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Gearóid Beamish, Anthony O'Donovan, Ronnie Barry and Jim Hennessy from Clonakilty Cycling Club pictured for the announcement that a team from the Club is embarking on a mammoth 616km challenge to raise funds for the Irish Community Air Ambulance (page 33). Pic: Michael O'Sullivan /OSM PHOTO

Solidarity running movement starting in Clonakilty

The Sanctuary Runners, a multi-award winning 'Solidarity through Sport' movement, will launch its newest group in Clonakilty on Saturday, April 2.

Established in January 2018 in Cork, the initiative now has over 25 groups across the world including three groups in Cork County; Cork, Mallow and Millstreet.

With its origins in Cork City where the group was founded by journalist and broadcaster Graham Clifford, the group uses running to bring Irish residents together with asylum seekers and refugees.

Kathryn, a committee member with Clonakilty Friends of Asylum Seekers (CFOAS) hopes that the

Clonakilty Sanctuary Runners will bring the residents in Clonakilty Lodge, the newly-arrived Ukrainians and the community of Clonakilty even closer together.

"Running is a great equaliser. When we run we run as one and the labels of citizen, asylum seeker, refugee, migrant...they all disappear. That feeling of solidarity and egalitarianism is very powerful both for the person seeking protection in our country and for Irish people. There is no 'them' and 'us' – just 'we'," said Graham Clifford.

This month the Sanctuary Runners spoke to the United Nations in New York about the successes of the solidarity movement. The

group takes part in many local running races across the country, as well as at weekly parkruns across Ireland. They plan to have 1,000 Sanctuary Runners taking part in the Cork City Marathon on June 5.

To find out more about getting involved in the Clonakilty Sanctuary Runners or to register please email info@sanctuaryrunners.ie or whatsapp Niamh on 087-9026803.

The Clonakilty launch will take place on Saturday, April 2 at 9.15am in advance of the Clonakilty Parkrun. The group will be identifiable through the distinctive blue tee-shirts, which will be available for anyone interested in joining the group. Runners and walkers are welcome.

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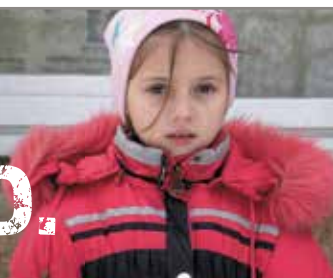
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West Cork pilgrim begins her journey 'From here to Jerusalem'

The indomitable pilgrim Anja Bakker is off again on foot on April 2: This time on a prodigious journey that, if successful, will take her all the way from West Cork to Jerusalem, travelling anywhere between 6000-8000 km on foot over the next year, all the while carrying her harp (named Séan) on her back.

This is a spiritual journey for Anja, a person who dares to dream and seek a learning experience that she hopes will bring her a sense of freedom and the ability to let go. "I want to flow over the roads where all those people have gone before me," she says passionately. "There is wisdom and understanding there that we don't see in the fast pace of everyday life when we're so caught up with material things; and I really have a desire to live

that experience."

Anja first began walking with her harp in 2010 on a pilgrimage from her home in Clonakilty to Santiago de Compostela (2500 km). She followed that up with a pilgrimage from West Cork to Rome (3500 km) in 2018.

Four years on and this courageous spirit is ready to attempt her biggest and most arduous journey yet. This time, with so many more countries to cross, some war torn, and extreme weather conditions to contend with, Anja is hoping for help in facing the challenges ahead. Rather than simply trusting in just the willingness of those she meets along the road to support her, she aims to raise €20,000, which will give her some security over the 365 days.

On this pilgrimage, Anja will be taking it one day at a time, depending on her physical condition and the challenges she meets along the way.

"I'm getting older, 53 this year, so I'm not so sure I'm able this time for walking till I almost drop and sleeping in the ditches and waking up in the



morning unable to walk for half an hour," explains Anja.

"I cannot even start to think about the strain my body is going to go through, given Séan's weight and then the rest of my pack, which will weigh around 20 kg.

"I will need help. Help that will range from making sure the harp is protected adequately to looking after my feet and body, finding places to rest and recover

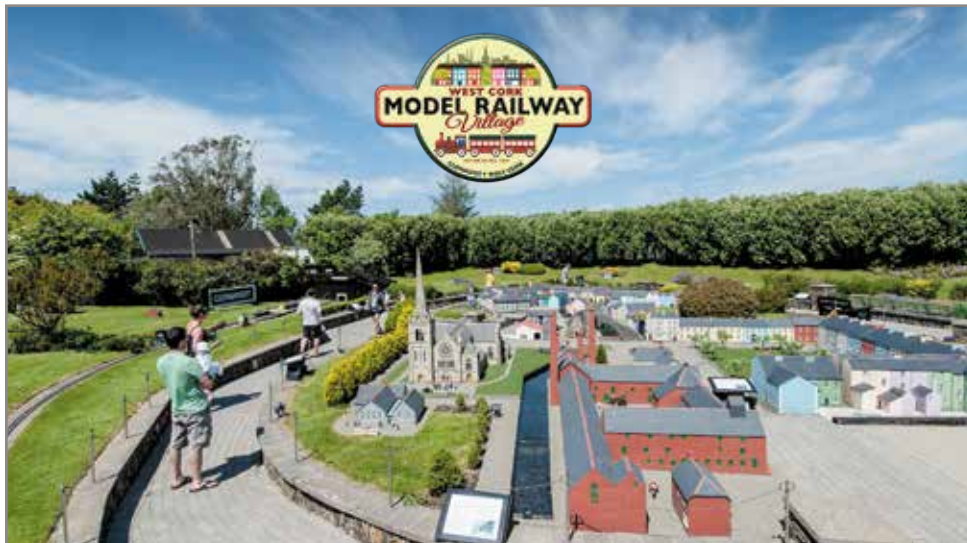
(something I didn't do on the other journeys) to making sure I have enough time to connect and play for those we meet along the way."

If you're interested in supporting Anja on her pilgrimage please go to gofund.me and Anja Bakker's page 'From Here to Jerusalem'

You can follow her journey through her video diaries on theblattingharp.com.



Anja in Rome.



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Watching war from afar: Natalia's story

For a few precious minutes each day Natalia Menovska breathes a little easier.

Sometimes it's for less than a minute; just a few snatched words with her father after curfew, as he hides in his bathroom where the light of his phone can't be seen, at his home in a small town about an hour outside Kiev in war-torn Ukraine.

Father and daughter make contact through Messenger as he is afraid to speak on the phone.

Natalie's dad is 73: A retired soldier, too old now to fight, he stays behind to support his sons.

Her two brothers, both retired from the army in recent years, are back in service. Her sister-in-laws are also on the ground, one on the border, the other in the medical corps.

From the safe haven of her home in Clonakilty, Natalia feels helpless and afraid for them. She often wakes in the middle of the night and can't catch her breath.

"Each day I just need to know they are ok. Then I can go to work. I can function," she says, her voice breaking.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, this has been the reality for so many Ukrainians living outside their homeland. Some have returned to take up arms, others are doing what they can to help from afar.

Natalia moved to Clonakilty 13 years ago and has made a good life here for her family. She works at a local nursing home, her three children attend local schools.

Since the invasion started, she has been doing what she can to help, collecting and sorting donations at her home to send to the Polish Ukrainian border through a group in Waterford and the West Cork Appeal based in Bandon. Anything she collects now goes to the premises of the old library in Bandon, which is being used as a community resource centre for displaced Ukrainians joining



Natalia Menovska

our community.

"I can't believe the support shown by the Irish people," she says. "So many people here in Clonakilty, Bandon, all over West Cork are helping in any way they can."

She tries not to watch the news too often and finds it helps to talk to other Ukrainians. "Since this started, I am just crying all the time. You don't know what you will wake up to each day, you are just wondering all the time if your family are safe. In one day, people lost everything, their hopes, their dreams, everything."

Natalia feels grateful that so many people from Ukraine are being offered refuge here in Ireland and can experience the same generosity of spirit she was welcomed with.

"I'm just so thankful. People here are so friendly and kind."

A smile lifts her tears.

"I learned a lot about the weather when I first came here but most importantly, I literally

learned how to smile when I came to Ireland."

She fears too for her friends in Russia, silenced under Putin's regime. "Everyone is suffering under that man," says Natalia.

She recalls a recent encounter with a woman in a coffee shop in Cork City. "I admired her coat, she didn't understand what I was saying and I automatically found myself switching into Russian," says Natalia. "She asked me where I was from and when I told her Ukraine, she just said, with tears in her eyes, 'I am Russian and I am so very sorry for what is happening'. We both stood there crying for a long time."

"The Russian people do not want this war either, it is Putin's war," says Natalia with passion.

Natalia is offering her services as a translator to any families who are hosting refugees from Ukraine. She can be contacted through her facebook page: natalia.menovski

Irish tech community launches new website to help businesses welcome Ukrainian refugees

The Tech For Good Dublin community has launched a new website Pryvit.ie which enables Cork businesses to welcome refugees escaping from Ukraine. It is a not-for-profit initiative.

Pryvit means hello in Ukrainian and the aim of the site is to allow people who have been displaced by the war to access special offers

and discounted goods listed by businesses. It facilitates companies across Ireland to place a 'welcome offer' of discounted or free goods or services to those arriving in Ireland from Ukraine. Examples of offers could include deals from all types of businesses including grocery shops, cafés, gyms, pharmacies and drapery shops.

If you are a business that would

like to help by offering free or discounted products or services, go to pryvit.ie and complete the form with information about the business, the offer and how people can avail of it. Individuals affected by the war will contact the business directly to claim the offer. The welcome offers are listed in both Ukrainian and English languages.

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Lament for a small stream



A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

It's so good to see the Spring again. The world is still a crazy place and getting weirder every day. After two years of covid and one month of watching Ukraine go up in flames, it's good to at least say goodbye to the winter. Thank goodness for the sights, sounds and lovely smells of Spring. Few things lift my heart more than a walkabout through the first flowers. This is the season I think of as being "silly pretty". The snowdrops are spectacular this year. Bright yellow daffs line the drive and spill out into the front field. Our little patch of wild crocus has doubled this year with almost a dozen purple flowers, peeking through the grass. Also starting to peek through the grass are little violets and tiny blue forget-me-nots. In the woods the three-cornered leek is growing in wide banks. The flowers aren't out yet, but the leaves smell and taste delicious. Equally tasty and abundant is the sorrel. The bluebells promise quite a show in a few weeks, and I was delighted to see that primroses have established themselves under the big sycamore.

This time of year, every drive along the back roads is a delight. Coming across a bank of daffodils at the turn of a boreen feels like a gift. Being able to leave the kitchen door open to hear the birds making a racket outside

and smell the sweet air of new grass and flowers is the best sort of mindfulness. Early spring is a good time to be grateful for living in West Cork.

Sometimes I stop and think about how much West Cork has changed in the thirty years that I've lived here. Change is generally slow and incremental, so that we don't really notice it as it happens. You must stop, look around, and then remember what it looked like in 1992 to notice the difference. There have been some momentous changes to society on every level, but one of the biggest changes has been the landscape itself. The expansion of our towns and villages over the last three decades has been phenomenal. It has changed what used to be called "isolated rural pockets" into suburban communities. My own house used to be described as "in the middle of nowhere". Today it is in the middle of a dozen new houses that have been built since we first moved in. There are still more fields than housing estates, more cows than people, but there's hardly a boreen that has been left untouched.

I love the countryside. It's why I left the city and came to live here. I love the fields and the hills, the overgrown walls, and hedgerows. The countryside that I love best however, has always been the small forgotten bits of wilderness that you find wedged in between the cultivated bits. They can be a few square metres to several acres. Small stands of trees. A little bog. A brook in the corner of a field flanked by willows. They are often the wet, marshy bits, and have a stream running through. That's where you'd find the wild damsons, chanterelles, and wild garlic. They are great places to look for frog spawn. Though sometimes quite small, each is a pocket size eco-system, a perfect example of the type of temperate rain forest native to West Cork. These are the magical places that so charmed me when I first visited. One would not be surprised to

find a few fairies flitting through the dappled light and giant ferns. They are bursting with biodiversity. These small areas of abundant lushness delight me more than any other landscape. They remind me how beautiful this planet is when left to its own devices.

We had such a jewel right across the road. We called it The River, but it's really just a stream, a babbling brook at best. It runs parallel to the road and then under it to continue through a strip of land that's been left alone for as long as I've been here. A lovely mix of trees line the banks. Fallen trunks are covered with moss and giant ferns. The stream makes a most pleasing sound as it trips over rocks and gathers in eddies. It was a great place for the kids to play, and a sort of right of passage in our house. You had to be at least seven years old to cross the road to "de ribber" to play. One summer my second daughter told me that she had sat very quietly on the bank, watching a fox who was sitting on the other side watching her.

I always have a look as I drive by, often stopping to roll down my window and listen to the river, noting how high the water is, or if a tree has fallen in a recent storm. For my sins, I have not actually walked along its banks for a decade or more. Once the girls were too old to play in the stream, I stopped visiting.

I could kick myself now. Due to roadworks that need to be carried out to repair a bridge where the river joins the main road, the entire area has been levelled of all life. The river has been dredged. The trees and ferns have been torn out of the ground and tossed into a giant pile of sadness. I'm sure there is a good reason for the destruction of this little piece of local magic. Maybe once the works are done the magic will return. In the meantime, I will mourn that tiny bit of wilderness and try to be more aware of the wild bits and small streams that are left.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the April edition of West Cork People

Amidst all the grief, uncertainty and challenges in the world right now, it's really heartening to see the compassion, action and spirit of people right across West Cork. In a challenging economic climate with soaring inflation causing pain to households and businesses, people continue to open their hearts, homes and wallets to help our Ukrainian friends coping with the trauma of war.

With this war and consequent sanctions on Russia causing so much economic uncertainty around food and supply, West Cork farmers and food producers haven't blinked in rising to the challenge. Here in West Cork we are fortunate to have an optimal growing climate and a wonderful diverse range of forward-thinking local growers and food producers.

Inside this issue, we meet just some of the people who give West Cork its green spirit, people who are passionate about our land, our community, our way of life and our eco-system. We feel very privileged that because of these people and all of the people who contribute to our paper every month, West Cork People has grown and evolved into one of the most progressive and informative local papers around on matters relating to the environment. Our mission has always been to help our community and our planet in any way we can: Together we can create positive change.

With Easter just around the corner and Covid beating a path to most doors, I hope you and your family get to enjoy this celebration. Sharing food with friends and family is one of the things we all missed during the past two years of this pandemic and I do hope this year will be different.

'Your health is your wealth' is a saying I think we've all come to appreciate more in recent times!

I hope you enjoy the read,

Until next month,
Mary

West Cork communities shouldn't have to fundraise for SNA's in 2022: O'Sullivan

Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has praised Ballydehob community for pulling together to fundraise in aid of Scoil Bhride SNAs.

But he says it highlights the unfair and critical lack of SNA allocations in west Cork.

"Primary schools in 2022 should not have to fundraise for SNAs. I've raised this numerous times in the Dáil and with Minister Norma Foley and Minister of State Josepha Madigan," Deputy O'Sullivan says.

"Fair play to the community

for getting behind this cause, and to Barry O'Brien for his help organising the vintage tractor run to raise funds. I will certainly be doing everything I can to help, and will be raising it again with government colleagues.

"There seems to be an under-allocation of SNA's in West Cork in general and I've previously raised the plight Ballydehob, Dreeny National School, Caheragh NS and St Patrick's NS Skibbereen. I'm seeking further SNA allocation, and I will continue to raise it."



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Clonakilty Flower Club continues to blossom 40 years on

Since its inception in 1982, Clonakilty Flower Club has established itself as one of the most vibrant and thriving flower clubs in the region. The club, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, was formed by a group of enthusiasts with a shared love of flowers and gardening who came together to provide a social outlet through which they could foster their love of all things floral.

Over the years, Clonakilty Flower Club became the place for flower lovers from all walks of life to meet, make friends and obtain valuable tips and information on flower arranging and gardening.

With a membership of approx 60 from Clonakilty and surrounding hinterland, the club holds regular flower demonstrations, flower arranging classes, gardening talks and outings. While the club attracts new members each year, many

of the original members still attend the monthly gatherings.

Phil Beechinor from Rossmore is one of the founding members of the club. Now in her late eighties, she continues to play a part on the committee and enjoys attending meetings every month. While Phil can't physically make flower arrangements any more, she still finds the creative process fascinating. "Floral art is what they call it now," she says.

A member of A.O.I.F.A (Association of Irish Floral Artists),



Club members on an outing in recent years.

Clonakilty Flower Club has a reputation as one of the most successful of its kind in the country. Members have competed successfully at inter-club competitions, winning prizes at national and international level. In 2019, Beverly Buttimer represented Ireland at the World Flower Show in India. Members have also competed in Glasgow, Manchester, Canada and Boston.

"There is a great comradeship in the club...even with the competitive spirit," says Phil smiling. "You make great friends all over the country."

"I was never very interested in winning competitions, I just always got great satisfaction out of making arrangements and friends," says Phil. "That's the nice thing about the club, it's open to every one and every ability."

In 2012, Clonakilty Flower Club hosted the National Flower Festival with clubs from all over the country exhibiting in local churches.

Long-standing Flower Club

member, Una Fleming, was elected as the National President of A.O.I.F.A in 2014 when the World Flower Show was held in Dublin.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 8pm at the Clonakilty GAA complex. The club hosts a flower demonstration each month from October to May with an optional competition (Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced categories) confined to members. The monthly demonstration nights provide

an important opportunity for members to improve and learn the art of flower arranging. Member's entries are judged by visiting demonstrators, who consistently comment on the high standard in the Clonakilty club. Members are under no obligation to enter these competitions with many simply enjoying a relaxing night out with friends.

Annual membership is €50 but non members and guests are welcome to attend for a fee of €10 on the night.

The highlight of the year is the 'Gala Night' held in May. Regularly attracting an attendance of over 150 people, the event is a significant fundraiser for a local charity. This year, well-known florist John Paul Deehen from Derry will demonstrate at the Gala.

Everyone is welcome to join Clonakilty Flower Club. Email: clonakiltyflowerclub@gmail.com www.clonakiltyflowerclub.com



Phil Beechinor



10th Birthday celebrations with founding members Kay O'Donovan, Margaret O'Regan, Phil Beechinor and Noreen McCarthy.



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It's not just about property. It's about people.

Noah and pals raise funds for Crumlin and Irish Red Cross

A St. Brogan's College student has raised over €1,500 for two charities with his creative craft business "Pom Pom Pals". Noah O'Shea from Ballineen set up his mini company as part of the Student Enterprise Programme which is run by the Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West and will represent the

region in the Junior category at the upcoming National finals in May.

Noah, aged 13, began creating Pom Pom Pals as a way to connect with and entertain his sister when she was up and down to Crumlin Children's Hospital in Dublin from West Cork four years ago and since then he has made his pastime

a business to give back to the place that helped his sister get better again. The Pom Pom Pals are the perfect gift to give to a loved one who needs cheering up or to be reminded to be happy and to smile at the small simple things. Since setting up the business Noah has packaged his pals off to all corners of the country and also gifted them to well known faces including Rob Heffernan and Phil Healy.

Speaking about his business, Noah said, "I started to make these little guys when my sister Louisa was up and down to Crumlin and I would make them with her to cheer her up. When we were making them we started to give them their own personalities and play with them for hours so when the opportunity came to set up a business for the Student Enterprise Programme my Mum suggested that I should turn my hobby



into a business and I did! At Christmas time I made robins and at other times of the year I make a variety of characters such as chicks for Easter. They can be bought finished or you can stick your own expressions on them yourself too which has been really popular."

Noah pivoted his business last month and made little pals in Ukrainian colours to raise money for the Irish Red Cross by selling them in O'Donovan's Centra, Enniskeane. To date, he has raised over €1400 for the Red Cross Ukraine appeal.

You can order your very own Pom Pom Pal through Facebook at 'Pom Pom Pals'. Keep an eye on the Facebook page for updates on new additions to the Pom Pom Pals range and details of pop up shop dates and locations.

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Calling for vaccines for all

By Clonakilty
Amnesty Group

On the second anniversary of the World Health Organisation's declaration that the Covid-19 outbreak had become an epidemic, more than 130 former world leaders, Nobel laureates, leading scientists, economists, humanitarians, faith leaders and others are calling for urgent action to vaccinate low and middle income countries in a letter coordinated by the Peoples Vaccine Alliance.

It calls on world leaders to recognise that after nearly 20 million deaths in 24 months, and



while the pharmaceutical companies make profits of tens of thousands of dollars per minute, it is time to end Covid monopolies.

They ask that whatever is necessary to end this crisis be done, that they unite behind a Peoples Vaccine that is accessible to everyone, everywhere and free from patents and profiteering.

"Self defeating nationalism, pharmaceutical monopolies and inequality" have lead to avoidable deaths around the world. In India alone it is estimated that 2 million children have lost their parents or caregivers to Covid according to an Oxfam report.

Leaving billions of people un-

vaccinated risks leading to dangerous new variants of Covid 19, so self interest alone should be an incentive to do the right thing. Sadly the EU, UK, Germany and Switzerland continue to block the lifting of intellectual property rules which would allow test and treatment manufacturing in the global south.

More than 100 countries supported an intellectual property waiver at the World Trade Organization in 2020 and the US announced its support in 2021.

Former Secretary General of the UN said, "Rich country leaders are protecting pharmaceutical monopolies of Covid 19 vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics over the health and lives of billions of people. And

we can only imagine how damaging a new profoundly lethal variant could be for everyone on the planet. That is why this is a historic test of multilateralism. It truly affects us all. And, if world leaders can't rise to the challenge of vaccine equity, they diminish hope that they will rise to the existential challenge of tackling the climate crisis"

Amnesty International joins these voices calling for a humane response to human, avoidable, tragedy. Go to the Amnesty.ie website for further actions.

The Clonakilty group of Amnesty is now meeting in person at O'Donovan's hotel at 2.30 on the first Monday of the month. We would welcome new members.

Christopher O'Sullivan TD

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If my team or I can assist you in any way, please don't hesitate in getting in touch.

Keep an eye out on my Facebook and Social Media for upcoming clinics.

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Dunboy Castle future a win for Beara

Plans to restore and turn Beara Peninsula's Dunboy Castle into a hotel are a welcome boost to the area's economy, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan says.

Property developers Oakmount bought the property with the intention of completing its restoration and opening it as a hotel in the popular tourist spot.

"This is superb news for the Beara Peninsula and Castle-townbere," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"I've repeatedly said the Beara Peninsula is an absolute

gem in terms of Ireland's tourist offerings, but a major issue has been accommodation so this can only be good news for the area. Its clear more accommodation is needed."

A previous restoration of the 15th century castle was halted in 2006.

"This restoration and conversion means visitors can base themselves on the Beara Peninsula instead of Cork City or Killarney," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"So it'll complement other fantastic hospitality, B&B and glamping offerings in the area."





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HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

Mariupol, Kherson, Kharkiv. The names of those cities roll off our tongue. A month ago, we had never heard of them. Now they are being spoken of in the same breath as other civilian cities that were destroyed indiscriminately by bombardment; London in the Blitz, Guernica in the Spanish Civil War, Dresden by the Allies, and most ominously, Hiroshima at the end of World War II. Whether we will have another 'Hiroshima' is not over dramatising events, given Putin's decision to put his nuclear deterrent force on high alert when the conflict was not even a week-old in Ukraine. Whether it is a bluff or a strategic move, it has certainly worked, given that NATO have backed away from giving Zelensky and the ordinary people of Ukraine protection from the skies. To create a no-fly zone is one thing but to implement it is another. To execute a no-fly zone, NATO could find themselves shooting down Russian aircraft and even dismantling Russian radar and ground air systems, which we

know would plunge NATO into direct confrontation and possibly a global conflict.

So what is the alternative to boots on the ground? Sanctions? There is no doubt that sanctions are severely hurting the Russian economy, though probably not Putin personally, given he is one of the richest men on the planet. Part of the idea is to cause enough pain amongst his cortège that they put him under pressure to revise his plans. However, anyone who has seen the footage of how Putin controls and speaks to his cabinet and generals alike will have witnessed images of a Stalin-like grip over insubordinates. Speaking on radio this week a former European commissioner, who had close dealings with Putin for years, claimed he was not a man to back down when confronted, rather one who doubled down, which we have already seen him do in a month of fighting in Ukraine.

This of course brings us back to whether NATO, who are a defensive alliance, should intervene. I felt their application of a tiered approach to the sanctions was a sign of weakness. You can't half crack an egg; it's either broken or it's not. The day Crimea was taken by the Russians in 2014, the United Nations, EU and G7, should have immediately hit Russia with every sanction at its disposal, instead of the rising, sliding scale approach currently being applied. Can you imagine the Russians say



taking over county Cork and life simply moves on for the rest of the world? That's exactly what happened after their first invasion of 2014 into Crimea. The winter Olympics went to Sochi, followed by the World Cup in 2018. Like the Berlin Olympics of 1936 in Nazi Germany, it allowed Russia to present itself in a flattering but distorted light. Putin continued to be indulged by global leaders and the world did indeed turn.

When the Russians fanned the flames of trouble in the Donbas region, and created a situation that precipitated Russia's support for the Russian speaking peoples of that area, another instalment of weak sanctions followed suit. Even when the sovereign nation of Ukraine was finally invaded with the full might of Russian forces, the West merely slapped Putin on the wrist, told him he was a naughty boy and he might get moved higher up on the naughty step if he didn't behave. Dozens of naughty steps later, yet more sanctions are being prepared to meet his latest defiance. I would love to know if there is a little sanctions booklet that tells our leaders in the EU how many lives lost or torn apart it takes before you escalate to the next level? Why wait till thousands are killed and mutilated, millions are displaced, and billions worth of infrastructure has been destroyed? This may never have happened if our western leaders had the guts to hit with full force the moment a Russian boot landed in Ukraine.

Now we find ourselves in a situation where Putin realises he can do what he wants. When NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg says that Russia's attack on Ukraine has shattered peace in Europe, and that the alliance would defend "every inch" of its members' territory,

what he really means is, 'we won't lift a finger to defend Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova or any other non-NATO country under the glare of the Russian Bear'.

It's not as if I'm gazing into a crystal ball. The Russians invaded Georgia in 2008 and surprise, surprise, there is now a pro-Russian breakaway

he took back the Rhineland, amalgamated Austria and Germany, annexed Czechoslovakia. Yet, even after he invaded Poland in 1939, the Allies did not respond militarily until eight months later in 1940. By then it was too late to stop the bloodiest war that Europe and the world had ever seen. Russia has been inching back into its for-

Russia has been inching back into its former Soviet sphere of influence with impunity under Putin. The pathetic image of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain waving a white sheet of paper, declaring "peace in our time" highlighted the impotence of the West's ability to stop Hitler. A century later, the West has been castrated by Europe's newest despot, Vladimir Putin.

province within that country. The Russian military maintains a small 'peace keeping force' in Moldova. Do any of those strategic moves sound familiar to us? He could invade both countries in the morning and sleep soundly the night before. Putin understands that General Stoltenberg's rhetoric of 'protecting every inch of NATO countries', is code for, 'good luck to the rest of you, you're on your own. But we have an incremental sanctions booklet guys, so hang in there'!

Parallels can be drawn with Hitler's foreign policy. Germany after WWI and the Soviet Union after the Cold War both lost territory that included German and Russian speaking peoples. These former empires pined at their fall from grace as global powers. Democracy was used by both Hitler and Putin to rise to power, and both then dismantled the very process that got them there. Hitler started to encroach on sovereign territory;

mer Soviet sphere of influence with impunity under Putin. The pathetic image of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain waving a white sheet of paper, declaring "peace in our time" highlighted the impotence of the West's ability to stop Hitler. A century later, the West has been castrated by Europe's newest despot, Vladimir Putin.

Western governments are congratulating themselves that they are seizing the dirty money and assets of the oligarchs but it has taken a war and the death of innocents for Europe and the West to clean its dirty laundry. They pat themselves on the back for tearing up (well kind of) the contracts with Russian oil and gas companies that they were happy to keep up until three weeks ago. This war has also been like a giant broomstick, sweeping into the light all the shady Russian money, personalities and tax systems that have facilitated, even encouraged, Russian oligarchs and

banks to do unsavoury business here. That's small comfort for the 3.3 million Ukrainians who are fleeing their homes, jobs, pets, lives. They also leave behind their brothers, husbands, sons, who are compelled to defend their country not just by order of President Zelensky, but because of the indefatigable spirit we have seen the Ukrainian's possess. Thank God, the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity has bonded together. Donations, the housing of refugees, people driving to bring supplies to Ukraine, community participation are all welcome responses. Even sporting organisations and the super companies of the world have joined in unison to do what they can for Ukraine. It does make you think, if the world could only respond this way to every conflict, like in Syria and Yemen, we might bring an end to all this madness.

The other ending is too unthinkable. The last time we genuinely faced a World War III threat was in 1962 – commonly known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. In return for Soviet money and regime support, Cuba allowed the installation of a Soviet nuclear launch site within its territory, a mere 100 miles away from the USA. Kennedy was heralded as a hero for standing up to the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev. The world held its breath and teetered on the edge of WWII for 13 days of tense anticipation. Khrushchev eventually backed down and war was averted. What most people did not know is that Kennedy had nuclear missiles in a Turkish base pointing at the Soviet Union (merely 400 miles away then). Secretly, Kennedy had to decommission that base as a reciprocal action but, of course, we never hear that side of the story.

There may be something in this for Ukraine. Historically, Russia has always felt threatened by the West. NATO expanded into Eastern Europe, despite promises made after the fall of the Soviet Union that this would never happen. Like it or not, keeping Ukraine out of NATO and maintaining neutrality could be a compromise that might save us all. But one wonders, has Putin poisoned the well in Ukraine? Who can trust him? Why now would Finland, Sweden, Georgia and others not want to join NATO and be guaranteed protection? Tomas McCurtain once said, "It is not those who can inflict the most but those who can suffer the most who will conquer."

The Ukrainians have already conquered our hearts and may yet tame the Russian Bear.



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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.

On the evening of March 10, 1928, Christine Collins gave her nine-year-old son Walter some money to go to the cinema. When he didn't return after a few hours, she called the police and filed a

The real changeling

The Hollywood blockbuster 'The Changeling' starring Angelina Jolie as Christine Collins is based on the events of the Walter Collins case. In 1929, Gordon Stewart Northcott was found guilty of abducting, molesting, and killing three young boys in what became known as the Wineville Chicken Coop Murders. Northcott's mother, Sarah Louise Northcott, confessed in late 1928 to her participation in the murder of Walter Collins. Encouraged by the fact that a boy Northcott had been accused of killing was found alive some years later, Walter's mother Christine Collins refused to believe her son was dead and continued to search for him until her death in 1964 at the age of 75.

missing person's report. Nelson and Lewis Winslow, ten- and twelve-years-old, went missing on their way home to Pomona on May 16, 1928. Their parents received strange letters purported to be from them: The first said they were heading to Mexico and the second said they planned to stay missing until they became famous. In February of the same year, the headless body of a Latino boy was also found. Even after following up on hundreds of leads,

all of these cases remained unsolved, which at the time put increasing pressure in the Los Angeles Police Department, especially as the Walter Collins case gained nationwide notoriety.

With such negative publicity and increased public pressure to resolve the case, the police became desperate.

In August of 1928, five months after Walter went missing, the LAPD found a missing boy in Illinois, who claimed to

be Walter Collins. Illinois police contacted the LAPD, sending photographs of the boy, before sending him to Los Angeles. The media reports said Walter Collins had been found through incredible detective work by the police department. A public reunion was organised and scheduled for broadcast.

Christine Collins was given pictures of the boy, which she immediately said, although there was a likeness, was not her son Walter. However such



Christine Collins

was the LAPD's desperation to save face in front of the national media that they forced Christine to take the boy home for a

while, just in case she was mistaken. The detective in charge of the case Captain JJ Jones is quoted as asking Christine to just "try the boy out" for a period of time.

Three weeks after their reunion, Christine Collins brought the boy back to the police station along with Walter's dental records and signed statements from people who knew Walter saying that this boy was not him. Captain Jones had Collins committed to the psychiatric ward at Los Angeles County Hospital under a 'Code 12' internment – a term used to jail or commit someone who was deemed difficult or an inconvenience.

After questioning, the boy admitted to being 12-year-old Arthur Hutchens, Jr., a runaway from Iowa. His motive for

Continued on next page...

The life and times of Boss Croker

April marks the centenary of the death of Boss Croker, a notorious figure in US politics who hailed from Ardfield, Clonakilty. **Pauline Murphy** recounts his colourful life.

Boss Croker was born Richard Welstead Croker in 1843 at Ballyva, Ardfield, Clonakilty, the third son of Presbyterian landowner Eyre Coote Croker and his wife Frances Laura (nee Welstead).

Although Eyre Croker was an army officer and horse specialist, he was also terrible when it came to handling money and just two years after the birth of his third son, Eyre found himself in a dire financial situation; severe losses at the Ardfield property forced him to surrender his army commission and emigrate to the US with his family, where he became a full-time horse doctor.

Young Richard Croker forged his own path in the land of opportunity. Initially he worked on the railroads in New York but earned more money in the gritty world of prizefighting.

19th century New York teemed with street gangs and bare knuckle fights were regular events. Croker found his place in this rough and rowdy world; he joined the Fourth Avenue Tunnel gang, worked his way up the ladder of protection rackets and into the world of local politics.

At this time New York was divided into wards rather than districts. Croker was hired as a

bodyguard by ward boss James O'Brien, the latter having first witnessed Croker brutally beat the more fancied Denis Lynch in an underground bare knuckle fight.

After converting to Catholicism, Croker went on to join the Democrat Party, where he came under the stewardship of the ironically named 'honest' John Kelly, head honcho of the New York Democratic machine at Tammany Hall.

Croker quickly made a name for himself in New York's political and social sphere, first as an Alderman in 1868 and then as City Coroner in 1873. In 1883 he took on the role of Fire Commissioner before taking on his most famous title in 1886 – 'boss' of Tammany Hall.

In his new position Croker oversaw a mass influx of money from bribes, protection rackets, saloons, brothels and gambling dens. His reputation as a fearsome 'boss' was bolstered when he shot a political opponent at a polling station but walked free thanks to a hung jury.

In 1897 Croker pulled off his biggest political success when his candidate for New York Mayor, Robert A. Van Wyck, was elected. Van Wyck was a bland yes-man candidate, just the type that Croker needed to ensure he would have complete



control over the governance of the city.

Not everything ran smoothly for Croker during Van Wyck's mayoral term; when he instructed City Hall to increase the price of ice he came under intense scrutiny due to his owning shares in The American Ice Company. Another controversy arose when he called for the Manhattan Elevated Railroad Company to attach compressed air pipes to their infrastructure; Croker had shares in a manufacturing company that would have benefitted from such a move.

By the turn of the century Boss Croker and Tammany Hall was a by-word for greed and corruption. Finally, in 1901, a string of controversies, combined with Croker's failure to carry the city for the Democrat candidate in the presidential election of 1900, forced him to resign from his once powerful position.

Croker now turned his

attention to horse racing and the land of his birth. In 1905, he set up home on a sprawling estate called Glencairn House in Foxrock, Co. Dublin.

Still stirring up controversy, Croker's horse Orby won the Epsom Derby in 1907 but Croker refused to meet the King in the royal enclosure. The Derby win was greatly celebrated in Ireland; crowds thronged the streets of Dublin and bonfires and brassbands escorted the victorious horse and owner back to Foxrock with one onlooker proudly proclaiming: "Thank god we have lived to see a Catholic horse win the English derby!"

Soon after Boss Croker was made a Freeman of Dublin. His thirst for respectability had finally been quenched; Americans had lampooned him in the press as a corrupt mob boss, the English looked down on him as just a thug with money but the Irish embraced him as

a returned son with pockets bursting with cash!

In 1919 Croker enjoyed another Derby success with the son of Orby, Grand Parade, named after the Cork City thoroughfare.

Boss Croker was as controversial in his private life as he was in his public one. He first married an Elizabeth Fraser in 1873 and the couple had five sons and two daughters. When Elizabeth died Croker married again but this caused a terrible rift with his offspring, who were so incensed that they tried to have him committed to an institution. In retaliation Croker disinherited them. At the age of 71 Croker was married a third time, to the much younger Beulah Benson Edmondson, grand-daughter of Chief Sequoy of the Cherokee Indians, whom the press dubbed 'The Indian Bride'.

During the War of Independence Boss Croker financially

supported the Republican movement. Glencairn House, decorated in a mixture of Native American and Celtic design, hosted many of the big names from that era such as Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins.

At a dinner party hosted there following the Truce in 1921, Michael Collins and his fiancée Kitty Kiernan were among the invited guests. Rumour has it that although Kitty got on very well with Beulah Croker early in the evening, a flirtatious Beulah tried to coax Collins into the library before Kitty stepped in and words were exchanged!

Although he was rumoured to be preparing to stand for the Dublin County constituency in the upcoming general election of 1922, Boss Croker's return to politics never happened. While returning from a stateside trip he caught a bad cold and died at Glencairn House on April 22, 1922. His funeral was held within the grounds of his Foxrock home; Mass was said in the chapel he had built there and his coffin was carried to a spot nearby. Among the pallbearers were Arthur Griffith and Dublin Lord Mayor Alfie Byrne.

Boss Croker left an estate worth £5million, all of which went to his wife Beulah, who relocated to Palm Beach, Florida where Croker also had a large house. Beulah later tried to forge her own path in politics when she ran for the Florida congress but was unsuccessful.

Beulah died in 1957 at the age of 73, having spent much of her widowhood tied up in lawsuits brought by the many people left out of pocket by her late husband, including his children. Even in death Boss Croker was still causing trouble!

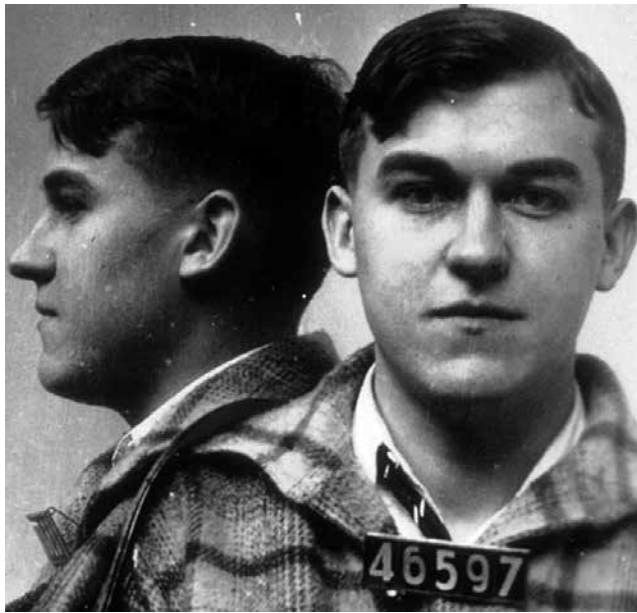
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posing as Collins was to get to Hollywood to meet his favourite actor, Tom Mix.

Released ten days after Hutchens admitted that he was not her son, Collins filed a lawsuit against the LAPD and Jones. She won against Jones but never received a payment.

In September 1928, a Canadian woman named Winifred Clark, contacted US authorities to tell them that her nephew Gordon Stewart Northcott, 21 at the time, had kidnapped her son, Sanford Wesley Clark, age 15, and was holding him in California.

On September 15, 1928, Sanford told investigators that his uncle had kidnapped and physically and sexually abused him. He also said Northcott had forced him to watch the abuse and murders of Walter Collins, Nelson and Lewis Winslow, and other boys. Sanford also said Northcott had killed a Latino boy in La Puente. Sanford pointed the police in the direction of the chicken coop on the ranch for the graves of the Winslow brothers and Walter Collins. Two graves with pieces of bone were found. Axes with human hair and blood on them were found among other farm equipment and several bones were found scattered across the ranch, which pathologists



Gordon Stewart Northcott

later determined to be from male children. There was other evidence uncovered inside the ranch but none to suggest Walter Collins had been killed there.

The murders became known as the 'Wineville Chicken Coop Murders' although the exact number of deaths that occurred on the farm is still unknown.

Northcott and his mother, Sarah Louise, fled to Canada but were arrested near Vernon, British Columbia on September 19, 1928.

Sarah Louise Northcott was sentenced without trial to

life imprisonment for her role in Walter's death. The state chose not to prosecute Gordon Northcott for Walter's murder due to lack of forensic evidence but brought him to trial for the murders of three other young boys. On February 13, 1929, he was found guilty for all three murders and sentenced to death. Gordon was hanged at the age of 23. To the end he denied killing Walter Collins.

Shortly after his death the town of Wineville changed its name to 'Mira Loma'.



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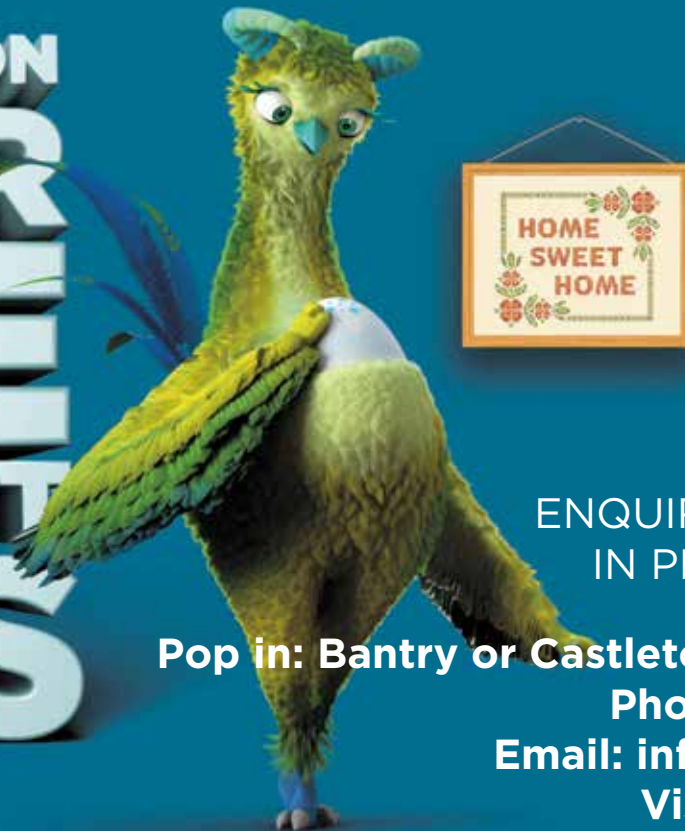
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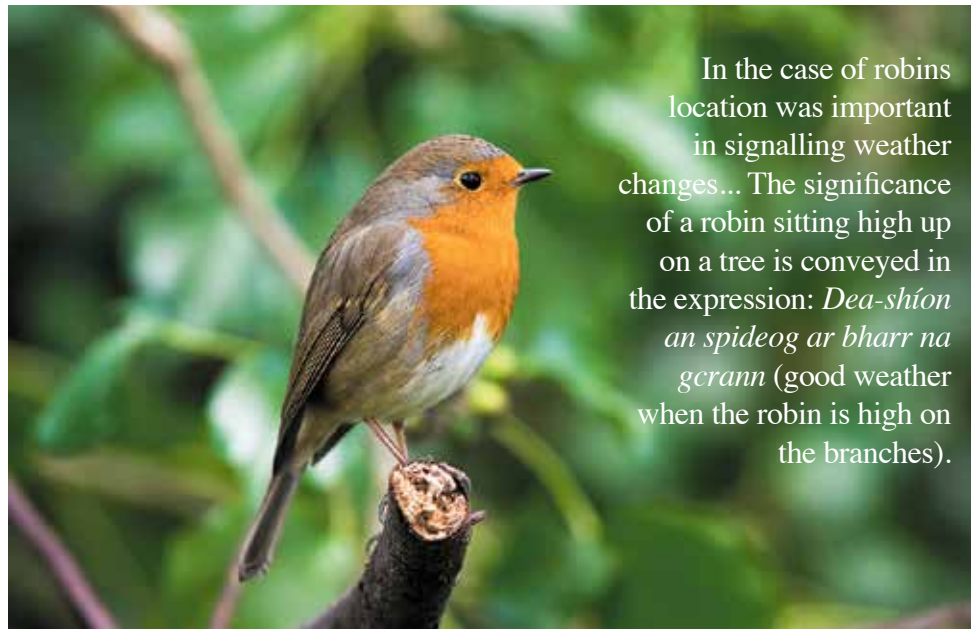
Eugene Daly

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.

Ní hé lá na báistí lá na bpáistí (the day of rain is not the day of children). Anyone who has

ever tried to entertain young children when it is too wet to go outside – especially on holidays – will appreciate the accuracy of this proverb. There is hardly anything like relentless Irish rain to achieve the twin feats of dampening people's spirits and increasing their irritability. Talking about the weather is a constant theme when Irish people meet. In a metaphorical sense, people speak of being 'under the weather' when they feel unwell or of 'making heavy weather' of a task when it proves to be unexpectedly difficult. The misery of working in inclement weather has long been recognised in Irish folk wisdom. For example an old saying warns us of 'the four worst things – ploughing in frost, harrowing in rain, making a ditch in summer and building a wall in winter'.

Nevertheless, climatic adversity has inspired many Irish writers. The damp tapestry of Frank McCourt's early life is evoked in his book, *Angela's Ashes*, in a vivid account of how 'great sheets of rain gathered to drift slowly up the River Shannon and settle forever in Limerick', thereby creating 'a cacophony of hacking coughs, bronchial rattles, asthmatic



In the case of robins location was important in signalling weather changes... The significance of a robin sitting high up on a tree is conveyed in the expression: *Dea-shíon an spideog ar bharr na gcrann* (good weather when the robin is high on the branches).

wheezes, consumptive croaks'.

It is notable that certain Irish weather phrases are very poetic and rich in imagery. For example, a cold morning has been described as one which causes people 'to kiss their knee-caps (*ag pógadh na gcópán*) or to curl up in bed with their knees underneath their chins. We are preoccupied with the subject because Irish weather is quite capricious and unpredictable. Supporting this view, an Irish phrase describes the many different weather conditions that

one can encounter on any given day, '*Lá na seacht síon – gaoth mhór, báisteach, sioc agus sneachta, tintreach, tóirneach agus lonrú gréine*' (On the day of seven weathers, there is high wind, rain, frost and snow, thunder, lightning and sunshine).

Some people are never happy with the weather even when it is pleasant. Consider the old Irish saying: *Dá mbeadh soineann go Samhain, bheadh breall ar dhuine éigin* (If fine weather lasted until November, somebody would be complaining).

In the interests of economical survival, people, especially fishermen, sailors, farmers and shepherds have tried to anticipate impending weather conditions through careful observation of a variety of natural phenomena. Long before the advent of scientific weather forecasting, changes in the appearance of the sun, moon, stars, clouds and waves were studied to forecast weather. These observations were passed down from generation to generation, often termed in rhymes and easily remembered sayings. A common weather saying, 'Red sky at night, shepherd's delight, red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning' dates back to biblical times. The significance of red skies is echoed in several Irish phrases: *Dearg anuas, fearthainn is fuacht*; *Dearg anoir, fearthainn is sioc*; *Dearg aníos, fearthainn is gaoth*; *Dearg aniar, soineann is grian*. (Red high up, rain and cold; Red in the east, rain and frost; Red low down, rain and wind, Red in the west, fine weather and sunshine).

The sun and the moon were significant omens for the ancient Irish. In the pre-Christian era, the sun was portrayed as a god of the heavens which lay down in the evening. Perceived in this way, the sun's long rays were interpreted as its legs. Certain weather signs could be detected from the position of these 'legs', For example, we hear *Togha na*

haimsire chughainn – cosa na gréine suas ar maidin agus stós trathnóna (the best of weather is coming – the sun's legs (rays) are up in the morning and down in the evening).

The appearance of the moon was a good indicator of the weather. For example, bad weather was likely if the moon appeared to be lying on its back. This was often called a 'she' moon. The harvest moon in September (nearest to the autumn equinox) is the brightest of the year. *Gealach na gcoinleach is gile sa bhliain* (the moon of the stubble field is the brightest of the year). A similar phenomenon occurs around mid-October and is known as the 'hunter's moon'.

Strong winds were often attributed to the movement of the sí or fairies. A whirlwind in summer was called a *sí gaoithe* – a fairy wind, which was also known as *deamhain aeir* (demons of the air). Another cause of the wind was a mythical being called *Beartlaí na Gaoithe* (Bartholomew of the wind).

Many old Irish weather sayings have a solid foundation in scientific fact. In Cape Clear they used to call a moon with a halo around it, *súil circe ré* (the moon of the hen's eye). Another phrase to indicate this is, *Garraí na gealaí-báisteach* (a garden around the moon means rain soon). A ring or halo around the moon indicates the presence of cirrus clouds which precede low pressure weather systems containing moisture. Also quite accurate is the old observation that low flying swallows herald the arrival of rain (*Fógraíonn fainleoga ísle doineann*) – low flying swallows portend bad weather.

When distant objects appear nearer than usual, or when distant sounds can be heard more clearly, are certain signs of wet weather approaching. This is evident in phrases like *Glór an easa i bhfad uait – dea*

aimsir; drochaimsir más gar duit – good weather is due when the sound of the waterfall is far away; a bad spell is due when the waterfall is audible nearby. If, for example, you are looking at Cape Clear from the mainland and it appears closer than usual, this indicates the approach of bad weather. This is confirmed in a similar saying: *Droch-chomhartha ar mhuir an léargas a bheith go maith* – if there is good visibility at sea, bad weather is coming.

Mist was also considered a weather sign. A particular worry was the *ceo sí* or *ceo draiochta* (fairy mist or magical mist), which could descend without warning, disorientating a person and perhaps signalling his or her death. Like the wind or clouds, the pattern of mist was held to foretell the weather. Thus, *Ceo soinne ar abhainn, ceo doinne ar chnoc* – mist of good weather on a river, mist of bad weather on a hill.

Birds and animals feature in a number of Irish weather signs. An example is the following: *Aimsir chrua thirim nuair a bhíonn an corr éisc suas in aghaidh srutha chun na sléibhte; fearthainn nuair a thagann sí an abhainn anuas* (When the heron flies upstream to the mountains the weather will be dry but rough; when she goes downstream, it will rain). It is held that the curlews call before rain, something I have observed myself. Wet and windy days are also regarded as imminent when oystercatchers call: *Fliuch gaofar is na roilligh ag éagaoín* (wet and windy when the oystercatchers cry).

In the case of robins, however, location was important in signalling weather changes. For example, *Má bhíonn an spideog faoi thor ar maidin beidh sé ina lá fliuch* (if a robin hides beneath a bush in the morning, rain is on the way). The significance of a robin sitting high up on a tree is conveyed in the expression: *Dea-shíon an spideog ar bharr na gcrann* (good weather when the robin is high on the branches).

A change in the weather can also be expected if bees are busy after sunset. *Beach ar saothar agus an ghrian faoi – athrú aimsire* (the bee working after sunset, a change in the weather). When seals travel up the strand away from the water is an indication of bad weather: *Drochaimsir má thagann an rón isteach i mbéal an trá*. When a herd of cows lie down in the middle of a field indicates coming rain: *Báisteach chughainn: tréad buaibh in aice le chéile i lár páirce nach mbeach fonn orthu éirí* (Rain coming if a herd of cows lie close together in the middle of a field).

OLD CORK IN COLOUR

EXHIBITION

March - November 2022

See over 30 old images of Cork coloured for the first time, including Bantry, Kinsale and Cork City, and the last ever image taken of Michael Collins.

Above image: FAIR DAY Bantry, early 1960s. Courtesy of Toby Campbell, Bantry Historical Society

Mitchel Hall Spike Island



Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Joy in the garden

Joy Larkcom, 86, won't allow the physical limitations that come with age to keep her out of her beloved greenhouse. The inspiring gardener and writer, affectionally referred to as 'The Queen of Vegetable Growing' has garnered an enviable reputation over the years for her expertise in the vegetable patch. Joy reflects to **Mary O'Brien** on a childhood that, while frugal, enjoyed fruit from the garden all year round; and shares some advice on growing easy and nutritious veg to ensure greens on the table for your family throughout the year.

"I'm beginning to feel it (age); everything becomes so much harder," shares Joy "it hits you in so many ways...but you just have to be glad for the bits that work."

Over the years Joy's accolades have included the Garden Writer of the Year award (three times); the Veitch Memorial Medal for horticulture – the RHS's prestigious honour in 1993; and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Garden Writers' Guild in 2003.

Her 'Grand Vegetable Tour' of Europe with her late husband Don Pollard and two young children in the 1970s and a research trip to China in the 80s were key elements in a lifetime of garden writing, spawning such titles as 'Grow Your Own Vegetables', 'The Organic Salad Garden', 'Creative Vegetable Gardening', 'Oriental Vegetables' and her wonderful memoir, 'Just Vegetating'.

It's thanks to Joy that we know about the cut and come again approach to harvesting to increase leaf production and leaves like rocket, endives, mizuna and pad choy might still be strangers in the salad patch except for her.

At this time of year, Joy is enjoying the first of her sprouting broccoli and her potatoes are sprouting indoors ready to go outside. As well as seedlings, the greenhouse is filled with greens – endives, orientals, rocket, cress and Tessel greens (Brassica family).

"Tessel greens is one of the handy, quick-growing greens I have in my greenhouse right now," she explains. "I see it is being sold these days as Ethiopian kale or Amara. Mr Fothergills' Seeds is one of the seed companies selling it, but it's a UK company so no longer supplying direct to customers in Ireland."

Born in 1935, Joy grew up in the English countryside 50 miles west of London. Her father fought in both world wars and was evacuated from Dunkirk in WWII. As a child, Joy remembers British planes flying overhead and meeting Italian prisoners of war in the woods near where she lived. "I

remember they were very sweet to us kids," she recalls.

"As children, you just take what's happening for granted. It's only now, as the threat of war hangs over us, and with Ukraine living through it, that I realise what it must have really been like," she shares. "The sound of an air raid siren on the TV or radio still strikes fear in me."

While some foods were limited during WWII, the introduction of rationing meant that everyone received a fair share. As a result, the British were in fact healthier than they had ever been before. Many people grew their own vegetables and kept hens to supplement their rations.

"My Scottish mother had a very sweet tooth," laughs Joy, "and her wartime treat to herself was sprinkling sugar on top of butter on a piece of bread! She had been brought up in a town, but felt it was the patriotic thing to keep hens, so she buckled down to buying them and learning how to keep them."

Nothing went to waste in those days. On a post at the end of their road, where Joy and her family would wait for the bus, a 'bone box' collected old bones to be made into fertiliser. "If you had any bones left over from the weekly roast, you were supposed to put them there to be collected and used for fertiliser, bone meal I suppose, as part of the war effort," explains Joy.

Clothes were hand-me-downs or made by the village dressmaker. "I don't think I had a shop-bought dress until I was a teenager," recalls Joy "I can still remember that dress and the excitement."

She clearly remembers her mother taking torn sheets and sewing them backs to middle. "You just kept them going as long as you could. Shirt collars were turned inside out, as were cuff sleeves."

Joy has no memory of ever buying vegetables until she left home. When her father came home on leave during the war, he planted an orchard; some of these varieties Joy now grows in her garden in West Cork.

"I remember my father coming home and turning over the bare field to make a vegetable

garden and giving me the wire worms to take to the hens," she shares nostalgically.

"Since then gardening has always been a part of my life."

Sent to boarding school in the west of the country at the age of seven out of harm's way of the bombings, Joy declares that she loved school life. But of course they had wartime rationing.

"We had a 'skinny list'" she laughs "which meant you got an extra egg or whatever was going. I later progressed to the 'semi-skinny list!'" They had a two-sweet allowance a week. "Even now, when I eat a whole bar of chocolate I feel guilty."

During Joy's childhood there was never a shortage of fruit and vegetables. "We more or less had fruit all year round," she says. "If you keep apples carefully you can have them until March when the rhubarb is coming up and then there are all sorts of currants and berries to look forward to."

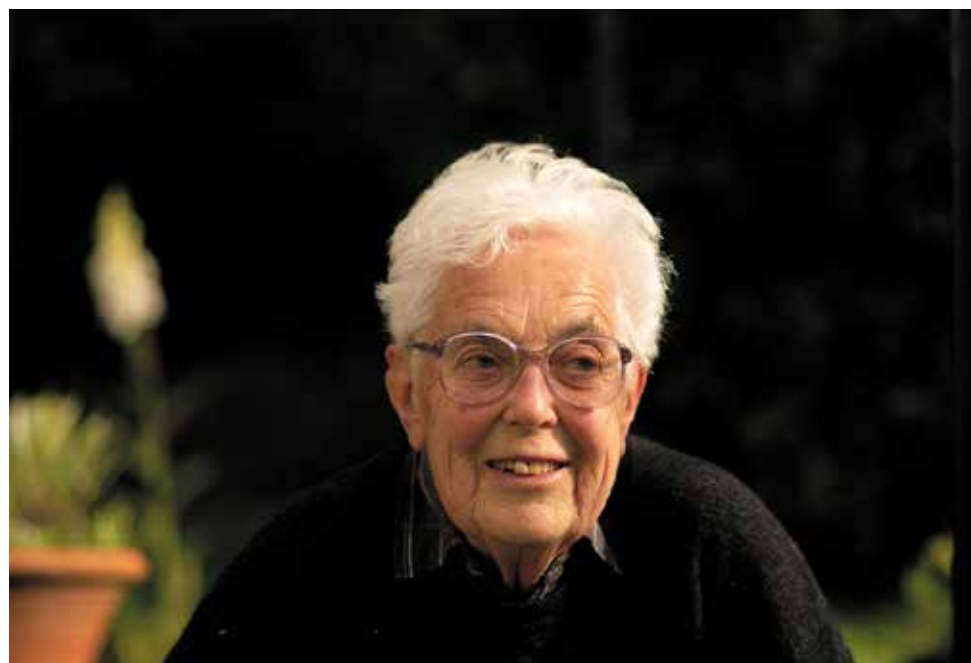
"I really think people here should grow more fruit. The West Cork climate is perfect for growing blackcurrants, redcurrants, gooseberries and so on."

The bounty in Joy's garden today is fed with seaweed... heaps and heaps of it. "For my 80th birthday, I asked people to give me nothing but seaweed. They're still coming with it," she laughs.

Seaweed offers the perfect mulch according to Joy, even helping to deter slugs and snails when it goes hard and crinkly.

Joy's gardening advice is to keep a constant watch on your plants. "It's one of the keys to successful vegetable growing. It is easy to spot an early attack of caterpillars or aphids and just nip it in the bud," she says.

Now is the time to start sowing so many garden vegetables such as peas, salads, leeks, traditional brassicas, but it is best to delay sowing Joy's favourite oriental greens until late summer. "Things like pak choy, purple mustard, mizuna will grow really fast then and many will last right through the winter," advises Joy. She stresses that we have to accept our limitations. "It might be tempting to try all sorts of exotic things but you have to cash in on what



Joy Larkcom. Pic: Sean Casey

does well in this climate. If you can put up a polytunnel or greenhouse that makes a huge difference for growing things like tomatoes and peppers." She doesn't usually sow directly outside until April or May.

If you don't have much space, Joy suggests trying micro-greens or cut and come again salad leaves.

She believes that gardeners underestimate the value of shelter to vegetables. "Research has shown that even sheltering them from light winds can increase yields by 30 per cent — and it is best to filter the wind. So even putting up temporary strips of hessian net between vegetable beds can be a very good investment."

Today, when she's not archiving her prodigious research material to send off to the Garden Museum in London, Joy may be found pricking out seedlings in her greenhouse.

"I should probably give up the garden but I love it," she muses "and I have fantastic help from people."



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Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Baltimore aims to increase local access to fresh food with community market

With food security such a concern right now, a group of sustainably-minded people in Baltimore have taken matters into their own hands to build a food system that encourages growers, producers and farmers to sell their produce as locally as possible.

Baltimore Community Market will launch at the Baltimore Community Hall on Sunday, May 8, running from 11am-3pm, and continuing every Sunday throughout the year, with all growers and makers in Baltimore, Rath and the islands welcome to take part.

“Our aim is to encourage people in Baltimore, Rath and the islands to start growing their own produce and for local

people to have access to it,” explains Jean Perry, one of the growers behind the initiative.

If the market is a success, the local community will have access to fresh, nutritious, chemical-free produce all year round on their doorstep, enhancing people's choice, nutrition and hopefully reducing food waste.

“After completing the SEC-AD Sustainable Communities Training Programme, I started thinking about what sustainability is for us here in Baltimore,” says Marie Loviny, another local grower.

“We're eight miles from Skibbereen and access to fresh produce so that was the key driver behind this initiative,” says Marie, “and when we started to look around we found there were already so many people producing locally.”

Taking inspiration from the UK's greenest city, York, and



Tara Coppelstone, Marie Loviny, Jonnie Goyer and Jean Perry are part of a group in Baltimore behind a new community market that will encourage local growing and buying

its very successful sustainable Food Circle, the Baltimore group will also host a community stall at the market, where locals can sell their surplus produce.

“If someone has excess produce in their garden, they don't have to have their own stall,” explains Jean, “they can sell it on the community stall. It will also provide the opportunity for selling things like chutneys

using excess produce from the market, reducing any food waste.”

Funds raised from a tea and coffee stand will be channelled back into the community, benefiting local groups and projects.

“We want it to become a real hub of activity in the village,” says Jean.

The market has already established an impressive list of contributors with promised

produce to include: seasonal fresh vegetables and fruit; home baking; hen and duck eggs; artisan cocktail mixes; handmade organic chocolates; preserves; honey, beeswax, soap and candles; flowers and plants.

There will also be a small craft section with handmade woollen clothes, scarves, hats, printed silk scarves, home-spun wool skeins and handmade cushions and doll's clothes.

Chair of Tidy Towns and seconded to the Baltimore Community Council, Jonnie Goyer has kindly volunteered to help with the administration.

Anyone interested in having a stand or supplying produce to the Community stall at the market should email baltimorecommunitymarket@gmail.com.



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.

Farmers' markets have proven to be hugely popular for customers and stall holders alike. On a sunny day nothing could be nicer than strolling around a bustling market with so much to look at, delicious aromas of coffee and cooked foods, and a place to meet friends.

In a busy market such as Skibbereen it is possible to do the weekly shop such is the array on offer. But spare a thought for the stall holders who week after week turn up whatever the weather, come rain or shine or cold winter mornings; not to mention the previous day or two spent harvesting, preparing and packing up ready to be in the market for an early start.

Last Saturday I sat on the back ledge of Mary and Tom Stout's van, listening to their story and watching their interactions with customers and fellow stallholders. It soon became clear that this kind of life, growing food and selling directly to customers and friends, or swapping with fellow market holders, is not only sustainable but actually what knits the fabric of a community together.

I have known Mary for about 30 years. We were introduced when I joined Skibbereen Country Market as a producer back in the early 1990s. Mary was already very involved in the organisation and continued to be so, long after I left. She grew soft fruit among other things for the Country Market, and the couple's three children helped



Mary Stout

with picking and preparing through the long summer holidays. For many years Mary and Tom raised Christmas turkeys and it became a family tradition for us to meet Mary a couple of days before Christmas in a car-park in town to collect our bird. Sadly, (for us) they no longer raise turkeys.

Mary and Tom are a rare breed, theirs is the epitome of a small farm, about 80 acres. Tom

laughingly says it's 50 acres of reeds and 30 of grass but they raise some beef and have a good flock of sheep, though what keeps them especially busy is about an acre and a half of vegetables and soft fruit.

When Mary stopped milking cows a few years ago she had more time and, having always grown vegetables and fruit for the family, she now had time to increase production so they

started to grow to sell. With the addition of a couple of tunnels to give them more scope for year round cropping, they grow a wide range of vegetables and fruit without the use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides.

It is very unusual to find such things as gooseberries, loganberries and even cape gooseberries (*Physalis peruviana*) for sale, but Mary grows all these highly nutritious fruits. About five years ago she was approached by three young men in Skibbereen market, James, Luke and Robert, who had just opened The Mews restaurant in Baltimore. Mary says that working with them 'put her on the map'. They now sell to other restaurants such as The Customs House.

Mary and Tom both come from farming backgrounds. Mary's grandfather was a founding member of Drinagh co-op but she gives her father credit for getting her into vegetable growing when she was a child; despite his busy working life he always grew a vegetable garden for the family. Mary told me a story of when her mother brought home some unusual vegetable plants from

the Country Market for him to plant. Back then they had no idea what the plants were, but they turned out to be perpetual spinach, a vegetable that she still grows and enjoys. She continues to be adventurous and is always on the lookout for interesting things to grow, hence the cape gooseberries.

Farming has always been a way of life, not just a way to make a living and small scale farming even more so. Mary and Tom work as a team, living and eating from their land, looking after their mix of animals and poultry and tending their extensive vegetable garden together. This may sound romantic but it's not, it's real and hard work and the result is a van full of produce which arrives in Skibbereen Market every Saturday. This produce changes with the seasons; vegetables, fruit, eggs, preserves, the occasional bunch of flowers and even a sack of logs in the winter. And whoever is manning the stall, whether it's Tom doing the early shift or Mary later after she's fed the livestock, you will always be greeted with a smile and chat and some great seasonal produce.

Working through the seasons

Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Life breeds hope on a small farm



Yvon O'Flynn is busy with lambing. **Mary O'Brien** finds an air of anticipation and hope on the farm that comes with the arrival of spring and new life – Yvon's seven nanny goats have already birthed eight beautiful offspring. The small farmer gifts all her kids, unless she needs a replacement goat, to Bother, an organisation that delivers thousands of animals to support struggling families in countries across Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

The animals on 'Maughanasilly' hillside farm in Kealkil are happy and well-cared-for. 'Bob' the three-year-old billy goat was born there. There are 20 sheep raised for their meat, which is sold. The soft-hearted vegetarian farmer recently gave all her ducks away, as she couldn't bear to slaughter them anymore. In the autumn, she buys broiler chicks and rears them until they are approx five kilos (size of a small turkey).

The sound of birdsong mingles with the babbling of the stream running through the land. There is a mystical quality, as the sunlight hits the moss-covered steps leading to nowhere on the hillside. It's peaceful and beautiful here.

Close to the house a line of old bathtubs overflowing with greenery are intriguing. Container growing in old salvaged bathtubs is a recent enough discovery for Yvon. A small piece of pipe drains any excess water from the sun-soaked baths which, because they drain well and heat easily, provide the ideal environment for a small garden bed. The baths are also slug-proof because of their height. Yvon's baths are a mixture of herbs, veg and flowers, boasting crops of cabbage, lettuce, beans – and asparagus kale all through the winter.

'Maughanasilly' is 15 acres, nine of which is worked by Yvon and her son Brion. The vegetable garden with polytunnel, which feeds the farm, is tended by Casper, a friend from

Holland who moved here just before Covid. He now lives on the farm and grows the food. No chemicals are used at 'Maughanasilly'.

"I try to grow as many varieties of veg as possible: carrots, cabbages, onions, beans and peas, suedes, beetroot..." says Casper. For the novice grower, he advises planting potatoes on hard ground in the first year to



loosen the earth. This means you can then employ a no-dig system, which is healthier for the soil and plants. He also suggests planting 'Ragged Jack Kale'. "It's frost-resistant and if you plant it in spring, you should have it all year round." Casper and Yvon get all of their seeds from local businesses Fruithill Farm and Brown Envelope Seeds and at Bantry Market, which offers a great supply of plants at various stalls every Friday.

"I'm as self-sufficient as I can be," shrugs Yvon. "With four children, I couldn't grow cornflakes," she laughs. Her four children are now all grown and she enjoys the company of her eight grandchildren when they visit the farm. "All four kids can make baskets and grow their own veg, even one of my daughters, a scientist," she says proudly.

Yvon doesn't like the term self-sufficient. "I think you need to work with other people and if you're self-sufficient you make yourself insular, which isn't a good thing. Self-sufficiency should be about trading, sharing and helping each other out!" Throughout the pandemic the three farms next to each other on the hillside supported one other. "We have the best of neighbours."

When she's not working on the farm, Yvon makes and repairs baskets, which she sells through Bantry craft shop Forest and Flock. She hand collects all the willow, soaking the branches to make them pliable before



weaving them into baskets and other useful containers.

She learned the craft here. After a brief holiday in Ireland in her late teens, Yvon felt so at home that she decided to return for good after finishing art college. "I don't think I brought all of me back from Ireland when I returned to Holland," she admits.

"I can still remember the moment so clearly at the airport in Amsterdam when the bus driver closed the doors and drove off because we were too slow taking out our money. I thought, 'that would never happen in Ireland!'"

On being introduced to weaving Yvon says, "I thought it was fantastic that you could play with sticks and before you know it have a useful item with a number of purposes."

Yvon loves farm life with a passion. "It's a very fulfilling way of life and made me what I am," she shares.

"Anyone can grow if they put their mind to it. Most importantly, if something fails don't give up, try again. There is always someone to give advice if you need it."



Pictured clockwise from top left: Yvon checks on her sheep; the vegetable garden with its polytunnel; herbs and vegetables are also very successfully grown in old bathtubs; Yvon in her weaving workshop; Casper also lives on the farm and is in charge of growing; Yvon with a newly arrived kid.

Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

McConalogue says farmers are “the everyday hero of our food sector”

With the uncertain climate ahead for farmers and consumers, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue talks to **Tommy Moyles** about what is being done to meet these challenges

You recently put together a national food and fodder security committee, what are the principal drivers of this and what can farmers expect?

It was proactively set up as a rapid response within my own department, as a reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which we unilaterally condemn and the impact that could have on our farming sector.

I proactively sought a meeting with farm organisations and the National Food and Fodder security committee was set up as a result, to assess the sector. It's set up to take a 14-month horizon view to ensure we can grow enough grass and crops



FARMING IN WEST CORK

Tommy Moyles

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

In association with



I was so wrecked tired on the first Saturday night in March that I headed for bed before 9pm. Not long after, word came through to check out the front page of the next day's Sunday Business Post: The headline

and feed our animals and bolster our supply chains rolling into the spring of 2023. It's meeting once every two weeks and is putting together relevant advice. An important remit of the committee, is to see what can be done within the current environmental parameters. Right now there is no challenge to food security but there are concerns around the supply chain and that's the greatest part of the challenge now. Getting product out of Ukraine is a challenge for fertiliser industry in particular. Grain and, in particular, fertiliser from that region, have a major role in Irish food production. Russia accounts for in the region of 23 to 25 per cent of the fertiliser used. When that market is shut off, that is challenging and sourcing replacement markets requires work. We are doing that work but opening a new market is not a flick of a switch thing.

I have also recently announced the creation of a €12m package for tillage farmers to support the production of more native crops on the back of supply chain issues caused by the war in Ukraine. These include the Tillage Incentive Scheme, which has a payment of €400/

ha proposed and is targeted at getting an extra 25,000 ha of crops grown. The Protein Crop Supports will encourage farmers to grow more peas, beans and lupins. A payment of €300/ha is proposed and we want to increase the volume of hectares under protein crops from 10,000ha to 14,000ha. There is also a Multi-Species Sward Measure which also includes red clover. This aimed at 12,000 hectares and is aimed at reducing our dependency on chemical nitrogen.

What would you encourage farmers in West Cork to do, both now, and as the summer goes on?

The key advice for livestock farmers is to be able to match up the animals you have with what fodder you will need. Every farmer should ensure they have enough and take steps to address it if they don't. Assess the organic manure you have on the farm whether that is slurry or farm yard manure and use it wisely. If your budget allows, spread fertiliser and try and get a good silage crop. As minister, I visited West Cork last year and met farmers there and I

know how capable they are of overcoming challenges. I know they will do this again and I will take every step to support them. I saw first-hand how pioneering and resourceful they were. They have a great spirit of entrepreneurship and farm as well as any in the country and almost every sector of farming is represented there, including a strong pig presence. West Cork farmers maximise the farms they have to the best of their ability. Growing up on a suckler and sheep farm in the hills and lowlands of Donegal, I know how challenging some of the land can be and the special skill set that is required to allow a farm to prosper. I'm always enthused to see that farm families thrive in more challenging landscapes.

What is the best case/worst case scenario for the average household?

The reality is the worst of the Ukraine crisis probably hasn't hit us yet. Supply chains are disrupted now and are likely to continue for a while yet. Every day the war continues, the more likely the potential impact on households. Energy costs in



Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue TD met farmers in West Cork last summer along with Christopher O'Sullivan TD

short to medium term won't fall. Regarding feed and fertiliser, availability is there, but the affordability of it depends on farms to farm. We don't know how long this will go on. Our brothers and sisters in farming in Ukraine are taking up arms instead of getting to plant crops and while there are silos there full from last year's crop, the prospect of having no crop at all harvest that's probably our greatest challenge. That is why we are being proactive now about getting our own crop area increased.

For consumers, will buying local and the part we all have to play help the situation going forward?

Irish food produced on family farms like those in West Cork is the best food in the world and most sustainable. While we export 90 per cent of what we produce, particularly in terms of beef, dairy and sheep meat, we have a strong home market for horticulture. I met with farmers in North Co Dublin recently, that's a major horticulture area and there is some excellent businesses there but they have challenges too. I think there's a role to play in every parish around the country where we can get more veg grown. We'll stand by our farmers, they are the everyday hero of our food sector.

Irish farmers ready to rise to the challenges ahead

stood out boldly 'All farmers to be told to plant crops amid fears of food security crisis'. Two hours later I was still wide awake, my brain going at 90, trying to work out how this will affect my already-altered farm plan for the year. What to grow? Where best or handiest to grow it? Machinery isn't an area of farming I have much of a grá for, so how would I approach a contractor, busy already, to take on more work? I'd never grown a grain crop before – I found myself asking should I not just stick to my strengths? These are just a sample of the initial thoughts that occupied my mind and postponed sleep. Before the end of the night, I decided to focus on choosing where to plant first and deal with the rest once details became known. After finally settling on what fields or paddocks to drop from the grazing and silage plan without upsetting things too much, I finally drifted off!

Maybe this is an insight into how a farmer's brain works. Even with announcements at a macro level, the tendency is

to work out how it will work out for yourself first before considering the bigger picture. The result of the headline was the creation of a National Fodder and Food Security Committee by the Minister for Agriculture. Before Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the escalation in fertiliser prices was surely enough to focus minds at government level to avoid a fodder crisis next spring. Add in high fuel price and a potential vacuum on the global grain market caused by the war in Ukraine and having such a committee in place now has merit. When there was fodder issues in 2013 and 2018, grain was a relatively economical solution. That is unlikely to be the case in 12 months' time. Soaring input prices, let alone a European war, were likely to be a good enough test of the grass fed credentials of our livestock sector. Now, with access to Black sea grain unlikely for the foreseeable future, I'd imagine the pig and poultry sectors should be the priorities when it comes to grain usage and rightly so. Cattle and sheep have more homegrown options open to

them. The likes of red clover could be an easy option on many farms. It doesn't require N fertiliser, has high yields, and could provide high protein silage for young stock, negating impact of lower cereal availability. Some was planted here last autumn for those reasons but it remains to be seen how it will work out.

The big unpredictable factor is weather. If we have a washout summer and autumn like 2012, then the challenge will become greater than it is now.

By putting the committee in place, at least Government is showing some initiative. Outside of input costs; labour and time availability are limiting factors for both farmers and contractors. Access to planting equipment could also be an issue, definitely outside of the more traditional tillage areas. The skills aren't there in abundance either but they can be learned. Speaking to those involved in tillage, the equipment is there to get it planted but the question is whether there are enough combine harvesters around to get it cut, particularly if there is bad weather at harvest time, which is

more of a concern.

For those of us with cattle or sheep, there are easier options if there isn't enough fodder for next winter. In an extreme scenario, you can sell stock at relatively short notice. That option is more complicated for pigs and poultry.

For example, if a pig unit stopped breeding sows at the end of March this year, then the last pigs are likely to be sold in early November if it's a breeding-only unit. If it's an integrated breeding and finishing unit, then it is well into February 2023 before the last pig is gone.

That's a lot of cost in terms of feed and energy alone over those months. There are people who would dismiss these sectors, as they don't like the largely intensive farming systems. They are important to the home market however, as 73 per cent of the meat consumed by Irish people is either pig or poultry meat. Grain plays a major part in their diet, so much of the cereal-growing focus will be with these two already-under-pressure sectors in mind. It's also worth noting, that combined, the Pig, Poultry and

Horticulture sectors are the most reliant on the home market, yet all three are currently under the most financial pressure.

Unlike during the Second World War, there won't be a compulsory tillage scheme. At the time, this proved deeply unpopular among many farmers. Beginning in October 1939, a quota was put in place that farmers had to adhere to. If a farmer owned 10 acres or more, then one-eighth of their land had to be tilled. As the war escalated, so did the amount of land under compulsory tillage. By 1941, 25 per cent of a farmer's land had to be tilled and, in 1944, the threshold was reduced to five acres or more with cereal, fodder or vegetable crops grown on three-eighths of the land.

Since the turn of the century, the tillage area in the country has contracted largely due to economic reasons. Grazing systems have come to the fore here because they have a cost advantage for the same reason. That may have worked well in peace time, but there is a lot more uncertainty in the world today.

Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Cultivate: Keeping it local, personal and simple



At a time of heightened uncertainty, West Cork farmers are increasingly turning to their local credit union for farm finance. Long seen as a place to put some savings for a 'rainy day', credit unions are changing. They are diversifying their loan portfolios to include small business lending. The best example of this explains **Finbarr O'Shea** QFA Manager, Bantry Credit Union is Cultivate, the credit union farm finance offering.

Cultivate is rapidly gaining national attention in farming circles. It began just five years ago in Galway and has since grown to cover most parts of the country. Late last year former IFA President Joe Healy joined the Board of Cultivate as non-executive Chairperson.

Bantry Credit Union has been offering Cultivate loans since early 2019. From the beginning it has been a great success. Cultivate farm loans now account for over 13 per cent of Bantry Credit Union's loan book, making it the third-ranked loan purpose after home improvements and motor loans.

National scene

This success locally reflects the national scene. Cultivate has just released its analysis of all loan applications received during 2021.

Year-on-year, there has been an increase of 66 per cent in the number of Cultivate loan ap-

plications received. The average loan application from farmers in all sectors was up 14 per cent year-on-year to €28,370. This was mainly used for a number of key on-farm activities, including farm buildings (24pc), stocking and working capital (23pc) and tractor purchases (18pc). This is the first year that farm buildings have featured as the most popular use for Cultivate loans, highlighting farmers' confidence in completing longer term investments.

With strong prices being received by farmers across all of the main agricultural sectors in 2021, farmers looked to secure short-to-medium term finance to complete on-farm developments. In comparison to 2020, there was an 89pc increase in the total value of loan applications. When adjusted for new credit unions joining Cultivate, the like-for-like comparison shows a really positive 77pc increase in loan application value.

Beef and dairy comparison

Beef farmers continue to account for the majority of Cultivate loan applications, driving over two-thirds of the total loan applications in 2021. Dairy farmers accounted for 21pc, sheep farmers for 8pc and tillage farmers for 2pc.

The average loan to a dairy farmer was just over €32,000 in comparison to €27,715 for a beef farmer. The period saw an increased focus by beef farmers applying for farm building projects while dairy farmers prioritised equipment investment projects.

Dairy farmers were also bigger landowners, owning on average 43 HA of land in comparison to the 30 HA owned on average by beef farmers. In comparison to 2020, the average dairy herd size per farm applying for a Cultivate loan was up by almost 5pc or four cows to 85 cows, while the number of sucklers owned by beef farmer applicants dropped by 11pc from 18 suckler cows to 16.

Off-farm income continues to be a major differing factor for beef and dairy farmers. While 92pc of beef farmer applicants had some sort of off-farm income, this compared to 68pc for dairy farmers.

Local, Personal, Simple

The provision of financial services is increasingly being driven online, remote, impersonal. Credit unions are bucking this trend. While many banks are withdrawing from a presence in rural Ireland, credit unions are investing in their communities. We employ local people to deliver local services to local communities.

The Cultivate mantra is: Keep it Local, Keep it Personal, Keep it Simple.

These characteristics have always been the hallmarks of the service provided by credit unions in the personal lending market. They have led to the

Irish people having a great trust in credit unions. A measure of this trust is how credit unions fare in customer experience surveys year after year.

The CX Company conduct a major Customer Experience Insight (CXi) survey every year. Carried out on their behalf by Amárach Research, this annual

report is the recognised benchmark for customer service in Ireland. For the past seven years in a row, Irish Credit Unions have been voted Number One for Customer Experience in the survey. This achievement has not been matched anywhere else in the world.

Finbarr O'Shea is Manager of Bantry Credit Union. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Collaborative Finance CLG, the credit-union-owned company behind Cultivate. He is also Chairperson of the National Cultivate Marketing Group.



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AS A FARMER, ARE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY PROTECTED?

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€250k grants for Africa Agri-Food Development Programme

West Cork based Agri-Food companies of all sizes should think seriously about applying for grant funding to explore opportunities to develop new markets in Africa, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan says.

The Africa Agri-Food Development Programme (AADP), now in its 10th year, offers grants up to €250,000 to support Irish companies to develop new markets with companies in sub-Saharan African countries.

"West Cork's Agri-Food producers are renowned as among the best in the world and I encourage any Agri-Food business that sees an opportunity for their product to go for it and apply for the funding," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"It's an invaluable opportunity to develop and harness partnerships with local companies in Africa, and exchanging knowledge and skills while supporting mutual trade between a host of nations.



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Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Food for Winter

It is wonderful to see the young seedlings that were sown a few weeks ago beginning to appear over the ground. The first leaves of lettuce, chard, and other salad plants remind us of sunny summer days, lighter food, and outdoor dining. However, this is also the time to think of the winter and with the real possibility of food insecurity in the coming months, more

thought may need to be given to foods that we can harvest and keep over this season. One of the best ways to keep foods, without adding them to the freezer, is by fermentation. Even today this method of preserving food remains a simple natural way to extend the life of produce without the need for added preservatives. We are familiar with sauerkraut and kimchi, but

it is also possible to ferment other assorted vegetables.

Man has been fermenting foods since neolithic times and fermentation is akin to alchemy because given the right conditions, simple ingredients come together and undergo a transformation to become something entirely different and new. When microorganisms, known as the starter, are introduced to the carbohydrates in food and kept under certain conditions for an extended period, fermentation takes place. Fermented foods are rich in probiotics and high in enzymes. They are also highly bioavailable and offer excellent digestive support in that they balance the gut flora and improve digestion generally.

If we look at sauerkraut alone we find it creates good bacteria in the gut, aids digestion and boosts the immune system. As well as these benefits, it contains vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, as well as being high in fibre and rich in probiotics. When cabbage and salt are combined and massaged together to create a brine, the naturally

occurring bacteria present in the cabbage creates sauerkraut. Who would ever think a cabbage could be so good for you, and what a pleasant change from boiling it to death with bacon.

Good, fermented food starts with high quality ingredients: As a rule always buy ingredients that are organically grown or, better again, use produce from your own garden. Fermentation takes place at room temperature and there is a better chance of success if the ambient temperature is kept within the optimal range of 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit or 18-24 degrees Centigrade. Fermenting below the ideal range can result in the microorganisms becoming dormant, while fermenting above the active range can kill the beneficial microorganisms. Once the fermentation is complete, the finished product is best stored in the 'fridge.

Clear glass Kilner jars are the ideal vessel for many types of fermenting because it's easy to see the contents and to track the progress of the fermentation. They're available in most shops, come in a variety of standard sizes and are also easier to clean and sterilise. The only problem with them is that they're fragile since glass breaks easily. When fermenting food for longer than one week use plastic lids or inserts for the Kilner jar because the steel lids can begin to rust when exposed to the salt and the acids of fermentation for any extended period of time. The other problem with glass Kilner jars is that light can interfere with the fermentation process so it is best to keep the fermenting foods in a dark place especially those that are particularly light sensitive. It is very easy to cover a Kilner jar with a cloth

or paper to keep the light away from the process.

A starter is the culture that can cause fermentation. In some foods such as vegetables the starter necessary for fermentation is already present and all that's required is placing the food in the right environment for fermentation to take place. For other ferments, such as kombucha, the starter must be intentionally produced.

Cabbage is the most popular vegetable for fermenting, but carrots come a close second. Other vegetables that are suitable include, celeriac, kohlrabi, parsnips, winter radish, Jerusalem artichokes, and swede turnips.

Salt is needed for fermentation for several reasons. Firstly, it neutralises the pathogenic microorganisms, and allows good bacteria to establish themselves before the bad ones. Secondly salt helps to draw water out of vegetables, and this creates a natural brine full of nutrients for the microorganisms. This brine also covers the vegetables and prevents exposure to oxygen thus creating the perfect environment for fermentation. Thirdly, salt slows down the softening of vegetables. The more salt you add the slower for the fermentation and the longer the vegetables will remain crisp and finally salt makes fermented food taste good.

The salt used must have no additives so pickling salt, sea salt or any salt that is JUST salt can be used. Salt can be added to fermentations in two ways, either dry salting or a brine. In both cases the amount of salt is the same, namely two per cent. For 1000g of vegetables this is 20 grams. In dry salting the vegetables are chopped or sliced into small pieces and the salt



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.rosarikingstonphd.com

is massaged into them. This allows the salt to draw the water out of the vegetables thus creating a natural brine. The vegetables are then packed tightly into a jar where the brine should cover the vegetables. This is the method used for sauerkraut.

For vegetables that do not have a high water content use a brine. The calculation for the amount of salt is made by the size of the jar in which you are placing the vegetables. If the jar is one litre, the amount of salt is two per cent, which again is 20 grams. In this instance, you add the chopped vegetables and salt to the jar and then pour one litre of water over them. Shake the jar well to dissolve the salt.

Fermentation then is one method of preserving food for the winter with the added addition of it being extremely good for us and maintaining our health.

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Local grower highlights importance of growing and eating organic food

There are three sides to Ancient Organics in Rosscarbery: permaculture, organic food and teachings. Founder **Adam Afoullouss** tells us more about the growing business and shares his thoughts on Ireland and food security.

The core belief behind Ancient Organics is sustainability, where every resource is utilised with minimal waste and all food produced is clean and healthy to consume. "I focus on spreading my knowledge, promoting self-sustainability and bringing communities and local businesses together for the benefit of us all," says Adam.

Adam studied Organic Horticulture in Cork before attending the renowned Permaculture Research Institution in Australia, where he qualified as a teacher, consultant, designer and project and farm manager. He went on to work in 'The Greening the Desert' aid project in the Middle East, an experience which led him to create 'Ancient Permaculture', which offers consultations and implementations of sustainable designs for all types of gardens and businesses here in Ireland.

While based in West Cork, Adam got involved in a project in Cork City called 'Green Spaces for Health', which was partly funded by the HSE and aimed to address mental health awareness, bringing communities together and helping the environment. "The success of

this project helped me to realise that I needed a physical site to demonstrate the systems in production and how to apply them practically to real life business and home situations, to make a real difference in Ireland," he shares. It led him to expand Ancient Permaculture into Ancient Teachings, which provides permaculture courses and internships in practical settings and Ancient Organics which produces and sells organic food in West Cork.

The business is currently expanding its growing areas, increasing local production and the diversity of its demonstration sites. Adam currently employs two people, both of whom are in the process of starting their own businesses in their own right as a result of learning the importance of clean organic food and growing their own food. Mark is working on his own plot of land, growing vegetables, which he will sell back to Ancient Organics. Sally is in the process of starting an organic chocolate business which she will also sell to Ancient Organics.

On food security, as it stands right now, Adam says if we only ate Irish food we would go hungry. "I think we're a very focused monoculture system where we export a lot of our produce produced here and also import a lot of our food that we consume..."

"That being said, I believe we have one of the most forgiving climates for food production and I do believe we could be 100 per cent food secure and sustainable in Irish food production with the right systems in place. We are lucky enough to

have a lot of natural fertilisers that could be utilised as a great resource to encourage and increase mass scale, sustainable food production. However, I believe there needs to be more collaboratives of small scale producers who focus on sustainability, that distribute this food via cooperatives and community hubs, for the betterment of Irish businesses, Irish food security, Irish sustainability and the Irish economy as a whole.

to source the seeds that we grow," explains Adam.

"By expanding our growing areas while materials and structures are readily available, we are utilising the resources available to ensure we have this growing space for future expansion and security."

Adam is continuously on the look out for like-minded individuals who are interested in creating a community-based production cooperative; and by

"With the right awareness, the right food education and the right incentives and support for sustainable farming, I do fully believe that we could be a 100 per cent food secure nation."

"I believe there is a lot of awareness that needs to be brought to farmers, customers and the general public about changing their eating habits, becoming more connected to the food they are consuming, where their food comes from and seasonal eating. With the right awareness, the right food education and the right incentives and support for sustainable farming, I do fully believe that we could be a 100 per cent food secure nation."

Part of Ancient Organics ethos in food production is about linking up with other local producers, businesses and communities to strengthen its resilience and sustainability. "For example, our seed supplier 'Brown Envelope Seeds' is a local seed supplier, meaning we do not rely on the outside world

offering permaculture courses and internships, his mission is to promote food security awareness and self-sustainability to the wider community.

Ancient Organics is currently in talks with 'Green Skibbereen' about being a part of a developing course system, which promotes sustainability, food security, food waste and food awareness which will link in to its own courses on implementing sustainable design.

Adam's vision is to be able to expand each tier to his business and, while doing so, share his knowledge and education with the wider community to promote clean food, sustainable change and food security. But his vision is also a greater one, it's a vision for Ireland: A vision where Ireland becomes an innovator in sustainable whole



Adam at work in his tunnels and pictured at the Green Awards in 2020.

systems design and energy efficient use of its resources. An Ireland that is inclusive and can withstand and reverse the effects of natural degradation,

ecosystem loss and changes in our climate, our quality of air and water and essentially, our quality of life.

Special Feature **NATURE'S BOUNTY****A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE**

Karen Austin

Standing in the glasshouse in our garden it's difficult to envisage the catastrophe in Ukraine. Just when we all thought the world might slip back into some kind of normality it has taken another turn and the poor people of Ukraine are being invaded. It's impossible to imagine where this might end.

War isn't new. Wars have ravaged throughout the world for much of human history.

Now that one is knocking Europe's door we are taking note, and it's not of just the devastation and suffering of innocent civilians that has an immediate awakening effect on us all. There is a silent crisis happening in the back ground. A crisis of food.

Much of our food is imported and the rising prices of food and energy are affecting every household. The threat to the availability and dramatic price increase of food is an ideal opportunity to use locally produced food, which in turn will help the local economy and the global energy crisis.

Daily bread

toast. It is also super easy and quick to make. The basic recipe can be made using just oats but I like to add some seeds for added nutrition and texture. Pumpkin, sunflower and linseeds/flax seeds are all good. I also like to buzz half of the oats into a coarse flour as I think it gives a better texture but if you don't have a food processor you can just use whole oats.

I use plain natural yoghurt but low fat will probably work too as will plant based yoghurts.

Oats are naturally gluten-free but if you have a problem with gluten use gluten-free oats which are guaranteed not to be contaminated

Oat Bread

- 350g oats
- 500mls natural yoghurt
- 1 egg
- 1tbs molasses (optional)
- 2 tsp bread soda
- 1tsp salt
- 50-100g seeds – sunflower, pumpkin, linseeds

Pre heat the oven 180°C.

Line a large loaf tin with parchment or greaseproof paper. Put roughly half of the oats into a food processor and buzz until you have a coarse flour.

Tip the buzzed oats into a bowl together with the rest of the oats, bread soda, salt and seeds. Mix well.

Put the natural yoghurt, molasses and egg into a small bowl then mix together.

Tip the yoghurt mix onto the oat mix then stir until everything until it comes together in a thick batter.

Tip the batter into the prepared loaf tin. Smooth out the top with the back of a spoon then sprinkle over a few seeds or some oatflakes to decorate the top.

Bake for 40 minutes in the tin then carefully tip the loaf onto a baking tray and bake for a further 10 minutes.

Allow to cool completely before slicing.

Happy Easter. Hoping for peace for Ukraine and a successful growing season.
Karen

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good for growing.

There is a lot that can be grown without too much effort or stress even if you only have a small space. Large plant pots and containers will produce family sized crops of salads and herbs and if you have a small garden space the possibilities are endless.

Beans, potatoes, courgettes, beetroots, turnips, pumpkins and all the green things will thrive outside and if you have a glasshouse, conservatory or tunnel you'll have a mini Mediterranean climate. Tomatoes, aubergines, chillies and cucumbers will happily ripen and once you've tasted a home grown tomato there's no going back.

Bread plays a major role in most Irish households and wheat is usually a vital ingredient. Rumour has it that wheat will be a major casualty in the food crisis and as we are a nation of toast and sandwich munchers this is quite alarming.

Although a lot of people see white sliced pan or a crusty loaf when they think of bread there other possibilities. Bread can be made from various other ingredients and Ireland grows a very good solution: Oats.

I researched alternative breads using chickpea flour, buckwheat, corn, barley, rye.... and each time returned to oats for the type of loaf that we like for breakfast and lunch.

Oat bread is very similar to soda bread and makes an excellent sandwich or piece of

Setting up the garden for the growing season has never made more sense.

The past lockdowns have meant that a lot of people discovered their inner gardener and got the growing bug and it's a good idea for the gardening revolution to continue.

Now is the ideal time to take action if you would like to sow some seeds. The days are getting longer, warmer, sometimes sunnier and the regular rain is

Hamilton High School celebrates World Water Day with 'Walk for Water' in Gougane Barra

As the fog cleared and the sun began to shine at the wild and scenic Gougane Barra, over 90 students and teachers from Cork city and county, including Hamilton High School in Bandon, set off on the challenge that is the Green-Schools/Irish Water 'Walk for Water' event. The students walked almost five kilometres carrying as much water as they could, some carrying as much as six litres, to highlight water scarcity and experience the journey travelled every day by women and children to access clean water in parts of the developing world.

The theme for World Water Day 2022 is 'Groundwater - Making the Invisible Visible' with a core focus on encouraging everyone to work together to sustainably manage this precious resource.

In Gougane Barra students learned about how important access to clean water is and what actions they can take to help ensure a clean water supply is available globally. The students also learned how to construct a 'tippy tap' which is a hand-made device for washing hands with running water. In a time when handwashing is more important than ever, the students constructed their tippy taps using sticks, stones, some string, and an empty bottle.

Senior Theme Coordinator

with Green-Schools, Ruth Gaj-McKeever, highlighted the importance of the event: "Each year we can see the difference the experience makes for the attending students; they go home with a greater awareness of what water scarcity is, how important conservation and sustainable development has become and, of course, with a greater appreciation for the beautiful surrounds of places like Gougane Barra."

The event is a key part of the Water Theme of the Green-Schools programme, which is supported by Irish Water. The attending students incorporated games and demonstrations into their walk, which took in the challenging red walking route in the park.

Commenting on the Walk for Water, Brendan English, Regional Communications Specialist at Irish Water said, "Helping the next generation to understand that the importance of conserving water is a key part of our role in safeguarding Ireland's water supply, so we are delighted to be partnering with An Taisce's Green-Schools Water Theme again this year and hope we can continue into the future. The Walk for Water is a creative way for the students to understand that clean water is a precious resource and that we all need to take action to conserve it."

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Fernhill celebrates the seasonal bounty on its doorstep

There aren't too many hotels at which you'd find the linens blowing in the breeze out-of-doors on a traditional clothesline. However when it comes to sustainable practices and energy saving methods, Fernhill House Hotel in Clonakilty has to be one of Ireland's most environmentally-friendly hotels.

Water is pumped from the hotel's own well, solar panels heat the water and generate some electricity and whatever food produce isn't sourced locally is grown on the grounds. Even the fertiliser is on tap; homemade from the comfrey and nettles allowed to flourish in the vegetable garden.

Fernhill makes a conscious effort to minimise food waste: If it doesn't go into making stock, leftover vegetable scraps are composted, going back into the garden.

A former director of Sustainable Clonakilty, Michael O'Neill Jnr is active in achieving sustainability in the family-run business and his local community. He was also a board member of the European Union's EDEN group, the largest collection of sustainable destinations in the world; and part of the team behind Clonakilty's ambitious tree-planting campaign.

Designed by renowned garden designer Mary Reynolds and inspired by the surrounding woodland, the 14 acres of gardens at Fernhill fall into three sections: managed, lightly-managed and wild. Parts

of the garden have been planted under the guidance of tree and permaculture expert István Márkuly.

Hundreds of fruit and nut trees and shrubs and native trees have been planted around the hotel to encourage wildlife and provide food, with a mix of formal planting and wilderness encouraging pollinators and promoting biodiversity.

Gardeners Ann Daly, Ryan Crowley and Eamon Coakley are currently busy planting vegetable seeds in the polytunnels and raised beds. Ann uses a no-dig system, which means fewer weeds and healthier soil for germination. Crops are rotated for an optimal balance of nutrients in the soil and this reduces pests and disease and no chemicals are used.

Just last month Fernhill was crowned Ireland's top wedding venue and listed in the fab 50 from independent.ie Travel.

After a two-year pandemic and the current economic and food supply uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine, Michael O'Neill Jnr says that while it has been a tough few years, with the current uncertainty making it even harder, Fernhill is striving to create a positive out of a negative by being as self-sufficient as possible and continuing to provide the best for its guests and wedding couples.

"We've always grown fruit and veg, but we're increasing output this year to try to bring food supply even more under our control," he explains.

The O'Neill family, who launched their own gin last year to celebrate 75 years at Fernhill, go as far as picking fresh pine tips from the Scots Pine trees on the estate to use in their cocktails.

"Overall, aside from the

benefit of having access to fresh organic produce on our doorstep, it's very rewarding for everyone involved in the process of growing and cooking at Fernhill," says Michael.

"Our aim has always been to be as sustainable as possible and we look forward to continuing to improve our environmental impact."

Right: Michael O'Neill Jnr with gardeners Ann Daly, Ryan Crowley and Eamon Coakley.

Below: The team at Fernhill House celebrating their 'Best wedding venue in Ireland' award at the 2022 gold medal catering awards, Ireland's most prestigious hospitality awards.



Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

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As many of you will know, we at Deelish Garden Centre do not use or sell chemicals for use in the garden. We advise gardeners to use chemical-free and, if possible, organic gardening solutions to everyday challenges like pests, diseases, weed control and many other gardening issues. By practising this method of gardening, the benefits are many, such as greater resistance to pests and disease, building habitat for pollinators, wild life and soil microorganisms, as well as your own health. Once gardeners have made the change from using chemical products to organic solutions, very few look back.

In previous articles, I have looked in detail at various natural solutions to many of the gardening issues mentioned above. Another area that is very important to me and other gardeners, as well as farmers, is the ongoing use of glyphosate (the main ingredient in Roundup and other herbicides) on farms, gardens and public spaces to control weeds. As this harmful chemical is now recognised as a carcinogenic substance, with hundreds of millions of euros having been awarded in law suits, it amazes me that these products are still available for sale in shops. As well as the harmful affect on humans, this ingredient has been linked to the rapid decline of pollinators and other wildlife. The damage



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.

to delicate soil microorganisms is huge and it can take decades for the soil to recover, if ever. As Rebecca wrote in last month's article for Deelish, the value of healthy soil is priceless. Indeed the future of feeding our growing population and increasing biodiversity around the world is dependent on it.

On a positive note, I was delighted to an article by Eoin English in the Irish Examiner that stated; "Cork City Council

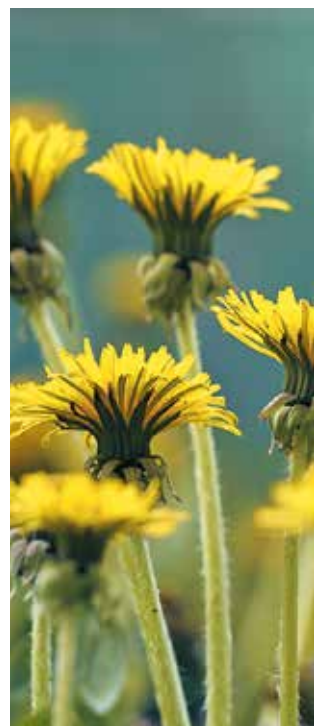
has decided to stop using chemical-based glyphosate weed killers in its parks and on some 500km of public roads."

After almost 50 years of using chemical herbicides, the Council will move to more expensive and time-consuming but pollinator friendly methods such as steam jet application, electric trimmer and organic herbicides. Vegetation (weeds) will be allowed to grow in certain places throughout the year.

It seems to me that it is a step in the right direction, with more action needed very soon. It is also great to see farmers being offered organic farming grants, as the use of glyphosate products is not used in this method of farming. Ultimately I think as a nation we will need to change the way we view our garden, roads and outdoor spaces. For example, not expect every inch of our gardens, roadsides and parks need to be perfectly weed-free and manicured. Consider leaving an area or section to 'rewild'. Encourage wild flowers to grow, leave that self-seeded willow to grow into a beautiful tree even though you didn't plant it yourself. In this approach, not only will we continue to have beautiful gardens and countryside but we will provide valuable habitat for a wide range of wildlife including our priceless pollinators, without whom our crops and flowers will fail to grow. When designing and adding new features in

your garden, try to incorporate as many of these natural wild areas including ponds, woodlands and wildflower meadows.

If you do feel the need to keep some areas well maintained such as lawns, paths and driveways research natural alternatives to achieve your goal. Feel free to visit us here at Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen and we will be happy to guide you in the right direction with our great range of natural gardening products. Enjoy the great gardening weather we are having at the moment and remember, gardening doesn't have to cost the earth.



West Cork shop introduces easy way for families to buy organic and save money

Sisters Hannah and Rachel Dare, owners of Organico health food shop in Bantry, are out to disprove the perception that sustainable, organic food has to be an expensive

luxury. They've sourced from over 40 brands to launch a new shopping category in their shop and online shop, Organico BASICS, which highlights great value and affordable 'basic'

organic products.

"We know there are people who want to feed their families as healthily as possible while also watching what they spend on groceries," says Hannah. "So the idea behind Organico BASICS is that you can quickly identify those 'everyday' essentials in versions that are sustainable, healthy, high quality, and also affordable."

Of course, nearly all supermarkets have a budget range or store brand intended to save shoppers money. Where Organico BASICS dramatically differs is that it doesn't include ultra-processed 'cheap' foods. Each product in the category is nutritionally sound and of high quality.

Take peanut butter for instance – supermarket budget brands often include conventionally grown peanuts, palm oil and/or peanut oil, and sugar. The peanut butter in the Or-

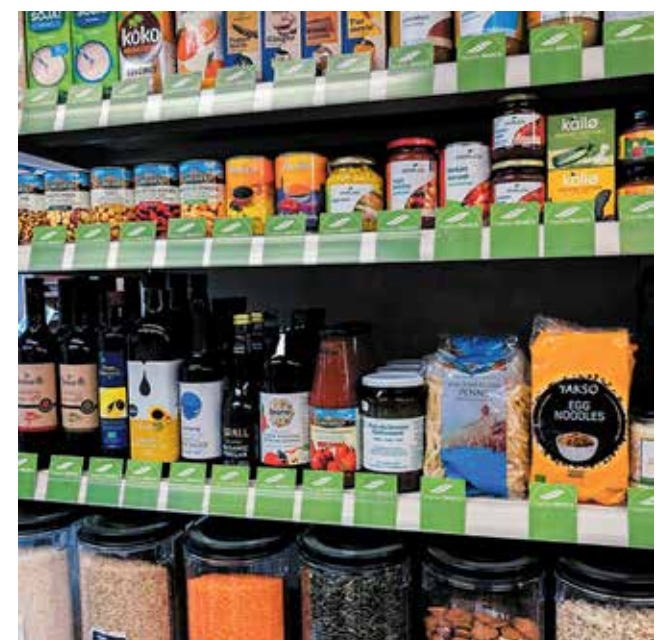
ganico BASICS range is made by Ekoplaza and contains two ingredients: organic peanuts and organic sea salt, making it more aligned with the whole foods principle of eating.

Organico BASICS was inspired by a team member's past experience of trying to eat well on an extreme budget. Yet its introduction has come at a relevant moment – just as forecasts of the rising cost of living in Ireland are flooding the news.

"It's been reported that the cost of living could increase by over €2,000 for most families this year," says Hannah. "We know it won't fix the issue, but we hope Organico BASICS will make it less likely that families who want to eat healthily must choose between nutrition and price. No family should be forced to compromise."

Shop the full Organico BASICS range of over 120 organic foods, clean supplements,

sustainable nappies, eco-friendly cleaning products and more in Organico shop in Bantry or online. www.organico.ie/organico-basics



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Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Is Ireland facing food insecurity?



Recent global events have directed our attention to the question of food security, and insecurity – a matter of great importance in the collective Irish memory. As politicians and farmers' organisations call for urgent changes in our farming practices, it is worth reflecting on the meaning of food security and the potential challenges now facing the country and the wider world, says **Dr Edward Lahiff**, a lecturer in international development in University College Cork and Co-Director of the MSc in Food Security Policy and Management.

Traditional views of food insecurity, and famine, have tended to focus on catastrophic environmental failures, affecting entire populations – the problem of food availability, or supply. More recent understandings have highlighted the vulnerability of particular social groups who, for economic or political reasons, are denied the ability to feed themselves – the problem of food access, or effective demand. The Great Irish famine of the mid-nineteenth century was a classic, and tragic, example of the latter, as were the famines in Ukraine in 1932, Bengal in 1943 and Ethiopia in 1983, amongst others.

For most countries today, and most households around the world, food security does not depend on self-sufficiency, but on the ability to acquire food through various forms of exchange. Agri-food is a truly globalised sector, as we know from our export success stories and the diverse origin of the food in our shops.

While Russia and Ukraine today contribute significantly to global supplies of grain, interruption to production and trade caused by the war is unlikely to result in food insecurity for much of the world, especially the higher-income countries. Interruptions in production and supply will certainly translate into higher prices for food, as well as for oil, gas and other commodities, leading to economic uncertainty or even recession, but this doesn't necessarily equate to a food crisis. Global availability of food is at an all-time high, and global incomes aren't far off, meaning that many consumers will simply switch to other food types – say, from wheat to rice, or even potatoes – and divert more of their income from luxury goods to basics.

The experience will be different for low-income groups, especially in the global south, who already spend the majority of their earnings on food, and have little or no access to social



Current proposals around an expansion of tillage may be part of the solution in the short term but needs to be seen in the context of the overall viability of the current farming model, now and into the future.

protections, and are therefore likely to struggle to meet their food needs. Countries such as Egypt, which rely heavily on Ukrainian wheat for much of their staple food, will be forced to find alternative sources on the global market, meaning higher prices and pushing more people into poverty and hunger.

Ireland, by contrast, is a remarkably food secure country, despite the fact that we don't produce enough food to meet our needs in most categories. Instead, our strong export-oriented economy and relatively high incomes allow us to purchase what we need on global markets. Only in beef and dairy can we call ourselves self-sufficient, but even this success depends heavily on imported inputs. Increasing our local production of grain at this time will do relatively little to affect global supply, or prices – as grain prices, like oil, are set globally, not locally – although it might alleviate some local bottlenecks. Those most likely to gain will be farmers who can substitute their own produce for purchased livestock feed, but much of the benefit will be offset by rapidly increasing costs of diesel and fertilizer. Indeed, there seems a real possibility that tillage production – much of it focused on animal feed – may even decline this year.

The interruption in trade in food, fuel, fertilizer and animal feed as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine presents Ireland not

with a food crisis, at least not in the short term, but with an economic – and potentially social – crisis, of unpredictable extent. It challenges the farming model that prioritizes two commodities for the global market, based on massive imports of agricultural inputs, and is therefore vulnerable to instability in markets and transport networks.

Ireland's agricultural sector is of particular importance for the thousands of farm households and the wider rural communities that depend on it directly or indirectly, in ways that go beyond food and narrow economics, and it is important that it receives appropriate forms of support. This does not mean we can't question the model on which it is based, however, especially if the assumptions underpinning the model no longer apply. Current proposals

around an expansion of tillage may be part of the solution in the short term but needs to be seen in the context of the overall viability of the current farming model, now and into the future.

It may be a little tone deaf in the face of a billion people worldwide who go to bed hungry every night, and the people of Ukraine facing a humanitarian crisis in the heart of Europe, to suggest our food security is under threat. It may be more accurate to say that we are facing some serious economic challenges, that will be felt particularly hard in our agri-food sector and, through price inflation, across the wider society. Over time, it will be important to reflect further on our current agricultural model, and what can be done to make it more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

MSc in Food Security Policy And Management, UCC

Ending food insecurity and malnutrition remains one of the greatest challenges facing our global community as we transform our societies in the face of the climate emergency. This Masters at UCC is one of the few courses worldwide focused on the design and implementation of food and nutrition security policies and programmes within the context of sustainable food systems, humanitarian action and climate change. It equips students with the skills and knowledge to manage and evaluate food security projects and programmes, develop and implement policies and conduct cutting-edge research, and pursue fulfilling careers with a wide range of organisations, including UN agencies, NGOs, government, private sector companies and research institutions around the world. For more info, visit our website at www.cubsucc.com/programmes/pg/food-security-policy-and-management/



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FOOD ACADEMY PROGRAMME

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shelves?

Food Academy Programme 2022/2023 now open for applications

To help develop Ireland's artisan food industry, the Local Enterprise Offices, SuperValu and Bord Bia joined forces in 2013 to create 'Food Academy' – a tailored Food Business Development programme for early to mid-stage food business owners.

Programme Objectives

Food Academy is a food business development programme where the participants receive training in food safety, market research and branding, marketing, finance, sustainability, and business development. The aim of Food Academy is to provide small food businesses with a solid foundation to progress confidently onto retail shelves.

- Develop an in-depth knowledge of the tools which can be used to assess market gaps for your product
- Understand core technical issues facing your business
- Learn how to grow sales for your product range through better branding and packaging design
- Gain the tools and knowledge necessary to launch and build a successful food business in Ireland
- Participants will get the opportunity to present their product to a panel from SuperValu and gain valuable feedback & if successful, can participate in a trial based in local shops, which in the right circumstances, could progress over time to a national listing with SuperValu. There is no guarantee of your product being listed as part of the programme.

How to Apply & Deadlines

In order to apply for a place on the Food Academy Programme the following would apply:

- You may be at the early to mid-stages of developing a food or drink business and have already developed innovative / on trend product and are looking to scale up and grow the business.
- You may have already conducted market research, completed the Food Starter Programme, conducted a feasibility study on your idea.
- You may have already validated the product in the marketplace through trading either via farmers markets or other independent retail.
- You may have developed a basic product offering/logo and need to further develop the product and branding.
- You must have capacity & the drive & ambition to grow your food business.
- You may wish to pivot your business to the mainstream retail channel with an existing product.

If you meet the above criteria, then you should consider applying for the Food Academy Programme.

Application deadline 8th April 2022

For more information & to apply: www.localenterprise.ie/FoodSupports/Food-Academy-Programme/

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



Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

Farming for Nature welcomes West Cork farmers to the network

The Farming for Nature (FFN) project is delighted to welcome West Cork farmers, Madeline McKeever and Holly Cairns to their growing Ambassador network.

"Holly and I are honoured to be ambassadors for Farming for Nature. Being recognised for our efforts encourages us

to do better and we have been busy planting more trees for shelter, and making plans for a farm pond. We will be looking out for the swallows returning to nest in the abandoned mobile home and watching the recently planted hedges grow and start to support more wildlife," says Madeline.

Madeline runs an organic

30-acre mixed farm in West Cork along with her daughter Holly. There is 15 acres of broadleaf forestry on the land, containing oak, alder, ash and nut trees. There is 10 acres of permanent mixed pasture and the remaining land is used for seed production and nature corridors. Madeline keeps a small herd of cattle, producing beef

for the home and for a few local customers. The cattle are grazed using Voisin's rational grazing system, meaning the grass is rested for approximately 30 days before being grazed again. A small amount of silage is cut off the land to provide winter feeding for the animals and the animal manure is used to fertilise the land. External inputs on the farm are extremely low.

Founder of Brown Envelope Seeds, Madeline is one of only two farms in the country producing vegetable seeds. They produce over 100 varieties of organically certified, open pollinated seed, which is sold to Irish growers and gardeners around the country. A wildlife enthusiast all her life, Madeline enjoys seeing an array of birds coming and going to farm, such as choughs, thrushes, chiffchaffs, redwings, fieldfares and lots of other songbirds. The family have planted a diverse range of trees, hedges and fruit bushes on the farm which attract insects like solitary bees, wild honeybees, bumble bees, hoverflies and wasps, all of whom play a crucial role in pollinating the seed crops. Madeline's love of nature is reflected in the low impact, regenerative farming system she runs.

Now in its fourth year, Farming For Nature was set up with an aim to source, share and celebrate the stories of farmers across Ireland who manage their land in a way that sustains nature, while providing a livelihood for their family. Madeline and Holly are part of



this year's 23 ambassadors that come from across Ireland and include beef, sheep, forestry, dairy, horticulture and tillage farmers who manage a wide range of very valuable habitats including species-rich grasslands and heaths, wetlands, woodlands and hedgerows. The Farming For Nature ambassador network is made up of family farms, couples, and both male and female farmers.

FFN is featuring their Ambassadors on a bi-monthly basis until August 2022. Keep an eye on FFN's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms to learn more about these wonderful farmers and the valuable work they are doing for nature on their land. FFN will work with

these inspiring ambassadors to produce farm videos, podcasts, 'Ask the Farmer' sessions, farm walks and more.

Go to www.farmingfornature.ie to learn about this incredible network of Ambassador farmers and to access further information, resources and tips.

The Farming for Nature Awards are sponsored by Bord Bia and supported by a wide range of farming and conservation interests including the Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the National Rural Network.

For more information go to www.farmingfornature.ie or contact info@farmingfornature.ie



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Taste and learn from a coffee master at WCC Brew Bar

Bandon native Tony Speight has expanded his coffee empire with West Cork Coffee Brew Bar, located at Grey Heron, in his home town. This new venture, which opened last December, builds on Tony's specialty coffee roastery business that supplies high quality specialty coffee to cafes and artisan stores.

Tony's appreciation of great tasting coffee began on his travels in Australia nearly 20 years ago. Coming back to Ireland as an aficionado he saw an opportunity to promote specialty coffee and the amazing produce that's produced in West Cork and created West Cork Coffee (WCC) in 2015 to do just that. WCC now proudly supplies



coffee to two of the four Michelin star restaurants in Cork and is working with some of the best specialty coffee shops in Ireland. The brand has also built a loyal following online where

people can purchase once off coffee supplies or take out a subscription.

Now WCC's Brew Bar is introducing superb coffee, and the process of making it, to an even greater audience. "Grey Heron celebrates and supports local West Cork makers and artists and a collaboration was a natural fit," Tony says. "I enjoy meeting our customers at the brew bar and discussing all things coffee!"

"We open Tuesday to Saturday, from 10am to 5pm, serving two single origin coffees. We also host barista, home brewing and roasting workshops."

Visit the brew bar at Grey Heron, Bridge Street, Bandon or go to westcorkcoffee.ie

Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

West Cork pig sector meets with Agriculture Minister at Leinster House

Cork South West deputy Christopher O'Sullivan secured a meeting between west Cork pig industry representatives and Minister for Agriculture Charlie McColl at Leinster House to discuss the crisis faced by the sector.

The delegation, which included farmers and people involved in pig feed, were part of a demonstration outside the Department of Agriculture on Tuesday calling for a rescue

package for the sector amid losses stemming from increases in the cost of feed, coupled with low prices and comparatively higher production costs.

The delegation explained the seriousness of the pig sector's situation.

“The minister agreed to look at the Irish Farmers Association’s proposal and would come back to the sector as soon as possible. It’s an industry we cannot afford to lose and I’m delighted the minister took time to discuss

the issues with them,” Deputy O’Sullivan said.

“The pig industry is such an important industry in west Cork. In places like Rosscarbery, Leap, Timoleague, Barryroe, Ballincarthy and in-and-around the Clonakilty area there are many pig farmers and producers. The village of Timoleague itself, which is a decent sized village, is very reliant on the pig industry with Staunton’s Foods nearby employing around 300 people.”



Tara McCarthy steps down from Bord Bia CEO position

year. Tara will take up a new position in the private sector in June 2022.

Tara said: "I am very grateful for the wonderful privilege I have had to lead Bord Bia. It is an exciting and thought-provoking organisation, with a powerful and inspiring mission. The wider agri-food industry faces many challenges, but thanks to the

amazing people that work in and with the industry it continues to thrive. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our Chairman and Board, my committed colleagues in Bord Bia and in Government and our farmer and producer members, for the amazing support they have given me throughout my time as CEO."

Dunmore House reopens for the season fresh from celebrating its inclusion in the Michelin Guide UK and Ireland

After a well-deserved winter break, the family at Dunmore House is preparing to open the doors to guests for this season.

Owner Carol Barrett, her son Peter, the General Manager at Dunmore, along with her husband Richard and the extended team have used the break to recharge their batteries, see to the annual maintenance and sprucing up of the gorgeous seaside property and, most importantly, have raised a glass to the wonderful news of the inclusion of their restaurant Adrift in the Michelin Guide UK & Ireland 2022.

“We were delighted to be included in the Michelin Guide 2022,” says Peter Barrett, the fourth generation of the

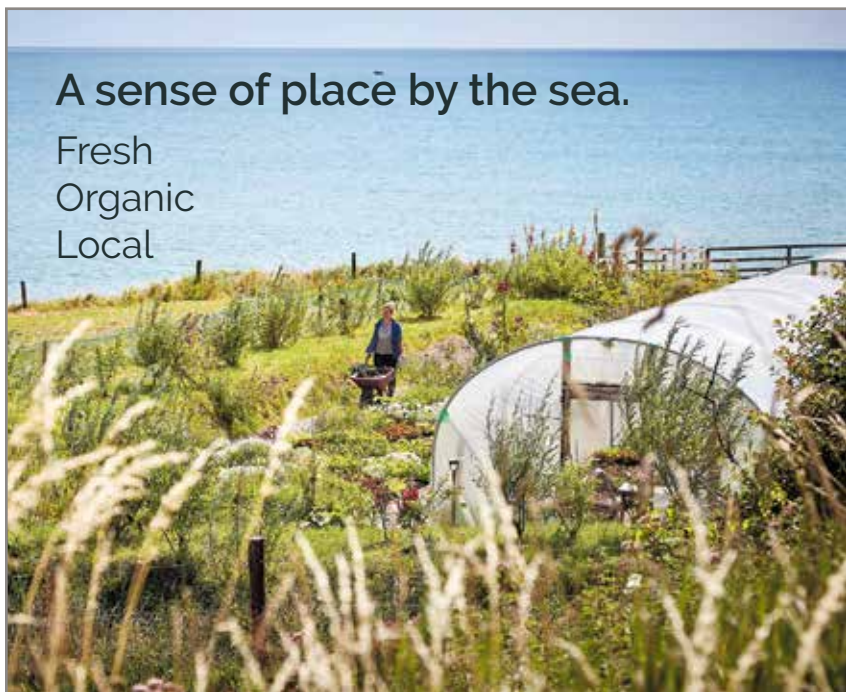
family to work at the hotel, “for our hotel and Adrift to be included really is a lovely recognition of our continuing ethos here at Dunmore which has been passed down from my great-grandparents, and our amazing team in the kitchen who continue to produce simple dishes with fresh, local produce.”

The entry in the Michelin Guide says, “Run by the fourth generation of the owner’s family, this restaurant is set in an enviable position on the ground floor of the Dunmore House Hotel with views out over Clonakilty Bay. Tasty, modern dishes showcase locally sourced produce, including some from their own organic kitchen garden.”

The family at Dunmore House believe in a warm welcome and exceptional food, with local seafood taking centre stage and produce from their organic Ocean Garden complementing it, making dining at Adrift and throughout the property a joyous thing.

Whether you enjoy the breathtaking sea views from the comfort of your room or pack your walking boots and togs and tick all 10 beaches on the doorstep off your list, a getaway to Dunmore House Hotel is a breath of fresh air this spring with rooms starting from €315 for overnight accommodation with breakfast and dinner for two in Adrift.

For more visit dunmore-househotel.ie



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WILD ATLANTIC WAY
WILDLIFE & NATURE

Special Feature NATURE'S BOUNTY

The Beekeeper of Aleppo in West Cork

If you haven't yet read *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, then please do. It is a beautifully written and deeply moving novel that chronicles the journey of a refugee couple from Syria as they attempt to find safety and asylum in the UK. It's raw and bravely, yet movingly, illustrates the nature of trauma and PTSD. While it is appropriately hard-hitting, the narrative is delivered with such beautifully crafted skill that you are compelled to take every step of their deeply poignant journey with them, with every turn of the page.

One of the main characters, the Beekeeper of Aleppo himself, was based on a Syrian refugee called Ryad Alsous and his true-life experience. As the novel depicts, he made his way to the UK where he now lives and has set up a community endeavour called The Buzz Project. Back in Syria he was a beekeeper with 200 hives and a shop in which he sold all

manner of bee-related food-based and therapeutic products. He now teaches other refugees and marginalised people from all walks of life beekeeping skills so that they can begin to develop their own hives and colonies and become self-supporting. This not only helps to empower displaced or disadvantaged people to carve out a modest livelihood, but working with bees, learning about their extraordinary hive culture and being part of meaningful community-led project helps them on a therapeutic level too.

Sherwood Healing Arts Centre is teaming up with Ryad to develop a similar project in West Cork. It is hoped to offer an opportunity for a small group of participants to train in beekeeping skills with Ryad himself. This will be partially on-line for theoretical components and in-person at Sherwood for regular skills-based sessions, with Ryad coming over on a monthly basis for a



Ryad Alsous © UNHCR/Caroline Brothers

period of time.

Sherwood offers a range of opportunities for Green Prescription, which is the term given for the tremendous therapeutic value of being out in Mother Nature, involved in gardening or being among trees with gentle woodland work

and forest therapy, for instance. By collaborating with Ryad, Sherwood hopes to set up a similar Buzz Project to offer the support this can give on so many levels.

At present this project is in the formative stages with Ryad ready to come over as soon as

there are two-three nuc hives in place at Sherwood and a group of participants on board.

Sherwood is currently hoping for help and connections in the following ways:

1. Any leads on possible nuc hives that might be available to purchase at a reasonable

rate for this not-for-profit community project

2. Networking within refugee communities, or any marginalised groups
3. Networking within mental and emotional health communities
4. Networking within beekeeping communities in order to be able to offer some public talks with Ryad about his life and work on a donation basis to help finance his travel costs over.

If you would like to learn beekeeping skills from this extraordinary man or if you can suggest either where it might be possible to get some nuc hives or suggest some good groups and/or venues that might be interested in hosting a public talk with Ryad about his life and work, please contact Freya Sherlock: www.freyasherlock.com; www.sherwoodhealingarts.ie; 086-1273148.

Plant sale at Kinsale College

With the end of the academic year nearly in sight, it looks to be a busy one for Kinsale Campus! The campus has been at the forefront of sustainability for over 20 years and this was reflected in the numerous events hosted over their Green Week in March. With topics such as 'Dealing with Eco Grief and Mindfulness' to Food Waste and Water Footprint, there was something to suit everyone!

The college will hold a plant sale on April 8, from 10am to 4pm. The horticultural department will be on hand to offer advice and planting tips

All plants available on the day are species and varieties that are known for supporting native wildlife such as bees, hoverflies and butterflies, all of which play a role in the healthy functioning of our natural environment. Some plants also have the additional benefit of being edible, such as globe artichoke and fennel. The focus is also on the longer-lived perennial plants so once planted and given a little care, they will be of benefit to our local biodiversity for several years without the need for replanting every Spring.

This year, the college has sourced plastic-free, plant-based pots in which to grow the pollinator-friendly flowers. These are 100 per cent compostable at home. Plastic waste is a huge



problem in the horticulture industry and the Sustainable Horticulture course at Kinsale Campus is continually looking for ways to reduce our reliance on the material. Similarly, all the growing media used in the production of the plants is peat-free, thus supporting and contributing to the protection of Ireland's remaining peatland habitats, which are internationally recognised for their biodiversity value.

This year, Kinsale Campus will donate all proceeds generated from the plant sale to the Irish Red Cross.



Grants of up €5,000 announced for biodiversity and nature recording

A grant scheme providing support to Ireland's nature recording community has opened its applications for 2022. The scheme, managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, aims to help naturalists recording in Ireland

to maintain and enhance their expertise in species identification. The scheme also aims to encourage and develop the next generation of specialist recorders, particularly as throughout the COVID-19 pandemic many members of the public have spent more time in nature and developed greater interest in biodiversity.

Grants are aimed at volunteer, unpaid recorders, or groups, societies and associations of recorders who have limited/no access to financial supports for their work. This is the fourth year of the grant scheme and so far it has supported over 30 projects run by individuals and groups. Projects have covered the entire range of Irish natural history including site recording of many biological groups (e.g. moths, other terrestrial invertebrates, bats, plants, and marine organisms), support for publications and updating

of web sites, and support to purchase specialist equipment to track bird movements.

The data generated by these recording exercises is utilised by the NPWS to generate information on species and habitats. In turn, it informs advice on nature conservation objectives and practical measures to protect species.

Applications should be submitted by 5pm on April 13, 2022. The form and further details can be found at www.npws.ie

people Environment : Making a difference

A natural Spring clean



GOING GREEN

Lauren Guillery

Lauren Guillery is a musician, horticulturist and crafter with a keen interest in sustainable living and the natural world. Here she shares tips on how to be more environmentally friendly.

Spring has finally sprung, and with it goes the urge to get the house in order. Starting a big Spring clean can feel like a big task, so I tend to focus on doing only one room, or one shelving unit at a time. 'Slow and steady wins the race' as they say!

You really don't need that many tools and products to give your home a sparkle. A dustpan and brush, a mop and a bucket, a rag, and an old toothbrush are all you'll ever need. When it comes to cleaning products, those readily available in supermarkets are loaded with hazardous chemicals and indoor pollutants that can cause all sorts of irritations as well as headaches and nausea. I steer well clear of those because not only do they come in plastic

bottles, but they are bad for the environment. Instead, I get refills of eco-friendly products in the local health food shop – things like washing-up liquid and laundry detergent, and I make cleaning products myself using natural, food-grade ingredients. White vinegar, bicarbonate of soda, unflavoured vodka, the rind of a few lemons, and some drops of essential oil for fragrance, it's easy to make homemade products that contain the same active ingredients than in commercial cleaners, but without the dangerous additives.

Take white vinegar, for example. It has been proven to be just as effective as commercial cleaning products, and because it has strong antibacterial properties, it's a great base for non-toxic cleaning. It removes odours and can cut through grease, grime, and stains – just fill a spray bottle with one part vinegar, one part washing-up liquid, and two parts water, and spray onto dirty surfaces, allowing the mixture to sit for five minutes. Then you can scrub the surface with a scourer or wipe it clean with a cloth.

Vinegar is highly effective at unclogging sink drains too. In a bowl, combine one part vinegar with one part baking soda and one part hot water, and pour the fizzy mixture down the drain, letting it work its magic for at least five minutes. Then

just flush the drain with boiling water.

Since vinegar can damage electronic screens and natural surfaces like granite, marble, and limestone, you can instead head over to your nearby off-licence and pick a bottle of unflavoured vodka with the highest possible alcohol concentration. Together with unwaxed lemons (pick organic lemons to be sure), this homemade spray can help protect your household from germs. What you do is: wash and peel 4-6 lemons, place the rinds in a jar and fill it to the top with vodka. Let the mixture infuse in a dark place for 1-6 weeks (the longer the better), and then remove the rinds and filter the liquid through a muslin cloth. Pour into a spray bottle and use the lemon cleaner undiluted to clean cutting boards, counter-tops, toilet seats, and floors, making sure to leave it on the surfaces for at least 10 seconds to allow it to kill all the germs. Then just wipe the surface dry with a clean cloth.

For the bath, toilet bowl, and the walls in the shower, I like to use a coconut fibre scourer because I can throw it on the compost pile when I'm done using it. You can use dry bicarbonate of soda as an abrasive, or mix it with water into a

paste, and then rinse clean. To clean the windows and mirrors, I scrub the dirt with washing-up liquid, rinse, and then dry vigorously with scrunched up newspaper. It works a treat!

Hydrogen peroxide is a great alternative for bleach, which you shouldn't use anyway if you have a septic tank as it kills the bacteria that's needed to break down and treat waste. Mixed with a few drops of lemon essential oil, hydrogen peroxide diluted in water will remove stains as it has mild bleaching properties.

But what about outside?

I never advise the use of weedkiller to get rid of mosses and weeds growing between paving slabs. Not only is that stuff toxic for all living creatures including humans and pets, but the burned remnants leach into the soil as they break down. The best way to remove them is by hand, or you can burn them with a torch, or as a last resort borrow a power washer from a neighbour, starting at low setting to reduce the risk of damaging the paving.

Vinegar can break down the mould and mildew that grows on outdoor furniture. To clean underfoot, mix vinegar with water in equal parts and spread the solution on the patio, allowing it to soak the surface for 20-25 minutes, and then scrub with a brush. Once rinsed, you can put all your garden furniture back where it belongs and start enjoying a well-deserved Spring!

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Clonakilty academic scoops the 2021 Irish Wind Industry Champion of Renewables Award



Clonakilty native Dr. Paul Deane, Research Fellow at UCC, has been named the 2021 Irish Wind Industry Champion of Renewables at the annual Irish Wind Awards.

This award recognises the outstanding contribution made by an individual who goes above and beyond to push the boundaries in raising awareness, inspiring others, demonstrating long-term leadership and ambition in the Irish wind industry.

Dr. Paul Deane is a senior researcher in clean energy

futures with Science Foundation Ireland's MaREI Centre in UCC.

Paul has been involved in the energy industry for approximately 15 years in both commercial and academic research. This research seeks to further understanding of the transition to low carbon energy systems from a technical, societal and an economic perspective.

Paul's research has been critical in advising all stakeholders including the Irish Government on the medium and long-term

options for decarbonising the Irish energy system. In 2021, Paul led the work of UCC MaREI in authoring Our Climate Neutral Future: Zero by 50 which looked at achieving a zero-carbon economy in Ireland.

Paul said: "I'm so delighted to accept this Wind Energy Ireland award for my and my colleagues in MaREI. It is so important now to have independent voices in research. And to look to Ireland to play to our strengths to reduce our emissions it's not just about climate

issues anymore, it's about social issues and as we have seen beyond our borders it's now about very relevant security issues."

The annual Irish Wind Awards, hosted by Wind Energy Ireland, celebrate innovators and leaders in Ireland's fight against climate change.

people Environment : Making a difference

What we do

by Nicholas Mitchell

I was recently asked this question: “What does BirdWatch Ireland and, more specifically, the West Cork Branch do?”. The Branch AGM was held at the end of March, so this is a pertinent question and one that I will attempt to answer.

BirdWatch Ireland is the largest independent conservation organisation in Ireland. It was established in 1968 and currently has over 15,000 members and supporters with a local network of branches nationwide. Its main focus is the conservation of birds and biodiversity in Ireland and the promotion of nature conservation amongst both policy-makers and the public. It does this in a number of different ways: species and habitat conservation, research and surveys, nature reserves, advocacy and policy, and education.

There are over one hundred officially classified habitats in Ireland and half of these fall under Annex I the EU Habitats Directive, so require protection. Ireland’s habitats range from internationally important blanket bogs to native woodland, wetland, riverine, estuarial and marine environments, all of which support birdlife and biodiversity. With financial support from donations, membership et al, BirdWatch Ireland is involved in protecting endangered breeding birds such as Curlew, Corncrake, Roseate Tern and Little Tern.

Research and surveys play an important role in helping to understand changing trends in bird populations, how birds are faring and their use of habitats. The data collected from surveys is vital to help make informed decisions for the conservation and protection of birds. BirdWatch Ireland co-ordinates a number of volunteer surveys through the year. These include the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) (September to March), the Irish Garden Bird Survey (December to February) and the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS) (April to June). In addition to these, BirdWatch Ireland co-ordinate surveys that ask for the public to record sightings and information, such as Starling Murmurations, Swifts, Barn Owls, breeding Lapwing and Long-eared Owls. For more information about I-WeBS in West Cork, please contact the West Cork I-WeBS Co-ordinator Damaris on damarislysaght@gmail.com.

BirdWatch Ireland also maintains a number of bird reserves around the country, such as Cuskinny Marsh near Cobh. All these reserves are found in areas important to the conservation of birds. As well as demonstrating the benefits of conservation management they raise public awareness of the importance of the conservation and improvement of biodiversity.

Advocacy is another crucial aspect of BirdWatch Ireland’s work. To quote BirdWatch Ireland, the focus of the

Advocacy team is “on climate change, agriculture and forestry, marine conservation, uplands and peatlands, hedgerows, site protection and making sure our laws work for birds”. Referring back to importance of surveys, this advocacy is evidence based and involves campaigning, influencing decision/policy makers and building partnerships to minimise the conflict with nature and create better outcomes for birds.

This leaves the work of the branches that are active across the country. The aims of each local branch are the same as those of the national organisation. In Cork there are two branches that broadly cover east and west. The West Cork Branch has been active since 1993 and, except for the last two years, the Branch runs a busy programme of over twenty events throughout the year, all of which are intended to edu-

cate and inform on not just the work of BirdWatch Ireland but on the birdlife and its conservation in West Cork and off its coast. These vary from visits to one of the many estuaries during the winter, or to a headland or to Cape Clear in spring or autumn for the migrations, or a dawn chorus event in May, or the more socially biased Christmas walk. Most of the events are free and open to Members and non-Members alike, but donations to support our work are always welcome.

The Branch is also directly involved in bird conservation in West Cork. At the end of 2018 the Branch launched its West Cork Swift Project. The aims of this Project are (a) to protect and improve Ireland’s biodiversity by creating additional nesting habitat for a wild bird that is in decline as a breeding species in Ireland in part due to loss of breeding habitat; and

(b) to raise awareness about general environmental issues concerning Ireland’s wildlife. After a nesting survey in 2019 and limited surveys 2020 and 2021, and with financial support from the Community Environmental Action Fund, Cork County Council and generous sponsorship and donations, the Branch acquired 42 nest boxes of which three-quarters have been installed. If you want to get involved please contact Claire Deasy at swiftproject@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie.

On a personal note, I did not stand for re-election as Secretary at this AGM. I am grateful to Fiona O’Neill for taking this on. I have thoroughly enjoyed covering this role for the last 10 years, and the three years before as Treasurer, but it is time for a new generation to take it on and to lead the Branch forward. We are always looking for new people to get involved in the

Branch and the work that it does, so please get in touch if you want to help.

And please don’t forget, you can help by becoming a Member or making a donation, such as to the Species Recovery Appeal – go to www.birdwatchireland.ie for more information.



For more information about the Branch contact Fiona O’Neill at secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie or join our mailing list by sending an email to mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie.



GROUNDLED

MEP Grace O’Sullivan

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

Hope springs from the spirit of determination on the ground

Sometimes there can be a perceived (or even real) disconnect between work going on at a political and local government level around the world in the fight against climate change, and the ground-up approach that has a vital part play. Of course massive systemic and infrastructural change needs to happen, but everyone has a role to play in finding and implementing the solutions that will get this ailing planet back on the pathway to recovery.

Over the past couple of days, as I’ve been visiting individuals and projects in Kinsale and Cork city, I’ve been reminded of how important it is to maintain the interconnectedness of the legislative work I’m engaged in at the European Parliament, with ongoing work and support on the ground.

So what do I mean by that? Well, Tara Shine is a good ex-

ample. Tara, author of the book ‘How to Save Your Planet One Object at a Time’, is an Irish environmental scientist, policy advisor and science communicator, whose work considers climate change negotiations and capacity building. She is a former member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Group of Experts, is a founder of Plastic Free Kinsale and, along with Madeleine Murray, Change by Degrees, a social enterprise movement for convenient sustainability. Tara’s is an impressive CV, obviously, but what is most appealing to me, is that Tara’s work essentially boils down to a focus on changing the conversation from: do I have to?...to: where do I start?

So, when I look at the work Tara has been engaged in around tackling plastic waste in Kinsale, for example, I see a

potent example of how the work I’m starting into on new legislation at a European Parliament level (the Waste Packaging Directive), can have a direct impact on the ground. When work is going on or being developed in our homes and communities, that is following on from or supporting the legislative work myself and others undertake in the European Parliament and beyond, it gives me a great sense of hope for our future, despite the massive challenges that the climate and biodiversity emergency we are in, presents.

Over the course of the past couple of days my sense of hope was furthered by other meetings I had and events I attended. There was the work of the RNLI base in Kinsale, and the stories I heard from Kevin Gould, the Lifeboat Operations Manager there, around the service to the very marine-based

community that the organisation plays a vital role in providing.

There was the activists’ spirit and dedication I saw in a group, who are doing their best to prevent development encroaching on the beautiful local amenity of Ballymartle Woods in Riverstick.

There was the energy and enthusiasm I saw in the students of Kinsale Community School and Kinsale College of Further Education. There was the inspiring work of the Cork Life Centre, a voluntary organisation offering an alternative learning environment to marginalised young people.

There was the joy of seeing the results of hard work in sustainable urban agriculture in the Cork Rooftop Farm. And there was even more!

It’s impossible not to get excited seeing the wonderful energy and work behind Future

Kinsale, Transition Town Kinsale and Tidy Towns Kinsale, and the individuals I met in all those groups were truly inspiring.

I hope I haven’t forgotten to mention any of the other groups I met on my whistle stop tour, and my apologies if I have. I would like to thank the many people who supported and advised us along the way, in particular John Twomey and the staff of Kinsale Yacht Club.

I will be returning to Brussels with a new sense of hope and energy that I look forward to putting into the work I undertake in the coming months and years. For now though, as I sit here thinking back on the spirit of determination, and dedication I’ve been privileged enough to be greeted with over recent days, I am reminded, yet again, that we are all in this together.

people Environment : Making a difference

Green clean with Tru Eco

It's that time of year again, Spring is finally here, and the clocks have gone forward. A time to clear out and spruce up your home. However, some cleaning products contain chemicals that can be harmful to your health and to the planet. We need to mind our health, and each do our bit for the environment. The best place to start is at home. Changing your household cleaning and laundry products, for example, to more eco-friendly products is a great way to work towards a greener lifestyle.

Tru Eco is a range of laundry and household cleaning prod-

ucts, by Irish company VivaGreen that aims to reduce your family's carbon footprint and allow you to clean your home in a safer and kinder way, and giving it fresh citrus fragrance.

The Tru Eco range of products are made from plant-based and biodegradable ingredients and each bottle is made from 100 per cent recycled plastic, creating a circular economy product that is reusable, recyclable, and refillable. The range includes an All-Purpose Cleaner, Washing-Up Liquid, Non-Bio Laundry Detergent, and Fabric Conditioner. The range is available in SuperValu stores and eco

shops nationwide.

Due to popular demand, Tru Eco refill stations are now being rolled out in SuperValu stores around the country. Bantry was the first SuperValu store in Cork to offer customers a Tru Eco refill station and now also available to refill in Cobh, Glanmire and Bandon. Shoppers can bring their empty bottles of Tru Eco cleaning products to refill in store at a cheaper cost.

Jim O'Keeffe, SuperValu Bantry Owner says: "Sustainability is at the forefront of our business strategy. We see more and more of our customers seeking greener solutions while

shopping so we are thrilled to offer our customers a simple refill solution for their household cleaning products that will help them protect the environment

"we are thrilled to offer our customers a simple refill solution for their household cleaning products that will help them protect the environment and save them money too."

Jim O'Keeffe,
SuperValu Bantry

and save them money too."

Russell Walsh, Joint Managing Director, VivaGreen says: "We are delighted and so proud that our Tru Eco range and refill station is available to shoppers from Bantry and surrounding areas. We see our refill solution like the plastic bag levy – you buy our Tru Eco product once and then you return to refill your empty bottle in-store at a cheaper cost. This not only saves consumers money, but it reduces plastic waste in our communities and supports small Irish businesses".

VivaGreen continues to grow its Tru Eco environmentally friendly range with

more products launching soon. The Irish company has also been recognised recently for its innovation, resilience, and success by winning the Home, Beauty & Lifestyle Award at the inaugural Guaranteed Irish Business Awards held in March. VivaGreen is also shortlisted for several upcoming awards, which include the Small Firms Association Awards and the Green Awards.

For more information about VivaGreen's full range of eco products visit vivagreen.ie or join the conversation on Instagram @vivagreen.ie



Green Skibbereen celebrates 'The Friends of Myross Wood'

Green Skibbereen celebrated the launch of a new group of volunteers and supporters 'The Friends of Myross Wood' on Sunday, March 13. Over 25 volunteers spent the day learning about the group's detailed development plans for Myross Wood, in Leap; undertaking guided walks and most importantly planting some 1500 native Irish trees to begin the process of the careful restoration of the woodland.

Green Skibbereen was awarded funding from the Woodland Development Fund via the Department for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to undertake the Myross Wood Meitheal project to carefully restore this well loved and historic woodland by involving the community every step of the way.

Green Skibbereen has been delighted to work with the Green Economy Foundation and Trees on the Land, as well as a number of woodland and ecology experts in developing a plan to increase the number of native trees, remove invasive non-native species, protect the wonderful biodiversity of the site and make the area easier and safer to access for those who wish to enjoy the benefits of being in the woodland by restoring and improving pathways.

Trish Lavelle, Chair of

Green Skibbereen was delighted with the involvement of so many volunteers from the community. "We had to postpone the event twice due to the recent storms, but the sun shined for us on Sunday and our volunteers worked away planting trees and learning about the woodland from Nikki Keeling from the Green Economy Foundation and Mark Robbins, Ecologist. It was a truly inspiring day and we achieved so much."

Fellow Director Ana Ospina was equally optimistic about the project: "We really didn't know what to expect, but it is such a vote of confidence for woodlands, for biodiversity and for West Cork that so many amazing volunteers have come forward. We have a follow-up day planned for Saturday, April 9, where we will be establishing a tree nursery in the grounds of CECAS. We hope even more



Ana Ospina

people will consider getting involved in such a worthwhile project."

The volunteers present included local gardeners, neighbours, farmers, and peo-



ple who wanted to learn more about Ireland's precious native woodland.

Reflecting on the day, Trish Lavelle said that, "it actually felt quite emotional to see these first new oak, rowan, hazel, spindle, birch, alder and holly trees planted in an area, which has been so very

badly impacted by storms in recent years. Native trees have adapted over centuries to cope with our weather and stand a greater chance of surviving into the future. The fact that they have been planted as part of a collective, community initiative makes today all the sweeter."

people Environment : Making a difference



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes

Earth day 2022

the Earth. 20 million Americans were inspired to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate against the impacts of 150 years of industrial development which had left a growing legacy of serious human health issues.

By 1990 Earth Day had gone Global, mobilising 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage. It led to creation of the EPA, the Clean Air Act and other environmental protections in the USA.

This Earth Day, 2022, across the planet people are organising clean ups, planting trees and pollinator gardens and organising teach-ins.

One would argue that EVERY day should be Earth Day. We should #InvestInOurPlanet every day. I would argue that requires massive change in global, national and regional policies.

So long as we have policies that undo all the volunteer work that people carry out, we will struggle to move forwards at all; indeed one could argue that as volunteers, we are simply being busy assuaging our individual consciences, whilst the world continues to be destroyed by unscrupulous companies looking for profit; and that most people are too lazy, too busy or too tired to care.

Take the example of the River Walk in Skibbereen. Ilen River Litter Removal and Ilen River Nature Matters (both

Friday April 22 Is this year's Earth Day. The theme this year is #InvestInOurPlanet. earthday.org/earth-day-2022/ lists activities taking place across the globe, most of which seem to be happening in North America. At time of writing this, only one is listed on the Island of Ireland, where the charity Action Renewables, based in Belfast, will have a work from home day and will publish recipes for meat-free Friday.

Earth Day started in 1970 following a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara California. Inspired to direct the energy of students to increase public consciousness about air and water pollution, a young activist, Denis Hayes, organised teach-ins on college campuses on April 22, a weekday falling between Spring Break and Final Exams. Thousands of colleges and universities organised protests against the deterioration of the environment. Groups that had been individually fighting against environmental destruction united in a call for



Why is it that clean-up is left to volunteers? Why is it that clean-up even needed?

Throughout Ireland, local authorities are responsible for keeping public places under their control clear of litter. The policy is that they provide street cleaning, including placing and emptying of litter bins. They are supposed to take legal action against people who break or ignore the law that makes littering an offence for which one can be fined up to €4,000. This local authorities responsibility may be possible to carry out effectively if there was not quite so much litter dumped or mindlessly dropped in the first place.

There is clearly a need for a combination of education, incentive and implementation of the law and policy change. If we educate people that damaging the environment hurts it and the animals living here, including human animals, we also must enforce existing laws against

environmental damage; and we must make and follow policies consistent with damage to the environment being wholly unacceptable.

If we decide damage to the environment is NOT acceptable, then we must include damage from commercial activities and planning activities. We must make the links between degradation of the environment, climate change, public health, migration, food security and war understandable for people.

That our planet is at risk of becoming largely inhospitable to humans and animals alike is no longer a matter for discussion, the evidence hits our news outlets monthly.

Earth Day was set up to regularly remind us to educate and take action. Its website lists 52 ways to take action, not just on one day, but every day.

Earth Day 2022 aims to engage more than 1 billion people, governments, institutions, and businesses in collective responsibility to "push aside the barriers erected by the ancient, dirty fossil fuel economy and old technologies of centuries past" instead redirecting attention towards a "21st century economy that brings back the health of our planet, protects our species, and provides opportunities for all".

If you have any type of environmental activity planned on or around April 22, please list it on www.earthday.org and become part of this campaign focused on "reframing the conversation, accelerating action, and bringing people together to understand that this is within our reach if we work together for the future of our planet."

Lets put West Cork on the Earth Day Map.

#InvestInOurPlanet

STOP ECOCIDE

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www.stopECOCIDE.earth

@ecocidelaw

can be found on Facebook) both recently reported on the disgusting state of the river walk behind the Eldon Hotel. It was in such a state that Ann Haigh's five-year-old son, having worked with her and others to clear litter elsewhere, nagged her to go back and clean up the river walk; they took their

rubbish bags and gloves and did an amazing job.

That the environment should be so badly treated, with no care for the other creatures whose home is along that stretch of river shows a complete lack of regard for the planet which we call home.

Voices of Experience share climate change stories

Cork County Council has published a collection of Climate Change stories, poems and photographs submitted by the older people of Cork County.

Older citizens of Cork County were invited to share their stories of what climate change means to them in their locality, how they have been affected and what they would like to say to future generations. A thought-provoking collection of these stories has been released in the new publication entitled 'Voices of Experience'.

A collaboration with Cork

County Age Friendly Programme and Cork County Older Peoples Council, the book shares a unique insight into how older people have experienced climate over their lifetime.

Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr. Gillian Coughlan welcomed the new publication, "When it comes to discussing climate change, older people have one advantage, they have watched it happen and have experienced its impacts. Many of the storytellers in this book imagine ways of responding positively. Stories are approached not just with anger or concern

or fear but with wistfulness and a gentle nostalgia for what has changed. There are beautiful descriptions of honest moments and treasured memories from authentic voices which stop and make us think. I would like to thank Cork County Older People's Council and all of the contributors to this book. I hope that people will enjoy reading it, but also reflect and be motivated to make change".

Elizabeth Maddox, Chair of Cork Older People's Council commented that, "Storytelling has always been a strong part of our culture and our learning. We

remember and trust stories told to us by our parents, grandparents and elders. While these are individual perspectives, the collective stories have the power to shift the narrative and contribute to positive change."

'Voices of Experience' is now available in Cork County Library branches throughout the county and digitally on the Borrowbox app. It is also available for download on the Council's website www.corkcoco.ie where a podcast featuring a selection of the stories can also be enjoyed.

Clonakilty Playground project slides towards finish line

Last month, at a presentation given by Eilish Lawlor to Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce, the good news of substantial progression on an upgrade of the town's playground was shared. €123,000 sourced from grant funding and local fundraising has been allocated to the project, thanks to the marvellous work of a committed few, with match funding now being sought to bring the project to completion.

The current playground on the by-pass road is in a dilapidated state and its refurbishment has been a key aim of Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce, which established a committee to drive the project.

Cork County Council has now agreed to lease the playground to the Chamber for the duration of the works and, following a competitive tendering process, Browne Bros has been chosen to carry out the work, which will include extensive resurfacing,

removal of most of the existing equipment and installation of 26 new items.

In her presentation Eilish explained that, "Outdoor play supports cognitive and social development but unfortunately children became less physically active during the pandemic. Our research shows that more people would use the playground if it was improved; families and tourists are currently travelling outside of Clonakilty to access better facilities."

In keeping with Clonakilty's autism-friendly plan, the new playground is designed to be fully inclusive, with Junior and Senior play areas, and sensory areas.

To total cost of the refurbishment is €190,000 and to date the committee has secured a €100,000 grant from LEADER with a further €23,000 raised through donations and local fundraising.

The project is now poised to begin and the playground will close for two weeks in either May or June for works to be carried out with the new playground open to the public in Summer 2022.

Pandemic restrictions have severely limited public fundraising opportunities in the past few years but bridge funding from Clann Credo is in place until further pledges can be secured to cover the shortfall. The committee asks that the public please support their fundraising efforts in coming weeks. If you would like to make a pledge please contact the chamber at chamber@clonakilty.ie.



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SPRING 2022 CLASS TIMETABLE

MON
SPINNING 7.00am – 8.00am
KETTLEBELLS 10.00am – 11.00am
SWEAT 1.15pm – 1.45pm
IRISH DANCING (Deirdre 086 2665776) 3.15pm – 4.15pm
YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060) 5.30pm – 6.30pm
ZUMBA (Flavie 087 6548138) 6.45pm – 7.45pm
SPINNING 6.30pm – 7.30pm and 7.30pm – 8.30pm

TUE
CIRCUITS 10.00am – 11.00am
AQUACISE 11.00am – 11.45am
CORK CITY BALLET (Alan 087 7851225) 2.15pm – 8.00pm
FAT ATTACK CIRCUIT 6.30pm – 7.30pm

PRICES

MEMBERS: €5 per class
NON-MEMBERS: €8
Please check directly with us for specific start dates.

WED
SPINNING 7.00am – 8.00am
BOXERCISE 10.00am – 11.00am
SWEAT 1.15pm – 1.45pm
SWIM STRENGTH (penguins only) 4.30pm – 5.30pm
YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060) 5.30pm – 6.30pm
ZUMBA (Flavie 087 6548138) 6.45pm – 7.45pm
SPINNING 6.30pm – 7.30pm and 7.30pm – 8.30pm
YOGA (Matt 086 8537232) 8.00pm – 9.30pm

THUR
YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060) 7.00am – 8.00am
STEP AEROBICS 9.30am – 10.30am
AQUACISE 10.00am – 10.45am
SWEAT 1.15pm – 1.45pm
YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060) 6.30pm – 7.30pm
CIRCUITS 6.00pm – 7.00pm

FRI
SPINNING 7.00am – 8.00am
ZUMBA GOLD (Flavie 087 6548138) 10.30am – 11.30am
CIRCUITS 10.00am – 11.00am
TEEN FITNESS 4.30pm – 5.30pm
CIRCUITS WITH SALLY 6.00pm – 7.00pm

SAT
HIIT 10.00am – 10.45am

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CLONAKILTYPARK LEISURE CLUB



CLONAKILTY PARK HOTEL

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

LGBTI+
MATTERS

BRÓD is an LGBTI+ Community Group based in West Cork. A mix of LGBTI+ people and allies, the group's mission is to 'Support, Advocate and Increase Visibility' for the LGBTI+ community in West Cork.

by Abi O'Callaghan Platt

Cork Women's Weekend

This May bank holiday weekend is the Cork Women's Weekend. The Cork Women's Fun Weekend began in 1984 and is organised by queer women for queer women. The three day event is held every year on the May bank holiday weekend in various venues in the city centre. Apart from the Masquerade Ball, all events are free!

The weekend begins on Friday April 29 with the annual drag king competition. Beginning at 8pm in The Hidden Attic

women sporting fake beards and male personas perform skits on stage, competing to win the title of drag king. Live music by the female-fronted pop-rock band Sparkle.

Saturday morning focuses on a little calmer and quieter activities, with workshops on Pilates and body positivity following on from the opening circle at 11am. These workshops will be held in LINC, a community resource centre for lesbians and bisexual women and their families in Cork, which is on

White Street.

In the afternoon there are a number of different events. At 1.45pm there is a menopause café event. According to Menopause Café Ireland 'Menopause Cafes provide a time and space to discuss the menopause rather than delivering information about the menopause. Offers a discussion with no pre-set agenda and without expectation or experts'. Following on from this there is a BBQ from 2.30pm to 4pm. Both events are also held in LINC.

For something a little more active, a badminton doubles tournament will be held over in Erin's Own GAA Club, in Glouthane, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

The main event of the weekend is the black and white masquerade ball! This is a chance to get all dressed up and dance. The ball will be held in The Address Hotel. The evening begins at 8pm with a drinks reception followed by music by the band Witless and DJ Andrea. For tickets email corkwomensweek-

end.est1984@gmail.com and tickets are €20.

On Sunday everyone converges on An Spailpin Fanach at 3pm for the pub quiz. The quiz covers loads of topics and is always really busy, full of people hung over from the night before! After the quiz the LINC drama group perform a comedy skit and then more dancing. This time music is provided by Cork female duo Velvet, recreating swing and Jazz hits.

Herbs for an easier menopause



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

We hosted a really inspiring webinar recently on using Herbs, supplements and lifestyle adjustments to ease the transition to menopause. The expert who was answering questions was Alison Cullen from A.Vogel, who is a nutrition therapist and practitioner for many years and an expert in women's health. Alison is also in incredibly inspiring speaker and is passionate about finding the right solution to each woman's unique menopause symptoms.

In many ways the subject of the Menopause is still somewhat taboo – many of us have very little idea of what it entails, when it might start, how long it might last and how it might affect us. And for many women (myself included!) the menopause can arrive quite suddenly and throw us into the unknown. So the more we talk to other women, read up and ask questions, the better prepared we will be and (hopefully) we will have an easier smoother menopause as a result.

One really good thing to know is that with some easy lifestyle adjustments, most women will go through the menopause with only a few

symptoms. Some really lucky ones will have none at all! However, a small number of women will experience deep hormonal shifts and these can cause issues in the menopause, but with relatively inexpensive nutritional and herbal supports these can often be eased.

As with so many things in life, preparation is key – we all know that the healthier and fitter we are, the better our chances are of having an easy menopause. So diet, exercise and lifestyle are really important factors and the earlier you start to prepare, the better. If you are in your early to mid 40s, you are at the ideal age to start this journey.

Alison was very emphatic about one thing – 'stress reduction' is key to managing our hormones, at all phases of life. When we are stressed, our adrenal glands are very busy producing adrenaline and cortisol, and this will make your ride through the menopause a lot bumpier. And tied in to this is reducing your caffeine intake, as caffeine plays havoc with our hormones!

Staying hydrated is hugely important during the menopause, Alison mentioned drinking enough water about five times during the webinar! Keeping hydrated helps to boost energy (dehydration affects energy levels), can fix sluggish digestion (enough water keeps your friendly bacteria alive and thriving) and will ease painful Joints (dehydration can worsen joint pain). If you have heart palpitations and hot flashes in the night, drink more water.

When we are approaching the menopause our moods can become very dis-regulated, and that came up repeatedly in the questions.

Low mood, low energy and low libido was mentioned by many women. Oestrogen is a mood enhancer, and falling levels can have a huge impact on how you feel every day. Here, once again, herbs to the rescue! A fermented soy supplement can help to gently raise and balance oestrogen, and this can have a direct impact on your mood. Called Menopause Support from A/Vogel, this is available in all good Healthfood

shops.

If 'anger' is one of your main symptoms, if you keep catching yourself reacting in a way that doesn't feel like the real you, and if your cycle length is varying and becoming erratic, then the herb Agnus Castus could be a good idea for you. You have to take it for three cycles to see if it's right for you. Agnus castus doesn't boost any one hormone but will help your body to regulate hormones and it can help if you are bleeding too heavily. Magnesium also helps to balance moods, and in Organico we also recommend a supplement by Viridian, which includes Saffron and Calendula, both amazing at balancing hormones. If anxiety is predominant or causing distress, try the Passiflora range by Vogel – there's a spray you can carry around to use when you need it, as well as drops and a new tablet.

Alison suggested that if Agnus Castus and magnesium didn't help anger issues, or if you are feeling sluggish, then it's time to look at your liver. Your liver needs taking care of

before and during the menopause. Our liver synthesises all the hormones – once they have done their job they are sent to the liver to be deactivated and excreted. If your liver is struggling this process might not be efficient so it could create further imbalances. Your liver also cleans your blood, makes and stores energy, and keeps your blood sugars at the right level. Taking a Spring and Autumn course of the herbs Milk thistle, Artichoke and Dandelion can really help your liver to stay in shape.

Several women had questions around aches and pains – and someone even commented that it was very reassuring to hear that feeling very achy was a common complaint for menopausal women. Falling oestrogen can affect the hydration in your joints, muscles and ligaments. This can make you feel less like exercising but it's very important to keep active for several reasons. If your joints and muscles are sore, the best kind of exercise is yoga, swimming and walking. For reducing inflammation in the body, Alison's suggestion included paying attention to your diet and making sure you had good Omega 3 Levels – lots of flax seeds, oily fish and possibly a supplement as well. Also drinking lots of water! And finally there is a herbal supplement that can help sore joints, it's called Devil's Claw and can be taken in drops or tablet form. Magnesium is also important here and a good quality collagen supplement can be a good idea – collagen helps joints and skin as well.

This is just a taste of what we covered in the discussion with Alison – if you would like to receive the playback, email me on info@organico.ie and I will send it on to you.

Share a cup of tea to raise funds for vital dementia supports and services

After two long years, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is inviting everyone to come together again for a cup of tea, a chat and maybe a treat or two on May 5 to help raise funds for vital dementia supports and services.

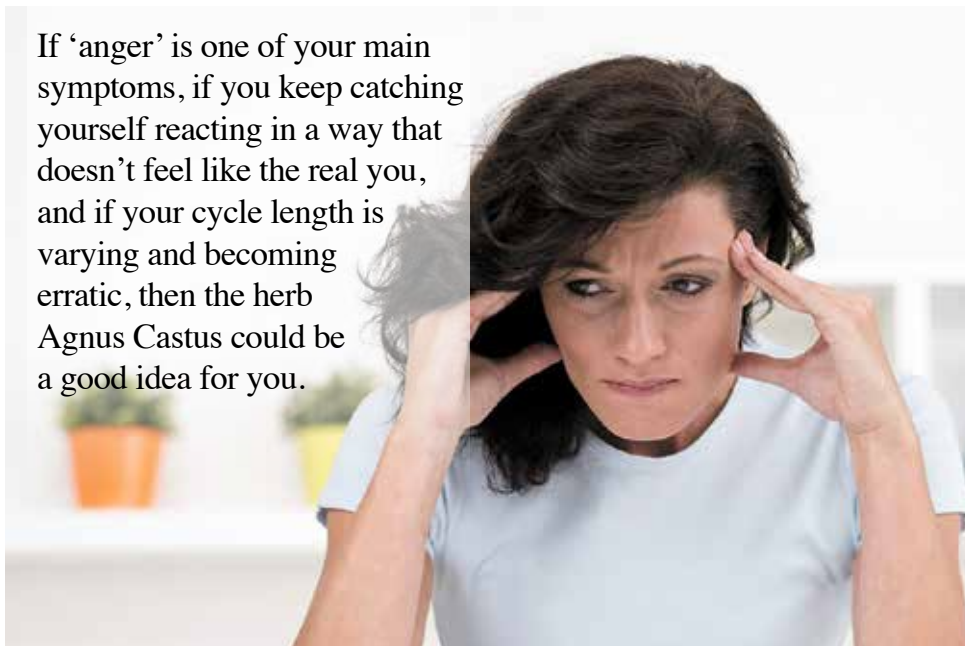
The ASI is asking the people of Cork to get involved with local Tea Day events in their homes, gardens, workplaces, schools, local community centres or somewhere special.

The traditional Alzheimer's Tea Day was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19, and the event had to be moved online. Now Alzheimer's Tea Day, the ASI's biggest and most important fundraiser, is back.

The ASI aims to raise vital funds to provide supports and services to help families living with dementia nationwide.

There are an estimated 7,509 people living with dementia in Cork and each year more than 11,000 people develop the disease across the country – that's at least 30 people every day. By supporting Tea Day, you can make an incredible difference: €10 provides an hour at an Alzheimer's cafe for a person with dementia; €35 provides one hour of Cognitive Stimulation Therapy; €70 provides a session of Musical Therapy; €150 runs a Social club for one day.

Find all the supports you need for hosting a Tea Day on Alzheimer.ie. Can't host a Tea Day this year? You can still support dementia care and services by making a donation on the website.



If 'anger' is one of your main symptoms, if you keep catching yourself reacting in a way that doesn't feel like the real you, and if your cycle length is varying and becoming erratic, then the herb Agnus Castus could be a good idea for you.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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

Laura Dullea and Larissa Farr at the St. Patrick's Day parade in Dunmanway



David and Charlie Kavanagh from Ballinhassig pictured at the Kinsale Record Fair last month where all door proceeds went to the Irish Red Cross to help the crisis in Ukraine. Picture: John Allen

West Cork Cycling Club to take on Malin to Mizen for Irish Community Air Ambulance

A team of 18 cyclists from Clonakilty Cycling Club is embarking on a mammoth 616km challenge to raise funds for the Irish Community Air Ambulance. The group is aiming to cycle from Malin Head to Mizen Head over four days between April 29 and May 2.

The Irish Community Air Ambulance is Ireland's only charity-funded Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) Air Ambulance. It works in partnership with the National Ambulance Service and responds to serious incidents and medical emergencies from its base in Rathcool in Co Cork.

Preparations are well underway for the event with club training sessions now taking place four times a week. A

support team will be on hand throughout the cycle with distances ranging from 141km to 172km each day.

Anthony O'Donovan, Chairperson of Clonakilty Cycling Club said, "Malin to Mizen is on the bucket list for most cyclists but it's essential to put the miles in on the saddle first. Our team is made up of cyclists of all ages and abilities, they have been training consistently for months. Cycling can be a dangerous sport, when it goes wrong it can go catastrophically wrong. As a rural club, we cycle the highways and byways of West Cork and it's likely the Irish Community Air Ambulance would be called if any of us ended up in a serious accident. We all know of someone who has benefited from a speedy transit to hospital

by means of the Air Ambulance. We're equally conscious of just how much it costs to provide such an important service. That is why we're delighted to be taking on the challenge in aid of the HEMS Air Ambulance."

The Irish Community Air Ambulance has responded to more than 1,300 emergency calls since it was first launched in July 2019. Last year it was tasked to 89 road traffic collisions including numerous incidents involving cyclists.

CEO of the Irish Community Air Ambulance, Micheál Sheridan said, "Each tasking costs approximately €3,500 which is why fundraisers like Clonakilty Cycling Club's Malin to Mizen challenge are so important to us. Our helicopter is airborne in under four minutes, travels at up to 300km an hour and

can reach any location within a 25,000sq km area in less than 30 minutes. When time is critical we bring hope and medical expertise to seriously ill and injured patients. However, this year we're also facing soaring fuel costs. That means we need to continue to raise funds so that we can continue to bring people to the hospital that suits their life saving needs, not just the closest geographically as well as continuing to fund our ground based Critical Care Volunteer Doctor service.

Clonakilty Cycling Club has set up an online donation page ahead of the event: Go to [donate.ie](https://www.donate.ie)

For more information about the service or to make a donation directly to the Irish Community Air Ambulance visit communityairambulance.ie

New exhibit at Lusitania Museum & Old Head Signal Tower

The Lusitania Museum at the Old Head Signal Tower is delighted to announce a new exhibit going on display for the 2022 Season. In 2021 a treasured family heirloom was donated to the museum by an American lady whose grandmother survived the sinking of the Lusitania. In a recent Nationwide special on the Lusitania Museum & Old Head Signal Tower, an emotional Jackie McDougall Weiner recalled her

cherished childhood memories of her grandmother, Alice, talking about her extraordinary experience.

On 7 May 1915, Alice Middleton McDougall was dragged down with the suction of the Lusitania, and pulled through a porthole, injuring her neck. Her unconscious body was rescued and brought to Cobh, but believed to be dead, she was placed in the morgue. Fortunately, the slight movement

of her finger was observed by a doctor and Alice went on to live a long life, even appearing on the NBC Television show 'This is Your Life' in 1956 speaking about the Lusitania tragedy.

Last year, Jackie made the decision to donate an item of clothing worn by her grandmother on that fateful day to the Lusitania Museum, after making contact with the Committee online.

'I took her money belt, I

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wrapped and took it to the Post Office in my town. It was a very difficult thing to do. I was relieved when Mr.Begley contacted me and gave me a picture and showed me that he had indeed received it.' said Jackie, speaking from Oregon, United States. Jackie added that she would love to travel to the Old Head Signal Tower to see the Lusitania Museum.

'What the people at the museum in Kinsale are doing is trying to expand and make it very special. Anyone can look up facts, we need to keep the emotional story alive and there are many of us alive now that have heard the stories first hand from those who experienced it. My dream is to get there someday.'

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

The Brain Gut connection

More and more people are aware of the Gut-Brain Axis but today I am talking about the importance of the Brain-Gut connection.

When suffering from gastrointestinal symptoms that have been going on for a long time, many people assume that it must be to do with food sensitivities or low-level ongoing infection in the gut. I often find these people go on restrictive diets and try many alternative remedies but, ultimately, they still have chronic, never ending gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhoea, consti-

pation, bloating and pain.

The gut-brain axis is well researched in literature and the connections between inflammatory foods and neurological symptoms are also well researched. However, the impact of brain function on gut function is often overlooked.

The brain is constantly communicating with all the organs in our body, including the gut, and it does this through the vagal nerve. The vagal nerve, amongst other things, plays a role in your ability to swallow, gut motility, digestive enzyme release and,

of course, afferent input back to the brain.

In my clinic, vagal nerve function can be assessed using some simple examination techniques. For example; by listening to the abdomen with a stethoscope, motility can be assessed. You should be able to hear the gurgling sound of digestion as the food moves through the gut. Looking at the gag reflex or the uvula at the back of the throat rising when you say “Ahhhh” can also help to assess vagal function. When the uvula doesn’t move much

or the gag reflex is weak it indicates the vagal nerve may not be functioning well.

There are also physical signs of a weakened vagal function such as if you struggle to swallow supplements or pills, or find that food sits in your stomach after eating; this is often described as feeling like a brick in your stomach and can indicate a lack of stomach acid.

It is common for health practitioners to ignore the brain-gut connection in patients with chronic gut complaints. Interventions such as enzymes, probiotics and other digestive aids may improve digestive health but the clinical focus should also support brain health to improve the brain-gut axis.

How to improve vagal function:

Nerves are like muscles in that they need constant exercise to make them work properly. If you break your arm and it is put in a cast, your muscles shrink within a few weeks of inactivity. It is the same for neurons. If you don’t activate them they lose function so if your brain is not able to stimulate the vagal nerve properly you can lose gut function and it can lead to chronic gastrointestinal symptoms.

For many people it can be very helpful to stimulate the



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic

vagal nerve, or to put it another way, exercise the vagal nerve.

These are the simple techniques that will help improve your vagal nerve function:

Gargle: The first exercise is to gargle with water several times a day. This is easily done. Take a sip of water, tip your head back and gargle. Continue to drink the whole glass in this way. The more vigorously you can do this the better.

Sing: Singing, especially singing loudly, is another great exercise, working the muscles at the back of the throat and therefore stimulating the vagal nerve. It doesn’t matter if you are a good singer or not; if you don’t want others to hear you put your favourite track on in the car and

sing along!

Gag: Activating the gag reflex is another good exercise. You do not want to jab yourself in the back of the throat but, if you get a box of tongue depressors and lay the depressor on the back of your tongue, by pushing down you will activate the gag reflex.

In terms of exercise, activating the gag reflex is like lifting weights. Singing and gargling are more like doing sprints. And just like going to the gym, it takes time and consistent effort to start to see some changes. Improvements in gut function, like better motility and less constipation, ability to swallow and digest foods, are all possible. Some find changes happen quickly but for others it takes more time.

So if you are suffering with chronic gut issues, assessing the Brain-Gut axis and vagal nerve is a good idea. Even if you do not have significant constipation, leaky gut, or other GI issues, you may still benefit from building vagal tone with the exercises above.

Eoin Roe is a chiropractor and functional medicine practitioner based at Roe Health in Skibbereen. If you would like to find more information please contact him through their website www.roehealth.ie.

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Dr. Eoin Roe DC CFMP

Dealing with your emotions can set you free

We can feel alone and exhausted when strong emotions are following us around all day long. Many of us are living with negative emotions that are overwhelming and affecting our quality of life. It is normal to push these feelings down to try to suppress and ignore them hoping they will go away, but

the reality is that the more we do this, the stronger they become.

Imagine your emotions as a small child who wants your attention. You are working from home, you’re busy and your mind needs to be focused on work-related things. The child knows that you are working and they want to be good and not disturb you but they are experi-

encing uncomfortable feelings in their body that they do not understand. It’s scary and they need you to help them figure this out and feel better.

They wait as long as they can and they know they shouldn’t try to get your attention but they can’t help but call out to you from the other room. You’re busy and the tone seems ok

so you pretend you haven’t heard.... A few minutes later there is a knock on the door and you call “Just give me a minute”. Ten minutes later they sneak into the room and this time they are standing quietly by your shoulder after a minute they start tugging on your sleeve. You explain calmly that you are right in the middle of some really important work but you will be with them soon. They go away as you ask but these feelings are growing and becoming more and more intense. So they go out into the kitchen and, in their frustration, are banging about and making a lot of noise... Then you hear things go quiet, until... suddenly there are raised voices and tears in the living room as they start a fight with a sibling. There is no option left for you, you must deal with this NOW!

Our emotions are like this; we can try to contain, push them down, or ignore them. This may work for a while, even years, but the more we do this, the stronger they develop, and the closer they rise to the surface. Until something apparently small can cause floods of tears or an explosion of emotion, that makes us feel out of control, embarrassed or scared, which further fuels the situation.



Amanda Roe
Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

If we refer back to the child metaphor, I wonder in real life would you ignore a child like that?

What would have happened if we had taken a moment to stop, listen and support the child on the first, second or third request? In my experience the sooner we support a child the more likely they are to feel loved and supported and find it easier to navigate their emotions.

Even though we are adults the same is true for us. Emotions that express themselves strongly in our body and hijack our behaviours can be scary.

It can be helpful for us to understand that emotions are psycho-somatic meaning a thought can cause a strong emo-

tional reaction in our body that is a subconscious response and not controlled by our conscious mind. Hypnotherapy and psycho-emotional techniques bridge the gap between the conscious and subconscious and help us to influence and change these behaviours.

I have taught emotional coping skills in primary school and kids find this fun and really helpful for dealing with feelings that seem stuck in their stomach, throat, head or causing disruptive behaviour. Ideally the younger we learn these skills the better, however it is never too late to free ourselves from overwhelming emotions.

Even after decades it is possible to recover from trauma, anxiety, depression, panic attacks or overwhelming feelings like fear, grief or low self-esteem that are impacting on your health and quality of life.

If you are looking for support or interested in learning more Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Acupuncturist, Life & Health Coach providing holistic solutions for your mind, body and emotions. You can contact her via her website www.roehealth.ie or call/text 087 633 1898.

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ROE HEALTH+ HYPNOTHERAPY & ACUPUNCTURE

Clonakilty Credit Union asks what you would like to happen in the event of your death

No one likes to think about death, be it your own or that of a loved one, but the simple fact is a bereavement can result in very significant expenses and complicated paperwork for loved ones, at an already difficult time. Clonakilty Credit Union cares about its members, and their families, and offers a number of benefits to ease these worries.

The first benefit that Clonakilty Credit Union provides is a service called Death Benefit Insurance, a fixed lump sum of €1,950 to help pay for end of life expenses such as funerals.

Clerical Officer Emma Griffin explains that, "Our valuable Death Benefit Insurance is provided free of charge and is subject to our member having a share balance of at least €100 at the time of their death, and having joined the credit union before the age of 70. This is service to help with funeral costs and does not form part of Nomination funds."

And so on to the second ben-

efit offered, Nomination. This is a unique facility for members whereby, if you are over 16 years of age, you can nominate someone to receive the amount (also called 'property') in your credit union accounts upon your death. The nominated property does not form part of a deceased person's estate.

Although this is advisable for all members, nomination is particularly of benefit if the member dies without leaving a will; the property left in the credit union will not have to pass through the sometimes slow moving intestacy process.

You can nominate a person or persons of choice to receive your property, presently up to a maximum value of €23,000. Any amount in excess of that will form part of your estate.

"You can change the details of your nomination as often as you like if your personal circumstances change or your nominee passes away before you," Emma confirms. "The most recent nomination is the valid one. A completed

nomination must be signed and witnessed so ask about it in our office and a staff member will be happy to help you fill out the form and witness your signature."

The third benefit offered by Clonakilty Credit Union is Loan Protection and Life Savings Insurance at no cost to the member.

Loan Protection Insurance* means that a member's loan debt will be wiped clean in the event of their death, relieving a huge burden from their loved ones. Banks and other financial institutions charge a separate insurance premium on top of loan repayments for this service but it is free at Clonakilty Credit Union.

Life savings insurance* is an additional incentive for members to save regularly. "The amount of insurance benefit to which a member is entitled cannot be calculated until the member has unfortunately passed away and will depend on the savings they made during the term of membership and

the age that lodgements were made," explains Emma. "All Clonakilty Credit Union's member shares are insured up to a maximum of €5,000 and the benefit will form part of the funds that are covered under a valid Nomination. Again, members must have joined before their 70th birthday to be eligible for this payment."

It is worth remembering that it makes sense to leave your savings intact, especially as you get older. It can often make more sense to borrow money using your savings as security. This way you are covered twice in the event of your demise; your loan will be covered plus you will get a top up on your savings under the Life Saving Policy.

For further information on any of the topics discussed here please visit Clonakilty Credit Union and speak to any member of staff.

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www.clonakiltycreditunion.ie/nomination

For more information read the editorial on this page.



people Food, Health & Lifestyle



Bantry woman makes 500 km journey on horseback to raise funds to build a barn for care farm

Sandra Schmidt has started her journey on horseback along the 500 km Beara Breifne way to raise funds to finish building a barn for the Hairy Henry Care Farm, a therapeutic riding centre in Bantry.

Sandra teaches children and adults with additional needs, autism and mental health challenges at the Hairy Henry centre.

The barn is necessary for the centre so services can be offered

all year round, regardless of the weather.

With €48,000 in Leader funding secured for the project and almost €30,000 raised by Sandra over the past few years, another €25,000 is needed to complete the project.

Sandra is covering her own costs on the journey, which she is making with her horse Flora and Trudi, her airedale terrier.

Go to gofund.me and search for 'Hairy Henry's Homeward

Bound Tour' to support Sandra and Hairy Henry Care Farm to build a barn. on FlightRadar24.com. Both the webchat and WhatsApp facilities can be readily accessed on corkairport.com.

Left: Sandra Schmidt with her horse Flora and terrier Trudy at the start of their 500 km journey along the Beara Breifne.

Cope Foundation hosts recruitment open day

Cope Foundations has launched a recruitment drive to fill a variety of roles across a range of departments. The event at the Metro-pole Hotel will take place on Wednesday, April 6 from 2pm to 8pm. People are invited to meet with some of Cope Foundation's team to discuss potential career opportunities within the organisation. The non-profit organisation employs staff in sectors such as nursing, multi-disciplinary services, care assistants, clerical and more.

www.cope-foundation.ie.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Entitlement to Maternity Leave & Maternity Benefit

There are a number of queries which may arise for women in work who are pregnant. The following are some frequently asked questions that arise:

How much maternity leave can I take from work?

As an employee, you have the right to take 26 weeks' maternity leave if you become pregnant. You also have the right to take up to 16 weeks' additional maternity leave. You can take this time off work from full-time, casual or part-time employment. It does not matter how long you have been working for your employer. You must take at least 2 weeks' maternity leave before your baby is due, and at least 4 weeks after the baby is born.

Can I take time off for medical visits?

While you are pregnant, you can take time off for medical visits connected with the pregnancy. You can take as much time off as you need for these visits, including the time for travelling to and from the appointment and for the appointment itself. You must give your employer a note from your doctor to confirm the pregnancy, and give 2 weeks' notice of your medical visits. You should show your appointment card if your employer asks to see it at any time after your first appointment.

You can also take time off for medical visits, for up to 14 weeks after the birth. You have the right to be paid while keeping these medical appointments, both before and after the birth.

Can I take time off for antenatal classes?

You can take paid time off work

to attend some antenatal classes. You are entitled to attend one set of antenatal classes except for the last 3 classes of the set. Fathers can take paid time off to attend the last 2 antenatal classes immediately before the birth.

How do I apply for Maternity Leave?

You should apply to your employer in writing at least 4 weeks before you want to start maternity leave and you must provide a medical certificate confirming your pregnancy. You must also give at least 4 weeks' written notice if you want to take the 16 weeks' additional maternity leave. You can give both these notices at the same time.

Will my employer pay me while I am on Maternity Leave?

There is no obligation on employers to pay you while you are on maternity leave. However, some employers will continue to pay an employee, in full, while she is on maternity leave and require her to have any Maternity Benefit paid to them. You should check your contract of employment to see what applies to you.

Who is entitled to receive Maternity Benefit?

Maternity Benefit is paid by the Department of Social Protection to women who are on maternity leave from work and have a certain number of paid PRSI contributions on their social insurance record. They must be in insurable employment up to the first day of their maternity leave.

The PRSI contributions can be from both employment or

self-employment - the PRSI classes that count for Maternity Benefit are A, E, H and S (self-employed). Members of the Defence Forces who pay PRSI at Class H are insured for Maternity Benefit but it is not payable while they are in service. You should check with your local Citizens Information Centre to see if you meet the PRSI requirements

What is the current rate of Maternity Benefit?

The Maternity Benefit rate in 2022 is €250 per week. Maternity Benefit is paid directly into your bank or building society account (a current or deposit account, not a mortgage account) or you can choose to have it paid directly into your employer's bank account. Payment is made each week in advance.

How do I apply for Maternity Benefit?

You can apply for Maternity Benefit online at MyWelfare.ie. To apply online you must have a Public Services Card (linked to your mobile phone number) and a verified MyGovID account.

Alternatively, you can fill in a Maternity Benefit application form and send it to the Maternity Benefit section of the Department of Social Protection. You can get a form from your local Social Welfare office or Citizens Information Centre

When should I apply for Maternity Benefit?

You should apply for the payment at least 6 weeks before you intend to go on maternity leave (12 weeks if you are self-employed). If you are already on certain social welfare payments then you may get



half-rate Maternity Benefit.

I have recently returned to Ireland from working in another EU country. Will I qualify for Maternity benefit?

If you were previously insurably employed in a country covered by EU Regulations and you have paid at least one full-rate PRSI contribution in Ireland, you may combine your insurance record in that country with your Irish PRSI contributions to help you qualify for Maternity Benefit. You must be in insurable employment in Ireland currently and have paid your most recent PRSI contribution in Ireland

How long is Maternity Benefit paid?

Maternity Benefit is paid for 26 weeks (156 days). Maternity Benefit is a 6-day week payment which covers Monday to Saturday. Sunday is not treated as a day of entitlement to Maternity Benefit.

At least 2 weeks and not more than 16 weeks of leave must be taken before the end of the week in which your baby is due. To ensure you take the minimum 2-week period of maternity leave before the birth of your baby, you must start your

maternity leave on the Monday before the week in which your baby is due. For example, if your due date is Wednesday 12 October 2022, the latest date for the start of your maternity leave is Monday 3 October 2022.

What is the situation if I take additional unpaid maternity leave?

You can take a further 16 weeks of unpaid maternity leave which must be taken immediately after the end of your 26 weeks' paid Maternity Benefit. This period is not covered by Maternity Benefit but you will be entitled to a credited social insurance contribution for each week of unpaid leave you take (up to the maximum of 16).

Must I give notice to my employer about returning to work?

You must give your employer at least 4 weeks' written notice that you intend to return to work. If you do not comply with these notice requirements, you may lose your rights.

Can I return to my old job after maternity leave?

You are treated as being in employment while you are on maternity leave and additional

maternity leave. This means that you have the right to return to work to the same job with the same contract of employment. If this is too difficult to arrange, your employer must provide suitable alternative work on terms that are not 'less favourable' than in your previous job.

If pay or other conditions have improved while you have been on maternity leave, then you should get the improvements when you return to work. If you decide not to return to work after your period of maternity leave, you must give your employer notice in the usual way, as set out in your contract.

Is there any payment for fathers?

Paternity Benefit is a payment for employed and self-employed people who are on paternity leave from work and covered by social insurance (PRSI). It is paid for 2 weeks and is available for any child born or adopted on or after 1 September 2016. You can start paternity leave at any time within the first 6 months following the birth or adoption placement.

If you need further information about any of the issues raised above or you have other questions, you can call a member of the local Citizens Information Service in Bantry on 0818 07 8390. They will be happy to assist you and if necessary arrange an appointment for you.

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



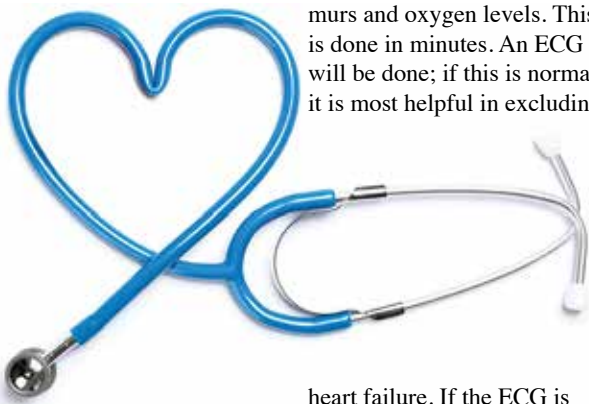
DOCTOR'S ORDERS

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.

I don't tend to get a lot of feedback from my articles so I can only hope that readers enjoy them and learn from my experience and particular 'take' on GP and Emergency Medicine. It is also a real privilege to be in the company of some really excellent contributors to this monthly publication.

Treatment of heart failure is important: There are some drug classes with funny names but I think it is important to understand how they work and how they come to the market. There have been some amazing advances.



I recently attended an online conference beamed in from Edinburgh, so this month I am looking at the earlier diagnosis of heart failure (Dropsy) the symptoms, and the advances in treatment that are really making a difference and saving lives.

Also, I love the word serendipity, which means the chance discovery of something that is beneficial!

So many times in Medicine, somebody discovers a new treatment purely by chance with great benefits – penicillin, water tablets and Viagra to name but a few.

So, what has all this got to

Serendipity and the heart... the drugs that really make a difference

do with your heart?

Heart failure is the situation when the heart is not pumping enough blood around the body: It is common as we get older and often poorly recognised particularly in ED when the symptoms are missed in up to 50 per cent of presentations, as patients come along with coughs, Covid and shortness of breath from other suspected causes. It is so important not to miss the early symptoms.

What are the symptoms? Well, I have talked about heart attacks; heart failure is usually less dramatic but again, time is of the essence, as early treatment is hugely beneficial. Increasing shortness of breath over a few weeks, ankle swelling, waking up at night short of breath and inability to sleep flat are the big clues. The lungs are becoming water logged. You may need water tablets (diuretics) urgently.

You visit your doctor who looks for these red flag symptoms, examines you, and looks for ankle swelling, the veins in your neck, blood pressure, pulse, heart murmurs and oxygen levels. This is done in minutes. An ECG will be done; if this is normal it is most helpful in excluding

heart failure. If the ECG is abnormal, an X-ray of your chest is needed, looking for an enlarged heart under strain and congested lungs.

Bloods tests will be done looking for heart damage (a Troponin Level), kidney problems and anaemia. A water tablet, a diuretic-like furosemide, will need to be started. In an ideal world an Echo of your heart would be done to absolutely confirm the diagnosis to accurately measure the hearts performance.

If symptoms are improving your doctor will add in a beta blocker like bisoprolol and an ACE inhibitor like enalapril or ARB like candesartan

to maintain the improvement. Low doses at first and building up gradually with monitoring of blood tests. The Beta blocker stops the heart beating too fast and the ACE inhibitors and ARBs relax the blood vessels lowering the blood pressure and easing the work of the heart.

You might also be put on a drug called eplerenone, which stops the body absorbing too much salt, which complements the above trio. Too much salt is bad.

If symptoms are not improving, patients are often referred to ED in the hospital and we then speak to our cardiology friends for advice. They have some exciting new treatments up their sleeves.

Back to serendipity. Diabetic specialists, purely by chance discovered that diabetics who have too much sugar circulating in their bloodstream, when put on a class of drugs that drive sugar out through the kidneys, had much lower rates of heart trouble than others who were not. These are the glucose transporter drugs.

We do not know why this is the case...but lo and behold they are now being used to treat heart failure without diabetes very successfully. Even starting them early on with the water tablets, they are that good. This is great news of course.

Another drug now established in treating heart failure is Entresto, a tablet that is a combination of two different classes of heart failure drugs, which is now well-established in treating more resistant heart failure. This treatment arose from researchers trying different combinations and looking at the benefits over many years monitoring their patients. A little bit of chance and a lot of science again.

So to recap, watch out for those red flag symptoms. Treatment? We get rid of the excess water first with a diuretic, all going well, then we start a beta blocker and an ACE inhibitor or ARB. If that is not doing the job, try the newer miracle drugs, the glucose transporters and Entresto.

You have to admit...all good news.



Get in touch for free and confidential career support in the Clonakilty area.

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Emer Sweeney 086 8395058
emersweeney@empwc.org



Margaret Donovan Daly 086 6031335
margaretdonovandaly@empwc.org



Emer O'Sullivan

MA, MSocSc, MSW, MIACP, MAC, HDip Relationship Studies

Counsellor Emer will help you to come to terms with any concerns and help you set about making positive changes in your life.

Life Coach Emer will help you to examine your life, evaluate what you want, and check the direction in which you are heading.

Emer is an accredited counsellor with the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and a member of the Association for Coaching. She has worked for many years as a Family Support Social Worker in the community.

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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.

So much seems to happen in between West Cork People monthly editions!

There is a lot going on for us to process, like the ongoing challenge of Covid 19, what's happening in Ukraine and across the world. Many of us are experiencing strong emotions and sometimes feelings of guilt for taking care of ourselves. Empathy and compassion are part of the beauty of being human and these qualities make life so much richer and more meaningful. It is extremely important that we care about each other, it truly matters, but staying distressed or overwhelmed doesn't help us or anyone else. And the difficulty of ruminating over upsetting situations is that we're recreating and repeatedly reliving the pain of these experiences. You can't pour from an empty jug, or give what you haven't got, but when we learn the skills to resource and replenish ourselves in meaningful ways, we have even more to share with others.

I recently took part in an

annual mindfulness teachers silent retreat as well as some workshops on engaged and relational mindfulness with the Mindfulness Association. This really helped me to ground and steady myself amid all that is happening in my own life and in the wider world. We practiced a lot of deep grounding in nature and were reminded to keep returning to our formal meditation practice as it provides an anchor in uncertain times. There is a real need to develop a strong connection not only between our minds and our bodies but between our bodies and the ground we all stand on. Grounding ourselves on the earth we all share can really help to steady us during unsettling times.

When we find ourselves getting stuck in a place of overwhelm, which is easily done these days, it can help to bring awareness into the body and out of the thinking mind, connecting with the feeling of

the ground beneath us, letting the earth hold the weight of our bodies and letting our bodies hold the weight of our minds. There are several mindfulness practices that can help with grounding in the body, like the body scan. If you would like to experience a guided body scan, please visit my website www.mindhaven.ie for some recently added recordings. Another useful grounding practice, "soles of the feet" is available on Dr Kristin Neff's website www.selfcompassion.org.

If you want to try it out just now, start by standing up if possible, keeping your knees soft and begin to feel into the soles of your feet. Really sense directly into the feet, feeling the sensations of contact between your feet and the ground. Notice the natural sway of the body when you stand like this. And, while keeping both feet on the ground, try rocking back and forth a little on the feet, slowly shifting your weight from the

balls of the feet to the heels and back again a few times. Shifting the weight to the outer edges of both feet, again without raising them from the ground, then the inner edges. When we focus our attention on the physical sensations in the soles of our feet, it can be a very effective way of anchoring our awareness in the present moment. This practice can be very helpful to ground us on the earth, especially when upset, or having strong feelings of anxiety.

When you are out walking as the evenings are getting longer and brighter, you could slow down your pace now and again, and as you move more slowly, notice the changing sensations in your feet as you walk. Pay attention to the textures and the surface beneath your feet as you stand or walk and try opening your senses to take in all the beauty that surrounds you. Notice when your mind wanders and bring your attention back into the soles of your feet as a

focal point helping your mind return to the present moment through the body and stay grounded in the here and now.

If you would like to begin a compassion-based mindfulness practice or deepen an existing practice together in community with others, drop-in mindfulness sessions run at Myross Wood, Leap on Tuesday mornings 10-11am: €10.

Also coming up at Myross Wood:

A Day of Silence, Sunday 3rd April 10-4pm. €75 (Vegetarian lunch & refreshments provided)

Online guided meditation sessions via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8pm. 45 minutes. Donation based.

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

What does an End of Life Doula offer?

Last month in my introductory column, I briefly shared my role as an end of life doula. In this piece, I'll do my best to offer a picture of what the work looks like (all while considering there is no set definition for an end of life doula!) This has to do with the fact that there is no licensure or overarching governance of the profession at the moment.

So what is an end of life or death doula? I prefer and tend to use both terms as they seem to be the most commonly used, but for this piece, I'll just use the word doula. Historically the word doula simply means to 'serve'. This role has been prevalent throughout history,

as doulas have been stewarding their fellow humans through life and death since time immemorial. Death doulas are often compared to a birth doula, guide or midwife, but at the other end of the life cycle. They are compassionate people often sharing similar skills while simultaneously engaged in varying paths to their work. The first aspect that comes to mind when I reflect on what it means to be a doula, is presence. To be a doula is to listen, listen and listen some more. It's to be a calming influence and a non-judgmental witness to another. The energy of a doula is steadfast and supports troubleshooting challenges that we all know life and death

present.

Essentially a doula is a non-medical professional who accompanies through the process of death as a resource and advocate; empowering each person in their end of life journey. I worked as a social worker in the past, so I especially appreciate that a doula is also someone who fosters maximum self-determination and works in partnership while supporting another. A doula serves in a holistic capacity – providing emotional, spiritual, educational and practical support. By practical support, this could mean organising household help, transportation to medical appointments, errands and so on. Additional resources and referrals can also be made to increase access to any and all services or supports that might be needed. I have helped facilitate early chats with hospice, foot massage at home, meal delivery, dog walks, and time with children. This is a community-based and collaborative process. The doula works with individuals, as well as family, friends, and communities of support before, during and after the sacred experience of death. I feel it's also important to highlight that doulas do not take the place of partners, family members, clergy, or other care providers. Personally I have found myself in more than one circumstance where such supports have been limited,



END OF LIFE MATTERS

Melissa Murphy

End of life Doula Melissa Murphy, a companion, guide and resource supporting our community in end of life matters.

but this is not always the case. My experience has also been that even when we have lots of friends and family around us, they may be grieving or not necessarily comfortable or prepared to lead conversations on end of life. A doula offers proactive guidance and can anticipate needs and help facilitate making plans. For example, I have linked people to advanced healthcare directives and other such tools that some have found helpful when seeking clarity

about their wishes. I also visited a green burial site with someone who was curious to learn more and begin thinking about their funeral. Recently, when I've connected with other doulas and people working in end of life, I'm reminded that one of our main roles is death education. Having open discussions on all things end-of-life, sharing and reminding those we serve that they have choices. However it's essential at the same time to celebrate life, living and this moment. To that end, some doulas may inspire or support legacy project – essentially ways to help tell the story and meaning of one's life through creative ideas or activities. To paraphrase the late neurosurgeon Paul Kalanithi, "Even if I'm dying, until I actually die, I am still living."

It is helpful to first connect with a doula about the kind of services he/she offers in order to find one (or more) to support the specific needs of the individual or collective. Doulas wear many hats and openly engage about all matters of death, dying and bereavement. They provide a safe space for deep listening, bearing witness, creating an atmosphere of calm and ease, helping to process any anxieties or worries, assisting with unfinished business, facilitating conversations – often difficult for many – and collaboration with circles of care, including

healthcare professionals, that may already be in place.

I love being an end of life doula for many reasons – one being the gift of time. I can offer as much or as little time while walking alongside folks in this process as they see fit. Each is a unique and profound experience as is every person's story. Simultaneously, I'm reminded of our precious impermanence while ever learning and preparing my own last breath. Many doulas make themselves available and are especially happy to work with people well in advance of their facing any health issues or life limiting circumstances. If you read my column last month, you won't be surprised to know that I'd love to see a culture shift where we're connecting about and planning for death before it's on our doorstep.

"Even if I'm dying, until I actually die, I am still living."

Paul Kalanithi

To learn more or to connect with Melissa, email her at starsbeyondourskin@gmail.com or visit www.starsbeyondourskin.com. She also welcomes your questions or thoughts for future columns.



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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.

Emotions are intense. Our moments and days can be completely altered purely by mood, for better or for worse. On the bright side, the landscape of emotion is colourful, dynamic, ever-changing and intriguing. Like a voyage across the ocean, we will all inevitably know what it is to be tossed about and feel utterly lost at sea as life deals its blows, sorrows and challenges to us.

And yet we will also hopefully make our way to calmer waters with gentle incoming tides of contentment, fulfillment and happiness.

In part, life is the art of riding these waves as graciously as we can, somehow finding a way to 'be in the world' and fully participating with good heart and soul, but also not 'completely of it' either, and able to keep a sense of centred-ness, no matter what the events and dramas of the day.

As the world gets increasingly unpredictable, this can feel easier said than done. As we collectively limp from one world crisis to another, barely pausing for breath before facing into the next round of threats, while the rising cost of living escalates with G-force speed, remembering to smile and take joy in simple pleasures can feel a distant and absurd dream.

While our emotional life can overwhelm us, and the thought processes that fuel our emotions seem so believable and compelling, it's perhaps worth bearing in mind that both thoughts and emotions can be fickle creatures and are totally susceptible to and responsive to the machinations of our endocrine system and the internal pharmacy of our biochemistry. We are literally like a walking drug store, with uppers and downers

of hormones and neuropeptides that are dispensed, swiftly on the spot in response to our environment, both externally and the internal environment we create with our thoughts, beliefs, expectations, fears, anxieties, triumphs and feelings.

Chinese Medicine understands our entire human nature and physiology to be matter at different levels of frequency and wave form, much like quantum physics now corroborates. In other words, the Liver organ for instance, is dense energy wave manifesting in physical form, whereas the emotional spectrum that arises from both a healthy or an unhealthy Liver state is matter resonating at a much finer, more subtle frequency with no physical form as such, but nevertheless corresponding to the Liver specific energy wave. As such, matter (body) and non-matter (mind/emotions) are two sides of the same coin. We can approach treatment from either side of the coin, improving mental and emotional life to positively effect physical health but equally, we can improve physiological harmony to positively effect our mental and emotional experience.

I have had clients come in chronic grief states, or with debilitating anxiety, or entrenched in depression or struggling to reconcile a traumatic history.

All such emotional states impact our physiology, setting off a domino effect of biochemical responses, disrupting the corresponding organ systems and depleting or stagnating our Blood, Qi and Body Fluids in various ways. And while there are always understandable and legitimate reasons for why we feel what we feel, it is nevertheless also true that we can ease this suffering by treating the impact at the level of our physiology. It is always so moving to see how treatment with acupuncture and Chinese herbs can make such a positive difference. Like watching the morning mist slowly evaporate and a sunny day emerge from underneath the dense cloud cover of heavy emotion, I watch people over the course of treatment slowly but surely come back to themselves and come back to life.

If you are finding that your quality of life is being undermined by difficult emotional states, please seek help. It may need a combination of therapies to help untangle the knot, but a tailored treatment plan that addresses your situation at the levels of both mind and body will lead to a much more effective resolution.

Phone: 086 127 3148 www.freyasherlock.com

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Free public talk with Wildfit founder Eric Edmeades in Kinsale

Wildfit is rapidly gaining popularity worldwide for its hugely successful methodology in helping people to not only lose unwanted weight but to genuinely establish longterm lifestyle changes and healthy food choices. Wildfit is the brainchild of Eric Edmeades, who then applied his expertise in NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) and behavioural change psychology to create a programme that understands the importance of addressing one's emotional and psychological dependance on non-functional foods (foods that actually don't serve us in any way nutritionally), to gradually help clients to unhook from their unhealthy food addictions.

WildFit has a triumphant track record of positively changing and transforming the lives and health of thousands of people all around the globe. The ongoing data is revealing a wide range of illnesses and conditions



that are tremendously improved and even cured through the process of completely changing and enhancing our most fundamental need for genuine nutrition.

If you ever thought the subject of nutrition was a little dull, then you haven't met Eric! He brings a fusion of his extensive experience as a compelling and entertaining keynote speaker on the international stage within both the business and personal growth spaces with his passion for positively impacting and changing lives through the WildFit methodology to deliver an intelligent and refreshing perspective on this whole subject.

Freya Sherlock, Ireland's premier Certified WildFit Coach is collaborating with Eric Edmeades during his upcoming visit to Dublin to speak at the Pendulum Summit (the world's leading business and self-empowerment summit on April 26/27 – www.pendulumsummit.com) to host a FREE public talk in Kinsale, West Cork on Saturday, April 30 at 2pm in the Harpoon Room at the Trident Hotel. This will be followed by a VIP ticket-only event in the

evening during which guests will have the opportunity to spend the evening with Eric in lively discussion whilst enjoying a WildFit dinner party to be held at Sherwood Healing Arts Centre, Dunmanway, West Cork.

So if you'd like to regain a more lean and nimble body, address concerning health issues through lifestyle changes and discover the joy of feeling vibrantly well, come to the FREE public talk and engage directly with Eric during the extensive Q&A session, which, given Eric's charismatic personality, will inevitably be both educational and entertaining!

For further information, confirmation of details or to secure one of the limited VIP Dinner Party tickets, please contact Freya Sherlock: Mob - 086 127 3148; email freyaasherlock@gmail.com; Website: www.freyasherlock.com/wildfit

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From the Well launched for 2022

Cork County Council Library and Arts Service has launched its annual From the Well short story competition for 2022. The highly regarded literary competition is now in its 18th year and is open to registered library members who are over 18.

20 stories will be selected for inclusion in the 18th edition of the From the Well short story anthology, while the winning story and two others will feature in the 2022 West Cork Literary Festival.

Applications should be submitted online through YourCouncil.ie before the closing date of Friday April 29.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Privacy matters



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

When dealing with your personal information, privacy matters. However, there are misunderstandings around DNA data used for genealogical purposes. It is important to put it into a wider context. To paraphrase a highly-respected Irish genetic genealogist, if you are really concerned about your privacy (by taking a commercially available DNA test) then you should not test in the first place. Similarly, do not have a social media page.

Testing companies and DNA websites do keep DNA data secure. Reputation is important, not to mention legal responsibilities. There is hardly any online company in any sphere of business that does not experience hacking attempts or had issues with security, but to my knowledge no DNA data has ever been stolen. Misleading stories on the internet and in the Press can blow events out of proportion leading to mistrust and panic, which in turn leads to people unnecessarily deleting their data and closing accounts.

Everyone should be aware of 'fake news' and ensure they get their information from reputable sources.

It is also unfair to point fingers at any one company or website as data security is an ongoing issue for all. It is the same at a personal level in daily life. As one example, users of social media have learned that by sharing too much information in real time, such as holiday snaps, when people know who you are and where you live, can lead to your home being burgled while you are away.

In a previous article I mentioned that technical understanding of what DNA data is, how it can be used for genealogy, as well as general trust issues, are the primary areas of why people may not share their DNA data. Here are some direct quotes from people who I have approached and declined to share but were kind enough to provide their reasons from their perspective.

– “My DNA info is not on any public sites because of the lack of privacy protections.”

– “I have uneasiness about handing over personal information via the internet, despite knowing that your intentions are most likely good” and “I must admit that DNA data is something I don't understand as far as security and possible use by others. As a result, I am hesitant to share.”

– “It is mainly privacy and not knowing what could happen to the information. I understand you can see it on Ancestry however you are not able to manipulate it from there.”

– “I would like to share my results with you as your work sounds interesting and is related to me, my bloodlines and family. Problem is it requires posting in a forum where I have

no confidence in promises of privacy” and “I assume you are spamming/phishing and looking to steal my data.”

Most people have store or loyalty cards or have online shopping accounts that involve providing a great deal of personal information. These often require names, telephone numbers, home addresses, date of birth, marital status and even bank account details. You may have completed questionnaires on your family, shopping habits and hobbies. You may willingly agree to Cookies on websites, which allow them to track your browsing history. You may be posting photographs and your life history on social media. In putting your DNA data into context, the large amount of information you normally share with others in normal life and may not think too much about, should be acknowledged.

For those who wish to maintain a more anonymous profile having done a DNA test, there are many strategies available. This includes setting up a dedicated suitably anonymous Gmail address that you can use to register with DNA websites and forums. Most DNA testing companies allow you to be listed under a pseudonym without completing any part of your personal profile. You do not have to provide a family tree (or you can keep it private on Ancestry). I can say from experience, trying to identify this type of listed match (apart from knowing who else they match) is tough. If they do not reply to a message, then you may never know who they are. However, all this does also work against them using their own DNA result to prove their own genetic ancestry.

Those taking a DNA test should always read the fine print, as often it will include

permissions for the testing company to share your DNA (albeit anonymously) with “selected partners.” Although access by law enforcement can be limited both by Law and user Terms & Conditions, and of concern to some (except to those who have altruistic inclinations to help catch serious criminals, aid injustices or solving cold cases), DNA companies may be required to respond to a court subpoena. Most libraries and worldwide law enforcement agencies have subscriptions to all leading family history and DNA testing sites where family trees and matches can be used to help with criminal investigations.

Let us discuss your raw DNA data file. In your account or settings, you can find a tab that allows you to download your DNA file. It is your right to have this file and I recommend all testers access it and keep it safely for their own use or to pass on to future generations. Even if someone got access to your log-in and password on these test sites, the file can only be sent to your registered email address; not downloaded directly. The file contains a standard format text file in a compressed Zip format, which is the normal way of downloading/uploading DNA data.

The DNA sharing website GEDmatch that provides more advanced tools for genetic genealogy has had its detractors, despite it offering a valuable free service at the basic level. What is not often understood is that once data is uploaded to that site the data is ‘parsed’, i.e., broken into pieces of data that are stored separately. The uploaded data file is deleted and there is no mechanism for reconstructing that file and downloading it back. Your only

ID on GEDmatch is your kit number, your email address, and your list of matches. You can call yourself Mickey Mouse if you like. You can delete your account which removes your data at any time. You can only access the relevant parts of other's data using the appropriate tools. GEDmatch will be discussed in more detail in a future article.

I manage over 100 kits on GEDmatch for people related to my investigations who do not wish to open their own free account, and I treat them anonymously in terms of labelling. Only my research email is available for enquiries. These genetic cousins are not interested in the detail but are willing to aid research into shared family origins. It also provides another level of anonymity for those who require it, since I become a de facto additional filter for their identity if enquiries are received.

Many would be surprised to learn that a raw DNA file has no personal identifying information. It consists of some header/format information and then the string of DNA coding that has been read for that tester, which may not include your whole genome. If you do not say who the tester is, it becomes whoever you label it as. I encourage people to open their file to check this for themselves. If you manage several kits, it is important you label them so you know who it is. It would not be the first time I have received two files of parent and child and found they were labelled the wrong way around. Fortunately, these can be easy to spot as the child often does not inherit all the genealogical markers from the parent.

This information is also in a form that is only useful for

genetic genealogy and cannot be used for medical purposes, for example, which looks for different things in a person's DNA makeup (genes). My DNA in various forms has been on websites since 2007 without problems. Data security is more advanced now than it ever was. No issues have been encountered with any of the DNA files I manage.

When carefully managed between trusted collaborators, there are no reasons not to share your DNA information. If you have paid for your test, it makes sense to get as much out of it as you can, especially when a lot more is available for free. When seeking an analogy, if you have gone to the trouble of passing your driving test (your initial DNA test result), why would you not want to drive and explore the world around you (genetic genealogy)?

Your DNA result is just the start. You may enjoy learning a new hobby. If you are lucky to match a serious genetic genealogist your single contribution through sharing could provide explanations for matches to many others and illuminate a deeper ancestry of which you were unaware. You might also help those who have uncertain parentage connect to their genetic heritage. As mentioned in a previous article, there are thousands of Irish in this unfortunate position.

Did this article answer any concerns you had about sharing your DNA data? Let me know your thoughts.

Questions and issues that can be answered as part of future articles can be emailed to DNAmatchingprojects@gmail.com or follow the West Cork DNA projects on Facebook ‘My Irish Genealogy & DNA’.

Bantry Bay Lions Ukraine appeal

The Bantry Bay Lions Club will hold a bucket collection in Bantry town on Friday, April 22 to raise funds to help the Ukrainian disaster relief effort. This is the earliest date that could be allocated. One hundred per cent of monies collected will be forwarded to the Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) organisation for distribution to where it can be most effective in providing medical and humanitarian assistance. Ireland has been very proactive in providing a haven

for Ukrainian refugees and the people of Bantry and the local area have always been very generous in supporting disaster relief programmes. Please give what you can to optimise this fundraising effort. A huge thank you in advance.



Application for Masters in Local History open

Applications are now being accepted for admittance to UCC's MA in Local History degree programme beginning in September 2022. Applicants must have an honours degree in History or a cognate subject, or its equivalent; however, there is no age barrier and a degree is not necessary in cases where evidence can be provided of an applicant's interest in local history, e.g., if an applicant is a member of a local history society or has publications on local history topics. Such candidates are subject to the approval of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies

and Social Sciences.

The part-time MA Degree in Local History is offered by coursework and assessment and runs for two years from the date of first registration for the programme. Coursework consists of a taught component of weekly evening lectures in Year I. Evaluation is by a 5,000 word essay and continuous assessment, to be completed by the end of the second semester, Year 1. A dissertation of 25,000-30,000 words on an approved topic to be submitted by the end of year 2.

Lectures are specially tailored to provide a practical guide to



the writing of Irish local history, indicating the main sources, their location and how best they might be exploited.

Lectures will cover the introduction to sources and archives,

approaches to Local History, reading the landscape, maps, census and parish records, Valuation Office records, Estate Records, sources for urban history, oral history and folklore, historiography, landscape and material history, gender and history, labour history, military and political history, cultural history, economic history, demographics, religion and much more.

Applications are made through www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad.

For further information please contact Dr. Donal Ó Drisceoil, 021-4903048 (e-mail d.odriscoil@ucc.ie)



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.

Menopause is a pivotal time in a woman's life, for some they sail through it, whilst others find it very challenging. It can also trigger some unwelcome changes in our skin. As oestrogen levels and our own natural hydrating moisturising agents like sebum, hyaluronic acid, and ceramides plummet, this decline translates physically into that feeling of dryness, tightness, and increased sensitivity, which is not just confined to the face; skin on the body can feel like this too. Skin also starts to lose its elasticity, causing sagging, fine lines, and wrinkles. Thankfully though it's not all doom and gloom. The good news is that there are many ways you can help your skin combat these changes in hormonal levels and, as always, skincare is key. Remember too, you didn't arrive at

Menopause and skin



menopause overnight so don't expect to be able to change everything overnight – it takes time, but you'll begin to see the difference; skin will be happier, your body will be happier, and you'll have your glow back!

First things first, reassess your skincare routine. Are your current products serving you and your skin well with the emphasis being on gentle – you don't want to dry out skin even more or compromise the delicate skin barrier.

Look firstly at your cleansers – opt for cream or milk cleansers and avoid anything harsh that leaves skin feeling tight or dry, if it does, it's not the right cleanser for your skin. Also, important that you stay away from any harsh cleansing tools that might exacerbate any sensitivity or redness. Bloom facial puffs are ideal for gentle cleansing, priced at €16 for three, they are a lovely addition to your cleansing routine. Soft and gentle on the skin but tough on makeup, they will easily cleanse your face from any traces of pollution, dirt, grime and are suitable for all skin

types. The set has two large and one small microfibre round cleansing puffs, available from selected pharmacies nationwide and online from bloom.ie

Dial up the hydration – When choosing a moisturiser dial up the hydration and comfort and look for skin barrier boosting ingredients like glycerin, shea butter, ceramides and niacinamide. Skingredients Skin Good Fats (primary €55 / refill €49) doubles up as a rich moisturiser plus night cream in one, locking in hydration while reducing inflammation and irritation. This ceramide barrier balm works by replenishing your skin's essential fats, vitamins, and goodness to bring equilibrium to your skin, available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online from skingredients.com

Incorporate a serum into your routine – Choose a serum to do the heavy lifting and help tackle collagen depletion. Collagen gives your skin structure and support, it is estimated that in the first five years of your menopause, we lose 30 per cent of our skin's collagen. As this depletes, we begin to notice loss

of firmness and some sagging. Ingredients like retinoids, vitamin C and peptides are all great for boosting collagen synthesis. Hyal C + E Serum from Irish Skincare Brand Reform targets multiple concern and has a super formulation containing Vitamin C for collagen production and brightening skin, Hyaluronic Acid for hydration, Vitamin E to nourish the skin and Ferulic Acid is in there too, providing superior antioxidant protection, €60 from www.reformskincare.com

Sunscreen everyday – Protecting your skin is more important than ever – if your collagen is diminishing you definitely don't want to accelerate that process with excess sun exposure, so protect your skin and make sure you are using daily sunscreen. AlumierMD Clear Shield Broad Spectrum SPF 42 is a lightweight, non-comedogenic, quick-drying physical sunscreen that provides powerful broad-spectrum protection against harmful UVA and UVB rays using a combination of zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Niacinamide

soothes and relieves redness and sodium hyaluronate hydrates, €50 available from AlumierMD stockists nationwide or email hello@shernamalone.ie

Don't forget lifestyle – Take stock of your diet and your nutrition along with exercise. I always advocate a holistic approach when it comes to skin health. If menopausal symptoms are impacting your wellbeing, supplements can be a welcome addition. After the three years of research and development in consultation with experts in various fields of nutrition and science Meno Active was brought to market, a unique product scientifically formulated for women to take throughout their menopausal journey. It is formulated with a comprehensive blend of 30 active ingredients including omega 3 DHA, digestive enzymes, plant extracts, strains of live friendly bacteria, vitamins, and minerals, all delivered in a unique sachet and capsule combination that helps support hormonal activity, brain function, nervous system, and energy. Dr Fiona Barry PhD BSc Lic Ac MBAC and

member of the Meno Active formulation team expresses "A food supplement needs two things: firstly, the correct ingredients and secondly the correct inclusion levels. In my opinion, Meno Active is the most comprehensive food supplement on the market for this phase of a woman's life" Free from artificial preservatives, flavours, and colours, it is vegetarian friendly and suitable for people with diabetes, €59.99 for one month's supply, available in selected pharmacies nationwide and online www.reviveactive.com

For all the latest beauty news follow me on Instagram and Facebook @shernamalone.ie Book Online for one of my advanced facial treatments or a skincare consultation www.shernamalone.ie Advanced Facial Treatments, Professional Peels, Medical Microneedling, Byonik Laser, Dermalux LED Light Therapy, Teen Facials.

Sherna Malone appointed Byonik brand ambassador by Pure Swiss Aesthetics

Pure Swiss Aesthetics are delighted to announce the appointment of Sherna Malone as a Brand Ambassador for BYONIK.

With over 20 years' experience, Sherna, a Facialist and Skin Health Expert, is based in Clonakilty and is the beauty columnist for the West Cork People newspaper.

"My passion is skin health and I've dedicated my talents and expertise in helping people achieve healthy, beautiful skin," says Sherna.

Originally from Dublin, Sherna's mother is the renowned Bronwyn Conroy, who was instrumental in founding the beauty industry in Ireland. Sherna managed and taught in their beauty training school in Dublin for 16 years, before moving with her husband and twin girls to West Cork in 2014.

Sherna combines different therapies – old and new, with

clinical products and procedures for a complete experience that delivers true results, along with ensuring you leave with a feeling of rejuvenation and well-being. "Great skin is possible, and that with a little guidance from me, you will feel confident and beautiful in your own skin," she says.

Commenting on her role as Brand Ambassador Sherna said; "I'm very excited to have been chosen by Pure Swiss Aesthetics as the Brand Ambassador for BYONIK. As a Facialist, I believe in treatments that provide a complete experience for clients and deliver real, tangible results, alongside a feeling of rejuvenation and well-being. This led me to BYONIK, the first ever patented Pulse Triggered Laser for skin rejuvenation for all skin types and conditions. BYONIK fills a real gap in the market for clinically led treatments that deliver immediate and long-term

skin benefits while the client can relax, enjoy and unwind. This is why I am proud to be associated with this unique and innovative device and treatment method".

For further information about BYONIK please visit pureswissaesthetics.com



people Food, Health & Lifestyle



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

The wonderful world of neuroscience confirms that in order to be truly happy, you will always need something more. Whatever you are striving for, whether it is personal enlightenment, a new job or car or to look better, you need to actively want something more in order to live well. In fact, it is in the act of seeking itself, rather than in reaching these goals, that is key to satisfaction. We all need reminding that the journey is what is important! So many women, in particular, miss this. We succumb to the pressure of having to look a certain way, fit into a certain size and fight a continual battle with ageing

2022 is bold and bright

and, when we don't reach these 'almost impossible' goals, we feel 'less than'. Instead consider patting yourself on the back for making an effort.

There is a blazing end-of-March sun shining outside as I write this and it's hard not to smile because this is such a wonderful time of the year. We have so much to look forward to. The beautiful yellow of spring daffodils sings happiness, freshness, energy, optimism, pure joy and reminds us that sunshine is not too far away. Is it any wonder that designers are staying focused on the colour yellow? We need massive injections of joy into our lives and there is no better way than to wear a bright colour. If you are not normally a 'colourful' person, then now is the time to change that.

I simply love the loose trousers, V-neck sleeveless sweater and runners look – it's relaxed but chic and confident. Drag out all of your colourful slip dresses, layer them and wear them during the day. The bold and adventurous among you should add a pair of fuzzy slides for extra wow. The same slip dress can be worn in the evening without any layers and the addition of some slinky heels and some are saying that if you

don't have a yellow slip dress then you are really missing out!

Ribbed knit pants are certainly not my cup of tea but I cannot deny that worn with confidence they can look pretty darn sweet. You can even go as far as wearing a full ribbed set, with comfort being most definitely to the forefront here.

'Clashing colours' needs to be your motto for Spring/Summer. Don't shy away from pairing colours that traditionally clash like pink and yellow or orange and yellow. The secret is to ground these colours by adding a neutral shade. I love blazers and boast quite a collection of them and this is the perfect time of the year to wear each and every one of them. The 20-somethings are wearing them with little else but heels and a great tan job on their legs! It does look fabulous, ultra glamorous even...the rest of us can look just as good with a pair of jeans or loose trousers underneath, in fact, a capri length can look sensational.

The over-sized cotton button-down shirt is becoming a big hit. While it appears to be huge and can go down below your thigh, the half tucked in will show off your waist and leave you looking less disheveled! The look mirrors



'Clashing colours' needs to be your motto for Spring/Summer. Don't shy away from pairing colours that traditionally clash like pink and yellow or orange and yellow.

menswear, especially when paired with a suit trouser and, while the glossy magazines are full of this look, I'm not too sure how well this will translate to streetwear.

Bold colours will always stand out and that's what 2022 is all about, so get ready to mix purple with cerise and fluorescent green... choose a cerise top, purple mules or pumps and a bright green bag and then calm it down with a pair of

denims; loose jeans tie the look together. Reinvent your trench coat by wearing it with a mini dress and a pair of knee-high boots, the addition of sunglasses and a neck scarf will add instant glam and this is a great look for right now, it will also take you straight from day to evening in great style!

Here is a little add-on tip that recently fell on my lap. Dare I mention the word 'cellulite'? To be honest, I couldn't give a rat's

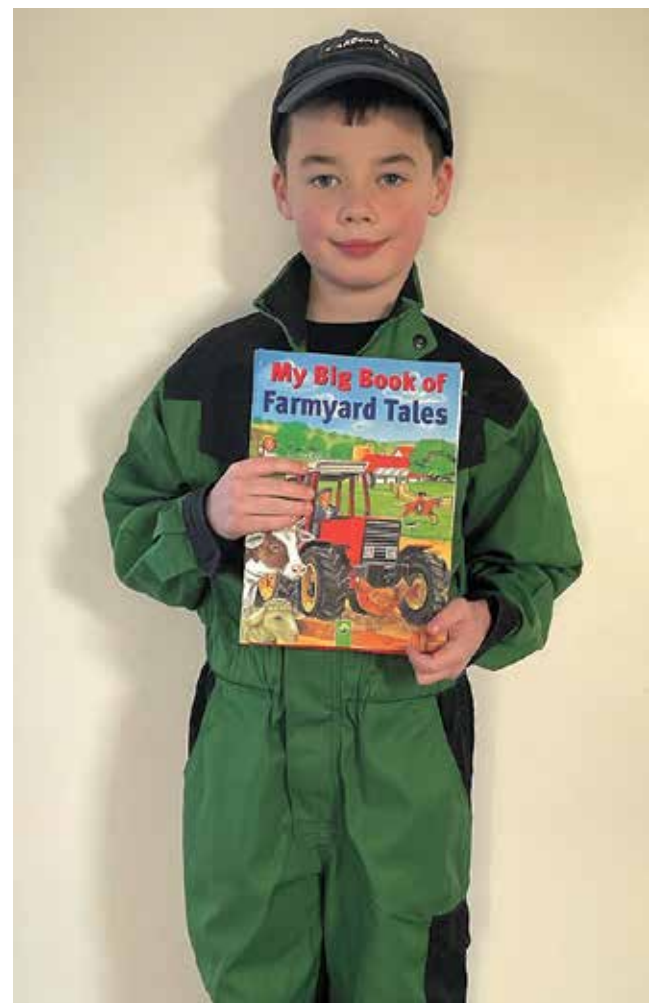
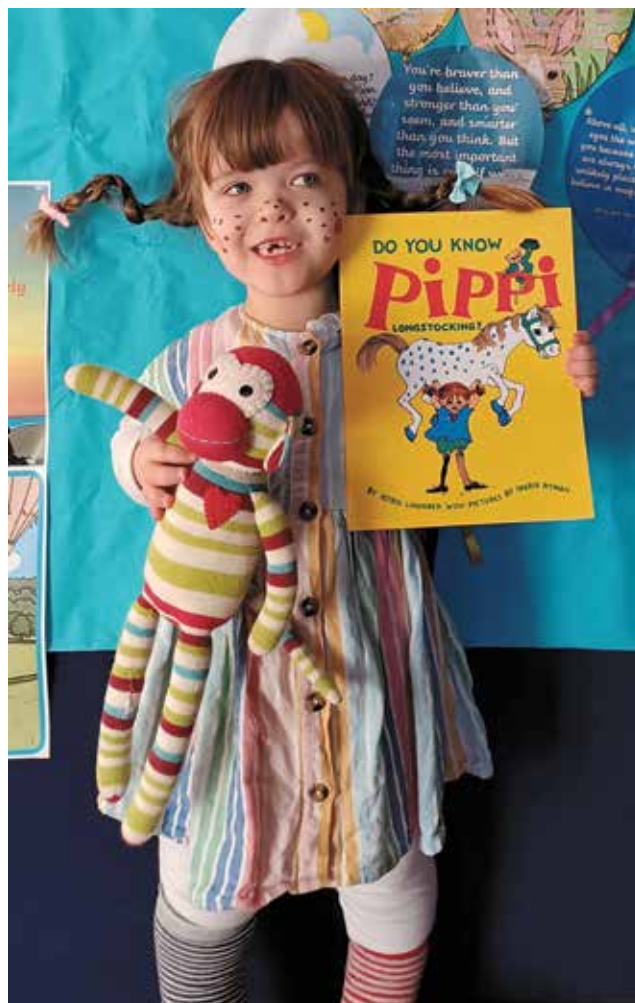
ass about it anymore but the mere mention of the word can send some on a downward spiral, so I feel compelled to share this with you. A good friend of mine in the skin business in the UK shared a little secret with me on how to reduce the appearance of cellulite. The main ingredient is coffee grounds. The key is to let them dry a little after you have had your coffee and then add in a few drops of rosehip oil to turn them into a gloriously aromatic paste. Smother this on your thighs or tummy or wherever you want to attack some cellulite and massage it in. Make a wrap out of whatever you have – muslin cloth, an old thin cotton t-shirt or a pillowcase and fire on your sexiest dressing gown. Leave this amazing concoction work its wonders...and when I say amazing, I mean AMAZING! The smell alone was enough to make me feel like something incredible was happening but the after-effect was remarkable. Just don't go straight into the shower, take off as much of the coffee-rosehip oil mixture as you can with a cloth first – or you will clog your shower drains. I've only done it twice in the last week and my thighs look like they have been air-brushed!

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



The effort shown in West Cork National Schools for World Book Day was very impressive. Pictured left to right are James O'Shea in Third Class Ardfield NS dressed as Minor Miner from Horrible Histories for World Book Day; Lia White in Senior Infants at Ardfield NS dressed as Pippi Longstocking for World Book Day; Jerry Hurley, age 7 from Hollyhill, Glengarriff dressed as a farmer from his favourite book.



people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Census 2022 contains a first of its kind Time Capsule to record a message to future generations

With Census night of April 3 now almost upon us, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) are encouraging the people of Ireland to write their Time Capsule entries.

From family recipes, to poems, diary entries or drawings, the Time Capsule is a new feature in Census 2022, where households can record their own personal message to future generations and historians. As is the case for all information gathered during the Census, the entries will be kept entirely confidential for 100 years before being released to the public in 2122.

While this is the first Census form that offers the public an official opportunity to write their own individual note, there is a long history of people adding details to their forms, including Irish revolutionary Seán Mac Diarmada whose 1911 return lists him as 'single, but not for long'.

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach, Jack Chambers TD says: "A census is a vital source for historians when they are studying a point in time, as the data gathered helps them to understand the



their family trees, the only limit is our imagination, which is why it is so important people start thinking about this now ahead of Census night."

Ms Murphy outlined how she was thinking of using her own time capsule entry "I find myself thinking about how other people may use the time capsule. So while I will record a personal message to my own family, I also plan to make some predictions about what Ireland's Time Capsule Stories may look like. Historians in 100 years' time can see if I am correct."

To help inspire people, the Census team have included a few sentence starters below, and will share more on social media using #TimeCapsuleStories.

- My prediction for 2122 includes...
- A typical day for me in 2022 starts off with...
- My favourite thing about living in Ireland in 2022 is...

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Survey finds nine out of ten workers would leave their job for a more flexible role

A quarter of people surveyed by recruitment specialists, Employflex said they would like a flexible work policy for school drop offs and collections

A survey among Irish workers has found that two out of three people (64pc) said they now work in a flexible environment. This is an increase from the same survey in 2019, before the pandemic when 53pc said they worked in a flexible environment.

The survey conducted by recruitment firm Employflex found that almost half of people said their company does not have a flexible work policy (48pc). Worrying also is that 16pc said they have been refused a request for flexible work by their boss.

The survey shows that flexible work is high on the agenda when it comes to the workplace. All survey respondents said flexible work would give them a better work/life balance while 96pc said it would make them more productive. Interestingly, although almost half said they would like flexibility for a better work/life balance, more than a quarter (27pc) said they would like it so that they can do school

drop offs and collections. In addition 93pc said they would change jobs all things considered if they were offered more flexibility in a new role.

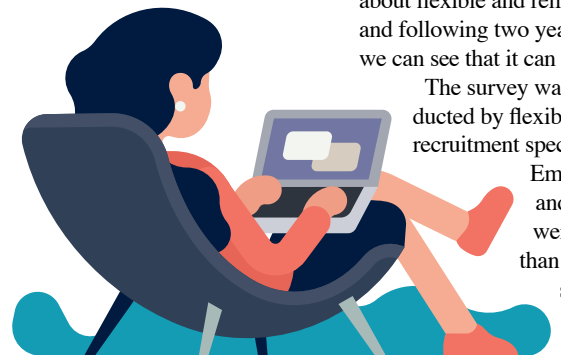
The survey found that most people would favour hybrid working (29pc), reduced or part time hours (25pc) or remote working (23pc). Unfortunately however 42 per cent said they would not feel confident asking their employer for flexible work. The main barrier people believe to employers granting flexible work is a lack of trust (43pc) followed by fears about a reduction in productivity (20pc).

Founder of Employflex, Karen O'Reilly said: "The results of this survey show us that flexible work is hugely important to employees today. As

two-thirds of people surveyed are currently working in a flexible work environment, the majority of employees favour a hybrid version of working which allows them the freedom of working part-time at home or in the office. This comes well ahead of working compressed hours, fitting five days into four, where only one in ten supported this option. Unfortunately just less than half of those surveyed are aware of their company's flexible work policy, while two out of five people feel uncomfortable asking their employer for a flexible work option.

"Flexibility is key to retaining good staff. People shouldn't be forced out of the workplace because they need flexibility in their working day. Employers must be more open to talking about flexible and remote work and following two years of it we can see that it can work."

The survey was conducted by flexible work recruitment specialists, Employflex and there were more than 400 respondents.



OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



Pictured on a visit to Gaelscoil Dhroichead na Banndan was mayor of Cork County Gillian Coughlan MCC who visited the school for Seachtain na Gaeilge Picture Denis Boyle

The Celtic Ross is celebrating its 25th birthday this year. Pictured cutting a celebratory cake is Gerry Wycherley, watched over by his daughter Helen Wycherley and Celtic Ross Manager, Neil Grant. Pic: George Maguire

Managing fear-aggression in dogs



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.

Dogs that are fearful need strong boundaries to give them self-confidence and to learn to trust that

their owners will deal with any perceived fearful situation. That isn't always easy if you're not even sure how to start and are feeling rather overwhelmed yourself. A genuinely fearful dog can quickly turn into a fear-aggressive if help isn't forthcoming.

As dogs use us as a role model (Monkey See/Monkey Do), we have a huge responsibility to give off the correct signals that we are in charge of any situation.

I was reminded of this when I visited two families in the space of one week. Each one had a dog with the same problem. They were both rescues. One came with the proviso that he could be 'awkward' with other dogs; the other was meant to love other dogs but this didn't seem to be the case.

But both tended to overreact to other dogs when out walking and on lead. From a long distance away, they were already

gearing up: ears pricked, hackles up, eyes focused, and both made use of their vocal chords with strident barking/shrieking and growling. All of these reactions had their owners completely unnerved. Daily walks had become a chore and everyone returned home feeling thoroughly stressed.

In fact, translating the vociferous barking and shrieking almost always means the dog is trying to tell the approaching dog not to come any closer as he/she might be forced to take action but would prefer not to. (A truly aggressive dog either barks in a totally different manner or stays very upright, very still, waiting in anticipation of the other dog's approach along with other noticeable signals!)

How we first react to the circumstances in any given situation sets a precedent for the future. The first time that a dog shows that type of reaction to other dogs, it's important to

give direction - to let your dog understand that you will deal with it.

Firstly, it's important to reinforce the boundaries in the home. That's always where I begin. If the dog isn't listening to you and ignoring basic commands in the house, then he's certainly not going to take any notice of you in a stressful situation on a walk. When I have a good idea of how a dog performs when asked for the basic commands at home, we can start a bit of formal training outside. In the house, I can also read the dog's signals and form an opinion as to how he might react when faced with another dog.

I use my own dog, Juno, in the training but I hasten to add that she always stays safely in my car only peering out to watch for the treats coming to her. Those who've met Juno know she's quite excitable. But, when 'on duty' for me, she's as

steady as they go!

Then, it's a question of allowing the dog and owner to approach very slowly, one small step at a time, while employing the Watch command and letting him process the situation each time he's asked to move forward. Since I'm coaching the owner while reading the dog's signals, both tend to be relaxed during the training session. And the most important factor is that the owner automatically keeps the lead nice and loose. No tension going down the lead - no reason for the dog to react badly!

If the dog begins to react as he's brought closer to Juno, then his owner learns to take him back a stride or two until he's able to relax again. That's so important as far as the dog is concerned because it means his owner is listening to him, easing the stressful situation by putting a bit more distance between him and Juno. The owner keeps

using the Watch command and feeding treats until the dog has adopted a new behaviour of focusing on his owner rather than reacting to another dog.

In one instance, the approaching dog was able to come right up close to my car. I opened the door for Juno to sit in place and look out, and the dog was actually wagging its tail in a friendly fashion despite the fact there was no barrier, i.e., the car door to 'protect' each one from the other.

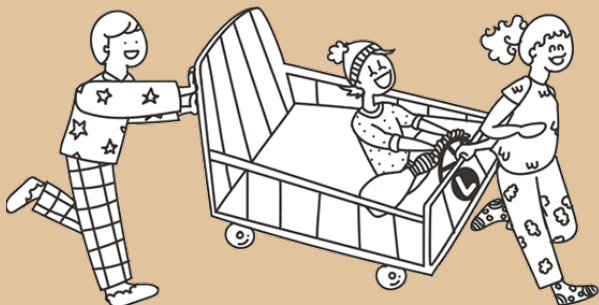
Fearful dogs don't become balanced and brave overnight but with ongoing practice, they learn to trust their owners instead of feeling they have to deal aggressively with the dog in front of them. Now that the owner has a plan of action (and a couple of Plan B's up his sleeve in case of emergencies), he/she begins to act with more confidence and both work in partnership. It can become a win-win situation!

Bantry Lions 'Bed Push' race for suicide awareness

The Bantry Bay Lions will hold its inaugural charity 'Bed Push' race in the slob car park at Bantry Harbour on Sunday, June 19 from 2-4pm. An obstacle course will be set up and beds will be pushed to navigate through the obstacles. It will be a straight knockout competition of four rounds with four teams competing each race, hence a maximum of 16 teams. Each team will comprise of four people and prizes will be awarded for the winning team as well as best team costume and best designed bed. Entry fee of €50 will be collected from each team. Food and raffle aspects will be present on the day.

In order to maximise participation and fundraising, the Bantry Bay Lions are looking for the support of local businesses or organisations (for example Rugby club or GAA) to either enter teams or provide raffle prizes/competition prizes, sponsorship or manpower on the day. Interested parties in entering the race or sponsorship should contact Nora Lynch at 087-7905053 or email her at innisbellakealanine@gmail.com. This will be a fun-filled day and, if successful, it could be an annual event.

The goal is to raise as much as possible towards opening a drop-in centre locally for people bereaved or troubled by suicide.



Canine Easter treats with no nasty side-effects

As Easter approaches, **Deirdre O'Brien** from RAWR reminds us that some of our favourite treats and traditions can pose a serious danger to our pets. However, if you are aware of these hazards and supervise your pets closely, everyone can enjoy the holiday.

Pets, like children, love to get stuck into hidden treats. Dogs and cats love to explore and discover and will make toys, or snacks, out of any intriguing items they find, especially shiny ones that smell very tempting!

Chocolate contains a caffeine derivative (theobromine) that cannot be fully metabolised by

small animals; if a sufficient amount is ingested it can create severe health complications or even kill them. The smaller the animal the more dangerous chocolate can be to their system.

If you are planning an egg hunt this year, just take care to hide your treats where your pets won't get to them before your EGG-cited children! And make sure you collect up any undiscovered treats at the end.

It is not just chocolate that causes a problem; shiny wrappers and decorative packaging (with its dyes, glitter and glue) may be enticing to both dogs and cats but can cause serious stomach problems if ingested. Sweet wrappers, small plastic eggs and toys can also pose a choking danger. Keep all pets away from these hazards and do a thorough clean-up of discard-

ed packaging after opening.

Turning to the conservatory and garden, many popular springtime plants and bulbs are highly toxic to pets and can be fatal if eaten. The traditional Easter lily, and other common types of lilies, are dangerous for curious pets, particularly cats. Consumption of even small amounts of any part of these plants can have a fatal outcome.

However, you don't have to leave your pets out of all the fun. Provide a pet-friendly Easter for them with special treats and toys. Why not make some tasty pet biscuits with your children using the recipe below? Your pet will love them and you will be rewarded with lots of love and affection.

A treat is exactly that... something that we have in addition to our regular, balanced

diet. Too many treats are not recommended as excess weight brings its own health risks but for this special weekend put on your chef's hat and gather your little helpers.

Savoury oat pet treats

- 3.5 cups of whole wheat flour
- 2 cups of oats
- 1 cup of milk
- ½ cup of hot water
- 2 stock cubes (chicken or beef)
- ½ cup of lard or beef fat

Dissolve stock cubes in hot water, add milk and lard and whisk together.

Mix oats in to the flour before adding the wet ingredients.

Mix well and then roll out on floured surface to 1/4inch thickness.

Cut into shapes using cookie cutters and bake at 150°C for 60mins.

Leave to cool and harden overnight.

RAWR is a registered charity, relying 100 per cent on volunteers to implement our programs and schemes. If you are one of the people who gave up your favourite vice for Lent and therefore have a little extra cash, why not boost your achievement and make a donation to RAWR? See our Facebook page or www.rawr.ie. Your donation will go towards covering the cost of our animal welfare work in the community.



people Arts & Entertainment

The Parish: an exhibition by Michael Holly with the Clonakilty GAA Community

Coming up at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre is a fascinating exhibition which takes Clonakilty GAA as its starting point to explore the GAA as an integral part of Irish culture and community. The GAA is the most ubiquitous cultural, community and sporting institution in Ireland, with a presence in almost every parish. However, it has seldom been the focus of creative work. Clonakilty-based artist Michael Holly spent over three years documenting the many and varied aspects of the Clonakilty GAA community, examining the impact of the presence of the GAA on a rural community, and how it may define what it means to be rural and Irish in an increasingly culturally homogenised and globalised society.

Since early 2019 Michael has been closely interacting with the regular activities of the Club, recording footage and sound using principles of ethnographic/observational filmmaking, encompassing and representing the scope of a GAA club as a community organisation. He



recorded a range of activities, including sporting activities (training, matches etc.) as well as social events, fundraising events, a funeral, award ceremonies and religious services. From early 2020 he focused on the Ladies Football Team and continued interacting with the Club and conducting interviews as restrictions allowed throughout Covid-19.

Michael's research focused on developing an innovative way of making a documentary film about and with a group of people. It is innovative in that its participatory approach has the welfare and benefit of the community at its core. Michael sought to collaboratively develop a system of collecting and

showing sensory information using video images and sound, that can become a new way of knowing and understanding a community, while providing the community with a new way of knowing and understanding themselves.

The Parish is an exhibition at Uillinn of video installation and a discursive space for considering the unique place that the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), and its affiliated organisations such as the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) have in Irish society. With its values of physical discipline, personal sacrifice through volunteering, community participation and consolidation of Irish identity,

the GAA has, in many ways, come to define what it means to be a part of a community in contemporary Ireland.

A programme of talks and discussions will take place around the exhibition at Uillinn including presentations by photographer Paul Carroll on his photobook Gaelic Fields, and journalist Ger McCarthy on his book Cork LGFA: Game of My Life.

Michael Holly is an artist, nonfiction filmmaker, researcher and lecturer based in Cork, Ireland. His work involves parafictional and nonfiction investigations into how identities are formed, and into the relationships that people have with culture, landscape, history and ecology. He is an Irish Research Council funded PhD candidate in Film & Screen Media at University College Cork. The Parish forms part of his creative practice-led doctoral project.

Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Gallery 2. 2 April to 12 May

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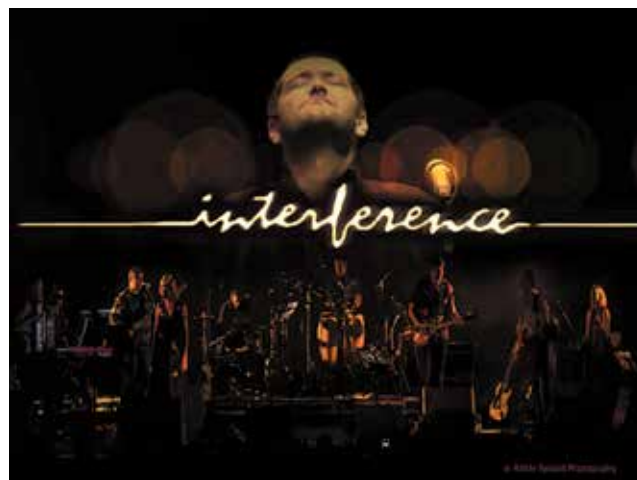
THE BAD GUYS
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MOVIES THIS MONTH

Schull night dedicated to the late great musician Fergus O'Farrell

At Fastnet Film Festival 2022, Sunday May 29 will be dedicated to the late, great Schull musician Fergus O'Farrell, whose song 'Gold' is one of the show-stoppers of Glen Hansard's Oscar-winning film Once. 'Breaking Out', the award-winning feature documentary that celebrates the remarkable life of Fergus, will be screened in the park in Schull followed by Interference, live in concert.

'Breaking Out' was a very personal labour of love for over 16 years by its Director Michael McCormack; a film in which a



spirit breaks free of the body's confines.

Fergus O'Farrell was the charismatic voice of Interference, one of the most influential bands of the Irish music scene in the 1990s. Despite being diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at a young age, Fergus just had to keep singing. His unique talent and love of life inspired a generation of songwriters, even as his own was slipping away. This is the story of that voice, and Fergus' fierce passion and dedication to his art.

www.fastnetfilmfestival.com

Interactive Museum of Languages for Young People

Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre is inviting artists, teachers, educators and parents to the opening event for the Interactive Museum of Languages (IMLYA) on Saturday 2 April at 12 noon.

Uillinn Programme Manager Justine Foster will host a conversation with artist and IMLYA creator Tomasz Madajczak around such topics as: the challenges involved in developing accessible and interactive artworks for the Museum; celebrating linguistic



and cultural diversity on a multilingual island; and the benefits

for children in developing an understanding of other languages.

es, cultures and diversity.

IMLYA is an exhibition for children at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre. It encourages children's self-expression and creativity, drawing on ancient and living languages to reflect on the diversity of languages in our environment.

The interactive artworks are inspired by linguistic artifacts, signs, pictographs and alphabets and each is accompanied by a range of activities for children between the ages of 5 and 12. These are designed to spark

children's interest in other languages and cultures, and to encourage children to talk about their own languages.

The exhibition at Uillinn is accompanied by a programme of workshops, gallery tours and discussions for children, families and schools including an Easter Storytelling Sculpture Camp with Tomasz Madajczak

and Mark Ball. Tuesday 19 April to Saturday 23 April from 11am to 3.30pm each day. Free, booking on Eventbrite.

The Camp takes place over four days and explores visual art, storytelling and multilingual stories for children (9 to 12 years) who speak more than one language at home. westcorkartscentre.com.

SUMMER CAMPS @ POTTERY STUDIO
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Wk 1: Tues 28th, Wed 29th & Thurs 30th June
Wk 2: Tues 5th, Wed 6th & Thurs 7th July
Wk 3: Tues 12th, Wed 13th & Thurs 14th July
Wk 4: Tues 19th, Wed 20th & Thurs 21st July

Camps run from 10.30am - 12.30pm each morning.
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April Sun Signs



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

The Sun moved into Aries to start the new astrological year at the Equinox on 20th March. New beginnings and high energy set the tone as we start this month with the first New Moon of a new solar cycle. This early Moon phase means we get a second New Moon at the end of the month. By the time we complete this Lunar cycle, we may have seen a lot of shifts and changes on many levels. April also brings us one of the big planet events of 2022 as well as the first eclipse of the year.

During the first week of the month, Mercury joins with the Sun and this can trigger all kinds of assertive dialogues. Aries wants to push forwards to the next target and has little patience for drawn-out conversations or negotiations. Words can contain some heat and this can ignite strong reactions. The positive side of this combination allows situations to be dealt with at speed and illumination or insight can occur. Around the 3rd is a good time to wipe the slate

clean for a fresh start.

The planet Mars is at home in Aries so it has extra strength this month whilst the Sun is in its sign so the confrontations and high energy will be dominant when this action-focused planet hits the slow and hard to move planet, Saturn on the 5th. These two have very contrasting energies and it can feel like a fast-moving force hits an immovable object. They are in the sign of Aquarius which can represent ideology and innovative ideas. We can expect a clash as themes involving community or social systems take the brunt of this combination.

The big headline event for April is the conjunction of Jupiter with Neptune which happens on the 12th but can be felt throughout the month and into late May. These two only meet every 12 years and the last time it happened in Pisces was in 1856. Jupiter is in one of its home signs in Pisces and Neptune is associated with this sign too. Themes of escapism, spirituality

creativity and all the metaphysical topics are highlighted by this dynamic.

Jupiter represents our urge to become better, have more and enlarge our understanding of worldly status. It can exaggerate or amplify issues. Neptune blurs definitions or boundaries associated with the physical or material world. It can create uncertainty or lack of clarity as it takes us beyond the five body senses into intuitive perception or imagination. Pisces is the sign most closely associated with our spiritual awareness. It represents the cycle of spirit into matter and the return to spirit once more as the flow of one level of experience merges into another.

This combination of energies could bring a great awakening or feeling of emerging into another realm of understanding. There is potential for seeing through the illusions and deceptions that are part of the corporeal world and gaining a greater sense of

connection and compassion. It can also heighten confusion and misinformation as falsehoods and propaganda are on overdrive. This is a time when being centred and grounded is essential. Maintain a strong connection to your inner moral compass and spiritual intuition. Be aware of attempts to beguile or enamour you. Don't be easily taken in by things that seem to look good on the surface until you have taken time to reflect and review with a different perspective. This is an opportunity to elevate your understanding and vision to a new height. Use these days mid-month to really visualise, imagine and dream your future into existence. Don't waste this powerful moment being caught up with fantasy or hypnotic stories and emotional roller coasters.

After this powerful mid-month, we move through the next weeks of April with a changing landscape and a focus on our resources. The Full Moon in Libra on 16th

is a time to seek some balance and harmony as relationships of all kinds are in focus. The Sun moves into Taurus on the 20th which brings us into the eclipse season. The Month concludes with the second New Moon and the Solar eclipse as Pluto starts its retrograde phase. Pluto travels overground back to the first days of January and we can reflect and adjust as we review the power shifts that have taken place since 2022 began. So many hidden agendas and shameful secrets are coming into the light now. The eclipse brings a shift that may take many months to become apparent. It is a time of huge change and it is even more important to make those choices that support your future, your values and the person you prefer to be in the world.

April has a New Moon at 12° Aries on the 1st at 7.24am, a Full Moon at 27° Libra on the 16th at 7.55pm and a second New Moon Solar Eclipse at 11° Taurus on the 30th at 9.28pm



Aries: During the first weeks of April expect some extra attention as others want to see what you're going to do next. This month you'll need to stand up and display your self-confidence in a way that wasn't called on before. Make adjustments if you are not representing yourself accurately or in a way that is most true for your character. Relationship matters occupy your mind around Full Moon on the 16th. What's important is how these areas of your life are impacting your lifestyle and self-expression. The trick is to handle any tense moments with grace, state your position and move on quickly.



Taurus: During early April your inclination is to shun the limelight and keep pretty much to yourself. You can be very productive in the next few weeks by just quietly working away behind the scenes in seclusion. Reconnecting with your inner world is important for your sense of equilibrium. Valuable insights and breakthroughs are possible. Enjoy the quiet "alone time" whilst you can as the demands of your outer world will encroach again soon enough. Simple practical concerns about health, money or everyday responsibilities must be given your attention but don't allow yourself to become over-anxious later in the month.



Gemini: This month it's who you know rather than what you know that matters. The spotlight is on your position within your community, in group ventures, or work projects which involve others of like mind. Make the opportunity to meet new people; the benefits will soon follow. It's also time to change up a gear in your social life. The focus shifts after Full Moon on the 16th as you get out the party gear or just take some needed leisure time. Having fun is the theme and allowing the inner child some freedom to run loose now brings its rewards.



Cancer: Now is the time to make plans for your future. Personal status or vocational concerns are likely to dominate your thinking during early April. If you want to fulfil your ambitions or go a step further then make some positive moves. Getting yourself some recognition for what you do well takes on extra significance. Remember to balance the demands of work or public life with the needs of your home life, especially from mid-month onwards. Family or domestic arrangements need your attention but you get the support you need to create a secure foundation to work from.



Leo: Travel, study or spiritual matters have been taking your attention. Not content with anything repetitive, you're likely to want the freedom to explore new ground or invite new experiences into your life. This is a great time to think big and make the most of opportunities that come your way. An overseas contact may get in touch or new information provides the chance to break out from any restricting routines to try something different. Be prepared to open your mind to new ideas and lifestyles. Life could get hectic around mid-month so pace yourself whilst you still have some time available.



Virgo: The next two weeks might be a trying period; you may feel anxious and worried about money, health or concern for other people. It will pass. You are simply focused on the negative side of a cycle at the expense of the positive. It's a great time to clear out what doesn't work well in your life in preparation for the next phase. After the Full Moon on 16th, you begin to acknowledge what you have in terms of real assets and how you can make the best of them. Finances, accounts and money matters improve when they get your full attention after mid-month.



Libra: With this month's New Moon opposite your Sun sign the focus is on relationship issues. Personal and professional partnerships will need your attention for the next few weeks. Finding a win-win situation for everyone has to be your goal. Interesting and inspiring people may come into your life now and you'll want to find more time for intimate encounters or shared experiences. Your personal style and self-expression get to be the issue later in April and you won't want to be dictated to by other people's demands. Being seen and accepted on your own merit becomes the priority.



Scorpio: This is a good month to organize your work or focus on the tedious but necessary tasks that don't reap obvious rewards. You'll benefit from making adjustments especially if you've been overdoing it lately. Treat yourself with care and pay attention to your physical needs especially up until Full Moon on the 16th. Take a few days mid-month for some solitary or downtime to reflect and restore your spirit and physical vitality. Later in the month, you will get the boost you need as life throws you some new or exciting challenges.



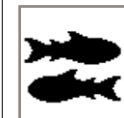
Sagittarius: Your imaginative powers are strong and you enjoy a chance to express your creative talents during the next few weeks. Whatever you do it needs to give scope to your originality and get you noticed. Your feelings for loved ones are more intense now and children may take an important role in your life at this time. You want to have fun and taking chances might pay off. Don't take yourself too seriously and you may surprise yourself at what you come up with by just playing around. Expect rewards from past efforts as we approach the month-end.



Capricorn: During early April you may feel like staying home. Build up your reserves so you have plenty spare for later. Use this time to complete unfinished tasks and don't expect to get started on anything new until mid-month. Your work or social status takes on greater significance after the 16th and you'll want to put your best effort into making the most of your situation. Putting your energy into any project that gives you some sense of achievement will feel important now. The real rewards will become more apparent after the 20th when you can expect some well-deserved recognition.



Aquarius: Follow the urge to get out and about and make connections over the next two weeks. Expect opportunities to get more involved with your neighbours or local events. This is also a good time to catch up on correspondences or to do some writing. You may feel restless if you don't find activities that stimulate your mind. Travelling, foreign visitors or starting a new study course will likely be a feature mid-month and you'll want to seek out more information or alternatives to what you already know. A boost to your work life or career is likely after the Full Moon.



Pisces: Early April finds you concerned with your material and financial security. Take time to consider if you are making the best of your natural skills and talents, you might be underestimating yourself. Actual money isn't the only source of wealth and you'll probably find you have abundance in another form. Concerns or anxieties about being dependent on others may trouble you mid-month. It's a short-lived phase if you don't dwell on the negative and your world will open up with new opportunities after Full Moon on 16th. Make plans, think big and remember to include your dreams.

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The face in the machine: emblems of adversity in Belarus and Russia



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.

Artists living in the Soviet Union often paid the highest price for daring to put into words or images any sentiment that could be perceived as fermenting resentment towards the state. In 1938 the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam was sentenced to hard labour in Siberia for a poem he wrote against Stalin, a sentence which proved the death of him. Eighty-four years later, in 2022, a friend of an artist I know in Belarus was sentenced to 12 years in prison for showing a painting of a partisan fighting Russian forces. The Soviet Union may have crumbled in the 1990s, but Soviet era repression has well and truly returned, in Belarus, as well as Russia.

In his Collected Essays, Seamus Heaney wrote the following translation of Mandelstam's 'ars poetica', ('the art of poetry' from his book 'The Noise of Time'): "People need poetry as their own secret / To keep them awake forever / And to bathe them / In the bright-haired wave of its breathing." The arts carry a special kind of magic and truthfulness which can fortify and inspire the spirit; they are a buoyant consolation, a raft of creative freedom which people cling to, for their psychological health, when all other freedoms disappear, when the truth itself is turned on its head, and the unrealities of propaganda reign.

My friend in Belarus is the artist Roman Sustov, a master printmaker, whose 'ex libris'

etchings, lithographs and mezzotints are collected internationally. His recent series 'Crash Test Dummies' reflects "his feelings at this time". In this series Sustov pushes his signature 'steam-punk' / 'cyborg' vision beyond the limits of 'human'; his 'dummies' have relinquished all human features; in place of a nose and eyes, could be, in one piece, an aerial view of a power station; in another the face becomes a centre of what could be radio waves or a radial target; in another an aerial view of a city; in yet another the face is a metal husk, melted and torn. Sustov's 'dummies' are absorbed and transfigured by machine parts, solar eclipses, grids and chambers. The human being has become a city, and the city a 'crash test dummy'.

This is, of course, my own interpretation; Sustov's work is never didactic, never overtly symbolic. It is always, rather, an endless process of invention; a fusing of fairy tale, myth, human and machine with an Escher-like love of intricacy, checker boards and labyrinths. Ships and cities crown heads, faces emerge out of towers, the inner workings of clocks replace craniums, and outstretched wings make of the human head a clock-work eagle. The more one looks at Sustov's work, the more one is drawn into its ingenious spell. This is the basis of its power, its imaginative force, and it is this which lends the 'Crash Test Dummies' series its incredible poignancy.

The 'Crash Test Dummies' have no vintage helmets. If they have eyes they are hollow. One work resembles an icon, the face criss-crossed with static and eclipsed by heliotropes

linking black and white squares, another is simply an android with a halo. The work which resembles the aerial view of a power station, is perhaps the most powerful and puts me in mind of a 2016 lithograph titled 'Reactor'. 'Reactor' is a frighteningly ominous structure, rising into the sky, and parting, with spiked struts, two halves of a giant, multi-eyed face; an iconic industrial mask fused with pipes and cylindrical apertures, of the kind we see in the 'Crash Test Dummy' image. It is possible to see in this, humanity as a reactor; humanity as completely enmeshed in the machinery of industrial power. It is this dependency which has become our ultimate vulnerability; a vulnerability so eloquently imparted in Sustov's recent work, and thrown into such stark relief through Putin's war upon Ukraine.

Exercising imaginative freedom in Russia and Belarus is, right now, fraught with risk. There is a difference, however, between art that expresses feeling through nuanced form in response to human suffering, such as Sustov's, and creative protest which explicitly challenges the authority of the state. Pussy Riot's guerrilla performance of 'Punk Prayer: Mother of God, Drive Putin Away' in 2012, is the most famous example of the latter in recent times. It earned the performers two years of hard labour and a lifetime of PTSD.

With a profile as large as Pussy Riot, Russian Instagram artist-icon, Ellen Sheidlin has equal potential to be a creative thorn in Putin's side. Sheidlin's elfin, doll-like surrealist videos and stills have earned her a huge



Crash Test Dummies, 2022

tives, and those whose work, whilst remaining non-political, developed layers of nuance and feeling which resonated great lyrical power. It is the latter group which held the cultural fabric together, through years of terror, whilst those in the first group were either imprisoned, executed or fled into exile.

Rather than 'cancel' Russian and Belarusian artists, we need to mind them, and give them a voice when we can. They reveal the true soul of Russia and Belarus, now, once again crushed and repressed by the malignancy of militant autocracy.



Reactor, 2016 Lithograph

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The Craft Corner

This month **Natalie Webb** shows us how to make an Easter Bunny Basket.

If you'd like to show Natalie what you made you can email a photo to her at info@westcorkpeople.ie

- You will need:
- Card • Scissors • Ruler • Pencil
 - Marker • Glue • Stapler
 - Large side plate/ small dinner plate for a template
 - Felt, two different colours
 - Tissue paper

- Method:
- Draw around the plate on the card to make a large circle and cut out.
 - Cut out a long strip of card for the handle.
 - Fold the card circle into quarters and open out.



- Measure 6cm in along each crease then, using this measurement as a guide, draw a square inside the circle.
- Fold the card in along the lines of the square and turn the corners in at the same time.

- Staple the corners shut to make your basket shape.
- Loop the cardboard strip inside on opposite sides of the basket and staple or glue on.
- Draw a bunny head shape on the card and cut out.
- Glue the shape to one of your felts and cut around the shape.
- Draw some little shapes for the insides of bunnies ears and their nose on the other colour felt, cut out and stick on the bunnies face.
- Using the marker draw on some eyes and whiskers.
- Stick you bunny on your basket.
- Draw some easter eggs or whatever you like on some card or paper then cut out and stick to the other sides of the basket, you can really use you imagination here to decorate in anyway you like!
- Put the tissue paper in the basket and you are all set for your easter egg hunt!



The goal of Sudoku is to fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9

Sudoku

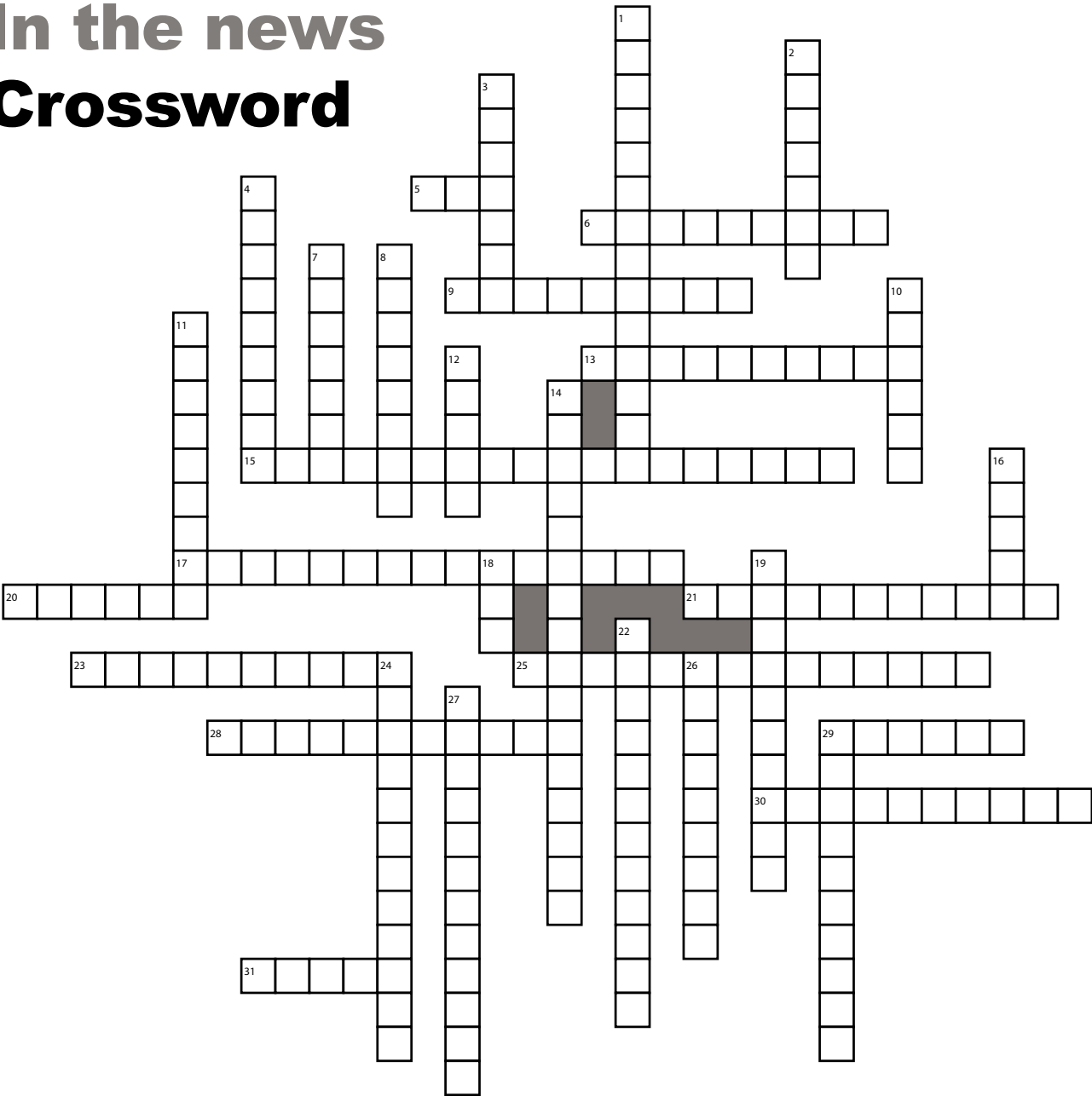
			6				3	
7		3	9					5
				2				
5								
				8	6			1
9				7	2		6	
	8					1		6
	4		1					8
				9		5		

#54154 Difficulty: moderate

				8				
			2					
	4			9			5	3
		6	3					
		2	9		5		6	
						7		1
	6							
	9	3		1				
	5				6		2	4

#130632 Difficulty: hard

In the news Crossword



Down

1. Unemotional stateside banking institution (7,7)
2. West Cork's Tara relenquishes seat at this state agency table (4,3)
3. A river turns green annually in this musical city (7)
4. Ron is taking himself out of Moscow after 22 years (9)
7. Brenda who's now scootered back onto our screens (7)
8. Battle waged with infectious weapons (8)
10. Weather pattern disruptor causing floods in Australia (2,4)
11. Virtual reality world (9)
12. Award in the shape of a theatre mask (5)
14. Gathering of country's subjects (8,8)
16. Where a South African born inventor is CEO (5)
18. System of agricultural s® subsidies (3)
19. Nonpartisan position (10)
22. West Cork happy to go halves with JP on this company (6,6)

Across

5. Surgeons tried to transplant the heart of which animal? (3)
6. A radioactive element (9)
9. Antlered inventor of the steel plow (4,5)
13. Late Fields of Athenry songwriter (3,2,4)
15. Zelenskyy's TV show that inspired a nation (7,2,3,6)
17. Ability to support oneself without help (4,11)
20. Irish towns and villages show a padre out in mid-March (6)
21. Comedian who surprised BBC with his rebel songs (5,6)
23. Ask auteur about hotdog topping (10)
25. Preserving of time that may be consigned to history (8,6)
28. Belfast actor also known as the King-beyond-the-Wall (6,5)
29. Provisions stored as gale is blowing (6)
30. New leader that will be pushing for delivery (5,5)
31. Explosive global fuel company (5)

people Arts & Entertainment

Art for all at exhibition in Innishannon to raise funds for cancer charity

Almost seven years Mary Ffrench's husband, Robert Quin, was diagnosed with stage four cancer of the colon. The following two years could be described as nothing short of torture for him. "There were a few times when I honestly thought he wasn't going to get out of hospital alive this time," shares Mary. "Every aspect of his life was turned into a tsunami of pain and suffering."

Thankfully Robert got through this ordeal and lived to see happier days again. As a result of their experience, the family pledged to support some of the amazing cancer charities that offered them support during this difficult period.

"Only people who have gone through the cancer journey or have seen loved ones go through it fully appreciate the good work that these charities



Robert Quin, after he recovered from cancer, with his wife Mary Ffrench

do," says Mary.

"The support, on so many levels, that is given to the patients and their families cannot be understated."

An Easter Art exhibition in

support of the Marie Keating Foundation will take place at Innishannon Village Hall from Friday, April 15 to Monday, April 18.

There are currently five



participating artists in the exhibition and over 40 works of art for sale.

A member of the Kinsale At-

lantic Artists, Mary is now in a position where she has a decent collection of her own work to contribute.

Joining her in donating works will be sculptor Kate French from Kinsale, Triona Ryan, a third year student in Contemporary Applied Art at Crawford, ceramicist Trish McCoy and oil painter Melanie Gallagher.

Mary has always been a lover of art but began painting when she had to give up work through illness. "I found that to do something simply for the joy of it rather than for the material benefit gives a real depth to living," she shares.

There will be greeting cards on sale for less than €10 to sculptures worth thousands at the exhibition, which really does offer art for all.

There is no entry fee so members of the public are very welcome to come in, browse and just make a small donation.

Lea M launches ambient loop cello album

Cello and singer Lea M. launched her debut album *In Search Of Water* at Levis' Corner House in Ballydehob recently.

Born in Hungary, based in West Cork, the music of Lea M. is rooted in improvisation and inspired by nature. With

cello, voice, and a loop station she creates experimental and ambient instrumental soundscapes that bring listeners to a quiet space of inner journey and connection. Layer upon layer of bowed, plucked, and even strummed cello loops weave seamlessly, ebbing and

flowing from near-symphonic force to delicate stillness, only to be further enhanced by Lea's evocative singing.

After several years of playing in bands and accompanying singer-songwriters, Lea M. launched her unique live solo project 'Comfy Concerts': A

hugely successful series of entirely improvised performances to horizontal audiences who have been encouraged to bring pillows and blankets to the gig.

Listen to Lea M. on Spotify, Apple Music and Bandcamp.



OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Pictured at a Scór na nÓg competition in Kinsale Community School are student musicians Bo Collins, Hannah O'Brien and Deirdre Nyhan from Ballinspittle. Picture. John Allen

New exhibition at Gallery Asna

Thaw is an exhibition of artwork by Jamie Ashforth running April 2 - 23 at Gallery Asna, Clonakilty Arts Centre.

Thaw speaks to fluidity but infers solidity. It crawls inside the slow, quiet change of state. Experimental approaches to print, drawing, photography, and installation archive these cusp experiences, in transition. Separate pieces link together like words completing a sentence. They speak of the space between delicate and durable, and absence and presence. Often teetering on the edge of clarity and obscurity, the work emerges and dissolves while protective layers incubate periods of flux. In the hazy stillness, we move through the gallery space as a landscape of its own.

Jamie Ashforth is a Canadian-born West-Cork based visual artist exploring new forms of connection through socially and environmentally engaged artmaking. She holds a first class honours Masters degree from Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork City, Ireland, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts



from Concordia University, Montréal, Canada. Jamie has exhibited in several group and solo exhibitions, including last December's Plus/Minus at the Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork City. She is artist-in-residence at Uillinn: West

Cork Arts Centre this April through to the end of June.

The gallery is open 11am - 5pm daily. All are welcome to join the exhibition opening Saturday April 2 from 5pm - 7pm.

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Choosing colours to suit your light



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



Peignoir from Farrow & Ball

temperature and how you feel in that space.

North facing rooms are normally cool spaces. They don't get much natural sunlight, even if there is a large window, and can appear cold and dark. Avoid anything with a green or grey base in it here; warm earthy tones work best. Add warmth by using a neutral or a sunny yellow colour toned paint, for example Colortrend's Victorianna, in its historic collection), would help bounce light around the room. You could also use a deep brown or red.

As the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, the south side of a house will benefit from the most sunlight hours during the day.

South facing rooms are warm but full on direct sunlight can bleach the colour out of the brightest of colour schemes. What you need is a paint colour that will filter that glare. Reds



Priory Wall from Colortrend



This yellow is similar to Victorianna from Colortrend.

and oranges work well as do dark colours like Colortrend's Priory wall, which has a blue tone.

An east facing room gets its best light in the morning, while the light is dimmer in the afternoon and evening. If you pick the wrong paint here it will feel very bleak and cold. You could go for teal or green paints such as Colortrend's Cobalt freeze or pantry blue but if you are unsure ask a colour expert or a designer like myself.

West facing rooms are the opposite to east facing – cooler in the morning and warm in the afternoon and evening. If this is an area that you only use in the afternoon try paint with a hint of violet, this is bright yet calming. If you want to create an impact add a feature wall or chimney breast in something like Peignoir from Farrow & Ball.

So my advice to you is know the direction of a room before you go to the paint shop. Choosing the right paint colour for a space will make you really want to spend time there.

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GARDENING

John Hosford
The Weekend Garden Centre

As the year advances into April there is plenty of activity in the garden both in terms of work to be done and colourful spring shrubs, bedding plants and bulbs in bloom. The later Daffodils, Narcissi and Tulips are flowering now with the tall elegant Darwin Tulips magnificent to look at.

Jobs for the month

Choose a showery, soft day to apply an organic shrub fertiliser to trees, shrubs and perennials, avoiding windy conditions when applying.

Lime hating shrubs such as Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias, Pieris, Kalmia, Eucryphia, Magnolias and Sarcococa will benefit from an ericaceous feed, which will contain all the right elements to optimise your trees and shrubs.

It is important that you use an ericaceous feed for these, as they require specific micro elements such as iron to improve leaf colour and eliminate leaf yellowing. Mulches of pine needles and bark mulch are all beneficial to shrubs.

Fruit Garden

Protect fruit blossom from late frosts. Many areas are at risk of frost until about May 19. Use hessian, jute bags, frost protection fleece to protect overnight. Remove the covering in the morning to facilitate access to pollinating insects.

Citrus bushes will benefit from a specialist citrus feed now.

Ventilate protected strawberries on sunny days.

Gardening in April

Finish planting runners by mid-April.

Planting of new Raspberries should be completed now without further delay, cutting back the newly planted canes.

Keep recently planted trees and bushes well watered during dry spells. It is important watering is attended to in this vital period of initial establishment.

Hand-pollinate wall trained peach and nectarine flowers. Spray at mid-day to help setting in dry conditions.

Prune gooseberries, red and white currants that have been left unpruned during the winter.

Greenhouse

Pot up Begonias, Gloxinias, Geraniums and Fuchsias.

Increase watering and commence weekly feeding (seaweed fertiliser) of indoor plants as days lengthen and sunshine hours increase. The more specialised plants such as Citrus, Cacti and Orchids maybe fed with a specialist feed formulated specifically to the plant.

When re-potting, check the roots thoroughly and vigilantly for vine weevil. Remove, destroy and dispose of these pernicious pests immediately or they will multiply and cause havoc. You can get parasitic nematodes to control these, an environmentally friendly and natural way of eliminating.

Watering will need to be increased now as plants grow at a more rapid rate with longer days and increased sunshine hours. Use lukewarm water in cold weather or frosty mornings.

Indoor plants should get more space now as they develop to improve air circulation, increase disease prevention and let the plants develop to their optimum shape.

Increase ventilation and air movement as weather improves. Keep a thermostatically-controlled fan heater on standby to protect against late spring frosts and low temperatures.

If you are choosing a new greenhouse, look out for good ventilation. Choose a strong structure that will withstand

the increasing frequency of damaging, high velocity storms and gales and position your greenhouse in an east-west orientation, keeping it in close proximity to electricity and water supplies. Keep it away from heavy farm animals and consider the provision of a double, water-proof plug. A light connected to a sensor is recommended.

Plant Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Peppers, Aubergines into their fruiting quarters now. Do however consider protection from late frosts and low temperatures. The risk of frost can vary around West Cork depending on proximity to the coast and local altitude.

Greenhouse vegetables/fruit can be grown successfully in grow-bags, terracotta pots, deep window boxes. Make regular sowings of lettuce, salad leaves, radishes, turnips.

Start off Pumpkins, Squashes, Melons, Courgettes, Vegetable marrows, Sweet Corn. Sow in a frost-free place indoors such as a propagator. Sow in 9/10cm biodegradable pots. Use fresh compost. Cover the seed with vermiculite. Target planting outdoors into their summer quarters by late May/early June. Harden-off well before planting out.

Plant up summer containers. Keep under protection to establish. Discard old compost and debris. Use fresh, clean compost, adding a slow release fertiliser to it. Feed weekly to optimise performance.

Move and place baskets outdoors in calm conditions at the end of May, making sure chains etc are in good, sound condition.

Discard containers which have rusted and are not in a sound, sustainable condition.

Summer Bulbs

Newly purchased summer flowering bulbs such as Begonias and Dahlias can be started into growth in readiness for planting outdoors at end of May or early June when all risk of frost is over.



Armeria-thrift works very well in a coastal garden.

Gladioli and Nerines can be planted outdoors into the ground now choosing a sunny, well-drained position. Don't plant Nerines too deeply – the crown of the bulb should be proud of the soil. They give terrific colour in late autumn when colour in the garden is getting somewhat diminished.

Gladioli can be planted at intervals of three weeks to provide a succession of bloom for the house and indeed special occasions. If you are colour co-ordinating choose named specific colours, labelling as you plant. Have support ready for the developing Gladioli.

Vegetable Garden

Get seed potatoes planted now, choosing certified, sound seed varieties.

Support peas and broad beans sown earlier.

Sow winter maturing vegetables such as Savoy cabbage, kale, cauliflower, broccoli. Protect against cabbage root fly, flea beetles, rabbits and pigeons.

Planting by the sea

This is a good month to plant hardy plants by the sea.

Shrubs for coastal locations include: Berberis buddleia; Cistus; Cordyline; Cytisus-broom; Elaeagnus; Erica carnea (winter heathers); Fuchsia ricartonii; Mrs. Popple; Griselinia; Hebe; Hippophae rhamnoides (sea buckthorn); Hydrangea macrophylla/hortensia (flowering

July-October); Lavandula 'Hidcote'; Phormium (New Zealand Flax); Pittosporum; Rosa rugosa/canina; Rosmarinus; Ulex; Viburnum tinus.

Perennials for by the sea:

Agapanthus; Armeria-thrift; Crambe maritima; Dianthus; Eryngium; Euphorbia; Iberis; Limonium; Olearia haastii; macrodonta; solandri, traversii – ideal for a coastal hedge; Osteospermum; Primula veris; Pulsatilla; Romneya coulteri; Sedum; Viola odorata

Bulbs for by the sea: Crocus; Galtonia; Narcissus; Nerine; Scilla; Zantedeschia. Keep well watered during dry periods. Protect against wind with robust, well-secured windbreak netting.

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Pledge your garden for pollinators

So many homeowners are beginning to see their gardens in a new light. They want to make their gardens more wildlife-friendly and contribute small patches of pollinator-friendly habitats to our landscape. In order to celebrate this, and to encourage more gardeners to follow suit, the National Biodiversity

Data Centre (NBDC) is asking you to 'pledge your garden for pollinators', so that it can track the creation of these pollinator-friendly pitstops, dotted across the island.

To help with this, the NBDC has produced a four-page brochure to help to explain this concept, and was delighted to get support from the Herit-

age and Biodiversity Officer network to produce this simple guide, beautifully illustrated by Aga Grandowicz.

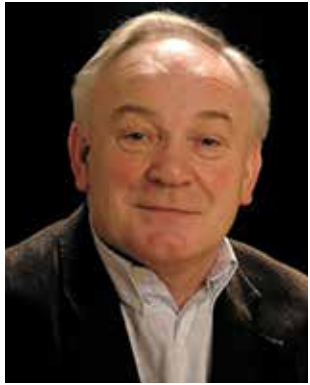
This brochure explains how anyone can make any garden – big or small – more pollinator-friendly. By taking simple steps in your garden, you will help to provide much-needed food and shelter for our

pollinating insects, while at the same time creating a beautiful, colourful garden for you and your family to enjoy.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet email corkheritage@corkcoco.ie or to download a copy go to pollinators.ie/gardens

people Motoring

A fine motor and price in the Arkana from Renault

CAR
REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

There must be certainly be advantages for a car's name to start with the letter 'A.' In various lists it's always going to be one of the first cars mentioned.

Renault say the name 'Arkana' is derived from the Latin word arcanum, which means secret. Well the 'secret' is out and the Arkana was named the best Medium Crossover/SUV at the recent Continental Irish Car of the Year awards dinner in the Aviva Stadium.

It sure is a fine, comfortable motor. Officially it's compact crossover, with a very stylish sloping rear roofline.

The Arkana is not only the French carmaker's first coupé-styled SUV, it's also their first purpose-built hybrid. The distinctive-looking Arkana is built at the Renault-Samsung Motors plant in South Korea.

Renault already have two neat SUV's in their stable, the Captur and Kadjar and the arrival of the Arkana will no doubt allow some Renault owners to possibly move up a notch to the Arkana.

The Arkana was introduced to the Irish media on a beautiful autumnal day last September at Palmerstown House in Kill. We remember it clearly, as it was the first major motoring evening in the country after two elongated lockdowns.

I drove a fully hybrid version and if you take your foot off the accelerator you will notice the needle on the dash drop into 'charge' mode. The car starts up on electric power, which means a significant fuel saving is made, while reversing is now managed by electricity alone.

And have you ever heard of a 'dog clutch'? It's yet another example of the advanced technology in the car's automatic transmission system that features what's called an intelligent 'dog clutch' that allows the Arkana drive in all-electric mode more of the time.

Inside the dash is dominated by a massive infotainment screen, a bit like a Tablet. You will never have to listen to ads on radio stations again, just keep switching stations by touching the screen.

The seats are comfortable, but a bit dark. However, the interior décor is lifted thanks to a few nice touches of red stitching on the seats and there is a touch of red on the dash and doors also.

Prices start at €30,340 or €252 per month on PCP. My 1.6-litre test model cost €34,915. Road tax is €190. It's available in Hybrid and Mild Hybrid. I don't normally check the brand of tyres on test cars, but this time the unusual name caught my eye. The Arkana was fitted with Kumho tyres, which like the car are also made in South Korea.

My test car came with a plethora of extras including, Blind spot warning and Easy Park Assist. I am always afraid to try the latter service, in case I get any scratches! There are so many goodies available and I know that it's only when you go into a dealer to buy new that

you realise the exact price. But you don't have to opt for every extra that's mentioned in the brochure.

The boot is massive, but no spare wheel; that space underneath was taken up by the hybrid technology. Talking of technology, plenty of USB

charge-point for all those mobile phones that family members may own.

Post-Covid inflation is driving up the cost of cars, but I think this Renault is reasonably priced.



people Sport & Fitness

'Springspiration': Moving the impossible



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.

What does it take to inspire you to make healthier life choices? Choices which are good for your body and mind? Choices that will improve your life and bring more joy, energy and health?

For me one inspiration is

spring, with its first blue skies and warm sun rays. It fills me with energy and a desire to 'go out and do something'. It's like a deep pull within to get out, soak up the D vitamin I can get from the sun and move my body. Run, bike, hike or walk. Or just sit outside, feeling the air and sunshine in my hair and on my skin. It's a mood-lifter and an energy charger and I use it as often as possible when the sun is out.

I also get inspired by other people's work ethics, achievements and accomplishments. I follow several runners and non-professional athletes on Instagram and enjoy reading their training and race posts. Learn how they improve or fail. I get inspired by the commitment ordinary people have towards their goals.

Like the two Ultra Runners, David and Jette who I interviewed for another inspiration piece. Maybe you remember them? He did five ultra endurance events during September and she just completed her second 100 miles race.

And then there is music, films and books. Music for when the training needs a little 'extra' and

films and books for the same inspiration as above: Following another person's journey towards their goal. And now – You tube video! Very hands-on Yoga session to be exact.

I'm still testing the waters (my form) to see if this year will be the year, to try a full marathon distance in my hometown of Copenhagen. I find that I need to take good care of my body to avoid injuries and thus have off-days and active restitution days.

So this Wednesday, I tried online Yoga! Found a 20 min yoga guide on You Tube, aimed for core, with a fantastic woman called Adriene (Yoga with Adriene). If you've looked for yoga online, you probably already know her.

I found the session quite easy-to-follow, despite not being able to see the screen from some positions and, all in all, it felt very organic and natural, especially the way she had composed the flow between positions.

I followed the session with roughly 25 minutes of my own body weight exercise combo to improve my running: Squats, one-legged squats, side lunges,

hip bridges, side planks and strict push ups. While none of it made me break a sweat, it also didn't lead to muscle overuse and gave my body a well-deserved active rest day.

While writing this, I'm looking forward for another week of trying to create the possibility of reaching the marathon distance. I'm looking at doing the furthest distance yet (28 km). Now this is peanuts for the two Ultra Runners (David and Jette) whom I mentioned earlier, but for someone like me, it's a big step.

And then...it only is, until it isn't. If these three past years of running have taught me anything, it is that what you think is impossible changes all the time. When I started running, I was happy to run 3 km a couple of times a week and I could not see myself run 5 km. That was too long and too hard. Then 5 km became the normal and even then I had many setbacks, having to take weeks off running regularly during these almost three years. My impossible has changed. I now run 10 km for leisure and a half marathon without problems.

I know, with the right inspi-



ration, drive and commitment, your impossible will change too, no matter what you decide you would like to become good or better at. Your impossible will change and you will change your life for the better. Don't give up because of set-backs and breaks. Work around things as well as you can and stick with it.

For example, should I, for any reason, not be ready for the Copenhagen Marathon, I will

find another goal, which will still move my 'impossible'. Moving the impossible is the gift from all the hard work and I hope it will inspire you too.

Questions and comments are as always very welcome to: taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com or via Instagram: @trainwithadane You are also welcome to follow my training and get tips to home sessions.

Sacred Heart lady footballers hoping for All-Ireland glory

Sacred Heart Secondary School in Clonakilty have an All Ireland C Ladies Football Final to look forward to on Friday, April 1.

The mastermind behind this success is team manager Brian Daly, a History and Geography teacher. His selector, fellow History and Geography teacher Ciaran Mulcahy was full of praise for Mr. Daly when chatting to **Matthew Hurley**.

“He (Daly) has accompanied the girls to most of the games and has set the wheels in motion,” Mulcahy said.

This is a huge occasion for the all-girls’ Secondary School as they go up to Tipperary to play Our Ladies Bower of Westmeath.

“There is a great mood in the camp ahead of the final. It is not all that often that a team gets to an All-Ireland final and it is important to enjoy the build-up and not become overawed or nervous before the big day.”

The West Cork school have had some journey in the Lidl Post Primary School Competition to date.

Their Munster Final victory over Coláiste Mhuire, Ennis was the first step to the decider.

“It was fairly evenly matched up until half time, but Clonakilty excelled in the final 30 minutes to lift the cup,” Mulcahy explained.

“The score was Clonakilty 5-6 to Ennis 1-6. There were fantastic scenes, and it was excellent to see the girls celebrate with family and friends.”

That was followed up by an

All-Ireland Semi-Final win over Coláiste Iognáid of Galway (3-15 to 5-3).

“It was played in (the) University of Limerick astro pitch, and it was a surface that really suited Clon’s direct style of attack.”

The girls’ are also enjoying the experience so far according to Mr. Mulcahy.

“There is a great vibe amongst the girls and competition for places is intense. In previous years, panel depth may not have been as strong.

“They all push each other on and there are a good few T.Y and Fifth Year students who will be well capable of stepping up next year.”

The school will have Fifth and Sixth Year students attending the game. The players’ families will also be in attendance and have been described as the ‘16th player’ by Mulcahy.

Getting to the All-Ireland Final was a big objective for Clon at the start of this academic year.

This team drew the Munster Junior final two years ago and unfortunately lost it after extra time.

“It was obvious from that campaign that there was serious talent in the school and the girls bought into it very early in the year under the direction of manager Brian Daly,” Mulcahy added.

“They have managed to win Munster, play extremely well in the All-Ireland Semi and I think they will have a healthy respect for Our Ladies Bower, Athlone in the final, but they most definitely will not fear them.

“If Clon preform to the best of their ability, it will take a super team to defeat them.”

The teams’ strengths were outlined by Mulcahy and if used in the Final, could be the key to victory.

“Strength in numbers is imperative to succeed at this level. Clonakilty are an athletic team and are excellent at keeping possession.

“When they break on the counterattack, they do so in a Blitzkrieg fashion and commit numbers forward. They are a team that will try to win and win well.

“There is no such thing as building a lead and inviting trouble from the opposing team.



In attendance at the Lidl All-Ireland Post-Primary Schools Finals captain’s day are captains, Abby Curran of Our Lady’s Bower in Athlone, Westmeath, left, and Lydia Sutton of Sacred Heart Clonakilty, ahead of their Lidl All-Ireland Post-Primary Schools Senior C Final. Photo by Brendan Moran/Sportsfile

So the strengths are definitely pace, athleticism and (the) ability to score.

“One of their biggest assets, in my opinion, is that they won’t give the opposition a moments peace. They will let Athlone know they are in a final,” he said.

Mulcahy also knows a small bit about Clon’s opposition before the big game.

“They beat a very physical Cavan team in the All-Ireland Semi-Final. I know that they have a couple of sharp shooters and the ex-Roscommon goalie, Shane Curran has a talented daughter in their ranks.

“Athlone are on the border of Westmeath and Roscommon, and they have a strong pool to choose from.”

Mulcahy explained how big an All-Ireland victory would be for the school.

“All Ireland Final days do not come by very often,” he said.

“We were lucky enough to win a Junior B Camogie title three years ago, but I think it was 2008 the last time Clonakilty won a football All Ireland under the tutelage of Brian Daly and Brid Hennessy.”

Ladies Football might be excelling in SHSS at this present moment, but the school offers a wide range of different sports also.

“Camogie, football, hockey, basketball, athletics and equestrian would be the main sports and we have been quite successful down through the years.”

While the Final is an exciting

prospect for the school, there is also school work for the students to contend with.

“The students are great in SHSS. Their main focus in school is obviously their studies and they are genius when it comes to mixing schoolwork with extracurricular activities,” Mulcahy said.

“They will always catch up on their schoolwork if representing the school for a match. They really are a credit to their clubs and families.”

Whatever the result in this Final, the team has brought pride both to the school and the local community.

The game is on at 12:30pm in Sean Treacy Park, Tipperary Town on Friday, April 1.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Sean Connolly of Skibbereen in action against Rory McParland of Rathmore during the Basketball Ireland U16B Boys Schools League Final match at the National Basketball Arena in Dublin. Photo by Seb Daly/Sportsfile



Congratulations to Kilbree’s Caoimhe Murphy and Emily O’Donovan who were part of the victorious Cork minor camogie team that won the All-Ireland championship.

people Sport & Fitness

Drinagh Rangers host Aviva Soccer Sisters Easter camp

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Drinagh Rangers will host an Aviva Soccer Sister Easter Camp this April in what is the first in-person Soccer Sister camp to take place since 2019. The three-day camp will take place over two weeks in April. The first camp takes place from April 12-14 and the second April 19-21.

100 football clubs nationwide will be hosting Aviva Soccer Sisters Easter Camps, open to all girls aged 6 to 14.

Shelbourne FC and Women's International Player Abbie Larkin, says: "Getting the opportunity to further develop my skills every year at Aviva Soccer Sisters was a massive part in my development as a player. I'm delighted to be given the chance to give back to my coaches and Aviva Ireland by supporting this year's Aviva Soccer Sisters Easter Camps. I would really encourage any young players out there, who one day dream of playing for Ireland, to sign up at their local club. You never know where it might lead."

Each camp costs €30. Participants will receive an Aviva Soccer Sisters training top, football and a certificate on completing the camp. Register via www.aviva.ie/soccersisters.



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O, Holy Spirit, you can solve all problems, light all roads so we can attain our goal, you gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against us, and that in all instances of our lives you are with us. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all the things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you, even in spite of all material illusions I wish to be with you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine, amen. O, most sacred heart of Jesus and Holy Spirit and all angels and saints. I place my trust in you. B.H.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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. B.H.S.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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. D.O.S.

UNFAILING PRAYER TO ST ANTHONY

O Holy St. Anthony gentlest of Saints, your love for God and charity for His creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (request). O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms. The gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen. E.D.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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. E.D.

ST. JUDE'S NOVENA

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and revered throughout the whole world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us. St. Jude worker of miracles pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless pray for us. Say this prayer nine times daily and by the end of the 8th day, your prayers will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thanks St. Jude. E.D.

PRAYER TO ST JOSEPH

Great St. Joseph of Cupertino who by your prayer obtained from God to be asked at your examination the only preposition you knew. Grant that I may like you succeed in the examinations which lie before me. In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be loved for ever more. E.D.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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.C.

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