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Elphick proves that age
is just a number
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Nessa and Eugene Brosnan
talk about Nessa's remarkable
recovery and living
with a brain injury
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Mum cheetah Gráinne with one of her four recently born cubs at Fota Wildlife Park. Pic: Darragh Kane

Stars of the sea

Sixth class students from Barryroe NS are planning on bringing a mini boat with a tracking system to the Port of Cork this May and, with the aid of container ship, the M/V Independent Horizon, launching it into the Atlantic ocean. The Educational Passages organisation will help them to follow the boats progress online.

The uncrewed boat first sailed into Barry's Cove on the Seven Heads Peninsula last summer after spending two and a half months at sea. Recovered in a cave by local fisherman Bill McCarthy and his daughter Katie on July 5, after being alerted by Rory Jackson of the Ocean Plastic Project, it was discovered that the 'Crimson Current' was the tenth boat launched by sixth graders at Morristown Beard School in New Jersey, USA.

Treasures packed inside by the American students included a

baseball, Abraham Lincoln coffee mug, Morristown Beard baseball cap, a USA jersey and 35 carefully written letters.

Since the remarkable find, the children on both sides of the Atlantic have met each other and exchanged life stories on Zoom. The Barryroe group played Amhrán na bhFiann on tin whistles, demonstrated hurling and Gaelic football and even taught the American students a 'cúpla focail'.

The students have continued writing letters to each other and are enjoying learning about one another's lives, greatly anticipating the regular interactions and building stronger connections with each delivery of mail.

Morristown Beard School have generously gifted their miniboat to Barryroe NS, sending them a new sail for its relaunch. The sail has been decorated by both the American and Irish students, with half of

it reflecting the boat's journey from America and its eventual recovery in Barry's Cove and the other half reflecting Barryroe.

The Barryroe students have added 'Réalt na Mara' (Star of the Sea), which is also the name of the local church in Lislevane, to the boat's title.

Currently busy redecorating the boat, the Barryroe students are also packing it with important items like a Barryroe jersey and signed mini hurley. All classes in the school will be represented: The Junior Infant class has decided to place a St. Brigid's Cross inside, third class have put some Barryroe soil aboard while fourth class have put in the famous Barry's Tea.

Both schools plan to launch boats simultaneously in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and the children will come together to predict where they will end up.



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Nessa and Eugene Brosnan pictured with their three children, Hannah 17, Eábha 15, and Jack 13

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It's estimated that 19,000 people in Ireland acquire a brain injury every year with 7,500 people suffering a stroke. Acquired Brain Injuries are often described as 'invisible', because many of the impacts like changes in memory and concentration are often unseen. Currently there are 120,000 people in Ireland living with a disability after brain injury. Nessa Brosnan is one of them. A secondary school teacher married to musician Eugene Brosnan and mother to three children, Hannah 17, Eábha 15, and Jack 13, Nessa lives just outside Clonakilty. In 2020, a routine eye test led her to being diagnosed with a brain tumour. She suffered two strokes after being operated on and was put into a medically-induced coma to protect her brain from swelling. Against all the odds however Nessa did wake up, responding to her family and the words and music they played to her. Nessa and Eugene talk to **Mary O'Brien** about the journey to Nessa's remarkable recovery and the role that the organisation Acquired Brain Injury Ireland has played in helping her regain as much independence as possible.

"I shouldn't feel lucky or positive when I look at all the things I have been robbed of," shares Nessa. "On the other hand the person that Eugene and my sister Niamh thought would be coming home from the hospital thankfully is not the one that they got."

The main disabilities Nessa has been left with are aphasia, a disorder that affects how you communicate, and hemianopia, which means she has lost half of her visual field in each eye. She also suffers from impaired mobility, memory loss and agnosia, a neurological disorder characterised by an inability to recognise and identify objects

or persons using one or more of the senses. One of Nessa's vocal chords froze after the stroke and while a procedure did help to restore her voice, she doesn't have the same projection when

singing as she did before. Like the rest of her family, Nessa loves music.

Her biggest loss however right now is teaching. "I loved my job and the independence it gave me. I loved my interaction with students. No two days were ever the same. I made lifelong friends among the staff members with whom I worked over the years.

"It's had a huge impact on us. We lost a lot as a family."

The Brosnan family's ordeal started in the midst of the pandemic in June 2020 when Nessa was diagnosed with a tumour – the size of an egg – in her brain.

From that very first day she has managed to keep a

"One morning I came downstairs to hear Hannah and Eábha playing a Dermot Kennedy song on the piano and singing harmonies. It was so beautiful I said we'll record that for mom."

positive outlook even though the restricted visitation policies during Covid-19 had a huge impact on her and her family.

Eugene dropped Nessa at the hospital on June 19 to have the tumour removed and didn't see his wife again until June 30. At that stage, Nessa had suffered two strokes and been put into a medically-induced coma.

He recalls hearing on the news on June 29 that going forward a family member would be allowed into ICU for a 15 minute visit.

"At the time I was managing the boat ok with the three children. We had a great support network of family and friends around us. Honestly I was fearful going in to see her. Fearful that I'd be rattled and the boat would be upset."

On June 30, Eugene was permitted in to see Nessa for 15 minutes and he observed the call and response technique being carried out by the nurses. This was implemented for four hours every day; 10 minutes of every hour over 24 hours. Nessa was unresponsive.

"I didn't feel that a stranger calling Nessa's name in her ear would ever have any effect," shares Eugene.

Allowed only 15 minutes each day with his wife, he was determined to use this time to get through to Nessa. He contacted friends and family members and recorded messages, music harmonies and old Irish poetry, which he played to her.

"One morning I came downstairs to hear Hannah and Eábha playing a Dermot Kennedy song on the piano and singing harmonies. It was so beautiful I said we'll record that for mom."

Nessa started responding to Eugene and to her sister Niamh. Even though her responses were just very slight tongue movements, the family dared to hope.

However due to her low score on the Glasgow Coma Scale, which is used to describe the extent of impaired consciousness after a brain injury, the family were told there was no hope of Nessa having a meaningful recovery. A person's GCS score can range from three (completely unresponsive) to 15 (responsive).

"At six, there's a 50:50 chance but Nessa was scoring much lower than this," says Eugene.

As Eugene prepared himself for Nessa's life support being switched off, remarkably Nessa woke up.

"She saved her own life," says Eugene. As Nessa's sister Niamh sang the words 'Over in Killarney many years ago my mother sang a song to me' at her bedside, Nessa responded by mouthing the next line of the song.

While Nessa doesn't remember waking up, she does feel strongly that having the presence of her children by her side could have helped in her recovery. "They were never allowed in," she shares, "except at the very end of my time in hospital for just two visits."

Nessa had no memory of her father dying six months previously or Eugene's brother dying two months before she was diagnosed. She didn't know she had three children

She continued to wake up from the coma with messages from musicians like Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Jerry Fehily, the drummer with Hothouse Flowers who played with Eugene's band, aiding in her recovery. "I'll always remember Jerry Fehily as the first man to get a smile out of her," says Eugene.

While Nessa doesn't remember waking up, she does feel strongly that having the presence of her children by her side could have helped in her recovery. "They were never allowed in," she shares, "except at the very end of my time in hospital for just two visits."

Although slow to wake up Nessa was exceptionally quick in her recuperation.

"I've never witnessed tiredness like it," shares Eugene "the effort it took her to make those tongue, eye and hand movements!"

By July 17 she was considered suitable as a candidate for a tracheostomy to reduce the need for prolonged mechanical ventilatory support, another

milestone in her recovery.

Five weeks after waking up on August 27, she was transferred from ICU to a general ward.

Nessa was discharged from hospital in September and admitted to the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dún Laoghaire in December. She was there until mid-February 2021.

Afterwards Nessa was assigned a rehabilitation assistant from Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Glen Galvin, who worked with her for the next year teaching her how to use assistive technology. All of Nessa's meetings with Glen were conducted in her own home, which for someone in her position made it possible to accept the support and benefit from it.

Established in 2000, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is an internationally accredited provider of community-based neuro-rehabilitation services for people with an acquired brain injury and their families. The organisation supports 1,100 brain injury survivors every year.

"They were very supportive," shares Nessa. "On my phone now I just need to click and a voice will read out long texts to me; the same with newspaper articles. Alex also looked at memory aids with me and tasks to assist with concentration and so on."

Although her future path is still somewhat uncertain – she isn't teaching at the moment due to the aphasia and hemianopia – Nessa remains positive. "I learnt that I don't always know what's wrong or what can be helped or strengthened so to give everything a go," she says.

Nessa has started going to some of Eugene's music gigs again and at home the family still enjoy playing music together. "Nessa's a great percussionist," says Eugene. "Give me a shaker and I'll shake it," she laughs.

Nessa is now dealing with getting back to driving, which will give her greater independence and support her in living a fuller life.

"I know I'm not a housekeeper that's for sure," she laughs. "I would hate to think that I'll still be fighting over a dirty floor in two years time!"



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Researcher seeking to connect with relatives of John Cadogan Murphy aka Whitehead Murphy

I am currently conducting research for a book that I have been writing about the life of my Great Uncle John Kent of Fermoy. Kent was a Fenian Dynamiter who took part in a conspiracy in Birmingham in 1883. One of Kent's co-conspirators was John Cadogan Murphy, from Assolas (near Kanturk), otherwise known as Whitehead Murphy. I am seeking to connect with relatives of Murphy who could help with my research. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Laura Doyle, Fermoy. Email: l.doyle86@hotmail.com



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Christopher O'Sullivan TD

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

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

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Tánaiste weighs in on fight to save hotel from vulture fund

Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan says the fight to save Clonakilty's family-run O'Donovan's Hotel from vulture funds is just getting started, as Tánaiste Micheál Martin pays a visit to the iconic establishment to hear first-hand about the family's treatment.

In a statement on Monday April 24, Deputy O'Sullivan gave an update on his efforts to bring attention plight of the family, which owns O'Donovan's hotel in Clonakilty, and their treatment at the hands of Everyday Finance.

"I informed them on Saturday that the Tánaiste Micheál Martin would be calling into the hotel to hear once again about the despicable behaviour of Everyday Finance (they can't leave the hotel because they dread what will happen if they leave for even an hour). He met with the family later that day.

"It's been exactly one month since I first raised the immoral treatment of the O'Donovan

family and O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty in the Dáil. They have my full support," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"Micheál knows how important Clonakilty is to me and he is aware of how strongly the people of Clonakilty feel about saving this family run, town centre hotel from the claws of

vulture funds."

Deputy O'Sullivan acknowledged that one politician alone may not be able to change what is happening to the O'Donovan family and their hotel, but he firmly believes that as a community more can be done. He encourages collective action and vowed to continue fighting

for the O'Donovan family and the people of Clonakilty.

The O'Donovan family and their supporters continue to call for an end to the predatory practices of vulture funds and for greater protection for family-owned businesses like O'Donovan's Hotel.



Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan with Tom and Dena O'Donovan.

New watermains from Bandon to Clonakilty over halfway mark

Since early November 2022, Uisce Éireann has been working to complete approximately 13.5km of new watermains from Bandon to Clonakilty that will alleviate the challenges to the water supply in Clonakilty and accommodate growth and development in the short to medium term.

Uisce Éireann will continue to carry out the works on the N71 Bandon to Clonakilty Road which are anticipated to be completed in early June. From there, a further 2.4km of watermains will be constructed on local roads. The works, being carried out by Ward and

Burke Constructions Ltd, are expected to be completed by Autumn 2023.

A stop-go traffic management system remains in place five days a week at two locations on the N71 to allow two work crews to operate simultaneously. Working hours are from 7am to 7pm daily and the road is be fully open to two-way traffic from 3pm Friday afternoon until Monday morning.

Pre-connection enquiries can be made via the Uisce Éireann Connection and Developer Services team at www.water.ie/connections/

Cape Clear features in TG4 documentary on decline of Bean an Tís

I níúchadh TG4 - Mná Tí, available on the TG4 Player, looks at the number of families hosting students at summer courses in Gaeltacht areas. This number has fallen by almost a third in four years leading to concerns for the future of some Irish colleges.

The impact and reasons for the exodus of 'bean an tís' from Gaeltacht colleges is examined by investigative reporter Kevin Magee.

The increasing age profile of "mná tí", changing social

habits, a move out of the sector into self-catering, and insufficient pay for keeping students are among some of the reasons given.

The fall in host families means thousands of students are being turned away from summer colleges in the Gaeltacht this year because there is nowhere to house them.

Coláiste Pobail Chléire on Cape Clear Island has seen the number of host families fall from a peak of seven, twenty years ago, to only one.

The former manager of the Comharchumann Chléire Teoranta, Máirtín Ó Méalóid said it's proving extremely difficult to attract new mná tí to keep students.

"It's a crisis really. Our biggest challenge now is how we are going to bring new host families into the system. I don't have the answer to that question. I can't tell you how we're going to do that because, to be honest about it, they're just not there." The college on the island will open this year for the first

time since Covid but with a reduced number of students.

"When we came back (after Covid), we were surprised at how many mná tí had stopped taking students for one reason or another.

The number of Irish colleges offering residential summer courses has also fallen, according to the figures obtained from the Department of TCAGSM.

Watch the hour-long documentary on TG4 Player.

Joined-up thinking on local health services needed



SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Holly Cairns TD

What do you do if you live on the Beara Peninsula and you have a sick child in the evening, but the Castletownbere Southdoc is unavailable due to staff shortages?

It can take up to an hour to travel to the Bantry or Kenmare centre from Castletownbere – even longer if you live further west.

What if you live on the Mizen and have a serious injury or illness in the evening, but Bantry Hospital's Medical Assessment and Injury Units are closed? Between Bantry, Skibbereen, and Castletown-

bere, there are only three ambulances ordinarily operational, with one Rapid Response Vehicle available between 7am and 7pm daily.

These are not hypothetical situations. This is the reality of emergency and urgent healthcare in west Cork. Our local health services are threadbare.

Last month, I raised these interconnected issues with the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly. I had previously highlighted the understaffing of Southdoc, the limited services in Bantry Hospital and the severe shortages of ambulances. When you look at these issues together, the larger picture becomes clear.

Each service is overstretched and strained. This in turn puts pressure on the other services. The Government needs to immediately intervene to ensure more staffing levels and a joined-up approach.

GP out-of-hours services face major pressures across the country. SouthDoc is having issues recruiting sufficient staff, especially in rural areas. Local GPs and their staff are



already overstretched and they cannot be expected to provide out-of-hours cover also. For example, the Castletownbere service has been unavailable on multiple occasions.

In reply to a parliamentary question, the HSE have informed me that 'due to the reliance on locum doctors, and the significant shortfall in their availability, there may be occasions when this additional support is not available.'

I have urged the Minister to address the shortfall in doctors and other medical professionals.

The situation in Bantry and its surroundings is especially frustrating. There is a lack of joined-up thinking and an under-utilisation of resources. Bantry Hospital should be used to help with the out-of-hours GP coverage issues. The Medical Assessment Unit only

opens from 9am to 4.30pm. Extending the opening hours of this unit is not only important in itself, but it will help relieve the stress on SouthDoc services.

There are knock-on effects, as without local services people have to travel to Cork city for emergency care. However, the few ambulances operating in west Cork are already overstretched. There are insufficient numbers of operational

vehicles and paramedics are being forced to work dangerously long shifts due to staff shortages.

While we have incredible EMTs who go above and beyond every single day, we all know that there are not enough vehicles to cover a region the size of west Cork. Part of the problem is that the National Ambulance Service is organised according to population rather than population

and the geographical spread of an area. This approach must change if we are to get more resources.

All of these issues are connected. Southdoc needs more staff, Bantry Hospital's Medical Assessment and Injury Units must be open for longer, and we desperately need more ambulances.

The Minister and the HSE must act now.

HOLLY CAIRNS TD

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Please get in touch with me and my team if you have any issues. If we can help at all, we will.

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Social Democrats

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The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions of Colm and this will be followed by a panel discussion featuring local providers and practitioners of Sustainable Energy solutions.

We will also have a range of local businesses exhibiting before and after the meeting where you can learn about the options available to you at a local level.

Guest speaker Colm Tynan

Colm is an experienced engineer with over 20 years' knowledge in the fields of low energy building design and sustainable home energy upgrades.

He is programme director of the BEng (Hons) in Sustainable Energy Engineering course at South East Technological University (SETU) and lectures extensively in the areas of thermal performance of buildings, building services and energy systems for buildings. Colm has a gift for communicating highly technical topics in plain English.

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Colm Tynan



Bird stories



A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

I do so love this time of the year. Whether it's hailing or basking in sunshine, each day is full of little signs that the best is yet to come: The fat buds on the trees, the hedgerows lined with the promise of bluebells and foxgloves, the blackthorn sporting its delicate white flowers, the bright green unfurling of ferns in the woods, the heady smell of wild garlic and triple-cornered leeks. The taste of wild sorrel. Every day the land gets lush, going from stark and bare to full blown diva. Every little change is a sign that the big event of the year – summer is on its way.

Of all the signs in West Cork, none is more potent than a small swooping squiggle high in the sky. The first time I see it, sometime around mid to the end of April, my heart skips a beat. The French have a saying: 'L'Hirondelle ne fait pas le printemps', which literally translates as 'One swallow does not make the spring', but which actually means that just because you've seen one swallow does not mean that summer has arrived. In other words, it's no big deal...

Semantics aside, I beg to differ. Seeing one swallow in West Cork is cause for celebration. The first ones are usually spotted on the coast about ten days before getting to my house. By the time they get to us these little birds have made an arduous four-to-six-week, 10,000km journey from southern Africa to our shores and back to the very nest they left last Autumn. It has been my pleasure over the years to spot swallows at various points in their migration. On a bus going north from Malaga to Granada, I watched flocks of swallows racing across the landscape and into the Sierra Nevada mountains. Once while relaxing poolside in Tunisia, I was delighted to see the garden crowded with swallows settling down for a rest. It amused me to think that these same birds might end up in my garage.

We saw our first swallow this week. He didn't hang around (the first ones are always male). This was not one of our house swallows. This guy was on a mission North, probably headed back to



Donegal. Shortly afterwards my daughter called with the news that loads of swallows had been spotted out by Owenahinch. The weather has been rather dreadful for the past few days, but I don't care. Knowing that the swallows are on their way makes it feel like we've finally turned the corner.

As far as I'm concerned, the swallows are welcome to nest in the garage. Bird poop is a problem, but one I'm willing to put up with. The swallows will provide entertainment for the next five months; swooping in and out of the garage, chasing the cat, or dive bombing crows and magpies. In the summer I always announce myself loudly when stepping into the garage to give them fair warning and avoid being targeted. The swallows fill the sky with joy. I've seen them chase off a sparrowhawk for miles across the valley. I've also watched with delight as they perform aerial acrobatics over the front field on a summer's evening or teach their young to fly off the bathroom roof.

Speaking of the bathroom roof, we have a much less welcome tenant moving in there this year. For a number of years, I have not only welcomed swallows in the garage. I have also tolerated starlings nesting in the bathroom roof. I like lying in the bath and hearing the hatchlings shrieking above me as they are fed and then going quiet as the parent leaves, only to start up

again when a parent returns. But no good deed goes unpunished and this year the starlings got evicted and the jackdaws moved in. Like any property that has suffered gentrification, my bathroom roof has been acquired by developers profiting from the efforts of lower ranked tenants who worked hard to better their homes only to find themselves priced out of the neighbourhood.

Jackdaws are bigger than starlings and have bigger home dreams. They immediately started ripping out the roof fascia to extend the hole that the starlings had made. They are presently undertaking some impressive home renovations if the number of dropped sticks is anything to go by. There is a sizable pile under the eaves every day. In fairness the jackdaws don't have to go far to get top notch material for their DIY projects. A lovely pile of suitably sized apple tree cuttings sits only a few metres away. I imagine it's like having IKEA on your doorstep.

We'll have to do something about them eventually, (if nothing else their giant nest is a fire hazard) but I'll probably wait until they've reared their young. It's too much fun to sit and watch them working away, and I'm looking forward to see how the swallows will react once they get home and realise they have big new noisy neighbours upstairs.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the May issue of West Cork People,

I'm looking forward to May flowers after all the April showers! The unpredictable weather still has us all layering clothing and with two weeks of Easter arriving so early in the month, it's meant that the end of April has been work heavy playing catch-up. The month has been unpredictable in other ways too. On the heels of the difficulties O'Donovan's hotel is facing up against a vulture fund, the news of Clonakilty's Atkins having to close their doors because of their lease not being renewed has really upset the town. Both businesses have been at the heart of Clonakilty for so many years, they have become its lifeblood.

Thinking back, O'Donovan's has been a stalwart for so many of us who grew up here: It was the hall where we tripped in our new Irish dancing shoes and later on where we cut our teeth on the nightclub dance floor! As a teenager, countless hours were whiled away planning harebrained schemes over cups of tea. It's where you go to rent a room for classes, meetings, launches and job interviews. It's also the first spot to check if you've lost something and the place where you leave something to be found. Over the years O'Donovan's has come to mean so much to so many, it's unimaginable that Clonakilty should ever be without it. But this fight isn't over yet!

Atkins unfortunately didn't get a chance to even put on their fighting gloves. The business has to be out by the end of the summer. The store has been a part of the town for so long, it will leave a huge hole when it goes: We will all miss the helpful faces ready to assist whenever we walk in the door and the advice that is given freely and always with a smile. My parents actually met there...over a box of Jaffa cakes or so the story goes. They were both working in Atkins at the time and my mum forgot her lunch so dad shared his biscuits! So many stories I'm sure within those old walls. It will be a very sad day for Clonakilty when the door finally closes on this long-running successful hardware store.

This month I travelled down to Beara to catch up with Allihies artist Danny Osborne whose fascination with rock has taken him to different extremes, from traversing ice and snow in the Arctic to scaling volcanoes in places like Chile where he has casted his sculptures directly from molten lava. I also chat with 80-year-old legend and Bere Island community radio presenter Brenda Elphick who has lived a life less ordinary and has no intention of slowing down any time soon.

In Clonakilty Nessa and Eugene Brosnan share their story of Nessa's remarkable recovery and living with a brain injury. Nessa suffered two strokes after being operated on to remove a brain tumour and had to be put into a medically induced coma. Against the odds she woke up, responding to her family and the music they played to her.

We are excited to this month launch a new Retrofit column in collaboration with a pilot programme called CHERIS –Community Home Energy Renovation Information Service with the aim being to support home energy upgrades in West Cork. Each month Xavier Dubuisson, an experienced engineer in the field of sustainable engineer will be covering topics such as home energy upgrades, insulation, solar panel, heat pumps and grants available. We hope this will be beneficial to both our readers and advertisers.

For this and lots more see inside.
I hope you enjoy the read,
Mary



Mary O'Brien
Editor



Sheila Mullins
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Barryroe 6th Class with Principal Orla Whelton, Rory Jackson from Ocean Plastic Project, Bill McCarthy (found the boat) Sinead Walsh Class teacher. See cover story. Pic: Martin Walsh

Partnership between The Innovation Exchange and The Ludgate Hub will benefit West Cork businesses

This week Skillnet Ireland has announced the partnership of The Innovation Exchange with The Ludgate Hub based in Skibbereen. The Innovation Exchange is Ireland's innovation marketplace connecting large companies facing digital transformation challenges with small to medium sized (SME) technology companies that can fast-track the solution.

The initiative will allow globally ambitious tech SMEs located in The Ludgate Hub and the wider Cork region the unique opportunity to pitch to, and collaborate with, large companies looking to access innovation as part of a diverse and curated community of startups and scaleups. As part of this collaboration, The Ludgate Hub will bring both corporate entities and scale-up businesses situated in Cork together as members of The Innovation Exchange, expanding its growing community.

As the newest regional chan-

nel partner of The Innovation Exchange, The Ludgate Hub has a reputation of being diverse, welcoming and accessible for startups and SMEs. Ludgate, through its strategic partnerships with corporates, academia and investors, helps businesses grow through resources and support every step of the way.

Attending the launch, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and TD for Cork South Central, said: "It is fantastic to see the rollout of this collaborative programme in West Cork and across the South-West. This partnership between Skillnet Ireland, The Innovation Exchange and The Ludgate Hub is an exciting example of win-win collaboration and I would encourage all businesses to consider joining the programme. The development of an ecosystem in West Cork that facilitates SMEs and Large Corporates working with one another will undoubtedly ignite digital transformation and support opportunities for increased growth for these organ-

isations."

Paul Healy, Chief Executive, Skillnet Ireland said: "The Innovation Exchange plays an important role in forging connections between SMEs and large corporations, facilitating new ideas and supporting the creation of new business ventures. As part of a national expansion of the programme, we are delighted to introduce The Innovation Exchange to Cork, in partnership with the Ludgate Hub and Furthr. We invite ambitious SMEs and larger companies in the Cork region to join the programme and take full advantage of the many benefits it offers."

Speaking at the launch, Sinead O'Riordan, Head of Channel Partnerships at The Innovation Exchange commented on the news: "We are thrilled to be collaborating with The Ludgate Hub, as we continue to bring our offering to SMEs and corporates across Ireland. Our main focus is to showcase the amazing talent and capabilities of the companies in the region, while also helping



Sinead O'Riordan (Head of Partnerships at The Innovation Exchange), Paul Healy (Chief Executive at Skillnet Ireland) Minister Simon Coveney (Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment) Photographer: Anne Minihane

them to scale their businesses. We see this partnership with Skillnet Ireland as an opportunity to expand our network and leverage Ludgate's resources and expertise to support our members and drive their success"

Grainne O'Keeffe, CEO of The Ludgate Hub, said: "We are delighted to become a regional partner in The Innovation Exchange, along with the RDI and GTC, our fellow innovation hubs. This is an exciting forward thinking digital transformation marketplace that brings scaling and enterprise sized organisations together. It is very positive to see The Innovation Exchange leveraging the hub network and its extensive collaborative ecosystem as an economic asset in the rollout

of this initiative. And Ludgate, as Ireland's first rural digital innovation hub, is thrilled to embrace this opportunity to accelerate growth in the region."

The aim of The Innovation Exchange is to establish a nationwide footprint by onboarding up to 10 regional channel partners throughout 2023; earlier this year, The Innovation Exchange announced its partnership with the Galway Technology Centre, which supports innovative, global trading companies in the ICT sector. In March, The Innovation Exchange partnered with Kerry based RDI Hub to provide local SMEs with the opportunity to connect and collaborate with innovation seeking larger companies.

The expansion of The Innovation Exchange, which currently has in excess of 350 participants, will offer even more SMEs access to the programme's benefits, including an instant sales pipeline, market intelligence and the capability to sell to large companies. Skillnet Ireland has committed €5 million to fund The Innovation Exchange, which is designed to address the barriers that exist for scaling companies when selling to large companies and multinationals. The programme will support over 1,000 companies between 2022-2025. Scale-ups and corporates in the Cork region are being encouraged by The Innovation Exchange to sign up at www.theinnovationexchange.ie.



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

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Searching for the truth to Bulgaria's troubled past



HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

During Easter, I had the good fortune to spend some time in Sofia, which one can access directly from Dublin. It lays claim to being the site of one of the oldest settlements in Europe, dating back 7000 years, but the city of Sofia claims the more modest date of 680 AD as its birthdate. For any history enthusiast strolling in the beautifully wide and tranquil streets, you can find yourself on old Roman pavements, spotting the minaret of the Banya Bashi mosque, being bemused by vast amounts of eye-catching eastern orthodox churches, and awestruck by the many behemoth communist buildings that were a statement of their era. Throw into the pot a synagogue, catholic church, and many modern shops and cafes, and you'll find a city worth discovering.

Like all old settlements, you can see different layers of the city as you dig down. Cork City's Peace Park has elements

of the old medieval city wall. Dublin found elements of Viking settlement at Wood Quay. But Sofia can boast of Serdica, an old Roman city. Metro excavations led to the discovery of an impressive footprint of roads, colonnades, foundations of houses that were using underground heating systems and advanced sewers from the Roman period. One can stroll around them at will. A layer up on the same site lies a stone church dating from the fourteenth century; and literally looking up from that spot you'll see one of the many 20th century communist statement buildings, focused more on size than style.

Bulgaria, like its neighbouring eastern countries, found itself behind the Iron Curtain and a puppet of the Soviet Union until the communist party, and long ruling leader Zhivkov, were overthrown in 1989, a day after the Berlin Wall was torn down.

Communism took hold in 1945 with the arrival of the victorious Soviet Red Army. It had been fertilised back in the 1920s by the local communist party led by Dimitrov (who would become the country's first communist premier in 1945) and encouraged by the Soviets who were bent on international overthrow of global capitalism and class society. In a country where 80 per cent of the population were poor peasants, such ideology, in its naked form, should have taken hold; but the population didn't have



Adolf Hitler receives King Boris III of Bulgaria at his headquarters following the collapse of Yugoslavia, 25 April 1941.

a political consciousness and thousands of years of deference to their overlords meant the communist party couldn't build a power base at that time.

The post WWII communist architecture in Sofia city centre is impressive by the sheer scale and ambition of the buildings. Their aim was to create imposing symbols of power. You must imagine they were telling their people that the communist party was here to stay and was a match for anyone. The party house (BKP Bulgarian Communist Party) dominated the skyline with its lofty spire that once held a red communist star. It has been repurposed as the parliament with the Bulgarian flag now at the top. Former communist ministries have also found new lives, such as the residency of the presidency. If you enter a hidden courtyard at the rear of the presidential palace, you'll find Sofia's oldest standing church, the fourth century Saint George Rotunda. Because one of the principles of communism was the suppression of opposing ideologies, which included religion, the massive buildings literally hid this church from plain sight. It was a regime that wanted only to look forward, not back.

New symbols from the 21st century are also present. On a towering pillar, sits a new statue of saint Sophia, replacing the former statue of Lenin that perched there until as late as 2001.

Some of the icons and monuments that glorified the Red Army 'liberation' have been decommissioned, but in the paradox that is Bulgaria, many remain intact around the country. Indeed, there still is a statue of Lenin in the village of Novgrad. There are also many monuments to Soviet heroes and soldiers. One, an 18-metre-high monument to a Red Army soldier in the

square in Burgas, remains unmolested. Others like the 10-metre granite Soviet soldier in Plovdiv was wrapped up in a red cloak and face-masked with a black handkerchief in 2013. Such monuments continue to divide opinion; in support of Ukraine, the residents of Sofia woke up to find a Red Army monument in Sophia painted in blue and yellow (the colours of the Ukrainian flag). Other city residents responded by cleaning it in a statement of Russian support. Similar 'vandalism' has happened before, for different political causes and as a protest to the existence of these monuments.

There are less obvious but nevertheless symbolic Soviet statues of working men and women in heroic poses and women holding children in towns and villages across the country. They propagate an image of a people who gave their all for the socialist project. Their presence reflects the tapestry of Bulgarian communist history but is also a painful reminder to those who suffered terribly because of the regime, including political dissidents and undesirables or critics of the ruling party interned at labour camps.

There is a group, 'Sofia 365', that offers a free tour around the centre of Sofia. Naturally we are delighted to go. It lasts two hours and the guide's boast is that they run 365 days a year, hence the name. Now I'm just an Irish guy on holiday with some interest in history but I can't relax with the tour guide's presentation. It's not in my nature anyway because, as I teach my students, the first thing to do when someone tells you something is query it. Our tour guide, articulate, charming and invested, offers a history that for me is not interrogating the facts. He smiles and tells the group, comprised of tourists from four continents, to feel



1961 USSR stamp marking the 15th anniversary of the People's Republic of Bulgaria

free to ask questions. There are many. Nearly all from myself. He is clearly knowledgeable but I'm uncomfortable with how he sells Bulgaria as a victim of the Nazis, rather than as collaborators. For those who may not know, the Bulgarian state was an ally of Germany in World War II. On questioning our guide claims it was a matter of 'survival' and that no Bulgarian fought for the Axis powers. He tells me the Allies bombed Sophia, so I ask him why they would target a civilian city, especially if the Bulgarians didn't fight like he maintains? He concedes some ground, saying that they supported the Nazis 'economically and tactically', allowing troops 'access Greece via Bulgarian territory'; but that is all he concedes. Later I read that the Bulgarian army, with the blessing of the Nazis, invaded parts of Greece and Yugoslavia. (but technically not alongside Nazis, thus allowing our guide to mislead us into thinking they were not active invading combatants.) He says their king, Boris the Third, was put under pressure to send 20,000 Jews to concentration camps but deliberately procrastinated for months. Instead, Boris had their land confiscated and sent them to labour camps, but this was a 'play' by Boris to resist Hitler. Yet Boris eventually 'ran out of time' and rounded up the city's Jews, who were marched

en masse to the train station. It took the brave interjection of an eastern orthodox bishop, who stood up (with the support of other people in Sofia), to stop the trains from leaving. I later research that dear Boris was complicit in the round up and indeed fired a minister who tried to stop the deportation. Our guide does concede that 11,000 Jews were deported but from parts of Bulgaria that are no longer in the modern state of Bulgaria, as if that is some sort of exoneration. I later find figures that suggest an even higher number. Furthermore, 95 per cent of Jews left for Israel in 1947 when the new Jewish state was formed. "It was fear of the communists", our guide tells the group. Perhaps. The Soviets

suppressed religion for sure but I'm thinking – 95 per cent is a massive proportion! Maybe they remembered the close shave they had with the last regime too? Our guide won't be deflated; his friend, King Boris, had stood up to the Bulgarian communist party in the 1920s, he informs us zestfully. We were not informed by our guide that Boris eventually targeted all the other parties too, becoming a dictator in 1935.

Democracy how are ya?

Our guide had given two hours of his free time (and in fairness was rewarded with great tips – rightfully so). He had been genial and had had a great number of facts. The trouble was his presentation of them. What worries me is that this organisation, 'Sofia 365', can give an uncontested picture to their visitors. For me, the tour had this narrative for a purpose. History is fascinating and dangerous in equal measure. In this organisation's position the tour must be handled with care. I'm sure most people in our group just accepted it. Why wouldn't you when a local explains their history? But history nearly always has an angle. I thanked him from his time and challenged him privately about a few political issues pertaining to the communist regime. He lost patience, telling me that his family (his grandparents' generation) were killed by the communist regime, leaving me abruptly alone in the square. Sadness enveloped me – for the young man's family and his own emotional attachment. But finally, the unspoken question had been answered. What is 'your' angle? In a country that is in turmoil about how to deal with its communist past there is a battle for hearts and minds. It is understandable and natural. But history can be a dangerous tool if it isn't transparent.

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#bealtaine

What stories bare rock could tell

Perched on the side of hill surrounded by bare rock and overlooking the breathtaking vastness of the Atlantic ocean, Danny and Geraldine Osborne's home, a small renovated cottage, at one time could only be accessed by walking through the surrounding fields. It was this wildness and raw beauty that first attracted artist Danny Osborne to the Beara peninsula in 1971 and what drew him and his family into a lifelong relationship with another wilderness, the Arctic. **Mary O'Brien** returns to the place where she first met the artist almost 20 years ago and finds that while the landscape has changed slightly, Danny, now 74, is still fascinated with geology and painting landscapes of ice and snow, travelling regularly between Beara and the Arctic to capture the effects of glacial erratics and the rocks smoothed by the ice. At the other extreme of temperature, Danny is also the first man to ever cast a sculpture from the molten lava of a volcano. One of his best-known pieces of work is the statue of Oscar Wilde in Merrion Square in Dublin.

Born in the South of England, Danny moved to Allihies in 1971 after finishing his training in industrial ceramics at art college. Six years later he borrowed some

money, packed some supplies and set off from Allihies on a painting expedition to the Arctic. It was the first of many such journeys and the beginning of a close relationship with the Inuit,

formerly known as Eskimos, in the Canadian Arctic.

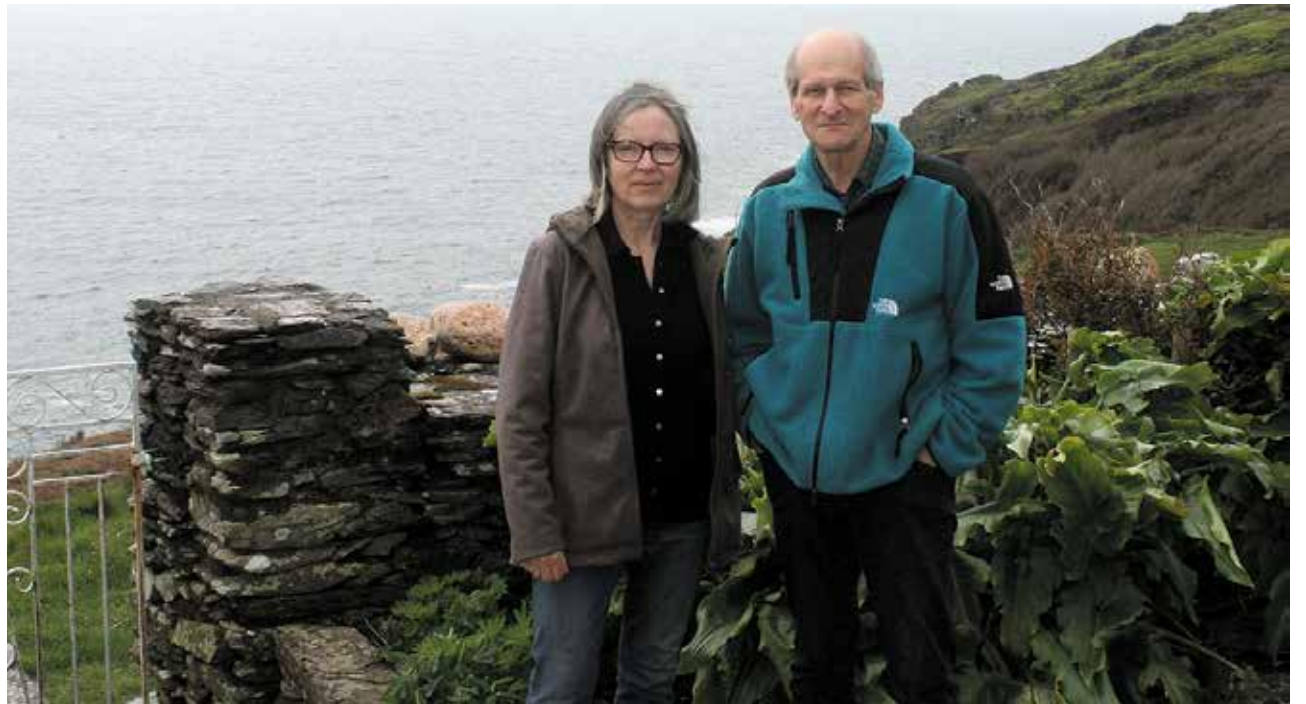
Over the years Danny and his family have adopted the Arctic as their second home: The Osborne family settled there permanently from 2001 to 2013 – with a brief spell back in

Beara in 2004 – after Geraldine, a public health doctor, got a job there as an associate chief medical officer of Nunavut, which was designated an independent territory in Canada's High Arctic. "It was supposed to only be for a couple of years

but we ended up staying," says Geraldine, who went on to become chief medical officer for the territory, assisting the indigenous population with their transition into the modern world. "There were a lot of challenges, particularly with

mental health and outbreaks of TB, but it was also a very exciting time helping people to adapt to this new lifestyle." During that period, Danny worked with the Inuit community helping them to create some unique

Continued on next page...



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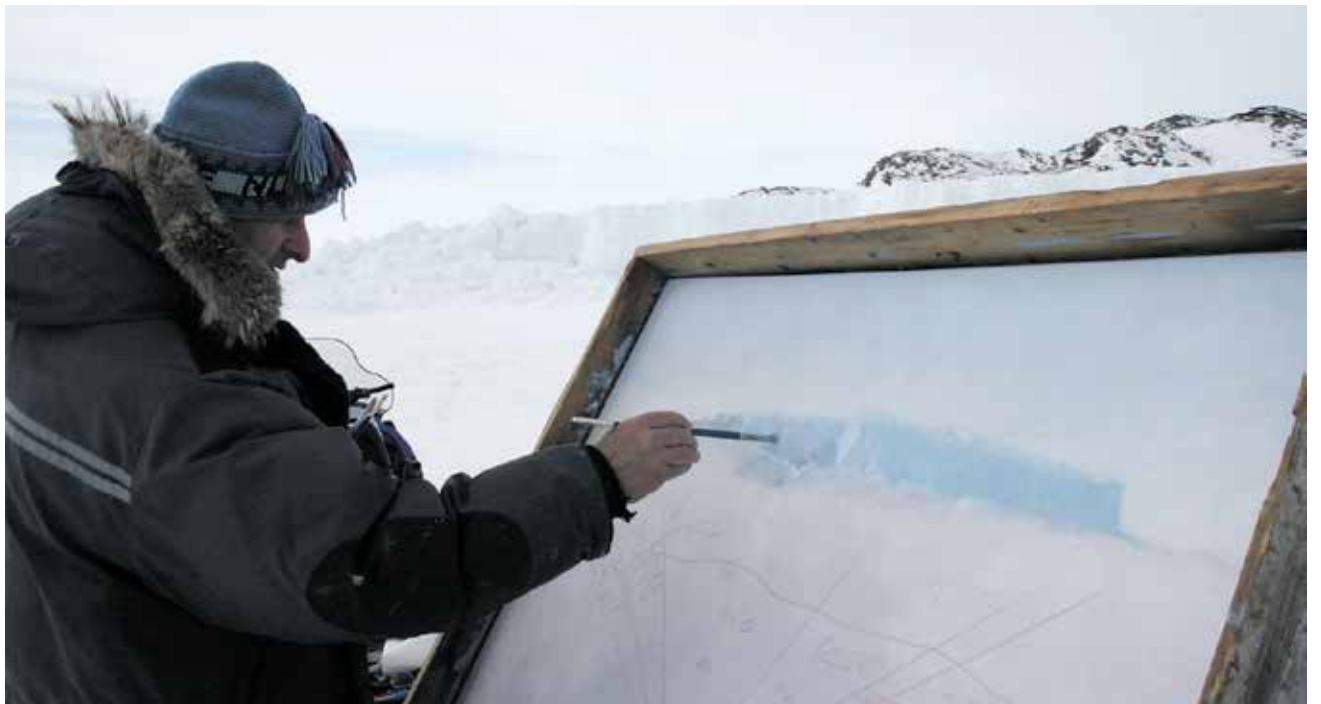


#bealtaine

What stories bare rock could tell .. cont'd from previous page



Danny working with lava, Guatemala



large carvings. He was also the sculptor behind a High Arctic Exiles monument and Nunavut land claims monument.

Danny and Geraldine met when he was organising the first ever Irish Arctic expedition in 1981. A medical student from Kildare, Geraldine was a volunteer in the supply warehouse for the expedition. A huge undertaking, the expedition led by Danny and scientist Gerry Wardell, took a year to plan and several tons of food supplies. Danny was doing a study of Irish geese summering in the Arctic and he made a lone six-week ski journey, the longest ever made at the time, with only a dog, quarter wolf, for company. The expedition was filmed in a documentary entitled 'Beyond the North Wind'.

A few years later Danny and Geraldine got married and started planning a trip of their own. Geraldine didn't want to go to the Arctic and so they settled on Chile and the Andes to see what is possibly the largest collection of volcanoes in the world. "I wanted to go somewhere hot," laughs Geraldine. "Danny wanted to see rock." The couple were also conducting scientific research on red blood cells and filmed a documentary, 'Halfway to Heaven'. Their eldest daughter Tempy was six-months-old at the time and stayed at home with Geraldine's mother.

Filming the journey themselves, the couple walked for eight to ten hours every day in the winter, their llamas carrying their cargo including cameras, around ice and lava, during the six month trip through a remote uninhabited part of Chile. Surviving on a diet of dried potato and dried mule, the adventurers made their way up the mountain to a volcano, where Danny spent two nights sleeping and painting.

"I was sleeping right on top of the lip of the volcano so there was an awful lot of noise," says Danny. "It was like hearing 20 jumbo jets taking off at the same time."

Geraldine was camping further down and recalls thinking the Llamas were acting very restless. "I did wonder at the time if they knew something I didn't," she shares.

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About a month after Danny and Geraldine left, the volcano erupted for the first time in 100 years.

And so started Danny's love affair with volcanoes. He went on to make many trips to erupting volcanoes in Hawaii and Guatemala to catch molten lava flowing from volcanic vents to create sculpture. Using a 20-foot pole, Danny was the first person to ever cast lava directly from a molten flow.

With lava flowing at a temperature of around 1,250 degrees Celsius, the heat on a volcano can get unbearable. "It's extremely hot especially if there is a breeze coming

towards you across the lava," says Danny. "And it can be very difficult to drag the mould back out of the lava when it's solidifying. It's best to do things very quickly!"

"You're looking at creation, it's amazing," shares Geraldine.

With lava literally flowing around your camp, this is not an expedition for the fainthearted. Danny recalls one time when the couple were camped in a sheltered place at the bottom of a volcano in Guatemala. "We were up on top looking down at the lava flow and I suddenly realised our camp was in this bowl, an old crater, a classic gas trap, which we didn't realise when we set up tent there. Luckily we were fine," he shrugs.

Sharing a spirit for adventure, the husband and wife were both part of a large climbing team from Ireland for the North Peak of Everest expedition in 1987 and, in 1989 the entire family set out on their first trip together to Canada's most northerly community, Grise Fjord. Like true Osbornes, the children, Tempy (5), Orla (2), and Oisín (1) adapted easily to the different lifestyle, which involved eating raw meat, dressing in caribou skins and coping with minus-40-degree temperatures. "They looked on travelling around in a dog sled and eating seal meat as perfectly normal, because that's what the Inuit kids did," says Danny.

"It was one of our favourite trips. The children helped break the ice with the locals and the people were very welcoming to us. They were still hunters and spoke Inuktitut so we got a glimpse of what their traditional culture was like," shares Danny.

Danny trained a team of dogs over their first winter and the Osborne family were



Like true Osbornes, the children, Tempy (5), Orla (2), and Oisín (1) adapted easily to the different lifestyle, which involved eating raw meat, dressing in caribou skins and coping with minus-40-degree temperatures.

down-filled clothing to keep warm when they camped on the sea-ice, which stays frozen until the middle or end of June. "You learn to butcher seal meat very quickly for the dogs before your hands freeze," says Danny.

"We did almost fall through the ice once. The crack was covered with soft snow and we were very tired but luckily when the sled keeled over the handlebar caught on the side."

"You don't feel scared at the time," says Danny, who has fallen through ice on numerous occasions. "It's afterwards you

feel the shock of the situation.

"It's a very visual and exciting place to be, where you see things found nowhere else in the world."

Danny spent one month painting a 5ft high iceberg. "The weather changed when I was in the middle of painting it, so I had to leave the painting there. It got covered in snow and was a source of great entertainment to the locals, but because it was oil on canvas there was no damage," he explains.

From October to February there is complete darkness in the Arctic, making it impossible to paint anything other than the Northern Lights. The days start to get lighter very rapidly and by the end of April there is light 24 hours a day.

"When travelling it meant we could make our days 36-hours-long," shares Geraldine "which was necessary because between making camp and breaking camp and getting everything ready it doesn't leave you much time for getting places."

On one of Danny's painting trips, an iceberg, which had

broken off from the base of a glacier, came crashing up through the 7ft sea-ice, about 30ft away from his tent. "All of a sudden there was this massive explosion and big blocks of sea ice as big as a truck suddenly started flying through the air, right into the tent. It was a close call. I was about 100 yards away before I even looked back. It cracked the ice all around the tent."

Returning to Beara after a year the family settled back into life in Allihies until their return to the Arctic in 2000 after Geraldine secured a job in Iqaluit on Baffin island. Two of the children, Orla and Oisín completed their high school education there.

Danny explains how the education system in the Arctic is very different from Ireland. "There is no discipline imposed in schools. But that's part of the cultural make-up of the Inuits. Children are never told what to do and they respond by behaving quite responsibly."

Continued on next page...

Today Danny and Geraldine are settled into a quiet life in Beara, interspersed with regular trips back to the Arctic: Danny, who still paints every day, visited last year and they both plan on making the trip there in 2024. The children are following their own paths: Orla is taking some time out from work and planning a sailing trip down to the Caribbean; Oisín, an artist, is currently backpacking around Australia and Tempy is settled in Brussels with three children.

“For me Allihies is definitely home but when we came back the last time it took about two years to figure that out,” says Geraldine.

It was harder for Danny to come back. “The world changed quite a lot while we were away the last time,” he muses.

Danny has been working on some etchings featuring people in the Ukrainian war, which will be shown in an exhibition at the Lavit gallery in Cork. He is also hoping to have a solo show in Dublin later this year; a big collection of his paintings and sculpture from the past few years, it's one to watch out for.

Top: Meta Incognita, 122cm x 91cm, oil on canvas, 2007.

Bottom: RHA lava installation detail



Dúchas lecture on reconstruction of France after WWI

The next Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage lecture ‘The ravages of war stand out on every hand’ will cover France and the reconstruction of the ‘devastated regions’ of the First World War. The lecture by Dr Gearóid Barry, University of Galway will take place at Clonakilty GAA Pavilion on this Thursday, April 27 at 8.30pm.

When we think of the First World War’s physical traces in today’s France and Belgium our dominant image is of manicured cemeteries and battlefield tourism along the former Western Front. It is easy to forget that before sites like the Somme could be presented in a prettified way there was a prolonged period of reconstruction of towns, villages and even of the land itself: in effect, in the 1920s, the former warzone covering the ten north eastern ‘departments’ (or ‘counties’) of France became a huge building site.

This talk first explains how industrialised trench warfare so devastated the environment – leaving behind for instance thickets of barbed wire covering some 375 million square meters of land – and turned the French into refugees in their own land. Reconstruction, the talk’s main focus, began in wartime itself followed by a bleak Armistice period after 1918 involving damage assessment, demeaning and physical hardship in the form of a housing crisis amongst farming communities determined to return and recultivate the land. Humanitarian aid from America and elsewhere was not lacking but labour shortages meant the controversial use of German prisoners and colonial workers for the most dangerous early work. A massive decade-long state compensation scheme – involving some 3.1m individual claims for war damages – encouraged communities to form rural co-operatives, akin to those in Ireland, in order to build back better. The demands of the living meant that war cemeteries were tidied up and earlier calls to keep ruined villages or landmarks like Reims cathedral as sacred reminders of wartime wrongs were generally overridden. Yet 1920s rebuilding – and the question of possible reconciliation with Germany – remained inevitably haunted by France’s shocking loss of some 1.4m men in the Great War itself.

West Cork native Dr Gearóid Barry is a Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Galway where he specialises in the histories of the First World War and of France. All are welcome. €5 (cash) entry fee on door on the night.


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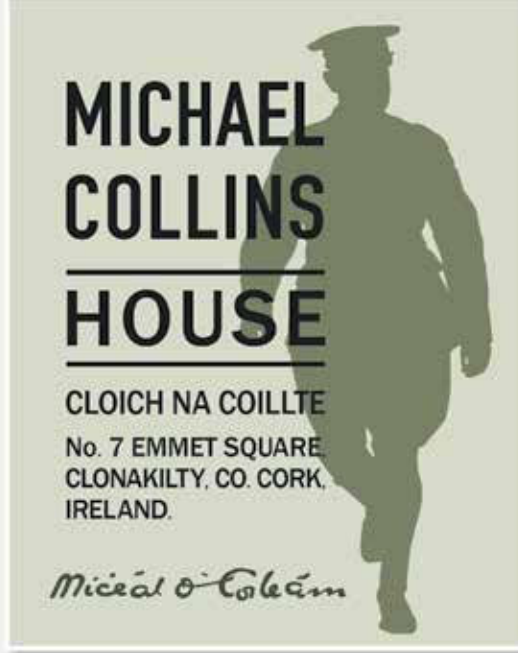
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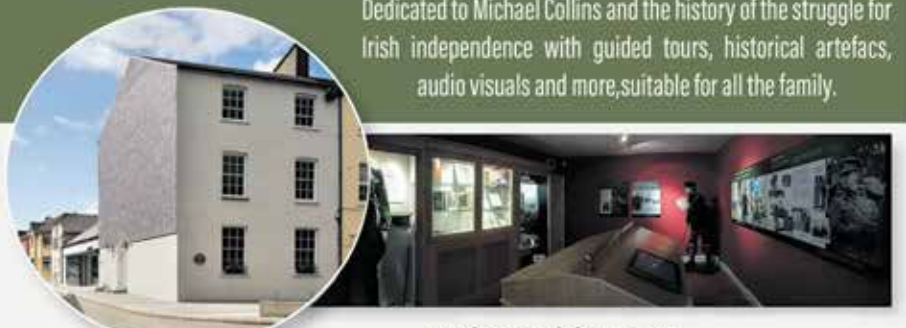
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FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

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

According to Edna O'Brien countries are mothers or fathers and "engender the emotional bristle secretly reserved for either sire". Ireland has always been a woman, a beautiful maiden, a womb, a cow, a Rosaleen, a bride, a harlot and the gaunt Hag of Beara. For James Joyce, in 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man', Ireland is 'the old sow that eats her farrow'.

Unlike the mythology of Greece or Rome, where male gods dominate, Irish mythology has an essentially feminine quality and female deities feature prominently in many of our legends and ancient stories. The feminine is the personification of the fertility of the land. This personification is usually in the figure of a sovereign otherworldly queen, with whom the mortal aspirant for kingship must have union if he is to rule well. This ritualistic mating ensures the fertility of the land. In contrast to Greek mythology where the all-powerful male god Zeus is promiscuous, in the Irish myths we have feminine deities and queens, such as

Mother Ireland (Part I)

Queen Medhbh (Maeve) of Connacht, whom we are told mated with at least nine mortal kings. Her promiscuity clearly symbolises the ongoing fertility of the land.

Irish mythology can be seen as seasonal and cyclical, following the wheel of the seasons.

Agriculture and many of the arts were in the hands of women, and therefore goddesses of culture and fertility preceded the male gods in time. Their supremacy is also clearly present in the stories, where they woo and win heroes, and determine whether a king will rule or not. Their capacity for love, their passions, their eternal youthfulness and beauty are all suggestive of goddesses of fertility. She has many names – Danu (also known as Dana or Anu). Áine, Grian, Macha, Brigit, Flíodhais, Clíona, Mór-rígan, Badhbh, Éadaoin (Etaín), Aoiheall, the Cailleach Bhéara and so on. Since Ireland was, and still is, a predominantly rural and agricultural country, it is natural that the mythology of the country is concerned with natural cycles – spring to summer to autumn to winter, and also the eternal cycle of birth, life and death, of death and regeneration, of beginnings and endings.

The literature and mythology of early Ireland shows a remarkable concern with the physical configuration of the land – the plains, mountains, rivers and so on. Also there are many stories about animals that are nurtured by the land – the cow primarily, but also the pig, the deer and the wolf, and in the rivers, the fish, particularly the salmon, and in the sea, the abundance of fish. Every river and lake and well, every plain and hill and mountain has its name and each name evokes its own explanation. This highlights the importance of place names to understand any area; unfortunately their Anglicised forms which we now use are meaningless in any deep sense. For example, the townland of Aughatubber (near Glandore)

is in Irish 'Acadh Tobair' (the plain or field of the water or spring) or 'Cill Dara' (the church of the oak) for Kildare, convey a wealth of meaning which is not present in translation. The agricultural imagery is especially pronounced in the case of the goddesses Danu, Brigit and Macha. The idea of fertility and of food production means that a goddess could be regarded as synonymous with the soil. Practically all Irish rivers have feminine names and feminine deities, the best known being the 'Bóinn' (Boyne) and 'Sionainn' (Shannon). 'An Life' (the Liffey) is recognised as feminine by Joyce in 'Finnegans Wake', where he calls it 'Anna Liffey' or 'Anna Livia Plurabelle', based on his idiosyncratic translation of 'Abha na Life'. Identification with mountain tops is best instanced by the peaks called 'Dhá Chích Danann' (literally the two breasts of Danu), two round-topped mountains, south-east of Killarney. Known locally as 'The Paps', they bear testimony to the association of the goddess Danu with the area, and indeed, with all of Munster.

Danu is generally accepted as the mother of the Irish gods. But just as the Dagda is seen as the father of the gods, Danu was not literally their mother. Rather she is the main fertility goddess, associated with the plenty and prosperity of the land. She is the mother or nourisher of the Tuatha Dé Danann (literally the people or tribe of Danu). Danu must have been worshipped from antiquity by the continental Celts and later by the Irish Celts. Several river names in Europe – most notably the Don and the Danube – are based on her name. One early text calls Ireland 'Iath nAnann' (the land of Danu) The Tuatha Dé Danann held Ireland before the Milesian Celts conquered the country about 500 B.C. After the Milesian conquest, the Tuatha Dé Danann were driven underground, but their deities were recognised as the gods and goddesses of pre-Christian Ireland. The Milesian conquerors divided the country between themselves and the Tuatha Dé Danann, the Milesians keeping everything over ground and the Tuatha Dé Danann the underground. So the Tuatha Dé Danann live on in 'liosanna' (forts), cairns, mounds, on off-shore islands, in lakes, and so on.

Queen Meadhbh (Maeve) of Connacht is one of the great fireballs of Irish myth. She is proud, fierce, uncompromising, beautiful, lusty, polyamorous, who will never take no for an answer. Her name liter-

ally means 'she who intoxicates'. But Maeve is more than just a sexy warrior queen. Her original self was a goddess of sovereignty, who offered her intoxicating mead to the man who would be king. The king, as the leader of, and therefore symbolic representative of the entire tribe, was seen as the goddess's lover. Ancient coronation ceremonies included a priestess offering a cup of mead to the new king, ritually symbolising the offering of the goddess's body (the land) to her new lover. When Queen Maeve brags in 'The Cattle Raid of Cooley' about her many lovers, it is a mistake to see this as praising or criticising her as an immoral woman. Rather, it is a clue to a time when the goddess of the land really was seen as enjoying the pleasures of many lovers, as kings in succession each took their turn as her favoured one.

Another female figure, a mother goddess, is the 'Cailleach Beara', the old hag of the Beara peninsula in Co. Cork. She is a corn-goddess and is associated with the protection of fertility. In one story she put to death a succession of male reapers who failed to match her prowess with the sickle. She is also portrayed as a shaper of the land itself. It is said that she was responsible for creating many of the rocks and islands around the south-west coast of Ireland. Deep ravines and valleys are the result of her having run her nails across the landscape. In another role she is seen as symbolising the wild forces of nature, especially storms. She is also a symbol of longevity and is said to have passed through seven periods of youth and age, so that her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are the series of tribes who invaded Ireland. She represents three aspects of the feminine – young maiden, mother and old crone. In West Cork the word 'cailleach' occurs in at least three place names, Poulmacall (Poll na Caillí, the hag's hollow) in Aghadown Parish and Kilnacally (Cill na Caillí – the hag's church) in Kilmacabae Parish. Mionnán na Caillí is a spectacular rock formation outside of North Harbour, Cape Clear (Mionnán is the Irish for a kid goat, but also a rock forma-



convent. There are at least four holy wells dedicated to her in West Cork, one at Glanafeen, near Lough Ine; one at Myross, near Union Hall; one on Rabbit Island (Oileán Bríde) off Myross and one near Tralong between Glandore and Rosscarbery. Irish literature at all stages stresses the symbolic unity of the king with an otherworld lady. Ériu (Éire in modern Irish) is one of three divine sisters and goddesses of the Tuatha Dé Danann. At the battle of Tailtiu, the Milesians defeated the Tuatha Dé Danann, all of whose chiefs and queens were killed. Before the decisive battle, however, Ériu told the Milesians that they had no just cause to capture Ireland. When Amergin, the Milesian poet, said that they would do so anyway, Ériu made a request: 'At least grant me one thing... that the island be called by my name'. 'It shall be so', replied Amergin. Her sisters, Banba and Fodhla, made the same request and both got the same promise but Ériu seems to have won. The official Irish name for our country is 'Éire', but 'Banba' and 'Fodhla' have been used repeatedly by poets and writers to refer to Ireland. 'Éire' is Ireland in its geographical sense. 'Banba' symbolises Ireland in its warrior aspect, while 'Fodhla' is Ireland in the intellectual and spiritual sense. 'Éire' is given a pivotal position as the 'sovereignty of Ireland', giving a drink of mead to each successive king of the country. 'Éire' represents Ireland in good times and bad. Thus she can appear as an ugly hag or as a beautiful maiden. In the story of the great king, Niall of the Nine Hostages, ancestor of the royal Uí Néill sept, she is transformed by his kiss from an ugly hag to a beautiful maiden. This symbolises the reign of the proper king when misfortune is banished and the whole country prospers. Probably the most famous of all early kings was Cormac Mac Airt, who was thought to be so wise and just, that during his reign, calves were born after only three months gestation, every ridge produced a sackful of wheat, the rivers abounded with salmon and there were not enough vessels to hold the milk from the cows.

Part 2 next month.

Second screening of Gorta Mór: Passage to India' in Clonakilty

Due to popular demand, a second screening of the award-winning documentary film, 'An Gorta Mór: Passage to India', will take place at the Park Cinema in Clonakilty on May 4, at 7pm. Directed by Fokiya Akhtar and co-produced with Ian Michael, the film 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.

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



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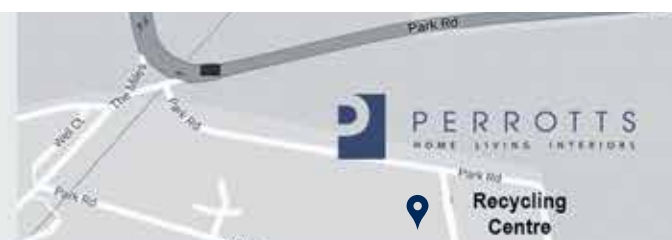
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Capturing the Border Fox



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.

“War brings circumstances with it that changes our normal concepts of morality. It’s a tough, dirty business, caused in the first instance by the filth of corruption.” - Dessie O’Hare

Dessie ‘The Border Fox’ O’Hare was, for a time, the most wanted man in Ireland. Bestowed on O’Hare by the media, his ‘Border

Fox’ moniker was earned for successfully crossing the border undetected for years, evading arrest by the Gardaí and the RUC. He was so pleased with his title that in later years, during interviews, he would refer to himself in the third person by that nickname. A protagonist during the Troubles and known for violence, O’Hare was a Republican and staunchly on the armed struggle side of the fence, which would lead to a fall out with the IRA in later life as the movement and Sinn Féin progressed towards political means to unify the country. Born in Keady, Co. Armagh, a republican stronghold, O’Hare joined the IRA at the age of 16. He was from a dedicated and active Republican family; his grandmother served time in a British jail for housing Republicans and his father and six uncles were interned in the 1940s, one of his uncles dying while in an Isle of Man jail. Due to disciplinary issues, in the 1970s Dessie left the IRA and joined the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), soon finding himself in a senior position. Years later O’Hare found himself in constant turmoil with other leaders within the INLA.

He decided to leave and create his own group, the Irish Revolutionary Brigade, with some of his most loyal followers joining him.

Known for both violence and fundraising efforts throughout his life there was one event that made Dessie O’Hare a household name during the Troubles. On October 13, 1987, O’Hare led the INLA kidnapping of dentist Dr. John O’Grady. It was an act that would make him infamous and result in the longest fixed-term prison sentence ever handed down in the Republic for a non-capital murder offence.

The gang kidnapped Dr O’Grady from his home in Cabinteely, Dublin, having gone there looking for the victim’s millionaire father-in-law, medical doctor Austin Darragh. However, Dr. Darragh had moved out and John O’Grady and his family had taken up residence in the house a number of years earlier. At the time Austin Darragh was a well-known doctor, appearing on radio shows such as the Gay Byrne Show; he was also a major shareholder in a leading pharmaceutical company. The intention was to hold him hostage until a £1.5

million ransom was paid.

In the end John O’Grady was held for 23 days, during which time the whole country watched in horror as the kidnap gang managed to evade Gardaí and remained at large with their hostage. Dr O’Grady was initially imprisoned in a Dublin basement before being moved to Cork, where he was held in a cargo container. Gardaí happened on the site but O’Hare and his gang escaped after opening fire and hijacking a car. The burnt-out car was later found in Dundalk.

O’Hare moved Dr O’Grady to a house in Cabra, North Dublin. When ransom demands were not met, O’Hare cut off the little finger from each of O’Grady’s hands and sent them to Carlow Cathedral.

Garda detectives eventually traced the gang to the Cabra house where a shootout ensued. A Garda detective was seriously wounded and O’Grady was rescued but once again O’Hare and his gang escaped. O’Hare became the most wanted man in Ireland with the Gardaí offering a IR£100,000 reward for information on his whereabouts.

Two of the gang were arrested near Cahir, County Tipper-

ary. Three weeks later on November 27, O’Hare was arrested when his car drove through an Irish Defence Forces checkpoint in Urlingford, County Kilkenny. O’Hare was shot eight times during the arrest, which was effected after a firefight, and the driver of the car, Martin Bryan, was killed. An Irish Army soldier was wounded in the affray.

At his trial at the Special Criminal Court, O’Hare was convicted of false imprisonment, wounding with intent and possession of firearms, and received a 40-year sentence. After sentencing, he made a speech in which he called for support for the Irish Revolutionary Brigade, calling for Republicans to turn their guns on the Irish judiciary, prison service, Defence Forces and Gardaí. He concluded by declaring, “May all my deeds reverberate until bloody war is waged against the British and their southern allies”. He was sent to the maximum security Portlaoise Prison, where he was isolated by former IRA and INLA associates who accused him of bringing Republicanism into disrepute. In December 1987, the INLA’s political wing issued a statement disassociating themselves from the kid-

napping and stating that O’Hare was no longer a member of the INLA having been removed from his position.

In 2008, Dessie O’Hare was released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. However, upon his release he continued with his old ways and took up work collecting debts for individuals. In 2019 he was sentenced to seven years in prison for the 2015 assault of John Roche in Saggart, Co Dublin. He also pleaded guilty to falsely imprisoning Martin Byrne at Rathcoole and Saggart on the same date. It is believed that he was employed by Dublin businessman Jim Mansfield Jr to evict Mr. Byrne from his home. Dessie O’Hare turned up at the home with convicted murderer and former INLA member Declan Duffy. The judge remarked that O’Hare and Duffy would have been known to Martin Byrne and that their reputation would have preceded them and that is the reason they were employed to do the job. Both men are still in prison.

Amnesty calling for impartial investigations into all allegations of torture in Turkey



When the earthquake struck Turkey on February 6 this year, over 50,000 people lost their lives and over 100,000 were injured.

In the chaos that followed, while people desperately searched under the rubble for relatives, or helped wherever they could, there were inevitably others who took part in theft and looting. This presented law enforcement officers with an enormous challenge.

However according to Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia Director at Human Rights Watch, “Credible reports of police, gendarmes and military personnel subjecting people they suspect of crimes to violent and prolonged beatings and arbitrary and unofficial detentions are a shocking indictment of law enforcement practices in Turkey’s earthquake region”.

Turkey has long had a record of human rights abuses. Under President Erdogan, political op-

ponents, protestors, writers, and some years ago, even staff at Amnesty’s Turkish section have been arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up charges. Torture in Turkish police stations and prisons is well-documented, despite the Turkish government claiming to uphold a ‘zero tolerance for torture’ policy.

Hugh Williamson states that “Law enforcement officials are treating the state of emergency for the natural disaster as a license to torture, otherwise ill-treat and even kill with impunity”.

Amnesty and Human Rights Watch have documented the case of M.G and his friend C.T both 19 and from Antakya. They were helping with rescue efforts in the Armutlu neighbourhood, where C.T’s aunt and cousin were trapped under the rubble. When they needed to go to the toilet they consulted a gendarme about where they should go for toilet facilities. M.G said the police followed them into the building and began to beat them. M.G said “They gave us no time to explain and wouldn’t listen to us and just began to beat us. I

thought it would stop when we got out of the building but it was just the beginning”.

The police and several other people, including gendarmes and civilians attacked him, for what he thinks was an hour or two.

“We were taken to three different places, put in different vehicles. We were handcuffed

from behind...made to lie face down.

We couldn’t speak...one police officer said he would get his stress out on us...when we managed to ask them to call C’s aunt and they called her, they realised we were not looters. They released us.”

Both M.G and C.T have medical reports documenting their injuries and on February 12 lodged a formal complaint at the police and prosecutors office in Urgup Nevsehir, where they went to stay with relatives.

Several of the people interviewed by Amnesty and Human Rights Watch who were also tortured or beaten by police after being wrongly accused of looting said they would not dare make complaints for fear of reprisals.

There needs to be impartial investigations into all allegations of torture or other ill treatment, for accountability, to end the flagrant abuse of policing powers and to ensure the security and safety of the population.



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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 4: Garrettstown House, Ballinspittle / Kinsale.

When you spend time in West Cork there is no escaping the remarkable history of the land in and around Kinsale. From the 13th century the Norman family of deCourcy left its mark on substantial townlands around important harbours, all along the coast between Kinsale and Courtmacsherry. The once beautiful Garrettstown House estate is also part of this 'Barony Courceys'.

You can see this rather hidden hilltop location if you look back from the Old Head towards Ballinspittle. You'll miss it when you drive to Garrettstown Beach from Ballinspittle or even when you take the back road, along the coast from the beach to Kilbrittain.

The now derelict Garrettstown House features, with half a page of coverage, in the rare Hodges publication and the book allows

us to see a rare photograph of the main house, then still thriving and intact, well maintained and with mature trees surrounding the seat.

Hodges' visit in 1910 was again timely, just as the estate had or was going to pass into new ownership.

The ownership history of this house is complicated so Hodges simplified it by stating the obvious in 1911 and mentioning the Franks family that was granted land as a reward for accompanying Cromwell to Ireland in the year 1650.

The house and demesne is mentioned in the 1750 edition of Charles Smith's 'The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork'.

When Reverend Hodges visited, the Forster and Kearney families owned the property solely or together through marriage.

The Irish writer Robert O'Byrne researched the property in detail and his thorough article is the standard on the building today (see his website theirish-aesthete.com).

O'Byrne found out that the owners availed of the so-called 'Wyndham Act', which came into effect mid-20th century and allowed them to sell off the lands attached to the estate.

The remaining main house slowly fell into disrepair but, thankfully, the owners of today have started the process of

restoration and rebuilding of the outbuildings.

Even though it is now derelict, the site of the main house is well worth a visit and the drive along the high walls of the estate, on

top of the hill, gives us a good idea of the winds from the bay, as well as the winds of change that the estate was exposed to through the centuries.

Visit www.garrettstownhouse.com for more details.

See here images of the House in 1911 and its owner at the time (Mathew Henry Franks).

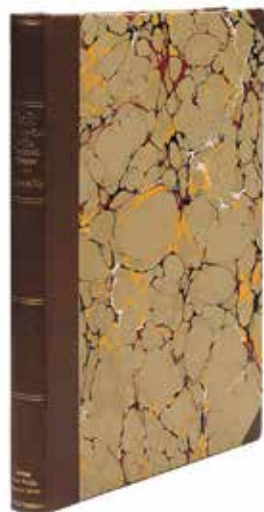


Garrettstown, Kinsale.



Mr. M. H. Franks, J.P., D.L.

Franks.—MATTHEW HENRY FRANKS, J.P., D.L., Westfield, Monutrath, Queen's County, Garrettstown, and Kinsale, co. Cork; son of Thomas Franks, of Dublin; born at Dublin, May 31st, 1835; educated at Merchistown, and Rugby. Justice of the Peace, Deputy Lieutenant, and Grand Juror of Queen's County; High Sheriff of Queen's County, 1902; Justice of the Peace for County Cork. A well known agriculturist and breeder of pedigree stock; Member of Council Royal Dublin Society; Member of Royal Agricultural Society of England. In younger days a prominent rider to hounds, and fond of shooting. Married, January 9th, 1869, Gertrude Priscilla, youngest daughter of the late Captain George Despard, late 53rd Regiment, of Rathmolyon, co. Meath, Resident Magistrate for that county, and has issue three sons and one daughter.



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 / e: info@inannararebooks.com

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The Courthouse is back in session as co-working hub

West Cork's newest co-working space, The Courthouse Hub, is up and running in the small village of Timoleague, conveniently situated not far from the towns of Kinsale, Bandon and Clonakilty.

On a short stopover at The Hub recently, Minister for Employment Affairs and Retail Business, Neale Richmond TD commented on how every village in Ireland should have this type of facility available to people working remotely.

"Though everyone works in different ways, separating family

life from work can be a challenge for some people working from home or they can simply miss the office personal interaction with other workers. Co-working spaces can play a big part in bridging that gap between home and office ultimately achieving the goal of a healthy work-life balance."

After 23 years in Dublin, co-owners and husband and wife team, Paul and Sharon Crosbie, both Cork natives, relocated to Timoleague – where they holidayed for many summer's in the family cottage – just before the pandemic.

Paul had spent 35 years working in the Irish media industry and was doing some consultancy work from home in Timoleague. "I saw co-working spaces at the

time as being a very interesting concept, as I personally found remote working difficult, coming from a busy office environment background," he shares. "The 300-year-old Courthouse building always caught my eye."

The building had been used as an English executive language school in previous years and wasn't for sale at the time, however, Paul made enquiries and the couple went on to purchase the Old Courthouse in 2021, mid pandemic.

They have been running an Airbnb upstairs while the ground floor was being developed into a co-working space to service the surrounding area.

"I felt at the time, that this was the way work-life was going," says Paul.

"Covid came along and changed everything. Work habits had to adapt and so did companies. Co-working spaces have become a huge part of this change and are now part of the working fabric in Ireland coupled with the objective to re-generate rural towns and villages."

Paul and Sharon's hope is that The Courthouse Hub will solve many of the challenges remote workers deal with on a daily basis, such as social isolation, slow internet speeds, fuel and traffic!

Situated on the Wild Atlantic Way, Timoleague and the surrounding area is a popular spot with visitors, so 'The Hub' will offer people the opportunity to extend their stay to a working holiday; with accommodation upstairs and a restaurant across the street, it's the perfect spot to combine work and leisure!

The Courthouse Hub offers different types of workspaces from dedicated desks and counter spaces to private office and fall out chill areas, all very competitively priced, with packages available for those interested in renting a space long-term.

"To come and work in Timoleague is easy, with free parking and easy access. We are wheelchair-friendly and offer



Donal Whooley cuts the ribbon flanked by locals and Paul and Sharon Crosbie (also below).
Pics: Andy Gibson.

individual spaces or group spaces in a very pleasant work-oriented environment right in the middle of the village. We hope it will be of benefit to the community and attract more people into the centre of the village, which in turn creates a vibrant village community.

"The Hub's motto is 'sometimes... everybody needs a little space.' Our challenge is to ensure we can be as flexible as possible and facilitate all our customers workspace and office requirements."

The Courthouse Hub is open for business to anyone looking for a space to work. Paul and Sharon are very happy to show people around the workspaces with no pressure or commitment.

The building itself is rich in history. Built in 1700, this iconic building once served as a market house on the ground floor, with the court sessions held upstairs. Daniel O'Connell, The Liberator, is reputed to have defended a client there in 1822, thus the plaque on the outside of the building.

Proudly displaying that history, a beautiful mural painted inside the space by artist Deirdre Keohane, with the help of some of the local Courtmacsherry 'Broadstrand Artists' depicts Daniel O'Connell coming into Timoleague by carriage with the Old Courthouse building in the background.

Other historic trials of note in



the Courthouse history include the 1862 case of a Timoleague parish priest, Fr. Ned Mulcahy. He was accused of breaking the lock from the gate of the Old Clogagh Graveyard when the landlord attempted to keep locals out. A huge gathering to support the priest, led to the presiding magistrate to adjourn the hearing. Fr. Ned was carried shoulder high from the Courthouse while the landlord cowered in the building until nightfall.

The inquest into the Aghawadda ambush of May 1920 was also heard in the building.

Older locals will remember the two petrol pumps that were stationed in the western alcoves: One was an electric pump and the other was a tall cylindrical

version with a lever that was cranked from side to side to fill the one-gallon glass jars, before the contents were released into the car parked (or tractor) alongside.

A cast iron weighbridge also stood outside on market or fair days. The demise of the weighbridge came in about 1970 when a brewery lorry parked on it and the weighbridge gave away. It was later removed, and the remaining crater filled in to street level.

Now this old building is moving with the times and is celebrating a new chapter in Timoleague's history into the 21st century.

For booking go to www.courthousehub.ie

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Sometimes...
everybody needs a little space

Bantry aid worker supporting families in Lebanon with fundraiser



As Lebanon starts deporting Syrians back to the war-torn country they fled from, Bantry humanitarian aid worker Amy Boyden appeals for support for medical supplies for the families who remain. Amy has been carrying out humanitarian assistance with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) in Lebanon since February.

Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world with roughly 1.5 million Syrian refugees and others from Palestine, Iraq, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

There are over 4,000 settlements in the Beqaa Valley in eastern Lebanon alone. Approximately 2.3 million Lebanese are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the Port of Beirut blast in August 2020, along with the economic crises and years of political instability have made Lebanon a fiercely unpredictable country. When Amy first arrived in February, the exchange-rate was 64,000 Lebanese Lira (LL) to one dollar, a few weeks ago the lira temporarily devalued to 143,000LL to one dollar. At the

time, protests erupted throughout Lebanon with roadblocks set up by piling tyres and setting them on fire.

While inflation in Lebanon has now decreased, it is not reliable and Amy says that medical supplies are very expensive with many families unable to cover the costs.

"Sometimes you might have more than nine people living in a couple of rooms," shares Amy. "Mental health is something a lot of people struggle with. People living in the settlements are limited in what they can choose

as a career and jobs are limited." Many undocumented Syrians are now living with the fear of deportation as well.

Prior to this, Amy volunteered as a humanitarian aid worker for five months on the Island of Lesbos in Greece in 2020. After leaving there she completed her masters in Public International Law (specialising in conflict and security) in the Netherlands, which motivated her to explore options for going to Lebanon.

"Even though the Lebanese people have been through so much, they are incredibly hos-

pitable and welcoming," shares Amy. "I thoroughly love living here, exploring a new country, studying Arabic, learning about a new culture, and helping the Syrians and Lebanese communities where I can."

"It's a totally different world and some of it is hard, it's a challenge, but the good times outweigh the difficult times for me personally."

If you would like to support Amy's fundraiser please go to gofundme.com and search for Fundraising for Medical Supplies, Lebanon by Amy

people Environment : Making a difference

Retrofitting Your Home: A public information evening

Everyone is aware of the need for all of us to play our part in responding to the challenges of the climate crisis. And many people are thinking about what they can do to make their homes more energy-efficient. But then the questions start: Where should I start? Who should I contact? What grants are available?

Research shows that this confusion is one of the main barriers to people doing Retrofit works on their homes.

In order to answer these and other questions, Bantry Credit Union is hosting a public information evening on 'Retrofitting Your Home'. It is being held at the Maritime Hotel in Bantry on Friday, 5 May, between 7pm and 10pm. There is no admission fee and the event is open to everyone ... from throughout West Cork and beyond!

The guest speaker is Colm Tynan from South East Technological University (SETU),



Guest speaker Colm Tynan

formerly Waterford Institute of Technology. An experienced engineer and university lecturer, Colm has over 20 years' knowledge in low-energy building design and sustainable home energy upgrades.

Now Programme Director of the BEng (Hons) in Sustainable Energy Engineering course at SETU, Colm has a gift for communicating highly technical topics in plain English. He will explain how to improve the energy efficiency of your home in a planned, cost-effective way.

The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions of Colm and this will be followed by a panel discussion featuring local experts and providers of Sustainable Energy solutions.

The event will also be attended by a range of local businesses who will have stands in the hall. So before and after the meeting, people can browse the stands and learn about the options available at a local level for starting their Retrofit journey.

And in order to get people into the right spirit, Bantry Credit Union is giving away a free BER Assessment on the night as well as other Green prizes. To be in with a chance of winning the BER Assessment, you must register in advance to attend the event and you must attend on the night.

For further details visit bantrycu.ie or scan the QR code in the advert on page 5.

Investors offered the opportunity to be a part of Ireland's first eco resort in West Cork



Matt Mills

After being awarded grant funding in excess of €180,000 by Bord Iascaigh Mhara through its Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Scheme, Goleen Harbour, which offers an eco glamping or camping experience on the Mizen Peninsula, is now inviting private investment to raise the remainder of the match finance to develop Ireland's first eco resort in West Cork.



Parliament adopts new law to fight global deforestation

An area larger than the EU was lost to deforestation between 1990 and 2020, with EU consumption causing around 10 per cent of losses. To fight climate change and biodiversity loss, a new law obliges companies to ensure products sold in the EU have not led to deforestation and forest degradation.

While no country or commodity will be banned, companies will only be allowed to sell products in the EU if the supplier of the product has issued a so-called 'due diligence' statement confirming that the product does not come from deforested land or has led to forest degradation, including of irreplaceable primary forests, after December 31, 2020.

As requested by Parliament, companies will also have to verify that these products comply with relevant legislation of the country of production, including on human rights, and that the rights of affected indigenous people have been respected.

The products covered by the

new legislation are: cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm-oil, soya and wood, including products that contain, have been fed with or have been made using these commodities (such as leather, chocolate and furniture), as in the original Commission proposal. During the negotiations, MEPs successfully added rubber, charcoal, printed paper products and a number of palm oil derivatives.

Parliament also secured a wider definition of forest degradation that includes the conversion of primary forests or naturally regenerating forests into plantation forests or into other wooded land.

The Commission will classify countries, or parts thereof, as low-, standard- or high-risk based through an objective and transparent assessment within 18 months of this regulation entering into force. Products from low-risk countries will be subject to a simplified due diligence procedure. The proportion of checks is performed on operators according to the country's risk level: nine per cent for high-risk countries, three per cent for standard-risk and one per cent for low-risk.

The competent EU authorities will have access to relevant information provided by the companies, such as geolocation coordinates, and conduct checks

with the help of satellite monitoring tools and DNA analysis to check where products come from.

Penalties for non-compliance shall be proportionate and dissuasive and the maximum fine must be at least 4 per cent of the total annual turnover in the EU of the non-compliant operator or trader.

The new law was adopted with 552 votes to 44 and 43 abstentions.

After the vote, rapporteur Christophe Hansen (EPP, LU) said: "Until today, our supermarket shelves have all too often been filled with products covered in the ashes of burned-down rainforests and irreversibly destroyed ecosystems and which had wiped out the livelihoods of indigenous people. All too often, this happened without consumers knowing about it. I am relieved that European consumers can now rest assured that they will no longer be unwittingly complicit in deforestation when they eat their bar of chocolate or enjoy a well-deserved coffee. The new law is not only key in our fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, but should also break the deadlock preventing us from deepening trade relations with countries that share our environmental values and ambitions."

Commenting on the good news, co-founder and managing director Matt Mills says "It has been a long road since first writing the business plan in mid 2014, achieving planning permission in 2016 and opening for activities only to be hit by the insurance crisis in 2018 but also opening our first EcoCabin that same year."

Goleen Harbour received €450K of private investment through the Fáilte Ireland approved EIIS (Employment Incentive Investment Scheme) in 2021 and commenced development in January of last year.

"We couldn't have picked a worse time with Covid supply chain issues and then the War in Ukraine seeing material costs go up weekly. Inevitably this led to a budget overrun and time

delays," explains Matt.

Against the odds, Goleen Harbour installed a zero carbon district heating system and opened two new EcoCabins, a geodome and campsite, in a phased manner from June to July.

"We had a great response from our guests, as the need for this type of accommodation and campsite is much needed in the area."

The BIM funding will allow the resort to add two larger EcoCabins, two more geodomes on decks overlooking the ocean, upgrade its facilities and create an event space.

"We'll be offering net zero carbon holidays, experiences and events evolving our business and site into Ireland's first Eco Resort," shares Matt.

"The funding also supports

the purchase of a new support RIB for our sea kayaking experiences and sea swimming at our Castle Strand. We have a third application with BIM for a 20KW Solar PV array with battery storage, which we expect to be passed soon.

"I'd also like to thank Fáilte Ireland, Access Credit Union, Bank of Ireland, ORIS and the LEADER programme for their assistance over the years."

If you are interested in being part of this exciting eco-tourism business in a sector that grew by one-third in 2022 email matt@goleenharbour.ie.

EcoCabin is Matt's own brand and designs are Irish made using as locally sourced and sustainable materials as possible.



people Environment : Making a difference



GROUNDLED

MEP Grace O'Sullivan

April has been a month focused on biodiversity, both with the launch of the Biodiversity Loss Report by the Citizens' Assembly and with some recent trips across the vast constituency of Ireland South from Bray to the Blasket Islands. Having the ability to step out into nature this month and meet various local groups who are actively involved in the restoration of nature and the

Biodiversity key focus this Spring

protection of the Irish landscape, gave me the chance to put into perspective the very real and urgent recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly.

The Recommendations and Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss recommends that the State must take prompt, decisive and urgent action to address biodiversity loss and restoration and must provide leadership in protecting Ireland's biodiversity for future generations. In order to achieve this, the report itself contains 159 recommendations, agreed by 99 members of the Assembly. Additionally, the report expresses the Assembly's disappointment at the State's failure to adequately fund, implement and enforce existing laws and

policies around biodiversity. This reality echoes how many of us, particularly policymakers, have lost touch with the natural side of Ireland.

This natural side of Ireland is our bedrock and foundation for building thriving societies and economies. Prior to joining the EU, Ireland had failed entirely to maintain and support Ireland's biodiversity. My recent visits to Bray in Co. Wicklow and the Blasket Islands brought me back into nature, as I connected with a wide range of environmental and biodiversity groups and engaged in outdoor walks and activities. One such activity included a beach clean with Flossie Donnelly, whose brainchild organisation 'Flossie and the Beach Cleaners' has en-

couraged beach clean activities all over Ireland, including on Tragamna beach with Skibbereen Community School last year.

Recently, I had the privilege of meeting Tidy Towns groups which are increasingly focused on the issues of biodiversity loss in Ireland. Every group that I met with had something to offer and were doing their own bit to help the environment and maintain the local biodiversity standards. One volunteer tree planting initiative has transformed a former golf course into a forested area which is being rewilded with native tree species. Some local tidy towns groups are also busy planting with a focus on planting bee friendly plants along what used

to be a concrete ledge. These kinds of activities involve the local community, including a lot of young people, while also attracting and supporting the local bees, a win-win for biodiversity!

These examples highlight the steps that local groups across Ireland are taking to protect and enhance Ireland's natural environment. In order for people to thrive, the natural environment must thrive. This reality of needing to protect nature in order to protect humans is highlighted through the Citizens' Assembly's recommendation that nature be provided with protections within the constitution to allow it to continue to provide the necessities of life. These necessities include food,

clean freshwater, air and soil, in addition to a clean and healthy environment, which supports all of our communities.

From travelling across the beaches and cliffs of Ireland to exploring the beauty of the Blasket Islands, April has been a strong month of nature and biodiversity, which Ireland has plenty to offer, but this remains under threat. Seeing the importance of protecting our landscape, echoed through the Recommendations and Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, offers both a sense of urgency and hope for Ireland's future.

Clochán Uisce says thank you to Clonakilty

Last month Clochán Uisce visited many of the wonderful shops that line the main street of Clonakilty looking for sponsors to help fill the 130 planters along the river Feagle with native and river-beneficial plants. Every single business visited welcomed the idea, supporting the group's efforts and sponsoring one (or more!) planters. It served as a reminder of the value of having so many small, independent and often owner-operated shops in the town.

The organisation would like to give a big thanks to Centra, DeBarras, The Flower Basket, The Loft Gallery, Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill, Don's Discount Store, O'Donovans Hotel, Options, IP Net, Clonakilty GAA, West Cork People, Spiller's Lane Gallery, The Laundry Basket, The Asian Store, Step N' Style and Nuala's Corner for your support! We really appreciate your sponsorships, the plants will be going in this month.

If you would like to sponsor a planter (for €10) please email clochanuisce@gmail.com.

Upcoming events: On Sunday, May 14 at 1pm Clochán Uisce will be hosting a walk along the Argideen river – this is a family friendly walk and all are welcome. Meeting at Inchy bridge, there will be some kick sampling as well as plant and insect identification. Various water samples and measurements will be taken for Drinkable Rivers, Clochán Uisce's international affiliated group. Clochán Uisce regularly collects such data for Drinkable Rivers and uploads it to its platform to help build an international data base on the health of our rivers.

Clochán Uisce meets each month and all are welcome. You can find the group on Instagram or join the mailing list by emailing clochanuisce@gmail.com. Also keep an eye out on the Clonakilty Bicycle Festival programme, June 8-11, where Clochán Uisce will be doing a river cycle.

Consider a career in the great outdoors with Kerry College

Have you ever considered a career in the great outdoors? There are many different career paths you can choose from in this sector. Kerry College's Killorglin Campus, nestled in mountains and lakes on the outskirts of Killorglin town, has a wide range of outdoor education and recreation-related courses to choose from: Outdoor Activity Instructor, Ecology and Practical Fieldwork, Scuba Diving Instructor, Surf Instructor, Beach Life-guard Training and many more.

There is no better place to study outdoor education than on the

highest mountain in Ireland, along the iconic Ring of Kerry, in the beautiful and historic Killarney National Park or in the surfer's paradise of Maherees, Castlegregory.

There are no course fees and all equipment, materials and books are supplied. Kerry College courses allow learners to be flexible by equipping them with a broad range of awards, across disciplines, ensuring a sustainable career in the outdoors. The real-world training provided on these courses gives learners an opportunity to develop their professional and interpersonal skills through a comprehensive training experience.

The aim is that students will be able to take on many different roles within organisations or to confidently setup their own business. The campus has very strong links with industry professionals, having provided them with qualified learners with a high level of competency over the years.

If you are interested in a career in the great outdoors, obtaining strong practical skills and securing an internationally recognised qualification, visit www.kerrycollege.ie

The dawn chorus



by Nicholas Mitchell

You may remember that our article in the February edition was about that being a good time to start listening to and learning the birdsong of our resident birds, such as Blackbird, Song Thrush, Great Tit and so on. If you have been out and about and learnt a few of their songs, then you may have noticed some new ones during these last few weeks as spring migrants have started arriving in Ireland all the way from Africa. Prominent amongst these songsters will be Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat. As a result, the sound of birdsong at dawn has already become more

varied and louder, and this only increases as we move into May.

For this very reason, every year in mid-May, the Branch hosts a dawn chorus event. This year it will be on Sunday, May 14 and we are grateful to the owners of Liss Ard Estate, for allowing us to hold it there. We held our last dawn chorus event at Liss Ard in 2014, so it's great to be back at this wonderful venue. The event will start at 4:30am, so you'll need to set your alarm clocks, but it's worth

the early rising, especially if you haven't been to a dawn chorus event before. Everyone should experience this at least once in their lives, not just to enjoy the experience of being surrounded by birdsong as night flows into day, but to learn what birds are singing as the chorus fades and individual song becomes more prominent.

As with most of our outings this event is free of charge and open to everyone. The walk will be led by our new Chairperson, Jez Simms. The entrance gate to Liss Ard is outside Skibbereen on the Castletownsend Road and there will be people on hand to direct you to the parking area. We will start on the lawn in front of the house. It will still be dark when the first birds start to sing; probably a Wood Pigeon, Song Thrush or Blackbird (come and find out). The noise level will slowly build as the light changes and more birds join in. As dawn breaks we will take an amble through the woods and meadow, stopping often to pick out

different songs and learn more about individual bird species. The walk will mainly be on hard surface paths, but sturdy footwear is recommended, as is warm clothing. The walk will last an hour or so and there will be refreshments afterwards.

Branch News

Upcoming outings:
Sunday, May 14: Dawn Chorus at Liss Ard Estate, Skibbereen
Sunday, June 11: Walk at Castle Donovan to 'George the Sky'
Visit our website www.birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie for more information about these events. To receive news and reminders about our events join our mailing list by sending an email to mailinglist@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie. For more information about the Branch, contact Fiona O'Neill at secretary@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie.
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Sedge Warbler
Pic: Nicholas Mitchell



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people Environment : Making a difference

Wild meadows and other adventures

Lisa Scarff has an eye for the wondrous nature that surrounds us and she captures it so well as **Moze Jacobs** finds out. “I have my camera with me at all times to record butterflies, moths, flowers, landscapes,” says Lisa. No better place than Sheep’s Head, overlooking Bantry Bay, where she lives.

Many of Lisa’s photographs can be viewed online at www.wayfarercards.com. The images, virtually all from West Cork, are ‘real’ (she may crop but never edits) as well as fantastic. Stone circles, ancient castles, lighthouses, boats, seascapes, landscapes, wildlife, flowers. A selection are sold as photographic greeting cards at various outlets in western West Cork (see below).

This spring Lisa has a photographic exhibition in Nickie’s Kitchen in Schull (through May 20). It is called ‘Commeen Wild-flower Meadows’ and focuses exclusively on the meadowlands at her home farm on the Sheep’s Head peninsula: A haven for wildlife. “As a child in the 1960s, making my way to school, I remember an abundance of



grasses, herbs, and flowers visited by bees, butterflies and a host of other invertebrates, humming and fluttering. There are areas like the Burren, where you can still see a

lot of traditional meadows. Here, there are only some remnants, mainly hugging the coasts or on the islands. The rest are mostly fields for feeding animals that



are being ‘improved’; even the rock is broken to create more green fields for feeding animals, composed of a few strains of highly bred grasses that support little or no wildlife. Even the hedgerows seem to be absolutely decimated.”

Her aim with the exhibition is to raise awareness. “We are losing or have already lost so much natural beauty. Hopefully, I can inspire people to undo some of the damage.” Just as her own memories are prompting her to do the same in Commeen. “The idea has always been to increase the biodiversity by encouraging native perennial lowers and grasses associated with acid grassland. As these meadows have never been ‘improved’ using fertiliser, they are rich in wildflowers and traditional grasses. And I have two little ponies that are rotated around the meadows from late September through late March before being put out on the commonage on the hillside. They graze the meadows right down so the grass doesn’t get matted. Their hooves press any seeds into the ground, which helps to create little seed beds. Normally, they don’t need any input, such as hay. Digging three ponds also had amazing results for biodiversity: dragonflies, damselflies, frogs, newts. Plus, they sequester carbon.”

Many people around the Mizen Peninsula will know Lisa from Schull’s Roaring Water Health Store, which she owned for 15 years. It sells organic/local food, as well as sustainable household and craft products. Recently, it was taken over by Enda Fitzmaurice, who intends to continue in a similar vein. Although Lisa herself will not completely disappear from the scene. “I look forward to working one day a week for Enda while having more space in my life for family and adventures. Such as exploring

the landscapes here in Ireland. I am particularly drawn to the offshore islands, where nature is often more abundant. Inishbofin, Clare Island, the Aran Islands, the local islands in Roaring Water Bay. And I am also doing some walks with a group of people in the Burren to look for butterflies that are specific for limestone landscapes.”

Lisa reckons there are 21 different butterfly species on her own land. Some are rare, such as the Small Heath, which was once widespread but has declined 77 per cent since 2008. It is classified as ‘near threatened’ under the Red List of Irish Butterflies. As is the Gatekeeper, also observed at Commeen. “I’m completely into butterflies,” she says. “There’s so much to learn about them and their food plants, life cycles. Three years ago, I started to do a regular weekly walk from April to late September for the National Biodiversity Data Centre, to which I submit my recordings along that route, which takes in a variety of landscape elements: woods, glades, rocky mountains, meadows, hedgerows. Different butterflies have their preferred habitats and you get to know those places. Speckled Wood is found in the woodland edge. There is a lovely old holly tree. Once it begins to flower, Holly Blues will be dancing as soon as the sun comes out. Some types of butterfly pair up with specific plants. I saw an Orange Tip today near the lady’s smock, or cuckooflower, which is its food plant. They coincide. The larvae may also need certain plants. Those of the Peacock butterfly like nettles.”

The National Biodiversity Data Centre collects information through its Citizen Science Portal, “in order to better understand and assist the protection of Ireland’s biodiversity”. Anyone can submit data (and pictures),

even from their backyard, via records.biodiversityireland.ie. These will be added to maps with over six million records. It’s quite addictive, says Lisa. “In addition to the day-flying moths in the meadows, we are also trapping and recording moths of the night and have been astounded by their number and variety.”

As well as minding the meadows and its creatures, she has been nurturing the native woodland. This year I planted 50 trees – oak and birch and mountain ash. It’s hard work and can be challenging, as I am quite exposed to the southwest winds. The soil is poor so this has been a slow process, much helped by mulching and applying portions of pony poo. I am also using gorse as a nurse species. It fixes the nitrogen and protects the saplings from the wind.” Apart from aiding biodiversity, the native trees help reduce her energy bill. “A wood burner is my only source of heating. A lot of the logs come from branches that are cut when thinning takes place to let the light in. The percentage of firewood is increasing year on year as the trees mature. I use gorse as kindling. In times gone by, gorse was a valued crop. The young gorse shoots were used as fodder for animals or as bedding. Many farmers would have had a furze cutter.”

Wayfarer Cards are on sale in the Roaring Water Health Store (Schull), An Siopa Beag (Cape Clear), Deelish Garden Centre (Skibbereen), Future Forests Garden Centre (Kealkill), Hudson’s Wholefood (Ballydehob), Durrus Post Office, Dzugchen Beara (Allihies), and Bantry Bookshop.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre website at biodiversityireland.ie offers numerous practical tips for increasing biodiversity, among others through wildflower meadows and ponds.

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people Environment : Making a difference

Ludgate Hub and partners to deliver an innovative new programme on Community Climate Action



RETROFIT

Xavier Dubuisson

Xavier Dubuisson is an engineer with 25 years experience in the field of sustainable energy in Ireland and internationally. The founder and CEO at RetroKit, a start-up dedicated to upscaling home energy upgrades with innovative digital solutions and one of the partners in the CHERIS project, Xavier has many years of experience helping homeowners make the right decisions when upgrading or building low energy homes.

Did you know that houses are one of the biggest culprits when it comes to inefficient energy use? In fact, many homes waste a significant amount of energy, contributing to climate change and increasing energy costs. It's time to take action and make our homes more energy-efficient.

It is for this reason that we are thrilled to introduce our pilot project – CHERIS. The project aims to support homeowners in making their homes more energy-efficient (ensuring access to grants and funding where possible), reducing household energy costs, all while targeting Ireland's climate goals. CHERIS will focus on householders,

In collaboration with CHERIS – Community Home Energy Renovation Information Service – a pilot programme and partnership between Retrokit, The Wheel and The Ludgate Hub, to support home energy upgrades in West Cork; West Cork People is launching a 'Retrofit' column in the May issue. This ongoing column will be written by Xavier Dubuisson, an experienced engineer in the field of sustainable energy in Ireland and internationally. Over the next six months, Xavier will inform and advise on topics such as home energy upgrades, insulation, solar panel, heat pumps and grants available.

addressing their needs at the initial stages of their home energy upgrade journey by providing information through clinics run by mentors working in the community.

Ludgate Hub, The Wheel and RetroKit have been awarded a grant as one of the successful participants in the new €5 million fund under the Community Climate Action Programme. (CCAP) to complete this project, which will focus on the following key areas:

- Raising awareness and knowledge within the community of home energy upgrade solutions, the costs and benefits of these options, and the support measures and opportunities available.
- Building capacity within the community to support homeowners on their upgrade journey, by providing a tailored advisory service.
- Supporting the development of community-scale energy renovation projects by providing an integrated home energy advisory service and signposting for grants available.

Ludgate CEO, Grainne O'Keeffe, welcomed Ludgate's selection to deliver this progressive programme, which she believes will bring "significant value to the sustainable energy learning pool" in West Cork.

She added: "We believe businesses, innovators, and householders all have a role to play in tackling the sustainability challenge. And in gathering feedback and listening to the

community, we have seen there is a willingness among each to do their part. But people are unsure of the options available to them. This programme aims to tackle this knowledge gap so people are empowered to make choices that work for them - and the planet."

CCAP facilitates organisations and their partners to collaboratively develop supports, tools, know-how and approaches to assist communities to take meaningful action on climate change. The CCAP is being administered by Pobal, on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

So, what have we done so far and what are the next steps?

Firstly, we conducted an assessment of the housing stock to identify the need for energy upgrades in homes in West Cork. The results were astounding. In cases where the shallow retrofit scenarios were modelled, we saw a 25 per cent reduction in energy use, a meaningful impact on energy budgets, and the climate. In cases where homeowners did a medium or deep retrofit, they were able to achieve almost an 80 per cent reduction in energy demand and an A2 rating for those homes.

But we did not stop there... We also analysed the policy framework for sustainable energy in housing at European, national, and local levels to provide an understanding of the context. Next we looked at examples of community-led, local projects already up and

are significant. We also know that finance is a huge barrier to homeowners completing energy upgrades.

The mentors will provide a clinic in October and November where they will provide guidance to homeowners, helping them make informed decisions to get started including information on grants, list of local installers, and grouped projects. We want this service to be for everyone, whether they are eligible for a fully funded energy upgrade, are putting in some attic insulation or if they are eligible for a whole house energy upgrade. The mentors will point them in the right direction.

CHERIS, working with the local community, has the potential to create a more sustainable future for homeowners in the area, providing them with the support and guidance they need to increase the energy efficiency of their homes while saving money, and making a positive impact on the environment.

We also want to provide information to homeowners in West Cork through this regular column in West Cork People. Let us know if you have any specific questions that you would like to see covered in this column.

We are excited to see this initiative take shape and can't wait to see the impact it will have on our community.

Sign up to receive future information on this project at www.ludgate.ie/cheris-west-cork or contact the project team on info@ludgate.ie.

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people Environment : Making a difference

VivaGreen launches new Tru Eco personal care range

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VivaGreen
www.VivaGreen.ie

Irish company VivaGreen, known for its innovative and environmentally friendly products, has launched new personal care products with the help of Irish broadcaster and entrepreneur Anna Daly, who shares VivaGreen's commitment to sustainability.

VivaGreen has expanded its existing Tru Eco range of eco-friendly laundry and household cleaners for the first time with personal care products for people seeking gentler solutions for their skin and hair and the environment.

VivaGreen's Tru Eco personal care range features a body wash, hand wash, and shampoo, all boasting a refreshing natural citrus scent. What sets these products apart is their use of plant-based and biodegradable ingredients, free from harmful chemicals and colourants. Additionally, each bottle is made from 100% recycled plastic, which is both recyclable and refillable, promoting a circular economy approach.

The Tru Eco products are formulated with organic sweet almond oil, known for its rich Vitamin E content and antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. This makes them suitable for all skin and hair types, including dry and sensitive skin. The gentle citrus fragrance of these sulphate-free products will refresh and energize your senses, whether you are starting your day or winding down after



Broadcaster and entrepreneur Anna Daly with VivaGreen Co-Founders Garrett Walsh (left) and Russell Walsh (right) Pic: Richard Gibb.

a long one.

VivaGreen is proud to have broadcaster and entrepreneur Anna Daly on board to help launch the new Tru Eco products. Anna's passion for sustainability and commitment to making a positive impact on the environment with her own ethical lifestyle brand Little Bliss makes her the perfect match for VivaGreen, according to Russell Walsh, Co-Founder of VivaGreen.

"We believe that Anna Daly's support will help us spread the word about the importance of choosing sustainable products and encourage others to make more environmentally conscious choices," said Walsh.

Anna Daly expressed her delight in partnering with VivaGreen for the launch of the Tru Eco personal care range. "As an entrepreneur and a mother, I am passionate about sustainability, and I am pleased to see that Vi-

vaGreen's Tru Eco range is made using natural, biodegradable ingredients that are gentle on the skin and hair. It is reassuring to know that these products are both environmentally friendly and safe for my family," said Daly.

In addition to providing a gentle and refreshing experience for your skin and hair, Tru Eco personal care products are also affordable compared to similar products in the market. By choosing Tru Eco by VivaGreen, consumers can make a positive impact on the planet with their personal care needs while supporting local businesses.

Dr Anne Marie Mahon, VivaGreen's lead researcher and a marine biologist, ecologist, and environmental scientist, played a key role in developing the Tru Eco personal care products. These products have undergone rigorous testing and have passed the Cosmetic Product Safety

Assessment, ensuring their effectiveness and meeting VivaGreen's high standards.

Tru Eco products are available in select SuperValu stores, and the new personal care line is also available in eco-shops nationwide, making it easy for consumers to switch to eco-friendly products that promote sustainability.

VivaGreen also offers Tru Eco refill stations in SuperValu stores in Cork (Clonakilty, Cobh, Glanmire, Bantry, Bandon) and eco-shops, making it easier for consumers in Cork to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Visit vivagreen.ie to find a refill store near you.

Make the natural choice for your personal care routine with VivaGreen's Tru Eco range and join the movement towards a more sustainable future. For more information, please visit vivagreen.ie.

KILCOE STUDIOS

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Learn about plants and traditional food ways in a weekend of nourishment

There is a lot of talk today about our connection with nature and how, in both rural and urban areas, we need to find ways to reconnect and see the importance of wild spaces for wildlife and for us. Picking and gathering wild plants for food is a literal connection: tying you in directly as you bend down to gather a spring salad from the ditches on a small back road and linking you with the habitat you are in, as you begin to understand which plants grow in which habitats – like fresh water, hedgerows and seashores.

Foragers can be protective sometimes about their spots, but many wild foods are very abundant and, through abiding by basic foraging respect rules, for example only collecting

enough, there is usually plenty for everyone.

In our dire need for conservation of these spaces, there is also the thinking that we will more likely be prepared to fight to preserve them if we use them as a food source, as well as leaving them for wildlife to feed and shelter in. Possibly then we can start to move to grow these spaces once again in line with current climate targets – basically more hedgerows and more woodland can mean more wild pickings to supplement our other foods!

Kilcoe Studios, in Ballydehob is bringing together a group of people who are passionate about the value of wild plants, herbs and traditional food ways.

Cothú (Nourish) is a weekend of talks, tastings, outdoor

foraging and an exhibition of works by Samuel Arnold Keane. It takes place on the weekend of May 13 and 14 at Kilo Studios in Ballydehob. You will find more information about the speakers and foraging on Kilcoe Studio's website (under craft and heritage) and also on Instagram.

Saturday Talks and Tastings

10-11am - Sonia Caldwell, Kilcoe Studios: Gathering wild food throughout the seasons. Sonia will share her learning over the years – the best approaches, best resources, where to start and some samples of the most common edible plants.

11.30am-1pm - Rosari Kingston, Herbalist : Why

Use Herbs?

In this talk, Rosari will look at some of the most common herbs, how to use them, and why they are useful.

2.30-4pm - Max Jones,

Up There The Last : Traditions of the Sea.

This is a talk and tasting to connect us to the past with foods from the wild, preserved by observing traditional methods.

5-6pm - Tasting And Discussion. Please bring your favourite dish made with some wild food or there will be other tastings available - no charge.

6pm Exhibition Opening - Samuel Arnold Keane

Sunday Outdoor Foraging

Both sessions will be joint led by Sonia Caldwell and Samuel Arnold Keane - see website for more details on their profiles.

8am-11am - Seaside Foraging.

Meet at 7.30pm in Ballydehob and we will car pool to a nearby shore. This is timed to coincide with low tide for seaweeds. Fire/tea and brunch on the shore about 10am - weather-permitting - if wet, it will take place back at Kilcoe Studios.

12-2pm - Hedgerow Foraging.

Finishing Event Gathering indoors for open discussion.

Book events@kilcoestudios.com or 087 0667871

Talks – €20 (€15 for first session with Sonia)

Full day €50

Foraging – € 25 for morning with brunch/€20 for afternoon. Full day €40.

Weekend Ticket €85

Wild garlic illustration by Sonia Caldwell.



A feast for foodies as Clonakilty Street Carnival returns

West Cork's renowned annual street carnival returns to Clonakilty on Saturday June 17, 2023 after a four-year break due to Covid restrictions.

Since its inception in 2016, the Clonakilty Street Carnival has seen huge crowds flock to the multi-award-winning seaside town. The colourful main streets are transformed into a foodie haven of culinary delights, and first-class dining is catered for by local restaurants and an array of excellent artisan producers.

The Carnival is delighted to announce Irish Yogurts

Clonakilty as their main sponsor again for this year's event, an award-winning family-run company based in Clonakilty since 1994.

Diarmuid O'Sullivan, Managing Director at Irish Yogurts Clonakilty said; "We're excited to be involved once again in supporting the wonderful Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival. It's a highly anticipated social event in the town's diary,

and we are absolutely thrilled it's returning this year after being so sorely missed. It's sure to be an exciting day out and we can't wait for all the festivities to begin again."

This year's event will be officially opened by renowned chef Eunice Power, a regular on the RTE One Today Show, where she hosts live cooking demonstrations each week from the studio. Eunice Power Catering is one of Ireland's leading gourmet event caterers, offering first-class food made from scratch with the very best seasonal ingredients. As well, she owns an award-winning restaurant AndChips located in Dungarvan, Co Waterford.

Eunice said, "I am absolutely delighted and honoured to be opening the Carnival on June 17. This is such an important event for Clonakilty, where a spotlight will shine on all the wonderful local producers, chefs and businesses. I understand the commitment and hard work that communities put into these events, and I am looking forward to spending this wonderful day with the Clonakilty community."

The gastronomic day out promises a unique dining experience unlike any other! Rows of tables will line decorated streets to create Clonakilty's longest dinner party, as thousands of diners get to feast on mouthwatering dishes from street food stalls by the town's top restaurants, with meal tickets priced at €18 for adults and €7.50 for children.

Headline acts throughout the day will keep audiences dazzled with live music, activities, and dizzying carnival style antics. The popular Family Fun Zone will return with hosted activities and street entertainment including bouncy castles, giant games, face-painting, and an enclosed area to keep the smallies amused, as well as a sensory play area as part of Clonakilty's continued commitment to being an autism friendly town.

Kevin O'Regan, an organiser of the Carnival said; "We're excited to be back and we're hugely grateful to all our contributors, sponsors, and volunteers. Without them, we wouldn't be able to create such a magical and memorable experience for locals and visitors

to the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival. Clonakilty is a thriving town and a top-class food destination, and we're thrilled to be able to showcase again the wonderful talents of our local food producers, businesses, and hospitality to everyone who comes to visit us on the day."

Dinner places are ticketed so to avoid disappointment please reserve your meal tickets in advance. Tickets include adult and children's meals with meat, seafood, vegetarian and vegan meal options, including drinks and desserts. All other festivities and event activities are FREE and accessible to all throughout the day as the town will be fully pedestrianised from 9am-9pm and open for business.

To keep up to date with the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival news and full schedule please follow Facebook @Clonakiltystreetcarnival or visit www.clonakilty.ie

Tickets can be purchased at www.buytickets.at/clonakiltychamberofcommerce



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HERBAL
HEALING

Dr. Rosari Kingston

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

www.rosarikingstonphd.com

The power of parsley

Our gardens are the place where we grow many health-giving plants. Among the culinary delights that form the bedrock of our cooking are parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme. Other important culinary herbs are mint, bay, horseradish, fennel, marjoram, oregano, lovage, dill, basil, and lemongrass. The latter can be a bit difficult to grow as it likes heat, but is perfect in a greenhouse or polytunnel.

Once planted, the following herbs return year after year, sage, rosemary, thyme, horseradish, bay, fennel, lovage, marjoram, oregano, and mint. Keep bay in a pot unless you want it to grow into a thirty-foot tree in a few years. Parsley is a biennial, so it does need to be planted each year. In its second year of growth, it sets seed and with a bit of luck these will take root in the same spot as the parent plant. This gives the illusion of a perennial until the year comes when the seed does not take root and you are left with

no parsley. Parsley does need good soil, unlike so many other herbs, so either start off the seeds in pots and transplant later or plant the seeds directly into area you have chosen for it. If at all possible, grow it near the kitchen so you are not having to walk to the far end of the garden to gather it.

The very popular herbs, basil and dill, are both annuals so need to be planted each year. Basil can be grown very successfully in pots on a south facing window. Pick out the growing shoots once they are well established, as this will encourage a more bushy plant with plenty leaves. I have also found that watering basil at midday is beneficial. With a little care, it is possible to have fresh basil from early summer until well into the autumn.

This is a long list of herbs to grow but they are beneficial for our health. If we examine parsley, we know it is not just a pretty piece of greenery. It is a storehouse of vitamins and

minerals. Two tablespoons of parsley provide us with 12 per cent of our daily requirement of vitamin A, which is important for our immune systems and eye health. The same amount of parsley provides us with 16 per cent of our daily vitamin C requirements. Vitamin C helps our immune system, as well as maintaining heart health. Since vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant, it protects our cells from the damaging effect of unstable free radicals which lead to a process called oxidative stress. Oxidative stress damages the body's cells and leads to a host of diseases. Parsley also provides more than our daily requirement of vitamin K which is needed for proper blood clotting as well as bone health and bone density. As well as all the aforementioned goodness packed into two tablespoons of parsley, it also gives us magnesium, potassium, folate, iron and calcium.

We tend to think of parsley as a garnish, but I also recommend



cooking with it, as cooking increases apigenin, a flavone found in parsley. While flavones are known to be powerful anti-oxidants, apigenin has demonstrated potential as an anti-cancer agent. Dried parsley is the best natural source of apigenin so set the air fryer to

dehydrate and dry some parsley. Another way of using parsley is to sauté it with garlic and onion and add it to any dish that is being cooked. Actually, a large batch of onions, garlic, and parsley can be prepared at the weekend and kept in the fridge for use during the week.

A FLAVOUR OF
WEST CORK
RECIPE

Karen Austin

April and May are known as the hungry gap in the gardening world but not in our garden where we're consuming colonies of cauliflower and infinite amounts of spinach and kale. The spinach and kale are giving their last ditch effort before reaching for the sky and going to seed; they are both are crops that have an incredibly long life cycle. We're still eating the same crops that we began growing last spring. They have produced buckets and buckets of leaves that used to go to the shop – remember all those spinach tarts and kale salads? We're not quite sure what we will do with our crops this growing season as although we are scaling back we have never grown on a domestic level and we'll probably be tripping over produce – it was the reason that we opened the shop in the first place!

A Spanish
classic topped
with egg

Spinach and kale love the climate here, they thrive with rain, wind and sunshine and are incredibly easy to grow. Five or six perpetual spinach plants or a couple of kale plants would provide you with a continuous supply if you look after them. Imagine, a few seeds and you'll get a years' supply of food. It's well worth doing.

Spinach, combined with chickpeas, produces the Spanish classic Espinacas con Garbanzos, literally spinach with chickpeas. This makes a delicious budget dinner, especially when it's topped with a fried egg which is the best combo in my mind.

The chickpeas can be cooked from scratch or made with the chickpeas in cans or jars. Jarred chickpeas are always my preference as they seem to be bigger and fatter which is a good thing but cans are fine. I do also cook chickpeas from dried, it is the cheapest option, it just takes a little time. If I am cooking chickpeas from dried, I always make more than I need and stash the remainder in the

freezer for another time.

Chickpeas with spinach

Ingredients:

- 250g chickpeas, soaked overnight and cooked or 2 cans chickpeas.
- 500g spinach
- 3-4 cloves garlic – peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/4 tsp crushed chilli flakes
- 75g stale white bread
- olive oil
- 1.5 tbs red wine vinegar
- a good pinch of saffron
- 1 tsp smoked paprika

Method:

If you are using dried chickpeas soak them overnight in cold water, drain, then put into a saucepan then cover with fresh water. Bring to the boil then cover with a lid and simmer for 40 minutes to 1 ½ or even 2 hours until tender. Drain and reserve cooking liquid.

Put the saffron into a small bowl and cover with some boiling water – approx. 50mls, then put aside to infuse.



If you are using canned or jarred chickpeas drain the chickpeas and rinse.

Rinse the spinach, chop roughly then sauté in a little olive oil until it wilts down and is just cooked. You'll have to add the spinach bit by bit, adding more as the spinach wilts down. Season with salt.

Cut the bread into cubes and fry in a pan with a little olive oil until lightly browned then add the cumin seeds and chilli, cook for a minute then add the

chopped garlic. Cook gently for a minute. Don't let the garlic burn.

Transfer this mix to a food processor and blend to a paste. Add the vinegar and saffron.

Put a pan on the heat and cook the bread mix and chickpeas together thinning with a little reserved chickpea cooking liquid or some water. Cook gently for a few minutes to allow the flavours to develop then stir in the spinach. Cook for a few minutes more until spinach is

heated through, check seasoning, stir in a teaspoon smoked paprika then serve.

Delicious with a fried egg on top!

Here's hoping for sunshine in May.

Lettercollum Kitchen Project,
Timoleague
info@lettercollum.ie
www.lettercollum.ie
0238846251

Clóna Dairies and National Dairy Council to host health and wellbeing event in Dunmore

A special health and wellbeing event is being held by Clóna Dairies and the National Dairy Council at Dunmore House in Clonakilty on Thursday May 11 in aid of West Cork Rapid Response. Speakers at the event will include dietician Aoife McDonald, chef Martin Shanahan of Fish Fishy restaurant, Stella O'Malley, psychotherapist, author, and public speaker and the evening will be MC'd by Cork broadcaster and communications consultant Jonathan Healy.

Stella O'Malley is a psychotherapist, author, and public speaker. Much of Stella's work focuses on mental health and the importance of well-being in the family. A regular contributor to the media, Stella has written four books: 'Cotton Wool Kids', 'Bully-Proof Kids', 'Fragile' and 'What your teen is trying to tell you', which was released in March 2023.

Chef and Author Martin Shanahan needs no introduction as one of Ireland's foremost seafood chefs and owner of the

award-winning Fishy Fishy Restaurant and Café in Kinsale. He opened Kinsale's first gourmet store with his wife Marie and then Fishy Fishy Restaurant in 2006. He has appeared on numerous shows for RTE including his own show, 'Martin's Mad About Fish' and he has also written numerous bestsellers on fish and seafood. Martin will be demonstrating some delicious seafood recipes on the evening.

Aoife McDonald is a Consultant Dietitian and Founder of The Digestive Health Clinic.

She is a CORU Registered Dietitian and member of the INDI (Irish Nutrition and Dietetics Institute) with a BSc in Nutritional Sciences from UCC, and a PgDip in Nutrition and Dietetics from the University of Chester. Aoife will be chatting all things diet and food and giving

advice to the audience and eating well for a healthy active life at all ages.

The event will start at about 6.30pm with refreshments and the event will commence at 7.30pm. Tickets are €10 and available on Eventbrite.



New state-of-the-art school for Ballinspittle

Cork South West TD, Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has confirmed that Ballinspittle National School has been given approval to go to tender for a brand new two-storey state-of-the-art national school. This school will include 12 mainstream classrooms and three special education needs classrooms.

Deputy O'Sullivan said, "this is fantastic news, Ballinspittle is a vibrant, thriving community with an increasing population and there's an ever-increasing demand for school places."

"This facility, which includes special education needs classrooms will be a game changer for the area. I want to pay a special tribute to the school principal, Shelia Wall, who has led this project along with the school board and the staff in the school.

"I have been spending a lot of time in the 'De Courcy' country recently and there is a really can-do attitude in the area, and this is another example of that."

Save the date for Clonakilty for Clonakilty Bicycle Festival

This year will mark the 12th anniversary of the Clonakilty Bicycle Festival, which takes place from June 8-11. For anyone who has attended in past years it will be another 'wheely-great' line up of events for all ages and abilities. Highlights include a mystery musical cycle, 20km Pop-up Picnic cycle (with Chef Caitlin Ruth), bird watch cycle (hosted by Bird Watch Ireland), Bike-eoke sing-along and a family morning at Croppy Park – don't forget to pick up this year's collectors t-shirt! Visit clonakiltbicyclefestival.org for more.






HEALTH & WELLBEING EVENING

**Dunmore House Hotel, Clonakilty, West Cork
Thursday, 11th May 2023**

Doors open 7.00pm for 7:30pm start

Jonathan Healy

MC, Communications
Consultant and Broadcaster



Martin Shanahan

Chef and Owner of Fishy
Fishy Restaurant



Aoife McDonald

Consultant Dietitian &
Founder of The Digestive
Health Clinic



Stella O'Malley

Psychotherapist and
Bestselling Author



Tickets €10

All ticket and raffle proceeds to West Cork Rapid Response

FREE GIFT BAG - LIGHT REFRESHMENTS - RAFFLE

Tickets available on Eventbrite:
bit.ly/HealthAndWellbeingEvening



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Book early to avoid disappointment!

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Get your lymph system flowing for glowing skin



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

The air is warming up, summer is just around the corner and it feels like the right time to be preparing for the end of our winter hibernation. And one of the things I love about the summer is being able to bare my skin. In preparation for sun worship, it is important to make sure our skin is in the best condition to be sure that it will be happy in the sun.

I already use very high quality skincare, but I know that glowing skin is healthy

skin, and achieving it begins on a deeper cellular level. This involves the right nourishment (lots of omega 3s for example!) but also a healthy lymphatic system.

What? How does the lymphatic system have anything to do with glowing skin?

Well, we don't often think about the lymphatic system which is made up of a large network of vessels and tissues that run throughout the body (much like blood vessels). This system includes your spleen, thymus and tonsils and the network of vessels extends to just below your skin. It works in the background to ensure the body is able to properly cleanse, detoxify and maintain fluid levels. The primary function of this system is to transport a watery fluid called 'lymph' containing white blood cells throughout the body. These white blood cells are key to fighting infection and aid the body to expel toxins, waste and other unwanted materials.

As the lymphatic assists with the expulsion of toxins, if it is not functioning properly, your skin may suffer from acne, loss of elasticity, premature ageing

To begin, you need a good dry brush; one that is high quality and has natural bristles. The bristles should feel stiff to touch but not hard.

and puffiness and swelling. And it's not just about skin health – inflammation, joint pain, headaches, lymphoedema and many other serious health conditions can result from a poorly functioning lymphatic system.

And unlike your cardiovascular system, the lymphatic system does not have a 'pump' (a.k.a the heart); it relies on you to get it going, but stimulating it is easier than you think!

Exercise is the number one way to do this, as regular muscle contraction stimulates the movement of our lymphatic fluid. The vessels have one way valves and muscular contraction pushes the fluid gently along the network and back up to your heart where it re-enters your bloodstream. Lymphatic massage is also a good option, as it offers techniques that contribute to healthy lymphatic drainage. It's also vital to keep really well

hydrated to keep our lymph flowing and the system able to do its vital jobs, so drinking plenty of water and herbal teas is a big help.

Dry brushing is an easy way to aid the movement of lymph from your exterior back up through the system. Dry brushing is done on bare skin, and it's something we can do ourselves to move the lymph back towards the heart and help to gently exfoliate the skin, reducing swelling, fine lines and wrinkles, and even cellulite and acne.

To begin, you need a good dry brush; one that is high quality and has natural bristles. The bristles should feel stiff to touch but not hard. You would be wise to look for a brush with a long handle so that you can reach your back and other hard to reach places.

To perform dry brushing,

begin at the feet and work your way up the body, using gentle motions and brushing towards the heart. Incorporating skin brushing into your daily routine can be an effective way to support lymphatic drainage and promote overall health and well-being, and even better, it feels great! I take a few minutes in the mornings before my shower and I love how I feel afterwards.

The face can also be brushed using a smaller softer brush and gentle strokes. You need special extra soft smaller brushes for your face, and you need to be extra gentle to avoid skin damage.

Facial cupping is another way of working with our skin to strengthen it and help with lymphatic drainage. The cups used are small silicone cups and you slide them across your face, using a high quality facial oil,

and it feels great.

If you want to try facial cupping or use dry brushes on your face, I would suggest coming in and talking to Helen Tobin, our beautician, who can advise on the correct way to start. It's a very gentle but very invigorating way of waking your skin up in the morning and can be combined with facial massage to achieve glowing and healthy skin.

In conclusion, taking care of our lymphatic system through techniques such as skin brushing, hydration, and exercise is essential for supporting overall health and well-being. Incorporating these practices into our daily routines can help to promote lymphatic drainage and prevent a range of health problems associated with a compromised lymphatic system. By supporting our lymphatic system, we can improve our quality of life and achieve optimal health and vitality.

If you want to try dry skin brushing, come and see our range of soft brushes – we also stock some facial cups and the oils you need to do facial massage and facial cupping at home.

Helen is available for one to one consultations on natural skincare including facial massage techniques, facial brushing and facial cupping. Call to book an appointment.

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

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Pictured at a Kinsale Youth Community Centre Breakfast fundraiser in Actons Hotel was guest speaker Minister Simon Coveney, Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment with Cllr. Marie O'Sullivan, event organiser and Chair of the Bandon/Kinsale Municipal District.
Picture: John Allen

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Look after your future brain function with a carotenoid levels test at Crowley's Pharmacy

Your whole world changes when you, or a loved one, begins to suffer from the effects of memory loss or brain disease. Years of scientific research point to nutrition as being a major contributing factor to long-term brain function. Our brain is designed to naturally accumulate nutrients from our diet that help it function optimally. Each one has an important role to play in maintaining and protecting brain function, thanks to their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

The latest research from Nutrition Research Centre Ireland has demonstrated that patients

suffering from brain disease are severely deficient in omega-3s and carotenoids, which are the active ingredients of ReMind, a brain supplement developed by a group of expert scientists.

ReMind now also offer pharmacies a new Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Alzheimer's risk factor screening service, which will be available at the SuperValu branch of Crowley's Pharmacy in Clonakilty on Wednesday, May 31.

A scanning machine, used in clinical trials at South East Technological University, measures patient's skin carotenoid scores; deficiencies in

carotenoids have been identified as a significant risk factor for both AMD and Alzheimer's. A person's skin carotenoid score has been proven in numerous trials to directly correlate with the amount of carotenoids in the blood plasma, and also with macular pigment in the eye and in the brain.

This simple, non-invasive, 10 second test will accurately measure the amount of carotenoids in your skin. If lacking you will be advised on how to supplement your diet with carotenoids.

To book an appointment for your scan call Crowley's on 023 8895055.

Dementia awareness training underway in Bantry

By the end of April, over 100 staff working in retail businesses in Bantry will have completed dementia awareness training. The training is part of a move to make the town 'Dementia Friendly', a place where people living with dementia are encouraged to continue to take part in the social, economic, cultural, sporting and faith life of the community.

Businesses participating in the training which is supported by Bantry Business Association and Bantry Chamber of Commerce, include staff working in supermarkets, fashion outlets, DIY stores, cafes, bus operators, hairdressers and financial institutions.

There are approximately 64,000 people living with dementia in Ireland and this number is expected to double in the next 20 years due to our ageing population. Three quarters of people diagnosed with a dementia are living in the community and use banks, credit unions, coffee shops, the post office, chemists, supermarkets, hairdressers etc. Staff working in these businesses will now have a better understanding of what it is like to live with dementia and how to communicate more effectively and helpfully.

Training is delivered by Sarah Cairns, Dementia Educator and Vanessa Bradbury, Dementia Advisor, Alzheimer's Society with funding from Cork



(l-r) Vanessa Bradbury, Sarah Cairns, both trainers in Dementia Awareness and Helen O Driscoll.

Kerry Community Healthcare (HSE). The training is delivered in small groups over two interactive 90 minute sessions, one week apart. This allows for the learning to be put into practice. Sarah works in Bantry General Hospital and has considerable experience in training people to interact well with anyone living with dementia, while Vanessa has many years experience working with people living with dementia and their carers in Ireland and in the UK.

The dementia awareness programme aims to assist businesses and staff gain a better understanding of what it means to live with dementia. It will also provide some communication skills and strategies to assist people living with dementia, their families, and carers.

Participants have said they

"The Dementia Awareness training has given me a new perspective, and an insight to what challenges people may be dealing with. My understanding of what dementia is changed how I interact with the public which makes for a much smoother conversation that works for everyone involved."

were "far more informed now with dementia and am more aware", "would now feel more comfortable dealing with somebody with dementia" and that

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the training 'would make people more mindful on how to make people with dementia feel safe'.

Winnie O Sullivan, Chair Bantry Age Friendly said "we know that Businesses in Bantry work really hard to serve all members of the community, including people living with dementia. This programme will build on the knowledge and skills businesses already have. Working together we can ensure people living with dementia are included in all aspects of community life."

Helen O Driscoll, Cancer Connect said "The Dementia Awareness training has given me a new perspective, and an insight to what challenges people may be dealing with. My understanding of what dementia is changed how I interact with the public which makes for a much smoother conversation that works for everyone involved."

Work on making Bantry a 'Dementia Inclusive Community' began with an information evening last summer and a

memory café is now available on the first Wednesday of every month in the Maritime Hotel. So far, these initiatives have been led by Bantry Age Friendly, the HSE, Alzheimer's Society of Ireland, the Family Carers and Older Person's Initiative at Locallink, but the aim is to include people across all parts of the community.

Spaces are still available on these free sessions for businesses and can be book by contacting Juliette at 087 9103036.

Emer O'Sullivan
 MA, MSocSc, MSW, MIACP, MAC, HDip Relationship Studies

Counsellor Emer will help you to come to terms with any concerns and help you set about making positive changes in your life.

Life Coach Emer will help you to examine your life, evaluate what you want, and check the direction in which you are heading.

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

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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

EmployAbility Service West Cork celebrates 22-year collaboration with West Cork employers

Employability Service West Cork is a free service funded by the Department of Social Protection and is governed by a voluntary board of directors.

“EmployAbility Service West Cork supports people who have

an illness, injury or any other type of disability or any other health concern back to work,” explains EmployAbility Service General Manager Micheal Hurley. “And it works!”

EmployAbility Service West Cork understands employers’

requirements and the importance of supporting and collaborating with its employers. The service partners with over 1,200 employers in the West Cork region and assists employers and clients to mutually benefit from its service. As well as sourcing potential employees for West Cork businesses, The EmployAbility West Cork team informs employers of relevant Department of Social Protection schemes their business may be entitled to.

The service removes the fear and the perceived risk of hiring someone who faces an obstacle in their lives, or someone recovering from an illness, injury, or any other type of disability. Concentrating on

peoples abilities, strengths, and explaining the benefits to hiring our clients to prospective employers,” Micheal says. “This is demonstrated by the feedback and testimonials we receive from employers throughout West Cork.”

“You take the time to get to know our business and the people you put forward for interview here reflect this. Business here in ICP is on an upward spiral and we will need your help in the near future again.” – ICP Newtech Bandon
“We used the Employability service as it was recommended by another local business. We found Employability helpful and quick with all requests and for us the right person

was found for the job vacancy within a few days. As a local business this was great and are very pleased with the help we got.” – Ruralbroadband.ie


“For us, Employability West Cork helped us to see the potential opportunities that we could offer to candidates with different needs and how we can provide them with meaningful work experience for their career development with no cost to the business.” – Logitech.com

“Reliance Precision have utilised EmployAbility West Cork for work placement and were delighted with the calibre of the person they put forward. We found them to be courteous and professional in their approach and would recommend them


as a resource in any search for suitable candidates.” – Reliance Precision Manufacturing Ireland Bandon

“I have found Employability Service West Cork great to work with. In the past few years we have gained valuable and loyal employees that are hard-working and have given them great opportunities to thrive in our company. All the employees that you recommend are still with us today and hopefully for many years to come.” The Gourmet Pantry Kinsale

If you would like more information, please look at empw.org or call EmployAbility Service General Manager Micheal Hurley on 0868546559



Get in touch for free and confidential career support in the Clonakilty area.
empservice.org



Emer Sweeney 086 8395058
emersweeney@empwc.org

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Maternity Leave and Maternity Benefit

Having a baby is a major life event. The following are some common questions that arise for new mothers who are leaving work to have their baby:

How much maternity leave can I entitled to take?

As an employee, you have the right to take 26 weeks’ maternity leave if you become pregnant. You also have the right to take up to 16 weeks’ additional maternity leave. You can take this time off work from full-time, casual or part-time employment. It does not matter how long you have been working for your employer.

You must take at least two

weeks’ maternity leave before your baby is due, and at least four weeks after the baby is born.

Can I take time off work for medical visits?

While you are pregnant, you can take time off for medical visits connected with the pregnancy. You can take as much time off as you need for these visits, including the time for travelling to and from the appointment and for the appointment itself.

You must give your employer a note from your doctor to confirm the pregnancy, and give two weeks’ notice of your medical visits. You should show your appointment card if your employer asks to see it at any time after your first appointment.

You can also take time off for medical visits, for up to 14 weeks after the birth. You have the right to be paid while keeping these medical appointments, both before and after the birth.

Can I take time off for antenatal classes?

You can take paid time off work to attend some antenatal classes. You are entitled to attend one set of antenatal classes except for the last three classes of the set. Fathers can take paid time off to attend the last two antenatal classes immediately before the birth.

Does my employer have to pay me when I am on Maternity leave?

In general, employers do not have to pay women who are on maternity leave. You should check your contract of employ-

ment to see whether you are entitled to pay and pension contributions from your employer during your maternity leave.

What is Maternity Benefit?

If you have enough social insurance (PRSI) contributions, you are entitled to Maternity Benefit (including self-employed) for the 26 weeks’ of basic maternity leave. Maternity Benefit does not cover additional maternity leave. You should apply for Maternity Benefit at least six weeks before you plan to go on maternity leave (12 weeks if you are self-employed). You can apply online for Maternity Benefit at MyWelfare.ie if you have a verified MyGovID account or you can get an application form from your local Citizens Information Centre or Intreo office

How does being on Maternity Leave impact on my employment rights?

In general, you are treated as being in employment while you are on maternity leave or additional maternity leave. This means you can continue to build up your entitlement to annual leave. You are also entitled to leave for any public holidays that occur during your maternity leave (including additional maternity leave). Maternity legislation protects you from unfair dismissal. If you have a dispute with your employer over maternity rights, you can make a complaint to the Workplace Relations Commission. You should talk to your local Citizens Information Centre about the steps in making a complaint.

Can I return to my old job after maternity leave?

You are treated as being in employment while you are on maternity leave and additional maternity leave. This means that you have the right to return to work to the same job with the same contract of employment. If this is too difficult to arrange, your employer must provide suitable alternative work on terms that are not ‘less favourable’ than in your previous job. If pay or other conditions have improved while you have been on maternity leave, then you should get the improvements when you return to work. If you decide not to return to work after your period of maternity leave, you must give your employer notice in the usual way, as set out in your contract.

How much notice must I give my employer?

You must give your employer at least four weeks’ written notice that you plan to take maternity leave and must provide a med-

ical certificate confirming your pregnancy. You must also give at least four weeks’ written notice if you want to take the 16 weeks’ additional maternity leave. You can give both these notices at the same time.

You must give your employer at least four weeks’ written notice that you intend to return to work. If you do not comply with these notice requirements, you may lose your rights.

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

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




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Realistic nipple tattoos giving cancer survivors back their confidence



In the final stage of their journey from cancer patient to cancer survivor, Aislinn Horgan provides a 3D areola and nipple reconstruction service for patients post mastectomy and breast reconstruction. Based in Clonakilty, Aislinn's tattoo service is giving women and men back their confidence after the trauma of breast cancer and the scarring and body dysmorphia that many are left with.

The process includes creating a highly-realistic 3D nipple by creating light and shadows, giving the illusion of a real nipple that appears to have physical dimension but is really flat to the touch. The surrounding skin is coloured to create an areola.

"The reconstruction of a

person's breast should mean that the new breast resembles the old but unfortunately this isn't the case for most patients," shares Aislinn. "The majority are left with no colour where their areola should be and often times no nipple either."

If it is a unilateral reconstruction, Aislinn will match the colour as closely as she can to the existing nipple and areola; with bilateral, the client can choose exactly how they would like their tattoo to look.

Clients come to Aislinn once all surgical procedures are finished and they have healed a minimum of six months. Using the latest, leading edge techniques, equipment and inks, Aislinn works directly with doctors and surgeons to support healing after trauma.

"I will carry out a consultation first to assess if the person is suitable and ready for the procedure to be carried out. We also decide on colour and shape at this point. The procedure is a two step process with step two approx eight weeks after step one," she explains.

Aislinn does her best make the tattoo process as painless as possible. "Depending on the type of surgery and reconstruc-

tion the client has had, there may be some small amount of sensation, but it is usually minimal, and, in most cases, clients do not feel anything," she says.

It's a very safe process that should last for years with a colour top-up needed at most every three years.

"My clients have told me they feel like they are complete again, that they are more like their old selves and now

have no problem looking at themselves in the mirror. One lady told me she no longer felt uncomfortable changing at the swimming pool, she felt completely normal."

Aislinn also provides semi permanent brows for people with a cancer diagnosis as a part of their chemo preparation and also post chemo brow loss. "Many of my clients have alopecia and trichotillomania and

some have unexplained brow loss. I also welcome people that have not lost their brows but would just like to define the shape and colour of the brows they have."

A trained nurse, Aislinn has spent many years working in various roles in healthcare. After working in many different nursing roles, mainly specialising in surgery and oncology, she felt there was something else she should be doing with her training and experience.

"I moved into the pharmaceutical industry and developed education and support programs to enable better patient access to medicines. I was still looking for my 'plan B' though; I wanted to set up my own business but doing what? One thing I was sure of is that I wanted to provide a service that was healthcare related and delivered a positive benefit to those I worked with."

In 2018, Aislinn met Olive O'Sullivan from Browtique Ireland, who encouraged her to consider training up to provide a service similar to hers and then work as an affiliate nurse. At a place in her life where she could consider setting up her own business, the planning for

'By Aislinn Micropigmentation Studio' started.

Aislinn trained in brow micropigmentation and, as the world of semi-permanent make-up opened up to her, so did the world of paramedical tattooing and in particular 3D areola and nipple reconstruction. She followed trainers and masters all over the world and learned as much as she could online before travelling to the UK to be trained by leading international trainer Kally Moorehouse. She has also attended a masterclass with Jody Stoski, who is based in Canada.

Aislinn is currently developing a portfolio booklet for clients and surgeons and is offering a discounted price to those willing to be photographed for publication: It's important to note that all identities will be kept confidential and just the photos of the pre and post reconstruction will be published. She can be contacted on 087 2239308 or on Instagram @byaislinnstudio.

By Aislinn Micropigmentation Studio is located at The Aesthetic Clinic, 16 Rossa Street, Clonakilty. www.byaislinn.ie.



Cork undergraduates and prospective students encouraged to apply for reduction in contribution fee

Undergraduates and prospective students in Cork could be entitled to a reduction in the third level contribution fee of up to €1,500, a Fine Gael Senator has said.

Senator Tim Lombard said applications for the student grant scheme for the 2023/24 academic year are now open, with a number of important improvements for students.

Senator Lombard said "Changes, introduced in Budget 2023, include a reduction in the contribution fee of €1,500 for families earning €55,240 to €62,000, and a reduction of €500 in the contribution fee for eligible households earning between €62,000 and €100,000.

"These changes, which come into effect in September, mean that up to 50,000 undergraduates around the country could receive support under the Student Grant Scheme for the

first time.

"Fine Gael is working hard to reduce the cost of going to college for students and their families.

"That's why we have brought in important changes for the coming academic year so that more people can avail of the supports available.

"This comes on the back of significant increases to the maintenance grant introduced in January," Senator Lombard said.

Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, said: "It is really important students and their families know they must apply for these important changes.

"I would encourage current undergraduate students, and those considering going to college in September, to go to susi.ie to apply for these new supports.

"I believe these changes will deliver much-needed assistance to students and families across the country."

Senator Lombard said: "Students in the 2023/24 academic year will also see the full benefit of increases to the maintenance grants announced in Budget 2023. From January 1, 2023, the Special and Band 1 maintenance grant rates increased by 14 per cent and all the other maintenance grant rates increased by 10 per cent.

"The increase in student earnings outside of term time from €4,500 to €6,552 will also come into effect for the 2023/24 academic year and there will be a reduction in the eligibility period from five years to three for second chance mature students who did not complete a course and are returning to college to pursue an approved course at PLC, undergraduate or postgraduate level.

"The student grant system opened on March 9 for renewal students, who were all contacted by SUSI directly, and on April 13 for new applications."



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people Food, Health & Lifestyle

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.

Clarins Double Serum Light Texture

The iconic Clarins Double Serum is now available in a light, imperceptible texture to effectively target fine lines, wrinkles, and uneven skin tone. Its unique dual formula combines 21 powerful plant extracts that help boost the five vital functions of the skin - regeneration, nutrition, oxygenation, hydration and protection. Its dual texture - evanescent oil and fluid gel - has a new 50pc lighter feel, absorbs instantly, and leaves a "barely there" finish leaving skin feeling smooth and silky. With a pleasant fragrance with fruity, floral, fresh and refined notes, the nested bottles contain the two formulas in a technological and eco-designed feat that prioritises responsible materials and limits waste. Double Serum Light Texture is suitable for all skin types and ideal for those who prefer a lighter texture in their skincare products. Use morning and evening for visibly smoother, firmer, and more radiant skin. Available

online from www.clarins.ie and selected pharmacies nationwide, €98.00.

Vichy Liftactiv Retinol Specialist Deep Wrinkle Serum
Liftactiv Retinol Specialist Deep Wrinkle Serum is specifically formulated to reduce wrinkles, while improving overall skin tone and radiance for a healthy-looking, youthful complexion. Formulated with Vichy's highest concentration 0.2pc Pure Retinol, combined with 1% Probiotic derived fractions, a cultured bacterial lysate known for their skin repairing properties, this lightweight milky serum is designed to nourish the skin, helps to promote skin renewal and leaves skin feeling more elastic, firmer, and supple. It is one of Vichy's biggest ever clinical studies on a product; tested over five months with more than 15,000 applications and is suitable for all skin types and tones. Clinically proven, fragrance free and suitable for all skin types and tones, apply this serum, at night after cleansing. And remember, when introducing any retinol product into your routine, limit use to two to three times per week, while skin builds up tolerance and SPF is a must when using retinol. Available from online retailers, and pharmacies nationwide, €44.50.

Philip Kingsley Virtual Hair Consultations

Female pattern hair loss, male pattern hair loss, menopausal hair loss or traction alopecia, they can all be highly emotional, distressing, isolating experiences but whatever signs or type of hair loss you may be facing, the Philip Kingsley team of world-renowned Trichologists (hair and scalp experts) are here to help. Leaders in hair and scalp care, Philip Kingsley are delighted to now be offering virtual consultations from the comfort of your own home. Their trichologists are able to provide



remote advice, treatment and products for a great many hair and scalp concerns. When you book a Virtual Consultation, you will complete a comprehensive client form to help them gather all the information needed for your appointment (photographs of your hair and scalp will also be requested). You will then meet your personal Trichologist via video call, who will guide you through a thorough consultation, which will last 45-60 minutes giving your Trichologist time to explore all factors affecting your hair and scalp, such as general health, diet and lifestyle, your medical and family history. At the end of your Virtual Consultation, you will receive a personalised, at-home care plan and any products prescribed within your bespoke treatment and wellness plan will be dispatched discreetly to your door. Most importantly, you will be starting your journey to healthy hair without delay. Available Monday to Friday, with prices from £150, if you would like to make an appointment or find out more go to www.philipkingsley.co.uk or email: reception@philipkingsley.co.uk

Haumea Ultrasono Device

The Ultrasono device is the latest facial device from Haumea skincare, a luxury skin tech brand that specialises in facial devices to achieve an 'in salon' experience in the comfort of your own home. Created and developed by skincare professional, Anna Forde, Anna has garnered extensive experience within the field, having created and grown the hugely successful 'The Beauty Suite' salon in Co. Galway for the last fifteen years. The Ultrasono device, which is waterproof and rechargeable, has two settings: clean and tone. The 'clean mode' can be paired with any cleanser, and uses 30,000Hz high-frequency vibrations and positive ions to extract trapped dirt, dead skin cells, blackheads, and oil from pores, giving skin that instant oh so coveted glow. The second setting, 'tone mode', uses high-frequency pulsations and negative ions to promote blood circulation and the production of collagen and elastin. The light tapping vibration enhances the absorption of skincare products while stimulating facial muscles to give the skin a lifted effect, €229.99 available online from www.haumeaskincare.com

L'Oréal Elvive Hydra Hyaluronic Acid 8 Second Wonder Water

A new addition to the wonder water family, transform dehydrated hair in 8 seconds with Elvive Hydra Hyaluronic Acid 8 Second Wonder Water from L'Oréal Paris. A skincare-inspired rinse-out liquid conditioner with hyaluronic acid, the eight second hydration transformation gives 18x more hydration while hair looks plumped, bouncy and 5 times shinier. The ultra-lightweight, silicone-free formula is powered by breakthrough Lamellar Water Technology and infused with a shot of hyaluronic acid. It forms a film of care around the fibre to smooth hair and maintain a healthy look, leaving hair visibly transformed with an instant and intense feeling of hydration, a glassy shine, and a silky touch. Effective on all hair types, ranging from thin, fine to thick, curly textures, it is scientifically designed for dry, damaged, and dehydrated hair and provides no weigh-down, even for ultra-fine hair. A must-try for anyone looking to add extra hydration to their hair care routine, €15.00 available from online retailers, and pharmacies nationwide.

Avène Tolerance Hydra-10

Did you know, your skin's microbiome is made up of micro-organisms that live on your skin; working to preserve barrier function and protect overall skin health. Your skin's microbiome is affected by everything from skin-care, age, and lifestyle to the environment. Winter for example, presents an extra challenge - skin faces extra increased external aggressors, making it weaker, more sensitive, and more prone to breakouts. New from Avène, Tolerance Hydra-10 provides ultra gentle hydration that works in harmony with your skin's microbiome. Rich in hyaluronic acid and Avène Thermal Spring Water, the patented formula of only 10 ingredients is made from a unique biomimetic formulation which replicates the skin - combining natural ingredients found in skin with a simulation of its protective structure, skin is hydrated without disrupting the microbiome - keeping it protected, calm and perfectly balanced. Suitable for adults, babies and children, Tolerance Hydra-10 Fluid €24 - is suitable for normal to combination skin, Tolerance Hydra-10 Cream €24.00 is suitable for dry/very dry skin. Available from online retailers, and pharmacies nationwide.

West Cork Development Partnership joins Vhi and Irish Youth Foundation to launch wellbeing fund in Cork

West Cork Development Partnership has joined VHI and young people in Cork to launch the third consecutive year of the Vhi Health and Wellbeing Fund. Established in 2020 in partnership with the Irish Youth Foundation (IYF), the Fund is dedicated to supporting young people's health and wellbeing and is inviting non-profit organisations based in Cork to apply.

In addition to making funding available, Vhi are introducing a pilot programme for youth leaders focusing on trauma informed care and worker wellbeing. This programme is being specifically developed by Vhi health experts

to support youth leaders in their work with young people.

The emphasis this year continues to be on supporting programmes focused on early intervention and prevention for young people. It is open to applications from non-profit and charitable organisations who work directly with young people or with adults who surround them. Grants of €5K and €10K will be available through the Fund.

Last year West Cork Development Partnership in Cork received €10,000 in funding to undertake a 'Surf to Heal' project where young people were able to learn how to surf

under the supervision of qualified instructors and Ability West Cork staff.

Speaking to the impact of the funding they received Arran O'Driscoll, CEO, West Cork Development Partnership, said: "We were delighted to receive the funding last year from Vhi. With the funding we were able to engage over 30 young people in our 'Surf to Heal' project designed to help them grow strength and confidence in themselves and build that self belief in their future selves. It's been really rewarding to see how well the young people have responded to the programme and from this experience we're looking

forward to continuing to grow our focus and support for young people in this area. I would encourage anyone working with young people in Cork with an idea to apply."

The Vhi Health and Wellbeing Fund, run by Vhi in partnership with the Irish Youth Foundation, is open to not-for-profit or charitable organisations that are seeking to deliver projects dedicated to supporting the resilience of young people aged 12-25-years-old in the six locations where Vhi have operations - Cork, Dublin, Donegal, Galway, Kilkenny and Limerick.

For more information, or to make an application, visit iyf.ie

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The early bird will always get to choose the juiciest of worms and this is also true when it comes to shopping for summer clothes. While our wardrobes will have plenty of bits and summer firm favourites to bring back out again, now is the time to shop for anything that needs replacing or to add some of this season's 'to die for' colour palette. It probably won't surprise you that, particularly since lockdown, more and more shoppers are taking the time to read the labels on clothes, look at the material mix and where the clothes are made. While the younger shopper is still splurging on fast fashion, according to a new study, the over 35s are more cautious now. We not only want to look good in our clothes but we also want to know that the material they are made from is not detrimental to our health.

The term 'Skin Deep' is something that is familiar to all of us but have you really thought about what it means? It means superficial or not deep or longlasting. Our skin is the largest organ of the body and because it is porous, it absorbs everything that we put on it. Many studies now show that what we put on our skin goes a lot deeper than what you might have originally thought and can last for a long time or indefinitely. While we have all become more careful about what skincare products we use, have you ever thought about the fabric or material that you put on your body and how that might affect you?

Did you know that synthetic fibres dislodged from clothing are a major cause of acute or chronic inflammation and inflammation is the root cause of all disease? There are more than 8,000 chemicals in the textile industry! Isn't that figure just insane? A recent

Greenpeace report detected a range of toxic chemicals, including formaldehyde and phthalates in clothing and they are not listed on the tags. The most dangerous fabrics are rayon, polyester and spandex – and how we love these! Other signs that clothes could have something harmful in them is when a label says 'wrinkle-free', non-iron or moisture-wicking. We want convenience, but as a result, our bodies are silently (until a disease is identified) paying a very heavy price for it. Wrinkle-free clothing, in particular, is treated with formaldehyde and while we associate formaldehyde with embalming fluid and particleboard, it has never been something that we would have thought was in our clothes. PFAs (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances) have been used in clothing for decades and they are known as 'forever chemicals' as they take thousands of years to break down in our environment. They are connected to many health issues, primarily cancer and infertility but also rashes, asthma, headaches, blurred vision and chronic fatigue. Wearing these clothes, particularly in hot weather can be even more dangerous. As your skin temperature goes up significantly to let out sweat

and toxins, the doors are also open to absorb three to four times more of whatever could be on or touching your skin. A leading dermatologist tells all patients with skin issues and asthma to only choose fabrics that are 100 per cent cotton.

While there are legal limitations for chemicals in children's toys, there are no regulations for children's clothing. Imagine, our most vulnerable tiny humans can be exposed to 'forever chemicals' (that break down the immune system) in clothing from the moment that they are born. Informed new parents are now actively searching for and buying only organic clothes for their infants, starting out the healthy and right way! Perhaps the next time that you are choosing a baby gift for a new tiny person, you might remember this. It may cost a little more but you are investing in a healthy immune system for that baby...and that is priceless.

I guess knowing that approximately 63 per cent of the materials used for clothing manufacture are virgin plastics, compared to three per cent of recycled fabrics is enough to inform you that our environment is being negatively impacted on a massive scale too. We hear so much

about this on a daily basis but it might take another few years before the materials in our clothes will become part of our day to day conversation.

Whichever way you choose to go, top dermatologists recommend that when you buy new clothes, the first thing that you should do is to wash them before you wear them. Protect your skin at all costs, it is the uniform provided by the body and it is not something that you can change on a daily basis.

Some eco-friendly materials to detox your wardrobe include organic cotton, lyocell or tencel (organic form of rayon), hemp or organic hemp, linen or organic linen, organic wool, alpaca (similar to cashmere) and silk. Whether you are going tomorrow or next week, start shopping for holiday essentials now so that you get everything that you need and more. Summer is all about ease so you should be able to spice up your wardrobe stress-free. Bermuda shorts are huge this year, you can team them with a button down shirt for day wear, or a bikini top for beach wear. Denim is 'ultra-baggy' this season with mid-rise waists everywhere. You will probably smile when you see patchwork denim popping up all over the

place. Mini-fit-and-flare dresses from 2010 have most definitely made a big comeback; these are the perfect summer dress if we get last year's tropical weather again! Sliders are huge but be careful, they are not meant for driving in. you can pick them up in any colour or why not pick up a few pairs.

Mermaid-esque dresses are being snapped up by savvy shoppers, these dresses were inspired by the live-action The Little Mermaid movie and designers moved in quickly so that you can feel like a goddess for an evening event.

While brighter, more vibrant colours typically dominate between the months of May and September, Valentino really embraced ALL BLACK everything for summer 2023. I know that those of you who love black all year round will absolutely love this! The top five colours this season are Magenta (the colour of the year), beige, lime green, soft blue and any metallic shade. There are whispers of violet and red around too. Use these colours as a guide to build your summer wardrobe, undoubtedly you will have some of these colours already

so wear them to your heart's content.

Feeling beautiful is a decision, always remember that. For some of you, baring more skin in the summer can raise anxiety levels, especially if you are not comfortable with

your weight. Be gentle with yourself, surround yourself with beautiful colours and beautiful kind people.

'We are as beautiful as our thoughts. Make those thoughts count'.

PEBBLES
DESIGN

Lots of fabulous new summer dresses, trousers, tops and shorts have been unpacked ...

Why not pop in and browse, there is so much to see!

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The top five colours this season are Magenta (the colour of the year), beige, lime green, soft blue and any metallic shade.

Pics Susu, Clonakilty & Chalk & Easel, Ballinspittle

people Food, Health & Lifestyle

Intentions for life and living

On this bright April day, while gazing at vividly blue skies over Glengarriff, the thought pops into my mind: 'what if today was the last day of my life?' Morbid perhaps, but not an unusual thought for someone regularly engaged in the subjects of death and dying. Whether through spiritual practice, my role as an end of life doula, or the books, courses and social media that I routinely consume, the question seems to return nearly as often as the WhatsApp notifications on my phone. Maybe today it's this especially beautiful Springtime moment that is offering pause, reflection and an appreciation for being alive. Bere Island Radio just interviewed me about my work so perhaps this is the cause for my reflection. It could be thinking about the Death Cafe

I plan to attend this weekend or the scattering of ashes ceremony I'm invited to in a week's time. I'm officially a year older this month and about to celebrate another wedding anniversary so personal milestones are happening too. I'm also holding joy paired with grief as I hear of more shootings in the country of my birth this week. Whatever the reason for this self reflection, I take a deep breath and allow the sobering reality of what's been happening lately, as well as what is, hopefully, to come. It wasn't long before this headspace led to recalling the 'top five regrets of the dying'. Are you familiar with these? Even if you've come across them before as I have, they can be powerful reminders; a compass for life and living.

A little background to begin: it was an Australian palliative care

nurse called Bonnie Ware who was inspired to document the 'top five' based on her years of experience caring for the dying. She wrote that "when questioned about any regrets my patients had, or anything they would do differently, common themes emerged again and again." The first feels the most profound to me, but I find they land differently each time I revisit them. Number one: (which has been said to be the most common regret of all) 'I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself and not the life others expected of me.' Number two: 'I wish I hadn't worked so hard.' Number three: 'I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.' Number four: 'I wish I'd stayed in touch with my friends' and number five: 'I wish I had let myself be happier.'

Do any of these ring true for you? Which resonates most in your heart? Do you feel you



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.

have any regrets, and if so, what might they be if this was the last day of your life? The things that arise for me in this moment are not having my house in order; meaning I feel I still have a good bit of unnecessary stuff that I'd loathe for someone else to have to go through and disperse. I'm also reminded of recent circumstances where there may have been tension, misunderstanding or conflict. How did I handle it? What did I say? And were these words ones that I'd be ok with saying to someone if they were my the last; and therefore, how I might potentially be remembered?

If you wish to explore more, there is the book 'The Top Five regrets of the Dying – A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing, (2011)'. There have been other top fives and even top tens crafted over the years. These too, can be enlightening. Asking yourself or others my

original question which bears repeating: 'what if today were the last day of your life?' offers for illuminating conversation. It's been said that regrets go beyond wishing you'd tried skydiving (although I'd certainly name adventure as an essential in life!) If you've been reading my columns for a little while, you might have noticed my love for quotes. They also tend to pop into mind when I'm writing. The one that highlights having as little regret as possible for me is by American writer E.B. White: "I get up every day determined to both change the world and have one hell of a good time. Sometimes this makes planning my day difficult."

To learn more or to connect with Melissa, email her at starsbeyondourskin@gmail.com or visit www.starsbeyondourskin.com. She also welcomes your questions or ideas for future columns.

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Be here now

Mindfulness meditation gives us a choice about where we place our focus and what we choose to pay attention to. It can help us make the most of our lives by being present to truly relish pleasant experiences, that may otherwise flit past the busy, overthinking, zoned out or even giddy mind. Sometimes it is likened to strength training for the mind, when we meditate, we allow thoughts to come and go, as we repeatedly guide the mind back from thinking to a point of focus, an anchor, which might be the breath, body, movement, sound, or the other senses. When we practice mindfulness meditation regularly, it strengthens our mindfulness muscle, which allows us to return to the moment with more ease when we're not meditating and are going about our daily lives.

The application of mindfulness to a pleasant event can, not only make the experience itself extra special, but can assist in creating a long-term memory. For example, I applied mindfulness skills to a seaweed bath experience recently. The seaweed bath was an hour-long feast for the senses, but I soon became aware that I wasn't settling, my mind was elsewhere, full of thinking about all that had happened already that day and busy forecasting plans for later that evening. After a few minutes, I made a conscious decision to focus my attention on my present moment experience and the words "I am here" floated into my mind. These words were and

are very helpful still, as a little reminder to come back to where our physical body is, to bring the mind back to what's happening here, now, around us and within us.

So, this is what I did, I made a choice to pay attention to this lovely treat and I had an unforgettable, moment by moment experience. There was an opaque window in the room, up high and I could see the silhouette of plants outside, blowing in the wind. I could see the flame of a little nightlight on the windowsill flickering in the wind too. It was a powerful sensory experience, I noticed the salty taste of the water, the natural scent coming from the seaweed. I watched the vibrant green fronds of seaweed waving under the water and the individual droplets of water appearing on my arms and hands. It was such a field of live physical sensation, with so much to pay attention to, like the feeling of warmth and the movement of the water, the rugged touch and texture of the plant and the hard surface of the bath. I could hear sounds of the water splashing, the wind outside and low music playing. My senses were awake, and I was fully embodied, present there in those moments.

How easy it would have been to let my mind wander away from what was happening. And I could have spent the entire hour, or most of it, thinking about what was coming next, but I made a conscious choice to keep coming back to the experience, to awaken my senses. To embed memories, we need to be present for



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.

the making of them, inhabiting our bodies, for as many moments of our lives as we possibly can. My seaweed bath experience was special because I chose to place my attention there and gently but repeatedly brought my wandering mind home, every time I noticed it had drifted. The application of mindfulness to daily life can help us to stay with the moment whether, pleasant or unpleasant. And even though it is easier to stay present in pleasant circumstances, we are encouraged to stay with unpleasant moments also and not turn away or distract ourselves, but that is for another day.

For me, learning to stay

with the present moment and lingering on pleasant experiences adds to our overall contentment and we stop constantly wanting more, or searching for distractions that can take us away from what's happening in the present moment. Being here now helps us to value the quality of our experience, whether it's a treat or an everyday activity, over the quantity of experiences that we have and we are happy to live slower and simpler lives. These lines from 'The Cure for it all' by Julia Fehrenbacher fit well here. "Go gently today, don't hurry, or think about the next thing... Sit. Close your eyes. Breathe. Allow the river of it all to pulse through eyelashes, fingertips, bare toes. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe until you feel your bigness, until the sun rises in your veins. Breathe until you stop needing anything to be different".

My next monthly 'Simplicity and Ease' workshop is on at CECAS at Myross Wood House near Leap. The next workshop is on Sunday, May 14, from 2-5pm and offers a 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. www.mindhaven.ie Phone: 087 2700572 or email: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com. Follow on Facebook

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Fertility series: It takes two



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

Women understandably feel under a lot of pressure when trying to conceive. With age a significant factor, stress can feel intense as the months and years go by. A woman may or may not be in a relationship but either way, the internal chatter of what is wrong with me and my body can feel lonely.

What women often don't realise is that reasons preventing conception are actually 33 per cent female related, 33 per cent male related, and 33 per cent male and female related.... So it is important to be in this

together to identify any issues as soon as possible.

Male fertility factors are easier to influence and optimise than female factors. Getting these checked as early as possible can resolve 50 per cent of possible reasons for unexplained infertility naturally within about three months.

Sperm analysis is one of the cheapest and least invasive fertility investigations. Understandably men can feel intimidated that this test is assessing their virility, but I would encourage men to see this more as a check up, a snapshot in time that

gives an enormous amount of information, not only reflecting fertility health, but it also gives a good representation of his current health.

Then if you're not happy with the results, it's surprisingly easy to turn this around. Stress, diet, medication, smoking, illness, high fever and environmental toxins you're exposed to when sperm is being produced and even the amount of time it is waiting prior to ejaculation will affect quality.

New sperm are created all the time with the stages of development taking about nine weeks from start to finish. The gonads hang outside the body and this lower body temperature is important. Sperm then only have a life span of two to five days in the gonads before they start to deteriorate.

When you get a sperm analysis, it is important to get the full report including the pH, volume, concentration, count, motility and morphology ie. the form and structure of the sperm.

Sperm are particularly sensitive to oxidative stress, which damages the membrane of the sperm, affects sperm motility, morphology, and DNA



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fragmentation.

If markers are low a fertility clinic will offer an Intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) where a single sperm is picked and injected directly into an egg.

Sounds straightforward but this is ultimately expensive and invasive for women, as eggs need to be harvested, fertilised, possibly frozen and then implanted without any guarantee.

If sperm markers are low, it is possible to tailor an approach that will naturally improve all

aspects of future sperm production in as quickly as three months.

Four things men can start doing today that will help are:

- Avoid tight underwear and cycling a lot as pressure on the testicles reduces sperm motility.
- Opt for a swim in the sea over a hot tub or sauna.
- Take a good quality Vitamin C and E
- Don't drink during her fertile window, cause when you're drunk, your sperm is too!

If you're looking for someone to support you on your fertility journey, 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 or call/text Amanda on: 087 633 1898.



Eoin Roe

Chiropractic

The research around the negative effects of gluten is growing all the time. Often the focus is only on coeliac disease, which manifests with gastrointestinal symptoms like pain, bloating, diarrhoea, constipation and damages the lining of the gut. More recent research is showing that actually two-thirds of people with gluten sensitivity present solely with neurological symptoms and don't have any gut-based symptoms at all. For these people they may find that they have brain fog, memory loss, declining cognitive function, balance issues and unusual unexplained neurological symptoms.

The standard tests for coeliac disease and gluten sensitivity are limited. Coeliac disease is

an autoimmune condition where the person is producing antibodies to tTg2 (Tissue transglutaminase 2) and to alpha-gliadin, both of which are tested for in blood tests.

Tissue transglutaminases are enzymes involved in creating the protein structures that hold cells together, tTg2 is found in the gut but there other important tTg's namely tTg3 found in the skin and tTg6 found in the brain and nervous tissue, that most tests do not include.

Alpha-gliadin is the chemical name for gluten but it is only part of the proteome found in wheat and all other grains. Many people will react to different parts of the proteome in grain and not alpha-gliadin, or they will react to tTg3 and or tTg6 and are therefore missed by conventional testing.

Gluten sensitivity

Gluten can still be a problem for people who do not have coeliac disease, this is referred to in the literature as NCGS (non-coeliac gluten sensitivity) it is often disregarded but can cause many symptoms and for somebody who has gluten sensitivity removing gluten from their diet

can be very helpful.

Cross-reactive foods

The traditional understanding is that being gluten free means removing, wheat, barley and rye from the diet. For many people removing these foods is not enough for them to have a resolution of their symptoms. This is often because of cross-reactivity of food proteins.

Your immune system works by recognising the arrangements of amino acids which make up protein chains in food. If two different foods have a similar sequence of amino acids the immune system can make a mistake and produce reactions against those foods as well.

The most common cross-reactive foods are all other grains and dairy.

Cross reactivity and molecular mimicry and brain function

Just as certain foods can be mistaken by the immune system, the immune system can mistake other tissues in your brain and this is known as molecular mimicry. This occurs when the immune system mistakes brain tissue for gluten and causes an immune reaction in your brain.

Gluten and neurological problems


It does this because some brain tissues and gluten have identical amino acid sequences.

A part of the brain that is particularly susceptible is called the cerebellum, and when people are producing antibodies to gluten these can also bind in the cerebellum and cause problems with balance known as cerebellar ataxia. This can also lead to increased anxiety and sound and light sensitivity.

The good news is that for many people with these problems a complete removal of gluten from their diet can prompt a complete resolution of symptoms. If you have been diagnosed with coeliac disease or gluten sensitivity and have removed wheat, barley and rye from your diet but are still having gastrointestinal symptoms or are still suffering with mood problems, skin or balance

issues, testing for cross-reactive foods and removing these from the diet may help you achieve the changes that you are looking for.

Eoin Roe is a certified functional medicine practitioner and chiropractor based at www.roehealth.ie Skibbereen. Please feel to make contact through the website or call 028 62081.



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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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May Sun Signs

It's been a bit of a whirl and full steam ahead in many areas of life over the last few months whilst we had no planets in their retrograde phase. Now things can slow down a little and we can catch our breath although the thrust for big change is still the trend for all of 2023.

We begin May with Pluto starting its return journey through the first degree of Aquarius before going back into Capricorn. Mercury joins with the Sun on May 2, as it continues to head 'backwards' until May 15. We have a Lunar Eclipse in Scorpio on May 5 when Jupiter enters Taurus and Mars enters Leo. With all this focus on fixed signs, we may see things moving along steadily as if they are on track without an apparent opportunity for any alternative route.

May brings us the Bealtaine cross-quarter day and a celebration of early summer. Fertility and high energy are associated with

this time of year. From May 7, we have both the love and desire planets in the nurturing sign of Cancer when Venus moves to join Mars there. This puts a focus on getting our own deeper needs met as well as a concern for the well-being of others. It's a time when family matters and home life become the priority area of life to invest in. Taking care of what nourishes and sustains us on an emotional as well as a basic physical level is uppermost now.

The early days of May initiate a period for review of all the Pluto in Capricorn themes experienced since 2008. Between now and October, when Pluto turns direct again before entering Aquarius for the next twenty years, we can make our choices about what feels right and good in these areas of life. Consider the authorities, government or establishment and the revelation of corruption, the banking system and the austerity and restrictions of recent years.

We are likely to see some repeat themes start to play out and this is the opportunity to 'do it differently' and steer a more enlightened course to the one taken in previous years.

Jupiter is the planet of abundance and positivity. It moves into Taurus the sign of earthy pleasures and resolve. This is a great combination for building up resources and enjoying the good life in a simple and wholesome way. It shares this sign with the erratic and inspirational planet Uranus. The way these positive and productive energies play out may be surprising and unexpected and take us in directions we could not have predicted beforehand. It is a great month for working on manifesting our desires and we may get results that take us beyond our wildest dreams if we keep a positive and open mind.

Mars will strike out to add some heat to the month as it moves into Leo on May 20

staying in this sign until early July. It may not guarantee the hot weather but there are some strong and bold moves possible with this hearty and spirited combination. Expect dramatic and even exaggerated displays of courage and audacity along with the potential for pride and hubris to get the better of some.

The Eclipse season is bringing us the first Lunar Eclipse of the year on the 5th. With the Sun in Taurus and the Moon in Scorpio the polarity of enjoyment through earthy simplicity is contrasted by the complexity of emotional intensity. The Full Moon is the culmination of events or themes initiated around the previous New Moon which was the Solar Eclipse in Aries on April 20. Any shift in the power status around issues of individual self-expression and personal values may become more apparent during this Scorpio Lunar Eclipse. This also ties into a series of the previous

Taurus/Scorpio Eclipses starting in November 2021. We can expect an outburst of emotional reactivity or an expression of deeply held resentment or passionate sentiment over the coming months through to October when this Eclipse cycle completes. This Full Moon Eclipse may illuminate topics that have been underlying and unaddressed during the last two to three years. The power of Scorpio energy for transforming and regenerating is not to be underestimated. Like the symbolic Scorpio totem of an Eagle soaring above or the phoenix rising up from the ashes of what has been destroyed, we can expect the potential for clarity and vision of the highest order to be seeded within our psyche or soul.

May has a Full Moon Lunar Eclipse in 15 degrees Scorpio on May 5 at 6.34 pm and a New Moon in 29 degrees Taurus on May 19 at 4.53 pm



Aries: During the Full Moon phase your experiences will confirm that you must not depend on other people or your possessions to provide emotional security for you. The few days around the Eclipse could be a very transformative time. You might unearth resources

within yourself that you were previously unaware of. Allow yourself to stand aside for a moment and recognise where any deals and contracts have tied up your energy. You no longer need to rely on certain items or belongings as you become more emotionally stable. Clear out any useless things you've been hoarding, the sense of freedom will do you good.



Taurus: With the Sun in your own sign and the Full Moon focus on your relationships you have difficulty distinguishing between your own feelings and the people closest to you. Allow your partner or close friends to have their moods. Don't imagine they are always

reacting to your own actions or words. Connecting with others in a special moment can be enjoyed when close allies or partners become your focus. This Eclipse will show you where you have got a little too involved or caught up with others. You'll need to stand back whilst you work things out for your self.



Gemini: You may waste too much energy on menial tasks in the first days of May. Avoid getting distracted from the broader visions in your life during this Full Moon. You are likely to make yourself indispensable through being of service to the physical needs of

others. You are generally happy to take on a lot of tasks – both in your career and around the house. If you are not careful however, other people will take advantage of you. Now you should be really getting things together for yourself whilst you can keep the focus on the details. Once done, you'll be able to stand back and take pride in your accomplishments.



Cancer: Spontaneity is the keyword for you this Full Moon and it's time to relax and have some fun. Taking the lead and making some bold choices is also an option. Going just a little bit over the top will be acceptable now as this is a general time of celebration for

you. Passion and intensity stoke up your enthusiasm to get creative with your energy. You have a strong emotional need for romance but you also know how to nurture and maintain the intimacy in an existing relationship. So go the extra mile and enjoy!



Leo: This Full Moon Eclipse urges you to spend more time at home and you can find great pleasure in looking after children or family, cooking, making home improvements etc. You feel very sensitive to the moods of others, especially if you share your personal space.

Although you'll be strongly motivated to create a caring and secure environment, a crowd can be claustrophobic. You can get on each other's nerves. This is a time to acknowledge the comfortable and familiar environment that supports you. Draw on it as a source of strength but avoid being over dominant or demanding.



Virgo: Any difficult emotional experiences you have during early May could be the result of having strong differences of opinion with someone you have to deal with every day. When you argue your case you are easily swayed by irrational arguments and emotions.

Maybe everybody is trying to get their message across but no one is listening? Try not to get distracted whilst you tie up important loose ends and meet deadlines. You need to keep some time for a new project or mental challenge. You could be making plans for travelling or starting a new class or training programme.



Libra: This Full Moon will find you focusing on your personal resources and economic fluctuations. You can be a very kind and giving person but you also need to feel secure. Being a little more concerned with your financial status now is probably a good thing although

some people may view you as unusually materialistic and possessive. This is a time to cash in on some of your hard earned investments and name your price for your efforts. Be confident in your skills and abilities and turn them to good use. Others will notice and reward you later.



Scorpio: With the Full Moon in your sign you are likely to be a glowing example of both vitality and attractiveness. Let your personality truly shine and you can expect to have a powerful impact on your surroundings through your moods and feelings. You know how

to provide a truly nurturing environment for others. You're motivated to show how much concern and care you have for them now. During the few days following the Eclipse you can bring any critical personal projects to a conclusion. Make the most of this time whilst you have the energy required to satisfy your own high standards.



Sagittarius: You need to withdraw from the world from time to time and commune with nature or your inner feelings. During this Full Moon you are extremely sensitive to your environment and could spend a lot of time enveloped in a very private emotional world.

Ideally create a place of your own which is sacred to you where you can be alone. In this private retreat, you can become aware of your many dreams and longings. Try to work more consciously with the inner world of your imagination through creative work or meditative practice for the few days around the Lunar Eclipse.



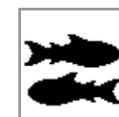
Capricorn: You have the desire for strong bonds with your friends and you are especially sensitive to how they treat you over this Full Moon. You are both caring and concerned for their personal development, but easily hurt if they let you down in any way. Ensure that you

spend time only with people that elevate and support you. During the Eclipse disconnect from the daily grind and tap into your lighter side for a while. Count your blessings and remember that enjoyment of the good life is more about your own sense of well being and less to do with what you have in material wealth.



Aquarius: You have a strong sense of duty and you can feel that your role is primarily to live up to family or social expectations over this Full Moon. You may have been striving to achieve some predefined goals and you want the recognition now. Over the days fol-

lowing the Eclipse you can reach out for what you want for yourself. Stand in the spotlight whilst acting the part of your unique self in all your glory. Ensure you take time out to wave your own flag and get noticed for your contribution before the next surge of personal creativity rolls in.



Pisces: Think big and stretch your imagination this Full Moon. In the past you will have unconsciously been affected by the convictions and values of those close to you. You have a powerful need for a strong belief in yourself. Hold on to what is solid and true

for you. During these few days your interest in philosophical and spiritual matters is heightened. Use the time to expand your inner window on the world and break new ground. The feeling of suddenly having understood something can leave you wondering what to do about it all. Relax, as this will take care of itself down the line.

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Aging with grace



DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

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

When are we too old to move? As life starts and we learn to stand, sit, walk and run, a whole world of movement opens up to us. Most of us have childhood memories of running around outside, being monkeys on the playground, biking, climbing and everything in-between. But at some point most of us stop. Life becomes more sedentary. We walk to the car, drive to school or work. More or less sit down most of the day, drive back home, sit and relax and go to lie down in bed. Gone are the days of climbing trees, biking fearless downhill, running in the sand dunes, playing football on the lawn or taking the board out in the surf. By the time we are grown up, have homes and families, the body becomes an afterthought and movement a memory.

It's true that it's hard to get started on any type of training,



however it is also true that it's hard to lose your mobility and muscles, which is what happens to our bodies in the autumn of our life. The good news is that it's never too late to start to move again.

Nina is an amazing 72-year-old lady, who only took up sport after her children became teenagers. Today she is still running track races in her local running club. I met Nina for the first time three years ago on her way to a local 10km race.

"I picked up running when I was 40. Before this I did a bit of yoga and played badminton but

up until a friend asked me to go running with her to lose some weight, running was just a sport that I was fascinated by," shares Nina.

Nina and her friend started out slowly, going from couch to 5km. "First we ran 100 metres and little by little we got up to 5km. We ran the same route, in the same pace for four years. Then we joined the local athletic club and our training became a bit more structured and I started to participate in races. I joined my current running club six years ago and I really enjoy the community."

Nina developed a love for racing after she ran her first marathon just six years after she started running with her friend (at age 40). In total she has run an astounding 19 marathons. "My best marathon was probably at age 50, where I ran the 42.2km in three hours and 42 minutes"

Nina developed a love for racing after she ran her first marathon just six years after she started running with her friend. In total she has run an astounding 19 marathons.

"My best marathon was probably at age 50, where I ran the 42.2km in three hours and 42 minutes, but otherwise the NYC Marathon is my best marathon memory. It was such a special feeling running through the different boroughs. Putting the race-number on my shirt and the buzz of being a part of a bigger race. For years I did two or three big marathons a year and enjoyed the competition that's involved with racing."

Like many of her fellow runners, Nina has experienced a devastating injury, which kept her sidelined and, at 59, it would have been easy to give up and throw in the towel. "Two years after NYC Marathon I got a really bad injury, which kept my feet off the road for about two years. I gave away all my running gear, I didn't think I would come back and couldn't stand to see other people run-

ning. I was devastated. Slowly by nurturing my injuries and eating pretty healthy, I have been able to work my way back to running and today I have a better knowledge of my limitations, the dos and don'ts. I am grateful I can still run today."

Nina still competes, chasing the club record for her age category (70-74-years-old) on the track and also still entering local shorter races. However her main objective has taken a more social angle. "Running today is more about the social aspect for me and less about competing. I really enjoy the runs with my club. We talk, share stories, problems big and small, and simply enjoy the sense of community you find with likeminded people. Running is uplifting for both mind and spirit and I can't recommend it enough."

Nina's best advice for people, regardless of age, who want to pick up running, is to take it slow. "Take it step by step. Don't rush yourself into harder, faster workouts than your body can handle. You need to build your base slowly. Also find people who are running the same pace as yourself and go out together. It's often easier to get up and out and more enjoyable with company."

Nina runs about 30km a week.

So if you are reading this and wondering if you can pick up a sport – any sport – as a 40, 50, 60 or 70 year-old, then the answer is yes. You can always start training. Take it one step at the time, go slow and don't push too hard and your body will thank you for it. You will start to feel physically better and stronger, mentally more confident and fresh. These benefits come at any age, but in the autumn of our lives it becomes even more important to keep our muscles, ligaments and tendons strong and working. They let us be healthy, mobile and independent long into our senior years and that is worth spending time on.

I hope you will take Nina's inspirational story with training and start writing yours, if you haven't already. Training is not just for kids and the Instagram/Social media generation. It is important and beneficial at all ages, and perhaps even more in the autumn season.

Comments and questions are as always welcome at @trainwithadane on Instagram or taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com

Little Otter is a charming story of resilience and accepting support

Katie O'Donoghue, author of 'The Little Squirrel Who Worried' has just published her new children's book 'The Little Otter Who Tried', a clever combination of story and psychoeducation that supports children in learning to persevere, be resilient and accept support in challenging situations.

Little Otter is scared to learn to swim on her own but with tips from her riverside friends, she keeps trying, grows in confidence, and is soon surprised

by how far she has travelled, all by herself. The duckling, kingfisher and toad all share their stories about learning to swim, fly and hop and Little Otter realises every creature has to start somewhere.

Every child will find something to love in this gorgeous book, beautifully brought to life with hand painted illustrations by the author.

Katie O'Donoghue is a child and young people's therapist with a background in Fine Art and Design. She has a master's

degree in Art Psychotherapy and is a PhD in Healthy Psychology. She writes her books to attend to the challenges children face and to support the inner child in us all.

€13.99 in bookshops now.

ISPC and Katie O'Donoghue are hosting a series of free webinars for parents and teachers that will provide them with tools and tips to help bolster children's resilience and manage anxiety. The next is on April 25. See www.ispc.ie/ event




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Cork County Mayor's Charity Dinner sets sail for Bantry

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Councillor Danny Collins, will host a not-to-be-missed Charity Dinner on Saturday May 27 at the West Lodge Bantry.

It promises to be a memorable summer evening of great food and entertainment, celebrating the best of Cork County and its maritime heritage, with 100 per cent of proceeds going to Cancer Connect and Bandon

Hyperbaric Oxygen Centre. The event will also mark the Mayor's year in office.

Tickets, which are priced at €100 each, are expected to sell quickly for the evening, which includes a drinks reception, three-course dinner showcasing some of the best local produce from across the county plus lots more.

Master of Ceremonies for the event will be none other than



Irish stand-up comedian, best-selling author and award-winning broadcaster Colm O'Regan. He will be joined by C103

presenter Patricia Messinger, while special guests include celebrity comedian Bernard Casey who will do a cameo perfor-

mance on the evening, ensuring spirits are high and kept high as attendees round off the evening with The Boogie Band.

It will be one of the networking and social highlights of the year in Cork County but above all Mayor Collins is keen to raise as much funds as possible for his chosen charities.

To book tickets see corkcoco.ie, email: corkcounty-mayorsdinner@corkcoco.ie or call The Cork County Mayor's Secretary on (021) 4285367.

Pictured: Christy Walsh, Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Centre, Cllr. Danny Collins, Mayor of the County of Cork and Helen O Driscoll, Cancer Connect, at the launch of the Cork County Mayor's Charity Dinner.

Pic: Brian Lougheed

Local People, Local Wisdom: Thomas Neville, Clonakilty

Aoise Tutty Jackson meets Thomas Neville at his family's summer home in Inchydoney on an auspicious day, the morning of his 53rd birthday. The house has been in the Neville family for 40 years and is deeply connected to Thomas' late father who died when he was 19, the same age as Thomas' eldest son is now. The place is filled with family photos and beautiful objects that Thomas and his wife Mel collected on their travels around the world before settling down and starting a family together. Beginning their relationship as teenagers, Thomas and Mel parted ways after school before coming back together in their later twenties. Swimming is Thomas's main passion in life and he shares this with his three children who all race competitively.

"My values are based around family – trying to do the best for our children, trying to instill goodness, to be respectful of others and yourself, to carry yourself with dignity and pride. I think it's important to constantly praise our children and tell them they can be anything they want to be. You have to believe in yourself and once you start to believe in yourself you'll understand that anything is possible. As a parent we have to encourage them and make them believe that 'yes you can'. It's humbling to see them win races and do things, destiny has been good to us.

"Failure is just as beautiful as

winning, when things don't go your way, how you deal with it is what's important.

"Life is frightening, you have to be prepared for anything. Swimming shows me that. Repetition is the greatest fortification; by doing something repetitively you're fortified, you're ready to meet what's coming for you, you have to be ready for what life comes at you with. You have to meet it and take it on. Sometimes you feel like you can't but you have to go through that.

"At the end of a day, we all come together to pray, to give thanks that we're all ok and everyone is ok. We want our

kids to realise there's something that's greater than them, that they're protected and just to go out there and be themselves and they'll be ok because they're looked after.

"When you're coastal you visibly see the tides. The world is revolving as we're speaking, it's a flow, it's a constant movement and we are at one with the world, we're constantly evolving. I'm not the same person I was 53 years ago, but like life, we're constantly changing. You can always be what you want to be."



Aoise Tutty Jackson

In this photo series West Cork photographer Aoise Tutty Jackson uses her informal and fresh style to connect with, and share the wisdom of, people in our community. www.aoisetuttyjackson.com email aoise@92circles.com or call 086 3465373.

"You come across people that you feel can guide you, that's where I met Mel, we're going to be married 20 years on the 25th of this month but you know she still fascinates me, it's amazing like. I feel so privileged and fortunate that I have Mel in my life.

"Mel has brought us to where we are with the swimming, she's the driving force, the visionary. It's really nice to be along for the journey, that there's someone steering the ship, because sometimes you get lost, there are other forces that can blow you off course.

"My father would have instilled rugby into me, but when I finished with rugby, I started swimming and that very much became a family thing, taking them out into the sea.

"There's so much involved in swimming, your buoyancy, your breathing, how you move, how you stay on the surface. That kind of a focus is really good for the mind.



A spring clean can have a big impact at home and abroad

It's nearly time to pack away the winter woollies. While you are at it, might a clear out be in order?

If you're thinking of bagging up bits that you never wear, or that the kids will have grown out of come autumn, then keep your local charity shop in mind.

The Self Help Africa shops in Skibbereen, Macroom and Bandon would welcome any contributions of worn – but not worn-out – clothing and footwear, and can find them a new home while raising much needed funds for its development projects in Africa.

Self Help Africa is currently implementing development projects in 17 countries across the globe. The organisation, which merged with Gorta a number of years ago, is one of Ireland's leading overseas aid organisations.

Every €30 that is raised by a local shop is enough to set a rural poor family in Africa on the path to self sufficiency.

Experts warn of the dangers of vaping

Experts from RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences have warned about the serious health risks associated with vaping, saying that it may be still another decade before we see the real impact on the younger populations that are now vaping.

The experts, who have taken part in a discussion on vaping as part of the RCSI MyHealth series, say that greater regulation is required around vaping. Regulations

should be supported by evidence on its efficacy in assisting people in quitting smoking and the safety and risk associated with the direct inhalation of the chemicals in vapes, into the lungs.

Professor Gerry McElvaney, Head of the School of Medicine at RCSI and clinician and principal investigator in respiratory health said: "It took too long for us to understand the

damage caused by tobacco and we cannot afford to do the same with vaping."

"We know that many people who vape are using it as a way of giving up smoking but there is no evidence to say it is safe and alarmingly, there is mounting evidence that it is very dangerous. What's even more concerning is that we know that there are young people vaping who have never smoked tobacco."

Professor McElvaney explained that research is beginning to reveal that vaping causes significant cardiovascular and respiratory damage. There is also emerging data that vaping can affect brain development in young people and that it exacerbates asthma and can actually precipitate asthma in a person who did not have it previously.

Prof Donal O'Shea, Professor and Head of Department, Department of Chemistry, RCSI adds: "The retail outlets that sell vapes use colour and flavour to appeal to younger demographics. For example, older people might enjoy the menthol flavour whereas fruit and sweet flavours can be more attractive to younger people. However, the health effects of inhaling these heated flavour chemicals and

additives that are contained in vapes directly into the lungs is unknown."

Dr Dan Wu, Honorary Lecturer in the Department of Chemistry said: "Young people are attracted by the flavours and are influenced by peer pressure as vaping can be seen to be 'cool'. It's very important that we find ways of educating young people about the great risk they are taking when they vape."

The RCSI MyHealth episode on vaping was chaired by

Professor Anne Hickey, RCSI School of Population Health. The episode addresses three questions about vaping: What is known about it, why it's so popular with young people and what research and science are revealing about the long term effects of vaping. You can watch the episode here or can you listen to it by searching for RCSI MyHealth wherever you listen to podcasts.



Durrus student donates hair to LauraLynn in memory of his teacher

A sixth class student in Durrus has raised €5,300 (and counting) for Locks of Love for LauraLynn by having his hair cut and donated to The Little Princess Trust, a charity that provides free real hair wigs to children and adults.

Fionn Wiseman, aged 12, had been growing his hair since the beginning of the pandemic. "Last year sadly my teacher Ms Sandra from Carrigboy NS Durrus passed away due to cancer. So I wanted to help people that are suffering from cancer and going through a difficult time in their life," Fionn explained.

On Friday last, in front of his school friends, teachers, family and friends, Fionn had his hair plaited and the plaits cut off and posted to The Little Princess Trust, before hairstylist Jennifer O'Connor set about giving Fionn a very different look for the summer! Fionn and his family are overwhelmed by the generosity of people and want to sincerely thank everyone who supported him in his fundraising efforts for LauraLynn. Fionn



added "Thanks to everyone who has donated. It really means a lot". The appeal remains open

until the end of April. Donate at www.idonate.ie (search for FionnWiseman)

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THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

In its finest form, genetic genealogy shows the recent history of every segment of DNA, connecting testers in a family tree to a set of shared ancestors. You may have a dozen pieces of DNA in common with a close cousin, but just a single segment shared with a third cousin and beyond. Using multiple testers, you find shared ancestry through ‘triangulation.’ These DNA vectors are the same process a surveyor may draw on a map from various places to indicate a location.

In researching my own DNA, I have tracked segments back as far as ninth or tenth cousins (sharing 8x and 9x great grand-

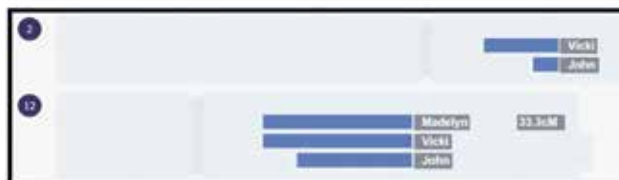
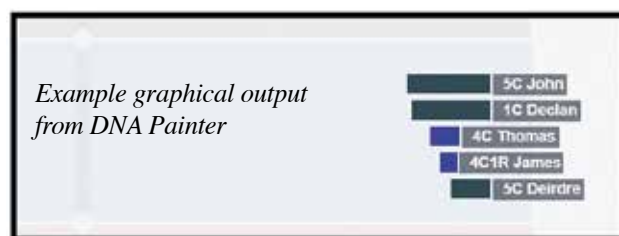
When DNA vectors collide

parents); a single segment of DNA supported by a paper trail. Sadly, if you are from West Cork and working through your own segments, this will not be the case due to the lack of that important paper trail.

The two things working against extensive genetic explorations here are the lack of church records before the early part of the 19th century (unless you have an extensive written or oral family history) and a gene pool which has generations of intermarriage between local families (endogamy). The same DNA can reach you from both your paternal and maternal sides. This example shows what you may find in your West Cork matches.

Chromosome mapping allows you to graphically display your matches and assign them to known ancestors using colours. I use a free app called DNA Painter. It is the only effective way of managing hundreds of matches. Any segments you do not know can be reassigned later.

Image 1 shows a cluster of matches in the paternal part of chromosome 12. Thanks to fifth cousin John, I can show that segment shared between my wife and her cousins Declan



and Deirdre are the same and must come from my wife’s four-times great grandparents MENNIS = DONOVAN who married sometime before 1780 in the Dunmanway area and lived in the Moreagh townland, SE of the town. These are shown as the dark bars. The blue bars represent cousins Thomas and James who connect back to a different set of ancestors, my wife’s three-times great grandparents MANNING (O’BRIEN Mongain) = McCARTHY who married sometime before 1810 and came from the townland of Dromdeegy, north of Dunmanway. These are completely different ancestral lines based on paper, but the DNA

data indicates they share a more ancient and unspecified regional heritage. They have geography in common around Dunmanway and the Fanlobbus parish.

This cluster of segments ceases to be genealogical useful for the period prior to the C19th. The DNA may have origins as far back as the mid C17th or earlier if proprietary databases use this one to define West Cork “ethnicity”. It serves a purpose to keep these segments designated to their respective ancestral groups for other matching, but recognise they come from a much earlier time.

My wife’s chromosome 12 has larger shared segments that

are attributable to the general area around Dunmanway. In this case (image 2), they are genetic cousins who connect before church records but share towards the high end of DNA for that genetic distance to explain the strength of the match. All we know is that there is some connection to either or both families of GRACE (Drinagh – no relation to this research, proven by DNA) and BUSTEED (Kilmichael).

It should be possible, as the science behind genetic genealogy develops, certain segments (especially those of a significant size) will be associated with specific family groups. As part of my Lowney DNA study suggests, it may be possible to drill down to communities in the same townland. You may find other DNA vectors from persons yet-to-test that helps you more closely triangulate their position in your family tree. It is worth keeping track of these types of matches too, while at the same time not to be too surprised if you find a cluster or two like this in your own data.

On behalf of a US family, I recently completed an analysis of some strong DNA matches to my wife who are very clearly

connected to the original group of West Cork MENNIS, pre-church records. Their family line, involving illegitimacies and adoptions was founded by an unknown Irishman in the US in the early C19th who is connected prior to 2x greats MENNIS=COLLINS in my wife’s line. Eight people in the US, all connected, match 14 testers in Ireland, all connected. While we have proven the explanation for the matches, we are unlikely to identify the person concerned.

MENNIS Follow Up: I am grateful to James Collins of UCD who indicated that the MENNIS homeplace of 2 Gneevies, as originally recorded in the Dunmanway parish registers, may be part of the area in the middle of the Moreagh/Moreigh townland, SE of Dunmanway (as shown on Griffith’s Valuation of the 1850’s). It may have fallen out of use unless you live locally and know differently?

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

Keeping calm reaps rewards



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.

Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem entitled If. The first two lines are as follows: ‘If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs.....’ And the last line of the poem ends ‘.....you’ll be a Man, my boy!’

For me, the message in those lines is if you can maintain

self-control in any circumstance, then you are pretty cool! Those words from the poem ran fleetingly through my mind as I faced Saffron who was showing a decided lack of self-control. I raised my voice in irritation and frustration, saying: “Why can you not show some self-control?”

At that, my inner voice chided me that I certainly wasn’t an example of ‘cool, calm and collected’ either and definitely not a role model if it came down to ‘Monkey see, monkey do!’

I’d been trying to teach Saffron to remain on her mat while I opened the back door with her favourite football in my hand and wanted to be able to walk out and leave her in situ. We were about to go outside to play footie. This gets her absolutely OTT but normally I would ask her to sit quietly facing the open door while I walked outside. She was always able to do this because I was still in her sights and, more importantly, so was the ball.

By asking her to sit on her mat, away from the door, I’d upped the ante considerably and expected her to cope when I

and the ball disappeared out of sight! Needless to say, each time I walked through the open door and disappeared, she couldn’t contain herself, and would get up to follow me.

She was impatient to play; I’d lost the plot, and neither of us was in a positive place to learn anything from this débâcle!

I turned back into the house, closed the door, put away the ball while I asked Saffron to sit and stay on her mat. I took a deep breath to ground myself, and sat down to compose my thoughts and to ponder on the next plan of action.

Once I was calm, I got up, retrieved the ball, and asked Saffron to continue waiting on her mat. Opening the door, I walked outside. Peeking in, I could see she was alert but still sitting on her mat. I whistled immediately for her to come, praised her intensely for her patience and self-control, and her reward was a hard game of footie. It was a short game because the sun was high in the sky for such energetic play. But, we were both happy with the result.

It’s not always possible to be perfect in interactions when

training our dogs and sometimes it can be easy to lose the plot. But, with calmness and consistency, it’s possible to find a solution without further damaging a relationship. What’s important is to take an emotional step backwards from the situation that’s causing problems, think it through and, if necessary, compromise.

When you do have success in the sphere of training that’s been causing you both difficulties, the most important thing is to give sufficient praise where it’s due. That will restore the bond of trust between you. If we’re always a nag, then we’ll never be much company or a support to our canine companion.

We’re very fortunate that our dogs are much more forgiving than we are. But, we do need to restore their confidence in us. So, instead of stubbornly demanding utter obedience, try chunking a situation into small parts that your dog can successfully perform and gain praise.

To help Saffron to achieve success in this situation, I asked her to sit and stay on her mat, quickly opened the door, walked outside and, without delay,

Increase in calls to South Munster MABS following lifting of eviction ban

South Munster Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) have revealed a rise in visits and calls from people in the three weeks following the lifting of the eviction ban on March 31.

MABS, who provide impartial advice to anyone who wants help in managing their money and taking control of debt, have reported a significant increase in referrals from over 65s.

The temporary moratorium which prevented no fault evictions was introduced in 2022 to protect rental tenants during the current economic crisis. The phased lifting of the ban puts thousands of renters at risk of potential evictions.

MABS had already been working with a high volume of people seeking support due to rising costs and are now seeing people impacted by the lifting of the ban, and those worried about receiving potential eviction notices with further financial concern due to energy prices remaining high, despite wholesale prices coming down.

MABS want to reassure people that there are steps in place to support those affected, and that MABS, alongside other support facilities, are there to help those who are worried. See. mabs.ie

whistled for her to come outside. That gave her no time to think or disobey my command. Instead, I praised her and then offered the huge reward of a game of footie. Both of us were satisfied winners in a potentially difficult situation. Dogs actually do better when we can praise them even for any tiny things that we ask them to do. It’s also worth remembering that if we lose the plot at the drop of a hat, how can we expect

them to be calm when asked when the only thing they see is their owner jumping up and down in an undignified manner!

The moral of this story is to stop before damaging a situation beyond repair. Find a solution by walking away until you regain your self-control. When you’re grounded, it’s much easier to find a way around the problem and ‘you can keep your head’ just like in the poem!

Study tool brings success to West Cork startup stars

An exam prep platform for the Leaving Cert and Junior Cert exams, SimpleStudy is fast becoming the study platform of choice for students, passing 14,000 users this month. Built with study features and revision content that matches the exams and curriculum for each subject, the study platform prepares students with the right resources so they can ultimately perform at their best in exams.

The young entrepreneurs behind this successful enterprise are West Cork natives Phillip McKenna, 23, and Oisín Devoy, 24, who say there is a big demand for tools like this as exams and CAO points become more and more competitive.

“The user feedback is great and that’s what keeps us going! Getting positive reviews from parents, or emails from students who found relief in our product is really motivating to keep building and improving the platform.”

Phillip and Oisín were

inspired to design SimpleStudy after completing their Leaving Certificate in 2017.

“We saw just how much gamification there is in standardised exams, leading some students to get a huge advantage while others have nothing,” shares Oisín.

Phillip continues, “To solve this, we wanted to create our own study platform and revision materials, so that any student can access the best resources.

“We weren’t thinking about money at all in the early days, but as the team has grown to meet demand, we’ve had to start thinking about it like a business

as well.”

Their Local Enterprise office has offered immeasurable support along the journey and Phillip and Oisín would en-

courage any local entrepreneurs to talk to their local enterprise office. “We’ve got financial support over the years, but, most critically, they’ve always been



Former Bandon Grammar students Philip McKenna (l) and Oisín Devoy (r) have taken the platform from a prototype to over 14,000 users.

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there as we’ve gone from just an idea and prototype to a working business.”

From day one, SimpleStudy was built to be a remote company, which has proved very beneficial in recruiting talent across Ireland.

Phillip from Rosscarbery and Oisín from Clonakilty both attended Bandon Grammar School. Oisín went on to study in Paris, completing a BSc in Finance and MSC in Innovation, and he is fluent in multiple languages. Phillip studied Marketing in the Netherlands but left

to dedicate himself to working in startups; he was an early employee at a Canadian tech startup that got acquired last year. They are both currently working full-time on SimpleStudy together.

SimpleStudy is currently starting to offer packages for entire schools to give SimpleStudy accounts to their students. They will be offering these school packages for FREE to any DEIS school across Cork County. Please get in touch through the website for more details. www.simplestudy.ie

Busy month ahead as Kinsale Campus showcases talent

“One of the busiest months of the academic year for our campus is upon us!” says Martin Coleman, Director at Kinsale Campus, who is looking forward to showcasing the talent of his students through artistic and theatrical events this May.

First up is the student art exhibition ‘Aurora’; all readers are invited to its opening event on April 27 at 6pm. This exhibition

runs from May 2-12 and will showcase the artists’ work in many different mediums including painting, sculpture, ceramic, drawing, and combined materials.

The Drama Department will host its end of year play ‘The Miser’, a comic farce by Molière, in the Cork Arts Theatre and St Catherine’s Cultural Centre Kinsale from May 3 to 7. For further information and

bookings visit www.kinsale-campus.ie

Finally the campus will host an Open Evening on Thursday May 11 from 4pm–7pm for anyone who may be interested in exploring course options for Sept 2023. This is an ideal opportunity to explore the campus, meet with staff and check out what’s on offer. Online applications are open via www.kinsalecampus.ie

West Cork students to broaden their horizons this summer

Cork based charity EIL Intercultural Learning has selected two young people from West Cork for its 2023 Explore Programme; Darragh Walsh (16, Rathbarry) and Orna O’Brien (17, Drinagh) are among nine Cork teenagers who will embark on fully-funded, transformative cultural immersion experiences around the world this summer.

Darragh and Orna both won a Youth Activist Award and will join a group of five Irish youths at The Vermont Governor’s Institute in Vermont, USA. There, they will meet and learn from around 60 American young lead-



ers as well as engage in activism workshops with some impressive guest-speakers. US Senator Bernie Sanders has been a guest speaker in the past as well as other high profile politicians and activists. This programme will challenge them to find solutions to local and global problems that



directly impact young people and empower them to take positive actions within their own communities.

To learn more about EIL Ireland’s Explore Programme and how to apply, please visit www.eilireland.org.

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- Outdoor Adventure Education
- Office Administration
- Professional Cookery
- Sustainable Horticulture/Permaculture
- Multimedia Production
- Theatre Performance
- Healthcare Support/ Caring for the Elderly
- Art
- Film & TV Production
- English as a second Language

6 QQI/FETAC LEVEL

- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Outdoor Leadership
- Business
- Sustainable Horticulture/Permaculture
- Film & TV Production
- Multimedia Production
- Drama: Advanced Acting Course
- Art
- Health Services Supervisory Management

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#bealtaine An art retreat in beautiful Coomhola



Caroline Levis of Levis Art is organising a retreat for lovers of art and food in Coomhola, Bantry

in June. Pack your brushes and paints and book in for a few days of tranquility in this beautiful part of West Cork. It's sure to inspire the artist in you!

Caroline has been painting, exhibiting and selling watercolours for more than 30 years with a style echoing the soft textures of the Irish landscape and her seascapes capturing the rawness of the coastline.

In a review on her work she has been described as: "An artist completely in touch with her chosen medium of watercolour, she specialises in sensuous Impressionist

landscapes and nature paintings. And what compositions they are! Who can fail to be aroused by her pictures of tangy lemons, or the shimmering heat of an afternoon in Provence? After more than 30 years experience of watercolours, such is Caroline's skill at capturing the right colour, and sense of movement (or stillness), that one feels she must have painted all her works en-plein-air."

For more information or to book into this retreat call Caroline on 083-0870663. www.levisart.com.



Watercolour by Caroline Levis

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Thirty years at The Ewe



The Ewe Experience in Glengarriff is celebrating 30 years and publishing a book by co-owner Sheena Wood to mark the occasion.

As part of the celebration they are also looking for a local community project or charity that would like to benefit from the 'Wish-you-Well' in the award-winning gardens. Local groups or charities interested in having a small garden project created, can e-mail The Ewe Experience at art@theewe.com. The actual work will be carried out by the garden design team from Two Green Shoots, Glengarriff.

"We have always had lively information boards and poetry as part of the trail, and visitors have been asking to buy copies and when are we going to get them into a book? Getting the trail up each year with new ideas, takes a lot of background work, however, we've been promising a poetry book, so for the big 30, we wanted to make a special effort to get this finished. I am thrilled that we managed it," says Sheena

The limited edition book 'WoodWords', with new writ-

ing, poems and art, will be for sale in the gardens, which open in July and August and also in some selected outlets.

Artist Sheena Wood and writer Kurt Lyndorff arrived in Ireland in 1993 from Costa Rica, where Kurt was the Latin America correspondent for a Danish newspaper. With two infants, Kloe and Eliza, they had decided to give up their nomadic life, covering the dangerous conflicts of the Falklands, then the Middle East and finally South America.

The couple bought a derelict sheep farm on the Mizen peninsula, which they renovated, and opened 'The Ewe'. With great Atlantic sea views, they ran residential courses, teacher training and developed the sculpture/nature garden. They settled in, loving the less stressful life amongst the Mizen farming community in the hills above Goleen.

Although they had vowed never to move, ten years later they started all over again in Glengarriff, after falling in love with a spectacular site, beside a beautiful waterfall, which felt perfect for their growing nature



Artist Sheena Wood and writer Kurt Lyndorff are the imaginations behind The Ewe.

project. They have created a much-loved attraction, that welcomes visitors from Ireland and all around the world.

The Ewe Experience is Ireland's only interactive sculpture garden, a journey back in time, and back to nature, with hundreds of engaging information boards on natural history, science and life.

"It's quite something to have lived and worked in Ireland for

30 years, after moving so much as a foreign correspondent. Children that came to us in the early days, return with their children and even grandchildren! It's lovely to see such different ages enjoy the trail and coming back each year to see what new creatures and features they'll find. We enjoy it, and it has been quite a journey," says Kurt.

Seba Safe releases 'On my Way' single

'On My Way' is the second single release from Seba Safe's upcoming sophomore EP, 'Rainy' (Netzwerk Records). Following Irish and UK touring towards the end of 2022, the new year brings new music and a great evolution from the Irish singer-songwriter.

According to Seba Safe (real name Mike D'Alton), "'On my Way' is a personal song about love and mental health but also deals largely with immigration from Ireland. I'm from a small town in rural Ireland and I can see my town, and towns like it, getting quieter and left further

behind by the masses of young people who choose to leave Ireland for work or travel – many of whom don't return."

Seba Safe plays DeBarras on July 14.



Age is no boundary to a youthful spirit #bealtaine

Always on the go, 80-year-old Brenda Elphick epitomises the quote ‘you are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream’. The Bere Island community radio presenter, who tells **Mary O’Brien** that age is just a number, has surely proved this with a list of lifetime accomplishments that just keep on growing. “I have had two hips and a knee replaced and I intend to keep making the best possible use of them!” she shares laughing.

A retired nurse and mother-of-13, Brenda returned to education in her late 60s, starting with a course in Disability Studies and finishing up with an Environmental Science degree at UCC. She also completed a Diploma in Credit Union Studies. Her husband and best friend Paul had passed away suddenly two years prior at the age of 67 and Brenda explains that she was feeling pretty lost at the time. “One of my colleagues registered me for the course and that was the start of my academic career. I loved my time at UCC,” she shares.

Not quite ready to let her nursing career go, in her 70s Brenda signed up for Nurse on Call agency nursing, helping to set up a new nursing home behind County Hall during her posting at St Finbarr’s. When a job came up at Castletownbere Hospital, where she had previously been employed, she

returned there, staying until a broken hip forced her into retirement for the second time.

Never one to stay idle for long, Brenda became involved with the Bere Island Projects Group, taking a seat on the Island Federation committee and also joining the Bere Island branch of the IFA, where she has just finished her term as chairperson. She is also part of the Bere Island Church Choir who sang for Pope Francis in Phoenix Park on his visit in 2018. “It was a huge privilege and a lovely experience,” says the classical music lover, whose regret is that she never learned to play an instrument. But never say never!

Bere Island is a Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) and some houses on the island already use renewable energy like windmills and PV solar panels to generate electricity. “The aim is that we’ll eventually be self-sufficient,” says Brenda

who travelled with the island group to Denmark to learn from the energy academy there. She has also travelled to Sweden as part of the European Small Islands Federation and last November went to Macedonia to learn from their experience in community development programmes, as part of a Secad and Leader initiative.

In 2019, when Bere Island got the opportunity to set up a community radio station as part of the EU Grassroots Wave-lengths programme, Brenda was one of a number of dedicated islanders to volunteer to help staff what has proved to be a vital community resource.

“It’s something I never imagined I could do and, although I was very hesitant in the beginning, I really enjoy it, particularly the research side of the job,” she explains.

“I was never great on a computer but when the pandemic came and meetings could

only take place over Zoom, I decided I had to get with the programme!”

From broadcasting Mass direct from the home of the local priest during the pandemic to interviewing people from all walks of life and covering a wide range of topics, with shows covering gardening and music to sport and current affairs, the local radio station, which broadcasts for three hours every Sunday, has picked up listeners all over the world.

President Tim Cullinan, musician Lisa Lambe, writer Kate O’Riordan best known for the show ‘Smoother’ and Dr Julie Maguire from Bantry Marine Research Station are some of her interviews.

The other volunteers who keep the radio broadcasting are Paul Moore on controls, Eileen Murphy and Dominic Hallahan, Dorothy Brophy and Ann Marie Manser, John Walsh and Paul O’Shea.

ally hit him with my basket as I came racing out of mass one day during Lent,” she smiles remembering. After many happy summer holidays spent on Bere island, when a teaching opportunity for Paul presented in Castletownbere in 1970, the family jumped at the opportunity to move from Lancashire to Bere Island, where they settled on a small suckler farm. Brenda worked as a nurse in Bantry Hospital until a job came up in Castletownbere Community Hospital soon after having child number 13.

At the age of 50, when her children were still young, Brenda somehow also found the time to do a stint with the Irish Coast Guard. “I really wanted to do something different but I couldn’t afford to do anything different,” she says laughing. “Volunteering with the Coast Guard was exciting and enjoyable.”

Still showing no sign of ever slowing down, Brenda says she doesn’t have a bucket list. “I take life as it comes,” shares the octogenarian, “...but hopefully I have a few more trips abroad in me yet!”

“It’s something I never imagined I could do and, although I was very hesitant in the beginning, I really enjoy it, particularly the research side of the job. I was never great on a computer but when the pandemic came and meetings could only take place over Zoom, I decided I had to get with the programme!”

“I devour the papers and we all meet every Monday night for a brainstorming session,” shares Brenda. Green Party MEP Grace O’Sullivan, IFA

A native of Bantry, whose mother hailed from Bere Island, Brenda met her husband Paul, a teacher, while she was training to be a nurse in the UK. “I liter-



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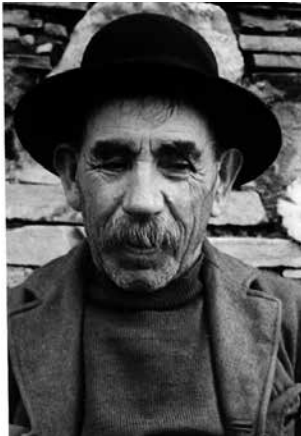
A book for 'all who love Béarra'

Dr. Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Director of the Folklore Collection, UCD, launched 'A Cluster of Seaweed' by Emma Verling née Ní Mhurchú in Evie's Hall in Eyeries on Wednesday, April 5, 2023. Críostóir supervised Emma's translation of her late husband, Martin Verling's book, 'Mioscais na gCumar.' The cultural landscape of Atlantic island and coastal communities is of particular interest to Críostóir, and his PhD dealt with the subject of storytelling in fishing communities in Corca Dhuibhne, west Kerry. Brian Boss O'Sullivan Bhealaigh chaired the launch. The appreciative audience included relatives of the seanchaithe, native Béarra people and very many people who have chosen to make Béarra their home.

A Cluster of Seaweed contains a rich body of stories, seanchas – historical lore – songs and stories from Béarra, 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 otherworld 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, Goibhniú.

The book runs to 486 pages and contains the stories of 17 storytellers from Cill Chaitiairn and Ardgroom whose genealogy is traced by Riobard O'Dwyer in 23 pages. The Recording Context section brings us into the homes of these storytellers and introduces us to them and to their families. Then while reading the stories, we can imagine ourselves in the kitchen of the storytellers during the recording session. Martin's map at the back of the book is a guide to the townlands in which the storytellers lived. The book includes 40 pages of notes and also contains many photos including those of some of the storytellers such as Brídín Ní Mhurchú, Pádraig Ó Laochdha and Diarmaid Ó hÚrdail, Caobach. The cover is based on Martin's painting of two seals. A Cluster of Seaweed was beautifully designed by Romanian, Iulian Pirpiliu, originally an aeronautical engineer, and printed by Stewart O'Connell of Johnswood Press.

Photos of those who played a part in this publication were displayed in the hall – Tadhg Ó Murchú, the folklore collector from Uíbh Ráthach; Dr. Gearóid Ó Cruaiaioch, UCC, who wrote



Pádraig Ó Laochdha, Cill Chaitiairn



Brídín bean Uí Mhurchú née Ní Shíocháin, Cill Chaitiairn

the foreword for both Mioscais na gCumar and A Cluster of Seaweed; Fachtna Ó Donabháin who organized the unveiling of the plaque in honour of seanchaí, Pádraig Ó Murchú; Riobard O'Dwyer, genealogist; Dr. Riobard Ó hÚrdail, UCC, who is an authority on the dialect of the Irish of Béarra; Jeremiah Murphy, Cathair Caim, who supplied valuable information on seine fishing; Mrs. Kate O'Leary in whose house in Eyeries Tadhg Ó Murchú stayed; Professor Pádraig Ó Fiannachta who published Mioscais na gCumar and Martin Verling who edited Mioscais na gCumar.

Photographer Seán Moriarty, made an excellent photographic record of the launch, capturing the atmosphere of what was a most enjoyable occasion. Evie's Hall, built by her father, master carpenter, John Murphy, was a comfortable and spacious venue. The fact that Irish classes were held in the original hall across the road in the 1940s, provided a real sense of continuity. After the launch, a very pleasurable reception was held in Mary O'Shea's public house.

A Cluster of Seaweed is dedicated 'To all who love Béarra,' and is available for purchase at €30 in Eyeries, Ardgroom, Allihies, Castletownbere, Bantry, Sciobairín, and An Gadaí Dubh in Baile Bhuirne.



Tadhg Ó Murchú, Uíbh Ráthach, folklore collector.



Jeremiah Murphy, Cathair Caim, explaining the art of seine fishing to Martin Verling in the early 1980's.



Mrs. Kate O'Leary née O'Dwyer, in whose boarding house in Eyeries Tadhg Ó Murchú stayed.

Excerpt from 'A Cluster of Seaweed'

Kenmare Workhouse by Diarmaid Ó hÚrdail Caobach

A man and his wife from this townland lived in famine times and had only one child. The man's young wife died. He had to bury his wife outside the fence on the hill. He couldn't bring her to the graveyard because he was too weak and the neighbours were also too weak from hunger. The pigs rooted up the body of that woman! The man wandered away with the child. He put the child into the workhouse in Kenmare. He walked the whole of Co. Kerry and came back to the workhouse in Kenmare. He didn't recognise the child at all, so he had to leave him there. That went through his heart sorely. He was thinking of that child for as long as he lived, and he lived to be very old.

He returned to this place again, got married and had a family after that. He used to fish for trout, which kept him alive.

That's how they were without a doubt.

Note on this story written by folklore collector, Tadhg Ó Murchú:

In relation to this story, I often heard my father talking about the workhouse in Kenmare and about the mothers and children there. He told me that they separated the children from mothers just as they would separate lambs from sheep. There was a precocious child there, and he used to push one of his fingers through a hole in the wall that separated them, and say: "Look, Mammy, do you recognise my finger?" My father cried when he told me that story.

In brief....

East Cork is home to a brand new music festival with the Ballycotton 'F.A.T. Fest' running from Thursday, April 27 to Monday May 1. The five day celebration of Irish Folk and Alternative Trad music sees high profile acts such as Ron Sexsmith, Stockton's Wing, The High Kings and the Dublin City Ramblers perform at Sea Church and various other locations around the stunning seaside village of Ballycotton.

Performers at the festival comprise a mix of established and up-and-coming artists, all with a passion for traditional Irish music and a desire to push the boundaries of the genre. Audiences can expect everything from lively jigs and reels to more contemporary styles of music. In addition the village will play host to talks and workshops with plenty of opportunities to meet performers.

For more information on the Ballycotton F.A.T. Fest, visit www.seachurch.ie

Created by Anna Furse, the award-winning UK theatre artist, writer, and academic, 'Muscle: a question of power' is an immersive experience that takes visitors on an audio-guided journey through Crawford Art Gallery's historic collection of Canova Casts and culminates in a short film exploring the muscularity of professional women. The exhibition runs from April 28 - August 20, 2023.

Designed to bring visitors up close and personal with these ancient classical forms, 'muscle' is an invitation to contemplate the idealised nude, and its legacy today.

'Muscle' engages with society's contemporary and often damaging obsessions with beauty and perfection, strength and power. It alludes historically not only to the Ancient Greek cultivation of mind and body in service to the state, but to the Nazi obsession with antiquity in its effort to sculpt the flesh of the German nation according to Greek ideals.

The Bonk comes to Levis Corner House



MUSIC BOX

Lauren Guillery

Lauren Guillery is a rock musician and music lover. Her album 'Disaster in La La Land' is available on all music platforms.

Currently on a UK tour playing keyboards for alternative folk singer Junior Brother from Kerry, the main man behind The Bonk, Phil Christie chats to Lauren Guillery.

On May 14, Phil Christie will grace one of West Cork's most intimate venues to promote the release of his second LP 'Greater Than, Or Equal To The Bonk'. If you're into left of field genre-bending performances and jazz improv, Levis Corner House will be the place to hang out that

evening.

Originally from Waterford but now based in Dublin, Phil Christie was for many years the keyboard player and backing singer for O Emperor – the alternative rock band that announced in 2018 its break-up with the release of its farewell album 'Jason', only to win the prestigious RTE Choice Music Prize for Irish Album of the Year a few months later. The Bonk emerged from the ashes of O Emperor, seemingly fully formed with its blend of garage rock and experimental pop with jazzy undertones, and although influences are hard to pinpoint, the band wouldn't seem out of place alongside the likes of 70s experimental rockers CAN, New York synth duo Suicide, and idiosyncratic rocker Captain Beefheart.

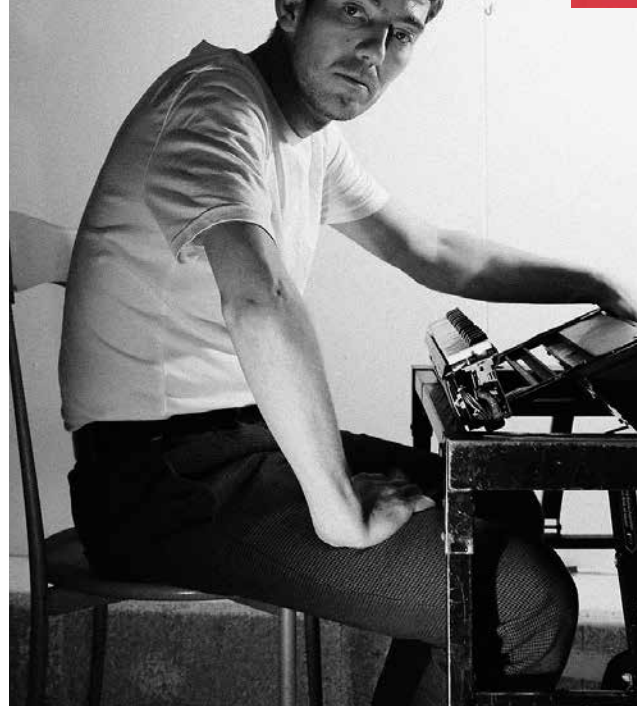
It won't be Christie's first visit to Ballydehob – the songwriter and multi-instrumentalist performed there at last year's Jazz Festival, playing synths with Cork experimental group Fixity. Asked if he's planning to bring the whole band set-up for The Bonk's upcoming tour, he responds "We will have the full line-up in levels, but not in all the venues. I think some places are just too small to accommodate us all, and while most of the gigs are with a full band, there'll be a couple that we might do as a trio or quartet, it's kind of malleable in that way," he explains. With a core band of six musicians

where Phil sings, plays guitar, keyboards, percussions and sometimes theremin alongside his brother Jimmy on drums, Patrick Freeman on bass, his cousin Phil O'Gorman on guitar, Fixity's Dan Walsh on saxophone and flute, and Robert Grant on trumpet, it will be pretty amazing to see them all fit behind Levis' shop counter.

The Bonk has so far released three digital EP's, including two volumes of 'Songs for the Mean Time' in 2020 and 2022, and 'Chore Loops' in 2021, all only available as downloads on the online streaming platform Bandcamp. The first album, 'The Bonk Seems To Be A Verb' was released in 2017 on cassette and digital format, with only a selection of tracks available for streaming. Phil explains that he wasn't interested in paying an online aggregator to have his music placed on streaming sites. Spotify and other mainstream online platforms pay 'peanuts' per stream (an average of €0.004 per play and sometimes less), which means independent musicians and more obscure acts have very little chances of ever receiving a payment for having their music streamed there. The ethos of Bandcamp are different: musicians earn more money per sale since they decide their own prices, and they have a lot more freedom on the platform. Though he's excited to have his upcoming album released on vinyl, Phil confesses he'll probably make the album available on Spotify too. "I'm aware that it's the only access some people have to listening to music, so there's kind of a balance to strike."

While The Bonk's first album was a collection of one-off live studio takes, Phil explains that despite seeming improvisational in nature, most of the songs on the forthcoming album were initially demoed using rhythms and form as a basis for writing them. A couple of other pieces started in the practice room as a jam session with the band, which he later cut up, edited, and made into songs. For this project, he was particularly interested in rhythms, exploring swing rhythms and early blues as a starting point, and how to incorporate these structures within songs. The formal structures of language too, inform how he delves

Though he's excited to have his upcoming album released on vinyl, Phil confesses he'll probably make the album available on Spotify too. "I'm aware that it's the only access some people have to listening to music, so there's kind of a balance to strike."



into using words and word play as rhythm and sounds in his compositions. "I kind of gather things as I go along, I don't really think of it as a genre specific thing, but more digging into those interests myself and seeing where that goes," he reveals.

The Bonk have teamed up with Drogheda-based independent label thirty-three45 for the release of 'Greater Than, Or Equal To The Bonk'. The album was self-produced and recorded over two sessions. The first one in 2017, was recorded with long-time collaborator Brendan Fennessy in his Cork studio Big Skin with whom Phil had worked previously on O Emperor albums. The second recording session took place at Ailfionn studios in Dublin at the end of 2018. While these seem like quite a long time ago Phil explains that by the time the album would have been released, Covid and subsequent lockdowns put a stop to any touring plan. "It will be nice to have them out in the world and feel like there's a line drawn under those", he enthuses. Naturally, during lockdown he ended up recording and releasing his

two three-track EP's "to keep going in between the larger projects that were on hold".

The album cover was designed by Dublin visual artist Barry Gibbons. "It comes from a video that we made for one of the songs on the album, where he created geometric shapes inspired by tangram puzzles," he says. The video was for the song Future 87, one of the leading singles for the album, and is a rotoscope animation of choreographer and dancer Aoibhinn O'Dea. "She had the tangram shapes fastened to her limbs and did

a dance with the shapes, and so the video is the animation of those movements. We took some of the stills and used them for the album cover; the geometric nature of it all seemed to tie in with some of the other elements we were thinking about."

With a total of eleven dates around the island of Ireland this May to promote the album, The Bonk's tour will start in Manorhamilton and conclude at Dublin's Sugar Club, with Galway folk singer/songwriter Maija Sophia as the main support act on many of the tour dates. Phil had previously shared the stage with Sophia at festivals but ended up on a residency as part of an Arts Council programme at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Cavan, where both had received the prestigious Next Generation Artists award. The bursary was designed to support emerging artists in creative disciplines with an opportunity to develop their skill and produce new work, and West Cork is very lucky to have venues like Levis' that bring us the most interesting and innovative music from around the country. Make sure not to miss it!

The Bonk, with support from Maija Sophia, play Levis Corner House on May 14.

May West Cork Gig Listings

Compiled by Lauren Guillery

Mon 1st	Candlelit Tales / Connolly's of Leap
Tues 2nd	Martin Stephenson & John Perry / Connolly's of Leap
Thurs 4th	Aidan O'Rourke & Brighde Chaimbeul / Baltimore Fiddle Fair John Spillane / DeBarra's Folk Club
Fri 5th	David Kitt / Connolly's of Leap The Foghorn Stringband / Duo Ruut / Baltimore Fiddle Fair
Sat 6th	Aoife and Deirdre Granville / Baltimore Fiddle Fair Blazin' Fiddles / Liz Knowles, Nível Tsumbu and Niall Vallely / Baltimore Fiddle Fair Dani Larkin / Levis' Corner House Tionól and Tallari / Baltimore Fiddle Fair
Sun 7th	Allison de Groot and Tatiana Hargreaves / Ye Vagabonds / Baltimore Fiddle Fair BRÍDÍN / Connolly's of Leap ENKEL / Lúnasa / Baltimore Fiddle Fair
Tues 9th	Dick Valentine (Electric Six) Solo / DeBarra's Folk Club
Thurs 11th	Sam Amidon / DeBarra's Folk Club
Fri 12th	Paul Tiernan / Levis' Corner House
Sat 13th	Jinx Lennon / Levis' Corner House Mary Coughlan / Connolly's of Leap
Sun 14th	The Bonk / Levis' Corner House
Fri 19th	Georgia Mooney / Connolly's of Leap
Sat 20th	The Frank & Walters / Connolly's of Leap
Sun 28th	Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh Trio / Connolly's of Leap

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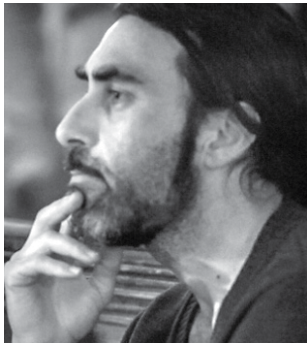
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Magical plumes and the secret lens:

Exhibitions by Michael McSwiney and Thady Trá



THE SHAPE OF THINGS

James Waller

James Waller is an Australian born artist and poet based in West Cork. Through this column James explores the world of art, introducing the reader to major works of art and artists and reflecting on what makes them so engaging.

A lavaic splash of cadmium red diffuses into a tar-enamelled sky, a plume of pale aqua blue breathes up and fractalizes into islands seen from above, and deep blue penumbras bleed into white heads of thunder. This is 'Archipelago', a new exhibition by West Cork painter, Michael McSwiney, who shows us time and again how mysterious and exciting painting can be.

'Archipelago' is a major exhibition of new work, laid out in the expansive space of the Kenmare Butter Market. As a master of the post-expressionist sublime McSwiney is comparable to Ian Humphreys, and 'Archipelago' bares favourable comparison to Humphreys' 'My Journey in Paint' which showed at the Kenmare Butter Market in September 2022.

Like Humphreys, McSwiney intimates the world through an abstract tableaux, and like



'Archipelago', 2023. 250 x 150 cm. Oil and mixed media on canvas.

Humphreys, he generates an accelerative force through brush and scraper, leaving trails of colour which quicken upon the eye. Both painters intimate experiences of light, sky and sea and both push paint to the moment of epiphany.

McSwiney's material language is complex and is on full display in 'Archipelago'; he pours, drips, sledges and sprays; water droplets in oil form delicate craters on geo-physical surfaces forged from sand, sawdust and oil; colour surprises are typically sledged at speed along

the bottom edge or breathe up the sides; residues of layers form continental like plates upon old canvases, and fiery colours glow as if from within clouds of cosmic nebulae.

The result is a hymn of sensations, of brooding panoramas and sudden pulses, leaving the viewer with a quiet sense of wonder, as if having witnessed nature's sublime eruptive power, made gently mysterious by painting's magical stillness.

The title piece of 'Archipelago' is an elevating hymn of pale blues, framed on the



'Slán Go Fóill' by Thady Trá

sides by fiery licks of cadmium yellow, which breathe up and in. McSwiney has fractalized the paint with sprays and drips and the result is not unlike a topographic map of an archipelago fanning into the sea. Anchoring the field below is a nebulous line of light blue against deep pthalo, intimating a tidal line, as if seen from above.

The piece is indicative of a show which soars with lyrical light in one breath and plunges into alchemical, fiery darkness in another. The pulsing painting, titled 'Epiphany,' which hangs on the centre island wall, and another titled 'Magma Plume' are indicative of the latter, whilst the pale green and yellow hues of 'Halcyon' joins 'Archipelago' as a celebration of light and sun.

'Archipelago' is a major

exhibition by an important Irish painter; if you know McSwiney's work you will not be disappointed, and if you don't already you're in for a treat.

Closer to home in Clonakilty, photographer Thady Trá has delivered his second solo exhibition at Gallery Asna in as many years. 'By Eye' is a refreshing, surprising and poignant show of black and white analogue photographs, taken of people, objects and situations in Trá's home town of Clonakilty and throughout Ireland.

Trá has a great eye for the poignant, the beautiful and the unexpected: an abandoned teddy bear on an outdoor window sill, smoke rising from Kilmaloda House (gutted by fire last December), the dark interior of an iconic theatre in Dublin, an

elderly lady walking, grinning brightly, along the street; they are images which return our world back to us, as beautiful secrets, whispered through film, and birthed in red-lit darkness.

In one memorable piece 'Slán Go Fóill', Trá has framed an elderly lady in profile as she passes the middle pane of a set of three windows, along a street. She is grinning, as if she knows she is being photographed. The tones are beautifully light and Trá's composition holds an exquisite sense of gentle tension.

Other pieces, such as 'Donations,' 'The Wonky Bridge,' and 'Encore!' show Trá's masterful handling of low-light photography, with 'Encore!' in particular, breathing a gold-lit, Rembrandtian air.

Through his presentation Trá invites us into the rich and mysterious world of the darkroom; the photographs are pegged on lines, an enlarger sits in one corner with a bunch of developing trays, whilst test-strips are pegged above.

Trá is a photographer who wants us to share in the magic of the creative process and his passion for his art is infectious; one does not buy a framed image on the wall, one buys into the mystery of a world; a world of time capture and all the magical elements of the photographic hunt.

'Archipelago' runs from April 29 - June 10 at the Kenmare Butter Market. 'By Eye' finishes on April 29 at Gallery Asna, Clonakilty Arts Centre.

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'Inanna Modern' launches with group exhibition of international artists at Cnoc Buí

'Inanna Modern', a new sub-division of Inanna Rare Books and Reader's Garden in Skibbereen will hold its first art exhibition at Cnoc Buí in Unionhall from May 7 – 27.

While visitors to Inanna's beautiful location at Woodley House on Castletownshend Road are already familiar with their merchandise of historical art, vintage maps and decorative prints and graphics; 'Inanna Modern' is now welcoming a group of international contemporary artists into the fold.

The recently launched 'Inanna Modern' business and website currently showcases the

work of six artists from Canada, USA and Scotland and a new artist from Denmark, living and working in Ireland, recently joined their portfolio. In an effort to bring new colour to the West Cork art scene, 'Inanna Modern' is focusing on artists

outside of Ireland, many of whom have Irish connections.

While art lovers will be able to view all artworks at Inanna Modern's location in Skibbereen, the first group exhibition will be held at Cnoc Buí, West Cork's newest art and commu-

nity Centre in Unionhall.

Cnoc Bui is the brainchild of Paul and Aileen Finucane, whose 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.

The group exhibition by Inanna Modern will show Brooke Palmer from Toronto, Canada, whose art is held in international private collections and who has never exhibited in Ireland before. Also on display will be the wonderful drawings of Scottish artists Jim Wilson (line drawings) and Nicola J. Smyth (flowers and more).

The West Cork art of Evelyn Street will also be a part of the exhibition. Street lived in West Cork during the 1960s

and 1970s and her paintings represent the work of West Cork artists who are no longer with us but who Inanna Modern will show in coming years in order to reflect on the creativity this landscape has triggered in contemporary artists as far back as the 1950s. Three rare Evelyn Street paintings from the esteemed Naylor Collection in Durrus, which have not been shown in the last 50 years, will be on display.

The Exhibition is open daily from 11am – 5pm (May 7-May 27)

Find the new website of Inanna Modern under: www.inannamodern.com

For enquiries phone 087 102 5412 or email info@inannararebooks.com



Jim Wilson - Fishy Fishy



Nicola Smyth - At the Crossroads of Growth



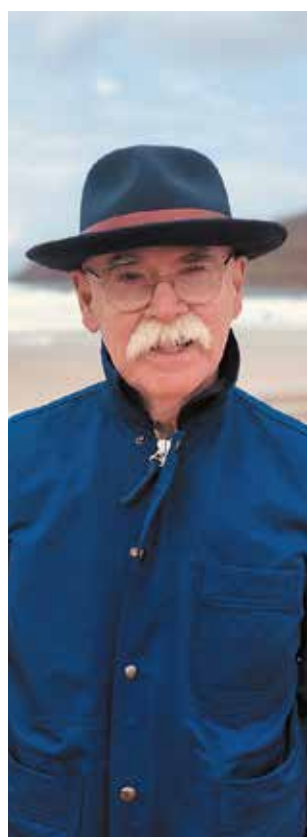
Brooke Palmer - Unfurling Heavenbound

Paul Charles announces Adventures In Wonderland book tour

A coveted appearance at the International Festival of Literature Dublin on May 26 is among the highlights of a book tour by leading music agent Irishman Paul Charles, whose memoir, *Adventures in Wonderland*, is set for publication on 19 May.

The festival takes place, this year, in the beautifully convivial surroundings of Merrion Square Park – with numerous other high profile guests starring in the week-long event, including Douglas Stuart, Joseph O'Connor, Mary Gaitskill, Stanley Tucci and Catherine Ryan Howard. It is indisputably one of the city's cultural highlights of the year. The Guest Interviewer will be announced shortly.

A riveting memoir, *Adventures in Wonderland* tells the story of how a music-mad youngster from Magherafelt in Co. Derry got caught up in the allure of rock 'n' roll, took to



London in the heady days of the 1960s' music revolution and went on to become one of the most influential music figures ever to come out of Ireland...

Adventures in Wonderland is available by pre-order from hotpress.com/shop in Hardback and Large Format Paperback, with a variety of special pre-order bonuses to be scooped up by book and music fans alike.

Irishman Paul Charles is one of the leading music agents on the planet. Over the past 40 years, he has worked with some of the biggest names in music, at different times managing the careers of Van Morrison, Ray Davies of The Kinks, Gerry Rafferty, The Waterboys and Dexys Midnight Runners, and launching Tanita Tikaram – the teenage star whose debut album sold almost 5 million copies – into the world.

Padraig Jack releases thought-provoking new single

Singer-songwriter Padraig Jack releases his first newly written and recorded music since his award-nominated debut album 'Making Sand'. 'It Could Be Home' is the first single to be taken from his forthcoming sophomore album, out later in 2023. Seeking not to provoke people but instead to provoke thought, 'It Could Be Home' is a song written by an Irish Gaeilgeoir from Iar Chonnacht attempting to walk a mile in an Ulster Unionist's shoes, while conscious that the term 'Ulster Unionist' can include a disparate group of people with differing views. In the context of the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and

the surrounding conversations about a potential poll on a United Ireland, many people are now asking what that might look like.

'It Could Be Home' attempts to understand some of the considerations that might exist within the psyche of some Unionists and ponders how they might view being a part of the whole island of Ireland; 'I've been looking at all of this place, like it could be home'. Equally the song seeks to invoke some compassionate reflection on the part of Irish na-

tionalists, to think what might be going through the mind of these Unionists and how it must feel to be in the position they're in.

Padraig Jack (O Flaithearta) was born into a musical family from the Aran islands. His dad is the songwriter Barry Ronan and he is the nephew of the Irish poet and Aosdána member Mary O'Malley.

You can catch Padraig live in Inchigeelagh on July 21. www.padraigjack.com

International Art Exhibition

Cnoc Buí

Cnoc Buí - Art Centre - Union Hall

Brooke Palmer (Canada)

Nicola J. Smyth (Scotland)

Jim Wilson (Scotland)

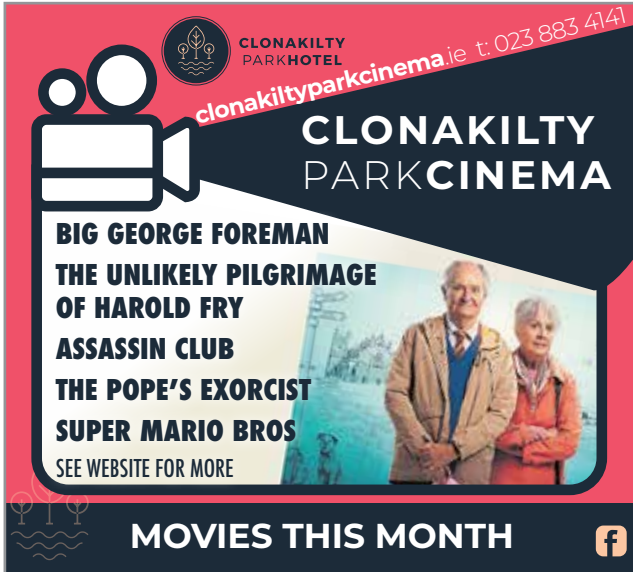
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Swerve Magazine offers an evolving artistic platform

Swerve Magazine grew out of the dark days of the Covid lockdown via an initiative from Cork Arts and Library Services encouraging writers to meet online. Mich Maroney explains how odd little writing communities began to form and the first issue of Swerve represents some of the work that was produced during that time. Writers who contribute to Swerve will read at DeBarra's Spoken Word on May 3, 2023.

Swerve 1 is an anthology of poetry and prose with strong visual elements; its writers are a diverse group with interesting histories and stories to tell. What became clear very quickly was that, apart from being a creative outlet, writing and sharing was an essential lifeline in those lonely and troubling times.

What started as an anthology has evolved into a magazine. Swerve 2 features an article by

Netherlands artist Willem Boel, a recent artist-in-residence at the Albers Foundation in Glandore, who writes about his work and his response to the West Cork landscape. Jonathan Doig (doyen of West Cork organic farming) is interviewed by writer/actor Fiona York and Sinéad Fagan, creator of exquisite ceramic pieces, is interviewed by poet Gillian Watt. Kinsale poet, Matthew Geden, talks to artist Jennifer Redmond. As well as publishing the writers brought together from its first submissions call-out, Swerve 2 also features an inaugural artist-writer collaboration by novelist Hannah Hoare and artist Charlotte Malik.

Swerve Magazine recently moved to new premises in Skibbereen, a former medical centre that is well known to many inhabitants. The old surgery lends itself as an HQ for the magazine with an office and studio and

a room for visiting artists and writers. The small gallery space will show interesting and experimental new work while hosting workshops and readings.

The magazine will welcome its first artist-in-residence, Caroline Boyfield, in the summer of 2023. Caroline is a writer and painter based in Brittany. This will hopefully be the first of many such residencies. As part of her residency, Caroline will facilitate a SKETCH-CRAWL event around Skibbereen, introducing drawing techniques to anyone who cares to come along, it is a FREE event and we welcome all ages and abilities.

The main aim of Swerve Magazine is to give a platform to (emerging) writers and artists from County Cork from different ages and backgrounds but it is also keen to form relationships further afield. It has a presence in France via an exciting cross-cultural project with



artists and writers from Brittany and County Cork under an EU editor-at-large. As it is essential to make the magazine widely available, there is an online version which can be accessed on www.swervemagazine.org. Print copies are available from the Waterstones bookshop in Cork, the UCC bookshop at the Cork City Campus, Uillinn Arts Centre Skibbereen as well as from our office.

Instagram: @swerve_magazine
FB: Swerve Magazine and Swerve Magazine France
Swerve Magazine presents at DeBarra's Spoken Word on Wednesday, May 3 at 8:30pm, no cover charge.

'Where Light Falls' at Gallery Asna

'Where Light Falls', an exhibition by artists Kayla Martell and Nikki Tait opens at Gallery Asna, Clonakilty at 5.30pm on May 6 with all welcome.

Kayla Martell lives and paints in the beautiful countryside of Wicklow. She loves bringing to life the spirit and beauty of everyday things and each

painting is a little conversation between her and those special characters. Kayla's paintings focus on maintaining dynamic and expressive brushwork and a love of light and mornings, which she captures in quirky compositions.

Nikki Tait is a relief print-maker who made her home in West Cork more than two decades ago. She now works be-

tween West Cork and London, but it is the natural environment around the Seven Heads which provides much of the inspiration for her work.

After a former career as a journalist, Nikki studied at The Royal Drawing School and Heatherley's School of Art, and her work has been exhibited widely in Ireland and England and North America, Japan and

Australia. Her prints have been selected for both the "The Masters-Relief Prints" exhibitions in 2015 and 2019, organised by the Royal Society of Painter-Print-makers, and the "Impressions Print Exhibition" in Ireland. Her website, named after the townland where her studio is located, is cullenaghprints.com.

The exhibition runs for three weeks from May 6.



Ballydehob Jazz festival is back in full swing



Fans of music and almighty craic will descend on the West Cork village to partake in its world-renowned Ballydehob Jazz festival, from Friday, April 28 to Monday, May 1, 2023.

The Ballydehob Jazz Festival is back in full swing for its 17th edition this May bank holiday weekend with an incredible line up of gigs, art, and activities that promise to be the best yet!

Music lovers can look forward to unique live original shows, a free music trail of over 30 Irish and international acts, a jazz poetry slam, swing dance lessons, a late night jazz club for adults, a circus school for kids, flower and food workshops, a craft market, the Word Famous Ballydehob Jazz New Orleans Jazz Funeral Parade and many other treats and surprises.

Not to be missed is the world premiere of Swedish-born Ca-

milla Griehsel's new studio album show Mamasongue Source, alongside exceptional musicians all the way from the Congo and South Africa. Headlining on Saturday is the wildly anticipated TarantaCeltica; a multi-instrumentalist high energy musical collaborative that combines the rhythmic percussions of Southern Italy with traditional Irish jigs and melodies that guarantee to have the crowd on their feet.

The village's vibrant community has been pulling together to channel Ballydehob's energy through the legendary New Orleans-style Sunday Funeral Parade, this year themed the 'Carnival of Creatures' and led by Modh Coinníollach (The Good Mood) muppet, a physical manifestation of the village's sunny predisposition. Expect muppets in every shape and size, from the beautiful and majestic to weird and spooky alongside

music, spectacle and lots of colour.

"It's amazing how the festival has evolved from a bunch of jazz enthusiasts wanting to bring music of world stage standard to our small village 18 years ago, to a true celebration of the wild energy of jazz interpreted by an incredibly talented creative community, alongside local and international acts like Donal Dineen, the Canibal Dandies, Tacla, The Schmoozenbergs, Eve Clague, Duelling Pianos, Mafia Cats. How this village pulls together is incredible" says BJF Creative Director Joe and owner of local music venue

Levis Corner House.

"There'll be fun for everyone; circus school and music for kids, and for the second year running the Jazz Poetry Slam with amazing young poets and spoken word artists. For those who like to let loose we have the Moonshine Shindig Club with late night jazz DJs, and loads of great food options at the craft market with local fares, and of course more live jazz".

There are plenty of free events for all ages to enjoy, with some ticketed concerts. Weekend passes to all headline shows are €65. Full information, and booking at ballydehobjazzfestival.org

people Arts & Entertainment

Darrara Art Group paints a successful first exhibition



Detail of 'Poppies in the mist' by Kathleen O'Donovan

The Darrara Art Group held a very successful first exhibition over the Easter period. In opening the exhibition, Kate Fitzgerald of The Loft Gallery and Framing noted the high standard of work and the love of their local area by the artists displayed in the many landscape scenes depicted.

The Darrara Art Group was

started in 2002 by Patricia O'Brien and Mary Hennessy O'Brien in the old community hall. Some nights there were as few as three or four burgeoning artists in attendance but the girls kept it growing and today there are 25 members. Some of the earlier teachers were Sheila Hooks, Ann-Marie McCarthy, Gillian Smyth, Fionna Power, Rose Foley to name a few.

The group are most grateful to Maura McCarthy of the ETB in Skibbereen. Without her help and the guidance of tutor, Deirdre Hayes Archibald, they would not have reached the milestone of a first exhibition.

There was a fantastic atmosphere in the hall at the exhibition with a great crowd coming out to support the artists.

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Put Leap Show in your diary for June Bank Holiday Monday

The annual Leap Horse and Pony Show will take place on Bank Holiday Monday, June 5.

The Show will include a full schedule of in-hand and ridden classes for horses and ponies held across two rings, however no stallions are allowed to ensure the safety of spectators and competitors. This year both horse and pony classes begin at 11am sharp.

The big class of the day in Ring 1 will be the €1,000 Champion Yearling Class for non-thoroughbred horses. This has quickly become one of the most respected young Horse classes in the country with the winner often going on to have a great season and quickly earmarked for the yearling class at the Royal Dublin Show in August. There will be yearling qualifiers for the Filly/Gelding Yearling Cork County Championship at Carbery Show, the Colt/Gelding All Ireland Championship at Barryroe and the Filly Championship at Bridgetown as well as €100 for the Yearling Filly if not placed first or second. .

Competitors will need to have their horse's passports available for inspection on show day. Leap show is the huge showcase for yearlings as it is held so early in the year.

Ring 1 will have a qualifier for The Bantry Show Irish Draught Foal Munster Championship in September. There are also classes for brood mares, colt and filly foals, two and three-year-old fillies and geldings and for coloured horses both led and ridden.

Ridden hunter classes include the heavyweight/middle-weight, lightweight and small hunter categories.

The last competition of the day is the Supreme Champion Horse of the Show with the winner receiving the Michael Mennis Memorial Trophy which is a great honour for those involved.

Ring 2 sees a full range of IPS affiliated classes for show pony, lead rein, first ridden and show hunters. Following the Champion Ridden Pony is the family pony class for non-IPS ponies. A change has been made to the format of the ridden classes which gives more ponies the opportunity



to compete in the prestigious supreme championship at the end of the day.

There will be the in-hand pony classes for show pony and show hunter pony youngstock as well as show pony broodmares and foals. Connemara and Welsh ponies are also catered for. Prizewinners from these pony classes go forward to the Young Stock Championship and the Led Pony Championship. West Cork is synonymous with producing young ponies and horses so, like the young horse classes in ring one, fierce competition is to be expected here. The miniature pony class is split to accommodate youngstock and older ponies and has it's own championship with the champion going on to represent this category in the supreme championship for the best pony of the show.

Following the supreme championship, there is a led donkey class, roadcar and Open Driving classes.

The Dog show, which always proves exciting, commences at 3pm. This year there will be four qualifiers going forward to compete in the Munster Dog Championship at Kilgarvan Show in August, two from the small dog class and two from the large dog class.

Leap Horse and Pony Show, being early in the show season, gives people a chance to view the horses and ponies that will be exhibited and enjoyed during 2023. It is also a great social occasion where stories and memories are shared and friendships renewed.

For more details contact the secretary, Eleanor Calnan on 087-2958460 or Brian Sheahan on 087-6436355.

'Bloody Yesterday' on the Mizen



'Bloody Yesterday', a play by Deirdre Kinihan, one of Ireland's leading playwrights returns to the home of its inception this June on the Mizen Peninsula.

Conceived and written in 2022 in Ocean Studios, Gortnakilla, on the Sheep's Head Peninsula, Just seven miles from Gosh, it features two stellar Irish actors, Elizabeth Moynahan and Sinead Keegan. This thought-provoking play explores the relationship between a mother and daughter. Joyous, sad, funny and reflective, this play will head to New York after its performance in Gosh. Deirdre Kinihan will also be in attendance and will host a Q&A session after the play. June 10 at 8pm. Tickets €25 each.

For tickets please ring Brian on 083 1078077 or email devine.rooska@gmail.com. Tickets are limited!

Sudoku

The goal of Sudoku is to fill a 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9

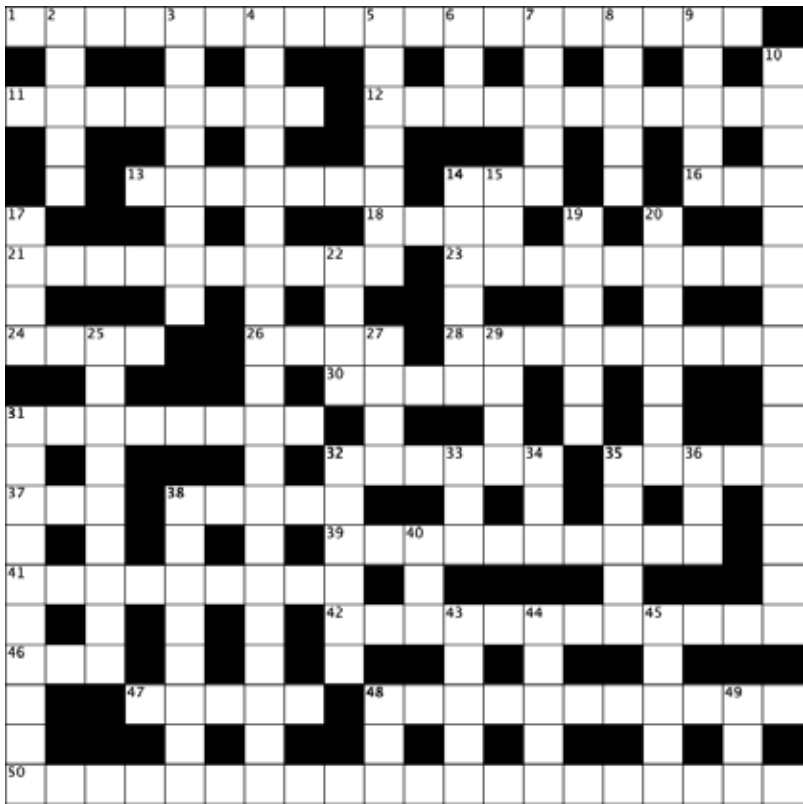
				2				6
1			5		4		3	
			3	9			8	
							5	
			8					
9		1	7					
					7	2	6	8
3	4			6				5
						3		

#225969 Difficulty: hard

				4				
9		1				7		
	2		8					
8		6		5			4	
				9				3
4						5		
	1					8		
5	4			3				2
				6				7

#223697 Difficulty: moderate

In the news Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 It's the 25th anniversary of this pact of cooperation (4,6,9)
- 11 Memo Alan about the malignant growth (8)
- 12 An ambassador from the Pope (5,6)
- 13 Guglielmo _____; radio pioneer (7)
- 14 Military special projects, in brief (3)
- 16 Bird with front-facing eyes (3)
- 18 Removed dye partly in whirlpool (4)
- 21 Fairground sweet (10)
- 23 Occasion to break glass? (9)
- 24 Hugo _____, German fashion designer (4)
- 26 Extreme body parts (4)
- 28 Watertight vessel, Nautilus perhaps (9)
- 30 Short summation (5)
- 31 Luxurious food item (8)
- 32 Rise, slope (6)
- 35 Foster's musical partner (5)
- 37 _____ Ellen, J.R.'s wife (3)
- 38 Group of African languages used in urban tutorials (5)
- 39 Icecream flavour (10)
- 41 Functioning well and with little waste (9)
- 42 Form of criminal defence (8,4)
- 46 Expose on the internet (3)
- 47 1:1,000,000, for example (5)
- 48 Rose in value (11)
- 50 Fictional creature created by Mary Shelley (13,7)

DOWN

- 2 US sandwich cookies (5)
- 3 Potent synthetic opioid (8)

- 4 Catholic Church name in Clonakilty, Enniskeane, Kealkil and elsewhere (10,10)
- 5 1980s go-getters (7)
- 6 Country's economic statistic, abr (3)
- 7 Island of liberty (5)
- 8 Color similar to lilac (5)
- 9 Comedy starring Jack Black, _____ Libre (5)
- 10 Louth area, ancestral home of US President (6,9)
- 14 Texas city named after a Black Sea port (6)
- 15 Ant-man's last name (3)
- 17 Strike breaker or wound protection (4)
- 19 Author or 33rd President of the United States (6)
- 20 Liable to cry (7)
- 22 Can tell the future (4)
- 25 Attractive older gentleman (6,3)
- 27 Hems, perhaps (3)
- 29 Word almost at beginning of fairytale (4)
- 31 Industrial city on the Rhine (10)
- 32 1950s car make (6)
- 33 Landing time, approx (3)
- 34 Bath, informally (3)
- 35 Varied selection (5)
- 36 Non-ordained person in the church (3)
- 38 Travel light (8)
- 40 _____ na Rún, TG4 drama (3)
- 43 Ski resort in Colorado (5)
- 44 Last bit of the small intestine (5)
- 45 Sound of bells or laughter (5)
- 48 Part of a Tin Man costume (3)
- 49 Farm female (3)

Across: 1 Good Friday Agreement; 11 melanoma; 12 Papal Nuncio; 13 Marconi; 14 ops; 16 owl; 18 eddy; 21 candyfloss; 23 emergency; 24 Boss; 26 toes; 28 submarine; 30 recap; 31 delicacy; 32 ascent; 35 Allen; 37 Sue; 38 Bantry; 39 strawberry; 41 efficient; 42 insidious plea; 46 doc; 47 radio; 48 appreciated; 50 Frankenstein's monster. Down: 2 Oreos; 3 Jennifer; 4 immaculate Conception; 5 yuppies; 6 GDP; 7 Ellis; 8 naive; 9 macho; 10 Cooley Peninsula; 14 Odessa; 15 Pym; 17 scab; 19 Truman; 20 tearful; 22 seer; 25 silver fox; 27 sews; 29 upon; 31 Düsseldorf; 32 Austin; 33 ETA; 34 nub; 35 array; 36 key; 38 backpack; 40 Ros; 43 Aspen; 44 ileum; 45 beads; 48 axe; 49 Eve

people Farming

Macra taking 'Steps for our Future' to the gates of Government

Macra na Feirme's national AGM will be held in West Cork this year at the Maritime Hotel in Bantry on Saturday, May 13. Once the day's official proceedings are out of the way, Carbery Macra have organised a banquet with music afterwards by Bog the Donkey. Check the Carbery Macra Facebook page for further details on tickets.

Ahead of the AGM, Macra is taking 'Steps for our Future' walking 14 hours through the night from Athy, County Kildare where Macra was founded in 1944, to arrive at the gates of Government at 13:00 on April, Wednesday 26, carrying the message for the future of rural Ireland.

Macra President John Keane has said that "Over the past two years we have put forward continuous constructive proposals around forming the future that rural young people want in Ireland. Sadly, the Government have failed to engage proactively on many of these proposals".

The main issues that are coming to the fore for Macra members are:

- Accessing affordable housing and cumbersome housing planning guidelines
- Disjointed and sparse health-care services for rural communities
- The Governments definition of a family farm as 'average' and 'typical'
- No recognition or engagement

by Government on a farming succession scheme

- Lack of planning for the future of our rural communities informed by rural people
- Imposition of quotas on young farmers availing of grant aid support
- Lack of public transport for rural Ireland
- Proposals to rewet large areas of rural Ireland

"On behalf of our members across the country, I am asking that rural people from all over the country support our action. We are the future of our rural communities, we want to remain in rural Ireland, what we want now is the Government to support youth in rural Ireland," the Macra president concluded.



A farmer offers refreshments to Macra na Feirme president John Keane and agricultural affairs chairman Liam Hanrahan as they take part in the Steps for our Future march from Athy, Co Kildare to Government buildings in Dublin.

A Farming Life: Elaine Houlihan, incoming Macra President

Interview by Tommy Moyles

A new presidential team led by president, Elaine Houlihan, begins their two-year term at the head of the young farmers organisation following recent elections. A member of the Killmallock branch in Co Limerick, Elaine is set to become the second woman to lead the organisation and subject to a trawl through the archives, it appears she could also be the youngest president in the organisation's 79-year history.

She's also probably one of the few heads of the organisation who got to meet with US president Joe Biden on his recent visit to Ireland. Speaking to Tommy Moyles, incoming president Elaine Houlihan tells us how the meeting came about.

So why did Elaine decide to put her name forward for election?

"I was humming and hawing, after my first year of Munster vice-president, people were saying that I would surely run for president. Over Christmas last year, myself and parents were around the table at home and they said to me, would you not go for the big job? I kind of dismissed it but my dad said think about it. More people got onto me in January then, so I sat down with the club and they were fully behind me. I threw my hat in the ring and I had nothing to lose. The big thing

for me was I didn't care if I won or lost but it was to show others that they could have the confidence to go for other roles. I'm looking forward to the AGM in Bantry and Carbery region hosting it; they're putting in trojan work so it should be a great event."

Macra's protest recently got the backing of not one but

two heads of state, when the incoming president was invited to meet the US president on his recent state visit to Áras an Uachtaráin. It's an event that nearly didn't happen according to Elaine.

"One of the lads at work was messing, asking if I'd get to meet Joe Biden now that I have the Macra president job. Later

on I got a phone call inviting me to Áras an Uachtaráin to meet him. I genuinely thought it was one of the lads and I was having none of it and was fairly sharp on the phone. I took it more serious when I got the email confirmation and another phone call. I thought there would be a few hundred of us there to see him when but there was only eight of us, myself, some trade people and former Irish soccer international Paul McGrath. President Michael D Higgins came in and had breakfast with us and after the tree planting ceremony, we got to meet Joe Biden for half an hour. He had interest in young rural Ireland and he loved the whole idea of walking the 79 kms in our 79th year and we'll be sharing 79 stories of people who had to move abroad. Hearing Joe Biden and Michael D saying you're doing the right thing would give you a bit of confidence."

Deciding to hold the protest walk from Athy to government buildings wasn't an easy decision but something Elaine said the organisation had to do.

"The points we're raising with government all stem from our membership. They are extremely concerned about the future of rural Ireland. Who wants to live in community that has no shop, has no school, has no GAA club, no hall."

Leap Horse & Pony Show
Bank Holiday Monday
June 5 Starts 11am

Classes for Horses & Ponies

Dog Show starts 3pm

Side Attractions

Fun day for all the family
Enquiries: 087 2958460



Over the years Macra has evolved to the point where the non-farming membership is over 60 per cent. While its roots are firmly in agriculture, the occupations of the members are varied. Every club is made up of teachers, nurses or any young professional living in the club's catchment who wants to be involved in their community.

One of Macra's biggest strengths has always been an active social life that centred around competitions, social events, meetings and travel both throughout the country and further afield. Through those activities it forged a strong sense of community at a local level that was built on through the branch and county network. The Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on social activities proved as challenging for Macra as it did for so many organisations and people.

"The whole pandemic was a learning curve. The infrastructure to deal with it wasn't there at the time. We've heard of the national broadband scheme

but broadband was a weakness in lots of parts of the country. Internet wasn't there for online quizzes or for meetings for everyone."

A physiotherapist and part-time farmer when not stuck in her Macra role, Elaine was instrumental in getting the organisation back up out of Covid-hibernation and social media proved a gateway for that.

"People want to belong to something, there are extremely proud macra people and those who pop in and out when they can, so we tried to cater for those. Bouncing back from it, we returned with a massive bang with social media. It helped when trying to keep people engaged with their local branch and county. I started off doing challenges online and they kind of escalated. We got members out walking 11 peaks; 18 members cycled from Mizen head to Malin head last summer and other events.

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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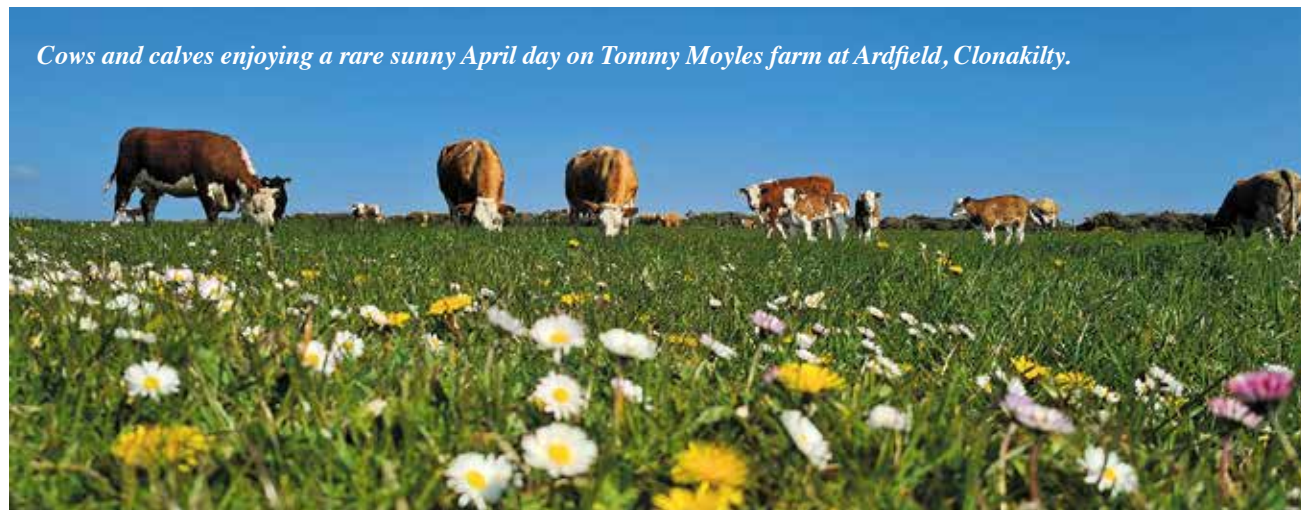


After a washout in March, I was hoping easier farming conditions would prevail for April but it has proved equally challenging for the best part of the month. Usually, April is a bit of a release valve on busy farms. Calving is out of the way on most spring calving farms and yards tend to empty out from after St Patrick's

day onwards with the workload easing as stock get to grass. On tillage farms there's usually a few windows of dry weather to get field work completed from late February on. This year has been different. Wet, cold and windy conditions were more prevalent certainly until the third week of April and you could count the good days on one hand. Due to that, field work has backed up and there's been a big push to get crops in as soon as possible. That puts an added strain in a system that is so seasonal. Dairy farms that would usually have cows out day and night from early April had to practice on-off grazing a little longer. Instead of getting a small bit of respite before breeding season gets underway their daily work didn't ease off at the levels it usually would.

Price cuts in the region of 4c/l won't have helped lift the moods of dairy farmers so a bit of sunshine would certainly lift the spirits.

One would hope that the amount of rain so far this year will hopefully mean a washout summer like 2012 shouldn't be on the cards. That summer alone, with the long cold springs in 2013 and 2018, feature highly in my own farming practice memory bank and those memories have been dipped into more



Cows and calves enjoying a rare sunny April day on Tommy Moyles farm at Ardfield, Clonakilty.

often than I'd like over the last month. Those lessons learned the hard way mean conditions are managed as they occur rather than sticking to a plan regardless. That, combined with focusing on what I can control, has made the last three weeks tolerable but still unwelcome.

Grazing

Despite the rain, temperatures have been relatively good and as a result grass growth has tipped along. With four months gone, this year has probably been the most varied when it comes to dipping into the grazing bag of tricks. All of the 2022-born heifer calves got out to grass in early February. In an effort to hold

grass covers for cows and calves, half of the heifers were housed before the end of February. I didn't think the rest would need to be housed again but I was wrong. They came in around St Patrick's day and it was the third week of April before they got out again. That was a first but it had to be done. Getting calves out of the shed was the main priority, especially as calves were arriving fairly quickly. It was one of the tightest calving windows I ever experienced and the worst in terms of weather too, but because of decisions made, it proved to be one of the more enjoyable calving seasons. It wasn't all sweetness and light as there were a few losses and things not going to plan but in

terms of the workload it was very manageable.

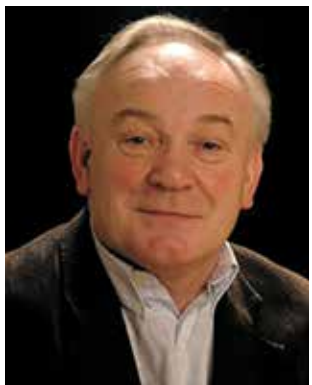
Schemes

Farm advisers are in the midst of yet another busy spell as they deal with their clients initial application for the main CAP payment.

In previous years, if a farmer had no changes to the farm, sorting out the application was straightforward. That's not the case this year. What was known as the Basic Payment System (BPS) has been replaced by a more environmentally-focused scheme Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS). Among the measures included is space for nature, so all farmers

must review the maps sent out earlier in March and ensure that the departments maps correspond with what is actually on the farm and that the areas are correct. Land parcels that are included in the new Multi Species Swards and Red Clover schemes must also be highlighted as well as what crops are in each of the fields. A further complication is that not all farmers have access to their application yet as their data for the environmental scheme ACRES isn't fully uploaded yet. I'd say every farm adviser in the country will be booking holidays for June and turning their phones off if not throwing them away.

people Motoring

CAR
REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

MG 4 EV is a gamechanger

I'm sure it would be attractive for boy-racers, who have a reputation for speed. But I think you need to drive sensibly in an electric car unless you want to spend even more time at the charging points.

You will get close to 430km with a full charge in the Exclusive version which has the large 64 kWh battery. The battery charges very quickly, if you can find a public charge point where is not a queue waiting for a charge.

This car is a game changer for the MG brand, which is made in China and imported by the Frank

Keane group. It's a five-door hatchback that competes with the likes of the VW ID.3 and Nissan Leaf in terms of size, but it undercuts most of its rivals in price.

The MG 4 is a really attractive. At the front it looks like a sports car and you get very attractive LED lights, hence the boy-racer comparison. It's based on a new dedicated EV platform which means more interior space. Other electric cars in the MG range have used chassis designed to accommodate combustion engines also.

At the front it's different to

most of the other electric cars in the Irish market. Electric cars don't have a front grille and they can look very dull at the front compared to a petrol or diesel cars. But the MG4 has a smooth, pointed, sports car-like front end, clean lines and also has a very fancy tail end.

Inside the dash has a minimalist layout with the rotary control the only item between the driver and front seat passenger.

The rear end is unusual with a huge glass strip between the rear window and the door to open the boot. There is no rear wiper as MG claims that the car's rear

spoiler is designed to channel airflow over the glass.

The boot is a decent size, but as is normal with electric cars there is no spare wheel provided. My only small gripe was that the radio kept switching from FM to DAB and the DAB didn't seem to be working.

Like most of the other electric cars there is no stop/start button in the MG4 EV. Once the key is on your person you sit in, press the brake pedal and select drive or reverse on the rotary controller and off you go.

Going from zero to 100km/h is not recommended if you want to

save electricity, but if you want to do so for research purposes it can be achieved in just under eight seconds.

Prices start at €27,495, which I think is reasonable. Road tax is €120.

Up to now I have been sceptical about the race to go fully electric by 2030. But if you are not fully convinced about the merits of electric cars, have a drive in MG4 and like me you might change your mind, especially regarding comfort and price.



Last week I got some envious glances in the electric version of the MG 4 that I was driving. And my wife had no difficulty finding the car when we parked in the massive Liffey Valley Shopping Centre car park.

The reason was simple, my test car came in a Volcanic Orange colour. Somebody said it would be more suitable for a boy-racer than a very mature (well in age anyway) adult like me.

people Home & Garden

West Cork Garden Trail gets ready to welcome garden lovers

A new gardening season lies ahead, eagerly awaited after this challenging winter. The West Cork Garden Trail and its garden members are again getting prepared for garden visitors and nature enthusiasts with 23 exclusively private gardens opening their doors to welcome garden lovers.

The diversity of the 23

gardens is what makes the West Cork Garden Trail so special. From large estate gardens to small hidden private gardens, everything can be found. From the manicured and extremely well-kept garden to the wildy romantic natural garden, from the garden shaped by sustainability aspects to the historic garden that gradually evolved over a long period, there is

something to suit every taste. Visiting several gardens in this season is therefore highly recommended.

For information on which gardens to visit on the West Cork Garden Trail go to www.westcorkgardentrail.com. This website also shows the individual opening times of the gardens. Some gardens have fixed opening hours throughout

the season, others are only open by prior arrangement.

The West Cork Garden Trail is also interested in adding new private gardens. If you would like more information or have questions about the West Cork Garden Trail, please send an email to info@westcorkgardentrail.com.

Changes to grants for vacant and derelict properties a gamechanger

Cork South West TD, Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has said that the increased grant amounts available to first time buyers and other qualifying applicants for renovating and upgrading vacant and derelict properties would be a huge boost towards home ownership.

He said "In West Cork, quite a number of first time buyers have already availed of these grants and it has made home ownership a reality, however we still have a number of vacant properties in many of our towns, villages and rural areas.

I truly believe that the increased grant amounts will accelerate the number of properties that are brought back into residential use."

The Government on Tuesday agreed on a proposal brought by Minister for Housing, Darragh O'Brien to increase the grant for vacant properties from €30,000 to €50,000 and for derelict properties from €50,000 to €70,000. Deputy O'Sullivan said "We need every measure possible to increase home ownership and bring rental properties back into the market."



He continued "I also believe that the waving of development fees for building of houses will reduce costs and should increase the level of house building in Ireland." He finished "It is very important however that any funds that would have gone to Local Authorities are covered by the State so that they can continue to provide important infrastructure such as roads, water structure and waste water."

New study reveals smartphone apps are unable to identify plant species accurately

A new study by University of Galway has shown that some smartphone identifier apps actually mis-identify at least one in five plant species.

With spring in the air and more people spending time in the great outdoors, smartphone applications offer opportunities to get people engaged with plants, the importance of biodiversity and education but potentially to determine if a plant may be problematic or harmful.

Researchers at the School of Natural Sciences at University of Galway and the School of Geography at University of Leeds released findings of a study which highlights that they should not be trusted to identify plants with 100 per cent accuracy, a particularly important issue for toxic plants.

The study has been published in the international scientific journal PLOS ONE, and was authored by Neil Campbell, who carried out the study while completing a Master's degree at the University of Galway; Dr Karen Bacon, Lecturer in Plant Ecology at University of

Galway; and Dr Julie Peacock, Associate Professor in Ecology at the University of Leeds.

The team tested the ability of six common smartphone applications to identify 38 herbaceous plants native to Ireland. The highest performing app only had 80-88 per cent accuracy.

The study also found that the apps showed considerable variation across plant species but they were better able to identify plants in photographs that included flowers than when photographs only included leaves.

The study highlights that, although apps can do a reasonably good job of identifying plants, they should not be considered to be providing 100% accurate identifications. This is important for a variety of reasons, including use to identify toxic plants, use to identify potentially problematic plants and use in teaching. The technology is improving all the time, but for now, identifications from such apps should be used as a help to identify plants and not automatically considered to be correct.

Dr Karen Bacon said: "The prevalence of plant ID apps on smartphones means that people can now reach into their pockets, take out their phones and identify plants - easier than ever before. This offers a great means of encouraging people to engage with nature and become more familiar with the plants in their local areas or, indeed, plants in new exotic places when they travel.

"However, we don't really know how good many of these apps are at actually doing what they say they can - identifying plants accurately. This is of particular importance when we consider people trying to identify a plant that an animal or young child may have ingested - how sure can you be that your app is giving you the right identification?"

Dr Julie Peacock said: "Plant identification apps have huge potential to improve plant awareness in the general population. They can also aid conservation efforts and environmental consultancy teams. However, we should be aware that plant identification apps are only a tool to guide the

user. The user needs basic plant identification skills too, as well as a willingness to double check the plant species suggestions that the app gives. A calculator is an excellent tool in maths, but without knowledge of at least basic arithmetic, someone using it could not know if the calculator was giving a strange answer. Similarly, basic plant identification skills and a willingness to check suggestions that apps make, will help the individual most effectively use these apps. Being aware that the apps may not be accurate, some will be better at different types of plants, and the photo submitted will impact the accuracy of the identification is important when using these tools."

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people Home & Garden

May in the garden

May is a beautiful month in the Garden with Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias, Paeonies and Flowering Cherries in full flower. The days are now warmer (we hope) but it is still necessary to be careful with late frosts especially with fruit blossom and tender bedding and half-hardy bedding plants.

Containers of tender plants can be brought indoors if a dip in the temperature is forecast or, if too heavy and cumbersome, can be covered with frost protection fleece, which has been well-weighted or secured down against winds and gales. If frost is forecast and you have treasured plants that are vulnerable, set an alarm one hour before

nightfall to cover and protect your plants before nightfall.

Potatoes: If you have unplanted seed potatoes get them planted right away – they will be fine if planted over the next fortnight. They should emerge quite quickly at this time of year. Earth-up potatoes that have already appeared above ground.

Summer Bedding: Plant out summer bedding now especially the hardier, tougher varieties. If you have a 'landmark' or 'red letter day' in May use some of the tougher varieties of bedding plants, patio or early flowering perennials. Pansies and

Cats especially are inclined to gravitate towards the warmest, most comfortable surroundings and if not kept out of the greenhouse could make a bed out of your precious tray of seedlings or young plants.

Plant out Tomatoes, Peppers, Chillis, Cucumbers, Aubergines, Lettuce, Salad leaves and Basil in the greenhouse border or in deep containers or grow-bags. All old debris in containers or the greenhouse border should be discarded prior to planting as it may contain overwintered pests or diseases.

Lilies: Lilies, which come in a great range of colours, may be



GARDENING

John Hosford
The Weekend Garden Centre

of Tomatoes such as 'Tumbling Tom RED' perform well in a hanging basket bearing their sweet cherry fruit over a long period. Use a deep container for greater water retention and abundant nutrients. Regular feeding at weekly intervals once fruit has formed with a liquid tomato fertiliser will encourage sustained continuity of fruit. Water/feed in the morning. Take precautions when blight warnings are broadcast on Radio, TV, online and on the daily newspapers. Ventilate well in warm conditions.

Deep troughs will sustain Kale, Savoy Cabbage, Carrots, Beetroot, Chard, Courgettes, Cucumbers, Runner Beans, French Beans, Climbing French Beans, Peas.

Climbing Beans and Peas should be supported with a wigwam made from willow, hazel sticks or timber from your local builders providers. The support should be 2-3m in height to maximise cropping potential.

Fuchsias, Begonias, Geraniums Pelargoniums, Petunias, Surfinias, Nemesis, Lobelia, Dichondra 'Silver Falls', Helichrysum (foliage, trailing

varieties), Buzy Lizzies (Impatiens), Cineraria 'Silver Dust', Calendulas, Marigolds (French and African) all provide continuous colour from now until the first frosts of winter.

Choose deep containers. Make sure there are adequate drainage outlets. If using old containers discard old compost, dead or diseased plants. In the case of hanging baskets ensure chains are in a good, sound condition. Brackets should be in a sound condition and replace if not. Use fresh compost when planting, adding a good slow release fertiliser to the compost. Mix thoroughly throughout the compost. Keep in a sheltered place for a period of seven to 10 days after planting to allow establishment and acclimatisation. Commence feeding within a month of planting.

Roses: Always buy good quality plants. Prepare ground well adding Gee-up and a slow-release organic fertiliser. Avoid planting where Roses have been previously. Use mycorrhizal fungi at planting time to optimise performance. Keep recently planted Roses well watered during dry periods, keeping water off the foliage. Liquid feeding can be done fortnightly from until late September. Established Roses should get two applications of rose fertiliser per season. Mulch Rose beds to a depth of 10cm with weed-free, well-composted farmyard or stable manure or Gee-up.

Tie in new growth of climbers or ramblers when young and pliable, training horizontally whenever practical to improve flowering.

Fruit: Tuck straw under strawberries to protect fruit from rotting. This also prevents the fruits being splashed by rain-splashed soil and slugs. Watch/protect any vulnerable fruit blossom if frost is forecast. Remember you can get frost up to about May 19.

Open Gardens

Check local and national newspaper gardening columns with opening hours of Gardens throughout Cork and Ireland. The Chelsea Flower Show is held at the end of the month and expect extensive TV coverage of the world's most famous Flower Show on BBC TV channels. Watch out this year for local participants!

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Violas come in mixed or named specific colours. Plant at 20cm apart on ground that hasn't grown Pansies or Violas before to reduce incidence of diseases, pests and leaf spots. Watch out for early infestations of greenfly and aphids. Aquilegia, Lupins, Primulas, hardy Geraniums and Sweet William will provide early colour. Arygrathemum, Euryops, Brachycome (Swan River Daisy), Nemesis will provide reliable early reliable colour and with regular feeding, watering and dead-heading will continue to provide abundant colour until the first frosts of October/early November. Water early in the day, recycling water if possible.

Daffodils and Spring Bulbs:

Lift and divide Spring bulbs, marking and labelling with a robust cane and label with details of variety. If moving to a new area ensure it is a sunny, well-drained position, avoiding waterlogged or poorly drained soils. Daffodils and Narcissi should be divided every three to five years. If not divided, you may end up with a lot of 'blind' non-flowering bulbs.

Crocus and Snowdrops will be disappearing from above ground now.

Glasshouse/Indoors: Open the glasshouse on calm, warm days. Do make it cat/pet proof if you are out for the day, using netting to exclude them and secure thoroughly!

grown in the border or in deep, well-drained pots. Many have a powerful fragrance, which will fill the garden with a scent of celestial proportions! Watch out for lily beetles (bright red) which can munch their way through foliage quite rapidly. They can appear on Lilies and Fritillaries from early Spring onwards. In midsummer the larval stage also occurs on the foliage.

The grubs have rotund bodies and are orange-red with black heads. Move early and swiftly to eradicate this destructive pest.

Containers for Summer

Displays: Plant up containers now for a long lasting summer display. Summer containers will provide months of continuous colour and scent. They will give an amazing amount of pleasure and satisfaction for a small amount of care. The choice of plants is limited only by your imagination!

Why not try a mixture of herbs in a container in a sunny aspect Sage, Thyme, Basil, Rosemary and Mint are all suitable in a container. Mint will tolerate some shade. Use a John Innes No.3 compost when potting, as this soil-based compost will retain moisture longer than some of the other composts.

Wildflowers can be used too in a container so consider some Clover and Bird's Foot Trefoil. The Hanging basket varieties

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Crowley in top form for this year's Christy Ring Cup

It's rare to see a West Cork athlete ply their trade outside the country, but Bandon born Ronan Crowley, who plays for the Robert Emmetts Hurling club in London and for the Exiles at inter-county level, is one to watch says **Matthew Hurley**.

Crowley was the third top scorer in the Allianz Hurling League Division 2, scoring 2-41 in five games as London survived relegation to Division 3 with a win over Sligo, 1-27 to 1-25.

However, Crowley and co lost to the same opposition in the first game of the 2023 Christy Ring Cup, 2-20 to 1-20.

The Exiles find themselves in a group with Sligo, Tyrone, Mayo, Meath and Derry with the top two going to Croke Park for the final.

After playing with Lancashire initially between 2017 and 2020, Crowley moved to London in 2021. Living in Ireland and in the UK has its fair share of differences, never mind playing hurling, as Crowley shares.

"Coming from West Cork, it's not quite the same as living in inner city London. As for the GAA side of things, it is a mas-

sive commute to get to a pitch for all of us," says Crowley. "Here it takes over an hour to get anywhere. It's not like rural areas where you can drive for five minutes down to the pitch. There are many positives too though; there is no shortage of stuff to do."

Crowley went across the Irish Sea initially to study radiography in Manchester, thus played GAA with Lancashire before London.

He spent around four years in the Northwest of England while also sometimes going home to Bandon.

"The first year there, I don't think they had a team set up. First of all, I was allowed to play with both Bandon and Lancashire which was a unique experience. I had some unbelievable experiences when playing with Lancashire," he reminisces.

"To play in Croke Park, to train competitively. We trained the same as at home, twice a week. We pretty much played all our home matches in Abbotstown in Dublin so there was a lot of flying involved. It was great that the family were able to come up and watch. The craic on the plane going back was always very good too."

Once Crowley got used to his surroundings and settled in the UK, he flourished; he is now five years there.

"My main concern when going to Manchester was not playing football or hurling regularly. The English GAA

inter-county setups get a load of backing from the GAA and county boards.

"If anybody is apprehensive in moving away from the GAA, there's loads of it here. It may be playing with different fellas but when you're playing in a city like Manchester or London, you will have automatically have 30 new friends in the first team you join for however long you're there," he says.

The club scene in London may not be known to Irish sports enthusiasts but it's a championship to look out for.

Crowley's club, Robert Emmetts, has competed in the last two finals, winning in 2021.

"There's some strong teams. We've been in battles with St Gabriel's and Brothers Pearse in the last couple of years. Gabriel's beat us last year in the final, we beat them the year before. It's very much the same structure as back home, train twice a week and then matchday," he explains.

"The county final feeling are the same as back home too. The build-up is big and if you can win it, the celebrations are immense but the downs of losing a final is terrible. What's unique about London is nearly all the players know each other, especially through the London team. That winning feeling is something I'd always have."

A championship win for London would be huge as they battle for the Christy Ring Cup this year.

The Joe McDonagh Cup is



the competition above with the Liam McCarthy Cup at the very top, a championship the exiles competed in as recently as 2014.

"There's some tough teams in the Christy Ring. Meath and Derry obviously. Mayo are an interesting one. The only reason Mayo are so low in the leagues is because the Tooreen lads don't play with them until the end of the league. They got to the Christy Ring Cup final last year, same year they got relegated from Division 2B. It's almost impossible to read into their league form.

"We've already lost to Tyrone this year and they won the Nicky Rackard Cup last year, getting promoted. If you get a few wins on the bounce, Croke Park could be on the cards but if you get a bad run, relegation could be a possibility," admits the West Cork man.

The Nicky Rackard and Lory Meagher Cups are the two other competitions in the hurling pyramid and Crowley played in the Meagher cup with Lancashire.

He noticed a key difference between middle tier and lower tier hurling.

"In the Lory Meagher, there's good teams in it. When I was playing with Lancashire, we

played Sligo a lot and now I'm with London, we've already played them three times this year. We were playing Kildare last year and recently they were one win from promotion to Division 1.

"The only difference between the Christy Ring and Lory Meagher is the panels. Numbers are strong in Christy Ring like ours whereas they might not be as big in the Lory Meagher," he explains.

He may have been one of the top scorers in the whole National Hurling League, but Crowley pointed out a flaw in that stat despite his exploits.

"The way I'd look at those is I'd take the frees out of it. I think having the players scoring from play only and ones taking frees in the same bracket is unfair," he acknowledges.

"Jack Goulding (his London teammate) has scored pretty much all of his scores from play and he's one of the top scorers in the league. I'd look more at the stats being put up from play rather than frees. Frees is just a job you take on. It's nice to be up there but it's ones from play I'd look at."

Looking back to his days playing for Bandon, Crowley has great memories. The current London star won a premier

intermediate county hurling title and intermediate football title in 2016.

"It's something I'll never forget. To win a county with your club is a dream but to win two in six days was incredible with virtually the same set of players. The hurling celebrations were a bit tapered due to the football being on soon after, but the football celebrations went long into the winter. It's something myself and the lads still talk about whenever we meet up."

He got called up to the Cork minor hurling team in 2008 too.

"Growing up, playing with Bandon was all I ever did. If I wasn't at home, I'd be at the GAA pitch practicing with friends," he said.

"Getting selected in the Cork minor panel then was a dream from when I was about 12. To win a Munster out of that was fantastic."

Crowley was on the Cork panel that won the All-Ireland Intermediate Hurling Championship in 2014 when he was home too.

"That was a great experience too, as back then Intermediate games were the curtain raisers to senior games. We got a couple of days out in Thurles. A couple of my friends, Mark Sugrue and James McSweeney from Bandon, were on the team as well, that made it extra special," says Crowley.

The possibility of coming back to Bandon is there for him but he is keeping his options open.

It's not just the GAA club which makes him contemplate coming home.

"I don't know," Crowley answers on whether he plans to come back.

"It's a question I've been asking myself. Life is good in London, but you do miss being home. My brother recently had a baby boy so things like that make you miss the family a bit more. Everybody else seems to be going to Australia as well; between the three of them I'm pretty torn at the moment," he laughs.

"There's always the pull for coming back to play with Bandon especially with the fact I'm pushing on; I'd love to go back."

The West Cork club are currently in the premier intermediate county championship in both codes.

No matter whether he comes home or not, Crowley is making a name for himself over in the English capital and will be a player to watch in this year's Christy Ring Cup.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Kilmeen U12 camogie team played away against Buttevant recently and recorded a fine win.

people Sport

New accessible fishing facility at Shepperton Lake

Inland Fisheries Ireland has launched an 'all abilities' accessible angling facility in West Cork to enable wheelchair users to fish safely and conveniently. The bespoke fishing platform at Shepperton Lake near Skibbereen cost €106,000 to construct and provides access to wheelchair users, and those with reduced mobility, at the popular angling destination.

The initiative was co-funded by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Speaking at the opening of the new platform John Twomey Fisheries Inspector with IFI said: "We're delighted to have had the opportunity to work with the Irish Wheelchair Association on this project, and are very pleased the amenity has been constructed. We can't wait for it to be used by people of all abilities."

The outdoor facility consists of a long boardwalk and a large

accessible steel stand that can cater for up to four wheelchair anglers at a time, a new picnic area, and parking for six vehicles.

IFI hosted members of the Irish Wheelchair Association in Clonakilty for the official opening of the new amenity, following an extensive programme of works to transform the site to support inclusive angling.

Sinead Burke, Service Support Officer for the Irish Wheelchair Association said: "Our service users are thrilled with the new fishing podium at Shepperton Lake and will be able to enjoy a long season of fishing from now on."

"Getting out in nature, and having access to a tailor-made resource like this, will be extremely beneficial to the wellbeing of our service users. We would like to thank the incredible team of IFI who went above and beyond to enhance the fishing experience of our service users. We feel very grateful to work in partnership with the team from IFI."

IFI has collaborated with the Irish Wheelchair Association in Clonakilty for the past seven years, and in that period angling day trips to Shepperton Lake have increased in popularity among the latter's members.



(l-r) John Nyhan, Harry Bennett, John Twomey IFI, Brian O'Donoghue, Mags O'Connor, Deirdre Harrington, Sinead Burke and Barry Collins

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FIREWOOD, buy cheap firewood ready for next winter! Noble Fir rings, excellent when split and seasoned, much better than Sitka Spruce. Collect before May 6th from Ballineen. Typical 6x4 trailer €60, 8x4 €80 etc. 087 3638623
ADULT MAN'S mountain bike, as new, €200, also secondhand Mandolin instrument €100. 087 2106424

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SCRAP CARS COLLECTED
Phone 0872449648

2 NEW WHEELS for Ford 3000 tractor 12x28, 087 2395459
WANTED ZETOR and David Browne tractor, for parts or repair might suit. 087 2395459
WANTED CHILD'S car seat suitable for 2 years upwards, 086 3031622
FOR SALE battery fencer, very good condition, 086 2206441
HEAVY WOODEN dining table with glass top to suit, 130x130cm, 6 chairs €300 ono. 087 7025376
BRITISH QUEENS, Golden Wonder and Rooster seed potatoes 087 9582727
SMALL CAR TRAILER frame and wheels lights working, plastic barrels, all sorts of furniture, old coins, 2 exercise bikes, oil tank, 2 glass doors for inside, old

furniture and pine, 8 inside doors, Childs bike for 6-7 year old, 2 stainless steel sinks with taps, 2 small kitchen units, 12ft long gates. 087 7504152
TWO 13FT 9X2 Deel, clean for stairs, already cut out. Dumanway area €70 for pair 087 7745075
FREE TWO double mattresses one base, Dunmanway area 087 7745075
HALL STAND 087 3970066

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• Washing Machines
• Cookers
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FAST & EFFICIENT

WANTED CAR TRAILER 8x4 must be in good condition 086 3960344
CAR TYRES and tractor tyres suitable for silage pit, take away 086 1940787
LOTS OF SHOES for sale size 4 and 5 never worn €5 each €40 for the lot one pair of RiverIsland €25 087 945840
CLEAR 1/4 PLATE glass 52"x 55" approx, free to whoever wants it 083 1991675
DUTCH STYLE 3 piece suit with brown cushions free to good home 083 1991675

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Violin/Fiddle, Trumpet/Cornet, Guitar, Ukulele, Piano/Keyboard, Voice, Whistle
Music Theory, Improvisation
Available in-person & online
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DIVAN BED 4ftx6ft excellent condition 086 3122811
3 SEATER COUCH with 2 armchairs perfect condition, going cheap 086 3569954
WHITE BATHROOM handbasin and pedestal with taps and waste fittings in very good condition €25 028 2374629
KVERNLANDBUCK rake needs repair 089 4192426
FERGUSON 20 diesel, very original 089 4192426

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Upvc Windows,
Doors, Patio Doors &
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SUPPLIED & FITTED
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WHITE FLAT pack 2 drawer bathroom wall mounted cabinet brand new from B & Q with instructions without hand basin, one tile cracked €20 028 2374629
BALE HANDLER, paddle type, very good condition 089 4192426
PAIR OF TRACTOR tyres 12.4 11/28 for sale and complete back wheel 086 2788682
JOHNSON SINGLE row potato digger spare or repair 089 4192426

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GUINEA COCKS 087 7681080
ANTIQUA PINE dressing table for sale with swivel mirror 087 2882953
OLD STONE building to be demolished, stone would suit for back filling 087 2882953

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CHILD'S COT as new, perfect condition Skibbereen area 086 1010314
3 SMALL folding tables one steel two timber €25 the lot 085 1379824
3 SHEETS of insulated cladding 10ft 6 long, 3ft wide €25 a sheet 085 1379824

AL-ANON provide support for families of alcoholics.
Meetings in the West Cork area are:
Monday: Dunmanway 8.30pm behind the Catholic Church.
Thursday: Skibbereen 8.30pm Lisheen house (opp. Busy Bee).
Friday: Bandon 6.30pm Town Hall
FOR MORE INFO: 01 873 2699

ROUND FIRE PIT with stainless steel top €50 085 1379824
BRADA BARBECUE perfect condition €60 085 1379824
PET EWES 086 3186618
MATTRESSES and beds for sale 086 3665436
SKIBBEREEN Animal Rescue would like to buy a battery fencer any condition as long as it works 086 8795950

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Excellent work | Good rates
no job too small
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SKIBBEREEN Animal Rescue have beautiful pairs of ponies looking for Summer grazing

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anything over an acre and a half, can be rough, the smaller ponies only need about an acre not much bigger than Shetlands, must have good fencing and a good water supply and well covered ditches 086 8795950

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TIMBER TWIN beds as new, one with Respa mattress never used can be sold separately 086 0593999
FOR SALE new 5ft bed and mattress not a divan, 086 2354631
SILAGE BALES for sale 086 3960344
5 DRAWER cream chest of drawers €40 086 3963252

EGLU CUBE plastic chicken coop for sale – to house up to 8 hens. Excellent condition. See omlet.ie for further product details. 087-7940860
GOLDEN OAK coffee table for sale. €30, Bantry area 086 3963252

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YAMAHA KEYBOARD electric with note stand and keyboard stand €400. Bantry area 086 3963252
BEKO under counter fridge for sale. €100 086 3198267
BEDSIDE LOCKER 2 drawers light brown colour €20. 086 3963252

O.C.T.H.
OLD CHAPEL TOOL HIRE & SALES
Old Chapel Village, Bandon
023 8852155 / 086 8573396
Diggers • Dumpers • Rollers
Hoists etc • Con Saws
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CIRCULAR fancy metal garden table, speckled beige colour, with rotating centre piece, including six chairs, red cushions and large red parasol. All excellent condition, although parasol 'sun-faded' €500 Pics available (WhatsApp or email). 086 2373816

TWO WHITE bathroom washbasins with taps, perfect. €50 each. 085 1379824
ROCKING CHAIR in perfect condition €50 085 1379824
NEW 40 GALLON plastic water tank, 2 new 5ft wooden benches, 2 veery old school desks, 2 David Brown link arms, @ antique cast iron wheels, three furrow ridger, 70" powered rotavator, industrial dehumidifier, new 4ft gate 087 1727640
SMALL CHEST FREEZER, 3 Years old. 30 inches long, 22 inches deep, 32 inches high. Perfect condition, too small for my family! Tel: 086/3706615
2 PERFECT light oak chairs €30 086 3963252

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE NO LONGER PUBLISH ADVERTS FOR KITTENS, DOGS OR OTHER DOMESTIC PETS
If you require assistance to neuter your cats please see Rural Animal Welfare Resources (RAWR) Facebook Page. RAWR don't accept kittens/cats but will advertise them for you.
If you have a dog that you can no longer care for please contact your local animal rescue centre so that they can be responsibly rehomed.

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southwestloggingco@gmail.com

6-PANEL 32-inch timber internal door including frame and hinges. Perfect condition (I think it is a Kelly door) €65. Phone for further details and photos. 086 8510430
2 X FIRE GRATES for sale €10 Bandon town 086 1662 886

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STANDARDS, SPIRALS AND CLOUD PRUNED SPECIMEN PLANTS.

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Open 7 days! including Bank Holidays

INTERNAL RADIATOR for sale, including taps and joints. Perfect condition. Size- 1.5 mtr x .500 mtr, €30 O.N.O. Further details. 086 8510430

SAMSONITE Hardshell suitcase for sale in great condition €35 Bandon town 086 1662 886

FREESTANDING OAK Mirror from Caseys Furniture Cork in excellent condition paid €570 last year selling for €330

Bandon town 086 1662 886

BICYCLES. Two mountain bicycles as new selling at half price. Suit 10 to 16 year olds. 18 gears (6 x 3). Ready to use. Phone 028 36269.

MD Marti's Taxis

Contact Martin @ **086-6008388**

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Drimoleague, Skibbereen & all areas - including Airports/Ferries

2 X BEAUTIFUL oak bedroom lockers with drawers from Caseys Furniture Cork in excellent condition paid €540 each last year selling both now for €450 Bandon town 086 1662 886

2 X BEAUTIFUL oak bedroom lockers with open shelf from Caseys Furniture Cork in excellent condition paid €390 each last year selling both now for €400 Bandon town 086 1662 886

FREE - One & a half year old laying hens. 087 6897591

SUNSET LAMP €10 Bandon town 086 1662 886

DRESSING TABLE with separate mirror, oak, beautiful condition, from Caseys Furniture Cork in excellent condition paid €900 last year selling for €350



086 3445956



All fencing types supplied & fitted

TV STAND, black, with 3 glass shelves for sale in perfect condition €55 Bandon town 086 1662 886

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FOR SALE Point of lay Pullets: Light Sussex €20; Rhode Island X Light Sussex €16; Rhode Island X Light Sussex 14 weeks old €12. Clonakilty area 087 0529262

IF ANY READER has unwanted Video recorders, DVD players, etc Please don't dump them, I'll collect them. 086 8325196.

RSA/CVRT GALVINS TEST CENTRE Ltd

DUNMANWAY

For all goods vehicles **(023) 8845125**

BAR STOOLS for sale, 2 x tractor bar stools from Caseys Furniture Cork in excellent condition paid €285 each last year selling both now for €200 Bandon town 086 1662 886

ANTIQUE STYLE Chair for sale, paid €270 in interiors shop, selling for €90 Bandon town 086 1662 886

BATTERY 35 amp car battery in perfect condition, €20 086 8325196 [skibb]

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- Honda
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- Masport
- Warrior
- Kawasaki

ROUNDED BOTH sides breakfast laminated oak work top 3 meters long 670 wide brand new still in it's packaging 200 euro or nearest offer. Skibbereen/Baltimore area Phone 086 2665637.

WANTED B.S.A. Bantam motorcycle to restore, preferably D1, D3 or D5 but any motorcycle suitable for restoration considered it does not matter

how much work it needs. Tel. 085 7580372.

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Art from Canada - Scotland - Ireland

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NEST OF 3 side tables €50 Bandon town 086 1662 886

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ITEMS FOR SALE: 2 Year Old Belling Electric Cooker with Fan Oven & Catalytic Liner, also Ivory Kitchen Units and an Extractor fan. All items are in excellent condition. Private numbers need not apply and no time wasters please. For more information on the theses items please phone 087 18 31 522

TUMBLE DRYER for sale, brand new, Hotpoint 7kg condenser dryer in spotless unused condition, bought before Christmas paid €400 selling for 280 Bandon town 086 1662 886

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