of the Awards: "We have a market for our products worldwide on the basis that Carbery are leaders in quality and sustainability. It is our suppliers who ensure that we can uphold and protect that reputation. We will never take for granted the work and commitment it takes to produce quality milk, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. That is why these Awards and recognising the high standards of our suppliers will continue to be an important part of the work we do."

Carbery Group Chairman, Cormac O'Keeffe added: "Awards like this one, recognising the commitment, standards and sustainability of

how we farm in Ireland and in West Cork, are more important now than ever. We will use the example of our 12 excellent nominees, and indeed all our

suppliers, to tell the story of Irish family farming, which is about highest quality milk, grass-fed, healthy cows and looking after the land handed

down through families and across generations."

The judges for this year's competition commended every entrant for their commitment to quality, hygiene and good practices, noting the very high standard this year. The combination of the sustainability award with the quality awards this year was an indication they said, of the fact that quality and sustainability go hand in hand as pillars of what farming excellence looks like in West Cork. Owned by farming families, Carbery Group processed 596 million litres of milk in 2020, to produce award-winning cheeses and food ingredients in Ballineen, which were sold in over 50 international markets across the world.

There were three finalists from each West Cork Coop (Bandon, Barryroe, Lisavaid and Drinagh) for the Quality Award and the full list of nominees and winners is below. Carbery would like to congratulate all of the nominees and in

particular the winners from each Co-op.

Bandon Co-op

Aidan Mulcahy, Mishells, Bandon; Tony Hawkes, Keel, Upton (winner); Michael O'Sullivan, Laragh, Bandon.

Barryroe Co-op

Gerard Harte, Richfordstown, Clonakilty (winner); Ivor Anderson, Baurleigh, Bandon; Micheál White, Ardgehan, Timoleague

Drinagh Co-op

David Kingston, Curraghnaloughra, Drinagh; Elizabeth, David and Ian Warner, Upper Curraghlickey, Drinagh; John Collins, Caheragh North, Drinagh (winner)

Lisavaid Co-op

Vivian and Evan Buttimer, Crohane, Ballinscarthy; Ronald and Brian Shorten, Woodfield, Clonakilty (winners); Conor Murphy, Clonlea, Clonakilty.



Ronald and Brian Shorten, Lisavaid Co-op, overall winners at the Carbery Milk Quality and Sustainability Awards 2021. Photo: Don MacMonagle



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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For the first time in my lifetime, there's been a TB reactor on the farm: Two of them. It's disappointing, but all I can do now is go through the process involved and hope it works out. As a result, the herd is now locked up. That doesn't mean myself or the cattle are physically tied up, it's not as draconian as it sounds; it just means I'm unable to sell cattle to other farmers or through the mart. There's a valuation process put in place before the reactors are taken from the farm and, as I'm discovering, there's plenty of paperwork and reading involved.

The fact that all cattle born here are eventually sold to a meat processor means TB is more of an inconvenience to me in comparison to dairy farms. They're dealing with a more consumer-ready product, so there's a bit more work for them to do. I now need to have two clear herd tests before the herd is deemed clear. The days between tests are my least favourite days of the year and the fact there's to be two more tests before April doesn't fill me with joy.

While testing, the vet pointed out that he'd never seen so many flies around this late in the year. I don't recall a November as mild as this but maybe it's balancing out the cold first fortnight in May. I keep telling myself that anyway, although I have this fear that we haven't had as many gale force winds in these parts that we normally have, so that's going to balance out

Success is finding the positive



The mild weather has seen grazing conditions hold well throughout November.

somewhere along the line.

Weaning

Weaning is nearly complete with just six calves left on the cows. These were all born from late May onwards and are likely to remain with their mothers until January. The weaning process hasn't been as noisy as I expected. The calves had developed a habit of going off and doing their own thing when they were grazing, so that bit of independence helps. The first evening, it was the cows making most of the racket and it took a few days for the calves to notice, but they don't seem too bothered.

Farm policy

The three big-ticket items of the year in farm policy are drawing to a conclusion. A new Nitrates action plan is almost over the line. The biggest issue of note in this is that it is a two-year derogation, whereas to date it has always been four years. Extra details emerged regarding carbon budgets too. A weak point in the plan regarding emissions from agriculture is putting so much faith in technology adoption when the track record hasn't exactly set the world on fire. Will more extreme measures be put upon farmers if there's no reduction in emissions?

Two solutions to lowering emissions on the beef side are reducing the age of slaughter and that of first calving. Within both options there's good news and bad news regarding the uptake of both.

On lowering the age of calving, starting with the positives, according to ICBF statistics, the percentage of heifers calved aged between 22 and 26 months has increased by two per cent from 21 to 23 per cent.

The bad news is that this rise took place over a decade, from 2012 to 2021.

Lowering the average slaughter age is achievable. An increase in beef-sired heifers from the dairy herd are well capable of being finished at grass before their second winter. Getting too fat, too soon, and at uneconomical carcass weight for both farmer and processor is one of their challenges. Also worth bearing in mind is that the removal of the 30-month limit on cattle was one of the central demands at the 2019 beef protests.

CAP

The CAP consultation process is drawing to a close with the deadline for public submissions in early December. The policy, containing the highest portion of the EU budget, has passed a final vote in Brussels. With that hurdle cleared it's now up to the member states to dot the I's and cross the T's on the final make-up of what farmers will have to deal with, as it's implemented. Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue conducted a series of meetings at marts around the country, speaking and listening to farmers. The temperature of those meetings rose considerably as details of the CAP changes emerged. Farmers on higher overall payments will see the annual payment capped at €66,000 per year. For context, the average payment in 2020 to the 122,281 farmers who received a CAP payment was €9,794. The average annual payment convergence, which is the levelling off of the payment per hectare each farmer receives, will see both winners and losers. In excess of 70,000 farmers stand to gain from this. For those who lose

out, it's proving to be a very sore point so interesting times lay ahead on the CAP front yet.

Fertiliser prices




Whatever anyone says about 2021, it has certainly been a busy year in the agricultural sector. A bit of calmness would be welcome, but a major blip in the form of record fertiliser

prices stands in the way.

A positive from the hike in fertiliser prices is that it could play a part in putting a dent in emissions for 2022 but, as it stands, non-organic farmers will have to use their fertiliser far more strategically in 2022. Global demand and geo-politics are all putting pressure on fertilisers, so it's not a local

issue.

The price rise could lead to more farmers looking at organic production especially with funding for the organic sector dramatically increases in the new CAP. Lack of demand is a stumbling block but there's a strong possibility the shift in fertiliser price will get many farmers thinking differently.

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people Farming

FodderBox leading a farming revolution

FodderBox, a Carrigtwohill based company, was one of nine companies selected to take part in UCD's new AgTechUCD Agccelerator Programme. The founder of Fodderbox, Ella Goddin has developed and built a fully-fitted, self-contained, computer-controlled fodder production system that arrives on-site, ready to plug and play. The system is capable of producing one ton of fresh premium fodder per day in pure water.

Roughly the size of a standard shipping container, the 40ft x 9ft fodder box is comparable in terms of production to a 40-acre field. Coming at a cost of €60,000, it just requires seed, water and electricity, along with about an hour per day for harvesting, cleaning and reseeded. The plants grow through a system called hydroponics, which is basically growing crops without soil. The water provides nutrients, hydration, and oxygen to plant life, a practice that is common in the horticultural world.

Fodderbox was the winner of the UCD Lyons Agritech award in the 2021 Innovation arena awards at the 2021 National Ploughing Championships.

Tommy Moyles chats to Ella Goddin about her ground-breaking fodder production system and finds out what it will mean for farmers in West Cork

Ella, could you describe FodderBox in less than 10 words?

It's tack-able land that prints premium grass grown in pure water.

What are the advantages to using this system?

A healthier planet, healthier livestock and healthier bottom line.

How much money can it potentially save farmers?

It could save €50,000 per year if you replace 180 tons of grain-based feed with HydroFodder. We've also had enquiries to see if a system can be developed to grow fodder that can be used in anaerobic digesters.

What are the benefits to animal health?

Germination literally creates digestive enzymes; similarly, the bulk of the nutritive value is created at germination; so HydroFodder is peak nutrition that is highly digestible, which increases the efficiency of the feed conversion or turning food into energy. Because digestion is the biggest energy cost an animal has, dialling down that energy cost means you are dialling up the energy available for everything else, like immunity and fertility and weight gain and milk production. By increasing the efficiency of the feed conversion where the reduction of methane and ammonia occur, as they are waste products of feed



conversion, this means more efficiency and less waste.

As a farmer from Bere Island who has been feeding Organic HydroFodder produced in equipment he built himself, wrote to me: "The benefits to the cattle are plain to see."

What type of labour hours can be expected with Fodderbox?

The AutoFodderBox is fully automatic, there is no daily labour, only maintenance.

In layman's terms please describe the technology?

It's growing grass in pure water. It uses drip and spray irrigation, UV water infiltration and proprietary LED lighting, all without fertiliser and pesticide use.

Is it easy to use?

AutoFodderBox is fully automatic. Training is provided. The fully automatic version should be available in Ireland in March but it is possible to make custom builds.

When and why did you set up the business?

During the Irish Fodder Crisis in 2018, farmers were ringing my gardening shop desperately looking for hydroponic fodder production equipment. My business partner told me one gentleman was nearly in tears having lost so many lambs. It broke my heart. I was in San Francisco at the time with the Lord Mayor of Cork on a Cork-San Francisco Sister City delegation; I've been on the Cork San Francisco Twinning Committee for 14

years now. When I got home I made it my mission to listen to those farmers, and bring hydroponic fodder production to Ireland.

What are your future ambitions?

Ireland is at the top of the leader board in sustainable farming and that must mean sustainable for the farmer. If farming isn't sustainable for the farmers it's not sustainable farming. For example, I want to facilitate Irish farmers selling their animal products directly to customers in the most lucrative markets.

What's your own background?

I was born in a tiny town in Florida called Crescent City. More people attended the annual Catfish Festival there than lived in the town. I spent most of my time outside climbing orange trees and building things in my dad's shop. I thought I'd be a veterinarian but I went into business instead. I lived in Switzerland, England and now Ireland, which I consider the best country in the world. I brought the Elizabeth Fort on Barrack Street in Cork back into public use with a six-week market fest and full-scale ice rink and ran it for Cork City Council.

Sometimes to think outside the box,
we need to think inside the box.



FODDERBOX
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2021 National Ploughing Championships

fodderbox.ie

Joe Healy joins Cultivate as Non-Executive Chair

At a recent Collaborative Finance CLG EGM, Joe Healy was announced as the new non-executive chair. Collaborative Finance is best known for its Cultivate farm loan offering, which is available in over 110 credit union locations across the country. Irish farmers are increasingly turning to Cultivate when looking to source finance, with loan applications growing by 50 per cent in the first six months of 2021, as compared to 2020.

With considerable board level experience with organisations including the FBD plc, Bord Bia, IFA, and Copa Cogeca, Mr Healy will add significantly to the Board. Commenting on his new appointment Mr Healy said:

"I'm delighted to take on my new role as chair on the Collaborative Finance board. I'm looking forward to helping the Cultivate brand grow as farmers look for alternative ways to finance the development of their businesses. As a farmer myself, I know the importance of locally provided financial services, especially with the closure of rural bank branches all around

the country.

"I've been very impressed with the people involved in Collaborative Finance and am excited to work with them so that the organisation reaches its potential and makes a real impact in families and communities across the country."

Bantry Credit Union has been offering Cultivate loans since April 2019. Finbarr O'Shea, Manager at Bantry Credit Union, is a member of the Board of Collaborative

Finance CLG and he is also Chair of the National Cultivate Marketing Group. Welcoming this announcement, Finbarr said: "This appointment marks a great day for Cultivate. Having someone like Joe Healy come on board and join us on the Cultivate journey gives us great confidence about where we can take Cultivate both nationally and within our local community."

"We welcome the opportunity to work with Joe and look forward to exploring together how we can spread the word about the farmer friendly finance that is offered by Bantry Credit Union."



Joe Healy has been appointed Chair of Cultivate. Pic: Ray Ryan



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HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

In 1954, USA, the civil rights movement won a landmark case which ruled that the segregation (the deliberate and legal separation of the white and black races), of schools was unconstitutional. This landmark case, known as 'Brown v Board', would mean the dismantling of all segregated institutions from Mississippi to Maine, from New York to New Orleans. Sounds like a marvellous victory? Almost. One seemingly innocuous phrase scuppered the whole process. There was no legal timeframe or timetable by which these institutions such as schools, universities and libraries would legally have to desegregate. The key phrase in the legislation was the term 'all deliberate speed'. At first glance, it may seem this is an invite to hasten speedy change. The more legalistically- and cynically-minded opponents to the legislation soon realised that 'all deliberate speed' was vague enough to be interpreted as any indefinite timeframe. What followed was a purposeful stalling of time, which resulted in little to no desegregation in many parts of the states. It took many more deaths, protests, laws and presidential influence, before this was rectified and replaced by a genuine workable law a decade later.

Looking at the language of

COP26 or cop out?

the COP26 final document, much of what was good about it will be defined by similar vague references. Despite reaching an agreement with 197 countries that signed off on it, it lost much of its potency with literally a last-minute change. The phrase phase 'down' the use of coal, as opposed to phasing it 'out', was added. This seemingly inconsequential word will reduce the potency of the agreement in a way the phrase 'all deliberate speed' undermined the 1954 Brown v Board legislation. No wonder the chairman at the conference, Alok Sharma was close to an emotional breakdown, understanding that this blatant word change, at the behest of China and India, undermined all the rest of the document. The phrase is vague enough to allow all the powerhouses to continue to burn large amounts of coal, at a non-quantified 'reduced' level, making it impossible to hit the all-important 1.5 temperature target that is the minimum we are told, to prevent the planet from irreversible damage. In order to achieve our goals, world emissions must drop by 7.2 per cent annually. Yet emissions only dropped by 6.4 per cent last year when the whole world stood still during the pandemic. 'Reducing' the production and use of coal, will never be enough.

While any free thinking and educated person can no longer ignore the science (and the weather – have we ever seen a milder winter? And let's not forget the hurricanes, heatwaves, floods and snowfalls, just in the last half dozen years in Ireland), when it comes down to personal responsibility will we take the requisite action? When the shoe fits, we accuse our government of being a nanny state; a government that tries to tell

us how to live. Back in 2004, how many were aghast that the government had the audacity to tell us where and when we could smoke? And didn't they have the same audacity again, daring to tell us not celebrate Christmas too much during the rapid, raging, rise of Covid? Did we listen when warnings were issued that society could close down in January and hospitals could be overrun? So why will people listen now when it comes to changing their lifestyles to save the planet?

We want our government and other world leaders, to act to combat global warming, but how soon will it be, before we accuse them again of too much interference in our private lives? Not long I'm guessing. Supporting climate change in the abstract is easy. Save the polar bears from the melting snowcaps; stop the rain forest from being cut down, tell China to stop polluting their rivers. All honourable causes, but none of these have a day-to-day, direct, tangible impact on us here. So let's move from the abstract to specific daily issues to really see what we would do to stop climate change.

I bet you agree that the national herd should be cut, if you are not a farmer and it doesn't affect you, I reckon you think electric cars are a great idea, if you are a high-income earner and living in urban areas with lots of electric charge spots. I'm going to guess that as a nation, little to none of us will stop using air travel, since we can't drive or get the bus or train to Paris, Vienna and Rome, like our fellow continentals who have the choice of not using air travel. And if a recent RTE survey is anything to go by, I'm imagining most people think retro-fitting for their house is

a brilliant idea, because (a) It will save you money on your bills, (b) You'll only do it if the government pays for it, and (c) In third place, it will be good for the environment. Let us see how supportive we are when new carbon taxes add to the burgeoning household bills? I'm not immune to any of these criticisms myself, but I want to be clear. Unless we all invest in real change, then whatever the document at COP26 prescribes, all the far-off abstract ideas will be futile.

The 'Green hypocrisy' of the human race is everywhere. In the weeks running up to COP26, a few hours south of Glasgow, the city of Newcastle was draped in the royal flag of Saudi Arabia, the world's largest producer of oil. A government-backed Saudi Arabian consortium has just purchased their newest plaything – a Premiership club called Newcastle United. The Saudis are ruled by a despotic royal dynasty, where democracy and free press are non-existent. It is a barren land for women's rights, which remain basic. The royal family courts both the Americans and far right Jihadist groups. When a journalist called Jamal Khashoggi tried to write about the many human rights abuses, they sent a government agent to assassinate him in a Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Yet all is forgiven and forgotten by football fans because they are going to spend 'gazillions' of pounds on extremely skilled and pampered footballers who will be kissing the badge of Newcastle FC one week, despite not being able to locate it on a map, the week before. Football lovers will not question the oil money used to fund their team. After all don't some of these fans do their part

and, reuse, recycle and reduce at the weekend? Whether it's Newcastle, Chelsea, Man City or any other team, sport or institution, built on with oil money, nobody will care about the pollution created by their benefactors. They will not protest on the street condemning this as dirty money, made from the destruction of our planet. Why? Because they will argue that saving of the planet is only down to our governments. They will declare that the ordinary man and woman have no influence. They will sing a catchy song from the terrace about their new owners and Saudi prince and all will be forgiven when they beat another oil baron-funded team.

Yet there is a part of me that is hopeful. The COP26 was unimaginable a generation ago. In the last few decades, countries are no longer decrying climate change as a fantastical tale. We have seen the emergence of wind, tidal and solar energy that was once an epic science fiction. When I was a kid, the word recycling did not exist.

Today it is an integral function of daily life. Young people have a lot more education, and can be influencers on a greater scale, (with no little help from social media), more than any generation that has lived on the planet. Greta Thunberg is the current face of this youthful uprising. Political parties with green agendas are getting into governments across the world. Is this enough to create the chasmic shift we need? For the cynical, it is as far away as ever. For the hopeful, it was merely a single word change away, at COP26. Time is ticking. We must accept the inevitable and take personal responsibility. Yet we must continue to agitate our governments for more tangible changes too beyond the capabilities of the ordinary person.

People laughed at Greta Thunberg for her 'hysterics', when she warned us of global extinction if we don't act. Remember, they laughed at Noah when he was building his ark and we all know how that turned out!

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people Environment : Making a difference

Kilcoe Studios Calendar takes a brief look at the history of Irish woodlands

The theme of the 2022 Kilcoe Studios Calendar, 'Irish Native Woodlands', was in many ways very challenging says Sonia Caldwell. "You would think there are so many beautiful trees and plants in the woodland that it should not be a problem but, compared to the delicate small plants, which I have painted in recent years, the woodland presents such a rich depth of life. This is on such a huge scale, that I felt I could never represent it in these few images. But then, this calendar cannot

aim to do that – a set of images can never fully represent all the senses and other feelings we get when we're in the woodlands. The images can focus on the details of just a few of the plants that make up our woodlands and enrich our understanding of this wonderful habitat."

With each month there are also interesting facts about each of the plants and trees that are represented. In the back of the calendar is some history of Irish woodlands, as illustrated below.

"The history of our woodlands is complex and is

wrapped up in politics and commerce. It is not as simple as thinking that our trees were cut down to make the large ships of the earlier centuries. At one point, woodland would have covered about 80 per cent of the country. Currently the cover is about 11 per cent, however only two per cent is native woodland, the rest being spruce plantations for timber production.

"The first people came to Ireland around 7,500 BC but they were mainly hunters and gatherers and did little damage to the woodlands. The Neolithic people came here around 4,500 BC and they were farmers who started to slowly clear patches of land, but the population was still small, so they had little impact. From then to up to the 14th century human activity had only a small impact on the

forests and a large proportion of land was still forested. By the 17th and 18th centuries much of the clearance had taken place.

"Many economic and political developments over the last few centuries impacted our woodlands. Wood was hugely valuable as charcoal for smelting iron, without which our cities would not have been built. Also, other industries like shipbuilding, construction, barrels, crates, tanning (oak bark) – were thriving and helping to create this developed country. The 18th century started to see a gradual awareness of our woodland cover and some incentives were introduced. However, this was mainly by way of managed woodland in large private estates, many of which, unfortunately, were cut for timber by the landlords



when land was transferred from landlord to tenant in the 19th century. By then, there was a deep sense that tree cover was something for the landed gentry and not for the new Irish private ownership whose focus was understandably on farming the land for food. Many sawmills closed and timber soon became something that was imported. Our thinking has certainly changed around forestry, but there is still a battle of minds over the best way to use our

land. Of course, the topic is also so much tied with what should be the most discussed topic this Christmas, Climate change, as we look to see what we can do to turn things around. So have a happy and sustainable Christmas, buy and eat local and give or plant a tree for Christmas.'

The Calendar is available to buy from Kilcoe Studios website. www.kilcoestudios.com as well as a selection of shops in West Cork.

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An initiative that makes sense

Cycle Sense, operating in Skibbereen since 2007, was set up with the ambition to get children out of cars and on to their bikes on the way to school. The initiative was formed to increase exercise and road safety and as a way of

promoting active transport to help the environment.

Cycle Sense collects bikes and paint waste left at Derryconnell Civic Amenity Site and Clonakilty Recycling Centre.

Over the years Cycle Sense has expanded and is now operat-

ing at an ideal base, the Skibbereen Showgrounds on the Mill Rd, Skibbereen, where busy mechanics repair and up-cycle bicycles on a daily basis.

There are also racks of paint pots ready to be sieved, re-mixed, repotted and sold under

the brand of Revive Paint.

This is a local positive initiative finding ways to up-cycle and contribute to a more circular economy.

Keep an eye out in West Cork People for future news at Cycle Sense.



by Nicholas Mitchell

I am writing this during the third week of November. Ordinarily, bird feeders would have been placed around the garden three weeks ago, but it has been such a mild autumn that this has not been necessary. The birds have been less in need of supplementary food during this warmer spell and there is still an abundance of hips and haws on the native roses and hawthorns that we planted in the garden sixteen years ago. A non-native Cotoneaster and (I whisper this) a short hedge of Rosa rugosa also provide a good natural food source. Rosa rugosa, a rose from temperate Asia, is now deemed an invasive species in the wild so consideration needs to be given to grubbing it up some time soon. However, until that happens, its fat hips continue to be a magnet for Greenfinch, Goldfinch and House Sparrow at this time

Winter in the garden

of year. Some days there are as many as twenty or more Greenfinch gorging on the seeds. And one day I may see a visiting Waxwing on the Cotoneaster.

As well as growing trees and shrubs for their berries, delaying the pruning of dead or dying branches until later in the winter, provides the birds with a foraging opportunity. Members of the Tit family can be seen and heard picking at the bark in search of invertebrates (listen out for their tap, tap, tapping). And then there is the leaf fall battle. No sooner are the paths swept clear of leaves than Blackbirds arrive to fossick about in the leaf litter and flick it back on the path in their endeavours to find food. Our mantra, especially at this time of year, is to leave large parts of the garden as 'untidy' as we can bear. The aim is to provide a space that provides the human inhabitants with joy and the rest of the animal kingdom with a habitat for food and shelter. This can be achieved in a garden of any size – it's simply a matter of scale.

However, the weather forecast is indicating that we are due for frosty mornings and colder

days. No doubt these will have already arrived by the time that you read this. The days also are much shorter, and that leaves less time for birds to feed. So, the feeders that were washed and stored away in April, are now back in the garden. I generally use a combination of peanuts, sunflower seeds and hearts that have a high protein and energy content and are eaten by a range of different birds. As it gets colder, I may supplement this with higher energy foods such as fat or suet balls. Apples and pears cut up and put on the lawn or a shed roof will benefit Blackbirds and, if put whole in a tree, may even attract a Blackcap that has decided to overwinter here instead of migrating south. Birds also need fresh water but make sure that it doesn't freeze over.

Feeders are best placed within a few paces of a tree, hedge, or bush. This provides birds with both shelter and a place to escape to. If you can find a spot that can be viewed from the house, that's a bonus. Last, but by no means least, good feeder hygiene is important. As more birds start to use your feeders,

there will be an increased risk of the transfer of infection, bacteria, and parasites, such as Trichomoniasis. Scrubbing your feeders every couple of weeks using a mild five per cent bleach solution should avoid this. Let them dry completely before putting them back up.

Now you can sit back and enjoy the sight and sounds of the birds in your garden, be it on the feeders, or washing and drinking in the bird bath, or grubbing about on the ground. And, while you are doing that, why not take part in BirdWatch Ireland's Garden Bird Survey? This is something that everyone can take part in and will also make an excellent school project. This year it runs from Monday, November 29, 2021 to Sunday, February 27, 2022. Go to birdwatchireland.ie where you can find more information and download a survey form. The Branch would love to hear about the birds in your garden, or difficulties with bird identification. You can post pictures, stories, and questions on our Facebook Page (search for @BirdWatchIrelandWestCork on Facebook or Messenger) or on



A male Greenfinch. Pic Nicolas Mitchell

Twitter @BWWestCork.

At least for the time being, the Branch is running outings again and our next one is the Christmas walk on Tuesday, December 28, meeting at the Long Strand car park at 11am. To receive up to date news about events and, given the current situation, cancellations, join our mailing list (details below). Finally, please think about supporting the work of BirdWatch Ireland by giving a Membership as a Christmas gift or buying

your feeders and high-quality bird food from the BirdWatch Ireland shop (birdwatchireland.ie/shop).

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

people Environment : Making a difference

€60 million for community climate action projects

Funding of €60 million has been granted from the Climate Action Fund for community climate action projects, and a new long-term structure to support public engagement on climate action, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan says.

The €60 million from the Climate Action Fund will be invested in community climate action projects and initiatives, as well as capacity building, over the next three years.

"The overall objective is to support and empower communities to shape and build low

carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"I urge community groups to apply for this funding. It will help fund and find creative solutions at a local level, whether it's promoting biodiversity or funding an electric vehicle for a community group to make greener transport more accessible."

The programme will roll out in two phases. €30 million will be allocated for the first phase.

Examples of projects to be funded may include: community EV charging points; small

renewable energy projects; community EVs; cycle parking; repair hubs; and community biodiversity gardens.

Minister Eamon Ryan also announced the launch of a new National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA).

Deputy O'Sullivan, who is vice chair of the climate action committee, welcomed the NDCA and said it will help promote public engagement and participation on Climate action.

"It will give everyone the opportunity to engage constructively," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

Save A Sod

Green Sod Ireland is asking the public to consider an alternative gift this Christmas. One that gives back and helps them in their work by 'Saving A Sod' of Ireland. Funds donated will be used to protect the land and species already in trust including a site in Rosscarbery.

The Save A Sod campaign will help protect wild spaces and Irish Biodiversity from decline. Put your name to as little as one sod or dedicate one or more to a friend, colleague or family member. greensodireland.ie/saveasod



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A New Year's pledge



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes

It is “code red for humanity...The world is running out of time,” declared UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres at the start of COP26.

But even as we all know this, still we wait!

Forty-four years ago ExxonMobil senior scientist James Black told the fossil fuel executives that, “Man has a time window of five to ten years before the need for hard decisions regarding changes in energy strategies might become critical...Once the effects are measurable, they might not be reversible.”

In 1977 ExxonMobil senior scientist James F. Black told Exxon's management committee of top executives that, “general scientific agreement is that the most likely manner in which mankind is influencing the global climate is through carbon dioxide release from the burning of fossil fuels... There are some potentially catastrophic events that must be considered...Rainfall might get heavier in some regions, and

other places might turn to desert...[Some countries] would have their agricultural output reduced or destroyed...”

At that time Clifton C Garvin Jr. was the CEO and just months after that report was delivered to the Executive, Exxon set up its own research programme into carbon dioxide from fossil fuels and its impact on the earth. This was an ambitious research program collating both empirical CO2 sampling and rigorous climate modelling; spending more than a decade deepening the company's understanding of an environmental problem that posed an existential threat to the oil business and to the world. Exxon became a pioneer in climate change research, funding internal and university collaborations, developing expertise in atmospheric carbon dioxide and collaborating on the publishing of dozens of research papers supporting an emerging consensus that fossil fuel emissions pose significant risk.

Then in 1987 Lee Raymond, one of the most outspoken business executives in the United States, and totally against any regulation introducing measures to curtail activities that increase Climate Change, became president and later took on the role of CEO of Exxon.

From that point on Exxon put millions of dollars each year into climate denial, suppressing the research that they had for ten years funded; and instead financing the promotion of misinformation about the reality of Climate Change, much the same as the tobacco industry had

funded misinformation about the health risk of smoking.

In 2005, as competing major oil companies started to diversify into alternative energy and renewable fuels, Exxon-Mobil re-affirmed its mission as an oil and gas company. Lee Raymond retired from Exxon in 2006 with a retirement package worth about \$400 million.

In 2011, 34 years on from the meeting where James Black first explained the dangers to the Exxon Executive, Exxon-Mobil, under the stewardship of Rex Tillerson, launched its ‘Protect Tomorrow Today Programme’ which the company says, defines its approach to the environment.

The company website boasts of 40 years of climate-science research, in partnership with governments and academic institutions, yet despite these boasts (which are undoubtedly stretching the truth), in 2010 Tillerson said that while he acknowledged humans were affecting the climate through greenhouse gas emissions to some degree, it was not yet clear “to what extent and therefore what can you do about it”. In 2012 he stated that “there are much more pressing priorities (than climate change) that we – as a human being, race, and society need to deal with...you’d save millions upon millions of lives by making fossil fuels more available to the world’s poor...”

In 2021, now under the direction of Darren Woods as CEO, at a time when countries are recognising the urgency of

reducing reliance on fossil fuels, Exxon are following a strategy that includes a massive increase in drilling to boost production by about one million barrels per day and increasing its annual carbon emissions by about 17 per cent, or about as much as the annual output of Greece.

In October 2021, less than a month before Cop26, Woods who was paid \$15,639,061 in salary and benefits last year, was accused of lying to congress when questioned under oath at a congressional hearing into the industry's long campaign to discredit and deny the evidence that burning fossil fuels drove global warming.

He, along with the heads of Shell, Chevron and BP denied that they covered up the climate science Exxon had funded and also declined to make a pledge to stop lobbying against climate initiatives.

Indeed, ExxonMobil became part of a formal advisory structure to the UK Government's efforts to integrate carbon capture into its net zero strategy, meeting with Top UK government officials many times in the run up to Cop26, where, as reported by the BBC, representatives from the fossil fuel industry outnumbered any other category of representative.

Whilst it is easy to write this story decrying those who stand to make so much money from continuing to drill for oil and gas, cataloguing the deceptions they have upheld and continue to uphold, it is much harder to even hold in my own head the enormous implications of action

to transition away from fossil fuels.

How many of us, for example, pick a pension fund based on it having no investment in fossil fuels? Yet research from The University of Amsterdam suggests that pension funds from the 38 OECD member countries may jointly manage as much as €828 billion in liquid fossil fuel assets! Pension funds are not fully committed to leaving fossil fuels underground and thus, possibly inadvertently, we, the environmentally-aware public, continue to invest in the same companies that we decry, continue to invest in the devastation caused by man-made climate change.

Had we listened to James F. Black 44 years ago, we could have started a gradual transition from fossil fuels, investing over time in sustainable alternatives and all the time reducing carbon emissions and mitigating against global warming, but we are now beyond the eleventh hour.

Like many people, I was horrified that so many fossil fuel lobbyists had access to decision makers at COP26. However, without including ALL stakeholders we simply will not start to tackle this crisis effectively and so we must include the fossil fuel giants, the investment banks and pension funds, insurance companies and business as a whole. We must put together the complete picture and seriously work at what is glibly known as ‘just transition’.

We are almost out of time... the few positive moves that

resulted from Cop26 were but baby steps; and we, as individuals, cannot simply point to the failure of our leaders, or opt out of our part in causing this. Those baby steps that are being hailed as ‘at least something’ only came through because of the pressure of the voters and future voters; because our own children were in the streets during COP26 fighting to wake us all up.

As the renowned climate scientist Michael E. Mann says in his book ‘The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet’.

“The youngest generation is fighting tooth and nail to save their planet, and there is a moral authority and clarity in their message that none but the most jaded ears can fail to hear. They are the game-changers that climate advocates have been waiting for.”

It is our moral obligation to fully educate ourselves, looking at all sides of this; listening openly so that we may understand fully the perspectives from all sides; AND to relentlessly pressure those who hold the power to act fully.

This means using your vote intelligently. It means following environmental and climate news across the world, it means reading behind the headlines and digging for truth. It means thinking globally and acting locally without fear or compromise. It means listening to our children and our grandchildren.

This pledge should be your New Year's resolution as the clock ticks over into 2022.

Fish farm claim that algae blooms are ‘natural’ contested as 80,000 salmon die

Mass mortalities reported by Mowi (formerly Marine Harvest) because of algae blooms at two of their salmon farms in Bantry Bay are ‘partly caused the farms themselves’, according to local group Save Bantry Bay.

Algal blooms are becoming an increasing problem worldwide, with salmon farms in Chile reporting losses recently of 6,000 tons of fish. The recent death of 80,000 mature salmon at two of Mowi's sites in Bantry Bay

is said by the company to be as a result of a toxic algal bloom in late October. The true extent of the losses has not been fully established yet. The deaths have occurred only a few kilometres from the controversial proposed new mega-salmon farm site at Shot Head.

Blooms, which are monitored by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, regularly force closure of the many mussel farms in the Bay, though the Department of Agriculture website does not show any algal blooms severe enough to stop mussel harvesting at this time.

Overproduction of salmon in a confined area fuels the problem as their waste enriches the waters around the open

cages. Cases of Sudden Death Syndrome have been reported previously in the company's operations in Bantry Bay, a condition that which can trigger mass mortality in mature fish from even minor increases in stress.

According to the Company, the cause of death is a ‘naturally occurring toxic plankton bloom exacerbated by warmer waters which leads to the proliferation of various types of harmful plankton.’

However, Alex O'Donovan, Secretary of Save Bantry Bay, says the Company knows well that, “There is nothing ‘natural’ about toxic algae blooms, which are caused by an increase in nutrients in the water from caus-

es such as the discharges from the salmon farms themselves, which emits vast quantities of waste food and fish faeces directly into the waters.

“The Company's own Environmental Impact Statement makes it clear that that this is not a ‘natural’ phenomenon, stating: ‘The undesirable result of this is termed eutrophication, which is characterised by unnatural levels of plant growth (algae and phytoplankton in the aquatic environment).’ [EIS Vol. 1 p. 201]”

“The Company now has no choice but to face the fact that open cage salmon farming discharges all its waste into surrounding waters, enriching them. The Company's own En-

vironmental Impact Assessment records that the nutrient load on the Bay from the proposed Shot Head farm will be the equivalent of a town four times the size of Bantry for sewage phosphorus waste and 10 times the size of Bantry for sewage nitrogen waste. [EIS Vol. 1 p. 298]

“At Shot Head the water circulates even more slowly than the outer bay where this mass fish kill has occurred. Slower circulating water means less dispersal of salmon farm waste, and more algal blooms.

“Nor is the company's attempt to shift the blame to global warming supported by any scientific research as scientific efforts to separate this from other causal factors are to date inconclusive.”

Kieran O'Shea, Chair of Save Bantry Bay said, “It's time for salmon farming to move to land-based tanks where all the inputs and outputs are controlled, just as our farmers must

do on land. The technology is up and running in other countries and Ireland needs to follow to create a sustainable salmon farming industry which does not damage a Bay depending on fishing and tourism and previously known worldwide for its natural environment.”

The licence granted to the company for the 5,000-ton installation at Shot Head near Adrigole now faces three Judicial Reviews, including one from the State Agency Inland Fisheries Ireland. There are 14 Notice Parties to the Judicial Reviews, including Save Bantry Bay and Friends of the Irish Environment.

Two further Judicial Reviews are being brought by Salmon Watch Ireland and octogenarian environmental campaigner Peter Sweetman.

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COMPETITION

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Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce is offering five readers a €100 voucher each to experience for themselves all that Clonakilty has to offer this Christmas. You can spend your voucher in over 60 local businesses including shops, supermarkets, fuel suppliers, health practitioners and more.

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Since its installation in Summer 2020, The Truce Mural on Clonakilty's Kent Street has already become a much loved Clonakilty icon.

To be in with a chance of winning a €100 voucher, circle the 6 differences between the real Truce Mural (top) and the doctored version on the bottom.

Take a photo and email it, with your name & phone number to info@westcorkpeople.ie before December 13. Please put 'Clonakilty Competition' in the subject line.

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Neil, Teresa, Michael Snr, Gearóid and Michael Jnr of Fernhill House, Clonakilty at the launch of Fernhill Garden Gin.

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To celebrate the O'Neill family's 75th year at Fernhill House Hotel & Gardens in Clonakilty, the innovative hoteliers have launched their new Fernhill Garden Gin, just in time for Christmas.

Fernhill's bar manager Gearóid O'Neill, who, with his brothers Michael and Neil, is the fourth generation of the family to run this historic hotel, elaborates on why they decided to develop their own superior gin.

"We really wanted to mark our 75th year with something special. We chose to create a gin that is inspired by our gardens, with a unique West Cork flavour. To have our own gin to accompany our homemade elderflower cordial, to add to our sorbets, desserts, as part of our wedding drinks receptions or simply just for our guests to enjoy in our bar is exciting."

Neil O'Neill describes the gin as having floral notes, with hints of lavender and citrus. "To achieve the flavour we used foraged botanicals from the West Cork countryside and flowers from our magnificent gardens. We also designed our own gin glasses, which we were delighted to be able to source locally."

"We are so looking forward to everyone trying our gin and hope that bars, restaurants and hotels will stock it so it can be enjoyed all over West Cork."

The bottle design was also influenced by the gardens and Fernhill's standing as a historic country house; it features a

design by one of the Georgian periods most celebrated artists, William Morris. The label, with striking gold touches, is in keeping with Fernhill's vintage themed branding.

For Christmas, and special occasions going forward, Fernhill has created a signature gin hamper to accompany its always popular voucher gift cards for Afternoon Tea and Sunday Lunch. The hampers consist of a bottle of Fernhill Garden Gin, two engraved gin glasses, two Fever Tree tonics, Fernhill's homemade elderflower cordial and Fernhill's signature cocktail recipes, beautifully packaged

and wrapped...the perfect gift to spoil someone special.

Individual bottles of Fernhill Garden Gin for €36 or Gin Hampers for €65 are available to buy for Christmas from the hotel's reception by calling (023) 8833258 or online at www.fernhillhousehotel.com.

Neil promises tasters won't be disappointed, "The feedback that we have received about the bottle, and most importantly the taste of our gin has been fantastic. We are all hugely excited and cannot wait to share it with everyone."

✂ CUT-OUT & KEEP RECIPES

Fernhill's Elderflower Gin Fizz

The newly launched Fernhill Garden Gin is delicious on its own with a premium tonic, a generous slice of orange, fresh garden mint and ice. It is also perfect as the star of this cocktail, which is sure to impress your guests.

Ingredients:

- 35ml Fernhill Garden Gin
- 35ml elderflower cordial
- 10ml lime juice
- Prosecco
- Lime peel twists to garnish

Combine the gin, elderflower and lime juice in a shaker. Pour into a champagne flute and top with chilled prosecco. Garnish with a lime twist.



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Thank you to all for your support in 2021. I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas.

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CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS

Jean Perry

Jean Perry is a lifelong horticulturalist and campaigner for organic and sustainable farming and growing. She has been living and growing in Baltimore since 1989 where she ran The Glebe Cafe and Garden with her family.

With this series of articles I am lucky enough to be meeting and interviewing people who are not only committed to growing good quality nourish-

Living off the land

ing food, but also selling it to us directly in our local markets. Seasonal produce with no food miles, grown in a sustainable way, not wrapped in plastic; Brad and Dee from Lisheen Greens are all those things and more.

Brad was brought up in New Zealand and Australia and, after leaving home, he worked for 23-years in London. He had done a bit of landscape gardening but had no background in farming. He met Dee on a trip to Cork, which proved to be life-changing. Dee is a Marine Biologist and, as their relationship flourished, she agreed to move to London to be with Brad for a limited time while they decided on a permanent location in which to make their life together. Brad says that they started, almost immediately, to look for a property back in Ireland.

The couple were always looking for a rural life, maybe goat farming or even a campsite, but when the farm in Lisheen came up for sale, it seemed

the ideal opportunity. While unsure if a life of growing was for them, they were more than willing to give it a go. Luckily there were well-established asparagus beds already on the farm to give them a head-start in their early days. Now four seasons on, they grow a range of seasonal crops from salads and leafy greens and herbs to delicious tomatoes, courgettes and so on, as well as the asparagus and other seasonal bits and pieces in between. Brad is the main grower, Dee works part time as a Marine Biologist based in Bantry, not to mention caring for the three small children they now have, and they make a great team.

When I ask about the future, Brad is very sure he is now where he wants to be. He is quite surprised how much he loves growing. He has learned a lot along the way, from friends and neighbours who have been really generous with their time and sometimes equipment, but also from actual experience. Getting his hands in the soil,



working with the seasons and yes, sometimes making mistakes along the way. He has learned how to be more efficient with his time and learned new

techniques for weed control, suitable vegetable varieties to grow and what equipment and tools he needs for optimum production. He loves chatting to

his customers, getting to know them and what they need and like. He has decided now is a good time to put up two new tunnels. This will give him space to expand a bit and also give him time to refresh and renew his existing set up. He really seems to enjoy what he is doing and it shows.

Brad and Dee are very happy that they can bring up their family in this wonderful environment, where the children can run through the tunnels grazing and tasting what he's growing and learning from the nature that surrounds them.

Brad sees their future firmly grounded in Lisheen. He has come a long way in all respects and in his own words, would now be really disappointed if he wasn't getting out there each day, growing beautiful vegetables and living off the land.

You can meet Brad and Dee and buy their lovely produce in Skibbereen Farmers Market each Saturday and Schull Farmer's Market on Sundays through the summer months.

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EAT IN OR TAKEAWAY

The future is seaweed

Ireland has a long association with seaweed. In fact it used to be a staple of the Irish diet. However in the mid-19th century, around the time of the Famine, seaweed lost its favoured status on the Irish table and became seen instead as a food associated with poverty. In more recent times this marine bounty has experienced a renaissance due to its immense nutritional and health benefits, with companies like Roaring Water Sea Vegetable based in West Cork pioneering seaweed farming in Ireland.

Today Ireland's first seaweed farm, Roaring Water Seaweed co-op, produces a range of seaweed products for the kitchen. From vegan sausage burger and pudding made from homegrown wakame to Nori tapenade, Japanese miso and Sea moss syrup with new products being developed all the time. During lockdown, sales of the company's carrageen boomed in the UK. During this time the company also developed new premises in Ballydehob and were this year awarded a license to farm seaweed in the pristine waters of Dunmanus bay.

Founder of Roaring Water Sea Vegetables, Paul Cobb, first arrived in West Cork with his daughter in 2002 on a converted Cornish fishing boat. On a smallholding in Lisheen, Paul learned about harvesting seaweed, first for the garden and then edible varieties.

After building work dried up when the recession hit in 2008, Paul decided to study Aquaculture at The National Fisheries College of Ireland in Castletownbere, completing work experience with the local Roaring Water Seaweed co-op.

At the time BIM was pioneering growing 'brown' seaweeds: Paul realised he had found his niche, as he grew tons of golden wakame in the cold months of the year. While harvesting was relatively easy, marketing a forgotten food however was another story. "We were trying to sell a new taste and texture in a meat and dairy culture," explains Paul "which was challenging" While customers were willing to taste the product at his market stall, they were slow to purchase, as they weren't familiar with how to prepare it. As a result, Paul started selling ready-to-eat products – vegetarian sausage, pudding and burgers.

"Sea vegetables are a bit like fish, it's all in the preparation," he says. "If a crab is cooked and dressed, it's very popular, but confronted with the raw thing can be messy. I could afford to make these products, as we were growing so much wakame, so customers got the same propor-

tion of sea veg, as well as all the other high quality ingredients, for the price of the raw seaweed available in the shops. Our first customers were mostly vegetarian, as seaweed filled the gap nutritionally for them offering lots of extra minerals and trace elements."

As demand grew, so did the business, and Roaring Water Sea Vegetables started distributing further afield than West Cork, first to Cork, then Dublin, and then over to the UK. Forced to slow down due to supply chain issues, in 2014 Roaring Water Sea Vegetables was fortunate to be taken under the wing of a Japanese company, Itadaki Zen. "They became our mentors," says Paul "advising us about Japanese methods of curing and cooking with sea vegetable." Roaring Water Sea Vegetable's sausages still boast the highest proportion of sea vegetables, more than any other product on the market.

Paul was also inspired by chefs like Dr. Prannie Ratigan who, brought up on sea vegetables in Co. Sligo, helped to launch a revival with books like 'The Irish Seaweed Kitchen'. Sea vegetables are also a great accompaniment to fish and meat dishes and, in Japan, kombu kelp is the first thing put into stock to make dashi, which is the base for so many dishes like miso soup.

With the help of its Japanese partners, Roaring Water has recently imported the live culture to make miso in Ireland, a product that has been fermented for six months at a controlled temperature and is a probiotic, unpasteurised living food.

"Farming seaweed ticks so many boxes," shares Paul passionately. "It creates an environment for marine life to prosper, absorbs agricultural run-off, mitigates the environmental footprint of fish farms and requires no chemicals or fresh water."

"The West coast of Ireland is ideally situated for what is already a billion dollar industry in the Far East. Over the dormant winter months more tonnage of brown seaweeds can be



produced than the equivalent in land crops per hectare, whether it be as a food supplement for animals or humans."

Research is currently being carried out on growing red seaweeds like duilleasc and nori.

With the marine ecosystem in crisis, as illustrated by dwindling fish stocks; the kelp forest is the building block to supporting biodiversity.

"While mechanically harvesting wild kelp might be cheaper, growing seaweed is sustainable and has a positive environmental impact," says Paul.

"I think there's a huge future for seaweed aquaculture in Ireland with opportunities for marketing and processing like that in agriculture. From health products, food additives and animal supplements to biode-

gradable alternatives to plastic – we are all probably consuming seaweed in products across the board without realising it."

Once the Christmas rush is over, Paul and his family are looking forward to trying out some of Prannie Ratigan's delicious seaweed recipes from her new book 'The Christmas Seaweed kitchen'.

Try adding some nori in with the dried nuts and fruit to your Christmas cake or pudding this year: Subtle in flavour but rich in micronutrients, nori could be the secret ingredient your pudding was waiting for!

For more information or to purchase some of the products go to www.roaringwaterseavegetable.ie.

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✂ CUT-OUT & KEEP RECIPES

Date and apricot filo rolls



We all love a warm treat at this time of year. **Chef Adam Medcalf** at Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail shares a recipe that he says "is perfect for using up dried fruits that are leftover from making Christmas puddings and fruitcakes... or just hiding in the cupboard. Even after Christmas you can substitute the dry ingredients with leftover Christmas pudding or fruitcake as a different way of using them up."

Method
Heat 1tsp ground cinnamon, 125ml maple syrup and 50ml of water in a pan together.

Take the pan off the heat and add 200g chopped dates, 100g dried apricots, 50g

dried figs or sultanas and 150g chopped pistachios/walnuts. Mix well and cool. Brush six pieces of filo pastry with 100ml of melted butter or vegan spread, sit another six sheets on top. Divide your mix between the six sheets diagonally, fold over the bottom edge and butter. Fold in the sides and roll the filo into tight cigars. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with poppy/chia seeds. Bake at 200°C for 15 – 20 minutes until crisp and golden brown. Serve warm with ice-cream or crème fraîche.

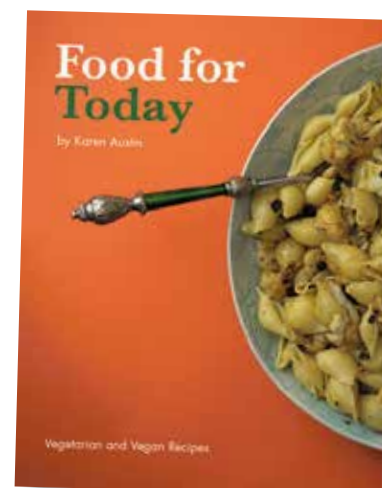
An inspiring and sustainable collection of recipes in 'Food for Today'

Just in time for Christmas, chef, food blogger and owner of the thriving Lettercollum Kitchen Project food shop in Clonakilty, Karen Austin, has just published her second cook book 'Food for Today'. The first, The Lettercollum Cookbook, was published by Onstream Publications in 2014.

Written mostly over lockdown, 'Food for Today' focuses on using locally grown produce to promote a sustainable way of life. Inspired by her garden and travels, in 'Food for Today', Karen has created a collection of vegetarian and vegan recipes for everyday eating and baking. The book is beautifully designed with unique hand drawn illustrations and photographs on each page and would make a fabulous gift for anyone with a love of cooking. Born in Kent, England, Karen Austin learned to cook while travelling across Europe dipping her toes in and out of restaurant kitchens before she moved to

west Cork, Ireland. On a wet, windy hill with converted stables and an acre walled vegetable garden, Karen began the dream of self-sustainability and living an organic way of life. Alongside her partner Con McLoughlin she opened Lettercollum House, a critically acclaimed restaurant and guest-

In spring, you can find her tickling peach blossoms with a feather duster while fantasising over which variety of tomato to plant. That is when she's not obsessing over beans. Don't mention the beans. Retailing at €20, Food for



Today is available in a number of West Cork outlets including Kerr's Bookshop and Lettercollum Kitchen Project, Clonakilty; Timoleague PO; The Old Mill Stores, Cononagh; Urru, Bandon; Kitchen Stories, Ballydehob; The Worm Bookshop Schull. It can also be bought online on lettercollum.ie and sent to anywhere in Ireland for €25 including postage and packing.



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A sustainable Christmas loaf



A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

There is one indisputable fact in these uncertain times and that is that Christmas is coming. The decorations are going up in town and the Christmas tree has been installed. It's a fine Christmas tree too, back to its pre Covid status and size which is most cheering.

As usual, I am running late but soon we will have our shop filled with Christmas puddings and mincemeat tarts.

Mincemeat tarts are one of my festive food favourites. There's just about time from the moment that we begin making them, on the first day of December through to Christmas Eve for me to get my fill. This is one of the beauties of seasonal food, we look forward to the moment, enjoy immensely and then it's gone for another year.

If you need any help filling your cupboards with Christmas goodies, we are happy to help you with our small but delicious menu. We will have nut roasts, cakes, tarts and the much-missed and seasonally-resurrected vegetarian sausage rolls. Pop in and let us know what you would like and we will do our best to fulfill your wishes.. It's been an interesting year to say the least with plenty of ups and downs and after a surprisingly speedy circumnavigation around the sun we're back to the Christmas dinner conundrum.

This year I decided that with climate change at the top of many agendas (and rightly so) that I'd write a recipe using only ingredients that we can grow in Ireland.

Pumpkins feature regularly in our recipes but parsnips are often neglected. They have a bit of a bad reputation, there seems to be quite a lot of childhood parsnip trauma out there. Boiling used to be the norm when it came to cooking vegetables but often this doesn't really bring them to their full taste potential. Roasting parsnips, like all root

vegetables, makes them sweeter and more flavoursome.

Maybe it's time to resurrect this knobbly blond carrot shaped root, as it does grow well in our climate.

I made this savoury loaf, using pumpkin, parsnips and chestnuts, which we ate with cider sauce, and I think it's definitely a contender for the Christmas dinner table. It can be prepared ahead of time then just put together and cooked when you are ready to eat.. It's important to season each component for the best end flavour so remember to season the parsnips, pumpkin and onions and taste each one as you go. A little salt on the onions will really open up the sweet flavour – we are talking pinches here, not spoonful's.

This savoury loaf goes perfectly with all the Christmas dinner trimmings if you are sharing a traditional table. It really benefits from a puddle of sauce. The creamy cider sauce is a great partner and is simple to make. If you want a dairy-free option supplement with a vegan cream.

Any leftover loaf can be eaten like a terrine the following day or popped into the picnic basket for the Stephen's Day walk.

Pumpkin, Parsnip and Chestnut Loaf with Cider Sauce

Ingredients:

- 450g parsnips
- 450g pumpkin or butternut squash
- 200g peeled chestnuts
- 500mls cider
- 100mls olive oil
- 2 big red onions
- 3 fatty cloves garlic
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 75g flour or g/f flour
- 5 eggs
- Salt and cracked black pepper

Cider Sauce

- Reserved cider from cooking the chestnuts
- 50g butter
- A handful of fresh thyme, stripped from the stems
- 250mls cream
- Salt and cracked black pepper

Method:

Pre heat oven 180°C. Line a 2lb loaf tin or 2 x 1lb loaf tins with parchment paper. Line 2 baking trays with parchment paper.

Peel the parsnips then dice into 2-3cm pieces. Put them into a bowl, drizzle over about 25mls olive oil, season with salt and pepper then toss together.



er. Tip onto a baking tray.

Peel the pumpkin or butternut squash then dice into 2-3cm pieces. Put them into a bowl, drizzle over about 25mls olive oil, season with salt and pepper then toss together. Tip onto a baking tray.

Put the baking trays into the oven and cook for 30 minutes. The vegetables should be tender but not brown.

Roughly chop the chestnuts into 2 or 3 pieces then put into a saucepan with the cider. Bring to the boil then simmer for 20 minutes, the cider will begin to reduce. Take off the heat and strain. Reserve the cooking liquid and put the chestnuts aside.

Peel and chop the onions finely. Heat a medium frying pan then add the remaining 50mls olive oil and the chopped onion. Season with a little salt. Keeping the heat medium high cook until the onions begin to melt down then reduce the heat to a low simmer. The onions should be gently sizzling. Strip the rosemary from the woody stem and chop quite finely. Add to the onion and continue cooking for 15-20 minutes, stirring from time to time. They should not colour or burn so keep an eye on them.

Peel and chop the garlic then stir into the onions. Cook for a further five minutes.

Crack five eggs into a bowl, season with a little salt and pepper then whisk in the flour.

Stir in the parsnips, pumpkin, chestnuts and onion mix.

Mix well then pour into the prepared tin(s)

Bake for 35-40 minutes for a large tin and 25-30 minutes for the small tins.

Remove from the oven and allow to relax for five minutes before upending the tin onto a serving plate.

To make the sauce put the reserved cooking cider into a saucepan then bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to medium but keep the cider at a rolling boil. It will begin to reduce. When there is about one third remaining take off the heat.

Melt the butter in a clean pan, add the thyme and allow to gently bubble for three minutes. Pour in the remaining cider and the cream. Bring to the boil and cook for 5-10 minutes or until the sauce has thickened a little – like good pouring cream. Season with salt and cracked black pepper.

We have a new cookbook full of vegetarian and vegan recipes inspired by produce of the garden and our travels. It's called Food for Today and it will be available in local shops or online from December 1. The ideal present for the food lovers in your life.

I hope that everyone gets to enjoy the feasting and I wish everyone good health and happiness for the coming year

Best wishes
Karen

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A yuletide treat in Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail

With its show-stopping interior and a first-class team put together by experienced restaurateur couple Billy and Diana Kirby, Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail in Clonakilty is living up to its promise of an exceptional dining out experience.

The light-filled industrial open-plan space, which can seat up to 100, is softened with luxurious leather booth seating, warm colour tones and glamorous lighting. This is a restaurant that flawlessly combines character, energy and style – the chandeliers are sourced from The Burlington Hotel Ballroom, the wall-mounted lights from a nuclear submarine factory in Russia. An open plan kitchen adds to the lively atmosphere.

Billy and Diana Kirby established their reputation in the industry running Kirby's Korner in Ballinahassig, where over the past 20 years they have grown the establishment from a country pub into a very popular eatery. In March 2021, the couple made the brave move of adding another restaurant business to their portfolio with the acquisition of The Whale's Tail building at The Waterfront in Clonakilty. "We felt the time was right for us to embark on a new venture," says Diana. "It is a beautiful building, finished to the highest of standards and the location is second-to-none in West Cork." While the building was purchased turnkey, Billy and Diana have put their own personal stamp on the interior and developed a comfortable and large outdoor seating area.

The food is a match for the impressive surrounds, with the inspiration for each dish on the menu gleaned from the abundance of quality produce available on its doorstep. "Working with local suppliers is of huge importance to us," says Billy "even more so now that we are focused on sustainability. To mention just a few, we look across the street to Clona Dairy, Shannonvale Chicken is less than 1 km away, Staunton's Foods is in Timoleague and Bushby's Rosscarbery Strawberries are only over the road. Fresh fish is delivered directly off the boat in Castletownbere through Gulfstream Seafood. We are so lucky we don't have to go far from our front door for the best of everything."

Due to its coastal location, there is of course an emphasis on great fish and seafood dishes



Billy and Diana Kirby



such as Kirby's Creamy Seafood Pie, Chowder, Local Prawn and Crab meat Salad and Monkfish Scampi. West Cork producers such as Dan Moloney Meats are showcased with the 8oz Fillet Steak, marrying well with crowd-pleasers like the Sirloin Steak Ciabatta, Asian style Beef Salad, Spicy Shannonvale Chicken Wings and Kirby's Seafood Tapas Board.

Desserts are all made in-house with comforting Baked Alaska and Sticky Toffee Pudding going down a treat with customers.

Lunch is served from 12pm onwards at the weekends with specials featured daily.

A well thought-out and balanced wine list has something for everyone and the extensive cocktail list designed by an in-house mixologist is heavily influenced by a variety of local and Irish spirit producers.

Since opening the door at The

Whale's Tail last July, it's been a whirlwind few months for Billy and Diana and their team. A hectic summer, plus juggling the demands of two busy restaurants coupled with the uncertainty of this pandemic and its constantly changing restrictions and government guidelines has truly tested their mettle. However the support and goodwill they have been shown by customers and staff has blown them away. "The local community, our existing customers at Kirby's Korner coming to try out Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail, the day-trippers, staycationers...the response from everyone has been amazing," share the couple. "Like every business in hospitality, we have struggled in areas such as staffing and the uncertainty of what is around the corner but our team have been outstanding. Myself and Diana are so proud of them and we cannot thank



them enough," says Billy.

With Christmas just around the corner, Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail are in full festive mode. While the puddings steam in the oven, the tree is being decorated and a sumptuous four-course menu written up for the Christmas party season. Very reasonably priced at just €45 per head and, with events like The Waterfront Marathon and The Polar Express taking place in Clonakilty before Christmas, tables are already booked up for some weekends. "It really

is a wonderful time of year in Clonakilty, with such a strong support local ethos, and we are delighted to be a part of that buzz this year," says Diana. With that in mind, Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail is extending its opening hours on Christmas week to accommodate all those busy local shoppers this year.

Give yourself a yuletide treat... savour the menu at Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail where the cocktails will be festive, the mulled wine warmed and the prosecco chilled.

Christmas Opening Hours:

Thursday 4-9pm; Friday 4-9pm; Sat 12-9pm; Sunday 12-7pm; Monday 4-9pm
Christmas Week: December 20/21/22/23, 12-9pm. Closed December 24-29.
New Year's: Dec 30, 4-9pm; Dec 31, 1-9pm; Jan 1, 12-9pm; Jan 2, 12-7pm.

For Reservations phone 023 8878111 or email reservations@thewhalestail.ie



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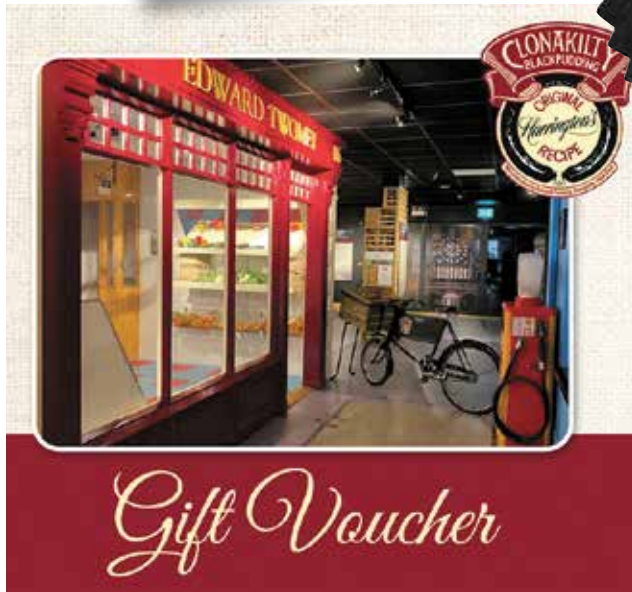
Seasons Greetings to all from Billy & Diana and all the team.



Exploding Tree chocolate bars are the perfect gift topper - handmade in Clonakilty from Fairtrade Ghanaian cocoa beans & organic coconut sugar and using only compostable packaging. Find their full range online at www.explodingtree.com and at small independent shops around the country'



Bring your pizza making up a notch with a World of Flavours pizza stone and cutter €29.95 at Tom Sheehys, Clonakilty



A keen cook will love the beautiful tea towels by Anne Harrington Rees €15 at Green Dot, Clonakilty



Jude's Chocolates have three gift box sizes to choose from for Christmas. Find them at Skibbereen Market or online



Check out the array of ceramic bowls, pots and more by Keiko from just €7 at The Loft Gallery, Clonakilty



Treat a loved one to a Clonakilty Blackpudding Visitor Centre Family Pass Voucher and let them discover the story behind Ireland's favourite blackpudding. Contact the visitor centre directly for your date and time of choice on 023 – 8834835.

If you are looking to treat yourself or a loved one with a special tasty treat this Christmas, then look no further. This Clonakilty hamper is filled with an array of delicious products with something for everyone. It's the ultimate full-Irish.

The Black and White Cookbook celebrates Clonakilty Blackpudding and Clonakilty Whitepudding and is packed full of delicious meal ideas. Sit back, enjoy reading and get creative this Christmas!



Kinsale Mead Co. Tasting Set €18.99 at Organico, Bandon



Each Boxed Love from Foxglove Cocktail Co contains three mixers, garnishes and a recipe card – available for gin, whiskey, bubbles or tequila. €25 from foxglovecocktails.ie



Blasta Books Illustrated Calendar 2022 €25 From new Irish independent cookbook publishers Nine Bean Rows at Urru, Bandon



Charcuterie Serving Boards €140 at Urru, Bandon. Handcrafted by Bandon-based furniture maker Paul Murphy with sustainable wood and silver metal handles.

Frequent picnickers will love these Plastimo Marina unbreakable mugs - Set of 6 mugs €44 from CH Marine, Skibbereen

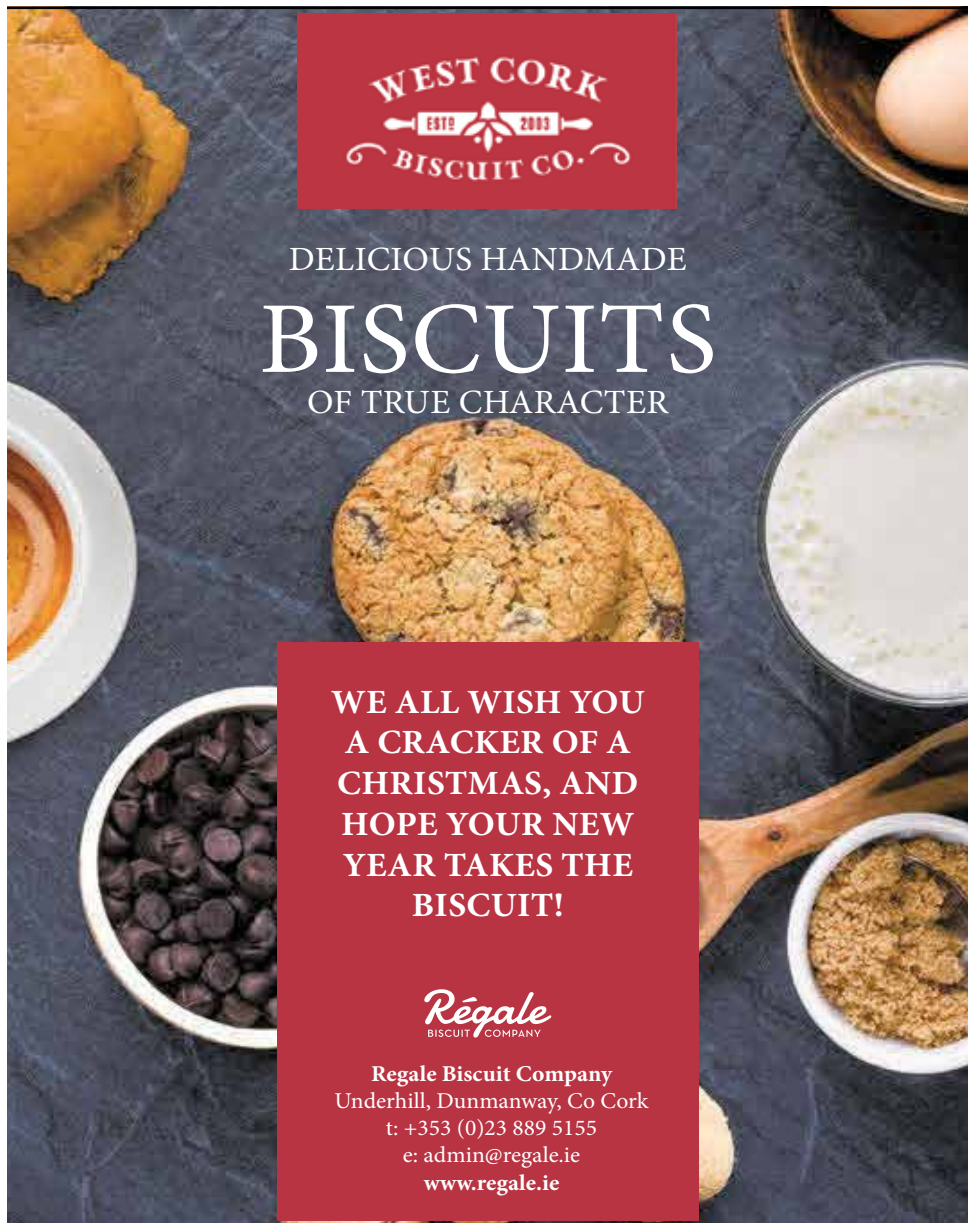


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UASHMAMA organic cotton apron €95 from Chalk & Easel, Ballinspittle





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Fri 31st NYE (closes 9pm)
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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Sustainable wines for Christmas

Fionnuala Harkin is a qualified wine educator with the Wines and Spirits Educational Trust. Her love of wine developed over her years of running a restaurant in Clonakilty, as well as writing on food and wine for West Cork People and Food and Wine magazine. She works for Wines Direct, an Irish family owned company who import wine from artisan producers all over the world. She also runs The Wine Shed near Timoleague, a quirky and unique space for gathering and enjoying great wines, chats and nibbles, while learning a bit about the wonderful world of wine. Check it out on Instagram @wineshedwestcork

Christmas is a time when we can all let go a little – eat and drink a bit too much and treat ourselves and those in our lives to things we have been looking at longingly through the shop window. It's a time we spend a bit more than usual, tightening the belts in every way in January.

We have great choice now in how and where we spend our hard earned cash, so it's an opportunity to support those producers, makers, chefs, artists, growers and entrepreneurs who really appreciate our business, and who are working ethically and in a way which doesn't harm the earth. There's great satisfaction

in knowing our money is making a positive difference rather than just an unnoticed drop in some trillionaires bank account!

We can do just that by choosing organic wine and sourcing it from independent family-owned businesses. Everyone wins – we get to drink better, the birds and the bees don't pay the price, and wonderful small family vineyards get to continue producing their delicious wines, many of them carrying on the traditions of generations before them. The gorgeous, warm and atmospheric shops, which are such a vital part of our towns, get our much-needed support.

Marian Keyes, of whom I'm a massive fan, reposted on Instagram this week: "Amazon will thrive over the next few weeks,



Fionnuala's wine selection. Pics by Thady Trá Photo

nice drop for a cosy Wednesday night by the fire.

'Oh So Organic' mixed case from Wines Direct – €115, which includes delivery to your door.

Our winemakers stay away from the easy commercial route when growing grapes. Instead, they tend to their vines without the harsh use of chemicals in exchange for biodiversity in the vineyard. We enjoy finding for you winemakers who revel in the individuality of indigenous grapes. In this case, the winemakers not only adhere to organic methods but also grow little unknown and almost extinct grapes and excel at it. You are sure to be delighted when introduced to a combination of our favourite organic wines and little known varieties from across Europe.

Domaine Ricard 'Tasciaca' – Touraine-Chenonceaux AOC, France. *Sauvignon Blanc* Vincent Ricard is very proud of his small microclimate, Chenonceaux AOC was only created in 2011 and now produces a more opulent style with more smokiness achieved from the flinty, Tuffeau stone. Fermented mostly in large oak tonneaux and 25 per cent in small barrels, the oak gives texture and complexity while not overpowering the beautiful fruit—a real show stopper.

Guerinda 'El Maximo' – Navarra, Spain. *Grenache, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon* An exciting blend that showcases Navarra's strengths as a DO. Juicy, rich and textured with great depth of fruit cut with a dash of spice. Firm tannins and beautiful balance.

Domaine Paterianakis – Crete, Greece. *Assyrtiko* The Paterianakis family are third generation winemakers from the hills right in central Crete. Farming organically and using gravity

in the winery so the healthiest fruit arrives for gentle pressing. Using wild yeast in stainless steel tanks, this Assyrtiko is full of citrus fruits, wild herbs and white flower with a vivid, crunch of acidity — delightful.

Mas Las Caves – Côtes du Roussillon AOC, France *Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Mourvèdre* The black marl and friable schist soils of the Mas Las Caves estate are farmed organically by the Gardiès family. The wine this careful cultivation yields is true to its origin with subtle liquorice and olive notes on the nose and a generously fruity and mildly tannic palate.

Nicodemi Montepulciano D'Abruzzo – Abruzzo DOC, Italy. *Montepulciano* From the sites with the best exposure in the DOCG area of Colline Terramane, longer skin maceration, ageing in stainless steel and some in old oak for three to four months, followed by at least a year in bottle before releasing. This results in a complex wine, richly aromatic, which reflects the deep understanding Elena Nicodemi has for her land and her grapes.

Tebaldo – Marche IGP, Italy *Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Pinot Grigio* The grapes for Tebaldo are hand-harvested early, in mid-August. This method showcases the aromatic characteristics of the grape varieties which produce this wine. The combination of Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc, while it sounds like a mouthful, delivers a wine of elegance and balance.

All wines available from winesdirect.ie or for any wine details or information on upcoming Wine Shed nights, contact Fionnuala on 086 8533758 or fharkin@winesdirect.ie.



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✂ CUT-OUT & KEEP RECIPES

Spiced Mandarin and Yogurt Cheesecake

As the festive season draws closer, the kitchen team at Celtic Ross Hotel in Ross-carbery are busily making Christmas Puddings, home-made beetroot chutney and spiced butterscotch sauce amongst other seasonal treats to make bespoke Christmas hampers. Led by Executive **Head Chef Shane Deane** the kitchen team share a passion for the local and seasonal ingredients that West Cork has to offer. Up to 40 local food and beverage producers are featured on the hotel menus. With this in mind, Shane is delighted to share a recipe which he created using Clonakilty based, Irish Yoghurts. His spiced mandarin and yogurt cheesecake is a delicious dessert choice which will enhance any Christmas dessert table.

Ingredients

For the base

- 200g bourbon biscuits
- 100g digestive biscuits
- 85g unsalted butter, melted

For the filling

- 2 x 300g tins mandarins
- 75g caster sugar
- 1 star anise
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 12g powdered gelatine
- 300ml cream
- 200g Irish yogurts whole milk yogurt
- 100g cream cheese



For the jelly glaze

- 2 x 300g tin mandarins
- 100g sugar
- 12g powdered gelatine

Method

To make the base

Line the base of a 23cm loose-bottomed tin with baking parchment. Place the bourbon biscuits and digestive biscuits in a plastic food bag and crush to crumbs using a rolling pin. Transfer the crumbs to a large bowl and pour over the melted butter. Mix thoroughly until the crumbs are completely coated. Tip them into the prepared tin and press firmly down into the base to create an even layer. Chill in the fridge for 1 hr to set firmly.

To make the cheesecake filling

Place the 2 tins of mandarin's liquid and all into a saucepan with the star anise, sugar and

mixed spice. Cook on a high heat until the quantity of liquid has reduced by half and the mandarin's have started to breakdown. Remove the star anise and blend until smooth with a hand blender. When the mixture is smooth add in the gelatine and blend again. Set this aside to cool.

While the mandarin puree is cooling whisk the cream in a bowl until soft peaks are formed. In a separate bowl beat the yogurt and cream cheese together until smooth. Then incorporate the cooled mandarin puree into the yogurt mix, beat until smooth again. Finally fold in the cream a 1/3 at a time until it is fully mixed. Now pour the yogurt filling onto the chilled base and smooth over the top with a palate knife. Refrigerate for 1 hour to set firmly.

To make the mandarin jelly

Place the 2 tins of mandarin's liquid and all into a saucepan with the sugar. Cook on a high heat until the quantity of liquid has reduced by half and the mandarin's have started to breakdown. Remove from the heat and blend until smooth with a stick blender. When it is smooth add in the gelatine and blend again. Set this aside to cool to between 25c and 35c. When it is cool pour the jelly evenly over the set cheesecake. Refrigerate for 1 more hour to set the jelly.

To serve the cheesecake run

a small sharp knife around the edge of the tin to loosen the filling and release the cheesecake from the tin. Garnish with seasonal fruits. Slice and serve.

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Stem the rising tide of dumped food

A new food sharing app, OLIO, connects neighbours to give away unwanted food and other items that may otherwise end up in landfill. Dumped food in Ireland is estimated at over 19,000 tonnes a week.

New research reveals that sending 1kg of food to a landfill produces the same carbon emissions as doing this with 25,000 plastic bottles

Even before its rollout in Ireland recently, word of mouth has meant OLIO already has over 36,000 sign-ups, with users giving away 10,500 food portions.

People can give away food and other unwanted household items by uploading a photo and description on the app, plus details about where and when to collect it.

Others can then request these by searching or browsing through the listings, where they will see what's available nearby.

After Dublin householders, Cork consumers are the second

most active users of the app.

OLIO co-founder and CEO, Tessa Clarke was inspired to build the app in the UK five years ago after struggling to find anyone to take the unwanted food from her fridge when she was moving house.

"By enabling people to easily share more and waste less, we aim to help transform our throw-away society into a giveaway society."

One Irish OLIO user, Lindsay Ray, 38, has so far given away 121 items and collected 69, saving the equivalent of 56 meals and 18,000 litres of water.

"There are already close to 2,500 people living within a 5km radius of me, so there's an active group of people sharing and giving away," she said.

"I use OLIO when doing a clear-out or if I come across something I no longer need. I've given away tea, coffee, tins of soup, lentils and pasta. Last week my partner discovered a spare tin opener, which we were

able to give to another OLIO user.

"Apart from the decluttering benefits, it feels really great to be able to give to others, while reducing waste. People in my area are into recycling and waste reduction in a big way, so items are usually requested within an hour or two."

OLIO's rollout here comes off the back of a €36 million funding round announced in September that will enable it to accelerate its international expansion plans.

In five years, OLIO has acquired over 5 million community members worldwide. Over 34 million portions of food have been shared, with the pandemic increasing the number of listings coming onto the app by five-fold.

The app can be downloaded from Google Play and Apple app stores. The desktop version is also accessible via olioex.com

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✂ CUT-OUT & KEEP RECIPES

Thai Red Curry



If turkey and trimmings aren't to your taste, **Baan Sujitra** in Clonakilty has a suggestion for a very different Christmas dinner – a traditional Thai red curry!

Ingredients:

- 250g chicken (sliced)
- 400ml can coconut milk
- selection of vegetables
- sugar
- fish sauce/salt

Red Curry Paste

- 2 tbsp lemongrass
- 2-3 tbsp shallot
- 1 tbsp galangal
- 3 tbsp garlic
- 1/4 tsp white pepper
- 2-3 pieces of coriander root (alternatively replace with coriander stem or leave out)
- 8-10 pieces of dried red chilli
- 1/2 tbsp kaffir lime zest or 3/4 lime leaves
- 1/4 tsp shrimp paste

- 1 tsp salt

Method:

Toast all the dry ingredients and place in a blender. Add water and whizz to a paste.

Heat a tbsp of veg oil in a pan on low heat and add 2 tbsp of your paste. Stir well, add chicken and raise heat to medium. Stir well and add 200ml of the coconut milk, stir and heat until bubbling. Top up with remaining coconut milk. Add vegetables and cook until al dente. Add sugar and fish sauce or salt to taste.

Enjoy

All of the ingredients in this recipe are available from The Spice Shop in Spiller's Lane, Clonakilty. If you're not in the form for cooking, you can order a Thai Red Curry, cooked to order, from Baan Sujitra in Clonakilty. 023 8834604.

Spreading kindness in a pandemic

Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Uí Choileáin in Clonakilty is a school that believes that kindness is needed in our society, now, more than ever.

Every year in December, a month that can be a very busy, often hectic time, children and staff are asked to take time to reflect on how lucky we really are, the importance of being grateful for what we have, and how we, in turn can help others around us who might not be as fortunate as ourselves.

Formal homework takes a back seat for the month, and instead the children have a 'Dialann Cineáltais' (Kindness diary), designed by pupils in the school, in which they record their daily acts of kindness. The emphasis is on the small acts, which like a rippling tide can make a big difference in the lives of others. Each day has a specific theme. Monday involves a family act of kindness, Tuesday is devoted to the environment and our animals, Wednesday the elderly, and Thursday an act of self-love. Over the years these acts have included helping at home with chores, visiting an elderly neighbour, writing a letter to a lonely relative,



Páistí from Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Uí Choileáin, Cloch na gCoillte, enjoying their "Nollaig Lúcháireach" (December Kindness Month). They have no academic homework for the month and instead will carry out acts of kindness.

feeding the birds, cleaning up the neighbourhood etc. Each day after completing their act of kindness, the children then document it in their diaries, either by writing about it or by drawing a picture of it.

They are also asked to make a big effort in school to be kind to those around them... Perhaps by playing with somebody they don't usually play with or going

out of their way to help somebody in class or in the yard.

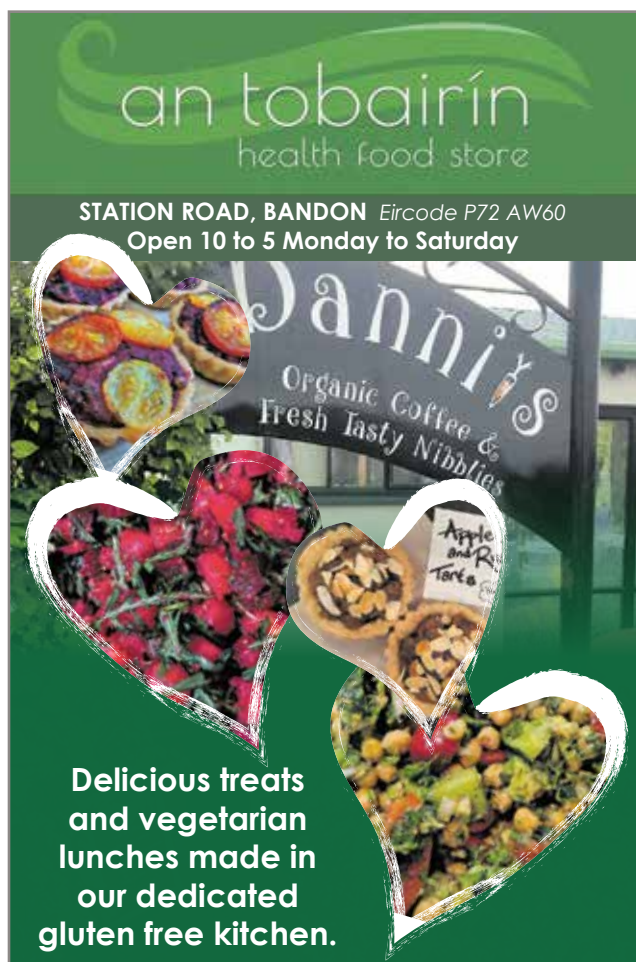
There is a 'buicéad cineáltais' (kindness bucket) in the school reception. When a kind act in school has made somebody smile that day, they write the act on a slip of paper and pop it into the bucket. These remain anonymous but are read out at random at the weekly 'Tionól' (Assembly).

Finally, this month every year, each class is asked collectively to complete a 'Gníomh Cineáltais Ranga' (A class act of kindness) wherein they work together as a class to make a difference in the community. These class acts have ranged from baking animal cookies for the animals in the Animal Shelter, to making Christmas cards for sick children in hospital, to carol singing for the elderly, and putting together hampers for families in the locality who are less well off than themselves, to name but a few.

"The feedback from our school families and the general community has been overwhelmingly positive and each year this spurs the children to continue with their kindness initiative. We are immensely proud of how our páistí and families have embraced our Nollaig Lúcháireach over the years," comments a teacher at Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Uí Choileáin.

"Seasann sé le manna na scoile 'Ar Scáth a Chéile a Mhairimid'

Nollaig faoi shéan is faoi mhaise daoibh go léir."



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Feasibility study to examine making West Cork's beaches accessible

The Department of Community and Rural Affairs has allocated €50,000.00 towards a feasibility study to examine if some of West Cork's Blue Flag beaches can be made accessible – the beaches being considered include Garrulucas, Garretstown, Inchydoney, Owenahinch and Barleycove. Cork South West TD, Chris-

topher O'Sullivan said: "This is another positive development in my campaign to have West Cork beaches fully wheelchair accessible.

"Earlier this year in the Dail Chamber, I made the case to Minister with Responsibility for Disabilities, Anne Rabbitte, to roll out a pilot project in West Cork's Blue Flag beaches. I am

delighted that this now will be the case.

"Our beaches are probably our best amenities, but unfortunately they are amenities that at the moment cannot be enjoyed by everybody. I am firmly of the belief that whether you are a wheelchair user or not, you should have the same opportunity to access and enjoy these

stunning coastal locations.

"After the feasibility study is complete, I will be pushing again for further funding, to insure that the recommendations of the feasibility study are implemented on these five iconic beaches."

The funding forms part of Our Rural Future plan.

Food, Health & Lifestyle COMPETITION

Another €100 of Skibbereen Town Vouchers to be won this month!

Due to the huge response to our competition in last month's issue, Skibbereen & District Chamber of Commerce are offering two more West Cork People readers the chance to win a €50 Skibbereen Town Voucher. Drawing on the town's claim to Olympic fame, a gold, a silver and a bronze medal have each been included in a business window display in Skibbereen Town. If you can spot all three you are in with a chance! Over 30 of Skibbereen's renowned choice of shops, boutiques, cafes, restaurants and attraction accept these vouchers so it would be a great start to your Christmas shopping or dining.

The Chamber has some lovely plans for this yuletide season and the Christmas lights are now on to add to the cheer. Their 'Find the Elf' competition is back this year, as is the Christmas Hamper Draw – just shop locally for free inclusion!

Live music is planned for the bridge on Main Street throughout December and the same spot is well worth a visit for a peek at the Christmas Cabin display too.

The Skibbereen & District Chamber of Commerce would like to thank everybody who has supported a Skibbereen business this year by shopping locally. It means a lot to business owners and staff, as well as local makers and suppliers. They look forward to welcoming you again in the next few weeks. For up-to-the-minute news on festivities in Skibbereen follow their facebook page: **Skibbereen - Home**

To be in with a chance of winning a €50 voucher, find all three medals and email the names of those businesses with your name and phone number to info@westcorkpeople.ie before December 13. Please put 'Skibbereen Competition' in the subject line.



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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Update on the Hairy Henry barn project

Below is Sandra Schmid with a group of young riders with the nearly finished barn in the background.



Sandra Schmid Qualified Therapeutic Riding Coach
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www.hairyhenry.com
Hairy Henry - an inclusive Care Farm:
Therapy & Education for people with additional needs

It has been a busy year so far on Hairy Henry Care Farm where the project to build a small barn to shelter against rain and wind has made great progress. This project has been made possible with the generosity of the local community. "It will be such an improvement to be able to offer our visitors a sheltered space for their therapeutic, educational and recreational sessions, especially during winter," says Sandra Schmidt.

"The walls and the roof of the barn are up and we hope to have electricity and water installed and the reception area in the front finished within the coming couple of months so that the barn can be used from the new year onwards hopefully. If the situation around Covid-19 allows, we hope to hold an open day some time in spring for all of our supporters and visitors to celebrate our new development!"

The fundraiser for the barn has gone incredibly well considering the project was started in the midst of a pandemic, however it is still short some funds to pay for all the necessary work. The Gofundme link is still



up and active so please consider donating to this worthwhile cause and share the link below with others too!

Also as part of the ongoing fundraiser, Hairy Henry has a selection of greeting cards and a 2022 photo calendar for sale – all proceeds will go directly towards the barn project. You can buy the cards and calendars directly from Hairy Henry or order online via the link below.

In the meantime life is busy on the Hairy Henry Care Farm, supporting children and adults of all abilities, especially those who face extra challenges due

to illness, emotional, social or cognitive difficulties, mental health problems, developmental issues and disabilities. Children and adults alike benefit from the various inclusive groups and sessions offered: Stable Club – a horse care and therapeutic riding group for 8-12-year-olds; Recreational Riding Lessons for children aged eight and old; Young Farmers Club for children six-12-years who enjoy farming and animals; Play Date – social group for children two-eight-years; Individual Therapy Sessions for children, as well as adults; Individual Riding Les-

sons; Holiday Camps; Family Fun Sessions; Outreach Visits to hospitals, nursing homes, schools and so on.

If you are interested to find out more about Hairy Henry and the services offered go to www.hairyhenry.com.

And if you would like to donate towards the new barn, please go to gofundme.com and look up 'Help Hairy Henry Care Farm to build a barn'.

Greeting cards and calendars can be ordered on www.itsplainsailing.com/org/hairyhenry or call Sandra directly on 087 9389867.



Wishing all our customers a warm and happy Christmas.

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DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Dr Jeff Featherstone

Dr Featherstone is a highly experienced medic and award-winning doctor who works in a busy GP practice in West Cork, as well as at Mercy University Hospital and Cork University Hospital, as an A&E doctor.

Over the next few months, I hope to cover those common symptoms, which we all know can mean something serious is going on and which, if missed, could represent a catastrophe.

This month the topic is chest pain.

You are just finishing your Christmas dinner and start to experience chest pain. You ring South Doc and the nurse recommends a visit to A&E by ambulance as this could be serious.

You and the nurse are worried

When the pudding becomes a pain in the chest

about a heart attack.

This scenario represents 10 per cent of A&E workload and in 90 per cent of cases, after a short stay in hospital, you may be discharged. No system is infallible and there is a small failure rate in existing systems in missing a major cardiac event (MACE). In most studies, this equals about one per cent.

So, what is the system? Doctors use scoring systems to improve accuracy of diagnosis and the best ones are the simplest. They are easily accessed electronically and really do help to improve diagnostic accuracy, not only with chest pain, but also sore throats in children or the chance of having a blood clot in your leg or on the lung; then there is the FEVER PAIN score, THE WELLS SCORE, the ALVARADO score for appendicitis, the Blatchford Score for bleeding from the stomach and so on. It might be interesting to have a look at some of them online.

Back to the Christmas dinner. You have arrived in hospital or are speaking to your GP. The hospital doctor will use the HEART score. Now that is an easy one and very accurate. I

will explain:

H stands for history. This is the information you give the doctors and is where intuition comes in. A really concerning story get

the maximum two points and a lesser concerning story gets zero or one point.

E stands for ECG: No changes, zero points, and more concerning, one or two points.

A stands for age: Over 65, two points; age 45 to 65, one point and, less than 45, zero.

R stands for risk factors: Things like smoking, high blood pressure, previous heart trouble. Three or more of these and you get two points. Less than three, two points. None, zero points.

T stands for a troponin test. Troponin is a chemical released by damaged heart muscle after a heart attack. A high level gets two points and a normal or slightly elevated level equals zero or one point. The level starts to rise three to four hours after a cardiac event and, the higher the rise, the greater the muscle damage.

For those of you of a mathematical bent, you will have worked out that the maximum number of points is 10, which means you will be seeing the cardiology team very soon!

Scores of four and higher again will be taken seriously and more tests ordered. Scores lower than four and you are safe to go home.

These scores are all well and good but your GP has other tricks up his or her sleeve, which I believe are even more accurate, and woe betide a hospital specialist who ignores GP intuition!

When GPs have gotten to know and examined and talked to thousands of patients, sixth sense becomes very honed. You might not have seen your GP for years and only consult when absolutely necessary. Your GP fixes you with a very careful scrutinising look that takes in so much. Your colour, presence of sweating, your breathing, level of pain and so on. If 'he does not like the look of you', after only seconds, a decision is made on what to do next. A full examination and ECG may be superfluous.

This is the Art of Medicine and, with GPs and hospital staff working together and communicating well, most chest pain is managed extremely well. Science and research combining well with good traditional GP skills and intuition.

Enjoy your Christmas dinner, go easy on the plum pudding, and Merry Christmas!



Thank you for all your support since opening in May 2020.
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Winner of the 2021 Bantry Credit Union Scholarship Ellie Horgan with her parents Gerard and Niamh and her brother Ben.

Ellie Horgan from Let-terlickey, Bantry, has been awarded the Bantry Credit Union Third-Level Education Scholarship for 2021. Daughter of Gerard and Niamh Horgan, Ellie is the 19th annual winner of the scholarship, which is worth €6,000 over four years.

Presenting the award, Chairperson of Bantry Credit Union Eddie Mullins congratulated Ellie on her achievement: "Ellie is clearly a remarkable young person. Her academic achievement in getting 577 CAO points and being offered a place in Medicine at UCC is hugely impressive. But even more impressive are Ellie's personal traits of perseverance and commitment and her remarkable community and voluntary spirit."

This comment was a reference to the voluntary work that Ellie had been doing while studying hard for her Leaving Cert. She is a member of the

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre's Youth Advisory Panel. She has also worked with 50808 Crisis Text Line as a voluntary crisis counsellor. And as if that wasn't enough, Ellie is also a befriending volunteer with ALONE. A remarkable young person indeed!

Turning to the credit union's annual scholarship scheme, Mr Mullins explained that this is the 19th consecutive year of the scheme. The scholarship is awarded following a rigorous process, involving a detailed application form, a written submission and an interview. The assessment and decision-making process is conducted entirely by a panel of independent adjudicators, whose decision is binding on the credit union.

Eddie thanked these adjudicators, each of whom has given almost unbroken service to the scholarship scheme since the beginning in 2003: Denis O'Sullivan (retired Deputy Principal of Maria Immaculata

Community College, Dunmanway), James Kilduff (Cork Institute of Technology) and Olive McCarthy (University College Cork).

The Principal of Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí, Marian Carey, also paid tribute to Ellie, saying: "On behalf of everyone at the school I want to congratulate Ellie on winning this prestigious scholarship. Ellie has won other awards this year based on her academic achievements. But I think there's something special about an award that recognises a student's personal traits and their commitment to their community and the broader society."

Accepting the award, Ellie thanked the credit union, the school and her family. She said that the scholarship will give her "financial peace of mind" as she starts her college life. And she thanked the school and the "phenomenal teachers" who helped her achieve her dream of studying to be a doctor.

Ellie Horgan awarded Bantry Credit Union Scholarship for 2021

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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!

This month, as we look forward to Christmas, to celebrating life, hope and love, I ask you to reflect on 'inclusion' and what it means to you.

"Today, I went into my new job to find that they'd knocked down the existing reception desk and were rebuilding it to be a better height for me in my wheelchair. I felt overwhelmed and grateful, but do you know what? That's inclusion." Emily Morison.

She approached the friendly, helpful, gentleman who monitors the door of the supermarket, since the onset of Covid, since the one-way system came in, it has been difficult for her, as the exit door, exits onto a slope where the camber tries to pull the trolley from her grip and launch an attack on a few unsuspecting shoppers. Additionally, lacking balance, and strength, a battle of wills ensues, with the stubborn trolley

often winning, as it sails on a mission of its own away from her. Explaining the battle lines to this very kind gentleman, his one regret was that his attention was not drawn to this issue sooner. There is no requirement to use the one-way system currently, however if it returns, it will never ever apply to her. His eyes were unhappy that this had occurred. How very kind. This is inclusion.

The checkout loomed, as she pushed the joystick. Her dog signalled wait, it's not quite wide enough. For a moment in time, there was confidence, and then, she should have listened, no damage, but there is a funny sound and there are lights flashing on the chair; and for her to back up, so must everyone else! Apologetically, at the man behind, "Sorry, I should have listened to my dog, but today, I did it my way"! "Without people with courage who go forth like you, nothing would ever happen!" he replied. Inclusion.

"Who brought you?" "Do you drive"? Who is this person who asks such questions, which are not their business, do they drive? Why should he not? They do not know him. A lack of respect. This able-ist attitude is not impressive, not inclusive.

Christmas is looming, and so are the crowds, the lack of space to manoeuvre safely, bags



knocking into people, trolleys, assistance dogs, buggies, wheelchairs, children, a perfect kaleidoscope of pandemonium and there are queues. It snakes like a macarena, drunkenly out of order at the end of a good wedding, through the shop, far away from the coveted landing strip of check out counters, lights beaming above them like a control tower at Dublin Airport, on a chaotic Christ-

mas eve. The disappointment mounts deep in her chest, as she moves to replace her intended purchases, when friendly smiling eyes appear above a mask, wearing an identifying shop uniform, "this way, you don't have to queue, we have special check-out facilities for people with disabilities"! She is whisked past the long line, realising that this is shop policy, people with disabilities are tak-

en care of, they can expend their energy doing what they need to, the staff are very happy to assist in reducing the challenges they meet. A policy and service unique to one popular chain of stores in Ireland. Inclusion, first rate.

Challenged by Covid, challenged by lack of adherence by authorities to universal design, challenged by lack of targeted services to assist PWD: So who excelled in 2021?

The staff of An Post in Clonakilty deserve special recognition, for the caring, considerate, low key, inclusive way all of their committed, friendly, reliable staff apply themselves to their posts. From their delivery personnel, who manage also to check on those in our community who may be at risk, to the welcoming crew in the beautiful old Post Office in Clonakilty, where every face is recognised, every ability remembered, hearing impaired, no problem, visually impaired, they remember, weak hands, the stamps miraculously get stuck on the letters and the money is sorted so it is more manageable. All with a subtlety, so that an individual's privacy remains private, and there is never any patronising. This is inclusion in motion, fluid and flawless.

Those businesses who adjusted or who removed street (dec-

orative) furniture, when they realised the way it impacted the lives of PWD and blocked their access to/through town centres. This is inclusion.

The businesses who re-marked their accessible parking for PWD and mother and baby parking, to align with alterations in shop entry due to Covid restrictions, thus keeping accessible parking as close to door entry as possible. This is inclusion.

The businesses who have been noted to open an extra till when they notice a PWD in a queue, or when they just pull that PWD out to avoid them standing for a period of time, which may be challenging for them. This is awareness and inclusion.

The people who live in our community, who have developed an additional awareness, who are teaching their children not to run into, or to push into a PWD, elderly, or any person, who notice a PWD and allow them space, who realise that doors are heavy to push open and offer to help when someone struggles. This is inclusion.

Inclusion is living everyday with awareness, making our community a more accessible environment together, cohesively!

Have a very happy and safe Christmas 2021!

Understanding hypnosis

Is Hypnosis real? As a hypnotherapist, I would definitely say yes hypnosis is real but perhaps it is not what you have imagined.

Hypnosis is a universal sensory language that is used everyday to communicate between your conscious thoughts/desires and your subconscious

emotions/behaviours. It is also used to communicate more effectively with others. We are all in a state of self-hypnosis everyday. It is a language that we all have access to. However most people are not aware that it even exists.

When people think of hypnosis, they normally associate it

with someone doing something to them. Stage hypnosis is normally the first thing that springs to mind. Often people think of this as being out of control and doing silly things to entertain others. Next they may think of hypnotherapy, when hypnosis is used as a therapy to help someone overcome an

emotional problem, psychosomatic (mind/body) illness or change an unwanted habit. With both of these, people imagine someone with their eyes closed who appears to be asleep.

But are you aware of waking hypnosis? Waking hypnosis is the language of influence that is around us all the time, when your eyes are open, when you are talking to others, watching TV or listening to a song. It is used regularly in advertisements on the radio, social media, buses and billboards. In advertising, this language is used to try to influence or coerce us to purchase something we may not need or want.

Self-hypnosis comes naturally for those who are able to 'get in the zone' or who easily move towards their goals. It is a sensory language, when words and thoughts and desires affect your body on a physical level. For example, it can affect your breathing, your heart rate, your ability to relax, digest, de-stress and focus.

It is particularly beneficial



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

for those suffering with IBS, anxiety, fears and phobias.

Although this language is easy to learn, it is not taught in school and so many of us find ourselves unwittingly influenced by others or even self-sabotaging our best intentions or greatest desires.

Understanding the language of hypnosis can help you improve communication with yourself and others and get your life back on track.

If you are curious, I would suggest starting with a guided hypnosis that you can use in the comfort of your own home.

Hypnosis can be a pleasant state of relaxation and I have created a free 'Relax in Nature' recording that is free to download on my website www.amandaroe.ie

Many people find it difficult to relax and switch off and a guided hypnosis can be very helpful as an afternoon nap or at bedtime to help you sleep.

Relaxing your body and mind is wonderful for managing stress and boosting your immune system.

For best results listen to the recording once a day for three weeks and then as often as you like after that, obviously the more you listen, the more benefits you will experience.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and joyful New Year.

Amanda Roe is a clinical hypnotherapist and acupuncturist working in Skibbereen, providing natural solutions for your mental, emotional and physical health. You can contact via her website www.amandaroe.ie or call/text 0876331898

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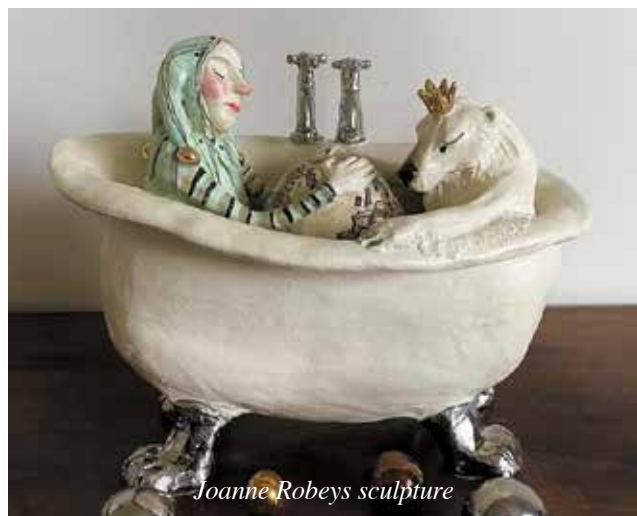
Twenty years framed in The Loft

There are few households in Clonakilty and surrounds who haven't had a piece of special artwork framed by The Loft Gallery and Frames, which celebrates 20 years in business this year. With people spending more time at home during the pandemic, the demand for a custom bespoke framing service like that offered at The Loft has been increasing exponentially over the past year-and-a-half. Artist, framer and proprietor Kate Fitzgerald paints a picture of what it takes to run a small creative business successfully in West Cork.

"A frame should make the work sing," explains Kate passionately.

While the main bulk of its clients are artists, The Loft will work with pretty much anything once it fits inside the frame; from photography, kids work, prints, posters and jerseys to ceramics and even cutlery.

In more recent years, the gallery side of the The Loft business has really prospered and there are now a huge number of Irish artists on the books, most of who are based in West Cork. "We started off on a small scale, taking work on sale or return



from artists who were getting work framed with us to put on display," explains Kate. There is now a light-filled gallery space upstairs, which regularly hosts group exhibitions and solo shows.

Lovers of fine and beautiful things will find so much to peruse in the way of gift ideas at The Loft this Christmas, where everything stocked is made or designed in Ireland: The shop now carries the new range of ceramics from Etain Hickey and Jim Turner Ceramics, Keiko Ceramics, macrame by BohoKnots by Anna, embroi-

dery hoops by Ciara Chapman Illustration, sculpture ceramic by Joanne Robey and woodwork by Pat Murphy of CK53 Design. You will also find paintings by Peg Quinlan, Judy O'Connell, Celina Buckley, Lesley Cox, Eadaoin Harding Kemp and Louise Manning, to name just a few of the artists.

"Due to Covid we could not run our annual Christmas market this year, so instead I decided to buy craft directly from those makers to sell in the gallery," explains Kate. There are big plans afoot for next Christmas, as Kate hopes to run

the market in an outside venue in collaboration with another artist.

Kate's right-hand person is artist and framer Eileen Foley, who has been working alongside her for the past 18 years. "She is the backbone of the framing side of the business and is truly amazing," says Kate, who lives with chronic and debilitating pain. Kate also feels fortunate to have worked with gifted artist Laura Wade and have talented furniture maker Tom Healy fill her place when she made the move to Mayo to pursue working as an artist fulltime.

The real profit in the business for Kate is the friendships she has made with her team and customers. The Loft is not online and yet business has never been busier. "I am always amazed and humbled at the journey some people go to get framing; our customers are from all over Munster some as far away as the UK."

In the future, the plan is to find new makers and artists to sell their work and to get back to holding exhibitions next summer: A group show with Etain Hickey, Eadaoin Harding



Kemp and Lesley Cox is in the works and Kate's ambition is to have her own solo show in the near future.

Throughout all the challenges of the past 20 years – Kate's personal struggle with her health, the recession, a major flood and the current pandemic – The Loft has held its own, an accomplishment that Kate says is due in no small measure to the support of the local community for small businesses like her own.

Kate studied Fine Art in college and went on to major in

Printmaking. She joined Cork Printmakers and went on work part-time as an artist assistant to Maud Cotter in the National Sculpture Factory in Cork for two years before moving home to Clonakilty with her now husband and setting up her own framing business.

To celebrate 20 years in the framing business, Kate will be running a weekly giveaway over the four weeks of December. Prizes will include work from Etain Hickey ceramics, Laura Wade Art, Joanne Robey ceramics and Kate's own work.

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It's hard to believe it's Christmas time already! We know this can be a challenging time of year, and this year even more so. So we have put a list together of survival tips to help keep you healthy, comfortable, calm and collected during the next few weeks.

Firstly, let me tell you about Fire Tonic. It's made in Cobh, so really local, and we think everyone should have it at home to boost the immune system throughout the Christmas season. It's a beneficial blend of horseradish, turmeric, ginger, garlic, onion, black pepper, cayenne pepper, raw apple cider vinegar, and raw honey...and you take a shot of it in a little water every morning (or whenever you need it). We've noticed it's given us a huge energy boost and helped prevent us from succumbing to the usual seasonal colds and flus.

Next, let's think about digestion. We have SO many people coming in to Organico asking how they can improve their digestion, and there are a lot of different ways to approach this, but at Christmas we all just want something that works, that soothes and calms and takes away the problem. And for all these reasons we love GI Nutra from Nature's Plus. It's the exact digestive support you need at Christmastime – it's a fast-acting powder that contains glutamine to soothe and heal the gut lining, enzymes to aid digestion, and probiotics to reduce bloating. Take one full scoop



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

mixed in water before your biggest meal of the day, and definitely before all Christmas feasting.

And if you've forgotten to take it, Wind Away. Wind Away is pure activated charcoal that does just what it says on the label, and Charcoal also happens to be a powbody. During a season known for its excess, Wind Away is a good friend to have for the morning after. And finally, if you or your loved one suffers from constipation, try soaking a teaspoon of whole chia seeds in water for five minutes and eating them – you can add them to porridge or just mix into the water and swallow them – they will really help!

In a survey, 77 per cent of adults said 'they have a very hard time relaxing during the holidays, and usually end up feeling more stressed and

worn down than ever.' Does this sound familiar? So much planning, shopping, cooking, hosting, decorating, gift-giving...we're pressured to pack a lot in. So it's no surprise that cortisol – which is the body's stress hormone – is heightened during this season. When cortisol is heightened for a prolonged period, it starts doing funny things, like messing with sleep, appetite, and metabolism, increasing blood pressure, and making you behave like the Grinch. Luckily we have some helpful herbs called Adaptogens that can come to your rescue! Adaptogens are herbal ingredients that help reduce cortisol and alleviate stress.

During particularly hectic periods, some of our staff take an Enhanced Rhodiola Complex from Viridian, which contains a blend of adaptogens, including Siberian ginseng, ashwagandha, and rhodiola, known to relieve stress and calm the mind and body. This is such a good blend of adaptogens to add to your stress management survival pack this season.

"Sleep is not a disposable luxury – it's a non-negotiable biological necessity," says sleep scientist Matthew Walker, author of the book, 'Why We Sleep'. "The shorter your sleep, the shorter your life. Short sleep predicts all-cause mortality." Magnesium helps the body relax and prepare for sleep, and it regulates the hormone melatonin which oversees the functioning of the body's sleep-

wake cycle. And to completely relax after a hectic period of Christmas preparation? End your day with a magnesium bath. Once the magnesium is absorbed by tired and aching muscles, it soothes them, and helps the body melt into a state of ultimate relaxation.

And finally, most of us really don't show enough appreciation for our liver. It's quite the little worker, because everything that we ingest – food, alcohol, medicine, chemicals, pollutants – is filtered through the liver. The liver is wise enough to recognise toxins from nutrients, eliminating the former and either storing or depositing the latter into the blood. The liver also regulates the amount of sugar in the bloodstream, and it produces bile that's essential for digestion. Basically, if your liver isn't happy, your digestive system isn't either. Over Christmas, there may come a moment amongst all the delicious mulled wine, mince pies, and brandy butter when you realise your liver has a little more work on its plate than it's used to. This is where Milk Thistle comes in. Milk Thistle is a trusted traditional herbal remedy that's taken to protect the liver and support its detoxification function. It's just the thing to keep nearby during a season of indulgence.

If you have any questions about these tips or products, get in touch (info@organico.ie) and we'll be happy to answer them.



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OUT & ABOUT



Maisey Clarke from Skibereen with her terrier Trixie, after being conferred with a BA Degree and Aoife O'Rourke from Rosscarbery who graduated with a degree in BSc Nutritional Science at UCC. Pic Daragh Mc Sweeney/Provision



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Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns take first place in Pride in Our Community awards

There were celebrations last month in the twin villages of Ballineen and Enniskeane, when the villages' Tidy Towns group was awarded First Place in the Muintir Na Tire Pride in our Community Tourism Awards for 2020. In 2019, the group took first place for its Heritage Trail, a magnificent achievement for this small group of volunteers.

Pride in our Community is a competition open to all voluntary groups in Cork City and Cork County that recognises improvements made by local groups that are of long term benefit to their area and create pride in their community. It is about bringing people together to emphasise all that is good about their area and this is evident in the work being done by Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns volunteers.

Chairperson of Tidy Towns, Margaret O'Donovan was



Mayor Gillian Coughlan presenting 1st place Tourism Award to Margaret O'Donovan, Chairperson of Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns. Also pictured are Paddy Fitzpatrick, President of Muintir na Tire, Eddie O'Donovan, Patricia Kenneally and Marie O'Mahony members of Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns.

delighted to accept the award from Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr. Gillian Coughlan. "The strength of this vibrant and active community is due in no small way to the dedication and commitment of all Tidy Towns members who volunteer their time and skills, both in administrative and practical capacities, in working towards this great achievement, and

without whom this award would not be achievable. The support of residents, schools, local businesses, local voluntary groups, councillors and our near neighbours is greatly appreciated. Special mention must go to Cork County Council whose ongoing support, commitment and advice to our community is invaluable."

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Tui Na Professional Training launching in West Cork 2022

Tui Na (pronounced twee-nah) is one of the 'Four Pillars' of Chinese medicine (alongside Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine and Qi Gong) and is a form of bodywork that includes acupressure, massage techniques, assisted stretching, and joint mobilisations or adjustments that are all based on the key medical principles and diagnostics of Chinese medicine.

Born out of the need in ancient times to be able to effectively treat and repair the devastating injuries of battle and combat, Tui Na developed as a highly skilled modality within the clinical tool kit of Chinese Medicine.

Regarded as one of the most powerful hands-on therapies in the world today, Tui Na is much more than a musculoskeletal therapy and is in fact, a complete stand-alone medical system. It is both utilised as a primary treatment modality and in conjunction with Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine, both with herbal prescriptions for internal use to enhance healing and cure and its repertoire of wonderfully effective topical treatments in the form of liniments, poultices, salves and soaks to further facilitate effective treatment. While it is applied to the body surface, it treats both external and internal conditions via the channel systems and acupoints.

Tui Na is an integral part of healthcare systems in hospitals and clinics, not only in China but increasingly worldwide. While it is sometimes referred to as 'needle-less acupuncture' and indeed there is a shared theoretical and philosophical basis between Acupuncture and Tui

Na, it nevertheless uses a different aspect of the channel system to Acupuncture and has its own detailed medical understanding.

At the advanced stages of training, Tui Na techniques include an osteopathic element with skillful joint manipulations, hand techniques that resemble massage therapy and stretch methods that benefit the soft tissues much like yoga does. While it incorporates elements of these therapies, it is nonetheless a unique and rich tradition that is steeped in Chinese medical principles, knowledge and wisdom, to both treat and prevent disease. While the early stages of Tui Na skills are quickly clinically useful, the full potential of advanced practitionership is truly impressive.

Sherwood Healing Arts, Dunmanway is partnering with Anthony Monteith of Jade Natural Health in Dublin to offer a professional training in Tui Na starting in January 2022. Anthony brings his 25 years of expertise and experience in Physical Therapy, Tui Na, Acupuncture and Qigong having trained in China and Europe and has trained with several leading Tui Na masters.

This training will progress from Foundations Certificate level training through to Intermediate Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels. It is suitable for those looking to embark on a new career in the health sector or those working with other medical modalities who would like to expand their skillset and at the certificate level, no prior training in Chinese Medicine is necessary.

Equally, it is suitable as post graduate training for qualified

Acupuncturists who would like to deepen their knowledge and skills within the field of Chinese Medicine. Furthermore, for those who have long considered training in Acupuncture but have not been able to, Tui Na provides a super entry point into the Chinese Medical tradition and will serve well as a bedrock on which to continue into the Acupuncture profession.

Lastly, at the certificate level, this training offers a wonderful skill to lay students who simply wish to have a tremendously effective tool to help care for their families, children and friends. As a non-needle modality, it is used extensively in Paediatric clinics worldwide and offers a way to empower parents to help care for their children and families with many common ailments.

The Foundations training will introduce some of the core theoretical basis for Chinese Medicine with Yin Yang theory, Five Element theory, Channel theory, Zangfu Organ theory together with diagnostic methods and foundation level massage and manipulation techniques. By the end of this training, students will have learned basic Tui Na routines for general health and various regions of the body: head, neck/shoulders, back, arms, arms/elbows, legs/knees and stomach related conditions to practice.

The Intermediate Diploma will progress to learning how to treat more complex cases and diseases such as cervical spondylopathy, periarthritis of the shoulder, lumbar sprain, intervertebral disc prolapse, headache/migraine together with some gynaecological, diges-



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.

tive, respiratory and paediatric disorders.

The Advanced Diploma will focus on more difficult techniques, as well as expanding into external resources such as cupping, gua sha, making and using topical herbal liniments, balms, salves and soaks, traction methods and energy work.

The training will be held at Sherwood Healing Hub, Dunmanway and the dates for the Foundations Certificate level are January 29/30, February 19/20 and March 19/20, 2022. Each weekend costs €250 with an early bird price of €200 per weekend when paid in full four weeks in advance. Dates for further training TBC.

For further information please contact Freya Sherlock:

086-1273148 or
hello@freyasherlock.com
www.sherwoodhealingarts.ie
and www.freyasherlock.com

Or Anthony Monteith at
info@jadenaturalhealth.com

'Above and Beyond' for CoAction

Gobnait Ní Chrualaoí, CEO CoAction shares the achievement by everyone connected with CoAction in maintaining services whilst at the same time keeping everyone safe right throughout 2021. It is an accomplishment that took courage, tenacity and commitment and deserves huge thanks.

Christmas gives us the opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and the last year has been a year like no other! 2021 produced uncertainty, stress and trauma in many of our lives and in our communities. Despite this, 2021 also provided opportunities to people to really 'step-up', to think creatively and 'outside the box'. 2021 brought out the very best in many people! CoAction staff went 'above and beyond' throughout 2021 for the people they were supporting, day in and day out, and their families, right throughout the pandemic. I

am deeply indebted to each one of them for their endeavours.

Thankfully, CoAction had huge success in keeping the numbers of people diagnosed with Covid to a minimum, against all of the odds. People supported, staff, and families demonstrated a huge level of resilience in tolerating all of the restrictions, reductions in services and adapting to new ways of supporting and being supported. Not only that, but despite the pandemic, staff and teams right across CoAction were successful in implementing many of the priorities within our Five-Year Strategic Plan, 'The Road Ahead'.

Out of difficult situations can come a silver lining and this was clearly demonstrated by the

opening of 8 hubs throughout West Cork in 2020, which continued throughout 2021. I came across the following saying recently, from the writer Jodi Picoult. I thought it particularly relevant and poignant for us all at this time 'The human capacity for burden is like bamboo – far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance'.

Above all, the people supported have shown amazing resilience and ability to adapt and learn new skills. Everywhere I go, people are attending Zoom classes, Skyping and Facetime friends and family. The art of social distancing and constant hand washing has been perfected faster than many of us!

And so, I am very grateful to

have this opportunity to say *Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir / Thank you* to each member of CoAction staff and volunteers for the amazing efforts made throughout the pandemic and associated public health restrictions. To the Board of Trustees, Committee members, the Senior Management Team and Branch members, mo mhíle buíochas ó chroí libh go léir. 2021 was a year like no other and each and every single person played their part to maintain as much services and supports that were possible and safe. To our colleagues in the HSE, I want to thank them for their tremendous support throughout the year and for working with us as we navigated new and uncharted waters. To the people of West

Cork, sporting clubs, Church and local groups, we are forever indebted to you for opening your doors, literally, and enabling us to provide much needed supports and services when providing day services in our main centres was simply not possible.

Wishing each and every one of you and your loved ones a very safe, healthy and joyful Christmas. / Nollaig Shona dhíbh go léir!



CoAction



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.

“Gratitude is like breathing in – letting ourselves be touched by the goodness in others and in our world. Generosity is like breathing out – sensing our mutual belonging and offering our care” says author and meditation practitioner, Tara Brach, who offers many valuable talks and teachings on how we can awaken our natural

Give a gift of gratitude

capacities for gratitude and generosity. We may never know the impact of our own kindness on another, unless, or course, we tell each other. I am sharing a recent experience of my own to illustrate the vulnerability associated with both giving and receiving authentic gratitude.

Last week, I received a series of voice messages, out of the blue, that really warmed my heart and prompted the theme of this month's article. Back in 2017 – 2018, I was involved in a transnational youth project called 'Changing Minds' with several community groups and schools, including Skibbereen Community School and The Aurelia Trust. The messages I received were from one of the teenage participants, now a young woman in her twenties. I listened, as she relayed to me how she felt my kindness and patience, as well as the values espoused by the youth project had influenced her life choices greatly and that she is now following a similar career pathway to mine and “trying to be in service for others and to put all of my heart in all I'm doing”.

The absolute generosity of her message moved me to warm, grateful tears, I could also hear the emotion in her voice, along with the vulnerability and the courage as she said, “Thank you, really, really, really thank you for that experience even though it was a long time ago, but I think it's never too late to be grateful and to share your gratefulness to people who've really impacted you in your life, thank you”. It is not always so easy to send messages like this to another, yet how impactful they can be. I received these beautiful messages on a day when I had completely lost my voice and was self-isolating, unable to work while waiting on the results of a Covid test. These messages of gratitude humbled, encouraged and inspired me, on a day when it might have been easy to let my mind slide down the road of catastrophising. Instead, I chose to let the sentiment soak in and reflected on all the gifts that I was grateful for, inclining my mind towards all the good in that present moment rather than trying to control or predict what

‘might’ happen.

Finding ways of feeling or expressing gratitude and appreciation for when things are going well is an important skill that helps incline our hearts and minds towards all that is good. Even when we are struggling in our own lives, or when feeling grateful may be the furthest thing from our minds, it is worth digging deep. Research points overwhelmingly to the many benefits of practising gratitude for our very deepest well-being, showing that cultivating emotions like gratitude, kindness and compassion in our hearts and minds makes for a happier disposition.

Likewise, receiving gratitude sets off so many positive emotions in us and can have a knock-on, ripple effect. So, in turn, I am grateful to this wonderful young woman who took the time to contact me in such a meaningful and heartfelt way. And, like her, I am also grateful to be in a career of service and inspired to share this story and to say thanks to the many, many people who have helped me, and continue to help

“May the shelter and nourishment of all the good you have done, the love you have shown, the suffering you have carried, awaken around you to bless your life a thousand times.”

– John O'Donohue

me on this trajectory. John O'Donohue expresses my wish for everyone so much better than I ever could; “May the shelter and nourishment of all the good you have done, the love you have shown, the suffering you have carried, awaken around you to bless your life a thousand times.”

As our year draws to a close, despite all the ongoing challenges and continued uncertainty, can you still take a moment to reflect on what or who you are grateful for? Can you find a way of sharing this or letting them know what it is about them that you are grateful

for? Maybe you can also reflect on what you are grateful for and appreciate in yourself?

If you need a little support in the lead up to Christmas, I am delighted to continue guiding online and in-person mindfulness drop-in sessions. Keep an eye on my facebook page, mindhaven or get in touch for dates and times over the holiday period.

Drop-in sessions at Myross Wood, Leap on Tuesday mornings from 10 -11am. €10.

Online meditation sessions via Zoom 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.

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

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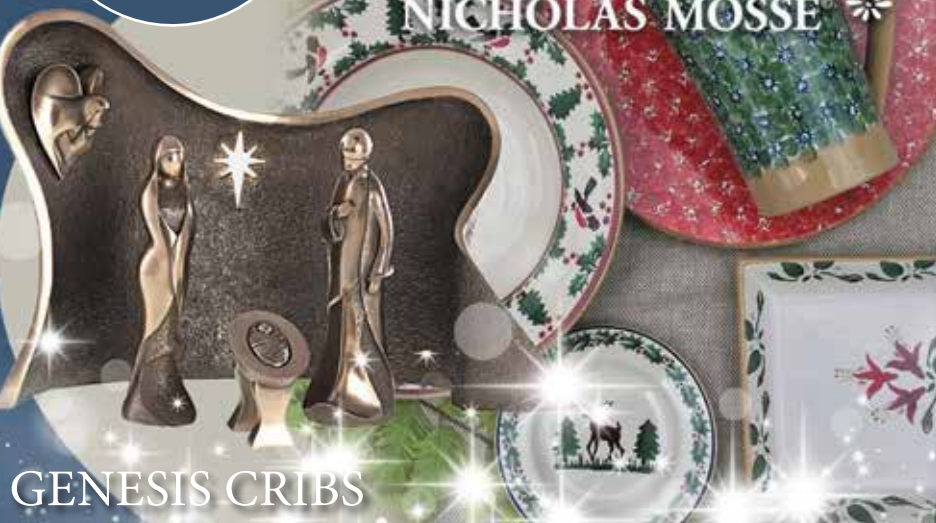
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Rainbow Folx: A LGBTI+ youth space in Clonakilty and Skibbereen



LGBTI+ MATTERS

BROD 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.

Lisa Brinkmann is a Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist working in private practice in Clonakilty and is one of the core members of BROD.

In the midst of a global pandemic and different stages of lockdown, BROD has been very limited in the ability to create, facilitate or share events and initiatives for the LGBTI+ community. However, we have been actively working in the background on different projects, one of them being the

creation of a youth service for young LGBTIQ+ people and their allies.

Together with the YMCA Carbery Youth Service we applied for funding for a LGBTI+ specific youth service and we are very happy to announce that our application was successful and initial funding has been granted. This has allowed 'Rainbow Folx' to come alive, a social and befriending support group for LGBTI+ young people and allies in Clonakilty. Rainbow Folx runs Tuesdays from 3-7pm in 'The Shack' (YMCA), 10 Astna Street in Clonakilty. Carbery Youth Service are working closely with Skibbereen's Community and Family Resource Center to develop further supports for young people in Skibbereen.

Rainbow Folx aims to provide a safe, social and relaxed environment for the young LGBTI+ community and is aimed at people between 15 and 20 years of age. It is run by youth workers from the YMCA Carbery Youth Service with the support of BROD.

In this month's column we speak to April Tambling, the youth worker who facilitates the Rainbow Folx meetings in Clonakilty every Tuesday.

April, you have been running the Rainbow Folx space for the last few weeks in Clonakilty. Can you tell us a little more about this space and what young people can expect when attending?

RainbowFolx is a project very close to my heart, and I'm so delighted that I've been given the opportunity to facilitate the project in Clonakilty. The idea behind the project is to create a safe space for young people, where they can engage in peer to peer support – a relaxed social environment for the LGBTI+ community in the area. I also like to encourage people to ask questions, so we can explore the answers together in a judgement-free zone. For the past few weeks in the group, we've been doing some artwork to hang up in the space, while learning about different labels and sharing our stories!

Is it ok for allies (non-LGBTIQ+) friends to come along to RainbowFolx?

Of course! Everyone is welcome in the space. It's a gender and sexuality alliance, the space is for people of the LGBTI+ community and allies, to learn about and support each other.

I will say however that the age group we are currently working with falls between ages 15-20.

It is great to finally have a LGBTIQ+ space for young people in Clonakilty. It is such an important resource. Can you let us know what else goes on in 'The Shack' in Clonakilty and what services are available to all young people, independent of their sexual or gender identity?

From my experience, the YMCA Carbery Youth Services is very much a youth space that can adapt based on the needs of the young people that are using the space at any given time. There's a Friday youth group that uses the space at the moment and there's been a game of Monopoly going on for the past few weeks! We offer a studio space for recording music, board games, playstation games, record player, art and crafts... When a young person comes into a YMCA Carbery Youth Services space, they should feel free to explore and make the space their own. The most recent project The Shack got involved in was the scarecrow competition. The young people got together to come up with concept ideas – and while we didn't win the competition, it was a lot of fun building the scarecrow together!

Young people in The Hive, which is the youth space in the Skibbereen Family Resource Centre, which runs every Thursday evening, are working on a film project and young people from both The Shack and The Hive were involved in creating a podcast called Cork Brave's Youth, which featured brave stories from young people, showcasing their creativity and connecting communities and young people in Cork. There has been lots of sport and physical activity happening as well including soccer with young people in Dunmanway, outdoor gyms and kayaking trips. And of course, like every good Irish establishment, we also offer a cuppa and a chat!

As a Psychologist, I am often working with young LGBTIQ+ people who feel very shy and apprehensive about going to a social group like Rainbow Folx. They do really want to join and make new friends, but feel very insecure and overwhelmed in regards to taking the first step into a new space full of strangers. Do you have any advice or sugges-



April Tambling who runs the LGBTQ youths service in Clonakilty

tions that might be reassuring or helpful to them?

This is so normal, I sometimes get anxious going into new groups! The Rainbowfolx space is so chill and friendly, there's no pressure to join in on any activities when you do show up. On a Tuesday, I'm free in the space from 12PM onwards, so they can feel free to pop in before the group really kicks off at 4PM, and get to know me first. I know it can be easier to just meet one new person at a time.

What do you enjoy most when working with young people from the LGBTIQ+ community?

As a youth worker, I really enjoy knowing I'm facilitating a space that young people from the community can safely engage in, and get the peer to peer support they need. It's so important young people of the LGBTI+ community feel they have a space. Because of homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, etc, it can often be scary to come out, and that can be lonely. As someone who identifies with the LGBTI+ community myself, I enjoy meeting new

people that bring a different perspective of the community to my attention. Even as someone within the community, I'm still learning!

Is there anything else you would like people from West Cork to know about the work you are doing?

I'd like to reassure the people of West Cork that Rainbowfolx is a safe, non judgemental, non-directive space for young LGBTI+ people and their allies. Peer to peer support is, in my opinion, the best support we can offer a young person when questioning their sexuality or gender identity. We never tell a young person who they are, just support them in becoming who they want to be. As youth workers we can offer empathy and a listening ear as well as practical support with education, employment and future direction and of course opportunities to connect with other young people and have fun together. I'd also love to get more involved in the local community, so if someone could point me to the best coffee shop, that would be great!

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The Christmas fast



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 as well as Church Cross, Skibbereen. Dr. Kingston's area of research are the healing modalities present in Irish vernacular medicine and she incorporates them, where possible, into her clinical practice. In her clinical practise she specialises in infertility and digestive issues.
www.rosarikingtonphd.com

Christmas preparations are now beginning in earnest, and advent calendars are being opened on daily basis. However, the four weeks prior to Christmas are also associated with fasting, which may be a good precursor to the indulgent practices of the feast itself.

We have come a long way from the Middle Ages when a forty day fast beginning on November 12 was obligatory. During this period, only one meal a day was eaten on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays of each week. This single meal consisted of fish or vegetables. Pregnant women, children, the old, infirm, or those who were doing physical labour were exempt from fasting. As well as the strict fast



on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, Christians were also expected to refrain from meat, dairy products, wine, fat, ale, and honeyed beer but eggs were permitted. This may not have been as onerous as we think since the vast majority of people did not have a surplus of food anyhow. However, since fasting was, and is, both a historical and religious tradition in many cultures and religions it may be an opportune time to examine its role in health.

Fasting may be defined as the abstinence from all, or some, foods, or drinks for a set period of time. In general, there are many different ways of fasting and most types of fasts are performed over 24 to 72 hours. There is also Intermittent fasting, and this involves cycling between periods of eating and fasting, ranging from a few hours to a few days at a time.

These are a few of the benefits of fasting:

1. Fasting promotes blood sugar control by reducing insulin resistance and this may be useful for people who are at risk, or have a family history, of diabetes type 2. Coupled with the potential blood sugar-lower-

ing effects of fasting, this could help keep blood sugar steady, preventing spikes and crashes in blood sugar levels.

Long fasts may not be necessary to achieve the benefits of fasting, as intermittent fasting and alternate day fasting are also effective at reducing insulin resistance. What is interesting about this is that intermittent fasting mimics the traditional Advent fast of Wednesday, Friday and Saturday which combines both the intermittent fast and a longer fast.

Unfortunately for men, some studies have found that fasting may impact blood sugar levels differently for men and women, as one small three-week study showed that practicing alternate-day fasting impaired blood sugar control in women but had no effect in men. As this was such a small study, it would be foolish to abstain from the possible benefits of fasting on the basis of it.

2. Fasting reduces inflammation. Acute inflammation is normal when fighting infection, but chronic inflammation is damaging to health. Chronic inflammation is involved in the development of heart disease, cancer, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Fasting helps reduce this chronic inflammation. In one study, the participants practised intermittent fasting for one month and subsequent blood analysis showed a significant reduction in inflammatory markers.

3. Fasting may improve blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol levels.

Some research has found that incorporating fasting into your routine may be especially beneficial when it comes to heart health. One study, albeit another small one, showed that LDL cholesterol and triglycerides were reduced by 25 and 32 per cent for participants who undertook eight weeks of alternate-day fasting. A more significant study of 110 obese adults showed that fasting for three weeks, under medical supervision, significantly decreased blood pressure, as well as levels of triglycerides, total cholesterol and 'bad' LDL cholesterol. Another study, this time involving a large cohort of patients (over 4000), concluded that they were deemed to have a lower risk of coronary artery disease, as well as reduced risk of diabetes type 2 due to fasting.

So, overall, our forebears benefitted from fasting and it may be a good idea to introduce it into our own lives. But how do we fast in a sensible way, without going for a complete marathon of bread and water, which will be of no use to anyone. It is important to find a method of fasting that fits in with lifestyle. Examples of different types of fasting are:

- Water fasting involves drinking only water for a certain amount of time.
- Juice fasting is similar to water fasting but involves juice instead of water. The level of sugar in some juices may make this type of fasting a waste of time and effort.

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- Intermittent fasting restricts food intake for a few hours up to few days. The 8/16 fast is an example of this.
- Partial fasting means cutting out certain foods i.e., chocolate for a time
- Finally, there is the good old-fashioned way of just reducing the amount we eat. Using a smaller plate than usual is one way of achieving this, as the

plate still looks as if it is full. Overall, fasting undertaken sensibly, and with due account taken for any underlying health conditions, offers innumerable benefits. During December, it has the added benefit of the Christmas repast being even more enjoyable.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic

Supporting Hypothyroid conditions with diet

use of thyroid replacement therapy to manage these conditions.

What many people are not aware is that an autoimmune condition called Hashimoto's thyroiditis is the leading cause of hypothyroidism and is estimated to effect up to 80 per cent of people with low thyroid function.

Dietary advice is helpful for hypothyroidism. But if you actually have autoimmune Hashimoto a diet tailored specifically to your needs is going to work best.

Firstly, I would like to clear

up a couple of dietary myths, related to hypothyroidism, that I commonly hear.

Myth One is that you should avoid goitrenergic foods: Many believe that goitrenergic foods such as kale, cabbage and brussel sprouts should be avoided. Supposedly these foods interfere with the uptake of Iodine by the thyroid gland and therefore contribute to the formation of goitre (thickening of the thyroid gland).

This assumption came from studies done in the 70s and 80s but these were looking at the

action of these foods in test tubes, not in real life, and they have never been reproduced in studies carried out in people.

In fact, the opposite is true – there is no relationship to developing hypothyroidism and you should eat these foods, as they are anti-inflammatory and an important part of a well-balanced diet.

Myth Two is that you should take extra Iodine (supplement) if you have low thyroid function: In areas of the world where Iodine deficiencies are common, this can cause thyroid issues. But in Europe and most of the developed world this is not the case. We have plenty of iodine in our diets. Numerous studies have now shown that this is the wrong advice; in fact the opposite is true. If you have hypothyroidism, you should not take additional iodine nor eat a diet rich in iodine containing foods. For those suffering with Hashimoto's, adopting a diet that reduces Iodine is better for you.

It is worth saying here that for the general population there is nothing wrong with eating a diet high in iodine containing foods such as seaweed, but for those suffering with hypothyroidism this should be avoided and external supplementation with iodine should also be



avoided even in multivitamins.

So, what dietary interventions help with low thyroid function? It is important to note here that if you have hypothyroidism, it should be controlled by taking a hormone replacement prescribed by your doctor, as it is not possible to control this condition with diet alone. But as Hashimoto's is the leading cause of hypothyroidism and is an autoimmune condition, diets that look at immune triggers and removing these foods will be beneficial. There are many food triggers, but the most common of these foods is gluten and a gluten-free diet can be very helpful.

Reducing table salt intake will reduce Iodine intake. Table salt has additional iodine added to it. This can be replaced with sea salt or Himalayan pink salt; both will reduce iodine intake and are better for you. These salts also taste saltier, so you

can use less salt overall, which is beneficial for your health.

Diets that control blood sugar spikes can also help with thyroid function. This is true for those who are suffering with generally high or low blood sugar. You can tell if this is a problem for you by how you feel after you eat.

If you feel sleepy after a meal this is an indication that you have blood sugar that is too high. If you feel better after you eat, with more energy, your blood sugar is generally too low. Learning how to control the insulin spikes associated with this can have positive effects on thyroid function.

If you would like help with hypothyroidism or Hashimoto's, Eoin Roe is a Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner based at Roe Health in Skibbereen. Contact him through the website www.roehealth.ie or call 087 9582362.

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The Aesthetic Clinic Clonakilty opens

Open for business at Bridge House on Rossa Street, The Aesthetic Clinic Clonakilty is an exciting collaboration between skin specialist and beauty expert Sherna Malone and registered nurse Olive O'Sullivan, who offers an eyebrow microblading tattoo restoration service.

Both are highly trained aesthetic professionals who, having worked alongside each other before, are passionate about bringing you the best possible treatments and results. The new clinic is located in a tranquil setting on the river Feale and presents a range of specialised treatments.

Olive offers eyebrow microblading for brow restoration in clients who have lost them (anything from illness to thyroid issues, postnatal, menopausal and hormonal eyebrow loss, to drug induced eyebrow loss in chemotherapy) all the way through to Trichotillomania, Alopecia, scar camouflage, poorly placed eyebrow though genetics or simply over plucked in the past in both female and male clients.

"Whilst initially all my

clients came for beauty, the first client that came following chemotherapy was the catalyst for me to combine my nursing training with my new skill," says Olive. "In 2020 my business moved from 100 per cent beauty to 80 per cent cancer and 20 per cent beauty.

Olive has an experienced nurse starting with her in January, who has trained up in micropigmentation hair stroke technique with the world-famous trainer Monica Iviani.

Along with her skincare consultations, both in person and online, Sherna offers the most innovative, safe, and highly-effective treatments, including her range of bespoke facials, Peels, Mesotherapy, Microneedling, Radio Frequency and LED Light Therapy. "Clients who book in with me have the reassurance that I use only the most advanced FDA-approved technology and products from the most renowned suppliers in the industry (AlumierMD, Exuviance, AnteAGE, Dermaviduals). Whether you are looking for skin rejuvenation, acne management, treatment for rosacea, pigmentation, scarring, sun

damage or just great skin care, I can help with your concerns and goals," she explains.

For 2022, Sherna hopes to have an enhanced offering of skincare treatments, focusing on cosmetic injectables such as skin boosters, wrinkle relaxers and dermal fillers.

Olive O'Sullivan is a Registered Nurse with 40 years and has practiced Eyebrow Microblading for 10 years exclusively. When she was in her 20s, Olive lived in Australia for four years and worked in a private plastics hospital. It was here she saw how minor 'tweakments' could restore confidence in patients. "We nursed patients from car accidents to skin cancer, nose jobs to breast augmentation and liposuction," she explains. "Back then Australia was more advanced in skin cancer prevention and treatments. As a result of this it brought awareness of the devastation of cancer, how its drug therapies can have both on the physical and mental wellbeing of the patient. That in turn gave me the insight how a procedure can restore confidence in a patient after cancer surgery and

now confidence can be restored following it."

Before moving to West Cork seven years ago, Sherna managed and taught in her family business, the Bronwyn Conroy Beauty School in Dublin. Now based in Clonakilty, she offers a variety of services including skincare consultations, bespoke facial treatments, and master classes for adults and tweens. She is the beauty columnist for the West Cork People and you will also find her on Instagram where she regularly shares her top skincare tips and product picks!

Sherna's facial treatments are grounded in the idea of clinical beauty. "Improving skin health is at the forefront of what I do. Your journey to healthy skin is personal and unique to you and by getting to know you through a consultation and/or treatment, I am able to expertly curate the ideal treatment plan for you to achieve healthy, beautiful skin."

Bookings for Olive and Sherna are by appointment only – Book Now on shernamalone.ie and browtiquecork.com.



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Know your Consumer Rights

by the West Cork
Citizens Information

It's that time of year again when Christmas is fast approaching and shoppers are out in force. Most purchases of goods and services go smoothly, but what happens when things go wrong.

Rest assured that when you buy a product or a service you have a number of rights under Irish and European Union (EU) legislation. These laws aim to give you strong rights when you buy in a shop or online, make sure you get enough information to make a buying decision based on facts and make sure there are redress options available to you if things go wrong. By law, sellers or suppliers (known as 'traders') must treat you fairly, for example, by making sure products and services are safe and of a high standard.

Consumer Contracts

When you buy goods and services, you are making a contract with the seller. As parties to the agreement, both you and the seller have certain legal rights and obligations. Contracts can be made verbally, in writing, or by your conduct. There are certain parts of a contract that businesses are free to set. However, these terms must not go against your consumer rights.

Consumer Rights

Irish and EU consumer laws only apply to transactions between a consumer and a trader. It does not apply when:

- You buy from a private individual who is not a trader (for example, someone who is selling their own car to you but who does not sell cars as a profession)
- You buy goods or services intended for use in your business (business-to-business



transactions)

- You buy from a trader based outside the EU or European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein)

Sale of goods and supply of Services Act 1980

When you buy products, they must be 'in conformity with the contract'. This means they must be:

- Of merchantable quality – this means of reasonable and acceptable standard, taking into account other factors such as durability and price
- Fit for the purpose you bought it for – they should work and do what they are reasonably expected to do
- As described – they should match any description given in an advert or other information provided by the seller at the time of sale

If the products you receive are not of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose or do not match the description you were given, you have a right to certain remedies. A remedy could be a repair, replacement or a refund. Contracts for the supply of services are currently subject to

much less statutory regulation than contracts for the sale of products. When you make an agreement with a supplier of services, for example, a carpenter, a plumber or a dentist, the agreement may be written or oral or a bit of both. In general, the terms of the agreement are what you agree with the supplier or trader.

Online shopping rights

When you buy online from an online trader in Ireland, or elsewhere in the EU, you have strong rights under the EU Consumer Rights Directive (CRD). These include:

- The right to clear and accurate information
- The right to change your mind and cancel (some purchases are not included)
- The express right to refund for delayed or non-delivery
- Right to redress in case of faulty goods.

What is my 'right to redress' if things go wrong?

If you have a problem with something you have bought (for example, it is faulty or does not

meet the description given), it is always the seller who must put things right. As a general rule, the seller must offer a repair or replacement. Alternatively, they can give you a refund.

If you are not satisfied with the quality of the products or services you should:

- Return the item to the seller (not the manufacturer)
- Act as soon as you can – a delay can indicate that you have accepted faulty products
- Don't attempt to repair the item yourself or give it to anyone else to repair it
- Make sure you have proof of purchase, for example a receipt or credit card statement
- For services, keep all evidence of damage caused by poor work, for example take photos.

The success of your consumer complaint can depend on a combination of factors – consumer legislation, the trader's willingness to resolve the issue, and the circumstances of the case itself. If you have a question in relation to your consumer rights, please contact South Munster Citizens Information Service where a highly trained member of staff will be happy to provide you accurate and up-to-date information in an understandable and usable way so that you can make an informed decision.

For anyone needing information, advice or have an advocacy issue, you can call a member of the local Citizens Information team in West Cork on 0761 07 8390, they will be happy to assist and make an appointment if necessary. The offices are staffed from Monday to Thursday from 10am to 5pm, and 10am to 4pm on Friday. Alternatively, you can email on bantry@citinfo.ie or log on to www.citizensinformation.ie for further information.

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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.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Under the tree this Christmas

As the festive season approaches and thoughts turn to gifting, fear not, I have the ultimate beauty gift guide to help you find the perfect pressie guaranteed to put a smile on the face of your loved one this Christmas morning.

Seoulista Beauty 'A Magical Night in Wellbeing Kit'
'A Magical Night In' is a top-toe bundle of treats designed to provide professional results at home. Choose from a best-selling Instant Facial™ to suit your skin needs, combined



with the sustainable cleansing Magic Cleanse and nourishing, soothing treats to provide some much-needed TLC to your precious hands and feet. Contains one Magic Cleanse, one Instant Facial, one Rosy Toes Instant Pedicure, one Rosy Hands Instant Manicure. Choice of Instant Facial includes Super Hydration, Brightening or Correct and Calm, €24.99 available in selected pharmacies nationwide, Dunnes Stores and seoulistabeauty.com

Max Benjamin Bath Experience Gift Set



Bringing balance and joy to the recipient's life, Max Benjamin's Bath Experience Gift Set is the gift of self-care this Christmas. The recently launched Bath and Body range is focused on wellness, sleep, and luxurious textures. This gift set contains a glass jar of lavender, chamomile, and magnesium body cream, a glass jar of lavender, chamomile, and magnesium body scrub and a lavender and chamomile candle. Presented in a beautifully crafted, recyclable gift box, €50 available from maxbenjamin.com and select

luxury retailers nationwide.

Kérastase Gift Sets

Give the gift of beautiful hair this Christmas with Kérastase and their luxurious range of ultra-personalised gift sets, for pure hair indulgence. Genesis Anti Hair-Fall collection will give hair that much needed dose of strength and 'oomph'. Containing Bain Hydra Fortifiant, Fondant Renforceur and Défense Thermique,



weakened hair will benefit from this strengthening trio, €88.10. And for curly girls the Curl Manifesto Discovery Set is a must for the stocking list this year. Three luxury travel size products to nourish and define curly and oily hair, €35 both available from a Kérastase stockist near you.

Murad Start Glowing Set



Partnering with illustrator Patrick Hruby, Murad's Christmas collection is a limited-edition range of apothecary style skin-care kits. The four-piece Start Glowing is a complete brightening regimen to cleanse, exfoliate and treat skin, as well as targeting the under-eye area. The set includes, Essential-C Cleanser, Vita-C Glycolic Brightening Serum, Vita-C Exfoliating Facial and Vita-C Eyes Dark Circle Corrector, €93 available from Murad stockists nationwide and online from millies.ie

Pestle & Mortar

Inspired by Indian culture, the Nimbu Body Ritual blends skin care and wellbeing in a simple daily routine and is a beautiful gift for someone you care about.



Infused with a fresh citrus scent, Nimbu products blend a clinically proven ceramide complex with skin-nourishing vitamins so that skin is left feeling soft, smooth, and supple. Opening with notes of green leaves and zesty citrus, blended with sweet fruits and flowers resting on a nostalgic berry base, the Nimbu ritual will improve mood and promote calm so that you start every day feeling uplifted and refreshed, €58 available from Pestle and Mortar stockists nationwide and pestleandmortar.com

Urban Decay Hall of Fame Makeup Gift Set

Grab this trio of Urban Decay holy grail products for everyone on your list (and don't forget one for yourself). Start with Vice Lipstick in their bestselling shade Backtalk for creamy, long-lasting colour in a single swipe. Add a few coats of Perversion Mascara for buildable volume and feathery, fanned-out lashes. Lock in your look for up to 16 hours with their iconic All Nighter Setting Spray, for waterproof and smudge-proof makeup that fights fading, flaking, and melting, €60.00 available from Urban Decay stockists nationwide and arnotts.ie

King Luxury Christmas Gift Bag



The perfect Christmas gift for anyone that is looking to up their hair and beauty routine! Filled with King luxury essentials you won't want to be without, the Jewel Brush, King's original and best-selling product is designed to make light work of the toughest tangles, whilst not damaging the hair. Gold Dust Dry Shampoo, a weightless, intelligent formula, with a unique velvet tip applicator. A quick dusting revives and adds body to hair. A scrunchie duo and velvet cosmetic bag complete the set, €39 available from kinghairandbeauty.com

IT Cosmetics Confidence Blockbuster Set



Celebrate confidence in your skincare routine with this limited edition Christmas set, featuring the #1 anti-ageing prestige moisturiser in America! This four-piece skincare gift set includes a complete routine to help achieve beautiful-looking skin during the day and while you sleep. The set includes a travel-size Confidence in a Cleanser, full size Confidence in a Cream Hydrating Moisturiser, travel-size Confidence in an Eye Cream, travel-Size Confidence in Your Beauty Sleep Night Cream, €65.00 available instore and online from Arnotts, Brown Thomas and CH Tralee.

Vogue x SK Luxury Brush Set



For the make-up lover in your life, the exclusive and limited-edition Vogue x SK luxury brush set is the ultimate glam toolkit for perfecting your makeup look whether you are a pro or a novice. A collaboration born out of a mutual love for quality makeup products that look as good as they feel, this premium quality seven-piece brush set, in a gorgeous pink ombre pantone is cruelty free, and consists of a powder brush, foundation brush, contour and blush brush, highlighter brush, eye duo brush, eyeshadow concealer brush and brow/liner brush, €99.99 available from www.sarahkeary.ie

Skingredients Skin Veg + Skin Protein Gift Set

A match made in skincare heaven. Containing Skin Veg, a hydrating and brightening pre-serum with hyaluronic acid, pro-collagen peptide, fruit, veg and botanical extracts galore along with Skin Protein, a results-driven, pro-ageing serum that contains hero vitamins A, C + E to brighten, tighten and smooth the skin. It also contains tea extracts to soothe, antioxi-

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full of volume! The black kohl eye pencil glides on effortlessly to deliver a look as subtle or dramatic as desired. A gel-like finish with excellent stay-ability and the twist feature means no need for sharpeners! €28 available from ayu.ie

Skin Formulas Oat and Milk Duo

This set contains the luxurious 100 per cent Bamboo Cleansing Mitt, with waterproof travel bag and the nourishing Oil and Milk



Cleanser, a mild daily cleanser which gently removes makeup and impurities from the skin's surface. This glides onto the skin as a beautiful oil, and once emulsified with water it melts to a delightful conditioning milk. Lightly wet the mitt and massage the skin a final time for gentle yet effective exfoliation, leaving the skin looking refreshed, rebalanced, and silky smooth, €39 available from skinformulas.ie

Bloom Mask Gift Set

The perfect gift for those who love a face mask! The Bloom Mask Set contains their best-selling Avocado Silk Sleep Mask, which helps fight the visible signs of tired and dull



skin, their Turmeric Clay Mask and the latest addition to the Bloom family, the luxurious Repairing Clarity Mask, with blue tansy oil, fruit enzymes and white willow bark that clarifies skin and soothes irritation and redness. Also in the set is a dual-ended applicator to ensure smooth and even coverage, the Bloom signature White Puff Trio for gentle cleansing and last but by no means least, a KonJac Sponge with Bamboo Charcoal to deep clean pores and eliminate blackheads and dirt whilst absorbing excess oils and toxins. All packaged into a beautiful luxury gift box, €99 available from bloombb.ie

Superfacialist For Men Looking Sharp Cactus Gift Set

This performance driven skincare set provides the perfect skincare duo to cleanse and moisturise skin. Vitamin B Energising Face Wash is enhanced with Vitamin E bursting beads, to help remove impurities and dirt built up by pollution while niacinamide and glycolic acid leave skin feeling cleansed, comfortable, and totally rejuvenated. The Hyaluronic Acid Anti-Ageing Day Moisturiser is a lovely lightweight, UVA/B boosted day moisturiser packed with skin-saviours and hydrating Cactus Water to help leave skin feeling refreshed and firmer looking. If you're green-fingered, the set also contains a pack of cactus seeds and



a plant pot to grow your own cactus plant at home! €32.99 available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online.

ClarinsMen A Boost of Energy Gift Set

Men's skin naturally needs more energy and to be hydrated regularly to stay in top form and this trio of men's essentials will do just that! Containing the new ClarinsMen Energising Gel, a fresh, non-sticky hydrating gel packed full of plant extracts to reenergize and brighten skin, it delivers the perfect dose of vitality, recharging skin and leaving it toned, rested and healthy-looking. Energising Eye Gel brightens tired looking eyes and Active Face Wash, a gentle foaming cleanser, tackles dirt, grime, and pollutants. All presented in a stylish wash



bag, €42 available in selected pharmacies nationwide and from clarins.ie

Ground The Change Gift Box

Ground products are handmade in small batches by founder Peigín Crowley in Cork, using vegan ingredients; organic where possible, and blended with sincere intention, to soothe the soul. The Change Gift Box includes Talamh Balancing CBD Balm and Codladh Sleep Pillow Spray to comfort and support during hormone fluctuations. Balancing CBD Balm is an infusion of therapeutic grade essential oils including ashwa-



gandha, clary sage and geranium blended together with hemp seed oil and full spectrum CBD to help restore balance and harmony, while St John's wort and ylang ylang helps to reduce anxiety and calm the mind. Codladh Sleep Pillow Spray with Rosewood and Lavender slows a racing mind to prepare the body for undisturbed, restorative sleep, €55 available from groundwellbeing.com

Sherna Malone Gift Voucher

If you would like to give your loved one the gift of healthy beautiful skin, a gift voucher for a Skincare Consultation, Facial Treatment, or perhaps a monetary value towards a treatment is the perfect choice, available from www.shernamalone.ie

Wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas and every happiness for 2022. I look forward to bringing you more beauty

and skincare updates next year and welcoming you to my new treatment room in The Aesthetic Clinic Clonakilty.

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dants to protect from free radicals and pro-collagen peptide to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Bonus Treat is a Cleanse Off Mitt makeup removal tool, plus a saving of 15 per cent vs. normal retail prices of individual products, €99 available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online from skingredients.com

L'Occitane Néroli and Orchidée Intense Gift Set



This heart-warming body care trio is infused with deep and mysterious notes of vanilla bean and floral orange blossom flower. Not only are the products deliciously fragranced, but they also leave the body feeling smooth, supple, and hydrated, whilst also containing ethically sourced ingredients. This elegant and sensual gift includes Néroli and Orchidée Intense Shower Gel, Soap and Hand Cream, all housed in a L'Occitane signature gift box. Not only are the products deliciously fragranced, but they also leave the body feeling smooth and hydrated, €35 available in selected pharmacies nationwide, L'Occitane Boutiques and online.

AYU Volume and Define Set



This set comes ready for gifting and includes Black Volume Lashes Mascara, Black Kohl Pencil, a mirror, small cosmetic bag, and white Ayu Gift box. Volume Lashes Mascara is infused with hyaluronic acid and will create volume and length that won't flake or smudge. The hourglass-shaped brush hugs the lash to create a natural curl while the highly pigmented liquid has a rich consistency, leaving lashes fanned out and

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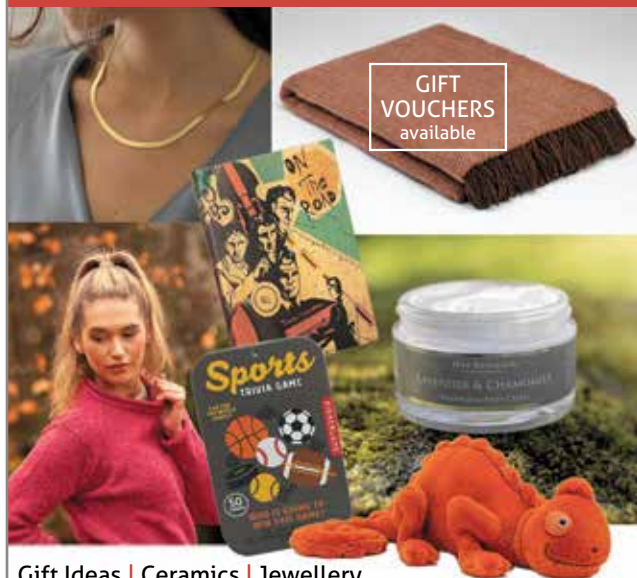
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All roads lead home at Christmas

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My fruit bushes have buds on them and the hydrangeas have a few new blossoms – someone needs to tell them that it's December! Perhaps we are all a bit mixed up too, upside down even or 'trína chéile' – my kids erupt with snorts of laughter when they hear me spout old-fashioned Irish phrases like that. This is a new world that we are living in and we are only beginning to learn how to navigate our way through so many challenges. If there was ever a time to provide a little light relief or distraction, then it simply must be Christmas time. It is the season to celebrate life and living, to sprinkle glitter everywhere, to wear pyjamas all day, to eat turkey sandwiches at any ungodly hour, to 'never' use a spirit measure, to raise a glass to those no longer with us and to welcome home loved ones. Social connection is crucial to our mental wellbeing: it lowers anxiety, helps us to regulate our emotions, leads to higher self-esteem and empathy and actually improves our immune system – we have been desperately missing this but we can safely find ways to socialise...at a distance. Making the effort to get out and about and have little chats with people while walking can change someone's entire frame of mind, so put on a big smile, get out and communicate. Oh Louise, what should I buy? Where will I shop? What's



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

in? Do I need another pair of heels? What's new? The answer is very simple – Do whatever makes you happy and what makes your heart sing!

Eat like you love yourself;
Move like you love yourself;
Speak like you love yourself;
Act like you love yourself;
Think like you love yourself and;
Dress like you love yourself.

Imagine if you made a conscious effort to do all of the above on a daily basis? Can you even begin to feel how it might change how you would feel about a lot of things – especially how you would dress. This Christmas season I am beseeching you to cast out your critic – you know that voice in

your head that says 'you don't look good enough'? Yes, that critic, find a way to flush that voice down the toilet FOREVER. Then, with a clear head, go shopping!

Who knows what we can and can't attend; so who knows what we should or shouldn't buy – but sparkly Christmas attire will never be wasted, so shop for sparkly bits to your heart's content. Chunky jumpers, gourmet leggings, runners and coats have hit the top of any list documenting what shoppers have been buying over the last few weeks. The boots are big and chunky with a thick sole, similar to the original Doc Martin's in dark colours. Silky patterned blouses are much-loved also. I know that I am repeating myself but SHOP LOCAL. The harsh reality of the last two years has left its mark on so many businesses, so let's play an active part in promoting that these local shops grow rather than close. However much you spend will make a difference; don't underestimate that for one second. Let's keep the streets in all of the towns in West Cork full of hustle and bustle and with open shop doors.

Strolling around Skibbereen market last Saturday, I came upon two familiar faces, two sisters, Marie Stanley and Catherine McAree, standing next to a stall full of the most divine pieces.

Some time ago, Catherine started an adult education course

in textiles and developed a love for crocheting. When lockdown hit, Marie used YouTube videos to learn how to crochet, so that she could follow her sister's path and pass the time; and together (but in separate houses) they created the most exquisite pieces. From bobble hats to baby hats and baby blankets, cowls to beanies, knee blankets and scarves and throws, their line, cleverly named 'Fifty Shades of Wool' will warm your heart. I picked up each piece and could feel the time and love that went into it. These are pieces that are made, sitting on the sofa, having a chat, sipping a cuppa or maybe even while watching TV or conversing



Continued on next page...

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



Pictured at the Tractor Run at Reenascreena in aid of West Cork Rapid Response were Sarah, Clodagh and Henry Hennessy. Pic Denis Boyle



Anna O'Regan from Schull pictured after graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering at UCC, Cork. Pic Daragh Mc Sweeney/Provision



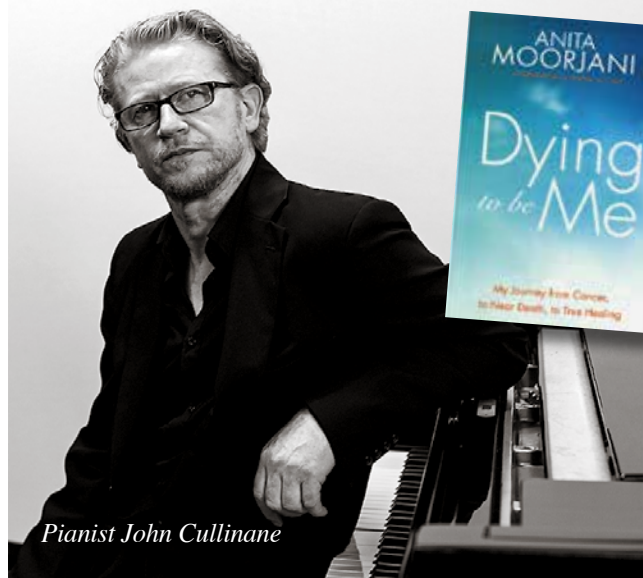
St Joseph's GNS Clonakilty took part in this year's Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Pictured are Student Council members Isibéal Crowley (6th) and Méabh McCarthy (3rd)

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

...Cont'd from previous page

with a loved one... a real little cottage industry that creates pieces that will last for a very long time. To give you some perspective, the sisters still have a blanket that their Grandmother crocheted; it just shows you that quality does last. You can contact them at fiftyshadesofwool@gmail.com and because this is West Cork, if you know them, then contact directly! Wishing them and their 'fifty shades of wool' incredible success.

Many moons ago, I played the clarinet in the Clonakilty Brass band; our conductor was the infamous Brawny Wycherley – a mighty man who gave so much of his time to music over the years. Even back then you could tell that John Cullinane was one to watch when it came to his incredible musical talent. Perhaps you are wondering why an image consultant is writing about music well? Image is all about looking and feeling good. The last almost two years of pandemic living has caught us in a mindset where we are almost afraid to feel, or plan or hope. Music has this unique ability to transcend time and space and it can take us to a place, a peaceful



Pianist John Cullinane

place that soothes the body and the mind. When you feel good you look better, don't ever forget that. John has released 'Emilia' on all music platforms. He is an amazing composer, arranger and a hypnotic pianist. A beautiful gift to give anyone of any age, especially if you have a child who is learning the piano and you live in West Cork. Have a listen... this piece has captured my heart.

The last gift is another unusual one but I promised myself that I would share it with you.

Lots of friends have lost loved ones recently and this is for them or any of you who have that ache in your heart that is like no other. I gave the gift of a book 'Dying to be me' by Anita Moorjani to a friend after she suffered a loss recently. It was a book given to me a few years ago under the same circumstances; I have lent it to so many people that I have lost track. It is the incredible story, told by Anita herself and will bring great comfort to anyone who is feeling tremendous

loss, struggling to cope with life without their loved one and wondering how to put one foot in front of the other and live again. This book will change how you look at life and death and might make you feel better. There is no pair of shoes or designer dress that will brighten the day of someone grieving this Christmas but perhaps the precious gift of your time and a chat will be priceless.

Have a lovely December; fill your thoughts and your eyelids with sparkles. To my friends, thank you for always being authentic, full of fun with a welcome side of love and patience, you are my diamonds. Thank you, my readers, for those warm reminders that my words can make a difference to your day. I will never tire of your lovely messages. Get your 'naughty' on this Christmas so that you can giggle your way into the New Year.

"Christmas is a tonic for our souls. It moves us to think of others than of ourselves. It directs our thoughts to giving." B.C. Forbes

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Unique gifts for a beautiful home

Kinsale students winners of National Garda Youth Award

Students of Kinsale Community School, Shane Collins and Oisín Coyle, were awarded with the National Garda Youth Award 2021: The Community Safety Award at the National ceremony held on November 13 in Portlaoise. This award was in recognition of the tremendous work they have done in making their community a safer place through their work in production of PPE for frontline healthcare workers both locally and nationally during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Principal, Fergal McCarthy said: "Kinsale Community

School is incredibly proud of Oisín and Shane in respect of the National Garda Youth Award which they received in recognition of their work in producing 12,000 visors and rectifying a further 10,000 defective face masks in support of frontline healthcare workers at the beginning of the pandemic when there was a national crisis in respect of PPE. This project demonstrated the student's empathetic good nature as well as reflecting their sharp intellect and dynamic creativity. They showed that they are adept problem solvers, capable of working

as a team, and they used these skills to focus on public good. These students reflect all that is good about bright, young, gifted people. We are proud at having this calibre of student attending Kinsale Community School.

"Having already won a Garda Divisional Award in the Cork West, a huge achievement in its own right, the Kinsale students, Shane and Oisín, were nominated to go forward to the National Awards as recognition of how much their community values them. The National Garda Youth Award is an excellent example of young people who give up their free time to help and support others. This is an especially strong message for all of us at a time when we all individually and collectively across all age groups continue to work together to reduce the spread of Covid-19."

On the award Shane says: "Oisín and I are delighted to have received this special award. It would not have been possible without the support of the school and all our teachers. We worked together as a team to support the community, those on the frontline and provide much needed PPE".



Oisín Coyle and Shane Collins

Diolette
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Find comfort and style under your Christmas tree!

Thank you to all our customers for your support throughout the year. We wish you a very Happy & Safe Christmas x

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Testing strategies

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Most people receive DNA test kits as gifts or for their own education, but mostly for fun. There are those who provide kits to relatives with a serious purpose in mind. This could be for general background family research (underpinning a family tree) or investigations into a family mystery. For anyone buying a kit (especially as Christmas gifts), a testing strategy is a necessary starting point. This can save both time and money, as well as maximise results. This month, as part of my introduction to DNA testing and with Christmas upon us, I am highlighting some things you may not consider. It starts before you order your test kit(s).

Sample collection is not something given much thought. Depending on who you select to do your DNA test(s), sampling is usually through spitting into a collection tube (for example Ancestry) or using a scraper to collect cells from inside the mouth (MyHeritage). For the willing older generation, providing enough sample in the spit test scenario can be difficult or impossible which may rule out using Ancestry for some.

If you are considering building a 'golden dataset', as mentioned last month, then cost can become a barrier if you have a large family. Tests cost around €75 and may have additional shipping costs. Most DNA testing companies have holiday sales with discounts up to 30 per cent and many researchers wait to batch-buy all their kits (or a few at a time) as finances permit. Random genetic inheritance can provide

unique and valuable matches from any family member. If the number of kits is limited, in addition to yourself you should sample the oldest generations first as they are closer to your DNA origins. They will have more of the most ancient DNA segments that may not have reached you.

If you have your family tree on Ancestry, it is worth testing there. You can download your results and upload them for free to other companies, such as MyHeritage. If you test elsewhere, you cannot upload your results to Ancestry, but can still share with sites that do.

If you have relatives in France, note that it remains illegal to DNA test for genealogy as the state believes it controls your DNA. It does not seem to stop many French people from testing. They get kits sent by friends outside of France under plain packaging and return them the same way.

Are you prepared for the results? There are many reasons why you may get surprises. As mentioned in previous articles up to one in 50 testers are finding that one or both their parents are not genetically connected to them, and it may extend to a grandparent too. It could be that you were never told you were adopted or, knowingly or unknowingly, you were the child of an affair. How would you handle that? It is an important consideration for yourself and others ahead of testing. Not everyone is able to get over the 'shock' of certain findings.

The younger generation are usually more open and often keen to follow up the truth.

Sometimes it is important for medical reasons to prove ancestry. Older generations can still be concerned about hiding 'family secrets' or dreading a family story that is proven correct by DNA, even if the protagonists are long passed and that society, in general, cares less about this type of thing. Most families have secrets. Also, the Irish have the sad and dark history of Church and Government complicity behind mother and baby homes and the Magdalene Laundries, as well as illegal and undocumented adoptions. Thousands of Irish without a paper trail to help prove their genetic identity are resorting to DNA.

My experience of people in these situations is usually uplifting and collaborative since a personal quest for answers is involved. They are often supported by the love and understanding of their adoptive families and does not affect the relationships between them. Nurture can be stronger than Nature. There are still a few who have not accepted that 'DNA never lies' (as per previous articles) and insist what is written on a birth certificate must be correct. I plan to discuss some general discoveries along these lines in future articles.

It is likely that you be approached by someone who matches your Irish DNA for these reasons and it is important that you reply to all enquiries, even if think you are unable to help or do not understand your own matches. Please be considerate. To share is to care and you may help someone find their identity. These small actions can be life-affirming for both you and the other person. It is one of the primary reasons I help all my project matches. The thrill connecting someone to their genetic history and potentially their living family are the simplest justifications for collaboration. The sad reality is that few people reply to enquiries and it is an issue I will discuss next month.

Consider sharing your DNA results as a matter of routine. Sharing is a two-way street. As you own your own DNA and the result, you should always ensure you download your raw DNA file from your testing company and keep it safe, so you can use it as you choose. You may wish to verify the results and pass on this data to future generations, so it should not be left unused on test sites and become inaccessible to those it can also help.

If you are keen, you test with all the testing companies that



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

interest you. 23andMe is an example, as they provide health traits as part of their service. Some other companies are now identifying which segments of your DNA specifically relate to categories in your DNA origins ('ethnicity') as discussed previously. This is still not widely available but incredibly useful for researchers looking for geographical clues in some investigations.

It remains disappointing that Ancestry still only provides a basic DNA match result (the total amount of shared DNA and the number of segments) which is unverified. Verifiable segment detail is provided automatically by other vendors. Part of your strategy will have to be the time it takes to contact Ancestry users to request that data. Sharing and verifying your matches (using tools on GEDmatch, as an example) is so important. It is also necessary to provide Ancestry with even a rudimentary family tree (three to four generations) connecting you and your DNA test so that their algorithms can suggest DNA matches and family connections. MyHeritage has a similar function connecting family trees called Theory of Family Relativity.

Next month I will be discussing in more detail the many reasons why collaboration with other testers can be more difficult than you might expect. In the meantime, if you do get a DNA kit for a birthday or Christmas, do not delay in sending it off, as there is always a New Year surge in new data. Please remember to respond to any enquiries you get from your matches and be open to sharing. Happy Testing!

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

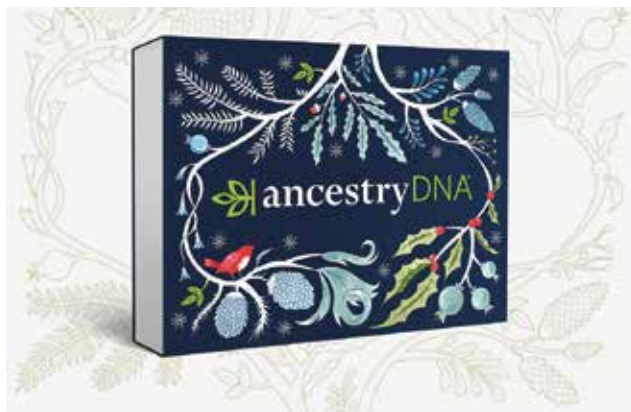
COMPETITION

AncestryDNA® Festive Edition box

Whether you have loved ones who want to have their very own 'Who Do You Think You Are?' moment or are keen to see whether a family legend is true, exploring your family history is a great way to connect with your family today and discover more about your past – and what better time to explore this than during the festive period?

This Christmas, AncestryDNA Traits will also be available to new Irish customers for the first time, offering new Ancestry customers the chance to further explore who they are, where they came from and what makes them unique. Combining cutting-edge science with data, Traits can help you discover up to 36 traits and attributes influenced by your DNA such as what colour hair or eyes run in your family or even whether you have the sprinter gene!

The brand-new kits are €69. For more information, see www.ancestry.co.uk/dna.



To be in with a chance of winning an AncestryDNA Festive Edition Box email your name & phone number to info@westcorkpeople.ie before December 13.

Please put 'Ancestry' in the subject line.

Consumers urged to give #MadeLocal presents this Christmas



(l-r) West Cork Creates exhibitors and their product, Deirdre Buckley Cairns, Alison Ospina and Etain Hickey

Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI) has launched its 'Made Local' campaign for Christmas 2021. The campaign aims to encourage Irish people at home and overseas to think about giving Irish made crafts this Christmas.

Supported by West Cork Craft & Design Guild, DCCI's popular Made Local campaign highlights the work of talented craft makers and designers nationwide and the retail shops who support them. The campaign shines a light on the quality and variety of authentic Irish products crafted by Irish makers and retailers. MadeLocal.ie lists all the participating makers and retailers to enable consumers to research and purchase a wide range of beautiful gifts.

West Cork Craft & Design Guild is a group of talented craftspeople in West Cork. The group is dedicated to craftwork

and promoting members work. Members of the guild work in various mediums such as ceramics, glass, wood, metal and textiles and all demonstrate a high level of both craftsmanship and design. The WCCDG organises one major annual exhibition entitled West Cork Creates, which includes the work of fine artists, designers and photographers. The exhibition took place as usual in the O'Driscoll Building, Skibbereen during August this year and a shopping website has been created to allow continued availability of the artworks for sale. www.westcorkcreates.com

For many, the joy of finding new and exciting Irish-made brands was elevated when they experienced the benefits of dealing with local and reputable sellers (retailers or the brands themselves). At a time when there is constant discussion and concern about global supply

chain and delivery issues, having the reassurance of buying from someone locally who you can trust to deliver, and who you can contact with ease is a huge plus.

Christmas 2021 will be a time for families and friends to come together, in some cases after a long and difficult absence. The personal touch of the maker, and thought by the gifter is an intrinsic part that makes it all the more special. DCCI is encouraging everyone to think about giving something Made Local – whether travelling within Ireland or abroad. The website, MadeLocal.ie, will assist you to find a maker and products near you.

Damian English TD, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail said: "The craft & design sector continues to grow, generating €2.9 billion annually for the Irish economy. The 'Made Local' initiative

will make a real difference to many local craft businesses this Christmas and underscores the important local economic contribution made by the sector in Ireland. I urge everyone who can, to support their local crafters as they shop for gifts this festive season."

Commenting on the campaign, Rosemary Steen, CEO of Design & Crafts Council Ireland said, "the results of our Made Local campaign during the summer are so overwhelmingly positive. We are very pleased to be able to launch the winter campaign. Our industry has been affected by the pandemic. The determination of our members to pivot their business and ensure availability online is inspiring. We encourage everyone to support your community, shop local and above all 'Love What You Give'."

The Irish craft and design sector is a significant contributor to regional economies. For more information on Irish craft and design and where to shop, visit www.madelocal.ie or join the conversation by following #MADELOCAL #lovewhatyoudo.



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Christmas in Glengarriff

The Glengarriff Tourism and Development Association is delighted to announce the schedule of events for this year's 'Christmas In Glengarriff' festival.

Saturday December 4:

12pm: Festive candle making and painting of wishing stones for children of all ages at marquee in Quills Market.

Sunday December 5:

1.30pm: 'From the Tunnels to the Glen Walk'. A unique opportunity to walk the road

from the tunnels to the village with little or no traffic while the road is closed for works. Online booking is essential. A shuttle bus will be in operation from the village to the starting line.

From 3pm: Get your limited edition 'Christmas in Glengarriff 2021' mug with fill of mulled wine/hot apple juice.

From 3pm: Wishing stone hunt for children - find the painted stones and make a wish.

4.30pm: Turning on of the new Christmas Tree lights by the Blue Pool entrance.

December 11 and 12:

From 11am: Santa & Mrs Claus at the marquee in Quills Market. Booking essential. Selection boxes for every child.

December 18 and 19:

Selection of local arts and crafts available for sale at the marquee in Quills Market.

Enjoy discounts in all businesses over the three weekends.

See www.visitglengarriff.ie for booking and further details.





These Agatha Ruiz doc boots are way too cool for school! €46 at Batemans, Clonakilty & Bandon



Cork made **Happy Attic Stories** have a new book out now – Purple & Reggie's Super Splashy Adventure Under the Sea. Just €10 at happyatticstories.com



This Gamboldown Cow by Jellycat is super snuggly. €43 at Courtyard Crafts, Schull



Salt Rock pyjamas for boys and girls at Jelly Fish Surfshop, Clonakilty



Molo Cobolt Blue dress €49.95, Molo Cobolt Blue Mohair knit sweater €54.95. Fawn set of hat and gloves €19.95, Smafolk organic cotton dress with deers €46.95 at Grasshopper, Clonakilty

Fairtrade bunnies and bears €7 - €15 available from Lazy Ostrich at Bantry & Skibbereen Markets



Blume Chocolate Pen €19.99
Lego Infinity Gauntlet €69.99
both at Toymaster, Skibbereen



Encourage kids to explore their world with an inspiring book now €12.99 or this Bird Watching Nature Kit, €14.99 from Coughlans Bookshop, Clonakilty



Fauna Kids Christmas Pyjama. Organic Cotton, designed and screen-printed by Nadia. Ages up to 7/8 yrs. €35 Limited availability at Forest & Flock Bantry



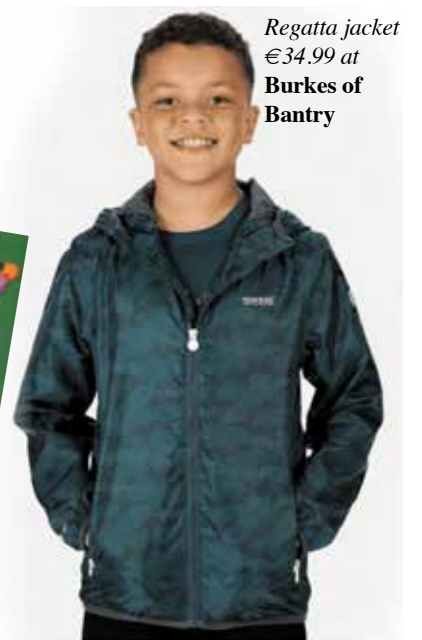
Education through play, KidzLabs & Kids Robotics from €16
Peppa Big Red Car €32.99
Pokemon from €5 (cards) up to €29.99 at Stowaway, Bantry



Barnetts of Schull brought out these exclusive sweatshirts to mark Down Syndrome awareness month. A nice way for family and friends to show their love and support. There's a choice of 4 different colour-ways and sizes range from 3/4 yrs up to XXL. Kid's €30 & adult's €38 (10% of sales will go to West Cork Down Syndrome Support Group) Available to order on www.barnettsofschull.ie or 086-3669151.



Beautifully crafted model cars from one of Ireland's longest serving toy and model shops – Collector Toys, Innishannon



Regatta jacket €34.99 at Burkes of Bantry



McNutt of Donegal's My First Blanket, a perfect gift for a little one celebrating their first Christmas. €40 at Grey Heron, Bandon



Embroidery Hoops by Ciara Chapman from €18 at **The Loft** gallery, Clonakilty

Cré Pottery Studio in Skibbereen have paint at home kits from only €8 that come with acrylic paints, brush and instructions. Lots of kits available on crepotterystudio.com Also personalised gifts from only €10, available on crepotterystudio.com or instore. They can be posted to anywhere within Ireland.



Beebombs are a super little gift for kids €7.99 at **Organico, Bantry**

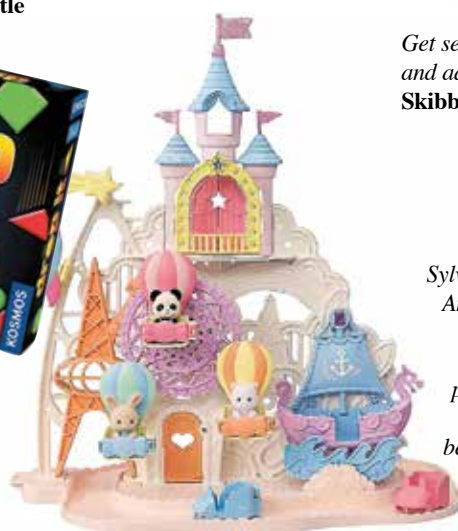
Recycled plastic plush toys, Wooden ocean stacker set €19.95, Wooden blender set €44 at **Green Dot, Clonakilty**, which now boasts Munster's best eco-toy corner!



Adorable Spotty Gnomes €16 at **Abbey Furniture, Skibbereen**



Timeless wooden alphabet puzzle €15.95 at **Chalk & Easel, Ballinspittle**



LEGO City stunt show truck & motorbike set €65, **Sylvanian Families** Baby Amusement Park €60, **Drop It** – an action/ dexterity game that promises hours of fun €40 from **Ireland's best board game shop, Happy Go Lucky, Clonakilty**

Stowaway Crafts & TOYS
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 2 William St., Bantry. Tel 027 55127

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 Thank you for your support in the year that has past and wishing you all a happy Christmas.
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 Great selection of sustainable clothing with organic cotton and independent ethical brands.



Get set to score! Sports boots for girls, boys and adult at **Fuchsia Footwear, Clonakilty & Skibbereen**

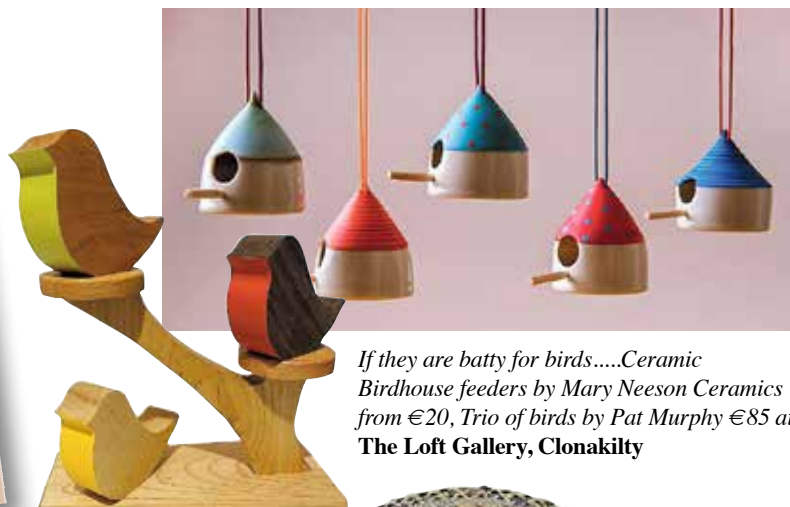


Don't forget your pets on Christmas morning! Huge range of toys and treats available at **Potty Fish, Bandon**

HAPPY GO LUCKY TOY SHOP
 Toys For All Ages
 Wide Range of LEGO, Playmobil, Sylvanian Families.
 Check out our collection of Vintage Lego Sets
 11 Ashe Street, Clonakilty. 023 8859746



Gift Guide for Homes

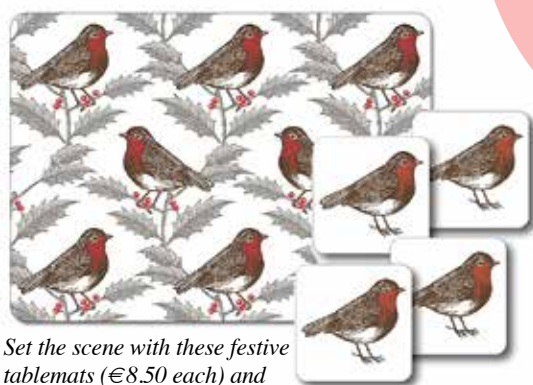
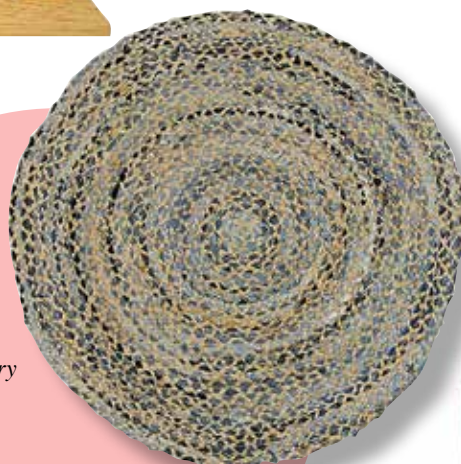


If they are batty for birds.....Ceramic Birdhouse feeders by Mary Neeson Ceramics from €20, Trio of birds by Pat Murphy €85 at **The Loft Gallery, Clonakilty**



Aynsley porcelain robin & holly ornament set €27 at **Tom Sheehys, Clonakilty**

Denim & Jute braided rug 90cm diameter €39 from **Lazy Ostrich** at Bantry & Skibbereen Markets



Set the scene with these festive tablemats (€8.50 each) and coasters (€4.50 each) from **Courtyard Crafts, Schull**



Electric wax melt burner €13 are a very safe scent option from **Abbey Furniture, Skibbereen**

Voya Little World Of Scent Festive Candle Duo €24 at **Eccles Hotel Spa, Glengarriff**



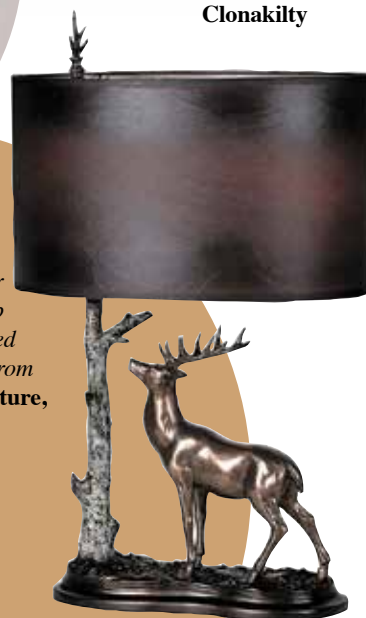
Starburst mirror €119, stag lamp €189 and framed print €199 all from **Glentree Furniture, Dunmanway**



Tipperary Crystal Jardin Merry Christmas Candle from **Rosscarbery Pharmacy**



The Coastal Atlas of Ireland €60 And the whole Atlas range from Cork University Press all at **Urru, Bandon**



Christmas throw €42.95, White footstool €39.95, wooden Christmas scene €22.95 and Christmas cushions from €17.95, all **STOF France at Fusion Home, Skibbereen**

Transform your tree with amazing decorations from **Newbridge Silverware**, from €15, at **Spillers Lane Gallery, Clonakilty**



Hairy Henry's 2022 calendar is full of their lovely West Cork farm animals. €20 directly or on www.itsplainsailing.com/org/hairyhenry

Beautiful selection of vases to suit any home from €23 at **Abbey Furniture, Skibbereen**



Macrame wall hangings and plant holder by **Boho Knots** from €18 at **The Loft Gallery, Clonakilty**

people Food, Health & Lifestyle COMPETITION

Give the gift of natural care for the face, body, mind & senses this festive season with Dr. Hauschka's luxury christmas collection

To celebrate their stunning Christmas 2021 gift collection, Dr. Hauschka Skincare is delighted to team up with the West Cork People to give readers the chance to win a luxury Dr. Hauschka goodie bag worth €100!



Dr. Hauschka's Christmas Gift Collection 2021 comprises of seven luxury gift sets in total with something available across the range to suit everyone's skincare needs. Each of the sets are beautifully packaged in vibrant festive colours that will be sure to delight when unwrapped on Christmas morning.

Dr. Hauschka's Beautiful Body Set €19.95

Beautify the body and delight the senses with the Beautiful Body Gift Set. There is a Dr. Hauschka body oil suitable for every occasion included in this luxury set; Dr. Hauschka Rose Nurturing Body Oil, Dr. Hauschka's Moor Lavender Body Oil, Dr. Hauschka's Birch Arnica Energising Body Oil, Dr. Hauschka's Blackthorn Toning Body Oil and Dr. Hauschka's Lemon Lemongrass Vitalising Body Milk.

Dr. Hauschka's Relaxing Lavender Set €27.95

Lavender to soothe and relax the body and mind - this set features Dr. Hauschka's Lavender Sandalwood Calming Body Cream and the Dr. Hauschka Moor Lavender Calming Body Oil, this great duo will be sure to help you relax and unwind after a busy day.

Dr. Hauschka's Everyday Essentials Set €29.95

Featuring your Dr. Hauschka daily care must haves this set contains handy 30ml sized products that are ideal for travelling. It includes Dr. Hauschka's Cleansing Cream, Dr. Hauschka's Soothing Cleansing Milk and Dr. Hauschka's Hydrating Hand Cream.

Dr. Hauschka's Deluxe Body Set €32.95

This gift set includes three body care must haves – Dr. Hauschka's gentle, nourishing Shower Cream, the handbag essential, Dr. Hauschka's Hydrating Hand Cream and the invigorating body moisturiser, Dr. Hauschka's Lemon Lemongrass Vitalising Body Milk. Ideal for pampering those hard-working hands and bodies during the winter months.

Dr. Hauschka's Radiant Rose Set €34.95

Reveal the power of the rose with Dr. Hauschka's Radiant Rose Set which features the cult classic Dr. Hauschka's Rose Day Cream which captures the strength and softness of the rose to nourish and protect normal, dry and sensitive skin. The set also includes the ever-popular Dr. Hauschka Facial Toner.

Dr. Hauschka's Refreshing Shower Set €39.95

Create a pampering shower experience with the Refreshing Shower Gift Set which features Dr. Hauschka's Shampoo, Hair Oil and Dr. Hauschka's Shower Cream.

Dr. Hauschka's Luxury Face Care Set €44.95

The classic three step skincare regime; cleanse, tone and moisturise, this set has you covered! It features a daily cleanser, Dr. Hauschka's Soothing Cleansing Milk, Dr. Hauschka's Facial Toner to tone and renew the skin and finish with Dr. Hauschka's Quince Day Cream, a light daily moisturiser that will refresh and protect the skin.

For further details on the Christmas Gift Collection 2021, the full Dr. Hauschka skincare range as well as details for your local stockist or to shop online log onto Dr. Hauschka's website: www.drh.ie

To be in with a chance of winning this great prize, simply answer the following question: **How many luxury gift sets are there in the Dr. Hauschka Christmas Gift Collection for 2021? A. 5, B. 6 or C. 7**

Email your answer, name & phone number to info@westcorkpeople.ie before December 13. **Please put 'Dr Hauschka' in the subject line.**

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Elemis Muscle Melt Massage - €95

Focusing on relieving tension and aching muscles, the fundamental elements of this treatment are experienced in a firm massage. Following a consultation, your therapist will use a blend of oils to suit your specific needs. Afterwards, enjoy access to the Heated Seawater Therapy Pool and Relaxation Areas.

Seawater Revitaliser Afternoon in the Island Spa - €99

Enjoy a combination of any 3 seawater treatments along with access to our heated Seawater Therapy Pool, Hammam and

Relaxation Areas. Choose from our Seawater Baths, Body Wraps, or Body Polish. Prior to your treatments, you will enjoy access to the Heated Seawater Therapy Pool and Relaxation Areas.

Elemis Peaceful Pregnancy Back Massage - €120 / €95

This inspirational therapy connects mother and baby through the power of touch, working with two heartbeats as one. Specialized positioning using a support pillow to ensure the ultimate in safety, comfort and relaxation. Helping to relieve tension in the back and alleviating swelling in the hands and feet, while easing the mind and uplifting the spirit.

Dinner for Two in the Gulfstream Restaurant - €118 for two

Treat someone special to a stunning dining experience, Dinner for Two in the Gulfstream Restaurant overlooking the ocean and the award winning Inchydoney Beach.

Locally made 'Elf Hats' for your Christmas tree

Fourth class girls from Ardfield National School have been busy making tiny 'Elf Hats' to decorate the Christmas tree. Each decoration is carefully hand-crafted, using wool, and is beautifully finished

to hang on a Christmas tree and to welcome Santy on Christmas Eve!

The group of girls came up with the idea, as the Parent's Association made plans for their fundraising outdoor Christmas

Market, which takes place in Ardfield village on Sunday, December 19 at 11am. Wanting to help with the fundraising campaign, the enterprising young students started to make the elf hats in their free time, at weekends and after school at their own homes.

With orders coming in from as far away as North Cork, Limerick and London, the decorations are priced at €2 per hat or €5 for three hats. 100 per cent of all monies made from the hats will go to Ardfield National School's Parents Association fundraising, which in turn supports school activities in 2022.

If you want to purchase a tiny Elf Hat for your Christmas tree

or as a gift for someone special like a Grandchild or God-child, please visit the market at Ardfield village on Sunday, December 19.

The outdoor market is the first of its kind for the fundraising committee of the Parent's Association and other delights on the day will include seasonal Christmas baking, Christmas decorations, festive Christmas wreaths, kindling, plus a guaranteed festive atmosphere and all outdoors!

The wonderful creative makers behind this social enterprise are Adeline Heffernan, Ella Haughney, Keelin O'Brien, Jennifer Soden, Nuria Murphy and Reidin Geaney.





Soruka bags and wallets in many different colourways add a pop of colour on a dark day. Satchel €70 from **Bateman's, Clonakilty & Bandon**



These headbands are a great jewellery alternative €35 at **CiCi, Clonakilty**. They also stock fun and funky bags €39 each in various colours and elegant gloves €14.



Pick up these very unusual cushions from the Paloma Faith Home range from €45 at **Fusion Home, Skibbereen**



There's lots of Clarins, La Roche Posay and Vichy Gift Sets to choose from at **Coen's Pharmacy, Bantry**



Vintage gold bracelet in yellow gold €1600
Lovely alternative to diamond studs.
Sapphire and diamond on 18k white gold €1900. Both at **Lindas of Kinsale**



Stripes never fade from fashion so this Vila Joy sweater €49.95 from **Options, Clonakilty** will be much appreciated. They also have a gorgeous selection of cosy hats (€35), gloves (€21) and scarves.



Kinght & Day Cecilia Layered Necklace €40 at **Spillers Lane Gallery, Clonakilty**



Toms slippers €60 and lounge shoes €70 at **Fuchsia Footwear, Clonakilty & Skibbereen**



Framed original 'Moonlit Irish Hare' wall tile by Joanne Robey €100 at **The Craft Shop, Bantry**



Esprit Wool Mix Jumper €49.99. Esprit burnt orange Jumper €59.99. Rathbournes Candles €46 and Diffusers €49.99 at **The Webb, Bantry**



For the boho lady choose this Roxy handbag €39.99 at **Jellyfish Surfshop, Clonakilty**



Yonka hydration gift set €51.50 from **LA Beauty, Clonakilty**



Sawframed Snowdrop Earrings. Sterling Silver original designs from Hannah at Sawframed. €60 at **Forest & Flock, Bantry**



Voya Body
Concentrate / Body
Indulgent Gift Set €85
at Eccles Hotel Spa,
Glengarriff



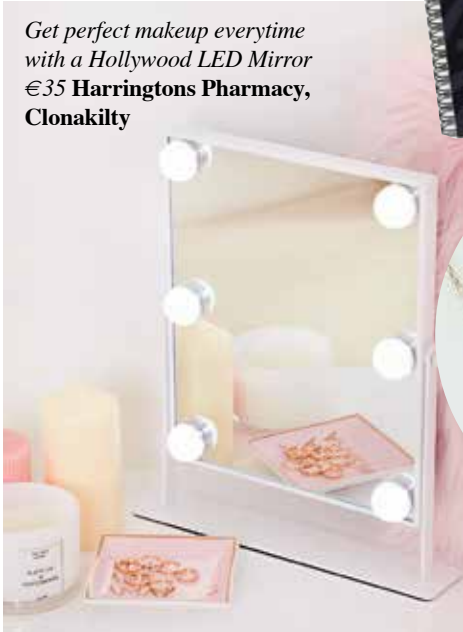
Gift box of serum and
perfume special €150
from Waters + Wild,
Glandore & online



Moon Mhá - Women's Diary
2022 at Organico, Bantry



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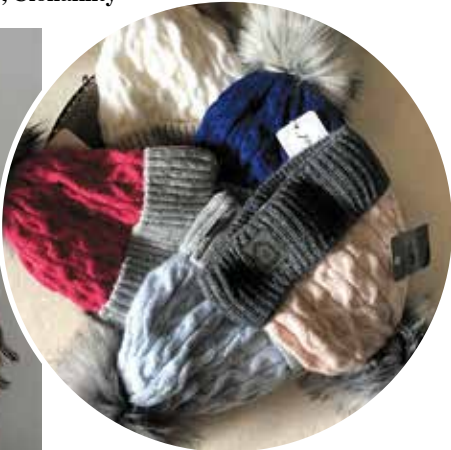


9ct yellow gold name
chain €220 from
Twomey Jewellers,
Dunmanway



Musto Sardinia Jacket now
€127.96 from CH Marine,
Skibbereen

Caudeline Christmas sets from €25 at
Crowleys Pharmacies, Clonakilty



Soft lined pom pom hats €25 and
red fleece scarf (matching wristlets
included) €36 at Pebbles, Schull



Go neon bright
at SuSu,
Clonakilty
Sweater €120
Scarf €85



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Isle Socks
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Courtyard
Crafts, Schull
will keep toes
toasty.



Moments of Solace Daily
Guidance Oracle Cards
€35 from Solace Holistic
Centre, Clonakilty



Inchydoney Candles' Soy Candles in a variety of scents for the
candle lover in your life. €21 from Grey Heron, Bandon

Mervue Organic with 100% natural ingredients
promotes natural skin care. See the full range
including vegan diffusers & candles from
Roaringwater Wholefoods, Schull



Jo Browne Luxury Bamboo Bedding at
Fusion Home, Skibbereen
Pillowcase set €45
Bedding set from €175



Luminous Collection gift sets by Image
at Smooth Beauty, Dunmanway &
Skibbereen





'The Guardian'. Framed works from award winning photographer Stephen Hayes. Prices from €120 at **Forest & Flock, Bantry**

There's not a whiff of old fogey about these TOMS slippers €60 from **Fuchsia Footwear, Clonakilty & Skibbereen**



Wall plate, original art by Master craftsman Geoffery Healy €110 at **The Craft Shop, Bantry**



Wild Atlantic models by Cowfield Design – available also for Lough Hyne, Timoleague Abbey and Galley Head – €43 Handcrafted beer caddy with magnetic opener by Pat Murphy €45 both at **The Loft Gallery, Clonakilty**



For a masculine scent go for a Cinnamon & Cedar Brooke & Shoals Candle €22 or Diffuser €29 from **Fusion Home, Skibbereen**



Yonka men's anti-age defense gift set €60.75 at **LA Beauty, Clonakilty**

To capture professional videos and picture give him an Intempo SYNC 3-in-1 Streaming Stand €24 at **Harringtons Pharmacy, Clonakilty**



Roadstar Retro Radio €44.99 at **Tom Sheehys, Clonakilty**

Get the warmth of wool with these Birkenstock Felt Zermatt slippers, sizes 36 to 45, from €70 at **The Craft Shop, Bantry**



Poly blend or merino blend hiking and snow socks (perfect for wellies) from €16 Billabong wallet €25 both at **Jellyfish Surf Shop, Clonakilty**



Add some finesse to his man cave with a range of fish prints by David Norman €25 at **Green Dot, Clonakilty**



Plastimo Auto-focus 7x50 Binoculars €49 from **CH Marine in Skibbereen**



Selection of useful men's gifts from **Stowaway, Bantry**



Bespoke and crested 18k gents signet ring stamped with family crest made in the LOK workshop €1900 Gents vintage 18k gold snake ring set with old cut diamonds €1650 both **Linda's of Kinsale**



West Cork Beard Company's The Ultimate Gift Box is a great gift for the other bearded man in your life (after Santa of course!) €50 from Grey Heron, Bandon



Scents for him and her from €25 at Waters + Wild, Glandore & online



Regatta rucksack reduced to €38.45. Regatta LED dog collar €10.45 at Burkes of Bantry

Stay sharp with this plastic free Bearradh Unisex Silver Safety Razor €39.99 (replacement blades cost as little as .20 cent each) from Organico, Bantry



Hugo Boss Bottled Eau de Toilette 50ml Rosscarbery Pharmacy



Schull teenagers call on Government to keep them safe from social media



Teenagers from Schull gained national attention last month as they protested outside Facebook Headquarters in Dublin before marching to the Dáil to present an Open Letter calling on Ministers Catherine Martin and Robert Troy to lead on stronger rules to rein in Facebook and other social media corporations. The event was organised by Uplift, a campaigning community who take coordinated action for progressive change across Ireland. It followed recent revelations that the tech giant deliberately hid research and profited from the mental and physical harm inflicted on teenage girls, caused by Insta-

gram algorithms.

Uplift campaigner, Layla Wade explained that "Facebook bosses know the damage they are causing. They are not going to change willingly – from June to Sept alone they made a \$9 billion profit.

This government is in a powerful position to rein in Facebook because their European HQ is based in Ireland, but are failing to rein them in."

Megan Brown, one of the teenager organisers of the event, said before the protest: "We won't stand by while this government sits on their hands and fails to protect us. That's why today we are going to Facebook and to the Dáil to tell them how

we feel and that we want them to stop letting Facebook off the hook."

Dorothy-Ann Vandervulgt, another of the teenagers involved in the action added: "Teenagers like us are fed unrealistic images of how we should look. We then feel pressure to look a particular way and it makes us feel bad about ourselves. Facebook should be protecting us, not pushing this stuff at us."

Ministers Martin and Troy have now been invited to meet with Uplift and the young activists to discuss the open letter in the near future.

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Changes to CAO website include apprenticeship opportunities

Enhancements to the CAO website will include further education

and apprenticeship opportunities for school leavers, Senator Tim Lombard has said.

The CAO website went live on November 5 and, for the first time, the portal includes options across higher education, further education and training, and apprenticeships for school leavers and other applicants.

Senator Lombard said, “The changes to the CAO website from my colleague Minister Simon Harris will allow students to see the full range of third-level options in one place for the first time.

“Students across West Cork will now have access to over 400 Post Leaving Cert (PLC) courses and 62 apprenticeship

programmes, as well as university options, on the enhanced CAO portal.

“Access to education for all is a key priority for Fine Gael in Government and this is just one more step in breaking down the barriers to third level. As part of last month’s Budget 2022, Minister Harris announced the abolition of the €200 course levy, which will apply to all PLC courses from next September.

“The inclusion of apprenticeships on the CAO website speaks to the societal shift that has occurred over the past few

years. Students, teachers and parents recognise there is so much more than university to consider when thinking about life post Leaving Cert.

“This is a significant step in making our third level sector a more inclusive environment which caters to the needs and skills of all school-leavers. It is a change which reflects education, of some form or another, is for all – but the ‘one size fits all’ model is now a thing of the past.”

Minister Harris said: “I really want to pay tribute to the CAO, Solas and ETBI for coming to-

gether to bring this to this point. This is an important day for this Department and our third level sector.

“Across the country over the next few months, Leaving Cert students will be considering their next steps in life. We have so many industries offering diverse and interesting careers and there are so many ways to get there. If full time education isn’t for you, then we have options that are.”

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Charity Air Ambulance on a mission to ‘Light up the Sky’ this Christmas

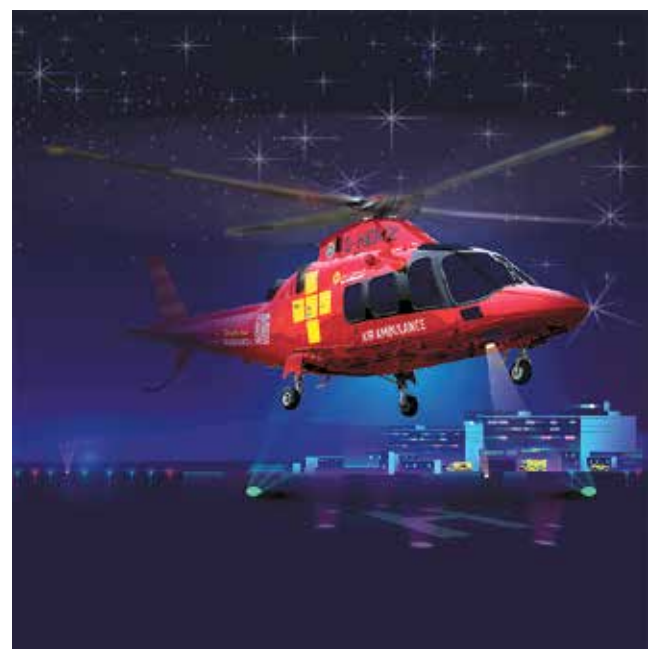
The Irish Community Air Ambulance is asking supporters and businesses to help it Light Up The Sky and sponsor a star to fund life-saving missions this Christmas. Each donation made through the organisation’s website will light a virtual star, supporters can also leave a message for the crew or light a star in honour of a loved one.

The Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) is

Ireland’s only charity-funded Air Ambulance. It responds to serious incidents and medical emergencies every day of the year, including Christmas Day, from its base in Rathcoole, Co. Cork.

There were 42 taskings during December 2020, including one on Christmas Day. Crews launched 12 times between Christmas Eve and New Years Eve to counties Cork, Clare, Kerry, Limerick and Waterford costing an estimated €42,000.

Each helicopter mission costs an average of €3,500, all of which has to be raised or donated. The HEMS Air Ambulance has been tasked by the National Ambulance Service to 468 incidents so far in 2021. One in five calls has been to cardiac arrests, followed by road traffic collisions and farming incidents. Cork accounts for more than a third of all incidents (37pc), followed by Kerry with 23 pc. Both Tipperary and Clare account for 12 pc of missions in 2021. Kerry, Tipperary and Clare have all seen an increase in taskings when compared to 2020.



Kieran McGeary, CEO of Cork’s 96FM and C103 is a voluntary Board Member of the Irish Community Air Ambulance. He hopes companies will get involved in the campaign, “As well as individuals, businesses can take part in this great fundraising initiative. What better way to thank employees for their efforts over the last 12

difficult months than buying stars for them? It would be an ideal feel good gift for clients this Christmas too. As well as helping meet your company’s CSR targets, your donation will help to save lives. There’s no better present this Christmas.”

To buy a star or to make a donation visit communityairambulance.ie.

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New defibrillators for Glengarriff

Recently the Glengarriff Defibrillator Group was delighted to install a further three defibrillators in the village. This brings the total number of 24-hour, publicly accessible, defibs in the village to five – there was just one at the start of 2021!

This is a huge boost to the locality, achieved through a combination of fundraising support from the community, and a grant awarded in September

from the HSE and the National Lottery.

John Dervan and Kieran Desmond (pictured) installed the defibrillators. “We are delighted to be installing a further three defibrillators in the village,” said John, “as this provides great security to our residents in Glengarriff and for the thousands of visitors that come to stay here in Glengarriff every year. We ask that everyone familiarise themselves with where

the new defibs are, and look out for upcoming CPR courses which we will be organising in the village.”

The previously installed defibrillators are situated at the church and outside Daniel O’Connell’s property; across the road from Casey’s Hotel. The newest ones are located at O’Sullivan’s Quik Pick Shop and Filling station, The Perrin Inn and Harringtons Maple Leaf Bar.



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Bantry Bay Lions Christmas Food Appeal



By John Dervan,
PRO – Bantry Bay Lions Club

The Bantry Bay Lions will be holding their annual Christmas Food Appeal at SuperValu and Lidl from December 3-5. Food and money donations can be made as usual in SuperValu at checkout. Lions will be stationed at Lidl from Friday to Sunday to accept monetary donations. There are more needy families to help this year so the Lions are relying on the usual generosity of the local community to support this food appeal. Food vouchers will be given to Saint Vincent De Paul for distribution this year instead of food hampers. Any food donated at SuperValu will be converted to money through the cooperation of Jim O'Keeffe and staff.

President Marion Rouse and past President Nora Lynch were presented with the Melvyn Jones award in November. This award is in recognition for their contribution and dedication to Lionism over the years. Melvyn Jones is a founder member of the Lions organisation and this award is the highest an individ-

ual in the Lions organisation can receive. Congratulations on a very well-deserved recognition for both members.

After organising a highly successful inaugural drive-in Bingo night in August, the Bantry Bay Lions decided to host another one on Sunday, September 12 in the SuperValu car park in Bantry. This was a fully Covid-compliant event since everyone remained inside their car for the duration of the bingo. It was a real innovative way of playing bingo, using a projector to display the numbers, loud speakers and also participants were able to tune in their car radios to hear the numbers being called. With 11 games per bingo book, cash prizes were given for a line and a full house per game and the bingo ran for approximately two hours. A raffle was also held during the half time break, with all prizes being generously donated by members of Bantry Bay Lions Club. The event was well attended and the proceeds were donated to the Bantry Inshore Search and Rescue Association (BISRA). The Bantry Bay Lions would like to thank everyone who came out

to play bingo for their support. Special thanks to SuperValu and Cork County Council for use of the car park, Barrett's Agri for the use of a covered lorry to allow for the inclement weather and DJ Jay for all the equipment and for calling out the numbers.

Club President Marion Rouse and all members of the Bantry Bay Lions would like to thank people in the local community for their generous support throughout this very challenging year and extend their warmest wishes for a happy Christmas and a healthy and happy new year. Stay safe everyone.

The Bantry Bay Lions Club is a non-profit organisation and is affiliated to the Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF), which has 100 years of service. Members normally meet at the St Goban's Centre at 7pm on the second Thursday of the month but due to Covid 19 restrictions they now hold meetings via Zoom. To learn more about the Bantry Bay Lions you are cordially invited to visit their website at www.bantrybaylions.com.

President Marion Rouse presenting a cheque of €500 to Toby Campbell, Secretary and Coxswain of BISRA. Also shown are some members of the Bantry Bay Lions (yellow vests) and BISRA.

Christmas market in Durrus

For one last time in 2021 the artists and crafters of Sheep's Head invite you to join them for their Durrus Christmas and Antiques market. With over 25 stalls from summer traders, and some new faces, you can support local small businesses while crossing off gifts on your Christmas shopping list.

The market takes place in the bigger venue of the Durrus Community Hall on Saturday, December 4 from 11am until 5pm.

The stallholders offer all their supporters season's greetings and hope to be back in Phillips Green for Summer 2022.



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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Keeping your animals safe over the holiday

Every family looks forward to a holiday and being able to relax. But spare a thought for your dog/dogs during this festive season. Here's my cautionary tale!

Some years ago, before I became a dog trainer and holistic therapist, I was just an ordinary person who woke up on Christmas morning with two young and very excited young children and a female Boxer. We were due to spend the day with some of the in-laws who had kindly invited

us. But, Freya, my Boxer, had other ideas. I couldn't get her out of her bed. And when I lifted her up, she stood with her head lowered, her back hunched and all her muscles were stiff and she couldn't move!

Fortunately, my vet was on call for the day and I rushed her to him for a very expensive visit. He had no idea what was wrong and repeatedly asked me if she'd consumed something to upset her. Needless to say, on the day that was in it, and all the preparations of the day before, I couldn't remember anything out of the ordinary. I recall the vet gave her some sort of vitamin injection or something in the



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.

hope that it would revive her.

With a heavy heart, I packed my two kids into the car with Freya all wrapped up in blankets in her basket and drove to the in-laws. I spent the day running in and out to check on her just to ensure she was still with us.

Finally, the long day ended and we went to drive home. There was Freya, sitting up in the back of the car, looking chipper and full of life! What a relief but what a ghastly, anxious day.

As I drove home, it suddenly

occurred to me what had happened. The previous night, I'd used undiluted Tea Tree essential oil to disinfect something, as it was the first thing that came to hand. I remembered Freya licking the area afterwards and as I was fairly ignorant about essential oils, their uses, and their contraindications, I'd not really thought anything of it. Nowadays, having completed a course in Essential oils, their properties, uses and toxicity, I would have first diluted the Tea Tree oil and made very sure no animal had access to it. In fact, I never use Tea Tree oil, diluted or otherwise, anywhere near my animals just to be on the safe side.

So here's a list of some of the things that can be toxic for dogs and cats giving them huge and often fatal reactions:

- Certain indoor plants such as some species of Cyclamen, Asparagus Fern, Dwarf Cane, Dwarf Rubber Plant, Lilies, Poinsettias, Mistletoe and Holly – all Christmas favourites
- are toxic to dogs.
- Cooked bones especially turkey, chicken and goose.
- Herbs and spices – dog's aren't used to eating them and can get stomach upsets.
- Onions and other bulb vegetables (chives, leeks, shallots). Your dog can tolerate a very small amount of garlic but definitely NOT on a regular basis.
- Grapes, raisins, currants and sultanas can be fatal even in small amounts, which means they shouldn't eat Mince pies, Christmas pudding or fruit cake.
- Avocados, both the fruit and the stone, contain a chemical that's dangerous to dogs.
- Chocolate, especially dark chocolate, can be very dangerous for dogs even in small amounts.
- Yeast and uncooked dough can rise and ferment in the dog's stomach causing great discomfort and can be fatal.
- Human desserts and sweets are bad for dogs and their teeth

- while the artificial sweetener Xylitol is dangerous for them.
- Macadamia nuts and walnuts are toxic to dogs.
- Obviously alcohol and caffeine are not good for any animal.
- Too much of rich foods and gravy can lead to digestive upsets and the unwelcome deposits of vomit or something worse during the night!
- If you're using a diffuser with essential oils, remember that animals can find them overwhelming and toxic. They like to choose the oils they need. So, keep all diffusers in use in a well-aired room and out of the way of any animals. If you see one of your pets looking lethargic or definitely off-colour, then shut off the diffuser and take your pet outside to breathe fresh air.

Forewarned about all the above is forearmed!

Let me take this opportunity to wish everyone and their pets a happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year!



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Thinking of a pet for Christmas?

RAWR, and other animal welfare organisations, are in strong agreement that pets should never be given as Christmas gifts. If you are pondering such a purchase, **Deirdre O'Brien** from RAWR outlines why you should seriously reconsider, or maybe just delay it.

Our TV screens often show a charming Christmas morning scene, with children's eyes wide with wonderment, as they open a gift box from which a tiny puppy peers innocently out. The puppy stumbles over mounds of gift wrapping, to the amusement of the delighted children who rush to hug their new pet. The adults smile knowingly in the background as they watch their children so full of the joy of Christmas. What could possibly be wrong with this picture?

Nothing. It perfectly captures a lot of the symbolic spirit of Christmas. As fiction it warms people's hearts. As advertising,

it effectively sells products, even those totally unrelated to pets or Christmas. What IS wrong though, is what happens when real people try to re-enact this mythical family drama with a living, breathing pet as a prop.

At RAWR we are not against pet ownership; in fact we think the world would be a better place if more people had meaningful relationships with animals. Our concern is for the future of adorable puppies that show up under the Christmas tree. Unfortunately, their lives, in all probability, will turn out to be very unhappy.

The atmosphere of Christmas morning is frightening: Your new pet's experience of leaving its mother and litter-mates, its arrival in a new home and introduction to a new family, can permanently affect its ability to bond with, and trust, humans. A pet needs to be introduced during a relaxed, quiet and gentle time. Christmas morning is absolutely the worst time, in terms of a pet's developmental needs, for introducing them to a new family.

The timing teaches children the wrong values: Many families

who value pet ownership do so, at least partly, because of what children learn about care and responsibility, love, loyalty, and respect for other living beings. Think of what happens to the other gifts from under the Christmas tree. Most of them have now broken or been forgotten. The excitement inevitably wears off, and the once compelling toy becomes something to use, use up, and then discard in favour of something newer.

A living pet should not be thought of in the same category as a Christmas toy. Children need to learn that a pet is being adopted into the family – as a living family member who will contribute much, but will also have needs of its own, which the rest of the family is making a commitment to meet.

The puppy grows up: Many people have a somewhat romantic view of what pet ownership is like. This romanticism can be exaggerated further by the Christmas season. People who have not had pets before, or not since they were themselves were children, are often completely unaware of, or have just forgotten, how much work it is to raise

A living pet should not be thought of in the same category as a Christmas toy. Children need to learn that a pet is being adopted into the family – as a living family member who will contribute much, but will also have needs of its own, which the rest of the family is making a commitment to meet.

a pet.

Dogs require a huge commitment from at least one person who is prepared to teach the dog what behaviours are expected of him, under a wide variety of circumstances. Adults may remember a faithful friend from their youth who seemed never to need training. But they were children at the time and did not necessarily see all the work that went into training and socialising that pet.

The reason that I mention this is because a lack of owner knowledge is one of the main factors contributing to a huge problem: young dogs being 'given up' within the first year or so of having acquired the animal. Untrained, unsocialised puppies might be 'cute' and 'natural' but they are tolerable only for a few weeks, if even that. Then they start to be a nuisance. Then they start to be a major problem.

It's a sad fact that a dog is often brought to the vet for euthanasia by a frustrated owner because they are 'uncontrollable' or have 'behaviour problems'. Perhaps they are taken to a shelter in the faint hope that it will be adopted by someone else.

The right thing to do: 'Christmas pets' often are impulse purchases, in the seasonal spirit of love and generosity, without the hard self-assessment of 'Have we the time, energy and inclination to give the necessary commitment to raising, socialising and educating this pet?'

It is better to get that new pet at a less emotionally charged time of the year, when the decision is a more carefully considered one.

If you are absolutely set upon getting your family a pet for Christmas, consider this alternative instead: Purchase a lead, a collar, a feeding bowl, a cage, a good book on caring for a pet, a book or DVD on the topic of how to select the right pet for your family or a donation certificate such as the one RAWR has available in its shop in Bantry. Wrap these up under the tree instead.

Then, after the Christmas tree is taken down and the frenzy of the holiday season is behind you, the family can enjoy the anticipation and excitement of discussing and selecting a pet.

This will increase the family's mutual commitment to, and investment in, the well-being of the newest family member. It will be a project the family has done together, which is a wonderful way for any adoption to commence.

A pet with a good introduction to its new family is much more likely to become a longterm companion rather than just another tragic statistic.

people Arts & Entertainment

Son of Man' from Iran sheds light on plight of transgender people

Iranian filmmaker Sepideh Hosseini's 'Son of Man', a groundbreaking film based on the true story of an Iranian woman who transitions to a man, is due to be released on international screens. The picture is a rare LGBTQIA+ story to come from Iran, where homosexuality continues to be illegal.

The film, brought to us by Cork-based Silver Mountain Productions, follows the story of an Iranian woman, Azar, who following her divorce, gives birth to a baby girl, Armita. With the support of her only friend Azar transitions, becoming Ahoura and 'father' to Armita. They enjoy a loving and close relationship, with Armita believing her mother Azar had died when she was a baby. The secrets of the past appeared to be buried forever

until Armita's biological father, Bahman, appears in Tehran from Italy to claim paternity and to reveal all, threatening to tear their whole world apart.

The film was financed and produced by Vahid Dalili's Dalili Group and stars Behnam Sharafi, Majid Potki, Paria Mardanian and Hadi Eftekharzadeh. The collaboration with SMP was negotiated and agreed by SMP's Ronald de Neef, the film's Producer Vahid Dalili and Producer and Director Sepideh Hosseini.

Director Sepideh Hosseini commented: "I am so pleased that this important film is being launched into the world markets. Using the story and lived experience of my friend and incorporating real events, which we reconstructed in 'Son of Man' I intend to raise much-needed awareness and



encourage the world to confront and openly discuss the plight of the transgender community around the world. It is so important that we share the language and common pain of humanity and get the world to defend the transgender view. Maybe if we all join hands the whole world can help to bring about change."

SMP's Creative Director Dominique Murphy-de Neef added "LGBTQIA+ rights need to be fought for from every corner of the world. This film is an incredible piece of work that sheds light on the discrimination that transgender people are subjected to. We still live in a world where transgender people are marginalised by members of our society for being who they are. The lack of understanding and support in today's society is unacceptable and this is why films like 'Son of Man' are so crucial. This film highlights the transgender experience alongside beautiful cinematography and powerful performances."

SMP are currently working on the worldwide Festival Campaign for the film and hope to announce further news on that as well as the worldwide distribution plans shortly.

Learn to play the ukulele the Wild Atlantic Way!

'I've always wanted to play an instrument but I'm not musical and I don't think I'd be able to do it now that I'm an adult'.

"I hear this a lot," says teacher Claire Marie Barton. "The good news is that it simply isn't true. Music is in our DNA and we just need to rediscover our connection to it. Anyone can learn an instrument with a bit

of help.

"Of course some instruments are easier than others...drum roll...the ukulele! This small, modest instrument looks like a toy guitar but it only has four strings, making it much easier to play."

M.W. from West Cork backs Claire up in this, writing in a testimonial, 'Claire, many thanks for helping me reach this stage. I am delighted to be able to pick up my ukulele and feel

confident to play the songs I've learned. It's a great feeling. To be at this stage is brilliant and was always my ambition'.

Claire has created a ukulele membership called 'Ukulele the Wild Atlantic Way' that is designed to take you comfortably on your ukulele journey, with a bit of craic along the way. "The emphasis is on fun," Claire says, "making new friends and developing your ear so you can play music with others."

Membership includes two 12-week beginner courses that you can work your way through at your own pace, using weekly tutorial videos. Every week you get to check in with Claire, ask questions and get feedback.

"Once a month we meet for

a Q&A and practise session and you choose whether to attend in person or online via Zoom. Sessions are recorded so if you miss a class you can watch the replay.

"At intermediate level we learn a new song each month on video and meet up for a practise and sing-song. Again you have the choice of meeting in person or online via Zoom."

Enrollment is happening now to start in January and there is a 10 per cent discount until Sunday 12 December!

For more information and to find out more about why the ukulele is such a great instrument as well as tips on choosing one, please visit clairemariebarton.com/ukulele-classes/

West Cork filmmaker the audience's favourite at Cork Film Festival

The Short Audience Award at this year's Cork Film Festival went to West Cork based director Michael Holly for his documentary 'Seanie Barron: Only in Askeaton'.

For decades, Seanie Barron has been making walking sticks in a workshop at the back of his house. His creations often appear flamboyantly eccentric, yet all are made with an intuitive practical understanding of nature and the Irish countryside. He roams fields, lanes, bogs and tracks, always looking for a promising branch to shape.

His unique vision searches for surreal forms embedded in wood, ranging from UFOs to motorbikes, ice skaters and swimmers, foxes and seahorses.

"Seanie will be as pleased with this Cork Film Festival Audience Award for Short Film as I am!" said Michael Holly. "I would like to say a huge thank you to Michele Horrigan and Sean Lynch of Askeaton Contemporary Arts who commissioned and produced this short film as part of a series named 'Only in Askeaton' about artists and creatives who have been a part of their annual artists



residency programme. Also a huge thank you to the legend that is Seanie Barron, and the wonderful audience of the Cork International Film Festival."

Michael Holly is an artist and non-fiction filmmaker, and a current Irish Research Council PhD scholar in Film and Screen Media at University College Cork. He holds a MA in Visual Arts Practices from IADT, Dún Laoghaire, and works with video, sound, installation and photography in parafictional and documentary investigations into local and national identities.

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'Brother Blue' single from Mongoose singer

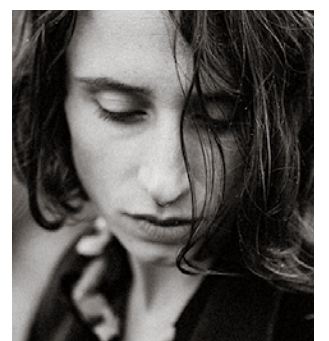
Possessing of a "rich 80 per cent dark chocolate" voice and an acute sensitivity for the emotive power of words, Molly O'Mahony's song writing is raw and unabashed.

Molly spent the past decade writing and performing with art-folk group Mongoose, who have been a fixture of the Irish music scene since their formation in 2012. The band have released two albums and two EPS in that time and have shared stages with the likes of Glen Hansard, Mary Coughlan and Eddi Reader.

She returned to her family home to Ballydehob in March of last year. Against the backdrop of the unfolding pandemic,

she began work on her debut solo collection. The first single 'Remember to Be Brave', was released in June. Brother Blue is the follow-up single from the highly anticipated album, due for release in 2022.

Stream/Buy Brother Blue at: linktr.ee/mollymahony



people CHRISTMAS READING



Literary picks

Eimear O’Herlihy is the festival director of West Cork Literary Festival. The festival normally takes place over one week in Bantry each July and includes writing workshops, readings, seminars and events for families and young people. WCLF’s Literary Advent Calendar launches online on December 1 and will feature a short reading by an Irish writer each day until Christmas. The 2022 West Cork Literary Festival is scheduled to take place from July 8-15.

2021 has been a bumper year for books and Irish books in particular. There have been so many incredible books across all genres, with new titles by well-established writers as well as debut authors that we’ll be hearing about for years to come.

IRON ANNIE is the debut novel by Luke Cassidy and it was published in September. It is set in Luke’s hometown of Dundalk and it is an absolute rollercoaster of crime and romance. It is very dark whilst also hilarious. I really became invested in the main narrator Annie and the wonderfully colourful cast of characters and I found myself rooting for them despite their very shady involvement in the local criminal underworld. Iron Annie has already been adapted into The Iron Annie Cabaret, an interdisciplinary stage show combining music, theatre and literature

and the show is currently on a nationwide tour. I think this book is going to be huge and we’re going to be hearing lots more about it. This would be a great Christmas gift for anyone who likes a fast-paced, darkly humorous read and who enjoys discovering new writers.

UNSETTLED is the first book by playwright Rosaleen McDonagh and it is one of the best books that I read this year. It’s a short book but it has stayed with me since I read it and it is one that I will definitely read more than once. It is published by Skein Press, independent publishers who focus on under-represented voices in Ireland. Unsettled is a series of essays about Rosaleen’s life as an Irish Traveller and as a wheelchair user. She writes about racism, ableism and abuse but also about the importance of family and friends. It is an unsettling

and sometimes difficult read but it is also life-affirming. It really is a must-read. An extract from Unsettled will feature in WCLF’s online Literary Advent Calendar in December.

Rónán Hession’s second novel **PANENKA** was published this year. His debut novel Leonard and Hungry Paul came out a few years ago and it is one of my favourite books of all time. I can safely say that Panenka did not disappoint as the eagerly-awaited second novel. Rónán writes such gentle characters and I really feel like I get to know them when I am reading his books. Panenka is a football term and it is the nickname of the main character, a nickname he received following a disastrous moment years ago in his footballing career. The relationships between Panenka, his daughter and grandson and his new friend Esther are so beautifully written. Rónán has

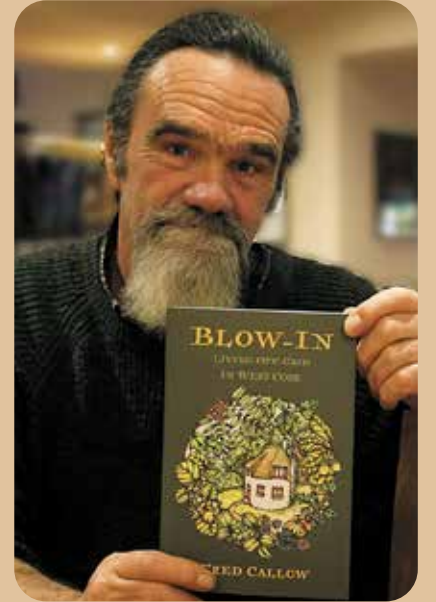
New book gives a candid account of life on Cool Mountain

A book that tells the story of the Cool Mountain community in West Cork has just been published. ‘Blow-In: Living Off-Grid’ in West Cork is written by Fred Callow, originally from the Isle of Man, who settled in Cool Mountain in the early 1990s and still lives there.

The book is the first title to be published by a new West Cork-based publishing company, Sweeney and O’Donovan, which will publish three more titles in Spring 2022, including the memoirs of long-distance swimmer Stephen Redmond. It will be available at €16 in all the main bookshops and online at www.sweeneyodonovan.ie.

In ‘Blow-In’, Fred Callow tells how he arrived in West Cork and discovered what he calls his ‘Family’, a group of like-minded people striving to live an alternative lifestyle in the townland of Cool Mountain, not far from Dunmanway.

For a while, this ‘hippy’ community became an easy target for dishonest media commentators and politicians, but in reality it had from the beginning an excellent relationship with local people and contributed greatly to the arts and crafts and musical culture of West Cork. Although the community wasn’t without its own internal problems, as Fred explains in this candid account, it was at the end of the day simply a collection of people “looking to feed and house their families — gardeners and smallholders and basket makers having a little fun drinking and playing music together along the journey”.



read from both books at West Cork Literary Festival and his outdoor event this summer was a real highlight of the year. If you want to get a taste of the book you can watch the event on our youtube channel.

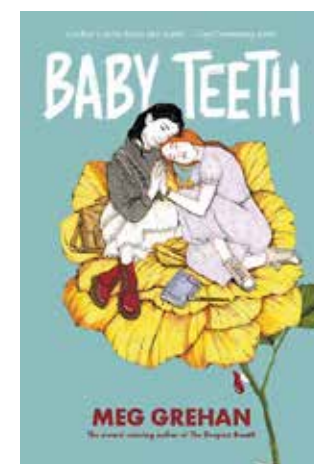
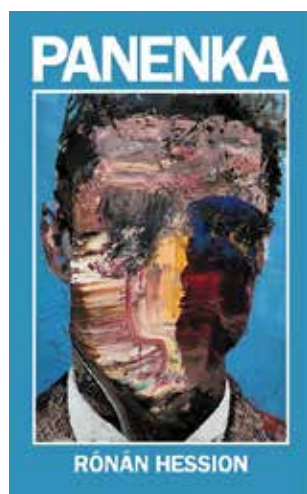
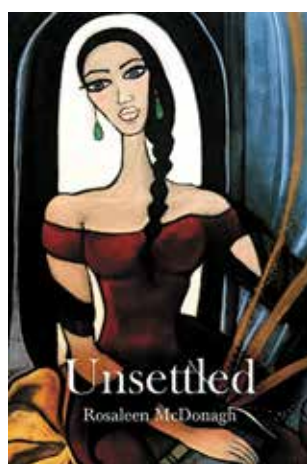
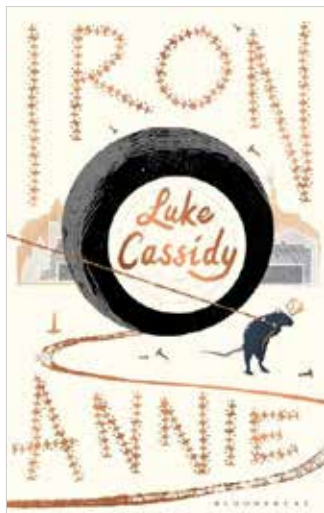
2021 was also a great year for young adult novels and these are three of my favourites from Irish writers.

Caroline O’Donoghue is the author of several novels for adults and **ALL OUR HIDDEN GIFTS** is her debut novel for young adults. It’s the first installment in a series of books about sixteen-year-old Maeve and her friends. There is a supernatural element to the book as Maeve discovers a pack of tarot cards with magical powers. It’s also very strong on the complexities of teenage friendships and I was hooked from start to finish. Caroline is a writer from Cork but now living in London. All Our Hidden Gifts was chosen

as Cork County Council’s One County One Book for teenagers and young adults earlier this year and Caroline is also the presenter of the popular podcast Sentimental Garbage.

BABY TEETH is a glorious verse novel by Meg Grehan and I fell in love with it the moment I saw the beautiful cover. It’s described as a “verse novel of queer love, lust and vampires” and honestly what more could you want. I first discovered verse novels when I started reading another Irish YA writer Sarah Crossan and they are such a wonderful way to read poetry for people who might not think that they like poetry. In Baby Teeth Claudia and Immy meet in a flower shop and fall in love but Claudia doesn’t know that Immy is a vampire. It is so beautifully written and it would be a gorgeous Christmas present for teen readers.

HANI AND ISHU’S GUIDE TO FAKE DATING is the second book by Adiba Jaigirdar. Adiba was born in Bangladesh and has been living in Dublin since she was ten. Hani and Ishu’s Guide to Fake Dating is a YA novel about first love and identity. Hani’s friends don’t believe that she likes girls because she has only dated boys so she pretends to be dating Ishu whilst Ishu is happy to go along with the pretence in the hopes that dating Hani will make her more popular as she really wants to be Head Girl at their school. This heartwarming and funny love story is perfect for teens who enjoyed To All The Boys I’ve Loved Before. It’s been nominated for several awards recently and it’s easy to see why. Adiba was involved in two virtual events for teens at West Cork Literary Festival and will also feature in our online Literary Advent Calendar.



people CHRISTMAS READING

Miniature novel by a 12-year-old Austen reproduced by 'Pretty Interesting History'

Designed by Pretty Interesting History's Jenny Dempsey, a miniature novel written by Jane Austen at the age of 12 has been published just in time for Christmas.

Jane Austen was only twelve or thirteen when she wrote 'The Beautifull Cassandra'. Using only 465 (occasionally misspelled) words, Austen questioned gender boundaries and challenged the prevailing restrictions on women's bodies and minds.

This tiny novel examines a day in the life of a young girl, who, inspired by a phoenix-styled bonnet, meanders about engaging in gluttony, robbery and violence.

The novel uses the language of flowers to illustrate Cassandra's inner journey of self-realisation and empowerment.



32 full colour pages – A5 landscape (magic feather included)! Available online from prettyinteresting-history.com Price €12. Free postage in Ireland.



Books for under the tree

Recommended by Worm Books Schull



Tree Dogs, Banshee Fingers and Other Irish Words for Nature – Manchán Magan
Following on from last year's hugely popular Thirty-Two words for field, Manchán Magan gathers together a fascinating collection of Irish words and stories related to the natural world. Coupled with beautiful illustrations, this hardback is a perfect gift for lovers of language and nature.

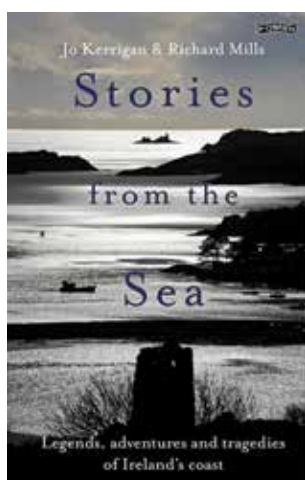
A Treasury Of Eight Books – Tomi Ungerer

A newly released and sumptuous Hardback collection of eight stories by the wonderful children's book author and illustrator Tomi Ungerer. Featuring old favourites such as (The Three Robbers, Moon Man, Otto) and lost gems Zeralda's Ogre, Flix, The Hat and Emileas. This single volume collection also includes letters, quotes, anecdotes, sketches and storyboards giving great insight into the mind and working methods of a master storyteller.



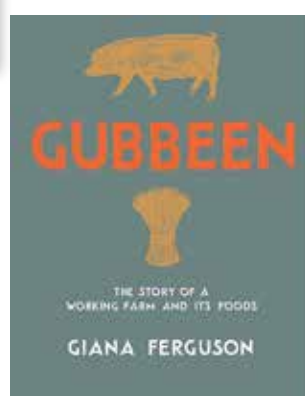
Why are we here – Niamh O'Mahony and Annabel Langrish

Based on a true story and a real pig who lives on the Sheep's Head peninsula. This is a charming story for children with beautiful illustrations by local West Cork artist Annabel Langrish.



Stories from the sea – Jo Kerrigan

Featuring stunning photographs of the coastline, Jo Kerrigan takes readers through the intriguing history of legends, adventures and tragedies gathered and handed down over centuries by Ireland's coastal communities.



Gubbeen – Giana Ferguson

Covering the history of the well known Gubbeen farm in West Cork and the daily workings across the dairy, smokehouse and vegetable gardens. This is a lovingly written and beautifully photographed book which also includes many delicious recipes from the Ferguson's and friends.



Small things like these – Claire Keegan

The new novella from one of Ireland's best writers. This taut and expertly written story unforgettably renders the small town life of uncomfortable truths that hold universal for a world immersed in institutional control.

WORM BOOKS



SCHULL

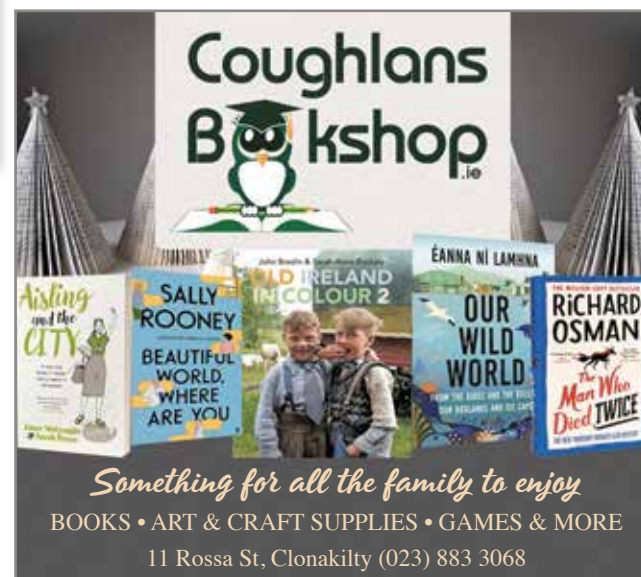
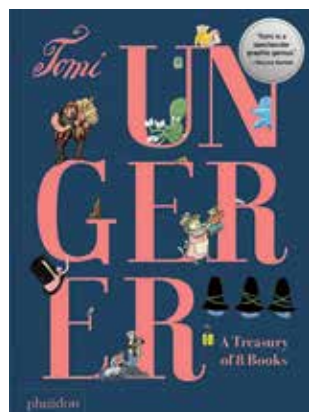
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people CHRISTMAS READING

Thriller set in West Cork shortlisted for Crime Novel of the Year Award

West Cork set thriller 'The Dark Room' was launched in the depth of January's lockdown when all the bookshops were closed, but was recently shortlisted for the An Post Irish Book Awards Irish Independent Crime Novel of the Year. 'The Dark Room' is crime writer Sam Blake's fifth bestselling novel, and she found herself rubbing shoulders on a shortlist with world renowned writers including Booker winner John Banville, lawyer Steve Cavanagh and Mary Higgins Clarke Award winner Jane Casey.

Location is key in all Blake's books and she modelled the village of Glencurragh in 'The Dark Room' on Castletownsend, extensively researching the village and the census returns from the 1880s to get a feel for the area and the families who lived there. The setting for this atmospheric thriller is an Agatha Christie style country house just outside 'Glencurragh'. Hare's Landing, which has been newly opened as a hotel, but is haunted by the mysteries of the past. "I came up with the idea for 'The Dark Room' sitting just a few hundred yards from Frenchman's Creek and the story is definitely influenced by Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca. West Cork was the perfect setting with its Atlantic coast line, tempestuous winter weather and beautiful wild scenery."

Sam Blake is the pen name of Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin, founder of the Writing.ie writing resources website, and a regular at the Cork World Book Festival. Blake has been writing fiction since her husband went sailing across the Atlantic for eight weeks and she had an idea for a book. She says, "I made all the rookie mistakes with my first book, literally putting the



last full-stop down and sending it out to agents and publishers. Needless to say it was rejected everywhere." Bestseller Sarah Webb, who is a familiar face in Castle Townsend and was a huge source of local knowledge, told Sam to "just keep writing". Sam reveals "that was the best advice I was ever given, by book three I'd found my voice and my debut novel, 'Little Bones', was a runaway bestseller."

Sam explains, "I use a pen name because my full name Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin would be a real squash on the cover. There's also a theory that men don't buy crime written by women, so many female crime writers dodge that bullet with an androgenous first name."

Bestseller Liz Nugent described 'The Dark Room' as 'Twisty, unpredictable and compelling' and the Sunday Independent: 'an intriguing read that delivers plenty of twists and turns and an absorbing conclusion. Blake also has a wonderful gift for description, ensuring the reader can picture every scene in exquisite detail. Her atmospheric depiction of West Cork triumphs in this novel, along with the wonderful portrayal of Rachel's dog – a German Shepherd called Jasper



who is pivotal to helping them with their investigations."

In 'The Dark Room', Irish born Rachel Lambert leaves London with Jasper, her German Shepherd, afraid for her personal safety after a break-in on her houseboat. Her partner, Hunter, has been involved in a hit and run, and she's determined to uncover the truth behind the sudden death of the homeless man he was filming for a documentary. The only lead she has is a mysterious country house hotel in West Cork called Hare's Landing.

When she arrives, Rachel meets New York-based crime reporter Caroline Kelly whose career is threatened by a lawsuit – she's in Ireland trying to get some thinking space away from her job. But almost as soon as they arrive, Hare's Landing begins to reveal its own stories – a 30-year-old missing person's case and the mysterious death of the hotel's former owner. And as Rachel and Caroline join forces, it becomes clear that their investigations are intertwined – and that there is nothing more dangerous than the truth...

Released in the smaller paperback format on November 4, 'The Dark Room' is in all bookshops.

Inspiring collection of poetry launched at Clonakilty IWA

The service users and staff at Clonakilty's Irish Wheelchair Association Resource and Outreach Service have just released an inspiring collection of poetry. The collection 'ThisAbility' is dedicated to the memory of the late Mark Barry from Clonakilty, a service user, who sadly passed away during the writing course that led to the publication of this book. Some of Mark's words have been made into poetry with the support of IWA staff.

SpokenWord poet Stanley Notte facilitated the writing project, which ran every Wednesday over 10 weeks.

"The confidence and self-esteem this course have brought to the group has been outstanding," commented Sinéad Burke, Service Support Officer at IWA Clonakilty.

"I have the honour of working with some of the most interesting people I have ever met, people who have shown strength and determination when faced with the most challenging situations. These people inspire me on a daily basis, how, through whatever life throws at them, they have shown that they can come out even stronger on the other side. These life stories could not be captured in one book but instead reflected through poetry and illustrations."

According to one service user "The facilitator challenged us to write poetry, and nothing was laughed at. It was a brilliant course with great results and bonding within the group."

The Irish Wheelchair Association operates community centres with day services, member transport, training, holidays, outings, school leaver activities and outreach programmes through 57 full and part-time community centres around Ireland.

To purchase a copy of 'ThisAbility', retailing at €10, contact Sinéad at 087-2217943.

Coolim Books launches with the publication of two titles

Well-known local historian William Casey has taken it upon himself to save two titles of immense importance from disappearance so that this and future generations may enjoy them.

While researching history projects William came across some illustrated books that are long out of print. "They were such a find, and it saddened me to think that they were no longer available for others to read and enjoy the incredible sketches they contained." So Coolim Books was born to bring these works to a wider audience and to save out of print books from being lost forever. The two books recently published by William do just that.

The first is 'A List of Ancient and National Monuments in the County of Cork' by Robert Cochrane. It was originally published in 1913 and includes



beautifully illustrated descriptions of the six sites in Cork then under the control of the Board of Works – St. Keiran's Church (Cape Clear), Sherkin Island Friary, Timoleague Friary, Kilcrea Friary, Buttevant Friary and St. Molaga's Church. This work also includes lists of other monuments in Cork, such as ogham stones, cromlechs, round towers, and a

comprehensive list of castles in the county.

The other title dates from 1895. It is 'St. Multose Church Kinsale: As it was, and is, and ought to be' by the Rev. John Lindsey Darling. It used architectural drawings, sketches and photographs to illustrate the history of this church, its state in the 1890s and the alterations that were proposed to restore it to its former self. While the Rev. Darling's vision for the church was never fulfilled, this richly illustrated volume gives us a unique insight into the history and structure of this beloved building.

Bringing these books back into print was a labour of love for William, and his aim is that a modern audience can once again enjoy these works for themselves. They can be purchased in bookshops throughout Cork, or for more information, visit www.coolim-books.com

Debut picture book from Skibbereen-born author and illustrator helps children dance to their own beat – together

As Pippa watches her friends express themselves through their special dance moves, she wonders if she will ever find the dance in herself. With gentle encouragement from the others, Pippa discovers that it's all about taking the first step. A story about the

freedom to be yourself and the fun of joining in.

Aoife Greenham, who authored and illustrated 'Big Dance' said, "Response to the book has been so lovely, my favourite bit is seeing kids responding with their own dances! Irish children love

reading, and it's been fantastic to see Big Dance being enjoyed by young Irish readers".

This joyful picture book published by Child's Play has already been included in the recent 'Free to Be Me' reading guide by Children's Books Ireland and received glowing re-

views from The Irish Independent and the Today with Claire Byrne show on RTE Radio 1.

Aoife Greenham is an author, illustrator and printmaker living and creating in Manchester. Originally from Skibbereen, she studied Animation at the National Film School in Dún Laoghaire and has worked in film and TV for many years. Combining her love of silliness, colour and handmade storytelling, she completed a Masters in Children's Book Illustration at the Cambridge School of Art.



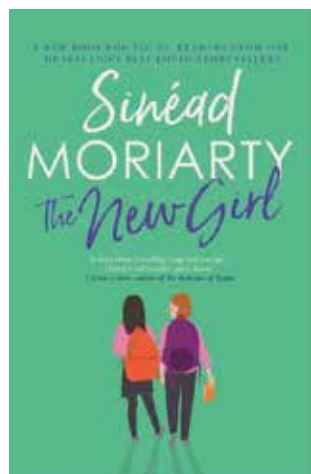
Child's Play has a history of creating innovative, award-winning books for children from 0-8 years that promote learning

through play – books that fully reflect our diverse society in terms of heritage, disability, gender and family.

people CHRISTMAS READING

A book lovers' list

Award winning writer **Cauvery Madhavan** was born in India and moved to Ireland 34 years ago. Her latest novel, *The Tainted*, published to wide critical acclaim, was picked as An Post Book Awards' Top Summer Reads in 2020. In the same year, it was also awarded the runner-up prize in SAHR Prize for Military Fiction and listed by The Times, UK, in their list of top 40 Historical Fiction novels. She lives with her husband and three children in County Kildare and is working on her fourth novel.



When he was last interviewed, the man in the big red suit said that all he wanted for Christmas was a good book. So, there you have it from the expert – books make the best presents. An indisputable fact really if you think about it – step into your local bookshop and you could have your Christmas list ticked off fairly quickly, with time left over to browse for something for yourself for when you are



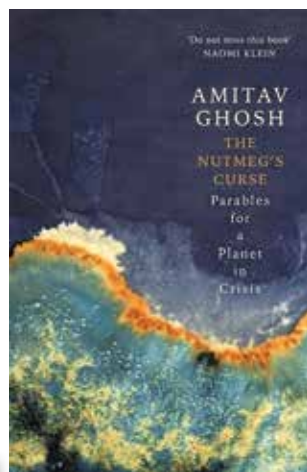
settling into the armchair, the last of the plum pudding having been eaten. Independent bookshops in Ireland are full to the brim with the wonderful books and here's what I'm buying for the special people in my life.

THE NEW GIRL by Sinéad Moriarty is a truly heart-warming story of an unlikely friendship between two young girls – Safa, a newly arrived Syrian refugee and Ruby, the



odd one out in school. They lead completely different lives but soon discover they have much more in common than they could have ever imagined. Young readers will get to walk a mile in someone else's shoes and learn that empathy and kindness are wonderful gifts to share and to possess.

A short story collection that is pure joy to dip into at leisure is the very stylish **PURE GOLD** by John Patrick



McHugh. His beautifully crafted tales, set in a fictional island community of the west coast of Ireland, are full of life's twists and turns, the prose unflinching in its dark details, funny and very clever too.

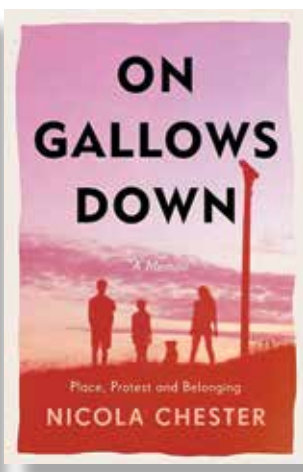
TEN DAYS by Austin Duffy is a sensitive exploration of a fraught relationship between father and daughter which goes on to reveal, in the most ingenious way, greater personal issues that overwhelm the characters. The book, set between London and New York, delves into the cross-cultural dilemmas that confront inter-faith marriages and the fall out when things go wrong. A wonderful read that will make you think long after you've turned the last page.

If an author can take you places, Amitav Ghosh can get you there and have you smelling the spices and reliving the horrors that came from colonial capitalism. **THE NUTMEG'S**



CURSE is an enthralling history of the nutmeg and how the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the New World laid the foundations of our climate crisis. A timely book, set against the backdrop of the global pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests.

The holidays are a great time to get stuck into a good biography or memoir and a book that combines the best of both the genres surely is **A VERY STRANGE MAN** by Alannah Hopkins. A fascinating and very fond account of their years together, this love story is set in the Irish literary world between 1986 and 2015. Drawing on diaries, notebooks and correspondence, it is a personal and unique insight into the life and times of not one, but two



major literary figures. A book lover's book.

Finally, a book that I loved heart and soul – **ON GALLOWS DOWN** by Nicola Chester. The story of a life filled with hope, shaped by the living landscape and driven by an enduring love for nature. Nicola Chester writes with such conviction about the desire to protect the place she calls home and the intense sense of belonging that comes from doing so. This book will resonate immediately with readers in West Cork!

Please support your local bookshop this Christmas season and remember booksellers always have great recommendations if you are overwhelmed with choices... just ask!

people Arts & Entertainment

West Cork - Centre of the Knotiverse

Murray Heasman has been working with Celtic knotwork for the last 30 years. His early explorations of this artform produced guitar straps for rock gods and huge wall hangings in rope and iron, before merging his love of knots with another great passion - strategic board games. The result was Tara, an award-winning game which was launched by Jeremy Irons in Clonakilty back in 2004. He then went on to produce a series of Celtic Art jigsaw puzzles.

Fast forward to now and Murray is launching Nodus, the Celtic Knot Conundrum. It's an idea he had back when developing Tara and has spent the last three years quietly bringing it to fruition under his company Knotiverse.

His design is unique; it's the first time that Celtic knotwork has been broken down into a series of core elements, designed in such a way that they can be recombined into millions of



designs. The result? a beautiful and collectible system which creates mesmerising interwoven knot patterns in a fun, challenging and relaxing way.

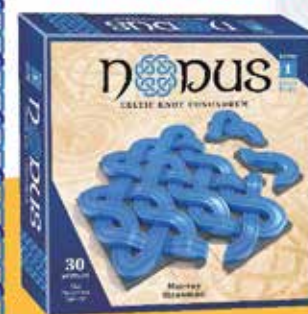
There are 30 puzzles to solve or patterns to copy in the box, and then you can begin to create your own patterns. Different colour sets can be combined together, interweaving two or more loops. Nodus appeals to adults and children alike - that feeling of elation on solving even the smallest conundrum can get quite addictive!

Murray is launching Nodus in West Cork this Christmas, where you can come and try it out for yourself. The Ballydehob launch takes place Friday December 3, 6-9pm at the Bank House, and Clonakilty launch will be Tuesday December 7, 7.30-9pm at the Restaurant, O'Donovan's Hotel.

He also plans to attend Christmas markets around West Cork. Online, Nodus is available from www.knotiverse.com

Monuments to our Past: Understanding Commemoration and the Revolutionary Period in Cork, 1914-23

Across county Cork and City, the highroads and byroads are richly decorated with a tapestry of monuments from the 1914-23 period. This book, is the first to try unlock our county's interest in commemoration, by mapping, photographing and exploring, not just the history of the people and events, but the language, structure and meaning behind those commemorations. It reveals the shocking lack of civilian and female memorials, to the controversy of Civil War ones, as well as the extent of War of Independence, Easter Rising and Great War monuments. *Pages 350 RRP €20* On sale in book stores around the county. Authors: Kieran Doyle and Alan O'Rourke.

New Puzzle for Christmas!
Nodus: Celtic Knot Conundrum
Come & try it out !!!

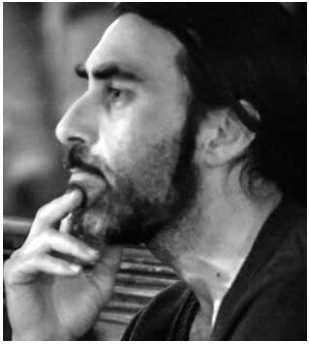
NODUS LAUNCH:
Ballydehob
Bank House, Main St.
Fri 3rd Dec 6-9pm

Clonakilty
O'Donovan's Hotel,
Pearse St.
Tue 7th Dec 7.30-9pm

Also available here:
www.knotiverse.com

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Baroque Cocktails (Part II): The Nerdrum School



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.

‘The Old Masters’ are, well, ‘old’. There’s no denying it. I remember at art school painting a still life, trying to emulate the Spanish ‘old master’ Francisco de Zurbarán. One of the teachers commented: “looking very old James”. It was not a compliment. I was in the wrong place (a university art school is no place to study realism). If only I had gone to Sydney’s Julian Ashton Art School, or better: The Florence Academy!

The “old” comment is gradually being turned on its head, as the hashtag ‘newmasters’ trends more and more in realist art circles. The idea that you can, today, paint like the masters of the 17th century Baroque (Rembrandt, Caravaggio, Ribera)

or the 19th century academy (Bouguereau) is no longer an anachronistic fantasy; it is being done and brilliantly so. Just as there are contemporary classical composers we can now say that there are contemporary classical / Baroque painters.

Many of these ‘new masters’ are coming up through the Florence Academy, the Barcelona Academy and many private ‘classical ateliers’ (studios) in the U.S. Some of these painters have gone / go on to study with the Norwegian master Odd Nerdrum; a three month rite of passage in a neo-Baroque heaven, where all one does is paint, model or talk about painting.

One such artist is Ireland’s Molly Judd, of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, who studied both at the Florence Academy and for two years as an apprentice with Odd Nerdrum, in France and Sweden. Unlike many Florence Academy painters, whose work tends towards 19th century academic realism, Judd’s work stands out as decidedly Rembrandtesque in feeling and Nerdrumesque in composition, a neo-Baroque jewel full of chiaroscuro, beautifully textured layers and softly vibrational brushwork. This quality of Judd’s is very much an imprint of the Nerdrum School (less a ‘school’, more of a traditional apprenticeship), which prizes, in emulation of the master, rich, layered textures and shimmering vibrato.

Judd’s journey towards mastery in painting began early on: “I grew up with books of classical painting and drawing given to me by my mother and I was certain from an early age that I wanted to learn how to draw from life. The art universities that I researched in Ireland and the UK seemed to teach only conceptual art with very little focus on academic technique. I heard about the Florence Academy through a family friend and

was immediately convinced by its high level of academic training.”

It is important to understand just how ‘counter-cultural’ Judd and other Academy alumni are from the perspective of the contemporary art world, jealously guarded as it is by the custodians of conceptual and postmodern art theory. The fact is, however, that the urge to create a masterful image of human connection in oil paint is right now exceedingly strong. One hundred years of abstraction, semi-abstraction, naïve art, expressionism, postmodern pluralism and conceptual emptiness have left a deep yearning for the magic of the beautifully painted, spot-lit figure. It is the same magic we look for in the theatre, the opera, the ballet, photography and even the cinema; the spot-lit figure arising out of darkness.

For many young painters the answer to this yearning has come via the work of Odd Nerdrum, who for 50 years has shown that it is possible to paint like the Baroque masters today, and to evolve your own narrative language whilst doing so. Criticised throughout his career as hopelessly anachronistic, Nerdrum has steadfastly forged a powerful poetic vision, in which pathos, human connection and dramatic narrative are key. He has done so with a formidable toolbox; within his work one witnesses the entire history of oil painting, from Classical and Baroque composition through to impressionist and expressionist delivery.

Last month I referred to Baroque painting as a cocktail that punches a “blast of flavour with an alcoholic moon-kick”. Odd Nerdrum’s work does this and more. There is a beating pulse in Nerdrum’s oeuvre: what unfolds is a haunting story of post-apocalyptic human survival, on one hand, and bucolic visions of



Feeding a Thirsty Man, Oil on linen

Arcadian peace on the other. Titles such as ‘The Seed Protectors’ and ‘The Water Protectors’ reflect primordial human images that evoke our distant past, as well as our uncertain future. Being masterfully composed and powerfully delivered the images echo timelessly in the viewer’s consciousness.

It is small wonder, then, that artists like Molly Judd have been drawn to Nerdrum’s banner. Judd writes, “I would say he (Nerdrum) has been the single greatest influence on my development, mainly because of his dedication to his craft and his unwavering sincerity for narrative painting.”

Helene Knoop, who studied with Nerdrum for three years

in Oslo echoes Judd’s sentiments. Writing in the ‘Painting Forever’ catalogue (2015) she states, “having a milieu, like the Nerdrum School, is important for the small community of figurative painters. I have often thought about how many young people there are worldwide, with a talent or a need for painting in a figurative manner, which (sic) feel quite alone. Many of them contact Nerdrum, and a few of these study with him. And those who only study him from a distance, miles away, find hope that it is possible to paint like this. Even today.” (Painting Forever: Odd Nerdrum and the Nerdrum School, p. 97).

Molly Judd’s exquisite painting ‘Feeding a Thirsty Man’

reveals her debt to Rembrandt as much as to Nerdrum. There is no trace of irony here, no tricks, no traces of art world ‘cleverness’, no modernist simplifications or shortcuts. It is, rather, masterfully composed, beautifully delivered, and sincerely emotive. Immune to the contemporary cult of ‘originality at all costs’ Judd embraces authenticity, mastery, connection and humility before the masters of the past. Her painting ‘Feeding a Thirsty Man’ is an apt metaphor for a generation thirsty for the magic of soulful mimesis and a visual culture hungry for its roots.

Next month: Part 3: The New Italian Masters

Christmas Members Exhibition at Clon Community Arts Centre

Clonakilty Community Arts Centre is delighted to announce its Christmas Members Exhibition, open from Friday, December 3 at 7.30pm until December 24.

This exhibition of West Cork artists and craftspeople will feature a delightful variety of paintings, prints, mixed media, ceramics, glass, jewellery and gift cards. A wonderful array of inspirational gifts for Christmas.

Gallery Open Daily: 11am to 5pm.

CLONAKILTY SCHOOL OF PAINTING

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SEPTEMBER - JULY

Adult classes:

Tues 11am-2pm; Wed 11am-2pm; Fri 7-9pm; Sat 2.15-5.15pm

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Bookings & Enquiries: 087 7184399 | starfugue@gmail.com
or book online at paintingschool.jameswaller.org

Clonakilty Community Art Centre, 2 Asna Square, Clonakilty, Co. Cork



Christmas at Blue House Gallery

In a final festive fling of 2021 the Blue House Gallery in Schull is opening its doors and walls for the last few weekends of November and the entirety of the month of December with its annual Christmas celebration of the good and the great and the wonderful, with the entire ground floor priced only with works under €300 it's a fantastic opportunity to pick up something beautiful and unique for the one you love (or yourself or someone you just really, really like) that will bring lasting pleasure long after the wrapping has been recycled, at the same time you can bask in the glow of the knowledge that your support is the support of the culture of the community and surrounds of where you live and play.

Represented through the following weeks with works being changed frequently will be a range of mediums and disciplines from the Blue House Gallery stable of artists, many of whom show regularly. With something sure to inspire and please everyone, below is a few of the artists with work on show.

From painters of the land-

scape and the familiar to abstract visions of colour and line there are works by (amongst others); Jo Ashby, Leslie Cox, John Doherty, Mollie Douthit, Ian Humphries, Damaris Lysaght, Helen O'Keefe, Fiona Power and Catherine Weld: to printmakers including works by Brian Lalor and Shane O'Driscoll. There are also works in mixed media including collages of innovation and imagination by the likes of Penny Dixey, John Petersen and Dick Richards. Photographic works by Geoff Greenham and Sheena Jolley will delight as well as original new work by ceramic artists; Etain Hickey, Nicola Kelly, Jim Turner and Luke Sisk, who also has stunning sculptural pieces in glass.

2021 has been a year that has been difficult for many and the uncertainty may continue for some time to come but we can all share in artistic expression that at its finest can reflect the human conditions and perceptions of the times we all live through. Through the past year Blue House Gallery strove through the many challenges and changes to schedules to continue to provide diversity,



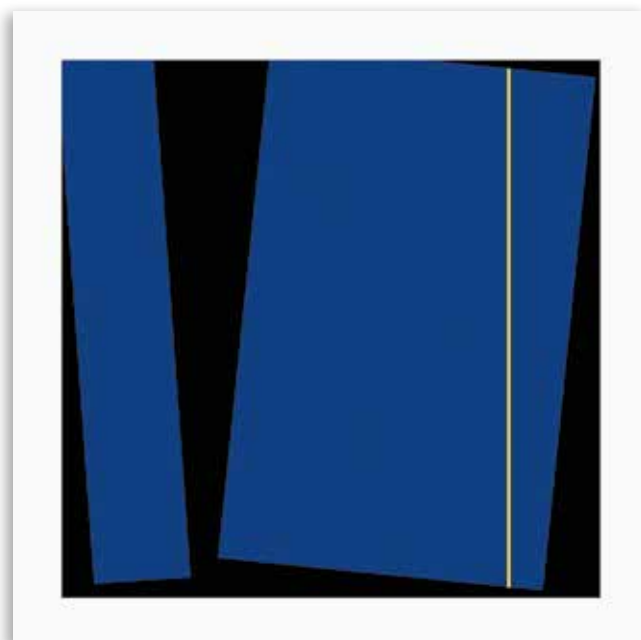
Catherine Weld - Boreen

quality and commitment to a wide range of artistic disciplines. As well as recognising and celebrating the work of other collaborative organisations from around the country. Already 2022 is shaping up to be a year that will continue to deliver in this endeavour. Blue House Gallery is a gallery run by artists to support artists and to provide space for absolutely anyone to walk in and share in the conversation. Or simply just to take a look. All are welcome. Best wishes for a Happy

Christmas from all at Blue House Gallery for the season and many thanks to all those who have paid us a visit over the year. May we all stay safe and well and merry.

2021 Blue House Gallery Christmas Show Opening Hours: Friday November 26 – Sunday November 28, 11am – 5pm. Friday December 3 – Sunday January 2, 2022* 11am – 5pm.

*Excluding Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and St. Stephens' Day



John Pettersen - Klein Yellow

Secret Santa Experience

Twas the night before Christmas and all was so quiet,
The West Cork Secret was closed, no lights burning bright,
The crew had been busy, working hard spreading joy,
And helping Santa to meet little girls and little boys,
While Christmas is special and a time to spread cheer,
The crew at the "Secret" do this all through the year,
With laughter and jokes and loads of mud games,
No visit is complete until great memories are made,
And with all we've been through for nearly two years,
It's important to appreciate the times of great cheer,
So cherish each giggle, each laugh and each smile,
And make happy memories to last for a while,
Hold close those you love, the ones you hold dear,
And let's look forward with hope for the upcoming year,
Let's stay safe and help others as we go through each day,
And let's make this world a much better place,
So from Finbarr and his crew who made this Christmas so bright,
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

Thank you to everybody who visited us at West Cork Secret this year. We wish you all a very Happy Christmas!

www.westcorksecret.ie

December Workshops & BYOB nights!

Write a letter to Santa, Clay Play, Hot Chocolate & Cookies for the kids, Coffee & Mincepies for the grownups, Pottery Gift to take home.

Kids €35, Adults €10, Small Babies free (option to do a handprint bauble for €15).

Bookings @
crepotterystudio.com

SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS:
Come and paint pottery with our Christmas elf in Santa's Workshop!

We have extra BYOB nights planned for December so get your friends together for a night of pottery painting and wine!

Don't forget you can also book a private evening for your family, friends or work colleagues (groups of 8 or more).

Friday 3rd December & Friday 10th December 7pm - 9pm
From €15. Free glass of prosecco on the night. Booking is essential as tables are limited. **Call us on 028 22913.**

Stock up on with some of our lovely gift boxes or get the kids handprints on Christmas baubles. Call us or pop in.

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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Transition year students from Kinsale Community School Jenny Farrelly, Grace Coyle, Tamara Kruslan and Isobel Linehan with their copies of Caroline O'Donoghue's book 'All Our Hidden Gifts' after the author visited the school as part of a Cork County Council Libraries One County, One Book initiative. Pic Boyle Photography

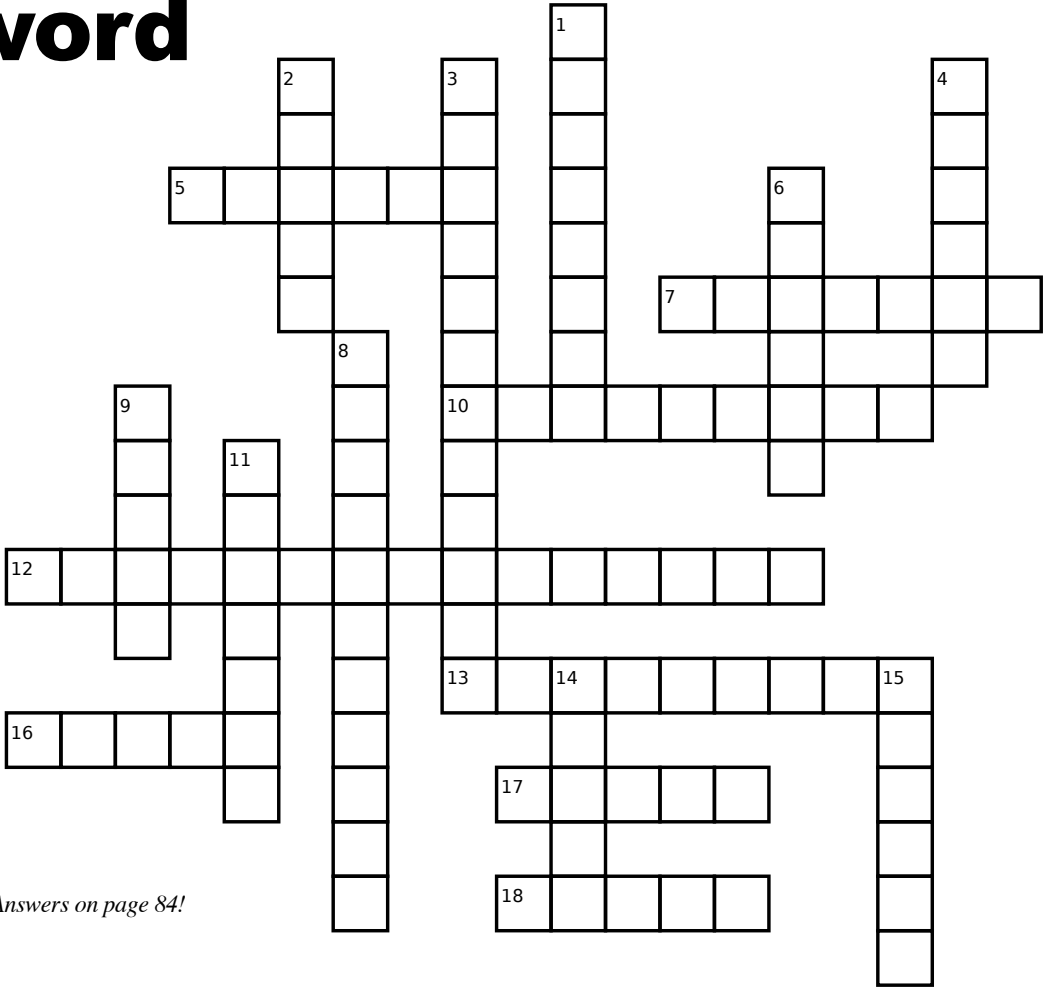


Pupils from Gaelscoil Mhichíl Uí Choileáin, Cloch na gCoillte supporting their team in advance of the County Final

In the news Crossword

- Across
- 5. Now jobless manager Ole _____ Solskjaer (6)
 - 7. Clydeside city that hosted climatic talks (7)
 - 10. A policy that came to an end with de Klerk's leadership. (9)
 - 12. Canadian province swamped in November (7, 8)
 - 13. The former name of Eswatini, only now generally known due to travel restrictions (9)
 - 16. US telly, telegram or mode of transport in part of West Cork (6)
 - 17. Number of tries scored against Los Pumas (5)
 - 18. A swine that Boris expressed admiration for whilst hamming it up for the cameras (5)

- Down
- 1. Powerhouse singer currently fronting fashion house saga (4,4)
 - 2. This year's tidiest Irish town lies on the River Fergus (5)
 - 3. The swoopings of starlings (12)
 - 4. Parasitic funds that give a bird a bad rep (6)
 - 6. Recently renovated bridge that has the city trembling with pride (6)
 - 8. A tuneful friend who'll lift fans from a low place next year in Croke (5, 6)
 - 9. Korean frolics that are inspiring play-ground re-enactments (5)
 - 11. Sainly abbess who will be celebrated from 2023 on (7)
 - 14. Songstress who fits a lot of heartbreak into three decades (5)
 - 15. Festival of light celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs (6)



Answers on page 84!

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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

		4		9				
5						9		
6				4		5		
	4			2	1			
1						3		
8			7					
			5		9	2		8
		3		7		4		
				6	8	7		

#186818 Difficulty: moderate

8				5			4	
	4	6					1	
			7	9			6	
		3	9	6			7	1
7	8		4					
1							8	
		2						
					3			
	1	4	8		6			

#210570 Difficulty: hard

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COMPETITION WITH THE EVERYMAN!

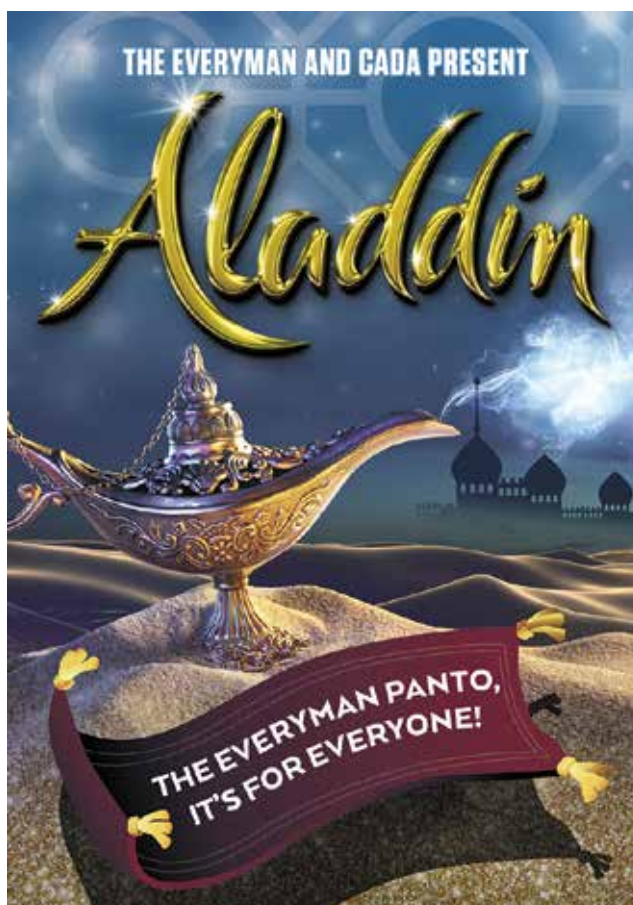
Oh yes, it is! Oh no, it's not!

Cork's favourite traditional family pantomime is back! Oh yes, it is. *Aladdin* will take you on a magic carpet ride at The Everyman from Wednesday 8 December 2021 to Sunday 16 January 2022.

Aladdin will be jam-packed with the usual panto fun including audience participation, singing and some unreal dance-offs! *Aladdin* stars the same zany gang, directed by the zaniest one of all, Catherine Mahon-Buckley!

At The Everyman the panto is for everyone! Aladdin at The Everyman will lift the whole family to brand new heights. More info at www.everymancork.com or call 021 4501673.

To be in with a chance of winning a Family Pass for *Aladdin* at The Everyman, Cork on Wednesday 12 Jan 2022, 7.30pm email your name & phone number to info@westcorkpeople.ie before December 13. Please put 'Aladdin competition' in the subject line.



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Kinsale artist Mia Buckley wins top prize at prestigious national competition



Mia Buckley with her boyfriend Tudor at the Zurich Young Portrait Prize exhibition at the National Gallery of Ireland. Photo Abe Neihum

Mia Buckley from Kinsale has taken home a national age category prize from the National Gallery of Ireland. Mia, who plans a career as an artist, was announced as the winning portrait in the 16-18-year-old category of the Zurich Young Portrait Prize competition at a virtual ceremony on November 30.

In her artist's statement, Mia Buckley said, "With lockdown closing hairdressers, unexpect-

edly, Tudor ended up with long, gorgeous curls that I wanted to capture in a portrait. I loved investigating the colour, light and shadow that was portrayed across the skin of my model and the autumnal tones within his curls."

The judges for the Zurich Young Portrait Prize were visual artist Aideen Barry; artist, art teacher and activist Joe Caslin; and Tadhg Crowley, Senior Curator: Education + Community

at the Glucksman.

The Zurich Young Portrait Prize exhibition, featuring Mia's portrait alongside 19 other shortlisted works, is now open at the National Gallery of Ireland. It will run until April 3, 2022 alongside the Zurich Portrait Prize exhibition of 24 shortlisted portraits. Both exhibitions will travel to Crawford Art Gallery in Cork in 2022.

www.nationalgallery.ie.

A story of love and loss

Kerry filmmaker and writer Shaun O'Connor and West Cork singer-songwriter Alan Daniel Tobin (ADT) have joined in collaboration on a new multidisciplinary project of film and music 'The Consequences of Breaking the Heart - An Irish Folk Tale', which is out now.

For the soundtrack ADT, member of renowned Irish folk band LOWmountain, writes stories of the heart wrapped in atmospheric soundscapes.

'The Consequences of Breaking the Heart' is taken from ADT's debut album volume one, which was produced by multi-instrumentalist Justin Grounds.

To coincide with the video release, ADT also shares 'repurposed', a collection of tracks taken from volume one remixed by Cork based musicians and producers Duncan Lutz and Denis Clifford, who operate under the moniker SubRelic.

Drawing on Irish folk tales of the Selkie, O'Connor's music video 'The Consequences Of Breaking The Heart', is based on a script written by award-winning Irish screenwriter Paul Cahill.

The story is about Muirín and Tadhg, a young artistic couple living and working by the Irish coast. Tadhg's world is torn apart when Muirín suddenly disappears in the ocean. In his grief, his search for answers leads him to a stunning discovery.

It's a story about love, and the consequences of the sudden loss of it. What can we do with our lives when we lose somebody without explanation? It's also a tale about music and joy, and the importance of art in getting us through difficult times.

Director Shaun O'Connor says: "Paul and I had initially planned the story as a short film. But when I heard Alan's album, which is so influenced by the ocean and the coast, I immediately thought of how well-suited the story would be to one of the songs.

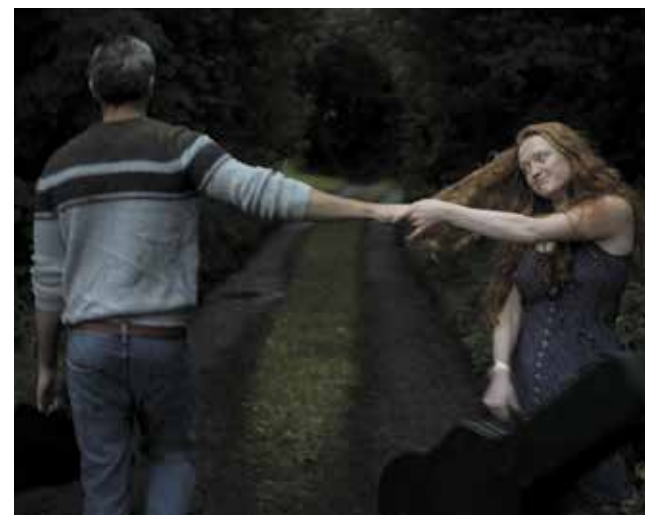
"Even the title, 'The Consequences of Breaking the Heart', spoke so clearly to the tone and feel of the story. Paul and I went back to the script and restructured it to work in images only, and fit the lyrics of Alan's song.

"Initially we had planned

to shoot the music video last year, but COVID put it on the back burner for a while. As the restrictions lifted in the last few months it's been such a joy to finally get back out into the world and make new work. The story's theme of art being a sustenance in difficult times also felt even more pertinent after COVID."

'The Consequences of Breaking the Heart' was shot in stunning locations in West Cork including Lough Ine and Inchydoney Beach. The lead roles are played by Elaine O'Dwyer (Arracht) and Barry McKiernan (Valhalla / The Bright Side) and Claire Loy (In Orbit / Crosshair) plays their friend Liz.

Watch the official video for 'The Consequences of Breaking the Heart' on youtube and stream the music on Spotify.





ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.
email: astro@katearbon.com
www.katearbon.com

December Sun Signs

December has a New Moon Solar Eclipse at 13 degrees Sagittarius on December 4 at 7.43 am and a Full Moon at 28° Gemini on December 19 at 4.35am.

December comes with many endings and new beginnings. These are not only to do with the annual seasonal themes but several important cycles come to a conclusion and set us up for the year ahead. After the very intense and rapid succession of difficult dynamics through November, the December astrology has a gentler feel but it is still a time of powerful undercurrents and significant transformations.

The New Moon on December 4 brings the last eclipse in the Gemini Sagittarius polarity, which has been with us over the previous eighteen months. It will be about nine years to the next time this duo are the eclipse partners. This means that we move from fluctuating belief systems and information based patterns to the Taurus Scorpio

polarity, which offers practical values and emotional authenticity as a theme.

A Solar eclipse takes a long time to complete its energy pattern and is often seen in events on the world stage in the following months. It frequently heralds a change or decline in power or authority as a new one takes its place. The Sun and Moon in Sagittarius connect to Mercury. We may see a system failure from the effect of overreach in the coming months. Information overload could become a problem along the lines of the folk tale 'cry wolf' scenario. Some of the best plans and schemes can topple due to over-optimism or failing to take care of some very fundamental details. Too much focus on the long view and not enough attention to ground level practicalities over the last couple of years can mean the path ahead has to be reconsidered.

The month starts with Neptune, the planet of the metaphysical

realms, going forwards after being in retrograde phase since late June. This brings us the ability to perceive that what is being presented as reality or fact, is also lies or illusion. After months where personal clarity was lacking and confusion was normal the attention goes towards the outer world and it's as if the fog or mist clears and we see through the mass deception or collusion that has formed our reality. It may take until late March for many things to become really apparent but meanwhile, we can feel more compassion or empathy for others and grasp a sense of greater meaning from current events.

Mid-month Venus, the planet of sharing and relationship, joins with powerful Pluto, which can bring uncomfortable truth to the surface when social and material values are put under the microscope. Mars the feisty action-orientated planet moves into Sagittarius to join the South Node, which can act as a trigger

for the recent eclipse events to unfold. On the same day, December 13, Mercury moves into Capricorn, which can mean negotiations have long-reaching effects and conversations have consequences. Although these dynamics are not cataclysmic and may even go unnoticed, these are powerful undercurrents that will add to the unfolding of events in the New Year.

The Full Moon in Gemini on December 19 is not an eclipse and makes a lovely connection to Jupiter. This gives us a much-needed boost for the last weeks of the month. It's certainly an easy, optimistic and sociable Moon compared to the last few we had to manage. It coincides with Venus starting a retrograde phase, which will last until late January and keeps the 'love' planet in Capricorn until early March. This puts the focus on our material and social requirements. Things of lasting value will have appeal, as this planet retraces

its passage through Capricorn. It is not a romantic or frivolous trend we are entering over the festive season. The positive side to this theme is that we can really evaluate what is worth sharing, giving or getting. Hold back from making new investments or commitments and stick with the familiar or tried and tested, the connections and arrangements that have served you well over many months or years.

The final harsh aspect of Saturn and Uranus is on December 24, which finally allows us to turn a corner in 2021. The year ends with a strong and positive move, as Jupiter moves into Pisces for the start of 2022 and many months of this most beneficial planet in its spiritual home sign.

See the January edition for the 2022 yearly overview or contact me directly for your personal year ahead forecast.



Aries: You may find yourself called on by neighbours for help or asked to get involved with community ventures or projects this month. The impulse for new experiences is very strong but avoid hasty commitments. You could feel restless if you don't find

activities that stimulate your mind. Seek out alternative options or try something different. More opportunities are becoming available so build on these during the next few weeks. Try to keep both feet on the ground around mid-month, as heightened emotions may run away with you. It's a great time for planning or rearranging the way you look at things.



Taurus: December finds you concerned with your material and financial security. It's time to consider if you are making the best of your natural skills and abilities. Once potential talents are recognised you will aim higher and you'll want to expand your horizons very soon.

The Eclipse on December 4 is a good time to re-evaluate what it is that you pursue, follow or find meaningful. It may turn out that you've changed since you last acted so instinctively. If what you seek now is simply following old habits, it may prove extremely dissatisfying in a very short time.



Gemini: Your need for unique self-expression and communicating your personal vitality is a priority. Relationships are meant to be a two-way flow but now you want to take the lead. Your current mood doesn't favour sharing and you may find a flood of emotional intensity directed at you during the next few weeks. How you respond could largely shape the direction of an important relationship. If you achieve a new closeness or connection now, remember that it's hard to keep a high level of intensity going all month but the message underneath is sincere and of real value.



Cancer: You can be very productive this month by just quietly working away behind the scenes. Reconnecting with your inner world is important for your sense of equilibrium. Valuable insights and breakthroughs are possible.

Enjoy the quiet 'alone time' whilst you can, as the demands of your outer world will encroach again very soon. It can be easy to get worried about health matters or everyday responsibilities especially during the New Moon phase this month. Moderation is the key. Make sure you're not expecting too much of yourself. You don't want to fall flat after the Full Moon just because you took on more than you can handle in early December.



Leo: Your position within your social circle is highlighted this month. What you have to offer is appreciated and you can reap rewards from your past contributions. The phrase 'what you put in is what you get out'

is the key. Allow time to connect with others and you'll meet the right people. The astral weather is perfect for creativity and you'll find that your imagination flows faster and easier than usual from December 4 to mid-month. In fact, anything you do for enjoyment will seem extra special right now. Break out the inner child, drop your self-conscious-



ness and just have fun.

Virgo: Getting recognition for doing your best takes on extra significance this month. Self-acknowledgement is required but now you need approval from those you

respect. It may seem like constant hard work recently but this eclipse in early December will bring a much-needed chance to relax with loved ones. If things around the home aren't quite to your liking you will want to assert your right to peace and harmony. It's a good time to start new home-related projects as a way to focus this extra energy constructively.



Libra: Travel, higher learning, study and spiritual matters are on your mind during the early days of December. You've had enough of the 'every day' in life and you want the freedom to explore or invite new

experiences into your life. Be prepared to open your mind to new ideas and lifestyles. You'll likely find your attention and energy go into taking care of details and side issues later in the month. Whatever happens, it will be nothing but action by mid-month with plenty of options. Don't be too impulsive but just be sure you get your ideas out there in some form whatever it takes.



Scorpio: Your attention is on the patterns that create life's ups and downs this month. You may find your focus is fully on the negative cycles at the expense of the positive. Pause to consider what is truly worth keep-

ing and what you can dispense with. Re-design what doesn't flow well in your life and prepare for a more constructive phase after the Full Moon. Take time to consider how you're shaping up financially. This month may not be as productive as you hoped but don't worry yourself into a frenzy about things that only time can remedy.



Sagittarius: With the Sun in your sign take the opportunity to smooth over any relationship issues. You know how much you have to give. You'll experience more freedom when the "give and take" slips back into a healthy balance. Interesting and stimulating people

may come into your life around this eclipse so find time for intimate encounters or shared experiences. It's a time of personal beginnings. If you find yourself in the spotlight, accept that others are waiting to see what you're going to do next. This may be challenging, but it's the boost you need right now. Just enjoy the generosity of others.



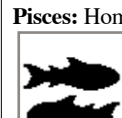
Capricorn: During the next weeks, you'll focus your attention on the practical demands of life. Feeling pressured to do better can create some stress but any self-improvement effort pays rewards. If you invest in yourself now you'll have full confidence to step up to

demands later in the month. Regardless of how extrovert or sociable, you might usually feel, the Eclipse and New Moon phase is time to withdraw and spend some time alone. Take a few days to rest and recuperate, mentally, emotionally and physically, as you revitalise your spirit. You will benefit over the following weeks from the extra stamina and focus.



Aquarius: Your creative powers are at a peak. If you don't take yourself too seriously life will be more enjoyable. You can be surprised at what you come up with by just playing around with ideas or projects. Your

romantic feelings are more intense now so try to wear your heart on your sleeve without worrying about the outcome. It can be worth risking upset to get at what you really feel and share it with those that matter the most later this month. You instinctively relate to your friends and very much want them to accept you as you are.



Pisces: Home and family matters occupy your life during the next two weeks. Concentrate your energy on the things that give you a sense of security and wellbeing. Sticking with familiar surroundings and intimate company gives the freedom to nurture what's really important to you.

Expect a phase of new developments in career matters and a welcome reward with a sense of fulfillment to emerge by mid-month. The pressure to produce can be a bit intense but take time to plan ahead before you take on any new commitments. It is important to listen and wait and soon you'll know when to act.

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Their time will come

The Clonakilty Footballers have had a season to remember in the Cork Premier Senior Football Championship despite eventually losing to seasoned side St Finbarr's in the Final. A young Clon side, managed by 2009 winning manager Haulie O'Neill, performed with heart and desire in Pairc Ui Chaoimh, losing by just a single point in the end (0-14 to 0-13). The Brewery Town beat Ilen Rovers, Ballincollig, Duhallow and Douglas to get to the showpiece and Full-Back Tom Clancy tells **Matthew Hurley** he was really happy with the season.

“I think if you told us at the start of the year that we were going to be playing in a county final against the Barrs, all the players would have been taking your hand off. It's been a very good season for us and a season that we've really enjoyed.”

Clancy himself produced an outstanding performance for the West Cork club, keeping the championship's top scorer Steven Sherlock relatively quiet for large parts of the game.

There has been some brilliant individual showings throughout the season.

“It's very hard to pinpoint anyone. I think throughout the year, there have been different players that stood up in different games,” Clancy said.

“Against Douglas, I think Sean McEvoy in fairness to him. He was just coming back from COVID, he hadn't trained in the two weeks since the Duhallow game and to be honest, we were worried if he was going to play or not and, in fairness, when he went out, he was probably the best player on the pitch.

“For the Duhallow game then, Joe Grimes stood up. When we needed someone, it was Joe Grimes.”

The most impressive thing about Clonakilty this season was that all the team contributed in some way or another.

“If you go to a lot of the (Clon) games, there's been different players stand up in different games, which is great to see.

“We're not just relying on one player, so I think the team, the 15 players together and the subs that come on, they know the job that they have to do and we're just trying to do it to the best of our ability,” Clancy added.

Clon beat West Cork rivals Ilen Rovers in the first game on a scoreline of 3-10 to 0-11, their biggest victory of the campaign.

The next game was seen by many to be the kickstart to

Clon's season after beating Ballincollig, a team who virtually knocked the West Cork side out last year, 1-10 to 0-12.

“Last year, they (Ballincollig) gave us a good beating, a game we weren't too happy with. We didn't perform on the day, we weren't performing as well as we could have been last year,” said Clancy.

“I think we all believed that we could beat Ballincollig. We knew we had the players to do it and I think once we got that win over Ilen Rovers, we knew the Ballincollig game was going to be a game that would decide if we got out of the group or not.

“I think as a team we performed very well. If that was another year when Ballincollig came back at us, we might've folded, and they might have snuck the victory, but I think we showed how good we are to get through that game.

“I think you could see by the reaction players, anyone that was at the game, the celebration after that game, it means so much to the team to get a very good win against a very good team.”

After losing the last group game to St Finbarr's (1-12 to 1-5), a game that decided first place in the group, Clon had a Quarter Final against Divisional side Duhallow.

Despite being six points down with 15 minutes to go, Clon somehow made a miraculous comeback to win 0-13 to 1-9, scoring 0-7 in the last quarter.

“I think a lot of people at that game when they saw the score playing against Duhallow, who are traditionally a very defensive team, if you go down four or five points against them with 10 minutes left on the clock, it's very hard to pull it back,” the full-back said.

“I would say credit to our forwards. They took some great scores at the end of the game, and I think a lot of people would have said that Clon needed a goal to win the game to get

through the game, but we just kept working the scoreboard.

“We kept focusing on the job in hand, kept playing to our strengths, I suppose and once the chances came, before we knew it, we were level.

“Then we were up a point, and it just shows once you keep doing the right things and keep ticking over the scoreboard, you can get there eventually, and it was a game that we were delighted with.”

Before the Semi-Final against Douglas, very few people gave Clon a chance, having seen Douglas beat defending champions Nemo Rangers in the last round.

However, Clon defied the odds again, beating the City side 0-15 to 1-11.

“Definitely, as a team, I think it was our best performance. We knew going up against Douglas that we were happy enough with how we were defending, but our offensive play needed to improve, and I think the game against Douglas is definitely the best game we have played going forward as a team.

“I think we started off slow, but after they got the first three points, I think we controlled the game.

“Going into the last six or seven minutes, I think we were five points up, so that penalty decision, I would say, was a big turning point. It kept Douglas in the game.

“If you ask me, I think we were definitely five or six points better than them throughout the game. The third game of the year, we were after winning by a point and that's a good sign of a team,” said Clancy.

Despite a heartbreaking loss to the Barrs, there are loads of positives to take out of 2021 for Clonakilty, one being the youthfulness of the side, according to Clancy.

“I'm the oldest in the team, at 29. I think the next might be Gearoid Barry, who might be

26 or 27 and then there's a lot of young fellas in the team. If someone told you 29 was the oldest player in any team, you'd probably take it.

“I suppose Haulie (O'Neill) would have been saying it to us and Neill Deasy and the selectors that if we win or lose the Final, this team is still building.

“It's our first year with this management, in the next three to five years going forward, there's no reason why we can't be competing with the top teams in the county, and I suppose since Haulie's come in, he's set the standards and fellas are enjoying their football and as a Clon player, you will be definitely looking forward to the next number of years playing with Clon.”

Haulie O'Neill was the Clonakilty manager the last time they won the county in 2009 and this year. He has made a considerable impact on the team.

“A lot of people ask what does Haulie bring to it, it's very hard to know, but I suppose the main thing is his experience,” Clancy explained.

“He's been there, he's done it, he's been there in (19)96, he's been there in 2009, he's been involved in many more Clon teams throughout the year and I suppose he knows what works.

“I think what he's bringing this team is just simplicity, trying to get the basics right. (He) looks into the finer details, that it's the small little things, the basics that can add up to make a big difference at the end of the game.”

Overall, this season was one with significant progress for Clonakilty. They reached their first decider since 2009 and their first Semi-Final since 2010.

“As a team, I think once you're winning, a lot of the enjoyment comes with winning games, something that this group of players wouldn't have experienced over the past number of years,” said Clancy.

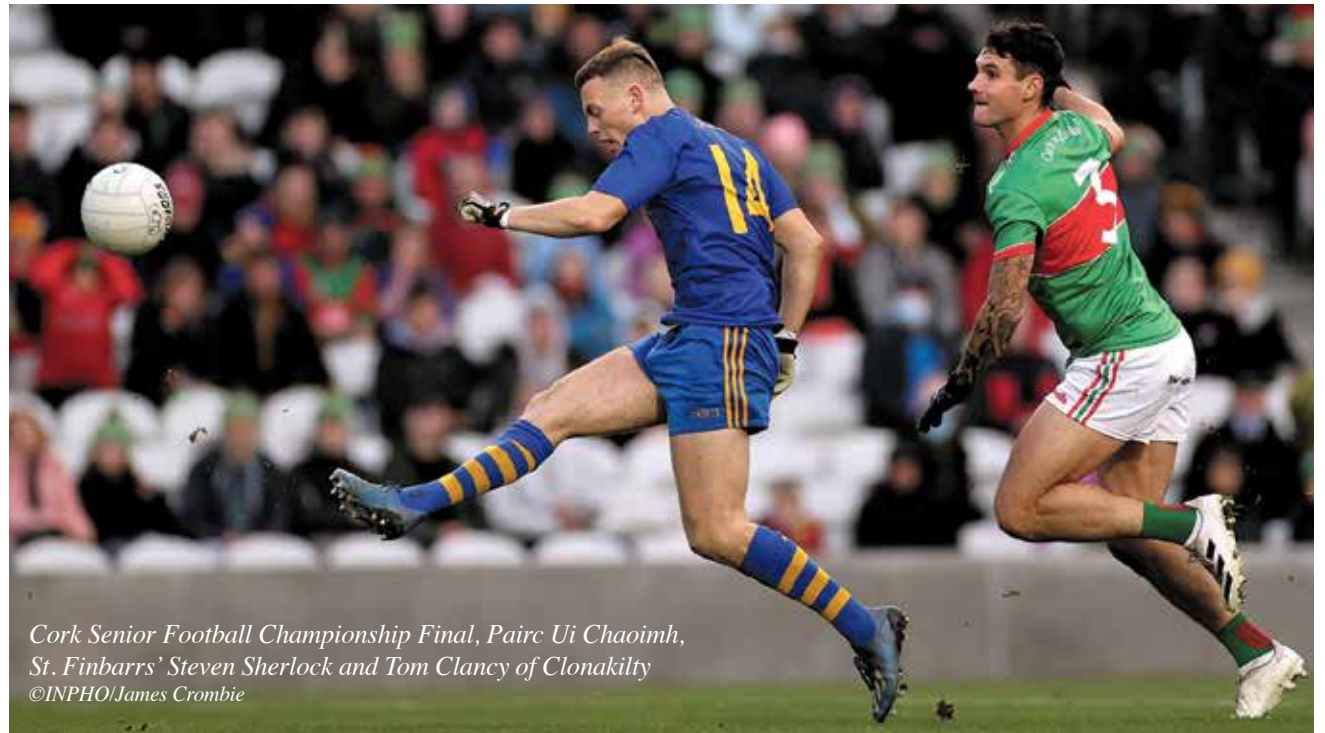
“Before we might win one game in the championship

season, maybe two and then we could be knocked out, whereas now, we seemed to be after getting a nice run of games and we're all enjoying our football.”

Despite the result in the county final, there's a feeling that this young, exuberant team is going to achieve big things in the next

few years. This year was just the start.

The team now has a belief, given their performance in the Final and throughout the campaign, that their time will come soon. The future looks very bright in Clonakilty.



Cork Senior Football Championship Final, Pairc Ui Chaoimh, St. Finbarrs' Steven Sherlock and Tom Clancy of Clonakilty
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Sport & Fitness



DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

Danish freelance journalist and fitness professional Tania Presutti, who now resides in Clonakilty, delivers a series of efficient DIY fitness exercises you can do at home.

If you read about David and Jette – the two exceptional runners who were featured in my column the past two months – and they inspired you to start something new, complete a goal or make plans for a new one, I’d love to hear about it.

To inspire and share knowledge about health and fitness, is why I write this column, so every month it’s my hope, that just one person will lace up and go for a run, or try a few push ups or go to that zumba or thaiboxing class.

My December column is no different. I hope to inspire you dear reader, to take your fitness into your own hands and make it a priority.

Last year, I wrote nine suggestions that would add to a healthy lifestyle, throughout and after

Fitmas Calender 2021

Christmas, including getting a good cookbook, sharp kitchen knives, drinking a glass of water before each meal and making your own vitamin smoothies.

This year, I will make a fitness calendar with you. I’ve put together a calendar form, that you can easily adapt to your own liking and, if you’re out of ideas, I have some to share as well.

Let’s start with the form: We have 24 days, which can translate into three categories of methods for your training: Time, distance and counts.

For example time: one minute to 24 minutes, or 1km to 24km or simply one to 24. (Since West Cork People won’t be out on December 1, I propose to just start from the date you’re reading this.)

The kind of training you put in can be anything from dancing, push ups, burpees, running or biking. Let me however, warn you against doing time and push ups/ burpees. It will hurt. Yes, one minute of push ups doesn’t sound so bad, but just try four minutes of non-stop push ups and you’ll think twice about going to the 24th. If you choose a combo like this, I’ll advise to make it like a HIIT session: 20 sec on, 10 off, so you can catch your breath and live to do this again tomorrow.

For the best Fitmas calendar, chose something you like doing. If dancing is your thing, then dance; if biking, running, walking is, then go ahead. Or choose something you would like to become good at. If you always wanted to be great at

1 1 Push Up	2 Run 2km/ 2min	3 Run 3km/ 3min	4 4 Push Ups	5 Run 5km/ 5 min
6 Run 6km/ 6min	7 7 Push Ups	8 Run 8km/ 8min	9 9 Push Ups	10 Run 10km/ 10min
11 11 Push Ups	12 Run 12km/ 12min	13 13 Push Ups	14 Run 14km/ 14min	15 15 Push Ups
16 Run 16km/ 16min	17 17 Push Ups	18 Run 18km/ 18min	19 19 Push Ups	20 20 Push Ups
21 Run 21km /21 min	22 22 Push Ups	23 Run 23km/ 23min	24 24 Push Ups or Run	

push ups, choose push ups for counts. Even it doesn’t seem like a lot, once you reach 24, you’ll be pretty efficient with your push ups. Just remember to use the correct form for each and every repetition during December.

My calendar will be a mix of running and doing push ups. They complement each other well, as a good runner needs a strong core and to perform perfect Push ups, you need a strong core.

For me, I’ll be doing most of my push ups at the weekends, as I’m usually busy being mom from morning to night. Plus I also need a rest day or three from running, so my plan is to run three to five days a week

and two to four days engaging core and backside and firing those arms. However since the kilometres are raking up towards the end, I’ll suggest you either substitute with biking or alternate run/walk on the long days to avoid injuries.

If you wish to join me, I have two running models for you to choose from: Beginner runners, run the dates as minutes. On December 10, run for 10 minutes and either walk back or run/ jog back. On December 11, add another minute.

Already running loads of kilometres, three to seven days a week? Run the dates as kilometres.

If your training is something

you do in a class, which is only on two or three days a week, you could always take something from the class and add to your Fitmas calendar at home. If you’re into boxing/thaiboxing/kickboxing, you could do shadowboxing or train a specific combo for minutes. If you’re in a step class, you can either memorise a part of a routine and do at home for minutes, or come up with a routine of your own. Lifting weights in your class? Squats and push ups can be your friends.

There’s always a solution, don’t be buggered down with things that are not aligning. Look at what you can do and chose.

And that leads me to the last

part of my Christmas column for this year: As we seem to be in the fourth wave, I wish you the best Christmas ever. And I want to tell you – do indulge. Do have a taste of all the Christmas goodies you love, say cheers with loved ones and enjoy all Christmas has to offer of companionship and kindness, and remember to take good care of yourself and your body (maybe by following a Fitmas calendar), so you’ll get through this strong in both body, mind and spirit.

If you want to share your own fitness story or have a comment or question, please do reach out: taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com or via Instagram @trainwithadane

people

Motoring



CAR
REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

A few years back Ciaran Allen, Sales Manager in Mercedes said that buyers of new cars spend approximately 11 hours researching information on a car before buying.

Then they spend only 30 minutes in garage forecourts. Buyers know what type of car they want

Impressive electric offering from Kia



before they go into a dealership; it’s just half an hour of haggling over the price.

Last month Aidan Doyle, Head of Marketing in Kia, said that over 200 Irish people had ordered one of their new electric Kia EV6 Crossover electric cars without seeing the car in the flesh. That’s some confidence and I can see why they were so impressed.

Kia has now revised their forecast of sales for the EV6 in 2022 up to 750 units, provided they can get enough of them into the country.

I had the EV6 for 24 hours last month and it’s really impressive. There are two versions available, the GT-line and the Earth model.

Normally cars with the GT moniker are top of the range, but in this case the range for the Earth model is 528km, while the GT version will only get you

506km. Apparently the range has much to do with the alloys which are 20-inch in the GT version and 19-inch in the Earth model. Both models are the long-range, 77.4 kWh/ battery pack paired with a 168 kW electric motor.

Externally the car looks really classy. Up to now most electric cars are unlike regular petrol or diesel cars, but the EV6 is like a regular saloon. The EV6 is the Korean manufacturer’s first BEV

(Battery Electric Vehicle) built on a new dedicated EV platform.

The interior of most electric cars I have driven in recent years have been minimalistic, but again this is where the EV6 impresses. I liked the ‘mosaic’ effect on the dash which is similar to a regular petrol or diesel car. Overall the interior is very bright and spacious and there is plenty of room for three well-built adults in the back seat.

The boot has decent space, but no spare wheel. You also get a ‘Frunk’ in the front where the engine would normally be in a regular car, and there is neat space there for the charging leads. The reversing camera with the bird’s eye look is brilliant.

Following the Government’s decision in the recent Budget to drop the €2,500 grant for Hybrid cars, it’s full steam ahead now

for fully electric cars. But we still need more charge fast-charging points at every cross road around the country.

In their recently-launched Climate Action Plan the Government said they expect to have one million electric cars on the road by 2030. Tánaiste Leo Varadkar said that people will not be forced into buying an electric car and that low-cost loans and scrappage schemes will be introduced to convince drivers to switch to electric.

Prices start at €50,000 for the Earth model, while the GT Line starts at €54,345. Road tax is €120.

I will have more time in the car at a future date. For now, if you are interested in going electric, have a test drive...I think will be impressed.



THE NATURAL GARDENER

Noah Chase

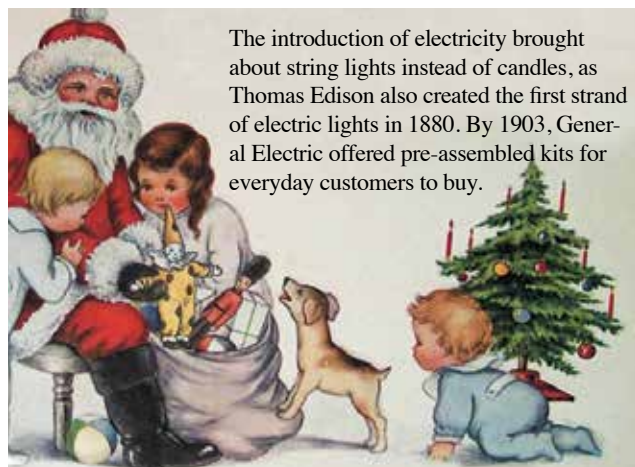
Noah studied horticulture at the Eden Project in Cornwall, England. He now co-manages a family run nursery, Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen, specialising in rare, unusual and edible plants. His passion is sustainable gardening, useful plants and care of the environment.

Where does the tradition of bringing a tree into your home to celebrate Christmas come from? It took a little research but it turns out the tradition is very ancient indeed.

Long before Christians started to celebrate Christmas, many cultures around the world celebrated this very special time of year we know as Solstice. Here in Ireland our ancient relatives built Newgrange over 5000 years ago to mark and honour this magical time of year when the daylight is at its shortest. Ancient Egyptians celebrated by decorating their temples and homes with evergreen trees and wreaths. The plants represented everlasting life, peace, and opulence, which was important because winter was a time when their sun god, Ra, was ill and weak. After the solstice, Ra would slowly start glowing brighter and stronger, and an evergreen's immortality symbolised the triumph of life over death.

The Egyptians weren't the only ones bringing the plant indoors. In Scandinavia, the Vikings believed evergreens were special gifts from Balder, their god of light and peace. Celtic Druids started bringing evergreens into the home around the eighth century. Before then, the Druids worshipped oak trees as their idol. But English Benedictine monk St. Boniface, a man who devoted his life to converting pagans, offered the Druids a triangular-shaped balsam fir tree as a symbol of the Trinity, and it went on to replace their beloved oaks. They then used evergreens to adorn their temples as a celebration of life without death, hanging mistletoe sprigs over their doorways and windows to ward off evil spirits of diseases.

Christmas tradition in a living tree



The introduction of electricity brought about string lights instead of candles, as Thomas Edison also created the first strand of electric lights in 1880. By 1903, General Electric offered pre-assembled kits for everyday customers to buy.

Around the 16th century German Christians built pyramids of wood and adorned them with evergreens and candles outside to celebrate Jesus' birth. German theologian and priest Martin Luther, in awe of the magical, sparkling trees shining bright outside, decided to recapture the beautiful scene for his family by bringing the tree inside and covering it with wire and candles.

In 1846, Queen Victoria, was sketched with her children and husband, Prince Albert, alongside a Christmas tree in Windsor Castle. Because Queen Victoria was so popular, the sketch instantly became an iconic one and went mainstream worldwide. By the early 20th century, Americans had large floor-to-ceiling trees and decorated them with homemade items like popcorn strings, marzipan cookies, nuts, apples, and candles. The introduction of electricity brought about string lights instead of candles, as Thomas Edison also created the first strand of electric lights in 1880. By 1903, General Electric offered pre-assembled kits for everyday customers to buy.

Fast-forward to 2021 and the United Nations climate change COP26 conference has just finished in Glasgow. It is obvious to all that many changes are needed on so many levels around the world. Over 600,000 healthy trees will be cut down in Ireland this year to celebrate Christmas. As a nation, we are becoming more aware of the importance of trees and their role in a healthy ecosystem. This huge waste of land, trees and resources just to decorate a tree for a couple of weeks, seems very strange to me, as there is a natural alternative, if like most people, you want to have a Christmas tree to celebrate Christmas. The alternative is a living Christmas tree!

Even if you do not have anywhere to plant it out after the big day, we have successfully grown living Christmas trees in pots for four to five seasons, as long as they do not dry out in summer and have some liquid feed each year. I also recommend sinking

the pot half way into the ground, if you have the space as the roots will quickly anchor into the ground and find water and food. Simply dig under the pot in early December each season cut the roots and clean the pot. You may have to increase the size of pot every few seasons but this cost is small compared to the savings of getting a few seasons from a single tree, which has grown and shared each Christmas with you and your family!

When the tree has outgrown your room space, it can get a few more years as an outside Christmas tree if placed in the right spot. If you do not have the space in your own garden, or do not have a garden, ask a friend or neighbour who does, and enjoy their smile as you give them a free tree! Most varieties of Christmas trees will grow on to become beautiful additions to

any garden. They will provide year-round shelter for other plants and wildlife, absorb carbon and release oxygen. If they become too big for your garden or you need more room for future generations of Christmas trees, they make fantastic firewood to keep you warm over the winter!

After selling living Christmas trees for over 35 years here at Deelish, we have found smaller trees usually have a better chance of transplanting after the holidays. You also get more years to reuse it after your first Christmas. Thankfully there has been a change over the last few years and many homes and commercial growers are now making the switch to living trees. However, be aware of some sellers supplying 'living Christmas trees', as many of these have simply been dug up from a tree farm with no understanding that the roots need to be undercut each year, and will have little or no chance of transplanting after Christmas.

Here at Deelish Garden Centre, we have never sold cut trees and never plan to; as we feel dead trees are bad for the business we are in, as well as the environment. This year we are sourcing our trees from a specialist Christmas tree grower and have potted trees, which are trees that have had their roots undercut each year by the grower, then dug from the ground and

potted up.

Feel free to come and have a look at the full selection of Christmas trees at the garden centre, and we will be happy to help you select the perfect tree for your situation.

On a side note we will be open all Sundays (11am-5pm) in December leading up to Christmas. Two of these Sundays we will be hosting our first ever

Christmas Craft Fair with 40 local artisan craft stalls, food and coffee trailers and a few surprises for all our visitors on the December 5 and 12.

Wishing a very Happy Christmas to all our customers and West Cork People readers, from all of us here, at Deelish Garden Centre. Here's to a brighter and greener 2022!



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December in the garden

While December is dominated by Christmas preparations including the selection of the perfect Christmas tree, it's also a worthwhile exercise to walk around your garden and see what trees, shrubs and plants can add colour and fragrance to the mid-winter garden. There is a stalwart selection of reliably hardy varieties worth considering for winter interest with many prolifically-berried trees and shrubs that will brighten up your garden.

Cotoneasters come in large shrub/small trees. There are several groundcover varieties that are great weed suppressors with good foliage and bright, red berries that are a glowing, bright



GARDENING

John Hosford
The Weekend Garden Centre

beacon in the depths of winter. Choose low Cotoneaster horizontalis or microphyllus to cover low walls or the face of banks. Cotoneasters are totally hardy even in the most challenging of locations including exposed, windswept coastal locations.

Pyracantha is an evergreen climber that comes in shades of red or yellow berries lasting well into winter. Plant against a wall with the support of a strong, well-secured wire. Pyracantha produce masses of white flowers in late spring followed by magnificent crops of berries in the autumn. Feed in spring on a showery day or when rain is forecast, keeping the fertiliser off the foliage.

Hollies are a great favourite at this festive time of the year.

There are male and female varieties: Female varieties produce the berries if accompanied by a male plant in the vicinity. Watch for reverting shoots on variegated varieties. This means pruning away green shoots on variegated varieties.

Failure to remove them could end up with the variegated shoots disappearing after a take-over by the rogue green shoots. Choose clean, healthy plants when sourcing new plants and watch out for any signs of holly or Ilex blight. Don't entertain any suspect plants.

Varities to choose: Ilex aquifolium – green, native holly, ideal specimen shrub or makes a most attractive, native evergreen hedge. They can also be used in a mixed, native hedge with whitethorn, blackthorn and spindle or hazel (native).

Golden King has gold variegation with prolific berries in autumn and winter. It's a great source for natural Christmas decorative material at this time of year! The non-berrying 'Silver Queen' is often planted to accompany the Ilex 'Golden King'. It adds variety with its evergreen, silver variegation and makes a good pollinator. Look out too for the lovely, green-leave 'Alaska' variety, which bears masses of glistening berries throughout the winter.

Some of the smaller-leaved hollies are now being used as hedges or as trained topiary specimens.

Viburnum x bodnantense 'Dawn' flowers continuously from October to May. While it may lapse for short periods during cold spells, it will return to producing its blush pink or white, sweetly-scented blooms on bare stems. Grow in moist but well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade. It is a generally, pest-free plant.

Bulbs

If you still have some spring bulbs lurking around, do get them in the ground without delay. Tulips, Daffodils and Hyacinths can all still be planted out.

Put bulbs for a late winter/early spring display in pots, bowls or containers.

Plant the deliciously scented 'Grand Soleil D'or' Paperwhite or 'Avalanche' Narcissi in a cool, bright frost-free greenhouse or conservatory, ensuring the containers have adequate drainage.

Freesias, which come in single or double varieties and are available in mixed or named colours, can be potted up now too



Viburnum x bodnantense
'Dawn' flowers continuously from October to May.

in a cool, frost-free greenhouse. Look out for exquisite double varieties in shades of white, red, yellow or blue. Stake with bushy beech twigs for support as they emerge

Lawns

Keep off the lawn if wet or frosted and rake off any fallen leaves, as they will cause the grass to die off due to lack of light. If a lawn has been neglected for any length of time, spiking it after clearing the leaves will help to improve aeration again, especially to the roots.

Vegetable Garden

Protect vegetable plants, which will command a prized position at the Christmas dinner table, especially Brussel Sprouts, Savoy Cabbage and Kale. Earth up tall Brussels sprouts to support them. Put early seed potatoes sprouting in plastic crates or wooden sprouting boxes and place in a cool but frost-free shed.

Christmas Gifts for Gardeners

Planted combination bowls or planters planted with a selection of seasonal plants are always most acceptable and appreciated. Great favourites in Christmas Pot Plants include: Cyclamen-mini, midi and large in white, pink, red or lavender. Keep in a cool, draught-free room, watering from underneath in a shallow saucer of water. Discard any water remaining after 30 minutes. Don't sit the plants for prolonged periods in water.

Poinsettias they need quite warm rooms. Keep moist but not

waterlogged and check that they are dry before watering. Use lukewarm water when watering and avoid draughts.

Azaleas thrive best in a bright, cool room. Don't allow them to dry out. Keep on a saucer with some water at all times.

Winter Heathers are reliable, hardy, free-flowering plants that will brighten up borders and beds. Plant informally in full sun in groups of odd numbers of the one variety. Winter Heathers are best planted in lime-free soil and associate well with dwarf conifers, alpine and dwarf shrubs.

Hyacinths come in a variety of colours including red, pink, blue, yellow and white and last best in cool, bright, unheated rooms.

Fruit Garden

Check apple trees and pears for canker and treat if present. Avoid waterlogged sites.

Winter prune apples and pears. Continue pruning of fruit trees and bushes where soil and weather conditions permit.

Grape vines can be pruned when dormant, as they bleed sap if cut when in growth. Prune back to two or three buds.

Christmas Trees

Choose the non-shed Noble Fir or Nordmanniana varieties for best results. Keep outdoors until you are ready to decorate the Christmas tree. Once brought inside keep a supply of water available at all times

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and every good wish for the New Year.

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people Home & Garden

Christmas Décor list



INTERIORS

Maura Mackey

Maura Mackey is a Cork-based interior and retail display designer. A professional with an eye for detail and interior styling, she thrives on giving any home the 'showhouse feel' when up for sale or rental from a home staging point of view. On the other hand, if you are looking to give your home a makeover or restyling, 'Maura Mackey Design' will help you achieve the home of your dreams. P: 087-7699714. maura@mauramackeydesign.ie

My Christmas article, of course, has to be about setting the scene for Christmas celebrations.

Each December I bring my decorations down from the

attic in plenty of time to get the décor just right. I love Christmas and kick it off by ensuring I have the house decked out in the most festive of decorations, from trees to garlands to nativity scenes, Santa Claus, and of course reindeers and snowmen. Every year I add to my collection, even though I know I have enough!

I've compiled a list of decorations below for maximum impact... a Christmas décor toolkit so to speak!

You definitely need a Christmas tree, be it real or faux evergreen. Decide on the size, depending on space you have where you want to place it, and ensure you have a good, strong stand to keep it upright.

For a classy looking tree pick a colour theme, gold, silver, traditional red or a palette unique to you, and choose ornaments, lights and a tree topper (angel or star) that tie in with that. My top tip is to check your lights are working before you put them on the tree!

Don't forget under the tree. Use a tree skirt to cover the stand and employ some empty wrapped shoeboxes, a nutcracker or a trainset to complete the scene... whatever you have to hand that ties in with your style.

Who doesn't love a Christmas stocking hanging from the



mantle? If you are crafty there are lots of online tutorials to make your own so get the kids involved for an afternoon of fun.

I fondly remember the crib lighting on the sideboard when I was young. Create interesting little scenes around the house for kids with a nativity or Santa Claus and reindeer figures.

A Christmas wreath is essential to dress up any door – external or indoors. There are some gorgeous freshly made ones with berries available from local garden centres. I also love Garlands to put on the mantle, a side table or wrap around the stairs.

Decorate your garland or any sort of table display with:

- Poinsettias

- Scented candles such as cinnamon or fir – Jo Malone does lovely ones.
- Elements of nature. I love going out in the garden and cutting greenery for garlands, dining table décor, in a vase – just keep it hydrated with a spray bottle nearby.
- Mistletoe – such a romantic Christmas decoration, kissing under the mistletoe apparently sends blessings and good fortune your way!

- Ribbon bows
 - Spray snow
 - Battery operated LED lights.
- Make decorating a treat by putting on some music and taking breaks with hot chocolate or a glass of wine. Happy Christmas to you all.

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Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. M.O'R.

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