



westcorkpeople

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ENVIRONMENT
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HEALTH & LIFESTYLE
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Katie Coughlan from Mount Saint Michael at Agri Aware's Farm Walk and Talk in Teagasc Agricultural College, Clonakilty

Expressions of Interest sought for Recognition Fund

Cork County Council is seeking Expressions of Interest from communities in West Cork under the recently announced Cork County Community Recognition Fund 2023.

The fund is intended to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution of communities in hosting new arrivals in response to the Ukraine crisis.

The fund has been allocated to Local Authorities based on the numbers of new arrivals located in each county, with Cork County Council receiving an allocation of €2,307,035.

The funding is to be targeted at those communities, villages, and

towns where the highest levels of new arrivals are located. In West Cork areas will include Bandon, Bantry, Clonakilty, Glengarriff, Kinsale, Macroom, Rosscarbery and Sherkin Island.

Projects to be funded will be capital in nature, deliver tangible benefits for the communities in which they are located and will be capable of being delivered over the course of 2023 and 2024. Eligible projects may receive funding for capital costs, but not for any ongoing operational or running costs.

Welcoming the initiative, Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins commented "Communities across Cork County have warmly welcomed new arrivals into

their communities. It gives me great pleasure as Mayor to lead the Cork County Ukraine Response Forum which comprises a multi-agency approach in planning and coordinating the response. I would urge communities that have welcomed large numbers of new arrivals to avail of this capital funding to develop and enhance their local amenities, this might include everything from the refurbishment of community facilities to the enhancement of parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas."

Expression of Interest (EOI) will be accepted online via Cork County Council's web portal, see www.cork-coco.ie for details. Completed EOI forms should be submitted online by 5pm on Friday, March 3, 2023.



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#makingithappen

Where the people make the place

The expression 'It takes a village' rings especially true when it comes to the success of the Courtmacsherry Community Shop. **Mary O'Brien** meets a few of the people who volunteer their time and energy to ensure the continued success of this inspiring social enterprise.



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Since the mid-1870s, the small village of Courtmacsherry – whose population of 500 (give or take) swells considerably in the summer months – has boasted a number of small shops. Local Trish Gannon, 63, who runs a B&B in the village, recalls at least seven grocery shops in Courtmacsherry when she was growing up.

Over the years, this number gradually dwindled and, when the last remaining convenience shop closed its door upon its owner's retirement in 2015, the local community was galvanised into action.

"The conversation started over a cup of tea in my kitchen," shares Trish. "Most of my guests in the B&B are anglers from Europe and for all the visitors who visit Courtmacsherry during the summer, as well as the locals, it was imperative we have a shop in the village."

A public meeting was called, a committee formed, research carried out, the set up of a co-operative approved, shares were sold and grant funding secured.

Six months after the co-operative got the go-ahead, with the support of the community behind it, the Community Shop opened on June 1, 2016, just in time for a busy bank holiday weekend.

As well as stocking the shelves with essential food items – fruit and veg, dry goods, dairy products, drinks, confectionary, household items and so on – the shop has always endeavoured to repay the support of its community by stocking as much local produce as possible: you'll find freshly baked bread and cakes from master baker Brendan of Travara; homemade jams and chutneys; postcards of the local area; walking maps and visitor guidebooks; RNLI merchandise; crafts, herb and veg plants and more. A tea and coffee making machine has been a welcome addition, especially for the many walkers and cyclists who frequent the area.

The secondhand bookshop upstairs with rocking chairs overlooking the bay, a lifesaver for readers during the pandemic, was set up by Diarmuid Begley and Cathy Gannon and is now kept well stocked by volunteers Bernadette and Ger with adult and children's fiction, as well as genres ranging from sports and politics to gardening and recipe books.

It's more than just a shop however – this vital community hub is the place to find out the local bus timetable, to pick up the key to the local communi-



Trish Gannon outside Courtmacsherry Community Shop

ty hall, find out the routes of local walks or the dates for the much-anticipated annual Courtmacsherry Harbour Festival, or simply stop by for a chat.

With the influx of remote workers in recent years, the committee identified a need for providing office space in the village so the shop has a good Wifi connection and upstairs space available to rent short or longterm.

The beating heart behind all this is the stalwart group of volunteers and dedicated committee, people from all walks of life who, come rain, shine or pandemic, give up their time to keep this show on the road. When so many of the older volunteers had to cocoon during the pandemic and other businesses closed, suddenly locals unable to work or remote workers new to the area were signing up to help out and the community shop was able to remain open and continued to flourish.

Today while business remains steady, the shop could always do with more support, especially from local residents during the quieter times of year.

"It would be great if locals used the shop more," says Trish. "As someone who's running a business, I really am price-conscious and I can honestly say that everything in the community shop is priced very competitively."

maraderie with other volunteers and the chats with customers, something that all of the volunteers can attest to.

Belfast native Anne Caher, 76, moved to Courtmacsherry with her husband three years ago.

"We weren't here very long, perhaps a few months, when Sheila nabbed me for the shop," she says. As someone new to the area, Anne found her new role was a great way to meet people.

"It's not just somewhere to come and buy your eggs and milk, it's a community hub and it's so important that people support it," she emphasises.

"One old lady who lived a few doors down from the shop needed her gas bottle changed so she came in and asked for help. I put it up on the volunteer WhatsApp group and the same day someone arrived to help her out.

"Very often people have the perception that a local shop will be more expensive but it's really not the case, especially for the basics."

Anne and her husband have settled in well to life in the village. They joined a dance class in Butlerstown and Anne enjoys being a part of 'The Broadstrand Artists' and the Courtmacsherry Ladies Group. The couple's six children regularly visit with their families.

Anne Caher



Christopher O'Sullivan TD

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I am delighted to announce that my new **BANDON CONSTITUENCY OFFICE** at Market Buildings, New Road is now open at least 3 days a week and I will host constituency clinics on the first Monday of each month from 10am to 12 noon.

My constituency office in Clonakilty remains open 5 days a week.

If you feel I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact my team and I.

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Pauline Pollard

"They come to visit at every opportunity because it is such a beautiful location," says Anne.

Another Belfast native Pauline Pollard, 76, who emigrated to the US in her twenties and has now retired to Courtmacsherry, also gives regularly of her time to the Community Shop.

Pauline started volunteering in the shop five years ago and says she loves hearing the stories of the people who come into the shop.

Pauline's own story is engaging. The nurse met her future husband on a holiday to the States when she was in her early twenties. On her return home, he posted her a one-way ticket and two American football books. While she never opened the football books she did use the ticket and a year later the couple were married. They spent 40 years together in Michigan where they raised their three children.

Nine years ago, three years after her husband passed away, Pauline, age 67 at the time, made the decision to pack up and move to Courtmacsherry. "My husband and I always yearned to come back here," says the pensioner, who has a sister-in-law living in the area. "The kids were grown up, settled and busy with their own lives and I wanted to do something different."

"The hardest thing was getting rid of all my possessions, all those memories," she shares. "But I put myself out there when I arrived and made friends. I love it here."

"I am a little bit forward," she admits laughing. "I knew that if I talked to Irish people, they'd talk back to me!"

Mary O'Neill's pub in Butlerstown was a great source of local information and before long Pauline had her finger on the pulse of all the local music sessions, even driving as far as Kinsale on a Thursday night,

and had joined the local ladies group and the Butlerstown and Darrara friendship groups. "I played bingo for the first time in my life here," she says.

Mass – the Catholic sermon on a Saturday evening and Protestant on a Sunday morning – also provided a great way to meet people.

Mass – the Catholic sermon on a Saturday evening and Protestant on a Sunday morning – also provided a great way to meet people.

"I'm a Catholic married to a Protestant, my eldest son is married to a Jewish girl, my middle son is a Hare Krishna and my daughter, who is twice divorced, has been Catholic and Presbyterian, so we're a mixed bunch of faiths,"

Pauline Pollard

"I'm a Catholic married to a Protestant, my eldest son is married to a Jewish girl, my middle son is a Hare Krishna and my daughter, who is twice divorced, has been Catholic and Presbyterian, so we're a mixed bunch of faiths," she laughs.

Pauline's energy and enthusiasm for life is inspiring. Six years ago the grandmother climbed Carrauntoohill with one of her sons. A few years later she completed 26 miles in a fundraising walk.

While she hasn't been to a music session in Mary O'Neill's since pre-Covid, Pauline is looking forward to getting back to it. "I would never have gone into a bar on my own in the States," she says.

During the pandemic Pauline had to step back from the community shop and all her other social activities. "I got chickens...they keep me company during the pandemic...and where I live, people out walking would stop to have a chat if they saw me in the garden. My neighbours are wonderful and we enjoyed many sing songs

hanging out of our windows and doors during the pandemic."

Pauline loves living in an area where your post will always find you and someone always knows someone who can help. "My grandchildren love visiting. They'll say to me 'one of your neighbours stopped me and knew who I was!'."

That's the kind of community it is and I love it."

Another volunteer enamoured with the Courtmacsherry way of life is Feona Daly Cairn, 57, who drives over from Ballinspittle one or two times a week to help out at the Community Shop.

A born and bred Londoner, Feona and her partner moved to Ballinspittle last year and are delighted with the warmth of the welcome they have received in West Cork.

"I feel safe here," says Feona. "In inner city London you're always on the lookout for hostile behaviour so you carry yourself differently, you're never truly at ease. To feel relaxed where you live is so nice."

She especially loves that people take the time to stop and shoot the breeze here. "Nine times out of ten people will come into the shop and stop and have a chat. People are genuinely interested in your story and what brought you here. Where I come from people are always busy and rushing to get

Continued on next page...






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Where the people make the place.. *cont'd from previous page*

somewhere.”

A library supervisor and community development worker, Feona had never seen a completely volunteer-led community shop in action before coming here.

Attending the St Patrick's Day parade in the village last year, she discovered the wonderful bookshop upstairs and decided she'd love to help out.

“I was made to feel so welcome from my first day in the shop,” she shares.

“It really is a great initiative in such a beautiful place.”

Feona and her partner first fell in love with West Cork in

2009 but it was after they both took a six month career break to go on the trip of a lifetime to Costa Rica and South Africa that the couple decided they didn't want to live in the UK any more. They volunteered with a turtle nest conservation charity in Costa Rica and with literacy and LGBT charities in South Africa. It was a life-changing experience.

At home now in West Cork, Feona has joined The Tidy Towns group in Ballinspittle and the local biodiversity group and hopes to get back to running and perhaps dip into sea swimming.

“I feel safe here. In inner city London you're always on the lookout for hostile behaviour so you carry yourself differently, you're never truly at ease. To feel relaxed where you live is so nice.”

Fiona Daly Cairn

A trustee for The Family Resource Centre in Bandon, she is also volunteering there.

While she would like to get back into community development work, an area she's passionate about, she's working hard at getting to know the area and her local community first.

“As a gay couple, I don't know if Ireland would have been as welcoming to us 20 years ago but Ballinspittle and Courtmacsherry have been so accepting and inclusive and we've gotten to know so many people,” she says.

Vladyslv Vovk, 17, from Odessa in Ukraine is another emigrant who has felt the warmth of a Courtmacsherry welcome. The young man, who is doing a course at Cork College of Commerce to improve his english, is completing his work experience at the Courtmacsherry Community Shop. On his first day the committee gifted Vlad a second hand bike, to make life just that bit easier.

Vlad fled Ukraine with his mother, sister and her children and arrived in Ireland four months ago. His father stayed behind to fight for his country with Ukraine's armed forces.

Weekdays Vlad stays with his sister in Cork City while he attends college and at weekends he's in Courtmacsherry, where his mother is living. She's a highly trained pharmacist but because her english is limited she can't work here. “She's very homesick,” shares Vlad.

In Ukraine, Vlad was studying IT Languages and Programming. Every summer he worked at a small shop by the seaside. “The shop in Courtmacsherry is bringing back a lot of memories for me,” he shares.

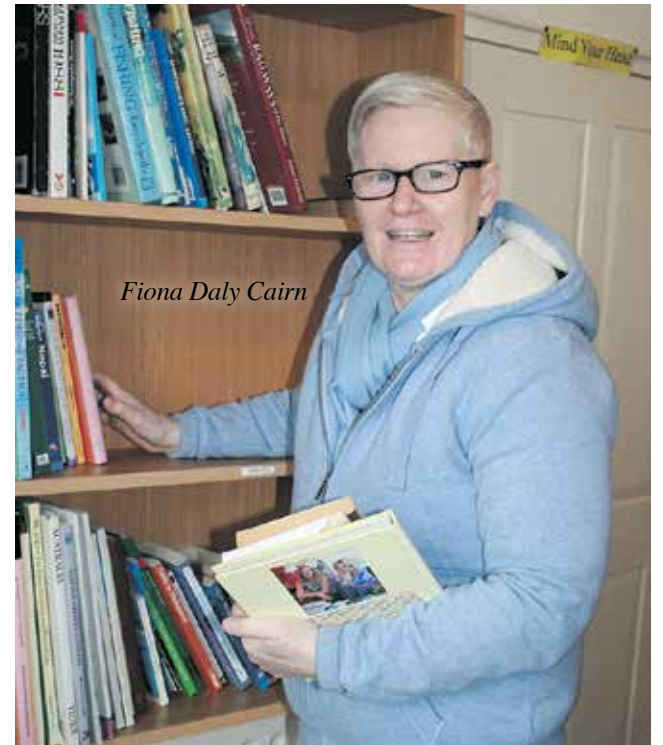
His experience in Ireland has been good so far. “People are quicker to show kindness here, to speak with you, strangers say hello! I really like living in Ireland.”

“People are quicker to show kindness here, to speak with you, strangers say hello! I really like living in Ireland.”

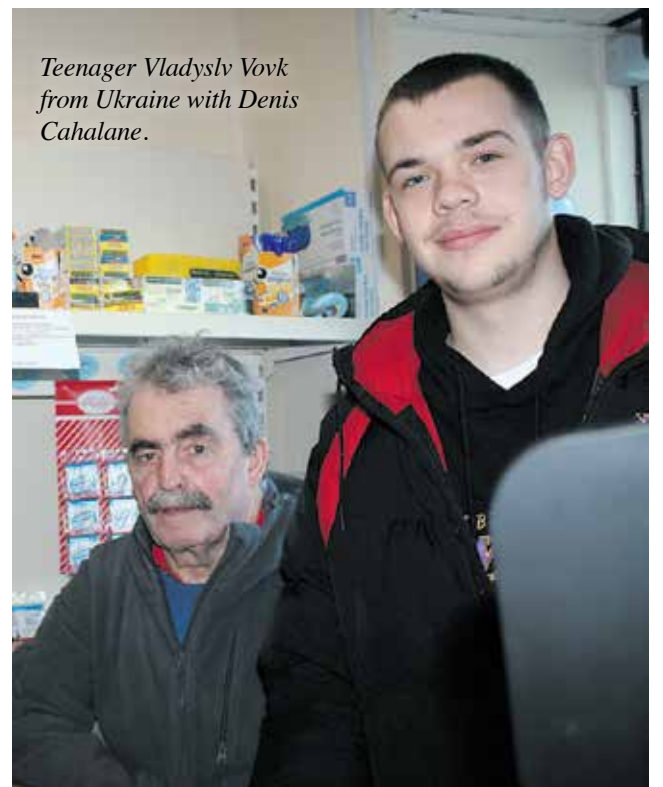
Vladyslv Vovk

Its brightly painted blue exterior a beacon in the centre of the village, Courtmacsherry Community Shop is a friend to anyone who needs it. An enterprise at the very heart of the local community that came together to achieve this common goal; like its local rowing club, it's a shining example of what can be achieved when we pull together.

Volunteers are needed to run the shop on a daily basis and anyone who is interested in becoming involved and can spare some time should email courtmacshop@gmail.com.



Fiona Daly Cairn



Teenager Vladyslv Vovk from Ukraine with Denis Cahalane.

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Committee members Sheila Desmond and Dara Gannon outside Courtmacsherry Community Shop



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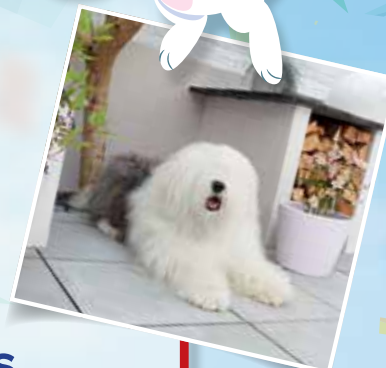
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€2.4 million to develop 70 new walking trails

Government has announced funding of €2.4 million to develop 70 new walking trails across the country. The major expansion of the Department's Walks Scheme will see the number of outdoor trails increase from 80 to 150 over the next two years.

The initiative is designed to boost outdoor recreation and rural tourism and will see the scheme work with over 2,500 farmers to open up the countryside to walkers, hikers cyclists and tourists.

Under the Walks Scheme, funding is provided to farmers and other landowners to maintain the trails that travel through their holdings.

At present, 2,200 farmers or landowners are participating – with a new call for expressions of interest now open.

Making the announcement on the Lung Lough Gara Way in Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, Minister Heather Humphreys stated: "Today, I am formally launching a call for expressions of interest as part of this initiative. I want this expansion to focus on counties which have



few or no trails approved under the Walks Scheme. We need to balance development and ensure that all counties have high quality trails for tourists and local communities alike.

"I am also committed to reviewing the number of Rural Recreation Officers currently funded by my Department to deliver the Walks Scheme, particularly where a county is approved a trail under the

Scheme and where there is currently no Rural Recreation Officer in place. I would therefore encourage potential applicants such as trail management committees, community groups or other similar entities to contact their nearest Local Development Company to make an expression of interest for inclusion in the scheme."

Applications for 35,000 free youth travel passes opening soon

Ireland South MEP Deirdre Clune is urging young Irish people to apply for a month's free travel across Europe.

Applications for the latest round of the DiscoverEU scheme will open on Wednesday, March 15 and run until Wednesday, March 29.

35,000 travel passes are on offer Europe-wide and they can be used for up to 30 days between June 2023 and September 2024.

MEP Clune says "this a fantastic opportunity for 17 and 18-year-olds to help cut the cost of their travel plans.

DiscoverEU gives young people from all backgrounds the chance to travel around the continent, predominantly by train, discovering new cultures and building new friendships.

It is an important investment in a young generation who have faced unprecedented challenges in recent years.

Many of those who have

used the scheme in the past say it boosted their independence and self-confidence.

There is also an environmental bonus, as it introduces young people to the possibilities of green travel."

To be eligible applicants must be born between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005.

Details and an online application: www.youth.europa.eu/discovereu_en

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers

To mark Enterprise Week in March, we have gone with the theme #makingithappen in this issue of West Cork People, as we speak to inspiring men and women in various sectors of business around West Cork, from technology and recruitment to farming and food. International Women's day (March 8) is also celebrated with some interesting interviews with progressive women from different walks of life such as Syrian entrepreneur Reham Ghafarji of Soap & More and Grainne O'Keeffe, CEO of the Ludgate Hub. It's fitting that another inspiring West Cork woman Holly Cairns, should take on her new role as leader of the Social Democrats so close to International Women's Day. She is the youngest leader of a political party in the Dáil.

Some of the business people featured like Gik Kelleher of Olives West Cork and Denis McCarthy, Ger McCarthy and John O'Connell of West Cork Distillers are part of the West Cork food and spirits revolution; both are in business 20 years. Others like Aisling O'Leary and Forbes Kelly of Revel and Emma Connolly of 'Flourish & Be' are newer enterprises. We also meet some of the people behind the Courtmacsherry Community Shop, a social enterprise at the very heart of a small village.

Listening to the inspiring stories of these West Cork people brought to mind our beginnings 20 years previously. As good as we are at marketing other people's businesses, we tend to forget our own. But I'm hoping the paper speaks for itself!

West Cork People started out in the attic room of one of its founders, Jean Farrelly, on McCurtain Hill in Clonakilty. There was a fair amount of winging it that first year but we had drive and weren't afraid of hard work and had plenty of fun along the way too. We were still in the time of dial-up internet so there were long drives to Wexford on very little sleep and lots of coffee so the paper would reach the printers in time. I can honestly say I've never felt tiredness like we experienced that first year as a start-up. I can also still remember the excitement when a local business booked our first half page ad space (you know who you are!) or when we got a grant from our Local Enterprise Office, which made it possible to employ someone, a plucky New Zealander living in Dunmanway. There were also challenges: Flooding, a recession, the pandemic and lots of other stuff in-between.

Someone that first year asked me what I was going to do when I ran out of people to interview. Twenty years on and I'm delighted to say there seems to be no fear of that.

While we've worked out of offices at both ends of Clonakilty town, today we're back where we started, right at the heart of it on the 'hill' and still enjoying every minute of it...I've no doubt there is another 20 years of stories in you all.

I hope you enjoy the read,

Until next month,

Mary



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Editor



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Creative Director



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Sales Consultant

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Holly Cairns TD

Social Democrats

New legislation will see credit unions grow as a key provider of community banking

According to Fine Gael Senator Tim Lombard, new legislation will help credit unions grow as a key provider of community banking in Cork.

Senator Tim Lombard said the

legislation, currently before the Dáil, will enable a wider availability of products across credit unions and enable members to access the widest possible range of financial services through their local branch.

“Our local credit unions and the role they play in both the Cork and national economy and our local communities is more important now than ever before.”

“A strong and collaborative

credit union movement can take advantage of the opportunity afforded by banks withdrawing from Ireland and from branch closures in towns across the county.

“This legislation will enable greater collaboration through the ability to establish corporate credit unions, these are credit unions whose members consist of other

credit unions. It will enable wider availability of products across the movement through changes to the common bond. It will give credit union boards a greater focus on strategic issues, through practical governance changes.”

He continued: “The Bill will see member services improved by providing flexibility to the common bond in four aspects - to

allow for referral of members to other credit unions to provide a service not provided by the referring credit union; to allow for loan participation; to allow for more businesses to be members; and to allow credit unions to lend to certain public sector entities designated by the Minister.”

Regional and local roads in County Cork to receive essential funding of €71.3m to improve quality

Regional and local roads in County Cork are set to be improved as a result of a much-needed funding boost. Senator Tim Lombard outlined that funding of €71,340,042 has been allocated to Cork County Council to invest in the maintenance and strengthening of local routes. “A total of €626 million will be invested in local regional and local roads around the country this year. This represents an increase in funding of €20m for road pavement and rehabilitation works. The funding package will allow approximately 3,100kms of regional and local roads to be maintained and 2,550kms to be strengthened,” Senator Lombard said.

“In our own area, I am pleased to see such a significant amount of funding being invested for

the protection and renewal of our existing regional and local road network. This funding will be utilised for a range of schemes from larger strategic road improvements to smaller scale road improvements, as well as critical bridge rehabilitation works. €4.6m has been allocated to Specific Improvement Grants which include €2m for the R595 Old Court, Skibbereen to Baltimore. Over €2m is allocated to Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works and €1.8m to Bridge Rehabilitation Works. Projects allocated funding under Safety Improvement Works include the R605 Innishannon to Kinsale road at Shipool, Baxters Bridge junction in Bandon and Western Road/Fernhill junction in Clonakilty.”

“An important part of this

allocation is the climate change adaptation grant, which was introduced for works on roads at risk due to the impact of climate change and severe weather events. Other features of this year’s investment programme include: Road pavement strengthening works; Drainage works; Preventative surface dressing work; Safety improvement works.

“The protection and upkeep of our road network is hugely important and protecting and repairing our roads quickly is infinitely preferable than allowing them fall into more expensive disrepair. I look forward to seeing Cork County Council utilising this funding to the maximum benefit for our road users and pedestrians.”

O’Sullivan to query Employability tender in the Dáil

Cork South West deputy Christopher O’Sullivan says it’s unthinkable that EmployAbility West Cork could lose its contract to a company from outside the county after the Department of Social Protection said EmployAbility’s services will be opened to tender later this year.

The service provides a supported employment service to people who may have obtained, or may be recovering from an illness, or any other types of disability with the goal to secure mainstream meaningful employment for its clients.

“EmployAbility Service West Cork work diligently, passionately and effectively to support people with disabilities to gain open labour market employment,” Deputy O’Sullivan said.

“It’s unthinkable that this organisation, which has delivered its services since 2001, could potentially lose this contract to

companies around the country with no previous experience in West Cork.”

“I’ve already raised this with Minister’s Norma Foley and Anne Rabbite. I will be raising this in the Dáil at the next opportunity.”

EmployAbility Service West Cork is one of 23 Supported Employment Agencies located throughout Ireland.

The service provides a supported employment service to people who may have obtained, or may be recovering from an illness, or any other types of disability. The goal of this service is to secure mainstream meaningful employment for the clients.

The service has operated throughout West Cork since 2001 having offices in Kinsale, Bandon, Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Bantry with outreach support in both Dunmanway and Castletownbere.



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FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

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

Noted in Irish folklore for its swiftness, alertness and agility, the hare was also regarded as a fairy animal associated with deception and witchcraft. In myth, the hare was linked to Celtic goddesses of fertility, both of spring and of the harvest.

One widespread belief among Irish country people was that witches would travel in the form of a hare to steal milk, especially on May Day. The most common version of the story tells of a dairy farmer who became suspicious when the milk yield of his cattle diminished considerably. He began to stay up at night to watch the cows, and soon saw a hare come and drink the milk from them. The farmer's dog gave chase, but succeeded only in drawing blood from its hindquarters as it fled. The farmer followed on and, coming to a nearby house, he asked the old woman who lived there if she had seen the hare. Despite the woman's denials, the farmer noticed that she was bleeding from her leg, and so realised that the hare had been the woman in disguise. For this reason, in the past any hares

The Irish hare

found among the cattle on May Day would often be killed by farmers. Farmers would sometimes try to prevent the theft from taking place. For example, it was the custom to sprinkle the fields with holy water on May morning. One story tells how a farmer accidentally sprinkled a hare hiding in the grass. As soon as the holy water touched the hare, it turned into an old woman crouched down in terror, caught in the act.

The hare was also associated with the end of the harvest. Traditionally one sheaf of corn was left uncut, and it was believed that a hare hid in it, only making a dash for safety at the very last minute. Finishing the harvest was called 'putting the hare out of the corn', and the farmer who was late with the harvest was told: 'we sent you the hare'. Finishing the harvest was also called 'putting out the 'cailleach' (hag)'. One story tells how the hag hid (in hare form) in the last sheaf, and was driven from farm to farm as the farmers finished the harvest, until she reached the field of the last man in the parish to cut his corn. In many parts of Ireland the last sheaf itself was called the hag or 'cailleach' for this reason.

There are many Irish proverbs about hares that emphasise its speed and alertness. To say 'Tabhair do phóig do chois an ghiorria' (kiss the foot of the hare) meant to say goodbye to something for ever. 'Codladh an ghiorria' (the hare's sleep) meant to sleep lightly, 'with one eye open'. According to another Irish proverb, the three traits of the hare were a keen ear, a bright eye and a quick run. An old belief dating from classical times was that the hare always sought shelter under the sow-thistle (bleachtán mín), widespread in cultivated and waste ground.

Hares appear sometimes in Irish folk tales and myths, usually in the context of hunting. According to one legend, Manannán Mac Lir, the Irish god of the sea, led King Conchubhar of Ulster to the hiding place of the maiden Deirdre by running

before his hounds in the form of a hare (This is part of the tragic love story of Deirdre and the Sons of Usna, perhaps the best known love story in Irish mythology). Part of the training of the Gaelic hero, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, was to keep hares in a field by successfully running before them, whichever way they went. Later, hares were among the animals hunted by the Fianna, and one poem tells of a prodigious week's hunting, when a total of six hundred hares were killed.

There is evidence that the hare was sacred in Celtic Britain. A well-known remark by Julius Caesar in his work 'De Bello Gallico', stated that the ancient Britons regarded hares as sacred and taboo as food. Boudicca, the British Celtic warrior queen, was said to have released a hare while invoking 'Andraste', goddess of battle and victory, before setting out to defeat the Romans in battle.

Hares were generally linked to the spring because of the prominence of the 'mad March hares', namely the male hares which compete with each other in sparring matches at this time.

Hares were involved in several folk cures and probably because of their speed, their feet were considered especially potent. In Ireland it was thought that the paw of a hare hung around the neck on May Day would cure ailments such as cramp and rheumatism. In England a hare or rabbit's foot was considered lucky, especially by sailors and fishermen, and it was used to brush the baby's face and so ward off evil spirits.

However traditionally the hare was regarded as an unlucky and even sinister animal. This idea is probably due to its nervousness and wildness, which caused man to associate it with the insecure and unknown side of his own nature. The Irish word for a hare (giorria) originally meant 'little wild one or even little deer'. Because it lived in the wilderness and avoided humans, the ancient Irish regarded the deer as a strange animal which consorted with otherworld beings, and

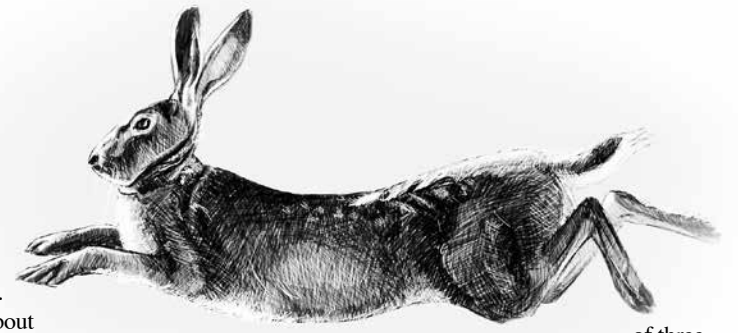
they saw the hare in a similar light. It was said that fairies could take the form of hares, an all-white hare being especially suspect.

This was a riddle about the hare: A hopper of ditches, a cutter of corn, and a brown little cow without any horns. There are many sayings about the hare; 'as swift as a hare' and 'it's hard to drive the hare from a bush she's not in'.

Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar Wilde, observed with regard to the widespread superstitions concerning the hag-hare which milked cows, especially on May morning when the door to the world of spirits is most open: "On May day if they find a hare among their cattle, they endeavour to kill her out of a notion that it is some old witch that had a design upon their butter".

Paradoxically, it was unlucky to kill a hare before sunrise. If one met a hare when setting out on a journey one should turn back as the hare presaged some unlucky happening.

Those who hunted hares often had strange experiences. Here is an example from folklore: Long ago there lived a man in this district by the name of O'Sullivan. He was very fond of hunting and used to spend much of his time out on the hills with his hounds. One day when he was out a beautiful hare rose before him. The dogs gave chase and O'Sullivan, who was very fleet of foot, followed behind. The chase lasted for hours, but in the evening the hare disappeared. O'Sullivan turned for home but at that moment he heard someone calling him. When he turned around he saw a beautiful lady, dressed in white, standing on a rock. The lady said to him: 'Why do you follow my hare?' O'Sullivan said that he thought that the hare was not owned by anyone. These words seemed to please the lady and taking a mug of milk she gave it to him and said: 'Take a drink for I know you are thirsty'. When O'Sullivan put the mug to his lips he was



changed into a bird and he flew back to his own house. When the woman of the house saw the bird, she caught it and killed it. The man then returned to his own form again and he told her the whole story.

In another story two huntsmen and their dogs were walking near a graveyard. One of the dogs ran into the graveyard, killed a hare, and returned to its owner with the hare in his mouth. The man took the hare and brought it home. After a while he got a severe pain in his hand, and he was treated by the best doctors. No cure was found, with the result that in time his hand withered and rotted off his body. He died soon afterwards and the storyteller concluded that it was the general view in the locality that there was something unhealthy in that hare.

If a pregnant woman encountered a hare, it was believed that her child might be born with a fissure in the upper lip, a harelip. To avoid the hare-lip, it was advised that such a woman should tear the hem of her dress, thus transferring the destined fissure to another object.

Another story from West Cork concerning the 'cailithín', or white hare, goes as follows: A very long time ago there lived in the townland of Reavouler, Drinagh, a 'cailithín'. This 'cailithín' was a white hare and he lived in a druid's fort. It was supposed to be a witch in the shape of a hare. The owner of this fort had seven cows, and each evening when his wife went to milk them out in the field, the hare came to the opposite side of her and sucked nearly a bucket of milk.

One day, a pack of huntsmen came to hunt this mysterious hare; they had hounds who could catch a hare at a distance

of three or four hundred yards. When they came to the fort, the hare started out. When the hounds saw it, they seemed reluctant to follow it, but on being urged on by the huntsmen, they started off in pursuit. Away then they rushed over hills, bogs and meadows with the horses and huntsmen close behind shouting and urging on the hounds. The hare jumped across a river into a rushy meadow where it hid itself from the hounds. The horses and hounds sprang across after it and they searched the meadow over and over again but they found no trace of the mysterious hare. However, there was one clump of rushes which they had not yet searched. As they approached it, a large bird, the like of which they had never seen, flew out and with a weird scream, went upwards into the air. On the other side of the river was a little mound on which the bird alighted. The huntsmen gazed at each other and when they turned again to the mound, there sat the white hare looking as fresh as ever. Again they began the chase, and away they sped over bogs and meadows as before, with the huntsmen urging on the hounds.

When they came to the druid's fort, the hare, with one jump, sprang over the fence and sat in the entrance hole. When the huntsmen came up, the hare disappeared down the hole. The huntsmen set the dogs after it, and then they heard some scrambling in the entrance hole, and a moment later there stood there a dog about the size of a large goat, with large hanging ears and eyes as big as saucers. It grinned so horribly that the huntsmen and hounds took fright and no one ever since chased the 'Cailithín'.

Fianna Fáil appoints new Bantry Local Area Representative

Fianna Fáil has appointed Danny Crowley as a new Local Area Representative for Bantry Local Electoral Area.

A native of the Beara peninsula Danny said: "I am delighted to be appointed and look forward to again working with our public representatives in highlighting the many genuine concerns of people living in

west Cork.

"Living in Adrigole, I'm acutely aware of the many challenges facing rural communities. Farming and fishing will always be important to this area however Government policies in recent years have failed to recognise the continuing decline in these sectors.

"Public confidence will need to be restored regarding both European and national policies around these sectors and this can only be achieved by meaningful discus-

sions with stakeholders."

The former Fianna Fáil councillor for Cork County Council is calling for incentives to be introduced to encourage young people to stay in West Cork.

"We need some incentive for our youth to encourage them to look at staying in West Cork so we can retain the many services that are under constant threat of reduced hours or in some cases closure due to population decline."

He wants to see current

planning guidelines need to be amended to ensure local young people are given the opportunity to build a home on a site that may have been given to them by a parent or relative.

"This has always been our way in West Cork to provide affordable housing for the next generation and current planning guidelines, if not amended, will decimate rural communities," he said.

Danny added that he was looking forward to working very

closely with Fianna Fáil TD for Cork South-West TD Christopher O'Sullivan and Senator Denis O'Donovan, along with other elected representatives in finding solutions to many of local issues.

Deputy O'Sullivan said: "I know what a hard worker Danny is, I previously worked with him on Cork County Council. Danny has a reputation for being a trojan worker in terms of his work as a county councillor especially in the Bantry and Beara Peninsula areas.

"I'm really excited that he has been appointed an area representative. The entire Beara peninsula needs as much representation as possible because it can be very isolated.

"I know Danny will be a great addition along with the existing sitting councillor, Fianna Fáil councillor Patrick Gerard Murphy. We'll have two really strong Fianna Fáil reps in an area that need it."

Refugees thank their Bandon hosts on anniversary of Ukraine war

Three refugees from Ukraine have thanked the couple who welcomed them into their Bandon home, making their remarks days ahead of the first anniversary of the start of the conflict.

Andrew and Caroline Coleman hosted Victoria and her son Vlad in their home from May until November last year. When the mother and son moved into a nearby apartment to get some

additional living space, Tetianna moved in and is staying with the couple to the present.

Victoria, who comes from the central city of Kropyvnytskyi, paid tribute to Andrew and Caroline: "I like Andrew's family and their traditions. They know how to welcome guests by making parties and picnics. At first, my parents didn't support me coming but after telling them about the peaceful situation

here, they are praying for the kind Irish people who offered me a home."

Tetianna, who comes from Kyiv, thanked the Colemans and added: "I don't feel alone and I am happy here. Irish people are very merry, always smiling and laughing. They are very hospitable, welcoming, helpful and open-hearted."

Andrew, who works as Church and Community Officer

at Christian Aid Ireland, spoke of his hopes for the future: "Tetianna and Victoria are part of our family now. We are looking forward to visiting them in Ukraine when the war is over."

Victoria, Vlad and Tetianna are among more than 6,000 Ukrainian refugees living in County Cork and among nearly 8 million people who have crossed Ukraine's borders to reach safety. Another 5.5 million remain displaced within the country. Many initially abandoned their homes with only a few days' worth of clothing and possessions. Across Ukraine, people have had to cope with the bombing of residential areas, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and a winter without reliable heat or electricity.

Working through local partner organisations, Christian Aid has reached around 800,000 people within Ukraine as well as Ukrainian refugees in Hungary and Romania. As well as providing frontline medical support and support to shelters housing displaced people, the charity has also distributed cash so that people have the money to pay for essentials and handed out grants to community groups to give them the freedom to decide for themselves what needs to be prioritised in their local area.



L-R, Andrew Coleman and his wife Caroline (wearing orange) have been hosting Ukrainian refugee Tetianna (2nd from left) since November. From May until November last year, they hosted Victoria (wearing glasses) and her son Vlad.

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Tom Barry's flying column remembered at Crossbarry

The 102nd anniversary commemoration of the battle of Crossbarry will

be held on Sunday March 19 at 1.30pm. Councillor Gillian Coughlan will be the main

speaker this year. Gillian was also invited to speak at Crossbarry last year, whilst Mayor of Cork County, but unfortunately had to withdraw at the last minute due to a Covid infection. At very short notice Aindreas Moynihan TD kindly gave the oration on that occasion.

Gillian was elected to Bandon Town council as a FF Councillor in 2009 and has been a member of Cork County Council since 2016. Gillian has been prominent in promoting the Irish language and culture and has been to the fore in remembering those who fought

for Irish independence; she has spoken eloquently at several commemorations during the centenary period.

On March 19, 1921, 104 IRA volunteers, under the command of Tom Barry, outsmarted and outfought a much larger force of over 1,000 British soldiers who were trying to encircle and destroy the flying column in and around Crossbarry. Four IRA volunteers gave their lives fighting for Ireland on that day; Con Daly, Ballinascorthy, Jeremiah O'Leary, Corrin, Leap, Peter Monahan, Bandon and Charlie Hurley, Baurleigh Kilbrittain.

The British suffered heavy casualties – it is believed that well over 30 were killed. It was the biggest land battle fought during the War of Independence and was the flying column's finest hour.

With Crossbarry following on the heels of the IRA's success at Kilmichael a few months earlier, it became increasingly clear to the British that they could not achieve a military victory against the IRA. The British entered negotiations with Sinn Féin a few months later. Tom Barry, IRA commander at Crossbarry, said of that period

in his book *Guerilla Days in Ireland*: "that it was the end of an era but alas not the end of our guerilla days". He was referring of course to the tragic Civil War that followed in 1922 and 1923 and the consequences of a divided Ireland following the Treaty.

The organisers look forward to commemorating the men of the West Cork flying column of the 111 Cork Brigade in the usual and fitting way at Crossbarry on Sunday March 19, the exact date of the Battle of Crossbarry. "Tá faillte roimh gach éinne."

CROSSBARRY COMMEMORATION

Sunday 19th of March, 1.30pm

Guest speaker: Cllr. Gillian Coughlan

Ta fáilte roimh gach éinne

*Eagraithe ag an gCoiste Chomóraidh
Chill Mhichíl & Crois a' Bharraigh*



Reject racism

Imagine being at the receiving end of racism. You are rejected or sidelined just because of your racial or ethnic background or because of the colour of your skin. There is no consideration of your value, your skills, your personality, your difficulties, your talents. You don't get a fair chance. You can imagine the feeling of anger, frustration and helplessness that this produces in the individual.

Moving on from the level of the individual to society as a whole, progress for the common good of all will be held back if the well of anger and frustration and the neglect of skills and talents caused by racism, are not eliminated.

Life and nature can throw enough problems at us that are beyond our control (pandemics, war, natural disasters), so we need a society that works well, cooperatively and fairly for the greater common good in order to overcome the challenges. We cannot afford the extra strife and waste of talent that can come from racism (not the only problem of our own making, admittedly).

Racism can reside in us as

individuals, and it can reside in the workings of the state – anywhere, not just in Ireland. In individuals, how does it arise? Does it come from fear of the stranger? From ignorance or lack of education or 'lack of manners'? From a dodgy sense of superiority? From uncritical acceptance of the hate message propagated by agitators using "the racism game" as a manipulative tool for other purposes? Whatever; – take your own stance against racism at your personal level and leave it to the social scientists to develop the strategies that best tackle these different causes in a targeted manner.

Meanwhile, at your own level: cross-check your sources of information that try to place the causes of our problems at the door of some ethnic group, or that tell you that some people of a different skin colour are the problem. Stop and think about your own attitudes to people of a different ethnic background – we have some embedded notions that came to us as part of the baggage of life, from a time when things were different. Become aware of the benefits that derive from the

greater diversity of ethnic types that exists in Ireland today.

In the lifetime of this writer, Ireland was once a very homogenous place, so maybe we were not tested on our 'racism credentials'. Ireland is not so homogenous now, so we may need to make more effort to maintain the harmony that existed when 'we were all the same'. Actually, that harmony (somewhat superficial and sometimes enforced), was often oppressive – there was not much space for anybody who was, or wanted to be, different. Many emigrants who left did so not just for reasons of economic necessity; they were not ethnically different to the rest of us, but our lack of tolerance of 'the different ones' squeezed them out. Our lack of tolerance in those cases was not textbook racism, but it was essentially the same affliction of society, and it impoverished our society. We failed to make space for the diversity then. Let's not allow that to happen again.

Racism can also reside in the workings of the state. As individuals, we can demand of our TDs to take up the banner against racism in the conduct

of their work, and we should challenge those public representatives who sometimes try to play the racism theme.

Already, in 2006, a report called 'BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: Tackling racism in Ireland at the level of the State and its institutions' noted 'It is essential that we in Ireland understand and accept that racism exists here. Racial discrimination persists in virtually every society, and in every state's institutions. This does not mean that Ireland is a racist or xenophobic state, but rather accepts the reality and the challenge. Where states show the courage of their conviction to firmly identify and weed out discriminatory laws, and discriminatory policies and practices within its institutions, it can be combated. We can still learn from the terrible mistakes made by other countries over many years.' (report by Louise Beirne and Dr Vinodh Jaichand, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUIG, at the request of Amnesty International).

That message is still valid today. Reject racism and work to overcome it in Ireland.

Doras urges politicians to avoid adopting the language of the far-right

Refugee and migrant rights organisation Doras has called on politicians, commentators and others with influence to avoid the use of language that sends negative messages about asylum seekers and refugees.

In recent weeks Doras has seen a number of politicians use terms like "illegal" that call into question the right of some people to seek international protection or asylum.

"Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right, and everyone who does so is by definition lawfully resident in our State," says Doras CEO John Lannon.

"References by government politicians and others to people arriving illegally only add to the confusion that might exist amongst the public, and plays into the discourse of the far right. We have had gangs chanting "get them out" and "burn them out" outside accommodation centres with innocent people, including children, looking out in fear and confusion. This is not the type of Ireland most of us want. The government has a responsibility to keep asylum seekers safe while they are in the care of the State. With this in mind, they should communicate the rights of refugees and asylum seekers clearly through a national campaign and

ensure communities are fully informed, rather than relying on what is often misinformation shared online by those with their own agendas.

"It is also important to remember that many people escaping from war, persecution or exploitation may not be in a position to present identity documents when they arrive in Ireland, such is the nature of fleeing from a war zone or a crisis. We're talking about people we work with every day, including victims of trafficking, and those who have undertaken horrendous journeys over land and sea, which in some cases results in documents being lost or stolen. It's the grim reality regardless of how some opportunistic voices seek to spin it".

"We're calling on Minister for Justice Simon Harris and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris to re-think practices that could restrict access to international protection, like travelling to international airports in other countries to check people's travel documents."

Doras say that rather than focusing on restricting access to the international protection system in Ireland, the government should invest in putting the necessary resources in place to process asylum applications fairly, efficiently and properly.

Green Party delivers new bus routes for Skibbereen

Rory Jackson, Green Party rep, has warmly welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD, of new bus services for Baltimore to Union Hall and the 270 Skibbereen to Killarney.

The announcement was made this week by the Green Party leader at the launch of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan for 2023 in Tullamore, Co. Offaly. The new routes form part of a wider cohort of 67 new

or enhanced bus services as part of the Green Party's strategy to dramatically improve public transport in rural Ireland.

Welcoming the news, Rory Jackson said; "It is wonderful to see this investment in public transport services in the Skibbereen area. For too long, governments in Ireland have only catered for car-owners, but this is not viable or sustainable for everyone. Since taking office, we have been tireless in offering people real alternatives

for getting around.

The Green Party has rolled up its sleeves and is investing in making it easier, safer and cheaper to travel around rural Ireland. The lives of ordinary people will be better off for years to come as a result of these decisions."

The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan was launched in October 2021. The plan identifies gaps in the public transport network in non-urban areas and proposes options to

address these gaps. The push to increase rural routes comes on top of the Green Party's success in cutting public transport fares by 20 per cent until the end of 2023 and an additional 50 per cent for those using a Young Travel card.

Today's announcement marks an exciting few weeks of investment for investment in rural Ireland. Thursday saw Minister Ryan allocate €63m for the development of new Greenways as well as hundreds of millions

of euro in funding for new bypasses to allow people enjoy their town centres once more without 24/7 car congestion.

Last fortnight, Minister Ryan also allocated €290m for 1,200 walking and cycling projects across the country.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Eamon Ryan, said: "As Minister for Transport, one of my key priorities has been improving rural transport and we have already had success connecting towns and villages

around Ireland. We want to build on this and go further to make travel by bus a real option for more people.

It is clear that when given the choice, many people choose public transport. Not only is it cheaper and more environmentally friendly, but we are making service more accessible, frequent and reliable. Public transport, both rural and urban, is a key to meeting Ireland's climate goals."



HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

There is an old Russian communist joke that goes something like this: a local communist meeting is taking place in a village outside Moscow and the party leaders are attending, to indoctrinate the local peasants. The leader asks the assembled crowd, 'If you had ten cows what would you do?' One of the peasants replies correctly, 'If I had ten cows, I would keep five cows and give the other five to the party for redistribution'. The leader asks another question to a different man, putting it to him, 'If you had ten pigs what would you do?' The other man promptly responds, 'I would keep all the pigs'. When the party leader asks him why he would do such a thing, the man simply replies, 'because I have ten pigs'.

The moral of the tale is that people tend to support political and government systems when they feel they can benefit from them. Paraphrasing John Adams, one of the founding fathers of the USA, 'If you're not a liberal when you're 25, you have no heart. If you're not a conservative by the time you're 35, you have no head.' This has always been the trouble for the left. How do they hang onto voters, once their voters' circumstances have been improved? This is the tricky tightrope balancing act that Sinn Féin are currently engaging in. In opposition, without control of the state's purse strings nor power to implement legislation, it is easy to demand grand socialist schemes: houses for those without, more money to pay electricity bills, more medical cards for low income workers. Those with more, pay more. It's all very economically appealing when caught in a 'cost of living' storm. The question remains, do you continue to support such policies when you no longer become a benefactor of the system but become the net contributor as you later advance in life? This has always been the problem faced by socialist leaning parties. Throughout the history of socialist revolutions, be it Russia, Spain, Cuba, Venezuela, the aim is to appeal to the less well off, the masses of workers who create the money but never receive the profits. Astonishing-

Why the Labour Party has failed to dominate British politics

ly, those who are lower down in the economic strata, can often become more conservative than the conservatives themselves. Brexit illustrated this when many first generation immigrants supported it, in the belief that future immigrants would compete for their jobs if Britain remained in the EU. It was a masterful stroke of misinformation and fear stoking by Boris and co that secured large chunks of working class vote to get Brexit over the line. Remember it was the Irish Immigrants working on the docks of New York that rioted when the slaves were emancipated.

I want to look at a major turning point in political history – the creation of the Labour party in the UK at the turn of the 20th century. Since Britain first introduced a very limited monarchical parliament in the 15th century, only the very rich, powerful and landed, spoke for the rest of the people. And though the enfranchise was gradually widened over the ensuing centuries, it was never great enough to include most men and women that could tip the balance in favour of the 'common hordes'. This changed after the Great War when, the 'Representation of the People Act of 1918' granted the vote to women over the age of 30 who met a property qualification or were married to registered male voters, and the vote to all men over the age of 21. With the stroke of a pen, there were now more working class voters in the UK than middle or upper class ones. It had always puzzled me why the Labour Party, the party of the working classes, was not swept into power by the wave of new voters that had been unleashed onto the voting register? They did first achieve political success in the 1920s, but it was both brief and unsuccessful minority governments under Ramsey McDonald. It wasn't until Clement Attlee from 1945-51, the Labour regained power creating the National Health Service, and improving social services to take people out of poverty. And that's the rub. People's lives improved and yet Labour had to wait until 1974 to govern again.

Let's look at the reasons why Labour failed to dominate the political landscape, despite having claimed to represent the majority of people on the island, from a class perspective, from 1918.

The first thing to acknowledge is that the Liberal Party, which had been in existence



Keir Hardie a founder of the Labour Party, speaking to trade unionist workers at Trafalgar Square, 1908

since 1859, was the main opposition party to the Tories. Their membership and party stemmed from self-made men, as opposed to the landed classes and old money. They also appealed to the growing but small middle class voter of the 19th century. They had of course been responsible for the heralding in of the old age pension and other measures that meant they had some appeal to people less off than the Conservative Party core membership. Labour was often in battle with liberal candidates at the polls, as much as it was with Conservatives ones, thus in many cases their vote was split. In the British 'first past the post' system, the Conservatives benefitted as long as Liberal and Labour stood against each other.

The fact that labour was founded in 1900, and that MPs were only paid from 1911, also meant that before 1918, Labour had precious little time to create a political machine on an even keel to the others. What good is having a body of voters behind you, if you don't have enough candidates to tap into it? Ultimately, promising Labour politicians up to 1911, had to get funded by trade union dues, even to just get to the starting line. The Conservatives and Liberal politicians were wealthy men of inheritance, land or enterprise. A working class candidate was a rare thing.

The Labour party in its infancy also made a few fundamental mistakes that certainly alienated even working class voters from giving them support. The industrial union had created a world where towns and cities grew exponentially and rural towns became depopulated. Few millionaires were made in

big industry, made possible by the low waged and hard worked employees. On the surface, one would think from 1918, that it would be a simple matter of tapping into the disgruntled man and woman. Keir Hardie and other Labour politicians saw firsthand the devastating effect of alcohol on the working class and campaigned hard on a teetotaling ticket, promising laws that would curtail the wicked liquor that had devastated so many working class lives. On the surface, this makes sense and morally was a just crusade. In reality, the working classes of the early 20th century, with little else to elevate the drudgery of their hard lives outside of alcohol and gambling; saw getting rid of alcohol as an anathema to them rather than a cure to their poverty. Conservative candidates and capitalists with vested interests in brewing and alcohol, preached a different tune and thus many working classes

voted conservative rather than voting a dry Labour Candidate. The Conservatives (like the republicans in modern USA, were also very good at tapping into working class patriotism). Wars create xenophobia and many working class voters were lulled into supporting imperialist Britain, under the pretence of keeping British goods and markets strong, to prevent the cost of living going up. Thatcher repeated the trick in 1982, with her ludicrous Falkland war campaign, which kept her in power for another term.

Labour also missed a trick, failing to tap into a massive reservoir of potential voters – women. The suffragettes, in their attempt to make a splash and bring attention to the cause of women suffrage, began violent campaigns, arson attacks and hunger strikes. Instead of whole-heartedly supporting them (at that stage women could not vote and maybe this was

part of the reason) many Labour candidates condemned them like most of the male politicians. It seems the traditional nature of Edwardian England was not ready for strong female voices. There were exceptions of course, most significantly future Labour Prime Minister Ramsey McDonald who crossed the floor in a fit of rage, condemning the government's force feeding of the female prisoners. He wasn't alone, but Labour never formed a unified front to support the suffragettes, something that was remembered in 1918, when many of the newly-enfranchised women voted with their class. It was a missed opportunity by Labour that could have garnered universal female support otherwise.

A major factor that can't be discounted was that many people feared 'socialism'. The bloody and murderous Russian revolution in 1917 had devastated that country. Socialism was still a relatively new political concept and was often associated with Marxism or Communism. It was hard for Labour to get its messaging right and it didn't help that many candidates were outspoken in favour of hard socialism. Having an ill-defined manifesto is of course the most damaging aspect of any party, as voters need a clear indication of what they are supporting. Even today, American Republicans and British Conservatives represent low tax regimes, protectionism and a hawkish patriotism. It's not everyone's cup of tea, but its appeal is in its clear and transparent messaging. The left continues to have mixed signals and even in Ireland remains splintered and divided, despite the vast sways of people who could benefit from their policies.



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West Cork business invited to join Local Enterprise Week 2023

Businesses across North and West Cork are being encouraged to take advantage of the array of events and topics at this year's Local Enterprise Week, taking place from the March 6-10. In Cork County, over 31 events are scheduled to take place in person and online, covering themes such as digital, resilience, productivity and inspiration.

The theme this year is 'Making It Happen' and will focus on helping businesses to look forward and to future proof for the years ahead.

In addition to local events, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) are offering five national 'Spotlight Events' online. Taking place daily during Enterprise Week, the events are open to all small businesses and entrepreneurs, are free to join and cover everything from digitalisation and exporting to future proofing and boosting

your business online.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins invites Cork businesses to take advantage of the weeklong series of events, "Local Enterprise Week is the perfect opportunity for businesses to immerse themselves into a specific area of interest and gather information on a topic that may be important to their business now or in the future. Our LEO's in Cork North and West and South Cork offer a range of supports for small businesses and start-ups. I would encourage our business owners and entrepreneurs in Cork County to take engage with their LEO and to take a look at the Local Enterprise Week programme to help start or grow their business."

Chief Executive of Cork County Council, Tim Lucey detailed how Cork County Council's Local Enterprise Offices are supporting homegrown



Pictured is Mayor of Cork County, Cllr Danny Collins and Kevin Curran, Head of Enterprise at Cork County Councils Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West with Lisa Finn, Business Advisor, LEO Cork North & West, Joan Kelleher, Business Advisor LEO Cork North & West and Jamie Cuthbert, Business Advisor LEO Cork North & West for the Launch of National Enterprise Week 2023. Pic Sean Jefferies Photography.

businesses, "Our Local Enterprise Offices have supported thousands of small businesses and entrepreneurs in Cork County. Figures released for 2022 show that our Local Enterprise Offices Cork North and West and South Cork financially supported 433 small businesses

in their portfolio across the county, these companies in turn employ 2,272 people. Since their establishment in 2014 they have provided a suite of supports to small businesses including mentoring, training, sector specific expert consultancy and financial supports to help

guide businesses at any stage of their development."

For more information on Local Enterprise Week and to find information on the National Spotlight Events and specific events taking place in Cork County, visit www.localenterprise.ie

Local Enterprise Week is an annual initiative from the Local Enterprise Offices and supported by Enterprise Ireland, Local Authorities and the Government of Ireland.

Learn the tricks of using social media for business at free Clonakilty evening networking event

As part of Enterprise Week the Local Enterprise Office and Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce will co-present a free evening networking event in An Sughan, Clonakilty on Tuesday, March 7, 7-9pm that is open to Chamber members and non-members.

During the evening guest speakers Laura Curtin from Platinum Communications and Kela Hodgins of Dunowen House will demonstrate how social media can benefit local businesses.

Laura Curtin explains that: "For any business it is important to understand the power of social media, dispel any myths



Laura Curtin

around it, identify what will work best for the organisation, and build confidence in using it.

"We will identify the tools and resources required for proactively engaging with

social media and discuss good examples of social media engagement. We will also review participants' own social media activity in a Q&A session."

Deirdre O'Mahony, Senior Enterprise Development Officer at LEO Cork North & West, will also be outlining the benefits of their Mentor Programme to help you grow your business.

Refreshments will be provided by An Sughan as people have the opportunity to chat and make new contacts after the presentation.

Booking is essential. Go to www.localenterprise.ie and look for online bookings or email chamber@clonakilty.ie.

Leading West Cork businesses to success

The Ludgate Hub in Skibbereen is delighted to announce the commencement of the Interreg NPA project 'Target Circular – Supporting SMEs to Success'. Target Circular, which kicked off on January 25 will improve the service that business support organisations offer client SME's with the aim of increasing their chances of business success. This wide-ranging service includes training to business support organisations in our regions and informing policymakers about how to improve the services they offer to SMEs.

Target Circular will be led by Niall O'Leary of MTU's Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence. The project comprises an excellent team of seven Partners and two



Fiona Ryan

Associate Partners from Ireland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland – all actively engaged in supporting businesses. The programme is reflective of its commitment to the region and will run for three years.

Fiona Ryan, Entrepreneurship Manager with the Ludgate Hub, said, "I am delighted on

behalf of Ludgate to be part of this consortium, to deliver on the various tasks assigned and to host all partners in Skibbereen when they visit later in the year. The ultimate aim is to support sustainable based SMEs development and success for our region. The programme has the unique ability to link SMEs within the West Cork region with those in other partner regions." This project complements the overall mission of Ludgate, which is a not for profit organisation with the aim to lead Rural regeneration in West Cork through digital transformation, learning, and sustainable action.

If you are interested in learning more about the project, please email fiona@ludgate.ie



Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West

North: [022] 43235 West: 023 8834700
www.localenterprise.ie/CorkNorthandWest/



The Cork County Council **Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West** are planning an exciting week ahead of Local Enterprise Week 2023, which takes place from Monday 6th until Friday 10th March 2023. The schedule will see a number of workshops and training events for clients across all sectors and all stages of business development, from start-ups to established small businesses.

Monday 6th March

Start Your Own Business Programme

(Day #1 of 7, finishing 27th March)

An Entrepreneur Like You

Time: 10am to 12pm. Location: Corrin Events Centre, Fermoy
Networking opportunity

A spotlight on the entrepreneurial journey of three Cork entrepreneurs. Be inspired by real stories of what it takes to start and manage your own business, with a panel discussion.

Tuesday, 7th March

Trading Online Voucher Information Webinar

Time: 9.30am-11.30am.

Sign up to this free webinar to find out more about the scheme, eligibility criteria, what research you must undertake and the application process.

10 Steps To Self-Employment

Time: 10am-1pm. (7th & 10th March)

This two-morning online programme is recommended before a client partakes in our intense Start Your Own Business Programme. By the end of this programme, you should be able to decide if self-employment and being an entrepreneur is for you. If you decide to proceed with your business idea, the next step would be to partake in one of our intense Start Your Own Business Programmes.

Branding unpacked: From Business to Brand

Time: 11am-1pm. Location: Kinsale Hotel & Spa, Kinsale

This in-person workshop is designed for people who are already in business. As the term branding can be sometimes confusing, this workshop will help you get under the hood of branding, explaining simple and powerful elements that are often overlooked and misunderstood.

Social Media Webinar

Time: 3pm-5pm.

This webinar will cover social media and its relevance to your business and different sales and marketing opportunities.

Wednesday 8th March

Social Media Webinar

Time: 10am-12pm.

This webinar will cover social media and its relevance to your business and different sales and marketing opportunities.

Enhancing your brand through Visual Merchandising

Time: 2pm-4.30pm. Location: Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery

This in-person practical workshop will help you discover how to boost your sales with visual merchandising, with tools and techniques to display your products and services.

Thursday 9th March

LEO Finance & Grant Information Webinar

Time: 10am-11.30am.

This Webinar will provide you with information on the LEO Grant & Financial Supports available to your business

Export Webinar

Time 12pm-2pm.

This online webinar will help businesses with the practicalities of worldwide exporting, to include UK, Europe, America, Australia, and Asia.

Starting your own food business

Time: 2pm-5.30pm. The Ludgate Hub, Skibbereen

This half day in-person workshop is targeted at anyone thinking about or within the first 24 months of starting a food business and will provide a roadmap to the possible journey ahead.

Friday 10th March

Digitalisation For Business: Making Your Business Work For You

Time: 10am-11.30am. Charleville Park Hotel, Cork

This event will help established businesses understand what the term "digitalisation" means, why it is important and what is involved in making your business more digital.

For more information or to
book your slot follow the QR
code or visit our website.



www.localenterprise.ie/CorkNorthandWest/



In partnership with



#makingithappen

Olives at the centre of the West Cork food revolution

In need of larger premises, this month Olives West Cork moves into a new home in the original Clonakilty Black Pudding factory. As he approaches 20 years in business, proprietor **Gerald ‘GIK’ Kelleher** reflects on how Olives West Cork has grown from humble beginnings to now supplying local artisan products and Mediterranean fare at seven markets a week, as well as to some of the finest restaurants and delis throughout Cork and beyond.



extensively whilst travelling in the eighties and nineties which, “really opened my eyes to some amazing cuisine. I think I lived on hummus and hot Turkish flatbreads, straight out of a wood-fired oven, for six months while I lived in Turkey.” He also spent time living in the Japanese city of Osaka and San Francisco.

Gerald recalls looking through recipe books back in the eighties and being constantly frustrated that some ingredients were either completely alien or just not available in Ireland. Thankfully, wandering Irish, and the new Irish, introduced us to other food cultures, and the markets of today are a completely different scene. “Nowadays it’s rare that you can’t find what you’re looking for to put together any recipe,” Gerald says. “The quality and

Like anybody who grew up in pre-90s Ireland, Gerald was raised on a diet that was wholesome but not terribly exotic. “We ate well and all our meals were home-cooked by my mum. A real fan-

cy treat back then would have been something like a prawn cocktail for starters, a delicious lasagne for dinner and, on very special occasions, a strawberry pavlova for dessert!”

His food horizons broadened



selection of food and ingredients available, particularly at the markets, is mind-blowing and inspiring.”

Olives West Cork has played a major part in West Cork’s food revolution. A lot of Gerald’s raw products are sourced from the olive-growing regions of the Mediterranean. “We always strive to source the best grade and top quality products where we can. From there we create freshly-marinated olives using local herbs and veg where possible. We also create delicious pestos, tapenades and hummus, again sourced with the best available ingredients. We also operate our own smokehouse and use these smoked products, such as sundried tomatoes, to create our signature oak-smoked sundried tomato pesto. It’s a lot of work, and more than most would be willing to put in, but it is well worth it judging by our customer feedback.”

Also available on the Olives West Cork stall is fresh Macroom buffalo mozzarella, burrata and other classic cheeses, locally cured meats, garlic, and a wide range of essential ingredients to satisfy the wildest foodie dreams.

The move to new premises gives Olives West Cork space to continue to grow. Gerald explains what prompted him to take that big step. “The premises that we’d been in for 15 years at Lisavaird Coop is due to be demolished to allow for exciting new developments at the Coop. We’d had a great run of it in our time there – Pat Moriarty, Keith, Loretta, Theresa, Eileen, Dennis, and all the crew there have been so good to us. I can’t thank them all enough for their years of support and good wishes.

“We are very lucky to be now renting from a true legend in the Clonakilty business community, Colette Twomey



of Clonakilty Black Pudding. We have put a lot of work into getting the original pudding factory back into shape and ready for a new era. We’ve also received invaluable support from Deirdre O’Mahony and the crew at the Local Enterprise Office. It’s very exciting for us and we would like to thank Colette and Deirdre for giving us this opportunity, and for all their support and advice.”

Reflecting on successes and challenges Gerald has some sage comments, “Our biggest accomplishment isn’t one specific thing. Right now I would have to say that I’m proud to have been in business for nearly 20 years and that we’ve maintained a great relationship with our customers, many of whom are longstanding. It makes a huge difference to enjoy the customers that you work with, it’s just a constant positive feedback loop. The spirit of West Cork markets never ceases to inspire me. The attitude of the producers and traders mixed with the wonderful support of customers creates such a positive community spirit that really is hard to beat. I’m very attracted to positive energy and the positive force

that our community inspires is a constant in my life. I’m very thankful for that.

“I’ve come to believe that the biggest challenges tend to be more psychological and for the most part your worst fears never really materialise in the way you imagine. The uncertainties of recent times are all challenges but how you respond to these really is what it’s all about. The rest is just good, hard honest work!”

Although he maintains that because he loves what he does, it never seems like too much hard work, for balance Gerald enjoys spending quality time with his wife Kathleen Holland, and their three boys Leon, Aran and Sam at their home in Woodfield, Clonakilty. He also makes time for listening to music and for the odd pint with a good bunch of friends. The recipe for a happy and fulfilling life!

You’ll find Olives West Cork market stalls all through the week: Macroom (Tuesdays); Kinsale (Wednesdays); Clonakilty (Fridays); Bantry (Fridays); Skibbereen (Saturdays); Douglas (Saturdays) and Schull (Sundays, from Easter until September).



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A place 'where everybody knows your name'

#makingithappen

Time passes slowly when you're enjoying a freshly brewed coffee while watching the world go by from behind the handsome glass window that frames the front of Revel, Clonakilty's friendly and relaxed coffee bar and concept store. For Revel owners Aisling O'Leary and Forbes Kelly however, it's been a whirlwind of a first year. Not ones to waste time, especially when they feel they're on to a good thing, the couple, who wed just prior to opening the store, have married, opened a business and are looking forward to welcoming their baby girl to the family in June, all since they first laid eyes on each other back in June 2020. It all started over a cup of coffee of course...

Forbes was running Revel Culture Coffee from a converted caravan outside Quill's in Glengarriff at the time. Introduced by Aisling's sister, the pair felt a connection on their first date. "We were both very honest with each other about our hopes, dreams and feelings and held nothing back. I described my vision for a concept store and we discovered it was a shared dream," says Aisling.

Forbes sold his business in Glengarriff and two days after getting married – in a surprise ceremony in Aisling's parents' polytunnel in Shannon Vale – the couple viewed the premises on McCurtain Hill in Clonakilty.

After two hard months refurbishing the premises with the unwavering support of Aisling's brother, the dream became a reality, as the couple opened the door to Revel on March 16, 2022.

"It just goes to show that if you put your heart and soul into something it can work," says Forbes.

Everchanging, like their life story, Revel reflects the passions of both Aisling and Forbes: The beautiful lifestyle items on one side of the store, which have grown to include almost 40 brands – a mix of interiors, clothing, skincare and more – are influenced by Aisling's time spent living and working in retail in the Netherlands and her passion for supporting Irish businesses like Petal to Petal and Wild Wave. The coffee, tried and tested by Forbes for over six years in Glengarriff, is the renowned Golden Bean from artisan coffee roaster Marc Kingston in Shanagarry. To accompany such quality beans, the milk could only be from West Cork family farm Gloun Cross Dairy. The mouthwatering cakes are from Alchemy bakery in Cork.

With ambient background music and always a friendly face behind the counter, there's

a very inclusive and homely vibe to this coffee bar. You're also welcome to bring your dog along and canine regulars never leave without a treat! It's easy to see why Revel has been likened to 'Cheers', the affable Boston bar where the regulars



Aisling and Forbes with sons Mink and Riley.

share their experiences or lives with each other.

It's a family affair. Occasionally the couple's dog Polar will come for a visit and their two boys Mink and Riley love hanging out in the back space of the store after school or helping out at the cash register.

"Something as easy as giving someone a smile can make a person's day," says Aisling. "And that's what Revel is about...we want everyone to feel like they're coming to visit a friend!"

While juggling the commitments of work and family have been challenging, Aisling and Forbes are lucky to have a huge network of support from family and friends and life is certainly

never boring.

"I actually get a kick out of problem solving," says Forbes. "I don't think anything phases me anymore."

Now with their first anniversary approaching, there is a celebratory feel in the air.

"The support from the local community over the past year has been exceptional," share the couple. "We're so proud of Revel and thankful to all our customers. We have loved every minute of getting to know you all!"

Aisling and Forbes are inviting everyone to celebrate with them on Thursday, March 16 from noon onwards. There will be coffee and fun with music from DJ Ian Richards.



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Support for Syria in Soap & More

A Syrian entrepreneur living in Clonakilty, who lost a good friend in the devastating Turkey-Syria earthquake that has claimed over 48,000 lives since it hit in the early hours of February 6 is donating 100 per cent of her profits to help humanitarian aid efforts until the end of March. Reham Ghafari, 28, the owner of Soap & More shares with **Mary O'Brien** how she read her friend's name in the list of deceased in a news report.

“**S**he was my closest school friend,” says Reham. “It’s heartbreaking. The entire family were killed... my friend, her husband, their son and 15-day-old baby.”

Reham’s aunt and uncle in Turkey, who fled war-torn Syria in 2012 after the death of their son, were also affected by the earthquake, losing their home and business. “They don’t know what to do, whether to stay or go. There is nothing in Syria for them anymore,” says Reham.

Here in Clonakilty, Reham is working hard at her soap making business so she can continue to help those in need. “It’s not about the money for me,” she says. “I’m so grateful to be happy and safe here in Ireland and I’m so appreciative of the organisations here in Ireland who are helping the victims of

the earthquake.

“It doesn’t matter our religion or our skin colour... we are all human and we need to help each other.”

Reham studied English literature at University in Damascus and fled Syria in 2017 with her three-year-old son Khaled, joining her husband Wasim, a chef in Clonakilty, under the Family Reunification programme. The couple now also have a two-year-old daughter called Heaven.

Since she started her business in 2020 after losing her job in a nail salon in the pandemic, Reham has been donating a percentage of her profits to a homeless charity in Ireland. When the war started in Ukraine last year she made a soap in the blue and yellow colours of Ukraine, donating the profits to the Irish Red Cross.



The enterprising skincare developer recently made the news for creating a soap using breastmilk, calling it “liquid gold for skin ailments”.

All of Soap & More’s soaps are made with 100 per cent natural ingredients and are highly moisturising.

“With the focus on hand washing during the pandemic and so many harsh chemical ingredients in hand washes, I found my skin became really dry and sore,” explains Reham. Passionate about skincare, Reham made a soap for herself and soon she was supplying her friends too.”

High in fat and sugar with natural antibacterial properties, breastmilk is an ideal ingredient for making a soft, creamy soap to treat a range of skin conditions.

“A customer with eczema asked me to make her some

using her own breastmilk and that’s how it started,” says Reham. “She had used hundreds of products with none of them helping her condition. After six weeks using the breastmilk soap, there was a big improvement in her skin.”

A friend of Reham’s with excess breastmilk in the freezer is now supplying her.

Reham stresses that her friend has no allergies or medical conditions.

“I’m obsessed with skincare, with finding the purest ingredients,” says Reham, also sharing that her dream is to one day have a small factory.

As well as soaps made from ingredients like black seed oil (great for psoriasis) and oatmeal and honey (good for acne or oily skin), she also produces organic hair and body oils, scrubs, shampoos and body washes.

Her 200g Aleppo shampoo bar,



using the best olive and laurel oils, works for hair, face and body.

Reham grew up in Idlib, a city in north west Syria. She was in high school, 18, when the war started. Life changed dramatically for the young student. “Suddenly there was no electricity and constant fear, especially on stepping outside our door,” she says. “Bombs were always falling close by and you worry for your own safety and the safety of your family and friends.” She lost her 22-year-old cousin. “He went out to college one day and never came home,” she shares.

Of her six siblings, only two remain in Syria, a sister who lives with her parents in Damascus and a brother who runs the family pharmacy.

While she misses her family, home to Reham now is Clonakilty.

“I feel very at home here,” she admits. “Everyone is so friendly and now I even have the habit of saying hello to strangers!”

www.soapandmore.ie



MIX Coworking gives back with free spaces for community groups and special reduced rates

MIX Coworking opened its doors at 8 Wolfe Tone Street one year ago this month, on March 14, 2022. The upstairs was a grain store for many years and still bears handwritten tally scores on the wooden beams. Now it’s an open-plan workspace for remote workers, with fibre broadband, smart-door access, ventilated phone booths and social space.

The interior fit-out at Wolfe Tone Street was part-funded by SECAD Partnerships LEADER Programme, an EU-funded grant. A few months after opening, MIX Coworking secured a second grant, part of The Connected Hubs Fund from The Department of Rural and Community Development. The Connected Hubs Fund was launched in 2022, specifically for the development of digital hubs across Ireland, covering the bulk of project costs. With this grant, MIX Coworking has

added 12 solar panels, which means the building will be entirely passive in the summer months, and helped along in winter months with the new Microgeneration scheme.

Private pods and additional phone booths have also been added, meaning more private spaces for calls and meetings.

As a commercial enterprise entrant, a component of the funding achieved is for MIX Coworking to provide a community dividend over three years. Rachel Kelleher, co-founder, shares their plans: “We’re delighted that there is a community dividend element to the funding we received. With this, we are now offering the social space/meeting area entirely for free to any community group, local volunteer group, business network, local events and festival group, and projects funded by the Arts Council. If you’re a group and you need a place to meet, get in touch!”



Michael Kote and Rachel Kelleher of MIX CO

“We are also now offering a ‘Student, Start-Up and Artist Discount’ at a 50 per cent reduced cost on our prices from March to June and from September onwards for a select number of seats. So if you fall

into this category and need a productive space to work during the day or evenings, get in touch!”

For remote workers in the area, prices are reasonable regardless, with a flexible hourly



rate of just €4/hour, capping out at €20 for a full day. Full-and part-time membership seats are nearly filled, with sit/stand

desks and monitor screens included, so if you are interested, contact Rachel at hello@mixcoworking.ie today.

Ireland's first occupational therapy-led hair salon flourishing in Clonakilty

#makingithappen

When occupational therapist Emma Connolly took a leap of faith last December in opening the first occupational therapy-led hair salon in the country, little did she realise how much of an impact her new venture 'Flourish & Be' would have on both children and parents in reaching important milestones together.

Open to everyone and all ages but with a particular focus on children and people with sensory differences, 'Flourish & Be' on Pearse Street in Clonakilty is a bespoke, sensory inclusive and accessible hair salon that is evidence-based and tailored to the individual needs of each client.

"First haircuts, first ear piercing, first independent purchase

much fun and usually they don't want to leave! Also the burden of relief for parents is something I am really proud of."

Integral to the business model is that parents in particular feel supported and not judged or under pressure and that children and young adults feel safe and understood. Any accommodations that may need to be put in place are done so in advance following pre-appointment consultation to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for all.

This is not a standard salon so there was a lot of work involved in bringing all of the sensory elements and child-friendly fittings together while still retaining its salon functionality. Equipment has been carefully sourced keeping in mind the decibel level, allowing for a

softer, dimmable LED fixtures allowing to reduce of any light sensitivities as required.

"I grew tired of seeing families stressed and overwhelmed when it comes to their shopping experiences, either in salons, supermarkets, play zones or shopping centres," says the therapist. "For the most part, the environments are unsuitable, resulting in distress and ultimately them opting out. Engagement in self-care and meaningful activities should be a seamless process without barriers, and obstacles which can impact negatively on the overall experience."

Emma's vision was for a more welcoming type of salon that would allow for a much more meaningful experience for these families. "For their children to get a simple haircut before now has been a highly stressful experience with some parents resorting to cutting the child's hair while they were sleeping. I knew I could merge my knowledge and experience to create something really special while also meeting a huge gap in the market."

This is Emma's second business venture. The mother-of-four, who lives in Clonakilty, also works full-time as an Occupational Therapist. Much of her work involves working with families with young children but she also works a lot with students in third level education.

"I love my job and surround myself with like-minded people who have a positive mindset," she shares. "Fun and laughter motivate me."

Before opening her private practice, Emma worked for both the public and private sector, and continues to work with various health organisations and private companies through her practice.

Determined that her specialised skills would be put to use for the whole wider community, Emma says it was a combination of hard work and sheer determination that got her to where she is today. "There were many curve balls sent my way over the course of my journey, but I have good aim, and so they were sent away as quick as



Emma Connolly's vision involved sharing the power of occupational therapy to really make a difference for the children and families that come through the door for her unique services.

they came."

On the go with two businesses to manage and four children, Emma says she couldn't do it without the support of "good coffee, my husband, my mam-

my and google calendar!"

Family comes first always and they're a household of big food and music lovers. She also has a penchant for upcycling and DIY. "I got a new drill in

West Cork Building Supplies and there is no stopping me now! she laughs.

Back to business and the larger vision for Emma involves educating and supporting other business and organisations around the country to be leaders in their field when it comes to inclusion.

"There simply is not enough being done and I want to change mindsets and encourage more business and organisations and leaders to support and embrace individuality. I have started with the hair industry but already have received many requests from various types of businesses and organisations. So I know the desire is there for them to want to do better. So I will be helping them do exactly that."

At a very exciting point in her career, Emma is looking forward to taking on new and interesting projects, becoming more involved in the local community and watching the salon flourish and grow over the next five years.



of a toy or accessory. Children who feared the hairdressers or barbers, and social interaction within the retail sector, have got beautiful haircuts – tear free! she shares.

Emma's vision involved sharing the power of occupational therapy to really make a difference for the children and families that come through the door for her unique services.

At the heart of it all is inclusion. Passionate about breaking down the barriers that unintentionally contribute to occupational deprivation, Emma wanted to create a more accessible space where difference is celebrated. When children arrive, they are encouraged to feel at home and explore.

"This never gets old for me," says Emma. "They have so

calmer, quieter space. Even the bathroom has been adapted to be family-friendly and adds to the overall experience. There are various sensory stations and digital devices, including interactive bubble tubes and fibre optics, a gaming station, a play house, a TV, as well as fun games and toys. All fluorescent lighting has been replaced with



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Delivering supplements for a healthier future

Fuelled by a vision to deliver natural, effective and highly palatable health supplements, Bandon-based company SOMEGA was co-founded in 2019 by husband and wife team, Mark Clifford and Dr. Paula Gaynor. As well as having backgrounds and more than 30 combined years of expertise in food science and nutrition, the couple have three children and it was a concern for their kids' nutrition that ultimately led Mark and Paula to start the business.

“When we looked at their diets, it was clear that the kids were lacking in Omega-3’s because they would not eat oily fish” says Mark. Omega-3s are healthy fats, essential throughout life for supporting brain health, heart health and vision. In children, they are particularly important for brain development and, as we age, they play a critical role in maintaining brain function. “As an alternative, we turned to supplements but getting the kids to take these was also challenging due to the fishy taste and oily texture” says Paula. So that was the genesis for their first product ‘Easy Omega-3 + Vitamin D3’, a liquid supplement with a delicious natural

peach-mango flavour and smoothie-like texture, suitable for both children and adults. It can be enjoyed straight from the spoon or added to smoothies, yogurts and other foods.

While SOMEGA was very much in the start-up phase, the COVID-19 pandemic struck and this heightened people’s interest in supplements to protect their health and especially their immune systems. The SOMEGA product line rapidly expanded to include a Liposomal Vitamin C supplement, as well as a range of Vitamin D3 supplements. Vitamin C is well known for supporting the immune system; it also enhances energy levels and promotes collagen formation for healthy skin. However, regular Vitamin

C supplements are poorly absorbed. “We want to make sure that Vitamin C is well absorbed, which is why we use liposomal technology to maximise vitamin absorption, thereby leading to enhanced health benefits,” according to Mark.

The SOMEGA range of Vitamin D3 products includes pure and natural, convenient oral sprays for adults and family-friendly liquid drops. Vitamin D supports the immune system and is also essential for maintaining bone health and helping with calcium absorption. “The reason we chose sprays and drops as delivery systems, as opposed to tablets and capsules, is because the vitamin can be rapidly absorbed under your tongue” adds Paula.



B-Vitamins have also been added to the product range – a ‘Vitamin B12 Oral Spray’, which naturally enhances energy levels, helping to reduce tiredness and fatigue and ‘Liposomal Vitamin B-Complex + C’, which combines the many health benefits of the ‘energy’ B-vitamins with Vitamin C.

“What makes SOMEGA supplements unique is that they are well absorbed, they are enjoyable to take and easy to fit into your everyday routine,” highlights Mark. Their expertly formulated products are all designed to be pure and natural,

non-GMO and free from gluten, yeast, soy, sugar, and dairy and contain no artificial sweeteners or preservatives. SOMEGA products are packaged in recyclable, environmentally friendly materials.

Paula and Mark acknowledge the ongoing support they have received from their Local Enterprise Office in Clonakilty, not only in terms of grants and training courses, but also the access to mentors who provide invaluable practical and strategic advice and guidance. SOMEGA has also been supported by Enterprise Ireland.

“The positive feedback we get from consumers is a driving force for us and this makes it all worthwhile” says Paula. Indeed, the future is looking bright for SOMEGA with plans to further grow the product range this year with four new products in the pipeline and also firm plans underway to expand into the Benelux market.

SOMEGA products are available in all good health stores in West Cork and nationwide, in pharmacies and online at gosomega.com.

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Students at Kinsale Community School win the VEX National Robotics Competition for the fifth time

Kinsale Community School has made history by winning the National VEX VRC competition for a fifth time, cementing its position as the top school in the country for robotics and securing its place in the World Championships in USA. Every year, VEX robotics competition brings together the brightest young minds nationwide to showcase their skills and abilities. This year’s competition took place on February 23 in Pairc Ui Chaoimh. It featured 20 of the best teams from all over Ireland, having previously qualified through regional competitions.

Kinsale Community School’s four Robots teams, comprising 20 TY students, performed exceptionally well, impressing judges with their innovative design, creativity and ability to solve complex problems in engineering and coding. Their robots completed a series of challenges in this year’s game named ‘Spin Up’. This year’s competition was complex, requiring the robots to intake and launch discs into nets. The two-minute games have two parts, a 15-second autonomous and one minute 45-second driv-

ing control section.

The diligent and competitive students won 10 of the 13 awards including the Excellence Award and two Tournament Champion awards.

The Kinsale teams have worked hard for months to perfect their design and programming skills. They have demonstrated high professionalism and dedication, spending countless hours perfecting their robot and practicing their strategies. They are now proud to represent Ireland in the upcoming World Championships in Dallas, USA, in April.

The team’s victory is a testament to the school’s dedication to STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), already with a great history in BT Young Scientist, and its commitment to inspiring young people to pursue careers in these fields. It also reflects the hard work and determination of the students and their mentors, Niamh Hay TY Coordinator and Eddie Farren, IT Coordinator who also each won Teacher of the Year awards. In addition to their victory in the VEX VRC competition, Kinsale Community

School has also been actively mentoring local Primary schools in VEX IQ. This initiative, which began in 2018, is designed to introduce young children to the exciting world of robotics and programming and to foster their interest in STEM education. “This is what sets Kinsale’s TY Robotics program apart. It creates student leaders, and the students become the experts creating a self-directed learning culture” says Eddie Farren, IT Coordinator and student mentor in the KCS robotics club.

“We are incredibly proud of the Vex Awards these pupils have achieved through their talent and dedication to their Robotics Programme. They embody the passion that Kinsale Community School has for STEM and as a community we are delighted to cheer on their well-earned success. Their teachers, Niamh Hay and Eddie Farren, are a credit to the school and their profession. They richly deserve the Best Teachers Awards for the incredible dedication and hard work they have given in support of these wonderful young people.” says Kathleen O’Brien, KCS Deputy Principal.

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Leading West Cork in the new world of work

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Skibbereen native **Grainne O'Keeffe** joined the Ludgate Digital Hub CLG in Skibbereen in 2020 as CEO of a national thought leader in rural regeneration. Ludgate's goal is sustainable job creation in a rural location leveraging 1gb fibre optic connectivity closing the gap on the rural digital divide. To date, the Ludgate social enterprise has nurtured and enabled over 700 direct and indirect jobs in West Cork – a disadvantaged area by function of geographical remoteness – through a combination of co-working facilities and curated elevator programmes.

and New York so I love the fact that JP Morgan Investment Bank has now arrived in Clonakilty through the recent acquisition of Global Shares," she shares.

After JP Morgan she joined Goldman Sachs Investment Bank and held a global position for a number of years before opting out of the paid workforce to take care of her young boys for a few years. On returning to the workforce and having returned also to Ireland she spent a number of years with Spearline in Skibbereen as Head of Innovation before joining Ludgate to lead the team there.

According to leader Grainne, whose role is setting the strategic direction of the organisation, the people who make it all happen at

Ludgate are a very happy team in a very happy hub

"It's important to me to create a productive but happy environment in Ludgate and I believe we have achieved that. Collaborating with my team, the hub members and the wider hub and start up and SME community are very motivating and enjoyable."

Grainne is also responsible for ensuring there is enough revenue coming in to cover staffing and operational overheads.

Funding is one of the biggest challenges. "It's always on my mind," says Grainne. "We are continuously exploring revenue generating opportunities that deliver value for the region. Funding opportunities come through state and EU funding as

well as corporate funding from AIB who have backed us from inception. We also collaborate with the Irish Tech Hub Network and the Connected Hub Network and there are significant synergies through such partnerships. Our recently launched 'Friends of Ludgate' initiative targets new channels of corporate and philanthropic sponsorships."

Staying relevant through Covid lockdowns was also difficult. "We solved this by pivoting to online virtual knowledge sharing webinars and hiring a marketing manager."

Over the past three years, Ludgate has hosted over 36 events with close to 2000 attendees. "Given we were novices in virtual hosting we are very pleased with our recently developed expertise," shares Grainne. "Our online social media presence is extremely active."

The plan is to launch a number of new initiatives in the coming months that focus on the net zero transition challenge. One of these initiatives will see Ludgate partnering with RetroKit, a Clonakilty-based home energy upgrade consultancy company and another initiative in collaboration with MTU will focus on enabling the growth of sustainability driven SME's in the region.

One of the initiatives that Grainne is most proud of working on to-date is a pilot programme

that Ludgate recently completed called ReIgnite, which was designed to nurture and signpost female returnees to the workforce.

"Having been out of the paid workforce myself for a number of years, I recognised how intimidating the return to work can be," she says. "When skills become rusty our confidence is impacted and this can be an obstacle to embracing new opportunities. Our ReIgnite programme was designed to be a refresher of soft and technical skills for women in an environment that offered support and solidarity. This pilot initiative was a resounding success and brought a lot of joy to the Ludgate team knowing we were able to play a role in nurturing west cork women to return to the workforce. We hope to be in a position to run this programme again in the future."

"Say Yes to everything..." is Grainne's advice to anyone starting out and looking to succeed in business "and then figure out how to execute and deliver."

"Saying no to opportunities is not in my dictionary!"

Outside of work, the CEO, who lives with her family in Clonakilty, is looking forward to introducing her kids to her love of international travel and having lots of adventures along the way.



The Irish Government's rural policy, launched in March 2021, seeks to replicate the proven hub model in other rural remote areas with the goal of economic empowerment leveraging digital enablement.

"When Ludgate first opened its doors its primary role was a co-working hub for remote workers, solopreneurs and start ups in the region," shares Grainne. "We have since expanded our offering to include a wide range of value added elevator programmes that enable and nurture working in a rural location."

While she aspired to be a teacher when younger, the Mercy Heights student went on to study law at UCC and completed a

Masters in Business Studies at the Smurfit Graduate School of Business, UCD. That was back in the nineties. More recently she became a part of the life-long learning brigade after enrolling in a diploma with UCD/Institute of Bankers in Sustainable Finance.

After University in the nineties, the Bank of Ireland graduate programme sent the ambitious young woman to Jersey, Channel Islands. She went on to spread her wings within the financial services sector, gaining a wealth of international management experience spanning 20 years across London, Tokyo and New York.

"The first six years of my career post graduation were with JP Morgan in London, Tokyo

known as 'changemakers' to create social impact through their nationwide network of chapters. These changemakers run local meetups, seminars and parties to promote the community impact that remote workers can have locally.

Beginning in mid-March, Grow Remote will run their fully-funded Local Leader Training and this time, they are focusing on communities across Munster. The Local Leader Training supports individual remote employees to

lead a local chapter. It involves three weekly live interactive sessions with the Grow Remote team at 7pm on March 15, 22 and 29, as well as a self-paced online e-learning programme involving six modules (roughly one hour's learning per module) to complete in your own time over six weeks.

Community Manager at Grow Remote, Dónal Kearney, says: "Usually, chapter leads are individuals with a deep investment in their local area and a drive to make

sustainable grassroots change through remote employment. Grow Remote offers funding up to €1,000 per chapter, one-to-one supports and the opportunity to change their locality for good."

There are infinite ways of being a changemaker with Grow Remote depending on one's expertise or availability. The Grow Remote community is full of creative changemakers who have made a local impact.

Kat Slater, chapter lead in

Louisburgh (Mayo), helped a local job seeker secure a remote job with Automatic. John Brett in Carlow designed and created the first-of-its-kind Remote Jobs Board free of charge, allowing Grow Remote to publicly advertise hundreds of remote jobs every month. Colum O'Connell, chapter lead on Valentia Island, helps locals get remote jobs and move back to Valentia and continues to attract new families to the island through remote employment.

Through a Grow Remote chapter event in Skibbereen, remote advocate Triona O'Sullivan helped a local job seeker find remote employment with Shopify.

Dónal Kearney, Community Manager at Grow Remote explains that completion of the Local Leader Training training, which is now open, entitles you to become a chapter lead and apply for the €1,000 Grow Remote Community Fund. Apply now at growremote.ie/local-leader-training/

Search begins for community activists working remotely across Munster

Remote work has presented myriad opportunities for rural and regional communities to grow and regenerate. With the support of an Irish social enterprise, communities in Munster now have access to fully-funded training especially for community activists.

Grow Remote is a non-profit on a mission to make remote employment more visible and accessible. The Grow Remote community supports local people

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A West Cork Farming Life

Nicola White, Owner and Managing, Animal Health Laboratories, Bandon



Q&A with
Tommy Moyles

When was the business established and what was the catalyst for starting it?

I'm the owner and Managing Director of Animal Health Laboratories since it was established in 2012. My aim is to continue to provide an extensive range of laboratory services to large animal and equine vets in Ireland whilst remaining competitive with our prices. We also provide disease testing to farmers and the aim here is to have our base in Bandon be a place where the farmer can bring their samples into directly for testing and be met with friendly approachable staff, at all times. I foresee that side of the business growing more and more and the tests that we offer farmers broadening.

I have always believed that all the members of our locally employed team are essential to the success of the laboratory.

How many employees do you have and what is your customer catchment area?

We currently have 20 local people employed with us here in Animal Health Laboratories, 15 full time members of staff and five part-time. Our customer catchment area is the entire country of Ireland but we are very lucky to be based in a busy part of the country here in the agricultural heart of West Cork and we are proud and thankful to have the consistent support of the local vets and farmers.

We now have drivers on the road, picking up samples from our vets and co-ops all over Ireland. This takes the hassle of

posting samples and organising couriers away from the client. We pride ourselves in our ability to meet and exceed efficient turnaround times. Our drivers have samples delivered back to our lab for the same day which in turn means faster turnaround time on results and more reliability that the clients samples are safe.

What are the main services provided?

Animal Health Laboratories are licensed by the Irish National Accreditation Board to carry out BVD, IBR and Johnes testing in compliance with ISO 17025. The laboratory is approved by the Department of Agriculture for CEM testing in thoroughbred mares and provides culture and sensitivity testing for AHI cell check and mastitis programmes

to industry and private customers. Other services include pathogen testing using real-time PCR, antibody detection and Elisa testing, parasitology, microbiology and mineral analysis and biochemistry.

How has the business evolved since it began?

I am very proud to be in a position to tell you that the business has evolved massively since we began. Staff numbers have tripled since we started and all are local, qualified people.

PCR has been available to veterinary diagnostic labs for a number of years now and AHLI provide this service for the management of diseases such as Mycoplasma bovis, BVD and Mastitis pathogens, which traditionally would be tested for using other technology such as ELISA method.

We are accredited by the Irish National Accreditation Board to carry out BVD, IBR and Johnes testing in compliance with ISO 17025. It is the policy of Animal Health Laboratories to continuously improve the quality of our testing facilities and the service we offer to our customers.

Our Equine testing services are growing also, we now provide a full range of testing to the equine veterinary client to include faecal testing for worms and more and this has been steadily growing for the past number of years.

We have invested heavily in state-of-the-art equipment and technology to prevent the spread of viruses and disease that pose an ever-present threat to the farming industry in Ireland. For example our MALDI BIOTYP-ER, was purchased for reliable, fast and efficient identification of a wide range of gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria, yeasts and moulds, by an easy to operate, yet powerful benchtop analyser. The MALDI Biotyper is in use daily in our microbiology laboratories as a reliable rapid test method for hygiene



monitoring, pathogen detection and much more. The MALDI Biotyper System identifies microorganisms using MALDI-TOF (Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization Time of Flight) mass spectrometry to determine a unique proteomic fingerprint of an organism.

The laboratory has pioneered a sample storage system to allow animal retesting without the inconvenience of having to harvest further samples, which is an excellent time-saving facility for any busy farm.

The laboratory proactively and efficiently responded to the necessity to support the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 infection) pandemic when we were approached by private hospitals to carry out PCR testing for patients all across the country. This is something that we are extremely proud of and allowed us to show the extent of what can be achieved here in the laboratory but our heads and hearts are very much encrypted in Animal Health.

What future plans have you for the business?

The future is bright for us, we'll continue to consolidate and develop our large animal side of the business and in the process of expanding our services for small animal diagnostics.

What are the benefits of being based in West Cork?

There are so many benefits to having our business in West Cork. It's a diverse geographic region and is renowned for its excellent food production. Cattle, sheep and mixed farming are predominant here. West Cork is well known for its excellent dairy farming with almost 1,900 dairy farmers supplying the co-ops. Tillage farming is also a significant enterprise in the greater Bandon/Kinsale areas. Having our lab available for these farmers to walk in with their scour, milk and ear notch samples and for vets to come in with blood samples and more is, in my opinion a wonderful and advantageous asset to have on the door step.

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Irish Business Design Challenge opens for public voting

Public voting for this year's Irish Business Design Challenge open now on www.dcci.ie/ibdc-2023 until Tuesday, March 7, 2023. Eleven Cork businesses have entered this year's challenge, which focuses on sustainable design solutions and innovation: Cotton Caterpillars by Kata O'Donovan, Mamukko's by Attila Magyar, GROUND wellbeing

by Peigin Crowley, Firkail by Orla Lynch, One Space by Dermot Browne, Colour Addict Jewellery by Vereena Sundraj, YAWUW by Angela O'Donnell, The Silver Loom by Isabelle Balikoeva, Repro Doc LTD by Daniel Ryan, Us by Victoria Small and HaPPE Earth by Mary O'Riordan.

Now in its third year, the Irish Business Design Challenge

(IBDC) supports companies applying design thinking to future proof their business and support customer needs. Over 100 businesses across Ireland entered this year's challenge.

The competition for micro, small and medium Irish businesses has a prize fund of over €50,000.

Harnessing the spirit of diversity at West Cork Distillers

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John O'Connell, Ger McCarthy and Denis McCarthy

“Desperation is great motivation,” says John O'Connell one of the founding trio of West Cork Distillers which celebrates its 20th year in business in 2023. “Nobody wanted us in this game, and we were desperate to succeed.” West Cork Distillers was founded in 2003 when childhood friends from Union Hall, Denis McCarthy, Ger McCarthy and John O'Connell, decided to pack in the day jobs and take a punt on a whiskey dream.

O'Connell, who holds a PhD in Colloidal Chemistry, was Head of Research and Development in Kerry Group at the time, and first cousins Ger and Denis McCarthy were successful fishermen. In and around 2003, the fishing industry, which was once a lucrative sector that supported the prosperity of many villages around West Cork, had become less so over the years. Increased regulation and depleting fish stocks made it more and more difficult to turn a buck, and with young families at the time, the McCarthy cousins found that they were spending longer hours at sea for a greatly diminished return. Of course, as West Cork knows all too well, life at sea is fraught with danger and finding an alternative source of employment for the seafaring duo was something that both the lads and their nearest and dearest aspired to. At this time, the Irish whiskey market which had been decimated and in steady decline since the Famine, was rumoured to be showing signs of a resurgence. Prior to this, John and Denis had been brewing beer as a hobby in Den's shed at the back of his house in Brade, Union Hall. Perhaps it was the combination of home

brew and the lad's entrepreneurial spirit that brought about the idea of opening the first new distillery in Ireland since 1987. The distillery started from humble beginnings in the aforementioned shed, with the three men all still working their day jobs and running the distillery simultaneously. “We knew nothing about the industry,” recalls Ger McCarthy “my father always says that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, if we knew what we were signing up to at the time we might never have followed through.”

Fast forward twenty years and West Cork Distillers now sits on a 12.5 acre site on the Marsh road outside Skibbereen, which was once home to the Union Hall Fishermen's Cooperative. It produces the world-renowned West Cork Irish Whiskey and award-winning Garnish Island Gin and along with running a significant contract business for both alcohol, bottling and canning, it also boasts a thriving Ingredients division. The distillery employs 140 people at present, with plans to grow the team by another 30 before the end of 2023. “You can't achieve anything without having good people around you,” says Denis

McCarthy, “people have been central to the success of West Cork Distillers.”

The distillery was delighted to be in a position this year to support the Living Wage for all employees. “Investing in people is a key part of our business

strategy and it's important to recognise the incredible work of the team here, every individual within the company makes a massive contribution its success and we are very respectful of that, it's something we can never take for granted,” explains

Niamh McCarthy, Head of Human Resources.

In tandem with aligning with the Living Wage, the company also offers all its employees a pension, death in service benefit, private health insurance, an employee assistance programme, full financial assistance for further educational pursuits, increased annual leave with service, employee discounts, a generous refer a friend bonus scheme, free lunch on Fridays and employee events throughout the year. The company also offers remote working opportunities and a number of flexible and part-time roles. The WCD team currently represents 14 different nationalities and has significantly increased the representation of females in the workforce over the last 12 months. “I think it's our diversity that makes us work,” says O'Connell, “we leverage this diversity to enhance our ability to move quickly in response to business needs, and we truly recognise the benefit of having a wide range of perspectives involved in the decision making process.” Over the coming year the company hopes to invest heavily in its research and development division, with aspirations to build a state-of-the-art R&D facility on its current

site in the future.

Twenty years on since its foundation, West Cork Distillers has become a bastion of West Cork grit, determination, hard graft, and a testament to team of people that made it happen. The distillery currently exports to over 70 countries worldwide and is showing no signs of slowing down. An expansion is currently underway which aims to significantly increase production capacity in 2023 and with that comes more jobs and specialised roles. “Skibbereen has been good to us,” adds John, “it's great to arrive at work in the morning and see the car park full, it's good to be in a position to give something back”.

West Cork Distillers has come a long way from the shed in Union Hall twenty years ago, the lads will admit that the journey has been far from plain sailing with some significant challenges to overcome along the way. However, the company has a solid foundation in friendship, that has been a key factor in its success and that camaraderie permeates through the entire organisation. “It's been great fun,” O'Connell adds. “There have been a lot of good laughs with the lads over the years, and the whole team.”



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Bantry Bay Works provides improved facilities as it looks forward to another busy year

Neill Clarke, a member of Bantry Bay Works Managing Committee reflects on a year that saw the remote working facility move on from uncertain times to a bright and sustainable future.

“2022 was the year Bantry Bay Works moved on from the uncertainty of previous years. We had kept the unit open during the Covid years and looking back that was probably a good decision.

“While occupancy levels were low we got our website up and running and our payment system in place. We were also able to provide a necessary service for people who needed it;

those with poor quality broadband at home; visitors to Bantry who needed to stay in touch with the office or keep their work commitments on track; students doing lectures, projects, interviews and exams... all these people really needed the services we were providing.

“Those years also gave us solid information to base our plans for upgrading our services and equipment on. Remote work was a new concept at the time and no-one had any real idea of how the new world of employment would work!

“By October 2021 we had a feel for what was likely to happen and where demand might develop after a strong summer season. We introduced a hybrid offering for those who wished to split their time between an office environment and

working at home, with the client choosing how they would use their days. For a lot of people working in Cork city it cut out the commute and turned out to be a popular choice.

“Part of our popularity has to be our location, positioned as we are on the first floor of O’Keeffe’s SuperValu, in a made-for-purpose office overlooking the inner harbour. Clients have the option of doing some shopping, using the deli and café, strolling on the Beicin sea walk or walking into the town centre, just five minutes away. Free parking and EV charging are also part of the package.

“In January 2022 we experienced an increase in numbers and this carried through to June. The summer season was very good so when Connected

High Resolution offers solutions to jams in your printing workflow

Is printing or photocopying at your company or school giving you a constant headache by being too slow with poor breakdown service and consumables that are too expensive? West Cork company High Resolution provides sales, leasing and print management solutions for printers and photocopiers as well as fast and knowledgeable service and repairs. Owner **Trevor Kington** gives an overview of how he can solve your printing issues by matching your needs to the appropriate machine and explains how a Managed Print Service could save an organisation up to 50 per cent on costs.

Between jams and queues it is amazing how much staff time is wasted because an organisation has the wrong printer or copier. Before advising on a new sale or lease Trevor first considers your organisation’s daily workflow – if you need to print, scan and photocopy then a multifunction printer is a good choice; if your office regularly produces a high volume of documents, then you need the high speed of a laser printer; if you need to produce high-quality photos, large documents, or print on different types of paper, an inkjet printer is more suitable. Is colour printing really necessary or would you be better investing in a higher spec monochrome printer? What other features such as wireless printing would be useful to increase productivity?

“Only then will I recommend a machine that will be a good fit,” says Trevor. “We supply many of the well-known printer brands such as HP, Brother, Epson and Canon, and for more demanding requirements, such as those of schools or solicitors, we supply workhorse printers and copiers from Triumph-Adler, a well-respected German

brand. All the printers we supply are optimised for maximum power saving and minimum environmental impact.”



The cost of office printing is often overlooked. Between upfront costs and also a number of hidden costs, it is estimated the average annual cost of office printing could be up to five per cent of annual turnover. That’s where the option of a ‘Print Management Service’ comes in with no upfront capital costs but a fixed monthly cost instead. A managed print solution is almost always cheaper than conventional ‘pay as you go’ printing and by knowing your

exact print costs (which includes the machine, all supplies and all service) you can manage your budgets simply and accurately.

Print Management also comes with the peace of mind of on-site service for the lifetime of the contract, far longer than the one year warranty of a purchased printer. By being locally based, Trevor can be on your doorstep quickly with parts and expertise in hand. “When you have a technical issue that needs a prompt response you won’t have to worry if you’re a priority for an engineering team based several hundred kilometres away,” he points out. “Even for my sales customers, if they give me a ring I could easily have the part they need in my van and have it installed whilst someone who bought elsewhere was still in a customer service queue.”

As well as all the inks, toners, paper and stationery an office requires, High Resolution also provides a huge range of office furniture including the latest ergonomic designs. To get a quote or advice, call 023 8858888 or email office@highresolution.ie.

Hubs had a funding round from the Department of Rural and Community Development, we applied and were successful in securing funding for our recent upgrade.

“Our main expenditure has been on two acoustic workstations. This allows clients to have soundproof facilities for their private calls. We upgraded seating and supplied monitors

to the desks. This means clients don’t have to carry their own bulky equipment in with them.

“Everything was installed by mid-November and has added significantly to the hub’s infrastructure, allowing for a more professional layout and a more comprehensive facility.

“As we head into spring 2023 we are happy to be providing an improved experience for our clients, regular and new. Last year saw a significant increase in our business, and the year so far has produced more good bookings and enquiries.”

Pictured are the new soundproofed ‘acoustic workstations’ as well as a private, fully ventilated phonebooth.





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Leading the retrofit revolution in West Cork #makingithappen

Susan O'Flaherty founded RetroKit with her husband Xavier and his business partner Shay a week before Covid and lockdown. Three years on, the business is going from strength to strength.

RetroKit is a software platform that helps housing professionals make evidence-based investment decisions for their energy upgrade projects.

Xavier and Shay had years of experience in local energy planning and started developing RetroKit's solutions in 2018 as part of a research and development project. They began to experiment with using Building Energy Rating (BER) data to plan home upgrades, initially with spreadsheets and in time creating a software platform. Originally aimed at large social landlords such as housing associations and local authority housing departments, it quickly became apparent that the platform also delivered benefits to smaller operators such as project managers, retrofit co-



Xavier Dubuisson, Susan O'Flaherty, Shay Kavanagh and Max Deasy of RetroKit.

ordinators and BER assessors. The team worked on adapting the platform and new products quickly followed. Today RetroKit works with social housing bodies including Cork City and County Councils and the Peter McVerry Trust, as well as One Stop Shops and Community Energy project coordinators.

As the non-technical member of the team, Susan took the lead on sales, marketing, and customer support. Whilst she found the lack of technical speak a little daunting to start with, she now firmly believes it is a ben-

efit, allowing her to approach things from a user's perspective and helping her translate the more specialist concepts for users with a lower level of expertise. Susan explains, "My motivation for working in the business was to help to grow the team and make the business sustainable into the future. My previous experience in project management and programme development in the NGO sector was valuable as it's very similar to working in a startup, where you have to roll up the sleeves and get things done."

Today RetroKit employs a team of seven here in West Cork, including energy engineers, a BER assessor, software engineers and a marketing lead. They mainly work remotely, meeting up once a week in the office, and have quarterly offsite meetings where the team gets together to innovate and plan new projects. Everyone in the business is encouraged to get involved in innovation, whether it's the software team with creative marketing ideas or the other way around.

Susan is passionate about the

importance of flexible working hours, with the focus on getting the job done rather than clocking in and out at a certain time. "I believe that at different times of your life you need different things and as a small company we have the flexibility to accommodate that. We value work life balance and we aim for a working environment where everyone feels valued and enjoys coming to work. Being able to finish work and get to the beach within five minutes also has its benefits," Susan admits.

The level of talent available

"We have been able to find exceptional talent to help us whether in software development, user experience, co-design or marketing. West Cork is a very special place and the benefits of working with these exceptional views, far outweigh any downsides of being in a rural location."

in west Cork is something Susan believes is a key factor in their success. "We have been able to find exceptional talent to help us whether in software development, user experience, co-design or marketing. West Cork is a very special place and the benefits of working with these exceptional views, far outweigh any downsides of being in a rural location."

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A happy employee is a loyal employee

Long before the four-day week became a serious discussion here in Ireland, West Cork-based recruitment company Employflex had been highlighting the advantages of flexibility in the workplace for both the employee and employer. **Karen O'Reilly** of Employflex shares some of the advantages for both employee and employer in having a flexible work culture that promotes equality and gives advice on how to start the discussion on getting a flexible working arrangement in place.

I founded Employflex back in 2016 when I sought flexible work to continue with my career and manage a decent work-life balance – my husband works abroad for nine months of the year so flexibility was really important to me with two small children at the time – we have since branched out to add Employflex to our offering, which opened up our flexible work to the whole market as many of our candidates are male.

Flexibility is the most requested job requirement from people seeking work at the moment, especially post covid, as people have got a taste for flexible work and have proven that it can be done.

The advantages to the employee are obvious; better work life balance, less stress, more time with family and more autonomy at work.

For employers, in the tight labour market that we are experiencing at the moment, offering flexible work can, without doubt, widen the net when seeking talent and help companies obtain and retain the best people.

A happy employee is a more productive and loyal employee – we are seeing candidates walk from traditional presenteeism-type companies to places where there is a more flexible culture. No-one can afford to lose people at the moment.

What advice would you give to someone in approaching an employer about a having a more flexible working arrangement? Step-by-step would be really helpful!

Firstly, there has never been a better time to seek flexible work as companies are more open to the conversation due to the talent shortage we are experiencing at the moment.

Remember also that there is new legislation coming into place in the form of the Right to Request Remote Work and the EU directive on Work Life Balance which will give carers and parents with children up to the age of 12 the right to request flexible work.



Helen Walshe and Karen O'Reilly

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1. Do your research and find out what is the best type of flexible work that will suit you. There are many options available: Hybrid working – part office and part remote; Remote working – fully remote; Compressed hours – working five days in four for example; Core hours – having core hours in the office where everyone has to be present; Reduced hours – working part time; Job Share – sharing your role with a colleague; Term time – working while the kids are at school coinciding with their terms; ROWE – Results Only Work Environment – payment on results (for example a research project).

2. Approach your manager with a ready made solution – outlining how it is going to work and the tangible benefits for the company (cost savings/increase in productivity etc). Make the business case clear and be ready with your counter arguments.

3. Suggest a trial period of a few months – this might be an easier request to grant for a manager (Just make sure that the trial period does work out tough!)

What advantages are there to having a gender-balanced and a culturally diverse workplace?

The business case for equality in the workplace is a very compelling one:

1. Increased diversity can

lead to improved decision-making: When there is a diverse mix of people in the workplace, there is a greater variety of perspectives and ideas.

2. Improved employee morale and productivity: When employees feel valued and respected, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work. This can lead to higher levels of productivity and lower rates of turnover, which can ultimately benefit the bottom line.

3. Enhanced reputation and customer loyalty: Companies that prioritise equality and diversity in the workplace are often viewed more positively by customers and the public. This can lead to greater customer loyalty and increased brand awareness.

4. Access to a wider talent pool: By creating an inclusive workplace, companies can attract and retain a wider range of talent. This can help ensure that they have the skills and expertise needed to succeed in a rapidly changing business environment.

Companies are approaching us at the moment here in West Cork telling us that they can't find people to join their teams, that there is a dire shortage of talent – what we are saying is that there are people willing to work if you offer them genuine flexibility – and the operative word here is genuine, as candidates will learn from the word on the street if you are being

genuinely flexible or not.

What do you enjoy most about your own job?

Helen Walshe and I make up the team here in West Cork for Employflex – we love nothing better than helping people find that flexible role so that they can stay in the workplace and not be forced to leave.

We helped one particular candidate recently who was completely burnt out working in a company that expected her to do 60-hour weeks and some, and had that toxic 'always on' culture. This is the best job satisfaction for us;

"I kissed my kids goodbye in the morning before they got up and had a rushed few precious minutes with them in the evening, if I was lucky, before they went to bed. Weekends were spent catching up on housework and running around ragged – I just felt that there was no point in it all and my mental health was suffering big time. With the help of Employflex, I found a job that allows me some work life balance – I am still at the level I was at but am now working 34 hours per week and I have so much more time with my babies. I am so happy now."

Employflex has a database of over 10,000 candidates actively seeking flexible work, so if you are looking for vetted and qualified candidates, call Karen or Helen on 087 9722498 or email on info@employflex.ie

Hennessy Outdoors wins 'Best Customer Service Award' at West Cork Business and Tourism Awards

Hennessy Outdoors, one of Ireland's leading retailers of children's playhouses, swing sets and ride on cars, based in Clonakilty, has been named the winner of the 'Best Customer Service Award' at the West Cork Business and Tourism Awards held on February 3 at the Maritime Hotel in Bantry. The event, which was sponsored by the Southern Star, recognised businesses and tourism organisations in the region for their outstanding achievements.

Hennessy Outdoors was recognised for their commitment to providing exceptional customer service. The company's dedication to this principle has been a driving force behind their success and growth.

"We are honored to receive this recognition for our customer service," said Aidan Hennessy, owner of Hennessy Timber Group. "Our team has always been dedicated to providing our customers with the best possible experience, and this award is a testament to their hard work and dedication."

Hennessy Outdoors has established itself as a leader in customer service, setting the standard for other businesses in the region. The company has received praise from customers for their knowledgeable staff, impressive product range, quick response time and a commitment to providing high-quality products at affordable prices. With over 200 reviews on Trustpilot it has a current rating

of 'Excellent'.

Hennessy Outdoors plans to continue its commitment to customer service, using this award as motivation to continually improve and provide the best possible shopping experience for its customers. The company's dedication to excellence has made it a staple of the West Cork business community, and it is sure to continue its success for many years to come.

Hennessy Outdoors is part of Hennessy Timber Group which is comprised of Hennessy Packaging, Kruz Official Electric Bikes and Hennessy Offsite Modular. Hennessy Outdoors' goal as one of the premier garden equipment suppliers in Ireland, is simple – to provide the highest quality

garden timber products, garden furniture, garden sheds, fencing and children's play equipment to customers nationwide, to ensure years of enjoyment in your outdoor space.

HennessyOutdoors.ie provides high quality timber garden products nationwide. All products can be shipped nationwide, flat pack for self-assembly.

Children's play systems and wooden playhouses enable your children to stay active and offer lots of enjoyment through creative play. Over the past 20 years, Hennessy Timber Group has become a trusted and reliable provider of outstanding timber products.



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Ahamilla, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

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023 883 3780 info@hennessytimbergroup.com

Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill expanding into Bantry with new office opening



Ray O'Neill and Olivia Hanafin

Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill is delighted to announce the opening of their new Bantry office, located on Wolfe Tone Square, in the heart of the town. This branch will be Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill's third West Cork office, complementing the existing offices in Clonakilty and Skibbereen where they have consistently provided excellent customer service to their West Cork customer base.

Commenting on the new office, Ray O'Neill, Director of Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill says, "Given that we are already firmly established selling properties in this area for a number of years, this new branch is a natural progression for the company. Our new Bantry office will bring us closer to our customers in this area and will further strengthen the Sherry Fitzgerald brand in West Cork".

Opening a third West Cork office is a significant move for Ray, who has 40 plus years' ex-

perience providing advice and sales strategy in relation to the disposal of residential, commercial and farm properties, new homes, country estates/period homes, and residential portfolio sales. Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill was originally founded as an estate agency practice in 1930 by Ray's grandfather, Michael J O'Neill and then by Con O'Neill. Ray succeeded in 1978 and over the past 40 plus years the O'Neill family have gained an excellent reputation for providing professional advice based on extensive local knowledge and extremely high standards of customer service.

Olivia Hanafin, a native of Castletownbere and living in Eyeries, moves from Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill's Skibbereen office to the position of Branch Manager in Bantry. Combining her in-depth knowledge of local markets and the Sherry Fitzgerald brand will ensure a winning

service for customers, old and new. Olivia is a fully qualified and licensed Estate Agent having graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Property Valuation and Management from LIT in 2011. Olivia joined the Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill team in 2017 having previously worked as a Buyer's Agent across West Cork giving her an intimate understanding of the needs of buyers and sellers alike. Olivia works in residential and commercial sales and lettings.

The firm joined the Sherry Fitzgerald franchise in 1999 as one of its first members. In 2018, Ray was joined by his son Con to bring the business to four generations. Ray's nephew Hugh, has taken over the Skibbereen branch after a successful career at Cushman Wakefield in Limerick and Cohalan Downing in Cork City.

Sherry Fitzgerald, founded in 1982, is Ireland's largest estate agency with a national network of over 100 offices across Ireland, bringing property to the attention of a national and international audience.

Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill's new office on Wolfe Tone Square in Bantry is now open and Olivia Hanafin can be contacted on 027 31030 or by email: olivia@sfoneill.ie

Clonakilty. P: 023 8833995.
Skibbereen P: 028 21404.
Bantry P: 027 31030
E: info@sfoneill.ie
www.sfoneill.ie



Seated: Ray O'Neill. Back Row, L-R: Hugh O'Neill, Con O'Neill, Olivia Hanafin, Linda Burke, Cliona Kearney.

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Clonakilty Park Hotel recognised as one of Ireland's top family friendly hotels

Clonakilty Park Hotel in the heart of West Cork has taken the Bronze Medal in 'Ireland's Family Friendly Hotel' category at the recent Virgin Media Business Gold Medal Awards. Judged by industry experts, the awards are the leading independent honours scheme for recognising and rewarding excellence in Irish hospitality.

It's little wonder the Clonakilty Park brought home a medal. Aside from the family-friendly swimming pool with separate toddler pool, big and little kids can enjoy spending

some time at the high ropes, zip wiring and adventure golf. The Kids Club operates during all school holidays for children aged 4-12, giving parents the opportunity to enjoy some time to themselves and babysitting services are also available.

Commenting on the win, General Manager of the hotel, David Henry said he was "thrilled to accept the award. The team work exceptionally hard and 2023 is going to be a very exciting year, particularly with the completion of the second phase of the stunning remodelling of the large family

rooms. Our core ethos is family and we are delighted to receive an award which recognises this focus."

The hotel offers a selection of spacious family bedrooms, apartments and holiday homes and also boasts an Indoor Playzone, Teen Zone, Outdoor Playground and 3 screen Cinema. As the hotel prepares to welcome generations of families, there is little chance of hearing the words "I'm bored" at this hotel, more likely a little sob on departure with the words "I don't want to go home".



(l-r) Christiaan Venter, Aisling Drummond, David Henry, Irene O'Callaghan, Maria Carolan

Cork company brings fashionable and functional attire to children with additional needs

Keeks is a family-run online business which serves both baby and toddlers and adaptive fashion for persons with additional needs.

Parents Rob and April Mullen started the business in September 2021 after struggling to

find products for their oldest son Kian, who was born with a rare genetic condition known as FOXG1. The neuro-developmental disorder impacts brain development and function and is characterised by seizures, inability to control body movements, and lack of speech.

After stumbling across BILLY Footwear, which ticked every box for Kian, being both fashionable and functional, Rob and April subsequently became approved as their Irish retailer. Billy footwear are a stylish adapted footwear brand designed for people with limited

mobility or to fit over orthotics.

Kian Mullen is a happy nine-year-old, living life to the fullest – triumphing every day over his disability. His rare condition means that he is non-verbal, non-mobile and tube fed. There was always challenges to help Kian live to the fullest. From sourcing equipment and clothing to the intensive medical assistance he needs. Rather than seeing those difficulties as a burden April and Rob have embraced it in a courageous way – constantly finding the solutions to overcome them.

"Kian's condition has meant that over the years we have had to source a lot of inclusive products to assist him in everyday life," explain Rob and April. "Our goal is to pass on our experience as parents and make life easier for other parents out there."

Keeks supplies a baby and toddler range from Mum2Mum,

which includes the award-winning Wonder Bib line, Hooded Bath Towels, Face Cloths and Baby Swaddles. The company also supplies the very versatile Bundle Bean multi use footmuff and buggy accessories.

In its adaptive fashion and footwear range, you'll find products which are not easily accessible in Ireland. This includes fashionable adaptive footwear for kids with orthotics and mobility issues, clothing designed for children with sensory issues, plus size bibs and no-tie shoelaces.

Operating the business from their home in Cobh, the former engineer and administrative assistant say the biggest challenge has been balancing family life with busy work demands. However being able to introduce customers to their products and the hugely positive feedback they receive makes it all worthwhile.

The couple have three children, Kian (9), Luke (7) and Charlie (3) and when they do get the chance they like to go for walks as a family on the beach or their local woods or watch a movie together at home.

While they are currently awaiting a grant to improve their website www.keeks.ie, the big dream is to open a bricks and mortar shop in the future and hire some employees to help with the workload.

"We never expected we would ever end up running a business and it has been a steep learning curve, but we genuinely feel that we have made life easier for parents and kids by sourcing adapted solutions while keeping it stylish. There is no reason why fashion and a disability cannot go hand in hand".

www.keeks.ie

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April and Rob Mullen with their children, Charlie (3), Luke (7) and Kian (9)

people Environment : Making a difference



GROUNDED

MEP Grace O'Sullivan

As an MEP, the work that takes place in the European Union often seems too distant from the people who voted in the European elections back in 2019. It is something that has always bothered me, especially as too often the television and radio in Ireland focuses on American or British news, despite the fact that EU laws and the EU economy now plays a much more important role in our lives today. It is another reason why I am thankful to outlets like the West Cork People and local publications which give us the opportunity to bring Europe to you.

However, a physical presence is also vital. Now that we have all cancelled our Zoom subscriptions and we would rather not even think about the months and years spent on lockdown

Opening a new 'Green Hub' in Cork

during the Covid pandemic which took so many of our friends and loved ones, I figured it was well overdue to open an office in Cork.

As a native of Tramore, I travel between Waterford and Brussels on a regular basis. Coming back to my three amazing daughters in Tramore or heading out to vote in Committees and Parliament sessions in Brussels. On the weekends I stay with my daughters or I will coach surfing down on the beach in Tramore with the local kids. But serving a constituency that stretches from Wicklow to Clare, and everywhere south of that, requires a lot more time listening and learning from constituents from every walk of life.

About a quarter of the population of the constituency of Ireland South live in County Cork alone and there is massive potential for Cork, and the West Cork coast in particular, to play a leading role in the climate transition.

With a great team assembled we set about finding the perfect spot in the centre of Cork City for a brand new office, and I



Grace with Kinsale-Bandon Green Party representative Dr. Marc O'Riain and with Bantry Green Party representative Liz Coakley Wakefield at the opening of her Washington Street office.

am so grateful to the volunteers who turned out to put a fresh lick of green paint on the new space, inside and out. Local activists were on the ground in force, including local representative for Bandon-Kinsale, Dr. Marc O'Riain. We may have got a little overzealous though and at one point we accidentally painted some of the next door neighbour's wall too!

There is so much happening now across Cork, and I would like to use this new space as an opportunity for people who care about the environment and the health of our ocean to use the space - a kind of a 'green hub' for fresh ideas on climate action. In particular I am thinking of the new Marine Protected Areas legislation that is passing through the Oireachtas this year,

as well as the much needed expansion of our offshore wind energy production for which West Cork in particular is well placed. With the unmatched beauty of our south and west coasts, this county should be the leader in the protection of the environment and marine protection and we have a great team of local representatives there including Liz Coakley Wakefield

from Bantry and Rory Jackson from Skibbereen.

So if you're in the city in the coming weeks and months and you are interested in what we are doing in terms of environmental protection and social justice, stop by our new office on Washington Street in Cork City. The kettle's already on!

GRACE O'SULLIVAN MEP

NEW CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

located at 12D Washington Street, Cork

I am delighted to open my new constituency office in Cork City, and look forward to working more closely with the people of Cork in my role as an MEP.

Please reach out to me if there is anything I can do for you.

Contact Me: grace.osullivan@europarl.europa.eu

green party
comhaontas glas

THE GREENS/EFA
in the European Parliament

people Environment : Making a difference

Whale (and dolphin) enthusiasts invited to Whale Tales at Myross

Whale Tales will take place in West Cork from March 24 to 26 and is now open to both Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) members and the general public. This annual meeting of the IWDG is an opportunity for all whale (and dolphin) enthusiasts to join the group over the course of a weekend to share in appreciation for these charismatic mammals and to learn more about the conservation and research work being carried out by the IWDG and others.

This year's event is being held at CECAS The Centre of Excellence for Climate Action and Sustainability, at Myross Wood House, Leap, the wonderful former religious retreat, where many of the attendees will be staying on a residential basis. This is a local community initiative, which aims to make a positive impact on addressing climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

The weekend will kickstart with a humpback whale film/presentation on the evening of Friday, March 24, which will be very relevant to anyone living in West Cork who has ever been



Humpback whale tail-slapping, Rosscarbery bay area, © Pádraig Whooley, IWDG

fortunate enough to see this iconic species. Saturday will be a 'Whale day' of news and stories from IWDG officers, as well as an opportunity to introduce and discuss important issues on topics including offshore renewables and Marine Protected Areas (MPA's), with plenty of time for Q&As. More importantly, this is a great opportunity to share your own stories and mingle with like-minded folk, passionate about our marine environment and its wildlife.

To facilitate as many people

as possible attend, there is a small registration fee of €25 for IWDG members (€35 non-members) which includes a venue facility fee, light lunch and refreshments on the Saturday. Activities on Sunday morning will be dictated by the weather, but among the options are to hold a land-based whale watch from a local vantage point or to deliver a simulated live-stranding exercise on a local beach or at the venue. It promises to be a most interesting weekend with a difference. Bookings on Eventbrite.

The IWDG AGM is on Saturday afternoon at 5pm which, as always, is open only to current members; so if you'd like to attend this part of the day you should become an IWDG member. To encourage attendees to support the IWDG charity by joining there is a discounted rate using this promo code: TBY3XZQ4 in the IWDG Shop www.iwdg.ie.

Queries to IWDG on: padraig.whooley@iwdg.ie or Ph. 086 3850568

Clochán Uisce Spotlight on the Argideen

In Irish, the river Argideen means the little silver stream.

This beautiful river rises in the peatlands of Reenascreena and flows to the estuary at Timoleague then drains into the Celtic sea at Courtmacsherry. It has an abundance of wildlife along its banks and a sea trout return to the river every year. The Argideen also provides Clonakilty with its drinking water so spare a thought for this natural resource next time you fill your kettle or wash your clothes!

For all that Argideen has to offer, we must reciprocate by helping to improve its health. The little silver stream does not get back from us anything like it provides. Sewage from the unresolved septic tank problem in Shannonvale leaches into the river. High levels of glyphosate have been found in its waters and excessive nitrogen levels mainly from agriculture contribute to green algae blooms in Courtmacsherry bay and have a detrimental affect on water quality and biodiversity in the estuary.

Rivers are one of the most

diverse ecosystems in the natural world and we need to find solutions to the problems we are responsible for as a society. The Teagasc catchment program and the EPA are working to resolve the excessive nitrogen issue but more needs to be done. We will be doing kick sampling and water sampling along banks of the Argideen in the coming weeks and enjoying the new trails along its banks from Inchy bridge to Timoleague, please get in touch if you would like to join us.

Last month's focus on the Feagle has led to us teaming up with Clonakilty's Tidy Towns and a project to plant the flower boxes in town that flank the river with perennials and biodiverse flowers that will encourage more life to thrive along it and, in future, to plant native trees further up along its banks to stabilise the riverside and provide refuge for our native fauna. Clochán Uisce's next meeting is Saturday April 1, 5pm at 8 St Paul's Cl, Clonakilty and all are welcome. You can find us on Instagram or join our mailing list by emailing clochanuisce@gmail.com.

Spring and summer programme of events

by Nicholas Mitchell

The Branch has a full programme of events planned for this spring and summer in West Cork. We started spring with a visit to Kinsale Marsh on February 12, led by Prof. John Quinn from the Department of Biological Earth and Environmental Sciences at UCC. With his research background, and this being his local patch as a counter for the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS), all present benefited from some fascinating information and insights about bird ecology, behaviour, and evolution. The highlight was a Curlew Sandpiper, a bird that we are more used to seeing as a juvenile in early autumn.

Next up we are visiting the estuary at Timoleague and Courtmacsherry in March. Karl Woods is leading this outing for us. If you ever want to find Karl, this estuary is a good place to start, so there's no better man to lead this. We will be looking for wading birds before they start their migration north to their breeding grounds, Grey Herons and Little Egrets who will already be nest building in the woods, as well as divers to-

Sunday, March 5: Timoleague and Courtmacsherry
1:30pm: Meet at Timoleague Abbey (GPS 51.64386, -8.76360)
Leader: Karl Woods 083 109 4570 | Toilets: Yes | Walk: Easy

Sunday, March 26: Lissagriffin and Dune Walk – Early migrants
10:30am: Meet at Lissagriffin car park (OSI Map 88 Ref. V 773 259).
Leader: Mike Cobley 086 873 6436 | Toilets: No | Walk: Easy

Thursday, March 30 - Annual General Meeting and talk
7:30pm: O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty

wards the mouth of the estuary.

Later in March, we plan to visit Lissagriffin and its dunes on Mizen Head. We normally run outings here in the summer or the autumn so this is a new event for the Branch. We will be hoping to find early spring migrants such as Sand Martin and Wheatear.

And finally, the end of March is when we hold our Annual General Meeting. This is not to everyone's taste, but it is an opportunity to come along, meet other members and find out what we do. We are always looking for new volunteers to help or to get involved in some way, so please come along if that is you. We also plan to have a guest speaker but, at the time of going to print, this has not been finalised. Please join our mailing list for the latest

information (see below).

We have not planned any specific outings during April. Instead, the Branch plans to organise ad hoc outings to the Old Head, Galley Head and Mizen Head when conditions are suitable, which could be any day of the week. In order to receive WhatsApp notifications for these events, and any other ad hoc events, please WhatsApp Nicholas Mitchell at 087 121 5256.

By May early mornings are alive with birdsong and it is time for our annual dawn chorus event. This year, after a long absence, we are holding it at Liss Ard Estate outside Skibbereen. We held it there last in 2021, 2014 and 2015 and it proved to be one of our most popular venues, so another visit is long overdue. We are grateful

April – West Cork peninsulas – Spring migration

Sunday, May 14 – Dawn Chorus at Liss Ard Estate, Skibb
4.15am: Meet at Liss Ard. The entrance is SE of Skibb on the Castletownsend Rd (GPS 51.53758, -9.25333), 4.30am: Prompt start
Leader: Jez Simms 087 689 6964 | Toilets: Yes | Walk: Easy

Sunday, June 11: 'George the Sky' – Walk at Castle Donovan
11:00am: Meet at Castle Donovan Car Park (51.69043 -9.28216).
Bring suitable clothing, swimmers and picnic.
Leader: Dave Rees 086 215 2590 | Toilets: No | Walk: Moderate



Meadow Pipit (summer). Pic: Nicholas Mitchell



for the owners for allowing us entry.

Although this will not be our last event of the summer, a visit to Castle Donovan in June is the last on our current programme. We have held an outing here before, but it was a Christmas walk in 2011. This time we are visiting in the summer and will be looking for Meadow Pipit, Skylark and Wheatear.

We look forward to seeing old and new faces at these events. If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Visit our website www.birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie for more information about these events. To receive news and reminders about our events join our mailing list by sending an email to mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie. For more information about the Branch, contact Fiona O'Neill at secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie.
Facebook: @BirdWatchIrelandWestCork
Twitter: @BWIWestCork

people Environment : Making a difference

The power of the consumer – a guide to greenwashing



GOING GREEN

Lauren Guillery

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

The old adage ‘the customer is king’ or ‘the customer is always right’ might make you believe that a company’s most important value is to treat their clientele with respect. But over the years many retailers and manufacturers around the globe have cheated their customers to boost their revenue and in the process were accused of ‘greenwashing’. But what exactly is greenwashing, and how can consumers be more vigilant and avoid falling for these deceiving tactics that seem to sprout every so often on the market?

The Oxford dictionary defines greenwashing as ‘the creation or propagation of an unfounded or misleading environmentalist image’. In simple terms, it involves making unsubstantiated claims to deceive consumers into believing that a company’s products are environmentally friendly or have a greater positive impact on the environment than they actually do.

You might remember the Volkswagen emissions scandal of 2015, where the German car manufacturer was found to have installed ‘defeat devices’ on diesel engine cars. The devices – installed on 11 million VW-manufactured vehicles worldwide, detected when the cars were being tested, changing their performance accordingly to improve emission results. This is a classic example of greenwashing: keen on tapping into the growing pool of consumers interested in affordable low-carbon transport, Volkswagen deceived the public with fake emissions reports, branding its new line of diesel vehicles as one of the most environmentally friendly options in a huge marketing campaign. But the truth eventually came out – the cars were found to produce up to 40 times more emissions than advertised.

A prime greenwashing example involves purposefully using imagery of nature in advertising or on packaging. Companies use photographs and graphics of trees, forests, plants, leaves, flowers, as well as text in the

colour green on their website and their product packaging to fool customers and appear more environmentally friendly to them.

Greenwashing may occur when a company attempts to emphasise sustainable aspects of its products to overshadow its involvement in environmentally damaging practices. An example would be technology promoting energy efficiency without disclosing hazardous materials used in manufacturing. Some industries are particularly good at this – the fossil fuel industry has often rebranded itself as ‘green’ and environmentally friendly by pushing the idea of ‘clean coal’ promoting natural gas as a sustainable energy source, and creating tokenism campaigns such as tree planting initiatives in the community.

Companies may also use false, misleading labels with ‘sustainability’ certifications to create an illusion that their products or services have been independently certified by a legitimate third-party. Generally, beware of ‘100 per cent organic certified’ and ‘energy efficiency certified’ labels – look for reliable sources of certifications such as the ‘GOTS’ label on pieces of clothing, the European leaf logo on organic food and gardening products, and the colourful A-G rating on electronic devices.

Environmental claims that are broad or unfounded have been used by companies to make themselves look better to the



public. The ASA in 2020 held that a claim by Ryanair that they were “a low CO₂ airline” was misleading. And last summer, Land Rover was told by the Advertising Authority of Ireland to stop running an ad featuring Irish celebrity gardener Diarmuid Gavin who was driving around in an SUV praising the vehicle for ‘planting the seeds for a more sustainable life’ despite burning fossil fuels with a three-litre engine. Such misleading claims could encourage unwitting consumers to fly abroad every weekend and buy large SUVs with the belief they are doing good for the planet. And let’s face it, SUVs just like airplanes are not the answer to a greener lifestyle.

Another greenwashing tactic

is called the ‘bait and switch’. This is when a company heavily promotes a limited line of eco-friendly goods to attract ecologically conscious consumers. Once the customer is enticed by the products, they are presented with an extensive range of goods that are not eco-friendly. There is also the use of vague terminology on products which doesn’t mean anything in terms of a company’s manufacturing process or its adherence to environmental policies. Players in the clothing industry make use of such language with phrases like ‘close the loop’, ‘a conscious choice’, and calling their products ‘sustainable’ despite their clothing being made of synthetic materials. Brands like the Swedish

giant H&M offers its customers the opportunity to bring their old, no longer wanted clothes back to its shop for recycling; it could be looked at as a way of inducing customers to buy more. In fact textile recycling barely exists (only 12 per cent of textiles are recycled globally). In fact, what the fashion industry calls ‘recycled’ is mostly downcycled to lower value products or shipped around the world to low-income countries, where a large portion of it (an astronomical 85pc) ends up in landfill.

I’m tempted to also mention Coca Cola, the largest plastic polluter on the planet, greenwashing us with ads claiming they are committed to reducing plastic waste, and encouraging people to recycle their bottles. What a lot of... garbage!

Greenwashing is an attempt by companies to capitalise on the demand for environmentally sound products. Ultimately, it has negative consequences for us all and the environment, so it’s vital we call it out for what it is: a deceitful and unethical practice. My advice is to always be sceptical of brands that claim to be green without the proper credentials, and to check whether a product lives up to its advertising. Vote with your wallet and support companies that inspire confidence. Only by remaining vigilant will we avoid being swayed by claims that promise the world.

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Noble false widow spider found preying on pygmy shrew

Scientists at University of Galway have published the first record of a noble false widow spider feeding on a pygmy shrew, a species of tiny mammal protected in Ireland.

The new study, recently published in the international journal ‘Ecosphere’, demonstrates further the potentially negative impact of the invasive and venomous noble false widow spider on native species.

It is the first time a member of this family of spiders, called ‘Theridiidae,’ has been recorded preying on a shrew in Ireland or in Britain. It is also the first time for any species of false widow spider to prey on shrews anywhere in the world.

The extraordinary discovery was made by Dawn Sturgess at a home in Chichester, West Sussex, southern England when a small mammal was found entangled in a spider’s web



constructed on the outside of a bedroom window. The ensnared creature was later identified by the lengths of tooth rows as a pygmy shrew ‘Sorex minutus’.

The shrew was still alive, but the spider’s highly potent neurotoxic venom was evidently taking effect as the shrew became increasingly incapacitated. The spider was observed hoisting the shrew upwards into the rafters where it wrapped it in silk and fed off its meal for three days.

In Ireland the pygmy shrew is protected under the Wildlife Act (1976) and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. In the UK, the species is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

This is the third case in recent years of a protected vertebrate species falling prey to the noble false widow in Ireland or the UK, and this represents the eighth species of vertebrate known to fall prey to members of the false widow genus Steatoda. The noble false widow now appears to be a regular

vertebrate-eating spider.

In a previous study published in the journal Food Webs in 2021, researchers at University of Galway’s Venom Lab provided video evidence of a false widow spider lifting a significantly larger gecko off the ground with exceptional ease using its silk threads as a pulley system. It appears that the noble false widow spider used an identical method to hoist the shrew higher up the web.

Over the past seven years, the research team, led by Dr Michel Dugon at University of Galway’s Ryan Institute, have been studying a wide range of characteristics specific to the species including its venom, symptoms associated with their venomous bite, ecology and behaviour.

Dr Michel Dugon, Head of the Venom Systems Lab, Ryan Institute, University of Gal-

way and lead author of the study, said: “This observation demonstrates further that the noble false widow is perfectly adapted to take down large prey, combining potent venom, extremely strong silk, and complex hunting behaviour.”

Dr John Dunbar, Irish Research Council Post-Doctoral fellow, Venom Systems Lab, Ryan Institute, University of Galway, and senior author of the study said: “The noble false widow is a very intriguing

spider, and we have much to learn about it still. We are very grateful to the members of the public who share their observations with us. This allows us to understand better how this invasive species may impact us and our environment.”

The scientists at University of Galway are encouraging members of the public to email them at falsewidow@universityofgalway.ie to report sightings of the noble false widow spider.



people Food, Health & Lifestyle

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A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

I have cautiously started to set seeds, the glasshouse has been scrubbed and is ready for the new growing season. There's not much in there as of yet as the rumour of the return of the 'Beast from the East' is holding me back.

Rumour or no rumour, nature is beetling along; the daffodils are opening, the peach tree is blossoming and the frogs are contentedly 'ribbeting' away in the pond laying their spawn. The sound of the frogs is a proper affirmation that spring is here.

Nature might be on the move but the growth is pretty slow. There are still plenty of green things to eat and we're still gallantly munching our way through our kohlrabi crop – I have discovered that kohlrabi makes excellent fritters.

Fritters are actually incredibly versatile, they're eaten all around the world – pakoras in India, falafels in the Middle East, tempura in Japan, smoute-bollen in Holland... the list is endless, sweet and savoury. Fritters can be anything – meat, fish, fruit or vegetable that has been dunked in batter and fried in oil; the word comes from the Latin word 'frictura', which translates as fried, and fried means crispy which can only mean delicious.

There's always something in the vegetable basket which can be frittered – carrots, squash, celeriac, cauliflower, broccoli, parsnips, kohlrabi, turnips, kale, cabbage... they all transform into a delightfully crispy dinner at very little cost and generally we'd have all the ingredients in the house.

Basically to make a vegetable fritter you need flour, baking powder and eggs. All other add-ins are optional – herbs, spices etc. The flour can be regular flour or a combo of regular flour and cornflour for extra crispiness. Rice flour works well especially mixed with cornflour

and gram flour (ground chick-peas) offers added protein.

Making vegetable fritters is a bit like making pancakes, the same kind of base but instead of frying straight batter, grated vegetables are stirred through. As always there are a few tips for success.

The batter should not be too runny, just enough to bind the ingredients together. There should be just enough to coat the vegetables, ie more vegetables than batter.

The flour shouldn't be strong flour, as gluten isn't required; regular household flour is better and a little added baking powder helps create bubbles, which keep the fritters light.

Brighten up the batter mix with the addition of fresh herbs and lemon zest

Any vegetable that is wet after being grated needs to have the excess liquid removed – just pat with kitchen towels or roll in a clean t-towel and give a little squeeze, then continue with the recipe.

The oil for frying can be any vegetable oil, it just needs to be hot so heat the oil before frying. You should hear everything sizzle as it hits the pan and maintain the sizzle whilst cooking. If the fritter's are browning too quickly reduce the heat but not to the point of no action.

And one last thing. Fritters

like to be dunked so serve with mayonnaise, yoghurt or any salsa of your choice on the side and you're guaranteed happy diners.

Vegetable Fritters

Ingredients:

- 400g grated vegetable – kohlrabi, carrot, celeriac, parsnip – any combo
- 1 onion, peeled and grated
- 1 tbs chopped dill, fennel or chives
- 1 lemon, finely zested
- 35g plain flour or rice flour
- 35g cornflour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- half tsp salt
- 2 eggs

Method:

Sift the flours, salt and baking powder into a bowl.

Lightly whisk the eggs then mix with the flours.

Stir the grated lemon zest and onion into the batter.

Dry the grated vegetables if they are wet. Kohlrabi will need a squeeze – just gather handfuls and squeeze like washing. And the excess liquid will come out.

Stir the grated vegetables into the batter. It will look quite



vegetable predominant but they soon relax to become a scoopable batter.

Heat a large frying pan, add enough oil to cover the bottom. Turn the heat to medium then add the batter a spoonful at a time, flatten with the back of the spoon. Cook each side for 2-3 minutes keeping an eye on the temperature. It's a balancing act. On one side you want crispy fritters which aren't burnt and on the other you don't want soggy bottoms so make sure you can hear a little action.

Good luck and bon appetit!

Karen
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Clonakilty Fairtrade group asks shoppers to examine packaging for fairness during Fairtrade Fortnight



International Fairtrade Fortnight began on February 27 and continues to March 12, with this year's theme being, 'Be Fair – Do Sustainable' focusing on the links between food, farmer/producer livelihoods and the global and local environment.

As Ireland's first Fairtrade Town, Clonakilty will celebrate this twentieth anniversary next September. For Fairtrade Fortnight, the local committee is asking people to think carefully about the food they purchase. Are the people who work hardest, and take the most risks at the early production stage, getting a fair price? Are workers being paid a fair wage? Are children working on those holdings rather than being educated in school? Who is making the largest profits in the journey from land to shop shelf? How many 'food miles' are involved, meaning how far have those items travelled? Is there a better alternative?

The Fairtrade logo on packaging indicates that the producers are being treated fairly by the food companies. During Fairtrade Fortnight and beyond, the Clonakilty committee encourages people to read food packaging and ask themselves – is this product fair on people and the environment?





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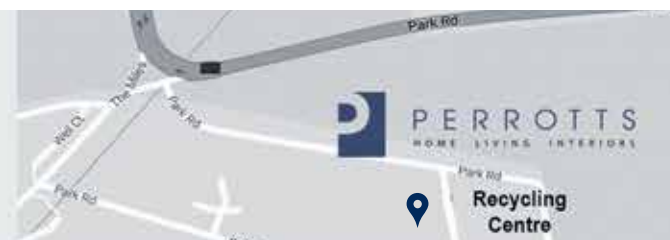
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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

The healing riches of a garden

At this time of year when gardens demand so much of our attention it is interesting to consider why we put such an effort into making even the smallest patch lovely.

A garden may be defined as an area distinguished by its layout and the plants that grow there, all of which gives us pleasure and enjoyment. This association of gardens with solace, quiet and delight has endured since time immemorial. The Garden of Eden and the Garden of Hesperides are just two that evoke a sense of mystery, while the Babylonian hanging gardens suggest visions of exotic plants,

fruits, and abundance in an arid, dry environment.

In the Middle Ages, monastic gardens, and the 'luibh gort' in Ireland, supplied the herbs necessary for healing the sick but modern research supports the view that gardens also provide physical, social, emotional, and spiritual health. According to a 1984 study by Roger Ulrich, surgical patients who had a view of nature had fewer problems, and were released sooner, than those who could only see a brick wall. This work established the necessity for evidence-based design in the layout of healthcare facilities and gave rise to a distinct profes-

sional organisation of horticulture within the discipline – the American Horticultural Therapy Association.

Gardens are defined as a piece of enclosed ground, so a garden may be seen as an outdoor room. The Zen garden is probably the one style of garden where this idea of being a separate room, away from public life and in a safe secure space, is most evident. But any garden can create this sense of being away from the hustle and bustle if a little corner is made more secluded than the rest and hidden away from the house. The growth and sheer verdant nature of a garden also pleases us and, if a garden is well-designed, it allows all our senses to be activated. We can touch, smell, hear, see, but we also become aware of temperature change as we move from sun to shade. If the ground is uneven or we have to climb steps our sense of balance is needed and the feel of a gentle breeze on our face only adds to the delight of the experience.

Why are gardens healing? It may simply be because we are taught that nature is restorative, and that cities are 'unnatural'. There is also the evolutionary theory which states that we respond more favourably to environments that are beneficial for our survival and gardens



HERBAL HEALING

Dr. Rosari Kingston

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

with their rich array of plants serve that need. Physically, gardens heal by reducing pain, (Fewer analgesics are needed for patients with access to gardens), improving sleep quality, reducing stress, improving patient satisfaction and even lowering infection occurrence. An

interesting study by Dr. Joanne Westphal (2003) evaluated time spent in a garden by patients with Alzheimers. She found there were no beneficial effects on behaviour, medication usage, pulse rate, blood pressure and weight with patients who spent five minutes or less in the garden. However those who spent

stress or trauma, will not be able to climb over rocks but will appreciate a garden that is serene and calm, with the only sound being the hum of bees, and the trickle of water. For those who are more active, a garden rich with different plant species and experiences will absorb their attention, while for others a sense



ten minutes or more showed great improvements in all the categories, except medication usage which stayed the same. Other benefits of gardens may be seen in social interactions as well as exercise. The delights of a garden can also be a positive distraction and help to decrease mental fatigue.

Gardens need to offer different experiences to different people. A person who has no energy, has experienced great

of space is what will restore their spirit. The serene garden may not be attractive at all for a young family on a day out but a wide-open space with lots of areas to explore will suit.

Gardens are then a pleasurable and healthy part of our lives and, as we dig, plant and weed this spring, our sore muscles may be lessened somewhat by remembering the incalculable riches they give us.

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DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

Danish freelance journalist and fitness professional Tania Presutti, delivers a series of efficient DIY fitness exercises you can do at home.

Spring is officially here and, with brighter and warmer days, we feel the need to spend more time outside. This spring and summer you can make the most of your outdoor time by using your surroundings for training. I hope you can find the inspiration you need in this guide to get ready

The outdoor gym

for a beautiful summer looking and feeling great, fit and strong.

If you are in the habit of going for walks or runs, you can easily adapt your trips to include strength training. Just dress in clothes you can move around in and bring a bottle of water with you if you can. If you don't go out, you can do most of these exercises at home. But I genuinely urge you to add walks, jogs or runs to your weekly routine. Being outside, closer to nature will lift your mood, strengthen your immune system and make you more aware of your environment.

Below you'll find my suggestions to add strength work to your walk or run routine to help you build muscles and burn more calories.

Benches can be used for Dips: Sit on the bench and place your hands palms down on the bench, fingers gripping on the edge of the seat. Scoop your behind off the bench, lower yourself towards the ground, by bending your arms by the elbows, use your arms to press yourself up to bench level again.

A good beginner set would be 3 x 10.

Big tree trunks can be used for standing push ups: Stand an arm-length or a bit further (so you're leaning towards the trunk) from the tree. Bend your arms by the elbows and lean your weight against the tree, push slowly back to your start position.

Again do 3 x 10 repetitions if you have time for it (watch for splinters).

Sand dunes/small hills: Walk/run briskly up and walk down. This will strengthen your legs and feet: Quads, hamstrings, glutes and achilles and ankles. Walking/running uphill is a replacement for weight exercises such as squats. Depending on the height of the dune/hill you could do anything from 3-10 repeats.

Other environmental tools: Fallen tree trunks (narrow), stripes on the road, small puddles or smaller rocks can be used to jump across either with feet together or as a scotch hop. If you feel the trunk or rock is too high or too broad, then

jump next to it and just use it for measure. This exercise will get your pulse up and strengthen your fast twitch leg muscles. A workout could be 3 x 10 with feet together or 3 x 10 on each side.

If you are walking by the ocean side, on one of the rock beaches, you can skip stones off the water. Or practice throwing long or hard (provided nobody is in the water of course). Another exercise to include for up-pertbody is to find a solid branch (or a metal bar at a playground) and do pull ups/chin ups.

A full body exercise which involves arms and back as well, is to roll /flip rocks. Simply squat down, grip the rock lift and flip or just lift, stand up and put back down.

For rock throwing/skipping I'd suggest 3 x 10 turns each arm, or 3 x 12 with your weakest arm and 3 x 10 with the strongest. If you are new to pull ups/chin ups, I suggest you just hang and practice grip strength or work to failure (till you can't do anymore). For the fullbody lift or flip, I'd suggest



3 x 5, depending on the size of the rock. If it's light you can do more than five repetitions.

I want to point out that the most important thing is to have fun with your activities. If you're walking or running with someone, ask them to get in on the games with you. If you're on your own, make it a game for yourself, become better

at different exercises week to week. Enjoy being outside, enjoy being able to move and enjoy the thought that these games will help make you stronger and thus improve your life.

Questions and comments are as usual welcome at [@trainwithadane](https://www.instagram.com/trainwithadane) on Instagram or taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com

Wild Garlic revealed as Munster Café Takeaway of the Year

#makingithappen

After just six months in business, Dunmanway's Wild Garlic Café and Restaurant was named as Munster's Café Takeaway of the Year at the YesChef Takeaway Awards, which took place in Athlone last week. Turning to takeaway saved many a restaurant from going under in times of lockdown and since then food-to-go has continued to thrive in Ireland. From food trucks to local cafés all serving restaurant-quality dishes, there's been a renewed appreciation for the option to bring home a dinner that someone else has cooked!

Wild Garlic's dynamic proprietors Pat Kiely and his wife AnneMarie, who is also Head Chef, have no strangers to awards, having picked up numerous accolades during their time running a seafood restaurant in Bantry. However, Pat says the couple are still thrilled to be recognised so early into their new venture.

"The Yes Chef judges came incognito during a Saturday lunchtime. I had no idea who they were and the restaurant was full so I even had to ask them to wait 10 minutes until a table came free.

"Whilst they looked at the menu they asked what was available to take away and when I said 'absolutely everything' they seemed very surprised as most cafés and restaurants would have more limited takeaway options.

"It was only when they were



Head Chef AnneMarie Kiely at the Yes Chef

paying that they revealed they were from Yes Chef magazine! The service and the food had been up to our usual standard so I wasn't worried that we had let ourselves down in any way".

Shane Smith, Managing Director of NI Media, which runs the awards, says: "Food to go is one of the fastest growing sectors. Customer expectations are high and the modern Irish diner has a discerning palate.

The standards that we encountered this year were incredibly high and the quality of food delivered was outstanding. We are lucky to have an extensive panel of researchers and every entrant to the awards was inspected by experienced judges. We'd like to thank them and everyone who took part in this year's programme."

Pat and AnneMarie travelled up to Athlone for the awards

night but were back behind the counter the following morning.

Wild Garlic has already become a firm favourite with the local community who seem to be spreading the word further afield. "We're not on the tourist trail as such so we really rely on local custom," Pat explains.

"They seem to like us as we are delighted to see the same faces returning again and again. But we are also now seeing people travelling from Bandon, Clonakilty and Macroom so we know locals are recommending us and we thank them."

Wild Garlic is open Tuesday

to Saturday from 9am to 4pm for breakfast, brunch and lunch. It will stay open until 5pm on St Patrick's Day to cater for parade goers. Sunday lunch on March 19, 12-6pm for Mother's Day. A full coeliac menu is available.



Munster Café Takeaway of the Year 2023

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Irish seafood has one of the lowest carbon footprints of any produce in Ireland according to BIM Study

A new study by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has found that Irish produced seafood is among the lowest carbon food produced in Ireland. This study provides the Irish seafood sector with access to reliable data for the first time. It identifies areas for targeted strategies to help minimise the carbon emissions associated with the production of seafood.

The 'Carbon Footprint Report of the Irish Seafood Sector' found that carbon emissions for the sector are just under 400,000 tonnes of CO₂ – less than two per cent of those produced in other key food sectors. This number includes the emissions for both farmed and wild caught seafood. Farmed mussels (rope grown), oysters and wild caught

mackerel in particular have been shown to have very low carbon emissions.

Caroline Bocquel, BIM Chief Executive Officer welcomed the newly published report, saying it provided scientific evidence that the sector has significantly low levels of greenhouse gas emissions: "Access to reliable data is crucial to understand which steps of seafood production create the most emissions. Being able to feed people in a healthy, nutritious, and equitable way, without adding to global warming, is key.

"This comprehensive study has taken almost two years to complete. Delivering the data required input from industry and other stakeholders. The findings of the report demonstrate

how the sector is producing a beneficial, nutritious, and safe food with low environmental impacts."

"In fishing, fuel accounts for more than 90 per cent of carbon emissions, while processing and transportation accounts for 10 per cent. Already, we are seeing transitions away from exclusively diesel-powered engines to hybrid vessels and alternative fuels are also being explored. Later this year BIM will produce a report under the Climate Action Plan 2023 on the role these alternative fuels may play in the future of the Irish seafood sector. We now have a great opportunity to reduce emissions even further."



Emer O'Sullivan

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

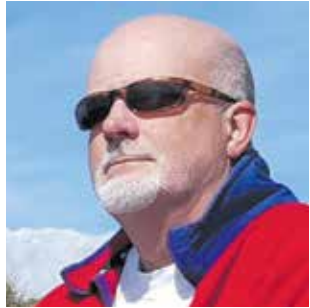
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Emer is an accredited counsellor with the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and a member of the Association for Coaching. She has worked for many years as a Family Support Social Worker in the community.

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people Food, Health & Lifestyle



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

My West Cork DNA Projects (Part 6)

This month provides the sixth synopsis for my wife's ancestral lines and what has been learned from atDNA matching. If you have DNA tested and related to any of these family, 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, reaching boundary-defining church records in County Cork. This provides a solid and verifiable dataset for anyone who is a close match within this genealogical timeframe.

O'CONNELL of Kilnamartyra Parish

This family is the most difficult to pin down as almost all the family from the area (the townland of Ballvoge/Ballyvouge near Macroom, noted for poultry farming) emigrated to the US in the C19th and settled in and around Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware. Poultry is now one of the main industries of the state.

Church records and DNA matches indicate few identifiable relatives remaining in County Cork, but the phone book in Wilmington is full of O'CONNELLS. It is not clear if it was a mass exodus or a steady stream of emigration over many decades. There are at least three third cousins on paper who are strong DNA matches. Unfortunately, none are active on their respective genealogical platforms, so no specific DNA can be attributable to the family line to advance matching closer to home.

In Ireland, the paper trail starts from my wife's great great grandparents John CONNELL, a labourer of Ballyvouge and his wife Mary McCARTHY of Ballyvourney who married in 1860. The only family witness at the wedding was a Callaghan McCARTHY. Mary's parents appear to be John "Sean" McCARTHY & Catherine KELLEHER which is supported by many

distant matches relating to both families in the region. Their son Callaghan might be the marriage witness, however the connection is prior to church records. One matching DNA line in County Cork includes descendants of Eugene 'Owen' McCARTHY (1838).

John and Mary's known children include Jeremiah 'Jerry' CONNELL (1861), Julia CONNELL (1863), Margaret 'Margie' CONNELL (1865) and Daniel CONNELL (1867) who were born Ireland. Other children were born in the US including a John J O'CONNELL (1876-1941). The strong DNA connections are indicated through descendants of both Margie and John who live in the Wilmington area today.

Daniel O'CONNELL, a Catholic, is my wife's great grandfather. He owned a saloon bar in Market Street, Wilmington where he married Gertrude 'Gertie' GOOD, a Protestant, in 1899. Gertie was living in Philadelphia. It is not clear how they came to meet (although both families came from County Cork) nor their apparent age difference of some 12 years. The couple apparently agreed that any boys would be raised as Catholics and any girls raised as Protestants.

After their first three children died in very early infancy in the US, the couple decided to relocate arriving in Queenstown (Cobh) aboard the SS Etruria

in 1902, where they opened a poultry shop and later ran a pub in Ballydehob. They raised two daughters including my wife's grandmother (who married into the Clonakilty LOWNEY family) and Phyllis who married a MacCAFFREY in England and settled in Perth, Australia.

Daniel (known as 'DG') and Gertie were local celebrities in the up-and-coming market town of Ballydehob having arrived with 'their American dollars'. Gertie was also referred to as the 'American woman' which suggests she may have been in the US for a while. Daniel's shop was at 29 Ballydehob in 1911, which is remembered by a banner every St Patrick's Day (see image). It is thought the pub is the building later occupied by Duggan's Restaurant.

His additional initial 'G' is only found in Ballydehob, which distinguishes him (as a poultry dealer) from another Daniel O'CONNELL in the town (known as 'Danlo', a grocer/shopkeeper). It is suggested that the 'G' was for Gertie.

The people of Ballydehob who knew 'DG' as children relate that he was held in high regard by his neighbours and customers. He was described as an old man, very tall and 'hefty' with a good head of white/grey hair, who used to greet families on their way home from Mass. The different religions in the household

did not seem to make any difference. Gertie worked as a teacher at the local C of I school.

DG retired to Sparrograda, just north of Ballydehob. Today, the nearby road junction (Dreenacough and Sparrograda) on the Bantry road is referred to as 'DG's' even though the house has long gone. DG died in 1943 at Schull Hospital.

O'Donovan Clan Gathering 2023

After travel restrictions, the annual O'Donovan Clan Gathering resumes this year, to be held between June 14 and 18 in West Cork. I shall be presenting findings from my investigations into my wife's numerous O'Donovan connection at the Maritime Hotel, Bantry, on June 16. I will also be available for a Q&A session on DNA testing and matching. There is more information on the event on the Gathering's Facebook group. I will be discussing some O'Donovans in next month's article.

Questions that can be answered as part of future articles can be emailed to DNAmatchingprojects@gmail.com or follow the West Cork DNA projects on Facebook 'My Irish Genealogy & DNA'.



A resource for our lives



MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

Susan O'Regan

Susan O'Regan, Msc Mindfulness Studies teaches compassion-based mindfulness. She is a teacher member of the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland (MTAI) and The Mindfulness Association.

What is the difference between mindfulness and meditation? Or are they the same thing? These questions regularly come up in my classes and workshops. Listening to a radio interview recently, I heard traditional meditation being described as, 'just another thing we have to do' with a range of less time-con-

suming options being offered instead. Then I spotted a newspaper article offering 12 ways to meditate – without actually meditating! I suppose because mindfulness has become such a buzz word in recent times, it is understandable that there are different views around what it means, but, as this is the case, I believe it is more important than ever not to allow this ancient practice and its benefits be diluted down to the point where its essence and meaning are lost.

Why do we resist the things that are good for us? Or we look for quick-fix solutions, that won't take us long but that we hope will have long lasting results. We can talk ourselves out of things so easily, telling ourselves that we don't have time, or that it doesn't work for us, that our minds are too busy, or we feel we are already meditating 'without actually meditating' by walking, swimming and so on. Or maybe we have anxiety about trying new things. For me, before I found mindfulness meditation, I was not able to manage stress very well or cope with the various



life challenges that came my way. And yet I walked, I swam, I tried so many things, but it was only by learning to meditate that I got to know myself and learned long-lasting techniques to manage stress, overthinking, rumination and how to cultivate self-compassion rather than self-criticism.

There are many ways of practicing meditation but at the end of the day it comes down to the same thing. We are learning to tame or train what is described by mindfulness teacher Rob Nairn as our 'wild horse' mind, to keep returning to the present moment and to what's happening now. We are learning to

stay in the body. We are paying attention to how we are feeling physically, mentally and emotionally. Tara Brach in her recent podcast 'Refuge in the wilderness: coming home to embodied presence' says, "We are, by and large, utterly terrified of silence, stillness, spaciousness, the doing of nothing so as to feel the totality of everything." Sitting still with your thoughts, feelings and emotions can be hard to do. It might sound simple, and indeed there is a simplicity to it, but it is not easy.

So not as straightforward as it may appear, because human beings are complex, but it is in the stillness that we get to know

the depth of ourselves, we learn how to be present, how to rest. And then we add compassion to the mix, and this is the cherry on the cake! The compassion element softens everything, and by practicing traditional 'formal' meditation we can more easily carry attributes like calm and compassion with us out into the world and are more able to apply mindfulness to everyday life, to our walking, swimming, eating and so on. So, it is not a case of one over the other, mindfulness or meditation, but it is the regular practice of mindfulness meditation which can support us through our lives, helping us to be present for more of our lives.

When our mind is home in the body, we are much more able to deal clearly with what is going on in our lives, we are not overtaken by thoughts or the stories that we create around events or about people. We learn to deal with what is, rather than what has been, or might be, or could or should be. It's like we're peeling away the layers of habitual patterning and unlearning ways of being that

no longer serve us in our lives. It is an intentional practice; it takes commitment. We are present in our bodies, aware of the weight of our bodies, the places we are in contact with the seat, our sensory experience and our thoughts, the whole lot. It's not about clearing the mind, it's about noticing what's happening in the mind, body, heart and what's going on around us. A waking up to our lives, best learned by practice, as the world-renowned teacher, Jon Kabat Zinn recommends "Just do it!"

Drop-in compassion-based mindfulness sessions at Myross Wood House, Leap (CECAS.ie) on Tuesday mornings from 10am-11am. €10. All welcome.

Monthly mindfulness and self-compassion workshops at Myross Wood are happening during Spring. Please keep an eye on my facebook page or feel free to give me a call. www.mindhaven.ie
Phone: 087 2700572 email: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com or follow my facebook page: susanoreganmindfulness

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Sheona draws on medical skills and experience to launch new aesthetics career

Beara nurse Sheona Harrington has recently embarked on a new venture, one that ties together her interest in beauty and skincare, her clinical background and her entrepreneurial spirit. Sheona's Aesthetics holds a monthly clinic once a month in Jessica's Beauty Room in Castletownbere and also offers mobile appointments.

After five years as a nurse in Bantry General Hospital, Sheona decided it was time for a change and is currently completing her post graduate diploma in Public Health Nursing. She had already completed her aesthetic training and now sees her two careers – nurse and aesthetician



– as complementary.

“Having a clinical background is a great advantage in this area,” she explains. “My work as a nurse has equipped me with evidence-based knowledge, clinical techniques and skills to carry out treatments in a safe, high-quality manner. Client safety, satisfaction and clinical quality are core values of my service. The most fulfilling part of my work is seeing and hearing about clients satisfaction post treatment – it's so rewarding.”

Sheona currently offers lip fillers and skin boosters, with the view to expanding her services as the business grows. “Lip filler doesn't just add volume to lips, this treatment can also help with asymmetry and facial balancing,” she explains. “It's a minimally invasive treatment and can last up to 12 months.”

Skin boosters on the other hand is a progressive rejuvenating treatment that gives long lasting, natural results to improve the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, acne scarring and sun damage. “It delivers hydration deep into the skin and can be used not only on the face but any area where the skin has lost elasticity such as the neck, décolletage and hands.”

There is no typical Sheona's Aesthetics client; they are from a broad range of ages but all have a common goal – to enhance their beauty with natural looking results. “There are many negative connotations associated with the aesthetic industry, the main one being that

people who receive the treatments 'look fake'. This is not the case. Aesthetics, and fillers, when administered correctly, can achieve natural looking results, which is the main aim of my service,” Sheona promises.

In setting up her business, Sheona has looked to her partner Éanna for guidance. “Running his own successful catering business for over a decade, Éanna has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to entrepreneurship. He is extremely supportive and always guides me in the right direction.

“I'm also inspired by Jessica Murphy of Jessica's Beauty Room who is extremely hard working and has created a thriving business in Castletownbere. I am delighted she has given me this opportunity to team up with her to offer my services to the people of West Cork.”

Potential clients can contact Sheona through Facebook and Instagram at Sheona's Aesthetics, or message her on WhatsApp 086-2049933.

#makingithappen



SHEONA HARRINGTON
Aesthetician/Registered General Nurse

Skin Boosters & Lip Fillers
Monthly Clinics, starting March 11,
at Jessica's Beauty Room,
Castletownbere.

Mobile appointments also available.

For bookings or enquiries:
DM through Instagram or Facebook
@ Sheona's Aesthetics
or WHATSAPP message on 086-2049933



Daffodil Day 2023 is back with a bang this year on Friday, March 24.

Cancer takes from us every day. It takes the big days, the little days,

and the everything in-between days. It replaces them with treatment days and recovery days. But this Daffodil Day we have the power to take these days back, to give hope and raise vital funds so that one day cancer can take no more. By supporting this Daffodil Day, you can make a real, practical difference to thousands of cancer patients and their families. Spurring on research and progress. Keeping vital services available and supporting people along the way. You can help to

take back from cancer.

Over the years Clonakilty and the surrounding areas have an incredible tradition of supporting Daffodil Day, recognised by the Irish Cancer Society as being one of the best in the country when it comes to support and this year, the organisers are counting on your support yet again.

“After a three-year hiatus, due to Covid, we are very happy to announce that our beloved ‘Coffee Day’ will return this year, thanks to the incredible generosity of the Blackwell Family and all at De Barra's

Pub on Pearse Street, who have very generously offered us their premises for the day,” says Therese Hayes.

“Therefore, we will be calling on you all to don the aprons, switch on the ovens and overwhelm us once again with your wonderful array of scones and cakes as you have done in the past. We will also be hosting various other fundraising activities and details will follow once confirmed. In the meantime, we want to let you know that your help really does mean the world to thousands of people living with a cancer diagnosis during

these difficult times. By joining us in our fundraising efforts, together we can help ensure that no-one has to go through their lonely cancer journey on their own.”

If you would like to help or

contribute in any way, please contact Therese at 086 823 0106 or Liz at 086 2519409 who are looking forward to seeing everyone on March 24 for the traditional cuppa and chat.

Clonakilty Daffodil Day returns in full bloom

Cork community-based and voluntary health and social care providers will receive over €9m in once off funding

Community-based and voluntary health and social care providers in County Cork will receive over €9m in once off funding measures to ease cost-of-living pressures. Senator Tim Lombard said, “This funding was announced on budget day. Since then, the Department of Health has worked with the HSE to

finalise a system for distributing the funding amongst relevant provider organisations. This is now agreed and funding has been allocated to a total of 1450 organisations across the country ranging from local community groups to major national service providers.”

Senator Lombard continued, “Community-based and

voluntary health and social care providers in County Cork will receive over €9m in allocations. Over €4m has been allocated to COPE Foundation (€2,683,682) and Brothers of Charity Services (€2,023,344) who both provide vital services. CoAction West Cork will receive €342,666. A large number of other organisations will

receive a minimum of €1,000 to help with increased costs.”

The following voluntary and community providers will benefit from this once-off funding; Bandon Geriatric and Community Council Ltd €4,424; Bantry Care of the Aged €1,435; Beara West Family Resource Centre Company €2,230; Clonakilty

Friends of Asylum Seekers €2,594; Coomhola / Borlin Community Development Association €1,348; Dunmanway Family Resource Centre €1,505; Kinsale Youth Support Services €2,625; Rosscarbery Social Services €1,148; Schull Community Care Association €1,628; Sherkin Island Devel-

opment Society; €1,803; Skibbereen Community and Family Resource Centre €6,499; Skibbereen Geriatric Society €3,052; West Cork Arts Centre €3,130; West Cork Counselling and Support Services €3,395; West Cork Traveller Centre Association €11,048.

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The Beauty Edit – What's new this month!

INSIDE OUT
BEAUTY

Sherna Malone

Skincare and beauty expert Sherna Malone shares her knowledge and expertise of all things beauty – from skin care do's and don'ts to the latest products out there.

Clarins Hydra-Essentiel [HA2] Matte Gel

Offering inclusive hydration dedicated to all women whatever their age, ethnicity, or skin type; the new Hydra-Essentiel [HA2] range from Clarins, with seven formulas to choose from, delivers a triple plumping and hydrating action in just 60 seconds. At the heart of each formula is Clarins Hyaluronic Power Complex – a powerful blend of high and low molecular weight hyaluronic acids to slow down transepidermal water loss keeping skin hydrated for longer, while extract of organic leaf of life boosts skin's own hyaluronic acid production by 161 per cent, giving skin a great hy-

dration hit, leaving it nourished and plumped day after day. For normal, combination skin types, Hydra-Essentiel [HA2] Matte Gel with its Hyaluronic Acid Complex and organic alpine willow herb has a fresh, mattifying texture that melts instantly into the skin, leaving it plump, luminous, and comfortable, €45 available from Clarins stockists nationwide and online from www.clarins.ie.

Phytaphix Immune Phix

Does your immune system need a #Phix? Developed by Dr Conor Kerley, founder and Chief Science Officer at Phytaphix, Immune Phix contains specific and crucial vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients known to help maintain immune health. Natural plant-based Vitamin C from dried fruit powders, a unique Vitamin D Complex, including vegan Vitamin D, Irish Sea magnesium, antioxidant trace minerals selenium and zinc, Vitamin B12, Polyphenols and Flavonoids, Phytaphix is the world's first and only product to combine these specific nutrients. A powdered product, designed for convenience to be easily added to most foods and drinks with a delicious berry taste, it is formulated for anyone who feels they need support for their immune system, anyone feeling tired or run down, or for anyone who struggles to get the daily recommendations of fruit and veg. Available online from www.phytaphix.com €45.

Aveeno Calm + Restore®
Re-Hydrating Night Cream

Aveeno Calm + Restore Re-Hydrating Night Cream comes as a welcomed extension to the existing range of Calm + Restore daily face care products which are clinically proven to nourish the skin, helping it to feel calm, restored, and healthy looking. With research suggesting the skin barrier is more prone to irritation during the night, it is increasingly important to rehydrate skin after a day of exposure and provide it with the right ingredients for it to repair. Dermatologist tested and fragrance-free, Calm + Restore Re-Hydrating Night Cream is made with Prebiotic Oat (known to help soothe and repair skin), Mineral Complex (known to increase the surface skin cell turnover), calming Feverfew (known for its antioxidant and skin calming properties) and rich Shea Butter. The formula's rich and velvety texture provides up to 48-hour

moisturisation, replenishing and helping strengthen skin's moisture barrier, €14.99, available from pharmacies nationwide.

'All You Need to Know About Menopause'

Everyone's journey through menopause is different, but we all need support through the challenges it brings. Wellness Warrior Catherine O'Keeffe is on a mission to shatter the taboo around menopause and has already provided life-changing information to thousands. Drawing from the latest research, 'All You Need to Know About Menopause' answers all your questions about gaining control of physical, mental, and emotional symptoms, assessing the pros and cons of HRT and alternative therapies, how to negotiate menopause in the workplace, which supplements are best for you and how nutrition and exercise can help. From hot

flushes to mood swings, weight gain to joint ache, brain fog to depression, Catherine's expert help will help you navigate the different stages, from perimenopause onwards, leaving you empowered and informed and feeling like yourself again! Available in bookshops nationwide and online from www.easons.com €19.99.

Voduz Pure Silk Hair and Body Oil

Pure Silk Hair and Body Oil, with its sensual vanilla and bergamot scent, is the latest product to hit the shelves from Irish-owned haircare brand, Voduz. Each protective drop will transform and overhaul your lacklustre locks and lifeless skin. Harnessing the power of argon oils and enriched with Vitamins A and E to nourish and protect, the lightweight and fast-absorbing formula infuses each individual strand of hair

and skin with long-lasting hydration and luminance. Fitting right into your haircare (and beauty routine), the ultimate magic of all, it is suitable for all hair types and can even be used with wigs and extensions, €29.95 available online www.voduzhair.com.

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West Cork Jesters celebrate International Women's Day



To mark this year's International Women's Day (March 8) the ladies of the West Cork Jesters mixed ability rugby team posed at Dunmanway RFC for local photographer Patricia Andrade. Patricia says she asked the team to pose for her because: "This amazing group of women represent us all; different ages, different shapes, different histories. The Jesters invite us to celebrate life in every moment, to embrace our differences and to support each other just because we can." Pic: westcorkflash@gmail.com



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

As I get older, the topic of how we sleep, how little we sleep, and how tired we are seems to be coming up more and more in casual conversation with friends. Waking shortly after going to sleep and not being able to get back to sleep again; or simply not being able to get to sleep in the first place, waking with hot flashes – all these are very common complaints. Personally, I've always slept pretty well, but recently I'm waking up a lot more than I'd like, and having to focus on making sure I get enough sleep or I'm a tired wreck all day. So I thought I would take a look at sleep this month, at what habits we can build into our daily routine to sleep better (often called better 'sleep hygiene') and what foods and supplements we can use to support our sleep, and generally at what benefits sleep brings us.

To get started on this topic I delved back into a book by sleep expert and neuroscientist Matthew Walker called 'Why We Sleep' which I first read about four years ago. Sections of it have stayed with me all that time – for example, that we should be aiming for eight hours a night in order to protect ourselves from degenerative diseases such as Alzheimers and Parkinsons. Walker tells us that sleep supports brain health: During sleep, the brain flushes out harmful waste products that accumulate during waking hours, such as beta-amyloid protein which is linked to Alzheimer's disease. He also argues that sleep improves memory and learning: Deep sleep is important for consolidating memories and strengthening connections between brain cells, which can help protect against age-related cognitive decline. And, something that is relevant for many of us these days is the fact that sleep helps regulate hormones: specifically insulin, which is important for maintaining healthy blood

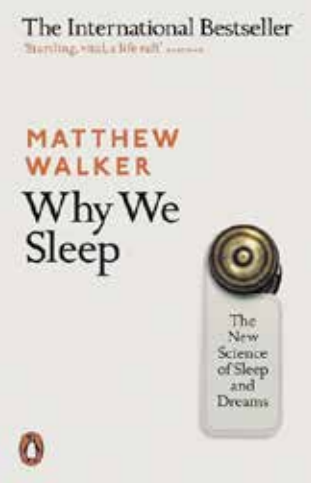
How to sleep better

sugar levels and preventing type 2 diabetes.

Walker also maintains that naps have a protective effect on our health. This has fed my habit of napping whenever I can – if I have a day at home, for example, you'll often find me napping just before lunch, for about 20-40 minutes. When I manage this I feel much better, not just on that day, but all week long.

The beneficial effect of naps seems to be backed up by science – according to Walker: 'In the mid-1990s, Nasa refined the science of sleeping on the job for the benefit of their astronauts. They discovered that naps as short as 26 minutes in length still offered a 34 per cent improvement in task performance and more than a 50% increase in overall alertness'.

Walker has a number of tips for good sleep – for example, make sure your bedroom isn't too warm and stuffy – 'To successfully initiate sleep... your core temperature needs to decrease by two to three degrees... for this reason, you will always find it easier to fall asleep in a room that is too cold than a room that is too hot'. I sleep with the window open (hail, rain or snow!) and that really helps.



Here is a summary of his good Sleep Hygiene suggestions:

- **Stick to a regular sleep schedule:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- **Create a sleep-conducive environment:** Keep your bedroom cool, quiet, and dark. Use comfortable pillows and mattress, and remove electronic devices that emit blue light.
- **Avoid stimulants:** Avoid consuming caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol, especially in the afternoon and evening

- **Wind down before bed:** Engage in relaxing activities such as reading, taking a bath, or listening to calming music in the hour before bedtime.
- **Don't lie in bed awake:** If you're unable to fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do a calming activity until you feel sleepy.
- **Limit screen time before bed:** Avoid using electronic devices such as phones, tablets, and computers for at least an hour before bed, as the blue light can disrupt your sleep.
- **Exercise regularly:** Regular exercise can improve the quality of your sleep, but avoid exercising too close to bedtime.
- **Watch what you eat and drink:** Avoid heavy meals, spicy or acidic foods, and large amounts of fluids before bedtime.
- **Seek treatment for sleep disorders:** If you experience persistent sleep problems, seek medical advice to rule out any underlying sleep disorders such as sleep apnea or insomnia.
- **Prioritise sleep:** Understand the importance of sleep for your health and make it a priority in your daily routine.

I've also found a lot of links between regular daily exercise and good sleep patterns. More recently this is an area that Matt Walker has been exploring. He has found that while all types of exercise seem to benefit our sleep, the more aerobic exercise people do, the better they sleep, in comparison to for example, weight bearing resistance training. 'Moderate intensity aerobic exercise (ie you don't need to kill yourself!) helped people fall asleep 47 per cent faster than normal' he says. This is good news for me as my favourite exercises are swimming at Snamh and walking in the woods in Glengarriff (rather than going to the gym). I've also found (anecdotally) that a short walk after your evening meal can help to promote good sleep patterns – so that's something I'm trying at the moment. I'm taking my dog up the road and back, in the dark, for a total of about 15 minutes. I'll report back in a month or two if this helps! We also know that making sure we have optimal levels of magnesium in our diet is essential for good sleep patterns. Matthew Walker mentions

magnesium supplementation in 'Why We Sleep' explaining that magnesium is an essential mineral that plays a crucial role in regulating the body's stress response and sleep-wake cycle. He also notes that some research suggests that magnesium supplementation may improve sleep quality and reduce insomnia symptoms in certain populations. One of the first things we ask about when people come into Organico with sleep issues is how much Magnesium they are taking – it's suggested that an adult takes at least 400 mg in supplemental form on top of what they will be getting from a good healthy diet full of greens, whole grains and seeds.

Finally, if you have difficulties falling asleep and want an alternative to medication, there are some herbs that can be helpful. Valerian, Passionflower and the extract Theanine are all good for reducing stress and inducing sleep. Call into your local healthfood shop for advice on the different options to help you get into a good

sleep routine.

Organico News: Unusually, we are opening this St Patrick's Day from 10-5pm – given that it's a Friday and so many of our customers do their weekly shopping on Fridays, we thought we had better break our rules and open even though it's a Public Holiday! Also, in the Deli we are testing a sandwich toaster – look out

for our new Sourdough Toasties menu coming soon – call in if you are in Bantry!

Organico Shop Deli and Bakery is open from 9-6pm Monday to Saturday, on Glengarriff Road in Bantry. Call us on 027 51391; email us on info@organico.ie and find us online on www.organico.ie.

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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Getting busy again

I'm not sure why, but every year January takes an eternity to get through rather than just a month. It feels like it will never end. Maybe it's a delayed reaction to all the excess of Christmas. Maybe it just takes a while for our hibernating brains to react to the slow return of the light. This year was a special kind of limbo as we struggled to get over the various illnesses that turned Christmas and New Year into more of a hospital stay than a holiday. Whatever the reason, January slogged along, slow as treacle until the 31st. Then suddenly it was February, and everything sped up as the days got visibly longer. Granted, February is the shortest month but that doesn't really explain why the first three weeks of February go so much faster than the last two weeks of January. Go figure. In February everything just speeds up. Blink and suddenly it's Ash Wednesday. I must admit that I barely noticed the start of Lent

A
WEST CORK
LIFE

Tina Pisco

this year. Ash Wednesday was a bit of a no show. I did not see one person with the characteristic smudge on the forehead. I remember back in the day almost everyone you met was marked, which invariably led to a conversation about what they were giving up for Lent. I wonder if anyone still does in the new, more secular West

Cork? It certainly doesn't make much sense to give up meat if you are already a vegan...

And so, to March. March is when spring has fully sprung, no matter the weather. Outside my window the daffs and snowdrops line the drive, the camellia has paved the entrance in frilly pink petals, and small white flowers have already appeared on some of our trees. The woods are full of sorrel and even the three-cornered leeks are up and smelling lovely and garlicky. I was also delighted to see that the wild garlic we transplanted last year has taken root and is coming up nicely.

The start of spring is generally accompanied by a rise in anxiety. As the land wakes up, the need to get out in the garden and get ready for the growing season increases. It starts with a slow steady beep – like my car reversing – rising to a shrill, insistent siren telling me "It's time to get busy!" Many a year has caught me off guard. If I'm

slow to get my garden groove on, the brambles start to grow again and the veg patch turns back into grassland.

Not this year. This year we're on it. It's only the beginning of March and almost all of the brambles have been cut back or uprooted. The apple trees have been pruned. Early seeds have been sown. The veg patch has been turned and mulched and the potatoes are happily chitting, waiting for Paddy's Day to give us the nod to put them in the ground. We have some early radishes, spinach and salads in the tunnel, and we've even put some spuds into the tunnel in the hope of getting a super early crop in May/June.

This burst of efficiency is partly due to some strategic forward planning, but also due to having helping hands around to do a lot of the work. For around the last twenty years our lives have been enriched and our garden has been tended and improved by a long succession

of helpers. These are volunteers who come and live with us and help in the garden and the house in exchange for food and accommodation. Most are young people who want to travel and experience new cultures and countries – though not always. Many are taking a career break in their early or mid-thirties, and we once had helpers who were in their seventies! This year our first volunteers have been a delightful young couple from France, who have been extremely hard-working and have given the garden a real head start.

We connect with these volunteers through websites like wwoof.ie or workaway.info that put hosts like us in contact with volunteers looking to come to Ireland. These websites offer placements all over the world and similarly have helpers from around the globe. Many people feel that having 'strangers' living in your home would be weird, but for us it has been

not only a tremendous help, it has also given us the chance to meet some wonderful people, many who have become lifelong friends. Granted we are a very sociable family and have a big house. That means that there are often 'strangers' popping in. It also means that we all have lots of space to move around in, so no one needs to feel cramped or put-upon.

Over the last twenty years or so, we have probably hosted over one hundred volunteers. Some have faded from our memories. Some have become dear friends who come back to visit. Some came for only a few weeks. Some planned to stay for a month and ended up staying for a year. Some left and came back. And some have never left, opting instead to make West Cork their permanent home and have become a much-loved part of our extended family. All have helped us make our little patch that much better and brighter.

Dying isn't a secret

"Death is the last intimate thing we ever do"
-L.K. Hamilton, writer

One day we'll receive news or may even sense that a beloved friend or family member is

dying. Someone recently got in touch with me relating their own experience of this. They shared how their inclination was to wait for a cue from a dying friend. However, the acknowledgement of their friend came to mind first. For exam-

ple, asking 'Do you think you are dying?' And yet they tended to hold off for their friend to begin the conversation, finding it never happened. They wonder if there is another way. This is a challenging situation to engage with; talking with people about dying when we don't know if they are ok with it.

It feels difficult to talk openly about death for many; particularly for those uncomfortable with the topic in general. It's understandable as avoidance has long been the way in our society but like many other things, it's a skill that can be practiced. While these are tender conversations to have with those we love, becoming more comfortable can be helpful in the way we meet these situations in the future. Being open to communicate about death and dying is actually a gift to the people we love. This may seem like a different way to think about it, but it's consistently heard by those who work in end of life care, as one example. I've witnessed it countless times in my role as an end of life doula and through personal stories within my own support network. Whether we engage in talking about dying or not doesn't make it happen faster nor can we slow it down by staying quiet about it. There can be fear and discomfort as we begin to do so, but we're not alone in our shared humanity.

END OF LIFE
MATTERS

Melissa Murphy

End of life Doula Melissa Murphy, a companion, guide and resource supporting our community in end of life matters.

We can do this, however awkward it might seem at the start.

Another prompting for this month's topic was a blog by a hospice worker. They wrote about a situation where a patient's closest family member/next of kin said that talking about death and dying was depressing and negative. The patient expressed a wish that their loved one might reconsider; feeling they'd be less lonely in their dying experience. Sadly, both parties have to be willing for this dialogue to hap-

pen. Education can be offered which can sometimes facilitate the process, however, those of us who help others navigate at the end of life must always meet people where they are as opposed to where we think they should be. This is also a good practice for anyone accompanying the dying.

That person I mentioned earlier who waits for her friend's cue has done beautifully because following the dying person's lead is always optimal. The dying person will ultimately choose if, when and with whom to share with. What's needed at this time in their life is most important. These include: autonomy, dignity, appreciation, listening, support as well as space. It's been said that some need space while others need a hand to hold, so we can be what they need when asked. It's also important to bear in mind that as someone is dying they're also still living. Being included in the day to day conversations and activities as they've always done is also important as long as that's what they want.

Of course there are also some people who know they are dying but avoid talking about it. This too is a choice to be respected. Yet, more often than not, people feel respected and supported by openness and honesty in these conversations so it's definitely encouraged to

ask questions (which the person may answer or not) and to let them know you're willing to be there to talk and (especially) listen if you are indeed comfortable doing so.

If given the chance, be someone that leans in rather than avoids this chapter of your person's life. They will feel cared for and may feel welcomed by your invitation to share their thoughts, feelings, fears. Being mindful that there is nothing to fix or change, but letting them know they're heard means the world. Advice-giving is generally not appreciated, but a few questions may include: what do you think is happening? What do you want and need most? How can I support you? It's never too late (or too soon!) to share your feelings for them, what they've taught you and to express your gratitude. These experiences can be life affirming. Know that it's no small act to show up during this precious transition time of equal importance to all others. It can change the way we experience living and dying.

To learn more or to connect with Melissa, email her at stars-beyondourskin@gmail.com or visit www.starsbeyondourskin.com.

She also welcomes your questions or ideas for future columns.



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Fertility series: Should you test your progesterone on Day 21?



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

Progesterone is an important hormone because it maintains the uterus lining, propels the egg down the fallopian tubes into the uterus, aids implantation and sustains the pregnancy.

By testing progesterone levels seven to nine days after ovulation you can confirm that you have ovulated and know there is enough progesterone to support pregnancy or find out that you are in fact pregnant.

If you have an optimal 28 day cycle then you would ovulate on day 14 and then yes you should test progesterone levels on day 21.

However only 13 per cent

of women have a 28 day cycle. The reality is that the other 87 per cent have cycles that are too long, too short, too heavy, too light, painful or have stopped completely.

The menstrual cycle is divided into three parts, the follicular phase, ovulation and the luteal phase.

In a 28 day cycle, the first 14 days are known as the follicular phase. In days one to three, the endometrium that lines the uterus sheds this is really important as an egg will not implant in an old endometrium. Then as estrogen levels rise a new endometrium is produced.

At the end of the follicular phase ovulation thrusts the egg out of the ovarian follicle into the fallopian tube.

After ovulation we have the luteal phase. From day 15-28 estrogen is falling as the levels of progesterone rise which, propels the egg from the ovary through the fallopian tube to the uterus. If a sperm fertilises the egg, the fertilised egg will implant in the endometrium.

When trying to conceive, first get to know your cycle, you can do this with little cost by charting your basal body temperature and noticing cervical changes.

Although it is inexpensive you can learn how long your follicular and luteal phases are and it can accurately identify your ovulation window within three days of it happening.

As your progesterone levels are at their highest seven to nine days after ovulation this will give you an opportunity to book your progesterone test on the date that is right for your cycle.

Although a 28 day cycle is optimal, it is perfectly normal and healthy to have a cycle between 25 to 35 days that may even fluctuate in length from month to month making it challenging to pin point ovulation.

When you speak to your GP let them know that you do not have a 28 day cycle, that you are tracking your ovulation and confident of its date therefore you are asking to test your progesterone seven to nine days post ovulation rather than on day 21.

Levels of progesterone of 20 nmol/L or more confirm that you have ovulated, 30 nmol/L or above mean there is enough progesterone to support pregnancy and 50 nmol/L plus indicate that you are pregnant.

If your cycle is greater than 35 days or less than 25 days, if

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your periods are painful or flow is too heavy or too light, then working with a fertility acupuncturist will help address any underlying problems, improve hormone levels and optimise your cycle. This is important whether you are trying to conceive naturally or with the support of a fertility clinic.

Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist and Acupuncturist. She uses a range of holistic therapies including guidance around food to improve fertility, emotional and mental health and support natural recovery from trauma, eating disorders and other mind/body illness. For more information or to book a session visit www.roehealth.ie or call/text Amanda on: 087 633 1898.

Community neurorehabilitation team urgently needed in Cork

Only 15 per cent of neurological patients nationally have access to vital care services

Neurological patients in Cork are being failed by the current shortfall in community neurorehabilitation teams in Ireland. That's according to the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) who launched a new campaign last week seeking commitments from elected representatives and the HSE to tackle the absence of a community neurorehabilitation team in CHO Area 4, which includes Cork services.

There are only two community neurorehabilitation teams in Ireland, despite nine teams being required which is outlined in the Implementation Framework (2019-2021) for the National Neurorehabilitation Strategy. This means that only 15 per cent of neurological

patients in Ireland have access to teams that provide vital care to support their recovery.

CHO Area 4, which includes Kerry, North Cork, North Lee Cork, South Lee Cork and West Cork, is the catchment area for Cork University Hospital, which is both a national neuroscience centre and a designated major trauma centre. Despite this, the dedicated neurorehabilitation team promised in 2019 has yet to be delivered.

Speaking at the launch, Magdalen Rogers NAI Executive Director, said: "Once a person receives a diagnosis of a neurological condition, they need to be supported in their recovery and the management of their condition. That's what a community neurorehabilitation team does. It brings together health care professionals from a range of disciplines such as an occupational therapist, a

speech and language therapist, a physiotherapist and a clinical psychologist to enable a person living with a neurological condition to live well."

As well outlining the positive impact a community neurorehabilitation team can have on a patient's recovery, the NAI presented a clear economic rationale for urgently establishing the teams in the seven CHOs that do not have a team in place.

Ms Rogers continued: "For every euro spent on a community neurorehabilitation team, the health service saves 11 euro. Having these teams in place is vital in reducing the length of stay and delayed discharges and therefore freeing up beds in acute hospitals. The support of neurorehabilitation teams is also proven to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospitals and improves the overall well-being

and quality of life of patients with a range of neurological conditions. We have estimated that having these vital teams in place could save up to 42,000 bed days annually.

"We are calling on elected representatives in Cork and the HSE to commit to delivering these services for the people of Cork. There is still no funding in place for a team in the CHO 4 region. Having a team in place here would have a significantly positive impact on the lives of those living with neurological conditions in Kerry, North Cork, North Lee Cork, South Lee Cork and West Cork."

At the campaign launch, Ivan O'Regan, from Blarney, who is living with Parkinson's disease described his experience, "Being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease was a massive shock, and I had no idea where to turn

for help. Unfortunately, there is no local support available, and early intervention is crucial in managing the disease. With a team in place within the community, people with Parkinson's can take ownership of their care and receive timely access to rehabilitation services. We shouldn't have to fight for these services. We need our represented electives and the HSE to take action now."

Professor Aisling Ryan, Consultant Neurologist at Cork University Hospital and Dr John MacFarlane, Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at Mercy University Hospital also spoke at the online launch event.

"Many patients report back to me that they got great care in hospital but the transition from hospital to home was

fraught. That's one plea I hear from my patients; for better services after discharge," said Dr MacFarlane, "the home is the best environment patients have, we need to get them back there and rehabilitated as soon as possible."

"There's a huge gap in services in both regional and national neurorehabilitation centres and we need to develop those services in the region."

The Patients Deserve Better campaign brings together over 22 non-profit organisations working with people with neurological conditions. The Patient Deserve Better campaign is a joint initiative brought to you by NAI and Roche Products (Ireland) Ltd.

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ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.
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March Sun Signs

The image of the mad March hare is very suited to this month. There is so much astro-action coming up over the next few weeks it could leave us feeling 'all over the place'.

It's a month that brings huge shifts and major new phases with the two heavyweight planets, Saturn and Pluto changing signs. There is a significant New Moon in Aries at the Equinox and Mars finally moves out of Gemini.

We start the month with a lovely and very auspicious conjunction of Venus with Jupiter on March 2. The pair are currently very visible as bright stars in the Western sky just after sunset. These two are known as the benefics. They are all about the good things in life. Combined they bring a sociable, generous feel to the first few days of March. But because they are joined together in Aries there is also a strong drive to take action. So this is a time to get ahead, be determined, and spontaneous and do the things that you love. There is an almost magical and vibrantly optimistic feeling around this time.

This energy takes us up to the New Moon in Virgo on March 7,

which connects with the sparky, offbeat planet Uranus. The combined earthy elements of Virgo and Taurus make this the right time to set your intentions towards unique projects and inspired plans, especially if they involve your garden, food production or improving your essential resources.

Underneath the positivity of Jupiter with Venus there is also tension or excitement building. As the slow-moving planets reach the last degree of a sign there is the need to release something so the new energy can flow in as the next sign is activated. We have three planets activating what is known as the anaretic or critical degree. Saturn, Pluto and Mars all pass this transition point during March. This focus heightens the urge to make a last-minute push before the end of the current phase and we may see this acted out in world politics, but the strength and power has dissipated so it has no lasting effect. Old themes are now being replaced with new trends.

Within moments of the New Moon on March 7, Saturn moves into a water sign, Pisces. This triggers a new phase of restructuring

and potentially takes us to a new level of understanding, compassion and spiritual connection. Saturn has been in its home signs of Capricorn and Aquarius since 2017. We have seen our world transformed during this time. Since early 2020 Saturn was in Aquarius bringing us the social restructuring that couldn't have been achieved without the incredible events of the last few years.

Now, during the next three years, the focus will be more philosophical, spiritual and idealised. We can expect these new trends to occur in the areas of religion and belief. Saturn's presence consolidates and defines, whilst Pisces is the sign of the nebulous and mysterious. A movement to a more mystical approach is possible. As the structures of our society become more chaotic and unruly we will turn our attention to religious faith or inner guidance for direction and support. The reality we put our trust in during previous times is now an uncertain or unreliable foundation. It becomes clear that reality is pliable and easily manipulated. There is no longer one consistent

and dependable version as things change so frequently. It is a time of recognising that belief affects individual experience.

By mid-month, there is more confusion about what is actual reality and what is simply untrue. Neptune in Pisces is activated by the Sun, Mars and Mercury between March 14-16. It may be hard to trust any source of information during this week unless you know it comes from a sincere person with your best interests at heart.

The next big event is the Equinox on March 21 when the Sun enters Aries. This first degree of the first sign is the most potent point in the Zodiac. On this day we also have the New Moon. Here the Sun is joined at this crucial point by the Moon bringing the significance of a new start and new cycle to a peak. In addition and to add to the already intense drama, we have Pluto at the anaretic 29th degree before moving into Aquarius on the 23rd. We can expect to have some release of tension and some bid for power by an authority or establishment representative.

The last big switch-up of the

month comes on March 25, as Mars leaves the last degree of Gemini after being in this sign since last August. Mars in Cancer, another water sign brings a very different energy. Mars is in this sign until Mid May. Cancer is the sign traditionally associated with the home and basic security. Mars here can bring a sense that these areas of life need protection and extra attention. Issues around social care and domestic support will be more prominent during the next couple of months

On a personal level, these new energy patterns will not be so noticeable until more time has passed. Over the coming months and years that the full extent and significance of the new trends will become apparent on the larger social level. In our own lives, the area of your birth chart where these astrological events occur is where you'll find the strongest indications of the old ways leaving and the new ways emerging.

March has a Full Moon in 17 degrees Virgo on March 7 at 12.40pm and a New Moon in one degree Aries on March 21 at 5.23pm



Aries: Your work and daily routines are your main concern this Full Moon prompting you to focus on organisation and efficiency. Use this energy to streamline your tasks and prioritise self-care. What you willingly sacrifice now will be more than repaid with an increased ability to make your dreams a reality later. The New Moon emphasises intimacy and joint resources, urging you to examine your emotional and financial investments and make any necessary adjustments. Being of service to others or taking on extra responsibilities this month will prove to be worthwhile in the coming weeks.



Taurus: This Full Moon illuminates your creative and romantic interests, encouraging you to express yourself fully and explore new avenues of self-expression. Tension results when you ignore your desires for achievement or acknowledgement. Circumstances may urge you to make a greater effort. But don't overdo things or try to go too far too fast. Travel and new experiences are possible as you explore new horizons and expand your knowledge and perspective.



Gemini: Your attention goes to your home and family life during this Virgo Full Moon, prompting you to reflect on your emotional needs and create a sense of comfort and stability in your living space. Events make it difficult to make good decisions concerning your life direction. However, it's a good time to make some changes so you can reach new levels. Career and public image take the spotlight later in the month. You may want to consider your professional goals and make meaningful strides towards success.



Cancer: Your communication and social skills are the focus of this Full Moon phase, urging you to connect with others and express your ideas and opinions more confidently. Social networks and community become important. You are drawn to connect with like-minded individuals and work towards common goals. Giving extra attention to details and keeping up with everyday business could be time-consuming but the small things also contribute to the longer-term plan.



Leo: This Full Moon phase highlights any stress around your financial and material well-being, prompting you to examine your spending habits and take steps towards greater financial security. The drive to improve your finances and material security is strong now and you could find some welcome inspiration for a new direction or possibility you hadn't previously considered. Your attention turns towards your inner world and spiritual growth in the later weeks of this month. Some deeper reflection allows you to explore your subconscious mind and let go of old patterns that are holding you back.



Virgo: The Full Moon in your sign brings your innermost thoughts and feelings to the surface, inspiring you to pursue your passions and prioritise your own needs. You may want to emphasise your identity this month. Focus on self-expression and spiritual growth. Taking care of your needs both spiritually and physically is a balancing act you can achieve now. Your desire to get out and about to express yourself could find you enjoying an extra busy social scene after the New Moon.



Libra: This Full Moon puts the focus on your finances and material possessions. You feel the need to examine your values and financial priorities. The New Moon later this month highlights your spiritual and emotional growth. You want to get things right and contribute something worthwhile. You are happy to take on new opportunities now. Exploring your inner world and letting go of any past hurts or emotional baggage brings a sense of liberation.



Scorpio: This Virgo Full Moon draws your attention to your social networks and community, encouraging you to connect with like-minded individuals and find common goals. Remember that not everyone is ready to make the required changes at the same time as you. Your vision is probably further reaching than theirs and includes the broader issues. Communication and learning are heightened and you may want to express yourself more effectively and follow up on new areas of knowledge.



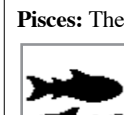
Sagittarius: The Full Moon illuminates your career and public image and you focus on your professional goals. You know what your limits are and it's time to move forward. Now you can see what was holding you back. You can make meaningful strides towards success. Around the New Moon, you can place your attention on your home and family life. You are encouraged to create a sense of emotional security and stability.



Capricorn: Travel and educational aspirations are on the front burner for you this Full Moon, encouraging you to broaden your horizons and seek new experiences. There may be additional details, communications or arrangements to attend to but keep your focus on the bigger picture. This energy flow emphasises creativity and self-expression, prompting you to find your passions and embrace your unique talents. Backed up by so much strong energy you are likely to feel an incredible drive to accomplish and achieve in life.



Aquarius: Joint resources and intimate relationships are uppermost this Full Moon. You may want to examine your financial and emotional investments and make any necessary adjustments. Your work and daily routines can become so important they end up taking all your time. Throw out any useless things you've been hoarding and make some space in your life. The burst of freedom will do you good and make it easier to keep things in perspective. Later in the month, you can start to prioritise self-care and find a healthy work-life balance.



Pisces: The Virgo Full Moon draws your attention to your partnerships and one-on-one connections. You are prompted to communicate openly and resolve any lingering issues. You're inclined to let go of anything you believe to be holding you back or simply uninspiring. Find a balance between individual or personal concerns and any desire you have to be of help or service. Doubts fade into the background as a new sense of self, and a more assertive personal style will emerge now. Your relationships need to reflect this energy so everyone gets a good deal.

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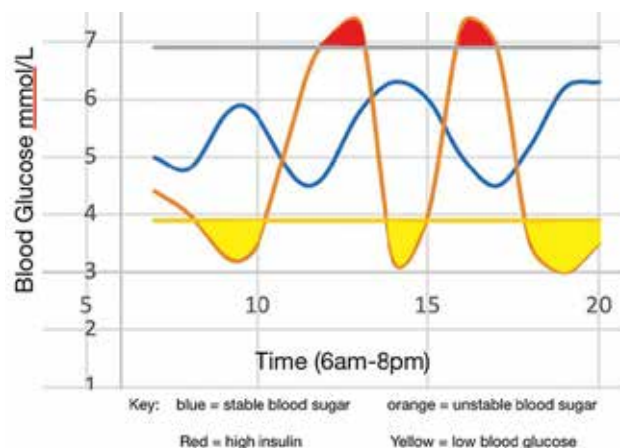
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Low blood sugar and mood disorders



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic



Mental health issues are often treated as health conditions that are separate from other health problems. But in truth there are underlying physiological mechanisms that play a role in the development of mood disorders such as depression or anxiety.

Our brain relies on neurons to govern our thoughts, actions and how we feel. The brain is an energy-hungry organ, making up only two per cent of body weight but requiring 20 per cent of your daily energy demands. Your brain loves two things above all others 1) a steady supply of blood glucose and 2) a steady supply of oxygen.

Please be aware that blood glucose is different from glucose (sugar) that you eat. All food that we eat whether protein, fat or carb will eventually convert into glucose or ketones, which our body then uses as fuel.

Traditionally blood glucose is measured in a fasting blood test with normal ranges between 3.9 – 6.9 mmol/L. The upper range from 5.7 - 6.9 mmol/L is a flag for pre-diabetes and provides an opportunity to manage or prevent diabetes from developing. However little attention is given to the lower end of the scale and low blood glucose levels.

If your blood glucose drops below 3.9 mmol/L you are likely to be feeling quite unwell, probably fainting, maybe have some dizziness and spells of disorientation and lacking in energy. Blood sugar levels that get too low can be dangerous and need medical attention.

Blood glucose levels naturally fluctuate throughout the day but there are complex mechanisms that help to keep the glucose level within a functional range that works well for your body. When you don't eat enough, skip meals, eat a diet that has too much sugar and carbohydrate (this includes fruit) the fluctuations in your blood glucose levels can become exaggerated causing

you to spend times of the day when your blood sugar is too low or too high and this has effects on how well your brain can function. (See table)

There are a number of physiological mechanisms that affect your brain function and mood, two of which are firstly the GABA shunt and secondly Large Neutral Amino Acid (LNAA) transporters.

GABA Shunt

There are two types of neurotransmitters, inhibitory and excitatory. These have complex actions but if we keep it simple, inhibitory pathways and transmitters dampen or stop things from happening. GABA is the main inhibitory neurotransmitter, and plays a role in the inhibition of neural circuits and reduces feelings of anxiety.

This is important in relation to blood sugar stability because the production of GABA is reliant on the citric acid cycle. Therefore the less stable your blood sugar is the less GABA you can produce and the less the dampening effect of this neurotransmitter on your anxiety pathways.

GABA is not the only neurotransmitter, there are others and all of them require adequate amounts of amino acids in order to have enough of them. We

get amino acids from eating protein in our diets, which is broken down in the gut and then distributed through the body. Some amino acids cannot cross the BBB (Blood brain barrier) on their own – they need to be carried over by other proteins and this is where LNAA transporters come in.

LNAA transporters

LNAA's pick up the amino acid and transport it across the BBB so it is available in the brain to be converted into neurotransmitters.

Blood sugar is important for this because the balance between amino acid and insulin governs how well this can happen. When your blood sugar goes up, your insulin levels go up. When insulin goes up it inhibits LNAA's ability to transport amino acid across the blood brain barrier.

There are a number of reasons why someone may suffer with low blood sugar but it is particularly common for people who skip meals especially breakfast.

It is not necessary to have a blood test to know if you are having problems with low blood sugar. If you suffer from the following common symptoms, it is likely your blood sugar is low and you will have fluctuating

blood glucose levels depicted in the graph above: Waking in the middle of the night; Skipping meals and relying on coffee and sweets to keep going; Feeling energised after meals; Brain fog; Snacking on fruit and sweet foods; Irritable if meals are missed (hangry).

If you are regularly suffering from these symptoms then it is likely that your blood glucose level is functionally too low. If

you also suffer with anxiety or depression, it is worth stabilising blood sugar, as this will have a positive effect on your mood.

The easiest way to stabilise blood glucose is by eating regularly. Most importantly start with eating breakfast within one hour of waking, you may even need to eat every three hours and switch to foods that have more fibre, protein and good

fats in them.

Eoin Roe is a Chiropractor and Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner based at Roe Health in Skibbereen. If you would like to get in touch or learn more, please look at our website www.roehealth.ie or leave a message on 028 62081.

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CHILD BEHAVIOR

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.

When separating children from caregivers becomes an issue (Part 2)

In last month's column Sarah covered the range of different factors that can be attributed to separation anxiety that persists past toddlerhood and beyond what can be perceived as within the range of healthy and developmentally appropriate. This month she looks at ways to address the issue.

The two most common routes to addressing separation anxiety are therapy and medication. Oftentimes, the latter is required

in very severe cases in order to allow the former to have a chance to commence. Here are a couple of common universal tips when proceeding forward with addressing your child's separation anxiety;

1. Provide notice. Preparation is key, and so, preparing your child for the separation is essential. Notifying your child of an impending separation can be a trigger to some big feelings, and you may question yourself as to why you are creating upset long prior to the event occurring, but notice of the event, no matter the response, is a lot better than a sudden separation with no anticipation or prior warning. Additional measures can include visiting the place with the caregiver prior to the date of separation, introducing a new babysitter whilst in the company of the caregiver and creating a picture story book about it all and how things will proceed in order to give children advance notice.

2. Avoid sneaking away. When you have an overly anxious child, it can be tempting to tiptoe away and avoid the upset at the goodbye process. However, this allows separation anxiety to spread. When you are consistent with saying goodbye each and every single time, children can learn to come to trust the process, and to trust you, and know that you will not disappear and that goodbyes will result in your return.

3. Gradual desensitisation. Oftentimes when I am called



to assist families with separation anxiety, I assess where the difficulty lies and where we would like to get to, and set a clear goal. Next, we need to look at all the small, baby steps that will get us to our end goal. We strip things back, start at step one, and take things in a gradual, step by step fashion. How this looks will vary from child to child and will be very individual to the circumstance and individual. We do not proceed forward until the current step in the chain has been mastered, and the child is happy and relaxed with accomplishing this step. That's when children are in a good position to move forward, and we build up like this, overcoming fear and anxiety through each step of the way, eventually landing on a set interval of time spent away from the caregiver and within the context that it is required, with ease and the ability to cope.

4. Working with schools. It is really important for both caregivers and children to work closely with schools when chil-

dren are exhibiting separation anxiety that persists beyond the first four weeks of starting school. Sometimes, you may need to bring in a professional to assist with this process, as it can be taxing on school staff at times.

5. Validate and label the child's feelings. Anxiety is not something that is in a pre-schooler's vocab. Sometimes, parents think that telling their child that they are 'scared' in a given situation can create a bigger deal, when all you want to do is try to minimise things and keep the situation low-key. You fear that your child will have it become 'a thing' through similar situations going forward. However, it is really important to teach children from an early age to identify their own feelings. We tell children when they are happy and sad, why not anxious too? This not only teaches children about this specific feeling and assist with identifying it, but it also shows that you recognise how they feel and that you are there to support them through it. Logic

and reasoning in the moment can oftentimes be ineffective. So too can redirection and distraction tactics such as "Oh look, the playdough is out", "oh wow, babysitter brought you a book" and so on. This can also sometimes be misconstrued by the child as you not seeing and recognising their overwhelming feelings to the situation as you try to talk them down and help them understand that there is nothing to worry about. You mean well, but you can see how things can stray.

6. Accidental reinforcement. Sometimes, parents can inadvertently reinforce big behaviours that stem from separation anxiety. Parents go into the classroom with them for a period of time, maybe take them home, cancel the babysitter, but what this teaches your child is that when they have a reaction this big, things will pan out fine for them. Don't get me wrong, sometimes, this IS required in some instances to deescalate a dangerous situation. However, a repeated pattern of this kind of behaviour on the parent's part can keep these big responses to separations trickling on. This is when a gradual desensitisation plan is required.

Assisting children with separation anxiety is a slow and gradual process. There is no quick fix that will result in long lasting change, but know that there is always a way forward and a family support plan to suit every child.

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Sarah Murray

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT & EARLY INTERVENTION

Paediatric Behaviour Analyst
B.A Psych, MSc ABA, BCBA, M.Ps.S.I

Sarah has worked with children with developmental delays, speech and language delays, developmental disabilities, autism, premature infants, and children with various medical needs and other learning needs.



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085 7768924

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To view my services visit
sarahmurrayabatherapy.com



Knockskeagh Montessori and Afterschool: A holistic approach to children's development

Knockskeagh Montessori and Afterschool is a friendly, child-centred Montessori-based education system for that provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to children from two years eight months to five years six months. All children enjoy its fun, safe and loving environment, whether they are in the Montessori or the Afterschool Club for children (four to 12 years) who are enrolled in the adjacent Knockskeagh National school.

Knockskeagh is affiliated with St Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association. All staff are fully trained and qualified in Early Years, certified in

FAR-First Aid Responder, are Garda vetted and recognise that continuous professional development is key to giving the best education to children in their care. Emergent learning takes place daily when staff look at the children's interests to help them in planning. Manager Shirley Finn guarantees that, "your child's holistic development will be enhanced and enriched by all our teachers." There is an 'Open door' policy where any ideas that parents may offer are welcomed.

The big, bright and spacious classroom (a second classroom will open for September 2023) caters for breakfast club from 8.15am-9am, Montessori from



9am-2pm* and Afterschool Club from 2pm-5pm.

Outside the classroom there are four sports playing courts, a large pitch and a separate playground for the Montessori children which has large slides, a climbing frame and a large sandpit.

Knockskeagh Montessori and Afterschool is located at the back of Knockskeagh National school, Lyre, Clonakilty, P85 AV90.

For any information please contact Shirley Finn on 087 1492273 or email finnshirley58@gmail.com.

*Optional early drop off from 9am and after-preschool care from 12.30pm-2pm is available

**KNOCKSKEAGH
MONTESSORI & AFTERSCHOOL**

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• MONTESSORI (9AM-2PM)
• AFTERSCHOOL CLUB (2PM-5PM)

Contact Shirley Finn
087 1492273
finnshirley58@gmail.com

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Leap and Glandore Community Playschool: Growing and learning through play

Leap and Glandore Community Playschool is a fun and creative playschool situated in Leap Village. Christine, the Play Leader and Noreen, the Play Assistant, are both qualified and extremely experienced in childcare.

The playroom is bright and spacious and there is also a large outdoor playground with both tarmac for cycling and grass and woodland for exploring. A wide range of toys and equipment encourage fun physical exercise. On rainy days the covered outside space is ideal for painting, sand and water play.

The children engage in a wide range of activities including arts, crafts, planting, threading, sewing, music, free play, role

play, story time, puzzles and games. Christine and Noreen are also committed to encouraging STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) activities such as experiments and pre-literacy/pre-maths games involving matching, ordering, sorting and phonics. All activities are linked to the Aistear and Siolta curriculum, which is focused on learning through different types of play that encourage four key areas of development: exploring and thinking; communication; wellbeing; identity and belonging. Children also enjoy a variety of outings and externally sourced activities such as pottery, painting and yoga.

The playschool takes children aged two years and eight

months and above and offers both free Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and fee paying non-ECCE spaces, and is registered for the National Childcare Scheme. The session runs from 9.15am to 12.15pm. The option for additional hours until 1.45pm is also offered at a small additional cost.

Leap and Glandore Community Playschool is now enrolling for September 2023 and looks forward to welcoming you and your child and helping them to grow and learn through play. To book or arrange a visit please call Christine on 087 9544696 or email: leapcommunityplayschool@gmail.com



Let your child experience the fun at

LEAP & GLANDORE COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL

ENROLMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 2023/2024

Spaces still available for both ECCE and non-ECCE scheme children.

Please call Christine Cowap, Play Leader on **087 9544696** or email: leapcommunityplayschool@gmail.com

Darrara NS: Supporting children as they grow into confident human beings

Darrara is a Catholic school that welcomes all beliefs, and none, in the same open fashion. It strives to provide schooling that enables each of its 24 pupils to reach their full potential; intellectually, spiritually, socially, morally, culturally and physically. The aim is to develop the whole child, a child that on leaving will be self-confident and well-prepared for second level. This is all done in a secure, non-critical and positive environment.

Physical extra-curricular activities that are available include swimming, tag rugby, GAA ball skills, dancing, Cycle Sense, orienteering, walks, field trips and school tours. Music and drama is encouraged with various performances such as the annual carol service. Pupils also have the option to participate in

the Credit Union School Quiz, French classes through the 'Say Yes To Languages' initiative, FÍS Film project, coding, chess, lego, Maths and Science Weeks.

The school's approach is child-centred and based on best practice in all areas; social and emotional, physical, literacy, numeracy, language, exceptional ability, sensory impairment, mental health and well-being. Whole school approaches such as Friends for Life, Zippy's Friends and early intervention and prevention strategies meet the needs of all pupils and there is always a collaborative approach between the pupil, class teacher, special education teachers, parents and other relevant personnel such as psychologists and speech therapists. Support is provided for pupils with identified needs, in line with the

current guidelines for supporting pupils with SEN in primary schools. This support may take the form of in-class support such as Aistear, Literacy Lift-off and Mata sa Rang. Sometimes small groups and individuals are withdrawn to another classroom for a quieter setting.

The school encourages the full involvement of parents and guardians in their child's education through home/school connections and the active Parents' Association. Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

Enrolments are now open for the coming school year: applications are available on www.darrarans.ie or by emailing office@darrarans.ie or calling 023 8834160.



Darrara National School
Cruary, Clonakilty P85 VX62

Schooling that enables each pupil to reach their full potential; intellectually, spiritually, socially, morally, culturally and physically.

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UL research reveals 'no academic advantage' to attending single sex schools

New research carried out at University of Limerick has revealed that there is 'no significant difference' in academic performance between those attending single sex or mixed schools.

The major new study has found that, on average, there is no significant difference in performance for girls or boys that attend single-sex schools compared to their mixed-schooling peers in science, maths or

reading.

The study used a large sample of nearly 5,000 15-year-olds from the 2018 Irish wave of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) dataset to examine the association between attending a single-sex school and mathematics, reading and science literacy performance for boys and girls respectively.

The data is designed to examine what students can do

with what they know in each of the three subject areas by testing how well they apply their knowledge in everyday life situations.

The dataset also includes extensive information about individual students and the schools they attend.

Dr Flannery explained: "The topic of single-sex versus mixed-sex schooling continues to be a source of debate within education policy in many coun-

tries, including Ireland. However, there is limited evidence around the relationship between attending a single-sex school and academic performance.

"In Ireland, relative to other countries, a high proportion of secondary school children - roughly one third - attend a single-sex secondary school. For this reason, the Irish educational system provides an interesting setting for exploring the outcomes of single-sex schooling."

The analysis shows significant raw gaps in reading, science, and maths performance with pupils in single-sex schools performing better than those in mixed-schools. However, once the researchers applied a range of individual and school level factors such as the socioeconomic background of the student, the school student-staff ratio, the quality of teaching material available to the school and whether or not the school

is disadvantaged, these gaps did not present as statistically significant.

It reveals, on average, that there is no difference in maths, science or reading performance for 15-year-olds after adjusting for the background of the student and other school-level factors and this result was found for both boys and girls.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Early Intervention pre-school model needs to be retained

Cork South West TD, Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan, has said that the Early Intervention ASD pre-school model should be expanded rather than reduced. His comments came after visiting the Early Intervention pre-school ASD class in St Patrick's National School in Skibbereen.

Deputy O'Sullivan said, "I was blown away by the interaction between the teachers and children in this particular class. I learned of one boy who was non-verbal and not communicating when he first entered the class. Over the space of just six months, he is now fully communicating and fully interactive

and talking with his teachers."

Deputy O'Sullivan continued, "Speaking to the principal and staff of St Patrick's National School, they attested to the importance of this Early Intervention Model, when it comes to children being able to progress and also interact with mainstream classes."

Last year saw a campaign to retain the Early Intervention pre-school in Kilbrittain, this campaign was successful but there were concerns raised about the departments move to replace the Early Intervention Pre School model with the Access and Inclusion model (AIM). Deputy O'Sullivan

said: "It's clear to me we should not fix what's not broken."

Right throughout Cork and indeed Ireland these Early Intervention pre-school models are achieving great results for children.

"I will certainly be raising this with both Minister Foley and Minister Madigan and telling them of my experiences in Skibbereen.

"I will also be advocating for a special school for West Cork which would be really important, especially for those children who have difficulty in integrating into mainstream classes."



Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan visiting the early intervention ASD preschool class at St Patrick's NS, Skibbereen

Local people, local wisdom: Mary and Micheál Hurley, The Pike



Aoise Tutty Jackson

In this photo series West Cork photographer Aoise Tutty Jackson uses her informal and fresh style to connect with, and share the wisdom of, people in our community. www.aoisetuttyjackson.com email aoise@92circles.com or call 086 3465373.



Hurleys at The Pike (Mary Hurley jokes that she doesn't like it being referred to as a garage!) is a place that so many people have remained loyal to over the years, with less and less of these gems to be found today even in West Cork. Renowned for the unusual and very local selection of goods they stock, reasonable prices, but mostly the energy of the people running the business, on a recent visit photographer **Aoise Tutty Jackson** gets a window of insight into Mary and Micheál's lives and some of the wisdom they have gleaned over their many years living and running a business in West Cork.

Mary: When Micheál finished up milling, we decided to put our energy into the business here: We wanted to do something a bit different, to be very independent, but also to support people.

Micheál: I was asked a very interesting question a few years ago by a local friend. He asked 'Did you ever think that this place would be such a success?' He remembered me telling him I was going to be selling coal and we both knew that that wasn't a sexy thing!

I've always believed 'Do the simple things, the simple way' and you will get great results... and a lot of the time you will get kicked in the teeth, there's no doubt about that!

I've always considered myself to be very lucky, things have happened for me. I do have faith. I pray a lot, I pray that I make a success, and that I would be kind to people and that I would make the right decisions.

Mary: You have to have faith and you have to believe and you



have to be positive. It's very easy to be negative, and it just gets you very down...there's always some light at the end of the tunnel no matter how bad anything is...no matter how wrong things may be going, and certainly we've been through our share of difficult times, but you just have to have

hope...and you have to have faith in yourself as well.

Micheál: When we got shut down with the planning permission for this place, Mary just said 'look we'll start again and we'll go after it and we will get it, and we will beat them and



we will get the planning, it's just another fence that's been put up in front of us'...I'd love to say to those that were trying to shut us down now – 'you come down here and I'll show you what community is!'

I've always been a believer that you have to make up your own mind about what you do in life and then you have to run with it. A lot of people will tell you 'Ah don't do that', or whatever – and you just have to shut them out...The less you tell people about what you intend to do the better.

A discovery made during the interview was that the beautiful and varied selection of paintings in the back office were all Mary's own.

Mary: I'm painting a long time. I do it mostly in the wintertime at night when I finish my work. It makes you very aware of your surroundings, the trees and sea, colours and everything. When I start painting, I could be painting for three or four hours and forget all about everything, whatever happened earlier in the day is gone.

I suppose the big thing, that should be accentuated now more than ever, is to be kind to people, because you never know what people are going through! You have to make allowances for people...not always! But you never know what's going on in peoples' lives.

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Bantry Bay Lions Club Diary – February 2023

With a rising total of over 41,000 killed and many thousands injured or homeless after a strong earthquake struck Turkey and Syria, organisations such as the Lions are vital in helping in a humanitarian crisis of this magnitude. The Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) is mobilising funds, including a US\$200,000 Major Catastrophe grant to empower Lions in Turkey and Syria to help their communities recover. The Bantry Bay Lions will be organising a bucket collection as soon as a permit can be secured. All funds raised will be sent to the LCIF.

The Bantry Bay Lions have set up designated locations in the Bantry area where the general public can donate eyeglasses which are no longer needed so that someone else in a third world country can see. The club is requesting people to drop-off their unused eyeglasses during the month of March at the following locations: Bantry General Hospital, inside the front door; Bantry Public Library; Kenneally Eye Centre, The Quays Bantry; Newtown Pharmacy, Glengarriff Road; Glengarriff pharmacy; Dri-moleague pharmacy Mealagh Valley Centre; Bantry Catholic Church.

Once collected, the eyeglasses will be sent to a location in France where they will be refurbished and sent on to third world countries for distribution to those in need. Your help is appreciated in making this a successful undertaking. You can contact Lion Joan O'Donovan for any queries 086-0563185.

The Bantry Bay Lions donated €300 in January to the Sudbury School in Kealkil to help fund the establishment of a workshop.

The Bantry Bay Lions Club is a non-profit organisation and is affiliated to the Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) which has 100 years of

service. LCIF is a world-wide organisation of 1.4 million men and women who are dedicated to serving their communities and whose motto is 'We Serve'. The Bantry members support the local community and provide assistance and financial support to various programs and local organisations. They normally meet at the old Gaelscoil at 7pm on the second Thursday of the month. To learn more about the Bantry Bay Lions you are cordially invited to visit their website at www.bantry-baylions.com.

Provided by John Dervan,
PRO – Bantry Bay Lions Club



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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Understanding the Working Family Payment

What is the Working Family Payment?

Working Family Payment (WFP) is a weekly tax-free payment for employees with children. It supports people who are on low pay. You must be an employee to get WFP. You cannot get it if you are self-employed only. You must have at least one child who normally lives with you or who you support financially. Your child must be under 18 (or between 18 and 22 if they are in full-time day education).

What are the qualifying conditions for WFP?

To qualify for WFP you must meet the following conditions:

- Work 38 or more hours per fortnight (in any combination of hours). You can combine your weekly hours with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant's hours to meet this condition. You cannot use time spent in self-employment (or on Community Employment, Tús, JobBridge or the Rural Social Scheme) to meet this condition.

- Your job is likely to last at least three months
- You have at least one child who normally lives with you
- You earn less than the WFP income limit set for your family size

What are the current income limits to qualify for WFP?

The DSP will assess your household income in a means test. It compares your total income to the WFP income limit for your family size. If you earn less than the WFP income limit, you may get WFP. Your WFP will be 60% of the difference between the WFP income limit for your family size and your

assessable income. The weekly income limits increased from January 5, 2023.

If you have the below number of children and your weekly family income is less than:

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| One child | €591 |
| Two children | €692 |
| Three children | €793 |
| Four children | €884 |
| Five children | €1,010 |
| Six children | €1,126 |
| Seven children | €1,262 |
| Eight + children | €1,358 |

If I am employed for 38 hours a fortnight and my spouse/partner is self-employed. Can I apply for WFP?

Yes, you can apply provided you are an employee. If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is self-employed, his or her income over the 12-month period before you apply is used to work out his or her average weekly income.

**If I claimed WFP would it affect my medical card entitlement?**

No. WFP is not taken into account in the means test for a medical card.

Are there any other family supports available?

If you are getting WFP, you may also be entitled to the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

How long will I receive WFP?

WFP is paid for one year (52 weeks) as long as you meet the conditions. It does not change if your earnings from work go up or down during that year. After 52 weeks, you can apply again for WFP.

Can I keep my WFP if I am on Maternity Leave?

When you are on maternity leave, adoptive leave, paternity leave or parent's leave you are entitled to be treated in the same way as when you are at work. This means that you can claim WFP if you meet the conditions of the WFP and already have a child. A pregnant woman who has no other children does not qualify for WFP until the birth of the baby.

You cannot continue to claim WFP if you take additional unpaid maternity leave or adoptive leave, or if you lose your job after returning to work, or if you give up your job.

What happens to my WFP if I change jobs?

If you move to a new job, your current entitlement to WFP will end and you must tell the WFP section of the Department of Social Protection. You can apply again for WFP for your

new job.

What happens to my WFP if my hours are reduced or I lose my job?

If the number of hours you work each week falls to under 38 hours a fortnight, you are no longer entitled to WFP. If you lose your job, you are no longer entitled to WFP. In both situations, you must tell the WFP section of the Department of Social Protection about the change in your circumstances.

How do I apply for WFP?

You can apply for the Working Family Payment online at MyWelfare.ie if you have a MyGovID verified account. Alternatively you can complete a paper application from which you can get from your local social welfare office or Citizens Information Centre. To make sure that your application for WFP is processed as quickly as possible, you should send your most recent payslips with your application form.

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

WEST CORK HELPLINE
0818 07 8390

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

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Innishannon school approved for extra SNAs



Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has confirmed that Scoil Eoin Innishannon has been approved for a further 1.34 SNAs.

The Cork South West TD said that this will enable the school to fill two SNA posts to help out in their special classes.

The Deputy visited the school in October where he saw first-hand the difficulties that teachers and SNAs were having because they were short staffed.

He said, "Scoil Eoin is a terrific school growing in popularity because of the excellent level of teaching there."

He continued "It has also become renowned for the special classes that it has there and the level of care and attention that children with additional needs

get when they attend Scoil Eoin."

"However in recent years, as the numbers have grown, they have become under pressure in terms of numbers of Special Needs Assistants."

He said, "In one instance you would have one teacher and one SNA with up to six children in the class. This means that if one child needs to be brought to the toilet, you would have just one teacher looking after five children with additional needs and many of these children have high needs."

He continued: "They were really reaching breaking point towards the end of last year when the school staff and some of the parents approached me in relation to extra SNA allocation.

"The school applied to the SENO for extra SNA allocation and I am delighted that this has been successful."

Deputy O'Sullivan added "however their numbers will continue to grow therefore we have to still explore further allocation of extra SNAs for this school to enable them to meet the demand in the area. I would have slight concerns that not every child with additional needs in the area will be able to be accommodated in Scoil Eoin and that is something that we will really have to look at in the future."

Deputy O'Sullivan congratulated the Principal and the staff for their successful application and the excellent job that they are doing to date.

Further puppy training notes



CANINE CORNER

Liz Mahony

Liz Mahony is an experienced Dog Trainer and Holistic Therapist for all animals. In her monthly column, Liz aims to promote mutual respect between carer and dog. Contact Liz at corkdogtrainingclasses.com.

My little Boxer, Saffron, is no longer quite so little. She's almost six-months-old and it's been interesting to watch her mature. In a lot of ways, she's still the same little bundle of joy who loves to play, has difficulty focusing when there are too many distractions, and adores doing Boxer 'zoomies' in the fields!

However, one noticeable difference with getting older and more secure with me is her attitude to running free. She still comes to the whistle but there have been one or two instances when she's had a think about it first. That's because she's become more confident now that she knows her surroundings and feels braver at putting greater distance between us. She still likes to literally run rings around me while just out of reach and we look on it as a game. She'll run around, then further away,

and flop down and wait while I pretend to stalk her. As soon as I come close, she's off again, dancing away and repeating the procedure.

In between pretending to stalk her, I make a point of blowing the whistle to get a decent recall, a cuddle, a treat, and, then, with that never-ending energy of puppies caught up in the action, she's away for more fun.

She still asks if she can go into a particular field or jump onto a bank to explore. And I encourage that all the time because it reinforces that connection between us. But, I'm conscious that when she looks off into the middle distance, occasionally weighing up whether to come to me or run away, she's getting near to the age when she will get an instinctive 'call to the wild' and that incentive to run away rather than come to me will take over.

I thought I'd reached that stage the other day despite her being not yet six-months-old, as the 'call' normally starts around seven months. But I appreciate that this timing isn't written in stone.

We'd had a good walk and were on the homeward bound bit. She was ahead of me on the road and trotted off into a gateway. I told her we were going home and turned away. When I looked back she'd disappeared! My heart gave a lurch and I raced back to the field. In the space of moments, there was no sign of her in either direction. And no response to my whistle either! One end of the particular field led to the Bandon river, a danger in itself.

The other way was familiar territory as we walked home many times in those fields. But which direction to choose? I was nervous, panicky, annoyed, all at the same time. Fortunately, common sense and a big dollop of intuition kicked in. Some days previously, Saffron had found a

deflated football in the next field, which had been a huge source of amusement each time she came across it. I prayed that was what had happened.

And, indeed it was. She had gone beyond the field she was in to the next one to source it and was now triumphantly parading it in her mouth as I approached on the road abreast of her. Saffron expected praise at her cleverness in finding it again. Instead, she received my relief tinged with annoyance! When I called her, at first she fixed me with a bold stare and turned back fully absorbed in the ball. I was getting my first real brush-off and I didn't like it!

I sternly called her and showed her a small opening in the bank that she could climb. She wasn't responding as per usual but went back to nudging the offending ball. She seemed to be saying, surely she was entitled to prolong the game after showing such skill in remembering where it was?

For a few minutes we were involved in a Mexican standoff with me realising that the outcome was of major importance to both of us. Saffron made a few half-hearted attempts to climb the bank. So I decided to call her bluff. "Right, I'm off home," I called, blew on my whistle, and disappeared from view. My disappearance usually helped Saffron to make up her mind on previous occasions. And I was hoping for the same result this time...

I walked down the road a few yards and then turned around. Phew, there she was just jumping off the bank. "Good girl, Saffron," and I promptly put her on lead to walk the short distance back home.

Needless to say, she's been consistently on the lead since then just in case she's getting that instinctive 'call to the wild'. And, whenever she is loose, I'm watching her signals like a hawk!

Join our animal loving team

As a charity volunteer **Deirdre O'Brien** at Rural Animal Welfare Resources (RAWR) says that although 2020 and 2021 left charities struggling due to lack of fundraising opportunities, an upside was that people learned to value their time and use it to make their lives more meaningful. Pledging your time to a cause you are passionate about is not just about the contribution you make to the charity but the personal benefits you get. If contributing to animal welfare in your locality appeals then RAWR needs you!

We are currently looking for people to join our team at the RAWR shop in Bantry. You do not need to commit to long hours and we are happy to find you a suitable time slot be it a day, half day or few hours a week. No experience is necessary as all vol-

unteers will be trained. The only thing we require is that you are passionate about animal welfare and support our ethos. A friendly personality and a willingness to work with a likeminded team in a position that involves dealing with the public makes you a perfect candidate.

Working in charity retail brings great job satisfaction as no two days are the same. As the stock comes from kind donors, each piece is unique and brings unbeatable variety. You also meet all kinds of people and really get to know your local community; many charity shops act as a community hub. All of your colleagues will be willing volunteers and social interaction is a big part of working in our charity shop, which is a great opportunity for career and personal development. You will also get the chance to express your creativity with tasks such as window dressing and shop displays!

Our charity shop generates the funds that allow us to provide our long-term schemes and

services but it also has huge environmental benefits. Charity retail is the essence of sustainable shopping and the opposite of fast fashion and throw-away culture. The Circular Economy is one where we keep resources in use as long as possible and charity retail plays an important role in this.

If you are an animal lover then RAWR is the right organisation to give you a sense of purpose by supporting a cause that resonates with you.

Come in and see us in the shop on Bridge Street in Bantry or contact us via our FB page. We look forward to meeting you... we will have the kettle boiling and the biscuits ready (doggy treats on offer too if you are joined by four-legged

companions).

"When I retired, my husband and I decided to move to live permanently in our holiday cottage in West Cork. After a few months of enjoying retirement, I decided that I wanted to become more involved in community life and meet more people. I had always had an interest in animal welfare and so decided to volunteer in the RAWR shop in Bantry. From the first moment I stepped inside, I was made to feel very welcome and part of a great team. Everyone is a volunteer, including the management team, and all the funds raised go towards helping the animals of West Cork. Since joining, I have made new friends and have enjoyed the work at the shop which is varied and interesting. I keep

the shop looking attractive, sort through donations and chat to customers. I also enjoy meeting some very special customers, the dogs who visit us for a biscuit and to try on one of our beautiful handmade jumpers. It's great fun. So, if you have a few hours to spare, why not call into the shop and join our team. I can highly recommend it!"

"I have volunteered at the RAWR shop for over eight years and am still really enjoying it. When I first started, I didn't know many people in town. Now when I walk down the street I see people I know everywhere. It's a great feeling to know that I am helping animals while having such an amazing time."

people Food, Health & Lifestyle



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

E: louise.anewu@gmail.com

Sustainable shopping is now, more than ever before, a responsibility that we all need to embrace. We need to rethink how we shop, why we need more, when we have enough and how to reduce the chances of making ridiculous purchases. Style lovers are now becoming more humanitarian, asking 'who is making these clothes' and need reassurance that they are ethically produced... in other words we want guilt-free clothing. Long story short, ethical clothing makes sure that it positively impacts people, the planet and animals. There is the reassurance that workers are treated fairly across the supply chain, this includes all policies and practises on child labour. Worker safety, the right to join a union and payment of a living wage is guaranteed. An ethical brand is passionate about reducing carbon emissions and safely eliminating or disposing of any chemical waste.

Unfortunately, not every clothes shopper can afford to replace their entire wardrobe with solely ethical pieces. Please don't fret if this describes you and don't underestimate the part that you can play in reducing fast fashion. We all have to start somewhere and today is as good a time as any to start. Pre-loved is very much a step in the right direction, it reduces waste and brings a big smile to more than one face. You would be simply blown away by what is out there now for the Irish style lover, whether you are looking for something for your big day or a designer piece that would otherwise be well outside of your budget.

Undoubtedly, we are all feeling the pinch, as it seems like we are getting less and less 'bang for a buck' but what about the feeling of contentment when you can buy an item of clothing and know that the money goes on to help someone who genuinely needs your help. And there will always be that section of

Sustainable shopping is a win-win

'Fast fashion isn't cheap...
Someone somewhere is paying'



*Naphisa
Designer Resale
in Cork operates
as a consignment
store stocking
pre-loved
designer clothes*

society who refuse to walk into a 'charity shop'. All that I can say is that I lived in Manhattan, New York for many years and the treasures and designer bits that I found in what they call 'Thrift Stores' would keep your jaw very firmly planted on the floor!

Have you heard about Barnardos Bridal Rooms? Yes, I'm referring to Barnardos, the Children's Charity. Two shops, one located in Wexford, the other in Dun Laoghaire stock brand new bridal gowns and wedding accessories that have been donated by some of Ireland's top bridal retailers, wholesalers and designers. These incredible bridal gowns retail at greatly reduced prices and the bride-to-be can

Unfortunately, not every clothes shopper can afford to replace their entire wardrobe with solely ethical pieces. Please don't fret if this describes you and don't underestimate the part that you can play in reducing fast fashion.

magically pick up a stunning new gown at a fraction of the standard retail cost. Proceeds from the gowns and accessories go to Barnardos children's charity and help to support our most vulnerable children. Imagine knowing that your 'big day' played a part in helping to improve the life of a child. That's what I call feel good, now that's a win-win – knowing that your hard earned cash could change a life for the better.

Having worked in the style

business for many years, I know, only too well, how clothes can make or break how you feel. As a result, don't ever allow anyone to tell you that you can't or shouldn't like something, just because... I'm referring to designer clothes. If you love designer clothes and have the budget to follow suit, go for it, spoil yourself! Forty years ago, the very wise Teresa Collins opened Naphisa Designer Resale in Cork. Teresa has built up a solid customer base over the years, those who buy new designer clothes and then sell them on to Naphisa and customers who couldn't normally afford new designer pieces will gratefully buy these glorious pieces at a fraction of the original cost. It operates as a consignment store. You could say that Teresa with her brainchild Naphisa were well before their time but this wonderful business has always been thriving and is now busier than ever.

Naphisa stocks pre-loved designer clothes from Brown Thomas, Samuili and Olori... I am exceptionally sweet on the last two and all that I can say is that they are heaven-sent! Obviously the usual Prada, Chanel, Gucci etc are available here too and many other brands but many of you might not have known that you could find a stunning Annie Bing or a Lis Lareida piece – sophisticated style ready and waiting for you. So if you are tired of some of your designer pieces or bags, then call in to Naphisa.

I met with the lovely Robert Plant in Designer Exchange Ltd on Exchequer St, Arncliffe Dublin 2. Run off their feet, Robert's only complaint was that they would love to stock more designer clothes and accessories for men. At the moment, whatever comes in for guys is re-bought on the same day. Robert explained that men buy

new designer clothes and wear them until they fall apart, that's why there is such a problem getting his hands on re-sale bits. Women are completely different, they continue to want new bits and are willing to let go of older pieces... especially as these consignment stores offer a way to fund what's currently on sale. This is another busy shop, making sure that what's not being worn in your wardrobe finds a new love again. Designer Exchange is now 10-years-old and during that time has won awards for excellence and innovation.

Believe it or not the current trend is 'less is more' and pre-loved is admired and sought after more than ever before. How about we continue to embrace this mindset. Supporting Barnardos bridal rooms helps to save or improve the quality of a child's life. Supporting these incredible designer resale stores means that quality is not compromised, in fact the quality is more than exceptional, you save money, there is no packaging and you find unique items so that you can wear them your way!

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Eternal Life: the magical realism of Guillermo Lorca García Huidobro



THE SHAPE OF THINGS

James Waller

James Waller is an Australian born artist and poet based in West Cork. Through this column James explores the world of art, introducing the reader to major works of art and artists and reflecting on what makes them so engaging.

Of all the young realist painters to have entered the world stage in the last decade, the Chilean, Guillermo Lorca García Huidobro, is certainly the most spectacular. His magic realist fantasies, delivered in oil on a cinematic scale, combine the opulent Baroque world of Peter Paul Rubens with a tropical South American fantasia. His work is a cornucopia of visual delights, an abundant feast worthy of Rubens' 'The Feast of Venus' and a welcome panacea to the anaemic offerings of the exhausted conceptual canon.

Born in 1984, Lorca García Huidobro is easily the most successful of the 'Nerdrum School' alumni – those artists who have spent a period of apprenticeship with the Norwegian neo-Baroque Master Odd Nerdrum. The reasons for his success are manifold, and have led to major exhibitions in Chile, London and Barcelona, including the current three year exhibition at the Moco Museum, as well as representation by renowned gallerist Simon de Pury.

Where the vast majority of Nerdrum School alumni remain hidden in the Norwegian Master's shadow, both compositionally and thematically, Lorca García Huidobro's work was, from the beginning, outside of Nerdrum's imaginative orbit. This is the Chilean painter's secret: he is the master of his own inner world of images, and a composer of Rubensian power, the dynamic of which eclipses the dark, elemental, earth-bound world of Odd. He is the noon to Nerdrum's dusk; a swirling satin dress of youth and opulence, to the homespun rags and animal skins which

drape Nerdrum's primordial figures.

Such a comparison is not made to say that Lorca García Huidobro is greater than Nerdrum; far from it. It is to say that they are of different temperaments and worlds, that they are both independent masters of their own authentic inner visions. Lorca García Huidobro's world is one of dark fairy tales; of fairy-like children juxtaposed with violent beasts, of erotic 'femme fatales' in the midst of giant animals of forbidding power, of banquets over-run by dogs, of bed chambers flooded with tigers and swans, all on the scale of a cinema screen.

Nerdrum's world, by comparison, is peopled by outcasts, wanderers, shamans and survivors in a bleak, twilight landscape redolent of either Iceland or the Middle-eastern desert. His figures, like Lorca García Huidobro's, are life size, but they do not compete with the denizens of the jungle. Rarely do animals enter Nerdrum's universe, and then only as close companions to their human keepers.

Lorca García Huidobro also breaks the mould of the 'Apelles palette' (if indeed he ever employed it), a palette of sunset colours sacrosanct in Nerdrum circles, which we see employed in the work of late Rembrandt and Titian. In embracing all of nature the young Chilean painter also embraces the entire spectrum of the sun, glorying in startling peaches and blues, dying the hair of girls and beasts at will, employing jade and emerald in fabulous visions of the inner jungle, such as in 'The Black Dragon' (2018).

What makes it all so fabulous, apart from the superlative delivery, is Lorca García Huidobro's powerful, cyclonic approach to composition. In this he is most closely attuned, not to the Rembrandtian Nerdrum, but to Peter Paul Rubens, the



'Eternal Life' (2014). Detail below right.

most sensuously powerful painter of the Flemish Baroque (1577-1640). Lorca García Huidobro's 'The Hunting' (2013) most directly recalls Rubens' 'Tiger, Lion and Leopard Hunt' (1616), whilst paintings such as 'The Banquet' (2014), 'Laura and the Dogs' (2012) and 'The Bird of Paradise' (2019) echo the cyclonic sweep of Rubens' 'The Fall of Phaeton' (1604) and 'The Feast of Venus' (1637).

Where in composition and delivery the young Chilean is comparable to the Flemish Master, he gives a contemporary surrealist twist to his imagery

which is far beyond the world of Rubens. In 'The Hunting' the animals swirl, bite and writhe in a sea of milk; in 'Yaksha's Party' (2018) a semi-clad Victorian-dressed girl pats the head of a creature with a swan in its jaws, whilst peach coloured baboons scream on the other side of the bed. Here we find the stage design of Velazquez's 'Las Meninas' (1656) in cahoots with Rubens' 'Bacchanalia' (1615).

Lorca García Huidobro's images are dizzying in their decadence but also clarifying in their power. There is no doubt that Freud would have a

field day; in so saying it is the slightly transgressive, juxtapositional elements which make the images so compelling.

It is a painting of comparative quietude, however, called 'Eternal Life' (2014) that feels like the Chilean's most iconic work. Now hanging in the collection of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Chile, 'Eternal Life' presents a twisted, knotty tree, with one dog looking up from below, two others on the ground looking at the viewer, a girl hanging upside down from an eagle's nest above, and other exotic birds nesting in the branches to the left and right.

On his Instagram page the artist writes of how this work came to him: "While I was observing the tree many images and childhood memories came to my head. I saw abundance, diversity and movement in its branches and from them I saw a girl hanging, perhaps symbolising the archetype of the 'hanging,' maybe just having fun or maybe playing the game of death."

The composition is constructed on the lines of a spiral, or a clock, with its fulcrum a knot in the lowest branch of the tree. Its compartments are in perfect tension, the upside down girl with red-dyed hair looking at us, or past us, asking us to view the world from a different angle, to refresh our vision. To this end the artist succeeds.



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Let Cork's Art Therapy Summer School help you to create a space to feel really alive, connected and powerful this summer

By Marianne Adams
Lecturer of Arts in Health and Education at MTU

Have any of us truly integrated the last two years, are we ready for the coming year, do we feel empowered in our own lives, and in our ability to impact the wider world? These are crucial questions, but ones that often get put to one side as we rush through our day to day lives.

Let us help you create a space where time will pause, where you will be safely held while

President of NIGAT, before her recent retirement she worked with offenders in custody and in the community. Stephen is part of the Array Collective, who won last year's Turner prize for their powerful art led social and community engagement. Louise is the Founder and Director of Artonomy, and Ed was the Head of the Department of Arts in Health and Education as well as the Chair of IACAT.

The Summer School will feed your heart and the soul as well as your head. The most profound element of the experience

happens in the therapeutic space Art Therapy creates, through the clinical work shared in the lecture series. Participants will also learn ways to understand their own process.

The Art Therapy Summer School is a long established, nurturing and dynamic event run by a hugely experienced team whose aim is to create a safe space to allow your innate

creative energy to flow more strongly. The beautiful building of the Crawford College of Art and Design, already imbued with art making, is the perfect venue and our coordination, caretaking and kitchen staff will ensure you are well fed and well orientated and well minded.

www.crawford.cit.ie/courses/art-therapy-summer-school/



you find your belonging in a group of like-minded adventurers, where inner knowing will unfurl as your creativity and agency are supported to flow through you and beyond you more powerfully.

This year, as well as providing spaces where you can dive deeply into your inner landscape, there will also be opportunities to think about how we bring the benefit of this knowing out into the world. Testing times can leave us feeling isolated and disempowered, the Summer School will foster your courage to connect with others and it will help you to bring this courage, colour and clarity back into your life.

Bearing in mind the demanding times we are living in, the calibre of our workshop facilitators is superlative this year, and the pivotal themes of internal and external connection are at the forefront of our planning. We welcome Eileen McCourt from Enniskillen and Stephen Millar from Belfast as two of our four group facilitators, as well as Louise Gartland from Dublin and Ed Kucjak from Waterford. Eileen has been a pioneer of Art Therapy in Northern Ireland and is

are the experiential workshops. The workshop groups are of approximately 12 participants, and the membership of each group stays constant over the event to allow trust to grow. The group facilitators are skilled in supporting the creativity of each individual and the group as a whole, and the group becomes a place where everyone can experience the powerful process of being witness and being witnessed. As the journey unfolds, the shared experience inevitably generates a camaraderie that is hard to put into words. Similarly, one's relationship with oneself if also kindled as the art making creates a conversation with parts of ourselves that perhaps sometimes feel forgotten and unseen. Absolutely no art making experience is necessary, every mark that is made will be honoured, all aspects of ourselves that come out to play will be welcomed and held dear.

A series of three lectures woven through the five days helps to create a theoretical framework for those new to Art Therapy, while those with more Art Therapy experience will learn deeply from leading practitioners in the field. Everyone will be inspired by seeing the transformation that

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2023

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'Depositions' at DeBarras Spoken Word

a child / face down in the shallows / line in the sand
we move in lines / a panic of ants / a satellite sees
you hear the wind / in the eaves / I hear the whistle of bombs
I'm the stranger / stared at with burning eyes / my heart's already stone

The three-lined poems (or tercets) above were written by Anton Floyd, a poet and former teacher who lives near Inchigeelagh. They are in his second collection, 'Depositions' (Doire Press, 2022), which is the focus of Anton's next appearance at DeBarra's Spoken Word on March 14. The book is themed on the worldwide refugee crisis and



displacement of people. The poems look at our collective experience of the refugee crisis in almost every possible way. How 'we' view 'them', how 'we' and 'they' are seen from space, how our experiences

differ, what 'they' may feel when faced with how 'we' may feel.

Who 'we' are and who 'they' are depends on your perspective, your (individual and/or collective) history and even, your ability to 'walk in someone else's shoes'.

It could be argued that we all wear the same shoes. In reality, the ancestors of every person on earth did migrate at some point. To quote the United Nations 'Since the earliest times, humanity has been on the move.' It happened for all sorts of reasons, with a huge effect on the people who experience this. Many perish and suffer, many return to the places whence they came, many settle successfully. Irish history provides ample proof.

But maybe, for the first time, thanks to technology, we can now look at those very different stories side by side, in real time. And realise that, in a sense, we ARE them.

Anton Floyd knows a thing or two about that. A mix of Irish, Maltese, English and French-Lebanese, he was born in Cairo, raised in Cyprus, and educated in Ireland. Much of the emotional heft of the 'Depositions' collection derives from his family's long history of displacement dating from the Mount Lebanon Pogrom in 1860 while the family was exiled from Palestine in 1948 and from Egypt during the Suez Crisis. His own direct experiences of conflict occurred in Cyprus where he lived

from 1955 to 1970. A period which saw the War of Independence and violent intercommunal strife. At Christmas 1963, his family was forcibly removed at gunpoint from the family home in Nicosia.

'Depositions' is rich and diverse. It presents as many viewpoints as a butterfly's eye. There are 120 tercets and some longer contemplative poems that came soon after the start of the Ukraine war. A selection of the three-line poems has been translated into 20 languages, including Irish. This aspect of the book arose from workshoping the poems with refugees in Direct Provision Centres as well as from discussions with two Congolese young men whom

the Floyds befriended twenty years ago. They have long since become part of the family. The book is dedicated to them.

The event will include live music by The Lost Gecko (Malcolm Urquhart, Elaine McCarthy) and a dance and a poetry film. 'Depositions' will be on sale at DeBarra's on the night.

All proceeds, including the artist fee and any donations, will go to the funds of UNHCR (Ireland), the Refugee Agency of the United Nations.

Depositions ft. Anton Floyd and The Lost Gecko, March 14 from 8:30pm, DeBarra's Folk Club, Clonakilty

A musical journey through Dublin's inner city

To cap a hugely successful Spring season, which has welcomed audiences of 50 plus per film, Clonakilty Film Club has decided to add an Irish film to the programme. Musical documentary 'North Circular Road' will be screened on Tuesday, March 28 at 8.30pm.

Dublin's North Circular Road defines the working-class north inner city as it curves from the Phoenix Park in the West to Dublin Bay in the East, passing parks, barracks, asylums, stadia

and prisons along the way. 'North Circular' explores the history, music and streetscapes that link some of the country's most beloved and infamous places.

Told in black and white 4:3 Academy ratio, this film evokes many narratives from the history of the city and nation, from colonialism, to mental health, to the struggle for women's liber-

ation while also engaging with urgent issues of today, including the battle to save the legendary Cobblestone Pub, centre of Dublin's recent folk revival, from destruction at the hands

of cynical property developers. The film also includes musical performances from artists local to the North Circular, including John Francis Flynn, Séan Ó Túama, Eoghan O'Ceanabháin, Ian Lynch and Gemma Dunleavy.

"Luke McManus's resonant, vivid and beautifully shot film is a documentary essay on Dublin's North Circular Road and its working-class communities and histories... A film made with real artistry." – The Guardian.

€10 at the door, all welcome.



Young West Cork filmmakers show off talent with screening at film festival

Over 200 films will screen at the First Cut Youth Film Festival (FCYFF) in March (7-11), including a film created by local Ukrainian teenagers (based in West Cork), residents from Direct Provision at Clonakilty Lodge and local young people from Clonakilty.

The film 'Practice Session' was created at the end of a two-day youth filmmaking workshop in December at The Shack at Clonakilty Youth Centre. This opportunity was provided by the Cork Film Centre county-wide Cork Young Filmmakers Programme which brought professional and experienced filmmakers and equipment to this group of enthusiastic and creative West Cork young people. During the workshop the young people were taught exciting new skills including scripting, directing, lighting and camera skills.

'Practice Session' will screen at the First Cut Film Festival in the Regal Cinema on Saturday, March 11 from 1.30pm to 3pm.

The young filmmakers will attend the screening with support from Creative Bandon who are providing transport to festival,

which takes place in Youghal.

In its 14th year, this unique vibrant festival creates opportunities for young people age 12 to 25 to screen their films, learn about filmmaking and to take part in events and discussion panels hosted by film experts.

Festival Director Mary McGrath said "This year's festival is jam-packed full of amazing short films, creative young people and special guests! Over the years we have seen lots of 'magic moments' and I have no doubt we will be sharing more of these this year in Youghal's Regal Cinema and Mall Arts Centre. We like to think that, with our partners, we champion the discovery of the young talent and powerful new voices in Irish filmmaking that are out there. We encourage them to follow their passion, aim for new heights and ultimately have their work showcased on an even larger platform."

Over 40 Primary and Secondary Schools from all over Ireland have created short films which will screen at the festival.

The 2023 programme features recent work from international young filmmakers. An Australian

film, 'Daydream' (Julian Hamman), features on the Spotlight Programme, Saturday 11th, Regal Cinema 3pm, and a very topical Ukrainian film 'Russian Military Warship Go (Oleg Tchelnikov)' also screens on Saturday in The Mall Arts.

A new addition, First Cut International, will screen a wide range of films from all over the world including the US, Iran, India, Korea, UK, Brazil, Lithuania, Denmark and Australia. First Cut! International is an online platform that will augment the main Open Call programmes with online screenings showcasing the best short films by young filmmakers.

There will be a special family screening of the beautiful animation film 'Marcel The Shell with Shoes On' along with the First Cut Film Festival Youghal and Middleton Animation Workshop Films. These workshops have been facilitated by Animation Artists Belinda Walsh and Lisa McDonald and will feature films created by students from 13 primary and secondary schools in Youghal and Middleton.

Through the festival's Athrú Amháin/One Change

Programme, the FCYFF has hosted a series of Irish Language workshops on filmmaking. Participants are invited to make one-minute-long films in the Irish language. Young people are invited to create Irish Language films with a special focus on climate change and the environment.

The festivals Athrú Amháin Programme is unique in providing supports to young people to make short films in the Irish language. The festival will showcase approximately 30 Irish Language short films on the big screen.

Presented in partnership with Feel Good Lost, the Youth Music Video Competition (YMVC) offers young emerging filmmakers the opportunity to create a music video under the mentorship of top music video director Brendan Canty who created the acclaimed 'Take Me to the Church' video for singer Hozier and renowned writer and choreographer Bob Gallagher.

On Saturday March 11, all videos will premier and the award for Best YMVC Music Video will be announced. Due to the generous support of an Arts



Council YPCE Project Award, the winner of the YMVC Best Music Video Award will receive a €5,000 bursary to kickstart their career!

'Someone Like Me' is a special guest panel discussion with members of LGBTQIA+ filmmaking communities. On Saturday a distinguished panel of filmmakers will present their work, and discuss their filmmaking from their own specific point of view. Featuring writer/director Katie McNeice, film artist Francis O'Mahony and Barry Dignam of IADT.

Each year through its Spotlight Programme, the First Cut Film Festival celebrates the vision of emerging Irish filmmak-

ers of third level age. This year the festival will focus amongst others on the work of Nell Hensey (recently nominated Nell for the Dublin International Film Festival's prestigious Discovers Award 2023), Shane Joyce, Ian Fallon and Julian Hamman.

The First Cut Film Festival and Cork Credit Unions have teamed up to bring aspiring Cork-based TikTok creators aged 14-18 the unique fun opportunity to take part in a workshop with Dublin Smartphone Festival's Robert Fitzhugh and make a film about the place where they live. To register for the free workshop email firstcutfestinfo@gmail.com.

firstcutfilmfestival.com

Stop, look and listen in Clonakilty



Composer and violinist Justin Grounds set up 'Stop Look Listen', a weekly outdoor listening event, in September last year as part of the West Cork 'Rekindling the Light Within' initiative,

which has enabled eight artists across the region to develop art for mental health initiatives in different ways. Justin wanted to create a free and inclusive weekly event in Clonakilty that people could come and go from; a simple outdoor gathering with a weekly playlist of three pieces of music to listen to collectively.

"I have been involved with many participatory music projects over the last years, and I am very passionate about creating musical experiences for people to take part in, as well as teaching people to make their own music. However, this time, I wanted to run an event that focuses on listening – a somewhat overlooked and yet hugely important element of music!

"In today's world we may feel overloaded with music – played to us as we go shopping, sit in waiting rooms, travel on the bus – it can feel as if we



need to slow everything down and create a space to actively listen, to relax and let the music wash over us in a deeper way. And the silence between the pieces is important too. That's always been my experience performing and attending concerts, there is a magical quality to the silence when the audience are all actively part of

it. With today's endless Spotify playlists, and radio's fear of 'dead air', we are losing this beautiful shared silence that can be so enriching."

Justin bought a portable hi-fi sound system and hand-sewed a banner to hang up in various outdoor spaces around Clonakilty each Sunday. He spent each week curating a new collection of music to listen to – pieces from many different composers and genres that fit together well – along with a few words to share on the origin stories of the pieces and how they share common themes. Eventually the bandstand in Bennett's Field became the regular venue with different people gathering each week, bringing coffee, blankets, pets and open ears. "It became a place to quietly connect with oneself, other listeners and the soul-enriching music," Justin says. "Conversations



always followed naturally, the music and the silence unlocking stories and experiences that people shared generously."

After a brief hiatus for winter weather Stop Look Listen will be starting back again on March 5 at 11am in the bandstand

in Bennett's Field, the new park just off Western Road in Clonakilty. All are welcome. Visit www.justingrounds.com/stoplooklisten to view all the previous music, and for updates on future times and dates.

Exhibition offers a space for reflection at Uillinn

Brian Fay's exhibition 'The Most Recent Forever' – at Uillinn Arts Centre until March 25 – provides a space for reflection on different ideas of time and how we might understand them, providing an overview of the artist's drawing practice that has, for the last two decades, explored ideas of temporality, change and ephemerality in artworks as a way of standing in for our own experience of time.

The exhibition at Uillinn will include a new drawing inspired by the work of Anni Albers, widely considered to be the foremost textile designer of the 20th century. She made major innovations in the field of functional materials and at the same time she expanded the possibilities of single weavings and individual artworks. She was also an adventurous graphic artist who took printmaking technique into previously uncharted territory.



March at Gallery Asna

Gallery Asna, Clonakilty Arts Centre, presents 'Weird Fishes', a solo presentation of paintings by artist Emmet Brickley from March 4-25.

Emmet Brickley is an Irish artist based in Cork. He weaves figures and environments together conveying metaphors for identity, solitude, and place. The spatial layering of colour and the environmental abstraction is as relevant as the anonymous protagonists within the oil paintings. The occurrence of events often toils under the surface of otherwise calm imagery, as sociological themes merge with

personal mythology to create a distinct atmosphere throughout his work.

Reference imagery is often sourced using Google Street View or digital news outlets, a practice reflecting the manner in which the internet is altering our visual experience.

Emmet graduated with his BFA at the Crawford College of Art & Design in 2016. His work has been acquired for public, private, and corporate collections both nationally and internationally.

Opening reception at 5.30pm on Saturday, March 4, all welcome.



Glass pavers bring 'Joy in Nature' to Clonakilty biodiversity park

Members of the Irish Wheelchair Association Community Centre, in February, launched their glass pavers artwork installed at the Clonakilty biodiversity park.

The group worked on the artwork over a ten-week period with facilitator and glass maker Michael Ray. Themed 'Joy in Nature', the project opened up the discussion with the members of IWA on what brought them peace and joy when outdoors. Several different ideas were brought to the table, with each member deciding on how they wanted

their thoughts to be portrayed on their individual piece. For some, there was a strong connection to nature through fishing and bird watching, for others it was their love of the land through farming or poetry. Words were chosen and in some pieces Yeats poetry

is quoted. After the words and images were fused together to make colourful cast glass pavers, the pieces were then inserted into the walkway at the Biodiversity Park seating area and will be there for years to come.

There was a great gathering at

the launch in February including the presence of Clonakilty Mayor, Paddy McCarthy. A special thank you to Diarmuid and Mike Deasy of Clonakilty Tidy Towns who were incredibly helpful when it came to the installing of the pieces.

This project was kindly supported by Cork County Council and worked on in partnership with Clonakilty Tidy Towns who went above and beyond to make sure this project was a success.



people Arts & Entertainment

Everybody is talking about Ahakeera Drama Group comedy play



The Ahakeera Drama Group has been staging its comedy play ‘Nobody’s Talking To Me’, written by Tommy Marren, in Community Centres around West Cork and last month performed to a packed Darrara Community Centre. Built in the early 1880s, the ‘old school’ was alive with laughter from the opening scene to the final bow, when the cast received a standing ovation.

Set in 1968 in rural Ireland, it’s the eve of the 40th wedding anniversary of Maggie and Mattie Conway who haven’t spoke a single word to each

other in 10 years. Disaster strikes when the local parish priest Father O’Toole decides to surprise them by renewing their marriage vows. All hell breaks loose as a roller coaster ride follows over the next hour and a half, by which time, most of the eight characters on stage aren’t talking to each other; but of course it all ends well with all living happily ever after.

As usual, the Darrara Community Centre committee members were well organised with tickets sold out over a week beforehand. On the night there was plenty of stewards assisting with parking, the hall was in immac-

ulate condition and patrons enjoyed complimentary tea and biscuits. A most enjoyable night was had and the organisers express their thanks to all who attended and businesses that sponsored raffle prizes. Proceeds, after costs, go to the upkeep of the centre and making it an even greater resource for the local community.

There’s another chance to catch the play on Friday March 24 when ‘Nobody’s Talking To Me’ will be staged at Butlerstown Community Centre at 8pm. Tickets are available in advance from Majella on 086-3415283 or Marian on 086-3458764.

Another floor-filler in ‘Country Girl’ from The Shruggs

Harmony-loving musical duo from Cork James Downing and Kees Hendrickx of The Shruggs have just released a new single ‘Country Girl’.

Best known for their viral hit ‘West Cork’, the acoustic duo are noted for their catchy songs, harmonies and incendiary live shows.

A song about a naïve country boy who falls in love with a country girl only to be left for

a city boy, ‘Country Girl’ is another exuberant foot-tapping floor-filling single from one of Hot Press magazine’s ‘rising acts to keep an eye on’.

Produced and recorded in the peaceful countryside of Bandon in Clashafree studios by Kees Hendrickx, The Shruggs are joined by Christian Martin on Fiddle and Rian McCarthy on banjo for this upbeat song.



Sudoku

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

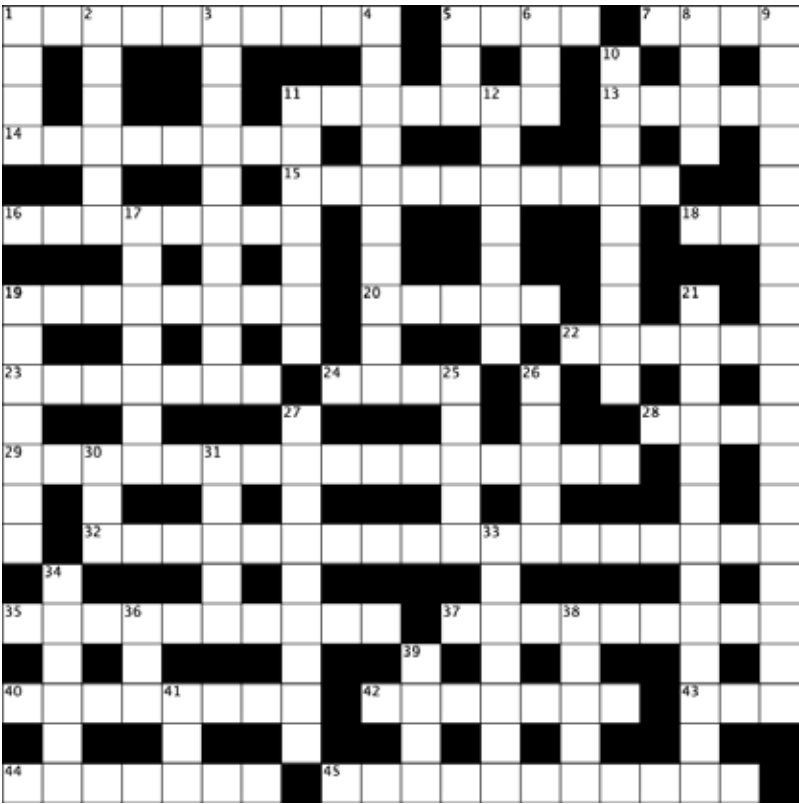
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#120789 Difficulty: hard

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| | 8 | | | | | | | 2 |
| | 9 | | | | | 7 | | |

#195519 Difficulty: moderate

In the news Crossword



- ACROSS

 - 1 World-shattering event (10)
 - 5 James would have been a faculty head (4)
 - 7 Captain’s help (4)
 - 11 Bed frill (7)
 - 13 A brown earthy mineral used as a pigment (5)
 - 14 Persuade (8)
 - 15 Relating to official rules or laws (10)
 - 16 Where huffs and puffs are harvested? (4,4)
 - 18 Legolas, Dobby etc (3)
 - 19 Old word for a toll road still used in USA (8)
 - 20 Domed shelter (5)
 - 22 Whacked with a playing card (6)
 - 23 Bugged, bothered (7)
 - 24 Giant that isn’t gentle (4)
 - 28 Wild swine (4)
 - 29 Inherited blood disorder (6-4, 6)
 - 32 Deputy administrative leader of a state or province (10,8)
 - 35 Scamster tactics on dating website (10)
 - 37 “Nutcracker” fairy (9)
 - 40 Region of Turkey (8)
 - 42 Authoritarianism (7)
 - 43 Cancel show (3)
 - 44 Insect on soft cheese for a short time (7)
 - 45 Delivered the racist “Rivers of Blood” speech in 1968 (5,6)
- DOWN

 - 1 Lengthy, grandiose film (4)
 - 2 Milk-curdling enzyme (6)
 - 3 ___ easing: Policy to stimulate economic activity (10)
 - 4 Praising fantastic gig in Seoul (10)
 - 5 McLean of “American Pie” fame (3)
 - 6 Copy (3)
 - 8 Jack ___: Shot Lee Harvey Oswald (4)
 - 9 UN group that provides global sustenance (5,4,9)
 - 10 Man City boss has lost his Pep (9)
 - 11 Dutch Old Master (7)
 - 12 Alexa, Siri e.g. (4,3)
 - 17 Small European songbird also called a hedge sparrow (7)
 - 19 Start in moving passage (7)
 - 21 Partition that could develop a six pack (9,4)
 - 25 Young partner in finance managed rents (5)
 - 26 Jet that recently retired (5)
 - 27 Blasphemous (9)
 - 30 Beginning of a dead end (3)
 - 31 Latin for “horse” (5)
 - 33 Evidence of burnt spirit, perhaps, in stew (7)
 - 34 Mercenary composer (6)
 - 36 Trim (3)
 - 38 Prenatal test, informally (5)
 - 39 Printing missssstake (4)
 - 41 Clumsy fellow (3)

Across: 1. earthquake; 5. Dean; 7. crew; 11. valance; 13. number; 14. convince; 15. regulation; 16. wind farm; 18. elf; 19. turnpike; 20. igloo; 22. clubbed; 23. annoyed; 24. ogre; 28. boar; 29. sickle-cell anemia; 32. Lieutenant Governor; 35. catfish; 37. Singspiel; 40. Anatolia; 42. tyranny; 43. axe; 44. briefly; 45. Enoch Powell
Down: 1. epic; 2. remnant; 3. quantitative; 4. eulogising; 5. Don; 6. ape; 8. Ruby; 9. World Food Programme; 10. Guardiola; 11. Vermeer; 12. chabot; 17. dunno; 19. transit; 21. abdominal wall; 25. Ernst; 26. jumbo; 27. heretical; 30. cut; 31. equus; 33. goulash; 34. Wagner; 36. fit; 38. amnio; 39. typo; 41. oaf

The Craft Corner

This month **Natalie Webb** is showing us how to make a leprechaun windsock.

"Make this cheerful leprechaun for St Patricks day...hang it up at home and take it to the parade!"

Materials:

- Coloured card: green, black and any skin tone colour you want.
- Orange and green tissue paper.

- Small pom pom or something similar you can glue on for his nose!
- Googly eyes
- Scissors
- Glue
- Marker
- Stapler

Please note these measurements are just a guide – you can make him as big or as small as you want!

Cut out his hat (top hat shape) approx 2.5" x 4".

Cut out a strip of black card

to fit onto bottom of his hat above the brim and stick it on.

Cut out a rectangle of your skin coloured card approx 6" x 7"

Cut out 10 1.5" x 1" strips of the orange tissue paper and stick half of them onto the middle of the top edge of your card..this is his fringe.

Cut out another four longer strips of the orange tissue paper 1" x 6" and glue on opposite sides of the card for his side burns.

Stick the remaining small bits of orange tissue at the

bottom of the card for his beard, these can hang over the edge.

Now we can do his face! In the middle of the card stick on the googly eyes, then glue on the pom pom nose and draw a big smile with your marker. (if you dont have googly eyes or a pom pom simply draw on the eyes and nose)

Cut out 8 long strips of the green tissue paper approx 12" x 1"

Turn over the leprechauns face and stick these strips on the bottom edge.

Curl the leprechaun around to make a tube and either glue or staple the edges together.

Cut out a strip of card for the handle approx 6" x 1" and glue or staple it inside on

opposite sides of his head.

Finally glue or staple his hat onto the top of his head.... have fun!



Colouring Corner



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MOVIES THIS MONTH

people Arts & Entertainment

Charity concert remembers Jean Lyons



know Jean as the first face they would meet at the Waterfront Medical Centre. Jean always had a friendly smile and an empathetic ear for all patients, no matter how busy she was.

Jean was also a well-known and popular member of the Clonakilty Flower Club and was involved for many years in designing and arranging flower displays in the church for special occasions like Easter and Christmas. Thanks in part to Jean, over the years a strong bond has formed between the Folk Group and the Flower Club, who are once again involved in this concert, providing beautiful flowers for the stage and much needed support behind the scenes.

Jean was a member of the Folk Group from its very early days, more than 30 years ago, and she hardly ever missed a practice or performance. This is the group's first concert since 2018 and the singers will honour their friend with a night of fun and entertainment that will feature over 30 singers and musicians performing classical, traditional, musical theatre and

modern pop music. The group is thrilled to be joined by well known pianist Sean Ruddy, as well as Margaret Deegan on flute (also known as one half of the duo Dreambeam) and many other local musical collaborations.

To date Clonakilty Folk Group has raised over €8000 for local charities like Inchydoney Inshore Lifeboat, Courtmacsherry RNLI Lifeboat, Clonakilty Community Hospital and My Canine Companion Autism Services. This year all the proceeds of the concert will go to Cork and Bantry ARC House Cancer Support and Irish Community Air Ambulance Service.

Support for the concert has taken the group by surprise with tickets quickly selling out. There is a waiting list in O'Donovans Hotel so if ticket-holders realise that they can't go, for whatever reason, the organisers would love if you could return your tickets so that someone on the waiting list can avail of them.

See Facebook for updates @ clonakiltyfolkgroup

Following a covid-induced hiatus, Clonakilty Folk Group is back with another Charity Concert on March 5 at the beautiful Inchydoney Lodge & Spa.

This year the group is honouring and remembering its dear friend, Jean Lyons, who is dearly missed; many people will

Strictly Come Dancing Bantry 2023 launched

The 2023 launch of Strictly Come Dancing Bantry took place on February 10 in the ballroom of The Westlodge Hotel. Now in its fifth year, the event was officially launched by Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Danny Collins, with photographer Tony O'Donovan once again working his magic for the dancers' first official photoshoot.

Each of the 22 dancers did a quick interview, which was

followed by a group dance; choreographers Josie and Theresa kept a close eye on proceedings.

St Finbarr's NS Principal Brian Gleeson announced that for this year's show his school is partnering with the West Cork Jesters, a thriving mixed ability rugby club, as both the organisers and beneficiaries. Brian said that the importance of inclusivity was a defining factor in this decision.

As always the event promises to be a show for all the family. Tickets go on sale on Friday, March 3 in The Westlodge for the shows on March 11 and 18. For updates see instagram and facebook: Strictly Come Dancing Bantry.

Pictured below are this year's dancers.
Pic: Tony O'Donovan



Boogie for Anja

How long has it been since you've hit the dance floor and had a really good boogie? Covid killed the disco divas and DJs and any chance of dancing together. It doesn't help that many of the nightclubs that closed during lockdown never reopened.

But that will all change on March 31 at O'Donovan's Hotel!

Join in a night of music and dancing at 'Boogie for Anja' – a fundraiser event to support Anja Bakker's incredible journey from Clonakilty to Jerusalem.

Anja has been walking for over 330 days and is currently in Bulgaria, sharing her talent and spreading joy by playing her harp (which she carries on her back!) for the people she meets along the way. Let's



come together and show our support for Anja's remarkable journey by dancing the night away and raising funds to help her continue on her path. With your help, we can ensure that Anja's music will continue to inspire and uplift communities along her route. Don't miss this opportunity to make a difference and celebrate the power of music to connect people and

cultures.

Classic dance tunes by the Vintage Jukebox, spinning his vinyl magic! Doors open at 9pm. €10 in.

If you can't make it, or if you wish to make a larger contribution, please go to Anja's gofundme page to donate: Search for 'from-here-to-jerusalem'

West Cork's Garda Tim Collins is on home turf in latest novel

Cork author Tadhg Coakley's follow up to the award winning 'Whatever it takes' is due for release on March 11. Set for the most part in West Cork,

'Before he kills again' is tense crime novel, second in a series featuring former inter-county hurler now turned Detective Garda Tim Collins.

A young woman lies brutally murdered in her own home; Detective Tim Collins and his partner Deirdre Donnelly must stop a sinister plot to attack more women. As they race against time, they face one of Ireland's most dangerous criminals. In

a gripping showdown, Collins must decide how far he will go for justice.

Dunmanway and Dri-moleague have major parts in the story but there are also scenes set in Inchydoney, Kealkil, Reenascreena, Goleen and Owenahinch, with the Garda Stations of Glengarriff, Bantry, Clonakilty and Skibbereen getting a look in! A strong sense of place combined with a shocking double climax makes this second installment of the Tim Collins series a thrilling read.

Whatever It Takes (Part 1 of the Tim Collins Series) was chosen as the 2020 Cork, One



City One Book.

'Before he kills again' is priced at €16.99 in bookshops from mid-March.

Eleven times-nominated 'The Innocent' to open Cork French Film Festival

The annual Alliance Française Cork French Film Festival returns to its March dates (March 9 to 12) at the Gate Cinema in Cork, with an exceptionally strong programme, which includes a number of Irish premieres and multi-award nominated new films.

'The Innocent' (L'Innocent) by Louis Garrel opens the festival with its Irish premiere at The Gate Cinema on March 9 with tickets currently on sale. The dark comedy has been nominated for eleven French César awards, the national cinema awards of France, making it the most nominated French film this year. Garrel directs and co-stars as a man who tries to derail his mother's relationship

with a recently released convict, in a campaign that will find him flirting with the wrong side of the law. Based on Garrel's life story, the film has been described as a romantic dark comedy that is both hilarious and inventive.

'Rise' (En Corps) will close off what promises to be a hugely impressive festival on March 12. The life-affirming Cédric Klapisch film about a ballet prima donna of the Paris Opera is also César nominated in nine categories.

The full programme of the 34th Cork French Film Festival will be available soon. Tickets for the opening film are now available at The Gate Cinema and online at gatecinemas.com

Spring at Future Forests



Spring has definitely sprung at Future Forests says **Matt Keane**

For everyone in the horticultural industry the next few months are by far the busiest time of the year. For us the bare root season starts in November, but peaks in February and March, so it is all go every day at the moment. There is still a good month left to get your bare root fruit, hedging, trees and shrubs in.

We have experienced a real burst in interest in fruit in particular and it has become a major part of our offering. This season, we have our most extensive range of apple trees, with 18 varieties of heritage apples still available and of course a large range of more modern varieties including some specialist cider varieties. Now is also a great time to get in your raspberries, blackcurrants, gooseberries, blueberries, hybrid berries and other soft fruits in the ground.

As usual native trees are in demand and our mixed hedges are as popular as ever. Mixed hedges are informal and are a great way to bring diversity into your garden. We offer a native mix, which are great to plant to bring more life and wildlife to your garden, some people worry that a native hedge will be unruly and unkempt, but a



well clipped native hedge would not look out of place even in an urban garden, of course in my opinion there is nothing wrong with letting it do its own thing as well, if room and space allows. I feel there should be a place for some native plants in every garden, we have so many beautiful species to choose from.

Another favourite is our mixed permaculture hedge, everything in this mix has an edible use, from jams, preserves to eating straight off the bush, it's also another great one for the pollinators, as the different species will flower at different times. The plants included in this hedge can change depending on availability, but currently we put in Aronia, Cornus Mas, the Autumn Olive, Elder, Hazel and Amelanchier.

For me, when I think of Spring, Japanese cherries and Magnolias always come to mind. We love Magnolias and they bring so much to a garden, they are simply beautiful. Magnolia Star Wars, which was bred in New Zealand in the 1970s has stunning pink flowers and has just found a home in our own garden. Japanese cherries

are so easy to grow and people often forget that they can also have some amazing Autumn colour to complement their fa-



mous Spring flowering. There is generally one to suit every garden, Prunus incisa Kojo-no-mai will grow well in the smallest of



gardens, this dwarf cherry was originally found on the slopes of Mt Fuji and if you have the space, my personal favourite is Prunus Shogetsu (Moonlight on Pines), also known as Oku Miyako.

Winter can, at times, feel long, I think our new St Brigid's bank holiday is very well placed

to give everyone a boost in February. For us we noticed a definite increase in interest around that time, as people were using the opportunity to get some planting done.

But March is when people really start to think about planting and the garden in general and what they want to get done in the Spring, it isn't just the plants that are waking up. There is an innate instinct in people to start planting, to get their hands in the soil and the promise of growth is life affirming.

Future Forests is about 15

minutes from Bantry towards Gouganne Barra, we are open from 10 to 5pm Wednesday to Saturday and 12 to 5pm on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Tel: 027 66176 Email: info@futureforests.ie Web: www.futureforests.ie Eircode: P75 H958

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people Home & Garden: FOCUS ON SPRING GARDENS

Cork garden designer to show 'cavernoma' design at Chelsea

Garden designer Anne Hamilton, who shares her time between West Cork and London is aiming for a medal – “the shinier the better” says the designer – at the Olympics for garden designers, the 2023 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Anne has partnered with Taina Suonio, to create the garden, titled ‘Cavernoma on my Mind’ which is sponsored by the Cavernoma Society, an organisation aiming to raise awareness for this condition and spur new research. Anne has a family member with a cavernoma, a tangle of small veins that can occur anywhere in the body but is especially debilitating when it occurs in the brain, as it can cause a stroke, haemorrhage or seizures.



“Simona Stankovska started the Cavernoma Society after she suffered a stroke at the age of 27 as a result of a cavernoma,” shares Anne. “Simona also works for the company that sponsored Taina last year and was inspired by that garden’s success.”

Anne and Taina have been working on the garden for over a year. The main structural feature in their design is a glass staircase and the planting



A plan of Anne’s ‘Cavernoma on my Mind’ garden Chelsea Flower Show

reflects the fragility that newly diagnosed cavernoma patients feel. “As you climb the steps, we hope your confidence grows,” explains Anne “and at the top you can walk out on to a cantilevered glass balcony, which symbolises clarity and hope for the future.”

The plant choices were selected based on Simona’s description of the pain and vulnerability suffered with Cavernoma; so for example, the peeling bark of the *Acer griseum* and the prickly foliage of *Taxus baccata* allude to the cavernoma condition. Other plants in the garden are used medicinally such as *Paeonia officinalis*, the root of which is used in the treatment of seizures.

Anne describes her style as accessible contemporary. “I like clean lines and lots of places to sit and admire the planting or a view. Living art for living in,” she says. Her passion is for planting trees. “They give you something new (and bigger) every year.”

She also favours working with grasses because they add movement and a sense of drama on a windy West Cork afternoon. Recently she has created some gravel gardens with Mediterranean plants and worked on woodland gardens for clients.

Over-ambition and neglect are the stumbling blocks for most gardens reaching their potential shares the award-winning garden designer.

“I’m all for the ambition, and I work to provide what clients want, but I emphasise



the need for maintenance and watering,” she says.

According to Anne three key things to consider when planting a garden are aspect, shelter and privacy.

“Aspect – you want your patio to get good sun, especially evening sun in the summer months. If you can plan for more than one seating area then you can make the most of morning sun too. Sometimes these areas aren’t right outside the kitchen, but they are worth having.

“Shelter – If your sunniest spot is also in a windy position (often the case in Ireland) then it is possible to factor in planting or structural elements that provide enough shelter to allow you to enjoy the space.

“Privacy – If you are overlooked, there are lots of options to offer screening. In a large garden then you can use hedging or trees, if it is a smaller garden, then you can still use hedging and trees, but you might want to look at pleached trees, that give

screening without taking up too much space.

“Once you have those bits of information you can concentrate on how to make the best use of your space.”

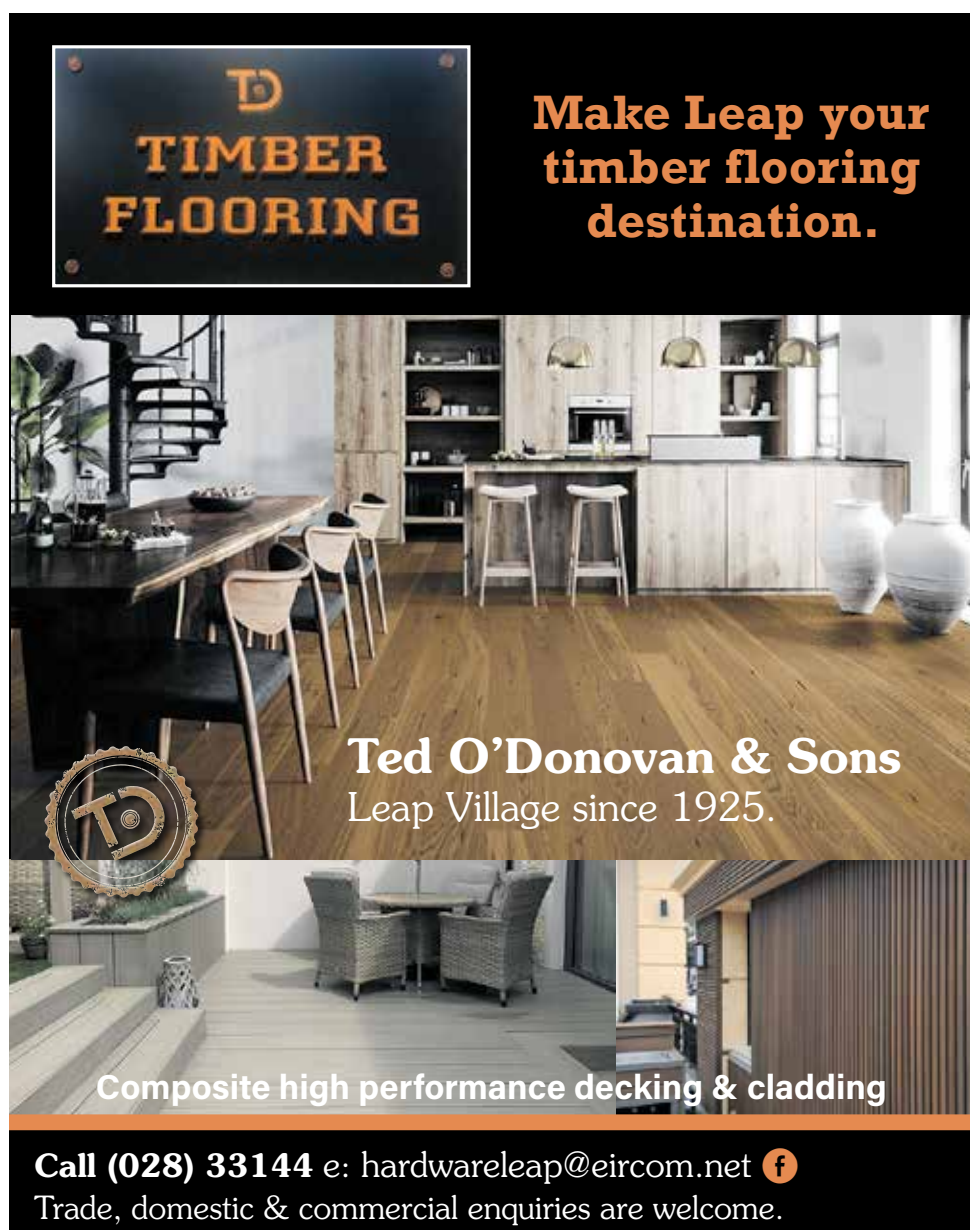
Anne trained and worked in the UK before moving to Ireland 16 years ago with her family. At the end of the Celtic Tiger, the timing was poor and it was also a big jump moving from London to Cork, urban to rural and small-town gardens to large landscapes with acreage.

However she worked hard at building up her reputation and entered BordBia’s Bloom in the Park and also joined the Garden and Landscape Design Association, which entails an in-depth assessment and portfolio critique. “Both of these really helped give me a presence here,” she says. “I also think longevity plays a big part in building a service based business, word of mouth is gold.”

To date Anne has entered two gardens at Bloom, winning a Gold and Best in Category respectively. However getting a design accepted at the Chelsea Flower Show has to be her most significant and proudest accomplishment to date.

Of her work she says what she loves most is that each day brings a new adventure. “The absolute best part of my job is the happy clients. It is really satisfying to know that the garden design has made a difference to someone’s quality of life.”

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people Home & Garden: FOCUS ON SPRING GARDENS



If you are looking for some inspiration for your own garden, **Noah Chase** of Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen invites you to stop in and say hello.

Spring is on her way! Early flowering bulbs are starting to fill the beds and borders; leaves are unfurling and insects are waking up. It's time to enjoy the first warmth of the sun on your backs after the wet and windy Winter, and it's one of the first chances to get back in the garden and prepare for the growing season ahead. The air is literally buzzing as the pollinators start to forage, the birds are singing and us gardeners are itching to get stuck into the many tasks that await us.

There have been a lot of changes at Deelish over the last few seasons. We have finally completed most of the final upgrades, including our new car park, which has doubled in size, this is a real benefit for us all. Once parked you will find our excellent little coffee kiosk serving the delicious locally roasted, sustainably grown, Red Strand coffee, as well as various teas, hot chocolate and more. If you are looking for a quiet calm place to enjoy your hot cuppa, I would recommend our newly built Shade area. It is bursting with Rhododendrons, Camellias, Tree ferns,

Deelish is growing

Bamboo, Hostas and many other shade loving plants. Next to the Shade area you will find West Cork's largest collection of outdoor pottery, whiskey barrels and ornaments, which we add to each month with the latest designs and colours. Next to the pot area, we have a wonderful collection of pond plants and plants suitable for damp ground.

The perennial stands located outside the newly-built covered plant sales area are starting to fill up with the beginnings of this year's collection. If you forgot to plant spring flowering bulbs, don't worry, as we have Daffodils, Tulips, Snowdrops and many more bulbs potted up and ready for planting. We also have just started potting-up over 150 bare-root perennial varieties, which include some of our favourites, as well as some new, unusual, exciting varieties, which we are looking forward to sharing with you in the season ahead!

Inside the covered plant area we have an extensive coastal shrub collection which are suitable for the more exposed gardens in West Cork. In this area, there are also a great selection of seasonal garden

bedding, ericaceous (lime-free) plants such as Magnolias, Azaleas, Acacias and many more, which are all suited to our soil in much of West Cork. We also have a great selection of more unusual plants here such as Daphnes (five varieties including Jacqueline Postill) Rhododendron 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam', various palms, Mangaves, Albizias, Psuedopanax, to name just a few of my favourites.

On the upper terrace, you will find larger shrubs/small trees (such as dog woods, Eucryphia, Elder and many more), climbers for all situations, hundreds of Roses (including a fantastic David Austin collection), and an extensive Conifer selection in all shapes and sizes from ground cover varieties to the largest trees in the world (Sequoia giganteum)!

Above this area at the moment we still have a great range of bare root fruit trees such as Apples, Pears, Plums (and Plumcots), Cherries, Cobnuts, Almond, Peach, Nectarine to name a few. We also stock soft fruit here including Currants, Gooseberry, Rhubarb, Raspberry, Blue berry and many other unusual fruits suit-

able for growing in West Cork.

This is also a great time to plant bare root trees and hedging including our fantastic value instant XL hedging in root balls. Between the bare root beds are our comprehensive collection of potted trees from 2 feet to 20 feet! This collection includes some of our most popular trees such as flowering Cherries (over 15 varieties), Crab apples, Birch, Eucalyptus, Oaks, Acers as well as many more unusual varieties.

Inside our solar powered heated shop, we now offer an exciting new range of Organic vegetable and flower seeds with many new varieties from Europe, seed potatoes, Garlic and Onion sets. Here you can also find quality gardening tools (including many of the favourite Fruit Hill Farm tools), indoor house plants, a huge range of chemical-free gardening feeds, pest control, and many natural solutions to everyday gardening issues, as well as many unusual gardening gift ideas.

At this time of year we also stock summer flowering bulbs such as Dahlia, Agapanthus, Lilly, Nerine and many more



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paul@permaculturedesign.ie

unusual varieties, in packets which are the best value for money.

Next to the shop is our covered outdoor living area (which also hosts our annual Christmas market). This area has proved to be a huge success as we have searched all over Europe to find quality, affordable and unique outdoor furniture. One of the most popular chairs is the eco chair, made from Finnish wood which is held together with hemp rope. It is very comfortable to sit in, and the hemp pillow really is the cherry on top! We also have powder coated aluminium furniture that is perfect for gardens that are exposed to salt winds, as these will last a lifetime.

Fire pits have become really popular over the last few years and we now stock over 15 different styles from the tiny models to the really big options that can take very large logs. We also stock various accessories that allow you to cook on your fire pit, including waffle irons, popcorn pans and

blow pipes to name a few!

Maya and I have just returned from a furniture sourcing trip to northern Italy and are very excited about some of the new stock coming for this season, watch this space... To make way for the new stock, we plan to run a preseason outdoor furniture sale with up to 50 per cent of selected items. Be quick as these bargains are unlikely to be available for long.

So as you can see, there is lots going on in Deelish Garden Centre at the moment and we look forward to seeing you this coming season to help you prepare for another great year in your garden, and remember gardening doesn't have to cost the earth!

On a side note, we are hiring again so if you are a keen horticulturist and fancy joining our growing team of staff here at Deelish, to help us cope with the busy season ahead, feel free to stop in, ask for Noah.



people Home & Garden: FOCUS ON SPRING GARDENS

March in the garden

The first month of Spring has arrived and with it the curtain comes down on the short, dark days of winter. Summer time arrives at 1am on Sunday, March 26, 2023. We look forward now with anticipation to the garden coming back to life after its winter dormancy. Do however be vigilant about putting out tender, vulnerable plants too early. We are still at risk of damaging frosts especially in areas not in the moderating influence in the coast. You can encounter two or

three degrees of a temperature differential between places in West Cork even in a 10-16km distance.

The typical March winds longer days and hopefully greater sunshine will help to dry out the soil making it more workable after the deluges of winter.

Weeds

The weeds will start into growth and now is time to tackle them before they go to seed. Remember one year's seed is 10 years' weed. Use a good sharp Dutch hoe on a dry, sunny day. Hoe early in the morning to maximise the wilting power of the sun and wind. If you have very deep-rooted weeds such as docks or dandelions, specially designed tools to access the entirety of the deep roots are available from specialists suppliers such as Fruit Hill Farm near Bantry.

Once you have everything good and clean it is a good idea to mulch the beds and borders. As well as cutting down on weeds, it will help to conserve moisture during the warm, dry sunny months. Mulch before the ground gets too dry but if the weather has been dry do water first.

Containers

Containers that contain year-round permanent shrubs or plants should get a fresh layer of compost on the top layer of compost now. Use a



GARDENING

John Hosford
The Weekend Garden Centre

lime-free, ericaceous compost for lime haters such as Camellias, Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Skimmias, Heathers. A liquid feed containing iron is also very beneficial applied from late March onwards. Ensure all containers have functioning drainage holes.

Flower Garden

If you need immediate colour in gaps in the border or containers for immediate early colour now you choose some hardy, reliable tried and trusted plants such as:

- Polyanthus (hardier than the multi-coloured Primroses).
- Pansies and Violas – hardy, colourful and reliable (plant in fresh ground or fresh compost if planting in containers).
- Heathers are hardy and reliable.
- Camellias, Azaleas, Skimmias and Rhododendrons are good choices if you want an evergreen shrub. These are best in north or west facing aspects to avoid damaging early morning frosts.

Use a lime-free, ericaceous compost and applying regular liquid feeds with iron applied at regular intervals throughout the growing months will bring optimum results.

Rose pruning should be completed by St. Patrick's weekend.

Cut out dead, damaged and crossing branches, removing some of the older shoots as well especially on older bushes. Roses can get their first feed of the season at the end of the month or in early April. Use a specific Rose Fertiliser, preferably with a brand that is formulated to promote good growth as well as disease resistance.

Protect emerging perennials from slug damage especially Delphiniums, Hostas, Lupins, Heleniums. If you don't control slugs at this early stage, it may be curtains for your much-anticipated splendid colour in your beds and borders. Remember slugs are most active in mild, damp weather.

Sweet Peas

Sweet Peas are a classic favourite with a wide range of exciting colours from the most delicate pastel shades to fiery reds and oranges. They are the tall conventional varieties that grow up to and beyond two metres in height or dwarf varieties, which will suit the patio or will look delightful in a hanging basket. Sweet Peas that have been sown earlier in the year or indeed in the autumn should be gradually hardened-off. The site for Sweet



Peas should be a clean, sunny site, which has been well-enriched with good organic material such as well-composted garden compost, farmyard or

stable manure.

Create strong, sound support, either in the way of a wigwam or sheep netting providing at least a height of at least 2m or higher.

Pest and Disease Control.

Control leaf spot and downy mildew in Pansies and Violas by planting clean, healthy, disease-free plants. Plant on a new, clean site where Pansies and Violas haven't been grown. If growing in containers discard old spent compost replacing it with fresh compost and some organic slow-release fertiliser. Feeding with an organic liquid feed is recommended at about one month after potting up.

Clean up Hellebores that have leaf spots. These should be cut off cleanly with a sharp secateurs and disposed of offsite.

Aphids/greenfly can appear suddenly in March. They should be dealt with swiftly, as apart from not being beneficial to the host plant, they can spread harmful viruses.

Greenhouse, Conservatory, Indoor Plants

As days lengthen and sunshine hours increase, more frequent drying out of your indoor plants will occur. Water in the morning with lukewarm water. Cacti and succulents that will have been without water since last autumn can now get a thorough watering to bring them back into growth. A feeding programme can start now with a specific Cacti and Succulent feed.

Geraniums, Pelargoniums and Fuchsias that have been under protection all winter can now be encouraged back into growth using again lukewarm water and commencing a feeding programme from mid March onwards. Liquid feeding then continues at weekly intervals until late September. Dahlias, Begonias, Cannas,

Gloxinias can be gradually brought back into growth.

Ventilate the greenhouse on bright, sunny days ensuring it is sealed up before nightfall. Keep a careful eye on young seedlings and plants for water using again lukewarm water.

Bulbs

Many Snowdrops have now flowered and may be divided while still 'in the green'. Crocus and Daffodils that have finished flowering should be allowed to die down naturally or leave for at least six weeks after flowering. If you cut down too early it will jeopardise next year's flowering potential. Forced Hyacinths, Narcissi, Crocus that have flowered early for Christmas and the New Year indoors may now be hardened-off and planted outside. Protect emerging bulbs against slugs. Lilies should be planted without delay

Lawns

Add light layers of grass clippings to the compost heap. Straighten lawn edges and give an initial feed to the lawn at the end of March. Prepare site for lawn sowing next month.

Pruning

Get Buddleias pruned now. Hardy Fuchsias can be pruned back hard now. Cornus and Willow, grown for their bark, can be pruned back hard now. Heathers that have finished flowering can be trimmed back to just below where they were flowering.

Visit a Garden

Check out Gardens open to the public with early spring interest. Blarney Castle and Fota have good selections of early colour. Check out the website of the West Cork Garden Trail, the OPW and local Tourist Information Offices, garden columns of the national newspapers and The Irish Garden Magazine.

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The Week-end Garden Centre

by John Hosford

We are signposted off the main routes into West Cork.
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Also signposted off R586 Bandon-Bantry road at Murragh.

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County Council supporting National Tree Week

In celebration of National Tree Week 2023, Cork County Council is offering a limited number of native trees to schools, community groups, and organisations. National Tree Week is an initiative of the Tree Council of Ireland and will take place this year from March 19-26. The initiative invites communities to learn about the folklore of trees, their practical applications and to appreciate the importance of a healthy and diverse native tree stock.

To be part of National Tree Week, community groups, organisations, and schools are

invited to organise or participate in events throughout the week. As well as tree planting, the range of events can include forest and woodland walks, nature trails, workshops, woodturning displays, talks, poetry readings, exhibitions, dramas or any other ideas that will celebrate the wonderful world of trees.

Speaking about National Tree Week 2023, Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Danny Collins noted "Trees and our connection with them is a relationship that is thousands of years old. They provide for us, shelter us and inspire us. Alongside pro-

moting tree health, one of the key objectives of the week is to boost climate awareness and the agricultural economy. This is especially important as the Irish forestry sector currently supports 12,000 jobs in Ireland. I encourage communities to get involved in National Tree Week this year, let's do our bit to protect and enrich our environment."

National Tree Week has been growing from strength to strength in Cork County over the past number of years. In 2022, Cork County Council allocated trees to over 30 groups.

Thanks to the support of the Tree Council of Ireland, Cork County Council will once again have a number of native trees to gift to local schools, community groups and organisations on a first come first served basis for planting during Tree Week.

For further information on National Tree Week in Cork County or to avail of trees for planting, email corkheritage@corkcoco.ie or phone (021) 4285905. All groups engaging in the week online are invited to tag Cork County Council and use the hashtag #treeweek2023

people Home & Garden: FOCUS ON SPRING GARDENS



Interiors: Open your front door to Spring

door a good clean and a Spring makeover could be just the ticket for welcoming the new season. We have some colour ideas and also some technical tips from Farrow & Ball to create a front door you can be proud of.

Traditional colours for front doors are inspired by nature and can carry a lot of meaning. In Scotland, red front doors are believed to ward off evil spirits, while in China red is used to encourage good fortune into the home. Green symbolises growth, balance, and harmony so olive, sage and forest green shades are eternally popular. Cheerful yellows can encourage a feeling of happiness and optimism – soft tones such as ochre are great choices. Calming and peaceful cornflower, baby and navy blues

are gorgeous on a traditional wooden door.

If you're looking for something a little more unconventional then consider teal, which pairs well with natural wood and stone. Rich and moody plum could create a sense of drama or to contrast against neutral greys look at coral for a sense of playfulness or mustard for sophistication.

To get professional results on your paint job choose a good quality paint such as Farrow & Ball's Exterior Eggshell for a mid-sheen finish or Full Gloss for an ultra-reflective finish.

You'll also need an exterior wood primer and undercoat in the recommended tone for your top paint colour.

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of sandpaper, masking tape and a decent paint brush – try a two-inch angled brush for a crisp finish on edges.

Preparation: Remove all hardware, then sand the door, making sure it's clean and dry. If your door has glass, use masking tape around the edge of each pane to keep splatters at bay.

Farrow & Ball recommends starting this project in the early morning, or even the night before, to ensure you can give the paint all afternoon to dry.

Priming: Apply a layer of primer and undercoat using a two-inch angled brush, one section at a time. Then leave to dry.

Farrow & Ball recommends recommend following this sequence when painting your door: panels, then central beam, top rail, middle rail, bottom rail, side beams of the door

Painting: Apply two layers of your chosen door paint in the same order, leaving to dry between coats.

Looking for a low-effort, high-impact project for an upcoming bank holiday weekend? In Feng Shui, the front door is considered the

'mouth of chi' – the main entry point for energy into the home – and its design can have a significant impact on the occupants' wellbeing. Giving your front

people Motoring

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CAR REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

Over the years Mercedes has used lot of different letters to name their cars. The C and E classes are probably the most popular. But they also have an S Class where the S stands for Super. They currently don't have an 'L' class, but I think you could

describe the S-Class I drove last week as 'L-Class' with the L meaning luxury.

I drove the PHEV version of the S-Class and it was so relaxing and enjoyable. With most Plug-in Hybrids you get between 50 and 60 kilometres in full electric mode, but with the Mercedes S-Class you should be able to get close to 100km in full electric mode.

My neighbours were very impressed and one neighbour, who drove a Mercedes for many years, told me that he is now sorry that he changed to BMW a few years back. He was really impressed with my silver-coloured Merc.

Maybe it was the famous three-pointed star on the bonnet that had him thinking about happier days. I know he suffered from ruffians who used to break the famous star on the bonnet, just for fun. Strange kind of fun, but it looks like he wasn't the only driver to be hit



as Mercedes dropped the star and used their famous badge on the bonnet instead. But now they have brought the star back for the new S-Class.

I have never owned a Merc, but I have tested a few over the years and I used to travel with a colleague who bought a second hand Merc in the nineties. At that time he said the car would do him until he died. Thankfully he is still with us and he has now traded in for a more modern version. Maybe he also likes the famous star, which in my opinion completes the look on that huge bonnet.

It really is a huge motor at almost 5.3 metres in length and 1.95 metres wide. Yet thanks to that pointed star it's so easy to handle. It may sound a bit Christmassy, but you just follow the star!

If it's power you want there is plenty in this 3.0-litre motor which has 367 brake horse power and it will get you from zero to 100km/h in just over five seconds.

Keeping those Nappa Leather beige seats clean might be difficult, but I think most people would enjoy cleaning those seats.

My wife, who is nowhere near six foot, had no problem finding a comfortable seating position. The back seat is equally comfortable and if you have only two back seat passengers they can leave down the 'dividing rest' and have drinks.

The boot is huge, but as is

normal with plug-in hybrids, no spare wheel is provided. But then as the old saying goes, you can't have everything where would you put it. In this case the hybrid technology takes up the space needed for a spare wheel.

I can safely say that it was the most expensive car I have ever driven. The starting price was €150,000 and then when you add in a few extras like the Advantage Pack, which costs over 5k and the price of the car as tested came to a whopping €159,286. But then road tax is cheap at €140. And you will never leave your mobile phone

in the car, because if you do, you will get a warning voice message before you close the driver's door.

I loved it and hated giving the car back to the kind people in MDL on the Naas Road. But I know there will be more electric Mercs to be road tested in the year ahead.

I realise the price is outside of most people's budget and there are parts of the country where you can still buy a house for that kind of money. But as the National Lottery ad says, 'dreams can come through.'

Move to ethanol in petrol will be better for our environment

The move to 'E10' as the standard grade of petrol in Ireland will help reduce the harmful emissions produced by petrol cars. E10 petrol is a motor fuel that contains more bioethanol than the current petrol supply in Ireland. By increasing the percentage of bioethanol, less fossil carbon will be used compared to petrol. Ethanol is already in current petrol supply, and E10 will mean that no vehicle changes are needed to get immediate results for the environment.

Since 2009, E10 petrol as standard has been rolled out across 15 European countries as well as other countries around the world such as the US and Australia. This measure will also align the current petrol supply used in Ireland to that of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Renewable Fuels for Transport Policy Statement 2021 signalled the incentivisation of E10 petrol supply by 2023, which will be mandated shortly in new regulations by the Minister. The

move to E10 is one of several transport measures to achieve a 51 per cent reduction in transport emissions by 2030 as outlined in the Climate Action Plan 2023.

Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan said, "While there has been a big uptake in EVs, we need to continue with measures that can have an immediate impact on emission from vehicles that are already on Irish roads. Measures such as moving to E10 petrol mean that we can reduce our emissions from transport further, move us closer to reaching our Climate targets. It also means that we are in step with Northern Ireland, the UK and many other European countries who have already moved in this direction."

Ireland's car fleet is predominantly diesel (c. 63 per cent at end 2022) and of the approximately 1million petrol vehicles, there is a very low level of vehicles (c. 2.4 per cent) where owners may be concerned about potential impacts. All vehicles can operate on an E10 petrol blend.

Some older vehicles pre-2011 (predominantly pre-2003/pre EURO V standard), were not manufactured with certification for E10 use, but it does not mean they cannot use E10.

See www.gov.ie/E10 for more information.



Adult basketball players wanted to join Bandon Ravens

“We predominantly have leaving cert and first year college girls playing with our adult team. They were the first bunch of players to come through to this level and they’re sometimes busy with study, exams and work,” Conlon says.

“Fielding a team can be difficult sometimes and when we played other clubs, we were often up against older ladies in their 20s, 30s and 40s. It would be a great place to get to if we had a squad ranging from ages 17 years into 40 years and over.”

There are currently only three basketball clubs in West Cork – Bandon, Skibbereen and Bantry. Bandon could draw girls from many surrounding parishes.

“It’s a great sport and we’ve had some fun days where we invite parents along and it’s enjoyable. Basketball is a sport where you can play comfortably into your 30s or 40s. You can come on for 10 to 15 minutes and come off again so there’s none of the pressures that you might have in Gaelic Football or Camogie,” the vice chairman explains.

“We have a lot of people from Poland living in the Bandon area and they’re strongly committed to the club. In Poland, they play into their 50s. Any help we can get would be very much appreciated.”

The club, who is only catering for women sides at the moment, have age grades at U10s, U11s, U12s, U13s, U14s, U16s, U18s and adult. Contact had been made with primary schools around the locality in recent years such as in Enniskeane,

Innishannon, Ballinspittle and Kilbrittain with great success. However the basketball club now need more members to play in their adult team.

“It’s a great way to get to know people. It’s a great way for those new to the parish to get integrated into the community and have a different outlet for their kids to mix with other children. There’s a lot of positives.

“I came from a GAA background myself and never got the opportunity to play basketball, but it is a fabulous game. One of the first things I noticed in basketball is that you get to defend, to attack, to do everything. It’s not like you are a corner back or goalie stuck in the same position for the whole game,” Conlon adds.

The club, which has been in existence since 2017, was originally set up by three mothers who had daughters going to Coláiste na Toirbhirte, the presentation secondary school in Bandon.

The signs were clear early on that it was a good idea. “Those mothers saw how much their daughters were enjoying basketball in school. The club took off very quickly after they started it,” Conlon explains.

“We started off with teams that were initially catering for the age groups their daughters were at. All of a sudden, it mushroomed, and we have just under 150 members in the club today. I don’t think people would have thought that the club would have grown as quickly as it did and especially when you factor in the pandemic. That basically took two years

of existence out of the club with Covid hitting indoor sports very hard.”

Not only does the club provide excellent sporting activity, it also offers great escapism.

Most young people nowadays are stressed doing school exams, especially leaving certs. Basketball has offered an opportunity to take breaks from the books. Conlon has seen the effect of this, being a father of four daughters.

“The adult team had a game recently against Cobh. My oldest daughter who is doing the leaving cert was playing with the team and thoroughly enjoyed it. There were other exam students playing the game too.

“I am a great believer in sport, team sport, individual sport, whatever. There is a sport out there to suit everyone, you just have to try enough of them to find the one that you like. I think basketball is one that many will enjoy, whether you come from a GAA background or you are totally new to sport, I think it’s well worth trying.

“Whether you are a player or coach, you get enjoyment out of sport. It’s good for your wellbeing and it’s good for getting away from everything,” he says.

The skills of basketball tie into all kinds of sports, another drive to get involved.

“For those who did athletics, there’s a lot of running in basketball. There’s the catching element from ladies football. There’s a lot of body movement in basketball, lots of parts of the body are used, it can get physical at times. It’s every bit as physical if not more than ladies football in my opinion. Those that play it really enjoy it,” Conlon explains.

For many sporting clubs, the chance of winning silverware is a huge goal. However, for Conlon and the Bandon Ravens, it’s firstly about getting numbers for their teams.

“Success is having 16 to 20 players who are competing, playing, developing a social scene and having a bit of fun. The first year we had an adult team, we finished second or third in Division 1, which would actually be the third level despite the naming.

“There are three divisions overall. This year, they’re in and around mid-table, they had to forfeit certain games because of

Local girls basketball club Bandon Ravens has been on the rise since its inception in 2017, however its adult team is suffering due to low numbers. Vice chairman and U10 coach in the club Brendan Conlon explains to **Matthew Hurley** what joining this up-and-coming club for the upcoming 2023/24 season involves.



Division 1 team

the lack of numbers. You have to have eight or nine players to play a game. The cherry on top would be to have some success in the future,” he concluded.

The club is in the process of trying to collect names and building an adult squad for the

2023/24 season. The season will get going in July but club numbers need to be confirmed by late April as the Cork ladies board will be putting divisions together and matches in place.

If you want to sign up for this brilliant sport with the Bandon

Ravens, get in touch with Brendan on WhatsApp or text (+353 86 839 8133).

You can get in touch with their Facebook page too, Bandon Girls Basketball Club.

Players of all abilities are very welcome.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Pictured at the Kinsale Ladies Gaelic Football Underage medal presentations in Actons Hotel on Sunday night was Club Player of the year Maisie O’Callaghan being presented her prize by Kinsale and Cork footballer Orla Finn. Picture. John Allen

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Tommy Moyles

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

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Spring on the farm

all milk processors pulled milk price significantly when January prices were announced recently. Carbery had one of the lower drops at 3.8cent/litre while Dairygold lowered their price by 5.7c/litre. These prices were signalled late last year and the challenge now for dairy farmers is how they cope with lower price while input prices remain high. Sheep farmers, after a few record years, are now in a similar position where input prices and a lower demand is putting extreme pressure on farms.

CAP

The new CAP payments system will get up and running shortly and will have a new name, Basic Income Support Scheme (BISS). It's been a longer than usual road to get this CAP under way with Covid delaying proceedings in this new EU-wide policy that has a high environmental focus compared to previous versions. Farmers displayed their willingness to put their shoulder to the wheel on the environment when the new environmental scheme, ACRES, was oversubscribed. The department have been trying to accommodate all who applied and a combination of this and changes to the IT system have delayed informing farmers as to whether they were accepted into it or not.

Details did emerge recently of another of the new elements of CAP. The Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme III (TAMS III). This provides grants to farmers to build and/or improve a specified range of farm buildings and equipment

on their holding. This is part of the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

It has a funding allocation of €370m and will operate on a tranche basis until 2027. There are 10 scheme or entry routes under the TAMS heading and each of these has their own conditions as summarised below.

- Animal Welfare, Nutrient Storage Scheme (AWNSS) at 40pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.
- Tillage Capital Investment Scheme (TCIS) at 40pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.
- Pig and Poultry Capital Investment Scheme (PPIS) at 40pc grant rate, with a €500,000 investment ceiling.
- Dairy Equipment Scheme (DES) at 40pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.
- Young Farmer Capital

Investment Scheme (YFCIS) at 60pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.

- Women Farmer Capital Investment Scheme (WFCIS) at 60pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.
- Organic Farming Capital Investment Scheme (OCIS) at 60pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.
- Farm Safety Capital Investment Scheme (FCIS) at 60pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling.
- Solar Capital Investment Scheme (SCIS) at 60pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling that is separate from other schemes.
- Low Emission Slurry Spreading Equipment Scheme (LESS) at 60pc grant rate, with a €90,000 investment ceiling that is separate from other schemes.

Solar Capital Investment Scheme

The Solar Capital Investment Scheme (SCIS) opened for applications in late February and the Department has said that the remaining investment categories will become available on a phased basis during tranche one, which closes on June 16. In a previous version of TAMS there has been a three month wait between submission of application and approval so it will likely be August or September before the earliest approvals. With many farmers holding off on applying in the last tranche of TAMS II, there's a strong possibility that the first tranche this time out will be over subscribed.

Grazing

On the farm there's been a bit of on-off grazing going on with the last month as ground conditions

have been relatively good. Most young stock were brought back in when the rain returned and I held the bigger ones indoors when they went back out again. There's a bit of a balancing act to the early grazing every year as the farm is fragmented, so it's not just a case of opening the door and leaving them all out at once.

Calving

Calving began at the end of February and hopefully most will have calved by the middle of April. It's a time where there's plenty of unexpected occurrences so it's a case of being prepared and hoping all goes to plan. There's enough to keep me busy for the next while at least.



Grazing is underway on Tommy Moyles farm at Ardfield, Clonakilty. Young stock have been out full time when weather is good and housed if rain persists for a few days.

New TAMS is welcome news for West Cork farmers

The Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS) is back for 2023, with €440 million in funding available for farmers looking to modernise and upgrade their farms.

The new TAMS builds on previous versions of the scheme. Importantly, it will also include a higher grant rate of 60 per cent for investments in low emission spreading equipment, farm safety, organics, and solar, in line with Government priorities.

Young farmers, female farmers as well as organic farming participants have also been given significant focus for

2023, with grant aid for capital investments for these farmers also at an enhanced grant rate of 60 per cent.

An opening date for Tranche 1 is to be confirmed early this year.

As part of the changing funding landscape, Cultivate farm loans are increasingly part of the credit supports being accessed by farmers. Cultivate is the collaborative credit union finance lending platform for farmers providing short to medium term loans. Available through a network of over 150 outlets throughout the country, Cultivate is offered by Bantry and Access Credit Unions in West Cork.

Speaking on behalf of Cultivate, Karen Farr, Lending Manager with Access Credit Union, emphasised the importance of supports for farmers:

"Cultivate understands the need for farmers to complete on-farm investments from both a sustainability and efficiency perspective. The TAMS schemes is a great opportunity for farmers to reduce the costs of developing their farm and provides additional funding supports to supplement their requirements."



Niamh O'Driscoll, Senior Loans Officer with Bantry Credit Union, explained the difference for farmers when dealing with their local credit union:

"Cultivate offers farmers the opportunity to talk with local people who understand farming. When considering significant on-farm investment, it's important that farmers can sit down face-to-face with a person who

will listen to their plans and who cares about them and their farm enterprise."

TAMS operates seven different schemes under which farmers can access support. These include the Young Farmer's Capital Investment Scheme, the Dairy Equipment Scheme, the Organic Capital Investment Scheme, the Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) Equipment Scheme, the Pig and

Poultry Investment Scheme, the Animal Welfare, Safety and Nutrient Storage Scheme and the Tillage Capital Investment Scheme. For farmers who are looking to really maximise the potential offered by these schemes through TAMS, the Cultivate loan offers accessible supplementary funding to work in tandem with the grant supports.



OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK Send your photos (with captions) to info@westcorkpeople.ie



Experiencing life as a barrister are Transition Year students Caoimhe Walsh (St Brogans College, Bandon), Maebh Collins (Skibbereen Community College), Grace Doyle (St Mary's Secondary School, Mallow) Luke Morrison (St Colman's College, Fermoy).

Kinsale Strictly handed over a cheque for €33,000 to the Kinsale Friary Restoration Fund after raising the money at a two day ballroom dance event in November. Pictured are the friars accepting the cheque from Paul Eaton and Michael Ahern from the Kinsale Strictly Fundraising committee with dancers from the nights. Picture. John Allen

PRAYERS

Call to/post to our offices – Old Town Hall, McCurtain Hill, Clonakilty with details of your prayer. 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 for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. K.D.

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UNFAILING PRAYER TO ST ANTHONY
O Holy St. Anthony, gentlest of Saints, your love for God and Charity for His creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (request). O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen. A. O'D.

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ST. JUDE'S NOVENA
May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and revered throughout the whole world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us. St. Jude worker of miracles pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless pray for us. Say this prayer nine times daily and by the end of the 8th day, your prayers will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thanks St. Jude. A. O'D.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
O, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, Fruitful Vine, Splendor of Heaven. Blessed Mother of the Son of God, assist me in this my necessity. O, Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my mother. O, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to secure me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. O, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee (say 3 times). Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hands (say 3 times). Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine. Amen. This prayer must be said for three days after which the favour will be granted and the prayer must be published. A. O'D.

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THANKSGIVING
Thanks giving to St Anthony, our blessed Mother and the Sacred Heart, for Jesus for always answering and helping in my time of need. St Anthony through the child Jesus in your arms pray for us. Immaculate heart of Mary pray for us, St Heart of Jesus have mercy on us. Many thanks K.H.

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