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*Pupils at St Joseph's NS, Clonakilty enjoying the fun of Daffodil Day.*

## LEADER may return to West Cork

**W**est Cork Development Partnership CLG, who successfully operated the programme in large parts of west and south Cork between 1991 and 2016, has been invited by the Department of Rural and Community Development to develop a Local Development Strategy to deliver the 2023 – 2027 LEADER Programme.

The LEADER Programme is a key intervention of Our Rural Future, the Government's policy for rural development launched in 2021. The overall budget for Cork (which will be apportioned between North, South and West Cork) for the period 2023 to 2027 is €16.8 million.

Since 2016, the LEADER programme has been delivered by a consortium of Local Development Companies, under the auspices of Cork County Council, with programme planning and implementation coordinated between Castletownroche, Middleton, Dingle and the Aran Islands.

Currently WCDP is the sole rural Local Development Company without the LEADER Programme and the West Cork region is the only

rural area without a dedicated public office or named full time personnel employed on the programme.

A Cork County Council led consortium will again compete against WCDP.

A defining feature of the LEADER programme is the emphasis on community led Local Development, a bottom up approach that brings local people together to decide how they want to improve their area.

In developing their Local Development Strategy, WCDP which has a long and proud track record in supporting innovative community, economic and environmental initiatives throughout the area, will be guided by the CAP Strategic Plan and engage with rural communities to identify inventive projects that will enhance their viability and sustainability.

WCDP CEO Arran O'Driscoll says, "The LEADER programme fits strategically with the other social economic and environmental development programmes already being delivered by the organisation."

Some of the LEADER sub themes include The Green Economy, Agri-

cultural Diversification, Rural Tourism and Recreation, Rural Youth, Climate Change Capacity Building, Mitigation and Adaptation to mention a few and will also include the Smart Villages Concept.

An open and inclusive public consultation process is at the heart of community led local development and WCDP want individuals, key stakeholder groups and local community groups to get involved and have their say.

As part of the consultation process WCDP will be hosting a number of public meetings throughout West Cork. "We want communities and stakeholders to identify the challenges and opportunities for West Cork and these meetings will give people the opportunity to voice their ideas on how to make West Cork a better place for all," says O'Driscoll.

Anyone can also meet with WCDP individually, attend one of the online meetings or complete their online survey. Contact [arran@wcdp.ie](mailto:arran@wcdp.ie) for more information.

WCDP must submit their local development strategy by July 14, 2023

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# When we danced at the crossroads

“It was like being dropped out of an aeroplane into the Atlantic,” says Eileen. “I was 22 and madly in love.” Swept off her feet on a dance floor in Skibbereen, in 1967, Eileen McCarthy (22) of Castlehaven married Tim Joe Whooley (30) of Lisheen, joining three generations of Whooleys who had served the people of Aughadown for over a century in their busy country shop. The couple chat to **Mary O’Brien** about life way back when...

In those days, small grocery shops were inherent to the social fabric of rural Ireland and the local community, with a visit as much a social activity as it was an essential part of daily life. ‘The Shop’ in Lisheen as it was simply known by was a place to buy and sell but also to meet neighbours and friends and exchange news and banter.

After the wedding, Eileen, a young shorthand typist, moved into the family home with Tim Joe, his three brothers, and their mother Kit; running the family shop in Lisheen with Tim Joe until it closed its door in 2002 after 102 years of service. The family also had a small farm and, aside from the shop, Tim Joe ran a hackney business and delivered coal.

The story of ‘The Shop’ begins a long time before this with another marriage, that of Patrick Whooley of Lisheen to Margaret McCarthy of Heir Island. They

opened a store further south in Lisaree in 1896 in what used to be called ‘Eugene’s Cottage’.

Patrick was a fisherman, the owner of ‘The Pride of Toe Head’. While he was off fishing, Margaret ran the shop and raised a family of 17 children who, with the exception of four girls, all emigrated to America.

Rumour has it that Margaret was so strong she could lift a 10 stone bag of flour on her back up the ramp to the shop. She was also known for being a very good-humoured woman. “She had a kind word for everyone who visited the shop,” recalls Tim Joe of his grandmother.

Patrick and Margaret subsequently moved to Lisheen and ran the shop there until their son, Michael John (Tim Joe’s father) who was in the Merchant Navy returned from America in 1930. On May 5, 1931, Patrick signed over the place to Michael John for the sum of £200 pounds, five

cows, one horse, one pony, all pigs and stock in trade and all other goods. Tim Joe still holds the receipt of this transaction.

Michael John married Kit Duggan from Foilnamuck, Ballydehob shortly afterwards and she joined him in running the shop. For a while they also ran a small creamery.

While the shop was always open, when Tim Joe’s grandmother Margaret was saying the rosary in the evenings, customers knew better than to interrupt. Tim Joe recalls how he’d come back after delivering coal and the decades of the rosary would be interspersed with questions or remarks. “It would go something like ‘Holy Mary Mother of God...did Dr. Twomey take coal today?...Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee...did Gerard Brien take coal today and did you get the paraffin oil for Mrs. Daly?’” he explains laughing.



When Tim Joe’s father died in 1959, Tim Joe suddenly found himself full time in the shop along with his mother and some of the family. “None of us had much interest in the shop at that time,” says Tim Joe “except maybe to steal a few sweets out

of it!” Nonetheless he says he never thought of doing anything else. “I enjoyed it all my life and was happy at it.”

Growing up he recalls cycling everywhere or walking the 14-mile roundtrip to Skibbereen and back. “Just for something

to do, we’d walk in to ‘see the time’ on the town clock in Skibbereen,” he says. “We might get a bottle of lemonade and a bun in a shop before walking back home.” They’d change into their kit on the way to matches, hiding their clothes underneath bushes.

Tim Joe was 17 when he started delivering coal and, purchasing his own lorry later on, he stayed in the coal delivery business until 2000. He continued driving his hackney until 2017, transporting people from all walks of life; from prisoners to Cork jail to tourists to Shannon Airport to Cork junior, minor and senior GAA players to matches. On many occasions it would be six in the morning before Tim Joe got home himself after dropping players off. “And in all that time I never got a penalty point,” he shares proudly.

With Tim Joe’s passion for dancing – he started Lisheen Dance Platform in the early ‘60s, along with John and Timmy Whooley and Jerry Minihane – it seems apt that Tim Joe and Eileen’s story began on a dance floor. Up to 350 people, many arriving by bicycle or on foot, would attend the dance sessions on the concrete platform at the side of the road next to Minihan’s pub in Lisheen. Entry was a shilling. Tim Joe recalls



Tim Joe and Eileen today.

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Tim Joe behind the counter in 'The Shop' in Lisheen, which was like an Aladdin's cave of goods.

with humour a headline in his local paper at the time that read something like 'Judge cuts short holiday to issue licence to Tim Joe Whooley for Lisheen dance platform'.

Other popular dance spots included Crowley's Hall in Union Hall, The Lilac in Enniskeane and the Town Hall in Skibberreen where Tim Joe and Eileen first laid eyes on each other. "He had just finished doing a line with someone," recalls Eileen.

Theirs was a double wedding, shared with Tim Joe's youngest sister Mary and her husband Cliff Minihane. The ceremony at St Patrick's Cathedral in Skibberreen was followed by a breakfast reception for 195 guests at the West Cork Hotel. It was a daytime affair so everyone was home by six that evening. Tim Joe kept the receipt, which includes three rounds of whiskey for the men, totalling £245. The newly weds stayed with Eileen's sister for their week-long honeymoon in England.

Tim Joe and Eileen took over the shop after they married in 1967. While life was busy, there was never a dull moment. Eileen got on very well with Tim Joe's mother Kit. "There was never a cross word between me and any of the Whooleys in all the years we lived together," she says.

"The Shop" in Lisheen was like an Aladdin's cave. "Entering the shop, an unforgettable aroma struck the nostrils, difficult to describe – a mixture of fresh bread, bacon, fruit and so on," recalls local man Eugene Daly.

"There were sacks of flour and sugar, chests of tea, boxes of raisins, currants, sultanias, all of which had to be weighed and



Tim Joe recalls with humour a headline in his local paper at the time that read something like 'Judge cuts short holiday to issue licence to Tim Joe Whooley for Lisheen dance platform'.

placed in paper bags, barrels of pigs' heads, sides of bacon, stockfish. Shovels, pikes, nails, hammers, scythes, hanging from the roof – everything from a needle to a ton of coal could be bought.

"On the shelves was a cornucopia of goods – various varieties of sweets, two pound pots of jam, Golden Syrup, Lifebuoy soap, Rinse washing powder. Metal posters advertised Wood-bine cigarettes, Mac Smile blades, Bird's custard."

The Whooley family were renowned for their kindness and goodwill. There was never a No Credit sign in this shop. "People paid when they could with money from the sale of eggs or butter or when they sold an animal at the fair," explains Tim Joe. "We had to carry the cost and the biggest challenge was if you had to get an overdraft," say Tim Joe, who recalls the

Continued on next page...






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## When we danced at the crossroads. *cont'd from previous page*



*Tim Joe and Eileen (couple on the left) shared their 1967 wedding with Tim Joe's youngest sister Mary and her husband Cliff Minihane. Do you recognise any of the guests?*

interest rate being at around 21 per cent at one time. In 1968 a half pound of tea would set you back four shillings, a packet of sugar cost one and nine pence and a pound of butter one and ten pence.

After mass on a Sunday, Tim Joe would ferry people from the church to the shop in his hackney. This was always a great social occasion, with neighbours catching up on the week's news while getting their bits and pieces.

GAA was a hugely important part of Tim Joe's life. He was a Junior selector with Skibbereen, Carbery and Cork and played with Skibbereen before the Ilen Rovers club was formed. He was President, Chairman and

Treasurer of O'Donovan Rossa and still helps to run the club bingo on Friday nights.

As well as looking after the shop and milking the small herd of cows, Eileen ran a bed and breakfast for a while in the seventies, providing the local work men who stayed with three meals a day. She also made sandwiches for people on their way to work in the mornings.

In the sixties and seventies, Tim Joe recalls buying rabbits from local men. Sometimes they would exchange them for cigarettes. Local children would pick blackberries for three pence a pound, which would be placed into 40 gallon barrels with a preserving fluid and shipped up to Cork Farm Products on the train

with the butter and eggs, guinea hens and other goods bought from the islanders and people in the local community.

Tim Joe had a day in court when the local sergeant in charge of weights and measures called him out for being overweight with his measures of paraffin oil. "For every 39 gallons I sold, I was wronging myself a gallon," explains Tim Joe, his eyebrows raised. He was fined 10 shillings for his generosity. Eugene Daly remembers when there used to be a mix of motor cars, bicycles and horse and traps in the yard in the fifties. For many years, the yard was also where the paraffin, coal, pig ration, maize and other animal foods was

kept.

In the late fifties, there was a huge fire in the yard which nearly destroyed the shop. Over 40 local men were on site within ten minutes to help. The meal was saved but the store burned to the ground. The storage buildings in the yard were eventually replaced with apartments with many of the usually longterm tenants becoming good friends over the years with the Whoollys, who always kept that generosity of spirit they were renowned for. Descendants of the famous Vincent Van Gogh even stayed there at one time, and kept in touch for a long time after. Over the years, Tim Joe and Eileen developed a great love of travel, taking trips to

the US and Europe, sometimes visiting family and people they had met through the shop or accommodation.

While it was the end of an era when 'The Shop' in Lisheen closed its door for the final time in 2002, the close-knit way of life that Tim Joe and Eileen grew up with had faded significantly in the years leading up to it. "I think the takings were two loaves of bread on that final day," recalls Tim Joe. "It was time." Centralisation had stolen the way of the small rural shop.

Fifty-five years on from their wedding day and Tim Joe (85) and Eileen (78) are still happily ensconced at their home in Lisheen. Life is quieter now but the happy couple enjoy

each other's company and both keep active. When they're not at home, they're out walking their two beloved dogs, Liz and Susie, on country roads, at bridge or bingo or off visiting someone somewhere. Eileen still bakes so visitors to their home are always treated to a delicious slice of something with their tea. Running the shop, open from eight till late seven days a week for so many years, meant always being at the beck and call of someone, so while their memories are nostalgic, the couple appreciate the freedom that retirement has brought them in their golden years.



## Minister hears about issues with Kinsale to Cork bus route

Last Thursday Minister Jack Chambers visited Kinsale to meet with locals who are frustrated with the bus services being provided between Cork and Kinsale.

The meeting was arranged by Cork South West TD, Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan.

The locals outlined issues with capacity and lack of regularity with the service.

Deputy O'Sullivan said "I was really delighted that Minister Chambers took time out of his schedule to visit Kinsale and to hear the concerns. This is an issue that has been rolling on for quite a while now. Minister Chambers has responsibility for the NTA who obviously play a

pivotal role in the provision of bus services especially in rural parts of Ireland."

The FF TD continued "It is really important that Minister Chambers hears the concerns of the locals and that the services are improved as soon as possible and I am confident that the Minister will take on board the concerns that he heard at Thursday night's meeting."

The Minister also met with local commercial bus providers, West Cork Connect who outlined issues that commercial providers are having in operating public transport services.

On this Deputy O'Sullivan said "we have seen issues in the past where the government

have announced innovative fare reductions but unfortunately in some cases only the public transport providers such as Bus Eireann have been able to roll these out and the commercial operators have missed out. I think it is really important that these fare reductions apply to both state owned and commercial operators going forward as they play such a huge role in providing public transport in rural parts of Ireland."

Deputy O'Sullivan concluded "I am very confident that the new Kinsale Connect Service will eventually be up and running once all potential issues have been ironed out."



## O'Sullivan demands preservation of Kilbeg Pier in Unionhall

Cork South West Deputy, Christopher O'Sullivan, has spoken out against Cork County Council's recent proposal to put up a barrier, which will cut off access to the historic and widely-used Kilbeg Pier in Unionhall.

Deputy O'Sullivan is urging locals to join him in putting pressure on the Council to invest in the pier's repair instead of closing it off.

"The Kilbeg Pier is an essential part of Unionhall's maritime community, with fishing boats, rowing and sailing clubs, and leisure crafts depending on its access. The Council's current proposal to put up a barrier and close the pier is absolutely unacceptable," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

After attending a meeting with around 30 pier users, Deputy O'Sullivan has written to the Council to request they stop their proposed plans. He calls on stakeholders and locals to do everything possible to stop the barrier's construction.

"Kilbeg Pier is of great importance to the people of Unionhall, and it is crucial that their voices are heard. I urge everyone who has an interest in preserving access to the pier to put pressure on the Council to ensure that the barrier does not go up, and that they invest in repairing the pier, which is desperately needed," adds

O'Sullivan.

"The old pier is a symbol of our heritage, and it's time that the Council recognizes its signifi-

cance, and works towards maintaining it for future generations," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

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# Grand opening of renovated Bandon Co-op retail store



L-R: Vincent O'Donovan (Chairperson of Bandon Co-op Board of Directors); Ger Brickley (CEO Bandon Co-op); Eddie Goggin, Editor of The Opinion, Sean O'Donoghue, Cork Senior Hurling Captain and Donal Deasy (Bandon Store Manager)

The grand opening of the newly renovated Bandon Co-op Retail and Garden Centre in Bandon on Saturday, March 25 was truly a community affair.

After an extensive planning project, renovations on the Bandon and simultaneously the Enniskeane store were completed in 2022.

The Bandon store extension and redesign accommodates a new Euronics electrical department along with the development of many of the product ranges such as paint, bathrooms, doors and flooring and gardening.

On Saturday, March 25, members of the community were out in force to support the opening of their local store and a great day of fun was had by all.

Bandon Co-op presented representatives of three charities, Lisheens House, St



Vincent de Paul and Irish Red Cross, with donations.

Bandon Co-op were delighted to be joined for the official opening by Sean

O'Donoghue, Cork Senior Hurling Captain and Eddie Goggin, local legend and editor of The Opinion.

Everyone who went along on the day was treated to amazing offers and savings, free gifts, lunch and refreshments. In addition the kids in attendance enjoyed face painting, balloons, magic tricks and visits from the Dulux dogs, Peppa Pig and Paw Patrol!

Bandon Co-op credits the success of the recent store revamps to the professionalism of local construction companies and experts, support and guidance from Homevalue Hardware and Euronics, the vision of the management team and board of directors, and most importantly the hard work of the staff at their retail stores.



## Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the April edition of West Cork People,

I feel like I've been chasing my tail all month, not only since the clocks went forward last weekend...I'm still an hour behind with everything. It's lovely though to be looking forward to longer evenings and more time in the day. I can't wait to get out and about sampling everything West Cork has to offer this summer. In truth I've started already: This past month I've attended a mindfulness workshop facilitated by Susan O'Regan of Mindhaven, which I couldn't recommend highly enough for anyone, like myself, who needs a helping hand with slowing down and being in the present! I also dropped into a session at Connolly's and was lucky enough to meet the lovely Clare Sands, headed to Lough Hyne for a swim and a sauna, another beautifully mindful experience in the midst of all the mad dashing around, and last weekend visited Ballylickey to treat my mum for her 70th at the lovely spa at Seaview House. The team couldn't have been kinder and more accommodating. She had a wonderful day so a big thank you to all at Seaview. The same day in the spa's sauna I met a couple from Kinsale who were staying in the hotel with their old dog. They chose Seaview as they wanted somewhere their faithful friend would be comfortable and welcomed on his 'last hurrah', which speaks for itself!

I'm looking forward to finishing the month on a high note at Jarlath Regan's comedy gig in De Barra's and I'll be diving into April with a trip to Union Hall to attend the opening of the West Cork Creates Easter exhibition at Cnoc Buí, West Cork's newest community arts centre spearheaded by the wonderful patrons of the arts Paul and Aileen Finucane. You can read all about their ambitions for the project and passion for the arts in this issue.

Our new entertainment columnist Lauren Guillery has compiled a great listing of gigs around West Cork in our Entertainment section so make sure to check that out. April's calendar is already filling up! She also looks forward to the Baltimore Fiddle Fair happening in May, chatting to founder Declan McCarthy about the festival's roots and what we can expect from this year's line-up.

I was fortunate this month to get to spend time with Lisheen couple Tim Joe and Eileen Whooley, who shared some of their life story and beautiful memories with me of a time almost forgotten. Tim Joe and Eileen were part of three generations of Whooleys who served the people of Aughadow for over a century in their busy country shop.

As we head into Easter, with Summer on its heels, in this issue we kick off our Nature's Larder series celebrating the bounty that is on our West Cork doorstep. From Ballydehob to Innishannon, we speak to some of West Cork's inspirational businesses who promote a more sustainable way of life.

For this and lots more see inside.

I hope you enjoy the read,

Mary



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Editor



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Creative Director




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## Cork County Council announces commemorations and heritage grant schemes 2023

Cork County Council has announced the opening of the County Cork Commemorations Grant Scheme and the County Cork Heritage Grant Scheme for 2023. These schemes seek to recognise the heritage of the county, the numerous groups who actively engage with their local heritage, and those dedicated to commemorating the centenary of the War of Independence and Civil War.

Cork County Council's Heritage Grant Scheme was established in 2021 with support from the Heritage Council. Under last year's scheme, over 30 groups received funding for a range of initiatives including Heritage Week projects, video documentaries, conservation plans, exhibitions, archives, natural heritage projects and heritage publications. The scheme is designed to acknowledge and support Cork County's many heritage groups in undertaking activities that in turn support the objectives of the County Cork Heritage Plan.

The Commemorations Grant Scheme, delivered by Cork County Council and supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, is aimed at highlighting the pivotal role of Cork

County in the Anglo-Irish War of Independence and ensuing Civil War. This year marks the centenary of such notable events as the killing of Corkman Liam Lynch on April 10, 1923, head of anti-Treaty Forces; a number of Civil War ambushes; the end of the Civil War on May 24, 1923 and the Hunger Strikes of October and November 1923. The scheme will support those who wish to ensure the appropriate commemoration of significant local events through a range of projects, from school projects and the restoration of important local memorials to documentaries and touring exhibitions.

For further information on the County Cork Commemorations Grant Scheme 2023 and the Heritage Grant Scheme 2023, visit [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie) or phone 021 4276891.

The closing date for proposals and application forms is 5pm on Tuesday, April 18, 2023. Applications can be made online, emailed to [commemorations@corkcoco.ie](mailto:commemorations@corkcoco.ie) or [corkheritage@corkcoco.ie](mailto:corkheritage@corkcoco.ie) or delivered to 'County Cork Commemorations Grant Scheme 2023/County Cork Heritage Grant Scheme 2023', Cork County Council, Floor 3, County Hall, Cork.

## EmployAbility teams concerned over tendering process

Directors and staff of EmployAbility companies across the country are concerned about the upcoming tender and how potential changes will affect the people they help in gaining employment.

EmployAbility West Cork (EWC), is a service that provides assistance to people with disabilities in accessing employment. The service has existed here in West Cork for 20 years. The company has been told that they must apply for tender this summer in order to keep the service going.

Chairperson of EWC, Evie Nevin says: "EmployAbility Service organisations across the country as well as their dedicated staff are concerned about the future of this vital service. With 70 per cent of disabled people being unemployed, and being disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis, this service must not just continue to exist but to expand in its current form.

"All 23 EmployAbility Services are set up as independent



Chair of EWC Evie Nevin

companies with an annually renewed contract of under €750,000. According to Article 4 of the relevant EU Procurement Directive, under which the DSP is operating, we as EWC are therefore exempt from having to apply for tender.

"The DSP claims in its defence of the tendering process, that the Chief State Solicitor has advised that under EU law we must go to tender. Our legal advice is to the contrary.

"EmployAbility Service West Cork is concerned that the DSP is moving the goal posts to suit

their own agenda and only sees the service as a single service when it suits their needs. The DSP has not been forthcoming and transparent about what changes may occur and how our directors, staff and, above all, how clients in need of this valuable service will be affected.

"We have and always have been separate, legal entities and, up to now, have been treated as such. The staff and directors just want to focus on the work that needs to be done to support our clients and this is such an unnecessary distraction and is causing a lot of anxiety.

"EmployAbility Service West Cork always welcomes changes that improve the service for clients. Our team at EWC continues to advocate on many issues that benefit its clients and their families. This is a case of the DSP trying to fix something which is not broken. EWC is very proud of its 98 per cent satisfaction rate and the dedication the team has to our clients."

EWC's Coordinator, Micheal Hurley says: "I'm immensely proud of EWC and the effective

work the team does to support people who face barriers in their lives to secure employment. Seeing our clients gain confidence and thrive in the right environment is such a pleasure to watch. Our team is passionate and dedicated to the work they do and we hope this will be the case for many more years to come".

"We need to ask ourselves as a society as to whether we want an empowering, person-centred approach or a one-size fits all model. That's what we are most worried about, our clients," said Evie.

The board of directors have contacted their constituency TDs on the matter and urge people in West Cork to do the same.

"If it were your son or daughter, struggling in a neurotypical and able-bodied world to find the right job, which service would you fight for to give them the best outcome? One that is about meeting targets or one that spends time on supporting the person and finding the right job for them to thrive?"



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



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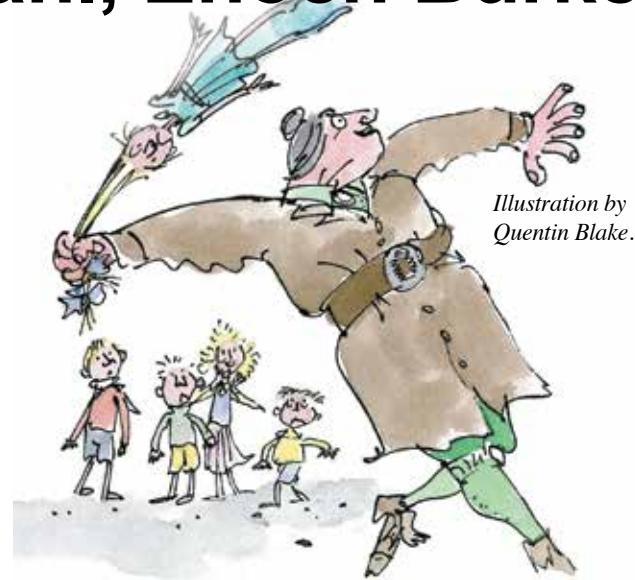
# Roald Dahl, Enoch Burke and the Irish Constitution



## HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

We all know Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase, 'You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time'. I think this



article is going to test this theory – so hold onto your hats!

The 21st century is like a century on speed. Within two decades, we have moved from lazy letters to instantaneous

email; from dozy dial-up internet, to superfast Wi-Fi in jungles (sadly – I witnessed this in a safari camp in the Serengeti in Tanzania). Now we have space tourists that travel at the speed of sound, to artificial intelligence called CHATGPT that can write you an essay on pretty much anything in the space of seconds. We are in such a hurry, that we can now melt glaciers in a few years that took 100,000 to form. Is there any part of human civilisation that is not in a hurry? What about our language?

We all understand language is not a static creature. It too evolves, oftentimes shedding its archaic words like old skin or, like a chameleon changing its meanings over time. For as long as people have mixed, languages have intermarried. English is a particular carnivorous beast, consuming French, Latin, Germanic and expanding its lexicon in line with its colonial expansion. Naturally, new words have to be invented, as new technology emerges and so too the habits that go with them. Likewise, words that were common, like measurements such as perches, poles and rods, are now outdated. We have bent words to become different things, brilliant no longer is commonly used to mean bright, instead we use it to denote how good something

is. We have also stopped using words that are now archaic. Collective nouns such as the one found in his much quoted 'I have a dream' speech where Martin Luther King oftentimes refers to his audience as the 'Negro people' would never be used by Afro Americans today to describe themselves. Closer to home, our travelling community once were collectively called 'Tinkers' to reflect one of the crafts that was synonymous with them, but once it became used as a negative and pejorative term (some might even add inaccurate term), it too has been replaced with better fitted terminology to capture the 'traveller' culture. This is language. It doesn't stand still.

So when the Roald Dahl story broke that publishers were changing the language in his children's books, one could argue if language changes, what is the fuss? Before I go into this delicate subject, let me refresh some readers. Puffin books hired 'sensitivity writers' to remove or change what they deem 'offensive language' as well as other changes. Some words like fat and ugly have been omitted or replaced. Gender has been targeted too, for example the indelible Oompa Loompas are no longer 'small men', but 'small people', and a 'formidable female' character in Matilda is now a 'formidable woman'. Some agree, many others do not. Language does evolve, but are we in danger of speeding into this decision in keeping with the hectic nature of the 21st century?

Let's look at it through both prisms for the sake of balance. As a teacher, our job is not just to shape kids or prepare them for exams, but also to look after them. It seems the one consistent thread throughout times is that children can be cruel, and quick to tease. As adults, we have to bring them on a journey of self-awareness of themselves and others. If all the fictitious bad and nasty characters are always depicted as 'fat' and always 'ugly', does this subconsciously plant the seed into children that the same goes for kids in real life? That may be so if every character in a children's book always depicts the bad child using those types of terms. It was probably an overused trope in children's literature in the past. Some argue that a child would never see it that way, but if the messaging is consistent and reinforced from book to book, then one would have to think it could subconsciously shape the child.

Gender issues have, of course, become the topic of mainstream like never before. A friend of

mine insightfully commented that humans always want to categorise things to make life easier, so we narrowed everything into two genders, whereas it was never thus. Modern times have allowed us to debate and tease out these issues and that's what Puffin must be doing when they are rewriting gender specific definitions.

While I can understand why Puffin my feel they are doing the right thing, I have concerns about how they are going about it. I suppose as a lover of books and history, the first question is where do you stop? Do you take out the antisemitic references in 'The Merchant of Venice'? Do you censor 'Ulysses' because the N word is used in it half a dozen times? Do you ban 'The Field' because it used the word Tinker, as an insult? Firstly, one has to ask who and what are sensitivity writers and is it a form of censorship? After all fiction creates good and bad characters who say nice and nasty things. Do they sanitise it because it is offensive to the 'sensitivity writer'? What if it is meant to be offensive for the sake of the narrative or characterisation? Yes, it's true that in Nazi Germany, the 'Merchant of Venice' was the most popular play. Today it is more popular. As well as it being appreciated as a great piece of literature, it has become a tool to highlight the wrongs of prejudice and antisemitism. Context is everything. It always has been. Who would dare to rewrite 'Ulysses' because they take offence to language from 100 years ago? Where do you stop? With some many great new writers and a market awash with children's literature, the 21st century has brought us a rich tapestry of books for kids and teenagers. We should look forward not back.

Literature written from any particular era, will reflect the mores and social compass of that period. To change words to fit 2023 sensibilities is akin to cultural vandalism. I'm not just taking about fiction. How can we peer into the past if we cleanse it to suit the codes of today? Historians would be blinded from how people thought, wrote, and preached. From children's school books in communist times to religious literature that captured the spiritual zeitgeist of that era – removing or changing these for example, would rob us of what people experienced in their world from those timeframes. Surely, we have the capacity to differentiate between what terms were used then and what is wrong to say today? That's what parents, schools, reading groups, historians and many others do

every day. As I said, context is everything.

Yes, we need to teach our children about being sensitive and inclusive, but I think do it going forward not back. When you consider the millions of children's books of today, the ones that will be written tomorrow, it puzzles me more why you would change a Roald Dahl story? If one is offended by it, why would one buy it? Or perhaps if one wants a sentimental peek at older stories, put a warning label on the book, that declares, this may offend. (Like we used to do on CDs if lyrics were deemed too risky or contained bad language.)

Despite my protestations about changing older books and documents, there are always good reasons at times to do so. (It's never black and white – is it?) With good reason we are looking at changing our Constitution in a referendum. Not for reason of law, but of language. Yes, it is a historical document, but also a legal document and we modify it when society deems we need a change. In this case there is cause and reason to adjust the language, which was written with reference to men only. For example, the clause relating to the president says, 'The President shall hold office for seven years from the date upon which 'he' enters upon his office, unless before the expiration of that period he dies'. We have had two female presidents yet we still maintain the word 'he' in the text. In this instance, in my opinion, there is legitimate and practical cause for amendment. Some may even think 'they' will be a more encompassing term, and I'm sure it will be debated in due course. Enoch Burke has brought the 'they' debate to national attention. We need to protect our vulnerable children, in this case a child who wishes to be referred to as 'they'. You could go down a worm hole about freedom of speech or religion, something beyond the scope of this month's article. Again, it will divide people, but doesn't our proclamation declare 'we must cherish all of the children equally'?

Language changes as society changes. As long as human-kind has been around, it has demonstrated that transformation is sometimes for the better, and sometimes for the worse. Having a rigid position on language, however, is trying to hold back the tide. But we can be sensible about what makes good alterations, harmful ones, and downright idiotic adjustments. What certainly is true, is that you can't please all of the people, all of the time.

## Christopher O'Sullivan TD

FIANNA FÁIL  
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

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# West Cork Development Partnership CLG

**HAS BEEN INVITED**

**by the Dept. of Rural and Community Development**

to develop a

## COMMUNITY – LED Local Development Strategy

to deliver the

## 2023 – 2027 LEADER Programme

The LEADER Programme is a key intervention within EU rural development Policy resourced jointly by the EU Commission and Ireland as a member state.

Over 3 decades of its existence, LEADER has supported the development of a wide range of innovative and sustainable projects that have brought increased jobs and vibrancy to rural communities across the EU.

**West Cork Development Partnership is hosting a number of public meetings to ensure open, active and inclusive consultation with local communities to identify the challenges and develop responses to the various social, environmental and economic challenges in their areas.**

Tuesday 11th April  
The Parish Centre,  
Western Rd, CLONAKILTY  
- 7pm to 9pm

Wednesday 12th April  
The West Cork Hotel,  
SKIBBEREEN  
- 7pm to 9pm

Thursday 13th April  
The Munster Arms Hotel,  
BANDON  
- 7pm to 9pm

Monday 17th April  
The Castle Hotel,  
MACROOM  
- 7pm to 9pm

Wednesday 19th April  
The Maritime Hotel,  
BANTRY  
- 7pm to 9pm

Thursday 20th April  
The Parkway Hotel,  
DUNMANWAY  
- 7pm to 9pm

Tuesday 25th April  
Scoil an Chroi Ro Naofa,  
CASTLETOWNBERE  
- 7pm to 9pm

Wednesday 26th April  
The Temperance Hall,  
Market Quay, KINSALE  
- 7pm to 9pm

This is an important and ongoing consultation process. If you are unable to attend the public meetings, WCDP is encouraging and inviting all individuals, area based, sectoral and interest groups and representatives from the statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors to meet with us. Please contact Arran O'Driscoll, CEO at [arran@wcdp.ie](mailto:arran@wcdp.ie)

WCDP also have an online Open Public Consultation Survey "West Cork Development Partnership Leader Programme (2023 -2027)" where you can offer your ideas on how to make west Cork a better place for all in which to live, work and thrive.

Scan code for survey:



At this time, WCDP would like to advise that it is opening its membership to individuals, community organisations and businesses who share our ethos and would like to become a member of an Organisation dedicated to promoting social, community and economic inclusion. For further information on becoming a member please go to [www.wcdp.ie](http://www.wcdp.ie)

## Get involved, be creative and make your voice heard.

We look forward to meeting you and hearing about what you think the opportunities and possibilities are for your communities.





Pictured are Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins and Emer O'Brien, County Librarian, Cork County Council Library Service. Also Michael Plaice and Denis Murphy, Bantry Library. Pic: Brian Loughheed

## A new lease of life for Bantry Library

Bantry Library, a building of great architectural interest, is set to receive a grant of €259,920 from the Heritage Council for external conservation works. Cork County Council applied for the Historic Towns Initiative 2023 grant, which will fund much-needed refurbishment to preserve the library's unique features.

Bantry Library has played a crucial role in the community for over 50 years, and its commanding presence in the heart of the town is central to the historical and cultural fabric of

Bantry. The library's signature bow-shaped window above the mill wheel is a cherished feature that resonates with locals and visitors alike.

"The conservation works being undertaken will highlight a nationally significant asset and enhance Bantry's varied streetscape," promised Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Danny Collins. "The library has been an integral part of the town for many years, and this funding will help to preserve the library's unique features and ensure that it remains a cornerstone of the community

for generations to come."

Chief Executive of Cork County Council, Tim Lucey added, "As Bantry Library approaches its 50th anniversary, we are committed to safeguarding this important building. As a protected structure within an Architectural Conservation Area, Cork County Council recognizes its responsibility to preserve and protect Bantry Library for future generations. The conservation works will take place during 2023, and we look forward to seeing the library restored to its former glory."



### 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.

## Easter customs

on Easter Sunday morning. The Pascal Candle, decorated with studs to depict Christ's wounds, is lit at Easter and is burned from Easter to Whit Sunday.

After Christmas, Easter was and is the most important Church festival in Ireland. As at Christmas, tradition demanded that the dwelling house, the out-houses and the farmyard should be set in order before Easter. The home was swept and cleaned, the walls were white-washed, the furniture scrubbed clean. The cowbyre, the stable and other outhouses were swept and tidied. To the best of their means, people bought new clothes at this time, which were shown off by the proud owners at church on Easter Sunday. The Easter season was also seen as the occasion for the first outing for new clothes and a beautiful new Easter bonnet.

Good Friday was a day of austerity, a day of 'black fast'. Many people ate nothing until midday; even then, some took no more than three mouthfuls of bread and three sips of water. No nails were driven into timber on Good Friday out of respect for Christ's death and women would let their hair hang loose as a sign of sorrow. Nobody would move house or begin any important enterprise on this day. No blood should be shed, so no animals or bird would be slaughtered. Between midday and three o'clock, traditionally the period when Christ hung on the cross, silence was observed as far as possible.

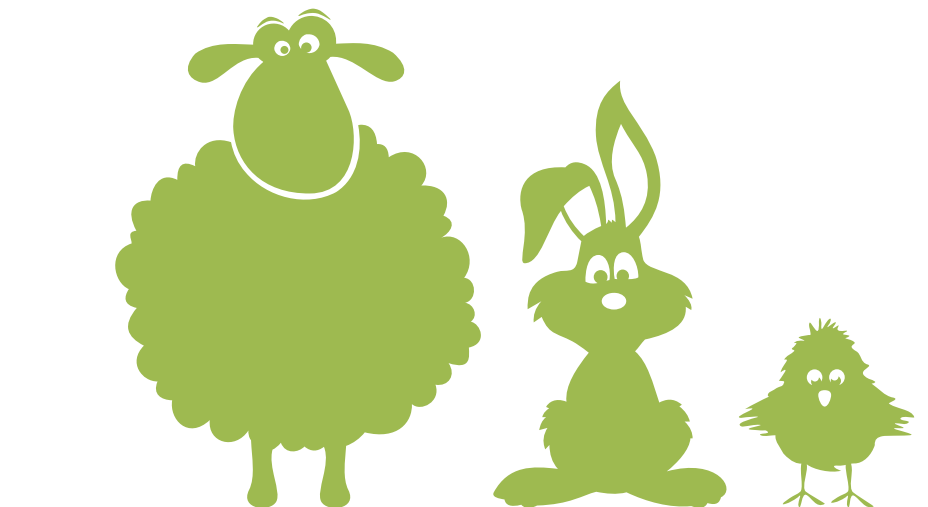
On the islands and in the coastal areas of West Cork most people collected shellfish on the strands – periwinkles, cockles, mussels, limpets. This was called the 'cnuasach trá', the strand gathering. Since meat was strictly forbidden, coastal people ate 'bia trá' (shore food).

It was considered a great blessing for an ailing person to die on Good Friday. A child born on Good Friday and baptised on Easter Sunday was expected to have the gift of healing.

In medieval times, the sun was seen as a symbol for Christ, 'the true light of the world', and a superstition spread throughout the Christian world that on Easter morning the sun danced in the sky with joy at the Resurrection. The sun's image does indeed shimmer on many spring mornings due to the mingling of hot and cold air at the earth's surface.

The Orkney Island writer, George Mackay Brown, writes about children going from house to house where they got presents of 'Pace' eggs. The word Pace is a variation of 'Pasch', an old name for Easter. Christ is often called the Paschal Lamb. The association of eggs with Easter is familiar to us all, especially in recent times in its modern commercialised form of the sale of chocolate Easter eggs. This springs from the old custom of eating hen eggs on Easter Sunday morning. In former times it is told that the people, after their breakfast of Easter eggs, decorated the trees with the shells, as blossoms, in honour of the occasion.

The origin of the Easter egg customs is probably derived from the fact that formerly during Lent people abstained from eggs and all animal products. So there would be a large accumulation of eggs by the coming of Easter, which provided a surplus for feasting, presents, games and so on. The general feeling was that 'nobody should be without an egg at Easter' and most farmer's wives gave presents of eggs to their workers and poorer neigh-



bours and no tramp or beggar was denied an egg at Easter. Mothers often added a little colouring matter, such as washing blue or onion skins, to the water in which the eggs were boiled, so that the children got theirs attractively coloured, or drew patterns and decorations on the egg shells. There was a time in Ireland when duck eggs would be eaten in large quantities on Easter Sunday and there was often a competition to see who could eat the most.

Children often had their own Easter parties with the eggs they gathered, supplemented by other 'goodies', cakes, sweets, and so on. They retired to a quiet place where they built a 'house' or fireplace to cook the eggs. This custom was known as the 'clúideog', a term which could mean the custom, the collected eggs or the place where they were cooked.

In the Irish of West Cork, there are at least two 'seanfho-cal' (old sayings) referring to Easter: 'Bia is deoch I gcomhair na Nollag, éadach nua i gcomhair na Cásca' – Food and drink for Christmas, new clothes for Easter. And also: 'Bia glan na Nollag agus éadach glan na Cásca' – good food for Christmas and new clothes for Easter.

The Easter Sunday dinner was a festive meal, second in importance only to that on Christmas day. All who could

afford it ate meat, roast lamb being a traditional favourite. Better-off farmers killed an animal for the festival and sent presents of portions to friends and neighbours. Often the animal had been slaughtered in November and salted down; special joints of this graced the farmhouse on festive days. Irish people often had 'corned beef and cabbage' as festive fare and this custom was brought by them to America.

When Christianity came to Ireland, the symbol of the hare was used deliberately to transfer old pagan religion into a Christian context, especially at Easter. As harbingers of spring, hares were held in high esteem. Over time the hare became the Easter rabbit or Easter bunny.

Easter is a time of joy and hope, with lengthening days and brightening weather. It was even more joyous in former times as it followed the austerity of Lent when no jollification was allowed. One pastime beloved by young and old was dancing, a community outdoor affair when weather permitted and there were few parishes in which an outdoor dance was not held on the evening of Easter Sunday.

Outdoor dancing on Summer Sunday evenings on concrete platforms was very popular in West Cork up to the 1960s. The Easter Sunday dance often

included a contest for which a large cake was the prize, probably because the dance held on the day was almost always the first in the year.

Many holy wells, especially those named 'Tobar Rí an Domhnaigh' or 'Sunday's Well', were visited on Easter Sunday and water taken from them on this day was believed to have more than usual curative powers.

Easter Monday was a favourite day for fairs and markets, at which there were not only buying and selling of livestock and merchandise but also games and sports, sideshows, dancing, eating and drinking, gambling, and faction-fighting. Horse-racing is also popular on that day – the Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse being the most important.

Easter Monday will always be remembered in Ireland as the day of the 'Easter Rising' in 1916. Yeats, in 'Easter, 1916', immortalised our patriots in verse:

*'And what if excess of love / bewildered them till they died? / I write it out in verse / Mac-Donagh and MacBride / And Connolly and Pearse / Now and in time to be, / Wherever green is worn, / All changed, changed utterly / A terrible beauty is born'.*



# Our Government is failing us all in the housing crisis



## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Holly Cairns TD

Given the scale of the crisis, housing should be the Government's number one priority – clearly, it is not.

Housing is not just about having a home. It is also about health, wellbeing, security, jobs and being part of a community.

The housing crisis affects us all: young families are trapped in a dysfunctional rental market; adults in their twenties and thirties are still living with their parents; and grandparents are worried that another generation will be forced to emigrate.

The very survival of our towns and villages is at stake.

The eviction ban and housing

have rightly been the main political topics in recent weeks. We have record-breaking homelessness figures – almost 12,000 people, including nearly 3,500 children, are living in emergency accommodation. Even these shocking numbers are an underestimation of the true picture.

The eviction ban was a necessary tool to help prevent even more people falling into homelessness. Introduced as an emergency measure, the plan was to use this time to make more homes available.

But thanks to more failed policies and inaction, the situation did not improve over the winter months – in fact, it just got worse. Now the Government has lifted the eviction ban, despite knowing that it will lead to even more homelessness.

As the leader of an opposition party, it is my role to hold the Government to account. In doing so, I also have an obligation to offer solutions.

Housing is a key priority for me and my colleagues in the Social Democrats. We have offered several practical proposals to deal with the crisis.

Here are three key measures that the Government could take.

Firstly, the Minister for Housing should use all of his

department's budget. It is unbelievable that the Government failed to spend €340 million on housing in 2022. People will find it hard to grasp how so much money can go unspent when it is desperately needed.

There are construction companies and builders out there who are willing to contribute. They see the need for more social and affordable housing and want to play their part.

Secondly, an obvious way to free up more homes is to target the tens of thousands of vacant properties all over the country. In towns and villages across West Cork, there are buildings lying idle. Each one of them could potentially be a home or a local business.

After years of discussion and dithering, the Government eventually brought in a vacant homes tax. However, it has been set at a derisory 0.3 per cent of the value of the property. At current inflation levels, this tax is only a small percentage of the increasing value of a property.

It is immoral to sit on vacant homes during a housing crisis. Companies and individuals driven solely by profit can just make money by doing nothing with a property while families are desperately searching for a

home.

This is where the State should intervene. We need a punitive tax rate to discourage owners from leaving properties vacant. This measure could be brought in quickly and would help free up thousands of properties for use.

Thirdly, we need more tradespeople. There is a serious shortage of builders, plumbers, carpenters and electricians. For the sake of our economy and society, the Government must do more to support those entering these vital professions.

The State should encourage more people to take up jobs in the construction sector, both at school level and by helping people who want to change careers. These are highly skilled jobs and they need to be recognised as such and properly remunerated.

In addition to these measures, the Government could help reduce the number of derelict properties around the country by bringing about meaningful reform of our planning laws.

In my position as leader of the Social Democrats, I want to show that there are practical ways to deal with our housing emergency. It has become increasingly clear, however, that the required solutions won't come from this Government.



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## Timoleague welcomes new co-working hub

The Old Courthouse, an iconic 18th century building in the West Cork heritage village of Timoleague, is getting a new lease of life under owners Paul and Sharon Crosbie, who have developed the ground floor of the building into a co-working space to service the surrounding area.

Over the years, the building has seen many changes from the

original courthouse upstairs and a livestock market downstairs every Thursday, to a petrol pump station, an English language school, an art gallery and now a co-working hub.

Paul and Sharon Crosbie, originally from Cork and Kinsale, spent 23 years in Dublin before moving permanently to live in West Cork, where they holidayed for many years.

They purchased The Old

Courthouse in 2021 during the height of Covid and have been running an AirBnB upstairs while developing the ground floor of the building.

Paul says, "After a number of delays, we are delighted to finally open the doors of The Courthouse Hub... Working from your own home can have its own challenges... wifi speed issues, isolation from interacting with others in an office environ-

ment or remote geographical locations can all cause problems. We hope the Courthouse Hub solves many of these issues and enhances a work/life balance for people in the area."

The Hub offers different types of workspaces from open workspace, to semi-open and private spaces at a low cost.

For more information contact Paul at [info@courthousehub.com](mailto:info@courthousehub.com)

## Businesses need to ensure they are not accomplices in war crimes



The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights states that businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights wherever they operate. In situations of armed conflict, including military occupation, businesses must also respect international humanitarian law. Under the Fourth Geneva convention, forcible transfers is a war crime, as is the destruction of property without military necessity. Corporate actors who knowingly provide practical assistance that substantially contributes to the commission of crimes against humanity may be held criminally responsible for aiding and

abetting such crimes.

Amnesty International has written to Hyundai CE to point out the use of their excavators in demolishing Palestinian homes in Masafer Yatta, an area of the West Bank where some 1,150 Palestinians are at imminent risk of forcible transfer. Some homes have already been demolished in an area now earmarked for Israeli army exercises. A petition from residents was rejected in May 2022 in the High Court and the judge ruled that the demolition of nine hamlets and villages could go ahead.

On July 20, 2022, Hyundai CE published a set of Guiding Principles for Human Rights Management. They claim to reject any form of violation linked to its business operations and

also commits to (taking) heed of infringement upon the rights of local residents.

On February 2 this year, Hyundai replied to Amnesty that it does uphold its responsibilities to respect human rights as well as stating that it is not involved in Israeli settlements, but they did not address AI findings regarding the use of its equipment in Masafer Yatta.

The present Israeli Government is at this moment facing opposition from its own citizens to the plan of limiting the power of the judiciary... the last check and balance on the government that remains. The settler movement and the religious far right have already made it clear that Palestinians should have no rights whatsoever. Everyone, individuals or businesses, are

responsible for their actions.

As Adam Shapiro, Director of Advocacy, Israel/Palestine, at DAWN, said in a statement "Businesses like Hyundai need to take action now to ensure that they are not accomplices in war crimes and send an unambiguous message to the Israeli Government and business that human rights standards are not just words on a page but have practical consequences"

A very interesting programme on BBC 2 called The Holy Land and Us, looks at the tragedy of that land through the family history of two people from opposite historical positions. What is clear in this programme is that both the Jewish population and the Palestinian population are still paying the price for this history.

## Remembering Maggie Dunne of Adrigole Cumann na mBan

The contribution of women in the War of Independence is not often highlighted, nor is their involvement in the Civil War. This month **Pauline Murphy** draws attention to Margaret Dunne, better known as Maggie, a farmer's daughter from Cappaleigh, a townland of Adrigole on the Beara Peninsula. On April 8, 1923, Maggie, who was Secretary of the Adrigole branch of Cumann na mBan, was murdered by a Free State officer near her West Cork home.

The Dunes were a well known Republican family in Adrigole; their home was the headquarters of the local IRA battalion, in which Maggie's brother Eugene was an Intelligence Officer. The Dunne home was often subjected to Crown harassment and in one instance the family moved all the furniture out due to fears of an arson attack.

Maggie and her sister Kate joined Cumann na mBan in 1918, with the Adrigole Company, 6th Battalion, Third West Cork Brigade. The sisters were active in scouting, running dispatches and transporting arms for the IRA during the War of Independence.

Eugene Dunne took part in many actions against the Crown

forces and managed to avoid capture until the very end of the conflict – his luck ran out in July 1921 when he ran into a checkpoint at Glengariff. Eugene was arrested and imprisoned at Bere Island internment camp before being moved to Spike Island and then Portlaoise jail, from where he was released just before Christmas 1921.

During the truce the Dunne women continued their active roles in the Republican movement, fundraising for prisoners and attending training camps. As Civil War loomed, the Adrigole Cumann na mBan company was re-organised into the 5th Battalion, Cork No.5 Brigade and its members provided billets for IRA active service members and supplied

food and clothes to men in dugouts in the mountains.

The killing of 27-year-old Maggie Dunne on April 8, 1923 followed a gunfight in Adrigole village between local IRA men and Free State troops from the army's Western Division. During the engagement one of the Free State soldiers, a Lieutenant Cassidy, was wounded but there were no other casualties on either side.

Maggie had taken supplies to the IRA side and some 10 minutes after the fight ended was spotted by Free State troops as she made her way up Droumlave Road to meet IRA Volunteer Tim O'Shea, whom she was courting at the time.

Troops led by a Captain Hassett headed in their direction and Maggie told Tim to make a run for it while she stayed behind to delay the soldiers. Neither Tim nor Maggie expected the tragic outcome of such a decision; an enraged Captain

Hassett drew his pistol without warning and shot Maggie at point blank range.

Although the soldiers led by Captain Hassett were appalled by his actions, the murder went unpunished; in fact, Captain Hassett was later heard boasting in the village about his deed, declaring that he would shoot more women who stood in his way. An inquest finding was ignored by the Free State authorities and Captain Hassett was simply moved out of the area by his army superiors.

The Dunne family never received justice for the death of Maggie. Two days after her murder she was buried in the churchyard of St Fachtna's, Adrigole, her coffin draped in the tricolour and carried by IRA Volunteers. On-duty Free State soldiers saluted the funeral procession as it passed and, as the coffin was lowered to its final resting place, IRA volunteers gave a final salute.

## Barryroe student wins Law Society Human Rights Competition with study of parole system

The Law Society's Human Rights and Equality Committee announced the winners of its 2023 student competition at an award ceremony at Blackhall Place, Dublin in March. Ruairí Ó Conchúir, Ballincollig, Conor Ó Floinn, Barryroe near Clonakilty (*pictured*), and Oisín Ó Síocháin, Donoughmore near Blarney, all second year BCL students at UCC, were each awarded €500 in prize money for their winning entry.

Their submission, 'Parole in Ireland - a Balance of Rights',



analysed the foundation of the parole system, its development, and the advent of the new parole system in 2021. It considered the effectiveness of this system in respecting the rights of prisoners and the rule of law, along with the viewpoints and rights of victims.





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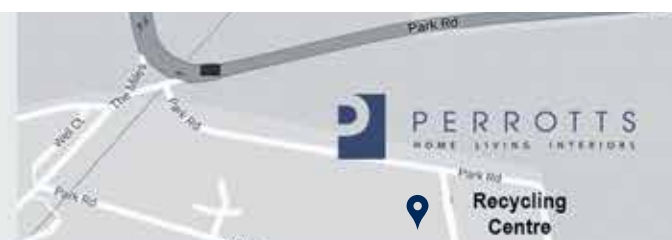
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# The legacy of Gusty Spence



## THE HISTORY CORNER

Shane Daly

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

*"He will also be remembered as a major influence in drawing loyalism away from sectarian strife" - Gerry Kelly*

There were many key but controversial figures who featured throughout the Troubles in Northern Ireland on both sides of the conflict. On the Republican side, there was Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Gerry Kelly and Brendan Hughes. On the Loyalist, names such as Johnny Adair, Billy Wright, Lenny Murphy and Gusty Spence stand out. All played pivotal roles in either the armed or political struggle for peace in Northern Ireland with some playing a part, rather paradoxically, in both the armed and political struggle. Gusty Spence was one of those who sat on both sides of the fence.

Despite at one time being a hardliner in favour of war, he is

an example of how attitudes to war can always sway towards seeking peace by political rather than by violent means. Spence was so heavily involved in the use of violence, including bombs, urban warfare and guerrilla tactics that he was one of the leading members of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) for a long period of time, eventually going on to become the head of the organisation. During the Troubles if there was one man you could have confidently said would never drop his weapon for a pen and paper, it was Gusty Spence. However, not only did he choose the political route for peace, he was once again one of the leading proponents; in favour of the Good Friday Agreement and crucial in securing its passing. Gusty Spence was the dichotomy of man personified.

Spence's early life was not dissimilar to most born in the North of Ireland at the time. Born in Shankill, Belfast in 1933, Gusty grew up in a Protestant working-class family. He left school at the age of fourteen and began working in the shipyards, where he became involved in the trade union movement. In 1953, he joined the British Army and served in Germany for three years before returning to Belfast. Spence became involved in politics in the late 1960s, as tensions between Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities began to escalate. He was a member of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV), a loyalist group that emerged in response to the growth of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The UPV carried out a number of bombings and shootings; and in 1966

Spence was arrested for his involvement in a bomb attack in Belfast. His older brother Billy Spence was a founding member of the UPA, otherwise known as the Ulster Protestant Action group. The Spence's were an extremely Loyalist family.

In 1969, Gusty Spence was released from prison and became involved in the UVF. The UVF's primary goal was to defend Northern Ireland against Irish republicanism and to resist any attempts to merge Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. Spence played a key role in organising the group, which carried out a number of bombings and shootings during the Troubles. Spence's political awakening came in the wake of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland. The movement, which sought to end discrimination against Catholics, was seen by many Protestants as a threat to their identity and way of life. He joined the UVF with the aim of resisting Irish republicanism and defending Protestant communities from perceived threats, quickly rising through the ranks to become its leader in the early 1970s. Under his leadership, the UVF became one of the most active and deadliest paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, carrying out numerous attacks on civilians, including the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in 1974, which killed 33 people.

In 1966, his involvement in the random murders of innocent Catholics earned him a life prison sentence. On May 27, Spence ordered four UVF men to kill an IRA member, Leo Martin, who lived on the Falls Road. Unable to find their target, the men drove around in search of

any Catholic instead. They shot dead 28-year-old John Scullion, a Catholic civilian, as he walked home. Spence later wrote: "At the time, the attitude was that if you couldn't get an IRA man, you should shoot a Taig, he's your last resort". On June 26, the same gang shot dead Catholic civilian 18-year-old Peter Ward and wounded two others as they left a pub on Malvern Street in the lower Shankill. Two days later, the government of Northern Ireland used the Special Powers Act to declare the UVF illegal. Shortly after, Spence and three others were arrested and, in October 1966, Spence was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Ward. Although Spence has always claimed innocence, he was sent to Crumlin Road Prison. Although he was officially expelled from the Orange Order following his conviction, during its July 12, 1967 march, the Orange lodge to which he had belonged, stopped outside the prison in a tribute to him. Spence's involvement in the killings earned him legendary status among many young loyalists and he was claimed an inspiration by the likes of Michael Stone.

In early July 1972, Spence was granted two days leave to attend the wedding of his daughter Elizabeth to Winston Churchill 'Winkie' Rea. The latter had formally asked Spence for his daughter's hand in marriage during a prison visit. Met by two members of the Red Hand Commando upon his release, Spence was informed of the need for a restructuring within the UVF and told not to return to prison. He initially refused and went on to attend



*Gusty Spence, taken in 1972 during his four-month period of liberation from prison.*

his daughter's wedding. Afterwards, a plot was concocted whereby his nephew, Frankie Curry, also a UVF member, would drive Spence back to jail but the car would be stopped and Spence 'kidnapped'. As arranged, the car in which Spence was a passenger was stopped in Springmartin and Spence was taken away by UVF members. He remained at large for four months and during that time even gave an interview to ITV's 'World in Action' in which he called for the UVF to take an increased role in the Northern Ireland conflict against the Provisional IRA. At the same time, he distanced himself from any policy of random murders of Catholics. Spence also took on responsibility for the restructuring, returning the UVF to the same command structure and organisational base that Edward Carson had utilised for the original UVF, with brigades, battalions, companies, platoons and sections. He also directed a significant restocking of the group's arsenal, with guns mostly taken from the security

forces.

Spence was a controversial figure, even within loyalist circles. Some saw him as a hardliner who was willing to use violence to achieve his goals, while others saw him as a pragmatic leader who was willing to engage in political dialogue. He was a complex character, who believed that violence was necessary to defend Protestant interests, but who also recognised the need for a political solution to the conflict. Spence's impact on Northern Ireland's political landscape was significant. His involvement in the UVF helped to fuel the sectarian conflict that engulfed Northern Ireland for much of the 20th century. However, he also played a role in the peace process that eventually brought an end to the conflict.

In the 1990s, Spence became involved in the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), a political party that was formed by the UVF to represent loyalist interests. He played a key role in the party's decision to endorse the Good Friday Agreement. Spence's decision to support the Good Friday Agreement was significant, as it showed that even hardline loyalists were willing to engage in the political process. It also helped to create a more inclusive political environment in Northern Ireland, where loyalists and republicans could work together to address the issues that had fuelled the conflict.

Spence passed away in 2011, but his legacy lives on. While he remains a controversial figure, his impact on Northern Ireland's political landscape cannot be denied.

## John Footman's journey from Clonakilty to India during potato famine traced in documentary

The award-winning documentary film, 'An Gorta Mór: Passage to India', directed by Fokiya Akhtar and co-produced with Ian Michael, explores the story of John Footman, an Irishman who left his home during the potato famine of 1847 and found passage to India. The documentary traces Ian Michael's journey tracing his fifth time removed grandfather, John Footman, from his humble Irish roots in West Cork to his Indian descendants living in India and scattered around the world.

With a running time of approximately 73 minutes, the film is narrated by Ian Michael as he works with historian

Tim Feen and genealogist Michael O'Mahony in Ireland to highlight the struggles of the Footman family in persevering through great adversity. The story also resonates with the contemporary experiences of recent migrants and refugees. Director of Photography and Creative Editor, Michael Ogden, and cinematographer Fred Louradour (who tragically died before the film was finished) capture the rich tapestry of India woven with the bucolic Irish landscape revealing the essence of the story. Under Ogden's guidance, the visuals are complemented by the deft editing of Rabi Mohan Joshi at Fahrenheit Films.

Producer and narrator of 'An

Gorta Mór: Passage to India', Ian Michael, stated that: "This film is a realisation of a longing to understand not only the Irish-Indian culture that I grew up in but also to appreciate the richness of the Irish roots that I learned from my great-grandmother, Agnes Footman. This took me on a journey to explore my Irish roots culminating in an emotional discovery of the original home where John Footman was born, and no doubt departed for India, a journey from which he would probably never return".

Producer-director Fokiya Akhtar says, "Looking back at the journey of Irish roots and talking with Footman descen-



*Ian with Tim Feen*

dants all over the world, I never would have thought that the historical events in Ireland that prompted John Footman to leave everything he ever knew and loved to seek a better life

in India would find its analog in the contemporary stories of migration today".

'An Gorta Mór: Passage to India' was edited from over 90 hours of original footage shot

in Ireland and India, supported by a research grant from Zayed University, United Arab Emirates. The documentary is a testament to the resilience and perseverance of those who came before us, and it serves as a reminder of the struggles that many continue to face as migrants and refugees in pursuit of a better life. After all, no matter where we are from, we are all migrants.

The film is a must-watch for anyone interested in Irish history, immigration, and the migrant experience.

**'An Gorta Mór: Passage to India' will be screened at Clonakilty Park Cinema on Monday, April 3, at 7pm.**



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

**Holger Smyth**, Inanna Rare Books, Skibbereen, revisits houses shown in the rare Hodges publication 'Cork and County Cork in the Twentieth Century'.

## EPISODE 3: Norton, Skibbereen, the home of solicitor and Teachta Dála, Jasper Travers Wolfe

Norton, originally 'Norton Cottage', still towers prominently, overlooking the River Ilen and the West Cork countryside in Skibbereen. This was the home of one of West Cork's most respected solicitors and independent TDs, Jasper Travers Wolfe (1872 – 1952).

Jasper Travers Wolfe's life is described in detail in the excellent biography by Wolfe's grandson, Jasper Ungood-Thomas.

His residence, Norton, reflects the position that Wolfe held in the West Cork community. "Greatly admired in legal circles" (Ungood-Thomas), Wolfe was not only a strong supporter of Home Rule but even "gave an acclaimed speech at a rally in London in 1912 to launch the Irish Protestant Home Rule Movement". He lived through all the important events of the formative years of the Irish Republic and was, at the time of the publica-

tion of Hodges' book, Director of the Skibbereen Eagle.

Even though Wolfe was repeatedly a target of the IRA because of cases he accepted (e.g. the case of the murder of Tomas MacCurtain), the Norton residence was left untouched during a time of burnings, a testament to a solicitor who had to navigate serving a community of Protestants and Catholics alike, not betraying his beliefs and still acting in the spirit of the law.

Built in 1820 and set within landscaped, terraced gardens, Norton looks today like a reflection of a Tuscan mini-villa and is now the home of the Planning Office of Cork County Council West. Framed by mature trees, the courthouse at its feet, elevated but not intimidating, the house is an important feature in the heritage of West Cork architecture.

The book by Hodges, from which the original photograph of Norton, and the biographical

text, are sourced, also gifts us the excellent and telling portrait of Wolfe you see below. An ascetic presence with a distinguished mustache, hiding the true, "clever, convivial, hard-drinking and fearless Jasper Wolfe in West Cork".

The book by Hodges was published in 1911, showing us Wolfe exactly one year before his memorable speech in London in which, according to his grandson, Jasper Travers Wolfe even "upstaged George Bernard Shaw and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who also spoke".

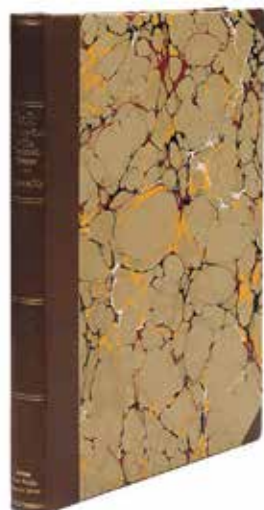
Homes are reflections of the people who live in them. Norton is still here in all its glory, as is its neighbouring courthouse, and so too is the memory of Jasper Travers Wolfe.

Next month we visit: **Garretstown House**, between the Old Head of Kinsale and Ballinspittle.



Mr. J. Travers Wolfe.

**Wolfe.** — JASPER TRAVERS WOLFE, Norton, Skibbereen; second surviving son of the late William John Wolfe, of Skibbereen; born in 1872; educated at Bishop's School, Skibbereen. Admitted a solicitor in 1893, obtaining 1st place at Final Examination and the Incorporated Law Society's Gold Medal and Findlater Scholarship; for several years was a member of the Skibbereen Urban Council; is a Director of the *Skibbereen Eagle* newspaper; and a member of the Governing Body of University College, Cork. Married, in 1898, Minnie, elder daughter of the late George Levis Vickery, of Skibbereen, and has issue two daughters, Dorothy and Ray. Clubs: Cork City, and Bantry.



The article above refers to a rare publication, now available in a high-quality reprint and hand-bound limited edition from **Inanna Rare Books**, Skibbereen. Phone: 087 1025412. W: [www.inannararebooks.com](http://www.inannararebooks.com) / e: [info@inannararebooks.com](mailto:info@inannararebooks.com)

**Cork and County Cork in the Twentieth Century / Contemporary Biographies.**

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Originally published in Brighton in the year 1911. With 315 pages of photographs and stories of big houses, town houses and country estates in Cork City, North Cork, East Cork and West Cork, as well as biographies of the men and their families who lived in these houses.



Norton, Skibbereen.

Formerly the residence of the Bishop of Ross. Later it became the property and residence of the late Mr. Thomas Downes, well known co. Cork solicitor, who was married to a granddaughter of "The Liberator." It is now the residence of Mr. J. Travers Wolfe.



Norton in 1911 (top) versus 2023 (this image)



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## people Environment : Making a difference



### GROUNDLED

MEP Grace O'Sullivan

**A**s lead negotiator for the European Greens, I am currently working on the reform of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, with a particular focus on plastics.

In that work, one issue keeps coming up. We cannot keep trying to rely on recycling as a silver bullet to tackle the amount of plastic we create.

We are drowning in plastic that we don't even want to use in the first place. Irish people are now the largest consumer

of plastic packaging waste in Europe. Almost everyone will tell you that they don't want to buy all this plastic waste, and they certainly don't like having to pay to get it taken away and disposed of or recycled.

Irish consumers are essentially being conned by big supermarket chains and by the plastics industry into buying plastic they didn't ask for. And our environment is suffering as a result from these mountains of plastic which we are struggling to deal with.

The same can be said for fisheries where plastic and polymer-based gear is now basically the only game in town.

As a result, over 90 per cent of Irish protected marine ecosystems are now polluted with plastic, mostly from clothing fibres and fishing gear. Put simply, we need to stop making



the plastic in the first place. Production needs to change.

This impact of plastic pollution on the fishing industry and marine environment was the subject of a recent hearing in the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament.

While I welcome efforts made to increase the recycling of fishing nets on land, our reliance on plastic for affordable

fishing gear has been a disaster.

Fishers in Ireland will tell you that they do everything they can including bringing the lost gear of other vessels back to port. Around 95 per cent of fishers in Ireland are involved in the government's Clean Oceans Initiative for bringing old nets back on shore to be disposed of properly. They are more than aware of the damage plastics are

doing to the sea. Fish producers will be able to tell you the wildest stories of the types of plastic that has been pulled from the belly of fish.

Dublin Bay Prawns, or *Nephrops Norvegicus* as it is known by its latin name, are being found to have microplastic fibres from clothing waste and degraded fishing nets in their digestive systems. All of this makes its way onto our own plates at home and in local restaurants.

Plastic gear is now cheaper and more accessible than anything else, and while many of the inshore fishers around the coast do their best to cut down on this often there is no alternative product on the market.

A few decades ago a small boat would put out under 100 willow and hazel pots. These were precious handmade pots,

and the fisher would make sure to bring back every one.

With plastic pots, you can put out hundreds for the same price. It is reflective of the rest of society here on land where we rely on plastic for everything.

To me that means we need a complete overhaul of manufacturing and production. We need to stop importing cheap plastic gear, and instead incentivise and encourage homegrown production like we used to.

The way we are doing things now, marine ecosystems will continue to suffer and fishers will be blamed for a problem that is the fault of a faulty economic model.

Irish and European manufacturing has been completely taken over by plastics. It's time we look to the past for solutions to 'throwaway culture'.

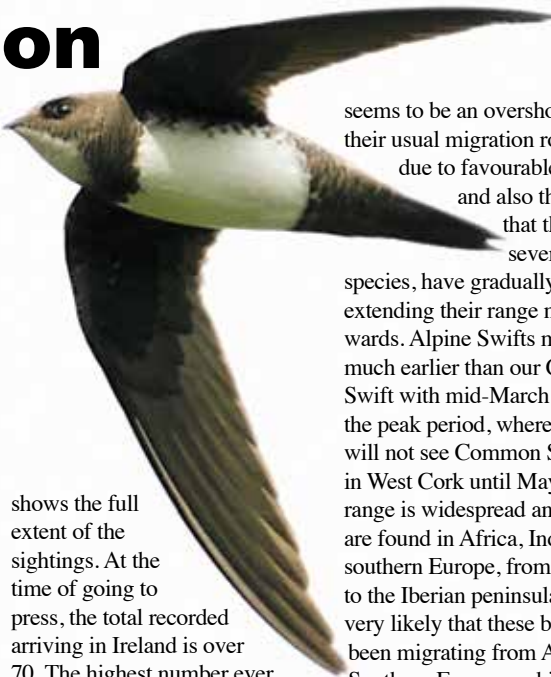
## An alpine invasion



Committee Member **Jez Simms** tells us more about the extraordinary influx this March of a bird only occasionally seen in Ireland.

**A**t the time of writing, in the third week of March, an unprecedented ornithological event

is taking place across Ireland (and the British Isles) with the largest ever influx of Alpine Swifts to reach our shores and come dashing through our skies. These magnificent birds, which are almost twice the size of our regular Common Swifts, have been spotted from Donegal to West Cork sweeping through the air and roosting overnight in tall buildings, often favouring churches and cathedrals. Easily recognised with their white throats and underparts they have been seen in Bandon, Clonakilty, Rosscarbery, Carrigaline, Middleton, Catlemartyr and Cork City. Sightings continue to rise across the country with a group of nine birds over Blackrock, Dublin on March 20. The map created by Irish Rare and Scarce Bird News (Twitter @IRSBG1)



shows the full extent of the sightings. At the time of going to press, the total recorded arriving in Ireland is over 70. The highest number ever recorded in one year before this was five.

The reason for this influx

seems to be an overshoot of their usual migration routes due to favourable winds and also the fact that they, like several other species, have gradually been extending their range northwards. Alpine Swifts migrate much earlier than our Common Swift with mid-March being the peak period, whereas we will not see Common Swifts in West Cork until May. Their range is widespread and they are found in Africa, India and southern Europe, from Turkey to the Iberian peninsula. It is very likely that these birds may be migrating from Africa to Southern Europe and just kept going.

Like all swifts, Alpine Swifts are masters of the air, they have

a powerful flight with deep slow wing beats. They spend most of their lives in the air, catching insects, drinking and even sleeping on the wing. In 2013 the Swiss Ornithological Institute and the Bern University of Applied Sciences reported their findings from six Alpine Swifts, electronically tagged during a year-long migration cycle, some of which were recorded as staying aloft for 200 straight days. Not to be outdone, a study published in 2016 reported that 'our' Common Swift can remain airborne for up to 10 months!

So keep your eyes raised in the coming days, especially if in the vicinity of a church or cathedral and you might be lucky enough to spot one of these amazing vagrant visitors.

### Upcoming outings being held by the Branch are:

**April:** Spring migration ad hoc events

**Sunday, May 14:** Dawn Chorus at Liss Ard Estate, Skibbereen Visit our website [www.birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie](http://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](mailto:mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie). For more information about the Branch, contact Fiona O'Neill at [secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie](mailto:secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie).

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## Clochán Uisce: Minding our banks

**O**ur rivers are more than a just part of the landscape they flow through. The life force along and within them make these entities themselves something to be cherished and much more can be done to improve their overall ecology. Over the past decade we have all become very aware of the damage that can be caused to our towns and villages when rivers burst their banks. The flood relief work along the Feagle in Clonakilty, the Ilan in Skibbereen, and the Bandon river in Bandon has had the desired effect of putting an end to this perennial problem in our localities but more can be done

to improve stability, structure and space along our rivers.

Recently the Clochán Uisce group took part in some tree planting along the banks of local rivers and tributaries supported by a grant from the local water authority. They planted a mix of holly, alder and crab apple. These species were picked for various reasons; their roots will help stabilise the bank along areas that are prone to flooding while also providing shelter for fish and other creatures who make the water course their home. Their leaves, flowers, seeds and fruit will benefit a myriad of insects, birds and mammals. These trees not only

add another layer of support to flood relief but also to the overall ecology. Clochán Uisce hopes to identify other areas along our local rivers where similar work can be carried out with the help of landowners, local councils and businesses.

The next of these projects, in partnership with the Clonakilty local council and Tidy Towns, is to plant the existing flower boxes along the inner wall of the Feagle between the Clonakilty post office and fire hall with native and perennial plants to attract beneficial insects to the river. This will in-turn attract more fish and other creatures who will all help develop the

ecosystem and improve the health of the river. The group is looking for financial help for this project and is reaching out to the community for support: If you are a local business or individual who would like to sponsor one of these planters (€10 per planter) please contact Clochán Uisce at the email below and they will happily arrange to collect your contribution and provide a receipt.

Clochán Uisce's next meeting is Saturday April 8, 5pm at 8 St Paul's CI, Clonakilty and all are welcome. You can find the group on Instagram or join the mailing list by emailing [clochanuisce@gmail.com](mailto:clochanuisce@gmail.com).



Planting trees along the Feagle



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## people Environment : Making a difference

### Green Skibbereen welcomes solar installation at CECAS centre in Leap

Green Skibbereen CLG has installed six thermodynamic solar panels on the roof of CECAS at Myross Wood House in Leap. Three new 300-litre hot water cylinders and corresponding thermodynamic solar boxes and a system controller will also be installed. After com-

petitive tender, the contract was awarded to Future Generation Energy from Clonakilty. The funding was provided by their successful application to the Community Centre Investment Fund, which is run by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

By installing the thermodynam-

ic solar panels, Green Skibbereen aims to supply 100 per cent of the centre's hot water needs for the foreseeable future from a renewable energy source. Given the high number of events, workshops, and other residential events, demand for hot water for showers, cooking and other uses we estimated that hot water consumes around 10-20 per cent of all energy used in the building.

The solar thermodynamic system from Energie is unique in its approach to heating water. The panels collect heat from the sun and from the surrounding environment. This heat is put through a heat pump to produce hot water at the necessary temperature. The

solar collectors make the system more efficient than a traditional air source heat pump.

The new system is expected to save 20-30 per cent of the cost of hot water heating, which is currently oil-fuelled, thereby reducing carbon emissions by 10 tonnes per year.

Jose Ospina, Green Skibbereen director, commented: "We see this as the first step in the full Near Zero Energy Retrofitting of Myross Wood House, as an exemplary project of how historic buildings can be brought up to 21st Century decarbonised energy standards. We welcome expressions of interest and collaboration in this mission".

### Kinsale building awarded 14k to preserve its heritage



Patsy's Corner at Market Place in Kinsale has been awarded €14k in government funding for works to support it as a local heritage building. In total, 556 heritage projects in 31 local authorities across the country will benefit from a total of €4.5m under this year's Built Heritage Investment Scheme – an increase of 12.5 per cent on 2022, as announced by Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD.

Works will include external joinery repair, lime rendering, roof repair, structures and coverings including lead work, and rainwater goods repair or replacement.

Marc Ó Riain, Green Party Local Area Representative for Kinsale Bandon welcomed the news.

"Built Heritage has always been a key priority for the Green Party, and with a Green Minister for Heritage, we're seeing increased investment by Government in the protection and preservation of our built as well as our natural environment. Kinsale town centre is an area of Architectural conservation but has seen a lot of dilapidation in the last 10 years. We have seen some action to dress the Folkhouse and the Seaview in the last year and we would love to see both Patsy's Corner and the Silent Banjo being brought back to their former glory."

"This has obvious benefits for our cities, towns and villages, both in terms of preserving the integrity of our historic and vernacular buildings, and in terms of preserving the skills and crafts required for this conservation work. These schemes

deliver thousands of hours of professional craft skills, many of which are based in rural communities."

"The Built Heritage Investment Scheme is hugely impactful in this regard because it allows so many owners and custodians of historic and protected structures to complete necessary works to maintain these structures and safeguard them for the benefit of future generations, and this support is not limited to private dwellings. This round of awards is supporting work on a wide range of heritage structures, including landmark buildings and historic churches, mills and castles."

Announcing the funding, Minister Malcolm Noonan said: "Ireland's towns and villages were built around a uniquely Irish vernacular; a style and an approach to craft and design that gave our places their charm and character, and supported the traditional craftsmanship needed to maintain it. We're in danger of letting that vernacular slip away, and that's why it's vitally important that as a government, we support people to protect our built heritage; to choose repair or restore over redesign or replace; and to keep traditional crafts alive."

"It's an undertaking that I know requires significant time, care, expertise and investment, and my department is recognising this with significantly increased investment in 2023. Across both funding schemes, for built heritage and historic structures, we're supporting this work to the tune of €9 million this year – an increase of 12.5 per cent on 2022."

### Communities urged to have their say on offshore renewable energy plan

Communities across Cork are encouraged to have their say on a new draft national offshore renewable energy development plan aimed at meeting our future energy demands and ensuring we put the right offshore technologies in the right places in our seas.

An eight-week public consultation is now underway, giving people in every county a voice on proposals to harness the immense wind, wave, and tidal energy potential of our seas.

The second Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, (ORED II), is one piece of the jigsaw in delivering on Ireland's Climate Action Plan, which aims to have up to 80 per cent of the country's electricity sourced from renewables by 2030.

The ORED II is a new national

spatial strategy for our offshore renewable energy future.

It will set out a framework for where we will put offshore wind, wave and tidal technologies in the future.

This work will support the move away from a developer-led model towards a more plan-led model for offshore renewable energy development in Ireland, where the State will play a much greater role in identifying optimal locations in our seas for offshore renewable energy development.

Through the ORED II, all relevant maritime stakeholders and citizens, particularly those in coastal communities, will be able to have their say in where we put offshore renewable technologies in the future as part of the Enduring Regime.

Submissions can be made at un-

til April 20 and are being gathered to ensure the plan fairly reflects the views of those most affected by the development of offshore renewable energy.

Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan, said that Ireland's coastline offers huge, clean and sustainable sources of offshore renewable energy.

"To harness this energy for the benefit of all, we need to ensure we put the right offshore technologies in the right places," he said.

"I encourage all, particularly those in coastal and island communities, to participate in the consultation events."

"The maritime area is a shared space and we want to hear from all those with an interest in our seas. How we plan for this development will be important to ensure benefits

are delivered for everyone."

At the heart of the draft ORED II is an ambition to meet the country's future energy demands, transform our economy, achieve net-zero carbon emissions and protect our environment.

It has been developed in collaboration with the environmental sector, fisheries, academics, industry and the Government.

Views are particularly welcome from local tourism, fishing, leisure and sports organisations or anyone with an interest in Ireland's maritime resources.

Following the conclusion of the public consultation process and consideration of all submissions, the draft ORED II will be finalised and published this summer.

Have your say by filling out the online survey at: [www.Gov.ie/OffshoreEnergyPlan](http://www.Gov.ie/OffshoreEnergyPlan).

### Survey finds Kinsale beech tree to be 'healthy'

An historic beech tree, that may be up to 250-years-old, was temporarily saved from felling by the Kinsale community in February of this year. The tree is a prominent feature on Compass Hill, that once belonged to an ancient forest of which there are only a handful of survivors remaining. The tree was in immediate danger of being felled over insurance concerns, as it is positioned above the ETB's local Outdoor education Centre (OEC). Constructive engagement between the OEC, the State Insurer and the local community led to a stay of execution only days before the intended felling. The state insurer, the IPB, demanded the felling over aspects of reports from professional arborists.

The issue of the felling was highlighted by Henrik Lepel, a local tree surgeon, on local social media. This resulted in the formation of a group of concerned locals together with Transition Town Kinsale and local Green Party Representative, Marc Ó Riain. A petition to save the tree received 1000 signatories and the issue was raised outside the Dail by South West Cork TD Christopher O'Sullivan and on TG4 by historian Dermot Ryan. The IBP, OEC and ETB changed their position on St

Brigid's day and the town welcomed the news. The IPB stated they were willing to engage with the community and seek more sustainable and alternative solution to the removal of the tree.

Using a freedom of information request under the EU Access to Information on the Environment, the local community Beech Tree Group secured the arborists reports on the health of the tree. The group has welcomed the fact that the most recent survey clearly states that the tree is in excellent health. With an annual tree survey and ongoing care and maintenance it could well be in position for decades to come.

The fundamental question of the risk level of this tree is still under investigation through a newly requested investigation. Support gained from arborists and tree experts around the country suggests that both ground radar and tomography tests (which surveys the density of the tree and its internal health), further environmental impact studies, monitoring and maintenance program are all necessary to secure the Kinsale Beech Tree's future. With the amount of local interest and signatures on the petition, this process has clearly illustrated the need for more transparent community deci-

sion making processes. The Beech Tree group compliments the ETB, OEC and IPB on their constructive engagement with the community thus far and looks forward to being involved in assessments and decisions going forward.

In recognition of this beech tree as part of the wider community, Transition Town Kinsale included

a replica tree in this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade entry and local creatives created a colourful and exuberant spectacle of biodiversity which won the Overall Cup on the day.

To visit the tree just walk up Compass Hill from the Municipal Hall side and you will see its unmistakable outline on the horizon.





# The best of Breton in a West Cork crepe

'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans' is a saying that is particularly true of West Cork, which has a way of often drawing people down unexpected life paths!

For Linda Shaw-Hamilton and Sebastian (Seb) Carava of La Creperie, when they moved their family from Brittany to West Cork 16 years ago, they never anticipated the direction that life would draw them in here.

“We actually had always dreamed of working as craftspeople, ever since before we met, me in pottery and Seb in woodwork, but that never happened,” explains Linda “not yet anyway!”

While La Creperie started off in 2019 from a small stall at Skibbereen market, before expanding to Bantry and then Clonakilty; two years ago the couple left their jobs to become fulltime market traders. Today their popular food van, renovated by Seb during lockdown, is always conspicuous for the long line of people queuing for their tasty crepes and galettes.

The recipe that West Cork customers enjoy today travelled with the couple from France, from the quaint little crêperie where Linda worked, in a little mountain village of 170 habitants in Brittany.

Crêpes and galettes are a big part of the culinary tradition in Brittany. Every village has at least one crêperie and most households would have a crêpe machine – a ‘billig’ in the Breton language.

“Different areas have different styles and where we lived the crepes were made particularly thin,” shares Linda. “Actually that’s the big difference between crepes and pancakes, crepes and galettes are made very big, like 40cm in diameter but very thin, so they cook really quickly on the extremely hot bilig and are then folded over a few times.”

She explains that galettes are made from buckwheat flour, which the couple stock up on on trips to visit friends in France.

“The buckwheat flour we use in our galettes (buckwheat savoury crepes) is one we can’t get here. It’s grown and milled on an organic farm in Brittany

and the quality is excellent; it’s non-refined and so very flavour-some and nutritious.

“At the beginning not that many people knew what a galette was, but they have become increasingly popular.”

There are now eight savoury options on buckwheat galettes and 10 sweet crêpe options on the menu. Wheat and dairy intolerances and vegans are also catered for. Linda and Seb use mainly fairtrade and organic and source as much of their ingredients as possible locally with the eggs, mushrooms, ham,



vegan cheese and fresh greens all bought from the market.

When they first moved back with their two daughters to West Cork in 2007 to be closer to Linda’s granny, the plan was to stay for a year. Although nostalgic at times for France, West Cork is now most definitely home for the couple who first met in the summer of 1995 when they were in their early twenties in a little pub in Plouyé, a very small village of Brittany, run by an eccentric and interesting Welsh man, where Linda was the barmaid.

While Linda has worked on and off in kitchens since her teenage years, including Adele’s



in Schull and Hudson’s in Ballydehob and her local crêperie in France, Seb’s love of food started with his grandparents, who were from the Breton-speaking part of Brittany. Family dinners were always hours around the table – eight hours on Christmas day – enjoying multiple courses. “It was like a medieval feast and one I always looked forward to,” shares Seb.

“We would start with seafood platters including cray fish, full crab, periwinkles and clams, then move on to diverse raw vegetables followed by cold meats and a charcuterie board, followed by the main dish, a big roast, varying between beef, lamb, chicken, pheasant and venison. After the main dish we would have lettuce and cheese and then finally, the dessert.”

Seb’s family on his father’s side were originally from Sicily but lived in Tunisia for three generations amongst a Sicilian community, before arriving in France in 1964. A large family, it wasn’t uncommon to have 25 sitting around the dinner table on many family occasions, enjoying mediterranean cuisine.

“More feasts,” laughs Seb “a mixture of Italian and Arabic, all sorts of pasta dishes, couscous, tagine, octopus and so on.”

Unsurprisingly he gets passionate when talking about food “My friends in Ireland tease me about this but in France it’s quite normal!” he laughs.

For both Linda and Seb, the ease of conversation and chats they share with their customers, and getting to know them over the years, is what makes

their work so satisfying and interesting.

“We love the little chitchats we have with the young and older generations,” they share. “You meet people from all walks of life and we really enjoy the connections we have with customers while we’re cooking for them.”

Linda’s grandparents, the Shepards, were from Schull and had a farm in Skibbereen before Linda was born. “I love it when local people visiting the stall share their childhood memories of my grandad when he used to deliver

the milk from house to house out of the churn!” she says.

“For many years I often felt homesick,” shares Seb. “But last year for the first time in 15 years I realised that I would find it really difficult to go back to live in France. I like the mixture of people in West Cork and I find it’s generally easy to start a conversation with an Irish person whether you are at the pub counter or queuing at the supermarket till. There is a very strong sense of community here where everyone is looking out for each other.”

The crêperie has been a real plus in both their lives and

Linda and Seb enjoy working together...prepping and all the other behind-the-scene stuff that goes with running a busy market food stall and the fun part, cooking and meeting people at the markets. “The

flow is easy...Mostly” they laugh.

You can catch La Creperie at Clonakilty Market every Friday and Skibbereen Market on Saturdays.



## Sharon's view

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# people Food, Health & Lifestyle

special focus: nature's larder

## No 'knead' for anything else

Called the 'staff of life' because it is a basic food that supports life in almost every global culture, the world of bread is vast and varied. However, by using only the highest quality ingredients, Wildflour bakery in Innishannon has risen above the fray to become a West Cork favourite. Owner and head baker Chris Fahey speaks to **West Cork People** about his baking adventure.

Surprisingly it was a Netflix documentary that provided the impetus for Tipperary-born Chris to take up bread-making in the first place. "Food writer Michael Pollen inspired me to start baking in 2016," he says, "After seeing his documentary 'Cooked', I was fascinated with the way he spoke about bread and it was my first time seeing the sourdough process."

'Cooked' examined the primal human need to cook and issued a clarion call for a return to the kitchen in order to reclaim lost traditions and restore balance to our lives.

"Once I started baking bread

I became addicted."

Chris had always had a yearning to run his own business, an idea that had matured as he gathered life experiences. "I thought there was an opening in Cork for real bread so I started baking in a wood-fired pizza oven and selling bread from the boot of my car," he explains.

Word started to spread and, when the time was right, Chris made the decision to expand; "After working in the city for years and seeing what the pandemic did to businesses there, I thought it was better to move outside the city."

A Daft search of potentials threw up a building on



Innishannon's Main Street but Chris initially wasn't keen: "My wife's uncle convinced me that if we cut down a few walls, we could make a go of it."

After months of hard graft and a total overhaul of the premises, Chris's dream of a bricks and mortar bakery shop

The Wildflour ethos is to use chemical-free flour from farms that are concerned about soil health and quality grain rather than getting the most grain possible from a field.

was realised in August 2021. "I'm delighted it worked out because the village of Innishannon has been amazingly supportive!"

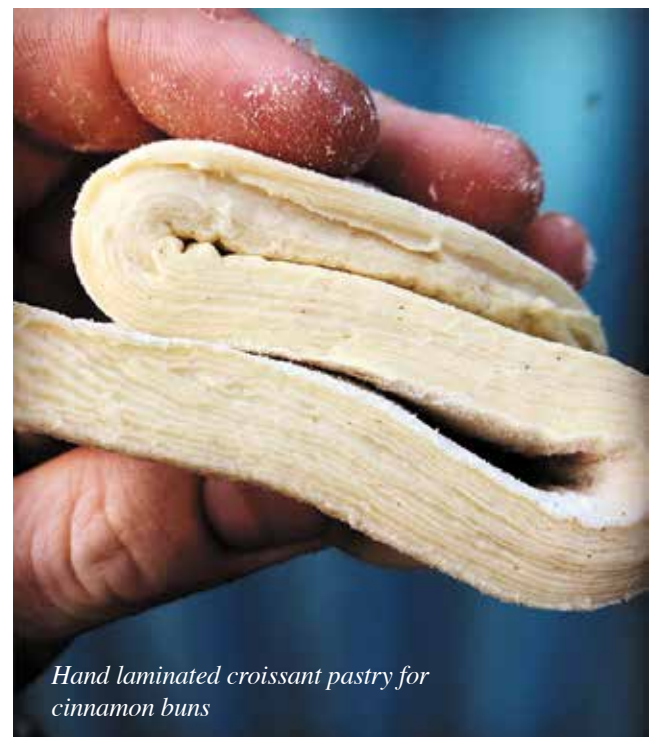
The Wildflour ethos is to use chemical-free flour from farms that are concerned about soil health and quality grain rather than getting the most grain possible from a field. Current suppliers are Wildfarmed in the UK and Oak Forest Mills in Kilkenny.

"This makes the flour we use more nutritious and it actually tastes better too," Chris promises.

But man cannot live by bread alone so Wildflour actually now makes more pastries than bread! "This empire is built with butter," Chris jokes. "Most of our pastries are laminated, croissant-based dough, also using chemical free flour plus fantastic pastry butter from Normandy in France."

When asked about his favourite aspect of being self-employed, Chris cites creative freedom. "If I have an idea I don't have to pitch it to anyone, I can just do it."

Chris is now living in Drimoleague and expecting his first child with wife Michelle. "That's going to be my main hobby for a while!" he acknowl-



Hand laminated croissant pastry for cinnamon buns

edges, "but other than that I'm big into growing veg in the garden. I think everyone should be growing something! I also love cooking. Even after a long day at work I'd be happy to cook up a storm and wreck the kitchen."

For naturally leavened bread, hand-made pastries and quality

coffee from Stone Valley, visit Wildflour Bakery in Innishannon. Open Wed-Fri 7.30am-3pm, Sat-Sun 9am-3pm. Bread and pastries are also available in a few select cafés and shops around the city and West Cork.

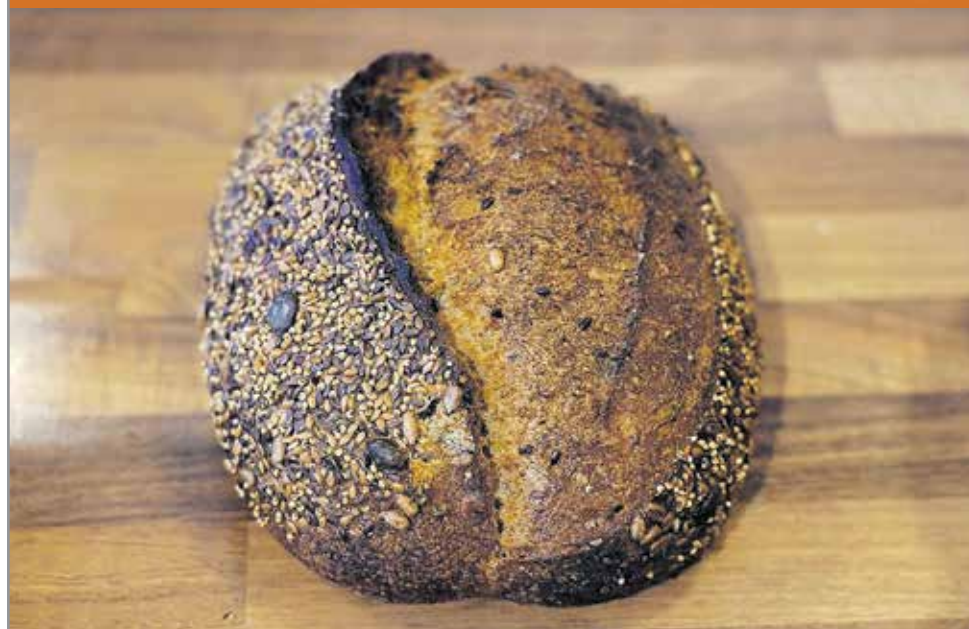
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## people Food, Health &amp; Lifestyle

# Passionate about cacao

Clonakilty chocolatier Allison Roberts was just 12-years-old when she first dipped her finger into making and selling chocolate. While she took a break to study Globalisation and Consumerism at University, a subject she says that left her lost and jaded, after moving from Canada to Ireland in 2008, her passion and curiosity reignited and she started selling handmade chocolates at the local Christmas markets and stocking local shops.

For Allison, making chocolate goes hand in hand with delving into issues around sustainability, human rights and the food industry. Her company Exploding Tree, which today is a team of four, aims to be zero-waste and its supply chain is simple and direct.

In order to be zero waste Exploding Tree sells as much of its products as possible in bulk and unwrapped. Any packaging that is used by the company is carefully sourced and biodegradable or better yet compostable or recyclable. Customers can opt to buy Exploding Tree bars unwrapped on the website and 'save the wrap' on your order allowing the company to re-use postal packaging.

Exploding Tree buys all of its cocoa beans and coconut

sugar from Fairtrade Organic cooperatives in Ghana and Indonesia. Secondary ingredients are sourced as locally as possible, mostly Irish, but sometimes from other EU countries and organic whenever possible.

Allison is driven by her passion to run her business as a social-enterprise. "I want to share with others that small and ethically-minded businesses can be a very real (and very very rewarding) solution to so many of the problems we are facing today," she says.

Starting out as a solo chocolatier, Allison originally bought in a base chocolate from Belgium, crafting it into shapes to sell at markets. Today she buys in raw cacao beans and makes the chocolate from the bean to her own recipes for healthier Fairtrade

chocolate that is really different from anything you could find in a supermarket. She also does a lot of chocolate making workshops and many of her orders come direct from customers through the website. "Both of these enable me closer contact to my customers and to sell my bean-to-bar chocolate with less packaging," she shares.

Not only is she still in business in a very competitive market 15 years after starting out but Allison has not compromised on any of her values. Her full bean-to-bar chocolate factory in Clonakilty was awarded the Irish Food Writers' Guild sustainability award in March 2020 and has also received the McKennas guide award every year since 2014.

She says she loves the freedom that being her own boss allows her. "I get to be creative, follow my passion and take holidays whenever I want! she says. "I have met so many interesting people and continue to learn so much. It brings me a lot more than a living wage!"

Like any business there have been challenges but Allison is pragmatic. "A lot of my challenges have been pretty 'self-inflicted'," she shrugs. "One of

the things about running your own business and going against the grain is there is plenty of opportunity for self-scrutiny! Any small (or perceived) issue can trigger insecurities and anxieties – and combined with a dose of self-saboteur tendencies have led to some pretty low lows but I've done so much work in this area to get to where I am now and I'm happy to chat to anyone who's struggling and needs some empathy!"

Always interested in forging new connections and keen to learn more, in the near future she would love to go back to visit the new cooperative she is sourcing from – the only Fairtrade Organic cooperative in West Africa, the ABOCFA cooperative. "They are doing amazing work," she says.

She would also like to learn more about what needs to happen in her industry to help farmers be more resilient and diversify to face climate change. "Eighty per cent of the world's cocoa comes from this area and they will be facing the potential loss of 50 per cent of their arable land in the next 50 years," she says.

This time of year, the Exploding Tree team, a happy mix of



Allison with a DIY Easter Egg kit, complete with reusable mould, detailed instructions and chocolate of your choice.

food lovers, are busy making Easter eggs and bunnies, which never go out of fashion! There is lots of roasting, cracking, winnowing, grinding and tempering chocolate happening in the factory, as well as other jobs ranging from Instagramming to packing orders.

It is also possible to purchase 1kg bags of rough untempered chocolate. "This is our base chocolate we pour into slabs straight out of the stone grinder," explains Allison. "It can be used in baking or eaten straight from

the pack so a lot of our customers have discovered it as a better alternative to buying bars."

Right now however the buzz word at Exploding Tree is DIY. "We are selling a new DIY Easter egg kit, DIY truffle kit, Experimenters kits and Choco-lovers survival kit. All these boxes come with lots of chocolate, ideas and instructions to have fun with chocolate at home," explains Allison.

Orders for Easter can be placed through the website explodingtree.com



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# people Food, Health & Lifestyle

special focus: nature's larder

## Building a brand, bean by bean

A new coffee brand is causing quite a flutter in West Cork. Blue Butterfly Coffee, whose logo signifies the important role butterflies have in pollinating coffee plants, is the brainchild of former distributors of Java Republic, Fintan Stanley and the late Kieran White. Paul Hayes, the brand's South West Business Development Manager, speaks to West Cork People about the company's origin story and its ambitions.

Following the 2019 sale of Java Republic to Cafento, a large Spanish multinational, Fintan Stanley and Kieran White quickly realised from meetings with the new owners that there was now a mismatch in agendas and ambitions; therefore the entrepreneurial pair set about establishing a new brand that was more in line with their dreams.

A blue butterfly is usually associated with good fortune but the fledgling company suffered two significant blows in its first 18 months. The brand was launched on Friday, March 13, 2020 – the weekend Covid closed the country – and Kieran tragically passed away suddenly

in September 2021, leaving all who knew and worked with him reeling.

Against the odds the company survived and is now thriving, with its own roastery and barista training centre in Fintan's home town of Waterford.

Paul Hayes joined the team last November with a mission to expand the brand into the South West. Many will know Paul as a Cork County Councillor but he also spent 13 years in sales and quality for Java Republic.

"I was aware of the Blue Butterfly plan that Fintan and Kieran had been working on but, with Kieran's untimely passing, I thought plans to expand into the South West region

would never materialise," Paul explains.

However, following several conversations with Fintan and his team in the South East, and after returning from a 'bucket-list adventure' in the Himalayas, Paul felt the time was right to join this exciting new brand.

"There has been a coffee revolution in Ireland over the last 30 years – when I was growing up, most households were only drinking tea, and coffee came in jars from Nescafe or Maxwell House!," Paul recalls with a laugh. "Coffee is seen as an affordable little luxury that people can treat themselves to daily so they won't tolerate mediocre quality."



Paul Hayes (l) with Fintan Stanley at the Blue Butterfly Coffee roastery in Waterford.



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"Our offering of competitively-priced medium roast coffees, together with barista training and top notch coffee equipment and support, is thankfully striking the right cord with people."

All Blue Butterfly Coffee raw beans are ethically sourced and certified as either Rainforest Alliance or Fairtrade, with some certified as Organic. Fintan has personally visited many countries of origin to ensure the quality and transparency of the produce Blue Butterfly is buying, and to build strong relationships with the local producers and farmers there.

Relationship building is high on Paul's agenda too, from growers to those in the trade and onwards to the end user: "I'm very much a people person and love interacting with customers on a daily basis. I believe the best way to grow all of our businesses is by meeting customers regularly, listening, finding solutions and suggesting new ideas."

"Really I'm happiest with my sleeves rolled up; adjusting equipment settings, sharing my knowledge with staff, or just calling in with a delivery and enjoying a coffee and a chat!"

Paul relied on his strong relationships to see him through a difficult first few months in his new role. "Not long after I started, my dad Mike passed away after a short illness, followed a few weeks later by my mother-in-law Eileen," he shares. "Both were kind, generous and easy-going individuals, much loved by all who knew them. With these bereavements, and trying to establish this new brand here, it was quite challenging at times. Knowing I've always got the support of my family, community and friends pushed me on."

A keen hiker, Paul also found solace taking his dogs for a daily walk on Broadstrand in Courtmacsherry and on longer weekend hikes in Cork, Kerry and Waterford. "I enjoyed the trip of a lifetime to Everest Base Camp last year and would love to take on the highest mountain in Africa next, Kilimanjaro!" he ventures.

For now his busy but fulfilling daily life is firmly in West Cork. "I really appreciate the support of those customers who have put their faith in me so far, and I know Kieran White would have enjoyed seeing the brand he helped create now available in outlets across Cork and Kerry."



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## people Food, Health &amp; Lifestyle

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## A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

Looking out of the glasshouse the other day, thinking about which recipe I could write this month, it came to me how much tastier our lives would be if everyone could grow their own salad and herbs.

I know this may sound problematic for people that live in small spaces and don't have gardens but it's actually very possible.

Salad and herbs will grow happily in pots on window sills, patios or small garden borders and the flavour is going to be so superior to those that we find in the supermarkets in plastic bags. For sure these bags look very attractive but looks aren't everything and generally they don't really taste of much.

All that is needed to grow your own are containers – buckets or large plant pots for salad leaves and rocket, plant pots for herbs, and some decent compost. Like everything in our lives we generally get what we pay for so it's worth investing in a decent bag of compost, which will contain more nutrients and assist better drainage than the cheap stuff which tends to clump.

Seeds are widely available but unless you are getting together a seed share with friends it'll be a good idea to buy a packet of mixed salad leaves and some rocket seeds. These both grow very well in containers and make excellent cut and come again meaning that some of the small leaves are harvested and the remaining leaves have room to grow and so it goes on. Each pot should give about six weeks picking. Usually we sow salad and rocket seeds again as soon as we start picking the previous crop. This always ensures a continuous supply.

To begin, put a few stones at the bottom of the pot – this helps drainage, then fill with compost. Water the compost well – it always seems to arrive very dry. Sprinkle a few



seeds on top, scatter with a little more compost, pat gently and sprinkle with a little more water. Put somewhere warm and sunny. This could be your windowsill, porch or outside. After five to seven days you will see the seeds popping up. Maybe longer if the seeds are outside as it's not very warm yet. Water every day or two – this will depend on the weather. If the sun is belting through the surface will dry quickly but if it's a damp old day it might not need anything.

Growing herbs from seed is of course possible but if you live alone or are a small family you won't need a lot. Here is a very handy 'cheat' – buy a pot of herbs from the supermarket. The pots that these plants are sold in don't have the space or nutrients for an extended growing period but if you put these plants into a bigger pot with good quality compost they will thrive and you'll be able to pick away for the summer.

The one thing that these plants will thrive on is continuity of care. They like to be watered well but not drowned and they definitely don't like to have 'soggy feet', which means the surface is continuously damp but the roots are dry. Seeds won't germinate if they are too dry but if you water them too much they'll rot so be sure to pick the middle ground.

It really isn't complicated and as you will be picking these leaves regularly you're sure to remember to look after them!

Here's a tasty recipe for a Carrot and Cashew Pilaf with Crispy Onions. It's perfect spring food and there are always plenty of carrots!

## Roasted Carrot and Cashew Pilaf with Crispy Onions/Coriander Chilli sauce

## Ingredients:

- 700g carrots
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 300g Basmati rice
- 100g cashew nuts
- 2 onions
- 75g butter or 75mls olive oil
- 1tsp ground coriander
- 4-5cms cinnamon stick
- half tsp turmeric
- half tsp ground allspice
- half tsp salt
- 450mls vegetable stock
- Vegetable oil to fry the onions
- handful of chopped coriander

## Method:

Pre heat the oven to 200c. Peel and chop the carrots into equal sized chunks – I like to chop on the diagonal as the more carrot exposed to the heat the better the flavour. Toss in a little oil together with a little salt and the cumin seeds. Tip into a pan. They need to lay in a single layer. Roast for 15mins then give the pan a shake and roast for a further 15 mins. The carrots should be just tender.

Measure the rice and cover with cold water and put aside.

Heat a pan, add a dribble of oil and the cashew nuts. Cook the cashews, stirring continuously until they take a little colour then remove from the pan and put aside.

Peel and chop the onions.

Melt the butter or heat the oil gently in a pot that has a close fitting lid – you'll need the lid later. Add the cashew nuts and stir until they take a little colour then remove and put aside. Add the ground coriander, allspice and cinnamon stick to the butter/oil and cook gently for a minute then stir in the onions. Season with a little salt. Cook until the onions have softened but don't let them brown.

Rinse the rice in a sieve under a running tap, shake off the excess water then stir into the onions. Cook for one minute. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Taste and add more salt if you think it needs it then turn the heat down and cover with the lid. Bring to the boil then turn down to the lowest simmer then cook for 12 minutes. Turn the heat off but don't open the lid, just leave the pilaf to relax for a further five-ten minutes.

Stir in the roasted carrots and cashew nuts and serve with a little coriander chilli sauce.

## Coriander Chilli Sauce

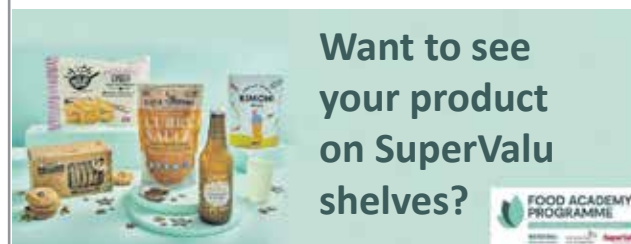
## Ingredients:

- 1 bunch fresh coriander
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 2 green chillies
- Pinch ground cumin
- Salt
- 50mls Olive oil

## Method:

Peel the garlic and roughly chop. Remove some or all of the seeds from the chillies, depending on how much heat you like. Roughly chop the coriander

Buzz all the ingredients together. Season with salt.



## Food Academy Programme 2023/2024 now open for applications

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

## Programme Objectives

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

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

## How to Apply &amp; Deadlines

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

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

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

**Application deadline 7th April 2023**

For more information & to apply: [www.localenterprise.ie/FoodSupports/Food-Academy-Programme](http://www.localenterprise.ie/FoodSupports/Food-Academy-Programme)

Contact us at our Clonakilty, West Cork office on:  
T: 023-8834700 E: [westcork@leo.corkcoco.ie](mailto:westcork@leo.corkcoco.ie)

Personal information collected by Cork County Council is done so in order for us to process your representation/enquiry and legally we can process it as it is necessary for us to comply with our statutory/legal obligations. The information will be processed in line with our privacy statement which is available on our website: [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie)



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# people Food, Health & Lifestyle

special focus: nature's larder

## Oil pulling and oral hygiene

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### HEALTH

Hannah Dare  
Organico Bantry

Recently, I had a customer looking for a particular organic Portuguese Extra Virgin olive oil. He wanted it in particular because of its flavour, but not for cooking – he wanted it for oil pulling. He said you can really tell the quality of the oil you use when you do oil pulling – and this was the one he had found that stood up to his exacting standards.

Have you heard of oil pulling? It's the Ayurvedic practice of using oil to clean your gums and interdental spaces. It is a technique that has been around for centuries, intended to pull out bacteria and toxins from every nook and corner of the mouth. It's a natural replacement for harsh alcohol based mouthwashes, and it's amazing for long term oral health.

Coincidentally my dentist recently gave me a lecture about oral hygiene. I have always brushed my teeth every morning and evening but have been lax with my flossing. During a checkup for an abscess (that turned out to be a blister!) my dentist gave me a much-needed refresher on oral hygiene. He gave a thorough explanation

of the reason we need to clean between our teeth with an interdental pic (where your brush can't reach) and then floss up under the gum each side (bacteria and plaque build up under the gum, leading to gum inflammation which leads to loss of bone and loose teeth). I asked if he had seen any evidence of the benefits of oil pulling and he said he had had a patient who showed huge improvements in their gum health that it had come from oil pulling. That's not to say that oil pulling can replace flossing and brushing but it's a great addition to your oral health routine.

For some reason, the clarity of his explanation combined with the relief that it wasn't an abscess has meant that I've kept up the routine he suggested ever since – and I've also added oil pulling.

I had been using cold pressed sesame oil but now I've swapped to the Olive Oil my customer recommended. And it's WAY more enjoyable. I actually like the taste, which really helps. Next I'll try cold pressed coconut oil, because that also has many benefits.

Oil pulling is really very simple. You take a swig of oil (or a spoonful if you're using coconut oil which is likely solid) and swish it around your mouth for three to 10 minutes. Your aim is to swish it between your teeth. The oil is spat out (into the toilet, not down the sink) followed by a quick gargle with lukewarm water.

Ayurveda practitioners recommend making oil pulling



health, and we also know that the oral microbiome is the starting point of the human microbiome, it makes sense to be aware of what we put in our mouth and how it affects both the good and the bad bacteria.

Commercial mouthwashes can be very harsh and can kill off the good bacteria in our mouths, so I was happy to find that recent studies have shown that oil pulling can be as effective as mouthwash in reducing harmful bacteria in the mouth. It can be very helpful in cases of oral thrush, bad breath, and bleeding gums.

I'll end with this quote from Dr Burhenne "Your teeth are designed to rebuild (remineralise) themselves on an ongoing basis, but this remineralisation is only possible in the presence of the proper nutrients and the absence of cavity-causing bacteria."

If you are interested in more information on functional dentistry and the importance of nutrition and good oral hygiene have a look at his website [www.askthedentist.com](http://www.askthedentist.com) – Dr Burhenne is a US based functional dentist and he has tons of helpful advice on his site.

Let me know if you try oil pulling, and which oil you use – the suggested oils are cold pressed organic sesame oil, cold pressed organic coconut and cold pressed extra virgin olive oil.

Organico Shop Deli & Bakery is open from 9-6pm Monday to Saturday, on Glengarriff Road in Bantry. Call us on 027 51391; if you have any questions, email us on [info@organico.ie](mailto:info@organico.ie) and find us online on [www.organico.ie](http://www.organico.ie).

part of your daily morning ritual. The traditional advice is to do it for as long as 20 minutes, but from what I've read even three to five minutes gives good benefits. I've also seen advice to brush afterwards, but apparently the ideal is to brush first because besides removing bacteria and toxins, swishing the oil inside the mouth forms a protective layer to prevent tooth decay.

"The biofilm on your teeth needs to be reconditioned each day to retain healthy colonies of good bacteria. Rebalancing the oral microbiome is one of the key benefits of oil pulling. If you brush after you oil pull, you'll actually brush away the anti-inflammatory compounds in the oil and limit their ability to support your oral health." Dr. Mark Burhenne, AskTheDentist.

Oil pulling seems to be a lot gentler than commercial mouthwashes, and it's beneficial for our oral microbiome. According to Dr. Mark Burhenne:

"Alcohol based mouthwashes containing antimicrobial agents can disrupt the oral microbiome, leading to an imbalance of beneficial and harmful bacteria and potentially compromising oral and systemic health."

Since we know that our microbiome is crucial to good

## Sacred Heart says "Sustainable beef is the Future"

Transition Year students from Sacred Heart Secondary School in Clonakilty have progressed to the third stage of the Certified Irish Angus Beef Competition.

Certified Irish Angus, ABP and Kepak, run the Certified Irish Angus Schools Competition, which aims to encourage second-level students to gain an understanding about the care and attention that is required to produce and market the highest quality Irish Angus beef for consumers. The initiative challenges groups of students to rear five certified Irish Angus

calves for eighteen months and carry out research on a chosen topic.

Saoirse Whelton, Aine White, Sinead Walsh and Riona Collins are one of 42 groups that have been selected to exhibit project ideas to a panel of Agri-food industry experts at the next stage of the Certified Irish Angus Schools Exhibition in Croke Park on March 31, 2023.

The five schools who demonstrate the best understanding of the project will be announced as finalists, and will be presented with their calves at the National

Ploughing Championships in September 2023.

A record number of over 170 school groups entered this year's competition and Sacred Heart's was one of 72 to be called to the interview stage in Athlone/Limerick in January.

"We created a project to help raise consumer awareness about sustainable beef. Public opinion on beef farming is often a negative one due to concerns about the impact beef farming has on the environment. However, our group is looking to present the bigger picture and show people that beef farming can be sustainable," says Saoirse Whelton, contestant.

"Our school group created a three-minute entry video based on the chosen topic of sustainability and the three pillars; social, economic and environmental. We are just over the moon to have

made it this far in the competition and have this opportunity to break the bias surrounding beef farming through educating the consumer and, in turn, promote Irish Angus Beef."

The students of Sacred Heart believe that education and promotion is key to the future success of sustainable beef farming. They believe that through farmers signing up to the Teagasc Water Catchment Programme or using GPS fertiliser spreaders, there is a brighter future for both Irish Angus Certified Beef and the farmer who produces it.

Sinead Walsh hopes that "through this project we will break the bias towards beef farming and the consumer can enjoy this produce knowing it went from farm to plate in an ecological way".

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Sinéad, Saoirse, Aine and Riona



# Burgers with attitude

special focus: nature's larder



If ambition is the path to success then Alex Nowotynski, 28, is surely on it. The good-humoured mountain biking fanatic born and bred in Drinagh, who learnt the gourmet burger trade from the late Frankie Murphy of Frankie's Badass Burgers and has been carrying on his legacy since 2018, is getting ready for another busy summer season with his food truck The Badass BBQ.

Born with the gift of the gab, and a fierce work ethic he credits his Polish grandad with, Alex is never happier than when he's serving up his tasty gourmet burgers and talking the talk to a long queue of hungry customers at Skibbereen Market with the help of his righthand man, nephew Luke.

When he's not at the market, Alex, who has been racing competitively since he was 13, is following the Irish mountain bike race series around the country, catering for, competing

and sometimes even winning in it!

The Badass BBQ is renowned for its mouth-smacking, finger-licking breakfasts and beef burgers with all the trimmings piled high. Alex sources most of his ingredients locally: The beef comes from Drinagh Butchers in Skibbereen, where the burgers are made to Alex's recipe and collected on the morning, the Pork is from Allshires in Rosscarbery, eggs from Shehymore Free Range Poultry, cheeses from Gubbeen and Carbery and the bread from

Field's Bakery.

On the menu are nine different beef burgers, all available gluten-free, three hot dogs and seven breakfast options, which boasts an Italian, Mexican and Irish-style breakfast. Alex is in to Skibbereen market early every Saturday to collect his supplies and get the 10 to 15 kilos of chipped, par-boiled and marinated potatoes twice-fried for his famous vegetarian hashes. He makes his own hot sauces, salsas and salads. The biggest seller on the Badass menu is the 'Gubbeen Smoked Cheese and Bacon Burger' with the 'Not a Big Mac' hot on its heels. "It has all the elements and taste profile of a Big Mac but it's done properly," laughs Alex. All of the ware and packaging used by Badass is compostable.

Come winter and Alex will be off for a brief spell to Scotland where he drives machinery in the Christmas tree harvest. "The money is too good not to do it,"

he shrugs. And then it's over to France, where he has completed six seasons, four of which were under a Michelin-trained chef.

From March until October however, it's foot to the floor between the market and catering to private events and mountain bike race events. It's not unusual for the Nowotynskis to cover 90 breakfast orders in under two-and-a-half hours or feed up to 300 between 9am and 3pm

on a good day in Skibbereen and cater for up to 600 famished racers during a mountain bike weekend. "Every day that I have a queue and it's a sunny day that's a high for me," shares Alex. "I feel really privileged that people come back week after week; I have at least 100 repeat customers every Saturday...I think a lot of people come for the chat and the craic," he adds laughing.

This year Alex is looking for a permanent location to park his food truck midweek in Skibbereen so if you miss it on a Saturday keep an eye out for the queue!

The Badass BBQ can cater up to 200 for private events and functions. For more information or to make a booking contact Alex by emailing [nowotynskialex@gmail.com](mailto:nowotynskialex@gmail.com)



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## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



A highly coveted Weddingonline Award was brought home to Clonakilty by Valda Binding when her company 'takeNplace' was named Newcomer of the Year 2023. Well done Valda.



## people Food, Health & Lifestyle

special focus: **nature's larder**

# A true field to fork experience

Entering its third season, The Field Kitchen at Camus Farm is firmly established as a West Cork destination for seekers of special dining experiences. As an organic farm, sustainability, biodiversity and animal welfare are at the heart of everything on the 30-acre property. The award-winning restaurant offers an authentic field-to-fork experience, with much of the produce served, grown or reared on the farm.

There is a short walk from carpark to Field Kitchen, with a set down bay at the restaurant available for the less mobile. This walk is referred to as 'the first course', as it is a feast for the eyes and ears, up the 'botharín' that is lined with lush hedgerows and maturing trees and home to numerous birds and butterflies.

The vegetables, grown in a walled garden and two large polytunnels, are harvested hours before service to ensure maximum freshness. When Camus Farm Dexter Beef is on the menu, it will be from 100 per cent grass-fed cattle, and aged for at least 28 days. Over winter, the cattle are fed farm-made hay,

saved over the summer months each year. The menu is complemented by local craft beers on draught and an extensive old world wine list featuring small scale producers. Vegetarians, vegans and special dietary requirements are welcome.

The gallery in the restaurant showcases the work of local professional artists and crafters.

Just beyond the restaurant, there are nature trails to explore with panoramic views over Clonakilty Bay, or get up close to the suckler herd of native Irish Dexter Cattle.

Water is drawn from the Camus Farm well, free from the tastes and odours associated with mains water. Solar thermal

panels contribute to the hot water and solar photovoltaic panels contribute to the electrical power. The small amount of food waste generated by the restaurant is composted on-farm and used to improve the soil.

The business employs four people full-time, rising to over twenty in the summer months. Anyone interested in joining the team is welcome to get in touch.

Camus is a venue for ceremonies, celebrations and gatherings with the option for overnight camping. With seating for up to 100 indoors and a further 100 outdoors, larger groups and all weathers are catered for.

Plans for the annual 'Fair Days' music event are well



*Dexter Cattle*

underway for the August public holiday weekend. Following the hugely successful 'Christmas Craft Fair', plans are also underway for a 'Summer Makers Market'. Follow on Instagram @camusfarmfieldkichen to keep up to date.

Reservations are essential at the Field Kitchen as the food is harvested and prepared to order. Summer opening hours are from 6pm, Thursday to Saturday, and from 12noon Sunday. To book online or purchase gift vouchers visit [fieldkitchen.ie](http://fieldkitchen.ie) or call 086 826 3429.



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# The Eccles experience

special focus: nature's larder



Steeped in 250 years of rich history and situated in the quaint village of Glengarriff overlooking Bantry Bay on a stunning stretch of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, Eccles Hotel & Spa is a beautiful four star hotel in West Cork offering the finest in charm, comfort and location.

Under the direction of award winning Chef Eddie Attwell, Eccles Hotel has established a reputation for its excellent food, with most of the produce on Eddie's menus picked fresh daily from the hotel garden and polytunnels he has planted, foraged locally or supplied by the best of West Cork's artisan food and drink suppliers.

Prior to joining the Eccles

team, among other career highlights, Eddie spent time in the two star Michelin restaurant L'Enclume in Cumbria and has appeared twice on BBC's Great British Menu. He was recognised as West Cork's Local food Hero in 2019 and the hotel's breakfast was a national winner at Georgina Campbell's National Breakfast Awards 2020.

The Garnish Restaurant at Eccles boasts stunning panoramic views across Bantry Bay and offers a range of dining options including a wide choice of classic dishes sourced from renowned food suppliers within the local region of West Cork.

Dining at Eccles means enjoying carefully prepared meals and friendly service in pleasant settings. The bright and spacious room looks out over the picturesque surroundings of Glengarriff harbour and the Wild Atlantic Way beyond, home to some of the fresh local and seasonal ingredients that go

into the restaurant menus.

The Garnish Restaurant is open seven days a week, with dinner served from 6-9pm and Sunday Lunch served from 12.30-4pm.

The Spa at Eccles Hotel is a wellness environment unlike any other and is the ideal destination for a mind and body rejuvenation experience. With three luxurious treatment rooms, a deluxe double treatment suite overlooking Bantry Bay and the ultimate selection of VOYA organic Irish seaweed based therapies and experiences, you will be completely pampered in a world of your own.

To mirror the stunning natural surrounds of the wonderful West Cork maritime location, the treatments offered at The Spa at Eccles blend natural, organic, sustainable, locally and ethically sourced ingredients designed to give you immediate, visible results and long term benefits.

You don't need to book an



overnight stay to enjoy a day of relaxation at Eccles, the Spa also offers a range of Day Packages including a new 'Warming Massage Experience'. Using Specialised intensive warm oils, this experience combats aches and pains, releases tension and treats the skin by combining a luxurious trio of a back, neck, and shoulder massage, facial

massage, and a scalp and hair massage treatment.

This package also includes a two course lunch served in the Harbour Bar, complimentary use of the Thermal Spa Garden, Hot Tubs, Sauna and a glass of Prosecco/Mimosa/Organic Cordial, and a Sweet Treat!

Following your treatment, you can relax and unwind in

the seaview Relaxation Suite whilst enjoying a VOYA herbal tea. The Warming Massage Experience package is currently available for only €130pp.

To book your spa treatment or to make a dining reservation call 027 63093 or email [reservations@eccleshotel.com](mailto:reservations@eccleshotel.com). Visit [www.eccleshotel.com](http://www.eccleshotel.com) to find out more.

## New 'Food Matters' RTE series explores Ireland's food sustainability

Food Matters is a brand new RTÉ One series which uncovers Ireland's food sustainability and explores how the food system is a major contributor to the climate change emergency.

Presented by GIY (Grow it Yourself) founder Michael Kelly, this brand new six-part series sees Michael travelling throughout the country, starting in West Cork, meeting farmers, food producers, food experts, climate experts and chefs.

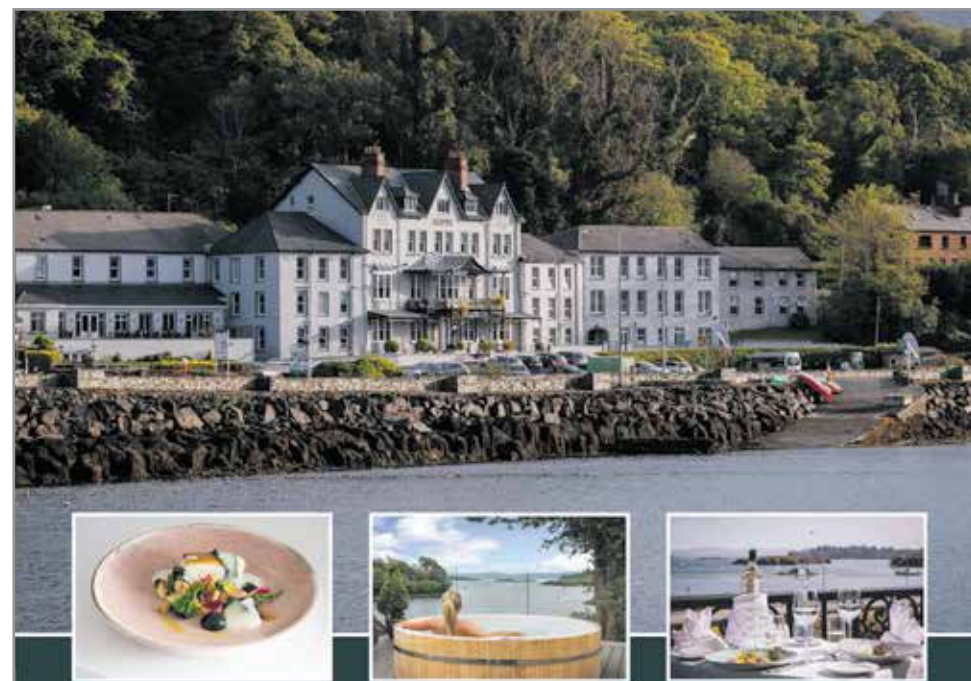
He also talks to economists, ecologists and activists as he



digs deep to uncover the complexity of the Irish food system and how it works, delivers and impacts the environment.

In the first programme, which aired on Wednesday, March 29, Michael travelled to West Cork to visit Dr. Steve Collins (*pictured*), a pioneer of regenerative agriculture, who is farming on the side of a mountain, and managing to grow a superfood in bad soil.

Watch it back on the RTE player.



### EXPERIENCE THE UNSPOILT BEAUTY OF WEST CORK AT ECCLES HOTEL & SPA

Steeped in 250 years of history and heritage, Eccles Hotel & Spa sits at the gateway to the Beara Peninsula with panoramic views over Glengarriff Bay out to the wild Atlantic beyond. Enjoy an oasis of calm and a menu that celebrates the finest seafood, and a bounty of fresh local artisan produce. Experience a natural wellness environment unlike any other at the Spa at Eccles. Then explore everything this wonderful part of the world has to offer. Golfing, walking, cycling, horse riding, fishing, sailing and sightseeing... there's something here for everyone.

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## people Food, Health & Lifestyle

# The best things in life are free



### IMAGE

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Coco Chanel is reputed to have said, 'The best things in life are free, the second-best things are very, very expensive'. I must admit that the second part of that quote is up for debate. Rising costs have been hitting us squarely in the jaw for sometime now, leaving many people with no option but to significantly cut back, on just

about everything, or at the very least, question and think about what to prioritise and what to discard. A recent survey still rates 'image' in the top three priorities associated with leading a contented and happy life. What does this mean? Are we cutting back in other areas of our lives just so we can still look good? What if I told you that there are so many ways that you can slash your image budget and still look and feel amazing?

Have you ever heard the expression 'She's all fur coat and no knickers'? I laugh every time I hear my daughter's friend say it...because it epitomises how so many people live these days. What it means is that some people would spend all of their money on a flash coat and then not have anything left to buy essential pieces, like underwear! The not-so-funny part is that the pressure on everyone to slot into the 'looking good' box means that this happens a hell of a lot more than any of us would like to admit. Faced with adversity (if that's what you want to call it) we need to

assess, recalibrate and realign with a more sensible approach to how we look, and as a result, how we feel about how we look. We are living in an amazing world and there are signs and signals and answers and solutions everywhere we look in nature! There is a Yin to every Yang, but we have to look a little deeper than just skimming across the surface.

Did you know that a banana peel is considered 'Nature's botox'? This is the answer to all of your prayers if you are nervous (and rightfully so) of having something injected into your face or neck. I should say a big thank you to all of the cosmetologists who have offered me free botox down through the years, I have always declined but am grateful for the fact that my opinion and review is much sought after. I decided, quite a while ago, never to go down this road. So I research alternative remedies, and yes, rubbing the inside of a banana peel to your face and neck does make a remarkable difference. It also has a cumulative effect so the more you do it, the better you look. Banana

peel is full of ingredients that the skin craves and flourishes with. Loaded with antioxidants (studies have found more antioxidants in unripe bananas than overripe ones), Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Silicon, zinc, Potassium, lots of anti-inflammatory agents and hydrating oils, banana peel is being praised as a cheaper, quicker and less invasive alternative to botox injections. I've been eating a banana every morning and then rubbing the peel to my face and neck...and the result is quite astonishing! I can definitely see and feel that it has improved elasticity along my neck and locked in moisture on my face and neck, my skin is less dehydrated than it was. My skin tone seems to be more even and more firm, some of my more 'obvious' wrinkles are diminishing somewhat but there is a welcomed reduction in fine lines around my eyes. Now when I put on make-up, my overall look is revitalised and brighter, perhaps due to the high amounts of Vitamin C in the peel. Would I recommend that you try it daily? Does a bear s\*\*t in the woods? Of course, it's completely natural so the skin absorbs it completely. You could also smack on some of the banana pulp, it gently exfoliates and banishes tired and dead skin cells. 10/10 from me.

Are you a big Winnie the Pooh fan? Winnie is a firm favourite in our house and while all of the other remnants of childhood have been given away or stored away, you will still find a few Winnie teddies, towels and photo frames in prime positions around the house. Pooh bear loves honey, perhaps that's why Winnie is the epitome of everlasting youth and we could all do with adding some more raw honey to our diets and using it on our skin. Ancient Egyptians used honey as a nutrient for the skin, I think we are all familiar with the stories about Cleopatra bathing in it. Archaeologists believe that it was used mainly because of its antibacterial properties but nutrient-enriched honey proved to be laden full of antioxidants too – the end result was flawless skin. Cleopatra also regularly had oatmeal baths proving that beauty recipes are ever so accessible to the modern woman. Raw honey is packed with components beneficial for your skin, especially if you have acne or autoimmune conditions such as eczema or psoriasis. Even Candida overgrowth can be controlled by applying honey to your



skin. In its natural form, honey is produced by enzyme activity, plant matter and live bacteria coming together to create a powerful ingredient, especially valuable for cosmetic uses. It can clear acne, heal scars and even out skin tone and local, raw, unpasteurised honey has the most potential for topical application on the skin. So make sure that the honey that you use is unpasteurised as in order to benefit your skin, it needs to have the healthy bacteria intact. Some recommend mixing honey with a teaspoon of cinnamon, this is a powerful antioxidant. Leave it on your face for eight to 10 mins and rinse off completely with warm water. If you feel that your skin is tired or dull, mix a little purified water with honey and apply to the face and neck. Leave it on for at least 15 mins and wash off, the purified water makes it easier to spread and also to remove after. Because honey is completely natural, it is unlikely to cause an allergic reaction.

Life is all about accepting what you can't control and focusing on what you can control. Ageing is a natural part of living, we should embrace it, all the while using what nature provides to look and feel as good as we possibly can. Don't feel bad if you can't afford whatever the latest promise of everlasting youth is, just remember that there was a time when doctors told people that it was safe to smoke, asbestos passed all safety regulations and Bayer laboratory produced heroin cough syrup in 1898 – and this was much sought after! The cough syrup was discontinued in 1910 when it was discovered that it didn't cure the cough but rather, made people so 'chilled out' that they didn't care if they were sick or not! Do your own research, use what is natural.

Stop giving out about how you look! Yes, I'm talking to you. Negative self-talk produces physiological stress in the body, rapidly elevating levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. Prolonged elevated levels cause illness, this has been scientifically substantiated but ARE YOU LISTENING? The more you criticise how you look, because the brain takes everything literally, the more parts of your body the brain will find for you to complain

about. It really is very simple, train yourself to take note of what you love about yourself and the more that you do that, the more things you will find to love. If you have tried in vain to lose weight, how about you focus on your posture and how you hold your head? It's a simple trick to lose five pounds! Be realistic, your instagram algorithm might be continually tempting you with the latest 'pull your belly in and lift your ass' but it's all just an illusion and what is pulled in and lifted up has to go somewhere else. I, for one, have seen all too many women fall 'sucky in' things and then end up looking like a prop forward, all bulk at the top and no neck!

Smile as much as you can, it's free, it's contagious and believe it or not, the more you smile, the younger you will look. Smiling exercises anywhere from five to 53 muscles in the face, the bigger the smile, the more muscles contracting and the result is an improvement in circulation, improving elasticity and reducing those natural grooves that come with age. Because this is the summer of 2023 and the summer of dresses, there is no better accessory to a flowing summer dress than a wonderful smile. It is the best accessory that you will ever add to any outfit, in fact. A recent study revealed that out of a group of 10 women dressed for an evening event, all wearing black, all of similar height and weight, five smiled and five posed without a smile, only one woman out of the five that didn't smile received votes in the 'Best Evening Look'. I think that it's safe to say that a big smile will 'woo' any audience!

If you want to find out more about 'Who How and Why we are and How We Feel' about ourselves dictates 'How We Function' in the world, check out my instagram @louiseodwyer7.

*'The standard of success in life isn't the things. It isn't the money or the stuff. It is absolutely the amount of joy that you feel'*  
– Abraham Hicks



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# The Beauty Edit



## 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.

### Max Factor Miracle Pure Skin improving Foundation SPF30

Believe in miracles! Inspired by skincare and mastered by Max Factor, the New Miracle collection is the most natural and caring range released by Max Factor to date. The new Miracle Pure Foundation from the collection is clinically proven to care for skin while you wear it. In just one minute and with just a drop, it plumps your skin, letting your complexion benefit in five ways, with improved radiance, firmness, elasticity, density, and suppleness. The advanced formula is infused with 89 per cent skincare ingredients including Vitamin C and Hyaluronic Acid. It's a skin improving foundation that conceals and cares, and the advanced formula is clinically proven to give 24 hours hydration as well as improve skin texture after prolonged wear, €17.99, available in leading pharmacies nationwide.

**Skin Formulas Hydra Mask**  
Skin Formulas latest skincare innovation to the Skin Formulas portfolio is the highly-anticipated Hydra Sheet Mask. Packed with a multi-weight hyaluronic acid to help boost the skin's moisture levels, the light formula delivers instant hydration leaving skin feeling soft, plump, and brighter. Comprising of a three-tiered hydration system that works by stimulating the skin's natural production of hyaluronic acid and collagen to achieve long-lasting radiant results. A premium blend

of amino acids and hyaluronic serum minimises fine lines and wrinkles, leaving skin softer, healthier, and plumper-looking while Camellia Sinensis Leaf Extract with its potent antioxidant properties helps to protect skin from environmental stressors, which can accelerate signs of ageing. Witch Hazel along with its tightening and toning benefits, helps to reduce inflammation, and soothes irritated skin, €40 (Box of 5 masks) or €8.50 (single mask), available from Skin Formulas stockists nationwide and online from [www.skinformulas.ie](http://www.skinformulas.ie)

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The new pioneering Skin Blue Filter supplement from Advanced Nutrition Programme is a specialised skin supplement that shields your skin from the effects of blue light. Did you know the most harmful blue light actually comes from the sun and not electronic devices. While damaging UV makes up only five per cent of sunlight, blue light makes up 25-30pc. Protecting skin from within, a synergy of cell-protecting nutrients and targeted antioxidants (Vitamin E, Biotin, Lutein, Zeaxanthin and Olive Fruit Extract) are all encased in blue capsules derived from spirulina extract. Excessive blue light exposure can accelerate the signs of ageing, speeding up the appearance of lines and wrinkles while triggering uneven skin tone and damaging the lipid layer of the skin. This one-a-day capsule, suitable for all skin types, helps protect skin from the impact of blue light by up to 60pc, shielding against premature ageing, helping target the appearance of discolouration and uneven skin tone while increasing skin luminosity and elasticity, €58 (60 capsules) available from Advanced Nutrition Programme stockists nationwide and online from [www.millies.ie](http://www.millies.ie)

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## people Food, Health & Lifestyle

# Support during the transitions of dying and grief



## 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.

If you're familiar with this column, you have an idea of what 'end of life' or 'death doula' means – a profession, as well as movement, that's expanding globally. Simply put, it's a non-medical role providing accompaniment, navigation and education about end of life.

I'm one such person offering this service while growing a practice here in West Cork. I learn from every individual story and experience that finds me, while continuing to refine what this work means. An end of life doula can be defined in a number of ways depending on who they're assisting. I resonate with being an informed companion bringing comfort, compassion and assistance to individuals as well as their loved ones; creating a space for them to feel safe and supported during the transitions of dying, death and grief. End of life doulas are not entirely new, as throughout history, people have been supporting dying and death in their communities. Today those of us engaged on this path are inspired by the role of birth doulas, also non-medical supports for individuals and families planning for birth. Birth doulas are often involved in preparations before, during and after a birth happens (i.e. post natal care). I too support people in personalised pre-planning (helping to clarify end of life wishes), during the transition of dying (i.e. vigil if requested) and in bereavement/grief, care after death has occurred.

I'm often asked: who is it that

contacts me? And my answer varies. Certainly included are people who have faced or are presently living with life-limiting illness, those receiving hospice or palliative care, others living in care homes, and carers themselves. Some would like in-person visits, while others solely prefer phone contact. I connect with a range of ages and genders, locals and 'blow-ins' – all are impacted by grief. There are also a good few who want to learn more about how to 'do' this work while others are curious to research or share more about it (via various media platforms). For those looking to hire a doula, contact might be a one-off or it can be ongoing; monthly or as needed. Those who contact me for self-referral are primarily seeking companionship; meaning someone to talk with about anything to do with the end of life. Some people have a broad support network around them, but still feel they'd like a neutral person (someone not directly related or involved emotionally) to share candidly with. While important and deeply meaningful, talking with someone close to us can be gently supported with additional guidance. I've also come across individuals

who want to be proactive and are genuinely open to approaching the end of life in an integrated way. These folks tend to view death and loss as a part of life; something we must face as with all other stages and milestones.

Caregivers: sometimes these are the people I'm exclusively in contact with; offering listening and acknowledgment; witnessing their own unique grief. As an end of life doula, I help them to navigate a lot of information while being a steady presence for the multitude of decisions they often must make. Again, our contact may be only from time to time (I'm always led by those I support). In these cases, some have expressed that just knowing they have someone to call offers much relief.

For those already receiving palliative care or hospice services, my role can be a complementary to the collective. As an end of life doula, I have more time to spend with contacts as I'm not limited by regulations or numbers of people I must attend to. I understand this well, having been a health care and specifically hospice-based social worker, in the past. As an end of life doula, I can also offer to bridge gaps as they occur with

these services. Like healthcare providers, I advocate for the people we support by validating their wishes and needs, but I can also show up at times when it's not possible for others. I've had the opportunity to be involved in working partnerships at a local care home. When all are in communication for the greatest good of 'patients' and families, this creates an enriching experience to mutually reflect upon. As an example, a 'patient' adjusting to a care home move then began their transition of dying. It was evident that their complex physical needs required the attentiveness of multiple nursing staff in the care home, as well as palliative care to supplement for optimal comfort. During this period, I was able to be with the family as they requested. In doing so, there were opportunities to be present for anyone in need of extra support. There was also ample space to normalise the dying process and to facilitate plans for the remaining days, including after death. I could be there for the 'patient' with regard to expressing his wishes. They needed to be thoughtfully communicated because of an inability to verbalise due to progression in illness. I now

continue to provide bereavement support to the family since the death occurred last month and have been asked to join in a personalised celebration of life that's being crafted by them.

As an end of life doula, I'm a presence attuned to the personal needs and priorities of those I'm privileged to support (after all, the root meaning of 'doula' is to serve). By practicing humility, I can step back as people connect with their inner 'doula' – the role is also about empowering people; reminding them of this truth. I'm inspired by and continue to learn from others who work as end of life doulas or in similar roles at life's thresholds. Canadian Sarah Kerr is one such person who shared the following poignant reflection: "You can't prevent death from happening, but you can choose to meet it in a sacred and healing way."

To learn more or to connect with Melissa, email her at [starsbeyondourskin@gmail.com](mailto:starsbeyondourskin@gmail.com) or visit [www.starsbeyondourskin.com](http://www.starsbeyondourskin.com).

She also welcomes your questions or ideas for future columns.

## Savouring the joys of Spring



### SIMPLICITY AND EASE Sunday 23rd April, 2-5pm

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### MINDFULNESS MEDITATION Drop-in Sessions, Tuesday, 10-11am Myross Wood House, Leap €10

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The budding and blossoming of life at this time of year is a reminder, not only of impermanence, but of the storehouse of resilience that exists in nature and in us. Indeed, it would prove hard not to notice the birdsong and the new life unfolding all around us and stirring within us at this time of year. We are consistently moving forward in our lives, even unknown to ourselves, turning with the seasons. I'm writing this as I look out the window on a rainy Sunday, the soft weather an invitation to rest. My lovely little dog is resting beside me, diligently licking her paws. I notice a sense of being happy for no reason writing this, life feels quiet and spacious in this moment, nothing to do, nowhere to go.

I deliberately pay attention to moments of simple, everyday contentment when I notice them and feel in every part of my being, a felt sense of gratitude washing through me. I fully appreciate such moments now, as it is never too far from my mind or heart, how challenging grief, loss, and change is. Yet slowly, over time, these experiences get woven into us and, perhaps like the new buds and blossoms, we emerge as newer versions of ourselves, in many ways the same as before, but wearing life a bit differently now. A little more

fragile and vulnerable but with an inner resilience, still able to plant seeds, to nurture ourselves, grow, bud and blossom and more inclined to foster what really matters in life.

Nature really matters, and it is a real joy at this time of year to notice life renewing itself, offering us amazing displays of new growth and colour everywhere. Looking out the bay window at Myross Wood House the other day, I spotted some fresh Spring flowers that had just blossomed lowdown on the ground outside. They were different shades of purple, with mottled, quite delicate looking petals. My mind immediately leapt into the future, and I felt a sense of panic inside at the thought that they will soon be gone again! Aware of this panic, a kind of bittersweet reminder of the seasons of life, I paused, gathered my attention back to the present moment, and, using my senses, slowly and consciously took in this beautiful sight before me, savouring these surprise gifts from nature that will certainly soon be gone.

My panic over the beautiful flowers not lasting long, I view with a sense of humour now, but it reminded me of a powerful lesson in mindfulness, to appreciate things while they are still here with us, now, in this moment. How often are our minds in the future or the past,

instead of enjoying what is right here in front of us? There is a simple wellbeing practice called 'mental subtraction of positive events' which encourages us to appreciate the positive things in life by imagining our lives without them. Soaking up the goodness of people, places and the life going on around us now, helps us, not only to enjoy our present moment experience but to build a storehouse of long-term memories to fall back on.

And it's no harm to remind ourselves that things don't last forever if it means we can take time to slow down and appreciate all that we have a little more. So, no matter how busy life is, try to take every opportunity you can to spend time with and savour what is good in your life, including yourself. We can tap into our own internal resources, our inner spring of goodness as we journey through our days. And whether we're moving a little tentatively or bursting forth in our full power, just like the nature that we embody and that surrounds us, we can integrate all the changes each season brings, renew ourselves and begin afresh in every moment.

It is the loveliest time of year for new beginnings, monthly 'Simplicity and Ease' workshops are on at Myross Wood. The next workshop is on Sunday, April 23, from 2-5pm and offers a



## 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.

gentle introduction to compassion-based mindfulness, using indoor and outdoor settings.

Drop-in compassion-based mindfulness sessions at Myross Wood House, Leap (CECAS.ie) on Tuesday mornings from 10am-11am. €10. All welcome. For more information: [www.mindhaven.ie](http://www.mindhaven.ie). Phone: 087 2700572 or email: [susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com). Follow on Facebook: [/susanoreganmindfulness](https://www.facebook.com/susanoreganmindfulness)



## people Food, Health &amp; Lifestyle



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist  
& Mind coach

## Fertility Series: The GAP between trying to conceive and IVF

When a couple are trying to conceive they may be told that 84 per cent of couples will conceive naturally within a year of having regular unprotected sex every two or three days and to just keep trying for 12 months. If they are unsuccessful after 12 months the usual course of action is referral to a fertility clinic.

The pressure and stress can affect relationships with sex ultimately becoming a chore. Unfortunately one in seven couples have difficulty conceiving and, with age a factor, that 12 months period is an 'enormous' window of opportunity to naturally improve fertility and an area that your GP and fertility clinics do not address.

For many, prior to wanting a family, the focus during the reproductive years is naturally how not to conceive and there is a lot of information and contraceptive options available to support that choice. However women are not informed that taking a hormonal pill, injection, ring or IUD as contraception, changes the body's natural hormonal cycle, and that after contraception is stopped, it takes time sometimes years for this cycle to reestablish.

Even though the medication is out of your system in three to seven days and your periods resume, you may not be ovulating. If you are not ovulating, your eggs are not being recruited and matured by the follicles. If your eggs are not recruited and matured, they will not be released into the fallopian tubes and available for the sperm to fertilise.

If you are considering IVF and not ovulating then it would be normal for the clinic to find zero to low numbers of viable eggs for IVF collection, however don't worry, as this can be improved.

Reasons behind unexplained infertility are 33 per cent female factor, 33 per cent male factor and 33 per cent combined male and female factors

So when you are trying to get pregnant it is important to be aware that there are five important stages: 1. Egg recruitment, maturation and ovulation; 2. Sperm creation and maturation; 3. Fertilisation; 4. Embryo implantation; 5. Embryo development.

The first thing for a woman to do is make sure she is ovulating. If you are not ovulating then the cervix is closed, and no matter how often you have sex, the sperm will find it impossible to reach the egg.

Ovulation happens after an egg is recruited and matured

in its follicle. If this is not happening then you will not ovulate. A well-timed blood test can confirm ovulation and, if you are not ovulating, there are a number of natural options including lifestyle, nutrition and acupuncture that will influence and regulate your period and restart your ovulatory cycle. It takes three months for a single egg to be recruited, matured and for ovulation, however it is important to be aware that age has an influence on how long it takes to establish adequate ovulatory cycles.

During fetal development, a female foetus will have about six million eggs. At birth, there are approximately one million eggs left. By the time you reach puberty about 300,000 remain. The number of eggs continues to decline as you age and menstruate each cycle but there are still thousands of eggs there by the time a woman reaches menopause when the follicular reserve is finally exhausted and egg recruitment stops.

On the other hand, male sperm is formed in the testicles within a system of tiny tubules. Fresh sperm is being created all the time. The sequential stages of development take about 48 days and then they spend two weeks maturing before moving out of the body.

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during that nine-week period. Stress, illness or high fever can adversely affect sperm quality being ejaculated nine or more weeks later so reducing stress and improving your health will improve your sperm.

There are a number of things that both men and women can do to improve their fertility. Many of these often involve lifestyle changes including diet and exercise. Acupuncture is very effective in helping women to regulate their periods and to ensure that they are ovulating. It can also help men significantly change the quality of their sperm in two or three months.

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 recover from trauma, eating disorders and other mind/body illness. For more information or to book a consultation visit [www.roehealth.ie](http://www.roehealth.ie) or call/text Amanda on: 087 633 1898.

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## Crafty Clon boys win top honours at West Cork Student Enterprise Finals



Three students from Clonakilty Community College, Maximilian Menovsky, Jamie O'Donovan and Denis Ciobanu, took the overall prize at the West Cork Student Enterprise finals, held in Rossbarbery in March. Their company, Timberworks, creates sustainable, unique handcrafted seasonal decorative products for the home. More than 350 students from nine participating West Cork schools took part in the annual programme this year. The winning trio will represent the Local Enterprise Office Cork West at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Final on Friday, May 5 in Croke Park.

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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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# April Sun Signs

Early April may seem quiet on the Astrological news headlines, especially after all the activity throughout March. This Month we are eased in gradually but the few days between May 19 and 22 will certainly make up for a slow start. An intense concentration of major astrological events occurring simultaneously will set the tone for the coming weeks and months. We have the combination of a New Moon and the first Solar eclipse of the year, the Sun entering Taurus and making a strong connection to Pluto whilst Mercury turns retrograde all within around 30 hours. Zodiac sign Taurus is playing host to the action so this sign and the other fixed signs, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius will take the biggest hit. This push may be just what's needed to make shifts and changes that have been in the wings for the last long while.

The early days of April bring a welcome change of pace as Mars has finally, after seven months, moved out of air sign Gemini and moved into watery Cancer. This puts our energy and drives into a more caring approach with home, family and the need to care for and nurture ourselves and others becoming important issues now.

Mercury moves into Taurus on May 3 and will stay in this sign until mid-June. The talk and communication planet is also relevant to business transactions and negotiation as well as everyday travel and connections. In Taurus, the focus is likely to be on themes around money and finances, resources, stability, food and basic practical needs.

The planets that enter Taurus during this month are activating a strong challenging aspect of Pluto, now in the first degree of Aquarius. The role of Pluto is to

cleanse, purify and evolve whatever it combines with. Sometimes this can be a messy or uncomfortable process, much like clearing out a blocked pipe or releasing addictive habits. Take note of any issues that come to light with the Full Moon in Libra on May 6 because when Mercury is retrograde from April 21 through to May 15, we will be revisiting these themes again for review and reconsideration.

On May 11, Venus, the social planet moves into Gemini the sign of ideas, connections and curiosity so we can have some lighthearted fun too. The urge is to get busy networking, meet up with friends and put a relationship talk on the to-do list. Whilst Mars is in Cancer there is a strong desire to get things right for the people we care deeply about.

The climax of the Month

occurs with the New Moon and Solar eclipse on April 20. An Eclipse is a time when something changes. A power dynamic shifts and something is replaced with the new version. The effect is usually seen during the following few months. As the light of the Sun is temporarily extinguished and the Moon is between us/Earth and the Sun it is possible to set a new theme or agenda. With the inclusion of the strong Pluto energy, we can feel compelled to rid ourselves of old habits or ways that have become outmoded or unworkable. The continuation of these behaviour patterns would be holding back our personal or collective evolution. An important part of this energy shift is that we cannot control the outcome from where we are as the new way is not yet fully known to us and this can be an unsettling time. Pluto often requires a 'leap

of faith' and the ability to allow a 'greater force' to lead us. The big question that we need to address now is about the true nature of that greater force we are about to put our trust in. Are we surrendering our personal power, desires or intentions to something or someone who is full of their own agenda? Are we ready to allow ourselves to be led by something that feels deeply right on an intuitive level, or will we follow what we are told is best for us? This is the time for some of the big questions and it is also the time for some of the big answers.

**April has a Full Moon in 17 degrees Libra on May 6 at 5.34 am and a New Moon Solar Eclipse in 30 degrees Aries on May 20 at 5.12 am**



**Aries:** This month's Full Moon brings a good opportunity for dealing with any relationship issues. Personal and professional partnerships need your attention now. You are aware of how much you have to give but guard against taking others for granted;

they won't appreciate it if you do. You'll be at your best when you can get things into a healthy balance so finding a win-win situation for everyone has to be your goal. Interesting and stimulating people may come into your life now and you'll want to make time for intimate encounters or shared experiences.



**Taurus:** This is a good time to organise your work environment and make it more efficient. You are prepared to do the tedious work and the necessary tasks that don't reap obvious rewards. You're not likely to feel at peak performance level so take a slow

and measured pace and be surprised at how much can be achieved. Also, don't take your health for granted; keep an eye on what you eat and pay attention to what you do physically during the next couple of weeks. You'll benefit from making adjustments especially if you've been overdoing it lately.



**Gemini:** This Full Moon heightens your imaginative powers and you could enjoy artistic success if you have creative talents. Whatever you do it needs to give scope to your originality and get you noticed.

You want to have fun and taking chances might pay off. Not taking yourself too seriously will also reap benefits and you may surprise yourself with what you come up with by just playing around. Your feelings for loved ones are more intense now and children may take an important role in your life at this time.



**Cancer:** Home and family matters occupy your thinking during early April. Putting your energy into ventures that give you some sense of security and well-being will feel important now. You may just feel like staying home and building up your reserves so

you have plenty spare for later. Sticking with familiar surroundings and intimate company takes the stress out of socialising and you need that freedom to nurture what's really important. This is a good time to try and complete unfinished projects and don't expect to get started on anything new just yet.



**Leo:** There may be increasing contact with your neighbours and involvement in community activities during this Full Moon phase. You have the urge to get out and about and make connections. You may feel restless if you don't find activities that stimulate your

mind. A lot of energy may be used up in trivial or light-hearted conversation but going deep isn't the mood of the moment. Seek out more information and alternatives to what you already know. This is a good time to catch up on correspondences or to do some writing.



**Virgo:** This Full Moon phase finds you concerned with your material and financial security. Impulse buying, or conversely, stinginess might be a problem now depending on how you feel about the state of your resources. This is a good time to consider if you

are making the best of your natural skills and talents. You might be underestimating yourself or not yet utilising all the tools in your bag for your greater benefit. Actual money isn't the only source of wealth and you may find you have abundance in another form.



**Libra:** With the Full Moon in your Sun sign you are concerned with your own needs and personal security. The emphasis is on how you express your individuality in everything you do. Domestic, family and property matters are also likely to occupy your mind

and what's important is how these areas of your life are impacting your lifestyle and self-expression. You are especially sensitive to environmental conditions and your inner moods. Getting a glimpse of your unique personality in action gives you a better sense of who you are.



**Scorpio:** The Libra Full Moon highlights your inclination to shun the limelight and keep pretty much to yourself. You can be very productive throughout this period by just quietly working away behind the scenes in seclusion. Taking time out to relax, daydream or

meditate regenerates the spirit and brings you closer to your creativity. Reconnecting with your inner world is important for your sense of equilibrium. Valuable insights and breakthroughs are possible. Enjoy the quiet 'alone time' whilst you can as the demands of your outer world will encroach again soon enough.



**Sagittarius:** This Full Moon phase shows you it's who you know rather than what you know that matters now. This is a good time to upgrade your social life and meet people; the benefits will soon follow. The

Libra Full Moon highlights your position within your community, in group ventures, or projects which involve others of like mind. The phrase 'what you put in is what you get out' holds very true for you now. You can see that what you have to offer is appreciated by those around you and this is a time of reaping the rewards from your past contributions.



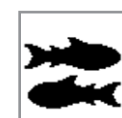
**Capricorn:** Vocational concerns are likely to dominate your thinking. If you're not already striking out to fulfill your ambitions then now is the time to make plans for your future. Getting yourself some recognition for what you do takes on extra significance

during this Full Moon. Self-acknowledgement only takes you so far and for now, you need some approval from those you respect. If you want to launch your career or go a step further then make the moves. But remember to balance the demands of your work or public life with the needs of your family or home life.



**Aquarius:** During this Full Moon travel, higher learning, study and spiritual matters can occupy your mind. Not content with anything 'hum drum', you're likely to want the freedom to explore new ground or invite new experiences into your life. This is a great

time to think big and make the most of the opportunities that come your way. An overseas contact may get in touch or new information provides the chance to break out from any restricting routines to try something different. Be prepared to open your mind to new ideas and lifestyles.



**Pisces:** The April Full Moon phase might mark a trying period; you may feel anxious and worried about things. Your attention is being drawn to the patterns that create life's ups and downs. During this phase, you may be focused on the negative side of a cycle at

the expense of the positive. This might be a slow growth point but it's a necessary pause during which you can consider what is truly worth keeping and what you can dispense with. It's a great time to clear out what doesn't work well in your life in preparation for the next phase.

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# West Cork youth celebrated in Garda Youth Awards

The 27th annual West Cork Garda Youth Awards, in association with SuperValu, has just been launched by An Garda Síochána in West Cork.

The West Cork Garda Youth Awards celebrate outstanding young people between the ages of 13 and 21 years. Awards will be considered for nominated young people who, by their presence, make their communities in West Cork a better place to live in.

This year, the process for nominations will remain the same, and Gardai will be distributing nomination forms to schools, youth groups and voluntary organisations right across West Cork. Following on from the judging in May, award winners will be notified by the organising committee. The presentation ceremony will take place on Friday, May 26 in the West Cork Hotel in Skibbereen.

It's important to remember that due to Covid, there hasn't been the same opportunity for young people to become involved with activities or projects compared to previous years. However, many young people were active on the ground throughout the Covid 19 crisis, volunteering and becoming involved in a variety of projects that supported both the vulnerable in the community, and the frontline services.

The nomination forms are now available from any SuperValu store in the West Cork Garda Division, and also at Garda Stations throughout West Cork. Application forms



*l-r Garda Damian White, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Bandon Garda Station; Chief Superintendent Vincent O'Sullivan, Bandon Garda Station; Kevin O'Shea, Regional Manager SuperValu, Inspector Ian O'Callaghan, Chairperson of the West Cork Garda Youth Awards Organising Committee.*

will also be distributed by the Community Gardai in each local Garda District. Electronic versions of the nomination form are available from [westcorkgardayouthawards@garda.ie](mailto:westcorkgardayouthawards@garda.ie)

The Award Categories are; Individual Award, Group Award, Community Safety Award and a Special Achievement Award.

The Individual Award is open to young people who have made a positive contribution to their community, making it a better place to live.

The Group Award category applies for groups of two or more young people whose combined efforts have contributed positively to their communities.

The Community Safety Award is for a young person, or group who, through a crime prevention or safety innovation, have made their community a safer place to live.

The Special Achievement category is open to any young person who has overcome difficult circumstances, or defied the odds and whose commitment

deserves recognition.

In launching this year's Awards, Chief Superintendent Vincent O'Sullivan from Bandon Garda Station commented "The nomination process is open to everyone, so if you know of a young person who is committed to making a difference to their community, please put them forward. We wish to promote and honour the positive contribution of the youth of today, who are the leaders of tomorrow".

Inspector Ian O'Callaghan, Bandon Garda Station, who is Chairman of the Organising Committee, remarked "We wish to recognise the sacrifices made by young people, as they contribute to their community, both at a local level, and also in wider areas. An Garda Síochána would like to pay tribute to SuperValu for their continued sponsorship of the Youth Awards, and to the Irish Examiner for their support as Media Partner."

As SuperValu stores are independently owned by families who live and work in their local

communities, SuperValu truly believes in supporting the local community in which they operate. The West Cork SuperValu stores which have sponsored these Youth Awards for the past 25 years are Caulfield's SuperValu Bandon, Smith's SuperValu Kinsale, Healy's SuperValu Dunmanway, O'Leary's SuperValu Macroom, Boherbue Coop, Field's SuperValu Skibbereen, Murphy's SuperValu Castle-townbere, O'Keeffe's SuperValu Bantry, Scally's SuperValu Clonakilty and O'Keeffe's SuperValu Millstreet.

The closing date for the applications is Friday, April 28, 2023.

Application forms are to be submitted to: Garda Damian White, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Bandon Garda Station, or Garda Don Davis, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Bantry Garda Station.

Forms can also be emailed to: [westcorkgardayouthawards@garda.ie](mailto:westcorkgardayouthawards@garda.ie)



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## Castletownbere school puts its heart into raising funds for community all-weather pitch

After being successful in obtaining a CLAR grant last year to cover half the costs for an all-weather astroturf sports pitch, Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa in Castletownbere is currently undertaking a massive fundraising drive to secure the remaining €50,000 needed to install the pitch on the grounds of the school. This Astroturf pitch aims to give all in the school and the wider community access to a safe, green space for sports, exercise, fun and activities all year round and whatever the weather.

This new space will be called 'An Chroí Community Astro', 'An Chroí' meaning 'heart' in



Irish, as it is hoped this field will become the heart of the local community. When completed in September 2023 this will be an amazing facility, not just for the school, but for everyone in the locality, including sports teams, clubs and other groups

who will be able to use it for training, sports, leisure and other activities.

Since 2002 the school has had no green space for PE, sports or training, making it the only school on the Beara Peninsula to not have field to play

in at break times. The new Astroturf will mean so much, not just to the pupils and staff of the school, but to the wider community who will have access to the area after 3pm. The facility will be able to be booked by local clubs and groups and will be a welcome and exciting addition to Castletownbere and the Beara area.

To help us with fundraising efforts, the school has launched its 'BE A PLAYER - BUY A SQUARE' campaign. This involves the Astroturf field, being divided into 250 squares costing €200 per square, €100 for half a square or €50 for a quarter square. Donations can be

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**087 1492273**  
[finnshirley58@gmail.com](mailto:finnshirley58@gmail.com)

made at An Chroí Community Astro on [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) or by contacting the school directly on 027 70788 or [ctbprincipal@gmail.com](mailto:ctbprincipal@gmail.com).

Please help Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa reach its goal by

making a donation towards An Chroí Community Astro. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Watch this space for updates of the school's efforts and developments over the next few months.



## people Food, Health & Lifestyle

# Hard won experience shared at West Cork Campus event

A wide variety of inspiring entrepreneurs and representatives of local organisations shared their experience and tips with students of West Cork Campus during the college's Enterprise Awareness event last month.

Speakers included Sharon Ryan, Pure Fitness; Fingal Ferguson, Gubbeen; Hannah Dare, Organico; Mags Riordan, Bumblebee Flower Farm; Denis Crowley, Jagged Edge Hair Design; Bradley Putze, Lisheen Greens; Jim & Maria Kennedy, Atlantic Sea Kayaking; Anne Dineen, Naíonra Phobail an Scobairín; Sonia Caldwell, Kilcoe Studios; Michelle O'Shea, The Alzheimers Association.

All photos by Anne Minihane.



Jim and Maria Kennedy of Atlantic Sea Kayaking with Mary O'Donoghue, Coordinator of Nutrition, Health & Wellness (centre)



Back l-r: Bradley Putze (Lisheen Organics), Sonia Caldwell (Kilcoe Studios), Denis Crowley (Jagged Edge Hair Design) and Michelle O'Shea (Alzheimer's Association)  
Front l-r: Sharon Ryan (Pure Fitness), Anne Dineen (Naíonra Phobail an Scobairín), Máire O'Sullivan (Coordinator of the West Cork Campus)



Healthcare: Con Barnett and Helen Santos (Students), Guest Speaker Michelle O'Shea, the West Cork & South Kerry Coordinator of Alzheimer's Association, Evenessa Achas (Student), Máire O'Sullivan (Coordinator of the West Cork Campus)



Nutrition Health & Wellness: Elizabeth Sexton (Teacher), Mary O'Donoghue (Coordinator), Guest Speaker Hannah Dare of Organico Bantry, Trina Croston (student)

## Construction underway for Clonakilty's new playground

Works have begun on a new, inclusive playground in Clonakilty at its current site on Park Road. Browne Brothers LTD, who have been appointed with its design and construction, expect to have the new playground installed by the end of April.

The first phase of the build will include the new, state-of-the-art playground equipment, replacement fencing, re-surfacing, and a new multi-use pathway around its periphery. A further, future development to the site will include upgrading the green spaces with new landscaping and seating areas.

Christopher O'Sullivan, TD for Cork South West says: "On behalf of the people and the community of Clonakilty I just want to wholeheartedly thank the Clonakilty playground fundraising committee who

have got this project to where it is today. It's been a monumental effort that means that future generations will be able to enjoy this incredible amenity. A big well done also to the Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce and SECAD [Leader Funding] for the support that they have put behind this project."

The re-development of the playground site has been eagerly welcomed by the town, including many local families with young children who will benefit hugely from this new facility. The new playground will have a focus on an inclusive design that caters for all with accessible equipment and a sensory play area as part of Clonakilty's plan to be an autism friendly town.

Despite successfully raising enough to begin construction works, the Clonakilty play-

ground committee will need to continue its fundraising efforts to cover price increases and the landscaping of the new garden area.

Orla O'Donovan, from the Clonakilty playground fundraising committee explains: "We are delighted to finally begin construction on Clonakilty's long-awaited new playground. The committee are indebted to the generosity of the local community and the additional help local businesses have offered us in facilitating venues, raffle prizes, as well as their kind donations. We are confident we will raise the additional funding needed to finish the playground and the surrounding garden to create a much-loved communal area for locals and visitors to Clonakilty."



Horticulture: Luke O'Donovan (student), Guest Speaker Mags O'Riordan from Bumblebee Flower Farm, Celine O'Donnell (student), Michael Burke (Coordinator of Horticulture) & Hannah Denholm (student)

The committee continues to welcome new sponsorship and donations towards the new playground [www.gofundme.com/f/clonakilty-playground](http://www.gofundme.com/f/clonakilty-playground)

To follow the Clonakilty playground please visit Facebook & Instagram at @Clonakilty\_playground to be

alerted of upcoming news and fundraising events.

Pic: Browne Brothers





## people Food, Health &amp; Lifestyle

# English language school looking forward to a busy season in Schull

Ireland is the number one per capita destination in the world for learners of English with an estimated 204,000 international students coming here in 2019 to study English and staying for an average of 6.5 weeks. It is estimated that the combined direct, indirect and induced value of the sector exceeded €800 million that year. As part of this picture every year since 1999, hundreds of students of many different nationalities, ranging in age from four to 84, have flown into Ireland and made the journey to a small English language school located in the picturesque village of Schull in West Cork. Here, looked after by the Atlantic School of English and Active Leisure, as well as learning the language, students get to enjoy the West Cork way of life, staying with local host families and engaging in a range of leisure and recreational activities. As a result of their experience, Schull becomes a second home and some of these students return year after year, often bringing family or friends with them.

In April, a retired Swiss couple, who last attended Atlantic SEAL in 2009, will return to the school for a two-week course, staying in Schull for a total of five weeks. They are delighted that that teacher Dawn Evans, who taught them then, will do so again this year.

In August, an Austrian couple in their eighties who have been coming back year after year since attending the school, return with their grandchildren. "They're a beautiful love story," shares Atlantic SEAL owner Barbara Connolly. "Lovers in their twenties, they went their separate ways before reuniting in their seventies and coming here on their honeymoon. She's an opera singer, he's a physicist who taught physics to Buddhist monks. They've been staying with the same family in Schull for many years."

Founded 24 years ago by Barbara Connolly and her partner Peter McDonnell, a Marine Ecologist, Atlantic School of English and Active Leisure started off in the tiny annex next to their home with a maximum capacity for four students.

Today it remains a small school that believes in a hands-on, holistic and relaxed approach to teaching. Students learn both inside and outside the classroom in a mindful environment giving them the confidence to communicate



Pictured from l-r: Sean Vail, teacher; Jonathon Louks, Office Administrator; Dawn Evans, teacher and Barbara Connolly, owner Atlantic SEAL.

socially in the English language.

Over the years, the school has been housed in several different buildings around Schull. "None of which was very suitable," says Barbara, who signed the purchase agreement on two buildings on Main Street in Schull just before the pandemic hit. As it doesn't fit neatly under a specific category like hospitality or tourism, Atlantic SEAL has not benefitted from any funding for building purchase, development or equipment to date.

"While it was a very challenging time especially after just purchasing the buildings, ninety-nine per cent of students who had enrolled with us for 2020 stayed with us so I did feel very privileged to be in a position of business as usual when we did reopen," shares Barbara, who also lauds her team for their loyalty.

"Being forced to close the doors for two years and getting off the hamster wheel also really made us appreciate the number of interesting people we get to meet through the school and the relationships we have developed as a result over the years. I think the local commu-

nity also missed the influx of nationalities and their contribution to the local area on a social and economic level."

In 2018, Atlantic SEAL and Schull hosted over 26 different nationalities. "It was our busiest year," says Barbara, who shares that the school paid out €250,000 to host families in the area during that season.

Some of the families have been hosting for Atlantic SEAL for 23 years or their children have continued on the tradition.

Host Family Co-ordinator Fiona Cairns, a host herself, says that it's like welcoming a niece or nephew into the family. "It's about making the students feel really comfortable and welcome and settling them in quickly, which all of the host families in Schull, Ballydehob and environs are very experienced and good at. You get to share your traditions and way of life and the students share theirs, which oftentimes could be cooking a traditional Italian or Spanish meal for their host family. It's a nice experience for all involved."

Today the school offers a number of English language and teacher training courses

welcoming up to 500 students in a season.

Atlantic SEAL is a small team year-round, which is added to greatly in the Easter to autumn period, peaking in summer with up to 30 people working in various capacities on seasonal full-time or longer part-time positions. In addition, the school works with a number of service providers in the areas of leisure activities, transport and accommodation. "On any given weekend, up to 200 students may need to get to or from the main airports or city centres, which is all organised by us through local providers," says Jonathon Louks, who is in charge of the day to day administration.

Back to the beginning... Barbara remembers touring around Ireland with Peter to find the ideal location for the language school. "It also needed to be somewhere we wanted to live. As Pete's mother came from Tory Island Gaeltacht and he's a Marine Ecologist, we both felt very much at home here," she says. "In Schull we found the location and the community."

Atlantic SEAL has just launched a bursary in memory of one of their very first hosts, Maureen Carrig, who passed away in 2019. The €1000 annual bursary (two €500 amounts) will go towards the educational funds of two people nominated by Atlantic SEAL hosts.

If you are interested in becoming host for the 2023 season, please text/WhatsApp 087 228 3672 or email info@atlantic-english.com [www.atlantic-english.com](http://www.atlantic-english.com)

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Our favourite yarn this month: **Scheepjes Stone & River Washed Cottons**



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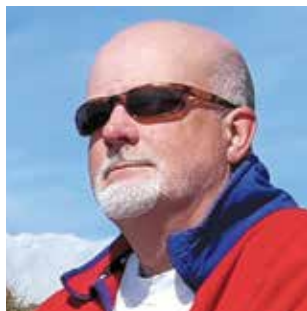
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"Being forced to close the doors for two years and getting off the hamster wheel also really made us appreciate the number of interesting people we get to meet through the school and the relationships we have developed as a result over the years. I think the local community also missed the influx of nationalities and their contribution to the local area on a social and economic level."



## 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

This month provides the seventh synopsis for my wife's ancestral lines in County Cork and what has been learned from atDNA matching. If you have taken a DNA test and related to any of these family, do get in touch and consider adding your DNA information to the project.

With the O'DONOVAN Clan Gathering due to take place in Bantry in June this year (see their Facebook page for more information), it is apropos that we have reached this family name. Like many, my wife has multiple connections to the DONOVAN

clan in general and some specific direct ancestry. It is a surname that was established in the C10th and is very much Cork-centric.

As part of the previous synopses on the MENNIS family, the earliest DONOVANs in her family line are Katherine DONOVAN of unknown family (who married John MENNIS abt 1755) and Hanora DONOVAN (the daughter of Andrew DONOVAN and Mollie O'HEA) who married their son James MENNIS abt 1788. We assume these took place in the wider Fanlobbus parish of which Dunmanway is a part.

#### O'DONOVAN of Shannonvale and Templebryan

Based on the earliest church records at Darrara there appears to be only one DONOVAN family living in Templebryan. Anne DONOVAN (1818, my wife's 2x great grandmother) was the daughter of Cors DONOVAN and Cate COLLINS. A Daniel DONOVAN was one of the witnesses when she married neighbouring Reenroe farmer John O'NEILL in 1840. The O'NEILLS will be discussed in more detail in a future article.

While it is impossible to prove on paper without a written or verbal family history, there was a Daniel DONOVAN who farmed at Shannonvale and was potentially the marriage witness. It likely he was Cors' brother. The paper trail then becomes interesting for all those who know Clonakilty well.

Daniel and his wife Elizabeth or Eliza NEIL were the parents of Denis DONOVAN who was the founding proprietor of the O'DONOVAN's Hotel in present-day Pearse Street (then Sovereign Street), Clonakilty. Importantly in his Will of 1866 he entrusts guardianship of his children to their grandfather (his father) Daniel DONOVAN, farmer of Shannonvale, the assumed uncle of Anne DONOVAN.

After Denis died, the Hotel was continued to be run by his brother Thomas DONOVAN (1826-1883) and his wife Catherine WALSH (1835-1918). Visitors who climb the main stairs of the hotel can see their portraits on the way to the first floor.

I have no information regarding earlier generation of DONOVANs and my DNA study has not identified any descendant of this family who may have

DNA tested to prove or disprove the connection between the line of Denis and Anne. Of Thomas and Catherine's 15 children, twelve survived and ten married to produce many descendant lines found locally in Ireland and in Canada, Australia and South Africa. Additional family names include DAVIES, GILLMAN, O'BRIEN, O'MAHOONEY and O'SULLIVAN. There should be plenty of candidates.

#### O'DONOVAN of Derrylahan

DNA matches are proving up many family lines leading back to Timothy DONOVAN, a late C18th farmer at Derrylahan near Dunmanway, and his wife Ellen COVENY. To date matches can be found from three of their sons.

Denis DONOVAN (c1804) farmed at Derrylahan. He married Mary MANNING (O'BRIEN Mangan) in 1832

when both were given of Drom-deegy. Three of their children have provided DNA-proven lineages: Julie (1841) who became MINEHAN / MURNANE after emigrating to New Hampshire, Rickard (1843) who first married Mary CONNELL (four children) and then Minnie LUCEY (12 children). He continued to farm at Derrylahan until 1890. One of his first wife's children and three of his second provide DNA matches. The third child of Denis and Mary was my wife's great grandfather Michael 'The Count' DONOVAN (1847-1924) so named because he was Clonakilty's town clerk. He had one child by Anne HARTNETT of New Chapel Lane, Clonakilty before marrying Mary FITZPATRICK of Ballinavar, Derryduff, Rosscarbery in 1884 (my wife's great grandmother). They lived in Sovereign Street, Clonakilty and registered in both the 1901 and 1911 census. Their daughter

Bridie married Felix O'NEILL (of the Reenroe family) who ran a watchmaking shop in Main Street, Dunmanway.

Mick DONOVAN (c1810) married Ellen MANNING, the sister of Mary in 1838. Son Timothy (1843-1916) provides the continuing DNA connection having married Anne LUCEY of the same family as Minnie, above.

Rickard DONOVAN (1820-1888) married Mary MENNIS. He first farmed at Derrinasafagh before running a pub in Main Street, Dunmanway. The genetic trail follows their son Tim (1850-1916) who emigrated to Massachusetts and married Annie HARNEDY.

Questions that can be answered as part of future articles can be emailed to [DNAmatchingprojects@gmail.com](mailto:DNAmatchingprojects@gmail.com) or follow the West Cork DNA projects on Facebook 'My Irish Genealogy and DNA'.

## Local people, local wisdom: Rita Holding, Connonagh



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](http://www.aoisetuttyjackson.com) email [aoise@92circles.com](mailto:aoise@92circles.com) or call 086 3465373.

Rita Holding (née O'Sullivan) was born near Durrus to a family of nine. She left Ireland at age 17 to work in a bank in London and after 24 years of being away, Rita, and her husband Ian, decided to move back to Ireland. Having both worked in the corporate world for many years, first in London and then

in Ireland in the same company, Rita made a life-changing decision seven years ago to follow her dream of opening a vintage interior shop, RH Vintage Interiors, with Ian soon joining her in the business.

I was getting sick of the corporate world, I wanted to work for myself. I went into work one day – I hadn't even discussed it with Ian – and I just handed in my resignation.

When I told people I was going to set up my own business, people were going 'nah course you're not' but it just started off slowly. At first it was selling from our house and sure look I'm here now.

What I love the most is the people you meet, it's incredible, we meet people from all walks of life. I love how Irish people talk to each other – the useless banter and the fun!

I feel like this is something I should have done years ago but when I look back, there was definitely fear. I don't have that anymore. I was following my heart with this fully.

I spent many years living in that world where you're trying to fit in – doing stuff that

I thought would keep other people happy instead of being completely myself. Now I feel I can be. I'm showing people that, faults and all, this is me! I think the most important thing is to do what you really want to do in life, just be your true authentic self.

I always come back to the saying 'This too shall pass'. You're going to have good times and bad times, which is something I have to consciously remind myself of; I think about it daily and it really helps me.

I remember, at the age of about 14, having a conversation with my mother who was a devout Catholic. I told her that I felt like I had my own type of faith, that there was certain things that I didn't really believe in, but there were things I believed in that gave me strength. She turned around to me and said 'that's enough'. Faith is a strength from some higher power, whatever that might be.

I love waves and water, I'm a poor swimmer but there's something about the sea that I absolutely love and the sound of the waves. It brings me peace.





# On the crest of a wave

West Cork's favourite surf shop, Jellyfish, is celebrating 20 years in business this year. Owner Nollaig Hurley says the years have flown by as the business has gone from strength to strength. She shares her pride in reaching such a milestone with **West Cork People**.

“It certainly doesn't feel like that length of time has passed,” says Nollaig. I'm so appreciative of the community in West Cork and the loyal customers that have supported Jellyfish over the years and they are the reason the business is still operating and able to offer the service it does.”

The first seeds of the idea for opening a surf shop were planted over a pint after a surf session when some of Nollaig's surf buddies were bemoaning the fact that the nearest place to get board wax was in the city.

Although her background was in hotel management, words of advice imparted to her from her dad years earlier came back to Nollaig. “My dad always said ‘know what you are passionate about and find a job related to that and you will always be happy in your work,’” says Nollaig. Bitten by the surfing bug and lucky enough to grow up a stone's throw from the sea in West Cork, after years of managing other peoples' businesses, Nollaig decided that it was time to follow her own passion, with becoming self-employed the next logical step in her career path.

So in the summer of 2003, she opened the doors of Jellyfish Surf Shop.

While the business was initially based mostly around surf products and lifestyle clothing, over the years this has evolved and expanded to include swim-specific products and a wider range of clothing and accessories. Most recently Jellyfish has launched an e-commerce website, which had proven to be a very significant development in the continued success of the business. Customers from all over Ireland can now easily access products from Jellyfish, which now trades seven days a week.

Over the past 20 years, Jellyfish has grown into a team of four, all sharing a passion for the sea and water sports and all hailing from West Cork.

With a degree in outdoor education and love of all things sea-related, Ellen joined Nollaig

in the very early years, in 2008. “She has comprehensive product knowledge and customers trust her advice and expertise,” says Nollaig.

Ten years later, in 2018, Ciaran was welcomed into the fold. He also has a qualification in outdoor activities and more than a decade of experience in water sports merchandise retail. He is happy on or in the water and happiest when talking technical!

The newest member of the team is Helena, who joined Jellyfish in 2021. Having grown up in West Cork, she naturally has an affinity with the ocean and is now a valued member of the team.

“I truly believe the human resource behind the company is the best asset Jellyfish Surf Shop has,” says Nollaig sincerely.

While the challenges have been many – floods, recession, a pandemic – like so many businesses in West Cork, Jellyfish has come out the other side more resilient.

In 2019, Jellyfish was recognised with an award of Specialist Independent Retailer of the year and, in 2021, Nollaig claimed the Network Ireland West Cork Established Business Woman of the Year award.

“Covid was a massive challenge and we had to pivot the business to put the website front and centre, as the shop door remained firmly closed under the Government restrictions,” says



The Jellyfish team: Ciaran, Ellen, Helena and Nollaig.

Nollaig. “In the first few weeks, I genuinely thought that the lockdown would prove to be the end... The prospect of having to let my staff go was the worst part. Luckily it is behind us now and the supply chains and product shortages are no longer an issue.”

“The main challenge at the moment is the increase in costs coming from all sides but I think like lockdown this is a challenge that is facing all sectors.”

At the end of the day what makes it all worthwhile for Nollaig is her happy customers, so many of whom have experienced the life changing effects of the sea.

“Whether it is a small piece of advice we have given or sold them the right product to help them on their water sports journey, the positive feedback gives us great job satisfaction,” shares Nollaig, who loves the variety that her work brings.

“I love that every day is different and that I work with a great team I can rely on and still have a laugh with.”

While right now swim-specific wetsuits and accessories are outselling the surfing products

at Jellyfish, come the summer, surfboards, bodyboards and skimboards will no doubt be back on the leaderboard.

In the lifestyle clothing department, Quiksilver, Roxy, Billabong and Weirfish are still some of the most popular brands but Jellyfish Surf Shop's own brand products are also in development with buff's, t-shirts, hoodies and towelling robes in a choice of colours and

sizes currently in stock, as well as Jellyfish Nordic and budget all-weather changing robes.

“Keep your eyes peeled for our new special edition Jellyfish Surf Shop branded t-shirts and hoodies to celebrate the 20th anniversary in some fun new colours and designs,” says Nollaig. “We plan to extend our own brand range further, so I would love to hear any suggestions from our customers as to

what new products they might like to see added.”

While continuing to source the best and innovative products and upgrading the website are short-term ambitions, looking ahead Nollaig says the next 20 years will be about maintaining a nice balance of work and play and keeping the doors open and the lights on!

[www.jellyfishsurfshop.com](http://www.jellyfishsurfshop.com)

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## people Food, Health &amp; Lifestyle



Eoin Roe  
Chiropractic

Leaky gut, or intestinal permeability as it is called in thousands of research papers, is a description of dysfunction in the gut wall, which can lead to a number of health complications and have

## What is leaky gut and how can it be helped?

an impact on systemic inflammation, autoimmunity, digestive health, diabetes and other health problems.

To understand intestinal permeability, it helps to understand a little about how the gut works. The wall of the gut is made up of many cells held together by proteins between the cells which are known as tight junctions. The tight junctions act as a barrier but also let selective nutrients in through the gut lining and into the blood stream. 'Leaky Gut' or intestinal permeability is when these junctions breakdown and the gap between cells become wider and let larger

inappropriate sized food proteins, pathogens and harmful by-products called LPS from gut bacteria, through the barrier. This can lead to a cascade of immune reactions, which result in systemic inflammation, pain, autoimmune reactivity and other health conditions.

### What causes the gut to become leaky?

There are a lot of reasons; diet can play a part but it may surprise you to find that concussion (a brain injury) can cause leaky gut, overuse of some medications, getting a stomach bug or having diarrhoea can all cause intestinal permeability. When

your body is functioning well, it will usually heal and whilst there may be a brief period of time when you have intestinal permeability, once you have got rid of the tummy bug, the gut should naturally heal.

People with autoimmune conditions such as coeliac disease, Hashimotos thyroiditis and many others are likely to be susceptible to leaky gut and ensuring good gut health will help them feel much better.

### Do people with food sensitivities have leaky gut?

Not necessarily, there are a number of reasons for developing food sensitivities with regard to immune function that are different from intestinal permeability. This is known as loss of oral tolerance – when you lose tolerance you can start to have immune reactions to food. Intestinal permeability can be involved, but other factors include overactive dendritic cells, dysfunctional regulatory T-cells, and over-reactive Kupffer cells in the liver.

The inverse of this is often the case: When people develop intestinal permeability they will start to develop food sensitivities that they have never had before. This is because once the gut wall has become leaky, inappropriate sized proteins are now able to enter the blood stream causing the immune system to react.

### Is IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) the same as leaky gut?

Again this is nuanced, food sensitivities may cause inflammation that may contribute to IBS and intestinal permeability. But it is not a given that people with IBS have intestinal permeability. Just as there are many different causes of intestinal permeability, there are many different causes of IBS and in order to get any resolution to these symptoms you have to understand what is causing them first.

### Can you test for leaky gut?

Yes, intestinal permeability can be assessed using ELISA testing and looking for antibodies to the proteins that hold the tight junctions together these are called zonulin and occludin.

Food sensitivity testing which also uses ELISA testing methodology does not tell you if you have intestinal permeability.

### Can you heal leaky gut?

There are supplements that help to heal the gut lining and resolve intestinal permeability. Changes to diet can reduce inflammation and also help, but the protocols for each person may be very different depending on the reason why they have developed intestinal permeability.

Whilst some mechanisms that cause leaky gut can be remedied, some cannot. Those suf-

fering with inflammation caused by autoimmune reactivity can have repeated bouts of intestinal permeability as the condition flares up and calms down again. Another example would be someone who has chronic pre-diabetes and high levels of HbA1c, which can cause repeated breakdowns of the tight junctions causing ongoing permeability. For these people, managing leaky gut will be a life-long endeavour.

### Is healing leaky gut important?

Yes, especially for those who have autoimmune conditions. The inflammation caused by flare-ups can be much worse if the person is also suffering with leaky gut and any flare-ups of the condition can be harder to manage. It is not possible to cure autoimmune conditions but it is possible to help manage the condition with a focus on lifestyle changes. It may also be important for people with other gastrointestinal problems such as IBS or multiple food reactions especially if these are accompanied with elevations in toxic LPS from gut bacteria.

*Eoin Roe is a certified Functional Medicine Practitioner and Doctor of Chiropractic working in Skibbereen at Roe Health. Website [www.roehealth.ie](http://www.roehealth.ie) or call 0286208.*

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## CANINE CORNER

Liz Mahony

Liz Mahony is an experienced Dog Trainer and Holistic Therapist for all animals. In her monthly column, Liz aims to promote mutual respect between carer and dog. Contact Liz at [corkdogtrainingclasses.com](http://corkdogtrainingclasses.com).

Any parent with children who are in or have gone through their teenage years will know exactly what I mean when I talk about teenage tantrums. Your adorable son or daughter suddenly becomes moody, flounces around, chal-

## The canine equivalent of teenage tantrums

lenges you or argues over the smallest situation, making you question your sanity!

Well, puppies go through the same sort of period as they mature to adulthood. Saffron has reached that age where sometimes she's still my beautiful bundle of joy, returns immediately when called, behaves impeccably and continues to trust my judgement. Then, suddenly, when I ask her to do something that she used to do automatically, a curtain seems to descend, her jaw juts out in belligerence and I can almost hear her saying, 'Why should I?'

Yes, I've been through this teenage tantrum business with my own children and then with all my puppies to a varying degree. And, generally, it happens just when I'm congratulating myself that my puppy is behaving so well. Talk about falling into the trap of false security! And how to deal with these challenges which are so out of

character?

I'd like to say that I have all the answers but despite knowing what I should do, I can't say I'm always immediately successful.

One of the first times it happened with Saffron, she had jumped onto a bank to go into a field. As there was a bull in it, I thought it wise to call her back to me. She wasn't having a bit of it. She deliberately ignored my call, turned her back and hopped into the field. Even then, I didn't lose my cool, I just got out my whistle and gave the usual recall. Saffron would normally return with satisfying alacrity amidst loads of praise. She had been doing so well that I'd no longer felt the need to mark the good behaviour with a treat. What an error of judgement!

On this particular evening, I continued to whistle and peeped over the bank to see her reaction. Imagine my fury to see her boldly meeting my gaze

while slurping on a cow pat!

After a short display of double defiance, she hopped back onto the road, giving me a saucy look as though asking me what was I going to do about it!

I called her back to me while trying very hard not to let my anger and dismay find an outlet, attached the lead and we walked home in stony silence! During the silent procession I reviewed the situation. Obviously, I'd become a little casual in my training and so the remedy would be to go back to basics and give her little training sessions both at home and out on walks.

So, the very next day, I began my plan of action. Keeping her on lead, we set off for the morning's walk. Saffron loves to run in the fields whenever possible and I do so enjoy letting her expend all that energy. But, there was no way I could allow that until she began to listen to me again.

And, there was the problem. I might have got a little casual

about training, but Saffron had stopped listening to me! On that first walk, whenever I first asked her to Halt, Sit, and Look at me, it was like a sulky brat had replaced my beloved puppy. She stood like a pudding, deaf to my commands, refusing point blank to look me in the eye. And the jut of her chin! Boxers always have a slightly pugnacious look about them purely because of the conformation of their jaws but this pose went far beyond that.

Persevering over the next few days, I took her back to basic commands while positively praising and rewarding any good behaviour. And, hard as I found it, I pretended I didn't see the saucy looks or the outright challenges. However, I did find it difficult that this touchy feely, affectionate little puppy had become aloof on occasion.

During this debacle, I had to go away for the day and a friend kindly looked after her. The following morning I got

ready for our walk, prepared to train and face any challenging behaviour from Saffron. Lo and behold, perhaps it was my sudden disappearance the day before, but she showed me model behaviour.

I didn't push my luck by letting her off lead that first time. But, since then, I've allowed her more freedom while still maintaining a modicum of training. Apart from a few minor lapses, she seems to have returned to her normal affectionate, obedient self. However, I've also learnt my lesson. I'm not relaxing but continuing to ask for her attention both in and outside the house.

Each puppy is different but the stages they go through towards maturity are the same to a greater or lesser extent. The difference with each one is that their specific characters can accentuate each phase making it an endurance test.



## people Home &amp; Garden

# Irish households still being left out in the cold

As the Government responds to the three-part energy crisis of affordability, pollution and supply, detailed research commissioned by Friends of the Earth shows what policy changes are necessary to address rising energy poverty while making Irish homes warmer and more energy efficient.

The number of Irish families unable to heat their homes more than doubled in the last 12 months as a result of inadequate incomes, high energy costs due to the energy crisis, and inefficient housing. At the same time, the Government has committed to halving carbon emissions by 2030. This will involve retrofitting 500,000 homes by 2030. However, grants remain skewed to already well-off homeowners, and leave many groups and communities who are most at risk of energy poverty out in the cold.

This research report, based on input from 32 experts across housing, poverty, climate, and energy, unpacks how current climate, housing and social protection policies go some way in protecting vulnerable households, but are ultimately failing to address the root causes of energy deprivation. It also includes an assessment of recent housing,

energy and climate policy, including the Government's new Energy Poverty Action Plan and the latest Climate Action Plan both produced in December 2022. The report also includes a comprehensive analysis of policies and responses related to energy efficiency and home heating.

Clare O'Connor, Energy Policy Officer at Friends of the Earth said: "This research shows that if the Government is serious about meeting their climate targets, they will need to change their current approach and do it in a way that protects and prioritises households that are most in-need first. Families who can't afford to pay their energy bills aren't in a position to invest in expensive retrofitting measures. The report shows how the Government should be going much further to make sure these families have access to the benefits of warm homes and lower energy bills.

Retrofitting for low-income

families in inefficient housing needs to be a top priority - much more investment is needed in state-led retrofitting programmes so they can reach more families, specifically the SEAI Free Energy Upgrade scheme and the Local Authority Retrofit Scheme for social housing."

Jerry Mac Evilly, Head of Policy at Friends of the Earth said: "Ireland does not have sufficient safeguards to protect against price volatility as a result of the heavy role of polluting fossil fuels, like gas and oil, in home heating and in Ireland's energy mix. While warmer months may now offer a temporary reprieve for some, there is a major risk that the situation will deteriorate later in 2023 given high inflation and continued high energy costs. It's clear that household fossil fuel dependence cannot be allowed to continue.

The research report shows that

Continued on page 42...



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## people Home &amp; Garden

special focus: nature's larder

## Growing your own food

Over the last few years there has been a huge increase in people interested in growing their own food visiting us here at Deelish and, with the weather warming up, now is a perfect time to start. Not only has the number of growers increased but the average age of the gardener has gone down by many years! We regularly help teachers in preschools and primary schools to get started with their own growing. The lovely thing is that you can produce food with very little space. Whether you are planning to grow from a window ledge, raised bed, Geodome or commercial polytunnel, there are a few practical points to consider before you get started.



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**P**lan to plant in an area that gets full sun, at least six hours a day (eight to 10 hours is even better). Since all gardens require frequent watering, make sure you have a source of good quality water and a hose that will reach all corners of your garden. If well water or mains is not available, you may consider setting up a rainwater collection system. Once you have decided where you want to grow, you need to decide if you are going to use containers (for a small garden or patio space), raised beds (that can be constructed from a variety of materials) or grow directly in the ground.

For a healthy vegetable garden, you need to start with



## THE NATURAL GARDENER

Noah Chase

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

healthy soil. The most important component in soil is the organic matter such as manure, peat moss, or homemade compost. Compost is the best option because it contains decayed plant matter and microorganisms. These microorganisms form a symbiotic partnership with the plants you want to grow and supply your plants with the nutrients they need. If you plan to create your own compost-making area, locate it near your growing area to minimise the distance you have to move materials. If you are unable to get freshly-made compost, we stock a fantastic product called 'Soil Renew', which contains millions of these beneficial microorganisms and will kickstart the process. As bagged soil and compost is heat-treated to stop weeds growing, it also needs added soil microbes to get it started. One bagged compost we supply is called 'Living Green' and currently this is my favourite for growing vegetables in. It is certified organic, produced in Co. Donegal on a worm farm and is also available in a peat-free option. It is very gentle, with a perfect consistency for starting seeds and has the added bonus of adding worm eggs to your soil (which are a gardeners best friend).

Once you have decided where you want to grow and the soil has been prepared, it is time to get planting. At this stage, there are two options, growing from seed or buying seedlings

in multi-packs already grown. When shopping for multi-pack seedlings, I recommend choosing plants that have a healthy colour, with no yellow leaves. Avoid droopy or wilting leaves. When you're shopping for seedlings, gently tap the plant out of the pot to make sure the roots are well-developed and white. Avoid plants that have only roots with no soil showing (as these are pot-bound and will never grow well for you) or plants that are too young with very few roots, as well as plants that are already budding or have flowers. The advantage of this option is you can save weeks of time and get just the right amount of plants for your space. The second option is to grow from seed. The advantages of this option are a huge amount of variety to choose from (we now stock Sativa organic seeds from Germany with many unusual varieties suited to our climate, as well as lots of heirloom varieties. We also stock Thompson & Morgan non-organic tried and tested seed varieties. Generally speaking root crops such as carrots, beetroot, parsnips, swedes and radish don't transplant well and are usually sown directly into the ground. Transplanting those crops may cause forking of their roots (especially carrots). For most other crops, many gardeners prefer to sow in trays and modules. The seedlings or transplants are potted on or planted out four to six weeks after sowing. Most vegetables benefit from transplanting and there are many advantages of this method, especially if your garden is outside and not under cover. Having the seedlings in trays or modules on a worktop or heated bench in the polytun-

nel, windowsill or glasshouse means you can look after them much easier and can protect them from the weather and pests as well. If you do want to grow from seed, listed below are the stages involved:

**Sowing** – Get a quality seed and cutting compost (such as Living Green or Westlands) to start your seeds in. The bag should be left somewhere warm to raise the temperature of the soil, so it is warm to the touch. Adding vermiculite to the surface and perlite mixed with the soil (to aid aeration and drainage) is also recommended if possible. Firmly fill seed trays or cell packs most of the way to the top. Evenly spread seeds in trays or put a few in each cell and cover to a depth of twice the diameter of the seed used (a small dusting for fine seeds such as lettuce or up to 2cm for peas or sweet corn). At this stage, I have started using 'seed booster' spray from an Irish company called Better plants and find the Humic and Fulvic acids, as well as trace elements it contains really do get the seedlings off to a great start. I am also using an electric heat mat to speed up the germination time but if you can keep the seed trays in a warm spot, this will also work, just be careful not to let them dry out. Keep the soil moist, not damp and within two days to two weeks depending on what you are growing, you should see the seeds appearing from the soil. Seeds grown in cell packs can be grown on for up to a month and then planted into their final growing spot. If the seedlings do not get enough light at this stage, they can become 'leggy'. These seedlings become top heavy and cannot support their



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# The scent of Summer



## A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

I spent the last two weeks of March in Brussels, where Spring is always a little bit behind West Cork. So, though the buds weren't even starting to show over there, by the time I came back home Spring was in full swing, with lovely patches of early green, full displays of daffodils and an early show of primroses.

This is the season where West Cork really starts to turn on the charm. The house looks like something out of a Disney

cartoon with all the daffodils, crocuses, and snowdrops crowding together as if they're cheering a parade. This year the celandine has taken over both sides of the drive, sweeping around the daffodils and snowdrops, pushing out the violets and forget-me-nots to the edges. The leaves form a dense carpet dotted with little yellow flowers that really pop against the deep dark green. In the woods, the three-cornered leek is a brighter green and will soon be sporting tiny white bells. Sorrel is a paler green again, but just as tasty. Some early trees have started to unfurl, including the paper birch in the front field, but neither the oak, nor the ash has woken up yet. Every walk around the place brings new discoveries: elders that have sprung up. A giant fern growing at the base of a tree. Further in the woods clumps of shoots mark where the bluebells will soon bloom.

My attitude towards the land has always been to manage rather than design. My main management style is to try and keep the brambles and nettles down, and to cull the elders ev-

ery once in a while. Everything else is welcome to try and occupy an ecological niche on the hectare I own. This means that the 'garden' is different every year. Sometimes the foxgloves dominate. Sometimes the white bells are the stars. I didn't know it when I started, but I was rewilding. Letting the land do what the land does (with a gentle nudge here or there: like getting rid of brambles and nettles).

Rewilding, in other words leaving well enough alone, is a powerful tool against the loss of biodiversity. It's quite extraordinary to think that one of the best ways to support biodiversity is to do nothing. Leave the land to do its thing. Same goes for the ocean.

Case in point: This time last year, I was lamenting the loss of a small river that flows across the road from my house. Roadworks to repair a broken bridge had required for all the growth along the banks; trees, ferns, and shrubs, to be cut down and tossed onto a 'pile of sadness'. It looked like the life had been ripped out of the landscape. A

beautiful little patch of wildness had been destroyed.

One year later and all that life is growing back. The pile is now lush and green, covered in ivy and grasses, and I'm sure, houses a variety of insects, mammals, and even amphibians. (I remember many years ago, there was a woodpile, covered in brambles, in the middle of the front field. We decided to try and remove it. As we started to poke around, suddenly dozens of frogs started hopping out! They had hibernated in there.) It will take a few years, but I'm sure that if the site is left alone, we will have lovely, lush riverbanks again. Nature is programmed to self-heal. One Spring later and the rebirth/renewal is evident.

Spring is really the fizzy drink of the seasons. A heady mix of relief mixed with anticipation. Relief that winter is over and anticipation of the season to come. Because perhaps the best thing about Spring is that you can almost smell Summer on its way.

## special focus: nature's larder

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## Growing your own food... cont'd from previous page

own weight. To avoid this, place new seedlings in a bright spot to grow on. For seeds sown in trays, follow the two steps below.

**Pricking out** – If seeds are sown in open seed trays, they are pricked out (moved) into a larger container so the seedlings have more room to develop. Usually this happens after one to two sets of true leaves (not the first set of seed leaves) have grown on the plant. If you are having issues with 'damping off' (where new seedlings collapse after starting to grow), increase airflow if possible and try to sprinkle cinnamon on the surface of the soil after sowing seeds.

**Potting on** – This means moving into an individual pot to get high quality plants for planting out, such as tomatoes and cucumbers. Be sure to water straight away after potting on. I would also recommend a product called Root Ultra concentrate at this stage, as it promotes strong healthy roots (speeding up the growth rate) and minimises transplant shock. Some gardeners sow a few seeds directly into larger pots to start with to reduce transplant shock and work.

**Hardening off** – This stage is so that plants can gradually adapt to lower temperatures and

windy conditions. Obviously hardening off is unnecessary when growing in a polytunnel but if you plan to grow outside, move plants outside for a few hours each day up to a week before planting outside.

**Planting and feeding** – When the plants are fully hardened off, they are planted out into their final position. During hot spells it is advisable to plant out in the evening or choose a dull day. As with all stages of moving young plants, be sure to water after moving and consider adding Root Ultra mentioned above or a low-strength concentrate feed, which is fast-acting but will need to be added every two weeks or so. A solid feed such as chicken pellets with added seaweed dust can also be worked into the soil at this stage

to provide the plant with a slow-release food over the coming months. The quality of the feed you choose will not only be visible in the plants' growth (as well as disease and drought resistance) but also in the taste and flavour of the food once you finally get to taste it!

Hopefully the information provided above will help you along the way to starting out with the growing season ahead. I plan to give a few more tips for growing on your plants once they are in the ground in the next article. Feel free to call in to us here at Deelish for any help we can give you with starting your garden. For now, good luck with the growing season ahead and remember, gardening doesn't have to cost the earth.

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## people Home &amp; Garden

## April in the Garden

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We are well into Spring now with a corresponding momentum of work and growth in the garden.

**Jobs for the Month**

Sow hardy annuals in informal waves or drifts where they are to flower. Check the back of seed packets for advice at achieving optimum germination and best displays.

**Roses:** Continue to plant Roses. It is now too late to plant bare root Roses but a good time to choose container grown Roses. Choose a sunny, well-drained position, avoiding planting where Roses have been grown previously. Enrich the soil prior to planting with well composted farmyard manure, stable manure or Gee-up. Add some organic rose fertiliser to

the planting hole, firming in well after planting. Roses can be grown in mixed or dedicated borders but if growing in mixed borders avoid over-aggressive border companions. Some of the lower growing hardy Geraniums make good associates, Aubretia, Arabis, Dianthus, Cerastium (Snow in Summer), Polyanthus and dwarf Hostas are a good choice. The aim of associate plants should be to complement the Roses, as well as extending the period of interest. Tie in climbing and rambling Roses.

**Spring Bulbs:** Many of the Daffodils, Narcissi will have finished flowering now. Don't be tempted to cut back the foliage too early or you'll end up with no flowers and stunted growth next year. Avoid tying up the foliage too, as it doesn't serve any positive purpose! The bulb must be allowed to build up resources to energise next year's flowering in the vital six weeks post flowering. A good liquid feed applied at weekly intervals is also beneficial in building up the bulbs' resources for next year. Snowdrops and Crocus will all have finished flowering now and it is a good idea to label and mark their location before they go dormant.

**Summer Bulbs:** Start Dahlias and Begonias into

**GARDENING**

John Hosford  
The Weekend Garden Centre

growth now indoors. These can be planted outdoors when all risk of frost is over at the end of May. Check Dahlias and Begonias that have remained outdoors during winter. You may discover casualties as a result of the cold weather before Christmas. Decayed bulbs and tubers should be discarded and replaced with new stock at the end of May.

Divide Bamboos and Water-lilies

**Lawns:** Commence feeding and weed control this month. Sow new lawns.

**Indoor and Greenhouse:** Indoor plants will now require more frequent watering. Water in the morning with lukewarm water. Feeding should now be in progress. Choose specif-

ic, specialised fertilisers for African Violets, Cacti, Orchids and Citrus.

Overwintered Geraniums/Pelargoniums and Fuchsias should be pruned now removing older wood, dead shoots, aiming to encourage a flush of vibrant growth from the base of the plants. Check for any infestations of pests such as whitefly, aphids, red spider and so on and deal with appropriately.

Tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and chillis can now be planted into their summer fruiting quarters. You can grow in the greenhouse border or in large pots, deep window boxes or troughs. If using a grow bag, choose the deepest bag you can find.

Shallow grow-bags are a false economy, as they dry out quicker or run out of nutrients more rapidly. All debris should be cleared prior to commencing the new growing season. Keep an eye on late frosts and protect on nights where frost is forecast.

**Check:** Repair arches, pergolas, arbours and garden sheds. Remove algae from paths and drives.

**Fruit Garden:** Protect fruit blossom when frost is forecast.

Ventilate protected strawberries on sunny days.

Retrain branches of wall-

trained figs, pruning during April.

Watch out for sawflies and aphids on gooseberries.

**Weeds:** Choose bright sunny mornings to hoe emerging weeds with a good sharp Dutch hoe.

Mulch flower beds and borders with well-composted farmyard manure or stable manure, being careful not to bring roots or seeds of persistent, perennial weeds. Bark mulch makes good mulch but is too acidic for Roses. Get the site clear of weeds prior to mulching. Mulching is well worthwhile, suppressing weeds and retaining moisture during the warm, sunny days.

**Pruning and Training:** Trim winter flowering Heathers once they have finished flowering, cutting just below where they have finished flowering. This will help to maintain a tidy, well-shaped plant.

Prune Forsythias and Chaenomeles after flowering. These two shrubs put on a terrific show of colour in the spring. When the flowers have gone over cut back the flowered shoots to two or three buds from their base. These shrubs can also be trained to grow against walls&fences.

Cut back Lavender once the plants approach the size you want them to grow to.

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## Left out in the cold... cont'd from page 39

a change in approach at all levels of Government is urgently needed to ensure Ireland responds to the climate and energy price crisis in a manner that respects Sustainable Development Goal pledges to ensure "no one will be left behind" and to "reach the furthest behind first."

The report makes several notable findings. These include:

- Government policy on energy poverty is lacking in scale and ambition; the Government's broad based electricity credit provides some short-term relief but risks being counterproductive as it does not target resources to those in most need of support and does not respond to fundamental issues of income inadequacy and inability to carry out retrofitting measures.

- Tenants renting from private landlords are particularly vulnerable to energy poverty as rental accommodation comprises larger numbers of older, low BER dwellings. They also suffer from weak regulation and protection, and do not have control over the level of insulation in their home.

- There are serious problems with retrofitting/energy efficiency programmes, including waiting lists of up to three years for the

SEAI's free energy upgrade scheme, as well as a major labour and skills shortages.

- The Government's retrofit and heat pump targets are not being achieved. The latest Climate Action Plan does not sufficiently address the need for the SEAI and other public agencies to proactively scale up activities and reach out to communities in order to meet retrofitting targets. The Plan also does not explicitly address the necessary phase out of fossil fuel boilers in existing residential buildings.

- The 'poverty premium' experienced by many at-risk households is poorly understood, including customers being penalised for paying bills in cash, the inability to switch supplier without direct debits, as well as related challenges such as the underreported issue of self-disconnection.

This Friends of the Earth commissioned research lays out the most effective policies needed to positively impact both the planet and vulnerable groups. It makes 49 separate recommendations to Government based on fieldwork, research and analysis across the following areas. These

include:

- The Government should prioritise increasing eligibility for the SEAI free retrofitting scheme, zero interest or low cost loan or other models of financing retrofits, as well as community energy advisors, street-by-street insulation programmes and district heating systems.

- A much more ambitious target should be set for the retrofitting of social housing, setting a minimum standard of B2 to be achieved in all social housing by 2030 and increasing investment in the Department of Housing's social housing retrofit scheme.

- Regulations for rental properties should be introduced to force landlords to ensure a minimum energy performance standard. This regulation should start with multi-property landlords in 2023.

- The Government should consider redesigning the Fuel Allowance to include households who really need it, for example a new year-round payment with eligibility based on household income, as well as on the Building Energy Rating.

- Core social welfare rates should be increased significantly, by at least €20, and be benchmarked against the cost of living

to address the serious problem of inadequate income.

- The Government should introduce an Energy Poverty Act that defines energy poverty, sets legally-binding targets for reducing energy poverty, and sets up an independent energy poverty advisory council.

- The Government should consider providing free or subsidised BER assessments to lower income households, as a way of encouraging households to act on their level of energy consumption.

- Narrow definitions of energy poverty that solely focus on household energy expenditure should be avoided in favour of an approach that recognises the intersection of energy poverty, energy deprivation, income inadequacy, housing inadequacy and health effects.

- The role of the CRU and other relevant public bodies must be reformed to ensure that they are optimally supporting the aims of emissions reductions and energy poverty reduction.

- A Just Transition Commission should be established to give greater public awareness to the State's commitment to integrating social justice with climate action.



# Facilitating art lovers and art makers in Dunmanway

Though her surname might lead you to assume otherwise, Cecilia Scholte Lubberink is proudly Dunmanway born and bred. The artist's deep love for her town meant there was no doubt about the location of 'Le Chéile Arts', her new shop that is dedicated to promoting the work of local artists, crafters and designers.

The seed of the idea came last summer during Dunmanway Arts Weekend, a relatively new and energising annual summer event that gave Cecilia an opportunity to mix with the many local artists and crafters taking part. She quickly became aware that others had similar concerns about the lack of a permanent creative outlet in Dunmanway, as well as a lack of local art being shown.

"There wasn't anywhere for us to share resources and facilities, to learn from each other or to share ideas. There are fantastic hubs in other towns but I was tired of commuting and wanted to have something on my own doorstep," she explains.

Shortly afterwards Cecilia noticed Cork County Council and Creative Ireland's call for applications for their Creative Startup Grant, aimed at revitalising disused retail spaces.

"I wanted to create a fair space for artists to sell their work without high commission rates, but it's very hard to do this while starting up a new business – there are so many unavoidable costs involved. The owner of the old Kerr's Pharmacy on the Main Street was incredibly supportive and, with the help of Paul Looney, organiser of the Arts Weekend, I put all of my energy into applying

for the grant and then setting up a Christmas pop-up shop.

"This was such a positive and successful experience that I decided to take the plunge and open a permanent shop in the same location."

Le Chéile Arts officially opened on March 16. Inside there is an eclectic selection of original paintings, drawings, ceramic art, and sculptures, as well as functional pottery, knitting, homewares, candles, lamps, children's books, jewellery, cards and prints. "I have designed the space but the artists make the shop come alive when they bring me their unique creations," Cecilia emphasises.

Now that the shop is open Cecilia is dedicating time to getting the upstairs of the building ready to hold classes and workshops. "There has been a lot of interest expressed by the community and many of the participating artists so I'm working on the space to facilitate this. I hope to hold exhibitions upstairs too and I'm developing a studio for myself and for any other artists who need a creative space."

Dunmanway is a growing town with several more businesses setting up there recently. "There is a fantastic sense of community in this town," Cecilia says, "everyone is so

supportive. I hope to brighten up one more building with this shop and to give even more reasons for people to stop and walk around the town. There is fantastic architecture and natural beauty in and around Dunmanway that needs to be appreciated."

Cecilia's own journey into art started with writing poetry, "my first creative love", which she then illustrated in pencil, charcoal and pen. She began painting at college, first at St. John's Central College and then in the Crawford College of Art & Design. You may already know her work from West Cork Animal Welfare Group's Christmas cards or charcoal sketches of the architecture of Skibbereen for the Heritage Centre.

"In the past year I've been working on combining watercolour pencils and acrylic paint to capture the animals I see around me in the countryside. There is abundant wildlife and inspiration in this beautiful area.

"I took up ceramics at Crawford which I loved. Through Le Chéile Arts I have met other ceramicists who I can now learn from; I'm very excited to get back to working with clay. Creativity fosters creativity; I find seeing other people's work so invigorating and am always getting new ideas for my own



Cecilia pictured in her new shop, Le Chéile Arts.

practice."

Whilst Cecilia struggled to achieve a work-life balance when setting up the pop-up shop, she is now eager to work in a more sustainable way going forward by sharing hours in the shop with participating artists who want to do so, in a way that works for everyone involved.

This will hopefully allow her to enjoy some time off with her partner Gavin O'Reilly and daughters Olive (5) and Alice (2), and also allow her to get back to gardening, long walks with her dog and hopefully sea swimming.

**SHOWCASING LOCAL**

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**ART CRAFT & DESIGN**

## New work by West Cork choreographer inspired by The Gearagh

The poignant and striking landscape of an 11,000 year-old submerged glacial woodland, The Gearagh/An Gaorthadh in Co. Cork is the point of departure for 'Weathering', a new work by director/choreographer Mary Wycherley, who grew up in Skibbereen and has had some familiarity with The Gearagh all her life.

This hybrid of feature length film with live music and song is an exploration of our relationship to our ancient past and how we might ground ourselves within the precarious social, political and environmental landscape of our present and future. 'Weathering' will be premiered in the unique location of St John's Church at Dance Limerick on Thursday, March 30.

The Gearagh, now a nature reserve, lies two kilometres

southwest of Macroom, at the point where the River Lee descends from the mountains and widens at an alluvial plain, stretching for roughly five kilometres, bounded by the townlands of Toonsbridge, Illaunmore and Anahala. It is the site of the last surviving full oak forest in Western Europe, which was felled in the 1950s for the building of two hydro-electric dams in Carrigadrohid and Inniscarra, which provide electricity for the nearby city of Cork and the surrounding area. Within 'Weathering', the resulting sacrificial landscape of flooded forests acts as a bridge to the prehistoric age, asking us to reflect on how ancient places and natural environments infuse our current relationship to the natural world.

In 'Weathering', dancers Justine Cooper and Aoife



Left: Choreographer Mary Wycherley. Right: Dance artist Justine Cooper in Weathering. Pic: Marcin Lewandowski

McAtamney, filmed in The Gearagh by cinematographer Raja Nundlall, will appear on multiple screens with poetry



by Jools Gilson and live music from composer Jürgen Simpson, musicians on cello and percussion, and singer Ceara Conway.

Mary Wycherley says, "During the last decade or so I've been engaging more with the area, particularly benefiting from the knowledge and research of local born ecologist and author Kevin Corcoran. I don't feel that I have any right to try and tell THE story of this place, but it is a place that really compels you to think deeply about how we impact on our landscape, a place that prompts you to think about a deeper past, and how that might help us see better ways forward. And while there is much to mourn in the story of The Gearagh, there are also elements of joy, with a rich and rare biodiversity that finds ways to exist within this irreparably changed environment."

'Weathering' is funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and Limerick City and County Council with support from

Dance Limerick, Project Arts Centre and Tanzrauschen Festival, Wuppertal.

For more information and to book email [info@dancelimerick.ie](mailto:info@dancelimerick.ie)

Mary Wycherley is a dance artist, filmmaker and curator born in West Cork and based in Co. Tipperary, Ireland. Her work expands across disciplines and communities and is experienced in live performance, cinematic, and gallery settings both nationally and internationally. Collaboration is central to her work, connecting with a range of artists and settings. Mary is founder and artistic director of Light Moves Festival and Studio Light Moves which nurtures experiences across dance, new media and screen-based practices.



# Cnoc Buí paints a new story for arts in West Cork

Spearheaded by philanthropists and patrons of the arts, Paul and Aileen Finucane, Cnoc Buí is a new community arts centre for visual and performance art located on the edge of Union Hall village. While architect plans are currently being drawn up and renovations are underway, part of the property is already providing an exhibition space and a meeting place for local community groups. West Cork Creates Spring Exhibition will take place there from April 1-15: Holly Cairns, Leader of the Social Democrats and TD for Cork South West will officially open the exhibition on April 1. Paul and Aileen, who bought the property last June, talk to **Mary O'Brien** about their connection to the local community, ambitions for the project and their shared passion for the stories behind the art they collect.

While they have owned a house by the pier in Union Hall since the 1980s and spent a lot of time there over the years, the couple only settled in West Cork permanently on Paul's retirement two years ago. They share their home with a boisterous two-year-old boxer Biddy, the sixth in a line of beloved boxers.

A retired geriatrician, Paul's work as a doctor and medical educator has brought them around the world; living between Ireland, Wales, the Middle East and Australia. They married 42 years ago while Paul was working as a Concern volunteer doctor in Yemen.

The driving force behind the establishment of Ireland's first medical school in over a century at University of Limerick, Paul finished his working career in Australia, where he spent a decade from 1991 to 2001, returning for another five years in 2016 to set up a medical school there, before his retirement in 2021.

It was in Australia that Paul and Aileen purchased their first piece of art, from the late Australian painter Murray Edwards. It was also around this time that the 'Union Hall Collection' was initiated. The series of works by artists from all over the world responding to the same visual stimulus – the view of Glandore Harbour from Paul and Aileen's home in Union Hall – began when a visiting Australian artist Harry Sherwin gifted them

a painting of the pier. Each painting represents the artist's impression of the Old Pier at Keelbeg, which dates from the late 19th century. Today the collection, which continues to grow, totals over 40 works of art and Paul and Aileen plan on making Cnoc Buí its permanent home once the renovation work is completed.

Over the years the couple's art collection has grown extensively – they have never and don't intend to ever sell a piece of art – and Cnoc Buí offers a way of housing this important collection, as well as repaying the debt of gratitude that Paul and Aileen feel towards their community. "We have long wanted to give something back to our local community in Union Hall," shares Paul.

While neither hail from a background boasting any artistic influence, the couple say that art has massively enriched their lives, in particular the stories and people behind the works in their collection. "Neither of us

know anything about painting technique," shrugs Aileen. "Our interest really lies in people's lives."

It was this fascination with artists that led them both to complete a certificate in the History of Art and Design in UL with Paul subsequently penning two respected books in the art world 'Irish Women Artists of the 20th Century' and 'Odd Roads to be Walking: 156 Women Who Shaped Australian Art'.

"I think she's (Nell McCafferty) a wonderful human being and it's a fabulous painting of her." The painting of Nell was selected for a year-long exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington a few years ago in an event that was opened by Michelle Obama when she was First Lady.

"A lot of Irish and Australian women sacrificed their own careers to promote their husband's work," shares Paul. "For example Margaret Clarke always played second fiddle to Harry Clarke and Grace Henry to Paul Henry."

"Irish women artists tended to come from the 'big house' and were often the second or third daughter of an aristocratic Protestant family, as the first would get the big dowry," explains Paul. "To enhance their chances of a good match, they



Aileen and Paul Finucane in an out-house at Cnoc Buí.



Portrait of Nell McCafferty by Daniel Mark Duffy.

were encouraged to nurture their talent with quite a few women sent to Paris where they were exposed to modernism in art. They came back to an Ireland in the early 20th century that was dominated by men and the Catholic Church and one in which they were marginalised for their 'new' ideas of art. To

this day their work is undervalued, which means that people like Aileen and myself can afford to buy it."

Paul and Aileen's collection of art by Irish women in the 20th century is now sizeable with pieces by such artists as Mainie Jellett, Sarah Purser and Margaret Clarke that have been

loaned to the Crawford Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Ireland. This collection is currently on loan to the University of Limerick but will hopefully make its way to Union Hall in the foreseeable future.

The story of women artists in Australia is in the same vein except without much of the reli-



The latest in the Union Hall Collection is by Gary Swan.



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

gious prejudices. For example, Clarice Beckett, now regarded one of the greatest Australian artists of the 20th century, never sold a painting in her lifetime.

"In a clear-out, her father burned many of her paintings. Taking what was left of the paintings after Clarice's death, her sister kept them in an old shed that was open to the elements. Only 200 of her paintings were salvaged in the end," explains Paul.

"She was rediscovered by someone who found one of her paintings in a junk shop and started researching her," adds Aileen.

Paul and Aileen are now both involved in the Sheila Foundation, an Australian philanthropic foundation ensuring equality for Australian women in visual art.

They are both very interested in portraiture. "Every piece we own has some kind of personal relevance," shares Aileen "and although we'll never sell any, I'll admit there are a few pieces I look at and wonder why the hell did I buy that!" she laughs.

During an exhibition for Culture Night last September at Cnoc Buí, Paul and Aileen asked 25 local people to share the artwork that each would most like to save in the event of a house fire.

Paul's personal choice is a piece by West Cork artist Christine Thery. The large painting, depicting a tiny figure of a woman with a red head scarf on the rocks by the sea, hangs in the couple's living room.

Aileen's pick is a controversial nude portrait of feminist Nell McCafferty by American born artist Daniel Mark Duffy. "I might not agree with a lot of her ideas but she has always stayed true to herself," says Aileen. "I think she's a wonderful



*'Mary Coughlan' by Daniel Mark Duffy*



*Samuel Beckett by Donal O'Sullivan*

human being and it's a fabulous painting of her." The painting of Nell was selected for a year-long exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington a few years ago in an event that was opened by Michelle Obama when she was First Lady.

Paul and Aileen have become good friends with the artist Daniel Duffy, who describes his series of portraits of well-known Irish people as an open and frank portrait of the ageing body. They possess a second

of his nude portraits, one of Irish singer-songwriter Mary Coughlan, which they rescued from the wastepaper basket in Daniel's studio. "He wasn't happy with the painting so it took a lot of convincing on our part for him to even sell it to us," shares Paul.

The late Donal O'Sullivan is another artist whose work Paul and Aileen admire and collect. "Although I really like his painting of Beckett, I could take or leave his paintings of women with pendulous breasts," laughs Aileen.

"He was an extraordinarily gifted artist who had a tragic life," shares Paul. "An art teacher in Dun Laoghaire college and revered by his students, he committed suicide when he was in his 50s. His work never gained the attention it should have". O'Sullivan did however win the highly respected Taylor Prize on two occasions, once for a painting now owned by the Finucanes.

Once completed, Cnoc Buí will provide a permanent home for Paul and Aileen's important collection of over 250 art works, which include portraiture, works by Australian artists and works by Irish women artists of the 20th century.



The couple are aiming to establish a charitable trust that will eventually take ownership of the building.

"We do need to make sure it's sustainable," explains Paul. "So while our hope is that organisations like the Arts Council might in time help with the maintenance of the building, we are looking at setting up some commercial activity like a cafe or gallery shop on the premises."

Tracton Arts and Community Centre in Minane Bridge, Cork and The Ballinglen Arts Foundation in Co Mayo are both inspiring and flourishing examples of what can be achieved with this type of project.

The derelict outbuildings at Cnoc Buí are particularly exciting, as they date from the 18th century and are among the oldest surviving buildings in the Union Hall area. "The outbuildings would have been a village of four or five houses in the 1700s," shares Paul. "One by one they were converted to animal houses over the years and many people in Union Hall will remember this being a working farm with horses

and cattle. "It's thought that the centre of the village moved across the harbour from here to where it is now some time in the 1700s."

While it could take years to renovate all four of the derelict outbuildings, in the more immediate future there are plans to convert the old chicken coop into accommodation for an artist in residence.

"I think people in the village were a bit unsure of our motivation at the beginning but slowly they're starting to understand what we're trying to achieve," says Paul.

"Union Hall is a thriving village, on the up and up, and we have only seen positive changes here in the 35 years we have called it home."

Paul and Aileen's vision is that Cnoc Buí will further add to West Cork's reputation as a haven for artists and as a magnet for those with an interest in the arts.

"Cnoc Buí will be providing an independent focal point for the arts in West Cork now and for future generations," says West Cork artist Alison Ospina. "West Cork Creates is run-

The derelict outbuildings at Cnoc Buí are particularly exciting, as they date from the 18th century and are among the oldest surviving buildings in the Union Hall area.

ning two exhibitions in that space this year. The Easter exhibition curated by Lesley Cox is a pilot exhibition of invited artists rather than an open call like our summer exhibition. Over the years, WCC has gained a reputation for showing the very best of arts and crafts from this region and, as usual, the exhibition will show a variety of media and talent that makes it really special and something worth travelling to see."

[www.cnocbuiarts.ie](http://www.cnocbuiarts.ie)  
[www.westcorkcreates.com](http://www.westcorkcreates.com)



A selection of work on show at this year's West Cork Creates at Cnoc Buí:  
'Garden Map' by Tom Climent;  
'Alltar' bronze on sycamore base by Helle Helsner;  
'Should I Gather Flowers' by Mary Galvin.



# The Craft Corner

This month **Natalie Webb** is showing us how to make salt dough Easter decorations.

- Materials:*
- Salt Dough
  - Rolling pin
  - Grease proof paper
  - Flat oven tray
  - Card
  - Butter knife
  - Pen
  - Paints
  - String or ribbon

*For the dough:*

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1/2 cup table salt
- 3/4 cup of warm water

Mix all ingredients together to form dough if its a bit sticky add more flour. Give it a knead.

*Method:*

Put Oven on the lowest setting.

Put a sheet of grease proof paper on your baking tray.

Draw some easter shapes on your card, I did eggs and bunnies then cut these out.

Flour your surface and roll out your salt dough to approx 1cm.



Place your card shapes on the dough and gently draw around them, you can do as many as you like.

Using a butter knife carefully cut out the shapes and place them on your baking tray.

Poke a little hole in the shapes this is where you will thread your string.

Bake for 3 hours then take

out the oven and leave to cool.

This is the really fun part! You can paint your designs however you like, keep them simple or go wild.

When the paint is dry, simply thread the string or ribbon through and hang them up.

Happy Easter!

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# Colouring Corner





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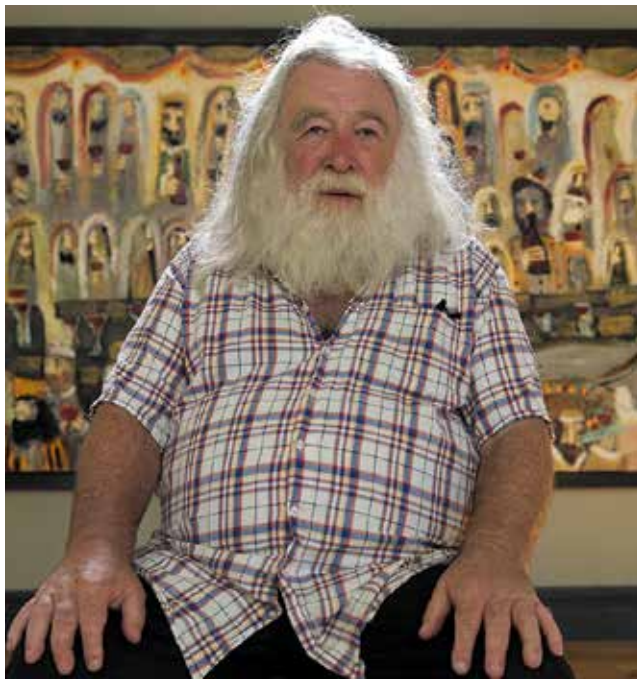
## Renowned Allihies based artist Bill Griffin announces landmark exhibition in Dublin

The contemporary Irish painter Bill Griffin, best known for his symbolic style and subversive technique, has announced a landmark, limited-run exhibition at the historic City Assembly House on South William Street, Dublin later this month.

Works will include a selection from his most recent collection that has not yet been shown, as well as a select number of works that featured in a hometown show in Allihies, which was originally destined for a Russian tour.

Known for his unique style using oil paint and his fingers, Bill produces visually engrossing, symbolic and at times fantastical works that interpret the world and times around him, along with his own fascinating lived experience and adventure.

This exhibition is Bill's fiftieth solo show. Commenting on it, he said "These works, layered over time are achieved through the multiple expression of various muses, a journey where random selection of material can signpost direction, leading ultimately to a point of total completion. This point is where the work whispers 'I'm done' and then goes silent on the artist



and can only speak to others."

Bill's story is unique; born in Cork in 1947 he left school at age 14 to work in a small engineering supply company before getting a job at the Ford Assembly Plant, which was regarded as a lifetime career. Bill got himself fired soon after starting there so, aged 20, he moved to London hoping to pursue a career as an artist but had little success in this

endeavour and very few sales.

Bill went to work on a North Sea oil rig and then on to what was to become the Kinsale Gas Fields.

In the oilfield, a known meritocracy, he rose through the ranks quickly and specialised in directional drilling techniques where he gained an international reputation, working in the Far East and Australia until the

mid-1980s when he worked extensively as a consultant involved in rig design and layout for exploration and production facilities. He became involved in drilling concession negotiations and rubbed shoulders with the likes of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein. He became godfather to Eduard Shevardnadze, the Georgian President and former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.

In 1998, disillusioned and upset at the destruction caused by the UN sanctions on the trampled population in Iraq Bill carried out a substantial study of the devastating effects of depleted uranium munitions (Du-U238) used by the Allied armies, and its poisoning of Iraqis. He organised a successful campaign to have this filthy ordinance banned as a Weapon of Mass Destruction (although not utilised since, production of this deadly projectile continues). The ban was signed by Mary Robinson during her term as UN Commissioner.

At age 50, Bill became a full-time artist and settled in Allihies on the Beara Peninsula.

## Songs and stories from Béarra translated in new book

The launch of a book 'A Cluster of Seaweed' – a translation by Emma Verling née Ní Mhurchú of Eyeries, takes place at Halla Evie, Na hAoraí (Eyeries) on April 5 at 8pm.

A Cluster of Seaweed contains a rich body of stories, seanchas – historical lore – songs and stories from Béarra, one of the most westerly maritime districts in Ireland, where Irish was widely spoken until recent

times. The collection brings together traditions of landlords and land agents, stories of the devastating Great Famine, trade and commerce, legends of the fairy host and other-world animals, folk cures and popular beliefs, as well as tales of mythological figures such as the Old Woman of Béarra and the Gaibhleann Gabha, a folk counterpart of the mythological smith, Goibhniu.

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**MOVIES THIS MONTH**

## 'Six' single release from Irish songwriter Pearse McGloughlin

'Six', the new single from Irish songwriter Pearse McGloughlin's forthcoming studio album 'Keg' will be released by Bluestack Records in conjunction with Urchin Music on Bandcamp and all digital retailers on March 31.

Recorded to tape by producer Julie McLarnon (Jeffrey Lewis, The Vaseline's) in Analogue Catalogue in Newry, Northern Ireland, the song is inspired by Alexander Solzhenitsyn's 'The Gulag Archipelago', exploring

the interplay between destiny and hardship. Musically reminiscent of Neutral Milk Hotel or The Cure, the song leads with a theremin motif played on a Roland JX3P sewn together with a melodic bassline by Ciaran McCreevey and drumming by Stephen Kiernan (Cathy Davey, Mundy).

"My memory of recording this is the sense that I wanted the song to have a spontaneous energy. It was one of these songs that came quickly to

me...I didn't know what it was about till afterwards, as happens so often in songwriting. I wanted to capture it quickly. This was abetted by Julie's analogue approach to recording – we didn't do a whole load of takes once we had everything set up technically. The subject matter, of someone being imprisoned, could have led to a very different treatment. That it's light-hearted and somewhat poppy adds an interesting juxtaposition and allows the casual listener in..." Pearse McGloughlin

Praise for Pearse McGloughlin:

"Softly embellished folk songs, often with a softly sweeping cinematic bent, the faint burble of electronics and a sense of the avant garde..." Lauren Murphy, *The Irish Times*

"Songs of autumnal ambience, bringing shades of a serene Sigur Ros or Beach House in their better moments..." Steve Cummins, *The Sunday Times*.

www.pearsemcgloughlin.com  
Pic: Emily Yasmin O'Brien



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# Claudia Boyle in concert in Castletownshend



Claudia Boyle, one of Ireland’s most spectacular sopranos, will perform with the very talented trumpet player Niall O’Sullivan, and Conor Linehan, the exceptional pianist, on Thursday April 13, 8pm at St. Barrahane’s Church, Castletownshend.

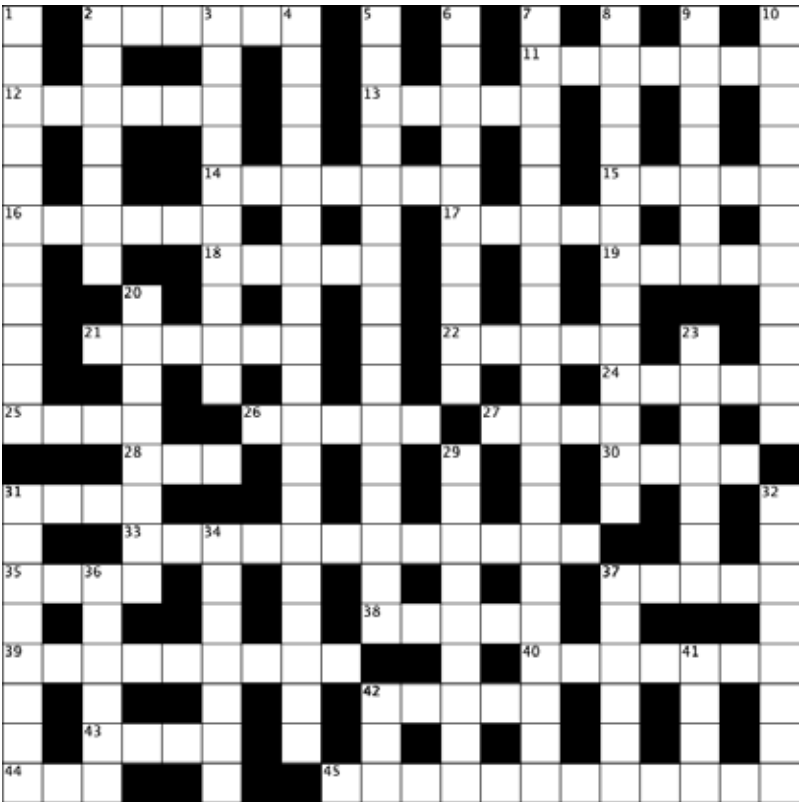
Claudia has secured a stellar international profile in recent seasons through highly-acclaimed performances in Zurich, Rome, London, Berlin and New York, and made her recent debut for Opéra National de Paris.

This concert is organised by St. Barrahane’s Church Festival of Music and Music Network. The delightful programme will include works by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Donizetti, Verdi, Piazzolla and the premiere of Solfa Carlile’s new work.

As well as organising tours, Music Network also promotes the composition of works by Irish artists and for this tour, the Fermoy composer Solfa Carlile, a recipient of several major awards, was commissioned to write a piece so she created ‘Storybook Land’. During the concert Solfa will give a brief introduction and share some insights about this work which will be a lovely opportunity to hear directly from the composer.

Tickets €20: online with Eventbrite; Thornhills Electrical, Skibbereen; text/call 086 2264797; [www.barrahanemusic.ie](http://www.barrahanemusic.ie)

## In the news Crossword



- ACROSS
- 2 Catherine of \_\_\_\_\_, royal wife (6)

11 I retain strange tendency to do nothing (7)

12 Unbalanced tea-party host (6)

13 Snacks in Seville (5)

14 Last moves on the board edge man out (7)

15 It’s a little cold on high ground (5)

16 Civil and religious leader of a Muslim state (6)

17 Saucy music! (5)

18 Annoyed (5)

19 Assassin held in Benin jail (5)

21 Part of a gun barrel or bottom-first delivery (6)

22 “Carmen” or “Aida” e.g. (5)

24 Sunday food fare (5)

25 Animal harness or servitude symbol (4)

26 Just be (5)

27 Superhero surname or English county (4)

28 Price of round of golf e.g. (3)

30 1969 classic film, \_\_\_ Rider (4)

31 Stare in wonder (4)

33 Vomited (12)

35 Without fat (4)

37 Splendid wave (5)

38 Try to influence in the hallway (5)

39 Chinese President (2,7)

40 Name shared by Lady Diana and Mr Tracy (7)

42 Container of tea (5)

43 Mandy Patinkin’s character in Homeland (4)

44 Hard drinker (3)

45 Recommendations (12)
- DOWN

1 Composer of ‘Swan Lake’ (11)

2 Bacterial disease weaponised in wake of 9/11 (7)

3 Smoky dangers in dry weather (5,5)

4 Phenomenon sometimes occurring on the brink of human expiration (4-5, 10)

5 From outside the earth (16)

6 Dent (10)

7 Intended to shield a country from attack (7,7,6)

8 South of the border business association (7,6)

9 Nationality of Marco Polo (7)

10 John Cleese’s infamous hotelier (5, 6)

20 Plant is unexpectedly rent free (4,4)

23 Wailer of Irish folklore (7)

29 Most unkempt (9)

31 Andromeda and others (8)

32 Coils are involved in units of heat (8)

34 Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (7)

36 Fix time to be fair (6)

37 In which country were Greta Garbo and Britt Ekland born? (6)

41 Best Picture winner of 2022 or financial donation (4)

42 Backstage prompt (3)

# Daily life through the lens of Thady Trá

Thady Trá’s photography exhibition ‘By Eye’ opens on Saturday April 8 at 5.30pm in Gallery Asna, Clonakilty.

Thady has been honing his photographic skills for many years and keen observational and compositional abilities are evident in his work. The up-and-coming photographer has a huge grá for analogue photography and takes all his photographss on film, which he then hand-develops and prints in the in-house

darkroom in Clonakilty Community Arts Centre.

This exhibition of work ‘focuses’ on daily life – captured moments which are both artistic and endearing portrayals of their subject matter. In his own words, “I like photos that make you say ‘Huh!’”

A beautiful body of work awaits at Gallery Asna.

‘By Eye’ runs until April 29. Gallery Asna is open daily Tue to Sat 11am to 5pm.



## 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

8				3				
5						9		4
	4				7	6		1
9			1		5			6
2					9		7	
	6					1		
		8			3			2
				8				
			4	7				

#202356 Difficulty: hard

9				8	5			
						4	3	8
7				3				
	1	2						
		6	7	1				
						9		5
	8		4		2			
						1	7	
	2							6

#17559 Difficulty: moderate

Across: 2. Aragon; 11. inertia; 12. Hatter; 13. tapas; 14. endgame; 15. chill; 16. Khalif; 17. salsa; 18. brave; 19. minja; 21. breach; 22. opera; 24. road; 25. yoke; 26. exist; 27. Kent; 28. fee; 30. easy; 31. gaze; 33. regurgitated; 35. lean; 37. swell; 38. lobby; 39. Xi Jinping; 40. Spencer; 42. chest; 43. Sant; 44. sot; 45. testimonials; Down: 1. Tchaikovsky; 2. anthrax; 3. gorse fires; 4. near-death experience; 5. extraterrestrial; 6. impression; 7. missile defense system; 8. Mexican cartel; 9. Italian; 10. Basil Fawley; 20. tree fern; 23. banshee; 29. shabbiness; 31. galaxies; 32. calories; 34. Gospels; 36. adjust; 37. Sweden; 41. Coda; 42. cue



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

# Baltimore Fiddle Fair hits the high notes with this year's line-up

Having celebrated its 30th year in existence in 2022, the Baltimore Fiddle Fair is held annually the weekend that follows the May Bank Holiday. But what started in 1992 as a two-weekend session of local musicians at Declan McCarthy's pub in Baltimore has morphed over the years into a celebration of music from all around the globe, and an event that is regarded as one of the very best traditional and folk festivals in the world. Director of the Fiddle Fair, Declan McCarthy, chats to **Lauren Guillery** via video call from Norway, where he now resides with his family.

Though admitting to having “fallen into” doing music things, the pub Declan ran in Baltimore is where it all began for him. Having heard that Nigel Kennedy, the classical violin player was holidaying in West Cork, Declan fantasised about having the musician play in his pub. He devised the idea of a festival where a few violin and fiddle players would perform, and boldly sent an invitation letter to Kennedy's agent in London. Though the invite never came to be, the festival took place that year and Declan never looked back.

Aside from the Fiddle Fair, Declan works every winter at the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow and this is where he mainly makes contacts with people in the business. He also does some tour managing and is one of the main organisers of the Skibbereen Arts Festival. I ask him if he can pick a musical highlight to date. “There's been lots over the years. A couple of years ago we had Ladysmith Black Mambazo in Abbeystre-wry Church in Skibbereen, and we've had an amazing night in the Town Hall a few years ago with the Blind Boys of

Alabama. It was one of the best nights ever.” Declan was also instrumental in bringing Patti Smith to the Liss Ard Estate for the Cork X Southwest festival back in 2011. “That particular year we lost a lot of money,” he confesses. “There were three of us involved and financially it was a disaster, but still something to be very proud of when you look back, to bring an artist like that to Skibbereen”.

Despite having brought so many high profile artists to West Cork, the Fiddle Fair remains McCarthy's brainchild and the one event he is most excited about. The festival changed its format over the years, moving to various locations when the pub he ran in Baltimore sold in 2004. For some time, the Fair took place at the Harbour Hotel where concerts were held every night for a week, and at the lovely Glebe Gardens, which was particularly special on sunny days. When the hotel sold in 2008, Declan found himself in a quandary and moved the evening events of the festival to the West Cork Hotel in Skibbereen, a choice which proved to be very successful. The following year the Fiddle Fair returned to Baltimore with the addition

of a marquee on the pier. The marquee, which hosts 300 people, is now their hub for the weekend and where most of the concerts happen, though some also take place at St Matthew's Church, allowing the audience to get close and personal with the performers.

What makes the Fiddle Fair special is that it is small and intimate. “The festival starts every year on the Thursday where each of the pubs will host an ‘official’ couple of sessions each,” Declan explains. “Lots of musicians come with their fiddle or their guitar so there are sessions all weekend. You could go to the festival and not go to any concerts and still hear lots of great music”. Early on, Declan made the very conscious decision not to have a separate artists bar, so that audience and artists could mingle, which makes it the charm of the Fiddle Fair: artists could be playing a concert on the Friday night, but on the Saturday they could be playing a session in the pub or having lunch on the square. “It's very much an inclusive, accessible festival,” Declan remarks. “And that's how I'd like it to continue.”

The festival usually books



*The Foghorn Stringband*

thirteen visiting acts including three or four from Ireland and the rest from different countries. Aside from the live music, the event offers workshops with the musicians from the line-up, film screenings, historical walks, and more unusual happenings like boat trips around the harbour with two musicians and ten of an audience to hear some music for an hour. This year, Declan is thrilled to introduce Aidan O'Rourke's film ‘The Ballet of A Great Disordered Heart’, which was shot during lockdown in Edinburgh where the folk musician/film director lives and offers an insight into his community and the music there.

Although the Fiddle Fair and traditional music in general tend to attract an older audience, an important part of the festival is to encourage the local kids to engage with music. Every year on the Friday morning, the festival hosts a concert for local primary schools, which is

always good fun and consists of three of the acts doing 20 minutes each for about 300 children, some of whom will get up and play with the artists if they're learning music. “I would love it if some day a kid from Baltimore performs at the festival,” Declan shares.

Over the years, the Fiddle Fair has had music from many different countries, but this year he's especially excited to introduce acts from Finland and Estonia, none of which have performed in Ireland before. He came across ENKEL, four girls from Finland, at a music showcase in Oslo. “They're amazing, really good but also really funny. They seemed like really good craic, so I booked them,” he says. Allison de Groot

and Tatiana Hargreaves, who will perform with Ye Vagabonds on the Sunday of the festival and play bluegrass / old timey music will be a big hit with the audience too. “I know people will love them because they're absolutely amazing.”

With the return of the most ‘famous’ Fiddle Fair act to the festival this year – The Foghorn String Band, and many other world-class musicians to boot, Declan declares: “I'm really happy with the line-up this year, it's going to be really good!”. His enthusiasm is palpable as he says, “I'm really excited now. You have to come!”

The Baltimore Fiddle Fair takes place May 4-7. For more information and tickets, visit [www.fiddlefair.com](http://www.fiddlefair.com)

## Creative Carers musical mornings in Clonakilty



Composer Justin Grounds will be running a series of four weekly coffee mornings for carers starting on Wednesday, April 12 at the new Green Dot café in Clonakilty (next to Meade's Newsagent).

Justin explains that: “The sessions will be an informal and relaxed opportunity to connect with other carers in the community and explore ways to bring music and creativity into our daily lives with those we care for.

“We will discuss and share some of our favourite music, find out how to make play-

lists and share them, explore rhythms and melodies and even some creative haiku writing with guest artist Tess Leak.”

Participation is free but booking is essential – email [justin@justingrounds.com](mailto:justin@justingrounds.com).

The Creative Carers Programme was launched in 2022 to provide enjoyable social and creative engagement opportunities for family carers – people who provide care for a loved one in the home.

Managed by Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre as part of Arts for Health Partnership, the programme is currently deliv-

ered by composer and musician Justin Grounds and visual artist Sarah Ruttle.

In its first year Creative Carers led three creative workshop series; two ‘In the Picture’ dementia friendly gallery tours; worked with four families at home and ran three outreach workshops – all culminating in a celebration at DeBarra's Clonakilty.

For more information about any aspect of the Creative Carers programme, contact 028 22090 or [info@westcork-artscentre.com](mailto:info@westcork-artscentre.com)

## April West Cork Gig Listings

*Compiled by Lauren Guillery*

Sat 1st	Eva Coyle & Friends   Ballydehob Trad Festival
Sun 2nd	Dylan Flynn & The Dead Poets   DeBarra's Folk Club Joshua Burnside   Ballydehob Trad Festival
Thurs 6th	John Spillane   DeBarra's Folk Club
Fri 7th	Damien Dempsey   Connolly's of Leap Ganz Collective Take Over   DeBarra's Folk Club
Sun 9th	The Black Apple Bastards   DeBarra's Folk Club
Sat 15th	First Class + Coach   Levis' Corner House The Deadlians   DeBarra's Folk Club
Sun 16th	Liam Ó Maonlaí   Connolly's of Leap Q.U.I.E.T. (Anthony Noonan)   DeBarra's Folk C
Thurs 20th	Pa Sheehy (Unplugged)   DeBarra's Folk Club
Fri 21st	WHENYOUNG   Connolly's of Leap
Sat 22nd	Inni-K   Levis' Corner House
Sun 23rd	John Blek   DeBarra's Folk Club
Thurs 27th	Ana Tivel and Jeffrey Martin (US)   DeBarra's Folk Club
Fri 28th	Camilla Griehsel & Friends   Ballydehob Jazz Festival
Sat 29th	Canibal Dandies   Ballydehob Jazz Festival Síomha   Connolly's of Leap Tarantaceltic   Ballydehob Jazz Festival
Sun 30th	Æ Mak   Connolly's of Leap Canibal Dandies   Ballydehob Jazz Festival



## people Arts &amp; Entertainment

## Booking opens for 2023 West Cork Chamber Music Festival

West Cork Music is delighted to announce the programme for this summer's West Cork Chamber Music Festival which runs in Bantry from June 23 – July 2.

Featuring four great violinists, four international quartets and stories told by composers from Ireland, Australia, USA and the Netherlands, West Cork's premier international festival presents more than 50 concerts over 10 days and nights with Baroque Coffee Concerts, midday experiments, afternoon recitals, powerful evening

concerts and finishing up with candle-lit late nights.

Headlined by four outstanding violinists, Alina Ibragimova, Viviane Hagner, Nurit Stark and Mairéad Hickey, the Festival welcomes four international string quartets – Pacifica Quartet from USA, Armida Quartet from France, Ardeo Quartet from Germany and Ragazze Quartet from the Netherlands. The Baroque and early music ensembles feature two outstanding violinists, Ariadne Daskalakis and Johannes Pramsohler.

Much-loved repertoire

features from morning to night and includes works by Bach, Schumann, Beethoven, Mozart and much more, while audience can also immerse themselves in a wide selection of contemporary music including world, European and Irish premieres, special Festival commissions and a rare performance of George Crumb's Black Angels that dates back to the Vietnam War.

The many highlights include Pacifica Quartet playing Beethoven's unmatched Song of Thanksgiving for recovery from

illness; Brett Dean's 'Madame, ma bonne Soeur', letters written by Mary Queen of Scots to her cousin Elizabeth of England, the last letter written hours before her execution; and Biber's famous Mystery Sonatas performed by Ariadne Daskalakis with specially commissioned poems by Ruth Padel.

This year's line-up will also include Cédric Tiberghien, Jérémie Moreau, Ensemble Diderot, Cédric Pescia, Anna Devin, Lotte Betts-Dean, Rainer Zipperling, Emma Wernig, Caroline Melzer, Claudio Bohórquez and

many more.

Free family friendly Fringe concerts bring the music to the wider West Cork area and there will be pop-up performances in Bantry town. Ireland's only instrument exhibition runs throughout in the Old Methodist Church.

The West Cork Chamber Music Festival is generously supported by the Arts Council of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Crespo Foundation and Cork County Council. General booking now open. Full programme can be found on westcorkmusic.ie



Alina Ibragimova

## The Lost Messiahs play Crane Lane

The Lost Messiahs, confirmed for two of Ireland's biggest festivals this year, Forest Fest and Electric Picnic, play Crane Lane Theatre in Cork on Wednesday, April 5.

Formed by songwriter and guitar player Ollie Plunkett, the alternative group from Portlaoise are a true collective of musicians all sharing a deep passion for playing original music.

Barry Egan of the Sunday Independent describes the band as having "a distinct sound with echoes of Mercury Rev and The National."

Their newest single 'Brown's field' from their latest 'Connected to the Real' album is about a real Brown's field that was situated across from Ollie's house. This pretty blank landscape or canvas offered a young adolescent lots of room to create an imaginary world away from the ordinary into the extraordinary. Everyone has their own Brown's field. Produced in Golden Egg Studios by Ollie Plunkett, the single has been mixed by multi-award-winning producer Chris O'Brien and

mastered by Greb Calbi of Sterling Sound, New York.

There has always been a mystical, spiritual connection to The Lost Messiahs' music. On the first album they collaborated with the monks from Glenstal Abbey for their beautiful track 'Soulstar'. They followed that album with 'Deconstruction of the Mind', an album laden with songs that beautifully explore the inner workings of the mind in search for new meaning and direction. The production is rich, laden with fat immersive synths and atmospheric guitars. Bands like Mercury Rev, Spiritualised, The National and War on Drugs have always inspired The Lost Messiahs with their similarly rich atmospheric landscapes.

The Lost Messiahs are made up of experienced musicians who all have a rich musical pedigree in their own right. The band members are Eamonn Duff on bass, James O'Connor on vocals and acoustic guitar, Ollie Plunkett on electric guitar and Martha Cummins on drums.

## Becoming the thing

All inspired poets are unique in their own way. John W. Sexton is no exception says **Moze Jacobs**. Specifically, he happens to be a particularly sci-fantastic one.

The award-winning author of eight published poetry collections (and counting), two novels, a 100-episode RTE radio programme, and an album with Hugh Cornwell, frontman of The Stranglers, is a long-term resident of Kerry. He lives on a mountain in a townland called Carks, which translates as 'Place of the Grouse'. He will be reading at DeBarra's Spoken Word, Clonakilty, on April 11, mostly from his latest collection, 'The Nothingness Kit' (Beir Bua Press, 2022) which contains "Minimalist poems in sequences". The poems are haiku-like and grouped in different constellations with intriguing titles.

Sexton operates in various genres. This one is called 'hybrid gendai scifaiku'; a form



John W. Sexton & Rory Gallagher

of gendai (the contemporary, non-traditional Japanese haiku) that can be very surreal. "Sci-faiku was widely considered to be no more than a poetic ghetto," he explains in the introduction to 'The Nothingness Kit'. "Disdained, vilified, shunned by many self-respecting haiku poets. I entered it for that very reason... The perfect place for experimentation and development." Some of the poems in this collection are indeed, 'sci-fi' (short for science fiction) in that they mention locations away from planet Earth: *mining an ethanol cloud ... / in the vastness of space / we'll still*

*act small*

*Others appear to be 'decidedly human':*

*they married and lived / in a chestnut ... ate promises / from tins*

*those lips so kissable ... / briars trip / from her tongue*

Or, fairy tale and fantasy:

*Five Two Two / Unicorn Avenue ... the postman / arrives in a wish*

On the whole, his poems are moulded on the same haiku pattern – three lines, including two fragments, and a phrase containing a verb. At the same time, each couplet is like a tiny

universe unto itself. And each one is different due to a colourful, exuberant, and refined manipulation of language. According to the poet, "There is a lot of wordplay and punning going on. I like creating new characters and subverting myths. The poems literally took me by surprise because they came from other places. The future, or the past, or other dimensions. I was the piece of paper they appeared on." One of his processes is, "to become the thing that I want to write about. To write a poem about a cat you must become one."

John W. Sexton feels in his bones that poetry is a form of magic. "As an Irish poet with an English accent, the child of economic emigrants who were forced to live in Sasana, aka England, I follow the ancient concept of 'imbais forosnai' (illuminating inspiration). It involves reaching a higher consciousness in order to find a pure, prophetic form of poetry. It's in everything I do – minimalist poetry, science fiction, magic realism. There is a duty for the poet – I think – to believe that poetry can make a difference. When I write about my adult autistic son Matthew, I cannot cure him through magic but I have moments of clarity, healing. And I can communicate that experience. As the father of a forever-child, I offer my readers a moment of understanding and empathy by altering my awareness. It's something I can do. Enter the poem and lose myself."

John W. Sexton will bring a surprise exercise to his reading, which will be followed by a Q&A and the Open Mic.

DeBarra's Spoken Word, DeBarra's Folk Club, Pearse Street, Clonakilty. Tuesday, April 11, 8:30pm, no cover charge.

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## people Farming

# A West Cork Farming Life: James and Rachel O'Sullivan, Leap-Union Hall

By Tommy Moyles

James and Rachel O'Sullivan with their four children, Kayla (12), Daire (10), Jenna (8) and Eoin (6) farm 31 hectares, which is divided into two blocks near Leap and Union Hall. There they run a dairy calf to beef system buying in calves in spring and finishing the cattle at 21 to 24 months.

The O'Sullivans have been participants in Teagasc's Dairy-Beef500 programme since early 2022. Working with Teagasc advisor, Anna Sexton they have been steadily implementing changes that will increase the profitability on the farm.

Similar to many West Cork farmers, March has been a challenging month to manage. According to James: "We were doing fine till a few weeks ago. I have no big cattle, they're all yearlings, so I'm not badly off. Half of them are out since end of January and the rest from early March. I'm limited enough on housing, so I needed the shed space for calves. The larger land block is almost on an island in a way so it's very exposed but it's good at this time of year as it's fairly dry land. It can be more challenging from June onwards if weather gets very dry. The farm at home is north facing and is more sheltered. There's 25 acres there and a shed. I do a bit of reseeding every year so if I need to hold cattle in a paddock, I try to have them in one that I've lined up for reseeding."

Previously James purchased calves from local calf dealers and marts and while this worked well from a time point of view, it led to calves of varying quality and brought an element of disease risk too. So



Teagasc Cork West Advisory staff at the grass farm walk on James O'Sullivan's farm, Stephen O'Sullivan, John Crowley, Aine O'Riordan, Tom Scannell.

this year he changed his buying routine.

"This year I purchased them from four farmers. I work as an AI technician for Munster Bovine so I know a good few farmers and I can have a bit of input in the type of beef bull they are using so it's a good tie up between us. This spring we bought in 91 Angus calves, an

even enough mix of bulls and heifers and all bar two were born before March."

Having the calves close in age will aid their weight uniformity and will benefit when it comes to housing, dosing and drafting for sale also. While he places an emphasis on early-maturing heifers, James finds it useful to have a mix.



Multi Species Sward on James O'Sullivan's farm.

"Some of the heifers will be ready for finishing by September so it's handy to get them away. It reduces the demand for grass and I can keep the bulls out a bit longer at grass. It's good for cash flow too."

Improving the carcass weight is one of the priority areas for James. Ideally, he would like a carcass of over 300kg at 21 months for steers and 275-280kg for heifers at 20-21 months. Focusing on early maturing breeds will help get the cattle finished before the expensive second winter.

"I examined some of the sires of the cattle I had slaughtered over the past number of years and found significant variability in the quality of bull used. Some of the carcass weights have been light so if we can add a few kilos to that without having an effect on calving difficulty for the dairy farmer, it should be win-win for both of us. This year, there'll be a focus on using bulls with a higher Commercial Beef Value with a focus on their



Teagasc advisor Anna Sexton and farmer James O'Sullivan, Amy Ross, Union hall

carcass weight index."

Having a coastal land can be a benefit when it comes to having early grass but has its challenges when it could dry out and grass growth tails off in summer. To overcome this, James applied for the Multi Species Sward Scheme in 2022 and sowed 8ac of multi-species sward (MSS) between his home farm and his out-block. He ploughed the land in early summer and run with a disc harrow shortly after to break up the sod. The land was then levelled and run with a harrow to create a nice fine seed bed and then seeded and rolled. The only spray the land received was glyphosate prior to ploughing and it received two bags of 10-10-20 at sowing. "Growth was excellent once the sward became established. This was particularly noticeable in the dry period in late summer and

early autumn, when the MSS outperformed grass swards on the farm without the need for any chemical fertiliser applications."

James saw a good level of performance, enough to encourage him to try another few paddocks in future. "What I want to establish is how the swards will persist next year, particularly if there is any level of poaching on the sward, which can be quite open early in the year."

While James will be incorporating various technologies on-farm, including CBV to purchase better calves of a higher beef merit and reseeding with MSS to reduce reliance on chemical nitrogen and help with drought periods, the overall plan of the farm remains the same, finishing cattle from a largely grass-based system at 20-21 months of age.

## West Cork in-person clinics for new CAP Schemes announced

The Department of Agriculture has announced dates for in person clinics and public meetings to assist farmers in making applications for CAP related schemes.

The Public Meetings and Farmer Clinics are there to assist farmers in making their applications online for the Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS) and other area-based schemes and the Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCEP).

The dates for west Cork are as follows; Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS) and other area-based schemes will be held in Skibbereen at the West Cork Hotel, on April 18, clinic is from 10am to 4pm and in Dunmanway on April 19 at the Parkway Hotel, clinic from 12 noon to 7pm followed by a public meeting from 8pm to 10pm.

Also, a public information meeting on the new Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme

will be held at the Westlodge Hotel in Bantry on April 18, the public information meeting will commence at 8pm, however Department officials will be available from 6pm.

Minister McConalogue has also just announced the opening of the €265 million Suckler and Beef schemes. Information can be found on [www.agfood.ie](http://www.agfood.ie). Closing date of May 2 for the Dairy Beef Scheme and May 22 for the SCEP.

## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Aidan Connolly, Eimear Collins, Laura Murray and Kelle Dolan from MICC Dunmanway at the Senior Category, Schools Enterprise Programme run by the Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West in The Celtic Row Hotel, Rosscarbery. Pic Darragh Kane



## people Farming

FARMING  
IN WEST CORK

Tommy Moyles

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

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‘In like a lion, out like a lamb’ – the proverb usually associated with March, has been reversed this year. The dry spell that dominated the second month of the year hung on for the early days of March before the wind and rain swirled back into our lives and those hazy February days became a distant memory.

## Winds of change

We seem to be getting spells of three-to-six-week dry or wet weather in recent years. The upside is pasture growth has kicked on a little as temperatures have managed to stay above ten degrees for much of March.

Calving kicked off properly at the start of the month and before I knew it the two-thirds point was reached before hitting a bit of a mini-break. I think it's the first year where the peak calving time became this condensed but, while there were a few busy days, things weren't as hectic as they were other years.

Perhaps that's down to having an eye on both the past and the future. I enjoy farming and have every intention of continuing to do so but I'm not as young as I used to be and won't be getting younger. Combining what worked well before with making some labour-saving changes should help in that regard. A few changes of direction with an eye on the future and the bank balance have eased the workload and with the value of hindsight, I wish I had made some of those changes sooner.

## Polled cattle

Topping the hindsight list is polled cattle. I now regret not making that choice much sooner. Disbudding suckler calves was easily my least favourite

job. Even with them confined in the crush, it was physically demanding work that hopefully will no longer be required here.

With the exception of one calf who is from a hetrozygous polled bull but thankfully has no sign of buds yet, all the rest of the calves are from homozygous polled sires. It's one job less to be done and other benefits include less strain on my back, no bad experience for calves and no cows getting over protective. The knock-on effect means an animal that's a bit easier to deal with as they get older too.

Something to note when I'm doing a review of how things went is that I'll need to scan earlier and get my cows into groups of when they're due rather than messing around picking some out of different pens. Some of that is a result of trying to get a handle on how best to use the shed since the extension was put on a few years ago. It might make more sense to run the cows as a larger group with a straw lie-back and keep the weanlings on slats. With more calving in a shorter space of time it means more thought will have to be given to shed space.

As it stands the oldest third of calves are all out with since last week and are split into two groups. The calved heifers on their own and the cows as a

separate group. There's a far larger chance of a calf picking up scour if left indoors so they have been put into paddocks where they can find shelter from the wind and rain.

## Milk Price, fertiliser and politics

Newswise, three big items stood out for me. Milk price fell another few cent and the base prices Irish dairy farmers were paid for February milk is anywhere from 10c/l to 12c/l back from December prices. I can't ever recall so large a price fall in such a short period of time. While output prices have pulled back, the same can't be said of inputs. March weather put a halt to a lot of fertiliser spreading but farmers are in a bit of a standoff as fertiliser prices remain high despite it being cheaper in Northern Ireland. This was highlighted when Wexford farmer and IFA grain committee vice-chairman, John Murphy imported a lorry load of CAN fertiliser at €560/ton (VAT exclusive) at the time prices for the same product in this jurisdiction ranged from €700 to €740/ton. I have a feeling that topic might run.

The other topic which could play out in the long run is the success of the Farmer–Citizen Movement (BoerBurgerBeweging, BBB) in the Dutch

provincial elections. The party less than four years old took 20 per cent of the seats in the Dutch senate and with 15 of 75 seats it is now the largest party in the upper house of the Dutch parliament. Described as a populist right-of-centre party it was formed in 2019 to give a voice to the farmer protests against the governments plans for the sector. It gained one per cent of the national vote in the 2021 general election with leader Caroline van der Plas taking their solitary seat. Ms van der Plas was an agricultural journalist and adviser prior to her involvement in politics and was a member of the political party, the Christian Democratic Appeal (similar to FF or FG) before setting up the BBB. Interestingly, her mother Niamh Fitzpatrick, an Irishwoman, was previously a political representative for the CDA.

The BBB emerged from the imposition of environmental restrictions on farmers, the sense of voices not being heard in rural areas and a broader sense of conservative resistance to societal changes. Parallels could be drawn in an Irish context as many of the independent TDs could fall into some or all of those categories but some political commentators remain unsure if they could form a party under the same banner.

## Agricultural Science students have a low farm injury risk perception

A major study has found that just over half agricultural science students think that the level of risk they face whilst doing farm work is low.

The study, part of the BeSafe Project was conducted among 417 first and second year Agricultural Science students in UCD. The study sought to understand if experience, awareness, or social influences increase, or decrease risk perception.

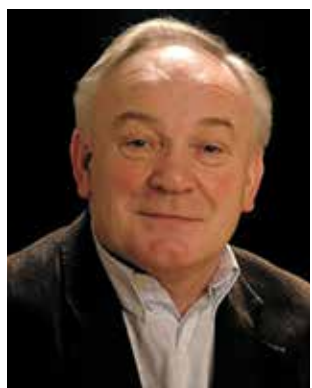
Overall, the results found that the level of work experience has little influence on risk perception. Awareness of someone who had a serious injury, or of someone killed on a farm, substantially increased students' risk perception. The study found that 34 per cent knew someone killed in a farm incident, 14 per cent knew someone who suffered a severe injury, defined as being out of work or study for more than a day, while 25 per cent experienced a near miss.

Social influencers, that is family members and farmers known to the students, were found to have the largest impact on student's risk perception. However, worryingly, the research found that these social influencers had a negative impact on the students' risk perception.

The study also found that students' level of farm injury risk perception was highest where a family member experienced a severe injury, followed by a near miss; followed thereafter by hearing about someone who died and lastly by hearing about someone injured. These findings indicate that direct personal experience has the strongest influence on student risk perception.

## people Motoring

## A stylish family car

CAR  
REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

Peugeot choose the luxurious Cashel Palace hotel in the heart of the Tipperary town of the same name to launch their new 408; it certainly was an impressive location and the car is very stylish also.

Yes, a classy five-star Palladi-

an Manor for a classy new car. The Palace was built in 1732 for Archbishop Bolton and was designed by Edward Lovett Pearce, who also designed the Bank of Ireland building in College Green, Dublin. Later converted to a hotel, it ceased trading in 2015 and after a major refurbish was re-opened under the Magnier family ownership in March last year.

Enough about the hotel, what's the car like? The 408 is included in Peugeot's E-Lion project, which will see five new electric cars being launched in the next three years, part of the company's plans to be fully electric by 2030.

Peugeot are certainly being brave with their colours of late. When they launched their new 308 last year it came in Olivine Green and the week before the launch of the 408 I drove an SW version of the 308, which came in Avatar Blue.

Continuing with the bright

and bold colours, the 408 I drove last week came in Obsession Blue. When I left the pick-up point at the Automotive Team in Sandyford the range, with a full tank of petrol, said 700km. But with steady motorway driving the clock was reading 760km by the time I got to the Red Cow roundabout.

I have seen this happen previously with other petrol or diesel cars; when you drive along a motorway at a steady speed you will see the range rapidly climb. My test car was an eight-speed automatic with 130bhp.

At first I thought the 408 was not much larger than the 308, but then I came to it via the station wagon version of the 308, which might have given me an inaccurate impression. The 408 has a longer wheel base and a larger boot than the 308.

Inside the dash is attractive and well-laid-out with a ten-inch infotainment screen. Plenty of head and leg room for five



adults. The boot is a decent size and while there is space for a spare wheel, none is provided. Unusual for Peugeot that there is no spare, but I'm told it's all got to do with weight.

Peugeot has really upped their game in recent years and their cars are up there with the best. No wonder Stephen McGrath, their Product Manager says that the 408 is not just a new car, it's a conquest model.

Peugeot are confident that they will win over some new customers with this new version of the 408.

It's a very stylish family car. Really comfortable car to drive and travel in and my daughter, who was my regular passenger last week and good judge of style, was very impressed.

The Peugeot 408 is certainly worth a test drive. Remember if you drive carefully you won't

have many pit stops.

Prices start at €39,995, but my Allure Pack test model with a plethora of extras will cost you €41,995. If you want GT is five euro short of 45K.

Available in petrol or plug-in hybrid, no diesel version available, but there will be a fully electric version available later this year.



# A season to remember for Coombes rugby star

Skibbereen's Coombes family has become well-renowned in rugby circles in recent years. Gillian Coombes is a member of the successful Munster Women's side that won all their matches in the Vodafone women's interprovincial series for 2023. They beat Ulster (34-0), Leinster (26-17) and Connacht (50-24) to retain their title and the 29-year-old Coombes, who now plays club rugby with Ballincollig RFC as a second row, tells **Matthew Hurley** how delighted she is with their success.

**“T**he instant feeling was joy and delight. I know a lot of the girls on the team won it the year before so to win it back-to-back was very special. It was unbelievable in my first interpro series. It made the journey even better,” she says.

The team has four West Cork girls in their ranks. Skibbereen natives Coombes, Enya Breen, Abbie Salter-Townshend and Urhan's Laura Sheehan all played their part.

It is a thrill for Coombes to play with girls who originate from West Cork. “It was lovely. We are all so spread out now. Laura Sheehan is playing in England for Exeter Chiefs, Enya is playing in Dublin for Blackrock College and Abbie is playing in Limerick with UL Bohemians. Typically, I wouldn't get to stand on the pitch with them, so it is just a great experience to have the opportunity to do that.”

It was extra special to play with Breen and Salter-Townshend especially because of the Skibb connection. “Our families would all know each other. We grew up together, so it is great,” Coombes says.

Munster won the interpro title in 2022 too and the clear aim was to win it for the second time in a row, a brilliant achievement.

“It was a bonus that we were able to do it with a clean sweep. We saw the Leinster game as the one to win especially,” Coombes explains.

“That most likely would have determined who would win the series. All the teams were tough though, Connacht put it up to us too in the last game.”

Family is important to Gillian. Her brother Gavin (25) was part of the recent Irish Grand Slam winning side. When she made her debut against Ulster, it became a brilliant occasion not just for Gillian but for the whole Coombes family that weekend.

“You just want to go out and perform. Once you look back at it, you only realise then that it was a dream come true. It

was extra special because Gav played on the Friday night in Musgrave Park, and I was able to play on the same pitch the next day. It was nice for my mom and dad to see both of the games,” she says.

In general, the Coombes' have played a huge part in keeping Skibbereen RFC going, although Gillian didn't start playing the sport regularly until after college.

“My dad would have played rugby when I was a child, and we'd go to the Skibbereen RFC games. The sport has always been a part of my life though.

“I would have played a bit of underage with Skibb U10s boys team but then I stopped as there was no girls team.

“Dad was a big part of the club obviously, Mom was always in the kitchen helping out every Sunday after matches giving out soup and sandwiches. It was always an element in my life,” Coombes says.

Gillian's other brother Kevin (27) also played underage rugby for Skibbereen along with Gavin while her sister Claire (24) played for Bantry as there



Gillian Coombes with her parents Pic: Inpho Sports

was no underage girls side in Skibbereen.

The oldest of the four children, Gillian played basketball and Gaelic football going through college.

“Even though my siblings are younger, they've been playing a lot longer than I have. I followed them,” Gillian laughs.

In playing different sports, her skills on certain aspects of rugby has developed her into an accomplished player today.

“Football and basketball are useful for a lot of things including hand eye coordination. It's important for children to grab that opportunity. Our parents would have encouraged us to give everything a go. Then when we were older we decided what we liked most,” she explains.

Coombes is currently a

teacher in Bandon and, like many athletes that have a job alongside a high-level sport, it is a challenge at times. She isn't the only player to have a job along with playing though.

“It's tough. During interpro time, we were up in Limerick three times a week in the evenings on top of my job. The fact I finish school at three o'clock, I'm kind of lucky that I have the time to drive up and down to Limerick,” Coombes says.

“When we had to do gym work in the mornings, there was a lot of commitment to get to the level. It was a lot of effort from all the girls, some would have been travelling from Dublin. Laura Sheehan would have been travelling from Castle-town, that's three hours just to get to a training session.”

Being a Munster rugby player

takes up a lot of time management too as Coombes has found in the past year.

“It does take a lot of organisation from your own perspective because you have to fuel prep as well. It was important that our nutrition was right. It takes a lot of commitment if you want to succeed at the highest level.”

In terms of club rugby, Gillian used to play for the Skibb boys at underage before playing for Bantry at adult level and what followed was a move to Ballincollig.

It is fair to say that the trajectory of the club in Mid Cork has gone up since she joined them.

“When I started with Ballincollig, we were just in the Munster junior league whereas now up in the All-Ireland league which means we do an awful lot of travelling around Ireland. We

could be up in Belfast, Galway, Dublin. It does take up a lot of time, you got to go to extra gym, training twice a week and nothing more. It is a big step up in intensity and commitment required. In addition, the general standard is much better,” the 29-year-old admits.

Continued success with Munster is a big aim for Coombes and the rest of the team.

“We need to make it three-in-a-row of interpros. It was a little bit disheartening to see people who should have made that Irish squad that didn't. We were so dominant this season, so it was a shame more of them didn't make the cut. I have no doubt that it will light more fires in peoples bellies to go on and progress.

Despite the hope for her teammates and the whole Munster team next season, Coombes admits that she is thinking about going back to basketball. One more season of rugby perhaps.

“I'd say if I make a Munster squad again next year, it would be a big achievement for me. I'm older now so I don't think I have many years left playing rugby unfortunately. My body is not able for it anymore.

“I would like to stay involved somehow, like helping out an underage team. I would actually like to go back and play basketball someday to keep fit. That might not be as hard on the body as rugby is,” she concludes.

Whatever the future holds for the Skibbereen woman, this season has been a memorable one for her. Not just in a sporting context but having success with the girls she grew up with too.

## OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Pictured here is the MICC Dunmanway team that claimed the Munster under 17 Junior Schools Soccer Trophy with a comprehensive 3 – 0 victory against Clare school side St. Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla. A brace from Padraic Hegarty and a goal from the excellent Brian Horgan sealed the victory for the West Cork side at a wind and rain swept Charleville AFC ground. Credit: Chris Melnyk



## people Sport

# Clonakilty Gymnastics Club impresses at Gymfest

A team from Clonakilty Gymnastics Club competed against clubs from around the country to come second in the Gymfest display competition that was held in Dublin in March. The gymnasts range in age from eight up to 14 and train once a week with their coaches; their three and a half minute routine for Gymfest consisted of dance, acrobatics, balances and gymnastics elements.

This was the Clonakilty team's first competition and to place second was a huge achievement for the individual gymnasts and for their Club, which is excited to see what's next for this hardworking team.

## Rally legends to raise funds for critical charity

A charity rally featuring internationally-known legends of the sport will tour the south-west of the country later this year to raise funds for CRITICAL, the emergency medical response charity.

Déjà vu Cork '23 will see 150 historic rallying and supercars leave Little Island in Cork on September 9 and embark on a 140-mile route taking in many of the classic Cork 20 and West Cork Rally special stages. It's the

ninth event in the series which has raised more than €300,000 for charity.

The non-competitive rally will include a lunchtime parade through the streets of Clonakilty and will culminate with a gala dinner at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Little Island in Cork. All proceeds from the event will go to CRITICAL.

The charity provides pre-hospital emergency care to critically ill and injured patients in their local communities through its network of volunteer Emergency Medical Responders. The charity has volunteer critical care doctors in Mayo, Donegal and Dublin and will soon have

teams in Meath, Kildare, Wicklow, Waterford and North Cork. It is also exploring opportunities to expand its network of Volunteer Responders into more local communities over the coming twelve months

Micheál Sheridan, CEO of CRITICAL said, "Our volunteers are tasked to serious incidents by the National Ambulance Service. We've kitted out their Critical Care response vehicles with a specialist medical kit essentially bringing the Emergency Department to the patient. The equipment, which is entirely funded by donors and wonderful fundraising events like this, allows our critical and

advanced care doctors to use their many years of experience to perform complex and often life saving medical procedures at the scene. We're honoured to be chosen by Déjà vu as the beneficiaries of their Cork rally as it will help us to expand our services to even more communities across the country. We're often called to road traffic incidents and fundraising events like this help us to bring hope to people when time is critical."

It costs an average of €25,000 to establish an Advanced level Volunteer Doctor in the community; and €120,000 to put a new Critical Care response vehicle on the

road.

Déjà vu Motorsport was created in 2016 by two retired motor sport enthusiasts, Alan 'Plum' Tyndall, the creator of motorsports TV programme RPM and former rally co-driver Beatty Crawford.

Alan Tyndall, RPM Déjà vu Motorsport Director said, "We are delighted to support CRITICAL, the emergency medical response charity. Many people will know it as the charity responsible for setting up the Irish Community Air Ambulance and proving how vital that service is. Now the priority is bringing Critical and Advanced levels of care to more communities.

As they are using specially prepared cars for their innovative response vehicles, it seems appropriate that our enthusiastic motorsport orientated entrants will be supporting this very worthwhile initiative."

Previous Déjà vu Motorsport events have been based in Killarney and Donegal twice as well as Sicily, Belfast, Tralee, and Westport. Entries for the Cork event are available on: [www.rpm-motorsport.com/tours](http://www.rpm-motorsport.com/tours)

For more information about CRITICAL, visit [communityair-ambulance.ie](http://communityair-ambulance.ie)



## 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. M.C.

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### MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. D.O.S

### MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken

heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. M.L.L.

### PRAYER TO ST JOSEPH

Great St. Joseph of Cupertino who by your prayer obtained from God to be asked at your examination the only preposition you knew. Grant that I may like you succeed in the examinations which lie before me. In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be loved for ever more. J.P.C

### ST. JUDE'S NOVENA

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and revered throughout the whole world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us. St. Jude 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. M.H.

### MIRACULOUS PRAYER

Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. M.C.

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Shined  
✓ Glass Cleaned &  
Polished  
✓ Tyres Shined

\*Offer applies to certain makes and models.  
Please call 023 88 34862 to make an enquiry

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**PLEASE NOTE THAT  
WE NO LONGER  
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If you require assistance  
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don't accept kittens/cats but  
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