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Celebrating 21 years in existence, The Permaculture Course at Kinsale College held a Permaculture/ Environmental Sustainability Conference on May 28. Pictured were Wayne Dunle and Virginia O'Gara from 'My Goodness' foods. Picture: John Allen

Full steam this year for festival favourite Innishannon Rally

After being cancelled for the past two years due to Covid, a firm favourite on the West Cork calendar, the 25th Innishannon Steam Rally 2022 in aid of The Irish Cancer Society, returns this year. The festival will take place over the June Bank Holiday Weekend, on Sunday, June 5 and Monday, June 6. This is Ireland's largest rally of its kind, welcoming over 1,000 exhibits on to a 38-acre site. The first vehicles have already arrived to the rally field with a fantastic experience promised for 2022.

The rally is a unique event where visitors get to see machinery, traditions, demonstrations and

items from the past. During a stroll around the field you will come across great treasures and many a willing exhibitor who is only too happy to share their knowledge. The mix of entries over the years has been so great that there is something for everyone, young and old.

The exhibits this year include huge tractors, threshers, unique cars, motorbikes, oil and steam engines, as well as experiencing a working forge. There is also a pet's corner, always popular with children, a cake sale, numerous stands and stalls with art and craft displays, a dog show, sheep dog trials and road rolling.

Music will be by The Neilly O'Connor band on the Sunday followed by Patrick O'Sullivan on the bank holiday Monday so be sure to bring your dancing shoes.

This is a fun-day out for collectors, enthusiasts and visitors alike with car parking and camping facilities set up in the village.

Raffle tickets in aid of The Irish Cancer Society are available online at donate.ie.

Entrance fees are: €15: Adults; €10 OAPs and Students (with a card) plus Free Programme; €30 Family (max 4); Children under 12 years free.

For more information see www.isvrally.com.

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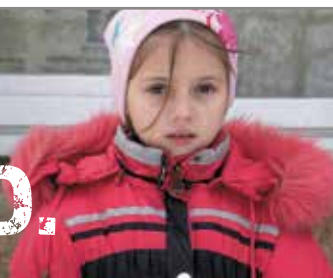
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West Cork Garda Youth Awards 2021 take place in Kinsale

Two hundred guests gathered at the Kinsale Hotel and Spa on Friday, May 13 to laud the award winners at the 26th West Cork Garda Youth Awards, in association with SuperValu. The presentation of the 2021 Awards was delayed by Covid.

Chief Superintendent Con Cadogan, Divisional Officer for Cork West Division, paid tribute to the award winners, saying that it was heartening to see so many young people involving themselves in activities within their local communities. He also stressed the importance of the spirit of volunteerism in general, and he commended the positive input created by those who give freely of their time, and that An Garda Síochána was delighted to be in a position to honour the award winners. He also said that the award winner's dedication and commitment to their communities, be that local, national, or international was uplifting to witness.

A total of 16 awards were presented, and the mood was uplifting, as the dedication and excellence of the award winners was celebrated. Each of the nominees who didn't win an award will be recognised with a Certificate of Nomination.

In addition to the sixteen



Marian Creedon, Macroom District Award; Lauren McCarthy, Clonakilty District Award; Aisling O'Reilly, Bandon District Award; Zoe Murphy, Bantry District Award.

2021 awards presented, an award from 2020 was presented to Sean Dwyer from Castle-townbere who was unable to attend the 2020 presentation ceremony. An Outstanding Contribution to Youth award was presented to retired Garda James O'Mahony, who founded the Awards in 1995. A Special Recognition award was presented to Chief Superintendent Con Cadogan to acknowledge his contribution to the West Cork Garda Youth Awards. A Posthumous award for Garda Aidan Cremin was presented to Aidan's brother Mike, in recognition of Aidan's outstand-

ing contribution to the youth of Beara before his untimely passing in 2021.

There were five Overall award winners.

Saorlaith O'Leary (18) Macroom

Saorlaith was selected as the Deputy Head of her school, a very responsible position, where she is the representative of the student body. She was chosen as a Buddy for incoming first year students, assisting them settle into school. Saorlaith has fundraised for the Hope Foundation, raising over €4,000. She has been a Wellbeing Amba-

sador in her school for the past three years. She is a member of Macroom Foróige, where she has been involved in visiting residents in nursing homes, assisted with Tidy Towns, and helped through her engagement with refugees in her locality.

Lorraine Casey (18) Lissarda

Lorraine has run the Women's Mini Marathon in both 2020 and 2021, raising funds for the Marie Keating Foundation. She has been the recipient of Awards in her school recognising her dedication and contribution to her school community. Lorraine is a member of the Senior De-

bating Team, and has been very involved in organising a variety of school plays and musicals. Lorraine also received a highly commended Award for her project in the BT Young Scientist exhibition. Her project was titled 'The Google Generation' and it examined if young people are too reliant on internet search engines.

Lara O'Sullivan (17) Macroom

Lara has been engaged with the European Youth Parliament, where she has supported active debates on issues related to young people. She has spoken at Climate Rights Ireland – a forum to explore factors affecting the environment. Lara wrote a prize winning essay on gender equality in the European Union. She has also addressed the European Youth Parliament on eating disorders and exercise addiction in young people. Lara has also spoken at the UCC Feminist Society's Conference on the topic of supporting people living in Direct Provision.

Conall Boyle (20) Courtmacsherry

Conall has volunteered for several years as a Lifeguard, and has also acted as an Advocate – encouraging his peers to train

as lifeguards. He has acted as a volunteer Water Safety Ireland instructor, both in the swimming pool and on the beach. Conall has spoken to his entire school on the topic of water safety. He has been appointed as a Mentor for younger students, and taken on the role as a school Ambassador. Conall acted as a peer leader during the mental health awareness week. Conall undertook a 5km swim across Courtmacsherry Bay to raise funds for Mental Health Ireland.

Laoise O'Sullivan (18) Macroom

Laoise has been a member of Macroom Foróige for the past five years, where she has been involved with her local Tidy Towns group, and raised funds for charities in her locality. Laoise took part in the BT Young Scientist exhibition for two consecutive years. She also raised over €4,000 for the Hope Foundation supporting the street children in Calcutta. Laoise performs with Cork Youth Orchestra and has played music for residents in local nursing homes. Laoise has been recognised with awards in her school for her positivity and being such a great role model to others.

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West Cork honours the late Professor Gerry O'Sullivan with memorial statue

On National Cancer Survivors Day, Sunday, June 5, a life-sized statue will be revealed by a West Cork community to honour the late Professor Gerry O'Sullivan, a pioneer in the field of cancer research, and founder of Cork Cancer Research Centre and the national charity Breakthrough Cancer Research.

The statue will be officially unveiled in the Professor Gerry O'Sullivan Memorial Park, Caheragh, at 2pm, by the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan and Professor of Sullivan's widow Breda and family. They will be joined by friends, family and colleagues from all over country and as far as the US, along with neighbours and the wider West Cork community, as they celebrate an extraordinary life dedicated to helping others.

The keynote speaker at the event will be one of the world's most influential scientists, leading immunologist, author and broadcast personality, Prof. Luke O'Neill. O'Neill is a regular contributor to discussions on science and research on TV and radio in Ireland and around the world. Like many said of Prof. O'Sullivan, he has an infectious enthusiasm and belief in the power of science to help us live better lives, so those attending can expect to be inspired.

Professor O'Sullivan was a highly acclaimed surgeon, scientist and cancer researcher. His world-renowned clinical expertise was matched by his belief in the power of research to mould a better future for people with cancer.

Gerry was deeply rooted in the West Cork community. He grew up on a farm in Milleenahorna in Caheragh, went to Gurrane National School, and then to St. Fachtna's De La Salle High School in Skibbereen. He spent as much of his free time as possible "down West" and religiously attended the Threshing Festival in the community every year until he passed in 2012.

In 2014, the local Caher-



agh community, who are immensely proud of Gerry and his accomplishments, created a 'Science Through Nature'-themed recreational park, which was named in his honour to preserve his memory and inspire future generations.

The Kirby Family in Killeenleigh donated the four-acre plot, which links the school and churches to the rest of the village, and the development was funded by generous private donations, Cork County Council and other voluntary groups. It is an ongoing project to create a vibrant, creative and educational space for families in the area, with plans for themed gardens denoting significant periods of Prof. Gerry's life. There will also be a pollinator corner for a hive and honeybees, another passion of O'Sullivan.

Eight years later, the same community have come together again to commission a life-size statue of the late professor, which will take centre place in the Professor Gerry O'Sullivan Memorial Park. The statue was created by sculptor Don Cronin.

Chair of the committee Micheál Kirby, said, "Professor O'Sullivan died at the young age of 65 from cancer, a disease he had spent his whole career saving others from. We are so incredibly proud of his achievements and the man he became and want to encourage young people in our community to follow in his footsteps. Nothing is impossible when you have passion, determination and a kind heart. Gerry never forgot his roots in West

Cork and we will always remember him."

Orla Dolan, daughter of Professor O'Sullivan, who is continuing his vision as CEO of Breakthrough Cancer Research, said, "My father always had a special place in his heart for West Cork and the people of Caheragh. Whenever we saw him lost in thought, he said he was 'looking West for inspiration'. I know he would have felt immensely honoured and humbled by this upcoming event. I hope everyone comes out and joins us on the day as we celebrate his life and the lives of cancer survivors."

Professor O'Sullivan's work continues with Breakthrough Cancer Research, an Irish medical cancer research charity that he founded on the unshakeable belief in Cork and in Ireland that we can make more survivors of cancer and we will do that through research. Breakthrough invest in world-class research in Ireland to impact the quality of life for cancer patients and to save lives. They are particularly focused on improving outcomes for cancers which are poorly served by current treatment options and have helped take 9 new treatments from the lab into clinical trial.

The statue unveiling is an event open to the public from 1.30pm-4pm on Sunday, June 5. In addition to the commemoration ceremony, there will be dancing performances from the local national school, music with the St Fachtna's Silver Band, facepainting and food trucks.

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A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

The weather has been touch-and-go so far, but there's no denying that summer is here, and frankly it couldn't have come at a better time. Just a month ago we were emerging back into the light both metaphorically and literally. Now Covid is receding into the past, and it's still light enough to work in the garden at 8pm. Happy days. I can't pinpoint when it happened, but it happened. One week I was still feeling uncomfortable in a crowd and the next I was sharing a jacuzzi with three other people and having the chats.

It's so good to find myself basking in the comfort of living in West Cork again, though it sometimes makes me feel guilty to be so blessed, with all the terrible news coming at us every day from other parts of the world. War and heatwaves. Shortages and school shootings. Not to mention the housing crisis and the rise in the cost of living closer to home. My way to deal

Future-proofing

with the guilt is to try and truly appreciate what we have; to feel grateful instead of guilty. That means getting out there and appreciating what is on my doorstep. Summer is West Cork at its best and I promise to try and make the most of it in 2022.

I'm not advocating turning my back on the world. Just looking a little closer to home and taking action where I can instead of despairing about events that I can do nothing about. That means not only appreciating the now but planning for what's to come. We've got a good thing going here in West Cork and we need to get together and ensure that we are prepared for the future. Our communities are strong and willing, and I have no doubts that we have the talent, the resources, and the skills we need to ensure that West Cork continues to thrive.

Let's face it, the outlook is grim. The effects of climate change are accelerating faster than had been predicted. Brexit and the war in Ukraine has shown us just how dependant we are on imports for both food and energy. Compared to the situation in other parts of the world, we will not be hit as hard, nor as soon. However, we will suffer the repercussions of climate change conflict and strife, though they may be far away.

This may sound a bit doom and gloom – especially for a column that started out so jolly. It isn't. It's about cherishing what we have, thanking our lucky

stars and taking measures now to prepare. Securing our future means thinking about security. Energy security. Food security, and infrastructure security from extreme weather.

One very inspiring project is the Clonakilty Chamber going ahead with an ambitious plan to create a solar farm on a 26-acre site in Shannonvale. Its 22,000 solar panels will provide power to 1,500 homes and will be connected to the grid. Imagine if all small towns and villages had a similar commitment to stop using fossil fuels and generate their own energy. The area I live in has about 500 inhabitants and tens of thousands of acres of land. Could we set up a local energy-generating project? I think it's worth looking at. Imagine that our communities were no longer dependant on fossil fuels? Same goes for food security. Imagine that we grew the food we need locally. Doesn't that sound excellent? As for security from extreme weather events, we need to take a good and hard look at our coastline, our roads, and our buildings; compare them to the predictions of sea level rise, and extreme storms and plan accordingly. It's not rocket science. In fact, it's the basic plot of the fairy tale of the Three Little Pigs.

Another good idea is the Sustainable Energy Authority Initiative grant scheme. I've started looking into it for our house and I must admit I got a thrill when the salesperson I was talking to asked me if I just wanted to heat the water, or whether I wanted to future-proof my home. Future proof? Yes, please. That sounds like a splendid idea.

Even with the grants, it's still a costly project that demands a lot of planning. I recently inherited a bit of money, and I can't think of a better investment than to future-proof my house. Watch this space for updates and in the meantime – have a look at your own house, village, and community. It's time to get cracking...

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the June issue of West Cork People,

It's mad to think this time last year I had just registered for my vaccine and we were still restricted from socialising indoors. I'm really appreciating my freedom this year and anticipating the many wonderful meet-ups, outings and holidays planned for this summer. Hopefully the weather continues to behave itself and we get to soak up all that West Cork has to offer.

I was lucky enough last month to spend time at Aultaghreagh Cottage Garden in Dunmanway. It must have been 20 years since I visited there last and seeing the mature trees and how the garden has evolved was really nice. I'm looking forward to perusing more of the fabulous gardens on this year's West Cork Garden Trail and getting ideas for my own little patch. My project this year was to incorporate a miniature pond into the garden; which I hope will attract even more wildlife. It's so uplifting to see people in West Cork making an effort to let their grass grow and encourage and support biodiversity and our wildlife. Our garden is pretty small but over the past few years, we've been gradually making our grass strip smaller and smaller as we plant more pollinator-friendly plants and trees.

At last count I think there were over 10 (small) trees and we are really seeing the benefits this summer, as quite a few of them have matured, providing handy perches for the birds, as they hop from branch to branch and wake us up with their morning song; we're also enjoying the privacy and shade that they bring. Once you keep on top of the pruning and pick the right specimen, there is no need to be afraid of planting a tree or two or three in a small area. We're lucky to have so many great garden centres in West Cork so don't be afraid to ask for their advice.

Unfortunately there is still weedkiller being sprayed around the place; particularly sad to see it still being used in social housing estates locally. How anyone can think the dead, burnt vegetation it leaves behind looks better than a few flowering weeds is beyond me! Research has shown that prolonged exposure to the weedkiller Glyphosate causes significant harm to species and our health.

Getting back to summer outings, how great is it to see all of West Cork's favourite festivals back in full swing. June heralds the return of the Innishannon Steam and Vintage Rally, the Fastnet Maritime and Folk festival in Ballydehob, and the Kupala multicultural festival in Bantry; in July Clonakilty welcomes the South of Ireland Band Championships and the Eyeries Family Festival takes place... just a few of the events that you will find around West Cork.

Inside this issue you'll find the usual mix of news, views and community stories and interviews. We also have a focus on Women's Health this month. You may have heard a lot of talk recently about menopause and the need for better services in this area for women. Due to the lack of support and services, what should be an empowering period of life for women, can be a really difficult time for many. We have spoken to a few professionals in this area and some of our health columnists have kindly shared their expertise, so our hope is that it will be of benefit to any woman out there unsure of what's she going through and how to get the help she needs.

I hope you enjoy the read,
Until next month,
Mary



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Calling all genealogists and history lovers

Are you researching your local area or doing your family tree, or would you like to learn more about the history of your locality? Cork County Council's Library and Arts Service, Local Studies Library, has launched its remodelled website www.corklocals-tudies.ie.

Following a major overhaul of the existing website, the new site provides enhanced access to a wide range of resources, including recently digitised material such as the Irish Tourist Association files and Standish Barry Estate maps.

Welcoming the new Local Studies Website, the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan highlighted how, "With a raft of extra features, such as a dedicated schools page with information for students, history podcasts, extensive information relating to family history research and detailed descriptions of books that are available for research from Cork County Council's Library Service Rare Books Room and the Cork and Irish Collections, I know that there is a wealth of exploration and discovery awaiting its visitors."

Ludgate's Reignite Programme hopes to get West Cork women back to work

The Reignite Programme recently launched by The Ludgate Hub in Skibberdeen aims to support women in West Cork to get back into the workplace. Taking place over 11 weeks, it will show women how to diversify their skill set, upskill and reskill after taking time out of work for children, to take care of parents, or maybe because of illness. It aims to help bridge the gap between what they did before and getting back to the workplace, with a link to local businesses through a three-month work placement.

This programme was made possible through the support of Rethink Ireland's Rural Recovery Fund and ESB. As part of the funding call with Rethink there were over 60 applicants and Ludgate was one of six who were successful.

In a rural setting, sometimes the signposts to get back to work aren't as obvious as in an urban environment. And if you don't have the luxury of time to research, which a lot of women don't, then that's problematic.

Reignite will help women identify their skillset, to make sure they re-enter the work-

place in a way that enhances and draws on their skills and their prior life, or maybe even redirects them if they didn't like what they did in the past.

Fiona Ryan, Start Up and Entrepreneurship Manager with the Ludgate Hub is programme lead for Reignite. "What I've discovered is that, in a rural setting, there is more of a chance that you have to step outside your career comfort zone. The opportunities are different, but they're out there, if you know how to find them," explains Fiona. "In my experience, once you figure it out, you'll find yourself challenged in more ways than you ever hoped.

"The beauty of this programme is that we will support the returnee in the transition back to the workforce. The job market is thriving and we want to ensure that there is talent to meet those roles. Some candidates may not feel ready to return to the workforce at the end of the 11-week programme, we will work with this candidate to identify their next move. There are other opportunities through Ludgate, maybe they have a start up frame of mind and

want to embark on their own business idea, we can support that through the Ludgate Start Up Academy. The options are endless, it is finding the right fit for you."

The Reignite Programme at The Ludgate Hub in Skibber-

deen, Co Cork, is open for applications. To find out more and apply, go to www.ludgate.ie. Also find information there on hot-desking at the hub, supports for business, rural regeneration and sustainability.

Fiona Ryan, Start Up and Entrepreneurship Manager with the Ludgate Hub



West Cork beaches top of the table again

An Taisce has announced the International Blue Flag and Green Coast Award recipients for 2022. Eighty-five Irish beaches and 10 marinas have been awarded the Blue Flag for 2022, up two on last year's total. With 15 Green Coast Award beaches, Cork is once again top of the table.

West Cork beaches that retained their Blue Flag status for 2022 are Barley Cove, Garretstown, Garrylucas White Strand, Inchydoney East Beach, Inchydoney West Beach, Owenahincha Little Island Strand and Tragumna.

The Warren in Rosscarbery has unfortunately lost its Blue Flag for this year but still received a classification of 'Good', the second highest classification available based on analysis of bathing water samples over the past four bathing seasons.

The Green Coast Award recognises beaches for their clean environment, excellent water quality and natural beauty. An important aspect of this award is the involvement of Clean Coasts groups, comprised of tens of thousands of volunteers nationwide. These volunteers participate in community clean-



ups and in cooperation with Local Authorities help sensitively manage their local beaches throughout the year.

Green Coast beaches and strands in West Cork are Sherkin Island Silver Strand, Ballyrisode, Galley Cove, Dooneen Pier, Red Strand, Cadogan's, Garnish Beach and Inchydoney East.



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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.

"When I came to the front of the hospital, it was absolutely quiet. What greeted me when I got into the main corridor was sheer pandemonium. This was not a major incident, but a major disaster of battlefield proportions."
- Dr. Dominick Pinto

The name 'Martha Pope' was the IRA code word used when alerting the authorities that a bomb had been placed in a nearby area. It was common practice for the IRA to alert the police they had planted a bomb, apparently in order to limit or bring to zero the number of civilian casualties! The bombs were meant to disrupt the work of the UK government in Northern Ireland and to make life as difficult as possible for trade and general day to day living for people in the North with the hope that the UK government would rethink

'Martha Pope' and the Omagh bombing

their position in the State. Of course, loss of life inevitably happened, none more so than when a bomb was detonated in Omagh on August 15, 1998. Bloody Sunday is often attributed with being the culminating event that began the Troubles in Northern Ireland but the Omagh bombing is associated with being the event that ended the Troubles, such was the disgust at its outcome.

After 30 years of violence and tit-for-tat killings, the Irish and British governments sat down to try and finally bring peace to Ireland; in 1997 both governments signed the 'Mitchell Principles', a commitment by both parties to focus on resolving political issues by peaceful means. While the Provisional IRA also declared a ceasefire, many of their members saw this as a betrayal of the republican struggle. These members broke off from the P-IRA and formed a splinter group called the Real IRA, a group that rejected the Mitchell principles, as well as the Good Friday Agreement, opposing any political settlement that falls short of Irish unity and independence. The Real IRA focused their bombing campaign on town centres so that they would damage the economic infrastructure of Northern Ireland. Similar to the P-IRA before them, they wanted to damage the economy of the towns and limit civilian casualties. They attempted to do this by calling the police before a bomb was due to explode. Generally, three calls were made, one 30



minutes prior, one 15 minutes prior and one five minutes prior to the explosion. However, this was often not enough to mitigate fatalities, as was the case in Omagh. Furthermore with Omagh, some miscommunication during the calls led the police to direct evacuees towards the blast instead of away from it, leading to catastrophic results.

The Omagh bomb created Ireland's largest-ever medical emergency. Within the first 45 minutes of the explosion, 240 injured people were taken to Tyrone General Hospital. The staff were completely overwhelmed with the scale and volume of people needing treatment. Buses, cars and helicopters were used to take people to other nearby hospitals to alleviate some of the workload of medical staff. Of the 29 people killed, 16 were Catholic and 11 were Protestant; two Spanish tourists were also killed. The deaths included many children and teenagers with most of the victims being women. In one case, three generations of the same family were killed. Mary Grimes, her daughter, Avril Monaghan and Avril's 18-month-old baby, Maura. Avril was also pregnant with twins at the time of her death.

The initial reaction to the bomb was revulsion. The Irish, Northern Irish and British governments had been working politically to try and bring peace to Ireland after 30 years of war. The killing was entirely unnecessary and it killed Catholics, as well as Protestants. For the general public, it cemented the idea that the method to a free and united Ireland was to be a political journey, not one fought with blood.

Gwen Hall whose 12-year-old son was severely injured in the explosion wrote a letter to the R-IRA from her hospital bed.

"To the bold lads who ripped out the heart of Omagh, I will probably never know who you are, but you know. I'll tell you who I am. My name is Gwen, I am the mother of Alistair, who is the bravest person I know. We and all the other victims of your ambush last Saturday, would like to know why? I went to hell and back lying injured in the debris and the water and the blood. Not knowing if my 12-year-old son was alive or dead. By God's grace he survived and that is why I am lying here able to write. I wish you could have heard that child crying inconsolably yesterday, as he struggled with the pain

from his severed limb. That was what ripped at my heart. However, we are two of the lucky ones for which I thank God, we do have a future. You may have broken the bodies of the people of Omagh, but you can never break their spirit. The last line of one of my favourite songs is. 'God is watching us from a distance' you can run but you cannot hide."

Gwen was right, the culprits could run. However, they could not hide. Three days after the bombing, on August 18, 1998 the R-IRA took responsibility for the bombing. One month after that, they announced a ceasefire, which lasted for two years. Despite knowing that the R-IRA as a group were responsible, no names of the actual bombers were in the crosshairs of the RUC. After much detective work and suspicions, it was a mobile phone conversation between the bombers that eventually led the police to them.

They were Michael McKevitt (Dundalk, Co. Louth), Liam Campbell (Dundalk, Co. Louth), Colm Murphy (Dundalk, Co. Louth) and Seamus Daly (Castleblaney, Co. Monaghan). However, it wasn't until 2009, 11 years later, that the families of Omagh bombing victims found a form of justice.

Michael McKevitt was the founder of the R-IRA and is married to the sister of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands. McKevitt served 13 years in jail for offences related to being a member of an illegal organisation, the R-IRA, as well as directing terrorism. Liam Campbell only last week was extradited to Lithuania on gun smuggling charges and will face trial there soon. He was convicted of being a member of an illegal organisation, the R-IRA and has served eight years behind bars previously. Colm Murphy was the one who supplied the mobile phones that were used for correspondence between the scout car and the car fitted with the bomb. He was the first of the four men to be charged in relation to the case, however his conviction was overturned on a technicality. However, he also served years in jail for various offences related to terrorism, being a member of an illegal organisation, the R-IRA and gun running. His son, Conan Murphy (Dundalk, Co. Louth), is currently serving a jail sentence on an explosives charge. He was found making a 500 lb bomb in a shed in Dundalk Co. Louth. Seamus Daly, was found guilty of being a member of an illegal organisation, the R-IRA and served three-and-a-half years behind bars.

All four men were never charged in a criminal court with being the culprits for the Omagh bombing, as the prosecution felt there was not enough evidence to convict them. However, the families of the victims raised money and sued them in a civil court. The civil court requires a lesser burden of proof. In the civil court, all four men were found guilty, and were found to be liable for the Omagh Bombing and killing 29 people. The biggest case of mass murder in Northern Irish history. They were requested to pay 1.5 million pounds in damages to the victims: None of which has been paid.

Christopher O'Sullivan TD

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

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An Post confirm a 'glimmer of hope' for Goleen Post Office

Cork South West TD Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has confirmed that a prospective candidate has come forward to run the post office in Goleen, which was due to close on May 31.

Deputy O'Sullivan said, "this is really positive news. An Post has confirmed that a "decent prospect" has applied for the position and what's even more positive is that the existing postmistress has agreed to stay on, to ensure the smooth transition of the changeover of facilities."

He continued, "I want to thank Breda Buckley in particular for the kind offer to stay on and assist with this transition. I'm sure a lot of detail has to be ironed out but according to An Post this is looking very good. I will keep people updated on any further developments."

Because of these latest developments Deputy O'Sullivan has decided to cancel the proposed public meeting, which was due to take place on Monday, May 31 in Goleen.

Sports Capital Grant Funding puts West Cork Clubs ahead

Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has congratulated Bandon Golf Club, Bantry Bay Golf Club, Castletack FC and Eyeries Community Development Association for their successful appeals under the Sports Capital Grants.

Bandon was awarded €79,559, while Bantry was awarded €73,165. €43k was also awarded for Castletack FC for their clubhouse and machinery while Eyeries Community Development Association have been awarded €68,740 to refurbish their dressing rooms.

"This is a great boost for all of these clubs. They put together fantastic appeals, so congratulations to the committees for their hard work," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"I want to thank minister Jack Chambers and the department for showing discretion and understanding in these cases."



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History in the making: The rise of Sinn Fein in the North



HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

In May this year history was made in Northern Ireland. For the first time since the 1920 'Government of Ireland Act' that officially created the state of Northern Ireland, a nationalist party has been elected as the largest political grouping. Sinn Fein topped the polls with twenty-seven seats, two more than the unionist DUP. The party with the highest number of seats is designated to get the first Minister position in the Assembly, which in this case would be Michelle O'Neill. This too would be historic, as it would mean the first nationalist female leader to hold that position.

The chilling words of Ian Paisley still resonate from his graveside: 'Never, never, never'. This was his mantra, when he, with the help of loyalist workers strangled the state of Northern Ireland in 1973 when there was an attempt to power share with nationalist parties in the 'Sunningdale Agreement'. Sectarianism won the day and the agreement fell, resulting in unfettered unionist control for decades to come. This of course

led to tragic consequences, as some nationalists feeling disenfranchised from the political process, believed they could only be heard by bomb and by bullets. With the strangulation of any genuine democracy, the extremes in Northern Ireland were pitted against each other resulting in a bloodbath amongst nationalist and unionist communities.

That is why the 1998 'Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement' was such a vital component in stemming the blood and reforming institutions such as the government and the police force, which had failed so many sectors of society. Thirty-four years later, the Assembly has worked relatively well, notwithstanding years of turmoil and suspension of the chamber. The violence by and large has abated, though not disappeared, and nationalist voices have been democratically elected. Gerrymandering [i.e. the fixing of electoral boundaries to weaken the nationalist vote] has disappeared and the police force, while not attracting the numbers of Catholics it originally hoped for, is a universe away from the corruption and collusion of the loyalist leaning former RUC force.

Yet here we are in 2022 staring down the barrel of a gun, a metaphor I choose deliberately! The DUP canvassed for this election on the promise of not entering the Assembly until the Northern Ireland protocol had been eradicated. True to their word, they have delivered on this promise to their voters and refused to take their seats. Let's have some perspective with this 'tactic'. It is one Sinn Fein has

used since its inception. They also contest for their seats in the Westminster elections, on a promise that they would abstain from sitting in London. However, there is some mischief in the DUP's decision in this case.

Demographics, polls and the last number of elections all foresaw that it was only a matter of time before they would face a unionist defeat to a larger nationalist vote. Knowing that the 2022 elections would herald this eventuality, the party could not face the symbolic humiliation of succumbing to a nationalist majority. In real terms the unionist vote is still larger than the nationalist one taken together, but of course one of the great problems of unionism currently in Northern Ireland, is their division, and so it turned out to be in this election. Prior to any vote being cast, the DUP's leader Jeffrey Donaldson hinted that he would not take up the position of Second Minister, which meant serving second fiddle to Sinn Fein. The irony of this statement, is that both First and Second Minister are equal positions, despite those titles. [When you factor in how symbolism and language are extremely sensitive issues in the North – one wonders why those titles were ever conceived?] Yet this never seemed to worry the DUP when they were comfortably the majority party for a decade.

So here we are again. At the time of writing, the newly elected politicians have yet to take their seats. The suspension of the Assembly is nothing new. In fact it has been suspended five times in its thirty-four year history. The longest spell was



There are many on the island who would be very supportive of what Michelle O'Neill is achieving in the North and many of our own politicians have made calls for the DUP to enter into government with them now and take their seats. The irony should not be lost on us.

590 consecutive days without a devolved government in the North. When this happens, it means direct rule from the UK. The fact that Sinn Fein does not sit in Westminster [which is of their own choice, it must be said], makes this stalemate even more undemocratic.

So what are the current issues? Let us begin by looking at the three strands that are central to the foundation of the 'Belfast Agreement'. The first one, was to set up a power sharing assembly and an executive. Simply put, this meant every party would get a seat at the table. Though to get a seat in the executive, a party would have to have a minimum number of seats under the agreed system. This meant politicians on different side of the spectrums would have to sit and work together which proved it can be done, as exemplified by John Hume (SDLP) and David Trimble (UUP), both recipients of the Nobel Prize prize for their efforts. While the initial rays of political hope were bright, mood of the Assembly has darkened over the intervening years. During the last decade and a half, it has been dominated by the extreme unionist DUP vote and by Sinn Fein who would be seen as an extreme nationalist party in comparison to the SDLP party of John Hume.

However there is new light emerging on the horizon, in the guise of the Alliance Party. The hint is in the name. It is a party that seeks to move away from the fringes and sectarianism of politics in Northern Ireland to a place where religion and ethnicity are not reasons to vote for anyone. A return of seventeen votes in the assembly election of 2022 has proven that there is fertile ground in the north for a generation who wants to be defined by other things and move on from old and strangled identities.

Strand two of the 'Belfast/Good Friday Agreement' established an Irish dimension to the executive with an aim to improve north-south bodies and cooperation. Likewise, strand three established an east-west body of institutions to develop good relations between Britain and Ireland. One of the destabilising factors within the unionist mindset, is that strand two has become a dominant theme in the Assembly. What is more, is all the talk of border polls, a poll that would merely establish a discussion on whether people would like to vote for Irish unity somewhere down the line, has spooked the unionist community: Though numerous polls in the North have suggested Irish unity is a long way off from popular support, as of yet!

The greatest concern currently to the unionist community is the symbolic nature of the protocol. I say symbolic because the protocol was devised in the Brexit negotiations to protect the European Single Market, yet at the same time allow as much freedom as possible between the north and the south, not just for the sake of politics, but to preserve the all-Ireland economy too. Most observers and commentators have agreed that it was a win-win for the North on economic grounds, now that they have access to a British market and also European. And while there was dread over the

proposed checks and balances and paperwork, the nightmare that was meant to be Brexit did not transpire as the doomsday-sayers had said it would. So what is all the fuss? Instead of having a border check within the country, an imaginary sea border was created between the north and mainland UK. In essence this meant there would be checking of goods in ports between North and Britain. This has infuriated many elements of unionism, because in their eyes, they are now being treated differently to other parts of the United Kingdom. This has strong and symbolic connotations for unionism. They feel their identity and link with the UK is being slowly erased.

Sinn Fein have made great strides both north and south of the border and are appealing to a wider range of voters in every passing election. There are many on the island who would be very supportive of what Michelle O'Neill is achieving in the North and many of our own politicians have made calls for the DUP to enter into government with them now and take their seats. The irony should not be lost on us. Those same politicians who call for power-sharing to work in the north, have done everything in their power to keep Sinn Fein from being part of any government in the south because they won't 'share' power with them in any coalition. I say that as an apolitical voter with no loyalties or ties to any party. Despite the historic results of 2022, history also teaches us that governance in Northern Ireland is as fragile as it ever was.

Notes: Michael Smith, author of 'An Unsung Hero – Tom Crean' will be giving a lecture about Crean, on June 15, in the Independent Museum, Kilmurry. Also, between June 15-19, UCC will be hosting an Irish Civil War Conference with over 80 lectures and events all for free.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



The Meade family from Madam, Ballinascorthy at the happy occasion of the presentation to Marie Meade, winner of the €20,000 lotto jackpot of the combined Ballinascorthy GAA, Underage GAA and Camogie clubs, l to r: Leona, Eoin, Marie, Ann and little Saorlaith.

Clonakilty Credit Union announces annual Cash for College Draw

The cost of living is on the rise, which will of course also affect college students leaving home for the first time this autumn. Clonakilty Credit Union can offer a helping hand. With its low interest rate, flexible repayment options and very high approval rate, their Education Loan is ideal for students. For possibly the first loan of their adult life, students won't find a friendlier or more understanding organisation to deal with.

Clonakilty Credit Union is also delighted to be organising its Kevin Mullen Cash for College Draw (formerly the Bur-

sary Draw) for the fourth year running. This draw has been set up to help with the many costs of college and has been named to honour the late Kevin Mullen for his contribution to the Credit Union movement.

Entry for the Cash for College Draw is open to Leaving Certificate students in its common bond – Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty; Mount Saint Michael Secondary School Rosscarbery and Clonakilty Community College – who will be going to college in Autumn 2022.

The prize amounts have been doubled this year, one student

from each of these three secondary schools will now win €1000 cash each! One other student will win a travel pass for year's free travel to Cork with West Cork Connect.

In a new twist this year, the school with the most entries will win €500 cash to spend how they wish.

Former Sacred Heart student Grace Lyons was a winner in 2021 and found her prize money to be a huge help in her first year of studying General Nursing in UCC. "Because my brother is also in college I put my winnings towards college fees, to help my parents out," she says.

"Accommodation is another big cost for college so I would encourage every student to apply for this draw."

To enter this draw you must have completed your leaving certificate year in June 2022 and intend on completing a full time Diploma/Degree at a Third Level Institution, apprenticeship or a full-time PLC. You must open or hold an account with Clonakilty Credit Union. Only those commencing their first year are eligible.

You can enter online at www.clonakiltycreditunion.ie or pick up an entry form from the Credit Union office on Kent Street.

Entry forms must be completed in full and returned to the Credit Union by 5pm on September 30, 2022.

The student cash prizes and

Free Travel Pass will be allocated by an Open Draw which will be held publicly in the Credit Union office on a date to be announced later.



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Macroom-based timber frame manufacturer to grow operations by 60 per cent

Cygnus, one of the largest timber frame manufacturers in Ireland, has announced ambitious plans to increase its output to help meet the targets set out by the Housing for All strategy. The company – which designs, manufactures and installs timber frame houses – aims to increase its overall output by more than 60 per cent over the next two to three years. This will lead to the creation of 50 new

jobs following an investment of €7m during the past 5 years.

Operating in Macroom since 1997, Cygnus currently produces 850 houses for the Irish market per annum. Following this investment, the company's aim is to produce 1,350 homes each year. The market share of timber frame construction has grown exponentially in recent years, from 37 per cent of developments in 2019, to 48 per cent in 2021. According

to Forest Industries Ireland (FII), rapid-build timber homes have the dual benefits of only needing three to five months to construct, whilst also saving 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions versus conventional builds.

The Cygnus facility in Macroom is the most automated timber frame plant in Ireland and the UK, and currently produces five houses per day. The onsite team engineers and designs the struc-

tural timber frame walls, floors and roofs. The digital information is then transferred to the highly automated processing lines on the factory floor, before the finished product is loaded onto trucks for assembly on site.

Cygnus has featured prominently in RTE's DIY SOS: The Big Build Ireland series over the last two years, supplying and installing buildings for families in challenging circumstances.

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FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

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

The earliest evidence of horses in Ireland dates to about 2000 B.C. from bones found in Newgrange, Co. Meath. In early Ireland the Brehon Laws generally make a distinction between two different types of horses: a work pony or 'capall' for farmwork, and a larger more prestigious horse or 'ech' (modern Irish, each) for riding. Generally the work pony was small and sturdy, similar to the modern Connemara pony and used as a pack animal for carrying loads such as corn, wheat, seaweed, and

so on. Horses were not used for pulling the plough in early Ireland, as this was a task for the heavier oxen. Plough-horses did not arrive in Ireland until the thirteenth century, when the strong plough-horses, originally developed for military purposes, were introduced from Europe.

Ownership of horses was a major status symbol to the Celts, as well as other early peoples. Horses were, and still are, relatively costly to maintain, and wherever their use became widespread, a social division opened up between those who could afford to keep them and those who could not. Indeed, the definition of a nobleman in Celtic society was someone who possessed a horse and arms.

Horses were frequently described in Irish legends as the companion of warriors. In fact, their warlike attributes and physical prowess were often described in as much detail as their human owners. A detailed system of evaluating good traits in a horse has been popular in Ireland for several centuries. According to this, the perfect horse should have 'three traits of a bull – a bold walk, a strong neck and a hard forehead; three traits of a hare – bright eyes, lively ears and swift run; three traits of a woman – broad breast, slender waist and short back'.

There is a detailed descrip-

tion of the two chariot horses of Cúchulainn, the 'Grey of Macha' and the 'Black of Sanglain'. Cúchulainn acquired the two horses by capturing them wild and 'breaking them in'. Both seem to have emerged from lakes, indicating that they were otherworldly. The 'Grey of Macha' is also connected by name to the Ulster goddess, Macha. In the famous saga 'Táin Bó Cuailnge' (The Cattle Raid of Cooley) they are described as 'two horses, swift, high springing, big-eared, beautiful, bounding, with flared



nostrils, with broad chests, with lively heart, high-groined, wide-hoofed, slender legged, mighty and violent. In one shaft a grey horse, broad-thighed, small stepping, long-maned. In the other shaft, a black horse, flowing mane, broad-backed'. The 'Grey of Macha' was capable of fighting alongside Cúchulainn, at one time killing an enemy horse.

When Cúchulainn later faced his final battle, the 'Grey of Macha's' grief was so great that it refused to be yoked to the chariot, before relenting and shedding great tears of blood at Cúchulainn's feet. Despite this, when Cúchulainn tied himself to the pillar stone and was dying, the 'Grey of Macha' defended him to the last, killing fifty men with his teeth and another thirty with its sharp hooves.

The swiftness of horses is another feature to appear regularly in mythology. According to the 'Book of Invasions', the three horses of the Tuatha Dé Danann, who ruled Ireland before the coming of the Milesian Celts, were called 'Attach' (blast) 'Gaoth' (wind) and 'Sidhe' (whirlwind). 'Mannánán', the Gaelic god of the sea, had a horse called 'Aonbarr' (One Maned) that was 'as swift as the naked cold wind of spring', and the sea was the same as dry land to her, and the rider was never killed off her back. In Greek mythology, Poseidon, the god of the sea, first created the horse.

The horse is also associated with the sun in Celtic symbolism, probably due to the idea that it drew the chariot of the sun across the sky. In Irish myth the sun was sometimes called 'Echdae' – the horse of the heavens.

The Celts had unrivalled skill in the use of the chariot

and this allowed them to settle over large parts of Europe. They were leaders in developing horse-related technology, making chariots that were particularly light and agile. They were also the first to develop the horseshoe, which was later borrowed from them by the Romans.

Horses were often said to be lucky animals and people got them to trample on newly sown grain crops, as this would cause the seeds to sprout well. The horse's halter was believed to bring good luck and was always kept by the seller when the animal was sold. The value or good fortune of the animal, which had been enclosed by the halter, would be retained within that trapping.

It was generally believed that horses had the power to see spirits and that they would stop on the road at haunted places and could not be persuaded to move on. This belief is probably based on the fact that horses can be skittish and have a very keen sense of smell both of which cause them to balk at anything they find threatening. Folklore claimed that if a rider or carter looked ahead directly between the horse's ears on such an occasion he would be able to see the spirit which was there.

Because of the horse's crucial value for agriculture and transport, the owner tended to be quite nervous about its welfare; beliefs abounded concerning many unexpected dangers that might lie in the animal's way. Often, when the owner would come to the stable in the morning, he would find the horse in a lather of sweat and this was explained as the result of it being stolen overnight by some neighbours who rode with the fairies. To repel the fairies various customs were used – tying a piece of red ribbon or a piece of hazel to the horse or spitting on it. Moreover, it was said that the horse itself sneezed in order to keep these beings out of reach. One of the greatest dangers to the horse was believed to be the evil eye of a begrudging person; to prevent this the Sign of the Cross was frequently made over the horse.

One type of horse that had great power, if folklore is to be believed, was the 'fiarláir' (true mare) which was defined as being the seventh filly born to its dam without any colt intervening. They were considered very good workers and gallopers and neither magic nor spirits had any effect on them. This, of course, is paralleled in human folklore, where the seventh son is believed to have unusual power and even more unusual was the power attributed to the seventy son of a seventh son.

Seven, of course, was considered a magic number in many cultures. It was also believed that where the true mare fell to the ground at its birth, a four-leaved shamrock ('Seamair Mhuire', Mary's clover) grew; this shamrock was believed to be very lucky, bringing good fortune and protection to anybody who found it.

Not all horses, however, were considered lucky. A foal born at Whitsuntide was believed to have a vicious nature. A white horse was generally considered unlucky, while a horse with four white legs was very difficult to sell as they were believed to be very difficult to tame. There were many varying opinions concerning the best colour for a horse. Grey horses were held in high esteem and advice from their riders was always heeded. A white mark on the forehead was generally considered a good sign. A foal born with a cawl was believed to make a good racehorse. A very strong belief was that a mare in foal should never pull a hearse or be brought near a corpse. All these superstitions indicate how close the relationship between humans and horses was. With the cow, the people's livelihood depended to a great extent on having a horse and the horse was often a human's sole companion on long journeys.

Expert horsemen were held in high regard. Good jockeys and those who could train horses, especially stubborn ones, could earn a good living. A wild horse, it was believed, could be tamed by whispering into its ear. The most famous of these 'horse-whisperers' was James Sullivan from Newmarket, Co. Cork who flourished in the early part of the nineteenth century. He was very successful at taming horses even the most stubborn or savage. In 1804 he performed his greatest feat when he so quietened a notorious stallion in the Curragh of Kildare that the animal actually took part in a race and won.

It was thought that horses had a special understanding of people and that 'one should treat a horse like a Christian'. Speaking to horses when they were working or racing has a natural soothing effect. If a team of plough-horses was moving too fast, the ploughman would sing calmly to them causing them to slow down. Sometimes, an extra man would walk beside the plough-team, whistling a tune to the horses; some people used to sing a slow song to soothe an uneasy or frightened horse.

An old saying in Irish is 'capall le ceansacht', meaning that a horse should be handled with gentleness.

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Bandon teacher wins ASTI award for outstanding contribution

A Bandon teacher has received the 2021 ASTI Achievement Award in recognition of his exceptional contribution to his school and community. The Award was presented at a reception in Dublin in May which had been postponed due to the pandemic.

Trevor Collins, a teacher and Assistant Principal at Bandon Grammar School created freebiz.ie, a website with free education resources for Leaving Cert business and economics students and Junior Cert business studies students. Trevor developed the website so that students could access these resources during the pandemic including periods when schools



were closed.

Trevor was also instrumental in implementing an IT system in his school which greatly assisted the transition to online teaching and learning in 2020.

Trevor runs a number of fundraising events including a 24-hour soccer marathon in his school. He also sources PCs from companies who are upgrading their IT and helps to organise the upgrading and distribution of the PCs to primary schools in West Cork.

The ASTI Achievement Awards recognise the outstanding contribution of second-level teachers to their students, schools, communities and to society.

Clon student gets top award at Scratch Finals

The National Scratch Coding Competition was held at the University of Limerick last month, bringing together the top scoring teams from all over the country. School students aged six and up, across five age categories, were invited to demonstrate their Scratch projects to the judges.

Clare Foyle from Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty took home one of the top prizes – a Judges Award – for her project ‘Unknown Tourist Attractions’.

Scratch is a visual programming language that makes it easy for young people to create their own interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art – and share their creations on the web. Using Scratch allows students to develop creative and

critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills as they work collaboratively or individually on Scratch projects.

Now in its twelfth year, the National Scratch Competition has established itself among both teachers and students as a leading platform and showcase for Ireland’s aspiring digital creators.

Frank Mockler, General Manager, Irish Computer Society said, “Events like the national Scratch competition allow Ireland’s upcoming cohort of digital creators to demonstrate their critical thinking, their creativity, and their innovation. We need to make sure that young people see the value and potential of technology and learn to own and control it. Some of the participants today may go on to be the IT professionals



of tomorrow – but even if they don’t, we hope that taking part has helped them develop new skills and become empowered digital citizens.”

€9 million investment in Cork South West Hospitals

Bantry hospital is one step closer to having an Endoscopy unit thanks to a €1.8 million euro investment as part of the Department of Health’s Capital Plan for 2022, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O’Sullivan says.

The funding is part of the department’s 2022 Capital Plan, which outlines what projects will receive funds for the year.

Deputy O’Sullivan said Cork South West was well looked after in 2022, with €5 million included for the extension and completion of Kinsale Hospital as well as €1.1 million for the extension of St Joseph’s Ward in Clonakilty and funds for

improvements at Skibbereen and Castletownbere.

“I’m so pleased at this announcement. Funding and further investment in west Cork’s hospitals and medical facilities is a high priority issue for me,” Deputy O’Sullivan said.

“I’m especially excited about the €1.8 million for the design and preparatory works for of a state of the art Endoscopy unit in Bantry, which continues to gather strong momentum. Endoscopy procedures are so much in demand and such an important procedure in terms of treatment, but also in the prevention of some cancers. The unit was granted planning permission back in January and it is hoped construction will commence at the end of this year.”

“€5.1 million for the com-

pletion of Kinsale Hospital, as well as funding for Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Castletownbere hospitals – it’s a sound investment in west Cork’s future health.”

In all €9 million was allocated for m Hospitals in Cork South West: €1.8 million for the detailed design of the endoscopy unit in Bantry General Hospital. Momentum is really gathering with this project after planning was granted in January.; €5.1m for the completion of the extension at Kinsale Hospital; €1.1 million for the completion of St Joseph’s ward in Clonakilty Community Hospital; €100k for the competing of extension at CTB community hospital; €960k for the completion of the extension at Skibbereen Hospital.

Network Ireland West Cork Businesswoman Of The Year

The winners of the prestigious 2022 Businesswoman of the Year Awards will be revealed on June 17 at the branch’s awards ceremony at Glebe Gardens, Baltimore.

The branch winners will be entered into the national awards, the winners of which will be revealed at the Network Ireland National Conference on October 7, 2022.

NIWC President Marie Wiseman of Wiser Marketing said concerning pandemic trends impacting women in the workplace make this year’s awards more important than ever.

“During the best of times, Irish women tend to be held back in their careers and businesses by their own outdated notions of humility and not

being good enough, as well as institutional gender bias” said Wiseman. “Unfortunately Ibec research shows the pandemic has disproportionately hindered women further in terms of upward mobility due to increased pressure and stress to care for families at home. One of the ways to combat this troubling trend is to encourage women to own their accomplishments and raise their visibility with awards like these so they can inspire other women to do the same.”

The 2021 Ibec survey revealed that 20 percent of organisations had noticed a change in the position of women in their organisations over the previous year, citing changes such as increased pressure and stress for women, childcare responsibilities, and requests from

women for worktime flexibility to accommodate childcare and/or eldercare. Only eight per cent of companies surveyed said that training was in place to ensure visibility of female managers while remotely working—a key factor in upward mobility.

This raises the stakes for women as we pull out of the pandemic, making the national and branch Network Ireland awards so important in helping encourage gender equality.

Winners are chosen by a panel of business experts based on the information supplied in the application form. The judging panels are looking for women who understand business, who are passionate about their career/business, and show a determination to succeed no matter what life throws at them.

Dunmanway recognises vital support of Tar Isteach fundraising

A gathering was held in Dunmanway’s Tar Isteach last month to recognise and celebrate how this fundraising shop has been supporting the local community. Tar Isteach, which translates as ‘come in’, has been a welcoming hub for customers and donors alike since it first opened in April 2009.

The raising of vital funds for local causes would not be possible without the support of the wider Dunmanway community and the wonderful shop volunteers, said founding member Rose Kelly; she paid a

special tribute to Mary Hurley who had been part of the Tar Isteach family for many years before she sadly passed away in 2021.

There were 15 cheques presented on the day to local charities and sporting clubs, these included Cancer Connect, CoAction, M.S. Ukraine, Comhaltas, Irish Kidney Association, St. Mary’s Church of Ireland, West Cork Rapid Response, Jack and Jill foundation, Sam Maguires GAA club, Dunmanway RFC, West Cork Palatine Care, Dunmanway Town Soccer Club, Dunmanway Community

Hospital, West Cork Jesters and Kilmeen Association. These are just some of the recipients of generous donations made by Tar Isteach throughout the year.

C103’s John Green attended the event and interviewed a number of people for his radio show, including Sue Nicholson of West Cork Jesters, who thanked Tar Isteach for their donation towards team jerseys, Tim O’Donovan who spoke on behalf of the Irish Kidney Association and Kerry Burchill, Matron of Dunmanway Community Hospital.





GROUND
MEP Grace O'Sullivan

In recent days, in the wake of the death of Al Jazeera journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, I was due to travel to Palestine on a five-day mission to the region as part of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Palestine. We had a packed schedule lined up, and were due to visit areas including the embattled neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, Bethlehem, the South Hebron Hills, Ramallah and the North West Bank.

I wasn't under-estimating the emotional impacts the trip would have had. Through my work and research as a member of the European Parliament's Palestine Delegation, and following in the wake of the assassination of Abu Akleh, I am very much aware of the situation on the ground. But I looked forward to meeting with people directly. I wanted to hear first-hand about their day-to-day lives, the realities of living in an occupied territory and how the EU can respond.

I was due to meet with Don Sexton, Representative of the Office of Ireland in Palestine, as well as representatives of the Palestinian National Authority, NGOs and members of civil society. I was to visit a refugee camp, an artist's studio, a women's centre and an organisation supporting

journalists.

Some areas I was due to visit or travel through are places where life presents numerous difficulties for Palestinians. My work in this area would have benefitted from seeing the region for myself.

In Ireland there is a lot of solidarity and support for the plight of Palestinians. Every aspect of their daily lives is impacted by the occupation. I planned to do my best to get daily updates through to home and to share elements of my journey on social media over the course of the mission.

This wasn't to be.

On Sunday last, as I stood in the queue at Dublin airport, getting ready to board a flight on the first leg of my journey to Tel Aviv, I received a message. Members of the delegation, I learned, had been banned by Israeli authorities from entering the Gaza Strip. Chair of the delegation Manu Pineda, had even been banned from entering Israel and Palestine.

I'm mindful that restricted freedom of movement is a daily occurrence for many Palestinians, but as a person who has had the privilege of living in a functional democracy, with the rights and freedoms that go hand-in-hand with that (including unrestricted access to normal travel) I was taken aback. The fact that the Israeli authorities were willing to block access of EU elected representatives shows just how far they are willing to go to obstruct others from seeing the everyday impact of occupation.

I recorded my thoughts in the airport and, with the same

privileges afforded to those of us lucky enough to live in parts of the world where freedom of expression is also a protected right, I posted my video on social media and distributed a press release to media outlets.

After leaving the airport I got in my car and travelled with ease to pay a visit to the Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid.

To end that long (and disappointing) day, I spoke with Al Jazeera on the banning of the Delegation from the Gaza Strip. Of course the EU must take a stronger stance in support of elected representatives, and more importantly defend the Palestinians whose voices are denied by moves like this, but as I spoke to the Al Jazeera reporters, my particular focus was on the killing of their colleague Shireen Abu Akleh and the steps the EU needs to take to protect a free press in the region. To begin, there must be an independent investigation into her killing by the Israeli Defense Forces.

I've backed Senator Frances Black as she continues to show support for the people of Palestine and highlights the ongoing impunity which is granted to Israel by the international community. In recent days she has called for meaningful repercussions for Israel following the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh, and their blockage of an EU delegation.

At the end of the day, life continues to present unimaginable challenges for the people of Palestine. Ongoing experiences of grief, loss and a denial of fundamental human rights forms

part of daily life. Meanwhile the EU continues to support strong trade links with Israel, even as their bulldozers continue to demolish Palestinian schools and development projects built with EU funding.

I come back to the final moments in the life of Shireen Abu Akleh, a respected 51-year-old Palestinian-American journalist. A video, filmed by Al Jazeera cameraman Majdi Banura, captures the scene leading up to the moment when Abu Akleh was killed by a bullet to the head.

Reports say she had been with a group of journalists near the entrance of Jenin refugee camp. She, along with the other journalists, was wearing a distinctive blue vest, of the sort that clearly identified her as someone working in the media.

Reports say that she and the other journalists undertook their usual moves of standing in clear sight of Israeli military vehicles for a number of minutes, so that they could establish that they were journalists, before they started to move. Their moves, reports say, were cautious, before shots broke out. Shots that left Abu Akleh on the ground with blood pooling under her head.

As I returned to work, and got on with the job of joining meetings that should have taken place in person, in Palestine, I reflected on the events of the preceding days.

I want to go to Palestine. Israeli authorities must allow us to do our jobs as EU-elected reps, and meet with Palestinian civil society on the ground.

This week I've spoken on

the rights of media workers to personal safety and the freedom to report the facts. In the words of Minister TD – "The first casualty of war is truth. We have witnessed that in most recent times."

Close to home, we've seen the killings of courageous and respected journalists and media personnel – Lyra McKee, Martin O'Hagan, Veronica Guerin. The recent death of Pierre Zakrze-

wski, an Irish camera operator covering the war in Ukraine, is another potent example.

Protection of access to the truth is a fundamental right in a functional democracy. Restrictions or threats to media and others trying to bear witness to the truth, must be challenged; those perpetrating, condoning, or turning a blind eye to these violations, must be held to account.

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Keep in mind that nature rarely appears in straight lines

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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Calving finally came to an end on May 25 with the final cow deciding she'd wait three weeks after the rest. It was a mild inconvenience but it brought the curtain down on what I think was one of the more straightforward calving seasons I can recall. Only four needed assistance and for three of those only the ropes and a slight pull was required. The calving jack wasn't required

until near the end and it needed cobwebs dusted off. The calf in question was coming backwards so a bit more effort was required than the rest. Most calves went out within a day or so of calving and within a short period of time had worked out where the sheltered spots were. It's amazing how quickly they find them. Whether it's just inside of a ditch, behind a furze bush or tucked in behind a hill or even on the sheltered side of a clump of nettles, they can sniff out the good spots very quickly.

Observing them is interesting because they can show you what's useful around the place. In the past I might have cut back all bushes tight or there would be a wire fence without a hedge behind it. In recent years, I take advantage of these natural advantages that in my earlier farming career I wasn't as keen on tolerating. It's simply working with nature and possibly because of that I've been keeping an eye on the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss since it began – a topic worth following up on.

Across society for farmers and non-farmers alike, there are a lot of easy wins in terms of curbing biodiversity loss. The effort to do good can be counter-productive at times. I'm sure I'm not the only one who has heard people say they have been out weeding so they can plant wild flowers instead. Just think of all that effort and toil, not to mention money wasted, when it makes more sense to do nothing.



May brought plenty colour on Tommy Moyles farm at Ardfield, Clonakilty. From late May onwards clover will replace dandelions as the main source of pollen in the grass swards.

ing. Overcoming the need to be busy and maintain everything neat and tidy will be among some of the main obstacles for society to overcome. It's worth remembering that nature rarely appears in straight lines.

I've been making more of an effort over the last few years to see what I can do to try and improve the biodiversity situation on the land I am responsible for. It's not straightforward, that's for sure.

Farming predominantly in a coastal area, some of which is very exposed, means that the 'plant more trees' option isn't always a runner. They will work in some places but not in others and the difference between whether a tree surviving could come down to what side of a ditch it's on, never mind if it's a plant that can survive in coastal conditions. Easier

options for many farms are reducing unnecessary spray use, for example around yards, or reduce fertiliser to see what will develop in the fields. That's one I've been working on for years and, as boring as it sounds, it's been interesting to see how plants that I once considered weeds now have a formal role in the annual grazing plan. Plantain and dandelion would be the two that stand out for me in that regard. Dandelion especially, because in spring that provides one of the main sources of feed for pollinators before clover gets growing. Previously we attempted to spray it off, but by observing what went on, I realised the cows ate it anyway and, where it could take over a paddock in April, clover got the better of it from June onwards.

With more farmers likely to use less artificial fertiliser this

year due to the extreme cost of it, there could be a lot of lessons learned from this year yet, both economically and in terms of biodiversity. Some farmers have been cushioned by the spike in input prices, as there are record prices for commodities such as milk and beef at the moment. Both Carbery and Dairygold are paying milk suppliers in excess of 50cent/litre and beef prices have reached €5/kg for the top grades of cows with prices for young stock further ahead of that. The unpredictability of weather means the heat and moisture of late May was great for growing grass but not so much for harvesting it. Until the last days of the month there was very few windows for the main crop of silage to be cut. The geography of West Cork with its hills, valleys and peninsulas allowed a few

farmers to escape the rain and make a bit of progress but it has been a frustrating few weeks for contractors and farmers alike. I took a gamble and have my first cut wrapped, so it's a job off the list; and with calving finished, breeding got under way with the cows. The bull went with the heifers at the middle of May so the first calves should hit the ground from the last week of February onwards.

AI got underway with the cows on May 24 and will continue for a month, after which a bull will be added to the group to pick up any cows that may have been missed. When it comes to heat-detecting the cows, I try to have the fields closest the house and yard ear marked for grazing at this time. There's always handy ways to reduce the workload.



A West Cork Farming Life: Denise Twomey, Upton

Describe your farm?

It's a 96-acre farm with dairy and beef enterprises. I'm farming in partnership with my father. I'm here full-time and do a bit of relief milking. It's always been a dairy and beef farm comprising of 20 cows and 40 bullocks. We're now changing to mainly dairy. Last year we purchased 32 acres that was next to the beef farm so we went about converting to dairy and built a 12-unit milking parlour, cubicles and silage slab on the outside farm. We finished building the end of March so the cows moved up on March 23. I focus on farming sustainably. We spread lime, use clover to reduce artificial fertiliser and use LESS (Low Emission Slurry Spreading) slurry.

What type of herd have you?

I'm milking 38 Friesian cows this year and there's still 11 beef bullocks too. It's a spring calving, low input grass based system and 97 per cent of the

cows diet is grass. I feed less than a ton of meal a year last year it was 800kg/cow down from 1 ton/cow in 2020. I have 11 replacement heifers and I might buy a few calved heifers next year. There was 89 per cent of the cows calved in six weeks this year and I had 15 heifer calves.

Have you always wanted to be a farmer?

Yes, I grew up on a farm and I was always helping out. I was probably more of a nuisance than a help when I was younger. I'd go and sit in the milking parlour and watch my father milk the cows and I'd be fascinated by it and couldn't wait to do it.

After completing the dairy herd management course in Clonakilty Agricultural College, I worked for two years on a 150-cow dairy farm near Innishannon. The owner worked off farm so I was in charge of the day to day running of it. That was a great experience.

In 2020 the plan was to go to New Zealand but then Covid hit so that changed the plans. So I decided to build up here instead and came home farming and went into a farming partnership with my father.

How are you coping with the higher input costs this year?

Since we moved the cows up to the larger block of land, I'm stocked low so in terms of fertiliser usage I'm not too bad. I'm grass measuring every week and will only spread if it looks like covers are getting low. I'm only feeding enough meals to give them there minerals as well so that's a saving. My biggest challenge is that the cows are going into good grass.

What's happening on the farm at the moment?

We got silage cut recently and thankfully the weather held up, it's in now and covered, so the job is done for the year. Once 11 or 12 weeks of breeding is

finished, I'll take a break, it's been a very busy year and a half. The last few months have been calving, breeding and silage. Last year was very busy too with buying the land and all the construction work. There was a lot of extra work dealing with accountants and banks but purchasing the land was a no brainer when it was on the bounds ditch. As a young farmer it was a good investment so I had to take the opportunity. The same with the building, it will all make the work easier.

The main job at the moment is AI. After five weeks 100 per cent of cows are served and 82 per cent of the heifers are bulled. I started milk recording last year which gave me the idea to change the breeding strategy this year. I used to do three weeks of Friesian AI and then use Angus. This year using the milk recording results, I'm using Friesian bulls on my best performing cows. Next year I hope to reduce the amount of dairy

AI I use and try sexed semen on the best cows. With the building still going on this year, I had too much going on to try it.

Have you felt more of a challenge farming as a woman?

No, I don't find it more of a challenge. The machinery and equipment available now more than compensates for any physical issues. I've been very lucky that I've never been judged or treated differently from anyone I've worked for because of my gender.

I think there's been a big improvement in recent years with people accepting that women can work, run and own farms and are capable of doing the same work as a man.

I do think there is still an issue with succession and the female being considered as a successor when there are men in the family even though the woman could be the one at home farming.





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Remembering famine victims at Corbally famine burial ground

On the 175th anniversary of Black '47, the worst period of the Great Irish Famine, **Pauline Murphy** draws our attention to Corbally famine graveyard, near Ballinhassig, which has been recently restored by a local volunteer group.

We know that West Cork suffered greatly during 'The Great Hunger' (An Gorta Mór), as evidenced by Abbeystrewry Graveyard in Skibbereen, which holds the bones of thousands of people who perished. There are several more famine graveyards across Cork County. One such burial ground can be found at Corbally crossroads near Waterfall, on the southwestern outskirts of Cork City.

Corbally was originally the site of a medieval church and monastic settlement before British Crown forces raised it to the ground in the 17th century. With the church in ruins and its holy order gone, Corbally became a burial ground for local families.

1847 has become known in history as 'Black 47', a terrible year in which many died of starvation and disease. Every parish had a burial pit to cope with so many victims, and this was the fate of Corbally graveyard.

It was not a dignified end. Above the pit was a poorly-constructed coffin with a trap door. Bodies were placed in the coffin and a prayer said before closing the lid. The trap door then opened beneath the body and the unfortunate person fell into

the pit below.

An example of how much devastation the famine caused can be seen in the demographics of a neighbouring village to Corbally graveyard. Before Black '47 Ballinhassig had a population of over 150. By the end of 1847 there were less than 90 people still living there.

In the Cork Examiner of June 25, 1847, a letter from Ballinhassig's Parish Priest, Fr. John Halanan, painted a dire picture: 'Fever is almost in every house in Ballinhassig village and the Half-Way to Bandon. Every cabin in the mountain part of Inniskenny electoral district is infected and not one particle of food or medicine is given to relieve those destitute people by the Relief Committee...'



Just a year previously, the clergy in Ballinhassig had led up to 2,000 people in prayer on the road outside Goggins Hill church. They prayed for an end to the famine but many of those who prayed for a solution were subsequently buried in the Corbally famine pit.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Waterfall/Ball-

inora Tidy Towns Volunteers the Corbally Famine Graveyard is now signposted and well cared for, with a small information plaque in place. The local Men's Shed has rebuilt the old stone entrance, making it easier for people to access this ancient burial ground and remember our history.

New book recalls Irishman's life in the American West

The Irish language writings of Templeglantine, County Limerick native, Eoin Ua Cathail, have been translated and published for the first time by Patrick J. Mahoney, who served as a columnist with the West Cork People for several years.

“Aside from offering invaluable insight into Irish emigrant life during the nineteenth century, the works are extremely significant in that they mark the first attempt to adapt the popular genre of the American Dime Novel to the Irish language,” said Mahoney.

Among the topics addressed within the volume, Ua Cathail describes battles with Native

American tribes during the Plains Wars, back-breaking labour and immigrant success stories, and the details of everyday life in the beautiful yet unforgiving woods of the Mid-western United States. Rather than presenting straight-forward recollections, Ua Cathail's writings often veer toward the mythic and fantastic in their descriptions of nineteenth century America.

Mahoney points to one story in particular with a strong West Cork connection as reflective of this tendency: “The account is presented as an oral history with an elderly West Corkonian named Mícheál Ó Mathúna who had settled in Illinois. Ó Mathúna recalls accompanying a wagon train across the Great Plains to California in the late 1840s when they are set upon by a Native war party. As he soon finds out, the leader of the fierce group is an Irishman

from the same townland back in Cork, who is successfully posing as a Native. I won't give away any other spoilers as to how things shake out, but he obviously lived to tell the tale!”

In other far-fetched plots, Ua Cathail estimates a number of slaughtered wolves surrounding his cabin to be in the hundreds while comparing the scene to the aftermath of a battle with the Fianna of Irish lore, while elsewhere he relays the particulars of an incident in which a young girl is kidnapped by a bear, much to the horror of her parents.

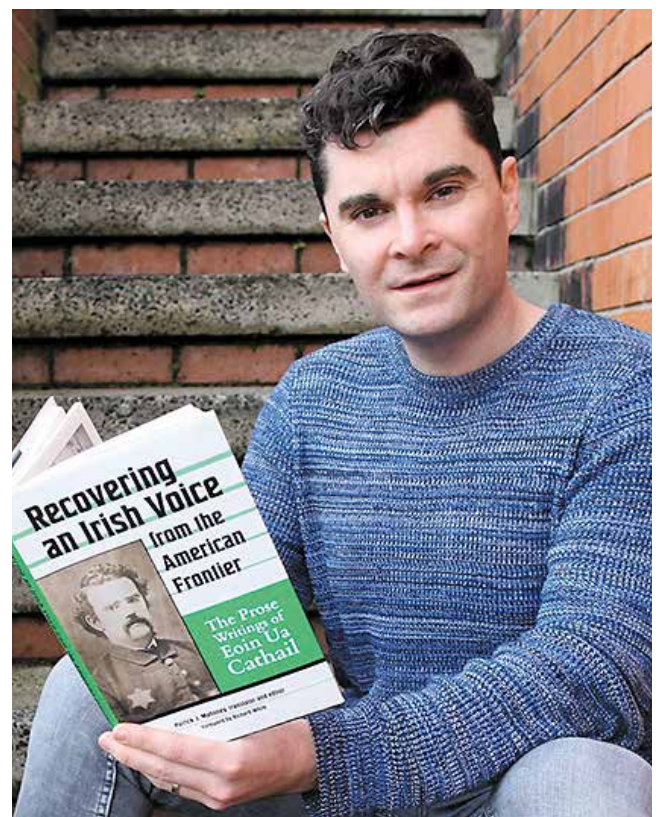
A passionate Irish-language activist, Eoin Ua Cathail became involved with the Gaelic League in America around the turn of the twentieth century, which is reflected in his writings. “He saw the Irish language as essential to the identity and future success of the Irish in America,” Mahoney

said, adding: “He was at times experimental with the language as he attempted to adapt it to describe life in the West, and to this effect he actually included a glossary of terms for his intended readership back in Ireland.”

Renowned Irish literary scholar Declan Kiberd notes the significance of Ua Cathail's newly translated writings, noting that “[they] anticipate Twain and Hemingway in a multicultural world of settlers, shysters, and simple idealists still confronted by the challenge of Native Americans.”

Recovering an Irish Voice From the American Frontier: The Prose Writings of Eoin Ua Cathail (UNT Press, 2021) is available by special order in local bookshops or online from Amazon and An Ceathrú Póilí.

Author Patrick J. Mahoney
Pic: Belfast Media



Rise in executions since lifting of Covid restrictions

By Clonakilty
Amnesty Group

In its annual review of the death penalty Amnesty International notes that 2021 saw a rise in executions and death sentences as courts were able to function again without Covid-19 restrictions in countries around the world.

At least 579 executions were carried out in 18 countries last year. Iran executed 314 people, many of them drug-related convictions and Saudi Arabia executed 81 people on a single day in March this year.

Agnes Callamard, Amnesty's Secretary General said, "After a drop in their execution totals in 2020, Iran and Saudi Arabia ramped up their use of the death penalty last year, including by shamelessly violating prohibitions put in place under international human rights law. Their appetite for putting the executioner to work has also shown no sign of abating in the



early months of 2022."

Other countries have also seen a rise in executions since the lifting of pandemic restrictions. Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Belarus, Japan, UAE, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt and Iraq have all handed down death sentences.

The recorded global total for death sentences and executions does not include the thousands of people that Amnesty International believes to have been sentenced to death and executed in China, North Korea and Vietnam where information is restricted, which makes it impossible to accurately monitor executions.

Agnes Callamard reports that, "China, North Korea and Vietnam continued to shroud their use of the death penalty behind layers of secrecy but as ever the little we saw is cause for alarm."

Amnesty has campaigned against the use of the death penalty for a very long time and,

thankfully, fewer countries now resort to its use. It has never been shown to deter crime; is too often used to silence critics of repressive regimes; is used disproportionately against minorities in many countries and; is a barbaric act that belongs in the past.

Solid research is at the heart of all of Amnesty's work. You may like to take a look at a video streamed on May 6, and now on Youtube, entitled 'Presentation of the New Amnesty International Investigation'. A panel of researchers and Agnes Callamard explain and discuss Amnesty's recent research in Ukraine, documenting abuses and war crimes, including some on the Ukrainian side. It is over an hour long but well worth it (in my opinion of course).

Finally...researchers need funds to carry out their work... the Clonakilty Group will be back on the street shaking our collection tins on Friday, August 12 in Clonakilty and Saturday, August 27 in Skibbereen...hope to see you then.

Survivors of sexual violence need local specialised services in West Cork

West Cork Women Against Violence has launched its most recent research into the experiences of survivors of sexual violence and their journey in seeking help and to heal, at an event held in the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery.

The report 'Listening to Survivors of Sexual Violence and their Supporters in West Cork' provides direct accounts from survivors on the impacts of sexual violence on their lives and relationships.

These survivor testimonies detail how delays in access to essential services (including forensic examinations and medical attention) and the lack of information and therapeutic supports in a dispersed rural region like West Cork, adds to the harm suffered and negatively affects a person's recovery.

Conducted by Dr Caroline Crowley, the research heard from nearly 30 survivors of sexual violence and their supporters in the West Cork area. A key finding was that most respondents first experienced sexual violence as a child or a

teenager and turned to another child or teenager for help rather than an adult. The report documents some of the long-term consequences of sexual violence in survivors' lives, including the life-long physical effects of sexual abuse in childhood.

Amongst its four recommendations is the survivors' call for a full, wraparound specialist service with trained staff to be located in West Cork, because as one survivor explained, "I felt anyone just didn't know how to deal with that knowledge". It also seeks further community-based prevention and early intervention family support programmes.

The powerful voices of survivors in this report tell us about the hurt and long-term impacts of inappropriate responses. They also highlight how to work together to support and care and build a community with zero tolerance for sexual violence.

"National statistics reveal that some 12,000 people in West Cork have been directly impacted by sexual violence, at least 3,500 of them children and young teens. They need us

to end our collective denial for once and for all, and to truly help them," said Dr Crowley.

The report also recommends the delivery of healthy relationship and sex education programmes in schools alongside awareness raising across the community. These calls to action underpin a new Sexual Violence Community Project for West Cork, currently under the auspices of West Cork Women Against Violence.

"If we are serious about supporting survivors and protecting children, we must do this together as a community, working in partnership, prepared to address the truth of the problem," Marie Mulholland, CEO of West Cork Women Against Violence said.

"The voices in this report are the tip of the iceberg. They need us to hear them, to believe them and ultimately to be there for them in practical, immediate and meaningful ways to help them heal, while also working to prevent future victims. If we can do that, then as a community we will have gone beyond anger and sadness to producing solutions."

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK

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



Retiring Coordinator of Art at the West Cork Campus, Carin MacCana, is pictured with her former colleague Jim Turner of Rossmore Pottery.



Kilcolman National School recently held a jumble sale in aid of The Red Cross Ukrainian Appeal. The children worked really hard with their teachers, setting up and organising their stations. Family members, friends and the local community gave so generously as always to this worthy cause. A total of €1000 was raised on the day. The cheque was presented to The Red Cross by the children who were thrilled to see the ambulance on site on the day.

people Environment : Making a difference

Dunmanway painter highlights Ireland's endangered species

An exhibition of nine paintings depicting Ireland's endangered species, by Dunmanway artist Anne O'Connor, takes place in The Celtic Ross Hotel for the month of June. The exhibition is supported by Cork Nature Network who have provided

information on each species to accompany the work.

Although artistically-inclined (she trained as a textiles teacher in London in her youth) 63-year-old Anne spent her working life in the family's shop in Dunmanway and only took up painting seriously three years

ago. She is entirely self-taught and paints in acrylics on paper.

"During Covid lockdowns I spent a lot of time in nature walking my first ever dog, a German shepherd rescue named Rocky," Anne says. "I was inspired to paint our endangered fauna."

Following its run in Rosscarbery, Anne's work will be used by Cork Nature Network in its schools programme: "I have also created some colouring/drawing sheets for CNN," Anne explains. "Using these, children and adults can look more closely at the detail of the paintings."



people Environment : Making a difference

21 years of permaculture at Kinsale College celebrated

The Permaculture Course at Kinsale College celebrated 21 years in existence on Saturday, May 28. A celebratory Permaculture/Environmental Sustainability Conference, organised by the Permaculture Course Co-ordinator Donal Chambers, saw 150 attendees treated to a morning of talks by experts in the areas of Food, Community, Agroforestry and Regenerative Agriculture followed by a choice of informative workshops in the afternoon.

Opening the Conference, the first Director of Kinsale College of Further Education, John Thullier recalled how an idea of a Permaculture course became a reality in 2001.

Founder and former teacher of Permaculture at Kinsale College, Rob Hopkins, joined the Conference on video call from his base in Totnes, England.

The positive impact of the course was evident as two of the five speakers were graduates. Virginia O'Gara, The Cork Urban Soil Project and Rob O'Foghlu, Regenerative Agriculture gave us great insights into their current businesses.

Also sharing their knowledge on the day were Mary Casey of hOur Timebank, Eugene

Curran, Agroforestry, Catherine Seale Duggan, Community Water Officer and Citizen Science Team Lead.

An Tobairín, Health Food Shop from Bandon were on hand providing a huge variety of teas and drinks.

Workshops in the afternoon gave fantastic insights into various aspects of sustainable living.

Jack Kelleher, Antony McCaffrey and Bridget Hannon, of the Bike Circus, provided demonstrations on Bike Maintenance Essentials.

Debbie Powell (another graduate of the course) and her Funky Food Preservation gave plenty of creative ways to prolong the goodness of our foods through air-drying, cordials and tinctures.

Thomas Riedmuller, Permaculture teacher, demonstrated Essential Eco-building skills, shoes optional!

Jo Goodyear came up smelling of roses, and much more, with her Holistic Herbal Medicine workshop and Daniel Murphy had a hands-on session or Marvellous Mushroom Cultivation.

Kinsale College teacher, Eoin O'Callaghan, held his workshop Grow your own food-a Mas-

terclass, in the polytunnels and college market garden.

The gardens at the front of the college provided a great social space where everyone soaked up the sun and enjoyed the food from the various food vendors on-site.

The day continued into evening as the marquee transformed into a concert venue with cabaret style entertainment followed by a performance by Fi Tierney. The Kinsale Drummers brought the evening to a close sending everyone home, marching with a new energy and ideas aplenty.

The aim of the Permaculture course is to educate students in real and practical sustainable practices. This includes conservation and regeneration of natural habitats such as native trees, wildflower meadows and wetlands.

This combines with ecological food production which is in evidence within the regenerative agriculture movement.

Zero waste is a key principle of permaculture since the 1970s and is finally in vogue in 2022.

Community development is close to the heart of the course since its foundation. There are multiple projects engaging with local and national community

projects. Students are encouraged to get involved to make the world a better place.

The Permaculture course in Kinsale is a two-year course.

A QQI level 6 qualification is gained upon completion. It gives the participants real practical skills and lifelong friends are made.

For more information contact: Donal Chambers, Course coordinator, 021 4772275.



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Boost for Bandon biodiversity with Local Action Plan

Bandon Environmental Action Group (BEAG) is delighted to announce that, in conjunction with Avonduhu Blackwater Partnership and with the support of LEADER funding, the development of a local Biodiversity Action Plan for Bandon has commenced.

Interested individuals and community groups are invited to attend a Community Information and Discussion Day at Bandon Library Community Room on Saturday, June 18, 2-4pm. This facilitated open forum event is an opportunity to learn about the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan and to come and share your views and ideas on the important issues for nature and biodiversity in our town. All ideas and comments harvested on the day will feed into the Biodiversity Action Plan.

With many species and habitats locally, nationally and globally in decline, Local Biodiversity Action Plans seek to contribute to the conservation of biological diversity at the local level. Cork Nature Network, a non-profit environmental organi-

sation, will carry out the research and development of the Action Plan for Bandon, on behalf of BEAG. The steering group leading the project is made up of representatives from Bandon Tidy Towns, Bandon Rivers Trust, Birdwatch West Cork, Bandon Playground Group and Bandon Allotments and is open to any other groups or organisations wishing to be involved. Public consultation with the local community, local groups and businesses and all interested stakeholders will be ongoing.

As part of the process experts are undertaking ecological surveys of existing biodiversity in targeted areas in Bandon town to record birds, plants and invertebrates. Informed by these survey findings and community input the Bandon Biodiversity Action Plan will provide a list of actions and targets to conserve and promote nature and wildlife in Bandon.

For updates follow Bandon Environmental Action Group on Facebook and for further information please email projects@corknaturenetwork.ie

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Participants enjoyed a coastal route that took in Courtmacsherry woods as part of Cork Walking Month. Pic: Anna Groniecka

people Environment : Making a difference



ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Fiona Hayes

Our current 1.1 degree Celsius warmer world is already affecting natural and human systems in Europe and across the world; yet now climate scientists are predicting that we will hit 1.5 degrees Celsius, even if that high level is not sustained, by 2026.

The 1.5 degree Celsius figure is the point at which climate impacts will become increasingly harmful for people across the entire planet," said Prof Petteri Taalas, head of the World Meteorological Organisation, which published the new report.

India and Pakistan have already been feeling the effects of the hottest March and April in 122 years of record keeping, with the scorching temperatures averaging more than 35 degrees Centigrade in March, well above the usual average of 27.4 degrees Centigrade and Sindh province in Pakistan reaching 49 degrees Centigrade, one of the highest April temperatures ever recorded in the world.

Does Cork County Planning Department undermine climate action?

When coupled with 40 years influence of modern western architecture and building techniques, this extreme heat creates energy supply problems, health problems and economic problems.

The modern multi-storey office blocks in India, built from concrete and cement, with flat roofs and an abundance of glass absorb and trap the heat, making increased spend on artificial air-conditioning vital. The air-conditioning continuously belches out exhaust greenhouse gases into the streets, further heating and contaminating the urban environment and adding to climate change. A vicious cycle.

Architects and engineers around the world are having to rethink; to redesign buildings and other structures, to be robust and sustainable to the effects of climate change locally. Building materials and design standards are being changed in order to withstand the weather and climate related changes in terms of temperature extremes, rainfall and flooding, snow and ice-melt, ground water changes, and wind speeds that are expected in any particular region.

Ireland's Climate Action Plan focuses construction on retrofitting sustainable energy

solutions and using low carbon technology in new and existing residential and commercial new builds.

Its transport plan is focused on the expansion of rail and bus services and cycling and walking infrastructure and an increase in the use of biofuels and electric vehicles.

Land use plans are all about forestry and marine.

All of these initiatives, in theory, and if brought together strategically and cooperatively, should be able to innovatively create inroads into Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, bringing us closer to our agreed target of a 51 per cent reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as we committed to in the Climate Act 2021.

However the planning system in Ireland now has five centres of management and oversight; local councils, An Bord Pleanála, the courts via judicial review, the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) and the Minister. Each appears to work independently and with competing priorities, creating a massive bottleneck of litigation and counter litigation blocking any real progress.

Serious joined-up thinking

is needed. Indeed the role of the OPR is to create this joined up thinking and to "ensure that local authorities and An Bord Pleanála support and implement Government planning policy."

This department evaluates city and county development plans, local area plans and amendments to these plans providing the relevant local authority with observations and/or recommendations regarding sustainable development of the area.

This will only work of course, if the relevant local authority are willing to work WITH the Regulator to improve the overall planning which, by definition of sustainable development, must take into account Climate Action agreed in the Climate Act 2021.

I was in the Council Chambers of Cork County Council in January 2020, when a group of activists and a few councillors, objected to plans put forward in November 2019 for Rioja Estates, a British-based company, to develop a retail outlet in Carrigtwohill. Rioja Estates claimed the development would create 850 jobs and attract around 220,000 shoppers annually. Despite environmental objections from some councillors, regarding increased emissions

from 220,000 car journeys; and despite Cork Business Association and Cork City Retailers objecting that this development would seriously damage city centre and satellite town centres retail businesses, the council voted to make a variation to the development plan of 2014 and moved to rezone the land to accommodate Rioja Estates, against the recommendations of the OPR.

Cork Business Association agreed with the OPR that the variation should not be made prior to the preparation jointly, by both local authorities of an updated retail strategy for the next 10 years, which was due in early 2021.

The council vote to rezone the land ahead of the updated retail strategy led the OPR and the Minister using their powers of direction to compel the local authority to withdraw the decision; with the result that Cork County Council took the OPR to the High Court and won their case. The whole case now goes to the Court of Appeal.

Whilst planning decisions are mired in bureaucracy and litigation, becoming an expensive and slow moving political football, Climate Change doesn't wait, rather it speeds ahead.

To even have a chance in this,

the most important race that any of us will ever take part in, we need ALL our public representatives to lift their heads beyond the next election and to honestly put the future of our planet front and centre in ALL their decision making.

Planning decisions and policies, like those made 40 years ago in India, to create buildings more suited to a temperate climate like that in the western world, have years of impact; but we don't have years to play with.

At the climate summit in Glasgow, World Leaders agreed to limit the planet's warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100. Today all indications are that we will reach 1.5 degrees Celsius within the next four years.

Seventy-four years adrift on targets, we must get our act together; and to do that we MUST Stop; Look up.

Every one of us is accountable. We must work strategically and collaboratively across all levels of all disciplines with the purpose of sustaining a world in which our children and grandchildren can stay alive.



CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS

Jean Perry

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

Over the last winter I have been working with a group of like-minded

Life in the soil

people, doing an online course in Sustainable Community Development. It has been a very interesting experience and I have learnt a lot. The added benefit has been getting to know other members of my community and working on projects together. It gave me the opportunity to work with, and get to know Marie Loviny. I have known about Marie for some time but hadn't had the chance to meet her properly before. During the course we were asked to think of a project (or two or three) and Marie has become the driving force of one of our projects, our Baltimore Community Market. Marie was born in Moulle, a small village in the north of France but at the age of 10 moved with her family to South Eastern France, the Ardeche. She loved Art but decided to study Landscape Management, a course that gave her the opportunity to do lots of drawings and would maybe

offer better job prospects: After which she worked in the local Tourist office for three years. Though she really loved her job she had itchy feet and decided to go travelling.

She wanted to improve her English so Ireland was a good destination for that and she found a place working as a volunteer gardener on The Inish Beg Estate where she spent three happy months. Having no transport she barely went into Baltimore on that, her first trip. More travelling followed but the draw back to Baltimore was strong. She was offered a part time job at Inish Beg and decided to return, this time throwing herself into the hurly burly that is Baltimore in the summer and getting a job in The Waterfront. Between them, these two jobs have continued to keep her busy over the last few years.

Wanting to learn more about growing, in 2019 Marie enrolled on the Permaculture

course in Kinsale but because of Covid she had to finish the course online. Nevertheless, she made some great contacts and met some very interesting people. She had work experience with Madeline McKeever (Brown Envelope Seeds) and still works for her one day a week.

A couple of years ago Marie had the chance to start a garden project of her own; a friend offered her a piece of land to grow on. She fenced it off from rabbits and put up her own tunnel. At first it was just to feed herself but very soon she found that she had enough for friends and started to sell veg boxes and salads to friends and locals. It gave her a chance to learn and realise that this is really what she wants to do. For Marie, it is all about the soil – healthy soil grows healthy crops and she grows organically using a no dig system.

Sadly, she lost the first tunnel

in Storm Eunice. Her first plot is very exposed but luckily she had just moved to a house situated in a much more sheltered area with space to put up another tunnel and ground to grow outside as well.

So she's back in business now with the two plots but she would ideally love to buy a small piece of land where she could develop her ideas and concentrate on improving the soil and increasing biodiversity.

Marie has been essential in the creation of our community market in Baltimore, she is committed to producing and providing local food for our local community and encouraging others to do the same. Fresh seasonal food with no food miles and low impact on the environment.

She can be found selling her vegetables and salad, every Sunday in Baltimore Community Hall from 11am.



people Environment : Making a difference



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.

One of the first things I did when I started my journey to a more sustainable lifestyle was to look at the consumption of plastic items in my daily life. Initially invented to 'protect the natural world from the destructive forces of human need'; the revolutionary material that we now call plastic came to life in the late 19th century to offer a substitute to ivory in the creation of billiard balls. Throughout the last century, this versatile material offered

Greening the bathroom

inexpensive substitutes to natural resources such as wood and metal, and we can't deny how it has improved our lives for the better...medical devices, sanitary food packaging and computers are all made of it. But plastic is now so ubiquitous that it can be found literally everywhere in the world, littering sites of natural beauty, polluting our oceans, clogging drains in cities, and finding its way in our drinking water in the form of tiny particles.

It didn't take me very long to realise that most of my personal hygiene products came in plastic packaging. The first two things I did were to switch to soap bars instead of using shower gel, and to swap my plastic toothbrush for a bamboo one. We are spoilt in West Cork with many artisan soap makers to choose from, many of whom offer their soap bars unwrapped and free of unsustainable palm oil, as well as some other products like handmade shampoo bars and natural deodorants. I have used a crystal rock deodorant for many years, having purchased my first one on a trip to Morocco, and replacing it ten years later with a crystal rock 'deodorant stick' as it wore out. These are made of natural mineral salts and are a long-lasting, effective protection against body odours. I swear by mine!

I would recommend not replacing items until they are completely unusable – there's no point ditching a pack of disposable razors if they are in fine order, but it will be worth investing in a good quality razor in the future, one with a metal handle and a top that allows you to change blades. There are many brands that claim that their disposable wet wipes are 'flushable' but these cause all sorts of trouble in wastewater systems and are indeed not safe to flush. As well as causing blockages in sewers, they contain microplastic fibres that will find their way into the ocean, causing long-term problems for sea creatures and the marine environment. Instead, you could get reusable face wipes, which are often made of cotton or bamboo terry towelling and are as effective for face cleansing and makeup removal as disposable wipes and cotton pads. I've never used nylon bath poufs because I've always used a washcloth to clean and exfoliate in the shower, but these could easily be replaced with a shower brush; or if you want a truly natural, biodegradable product you could opt for a sea sponge (a living organism found in rock pools and on the ocean floor) or a loofah, which is basically a dried out vegetable in the same family as the courgette and the

squash.

I like to exfoliate my face in the morning and have tried a few homemade face scrub recipes over the years. There are hundreds of them to choose from on the Internet depending on your skin type, but I like this simple recipe made with sugar as the exfoliating agent – it's super easy to prepare and I find it effective at removing impurities on my skin. Just combine 30g of coconut oil and 60g of granulated sugar in a bowl and add a few drops of your favourite essential oil (I like to use lavender) and then place the mixture in a jar with a lid. I also like to make my own lip balm and other natural skincare products with herbs from the garden that I dry and then infuse in oils; combined with beeswax, the results are luxurious lifesaving ointments.

If you're keen on liquid soap to wash your hands at the sink, you can finely grate a soap bar to the equivalent of one teaspoon and mix it with 200ml of boiling water. Stir until the soap is fully dissolved (you may need to add a bit of water to reach your desired consistency), let the mixture cool down, and then pour it into a soap dispenser to use for everyday handwash. I use this exact same method with shampoo bars because I prefer a liquid texture to wash my hair,



and although I haven't tried vinegar as a replacement for hair conditioner yet, I hear it works great with just two tablespoons in a pint of water. Cheap, cheerful, and plastic-free – maybe it's worth a try!

Something that is rarely talked about is the waste incurred by menstrual products. It's estimated that a woman will use between 10,000 and 16,000 disposable pads, tampons, and pantyliners in her lifetime. Think about it: if a pack of twenty disposable pads is used each month for the forty or so years of a menstrual life, plus the odd pantyliner, and bladder leak pads after a certain age, the numbers do add up! All these will end up in landfill or in the ocean (many women do not realise that tampons are not

flushable), and when you consider that a pack of disposable pads is the equivalent of about five plastic bags, and that they contain all sorts of chemicals that manufacturers are not even required to list on their packaging, it makes it even scarier. The market for reusable menstrual products has exploded in the last ten years: menstrual cups (funnel-shaped cups made of silicon), washable cloth pads that snap tightly in the gusset of the underwear, or plain and simple period knickers – women now have the choice to switch to eco-friendly alternatives. It's just a case of being brave enough to try them. Will you do the switch?

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Ireland's only legally protected butterfly

Branch Committee Member **Damaris Lysaght** writes about the fascinating and endangered Marsh Fritillary butterfly.

For most of the year the Marsh Fritillary butterfly exists as a caterpillar. It is only on the wing from the last week or two of May until the around the end of June; a case of 'catch it while it's flying!' The word fritillary comes from the Latin 'Fritillus' meaning 'dice box'. The patterns on its wings resemble a stained-glass window of browns, gold, tan, orange, cream, and beige, which can show much variation between individuals. It is not an energetic butterfly and seldom flies far from where it emerged. Individual Marsh Fritillary butterflies probably do not live for much more than 10 days. A medium-sized butterfly, the females are larger than the males, as they carry two or three hundred eggs. They feed on nectar



from a variety of wildflowers such as Ragged Robin, various orchids, Knapweed and Marsh Thistle.

They have an interesting and unusual life cycle. The priority for any butterfly after it emerges is to find a mate. Marsh Fritillaries lay their eggs exclusively on the leaves of Devil's-bit Scabious, the eggs hatching into tiny light brown caterpillars. These caterpillars feed and stay

together as a group, spinning a web over themselves as they very slowly eat their way from leaf to leaf. The web protects them from both weather and predators. As the summer progresses, the caterpillars increase in size and, when they grow too big for their skins, they moult. Each new stage, (six altogether), is called an instar and the colour of the caterpillar darkens and their skin gets spikier with each

moult. Towards the end of September, they build a winter web deep down in the vegetation called a hibernaculum, which is near impossible to find! Looking like black smuts, they can be seen basking on sunny days in late winter/early spring on elevated vegetation, usually purple moor grass. Around the beginning of April, they start to disperse, eventually finding a leaf or stem on which to form a chrysalis. A few weeks later the adult butterfly emerges, beginning the cycle all over again.

Most butterfly species are monitored by counting the adult butterflies. The Marsh Fritillary is an exception because of the unusual way the caterpillars live communally in a protective web that is visible, but only once you have your eye in! Devil's-bit Scabious is in flower in August and September, often putting on an impressive purple/blue display. This can be an indication that there might be a colony of Marsh Fritillaries present. Web surveys takes place from mid-August to mid-September. First a vegetation survey is done



Marsh Fritillary caterpillars basking in the sun.

and then transects are walked through the site to count the larval webs.

Numbers are declining, the greatest threat being habitat loss through clearance of land, draining.

Overgrazing and scrub encroachment can also be a problem. Keep an eye out and you might discover a new site! If you do, please inform the National Biodiversity Data Centre (records.biodiversityireland.ie) or the Butterfly Conservation Ireland (butterflyconservation.ie/wp/).

BirdWatch Ireland West Cork Upcoming outings:

Sunday June 12: A visit to the sea-bird colony at the Old Head of Kinsale, meeting at the parking area outside the Signal

Tower and Lusitania Museum at 11am.

Sunday July 3: An estuary and farm walk at Ballydehob, meeting at the playground car park at 11am (no dogs please)

To receive news about our events join our mailing list by sending an email to mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie. For more information about the Branch, contact Fiona O'Neill at secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie.



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A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

Berlin in early summer is full of Horse Chestnut trees in blossom. Some of the trees are immense – as tall as five storey buildings; and when the wind blows the pink blossoms come down like confetti, falling everywhere, sometimes landing into the glasses of the people drinking on the terraces and relaxing on river banks. It's not drinking in a drunken way, just social. The weather has warmed up and everyone's out. There are little bottle shops around the neighbourhoods, which sell a huge selection of beers, soft drinks and snacks and it's perfectly acceptable to consume them pretty much anywhere. People drink beers and other people pick the bottles up and get the deposit back. It all works very well.

Amongst the selection of beers that are consumed are pink drinks: Rhubarb spritzers, lemonades and cocktails, all totally delicious. I checked out how to make rhubarb cordial – the base for all these confections, and I feel like I have discovered a perfect use for rhubarb.

We have a healthy rhubarb patch in our garden and each year, after our initial rhubarb tart enthusiasm, it ends up languishing unless I have jam making fit. Rhubarb cordial is easier to make than tarts, crumbles or jam, the only vaguely complicated part of the process is straining the mix. It can be poured directly through a sieve but I prefer to line the sieve with a piece of muslin. This ensures a beautiful clean pink juice, no stray bits of fruit and so on, which might sneak through a sieve. This is not a difficult step, although it may entail a trip to your local haberdasher to buy a piece of muslin.

The grandchildren love the pink lemonade – rhubarb cordial plus sparkling or tap water, in fact we all do and it's fun to add to a favourite tippie especially served chilled.

Rhubarb Cordial

- 500g rhubarb (stems removed)
- 350mls water
- 350g sugar
- 1 orange, zest and juice
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 2 slices fresh ginger
- muslin
- string

Put the water and sugar into a pan. Bring to the boil then turn to a simmer. Wash the lemon and orange well then pare the peel of the fruits with a small knife or a vegetable peeler. A vegetable peeler works best, as it doesn't cut through to the pith but if you don't have suitable peeler just use a knife. Cut two or three slices of ginger, no need to peel. Put the lemon and orange peel and the pieces of ginger into the sugar syrup and continue to simmer. Wash the rhubarb well. Discard the leaves and the other end. There's no need to peel especially, as you need the pink skin to colour the cordial. Cut the rhubarb into 1cm pieces, add to the sugar syrup and bring everything to the boil. Turn to a low simmer and cook for 25-30 minutes, until the rhubarb has disintegrated.

Leave to cool then strain using either of the following methods.

- A) Just straining; Put a fine meshed sieve over a bowl that is large enough to collect the juice – without sitting in the juice as it strains. Pour the cooked rhubarb in and leave to strain for an hour - better a little longer if you have the patience. Don't poke or squeeze otherwise the cordial will become cloudy
- B) Using a piece of muslin



to line the sieve; Cut a piece of muslin so that it's large enough to sit in your sieve/colander and drape over the sides.

Organise somewhere to hang the muslin bag. I use an upside down stool but a large saucepan with a wooden spoon across the top to suspend the bag works too.

Wet the piece of muslin under the tap, then squeeze it out and drape it over the colander/sieve – wetting the cloth helps to keep it in place and encourages the juice to flow through, then pour in the cooked rhubarb.

Pull the four corners of the muslin together, then gather up so that the rhubarb is contained without squeezing and secure with a piece of string. The string needs to be long enough to tie

onto the bars of the stool or the wooden spoon over the saucepan with the bag hanging above a bowl to collect the juice.

Leave for an hour or longer if you're not in a hurry.

This method gives maximum extraction, as the weight of the fruit pushes the juice through. Don't squeeze the bag or the juice will become cloudy.

Put the finished cordial into clean bottles or a large jar and store in the fridge.

Perfect for sunny days!

Karen

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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Maebh Crowley, a pupil at St Enda's NS, Dunmanway, on her Communion day with her parents Declan and Tracy and brothers Paudie and Eamon. Pic: Picture Pure Photography

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Feast of contemporary folk music served up on Camus Farm



An open air performance area is the latest exciting development on Camus Farm – a 30-acre organic holding in Ardfield, Clonakilty – which this summer will host two outdoor concerts or ‘Fair Days’ of contemporary folk music.

On June 5, Camus will welcome Lorkin O’Reilly; I Have A Tribe; O Deer; and Rita Lynn. The July 31 line-up consists of The Fynches; Billy Wylder; Leevy; and Dreambeam.

Lorkin O’Reilly has enjoyed considerable success on music platforms, his song ‘Twist’ exceeding 10 million streams on Spotify. The Fynches, fronted by Ferdia Walsh-Peelo (CODA, Sing Street), featured on ‘The Late Late Show’ earlier this year, receiving a big reaction from Irish audiences, consequently selling out recent

performances.

Bar, food and coffee facilities will be open from 2pm, in addition to the restaurant, open from 12pm. Tickets for ‘Fair Days’ are on eventbrite.ie.

On-farm Restaurant and Gallery, the ‘Field Kitchen’, opened last year at Camus, winning the ‘Georgina Campbell

Newcomer of Year Award’. It is now established as a leading West Cork dining experience. The restaurant offers outstanding vegetarian and vegan feasts, alongside meat dishes. The farm’s herd of 100 per cent grass-fed Dexter cattle provides the 28-day aged, organic beef. The organic vegetables are



supplied from the Camus Farm Kitchen Garden, complemented by local produce.

The Field Kitchen offers a seasonal set menu updated on fieldkitchen.ie/menus each Thursday. Summer opening times are from 6pm Thu-Sat, and 12pm Sunday, with the first dishes served at 7pm and 1pm, respectively. Reservations can be made at opentable.ie or call

023 886 9199.

The restaurant offers indoor and open air dining, and is fully accessible with set down area, ramp and washroom. Tables can be laid out banquet style to accommodate larger groups. The restaurant can comfortably seat 100 indoors or outdoors, with a large outdoor covered area. Diners can also make use of camping pitches and access the

nature trails around the Farm. The indoor gallery showcases the work of local artists.

Camus Farm is a venue for celebrations and gatherings with the option for overnight camping. On the high ground, overlooking Clonakilty Bay, is a ceremonial circle inspired by local ringforts, available for weddings, namings and other ceremonies.



Barley to glass dream a reality as Clonakilty officially now has its own Irish whiskey

Clonakilty Distillery are celebrating a significant business milestone as their own spirit legally became Irish whiskey, following a three-year wait since they filled their casks. (As per legal Revenue requirements, Irish Whiskey must be matured for a minimum of three years and can then be marketed with different maturities.)

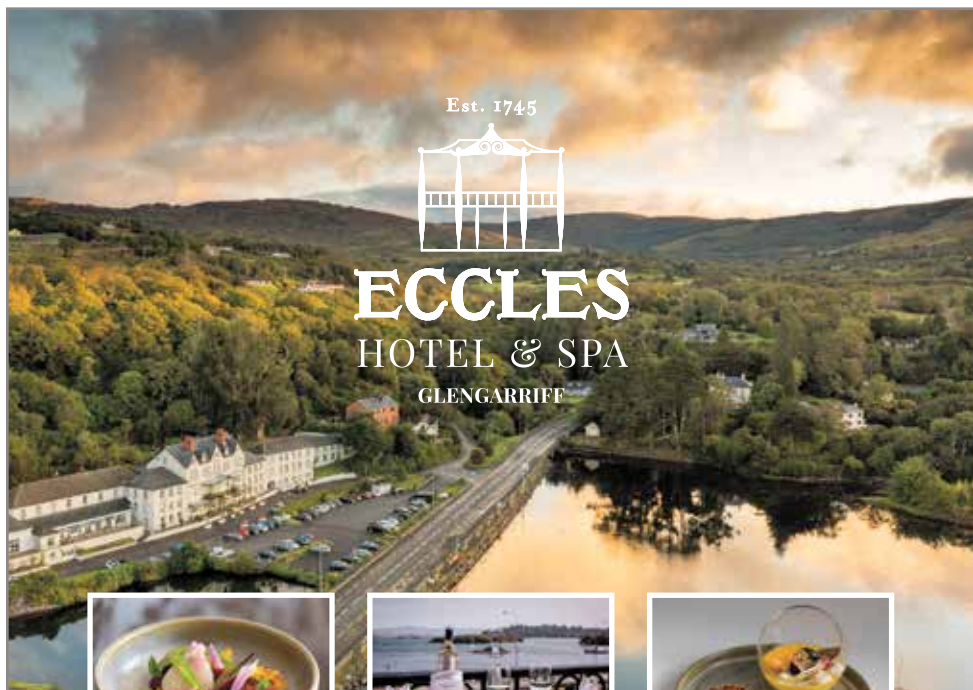
Patently maturing in their Atlantic Ocean warehouse, the spirit was distilled at the Distillery in Clonakilty using their own copper pot stills.

To add a further local connection, all the raw barley used within the distillation process was from farmlands owned by the Distillery, in addition to neighbouring farms.



Clonakilty Distillery’s own whiskey has been much-anticipated in the Irish whiskey community and within trade circles, having already won Best Irish New Make at the World Whiskies Awards in 2020.

Founder of Clonakilty Distillery Michael Scully said he was delighted with this recent milestone, but added that the Distillery will continue to harness the flavours and allow them to mature for a further two years before releasing to the public: “The smoothness and intriguing flavour combination of fruit and spice is exactly as we wished for at this point in its development. This elegant whiskey will only get better, which is why we intend to wait for a further two years.”



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Pride in West Cork



LGBTI+ MATTERS

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



By Mark Holland

Families affected by incineration of organs by CUMH protest

A group of parents whose babies organs were incinerated by Cork University Maternity Hospital will hold a protest outside CUH on June 11 at 11am.

'The Voice of Our Angels' group is calling for a review of the incident to be released to them.

"When our babies sadly passed away we agreed and signed for a post mortem to be done, and signed for the organs to be dealt with in a lawful and respectful manner and buried in the Garden of Angels," says Katie Quilligan.

"We were told by the Minister for Health that the report and review would be completed by November of 2021. It is now May 2022 and we are still waiting for this. We have been told on numerous occasions the report will soon be concluded and we would receive the first draft. We have now been told the first draft has been complete but due to legal advice they are not in a position to give us this first draft report."

More information and updates on can be found on 'The Voice Of Our Angels' facebook page.

"We will be using this group to update our followers on the journey we are taking looking for the answers our babies deserve," says Katie.

June is Pride month and this year it's all happening at the Community and Family Resource Centre in Skibbereen.

We often gets asked at workshops why would someone be proud of being LGBTI+; what are you being proud about?

We usually frame the answer within the context of the guilt, shame and stigma that has been associated with being LGBTI+ in the dogma of the educational and social institutions through which we were reared.

It amazes me that while the social environment has changed so much in the forty years since I was in school, with open discussion, decriminalisation and the appearance of role models in the arts, the experience of young students remains so much the same, with prejudice and discrimination associated with feelings of guilt and shame. Because of stigma, in too many cases, it is still easier to emigrate than it is to come out.

The environment here in West Cork, now, is more liberal than in some other parts of the country, with a healthy, happy proportion of the population living openly integrated LGBTI+ lives. But many of us are people who have settled here or returned having lived the

middle part of our lives abroad, it still remains that too many of our young LGBTI+ friends, family and neighbours feel the need to leave to live their lives openly, without the burden of stigma. And often Cork or Dublin are not far away enough, which is great for people who have friends living abroad and who thrive in a new environment, but not for people who feel isolated, who feel they have no option and who would rather be near their families.

I was reading a piece recently about 'straitjackets'. The first recorded mention of them was by Irish physician David McBride in 1772. Medical interventions from this era were cruel by modern standards, straitjackets were typically used to restrain people who may cause harm to themselves or others.

Before the American Civil War (1861 – '65) the mentally ill were forced to live in poor-houses, workhouses or prisons, forced to live with criminals, treated likewise, locked in cells and even chained to walls. Not understanding the causes of mental illness, it was variously put down to religious excitement, possession, sunstroke, or reading novels. Strict discipline was prescribed to help patients



regain control over their morals, with the use of straitjackets. Unlike patients who were anchored, straitjackets allowed some freedom of movement, patients could 'stroll outdoors', reaping the benefits of both control and fresh air.

Growing up is not easy for any of us, we all struggle to fit in; for me the heterosexist environment that we were schooled in, weirdly, by unmarried Christian brothers was like a straitjacket. And with the dedication of an escape artist, I spent my time trying to get out of it, to the constant disapproval of 'letting everyone down'.

So having Pride in my multi-coloured Queer Identity is not only important but a vital part in a journey of self-discovery.

The Timetable of Events taking place this month in Skibbereen (at the Community and Family Resource Centre, North

St. unless otherwise stated):

June 1: Launch at 11am, with the Archive Exhibition 'Not Sick, Sinners or Criminals', Cork's LGBT community 1970s & '80s. This exhibition will be on display at the centre every Friday for the month of June from 6 to 9pm.

1.30 to 3.30pm, Youth Music Group practice, this will also take place on June 8 and 17.

June 2: LGBTI+ Awareness Training, 10am to 3pm.

June 3: LGBTI+ Film Night @ 7pm, with refreshments and chat; this also takes place every Friday night, June 10, 17 and 24.

June 9: Drop In, 11am to 1pm.

June 13: 'The State of Transgender Issues in Ireland Today' at 7pm, presented by guest speaker Hannah Solley from TENI.

June 16: Adult Choir Practice, 7.30 to 9.30pm in preparation for Pride Day on June 18.

June 18: PRIDE DAY. Come visit the stall at the Saturday Farmers' Market 10am to 12. Kayaking on the Ilen, to be confirmed. Join the party afterwards at the Centre, from 3 to 6pm.

June 21: Film 'I'm Here, I'm Home, I'm Happy', 7 to 9pm. Presented by Director Orla Egan, archivist.

June 22: Drop In, 3 to 5pm.

June 23: Living Well with HIV in Ireland Today, Presented by Will Kennedy, followed by Documentary.

June 27: Special Family Movie Night, 5 to 7pm

June 28: Closing Event at Uillinn Coffee Shop, 7 to 9pm

Also in Clonakilty at the Community Resource Centre, Every Tuesday, 12.30 to 2pm, LGBTI+ Tea, Coffee & Chat!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

I am currently on Jobseekers Allowance. Is there a payment to help with the costs of children going to school?

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BTSCFA) helps you meet the cost of uniforms and footwear for children going to school. Your child must be aged between 4-17 on September 30. If they are aged between 18-22, they must be returning to full-time second-level education in a recognised school or college in the autumn of the year you are applying.

How do I qualify to claim the BTSCFA?

To qualify, you must be getting a social welfare payment or taking part in a training, employment or adult education scheme. In general, you must be getting an Increase for a Qualified Child with your payment. People getting the Working Family Payment and the Back to Work Family Dividend can qualify for BTSCFA. Also, your

total family income must be below a certain level for your family size as laid out in the table below:

Weekly income limits for 2022

1 child – Income limit €620
2 children – Income limit €668
3 children – Income limit €716
4 children – Income limit €764*

*The income limit is increased by €48 for each additional dependent child.

What is the BTSCFA rate this year?

In 2022, the allowance paid for each eligible child aged 4-11 on 30 September 2022 is €160. The allowance paid for each eligible child aged 12-22 on 30 September is €285. Children aged between 18 and 22 years must be returning to full-time second-level education in a recognised school or college in the autumn of 2022.

When can you apply for the BTSCFA?

The BTSCFA scheme is open for applications from 20 June 2022 until 30 September 2022.

I am living and working in Ireland but my child is living in another EU country. Can I claim BTSCFA?

No. You cannot claim BTSCFA for a child who is not resident in the State.

I have applied for a qualifying social welfare payment but have not got a decision. Can I apply for the BTSCFA?

If you have applied for a social welfare payment, or have appealed a decision not to award you a social welfare payment and are waiting for a decision on your application, you should apply for the BTSCFA before the scheme closes. Your entitlement to the BTSCFA will be decided when you get a decision on your application or appeal.

How do I apply for the BTSCFA?

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection pays the BTSCFA automatically to many families. This means that they do not



have to apply for the payment. If you qualify for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance payment you will automatically get a confirmation letter before 20 June 2022.

If you do not get a letter confirming you will get the payment automatically by June

20, 2022, you can apply for the BTSCFA online on www.MyWelfare.ie. You must have a Public Services Card and a verified MyGovID account to apply online. The closing date for applications is September 30, 2022

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

WEST CORK HELPLINE
0818 07 8390

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

Mix offers a new way of working



For remote or flexible workers, Mix Coworking at 8, Wolfe Tone Street in Clonakilty offers a fabulous workspace to connect with technology and people. The high ceilings, exposed beams, lots of plants and muted colours combine to offer a calm backdrop to this thoughtfully-designed space, which boasts 16 desks, comfortable ergonomic chairs, USB charging docks, sound-absorbing panelling and ventilated phone-booths for private or confidential calls.

The downstairs communal space has a small kitchen with tea and coffee-making facilities, fridge and microwave, and is a bright, welcoming room in which to enjoy breakfast, lunch or socialise

with other remote workers. Tea, coffee and cereal are provided complimentary. There is also an outdoor seating area.

The pricing structure, which offers excellent value at just €4 per hour (€3.25 + VAT),

is capped at €20 (€16.26 + VAT) for five hours and up. Bookings can be made online but walk-ins are also welcome.

Mix Coworking is open Monday-Friday, from 8am-8pm, but out-of-hours is also

available on request, particularly convenient if you're working in international time zones.

Future plans include a meeting and event space and individual private offices.

Mix Coworking interior fit-out was part-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. This was provided through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and was administered by the Leader 2014 – 2020 programme, with the support of the West Cork LAG and Secad Partnership CLG.

Rachel Kelleher and Michael

Kote are the couple behind this uplifting workspace. After moving to Clonakilty in 2017 and both working in European and US time zones, the couple realised their work was in jeopardy due to limited internet infrastructure. As a result they set up Mix Coworking as their own office with some extra desks to rent. "We needed connectivity for our work but wanted to live in a place that would help us disconnect too!" says Rachel. "We are really excited about the future of co-working in the

growing town of Clonakilty."

In collaboration with Grow Remote West Cork, Mix is hosting a free outdoor event for remote workers on Friday, June 10. This is an opportunity to meet up and network with other remote workers in the area. A light lunch and refreshments will be sponsored by the Fig & Olive cafe. People are welcome to drop in from 12.30 onwards.

www.mixcoworking.ie



Bandon Gaelscoil awarded Digital Schools Flag

Gaelscoil Dhroichead na Bannndan was the first of 13 schools nationwide to be awarded the Digital Schools of Europe Award. Minister Simon Coveney, Senator Tim Lombard, Cllr. Laura McGonigle and Ultan Mac Mathúna of the Dublin Education Centre were on hand to present the Gaelscoil with the prestigious award.

The award is in recognition of



excellence in the use of digital technology at the primary level and to celebrate evolving best practice in embedding digital technologies into learning and teaching activities. Minister Coveney made special note of the staff for their efforts in this field in recent times. Adding that being proficient in the use of technology is a life skill which will serve the Gaelscoil's pupils long into the future.

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Special Health Focus: (PERI)MENOPAUSE - A HOT TOPIC

Women have found their voice and smashed through the taboo when it comes to talking openly about menopause. Driven by frustration and desperation from fluctuating hormones, a shortage of HRT products and a desire to simply live a normal life in what should be an age of increased freedom unshackled from the responsibilities of parenting and unplagued by symptoms like night sweats, insomnia, vaginal dryness, mood swings, anxiety, you name it – the checklist reaches almost 40 symptoms in perimenopause – this is a battle

cry that's not before time. A new RTÉ documentary, 'The Change – Ireland's Menopause Story', which aired last month, gives an engaging and honest insight into women's experiences, explaining the science behind the menopause and opening up the discussion further. With support, lifestyle adjustments and treatment if necessary, menopause does not have to be a debilitating transition; it can and should be a very positive time of life for all women.

Own your menopause

According to research carried out by Menopause Workplace Consultant Catherine O'Keeffe 'almost one in three women were considering giving up their job due to menopause'. While honest conversation has only very recently really opened up in society around menopause, Catherine has been educating and informing in the workplace for almost five years. Founder of Wellness Warrior, and creator of the Menopause Success Summit, she has helped over 150 companies choose support over silence when it comes to women's health: Her mission from the start has been to shatter the menopause taboo...for good!

Catherine's personal menopause journey started at the age of 44 when she started experiencing some symptoms of perimenopause, flooding (very heavy periods), mood swings, anxiety and bloating. Following a presentation at work, where

brain fog, memory loss and anxiety left her floored, the investment banker realised that she needed to work with and not fight against the change she was experiencing.

Catherine believes that menopause should be a rewarding and empowering stage in a

woman's life. 'It changed my life,' she shares. 'Menopause offers the opportunity to look at where you're at in life and assess and prepare for the years ahead.'

Catherine left investment banking behind and went on to become the founder of Wellness Warrior. Over the years she has researched every aspect of menopause and health and has discovered many natural solutions that are providing relief to women both in perimenopause and menopause.

Perimenopause can start several years before menopause when a woman's ovaries naturally start producing less oestrogen and is an inevitable rollercoaster of hormonal upheaval for many women. The ensuing ever-changing symptoms means that you have to adapt and change as you go through these years.

"The changes that happen in

menopause will be unique to everyone," says Catherine, sharing the four pillars that helped on her journey.

1. Find your passion: Catherine now works every day with people and workplaces educating and empowering them with fact-based information on menopause.

2. Deepen your Education: Catherine armed herself with as much information as possible to understand the many choices available, from HRT to alternative choices to lifestyle. "Find trusted resources and when you do take one piece of information at a time, avoiding overwhelm."

3. Get Support: Catherine found her tribe who support her every day. "Menopause conversation should not be one of embarrassment or shame, it's a natural process. It's really important to be open about what



you're experiencing with family, work colleagues, friends, your GP – build your tribe around you. Having this support will help you with number 4."

4. Letting Go: When one door closes, another opens. "To quote Dr Maureen Gaffney, 'we have to go back in order to go forward'. If we flow with these changes, as opposed to going against the tide, this becomes an easier journey. Self-compassion, empathy and kindness to yourself is important as you go through these years."

"This time of life should be about good food, deep sleeps, plenty of exercise, support and lots of laughter. If we embrace the four pillars listed above, it can bring us to a place where we can look forward to the days ahead."

Without a good night's sleep however everything becomes more difficult and reaching even simple goals can feel impossible.

"Sleep is the bedrock of thriving through menopause," acknowledges Catherine. "If you can get that right, you can handle anything."

Sleeping difficulties are common in menopause due to fluctuating and decreasing hormones.

"What will deplete your hor-

mones further is ongoing cortisol production from ongoing chronic stress," says Catherine. Cortisol is our primary fight-or-flight hormone.

"If you're stressed you won't sleep properly, then you won't have the energy to exercise or eat properly – it becomes a catch-22!"

"This time of life should be about good food, deep sleeps, plenty of exercise, support and lots of laughter. If we embrace the four pillars listed above, it can bring us to a place where we can look forward to the days ahead."

When melatonin is high, cortisol should be low and vice versa. When either of these gets out of balance, our ability to sleep is affected. Our bodies normally produce cortisol in a cycle – more when we wake, less near bedtime. Levels should naturally decline as levels of

Continued on next page...



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HAVE YOU STARTED TAKING HRT? HAVE QUESTIONS? WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

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Special Health Focus: (PERI)MENOPAUSE - A HOT TOPIC

... cont'd from previous page

the hormone melatonin rise to induce sleep. But when cortisol levels become higher or lower than normal for prolonged periods, our wellbeing can be compromised.

Studies have shown that even having your phone in sight or nearby can elevate cortisol levels.

"Ideally don't bring your phone or TV into the bedroom," says Catherine.

Catherine goes to bed now most nights at 9.30pm, reads a book, fills in her gratitude journals and turns off the light around 10, usually a bit later at the weekend. "We know that ongoing sleep and stress issues are triggers for Alzheimer's and dementia, it's not just because you're in menopause," she stresses.

She recommends the supplement Mag365 and Tulsi Clarity tea to help with sleep issues.

"HRT is not a get-out-of-jail card – it's there to help you manage the symptoms of menopause as you transition through these years. You still need to make lifestyle choices for the benefit of your longterm health.

Exercise is a huge part of Catherine's personal tool kit.

"I've read so many research papers and everything comes back to exercise," she shares. "it helps with vasomotor symptoms (night sweats, hot flushes), anxiety, brain fog, you name it. You don't have to go hell for leather or become superwoman, you just need to make sure you have as much movement in your daily life as possible.

Catherine recommends cardiovascular exercise like running or brisk walking for heart health but also strengthening exercises. "Whether it's lifting bags of sugar at home or going to the gym, this is what will keep us from weak bones and hip fractures. Weights are a big part of building on your bone mass but start off easy and don't injure yourself."

Anything that exacerbates your symptoms, like alcohol, smoking, caffeine or sugar is not your friend. A varied and healthy diet will help you on this journey. "Fibre, protein, nuts and seeds, lots of water... look after your gut with as much variety in your diet as possible," says Catherine.

Her go-to supplements for helping with symptoms are Omega 7 for vaginal dryness,

Maca for hot flushes and night sweats, Vitamin C for so many things (Catherine recommends Somega) and Vitamin D for bone health. It's also important not to get overwhelmed with the supplement choice out there. Find out what you need and don't go overboard.

"We need to be calm and balanced in this conversation and part of being balanced is respecting the individual woman and her choices. Don't tell me I have to do acupuncture, don't tell me I have to take HRT. Give me the information and I'll decide what's best for me."

"Get your tribe around you... a good GP, pharmacist, osteopath and so on... and menopause can be one of the most empowering times of a woman's life."

Now age 51, Catherine is at the top of the perimenopause mountain and is feeling pretty good, which she attributes to her lifestyle. "The early years were the hardest," she shares.

She's not on HRT. "Right now I don't need it but that might change in a year's time,"

she admits.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) replaces hormones that are at a lower level as you approach the menopause, relieving symptoms.

"I've been in rooms with women who have cried with me because they feel they're miss-

me the information and I'll decide what's best for me.

"The government is well aware of the need for a national awareness campaign for menopause," says Catherine. "and employers are realising that they have to support this conversation because women like their careers and want to stay working.

"It costs a lot more to replace the experience and knowledge that a woman has at this stage of her life in the workplace than creating a supportive work environment. I'd love to see more awareness and education at secondary school level and in all workplaces.

"Menopause isn't going to go away, it's a natural stage in a woman's life and, as women, we need to protect it so that it stays being the natural evolution that it is. We don't want it to be viewed as a disability.

"Find out what works for you," says Catherine, "be it acupuncture, herbs or HRT.

At the end of the day it's your menopause and nobody understands your body better than you.

For updates on the next Menopause Summit happening on October 22 and to contact Catherine go to www.wellness-warrior.ie.

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Menopause and the role of the community pharmacy

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West Cork pharmacist Caitriona O'Riordan shares how pharmacists are often the first port of call for women seeking information and support on all aspects of healthcare including menopause.

Most of our patients will already have a strong relationship with their pharmacist and feel comfortable discussing symptoms and any concerns they may have. We are delighted to see more open discussion of menopausal symptoms and treatments and welcome changes in clinical recommendations, which mean

women can now seek effective treatment as soon as they need it.

I often find patients are unsure as to whether they may be entering perimenopause and just want to opportunity to bounce their symptoms off someone. As we all know the symptoms of perimenopause can vary widely from person to person and if you are not experiencing the same symptoms as your friends or colleagues you may begin to wonder what is happening to you and your body. Pharmacists are confident in discussing all symptoms with women, from anxiety and sleep disturbance to vaginal dryness and hot flushes. We all have private consultation rooms, which offer patients a relaxed environment to chat in private. Even if a patient has not raised the topic of menopause with us, we will notice if someone is presenting frequently with symptoms of thrush or urinary tract infections and we can help women work out if there may be a background reason for this such as vaginal symptoms associated with menopause.

The first step in my pharmacy is to discuss what symptoms are affecting quality of life the most and then find a solution to these. Many patients, especially in the early stages, are more interested

in simple over-the-counter remedies such as Solgar Magnesium Citrate for sleep disturbance or good quality lubricants such as the 'Yes' range of products. We also advise on the best vitamin and mineral supplements for energy and hormone balance, a number of companies now tailor products specifically for menopause such as Menomin and Menoactive.

Of course any discussion of menopause will turn to the topic of HRT and, as medicines experts, we are fully trained on the safety and suitability of these products. I will often advise patients who are suffering from multiple or severe symptoms when the time is right to have a chat with their GP. I really believe the more informed you are the more benefit you will get from any consultation, so we are very happy to discuss what options are available before they make their appointment.

Once a patient has a prescription for hormone replacement therapy we will advise them on how best to use their medicine, for example when to change patches or where to apply gel. Almost every patient seeks reassurance that they are making the correct decision in choosing HRT, particularly as there has

been such negativity surrounding this medication in previous years. Happily, I can reassure my patients with the most recent up-to-date information in relation to the safety and indeed the actual health benefits of using HRT.

The past six months have seen huge supply change issues in relation to all forms of hormone replacement therapy; luckily none of my patients needed to change the format of their therapy, as we were able to maintain a continuous supply by halving or doubling various strengths depending on availability. However, when the supply issue first came to light, I researched switching and equivalencies, so I was best informed to advise doctors who may need to switch patients and also to be able to reassure my patients that I always had a Plan B!

Your local pharmacy is a great place to begin a discussion on perimenopause and menopause; you don't need an appointment and we're trained and ready to chat. We are very happy to help, no matter what stage of the journey you are at, so call in anytime!

Caitriona O'Riordan, O'Riordan's Pharmacy, Main Street, Enniskeane, 023-8822710.

Could stress be driving your hormones crazy?

Many women are affected by the rollercoaster ride of fluctuating hormones during menopause and perimenopause. Often we think this is normal because it is so common, but it is not normal, it is a symptom, and one of the main culprits may be the pregnenolone steal due to chronic stress.

The pregnenolone steal is based on the idea that chronic stress robs the body of sex hormones so that it can produce more stress hormone cortisol.

How your body copes with stress: When you experience stress, the adrenal glands produce a hormone called cortisol, which elevates the 'fight or flight' response. Normally this

'fight or flight' stage is short-lived and the body returns to a 'rest and digest' phase. But for many people in modern society, they become stuck in a permanent 'fight or flight' stage; this is especially so for those who are dealing with chronic inflammatory problems or autoimmune issues.

When people hear the word stress it often conjures up images of emotional upheaval or money worries and whilst these do provoke a stress response, there

are other very significant mechanisms that provoke the same stress response, such as unstable blood sugar from a diet high in carbohydrates, skipping meals, or relying on caffeine or high energy drinks to keep going.

There are other serious stressors such as undiagnosed autoimmunity, gastrointestinal problems like IBS, chronic inflammation and chronic pain and insomnia. The bottom line however is that it does not matter where the stress is coming from; your body will respond in the same way and produce more cortisol.

Pregnenolone Steal: Pregnenolone is a precursor hormone, essentially a building block, which is converted into other hormones that are produced in the adrenal glands. These hormones include sex hormones like progesterone and oestrogen but also the stress hormone cortisol. This is particularly important for perimenopausal or menopausal women, as during this stage of life the ovaries stop producing hormones and the adrenal glands become the main producer of hormones in your body.

Pregnenolone steal refers to a situation where there is excessive stress diverting pregnenolone from producing progesterone and oestrogen to



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic

life and remove them or reduce them if possible.

One of the main mechanisms of stress I see in clinic is women not eating enough, skipping meals and ending up with low blood sugar. If you get 'hangry' or feel better with more energy after eating, this is a sign that your blood sugar level is dipping too low – if that is you then you should NOT fast. Instead eat at least three meals a day and maybe snack in between meals too but avoid sugar and high carb foods and excessive amounts of fruit.

In the case of relationships and emotional stress help from a professional like a hypnotherapist or counsellor can be great. If you have unresolved IBS, food sensitivities, chronic pain, insomnia or an autoimmune issue, functional medicine can help you make changes that will improve your symptoms, reduce stress and balance your hormones.

Eoin Roe is a Chiropractor and Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner working at Roe Health in Skibbereen. If you would like to make contact please see our website www.roe-health.ie or call 087 958 2362.

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A HOT TOPIC

Moving in menopause



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.

Whether you embrace it or want to run from it, menopause is waiting around a corner, most often hitting women between the age of 40 and 44 years. For many women the menopausal weight gain can seem overnight: Fat gets more easily attached to the body, especially around the midsection, with no lifestyle changes to explain the expanding tummy. However perimenopause doesn't have to mean the end of feeling and looking great.

According to the Mayo Clinic regular exercise is the best weapon against perimenopause weight gain, and they recommend as little as 10 minutes exercise a day to help combat the dreaded extra belly fat.

Besides helping to prevent weight gain, the Mayo Clinic also found regular exercise to be good for perimenopausal women for the following reasons:

1. Helping to reduce the risk of cancer, especially breast, colon and endometrial.

2. Strengthening bones. Bone loss and fragility in bones are known consequences of perimenopause and menopause. By training regularly, women can slow bone-loss and lower the risk of fractures and osteoporosis.

3. Regular exercise can also hold off/reduce the risk of diseases, which can come with weight gain: Diabetes and heart disease.

4. Last, but not least. Exercise will lift your mood. Regular exercise in adults lowers the risk of depression and cognitive decline. Exercise releases the feel-good neuro-transmitters in the brain: endorphins and dopamine. If you run or do other

kind of aerobic exercise, you'll also increase the production of serotonin – a third feel-good drug.

According to research any kind of exercise can be beneficial, but it's worth mentioning that aerobic exercise is one of the best exercises for weight loss/weight control. And strength training is the best for building muscles and strengthening bones.

It is recommended to start with as little as 10 minutes a day (this could be a walk in brisk pace or a bike ride, or 10 minutes home training). If every day doesn't fit your schedule, try to get 10-20 minutes done three to four days a week. If you include intensity training in your sessions, you'll get more fat-burn and better heart and lung condition.



Intensity training could be small sprints during a run or fast biking during a bike-ride, or a set of 10-20 burpees or jumping jacks during a home-training session. For example: Bike for four minutes in leisure pace and one minute as fast as you can, do four sets of these, to bike for 20 minutes total.

It could also be a jog/run, with two minutes jog and 20 seconds sprint, or 800 metres jog, 200 metres sprint. For a duration of 11 minutes total or 3km (5 sets/3 sets). Sets can be added or subtracted, but try at least to do 10 minutes consecutive exercise.

Food and drink intake is another big cursor, which can move the needle away from the negative effects of perimenopause, especially the weight gain.

Here are some of the most important facts to take into account:

1. Alcohol is calories. If you must drink, drink only a glass with food and max. 11 standard drinks per week (for women) according to official Irish guidelines). Or at least swap every other drink for a glass of water. A glass of wine (12cl) is around

90 calories, while a beer (33cl) is 120 and a strong beer (220 calories for 33cl). Spirits top the list with almost 100 calories for 4cl. In comparison a Cadbury Star Bar at 250 calories, while one Clonakilty Sausage is around 95 calories (according to myfitnesspal.com). For women in their forties with a sedentary lifestyle, the average calories used everyday is 1,800. This of course depends on your height and weight. If you want to know for sure how many calories you need every day, there are many online calculators who can help. Just type in your age, height, weight and activity level and the sites will do the calculation. If you are unsure where to look, you can try myfitnesspal.com, nhs.uk or mayoclinic.org.

2. Reduce intake of pre-made processed food, including fried food (fish and chips), crisps, chicken wings and so on) Food made from scratch at home is often more healthy and the big benefit is that you know what's in it. Include fatty fish regularly in your diet to get the benefits of Omega 3.

3. If you are smoking, you can slow down the symptoms of ageing and perimenopause by stopping. Your skin and organs will especially benefit from this.

4. Studies have shown that daily intake of D-vitamin delayed the symptoms of menopause for about 17 per cent of the women in the study. Daily intake of vital vitamins and minerals (including calcium) are also recommended. Preferably through your food, but if you are in doubt, you can take a multivitamin pill plus fish oil. However getting your vitals through food is always the best solution.

Lastly, it is of course always recommended to seek advice from your GP, especially if the changes in your body or symptoms you are experiencing are serious. It can also be a good idea to involve your GP if you plan to overhaul your lifestyle from sedentary to active. Maybe there are specific forms of training that will suit your overall health better, depending on pre-existing conditions.

In any case, an overhaul is a positive thing, when done correctly and step by step. Build up your muscles, tendons and ligaments slowly but consistently. Don't rush out and think you can race a 10 km race or join the fitness centre expecting to bench 50 kg on the first day. Doing too much, too soon, can result in injuries and can put a stop or a break to your goal. So start easy, but consistently and work your way towards your goal from here.

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Special Health Focus: (PERI)MENOPAUSE - A HOT TOPIC

There is 'no one size fits all' in menopause



Dr. Brenda Moran is a recognised BMS (British Menopause Society) accredited menopause specialist, with an interest in conditions associated with hormone sensitivity such as premenstrual disorders. The founder of the Danu Menopause and PMS Clinic in Cork, her aspiration is for all women to be able to avail of good quality sexual and reproductive healthcare throughout their life transitions. She chats to **Mary O'Brien** about recognising the symptoms of perimenopause, deciding if Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is the right treatment for you and why it's imperative that specialist menopause care for women is funded in general practice.

For the majority of women perimenopause will begin in their mid-40s (45-50) but according to Dr Moran this transition can start much earlier or even later for some women.

"One size does not fit all with perimenopause and you can have very different presentations," she shares. "Some women might notice changes to their cycle. Others can have normal periods and experience perimenopausal symptoms. For some these can even be the same as menopausal symptoms."

Most perimenopause symptom checkers list between 30

and 40 symptoms.

"During this time, PMS can start for the first time or it can worsen," says Dr Moran. "This is a characteristic trait of perimenopause, as are headaches, migraines or worsening of such physical symptoms, palpitations, brain fog, lack of focus or difficulty concentrating."

"Some women who are experiencing declining hormones can have menopausal symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats and sleep issues."

Anxiety triggered by fluctuating hormones is very common in perimenopause. "Anxiety and

loss of confidence are the most common symptoms presenting to me," shares Dr Moran.

Then there is vaginal dryness, vaginal burning, overactive bladder, recurrent UTIs and a whole array of vagina-related issues due to declining oestrogen, or as Dr Moran explains what is referred to as Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause (GSM) – prevalent in menopause and post but it can also start in peri.

These are just some of the more common symptoms. Non-classic symptoms can include burning tongue. "That's a big one," says Dr Moran "and as a GP one that I didn't make the association with perimenopause for a long time." It's a long list but burning mouth and tinnitus are two others at the top.

With the conversation around women's health focused so much on menopause at the moment, Dr Moran stresses the importance of recognising that other things can present with these symptoms as well. "It's important that other things



are ruled out first and it's our job as doctors to put the clues together."

Post-menopause is a "retrospective diagnosis – only diagnosed after periods have stopped for at least a year and they are not on a form of hormone therapy". The majority of women will be postmenopausal by the age of 55. There is no reliable marker to decipher the 'exact moment' a woman has gone through their menopause, therefore it's diagnosed in retrospect as periods need to be stopped for a year.

Not everyone will get symptoms of menopause. "It's an area we still don't know everything about, why some women experience symptoms when their oestrogen is a certain level and others don't."

"Typical symptoms of not having enough oestrogen would be your vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes, night sweats), vaginal dryness, overactive bladder, low libido, dry skin, eyes, mouth, brain fog, lack of focus and so on."

Low progesterone can occur before the decline of oestrogen for some people and how that often manifests is in the change to your menstrual cycle, for

example heavy periods or flooding. "Some people get on well with progesterone and some don't," explains Dr Moran. "A lack for some might be associated with anxiety and poor sleep but for others it won't have any impact."

High oestrogen can be seen quite often in perimenopause. "That's the ovaries working really hard to try and release the egg," she explains. "It's like an engine beginning to tire. At times there can be a high production of oestrogen and this can cause irritability, mood swings, or nausea, stomach or gastrointestinal issues."

"There is no right or wrong script to this...it's very individual but obviously if you're post-menopausal, it's a case of giving you back your hormones to relieve or resolve your symptoms."

"I find perimenopause more difficult to treat from a HRT perspective, as most people will still have ongoing hormone production themselves. It's a case of giving a little back to try to balance things."

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is used to replace hormones that your body no longer produces in menopause in order to relieve symptoms. The two main hormones used in HRT are oestrogen and progesterone but there are many different types of these hormones available in HRT.

"For some people the narrative is that HRT is a panacea but it's not as simple as that," stresses Dr Moran. "It can be tricky. People can have very different responses to HRT and you can get complications on it as well."

While a supporter of HRT, Dr Moran puts a lot of value on optimising lifestyle, which she says can have the knock-on effect of improving a response to HRT. Exercise, a good mediterranean diet and reducing sugar intake are incredibly

important. "Fluctuating blood glucose levels will exacerbate any hormonal swings going on in the background," she says.

If someone hasn't had a good response initially to HRT but still feels it is the right treatment for them, Dr Moran's recommendation is go back to basics.

"I do this with some of my patients: stop it for a period of time, and then reintroduce it and try a different regimen, a much lower dose, increasing it up gradually."

The two types of HRT treatment plans are cyclical (or sequential) HRT and continuous HRT.

The way in which progesterone is taken along with the oestrogen determines whether or not the HRT will lead to bleeding. By adding progesterone for 10 to 14 days a month, a bleed occurs similar to that of a natural cycle. This form of HRT is called 'cyclical' or 'sequential HRT' and is advisable in perimenopausal women.

Forms of hormone replacement that give continuous progesterone with the oestrogen have been developed to avoid bleeding altogether. This method is called 'continuous combined HRT'. "It tends to be given post-menopause," says Dr Moran.

"HRT can cause bleeding and it's important that this is recognised as a side effect," she continues. "You get leeway with that for the first three to six months but after that time, if you still have irregular bleeding, it needs to be investigated to make sure there isn't another cause."

"If a woman is switched over to a continuous regimen too soon in the perimenopause and they have ongoing hormone production themselves, this may lead to irregular bleeding," she emphasises.

For a woman in the perimenopause stage, Dr Moran says the Mirena coil combined

Continued on next page...

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Special Health Focus: (PERI)MENOPAUSE - A HOT TOPIC

... cont'd from previous page

with oestrogen can often be a good option. "You can still get pregnant in perimenopause and the Mirena offers a contraceptive, it's very good at controlling bleeding in most women and it gives good womb protection," she explains.

"We need to avoid fear-mongering, particularly in women in their 20s, 30s, 40s, who may not be experiencing any symptoms but are dreading what is ahead,"

There can be a number of issues present when someone starts HRT, and Dr Moran has seen progesterone cause problems for some of her patients. "If you're not getting on with it orally, my first line would be to try inserting it vaginally (Utrogestan), which can work; the Mirena offers a low dose of progesterone; or changing the type of progesterone can be an option. Sometimes it can take

a year to finally get the right regime," she says.

Dr Moran believes there is a need for pathways into clinics, ideally public clinics, for people with complications or anyone struggling with menopause symptoms.

With the right support, menopause should not be a debilitating transition for women.

"We need to avoid fear-mongering, particularly in women in their 20s, 30s, 40s, who may not be experiencing any symptoms but are dreading what is ahead," she says.

While the primary sex hormone in men, testosterone is also produced by women and contributes to sex drive, bone health and muscle strength. While it's not licensed for women in Ireland, Dr Moran offers reassurance that the safety data for its use in women is good. "In women, we're replacing testosterone back to pre-menopausal levels, not increasing it and the available data does not show increased breast cancer rates or cardiovascular events, although further studies in this area would be beneficial"

Dr Moran relates that it's important to test a person's levels to make sure they not too high before prescribing testosterone. The test involves measuring

total testosterone and something called sex hormone binding globulin, which gives an index called the free androgen index.

While Ireland's first publicly-funded menopause clinic opened this year at the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin, it is only accepting patients from its catchment area with complex needs. Another clinic is due to open in Cork, hopefully in the next year.

"Fundamentally what has to happen is that it needs to be resourced within general practice," explains Dr Moran. "It's impossible to do a menopause first consultation in 15 minutes. I'd love to be working within general practice but I can't operate the way I want to, as it's impossible to give people the time."

"There should be help out there and it should simply be a case of getting that help when you need it," says Dr Moran.

For anyone interested in doing some research before going to their GP, Dr Moran recommends going to the Women's Health Concern website, the patient arm of the British Menopause Society (www.womens-health-concern.org); on facebook 'The Irish Menopause' group, Dr Caoimhe Hartley (menopausehealth.ie);

and Dr Hannah Short has some excellent podcasts on instagram and is due to release a book called 'The Complete Guide to Premature Ovarian Insufficiency in Early Menopause'.

Not everyone will need or want HRT and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can be very beneficial for women suffering from symptoms such as anxiety in menopause. Dr Moran recommends looking up Prof. Myra Hunter or go to the www.womens-health-concern.org website for more information.



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Are hormone imbalances making you feel unwell?



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

Have you ever wondered why you're suffering with your mental health? Perhaps you can't think of a trauma or any reason in particular why you feeling this way. Friends may have suggested therapy but you can't see how that would help. If this is the case, then maybe your hormones are the reason why you are feeling this way.

Female hormones start to decline much earlier than many women think. Peri-menopause actually starts from about the age of 30 with a significant decline in hormones around 35

years.

Fluctuating and declining hormones will continue until menopause, which typically occurs between the age of 50 and 60 years and this can lead to many women feeling overwhelmed and exhausted with low mood, anxiety or even depression.

An example of the affect of hormones on mood can be seen clearly with postnatal depression. During pregnancy progesterone levels are elevated by nearly 600 per cent, while after childbirth progesterone levels fall significantly and, if they become too low, this can be the cause of postnatal depression.

Progesterone is a hormone that has antioxidant properties for the brain. It is released at ovulation and helps your body to manage stress, sustain pregnancy and feel good.

Low progesterone can lead to PMS, unexplained weight gain, cyclical headaches, infertility, miscarriage, anxiety and depression.

Alongside progesterone, oestrogen is known for its role in sexual and reproductive health. However it also contributes to cognitive and bone health,

mood and sexual desire. Low oestrogen levels are responsible for irregular or no menstruation, hot flashes, night sweats, memory problems, vaginal dryness, painful intercourse and depression.

Androgens like testosterone are usually thought of as male hormones but females naturally produce them and they are important for cell repair, bone and cognitive health and maintaining libido. Excessive levels lead to thinning hair on the head, excessive hair on the face and arms, mid cycle pain, acne and ovarian cysts. Low levels can lead to tiredness, loss of muscle mass and strength, lack of libido, motivation and low mood.

Insulin is responsible for blood sugar balance: High levels from a diet high in sugars and carbohydrates is stressful and can contribute to symptoms in peri-menopause.

So how can you find out what's wrong and what can you do about it?

As a practitioner who helps with emotional overwhelm and women's health, I do a thorough review of your symptoms and medical history to help me to

understand what is going on for you and how we can work together to improve your mental and physical health.

Acupuncture is an effective therapy that has been used for more than 3000 years to regulate hormones throughout a woman's life. It is particularly helpful for regulating periods, promoting fertility and relieving the peri-menopause symptoms I have mentioned above. It can

also help support a graceful transition through menopause and beyond.

Nutrition and what you eat also has a huge impact on hormone balance; it is possible to use food as therapy, not only for your hormones, but also for your mind. Changing diet can be a challenge and understanding your emotional drivers with hypnotherapy can help you to make those changes.

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

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HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

Hannah Dare shares some of the nutritional and lifestyle adjustments that helped on her menopause journey

Menopause: There's no need to panic!

In hindsight, I can see I was struggling with perimenopause for a number of years, until my periods finally stopped for good (I think!) about a year-and-a-half ago. It's a little early to go through the menopause, which caused me some anxiety at first, but now I have worked out how to stabilise the hot flashes, reduce my anxiety and have raised my energy levels, the relief is huge. I'm no longer on such an emotional rollercoaster, I don't struggle with feeling down for half the month, and I'm no longer wiped out for an entire week each month. Towards the end, my periods came every 20 days so it felt like there was no break and I was overwhelmed. If this sounds at all like you, don't panic – there's a lot you can do to balance it all out again.

I've learned over the last two years what works for me. It's an individual matter – we all have different bodies and lifestyles and hence all our symptoms and needs are different. I thought I would share with you some of the things that have benefitted me, so that (along with all the great information in this fabulous Menopause Feature) you can start to piece together your own plan.

When I realised that my periods were erratic and I was having early menopause symptoms, the first thing I did was take myself to a Medical Herbalist. I know Rosari is covering herbs for Menopause this month so I won't go into detail on what I'm taking, but I will say that if you are really struggling, I strongly recommend finding a herbalist to work with.

Sometimes over-the-counter herbs will do the trick (call into your local health store to ask about taking Agnus Castus for a stabilising your cycle, for example, or Sage extract tablets for flushes, or Rhodiola if you are feeling down, or Valerian for sleep issues) but sometimes life is so busy and overwhelming that having someone to talk you through all your different symptoms, your medical history and give you a prescription is just what you need. Medical Herbalists (like Rosari) are extremely well-qualified and can guide you through this time of transition in a way that will help you to stay on top of all the symptoms without needing to resort to prescription medication.

The next thing I did was start taking time out to look after myself. I do yoga twice a week, I swim in the sea regularly, and I get massages as often as I can. I also walk in the woods a lot and try to go to bed at 10pm. I aim not to get exhausted. I find all these things help me to stay balanced, to manage my busy life and stay feeling good about the world!

In terms of diet, my main goal is to drink a LOT more water than I was – at least a litre and a half a day on top of the (many) herbal teas I drink. Something I learned was that if you wake in the night with a racing heart, it could be dehydration. It's stopped since I focused on drinking water.

I also reduced caffeine, drinking mainly decaf coffee and rooibos tea (have you tried the Dragonfly Rooibos Earl Grey? It's gorgeous). I also cut out dairy milk, and reduced sugar, and increased the amount of fruit and vegetables I eat. I don't drink alcohol outside of the occasional times when I really feel like it – often our liver can have a hard time processing all the hormones, so giving it a break really makes sense.

In terms of supplements, my main symptoms were feeling very low – low mood, low energy, low everything. Life was a struggle. And what I learned at a recent Webinar we hosted on the Menopause was that taking Soy Isoflavones can really help this feeling. Previously, I used to dread the onset of the menopause because I loved the

high I would get once I started my period each month – which I understood was an oestrogen high. I felt on top of the world, and I was very worried that this was going to desert me and I would feel flat forever after. But this isn't the case, and I feel that it has a lot to do with Soy Isoflavones, which are a form of Phyto-oestrogen, which enables my body to boost my oestrogen levels a little. Not as much as Hormone Replacement Therapy would, but enough (for me) to feel really good again, and to feel stable – no huge ups and downs – which is actually very pleasant!

Other supplements I take include B Complex, Magnesium, and Omega 3. Omega 3 is amazing for keeping your skin supple and of course also helps your brain, heart and mood. If you get a lot of dryness – vaginal dryness, or dry eyes – you can also take Omega 7, it's very effective. Magnesium is essential for energy, mood, keeping your bones strong – you're probably on it, but if you are still getting any cramps or are having trouble sleeping, increase the dose – the only side effect of too much magnesium is loose bowels, in which case take it in two doses. B Vitamins are so important for women, for mood swings, energy again, and so many other things. Take a good one – I love Terranova. And finally if you used to bleed heavily please make sure you take iron every so often, it's a good energy boost and we don't always have enough in our diets. Floradix

Liquid Iron is great, gentle and effective.

If you want to try taking Soy Isoflavones, drop into Organico, we have some samples to give out so you can try them for a few weeks to see if they suit you. We also have a fantastic booklet by Eileen Durward called The Menopause that we can give you, it goes through lots of symptoms and how to deal with them naturally.

Overall, stay optimistic and remember that the Menopause can be really a really positive time – honestly, it's a long time since I've felt this good about life, about my body and about the future. Ideally it's a time that women get to focus on themselves, rather than looking after everyone else.

If you need help with perimenopause symptoms, email me and I will send you links to our Period Health and Menopause webinars – they are both full of useful information. And it's never too soon to start taking care of your health – so do whatever you need to do, whether that's finding a Herbalist, getting a course of Acupuncture to balance your hormones, or making those dietary changes you know will make all the difference.

Have a good month and see you in July!

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HERBAL HEALING

Dr. Rosari Kingston

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

Using herbs to support your menopause journey

The menopause is one of those life events that trigger fear and apprehension in some women, while for others it is a welcome relief from premenstrual issues as well as menstruation itself. From a medical perspective, if a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months it is assumed that that she has gone through the menopause. It is the end of the reproductive years of a woman's life and is caused by changing levels of oestrogen and progesterone, two female hormones made in the ovaries. These changing hormone levels lead to symptoms like hot flashes and vaginal dryness.

Needless to say, it is a normal part of the aging process, and

this is where one of the problems of the menopause arise, which is one's own perception of it. Most men can sail through their 50s thinking they are still the same handsome figure of earlier years, but the menopause is like a jolt to a woman's psyche and may be viewed positively or negatively. After the menopause, a woman has left a crucial part, namely the reproductive years, of her life behind, and is now entering the age of the 'Cailleach', the Irish goddess associated with the season of winter. This transition can be viewed can be viewed positively if children are reared, independent and relatively self-sufficient. From this perspective, it is important to

realise that from 50 to 80 years of age is the same length of time as from 20 to 50 years. With modern health care, good diet, and social life, these 30 years may be viewed, not as old age, but a long and fruitful transition to becoming a venerable elder at 80 years plus. Despite this long timespan (30 years), we do very little to plan or prepare for this second half of our life, which as women we can truly call our own. The perimenopausal years are then a time to reflect, evaluate and plan for the coming decades.

The symptoms of the menopause are familiar to most women and include hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, urinary urgency, sleep diffi-



culties, mood swings, and dry skin. Other symptoms include a racing heart, muscle aches and pains, and changes in libido (sex drive), memory lapses, weight gain, hair thinning, as

well as increased facial hair. In the perimenopausal stage, (while one is still menstruating) breast tenderness and PMS may get worse, and periods may be-

Continued on next page...

Special Health Focus: (PERI)MENOPAUSE - A HOT TOPIC

Menopause – a second spring



Radical Wellness

Freya Sherlock

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

What images come to mind when you think of menopause? Whether it's something you've yet to experience, have long since passed or are in fact, an unsuspecting man witnessing this inevitable time in the lives of the women around you, what would be your knee-jerk description of what menopause involves? Years of tiresome night sweats and embarrassing hot flushes? Exhaustion from

chronic insomnia and relentless menstrual flooding? Unwelcome pounds creeping on as your metabolism seemingly slows down? An unfathomable personality change that leaves you a stranger, even to yourself, be that acute anxiety or depression, debilitating loss of memory and clarity or a crash in confidence with intense emotional lability? Or did you manage to get off scot-free with simply the slow and gentle cessation of a not-so-monthly cycle?

While women come into my Chinese Medicine clinic seeking treatment for all the above, there is another dimension to menopause that is available to women at this stage of life that can be incredibly enriching and quite literally, transformative. Chinese Medicine regards the menopause as a woman's Second Spring. It has the potential to be a time of a total life re-write, an exciting time of re-discovering ourselves on our own terms. As the demands of the many roles we play as a woman within our families and society begin to wane or at least lessen, we can afford to consider what's important to us from a place of greater freedom and self-expression.

So often as women, we park our own hopes, dreams, needs and deeper selves in order to nurture, facilitate, support and finance those in our care during our younger decades. These

years are of course the era during which we accumulate our valuable life experience, expertise and grow from many of life's lessons. But our Second Spring is a time of shedding what we have outgrown, of being released from some of our responsibilities, of coming up for air after decades of selfless service and a time in which all our experience, expertise and hard-won growth can begin to distill into wisdom, self-assurance, calm and insight.

In Chinese Medicine, each of our organ systems are a microcosm that include a corresponding organ-specific spectrum of emotional and mental attributes that have both healthy and unhealthy expression. With our Second Spring, we can begin to have the bandwidth and spaciousness in life to consciously seize the day and ride the wave of physical change to dive more deeply into our own personal journey with unbridled selfhood.

I encourage women to pause at the juncture that The Change offers and reflect with a sense of curiosity and openness to ask themselves, 'What is the life that wants to live through me'? It takes courage to re-imagine what our lives are about when our children have flown the nest or when our biology has simply shifted gear and dare to consider what we 'plan to do with our one wild and precious life'.

While menopause can be a disorientating time, it can also be a tremendously empowering one, during which we get to reclaim ourselves, sometimes for the first time, and follow the beckoning call of The Woman Within who has waited so quietly and patiently for our time to come.

I particularly enjoy working with women during this powerful time. Within each organ system lies a path of personal growth and Chinese Medicine offers a framework for not only understanding how to help a woman with the physiology of menopause but also how to help harness the interpersonal and even spiritual opportunity of menopause. For instance, perhaps her Liver system needs tonifying to enhance her sense of vision for her life (the Liver channels opens into the eyes supplying both physical and metaphysical vision) and to transmute any residual anger, irritability or intolerance she may have previously experienced (from Liver Qi stagnation) into the virtues of the Liver: benevolence, kindness and compassion. Or perhaps her Gallbladder needs support to cultivate courage, conscious action, and decisiveness. Alternatively, her Lung system may need treating to help her navigate life's losses and sorrows (grief is stored in the Lungs) to cultivate a greater

capacity for letting go with forgiveness, or to nurture her sense of self-worth since issues of vulnerability and feeling valued are rooted in the Lungs.

Above all, Second Spring is our second bite at the cherry of life. It's a time to look your

hopes, dreams and quiet callings in the eye and ask yourself, 'If not now, then when?'

It's our time to flourish, to cherish the life we have and to honour the woman we have become.

Freya Sherlock
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... cont'd from previous page

come lighter and more irregular.

All these symptoms are enough to trigger nightmares and for many women they are really debilitating. Experiencing one or more of them is like travelling through a long, dark tunnel of misery before the freedom that comes with post-menopausal years.

What can be done about these symptoms if they impinge on daily living?

Hot flashes can be triggered by, caffeine, smoking, spicy foods, alcohol, tight clothing, stress, anxiety, and hot weather. So, all of these need to be reduced and if stress is an issue, identify the cause and take steps to reduce or eliminate it. Yoga, meditation, walking, forests, sea swimming are all good antidotes to stress and anxiety.

Memory lapses are reduced by doing crosswords, playing cards (join the local bridge club), less television, exercise and reading. Bingo is also useful, as it improves cognitive ability. It does this by improving the brain's processing speeds,

alertness, and memory: The listener has to have the ability to look for numbers quickly, many times across multiple cards. Bingo also improves hand-eye co-ordination, with the social aspect of bingo is also a positive factor.

Are there herbs for dealing with menopausal symptoms?

The answer is yes, and the first of these is cold sage tea. Make tea as one does normally but instead of a tea bag, add a handful of sage leaves to a ceramic tea pot. Let it draw for 10 minutes and then strain. Let it cool to lukewarm, or even cold, before drinking it.

Hot flashes may be reduced by eating soya products, but these MUST BE minimally processed foods like organic tofu, tempeh, natto, miso, and edamame. There is a danger that eating highly processed soya products can affect thyroid function and lead to increased TSH (sign of hypothyroidism). Some studies have shown,

"The chances of having a high TSH were quadrupled in

those who ate, on average, just under two servings a day [of soy foods] compared to those who didn't eat any," says study leader Serena Tonstad, MD, PhD, professor of public health at Loma Linda and a preventive cardiology physician in Norway.

However, other studies have shown no clinical effect on thyroid function. Possibly, like many foods, the least processed the better, which is why I recommend the soya foods above.

Other herbs include Black cohosh (Actaea racemosa), a herb from the Native American tradition, which may also be beneficial for sweats and hot flashes.

Red clover (Trifolium pratense) is abundant in lawns at the moment and this is also good for sweats and hot flashes. It is also effective at preventing bone loss, which is another very good reason to encourage its growth in your garden.

Flax seeds (Linum usitatissimum), These plant compounds have chemical structures and

functions similar to those of the hormone oestrogen. Flax is sometimes used to alleviate menopause symptoms like hot flashes and bone loss due to its supposed oestrogen-like activity. It is very easy to sprinkle flax seed into smoothies or add it to muesli.

The final herb I will mention is Chasteberry (Vitex agnus castus). A recent study has shown significant reduction in anxiety and hot flashes, but no improvement in depression or sexual dysfunction associated with the menopause. Chasteberry is generally considered safe, but mild side effects like nausea, itchy skin, headache, and digestive distress are possible. You shouldn't try it if you take antipsychotic medications or drugs for Parkinson's disease.

Needless to say, if over-the-counter remedies, or homemade teas, do not solve menopausal symptoms, professional help may be obtained from your health care provider.

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Special Health Focus: (PERI)MENOPAUSE - A HOT TOPIC



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.

When it comes to menopause; hot flashes, night sweats and brain fog are all very familiar symptoms, but dry skin during menopause, perhaps not. In fact, the onset of drier skin can actually start early in perimenopause, but why is skin feeling drier during this time? The answer is simple, hormones, specifically oestrogen. Oestrogen plays a key role in the health and appearance of your skin and as women age and approach menopause, oestrogen levels naturally de-

Menopause and dry skin

cline. This decline brings about a decline in our own natural hydrating moisturising agents – think sebum, hyaluronic acid, and ceramides, which translates physically into that the feeling of dryness and tightness, and for some increased sensitivity and itchiness, which I might add is not just confined to the face; skin on the body can also feel like this too. Always seek the expertise and advice of a skincare specialist, as you will need to reassess your skincare regime to ensure your skin's needs are being met. This along with the right product choices will ensure that these changes can be easily managed, and skin will be feeling its best. Read on for some skin barrier boosting products that will help to alleviate dry skin.

Avène XeraCalm A.D Range
The Avène XeraCalm A.D range has been specially formulated for very dry skin, prone to itching and eczema. At the heart of the formula, the patented I-Modulia® active ingredient, helps to strengthen the skin barrier and reduce itchiness and redness. Along with soothing Avène Thermal Spring Water, the formula contains Cer-Omega which helps to replenish the natural skin barrier. The range contains a minimal number of ingredients to minimise the risk



of allergy, the products are so gentle, that they can be used on babies, children, adults, and pregnant women alike. The XeraCalm range contains three products – the reformulated XeraCalm Cleansing Oil, the XeraCalm Cream and the XeraCalm Balm. The balm is thicker and intensely nourishing for very dry skin compared to the cream, which is recommended for dry skin, from €19 available from Irish pharmacies nationwide and online at boots.ie.

C Beauty Órga Hyaluronic Hand Lotion Bar
Irish business C Beauty's signature hand and body bar is

infused with hyaluronic acid to hydrate skin and lock in moisture while organic butters containing shea butter protect the skin barrier and help cracked irritated skin. When applied to skin, it effectively restores hydration, nourishing the skin from within. Shea Butter, a creamy certified organic unrefined shea butter provides both softness and elasticity while giving skin-protecting properties and together with coconut pulp from cold pressed organic coconut oil and ylang ylang, there is a gentle, floral scent. Perfect to keep hands, body and any pesky dry areas nourished, it is beautiful to massage into

body post shower or bath. Top Tip: Keep next to your bed and apply before bedtime to nourish and repair overnight, €17.50 available online from cbeauty.ie and check out the full range of products using luxury botanical cold pressed oils finely crafted with self-care in mind.

Amuline Nourish Lotion
Citrine Healthcare launched the Amuline™ range, a targeted skin care solution for dry and irritated skin which includes four topical products to help the skin's moisture levels and improve the skin barrier. Amuline Nourish is a rich emulsion to moisturise and reduce the appearance of dry skin. Enriched with natural oils and prebiotics, this nourishing and soothing cream moisturises the skin and absorbs quickly. The use of emollients applied liberally, will moisturise, hydrate, and help maintain the skin barrier to maintain healthy skin. Containing ceramides, prebiotics, niacinamide, evening primrose oil and perilla oil, it can be used on face and body, €14.95, the Amuline™ Derma range is available now in Irish pharmacies and online citrine-healthcare.ie

CeraVe Hydrating Cleansing Oil

The latest addition to the CeraVe family, this daily cleanser with its unique foaming oil formula gently cleanses while providing a nourishing comfort that leaves skin on the face and body looking healthy and feeling refreshed. Developed with dermatologists, Hydrating Foaming Oil Cleanser with three essential ceramides, glycerin, and hyaluronic acid, gently and effectively removes dirt, oil, and impurities from the skin at an optimal pH, while providing up to 24-hour

hydration. With triglyceride and squalane - ingredients that can be found naturally in the skin – the unique formula maintains the skin barrier and keeps skin comfortable without feeling greasy. For a nourishing body routine, begin with CeraVe Hydrating Foaming Oil Cleanser and follow with CeraVe's Moisturising Cream or your body cream of choice, €14 available in pharmacies nationwide.

Kiehl's Midnight Recovery Omega Rich Cloud Cream
Cocooning skin with a whipped, cloud-like texture, Kiehl's Midnight Recovery Omega-Rich Cloud Cream delivers plumping hydration, summoning a smooth and radiant appearance as you sleep. The 98.6pc naturally-derived night cream is infused with omega three and six fatty acids and a proprietary blend of botanicals, helping to support the skin's natural protective lipid barrier. Seeking to provide visible results in just seven nights, the antioxidant-rich formula transforms complexions from dry and dull to supple and luminous. Suitable for all skin types, including sensitive skin, in a consumer study after four weeks, 94 pc of participants agreed skin felt nourished with moisture, €46.50 available online from brownthomas.com and arnotts.ie and instore from selected Kiehl's stockists nationwide.

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A HOT TOPIC

Menopause health with SOMEGA

Over the past number of months, there has been a lot of attention on menopause. Of course, all women realise menopause is part of life, but many come upon it and question what is happening. For generations, menopause was simply not spoken about, just something that occurred and had to be endured. Just like everything else in life, preparation and knowledge is power. Fortunately, the power is very much in your hands and begins with some simple knowledge on what your body needs at this stage of your life.

Good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle are essential in helping to manage the symptoms of menopause and eating a healthy balanced diet is vital! High quality supplements can help to reduce menopause symptoms. Supplementing with key nutrients can also support bone health and heart health, which is very important because of the increased risk of heart disease and osteoporosis after menopause, due to the loss of oestrogen.

Here is a guide to SOMEGA supplements which are powerful allies during menopause:

Vitamin C

Research shows that Vitamin C levels in the body decrease during menopause. Vitamin C is vital for energy production in the body, helping to reduce tiredness and fatigue, a common symptom of menopause. Vitamin C also helps to increase iron absorption.

Vitamin C also supports the production of collagen, the main structural protein that holds

our bodies stable, and keeps ligaments and tendons strong around joints. Studies show that women's skin loses about 30 per cent of its collagen during the first five years of menopause, which makes a good Vitamin C supplement extremely important. As a powerful antioxidant, Vitamin C also helps protect cells from oxidative stress, which can contribute to aging and a range of health conditions, including heart disease and atherosclerosis.

Vitamin D and Vitamin K

Vitamins D and K are both essential throughout life. Vitamin D is vital for a healthy immune system, Vitamin K supports normal blood clotting and when taken together they are more effective for supporting your bone health. This Vitamin D and K combination is particularly important for women around menopause as the drop in oestrogen levels that occurs around the time of menopause results in increased bone loss. Maintaining good Vitamin D levels

around the time of menopause is important in reducing the risk of osteoporosis and combining it with Vitamin K offers enhanced bone health support.

Omega-3

Omega-3 is vital throughout all stages of our life but during menopause its benefits are of heightened benefit for brain health, heart health and healthy vision. Omega-3 supplements have been shown to ease psychological distress and depressive symptoms often experienced by menopausal and perimenopausal women. Research also reports a reduction in the incidence of hot flushes when there is sufficient Omega-3 in the diet.

Vitamin B12 and B-Complex

Vitamin B12 is essential for energy metabolism, helping to reduce tiredness and fatigue. For menopausal women, it is important to be aware that from the age of 50, there is increased susceptibility to deficiency due to impaired absorption of this

vitamin and more so for vegetarians and vegans as B12 is only found in animal foods.

SOMEGA's new Liposomal B-Complex + C is a powerful synergy of Vitamin B-Complex with Vitamin C, meaning you get the very best of the most vital vitamins to live an active and healthy life. It is made using

cutting edge liposomal technology for optimum absorption and maximum health benefits.

While we cannot control every change in our life, we can take control by knowing what our body needs. Knowledge is power and your body will thank

you for keeping everything as natural as possible, with a healthy diet and lifestyle and high-quality supplements. With these on your side, you'll be well-placed to greet the menopause as an exciting new chapter in your life.

Getting help with diet changes

Midlife is full of surprises – and not all of them are good, says Nutritionist **Michelle Ryan**. However, the food you eat can help to balance your blood sugar, hormone and energy levels, whilst keeping you feeling satiated and nourished.

Women's experiences of mid-life vary wildly and from country to country. If you are reading this then I'm guessing that you are touched in some way by symptoms of perimenopause or menopause – or more accurately, the transition to menopause. You might have just started noticing some changes or be really suffering; maybe you are wondering who the person is looking

back at you in the mirror! Who is this person? What the heck happened?

Your health is no longer something peripheral that you can take for granted but you do have some control over symptoms. It's all about making changes to your diet, stepping up your self-care and taking action to reduce stress.

One of the tragedies of menopause is the realisation that you cannot get away with eating the same foods you used to. Your body has changed and you must learn to eat for this new way of being. Why may you ask?

Muscle mass diminishes with age while fat increases. The drop in oestrogen levels that occurs during menopause has the side effect of redistributing body fat, with excess pounds starting to settle around the waist. On top of that, the change that happens in relation to oestrogen and

progesterone at this stage of life is also likely to make your body less sensitive to insulin, the fat storage hormone. Insulin is produced in response to you eating carbohydrates. When the body's cells are less sensitive, more insulin is needed to do the same job, and more insulin produced means more fat stored.

That means it's more important than ever to switch to a low GL (glycaemic load) diet that balances your blood sugar levels – eating foods that do not trigger an insulin secretion response.

I appreciate this might sound a bit scientific, and possibly a bit scary, but eating with this kind of nutritional knowledge, to support your body's hormones, is enjoyable and filled with foods you probably heard you couldn't eat like good fats, avocados and eggs!

At this time of your life you also need to eat foods containing

phytoestrogens, plant-based chemicals (the good kind) which are structurally similar to oestrogen and exert a weak oestrogenic effect. These include soy beans, lentils, beans, chickpeas, tofu, barley, rye, oats, alfalfa, apples, pears, carrots, fennel, onion, garlic, sunflower seeds, flaxseeds, liquorice root.

On this type of diet you won't feel hungry – I promise – but, if this is a long way from where you are now, I'd love to help you move to this way of eating.

You should always talk to your doctor about symptoms you are particularly concerned about but there is a lot you can do to feel more energised than you do right now. Work with me and it will feel easy rather than an uphill struggle or – worse still – devoid of all those little props you have used to get yourself through these trying times!

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SUMMER RESET

RECHARGE FOR SUMMER 2022!

Michelle is a nutritionist and lifestyle coach, supporting people to create better health. She's passionate about the lives of the people around her and sees 'real' food and nutrition the key to wellness.

If you are struggling with daily cravings, caffeine and convenience foods and you feel; exhausted, overwhelmed, moody and hormonal you need to get to work!

Connect with Michelle on a 1:1 Programme or join her RECHARGE, RESET FOR SUMMER 2022!



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or call Michelle Ryan 087 6704930
or email wellness@bwellhive.ie

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Dunmanway Guides grow up



Members of the Dunmanway Branch of the Irish Girl Guides recently attended their Promise Ceremony, which initiated them into Senior Branch. This is the first time Dunmanway has ever had a Senior Branch, for girls and young women from ages 14-30, and so it was a significant occasion.

The Dunmanway Senior Branch meets every second Saturday of the month at St. Patrick's Hall, 11.30-1pm. Activities within the

IGG programme are designed for both personal development and enjoyment, as well as for making new friends.

Dunmanway also has a branch of Guides for 10-14 years and Brownies for 7-10 years. They also meet every second Saturday at St Patrick's Hall. Ladybirds for ages 5-7 will start again from September. New members are always welcome and also adult volunteers, contact Heather 086 8064886.

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Cork youth reunite at local Foróige clubs

Foróige, Ireland's nationwide youth organisation, has reopened its clubs across Ireland. The past two years have had an impact on

young people across the country but with the world open once more, Foróige offers young people the opportunity to meet and learn new things with their peers in a fun and welcoming environment.

In a report that investigated Irish youth activity during COVID-19, it was noted that young people became extremely reliant on technology and screens for their social interaction. During this time, they missed out on building crucial social skills that

set them up for the years ahead.

With hundreds of clubs located in communities nationwide, Foróige plays a vital role in youth development in Ireland supporting thousands of young people. The clubs are run with the generous help of volunteers. In an effort to enrich the lives of as many young people as possible, Foróige is encouraging youth and the public to find a club near them and get involved.

Speaking about the comeback, Barbara Daly, Chairperson at

Foróige, said; "To keep our clubs running to the high standard we are known for, we are calling on the general public to get involved. Volunteering with young people is extremely rewarding and we are asking the public to help in any way they can. Our clubs are situated nationwide and cover lots of interest sets, so getting involved is fun, rewarding and worthwhile."

There are many Foróige clubs across West Cork, for more information visit www.foroige.ie.



HOST A STUDENT

Educatus are looking for welcoming host families for students who will be attending Sacred Heart Clonakilty.

We provide full training, local support via our coordinator in the area and a monthly hosting stipend. There is scope to host a second student of a different nationality.

To register your interest please:
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Educatus looking for welcoming host families in West Cork

Educatus Group is the largest organisation worldwide dedicated exclusively to high school programmes abroad for international students.

The Educatus programme in the West Cork area has grown significantly in the last few years and the group is now looking to recruit new host families in the Bantry, Clonakilty and Schull areas and nearby

In the last year, the group has welcomed more than 6,000 students from 60-plus countries to academic programmes worldwide into 17 different placement countries including Ireland, the UK and USA.

Educatus UK and Ireland was founded in 2015 and cur-

rently places over 700 students every year into a diverse range of UK and Irish towns and cities. Its specialty is combining a suitable school placement with a safe and caring host family environment alongside providing social, cultural, welfare and guardianship services throughout the duration of the programme.

Educatus pays a monthly stipend to the host families who host with the group and there is scope to host two students of different nationalities or even three if there is enough space in your home. Host families need to live a maximum of one hour on public transport from the student's school placement.

With an excellent local

coordinator in the area, full training will be provided to you and the coordinator will be on hand for support 24/7 during the programme.

The aim is that you and the student will be as happy as possible with the match and, to facilitate this, the local Educatus coordinator will contact you when they have matched a student to your family. They will ask you to review the student's profile and confirm that you are willing to host them.

To find out more please get in touch with Margaret by emailing her at margaret.pettersen@educatus.org or by phone at 087 6480355.



Galley Head 10km swim to raise funds for charities

The fourth annual Galley Head 10km swim is set to return to our shores (quite literally) on July 9 next in Rosscarbery.

With open water swimming taking on a life of its own, the Galley Head Swim has proven hugely popular with swimmers of all abilities from West Cork and beyond. 2021 saw a healthy mixture of relay teams and solo swimmers competing on what is a very social event. Having raised over €186,000 for charity in the first three years the event has been a success on every level.

The swim, which was first mooted by a group of friends while skiing in Austria, has gone from strength to strength with over 164 swimmers and 63 support boats participating last year, raising a considerable €113,220. This was split between Marymount Hospice and the West Cork Underwater Search and Rescue. The event committee recently announced the addition of Irish Community Air Ambulance to the list of beneficiaries for 2022. Committee spokesperson Geoff Wycherley said: "we are delighted to have Irish Community

Air Ambulance on board. They along with our other chosen charities are a fantastic asset to the community and very deserving of any support we can offer."

The challenging event will follow the same route as previous years, starting from Red Strand in Ardfield, then heading out around the iconic Galley Head spectacular views of the light house before heading back in across the Long Strand and Owenahinch Beach and finally, finishing at the picturesque Warren beach in Rosscarbery. It is expected that up to 25 solo swimmers and 35 relay teams

each with two to four swimmers and 65 safety boats will participate in the event. Each of these swimmers will be fundraising prior to the event so all support gratefully received and all monies received go directly to the charities.

The Galley Head swim committee consisting of Steve Clery, Justin Crowley, Margaret Deegan, Paul Melody, Pat Mulcahy, Tony Rafferty and Geoff Wycherley said they are very fortunate to have great local support. There are boat skippers, beach set-up teams, safety paddle boarders, BBQ

team, Cork County Council, and of course the swimmers who all come together to make the event the success it is and 2022 is set to be the biggest event yet.

There are only a few places still available to swim in this event – If you are interested in participating you can register now at galleyheadswim.eventbrite.com. If you are interested in supporting the event with a boat/skipper and/or for all other enquiries please email the GHS committee at galleyheadswim@gmail.com. Please do come out and support this event on the day!

Adding style Upstairs at Violette

Known for its eclectic style and statement colourful pieces, Violette in Skibbereen has now gone a step further for its customers with an entire room upstairs dedicated to bringing accessorising to a whole new level and perfecting the final touch. Fun, quirky, bold, sombre, strong, sexy... whatever signal you're hoping to send with an ensemble, Upstairs at Violette will help you accessorise it with panache!

Hats and headpieces to turn heads, jewellery to imbue personality and scarves, faux fur shrugs and bags to complement any outfit...you won't find a better selection anywhere in West Cork. Whether it's a bridal party or shopping for a day at the races, whatever the occasion, the aim at Upstairs at Violette is to help you look the part. Some of the well known brands carried by Violette include bags by Landa and jewellery by Corona.

"We want to add a sense of fun and occasion to the shopping experience and a personal shopping service for the benefit of our customers," explains Violette proprietor Sandie Gallagher.

The service is open to anyone, small or large parties, interested in accessorising an outfit and offers a private and comfortable room upstairs.

With its high ceilings and calm, muted colours, the light-filled styling room is the perfect setting to peruse the assortment of accessories with the help of a personal stylist in curating your look.

Sandie Gallagher has been in the fashion business a long time and sources a lot of her clothing from Paris, London and Italy "I love unique, funky clothes and have a passion for colour and textiles," she says.

"This service is a homage really to our customers," says Sandie. "We get such pleasure every time we help someone achieve the right look and they go home happy."

To experience this fantastic bespoke service at Upstairs at Violette call (028) 40935 or email violetteskibb@gmail.com.

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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Problems with your calves

Having last month encouraged you all to get a post Covid check-up, this month I am going to look at the common problems we see in GP land and in the Emergency Departments in Cork.

I'm going to chat about the dreaded blood clots in the legs, the deep vein thrombosis and its even more dreaded sequel the blood clot on the lung, the

pulmonary embolus.

Calf pain is a common problem. How do we decide if it is a blood clot or just a muscular strain. First, a bit of anatomy. Blood returning from the legs has to beat gravity. The muscles in the calf, the gastrocnemius and soleus, have the ability when they contract to pump the free-flowing blood back up to the heart against

gravity. Together they are called the peripheral heart. Valves in the deep veins stop the blood back-flowing and this usually works well.

I have mentioned the deep veins, which you do not see, but if the valves in them start to fail, as they do as we get older or go through pregnancies, the pressure from the deep system now transfers and dilates the superficial veins in the legs, which become prominent as varicose veins. Most of the time these present merely as a cosmetic problem but sometimes contribute to aching legs and ulcers on the lower leg around the ankle, as the tissue becomes less well drained and poorly oxygenated, which all equates to poor healing.

Blood leaks out around the ankle is an irritant and causes itchy, dark blue patches as varicose eczema. If you are in the supermarket and someone drives their trolley into your lower leg, where you have varicose eczema, the skin breaks then an ulcer forms and it can take months to get better. Be careful!

By the way the big superficial vein in your leg is the saphenous vein, running from the inside of your ankle to your groin, where it joins the deep system as the femoral vein. The clever heart surgeons harvest this vein and use it to bypass narrowed arteries in the heart as a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft, CABG. Very handy! We also sometimes use this vein to give fluids in children when the veins

in the arm are inaccessible, as it can be located above the ankle with a simple operation.

During Covid we became aware that this infection causes blood to clot more easily and I have seen hundreds of patients concerned about blood clots in their legs or chest.

So how do we determine if the pain in your calf or your swollen ankle is serious? It can be difficult. First, we look at risks. You may know that long haul flights in rare circumstances can cause blood clots but there are many others. Are you on the pill? Have you or a family member who had a clot? Have you active cancer? Have you been laid up in bed for a few days for example? The doc then examines your leg looking for deep pain in the calf, unilateral swelling, a significant measured difference in the girth of the calf, a warmer leg and a leg with dilated veins. A score is given, the so-called Wells score; if you score high, off you go to hospital.

Why the panic? Well, with a clot in the deep muscle of the calf, rather like a log falling into a river, if this is pumped upstream, next stop where the river narrows is the lung and that can be fatal. It blocks the circulation to a lung or even both lungs as an embolus, and blood now cannot take up oxygen from the lungs! A cardiac arrest can occur, as the heart pumps against an immovable blockage at its most dramatic and serious presentation. If the blockage is less complete and the clot smaller, moving to a smaller vessel in the lung before it jams, it can cause a pain on breathing in deeply, that is a pleuritic pain, shortness of breath and coughing up blood.

So, you arrive in hospital, we will repeat the examination and, if pretty sure there is a clot, an ultrasound is done. If we are not quite so sure, then a special blood test is done. This is called a D dimer test: It measures if



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.

there is a blood clot anywhere in the circulation. The level increases with age, so we build in a correction factor and, if still raised again, an ultrasound is done.

A blood clot in the calf is not a major problem but if it starts to move up the leg towards the groin then it certainly is. The log is moving on. We call this clot propagation. An ultrasound determines whether the deep veins in your groin compress. It takes minutes, is performed by an expert sonographer and if the vessels compress, as pressure is put on the probe, then all is good. If they do not, you have a blood clot, which can be visualised within the vein sometimes. Even if the ultrasound is negative and the suspicion high, the test can be repeated a few days later.

So why is it that if you have pain in the calf, the calf itself is not examined with ultrasound? Good question! The vessels in the calf are small and many and a complete examination of every one of them could take

hours; and bear in mind the clot only becomes a big problem when it extends or propagates above the knee.

Blood clot mimics are many: A torn muscle, a cyst behind the knee (a Bakers Cyst) simple cramp, fluid retention to name but a few. These can often be teased out with a careful history and examination.

If a blood clot is found and there is a powerful reason for having one, say a recent operation and immobility, we call that a provoked clot and blood thinners are prescribed for three months. If there is no reason for a clot forming then blood thinners may be needed for much longer. This is where the blood specialists come in. They look for reasons for unprovoked clots and investigate for inherited or acquired clotting disorders and there are many. They will then make recommendations on the duration of treatment.

I have mentioned ultrasound. We are taught basic ultrasound techniques in the Emergency Department, we are not experts and rely on specialists to confirm or refute our 'have a go' findings, it is so important that no chances are taken. I feel a huge level of frustration that I have left it so late in my own career to learn ultrasound.

I confidently predict however that in the future every GP and hospital doctor will learn to use ultrasound. The stethoscope after all has been around with little modification for over 200 years! It was invented by a French doctor, Dr. Rene Laenec, as previously doctors pushed their ears against a patient's chest to hear what was going on. You can imagine some difficulties and potential embarrassment with the odd mademoiselle!

Next month I will look at other common problems. I enjoyed working in Bantry Minor Injury Clinic for many years and will cover common minor injuries next month in my ramblings.

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Fun family events planned for Clonakilty Bicycle Festival

Clonakilty Bicycle Festival pedals into its second decade this June as it hosts the 11th year of this fun and family-friendly festival celebrating all things bikes bring to our lives. Between June 9-12 there will be a host of free and inclusive events, including a birdwatching estuary cycle, a dinner cycle to Monk's Lane in Timoleague, kids and older folks events and a surprise end of festival cycle to a pop-up jazz, dancing and Spanish food party.

clonakiltybicyclefestival.org

Cancer treatment 'not the time' to lose weight or muscle

A RED C survey commissioned by the Irish Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (IrSPEN), found concerning levels of misinformation and misunderstanding around the importance of nutritional status during cancer care, despite the fact that one in two of us will develop cancer.

The research found that more than half of people are not clear on the importance of nutritional care during cancer treatment and

the majority were not clear that maintaining muscle mass and strength is important for patients undergoing treatment for cancer.

IrSPEN spokesperson and Obesity Specialist at St Vincent's University Hospital Professor Caryl le Roux said current medical research shows that maintaining good nutritional health, body weight and muscle mass during cancer care significantly improves medical outcomes – including for people with overweight or

obesity.

"Losing weight without trying and losing muscle mass are common problems in cancer – affecting at least one in three of patients. Contrary to what people seem to think weight and muscle loss are unhelpful at the time of treatment – whether people are under or overweight – making treatment less effective and increasing the risks of complications.

"From the time of diagnosis and during active treatment, the goal is to minimise weight change, preserve muscle mass and maintain body strength."

Win for Ballinadee at IPB Pride of Place Competition



Ballinadee Community Hall Development Assoc had a recent big win in the 'Population Category 0-300' at the 19th annual IPB Pride of Place Competition, in association with Co-operation Ireland.

The Association was formed in 2016 to reopen the derelict village hall, originally built in 1954 by the local Muintir na Tire group on land donated by a local farmer. The committee

liaised with the wider community, local groups, Councillors and Cork County Council, fundraised tirelessly and availed of Leader Rural Development funds, which were supported by SECAD and Cork County Council grants.

The newly restored hall opened in 2019 and once again became a hub for local groups including Foróige, dancing, music, sports, drama groups, meet-

ings, markets and a social space for the community at large.

The judges were impressed at how "the refurbishment of the derelict hall breathed new life into the community; it was clear that this group has built an incredible community spirit, an excellent communications strategy and an effective engagement approach with business and other stakeholders alike."

Correct supplementation alongside healthy choices key to exam success

Exam jitters are something we have all been through at some stage of our life and as exam season is upon us, one of the main questions parents ask is how they can best support the student in their home during this time.

SOMEGA, Ireland's purest brand of health supplements, which is based in Bandon, has launched a special 'Exam Support' health bundle, which provides students with the most important vitamins to support brain health, memory, concentration and learning as well as combating stress. The 'Exam Support' bundle also helps to naturally enhance energy levels and reduce tiredness and fatigue.

Formulated by Mark Clifford and Dr. Paula Gaynor who are food scientists and nutritionists, SOMEGA supplements are created using the purest ingredients, which are sugar, gluten, alcohol, yeast and soy free. They are also non-GMO and are sustainably

packaged and produced.

Mark says, "Anyone who has sat exams, regardless of how long ago it was, can attest to still feeling that flurry of anxiety and worry that comes with the build-up of turning over the paper. It becomes one of those memories we may try to tune out but revisits us at this time of the year and this same feeling can be felt again as a parent of an exam student. It can leave you feeling powerless as to how you can support them which is why we have put together this special Exam Support bundle to ensure you are giving them more of what they need to see them through the weeks ahead."

"The bundle includes two of our hero products; Liposomal Vitamin B-Complex plus C and our Easy Omega-3 + Vitamin D. Both are liquid supplements with high bioavailability, meaning they are easily absorbed by the body in comparison to capsules, which the digestive system must work hard to break down and



utilise. They also taste good which makes them more enjoyable and easier to make part of your daily routine.

While high quality supplements are important at this time, so too is the need to eat a balanced and varied diet while getting adequate sleep and exercise each day. All of this combined will ensure that the student in your life is well supported both physically and mentally during exam time."

The Exam Support Bundle is available online at gosomega.com and is €76 (a 10 per cent saving on RRP).

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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.

If you're a dog owner, you've probably noticed that there seems to be a growing anti-dog wave in the country at the moment. It's been lurking there for a couple of years but

Why are dogs getting such a negative press?

now dog owners are frowned on and penalised in public places especially on beaches.

Prohibiting dog owners on beaches except at certain times is now universal here especially during the summer months. And Dog Wardens have been enforcing this by insisting that dogs must be on leads at all times. The purpose of taking a dog to a beach is to allow it the freedom to run off lead, socialise with other dogs, go swimming or chase a ball. As they exercise, they obviously stop to pee and poop so the Dog Wardens insist that dogs must be kept on lead to ensure owners are on the spot to pick up the poop!

Most owners are meticulous about picking up after their dogs. However, there are always some who just leave it lying around any place they are walking so the majority get penalised by the minority.

To me, it seems really harsh to take away such a wonderful amenity. It almost feels like discrimination. It appears that other groups in society want the beaches to themselves. Dog walkers maintain that many other types of visitors to beaches also leave their litter behind them but that's not a valid argument either. Two wrongs don't make a right!

But, the apparent discrimination has seeped into other areas of dog owners' lives. If you look on the websites advertising rental properties, apart from the lack of choice (which is another problem!), there is a Strictly No Dogs rule on most of those houses for rent. It's bad enough trying to find a property in these difficult times without having the selection narrowed even further.

How did we come to this? I certainly don't know the full

answer but I wonder if Covid has exacerbated this problem, as during lockdown, so many people got a dog because it was the first time they could actually devote a portion of the day to them in addition to wanting companionship. Perhaps it's that huge increase in the number of dogs seen around that has been a negative influence.

I wonder also whether the problem lies in the fact that many of these dogs are under-socialised because we, ourselves, were limited in our own social activities. And many dog owners during this time had never had a dog before so the normal basic training wasn't done. Now that life has opened up, it could be that some dogs may not have a clue how to behave in public and their owners may be allowing them too much licence around other people.

What really worried me about

this dilemma was an interview I listened to on the radio a few weeks ago. It definitely had an anti-dog bias to it. But, I was floored when the interviewee postulated that dogs were the cause of the spread of Japanese Knotweed. She didn't elaborate on this premise. Correct me if I'm wrong but I thought it was humans who imported this dreadful plant and are responsible for its alarming spread!

However, in my opinion, we need to find a solution to this problem before it gets even worse and dogs and their owners are banned from every walk of life. I would like to put a suggestion out there. Since lockdown I didn't restart my regular basic obedience classes, as I preferred to avoid exposure to the virus in a closed setting. Also, I seem to get such great results with one-to-one sessions in home visits.

But, my suggestion is that dog owners, who would like some basic obedience tips or training and help with socialisation, get in touch and give me your thoughts and ideas. Perhaps we can get together and improve this situation by showing the public that we are a responsible and caring branch of society. I think we need to do it before it's too late.

If you're interested, then get in touch with me through my website below and let's pool our ideas to come up with a solution to teach our dogs to be COOL CANINES! I mean that we can teach our dogs to go anywhere with us and behave politely under any circumstances. I look forward to your thoughts.

Dog owners urged to clean up after their dogs on the country's beaches

With summer rapidly approaching, the country's dog owners are being encouraged to leave only paw prints in the sand and pick up after their pets when using beaches. The UCD Acclimatise Project has identified dog faeces as an important cause of water pollution, which can result in temporary bathing prohibition notices being issued by local authorities. In an effort to address this issue, the team has released an animated video entitled 'Leave Only Paw Prints' illustrating the direct link between dog fouling and poor beach water quality. They want to highlight the potential harm caused by the abandoned dog mess and encourage pet owners to take responsibility for cleaning up after their dogs on the beach to help ensure better water quality for all to enjoy.

Contact with dog faeces can have serious health impacts including diarrhoea and even blindness in children. UCD research has shown that even one dog foul can result in contamination the size of a tennis court.

Wim Meijer, Professor of Microbiology at UCD said, "The unique aspect of this problem is that it can be rectified through our own actions. We are confident that increased awareness of this problem will lead more people to clean up after their dog. Each and every dog owner who makes the conscious decision to pick up after their pet will be making a difference."

Time for a 'pawdicure'?

Did you know that dogs need regular pedicures? Proper care for their nails and paws is as important to your dog's health as regular vet visits, dental care, and grooming explains **Deirdre O'Brien of RAWR**. Giving your dog a full 'pawdicure' can be a soothing experience for them when done right, and it can even strengthen your bond with them.

First and foremost, happy paws make for a happy dog. If your dog is constantly licking or chewing their paws, it's a sure sign that something might be amiss.

Beyond comfort, neglecting your dog's nails and paws carries serious health risks. Dry paw pads can eventually crack and split, providing easier access for germs and parasites. Overgrown nails can cause your dog's feet to splay unnaturally, reducing traction and making walking painful. Over time, this can even lead to serious muscle or tendon injuries.

Like a human fingernail, a canine nail grows constantly. Wild canines, like wolves and foxes, wear down their nails naturally as they travel great distances. Dogs on the other hand lead



more pampered lives and need help keeping their nails at a proper length. This is especially true of smaller, lighter breeds who don't have the body weight to help wear down their nails.

This may seem obvious but just looking at their paws regularly can help you identify issues. Check for dirt, pebbles, or other debris that can easily get trapped in between paw pads. For breeds with fur on their feet, be sure to gently feel for any foreign objects. Also look for abrasions, cuts, or other injuries to the pads or the skin in between them.

If you've ever seen a dog with overgrown nails, you have an idea of how uncomfortable this condition can be. Long nails on a dog cause the paw joints to twist to the side. The dog's toes may also be forced into an unnatural upward posi-

tion. If nails are allowed to stay overgrown for a long time, the dog may develop abnormalities in his gait and other parts of his body.

There's no hard and fast rule on how often to trim your dog's nails. The frequency depends on his breed, his body type and activity level. All dogs should have their nails evaluated at least once a month to determine if they need trimming.

The easiest way to tell if it might be time for a trim is to look at your dog when they're standing with all four feet on the ground. You want to aim for the tip of their nail to be slightly above the ground. Can you hear your dog's nails clicking on hardwood or tile floors? That's another sure sign it's time to get their nails trimmed.

While trimming your dog's nails isn't hard, it can be nerve-racking for many owners. Each of your dogs nails houses a sensitive pink nail bed, otherwise known as the quick. Cutting the nail too short can injure this area and cause it to bleed, creating a stressful situation for you and your dog. However, with proper technique and a calm approach, trimming your dog's nails yourself can be a pain-free process for you both.

If you've never trimmed your dog's nails before, give them a chance to get used to the tools involved and to the new sensations. Try a step-by-step approach, offering treats and praise with each step. For some dogs, you may need to break the

steps up over a few days.

Begin by letting your dog inspect and sniff the nail clippers. Next, lightly touch the clippers to the paw. Then bring the clippers near your dog's paw and squeeze the clippers, without actually touching the nails. This helps your dog get used to the tools. Try trimming a tiny section on only one nail, being sure to give lots of praise during the process. Once your dog is comfortable with the small trim, work your way up.

Making sure you and your dog are both relaxed goes a long way toward making nail trimming easy. For your dog, this could involve laying down a blanket or towel for them to lie on during the process and providing a filled Kong or a frozen treat to help keep them occupied. Being in a hurry definitely isn't going to improve the experience for either of you. Similarly, if there are other pets or even small children in the home, consider finding a quiet place for pawdicures, like a bedroom or office with the door closed. Just make sure the place you choose has ample light so you can see what you're doing.

Having everything you might need during the process at your fingertips prevents having to stop in the middle and makes for a quicker, smoother experience. Aside from the clippers, it's a good idea to keep the following items within reach: A tea towel to collect nail trimmings for disposal; Cotton gauze or tissue in case of any blood;

Clotting powder to apply if you accidentally cut a nail a little too short; Treats to help encourage and reward your pup during and after their trim.

Once you're set up, actually clipping your dog's nails is a fairly simple process. First, take one paw in your hand and place your thumb under the pad of a toe and your forefinger on the top of the toe, above the nail. Gently push your thumb up and backwards (towards your forefinger), while pushing your forefinger slightly forward. This extends the nail.

Using your other hand, clip the tip of the nail, straight across. Don't cut further up than where the nail starts to curve downward; doing so increases the risk of cutting the quick. Repeat for the remaining nails.

Still scared of trimming your dog's nails? That's okay, too. At-home trimming is not the right move for every owner or for every dog. If you or your dog is too nervous, allowing a professional to do the job can save both of you a lot of anxiety. Your vet or groomer will be happy to look after your pet and they will also show you how to tackle the job yourself if you are willing to give it a go but would like a tutorial first.

Proper paw care isn't difficult to master and has great benefits for your dog's health and comfort. Practiced regularly, it might even become a vital part in maintaining the bond between you and your furry friend.

My West Cork DNA projects (Part 1)



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

Having covered much of the basics in previous articles, this month I will start by providing brief synopses (in alphabetical order) for my wife's West Cork ancestral lines and what we have learned from atDNA matching. If you have DNA tested and related to any of these families, or simply have a family connection, do get in touch.

As mentioned in last month's feature, my wife's ancestry is genetically proven to her three-times great grandparents, which also reaches the boundary-defining available church records in County Cork. This provides a solid and verifiable dataset for anyone finding a close match potentially within this genealogical timeframe. Her DNA is available for matching on GEDmatch, Ancestry, MyHeritage and FamilyTreeDNA if you have tested there. In last month's DNA origins update from Ancestry she is defined as ethnically 98 per cent Munster.

BRIEN of Rathbarry

The BRIENs of Rathbarry are an ancestral family to two lines of local FITZPATRICK families. Although earlier records are not available we know that my wife's three-times great grandparents Daniel BRIEN and wife Abigail SULLIVAN were married sometime before 1809, in the village. The 1796 list of flax growers includes Daniel, so presumably he was born in the 1760-70 period.

Only two daughters are known from records. My wife's two-times great grandmother Johanna BRIEN (1809) who married in Rathbarry to Jeremiah FITZPATRICK of Derryduff (Rosscarbery) in 1833, witnessed by her father and Daniel FITZPATRICK, and her sister Catherine BRIEN (abt 1815) who married the same Daniel FITZPATRICK of Ballinavar, Derryduff in 1842.

The connection is based on paper only as no DNA has been directly assignable to this family yet.

COLLINS of Woodfield

There are many people on family tree websites who choose to select local hero General Michael COLLINS as a family connection, despite dozens of local namesakes to choose from. This may also happen as we approach the centenary of his death.

My wife's connection comes from information passed directly from the Collins family itself, that the General and her grandfather were 'second cousins'. This is a story that is difficult to prove genetically, despite the reliability of the source (the General's nephew) and that we should be well within genetic range to prove it using atDNA matching.

It is currently assumed that the connection must be through Kate COLLINS, grandmother of my wife's grandfather, however she was born before church records. Another difficulty is that although much has been written about the General being a seventh son of a seventh son, and that the family tree is lodged with the National Library of Ireland, no females of the line are mentioned, assuming they did exist. Kate might be one of the General's un-named aunts if the second cousin relationship is taken at face value. That too may not be entirely accurate.

This a puzzle that will only be resolved using DNA and we are currently looking for bona fide descendants of the family who have DNA tested to provide some marker segments that could be used to build a DNA-proven tree.

FITZPATRICK of Derryduff (Rosscarbery)

My wife's FITZPATRICK family is connected specifically to neighbouring townlands of Kilruane and Derryduff, situated just west of Lissavard and east of Rosscarbery. Derryduff includes the sub-townland of Ballinavar in the NE corner, which is commonly mentioned directly in records and includes the farm known locally as the 'Old Fitzpatrick Place'. My wife's three times great grandfather is an unknown FITZPATRICK farmer at Derryduff, whose was born c1760 in the Rosscarbery area. The wider area is a concentration of the surname in county Cork.

Both Jeremiah FITZPATRICK and his wife Johanna BRIEN (above) are DNA-proven ancestors as DNA matches have been proven from three of

their children;

John FITZPATRICK (1833-1902): On his baptism, further evidence of the close relationship between the FITZPATRICKs and BRIENs is evident by sponsors Daniel FITZPATRICK and Margaret BRIEN. John first married Margaret DONOVAN in 1854 Rosscarbery, and then married Mary CALLAGHAN prior to 1871. The family appear to have lived in the townland of Coolcraheen. Son Jeremiah (1883-1970) left for New Zealand. Son Timothy (1893-1957) moved to Montana in 1914. The lines of Jeremiah and sister Anne have provided DNA matches.

Other BRIENs sponsored children of Jeremiah & Johanna. Mary BRIEN for James FITZPATRICK (1835) and Stephen (1836) and Catherine BRIEN for Paul FITZPATRICK (1839) and Daniel. Uniquely within this set of records, Paul's mother is recorded once as Johanna BRIEN MONGAIN (Mongáin). This agnomen or regional clan name in its diminutive form means 'hairy' and can be found also as a family name – Mangan or Mongan. MANNING is an anglicised corruption and is another family associated my wife's ancestry; which will be discussed in a future article.

Stephen FITZPATRICK was a farmer at Derryduff and married Mary CALLINAN in 1868 Ardfield and Rathbarry (witness Jeremiah FITZPATRICK) with the family given of Derryduff. Their son Jeremiah FITZPATRICK (1878) aka Jerome provides the only DNA match for this branch of the family.

Mary FITZPATRICK (1848-1924) is my wife's great grandmother who married Michael O'DONOVAN of Derrylahan (near Dunmanway) in 1884. Michael was known as 'The Count' in his role as Clonakilty's Town Clerk. They provide the final DNA vector currently assigned to the FITZPATRICK family.

There are few, if any, FITZPATRICKs from this family known to remain in the area today due to emigration and no earlier family stories reported that may clarify some of the wider relationships for the same name in the area around Rosscarbery.

Comments, 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 blog 'My Irish Genealogy & DNA'.



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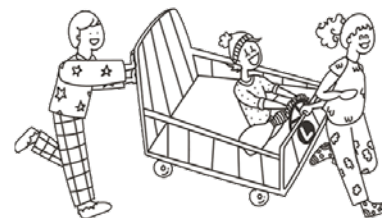


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Call for local groups to take part in 'Bed Push' for suicide awareness

The Bantry Bay Lions will be holding its inaugural charity 'Bed Push' race in aid of suicide awareness in 'The Slob' car park at Bantry Harbour on Sunday, June 19 from 2-4pm. An obstacle course will be set up and beds will be pushed to navigate through the obstacles. It will be a straight knockout competition of four rounds with four teams competing each race, hence a maximum of 16 teams. Each team will comprise of four people and prizes will be awarded for the winning team as well as best team costume and best designed bed. Entry fee of €50 will be collected from each team. Food and raffle aspects will be present on the day.

In order to maximise participation and fundraising, the Bantry Bay Lions are



looking for the support of local businesses or organisations (for example Rugby club or GAA) to either enter teams or provide raffle prizes/competition prizes, sponsorship or manpower on the day. Interested parties in entering the race or sponsorship should contact Nora Lynch at 087-7905053 or email her at innisbellakealanine@gmail.com. This will be a fun-filled day and, if successful, it could be annual event.

The goal is to raise as much as possible towards opening a drop-in centre locally for people bereaved or troubled by suicide.



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The soothing balm of self-compassion

As I sit and reflect on a compassion-based mindfulness theme for this month, it is a recurring theme that comes to mind, a practice that I believe transforms us, mindful self-compassion. What do you feel when you read or hear the words self-compassion? Do you feel anything in your body? What thoughts come to your mind? Maybe you think the words self-compassion sound selfish or self-indulgent? What does the idea of offering

yourself some self-compassion conjure up in your mind? Having a spa day? Or buying yourself a new top?

These treats may sound inviting but mindful self-compassion is less focused on material things and more about developing a warm and caring relationship with yourself, recognising when you need a break, when your life feels too busy, or that you are tired. It is about taking a quiet moment here and there to notice how you are by pausing to check

in with yourself in a real and open way. Time and again I return to Rob Nairn's definition of mindfulness, "knowing what's happening, as it's happening, no matter what it is." So, taking time to bring moment-by-moment awareness to our thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations helps us to notice what we are experiencing.

When we learn to bring awareness to how we are doing we may notice that we are struggling with something or feeling painful emotions. We may have developed the habit of reaching or searching for a distraction when painful thoughts or emotions arise. Mindful self-compassion invites us not to push the pain away or suppress it but to stay with it, even lean into it, allowing ourselves to feel it. Personally speaking, I found this very difficult when I started my mindfulness training at first, I recall being hardly able to say the word "suffering", never mind allow myself to feel it. I physically flinched when I heard or spoke the word. It still doesn't quite roll off my tongue, but I can now accept that suffering is part of my life. This was a profound revelation for me. That being human involves suffering and

struggle and this is part of life, just like happiness and joy are also part of life. This describes our common humanity.

We are not alone in how we feel, yet the more I develop my mindfulness teaching, the more I realise that practicing self-compassion is quite radical, as it turns much of what we think we know about ourselves on its head. So many of us are incredibly harsh on ourselves if we make a mistake, if we say or do the wrong thing, yet most of us make mistakes regularly, also part of being human. With mindful self-compassion we can learn to soothe our pain by offering ourselves self-kindness, with soothing words, like "It's ok" or a kind gesture, like placing your hand on your heart when you notice you are experiencing a difficult moment.

This practice of bringing first awareness, then kindness and gentleness to our own suffering or pain is new for many of us. But over time, by practicing self-compassion, we learn to treat ourselves with the same kindness that we would treat another who is hurting or struggling. All of us can learn this powerful practice and change how we relate to ourselves

firstly by noticing how we treat ourselves. For example, how do you react when you are late or when you feel you've done or said something you consider to be wrong? Can you acknowledge that you are giving yourself a hard time and try directing compassion and care towards yourself instead of self-criticism?

This verse from 'The Most Important Thing' by Julia Fehrenbacher, speaks self-compassion and kindness. "I am making a home inside myself. A shelter of kindness where everything is forgiven, everything allowed — a quiet patch of sunlight to stretch out without hurry, where all that has been banished and buried is welcomed, spoken, listened to — released. A fiercely friendly place I can claim as my very own."

I base much of my compassion-based mindfulness work at Myross Wood in Leap now, which is a now a community-based centre for climate action and sustainability (CE-CAS.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



MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

Susan O'Regan

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

For more information contact: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com Mob: 087 2700572.

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



Grieving together



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.

"Grief is not a problem to be solved, it's a presence awaiting witnessing." Francis Weller, author and psychotherapist

During the past month or so I've had the tremendous privilege to take part in two grief circles. They are ordinary gatherings leading to extraordinary experiences. The first: imagine half a dozen people sitting

outdoors in a naturally ring-shaped garden not far from the sea – some are known to one another while others are meeting for the very first time. By chance it happens to be a balmy, beautiful late April morning. We speak about personal and collective loss – the death of someone near and dear, estranged relationships with living relatives, deep sadness and concern about the future for generations to come. One at a time we share and together we listen. We touch stones that were collected beforehand from the land that surrounds us. After each one of us speaks, a stone is placed into a bowl of water. That person is then thanked – deep breaths are heard, perhaps a nod or hand to one's heart is mutually shared. The intention is simply for each person to be witnessed, acknowledged and heard. Somehow an hour passes and this is 'all' we have been doing. Realising this, time suddenly feels strange, as if we could have been there for mere moments or a day. Organically we feel finished, and soon after, the water and stones are poured into a stream nearby. Nature is the only other witness and our surroundings symbolically receive all that has emerged in this time together with steadfastness and ease.

Fast forward to two weeks later. A friend I'd invited to join me in the previous circle but who was unable to attend, asks how it all went. I say that it seemed to go really well – that it was powerful;

energising somehow. The overall feedback was that the experience had been valuable and more spaces were needed like this. My friend then invited me to introduce and share it with a group of her students who were preparing to complete a training after many weeks of learning, moving and sharing together. And so only days later I arrived to this next occasion. This one particularly meant a lot to me – to be a part of a circle within my own community. Again there were familiar faces, as well as people I had never come across. This time there were nine of us and all had been aware of my coming to share. I wonder what they were thinking when they first heard about this concept! Picture a community centre with high ceilings and sunlight streaming in through the oblong windows. It's certainly a very different space than the recent elemental setting, but very soon it feels as though we've forgotten the room we're in, all together. As with the previous circle, there were personal losses named – deaths, regrets, illnesses, things which had not been grieved or even named before throughout the life spectrum. There were emotions and expressions of tears, anger, laughter, silence and relief. There were some who didn't speak, yet their presence was felt as an equal and vital part of holding the space. There was an understanding that though are experiences are different, we have all been touched by grief and loss. Once again after an hour or so passed, there was an enhanced depth of quietude

and stillness. Eventually the circle shifted to conversation once everyone agreed that our process felt complete for the time being. The discussion revolved around this new experience (for most) that was both unusual and impactful; not at all heavy in the way some might imagine. After a little while, the collective decision was made to return our bowl of water to the nearby land where one person's ancestors were buried. Then with permission from the group and shortly thereafter, I returned the stones I'd gathered in the nearby woods beforehand to be placed into the sea only down the road. Each a symbolic loss that had been added to a collective well (bowl) of grief to be cleansed and released to the water once again.

One aspect of what happened in both circles included a basic ritual using the elements of water, stones, in a beautiful, simple central place featuring a single candle, wildflowers and perhaps one or two other natural items if someone felt called to add to the space. The reason for this is to basically to bring us into this time of presence that is different from having a chat over tea. We all partake in rituals whether it's going for our daily morning walk, or pausing at the end of the day with a prayer before sleep. The point is to create a space welcoming intention and expression. This simple ritual seems to help us to do this. It has also been said that some of the oldest objects on the planet are in fact grief ritual artifacts, so what we're doing has been done for a very long time and

is still an important part of life in many cultures around the world. (But perhaps this is what moves us into another potential topic or column altogether!) I would like to also note that the concept of this simple ritual and grief circle has been inspired by the author who I've quoted at the very beginning of this piece. It is my understanding that this practice was also shared with him; specifically while he spent time with indigenous people who so generously invited him into circles during his travels.

I am moved to be a part of grief spaces because I feel that sharing together in this way is healing, perhaps now more than ever. And because we all grieve, whether it be the death of a loved one, the ending of a relationship, the loss of a home, the injustices in life, the war, and violence against humanity, as well as our beloved earth. Our stories are unique, but again there is a sense of equanimity in the sharing and holding of space for one another. Imagine if something like this were a regular thing. Perhaps one month you were to share and the next month you felt more called to listen as someone had previously done for you? Note this is different to a therapy or support group in that there is no trying to offer advice, fix or change anything but rather to be with what is. This experience feels like a precious opportunity in these tumultuous times. I sense and hear that many of us are craving spaces to be together to talk, to grieve, to slow down, to rest. It's a different way of being and, as I write this,

I recall someone sharing that they are open to tending grief, but a challenge could be in 'finding the time', while another seemed to have a realisation that their own experience of being with grief, is that it's interwoven into the day. For example, in the morning there may be joy in something that happened, and by afternoon something triggers painful emotions. That each moment can also be like this; there is no separation of grief and joy or loss and appreciation. The latter person's reflection reminds me of a bit of this prose I stumbled upon recently – "some days we laughed until we cried, other days we cried until we laughed, either way every day was perfect." – Paul Perry

What if we shifted our capacity to be with grief and our culture to one of renewed love and healing, as we integrate our personal and collective losses? How about remembering that grief is a natural part of life that's normal and (more than) ok to share? How do you find our present culture of grief? How would it serve us to build a new one? What would it look and feel like?

This column is dedicated to all who have shared space with me in a grief circle since the very first in September 2021. I wish you well and think about you still.

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!



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

'Life's like ice cream. Enjoy it before it melts' – Em Clarkson.

There are so many ways to describe what being a woman is all about. For some, womanhood is strength, for others it's tenderness. It might also be pushing yourself in your career, at school, or helping to make other women feel better about themselves. You can be a woman wearing a dress and heels or in a pair of work boots or wellies. Womanhood is not defined by jobs, body parts or relationships – it's not defined by anything or anyone but yourself. We need to celebrate all the ways to be a woman, especially celebrating those who have learned what that means in their own way. I'm talking about the women who are taking power over their stories, and speaking their truths rather than allowing society to tell them what and who they should be and how they should look.

We have been tirelessly conditioned to believe that weight gain is synonymous with failure and that to succumb to the aging process – or to age gracefully – is letting go or giving up. Supposed normal thinking has us obsessed with youth, being slim, pucker-free with zero body hair. Does this sound like anything to you? Stop up and think about it? Isn't it comparable to the perfectly created Barbie doll or Cindy (My generation!)? I've been involved in the Image Industry for a very long time and I still think that so-called 'normal thinking' is more than just creepy, it is not attainable. I'm sure that the algorithm on your social media apps knows you very intimately now so if you ever clicked on one weight loss site, you are still seeing adverts for every weight loss package out there. It's all shrink it, conceal it, plump it, anti-aging this, fat-free that – where do I start? Where do I stop? This is the standard against which most of us compare ourselves now. No one mentions the pain, the heartbreak, the embarrassment, the 'not-fitting-in', the pressure,

the lack of finances, the trying and failing that is involved in that desperate hunt to fit into these societal standards.

There is nothing but misery to be gained if you pursue youth and beauty according to what our magazines print and what our TVs fill our minds with. Be authentic, be real but most importantly, be yourself.

Move every day, not just because you might lose some weight, but because it will make you feel better. Follow 'realistic' influencers and what I mean by this is if you are 50, follow style influencers that are close enough to your age. You will find yourself feeling less frustrated or soul-destroyed. Embrace aging, dump clothes that no longer fit and find new ones that make you feel like you, not a ridiculous image that you have created in your head. One day you will look at yourself in the mirror and wonder why you wasted so much of your life worrying about losing inches, covering grey hair and depriving yourself of chocolate or cheese or happiness.

Dresses are the ultimate in summer attire, they are easy, feminine, one item, an instant feel good so buy as many as your heart desires. They should be flirty, chic and bold colours that scream life. Cut-out dresses took centre stage on the runways for this summer and are simply gorgeous on the 'younger ones'. The look is cut out and midi length, sophisticated with an edge!

You will find plenty of vin-

tage-inspired dresses or 'frocks' as they were once called, with slinky halter dresses, swirled prints and pieces with bedazzled elements that will shine in the summer sun. Fun floral prints are very much on trend for summer 2022 and they are the kind of dresses that you can wear without having to think about them too much. The floral print also means that you keep accessories to a minimum. Revamping your wardrobe to incorporate the best summer dresses is arguably one of the most exciting parts of warm weather dressing and there is no better time to start clearing some hangers for pieces you'll wear on repeat in the coming weeks and months. Maxi dresses for summer are what boots are for winter...

non-negotiable and a no-brainer. It's all about being versatile, no matter what the neckline, you can tie a belt around it, throw on a denim jacket or a vest over it, wear it with flats or wedges or platform sandals. It certainly isn't a problem if the length is too long, there is simply nothing like a floor-kissing-hem to add a wow factor. The clever shopper will be able to carry some of their floral print dresses right through the winter with tights and boots...always a winning combination when you get such value for money out of a dress.

Shirt Dresses are still really big with so many variations available. Some are ruched, some poplin, smock-ed or t-shirt style, whichever you choose, it's an effortless casual look. When

Live life and embrace aging



it comes to a seasonal stand-out, how about a puff sleeve dress? – A real winner for the wedding guest of 2022, especially in an off-the-shoulder look.

The itty bitty hemlines are causing quite a stir and there is no more agreeable time to wear a mini than in summer. You can wear them everywhere, from brunch to bbq's to a romantic dinner or a weekend away with the girls. The secret to wearing a shorter-than-usual dress is to

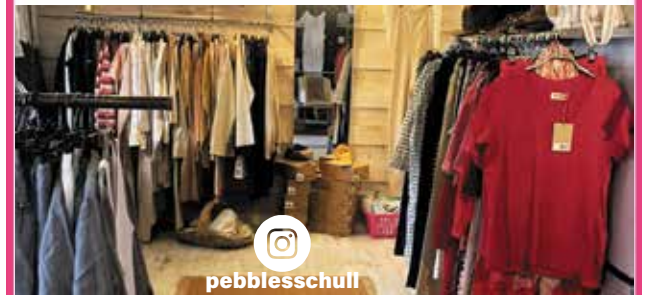
make sure that you are comfortable. If you find yourself pulling at it as soon as you put it on, then take it off rather than allowing it to upset your entire day or evening feeling self-conscious. Some can brave it, others leave mini dresses in the beach wear pile. Find your comfort zone!

Whatever you choose to adorn your body with this summer, wear it lovingly. No one will ever judge you as harshly as you judge yourself. Be your

own style guru, take chances, be adventurous and be bold. It's perfectly okay to assess your wardrobe and decide that you do not need a thing. Mindless buying just for the sake of it is silly so be really conscious about what you like, what you actually wear and what you are drawn to keep buying... but never wear.

Keep that ice-cream quote in your head always...go on, get out and keep living, after all life is melting away!

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Appeals to cyclists and scooter users

Clonakilty Access Group has issued a public appeal to cyclists and scooter users to not use the footpaths of the town. Over the last couple of weeks, several people have contacted the group highlighting this problem, including people who have had “near misses” as bicycles and scooters flew past, missing them by inches. The group says that

a potentially serious accident is waiting to happen.

Even before the recent increase of the problem, the Access Group had raised the matter with the local Gardaí at a meeting in April, and they have been in contact again requesting more Garda visibility to deter and to speak with people to raise awareness. They have also posted an appeal on their Facebook

page, which has received a lot of attention.

A representative of the Clonakilty Access Group said, “It has to be stated that riding bikes, e-scooters or any other item on top of footpath surfaces is totally illegal. We ask everyone, regardless of age, not to do this.

“They are very dangerous for other footpath-users, but in particular for the elderly,

less-mobile and poorly-sighted. Bikes and scooters are very often being ‘driven’ at speeds whereby the ‘operators’ have no hope of stopping safely in the event of something suddenly appearing in front of them.

“The only advice we as ordinary people can give to you if you witness this problem, is to immediately alert the Gardaí at 023-8821570.”

people Arts & Entertainment

Ukulele le Chéile at Inchydoney

On May 26, as part of the Creative Clusters initiative, 200 children and staff from Kilgarraff NS Clonakilty, Ballymoney NS Enniskeane and Ballineen and St Multose NS Kinsale united for the first time at the amphitheatre in Inchydoney, to play Ukulele le Chéile. Although the children have performed for one another many times via Zoom, this was the first time they all met in person for a giant ‘jam session’ using their newly acquired ukulele skills, as well as performing some self-penned material about climate change.

The Credit Union in Clonakilty surprised the children with ice-creams before they descended to the beach to create sand sculptures illustrating how climate change is affecting our oceans. Local artist Rawney from the band, ‘The Monks’, performed for the children in the open-air amphitheatre, with kind permission from Inchydoney Lodge and Spa.

The Creative Clusters initiative is in conjunction with the West Cork Education Centre and the School Excellence Fund. Schools are invited to



partner with other schools to develop a bespoke programme, responding to the needs and interests of their schools, with a particular focus on developing the skill of creativity, which the World Economic Forum has highlighted as one of the most necessary skills to develop for the workforce of the future.

After Survey Monkey helped school staff to hear the student’s call for a more dynamic music programme, the idea for Ukulele le Chéile was born. Ukuleles and tuners were bought, each ukulele was uniquely decorated, and two ukulele teachers were employed: Christine Deady and Isobel Towse.

Children in the middle and senior classrooms were taught the basic chords and strumming patterns for a variety of songs, and musical concerts were ar-

ranged with Deirdre Archibold and Christine Deady.

“Despite the nuisance of Covid, we persevered and revelled in having live music float through our open classroom windows mid-winter, and thoroughly enjoyed our outdoor concerts and hot chocolate,” says co-ordinating teacher Carolyn Buttimer. “In the spring, each school created a video to introduce themselves and show off their premises; it intrigued the children to see inside another school!”

It was on these zoom meetings that the children were first able to showcase their abilities on the ukulele. In turn, each school affirmed and gave their feedback to one another and so the process began to take shape. Having acquired the basic skills, the children were given the

freedom and the remit, to create a song about climate change; to compose the lyrics, melody, rhythm, and to structure their performance. “The strum of ukulele could be heard in outdoor classrooms, gardens and even in the polytunnel as the children collaborated, explored, and developed their own ideas about climate change and expressed it musically,” says Carolyn.

In a relatively short time, the teaching and learning of music in these schools has become far more dynamic, creative, and interesting thanks to the Creative Clusters Initiative. The children and staff have enjoyed the journey and look forward to exploring other creative opportunities in the future.

‘Bringing Outside In’ at Dunmanway Library

Artist Jackie Nevin and Dunmanway library are enjoying an extraordinary response to their collaborative art project ‘Bringing Outside In’. The library window, a focal point in the town, is home to a series of wonderful sculptures that celebrate the natural world. Dunmanway library has collated and presents books and activities relating to a range of topics including habitat, birds and spiders.

“The planet in crisis is spoken of consistently and is a growing cause for anxiety in children and young people,” says Jackie Nevin. ‘Bringing

Outside In’ is engaging the public with Nature in a positive way through art. “It has started a huge number of conversations and prompted people to go off and explore nature for themselves,” says librarian Diane. Library manager Sharon O’Mahony said, “it is a pleasure to see so many people, of all ages, engage with Jackie’s art, many of whom would not normally have access to galleries.”

Given the fantastic response from the public to this project, there have been numerous requests from other libraries to host the exhibition and Jackie, who is currently in discussions

with the Library and Arts service hope the project will travel to other Libraries in Co. Cork.

Jackie acknowledged and expressed thanks to the ex-

ceptional staff in Dunmanway library and to the Arts Council of Ireland for supporting her research which cumulated in this project.



Batons poised for the return on the South of Ireland Band Championships

Clonakilty is excited to once again welcome participants and spectators to the South of Ireland Band Championships on July 2. All previous bands expect to return to compete this year, including two new bands on their first visit to Clonakilty – Stedfast Shoes Band and An Lochrann Linn Brass Band – both from Carrigmacross, Co. Monaghan.

Organising Committee Chairman Ger O'Driscoll said committee members are very much looking forward to this 41st annual event: "As virtual performances were available

online we were not deprived of the pleasure of listening to the bands for the last two years but all the bands are very excited about competing in person again."

Junior and Senior Competitions will be held in Clonakilty Community Gym. The Intermediate Competition will take place in the adjacent Sacred Heart Secondary School buildings.

Sponsorship letters have already been issued and the committee is looking forward to as generous a response as in previous years. "This week-end of music, competition,

performance and camaraderie could not take place without the generosity of venues, the time, money and other facilities made available by the people and businesses of Clonakilty and numerous patrons," said Ger who also expressed thanks to Cork County Council's Arts Department, the Municipal District of Cork County Council, Cork County Council's Local Festival Fund, Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce and many local sponsors for their continuous support of the festival.

The Old Time Fair takes place on the same Saturday as the competition. After compet-





Saturday July 2 from 12pm
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Dress-up in costumes from any period to be in with a chance of winning fantastic prizes!

July 2 is also the 41st South of Ireland Band Championships

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Live Music
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Art & Craft Demos
Parade
Country Market



ing a number of the bands take to the streets to perform to the crowds already gathered for the fair. The diversity of each performance adds to the lively atmosphere, which is enjoyed by young and old.

Make a note in your diary to visit Clonakilty on July 2 to see the band community showcase their abilities and communicate with each other in the international language of music, which is understood by all. soibandchampionships.ie

Celebrating diversity of cultures at Bantry Kupala Festival

Bantry Development and Tourism Association invites everyone to join a mid-summer multicultural celebration at the Bantry Kupala Festival 2022 on Saturday, June 25 from 12-4pm. This festival is well known around West Cork for supporting artists from all backgrounds and this year's

programme features a unique range of artists from both Ireland and abroad.

Highlights include Chinese dragon dance performers, Latvian dancers, Celtic drummers, the Amdie Mexican Dance Group, the Aatma Indian Dance Troupe, a beautiful art exhibition by Aliszka, Polish artists

from Galway, as well as Tai Chi and Kung Fu workshops, and finally, great music by local artists.

The festival welcomes all ages and all events are free to watch on Bantry Square. For more information please visit Facebook: Bantry Kupala Festival or www.bantrykupala.com




Celebrating Diversity and Social Inclusion

West Cork's biggest midsummer festival returns with dozens of performers from around Ireland and overseas.

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See www.bantrykupala.com

International festival of folk in Ballydehob

The ninth international Fastnet Maritime and Folk Festival take place in Ballydehob from June 17-19, 2022.

A merger of 'Sliabh Luachra' instrumental music and Irish and UK maritime songs and traditions, the festival concert at Ballydehob Levis Corner House on Saturday, June 18 features Tom Lewis, Matt Cranitch and Jackie Daly, Gemma Khawaja, Pat Fleming, Maria Cotter, Tim Browne, Jim Mageean and Pat Sheridan.

Tom Lewis is renowned for

composing 'The Last Shanty' (A Sailor Ain't A Sailor) plus many other contemporary songs of the sea that have become folk standards.

Jackie Daly and Matt Cranitch are acknowledged masters of the rich musical tradition of Sliabh Luachra in the southwest of Ireland. The words 'Button Accordion' and 'Jackie Daly' are synonymous in the world of Irish traditional music. He was described in the New York Times as "probably the best accordionist in Ireland". Matt Cranitch is renowned as a



Jackie Daly & Matt Cranitch. Pic: Con Kelleher

fiddle-player and teacher, both at home in Ireland and abroad. He is an authority on the music

of Sliabh Luachra and received a PhD from the University of Limerick for his study on the

FASTNET MARITIME FOLK FESTIVAL

Ballydehob

Fri June 17 – Mon June 20

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Matt Cranitch & Jackie Daly
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Ballydehob Community Council



fiddle-playing tradition of this region.

Gemma Khawaja is a singer/guitarist from the Midlands UK (now based in Norfolk) performing traditional songs of the British Isles and creating songs inspired by folkloric customs, folk poesy and poetry.

Jim Mageean is an English folk singer based in Cullercoats, Tyne and Wear, England, specialising in Sea Shanties, traditional maritime music and 'Geordie' songs from his native North East of England. He will be singing with Irish Shantyman

Pat Sheridan, an expert on Irish Sea Songs

Pat Fleming will be performing with Maria Cotter, Tim Browne, Gary O'Brien and a special guest appearance by Timmy O'Connor. They will be launching a CD of local Sliabh Luachra music. The CD is a mixture of old and newly composed tunes from the heart of this rich tradition.

Admission €10. Most other events, except the workshops are free during the festival.

For full programme and tickets go to fastnetmaritime.com

people Arts & Entertainment

Shakespeare performed with new energy by Kinsale Drama

In early May, 15 students from Kinsale Campus Drama Department presented Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Ballinspittle Town Hall

to enthusiastic and appreciative audiences.

As the first live performance from Kinsale Campus since May 2019, and the first time the Drama

Department had been hosted by Ballinspittle Community Hall, this was a very special occasion.

Rehearsed in the college's unique green amphitheatre, the transfer to the new venue demanded an imaginative approach including a specially built add-on stage, giving the actors three levels to perform on and direct access to the hall.

Audiences experienced an energetic and playful performance, with actors running through the space, appearing unexpectedly and, at times, interacting directly with the audience.

"So refreshing and sincere"...."so much energy"....."first time I un-



Fiachna O'Brien from Galway as Oberon and Christopher O'Sullivan from Clonakilty as Puck; Chloe Browne from Ballinspittle, Sonja Murphy from Clonakilty and Isabella O'Donovan from Skibbereen as fairies.

derstood Shakespeare completely"...."great fun"....."so much talent....and, "thank you for a great night"... were some of the audience comments, after giving the delighted students a well-deserved standing ovation.

The performers were Isabella

O'Donovan, Shane O'Donovan, Fiachna O'Brien, Lucy Pearl Coleman, Iarla O'Neill, Sloane Quirke, Finn O'Donovan, Joanna Gill, Peter Wright, Tasneem Mathers, Debora Nogueira, Abhainn Harrington, Chloe Browne, Christopher O'Sullivan and Sonja

Murphy.

Directed by Belinda Wild, assisted by Ian Wild. Choreography by Patricia Crosbie. Music by Louis Wild. Production Team included Helena Farrell, Alayne Hynes, Mike Walsh and Marcus Bale.

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Blue House Gallery upcoming exhibitions



Set in the midst of Schull Village on Main Street. The Blue House Gallery showing local, national & international art is open Everyday between 11am and 5 pm from Easter to October

www.bluehousegalleryschull.com

Haunting and original her work often explores the relationship between humankind and the earth and landscape we inhabit and influence, what is changed and what is left.

Also upstairs Fiona Power presents, 'An Alentejo Connection'. Following a residency at the Foundation OBRAS in rural Portugal, Fiona shares new paintings inspired by the landscape and the shared heritage between our two countries.

From June 17 until July 6: (on the ground floor) Ayelet Lator's 'Juxtaposition' showcases her new ceramic sculptures of heads with fantastic headaddresses trademarked with Ayelets usual flair for attitude, style and flamboyancy. Balancing Ayelets exuberant pieces are etchings by Yoko Akino. "Elements" brings together works of quiet, simmering intensity. Subjects are treated with a strongly traditional influence and yet are refreshingly contemporary and personal.

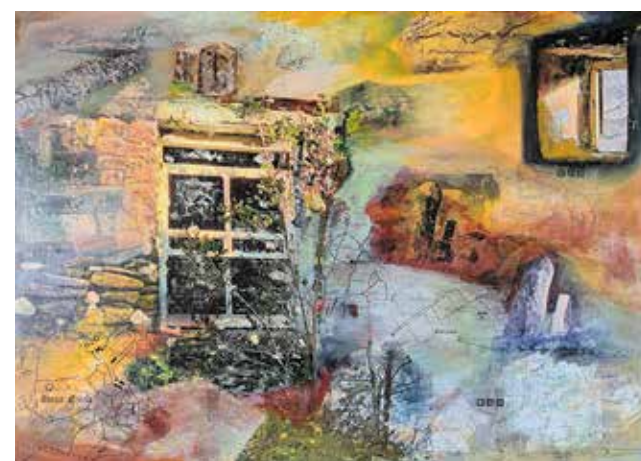
or landscape but also the mood and spirit of such.

Also on the ground floor, Richard (Tich) Breathnach presents, 'The Bog in the Bale'; Photography bordering on the abstract as the familiar silage bale gets transformed under intense focus of a creative eye. From the common the fantastical emerges as Breathnach records the reflections of the passing seasons.

Upstairs Debbie Godsell shows, 'Residues'; her latest collection of screen-prints.

Sitting on top of Spring and looking forward to Summer, Blue House Gallery is hosting an exciting run of exhibitions and artists that in their own way reflect the spirit, colour and times we live in.

Running May 27 until June 15: (on the ground floor) Nigel Huleatt-James offers us paintings in watercolour of wonderful intensity; delivered with a lightness of touch and bold use of colour that complement not only the subject matter he portrays, whether that be figurative



Fragments 4 by Dick Richards

Upstairs, 'Creative Spaces II', sees the continuation of a documentary photographic journey by Melanie Black and Geoff Greenham. Following on from their very successful first exhibition series in 2019 they have increased their catalogue of artists in the West Cork area, beautifully capturing the artists themselves and the spaces wherein they work and create.

Rounding out the cusp of seasons Dick Richards presents, 'Fragments', an exhibition of mixed media collage. Using map routes explored when under the 5km lockdown as a starting point each piece then takes a journey of dreamlike imagination.

Blue House Gallery is open every day 11am-5pm.



Helen O'Keeffe working in plein air for the Creative Space 2 show.
Pic: Geoff Greenham



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people Arts & Entertainment

Family-friendly events on land and sea planned for Ahakista festival this summer

The Ahakista Festival is back after a two-year break and ready to restore fun to the family calendar on the August Bank Holiday weekend. Planning for the festival got off to a great start with the news that Graham Norton has agreed to host the legendary Friday night table quiz once again. The TV presenter and author's generous support has meant a lot to the Ahakista community over the years and the Graham Norton Table Quiz is always a huge attraction for festival-goers. Tickets for the quiz sold out quickly on May 28 but other attractions this year will be plentiful, with family fun activities taking place on both land and sea and live music in the local pubs.

Interest is also expected to be high in 'Ahakista Fadó' and 'Ahakista Anois', two of this year's many new attractions planned by festival organisers. 'Ahakista Anois' is a photography competition with free entry to all and a special prize for the best images taken by under-12s. Photographers (amateurs only) can submit a total of three images. People, plants, animals, buildings are all acceptable as long as the images are taken in Ahakista. The closing date for entries, which should be submitted along with contact details to ahakistafestival@gmail.com, is Friday, July 1 at 5.30pm.

'Ahakista Fadó' will be an exhibition of photographs and other items celebrating the social, physical and cultural history of Ahakista. Images of people, places (Ahakista only!) and events of years-gone-by will be displayed in The Cabin over the bank holiday weekend and anyone who may have something suitable to lend is asked to email ahakistafestival@gmail.com before June 30 with details.

Follow Ahakista Festival's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages for further updates about festival events. Or email ahakistafestival@gmail.com

Tea bowls for Ukraine

From the onset of the war in Ukraine, West Cork ceramic artist Jim Turner wanted to respond in a positive way to help the Ukrainian people. He turned to his talents and has since been producing tea bowls and other ceramic pieces at his pottery in Rossmore, with the intention of fundraising sales.

Clonakilty Arts Centre was very pleased when Jim approached them for a sales space and has been humbled by the support of patrons so far; Jim's 'Bowls for Ukraine' have raised over €900 to date and will continue to be displayed, and available to purchase by donation, in the foyer of the gallery.

Jim has exhibited extensively, both nationally and internationally. A winner of the Crafts Council of Ireland 'Excellence in Making' award and the Irish Contemporary Ceramics Award, his work is in many collections, including the Crafts Council of Ireland and the Office of Public Works. Yet Jim wants these bowls to be accessible to everybody so the requested donation



is whatever people can manage to give, from 20 cent upwards.

Jim will also be exhibiting in an upcoming exhibition with Cork Potters at Gallery Asna, Clonakilty Arts Centre.

SUMMER CAMPS @ POTTERY STUDIO

Wk 1: Tues 28th, Wed 29th & Thurs 30th June

Wk 2: Tues 5th, Wed 6th & Thurs 7th July

Wk 3: Tues 12th, Wed 13th & Thurs 14th July

Wk 4: Tues 19th, Wed 20th & Thurs 21st July



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EYERIES Family Festival

Eyeries, Beara, Co. Cork

Friday 15th July

6.00pm	Blessing of Boats	Ballycrovane Pier
6.15pm	Children's Puppet Show	Eyeries Playground
7.30pm	Festival Official Opening	Eyeries Playground
9.00pm	RYAN SHERIDAN	Eyeries Hall
12.00am	Festival Friday Fever	Eyeries Hall

15th to 17th July 2022

Saturday 16th July

10.00am	Kids Treasure Hunt	Eyeries Strand
10.30am	A Walk on the Wildside with Eoghan Dalton	Boffickil
11, 1 & 3pm	MOWI Guided Boat Tours	Ballycrovane Pier
1.00pm	Let's Talk about Weeds	Garra Fadó
1.00pm	Family Fun & Sports Day	Eyeries Park
6.00pm	Festival Mass	St. Kentigern's Church
8.00pm	EIMEAR REIDY AND NATALIA BEYLIS	Scoil Chaitigheirn
9.00pm	A Distinctive Mix of Instrumental Music	Outdoor Stage
12.00am	BASHT Midsummer Disco	Eyeries Hall


Sunday 17th July

10.00am	Trail Run with West Cork Trail Runners	O Sullivan's Shop
10.00am	Kids' Crab Fishing	Ballycrovane Pier
10.00am	Tai Chi with Maureen Fitzpatrick	Eyeries Strand
10.30am	Under 9s Football Blitz	Eyeries Park
11.00am	Guided Looped Walk	Post Office
11am & 1pm	MOWI Guided Boat Tours	Ballycrovane Pier
12.00pm	Sheepdog Trials	Formanes
12.00pm	EYERIES STREET MARKET	
1.00pm	Vintage Rally	Presbytery Field
1.00pm	Variety Show	Eyeries Hall
1.30pm	Scoil Rince Carney Dancing Exhibition	MUGA
2.15pm	Target Road Bowling	MUGA
2.30pm	Open Fire Cookery Demonstration	
3.00pm	Digger Trials	Presbytery Field
3.30pm	Best Dressed Dog Show	Cluain Carraigeach
4.30pm	Kick Boxing Exhibition	Outdoor Stage
10.00pm	DEUCE'S WILD	Outdoor Stage
12.00am	Disco Finale	Eyeries Hall

For further information, tickets and pre-booking visit www.eyeries.ie or contact eyeriesfestival@gmail.com

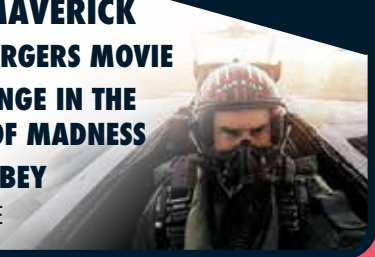
Windows of Eyeries Art Trail throughout the village

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people Arts & Entertainment

Cork Potters in Clonakilty

From May 28 to June 25, members of the Society of Cork Potters will be exhibiting in Gallery Asna at Clonakilty Arts Centre.

'Reconnect' is a collection of fresh work from 13 of Cork's finest ceramic artists. Participating artists include Susan Herlihy, Kate Standen, Sinead Fegan, Jim Kelleher, Jim Turner, Brendan Ryan, Cillian Gibbons, Bernadette Tuite, Catherine Ryan, Mary O'Regan, Martha Cashman, Charlie Mahon, Sara Roberts and Rosie Roccaforte.

One of the longest running creative networks in Ireland, the Society of Cork Potters has been in existence for over 40 years. It is a non-profit organisation, open to all ceramic artists or potters who live in Cork City or County and who make part of their living by working with clay.



Ceramic by
Brendan Ryan

St James' crowned Scor na nÓg All-Ireland Champions

There were huge celebrations in Ardfield/Rathbarry following the crowning of St James' GAA Scór na nÓg Novelty Act as All-Ireland champions. Hundreds attended the reception at the club's grounds to welcome home the performers and their mentors and to celebrate their success at the All-Ireland championships in Killarney.

The performers were Laura Hodnett, Joseph O'Sullivan, Conor Whelton, Cáit O'Mahony, Orla Whelton and Meadhbh McCarthy.

At the reception, the mentors were applauded for the innovative drama and first-class direction. Deirdre Hodnett and Chris McCarthy wrote the show, which centres on the 'reawakening' of statues of Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera, together with Kitty Kiernan and Harry Boland, and their ensuing discussion about Irish history and contemporary society.

Leading up to the All-Ireland championships, the actors received invaluable coaching from the Rossmore thespian Nora Scannell. The generous input of Kathleen O'Sullivan and Rachel Hodnett was also acknowledged, and thanks were extended to Diarmuid Scannell. Tribute was also paid to the families of those involved: their support and generosity underpins Scór, and – win or lose – seeing their children realise their potential is its own reward.

Bere Island women and 'The Hold'

'The Hold', which opens on Bere Island on Friday, June 17, documents the lives of 24 Bere Island women throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the hold the island has on them. The women, formed a collective, Bere Island Women Create, and during lockdown worked remotely with award winning island artist Mary Sullivan to use art as a way to express their lives as island women.

The exhibition will be held in the Drill Hall, which was used by the British Admiralty during their occupation of the island in the early 1900s. This building was one of the earliest to be constructed at the former Fort Berehaven, which also housed an internment camp, and following the signing of the 1922 Anglo-Irish Treaty became one of Ireland's three Treaty Ports. Bere Island women played their part during the War of Independence through their involvement in Cumman na mBan, passing messages to the men who were interned, and assisting those who escaped from the internment camp. Fort Berehaven was handed back to the Irish Government on September 26, 1938.

'The Hold' is funded by The Arts Council, Creative Ireland, The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport



Artist Mary O'Sullivan

and Media and Cork County Council.

Mary Sullivan, a visual and performance artist living on Bere Island, works with a variety of mediums including film, installation, performance and sculpture. Mary's work sheds

light on the complex history of women's labour in Ireland, domestic life and island living.

A graduate of the BA (Hons) Visual Arts degree programme, Technological University Dublin via Sherkin Island, Mary received the RDS Taylor Art Award for her work 'At Home, At War' in 2018. More recently, the artist has exhibited in institutions across Ireland and the UK including the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, the Royal Hibernian Academy, the Leydon Gallery London and Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre. In 2019, she hosted her first solo exhibition, 'Breathe', housed in the underground rooms of a disused military shelter on Bere Island. Mary is currently working towards a solo exhibition in Uillinn, West Cork Arts Centre in 2023.

The exhibition will run until Sunday, June 26, opening daily

from 10am to 5pm.

For the launch, Murphy's Ferry leaves the Pontoon situated outside Castletownbere at 1.30pm, arriving into Rerrin Village at 2pm. The Drill Hall is just under a 10 minute walk from the pier. A free shuttle bus will be available from the Pier to the Drill Hall. Alternatively, Bere Island Ferries leave Castletownbere at 1.30pm and arrive at the West End Pier at 1.45pm. Please note you will need to drive from the West End Pier to the Drill Hall (approximately 15 minutes by car).

Murphy's Ferry returns at 4.30pm and 6.30pm. Bere Island Ferries return at 4.30pm, and 6.00pm.

For further information please contact Helen Riddell at bereislandwomencreate@gmail.com or at 027 75099. www.bereisland.net



The goal of Sudoku is to fill a 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9

Sudoku

	3				2		4	
					1	5	8	
5	2				4			
	7						2	1
								6
	5		9	8				
		9	3	6				
								7
		3	2					

#13740 Difficulty: moderate

			6	5				7
							4	
2		5	3					
	5	1		6			7	3
		6		1				
9				8				4
							6	
	4		2					5
	6		5		7			

#94589 Difficulty: hard

people Arts & Entertainment

Clonakilty International Guitar Festival organisers plan two special events in June



To prepare for the return of Clonakilty International Guitar Festival (CIGF) this September, the festival organisers are hosting two special events in June to whet the appetite and generally remind everyone of the life-changing magic of live music. The Yonder Boys in DeBarras and Shanley's on June 3 and Dog Tail Soup in Spiller's Lane, Clonakilty on June 12 will be a delicious foretaste of the mayhem of melody planned for CIGF 22, which will take place from September 9-18.

The Yonder Boys will foreshadow the musical trail

of the Festival performing an acoustic set in DeBarras at 6pm followed by their full live set up in Shanley's at 9pm. While the luxuriant Dog Tail Soup will perform a ticketed outdoor show in Spillers Lane on Sunday, June 12 with special guest Mide Houlihan as CIGF partners with Cork County Council and the Department of Culture for this event.

Berlin based trio Yonder Boys are an Americana band, who while performing on traditional folk instruments, show great depth in variety of influences they bring to the genre. Traditional old-time sound can be

mixed with rock, latin, pop and psychedelic influences. Their self-titled debut EP came out in 2018 on Blue Whale Records, and their first LP 'Acid Folk' was released on September 25, 2020.

'Dogtail Soup' is an eclectic and flavourful musical stew made by carefully simmering Camilla Griehsel (Swedish World Music diva) with Maurice Seezer (Twice Golden Globe nominated Film Music composer), adding a pinch of Paul Tieran (International troubadour, pillar of West Cork's favourite band, Interference), a sprinkling of Anthony Noonan (drummer for Roy Harper with extra dulcet tones), a cupful of John Fitzgerald (bass and all known instruments... last seen touring with Gilbert O'Sullivan) and an occasional splash of James O'Leary (founding member of Interference on electric guitar).

Tickets on sale now at debarra.ie.

Modern Irish Sculpture at Kenmare Butter Market

Modern Irish Sculpture opened on June 2 at The Kenmare Butter Market, County Kerry, with more than 30 of Ireland's foremost sculptors exhibiting. One of Ireland's most exciting new gallery spaces, The Kenmare Butter Market opened in June 2020 to showcase the work of both national and international artists; this is the first time it has hosted a sculpture exhibition.

Modern Irish Sculpture will showcase over 70 contemporary works including many large-scale sculptures. Exhibiting artists include Michael Quane, Eileen Mac Donagh, Alva Gallagher, Bob Quinn, Jim Turner, Cecilia Moore and Martin O'Keefe. All sculptors exhibiting have national and international reputations with



Michael Quane, *Diver*, Carrara Marble

their work included in private and public collections around the world.

This unique exhibition is part of the Kenmare Arts Festival 2022. It is curated by Jackie Ball, Ana Duncan and John Goode.

Open Monday to Sunday 10am to 8pm.
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Ken Drew, *Cube Extended*, Polychrome concrete.

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June 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
www.katearbon.com

After a lot of frustration and delay in recent weeks, early June can bring a more positive sense of ease and flow. A lot happened in the sky over the last few days of May and this is going to play out through June. The recent New Moon of May 30 in Gemini follows the powerful conjunction of Mars with Jupiter in early Aries. During the first few days of June, if you are up before sunrise, you can see these two planets rising together in the East just ahead of the 'bright star' Venus. This combination sets a theme for the next few weeks and we could see a show of force or some power moves on the world stage. Because Mars, the action planet, which can sometimes be the bringer of strife and conflict is flanked by both the beneficial planets, there is some definite good to come out of this dynamic despite what might be manifesting in world events. A shift in mood to something more positive is possible for the early days of June if we can look beyond the exaggerated posturing and pro-

paganda that is part of the ongoing backdrop to events.

Mercury retrograde has given us time to take care of some of the mundane details and also review what supports us on a comfort level. We have had conversations and made connections with people from our past. It's been a time for renegotiating who and what we take with us into the next phase. As Mercury slows and turns to travel forwards again we can take some of our intentions and plans to the next level. Be aware that Mercury is currently making a challenging square aspect to Saturn and this will continue until around the Full Moon mid-month. This can create delays and setbacks in getting the usual channels of communication or transport running with ease. Also, consider the continued effect of many facts or truths being held back from full view. There may still be some frustrations or serious reality checks to navigate before the flow of business, trading or information can run smoothly once more.

Mercury finally comes out of the retrograde shadow after the 18th and this should allow a surge in activity, as the backlog gets freed up and events will start rolling along at a fair pace by midsummer.

Saturn begins its annual retrograde from June 3 through to late October and it won't be clear of the shadow phase until late January 2023. It's a time to address a reality you may have been avoiding, or responsibilities you didn't have the time or patience to deal with. It's time to focus on the more tiresome tasks but it's also a time to catch up on any study course or work-related project that may have been on the back burner. This is a good time to renegotiate or review how the longterm plans are shaping up. This is a time of maturing the things, ideas and projects that materialised over the last few months. It is also about the lessons learned and what we need to adjust, either to remove or reinforce, depending on what really worked well and what didn't. With Saturn revisiting its recent path through Aquarius we can look

back as far as late February to review what has occurred since then. We can look at any restrictions, limitations and boundaries in our lives for clues to what these lessons are about.

With Venus in her home sign Taurus for most of this month there is a focus on comfort and stability. We may want to relax and enjoy the longer days as if we were on holiday. It may not be possible to be so easy going and life seems to have other ideas but the desire for carefree lazy days is very strong.

The Full Moon mid month can bring some new insights but it could be a time of doubt or uncertainty. You may feel restless and look for distraction or some fast-paced fun or increased social connection. The Sagittarius Moon takes us to new heights or wants to explore ideas and this coincides with Mercury moving into its home sign, Gemini. Expect a rapid flow of ideas and communication as new information comes to you thick and fast. Neptune, the planet of confusion or disorientation, is involved

in this Moon Phase so we need to take all this talk with a 'pinch of salt' until we have more certainty. Unchecked rumours or news breaks can go viral before we know the real story. With Saturn also playing its part in this Lunation there is some helpful level headedness to ensure we sift reality from illusion.

The last days of June could be more challenging as confrontational Mars moves into a hard aspect to the undercurrents of Pluto. This can bring a show of 'might is right' or an ousting of more furtive agendas. This coincides with the New Moon which is connecting to the big planet Jupiter. There is a sense that things can have a positive outcome although it may not be visible from here. This is a time for staying focused on the long view whilst avoiding getting caught up with momentary and highly emotive suggestions.

June has a Full Moon at 24 degrees Sagittarius on the 14th at 12.51pm and a New Moon at 8 degrees Cancer on the 29th at 3.52am.



Aries: The next Full Moon finds you feeling like a born doer, with an incredible drive to accomplish and achieve in life. If you try hard now you can push on toward whatever goals you have in mind. Whilst you have all that store of energy to drive you it's also a good time

to philosophise and take a turn toward more lasting values. You are exploring and searching, linking things together, following up connections of all kinds and finding the limits. If you want to take the lead, just be prepared to take the responsibility that goes with it.



Taurus: This month's Full Moon is a time when you can respond to new ideas and find a footing on which you can build a foundation. You may be gathering resources, materials and finances to further your future and the situation you're in suggests you do some mental

or physical housecleaning. You'll have the courage to toss out those useless things you've been hoarding, and the burst of freedom will do you good. Your mind may take a more studious turn, questioning, exploring, and searching for answers as you find yourself thinking about your needs in relation to the others in your life.



Gemini: The next Full Moon focus finds you wanting to take a fresh look at relationships and make this a time to let go of all that's worn out and uninspiring. You may be torn between neglecting personal concerns to attend to group or social affairs whilst needing to turn away from

the outer world towards more personal and inner changes. As new information emerges you may be in a better position to measure your own appearance and how others see you. Finding the beauty and value in both yourself and those around you allows for more harmonious and rewarding partnerships.



Cancer: The June Full Moon brings a time of change that finds you examining your foundations, responsibilities, and basic security. Your business sense is enhanced, and you are able to really get down to what is important when it comes to making decisions affecting your material welfare. Things of lasting value appeal. You might have to put up with minor inconveniences and irritations for the sake of what is really important in your life. Sacrifices made now will be more than repaid by an increased ability on your part to make dreams real. Attend to nagging details, to get them out of the way.



Leo: Your tendency to compromise and settle for less than you dreamed can be a problem as tension results when you ignore your own desires. You're inclined to choose the path of least resistance, willing to bypass some of the things you always wanted in favour of expediency. Others may urge you on toward a more self-confident and outgoing attitude. The coming Full Moon is time for resolutions, for attempting to put into practice your ambitions and dreams and you may feel moved to cooperate and work together with others on community and long-term projects to achieve this.



Virgo: Circumstances may urge you to put in great effort and hard work, however, don't overdo it and try to go too far too fast. Despite appearances, things are working with rather than against you so don't get overwhelmed. Let things take their natural course. Mean-

while, this month's Full Moon accent is on your home and private life, which could be very rewarding now. Your feelings and sense of security may find you seeking seclusion for a time or losing yourself in past memories. A lot of personal and sensitive psychological material may be surfacing making it a good time to make some changes and reach new levels.



Libra: The next Full Moon phase shows you how your sense of honesty and truth is something that others sense in you and appreciate. Self-sacrifice and an understanding attitude on your part could have far-reaching effects on your own life path or career during this time period. You attempt to balance the needs of your close relationships with the demands of your idealism. Focus on the essence of your situation. This month you might find yourself teaching or guiding groups or being asked for your help and opinions on matters of religion or philosophy. Even expect an opportunity for some travel.



Scorpio: The approaching Full Moon is a time for getting down to business, stripping away and discarding non-essentials, memories of things past, and moving on, concentrating on the important things. You're likely to be less sentimental about this at the moment. You find that you are able to bring more imagination to bear on your goals and ambitions now and that you have the drive to improve your finances and material security. You are able to be at your most compassionate and understanding when it comes to accepting and dealing with other people so all your relationships benefit from this.



Sagittarius: The June Full Moon finds you feeling like getting together and enjoying the social scene. You may not get a lot of support for the way you express your basic energy and drive as you tend to go against the crowd and somehow manage to create reverberation in those around you. Some may even find you overbearing, as your intensity runs counter to whatever is wanted by them. You find your ambitions are backed up by the will to get things done. If you can avoid a very personal and reactionary response you may find you're appreciated and appear in a good light in any group project or social gathering.

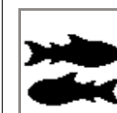


Capricorn: Although the coming Full Moon may seem to leave you between dream and hallucination, you can now perceive and commune with your inner self, something you might have neglected recently. The intensity in the air breaks internal barriers and allows you to heal wounds, now that they have come to light. In more mundane affairs take extra precautions that private plans don't come into the light unless you are fully ready to go public with them. Avoid confrontations right now, which will put you at a disadvantage, and use subtler means to gain your ends when emotions run high.



Aquarius: You now have the sense of having lived and experienced something in life. Ideas about what's really important may be flooding in, showing you clearly what is of value and what has spent its course. Community concerns, and altruism in general, may get an added

boost during this time and your sharp perceptions make finding new solutions easy. Whilst your thoughts may be on improving and making the best of a current situation, you can always bring an unexpected twist or insight to anything you set your mind to. Remember though that not everyone is as ready to make changes as you might be.



Pisces: This marks an end to a time of questioning and trying to feel your way. Now you can clearly understand your position, feel whatever limits there are, and move forward. This may be the perfect time to actualise career matters that have been under development for a while.

Public relations have extra influence from this coming Full Moon so you can get a fuller, rosier picture of just where you stand in your profession and what people think of you. The excitement around you comes in a rising crescendo that peaks now, so decide how you can make it work to your benefit.

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people Home & Garden

Ministerial visit to newly constructed housing developments

In May, Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Gillian Coughlan welcomed the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD to Cork County to visit six newly constructed Social Housing Developments in Skibbereen, Clonakilty and Macroom.

Mayor Coughlan highlighted how, "In meeting the challenges of housing supply, Cork County Council has been to the forefront, and has successfully provided homes through a variety of delivery streams across our county and this is evident today with our visits to Own Build, Turnkey and PPP developments. We will continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver sustainable housing solutions that will meet the needs of the county."

The Own Build development is located at Beechgrove, Clonakilty and provides for 57 dwellings consisting of 51 new build one and two storey one-bed, two-bed, three-bed and four-bed units and a specially-adapted unit. In addition to the new build, six apartments are housed in the original Beechgrove House and associated outbuildings which have been carefully renovated to best conservation principles and are at the centre of the scheme.

The development was con-



Pairc Thiar, Clonakilty residents Wasim and Heaven Ghafarji (left) and Ammar Ghafarji (right), meeting Mayor Coughlan and Minister O'Brien Ger O'Driscoll, Cork County Council, demonstrates heat pump controls at Beechgrove, Clonakilty. Pics: Michael O'Sullivan / OSM PHOTO

ceived and managed by Cork County Council and constructed by MMD Contractors.

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source pumps are a positive addition to Cork County Council's building stock and are providing additional homes for families within Clonakilty.

The Public Private Partnership schemes are located at Pairc Goodman, Skibbereen (50 units), Pairc Thiar, Clonakilty (52 units) and Pairc Uí Mhu-

irthe, Macroom (50 units.) The schemes involve a mix of two, three and four-bedroom 'A'-rated energy efficient houses.

The Turnkey Developments in Macroom and the Own Build

Development in Clonakilty are funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the Social Housing Investment Programme.

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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

Increase your holistic wellbeing this summer by creating a reflection space in your home or garden, a place where you can go to relax, unwind and escape, so to speak. For remote workers especially, this could be your place for mindfulness and meditation breaks or a quick yoga session before you head back to your desk.

Studying biophilic design principles has helped me to design such spaces in homes. Biophilic design it is a concept used within the building industry that aims to increase an occupant's connectivity to the natural environment outside.

Achieving such a space is easy once you follow these simple steps:

Choose the right location. Natural light is very important but bedrooms, studies, sunrooms or a sheltered outside deck or porch could all work. To eliminate distractions you need this space to be uncluttered and tucked away from loud and busy areas of the house. Segmenting a room with a linen curtain to create a small space could also work. You may need to add a water feature to drown



out background noise.

Include natural elements such as greenery, wooden furniture, stone accessories and natural fibres. Even easier is to throw back heavy curtains so that you have lots of light and a view of the garden. Add air-purifying plants like aloe vera or spider plants. Screens, wallpaper or artwork with leafy images will all help achieve the feeling we are after.

Determine what you need in order to be able to reflect properly. One person might need a comfortable rug to lie on, another might need to hear the sound of water, a third might

need to be surrounded with candles or religious items. Ask yourself, "what do I need to feel calm and concentrate?"

Stimulate the senses with candles or diffusers that have a scent that matches the mood. Include elements that stimulate sight, touch, smell and hearing to create a holistic space. They say putting your bare feet on the ground is good so try filling a tray that you could stand on with moss

Finally cosy your special space up with rugs or plush cushions – every zen space also needs comfort!

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A labour of love

Garden enthusiasts and gardeners will be delighted to hear that there are 23 gardens on this year's West Cork Garden Trail, the longest running trail of its kind in Ireland. From formally designed gardens to natural havens of biodiversity, formal to informal, traditional to more contemporary, this is an opportunity to glean new ideas for your own patch and discover rare plants or simply to enjoy the natural beauty and tranquility in all of these garden gems.

New or rather making a return to the trail in 2022 after an absence of 10 years, Aultaghreagh Cottage Garden at the top of a hill in Dunmanway, with views to the west of Shehy mountain and Nowen hill, is a garden well worth discovering. Created from scratch on a one-acre grass field over the past 32 years by husband and wife team Christine and Leslie Wilson, Aultaghreagh is a celebration of the wonder that exists when man connects with nature in a garden.

About a third of the plot is now dedicated to woodland, mostly planted with deciduous trees by Future Forests in the early days; these are now mature providing the perfect place for snowdrops, daffodils, wood anemones, bluebells and other shade-lovers. "As the trees grew, the garden changed," says Leslie. "A lot of the grasses we planted had to go." One of the stars of the woodland show has to be the pretty yellow wood or celandine poppy (*stylophorum diphyllum*), which peeps its sunny head out



from heavily shaded areas under trees but also (deliberately) pops up between the formal planting in some of the beds. As useful as it is pretty, this herb is typically used to treat stomach, liver, and gallbladder problems. As you

meander along the woodland trail, you'll come across a large pond with goldfish, a waterfall and a bog garden surrounded by ferns, Rodgersia and the splendid leaves of the umbrella plant (*darmara peltata*). The bank around it is planted with willows, beneath which are various junipers and evergreen conifers.

Closer to the house, the abundance of self-seeded Abutilon trees throughout the garden is also an early summer performance worth catching. While the spring bed of camellia, rhododendrons, magnolia, and



azaleas will have retired by June, the flower beds should be a glorious riot of colour from the many perennials – delphiniums, phlox, penstemon, lysmachia, lupins (a favourite of Christine's) to name just a few, most of which have been grown from seed in one of the polytunnels. Ornamental clover (*trifolium rubens*) with its handsome pointed flowers catches the eye of bees and passersby. There is also a wildflower bed humming with happy wildlife and a number of veg beds created using a no-dig, no-bend, no-weed growing system.

Before you leave, follow the sound of water to find the secret walled garden, where hostas, ferns and other damp-loving plants are thriving. It's a place to stop and drink in the gentle sounds and scents of the land.

For hosta lovers, the couple recommends 'Halcyon', as its blue, heart-shaped leaves are quite thick, which make it more slug-proof than most.

Throughout the garden there are climbers covering trellis and pergolas. The Vitis group of clematis does well here. You might also spot the pretty Tropaeolum happily weaving its way through a hedge. Bright scarlet flowers are followed by indigo blue berries. "We first saw it in Brian Cross' garden in Glanmire," shares Leslie.

This garden is a labour of love and an excellent opportunity to view the type of plants that will thrive in similar conditions in West Cork.

Aultagh, Dunmanway, P47 XK71. Admission is free to Aultaghreagh, the couple just ask that you make a donation to a charity of your choice. To arrange a visit please call 085-169-6474 / 023-8855307 or email houserocker@live.com. For more information on the West Cork Garden Trail go to westcorkgardentrail.com.



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New radon maps show more homes and workplaces at risk

New radon maps, launched by the Environmental Protection Agency last week at the National Radon Forum, show an increased risk from radon in Ireland, with 170,000 homes now predicted to be at risk of radon exposure above the national reference level. This is an increase of 45,000 homes, from the previous estimate in 2002. The new maps update the radon risk assessment for

the country and show that large parts of the country – particularly in Munster and Connaught – have been found to be at increased risk from radon. The map is based on work completed by Trinity College Dublin, Geological Survey of Ireland and the Economic and Social Research Institute alongside the EPA.

Michéal Lehane, EPA Director, speaking at today's National Radon Forum said:

"Radon is a serious public health hazard. The new maps combine thousands of radon measurements, with detailed geological information, and are a significant revision of the previous map from 2002. More importantly, the new maps make it easy for everyone to find out the radon risk in their local area using the eircode search on the EPA website. We urge people to test for radon as this is the only way of protect-

ing you and your family from this cancer-causing gas".

Employers too have a responsibility to ensure that their employees are protected from exposure to this radioactive gas.

Yvonne Mullooly, Assistant Chief Executive of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), welcomed publication of the new radon maps saying: "Employers in high radon areas are obliged to test their workplaces for radon. The new maps enable

them to clearly identify where they are legally obliged to test, so allows for targeting of resources in the areas where the risk from radon is highest. The HSA will continue to support employers by providing information, and through our on-line risk assessment BeSMART tool www.BeSMART.ie."

Radon testing is simple and inexpensive and, where necessary, reducing high radon levels in a building is also straightforward.

The maps are now available on the EPA's website and are searchable by Eircode and by address.



GARDENING

John Hosford

The Weekend Garden Centre

June is a month of freedom in the garden with long balmy summer days and the end of late frosts! It's a month of blossoms and summer fragrance from the likes of Roses, Lupins, Sweet William, Carnations, Honeysuckle, Lavender and Buddleia.

Spring Bulbs: Allow spring bulbs to die down naturally. Deadhead faded blooms. Feed all spring bulbs that are still green with an organic seaweed based liquid feed. Label all varieties with name, colour and flowering time, using permanent markers or black lead pencil when writing the labels and also marking with a good stout bamboo cane. Divide Daffodils once they have fully died down but be sure to label and mark vigilantly.

Plant in informal groups at two or three times the depth of the bulb.

A new site should be sunny, well-drained and preferably not somewhere daffodils have been grown before. Do keep a note of where the different varieties were planted.

Return of the flower shows: With Chelsea back to its normal slot in the calendar at the end of May, you will by now have visited the show or seen the extensive TV coverage.

Bloom is back from June 2-6 at the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Updates are available on social media or by signing up to the Bloom ezine.

Plant Fairs are back in splendid locations such as

June in the Garden

Fota, Airfield and St. Annes Park, Dublin. Watch out in the newspaper gardening columns for updates on dates, times and locations.

Vegetable Garden: Watch out for blight warnings on TV and radio bulletins and on the Met Eireann website. Take adequate precautions against blight on potatoes and tomatoes prior to the warning coming into force.

Tender frost-susceptible vegetable plants may now be planted outdoors. Water in well after planting and watch out for slug attacks especially during damp weather.

Courgettes, marrows, squashes, pumpkins, outdoor cucumbers, sweet corn, melons, runner beans, french beans, climbing french beans, outdoor tomatoes can now be planted into their summer quarters (harden-off well before planting outside). All can be still sown from seed in the first 10-14 days of the month. It is now too late to sow tomato seed.

Sow turnips now for an autumn crop, thinning out the seedlings to 10cm spacings. Harvest when they are the size

of a tennis ball. Some roots can be left in longer and their leafy tops can be cooked for leafy greens.

Swedes may be sown up to mid June for harvesting during the winter. Take precautions against flea beetle on emergence. Swedes, turnips and other members of the brassica (cabbage family) will emerge above the ground in four or five days at this time of year especially with warmer days and warm soil.

Sweetcorn is planted out at 30cm apart. Plant in blocks/squares to assist wind pollination.

Cabbage white butterflies will be hatching out now so keep a watchful eye for clusters of yellow eggs on the undersides of the leaves. Squash these eggs on detection. You can also cover your brassicas/cabbage family with a protective net, as a barrier to prevent the eggs being laid in the first place.

Carrot fly can be prevented with a fine porosity net/barrier.

Feed asparagus with a good general seaweed based fertiliser after cropping.

Continue planting summer containers: There is still time to plant up summer containers to create a display that will continue until the end of October. Dispose of old compost from last season. Use fresh compost with the addition of slow release fertiliser and ensure drainage holes are drilled on window boxes and troughs. Check hanging basket chains are in good order. You can plant annuals, herbs, patio plants or even some vegetables to give an attractive long lasting display.

Choose Geraniums, Brachycome, Diascia, Bacopa, Petunias, Surfinias, Lobelia, Nasturtiums for sunny aspects. Begonias, Fuchsias, Busy Lizzies are highly recommended for the more shaded aspects. These will give you months of continuous colour and display. Keep adequately watered throughout the season. Weekly liquid feeding is recommended

to bring out the ultimate potential of your display.

Roses: Take precautions against blackspot, powdery mildew, rust and downy mildew. If watering Roses keep water off the foliage. Give a summer rose food in early June. Remove suckers on appearance. Trace back to their source of origin and cut off cleanly. Deadhead faded blooms as they appear. Roses growing in containers will appreciate weekly liquid feeding.

Fruit Garden: Remove cloches from strawberries.

Harvest rhubarb until the end of June.

Gooseberries can be thinned for larger fruits. Watch out for gooseberry sawfly, which can attack right throughout the summer. A bad infestation can totally defoliate the gooseberry bush/bushes.

Heavy crops of plums can be thinned out early this month to prevent the brittle branches from breaking.

Greenhouse: Shade the greenhouse with blinds or shading paint. Ensure adequate ventilation in warm weather. If you are out all day at work or other commitments it is well worth considering an automatic ventilator opener.

Remove sideshoots from tomatoes.

Everything in the greenhouse will be growing away at a great pace. Water frequently and give a liquid feed to flowering, foliage and fruiting plants. Keep water off the foliage of plants.

Herbaceous Border: Ensure all tall plants are adequately staked. Fill gaps with bedding plants. Dahlias will provide colour until the first frosts of autumn and come in a very exciting array of colours and heights ranging from 30cm in height for the smaller bedding varieties to 120cm for the taller cactus, decorative and dinner plate varieties. Colours range from pure white to the darkest red almost bordering on black!

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Skibbereen Rowing Club pulls together for success in Ghent



Skibbereen Rowing Club made a worthwhile trip to Ghent International Regatta from May 7-8, as their rowers came home with 11 gold medals, eight silver and 11 bronze, which led to the club receiving the 'Club of the Regatta' award. This was a great honour for the club; after first travelling to Ghent in the early 2000s; it is a tradition to race there annually, so athletes can learn valuable racing skills. Niamh Casey reports on the trip.

Ghent was the Club's first international trip since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and, even though it was the first time racing for some athletes, overall it was a very successful trip. A squad of over 50 athletes travelled to the regatta, ranging from Junior 14 all the way up to Senior level. The club was treated to good weather conditions over the two days of racing and came away with many successes in over 30 events.

On the Saturday the 'mighty lighties' took to the podium twice in the Senior Lightweight events, led by experienced oarswomen Orla Hayes in the lightweight single, joined by Caoimhe Casey, Alyssa Mannix and Catriona O'Neill to win the



lightweight women's quad.

Saturday was also a successful first day for the Junior 19 women, winning two events; Lauren McCarthy Steele, Moya Knowles, Kelly Oforji, Ailise O'Sullivan and Jess Crowley joined together to win the junior four and double.

On Sunday the club had more lightweight success with Orla Hayes and Caoimhe Casey winning gold in the lightweight women's double. Not long after the Junior 19 women were on fire again; Lauren McCarthy Steele and Kelly Oforji winning the women's junior pair, followed by teammate Moya Knowles winning the junior 17

Lightweight women's quad Orla Hayes, Catriona O'Neill, Alyssa Mannix and Caoimhe Casey

Eoin Murran, lightweight men's sculler winner.

single by clearwater.

The Senior men of the club Eoin Murran and Finn O'Reilly won their retrospective events of lightweight single and heavyweight single. The Junior 17 men then followed in line with Dominic Casey winning the junior 17 mens single scull; he then joined his team mates Cathal McCarthy, Tomas Burchill and Rowan O'Driscoll to win the men's junior 17 quad scull.

Overall, it was a superb weekend of racing for all the athletes and the club would like to extend its thanks to the coaches, especially team manager Violet Hayes who volunteered and travelled with the team.

The club is already looking forward to attending Ghent International regatta next year, but it's first back to training in Dear Old Skibbereen for the busy summer racing season ahead.

possible without our sponsors, corporate supporters and donors. All funds raised will go towards projects and programmes that empower and support people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism across Cork city and county. Golf is an inclusive sport and there is no reason why it shouldn't be enjoyed by everyone. We are so proud to have people we support competing

Olympic champion returns to Schull CC

Schull Community College welcomed Olympic champion rower Fintan McCarthy back to his former school last month for what was the first whole school assembly since early 2020. Having followed Fintan's Olympic journey in Tokyo with such interest, the school population was finally able to celebrate his incredible gold medal achievement in person.

Fintan, and his twin brother Jake, took up rowing at Skibbereen Rowing Club during their time at Schull CC, and like many past and present student members of the historic club, Fintan and Jake put in long, hard hours on the Ilan River before and after school. Hardworking, high achieving and involved fully in community college life, the twins quickly experienced success with Skibb. They also put Schull CC on the national rowing stage when they clinched a National Schools Regatta title with another pair of brothers from the college, Naoise and Adam Kennedy. Fintan's rowing prowess and commitment was noted early on when he was presented with the Sportsman of the Year Award at the school's prizegiving in 2014.

On his return to the college, Fintan was generous with his time, answering a wide range of questions from the floor. Fintan referred to other high profile past pupils from Schull CC, like Ayoola Smart and Fionn Ferreira to remind his audience that young people from West Cork can do amazing things.

First Year students, and fellow Skibbereen Rowing Club members, Mattias Cogan and Sarah Coughlan presented Fintan with a gift in recognition of his success.



Fintan McCarthy pictured with Sarah Buckley, principal, Schull Community College, and Brendan Drinan, deputy principal.



Schull Community College Leaving Cert students Patrick Sheehan and Conor Brosnan with Fintan McCarthy's Olympic gold medal.

Finally Fintan planted a wild pear tree in the 'Incredible Edible' school garden.

"It was so encouraging for the students of Schull Community College to see one of their own return with a gold medal.

Not only is Fintan an incredible athlete and a wonderful role model for young people all over Ireland and we look forward to seeing what the future holds," a school representative said.

Final call for Cope Foundation's June Golf Classic

A limited number of tee times remain available for Cope Foundation's Golf Classic fundraiser at Lee Valley Golf and Country Club. The annual event returns for the 26th year on June 9 and 10.

Two teams of people supported by Cope Foundation will be taking part in the tournament. The Irish Blind Golf society will also be attending.

The tournament is sponsored by O'Flynn Exhams LLP Solicitors and raises much-needed funds for the organisation. Last year's event raised over €59,000, which brings to €1.7 million the total raised since 1997.

Cope Foundation Chief Executive, Sean Abbott says: "The Golf Classic is a wonderful fundraiser and wouldn't be

once again, and this year they will be joined on the course by leading Irish golfers who are visually impaired. Sport is a great leveller and we want to continue the conversation around rights and equalities for people with an intellectual disability and/or autism."

Golfers are in with a chance of winning a 100 per cent Electric Peugeot e2008 SUV in the Hole

in One Competition, kindly sponsored by Johnson & Perrott Motor Group. There will also be a 'Nearest The Pin' Competition sponsored by Carbery Group, a 'Longest Drive' Competition sponsored by First South Credit Union Ltd., and goodie bags sponsored by Lidl.

Teams of four people are invited to book a place at the Cope Foundation Golf Classic online

at cope-foundation.ie/Golf-Classic or get in touch with Cope Foundation's Communications and Fundraising Team on 086 7912540 or email murphy2@cope-foundation.ie.

The registration cost for a team of four is €1,000 and includes green fees, refreshments, a three-course meal, goodie bags and competition entry.

people Sport & Fitness

Phil Healy sprints towards her goals

Irish Athletics' Star Phil Healy, also known as the 'Ballineen Bullet', has come a long way since her early years in Bandon Athletics Club. Possibly the most notable West Cork sportsperson as of now, the 27-year-old has already competed for Ireland at the Tokyo Olympics Game in 2021. **Matthew Hurley** chats to the athlete who has received a lot of praise in her career so far including from top Irish sporting personalities such as Derval O'Rourke and Rob Heffernan.

Healy took up athletics at the age of 11 when she joined her older sister Joan who won the community games at the time. Amazingly, that was to keep her sister company but what was to follow in the years ahead would truly be memorable. Healy explains how well both of them get on despite both being high level sprinters.

"We've competed plenty of times together: We were on the same relay team at European championships that broke the record, and she passed the baton to me.

"There isn't the competition. I'm there to help her and vice versa. When you step on the line everyone is a competitor but it's much easier when we are in different events. She is 100m, I'm 400m."

Healy recognises the coaches in West Cork that were responsible for taking her to the top. "Catherine Duggan (RIP) was the leader of Bandon AC and was always there to help anyone. No matter what their levels are. She was there to encourage and support everyone. The club is built on so many volunteers and thanks to them, for the club being such a success to date."

She spent her teenage years training with Bandon AC. The well-renowned Irish sprinter explains why the club was a great cog in her development early in her career.

"It's where I started off up until I went to college. Access to facilities, coaching, support. Plus at a young age it was due to the environment within the club, which was the reason that



I stayed with the sport. It's great to represent the club on the National and international level still today," says Healy.

What most people may not know is that Healy also played soccer, ladies football and camogie when she was younger.

Clearly an all-rounder back then, she fully concentrated on athletics when she was 17.

The sprinter has competed in 100m, 200m and 400m races in various European and World Championships.

"My favourite event has changed as I got older," she explains on being asked which event she preferred. When I was younger I enjoyed the 100m. Now it's the 400m but I do like a 200m indoor."

The Olympic Games might have been a strange one, as it occurred one year after it was due to be held, and there was no fans allowed from counties other than Japan.

However surreal, it was still a great experience for Healy who competed in the 400m x4 mixed relay Final, as well as 200m and 400m events.

"It was weird with no crowds but I was glad they went ahead.

"Great with so many sports but COVID did have a huge effect on the whole Olympic Games, as there was no mingling or social interaction within the Irish competitors or others.

"The support was unbelievable from the West Cork region and I didn't realise it until I came back post games," she adds.

In March 2022, Healy

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was dealt one of the toughest challenges in her career to-date, battling with Covid-19 a week before her big World Indoor Championship 400m event in Serbia.

After considering withdrawing, she progressed through to the semi-finals of the event. She explains how that week was for her.

"Not knowing if I could go or not having to pass PCR. Wondering if I was able to run physically or not and what impact Covid would have.

"It was stressful."

So what for the future for the 'Ballineen Bullet'? She puts her aims in the simplest form: "Continue progressing and performing both nationally and internationally and to stay enjoying the sport."

This certainly isn't the end for this talented sprinter, more European Championships on the horizons and possibly another Olympic Games to look forward to (Paris 2024).

Healy has a lot more to offer Irish athletics in the future.

people Motoring

Suzuki Jimny is fun to drive but poor on CO2 emissions

Fifty-two years ago Suzuki introduced the Jimny, a neat jeep that you can take off road if needed. It used to be a four-seater, but I can tell you that my wife was not too happy last week when I arrived home with a two-seater version.

My good wife has a touch of arthritis and she appreciated the grab-handle as she climbed on board. Once on board she was very happy with the views of the countryside when sitting comfortably in that high passenger seat.

A few years back Suzuki switched the design of the Jimny from a four-seater to a two-seater. The sole Jimny now available in Europe is classed as a light commercial vehicle. The CO2 emissions are poor and it will cost you €413 to tax this 1.5 litre all-grip petrol version.

But it's a fun car to look at and while it can be a little noisy on the road, it's not uncomfortable and it's also fun to drive. There is great ground clearance which naturally would be good if using the car in rough terrain.

The latest Jimny has attracted both private users and professionals who seek authentic off-road performance. Now in its fourth generation, the Japanese company has sold close to three million Jimnys in 194 countries since the fourth edition was launched in 2018.

There is a bit of noise from the cage in the back and at times you might be tempted to look behind you and see if there is really a prisoner in there! It's built on a ladder chassis, which means that the cabin is separate from the frame.

Apart from the road tax, this small jeep is very reasonably priced at just under 21k and it should be of interest to a variety of customers.

People who love their dogs, not just one dog, might like one. It would also be handy for a photographer or painter/decorator or maybe a farmer who might need to take a few bales of hay to his/her flock of sheep on high ground in winter time.

I didn't get many opportunities to drive the car off road apart



CAR
REVIEWS
Sean Creedon

from the lower regions levels of the Dublin mountains where I was able to experiment with the stubby lever on the floor which allows you switch to all-wheel drive.

Space is a bit tight in the cubby roles in the doors and you can just about squeeze a newspaper in there.

If you go off-road you might

need a spare wheel, and the good news is that there is a full-size spare attached to the rear door. It's also a bit thirsty and the fuel consumption varies between 34 and 36 mpg.

My test car was a white colour, which certainly got a lot of attention from fellow motorists and some curious people in various shopping centres. White may not be the best colour when driving on muddy fields, but I suppose it would be easy to spot a white version, if you were looking for someone lost on a mountainside.

The Jimny is funky and it had an old-fashioned style handbrake, which is always appreciated. It also had a CD player, which would probably be regarded as old-fashioned nowadays, but no vanity mirror for the front seat passenger.

It's neat and easy to park, but no rear camera or reversing sensors. Only one version available and that's reasonably priced at €20,995.



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Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. M.O'R.

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MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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ST. JUDE'S NOVENA

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and revered throughout the whole world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray

for us. St. Jude worker of miracles pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless pray for us. Say this prayer nine times daily and by the end of the 8th day, your prayers will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thanks St. Jude. N.McC.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. M.J.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

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3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. N.McC.

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. N.McC.

MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within

your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. L.M.B

NOVENA TO ST TERESA

Twenty four "Glory Be To The Fathers" novena for 9 days. This novena can be said at any time of the month but it is more powerful from the 9th to the 17th of each month. Between the glory be's say "Saint Teresa of the child Jesus pray for us" and thank the Holy Trinity for the graces and favours showered on St Teresa during her 24 years of life on Earth. St Teresa the little flower please pick me a rose from the heavenly garden and send it to me with a message of love, ask God to grant me the favour I thee implore and tell him I will love him each day more and more. (The above prayer plus 5 our fathers, 5 hail Mary's, 5 glory be's. Must be said on 5 successive days before 11 am. On the 5th day the 5th set of prayers having been completed offer one more set of 5 our Fathers, 5 hail Mary's and 5 glory be's). Try it-it works. L.M.B

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