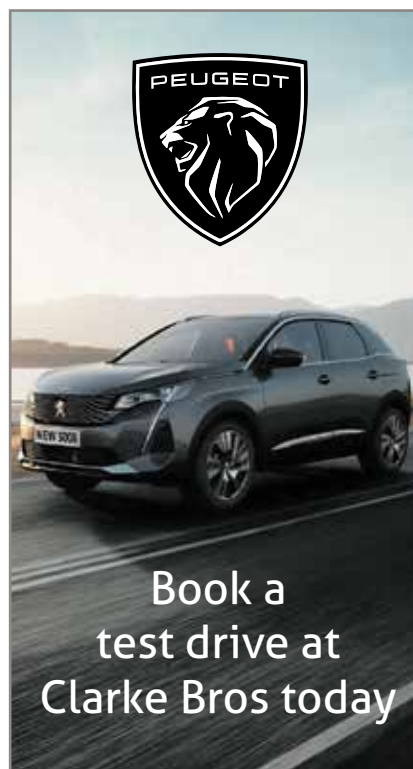




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Philippa Kennedy, Laetitia Catalano and Liadh Pyburn at the launch of this year's Fastnet Film Festival in Cork City. Taking place in Schull from May 25-29, this festival is a major showcase for Irish and International short film production, focusing on the craft of film. In addition to screening over 300 short films, the programme includes seminars, masterclasses, workshops and more.

Mayor of County Cork to host Charity Midsummer Ball

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Councillor Gillian Coughlan, has announced the long-awaited return of the Mayor's Midsummer Charity Ball on Friday, June 10, 2022.

The glamorous black-tie event will see the ground floor of Cork County Hall transformed into a glittering ballroom for one memorable summer evening that you won't want to miss.

It promises to be a stylish and social affair and will reflect the Mayor's passion for supporting the best of Cork County while raising funds for three charities that are close to the Mayor's heart – Break-through Cancer Research, the Irish Red Cross Ukraine Appeal for Cork

County and the West Cork Women Against Violence Project

The desire to celebrate and showcase the many wonders of Cork County will be evident in every small detail from the Kinsale Drinks Company cocktail reception, which starts at 6.30pm on the evening, to a fine dining menu that will showcase some of the best produce that the region has to offer. Master of Ceremonies for the event is also none other than 'Voice of the County' Patricia Messenger, who hosts the Cork Today show on C103 FM.

Commenting on the event, Mayor Gillian Coughlan, from Bandon said, "It has been my highest honour to serve Cork County over the

past year. It was a challenging year for many, but I was inspired every day by the resilience, innovation and sheer determination of the people of Cork County. I'm really looking forward to welcoming everyone to County Hall for the return of the Mayor's annual charity event as we look to the future."

Tickets, which include a drinks reception, a three-course meal, wine and entertainment in the unique setting of Cork County Hall, are priced at €100, with tables of 10 priced at €1,000. To book please visit www.corkcoco.ie, email corkcountymayorsball@corkcoco.ie or call The Cork County Mayor's Secretary on (021) 4285367.

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Irish Community Air Ambulance goes international with Camino fundraiser

The first overseas event for the Irish Community Air Ambulance is set to exceed its fundraising goal. A group of 48 supporters has arrived in Portugal to bike and hike the Camino into Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

The Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) is Ireland's only charity Air Ambulance and works in partnership with the National Ambulance Service. The helicopter is based in Rathcool, Co Cork with critical care teams on the ground in Dublin, Mayo and Donegal.

The organisation set a fundraising target of €50,000 for the week-long event which has already been surpassed. Participants from Cork, Kerry, Waterford, Limerick, Mayo, Galway, Dublin, Wicklow and Tyrone will be taking on a 130 km walk or 338 km cycle along the Portuguese Coastal Route.

George Blackshields from Cork City has opted for the cycle and has raised almost €6,000 so far. He has first-hand experience of the charity, he said, "We were on holiday in Kerry in June 2020, spend-

ing the day at the beach with family when my wife collapsed. There was a huge emergency response. It was a relief to hear from the ambulance paramedics that the helicopter was on its way, I knew that it would be important to get Jean to hospital quickly. The crew did everything they possibly could to bring Jean back but sadly

it didn't work out for her. We really appreciate the efforts they took. The Irish Community Air Ambulance is badly needed, it's an essential service especially in rural parts of the country. I cycle regularly and the Camino is another adventure for me and I'm so grateful to everyone who has donated over the last few months."

CEO of the Irish Community Air Ambulance, Micheál Sheridan says, "We're lucky to have such dedicated supporters right across the country. They have put huge effort into training and fundraising ahead of the Camino, hosting coffee mornings, a dip in the nip, firefighter car wash, cycles and signed jersey raffles. They

have done exceptionally well, especially in the current climate when fundraising is challenging. Local businesses and entire communities have also come on board to support them and we are very thankful. Their generosity ensures that we can bring hope to people when they need it most, whether that's responding with our HEMS Air Ambulance or our team of volunteer Critical Care Doctors across the country."

The walking group began in Oia on Monday and will walk 130 km to Santiago de Com-

postela along the coast around the Vigo estuary. Walkers are staying in the beautiful coastal cities of Baiona and Vigo before rejoining the traditional Camino Portuguese from Redondela to Santiago de Compostela.

The cycling group began their 338 km route from Aveiro in Portugal, following the road less travelled to Santiago de Compostela. They will cycle along some of the most amazing sandy beaches of North Portugal and Spain, such as those near Povo de Varzim.



Supporters of the Irish Community Air Ambulance at Santiago International Airport in Spain.



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A life well lived



Beth Hallinan at her home in Ballydehob

Retired professional cook and food writer Beth Hallinan's small cosy home in Ballydehob is filled with beautiful memories: pieces of art, furniture, well-thumbed books, that she has collected, been gifted, loved over the years – capturing moments lost in time and reminding her daily of family or friends. "Everything in this house is of sentimental value, which probably isn't really a good enough reason to keep it all," she says laughing, as she points out that even the uncomfortable sofa she is perched upon was rescued from a pile of rubbish in the early days of her first marriage.

Celebrating her 83rd birthday this year, Beth has led a fascinating life rich in colour and flavour: from running away from school at the age of seven to bluffing her way into a professional cook position with a bank in England. Much later she even entertained Queen Sonja of Norway at her guesthouse in Cork.

The accomplishment she is most proud of however is neither her business endeavours nor social connections but her family; four wonderful grown up children, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren." She chats online with them every morning.

Although adamant that her story won't be of interest to anyone, Beth can't help but smile as she remembers...

Born in Middleton in 1939, Beth's own parents were abroad a lot when she growing up. Her father worked in the Colonial Judiciary and when Beth was seven she and her older brother left the West Indies and were sent to boarding school in Ireland while her parents travelled to Africa. Hospitalised with chicken pox, the spirited little girl managed to run away to Middleton where her beloved

Aunt Marie lived. "I tagged along with another family on the train, even sharing their sandwiches; you couldn't get away with it nowadays" she says laughing. Beth spent a year with her aunt in Middleton before her mother returned and took her off to school in England.

It was while at boarding school in England that Beth discovered the flavours of Elizabeth David in 'A Book of Mediterranean Food'. She still treasures that book today. Inscribed inside it in Beth's young handwriting are the words 'This is my book and I love it!'

"I used to cook for my mother who hated cooking," says Beth, who recalls cycling down to the shop in Middleton and asking for a lemon. "The answer was 'Ooh there's not much call for things like that' recalls Beth laughing. "You couldn't even buy a tomato back then." Luckily Beth's mother was a great gardener and the aspiring young chef was able to source her Mediterranean ingredients like tomatoes and lemons and basil from the greenhouse.

"Mum always grew delicious vegetables like asparagus and sea kale," recalls Beth nostalgically.

Beth went on to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, married, and had four children before she was 25.

When her family situation necessitated that she gain employment and, with little experience in anything other than cooking for own family, Beth talked her way into a job cooking for a bank. Asked in the interview if she was a Cordon Bleu chef, without thinking twice, Beth replied in the affirmative. "Although when he asked me if that means I put cream and butter in everything' for some reason I knew the answer should be no," she says laughing. Quizzed on cholesterol in the interview,

Beth pretended she knew all about it. "I had never heard of cholesterol before but it turned out the bank manager had a heart condition," she explains. Beth got the job – and cooking with the help of Constance Spry she kept it – and in fact went on to write a number of books on low cholesterol cooking for heart health.

"Bluff is the worst way of getting on in life, it's so terrifying and such hard work," says Beth. "It's much better to be trained and know what you're talking about."

In her thirties Beth took a chance and opened a restaurant on the riverside in Hamble, a village on the outskirts of Southampton. "It was 1978 during Harold Wilson's Winter of Discontent," she remembers. "I borrowed money at six per cent and a year later was paying it back at 18 per cent interest. That was really tough... and again I didn't really know what I was doing," she says.

Then her business partner died suddenly and it turned out her chef was robbing her. The restaurant did so badly in its first year that Beth says if she had known how terrible things were, she would have most certainly closed the business.

"I really didn't have a clue, even the VAT people came and did my tax return for me!"

Luckily people still eat out in a recession and the food was good at Beth's restaurant.

By the time she had discovered the extent of her losses, the restaurant had turned a corner and become something of an overnight success.

"It was hugely hard work but great fun," she recalls nostalgically.

"In the meantime however," she says, "my four wild young children were left to their

Continued on next page...



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... cont'd from previous page

own devices while I ran the business."

Beth eventually sold the restaurant to look after her ill father who had returned to London. He passed away in 1985.

She ran a restaurant in Covent Garden for a year and was offered the opportunity to open a restaurant in New York but refused. "I felt I'd be out of my depth and have never regretted that decision," she says.

In 1997, Beth returned to Ireland to look after her ailing elderly mother. After she passed away, Beth bought and restored Rathcoursey House, a beautiful Georgian house on 55 acres in Ballinacurra, Co Cork, which she ran as a guesthouse for a

decade, selling it in 2004, when the scale of the work involved became unmanageable. "Queen Sonja of Norway loved the gardens of the south of Ireland and used Rathcoursey as her base to tour them," recalls Beth, who had also cooked during her time as a chef in England for the former King Constantine and Queen Anne Marie of Greece.

"My mum used to bundle my brother and I into the car when we were little and take us on holiday down to West Cork," Beth recalls. "I always thought of West Cork as holiday world so that's where I decided to retire to."

And so Beth moved west...to a beautiful hillside hideaway on

four acres in Ballydehob, where she once again applied her restorative touch to an old farmhouse and surrounding land.

Now in her eighties, Beth is settled into a smaller, more manageable home in the village that suits her needs. She has never lost that independent spirit that brought her back to Middleton all those years ago at the age of seven. Rarely idle, if she's not pottering around at home – cooking, gardening or with her head stuck in a tome – you might even find her planting along the roadside. "Nobody notices until it's a tree and then they think it's always been there!" she says with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

Peaceful protest is a human right

By Clonakilty Amnesty Group

As we see on our screens and in the newspapers protesting can be a brave and dangerous thing to do in too many countries around the world. Protesting against their governments actions in Ukraine has led to mass arrests in Russia. Protesting against the apartheid system in Israel results in incarceration for Palestinians and Israeli human rights activists. The list of countries where raising your voice publicly can lead to years in prison, torture and even death, is long.

Here in Europe and the rest of the democratic world, peaceful protest has always been a cornerstone of ensuring governments are accountable. From worker's rights to women's rights, a long list of the freedoms we enjoy today have come about by ordinary people taking to the streets, signing petitions, lobbying governments to do the right thing. So the proposed Policing Bill being discussed in the UK Parliament and proposed by the Conservative Government has come under scrutiny by rights activists, including Amnesty International.

The conclusion by the UK Amnesty section is highly critical of what this bill contains. One criticism is that the bill includes greater powers of stop and search, which overwhelmingly affects people of colour already. It gives the police an unprecedented extension of policing powers, which give police and Government the ability to ban, limit, or impose undue restrictions on peaceful protests on the grounds that they might be noisy or cause annoyance.

This essentially means that the right to protest outside an oil company's office, or Parlia-



ment, or an arms trade convention for example, could be an arrestable offence. If the suffragettes had not annoyed politicians, if unions had not annoyed their bosses and the government of the time?

The Bill sets out to crack-down on peaceful non violent dissent – a form of protest that is clearly protected by the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. As the author of this Amnesty blog asks "Can you imagine being threatened

with arrest by police for standing on a pavement with a placard?"

Non violent protest is a valuable tool in society to bring about change for the better, and any move to shut that down has to be challenged. Democracy is a fragile thing and needs constant defending.

If you would like to support people from around the world who are paying the price for their peaceful actions do go to Amnesty.ie and sign the latest petitions.



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the May edition of West Cork People.

My twin girls turned 13 in April; toddlers to teenagers in the blink of an eye! To make up for all the lost celebrations over the past two years, we partied the month away! Anything to forget about the world's problems. We're also hopping into freezing cold showers on a regular basis after watching documentaries on Wim Hof, the famous Dutch Iceman who teaches the benefits of cold-water therapy. I'm not sure about the health benefits (yet), but the cold definitely makes you feel good. We're really lucky this side of West Cork to have a mobile sauna that dips in and out of various beach locations so on a typical Friday I ditch the cold shower for the ocean and sauna instead. It's like having a mini spa outdoors, with the most spectacular view.

Inside this issue you'll find lots of information on events and festivals kicking off across West Cork. From the Fastnet Film Festival to the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, we can once again gather and experience live performances.

Another area neglected over the past two years has been our health and De Jeff advises that there has never been a better time to book yourself in for a check over by your local GP. Functional medicine practitioner Eoin Roe stresses the importance of having your thyroid function assessed if you're struggling with anxiety or depression and Hannah gives some advice on preventing our eyesight from deteriorating.

Outside of looking after our own health, looking after our decreasing bee populations and other pollinators has never been more important, as they are essential when it comes to ensuring the global safety of the food supply chain. Ahead of May 20, World Bee Day, Beekeeper Andrew Shinnick and Eugene Daly explain how we can all play a part in protecting them.

With energy prices rising and with 50 per cent of Irish homes currently having a BER rating of D or lower, now is a good time to look into doing any kind of energy upgrade in the home, especially with the increased grants available from SEAI. By improving your energy rating not only will you save on heat and help the planet but you might even be able to avail of a lower mortgage rate. We have a special focus this month on upgrading your home in our Environment section of the paper.

For this and lots more see inside.

I hope you enjoy the read, Mary



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Important milestone marked with Centenary Commemoration of Dick Barrett

An extensive programme of events has been announced for 2022 to mark the Centenary Commemoration of Dick Barrett, a prominent Irish Republican Army volunteer who fought in the War of Independence and on the Anti-Treaty side in the Irish Civil War. Barrett was executed by the Free State government, without charge or trial, for a crime he did not commit on December 8, 1922. Mayor Gillian Coughlan and Frank Murphy, former secretary of the Cork County Board, launched the centenary year on Friday, April 22, with over 200 people in attendance.

The aim of the State centenary commemoration programme is to ensure this complex period in our history is remembered appropriately, proportionately, respectfully and with sensitivity. A specific key objective of the State Programme, and for the Dick Barrett Commemoration committee, is to promote a deeper understanding of the significant events that took place during this period, while recognising that the shared historical experience of those years gave rise to very different narratives and memories.

Richard 'Dick' Barrett was born in 1889 in Hollyhill, near Ballineen West Cork. He was educated at Knocks and Knocksheagh National Schools before he entered De La Salle College in Waterford to train to be a teacher. He took up a position teaching in Upton and shortly afterwards Gurrane. Barrett dedicated much of his short life to the GAA, setting up Knockavilla GAA club. From 1917, inspired by the Easter Rising, he took a prominent part in the organisation and operations of the Irish Volunteers and IRB in West Cork. Quickly rising up the ranks of the organisation through his skills in planning, Barrett was appointed Quarter Master General. He was later arrested on March 22, 1921 and imprisoned in Spike Island, from which he later orchestrated and led out an escape under the cover of darkness. Following the War of Independence, Barrett supported the Anti Treaty IRA cause, as he was opposed to the Anglo Irish treaty and called for total elimination of English influence in Ireland. In April 1922, under the command of Rory O'Connor, Barrett, along with 200 other men, took the Four Courts in Dublin in defiance of the new Irish government, for which he was arrested and imprisoned in Mountjoy.

On December 6, 1922, the Irish Free State came into being, after being given the Royal assent



At the launch of the Dick Barrett Commemoration at the Munster Arms Hotel in Bandon were: Standing (l-r): Moira O'Sullivan, Clonakilty (niece of Dick Barrett), Michael O'Mahony (Secretary, Dick Barrett, Commemoration Committee), Frank Murphy, who launched the commemoration, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan, Mayor of the County of Cork, Finbarr Walsh (Chairperson, Dick Barrett Commemoration Committee), Nuala McCarthy, Ahiohill (niece of Dick Barrett) and Christopher O'Sullivan, T.D. Seated: Teresa MacCarthy, Cloghroe (niece of Dick Barrett) and Donal Barrett (nephew of Dick Barrett). Photo: Martin Walsh.

by King George V of England. The government of the new Free State assembled at Leinster House to take the loyal oath of allegiance to King George. On the following day, December 7, two pro-Treaty deputies, Sean Hales and Pádraic Ó Máille, were shot near the Ormonde Hotel in Dublin. Sadly, Sean Hales, who had been a close friend and comrade of Barretts during the War of Independence, died from his wounds. The Executive Council of the Free State Government met that evening. Their decision was one for which no cover of legality, could at that or any other time, be explained or defended. As Ernest Blythe arrived late for the meeting, the names of four Republican prisoners were being read out: Liam Mellows, Richard Barrett, Rory O'Connor and Joe McKelvey. Those four men had been members of the Four Courts Executive during the occupation and attack earlier in the summer and they were to be 'executed' as a reprisal for the killing of Sean Hales.

That morning, Richard Barrett wrote to his family: "I have just been called from my old bed in cell 36, top landing. A little paper was read to me, which stated that I am to be executed this morning at 8a.m. as a reprisal for the murder of Sean Hales".

From a legal perspective, these four men were 'executed' without charge or trial and for an offence clearly committed by others. Since they had been in Mountjoy Jail for five months, it would have been impossible to convict them of complicity in the shooting of Sean Hales. It was heavily debated in the Dail in the days that followed. Deputy Johnson, leader of the Opposition, stated that murder most foul had been committed – "murder bloody and unnatural". The government was charged to protect these prisoners

– that was their duty as guardians of the law.

While most of the newspapers of the time were pro-Treaty, they could not hide their shock at the horrendous killing of four innocent Irishmen at the hands of the newly formed government.

The first task of the Commemoration Committee was to write a letter to Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, seeking a state apology for the illegal killing of Dick Barrett and by extension his comrades, at the hands of the State, on December 8, 1922.

In addition, an extensive series of over 14 events is planned for throughout the year, such as an upgrade of the existing monument at Hollyhill, as well as updating the existing biography with new research and photos. Anyone with photos from this time can get in touch. Furthermore, a schools project is planned with schools in the area to commemorate 'Dick the teacher' but also to recognise the importance of educating this complex period of our history to younger generations. Further to this, a series of lectures and a symposium of academics is in the planning, as well as guided tours of both Spike Island and Mountjoy jail. In collaboration with the Cork County Board, a school league is being organised to play for the now retired Dick Barrett Shield. A radio play by Mike Russell is currently in the works and will hit airwaves later in the year. The committee is also engaging with relatives and family of Joe McKelvey, Rory O'Connor, and Liam Mellows to collaborate on their Centenary initiatives. The Centenary Programme of Events will conclude with Centenary Commemoration at the graveside in Ahiohill on Sunday, December 4. The oration will be delivered by Former Taoiseach and internationally-recognised conflict resolution expert

Mr. Bertie Ahern. Clonakilty Flower club will design a custom display for the programme.

The full programme of events can be found on social media and will be announced in print media closer to the time or for more information email dickbarrettcentenary@gmail.com.

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Uncertain times



GROUNDLED
MEP Grace O'Sullivan

There are some shocks you never quite get over. Two days in 2016 come to mind. The disbelief at results in votes that would see the UK leave the EU and the United States come under the power of a contentious individual I don't even want to name.

I was nervous in recent days that we might be heading towards another of those shock results. Thankfully though, as confirmation came through on Sunday last, that Emmanuel Macron had won a second term as French president, the repulsive scenario of a right-wing anti-immigration candidate coming into power abated. Like so many people, my reaction was one of relief.

As I write, I've just arrived in France where I'll be working for the next few days. I travel as part of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament. We've come together for intensive work on upcoming legislation, communications strategy, and other parliamentary areas of focus.

Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, as we watch death, havoc and trauma unfurl at the hands of a sadistic dictator, I've been considering the chaos that can be wreaked at the hands of evil individuals or regimes, flying in the face of democracy and rule of law, and intent on destroying life and inflicting fear and degradation in the ruthless pursuit of power.

As I gather with my parliamentary colleagues, it's hard not to feel helpless, powerless in the face of the sort of brutality we've been witnessing on our screens. The re-election of pro-European centrist, Macron in a decisive victory against the far-right's Marine Le Pen, is being hailed in more moderate camps as a chink of light in these dark days. However, we can't be complacent when turnout hit a record low and Le

Pen managed to round up over 13 million votes. That result was a record high for a party standing on a far-right, extreme anti-immigration ticket.

Claiming to be a president 'for all,' Macron faces into his new term with a divided electorate, restless in the faltering wake of Covid and the economic challenges being felt globally. Challenges that face us here in Ireland, too, alongside the ongoing difficulties posed in the wake of Brexit.

If Macron's election is being hailed as a positive development and a nod to a more open, moderate model of political leadership, the stand-out symbol of hope for me over recent days and weeks has been the outpouring of support and empathy being shown to the people of Ukraine. In Ireland, there's some disappointment at the drop-out rate of those initially signing up to take displaced individuals and families into their homes, but I'm hopeful that over time the Irish people will continue to show generosity of spirit and welcome our Ukrainian guests into our country, our homes, and our hearts.



**SOCIAL
DEMOCRACY**
Holly Cairns TD

Government reforms needed to enhance potential of our Credit Unions

Credit Unions offer an incredibly important service in communities across West Cork and beyond. With two major banks leaving the Irish market entirely and the remaining commercial banks closing branches, credit unions are now more important than ever, especially in rural areas. However, current financial regulations fail to appreciate their community function and are limiting CU's services and potential. While the government has promised reform, it has yet to happen.

When you visit a credit union, you will be guaranteed to meet a staff member and not be directed to a machine. This human interaction is incredibly important for people not comfortable with technology or for those who just need to talk a financial issue through. It is about accessibility and inclusion. The physical presence of a branch in a town or village is important to help people use the services and to keep our communities alive.

Credit Unions provide loans and flexible services to many people and families refused by commercial banks. I have talked with many farmers in

particular who are only able to stay in agriculture because of the credit union. The same can be said of students and other groups. Only recently, several credit unions, including Bantry and Access CUs, have developed an initiative called Cultivate that provides loans built specifically around the growing needs of farming members. This is the type of member-focused service that only credit unions offer based on understanding issues on the ground.

Credit unions are also competitive with commercial banks for everyday financial needs. Access, First South (Kinsale), Macroom, and Bishopstown are some of several Cork CUs which offer current accounts. Members can use these for normal banking, for direct debits, and for Apple and Google Pay. These credit unions and others like Clonakilty are ready to accommodate customers of banks which are closing.

I regularly raise the concerns of credit unions in the Dáil. Under current financial regulations, they are being limited in the services they can offer, especially around mortgages and lending to

small and medium enterprises. Financial institutions must tend to remain viable. However, credit unions are being restricted in areas commercial banks are not. Rules brought in during the financial crisis have not been changed. Until the government reforms this area, it will affect the ability of credit unions to succeed.

While we all understand the role of financial regulation, the Minister for Finance must ensure that the Central Bank oversees credit unions in an appropriate way that recognises them as volunteer-led organisations and community banking providers. I find it very frustrating that Ministers and government TDs all stand up speaking in support of credit unions but the necessary changes are not being made.

Credit unions across West Cork offer more than financial services, they are a lifeline for many families, they are inclusive and accessible, and they sponsor events and good causes. Our communities deeply value these member-focused organisations, it is long overdue that the government does the same.



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HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

Rediscovering one of Ireland's greatest sons

I had the good fortune to be invited by friends to spend time together in New York over Easter. Over a meal one evening, our lovely host Sile, an Irish immigrant of forty years, asked me what I knew about Thomas Meagher. Apart from the fact that he was the man who introduced the Tricolour to Ireland in 1848, and a trickle of bits and pieces about his life

as a soldier, I had little to add to the conversation. To my shame, as someone who has a deep interest in history, I had to travel 3,000 miles over the Atlantic to find out about a man whose amazing life story has been largely diminished in Ireland – boiled down to a mere footnote next to our national flag. Why is it that we keep alive the memory of some of our heroes while others slip away like shadows in the evening light? To hear the story of Thomas Meagher, is to be told a tale of sorrow, daring, bravery, inspiration, romance and tragedy. It is the formula to all the greatest Hollywood stories. Meagher was sought after by American presidents and hunted down by British Prime Ministers. He lived the life of a convict as well as a Governor. He witnessed firsthand the mangled corpses of the American civil war and the living skeletons of the genocidal Great Hunger.

The real story begins with Meagher's father. He was a self-made man who, through hard work and determination, returned home from Canada with enough wealth and business acumen to take advantage of the rise in fortunes for the emerging Catholic middle classes. Thomas, born in 1823, received an excellent education where his sharp intellect first shone amongst the Jesuits in a Catholic finishing school in England. It was the era of Daniel O'Connell; the rise of Catholic emancipation. A tide of nationalism swept over the young man who, even at a young age, had impressed the 'great liberator' with his rhetorical appeal and golden words. But what shaped him more were the killing fields of the Great Hunger. We know it was the swathes of the pathetic poor peasantry who were wiped out in Ireland during these tumultuous years, whereas middle classes and traders, if they could avoid famine fever, were more insulated. Meagher could have lived a wealthy life like his father, but was too much touched by the plight of his fellow country men and women. Disillusioned by the waning powers of O'Connell and increasingly belligerent and genocidal actions by the British Government, a new generation of 'Young Irelanders' emerged from the shadows carrying a new beacon of hope. Meagher, William Smith O'Brien, MacManus, Duffy, Mitchell and many others we have forgotten, fought the government with the only tools they had at their disposal – words. Talent writers and orators, together with contributors like Jane Elgee, (Oscar Wilde's future mother) inspired

a new generation that freedom from the yoke of British power, was the only solution to a country whose middle name was misery.

Perhaps the first clue to Meagher and the aforementioned characters demise in the history books, can be attributed to the pathetic rebellion that they led in 1848. It was a year that saw nationalists across Europe rise and throw off the chains of tyranny across Europe. Returning with the tricolour from France, inspired by the new tricolour of the French Republic, Meagher and this group looked to create a wave of popular support to sweep the British out of Ireland. Alas when your army is a platoon of living specters and the walking dead of the famine, and your commanders, newspaper journalists and poets, defeat was inevitable. The rebellion turned out to be an ignominious scrap in a cabbage patch field in Tipperary, hardly the thing of legends. The British, knowing too well that the cream of Irish thinkers were amongst the rebels, banished the men to the penal colonies for life. Out of sight out of mind, and for millions more, survival not words was all that matter.

Meagher would never see his native Waterford again and, after six months at sea, arrived in the harshest of penal prisons – Van Diemen's Land on the island of Tasmania. Despite being so far away from his homeland, the passion and light for Ireland continued to live in his heart and soul. The flood of Irish emigration had created a massive diaspora in the USA, many carrying the hatred of British rule. His years there were harsh and lonely. Thankfully for Meagher, plans were made for his dramatic escape to America. It wasn't as simply as hitching a ride on a ship. Meagher had to row, then swim to a narrow island where he waited ten days with no food and little water, before being picked by the ship, escaping the massive man hunt for the man the British rated as one of Ireland's most dangerous nationalists. It was a massive personal sacrifice; he left behind his new wife Catherine in the hope they could be reunited in the future. Catherine was taken to Ireland soon after, but died when their son was born, a son Meagher would never tragically see because of his lifelong banishment from Ireland.

Arriving into New York was like arriving into an Irish province. Swollen by the millions of emigrants that had poured in to the city [a quarter of all immigrants up to that point in NY], he was immediately greeted as a hero. It was an era



Conscription was not yet conceived, so Lincoln needed men like Meagher to use his persuasive skills and celebrity status to inspire Irish volunteers to form a militia


where oratory skills and the ink from a pen carried much more currency than today; and there was no better component of these skills than Thomas Meagher. Meagher, immediately set about studying for the bar and writing for newspapers, where he championed the rights of the Irish immigrant classes in New York. Their great numbers had given rise to the Nativists Party, who feared their Anglo Saxon Protestantism was being diluted by the swarms of 'Catholic Irish rats'. It seems the Irish had escaped British persecution only to be faced with more racism and discrimination in their new home. The Democratic party, impressed by the intellect and reach of Meagher, were soon courting him. A man whose name we barely utter today was on the lips of Presidents, Mayors and the darling of New York society. He fell in love with Elizabeth Townsend, daughter of a wealthy WASP, whose father had no time for the rascal Irish rebel. Love won the day and forged a long-lasting and supportive relationship.

A decade after Meagher's arrival in New York, he never blunted his words against British misrule in Ireland and the topic remained at the top of his agenda. Haunted by his failure in the 1848 rebellion, he could only dream of returning home to release the Irish from the manacles of its British captors. Closer to home, it was the manacles of the black slaves that were being spoken of and the infant state of the USA looked to be shattered by the succession of the slave states from the North. One of America's greatest presidents,

Abraham Lincoln, sought out Meagher. He would need men to fight his war. At the time there was only a full time army of 16,000 men. Conscription was not yet conceived, so Lincoln needed men like Meagher to use his persuasive skills and celebrity status to inspire Irish volunteers to form a militia. Patrick Corcoran, another Young Irelander, had forged a reputation with the Irish 69th Regiment, but with Meagher's inspirational oratory skills, the ranks were swollen, full of Irishmen. He had admitted to Corcoran that he hoped perhaps these battle-hardened soldiers could somehow be used to return to Ireland and drive the British from the shores of the Emerald Isle? His heart yearned for Ireland but for now he was committed to the country that had given him refuge as an exiled rebel. It was a difficult sell. As the lowest and most oppressed people in New York, Irish men and women were in fear of having to compete against freed black slaves for the dredges of the hardest work and compete for space in the slums. Nevertheless, Meagher's status was so respected and words so inspirational, he went to battle in the American Civil war, as a General in the 69th Irish Regiment.

The old fears returned. The ghost of 1848 hung over his shoulder. A poet leading his men in battle was surely doomed? Not so. Under Meagher and Corcoran's command, the Irish 69th carved out the most fearsome and respected reputation by friend and foe. Initially dismissed as the drunken Irish by General Sherman of the Union, they became the go-to regiment to break the deadlock under the command of McClellan, who was Major General of the entire Army. It was not without trauma and loss on a scale he only saw in the dying fields of famine Ireland. The civil war was won by soldiers like Meagher, his reputation enhanced. But the death and destruction of so many Irish never left him.

There were more adventures for him ahead in the next stage of his life as Governor of Montana, where he intended to create a 'new Ireland'. It was a dream that led to his death by Freemason vigilantes who murdered him for the liberties he wanted for all. Today there is a magnificent equestrian statue outside the state capital building in Montana and a bust of his lies over his dear wife in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn. Shamefully, he is but a footnote in our school history books.




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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.

Although in existence since the 19th century (when first written record was discovered) cargo cults only came to notoriety during, and most notably after WWII. The cargo cult that gained the most notoriety and attention was one worshipped by the people of the Melanesian islands.

A cargo cult is a system of belief based around the expected arrival of ancestral spirits in ships bringing cargoes of food and other goods. Unable to rationalise the unusual items that the soldiers who landed on these islands during the war brought with them and the aircraft that dropped off the soldiers (believed by the islanders to be metal birds) the islanders attributed it to the gods.

The soldiers were in fact landing on the islands to better position themselves for attack on neighbouring islands, or in some cases to rest and plan assaults that they would carry out elsewhere. However they did share some of their rations with the island inhabitants.

This carried on for the duration of the war, which the Melanesians believed was because of their prayers. However when the war ended, the military abandoned their airbases and stopped dropping cargo. In response, charismatic individuals developed cults among remote Melanesian populations. These cult leaders promised to bestow deliveries of food, arms and other equipment on their followers, claiming that the cargo were gifts from the islanders' ancestors.

The most notable case is that of 'John Frum'. He became the light that his worshippers needed in times of darkness and uncertainty. Frum is a mythical figure associated with cargo cults on the island of Tanna in Vanuatu. He is often depicted as an American World War II serviceman who will bring wealth and prosperity to people if they follow and worship him. As anthropologist Kirk Huffman, who spent 17 years in Vanuatu, explains: "You get cargo cults when the outside world, with all its material wealth,

Cargo cults

suddenly descends on remote, indigenous tribes." The locals don't know where the foreigners' endless supplies come from and so suspect they were summoned by magic, sent from the spirit world. To entice the Americans back after the war, islanders throughout the region constructed piers and carved airstrips from their fields. They prayed for ships and planes to once again come out of nowhere, bearing all kinds of treasures: jeeps and washing machines, radios and motorcycles, canned meat and candy.

But the venerated Americans never came back, except as a dribble of tourists and veterans eager to revisit the faraway islands where they went to war in their youth. And although almost all the cargo cults have disappeared over the decades, the John Frum movement has endured, based on the worship of an American god no sober man has ever seen. Many Americans know Vanuatu from the reality TV series 'Survivor,' though the episodes shot on the island hardly touched on the its spectacular natural wonders and fascinating, age-old cultures. Set between Fiji and New Guinea, Vanuatu is a Y-shaped scattering of more than 80 islands, several of which include active volcanoes. The islands were once home to fierce warriors, among them cannibals. Many inhabitants still revere village sorcerers, who use spirit-possessed stones in magic rituals that can lure a new lover, fatten a pig, or kill an enemy.

Local leaders say that John Frum first appeared one night in the late 1930s, after a group of elders had downed many shells of kava – a potent beverage used in ceremonies for relaxation – as a prelude to receiving messages from the spirit world.

Chief Kahuwya, leader of Yakel village speaking of Frum said, "He was a white man who spoke our language, but he didn't tell us then he was an American." John Frum told the islanders he had come to rescue them from the missionaries and colonial officials. "John told us that all Tanna's people should stop following the white man's ways," Chief Kahuwya says. "He said we should throw away their money and clothes, take our children from their schools, stop going to church and go back to living as kastom people. We should drink kava, worship the magic stones and perform our ritual dances."

With no notion of the workings of world-commodity markets, the islanders see only the sudden closing of plantations, reduced wages and unemployment; and are inclined to attribute their insecurity to the whim or evil in the nature of individual planters. Europeans who have witnessed outbreaks inspired by the cargo cults are usually at

a loss to understand what they behold. The islanders throw away their money, break their most sacred taboos, abandon their gardens and destroy their precious livestock.

Observers have not hesitated to use such words as "madness" "mania" and "irrationality" to characterise the cults. But the

cults reflect quite logical and rational attempts to make sense out of a social order that appears senseless and chaotic. Given the ignorance of the Melanesians about the wider European society, its economic organisation and its highly developed technology, their reactions form a consistent and understandable pattern.

They wrap up all their yearning and hope in an amalgam that combines the best counsel they can find in Christianity and their native belief. If the world is soon to end, gardening or fishing is unnecessary; everything will be provided. Of course the cargo never comes. The cults nonetheless live on. New breakaway

groups organise around 'purer' faith and ritual. The cult rarely disappears, so long as the social situation which brings it into being persists. Meaning, there will be an infinite number of John Frums to worship. The cycle is infinite.

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Bandon's Yankee prizefighter

Bandon town can lay claim to an American bare-knuckle champion fighter who thrilled crowds in the illegal fights of 19th Century New York. Pauline Murphy has followed Yankee Sullivan's chaotic trail from West Cork to New York, via London's East End and the penal colonies of Australia.

Born James Ambrose in Bandon on March 10, 1811, not much is known about Yankee Sullivan's early days in West Cork; the Ambrose family moved to London's East End when James was a young boy. We do know that he spent his teenage years running with Irish gangs in the British capital, where he perfected his pugilistic skills in vicious street battles with rival gangs.

Before his 25th birthday, and with his surname now changed from Ambrose to Sullivan, James found himself on the wrong side of the law once too often; he was sentenced to 20 years in Australia's penal colony, Botany Bay, on a charge of aggravated burglary.

Due to overcrowding, after just four years Sullivan and several other 'well behaved' prisoners were granted early release, on the condition that they stay in Australia and out of trouble.

An impossible task for Sullivan, who before long was leading a gang of former prisoners – the Sydney Ducks – in the notoriously rough and rowdy Rocks area of Sydney!

Eventually, after a close shave with a razor blade wielding rival, Sullivan decided he needed a fresh start and stowed away on a ship bound for America, where he added the moniker 'Yankee' and quickly made a name for himself as a fearsome fist fighter.

After just a year in America, Sullivan boarded a ship in New York and sailed back to England, intending to make money in the underground prizefighting scene that was booming across Britain.

Because he had broken the conditions of his release from Botany Bay, Sullivan was now deemed an escaped convict yet, in a brazen move, he placed an

advert in a London newspaper calling out the English prizefighting champion Hammer Lane. Lane answered and gave Sullivan the opportunity to pummel him in the ring and take a large purse from the fight. However, Sullivan's identity as an escaped convict was soon discovered and he quickly headed back to America.

Settled now in New York City, Sullivan joined the Fire Department as a member of Engine 15 – 'The Spartan Band'. He also found a route into the murky world of New York politics when he became an enforcer for the infamous Democrat party machine Tammany Hall – he was heavily involved in the 6th ward riots of 1842.

New York City in the 19th century was heaving with immigrants, especially in districts such as Hells Kitchen and The Bowry, which became hot spots of riotous behaviour, cut throat gangs, prostitution and bare knuckle fights. Illegal bouts between immigrants and nativists were box office affairs and Sullivan thrived in this world.

On the back of his prizefighting profits Sullivan purchased a saloon on Walker Street in the Bowry and named it 'The Sawdust House'. From here he organised and promoted fights, including one which almost ruined him; in September 1842 he organised a bout between Christopher Lilly and Thomas McCoy in Hastings New York. In front of 2,000 spectators the fight went on for over two hours and in the 77th round McCoy collapsed and died. Sullivan was arrested as the organiser and sentenced to five years in Sing Sing prison.

After just ten months Sullivan was granted a pardon by New York's Democrat Governor William Bouck and upon release he attempted to rebuild his reputation by declaring an interest in fighting Tom Hyer, the American heavyweight champion. Hyer agreed but arguments over the purse and the location of the bout stalled it for years. In the meantime Sullivan took on other



contenders such as Englishman Robert Caunt, whom he dispatched after just 12 minutes in the ring in 1847.

In late 1848 Sullivan came across Hyer in a saloon in Hells Kitchen and an almighty brawl broke out between them when Hyer insulted the West Cork man with anti-Irish slurs. Sullivan later took out an advert in a New York newspaper calling out Hyer with the words "I am no Irish braggart or bully, although I am an Irishman and believe I can show myself worthy of my country wherever I am required."

The much-anticipated fight between Hyer and Sullivan eventually took place on February 7, 1849 in Still Pond, Maryland. Despite the best efforts of local militia and police, the boxers evaded the authorities and the fight went ahead on a snow covered field overlooking Chesapeake Bay. Sullivan wore green and white, while a green flag with a gold harp hung in his corner. Hyer wore red, white and blue, while his supporters waved the stars and stripes.

Hyer, who was older and had a longer reach, beat 'the bejaysus' out of Sullivan; the fight was over in 18 minutes and a battered and bruised Sullivan went back to recover in the confines of his

Bowery saloon.

In 1851 Hyer retired and the American Heavyweight Champion title was passed to Sullivan for a short time before he lost it to John 'Old Smoke' Morrissey in 1853. The quick-footed Sullivan was clearly beating his awkward and bulky opponent in the ring but, thinking the fight had ended at round 37, Sullivan failed to come back for the 38th round and Morrissey, who stayed in the ring, was declared the winner. Sullivan contested this outcome but Morrissey held political sway with Tammany Hall and, with its backing, the result stood.

After this fiasco Sullivan fell out with Tammany Hall and went west to California for yet another fresh start.

In 1856 Sullivan got involved in Californian politics when he took charge of political campaigns in San Francisco. During one election he oversaw a polling station that churned out votes for Sullivan's candidate James Casey, even though Casey was not on the ballot paper! Casey was elected a city official but a Committee of Vigilance was subsequently set up to combat such blatant corruption.

Sullivan's downfall began with a shooting he was not directly involved in; a newspaper editor, James King, was on the cusp of exposing James Casey's corruption when he was shot dead by the man himself. The Committee of Vigilance went after Casey who was lynched by vigilantes on the streets of San Francisco before the Committee turned their attention to Sullivan.

Sullivan was arrested by the police and died in a cell in San Francisco; vigilantes having gained access to his cell and stabbed him to death while the police turned a blind eye.

The boxing Bandonite was buried in Mission Dolores Cemetery in San Francisco. His grave marker states his fate: 'James Sullivan who died by the hands of San Francisco vigilantes, May 31, 1856, aged 45 years.'

its focused on environmental change to create an impactful brand; and 'Rustic Thistle Farm' is a day-care centre based in West Cork that aims to tackle the revolving door nature of the mental health system in Ireland by providing a holistic environment to help people with mental health difficulties ease back into everyday life through physical and psychological therapy and the healing power of nature.

These companies, along with the 15 other startups have just completed the first Startup22 Kinsale Entrepreneurship Programme which was designed and delivered by Future Kinsale and a range of business experts from the Kinsale/south Cork region, all working on a voluntary basis. The Startup22 programme has been described as 'inspiring' and 'exciting' by participants and the 2nd programme will shortly be opening for applications via the Future Kinsale website: www.futurekinsale.ie

Guided by a survey of 800 community members in 2018, Future Kinsale is working in a number of areas. These are enterprise development, transport and infrastructure (including a campaign to bring a Greenway/Blueway to the region in cooperation with other local groups), culture and community; climate and sustainability and technology.

Future Kinsale Awards highlight female entrepreneurs

'Best Business Awards' and sponsored cash prizes were awarded to two Cork female-led startup companies at the Future Kinsale Fundraising Dinner and Awards event in Actons Hotel, Kinsale in April.

The awards, presented by The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath TD, went to two enterprises that are working to create positive social and environmental change in the region and beyond.

'Landscape' is a brand strategy and design agency helping non-prof-



Minister Michael McGrath with Trish Daly, Rustic Thistle and Lisa Harrison, Landscape Studio, winners of the Future Kinsale Startup22 Awards Picture. John Allen

Clonakilty's Noreen Minihan honoured with overall individual award at 2022 County Mayor's Community Awards

Outstanding contributions made by individuals and community and voluntary groups across Cork County was showcased at the Ninth Annual Mayor's Community Awards. Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan presented a total of twelve awards on the night, including a special posthumous presentation, with Noreen Minihan from Clonakilty winning the overall Individual award and Passage West Creates winning the overall Community Group award.

Mayor Coughlan warmly commended all nominees on the night for their commitment and dedication to their communities.

"These annual awards celebrate the best of our county's goodwill, generosity and altruism. They give us all the opportunity to recognise and celebrate the selfless work of volunteers who support their communities.

From responding to the urgent needs of neighbours and friends throughout the county to cultivating civic pride and harbouring a sense of identity and solidarity, each nominee has left a lasting mark on their community that deserves our highest commendations."

The Mayor's Community Overall individual award winner, Noreen Minihan of Clonakilty, has a long-standing history of community activity having been involved in the Cope Foundation, the West Cork Traveller Centre, Clonakilty Community Hall, Dúchas Historical Society, Annual Band Championships, West Cork Drama Festival and Clonakilty Street Feast Festival. The judges highlighted how Noreen has a very broad reach across her community and that of West Cork over many years.

Passage West Creates, winners of the Mayor's Community

Overall Group Award, is a not-for-profit collective of crafters from Cork Harbour and beyond. Its home is behind a bright blue shop front in Main Street, Passage West driven by an ethos of all that is local, sustainable and ethical with the judges remarking how Passage West Creates is committed to continued growth and continues to innovate.

A posthumous presentation for Mary Manning recognising her outstanding work in driving the development of Dromahane Community Park and promoting greater inclusion in her community was collected by her husband, Barry Phillips.

Chief Executive of Cork County Council Tim Lucey added,

"Cork County Council's mission to improve quality of life, of environment, and to preserve and promote local amenities and heritage is greatly advantaged

by the incredible work done at a community level throughout the County. It's no exaggeration to say that many of the great things about towns and villages in the county are thanks to the work of the nominees and groups and individuals like them. These awards are well earned recognition for the incredible community work that takes place all year round in Cork."

West Cork Nominees: Stuttering Awareness Mental Wellbeing Ireland; Clonakilty Meals on Wheels Group; Castletown Fundraising Group; Bandon Hillwalking Club
West Cork Women Against Violence – Group Winner; Eleanor Calnan; Geraldine Fitzgerald – Individual Winner; Fred Treacy; Mike Deasy; Fr. Tom Hayes; Noreen Minihan – Overall Individual Winner; Kathleen Keane; Alice Taylor



Noreen Minihan accepting the Western Division Individual award at the 2022 Mayor's Community Awards which were held in Cork County Hall. Pic: Brian Loughheed



FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

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

Bealtaine is the name in Irish, Scottish-Gaelic and Manx mythology for the seasonal feast at May 1. At the end of the dark half of the year, Bealtaine is a survival of one of the four great Celtic calendar feasts, known in early Ireland as 'Imbolc' (February 1), 'Lughnasa' (August 1) and 'Samhain' (November 1). Bealtaine may, or may not, derive from the veneration of the continental Celtic god, 'Belenus', whose cult stretched from the Italian peninsula to the British Isles.

The year, in ancient Ireland, was divided into two parts – 'Ó Shamhain go Bealtaine' is ó

Bealtaine and May 'piseogs'

Bhealtaine go Samhain'. At Bealtaine and at Samhain the veil that divided this world and the Otherworld was open and spiritual creatures were out and about on these nights.

A great body of oral tradition is associated with Bealtaine, of which fires were the most important. Fires were kindled in honour of 'Belenus', (Bel, Baal) and cattle were driven between two fires as a safeguard against disease. In Irish we have the expression: 'táim idir dhá thine Bealtaine'; 'I'm between two fires of May', meaning 'I'm between two minds, unsure, in a dilemma'. May Day was symbolic of a return to life, of the defeat of the hard winter, with new hopes for good planting and rich harvests. Bealtaine was the time for milk and honey, the primary time of pleasure, of blossoming and blooming, of desire and satisfaction, so the cow and the bee were both significant symbols for this celebration. The cow's miraculous ability to create milk and the bee's creation of honey, the sweetest food on earth, were absolutely magical. At Bealtaine people especially celebrated love, attraction, courtship and mating – that yearly groundswell we know as 'spring fever'.

In parts of Cork and Kerry, the first Sunday in May was named 'Domhnach na hEadrai', (Cow-time Sunday) because it was on this day that the cows were left out to pasture after the winter.

May Day was a 'gale day', when the Irish farmer's tenancy began or ended, on which a half year's rent must be paid to the landlord. Failure to pay the rent sometimes meant eviction, depending on the landlord or his agent's whim. The letting of grazing or meadows usually dated from May 1 and farm servants and

workmen were hired at this time. Hiring fairs were held in many places, to which those seeking work, both men and women, came, often carrying symbols of their skill, a spangle, which told that its bearer was an expert milk-er, or a spade, hay fork, reaping hook, flail or other instrument.

As people looked upon beginnings as foretelling the future, so people were anxious that all indications would be favourable on May Day. Signs of the weather, the appearance of the sky, the strength and direction of the wind, the amount of rain, were all carefully noted as indications of the coming summer's weather. Rain was expected and welcomed during the coming month. 'A wet and windy May fills the barns with corn and hay' and 'A wet May and dry June makes the farmer whistle a tune', and with the coming of the nectar-laden summer blossoms, 'a swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay'.

There were more 'piseogs' (or superstitions) connected with May Day than any other day of the year. Nobody would loan or give anything away on this day and anybody who asked for such was believed to be trying to steal his neighbour's good luck. Among the fishermen of the islands of Roaringwater Bay, nobody would ask for the loan of a match, tea, sugar or anything, not even the time of day. If they did, they were suspected of trying to steal the boat's luck. In general the rule for the day was 'no spending, no lending, no borrowing'.

The first water taken from a well after dawn on May Day was considered lucky. It was known variously as 'the top of the well', 'the luck of the well' or 'barra-bua an tobair'.

A story is told of a woman in Cape Clear rising very early to ensure she would be the first to draw water from a particular well; she fell asleep and a neighbour beat her to it, however.

'Piseogs' were especially strong regarding matters which involved no certainty such as milk, hay, crops and fishing. The dew on the grass on May morning has long been a symbol of agricultural prosperity. It was often gathered and kept as a medicine or aid to beauty. The young woman who washed her face in the dew on May morning gained a fair complexion; while if she were daring enough to undress and roll naked in the dew she was given great beauty of person.

The principal customs were those which welcomed the summer. The picking and bringing home of wild flowers was common, those in bloom at this time of year being mostly yellow – primroses, buttercups, marigolds, furze-blossom. The children usually made posies of the flowers, small bouquets, which they hung up in the house or laid on the doorsteps or window-sills. In West Cork, instead of flowers, people used to and some still do, collect leaves of the wild iris, liostrum, (or feileastrum), which were hung on the door, or placed on the window-sill or dresser. In most parts of Munster it was more usual to pick and bring in 'May boughs', small branches of newly leafed trees, hazel, elder, rowan, ash, and particularly in Co. Cork, the sycamore, often called the 'summer tree'. Different growths were believed to be lucky or unlucky, varying from place to place. Blackthorn, elder, honey-suckle, furze, alder and whitethorn particularly were considered unlucky or lucky depending on

the area.

'March will search, April will try and May will tell whether you'll live or die', so runs the popular saying. May was thought to be a critical time for sick people. However, May Eve and May Day were among the best days for gathering medicinal herbs. Everybody was expected to take blood purifying medicines at the beginning of May. A common custom was to eat three meals of fresh young nettles, boiled until tender, or three cupfuls of the liquid from the boiling. The belief that nettle stings were good for rheumatism may have some bearing on the custom which flourished in West Cork at least until the 1960s – the custom of stinging with nettles on May Day. Going to school in Lisheen in the 1950s, much 'fun' was had on May Day, striking each other on the hands and legs with a bunch of stinging nettles. This was called 'Lá na Neantóg' on Cape Clear.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the month of May is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Many families make a 'May altar' in their homes with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary adorned with vasefuls of fresh wild or garden flowers. The Roman flower festival of Floralia was instituted in Rome in 283 B.C. and was celebrated from April 28 to May 3 in honour of Flora, goddess of flowers and vegetation. This Roman festival was introduced into Britain and juxtaposed over the old Celtic fire festival of Bealtaine. The Christian devotion to Mary was juxtaposed over this, so many of our customs show a continuity from pre-Christian times.

As at Samhain, (Halloween), at Bealtaine, the division between the natural and supernatural was less and in folklore otherworldly

creatures were more than usually active about May Day and the appearance of a travelling band of fairies, or a mermaid, a 'púca', or a headless coach might cause unease but would not occasion surprise. Persons straying near forts or homes of the 'good people' – a ráth or a lios – might meet them venturing out to engage in dancing, hurling or other revels. A favourite pastime of the fairies was to cause mortals to lose their way by bringing down mist or by confusing landmarks. In Germany, May Eve is called 'Walpurgisnacht', or 'Night of the Witches'.

By Celtic reckoning, the Bealtaine celebration began at sundown on May Eve, April 30, because the Celts always figures their days from sundown to sundown. Sundown was the proper time for the Druids to kindle the great Bal-fires, on the top of the nearest hill, such as Tara Hill, in County Meath.

Traditionally there is often a snap of cold weather with easterly winds at the end of April and early May. This period was and still is in places called 'Scairbhín na gCuach' – the rough weather of the cuckoo because it coincides with the arrival of the cuckoo. More correctly, this time should be called 'garbhshíon na gcuach' from 'garbh', (rough) and 'síon' (weather). It is usually referred to as 'The Scaraveen'. 'Ne'er cast a clout until May be out' says the proverb, interpreted by many as a warning not to change into summer clothes until June. Others have the version – 'Ne'er cast a clout until the May be out', that is until the mayflower (whitethorn) is in blossom. Certainly most country children were permitted to run barefoot from May Day onwards.

people Farming

FARMING
IN WEST CORK

Tommy Moyles

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

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Sometimes time moves fast in the farming cycle. Only a few weeks ago the call came to try and plant more grain and fodder crops in order to deal with supply chain issues resulting from the war in Ukraine. At this stage, the vast majority of the grain crops are planted and it's largely maize and root crops that are left for this planting season. It's all over to that great uncontrollable, the weather, to dictate how the farming year goes. To date it's been manageable. A settled dry spell in Late May and June would see a lot of silage cut and this will go a long way to securing fodder for next

Keeping up with the times



Cows and calves enjoy the morning sun over Sandescove, Ardfield. Photo: Tommy Moyles

winter. In terms of crops, tillage farmers will need a similar spell of settled dry weather from late July for the winter cereal harvest and the same at some point in August and/or September. This year's grain harvest will have added significance so fingers crossed that the good weather will prevail.

One of the areas where the loss of Ukrainian produce will impact consumers most is vegetable oils. Combined, Ukraine and Russia supply in excess of 50 per cent of the world's supply of sunflower oil. Similar to grains we may have to look across the Atlantic to make up for the loss of product from the Black sea area. There is talk that a share of the cropping land in the United States and Canada will be planted with sunflower to fill the gap in the short term. On the odd occasion it is

grown in Ireland, but due to our climate, not at the same levels as seen on the continent.

DNA registration of calves At home, calving is almost complete and cows and calves have been going out to grass within 24 hours, as long as there isn't heavy rain. This year the farm is partaking in a pilot for DNA registration of calves. A tissue sample is taken at tagging and sent to a lab where the sex and parentage of the calf are verified. It threw up a few surprises. I expected a few corrections on the sire side. This happens at the time when changing from AI to natural service or if a cow is moved from one bull to another. What I didn't expect was a dam correction. In late March, I found a cow had calved about two weeks early and had twin heifers. She wasn't too keen on one of the calves, so I tried to

adopt her onto a heifer that lost a calf. All was going ok until I got the registration confirmation on the ICBF website. It turns out this calf was belonging to a cow on the other side of the shed. During the night, the two cows had calved either side of the feed passage. One calf got out through the feed barrier, crossed the passage and went in through the other barrier. The lesson there was never underestimate the ability of a newborn calf to move.

Food Vision Dairy Group Earlier this year, Minister McConalogue set up the Food Vision Dairy Group to look at ways the dairy sector could reduce emissions. The group, chaired by former head of Teagasc, Professor Gerry Boyle have been meeting on a number of occasions and a draft report from the group included

17 recommendations. I would stress this was a draft report. One of the headline grabbers is a proposed retirement scheme, which would see land removed from grazing breeding bovine animals. Also included is a proposed environmental limit on methane emissions and a 35 per cent reduction in nitrogen use.

The proposed retirement scheme appears to be the headline issue but maybe that's because it's among the more comfortable elements to deal with. To me, it's leaving more questions than answers. The finer details of what happens that land if it's sold. Can it be purchased and put back in dairy or is prohibited from dairy use for a fixed term? That would be less of an issue in tillage areas as the crop potential is there and the land sale value would hold relatively stable. If

it's in a livestock only part of the country does that limit it to sheep and fattening cattle? If it does will that impact on the overall value of the land? If the ground can no longer support breeding stock, does that limit its use for contract rearing? Also if a reduction of 35 per cent in artificial nitrogen is required, this will likely lead to a lower stocking rate, then surely the 'retired' land will be needed to facilitate this.

I'm not sure if such a retirement scheme is required, especially in light of two major issues across farming. Labour availability and succession issues are two major challenges to overcome. Young people in agriculture will want income comparable to their non-farming peers and, dare I say it, some may want a similar quality of life also. Fixing labour challenges is probably easier but costlier in the short term.

Technology

Technology will play a part in easing the labour issues but it won't solve them all. The danger is, you can become too dependent on technology to the detriment of common sense. An acquaintance of mine told me they couldn't go to a funeral last year as they wouldn't be finished work in time to make it to the church. I suggested they sympathise at the graveyard afterwards instead. I was informed that wasn't possible because they didn't know how long it would take to get there, as they couldn't find 'adjoining cemetery' on google maps. Now that's being too dependent on technology!

National credit union body supports
Cultivate as national farm finance brand

The Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) has offered its support to Cultivate in becoming the national farm finance brand for Ireland's credit union sector. This is an important example of the growing collaboration within the sector.

Cultivate provides unsecured lending of up to €75,000 to farmers across the country. Cultivate loans are used to develop farm buildings, invest in stock, working capital, and the purchase of tractors and machinery.

As long-established leaders in the personal lending market, credit unions are diversifying their loan portfolios by increasing their presence in business, agri and mortgage lending. It is

widely acknowledged by credit unions that cross-sector initiatives and economies of scale are required if this expansion into new areas is to have a real impact in the market.

Announcing the ILCU's support, Helene McManus, President of the ILCU, said: "Cultivate has established a strong brand identity in Irish farming in the past few years. What began as a pioneering local initiative by four Galway credit unions just five years ago is now widely available across the country."

Ms McManus continued, "The ILCU supports Cultivate as the agri brand of Irish credit unions. Most of the credit unions that offer Cultivate loans are members of the ILCU. We

encourage any ILCU-affiliated credit union that wishes to enter the agri lending market to do so as part of the Cultivate brand."

Finbarr O'Shea, Manager of Bantry Credit Union, is a director of Cultivate and Chair of its National Marketing Group. Welcoming the announcement, Finbarr said: "Cultivate is delighted to have received the support of the ILCU. This support is a massive boost to us as we seek to achieve our ambition of making Cultivate available to every farmer in the country." Cultivate loans are currently available from over 120 credit union offices around the country, and the number of outlets is growing all the time.

Finbarr continued: "As the largest representative body of

Irish credit unions, the ILCU is a key stakeholder and a key voice in the credit union sector. Cultivate's success has been built on a collaborative platform through engagement with all the key agri stakeholders including farmer representative bodies (in particular the IFA), agricultural advisers and training bodies (in particular Teagasc), agri businesses and merchants, accountants, marts and so on.

We are delighted to have the ILCU support this collaborative platform. And we look forward to working with the ILCU and all other stakeholders as together we improve and expand the Cultivate loan offering."



Joe Healy, Chair of Cultivate and former President of the IFA, with Helene McManus, President of the Irish League of Credit Unions, announcing the ILCU's support for Cultivate as the national farm finance brand for the credit union sector.

people Farming

A West Cork Farming Life: Jerome O'Brien, Barryroe

Describe the farm?

We're farming about 280 to 300 acres between owned and rented (land) in Barryroe. About 140 acres of this is the milking platform and the rest is used for silage and heifer rearing. We were split winter and spring. This year we were full spring milking 250 Friesian and Jersey cross cows. We rear all our own young stock.

What is happening on the farm at the moment?

We're just finished calving and we'll have two weeks break before breeding. That will allow us to recharge the batteries or go away for a few days. Calves are going out to grass from the shed and we're starting to wean them off milk. We have 80 replacement heifer calves. Moving into summer routine, the busy 12 weeks is over, so maintenance, fencing, grass walks.

We do a grass walk once a



week during the main growing season and from April to July we go twice. We use both a platometer and cut and weigh system to measure. To keep the

right quality grass in front of the cows we need to manage our surplus and deficits. If we go into a surplus there'll be a drop in litres and milk solids, so it's important to get the right quality grass. We use it as well to judge how much supplement ration we use or not.

We're just preparing for the breeding season by now. We're just delaying it for a week, as we don't want calves as early in January as before.

We're synchronising the heifers for fixed time AI. This is our first time doing it. Fixed time AI involves scanning the heifers to ensure they are okay for breeding and a progesterone cidr is inserted into each one. On day five they will get a progesterone injection with another the next day and the cidr is removed. Then on the pm of Day 8 or 56 hours after removal of cidr, we're going to AI the heifers.

We're hoping that 70 to 75 per cent will hold and any repeats on that will be day 18 to 24 so we should have 90 per cent hold to AI in three weeks. They'll be calving at the start for ease of handling of the animal and ease of labour for us, as they're on an outside farm. It will give the heifers more time in milk next year. Having them calved, gives them extra time before the cows join them.

How are you coping with 2022 input prices?

It's tough, we're being more vigilant this year. Every Kg of concentrate has to be justified so that increases the importance of grass measuring. With feed costs still increasing it's going to be more important to justify any input because it doesn't look like those prices are coming down in the short term. We're vigilant of where

we're spreading and using our soil samples to see what the different paddocks need in order to be more efficient.

We have new reseeds with higher levels of clover so we are pulling back the fertiliser on them. The co-op allowed farmers to buy a percentage of what we bought last year so we availed of that. Our chemical nitrogen usage is under scrutiny nationally so we're more aware of what we're spreading and how much these days.

What advantages and disadvantages are there to farming in West Cork?

The advantages are we have a lot on our doorstep and there's a good lifestyle balance between the two. Having a world leading dairy processor in Carbery is another big advantage. They always look after their suppliers. I suppose a disadvantage

might be that with such a busy farming community the opportunities for young people might not be here as much compared to other parts of the country.

Do you do much away from the farm?

My main interest would be in GAA; I play for Barryroe, both football and hurling, and I'm also involved in Barryroe Macra na Feirme. I find being involved in stuff away from the farm is good. It's kind of a release and an hour or two off-farm is a good thing; it clears the head and it's good from a social aspect to meet friends. Summer championship is a help too, as the farm isn't as busy compared to spring. I used to be an officer in Barryroe Macra and having served my time as an officer, I'm more of an active member now.

'Old Cork in Colour' illuminates Cork's past

Spike Island has teamed up with the authors of the hugely popular 'Old Ireland in Colour' books to create an exhibition entitled 'Old Cork in Colour'. The exhibition features a total of 30 old black and white images from the city and county that have been professionally restored and colourised by the authors. Many of the images are being colourised for the first time, and they include ten images that were taken on Spike Island, showcasing its rich past as a military, penal and social space. The remaining 20 images include areas of the county like Cork City, Cobh, Bandon, Bantry, Kinsale and Cork Harbour.

Included in the exhibition are images of well-known Irish characters, with a colourisation of the last known image of Michael Collins, which was taken shortly before his shooting at Béal na Bláth. Also included are images of John Mitchel and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Visitors can see a small print of the original black and white image alongside a larger colourised version of the photograph, all are on display in Spike Island's Mitchel Hall.

The books 'Old Ireland in Colour', written by authors Professor John Breslin and Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley, have been a huge success since they were first published. The first book was named Best Irish-Published Book of the Year at the An Post Irish Book Awards 2020, while both books have topped the Irish book bestseller charts. The social media accounts showcasing the restored images are also very active and engaged, with the authors earning significant praise

for bringing a renewed interest to many aspects of Irish history.

Both authors said they were overwhelmed with the positive response to the colourisation project, never expecting it to become the hugely popular theme it has become. The pair have made numerous TV and radio appearances as a result. John was able to make use of a computer-based 'artificial intelligence' system called DeOldify that does an initial colourisation of a black and white photograph in a short period of time. After that, he manually colourises various aspects of the photograph in Photoshop to correct any incorrect colours – such as uniforms, eyes, hair, etc. – based on any records or research he or Sarah-Anne can find. The Spike Island project presented its own challenges, with images of social and military life common in the islands archives. For uniforms, John and Sarah-Anne contacted several uniform specialists in Ireland and the UK to find out about various shades of khaki, green, etc. for those British/Irish uniforms that he had colourised from around the WWI period. They also involved former residents of Spike Island to get information on details about colours from structures on the island, and for other details like eyes or hair, they consulted portrait paintings, Ellis Island travel records, biographies, prison records, family members and any other relevant records where available.

Author John Breslin explained the challenges: "Often the details are unknown so you must choose a colour that looks right or that seems to match the shade of grey

in the original photo – there is a certain amount of interpretation here, but it is usually based on commonly worn colours, building materials, etc., from the time period, statistics on eye colours in certain countries, and so on."

Author Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley is a Lecturer and Head of the Department of History at the National University of Ireland Galway. A past Chair of the Irish History Students' Association, co-PI of the Tuam Oral History Project and Senior Research Fellow at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, she has authored and edited eight books and over fifty other publications. She was born in and grew up in Cobh. Her co-author John Breslin is a Personal Professor in Electronic Engineering at the National University of Ireland Galway, where he is director of the TechInnovate entrepreneurship programmes. He is co-PI of the Insight and Confirm SFI Research Centres. John is a co-founder of boards.ie, adverts.ie, and the PorterShed. He hails from the Burren and lives in Connemara.

Speaking about the exhibition, Island Manager John Crotty said: "We are delighted to host an exhibition that will stir the imagination of all who visit it, and hopefully appeal to a wide section of the Cork community. We proudly showcase our rich Irish history on Spike Island, and share our Cork connections, so this is a perfect opportunity to incorporate the wider Cork story. The ten colourised images of Spike Island are particularly exciting for us, as they bring our history to life so vividly, and show us details we would not

have identified without this kind of updating. But no doubt many visitors will be fascinated by the last ever image taken of Michael Collins being on display, in this

the centenary year of his death".

The exhibition runs until November 2022 in the island's Mitchel Hall gallery space. This beautiful former church has

showcased art and heritage exhibitions, crafts and talks over the last five years.

SPIKE ISLAND
CORK HARBOUR

OLD CORK IN COLOUR
EXHIBITION
March - November 2022

See over 30 old images of Cork colourised 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 FOCUS: EFFICIENT ENERGY SAVINGS

Upgrade your home to save heat and money

In order to meet the Irish government’s climate action plan to significantly reduce Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, 500,000 Irish residential homes must be upgraded to a B2 rating or higher. This ambitious plan also includes the installation of 600,000 heat pumps, 400,000 of which need to be installed into older homes. Homes account for one-quarter of all energy consumption in Ireland and with 50 per cent of Irish homes currently having a BER rating of D or lower, this is a significant task set by our government, however with increased grants and support available from SEAI, it is achievable, even for older homes, and there are significant benefits and savings to be had for homeowners who do upgrade.

A home energy upgrade not only means a warmer and healthier home but money saved on energy bills and the

use of renewable energy in the home.

Homeowners who upgrade are not only decreasing their carbon footprint, which is good for the environment, but by improving their energy rating, they are adding value to their home.

Susan Andrews of SEAI explains that as well as looking at how we use energy, we also have to consider the heat loss in our home. “If you have a poorly insulated home, you’re losing up to 30 per cent of your heat through roofs and walls and a further 10-20 per cent of your heat through poorly performing windows and doors.”

Susan emphasises that the upgrade journey is not a complicated process. SEAI has set out three simple steps to help homeowners get started.

“First assess your home, then improve the insulation of your home and finally add renewable technologies to meet your energy demands,” she explains.

With a number of banks now offering extremely competitive Green Mortgage rates for B3 ratings or higher, if your home doesn’t already have an energy rating, you could be missing out on another easy way to make savings.

Go to seai.ie to find a list of registered assessors. Start your upgrade journey by very simply getting a BER assessment of your home. A BER assessor will look at how well your attic and walls are insulated, how well your windows and doors keep the heat in, determine how efficient your heating system is, whether you have an open fireplace or stove, low energy bulbs and so on. A registered BER assessor will provide you with a roadmap to achieving a minimum B2 BER energy rating.

The next step is to insulate your home and keep your heat in. You may need to replace old doors and windows to im-



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Warning: If you do not keep up your repayments you may lose your home.

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Bank of Ireland Mortgage Bank trading as Bank of Ireland Mortgages and The Mortgage Store is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme / One Stop Shop Service

Grant amounts available for private homeowners

You can access a wider range of grants using a One Stop Shop than if you were to manage the project yourself.

One Stop Shop Service – Grants for Private Homes				
Measure	Detached	Semi-Detached / End Terrace	Mid Terrace	Apartment
Heat Pump	€6,500			€4,500
Central Heating System for Heat Pump	€2,000			€1,000
Heat Pump Air-to-Air	€3,500			
Heating Controls only	€700			
Launch bonus for reaching B2 with a Heat Pump	€2,000			
Ceiling Insulation	€1,500	€1,300	€1,200	€800
Rafter Insulation	€3,000	€3,000	€2,000	€1,500
Cavity Wall Insulation	€1,700	€1,200	€800	€700
External Wall Insulation	€8,000	€6,000	€3,500	€3,000
Internal Wall Insulation	€4,500	€3,500	€2,000	€1,500
Windows (Complete Upgrade)	€4,000	€3,000	€1,800	€1,500
External Doors (max. 2)	€800 per door			
Floor Insulation	€3,500			
Solar Thermal	€1,200			
Solar PV	0 to 2 kWp €900/kWp 2 to 4 kWp €300/kWp			
Mechanical Ventilation	€1,500			
Air Tightness	€1,000			
Home Energy Assessment	€350			
Project Management	€2,000	€1,600	€1,200	€800

Individual Home Energy Upgrade Grants

One Stop Shop Service – Grants for Private Homes				
Measure	Detached	Semi-Detached / End Terrace	Mid Terrace	Apartment
Heat Pump	€6,500			€4,500
Heat Pump Air-to-Air	€3,500			
Technical Assessment	€200*			
Heating Controls only	€700			
Ceiling Insulation	€1,500	€1,300	€1,200	€800
Cavity Wall Insulation	€1,700	€1,200	€800	€700
External Wall Insulation	€8,000	€6,000	€3,500	€3,000
Internal Wall Insulation	€4,500	€3,500	€2,000	€1,500
Solar Thermal	€1,200			
Solar PV	0 to 2 kWp €900/kWp 2 to 4 kWp €300/kWp			

* The grant for the Technical Assessment is only payable in conjunction with the Heat Pump System grant



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SPECIAL FOCUS: EFFICIENT ENERGY SAVINGS

prove insulation. SEAI offers insulation grants ranging from up to €1500 for attic insulation to €8000 euro for external wall insulation.

Once your home is well-insulated, the third step is adding renewable technologies. Heat pump systems are highly efficient alternatives to fossil fuel oil or gas boilers. Solar PV save between €200-€300 per year on domestic energy bills and solar thermal systems are designed to meet 50-60 per cent of your hot water requirement.

SEAI offers grants of up to €6,500 for heat pumps, up to €2400 for Solar PV and €1200 for solar thermal.

SEAI offers three Home Energy Upgrade Options: The first is for qualifying homeowners in receipt of certain social welfare payments and covers the full cost of the upgrade.

For homeowners not in receipt of social welfare payments, SEAI offers two options for a home energy upgrade grant.

The first option is where a one stop shop fully manages the upgrade. This option means you must include a minimum

number of energy upgrades and achieve a minimum B2 rating.

The second option will be attractive to homeowners on a budget who are interested in completing individual energy upgrades such as improving wall and roof insulation or adding a renewable technology. All you have to do is get a quote from a registered contractor (ask for their SEAI ID number), go to seai.ie, apply for the grant, giving your MPRN number, which allows SEAI to see that you haven't received the same grant previously. If you qualify, approval is immediate online and you can give your contractor the go-ahead. Once the work is completed the homeowner arranges a post work BER and claims the grant back from SEAI.

See table opposite for grant amounts or for more information on available grants and how to access them contact SEAI (www.seai.ie Phone 01-8082100) or for extra advice and information get in touch with your local Citizens Information Office or the West Cork Helpline 0818 07 8390.

CASE STUDY: Cormac Madden has spent several years upgrading the energy efficiency of his family home. He lives in County Dublin with his wife and two sons, who are enjoying the extra comfort it provides.

Cormac has worked for ESB for many years so is no stranger to energy efficiency and the benefits it brings. He knew about heat pumps long before it they became the 'must-have' heating system for homes moving away from fossil fuels. He knew that over time, he could reduce their home's carbon emissions and make the house warmer and more comfortable to live in.

As a first step, Cormac and his wife looked at how they could insulate their home and keep the heat in. They started with attic insulation and a few years later, they also got external wall insulation.

In 2016, he wanted to tackle any remaining sources of heat loss to bring the house to an even higher standard. This involved replacing doors and windows and getting an air to water heat pump and a ventilation system installed. "It's transformational. It's the appliance of choice for me. I would often say that in the future it won't be a new kitchen that will be the

object of desire in a home, it will be a heat pump."

As a final measure, they installed solar PV.

The process: Cormac contracted Electric Ireland Superhomes, an energy agency, to manage the heat pump installation and solar PV. Superhomes provided a project manager, who oversaw all the works and managed third-party contractors, which was a great relief to Cormac.

A BER assessor inspected the house to recommend what further works were needed to improve the BER and make the home heat-pump ready.

Cormac availed of all the relevant SEAI grants which was a great help when financing the project.

The house has now achieved an A3 energy rating, making it super efficient and very pleasant to live in. Cormac and his family never have to think about

the heating as it maintains a constant comfortable temperature. There are no longer any draughts or cold mornings, even when it's freezing outside.

Cormac strongly recommends upgrading the energy efficiency of your home and replacing your oil or gas boiler with a heat pump. "The house doesn't cool down, it stays at a constant, comfortable temperature and there is abundant hot water available."



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SPECIAL FOCUS: EFFICIENT ENERGY SAVINGS

Building our way out of climate change with hemp

A course in hempcrete building will take place at the Goleen Harbour eco-activity centre in May. Led by Steve Allin, teacher and pioneer in the use of hemp in construction – the only building material that can remove carbon from the air; the course will include presentations, discussions and hands-on demonstrations with hempcrete.

Allin is the author of 'Hemp Buildings: 50 International Case Studies' and director of the International Hemp Building

Association.

Hempcrete is a carbon negative, mould-resistant material that stores heat in the thermal mass of its wall, which is then

released slowly as the building cools down. These extraordinary thermal properties help the environment by bringing a massive reduction in the fuel used for heating and cooling during the lifetime of the building.

A breathable and non-toxic building material, hempcrete is rodent- and fire-resistant and makes an excellent acoustic insulator. While conventional construction relies on increasingly complex layers of barriers, insulation, boards, and tapes; using a single material like hempcrete means no seams and gaps like in traditional, wood-framed houses, which means less need for taping or specific air-sealing layers.

The course is suitable for architects, builders, environment professionals, self-build home owners, artists and anyone interested in building or living as naturally as possible.

The course is suitable for architects, builders, environment professionals, self-build home owners, artists and anyone interested in building or living as naturally as possible. May 13-15. €300 including meals.

Matt Mills and Melanie Furniss are the drivers behind Goleen Harbour, a beautiful bio-diverse coastal 38-acre site where they plan to promote ecological tourism and learning experiences. With the help of a number of investors and funding from the LEADER programme, the couple are currently developing on-site accommodation including a camp site, eco cabins and geodomes on decks overlooking the iconic Fastnet Rock. Summer camps for children, parent-child bonding weekends, Thai yoga massage experiential days and natural building courses will all be part of the planned offering at this innovative eco-activity centre.

Matt has already designed and built a prototype eco cabin on the land and a 'wellbeing' cabin where Melanie will offer



A hempcrete building at Goleen Harbour.



One of the planned eco cabins for the innovative eco-activity centre in Goleen.

holistic treatments.

The land is also home to 15 beehives, a three-quarter acre flower and herb garden and the couple grow organic vegetables for local restaurants and Goleen Harbour visitors.

A 2.5 km public harbour loop walk, part of the Fastnet Trails, takes visitors round the coastal loop and the woodland.

Matt and Melanie's longterm vision includes welcoming people who are neuro-diverse or experiencing social isolation. Goleen Harbour will give them the opportunity to get involved on the farm through social farm-

ing or simply by visiting and spending time on the land.

"Anyone who participates in the garden project will hopefully feel supported to create a sense of belonging in some way," says Melanie. "We have a lot of empathy for those who are on the journey to discover their confidence or just recover from the stresses life brings and we believe a natural environmental has the power to support that."

Other upcoming workshops include:

'Post & Beam' building by hand: Gather and learn how to

build a beautiful campsite barrel top building constructed from Native Irish Douglas Fir. Built with five post and beam frames and Belfast Trusses, all to be hand crafted using joinery and traditional methods. The frames will be stood by all participating at the end of each week.

Dates: June 6-11 and June 20-25.

For other options and upcoming courses visit goleenharbour.ie/learn

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SPECIAL FOCUS: EFFICIENT ENERGY SAVINGS

West Cork business 'Highly Commended' for energy efficiency product at SEAI Energy Show



Susan O'Flaherty, Xavier Dubuisson and Shay Kavanagh of Retrokit, which won the Highly Commended award for 'Best Service Provider' for RetroKit Platform, a software as a service platform that provides a toolkit to deliver home energy renovation projects.

the energy sector and the pace of innovation, as new energy saving technologies were revealed over the two-day event.

Central to this innovation was Retrokit from Clonakilty, which took home the 'Highly Commended' award for 'Best Service Provider' for RetroKit Platform, a software as a service platform that provides a toolkit to deliver home energy renovation projects.

Paul Martin, Programme Manager at SEAI who chaired the judging panel commented: "I want to congratulate this year's winners of the Product of Show Awards. The Government has set ambitious targets over the next ten years and beyond to reduce energy-use in our homes and our dependence on fossil fuels and the products and expertise that Retrokit and Verde Energy Group provide is an important facet of that transition.

For many years, the Product

of the Show Awards has championed innovative product development. Considerable investment in R&D, coupled with rapidly changing technology, has seen a wave of pioneering products and systems featured at the Show. The winners all share a passion for a clean energy future and are providing businesses and consumers with exciting new energy products that will help us use less and use clean."

Xavier Dubuisson, CEO Retrokit commented on the award: "We were very honoured to receive this highly commended award; it is a recognition of the hard work over the last five years by the whole RetroKit team. A big thank you to SEAI and to the judges as well as to our clients."

Other winners included:

- Mitsubishi Electric for the QAHV CO2 monobloc commercial heat pump which is designed specifically to produce high-temperature sanitary hot water using CO2 as a refrigerant.
- Cork company Verde Energy Group from Courtstown who won the Commended award for 'Best Lighting' for Enterprise, an energy-efficient LED power-adjustable high bay lighting.
- Grundfos for MIXIT which is a smart mixing loop solution for heating and cooling systems in commercial and large residential buildings.
- EnergyElephant for their energy and sustainability data platform with imbedded AI.
- Expert Leisure with SportsArt

G690 Verde Treadmill which converts human generated energy into utility grade electricity.

- TaskLED with Cree Sirius, a unique street lighting featuring Wavemax Technology that provides decreased LED source luminance.
- Grant Engineering with HVO Biofuel Grant Vortex which is an innovative, A-rated biofuel-compatible condensing boiler.

In addition to the 150 exhibitors in the RDS, the Show featured; an extensive electric vehicle showcase with free test drives, live retrofit demonstrations, a new lighting pavilion, expert seminars and multiple networking events.

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) welcomed over 2,500 attendees to the SEAI

Energy Show, which took place in the RDS at the end of March, after a two-year absence. The event showed the vibrancy of

One of the most cost-efficient ways to save energy is insulating your attic

Ninety-five per cent of all Irish homes have inadequate insulation in their roofs and walls and with energy prices increasing and SEAI now offering grants of up to €1,500 for insulating an attic, there has never been a better time to look into this cost-effective upgrade that can save energy in the home.

According to SEAI, approximately 20-30 per cent of heat within the home can be lost through the roof so insulating your attic properly can massively reduce heat loss and save you money.

Offering a more environmentally-friendly alternative to imported mineral fibres, which have a higher carbon footprint, cellulose fibre insulation is a winner in many ways when it comes to insulating your home: Manufactured from recycled newspapers by Cork company Ecocel, cellulose fibre insulation has a high thermal and acoustic performance; long lifespan; excellent fire resistance; improves indoor air quality and offers good value for money if you do your calculations right!

In fact, new research from

the University of Ulster has found that the installation of cellulose fibre insulation in attics can even improve the airtightness of dwellings.

"We've long thought that cellulose alone can improve the airtightness of dwellings, and now we have the research to prove it," said John Egan of Ecocel, who engaged the University to carry out the independent evaluation.

"The material is naturally dense, and the nature of the installation process means that it's blown into every nook and cranny, and around pipes and wiring, helping to seal up these spaces."

As part of the research, Ulster University conducted before and after blower door tests to determine the unintended air filtration rate of three dwellings. The blower door tests confirmed that the Ecocel attic treatment improved the airtightness of all three dwellings. The airtightness of dwellings in Deansgrange and Killiney improved by nine and eight per cent respectively, while a third dwelling in Wicklow improved by four per cent. The mean change was seven per cent.

The report noted that the test conditions were not ideal on the day that the Wicklow test was carried out, with wind gusts recorded, which may have impacted on the test. This dwelling also has a lower ceiling surface area to building volume ratio, which may have contributed to lowering the relative improvement.

"This brings up another point, the importance of going back and testing houses four and eight years later to really inform ourselves," says John. This Wicklow house would be a good candidate for retesting. At the moment we are predicting energy performance with Building Energy Ratings (BERs) but we are not gathering empirical evidence on the energy efficiency of Irish homes."

Ecocel is an active member of the Green Building Council, Passive House Association and Cork Environmental Forum. The company recently completed the insulation of over 50 A-rated units in Cork County Council's Beechgrove social housing development in Clonakilty.

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Ecocel, due to its natural fibres creates a healthy indoor air quality and is carbon negative when installed.



U-Values: 300mm in attic = 0.11 W/m2K //// 225mm in Timber Frame Wall = 0.14 W/m2K



people Environment : Making a difference

A sustainable wardrobe

With summer most definitely on the way, it's coming to that time of year when knitwear, scarves, and cosy jumpers are replaced with vests, shirts, and shorts. In the recent past, buying clothes was an occasional event – people would go out shopping when they outgrew what they had or when the seasons changed. But about twenty years ago, clothes became cheaper, fashion trend cycles sped up and shopping became a hobby, so much that many consumers now see fashion as disposable.

What we now call 'fast fashion' is a model built on an

endless cycle of overproduction, one that exploits people and damages the environment in a race to extract as much profit as possible. When the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh collapsed in 2013, killing over a thousand workers and leaving 2500 people injured, the world witnessed in disbelief the labour conditions that the workers of the fashion industry faced, in order to make clothing accessible and affordable to the people in the West.

Between 2000 and 2015, global production of clothes doubled. Cheap prices from clothing brands are only made possible because they produce



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.

in huge quantities and are ruthless about cost-cutting measures. A worker can spend up to 18 hours a day, producing clothes that go out of style so quickly they are designed to end up as waste. To put that in perspective, the Spanish brand Zara releases 500 new garments every week, producing 450 million garments a year. Globally, that's a truckload of textiles landing on dump sites every second of every day; in the UK alone it is estimated that 350,000 tons of clothing end up in landfill sites every year. And not only is the fashion industry wasteful, it is also one of the largest emitters of CO2 and polluters in the world, rivalled only by the oil industry and the agricultural sector. So how can we make our wardrobe more

sustainable, and ensure our future purchases are kinder to the environment and the people who make our clothes?

First, we need to look at the clothing we already own. To make clothes last longer, take the time to read the care labels, and wash them less often, and at lower temperatures. Air-drying instead of using the tumble dryer will prevent clothes from shrinking and elastics from warping; fabric conditioner and dryer sheets are best avoided, as they cover fabrics with a waxy coating that interferes with their moisture-wicking properties, making them harder for water and detergent to permeate them, and locking odours and stains into them.

Another way to make garments last longer is learning to mend and alter them. 'Mending' is a term used to cover all kinds of clothing repair; it can be just stitching a tear back together or it can be far more elaborate. Mending is considered a 'slow fashion' skill because it allows people to define themselves as more than just consumers and helps them wear their loved clothes for longer with the help of a needle, a thread, and a little piece of scrap fabric. The best place to start with mending is to look at the clothes and notice spots of wear and tear before they become a big issue. Holes and worn areas in clothing can be mended with 'darning' – a sewing technique quite popular in the 'visible mending' community, that involves stitching up and down the fabric to make a warp, and then stitching back over and under to make a weft. Similarly, woollen garments can benefit from needle felting, which involves taking wool that hasn't yet been spun and compacting it into the garment with



a little needle to fill the hole. To make a garment look different, it can be 'upcycled', whereby it is dyed a different colour – it must be made of natural fibres such as linen, cotton, silk, or wool for this to work; or crochet a border to shorten a wide neckline and add length to short sleeves.

The next step in making a wardrobe more sustainable is to look at our own consumption. A recent UK report suggests cutting how many new clothes we buy by as much as 75 per cent, only buying clothes designed to last, and recycling them at the end of their lifetime. Currently only one per cent of textiles are recycled, and few companies engage in 'circular fashion': whereby a brand may use offcuts from its manufacturing process to form new products or seek reclaimed textiles from their customers to make new garments for resale.

Brands that switch to more sustainable fibres and textiles and offer ethically conscious options are commendable, but they do little to address the waste generation and the increasing consumption of resources. Second hand, pre-owned, and charity shops extend the lifespan of garments, saving them from going to land-

fill for a little longer. Likewise, renting wedding dresses and formal wear, and engaging in clothes swapping with friends can have an impact in reducing the waste incurred by the fashion industry.

If we are to reduce our CO2 emissions and curb this huge waste problem, we need to rapidly expand the 'slow fashion' movement and focus on quality rather than quantity. This movement focuses on reducing consumption, favouring classic styles over fleeting trends, and preferring garments that last longer. Several sustainable mending groups and classes are starting to sprout around West Cork, offering to teach textile-based techniques such as embroidery and damaged clothes repair. With CECAS (the Centre of Excellence for Climate Action and Sustainability) in Leap, as well as German artist Vera Teske in Dunmanway now taking bookings for their courses, why not have a good hard look in your wardrobe and try your hand at giving your favourite clothes a freshen-up and a little bit of TLC? Mending will be very much on-trend this summer!

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Celebrating our bees

"Every individual can contribute to the preservation of bees and other pollinators"

Data collected by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations shows that bees and other pollinators are priceless when it comes to ensuring the global safety of the food supply chain. Unfortunately studies by the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature show that bee populations and the populations of other pollinators have significantly decreased, making them more and more endangered. The extinction of bees will not only deprive the world of another species, but may have drastic consequences for entire ecosystems and the human race. Ahead of May 20, World Bee Day, Beekeeper **Andrew Shinnick** explains how we can all play a part in protecting our bees and pollinators.

The decrease in our bees and other pollinators is affected by numerous factors; many consequences of human activity such as intensive

agriculture, widespread use of pesticides and pollution caused by waste. Their survival and development are also threatened by climate change and the ev-

er-increasing global population. Bees are also exposed to new diseases and pests like the varroa mite.

A third of all food produced



in the world, i.e. every third spoon of food, depends on pollination. The international study of Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in 2016 estimated that between US\$ 235 billion and US\$ 577 billion worth of annual global food production relies on direct contributions by pollinators. In addition, agricultural plants, which require pollination are an important source of jobs and income for farmers, particularly for small and family farms in developing countries.

Last but not least, bees have an important role in the preservation of the ecological balance

and biodiversity in nature. As good bioindicators of environmental conditions, bees inform us that something is happening to the environment and that we must take action.

The prompt protection of bees and other pollinators will significantly contribute to solving problems with the global food supply and with helping to eliminate hunger. It will also contribute to efforts to halt further loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems, as well as to the objectives of sustainable development defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Continued on next page...

people Environment : Making a difference

Minding our lawns is a war against nature

Time to tidy up the garden? Perhaps pluck some of the weeds? Must mow the lawn. These are some of the thoughts we entertain this time of the year as we approach summer. Lawns are the main feature of most Irish gardens and there's a great deal of effort involved in keeping them in pristine condition, to stop moss growing and generally achieving homogenous perfection, in particular making sure that no dandelions or daisies destroy its appearance! With our insect population in crisis, **Eugene Daly** asks why so many people are trying to keep nature at bay with the allocation of land to something as useless as a lawn?



The following are some of the headlines I have seen lately in the Cork Examiner and Sunday Independent – 'Forty Shades of Green Could be reduced to Two'; 'We face an Insect Apocalypse, but Recovery is Possible'; 'Each well-kept Lawn is a Little War on Nature'; 'Lifeless Lawns will Obliterate our Bumblebees'. Lawns are a standard presence across gardens, parks, university grounds, civic places, everywhere really. It seems that there is an antipathy to the natural world which is taking its toll on insects and birds. Dr. Una Fitzpatrick, who runs the bumblebee monitoring scheme for the National Biodiversity Data Centre, warns that our bumblebees are literally starving to death. "We keep tidying up nature so we have gardens, grassland and parkland with no dandelions or clover, or other wild flowers and the bumblebees die of hunger," she stated.

Maybe we have been lulled into a false sense of security by Ireland's image as a green and fertile land. The reality is that the plight of the bumblebee is worse here than in Europe overall, according to research

recently published in the journal 'Science'. The bumblebee that comes out of hibernation in spring cannot get the nectar it desperately needs because there simply aren't enough so-called 'weeds' and flowering plants.

Dandelions appear at the same time of year as the much-loved daffodil, and with similar colour; it's a pity we can love one flower and despise the other so much. Daffodils are undoubtedly beautiful plants, but planting daffodils offers as much for biodiversity as sticking plastic flowers in the ground. This is because daffodils contain little or no pollen or nectar, while dandelions offer copious amounts of this vital food for hungry pollinators at this time of year.

Bees, butterflies and other important pollinators require a varied diet, but in early spring the availability of nectar-rich dandelions can tide them over when there are few other flowers in bloom. Later birds can feast on the dandelion seed heads, a favourite with birds such as the goldfinch and greenfinch. "Between birds and bees what more could one small flower offer to the world?"

In this time of biodiversity crisis, can we learn to live with dandelions? If we could only let the dandelions enjoy their first spring bloom, this would be a valuable simple way to help biodiversity," writes Juanita Brown in the Cork Examiner.

I find it strange that maintaining a manicured lawn is such standard practice. Like many of the trends that surged in the mid-20th century, maintaining a lawn is another way to maintain dominion over nature. Lawns are often sprayed to conformity and fertilised for the brightest green. Lawns are where we rigidly reconstruct nature, stamp out diversity, and impose straight lines and sharp edges. "Each well-kept lawn is its own little war on nature," writes Anja Murray in the Cork Examiner.

Gardens are generally good for our mental health and physical wellbeing. Watching movement and texture, such as leaves swaying in a breeze, draws our attention and eases our nervous system. Making space for flowers, bees and butterflies is, of course, good for wildlife too. Allowing a lawn to grow tall and full with flowers

provides nectar and pollen for wild bees, colourful butterflies, night flying moths. These, in turn, support songbirds that we love to listen to. Not a week passes where scientists and naturalists do not express grave concern about the disappearance of insects – flies, bugs, bees, moths and butterflies, ladybirds, earwigs (the little gailseach) and so on.

There is a growing appreciation in Ireland and elsewhere that nature needs space from our controlling tendencies. Even very simple changes, like reducing how often the lawn is mowed, can make a big difference to wild life. I suggest a few ways that can help to restore the wild beauty of nature.

1. Mow part of your lawn low, if that is what you like, but leave other areas to grow longer, or, if your garden is big enough, create an area of wild-flower meadow. This will need cutting just once a year, provide a sequence of flowers and seed heads that will change weekly.

2. Probably the main reason behind the huge loss of insects is the wide use of pesticides

and herbicides – not only on farmland but also in gardens. Stop poisoning – after all we are poisoning Mother Earth.

3. Fall in love with dandelions, daisies, red and white clover and other wild flowers.

4. If you own land, plant native trees, which have the greatest benefit to our wildlife because they have evolved together. Consider silver birch, rowan, hazel, oak, ash, beech, yew and so on. Plant the smaller shrubs and trees if you have less space – holly, elderberry, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, honeysuckle, wild rose etc.

5. Set pollinator friendly flowers – lavender, aster, sunflowers, cosmos, calendula, daisy, borage, nasturtium, sage...

6. Enjoy the goodness of our wild plants – many are edible and delicious eg, blackberries, elderflowers, and nettles from which a delicious soup can be made.

7. Don't cut low, or worse still, poison the grass and plants along the sides of our roads. Adopt and put into practice what they are doing at the

entrance to Rosscarbery, cutting a couple of feet along the roadside and allowing the rest to grow higher.

A movement called 'No-Mow-May' encourages gardeners not to mow the lawn throughout the month of May. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and associated website Pollinators.ie has wonderful advice for anyone looking to do their bit.

Extract from Kahlil Gibran's 'The Prophet'

And now you ask in your heart, 'How shall we distinguish that which is good in pleasure from that which is not good?'

Go to your fields and your gardens, and you shall learn that it is the pleasure of the bee to gather honey of the flower, But it is also the pleasure of the flower to yield its honey to the bee.

For to the bee a flower is a fountain of life,

And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love,

And to both, bee and flower, the giving and the receiving of pleasure is a need and an ecstasy.

... cont'd from previous page

ble Development.

So, what can each one of us do to help the bees?

Plant nectar-bearing flowers for decorative purposes on balconies, terraces, and in our gardens. Buy honey and other hive products from your nearest local beekeeper, rather than a cheap shop honey which is often not honey at all. Raise awareness among children in schools and with young adolescents on the importance of bees and express your support for local beekeepers in your area. Set up a pollinator farm on your balcony, terrace, or garden; you can either make it

yourself or buy it at any DIY or home furnishing store. Preserve old meadows – which feature a more diverse array of flowers – and sow nectar-bearing native plants. Cut grass on meadows only after the nectar-bearing plants like the dandelions, cowslips and daisies have all finished blooming. Offer suitable farming locations for the temporary or permanent settlement of bees so that they have suitable pasture; as a consequence, they will pollinate our plants, which will thereby bear more fruit. Use pesticides that do not harm bees, and spray them in windless weather, either early in the morning or

late at night, when bees withdraw from blossoms. Mulch blooming plants in orchards and vineyards before spraying them with pesticides, so that they do not attract bees after being sprayed. Finally, if you cannot do any of the above, you could simply adopt a hive from one of our many apiaries whereby each adoption allows us to create a brand new colony.

For more information on how our adoption process works or if you are a business and want to partner with us, then simply visit www.blackwaterhoney.ie or email us at info@blackwaterhoney.ie



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people Environment : Making a difference



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes

There is nobody in control

into motion.

Because across the globe we rely so much on large infrastructure, supply chains, inter-continental trade and economy, global finance and investment and political agreement between countries, we are all interdependent even though it is very clear that maintaining the conditions that enable us to function globally is completely beyond our ability to fully understand and hold.

Instead we are watching, piece by piece as the many news reports, when taken as a whole, reflect accelerating tensions within the unstable economic system that relies on (i) artificially constructed demand for non-essential goods (ii) scarcity created in the supply chain, to hike the cost of both essential and non-essential goods (iii) human, emotionally driven behavioural responses to the disruption in what we have come to consider as 'our normal daily lives'.

The complex web of interdependencies sustaining our 'normal daily lives' is then further disrupted by our own actions; by what we choose to purchase, whom we choose to support, what we choose to believe, how we choose to influence others or educate the next generations, in whom we trust globally and locally, what we take for granted and what steps we take towards resilience.

We live in a time when major intensifying systemic stresses occur monthly or even weekly, creating vulnerabilities that many of us, unsurprisingly, choose to ignore. However, unless at least some of us pluck

up the courage and create the energy to look at these vulnerabilities; and start to look seriously at what is involved in adaptation, no sensible progress will ever be made.

The Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN) created in 2015 is a free open-source index that shows a country's current vulnerability to climate disruptions and readiness to leverage investment for adaptive actions.

This Index looks at land available, energy resources and supply chain; considering whether the amount of arable land within the borders of a country could provide sufficient food to support the current population should food imports become seriously limited.

It considers whether the current population is in excess of the land's carrying capacity; and how self-sufficient countries may be in response to the disruption, shrinkage or complete disappearance of global supply lines including energy supplies and manufacturing.

Whilst this may seem both pessimistic and extreme, as archaeologists bear witness, humans have a past history of ignoring the signs of impending civilisation collapse. Alongside Climate Scientists, Historians studying the demise of civilisations alert us to the risks we face today.

Eric Cline in his book, '1177 B.C. The Year Civilization Collapsed' warns that we live in a world that has more similarities to that of the Late Bronze Age than we suspect, indeed "complexity itself may have been the greatest threat to late

Bronze Age civilisation once the pressures began... it is that fact, more than anything else, that speaks to the dangers we face today" says Cline.

British archaeologist Susan Sherratt also points to the similarity of today's world with the late Bronze Age, in that, like that ancient civilisation, we have created an "increasingly homogeneous yet uncontrollable global economy and culture in which political uncertainties on one side of the world can drastically affect the economies of regions thousands of miles away."

It is beyond time to take notice.

Ireland scores relatively well using the Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index; and so we need to use what we have and create the Infrastructure for People-driven Societal Resilience.

David Korowicz physicist and human systems ecologist describes this as including:

- Information systems development so that every community has tools to collaborate, and coordinate resilience and preparedness.
- Support for family, urban, and community food security; enhancing local biodiversity; vulnerability and resource mapping; water capture and so on.
- Facilitate user-generated problem solving, innovation development, communications materials, video and so on.
- First aid and local crisis response training

He advocates specific programs targeted at schools, businesses, scouts, churches,

sporting clubs etc and states that:

"Now would be a time for those that can, to liquidate financial assets, and give unencumbered support to this and other efforts that focus on resilience and preparedness. Our interdependencies mean we're all in this together."

Most of us living in our complex society have little time and possibly even less inclination to wonder how resilient we could be to societal collapse. We are often too busy working our day to day jobs to even learn new skills that are unrelated to how we currently make a living.

In 1972 an MIT report argued that if corporations and governments continued to pursue continuous economic growth no matter the costs, then industrial civilisation was bound to collapse. Their prediction that business as usual would cause this collapse around the 2040s has since been revisited corroborating the results and adding that it is still not too late to stabilise our world somewhat, if humans make a deliberate choice to change priorities. We would have to choose to reduce family size, making birth control fully available; prioritise health and education services and limit industrial output.

West Cork, with its rural society and focus on small scale and artisan productivity is perfectly placed to pioneer People-driven Societal Resilience becoming a node of resilience and helping create a blueprint for the future.

Guide published by Lions helps access to environmental funding

A new guide published by Lions Clubs in Ireland is designed to assist community groups and voluntary organisations to access grants and other funding for local environmental projects.

The 'Environmental Project Support Guide' will be used extensively by almost 100 Lions Clubs in Ireland and is also available to other groups through a download from the Lions Clubs Ireland website. (www.lionsclubs.ie)

In producing the Guide, the Lions District 133 Environmental Team considered ways to best support Lions to engage in Environment Projects. Lions serve their communities on a voluntary basis but the appropriate use of available funding serves to increase the effectiveness of environment projects and enhances the benefits to communities. The Guide summarises key elements of Local Authority and other Environmental, Climate Change and Biodiversity Community Grants. It details funding streams that are available for carrying out various types of community activities and projects in local communities.

"By harnessing the skills and experience of our members, we aim to sustainably protect and restore our environment to improve the well-being of the communities we serve."

Clonakilty man plans to buy Leitrim farm for wildlife reserve

Wildlife and conservation biologist Jack O'Donovan Trá from Clonakilty has started an ambitious GoFundMe campaign with the hope of raising the €300,000 needed to purchase a traditional and biodiverse Irish farm in County Leitrim that has recently come up for sale, and which Jack wants to preserve as an Irish native wildlife reserve.

If his campaign is successful, Jack's plan is to be the caretaker of the land, living onsite and looking after it. Once some essential maintenance and path making has taken place he hopes to invite the public for seasonal guided wildlife tours and education/training events.

Once the habitats have been mapped and restoration works have happened, the aim is to make the land publicly accessible with the end goal being to set up a trust or work with the local authorities to ensure this land remains wild and a place for nature always.

"In Ireland, there is no system or scheme in place for the Irish government to buy land and turn it into a place for nature. In contrast, there are plenty of grants and schemes available for people that want to clear and/or farm the land. So this is why it's up to us, the people, to take action," says Jack passionately.

"Most of Ireland's farms have become modernised and

mechanised. To see traditional native hay meadows and broadleaf forests growing on an Irish farm is a very rare sight."

This farm in county Leitrim already acts as a sanctuary, as many of the surrounding lands have been stripped of every tree and ditch and sprayed with Glyphosate. "I had a long and very enjoyable chat with the farmer selling this piece of ground, it was his mother's homeplace and he would hate to see it converted away from nature and into a conventional modern farm," explains Jack.

The farm for sale has families of red squirrels, deer, foxes, pine martens, buzzards, frogs, newts, eels and many other

species already depending on it. A recent sighting even suggests that Ireland's critically endangered Curlew may be nesting on the farm

"This is an opportunity to protect vanishing Ireland, to play a part in cradling Ireland's dwindling native landscape. Once fully restored the farm could act as an example of how other parts of Ireland can be restored in the same way."

If you would like to help Jack create his wildlife reserve go to GoFundMe and search for the page 'Irish native wildlife reserve' to make a donation.



"This is an opportunity to protect vanishing Ireland, to play a part in cradling Ireland's dwindling native landscape."

people Environment : Making a difference

Workshops highlight local plants and their many uses

Kilcoe Studios will host workshops in May and June celebrating traditional Irish crafts that utilise accessible local materials.

"In times past, local rural communities thought nothing of using what was around them to make what they needed – there was no alternative. But along came imports, and people had a bit more money so slowly people stop making things and just bought what they needed," says artist and workshop facilitator Sonia Caldwell.

"Rope was made for various practical uses and from a wide variety of materials, many plaiting techniques were used to make mats, beds as well as hats and other decorative items. Textiles were usually made from locally grown linen as well as wool and as a result tailoring was a local trade in every town and village.

"We live in very different



times and hanging on to at least some of this knowledge of making these things is a good way to connect us to our heritage and nature. It also offers wonderful fulfilling ways to work with our hands."

Artist Sonia Caldwell has been working with materials sourced locally for many years and she also brings them into schools under the Heritage for

Schools scheme. These workshops offer a chance for adults to get involved and for Sonia to use more complex techniques not suitable for schools. You will find more information on www.kilcoestudios.com or call 087 0667871 / email events@kilcoestudios.com and full details can be sent to you

WORKSHOPS

Weekend of May 21/22

Saturday - Basket making with rushes using twining technique 2-5pm €35

Sunday - Field walk and talk up in a local bog and hedgerow learning about various uses for plants including craft and food. Afternoon paper making from grasses and rope making with materials we have collected. 9.30 - 5pm. €85.

Weekend of June 11/12

Saturday - Coiled Basket making using local natural materials €35

Sunday - Hedgerow walk and talk learning about various uses for our local plants followed by making baskets using a twining technique. 9.30am-5pm, €85.

More information on www.kilcoestudios.com – see craft/workshop page.

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The dawn chorus

by Nicholas Mitchell

As early as February, members of our resident bird population, like Robin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Wren and others, start to exercise their voices as they establish breeding territories. During April these songsters are joined by birds that have spent their winter in Africa and are now on their spring migration north to their breeding grounds here in Ireland. By May, this migration is well under way and now the song of Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Whitethroat can be heard with the others. Every morning just before dawn, throughout May and into June, birds in our woodlands, parks, hedgerows, reedbeds and gardens, start singing. Some birds, like the Song Thrush and Wood Pigeon, start earlier than others, but they soon all join in to create the dawn chorus.

The dawn chorus is something so special. Yes, birds of woodland and hedgerow sing throughout the day, so we can listen to them then, and it is a lovely thing to hear. However, what is beyond compare about that period just before dawn is the large number of birds singing and the very volume of their songs. The sound of their song surrounds you as you stand in



Whimbrel



Whitethroat

the dark. You may have a vague idea about the number of birds that are in and around your

garden or nearby patch, but it is not until you witness this tour de force of nature, the dawn

chorus, that you have any idea how many birds there really are.

The West Cork Branch will be celebrating the Dawn Chorus this year on Sunday, May 15. This is the day when you need to set your alarm clock that little earlier than usual and then wrap up warm before heading out to enjoy a morning of beautiful birdsong. It goes without saying that is not the only day on which to experience the marvel of the dawn chorus; the birds will be in full voice throughout early summer. However, it is a great opportunity, not just to enjoy this spectacle, but to do so with members of the Branch on hand to help point out which birds are singing and to explain more about why they sing. So, why not come along and see what all the fuss is about? This year, at the kind invitation of CECAS, the Branch is holding its Dawn Chorus event in the grounds of Myross Wood House, Leap (GPS 51.571139, -9.150409). It starts at 4am so alarm clocks are a must. Parking is limited so we also ask if you would car-share where at all possible and please only use the Leap entrance to Myross House Woods.

This event is free of charge and open to everyone and the walk will be led by David Rees. The walk will mainly be on hard surface paths, but sturdy footwear is recommended, as

is warm clothing. The walk will last an hour or so. After the walk, breakfast rolls and granola bowls, with vegan options, plus tea and coffee will be available to buy at Myross Woods House, or outside if we have a fine morning.

Not all birds that we see here during the spring migration actually stay here. One bird that we see here during the migration periods, but mainly in the spring, is the Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, a close relative of the similar looking Curlew, with its long legs and long curved bill. However, the Whimbrel neither breeds here nor spends the winter here. Instead, it stops in Ireland on its way north in the spring to its breeding grounds in the Arctic from its winter home in West Africa. It is known as a passage migrant. We see it along our coast and in our fields in late April and early May and, for that reason, is known as the May Bird. Interestingly, it is not often seen in Ireland in the autumn because it flies directly back to West Africa. To help understand why they stop in Ireland in the spring some Whimbrels have been colour-leg ringed here, so please look out for any colour rings and report them to the Branch

or to icelandwader@gmail.com. To tell the difference between a Whimbrel and a Curlew, the first thing of note is that the bill of the Whimbrel is quite a lot shorter and that the curve is in the last third of the bill, the rest being relatively straight. The Whimbrel also has shorter legs and a different head pattern; a dark crown with a light stripe through it and a light stripe above the eye with a dark stripe running through the eye. 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.



BirdWatch Ireland
West Cork Branch
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.

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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Spring into soup

The garden is producing at full speed. There are gazillions of green things – kale, spinach, salad leaves, rocket and chard and lots of potential with all the new seedlings. We have some experimental crops on-the-go this spring, spurred on by last month's conversations about food security. We've sown quinoa, oats and beluga lentils,

which have all germinated and now we're about to plant them out. I know this isn't going to change anyone's life but it'll be interesting to see what can be grown and harvested on a domestic level.

The glasshouse is jam-packed and the annual plant pot shuffle is on as we pot seedlings up and then wonder where to put them. At the moment we are stripping

all the spinach and chard out of the tunnel to make room for the tomato plants. We have finally eaten the last of the leeks and are making our way through the cauliflower crop. It's amazing how much there is to eat. All very green but that's just what we need at this time of the year. A good shot of phytonutrients to help our systems keep powered up.

There have been some beautiful days lately. Clear blue skies, wall-to-wall sunshine but very low temperatures. I am caught out again and again by looking out the window and thinking it looks gorgeous only to go out and be totally under-dressed and freeze. It's perfect growing weather though especially with regular sprinklings of rain, and when there's a little more warmth all the seedlings will thrive, as will the grass, which doesn't actually need any encouragement.

This recipe is a kind of seeing out the old season and ushering in the new with a combo of vegetables that have grown over winter and a few new arrivals. It's perfect for cold sunny days. Spring minestrone is a creamy comforting soup or stew made from gently cooked seasonal vegetables, beans and pasta – no tomatoes – it's not a red soup but a blonde soup. We always save Parmesan rinds in our house. The bit where it gets too difficult to grate. We stash them in the fridge until we can use them. They impart an amazing depth of flavour and creaminess when added to soups and stews. Don't forget to take it out before serving though as they



A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

are pretty freaky to come upon, apparently they become like chicken skin! If you don't have any Parmesan rinds just leave them out. We like eat this minestrone with herby green pesto drizzled on the top. Basil pesto would be perfect. It's ideal for a large lunch or an informal dinner.

Spring Minestrone

Ingredients:

- 1 medium large onion
- 3tbs olive oil
- 1 Parmesan rind - optional
- 2 stems celery
- 1 bulb fennel
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2-4 cloves garlic
- 2 medium potatoes
- 3-4 stems kale or cabbage
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 2 small courgettes
- 1 can cannellini beans
- 2tbs orzo pasta
- 150g peas
- A little fresh pesto to serve

Method:

Peel and chop the onion. Put a



large saucepan onto the heat, add enough olive oil to cover the bottom and the chopped onions. Add the Parmesan rind if you have one, then cook on a medium heat whilst you chop and add in the other vegetables.

Dice the celery, chop the fennel and chop the rosemary. Stir into the onions. Peel and dice the potato and add to the pot. Watch the heat - turn to medium low. Don't let the vegetables brown. Reduce the heat if they begin to stick and add a little more olive oil - the vegetables should be gently sizzling and softening in the pan. This will take 10-15 minutes – no rush. The longer the vegetables sweat the sweeter they will become. Season with a little salt and pepper. Peel and chop the garlic and strip the kale or cabbage from the stems then slice into ribbons. Give the ribbons a little chop to make them shorter. Stir the kale and garlic into to the pot then cook until the kale wilts. Rinse the can of beans and add to the pot along with the vegetable stock. Begin

with one litre, you'll probably need a little more at the end of cooking. It gets quite thick as the pasta will absorb the stock. Cook for 10-15 minutes then stir in the orzo. Cook for a further eight minutes then stir in the peas and remove from the heat. If you've used a Parmesan rind now is the time to fish it out and discard. Check the seasoning, it'll probably need a little more salt and pepper and add more stock if it is too thick.

Allow the minestrone to sit for at least 10 minutes before serving, an hour is even better and the next day superb!

Serve in large bowls with a drizzle of pesto on top.

Here's to warm sunny days!
Karen

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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



For its annual Enterprise Day, West Cork Campus invited a panel of local entrepreneurs to speak to students about their journey in setting up a business and to share their tips and experiences. (l-r) Dominic Casey (Casey's of Baltimore, West Cork Brewing Co), Caroline Murphy (West Cork Eggs), Sean Murray (Sean Murray Fashions & Lady M), Máire O'Sullivan (Coordinator of the West Cork Campus), Mark Lee (Skibbereen Garden Centre), Anne Marie Kingston (White Sage Decluttering).

Escape to Eccles



Situated on the waterfront in picturesque Glengarriff village, Eccles Hotel & Spa, the only Four Star hotel in Glengarriff, commands panoramic views of Bantry Bay on West Cork's Wild Atlantic Way. Glengarriff Harbour, with its boats to the famous gardens on Garnish Island; and the village centre with quaint craft shops, cafes and pubs, are just a two-minute stroll away.

Guests can make the most of their time at Eccles Hotel and the scenic surroundings of West Cork by sea kayaking in Glengarriff Bay, going for a hike up to Mount Gabriel or even scuba-diving to discover what's beneath the surface of Bantry Bay.

In 2020 Eccles Hotel & Spa in Glengarriff was awarded the achievement of a four-star status rating, an appraisal

recognising the hotel's superior facilities and accommodation offering. The award is testament to a comprehensive refurbishment and restoration of the mid-18th Century property.

Thanks to Chef Eddie Attwell's culinary prowess, the hotel has also fast established a reputation for its excellent food, with most of the produce on Eddie's menus picked fresh daily from the hotel garden and polytunnels he has planted, foraged locally or supplied by the best of West Cork's artisan food and drink suppliers. Prior to joining the Eccles team, among other career highlights, Eddie spent time in the Two Star Michelin restaurant L'Enclume in Cumbria and has appeared twice on BBC's Great British Menu.

He was recognised as West Cork's Local food Hero in 2019

and the hotel's breakfast was a national winner at Georgina Campbell's National Breakfast Awards 2020. Rich history is evident throughout. Since 1745, the property has been home to a hostelry and accommodation on the site of the current Eccles Hotel. The hotel has hosted many well-known names including sister to Duchess of Cambridge, Pippa Middleton, and many famous guests have crossed its threshold over the years including Maureen O'Hara, and writers Maeve Binchy, WB Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Enid Blyton and William Makepeace Thackeray, who following a stay in 1843 asked "What sends tourists to the Rhine and Saxon Switzerland?"

Within five miles of the pretty Inn of Glengarriff there is a country of the magnificence

of which no pen can give any idea."

Today the hotel is a member of the Historic Hotels of Europe collection, where dream properties in captivating destinations across the continent are handpicked, all inspired by millennia of prosperity, charm, intrigue, romance and cultured creativity.

To find out more visit www.eccleshotel.com

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National Discover by Rothar campaign to coincide with Bike Week

To mark national Bike Week which runs from May 14-22 this year, councillors and council staff across Ireland are being asked by advocacy groups to explore the potential of active travel in their area by cycling a specific route as part of the ongoing Vision for Cycling in rural Ireland campaign.

The campaign commenced in Autumn 2020 to re-designate quiet – mainly local – roads across the country as 'cycle and walking friendly'. Under the umbrella of the Rural Cycling Collective, community groups the length and breadth of the country are now asking their elected representatives and council officials with responsibility for road infrastructure

to participate in a short cycle during Bike Week this year.

In West Cork, advocacy groups in Skibbereen, Clonakilty and Kinsale have earmarked sections of road that have the potential to transform their communities' active travel capacity.

Allison Roberts of the Clonakilty Bicycle Festival said, "We are looking to draw attention to the section of the N71 ring road that connects new housing developments at the Miles with local schools and the town centre. This section of road is 1.2km and if it was possible to safely walk or cycle its length and navigate its two main junctions this route could provide major relief of congestion during school hours as well

as a healthier and sustainable way for kids to get to school and families to access shopping in the town." CycleSense and the Skibbereen Greenway group in Skibbereen are drawing attention to their proposed routes linking residential estates to schools, amenities and local sports and playgrounds.

This campaign to draw attention to the potential for safe and inclusive cycle infrastructure in rural Ireland builds on the groups' 'Vision' manifesto, launched in September 2020 by Minister for State, Malcolm Noonan and is co-ordinated by the national cycling advocacy network, Cyclist.ie. For more information or to learn about the proposed routes email ourvision@cyclist.ie

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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

MaxPhysio opens a second chartered physiotherapy clinic and pilates studio in West Cork



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- Clinical exercise
- Mat pilates



@lowrymaxphysio

Pain isn't just physical; there are biological, psychological and emotional factors involved, and physiotherapist and pilates instructor Lowry O'Mahony is keen to emphasise the importance of an all-encompassing approach in getting clients back to full health. Lowry has seen such a growth in demand for her services that she is opening a second clinic in Bandon on May 9.

"Stress can be a huge contributing factor when it comes to back and neck pain," she explains. "Up to 70 per cent of persistent back and neck pain case can be psychosocial and yet so many people don't even realise they are stressed or the extent of that stress until they come in for a consultation. Are you getting enough sleep and exercise? How are you getting on with other people in your life? Are you in fight or flight mode all the time? If you're stressed, it affects your hormone levels, the tightness of your muscles and how well your body can restore or heal itself."

Once the conversation between therapist and client starts and any underlying issues are identified, manual therapy may be used to manage pain. This combined with a rehabilitation programme incorporating pilates exercises is what has helped so many of MaxPhysio's clients with their recovery and goals.

Good news spreads fast in West Cork and since it first opened in 2016, MaxPhysio has grown from a one-woman operation with just founder Lowry O'Mahony at the helm as physiotherapist and pilates instructor to a team of seven professionals today. In 2019, the successful enterprise moved into a purpose-designed unit at the new Primary Care Centre at the Waterfront in Clonakilty.

Now to meet the needs of a growing clientele, Lowry is expanding the Clonakilty-based business with the opening of a second state-of-the-art premises on the bypass in Bandon, where the burgeoning MaxPhysio team of experienced physiotherapists and clinical pilates instructors will offer a wide range of comprehensive services to meet the needs of adults, seniors, and paediatric patients.

Lowry graduated from the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in 2010 and has extensive experience working in the specialisms of orthopaedics and musculoskeletal. She first came across pilates while working as a physio in the UK 12 years ago. "I was treating people with



different injuries. Physio would get them to around 70 per cent recovery but I could see that the final 30 per cent remained elusive, as clients weren't doing the exercises consistently themselves at home. That's why I trained as pilates instructor – to help clients achieve a full rehabilitation." In conjunction with physiotherapy, Pilates is excellent for healing injuries or for preventing them in the first place.

After two years in the UK, Lowry saw an opportunity to travel whilst still developing her career and made the move to Sydney, where she stayed for the next three years. It was here that she trained in reformer pilates. Invented by Joseph Pilates, the reformer machine is able to target your arms and legs while still focusing on the core, providing a more comprehensive workout than mat pilates.

With nine of these machines at the clinic in Clonakilty, the MaxPhysio team teaches

reformer pilates classes in order to rehabilitate clients with injury and illness or for those who wish to become stronger.

Lowry is joined by four other physiotherapists and one neuromuscular therapist on the MaxPhysio team, all of whom are also trained pilates instructors. Specialities include sports massage, acupuncture, dry needling, cancer rehabilitation, orthopaedic and chronic pain conditions. A psychologist also works at the clinic every Wednesday.

"In the past, physios would just give clients a manual treatment, so essentially a short-term fix," says Lowry. "Whilst physiotherapy treats acute injuries, pilates is exercise for long-term change. With the right advice, lifestyle modifications and appropriate exercise, I see clients who have suffered with back pain for 10 years or more, now completely pain-free. Clients are active participants in their rehabilitation and thus the outcome is much better," says Lowry.

"One lady who came to us recently got back on her bike for the first time in five years and cycled 10 km. Another client, a young guy, was told he would never work as a carpenter again. After treatment with us he's back working again."

"We feel really lucky to be in a position to help these people, get them moving and exercising again and improve their overall quality of life. We have amazing job satisfaction!"

Exciting finish to the year at Kinsale Campus

Kinsale Campus is finishing off the year in style with a number of really exciting and worthwhile events taking place.

The much-awaited art exhibition at Kinsale Campus will run Tuesday to Friday from May 6 until May 18, 2022. The 'Ebb & Flow' exhibition will provide a glimpse into the students' art produced during the year. This dazzling array of artworks includes sculpture, combined materials, drawings, paintings and ceramics. For an advance preview join the opening evening at 6pm on Thursday, May 5.

The drama students will present their eagerly-anticipated end-of-year play, Shakespeare's, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

in Ballinspittle Community Hall. This comedy of lovers with tangled heartstrings tripping over the fairy kingdom in a moonlit forest is packed with enchantment, theatricality and pythonesque surrealism. Featuring a lover's quarrel to end all lover's quarrels, Puck's mischievous bungling and a terrible actor being turned into a lovesick ass, this play is as immortal as a piece of theatre can be.

Performances: Friday, May 6, Saturday, May 7 at 7.30pm and Sunday, May 8 at 2.30pm
Tickets: On the Door
Reservations: 086 107 7230
€12. €10 concessions, Family ticket: €25

The Permaculture Course in Kinsale Campus is celebrating

21 years as a global leader in practical sustainability and ecological food production. A one-day conference on regenerative agriculture and international eco-community projects with founder Rob Hopkins will take place on May 28 from 9.30am to 5pm. All are welcome to attend. There will be information shared on food preservation, time banking, citizen science for biodiversity, herbal medicine, agroforestry, mushroom production and much more. More information about all of these events is available on our website www.kinsalecollege.ie

Enrolments are still open for all courses beginning in September. To apply for a course please go to www.kinsalecollege.ie



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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.

In this month's article, Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist **Lisa Brinkman** would like to shed some light and information on transgender healthcare and treatment pathways in Ireland and give an overview as to what is involved and necessary, and how and where people with Gender Dysphoria can access these services.

Just for clarity and as a reminder, here is a short definition of Gender Dysphoria and the term 'transgender': Transgender refers to people who don't identify with their biologically defined sex but identify with the opposite gender or have any other form of gender identity outside of the binary system of male and female (for example 'non-binary' identity or 'gender fluid' gender identity).

Gender Dysphoria is the medical and diagnosis term

for the same, that is given after psychological assessment by a Psychologist or Psychiatrist. Most transgender people who identify with the opposite gender of their biological sex wish to undergo medical treatment to align their bodies to how they truly feel. This includes hormone treatment and gender confirming surgeries. Most transgender people are also in need of psychotherapy to help and support them on this difficult journey in their lives.

Once a person starts their transitioning journey, they usually try (and need to) access the following services:

Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy can help and support the person questioning their gender and experiencing gender dysphoria to understand these feelings better. It also aims at supporting the person throughout the many different stages of the transitioning journey. Many transgender people also suffer from depression, social anxiety, low confidence or other mental health problems as a result of their gender dysphoria and psychotherapy aims at helping with these also.

Clinical Psychology/

Psychiatry: Any transgender person who wishes to access medical treatment (hormones or surgeries) needs to undergo a clinical assessment to determine if all criteria for the diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria are present and the person is ready and advanced enough in their transitioning journey to access this next step of medical transitioning. Often this process goes parallel and alongside psycho-

therapy, but sometimes they are sought out independently from each other.

Assessment of Gender Dysphoria usually requires three to six sessions.

Endocrinology: Once a transgender person has an official diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria and has been assessed as eligible for hormone treatment, they are referred to an endocrinologist for hormone treatment.

Hormone treatment involves the administration of 'hormone blockers' and 'cross-sex hormones', which significantly either 'masculinise' or 'feminise' the person's body in different ways.

Surgeries: After being on hormone treatment for at least six-12 months, transgender people can access sex reassigning surgeries (with approval from their Psychologist/Psychiatrist). Most of these surgeries are not performed in Ireland and patients need to access them through the HSE treatment abroad scheme in the UK or privately anywhere else in the world.

Unfortunately we are not doing very well as a country regarding these healthcare services for transgender people. First of all, we still don't have clear defined medical pathways and treatment protocols for transgender healthcare that are specific to Ireland. As a result, professionals of different disciplines who work in this area have to refer to (different) international guidelines and treatment protocols.

Over the last few years great

effort has been put into creating a public 'National Gender Service' for adult transgender people in Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin in which different services (Psychiatry, Endocrinology, speech and language therapy) are offered. However, this service is completely under resourced and waiting times are currently up to four years to get a first appointment.

Things are even more dire for children and adolescents. For the last few years, Crumlin Hospital had partnered with the UK Tavistock clinic to be able to offer psychological assessment, support and medical services to under-18-years-old transgender people in Ireland.

A team of professionals flew in from the UK every six weeks to hold a specific gender clinic in Crumlin Hospital. However, funding for this service has run out, and currently no public services exist for this age group. The HSE is in the process of creating an Irish based service, which will hopefully commence soon, but long waiting times will be expected for this service also.

The only alternative to this is the private sector, meaning transgender young people and adults have to pay themselves for all necessary health care, including psychotherapy, psychological assessment, hormone treatment and often surgeries. Unfortunately not all transgender people have the relevant means to do so. For those who can afford private healthcare, a small network of highly skilled and experienced professionals of different disciplines exist and



work together (this author being one of them).

Many Transgender and LGBT+ advocacy groups are rallying for better public services and often approach the HSE and the government to highlight the urgent need for more funding and resources. The long waiting times in the public sector are detrimental to many transgender people's mental health and add to their stresses and suffering.

If you are a transgender person or a family member of a transgender person wishing to start the journey of gender change, your GP is usually a good starting point. The GP can refer to the public services. Making contact with a psychologist or psychotherapist who is experienced in transgender matters is also a good first step to get help and support that is often very much needed. Professionals who are working

in private practice can usually be contacted directly without a referral needed.

The Transgender Equality Network (TENI) is also a good point of reference. They can often recommend professionals working in this area but also provide support groups for transgender people and their families in various different places in Ireland.

Although these healthcare service are only needed by a small minority of people, it is of utmost importance that they exist and are accessible to the people who need them.

Therefore it is important that non-transgender people (Cis-people) like myself raise awareness about the shortcomings of our health system and if there is anything within our power to do something, to act accordingly.

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Timetable Spring 2022

MONDAY Unity Yoga, Clonakilty

9:45am: Pilates core strength and fascia conditioning

Zoom Pilates Class 6:30pm: intermediate level

TUESDAY Rossmore

9:30am: Deep core strengthen & connect (intermediate)

11:15am: Senior Pilates, strength & agility

6:30pm: Intermediate Pilates, challenge & strengthen

8:00pm: Fundamental Pilates, core connection & relaxation (beginners)

THURSDAY Rossmore

9:30am: Deep core, strengthen and connect (intermediate)

11:00am: Strengthening, fascia conditioning & deep relaxation

8:00pm: Unwind & relax fascia class (suitable for all levels)

FRIDAY Unity Yoga, Clonakilty

9:45am: Pilates core strength and fascia conditioning

Booking essential, contact Lorraine Dufficey
086 3670478, lorrainedufficey@gmail.com

I'm at the age now where I need to start to pay attention to my eye health. I've worn distance glasses for years, for driving and watching movies, but reading glasses suddenly seem to be getting closer. I work at a computer more than I used to, and my eyes often feel tired, and driving in the evening is harder than it used to be. But is this deterioration really inevitable? What if we do some simple things to help prevent our eyes from deteriorating? Read on for techniques I'm trying out to relieve strained and tired eyes, and some dietary changes we can make to help keep our eyes healthy and our vision clear.

If you have a desk job, then regular mini-breaks from your screen are essential. We are all spending more time staring at screens than ever before – according to data from multiple studies, the average person can spend anywhere from six-11 hours per day reading and watching videos on their smartphones, tablets, and laptops. Think about how your eyes felt the last time you sat in front of your computer for hours on end without taking a break. From blurry vision to dry eyes, all that screen time can lead to short and longterm vision problems. While you may not be able to get rid of your screens altogether, giving your eyes a chance to rest and recharge throughout the day can lower the risk of eye strain and vision problems.

Known as the 20/20/20 rule, eye experts recommend taking a break from your screen every 20 minutes, and focusing your eyes on something at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds. I find I set an alarm on my phone to remind me, and it's a great excuse for a stretch as well.

Another really nice practice to sooth your eyes is called palming – you might have come across it in a yoga class. It involves rubbing your palms together briskly for about 30 seconds and then putting the palms of your hands over your closed eyes for another 30 seconds. It's very restful and the warmth of



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

your hands relaxes the six muscles around each eye and attracts more energy and blood flow.

What can help protect our eyes from a dietary perspective? A healthy diet with low levels of sugar, high amounts of green vegetables, nuts and legumes (beans and lentils) and lots of oil fish is the best for long term health in general, and also for healthy eyes. Good hydration is also essential – particularly for preventing or correcting a condition known as Dry Eyes. Recently I have been really focusing on drinking at least a litre of water a day on top of my cups of coffee and tea – and I have to say I am noticing a huge number of benefits. I'll have to write a whole article on the benefits of drinking more water, there are so many!

We've all been told to eat our carrots so we can see in the dark, and interestingly there's some truth in the fact that eating plenty of carrots (or more specifically, certain Carotenoids, which are found in green. Orange and yellow foods) are beneficial for eye health.

If you are, like me, becoming concerned about your eye health, it's worth doing a dietary overhaul to make sure you are getting enough Omega 3 Fatty Acids (you will get these essential nutrients from oily fish and seeds such as linseeds) and Lutein and zeaxanthin, which are both Carotenoids that have a strong

affinity to eye health. It's unclear why Omega 3 is so beneficial for eye health, but certainly people who regularly consume Linseed Oil/Flaxseed oil (sold in the food section of many health food shops) and/or Omega 3 from oily fish seem to have better vision, fewer cataracts and less problems such as Dry Eyes.

Lutein is a carotenoid related to vitamin A and beta-carotene. It is beneficial for the macula, slowing the progression of macular degeneration. It has the ability to filter out blue light emitted by digital devices. It may also delay cataract progression.

Research shows that high lutein intake can prevent age-related vision loss and cataracts, and improve symptoms in people who have these conditions. It's found in leafy greens vegetables (especially kale), egg yolks, parsley, as well as in carrots, sweet potatoes, pistachios and bell peppers. According to WebMD, most adult diets only contain 30 per cent of the Lutein that our body needs, so a supplement could be a good idea – and luckily it works just as well when taken in supplement form.

Another really important carotenoid for eye health is zeaxanthin, which together with Lutein has been shown to help protect our eyes from damage by Ultraviolet light among other things.

Diets rich in these two nutrients may help hold off age-related eye diseases. For example, one study found that people who ate foods rich in zeaxanthin – again think 'green veggies' like spinach, kale, and broccoli -- may be half as likely to get

cataracts. Another showed that if you have macular degeneration, which causes damage to the middle of your retina and can take away your central vision, supplements with lutein and zeaxanthin can slow its progress.

If you want to support your eye health using supplements, we generally suggest starting with a supplement called Macu Complete, from Irish company One Nutrition, as it contains both the nutrients Lutein and zeaxanthin as well as vitamins C, E, Beta Carotene (which your body turns into Vitamin A, essential for healthy eyes) and Omega 3, making it a really beneficial all-round eye support. We have Macu Complete on a 20% off Discount in Organico at the moment if you want to try it out. You should notice the benefits after around 3 months of taking it.

Other important nutrients for good vision include vitamin D, Magnesium, and if you have Dry Eyes, Omega 7, which is incredible for internal moisturising. If you want more information about the different natural supplements available to support Eye Health through Healthfood shops, check out our latest blog post on Organico.ie.

And lastly we have a very exciting Free Webinar coming up on May 26, on Period Health. We will have Alison Cullen from AVogel to answer questions on using herbs to treat hormonal issues, and also Ruby Raut who started the Company Wuka who can explain how to use Period Underwear and what a difference it can make your life.

The Webinar will be an extended Q & A – Rachel and I will put all your questions to Alison & Ruby – Ask about mood swings, period pain, irregular periods, hormonal breakouts... anything you'd love to know about having a healthier period, the natural way.

The Webinar is Free to attend but you must be subscribed to Organico newsletter by midday, Tuesday, May 24 to receive link to register: www.organico.ie/newsletter



Clonakilty Daffodil Day 2022 raises over €38,000

Fundraising for Daffodil Day 2022 has come to an end and like every other year the organisation is amazed at the generosity of people in Clonakilty and the surrounding areas with the incredible amount of €38,075.41 raised locally for 2022. Organisers would like to express their deepest gratitude and thanks to everyone who donated and helped to run yet another very successful Daffodil Day.

"To the businesses that allowed us to use their premises as a collection point, all the coffee shops, local shops, local businesses, Garda stations, co-ops and local communities who raised incredible money for us, we are so grateful.

"Our schools, where would we be without you! Given that we are living in a time when there are collections and demands in schools on such a regular basis, all 10 schools worked really hard and raised the staggering amount of €10,125.83. A huge thank you to all school managements, teachers, parents and pupils who contributed to this amazing amount.

"Our art sale was a big success and again thank you most sincerely to everyone who donated art, those who purchased art, those who allowed us use their premises to showcase the pieces and of course to Jacinta who co-ordinated the art sale.

"Finally, to everyone who volunteered on the day, to those who helped with social media, those who donated funds, cash, cheques or online, please know that we appreciate each and every donation, little or large. Every share, mention, donation and minute volunteered contributed to raising awareness and raising the incredible amount of €38,075.41 for 2022.

"Please be assured this will make such a difference to so many cancer patients, their families and friends and in so doing, it will ensure that no patient has to walk the lonely cancer journey on their own. So again, a very sincere thank you to everyone, stay safe, stay well and hopefully we will be back to our coffee day gathering in 2023."

Bantry photographer launches sustainable adventure clothing brand

West Cork photographer Miki Barlok is on a mission to create Ireland's own adventure clothing brand to produce high quality rain gear and clothing suitable for adventures across Ireland's terrain and to deal with our unpredictable (and more-often-than-not rainy) weather.

Miki's huge passion for hiking, rock climbing and mountain biking was the impetus behind the creation of his 'Gnarly Peaks' clothing brand.

Looking for a name that would represent the urge to explore, Miki went with 'Gnarly', which is defined as 'difficult, dangerous and challenging'. "I would define it more as excitingly challenging... That exciting feeling that drives you to the unknown places," explains Miki. "We have abundance of



incredibly beautiful places in Ireland to explore."

Performance and quality is absolutely crucial to the 'Gnarly Peaks' brand and Miki explains that the aim is to design and produce products that can proudly compete with big outdoor brands and put Ireland on the map of adventure clothing.

"It would be very hard to create outdoor brand without

thinking of nature," he says.

"That is why we source our materials with ecology and sustainability in mind." Fabrics for the brand's waterproof jackets and jeans are manufactured especially for 'Gnarly Peaks' using 100 per cent recycled polyester and PFC-free DWR.

Gnarly Peaks is in its infancy so right now there are just a few key pieces in the collec-

tion. These include a highly waterproof and breathable jacket, created to be super light so it can be worn in the summer or in the winter with layers underneath; innovative waterproof jeans, stylish and also practical, as they are made from a four-way stretch fabric, allowing for freedom of movement in any situation while keeping you dry. Warm puffer jackets and merino wool beanie hats are a great addition for the colder months and for lovers of mountain biking, Gnarly Peaks also offers gloves and custom jerseys.

With many more garments in the design stage, it won't be long before the collection grows to include hybrid jackets, three-layer waterproof jackets, merino base layers, mountain biking waterproof pants and many more.

Follow 'Gnarly Peaks' on Instagram or Facebook @gnarlypeaks for all updates and new product announcements and check our shop at www.gnarlypeaks.com

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Dunmanway climbed with Charlie

Two-hundred-and-forty people turned out on Nowen Hill on April 2, in solidarity with Charlie Bird and his quest to raise awareness and funds for the Irish Motor Neurone Association and Pieta House. **Sandra Maybury** shares how climbers came from as far as Wicklow and Wexford; one young lady from Yeats' county left Ben Bulbin and Knochmaree and even passed by Croagh Patrick to be in the heart of West Cork.

The Nowen Hill route measures 7.1km with a 410 metre ascent, which is a comparable challenge to Charlie's Croagh Patrick climb at 3.2km in distance with a 750 metre ascent. All those who reached the top of Nowen Hill marvelled at the panoramic views: The Old Head and Fastnet to the south; the Reeks and Musherah to the north; Sheeps Head and Hungary Hill to the west.

All those who helped out on the day must be highly commended; An Garda Síochána; volunteers who manned the barriers, helped with parking and registration; the Dunmanway Senior Branch and Dunmanway Guides who collected cash donations; Healy's SuperValu who sponsored the event, as

well as Maybury Coaches who transported everyone from Dunmanway right up to the entrance to Nowen Hill and safely home again.

Refreshments and treats for the walkers were supplied by Healy's SuperValu, For Goodness Sake Health Shop and West Cork Biscuit Co. Entertainment was provided by Danny O'Leary at SuperValu while people loaded into buses in the morning, and Brian and Paul of West Cork FM entertained the group of walkers at the base of Nowen Hill with regular live links back to John Daly at the radio station. Thank you also to Coillte for allowing access to this walk.

Congratulations must go to Tommy Collins and Denis O'Mahony of Dunmanway

Hillwalking Club for organising this climb, with the help of Andrew Healy, Cllr. Deirdre Kelly and Sandra Maybury. The group were delighted to welcome Vice Chair of the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association and national broadcaster Jonathan Healy who completed the climb with his sons.

This was really a community effort and showed a true solidarity with a very worthwhile charity event. What made the day so special was the true camaraderie of the people taking part, the weather being so fine – a crisp spring morning everybody could only be taken by the variety of landscapes. On the long walk up, past the historic Maulcraugh bog, walkers enjoyed panoramic views over the valley of Goulacullen with its deep ravens, and having reached the top of Barrabue the whole view of Mealagh Valley opened up with Bantry Bay in the distance. One could only marvel at the wonders of nature in such a splendid setting. Donations are still coming in for this fundraiser but to date over €7,000 has been raised from these two worthy charities.

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Could thyroid Issues be causing your depression and anxiety?

If you are struggling with chronic depression, anxiety or other mood disorders, it is important to have your thyroid function assessed. This is because thyroid hormones play an important role in the functioning of the brain including neuron health, brain-based immune cells called microglia and the blood brain barrier.

It is also important to know if low thyroid function is stemming from Hashimoto's, which is an autoimmune condition and a common cause of hypothyroidism. This is done with a blood test to assess TPO

antibodies and Tg antibodies.

Neurotransmitters: There is a network of connections between different areas of your brain that work via neurons that communicate with signalling molecules known as neurotransmitters like Serotonin, Dopamine, GABA and Acetylcholine. These four neurotransmitters regulate your mood, motivation and executive function. Thyroid hormones play an important role in the receptor sites for these neurotransmitters and, if levels are low, the receptors do not work as efficiently.

There has been a large amount of research into the neurotransmitter model of depression, which focuses on the balance serotonin and dopamine and this has led to the development of drugs correct these imbalances.

Neuro-inflammation: More recently research has found a connection between inflammation and depression, this is known as the inflammatory model of depression.

When this is happening to someone, the inflammation causes the connections between neurons to slow down and this

decrease in speed can cause depression. If this is the cause of a person's depression, traditional antidepressants will not be as effective.

There are many possible causes of brain inflammation – It can come from a traumatic brain injury, a stroke and systemic inflammation in the body.

Unmanaged Hashimoto's is also a possible cause of systemic inflammation. With Hashimoto's, thyroid hormone levels can continue to fluctuate. That means that periods of low thyroid levels can cause depression and can explain why depression can persist even after hormone replacement is started.

Blood Sugar Levels:

Fluctuating blood sugar levels is another issue that can affect your mood – sugar highs and lows can cause mood changes. Anyone who has been 'hangry' can attest to this!

People with Hashimoto's often have unstable blood sugar levels, which makes them more prone to insulin resistance and fluctuating levels of both high and low blood sugar.

Blood Brain Barrier Permeability: Another common feature for those suffering with Hashimoto's is systemic inflammation. People with Hashimoto's often develop gastrointestinal permeability (leaky gut).

Recent research has shown



Eoin Roe

Chiropractic

that 'leaky gut' leads to permeability of the blood brain barrier meaning that molecules that should not be getting into the brain can. This makes the brain more susceptible to inflammation.

Hypothyroidism and Anxiety: In neurological terms anxiety is derived from heightened activity in the amygdala and limbic regions of the brain. The amygdala is responsible for fear and aggression and the limbic region is involved in all aspects of human emotion.

In normal brain function, activating other parts of the brain dampens the amygdala and limbic regions of the brain. That is why it is usually possible to dampen down your anxiety by taking time to think through the issue, by doing this and problem

solving, you are activating your frontal lobe and this has a dampening effect on the limbic parts of your brain, therefore reducing anxiety.

If there is slowed nerve conduction and neurotransmitter receptors are not working as efficiently, this can lead to an inability to dampen the limbic brain and amygdala, which leads to severe anxiety.

Unfortunately, there is no single remedy for anxiety and depression; there are often complex webs of issue that contribute and a single medication or supplement is unlikely to unwind the complex mechanisms involved with these conditions.

This can be different for each person but diet, controlling blood sugar levels, reducing inflammation and therapy are usually part of any solution. It is also vitally important to understand if hypothyroidism or Hashimoto's is part of the picture for your anxiety and depression as specific dietary and lifestyle choices can impact the expression of Hashimoto's.

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

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Getting the balance right to stop cravings

Perhaps your weight has always fluctuated but now it seems impossible to lose.

You have tried everything, even resorting to eating like a bird, but you feel like you are starving and the cravings are so strong it is difficult to stay motivated.

Everything seems to be a trigger; when you are tired you

eat, when you exercise you eat, when you look in the mirror it is affecting how you feel about yourself and the emotional eating gets worse.

Over the years your weight has gone up and down and you have reluctantly bought bigger clothes holding on to those that don't fit, keeping them all just in case.

You have tried so many different diets but nothing seems to work and there is a nagging voice saying it must be you!

Well, it's not you. There are so many reasons why you may be finding it difficult.

Cravings are often a sign of deficiency and not of hunger, but throwing supplements at this is not the answer.

There are three main food categories: Carbohydrates, proteins and fats. It is important to eat a good balance of these so that we get all the nutrients we need.

Understanding the food groups and how your body makes, transforms and uses energy can help you to break this vicious cycle.

On a cellular level our bodies have two ways to make ATP, the energy that our body, including our brain, uses to function. We can use glucose or we can use fats. Glucose is easily converted by your body from simple carbohydrates and sugars in your diet. However eating high amounts of these foods will raise your blood sugar. When we eat too many of them the body doesn't know what to do with the excess sugar so insulin levels rise and are stored as additional weight.

Amazingly the body also has alternative fuel sources and can break down protein and convert these into glucose, or it can use fat in the form of ketones. This is the system that automatically kicks in when we are fasting.

Many diets that are promoted

to help with slimming, completely exclude or try to severely limit fat in the diet, believing that 'fat makes us fat'. That is incorrect – good fat in the diet is essential for your body to function properly and for weight loss.

Certain fats are essential because every cell in your body is surrounded by a phospholipid layer (fat layer) and needs these to function properly. Our body cannot produce them and so it is essential that we consume them as part of our diet.

When you are craving something and following a diet that restricts fat, eating other foods won't stop the cravings and may even make them worse – this seems paradoxical even when you are eating healthy foods like fruit. Fruit certainly has some nutrients and fibre, which are really good for you, but fruit is also very high in sugar, which can drive you toward high insulin levels and continue to feed a vicious cycle of weight gain, energy issues and cravings.

Many people come to me looking for hypnotherapy as a magic wand to cure them of



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

cravings and while it is certainly helpful for cravings and particularly for emotional eating, it is important to start by addressing your diet. When you do this, it is possible to have lasting relief from cravings; and sustainable weight loss, improved energy and health, without calorie counting.

Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Acupuncturist, Life and Health coach providing natural solutions that will improve your mental, emotional and physical health. For more information call/text 087 633 1898 or email amanda@roehealth.ie

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- Personal Loan Debt
- Utility Arrears
- Legal Moneylenders
- Budgeting
- Income Maximisation
- Saving Tips
- Court Fines

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Managing money with the help of MABS

Managing household finances has never been more challenging due to soaring energy costs and increased utility charges. The first step in taking control of your finances is to make a budget. A budget plan will help you to be more aware of what money you have and where it goes.

There are three key steps to making a budget plan that are outlined below. Everyone's budget plan is different. It will be personal to you and your family because you know what works best for you.

1. Get a clear picture of your finances / How much money do I have?

First you need to know how much money is coming into the household, and how much money is going out. Add up all the money coming in; this might include wages, welfare, and any money given by other adults in the household. If you receive your income weekly

do a weekly budget or do a monthly budget if your income is monthly.

Next write down all your bills. Include the bills that are annual or monthly, like the TV licence or electricity bill. Now work out what these cost either weekly or monthly, depending on your budget plan. To change a monthly bill to weekly, multiply by 12 and divide by 52. To change a weekly bill to monthly multiply by 52 and divide by 12.

2. Make a plan that works for you.

You should now have a picture of how much money is coming in and going out. The next step is to make a budget plan that works for you. Decide for yourself how to manage different payments.

Is the total amount of money going out bigger than the total amount coming in? If so, look for places that you can reduce spending. Consider what you need as opposed to what you want. Put a mark beside the bills you cannot change – there may be bills you could spend less on by switching to another provider. If you can't pay all of a bill, make sure you pay something off it. This is especially important for things like your gas and electricity bills.

Everyone manages food budgets differently; it depends on what we like, our family size, and how we can prepare or store food. It is important to prepare a shopping list. Making a daily food plan for the week will help with your shopping list. You can download a recipe book called 101 Square Meals from the MABS website www.mabs.ie. It's great for cooking healthy meals on a budget.

3. Check the plan regularly.

Do your best to stick to the plan. Check it regularly to help you stay on track. Keep track of what you have spent so far and compare it to your budget. Remember to call MABS if you need support.

Contact your local MABS on 0818 07 2450 for help planning your budget, or if you are worried about money. MABS are here to advise you. If you fall behind on your bills MABS can make arrangements with your creditors.

Call the MABS Helpline 0818 07 2000: available Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm. Useful websites: www.mabs.ie www.citizensinformation.ie

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West Cork Women Against Violence to launch research on survivors of sexual violence and their supporters

West Cork Women Against Violence will launch its research 'Listen to me. Support me. Believe me. Help me.' Listening to Survivors of Sexual Violence and their Supporters in West Cork at an event to be chaired by Professor Louise Crowley, Professor in Family Law at the School of Law, UCC. The launch will take

place at the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery on May 31 from 10am-1pm.

Conducted by Dr Caroline Crowley, the research focused on people in West Cork who have experienced sexual violence, together with a number of their supporters. Through the research, survivors have shared their experiences of

sexual violence and their experiences of seeking to access support, services, and justice. The survivors have also outlined key changes that are needed to ensure appropriate supports and redress in response to sexual violence.

To register please go to eventbrite.ie



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Ballymoney NS selected as one of 19 DCU Changemaker Schools

Ballymoney National School in Ballineen has been selected as a Changemaker School by Dublin City University. The DCU Changemaker Schools, established in September 2020, is a network of 19 innovative primary schools in Ireland who were chosen for their pioneering work in the development of the skills of empathy, creativity, leadership and teamwork. This social innovation initiative has one powerful yet simple ambition – to support

students as Changemakers. A Changemaker is someone with the skills and confidence to lead change in their home, school and community.

Ballymoney NS first drew attention because of its creative approach to supporting its pupils during the pandemic. The students had daily zoom lessons for up to three hours per day so they were not isolated from their peers and they did not fall behind in their school work. They had a baking week with daily videos to

instruct them and they created a 'Bottle Top Mural' out of 12,400 plastic bottle tops. The collaborative artwork was originally intended to help the two classrooms to feel connected to each other but ended up involving the parents, parishioners and wider community of Ballineen and Enniskeane. Since then many other schools, youth groups and tidy towns groups from around the country have been inspired to create similar murals, reusing thousands of plastic bottle tops.



At the DCU Changemaker Schools award ceremony were (l-r) Dr. John White (Programme Director), Prof. Anne Looney (Dean of DCU), Amanda Sullivan (Deputy Principal of Ballymoney NS), Shireen Rountree (Principal of Ballymoney NS), Daire Keogh (President of DCU).

Many benefits take the sting out of nettles



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We are all familiar with nettles and I doubt if any of us have evaded their power to sting. However they have other attributes, and we should not be so quick to remove them from our gardens, as they give many benefits. Firstly, nettles improve soils that are over-fertilised with nitrogen and phosphate. They also support the biodiversity of local flora and over forty species of insect.

The leaves of nettle contain protein, as well as many other beneficial constituents. The most important mineral they contain is iron, but they also contain calcium, selenium, zinc, and magnesium. As regards vitamins, the fresh leaves contain high concentrations of vitamins A, C, D, E, F, K, P as well as vitamin B complexes. Because of this storehouse of goodness in nettle, it is easy to appreciate why this herb was an important food for humans, as well as animals, in April and May.

We are told by informants in the National Folklore Schools Collection (NFCS) that nettles were good for the blood if they were boiled, and the resultant water drunk in March. They were also used as substitute for cabbage in the spring or boiled with cabbage. They were also chopped and added to colcannon.

Bushcraft expert Meers describes it as a very versatile plant and gives us the recipe for 'St Columba's broth' which may be prepared as follows

- Pick young stinging nettles before the end of June when they are 4 to 5 inches tall and



HERBAL HEALING

Dr. Rosari Kingston

Dr. Rosari Kingston PhD, M.Sc (Herbal medicine) is a medical herbalist practising in Dr. O'Reilly's integrative clinical practice in Clonakilty as well as Church Cross, Skibbereen. Dr. Kingston's area of research are the healing modalities present in Irish vernacular medicine and she incorporates them, where possible, into her clinical practice. In her clinical practise she specialises in infertility and digestive issues.

www.rosarikingtonphd.com

- allow a handful per person.
- Chop the nettles and boil with water and/or milk.
- Add oatmeal and stir until thickened.

Nettles can also be added to soups and stews, which is another way to avail of their high nutritious content.

When nettle leaves are used to make tea, it is advisable to start with a small amount, as the taste can be quite strong. A strong tea can also be used as a base for soups and added to smoothies. Nettles are used in herbal liqueurs and may be used



as a vegetarian rennet in the making of cheese.

Traditionally they were given to young ducks and turkeys to fatten them. With the possible shortage of grain this year, nettles could be used in this way again. Also, nettles are a good way to get rid of internal parasites in chickens and they enhance the yellow colour of the yolk. More importantly, recent research has shown that a diet containing one to two per cent nettle increases growth promotion in broiler chicks. Traditionally, boiled nettle leaves were given to young turkeys to prevent a disease called pip.

In vernacular medicine, nettle tea was deemed to cure measles. In this instance the nettles are boiled with very little water, strained and sugar or salt added to the liquid. It is then drunk by the patient. However, another method was to boil the nettles in whiskey after which it was strained, and the liquid given to the sufferer.

Three consecutive meals of nettle in the month of May were also considered to keep fevers away for the rest of the year. If taken in March, a person would be protected from all

kinds of rashes for the year. To 'improve' the blood and prevent pimples, boils etc, boiled nettle tops mixed with butter was the preferred option.

From a scientific perspective, nettles contain potent antioxidants and these help to defend your body against damage from free radicals. Damage caused by free radicals leads to cancer, senile dementia atherosclerosis and so on. Other benefits of nettles include its ability to reduce inflammation and some research studies indicate the success of the topical application of nettle cream in reducing arthritic pain in joints. It is even more promising in combination with conventional anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), where the addition of nettle allows for the reduction in NSAIDs.

Finally, one part nettle tea to ten parts water will give a most beneficial fertiliser in the garden and can be made throughout the growing season. This has the added advantage of always having young nettles growing to keep up with the need to make the fertiliser.

All in all, there are too many advantages to nettles to eliminate them from your garden. Make them your friend.



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.

Time for a Spring overhaul?

It's great to see the long evenings now; we are two months away from the longest day already and probably all talking about well-deserved summer holiday after over two years of abject misery, good luck to us all!

Over the last two months, I have talked about heart problems and some exciting advances in treatment.

This month I wanted to look at health generally, as I reckon over the last two Covid years, we have been neglecting ourselves. Doctors particularly are remiss in this respect.

How about a check-up? I am booked in myself. My car has been better looked after than my body of late!

So, what can the doctor offer to assess health? There seems to be a full understanding of cholesterol levels and patients often brag about how low it is, while puffing on 20 Major a day and doing no exercise at all. You get my point; health and longevity is complex and there is little place for medical dogma.

However, we will do our best to keep you well. So, prepare yourself for a virtual health check. I will concentrate on the 'well man' check, Here we go...

"Good morning, long time no see! Any worries or symptoms? Right let us weigh you first, oh dear work to be done here. Can I check your blood pressure? Fine, sit down, relax and yes, that seems ok. Now stand up

and I will recheck it. Good. Now I need to check your chest, heart and lungs. Great, deep breaths fine.

Just climb up on the couch, I want to examine your tummy. Appendix scar? Ok, liver, kidneys and spleen seem ok. Fine. Do you mind just giving me a urine test, I want a more detailed assessment of your kidneys, I will be looking for sugar and protein to check for diabetes and kidney problems.

While you are doing that, I am going to write some blood forms and then take some samples.

Fine, your urine test is normal no sugar or protein.

Now I will draw some blood, just roll your sleeve up. Yes,

I will check your cholesterol but also an awful lot more! The bloods will be analysed for diabetes, liver and kidney function. Your blood salts will be checked, and a CRP, which reflects general health and hidden serious disease as well. We will look at your iron and vitamin levels and your blood count to exclude anaemia and an infection through your white cell level. Yes, it is thorough, this is only once a year!

As you have piled the weight on, I am checking your thyroid function and your prostate activity, as you are 'middle-aged'. If the prostate level is high, I will repeat it, and check the size of your prostate by means of a back passage exam. Don't look

so worried!"

Now, as you smoke, I am going to book you in for an abdominal ultra sound with my partner to make sure your main blood vessel in your tummy is not enlarged. He also has a look at your liver, gall bladder, kidneys and spleen to make sure all is well.

How does that all sound? Here is some advice about diet and smoking cessation and I will see you in a week.

If your wife or partner is interested in a check-up she might prefer to see my female partner or practice nurse.

Great, then we will see you both in a week or so."

Now to misquote Dr Adam Kay, that did not hurt a bit!



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

May is all about simple, luxurious and gorgeous clothes that we can throw on effortlessly. We all have places to go and people to see and we want to look good too. The idea that something has 'gone out of fashion' is, quite simply, redundant. There is very much an 'anything goes' mood at the moment. Summer 2022 screams low-cut, colour, high shine, daring and magnificent.

Eclectic colours and unique prints remind us that bold brights are still around and plan on staying around for quite a while. Green is everywhere and there is a shade for everyone. Synonymous with life, this pure colour has the unique ability to be tranquil yet energetic. A green dress, bag and shoes, all in different shades of this wonderful colour, is fresh, clean and striking. Bold pink is the second bestselling colour this season, with orange next and then yellow. Feel free to mix your glam bright party dress with a denim jacket and flats... this sums up the anything goes mood at the moment.

The organised students among us always had an intact set of highlighting pens, they mostly came in a four-pack – green, pink, yellow and orange – and that is exactly what 'high-lighter tones means'. Designers have filled both boutiques and high-street shops with highlighter-tone blazers (now you know). Street style encourages you to wear these eye-popping blazers with long dresses, midi-skirts, jeans and jumpsuits. Despite the instant WOW when you wear a bright colour, many of us will keep this section of our wardrobe to a minimum. The clever shopper will always prioritise wardrobe staples that allow increased wearability. I'm not talking about boring settled clothes here, rather classic cuts in muted tones with unusual twists, interesting belt features or tailored trousers in an unusual fabric... silk seems to win here!

Anything goes in May

Wide-leg suit trousers with flats clearly say 'low-key luxury' and the suggested plain white fitted t-shirt accompaniment is simple but chic. Celebrities are adding a scarf hair tie up, mirroring African style. The adventurous ones can choose a bold trouser colour, a deep pink or green trouser will see you through any day or evening event! The trench coat is still here, much-loved and loving all the attention. I am getting an incredible amount of wear out of my caramel long lightweight coat. Never to be worn closed, I throw it on over everything and it works so very well. Wide-leg cream trousers, my trench coat, white t-shirt and green flats have happily taken me from day to night on more than one occasion.

Hmm, platform shoes are taking over! Stacked shoes, boots and sandals are everywhere; from foam-bottomed velcro sandals, thick soled flip-flops to strappy, not slinky, high heels; platforms have been added to give you that lift that allows you to wear them all day and all night. They haven't completely won me over yet, I'm taking my time. There is a part of me that is not sold on the idea that a platform adds the height that you need, especially if you are not as tall as you would like to be. Wearing a clumpy shoe can take away rather than add and pull the eye down to your feet instead of forcing the eye to look at your face and added height. My suggestion is that if you are buying platforms for summer wear, then choose light colours, white, a light tan and so on over black. Try them on with your summer dresses, you will clearly see how black or a dark colour will cut you up and pull you down. Black platform boots are for jeans or long trousers or if you are quite tall.

Hemlines started to descend again last year and we rediscovered our love for maxis. I really do like the 'tube-style' maxi that ends closer to the ankles. It can be a dramatic look; whether it is a maxi dress or a maxi skirt, throw on your eye-popping blazer over it. I've spotted a few gorgeous pleated maxi skirts and some maxi wrap skirts,

there is a style to suit everyone. I have to admire how my daughter and her friends turn the most amazing silk scarves into strapless tops, stunning and unique! Perhaps those of us no longer in our 20s can borrow this cute idea for beach or holiday wear!

There is nothing quite like wearing feathers. You do have to be brave though! I wore feathers to a wedding recently, the top wasn't covered in them, but they covered the right places and I just loved how different it was. So many other guests complimented my 'look' but I was saddened to hear them say: "I could never wear that, I don't have the courage!". The first step in being courageous is to 'pretend' that you have the courage to do it – this tricks your brain and you find yourself 'doing it' with less resistance or fear than you would have expected. The number one regret in a survey of terminally-ill people was 'allowing fear to stop them from doing something/wearing something/going somewhere. We all know how frighteningly short life can be so DO IT ANYWAY and WEAR IT ANYWAY. Yes, wearing feathers is a playful look but after two years of being caged up, we all need to get out and play!

According to Google trends, searches for 'feather dresses' were four times more this year than last year, while a few feathery pieces have been available in boutiques, feathers have hit the mainstream shops now... River Island has a feather or two. An easier option is a feather bag or shoes, ease yourself into this trend gradually. Valentino has embraced the feather-look magnificently with brightly coloured pieces covered entirely in Ostrich feathers. Trust me, this trend will be a 'must-have' for any formal event this season. Go on, be courageous. Don't put up pictures in your house with quotes saying, 'Follow Your Dreams' and then continue to live a 'safe' life. We came into this world to experience everything, so wear that bikini, go walk the Camino, get a tattoo, sing a song in public, never apologise for who you are, cry whenever and wherever you feel like it and soak up everything that this wonderful life has to offer. It won't always be smooth sailing or easy but it will always be worth it!



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people Food, Health & Lifestyle**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.

Dread. Curiosity. Going out with a bang! Slipping away quietly. The natural cycle of things. Getting to a ripe old age. It's not the

Reflections on a good death

days, but the life in them. To "not go gently into that good night." The end of suffering... What comes to mind when you hear the words 'good death'?

As a twenty-something-year-old hospice social worker, I wholeheartedly felt called to my role that genuinely supported this notion. After all, I was part of a compassionate team of people individually and collectively providing medical, emotional, spiritual and social support to those with life-limiting illness. We were the good-death-inspired folks. Indeed with a quick internet search for perspectives on this subject, there are many findings that reflect on such contributions by hospice including: awareness of dying, open communication, a gradual acceptance of death, the settling of practical matters and interpersonal relationships, as well as reduction of suffering and relief of pain. Spiritual concerns are also offered and tended to – and the list

goes on. I also recall frequently witnessing overall improvement and significant expressions of relief by many in our care. It's not unusual to be profoundly impacted when there is comfort and ease with supports in place (whatever those might be). And hospice is one good resource to be sure.

Conversations with friends on this topic in recent days have generated the following thoughts: a wish to die in one's own bed, to let nature take its course, viewing the moment of death as the next adventure and to be waked at home, as was done in the not-so-distant past with stories, music and drink. To each their own! There is much we would agree on as mortals when it comes to such preferences, yet one person's first thought can be as unique as the next. And we all know deep within that, despite our best intentions, what will actually happen when we die and how – is the ultimate mystery.

In continuing to think and share about the ideal end (is there such a thing?) I'm

reminded that there are a good number of directions that could be explored here. And it's no surprise that more than 20 years later my reaction to those two words 'good death' has broadened. For example, I support and applaud all who discuss or write down their health care preferences (to let those we love know what we want and to honour ourselves) which can contribute to satisfaction of personal wishes. However, I also cringe, as it can simultaneously feel like labelling a death as good sounds like a judgement – if we perhaps we haven't done this or that or maybe we will die quite suddenly. Then there is the fact that so many have not experienced, or won't have the privilege, of what would categorically be a good death. We don't have to imagine this for long. And yet I still appreciate thoughtfully having the opportunity to consider how I might want to meet my final chapter: ideally at home, the ability to continue seeing the nature around me with otherwise minimal stimuli, limited visitors, the presence of my dogs, select-

ed music/scents/poems, and the greenest simple burial possible – although I wouldn't mind a memorial celebration with the chosen funeral playlist I continue to build on.

It's also been said that death is one moment, and life is so many of them, so perhaps the focus is better served in savouring today. Life is a part of death and vice versa; mutually ever present yet we often put them into categories of separation. I continue to be challenged when it comes to this subject over and over again. For example, I have known people that have directly or indirectly expressed a wish to die alone, which many would deem to be a kind of tragedy. There is also this saying, "go big or go home" that has been used in sport and sales for example. To some this equates to living the good life or living to the fullest. Others share different perspectives to this phrase. For me, as time passes, my longing for simplicity, beauty and deep connections resonates most. I say yes to adventures as much as (and while) I can, but the every-

day equally impresses. I hone in on the practice of daily gratitude for all that's touched my days so far, embodying as best as I can that tomorrow – or the next moment is never guaranteed to be as it is now. These days, on this End of life doula path I've been walking, I'm in awe of the connections made; accompanying people who are open to the full spectrum of life and death while unintentionally teaching me and others around them about what it means to live while preparing for death – one day. I wonder about offering the gift of similar fate when it's my time.

I recently read the words of writer Mary Talbot who, when referring to the inner work and the spiritual practice she devotes herself to, said: "As I see it, it's the only hope for the good death I want: unburdened, unafraid, mindful."

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 ideas for future columns!



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Susan O'Regan teaches mindfulness and self-compassion courses and workshops throughout West Cork.

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Everything changes all the time, that is one thing we can be assured of. Change can happen in the blink of an eye or more gradually so it's less obvious. The fall-out from Covid continues and is potentially huge in terms of impacting our mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing. Over recent months I have been working with people to address issues such as burn-out, anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed. I feel many of us are 'managing' in our lives but I'm noticing that it can be very easy to tip the balance, causing us to wobble or even topple. I feel

Coming up for air

this myself, being a family carer who works part-time. There is such a lot to manage all the time that anything extra or unexpected can easily upset the apple cart. Tricky enough when you practice the skills of mindfulness and compassion daily, possibly overwhelming, in my view, without these skills.

If you are finding yourself struggling, know that you are not alone, but now that we are all coming up for air, how can we learn to care for ourselves as much as for others and to rely on ourselves for comfort and care? We need to give ourselves time and permission to feel our feelings when something difficult occurs and time to process stored emotions. Try not to deny your emotions, even when they are difficult, like anger or sadness. And don't forget to let yourself fully experience moments of laughter, love and joy. Take a pause and acknowledge rather than resist the feeling in your body, even when it is some form of discomfort. We can take a moment here and there, to literally sit and breathe with however we're feeling in the body, perhaps doing a little scan of the body with your mind to notice any physical sensations. Mindfulness can help us recognise when we are having pleasant or unpleasant feelings and learn how to be with them, without pushing them away or blaming others for how we feel.

My website www.mindhaven.ie has a guided body scan in the resource section for anyone who wishes to listen.

We all have situations and relationships in our lives that are challenging and most of us are not carrying the same reserves as we might have pre-covid and are perhaps a little less tolerant of certain behaviours. Mindfulness helps us to grow in awareness of ourselves and helps us to accept what is, as well as the things that are outside of our control, that we cannot change. For example, we cannot change or 'fix' the behaviour of another, or what other people think of us. We can waste so much of our already scarce energy wishing things were different to how they are or wishing those difficult relationships would ease up. So, if there is a clash of values with someone in your life, or you find yourself projecting your own values or expectations onto others, see if you can pause and step back from the situation. Switching the focus to yourself and cultivating the values and qualities in yourself that you live by, or aspire to live by, like compassion, empathy and gratitude is much more impactful than attempting to influence change in another. Spend time becoming someone you want to spend time with.

And time is indeed precious so what are we doing with it and who else are we spending our time with? Are there areas in

your life where you find yourself trying too hard? Constantly striving? Trying to keep everyone happy? Sometimes we need to ease up on ourselves and take our foot off the pedal a bit. I'm not sure who coined the phrase, but I love it, can we 'step out of our own way'? We are coming into a beautiful time of year now, where nature all around us is budding and blossoming. There is such an array of natural abundance for us to notice and savour. I spotted the first swallows returning, reminding me of awe and refilling me with hope.

I base much of my mindfulness work at Myross Wood in Leap now, which is a centre for climate action and sustainability (CECAS.ie). If you would like to either begin a compassion-based mindfulness practice or deepen an existing practice together in community with others, drop-in mindfulness sessions run on Tuesday mornings 10-11am: €10.

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

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

The May Beauty Edit – what's hitting shelves this month

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.

BySK Makeup

Introducing BySK, the hotly anticipated makeup range by renowned celebrity, bridal and editorial makeup artist Sarah Keary "I am so excited and proud to finally showcase the BySK makeup range, I have been using the samples of these products on my clients for the last six months and am blown away by the results and the response to them, so I am thrilled that they are finally available for everyone to enjoy whether you are a professional or a novice!". The elegant collection comprises of a deliciously smooth and long-lasting lipstick in four flattering shades, an innovative soft-eye-liner pencil in three shades, an ultra-fine water resistant and high-definition liquid pen liner as well as a stunning handbag essential nine-pan palette, 'The Palette of Dreams' all based on Sarah's extensive experience working with different skin tones and textures and 16 years of receiving client feedback. The BySK makeup range is available now from www.sarahkeary.com with prices starting at €15 to €39 for the 9-piece palette, all without compromising on quality, the range is cruelty free with vegan friendly ingredients.

Clarins Eau Extraordinaire Treatment Fragrance

Like its older sisters, this new treatment fragrance from Clarins scents and stimulates the body and the spirit and has a personality all its own: its fresh, floral scent deliciously wraps the body with refreshing, uplifting citrusy notes, red ginger, the warmth of jasmine and



the comforting fragrance of cedarwood and patchouli. Apply it in the morning to start the day off on the right foot, but also in the evening to reconnect with yourself after a long day or just after doing yoga to help prolong the benefits of feeling balanced, 50ml €29/100ml €44. Use alongside the Eau Extraordinaire Revitalising Silky Body Cream €36, which combines the revitalising fragrance of Eau Extraordinaire's essential oils with organic shea butter and hazelnut oil to deeply nourish your skin and leave it feeling satin soft, available online at clarins.ie and in Clarins stockists nationwide.

Sothys Organics

In the heart of the Corrèze, in their advanced research laboratory, Sothys have created the new Sothys Organics line, the perfect combination of organic skin care and advanced efficiency: an organic certified, and vegan range with a cosmaceutical touch. They have also collaborated with Plastic Bank to make its Sothys Organics range plastic neutral as well as creating packaging that uses eco-design as far as possible. If skin is looking dull and tired, the Revitalising Emulsion, €42, a light moisturiser with a complex of organic plant active ingredients including birch sap, hawthorn floral water and retinol-like alfalfa extract, stimulates collagen synthesis, reduces signs of fatigue while visibly smoothing the features and giving new radiance to the skin. Apply morning and/or evening over the entire face and neck area after your usual serum. Available in selected Sothys Spas and Salons nationwide.

Kiehl's Midnight Recovery Botanical Cleansing Oil

Leveraging Kiehl's chemists' expertise in lightweight yet highly efficacious face oils, Kiehl's newly launched Midnight Recovery Botanical Cleansing Oil is a non-pore clogging, non-acnegenic innovation that deeply cleanses while maintaining the skin barrier without an oily residue. Not only does it efficiently

wash away skin impurities such as dirt, oil, and sunscreen, but it is also effective on stubborn makeup – immediately after usage, 94 per cent of women said the product rinses cleanly. Featuring the 'Midnight Recovery' blend of ingredients – squalane, evening primrose oil and lavender essential oil – which within the formula provide an effective, soothing, sensorial experience, leaving the skin thoroughly cleansed, soft, supple, and prepared for some night-time replenishment, €18, available instore from Brown Thomas and Arnotts, and online at brownthomas.com and arnotts.ie

Ella & Jo Relax and Renew Night Cream

A new addition to the Ella & Jo family, Relax and Renew Night Cream is the ultimate treat for your skin, packed full of active regenerating ingredients to help your skin renew and repair when it needs it most. The carefully designed night cream combines bakuchiol, a plant-derived skincare ingredient we're seeing in more and more skincare products, as it is a powerful antioxidant and can help reduce the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, and uneven tone. Other star ingredients include peptides to promote collagen and elastin, polyglutamic acid and hyaluronic acid to ensure maximum hydration and magnesium an anti-inflammatory, which is skin healing and repairing. With scents of bergamot, lavender, frankincense, and sweet orange, enjoy a sleepover with this hydrating night cream and wake up feeling refreshed and looking renewed, €50 from selected Ella & Jo stockists nationwide and online at ellaandjo.ie

Brushdoc Makeup Brush Cleaner

Dirty makeup brushes no more! Irish brand Brushdoc are taking the hassle out of cleaning your makeup brushes and sponges with their revolutionary makeup brush cleaner. Makeup artist Ciara Malone created the rechargeable power tool to ensure that your brushes and sponges are kept

in excellent condition and more importantly, not spreading bacteria on the skin. Simply add water to the device and watch how the specially designed silicone mat cleans your brushes effortlessly in seconds. For enhanced cleaning power, use with the newly launched Brushdoc Cleansing Oil and watch the oil emulsify with the water and melt away stubborn makeup. The cleansing oil is specially designed so that it doesn't leave any oily residue, and it also kills bacteria thanks to the addition of tea tree oil. Brushdoc €60, and Brushdoc Cleansing Oil €15 available online at brushdoc.com

Vichy Liftactiv B3 Dark Spots and Pigmentation Serum

The new Vichy Liftactiv B3 Serum is a highly concentrated dermatological formula to target dark spots and pigmentation. Formulated to suit all skin types, it contains the highly versatile Vitamin B3, also known as Niacinamide, which is not only a powerful antioxidant but also has skin smoothing and skin soothing properties and with prolonged use helps to visibly reduce the appearance of pigmentation and dark spots, giving the complexion a brighter more radiant appearance. Along with tranexamic acid that works to reduce skin discoloration and glycolic acid that gently exfoliates to reveal more even skin tone, Liftactiv B3 Serum has been clinically proven to reduce dark spots by up to 71 per cent. Hypoallergenic, recommended by Dermatologists, and suitable for sensitive skin, Liftactiv B3 Serum is €39, available from pharmacies nationwide in-store and online.

Dermalogica Circular Hydration Serum

Deeply hydrate the skin with this new serum from Dermalogica that provides both immediate and long-lasting moisture. Working to balance the skin's microbiome, this serum helps to replenish the skin from within as well as trapping water at the skin's surface to prevent evaporation.

Formulated with an enhanced form of hyaluronic acid that provides deep hydration, this serum also contains algae extract and polyglutamic acid to boost moisturise while a blend of amino acids and plant-derived sugars work together to keep moisture close to the skin.

Lasting throughout the day, Dermalogica Circular Hydration Serum leaves the complexion feeling more supple and looking more radiant over time, €65 online at Dermalogica.com and all Dermalogica stockists nationwide.

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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.

Chinese Medicine has a long history and profound approach to the care of mother and child in pregnancy, that is at once, both esoteric and immensely practical. On the one hand, it is imbued with an appreciation of the tiny new human being in utero as a small cosmos that holographically and symbolically mirrors the greater cosmos and supports an approach to pregnancy that can awaken a deeper connection to the wonder and mystery of growing a child. And yet, it simultaneously has tremendous clinical application

to help address many of the issues and ailments that can impact pregnant women, from morning sickness to gestational diabetes with a host of ailments that can occur in pregnancy such as oedema, dizziness, anxiety, insomnia, anaemia, constipation, or intrauterine growth restriction (sub-optimal foetal growth).

In Chinese Medicine, a holistic approach is taken that begins ideally, pre-conception. Yang Sheng, is an aspect of Chinese Medicine that advocates and fosters lifestyle practices to 'nourish life'. Indeed, the whole Chinese Medicine tradition is as much about cultivating habits, practices and methods to support and nourish vibrant health as it is about treating illness. Traditionally women would embark on an extensive period of pre-conception Yang Sheng, to nourish and invigorate her Blood (the health of Blood is fundamental for both mother and baby), to potentise her Jing or Essence (vital for conception), to strengthen her Qi (loosely translated as life force, which she will need in abundance) as well as balancing and supporting the inter-relationship and function of all her organ systems.

In addition, women were encouraged to create a harmonious 'palace' for her forthcoming child with the understanding that the in-utero environment and experience will contribute to the temperament and character of the growing baby.

Women were encouraged to cultivate a pure heart, to speak kind words, foster positive thoughts, practice emotional equanimity, live a calm lifestyle and maintain healthy sleep and eating habits. The emotional life of the mother was particularly safe-guarded given the close relationship between emotional states and the limbic system of the cerebral cortex and central nervous system. Thus, the internal emotional environment of the mother was considered a vital factor in the creating a healthy 'palace' for the baby to grow in. As such, meditation, mindfulness and relaxation practices were advocated from pre-conception onwards whilst the husband and family were tasked with the role of protecting the mother from the stresses and strains of everyday life.

Fast forward to the 21st century and this can all seem a somewhat unachievable idyll with the relentless challenges of life in the modern era. Nevertheless, it can be helpful to adopt Yang Sheng principles in ways that do feel manageable, and create a more soulful approach to conception, pregnancy and birth.

Chinese Medicine offers an understanding of child development that is both fascinating and clinically useful. It maps the formation of the foetus' energetic body from the very first cell division, with the primary division from one cell to two halves being the creation of the Ren Mai channel (also

known as a meridian) that runs down our front centre-line from the nose to the perineum, and the Du Mai which runs down the centre-line of the back from the head to the tailbone. The next cell division, which results in four cells is seen as the formation of the Dai Mai channel, the only channel to travel horizontally around the body and intersects our midsection at the waist level. The next cell division, resulting in eight cells, is regarded as being the foundation of the Eight Extraordinary Channels (which includes the Ren, Du and Dai Mai's), and these are the channels which we use in clinic to treat the deeper psycho-emotional and spiritual aspects of a patient's health issue.

As gestation progresses, Chinese Medicine correlates each organ system as having a particular month during which it is the primary focus of formation and development, both energetically and physically. As such, a pregnant woman, even if in good health with no pregnancy related issues, would ideally have a monthly treatment throughout her pregnancy to support healthy child-development. Embryology in Chinese Medicine is of course, a huge and fascinating subject and one that is well worth exploring if you are planning a family or are already pregnant, both to gain insight into the deeper aspects of growing a healthy and happy baby but also to support you in doing so.

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Local community groups highlighted on not-for-profit website

The official launch of westcorkcommunity.ie – the only website and podcast service dedicated solely to promoting all community, not-for-profit and social groups based in West Cork – took place at the Bantry National Learning Network Centre on Friday, April 8.

Attendees included Cllr. Gillian Coughlan (County Mayor), Michael Collins TD, Christopher O'Sullivan TD, Cllr. Danny Collins and Cllr. Patrick Murphy, as well as guest speakers, Claire Cronin (Bantry NLN), Kathryn Kingston (West Cork Development Partnership) and Sandy McGroarty (Cork County Public Participation Network).

Also in attendance were 50 individual group representatives from all over West Cork, rang-

ing from The West Cork Down Syndrome Support Group to Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns and The Caha Centre, Beara.

As well as the large turnout, what made the morning special was the variety of groups, ranging from youth, sport, wellbeing, arts and social.

It was a morning of shared information on services available but also an opportunity for groups to network; to meet old friends and make some new ones...and for many, the first social gathering since the start of the pandemic.

The focus of the website is to heighten the profile of the listed community groups; help to increase their income and; improve their access to available resources.

The bi-monthly 'Voice of

West Cork' podcast consists of an In-depth interview with one of the listed groups, as well as a local featured artist.

So whether you are looking to join a group, offer up your skills, make a donation or avail from one of the many services and activities that they provide, or via the Festival/Events calendar are simply looking for something to do – the aim is to make westcorkcommunity.ie the 'one stop shop' for residents and visitors alike.

There is also the 'Links' category, providing groups with information on organisations offering funding, training, resources and much more. In addition there is an 'Audio Recording' service, the 'Photo Gallery', highlighting the beauty of West Cork and the 'Library', which will act as a

platform to showcase finished audio productions, ranging from music, poetry, audio books or

radio plays.

For more information go to westcorkcommunity.ie or call

Rob on 087 6710 163.



Pictured at the launch of westcorkcommunity.ie were (l-r) Kathleen Harrington (Rehab Group), Cllr. Gillian Coughlan (County Mayor), Robert Hurden (westcorkcommunity.ie), Claire Cronin (Bantry NLN) and Cllr. Patrick Murphy.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

My family doesn't match my DNA – The Fan Chart approach



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

It is more common than you think, so it could happen to you when taking a DNA test. Despite a carefully built family tree following a rigorously-reviewed paper trail, you are just not getting DNA matches along certain lines, or you are seeing unexplained genetically-close matches. It has happened to me along many lines of investigation into my wider family and during research on behalf of others who connect to me by DNA, but not through paper. It can be difficult to know exactly, except to acknowledge there is a genetic break somewhere. I have an extensive list of matches to me that require further exploration should they ever wish to collaborate.

Such events are referred to as NPEs, short for 'Not the Parent Expected' or a 'Non-Paternity Event.' I have several ongoing enquiries from people worldwide who clearly have West Cork ancestry (sharing parts of my wife's DNA) yet have no known connections to Ireland. Some were simply told by their mother that they had "an Irish father"!

In a recent collaboration, I managed to establish a connection to a family branch in West Cork for a group of testers in the US (including some adoptees), but also that the connection to my wife's line must be prior to the start of church records. This is a typical West Cork example supporting family stories and DNA matching but not making the final connection. You can share quite a lot of DNA with third and fourth cousins but that does not mean you can prove common ancestry.

In recent weeks, I also had a match enquiry from a man in the US who fits into the "you have an Irish father" category. Despite even knowing his alleged late father's name, investigations of that man's paper trail showed much deeper roots in the US with no obvious Irish connection. This is despite two robust matching segments to my projects that indicate that he has some ancestry coming from somewhere between Dunmanway and Clonakilty, and possibly related to the wider O'Donovan family. There could be another NPE involved.

DNA is revealing that many people have no genetic connection to some of their closest relatives (perhaps both parents through untold adoption or one through a previously unknown relationship, or a grandparent/great grandparent who may have been illegitimate). There can be many reasons a tester is unable to understanding their DNA matches. It is harder if the protagonists are no longer alive to provide an explanation, especially if it involves parents; sometimes even harder to approach living parents to ask those awkward questions.

In modern times we cannot rule out sperm donors. It was often a source of income for university students. A close cousin of mine recently had a

couple a close matches on the other side of his family, who themselves matched as half-siblings. Their enquiries found out that their mothers had used the same fertility clinic. All were happy for the explanation and neither felt the need to try to find the donor, although a wider family unit happily resulted. At the time most sperm donations were made, the possibility of wider DNA testing becoming commonplace was not really considered and so anonymity that was initially guaranteed may no longer be applicable should a biological child or grandchild of a donor finds a match. There are some well-known networks for those who share the same biological donor father.

One of the most impressive pieces of work by a genetic genealogist was done by a lady based in the US who managed to find the genetic connection between her client (who turned out to my sixth cousin) and my family through three consecutive NPEs, i.e., she, her mother and her grandmother were all illegitimate. My small contribution was having the detailed family tree that provided the final connection to our shared family.

As a new tester, it is always a good policy to go back to first principles. DNA also means you 'Do Not Assume' that your matches are going to reflect the DNA of the two people who you have always taken as your biological parents. It is another reason "DNA testing for fun" should not be taken too lightly.

A multi-generation fan chart is a simple and visual way to check if you have potential issues in your DNA heritage. Many free versions can be downloaded from an image search on the Web and can be printed off, as this example 5-generation fan chart.

Start filling out your direct ancestry from your family tree as

you understand it, starting with yourself at the centre, followed by both your parents, your four grandparents, and your eight great grandparents, and so on. As I have proven my DNA ancestry back to all my grandparents, I use this technique by having four charts starting from each of them.

Once your chart is filled out, review your matches to find those that have proven connections to known ancestors on your chart. You can either highlight these or cross them out, as you prefer. Any lines or individuals with potential problems will quickly become clear as they will have no matches. It does not necessarily mean all your gaps are NPEs. It simply could be that there are fewer descendants of that family line due to pedigree contraction and has not tested yet. It could be a waiting game. If you have a fully legitimate genetic ancestry all the people on the chart will be highlighted or crossed off, which puts you in an excellent position for deeper research and for helping others.

If adoption is involved, there will be no connections to either parent of the person in your fan chart who has the genetic break. If a different father is involved (the most common reason for a genetic break, whether it be through sperm donation, or another relationship inside or outside marriage), then matches will still be found on the mother's side, but not on the side of the 'father of record'.

How far back can you detect genetic breaks? It very much depends on the quality of your data, collaboration with others (sharing DNA data and detailed family trees are key), the time-period involved and how much time you are prepared to be a DNA detective. For example, it is relatively easy (using the term advisedly) to find family belonging to children of

soldiers who were conceived during the First or Second World Wars. I have connected to cousins who are descendants of short relationships that occurred in Germany and Iceland during WW2. Many others are suggested in my matches but cannot be proven due to the other parties not wishing to collaborate.

I have proven several illegitimacies in the mid C19th. As an example, I have proven both parents of my two-times great grandmother who was born in 1851 despite her birth never being registered and that she was not baptised. In 35 years of traditional family history research before DNA came along, I only had her marriage record which did not provide a father's name, traditionally indicating her illegitimacy. I now have over 70 proven genetically-proven cousins through this relationship.

I also have three 4x great grandmothers who were illegitimate on paper, born in the late C18th. While within reach of being solvable, genetic distance ensures that it will require many dozens of testers who are related to me through these lines not only to share some DNA with

me but have a willingness to share their data. It also requires an acceptance of what the DNA is telling us in terms of results.

Earlier in 2022, I established a new record for proving an illegitimacy for a child born in 1805 to my four-times great grandfather, but this was only possible within a project that had more than 25 participants.

For those who match my wife's West Cork DNA the good news is that no genetic breaks have been found in her direct lines back to all her three-times great grandparents, which is where church records start. This provides a solid basis for proving connections within this genealogical timeframe, which will be discussed in more detail next month. Trying to solve a whole host of mysteries is the hook that makes genetic genealogy so interesting!

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'.



Food and drink: Unrestricted grazing can lead to obesity; sensible use of electric/movable fencing will enable you to control your donkey's intake and reserve areas to allow for new growth and haymaking. A supply of clean water must also

Do you really want a donkey?

Driving around rural Ireland you will often get a chance to admire a donkey in a field. Perhaps you've thought to yourself: "I have a field behind the house, maybe we should get a donkey, the children would love it". Before you act on that thought, Deirdre O'Brien from RAWR says you need to realise how much it takes to really care for a donkey.

The average age of a well-cared for donkey is 27 years but they can live for as many as 40 years so you need to add up the costs and demands on your time. You will need a minimum of one acre of well fenced grazing, a spacious shelter with hard standing (unlike horses, donkeys do not have a waterproof coat), a supply of hay and straw (which requires dry storage space) and the regular attention of a vet and a farrier.

You must also be prepared for the everyday responsibilities such as supplying fresh feed and water, mucking out a stable, checking grazing for poisonous plants and that fencing is secure,

grooming, checking for injuries and other signs of ill health. Plus your donkey will require routine worming and delousing (as advised by your vet), annual dental checks and annual vaccinations.

Donkeys prefer to live with a friend, ideally another donkey but in some cases donkeys have lived happily with a goat or sheep. For the best advice on this and all matters donkey get in touch with the donkeysanctuary.ie.

It's also important to know that a donkey should not be ridden before it reaches the age of four years; before that its bones will not be fully developed. Even then a rider must weigh no more

than eight stone (50kg).

Grooming: Regular grooming is important and provides an opportunity to examine your donkey for bites, wounds and skin complaints. A donkey should have a flat, clean coat with no signs of itching, bald areas, sores or abnormal lumps and bumps. Do not brush them when their coat is wet, as water and dirt can reach the skin and increase the chance of infections.

One of the most common forms of neglect in donkeys is overgrown hooves. Donkeys originated in the deserts of north Africa; their hooves are designed to grow continuously to protect

their feet and, in their native habitat, are worn down by the abrasive desert surface. Here in Ireland donkeys are mostly kept on soft grazing land. With nothing to wear down their hooves they grow too long, curling up and making walking difficult and painful. For this reason they should be seen by a farrier every six-10 weeks who will check and trim their hooves. Between visits from the farrier you should provide a well-drained, clean exercise area, avoid grazing in muddy fields and check their feet daily, picking them up and removing any muck and stones

Continued on next page...

Why home quarantine of pets arriving into Ireland is so important?

With Ireland and other EU countries waiving normal biosecurity and pet travel requirements in light of the ongoing humanitarian crisis, it is of vital importance that the Department of Agriculture's quarantine regulations are complied with in order to protect the health of people and of animals in Ireland. More than 600 pets from Ukraine have already arrived into Ireland with their owners since the Russian invasion on February 24. With this open door policy set to continue, **Elizabeth Walsh** takes a closer look at the home quarantine regulations for pets arriving from Ukraine into Ireland.

Why is quarantine required?

Ireland is a rabies free country; rabies is a potentially fatal disease to both people and to animals. There are additional potential bio-security risks posed to pets, farm animals and to wildlife caused by the importation of animals from countries without rabies-free status.

What is required for a pet under these regulations?

The pet must be microchipped, rabies-vaccinated and treated for tapeworm on arrival into Ireland. It must have serology completed after 30 days, and then complete a further three months in home quarantine. The quarantine period is four months in total.

What is 'home quarantine' as opposed to 'quarantine facilities'?

Quarantine facilities are purpose-built, secure kennelling facilities, which house animals which have been imported from

countries which do not have rabies-free status. These are a safe way, to care for imported dogs, while protecting the health of people and animals, and limiting any possibility of the spread of disease within Ireland. 'Home quarantine', has been allowed for pets arriving with Ukrainians into Ireland. To comply with the regulations, the animal must not come into contact with any other animal, (pet, farm animal, rodent, bird, etc), it must not be walked outside the house where it is being kept, if possible, it should toilet inside, if brought to toilet outside, it must be kept on a lead, on concrete, or securely fenced and supervised on concrete. This area must be sanitised immediately, and the excrement collected, disposed of, through burying, at a minimum depth of 3 ft, (90 cm), in a suitable location.

The Dept. of Agriculture should be advised of the location of all Ukrainian pets.



Why can the pets not toilet on grass?

All excrement must be cleaned and sanitised. It is not possible to clean/sanitise grassed areas. This must be done immediately as birds or vermin can spread fecal matter throughout the environment, creating significant bio-security risk and risk of rabies.

Will these pets not become bored?

Of course, these pets will miss walks. However, instead of walks, owners can play with their dogs for longer periods, can play interactive games which challenge their minds, and can encourage and train calm behaviour.

What happens if a dog without rabies-free status, bites me or my dog, prior to completion of its quarantine period?

In that scenario, you must present for medical attention immediately, or in the case of a dog, present your dog to a veterinarian immediately. This situation is of high urgency.

What should I do if I am aware that an owner and their animal are not complying with quarantine?

Please treat any such person sensitively. The matter should be reported to the Gardaí and to the Dept. of Agriculture, who will be in a position to clarify any misunderstandings which may exist, with regard to obligations under the quarantine regulations. It is of high importance that any person who does not fully understand their obligations, receives this information in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

Do you really want a donkey?

...Con'd from previous page

be provided.

Grass cuttings should never be used as they can cause fatal colic. Excessive consumption of grass can cause laminitis with spring being a particular risk period. Regular checks of the pasture and its perimeter for poisonous plants should also be carried out; ragwort, oak and acorns are the most likely problem plants. Yew is also toxic and bracken is potentially toxic. The Donkey Sanctuary offers a useful fact sheet on poisonous plants.

Supplementary feeds should be introduced slowly over seven days using high fibre/low starch-sugar feeds. Good quality new hay may need to be introduced slowly in limited amounts. Carrots and apples can be given as a treat once a week only as the sugar content is too high. Do not feed donkeys bread or scraps.

Dung should be removed daily to prevent the spread of worms, but, if this is not possible, twice weekly is the minimum requirement.

Health Care

A healthy donkey should be alert and interested in what is going on around it, with ears pricked. No donkey should spend long periods lying down. Be prepared to consult a vet if any signs of discomfort or illness appear.

A vet will also give advice on the prevention and treatment of common pests. Regular worming is essential. Flies can cause distress and irritation; they can spread infection, especially around the eyes, and they lay eggs in wounds. To prevent problems manure should be removed frequently and muck heaps should be sited as far from the stable as possible.

Midge bites cause intense irritation leading to excessive rubbing, especially on the mane and tail areas. One species of midge – *Culicoides* – cause "sweet itch" in allergic donkeys. To prevent problems donkeys should be stabled at dawn and dusk and fly repellents (as recommended by a vet) should be used several times a day.

Mites cause intense irritation by biting, usually on the lower legs or around the head and neck. Some types live on the donkey and others in hay and straw.

Lice, unlike mites, can be seen with the naked eye. They are often found in large numbers and cause rubbing and hair loss.

Ticks cause mild irritation at the site of the bite. They may carry Lyme disease and infect humans. Tick hooks are readily available from vets and pet stores for easy removal of ticks – just pulling them may leave the head behind and cause irritation and infection.

It takes dedication, time, space and finances to care for a donkey properly, not just a handy field. If having read all this you would still like to have a donkey then first contact the Donkey Sanctuary who may have the perfect animal looking for a home with you.



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.

I've always been fascinated at what makes a dog tick. So, I studied Canine Psychology and read many books dealing with the subject.

Then, it was a question of watching a dog in its home setting, the dynamics in the

Key phases in a dog's development

family, and how it influences his behaviour. This aspect still intrigues me.

Although there are basic learning phases in the early stages of a puppy's development, every dog is different and the developmental phase is nuanced by his particular environment. The other important aspect is the significance of an owner or family's interaction with their dog and how breed or character plays an enormous part.

There are a number of developmental phases but I want to deal with a specific one: the period around four to eight months. During this period, if certain boundaries or 'house rules' haven't been laid down with basic obedience training, then this period brings that deficiency into focus.

If you look at it in human terms, you could apply it to the teenage period. During that time, your once normal, easy-going child can turn into someone who questions

everything including authority!

Huge changes are taking place in the dog's development. First and foremost, he/she is beginning to mature into adulthood. In a male dog, the testosterone levels are beginning to rise and his attitude changes towards other dogs and their attitude to him as well. The female is also developing and maturing bringing with it a certain independence that wasn't there before.

At around seven months, dogs get a 'call to the wild'. It's instinctive and a throwback to behaviour in a wolf pack. The young canine becomes more responsive to seeking out a dog of the opposite sex or to satisfy an innate desire to explore territory.

How do you recognise this? When your dog who normally responds joyfully and enthusiastically to your recall command stands and stares into the middle distance, he's experiencing his 'call to the wild'. If you do manage to get him back without

him fulfilling his desire to roam, keep him on a long lead for about a month whenever you take him out to avoid him succumbing to his desire for freedom! It will pass.

However, if he does take off and has a wild time playing with other dogs, investigating new sights and sounds, generally having fun, then he will always have an urge to run away. Containing him will be a problem thereafter.

If this happens to you with your dog, avoid chastising him when you either find him somewhere or he returns home in an exhausted but happy state. If you let your anger take over, you will be encouraging him to look at disappearing as a welcome option.

There's another even more important aspect to this time frame, in my opinion. And it's this: dogs' reactions could be loosely defined into two categories – either an active defence or a passive defence

reflex when challenged. (Please note that when I use the word challenge, I merely mean asking a dog to perform a normal, basic command immediately under any circumstances.)

A dog with an active defence reflex will respond to a challenge with aggression. One with a passive defence reflex will show submission when challenged or display OTT behaviour akin to that of a puppy having a mad moment.

If there are no 'house rules' or basic obedience training, in addition to the dog being spoilt, i.e., given all the privileges without earning them, then confrontational problems could arise in this period.

For example, let's assume your dog has automatically been allowed to sit on the couch from day one. He gets up any time and spreads himself comfortably! Up until now, you have been able to remove him or at least move him over so you can sit down, crunched into the tiny

space he's left for you! But, suddenly one evening when you go to move him, he bares his teeth and growls at you. You take a step back in fear and he, recognising your disquiet at this confrontation, adopts a rank above you in the human/dog pack. Sounds familiar?

All he's done is assume the higher rank because you haven't taught him his place in your pack. He's not suddenly turned into a confrontational dog but as a member of your pack who has been awarded a higher rank, he will defend the privileges of that rank with aggressiveness. Certain breeds may be more inclined to do this than others.

However, whatever the sex or breed of the dog, it's important to realise that teaching boundaries from an early age can avoid this. It is possible to teach an older dog his rightful place in your home but it requires dedication to avoid further confrontation.

Clonakilty-based musician O Deer announces debut album

As touring and live music came to a stop in 2020, O Deer (Oisín Walsh-Peel) used this slower pace to record his debut album, which is set for release this coming September. He has now shared on Bandcamp, the first single 'Waterside' – a dreamy combination of ambient minimalism with folk-song idioms.

Oisín's music is mellow and delicate, and draws from his diverse musical language. Now based in West Cork, Oisín has travelled extensively with his music. As a session musician (piano, guitars, harp, low-whistles and vocalist) he has played throughout the USA, Europe, Ireland, and the UK. He has toured worldwide with a wide range of artists and bands including Hudson Taylor, Gabrielle Aplin, Hannah-Grace, Villagers, Sun Collective, and I Have a Tribe.

Since the release of his first



EP 'O Deer', Oisín has played support for Hozier in the USA, Joseph (US), Departure Lounge (UK), among others.

Waterside displays a mixture of the neo-folk songwriting style akin to that of Sufjan

Stevens, with the ambient minimalism of the likes of Ólafur Arnalds. It has an earthy, natural sound contributed to by the open-string guitars. The nature sounds within the track (which were recorded in the Devil's

Glen in Wicklow) lend the song an ASMR quality. The sound is made distinctly Irish by the inclusion of the low-whistle.

Speaking of the single, Walsh-Peel says: "This song means a lot to me. It was written in a time just before the pandemic when there was a lot of change going on in my life. 'Waterside' is a short reflection of the state of the outer vs. the inner world: our natural environment vs. our mental and emotional one. It's strange to me that we witness the beauty and wonder of our natural world on a daily basis, yet so often allow it to pass us by unacknowledged – It's the same in relationships as well. This song tries to articulate that in some way. It's really a reminder to myself to not take anything for granted."

'Waterside' is available to stream/buy now on Bandcamp.

Zurich Portrait Prize returns to Crawford



Crawford Art Gallery is delighted to once again welcome the Zurich Portrait Prize to Cork, in partnership with the National Gallery of Ireland. Sponsored by Zurich Insurance plc, this is the third time the exhibition will travel outside of Dublin to Crawford Art Gallery, creating a wider opportunity for the public to encounter the remarkable portraits on display. The exhibition features the 24 shortlisted works from the 2021 edition as chosen by an esteemed judging panel.

Also making a welcome return is the Zurich Young Portrait Prize, a special competition for young people which encourages them to shape who we see and how we see them. The 20 shortlisted works from 2021, created by young artists aged between 5 and 18, will be on display together with the Zurich Portrait Prize at Crawford Art Gallery from 23 April until 17 July 2022.

Falling into Blue at Gallery Astna

Lesley Cox's solo show 'Falling into Blue' will open in Gallery Astna, Clonakilty Community Arts Centre on Astna Square on Saturday, April 30, 5pm-7pm. The exhibition will run until May 22.

Lesley is a professional artist living just outside Clonakilty where she works from her home studio. Lesley completed a BA in Visual Art on Sherkin Island and earned a MA in the Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork. Her love of painting her immediate surroundings has resulted in several series of work which has been shown nationally and collected in Ireland and internationally.

This series of contemporary oil landscape paintings have been informed by the events of the last two years, which includes Covid-19 and the beginning of the War on Ukraine; within both of those catastrophic events is the continued struggle with the Climate Crisis. All have a very significant effect on Lesley's artistic expression and this is articulated through her work.

Lesley's colour palette is usually influenced by current events, weather, mood,



therefore this work includes very dark canvases with small splashes of colour or almost completely white paintings with some darker colour. Horizons feature in a large amount of the paintings often in the distance, misty and moody with little definition, revealing the uncertainty and anxiety around world events as they unfold. Evidence

of human form is omitted, leaving only the landscape to speak of our interventions, be they good or bad. Her painting process is one of layering and scraping back with a palette knife to reveal the hidden layer, this creates not only texture but is also defined by chance.

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May 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

We start the 'Merry Month of May' by taking a quick look back at the April Astrology. The partial Solar Eclipse of April 30 is a major feature and sets a trend for events over the next several months. This year continues to be a game-changer and May is a pivotal month.

After so many challenging themes through the early months of this year, we finally have some very positive trends beginning with this lunation. The shifts that are part of this current era are momentous and we are all experiencing the need to adapt as the social, political and financial landscape evolves rapidly, echoing the Taurus Scorpio eclipse theme of 2022. We can expect the next few months to bring more departures from the old patterns and new potentials to emerge now.

The Sun-Moon combination on April 30 joins with Uranus the planet of change. This can provoke a sudden insight or awakening. An Eclipse always brings the elimination of something, as it makes way for the new. How it affects you personally depends on where it falls in your birth chart. The action planet Mars is also drawn into this eclipse pattern and whilst it is in Pisces the focus can be hard to pin down and the sense of direction can be vague. Any of the warlike and aggressive energy that often comes with Mars is very softened now. This nudges the drive for action onto a more spiritual or non-material level. We find our assertive efforts easily evaporating as a more accepting and adaptive energy becomes dominant.

Like a lucky charm, that brings a beneficial twist to whatever happens next, Venus and Jupiter combine immediately after this eclipse moment. Many good things can evolve from this event as we make changes in our relationships and evaluate our basic security to provide stronger supports and closer connections.

This New Moon and eclipse in signs Taurus and Scorpio has its counterpart Full Moon Lunar eclipse on May 16 and by then we

might begin to see how the positive trends are having an influence. Issues of emotional and material security will be highlighted and new systems or strategies are introduced. With Venus in Aries from May 2, the mood is less tolerant and more self-assertive as we push harder for what we value. When Mercury starts its Retrograde phase in Gemini on May 10, we get the prompt to consider the other side of the story and review our choices over the coming weeks. The messenger planet draws our attention back to the issues of late April and we get the opportunity to hear alternative versions, see things differently and make new decisions.

Jupiter the planet of growth, opportunity and well-being moves into Aries on May 11, giving us a preview over the next couple of months of the themes that will emerge fully in 2023. Jupiter in Aries puts a focus on learning through confrontation. This is about getting to know what you are capable of and where you find your

personal power. Jupiter represents the urge to be better, have more, and become greater. In Aries, this is all about the individual rather than the collective. There may be displays of strength and a variety of posturing moves by world leaders. Everyone wants to beat the loudest drum and be the leader. On a more personal level, it is time to assert autonomy and self-governance by confronting what is no longer acceptable. There is the need to rise above the petty squabbles and conflict dramas that result from power plays and to give time and energy only to what is positive and life-enhancing.

Mars has a big part to play during May and it also acts as a trigger when it activates the recent Jupiter Neptune conjunction by joining with Neptune on the 18th and then moving into its home sign, Aries on the 25th to join with Jupiter there on 29th just before the next New Moon on May 30.

This activity adds to the assertive energy that May brings. Although Mars is known for its

conflict and warlike behaviour, it is primarily the planet of action. It wants to make change happen and will confront whatever stands in the way of it reaching its goals or desires. This does not, by default, have to create war or a battle of wills. Assertion and the correct use of will is a creative action. The energy that is stoked up this month brings us the opportunity to assert our individual will in the most positive way. Like a great master in martial arts, we can channel this energy to stand firm and hold our position against all attacks. The essence of last month's Jupiter Neptune transit will be amplified by the contacts from Mars. Reach for the higher levels that this combination promised. Use the Mars energy to focus an unbending intent as you keep your mind on the ultimate goal and the highest version of your dreams and desires.

May has a Full Moon and Lunar eclipse at 26 degrees Scorpio on May 16 at 5.14am and a New Moon at 10 degrees Gemini on May 30 at 12.30pm.



Aries: Over this Full Moon and eclipse your experiences will confirm that you must not depend on other people or your possessions to provide emotional security for you. This could be a very transformative few days when you might unearth resources within yourself that

you were previously unaware of. Allow yourself to stand aside for a moment and recognise what has really tied up your energy in recent weeks. You no longer need to rely on certain items or belongings as you become more emotionally stable. New beginnings require the space to grow and the sense of freedom will help your creativity.

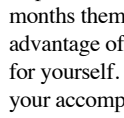


Taurus: With the Sun shining in your own sign puts the Full Moon focus on your relationships. The eclipse marks the start of a new phase. Tune in to yourself, and allow your partner or close friends to have their moods without imagining they are a result of your own actions.

Connecting with others in a special moment can be enjoyed. When close allies or partners become your main focus you could be thinking that you have all got a little too involved or caught up with each other recently and soon you'll need to stand back. This month will help get you back to balance.



Gemini: Basic tasks could take up all of your attention. It's easy to get distracted from the broader vision of your life during this Full Moon. You are likely to make yourself indispensable through being of service to the physical needs of others. Being happy to take on new responsibilities, both in your career and around the house is part of this months theme. If you are not careful however, other people will take advantage of you. The eclipse starts a phase of getting things together for yourself. Once done, you'll be able to stand back and take pride in your accomplishments.



Cancer: Spontaneity is the keyword for you this Full Moon and it's time to loosen up and have some fun. Taking the lead and making some bold statements is also an option. Going just a little bit over the top will be acceptable now as this is a time of celebration for all.

Passion and intensity can run rampant as your enthusiasm overflows so get creative with your energy. You have a strong emotional need for some romantic encounters but you do know how to nurture and maintain the romance in an existing relationship too. So go the extra mile and enjoy!



Leo: This month you may find you need to spend more time at home. You can find great pleasure in looking after children or family, cooking, making home improvements etc. Feeling very sensitive to the moods of others is also heightened, especially if you share your personal

space. Although you'll be strongly motivated to create a caring and secure environment, a crowd can become claustrophobic. You can get on each other's nerves. After the eclipse there is more time to acknowledge the comfortable and familiar environment that supports you. Draw on it as a source of strength for building a future that really suits your personality.



Virgo: Any difficult emotional experiences may result from having strong differences of opinion. Could it be that everybody is trying to get their message through but no one is listening? Conversations are easily swayed by irrational arguments and emotions. Finding a peaceful

balance is the goal but takes a dedicated focus to achieve. Tie up important loose ends and meet deadlines over this Full Moon. The eclipse will bring more time for a new project or mental challenge that will refresh you. You could be making plans for travelling or starting a new class or training programme in the coming weeks.



Libra: This Full Moon will find your attention on personal resources and economic fluctuations. You can be a very kind and giving person but you also need to feel secure. Being a little more concerned with your financial status now is probably a good thing although some people may view you as unusually materialistic and possessive. This is a time to cash in on some of your hard earned investments and name your price for your efforts. Be confident in your skills and abilities and turn them to good use now as others will notice and reward you later.



Scorpio: With the Lunar eclipse in your sign it's time to bring any critical personal projects to a conclusion whilst you have the energy required to satisfy your own high standards. You are likely to be a glowing example of both vitality and attractiveness in the coming weeks

so let your personality truly shine. You can expect to have a powerful impact on your surroundings through your moods and feelings. You may be emotional or sentimental, but you know how to provide a truly nurturing environment for others. You're motivated to show how much concern and care you have for loved ones now.



Sagittarius: You need to withdraw from the world from time to time and commune with nature or your inner feelings. During this Full Moon you are extremely sensitive to your environment and could spend a lot of time enveloped in a very private emotional world. Ideally

create a place of your own which is sacred to you where you can be alone. In this private retreat you can work more consciously with the inner world of your imagination through creative work or meditative practice for a few days and then see your dreams manifest over the following months.



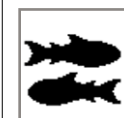
Capricorn: You have the desire for strong bonds with your friends and you are extremely sensitive to how they treat you over the Full Moon. You are both caring and concerned for their personal development, but easily hurt if they let you down in any way. Ensure that you

spend time only with people that elevate and support you. Disconnect from the daily grind and tap into your lighter side for a while. Over the next few weeks you will remember that enjoyment of the good life is more about your own sense of well being and not dependant on money, friendship or possessions.



Aquarius: You have a strong sense of duty and you can feel that your role is primarily to live up to family or social expectations over this Full Moon. You may have been striving to achieve some predefined goals and you want the recognition now. Over the coming weeks you

can reach out for what you want for yourself. Stand in the spotlight whilst acting the part of your unique self in all your glory. Ensure you take time out to wave your own flag and get noticed for your contribution before a new surge of personal creativity rolls in after this eclipse mid month.



Pisces: Think big and stretch your imagination this Full Moon. In the past you will have unconsciously been affected by the convictions and values of those close to you. Nurture your personal beliefs. Attend to what is solid and true for you now. Your interest in philosophical and spiritual areas is heightened over this eclipse so use the time to expand your inner window on the world and break new ground.

The feeling of suddenly having understood something can have you wondering where to put your focus next, but that will take care of itself down the line.

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West Cork Chamber Music Festival returns to celebrate its 25th anniversary

West Cork Music is delighted to announce the programme for this summer's West Cork Chamber Music Festival, which runs in Bantry from June 24 – July 3. After two years of uncertainty and cancelled festivals, the festival can finally celebrate its 25th anniversary.

The programme is packed with more than seventy concerts featuring sixty professional musicians and over twenty students, plus an extensive masterclass series of up to five classes a day. A Fringe series from Glengarriff to Skibbereen, taking in the Islands, will run alongside the main Festival programme.

The core of the 2022 Festival is built around four top international String Quartets – Pavel Haas Quartet from Prague, Danel Quartet from Belgium, Signum Quartet from Germany, and Doric Quartet from London – and a series of major cycles from Biber and Bach to Weinberg via Haydn, late Schubert and Bartók.

The Festival is renowned for supporting young musicians at every stage of their development and this year

welcomes a number of Stars of the Future including Cork violinist Mairéad Hickey, pianist Nathalia Milstein, cellist Ella van Poucke, and violinist Diamanda Dramm.

Much-loved repertoire features from morning to night and includes works by Bach, Brahms, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov, and much more, while audience can also immerse themselves in a wide selection of contemporary music including world and Irish premieres, special Festival commissions and three concerts by the acclaimed Crash Ensemble.

The rich and varied repertoire for woodwinds will be explored by the Orsino Quintet led by Adam Walker, and BBC-sponsored Ensemble Molière will join Irish mezzo soprano Rachel Kelly on Friday's programme which has a strong towards the French and Italian Baroque.

Fiddle player and Artistic Director of Masters of Tradition, Martin Hayes returns for a special late night performance while American violinist Ariadne Daskalakis joins Ensemble Vintage Köln and poet Ruth Padel for Biber's Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries,



Pavel Haas Quartet. Pic Boris Giltburg

fifteen sonatas played over three days.

This year's line-up will also include cellists Johannes Moser and Alexander Kovalev; viola players Dana Zemtsov and Sara Fervández; percussionist Alex Petcu; pianists Anna Fedorova, Zoltán Fejérvári, Julius Drake and Joseph Havlat; and many more.

Audiences are reassured that their safety is of paramount importance with measures including reduced number of seats, the removal of intervals, and ventilation.

Full programme can be found on www.westcorkmusic.ie

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www.westcorkmusic.ie

Image detail: Heather Betts

Limitless possibilities for Kenmare Butter Market art and exhibition centre

An art and exhibition centre committed to showcasing Irish and international professional artists, Kenmare Butter Market is located in the heart of Kenmare town. The large spacious building, with a seating capacity of 200, lends itself to the showcasing of large artworks but is also suitable for facilitating the likes of indoor markets, concerts, corporate team building events, weddings and so on.

Since opening its doors in July 2021, the centre has showcased the works of well-known artists Paul Hughes, Bridget Flannery, Paddy Lennon, Piggy (aka Ciaran mc Coy), Regina Bartsch and Michael Hales. In March an exhibition of works of nine female emerging artists was held with further exhibitions planned to be held continuously throughout 2022.

Two classical concerts and a play have taken place at the cen-

tre since Covid restrictions were lifted and a very successful artisan Christmas Market last year, which raised over €5000 for local charities, saw 1,700 in attendance.

Plans are now underway for the Kenmare Butter Market's first live gig with Jack O'Rourke and his Band performing at the centre on May 7.

Modern Irish Sculpture, a dedicated sculpture exhibition, will run from June 2 to July 24, showcasing large-scale works by some of Ireland's leading sculptors, including Michael Quane and Eileen McDonagh. The exhibition is being curated by Jackie Ball, Ana Duncan and John Goode.

In August, Kenmare Butter Market will host an exhibition of works (open submission) as part of Kenmare Arts Festival. Exhibitions to follow will include work by artists Ian Humphries (solo), Cathy Bacon

(emerging solo), Fionnuala Nolan, Mary Duffy and Anne Garrett (Group Show). Further programming is ongoing.

Built in the mid 1800s, the former Kenmare Butter Market was converted to a dance hall in the 1960s. Steeped in history, the building was originally purchased to house a whiskey distillery as part of a larger idea to reimagine the whiskey distilling of Islay (Scotland) that will expand across several new distilleries in other historic spaces including Killarney and on the Iveragh Peninsula. The Kenmare Butter Market is one of those buildings. Phase 1 will see the building used as it is now, an industrial urban space. In Phase 2, architectural work will commence along with the addition of the distillery.

Artists and performers are invited to register interest on www.kenmarebuttermarket.com.

SPACE

KENMARE BUTTER MARKET

Jack O'Rourke & Band

8pm SATURDAY May 7


KENMARE BUTTER MARKET

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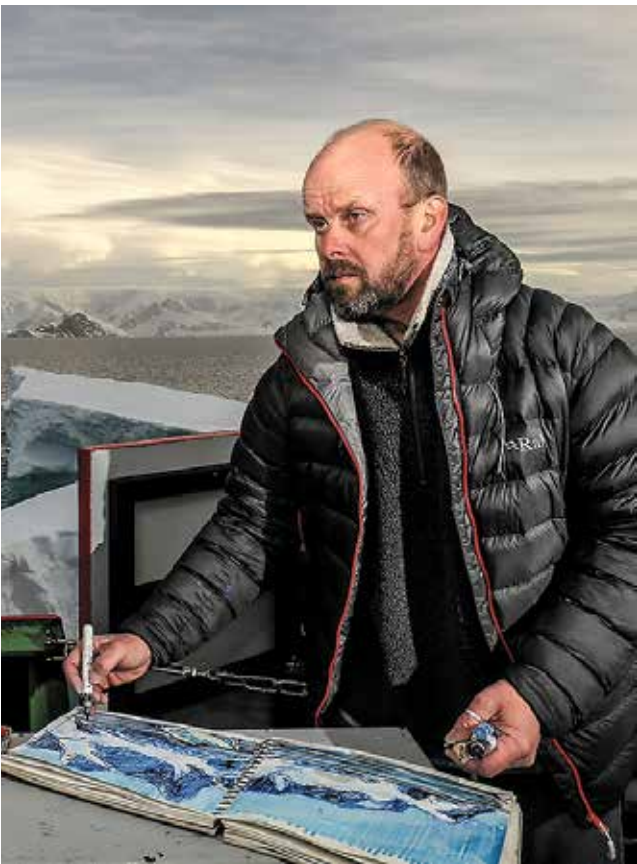


MOVIES THIS MONTH

‘Breaking Ice’ 5D Antarctic Experience is an extraordinary immersive exhibition by Nicholas Romeril, which will take place at Fastnet Film Festival in Schull on both Friday, May 22 and Saturday, May 23.

In January 2018, Nicholas Romeril travelled to Antarctica aboard HMS Protector, as Artist-in-Residence for the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute. During the six-week expedition, he travelled to 15 special interest sites, covering over 3,500 miles. He produced more than 200 drawings and paintings, a diary of the journey and a number of virtual reality films. A small number of these works went on display at Bonham’s, London, in the summer 2018 as part of ‘Polar Encounters’, an exhibition by the Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute displaying 200 years of contemporary and historical Polar Art.

Visitors to the exhibition will experience virtual reality films, a documentary film, expedition paintings and sketchbooks, penguin sculpture and the associated fragrances of the Antarctic in a cold temperature room. Nick will also give a 30-minute power point presentation, each day, illustrating the journey, his working method and his feelings for the expedition.



Nicholas Romeril aboard HMS Proptector in Artartica.

‘The Show Must Go On’ in Kinsale

The Lucy French School of Dance will return to the stage in Kinsale with their first on-stage performance since 2019, ‘The Show Must Go On’. As always this will be a full length dance production encompassing all of the school’s students showing off their talents.

The show will take place in Kinsale and will be performed on a purpose-built stage at Sáile Community Centre. The hall in the centre will be transformed into a theatre with a big stage and professional sound and lighting for the duration of the run.

This is an exciting variety performance, showcasing the talent in the school and suitable for all the family.

‘The Show Must Go On’ will open on Thursday, May 12 and will run for four shows until Saturday, May 14. Evening Shows 7pm. Matinee Saturday 2pm.

Tickets €15 Adults, €10 Children, available at The Boathouse Gallery Kinsale and limited availability on the door, please check social media on the day to see if we have tickets left and book in advance to avoid disappointment.



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Sudoku

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

		3	2		4			6
					6	8		
							2	
	2					7		
		4	5	1	9			
							6	
	9			7			3	8
				5				9
5	4					1		

#86761 Difficulty: moderate

				5			9	3
		4		3			1	
	9	2						7
8	7		3			2		4
				2		9		
			6					
6	1							
				4	5			
						8	7	

#17502 Difficulty: hard

The Craft Corner

This month Natalie Webb shows us how to make pipecleaner dragonflies:

“Have fun making these cute dragonflies ... use your imagination and artistic flair to mix up the colours whatever way you like.”

- You will need:
- 3 pipe cleaners
 - Scissors
 - 6 beads with a fairly large hole (I used wooden beads from my local craft shop)
 - Small stick-on googly eyes

- Method:
- Fold one of the pipe cleaners in half and thread on 5 of the beads leaving approximately 1 inch of the looped end; the beads should be fairly secure but if they are loose put a little bit of sticky tape or an elastic band around the bottom to stop them falling off.
 - Cut about 1 inch off the second pipe cleaner and make a circle with it, bend the ends around each other to secure. Loop the circle over the bead-



ed pipe cleaner on the open end down to the first bead then squeeze in the middle and twist both sides near the body to secure..this is your first set of wings!

With the remaining pipe cleaner do the same but don’t cut any off, loop it over the body so that it sits above the first set of wings then bend and twist to make second set



- of wings.
- Thread your remaining bead over the open ended pipe cleaner so it sits on top of the wings.
 - With the open ended pieces of pipe cleaner above the wigs curls down (like a fern) to make the head then with the the little piece of leftover pipe cleaner that was cut off (or use another one of a different colour to match the beads) thread it through the top of the head, twist to secure and bend to make little antenna ...then stick on your google eyes and your ready to fly away!

The ghost of Gainsborough and the power of appropriation



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.

Appropriation is a long-established strategy in modern, post-modern and contemporary painting. The desire to 'revamp', 're-mix' or 're-orchestrate' a masterpiece of old is as complex as it is interesting. Picasso's appropriations of El Greco were both a way of identifying with the Baroque master and his greatness, and colonising that greatness. Gordon Bennett's appropriations of Van Gogh were, in contrast, a way of exploring his Indigenous Australian identity in a white Australian world. Taking a more famous example, Francis Bacon's appropriations of Velazquez's Pope Innocent X sought, not unlike Picasso's, to assimilate the tradition of European painting, and respell it in the terms of a more terrifying existential reality, in which the very erasure of the image is imminent. There are, in short, many reasons to appropriate



Lucia, by Nicola Samori, 2019. Oil on onyx and Trani stone.

another's work.

Appropriation of an image is different to a copy of an image, in that the appropriated image is in some way transformed. Amongst figurative artists today, two outstanding painters – Jake Wood-Evans and Nicola Samori – have made this process the basis of their respective practices.

The British painter Jake Wood-Evans appropriates, amongst others, the works of Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88); the Italian, Nicola Samori, the works, amongst others, of Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652). Like Francis Bacon, partial erasure of the image is a central aspect of their respective processes. Apart from this starting point, however, their work has little in common. Wood-Evans works in an expressionist manner, the speed and energy

of his painting a large part of his appeal. Samori, on the other hand, paints as Ribera painted, in a Baroque manner, with layers of beautifully applied oil.

The original painting, for example Gainsborough's 'Sophia Charlotte Digby, Lady Sheffield', becomes a virtuosic blur of brush strokes, emerging as a Richter or Rothko in period costume.

Whilst both painters partially erase what they appropriate, Wood-Evans' defacement is integral, like Bacon, to the energy of his brush work, whilst



Sophia Charlotte Digby, Lady Sheffield, after Gainsborough by Jake Wood-Evans, 2019. Oil on linen.

Samori's involves a peeling away of the paint itself.

For Wood-Evans and Samori the problem of subject matter has been neatly solved. Where their art lies is in how they transform the compositions of others. Wood-Evans draws heavily on the strategies of modernism: in essence, strip back and reduce; turn form into gesture, a full palette into monochrome, deface and abstract. The original painting, for example Gainsborough's 'Sophia Charlotte Digby, Lady Sheffield', becomes a virtuosic blur of brush strokes, emerging

as a Richter or Rothko in period costume.

Samori's approach is, in contrast, decidedly postmodern. He has no interest in transforming the painterly qualities of the Baroque originals he appropriates – quite the opposite, in fact. Samori, in technique, is as Baroque as Ribera, and his delivery every bit as good. His interventions are, rather, surgical, or else predicated on the natural corruptions of the surfaces he paints on. In his surgical interventions he incises the skin of the oil paint and peels it away in the areas to be defaced.

In other works, such as 'Lucia' (2019), an oil painting on onyx and trani stone, Samori makes use of a natural corruption in the stone to locate, in this instance, the eyes of 'Lucia', conveying a sense of blindness, articulated by the stone itself.

Samori sees the painted body as an actual body; one that is wounded, by disease, violence, blindness, time. His works on corrupted stone fuse the body's wounds with the mineral essence of the earth. It is a profoundly nuanced vision, rich both in the art historical context and as a primal sensory experience. In contrast Wood-Evans utilises the art historical image as a carriage for a painterly acceleration, where the inspired speed of delivery partially erases the subject. The subject becomes a ghost of its original, and a new subject emerges: the artist himself, courtesy of the energy of his brush.

In re-conjuring great work of the past Samori and Wood-Evans seek to both embed themselves in a figurative tradition, largely broken through the 20th century, and to claim a space in contemporary practice. One could see their work as a bridge between the Baroque and Romantic periods and the post-modern, pluralistic present. Their work prompts us to cast our gaze back, to re-engage with mastery in figurative painting. They are also, however, creating an echo chamber, in which original composition fades. The issue at stake is form and content. When form dissolves entirely there is nothing for another artist to respond to. The question arises, what can figurative artists today give to artists of the future? Samori and Wood-Evans seem to answer: technique, feeling and virtuosity. That, for now, seems to be enough.



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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

In the world of interior design there are certain items that stand the test of time, whilst others are just passing trends. My clients are definitely more interested now in investing in statement or bespoke furniture, rather than what's trending on Instagram. We are all much more conscious of the sustainability credentials of what we are buying, and looking for something that could 'see us out'!

Antique furniture and vintage accessories, for example, will always have their place, whether you have bought them as investment pieces or they were passed on to you from a loved one. They are particularly useful if you want to create an eclectic



or 'lived in' style; combining vintage and modern furniture, picture frames and more will make a space look like it has evolved over years.

However, a word of caution here, not everything that is vintage is worth keeping. There were many passing trends in the 1970s, 80s and 90s too! I'm going to remind you of some below that should stay firmly in the past. If they still feature in your home, maybe it's time to say goodbye?

Patterned carpet with brightly coloured florals and motifs:

Modern homes are all about single colours for carpets or ditching the carpets altogether in favour of wooden, vinyl or tiled flooring.

Extravagant drapes: Heavy, long, floral patterned curtains with fancy pelmets etc were very popular when we were growing up to prevent cold air coming in through single pane windows. Better insulation in

modern homes allows us to go for more attractive window treatments on sleek curtain poles or perfectly fitted blinds.

Ornate kitchen cabinets: Dark and ornately bevelled cabinetry was very popular in the latter part of the 20th century, the opposite of the clean lines we crave today.

Magnolia walls: A safe option that added more warmth than white and 'went with everything', magnolia was all the rage in the 1990s. We still like our neutral walls but have much more choice now – look through shades of grey and beige from the various paint companies available locally to find one you like.

Coloured tiles: Huge in the 1970s, a whole bathroom tile job in yellow, green, orange or pink tile patterns was not exactly relaxing. If you'd still like to use a coloured tile do just the floor or a single feature wall.

Shiny plastic artificial flowers: In the 80s we didn't buy fresh flowers as much as we do now. We also much prefer real houseplants now. If, however, you can't be bothered with watering, or have a light starved room, then choose a lifelike faux plant over faux flowers, which are rarely convincing.

Fluffy toilet seat covers: Ok, this one I just threw in for fun! But I do remember these being all the rage years ago... hideously ugly, never mind the hygiene side of things.

My predictions for current trends that will be with us for some time: Animal and nature-inspired bold prints in fabrics and wallpaper from companies like Clarke and Clarke, Sanderson, William Morris and Zoffany. Sandy warm tones for wall paints paired with soft green and blues – anything that brings a feeling of nature indoors.

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Bill Coakley from Bantry Bay Sailing Club collected the donation of an Express sailing boat from The Ewe Experience in Glengarriff. The sailing dinghy will enable more enthusiastic youngsters to learn to sail at the thriving club in Bantry, which has lots of plans for the future. Work is ongoing with new sculptures to get ready for the season at Ewe Experience gardens, which this year will be open in July and August only.

people Home & Garden



GARDENING

John Hosford
The Weekend Garden Centre

May is often considered one of the best months in the garden with the freshness of newly emerged leaves casting a magical spell on the countryside. May is also the month of the world famous Chelsea Flower Show in London where trends and fashions in gardening are launched. Chelsea Flower Show is held from May 24-28 with extensive TV coverage.

Be careful of late frosts for the first three weeks in May. Protect tender bedding plants, patio plants and tender vegetable plants. Use frost protection fleece, cold frames, cloches and polytunnels to protect your tender plants. Old windows can also be converted into cold frames.

May in the garden

Start off tender vegetables:

Sow courgettes, outdoor cucumbers, vegetable marrows, squashes, pumpkins, runner beans, French beans, sweet corn. Using fresh compost, sow directly into biodegradable pots or cellular trays. A heated propagator or heated greenhouse will give more predictable results. You will get a higher germination and get your seedlings off to a more reliable start. Fill your pots and trays an hour or two before sowing, watering the pots or trays with clean water after filling the compost. Use clean water. If weather is cold, warm water is advantageous. Tender vegetable plants are well-hardened-off prior to planting when all risk of frost is over at the end of May/early June.

Tender bedding, patio

plants, bulbs: Harden-off and acclimatise tender frost-vulnerable plants for planting out at the end of May/early June. Dahlias, Begonias, Busy Lizzies, Cannas, Salvias should be acclimatised in readiness for planting into their flowering quarters at the end of May. Protect against slug damage. Stakes should be prepared for taller plants such as Dahlias.

Keep an eye on watering, especially on recently planted trees, shrubs, hedging and bedding plants for water. It is best give a thorough watering rather than small quantities which will evaporate on sunny days and on days with drying winds.

Spring bulbs: Feed spring bulbs such as Daffodils and Tulips with a good organic fertiliser or a seaweed-based liquid fertiliser. This will build up the bulbs for a good performance next Spring. Don't be tempted to cut down foliage after flowering – allow bulbs to die down naturally

Plant up summer containers now: Keep in a sheltered position until established. Use fresh compost with the addition of a slow release fertiliser which is mixed thoroughly throughout the compost. Geraniums, Petunias, Sanvitalia, Brachycome, Bacopa are a good choice for sunny locations. Choose Begonias, Busy Lizzies and Fuchsias for more shaded positions. Feed weekly with a seaweed based liquid feed.

Plant /sow hardy annuals: There are some delightful har-

dy annuals that can be sown directly into the open ground now. Sow in informal drifts. Choose Californian Poppies, Nigellas, Nasturtiums, Virginian Stock, Night Scented Stock, Calendula, Echium, Ammi, Orlaya, Annual ornamental grasses., Linaria. Most of the listed will thrive best in sunny, well-drained locations.

Vegetable garden: Sow purple sprouting broccoli now for harvesting next spring. This invaluable vegetable comes in at a time when other vegetables are scarce. Sow beetroot, lettuce, chard, winter cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, parsnips, broad beans, peas, turnips, swedes, salad leaves directly into the ground. Practice good rotation of crops. Plant out Brussel Sprout and cauliflower plants.

Fruit garden: Red, black and white currants, gooseberries, raspberries, loganberries will benefit from a mulch now. Make sure the soil is moist before applying the mulch.

Crops under glass: Plant up tomatoes, aubergines, peppers, melons and cucumbers now. They can be planted into growbags, large pots or directly into a well prepared greenhouse border. Tomatoes should be well supported with stout stakes. Allow adequate space with all greenhouse crops. Remove sideshoots from tomatoes. Tomatoes, peppers and aubergines will appreciate a high-potash fertiliser at weekly intervals. Seaweed-based fertilisers are recommended.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Ardfield NS commemorated the centenary of the Irish Free State and the life of Michael Collins with a visit to his birthplace at Woodfield, Clonakilty. Pictured before they left for their history tour are 3rd class pupils Ryan Whelton, Donagh Calnan, Flora Lowney Melton, Bella Duggan, Aisling White.

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people Sport & Fitness

Finding an online coach



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.

Summer is at the doorstep and it's only a matter of time before we all feel the need to dress down (literally) and free our skin of excess clothes, socks and shoes. Is there anything better than being outside, soaking up the free vi-

tamin D and feeling the wind in the hair. That being said, I know all too well the dread summertime also brings. Can I fit into my sun-dress? How do my thighs look in my bathing suit? Do I have one too many rolls on my stomach to go shirtless? If you haven't already joined a gym or gotten into a home training routine, now is often the season many chose to start some kind of exercise in the hope of getting 'beach ready'. If Ireland follows the global fitness trends, more and more people will look into online coaching as a help to lose those last pounds, 'tone up' and feel better about themselves.

This column is for you, those who contemplate getting an online coach. I hope this can guide you to make the best decision for your health, as well as your wallet.

Before I get into the whole world of online coaching, let me say from the start, that I have no stakes in this. I don't have any online clients, nor do I provide online coaching. I have my Instagram blog for my own training and inspiration tips, and I answer questions if I get

asked. But that is as far as I act as a trainer or coach.

I am also a firm believer in 'every body is a beach body'. I believe that how we feel about ourselves is more important than how we look; that being said, I also am a firm believer that exercise is good for us. Most human bodies were made to move and to be functional to get us about in our everyday life. Few people have a different kind of body, but they too need to learn how to treat their body in the best way possible, to feel their best. We do it through exercise, through the food and drink we consume, by the music we hear, the words we read, the people we surround ourselves with and the thoughts we tell ourselves.

Personally I prefer in-house coaching/training. Meeting with my trainer face to face and seeing how exercises are meant to be performed and getting corrections or guidance as I attempt them, rather than watching someone do it on a video. However, as I will get into; for some people, online coaching/training is the preferred method and it is important to know

that this can wield just as good experiences as in-house.

Online coaching/training has become really popular for many reasons. It allows clients to train at home at their own pace and self-report to the coach. For many who are shy or just feel uncomfortable in a gym setting, it's a great way to be held accountable without the hassle of going to the gym. Same story in terms of self-reporting. Anyone who had to step on the scale in front of their coach/trainer (in a gym full of people), knows how uncomfortable it can make you feel.

So doing it on your own and sending the numbers to your coach in a mail is undoubtedly a more comfortable experience. Also discussing food and drink and talking about your food diary feels safer and less intrusive when done via the internet, rather than face to face.

Lastly it is often more affordable compared to in-house coaching, joining a sports team, or buying weekly classes. So it's very understandable that online coaching/training has become so popular.

However one of the risks

in online coaching is exactly that. It's online and you don't really know who is behind the coaching profile, unless you've met the person. What are their strengths/weaknesses, what are their values, do they coach with the stick or the carrot?

Especially if you sign up with one of the more popular coaches, it can be hard to know if it's really that person who guides you, or if it's an assistant. Is the person looking at your numbers and/or pictures the person you signed up with or someone else?

Many popular online coaches have too many clients to keep the personal touch with all their clients, which results in generic training programmes, generic nutrition/diets as opposed to tailor-made individual programs, which is what you pay for when you sign up for personal training.

As you can see, there are positives and negatives with online coaching. If you are determined or contemplating this route, this checklist is for you, and will hopefully land you with the best coach possible.

1) Always check reviews/referrals before signing up.

2) Spend time googling the name of the trainer to see reviews of others experiences and maybe you can find out how many clients the trainer has.

3) Most personal trainers will have other things to their name such as sports they did themselves, classes they taught, gyms they were members at. So besides looking at the trainers' own description, take a look at what they do/have done and see if it's aligned with your goals and values.

4) Last thing: Don't let the exterior determine the coach/trainers value. A good trainer doesn't necessarily have a six-pack. A good trainer knows how to explain and show you how and which exercises to make to reach your goal.

I hope these guidelines can help make the right choice if you're looking into online personal training. As always, questions and comments are welcome at taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com or via Instagram @trainwithadane

Happy training

people Motoring

Toyota RAV4 plug-in Hybrid

There has been huge interest in Toyota's first fully electric car, the bZ4X which is due in Irish car showrooms in June.

The car was on display at Dundrum Shopping Centre in South Dublin for a few days before the St Patrick's weekend and apparently around that 2,000 prospective customers registered their interest online. We are told that the entry level version of the bZ4X will be capable of doing up to 515km on a single charge.

I didn't get to see the new car in Dundrum, but last week I did have the pleasure of driving Toyota's new RAV4 plug-in hybrid. Apart from some new charge points at Junction 14 near Monasterevin, I haven't see many new charge points being installed around the country, so for me Hybrid or plug-in Hybrid means less range anxiety.

Toyota has given their popular RAV4 a make-over and the company who specialise in Hybrid cars, now give us their

first plug-in hybrid version. The big change with a plug-in hybrid is that you can now get up you 75km in fully electric and maybe a few kilometres more with careful driving in urban driving.

This chunky-looking SUV has been with us since 1994 and my test car was a face-lifted version of the fifth generation of the RAV4.

Toyota, who stopped making cars with diesel engines in 2018, claim that one litre of petrol will allow you to travel 100km. But to achieve that target you would need to keep the battery charged.

The new version of the RAV4 is fitted with a 18kw/h battery pack and married to Toyota's 2.5-litre petrol engine, its combined output of 306 horse power is greater than many rivals in the Irish market.

It's also one of the quicker plug-in crossovers around, delivering a zero to 100km/h in six seconds flat. It's certainly sturdy and has a really high



CAR REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

driving position. You get a good view of everything around you from that commanding driving position.

Overall there is very tidy look to the dash and Toyota now embraces Android and Apple CarPlay facilities.

I drove a pearl red coloured car with a black roof. I noticed that the Sport version is also available in Pearl White, Silver, Ash Grey or Midnight Blue. Inside the black leather seats had red stitching which certainly brightened up the interior décor.

To accommodate the larger battery pack the boot space has



been reduced by 60 litres to 500 litres. But it's still massive and it was a pleasant surprise to find a 'mini' spare wheel in that

spacious boot.

Six years ago after complaints from other car manufacturers Toyota had to withdraw

their ads which said that they were 'the best built cars in the world,' but it was such a strong and catchy strap line that every time I see a Toyota I think of the ad. However, I think Toyota are allowed to say that they make the 'best built mass produced cars in the world.'

Prices start at €51,890 for the Sol version, while the Sport version that I drove, will cost you €53,735. Road tax is €140. It's a massive motor, so quiet on the road and so easy to manoeuvre.

Incidentally the vehicle's name RAV4 is an abbreviation of 'Recreational Active Vehicle' with 4-wheel drive.'

The physio behind the Cork ladies' football team

West Cork Chartered Physiotherapist Sinead O'Regan may have completed marathons and has the privilege of owning her own business but being part of the backroom team with the Cork ladies' football team has to be up there with her best achievements says **Matthew Hurley**.

The Cork team are chasing their 12th All Ireland Title and their first since 2016 with their first game scheduled against Waterford on the weekend of May 7/8. There is quite a large West Cork representation on the team with Doheny's Mellissa Duggan (the vice-captain), Clonakilty's Martina O'Brien and O'Donovan Rossa's Laura O'Mahony being players to keep an eye on. Physio Sinead O'Regan has worked with GAA teams in Rosscarbery, BallinacCarthy and Newmarket before and explained how the Cork LGFA position came up.

"It was my friend and colleague Orla Coughlin who was actually working with them for the last number of years under the previous management (led by Ephie Fitzgerald).

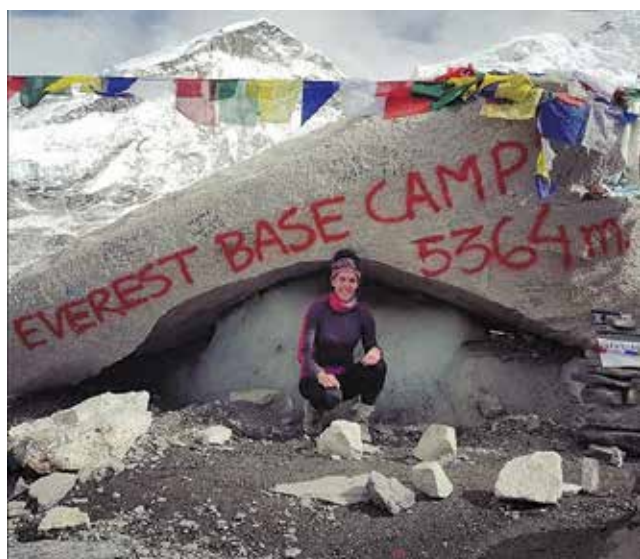
"In 2021, she asked me to come on board to help her and it was a brilliant set up," she said.

"At the end of the year, there was a change in management, so I wasn't really sure what was going to happen at that stage because I actually didn't know Shane Ronayne, personally. Never met him, never spoken to him.

"Shane rang me then one Saturday out of the blue and just asked me would I like to be back on board again for the coming season."

Sinead has already worked with the team for League games against Meath, Dublin and Waterford this year. She continues by saying how privileged she is to work the team.

"It's brilliant, even though people would often say to me you'd love the men's job now or at some stage down the line but I'm more than happy this is the gig I wanted and the ladies job



is so professional, they're such a good bunch to work with.

"When you're working with athletes at that level as well, they're so driven and competitive. They want the best, they demand the best of each other.

"It makes our job easy as well because you know they'll follow everything to a tee.

"It's not just the training we look at or even the rehab. We're looking at your sleep, we're looking at your rest days, we're looking at your stress levels. The team really take all that on board, which is great."

O'Regan is continuing on with the Cork LGFA side this year but also has roles with the Clonakilty Seniors and Carbery Hurlers. She goes on to explain about her career and how her job as a Chartered Physio works on a day to day basis.

"I suppose my job has changed an awful lot over the last 10 or 11 years. I've dipped in and out of different parts of physio but sport has always been a constant.

"I started in my first sports job when I was in final year of college. I got involved with the UCC Sigerson team in 2011 and I was still in the final year

myself at that stage so that was unbelievable," she said.

"They actually ended up winning the Sigerson Cup and the County Championship as well so it was a great first year out."

O'Regan interestingly used to work within the HSE full time, which was a help for later on in her career.

"I was in CUH and the regional in Cork where I was doing rotations on all the different areas, from outpatients to orthopaedics to stroke to ICU.

"I was basically rotating there for five or six years. I was always working with a couple of clubs on the side. Then I left CUH and went into paediatric disability for four years."

During an impressive career, a physiotherapist could do with a few breaks and O'Regan did take a year out in 2019 as she went abroad for a year. "I got burnout and I needed a change. I didn't really know what I wanted to do so I actually took six months off work and I went off travelling for a little bit.

"I was training for a Berlin Marathon with one of my friends and TJ Brosnan, who has Elite Sports Recovery up in Cork was a great help to us.

"I used to feel unbelievable doing the recovery after a long run on a Sunday and I used to go to TJ's on Monday and I swear to God, I could hop off the road on Tuesday again."

Going to Elite Sports Recovery provided O'Regan with a fantastic idea for a Recovery Centre in West Cork.

"I was away travelling over that six months and then I was thinking, there's an opening for setting up a Sports Recovery Centre similar to that in West Cork because we were travelling an hour to and from Cork.

"I set up a physiotherapy and Sports Recovery Suite in Clon in 2020, it wasn't the ideal timing with Covid, as I had to delay the opening for four months.

"My job has diversified so much, I trained as a personal trainer in 2017 with Setanta College in Tipperary. I started teaching some fitness classes just to pay the bills and that opened up another direction for me."

O'Regan, who has been doing online fitness classes since 2020, explained how she actually didn't start with physiotherapy initially in college.

"Physiotherapy had crossed my mind in school, it was kind of one of the options, as I was always into sport.

"The points were really high for physio so I just convinced myself I'd never get them," she explained.

"I filled out my CAO with PE teaching as my first choice and I actually got PE teaching, I got the points for physio as well but unfortunately it wasn't on my CAO.

"I did one year PE teaching in UL, doing PE and Chemistry. Halfway through the year, I loved the PE side of it and didn't really love the chemistry side of it.

"Around Christmas time, I filled out my CAO again. The following September, I started in physio and I did four years in Dublin (UCD).

"I suppose you do work longer hours and weekends I guess but that's probably the route I've gone down."

O'Regan has certainly built up a great career for herself since her college days. As she looks forward to her second year with the Ladies Footballers, the whole of West Cork is behind them.

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Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. K.o.C.

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, 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. K.o.C.

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THANKSGIVING PRAYER

O, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, Fruitful Vine, Splendor of Heaven. Blessed Mother of the Son of God, assist me in this my necessity. O, Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my mother. O, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to secure me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. O, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee (say 3 times). Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hands (say 3 times). Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine. Amen. This prayer must be said for three days after which the favour will be granted and the prayer must be published. G.C.

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PRAYERS

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