A five-year Biodiversity Action Plan, developed by the local community and aiming to make Bandon a more nature-friendly place, is to be officially launched in Bandon Library on Friday, October 14 at 11am.

From the Curlew to the Corn-crake, Marsh Fritillary to Natterjack Toad, the survival of many of our species in Ireland is under serious threat. While the rate of biodiversity loss is accelerating, the window to slow it is rapidly closing. The services provided by nature are often taken for granted; clean air, fresh water, material and medicines, and these too are critically threatened by biodiversity loss. With this knowledge, a community group in Bandon has resolved to take action.

Bandon Environmental Action Group (BEAG) first explored the idea of a Biodiversity Action Plan in 2021. With the support of Avondhu Blackwater Partnership and LEADER funding, BEAG engaged the services of Cork Nature Network in Spring 2022 to develop the Action Plan. A Steering Group with representatives from BEAG, Tidy Towns, Bandon Playground Group, Rivers Trust, Birdwatch Ireland West Cork and local schools was formed. Development of the Action Plan was carried out in consultation with local community groups, sporting organisations, schools, businesses, Cork County Council and the wider community.

Anna Roycroft of BEAG explains how, “The steering group has been working with local residents and community groups, and with the help of ecological experts, to come up with an achievable action plan. We see great potential in Bandon, with its river and woodlands, to make space for nature to thrive, for the benefit of the whole community. The action plan will help us promote and protect the existing rich biodiversity in our town by taking simple actions, from creating wildlife corridors, to improving green spaces for nature and developing pollinator friendly management plans for targeted areas in the town”.

Tara O’Donoghue, Cork Nature Network adds, “Nature is not something outside of us that we can choose to protect or not. Biodiversity is foundational to our health and wellbeing, economy, livelihoods and our existence. Local Biodiversity Action Plans identify made-to-measure objectives and actions, unique to each location, that aim to protect existing biodiversity and promote nature friendly measures and management.”

All are welcome to attend the launch.
Star of the sea

After starting a TikTok account last December, which has since attracted over 80,000 followers with its down-to-earth, no-nonsense, practical and more-often-than-not dryly humorous insight into daily life at sea on board one of the world’s largest container ships, Master Mariner Mark Maguire has recently found himself the focus of media attention.

The Courtmacsherry native who spends three months on at sea and three months off when he returns home to land to his teenage son Fionn and wife Donna, has been in the seafaring business for 21 years and still has the same passion for the job, which he says can be extremely tough but very rewarding.

It took 18 years of hard grind for Mark to reach the pinnacle of his career, being awarded his Master Mariner’s Certificate last December.

The memory of that excitement mixed with a little terror and a pinch of pride he still carries with him today; now leading a crew of two dozen and responsible for a 353-metre-long vessel that weighs 200,000 tons when fully loaded with 15,000 containers.

“It’s in my blood,” says the Captain, whose family go back generations in the small fishing village of Courtmacsherry. “The sea became part of life: From Diarmuid O’Mahony going off to sea of my father’s age son Fionn and wife Donna, to hearing about teaching us knots in national school by our schoolteacher Dan Dwyer and meeting people, learning about their cultures and way of life is what my crew do. It really does broaden the mind and gives you empathy towards other people.”

At home, when he’s not planning family holidays or solo trips, Mark enjoys the simple things; pottering around the house and looking after the couple’s two dogs. His passion for cooking and entertaining means the barbecue gets fired up at every opportunity.

“The hardest part is being away from home for the big events,” he shares honestly. “Birthdays, funerals, weddings, many Christmases missed. But that’s part of the job... You get used to it and make up for it when on leave.”

During the pandemic it was really hard on crews as there was no shore leave. “My crew do nine month trips, so nine months without stopping on land is tough.”

“Now that a lot of countries have fully reopened, we make sure the guys get ashore as much as possible. Even just to stretch the legs is good for the head.”

While on board the ship there is a gym, cinema, PlayStation and a small pool; outside of work, life is fairly quiet and can at times be dull and lonely: the crew’s food is cooked for them, alcohol is forbidden, everybody has their own en-suite cabin. A mixture of boredom and curiosity is what prompted Mark’s social media journey, catapulting him into accidental internet fame!

He started off by posting a few videos about places he had been and showing different parts of the ship. “I wanted to find out more about all the hype around TikTok and was just messing about really,” says Mark. Before he knew it however, his videos started to gain traction with questions flooding in. “I realised that the industry is very hidden. There are very few ways to see what it actually looks like to run a ship or get goods from a to b.” After posting more videos and answering more questions, things snowballed. Remarkably Mark now has 83,000 followers, his most popular video pulling in an incredible 1.5 million views.

“No one is more surprised than me!” says the Master Mariner. “The feedback has been incredibly positive... It blows my mind really.”

Mark’s advice to anyone thinking about a career at sea is to give it a shot.

“You will get to see places and meet people you would otherwise never get a chance to. “But you must be comfortable in your own company, as it can get lonely deep sea because the trips are long. However there are much shorter trips that can be done if this is not your cup of tea!”

“The industry is massive, with a huge number of different types of ships doing all sorts of important work all over the world. If you go for the engineering or electrical side your skills can easily be transferred ashore should you decide to ‘swallow the anchor’ (work ashore). If you don’t go, you’ll never know.”

Whether you’re interested in finding out more about a career at sea and unsure about your sea legs or simply interested in seeing the nooks and crannies and ins and outs of life aboard a massive container ship, take an informative and entertaining trip with Mark. It’s ‘ShipToK’!

@the_capain_mark
West Cork’s wild shepherdess

High up in the hills over Inchigeelagh, where the backdrop of the majestic cloud-covered Shehy Mountains lend an other-worldly quality to this rugged and beautiful land softly carpeted with heather and wildflowers, is where shepherdess Carly Murnane now calls home. After giving most of their possessions away and trading in such modern comforts as running water and electricity for the small candlelit leaky caravan that she shares with her husband atop the 22-acre hilly site, Carly tells Mary O’Brien that she couldn’t be happier.

“I’m building a life that I don’t feel the need to get away from,” she shares honestly. Here in the company of her sheep and other animals. Carly spends her days in blissful solitude, the whisper of the breeze and bark of a dog the only interruption to the peace of the pasture grazed by her flock of mostly Shetland and Mayo/Connemara blackface sheep, ancient and hardy breeds well-suited to this rugged land.

The shepherdess rises each morning just before seven to the alarm clock of her sheep bleating for their breakfast. After seeing to their needs, at least an hour is spent walking the farm, down into the meadow and undergrowth checking on her flock and the land, making sure that all is in order. Every sheep is called individually by name and Carly’s pockets are always filled with sugar beet treats. More-than-not she’s followed by her goats. Aside from planting a blueberry crop, other plans include establishing silvopastures on the land for shelter and to help improve the quality of the soil.

“We take care of the land and the land takes care of us,” says Carly.

After spending most of her working life as a horse trainer and gardener, Carly became interested in raising livestock, sheep in particular, combining her passion for self-sufficiency with her love of animals.

Living on an acre in Drimoleague for eight years, it’s only since acquiring the wild and overgrown land in Inchigeelagh in 2019 that this passion for raising animals has grown into a farming and crafting enterprise.

Since 2019, Carly has been gradually moving the livestock over to the hills away from rented lowland pasture. Before they sold their cottage in Drimoleague, moving into the caravan on the land just last month, Carly was driving over and back every day to see to the needs of her hill flock.

Her ram lambs produce meat for supply to the local community. “They feed us. They feed our community,” she says. “It only takes one ram to service a flock of ewes, yet half the lambs born are male. Nature has ways of making sure only the strongest and most well-adapted survive, breed and pass on their genes. We have to make those decisions. Only the very best can be kept.”

Her career in tanning hides and wool crafting developed in part because of her talent for crafting but mostly out of wanting to make full use of all the resources available from the animals she raises. With her only option at the time to send the pelts off to Wales for tanning, Carly decided to research traditional methods and give it a go herself.

The beautiful pelts of her animals are preserved into soft and usable leather in the traditional way, using only the emulsified fat of egg yolks, soap and woodsmoke. It’s a tough yet rewarding job, taking many hours of softening, washing and stretching again and again before the pelts are finally smoked over a wood fire to tan.

When she first started, Carly enthusiastically went so far as to try the almost-forgotten method of tanning using the animal’s own brain matter. “The butcher handed me back the whole head of the animal so it turned out to be a very messy and somewhat gory endeavour,” she shares, “one that I wouldn’t be keen to repeat.”

She also weaves her own rugs after hand spinning the wool. Carly’s flock has now grown to just under 50 sheep including this year’s lambs. She also has four goats and 15 ducks. The goats she keeps for their milk and to help clearing the gorse. The ducks, as well as supplying eggs, will patrol the fields of blueberry shrubs she aims on planting, to keep control of the slug numbers.

One day the hope is to build a home here on the hilltop. For now Carly is busy farming and fencing and building a house for her goats. Carly sells her natural sheepskin products online through Etsy – Wild Irish Shepherdess. You can also follow her journey on her Instagram platform, @wildirishshepherdess.

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September 30 – October 28, 2022

#NWED
Enjoy Autumn: Prepare Winter

A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

I t’s been a glorious September this year. Golden. Warm. Sea swimming and beach garden gigs. The good weather has added a few extra weeks to the feeling of summer in the garden, not to mention my mood. The bounty has been wonderful: tomatoes, squash, potatoes, the last of the green and runner beans, and lots of crunchy lettuce. When September is good it’s hard to beat (apart from the heat wave in July!) As my daughter said: “September would be my favourite month if it wasn’t because it means that winter is coming.”

We are officially in the Autumn of our lives. So on Sunday we’ll bring our apples to the Community Garden to use the community apple press. It is a delightful afternoon, meeting up with lots of lovely people with the sweet smell of apples in the air. It has become one of my favourite events in my calendar and it marks the official start of Autumn for me. Of course, all that berry picking and apple pressing means a lot of preserving, pickling, and fermenting ahead. Nothing says Autumn as much as the smell of raspberry jam simmering on the range, and the hiss and blurp of the airlock as demi-johns of cider bubble away. There’s something quite primal about this time of the year. It’s as if something in our ancient part of our mammal brain kicks in and makes us want to gather nuts. Few things are as satisfying as lining up a row of jams and chutneys alongside tall jars filled with maccaroni sloe and rhubarb gin. This year we’re trying something new: pickling elderberries (thank you Pilgrim’s Restaurant for the idea!) and preserving green elderberries to use like capers.

That urge to stock up and sort out the woodpile is particularly strong this year. I’ve lived through feast and famine, boom and bust, but I must admit that this year’s apprehension about the coming winter is different. The war in Ukraine and the unbelievable hikes in energy prices have created a heavy blanket of uncertainty over the coming months. We don’t know what’s to come, but we do know that it’s not going to be good. Most of us are dreading what the electricity bill will look like. I am very cross at the suggestion that one of the things we can do to mitigate the spiralling costs, is to open and close the fridge door quickly. Not only does it lay a new guilt trip on us, but it’s also bonkers. Could they not come up with anything better to combat the energy crisis other than suggesting that we don’t dawdle in front of the fridge. Cheddar, or gruyere? Know what you want before you open the fridge door!

So far, the only concrete steps we’ve taken is to start looking into getting solar panels. Watch this space for updates. We have also decided not to use the electric kettle since we have a range and a stove and a perfectly good kettle that whistles when it’s boiling. In fact, we’ve hidden the electric one away, just in case we get tempted. I’m also learning more than I ever wanted to know about electric heater efficiency.

So far so good. The weather is still holding. We haven’t had a single sunny day. Before we know it, it’ll be November.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the October issue of West Cork People.

My favourite time of the day is my first cup of coffee in the morning, preferably in bed, while I wake up myself up gently doing the New York Times mini crossword, which can take anything between one and eight minutes, depending on how I slept and the person who set the crossword! After that, the news headlines play a part in setting the tone of my day. This morning, as I scanned down, I wished I’d just stick to my crossword. The only thing that made me smile was Denis Lehanne throwing out the notion of what a reboot of Glenroe – Dynasty style could do for our spirits!

Just a teeny bit of good news in the mainstream media would do us, maybe every three headlines, just to balance out the wars, pandemics, climate change, inflation, recession fears, corruption and so on... just enough to get us out of bed!

I can be a glass half empty type of person at the best of times (or so I’ve told by the glass half full woman sitting next to me in the office!) but within the pages of this paper our aim is that for every negative in life there is a positive... West Cork People turns this case on its head and I can honestly say it’s never been difficult to find the positive in West Cork!

This month we travel from the coast of Courtmacsherry to the hills of Inchigeela to the cliffs of the Mizen to some of West Cork’s wonderful people and places with you. TikTok star and Courtmacsherry native Master Mariner Mark Maguire gives us an insight into life on board one of the world’s largest container ships, Instagram star and wild shepherdess, Carly Murnane shares her joy at trading in such modern comforts as running water and electricity for a small candlelit keyvan in the hills and Matt Mills tells us about the developments at and vision for Goleen Harbour, a 38-acre biodiverse site by the coast that has become an ecological tourism enterprise and centre for learning.

With rising energy costs, our Cosy Green Homes feature looks at the immediate steps homeowners can take to reduce their energy use and environmental footprint, whilst making their homes more comfortable.

Comforting food is also on our minds this time of year and we meet some of West Cork’s newest eateries, from the tasty authentic Mexican offering served up by Yermanos Taqueria food truck in Ballydehob to the creative and delicious seasonal menu at Wild Garlic in Dunmanway to the eco-conscious mother and daughter team behind the Sharon’s View at The Ullinn Café in Skibbereen (more about this venture next month).

Kieran examines the relevance of monarchies in the 21st century; Hannah enlightens us as to the amazing powers and health benefits of the aronia berry and we welcome new health columnist Sarah Murray, a Paediatric Board Certified Behaviour Analyst, who talks about sleep support for families of children with additional needs.

With National Women’s Enterprise day happening this month, keep an eye out for the #NWED drawing attention to some of the fantastic women in business profiled throughout this issue. For this and lots more see inside.

I hope you enjoy the read,

Mary

Bandon businesses urged to apply for funding to enhance town

West Cork County Council has been awarded €100,000 to make Bandon a more vibrant and colourful town.

The local authority is now seeking applications from the owners of commercial, residential and unoccupied buildings in the town.

The funding is part of the Streetscape Enhancement Initiative to help towns and villages in rural Ireland to become more attractive places to live, work and visit.

Retailers and property owners are being invited to apply for grants to improve their business and shop fronts.

Eligible projects include upgrades to building facades, artwork, lighting, street furniture and canopies.

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins welcomed the funding, saying: “Bandon is a fantastic, bustling market town with huge potential from a tourism and business perspective. The Streetscape Enhancement Initiative has been described as a facelift for our rural towns. There is an opportunity here for property owners in Bandon to collaborate and to paint their buildings in vibrant colours. It could be a chance to restore historic and traditional shop fronts, to install canopies, additional lighting or something as simple as planting trees, shrubbery and flower boxes. I hope that businesses in Bandon will take full advantage of the grant that is on offer.”

For more information about the Streetscape Enhancement Initiative or for an application form, please contact bandon@insalad@ corkcoco.ie or phone 021 4772154 to request a copy.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Danny Collins at the announcement in Bandon with members of Bandon Tidy Towns, Business Association and public representatives and staff members of Cork County Council

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‘Stories of the Revolution’ book and online archive launched

A treasure trove of oral history about the 1916-23 revolutionary period, most of which is previously unrecorded, is now available worldwide thanks to the team at Skibbereen Heritage Centre and the support of Cork County Council.

The ‘Stories of the Revolution’ project involved 823 children from 48 schools all around West Cork who collected thousands of intimate family accounts from this turbulent time, now published for the first time as a book and online archive.

“This is — as far as we are aware — the only such project published in Ireland so West Cork has ‘made history’ yet again,” said project manager Terri Kearney, “and we hope, some day, that it will be valued and appreciated as the 1937 Schools’ Folklore Project is today.”

The recently-launched ‘Stories of the Revolution’ book features over 300 individual stories from a time of revolution and war — from civilians’ difficult daily lives to those directly involved in the conflict — all enhanced by original artwork and hundreds of images.

“These personal accounts offer an insight into the experiences of both ordinary people and those involved in the struggle, and form a unique record of one of the most important periods in world history, and the children have done outstanding work collecting them,” said Kearney.

The project team visited schools in the Skibbereen, Clonakilty, Dunmanway and Bandon areas over four years, recording this invaluable oral history with the support of the Cork County Council Commemorations Fund. The children’s essays were published as an online archive at www.skibbheritage.com some time ago and the new publication now augments this collection in the form of a beautifully-produced ‘coffee table’ sized book.

The Stories of the Revolution book was launched recently in Dunmanway to a full-capacity crowd of almost 500 people and an overwhelmingly positive response from both the participants and their families.

Launching the project, journalist and author, Flor MacCarthy said: “This project was worthwhile in so many ways — the children’s essays repeatedly tell us how much they learned and how they enjoyed engaging with the older generation, as well as gaining insights into their ancestors’ experience and the reality of war. And, of course, we now have this precious collection of oral history as an outcome too.”

There were poignant moments at the launch too, as some of the interviewees have passed away in the intervening years. “We are honoured to record these precious family stories, most especially those from grannies and grandads who are no longer with us and both they and the children have done us a great service in recording them,” said Kearney.

The beautifully-produced 194-page book features chapters on the impact on people’s everyday lives, the IRA, Black and Tans and Cumann na mBan as well as arrests and escapes, safe houses, arms dumps, the RIC and the Civil War.

This was a period of insurrection and war internationally and the book also includes stories from India, Poland, Latvia and other countries. And the final chapter of the book, ‘PS from the Kids’, records the many insights that the children gained through their participation in this project.

The Mayor of Cork County, Cllr Danny Murphy, in his speech at the launch said that: “Cork County Council and its Centenary Programme were delighted to support the most worthwhile ‘Stories of the Revolution’ project, the entire collection of which can now be browsed and searched for digitally and will provide a rich archive for generations to come”.

The book is available in all good bookshops in West Cork, as well as online and the full collection of essays, alongside further information on the project, is available on the Skibbereen Heritage Centre website www.skibbheritage.com.
Tips for a smooth business sale

Save the date for event to remember Sean Hales and Dick Barrett

With the Michaél Collins Centenary events recently concluded, Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage will hold another public talk on two other prominent West Corkmen from the tragic year of 1922 on Friday, November 18 at the local GAA Pavilion.

A t the outset of the Decade of Centenaries, the local history and heritage group decided its mission was “To ensure that the complex period of our history from 2021 to 2023 is remembered appropriately, respectfully and with sensitivity”. Following on the very well-received care of Michael Collins recently by Gabriel Doherity of UCC, the sad and tragic deaths of Sean Hales and Dick Barrett will be remembered on November 18, just three weeks before their centenary anniversaries.

Much has been written about how close both men were in life and how sad they were linked in death with pro-treaty Seán Hales, TD assassinated as he left the Dáil on December 7, 2022 and his former friend and comrade, Dick Barrett, an anti-treaty Republican incarcerated since the surrender of the Four Courts, was taken out and executed as a reprisal the following morning along with three fellow Republican prisoners.

Given the upcoming centenaries and the fact that both men were ‘locals’, as well as interest in this tragic period of Irish history, it’s an event likely to attract a large crowd. Further details will be publicised nearer the date and interested people are advised to keep an eye on the Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage Facebook page.
Bandon Co-op: Striving for a Greener Future

Bandon Co-op is on a journey to embed sustainability into our business and to facilitate sustainability on our farms and in our communities.

These actions are the pillars of our key sustainability initiatives for 2023 and we will continue to expand and develop into other areas over time.
Cains says budget is a missed opportunity to restore confidence in Bantry Hospital

by Holly Cairns

The potential closure of inpatient beds in Bantry Hospital mental health unit continues to be a major concern. The reduction of beds in the unit from 18 to 11 will have significant impact on West Cork. Since the news broke, many people have been speaking about the fantastic help they received in the past, including, in some cases, life-saving assistance. The proposed closure is due to a finding from the Mental Health Commission. The Commission’s findings are legally binding but the HSE are appealing it. For the appeal to be successful or even feasible, the HSE needs to have a proper resourced plan ready – showing how they can improve the facilities at Bantry Hospital.

No one wants to compromise standards, and no one wants the beds to close.

Basically, the commission is doing their job - the HSE are aware they need to do theirs - now we need the government to do theirs, by putting a funded plan in place to address the issues immediately and ultimately to keep these essential beds.

The budget tells us in plain English that that is not the plan. Under the mental health heading there is reference to investment earmarked for approved centres to ensure they comply with the Mental Health Commission requirements.

This is not the guaranteed multi-annual funding needed to ensure the future of mental health services in West Cork and beyond.

The pirate queen of Ireland

Grace O’Malley was a female pirate going against the societal expectations of the 16th-century Irish history. She is regarded today as one of the most significant figures of 16th-century Irish history and an inspiration to those who choose to live their lives according to their own rules and by no others.” - Joshua J. Mark

Grace O’Malley, Ireland’s most famous pirate Gráinne Ní Mháille was essentially written out of history because of her gender: a female pirate going against the societal expectations of a woman in the 16th century. It is only recently and due to the work of historian Anne Chambers that Grace O’Malley is given the airtime and newspaper space that her unusual and incredible life warrants. Grace O’Malley lived an extraordinary life, achieving enormous wealth and notoriety and accomplishments in a male-dominated world how ever, that the Queen was able to play a part in it.

Grace was born into the Uí Ó Flaithbheartaigh (the Flahertys) clan, one of the most powerful families in Connacht. Grace was given the airtime and newspa

Gráinne Ní Mháille statue at Westport House, Mayo

ley herself was also arrested, but her release was somehow arranged through the help of her son-in-law. In trying to negotiate with Bingham, O’Malley decided to go over his head and speak directly with Elizabeth I herself in 1593. Official accounts of O’Malley’s life come from English sources such as letters and reports. Bingham sent to Elizabeth, Sir Henry Sidney’s account of their meeting, and the document known as the Articles of Interrogatory – 18 questions O’Malley had to answer in writing prior to her meeting with the Queen. After answering the questions, O’Malley was brought into Elizabeth’s presence and, according to legend, refused to bow as she consid ered herself the Queen’s equal. She was searched and found to be carrying a dagger, which she claimed was for her own protection and was allowed, by Elizabeth, to keep. A significant level of trust, and respect, on Elizabeth’s part. Her life, achievements and career were recorded but was carried out in Latin as Elizabeth I did not speak Irish and O’Malley would not speak English. The meeting seems to have lasted some time and concluded with the agreement that Bingham would release the captive and thereafter leave O’Malley alone. In return, O’Malley pledged 200 men and her fleet to Elizabeth I’s service in keeping the peace in Ireland. Elizabeth then sent word of the agreement to Bingham, which read, in part: “We require you to deal with her on our own terms and yield to her some maintenance for living the rest of her old years... And this we do write in her favor as she sheweth herself dutiful, although she hath in former times lived out of order. She hath confessed the same with assured promises by oath that she will in right in our quarrel with all the world.”

O’Malley returned to Ireland expecting Elizabeth I’s orders would be swiftly obeyed, but Bingham took his time in releasing the prisoners. He was certain O’Malley would not keep her side of the bargain, and she proved him right by lending ships to the Irish rebels under Hugh O’Neill at the outbreak of the Nine Years’ War in 1593. She continued to lead English forces through the 20th century when she came to be associated with the cause of Irish independence from England. After a lifetime spent traversing the sea, Grace died in 1603, aged 73. Her definitive biography was not written until 1979 by Anne Chambers. She was buried in the Cistercian Abbey on Clare Island. Grace O’Malley being remembered in folk memory is as much to her children and a meeting with Elizabeth I, the Queen of England. Such was Grace’s notoriety and accomplishments in a male-dominated world however, that the Queen was able to empathise with her and actually

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

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Cains says budget is a missed opportunity to restore confidence in Bantry Hospital

by Holly Cairns

The potential closure of inpatient beds in Bantry Hospital mental health unit continues to be a major concern. The reduction of beds in the unit from 18 to 11 will have significant impact on West Cork. Since the news broke, many people have been speaking about the fantastic help they received in the past, including, in some cases, life-saving assistance. The proposed closure is due to a finding from the Mental Health Commission. The Commission’s findings are legally binding but the HSE are appealing it. For the appeal to be successful or even feasible, the HSE needs to have a proper resourced plan ready – showing how they can improve the facilities at Bantry Hospital. No one wants to compromise standards, and no one wants the beds to close.

Basically, the commission is doing their job - the HSE are aware they need to do theirs - now we need the government to do theirs, by putting a funded plan in place to address the issues immediately and ultimately to keep these essential beds.

The budget tells us in plain English that that is not the plan. Under the mental health heading there is reference to investment earmarked for approved centres to ensure they comply with the Mental Health Commission requirements.

This is not the guaranteed multi-annual funding needed to ensure the future of mental health services in West Cork and beyond.
Female entrepreneurs and budding businesswomen from across the Local Enterprise Office Cork and Kerry catchment area are being encouraged to look to the future and register for this year’s National Women’s Enterprise Day taking place on October 13 after the line-up for the event was announced. The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) initiative, now in its 16th year, National Women’s Enterprise Day celebrates female entrepreneurs’ success and inspires female start-ups and this year it wants to help build ‘Our Future, Our Way’.

Sixteen major entrepreneurial events are planned across the country, including an event in Killarney with the Local Enterprise Offices Cork and Kerry. This initiative is led by the 31 Local Enterprise Offices nationwide, and funded by the Government of Ireland, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and Local Authorities.

On October 13, the event for Cork and Kerry female entrepreneurs is taking place at the Brehon Hotel, Killarney. The event will kick off with a welcome address by Moira Murrell, Chief Executive of Kerry County Council followed by a network event facilitated by Marie Wiseman, Wiser Marketing, allowing attendees to meet with other female entrepreneurs present. The keynote speaker will be Sonya Lennon, designer, broadcaster, social entrepreneur, and successful businesswoman. It will also include an interactive panel discussion of Cork and Kerry Leading lights hosted by MC Elaine Kinsella, Radio Kerry presenter and RTE Broadcaster. This event is an Afternoon Tea style networking.

“Our Future, Our Way” is the theme for this year’s National Women’s Enterprise Day 2022.

Sri Lanka in crisis

By Clonakilty Amnesty Group

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis in decades. Around 30 per cent of the population are coping with food insecurity and one in four are regularly skipping meals. Food inflation is at 90 per cent. The country owes 50 billion in foreign debt. The previous president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, was forced to flee Sri Lanka and resign in early July of this year following massive protests against his government’s economic mismanagement. The fact that 40 members of his family had been given important jobs in government also led to claims of corruption and cronyism.

The new President Wickremesinghe had backed the protesters until he came to power himself but then came a U-turn and now he describes them as fascists and terrorists and has used old Prevention of Terrorism Act to arrest, harass, and imprison people who are peacefully protesting. Since coming to power, over 140 protesters have been arrested and 18 have been issued travel bans. Yamini Mishra, Amnesty’s South Asia Regional Director says, “Over the last few months Sri Lanka has seen widespread protests over the worst economic crisis in the country’s post-independence history. People have the right to express discontent peacefully and the state has an obligation to facilitate this right but the Sri Lankan authorities have repeatedly and unrelentingly stifled the voice of the people. The new government has continued resorting to the unlawful use of force, intimidation and harassment to subdue protesters, sending a chilling message to the people of Sri Lanka that there is no room for dissent. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is a keystone of any rights respecting society. It must be respected and protected.” One protester, who has been repeatedly harassed by the authorities told Amnesty that “Many of us got travel bans and surveillance and tear gas attacks and baton charged and, at times, court orders and imprisonment... the state is always only protecting and defending political power and does not stand on the side of the people.”

Amnesty is calling on the authorities to end the use of Emergency Regulations, which allows the police and armed services to search and make arrests without due process safeguards and which flout international law. The right to protest is under threat across all regions of the world. Amnesty International’s new global campaign ‘Protect the Protest’ is challenging attacks on peaceful protest, standing with those targeted and supporting the causes of social movements demanding human rights change.

To learn more about Amnesty’s work and add your signature to petitions online do go to Amnesty.ie.
Surely the time for monarchies is over?

Like so many other things that have been postposed; premiership matches, flights to Heathrow for even postal and train strikes in England, I’m afraid my follow-up article of the civil war in Russia also has been hit by the death of Queen Elizabeth, the monarch of Great Britain, and postponed until next month. I have not deleted the article out of deference to the monarchy. On the contrary the whole episode has spurred me to examine the hysteria around the event and pose the question that others may think but dare not ask – is it time to call an end to the remaining monarchies in Europe? I wish to preface my article by saying of course it is not only nearby, but politically and diplomatically correct to pay one’s respects to the ‘head of state’ of the UK, in this case Queen Elizabeth. It is normal protocol for states to do this. Eamon De Valera, of course took this to an extreme level in 1945 when he signed the book of condolences in the German embassy in Dublin upon the death of their head of state – one Adolf Hitler. More importantly, if Ireland is genuine about reconciliation between the unionists of the North and nationalism, then monarchy is essential.

To understand the relevance of monarchies, one must unlock a concept as old as the word itself – tradition. ‘Tradition’ is a tremendous word. One only has to insert it into a sentence, and magically, it can be used to legitimise anything. It is frequently and ubiquitously employed to defend practices and peoples, even if the tradition itself is outdated, unsavoury and even unethical. I want to challenge the ‘tradition’ of monarchy in this article.

Let us examine the roots of a royal bloodstream since the inception of monarchies. To put it concisely, it was conceived by warlords waging war, winning vast territories of land and influence: This was in order to maintain their power and prestige, the land which would evolve into kingdoms, which in turn were kept in the family by forms of nepotism and hereditary inheritance. Another way of doing it was to marry off a son or daughter with a powerful rival family, thereby preserving the peace and status quo. Over the centuries, this ‘royal marriage’ system became an elite number of families across Europe, who would go on to be all interconnected, thereby maintaining a self-conceived ‘royal’ bloodline. Just below them were their aristocratic pals who, for equally mouthwatering estates, power and prestige, helped keep the commoner, yes you and me, in tow. The word aristocrat itself is derived from the Greek term ‘aristokratia’, meaning best, and ‘kratos’, meaning rule. These self-styled ‘best rulers’ were part of the royal machine, that was designed to enslave the majority of people to preserve their own wealth and power.

Preserving the monarchy is to preserve a blood line that has risen to the top through force and corruption, and not through meritocracy or popular consent. Preserving the monarchy because of tradition and the ancestral royal blood line, is to accept the charlatans and despots who brought us to the branch of the current House of Windsor. Surely in the 21st century it should be discontinued and not hailed, as it is in the UK. It is time to tell the world, the ‘Emperor has no clothes’.

The royal bloodline can go back, rather circuitously, from the Normans period up to monarchs, which included despots like Edward III and murderers like Henry VIII. Their current bloodline lends itself more to German than French ancestry. Let us start with King George I and King George II who both reigned in the 18th century. Both were born in Germany and spoke German as their first language because of the aforementioned system. George III, born in England, was the monarch who tried to suppress the birth of democracy in the USA during an era when England’s own piecemeal democracy was still in the hands of the king. Despite his growing insanity, which led to unhinged decision making, he could not be ‘dismissed’ from his post because, well, because he was king. In 1829, George IV was forced by his ministers, much against his will and his interpretation of his coronation oath, to grant Catholic emancipation. His sectarian and prejudicial viewpoints would have kept the Catholics of Ireland and the UK voiceless for another generation. Queen Victoria, sometimes dubbed the ‘famine queen’, presided over a Tory government who allowed millions to die in Ireland. She had the constitutional right to dismiss her government (even stronger in that era) but failed to do so. Two years into the famine, the first monarch to be called ‘Empress of India’, donated a modest 2,000 pounds from someone with her personal wealth. This of course caused problems for other donors. When the Sultan of Turkey, Abdullah, mired in the middle of a war, tried to donate 10,000 pounds a few weeks later, he was told through diplomatic channels that to donate more than Victoria’s ceiling was to be seen in a poor light, and consequently gave 1,000 pounds. Unfortunately, less money was offered by other donors too because Victoria’s ceiling was too low. Many more would die.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, leaders, Tzar Nicholas II of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and King George V of England reigned over the most powerful nations on earth. The three men were first cousins. The resemblance between Nicholas and George in particular in uncountable if you look them up on line, these three men owned not through hundreds of thousand acres of land between them, controlled millions of subjects and had more money that most of their ‘common subjects’ put together. For all their influence, World War one not only happened on their watch, but also in part because of their feudal belief in their right for expansion and rule. In 1917 King George V issued a proclamation relinquishing the use of their German family, ‘Saxe-Coburg and Gotha’, to a more acceptable and Germanic sounding, ‘House of Windsor’, superficially disguising just how intermarried the great powers were. The bloodline royal tradition was kept intact when Elizabeth married her third cousin Philip. Her grandson, Harry, who subsequently married a commoner, and a woman of colour, has as much to know, led to his self-exile. You only have to look at the disgraced prince Andrew to know that the ‘royal’ tag can be used as a ‘get of jail’ card.

Yet the crux of a monarchy is, more deep rooted than just a historical tradition. In 1993, the Tony Government under John Major, passed legislation, which means the 600 million pound inheritance that King Charles is due, cannot be taxed. Every other poor subject must pay their inheritance tax however. This is in a time where his majesty’s subjects, cannot pay electricity bills, and a whole generation of British youths cannot afford a roof over their heads. The total cost of wage bill for Elizabeth's funeral at six million pounds, is the most expensive in the history of the state, at a time when a burial allowance in the UK, if you are eligible mind you, is a paltry 700 pounds. Yet those who want to uphold the myth of royalty, also want us to believe that somehow she was different to the rest because she could have a joke with a fishmonger, and speak with a commoner. Her defenders will say she is an a-political leader and a mere symbol of the government. Yet she was able to bestow tributes each year of her reign, decorating subjects with titles and honours. In 1973, Queen Elizabeth decorated Lt Col Derek Wilford with an OBE. He is of course the man who commanded the para troopers in Derry, on the day of the Bloody Sunday shootings. No apology or retraction ever came, even in light of all that emerged since. But the most sinister aspect of all emerged in the days after, during the proclamation of King Charles III. One bystander was arrested when he said to a small number around him, ‘who elected you?’ Another was taken into custody for writing the words, ‘not my King’ at a royal assembly. Even more despotic, was when a solicitor, who became concerned at this sudden restriction of the freedom of speech was taken into custody for simply holding a blanket piece of paper, and merely threatened to write, ‘not my King’, on it. Only after these and other stories emerged in the media, did the arrests stop, but it’s a damming indictment of the elite and royal sympathisers continuing to rule with impunity even in the 21st century.

In 1977, the underground counter revolutionary movement was in full swing. The Sex Pistols sang, (shouted) their way into the minds and hearts of the disempowered younger British generation. One of their hits that soared across the airwaves was a track entitled ‘God Save the Queen’. Johnny Rotten the lead singer, belted out the lines, ‘God save the Queen, The fascist regime… there’s no future for you, there’s no future’. He was wrong. Fifty years on, the monarchy is very much alive. What has changed, is that Johnny Rotten would not get airplay for those words today in modern England. He might even get arrested for threatening to write them up on a blank piece of paper at a concert. Free speech needs to be protected, not a dated, anachronistic tradition that has taken more than it has ever given.

*I have been invited to give a talk at the monthly Spoken Word event, in Barrains October 25 at 8pm. The topic is about the language and symbolism on Cork Civil War monuments, and the power of commemoration on our collective psyche.

**END**

HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle
A story of houses of West Cork and County Cork in the year 1911

In a new historical series starting in November, Holger Smyth of Inanna Rare Books will introduce us each month to a West Cork house detailed in a rare publication by Reverend Richard J. Hodges and W.T. Pike, a massive volume of historical photographs and stories about the big houses and country estates in County Cork. This fascinating book includes an enormous amount of images of historical buildings in West Cork and an additional chapter of portraits and biographies of local nobility, clergy and very normal local families.

“In the 16 years of dealing with rare books in Ireland I was always intrigued by one publication which seemed beyond rare and hard to find,” shares Holger. “The publication is a strange composition of excellent local history of Cork City and its surroundings and then wanders into each corner of County Cork (East Cork, North Cork and West Cork) to highlight important and very common houses alike, as well as mentioning the families who lived in them, their background, often also their genealogy and their occupation, as well as their importance for the community. We find sometimes images of houses from Clonakilty, Charleville and Goleen on the same page, hinting on family connections.”

After finding a rare original of this book about a year ago, Holger decided to reprint the book, making it available to the public in a limited edition. Over the course of the next year, he plans to visit the original locations of each of these houses: Connecting with the new owners, he hopes to see what has become of the buildings and families since the year 1911. His fascinating journey and findings will be published each month in West Cork People.

Anyone with additional information on any of the houses or historical families can get in touch with Holger by email at holger@inannararebooks.com. The reprints are available for viewing by appointment.

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The pig in 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 pig was always highly praised by the Irish for its succulent meat, and in legend it was the favourite meat of gods and heroes at their feasts in the otherworld. The pig was also respected for its bravery and ferocity in defending itself against attack, and so was seen as a symbol of the warrior spirit.

As the wild boar (an torc) has been extinct in Ireland for several centuries Irish folklore about the pig mainly concerns the domestic animal (an mhac). In some parts of Ireland it was considered good luck to drive a pig into the house on May morning, to ensure good luck for the coming summer. Pigs were believed to be able to see the wind, and thus forecast the weather. It was also thought that pigs had such acute hearing that they could hear the grass growing.

In Irish folklore it was believed that the mating of pigs was linked to the cycles of the moon. If the sow came into heat for the boar when the moon was full she would have a large litter. If she came into heat as the moon was waning, then the litter would be small. In Britain, it was similarly believed that animals, especially pigs, should not be slaughtered when the moon was waning or the meat would shrink too much when boiled. They should be slaughtered instead when the moon was waxing. It was also believed in Ireland to be unlucky to slaughter a pig on a Monday. In parts of Scotland people would not eat pork at all, probably because of the Old Testament prohibition in Deuteronomy about pork being an ‘unclean meat’. For some Scottish people this prohibition was so strong that it was considered unlucky to even say the word ‘pig’ or ‘swine’: misfortune could only be avoided by touching ‘cauld’ (cold) iron afterwards. Interestingly, among fishermen of the West Cork coast, the use of certain words was taboo while aboard their boat. They would not refer to a fox, a pig or a priest. Instead they substituted the words ‘cold iron’.

Ominous spirits were often said to appear in the form of a black pig and it was widely thought that the pig was the worst of all forms for fairy folk to take. However, harm could usually be avoided by ignoring the apparition completely and believing oneself as one纯净. If that failed, a hazel stick was a good implement for warding off the spirit. Making for the nearest bridge on the road was another good idea, as it was well known that the animal spirits could not pass running water. Hallowe’en, when the barriers between this world and the otherworld are weakest, was a favourite time for the Black Pig to be abroad, so the wise did not travel alone on this night.

Along the southern border of Ulster, from Leitrim to Armagh, is a series of bank and ditch earthworks known in folklore as the ‘Black Pig’s Dyke’. According to legend these were formed when an ill-tempered schoolteacher was transformed into a black pig by one of his pupils who had got hold of a book of magic spells. In his rage, the transformed teacher ran through the countryside, carrying off a druid’s head with his tasks, and throwing up the earthworks beside it. In reality, the earthworks were probably constructed in Iron Age times to prevent cattle raiding.

There are several proverbs (‘seanfhocail’) connected with the pig. These include: ‘Tá cluain faidh air mhuca beaga’ – little pigs have big ears; ‘Na muca cithine a shearnan an mhín’ – the silent pigs eat the meal (it is the quiet ones who do it); ‘Radharc na muca le lá goaite’ – a pig’s sight on a windy day (i.e. an unfathomable ability – whatever is unexplained but true). ‘Ag cuimhníte feithdhe agus na muice meithe’ – rubbing lard onto the backside of a fat pig (i.e. laying it on thick, overdoing it); ‘Is iomar síl muac a bharrach san bhlaith’ (‘There are many ways of killing a pig other than by chopping it with butter, meaning: ‘There’s more than one way to do something’). ‘An bhunadhaiseach’ – a pig named in many Irish tales, especially of the Fianna. In one tale the Fianna hunted a great wild pig on the mountain of ‘Bearnas Mór’, and Fionn’s hound, Bran, got the better of it. When the pig began to scream a tall man came out of a nearby ‘sidhe’ (fairy fort) and asked Fionn to let it go. When Fionn agreed, the man struck the pig with a druid rod and it turned into a beautiful young woman called ‘Scáthach’ (shadowy one). The tall man invited the Fianna into the fort for a feast, and Fionn became so enamoured of the young woman that he was named ‘Fionn’s Dyke’ (father) for her in marriage. The man agreed, and ‘Scáthach’ began to play the harp for the guests. She played so beautifully that Fionn and all the Fianna fell asleep. When they awoke they were outside on ‘Bearnas Mór’ and ‘Scáthach’ and her father’s nocturnal song continued. Strange and the priest and the pig are associated in at least two old sayings. One said: ‘The priest’s pig gets the most porridge’, while another contained this gem of wisdom: ‘The priest that’s a pet and the pig that’s a pet are the two worst pets of all’.

The pig and the piggery featured in some old folk cures. If a child had the mumps he might be taken to the piggery where his head was then rubbed to the pig’s back and prayers said, the hope being that the sickness would transfer to the animal.

Blood was always shed on St. Martin’s Eve (November 10). Very often the cock was killed, but in many places it was the hapless pig that was led to the slaughter.

There was an old custom that when a sow had bonhams she should be brought into the kitchen with her young and left there for ten days and nine nights. Fairy pigs were not as numerous as phantom dogs and demon cats, but they were not unknown. There is one tale of a man whose clock had stopped and who set out for the fair in the middle of the night in his donkey and cart. He had not travelled far when he met a fairy pig, and the brazen pig not only followed him, but even tried to get into the cart. A little further on was a bridge over a little stream, and the driver was confident that he would make his escape at the bridge for, as was believed, a fairy of any kind cannot cross over water. When they came to the bridge the pig had to undertake a detour through the fields but, unluckily or by the evil influence of the fairy pig, one of the wheels fell off the cart. By the time the wheel had been refitted, the pig had caught up and pursued the man once more. The driver was so terrified that he screamed at the owner of a house beside the road to open the door for him. The kind householder did as he was asked, whereupon the driver gave an athletic jump over a stone wall and hurried indoors. The fairy pig was very disgruntled and vented his frustation by grunting outside the bedroom window for the rest of the night.

Pigs were often seen going in and out of forts (‘lossomáin’), which would seem to indicate that the fairies were as fond of bacon and cabbage as their human neighbours. Occasionally, pigs came out of rivers and streams and these too were enchanted. There was another tradition which proclaimed that the sow always had trouble giving birth because a pig put sods on Our Lord’s grave.

There are many old sayings which feature the pig. If a person was financially secure or ‘comfortably off’ to use the expression, ‘You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear’.

‘Caisearbháin’ (dandelions) and nettles were fed to pigs in the old days, when pigs were allowed free in a garden, unlike today where the poor creatures never see the sun, fattened as they are in large houses. The roots of comfrey, when boiled and mixed with the pig’s meal, provided an effective cure for swine fever. Those who lived near the sea used to wash their pigs with sea water if they suffered from cramp.

Ireland was once inhabited by wild pigs or hogs. The word ‘torc’ (a wild boar) is common in placenames, like Torc Mountain and Torc Waterfall, near Killarney. Kanturk in County Cork is ‘Ceann Toirc’ (the headland of the wild boar). ‘Ceann Toirc’ (Turkhead) is where I grew up, eight miles or so west of Skibbereen. However, Tur- khead might derive from ‘Muc Mhara’ (porcupine), also known as the ‘tóitheach’ in Irish.

Pigs are often spoken about in derogatory terms. One sometimes hears people being described as a ‘dirty pig’. The following poem by Galway Kinnell describes the beauty of a ‘cés mhúcé’, a sow.

Christopher O’Sullivan TD

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

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

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Saint Francis and the Sow
The bird stands for all things,
even for those things that don’t flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brown
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing;
as Saint Francis
put his hand on the created forehead of the sow,
and told her in words and in touch
blessings of earth on the sow,
and the sow began remembering all down her thick length,
from the earthen snout all the way
through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of the tail,
from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine
down through the great broken heart
to the sheer blue milk dreaminess
spurring and shuddering
from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths sucking and
blowing beneath them;
the long, perfect loneliness of sow.

Paddy’s pig’. There was some good advice too for the lazy: ‘A man without initiative is no better than a pig’, but attempting the impossible would bring no rewards: ‘You can’t make a silk purse our of a sow’s ear’.

Christopher O’Sullivan TD

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Two exciting agri events from Ludgate this October

Skibbereen’s Ludgate Hub will this October bring two exciting events, the Farm of the Future Agri Ideation day (October 26) and their annual Agri Tech Day (October 27), to West Cork.

Ludgate, together with AgTech UCD and MTU Kerry, will bring its Agri ideation day to Carbery’s newly-launched Visitor Centre on Farm Zero C at Shinagh, Bandon. This day-long event will bring together people who can identify challenges facing the Agriculture sector at the present. Those challenges can be vast and varied. Through facilitation and team-based exercises the challenges identified will be discussed and methodologies applied for the creation of a robust solution. The solutions will then be presented before a team of judges and a prize will be awarded to the winner.

Farm of the Future Ideation Challenge is open to participants working in the agri/food sector, the farming community, second and third level students, academics and anyone who has an interest in innovation and problem solving. Participants can be matched with a challenge on the day or come with their own challenges. Participants will get to experience how ideation works to create robust solutions which can evolve to a business in the future.

Participants can either attend on their own or alternatively teams will also be welcome to join. This may be the ideal opportunity for a corporate to experience an ideation workshop and develop their own skills for running such a workshop into the future unlocking their own ideation.

The Ideation Workshop will run from 9am-4pm. The workshop will entail short and fun team-building activities to connect with other team members, and then go through various steps in order to mature/rethink team challenges. Each of the following steps will be addressed. Which challenge is the idea solving? Exploring: why does this problem exist? Analysing existing solutions; Rethinking the problem; Finally, build an awesome pitch for the final presentation to the Judges.

Please see link for registration details: www.eventbrite.ie/farm-of-the-future-tickets. Alternatively you can contact Fiona Ryan for further information by emailing fiona@ludgate.ie.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre hosted a month-long (virtual) Festival of Farmland Biodiversity in May 2022. The purpose of the Festival was to encourage a more positive engagement around the topic of biodiversity and farmland, and to highlight some of the ways that farmers can work to support biodiversity. It invited farmers to share content on social media about biodiversity features on their own farms.

There was great engagement with this year’s Festival of Farmland Biodiversity. As part of the Festival, the National Biodiversity Data Centre offered a prize of a biodiversity survey by its staff to a farmer who shared content using the #FarmlandBiodiversity hashtag on twitter. James Hurley, a dairy farmer at Garragoleen, Clonakilty, was the lucky winner.

James is a fifth-generation farmer, milking 105 cows on 165 acres producing 5,500 litres of milk per year. He is a derogation farmer spring calving with cows going to grass from February 14 onwards. Five staff of the National Biodiversity Data Centre visited the farm on July 19, 2022, and completed the survey.

What was involved?

Each of the five of us have a certain area of expertise and one of the team went to the farm the night before to set up moth traps. We conducted the survey from 8am to 4pm and we visited three main areas on the farm that James identified. We looked at the plants initially; then we make a big part of the survey and are obviously easy to see as they don’t move. Our big focus after that was on pollinators such as bees and hoverflies, and luckily one of the team was an expert on wasps.

What was your overall impression?

We were pleasantly surprised by the diversity of species that we found during such a brief survey of the farm. The survey identified 267 different species. As would be expected, plants comprised the largest number of species, followed by moths, birds, hoverflies, bees and butterflies. Within the productive pasture fields several flowering plants were observed including Cat’s ear, dandelions, plantains, Red and White Clover, and Selfheal. Other notable biodiversity friendly actions practices on the farm include: Non-farmed areas (for example around gates, field margins, lanes, roads) unmanaged to allow grass and wildflowers grow naturally. Trees were allowed to grow within a hedgerow, clover was flowering within pastures, the mixed species sward was also allowed to flower and there was minimal use of herbicides. The hedgerows are in reasonably good condition, particularly the boundary hedges. They contain a variety of shrub species with some taller trees. They are not overly managed so there is plenty of flowering shrubs and a nice, vegetated ground layer margin. Where the electric fence runs out from the hedgerow base it provides a nice grassland margin for biodiversity. The ditch leading to the farmhouse has some exposed soil, providing a nice nesting habitat for solitary bees. Through the farm there are small patches of nettles and thistle, two plant species that are of great value to insects. There were also some small patches of uncultivated land, all of which contribute to the biodiversity value of the farm.

What was the breakdown of species recorded?

There was 101 different plant species were recorded, at least 63 different species of moth, 11 species of butterfly, 12 species of bee, 17 different species of hoverfly and 32 different bird species were recorded. The breakdown of bees recorded were, six species of bumblebee, five species of solitary bee and the Honeybee was also recorded.

It was noticeable on the survey that only two mammals were listed, was this due to time constraints?

Yes, we only listed what we saw on the day. Surveying for mammals would require setting traps for the smaller mammals or checking for bats using a bat detector. Neither of these were done, so the mammals present were not surveyed.

If there was one area farmers could focus on to improve biodiversity on their farms what would it be?

Hedgerows or field margins. They’re key. If you can pick one hedge and cut it on a three year rotation. If you cut it every year you’ll have no flowers. Flowers provide food for pollinators who feed other species within an ecosystem. It’s good to high-light to farmers what they have already. Every farmer is doing something without realising it.

Would you like to see farm biodiversity projects expand? Absolutely. At the moment we have the farmer moth monitor pilot project. It’s completely voluntary and I’d love to see that spread out. We also have 40 farmers involved in an EIP for pollinators. As part of that we looked at different habitats and how hedgerows are managed. The farmers get points and are paid on a results basis. If James was involved in that programme he would score quite highly on our scorecard. He needs to keep doing what he’s doing.

Keeping the focus on Agri, Ludgate’s second day is back in Skibbereen for its annual and highly regarded Agri Tech Day on October 27. For the last two years Ludgate has delivered this event virtually, but is very excited this year to bring the event back in person. However, Ludgate will also operate a virtual environment on the day to reach its more national audience base. This year’s event will focus on Agri Tech, the advancements in the ecosystem, meet the funders and the founders of Agri Tech, Emissions and Succession Planning. This event is proudly sponsored by Ludgate main sponsor AIB and Drinagh CoOp. The event will be launching in the coming weeks for registration please keep an eye on www.ludgate.ie/events/
Shine fades off ACRES

Farmers are left disappointed when they see the options available. Achieving the headline figures of over €7,000 seems out of reach to many farmers as either costs or conditions involved are viewed as too prohibitive.

In a recent Irish Farmers Journal survey conducted ahead of the National ploughing championships, 28 per cent of farmers surveyed stated they would not be participating while a further 37 per cent were taking a wait-and-see approach. I’m also hearing from some quarters that some advisors are telling farmers to consider entering the Organic scheme rather than participate in ACRES. The payment rates are very enticing for the organic conversion so it will be interesting to see if many take that option instead. Entry to the organic scheme begins in early October.

The centipede effect

I spoke to a non-farmer recently who attended a farm walk for the first time when they visited Carbery’s Farm Zero C project at Shinagh just outside Bandon. The individual isn’t from a farming background but has a strong interest in the countryside and environment in particular. What they said caught me off guard a little. They had never realised the breadth of disciplines required to be a farmer, never mind the scale of the finances and uncontrollable risks involved.

It’s only when you hear comments like that that you start thinking about what is involved. You need plant and animal husbandry skills, basic veterinary, mechanical, electrical and building knowledge, good financial literacy skills help too. Marketing, sales, a growing interest/knowledge of biodiversity and keeping up to speed on politics and policy changes that can impact on your business in the short and long term. On top of those you need to be able to react to market favourites and my monthly favourite topic, the weather.

I wouldn’t want to suffer from what is called the centipede effect. This occurs when a normally automatic activity is disrupted by consciousness of it. Like if a centipede had to think about everything it had to do to move one leg every morning and then repeat that process 100 times. That’s the last thing you need to do in a business like farming that has a lot of moving parts. Farming involves a lot of reacting to the different challenges that can arise on a weekly or even daily basis.

Weather and grass growth

The dry spell that ran through July and August just gone was one such challenge. It was dry for nine weeks around the same timeframe in 2006 so decisions were made based on that experience.

Out of curiosity, I dug out the 2006 diary from the filing cabinet to see if I had marked the day the rain returned. I didn’t, but it threw up a few interesting bits all the same. I had more fertiliser spread by April 4 than I have for this year. What I spread across the entire farm this year is just over 10 per cent of what I spread on all-owned ground back then. That was when we had a lower stocking rate too. I had one field from what is called the centipede effect.

The lack of rain over the summer was a good test of the multi species aren’t using the same amount as I did years ago. The lack of rain over the summer was a good test of the multi species swards, that’s for sure. Initially experiment ed with following the 2018 drought, they’re likely to be in a wait-and-see approach. I’m also hearing from some quarters that some advisors are telling farmers to consider entering the Organic scheme rather than participate in ACRES. The payment rates are very enticing for the organic conversion so it will be interesting to see if many take that option instead. Entry to the organic scheme begins in early October.

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Building our future

When Matt Mills stood on a rock at Goleen Harbour looking out to the Fastnet Rock and felt that first tiny spark of an idea forming back in 2014, little did he know that this piece of wild and beautiful land would come to mean so much to so many people: Where the sea sings to the land and where, as Matt tells Mary O’Brien, “The power of the waves and the tides stills your soul” – in a frantic world Goleen Harbour is a place to just simply be.

While it’s taken just shy of a decade, with the help of a number of investors, this 38-acre biodiverse site by the coast is celebrating its first successful summer season, post development, as an ecological tourism enterprise boasting a mix of accommodations – from camping pitches to glamping tents to eco cabins, to a luxurious geodome; and activities – from archery to kayaking trips to bike riding.

Under the guidance of Matt and his partner Melanie Furniss, Goleen Harbour has also become a centre of learning – with courses ranging from self care and massage techniques to green building – with the longterm vision being to welcome people who are neuro-diverse or experiencing social isolation or mental health issues and who may benefit from being supported in a natural environment.

Treading lightly on this beautiful landscape, the buildings at Goleen Harbour are being built using environmentally-friendly materials, locally-sourced where possible such as the Douglas Fir and Larh cladding. Passive House standard materials are used to give very high levels of air tightness and insulation.

The brief for the first small cabin, the prototype, was to create a healthy, energy-efficient eco-build, using high levels of insulation and air tightness, on a tight budget, while still being strong enough to take the Atlantic storms. Designed and built by Matt, while the windows are mix and match ‘seconds’, air-tightness has not been compromised: The building is so well insulated the only heating needed in winter is a 1.3kw infra red panel heater. “Hemp might be a more attractive insulating option than polyurethane insulation but if you have a budget to work to, it’s about working within your means to achieve a build with a decent life cycle and going as ‘green’ as you can within that budget,” says Matt.

Light and space were key considerations when designing the space. “I started with planning sight lines,” he explains. “I wanted to be able to see through the space in every direction.” The slanted high ceiling also makes the interior feel a lot more spacious than its 23.5 square metres. It’s a light, warm and tranquil space. “I think we’ve just got to learn that we can live in smaller spaces and reduce the building volume to keep prices down,” says Matt.

The new cabins are mounted on ground screws, a much more environmentally-friendly option than concrete foundations. The cladding on the exterior of the two newest eco cabins has been charred, a preservation technique that Matt is testing out in the harsh marine environment.

Matt’s belief that now is an important time for people to learn the basic skills to provide grid or grid tied options for power and heat.

For anyone interested in learning more about self-build techniques, Goleen Harbour runs a number of green building workshops throughout the year in collaboration with West Cork carpenter-builder Jonathan Callaghan (Jonny), who shares Matt’s belief that now is an important time for people to learn the basic skills to provide...
themselves with shelter where possible. “It excites me to be able to facilitate and teach skills that empower people to take their modest dreams into their own hands. I do believe that timber construction is available for all to learn and if explained well can be quite easy to accomplish.”

Past workshops have included hempcrete building; post and beam building by hand; and creating a cob pizza oven. A course in building a sauna is upcoming and a timber frame building workshop is also planned.

With sustainability and care for the environment at the heart of everything at Goleen Harbour, future plans involve an anaerobic digester to produce biogas from their own organic waste and waste silage to heat the entire campsite and provide compost for growing. They already have a zero carbon district heating system. When funds allow, they also aim to extend their Solar PV system.

Matt and Melanie have also planted over 10,000 trees including a native woodland of and raise Connemara ponies on the land. Melanie, a trained massage therapist, offers well-being treatments and her daughter Mo looks after the garden, growing organic vegetables for their own use and also to supply to local restaurants. Working with Coolmore Bees, their hives produce raw honey.

With the planned recruitment of a general manager for the business, the hope is that next season there will be more time to commit to building and educational projects…continuing to work towards changing people’s attitudes and behaviour to the environment and establishing sustainable communities for the better of our planet.

For more information on Goleen Harbour and upcoming self-build courses go to goleenharbour.ie

... cont’d from previous page

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It’s not just about property. It’s about people.
New solar PV grants announced

New supports of up to €2,400 were announced recently by Minister Eamon Ryan, for the installation of solar PV (photovoltaic) panels. Grants will be aimed specifically at businesses, public organisations and community groups through the SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland).

Solar PV (photovoltaic) panels convert energy from the sun into electricity, thereby reducing the amount of electricity a building draws from the national grid and lowering electricity bills. Deep Retrofit specialist and local Area Representative for Bandon Kinsale Marc O’Riain stated: “We all know that energy prices are at an all-time high, due to the fossil fuel crisis resulting from Putin’s war on Ukraine. Organisations in the Bandon Kinsale Municipal area and more generally in West Cork are looking at ways to reduce their costs and their reliance on expensive energy sources. These new grants for solar PV will help businesses and community groups to take control of energy costs now, and ensure that they are future-proofed with renewable electricity supply from their own roofs. PV is a panel that makes electricity from solar energy. At the current high electricity prices, a business could save €2,000-3,000 per annum from a solar PV system supported under this scheme. This means that the installation can pay for itself quickly. Whilst insulation and low energy lighting are the most cost-effective ways of reducing energy consumption, photovoltaic solar energy to electricity, is a very cost-effective plug and play method for creating sustainable renewable energy at a microscale and with very little disruption to businesses.”

This announcement signals the latest phase in the Government’s Micro-generation Support Scheme. The first phase of the Micro-generation Support Scheme was launched in December 2021, offering grants for solar PV panels on domestic houses. In 2022 the maximum grant available is €2,400 and it will remain at this level for 2023. In February of this year the Government announced an export tariff - the Clean Export Guarantee (CEG) - as part of the scheme. This provided the mechanism by which householders can be paid (by energy suppliers) for excess electricity exported back into the national grid. Speaking about the latest support, Minister Ryan said; “This new support scheme is part of a wider roll-out of initiatives to make the installation of solar PV easier and more cost effective for homeowners, businesses and public bodies. It’s Ireland’s rooftop revolution. With upcoming changes to planning exemptions, simpler grid application routes, export payment announcements, and capital supports from SEAI, it’s an ideal time for anybody to consider going solar to save money and help reduce our emissions.”

The scheme will provide grant funding up to a maximum of €2,400 towards the installation of solar PV technology up to a maximum of 6kWp (approximately 16 solar panels over 25 sq m). The scheme provides an opportunity for all areas of the non-domestic sector to not only reduce their electricity bills, but to visibly demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and Ireland’s broader climate action goals.

To apply visit www.seai.ie and follow the outlined steps.

Check your home is adequately insured with increase in building costs

The latest House Rebuilding Guide published by the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) shows that national average re-build costs have increased by an average of 21 per cent over the past 12 months. The SCSI House Rebuilding Guide, which is used by homeowners to calculate the rebuilding costs of their home for insurance purposes, shows the increase in rebuild costs in Cork was 17 per cent. The SCSI said it was important to note that the specifications and designs used for the six house types had been updated this year and that as a result not all the reported increases could be attributed to construction inflation.

The SCSI is urging homeowners to take the time to ascertain the correct reinstatement value of their home for insurance purposes. While these increases are considerable it does not necessarily mean the premium will increase significantly and consumers should shop around when seeking insurance cover for their homes. The really important takeaway from this is that homeowners is to set aside some time to get an accurate reinstatement figure and ensure your home insurance is up to date. If it’s not you need to contact your home insurer.

The SCSI points out that the rebuild figures are based on estate style houses and people with one-off homes or period properties are advised to contact their local chartered surveyor.

Dangers of under insurance

The President of the SCSI Kevin James said that homeowners who are not adequately insured may be penalised under their policy by having to pay a certain proportion of the reinstatement costs.

“Where, the insured sum is only 75pc of the total reinstatement cost, you will only receive 75pc of the agreed cost of reinstatement, whether the claim is made for partial replacement or total loss. For example, in the case of a house insured for €270,000, where the total reinstatement cost was €360,000, the insured party would receive only €202,500 to reinstate the house in the event of the total loss. In that situation the insured party would be obliged to provide the balance of €90,000. Similarly, if there is a partial loss, which costs €60,000 to repair, the insured party would only receive €45,000 and would have to provide the balance of €15,000. This is something many homeowners may not be aware of.

“It’s also important that homeowners reassess their cover to take account of any changes such as home office extensions or garden offices. These have become increasingly popular with more people now working from home, but they need to be included in the house insurance.”

A House Rebuilding Calculator and the 2022 Guide to House Rebuilding Costs is available free of charge at www.scsi.ie
Heat your home sustainably with the help of West Cork Building Supplies

For nigh on 30 years, West Cork Building Supplies in Clonakilty has been working with tradespeople and customers to design and supply everything needed to turn house plans into a reality. This includes choosing quality suppliers when it comes to renewable heating solutions.

Whatever your heating or plumbing requirement – heat pumps, cylinders, underfloor heating, boilers, Boru stoves, solar panels and everything else are all under one roof at West Cork Building Supplies, as well as expert and friendly advice from an experienced team.

With housing representing a quarter of all CO2 emissions in Ireland, building standards now require that all new dwellings have a Building Energy Rating (BER) of A2 and it has never been more important that we all work towards improving the energy efficiency of our homes, particularly with SEAI offering grants for home energy upgrades.

If you’re planning a new build, West Cork Building Supplies will work towards tailoring your property’s heating system to meet low-carbon regulations and reduce ongoing utility bills. From design stage, the building supplies company offers a wide-ranging portfolio of solutions for heating, hot water, mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems. Ranging from a standard small domestic heating installation to a solar thermal system, it’s a one-stop solution tailored to individual requirements.

Just some of the benefits of heat pumps include high seasonal energy efficiency; up to 60 degrees Celsius water supply; easy installation and controls; and higher capacity at low ambient temperature.

The SmartPlumb Kodiak by Joule is the most innovative pre-plumbed solution for heat pump systems. The DeJong Hot Water Cylinder (from Holland), a marine grade stainless steel cylinder, suitable for domestic and commercial, is able to withstand the harshest types of water from wells.

Whether you’re a new build or retrofit, the Firebird boiler range is compatible with HVO (Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil), which is a fossil fuel free.

If you are interested in hearing more about any of the renewable energy products mentioned above or to see what else is available, call in to the heating and plumbing department at West Cork Building Supplies.

Visit the updated bathroom and tile showroom where you’ll find the latest products from the Sonas Bathroom range.

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Creating a cosy home

Xavier Dubuisson is a renewable energy engineer and consultant and founding member and CEO of RetroKit Ltd, a software company dedicated to unlocking the housing energy renovation challenge with digitalisation. He shares some practical advice with homeowners looking to conserve energy and reduce costs over the winter.

Firstly, if you have a night time electricity rate it makes a lot of sense to time your appliances to come on at night, most new appliances have a timer function. This can save up to 25 per cent on electricity usage. Here are a few tips for the kitchen:

- Your fridge should be between three to five degrees and your freezer between minus-15 to minus-18 degrees.
- Defrost your freezer every six months to make sure it’s running as efficiently as possible.
- Only boil the amount of water you need in a kettle and put lids on your cooking pots.
- Try and cook a few meals together – for example if you are turning on the oven, try cooking a few meals at the same time, roast a chicken and cook a lasagne at the same time.
- Don’t open your cooker door more than you need to.

What are the main culprits in the home for high energy use and what can be done to reduce this?

The appliance that uses the most electricity is the tumble dryer so hang your washing out to dry whenever you can.

An oven is also a big electricity user, so try and switch to a microwave oven where you can.

With energy prices rising, what does this mean for sustainable energy solutions such as an air to water heat pump that runs off electricity?

As heat pumps use electricity to extract heat from the air (like a fridge in reverse) you will see an increase in your electricity bill. But if you compare with oil heating, heat pumps are still 40-60 per cent cheaper to heat your home compared to oil heating based on July 22 costs for oil and electricity published by SEAI.

What is the average running cost of a heat pump per annum?

The costs for an average house will vary between €1000 and €1,300 a year depending on the efficiency of your heat pump and the size of your house. It’s worth seeing if you can spread the costs throughout the year with an equaliser bill payment as costs will be higher during the winter.

The biggest problem for most people is the investment in the heat pump itself. Here, grants from SEAI (seai.ie), availing of a green mortgage from your bank or a low-cost loan from your credit union, will help.

What is the most cost-effective way of using a heat pump to heat your home?

Your house needs to be insulated to get the best value out of your heat pump – and this is also requirement for grants. You will need a technical assessment completed before you can get a grant to make sure of this.

Keeping a steady heat all day is better than turning on and off the heating – heating controls and thermostats can help with this. Heat pumps will work best when you operate your radiators at a relatively low temperature. This keeps an even temperature in the home.

If you have nighttime electricity, it makes sense to run the heat pump overnight at a cheaper rate of electricity.

I live in an old cottage, can you advise on the best and most affordable strategy to improve the energy efficiency of my home, from insulation to windows and doors etc?

The first thing to do is to insulate the house – this can be done first of all in the attic and grants up to 80 per cent are available for this.

Next seal any air leakages by servicing your windows and doors and blocking any...

Lighten your energy footprint and energy bill by using cellulose attic insulation

For anyone who wants to make their home more energy efficient but is lacking the funds for a large investment, cellulose fibre insulation offers one of the simplest, most cost-effective solutions to saving energy in the home to the best achievable standard. Cork based company Ecowool uses cellulose fibre insulation, a safe, eco-friendly and superior quality insulation made from recycled newspapers.

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

Researchers have proven that cellulose, installed without any air tightness measures, can improve air tightness up to nine per cent.

With the current generous grants available from SEAI, now is the ideal time for homeowners to insulate their attic properly. Attic insulation grants range from €800 for an apartment up to €1,500 for a detached house.

Cellulose insulation is the obvious choice for those wanting cost-effective and better insulation while keeping their carbon footprint to a minimum. Ecowool has a neutral carbon footprint, as it consumes very little energy in the manufacturing process and has limited transport needs. All of its paper is collected locally and the insulation is made here in Ireland.

Imported mineral wools can only absorb moisture – they can’t release it. “So there’s more chance of mould in the house, which is a health issue, whereas cellulose, a natural fibre, can take in and release moisture, thereby improving air quality in the house,” explains John Egan of Ecowool.

Cellulose will also last the lifespan of a building without vapour check unlike glass and mineral wools.

Up to 25% of your heat can be lost through a poorly insulated attic!
draughts. If you can afford to upgrade your windows and doors to double or triple glazing, this will make a big difference. However, if your double glazing is in good condition and doesn’t need immediate replacing, this might not be a priority from a return on investment point of view.

For the walls – insulting from the outside may be the best option but can be expensive. For old stone buildings, it’s important that the walls can breathe out moisture so it’s good to consider using natural materials for insulation.

**How can I make my home more airtight, without compromising on ventilation?**

An easy first step is to get your windows and doors serviced – local contractors can do this. This include checking seals, hinges and handles, and replace if necessary. This will make a big difference. Attic trap doors, downlighters, drain pipes, letter box, etc. are common sources of air leakage and should be made airtight.

Thermal imaging is a useful thing to do – a contractor comes to your house with a special camera which shows up any leaks in the building – so that you can fix them.

Now that the house is more airtight it’s important to provide for good ventilation to maintain good air quality and to avoid damp and mould problems. This step includes removing moisture from bathrooms, kitchens with extraction fans. Controlled air supply vents will refresh the indoor air while reducing heat losses.

Chimneys are a very important source of air leakage and those not in use should be blocked. If you are using a traditional fireplace, you should move to a stove.

If you are burning solid fuel, it’s important that combustion appliances have a dedicated air supply and that high quality dry fuels are used. Carbon monoxide is a risk if ventilation is not adequate and a carbon monoxide alarm should be installed.

**Is installing solar panels on a small house really worth it…will I see a return on my money?**

With rising electricity prices, installing solar panels does makes sense – especially now that we are able to get paid for the electricity that we don’t use. There is a €2,400 maximum grant available.

You will need to consider a few questions first – Is your roof facing the right direction, is it free from shade, do you have a smart meter, etc?

It’s always best to use the electricity that you produce yourself so it’s worth planning ahead. e.g. putting washing or a dishwasher on when the sun is shining. Any excess electricity can be used to heat hot water or charge an electric car at home – and then anything that is not used can now be sold back to the national grid – so if you are away for a week or two during the summer, you can get money back from the solar power you haven’t used.

Aside from SEAI, what other resources would you advise for anyone interested in energy saving?

CODEMA - Dublin’s energy Agency has an excellent website with tips on how to save energy: www.codema.ie or go to www.seai.ie/publications/SEAI-ReduceYourUse-Booklet.pdf.

Connect with your local Sustainable Energy Communities group. If you are on social welfare benefits including fuel allowance go to seai.ie to see if you are eligible for grants.
Sustainable and eco-friendly flooring choices

We are all trying to make better, more eco-friendly choices for our lives and homes but to do that we need to understand what products are made from. For example, do you know if your flooring is made from a sustainable material? Many flooring choices are better for the environment, and our health.

Laminate is made of 80 per cent natural materials, mostly wood. Newer, top-quality laminates now have a more random repeat pattern and they integrate a surface grain texture to make the flooring more realistic.

Cork is one of the most common materials used in residential and commercial designs where the word ‘sustainable’ is mentioned. As you might have guessed, cork flooring is made from used bottle stoppers and waste from their manufacture.

But where does cork come from in the first place? The cork oak tree has a thick layer of bark to protect itself from the harsh conditions of the forests near the Mediterranean. Once it has reached the age of 25, its bark (cork) can be stripped every eight to 14 years without damaging the tree.

Cork floors are attractive, durable, retain heat, and are very soft to walk on. They are also very quiet to walk on, reducing walking sounds up to 50 per cent, which makes them a great choice for upstairs or apartment flooring.

Marble is made by Forbo, is a carbon neutral flooring with 97 per cent of its raw materials being obtained from nature – limed oak, wood flour and jute. This product is durable, long lasting and available in a wide range of colours, designs and sizes. Forbo’s Marmoleum products are proven to inhibit the growth and spread of infections like MRSA, Norovirus and C Difficile, contributing to a more hygienic environment, particularly useful in residential and commercial bathrooms or where food is prepared.

Carpeting that is sustainable are typically made from natural, renewable fibres that are biodegradable. A few examples are hemp, wool, sisal, bamboo, corn leaves, jute, seagrass and coir.

Cleaning your carpet

The best way to reduce soil build-up and prolong the life of your carpet is to vacuum frequently, especially in those areas where high levels of traffic are common and you have people constantly walking backwards and forwards. The most used areas of your carpet, such as entrances, doorways, hallways, even areas around a favourite chair, are going to collect dirt much faster than the rest of your carpet.

Carpets perform best when not treated with harmful chemicals so are a great choice if you suffer from chemical sensitivities. They are also known to suffer from chemical sensitivities. They are also known to

Jute comes from a species of tall grass in Pakistan and surrounding areas that can reach maturity in a matter of months and only needs rain to grow. This is a very hard wearing carpet that is used a lot on stairs. Sisal is made from agave plants (yes the same as tequila). Sisal carpet is often used for rugs and can be trimmed off with an attractive edging fabric. Jute and sisal are always tan/beige in colour.

By the way, wool carpets are not treated with harmful chemicals so are a great choice if you suffer from chemical sensitivities. They are also known to continually purify indoor air for up to 30 years!

There are also carpets made from recycled materials that would otherwise have ended up in landfill such as plastic bottles and industrial scrap segments. For commercial projects, Modulyss carpet tiles (made from recycled materials) are a favourite of mine as they are durable and available in a wide range of designs.

I hope the information above has given you a better understanding of sustainable materials when it comes to flooring – it’s power as they say!

White Sage Decluttering

Feeling frustrated, stuck or not knowing how to start decluttering?

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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, mauramackeydesign.ie
Wool carpets are a great choice for both your home and the planet

Wool carpets are not only beautiful but are also intrinsically practical given the characteristics of the fibres; warmth, durability and insulation (picture a sheep on the side of a mountain in January). Wool is also sustainable, renewable, biodegradable and recyclable!

Glentree Furniture & Carpets in Dunmanway has a beautiful range of wool carpets to choose from with 10 year guarantees. Flooring Department Manager Steve Drislane shares even more reasons why readers should consider wool this winter.

Moisture regulation
We’re all about ‘smart’ technology these days but wool is the original ‘smart’ fibre! If you wear pure wool socks you know how well wool holds in body heat; it can also absorb up to 30 per cent of its own weight in moisture from the air without feeling damp, making a wool carpet especially ideal in older properties – or any home really in our damp climate. When the air is dry that moisture is released, thus regulating the home’s atmosphere.

Warmth and insulation
As a natural insulator a wool carpet will help to keep expensive heat in your rooms through the cold winter months. Investing in a quality wool carpet will save you money over time with estimated energy savings of at least five per cent. Carpet is also suitable for houses with underfloor heating; to find a suitable carpet, pay attention to the thermal resistance in the technical specifications and the presence of the PRO-DIS symbol for underfloor heating.

For extra comfort and an increased lifespan, use a good quality underlay. Underlay maximises all the positive effects of carpet such as sound and energy insulation and the feeling of comfort and luxury.

Durability
If you can picture raw wool you will see it has a natural “crimp” in the fibre. That gives wool the ability to bounce back to its original appearance, a quality that isn’t lost in the manufacturing process. This makes a wool carpet extremely hard-wearing and suitable for busy homes with lots of foot traffic. Wool also contains natural oils that are resilient to dirt.

Health and Safety
Wool carpets are good for you in all sorts of ways. They serve as a natural air filter, trapping dust and allergens and absorbing Volatile Organic Compounds from the atmosphere. The carpet traps the particles and keeps them trapped in the fibres until the next time you hoover.

The natural coil and softness of wool carpets also acts as a cushion for feet and joints and helps prevent serious injury from falls.

Wool carpets are also natural anti-static and flame retardant with a higher ignition point than synthetics, making them more resistant to dropped matches and other sources of fire.

Noise Insulation
The final benefit is an important one in the age of remote working. On stairs, in the living room or in an office, carpet is the floor that absorbs rather than reflects sound. The height and density of the carpet influences the effect of sound insulation so a good quality wool carpet greatly reduces annoying background noise.

Glentree offers a large range of the best carpet and flooring brands to suit every budget. Call in store to view their extensive flooring gallery where in-house experts are on hand to help with any questions.

Top tips as spiders move indoors
Rental shares its top tips for householders to prevent the presence of spiders in their homes this autumn. As temperatures begin to drop, spiders become more prevalent as they start to move indoors and begin breeding, ahead of the winter months.

Many common spider species lay on average approximately 100 eggs at a time, contained in silken sacs which may be fixed to an indoor surface or hidden in a spider web. The presence of these sacs indicate that a larger spider infestation is on the horizon.

There are many different species of spiders in Ireland but most are not considered dangerous and rarely bite. Giant house spiders, measuring around 120mm, are one of the most common types of native spiders. Males usually leave their webs to find females, and hence, they are commonly found indoors at this time of year. Common house spiders are another species the public will encounter frequently at this time of year.

Richard Faulkner, Advanced Technical Field Consultant with Rentokil Initial, said: “As the warm weather comes to end, you are more likely to see spiders indoors due to a variety factors, including the need to seek food and shelter. Insects, spider’s main food source, also retreat indoors at this time of year, so while the presence of spiders may be unpleasant, they are also providing you with a form of free pest control. House spiders actually have a generally positive impact on a household environment, as they eat other insects.

However, if their presence is particularly unpleasant, the most effective way to control spiders is to limit their food sources and disturb potential hiding spots.

• Vacuum regularly, high and low – particularly sheltered spots such as beneath worktops, backs of cupboards or under/behind large furniture.
• Remove noticeable webs on a regular basis.
• Fill in gaps - in walls, around pipework and under doors to deter entry.
• Remove sheltering sites – like firewood piles, garden bags, compost piles and general clutter from near your property.

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Greening the workplace

GREEN FOR MICRO PROGRAMME

What is Green For Micro?

As a small business owner, you’ll understand the growing importance of sustainability, both in business and in the world around us.

Green for Micro is a FREE programme, offering two days one to one consultancy with a green consultant, that helps small businesses take the first step towards becoming more sustainable and make small changes that can have a big impact on you and the world around you.

Benefits of the programme

Going Green can have significant benefits for your business, on everything from efficiencies to cost savings.

- Increased cost savings
- Improved resource efficiency (for example: using less energy, water, and materials)
- Reduced environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions
- Opportunities for higher and additional value on products and services
- Increased access to customers, improved corporate image and reputation
- Increased resilience to climate change impacts

Why is my Wi-Fi slow and how do I make it faster?

Has your Wi-Fi speed slowed down to a crawl? ESET.ie share a few quick fixes to speed things up.

From smart TVs to home security cameras – all need connectivity, and some may require high speeds to function well. The first step should be to find out the headline speeds published by your service provider. Then check the current Wi-Fi performance with a speed tester. If there’s a significant disparity between the two numbers, it’s time to find out why.

Here are several pretty straightforward things you can do to slow Wi-Fi. They may be all worth trying one by one to see if they have an impact on internet speeds:

- Put the router in an accessible place at the centre of the house.
- Change your Wi-Fi frequency band or channel in case the current one is overloaded with connections.
- Think about investing in a Wi-Fi mesh which will boost the signal to remote areas of the house.
- Reboot the router and/or install any new firmware updates available. Especially the latter is something you should do at regular intervals.
- Consider replacing your current router with a new one.
- Consider switching ISPs or upgrading your broadband package.
- Check how many devices are running on the home network and disconnect any not in use.
- Switch off bandwidth-hogging cameras – all need connectivity, and some may require high speeds to function well.
- Consider upgrading to a more optimised VPN version.

Whether working from home or travelling to an office, university, or a warehouse, some changes that don’t cost the Earth or break the bank are easily implemented. Producing waste, commuting to work, and using electricity all have an impact on the environment, so let’s look at some easy ways to lessen our carbon footprint and practice sustainability in the workplace.

Reducing waste

To reduce waste, the first thing to look at is your consumption. Are there things you bring to the office that can be eliminated or reduced? Things like single use coffee cups and plastic bottles are easily replaced with reusable ones. Does the water cooler offer disposable plastic cups? Use a refillable bottle or a plain and simple glass or a mug to keep hydrated throughout the day. If you buy takeaway lunches, consider bringing your own bag and a Tupperware-type container and asking the person preparing your lunch at the counter to place it in the container. You can then put it in your bag, which in turn reduces the number of paper bags you throw away every week.

Waste produced and brought into the workplace should be segregated into recyclables (paper, cardboard, tin, and plastic), compostable (food waste) and non-recyclables (everything else). Consider talking to your employer if this has not yet been implemented where you work – the bins should be placed in a central area accessible to all and labelled as such to encourage everyone to observe the segregation of rubbish.

When it comes to stationery, consider reusing binders and file folders. I reuse envelopes to post things out, especially the study cardboard ones which are perfect for sending little gifts to my friends – I close them tightly with masking tape to avoid using plastic Sellotape. Printing should be kept to a minimum – get in the habit of reviewing digital documents on screen rather than printing them out and ask vendors to offer e-statements and invoices instead of paper statements. If you must print, use recycled paper, and default all printing to one side on one page. You can get your printing cartridges refilled, and at the end of their life they should be recycled because they contain materials that are harmful to human health and the environment. The base ingredient for ink cartridges is usually oil - specifically petroleum distillate, but bio-based printing cartridges (linseed or soybean oil) are now readily available and a lot more environmentally friendly.

Commuting to work

Getting to work sustainably can be tricky for us in rural areas where cycling infrastructures are not well-developed and public transport is not always convenient or available. If you need to travel long distances to get from A to B, cycling or walking may not be an option, and most of us in West Cork need to rely on our car to get around. But with fuel and electricity costs continually rising, wouldn’t it be fantastic to look at an alternative way of getting to work while reducing the number of cars on our roads?

Eating carpooling – the answer to commuting more sustainably while reducing CO2 emissions, pollution, AND congestion. Let’s face it – single occupancy vehicles don’t really make sense, but teaming up with two or three people to share the same journey does. There is almost certainly someone in your office or in your local community that does the same journey (or part of the journey) as you, and you could potentially commutate together every day. It would be a case of sharing driving duties each week and picking up or dropping the other person at their place of work or study. Either way, it makes sense for the wallet, and it certainly encourages great conversations from which great friendships might form.

Reducing the consumption of energy

The cost of living crisis is well underway and truly here, and I must admit that I’m dreadling the next electricity bill. With that in mind, a greener office equals less energy consumption. Look to use more efficient electronic devices where possible and reduce the brightness on your computer screen. You can optimise the use of natural light in the room by keeping the blinds or the curtains open during the day and moving your desk closer to a window. But with fuel and electricity costs continually rising, wouldn’t it be fantastic to look at an alternative way of getting to work while reducing the number of cars on our roads?

I use by printing two sheets side by side on one page. You can get your printing cartridges refilled, and at the end of their life they should be recycled because they contain materials that are harmful to human health and the environment. The base ingredient for ink cartridges is usually oil - specifically petroleum distillate, but bio-based printing cartridges (linseed or soybean oil) are now readily available and a lot more environmentally friendly.

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For an A in energy-efficiency go to Classic Windows

Founded in 1983, Classic Windows is one of Cork’s most established window companies reputed for offering exceptional value for money and service with a personal touch. The spacious 1000 sqft showroom at Killumney displays a wide range of uPVC, aluminium and Alu-Clad windows, doors and RoofLITE windows in a variety of colours and designs.

The company advises that while PVC is the more cost-efficient material where window sizes are within its limitations; aluminium, while more expensive, is more robust for larger items, for example the highly thermally insulated Schueco slider in two parts, which comes up to 6.5m long and 2.7m high. Alu-Clad, which offers the natural beauty of timber internally and the low maintenance and durability of aluminium externally, is currently the most energy-efficient material on the market. However, all of Classic’s windows carry an energy band of A and, with its solar gain glass units, the windows are designed to heat your home from the outside in. For longevity and low maintenance, Classic recommends Schueco aluminium as being the best on the market. Classic Windows offers a huge range of doors, from standard uPVC doors to fibreglass composite doors.

The benefits of a composite door is that it provides a low U-Value and provides high security with a 10 point locking system. There are three different fibreglass composite doors available at Classic, Palladio, Rhino and Apeer, all offering exceptional value, strength and quality and with design options to suit every building, from a traditional to slick contemporary look.

Whatever your need, whether you’re changing existing windows and doors or building a new house, the experienced and professional team at Classic Windows is ready to assist and advise.

Classic Building Solutions Ltd.
Classic Commercial Park, Killumney, Ovens, Co.Cork.
021 4875833.
sales@classicwindows.ie.

To see if your home qualifies for a windows or doors upgrade grant go to www.seai.ie.

For an A in energy-efficiency go to Classic Windows.
Perrott’s Home Living presents an eco range of fabrics for a greener home

How can fashionable interiors be sustainable? Sustainable fashion starts with fabric so Perrott’s Home Living in Clonakilty strives to answer this question in part with its new Clarke & Clarke’s Eco Fabrics collection that uses 100 per cent recycled polyester to make a range of multi-tonal woven yarns in textured patterns of beautiful soft shades.

Single-use plastics are wreaking havoc on our environment so many brands have worked out ways to give landfill-bound plastic bags, bottles and textiles a second life. The process is rather simple. First, the bottles are broken down into small flakes, then these flakes are fed into a furnace that melts them into pellets and then they are melted again, filtered and spun into threads to make textiles.

Recycled polyester is extremely versatile and can take the form of many different feels and functions. When compared to virgin polyester, recycled polyester offers the same properties but with significant environmental gains, durable, lightweight, crease-resistant, colourfast, quick-drying, stain resistant, eco-friendly and economical.

The Eco Fabrics collection is suitable for made-to-measure curtains, roman blinds, accessories and upholstery. Eco speaks to both the style- and environmentally-conscious, with designs ranging from classic herringbone patterns to subtle geometrics that have a warm organic feel. Perrott’s also carries a large range of biodegradable cotton fabrics.

To view a huge range of fabrics available in all materials and designs visit Perrott’s Home Living at Unit 6, Cloheen Industrial Park, Clonakilty, P85 W903.

Rent-A-Room Relief Scheme

The rent-a-room relief lets you earn up to €14,000 per year tax-free if you rent out a room (or rooms) in your home to private tenants. A self-contained unit, a basement flat or a converted garage attached to your home, can qualify for this relief.

While renting out a room that is part of your home is not covered by landlord and tenant law, renting out a self-contained unit is covered. Depending on their circumstances, your tenant(s) may qualify for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). In certain circumstances, a tenant can claim Rent Supplement.

Rules: For you to qualify for rent-a-room relief, your home must be located in the State and you must occupy it as your sole residence during the year of assessment. This means that it is your home for the greater part of the year and is where people would normally expect to make contact with you. In most cases, you do not have to own the property – you could be a tenant and be sub-letting to someone else. (In these cases, you should check with your landlord that sub-letting is allowed – see our document on tenants’ rights and obligations.) However, if you are renting to a HAP tenant you must own the property and provide proof of ownership.

Currently, the total (gross) rent that you get, which includes any money that the tenant pays for food, utilities, laundry or similar goods and services, cannot exceed €14,000 in the tax year (January 1 to December 31) – see ‘Exclusions from rent-a-room relief’ below.

You cannot deduct expenses from your rental income while claiming rent-a-room relief. However, depending on the circumstances, it may be worth your while to opt out of the relief in a particular year in order to offset expenses against the rental income and avail of wear and tear allowances, see revenue.ie for examples of when this can be beneficial. The ‘How to apply’ section below describes how to opt out of rent-a-room relief.

If you qualify for rent-a-room relief, the income you get from renting out the room will be exempt from PRSI, the Universal Social Charge or income tax. However, it must be included on your annual income tax return.

Rent-a-room relief will not affect your exemption from Capital Gains Tax (CGT) if you sell your home.

Exclusions from rent-a-room relief: You will not qualify for the relief if:
• Your gross income from rent and related services is over €14,000. In this case, Revenue will treat the full rental income minus allowable expenses as part of your total income for tax purposes and this should be included in your tax return.
• You are renting the room in your home to your civil partner, son or daughter (but there is no restriction in the case of other family members)

You are an employee or office-holder in a company, and the company pays you to allow clients to use the room in your home on an occasional basis

You are renting the room to short-term guests, for example, through an online accommodation booking site.

The relief applies only to residential tenancies, not to short-term let arrangements. The occupants must be using the room on a long-term basis. So, renting a room to a student for the academic year or for a one-month course is covered, but providing accommodation to occasional visitors for short periods, for example, through an online accommodation booking site, is not, as this income is not considered to be rental income. This is because the visitors use the accommodation as guests rather than tenants. Revenue has published a guidance manual on how this income is treated for tax purposes (pdf).

If you normally rent out the room for short periods, for example, through an online accommodation booking site, it is not, as this income is not considered to be rental income.

The local authority will inspect the property within 8 months of the first HAP payment, unless the accommodation has already been inspected in the last 12 months. An inspector will check that the accommodation meets the minimum physical standards for rental accommodation.

You must show that your tax affairs are in order by producing evidence of tax clearance from Revenue. Tax compliance is checked in ‘real-time’ on Revenue’s electronic tax clearance system.

Rental income and social welfare payments: If you are getting a means-tested social assistance payment from the Department of Social Protection, you can get up to €14,000 per year for renting out a room in your own home without it affecting your social welfare payment.

This does not apply to short-term lettings (of less than 28 consecutive days). It also does not apply if you are renting a room to your employee or to an immediate family member. Your rights and obligations

Continued on next page...
Self-contained units: If you rent out a self-contained unit in your home, such as a converted garage attached to your home or a basement flat, the rights and obligations under residential tenancies legislation apply to you. For example, you are obliged to register the tenancy with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), provide a rent book to the tenant and ensure that the accommodation provided meets minimum physical standards. Residential tenancies legislation provides for security of tenure for tenants. These provisions are in Part 4 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004. However, if the self-contained flat or apartment was originally part of the main house, you can choose to opt out of these provisions. This option is available under Section 25 of the Act. You must give the tenant notice in writing, before the start of the tenancy, if you wish to take this option.

Rooms that are not self-contained: If the part of your home that you rent out is not self-contained, you are not covered by landlord and tenant legislation, so you are not entitled to reasonable notice if you choose to terminate the agreement. Tenants are, however, entitled to refer disputes under the Small Claims Procedure. Common claims that are heard under the Small Claims Procedure include disputes about retention of a tenant’s deposit for what are described as unfair reasons, or contributions from rent for damage to property that is over and above normal “wear and tear.”

Your tenants can find out more about their rights in our document Sharing accommodation with your landlord and can also contact Threshold for advice—see ‘Where to apply’ below.

Agreement with your tenant: Before you arrange to rent out a room in your home, it is strongly recommended that you and the tenant agree some ground rules and put them in writing. If you and your tenant each sign and keep a copy of this agreement, you can both refer to it in terms of the event of confusion or disagreement. These ground rules might include:

- How long is the tenancy going to last?
- How much notice will you or your tenant have to give if either of you chooses to end the tenancy?
- How much rent will the tenant pay and how often (for example, weekly, monthly)?
- How will this rent be paid (cash, cheque, standing order etc.)?
- When will the rent be reviewed and how much notice will you give the tenant of a rent review?
- How are utility bills (such as electricity, gas, phone, broadband, TV, waste charges) to be divided between you and the tenant?
- Can the tenant have visitors to stay overnight?
- Are there any restrictions regarding noise levels?

Rates: Rental income from renting a room in your home (and related services) is exempt from tax, up to a maximum limit of €14,000. Where more than one person is entitled to benefit from the rent (for example, you and your spouse), this limit is divided between the individuals concerned.

How to apply: To claim rent-a-room relief you must record your rental income when making your annual tax return. You can complete and submit your tax return form online using:

- Revenue’s myAccount Service if you are a PAYE taxpayer (Form 12)
- Revenue Online Service (ROS) if you are self-employed or a PAYE taxpayer with other sources of income (Form 11)

Alternatively, you can complete a hard-copy annual tax return. You record your rental income for rent-a-room relief in the “Exempt income” section of your tax return form and return the completed form to your local tax office.

The tax office can answer any queries you may have and will help if you have any difficulties completing the form.

If you wish to opt out of the rent-a-room relief in a particular tax year and be taxed on the rental income instead, you must notify Revenue in writing, on or before the return filing date for that tax year. Read more on revenue.ie. Use Revenue’s contact locator to find your tax office.

A suite of new initiatives designed to support and promote Remote Working across the country has now been launched with Phase Two of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme—which will see remote workers receive three free vouchers at hubs across West Cork.

During Phase One of the Scheme, over 3,000 vouchers were used—providing remote workers the opportunity to avail of the benefits of using a digital hub.

Phase Two will run from September 21 to December 31, 2022 and is aimed at any person registered via ConnectedHubs.ie.

Announcing Phase 2 of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme, Minister Humphreys said: “This scheme will run to the end of December so I hope that some of our returning diaspora may consider extending their trips home for Christmas and look at working remotely from a local hub with a strong, reliable broadband connection.

“The scheme is open to any member of the public with an account on ConnectedHubs.ie. If you haven’t already tried a hub, now is the time to do so. I would encourage anyone interested to visit ConnectedHubs.ie and register for an account today.”

The Minister also announced that €1.1 million has been provided to local authorities through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme this year to support innovative marketing campaigns to attract remote workers to locations across rural Ireland.

Minister Humphreys also announced that the National Hub Summit will take place on November 24, bringing together hub managers, representative bodies, state agencies and government departments to map out the future of the National Hub Network.

“This event will bring together all of the key stakeholders involved in co-working, enterprise, research and development and community hubs around the country to discuss the potential of the National Hub Network to fundamentally change the way many of us work, live and do business.”

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**Special Feature COSY GREEN HOMES & WORK SPACES**

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**Suite of new initiatives to support remote working announced**

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[www.connectedhubs.ie](http://www.connectedhubs.ie)

For queries contact: 028 35000 or emizen@mizenhead.ie

Mizen Enterprise Centre, Main Street, Goleen, Co Cork P81 VR99
A Community Enterprise Initiative

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**Special Feature  COSY GREEN HOMES & WORK SPACES**

**Free kit available from libraries to check your weak spots**

The Home Energy Saving Kit is the ultimate toolkit that helps you save energy at home. With five easy-to-use tools and six practical exercises, this kit allows you to get a better understanding of the energy usage in your home, problem areas that may need your attention and ways to improve energy efficiency.

The Home Energy Saving Kit is now available to borrow for free from libraries in almost all counties across Ireland, including Cork County Libraries. You can keep it for three weeks which is plenty of time to conduct all the exercises.

Whether you own or rent accommodation, this kit will help you understand your energy consumption and identify the most important areas of your home for energy upgrades.

**What’s in the kit:**

1. **Fridge/freezer thermometer**
   - Adjust the temperature to save energy if it’s set too low. Your fridge should be set at between 3º and 5º degrees. Your freezer should be between -15º and -18º.

2. **Temperature and humidity meter**
   - Do you need to get a dehumidifier or add some moisture to the air? Identify the levels in every room with this meter. Aim for an ideal temperature of 18º-20º in your living room and 15º-18º in bedrooms and hallways. Ideal humidity levels are between 40%-60%.

3. **Radiator key**
   - Bleed the air out of your radiators to make them run more efficiently.

4. **Thermal leak detector**
   - Where do you need to add a draught excluder? Measure the temperature of your walls, floors, windows and ceilings to identify air leaks, draughts or insufficient insulation and glazing. The difference between the temperature of a surface and your room shouldn’t be greater than 5º.

5. **Plug-in energy monitor**
   - Would you be better off upgrading that 30 year old freezer? Understand how much energy the appliances in your home use and calculate their running cost.

The Home Energy Saving Kit also comes with a guidebook of simple tips to get you saving today. We’ve pulled out just a few that West Cork People staff have already implemented ahead of the cooler weather.

1. **Make use of the sun during the winter by opening all your curtains and blinds in the morning and closing them as soon as it gets dark to preserve the solar heat.**

2. **Use specialist radiator foil or ordinary tinfoil behind your radiators to ensure the heat is not escaping through the walls (especially when they are external walls). The foil will reflect the heat back into the room.**

3. **Get more houseplants to purify the air – peace lilies are particularly good for air quality.**

4. **Buy a moisture absorber for damp rooms such as hallways or bathrooms. Ensure you can see it clearly so you know when it’s time to replace the salt.**

5. **Keep your freezer full as it will consume less energy. You could fill it with bottles of water which will also keep everything cold for longer in a power cut! Let your food cool down properly before putting in the fridge/freezer so it doesn’t have to work harder. It’s also a good idea to move your fridge/freezer to a cooler spot if possible – preferably away from sunlight and the cooker.**

6. **Make use of task lighting so that you can avoid lighting the whole room. They also make a home feel cosier!**

7. **Don’t open your oven door too often when cooking as you can lose 20% of the accumulated heat. Make use of residual heat by turning off the oven 10 minutes before the cooking time. Leave the door open when you’re finished to heat your room!**

8. **Consider a slow cooker as they save energy (using little more energy wattage than that of a light bulb!) and will have your meal ready by the time you get home from work. You can cook all meat and vegetables in them but they are particularly good for cheaper cuts of meat. There’s lots of delicious recipes available online.**

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Specialising in ENTRANCE GATES & RAILINGS

- Steelwork for Conservatories
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Castletownry, Rossmore, Clonakilty, Home: 023-8838724 Mobile: 087-2519690
The Butterfly Effect

In 2015 Volkswagen were caught cheating the system and eventually admitted that some 11 million clean diesel cars sold worldwide contained ‘defect devices’ meant to fool regulators.

The cars contained sophisticated software, to detect whether the car was being driven on the road or being tested on a treadmill. When it was being tested the software switched off. While diesel cars get better mileage and emit fewer carbon-dioxide emissions, they also emit more nitrous oxide (N2O), which not only helps to form smog and particulate matter which can damage lungs, but also stays in the atmosphere for an average of 114 years. In addition the impact of one pound of N2O on warming the atmosphere is almost 300 times that of one pound of carbon dioxide and globally, about 40 per cent of total N2O emissions come from human activities.

Human-caused climate change has warmed the planet by about 1.2 degrees Celsius to date according to the Global Warming Index run by researchers from the Environment and Climate Change of the University of Oxford. This has caused some types of extreme weather to become more frequent and more intense, particularly extreme heatwaves and record-high temperatures.

Now let me take a quick segue to Syria – 2009. In 2009 the UN was reporting that Syrian farming families were migrating into the cities. The Syrian Ministry for Agriculture and Agrarian Reform’s Estimate in July 2009 that 60,000 families had migrated, mainly to Damascus, Aleppo and Homs. This massive migration was caused by desertification due to climate change; and because the cities could not handle this in-pouring of people, overcrowding of housing, unemployment and social unrest followed. By 2013 youth unemployment in Syria was at 48 per cent and there was a 49 per cent drop out of education, all of which contributed greatly to unrest and calling for a change in government and eventually in March 2011 escalating to an armed conflict and millions of people fleeing their homes after protests calling for Assad’s removal were violently suppressed.

Stay with me as we fit the jigsaw together and look at how the cultures that we accept… or create in our businesses have had a butterfly’s wing effect across the world.

Desertification, as happened in Syria is happening across much of the world as a result both of climate change and desertification.

The term desertification centres on human-caused land degradation in areas with low or variable rainfall known as drylands, which account for more than 40 per cent of the world’s terrestrial surface area. The pace of desertification has accelerated and now according to the United Nations, is 30 to 35 times the historical rate. It is driven by urbanisation, mining, farming, and ranching, all of which clear away trees and other vegetation, increasing the risk of drought, soil erosion and an inability for the land to retain water or replace vegetation.

In the past few years, not only the Arab drylands but Western Europe and central and eastern China have also been suffering record-breaking heatwaves, droughts and water use restrictions causing crop failures and thus adding to rising costs of food around the world.

The flooding in Pakistan is the latest in a sequence of exceptional disasters in the Northern Hemisphere affected by climate change, extreme heat and drought being followed by monsoons and unprecedented glacial melt killing over 1500 and displacing and estimated 30 million people.

I am not for one minute suggesting that VW caused the Syrian crisis, or has by itself created it. Nor am I suggesting that, ever, link the action of VW’s increased emissions of nitrous oxide, known to have such an impact on warming of the atmosphere, thus adding to desertification and leading to migration, social unrest and war, the dominoes just keep falling.

I am suggesting that as global citizens, many of us working in, or with, trans-continental corporations, we have a responsibility to look at the bigger picture when we look at the culture inside the business’s we are working in.

Volkswagen’s values included “sense of responsibility”, ‘respect’, ‘co-operation’ and ‘trust’. I wonder how many of us who have similar sentiments written into our company values could hand on heart say, “the culture in my business is such that this could not have happened.”

Antonio Guterres, secretary general of the UN recently spent two days in Pakistan’s flood-ravaged areas.

His observation “I have seen many humanitarian dis- sasters in the world, but I have never seen climate carnage on this scale.”

The floods are made worse by the more than 7,000 glaciers flowing into Pakistan and melting as the earth warms, adding to the floodwater.

According to NOAA, the National Oceanic and At- mospheric Administration: “If all human emissions of heat-trapping gases were to stop today, Earth’s temperature would continue to rise for a few decades as ocean currents bring excess heat stored in the deep ocean back to the surface. Once this heat has been spread out to space, Earth’s temperature would stabilise. Experts think the additional warming from this ‘hidden’ heat are unlikely to exceed 0.5 degrees Fahrenheit (0.5 degrees Celsius). With no further human influence, natural processes would begin to slow- ly remove the excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and global temperatures would gradually begin to decline.”

How we uphold our company values and not only affects how the market perceives us but can also have far-reaching affects across the globe and into the future.
Funding announced for 18 anti-dumping projects

Cork County Council has been successful in securing funding of €108,000 under the Waste Enforcement Regional Authority (WERLA) Anti-Dumping Initiative 2022. The funding will support 18 diverse projects that aim to tackle illegal dumping in Cork County. The Bantry Bay Shoreline Cleanup is one of the community-led projects that will receive support from the fund. Founded in 2006, the initiative is supported by representatives of Bantry Harbour Commissioners, West Cork Development Partnership, local fishermen and other users of the Bay, along with Cork County Council and the local community. The project involves a litter pick of the coastline, which is a year-round effort to reduce marine litter. The group has also made efforts to improve the area by removing waste that has accumulated over time.

Rural Ireland takes the lead on climate action

Ireland South discussing issues with local communities. This engagement is crucial to ensuring action is taken in Brussels, so I encourage everyone to please get in touch with me and participate in this process. We want to engage with the wonder and joy of wildlife, by linking them on a deeply personal and emotional level. The hope is that we will all come to understand in our hearts, as well as in our heads, what will be required to face these challenges, and why this is important.

Public invited to get involved in developing a new wildlife centre for Clonakilty

The Clogheen Marsh and Clonakilty Biodiversity Group, a local conservation group, is calling on everyone interested in seeing a new wildlife centre for Clonakilty, and in sharing their ideas on the development of wildlife opportunities in the area, to get involved by completing the group’s online survey (https://forms.gle/55L-VaVoPcXc6R7). Clonakilty Bay is nationally renowned for its populations of wetland birds. Rare and scarce migrant birds are regularly encountered while whales and dolphins are common offshore. The area is a wildlife lover’s paradise! As a focal point in West Cork, Clonakilty is already a lively town and community, as well as an attractive and popular tourist hub. Alongside a rich history, it has stunning scenery, sandy beaches, and a vibrant music, arts and culinary scene. The group is hosting a public meeting on Monday, 21st November at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall, Clonakilty. If you are interested in lending your support to this exciting and ambitious project, new members to the group are welcome. Find out more by visiting @ClogheenWildlife on Facebook, or by subscribing to the Supporter’s Mailing List by sending an email to mailnglist@clogheenmarsh.ie, or by contacting the chairperson or secretary directly. The group held its first public event at Cul-de-Sac Pond on September 18. There will be more events to follow and these will be published to the Supporter’s Mailing List.

The Clogheen Marsh and Clonakilty Biodiversity Group has secured LEADER funding for a feasibility study to examine the potential for the development of a wildlife and environmental interpretation centre in Clonakilty. Appointed consultants will examine and assess the level (if any) at which such a centre might operate. The group’s vision is for an internationally renowned site that will attract people to experience the world class wildlife spectacles available. The Clogheen Marsh and Clonakilty Biodiversity Group has secured LEADER funding for a feasibility study to examine the potential for the development of a wildlife trail in the area. The Centre might also get to experience a wonderful bird reserve and wildlife trail.

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West Cork restaurants mark World Vegan Day

Veganism is on the rise globally and a trip to the local supermarket shows that Ireland is no exception. The number of vegan products on the shelves has risen dramatically in recent years. There are now over 20 Irish companies producing food solely for the vegan market.

Going vegan doesn’t mean missing the taste of foods you used to enjoy. You can now buy vegan versions of everything from chicken, beef, mince, sausages and rashers to cheese, milk, butter, cream, ice cream and eggs.

Irish restaurants have not been slow to adapt to the growing demand for vegan food. Walk into any fast food chain now and you will find a vegan pizza or burger on the menu. The Irish Vegan website lists over a thousand vegan-friendly restaurants around the country, each of which is offering a special vegan dish for the day or month. Many of these restaurants also have other vegan options on the menu. At least 30 restaurants in Cork are participating; 12 of these are in the West Cork area – most are in Clonakilty but the much-loved Budd’s in Ballydehob, Pilgrim’s in Rosscarbery and Antiquity Café in Skibbereen are also taking part.

The initiative is being driven by Full Irish Vegan – a group of vegan activists who want to encourage more people to try vegan food. The group says they have been great enthusiasm for the campaign, even from restaurants who primarily serve meat-based dishes.

Gerry Boland, spokesperson for the group, says: “I’ve been vegan for over 30 years. For 28 of those years, little changed for me. However, the past 30 months has seen a phenomenal growth in veganism, with very large numbers of people turning away from meat and adopting a vegan diet. This is not a phase; this is a radical shift in what we eat, and it is driven by many concerns, the main ones being climate change and animal welfare/animal rights. This is a great time to be a vegan, no doubt about it.”

Sharon’s View at The Uillinn Café supports local and the environment

Mother and daughter team Sharon and Laura O’Driscoll have recently taken over the running of the café at Uillinn, the West Cork Arts Centre in Skibbereen.

Sharon’s View at The Uillinn Café is serving a selection of delicious snacks, sandwiches and fresh cakes made at the family’s bakery in Castlehaven. Their eco-friendly bakery, based in Rea, Castlehaven, runs completely on solar energy.

As well as homemaking, most of the fresh produce used in the cafe is grown at home by Sharon and Laura. Whatever isn’t homegrown is sourced locally.

Always committed to sustainability, the café serves McCabes specialty fair-trade certified coffee. McCabes is Ireland’s first carbon negative coffee roastery.

Everything on the menu is also available for takeaway and cakes are available for order.
Have you heard about ‘Yermanos’ over Ballydehob way?

Saturdays in Ballydehob have been spiced up considerably since the arrival of Yermanos Taqueria food truck. Serving up a selection of authentic Mexican tacos, this tasty offering is the creation of locals Patrick McCaffrey and Rachael Stephens, friends and food lovers, who travelled all the way to Mexico to sample the best of traditional Mexican street food before embarking on their venture in West Cork.

While many people think of the hard shell versions of tacos, the traditional taco features a soft corn tortilla outer (gluten-free) and a tender meat filling; as you will find out when biting into a melt-in-your-mouth ‘Yermanos’ taco.

“A lot of people here haven’t experienced real tacos... but they’re so good,” says Rachael passionately.

It was this passion for real food that sparked the idea for a taco food truck over a dinner party one evening at a friend’s house. “I brought the flour to make the tortillas and they went down really well,” she says.

After locating a food truck, the friends put the time into stripping it down and renovating it, while also travelling to Mexico to research their product, before finally launching Yermanos this summer.

Since then, the rich fresh flavours of Yermanos has not only impressed locals but attracted the attention and approval of visiting Mexicans.

While the assembling of each taco may be simple, the mouth-watering taste of each dish is the result of hours of careful preparation.

‘Quesa Birria’ involves cooking up beef, marrow and oxtail with three different types of chilli and a selection of spices until the tender meat falls off the bone and you have a beautifully rich full-flavoured consommé. The tortilla is then dipped in fat from the consommé and topped with tender beef and a melded Toonsbridge smoked scamorza. The fried tacos are served with a side of consommé, which the tacos can be joyfully dipped in.

Carnitas are Mexico’s version of pulled pork. Rachael and Patrick’s version is rubbed with a sugar and salt mix, the pork shoulder then seared before being slow-cooked, submerged in pork lard until juicy and fall-apart tender. The meat-filled tacos are topped with avocado slices and salsa. ‘So simple but so good,” according to the duo.

Vegetarians are looked after with a very tasty roasted veg and pumpkin seed offering topped with avocado and a salsa of choice. This option is also vegan.

Rachael Stephens and Patrick McCaffrey in their food truck.

Save money by making the swap to the SuperValu brand

West Cork People’s Natalie Webb was very excited recently to be invited by Scally’s SuperValu in Clonakilty to test and compare their own brand products to the leading brands.

While Natalie went about the store doing her normal big family shop, one of the store managers, Gabriel Leahy accompanied her, swapping any store managers, Gabriel Leahy, accompanying her, swapping any branded items through first, followed by the SuperValu own brands. Natalie used her SuperValu card, which meant she got an extra €10 off with a voucher.

“Overall I was delighted with the outcome and felt I got really good value for money. I would like to say thank you to SuperValu for the opportunity and to Gabriel for his patience!”

Branded products: €255.96, SuperValu own brand (majority and using €10 off voucher): €182.40. So a big saving of €73.56.

“It’s well-worthwhile making the swap.”

Clonakilty Distillery to host special event to celebrate Ireland’s farming and food industry

Clonakilty Distillery is hosting a special Harvest Thanksgiving tour on Saturday, October 1 to celebrate Irish Whiskey’s links to the farming and food industry, as well as this year’s harvest which will become the whiskey of the future.

The three-hour Harvest Thanksgiving tour is starting at 2pm at the Galley Head barley fields, visiting the maturation warehouse, and finishing with a tour and tasting at the distillery.

Irish whiskey is the world’s fastest-growing whiskey – its success is a product of the Irish countryside and climate, and Clonakilty Distillery is proud to be part of this growing industry.

As worldwide sales continue to grow, the Irish whiskey industry is buying more grain from Ireland’s farmers and investing more in local communities. Taking place in the middle of harvest season, this event is taking place to acknowledge the close ties between Ireland’s whiskey producers, farmers, and food producers.

Further details, including ticket price and booking information, for the ‘Harvest Thanksgiving’ event can be found at clonakiltydistillery.digitickets.ie.

The event is part of a series of nationwide activities this autumn celebrating Irish whiskey, farming and food, which is being promoted by the Irish Whiskey Association’s IrishWhiskey360° platform under the banner IrishWhiskeyHarvest.
I have peeled and processed buckets of apples and I’ve eaten enough apple tart tatinis to keep me going for the next year and the apples just keep on coming. The trees were laden this year and the pumpkins have been just as happy. For a vegetable that doesn’t like a temperature of less than 18 degrees Celsius, the pumpkins were super comfortable this past summer. In all the years that we have grown pumpkins we have never had such a bumper crop.

We also had a butternut squash invasion, which took over one of our tunnels. We use a lot of butternut squash in the shop and the peels and seeds go into the compost, which we then spread in the tunnels to improve fertility. Obviously this last batch of compost hadn’t quite come to up to a temperature that would obliterate any seeds that might grow, as squash plants popped up all over the place. In the beginning we were pulling them out but as the summer went on we left some to grow. They covered the ground like triffids and there are now have about thirty potted plants ready which is timely as we have to evict them from our tunnels.

There are a few additional instructions below the recipe for the purees. I usually make a batch and freeze what I don’t need for a later date.

**Pumpkin and Apple Muffins**

**Ingredients:**
- 135g plain flour
- 45g ground almonds
- 80g outflakes
- 80g light brown sugar
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 170g pumpkin puree
- 130g unsweetened apple puree
- 2bs olive oil
- 1bs maple or agave syrup
- 1bs cider vinegar
- 100mls water
- Muffin cases.

**Topping**
- 1bs olive oil
- 1bs maple or agave syrup
- 30g outflakes

**Method:**
Pre-heat the oven 180c
Line a muffin tin with 10-12 muffin cases. Sift the flour, spices, salt, baking powder and soda into a bowl. Add in the sugar, ground almonds and oatflakes, then mix well. Set the apple and pumpkin purees, water, olive oil, syrup and cider vinegar into a bowl, whisk together then tip the wet ingredients onto the dry ingredients and stir until just mixed. Spoon into the muffin case.

To make the topping mix the olive oil, syrup and oatflakes together. Drop a teaspoonful on top of each muffin.

 Bake for 25 minutes. Allow to cool before serving.

*To make pumpkin puree, peel and cube the pumpkin then cook in gently boiling water for 10-15 minutes, check to see if the pieces are tender with a sharp knife. Drain and cool, then puree with whatever gadget you have or mash well with a fork.*

*To make apple puree, peel and dice the apples, put into a small saucepan with a splash of water, cover with a lid then gently simmer until the apples are tender.*

*To make this recipe gluten-free substitute the 135g flour with 90g rice flour and 45g potato flour*

By the time that you read this, our shop will be closed and we will be in Greece, enjoying the last of the sunshine and checking out the possibility of cooking classes. We’ll be back at the end of the month ready for the November cooking class programme. The shop was an epic eighteen-year adventure; thank you for sharing it with us. Watch this space for what comes next!

Enjoy the autumn leaves
Karen

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**LETTERCOLLUM COOKING CLASSES AUTUMN 2022**

**12TH NOVEMBER MEDITERRANEAN**
This class will have lots of ‘live to be one hundred recipes’ from the south where a plant based diet is widely believed to be the reason that so many live to an old age. Lots of quick tasty recipes to add to your repertoire

**19TH NOVEMBER CURRIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD**
Learn to make a vegetable Thai from Southern India, Pindi channa from the north, zippy Thai curries and the multi ethnic curries from Malaysia, all accompanied with the various side kids

**26TH NOVEMBER VEGAN**
How to eat and save the planet! Healthy and fun cooking without dairy, meat, nor eggs. Plenty of easy to make recipes to share with family and friends

**3RD DECEMBER MEXICAN**
We took a wander around Mexico before Covid and came back some exciting new recipes to share. Plenty of fresh vibrant food, tacos, re-fried beans, quesadillas, salsas, tamale, pico de gallo, guacamole…

(03) 8836938/03 8846251 karen@lettercollum.ie

The classes are held at Lettercollum in Timoleague. They begin at 10.30am and finish around 3pm. The cost is €120 and includes all recipes, tastings and a large lunch. Pre covid cooking vouchers are still valid (please mention when booking).

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**KINSALE HOTEL & SPA**

Now Serving Brunch
10.30am - 12.30pm Fri - Sun

Serving Lunch
12.30pm - 3pm

Serving Sunday Lunch
12.30pm - 3pm

Afternoon Tea
2pm - 5pm

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**The cream of Irish athletes and farmers come together**

The National Dairy Council has launched the next phase of its campaign ‘From the Ground Up’. The campaign highlights the hard work and commitment required by top athletes and dairy farmers to be top of their game. The NDC’s ads showcase Irish world class rower Paul O’Donovan who recently won gold at the European Championships, and Vikki Wall, award-winning Meath GAA footballer, together with NDC Farm Ambassador, Tom Power.

This campaign sets out to bring balance to the argument – showcasing the hard work undertaken by our dairy farmers each day. Paul O’Donovan said, “I am proud to be part of this new NDC ad campaign. As a farmer’s son, I grew up with Irish dairy and know the benefits it has in supporting a healthy balanced diet. As an athlete I know the immense hard work, dedication and commitment that it takes to be on top of your game and to win the medals. For farmers, it takes the same level of commitment to produce world class dairy 365 days a year in all conditions, that’s a real vocation.”
Food for the soul at Dunmanway’s Wild Garlic

Pat and Ann Marie Kiely are no strangers to the restaurant scene in West Cork. For 10 years, the couple celebrated a number of awards and recognitions at their restaurant in Bantry, not least keeping O’Connor’s recommended listing in the reputed Michelin Guide for nine years in a row.

The successful duo are now back in business together, and Dunmanway is the West Cork town gaining from their culinary prowess. With Ann Marie at the helm in the kitchen and Pat’s experienced hand at front of house, their new venture Wild Garlic Coffee Shop and Restaurant is already attracting attention from food guides and influencers.

Overlooking the square in Dunmanway, the bright and spacious 80-seater restaurant offers a creative and delicious menu designed by Ann Marie to offer a range of small artisan wine producers. Marie’s wine list is a selection of wines sourced from winesdirect.

Placing the same emphasis on food and music, we wanted to create a first-class, memorable event where people could come together to celebrate and support the local community. The Clonakilty Charity Ball Committee’s first beneficiary and they will be partnering with and supporting other well-deserving charitable projects at their yearly event. Following an extraordinary fundraising effort championed by the local community, the Clonakilty Playground Fundraising Committee have so far raised €150,000 from public and voluntary sources with €40,000 still to raise. The Clonakilty Playground Fundraising Committee is encouraging the local community to dig deep and give what they can as every donation will help enormously.

To donate to the Clonakilty Playground redevelopment please visit www.gofundme.com/clonakilty-playground

Grand ball at Dunmore in aid of Clonakilty playground redevelopment

The Clonakilty Charity Ball Committee is launching their first ever charity fundraiser event, hosted by Dunmore House Hotel on Saturday, November 19, with all proceeds going towards the new Clonakilty playground redevelopment. Alongside appearances from special guests, and hosted by Virgin Media news correspondent Richard Chambers, ticket holders will be part of a sensational night that includes a champagne reception, a three-course gourmet meal and an after-dinner gin soirée sponsored by the Clonakilty Distillery. There will be exclusive auction prizes including a state-of-the-art children’s playhouse worth over €2,000 from Hennessy Timber Group and dazzling musical entertainment from The Conor Ocean Band and Cork’s Red FM radio presenter and DJ legend, Stevie G.

The annual fundraising gala ball will delight audiences with what promises to be an unmissable and sought-after event in the West Cork social calendar. The Clonakilty playground redevelopment will be The Clonakilty Charity Ball Committee’s first beneficiary and they will be partnering with and supporting other well-deserving charitable projects at their yearly event. Following an extraordinary fundraising effort championed by the local community, the Clonakilty Playground Fundraising Committee have so far raised €150,000 from public and voluntary sources with €40,000 still to raise.

To keep up with the options available at Wild Garlic, check out their mouthwatering posts on Instagram and Facebook.

www.wildgarlic.ie

#NWED
THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

This month provides the first of three articles covering the MENNIS family. If you have DNA tested and related to any of these families, do get in touch and consider adding your DNA information to the project. 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.

MENNIS – an introduction

Having all but disappeared as a surname in West Cork, MENNIS is interwoven with local family history for more than 250 years. As my most extensive and successful West Cork genealogical and DNA project it justifies several columns. Over the years, several articles have appeared in local historical journals discussing the family. A book on the family has also been published in Australia. While much of what has been written is fundamentally correct, several family stories have been subsequently disproven by birth, marriage and death certificates that are now freely available online; supported by DNA matching.

MENNIS or MENN is a spelling found in Ireland, with MENNIS the rarer form found in County Cork (only five heads of household in 1901, all Catholic). MENNIS is associated with Northern Ireland (53 heads of household in 1901, the majority being Protestant). As an Irish surname it may be a corruption of a Planter surname, with the original surname being Scottish ‘MANNS’ or even ‘MENZIE’, which may also explain family stories of Presbyterian roots. There is no Y-DNA data available to indicate the origins of the male line or whether MENNIS is part of the same family. Even though the family is small (less than 120 individuals within County Cork over a period of 200 years) research was complex. Having the historical framework for a skeleton tree from Irish family legend was important. Such plots prove to be remarkably robust when support- ing records and matching DNA are found. Most of the MENNIS family shared first names, lived in the same area, and had the same occupations. As not all baptism and marriage records can be located, it is easy to make wrong assumptions. The overall lack of records has led many early online researchers astray. Based on family documents it is a story that appears to go back to the end of the 1600’s and there are still some unresolved tales in the historical period.

The date of the arrival of the MENNIS family in West Cork is unclear (but prior to first church records in Dunmanway (c1819). The name reduced to a few living individuals in the C21st due to less offspring along male lines; a combination of male farmers who did not marry, men who entered the church and ongoing Irish emigration. Branches of this family do continue outside of West Cork, both overseas (directly to Australia, Canada & the US (New York)) and present-day Navan, County Meath, by way of C20th Ballycastle, County Mayo. A couple of modern branches have settled in England. Any male direct descendant of these lines can help contribute to understanding by providing their Y-DNA to the MENNIS DNA Study on FamilyTreeDNA. This will establish the male genetic haplotype and therefore the overall position in the human family tree. Genetic matches should prove that the West Cork families are related to MENNIS or MENNIS families elsewhere, with an original family in Ulster or Great Britain before then. If interested, please contact the MENNIS project administrator Jerry MINNIS (via FamilyTreeDNA) for advice. Please share your result.

The story of the MENNIS family in County Cork continues next month.

FITZPATRICK families

Thank you for emails received concerning potential relationships in the wider Rosscarbery area. As a commentary, due to the concentration of the FITZPATRICK name in West Cork, one can suppose that the family started with a small family group which has since expanded district wide. This could explain the West Cork cluster on the mid-19th century surname map pictured here (c/o John Crennham).

Do you have IBS?

Amanda Roe

Do you have IBS? Do your stomach hurt after eating? Do you have other symptoms like nausea, cramping, bloating or gas? Are you suffering with diarrhoea, constipation or both? Are you irritable? Have you gained or lost weight? Are you emotional-eating? Have you developing anxiety around food? Are you sleeping poorly? Does stress make your stomach issues worse?

All of the above symptoms are related to IBS, which is very common and believed to affect one in four women and one in eight men. It is often a label given to someone who is having stomach problems but no discernable cause is known.

There is a connection from the gut to your brain and more than 90 per cent of the nerves in the gut go to the brain. So when your gut is unhappy, your brain is unhappy; therefore irritability, mood swings, anxiety and depression often accompany IBS.

In my experience triggers are gluten, dairy and highly processed foods can be inflammatory for the gut and stress activates the sympathetic system which makes all digestive issues worse. This is because stress activates the sympathetic fight and flight response and switches off the parasympathetic and therefore your ability to digest foods properly. It reduces stomach acid production, down-regulates the SLgA, part of your immune system, which plays an important role in gut function and even reduces blood flow to the gut so it will not function well and slows down any healing.

We hold stress in our body, perhaps you can feel it in your shoulders, in your head or in your neck. Anxiety, past trauma and pain is often held in our stomach, if this is the case for you then your IBS could have a psychosomatic (mind/body) element.

Hypnotherapy is the most effective therapy for psychosomatic conditions. It reduces stress, helps recovery from past trauma, anxiety and depression, caris emotional eating, eliminates pain, increases confidence, self esteem and will relax your body and mind. Seventy-one per cent of patients find relief of irritable bowel symptoms with hypnotherapy alone but I find that by combining hypnotherapy with dietary interventions which, address all the triggers affecting IBS it will allow your gut to heal and you to find a long lasting solution.

Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Acupuncturist, Life & Health Coach providing holistic solutions for your mind, body and emotions. You can book a free 15 minute consultation via her website www.roehypnotherapy.ie or call/text 087 633 1898 for an appointment.

When YOU feel good everything is possible!

I can help you with Anxiety/Stress, Depression Fear, Phobias, Trauma & PTSD Psychosomatic (mind/body) illness Weight loss & Eating issues Inner Child Healing Womens Health & Hormone Balancing

Call/text Amanda Roe: 087 633 1898
www.roehypnotherapy.ie Email: amanda@roehypnotherapy.ie

Do you have IBS?
Becoming a mindfulness practitioner, I notice little separation between the values and principles of my life and work, the personal and professional are very much interwoven. And, in life or work, mindfulness and compassion practices can help us get in touch with our own vulnerability, as we are encouraged to recognise, explore, and take care of how we are feeling. Over the last couple of months, I have been sharing my own processing of trauma, loss, and grief and how mindfulness and compassion practices can help when faced with a death or loss as an inevitable part of our human experience. Accepting what life presents us with isn’t always easy. Grief takes its time, and no matter the circumstance, it is not to be rushed. Over the Summer, I lost a loved one in sudden and traumatic circumstances and, as I have only recently begun to recognise some version of myself again, I write this from a place of anticipatory grief, as another much-loved family elder is slowly and peacefully passing away.

I feel a pang of sadness and self-pity writing this, and in these moments the mighty little practice of self-compassion comes to mind. The self-compassion break allows us as we peruse and feel our uncomfortable emotions or sensations in the body and ease them a little as we move through the three steps of the practice, for example, (1) we acknowledge that we are suffering, that it’s a difficult time, (2) we remember that everyone we know experiences loss and grief at some time in their lives, we are not alone, (3) we place a hand on our heart, saying a phrase gently to ourselves, like, “may I be kind to myself and others at this difficult time”. This practice by Kristin Neff can be so useful when struggling with a plethora of raw, sore, mixed, hard to bear emotions, feelings, and physical sensations. Both loved ones epitomised grace, dignity, and acceptance in dying. And while my own reactions have often been far from grace, dignity or acceptance, a feeling of privilege and humility remains. What a privilege it is to sit with someone in their last phase of this life journey as we know it, especially when someone has lived a long and full life. Being aware to the process is something I find really helps me, and simply being with the feelings, without distraction or denial of sadness, pain, fear, mistrust or even shame at any lesser than skilful reactions. We learn much about ourselves and how we live by how we approach death and dying. Mindfulness helps us to face our feelings by gently paying attention to how we’re feeling, no matter if it hurts. Typically, R.A.I.N. is a meditation practice to help us deal with difficult times and difficult emotions by turning towards, not away from them. The R in this acronym stands for Recognise, A stands for Allow, I for investigate and N is for Nurture. While I haven’t been guiding any meditation over the last few months, I have been listening wholeheartedly to a range of guided meditations and podcasts like R.A.I.N. and holding space for my own feelings, allowing my grief, and journaling, all of which I find healing and nurting. I listen to Tara Brach, who freely offers meditations and talks on a wide range of topics, including grieving.

‘The Practice of R.A.I.N’ by Tara Brach is a nice, gentle practice to start with for any area of challenge you are experiencing, but if you are grieving a loss, you could also try listening to her ten-minute podcast ‘R.A.I.N. and Grieving’ where Tara reads a poem by John O’Donohue and guides a short R.A.I.N. meditation on grief, for either a loss that has already happened or a grief you are anticipating. Mindfulness practices will help you, as they have me, when the inevitable challenges of life and loss arrive at the door. As the poet foreshadows, “Don’t turn away, keep your gaze on the bandaged place that’s where the light enters you”.

Drop-in compassion-based mindfulness sessions will resume later in the Autumn at Myross Wood in Leap (CECAS.ie) on Tuesday mornings at 10am. I also look forward to collaborating with CECAS on another Re-connect and Re-engage programme again this Autumn, deepening our connection to ourselves, nature, and community. Please get in touch for more details. Phone: 087 2700572 email: susanoregammindfulness@gmail.com or facebook page (Mindhaven)
West Cork Feel Good Festival 2022 makes mental health everyone’s business

The West Cork Feel Good Festival, running now for a decade, will this year take place from October 1 to October 19, in conjunction with World Mental Health Day (October 10), the theme of which is ‘Make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority’.

So what better way to start than “here and now”? The programme features events in six towns and villages across West Cork (Ballydehob, Bantry Clonakilty, Dunmanway, Leap, and Skibbereen). Workshops, mindfulness, concerts, interactive storytelling, poetry, music, film, a pop-up Gaeltacht, plant-care tips, doughnut economics, ‘Happiness on a bike’, a free lunch and (much) more.

Especially hopeful is that the number of ‘peer support groups’ is steadily increasing. It started in Bantry. Now there are groups in Clonakilty, Skibbereen, and (soon) Dunmanway. “These meetings are for anyone who experienced mental health difficulties,” says Nuala Ken- ny who, for the past five years while working in the Bantry mental health services, has had a vision of peer support groups in every village and town. A new venue, the ‘Bantry Community Café’, will be open to everyone. “People can just be, have a cup of tea or coffee (‘a brú to get you tru’), make connections or come to a support group. It is so important that they feel safe enough to open up about their lives and distress in ways that can help break down the internal stigma that many carry. Confidentiality is key. What is said in the room stays in the room. The realisation that you’re not alone and it’s OK (and perfectly normal) to not be OK and that you can, and will, be accepted within your community is our aspiration moving forward. Some of the activities introduced during the festival will continue throughout the autumn and beyond in this café space. We look forward to having more places where people can talk about what happened to them, rather than what’s wrong with them. Where they can be seen and heard and find their wings to fly. Anyone with experience of mental health difficulties who would like to train up in listening and group facilitation from late October can text 087 6074908 for more information. The festival is an initiative fed by 49 North Street in Skibbereen, a creative mental health hub that offers a space for creativity, recovery, well-being, and a variety of activities designed to inspire and connect people. Which helps to enhance well-being and mental health, according to manager Kevin O’Shanahan. “The Covid pandemic highlighted the major role the arts can play in our daily lives and for our mental well-being – making the difficult days a little easier, helping us listen to each other or celebrate together. It is about the little shifts that provide a breathing space, more headspace, glimpses of beauty amid all the challenges that life brings. All those at 49 and West Cork Mental Health Services would like to thank everyone in the various locations around West Cork who have gotten involved to make this a festival by the community and for the community.”

One of the vital strands in the vibrant festival tapestry is the creative revival of the Irish language in fun, relaxed, and accessible ways, specifically in combination with Irish music. Three Fite Fuaite events are woven into the programme, featuring spiritual singer Nóirín Ni Riain, singer/song-writer Ger Wolfe, and dual-language poets Julie Goo and Pól Ó Cofluinn. After the festival, from October 27, an informal Irish language group will hold Fite Fuaite meetings at 49, North Street on the last Thursday of the month. Around the weekend of October 8 and 9, there are some dazzling ‘treats’ in Levis Corner House in Ballydehob, including concerts by Luka Bloom, Jinx Lennon. These are the only festival events that need to be booked and paid for (via www.leviscornerhouse.com/listings). There is no charge for the ‘Sunday Soup’ Food Demo and Tasting at lunchtime when Rob Krawczyk (The Chestnut Restaurant) creates a Very Irish Soup made of local ingredients followed by an “afternoon of nourishment”; ‘Food for the soul and belly with live music and spoken word performances as well as delicious treats’. The offerings include sean nós songs and songs of migration as well as life-affirming music and food inspired by the island cultures of Ireland and Jamaica. There is also a series of interlinked special events around the work of local director Aoife Tutty Jackson and her many collaborators/collaborations.

First, ‘Listening: Film screenings’ at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre on October 13 (7-9pm) which includes conversations with Nóirín Ni Riain, Nick Murphy, and others. Book- ing via www.eventbrite.ie/e/listening-film-screenings-tickets-404532629977.

Next, a Fite Fuaite poetry reading on Saturday, October 15 (1-2pm) at 49, North Street, Skibbereen by the environment-ally-aware poet Paddy Bushe, who will participate that same day (5-8pm) in ‘Anna’ at CECAS (Centre of Excellence for Climate Action and Sus- tainability) in Myross Woods, Leap. It features the premiere of director Aoife Tutty Jackson’s new film ‘Anna’, made together with Gamelan Spréchta Geala, Music Alive, and Magpie Ryan of Escapepod Media. ‘Anna’ is narrated by Manchán Magan with a soundtrack by Kevin McNally and Kevin O’Shanahan. An experimental film and sonic interactive journey that explores our relationship with the land, language, sound, mythol- ogy, and the ‘Otherworld’. Includes a live performance by the Japanese Gamelan Orchestra and comprises film, photography, and a different Paddy Bushe reading. Booking via www. annascreening.eventbrite.com. Mental health is everybody’s business, as the programme states. Clearly, life in a convoluted and ever-changing world can be challenging. Debra Davey facilitates an Active Hope workshop (October 8, 1pm-8pm) that will go some way to help us face what’s happening to our world. And there will be a ‘tasty’ doughnut economics workshop (October 4, 2-4pm) with as ‘feel-good factor’ the uplifting notion that, as consumers and individuals, we are more powerful than we imagine. The programme is online at www.musicalive.ie/west-cork-feel-good-festival, on Facebook (via @49NorthStreet), or ask your library for a leaflet about local events. The festival is celebrated in a podcast on westcorkcommunity.ie.
With the increased enthusiasm for the outdoors post-pandemic, it’s been a busy time for 20th Clonakilty Scout Group since its inauguration in 2018. Local hikes and walks, camping trips around Munster, beach days and clean-ups, campfires and local Volunteer work have all been part of the outdoor fun. The three patrol groups starting in the next few weeks will facilitate young people in the 12-15 age group.

The downside of course has been the curtailment of indoor activities due to Covid restrictions, which has meant a decrease in numbers of volunteers and younger age groups. With so many children on a waiting list to join the Clonakilty Scouts, the onus now is to get enough leaders trained up to facilitate the patrol groups in the younger age category, Cubs (9-11), to start in early 2023.

“We would love to get the younger age group running in the New Year,” says Section leader of Scouts, Vicki Sherry, “but we need volunteers to be trained up as leaders to facilitate this.”

The groups meet once a week in the Parish Hall in Clonakilty and when they’re not outdoors, hiking or camping or orienteering, they’re playing games or learning how to use a compass, pack a rucksack or put up a tent.

“The main benefits that kids gain from being a Scout is independence, self-worth, confidence and many life skills, as well as widening their friend group,” says Vicki.

Cubs are involved in planning and running some of their own meetings and activities. They take part in planning their own camps – for example deciding on the menu and doing some cooking on camp, and deciding which activities to do. The real adventure for Cubs is in the outdoors – hill walks up mountains, treasure hunts, night camps, hostel trips, and sometimes, overseas trips.

Scouts are involved in planning and running Scout meetings and activities and may be invited to Group and Scout County planning sessions to give their input on planned events. Supported by Adult leaders – known as Scouters – they take part in planning and running their own activities, programme and camps. They decide the menu, cook on camp, organise equipment and run activities in all their Patrols. They learn about teamwork, about leadership and how to look after themselves.

Scouts get to go hill walking, partake in water-based activities, mini-expeditions, camps from one night to ten nights in length, community events, hostel stays, and sometimes, overseas trips.

When the children have met a set of challenges or have mastered a particular level in a skill they earn a badge to sew on their uniform.

“We have had amazing opportunities and outings over the past few years,” says Vicki, “from ice skating at Christmas in Cork to a survival weekend in Ballinspittle to camping in Waterford hills all over West Cork, volunteering at a local food festival, Scouting day in Farran woods and so many more activities.

Vicki was in the Girl Guides in Dublin from the age of six until 19. “I grew up in Guides and loved it,” she says, “we did a lot of travelling and learned a lot of life skills and I’m still friends with many of the people I was in Guides with.

“We are very lucky to have such a great group of leaders in Clonakilty Scouts since the beginning but we always need more.”

Scouts meet on Tuesday evenings from 7pm-8.30pm during school term in the Parish Hall in Clonakilty. If any children would like to put their names down on any age group or adults would like to volunteer as leaders they can email clonakilty20thscouts@gmail.com or get in contact through the ‘Clonakilty 20th Scouts’ Facebook page.

Testimonial from Mary Quinlan, parent of Liam Quinlan:

“Since the spring of 2018 our son has enjoyed being a member of Clonakilty Scouts. Hiking, camping, kayaking, skating and participating in community events (Clonakilty Street Carnival, Clonakilty Agricultural Show) are some of the activities he has been involved in. He has made lifelong friends in this inclusive and supportive group. The thoughtful contact from our Scout leaders during the long days of Covid lockdown brought joy to his sometime gloomy days.”
M ost of us are still holding on to our sun-kissed skin... How lucky are we? Lots of moisturising and hydrating heading into October, those tan lines are still very obvious. It’s a bit like suddenly discovering that there is a bar extension when you thought you couldn’t buy another drink, isn’t it? Those warm sunny days have warmed our hearts and our minds, gradually nudging us towards shorter days and less light, easier-to-stomach when we have had an abundance of sunshine. The cooler days, especially the evenings, are calling out for fleece socks... ever-so-gently. A week can make a dramatic difference in what you can wear, especially as this is ‘season changing’ time so it really is time to get ready for some added heat... in clothes form.

Leather jackets have come into our stores in a delectable assortment but so many get this look so wrong? There, I’ve said it. There are a few golden rules when it comes to wearing a leather jacket. While they have been around for over a century, worn initially by pilots for warmth, now they add a touch of style and heat to your wardrobe but you must get the ‘look’ right. Cheap faux leather may look similar to real leather but it lacks many of the features that make real leather such high-quality material, mainly it is not as warm (if at all) and not comfortable. There are so many types of real leather, some are softer than others so choose whichever you prefer and non-plastic, non-animal leather is also a wonderful option... the quality is remarkable and the price might be a tad higher but the feel-good factor is phenomenal, I can vouch for that! You can search for and choose between silicone-based leather, plant-based leather and lab-grown leather.

Secondly, a person’s circadian rhythm may be put out of sync with the shorter day and darker evenings. Our core body temperature, and our sleep wake cycle is governed by our circadian rhythm, and it is also responsible for many physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural functions. We are all familiar with jet lag and how it affects us a few days to recover from it. Likewise, when the clocks fall back an hour, we find it takes a week or so to adjust to the new time schedule. As the weeks between September 23 and December 21 will have decreasing light each day, it is important to maintain a regular sleep schedule to counteract the darkness which may lead to a desire to sleep more.

The dreaded ‘squeaking’ leather jacket, that enhances your leather jacket is key to a chic look. If your biker jacket is too tight you accessories (sunglasses, hats, scarves, watches, bags) need to blend with it, not overtake it. Choose unembellished accessories to finish the look. On the other hand, if you are wearing a short blazer style leather or a collarless leather jacket, you can accessorise more dramatically. How many of you take care of your leather? Leather jackets and bags and boots age really well, developing that much loved well-loved worn look over time. You do need to maintain it to let it reach this point. Spot clean any dirty areas and regular leather conditioner on a jacket, bag or boot can help prevent peeling too, even the ‘sensitive’ ones — says a lot doesn’t it?

The leather jacket that has outsold all styles is the ‘biker’ jacket. It seems to be the length that suits most body shapes, individual preference dictates how much or how little detail is in tow. Leather jackets are incredibly versatile so never feel the need to limit its use. Where people go very wrong is if they wear the wrong style of jacket with a more formal outfit or wear a formal/classic cut leather jacket with a casual outfit... ‘fuddy duddy’ is the word that springs to mind so be mindful of that, it is not a ‘one style jacket suits all occasions’! There is a good chance that you have more leather items in your wardrobe than you realise. If you do, it’s best to match the leathers for a more flattering look and if you are not sure about how they look together, go with your gut. A check print dress with matching leather boots is a win but if you top it off with a leather jacket you have transitioned into ‘leather over-kill’ so opt for a fluffy jacket or something completely different. Adding the right accessories on leather so easily if dirt builds up on it so make sure to gently wipe down with a damp cloth at the start and end of a season. I hang my jackets to air dry from a velux window opened a fraction, it’s a win-win, as the jackets get light and air and they are protectected from rain or sun fade too. Professionals recommend that you ‘condition’ your leather pieces once a year. Look for a landion-based leather care product. Lanolin is a natural waxy secretion, which comes from sheep and it will make your jacket, bag or boots lovely and soft. Never store ever leather in plastic, it needs to breathe. The last thing you want to is find your favourite pieces covered in mould! Unless you have bought top quality leather, also known as Full Grain Leather, leather or the finish or sealant on other grades of leather can peal if not stored properly. Cleaning with leather cleaners that contain solvents, or using a shoe or boot leather conditioner on a jacket or bag can also cause peeling. Believe it or not baby wapes can cause peeling too, even the ‘sensitive’ ones — says a lot doesn’t it?

No one will take care of your belongings like you do. They don’t know the lengths you took to purchase the things you own.

How ironic is Life? We spend so much money on expensive clothes, but the best moments in life are spent without clothes…the

A time for storytelling and recovery

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.rossakingstonphd.com

W e have just passed the Equinox on Friday, September 23: The day when light and darkness are more or less equal at our latitude. From now until December 21, we descend into a period where the days are darker and the nights longer. This sense of darkness is compounded by the change in time a few weeks from now. This means that mornings are somewhat brighter, but the evenings are darker much earlier.

This shorter day affects us in two ways.

Firstly, we may not get enough vitamin D due to lack of light. If at all possible, go for a walk, or undertake some other outdoor activity around lunchtime. It is also a good idea to check your vitamin D levels with a blood test to ensure you do not take vitamin D supplements unnecessarily. Having too much vitamin D is as bad as having too little. But it is important to ensure adequate levels of vitamin D as it helps in regulating the calcium balance in the body and increases immunity. Vitamin D also protects against respiratory infections such as influenza A virus and rhinovirus. It is also essential to avoid the worst effects of a Covid infection.

Secondly, the change in time a few weeks of darkness is compounded by the winter months. These three months are the time for storytelling and recovery. It may be a time to reflect, to enjoy the dormancy of nature, and nurture our inner self.

The leather jacket that has outsold all styles is the ‘biker’ jacket. It seems to be the length that suits most body shapes, individual preference dictates how much or how little detail is in tow. Leather jackets are incredibly versatile so never feel the need to limit its use. Where people go very wrong is if they wear the wrong style of jacket with a more formal outfit or wear a formal/classic cut leather jacket with a casual outfit... ‘fuddy duddy’ is the word that springs to mind so be mindful of that, it is not a ‘one style jacket suits all occasions’! There is a good chance that you have more leather items in your wardrobe than you realise. If you do, it’s best to match the leathers for a more flattering look and if you are not sure about how they look together, go with your gut. A check print dress with matching leather boots is a win but if you top it off with a leather jacket you have transitioned into ‘leather over-kill’ so opt for a fluffy jacket or something completely different. Adding the right accessories on leather so easily if dirt builds up on it so make sure to gently wipe down with a damp cloth at the start and end of a season. I hang my jackets to air dry from a velux window opened a fraction, it’s a win-win, as the jackets get light and air and they are protectected from rain or sun fade too. Professionals recommend that you ‘condition’ your leather pieces once a year. Look for a landion-based leather care product. Lanolin is a natural waxy secretion, which comes from sheep and it will make your jacket, bag or boots lovely and soft. Never store ever leather in plastic, it needs to breathe. The last thing you want to is find your favourite pieces covered in mould! Unless you have bought top quality leather, also known as Full Grain Leather, leather or the finish or sealant on other grades of leather can peal if not stored properly. Cleaning with leather cleaners that contain solvents, or using a shoe or boot leather conditioner on a jacket or bag can also cause peeling. Believe it or not baby wapes can cause peeling too, even the ‘sensitive’ ones — says a lot doesn’t it?

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The October beauty edit

Yves Saint Laurent All Hours Foundation
YSL Beauty introduces its first night-proof foundation that stays put all hours! Drinks, dates, dancing, whatever you put it through, it is as flawless at the end of the night as it was when you first applied it in the morning, with no need for touch-ups. This upgraded, breathable formula goes on velvety and sophisticated and, thanks to spherical shaped silicon resin, the finish is soft-focus. A rich level of fine pigments means full coverage without a mask-like effect. The foundation’s innovative formula is also waterproof and transfer-resistant, with no compromise on comfort. With 22 options from light to dark, the oil-free formula keeps the complexion shine free, minimizing the appearance of pores and leaving skin looking porcelain smooth. The formula is also enriched with a skincare complex and UV filter, €42 available instore and online from Brown Thomas and Arnotts.

Frances Prescott Eye & Lip Contour Cream
The skin around the eyes and lips is thinner and much more expressive in these areas, which is why exposure to the elements, particularly to the sun, along with everyday environmental stresses, can result in premature ageing. As these areas lack significant oil production, it’s important to hydrate and protect them. Eye & Lip Contour Cream by Frances Prescott is a light, yet luxuriously textured multi-purpose powerhouse formula combining a cocktail of powerful, naturally active peptides, vitamins, antioxidants, and prebiotics to help stimulate collagen synthesis, firm the skin, reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, boost hydration, and increase radiance of these delicate areas. This powerful combination also strengthens the skins natural moisture barrier. The formula can be applied morning and evening after cleansing or used on lips throughout the day to keep them feeling soft and nourished, €80 available from francesprescott.com

SkinFormulas Bakuchiol Retinol Alternative Serum
After 18 months of development, SkinFormulas Bakuchiol Serum is a lightweight, fast absorbing serum that contains the powerful ingredient, Bakuchiol, which is a plant-based retinol alternative that improves the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, increased firmness, and increases the skin’s plumpness by stimulating the natural production of collagen and elastin. Bakuchiol contains antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties and therefore is incredibly effective in reducing blemishes, redness and visibly diminishing scars. It is also perfect for those unable to use retinol during pregnancy. Other hero ingredients include Betaine to provide much deeper, longer-lasting hydration in the skin. Glycogen, which promotes the production of collagen and hyaluronic acid within the skin cells to dramatically improve the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, recover skin luminosity and enhance skin tone and lastly, Nicamamide, super for the skin barrier and helping to minimize the appearance of enlarged pores for a smoother, bright, and more refined appearance, €67 available from selected salons and stores nationwide online from skinformulas.ie

AYA Bio Range
AYA, the leading Irish vitamin and supplement brand for all the family has launched a brand-new Bio range. The latest addition to AYA’s product line consists of three action-packed bios: After Bio, Calm Bio, and Digestive Bio. The range is designed with delayed-release technology which protects the bacteria from stomach acid and ensures maximum delivery and each product in the new range has been specially developed with a diverse mix of friendly bacteria, nutrients, and enzymes. AYA After Bio (€9.99) contains 10 billion friendly bacteria per capsule with six strains of bacteria for a broad spectrum of probiotic activity. AYA Calm Bio (€21.99) is packed with a variety of nutrients, including Lactobacillus, Riboflavin, Thiamin and Magnesium which can help to support the normal functioning of the nervous system and normal psychological function. While AYA Digestive Bio (€16.99) is a unique and powerful combination of six digestive enzymes. Additionally, this product contains Lactase which contributes to the breaking down of lactose. Specially developed by Irish company Uniphar and exclusive to Irish Pharmacy, the AYA Bio Range is widely available in pharmacies nationwide.

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Advanced Facial Treatments | Professional Peels | Medical Microneedling | Bynik Laser | Dermalux LED Light Therapy | Teen Facials

November 30 – October 28, 2022

Health & Lifestyle

Sherna Malone
Skincare and beauty expert Sherna Malone shares her
Health & Lifestyle

Sherna Malone
Skincare and beauty expert Sherna Malone shares her
The Octobe
When sleep doesn’t come easy for children

Sarah Murray

Sarah Murray is a Paediatric Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA). Her practice is based in County Cork but she works online supporting many families. Sarah specialises in early intervention for infants and young children, with almost a decade of experience working alongside families of children with developmental delays, autism, and intellectual disability. A child behavioural consultant, Sarah helps families and schools to address challenging behaviour in a positive manner using evidence-based intervention strategies.

Sleep support for families of children with additional needs is one of Sarah Murray’s niche areas, as she recognises that sleep is a crucial foundation for early intervention and behaviour support. Thirty to thirty-five per cent of children under the age of five will suffer some form of difficulty with sleep. If you’re a parent, you may very well believe it! However, if your child has a diagnosis of autism, the latest research tells us that a whopping 80 per cent of autistic children experience difficulties around sleep. The main difficulties reported by parents of children with autism are difficulty with falling asleep (delayed sleep onset insomnia), difficulty staying asleep (sleep maintenance insomnia), early morning awakening (anything earlier than 6 am) and requiring a parent present at bedtime and through the night, what is referred to as a ‘sleep dependency’.

Research also tells us that, unless addressed, these sleep disturbances will persist into adulthood for many autistic individuals. Many autistic children who experience sleep difficulties are prescribed melatonin (our sleepy hormone that flourishes when night-time descends), or non-FDA approved sleep medications. While we know that autistic individuals are naturally low in melatonin, this treatment does not teach autistic children the vital skills required around sleep. At present, the best-known strategy for tackling those bedtime struggles is behaviourally based, with a staggering efficacy of 94 per cent.

You see, sleep, believe it or not, is a skill, that can be taught, and thus, learned. We can learn to settle in bed well enough for the sand man to visit us. We can learn to sleep independently without mom or dad by our side. We can learn to roll over and go back to sleep instead of wandering out of the bedroom in search of mischief. There is no pill that can teach a skill and children who practice not sleeping become very good at it! It becomes a pattern, a bedtime habit, a night-time ritual. All of this can be accomplished without using a ‘cry-it-out’ method (because when children are stressed, their stress hormones increase which shuts down any little bit of sleepiness that was there).

Sleep is an important restorative process for both the mind and the body. When a child sleeps, their body’s immune system heals and repairs itself, their muscles repair and regenerate and very interestingly and newly discovered, their sympathetic system activates (this is where the brain ‘flushes’ waste material away). Sleep is also the time when children’s growth hormones are released. Cognitive growth, repair and restoration occurs during sleep, and this is the time when memories are consolidated.

There is a myriad of effects that sleep deprivation can bring to an autistic child. Naturally, like all children, they will have a shorter fuse and be more prone to meltdowns and behaviour outbursts with a lot of emotional dysregulation being displayed. In terms of development, children will not be able to participate to the best of their ability in school nor in therapy. When a child is sleep-deprived, their memory will be impaired, attention and concentration wane, and so the absorption and retention of important information will be impacted, leading to less success at school and at therapy. Parents, siblings and anyone else under the same roof, can oftentimes develop their own sleep difficulties too as a result of a child with sleep difficulties. Just know that with the right sleep assessment, the right tailored sleep support plan and the right sleep practitioner, your child can learn to get a better night’s sleep.

Sarah has provided articles on the topic of autism and sleep both nationally and internationally. Keep an eye out on her website for the next upcoming sleep and autism webinar.

To view my services visit sarahmurrayabatherapy.com

Cork’s youngest ‘Heroes’

21 in aid of the Mercy Kids and Teens Appeal.

On Friday, September 16, the newest recruits to Cork City Fire Brigade undertook a fundraising mission which saw them do a bucket collection as they pushed and pulled a vintage fire truck through Cork City, finishing at the Mercy University Hospital. Before they set off from Cork City Fire Station on Anglesea Street, the firefighters gave a tour of the station to Noah, Denis, Darragh and Calvin, who are the faces of ‘Mercy Heroes’ this year. These brave little ‘heroes’ are asking the people of Cork to join them and become a ‘Mercy Hero’ on October 21 and help support the youngest patients at the Mercy Hospital.

Funds raised through ‘Mercy Heroes’ will go towards the Mercy Kids and Teens Appeal and will support services like POONS (Paediatric Oncology Outreach Nursing Service). This service, the only one of its kind in Ireland, allows children with cancer to receive vital treatment in the comfort of their own home, helping to cut back on hospital visits and provide support to families during such a difficult time. POONS has provided innumerable support for some of Cork’s youngest patients and their families over the last number of years with 45 families using the service in 2021 alone.

One such family is that of Noah O’Gorman from Whitegate, who turns three on September 24. Noah is currently receiving treatment for Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) at the Mercy Hospital. He was diagnosed almost 12 months ago, on his second birthday. Speaking about their experience, Noah’s dad, Tristan O’Gorman, said “For boys, the treatment cycle is quite long, and Noah’s treatment doesn’t finish until February 2025. Having POONS drastically cuts down on the amount of travel and time out to hospital. As Noah is so young, he is more comfortable getting treated at home and it cuts down on the risk of exposure to more infections in the hospital. For Noah’s mum, Deirdre and me, getting treatment in the community like this helps their family life continue as normally as possible and Noah is a big fan of Peg and Olga, the POONS nurses! They try to normalise the treatment so that Noah isn’t affected by it and he can just get on with the business of being a busy two year old boy.”

Speaking about the importance of POONS, Olga Buckley, Paediatric Oncology/Haematology CNS at The Mercy said, “Being able to deliver a home-based option to sick children has helped enhance their quality of life and allowed for some normalisation of family life during cancer treatment. Since Covid hit, it has become absolutely necessary as our young cancer patients are considered within the critically vulnerable group as their treatment, including chemotherapy, causes immunosuppression. POONS helps to cut back on the amount of time these patients need to spend in the hospital and gives them the opportunity to receive their treatment at home.”

In 2021, the Mercy POONS nurses travelled 23,654 kilometres to provide an incredible 550 home visits to families. It costs the Mercy Hospital Foundation €30,000 each year to continue to keep this service mobile. On October 21, by participating in ‘Mercy Heroes’, you can help fund POONS by making a donation online at www.mercyhospitalfoundation.ie, or by joining forces with your friends, family or colleagues to host a coffee morning. Schools around Cork are also being encouraged to join in the fun by holding a Dress Up Dress Down Day to support these young heroes.
Dealing with stress in our pets

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 corkdogtrainings.com.

Community in end of life

End of life Doula Melissa

M any years ago I chatted to a lady who told me that at one dreadful time in her life she had been so stressed that it interfered with her ability to function physically, mentally and emotionally. It’s not a pleasant experience. A small amount of stress is good for us. We learn to react to a dangerous or threatening situation and then relax after the situation has passed. When the situation has gone away or died down. Our heart rate returns to normal and we can focus again. However, chronic stress interferes with our immune system, makes us tense, reduces our capacity with our normal mental processes and generally makes life extremely difficult. It also makes it more difficult for us to find that habituated state when stress becomes habitual. If that is how it affects us, what about the effect it has on our pets?

One of the reasons that living alongside humans is the most stressful situation for dogs. As our pets are very sensitive to our environment, our anxiety, stress and mood, and so on, it’s no wonder that they literally ‘feel our pain’, take it on, and become stressed.

Ongoing stress activates a hormone in our pets called the ‘flight or fight mode’ in both humans and dogs. Once activated and maintained it’s difficult to get rid of it.

Signs of stress in our dogs include:
- Facial or shaking
- Yawning, drooling, licking
- Panting
- Refusing food
- Avoidance and displacement behaviour
- Aggression/snapping
- Shedding
- Body tension
- Lack of focus.

These are just some of the signs that can indicate your dog is stressed. If you notice your pet looking stressed or symptoms have suddenly appeared, then you should look back over the previous few days/weeks/months to see if any situation has contributed to your pet’s activated stress in your dog. It could be something very small but it could start problems with your pet. Or it might be something that you didn’t even notice, but may be all he needs to counter the harm of stress.

• Don’t over-indulge or pamper him at a stressful moment. Give him space to lie down and relax in your home. Everyone, including dogs, needs a quiet, ‘down-time’ with no distractions.
• When he does come over for a cuddle, try to be available. He needs to know that all’s right in his world and you’re the centre of it!
• Do very small sessions of training with high-value treats to encourage him to use his brain again and focus properly. Keep them short with lots of praise.
• If he remains totally uncooperative, then just ask for an easy Sit or Down command. Reward, praise and leave him alone. If you keep at him, you will add to his stress.

As much as possible, try to ground yourself before you interact with him. That very action will help your stress but it means that you are associating with your dog in a quiet and focused manner. If you’re jumpy and fidgety, it just won’t work and you’ll find he closes down completely.

If none of these things work and you or your dog’s stress levels are still in place, then it’s time to seek professional help. For you, it could be just a chat with a close friend who can help you see the ‘bigger picture’. For your dog, it could be a trained professional who can perhaps help with more stress-busting ideas coupled with some alternative therapies. But do find some help.

Our animal relations deserve remembering and in doing so, it helps to ease the hurt a little. There are many ways we can creatively honour our grief and the relationship we’ve had with them. If you’re curious, check out Amanda Stronza, a wildlife Therapist for each dead animal she adorning the body of the animal comes across. She does this by burying the body of the animal with flowers and photographs it as a way of honouring its life. Unique indeed – but her process makes for quite the reflection. You can see these beautiful animal memorials at amandas-tours.com.

How has the loss of an animal or pet companion touched your life? Your story is very welcome if you feel called to share it at starsbeyondourskin@gmail.com or visit www.starsbeyondourskin.com to learn more about my work. I’m also open to questions or ideas for future columns!
The power of aronia

Steve and Claire Collins of Derry Duff Farm

I t’s unusual to have world class producers of health foods on your doorstep but this month I want to highlight the fascinating work of Steve and Claire Collins of Derry Duff Farm, who are pioneering a really interesting product called Phytoberry which is an organic Aronia Berry Juice.

Steve is a veteran in the field of nutrition and is fascinating to talk to, as he is incredibly knowledgeable and experienced. He’s both a medical doctor and a scientist with doctorates in nutrition and science and he operates an organic farm in the hills of West Cork, near us in Bantry. At Derry Duff, Steve has cultivated blueberries and aronia berries on what would otherwise be difficult land.

We love Derry Duff, as they supply Organico with the best organic blueberries all summer long! But more recently Steve has done a lot of work researching Polyphenols and antioxidant properties. Polyphenols, by the way, are a plant-based compound found in fruit and veg. They act as an antioxidant.

Steve is particularly concerned about the rise in metabolic syndrome in Ireland. Metabolic syndrome is recognisable by the ‘apple-shaped’ body type. When there’s a lot of fat around the centre, it indicates that fat is getting into your blood vessels. Once this happens, it starts to affect every aspect of your health.

In fact, research is showing that metabolic syndrome could very well be the starting point for chronic ill health. So how do polyphenols light metabolic syndrome?

Well, it’s free radicals in the body that cause the damage to the metabolic system. These free radicals box in the blood vessels, which allows fat to leak into places it shouldn’t be. This turns into the development of metabolic syndrome. But polyphenols can neutralise these free radicals before they do their damage, if you’re getting enough of them. Polyphenols also have a major impact on metabolism, particularly glucose metabolism. Every time you eat a carbohydrate, it’s broken down into glucose (primarily), as well as fructose. Polyphenols have the ability to slow the digestive process down. They make sure the carbs you eat are broken down more slowly in your gut, and fewer of them are transported to your blood.

Overall, polyphenols make it less likely your blood sugar will skyrocket after eating by: Increasing your sensitivity to insulin; Helping your body deal with glucose much faster; Protecting the pancreatic cells that produce insulin. Polyphenols can also help keep your cholesterol in check and reduce inflammation all over the body. And since they’re so good at destroying free radicals, polyphenols play a big role in protecting the body from unhealthy ageing. But, as Steve shared, maybe the most convincing case for sipping your polyphenol intake comes from the PREPIMED study. This epidemiological study tracked 7000 adults over five years. It showed that those with the top 20 per cent polyphenol intake had 46 per cent fewer heart attacks and strokes and 37 per cent reduction in all cause mortality.

The takeaway? We’d all do well to get more polyphenols in our diets. But how do you (easily) up your intake of polyphenols? It’s true that ‘superfoods’ like açaí and turmeric have impressive amounts of polyphenols. But you’d have to eat a mountain of these ingredients – every day – to get enough. Besides being difficult it wouldn’t be pleasant either.

Which is why we are all excited about aronia juice. How much aronia juice should you drink each day? Just a small 100ml serving each day will do you. That’s just a shot glass worth. This serving provides about 400mg of polyphenols. Enough to help control blood sugar; improve blood flow; nourish the microbiota; and tip the scale towards the recommended range of daily intake of polyphenols.

Steve’s juice is gently pasteurised so it retains a strong polyphenol content. He’s even had tests done to confirm this.

You can find Phytoberry Aronia Juice in our shop in Bantry and online at www.organicoro.ie. We’d love you to order your bottle, drink it over a few days while you’re having a meal, and let us know what you think...

What do you think of the flavour? And how do your digestion and energy levels feel following a meal enjoyed with aronia juice?

And in other news – we are hosting a live Menopause Event in November! The Menopause Breakthrough with Dr Marilyn Glenville are we are very excited to have Dr Marilyn Glenville live in Bantry for the first time in three years giving a talk on the Menopause. Dr Marilyn Glenville is a best-selling author and the UK’s leading nutritionist specialising in women’s health and the menopause, and her talks are very inspiring. Come along to learn how to feel full of energy and life through the menopause.

She will be talking at The Maritime Hotel in Bantry on November 10 from 6.30pm, and there will be lots of chances to ask her your menopause-related questions.

Tickets are available through Organico and online from www.organicoro.ie. See you there!

Health & Lifestyle

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

Maritime Hotel Bantry
10 November 6.30 - 9pm
Tickets: €20 which includes:
• €10 redeemable and 20% off purchases on the night.
• Tea & coffee intermission
• Ask Dr Glenville questions

Christopher Minhall
BSc Hons Osteopathic Medicine, BSc Hons Biology
CRANIAL OSTEOFAX

P: 086 886 1075
Bantry and Skibbereen
www.westcorkosteopathy.com

The Skibbereen Writers’ Group is looking for new members. Describing themselves as a diverse group of people with varying interests, the writers in the group say they have one common purpose – to write.

Whether it’s prose, poetry, opinion pieces, editorial and so on…all types of writing, and everyone from beginners to more experienced writers are welcome. Whatever your skill level, if you want to improve your writing skills this group offers a congenial atmosphere in which to present your work.

Group sessions are often varied and impromptu discussions, never too serious, always supportive and fun. Covid forced the group to go online which unfortunately caused a decrease in group numbers, however the writers are now back at Skibbereen Library, meeting at 11am on the first and third Saturday of every month.

A typical Saturday morning session lasts two hours, beginning with light refreshments and the appointment of a chairperson. Each member is then invited to read out their submission, the preparation of which is optional. This work can be in any form and is often, at the writer’s discretion, motivated by prompts given at the end of the previous meeting. There is no set number of words required: In the case of poetry, it can be less than 50 words; for prose the maximum is 500. Each piece is discussed briefly at the end of a reading.

Once all the pieces have been read, depending on the time remaining and the availability of the group, various writing exercises are engaged in, often with very quirky or humorous results.

The writers group has the use of a very private and comfortable room in the library. Over the years, in order to assist writers to improve their writing skills the library have also arranged for various writers-in-residence to provide workshops to members of the group. It is hoped that in the future the group will have the opportunity to participate in further workshops of this kind.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Skibbereen Writers’ Group why not come along to one of their sessions in October (Sat-urday, October 1 and October 15, 2022) at the Skibbereen Library, 10 North Street, Marsh, Skibbereen. November sessions are on November 5 and 19. All welcome.
October Sun Signs

With the turn of the year and the equinox behind us, we are heading into the final months of 2022. We can have mixed expectations now, as many of the themes speak of significant change and new potential. We can expect to end the month with a much stronger sense of what’s up ahead. It’s Eclipse season, which is a time of endings and beginnings and in addition, we have four major changes in planet direction. This fast-paced activity is not all bad and the disruption or redirection are not to be feared. The coming months will bring a few surprises but we have been prepared and now we can take a positive perspective as we tune in to the Libra balance and the affirmative Venus vibes over the next few weeks.

The first major turnaround comes as Mercury enters retrograde on October 2 and will finally move out of its shadow phase by October 17. This means a full pass to get plans moving and what may have been frustrating and muddled since early September. As Mercury moves into Libra, its own sign, on October 11, we can really start reconfiguring with others and allow the appropriate and necessary communications to flow. It will certainly be easier to speak out now and be clear but remember that whilst Mars is in Gemini there could be some passion behind those words.

The heavyweight planet Pluto is the next to turn after being retrograde since late April. Pluto has been tak- ing us into the depths of the darker side of life and has enabled us to go deep. Some shared human experiences touch into our personal lives and the way we connect with others. With Pluto moving forward we can start to see where endings, losses and endings spiral, to bring unexpected gifts and an opportunity for new ways of responding. It turns direct just a day before the full-on Aries Full Moon on October 9.

October’s Full Moon is in the feisty sign of Aries which urges us to act on what comes to head now. Processes that were initiated around the recent Libra New Moon in September have Venus at their core. This puts a focus on our relationships and how we connect to each other. Love and marriage are in the air and cold but now the heat can get quite intense as Venus joins with the Sun in the coming days. Use this time to learn what really matters on a heart level. Opposites can clash but they can also make up the essential components to make things whole in your heart and head.

Taurus: During this Full Moon, you are extremely sensi- tive to your environment and how it feels. You might want to retreat to a very private space where you can be alone. In this private space, you can become aware of your true dreams and longings. Try to work more consciously with the inner world of your imagination through creative work or meditative practices for a few days.

Gemini: You are extremely sensitive to how people treat you over this Full Moon. You’ll want to know if you have forged strong bonds with people or allow to grow and you’re motivated to show how much concern and care you have for others. You want to be in control of your life and environment. You have a strong emotional need for some romantic encounters. If you have any thought, it’s about you and what others think of you. The Full Moon phase fosters your emotions, and you might feel a little left out by others.

Cancer: Recently a strong sense of loyalty made you conform to family or social expectations. With this Full Moon, you realise that in a past of your unconscious, an emotionally satisfying goal has been focused on. It’s time to find an objective that means something to you and feel good about. You understand how important your sincere personal expression is. You may be seen as over-emotional or sentimental but you can have a powerful impact on your surroundings through your moods. You instinctively know how to provide a truly nurturing environment for people to grow and you’re motivated to show how much concern and care you have for others.

Leo: During this Full Moon phase, your interest in philosophical and spiritual areas is heightened. Use the time to expand your inner world and the break new ground. Convictions and values of those close to you will have unconsciously influenced you to some degree, which you’d best be aware of now so you won’t let it down you in any way. Ensure that you spend time only with people that elevate and support you. Disconnect from the daily grind and indulge your personal happy side for a while. Good food, pleasant company, shared experiences and mutual understanding bring an inner peace that makes you realise that quality of life is not about money, status or possessions.

Scorpio: You may waste energy on menial tasks, thus get- ting distracted from the broader visions in your life during this Full Moon. Tune in to yourself, and allow your intimate friends to have their moods without imagining they always have something to do with your own actions. You sense that the focus is not on you but on others and you keep a little distance from the people you have close to you. You avoid conflicts between the people you love and avoid getting involved in your partners’ problems. You avoid getting close to people who are not as close to you because of your desire for freedom and independence. You are more concerned with your own needs than with those of others, and generally happy to take on a lot of responsibility.

Sagittarius: Enjoyment is the keyword for this Full Moon and it’s time to loosen up and have some fun, especially if you are someone who is always on the move. Do not be afraid to express your feelings. You may enjoy your own company and have a good time. You may also want to get involved in social activities and mix with people. You may also enjoy spending time with those who share your interests and passions.

Capricorn: This Full Moon you may spend a lot of time at home, finding great pleasure in looking after your children or family, cooking, making home improvements and so on. You are especially sensitive to the mores of others who share your personal space. Although you will be strongly motivated to create a caring and secure environment around you, a crowd can be claustrophobic and you can get on other’s nerves. This is a time to acknowledge how the comfortable and familiar support you. Draw on it as a source of strength as you prepare to achieve some great things out in the world.

Virgo: Experiences during this Full Moon will show how other people have provided emotional security for you. Seeing clearly where you have been dependent in your relationships gives you a new sense of freedom and independence. The release of energy will you into a fresh creative phase. You might unearth resources within yourself that you were previ- ously unaware of. This new knowledge will be of great help to everyone you contact on an intimate level. You no longer need to rely on certain people or situations as you have the tools to walk on your path. This helps you to free yourself from the limitations of others.

Libra: You have difficulty distinguishing between what really matters on a heart level. Opposites can clash but they can also make up the essential components to make things whole in your heart and head. This Full Moon phase puts a focus on our relationships and how we connect to each other. Love and marriage are in the air and cold but now the heat can get quite intense as Venus joins with the Sun in the coming days. Use this time to learn what really matters on a heart level. Opposites can clash but they can also make up the essential components to make things whole in your heart and head.

Lover: Libra, its own sign, on October 11, we can really start reconfiguring with others and allow the appropriate and necessary communications to flow. It will certainly be easier to speak out now and be clear but remember that whilst Mars is in Gemini there could be some passion behind those words. With Pluto moving forward we can start to see where endings, losses and endings spiral, to bring unexpected gifts and an opportunity for new ways of responding. It turns direct just a day before the full-on Aries Full Moon on October 9.

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## AUTUMN 2022 CLASS TIMETABLE

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<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
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<th>TIMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MON</td>
<td>SPINNING</td>
<td>7.00am – 8.00am</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KETTLEBELLS</td>
<td>10.00am – 11.00am</td>
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<td></td>
<td>YOGA</td>
<td>11.00am – 11.45am (Flavie 087 6548138)*</td>
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<td>ZUMBA</td>
<td>6.45pm – 7.45pm</td>
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<td>TUE</td>
<td>CIRCUITS</td>
<td>10.00am – 11.00am</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AQUACISE</td>
<td>11.00am – 11.45am</td>
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<td>CORK CITY BALLET</td>
<td>3.30pm – 7.30pm (Barbara 083 0733060)*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPINNING</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEN’S CIRCUIT (10 WEEK BLOCK)</td>
<td>7.00pm – 8.00pm</td>
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<td>WED</td>
<td>SPINNING</td>
<td>7.00am – 8.00am</td>
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<td>THUR</td>
<td>STEP AEROBICS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AERIAL YOGA</td>
<td>7pm – 8pm (Barbara 083 0733060)*</td>
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### PRICES

**MEMBERS**: €5 per class, 10 class pass €45
**NON-MEMBERS**: €8 per class, 10 class pass €72

Teen classes €5. Classes can be booked through the “Clonpool” app.

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**people Arts & Entertainment**

Mad Hatters dazzle in Clonakilty for Culture Night to help raise funds for local playground

Crowds gathered in Clonakilty on Friday, September 23 for a Mad Hatter-themed circus extravaganza, as part of Culture Night 2022 in Cork County. Performances by Moss Russell and Brian O’Mahony were enjoyed at The Bike Circus followed by a Mad Hatter themed tea party in Emmet Square. The Clonakilty Playground Fundraising Committee and The Bike Circus Clonakilty were delighted to mark Culture Night 2022 in Cork County with this exciting suggestion inspired from a student at St Joseph’s Girls National School, which received the most public votes earlier this year in a competition involving local schools. The event combined circus skills, mad hatter antics and of course, tea and cake!

The evening also included prizes for Best Dressed, with one of the winners, Fionn O’Driscoll, getting into character, as he enjoyed the lively celebrations alongside his mum Zoe Turner, both from Clonakilty (pictured).

Donations from the event were greatly received by the Clonakilty Playground Fundraising Committee who are now €150,000 closer to their €190,000 fundraising target for a new inclusive children’s playground in Clonakilty.

Orla O’Donovan from The Clonakilty Playground Fundraising Committee said, “It is truly remarkable how fundraising events like this one are bringing the local community together and helping to support us in delivering the much-needed redevelopment of the Clonakilty playground. We are extremely grateful to the generosity and continued support of the families and children of Clonakilty but also to the amazing partnerships we have created with The Bike Circus and Exploding Tree for their help in setting up the event, and to the amazing performer’s Moss and Brian.”

She adds, “We are excited to have been involved in the line-up of events as part of Culture Night 2022 in Cork County and to the support of Cork County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media through the Local Live Performance Programming Scheme.”

If you were unable to make the event and you’d like to donate online please visit GoFundMe/clonakilty-playground or follow on Facebook and Instagram @Clonakilty_playground
Ian Humphreys is quietly spoken, generous, down to earth and quick to laugh. He is also a painter of imminence, of quiet intensity, a minimalist of immersive colour fields, whose canvases pulse, shine and shudder like the morning sun burning into the coldest sea. ‘My Journey in Paint’, a retrospective of Humphreys’ work, which ran through September at the Kenmare Butter Market, establishes the painter, in no uncertain terms, as a master of the post-expressionist sublime. In 2014 Humphreys’ world of horizontal motifs (lines of sand, bluff and sea) was upended when he accepted an invitation to take up an artist residency in the Joseph and Anni Albers Foundation in Connecticut, USA. Suddenly surrounded by forests his work began to take on a vertical aspect, generating such work as the monumental ‘Vermillion’ two years later.

Immediately on his return to Ireland Humphreys painted ‘Nocturne to Joseph in Silver and Grey’ (2014), his most Rothko-esque piece, included in ‘My Journey in Paint’. The Rothko-association is one which Humphreys welcomes, some of his favourite work being Rothko’s ‘Seagram Murals’ in the Tate. Other influences for the artist include the colours of Giorgio Morandi and the ceaseless working processes of Alberto Giacometti, the latter mirroring his own eternal “hunt for the image”, as he scrapes, brushes, gouges and glazes his work into being.

There is a wonderful balance and epic, ephemeral and physical in Humphreys’ work, which this retrospective revealed to great effect. From a large work in white, for example, one turned to a small watercolour in red ochre, titled ‘Rust and Bach Cello Elegy’ (2014). This, in turn linked to larger oils with musical titles, such as ‘Bach Cello Suite 2’ and ‘Jacqueline’s Elgar’. Humphreys’ penchant for musical titles (“preludes”, “fugues”, “sonatas”) is resonant of a long line of modernists, beginning with Whistler (and including Joseph Albers) who likened painting to the non-representational nature of music. It is a useful language for Humphreys, who finds there is much in common between the two. He explains that paintings, no matter their size or medium are “a collection of marks, an arrangement of ‘notes’ with spaces in between, like pregnant silences in pieces of music”.

The above being said, the ephemeral qualities of watercolour are but a gentle counterpoint to the rugged physicality of oil, a thin wash but an echo of the oily shore of the ‘quickening’ where matter becomes spirit. The oscillation between the two is where ‘My Journey in Paint’ shines as an exhibition; the works by turns receding and swelling, thunderous and silent, the driving force of the brush more resonant of the tide than a pictorial seascape could ever be, but not limited to that either, as Humphreys’ first and foremost concern is the unimpeded act of painting itself, where all else drops away, where the silences are silver.

Ian Humphreys’ work is of an international calibre, an assessment affirmed by his endorsement from the Joseph and Anni Albers Foundation. He is comparable in the post-expressionist field to Clement and McSwiney and rivals Sean Scully in quality if not scale. His timeless paintings are welded to the world he lives in, a window from non-representation into the mist and fog of association, Whistler’s portal rotated and seen through the other side.

For detailed images of the works discussed and for all enquiries please go to: ianhumphreys.ie | email: ianhumphreys4@gmail.com. Ian is represented by Mill Clinic Gallery in Ireland and Lime Tree Gallery, Bristol, U.K.
What else is on...

Darrara theatre evening
Darrara Muintir na Tí presents, ‘Extraordinary Ordinary Women Live’ written and performed by Clonakilty native Karen Minihan with ‘Home Rules’ - a short play performed by Pauline O’Driscoll in aid of ARC House Cancer Support at Darrara Community Centre, (near Ring, Clonakilty), on Friday, October 7 at 8pm.
Tickets €10 are now available from Mary Anglin 086 3903597 and Mary Wycherley 086 3787905.

Skibbereen Singers’ Club
The Skibbereen Singers’ Club is resuming its regular ‘first Friday of the month’ meeting in the Corner Bar, Bridge Street on Friday, October 7 from 9.30pm.
The special guest is Marion Young, a wonderful singer from Drinagh, and Aine Merwick is Beam ‘a Ti.
Entry is free and no booking is required, just come along and sing your song. All songs, stories and old yarns welcome. Listeners also appreciated.

Clonakilty Macra fun events
Clonakilty Macra Na Feirme is back this autumn and inviting new and existing members to join them for upcoming events such as socials and competitions, including Mother and Baby Homes in Ireland, issues, including Mother and Baby Homes in Ireland, traditional Islamic practices in Pakistan and ancient emblems of the feminine.
‘Fall’ is a new body of work by Anna Walayat, continuing her ‘In the name of Shame’ series that explores female embodiment and culture of shame in the context of Ireland and Pakistan. According to Islamic tradition when a woman becomes pregnant, a paradise becomes a paradise for the woman and child. However, women and children often become victims of a ‘culture of shame’ with murder, exploitation, and related violence common throughout the world. These new works draw from the Garden of Eden to consider cultures of shame in a contemporary moment.

An analysis of life in colour at Kenmare Butter Market
Kemnare Butter Market is committed to supporting emerging artists and is delighted this October to provide a platform for Eyeries artist Cathy Bacon as she begins her artist journey with ‘Learning to Swim by Drowning’, showing from October 1-21.
Cathy Bacon came to Beara 20 years ago to raise her family and began painting in 2016. Her work has been evolving ever since and she has received a BA and Masters from Crawford College. These paintings are inspired both by the personal and the universal, and range in theme from recognisably domestic scenes of children and animals to more abstracted landscapes.
Bacon’s process is intuitive: it is her gut-brain response to the primal nature of being human. The images are nebulous and mysterious, with a dream-like or barely-there quality that reflects a certain uncertainty in existence.

The colours are subtle and the style is stripped back; the pictures are like visual echoes, reminders of cave paintings; images emerging from the shadows.

Old childhood photographs and captured physical moments are translated into enduring memories: swimming the Bull Rock; her children with the horses; an encounter with a stag in the forest. Alchemically changing through paint the physicality of life into a form of understanding the human spirit.

Kenmare Butter Market is open Tuesday to Saturday 10am-5pm. kenmarebuttermarket.com

Gallery Asna exhibitions
Gallery Asna presents two concurrent exhibitions that explore issues of female identity, representation and control in respect to multiple issues, including Mother and Baby Homes in Ireland, traditional Islamic practices in Pakistan and ancient emblems of the feminine.
‘Fall’ is a new body of work by Anna Walayat, continuing her ‘In the name of Shame’ series that explores female embodiment and culture of shame in the context of Ireland and Pakistan. According to Islamic tradition when a woman becomes pregnant, a paradise becomes a paradise for the woman and child. However, women and children often become victims of a ‘culture of shame’ with murder, exploitation, and related violence common throughout the world. These new works draw from the Garden of Eden to consider cultures of shame in a contemporary moment.
Kate McSharry’s exhibition ‘Desperately Seeking a Body’ is an exploration of how the body is represented through contexts of radical affection, feminist theory, and queering the figure. Audio recordings and imagery support this installation, heightening connections between the figurative forms which are presented as a series of modern-day Sheela na Gigs.
The joint exhibition ‘Fall / Desperately Seeking a Body’ opens on Saturday, October 1 at 5.30pm and runs until Saturday, October 22.

Stop Look Listen
A part of the ongoing ‘Rekindling the Light Within’ project across West Cork, composer Justin Grounds will be curating a weekly outdoor listening party to encourage people to take a break in one of Clonakilty’s beautiful outside spaces and listen to some of the most beautiful music known to man.
He will be popping up in a different public space around town each Sunday morning at 11am playing and talking about a selection of music for around half an hour. Bring yourself, a rug, a thermos of hot drink and open ears!
To find out locations and times follow @stoplooklisten on Instagram.

#NWED
The Craft Corner

Spooky Bats
This month Natalie Webb is showing us how to make Halloween decorations.
Halloween is a brilliant time for crafty projects.
Cut black card approx 15cm x 14 cm depending on size of toilet roll.
Cover card in glue and wrap around the roll, there will be excess card on the top.
Cut two diagonals into the excess card at the top to make the bat ears.
On another piece of black card draw out the shape of bat wings, fold them in half then open out, put some glue on the crease and stick this onto the back of your bat body.
On the white paper draw out some eyes and fangs, then cut these out and stick onto your bat for its face.
And there you have it! Nice and simple but really effective and great for Halloween decorations, you could even make a few and use them as a garland to put on your door.
For the trick or treaters… have fun and don’t eat too many sweets!

In the news Crossword

Sudoku

The goal of Sudoku is to fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row and column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

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ACROSS
1 Energetic rise in the price of milk (14)
6 Ribbon for a pet (4)
9 Stage name of British singer of ‘The Last Waltz’ (9,11)
13 Old Testament escape (6)
14 Type of acid/Relating to the fifth element (5)
15 ‘_____ Curve’ - S-shaped growth graph (8)
17 Lindy ___ popular dance in the 1940s (3)
18 Wooden bench, usually with arms and a high back (6)
19 Fortitude or nerve (7)
23 Gulf War offensive codename (6)
25 In a way that attempts to avoid notice (15)
27 Famous faces often open and close this by ringing a bell (3,4,5,8)
31 Committed a crime as the child slept (9)
34 World’s largest ethnic group (1+ billion) (3)
36 Personal peculiarities (14)
38 Broad sash worn as part of Japanese national costume (3)
41 Kind of diagram that the Mastercard logo resembles (4)
42 Pork knuckles (5)
41 18th letter of the Greek alphabet & Mitsubishi car model (5)
42 Armed men having a job to do: make them do it! (4-5)

DOWN
1 Lacking colour (7)
2 Walks with feet turned inwards (10)
3 Journalist covering war (7,13)
4 System of disbelief (7)
5 One entitled to a free TV licence & more (3)
6 House of the first Queen Elizabeth (5)
7 Greek god has a pain but retains his sense of style (7)
8 Insufficient, meagre (6)
9 Birthplace of Roger Federer (5)
10 Birthplace of Robert Federer (5)
11 Ape impersonator (5)
12 Last of native bees decline (3)
16 Sticking together (8)
20 Motor neuron disease in the States: able (3)
21 What nagging chickens do when they kiss and make up? (7)
22 Introduction of group Leo assembled (8)
23 Flamboyant (12)
24 Start to cycle (3)
25 Speech on the mount (6)
26 Shopping around for better utilities deal (9)
28 Technical term for this pain is cephalalgia (8)
30 Blackfly, Escalibur & Zuflipar for example (6)
31 Eucalyptus oil (4)
32 Previous occupation of revolutionary Che Guevara and author Arthur Canon Doyle (6)
33 The “P” in TAFKAP (6)
35 Terra ___ expedition to Antarctica led by Scott (4)
37 Secret soldiers gather in window (4)

Happy Go Lucky Toy Shop

11 Ashe Street, Clonakilty. 023 8859746

Happier than a pig in mud with our latest range of LEGO Playmobil!

#176516 Difficulty: hard

#17559 Difficulty: moderate

West Cork People Arts & Entertainment

people Arts & Entertainment

September 30 – October 28, 2022

In the news Crossword

Colouring Corner

HAPPY GO LUCKY

TOY SHOP

Toys For All Ages

Wide Range of LEGO playmobil

Check out our collection of Vintage Lego Sets

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Sudoku

6 8 3
1 6 4

2 3 5 9

4

1 2 6 3

11 2 4 8

3 1 7 9

8 4 5 9

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Halloween is cultural appropriation, it should be cancelled writes Mark Dougherty. The time has come to make Halloween Samhain again.

Halloween is the bastardisation of the most important festival of our ancestors, Samhain, a festival that has been celebrated for thousands of years on this island. It is an Anglo-American consumeristic affront to our unique and beautiful cultural heritage that has been turned into plastic profanity.

Samhain is the first great winter celebration on the ancient Celtic calendar. Each year it falls exactly between the important astronomical events of the autumn equinox and the winter solstice. Our Celtic ancestors viewed Samhain and this time of year with supreme importance. The world around them was dying, descending into a dark and cold winter, but they understood that the world had to die in order to reborn.

The Celts lived in a world of opposites, the otherworld existing as a parallel universe. When we are born here, we die there, and when we die there, we are born here. When it is winter here, it is summer there. As our sun sets, theiris rises. In this belief system, Samhain can be seen in a different light.

At Samhain, the otherworld blurred into this world, and beings from the other dimension could visit for the night. People laid out food for the dearly departed, for on this night, the ancestors were alive again. Fires were lit and games were played, great fun was had and the ghosts were all around. In a world without end, as the Celts believed, where death was also a rebirth, Samhain was a great reunion of souls.

But things could also get out of hand on Samhain. The open portal to the otherworld allowed all sorts of mischievous energies to abound. People made fright masks to hide their appearance from the fairies, in case they were stolen away, or nasty tricks were played upon them. You couldn’t trust anybody being who they said they were on this night. On Samhain, a wonderful chaos reigned.

Halloween is now a globalised celebration, one more mark on the corporate calendar. Another chance to consume, another chance for greed.

At the start of August, supermarkets have already begun to hawk their Halloween decor. This year it’s a fall acetic, wreaths of autumnal leaves, muted tones, natural looking skeletons, all made of plastic. From an ecological point of view, Halloween is a disaster, coming second only to Christmas for its extreme wastefulness. In a world suffering with environmental upheaval, plastic spider webs are an ecocide.

Ritual is extremely important in society, what we celebrate and how we celebrate define who we are. Samhain is a unique Irish phenomenon, one that Ireland can be truly proud of. It is also a chance for cultural rebirth, a turning away from the consumeristic frenzy that is destroying our world to a more holistic and sustainable celebration of life, death and community. By honouring Samhain, we don’t just honour the ancestors who came before us, we honour ourselves and the world we live in. By celebrating Samhain instead of Halloween, we can connect ourselves to an ancient past, and looking to the future, we can decide what we celebrate, how we celebrate and why. Samhain is a wonderful chance for transformation.

So this year, don’t say Halloween. Don’t buy the plastic masks. Instead, take a walk through nature with a friend and collect some natural materials and make yourself a costume. Help the kids make theirs. Carve a turnip. Hide from the fairies. Celebrate something that gives hope and life.

There will be a community Samhain parade on Sunday, November 6th this year in Clonakilty, followed by a fire performance in Emmet Square. People are invited to make their own costumes out of natural or recycled materials and to join in the celebrations. Together we can make Halloween Samhain again.

Halloween safety tips for pets

Many people, especially children, will be looking forward to the prospect of a lively halloween celebration this month. Deirdre O’Brien from RAWR reminds us that it is important to remember your pets safety and happiness.

Animals are individuals, so while you may enjoy the festivities, consider it from your pet’s perspective; a dog’s natural instinct is to protect its home or to alert you that a stranger has arrived, and cats typically prefer a quiet environment with their family. The hustle and bustle as well as the noise associated with Halloween can be very stressful for your pets.

Halloween hype causes pet stress

Before the celebrations start, put your pets in a quiet room where they will be safe from all the Halloween activity. If your pet is likely to try to run out the front door and is comfortable in a crate, consider putting them in the crate with a treat-filled toy and some soft music playing in the background. Even if you are just having family over for a Halloween party, keep your pets away from the festivities in their safe room. Masks and costumes change how people look and smell to a pet, so even familiar children! Children may make the harmless mistake of sharing their treats. Make sure they know the treats. Make sure your pet costumes minimal.

Steer your pets away from dangerous decorations

Introduce your pets to their safe room before you decorate indoors. Changes to your home can cause your pets, especially cats, nervous or frightened. Or they may decide those fake spiders pose an existential threat and need to be killed. Be aware of which decorations pose threats. Some hazards are obvious, like lit candles (fire hazards and toxic birds or insects). Other potentially-dangerous decorations include rubber eyeballs (chooking hazard), fake cobwebs (can choke or entangle pets and wildlife), potpourri (toxic to birds) and strung lights. Watch out for those sweet wrappers and plastic packaging too.

Be cautious with pet costumes

If you do choose a costume for your pet, consider your pet’s personality and what type of costume they may tolerate and for how long. It’s best to keep pet costumes minimal.

Keep an eye on your pet’s costume to make sure the costume is comfortable and allows your pet to move freely. Also be sure to remove any chewable parts or objects that could come off or choke your pet.

Be sure to remove any chewable parts or objects that could come off or choke your pet.

If your pet appears uncomfortable, take off the costume. Signs of discomfort include folded down ears, eyes rolling back or looking sideways, a tucked tail or hunching over.

Protect your pets from outdoor dangers

Bring your pets indoors before night falls. Cats are always safest inside with you, but on Halloween it’s especially important to secure all pets, including rabbits, inside so they don’t run away out of fear. In case they escape, make sure that all your pets are wearing tags with current IDs and that their microchip is registered with your most up-to-date information. Proper ID will help you reunite with your lost pet.
people Arts & Entertainment

Classical concert in Skibbereen

St. Barrahane’s Church Festival of Music, now in its 40th year, will celebrate with another delightful concert on Wednesday, October 12, at 8pm. This time the venue is in the lovely setting of Abbey雎rey Church, Skibbereen with the celebrated pianist John O’Conor and Ailbhe McDonagh, cellist and composer. This highly-acclaimed duo will perform works by Beethoven, Fauré, McDonagh and Popper.

John O’Conor, the world renowned pianist and a pivotal figure in Irish classical music, has achieved international recognition for his performances of Beethoven’s piano music. In August, 2022, as a 75th Birthday gift, the RTE Concert Orchestra accompanied him in the National Concert Hall with a performance of the monumental Concerto no. 5.

Irish cellist, Ailbhe McDonagh is an international soloist, chamber musician, recording artist and Lecturer, who performs throughout Europe, Asia and the USA. She is also an accomplished composer with many chamber pieces and orchestral works to her name.

This is a very special concert not to be missed! Tickets: €25. are available online at Eventbrite; at the door on the night or further information or visit www.barrahanemusic.ie The Festival is supported by The Arts Council, Cork County Council and local sponsors.

Bantry celebrates Culture Night with inclusive multicultural festival

Bantry came alive for Culture Night on Friday, September 23 a three-hour multicultural event that included artists from China, India, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine and Ireland. The evening was filled with music and entertainment. Beata Baranowska from Poland opened the show with a blend of energetic rock, blues and soul songs. This was followed by children and adults from the Ukrainian Community living in Bantry singing some traditional Ukrainian songs, playing instruments and dancing.

Anja Sinkin, a Polish singer from Galway, entertained the crowd with her own poetic songs whilst Kreizbergi Saveje, a multicultural band living in Skibbereen but with Latvian roots, added funky beat to the event. Dance performers on the night included Scoil Rince Carney with Traditional Irish Dancing; the Astma Indian Dance Troupe from Cork in their amazing, colourful costumes, and the Chinese Community from the Confucius Institute in UCC, who entertained everyone with the Chinese Sword show, Tai Chi and a Kung Fu show accompanied by Traditional Chinese music and the Chinese Dragon Dance.

Alongside the singing and dancing were two art exhibitions: ‘Welcome to my world’ – paintings on glass by Alliszka Carrabizska and Modern Art ‘Paper Quilling’ by Artana Gallery.

Culture night in Bantry 2022 was organised by Beata Baranowska and Kathryn Kingston of West Cork Development Partnership. Assistance was provided by Marta Zubinska and Mark Gaffney. The organisers would like to thank to all artists who came to Bantry to share their music and art and to all those who attended the event. A special thank you to Cork County Council for the stage and to special thank you to Cork County Council for the stage and to Billy O’Flaherty for providing incredible sound.

people Motoring

Opel bounces back

CAR REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

Donal Brindley, a charming PR man who handled the Opel account a few years back, recently passed away. One day when talking about the Bluebell area at the start of the Naas Road in Dublin where several motor distributors were located, Donald described the area as ‘Motown’.

I was back in ‘Motown’ last week where the Gowan group now handle the distribution of Opel cars in Ireland. Just as I walked into the building a colleague drove out in an attractive Yellow Amber coloured Astra. My heart sank when I learned that my Astra test came in good old fashioned ‘Henry Ford black.’

However, Sarah MacGilliarigh from Opel assured me that she will arrange a drive in the yellow version at a future date! Of course all the cars are the same but colour is so important when choosing a new car.

Launched in 1991, the Opel Astra is a small family car that was an instant hit in Ireland and named Irish Car of the Year in 1992.

The sixth generation, which was introduced to the Irish market earlier this year bears little resemblance to the original version, which was a replacement for the Opel Kadett.

The new Astra features a bold design at the front with the new Opel Vizor look, that is now a feature of all their new cars. Just below the bonnet you get the Opel logo and the neat headlights are incorporated into the grille.

At the back the LED lights are very slim and the name Astra is spelt out across the boot, which is opened by pressing the Opel logo. In the spacious boot you get a plastic covering where you can place wet items or dirty shoes or football boots. Underneath is a mini spare wheel which is always appreciated.

Black on the outside but a very bright interior. The seats are bright grey and there are white diagonal strips on the dashboard. The steering wheel is well-positioned so it’s very easy to see what your speed is from the digital feed. Then the second screen which has the controls for radio and air conditioning is, thanks to the wrap-around effect, tilted slightly towards the driver. A great idea.

The Astra is available with a choice of petrol and diesel engines and also a plug-in Hybrid. A full electric Astra-e is due here in 2023.

I drove a 1.5-litre diesel version, which had a really frugal engine. Whoever said that ‘diesel was dead’ was a bit premature.

Prices start at €27,995 for the 1.2-litre petrol model, while my diesel manual version will cost you €30,995. Road tax for the diesel is €190. As usual with Opel there are trims available, SC, SRI and Elite.

Officially the colour of my test car was Perla Black. The other colours currently available are: Yellow Amber, Jade White, Artesen Grey, Crystal Silver, Vertoxy Blue and Hot Red.

My only small complaint was an issue similar to the Peugeot 2008 where my left leg kept touching the foot rest when using the clutch.

After a few lean years Opel has bounced back with some great cars and dynamic marketing. That trend has continued this year with the Grandland and now the Astra, which is well worth a test drive and should be attractive to first time drivers and mid-size families alike.
Going wild about flowers

The Natural Gardener

Noah Chase

Noah studied horticulture at the Eden Project in Cornwall, England. He now co-manages a family run nursery, Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen, specialising in rare, unusual and edible plants. His passion is sustainable gardening, useful plants and care of the environment.

What a great end to an amazing summer! This year I sowed a few areas of wildflower seeds here at Deelish and even across the road for my neighbour. The results were and still are fantastic. We have had nonstop flowers from May right through the summer. Our bees, pollinators and a huge range of insects, as well as countless people, reaped the rewards of these beautiful flowers. For the small amount of time and money spent, this has to be one of the most rewarding methods of gardening.

I sowed seed in March but autumn is also an excellent time to sow wildflower seed, as this is the time of year the plants would naturally be dropping seeds after flowering. For best results, I recommend to sow seed at 3-5 grams per square metre. However, if you have good quality soil, have put good effort into preparing your soil so your site is clean and weed-free and you are able to provide water during germination, then you could sow seed at half this rate. The great thing about wildflower seeds is you can grow them in a huge variety of areas. A square metre or two in a courtyard, patches under roses or in the veggie garden, down a drive, or a full-sized meadow! The site does not have to be flat. Sloped banks are good as long as you are able to get on them to prepare the soil. If the bank is very steep, consider establishing an area on the top, where maturing wildflowers will seed down the slope. Most wildflowers are sun lovers so make sure they receive at least four to five hours sun per day, the more the better!

Wildflowers grow well in a wide range of soils. Very poor soils can produce stunted seedling growth but an organic liquid feed will help this stunted growth. Avoid wet or soggy soils. Heavy clay or very acid soils will benefit from adding lime – up to 100 grams per square metre. Fortifying the soil is not recommended, as it will encourage weed growth, but I do recommend adding your own compost on top of the soil, as this will improve the soil structure and fertility of the soil and is especially good for clay soils. If you have a digger working on your land, this is an ideal time to think about establishing wildflowers. Use the newly-created bare earth to your advantage and sow seeds straight away. Even if there is only subsoil, get your digger to loosen the surface, and sow seeds in this area.

Wildflowers require contact with soil for them to grow. They will not grow on grass or weeds – these must be completely removed and the soil surface broken up to a fine crumb structure. Aim for a clean, weed-free site where the wildflowers will grow fast to beat out and suppress any weeds.

If there are weeds or grass growing where you want to sow your seeds then collect a number of organic herbicides now available, or homemade options that I have written about in previous articles. Alternatively, you could burn off weeds with a flame gun, use salt or vinegar spray, add boiling water or overlay mown planting areas with a thick layer of damp newspaper or cardboard, or use weed fabric and then cover with mulch for use in a few months’ time. Otherwise, lightly cultivate the soil surface several times to remove weeds, allowing them to dry out on the soil surface each time and remove from site. Sprinkle with wildflower seeds and lightly rake or sprinkle with fine soil to just cover the seeds. Note: wildflower seeds should never be covered any deeper than 2-3mm, as this could stop germination. Once seed is sown, if the weather is dry, moisten the area. Keep soil moist so that seeds can germinate for approximately 10 days. Watch for slugs and snails and, if needed, use suitable organic controls. If birds are seen eating freshly sown seeds, consider sowing a few extra grams per square metre. Like any other seed, wildflowers require ample moisture for the first four to six weeks to germinate and establish. They can then usually survive with minimal moisture, but additional water in dry periods will encourage more flowers. Major weeds that reappear can be hoed or dug out in their early stages. If you have sown seeds in Autumn, the first flowers should start to appear in April. Flowering should begin within about eight to ten weeks from a spring or summer sowing. Once flowering has finished and the plants look a bit untidy then the area can be trimmed or mown down. If there are not many weeds in the area then cut everything down and leave the trimmings on the ground to drop their seed for next season. At this stage, pull, hoe or dig out any remaining seeds in the area. A light cultivation or rake over is also recommended to encourage reseeding.

Many wildflower seed may be required until the area becomes self-perpetuating. For best effect sowing up to 50 per cent of the original amount is recommended, especially if there has been a weed problem. Gently rake new seed into the clean wildflower bed. Some species may become more dominant than others due to local climates and conditions. Have fun experimenting to see what grows best for you. Many gardeners prefer to grow native wildflowers. Sourcing Irish grown seeds can be a bit tricky, as some of the larger producers encourage the farmers growing the seed to use glyphosate weed killers to prepare the ground for growing the seed (which I personally cannot support) and label them as pollinator-friendly! As well as being lethal to all pollinators, these chemicals destroy the delicate balance of the fragile soil web.

Other ‘native’ wildflower seed suppliers are in fact importing them from other countries and labelling them as Irish. One tried and tested method is to collect your own! The late summer and autumn are great times to collect your own seed from established wildflowers. Collect your seeds just before the plant is about to shed them. As the plant begins to brown, the seeds will be ripe and so you should place a paper bag over the top of a flower head, cut the stem and empty the whole thing.

Tie the top of the bag before putting it somewhere to dry. Hang somewhere with good ventilation. It’s also a good idea to write the name of the plant on the bag and location and the date you collected the seed. After a few weeks, check your bags and you should find seeds at the bottom of each bag. If not, you can give them a shake to help shed the seed. The seeds of many plants are best sown in autumn, as they need a cool winter in order to stimulate germination in spring. If you’re storing the seed until next spring, store in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place. If you’re just starting out and would like to develop an existing grassland or lawn area (it’s best if it’s not too nutrient-rich) into a wildflower meadow, Yellow Rattle is a good wildflower to begin with, and the seeds are lovely and dry just now, making them perfect for collection (we also have them for sale at Deelish). Yellow Rattle is also known as the ‘meadow maker’, so if you have part of a lawn or small field that you’d like to become more species-rich with wildflowers, try adding some Yellow Rattle seed to begin with, which will help to reduce the fertility of your grassland area. It’s an annual plant and its roots develop underground where they seek out the roots of plants growing nearby, especially grasses. Once contact is made, the Yellow Rattle draws water and nutrients from the grasses, holding back their growth by as much as 60%. In the resulting space, other wildflowers find room to grow. We also provide single plants of many individual native and ornamental wildflowers each spring. These pot grown plants can be planted directly into the wildflower area and will naturalise over the growing season. If you haven’t’ given this group of beautiful plants a go, I recommend you do. The flowers just keep coming, there is literally a buzz as bees and other pollinators enjoy the flowers just as much as you do and all for very little effort. I hope you had a great season in the garden and remember, gardening doesn’t have to cost the earth.
after a dry, warm summer, it’s now time to prepare for next year by storing up mulch.

Make a determined effort to plant in autumn and early winter, as the shorter days and potentially more rain will get your planting off to a good start and save you work.

In light of the warm, dry summer we had, I recommend that planting of hedging, trees and fruit trees is done in November or December. With hose pipe bans in place in West Cork this past August and September, learn from this and plan for next year by harvesting and storing rainwater.

Mediterranean type weather

It has been a kind summer to fruit except for the moisture deficit. I was amazed to see someone growing 240 varieties in far North Scotland and succeeding in ripening the crop! Apples seem to be giving a healthy crop everywhere this year. The end of frosts at the end of April was a great boost and is surely one of the main contributing factors for such an abundant crop. Poor crops in recent years were a result of late frosts in May of minus-four and five degrees Celsius, which destroyed the blossom. Pick and store them as ripe, keeping in a cool, well-ventilated store. Use wooden, slatted boxes for storage, keeping away from contaminants that can taint the fruit.

Vegetable Garden

Make a sowing of winter lettuce now, using a short day/winter variety. Spring cabbagee should be planted out now where it is to mature but protect against pigeons and birds. Pick out for the last of the caterpillars. Cut down Asparagus fern now that it has turned yellow. After cutting down the foliage, top dress over the crowns with garden compost, well-compost ed farmyard or stable manure or Geo-up. Pick the last of the Rhubarb, and French bean and carrot crop and place any surplus in the deep freeze.

Plant up for Winter/Spring Colour

Choosing winter hardy varieties, plant hardy bedding plants and patio plants to provide colour throughout the Spring. Ornamental cabbage and kale will give you colour in the winter months. Many berried plants give colour from winter through to spring. The Christmas Cherry or Solanum provides colour from autumn well through to Easter. Do watch out for vermin ie rats and mice eating the berries and nuts from plants like Pernettya and viburnums. Cut down Asparagus fern and hellebores now that it is a winter variety. Lettuce is now best done in the morning.

Make a sowing of winter lettuce, do check that it is a winter variety. Lettuce will grow in grow bags, window boxes, vertical planters and in the open soil. Germinate lettuce in temperatures of 15 degrees Celsius. Pot up some parsley/ mint for winter use. You might consider a new greenhouse. A hardy variety with reusable selection of varieties. Cotoneasters will tolerate coastal and exposed areas. Autumn/early winter planting is highly recommended. Autumn plantings get off to a great start, as the accumulated heat from the summer together with shorter days with reduced drying out and a high proportion of our rainfall occurs during the period. In a dry year and hosepipe bans in place in August this year due to trees being under pressure from the lack of rain. Rake up the leaves and compost them.

Roses

Shorten back taller shoots to maintain winter rock from gales and winds of winter. Continue protecting roses against blackspot, downy and powdery mildew and rust. Collect fallen leaves and dispose of off site if disease symptoms are evident.

October 2022 in the garden

Greenhouse

As Autumn gathers pace and cooler nights beckon, thoughts go to indoor gardening. Being tender/frost susceptible plants indoors such as cacti, succulents, geraniums, tender fuchsias, ten- der patio plants such as salvias, which are frost-susceptible. If you have tender plant treasures you may consider purchasing an electric, thermostatically-con- trolled fan heater. If you are using the heater, do make sure the greenhouse is well insulated for the winter.

It is important to have the plants dry going into the night. Sow some winter lettuce, do check that it is a winter variety. Lettuce will grow in grow bags, window boxes, vertical planters and in the open soil. Germinate lettuce in temperatures of 15 degrees Celsius. Pot up some parsley/ mint for winter use. You might consider a new greenhouse. A greenhouse will extend your growing season at both ends of the year. It will allow you to grow more tender plants. Why not consider growing your own melons, peaches, nectarines, citrus including: lemons, grapefruit, oranges, mandarins, peaches, blackberries, currants and blueberries?

Factor in close proximity to an electric supply and of course water. Consider too rain harvesting/ storage in close proximity. If you are using electricity do make sure you are getting the best possible rate. If you can afford the stronger greenhouse, it is well worthwhile, as weaker structures are a false economy, as they are vulnerable to gale damage. Have a look at the Irish Garden magazine for lists of suppliers.

Spring Bulbs

As the weeks move on so too will the availability of bulbs. Spring bulbs will brighten up some spring containers. You can still plant some deliciously scented narcissi. Varieties such as ‘Paperwhite’ will flower in as little as seven to nine weeks. Start outside and bring indoors as buds form, keeping in the coolest room possible to ensure you can the longest flowering period. Keeping cool keeps the Narcissus sturdy. Tulips can be sourced now for planting in November/December.

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Fallen Leaves

Leaves have started to fall since August this year due to trees being under pressure from the lack of rain. Rake up the leaves and compost them.

UCG honours Ireland’s first female botanist

UCG is to rename the headquarters of the Environmental Research Institute (ERI) in honour of the pioneering botanist and Cork woman Ellen Hutchins.

Widely recognised as Ireland’s first female botanist, Ellen Hutchins overcame a series of challenges in her personal life to identify several species that would become familiar to gardeners all over Ireland and been named after her, such as the moss Uloa Hutchinsiae (Hutchins’ Pincushion), in recognition of the importance of her botanical studies.

Paying tribute following her death, Ellen’s botanist friend Dawson Turner wrote that: “In the past Ellen had lost much ground as an indefatigable as she was acute, and as successful as she was indefatigable.”

Now Ellen Hutchins’ indefatigable spirit will be immortalised in the naming of UCG’s ERI building on Cork’s Lee Road.

The announcement also marked the unveiling of Ellen Hutchins Reading Room within the ERI building, which contains archival material and artefacts such as a number of pressed modern seaweed specimens, framed single drawings representing Ellen Hutchins and Dawson Turner, a number of books, several letters and a single drawing by Ellen Hutchins.

The official naming ceremony included contributions from a number of speakers including Madeline Hutchins, Ellen’s great-great grandniece and an organiser of the Ellen Hutchins Festival: “The Ellen Hutchins Festival and the Hutchins family are delighted with this linking of Ellen’s name and story with the University in her home county of Cork, and with the ERI in particular for the important work that they are doing. We think Ellen would have approved!”

Visit The Weekend Garden Centre

by John Hosford

John Hosford

The Weekend Garden Centre

September 30 – October 28, 2022
West Cork motorsport legend and Ballylickey native Keith Cronin has been rallying for as long as he can remember. The 36-year-old is going for a record equalling fifth British Rally Championship title to move alongside Jimmy McRae in the all-time standings. Matthew Hurley chats to the West Cork legend who, if he achieves the aforementioned record will have realised one of his all-time career ambitions.

Cronin’s family played a big part in him starting out in the rally car. “My uncle Denis was rallying, he often did well and had some wins. My father was always into the rallies as a young lad, it was probably inevitable that I would be taken in by it too,” he shares. “I wouldn’t have achieved anything without his help, I learned an awful lot from him in the early years.”

Cronin’s first BRC title was in 2009, the first Irish person to do so since 1974 in the form of Billy Coleman. On his return after that win, the large crowd waiting at his homeplace to welcome him back is testament to the huge pride the local Ballylickey community has in their local rallying star. That’s an achievement that was up there with the most significant for Cronin. As was his fourth and most recent BRC win in 2017. “(2017) came down to the final rally on the Isle of Man. It was a very close finish, I won the rally by one second and the championship by one point. “After that, winning the WRCC round in Finland in 2013 was also a highlight, Rally Finland is a very fast, specialised event, it was very satisfying to get the result there.”

There are two high profile West Cork rally events at the moment, the West Cork Rally and the Fastnet Rally. While the Fastnet is usually a round in the national championships, the West Cork version is connected to the Irish Tarmac Championship. Cronin would love to see the West Cork Rally in particular be part of the BRC, as an overseas round, like it was in 2019. “It would bring the best drivers from the BRC and the Tarmac Championship together on one event, it would be a major boost for the rally and for the West Cork area in general with all the extra visitors it would bring,” Cronin explains.

“Motorsport has a big following in West Cork already – if there isn’t someone interested in one particular house then there will be in the neighbouring one. There are other smaller events on during the year as well, such as Autotesting, which is an extreme skill in itself.”

Another aspect Keith wants to see introduced is that people would be able to get into motorsport at a low cost, whether it’s West Cork or anywhere else in Ireland. The UK governing body has introduced a thing called Streetcar, basically different types of competitions that you can take part in with an unmodified road car, and there is no cost for your competition licence. “I’d like to see something like that here, to increase participation numbers and give everyone a chance, even on a small budget.”

Most rally drivers would easily pick their best ever car to drive in. For Cronin though, it comes down to one important factor. “The best car is the one that works with you to get the best result possible. Our current car, the Volkswagen Polo, is certainly up there, it’s a great all-round package.”

“Denis had a Subaru Impreza WRCC car in 2013, I drove it on the Galway International Rally and won the event. It was actually a car that had previously been used by the Subaru World Rally Team, it was a very special piece of machinery.”

Cronin likes the British Rallies in particular because of the mix between tarmac and gravel track events. It isn’t just Ireland or Britain where he has raced though. “From about 2010 to 2014, I did rallies all over Europe. I did the Barum Rally in the Czech Republic in 2010, it’s a tarmac rally but the locals have a big advantage there. I didn’t actually finish the time I did it, I’d love to go back and have another go.”

Cronin’s co-driver for the majority of his races is Kerry man Mike Galvin. “He takes the role extremely seriously and works with great attention to detail. We joined up first in 2016, and won the Irish Tarmac Championship that year and the BRC the following year.

“Outside of the rally weekends and the lead up to them, we wouldn’t actually talk much, we wouldn’t be on the phone every day or anything like that. Then when the time arrives, he does his job and I do mine, it works well,” admits Cronin.

Currently, the biggest rivalry Cronin has is with Welsh driver Osian Pryce, as the two battled it out for this year’s BRC crown all season long. Despite the closeness in race and table positions, both of the individuals get along fairly well. “Osian is a guy I can chat to before a rally; while we’re waiting for the start, we’ll wish each other luck and congratulate whoever wins at the finish, we can have the craic and so on.”

“The connection between the two teams is actually quite close anyway, because Osian’s co-driver, Noel O’Sullivan, is from Killarney, and so is Mike, actually went to school together, so it’s just like a group of four friends meeting up when we’re doing the rallies.”

Cronin is going for a historic record-equalling feat, but he also wants to see young drivers come through the ranks, in West Cork especially. He shares some important advice for those who want a career in rally driving. “The first thing would be to think long and hard about what you want to get out of it. Do you want to do it for fun or do you want to try and progress to a professional career? In either case, I’d say start off with a few of the gravel autocross events in your area, they bring on your car control and you get used to having the car moving around under you.”

Cronin also gives some financial advice. “If a young person is only doing this activity for fun, there’s no point in breaking the bank.” If you do hope to make a career out of it and you do well initially, I would say to go and compete abroad as early as possible, to broaden your experience and build up a reputation. Aside from the additional cost of getting there, the expense after that won’t be much different, the car will cost much the same to rally in France or Belgium as it does in Ireland, and unless you’re doing the Fastnet or something else local, you’ll have to pay for accommodation if you go to Galway or Ypres.

“I would also advise young drivers to try and team up with a co-driver who has some experience, at least for a few rallies, you will learn a lot from them about how events are run, and they will be aware of the rulebook and the potential pitfalls. Also, don’t be afraid to contact other drivers who have been around a while for advice, most will be only too willing to help and pass on what they know,” he concludes.

Keith Cronin might be going for a historic achievement for himself and motorsport in West Cork, but he also wants to see youngsters develop in the sport: The sign of a true accomplished professional.
**OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK**

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

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**The Supercars of Cannonball Ireland visited Kinsale for lunch last week on their run around Ireland. In town to see the cars were Martina, Neasa, Odhran and Fionn Collins from Dunmanway. Picture: John Allen**

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**A MSD Brinny team members Aine Harte, Colette Kirby and Christine McGrath pictured holding a cake sale at St. Michael’s Centre, Bandon as part of their annual ‘Volunteering Day’.**

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**Around 120 walkers set off from Kilcrohane Community Hall on Saturday 3 September to take part in the 14th annual Christian Aid Sheep’s Head Hike. This year’s walk raised approximately €5,000 to support the international development charity which is responding to a devastating hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa where famine is looming after four failed rainy seasons.**

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**Dr. Mathew Potter, of University of Limerick, author and present Curator of Limerick Museum, (fourth from left) with members of the Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage sub-committee who organised the publication of “The History of Clonakilty Town Council” at the end of 2021 after several years of work and research by Dr. Potter and Dúchas members, Tomás Tuipéar (second left) and Michael O’ Mahony, (fifth from left). Also included are: Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin, (former Town Council and Mayoral Council Mayor); John M. Loughnan, (ditto, third left) and Tim Feen, Cathaoirleach Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage (on right). Dr. Potter came to Clonakilty to thank the local group for their support and important contribution to the book, of which almost all 200 copies sold out in a matter of weeks after publication in November 2021.**
PRAYERS

Call to post to our offices—Old Town Hall, Clonakilty.
Prayers: €10 each. Cash or Postal Order. No bank cheques please due to charges.

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 3 times. Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine. Amen. This prayer must be said for three days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. M.C.

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