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Gavin Kiely and his son Caden in Bandon's new state-of-the-art playground, which includes embankment slides, a wheelchair accessible roundabout and sensory play panels. Pic: Brian Loughheed

Innishannon woman elected to Teagasc Authority

West Cork woman Vanessa Kiely O'Connor has been appointed, with Limerick native Elaine Houlihan, to the Teagasc Authority by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD.

Vanessa Kiely O'Connor is a bard member of Bandon co-op and is the ICOS nomination while Elaine Houlihan is the President of Macra and is the Macra nomination.

A dairy farmer from Innishannon, County Cork, Vanessa Kiely O'Connor graduated with a Diploma in Corporate Direction (Food Business) from the UCC/ICOS programme, and also holds a Diploma in Environmental science and Social policy, from UCC.

She is a board member of Bandon Co-Operative and also serves on the board of Clona Dairy Products. She is a member of the Women in Agriculture Stakeholder Group and serves on the ICMSA's Farm Business committee. Vanessa has won numerous farm awards in quality and sustainability.

Elaine Houlihan from Athlaca, County Limerick is a physiotherapist and part-time beef farmer. She was elected as President of Macra, taking up the post in May 2023. Previously she was the Munster Vice President of Macra for two years. Elaine comes from a suckler and calf to beef farm, and completed her Green Cert in Salesian Agricultural College, Pallaskenry,

County Limerick. She attended Saxon University of Applied science in the Netherlands to study physiotherapy. As President of Macra, Elaine represents the organisations membership at local, national and European level on issues affecting farming and rural communities.

Speaking at a meeting of the Teagasc Authority in Oak Park on Wednesday, Liam Herlihy, Chairman of Teagasc, welcomed Vanessa and Elaine to the Authority saying, "I look forward to working with Vanessa and Elaine over the coming years. They bring important skills, knowledge and expertise to the Authority, which will assist the deliberations of the Teagasc board in the years ahead."

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If there was an Olympic medal for business...

A familiar character around town and still on the shop floor, known for his friendly, if occasionally gruff nature, Christy Thornhill, 76, is possibly most famous for being one of the first rowers in Skibbereen after he was captured on camera in the fifties taking a trip down the Ilen river with Frank Fahy and Tom Cottom who made a boat out of an auxiliary tank used for carrying fuel in a plane! The tank came from a wartime aircraft that landed in the marsh in Skibbereen in 1944. While he never made it to the Olympics, Christy has cause to celebrate in an enviable longstanding business reputation: The Thornhill family have been trading for the past 74 years so it's little wonder, says **Mary O'Brien**, that the name has become synonymous with Skibbereen.

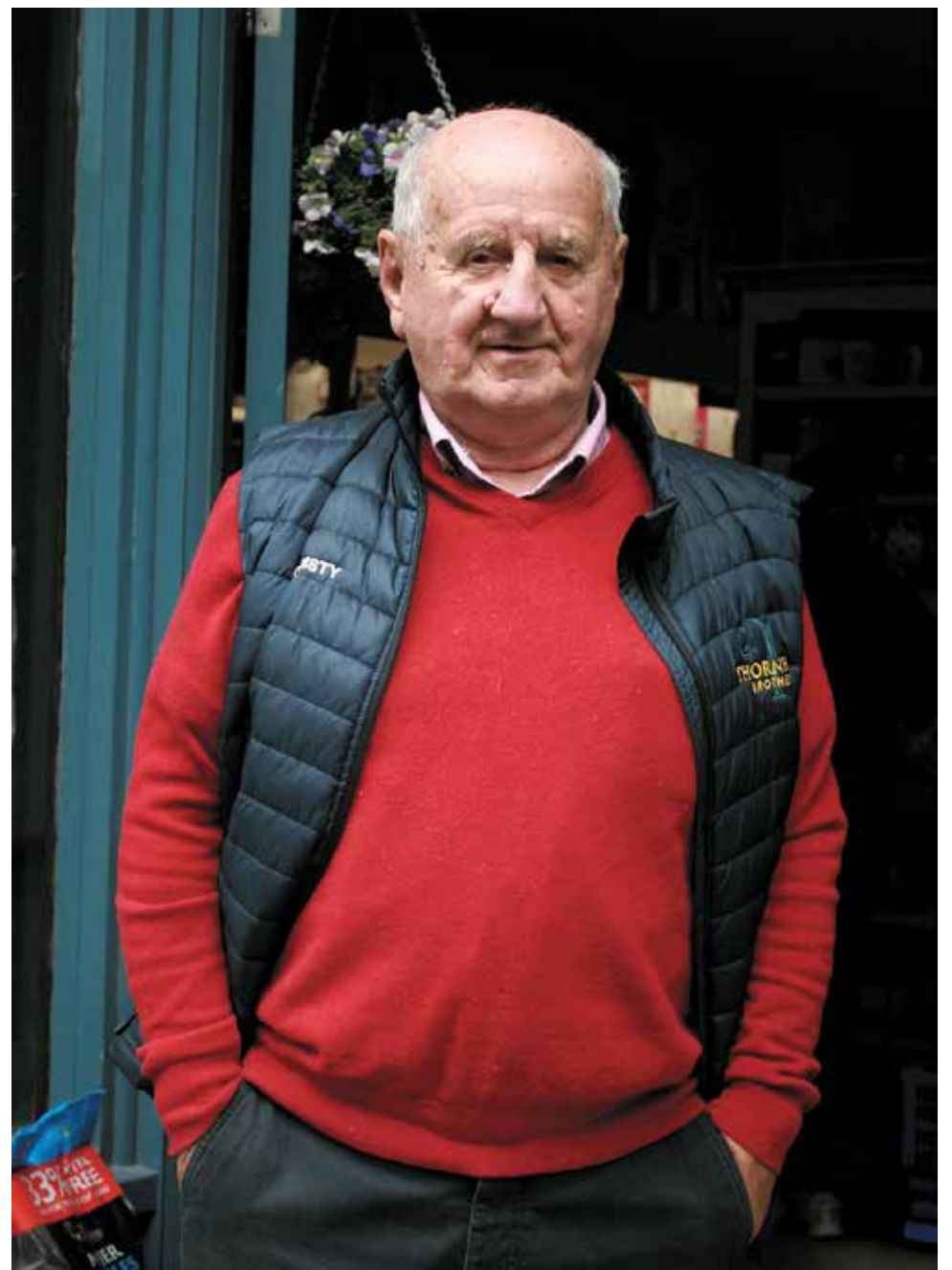
Today, Christy Thornhill, together with his son and business partner Henry, enjoy a busy trade at the heart of the town, where Thornhill Brothers offers everything from hardware and interiors to flooring, furniture, blinds, paint, bathroom, plumbing and heating. Demand was such that they opened a furniture store in Bantry in 2008.

While his younger brother

Michael now runs the electrical business, Christy Thornhill started out fixing radios and televisions in the electrical store that his father, Henry, opened in 1949. Prior to that, Henry Snr worked for the Skibbereen Electric Light Company in the gasworks building before the company was taken over by the ESB and the building abandoned (you'll find Skibbereen Heritage Centre there today).

When that closed Henry Snr worked as an electrician under the Rural Electrification Scheme, wiring many of the houses around the Skibbereen and Bantry areas to connect them to the electricity grid.

The Thornhill family of eight children, six girls and two boys, were all born upstairs in the tiny accommodation over the shop. There was no back door to the building; the street, and the



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river, were their playground.

Christy's early memories include travelling to Dublin with his father to collect the radios from the factory before December 8, traditionally a busy shopping day in West Cork before Christmas.

"I remember one time when I fell asleep in the back of the van on the way back down," he shares. "My father stopped for petrol in Cahir and I woke up and got out of the van. My father got back in and drove off none the wiser!"

There were no mobile phones in those days so the quick-thinking petrol station attendant had to ring the guards in Mitchelstown, who flagged down Henry Snr.

"They asked him if he'd lost anything," says Christy. "He got out, checked the radios in the back and was shaking his head until they asked him if he was missing his son!" he laughs.

That same trip, the father-and-son act ran out of petrol in Ballinascahy. Needs must and luckily the Council men's oil lamps along the roads provided the necessary fuel needed to get them the rest of the way home to Skibbereen. "We stopped along the way, emptying and

filling as we went," recalls Christy laughing. "Different times!"

Another time, they sold two radios, one to a local bar, O'Neill's in Old Court between Skibbereen and Baltimore, the other to a local farmer. "The farmer came in one day and asked if we could replace the radio," says Christy "as every Saturday night when he went to O'Neill's, they had Ceili House on Radio Éireann and he could never find it on his radio!"

"The farmer came in one day and asked if we could replace the radio as every Saturday night when he went to O'Neill's, they had Ceili House on Radio Éireann and he could never find it on his radio!"

By the time Christy left school at 16, the age of the television had arrived in West Cork, so he was sent off to London to a vocational college to learn about repairing the appliance. He spent over a year there before returning home and working in Cork and Dublin, finally settling back in Skibbereen and joining his father in the

shop in the early 70s.

Everyone rented television sets in those days, as the cost was so high and they frequently needed repairs, and the place to rent from in Skibbereen, and in Bantry – where they operated out of a room on Glengarriff Road for a time before opening a shop in 1971 – was Thornhills. "As far as I know we were the first to repair televisions in Bantry," says Christy.

"Before the transistor replaced the valve, TVs broke

down every week," he shares. "You'd replace a black and white television with a colour one while you were fixing it," he adds with a smile. "They'd never go back." The Pope's visit in 1979 however was the biggest boost to the colour television business. "We could hardly keep up with demand that year, everyone was in looking for a



l-r: Frank Fahy, Tom Cottom and Christy Thornhill paddling the 'canoe' made from an auxillary or drop tank of a wartime aircraft. The tank was one of two that were found in the Ilan river in the 1944.

colour TV.”

Around Christmas time you could hardly get in to the shop for the strings of fairy lights. “No-one threw anything away in those days,” says Christy. “Irons, kettles, fairy lights... you’d spend hours untangling the lights before fixing them,” he recalls. “Some of them were years old!”

In 1981, Christy moved from electrical into hardware, opening up a shop across the road. In the mid-nineties he bought the yard behind the shop, developing apartments and expanding the business further, adding on space for their growing enterprise in furniture, flooring, bathroom and heating.

About ten years ago, Christy’s son Henry, who has a Degree in Business and a Masters in Environmental Entrepreneurship, returned from working in Australia and joined the family business.

Today you’ll still find a steady stream of customers from all walks of life and the four corners of West Cork in and out of Thornhills. Upstairs,

over the hardware and kitchen shop, Jane has collated a selection of beautiful soft furnishings that will add comfort and chic to any home. It’s a must-visit before Christmas. As much as possible of the items, ranging from cushions to blankets to rugs to fabrics are sourced with sustainability and fair trade in mind. Even the paper napkins are a thing of beauty!

Downstairs and around the back, there are seasoned professionals with someone on hand always to offer advice and assistance. Christy and Henry are

inevitably on the floor or behind the counter. It’s a close-knit team; most of the employees at Thornhill’s have been there for years, even decades.

“Your team is the most important asset you have in business,” shares Christy. “That and your customers. Business is about people.”

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From 'rare old times' to West Cork

There isn't a whisper of a West Cork accent in Dave Scully's voice, as he serves up his famous sirloin steak burgers over the counter to a regular. "Howya love" and "Janey Mac" are common refrains as customers spill into the butcher shop on Pearse Street in Clonakilty. "I'll change me accent when I find a better one!" laughs Dave, as he chats to **Mary O'Brien**. A true blue Dub who grew up in Drimnagh, Dave has been butchering since the age of 13, blowing in to West Cork over thirty years ago. He's well known for his affable charm...and of course his famous sirloin steak burgers!

The third youngest in a family of eight, Dave Scully, 58, grew up in a two-bedroomed terraced corporation house in Drimnagh. His family were moved out of one of the inner city tenements as part of Dublin's early social housing schemes before he was born.

Back then Drimnagh was rough. Three doors up from the Scully house, Dublin "boys" looking for trouble could often be seen standing at the crossroads. It was a tough place to find your feet in. "There were so many good people in that neighbourhood but there were lots of troublemakers too with nothing to do," says Dave. "You'd see some kids sniffing glue outside on the streets, robbing cars, setting fire to them, that kinda thing," he shares. He recalls looking out the window at cars being driven into the school gates. "Twas like Eastenders gone wrong!"

Inside the front gate of the

Scully household was another story completely however. While the "boys" caused trouble on the streets, Ma Scully kept a firm grip on her own offspring. "No way would she let us outside that gate," shares Dave, who credits his now 90-year-old mother with keeping all of the eight Scully's on the straight and narrow and on to better things. "That woman should have been a therapist! You could talk to her about anything and not one of us ever got into any trouble. Doing the right thing – that's what we were taught was important."

Dave's mother was 16 when she moved from country to city to work in a grocery shop in Dublin. The Meath native met and married Dave's father, a mechanic and taxi driver – cab driving went back in the family as far as Dave's great-grandfather who drove one of the old horse-drawn cabs around Dublin – and both worked nose to the grindstone all their

lives. Their children followed suit. "We all learned respect and a fierce work ethic from them," says Dave.

He recalls taking the bus with his mother up to Ashbourne on a Saturday and walking the four miles, uncomplaining, to his grandmother's house. "We went every Saturday with her when we were small. She'd travel up weekly to clean my grandmother's house and do the shopping for her," he remembers.

While out the front his neighbourhood was rough, a lot of Dave's childhood memories are of time out the back, in the family's long garden, typical of the corporation houses of that time. "I only have good memories," he shares "of a busy house and summers playing in that long garden and picnics on the beach; Sunday drives with ten of us hanging out of the car, three or four on the front bench seat, five in the back and one lying across the back window!"

The Dublin Horse Show provided great entertainment for the Scully's and their likeminded neighbours in Drimnagh. "Hours of fun into the night," says Dave, who shares how they would improvise show-jumps up and down the garden using old tyres, bits of cars, anything they could lay their hands on from their dad's shed. An old taxi metre was wound up as the unquestionable decider of the fastest clear round.

Dave was 13 when he got his first job cleaning the meat trays in a local butcher shop. He left school when he turned 15 and did his apprenticeship in the same butcher shop, learning his trade and working there for the next 12 years until a girl eventually drew him down to West Cork.

He remembers the long queues of women, each and every one dressed in a scarf and trench coat and pulling a trolley bag, outside the shop in Drimnagh every Friday and Saturday morning. "The boss would have us warned not to raise the shutters until we had knives in hand ready to go.



Dave Scully in his butcher shop today and as a young apprentice in Dublin (far right)

"I only have good memories of a busy house and summers playing in that long garden and picnics on the beach; Sunday drives with ten of us hanging out of the car, three or four on the front bench seat, five in the back and one lying across the back window!"

"You worked hard and you worked fast," he shares. "The meat had to be strung right or you did it again; there was no waste – you didn't dare to leave a piece of meat on the bones or the head would be taken off ya!"

"They were masters and I'm proud to have learned my style of butchering from them."

A two-week holiday driving around Ireland with his friends, ended in a brief sojourn in West Cork, which went on to become permanent when Dave met Caroline, now his wife, in a pub in Kinsale. The couple exchanged phone numbers (of

phone boxes!) and the rest is history.

In between phone calls, they exchanged letters. Dave admits to having a briefcase of them still kept at home. "Don't tell the kids," he laughs.

Eventually an opening came up in Centra in Clonakilty and Dave got the job, slotting in so easily that he stayed for the next 14 years.

Seventeen years ago, in 2006, he made the move to open his own butcher shop, leasing what had once been the Credit Union premises in the town. He's been there ever since, working side by side with Caroline, six days a week

Christopher
O'Sullivan TD

FIANNA FAÏL
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If I can be of any assistance to you please do not hesitate to get in contact.

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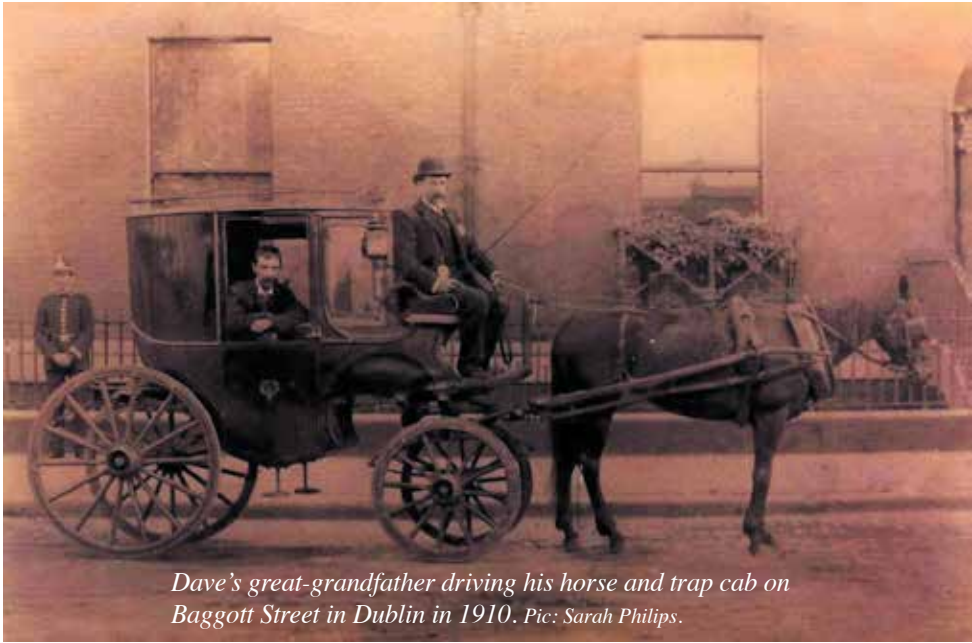
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Dave's great-grandfather driving his horse and trap cab on Baggott Street in Dublin in 1910. Pic: Sarah Philips.



Dave atop his father's cab in the late 1960s.

and inevitably late on Christmas Eve.

"I find it hard to say no to someone," he admits. "I mean I could never say 'no sorry Mrs you can't have a turkey!'"

He says his local Credit Union has been a shoulder at his back throughout it all.

"When the oven broke down Christmas week last year I don't know where I would have been without them," shares Dave. "We were under so much pressure with turkeys and dinners still to cook. I

couldn't let people down on Christmas. The Credit Union gave me a loan and transferred the money that same day so I had a working oven delivered the following morning. They've always been there for me and my family."

Today Dave is still serving up meat to please on Pearse Street in Clonakilty. He cures his own streaky bacon and back rashers, makes a range of popular sausages and the aforementioned sirloin steak burgers are delivered by the caseload as far away as Wexford. "I have one customer, he was 80 before he tried a burger and he hasn't looked back," he says smiling.

Glancing at his watch, he looks to the hill opposite where his Saturday regulars are pulling up right on time. "You'd set your watch by them," he says. "In fact you'd hardly have your coat off," he adds laughing. "What would I do without them, they're salt of the earth and only for them and their support we wouldn't be here at all!"

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Amnesty hopes EU Digital Services Act will hold big tech companies accountable for inciting hatred



Key provisions of the EU Digital Services Act came into force this year on August 25. This act is an important step in holding Big Tech to account for the risks posed to our human rights by their platforms.

Last year, Amnesty International published a report dealing with Meta's role in the atrocities committed by the Myanmar military against the Rohingya people in 2017. It showed that even Facebook's own studies, dating back to 2012, knew that its algorithms could result in real world harm. In fact, in 2016 Meta's own research acknowledged that "our recommendation systems grow the problem of extremism".

Pat de Brun, Head of Big Tech Accountability at Amnesty states: "Our investigations have made clear that Facebook's dangerous algorithms, which are hard-wired to drive "engagement" and corporate profit at all costs, actively fanned the

flames of hate and contributed to mass violence, as well as the forced displacement of over half the Rohingya population of Myanmar into neighbouring Bangladesh."



Maung Sawyeddollah (pictured) was just a teenager when he had to flee from his village. He fled through torched villages and fields filled with dead bodies and now lives in the world's biggest refugee camp, Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, with around a million of his people. He played happily as a child with his Muslim Rohingya friends and with the mostly Buddhist Rakhine children from the neighbouring village, before hatred, amplified by

Facebook, was stirred up.

He writes "I'd like to meet Mark Zuckerberg and his team. Maybe they'd like to come and spend a night or two in the refugee camp?"

"I'd tell them: 'Can't you see your role in our suffering? We asked you repeatedly to try and help make things better for us... Yet you ignore our pleas. Tell me, do you feel anything for us? Is it only about the data, is it only about the dollars?'"

There can be no doubt that false facts spread fast online. When the genocide in Rwanda happened, it had been the radio that spread lies and encouraged violence. Despite pleas from Amnesty and other groups to the radio station to stop spreading hatred, for months they broadcast slogans like 'kill them like cockroaches' and fanned a small flame of conflict in the country into hatred. But now one platform can reach around the world.

It is hoped, that with the new EU Digital Services Act, big tech companies will finally be held accountable for facilitating incitement to hatred and the spread of violence.

Clonakilty 1798 Journal being updated and re-published

A sub-committee of Dúchas Clonakilty Heritage is currently working on the republication of the 1998 'Battle of the Big Cross' journal, published 25 years ago, as part of the bicentenary commemoration of the battle, which occurred on June 19, 1798.

As well as re-publishing the journal, there will also be a number of new chapters, which will include accounts and photos of the June 2023

commemorative events (225th anniversary), and also articles relevant to the Battle of the Big Cross and participants, not previously published.

The group is appealing to anyone who has any information that could be included to make contact as soon as possible to ensure the associated articles can be written up and prepared for the journal.

It is planned to have this ready by the end of October and

printed for early November.

Information such as participants in the battle (both sides), folklore passed down about it, songs or poems, photographs of past commemorations, and so on, will all be considered by the editorial committee.

Contact DuchasClonHeritagePRO@gmail.com, phone 086-2202029 or send a message via Facebook: BigCross225.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the October edition of West Cork People,

It feels appropriate with the focus on Women's Enterprise this month that this issue has landed on our birthday. Twenty years ago this month, with the help of a loan from Paddy Farrelly and Noel O'Brien (supportive dads and volunteer paper delivery men!) West Cork People started off in the attic room of Jean Farrelly, one of its founders, on McCurtain Hill.

One year into business and our Local Enterprise Office helped out with a small grant, allowing us to take on our first sales employee. An invaluable resource in the area, over the years the West Cork Enterprise Office has been there throughout, for us and for so many other small businesses, to offer advice and assistance when needed.

It also feels fitting that so many of the personalities interviewed this month spoke about keeping our connection to our heritage and culture, something that, as our society becomes more globalised, is becoming increasingly important to the younger generation. We have always strived through the paper to promote the best of West Cork and what Sheila and I love about the area; heritage and culture being an important part of that.

I think I was first captivated by old Ireland in the bedtime stories that my parents told me as a child – an Ireland where people entered each other's home without need of invite and stories and music sessions were held long into the night. Later on authors like the great Walter Macken (his books now sadly out of print) stoked that 'gra' for our Irish heritage. As a result, West Cork People has always celebrated our older generation; their stories and wisdom, an important part of shaping what the paper has become.

On the other side of the coin, we are also passionate about looking at West Cork through a modern lens, celebrating the businesses and personalities, from all walks of life, native and blow-ins, who have helped make West Cork the exceptional place it is today, a place of diversity and inclusiveness, a community that welcomes and supports small independent businesses and innovative creatives.

There are so many people who have contributed to the success of West Cork People over the years – past and present colleagues who have become friends, writers, advertisers, readers, stockists, family and friends. We'd like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you for coming on this journey with us. Hopefully you've enjoyed it as much as us and will continue to do so.

In appreciation of all the support we've had from businesses in West Cork over the years, we are also running a competition this month to give away one year of advertising (value €3,000) to one lucky business. Check out inside this issue and our Instagram account for full details. There is also a €200 voucher up for grabs for a reader, so something for everyone!

As always, I hope you enjoy the read.

Mary



Mary O'Brien
Editor



Sheila Mullins
Creative Director



Natalie Webb
Sales Consultant

Contributors

Kate Arbon
Karen Austin
Hannah Dare
Tina Pisco
Louise O'Dwyer
John Hosford
Sean Creedon
Tania Presutti
Noah Chase
Shane Daly
Pauline Murphy
Kieran Doyle
Sherna Malone
Tommy Moyles
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Melissa Murphy

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Why preschools need to protest and why we need to listen



HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

This week many of you parents will have been subjected to disruption with the closures of preschools. More are planned for October and November. This article will attempt to explain why the providers have taken these drastic measures. Most readers will remember a time before formal pre-schooling. It's not that long ago when a preschool amounted to mainly women caring for children in their own homes, in an informal environment. The 21st century heralded in a 'new' type of preschool, where the emphasis was not just caring and wellbeing for the child as before, but their education. This approach meant there was a huge push for preschool teachers and providers to upskill to degree and diploma level. For the younger cohort of preschool teachers, college beckoned, but for most established preschool teachers, it meant doing your day job and night-owling as a student to get your degree by night. The rewards have not followed.

Preschool – an insight

My partner is a preschool teacher and provider, so I am well placed to explain what is going on. She will be in school long after her bell goes that sends the kids home happy after a long day. She must carry out administration work, clean, perhaps go to buy materials or replace broken toys, all out of her own pocket. In contrast, as a secondary school teacher, I get a wage that increases yearly for just being there. I get a pension and, if I'm sick, I get covered. I go home after school and never have to think about the running costs. It's slavery what the preschool providers do. The government want to control and

patrol the businesses these providers have built up themselves but they won't go as far as formally bringing preschool into the education system. If they were in the formal education system, it would mean decent wages, security of contract, pensions and protection for the providers. The other three tiers of the education system have those, why not preschool teachers and providers?

So what is the difference between a service provider and a preschool teacher?

In many cases – nothing, especially in rural Ireland. The provider who has set up the school, in most cases, is also a teacher in that school. Labour laws have now correctly enshrined preschool teaching staff wages at a higher rate in line with their qualification.

But in a system which locks providers into set fees per child, the service providers are the forgotten ones. No funding has been allocated to the provider to pay for their staff wage increases, meaning a further decrease in their own earning power, one that was already lean to begin with. Here is the nub of the protest. Without extra funding, the providers are struggling to pay staff and keep their business afloat, with many taking no wage at all. Staff are also entitled to statutory rights, like sick pay and holiday pay, and rightly so it should be stressed. But the providers, who take all the risks, set up the businesses, clean, administer and so on, get nothing, even if they teach alongside their staff. Your regular secondary, primary and tertiary teacher does not have to sign on in the summer to receive an income. Preschool teachers can avail of that to get keep their heads above water in the summer, yet providers who also teach alongside them, can't. Explain that one? I hope a picture is forming in your minds. How, with all these costs and conditions, are preschools viable business models? The answer is they are not, and dozens are closing each month.

Is it simply about money?

If only. As day follows night, the more formalised and regulated preschools have become,

the more demands government make upon the preschool education system. Minister O'Gorman even conceded on national airwaves, that up to the last decade, governments have failed to invest in, much less care for preschools and are playing 'catch-up'. Isn't it time they did? Preschools are also inspected by three bodies, TULSA, DES and Pobal, in what has become the most regulated strata of our education system. In nearly thirty years of my own teaching, I only have been visited by three inspectors. See how imbalanced our education system is? The providers, who run the schools, must be the teacher, cleaner, secretary, accountant, marketer, and carer. They have upskilled, taken on multiple roles and provided a service that without, modern Ireland with two working parents, could not function?

The parent is happy, but the system is built on sand

In 2010, the government played clever with the electorate. With child costs spiralling and more parents working to make ends meet, they introduced the 'Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). A "universal two-year pre-school programme available to children within the eligible age range, and provides their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school". It was a master stroke, because not only was it much needed, it satisfied the major stakeholder in society – the parent. Yet the people who provide the services have been left behind. Why hasn't the grievances of the provider been a headline act in a country that says it cares so much about education? One of the reasons is that the parent is happy that free education is being provided. The provider who holds up the whole pyramid, is sinking on a preschool education built on sand.

The government has invested in childcare. But where is that money going?

Let's look a bit closer at the ticking time bomb. The government, after years of no investment and unregulated preschools, formal or informal, have belatedly taken a stake into what is probably the most important level of education,



Parents and children of St Mary's Pre-School, Enniskeane out in support of saving early year's services.

the formative years of age three to five. With good reason. It is too vital a stage. It needed to be formalised, with best practise, rules underpinning child safely and recognised as an educational step and not child minding. However, the government are trying to coerce and control the industry by giving providers a no-win scenario to sign up for the ECCE scheme. Simply put; a child who is entitled to two years free preschool education, will only get it through the preschools that sign up to the ECCE scheme. Naturally parents will only send their kids to those schools. Would you honestly send your child elsewhere and pay for something you could get free? Would you survive as a preschool if you didn't sign into the scheme? The Government then introduced the Core Funding scheme. This promised more money for providers, though not much, every penny counted. Once the providers signed up to these schemes, the funny business began. The government locked fees. Providers have not been allowed to raise fees since 2017. So, while weekly, you watch your wage bill grow, your electricity bill explode and your rent shoot up (unlike schools, providers must pay for their premises), providers are stuck in a time warp, seeing an already paltry income, wither away. They are powerless against inflation. In my own sector as a secondary school teacher, all public servants have seen increases in wages. Retailers who face similar costs can put up their prices. With the economy at 'full employment', workers can demand more wages to meet inflation. It seems everyone can attempt to fight inflation and day to day costs except preschool providers. The government will do what they always do, talk big figures and mislead the public. Elaine Dunne, president of the preschool Federation has requested details of where the money is being spent for providers. She has been met with a wall of silence, from Green Party minister Roderic O'Gorman. Yes, money has been allocated

to childcare, but in the main put towards decreasing parent's childcare costs, into administration, and the inspectorate bodies that regulate the industry, but not to the providers.

Now we are in a perilous state, where weekly providers are pulling out of the system. 141 preschools closed last year, so far 90 this year. I attended a meeting where many of the women spoke of Credit Union loans to stay afloat or taking financial help from family members. This can't go on because if it does, society will shut down.

History is not kind to strikers and protestors

Irish people have an ambivalent attitude to strikes. Since Larkin and the strikers of the 1913 Lockout stood up to the evils of manipulative employers, we have seen a growing trade union movement somewhat curtailed in recent decades. Joe and Mary publicly seem to think strikes are okay if they are not inconvenienced by them. Can I ask what is the point of a strike if it doesn't disrupt? I hope the preschool providers and teachers stick to their guns because if the government refuses to listen, then they have in their hands the ability to

cripple society. You need them to go to work. You need them to educate your child. You need them to care and provide a safe environment. But if you stay mute on the situation, then don't expect the service to survive. Donogh O'Malley introduced the most important piece of legislation into Ireland when secondary school education became free in 1967. We now need an insightful progressive act that brings preschools online with the rest of our education and build a stronger and equal base for all the stakeholders.

There is a tide coming that will sweep all the sandy foundations away otherwise. With more protests to come, I hope they will stick at it and parents will support them. Larkin failed in 1913 because the establishment broke them and ultimately, the public grew tired of it. To quote Billy Bragg, a folk singer and socialist, 'There is power in a factory, power in the land, Power in the hand of the worker. But it all amounts to nothing if together we don't stand. There is power in a union'.

Support the preschool teachers and providers, because it means supporting your children.



Yvonne Butler, Londis Rosscarbery accepting the store's recent Retailing Excellence Award.

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*Vouchers purchased from town business association of your choice.

New Kinsale to Cork bus route starts next week

A new bus service between Kinsale and Cork is expected to start operation next Thursday October 12, following a month-long campaign to secure the route, Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan says.

"West Cork Connect have really come to the rescue here. I'm confident that the days of

people being left at bus stops or left on the side of the road on this route are over," Deputy O'Sullivan said on Monday.

"Credit is due to the team at West Cork Connect and Kinsale connect. They've taken some unnecessary criticism, but despite that have stuck with it and will in the end provide huge relief for the people of Kinsale,

Belgooly and Riverstick.

"It's difficult to explain the red tape and bureaucracy that's involved in getting a new bus route up and running. I've enjoyed working with Damien and his team to secure this route. Looking forward to trying it out myself in the coming weeks."

O'Sullivan meets with O'Gorman and stands in solidarity with early childhood educators

Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan has met with Minister for Children Roderick O'Gorman following a demonstration by early childhood educators outside the Dáil last week on Tuesday.

A large crowd of early childhood educators and business representatives gathered outside the Dáil to shed light on the longstanding issue of underfunding that has plagued this vital sector for years.

"I have serious concerns regarding capacity of childcare

provision and early education without adequate funding," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"It's not just about money; it's about the future of our children's education and the sustainability of businesses.

"While investing in the early childhood sector and reducing costs for parents are important steps, they are futile if we don't have a thriving early education sector to provide essential services for our children."

Deputy O'Sullivan met Roderick O'Gorman, the Minister for Children, Equality, Dis-

ability, Integration, and Youth, to pass on the concerns of the demonstrators, who represent hundreds of businesses that may face closure if action is not taken promptly.

"I stressed the point that staff feel undervalued and that business owners are struggling to keep their businesses open. Budget 2024 has to be an opportunity to rectify this".

Childcare providers across the country are expected to close for three days from Tuesday in protest over funding shortfalls.



Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan addressing large crowds who were protesting outside Dáil Éireann looking for fairer funding for the Early Childhood sector.



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Maneless man-eating lions from Tsavo



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.

"The idea that the two lions were going in as a team yet exhibiting these dietary preferences has never been seen before or since." – Nathaniel J. Dominy

Tsavo National Park is one of the most beautiful areas on earth. Kenya's largest park, it is a sanctuary for many thousands of wild animals that are allowed to roam freely across 22,000 square kilometres, monitored

by security and anti-poaching personnel. Despite its grandeur and beauty, the decision to run a railway track through the centre of this national park gave rise to Tsavo's most famous past residents: 'The Ghost' and 'The Darkness', two aptly-named lions that, over a period of nine months, ate construction workers of this railway for sport.

For years traders had transported their wares, and slaves, through Tsavo to get to Mombasa on the other side, where fairs were held. Thousands of people used this trade route. During the journey, slaves that were sick or deemed surplus to requirements were thrown from the horse-drawn wagons and left to die in the heat.

Lions in the area scavenged the bodies and so became accustomed to eating human flesh. They also became familiar with the patterns of the slave traders, realising that if they watched this trail for long enough, they would get to eat.

Due to the vast distances that people needed to travel in order to get to Mombasa and the length of time it took, a decision was made by the British Government, who ruled the country at the time, to build a railway along the route – the Kenya-Uganda Railway project. Led by Colonel John Henry Patterson, this work began in

March 1898.

Tsavo means 'place of slaughter' in the local language, which could have been seen as a bad omen before the project even started. This slaughter in the name referred to killings by the Maasai people, who attacked weaker tribes and took no prisoners.

A team of Indian workers, led by Patterson, arrived to build a bridge over the Tsavo River. One of the men, a porter, soon disappeared and a search quickly uncovered his mutilated body. Patterson, fearing that a lion had killed his employee, set out the next day to find the culprit. Instead he stumbled upon several other corpses, all men who had disappeared from previous expeditions.

Almost immediately, a second of Patterson's men disappeared. By April, the count had grown to 17 men missing. Unfortunately this was just the beginning. The killings continued for months, as the lions circumvented every fence, barrier and trap erected to keep them out. The chaos didn't end until December, when Patterson finally stalked and killed the two lions that were culpable for the killings.

It wasn't an easy hunt. The first lion was shot and killed on December 9, but it took Patterson three more weeks to

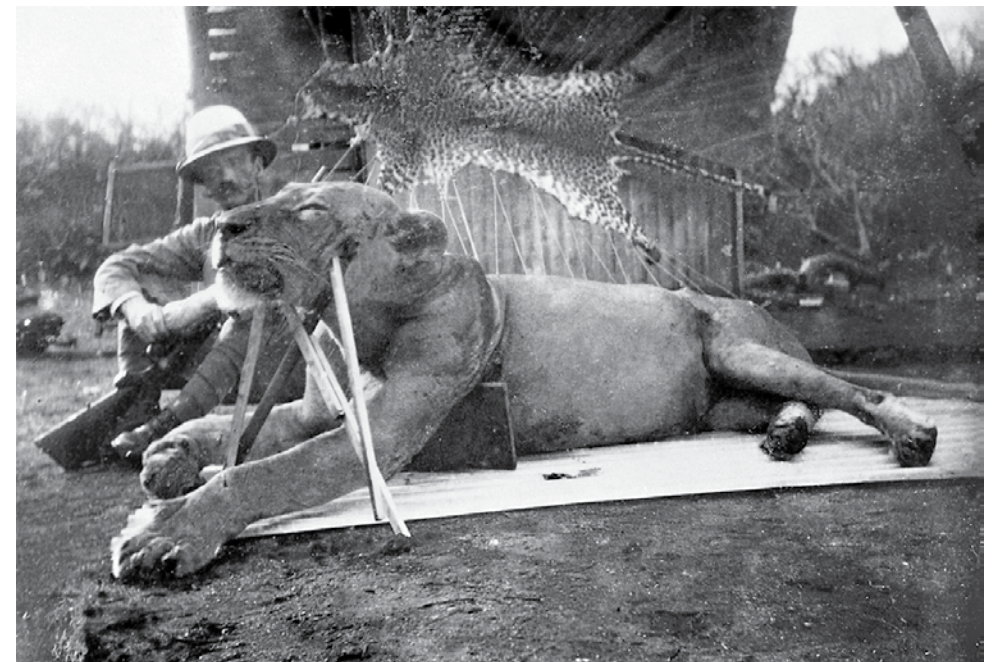
deal with the second. By then, Patterson claimed, the lions had killed a total of 135 people from his crew. This story became so infamous that a movie was made of the events 'The Ghost and the Darkness' with Val Kilmer playing the part of Patterson.

Due to the heat and humidity of the region, the lions of Tsavo evolved to be completely maneless, which makes them easily identifiable. Patterson had the lions skinned and made into two rugs that he used in his home. They remained there

for 25 years before he sold them to a museum for \$5,000; they were then repurposed by a taxidermist and are now on display, with their skulls, in the Fields Museum in Chicago. By the time the skins were bought they were in terrible condition and the lionskins on display are a fraction of the size they were when alive. The skulls however are in much better condition. Due to scientific advancements in DNA, tests were able to confirm that the lions killed and ate at least 35 people, one 11, the other 24, which isn't to say

they didn't kill more.

So why did the lions start killing people in the first place? Research revealed that the lion that ate the most people had a large abscess under one of its teeth, a poorly aligned jaw and damage to its skull. It may have turned to humans out of desperation, as they were easier to catch and the meat softer. The Tsavo killings also followed a period of decline in other prey, mostly of elephants. Perhaps humans were just an easy replacement.



The first of the two Tsavo man-eating lions shot by Lt. Col. Patterson.

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Bantry Credit Union celebrates 20 years of scholarship scheme

“What a night!” So said the President of the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU), Martin Busch, in reference to Bantry Credit Union’s recent celebration of the 20th anniversary of its scholarship scheme.

Held at Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí (CPB) on September 15, the celebratory evening was attended by over 80 people including scholarship winners and family members, adjudicating panel members, credit union officers past and present, school principals past and present, and visiting representatives of the ILCU.

More social gathering than formal occasion, there was a relaxed, feel-good vibe at the event. Scholarship awardees caught up with each other, as well as with the adjudicators, school principals and credit union officers, as they traded stories about life since winning the award. A slide-show featuring photos, old and new, of the scholarship winners and background music provided by two students at CPB (Cara Gammon and Helena O’Callaghan) provided the backdrop to the handshakes, smiles and lively banter.

Anna Fitzgerald, Chairperson of Bantry Credit Union, welcomed everyone and set the tone for the event by extending “a very special welcome” to “our Guests of Honour this evening

– the recipients of Bantry Credit Union’s Scholarship Award over the last 20 years.” Anna said “They are an impressive bunch of people. Each year that it was my privilege as Chair to meet a new recipient, I came away in the full and certain knowledge that our future is safe in the hands of these young people. They are a credit to themselves, their families and their schools.”

The credit union was delighted that 16 of the 20 winners were represented at the event, 14 of whom were there in person, while two more who live abroad were represented by family members. And all these former winners spoke highly about the importance of the scholarship to them at the time they were first going to college, both financially but also in other ways. One recipient said: “I can’t explain in strong enough terms the good the scholarship has done for me over the last few years. It is my absolute privilege to be involved.”

To mark the occasion, the credit union commissioned a display clock from Michael O’Shea at Smart Etchings in Bantry. It featured a map of West Cork in relief with an inscription about the scholarship. Each scholarship winner was presented with a clock by Anna Fitzgerald, accompanied by Martin Busch, President of the ILCU.

And then it was the turn of the



Back row (l-r): Jesse Cronin, David Malone, Kevin Barry, Caroline Coppinger, Niamh Crowley, Jack Ward, Michelle Ward, Shauna O’Sullivan, Ali O’Connell, Justin McCarthy, Joe Cronin, Eleanor Fitzgerald. Third row (l-r): Eddie Mullins, Finbarr O’Shea, Ellie Horgan, Noreen Crowley, Olive McCarthy, Sheila O’Grady (representing Alice O’Grady), Denis O’Sullivan, Sean Kelly. Second row (l-r): Marian Carey, Karen McSweeney, James Kilduff, Anne O’Grady, Niamh O’Leary, Tara O’Neill. Front row (l-r): Martin Busch, Anna Fitzgerald, James O’Donovan. Pic: Tony McElhinney

adjudicators. More or less every year since the beginning in 2003, the same three people have sat on the Independent Adjudicating Panel. They are: Olive McCarthy (Senior Lecturer in the Department of Food Business and Development and Director of the Centre for Co-operative Studies at UCC), James Kilduff (Lecturer in Quantity Surveying at MTU) and Denis O’Sullivan (former Deputy Principal of Maria Immaculata Community College, Dunmanway, now retired).

The credit union Chairperson said “They have been the backbone of the Scholarship Award for the last 20 years and we owe them a debt of gratitude that no words can express.” Anna pointed out that the decision of the Adjudicating Panel is final and binding on the credit union.

This independence has ensured the integrity of the scheme for two decades and is one of the reasons Bantry Credit Union’s scholarship scheme is respected far and wide.

This respect, both for the scholarship scheme and for Bantry Credit Union’s standing in the credit union movement, was demonstrated by the presence at the event of two of the most senior office-holders in the Irish credit union movement: the President and the CEO of the ILCU, Martin Busch and David Malone respectively. Martin is from Lisburn, Co. Antrim, while David is from Dublin. The fact that they both travelled to Bantry for a Friday evening event said a lot about Bantry Credit Union’s reputation in the sector.

Addressing the gathering, the

ILCU President said: “It is both a privilege and an honour to attend this 20th anniversary celebration tonight. And meeting all these remarkable young people is the icing on the cake. The wonderful attendance and atmosphere here this evening truly shows what the local Bantry community feels about their credit union.”

Bantry Credit Union’s Manager Finbarr O’Shea then explained the story behind a surprise presentation to the three adjudicators. The credit union commissioned an original painting from leading Bantry artist Danny Smith. It features the credit union’s premises on Wolfe Tone Square. The credit union moved into that premises in early 2002. And later that year, at the official opening of the new premises, the credit union announced that – to

mark the occasion – it would be introducing an annual Third-Level Education Scholarship Scheme with effect from the 2003–2004 academic year. The adjudicators were each presented with a high-quality print of this painting, and the original will hang in the credit union building.

The last surprise of the evening was a very popular one. Tony McElhinney has been photographer at every one of the Scholarship Award ceremonies since 2003. And he was at the celebratory evening as well, again in his voluntary role as photographer. But on this occasion he had to hand over the camera for a few minutes to receive a lovely hamper as a “thank you” from the credit union. As was remarked, Tony too is part of the scholarship story.

Michael McCarthy selected as the Sinn Féin candidate for the Clonakilty-Skibbereen West Cork LEA

Clonakilty native Michael McCarthy has been selected as the Sinn

Féin Candidate for the Clonakilty-Skibbereen West Cork LEA for the June 2024 Local

Election.

The son of Ruth and the late John McCarthy (formally of MICC Dunmanway, Rossa College, Skibbereen Community School and the TUI Trade Union), Michael grew up in Ahiohill and Lyre just outside Clonakilty, with his brothers Conor and Tadhg. He now lives in Kinneigh near Ballineen/Enniskeane and is currently employed by Cork City Council, having previously worked on the hospitality sector. He holds several qualifications from UCC and CIT/MTU, is a former shop steward with SIPTU and is currently a workplace representative for the Fórsa Trade Union.

With a passion for sports, including soccer, road bowling and the GAA, Michael promis-

es, if elected, to strongly advocate for community and sports organisations, people with disabilities and those working in the sector in West Cork.

“Change starts in our local communities,” says Michael. “I look forward to working to represent communities in West Cork and to being part of a bigger and stronger team of Sinn Féin councillors that will ensure that our council delivers on the issues that matter locally.

“Housing, building stronger communities, Irish neutrality, mental health, workers and disability rights will be priorities for me. We need more affordable and public housing along with more support for one off housing.

“Increased infrastructure is

needed for West Cork, including increased water infrastructure, for building houses and amenities. We need to enhance our public services. Increased funding and staffing levels are needed to achieve this at a local level. We need more coherent public transport networks and more extensive road and rail networks. Sinn Féin would ensure that enough sports and recreation facilities are available for local communities. We also need to ensure that school and bus places will be future proofed to keep up with demand levels.

“Youth emigration has been an electoral safety valve for the establishment for years, let’s change that.

“We need a sustainable envi-

ronment, more local employment opportunities and thriving communities in rural Ireland.

“I look forward to working with my Sinn Féin colleagues on councils and in the Dáil to tackle the high cost of living, the housing crisis and to improve our health system.

“Across Ireland, Sinn Féin will continue to work for a United Ireland – to build a better, stronger and fairer country.

“The local elections are an opportunity to start delivering change. Sinn Féin will deliver that change.

Michael is looking forward to working with the people of Clonakilty, Skibbereen, Dunmanway, Ballineen/Enniskeane, Rossbarbery and surrounding areas to make change happen.



Sinn Féin

Michael McCARTHY

Your Sinn Féin 2024 Local Election candidate - Skibbereen West Cork LEA

I look forward to working with the people of Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Dunmanway, and surrounding areas.

089 9805511
michaelmccarthysinnfein@gmail.com



The Michaelmas tradition in Ireland



FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

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

The feast of St. Michael the Archangel falls on September 29. In the old Irish tradition, Michaelmas was known as 'Fómhar na nGéanna' – the goose harvest. Geese, hatched out in spring, were left outside all through the summer in what can only be called truly free range and organic! When the grain was harvested, they were left into the stubble fields, feeding on the remaining grains, until Michaelmas when they were ready for market. Eating goose on Michaelmas day was a custom in many parts of the country.

Many farmers' wives had large flocks of geese and chickens, and later, turkeys. The care and disposal of fowl was the women's business and often they made presents of geese to friends and also to poor families. Some of the geese were kept for the Christmas market and for the family's Christmas dinner. (Goose was the usual meat eaten on Christmas Day before the turkey became popular).

At Michaelmas bigger farmers killed an animal and gave portions of meat to the poor. Geoffrey Keating, in his 'History of Ireland', wrote: 'the custom of killing St. Michael's sheep was called in the Irish language 'Cuid Mhíchil' (Michael's share). Often around the end of September and early October there is a

period of fine weather, known in Irish as 'Samhradh beag na féile Mhíchil' (the little summer of Michaelmas). In parts of Ulster it was the custom to present the landlord with a couple of geese at Michaelmas. There was an old saying: 'if you eat goose at Michaelmas you will never want all the year round'.

In parts of the west and south-west coast Michaelmas marked the end of the fishing season; fishing boats were securely moored and fishing gear (nets, lines, pots and so on) were stored away. Small boats were hauled up above the high water mark in a sheltered place. On the Irish-speaking island of Cape Clear the old fisherman had a saying 'Téann an púca sa bhfarraige Lá 'le Mhíchil' (The pooka – fairy – goes into the sea on St. Michael's Day). In other words the weather couldn't be trusted after that day. However, fishing continued up to Christmas if the weather was suitable.

According to country recipes, the secret of a succulent goose was in the long, slow cooking. In the traditional farmhouse kitchen the goose was cooked in a heavy iron pot with a lid. The pot was placed on the open hearth and the lid was covered with sods of turf, which were replaced from time to time. The goose was stuffed with potatoes, onions, celery, butter, chopped lean bacon and seasoning. Boiled goose provided

good broth, though it was said that 'a boiled goose was a spoiled goose'.

Goose feathers and down were used for filling mattresses and pillows. In many parts of the country the farmer roasted geese for the harvest feast for his workers and the first of the corn was made into flour and baked into bread. The last sheaf of corn took pride of place on the supper table and the girl who had tied it was led by the farmer's son out on the floor in the first dance of the night.

In east Munster and south Leinster, where many farms had orchards, Michaelmas was considered the proper time for picking the apples and making cider which formerly was a popular home-brew in those areas. A favourite saying there was 'Lá Fhéile Mhíchil a chroitear an t-úllóid' – on St. Michael's Day the orchard is shaken – meaning the apples were picked.

At Tramore, Co. Waterford, the summer holiday season was closed at Michaelmas with a curious ceremony. The custom of 'going to the sea' was practised for a long time there. Merchants from the towns, as well as farming families, had been going to Tramore for more than two hundred years with the result that many local people derived much of their livelihood from this practice; lodging-house keepers, owners of bathing machines, sellers of fish, periwinkles, cockles and other marine delicacies, pub owners and shopkeepers. On the feast of St. Michael, these people marched in a body to the edge of the sea and threw in an effigy of St Michael, as a jocular hint that his festival meant financial loss to them until the following year.

There was a widespread tradition concerning blackberries, which held that after a certain date each year, the devil ruins them by spitting on them. The date varies but was often Michaelmas or Hallowe'en. There were some other beliefs connected with Michaelmas; it was widely believed that horses, cats and babies are often not well when the blackberries are ripe.

St. Michael the Archangel, being the patron saint of high places, has given his name to high rocks or hills. The best known in Ireland is Sceilg Mhíchil (The Skelligs). There are many places named Mount St. Michael, such as the Mercy Convent in Rosscarbery, Co. Cork.



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Holly Cairns TD

In 1987, the late UCC Sociologist JP O'Carroll wrote about the notion of "pull" in Irish political culture: "The fact that most of that which is delivered is imaginary in no way lessens the degree of confidence in the person who is seen to have pull."

Some 36 years later, politics remains rife with strokes delivered for self-serving gain, rather

Different strokes for different folks – Where is the government's Plan B for derogation farmers?

than the public interest.

Look no further than the theatrics engaged in by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar when the nitrates derogation for farmers was cut. The derogation, which allows the use of up to 250kg of organic nitrogen per hectare on certain farms, will be reduced to 220kg in January.

This decision, by the European Commission, is non-negotiable – our water quality has significantly deteriorated, particularly in the south and south east, and the EPA has said it is primarily caused by agricultural run-off.

The news has come as a blow to impacted farmers, many of whom were misled by both Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil to believe that the 250kg limit was

written in stone.

Varadkar promised representatives from the Irish Farmers Association that he would invite the Commissioner to meet with Irish farmers. The implication was clear – the Fianna Fáil Minister for Agriculture had given up, but Fine Gael would fight for farmers in Europe. Crucially, his intervention implied the decision to cut to the derogation could be reversed.

Except it won't. And he knows that. Any pretence otherwise is pure political posturing.

Cork South West has the highest rate of dairy farmers with a derogation in the country. So, perhaps it would be easier for me to go along with this fiction – that the upper limit can be retained – but it wouldn't

be honest. It would be a denial of the clear scientific evidence that nitrates are having a serious impact on our environment and biodiversity.

Nobody wants a politician who tells them what they think they want to hear. They want public representatives who will speak honestly, directly and offer tangible support through difficult periods.

The reality is every single political party has known the derogation is incompatible with our climate targets for years. Despite this, zero planning has been done to prepare for its reduction.

Instead of being able to manage a gradual reduction over time, farmers now have just three months to comply with the

new rules.

The financial impact on smaller derogation farmers could make some unviable. A rush to buy or rent land by larger farmers, to comply with reduced stocking rates, could result in soaring land prices and chaos in other sectors like tillage, which are already being priced out of renting land.

Where is the Plan B for derogation farmers? Where is the information and outreach for impacted farmers? Where is the plan for the future – and the acceptance that our climate action goals, and emission limits, mean change is both unavoidable and necessary?

I was unable to put those questions to the Taoiseach in the Dáil last week as he was in

New York admonishing other world leaders for their failure to take radical climate action. Yet, behind closed doors at home, in meetings with farming lobby groups, the message on sustainability appears markedly different. It's one of delay, defer and deny.

What farmers want is stability – a credible plan for the environment and their sector.

The Social Democrats propose using a significant portion of the budget surplus as a Climate Transition Fund. Funding the transition to a more sustainable agricultural model and investing in renewable energy. What is the government's plan? Or, is all they have to offer strokes and cute hoorism?

A remarkable story in West Cork's rich agricultural heritage chronicled to mark Drinagh co-op centenary

As part of the celebrations to commemorate the centenary of Drinagh co-op, Phillip O'Regan has written a book '100 Years of Drinagh Co-operative Creamery Limited'. Expected to be published at the end of October 2023, **Tommy Moyles** says it is the remarkable story of how a small community, in what was then one of the most deprived parts of the country, established a dairy business.

In late July, over 3,000 people attended two open family days at the co-op's headquarters in Drinagh, where the Drinagh 100 exhibition took place; with an archive of photographs and memorabilia, the main attraction. The collection of hundreds of photographs, letters and documents chronicled the story of Drinagh from its inception. The release of the book will be one of the stand-out chronicles of West Cork's rich agricultural heritage.

Author Philip O'Regan said. "Researching and writing a history of Drinagh Co-operative Creamery Limited has been a pleasure. It has also been a great privilege. I believe the story of Drinagh is one of the single most important developments in west Carbery in the past one hundred years. The founding of Drinagh in 1923 sparked an

economic and social revolution in what was then one of the most disadvantaged parts of the country. It is the story of innovation, perseverance and tenacity. It is a wonderful success story."

In 1923, a group of farmers in Drinagh, led by Fr John Crowley CC, decided to establish a creamery co-operative, an enterprise that was as much about self-preservation as anything else. Drinagh was an unlikely place to set up a creamery co-operative. The fertility of the land was poor, it was not on a railway line, the road network was in an appalling state, making it more expensive and time-consuming to cart goods and materials in and out of the place. However, by their own sweat and toil, the pioneers of the co-operative movement in Drinagh created what became

a thriving concern within a few years. From the beginning, Drinagh confounded the odds and exceeded all expectations.

The members of the first committee of management in Drinagh were pioneers in every sense of the word. They were visionaries. The ethos and spirit of co-operation were central to their thinking and their legacy is an enormous one with successive management committees/boards of directors continuing that spirit of enterprise and co-operation down through the decades. The contribution that Drinagh has made to the economy and life in west Carbery over the past century is incalculable. There is scarcely a family that has not had some connection with the Society at some point. Drinagh has evolved as times changed and has diversified into a large multi-purpose co-operative, but it is still completely rooted in the community. It is of the community and for the community. The concept of co-operation is not an outdated one, far from it. As farming and business models will change substantially in the years ahead, the support and protection of a strong, vibrant, and diverse co-op will be even more crucial.



On Tuesday, February 26, 1957, eleven pure-bred TB-free Jersey in-calf heifers arrived at Shannon Airport from the Jersey Islands for Drinagh. They were purchased from the Jersey Countrymen's Association and were considered the best registered animals on the island.



Two Drinagh Foden lorries on Union Hall pier in the late 1950s. Coal and fertiliser for Drinagh were landed regularly at Union Hall. The three men are, from left, Bernie O'Connor, driver; Paul Stanley Ross, driver, and Jim O'Donovan, manager, Cononagh branch.

FARMING



GROUNDED

MEP Grace O'Sullivan

As the autumn weather sets in now it is a good time to reflect back on the Green's experience at the Ploughing Championships and the reception we received from Ireland's farmers.

Once again I upped sticks from my constituency office on Washington Street in Cork City for the annual pilgrimage to the National Ploughing Championships this September where, and it might surprise some readers, a warm welcome was waiting for us at the Green Party stand. Hundreds of farmers and festival-goers joined us over the course of the few days. Farmers interested in supports for organic farming, nature restoration and farming for biodiversity.

The topic of fertiliser was on everyone's lips, following recent news that the European Commission will reduce Ire-

Warm reception for Greens at Ploughing Championships

land's allowed limit of organic nitrogen per hectare from 250kg to 220kg. On a discussion panel with Irish decision-makers and farmers to discuss this change to Ireland's so-called 'Nitrates Derogation', I noted the toll Ireland's historically high fertiliser use had taken on our rivers, lakes and oceans.

People across the island have been shocked by scenes in Lough Neagh, where a thick green algal bloom caused primarily by nitrogen run-off has strangled aquatic life in the lake, leaving it now one of the world's most eutrophic waterbodies according to The Rivers Trust.

Unfortunately that phenomenon is not limited to Lough Neagh. In West Cork, the beautiful Lough Hyne is suffering from a similar fate, with a massive reduction of marine life in the saltwater Lough despite being Europe's first ever marine nature reserve. This condition is

general all over Ireland. Over a third of Cork's rivers and lakes are currently in bad or poor condition. Ireland's new River Basin Management Plan will help to mitigate the issues our rivers are facing, but without an immediate reduction in nitrogen use in Irish agriculture and better urban wastewater treatment facilities, the issue will spiral out of control.

Many farmers who have benefitted from the Nitrates Derogation have expressed anger over the decision, though it was clear that they understand the reasons behind it. I strongly believe that they will have to be supported through the transition in order to protect both livelihoods and our natural heritage at the same time.

In addition to the more 'traditional' discussions on farming, we brought one of my longer-running campaigns to the Ploughing on the 'Cost of Being a Woman'. While almost a

third of the Irish agricultural workforce are women, ownership of farms is much lower amongst women. So I was proud to bring a woman's touch to the Ploughing, with a stall dedicated to women and the additional costs they face over the course of their lives.

Studies show that it costs on average about €12,000 annually for women to buy everyday items. For everything from menstrual products to pregnancy equipment. Our stall provided free sanitary products for women and provided a place to discuss the extra costs associated with womanhood in Ireland and what we are doing to reduce them. Recently, the Greens in government introduced free contraception for people aged between 17 and 25. The government has also set up a pilot scheme for free period products.

Cork was well represented at the Ploughing and our tent was no exception. Local area repre-

Derogation update: Clarity on 220kg nitrates limit

A new and detailed map highlighting areas falling outside the controversial 220kg nitrates limit will give crucial clarity to West Cork dairy farmers, said Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan.

Deputy O'Sullivan received clarification from Minister Charlie McConalogue on Tuesday October 4 that parcels of land that touch the 250kg zone will maintain the 250kg limit for all of that parcel, instead of the 220kg nitrates limit.

"This is a really difficult time for dairy farming in Cork in particular, many derogation farmers will be within the new 220kg limit, which is causing serious concern and difficulty for them," said Deputy

O'Sullivan.

"They will have taken out loans they will have invested heavily and no they will inevitably in some instances have to reduce their herd."

"I have received clarification from minister McConalogue that those landowners who do have parcel of lands that are even just partially within the 250 kg will keep the 250kg limit for that particular parcel."

"Large parts of West Cork are outside the new 220kg limit, and many of them can continue as usual. If anyone has any difficulty, please don't hesitate to get in touch with my office."

The detailed map can be accessed at gov.ie

sentative for Skibbereen-West Cork Rory Jackson, a champion of clean oceans, was present on the ground. I was also delighted to have Harriet Burgess helping out. Harriet has recently announced that she will run for the very large local constituency

of Macroom and I know she will make an incredible public representative. For myself now that the Ploughing is over, I will be back to the constituency office in Cork and home in Tramore, or ploughing my own furrow in Brussels.

Tours start at 11am

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AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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.

In association
with



It's been a disheartening backend! I thought we might get a run of settled dry weather in September given how wet things were in July and August but it wasn't to be with Storm Agnes adding yet more wind and rain to deal with. Dock leaves in the field closest to the sea were blackened by salt water blown from the south east winds in the early hours of Storm Agnes. Places where cattle congregated to shelter from the south, east, south and south west could all be clearly seen.

Cattle were finished up in paddocks days ahead of schedule if conditions were dry. There are good covers of grass around, as it has been warm but stock are walking it into the ground more, as they are unsettled and ground conditions are only so-so. Part of that is my own fault. With rain and wind changing direction, I gave them larger runs in order to have different shelter options, as wind direction varies. You may recall that a week after the mini heatwave we were hit with cold northerly winds. That changeable weather has made managing stock at grass tricky.

Sherkin island weather station recorded an average rainfall of roughly 120mm for July, August and September. That's 30 to 40mm above the long-term average for that period. Those figures are consoling me in a way but only to confirm what the last three months felt like. It's like we're after 14 weeks where rain has made a regular appearance and it's been difficult to catch a break.

Uncertain times for dairy farmers

TB testing

As a result, and influenced by a TB test at the start of October, over half the cattle were housed for September 30. It's largely for convenience and not having to round up a lot of groups on the morning of a test but it will give ground a chance to recover too and the plan is to leave them back out once that is over.

TB testing means uncertainty for that week and beyond it too, you don't know what way things will fall with it, so I find it best not to make concrete plans until after. The farm is out of your control as such for the period between the two test days and that uncertainty is something I hate about the week, even more than the hassle of rounding cattle up.

Nitrates derogation

Uncertainty is in the air for any farmer availing of a nitrate's derogation too. That's roughly 7,000 farmers nationally, the majority of whom are involved in dairy. News that the EU Commissioner for the Environment, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius confirmed that there was no prospect of re-opening the current Commission Decision conferring a derogation from standard Nitrates Directive rules on Ireland has caused consternation across Irish agriculture, most notably in the dairy sector.

At present, Ireland's derogation permits the use of up to 250 kg per hectare on derogation farms. These vary in size from small to large and these more intensively stocked farms apply a range of additional measures beyond standard requirements to mitigate the risk to water quality. The average herd size for a farmer supplying Carbery is 90 cows with approximately 30 per cent of the milk pool supplied by those milking between 60 to 70 cows, a 12 per cent destock would prove a significant economic challenge to those producers.

The inclusion of "certain areas" in the Commissions message to the Minister offers the possibility of the 250kg N/Ha derogation remaining albeit within the aforementioned "certain areas". Minister McCauley appeared to confirm this in the Oireachtas committee meeting recently. If that's the case, judging by the 'Red Map' produced in the EPA's 'Water quality monitoring report on nitrogen and phosphorus concentrations in Irish waters 2022', West Cork looks to be remaining at 250kg N/Ha, for now.



Dairy cows grazing on the farm of former Drinagh chairman, TJ Sullivan at Urhan.

Further detail on who is included and what will happen if a farmer has land in both zones was expected at the end of September but there's no sign of it yet. Presently it appears that could mean a one year stay of execution for farmers operating above the new 220kg N/ha limit and the derogation issue doesn't look like its going away any time soon.

Now most of these issues will change for the better but right now I wouldn't like to be in the boots of a dairy farmer. Dealing with one of bad weather, a drop of almost 25c/l since last year in milk price and not knowing what you're able to do with your business in three months' time would be a challenge, but all three make for an uncertain few weeks for the sector in the short term.



Tommy Moyles' cows and calves head for the yard in Ballinascorthy.

OUT & ABOUT



At the NPC Minister Martin Heydon, announced the launch of 11 calving simulators and 11 injecting simulators for use in Teagasc agricultural colleges and research and innovation centres. Minister Heydon is pictured with Dr. Anne-Marie Butler, Head of Education, Teagasc; Jonathan Keneally, Technician, Teagasc Clonakilty Agriculture College; and Professor Frank O'Mara, Teagasc Director.

Special Feature: WOMEN IN ENTERPRISE

National Women's Enterprise Day regional event returns to Cork

Cork County Council's Local Enterprise Office North and West is delighted to welcome the return of the Southwest's National Women's Enterprise Day Regional Event to Cork for 2023. Taking place on Thursday, October 19, at the Dunmore House Hotel in Clonakilty, National Women's Enterprise Day is Ireland's largest female enterprise event.

Covering the Cork and Kerry region, this full day programme is designed and led by women to promote and encourage female entrepreneurship across Ireland. Now in its 17th year, National Women's Enterprise Day shines the spotlight on female entrepreneurship, opens the prospect of entrepreneurship to women who may not have considered it before and highlights what supports are available. Regional events also provide valuable networking opportunities to connect with industry experts together with acknowledging the achievements of women in enterprise.

Deputising for the Mayor of the County of Cork and former Mayor, Cllr Gillian Coughlan said, "National Women's Enterprise Day continues to highlight female entrepreneurs, encouraging them to build their community, share their successes and inspire others to follow their paths. I wholeheartedly encourage women in business from across Cork County to register to attend, and to embrace the theme of 'Empowering Business Together' through networking, knowledge sharing and following the journeys of

real-life entrepreneurs with four Leading Light Client companies speaking on the day. Cork County Council is delighted to welcome this event back to Cork this year, and to continue to collaborate with our Local Enterprise Office colleagues across Cork and Kerry."

The Southwest National Women's Enterprise Day Regional Event will feature a welcome address by Sharon Corcoran, Cork County Council's Director of Services, Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism. Cork based Amy Jane Keating, Host and Creator of the 'Go Do You' podcast will be the days host and facilitator, which will include Guest Speaker Pat Kane. Award-winning Sustainability Strategist, Founder of Reuzi.ie and Co-founder of Good Better Best, Pat will speak to attendees on building a future-proof business, touching on her own entrepreneurial journey, whilst highlighting small ways businesses can improve their sustainable practices. The day will also include a panel discussion with Cork and Kerry Leading Lights, followed by Keynote Speaker Laura Dowling, Fabulous Pharmacist and Founder



Pictured at the launch of the Women's Enterprise Day Event are: (l-r) Lisa Finn, Business Advisor, Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West; Amy Jane Keating, Event Host and MC; Deputy Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Gillian Coughlan; Caroline Murphy, West Cork Eggs, Event Ambassador and Leading Light representing Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West; Kevin Curran, Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West and Jamie Cuthbert, Event Coordinator and Business Advisor, Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West. Photo Joleen Cronin

and CEO of fabU Wellness.

Event Ambassador and Leading Light representing LEO Cork North and West at this year's event is Caroline Murphy of West Cork Eggs. Caroline's story is of city chic to country chick. Originally from London, Caroline married a dairy farmer and in 2009 bought her first four hens, a decision that was to change her life. Fast forward to today and Caroline now has 3,500 free range hens on the family farm near Rosscarbery. West Cork Eggs is part of the Supervalu Food Academy family and Guaranteed Irish. They

supply their delicious free-range eggs into most of the county's Supervalu Stores, as well as numerous hotels, cafes, restaurants, and independent outlets. West Cork Eggs is a family business with three members of staff, and they manage all their own deliveries. Their motto is 'Today's eggs are on the shelf tomorrow'.

Caroline says she is looking forward to "meeting other women at whatever stage of their business they are at and sharing stories. I always love a good panel discussion, which I know this one will be and

just spending a day getting motivated by the content and those there. I always come away from NWED invigorated and inspired."

She continues: "It is hugely important to encourage and support women into business because we have so many innovative ideas and skills to bring to business. It's not easy but it's always worth it and I would encourage anyone with an idea to at least explore it. We have so much to give and we owe it to ourselves (and our daughters!) to at least give it a go. Often our biggest obstacle is ourselves

and we listen to the voice that tells us we are not good enough or I'm not made for business or what would the kids/husband/friends think. Who cares! If you want to do it give it a go and avail of all the supports out there."

This initiative is led by the 31 Local Enterprise Offices nationwide, and funded by the Government of Ireland, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and Local Authorities. To book your place for the Cork and Kerry event please visit www.localenterprise.ie.

West Cork woman honoured at Ireland's Businesswoman of the Year Awards 2023

West Cork business woman Helen Wycherley of the Celtic Ross Hotel in Rosscarbery was named Networker of the Year at Ireland's Businesswoman of the Year Awards 2023. The results were announced at the organisation's annual Businesswoman of the Year Awards at Lawlor's Hotel, Nass, Co. Kildare last week. 350 guests attended the gala ceremony, which was hosted by businessman and social entrepreneur Aubrey McCarthy.

Network Ireland, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary,

received an overwhelming response to the awards this year with 370 applications from members of all its branches.

The awards ceremony followed Network Ireland's annual conference, which was hosted by film producer, entrepreneur, human rights campaigner and former Dragon's Den judge Norah Casey. Norah was honoured with the Trisha Murphy Memorial Award on the night.

National President of Network Ireland Emma Early Murphy said; "I would like to congratulate the eight winners

who are an inspiration to so many women around the country. The competition this year was really strong and it was a difficult decision for the judges to make. I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to all our members who took the time to apply for the Businesswoman of the Year Awards this year. We were blown away by the response and it's a great reflection on where the organisation is, 40 years after being established. Our theme this year is about celebrating success and I have met some really great busi-

ness women this year who are doing tremendous things and it has been a great opportunity to celebrate with them at our flagship event. I'd also like to thank all our sponsors who helped to make the conference and awards ceremony such a memorable occasion."

Helen Wycherley of Celtic Ross Hotel was named Networker of the Year at Network Ireland's Businesswoman of the Year Awards 2023.

Pic: Jill O'Meara





National Women's
Enterprise Day

Empowering Business Together

Southwest Regional Event

Hosted by Local Enterprise Offices Cork North
and West, Cork City, Cork South and Kerry

Dunmore House Hotel, Clonakilty on Thursday 19th October!

Now in its 17th year, National Women's Enterprise Day celebrates female entrepreneurs success and inspires female start ups.

The day promises to be a celebration of female entrepreneurship and an exiting opportunity for networking and inspiration with clients from across the Southwest region.

Covering the Cork and Kerry region, this full day programme is designed and led by women to promote and encourage female entrepreneurship across Ireland. National Women's Enterprise Day shines the spotlight on female entrepreneurship, opens the prospect of entrepreneurship to women who may not have considered it before and highlights what supports are available.

Regional events also provide valuable networking opportunities to connect with industry experts together with acknowledging the achievements of women in enterprise.



Keynote Speaker:
Laura Dowling
Fabulous Pharmacist
& Founder of fabÜ Wellness



MC & Host:
Amy Jane Keating
'Go Do You' Podcast Creator



Guest Speaker:
Pat Kane
Sustainability Strategist, Founder
of reuzi.ie & Sustainability Chief
Officer at Pragmatica



For more information and to register for this event, scan the QR code or go to
LocalEnterprise.ie/CorkNorthandWest/
Training-Events/National-Womens-Enterprise-Day-2023



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Special Feature: WOMEN IN ENTERPRISE

The seed of success: Cultivating a sustainable business

For the last 17 years that she has worked in West Cork **Jackie Gowran** has witnessed a quiet revolution taking place. Female entrepreneurs are sowing the seeds of their business dreams and nurturing them to fruition. Here she explores some of the art of cultivating a sustainable business that is aligned with you.



The seed: Germination of your business idea

Every business starts as a simple concept — an idea that germinates in the fertile soil of your imagination. It might come to you in a moment of inspiration or evolve slowly over time as you identify a need or follow your passion. Just like any seed, it requires the right conditions, care, and nourishment to grow into a sustainable business. Entrepreneurs are discovering that the journey includes cultivating not only their business but also themselves.

Strengthening the soil: Personal growth

First, I suggest you explore your identity as an entrepreneur. What makes you tick? What drives you? Understanding yourself and identifying your strengths and stretches are fundamental to nurturing your business idea. Just as a plant requires a strong root system, your business needs a solid foundation rooted in your values, beliefs, identity and commercial potential and



that tests your resolve. Your doubts, and limiting beliefs can be formidable obstacles. Embracing them, instead of shying away, is key to creating lasting change. Leadership isn't just about managing a team; it's about leading yourself effectively. You wouldn't treat a dear friend with anything less than respect, strong boundaries, encouragement, compassion, and love, would you? Apply the same principles to yourself as your own boss. Learning how to become your own best boss is part of business growth.

The journey ahead: Embrace the seasons

Just like the changing seasons, your entrepreneurial journey will have its ebbs and flows. There may be times of rapid growth and seasons of introspection. Embrace them all. Entrepreneurship is not merely a means to an end but a journey of self-discovery, growth, and making a positive impact on the world.

Surrounding yourself with a supportive network is also essential. Seek out mentors, advisors, and fellow entrepreneurs who can provide guidance, share their experiences, and offer emotional support. The Local Enterprise Office is a wonderful resource for this support, through providing mentors, training courses and inspiring networking events such as NWED.

Nurturing your business idea is not a solitary endeavour. West Cork is blessed with a supportive business community and local resources. Networking events, like those organised by Network Ireland West Cork also provide platforms to connect with like-minded entrepreneurs. The road to success can be lonely at times, but a strong support system can provide the encouragement you need to keep nurturing your business.

Remember, your journey as a woman in enterprise not only enriches your life but also inspires others to plant their own seeds of success. Cultivate your idea, watch it grow, and let it be a beacon of hope and innovation in your community and beyond.

Jackie Gowran is a business coach who specialises in blending traditional business training with a holistic person centred approach. With over 35 years of business experience she helps you weave the heart and soul into your business.
www.businessweaving.com

viability.

Why are you the right person for this business? Why do you do what you do? Your why is about the impact you want to have and the ripple effect of that impact.

When we look at this first it can appear quite surface level. When you peel it back it has much more depth. It is about looking under the layers. Your why isn't just about money, it's deeper. What is it that motivates you? What fuels and inspires you.

Planting the seed: Turning ideas into action

Once you have your business idea, it's time to plant the seed. This involves taking concrete steps to turn your concept into reality. Research is your first tool in this process. Understand your market, your potential competitors, and the needs of your target audience. At this stage I'd recommend signing up for a Start Your Own Business programme with the Local Enterprise Office or booking one of their advice clinic sessions.

• Creating a business plan is like crafting a blueprint for your seed's growth. It outlines your goals, strategies, financial viability and market. A well-structured business plan serves as your roadmap, in truth many entrepreneurs unless seeking investment shy away from committing to this process. At the very least, I highly recommend you commit to fleshing out your management (you), market and money plans on paper, it does not have to be formal at this stage.

• Vision development is the cornerstone of strategic planning. Where do you see your business in the future? What is the change you want to bring about in your industry or community? Crafting an outline

of your vision is like charting a course for your entrepreneurial journey and gives you direction.

• Business values are the compass that guides your decisions and actions. They form the core of your brand's identity and are an essential part of your business DNA.

• Consider your brand as a living entity, with a personality, voice, and values. When these elements align, the impact is profound. Developing your voice pillars allows you to communicate effectively with your target audience, creating resonance and connection.

• Financial planning is also critical. Ensure your business has a solid financial foundation with a budget, cash flow management, and a strategy for raising capital if needed. It helps you identify and explore the commercial reality of your business idea.

Nourishing the seed: Passion and perseverance

Much like a plant needs water, sunlight, and nutrients to grow, your business idea requires nourishment in the form of passion and perseverance. This is where many female entrepreneurs shine. Your passion for your idea will sustain you through the inevitable challenges and setbacks.

Just as a plant adapts to changing conditions, your business idea must evolve to meet the demands of a dynamic market. Sole entrepreneurs are usually more agile and able to adapt and innovate which is crucial for long-term success. Pay attention to customer feedback and market trends, and be willing to make adjustments to your products or services accordingly.

Entrepreneurship is a journey







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Special Feature: WOMEN IN ENTERPRISE



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For further information, please contact **021 4285795** or email audrey.heffernan@corkcoco.ie or visit **connectedhubs.ie**

West Cork celebrates in Dingle at Irish Food Awards

All roads led to Dingle for Blas na hÉireann 2023, the Irish food awards, with the three-day celebration of the best of Irish food and drink taking place at the end of September.

As usual there were many winners from West Cork including a gold for Kinsale Mead Co and a gold, silver and bronze award for various products from Clonakilty Gluten Free Kitchen.

Speaking as the winners were announced, Blas na hÉireann Chairperson, Artie Clifford said, "Looking back on 16 years of Blas, it's fantastic to see the standard of food and drink in Ireland go from strength-to-strength year on year. It's a real privilege for myself and the whole Blas family to bring these products, and the amazing producers who make them, to a much wider audience."

Now in its 16th year, Blas na hÉireann saw the highest number of entries with almost 3,000 products and many new produc-

ers entering the awards for the first time. Products from every county in Ireland were entered to win bronze, silver or gold awards in over 150 food and drink categories, as well as key awards like Supreme Champion and Best Artisan Producer.

As the competition ramps up year on year, securing that Blas badge is a huge achievement and means those producers who are short listed as finalists and the final winners really are the crème de la crème of Irish food and drink.



Kate Dempsey of Kinsale Mead Co receiving a gold award from Artie Clifford, Chairman, Blas na hÉireann.

OUT & ABOUT



Kevin Curran, Head of Enterprise with Cork County Councils Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West presenting certificates to (clockwise from top) Mary McCarthy from Verses of Ireland in Skibbereen, Michelle O'Driscoll from Wild Wool Way in Enniskeane, Lisa Wilson from Kinsale and Dolcie Ross Keogh from Schull at the completion of the LEO "Grow Your Creative Business" Programme. Pics: Sean Jefferies



Environment : Making a difference

What exactly is a daddy long legs?



THE ANIMAL WORLD

Dr. Jeremy A. Dorman

Dr Dorman is a zoologist and teacher living in West Cork.

Animals often have misleading names: a white rhinoceros isn't white, a black kite isn't black. The common gull isn't particularly common and the bald eagle certainly isn't bald. A bream can be either a freshwater fish in the carp family or a member of two different families of sea fish; (in southern Africa, it is a freshwater fish in a different family again). 'Prawn' and 'shrimp' can refer to a bewildering variety of crustaceans – the animals that fishermen here call prawns are actually members of the lobster family, while our shrimps are considered prawns elsewhere. Many insects called flies are not flies, and the word 'worm' is given to hundreds of totally unrelated creatures.

To make sense of all this, biologists use the classification system devised by the great eighteenth century Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus, who placed all animals and plants into categories, from kingdom to species, giving each a two-part name derived from Latin or Greek. This system also ensures that no matter what language is being spoken, there can be no confusion about a particular organism – for example, the Dublin Bay prawn might be called langoustine in France, scampi in Italy, and havskräfta in Sweden, but to a zoologist, anywhere in the world, it is *Nephrops norvegicus*.

Scientific names, however, are rather intimidating to the uninitiated, and as most invertebrates have few if any English names, to the general public, the vast majority of small animals, if they are noticed at all, are just 'bugs' or 'creepy crawlies', or have names that are too imprecise to be useful. One such name causes particular confusion – daddy long legs. It is descriptive, but unhelpful, as it refers to three different long-legged arthropods (animals with

exoskeletons and jointed limbs) about as closely related to each other as a frog is to a mouse or a cat.

One animal that we call a daddy long legs was especially plentiful this past September – the crane fly. This is an insect – it has wings and six legs. It is a true fly, a member of the order Diptera, meaning 'two winged'. Most insects have two pairs of wings, but flies use only the front pair for flying. The rear wings are modified into tiny structures called halteres, which are like gyroscopes – they give the fly information about its orientation so it can quickly adjust its position, as anyone will know who has tried to catch one. Diptera is a vast order of insects, containing about 125,000 described species (and possibly a million altogether). It includes houseflies, horseflies, hoverflies (which people confuse with bees or wasps), gnats, mosquitoes, and those big, clumsy crane flies.

There are over 15,000 species of crane flies in four different families; in Ireland we have 205 species. The most familiar belong to the family Tipulidae. The sexes are easy to distinguish – the male has a blunt, knobby end to his abdomen, while the female has a long, pointed tail. They are attracted to lights, so they often find their way into your house and then spend the rest of the night trying to get out. Being so big and having such long legs, they are easy to catch and release – they will not harm you, so don't scream, and don't swat them – let them out so they can complete their life cycle, or supply supper for a bird or a bat.

Adult crane flies don't live long – sometimes just a week or so – and if they feed at all, it is on nectar. But the larvae, called leatherjackets, live for several months in the soil and eat the underground parts of many plants, so gardeners don't like them.

The other animals that are called daddy long legs are both arachnids. This class of arthropods includes spiders, harvestmen, scorpions, mites and ticks, as well as several scarier creatures that live mostly in the tropics. Unlike insects, arachnids all have eight legs and no wings.

The spider order, Araneae, contains about 50,000 species in many families. I have a spider book which has in its introduction the sentence (chilling to an arachnophobe): "Unless you live in polar regions, there is at least one, probably more, not very far from you right now."

Spiders belonging to the family Pholcidae are known as daddy

long legs spiders. The common one found in Ireland is *Pholcus phalangioides*, the long-bodied cellar spider or skull spider (from the slightly skull-shaped pattern on its back). Pholcids have several other names – I like vibrating spider best, as it refers to their habit of spinning madly when disturbed, their way of confusing predators.

I am fond of pholcids. They appear so awkward – if you knock one out of its web by mistake, it seems to have a job controlling all its long legs while lurching away to safety. There are many living in my little cottage, partly because I don't much like dusting, but also I feel that it is now their home, and to throw them outside into the cold would probably prove fatal. I did hope that my spiders would catch any flies that come buzzing in, but unfortunately, pholcids eat mostly woodlice and other spiders.

Pholcus phalangioides is an alien species; it has a worldwide distribution now, associated

with humans, but probably came originally from Asia. It prefers warm places, which is why it likes to live in houses, but it usually hides away in cellars, cupboards and dark corners.

Pholcids have eight eyes, and, like all spiders, their bodies are divided into two parts – the cephalothorax and the abdomen. They have venom glands, and their fangs are strong enough to penetrate our skin, but they are not aggressive and the venom is weak, so they are no danger to us. Leave them alone and they will ensure you don't have so many less pleasant eight-legged visitors this autumn.

The last group of animals that are also called daddy long legs are the harvestmen, of the order Opiliones. There are about 7,000 species, but only nineteen recorded in Ireland. They get their other common name from an old English superstition that killing one would lead to a bad harvest. They are not a well-studied group, and individual species are difficult to identify; to most



Female crane fly.
The modified hind wings can be seen clearly.



Pholcus phalangioides



Unidentified harvestmen

BARRY O'CONNELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Irish Landscape Photographer



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people, they are just especially skinny and rather silly-looking spiders. But they are not closely related to spiders (it is thought that they are closer to the mites and ticks), and they differ in several ways.

Firstly, they have round bodies that appear to be made of just one part, and they have only a single pair of eyes. They have no silk glands, so they can't build webs, and contrary to popular belief, they have no venom glands, so they are totally harmless. They can, however, produce an unpleasant-smelling liquid to deter any predator; if that doesn't work, they can shed legs in the same way that some lizards cast off their tails.

Harvestmen are nocturnal, and they prey on a wide variety of small animals, many of which are pests, such as aphids, caterpillars, beetle larvae and mites, so they should be welcomed in the garden. They are highly

susceptible to insecticides, so please stop using chemicals and let the harvestmen (and other helpful animals like ladybirds and parasitic wasps) do the work instead.

Daddy long legs is a name for children to use, though I can't see why they shouldn't be taught scientific names from an early age – children love dinosaurs (or at least they did before their minds were deranged by smart phones and idiotic computer games) and have no problem pronouncing the likes of *Brontosaurus* and *Tyrannosaurus rex*. So, instead of daddy long legs, call these three different groups of animals craneflies, vibrating spiders and harvestmen, or better still, tipulids, pholcids and opiliones. And now that you know exactly what they are, you might be less tempted to suck them up the vacuum cleaner or squash them underfoot!

West Cork community heroes acknowledged at Anti-Litter Awards



Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Frank O'Flynn with winners of 1st place towns category B1 Jerome Dwyer and Francis Hunt representing Skibereen Tidy Towns at the Cork County Council's Anti-Litter Challenge awards. Twelve community groups received awards for 2023, including Dunmanway, Clonakilty and Schull. Photo: Darragh Kane

ENVIRONMENT : Making a difference

Most Irish people believe lack of political will is biggest threat to Ireland's marine environment

Environmental group reveals results of survey as it launches petition calling for legislation

Fair Seas has published the results of its first Ocean Literacy Survey which highlights that 76 per cent of people in Ireland believe "lack of political will to protect or manage the ocean effectively" is the greatest threat to Ireland's seas.

Ocean literacy is the understanding of our individual and collective impact on the ocean and its impact on our lives and wellbeing. This summer, almost 1,300 people provided their views on their relationship with the sea and a range of issues.

Some of the key findings include:

- 98 per cent of people surveyed support Marine Protected Area (MPA) designation to some degree.
- In total, 99 per cent of

respondents indicated that protecting the marine environment is either important or very important to them on a personal level.

• 76 per cent of people selected lack of political will to protect/ manage the ocean effectively as the biggest threat to the ocean, this was followed by marine litter and plastic pollution (72pc), overfishing (68pc), climate change (59pc) and destruction of habitats at the coast or in the sea (59pc).

Fair Seas is accelerating its campaign to protect, conserve and restore Ireland's marine environment and has launched a national petition to have the Marine Protected Areas Bill enacted without delay. It is asking people to add their name and call on Ireland's leaders to release strong legislation before the end of 2023.

The coalition of Ireland's leading non-governmental organisations and networks wants to see binding targets

committing to effectively protecting 30 per cent of the seas around Ireland by 2030, with 10 per cent strictly protected. The group is calling for stakeholder engagement at every stage, clear delivery timeframes and a robust management framework, with targeted, site-specific measures to ensure MPAs deliver for nature.

Aoife O'Mahony, Campaign Manager with Fair Seas said, "Progress is not fast enough, the MPA Bill was promised before the summer recess. We need to see this legislation published as soon as possible. It needs to be strong, legally binding and capable of doing the job it sets out to do. Hundreds of people took part in our Ocean Literacy Survey, spending at least 15 minutes sharing their views and concerns which adds up to more than two weeks in total – this alone demonstrates the personal commitment Irish people have to ocean conservation. It's significant that three-quarters



Minke Whale, West Cork Pic: Padraig Whooley/IWDG

recognised the lack of political action as a threat to our ocean and we are urging politicians to listen. We hope our new petition will again demonstrate that the electorate wants our elected politicians to act now. Together we can make a difference and safeguard our ocean for future generations.

Ireland's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week takes place until Sunday October 1. In May, Fair Seas was named one of 26 SDG champions by the Minister Eamon Ryan TD. The organisation's objectives align closely with SDG 14 which is concerned with 'Life Below Water'.

Dr Donal Griffin, Marine Policy Officer with Fair Seas said, "The ocean is the world's

largest ecosystem and absorbs around a quarter of global annual CO2 emissions, however in many respects its health is in steep decline. The latest UN progress report states that destructive trends haven't abated and that the ocean continues to be endangered by rising acidification, declining fish stocks and mounting plastic pollution. More concerted efforts to expand marine protected areas and coordinated global action is urgently needed. Strong MPA legislation should be prioritised as a matter of urgency. This legislation will provide the necessary certainty for all stakeholders, including fishers and offshore energy groups, all of whom have also expressed a desire to see this legislation

moved forward effectively."

Dr Stephen Comerford, Marine Policy Officer with the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, has welcomed the publication of the survey results and said "The survey shows unequivocally the public support for robust MPA legislation, and the sense of urgency felt by people who care for the marine environment. The threats faced by our seas are fully understood by the public and stakeholders alike, it just remains for the Government to engage meaningfully in delivering the MPA legislation in a timely and effective manner".

To sign the petition visit www.only.one/act/30x30-ireland. For more information about Fair Seas visit fairseas.ie

Green Party calls for a community meeting to discuss pollution issues affecting Lough Hyne



Green Party representative and council candidate for Skibbereen, Rory Jackson, has called for a meeting of all stakeholders to discuss and review the management of Lough Hyne in Skibbereen so that pollution issues affecting it can be addressed.

He said: "With a lifetime of engagement with Lough Hyne, I have sadly seen continued depletion in its unique marine life.

"Lough Hyne has been suffering from increased inflows of freshwater nitrates from both

within the lough and external sources.

"A 2012/2013 EPA study highlighted those freshwater inflows from outside the lough as contributing to the increases in nitrates, which shows up as green algae on much of our shores and inland waters.

"Continued weak management over the last 30 years and its now virtual status as marine play park is sadly only adding to decline in an increasing of its unusual and unique marine species."

Clochán Uisce: Drinkable Rivers in West Cork

There are not many rivers that you would consider drinking directly from if you were thirsty and yet, for the majority of human evolution, this was an unquestionable norm. We now rely on engineering and chemistry to bring our polluted water clean to us for consumption. Dutch-based NGO 'Drinkable Rivers' came into existence when ecologist and founding member, Li Ann Po, asked herself the question "how have we come to this?"

Our rivers are in a poor state worldwide. The causes are complex and numerous but the driving force behind these issues are human ones. Inspired to make a difference, Li Ann Po decided to set the bar as high as possible, to strive for drinkable rivers! Far too often our policy makers don't push beyond the minimum recommendations needed to improve our ecological footprint on the planet but Drinkable Rivers' approach is different.

With over 120 hubs in countries all over the world, Drinkable Rivers is community-led; with emphasis on engagement with landowners, farmers, industry, councils,

schools and businesses, they are making a difference. A difference that can, at first, be a litter-free river, a swimmable river, an ecologically diverse river, a community or multiple communities, a respected river... a drinkable river!

This month Drinkable Rivers is walking the Thames river in England, from source to sea, holding workshops, engaging with communities, schools, landowners, and policy makers along the way.

Clochán Uisce is the first Irish hub for Drinkable Rivers, taking water measurements from the rivers Feagle, Argideen, Bandon and soon, the Ilan. The group then uploads them to the Drinkable Rivers international database, which is monitored by ecologists based in the Netherlands. The aim of the database is to build a profile of the health of our rivers around the world, share ideas, discuss problems and find solutions.

For more information and to follow the progress on the Thames walk and previous events visit www.drinkablerivers.org and check out Clochán Uisce on Instagram.



Li Ann Po, Drinkable Rivers

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Feature FROM HOUSE TO HOME

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Win your dream house and raise funds for Enable Ireland



Seven year old Adam Clarke from Newcestown, Susan Dineen, Gavin White, Anne Hegarty and Stephen McCarthy join with Enable Ireland to launch their latest Win A House Cork fundraising appeal. Pic: Gerard McCarthy

Enable Ireland has just launched an exciting fundraiser, which the charity hopes will raise much-needed funds for its disability services. The charity, which provides services to over 13,000 children and adults with disabilities, is offering one lucky person a once-in-a-lifetime chance to win a three-bedroom end-of-terrace house in Astra Construction's Janeville development, Carrigaline, Co. Cork, valued at €350,000.

The winner will also receive a €5,000 voucher sponsored by Right Price Tiles and Wood Flooring and a €5,000 voucher sponsored by EZ Living Interiors Ltd bringing the total prize value to an incredible €360,000!

'Win A House Cork' has the support of the Clarke Family from Newcestown, including their seven-year-old son, Adam who attends Enable Ireland's ser-

vices. His parents, Therese and Fergal, said: "We are delighted to help support and raise awareness of this exciting fundraiser. Adam has been under the care of the early intervention team at Enable Ireland since April 2017, where he has received physical, occupational and speech and language therapies and also had access to their child psychologist. Thanks to Enable Ireland Adam has thrived."

The proceeds from the raffle will go towards the completion of funding for Enable Ireland's children's centre in Curraheen, Cork.

Tickets are available for €100 from www.winahousecork.ie, with the raffle scheduled to be held just before Easter on Friday, March 22, 2024.

Tickets can also be purchased by calling the fundraising team on 087 7905029 or emailing hello@winahousecork.ie

Heating your home



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.

It looks like the summer is almost behind us and the days are getting shorter and a bit colder, so it seems a good time to start thinking about heating. Over the last few months we have been looking at different ways in which we can prevent heat escaping through the walls, roofs, floors, windows and doors. Reducing draughts in a house is also a key part of conserving heat and improving comfort, and as we reduce unwanted air movement in the house, having effective ventilation in place becomes essential for good indoor air quality. The better insulated a house the less heating we need and that's why we always suggest a "fabric first approach" – insulation before anything else. What's the point in sending all the heat through the roof as it will be more expensive and will create more carbon emissions.

A warmer house not only saves money and carbon emissions but is more comfortable and has some other advantages. Once a house is cosy and well ventilated it is better for our health and this is especially the case for older, more vulnerable people who may spend more time at home. It also may allow us to use more of our house and not just keep one or two rooms

at a comfortable temperature.

In West Cork the main heating types are heating oil (kerosene) which is the most common primary heating fuel (62pc) for central heating, alongside LPG (11pc), and natural gas in certain towns. Solid fuel still plays an important role with 15 per cent of all dwellings in West Cork using it as the primary heating source. Electric heating, the most expensive form of heating, also plays a role (12pc), in particular in rental properties (based on 2016 CSO data).

Over the next two months, we will look at ways in which you can decrease your carbon footprint around heating your home. Ireland's Climate Action Plan is aiming to install 400,000 heat pumps in existing homes by 2030, which is a very ambitious target. Installing a heat pump, which extracts renewable heat from the atmosphere to heat the home and produce hot water, is one way to reduce your carbon footprint.

What's important if you are thinking about installing a heat pump installation is that your home is well-insulated first (fabric first approach again!). If you were to put a heat pump into a home that has not been insulated, it would have to work very hard and inefficiently which would increase your electricity costs. That is the reason why SEAI insists on your home having a technical assessment done by a registered assessor to determine if it qualifies for the heat pump grant. The assessment will determine if the fabric of the house has sufficient levels of heat retention. The assessor will calculate the heat loss indicator (HLI) for your home, which needs to be under two to qualify for a grant. If the HLI is too high for



your home, the assessor will advise you on what insulation and airtightness measures are required to comply with SEAI's requirements.

The survey of your home to check if it's 'heat pump ready' is called a technical assessment. It is similar to a Building Energy Rating – BER but goes into more detail and gives a report which you will need if you want to apply for the heat pump grant. A list of technical assessors who can complete this survey are listed on the SEAI website.

Heat pump grants are available from SEAI. You can install a heat pump using a registered contractor and manage this yourself or you can include it as part of a larger project managed by a One Stop Shop. The grants range from €3,500 for a heat pump in an apartment up to €6,500 for an air to water heat pump in a home.

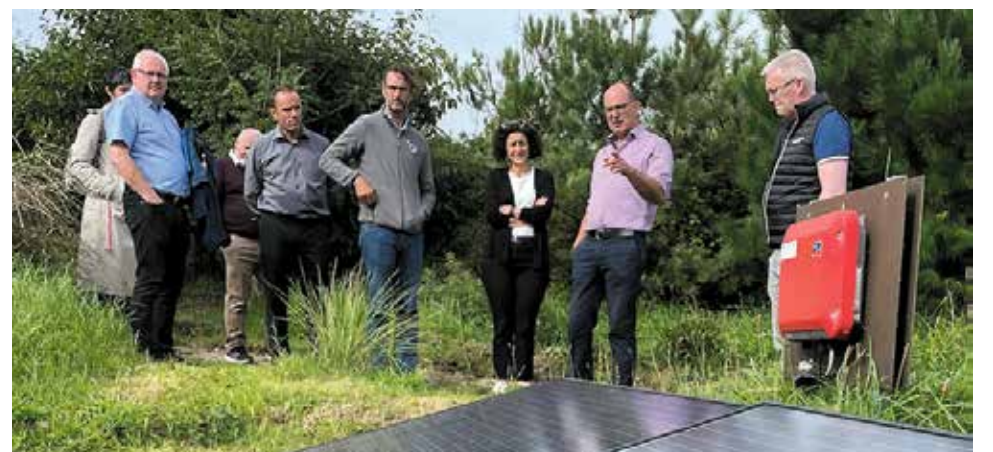
Next month, I'll go into more detail on different heating sources and look at heat pumps, how they work and how much they cost. I'll share my own experience in heating our home and moving from an oil-fired Stanley Stove to an efficient oil boiler and finally on to a heat pump.



CHERIS helps West Cork homeowners to make home energy upgrades, save money and contribute to a greener future.

It is no secret that most of us want to make our homes more energy efficient but don't know where to start. What do I need to do? How much will it cost? Are there any grants available? How much will I save in the long-run? Who is out there to do this work? How long will it take? These are the questions we all want answered before taking on a project like this.

The CHERIS project team (Ludgate Hub, The Wheel and RetroKit) have enrolled a number of energy mentors from housing associations, credit unions, community organisations and sustainable energy communities. The team have now started their training course to deliver a home energy upgrade information service using a new digital toolkit. The service will be rolled out later this year through a series of free clinics helping individuals who are searching for advice on how to get started on their home energy upgrade journey.



CHERIS Mentors: Ana Ospina, Finbarr O'Shea, Liam Donohoe, Tony Hughes, Pat Rodgers, Francesca Ryan and Ian Keoghane with Xavier Dubuisson of RetroKit

Feature FROM HOUSE TO HOME

Feather your nest with the best of Glentree Furniture

It's decades since, as a country, we moved away from having only one 'good room' deemed fit for the public. What needed to be merely functional in the rest of the house is now getting a lot more care and attention. Evelyn di Rollo of Glentree Furniture says this is all part of a wider cultural trend of quality over quantity, with customers seeking 'built to last' craftsmanship. Evelyn highlights just some of Glentree's current stock that is catching the attention of discerning buyers.

“A cosy comfortable home needs furniture made of natural materials wherever possible, with added layers of texture – rugs, cushions, lamps – that are all inviting to touch,” Evelyn advises. “It's all about our sensory reactions; how we get an emotion, a feeling of contentment, when we sink into a leather chair, run our hand over a wooded table or dig our toes into a wool pile carpet. I see it happen when customers ‘fall in love’ with particular pieces on the shop floor.”

To Evelyn's mind this ties in with changing consumer attitudes to everything we own, from clothing to footwear to furniture. “Many people are turning away from unsustainable materials, especially those derived from plastic. For example, wool and leather are huge now because they are organic and sustainable but also look and feel beautiful.”

To that end many of Glentree's customers are coming through the door with clear ideas on wanting real over faux, natural over synthetic. “Definitely sales of our wool rugs and carpets have grown massively,” Evelyn says. “So much so that we have just expanded our flooring section to bring in lots of new lines.”

Ironically, although plastic can take up to 500 years to decompose, and even then, never fully disappears, a synthetic carpet isn't as long-wearing as a wool one. The proof is in the wool rugs of historic buildings such as Bantry House; although faded after several hundred years underfoot, they retain their beauty.



“It's an example of buy better to prevent waste.”

Getting back to particular pieces that are attracting customers this season, Evelyn points to a luxurious grey leather corner sofa (pictured) that is butter-soft to touch – there's a warmth to it that is unmistakably from genuine leather. Although classic in design, this ‘plug-in’ sofa is also keeping up with the times; it reclines and adjusts head- and foot- rests at the touch of a button, and even allows you to charge your USB device!

“Fabric suites are still king though,” Evelyn says. “We have so much choice in fabric, pattern and colour you can see why.”

Also popular for sitting rooms, particularly in airtight A-rated homes, are Glentree's range of new generation electric fires, which provide a gentle warmth and a traditional focal point to the room.

Electric fires can be inset or wall mounted, or include surrounds and fireplaces in marble, steel or timber, and there is one for every style of home. For a Scandinavian inspired room you might choose the realistic

hand-painted log displays or choose glowing pebbles for a minimalist look.

Dining is a very busy section this year. Having people over for a casual lunch or dinner is much more common than it used to be; it makes sense that we want to have a beautiful table that looks great, even without tablecloths and flowers.

“Customers are definitely looking for a something with character and presence for their kitchen or dining room,” Evelyn says. “From supper to homework to crafting this is a piece of furniture that will get a lot of use. If it's not something that will stand the test of time, and even get passed down to the next generation, it's not worth your money.”

Tastes do change but what is timeless is a table that is deceptively simple but beautifully constructed. In Glentree you can view a stunning solid oak dining table that fuses the beauty of wood and metal.

This is actually only a design suggestion, it comes in so many options that it is essentially a ‘design your own’ table! The table on display is barrel shaped with a bullnose edge but it can



be ordered as a round, rectangle or square table, with five edge finishes, more than 12 wood surface finishes and legs in polished, powered or lacquered steel.

“Surround this table with a bench and chairs upholstered in fabric, leather or suede and you will have a dining room that is a showstopper but still has a warm and cosy feel,” Evelyn recommends.

Texture is a theme that continues in the bedroom depart-

ment, where high headboards in velvet and suede are still sought-after for a boutique bedroom feel. Customers are also being drawn to a traditional French-style rattan and wood bedframe that is very chic.

Also on show here are German engineered sliding robes, which are modular so you can mix and match units to fit any size room. These hardworking wardrobes use every inch of space efficiently with clever features like pull-down hanging

rails, trouser, belt and tie pull-outs, laundry areas, shoe racks and shelving that is height adjustable. The carcasses and doors are available in every kind of timber finish, or in neutral shades of coloured glass, so you will be able to change your room décor around them for decades to come.

If your home is your nest then feather it with the best. Call in to view Glentree's range of premium furniture.



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Feature FROM HOUSE TO HOME

Sleep sanctuaries made by Perrott's Home Living

2023 home design is all about warm earthy colours, natural textures and soft curves. Chrome, glass, hard angles and cool greys are being passed over in favour of brass, leather, terracotta and tweed. With these trends in mind, **Sheila Mullins** visited Perrott's Home Living in Clonakilty to get inspired for a cosy bedroom update.

Bedrooms are where you go to relax, rest and recharge your batteries so it makes sense that the décor is warm and inviting to touch, especially as we head into winter. For walls I'm thinking about taupe and other warm neutrals, with maybe a feature wallpaper in a botanical print or terracotta toned florals. And I have a lovely traditional tweed blanket to throw over crisp cream bed-linen. But what about furniture? What would tie in with my theme of 'touchable'. I head to Perrott's Home Living for inspiration.

There's so much to see in this huge showroom on Clonakilty's By-pass. Living and dining is downstairs, along with flooring and a window dressing department but, a woman-on-a-mission, I head straight upstairs to the bedroom department, where owner Trevor Perrott shows me around.

"At the trade shows this year I definitely saw evidence of that trend towards organic materials....mixing wood, leather, suede, stone" Trevor confirms. "All the colours are warmer shades too; grey isn't as ubiquitous as previous years and where it is seen, it's a warmer shade of grey with a hint of

mauve.

"People are so clued up these days about good design, probably because of Instagram. I'm being educated daily by customers who have wonderful ideas. And I listen carefully to make sure I'm buying with my customers in mind."

Having heard my design objectives, Trevor points me to the Francesca suite, a mid-century design in walnut, one of the most sustainable yet luxurious woods available. Its curvaceous lines are exactly the look I'm going for.

I see what Trevor means about mixing materials and textures; in this room display he has added a velvet bench and stool, a brass standing lamp and ceramic bedside lamps with brass rims. Bold botanical print cushions finish the look.

Although the full suite includes a bed frame, lockers and chest of drawers, Trevor suggests I could also mix pieces from around the store to create a unique and characterful room. So I go on the hunt for what else would match, without matching as it were.

Downstairs my eye falls on a tweed bucket chair with brass legs, again that 1950s shape I love, but also a green velvet

armchair with wooden legs... both would work in a reading corner. Maybe add a velvet cushion on the tweed chair or a tweed cushion on the velvet to maximise the number of textures? There's plenty of accessories here to choose from.

The final touch that would transform a bedroom is its window treatments. Maybe I'll go botanical on the windows instead of on the walls? Instead of letting me feel overwhelmed by the huge range of fabrics available, Trevor, who by this stage knows what I'm looking for, pulls out some suitable candidates.

Roller blind technology has come on leaps and bounds in recent years and they are now available in blackout, translucent, light filtering, waterproof, insulated or soft touch. You can also get extra wide fabrics for large picture windows.

"In many cases blinds are more affordable than made-to-measure curtains, particularly for those big new-build windows," Trevor says. "And with co-ordinating cassettes and bottom bars, and invisible brackets,



they give you an uninterrupted view."

I like the idea of light filtering blinds to give some privacy while still letting in diffused natural daylight but blackout is probably a wiser choice for

a bedroom, especially on long summer days. They also help to keep noise from outside at bay.

I'm also sorely tempted by the motorised option, which allows you to schedule your blinds to automatically open and close at certain times of the day.

I currently use a sunrise alarm clock but with these I could wake to natural morning light! You control these blinds using the remote provided, a wall switch, phone, tablet, or voice control with Google Home and

Amazon Alexa.

Decision, decisions. I'm leaning towards a fabric with a fern motif in light green tones, which would balance the darker walnut pieces. They would also look beautiful behind the velvet chair I was circling around earlier. My dream bedroom is taking shape.

For free expert advice bring photographs of your room and existing furniture such as a couch, or images from magazines, Instagram etc. Or avail of a free survey visit to assess and measure your windows.

Don't miss out: Perrott's Home Living is offering €50 off a bedframe or mattress with their advert on the page opposite!

A breakdown of the West Cork property market



The Sherry FitzGerald House Price Index saw the average value of second-hand homes in Ireland increase by 1.2 per cent in the third quarter of the year, with values rising 3.2 per cent in the first nine months of the year. This compares to growth of 5.5 per cent in the same time period last year. Estate Agent **Con O'Neill** of Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill provides a breakdown of the West Cork market per Eircode using the best figures available.

P85 Clonakilty

The P85 Postcode takes in the greater Clonakilty area; including Rosscarbery. There were 90 secondhand homes listed for sale in the first eight months of 2023. This is down from 102 homes in the same period in 2022. This shortage of supply has seen an increase in prices across all types of property in 2023.

Secondhand three-bed semi-detached homes, which had been reasonably stable in

price throughout the pandemic price increases, have finally seen price rises, which we anecdotally estimate to be between 10 and 15 per cent in 2023. This is backed up by figures published by the CSO, which estimates the median price paid on a per month basis. The median of the monthly figures published in the 12 months to July 2023 is €332,500 in comparison to €259,000 in the 12 months to July 2022.

Three substantial new-build

schemes at Sliabh na mBan, Sruthán Beag and The Miles in Clonakilty and Gleann Curriheen in Rosscarbery have helped alleviate the shortage in supply with figures published by the CSO recording 21 sales of new build properties in the 12 months to July 2023.

P81 Skibbereen

The P81 Postcodes takes in the greater Skibbereen area including Leap, Castletownshend, Baltimore and the Mizen



A coastal, detached, traditional type 3 bedroom residence for sale in Allihies with Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill. Asking price €245,000

Peninsula. Supply has been reasonably stable with 151 second-hand homes listed for sale in the first eight months of 2023 in comparison to 153 for the same period in 2022.

Coastal properties remain in high demand with buyers from the UK, mainland Europe, the

Middle East and the US replacing buyers from the Dublin area who had been to the fore during the pandemic.

The market within the P81 postcode has been relatively stable and this is backed up until-

Continued on next page...

FROM HOUSE TO HOME

Using figures published by the CSO, which estimates the median price paid in the 12 months to July 2023 at €297,500 in comparison to €283,125 in the 12 months to July 2022. A moderate increase in comparison to other areas in West Cork.

P75 Bantry

The P75 Postcode takes in the greater Bantry area including the Sheep's Head and Beara Peninsulas. The number of second-hand homes listed for sale in the first eight months of 2023 was 145 properties, which is down from 157 for the same period in 2022.

We have seen price increases on the ground in 2023. Estimates by the CSO of the median price paid in the 12 months to July 2023 estimate a figure of €239,500 in comparison to €190,000 in the 12 months to July 2022.

Purchasers tend to be relocating to the area on a full-time basis rather than holiday homes. Buyers returning home having lived elsewhere and European buyers, especially Germans, have been strong in the market in 2023.

P47 Dunmanway

The P47 Postcode takes in



A detached 4 bedroom house in Lisbealad, Dunmanway for sale with Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill. Asking price €420,000

the greater Dunmanway area including Ballineen, Enniskean and east to Ahiohill. In the first eight months of 2023, there were 65 properties listed for sale, which is down from 79 in the first eight months of 2022.

Areas to the east including Ballineen, Enniskean, Coppeen and Ahiohill have seen significant increases in prices post pandemic, as they are easily commutable from the city. While Dunmanway hadn't seen the same increase, there are signs of prices beginning to rise. There have been four sales on the Property Price Register with a Dunmanway address over the €400,000 mark in 2023 and a fifth was recorded in October 2022. Prior to this,

you must go back to August 2016 for the last sale to exceed €400,000 in the area.

Using the data published by the CSO, the median price for the 12 months to July 2023 is estimated at €245,000 which is an increase in comparison to €225,000 in the 12 months to July 2022.

**The author notes that the median price used is not the true median price and is rather a median of the monthly median prices published by the CSO on a per Eircode basis. We expect this estimate is close to the true median price per Eircode and is reflective of what we see anecdotally on the ground.*



L-R: Ray O'Neill, Niamh Moloney, Olivia Hanafin, Con O'Neill



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Feature FROM HOUSE TO HOME

Shiny happy bathrooms from Bathrooms & Beyond

From small bathrooms to luxurious designs, bathroom renovations to self build fit-outs, and managing the job from inspiration stage to the final finish, Bathrooms and Beyond are a West Cork company that's leading the way.

The company also sells a range of bathroom ware, tiles, timber flooring and safety flooring directly to customers in Cork city and county

through its online store.

Business owner Rory Murphy originally started with a showroom in Cork City 15 years ago, but with the advance of online internet sales, he closed the showroom seven years ago, moving the business back to his roots in Timoleague and the showroom online. Now operating from this small village in West Cork, Bathrooms and Beyond are testament to the

success of remote working for rural development, supporting so many local suppliers and contractors, as they provide quality bathroom renovations all over Cork county.

With a team of local contractors at the ready, Bathrooms and Beyond will help you in whatever your bathroom renovation requires, from hauling away the old bathroom to screwing in the final light bulb, including fitting, maintenance, upgrades, plumbing, tiling, plastering and beyond! The company's wide variety of stock is highly customisable, making it possible to tailor your units to your needs, hand pick for suitability in the space and provide a one-of-a-kind result that will show off your unique style.

This dedication to customising bathroom renovation to meet their clients' needs means that, in addition to supply of standard style bathroom ware,

Bathrooms and Beyond also provide additional modifications for less able-bodied customers including safety railings, accessibility features, and a variety of wet room styles, to grant scheme specifications.

Rory's passion is providing a quality service with a beautifully finished bathroom and a happy client at the end of each job, so as the online retail side of the business grows, his aim is to keep the fit-out side of the business Cork-based to ensure a personal and efficient service.

Visit the showroom online at BathroomsandBeyond.ie or check out their facebook / Instagram pages for updates. Visits on site can be made by appointment if needed.

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

What is the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant? The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant provides funding so you can refurbish vacant and derelict homes. It can also be used to renovate properties that have not been used as residential properties before.

You can get the grant if you are refurbishing the vacant property so you can live there, or so you can rent the property out.

What are the qualifying conditions for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant? To qualify for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, you must meet the following criteria:

- The property must have been vacant for two years or more.

You will not qualify if the property has been left unreasonably or purposely vacant so you can get the grant.

- The property must have been built before 2008. (Before May 1, 2023, only homes built before 1993 qualified.)

- You must own the property or be in the process of buying it.

- You must live in the property as your principal private residence when the work is completed, or make it available for rent. If you are going to rent the property when the work is done, you must register the tenancy with the Residential Tenancies Board.

- You must have tax clearance from Revenue and your tax affairs must be in order.

- You must have paid your Local Property Tax, if applicable.

- You must not be a registered company or developer.

You can only get the grant twice. You can get one grant to refurbish a home to live in, and another for a home you are going to rent out.

How do I prove that the property was vacant? Utility bills can be used to show that a property has been vacant at a particular time. If you can't get utility bills for the property, you can provide a signed affidavit stating that the property has been vacant for at least 2 years. Or, if you have recently bought the property you can get a letter from the seller's solicitor confirming that the property was vacant.

How much is the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant?

You can get up to €50,000 to renovate a vacant property and up to €70,000 if the property is derelict. The grant is inclusive of the VAT cost of the works.

The grant amounts increased on 1 May 2023. If you applied for the grant before May 1, 2023 and you haven't got your grant yet, the new grant amounts can

be applied. If you are living on an off-shore island, you can get up to €84,000 to renovate a derelict building or up to €60,000 for a vacant property.

If the renovation costs more than the grant, you will have to pay for this. You can apply to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) for the Better Energy Homes Grant Scheme. This grant helps improve the energy efficiency of your home, by helping with the cost of insulating your home or installing a heat pump or solar panels. Work covered by the SEAI scheme is not covered by the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

The grant must be approved before any work begins.

How do I apply for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant? You should complete the application form and send it to the local authority. You can download the application form or get one from your local Citizens Information Centre. There is a checklist of supporting documents you will need to send in the application form.

The local authority will review your application and documents. They will arrange for a qualified person to visit



A traditional farmhouse currently for sale in Castlefreke, Clonakilty for €125,000 that agents Sherry Fitzgerald O'Neill expect will qualify for this Grant.

the property to check that it is possible to do the work and to assess the cost.

The local authority will send you a 'letter of approval' if your application is successful. This letter will tell you how much your grant will be. If you haven't bought the property yet, you will get a 'letter of approval in principle' for the grant. You must sign and return this letter to the local authority, as it forms part of your agreement with the local authority.

You have 13 months to complete the works once your application has been approved

What happens if my application is not successful? If your application is not successful, you can appeal the decision with the local authority. You should write

to them within three weeks of the decision, giving the reasons why you are appealing.

Your appeal will be reviewed by someone in the local authority who was not involved in assessing your application. The local authority will contact you with the outcome of this review. This can take up to six weeks.

What happens if I don't want to live in the property or rent it out? If you got the grant to refurbish a property to live in and then you decide to sell or rent it out within 10 years of getting the grant, you will have to pay the local authority back. You will have to pay them back for any reason that you are no longer living in the property as your main home within 10 years

Continued on next page...

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Feature FROM HOUSE TO HOME

Wonder walls from Tom Sheehy's



Are you bored of looking at the same four neutral walls? You can magic up a whole new room with just a weekend of painting or papering says **Tony O'Sullivan**, a fourth generation painter and decorator who, after 35 years in the trade, stepped down from his ladder to manage Tom Sheehy's paint department in 2021. Always happy to share his expert technical knowledge and design advice, Tony highlights some of his favourite in-store products for creating wonderful walls.

Add interest and texture with wallpaper

Instead of paint, Tony says lots of customers are now choosing wallpaper for feature walls. "We have hundreds of designs so you can go bold or soft, vibrant or calming. There are some great ideas on Instagram and we'll have what you need to achieve the same look. A customer recently used a trompe l'oeil (trick the eye) bookshelf design to section off a reading nook in his sitting room; with a comfy armchair and a standing lamp it was very effective.

"Modern high-quality wallpapers are easy to install and, more importantly, remove when you fancy something fresh in the future," Tony promises.

Most papers add a sensory element with some degree of texture and this can also hide some sins. To disguise more serious imperfections such as a rough seam between new and old plasterwork Tony recommends using heavily textured 'expanded vinyl' paper, which you can paint over.

Wallpaper books are available to borrow from the Clonakilty store or you can browse the designs online at www.ryan-wallcoverings.com and use the

'SHEEHY10' code to get a 10 per cent discount and delivery straight to your home.

Let our landscape inspire you

With a palette that is drawn from the Irish landscape Colourtrend paint has a strong fanbase. "Their colours bring the outside in like no other paint," Tony says. "You've got the cool greens, blues and mauves that you'd expect but also warm pinks, oranges and yellows"... like the wild roses, montbretia and gorse of a West Cork hedge.

"Brickstock is a lovely earthy choice for a cosy living room, paired with a soft green such as Long Weekend and Unveiled, which is a barely-there pink. I also like Source, a rich shade of teal that works alongside subtle greys or lilacs, or soft browns."

There are stunning colour combination suggestions on the Colourtrend website or, again, customers are coming in with pictures from Instagram, which we can suggest matches for."

Sheehy's also stocks Dulux paint and has a full mixing service. They offer very attractive deals on paint packages so chat to Tony before you start any large projects.



Preparation is key

Tony swears by Sheehy's range of Owatrol products, which include a mix-in bonding primer to stabilise new build walls for long-lasting results; a conditioner that eliminates brush and roller marks and excellent mould treatments. "The brush on liquid masking tape is ideal if you're painting something like a glass panel door.

"Preparation is seventy per cent of the job but will have the finished job looking like it was done by a professional."

For more advice and ideas call in to Tony at Tom Sheehy's, Astna Street, Clonakilty.



of getting the grant.

If you get the grant to refurbish a property to rent and you decide to sell the property, or it is no longer available to rent within 10 years of getting the grant, you will also have to pay the local authority back.

The amount you will have to repay depends on how long you've lived in the property or rented it out. If you live or rent out your property for:

- Less than five years, you have to repay the full amount
- Over five years but less than 10, you have to repay 75pc of the grant
- More than 10 years, you don't have to pay back anything

Is there a grant for conservation advice for refurbishing

traditional farmhouses?

If you have a traditional farmhouse and want to apply for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, you can get an additional grant of up to €7,500 for expert conservation advice on how to refurbish your vacant property.

The Conservation Advice Grant Scheme for Vacant Traditional Farmhouses was launched on 14 June 2023. Under the Scheme, you can get an experienced conservation expert to complete a survey of your property and write a report with conservation advice on how best to refurbish it

To qualify for the scheme, the property must be a traditional farmhouse or cottage. This means that it is a modest house, built using traditional techniques

and local materials, such as thatch, stone, slate, earth, wattle and un-sawn timber.

If you need further information about this topic or you would like information on other issues, you can drop in to the local Citizens Information Service in Bantry or telephone them on 0818 07 8390. They will be happy to assist you and if necessary arrange an appointment for you. WEST CORK HELPLINE 0818 07 8390

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

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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Foodies ready in anticipation of 'A Taste of Bandon'

A Taste of Bandon is just around the corner. Running since 2019, the anticipated event seeks to highlight the rich culinary history of this historic market town and promote it as a wonderful place to live and visit for locals and visitors.

Over the years the festival has highlighted food businesses of the town, as well as showcasing artisan producers, foraging workshops, children's activities and more. This is one festival where there is definitely something for everyone.

Join in from October 27-28 for a celebration of fun and flavour on the streets of Bandon. From restaurants and cafés to delis and food markets, Bandon delights the tastebuds with quality fare whatever you fancy.

Taste the best of the Bandon,



with weekly markets or join the Heritage Trail as it walks along the route of the old markets of Bandon. And follow Kate Ryan

as she visits local producers and discusses the flavours of Bandon.

Come welcome Samhain



with a Luna ritual at the Druid's Glen, bash your drums on our Banshee walk with Creative Bandon and bask in the warmth

of the flames of ROGU Fire.

This year, the headline event is 'A Night out in Bandon' where local food businesses are

coming together to give you a true taste of Bandon. Join in on Saturday, November 4 at Kevin O'Leary's Irishtown – for food, fun and music! Local restaurateur Donal Kelleher of the Copper Grove said, "Bandon has a fantastic array of the finest food producers and restaurants around and we are looking forward to showcasing the best we have to offer."

Stephanie Murray of Jake's said "the businesses in Bandon are part of a thriving community and we are looking forward to putting on a fantastic array of fun, merriment and flavour to Bandon this November."

Tickets are €30 and available from Copper Grove, Poachers and Market Bar

For further information contact the festival team at tasteofbandon@gmail.com

Wild about mushrooms



A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

Bilbao was a new entry point for us to Spain. We packed our little van and departed early one morning for the Rosslare to Bilbao ferry. We then spent 27 hours on a lively sea. It's very relaxing once you find your feet, as there's not much to do apart from read a book, which is a good thing after the stress of packing up and leaving. We arrived in Bilbao to extreme wind and grey sky and then it began to rain, horror of horrors!

Our plans were very open so instead of exploring the city, we headed a little south, up in the hills to Soria, where the sky was blue and the sun was shining. We stayed in Vinuesa, a small village in the Sierra de Urbion, famous for pine forests and mycology. It's very quiet; there are two shops and a handful of bar-restaurants that cater for the locals and sporadic tourists. There is skiing in winter, mountain climbing all year and mushroom picking in the autumn.

We hit the mushroom time of year and our friends took us off up into the forest to find some. We walked for miles before we found our mushroom eyes but then they started to pop up everywhere. We learnt so much: Which mushroom likes to grow next to which plant and more importantly which were edible and which were poisonous? We found an amazing bright orange mushroom, which I would have run a mile from, but our friends were very excited about. It was a prized Oranje Aminita Caesara, which apparently was Caesar's favourite mushroom and fetches €100/kg. We went home with a basket filled with the above Oranges, boletus edulis (porcini) and thistle setas – little brown babies, and made ourselves a feast of marinated mushrooms and risotto.

The next day we clambered up, or should I say scrambled, whichever way, it was up, to the Laguna Negra, which is a beautiful glacial lake on top of the mountains. Once up, there is an amazing undulating plateau strewn with enormous glacial rocks, waterfalls, underground streams, wild pigs, deer, flowers and bees.

We moved on from Vinuesa, through hills and plateaus where acres of sunflowers were drying in the sunshine and butter-scotch-coloured cows were grazing. Up over the mountains into the Sierra de Gredas, where we found Arenas de San Pedro, a village surrounded with oak and chestnut forests. The chestnuts are just ripening and we filled our pockets with shiny

brown chestnuts.

Driving down from Arenas de San Pedro, the landscape changes, the pines peter out and the trees become olive trees and it looks very Mediterranean. It's also warming up. Or hot as Con would put it.

Right now we're in Merida and today's plan is to continue south towards Cadiz.

It's a wonderful drive, lovely people and places, highly recommended, a very different Spain from the coasts.

Here's a recipe that I made with the last of our mushrooms. There are only five ingredients apart from the pasta and Parmesan. Use the most interesting selection of mushrooms that you can find.

Wild Mushroom and Tomato Linguine serves 2

Ingredients:

- 250g mushrooms
- 1-2 large ripe tomatoes
- 100mls extra virgin olive oil
- 25g butter
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 250g linguine, spaghetti or tagliatelle
- Parmesan cheese to serve

Method:

Wipe the mushrooms clean and slice thinly.

Put a frying pan on to the heat, add 25 mls olive oil and the butter. When the butter froths up, add the mushrooms. Cook on a high heat for a couple of minutes, then reduce the heat a little. Cook until the

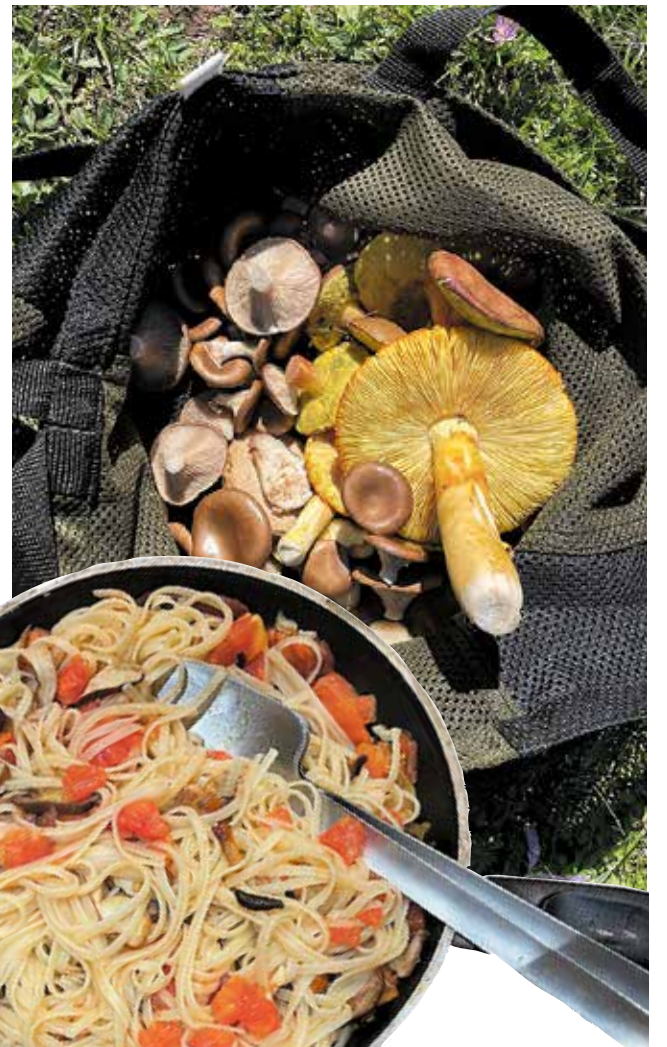
mushrooms have melted down, then season with a little salt and cracked black pepper. Tip the mushrooms onto a plate and put them to one side. Don't wash the pan.

Put a large pot of water on to boil. With a sharp knife remove the core at the top of the tomatoes and score a cross on the bottom. When the water boils, drop the tomatoes in, then count to twenty. Take the tomatoes out of the pot with a slotted spoon or spatula and slip them into a bowlful of cold water to cool.

Return the water to the boil and season with a tablespoon of salt. Add the pasta and give a few stirs to loosen it. Set the timer according to the time on the packet.

Drain the tomatoes, remove the skins, cut in half and gently squeeze out any excess seeds – these would only make the sauce watery. Dice the tomato and season with a little salt.

Peel and thinly slice the garlic. Put the pan that was used to cook the mushrooms back on the heat. Add the olive oil and garlic, heat gently together for a couple of minutes, just a soft sizzle, don't let them burn. Add the diced tomatoes then increase the heat. Cook until bubbling. Stir in the cooked mushrooms then let the sauce gently simmer. Check the seasoning and add more salt and pepper if



needed.

Drain the pasta. Reserve a little of the cooking water. Toss the pasta with the sauce – add a little cooking water if it's too dry.

Serve with a swirl of olive oil and some grated Parmesan.

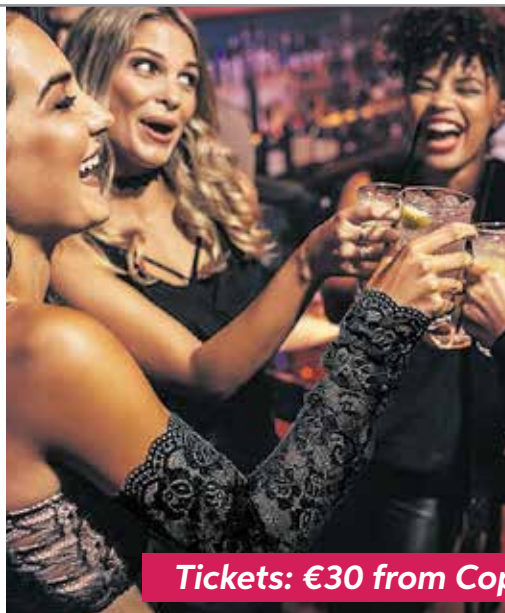
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Always an island nurse

"It's like having one big ward," laughs nurse Catherine O'Sullivan, as she describes her role as an island nurse. It's much more than that however, as Catherine is something to everyone on Bere Island on the Beara peninsula, from offering support and advice to the mother of the week-old baby to the carer of the 90-year-old pensioner who has returned home from the hospital to die. There are in or around 200 inhabitants on Bere Island today, a number which swells considerably during the tourist season. They're a fiercely independent and close-knit community finds **Mary O'Brien**, with everybody looking out for each other.

Catherine O'Sullivan has never left Bere Island: It's where she grew up, met her husband and reared her family. Being able to live and work there was always her heart's desire. When she does step off the island, inevitably she feels a fierce pull back: "I always find myself breathing a deep sigh of relief when I hit that patch of road at Adrigole where you can see the tip of the island," she shares.

Like most of the islanders, much of Catherine's childhood was spent along the shoreline, digging for clams and periwinkles and lobster fishing. A close family, Catherine remembers her parents were never far. "My dad fished and farmed, did a bit of everything really, he was a postman and a builder when needed too!"

Catherine's mother, who sadly passed away last year, worked at home and on the farm and when her children were reared, like many of the island women, she got a job in the fish factory in Castletownbere.

Catherine recalls how all of the children had a bucket – the size depending on age – and once you had filled your bucket with periwinkles, you were allowed to go and play. The periwinkles were sold to local buyers before being exported to

France.

She remembers having measles as a child and Nurse Mullins arriving on her bicycle with multivitamins. Later on, when Catherine was 13, she developed pneumonia and recalls her father having to carry her down through the fields and across to the mainland in his punt before she was transferred to a Cork Hospital by ambulance. While today Catherine has a handheld radio that connects her directly with the ambulance and search and rescue helicopter control desk – there have been two successful helicopter evacuations for head injuries on Bere Island since August – in those days, emergency services to the island were limited. "The doctor in Castletownbere actually told off my poor father, as he said my heart could have given out from the strain of the journey, but sure what else could he have done," she shares. "For a long time, the only 'ambulance' we had access to on the island was a stretcher in the back of a van." Today there are four defibrillators and three Community Responders trained in CPR on Bere Island.

Warm and compassionate with an easy laugh and efficient manner, it's obvious that Catherine is good at her job: Her predecessor was Nurse Veronica Crowley and before her

Nurse Mullins, both of whom made a strong impression on the young islander.

"Veronica Crowley taught me so much, practical, sensible stuff," she shares. "My own daughter is a nurse today and you don't got that type of experience when you're training anymore."

In the old days the public health nurse was also a midwife and cycled around the island from house to house. The last baby that was delivered on Bere Island is now nearing 40.

"We have an amazing ferryman. I've pulled him away from all sorts of occasions including his Christmas dinner and he has never once uttered a word of complaint or refused me! Nothing gets in the way of helping someone on the island, even a disagreement between neighbours. Everyone steps up when needed on the island."

While Catherine had the luxury of an automobile for her role, her first car did come without a bonnet. "I was told I had the cleanest engine on the island because it was rained on," she laughs.

After leaving school, she did some voluntary work in Castletownbere hospital before starting her training in the



Mercy in Cork in 1986. She married fellow islander Gerard O'Sullivan, who owns the local boatyard and drydock and continued working after having

and assistance and supporting people in their own care, in particular the elderly and under-fives, to doing dressings and giving injections. She also covers essential services, offering palliative care if someone is dying at home. Island life can be isolating, with loneliness greatly impacting mental health, so sometimes just providing some company is more important than anything. There is a huge social care side to the role.

"Being an island nurse is a much broader role than being a nurse on the mainland," Catherine explains. "You have to be open to listening and learning but also to knowing your limitations. There is only me!"

Her biggest fear is a multi-person accident. "Who do you deal with first?" she explains. A few years ago a golf cart with four teenagers went over a 15-foot sand bank and Catherine was one of the first at the scene. "My happiest

moment was looking over that bank and seeing four pairs of eyes staring up at me," she shares. "That kind of scenario is very daunting. Thankfully everyone came out of it ok."

There's a great sense of pride and inter-dependence in being an islander and nurse Catherine is grateful to be able to play her part in her community. "We have an amazing ferryman," she says. "I've pulled him away from all sorts of occasions including his Christmas dinner and he has never once uttered a word of complaint or refused me! Nothing gets in the way of helping someone on the island, even a disagreement between neighbours," she shares. "Everyone steps up when needed on the island."

Although she has worked more than enough hours to entitle her to retirement, Catherine has no intention of putting away her thermometer and bandages just yet. Once a nurse, always a nurse, especially on an island!

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Ground yourself with Budding Yoga

Craving the holistic lifestyle that she has since found in West Cork, Michelle Hegarty, packed in her rewarding but stressful engineering career with a technology company in the States, which involved juggling a 40 to 50 hour work week with family commitments, and moved with her American husband and two children back to Ireland.

Today she's a yoga teacher, living her dream life in Drinagh with husband Barry and two boys, Eoin and Rory.

Practicing since 2006 and teaching for over five years under the name 'Budding Yoga', Michelle is well experienced in helping people live more fully through moving and breathing. "Our bodies are meant to be moved," she says "and so many benefits will come from that; calming of the mind, grounding



and connecting through every practice."

Michelle has trained in a number of yoga disciplines including Hatha, and Yin with the Vitality Traditional School of Yoga, studying under teachers from the renowned Yoga Therapy Ireland group. She now concentrates her teaching

around Hatha, Yin and Chair yoga, giving classes around the Skibbereen area, and gains great satisfaction from seeing her clients more relaxed and grounded after just one class.

"Many claim that they sleep great and feel great after it," shares Michelle "but when people dedicate to practice more regularly, they notice improvements in range of movement, strength, flexibility, balance, overall health and even fine control movements."

Personally Michelle tries to 'live' yoga off the mat, physically and mentally. She works at instilling this mindset also in her clients.

"One lady told me that her yoga class with me saved her," she shares "that she fell backwards off the second step of a ladder, with a bag in hand, and just rolled back with her feet in



the air, and then rolled forward almost to standing without even hitting her head," explains Michelle, who often teaches rolling up and down in her class.

You need to ask what you can take from a practice or class that will help you in how you live your life," she says passionately.

"Whether it's a postural awareness, or how you can improve a repetitive task, or the philosophy of yoga; this helps me a lot, with perspective, detachment from egotism, minimalism, true quality of life and relationships with people I know and don't know. Finding compassion and kindness even for those that aren't always the most pleasant to deal with, maybe because they need it the most."

According to Michelle, the trust that develops as you

ground and connect in yoga is very powerful. "Things start to unfold the more you practice and the more dedicated you become, the more fully you want to live your life."

In her own life, Michelle enjoys living as organically as possible, close to nature and the ocean, where she tries to swim a few times a week all year around, but mainly in Lough Hyne. She loves to be outdoors. The family grow their own vegetables, and Michelle has a passion for making and repurposing things, her most recent project involved giving new life to an old trampoline in the form of a polytunnel.

This way of life has encouraged her to collaborate on yoga and food retreats to give people a glimpse into what's possible if you embrace movement, good ingredients and the outdoors

into your life. They have been a huge success: The combination of stunning coastal locations at the heart of nature with the detoxification of a sauna and the grounding practice of yoga and swimming, a winning combination.

For updates on Michelle's offerings keep an eye on her social media, Instagram and Facebook, and posters locally.

Michelle runs classes in Baltimore on Friday's and Skibbereen on Mondays. She also gives group classes at day centres and active retirement groups locally, and private sessions in Liss Ard Estate and on demand. An online class takes place on Mondays. Retreats are usually on a Friday or Sunday.

For more information or to book a class call Michelle on 087 2358188.



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Contact Michelle from Budding Yoga on 087-2358188

Dyslexia Awareness Month marked with focus on rights

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) will be marking Dyslexia Awareness Month this October as well as Dyslexia Awareness Week (October 2-8), along with dyslexia organisations worldwide. The organisation's focus this year will be on dyslexia rights. Namely the Right to Assessment, the Right to Identity and the Right to Supports for people who have dyslexia.

There is much progress to be made in Ireland around key issues faced by dyslexia individuals. This Dyslexia Awareness month the organisation will highlight the challenges faced and propose solutions to address them. It will work to deepen understanding of what dyslexia is and share the experiences of being a person with dyslexia,

as it works to make Ireland a dyslexia-friendly society. The group will make an Oireachtas Presentation on October 4 to highlight the challenging journey that many individuals face when dealing with dyslexia.

Access to dyslexia assessment remains challenging for both children and adults. Campaigning is needed for greater access to assessment in schools, and support for those left but with no option but to seek a private assessment. The group is also calling for an increase in postgraduate training places for educational psychologists to meet the need for qualified assessors.

Difficulty accessing dyslexia assessment also means that the benefit of identity is denied to many, leading to a negative

impact on the self-esteem and mental health of those left waiting. Better and earlier identification of dyslexia will decrease the mental health impacts and enable better understanding. The Dyslexia Association of Ireland is also calling for Government circulars and guidance to acknowledge the importance of the word dyslexia to those impacted by it and the impor-

tance of including the word in all relevant documentation.

Individuals with dyslexia of all ages experience challenges accessing necessary supports. Mandatory training of teachers at all levels is needed to ensure better evidence-based support is provided to dyslexic learners. Schools and workplaces should be supported to create clear policies on how best to

support dyslexic individuals. School Support Plans should be consistently implemented and monitored by the Inspectorate. Guidance from Government departments and agencies should be audited and updated to only recommend programmes fully aligned with Science of Reading research. An improved scheme of reasonable accommodations in state exams is also needed with the introduction of extra time for students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties, and increased access to assistive technology in exams.

Rosie Bissett, CEO of the Dyslexia Association said: We are calling on the Government to address the systemic barriers which prevent many dyslexics from accessing assessment, identification and the supports

and accommodations they may need in education and work. We are asking the Government and its agencies to properly recognise dyslexia (in words and actions) and commit to meeting the needs of dyslexic individuals of all ages. Literacy interventions must be in line with the known science of reading research. Accommodations such as extra time in state exams must be introduced for our dyslexic students, in line with international practice (and at university level in Ireland). Our educators must be properly supported with training and guidance on best practices. We cannot allow the needs of those with dyslexia to continue to go unmet.

For more information on dyslexia visit: www.dyslexia.ie



FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

A
WEST CORK
LIFE

Tina Pisco

Embracing Hygge

corner again, and another two months after that until we really feel the days getting longer again. When we can finally say: "There's a fine stretch in the evenings!"

I hate the cold, the dark and most of all the damp. I will admit, however, that the dark season has its plus sides. I can appreciate the cosy warmth of sitting around the fire as a gale blows outside. Hygge, a Danish concept, which has grown in popularity in the last few years, perfectly fits this time of year. Hygge is about "cosiness and surrounding yourself with the things that make life good, like friendship, laughter and security, as well as more concrete things like warmth, light, seasonal food and drink." What's not to love? In fact, though I didn't know the word for it, I've always been very good at Hygge. Comfort not speed has always been my motto. Then Covid lockdowns came around and I became a world champion of Hygge.

Now is also the time to get ready for the winter. This is the bit of the season that I love the most. Getting the woodpile sorted, foraging for

berries, pickling, preserving, and fermenting all bring me a joy that I can't really explain. I just know that it makes me extremely happy. It's like Hygge but more active. This year has been a bumper year in terms of foraging and harvests – except for blackberries which we pretty much missed. I only managed to pick a small bag.

Blackberries aside, the rest of our pickings have been wonderful. We went looking for damsons at exactly the right time and got 4kg, while still leaving most of the fruit on the tree. (The basic rule of foraging is never pick more than for your personal consumption and always pick less than half of what is there. Frankly I never pick more than one third. Often less). One of the characteristics of harvest time is to gorge on Nature's bounty. With 4kg of damsons we had no problem indulging in the season. We ate them. I made strudel. I had them for breakfast in my oats. Best of all I made the most spectacular jam

ever.

Our own apple trees produced a whopping 55kg. We pressed 45kg into apple juice, leaving the rest for apple sauce, pies, and desserts. The destiny of the apple juice is always a bit of a family tussle. We want to turn it all to cider, while my daughters want to keep it as juice. I must admit that the apple juice is gorgeous, but there's something about brewing cider that is just magical. Maybe it's the row of

demi-johns filled standing in a line by the Aga. Maybe it's the soft blip-blip of the bubbles going through the airlocks. Maybe it's because last year's cider was delicious. In any case it certainly qualifies as a seasonal drink and contributes to Hygge when we drink it at Christmas.

The raspberries have also been spectacular this year. Every drawer of the freezer is stuffed with them. They are crammed in with elderberries, and rhubarb. Most will go into jam, but some will be saved to brighten up a dessert



in mid-winter. Raspberry coulis in January is like pouring summer sunshine over ice-cream. If it finally stops raining (heat plume anyone?) we'll go out picking sloes – even though the price of spirits has turned sloe gin into a rather expensive treat. Then again, sloe gin definitely contributes to the Hygge.

As I sit writing this, the rain is steadily drizzling outside, the fire softly crackles with each gust of wind; the dog is

sighing on her bed by the stove. The cider is softly blipping in the background and a general feeling of contentment fills the kitchen. Hygge is assured for this winter. However, perhaps not quite yet. As soon as I finish this column, we're booking a holiday to Turkey. Hygge can wait. I need a bit of sun and heat before I give into it. And besides, I need to buy cheap gin for the sloes...

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MON

SPINNING

7.00am – 8.00am

KETTLEBELLS

10.00am – 11.00am

YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*

5.30pm – 6.30pm

ZUMBA (Flavie 087 6548138)*

6.45pm – 7.45pm

AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*

8.15pm -9.15pm

TUE

HIIT CIRCUITS

10.00am – 11.00am

AQUACISE

11.00am – 11.45am

CORK CITY BALLET (Alan 087 7851225)*

3.30pm – 7.30pm

SPINNING

6.30pm – 7.30pm

STEP

8.00pm – 8.45pm

WED

SPINNING

7.00am – 8.00am

CIRCUIT

10.00am – 11.00am

YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*

5.30pm – 6.30pm

ZUMBA (Flavie 087 6548138)*

6.45pm – 7.45pm

THUR

STEP

9.00am – 9.45am

AQUACISE

10.00am – 10.45am

SPINNING

6.30pm – 7.30pm

AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*

7pm -8pm

AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*

8.15pm -9.15pm

FRI

SPINNING

7.00am – 8.00am

CIRCUIT

10.00am – 11.00am

ZUMBA GOLD (Flavie 087 6548138)*

10.30am – 11.30am

TEEN FITNESS

4.30pm – 5.30pm

BELLY DANCING (Mila 086 4551257)*

7pm -8.30pm

PRICES

MEMBERS: €5 per class, 10 class pass €45

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The jungle gym (normal opening hours) is available to members doing any class.

Classes can be booked through the “Clonpool” app or by contacting 023 88 34387.

SAT

AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*

9.15am – 10.15am

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness**STRESS AND SELF-CARE PROGRAMME**

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West Cork Women Against Violence rebrands as West Cork Beacon

The West Cork Women Against Violence Project (WCWAVP) has unveiled a new name and logo for the organisation – West Cork Beacon. Announced at their AGM in September, the name is designed to be punchier and more memorable, allowing them to present the organisation as a multi-support service.

“Our name has served us well for over 20 years,” said Marie Mullholland, CEO of the charity. “However, it is long, it’s a bit clunky and the word ‘project’ suggests we’re only in it for the short term, which is absolutely not the case.” Although changing the name has been a consideration for some time, the introduction of a new Sexual Violence Support service at the end of August, that is available to anyone aged 14 and upwards, male or female, provided the impetus to make the change.

A thorough review of the competitive landscape here in Ireland and in the UK, was followed by a series of brainstorming workshops, involving both WCWAVP staff and supporters of the charity. Whilst countless names were generated during the process, these were whittled down to a shortlist of just four by May of this year, with these then researched amongst WCWAVP clients. West Cork Beacon was the resounding winner, with the tag line ‘Tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence’.

“The name does exactly what it says on the tin,” said Marie Wiseman, of Wiseman Marketing, who led the project from her position as Board Member



WEST CORK BEACON
TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

at WCWAVP. “A beacon is defined as a light or other signal for guidance and it also signals safety, solidity and grounding, all of which fit well with the organisation’s values. And of course the Baltimore Beacon is one of the most iconic images of West Cork, so demonstrates the geography we cover.”

“The word ‘tackling’ in the sub text was important too,” added Mullholland. “A huge amount of the work we do is around challenging the presence of abuse in our society and community, and pushing for change in how abuse victims are treated and supported. Indeed our internal Vision is ‘A West Cork without Domestic Abuse!’. The word ‘tackling’ pays heed to this and better reflects our values and work ethics.”

The logo was designed by Jenny Dempsey, who has provided graphic design solutions to organisations throughout West Cork, for the past 15 years. As well as a core logo for the organisation as a whole, there are sub logos for the two

main parts of the organisation. That for the Domestic Abuse Support Services arm continues to feature the profile of a woman, reflecting the focus of that part of the charity, whilst that for the Sexual Violence Support Services arm is not specifically gendered, again reflecting their focus.

“The brief was to create something that was evolutionary rather than revolutionary,” Jenny explained. “As the name was changing, it was important that the visual retained a connection to its previous iteration. We needed to reassure both current and future clients, and the community as a whole, that the organisation hadn’t changed – only the name. The brief also called for the creation of two ‘sub’ logos to differentiate the two strands that West Cork Beacon provides. Here we were able to create something new and used the opportunity to soften and simplify the visuals.”

Mullholland emphasised that, “It was important that the new logo reflected the greater range of services we provide but also stayed true to the legacy and history of the organisation and the women who made it possible. Jenny Dempsey and Marie Wiseman respected that past and with their combined talents have produced the new image and identity of our organisation going into the future.”

Visit the organisation’s website at www.westcorkbeacon.ie to learn more or call them on 027-53847 or freephone 1800 – 203 136. You’ll also find them on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (X).

Reunions and tender conversations



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.

I’m recently back from a visit with family and friends in upstate New York. I hadn’t been to the states in over four years so my heart still feels full even in the weeks since returning home to West Cork. As an end of life/death doula helping people to navigate all things end of life, I know my experiences can’t help but be reflected through this lens. The idea to go to New York began with an inner voice months before, that whispered “it’s time to go see your people”. Ignoring it slightly, I then pondered in my often catastrophic fashion “why now? Was something going to happen?”. Whether it was intuition or a gentle “go on” from beyond, I listened and decided to go solo. This would give me the opportunity to spend quality time with folks. I feel especially fortunate now to have done this.

My dearest people all know what I’m up to much of the time but admittedly don’t ask “so how’s the death doula thing going?”. And to be fair, I forgive them – it’s our culture after all. Still I was delighted by the conversations that were had. A college bestie spoke about her late dad and what would have been his birthday, as we admired her son, the middle child, who has the face of the grandfather he never knew. I was then entirely comfortable asking her to tell me again about her mom who died shortly after my friend was born. She’d told me when we first met in school, but it was such a long time ago. “Don’t make me cry,” she’d said, as my own eyes flooded with tears; hearing her story in a truly new way. Another friend was over

the moon to simply have a night out being a recent full-time carer for her 85-year-old mom. She was grieving too as her husband died suddenly earlier this year. Her perspective on life these days, in spite of everything, and her generous sharing astounded me. This woman, who was once my employer-turned-friend, honours her grief and joy equally. Then there was my cousin who is almost like a brother, being close in age to me. He’s had his share of loss in recent years too, which he himself named. A major health scare with one of his children that miraculously turned out ok, followed by his mother-in-law’s death this year. I was deeply moved by his real talk over the casual American fare and craft beer we shared.

This might sound to you like it must have been some dark kind of holiday, but to me it was the opposite – truly precious. Bearing witness to and being a recipient for the authenticity these conversations brought meant so much. And by the way, these and the other folks I spent time with had an absolute ball together too.

I’m reminded however that saying goodbye again and again is the worst. Could this be why I avoid going back? I was joking (but not) with more than one friend about this – here’s me who does what I do and hates goodbyes. But as many of you know when those you love live across the sea, reality kicks in: You don’t know, and perhaps can’t say, when or even if you’ll see each other next! I daydreamed during my 10 days visit; imagining that seeing my beloved New Yorkers one by one could be like the time of death: a review of places, faces, memories – like a film of my life and then, poof, it’s all gone. Anyone else? It’s how this death doula thinks anyway.

Then came the biggest, shall we say ‘memento mori’ (Latin for remembering you – and all things – must die): my parents. I’ll admit that I waited until the final hours to have the conversation I’m about to share. But over the days I observed them – my mother and father – smaller somehow, a bit slower, hunched shoulders, aches and pains in the knees, while feeling this sense of wanting to protect them like never before. Mad isn’t it? Or perhaps not. I’ve heard people talk about feeling a shift in parent-child roles as time goes on. Deep breaths were taken. The parents are healthy, but no doubt getting older. Usually they come to Ireland

for our visits, but now it seemed right to go to them. To spend the time while they’re well and able on their turf. I also wanted to be brave and talk to them about their end of life wishes, as they would permit me: wanting to practice what I preach and begin a conversation while we were relaxed and not under pressure to make decisions. I don’t think either of them were surprised by my initiating the talk, yet it was very interesting, comical even, to learn that what they wanted wasn’t what I had imagined! Furthermore, we discovered that each of them wants their final resting place at a different cemetery to the other. We’re talking about different towns altogether! So there were these moments of Mom trying to convince Dad to ‘come’ to ‘hers’, while also trying to convince herself to go to his cemetery of choice! In the end, both had their reasons for the chosen places that were meaningful to them and it all made perfect sense. Laughter was shared all around while I reminded them that this was just a conversation; nothing was set in stone (Pun intended. More laughter). It was illuminating for me to have gained just this bit of information. And so as the “if you’re dead, what do I do” chat had gone well, I took some time with my folks individually doing some life review. I composed a few questions for each of them inspired by a blog I found, suggesting ‘things to ask your parent(s) before it’s too late’. We touched on parenthood, life lessons, aging and more. I’m so proud of them – and me to be honest – for taking the time.

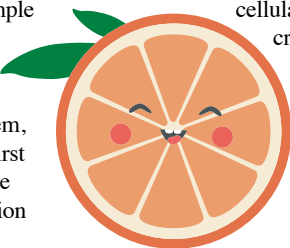
As I write this, a part of me still can’t believe it happened. These processes are a small part of what I do as an end of life doula yet it’s quite another thing when it comes to our own families. I was reminded of this in a big way. In the meantime, the days go on and summer has definitely turned to autumn. One friend suggested that I call my parents more often and so I have done that this week. Next I want to surprise my friends with handwritten cards in the post to say what our visits meant to me.

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.

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Simple steps to supporting your immune health this winter

While winter can be a cozy, enjoyable season, it brings along a unique set of challenges for your health and well-being. The cold weather, reduced daylight, and colds, flus and viruses can take a toll on your health if you don't take proactive measures. Now is the perfect time to take some simple steps towards strengthening your immune system, your body's first line of defence against infection



and disease, ensuring you navigate the colder months feeling your best!

Exercise: While the temptation to hibernate indoors for the winter can be strong, exercise is very beneficial for your immune system. Regular moderate intensity exercise can stimulate cellular immunity by increasing the circulation of immune cells in your body. This helps your body better prepare for a future infection by detecting it earlier. For adults,

the general guideline is that you should exercise at moderate intensity for 150 minutes each week.

Sleep: Research shows that people who don't get quality sleep or sufficient sleep are more likely to get sick after being exposed to a virus, such as a common cold virus. Lack of sleep can also affect how fast you recover if you do get sick. The optimal amount of sleep for most adults is seven to eight hours of good sleep each night, with teenagers and school-aged children needing more.

Healthy diet: A healthy diet provides your immune system with the nutrients it needs to function optimally. Fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds, contain antioxidants, fibre, vitamins and minerals which may help lower your susceptibility to illness. Fish, particularly oily fish, contain omega-3 fatty acids which help to fight inflammation. Fermented foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut and kefir are rich in beneficial bacteria called probiotics which also support your immune system.

Health supplements for immune support: Ideally, your diet should provide all the nutrients needed to support your immune system and overall general health. Due to a variety of reasons, this is not always feasible, which is why high-quality supplements are invaluable.

Vitamin C has long been the go-to supplement during cold and flu season and is known to reduce the duration and severity of colds. Vitamin C helps encourage the production of white blood cells which help protect your body against infection. Vi-

tamin C helps these white blood cells function more effectively and by acting as an antioxidant, it protects them from damage by potentially harmful molecules called free radicals.

It's important to be aware that regular Vitamin C supplements have limited bioavailability, meaning the amount of Vitamin C that can be absorbed by the body is quite low. SOMEGA Liposomal Vitamin C is made with liposomal technology and ensures maximum absorption of the Vitamin C. This delicious liquid supplement is suitable for all of the family.

Vitamin D is necessary for the proper functioning of your immune system and plays a critical role in promoting the immune response. Vitamin D is known to enhance the function of immune cells that protect your body against pathogens (organisms that can cause disease). Low levels of Vitamin D are associated with an increased risk of respiratory diseases, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), as well as viral and bacterial respiratory infections.

Vitamin D deficiency is very

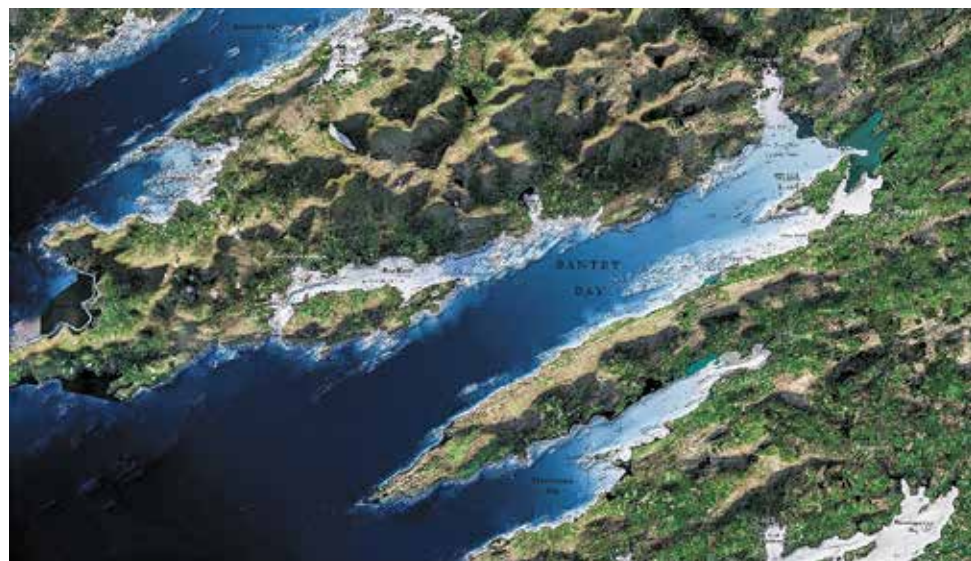
common in Ireland, especially in the winter months when our ability to make Vitamin D from sunlight is diminished. Taking a high quality supplement is advisable. SOMEGA Vitamin D3 Oral Spray is ideal and convenient for adults, while SOMEGA Vitamin D3 Liquid Drops are suitable for both children and adults, making it an ideal family-friendly supplement.

Omega-3 fatty acids positively impact your immune system via their anti-inflammatory, amongst other, properties. The best source of the Omega-3s DHA and EPA is oily fish but if you do not eat fish regularly, then a high quality Omega-3 supplement can be invaluable. SOMEGA Easy Omega-3 + Vitamin D3 has a smoothie, creamy texture and natural peach-mango flavour and is ideal for both children and adults.

Hopefully, these simple steps will help you navigate the winter months with vitality and positivity!

SOMEGA supplements are stocked in health stores and pharmacies throughout West Cork. For more information, visit gosomega.com

Free high-resolution maps showcase West Cork coastline



INFOMAR (Integrated Mapping for the Sustainable Development of Ireland's Marine Resource) has launched its Blue Scale Map Series; a collection of 18 free high-resolution bathymetric maps of Ireland's coastal waters. Developed by a dedicated team of hydrographers, data processors and cartographers, the maps highlight the topography of the coast in remarkable detail.

County Cork has a coastline

of approximately 1,200km – the new series includes maps of Bantry Bay, Mizen Head, Roaringwater Bay, Galley Head and Cork Harbour. All are free to download at www.infomar.ie

The INFOMAR programme is currently one of the world's largest and leading seabed mapping programmes. Funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, it is a joint venture by the Geological Survey Ireland

and the Marine Institute. The Blue Scale Map series offers a new and unique way not only to showcase the mapping effort to date, but also to visualise and communicate complex scientific information to the wider public. It has huge potential to communicate with local coastal communities and raise awareness on the importance of maintaining the health and integrity of our marine environment.









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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Music is for everyone

The effects of music to our wellbeing are known to be far-reaching, from reducing anxiety and pain to improving memory and mood. Who hasn't thrown on a tune on a grey winter's day and felt the better for it? Going a step further in actually making music, particularly in a community setting, can have a positive effect on our emotional wellbeing, as well as improving our social connectedness. Since 2016, West Cork is fortunate to be home to the only Irish gamelan outside of a university city, with people from all walks of life in the area regularly coming together to play on this unique set of percussion instruments. Gamelan Spréacha Geala (Bright Sparks Gamelan) is a community music group, which meets weekly in Skibbereen to play and enjoy the music, the socialising, and the effect the sound has on their emotional state. Gamelan Spréacha Geala director Dr Kevin McNally chats to **Mary O'Brien** about the group, his own musical journey and the importance of keeping the tradition of playing music in a community setting alive, not only for our wellbeing but for our cultural heritage.

Originally from Carriagaline, Kevin McNally moved to Clonakilty with his partner, Eithne O'Mahony, in 2007. The couple, both musicians, who were in New Zealand at the time, yearned to live in a small place like Clonakilty where they could lead a life rich in culture. "New Zealand is a beautiful amazing country but we just missed Irish culture and arts too much," explains Kevin. "A place like Clonakilty and West Cork doesn't exist there."

"There is still a value placed on creativity for creativity's sake in West Cork... An acknowledgement that making music is a worthwhile activity in and of itself."

"The more our community moves towards this homogenous internet society, the more we will take on that anglo-American attitude of categories – 'music is just for musicians' for example. "The point of music is not to play all the notes right, the point is to share and create a feeling in the room that everyone is enjoying."

From DeBarra's in Clonakilty to O'Donovan's at Fisher's Cross near Ardfield, the couple are now regulars at local pub music sessions. "These are people who are coming together, coming out just to share music and enjoy each other's music and anyone is welcome to join in," shares Kevin. "For me that's a great example of how music is valued for its own sake because when we play music together we all feel good, it takes us out of ourselves and connects us to other beings, to something bigger than us."

A lecturer in gamelan and Irish music at UCC, Kevin is also a musician and composer of music, a guitarist, and seasoned gamelan player. Since moving to West Cork, he has collaborated on a number

of music groups and events, from the West Cork Ukulele Orchestra to the Clonakilty International Guitar Festival. He is the Assistant Director of the Irish Gamelan Orchestra and Director of the West Cork Gamelan Spréacha Geala.

For Kevin, music has always been a way of engaging with the world, in particular the metaphorical, giving him a greater sense of self. "For some people, church or spirituality offers a way of getting in touch with the numinous, for others it could be drugs; for me it has always been music," shares Kevin. Music helped him develop from a shy teenager into a confident musician. "Although I still can't do small talk," he says laughing.

Starting out as a folk and classical guitarist, Kevin went to UCC to study music and came out the other side an ethnomusicologist – someone who studies the music of all cultures – although he still thinks of himself primarily as a musician. It was at UCC that he discovered the rich and living tradition of Irish music and also the compelling sound of the gamelan.

From the 1960s on, firstly under Seán ó Riada and later Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, the music department at UCC placed a big emphasis on all musics being equal, which was incredibly radical for that time. "UCC was the first place you could, as a traditional musician, get a degree in music. From that grew a respect and awareness for all types of musical cultures," shares Kevin.

With this tradition carried on at UCC under Professor Mel Mercier, the gamelan was introduced to incoming students like Kevin, who entered his first year of college at the same time a Javanese musician was visiting for the year. "So when I got introduced to gamelan music,

which I knew nothing about, it was in this really rich environment where there was a lot of performance going on," he explains. "Although the music was completely foreign to me, I loved the cohesion of the group and the atmosphere that was generated by the people and the instruments."

In third year of college, a scholarship brought Kevin for a summer to Java, the home of gamelan and, with close to 100 million inhabitants, the most populated island in Indonesia and one of the most densely populated regions in the world. It supercharged his knowledge and interest in the music.

"It was a totally overwhelming experience, a complete culture shock – living cheek by jowl with people was very unfamiliar to me coming from Ireland – but I came back with a new understanding of the music and culture," he says.

Attracted by this way of making music, where all of the basic building blocks taken for granted in music just aren't there or don't apply, Kevin says that it completely expanded his concept of what music could be. It also opened up his mind



to the fact that there are things that happen in society that are reflected in music and the other way around "A feedback cycle," he shares. "In Java everyone has a job to do; similarly in gamelan music there is a role for everybody, everybody is brought along and it's not about valorising the best individuals in a group. It's very inclusive."

Thinking back, he remembers the rich ecology of sound in Java – from the music on the wind and the streets to the sounds of the street vendors, calls of prayer, insects and traffic.

Ecology came up again when he was recently completing his PhD in Community Music: His findings relating that what music creates is something he has coined the 'atmosphere of affect' or structures of feeling. "Music can structure the attitude you have to something,"

he explains "For example, the structure of gamelan is one of safety, support and connection, which is all positive."

On a personal level as a musician, Kevin found himself exploring themes of ecological worry and collapse. "Because I was doing it through music, which created this lovely structure of feeling, I was able to deal with it without that sense of grief or worry or panic that often comes with talking about climate issues," he says.

"Sounds facilitate a structure of feeling like support, care and connection. Restructuring our feelings towards things, it touches us somewhere very deeply and opens up these channels of communication and empathy."

Gamelan is a generic term that refers to orchestras of tuned 'gong chime' percussion instruments such as bronze gongs,

xylophones and metallophones, which create a mesmerising sonic adventure. Unlike other types of musical ensemble, the musicians arrive to the gamelan empty-handed, with participants, not specialising in one, but eventually learning to play all of the instruments. With only five notes, it's literally impossible to play the wrong note in gamelan, so as a result it's very inclusive. "If you can hit something, you can play gamelan," explains Kevin. "The instruments do all the work."

"It's extremely effective as an orchestra for people who don't consider themselves musicians, as it's welcoming of failures and mistakes."

Participants of Gamelan Spréacha Geala based in Skibbereen – which is always welcoming to new people – have described the experience as "really grounding and inspiring at the same time"; "The vibration kind of hits different parts of you sometimes somehow, maybe resonates with your heart or your lungs on a subconscious level. Definitely you feel it"; "I think for me, something delightful and very soulful and soothing would be three words I would put to my first impression".

"The repetition of the sounds lends itself to this slowing down feeling of getting into yourself," says Kevin. People have described it as being transportive, as they lose all sense of time and feel part of something larger."

While he points out that gamelan is not a therapy or prescription, Kevin does believe there are somatic benefits to it, as it can invoke a feeling of calm. "It's also a way of communicating without speaking and still having that sense of connection to people."

Kevin's passion lies in demystifying music so that everyone can have access to it, which is one of the reasons he originally set up the West Cork Ukulele Orchestra and, most recently the Reverb programme, as part of the Clonakilty International Guitar Festival, which brings music off stage and out into the community, to places like schools and hospitals.

"Music is not that complicated and it doesn't have to be perfect," he emphasises. There shouldn't be any shame about not being able to play an instrument well or sing well. Music is about getting together, having fun and sharing.

"It's there, it's for everybody. We have to hold on to that in Ireland."



Members of Skibbereen-based Gamelan Spréacha Geala Pic: Maurice Gunning

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

What's in a Feel Good Festival?

The eleventh West Cork Feel Good Festival is in full swing continuing until the very last day of October. Purely the idea of a festival (and there are many in West Cork) says **Moze Jacobs** can inspire communities and cultural organisations to come up with something special, 'outside the box', new, celebratory or profound that will excite people and, ideally, bring them together. Perhaps provide them with experiences they may not even have considered before.

The three main themes to this year's Feel Good Festival are creativity, connection and community. Many people think creativity is all about original and mind-blowing ideas. And perhaps for that very reason, some say, "I am not creative". Potentially, neither is true. The American author Mark Twain famously said, "There is no such thing as an original idea". Twin studies and other scientific research seem to indicate that we're all born creative but may get blocked over time. Maybe what we need to do is take a deep breath, open our minds a little and focus on whatever we're doing: Be it making something or communicating, singing in a choir, playing an instrument, or being part of an audience. For there is such a thing as 'active listening'. This, too, connects people and creates community, thus enhancing wellbeing.

During the festival you can join workshops or sessions (creative writing, visual art, photography, singing, comic art, drama, Trad tunes, Irish language, knitting, card-making, masking), tell a story, play music, read at an Open Mic or during an Open Door session. And/or visit 'Sing With Us!' – the 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Bantry Community Choir at the Maritime Hotel. It features four choirs, groups of musicians, and coffee and cake (Friday Oct 20). There's also the Singing and Storytelling session at the Greyhound Bar in Dunmanway (Friday Oct 25).

The Irish language is woven into the weft and warp of the festival tapestry in a playful and enjoyable way. There are weekly Caint agus Ceol (music and chat) sessions, focused on Trad tunes, at 49, North Street (Skibbereen), where the monthly Fite Fuaite pop-up Gaeltacht takes place on Thursday October 26. The facilitator/fear an tí is the multi-talented artist and poet Pól O Colmáin, who has many years of experience of teaching and re-introducing people to the beauty and wonder inherent in the Irish language. That same evening, the award-win-

ning sean-nós singer Máire Ní Chéileachair will facilitate an Oíche amhránaíochta/Evening of song, 'No prior singing experience necessary'. The Harbour Hotel in Schull hosts a Pop-Up Gaeltacht every Monday morning at 10am. Last but not least, the independent Irish singer and guitarist Síomha (pronounced She-vah) delivers her songs in English and as Gaeilge. What informs her debut album, 'Infinite Space', is the idea that we're all the same, 'A collective oneness' (Levis Corner House, Ballydehob, Friday Oct 13). Her haunting, mesmerising songs, like the music of Belfast-based Duke Special, who will perform at Levis's the following evening (Saturday Oct 14), show why Irish pop music has such a wide global reach. Its soul is unique.

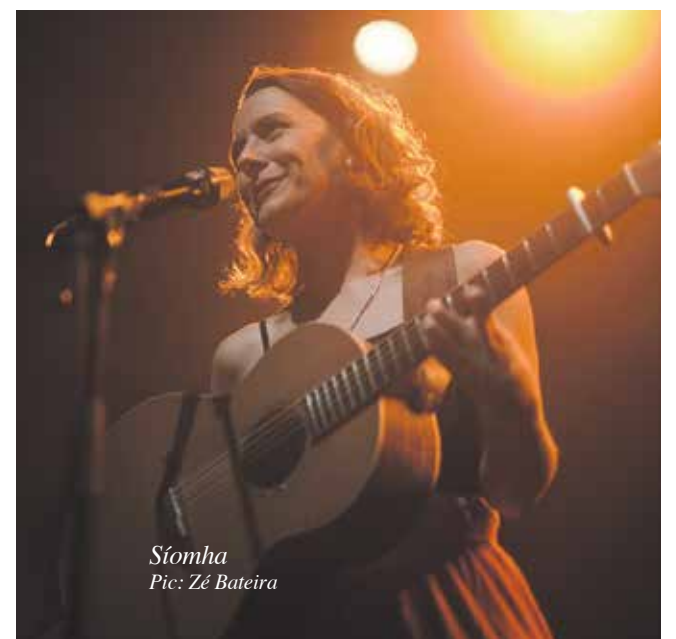
Wellbeing is of course central to the West Cork Feel Good Festival, which offers great opportunities to get a taste of various 'self-help methods' that can help us cope (better) with modern life. Some are based on ancient practices such as meditation, mindfulness, forest bathing, yoga, Tai Chi but there is also breath work, tapping, IFS, peer support, 'singing for the brain' and for wellness, a Conversation Café, Alexander Technique. And a gardening workshop!

"Engagement with the arts and with nature is proven to be beneficial to mental health," says festival founder and nurse specialist in mental health and the arts, Kevin O'Shanahan, while citing a 2019 World Health Organisation report published by Dr Daisy Fancourt of University College London, which reviews the findings of 3500 published studies. It demonstrates the benefit of the arts to health and recommends that governmental policies should reflect this.

"As the evidence base develops, people are becoming more aware of how simple things like singing in a choir, dancing, playing gamelan or being in nature can contribute significantly to one's health and wellbeing. What we might think of as little things actually matter greatly. These are the things that make up our festival."



Duke Special
Pic: R.T.Breathnach



Síomha
Pic: Zé Bateira

Highlighting two of the festival locations (both supported by the Cork Mental Health Foundation) Nuala Kenny, mental health recovery worker and initiator of the Bridge Street Community Café (Bantry) says that, "Everyone can drop into the café and have a cup of tea, cake, lemonade. But it has far more to offer. Anyone who may be feeling isolated or lonely and would like to feel more connected can either have a casual chat with one of the volunteers or book half an hour with a trained listener. Maybe to get some clarity about the next step to take. That can be therapy, or exploring your creativity, or you may want to try out self-help techniques or join a peer support group. One of our goals is to bring all sorts of people together on an equal footing and lower the barriers. And we always focus on the person not the problem. Some of the activities in the programme have been specifically designed for the festival. It takes the mysteriousness away and adds a sense of community. One workshop, 'Remembered Treasures', (Oct 9) asks people to give and receive objects that carry a story. Recovery starts when people get to tell what has happened to them and when they are heard and seen. The exchange of stories is vital. Another event, 'Remember Sinéad O'Connor', (Oct 27) invites those of us who were moved by her life and her passing to share their thoughts, memories, emotions. Help them bring out their inner Sinéad. In a way, she's in all of us."

Caroline Hayes, on behalf of the Clonakilty Community Resource Centre (CCRC), commented that "The Feel Good Festival is an important reminder of our need to find things that make us feel good. We're all somewhat guilty of getting too busy and forgetting what brings us joy. For me, it is art,

music and community. That it is say, community in its wider sense through connectivity and common interests. The resource centre is great that way. It is a project funded by the Cork Mental Health Foundation but it's open to everyone – just like the Feel Good Festival. We have some people that come in for a daily cuppa as we're the only people that they meet every day.

Others may come in for information or to take part in some of the regular groups – knitting, art, yoga, or the book club. For the Festival this year, we are hoping to make some new connections and to encourage new members to visit some of the existing groups. One new addition is 'Footsteps by the Pier' (Rosscarbery, Oct 11), a reflective meditation organised by our walking

group who have connected with the Rosscarbery Social Services Centre for this special occasion."

Detailed information on the Festival Programme can be found at www.musicalive.ie/west-cork-feel-good-festival or in the printed brochures that are available at libraries, participating venues and 49 North Street in Skibbereen.

WEST CORK

FEEL GOOD FESTIVAL

FILM

MUSIC

SÍOMHA Oct 13
@Levis Corner House, Ballydehob

DUKE SPECIAL Oct 14
@Levis Corner House, Ballydehob

GAMELAN SPRÉACHA
GEALA Oct 4, 11, 18, 25
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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness**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.

I am just back from a most beautiful solo retreat on Cape Clear Island, where lots of time was spent walking, swimming, writing, recording, sitting, watching rabbits and other wildlife. I had some wonderful family members

Winter rituals for wellness

and friends coming and going, and of course, Pudsy, my tiny Jack Russell beside me 24/7, so my week wasn't completely solo. Of course, the kindness of locals and other visitors to the island provided great company too. The week was, however, solo enough to delve deep into how we might winter well, the focus of this month's edition. This trip to Cape really laid the foundations for some lovely Winter rituals, because it's time to get thinking about little ways to get organised and cosy for the changing season and lessening light.

The raw, wild beauty of Cape Clear reminded me of all that is good and simple in life, the notion that less can sometimes feel like more. I deliberately left my laptop at home and had only limited or intermittent phone or internet coverage, no Netflix, no emails, sometimes no WhatsApp. A trip like this for me proved a good measure of my own resilience and resourcefulness and provided time

to take stock. The holiday was a prize that my nephew's partner won, and so it was literally a gift, one that I am very grateful for. My week was one of simplicity, making do with what I had and fostering a reliance on inner resources. I came back a different person, rested in ways, exhausted in others, perhaps a little bit wilder, and brimming with lots of new ideas for mindfulness programmes. Having a clear space and time stoked my creative side.

I was lucky to have a week with plenty of sunshine which is not the case today, the weather seems to change quite significantly every day. I began writing this on the Autumn solstice, equal light and darkness, time to hunker down a bit. Today, as I conclude the article, storm Agnes is making itself heard outside. How do we keep our minds fit as well as our bodies during these often quite dramatic seasonal changes? A steady and consistent morning ritual is really serving me well through

this changing weather and the shorter days. Everyone has their own morning habits, and mine have long included a little meditation, a small pot of coffee and some journaling. I get up early because I like making the most of the light. Over the Summer I added a 30-minute mindful movement/dance to my morning, and I've managed to sustain the habit, which means that before I leave the house now, I feel myself set up for the day, rested and energised.

But we are all different, maybe the evening suits you better for a small wellness ritual, or maybe, like me, finding a little bit of quiet time for clearing, sorting and organising for longer term Winter wellness. Because, fuelled by my digital detox on the island, I have been inspired to continue thoughtfully decluttering my home. In stark contrast to my minimalist existence on Cape, and despite believing that I lived a mindful, simple existence already, I was so struck when I came home,

by how much stuff I have, as opposed to what I need. This mindful clearing process might take some time but could be the basis of some lovely Winter projects. For example, I have already found some real treasures, like handwritten letters from my grandad, which I absolutely love and plan to share.

I had already started travelling through the contents of my attic in Summer, giving things away to people I thought might like them, doing a deep trawl through photos, documents, and so on. I can't do it all at once; some of us tend to move slowly through this kind of emotional processing, paying attention to the detail of a lifetime. I have an intention set now for these longer evenings ahead, to turn off the laptop and other devices and have some quiet time clearing space within and around me. It can be very rewarding, to deliver yet another bag to a charity shop, hoping that someone will take joy in what you once loved. Letting go to let come, not in a

material sense but making space for the new.

Reconnect and Re-engage free mindfulness programme for those who feel the need to reconnect and re-engage with themselves, nature and community will run on November 22, 29 and December 6 from 10.30 – 1.30pm. Please get in touch if you think this programme might be for you, it is run in conjunction with CECAS and supported by the REACH fund 2023.

Weekly drop-in compassion-based mindfulness practice sessions continue at CECAS, Myross Wood Leap on Tuesday mornings through-out October (3, 10, 17, 24 and 31) from 10am – 11am. €10. All are welcome to join this wonderful community of practice.

For more information, phone: 087 2700572 or email: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com FB: [susanoreganmindfulness](https://www.facebook.com/susanoreganmindfulness) www.mindhaven.ie



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.

Michelle Collins grew up near Kilcoe in 'a traditional Irish home', the youngest, with four older brothers and lots of greyhounds. After finishing school she spent ten years studying, living and travelling interna-

Local People, Local Wisdom: Michelle Collins, Kilcoe

tionally. She was always drawn to new cultures, with a natural penchant for exploration. Studying psychotherapy, music and eventually landing within the discipline of Anthropology, she is now living between Baltimore and Norway alongside her family, where she is finishing a PhD in Cultural studies focusing on contemporary practices of 'keening'. Keening is the anglicised word for the tradition of the 'Caoineadh' – a lament which was practiced at wakes and funerals. Michelle has also been running the 'Resonate' festival (an Arts and Wellbeing festival) which runs alongside the Skibbereen Arts festival for five years. It runs for a week in the end of July-start of August in and around Skibbereen.

"I first came across the term 'keening' as a child. My father used the word to describe a sound the dogs made. When I



was in Zambia, volunteering at a HIV hospice, I met a priest who was living there for 25 years. He took me into a room where a child had just died, two women were lamenting and crying over the body – I immediately recognised it as a form of keening and it touched me deeply.

There's a magic about keening. It connects me to Irish history and mythology, to the voice and expressing through the voice. Singing it of course connects me to a bodily practice but also to the past. And then the contemporary practice of keening is very much about

presence.

I very clearly believe in something other, something unseen, something more than myself

There are times of year that are very important to me which are also connected to keening, Samhain, Winter Solstice and Imbolc in particular. They are special times of year to reflect and connect with our dead.

Material things like having a house, car, and so on never motivated me. I've never been good at planning what will happen next. I've tended to trust and go with the flow. This has meant that I'm often 'in

between' things and spaces.

There's a challenge with that, it's not always comfortable. There is safety and comfort in the norm.

I try always to speak to others as my equal, no matter the social or cultural differences. In the past, I think I have forgotten that when speaking to people I felt lesser than, inferior to. I shied away. Now I feel I really understand what it is to talk to anybody as my equal, no matter what.

I love travelling; it was a huge part of my life for 10 years before I started living in places longer term. I loved

the challenge of talking to new people and finding some common ground. Initially you might think you have nothing in common but there's never been a person I haven't been able to find a connection with. It's a good reminder to me now.

Modern society is fast paced, we are more divided and isolated now. Of late – being in nature and slowing down is a huge part of what supports me. I love creating spaces where you are invited to slow down, invited to connect with yourself and your body in a practice, as well as to connect with other participants. Many of the spaces I coordinate as part of 'Resonate' are traditional arts or heritage practices, which support connection to place and environment. This subtle experience of connectedness with another person can be really profound."

One of the things that frightens me is the polarisation in today's world – the aggression that comes with that. Intimacy and empathy are very important to me. Maintaining that openness that you're not always right, you're coming from where you're coming from. I try to consider everybody as just another me. If you had the same experiences they did, how much different would you be living your life?"

AOISE TUTTY JACKSON

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Speed up your blood flow

Ginkgo biloba is a traditional herbal medicinal product used to alleviate the symptoms of poor blood flow in conditions such as cold hands and feet. To get the desired effects, it is essential that you choose a product with a documented content of active compounds.

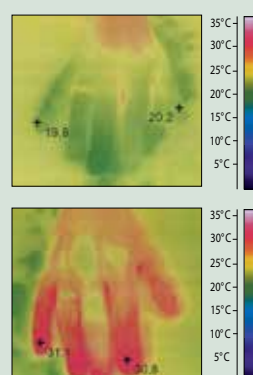
Your bloodstream carries oxygen and nutrients to every single part of your body – from head to toe – to ensure that all your body functions work properly. However, the flow of blood through the smallest capillaries can decrease for various reasons, and that may cause problems like cold fingers and toes.

Warm hands and feet again

A thermo-graphic camera can be used to test ginkgo biloba's ability to improve circulation in the hands. When the test subject takes ginkgo biloba, their hands become significantly warmer in the minutes right after they have been cooled down in very cold water.

Without Ginkgo-Biloba Pharma Nord:
After 10 minutes, the skin temperature increased from 12.6° to approx. 20.0° C.

With Ginkgo-Biloba Pharma Nord:
After 10 minutes, the skin temperature increased from 13.8° to approx. 30.9° C.



Cold hands and feet?

This problem may be a result of having poor blood circulation, and the solution could be tablets with ginkgo biloba.

Every inch of the body depends on a well-functioning blood supply that delivers oxygen and nutrients to the cells. As we humans age, our blood circulation becomes less efficient, leading to problems like cold hands and feet.

Supports your blood circulation

It stands to reason that ginkgo biloba is so popular among older people. The active compounds in the extract dilate your blood vessels, helping your blood to flow more easily through them.

What is ginkgo biloba?

Ginkgo biloba is a plant extract made from the leaves of ginkgo biloba, an ancient temple

tree that is also known as maidenhair tree. The extract contains a variety of biologically active compounds. Two specific compounds – ginkgo flavone glycosides and terpene lactones – are particularly well-documented and have been shown to support good blood circulation and good cognitive function. Today, thanks to scientific research that has delved into the underlying mechanisms of these active ingredients, it is possible to manufacture high-quality extracts that deliver the exact same amount of active compound with each tablet. Ginkgo-Biloba Pharma Nord represents this new generation of pharmaceutical-standard ginkgo biloba products that have become increasingly popular, namely among the elderly.



Ginkgo Biloba Pharma Nord has a high content of active compounds: The high content of active compounds makes it possible to obtain the desired effect with 1 tablet twice a day.

Traditional herbal medicinal product used to alleviate the symptoms of poor blood flow in conditions such as cold hands and feet, exclusively based upon long-standing use. Always read the leaflet.



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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa crowned Ireland's Leading Hotel in 2023 at World Travel Awards

Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa, located near Clonakilty, was named Ireland's Leading Hotel 2023 at the World Travel Awards Europe Gala Ceremony in Batumi, Georgia last Friday night (September 29).

Celebrating a landmark 30th year anniversary, the World Travel Awards serves to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all sectors of the global travel and tourism industry. Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa was nominated alongside other prestigious leading Irish hotels and will go on to compete on the world stage at Grand Final

Gala event towards the end of the year.

Celebrating a milestone 25th anniversary in business this year, the team at Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa are thrilled to accept the award. Speaking about the announcement, owner and founder of the resort, Des O'Dowd said, "We're delighted to be named as Ireland's Leading Hotel 2023 by the World Travel Awards. We were nominated in a very competitive category alongside hotels we really admire which makes this award very special." He continued, "Giving our guests the best experience we can is what drives our team and makes us

want to continually improve and grow and it is really fantastic to see our efforts recognised."

Located in the most spectacular location on the Blue Flag Inchydoney Beach, the resort offers cosy but contemporary accommodation and the warmth of West Cork welcomes to all their guests. A big supporter of their location, Inchydoney uses local suppliers and producers throughout the hotel which adds to its sense of belonging perfectly to this beautiful part of Ireland.

For more see www.worldtravelawards.com and www.inchydoneyisland.com



Des O'Dowd, owner of family run Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa in Clonakilty with staff at celebrating the prestigious win as Ireland's Leading Hotel from the World Travel Award.

The powerful effect that the autumn equinox has on our lives



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.rosarikingtonphd.com

The autumn equinox, which took place in September, occurs midway between the longest and shortest days of the year when light and darkness are equal. The days will be darker, and the nights will be longer from now until December 21. This sense of darkness is heightened by the impending time change, which will make mornings marginally lighter but evenings significantly darker. This time will also have an effect on our personal 24-hour circadian rhythm, which regulates our core body temperature and sleep-wake cycle, as well as numerous

physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural activities. With the shorter days and darker evenings, a person's circadian cycle may be thrown off. The longer nights can have an effect on this rhythm, and some of us may find that we sleep longer in the winter than in the summer when the early morning sun wakes us. We've all experienced jet lag and how it might take many days to recover. Similarly, when we set our clocks back one hour, it takes us about a week to acclimatise to the new time schedule. Because the weeks between September 23 and December 21 will have decreased light each day, it is critical to maintain a regular sleep pattern to offset the darkness.

Consequently, with the coming of the equinox, our way of life shifts inward from now until the next equinox near St. Patrick's Day. We imagine fires and hot meals. The day is more structured, and we frequently pick up new interests to fill the longer evenings. The equinox can thus be viewed as a pivot, a point at which we turn our attention inward rather than outwardly towards the world. It is thus a really powerful time, one in which we can think about the path forward and how best to nourish ourselves during the dark half of the year. This shorter day affects us in different ways.

We may not obtain enough vitamin D owing to a lack of light, as our bodies naturally synthesise vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. If at all feasible, we should go for a walk or perform some other outdoor exercise between 12 noon and 2pm, when the light is at its best. It is also a good idea to get your

vitamin D levels checked with a blood test to make sure you are not overdoing it on supplements. Too much vitamin D is just as hazardous as too little.

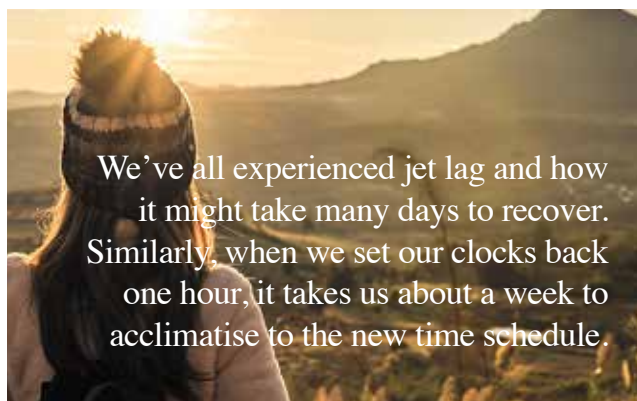
Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that belongs to the vitamin D family, which also comprises vitamins D1, D2, and D3. Vitamin D is important because it regulates calcium and phosphorus intake in the body and boosts immunity.

Phosphorus is required for the growth, maintenance, and repair of all tissues and cells, as well as the creation of DNA and RNA, the genetic building blocks. Phosphorus is also required for the proper balance and utilisation of other vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin D, iodine, magnesium, and zinc.

Getting enough vitamin D may also help prevent multiple sclerosis. There are numerous observational studies that have suggested that there is a correlation between the level of serum vitamin D and MS risk and disease activity and trials support these studies. However, in the Sintzel et al review they point out that,

"Study limitations identified in this review recognise the need for larger controlled clinical trials to establish vitamin D supplementation as the standard of care for MS patients. Though there is increasing evidence indicating that lower vitamin D levels are associated with increased risk of MS and with greater clinical and brain MRI activity in established MS, the impact of vitamin D supplementation on MS activity remains inadequately investigated."

The Saponaro et al review found that low serum 25OHD



levels are connected with an increased risk of cardiovascular disorders such as hypertension, coronary artery disease, ischemic heart disease, heart failure, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. They contend, however, that it is still uncertain whether vitamin D deficiency is a cause of cardiovascular illness or only a marker of poor health in chronic disease.

We also know that vitamin D plays a significant role in our immune system, and that those with low vitamin D levels may be more susceptible to infections and autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, and inflammatory bowel disease.

Grant et al have noted that several observational studies and clinical trials found that supplementing with vitamin D lowered the incidence of influenza, whereas others did not. They suggest that patients at risk of influenza and/or COVID-19 take 10,000 IU/d of vitamin D3 for a few weeks to rapidly elevate 25(OH)D concentrations, followed by 5000 IU/d. The goal should be to increase 25(OH)D concentrations to greater than 40-60 ng/mL (100-150 nmol/L). Higher vitamin D3 doses may be beneficial in the treatment of per-

sons infected with COVID-19.

Before increasing vitamin D supplements, it is prudent to get a blood test done to ascertain your current levels as having too much Vitamin D may also be harmful.

Too much vitamin D, also known as vitamin D toxicity, is most commonly caused by taking too much prescription-strength vitamin D or too much over-the-counter vitamin D supplement. Excessive sun exposure does not result in vitamin D toxicity, and eating too much vitamin D through your diet alone only seldom results in vitamin D toxicity.

Vitamin D toxicity symptoms include a loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, dehydration, and constipation. Increased thirst and urine frequency are also possible, as are muscle weakness and bone pain. These symptoms also cause disorientation and exhaustion.

A decrease in mood is another factor that may impact people at this time. This can take the form of SAD, or Seasonal Affective disorder. This is a kind of depression that occurs primarily in the autumn and winter when there is less natural sunlight. Low energy, feelings of melancholy

or emptiness, changes in sleep habits, impatience, difficulties concentrating, and weight gain are common symptoms. SAD is commonly treated with light therapy, psychotherapy, and, in certain cases, medication. SAD has been thoroughly researched, and studies have indicated that exposure to light, particularly light in the morning, can be an effective treatment for reducing its symptoms.

This low mood may also be lessened by taking a proactive approach, a part of which could be shifting to a warming, nourishing diet of seasonal foods, such as fresh soups cooked with root vegetables. It is critical to acquire enough rest to facilitate the transition from summer to winter. Gentle exercise is also preferable to strenuous activity, and meditation with a candle or incense is beneficial. 'Tilia', 'Crataegus', 'Passiflora', 'Matricaria', and oat milk are examples of herbs and foods that may be helpful.

Needless to say, the autumn equinox is also a time to reflect upon the coming darkness. It can be an ideal opportunity to accept this quiet time and to enjoy this gradual move into winter.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took advantage of the free consultations at the clinical training session in September. The next clinical training session will be in May, and I am already starting a waiting list for anyone interested in having a free consultation at the 2024 clinical training workshops. Please email me at rosari@drrosarikington.com

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Physio-recommended footwear at Batemans

Embracing the weather and heading out on a run or walk is guaranteed to improve your mental and physical health in winter months – but the right footwear is absolutely essential. Bateman's Footwear in Clonakilty and Bandon stocks a huge range of running and walking footwear from doctor/physiotherapist recommended brands that specialise in tackling foot and gait problems.



For less challenging terrain, such as roads and well-trodden forest paths, you need a lightweight supportive shoe with a reasonable amount of flexibility to help your foot move naturally. While running shoes are designed for the rigorous demands of running, they make for excellent walking shoes too.

Saucony, New Balance and Brook shoes are a great choice whether you are pounding paved streets or uneven country trails, or are required to stand or walk for long hours at work. Brooks's patented GuideRail technology is designed to keep your foot, ankle, and knee stable whilst in a recent

video, TikTok famous podiatrist Nadia Martineau named New Balance and Saucony as plantar fasciitis-fighting footwear.

A wide range of styles is available in Batemans to provide extra support for different types of wearers, like those with high arches or flat feet. All staff have been trained by Aetrex Orthotics to use its 3D Gaitway foot scanner to accurately access your feet (size, length, width, height, pressure distribution while walking, arch type and much more), in under one minute.

If you have a neutral foot, you will have a wider selection of footwear but should choose a shoe that supports your natural arch height. Generally, if you are an

overpronator or 'flat-footed' you may benefit from a stability shoe with more arch support. If you wear the outside of your shoe or supinate, you may find more comfort in a shoe with more cushioning.

If needed, Aetrex Orthotics are available instore in a variety of options based on foot type and footwear style, for both men and women.

Whether you run or walk, shoes made from Gore-Tex are a good addition to your wardrobe to avoid soggy feet. Because it's a breathable fabric, Gore-Tex allows sweat to evaporate, keeps the rain out but also means your shoes dry faster when you get indoors again.

Amongst the large selection of Brooks running shoes

at Batemans is the Gore-Tex 'Ghost' model and there are also several waterproof Ecco styles. All Meindl and Merrell walking shoes are made with Gore-Tex but these brands also have a stiffer sole and more grip then a running shoe to provide a more stable platform on rougher ground.

If you intend to be moving over uneven or very steep ground, for example hill walking, then you'll need a more rigid boot with good ankle sup-

port. There are several choices from Meindl and Merrell in hiking boots, all of which are lined with a waterproof membrane, allowing you to cross streams and ditches without a problem on your adventures.

Because it's so important to get expert advice and try a walking shoe on before buying, a visit to Batemans in either Clonakilty or Bandon is a must as we head into a winter of walking!



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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

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www.corkdanceclub.com

It's time to take the first step with Cork Dance Club

For over 30 years, Cork Dance Club's dedicated instructors have been teaching Cork to dance and promoting Social Ballroom and Latin American dancing throughout the city and county. With decades of experience, they are well-equipped to guide you in the right direction on your dance journey.

"Our mission is to get you on the dance floor as soon as possible and for you to have lots of fun while learning to dance," says instructor Anne Hurley.

"We specialise in beginner

classes but, whether you're a seasoned dancer or just starting your dance journey, we have a place for you, and we'll get you moving to music in your first lesson. Our dance classes are all non-competitive, welcoming, invigorating and great fun."

Beginners' dance classes start with easy steps in the Old Time Waltz and will help you get used to dancing with a partner. Cork Dance Club guarantees you will go home being able to dance. The next week will start with revision of last



week's steps and then gradually introducing other dances such as the social foxtrot, quickstep, tango, jive, cha cha cha and many more.

"Dancing is not just a hobby; it is a way of life, a journey, and one of the most fulfilling things you can do for yourself both physically and mentally," says Anne. "Dancing has no boundaries; no matter what age, gender or ability, dancing is one

of the most versatile and option filled pastimes.

Cork Dance Club's new class begins in Darrara Community Centre on Friday October 6 at 7pm. Booking essential. Further details contact Anne on 087 2487696, email corkdanceclub@gmail.com or visit their website www.corkdanceclub.com

Easy winter crafts: Pumpkin hat

Because it is a repetitive activity, knitting is calming and mindful – excellent as a winter wellness practice for your mind! Knitting can also be a welcome social activity in the dark winter months; many local libraries have welcoming 'knit & natter' groups.

If you are relatively new to knitting or you haven't picked up your needles in years, here is a simple pattern from Ravelry.com to get you going.

This cute pumpkin-shaped hat with a rolled brim and i-cord stalk is designed to fit a head of about 39 cm circumference. You'll need just one ball of organde aran weight wool for the hat and a little bit of green aran weight for the stalk. You'll also need 3.5mm and 4mm

double-pointed needles/circular or similar to get a gauge of 24 sts (10 cm) with smaller needles or 21sts with larger needles.

Directions: Cast on 75 sts with smaller needles and join to round, place marker. Knit 2.5 cm in stockinette stitch (knit every round when working in the round). Next round: *knit 15, m1 (make one)* [5 sts increased]. Next round: Change to larger needles and *k9, p1* all around. Keep knitting in pattern for about 10 cm with hem rolled or 12.5 cm with hem unrolled.

Next round: Start decreasing *ssk, knit 5, k2tog, p1* all around, knit next 2 rounds in pattern *ssk, knit 3, k2tog, p1* all around, knit next round in pattern *ssk, knit 1, k2tog, p1* all around

Change to green yarn and knit one round of stockinette stitch. Next round: Knit 4 sts, *work centered double decrease (slip 2 sts together as if to knit, knit 1, pass the slipped stitches over the stitch just knit), knit 1* 8 times [16 sts] Knit to marker and the next 3 rounds in stockinette stitch. Next round: *k2, k2tog all around* [12 sts] Next round: knit all sts Next round: k1, k2tog all around [8 sts] Next round: knit all sts Next round: k2tog all around [4 sts] Place the remaining four



stitches on one needle (it has to be a double-pointed needle) and knit an I-cord. The stalk should be 5-7 cm long. Break yarn and thread it through all stitches twice, then thread it through a tapestry needle. Bend the stem to the side and pull the needle with the yarn to the inside of the stem and down, then weave the end in on the inside. Now weave the other ends in too and you're done!

If this simple project has whetted your appetite, Olga Prins of Olga's Own has put together some lovely kits (pattern and required yarn) that can also be posted. For those

on a budget, she has a range of one-ball wonders – hats, cowls and socks, all priced under €20. And for those looking for something a bit more substantial, she offers a stunning selection of kits for scarves and shawls ranging from €34 to €60. These beautifully crafted pieces are sure to elevate any ensemble. Call into her shop to see the range or contact her via WhatsApp on 089 6177905. Olga also runs regular adult and teenage workshops in craft and knitting at her shop in Ballinspittle village if you would like some help to improve your skills.

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Link to 90 second video.

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Winter wellness through nutritional therapy and herbal medicine

Nutritional Therapist Gwen Bastian-Enright and Medical Herbalist Geri McGann of The Beara Holistic Clinic explain how Nutritional Therapy and Herbal Medicine provide the opportunity for individuals to not only address health problems holistically but support the systems in the body to function as effectively as possible daily.

Specifically, both approaches (both individually and combined) can help to support your immune system through these changing seasons and to be resilient from and respond correctly to, an infection (bear in mind that multiple colds in a year are totally normal!).

There are two ways to support the immune system:

1. Support your gut microbiome (all the bacteria in your digestive system) and promote good 'digestive fire'.
2. Include the key nutrients for immune support through diet or supplements.

Nutritionally two simple tips to supporting your gut microbiome:

- a) Eat a rainbow every day, choose one to two from yellow, green, orange, red, blue/ black/ purple and white/tan/brown. A simple way is to include a soup or stew, add some fruit to breakfast, swap to wholegrains and have lentils/ chickpeas/ beans a few times a week
- b) Include some probiotic/ fermented foods (these have bacteria in them) every day, such

as drinking kombucha instead of fizzy drinks, add some kefir to your breakfast, add a small bowl of miso soup to lunch, serve sandwiches on sourdough bread, swap to natural yoghurt or try some sauerkraut

From a herbal perspective including spices in the diet will aid digestion, as well as encouraging immunity. Three to include are:

- Ginger is a warming digestive which removes the accumulation of toxins in the gut, thus supporting the immune system.
- Cinnamon combats candida and other gut pathogens and enhances the effectiveness of insulin. It's great paired with stewed apples or to porridge a lift.
- Garlic a natural probiotic, it stimulates digestion and absorption. Its antimicrobial properties help restore gut flora after infection.

To support your immune system directly, vitamins C, D and A are key – including orange fruit and vegetables (serve with source of fat to optimise absorption) daily can really help with A and C, but in Ireland, between October and



Gwen Bastian-Enright

April we do need to supplement Vitamin D and dosages of 1-2000iU (international units) are generally considered safe for all adults. Though the best way to know what dose you need is to get a blood test and supplement accordingly.

Herbs work in a number of ways with the immune system from increasing the production of macrophages - cells that the immune system sends to digest invaders to stimulating the production of defence substances to protect non-infected cells.

- Siberian ginseng* has actions that directly affect the immune system, helping against infections including coughs and colds.
- Ashwagandha* is what we call an adaptogen helping the body to deal with stress, promoting energy and vitality.
- Reishi mushrooms* provide



Geri McGann

good longer term immunity support as well as being a cardio tonic

**Always consult your local herbalist before taking herbs.*

Finally, minerals like zinc and selenium are important for immune health and you can obtain these from Brazil nuts, shellfish, seeds and beans. There are specific immune supporting supplements available too, talk to Gwen or your health shop to find out more. For herbal support talk to Geri.

The Beara Holistic Clinic, located in the Bantry Bay area of West Cork, specialises in Herbal Medicine and Nutritional Therapy. They provide the opportunity for individuals to address health problems holistically, in a safe, supportive, and professional environment. Both Geri and Gwen are professionally trained

and fully qualified healthcare practitioners. To find out more visit their website www.thebearaclinic.ie or their Instagram page [thebearaholisticclinic](https://www.instagram.com/thebearaholisticclinic).

Gwen's main focus is women's health, from menstrual cycle health and awareness to specific conditions like fibroids and endometriosis. Gwen also helps couples with fertility, getting pregnant, supporting post-partum recovery and family nutrition. For a free nutritional therapy 20 min consultation at either of Gwen's Kenmare or Bantry Clinics, call 087 657 8307 or email: thebearaclinicnutrition@gmail.com.

Combining ancient tradition, clinical experience and modern

scientific research, herbal medicine is a safe and highly effective form of treatment for many health problems, including: Asthma and other respiratory issues; Common Cold, Coughs, and Flu; Poor circulation, varicose veins; Depression, anxiety and sleep; Digestive disorders such as IBS; Headaches and migraines; Hormonal imbalances, Irregular periods, PMT, perimenopausal/ menopausal symptoms; Osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia; Skin problems e.g., dermatitis, eczema and acne

To arrange a consultation call or WhatsApp Geri on 087 326 9122.



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<p>Nutritional Therapy Gwen Bastian-Enright <i>MSc, DipNT</i></p> <p>Nutritional Therapy looks at nutrition/ diet, lifestyle as well as supplements (where indicated) and can include testing and interpretation of blood test results with subsequent recommendations.</p>	<p>Herbal Medicine Geri McGann <i>DipHerb, MIRH</i></p> <p>Combining ancient tradition, clinical experience and modern scientific research, herbal medicine is a safe and highly effective form of treatment for many health problems including respiratory, digestive and hormonal.</p>
<p> GWEN: 087 657 8307</p>	<p> GERI: 087 326 9122</p>



Amanda Roe

Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

Hormone imbalances caused by endocrine disruptors can affect our physical and mental health but are of particular concern for couples who are trying to conceive as these can cause sub-fertility and infertility in both men and women and affect the growth and development of the foetus.

The endocrine system monitors hormones that control everything from blood pressure to metabolism, reproduction, growth and development, mood and ability to recover from illness. Endocrine disruptors are a group of chemical molecules that when inhaled, absorbed

Fertility Series: Endocrine disruptors

through the skin or digestive system can decrease or increase production of hormones and mimic or alter the natural production of hormones.

Endocrine disruptors are found in many solvents, plastic products, pesticides, furniture, kitchenware, packaging, toys and cosmetics. They are even found in processed foods, as they are released during the preparation of foods when hot or acidic foods are prepared or stored in plastic containers.

If you are trying to get pregnant naturally, want to improve your odds in IVF or to help prevent miscarriage it would be important to identify and reduce your exposure to endocrine disruptors.

A good way to start is by looking at what you have control over at home.

Cooking at home helps to reduce exposure because you are selecting your ingredients as well as how the food is prepared and stored. Small changes in your kitchen can make a big difference for your health.

Start by replacing plastic containers with glass or stainless

steel. Plastic lids are ok when they cover cold foods or dry goods like cereal, rice or pasta.

Heat releases endocrine disruptors from plastic so if you are blending soups use a stainless steel hand blender or a blender with a glass jar and if you're drinking coffee-on-the-go, take the lid off your travel or takeaway cup to avoid drinking your hot beverage through the plastic spout.

When making coffee use a French press or coffee machine without plastic coffee parts. Plastic kettles can be replaced with a glass or stainless steel kettle.

Some non-stick cookware are made with perfluorochemicals, such as PFAS and PFOA. These chemicals have been linked to various health risks, and possible infertility. Non-stick pots and pans can be replaced with stainless steel or cast iron.

Non-stick baking trays can be replaced with stainless steel baking trays or a glass pyrex dish.

Although most plastic water bottles are now BPA free it is still worth replacing your drinking bottles with stainless steel and a double-walled vacuum

insulated water bottle will keep your drinks cool for hours. Plastic spouts and straws are ok for cold drinks.

Many supermarket foods are wrapped in plastic or clingfilm and this is not a concern when the foods have been packaged cold.

When trying to conceive, taking a holistic approach is

important. Removing endocrine disruptors, as well as stress management, good nutrition and acupuncture can rebalance hormones and improve fertility for both men and women.

Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Acupuncturist, Life and Health coach. She uses a range of holistic therapies

including guidance around food to improve physical, emotional and mental health. Supporting fertility and natural recovery from trauma, eating disorders and other chronic health conditions. For more information or to book a session visit www.roehealth.ie or call/text Amanda on: 087 633 1898.

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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Family Focus: Winter Wellness using natural remedies



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

I recently picked up the Optimum Nutrition Bible by Patrick Holford and was reminded of how inspiring his writing is. I used to use this book all the time – in work and at home, for family health queries, for research – but somehow over the last while I've slipped out of the habit of referring to books in favour of online research. Sometimes though this can mean we bounce from trend to trend and end up forgetting the basics of good health.

In terms of winter wellness, we know that prevention is the best thing to focus on, but what does prevention mean? In my opinion, it's about listening to

your body, making sure you are eating well and conserving your energy, as it's much easier to recover from a cold or flu if you are well nourished and well rested. In terms of foods or supplements, in my experience there's no one magic bullet that takes care of all our immunity needs – it's more about finding that combination that suits you and your family.

Here's my top winter wellness tips:

1. Prioritise rest and get enough sleep – personally this is my number one priority. If you can, build downtime into your week, naps in the middle of the day, and get to bed as early as possible during the week. Patrick says "Get plenty of sleep to allow the body to restore and repair itself. You should be aiming for at least seven hours a night (for good immunity)."

2. Optimise your diet – If you feel under the weather, he advises "eat lightly, making sure to get enough protein, which is needed to build immune cells, and keep warm". If you are prone to mucus-related infections, reduce dairy.

3. Stay hydrated – Patrick says "Hydrated bodies are less prone to catching bugs. Water also flushes toxins out of your system and is particularly good for preventing urine infections and kidney stones". Personally I drink herb teas and hot lemon when I'm feeling under the weather, rather than coffee and black tea.

4. Increase vitamin C and zinc – Patrick says Vitamin C is an incredible antiviral agent. Viruses cannot survive in a vitamin-c rich environment – Research shows Vitamin C reduces your chances of getting a cold, as well as the severity and duration if you do catch one. I take two grams every morning

but if I feel something coming, I take another gram every hour (decrease if this gives you loose stools). I keep this up till I'm out of the woods. The Vitamin C supplement I take is called ImmuneC, it's Patrick's formula and contains Zinc, which is one of the most important immune-boosting minerals, helping to fight infections.

5. Don't forget your vitamin D – after the damp summer we've had, it's a good idea to take vitamin D in supplement form. I give my family a supplement every day – 1000iu for the kids and 4000iu for myself and my partner.

6. Eat lots of garlic – garlic contains Allicin, a substance that is anti-viral, anti-fungal, and anti-bacterial. It also acts as an antioxidant, being high in sulphur-containing amino acids. Garlic is an important ally in fighting infections, and Patrick refers to research showing that garlic eaters have the lowest incidence of cancers and garlic and it also helps to manage cholesterol levels naturally. I take Kyolic Garlic every day, an organic aged-garlic supplement from a company called Quest, and I also add it to all my salad dressings, soups and use it wherever I can in family meals.

7. Have elderberry extracts on standby – Patrick says "Viruses get into body cells by puncturing their walls with tiny spikes made of a substance called hemagglutinin. Black elderberry disarms these spikes by binding to them and preventing them from penetrating the cell membrane". Elderberry has been shown to prevent infections taking hold, so it's good to have at home so you can start using it as soon as you feel that tickle on your throat. I suggest giving it daily to children who are more susceptible to colds. It comes in syrup form – we

have a lovely Irish one from wild foraged berries (Wild Irish Foragers), and Sambucol. There's also a certain amount of black elderberry in Patrick's ImmuneC.

8. Echinacea is a great all-rounder with antiviral and antibacterial properties, and can be taken as preventative or treatment. One of our favourites is a Hot Drink containing Echinacea and Elderberry from A.Vogel – it's a very handy two in one you can take off the spoon or add to hot water. We also get really good feedback from the Echinacea and Sage Throat Spray from A.Vogel, the sage is soothing and gives immediate relief from throat pain and the echinacea helps to throw the infection off.

9. Make a Carrageen Moss cough syrup – at the first hint of a cough in our house, we make a syrup from carrageen moss (we use the dry seaweed), organic lemon juice and local honey. You can find the recipe on our blog. It's soothing, contains lots of minerals including zinc and iodine, and has calming properties making it good for irritating nighttime coughs. You can also buy Sea Moss gels now to make it even easier to take.

10. Add in the good bacteria – in the form of kefir, live yoghurt, or supplements. I give my kids Pro-ven 'Fit For School' every day, it's a combination of probiotics in a strawberry flavoured chewable tablet that boosts immunity.

11. Oregano oil – this is what I take if I feel like I'm coming down with something – I like to take it in drop form, in oatmilk, as it's easier to take that way. Oregano oil is very strong, and you need to find a supplement suitable for internal use. It's high in antioxidants and has been shown to deactivate

viruses and pathogenic bacteria. I wouldn't take this every day, rather I use it when I need something really powerful to stop a virus in its tracks.

12. Magic miso – Lastly, embrace miso, a fermented savoury paste that makes a veggie broth packed with immune benefits. Combine it with ginger, garlic, and spring onions for a nourishing and warming soup. You'll find a range of different misos in your local health food shop, and if you have a jar in your cupboard you can make a warming mug in minutes.

October 20 per cent off offers in Organico

Keeping you and your family healthy in winter can be an expensive business so we have negotiated special 20 per cent October discounts for you – for the whole month we have 20 per cent off Patrick Holford's ImmuneC, A.Vogel Herbal Tinctures, all Terranova supplements, as well as all Viridian supplements, Nature's Plus, Wild Nutrition and many more. You can shop online at www.organico.ie or with us In Bantry, whichever suits you. If you need advice, call in, we love to chat about natural health!

Marilyn Glenville visits Bantry in October

We are thrilled to have Marilyn back in Bantry on Monday October 23 for a live talk on balancing hormones. When we asked our instagram community what topic to choose, Balancing Hormones Naturally came top of the list. It's a great topic, as it covers women's health issues from PMS to fertility to Menopause and even after menopause. Tickets are on sale on www.organico.ie/event.

Hope to see you there!

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Getting to the 'heart' of women's health

Despite the misconception, one in four women in Ireland dies from heart disease and stroke, surpassing breast cancer deaths sixfold. Why? Heart disease in women has been historically under-recognised, under-treated and under-researched. Specific risk factors such as smoking and high blood pressure can be deadlier for women, who also have specific pregnancy and menopause-related risk factors. It's essential for women to educate themselves about heart health. Women aged over 30 should have their blood pressure

and cholesterol checked once every five years.

Overlooking heart attack symptoms: Women tend to be less aware of heart attack symptoms than men, as their symptoms can be more vague. Consequently, women might delay seeking help or not call emergency services for themselves, which can impact their chances of survival. If a woman suspects a heart attack, she should call 112 or 999 immediately and go to the nearest Emergency Department.

Believing heart disease is only a concern for older

adults: Many women are unaware that hormonal protection shields them from heart disease and stroke until after menopause. However, heart disease risk factors can begin in childhood, highlighting the importance of proactively reducing cardiovascular risk no matter what stage of life a woman is at.

Jumping into lifestyle changes without the right mindset: Most women already know what makes a healthy lifestyle, but the many demands of modern life can get in the way. The Irish Heart Foundation offers a free Self-care and

Wellbeing Journal, designed to help women identify areas they would benefit most from focusing on, understand their habits, and set realistic goals.

Believing they lack control over their cardiovascular risk: The good news is that 80 per cent of premature heart disease and strokes are preventable by managing modifiable risk factors. Here are some practical tips:

- If you smoke, try to stop.
- Limit alcohol to no more than 11 standard drinks per week.
- Follow a Mediterranean-style diet. This is based on fruit

and vegetables, wholegrains, beans, pulses, nuts, and seeds. It includes olive oil, seafood, and poultry, and is low in sugar, salt, processed foods, and red meat. See irishheart.ie for stress-free heart-healthy recipes.

- Mind your mental health by reducing screentime, maintaining a regular sleep routine, spending time in nature, engaging with relaxation techniques, and staying connected with friends and family.
- Incorporate more movement into daily life and include muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week.



- For practical strategies to take charge of their heart health, women can visit irishheart.ie and download the Irish Heart Foundation's free Self-care and Wellbeing Journal.

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

1972 bid to lift contraceptive ban is focus of TG4 documentary



When May and Séamus McGee (pictured above) approached a solicitor in 1972 to raise concerns about a banned contraceptive, they had no idea that the resulting case would lead to a change in the law, one that has had a profound effect on Irish society.

In 1972, contraception was illegal in Ireland. Although women could obtain the pill through their own GP, all retail sale of contraceptive products was prohibited.

May McGee, however, had

suffered severe medical complications during her first three pregnancies, and her doctor unequivocally warned that another pregnancy could prove to be fatal. In response, therefore, May attempted to import a spermicidal jelly. But her intended package was seized, and the young mother was threatened with jail.

Undeterred, she and her husband, Séamus, boldly challenged the law. Although the High Court ruled against them, a year later, in 1973, the couple won their case on appeal

at the Supreme Court, and six years later contraception was legalised.

In this one-hour documentary, originally broadcast on October 4 but now available to rewatch on www.TG4.ie, May and Séamus share unseen personal archive and deliver intimate and revealing moments, charged with emotion. As well as contributions from other family members, prominent

historians and human rights activists praise the actions of this unassuming couple from Skerries.

McGee v Attorney General has become a landmark case in Irish history. This defining, heart-warming documentary for TG4, by Midas Productions, relives the urgency of that period and the significant implications it delivered for married couples.



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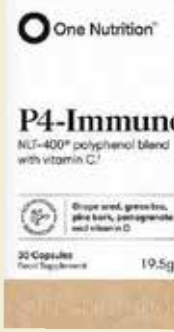


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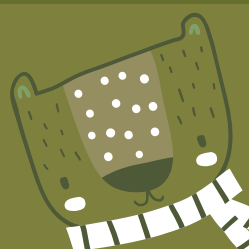


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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Osteoporotic fractures – the elephant in the room



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Dr Paula Stanley
drstanley@westcorkpeople.ie

Hands up who understands what osteoporosis is?

And why is a GP with self-confessed passion for women's health talking about bones? Because, almost exclusively, this is an issue that affects women.

First, a few myths to be dispelled: Osteoporosis is not the same as osteoarthritis – two completely different animals. Osteoporosis in itself does not cause pain, there are no symptoms....until a bone snaps.

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is defined as a skeletal disorder characterised by compromised bone strength predisposing a person to an increased risk of fracture. In layman's English: the intrinsic strength of bone becomes so low that even minor impact will result in fracture. The bones most commonly affected are neck of femur, the bone in the thigh, resulting in a hip fracture, and vertebrae. A vertebra is the name given to the individual back bones, stacked up like lego bricks, one on the other, encasing our spinal cord.

While a weak neck of femur bone will snap as a result of a fall; osteoporotic vertebrae often spontaneously collapse, causing tremendous pain, loss of height and that familiar

hunched-over posture seen in elderly called kyphosis. Fracture of neck of femur is treated with a total hip replacement but there is not a lot that can be done for osteoporotic collapse vertebral fractures.

Osteoporotic fractures: the gory facts

Worldwide, osteoporosis causes more than 8.9 million fractures annually: an osteoporotic fracture every three seconds. One in three women over the age of 50 will experience an osteoporotic fracture. A prior fracture is associated with an 86 per cent increased risk of having another fracture. After a hip fracture, 10 to 20 per cent of patients, who were previously living interdependently, require long-term nursing care. Forty per cent of patients are unable to walk independently after a hip fracture. The mortality or likelihood of dying in the year after a hip fracture is 20-25 per cent: That's a one in four chance of dying in the year after a hip fracture.

Contrasting that with breast cancer, compare the one in three risk of having an osteoporotic fracture in women over 50 with the one in 50 risk of getting breast cancer. When breast cancer is diagnosed localised in the breast, the likelihood of surviving five years after treatment is 99 per cent and 10 years is close to 80 per cent. In other words only one per cent of women over the age of 50 will die in the year after breast cancer diagnosis versus 20 per cent after a hip fracture.

Hopefully by now I have your attention. So what can we do?

What is bone?

What a lot of people do not realise is that bone is a dynamic organ, with bone constantly being laid down, then taken away or resorbed in a fluid cycle throughout our lives.

What makes bones strong is the combination of the bone density and quality. Bone is not a solid brick-like structure but looks a bit like honeycomb.



So what we need is for that honeycomb structure to be as dense as possible, with few air spaces, plus we need the links in the honeycomb structure to be thick and strong.

Studies have shown that women naturally begin to lose bone strength from the age of 30. That cycle of bone being laid down / resorbed begins to tilt more towards resorption after 30 and then tips right over at menopause. Oestrogen supports bone build-up, therefore lack of oestrogen after menopause causes more rapid bone resorption, resulting in sharp drop-off in bone strength.

Risk factors

- Hereditary: osteoporosis does run in families. If you have a female family member who suffered a hip fracture under the age of 65 years, you need to see your GP for a risk assessment.
- Smoking and Low BMI, being very underweight, predisposes you.
- Nutrition: diets low in calcium and vitamin D.
- Alcohol: more than three units of alcohol per day: a large glass of wine is four units, ladies.
- Certain medical conditions: hypothyroidism, rheumatoid arthritis, some bowel diseases.
- Certain medications, in particular oral steroids.
- Inactivity – not just current but life-long is a significant risk.
- Previous fracture: As a health care professional, if I have a patient, especially female, who breaks an arm or leg bone after minor impact injury such as falling over on a pavement, I should be asking: was this an osteoporotic fracture?

- Amenorrhoea; the medical term for absence of menstrual periods might occur in conditions such as anorexia where extremely poor nutrition switches off ovulation and menstruation, putting that young woman into a low oestrogen state, resulting in bone resorption, not build-up.
- The International Osteoporosis Foundation is a really useful source of information and assessment tools: www.osteoporosis.foundation/patients

How do we prevent osteoporotic fractures?

On two fronts: optimise bone build-up and minimise resorption.

Optimising bone strength starts in childhood. Weight bearing exercise, anything that involves walking or running stimulates bone strength. Exercise needs to continue from childhood into teens and through the 20s. A diet high in calcium and vitamin D.

Avoid excess alcohol and smoking, as much as is reasonable, in our youth.

Then, over the age of 30 to continue to build bone strength, we need regular weight bearing exercise, 30 minutes five times per week, plus a diet high in calcium and vitamin D.

Calcium and vitamin D – how much is enough?

Over the age of 50, a woman needs 1200mg of elemental calcium plus minimum 1000 I.U Vitamin D per day. There are a lot of 'menopause vitamins' out there but there is no evidence of benefit for bones or for menopause symptoms for any vitamins other than calcium and vitamin D. Most calcium tablets

are in a salt form, often only 40 per cent of it being bioavailable.

As with all vitamins, the best way of taking calcium is in food. The International Osteoporosis Foundation has a useful daily calcium intake calculator.

When it comes to Vitamin D, we are basically living in the wrong country, as over 90 per cent of our vitamin D is generated as a result of sunshine reacting with our skin. Therefore everyone, not just women over 50, should take at least 1000 I.U vitamin D per day from September to April. Vitamin D is cheap to buy over the counter and easy to take. A high dose can just be taken once a week if you forget to take daily whereas calcium intake should be daily.

What about DEXA scans?

You will notice that I have not yet mentioned DEXA or bone strength scans. DEXA scans measure bone mass not bone quality. Results come back as normal, osteopaenia, or osteoporosis. For further explanation see: www.irishosteoporosis.ie.

However, the majority of osteoporotic fractures over the age of 50 occur in patients with osteopaenia, not osteoporosis. A DEXA by itself does not accurately tell you your risk of having an osteoporotic fracture over the next ten years. What DOES reliably calculate that is the FRAX risk assessment tool (frax.shef.ac.uk/)

You can do this yourself at home. International guidelines advise that if your 10-year hip fracture risk is greater than three per cent or your overall fracture risk greater than 20 per cent, you should have treatment.

The decision about whether you need to start treatment to prevent a fracture needs to be made following a consultation with your GP.

Treatment

Hormone replacement therapy, HRT, is licensed to treat, as well as prevent osteoporosis. It has been shown that being on HRT for four to five years between the ages of 50 and 60 years will halve the risk of osteoporotic hip fracture by the age of 65 years. There is no alternative non-hormonal remedy that has been shown to do this. HRT is licensed to both prevent and treat osteoporosis. If my patient chooses not to use HRT, that is entirely her decision, but my job is to make her aware of the long-term benefits, in particular for her bones.

Where HRT is contraindicated, such as after breast cancer,

or if a woman does not wish to take HRT, medications called bisphosphonates taken in tablet form once a week, effectively treat osteoporosis. Both HRT and bisphosphonates can be initiated by your GP.

When a patient with osteoporosis is on treatment, either HRT or a bisphosphonate, we repeat the DEXA in one to two years, depending on the severity of the osteoporosis on baseline DEXA. It is possible to be on HRT and a bisphosphonate at the same time. Where the repeat DEXA does not show an improvement in bone strength, your GP should consider referral to an osteoporosis specialist called a rheumatologist.

Falls prevention equals fracture prevention

For our elderly relatives – no loose rugs, support bars in the bathroom, well-fitting shoes and not slippers about the house, check eyesight with annual eye tests. Nutrition is very important. The loss of muscle mass called sarcopaenia, which occurs with ageing, can be reversed with a high protein diet and even chair-based exercises if they are unable to get out for a walk every day.

All female readers need to be as worried about their bone health as they are about breast cancer. In short, ladies, we are far more likely to suffer a hip fracture than get breast cancer and, if we have a hip fracture over the age of 50, one in five of us will not make it through to the following Christmas.

What we are talking about here is primary prevention. To do that every woman at age 50 needs a consultation with their GP to have a holistic health check, looking at overall cardiovascular health and risks for same, bone health, as well as having that discussion about menopause, even if she has not been thinking about taking HRT. This is a bit of an alien concept in Ireland because most patients only go to their GP when they are unwell.

I have to add that this would become possible if the HSE paid for such a health check to be done by GPs, both for men and women.

Dr Stanley welcomes emails from readers requesting women's health topics for future articles or links to information. Email drstanley@westcorkpeople.ie. We must emphasise that this is not a platform for medical advice.

Phone the clinic on 028 23456 to book an appointment with Dr Stanley.

NEW DEDICATED WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICE

Skibbereen Medical Centre is proud to announce the opening of a new **Women's Health Clinic**

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No referral is required.

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

The life-changing power of touch

Teertha Ordish is in the enviable business of transforming people's lives. While life coach and educator are in her job description, the Ballydehob-based shamanic practitioner, who was brought up in a deeply spiritual family, is so much more than this, having committed most of her adult life to the study and practice of shamanic healing, energy work and tantra. In the Western world we have been conditioned to associate the word tantra with sex and, while sexuality does represent a part of it, tantra is so much more, inevitably bringing those who embrace it on a path of self-development and spiritual awakening. In Sanskrit 'tantra' means woven together, referring to the relationship between our physical and spiritual selves, with conscious touch playing an important role.

Some of Teertha's teachings focus on consent, boundaries and human relationships, taking those who learn from her on a path that works toward mindfulness and connection outside of oneself, in all aspects of life.

One of her upcoming workshops 'The Art of Choice, Communication and Connection,' is based around somatic consent, which builds clarity and connection to self, as well as bonding in relationship with others. Teertha focuses her teaching on somatic awareness, which can help us identify and understand our unconscious behaviours, break down the barriers of conditioning and understand how transformative and healing touch can be if it is something we want.

"If someone has unwanted touch in their life, somatic con-



sent can help them understand that they can say no to it," explains Teertha. "On the other side of it, there are many people who have been touch-deprived, who may want touch and intimacy but don't know how to simply ask for a hug or to be held. Sometimes this means that they reach for the nearest thing to this, which oftentimes is sex; this just makes them feel more vulnerable, ashamed and not in control.

"Quite often someone will override what they're actually feeling with what they think they should or are expected to do, especially if that person is a people pleaser," she adds.

Teertha teaches communication around consent and making empowered choices so we know how to respond to an invitation for touch confidently, therefore not having to rely on

those inbuilt survival mechanisms that can lead down a self-destructive path.

"Platonic touch can be so healing and transformative but we tend to pull away from it due to a fear of it being sexualised," she says.

Within a safe space, the somatic consent workshop focuses on teaching participants how to activate their hands, improving the quality of touch, exploring consensual touch, and learning how to separate doing from giving while also discovering deeper layers of receiving. The tools taken away can deepen capacity for authentic connection in personal or professional life, effectively making life more rich, exciting and fulfilling.

Participants have described the workshop as insightful and transformative. John would

encourage anyone who wants to gain a better understanding of themselves and make positive steps forward, to attend it.

"I found it to be truly uplifting, enlightening and indeed life-changing. If you enter with an open mind and heart, determined to listen and to discover your own inner truth, you will be most richly and generously rewarded."

Rebecca, who has been on a healing journey for the past 10 years says "this workshop has definitely been one of the best decisions I have made in my quest to understand myself more, release trauma, learned conditioning, and heal. Teertha is a beautiful woman and a kind soul who has an innate ability to understand and help others reach their true potential and embody their light."

Daithi shares how "working with Teertha has been some of the most important personal development I've done to date and the most beautiful gift I could have ever given myself.

"Although I recognise I'm a work in progress, I remain on the pathway to becoming the man I want to be and look forward to beginning a new journey with her..."

Teertha Ordish provides personal development trainings and workshops for groups; and private sessions for individuals and couples.

For more information on Teertha's somatic consent workshop (next training in West Cork starting October) or to book a place please contact her by email info@teerthaordish.com or phone 087 411 9622

Teertha Ordish

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- ~ Empowerment, Embodiment & Conscious Sexuality Educator
- ~ Intimacy, Relationship & Pleasure Coach
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Bantry welcomes back leading nutritionist for a talk on hormonal health

Dive deep into the intricacies of natural hormone balance with bestselling author and the UK's leading women's health nutritionist, Dr Marilyn Glenville. Organico in Bantry is thrilled to host Dr Glenville once again, following numerous successful collaborations, this time covering a topic chosen by a community poll: Balancing Hormones Naturally.

Hannah Dare, co-owner of Organico, says, "Our community's voice played a signifi-

cant role in shaping this event. It's a testament to the keen interest locally in women's health and how we can improve our health using diet and nutrition."

The evening promises to be transformative. Attendees can expect clear, jargon-free insights and a chance to ask Dr Glenville their pressing questions during a dedicated Q&A session. From combatting PMS to navigating menopause, empower yourself with strategies that place well-being and hormonal health at the

forefront.

"We always love having Marilyn in town because she puts a much-needed spotlight on women's health. The enthusiastic turnout for her events clearly indicates how much women crave and value her insights on health," says Dare. Tickets: €20, available at www.organico.ie/event or by ringing Organico (0)27 51391. Participants will also enjoy an exclusive 25 per cent discount on any of Dr Glenville's products available at the event.

Organico

Balancing Hormones Naturally with Dr Marilyn Glenville

Empower yourself with natural strategies to achieve optimal hormone balance and wellness.

The Maritime Hotel, Bantry
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www.organico.ie/event



FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

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LOUISE DILLON
DIP.FH | Member of The College of Foot Health

A 2017 study from Trinity College Dublin showed that sunshine contributes to vitamin D levels throughout the year, even in winter, even in Ireland. If there is ne'er a hint of sunshine, getting out into the fresh air on a winter Sunday afternoon will still benefit your mood, circulation, energy levels and sleep. To help get all ages out walking together we've jotted down a few of the easier routes around West Cork.

Top Tip: As the saying goes, there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. You will recognise the truth of this if you own a decent raincoat and waterproof walking shoes so invest in some decent 'kit'.... it will last you for years.

easier at 3.2km, taking about one hour if you stop to admire the scenery. At the first fork in the road turn sharp left and follow this road back to the Knockaunabee Road. This route affords a magnificent view of Shehy Mountain with Coolmountain and Cousane to its left. Turn left again at the next cross-roads; this leads back to the starting point.

Also nearby are the **Nowen Hill Trails**, which start at Cullenagh Carpark. To get there take the L4609 from Castle Street out of Dunmanway and follow the road signs for the Pipe Hill Trails. After 7km turn left and follow the L4611 road for 5km as far as Cullenagh Lake carpark.

The shortest of the Nowen Hill Trails is just 3km and encompasses Annees Bridge. Part of this walk is through forest paths and marshland so waterproof footwear is recommended but it is classed as easy for anyone wishing to avoid any strenuous climbs.

Garretstown Wood is located on the edge of Ballinspittle Village, close to Kinsale. It was originally part of the Frank's Estate. The wood covers an area of 200 hectares and is an extremely popular amenity. The northern section of the wood is on elevated ground overlooking the Atlantic Ocean with views from the forest of the ocean site where the Lusitania sank on 7 May 1915. Also visible from



the woods is the ancient fort of Ballycatten where the Vikings were first defeated in a pitch battle by the Munster men in AD 910. At the southern end of the wood there is a restored spring with a beehive stone roof to protect its waters from rain. These special waters were discovered in 1750 and many generations have been cured by bathing in them.

There are two waymarked woodland trails to enjoy here, both of which start and finish from the trailhead that is located inside the gate and pillars at the main entrance beside Ballinspittle Village. The Orange loop is quick at 1.5km. Allow 90 minutes for the Blue Loop at 5.2km.

There are five lovely walks in the Schull area, from easy to cross country up a mountain! All include an 'off road' element which means you will be walking across farmland so please remember to shut all gates, keep dogs on leads and don't litter.

The Colla Ring is 6.5km. Start at the ruined church and

graveyard on the Colla Road, continue south for 2.5km until you come to a fingerpost directing you to 'Toad Hall Kennels'. This is the start of the short route and follows the old road to Schull, now a track, which winds steeply uphill through a farmyard. The track improves towards the end, which is marked with a gate. Turn right (rejoining the long route) and continue downhill to Schull. Alternatively for the long route, continue on the main Colla Road past Colla Pier and the old Colla House Hotel. Bear right and continue onto the T-junction. Turn right and follow the road over the hill, bearing left and then turning right to rejoin the Colla Road at the old ruined church. Turn left for Schull village.

Of course there are many more walks, from easy to hard, Kinsale to Glengarriff, you'll find them all at explorewestcork.ie. And if you are in need of motivation think of the scones you can enjoy without guilt after!




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West Cork hikers help to stamp out poverty



A charity hike on west Cork's Sheep's Head peninsula has raised more than €11,000 for the work of an international aid agency.

Almost 200 walkers took part in Christian Aid's 15th annual Sheep's Head Hike, making it the biggest walking event on one of Ireland's best-loved coastal routes. The funds raised this year bring to more than €100,000 the total raised since the hike began in 2009.

The walk began from Kilcrohane Community Hall on Saturday, September 2. There were two routes to choose from to cater for all fitness levels, a 10.5 km route for experienced walkers and a 6.5 km walk suitable for families.

Christian Aid's Bandon-based Church and Community Officer, Andrew Coleman helps to organise the event. He said: "The walkers might have come down from the hills but here at Christian Aid Ireland, we're all still on a high! The weather was glorious for the hike, the views were amazing and we've already broken our record for the amount raised, even as donations continue to come in."

Andrew thanked everyone who helped to make the event such a success, in particular the organisers Margaret Skuce, David Hayward and Caroline Coleman, as well as the guides, leaders, bus drivers and caterers.

Andrew added: "Special mention goes to Kilcrohane

Community Hall Committee, The Sheep's Head Way Committee, The Red Cross, Local Link Transport, Ulla Zepperit and her team who provided the catering, and the parishioners of Kilmocomogue Union of Church of Ireland parishes who assisted on the day. We're also grateful to Ecclesiastical Insurance who sponsored the advertisements and publicity for the event."

Andrew urged everyone to get next year's date in their diary:

"If you would like to join next year's Sheep's Head Hike, it takes place on Saturday, September 7, so why not put the date in your diary and join us to help stamp out poverty."

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness



Clonakilty Park Hotel announced one of the 'Top 12 Best Family Hotels in Ireland'

Exciting time for the Clonakilty Park Hotel, as it recently featured in the Irish Independent's 'Hot 100 Hotels' list and also achieved a podium finish in the listing of the 'Top 12 Best Family Hotels in Ireland'. Compiled by travel editor, Pól Ó Conghaile, the feature commended the hotel for "evolving continuously" and recommended that holidaymakers choose the stunning, newly renovated large superior family bedrooms as a special treat.

Commenting on the publi-

cation, General Manager of the hotel, Mr. David Henry said he was "thrilled to feature in both lists. The team here work exceptionally hard and 2023 has been a very busy year, particularly with the completion of the second phase of the remodelling of the large family rooms and the third phase beginning in December. Our core ethos is family and we are so thankful to our very loyal customer base who return to stay with us, year after year."

The hotel has developed and

provided a comfortable, safe environment for adults and children, packed with unique kids facilities like the onsite cinema and the aerial trekking course and also boasts an Indoor Playzone, Teen Zone, Outdoor Playground and three screen Cinema.

Dunmore House, Fernhill House and Inchydoney Lodge and Spa also featured in the Hot 100 list, strengthening Clonakilty's position as a top holiday destination.

Exercising out the winter blues



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.

Winter can be dark, cold and most often miserable with little to no sun and dropping temperatures, which can lead to less energy, depression and even muscle ache due to lack of Vitamin D. The immune system feels easily compromised and fatigue (both mentally and physically) can, for some, feel like a permanent state, rather than a blue Monday occurrence. The following are some of my best winter-blues-combatting tips, and I hope they can help you to keep your mind and body in shape through this coming season.

One of the first things to consider and probably the easiest to remedy is lack of D-vitamin. Whether you are outside during the day or not, a daily vitamin D will be good for you. Some years ago, I woke up one morning and my legs hurt terribly. Like really, really hurt. And I was at a loss as to why. I hadn't

lifted or squatted anything heavy. It wasn't straight after a race or even a hard running session. It also didn't come after a session of kicking in Thaiboxing. I was pretty sure that it wasn't due to growing pains either, so I tried a bit of what used to always work for me in the aforementioned situations. I stretched. Foam-rolled. Stretched some more. Massaged. Tried Tiger balm and Voltaren Gel. And while everything did feel nice, the pain was still there. I came to the conclusion that it might be due to lack of glucosamine (for joints) or a mineral deficiency and went to the pharmacy. After explaining to the pharmacist that I was in pain and probably needed glucosamine, he stated simply "Vitamin-D". I remember going out of there and thinking "Vitamin-D huh?". After a couple of days, pain gone and I never looked back. Vitamin-D is now a staple in my house.

Another winter-time staple is lemon and fresh ginger. Whenever a cold starts to emerge, I'm peeling fresh ginger, julienne about a thumb size, adding freshly squeezed lemon juice and a teaspoon of local honey and filling my cup with freshly boiled water. And just like that the cold is on retreat. It never fails and it tastes really good.

Then there is of course this whole thing about being outdoors when the weather is, well...not grand. Go out anyway. Dress for it and get out. If you can, go for a walk on a beach. Feel the wind, marvel at the waves, let your body move and make your brain produce endorphins (one of the feel-good natural chemicals, which is a bi-product of physical activity).

Obviously for most people, going for a run, bike or walk in pouring, cold rain and/or icy wind, is not the first choice, when thinking of having a good time. However doing so anyway is very rewarding. Both mentally and physically. From the perspective of your body, you'll exercise both muscles, heart and lungs. And mentally you'll reap the 'feel good hormones' which is released by the exercise itself. Plus you will feel very dedicated and accomplished once you're back home.

If going outside is a complete NO-NO, a short (or longer) home session is what you need. If training at home is something you do on the regular or want to start doing, I suggest having a couple of different workouts to choose from.

For example, could you have one which focuses on joint flexibility and stretches. Think slow Yin Yoga and/or stretching sessions with very little cardio involved. And one opposite session full of cardio exercises: think Burpees, Jumping Jacks and jump squats. And finally you could have one that mixes both elements. This way you'll have something for the days you have lots of energy and stuff to 'burn off' and the days where you want to take it slow. Remember to add in strength exercises in both kinds: Push ups, core (abs and back), weighted squats.

I usually build up my sessions with eight to 14 exercises and then circle them two or more times, depending on how much time I want to spend. This way I don't get bored and tired of doing the same thing.

So, write your list of exercises, put on some good music (I can recommend making a work

out playlist), clear a spot on the floor, dress for training, bring your water bottle, a small towel for wiping the sweat off your face and dumbbells/kettlebells, big books or water bottles if you use any equipment for your session and just start.

If you are looking for inspiration for training at home

sessions, I have several on my Instagram account: '@train-withadane'. You can find them on my profile as text images.

Do your sessions two to three times a week or more to keep your body strong and healthy and give your mind a good dose of endorphins to help you combat the winter blues.

Questions and comments are, as usual, always welcome at taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com or via Instagram: @train-withadane

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Changing your diet to help manage pain syndromes



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic

Many of you will be aware of fibromyalgia, polymyalgia rheumatica or ME/CFS (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic fatigue Syndrome). These conditions present with diffuse, often severe pain and

fatigue and can be completely debilitating.

The diagnosis is often made after a significant period of time and is a diagnosis of exclusion, meaning that other causes have been ruled out.

As these conditions can be difficult to diagnose, they are often undiagnosed for many years.

For people with a pain syndrome, or who are having a pain sensation from a stimulus that should not be painful, it is hard to understand where the pain is coming from.

To help explain why it occurs, I am going to delve into the neurology of pain and the relationship between poor mitochondrial function and pain.

The first thing to understand is that pain is a brain based perception – this does not mean

that it is all in your head, as the pain for the person suffering is very real – but there is complex neurology involved in the perception of pain. Pain is easy to understand if there is a noxious stimuli – for example you get a thorn in your finger and when you remove the thorn the pain goes away. It is harder to understand when this noxious stimuli is not there.

The nervous system works by passing electrical signals along a pathway. For example if someone touches your hand, pressure sensors (special neurons) in your skin will reach a certain electrical threshold and a signal will be sent to your brain. At all times your neurons have a resting potential. If stimulated enough to reach threshold, the neuron will fire and then return to resting potential, which will

in turn activate the next neuron in the chain until the signal reaches your brain.

The neurons maintain this membrane potential by pumping ions (different charged particles) in and out of the neuron. In order for the neurons to pump these ions, they require energy from the mitochondria within the cells: The mitochondria get their energy from our diet so what we eat has a big part to play in how we experience pain.

How mitochondrial function influences pain syndromes: Imagine a situation where someone's mitochondrial function is not working efficiently – they can end up in a situation where their neurons cannot get back to the usual resting potential because there is not enough energy to run the pumps that achieve this and their

resting potential may be closer to the threshold. This means that even a very small stimulus will make that neuron fire and a pain signal will be sent. This phenomenon is not only related to pain but can be present in any condition where there is hypersensitivity to anything – touch, sound, light and so on.

Mitochondria are also needed for neurons to remain healthy and function well. One of the best ways to support this is with exercise, which can be challenging when a person is suffering with pain and fatigue.

The good news is that there are specific diets like the ketogenic diet that can help your mitochondria to function better. By shifting to a diet that is higher in fat and low in carbohydrate, we can start to supply the cells in our body with a less inflamma-

tory fuel called ketones.

Jumping straight into a ketogenic diet can be difficult, especially if you have been eating a diet that is very high in carbohydrates and sugar. One good way to see how this approach will help you is to start with a carbohydrate exclusion – this is a simple elimination diet and can be done without a huge change to a normal healthy diet. You can download a free copy of the two-week carb exclusion diet at www.roehealth.ie/download

Eoin Roe is a Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner and Chiropractor based in Skibbereen. Please feel free to contact him through www.roehealth.ie or on 028 62081.

October 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.

fabÜ Gut Culture

Following on from the success of their 2022 launch, fabÜ have expanded their range of supplements. Developed with the expertise of renowned Irish pharmacist Laura Dowling (also known as The Fabulous Pharmacist), the latest additions feature a meticulous blend of premium ingredients that seamlessly integrate the power of nature and the precision of science. fabÜGut Culture is a revolutionary gut supplement based on eight billion scientifically proven, multi-strain live cultures, designed to nourish your stomach, and rebalance your digestion. Carefully selected for their proven effectiveness, these live cultures have been blended with natural fibres, insulin, and the edible mushroom Chaga, to specifically target the enhancement of



your natural gut bacteria and optimise your gut health. Say goodbye to digestive discomfort and hello to a happier, healthier you, €29.99, available from fabuwellness.com and leading pharmacies nationwide.

NeoStrata Hyaluronic
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Experience the radiant transformation of your skin with the all-new NeoStrata Hyaluronic Luminous Lift. A lightweight luxurious gel cream that plumps and hydrates while leaving skin looking more luminous. NeoStrata, a name synonymous with dermatological excellence, has created a serum that not only revitalises the skin but also harnesses the regenerative power of multi-molecular weight hyaluronic acid, ensuring deep and lasting hydration, while luminosity is achieved with a powerful NeoGlucosamine and Lactic Acid Complex that works

to improve the look of dark spots and pigmentation, while gently exfoliating the skin, improving skin tone and texture. The net effect is skin that looks and feels great instantly, while providing longterm healthier younger looking skin, €78.95, available from neostrata.ie and selected pharmacies nationwide.

Dr. Hauschka Bergamot
Lemongrass Body Milk

With a new fragrance featuring bergamot – the Green Gold of Calabria, this light lotion with aromatic citrus notes whisks you away on a sensory journey to southern Italy: In addition to the essential oils used for composing the fragrance, the new body milk contains a myriad of other oils and essences, which work in harmony with each other to deliver their nourishing effect. Dr. Hauschka draws on the healing power of nature and every medicinal plant has

specific properties that enrich the overall composition. Lemongrass delivers its toning effect thanks to the light texture of the fast-absorbing new body milk while the blend of blackthorn, quince and field horsetail strengthens and maintains the natural balance of the skin. The lightweight, fast-absorbing formula ensures that your skin is enveloped in a veil of hydration without any greasy residue, leaving your skin feeling soft, supple, and refreshed, €27.95 available from drh.ie and Dr Hauschka stockists nationwide.

Storyderm Resens Red
Cream

Storyderm is a Korean cosmetic skincare line that has taken the aesthetic world by storm. They have launched a line designed for red, sensitive skin and skin prone to telangiectasias (spider veins). It's also really suitable to use on reddened

skin after injectable treatments and peels. This comforting cream melts into the skin to quickly restore and soothe sensitive, irritated skin, formulated using Storyderm's proprietary soothing complex ingredients, it helps to improve the appearance of spider veins by strengthening blood vessel walls, improving capillary dilation and promoting blood circulation. Leaves of the rosa damascene flower contain antioxidants with antimicrobial, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties which can help soothe skin conditions such as eczema and rosacea, reduce pores and minimise fine lines. Jojoba oil works to nourish skin, restore suppleness and provide antioxidant protection, €59, available from storyderm.ie and Storyderm stockists nationwide.

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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Taking control of your own wellbeing through mindfulness

Diagnosed with Crohn's disease at the age of 23, Rachel O'Boyle, from Cork, emigrated to New Zealand five years later, a move she says that completely changed her perspective, lifestyle and priorities. After a 17-year career in accounts, Rachel has since retrained as a life, health and mindfulness coach, and has been working in this area for the past four years, splitting her time between Kinsale, Victoria Cross, Cork and Queenstown, New Zealand.

As someone who has always suffered from anxiety and with stress being her biggest symptom trigger for Crohn's, Rachel turned to mindfulness in desperation.

"I felt overwhelmed, unsafe and stuck all of the time," she explains.

"In 2017, my GP at the time was also a mindfulness practitioner and she suggested downloading the Headspace app and trying it. Slowly I became aware of my mind and body and how I could break patterns of thinking and feeling to create more calm and a feeling of safety. It was an important skill to learn before I could explore any other lifestyle changes."

She now volunteers with Crohn's and Colitis New Zealand, running the regional support group, free stress management workshops, fundraising, awareness raising and petitioning for more medication options.



While studying as a health coach, Rachel learned a lot about managing inflammation through food, movement, sleep and connection.

"I tried manual therapies like osteopathy to help release the physical stress in my body and calm my nervous system. I also worked with my own mindfulness coach to address and change unhelpful thinking patterns, deal with difficult emotions and unhelpful habits and behaviours."

After years of trying drug trials to calm her symptoms, symptoms, Rachel has now learned how to calm them predominantly herself.

"I'm still navigating changes to reduce a low level of inflammation but I credit my mindfulness practice in helping me navigate those changes with

a lot more awareness, ease and intention," she shares.

"It's given me an immense sense of freedom, control and a sense of myself back."

Today Rachel, who is mainly based in New Zealand but hopes to be spending more time in Cork going forward, works with clients one-to-one in person and online.

"People generally come to me when they are feeling burnt out, overwhelmed, looking to make changes in their life but unsure of where to start, or to understand their chronic inflammation and illness," she says.

She also hosts group workshops and courses in person and online to educate people on what stress really is and how to manage it with mindfulness, working with corporate clients to educate their teams on stress management and overwhelm prevention.

Her ultimate goal is to help as many people as she can take control of their own wellbeing whilst maintaining balance in her own.

New Zealand now funds health coach roles in primary care as they see the value in educating and supporting patients alongside their GP visits. This is something that Rachel would love to see happening in the Irish public system someday.

"I love seeing clients get relief from suffering. I can visibly see the weight lift off their shoulders, their bodies relax and their whole face

looks lighter once they learn something new. Just one conversation can make all the difference."

One client said how "I came into this completely ignorant of what coaching was so it took me by surprise and if anything it made me wish I had done it earlier in my life."

And another: "This experience really helped me better

understand who I am and what I want in life. It helped me clarify my core values and made it easier to set goals and make decisions. This has been highly beneficial for me."

Rachel is running a one-day workshop at the beautiful Inchydoney Lodge & Spa in Clonakilty on October 22. It's suitable for anyone who wants a better understanding of the

physical, mental and emotional effects of stress and how mindfulness can help you manage it.

She will also be launching an online self-paced course on mindfulness and burnout soon. There is a waiting list on her website for anyone who wants to join and stay updated.

www.racheloboye.com

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Rachel O'Boyle
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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



The Clonakilty Fairtrade Committee at the entrance to the town after washing down the FT sign and trimming back vegetation in advance of the groups 20th birthday community celebrations of Clonakilty being declared Ireland's first Fairtrade town. From left: Allison Roberts, (Treasurer); Trevor Kingston, (Chairperson); Cindy Kingston, (Secretary) and Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin, (PRO).

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Social Prescribing empowers people to improve their own wellbeing

Social Prescribing is a free and confidential service that aims to address health and wellbeing needs through engagement in meaningful social activities, community participation and support for social issues. The programme, which is funded by the HSE and is available to anyone over the age of 18 years, also endeavours to support people with issues such as social isolation, anxiety, loneliness, and inactivity, which negatively affect health and wellbeing.

Initially part of an innovative pilot project across Cork and Kerry, in a partnership between Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (CKCH) Health and Wellbeing (H&WB) and National Family Resource Centres (NFRC), the programme was mainstreamed in 2022 and now runs in West Cork from the Caha Family Resource Centre in Adrigole and the Dunmanway Resource Centre, covering a wide area between them that includes Bantry, Beara, Sheep's Head and Mizen Peninsulas and Dunmanway, Drimoleague, Clonakilty, Rosscarberry, Enniskeen and Ballineen. Skibberreen area is shared between the centres.

While social isolation and anxiety can particularly impact older age groups, these issues can also affect those that endure chronic health problems, people with mental health difficulties and psychosocial needs, the bereaved, carers, single parents, migrants and immigrants and people from ethnic minorities or disadvantaged backgrounds. Social prescribing aspires to work holistically, using a resource-based approach to empower participants to improve their wellbeing.

Link workers with specialised training facilitates people to reflect on their wellbeing and situation in life and identify what they see as difficulties.



Wendy Bond

They work together, and the person is enabled to learn about and be supported to engage with local opportunities.

Jennifer Riney is the Social Prescribing Link Worker at the Caha Centre. She explains how "each individual is different and so the support that I give to each



Jennifer Riney

individual is different. I work with some people for just a few sessions, signposting them to groups or activities and I work for longer periods of time with others who might need more support accessing activities."

Wendy Bond has been the Social Prescribing Link Worker

at the Dunmanway Family Resource Centre for just over a year. She says that "people really appreciate the chance to have time to talk things through with someone and then find their own way forward."

Using a strengths-based approach, Jenny and Wendy work with the social prescriber to design personalised solutions that fit their needs, abilities and situation.

People who have participated in social prescribing have reported many benefits including increased confidence and self-esteem, meeting new people, feeling more connected to their community, learning new skills, receiving social support from others and improved mood and physical wellbeing.

On a broader level, some of the other benefits of social prescribing are better use of voluntary or community organisations, improved access to non-medical social activities and supports, reduced demands on GP services, reduced demand on urgent care and secondary care services and improved patient experiences.

People can be linked to many activities including walking

groups, volunteering, community gardens, adult education classes, fitness classes, men's sheds, self-help groups, low cost counselling, women's groups, coffee mornings, book clubs, crafting groups, to name just a few.

From Jenny's experience with the programme, she shares how social prescribing can have a transformative effect on people's lives and also the communities in which they live.

"This service is designed to be responsive to the local needs of people and to use local resources, as opposed to an enforced one-size-fits-all approach. By increasing the number of people that are using local community and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations it is also breathing new life into this sector."

People can be referred to social prescribing by their healthcare professional (GP, Public Health Nurse, and so on) or they can self-refer.

For more information please call Jennifer (Caha Centre) on 083-1491543 or Wendy (Dunmanway FRC) on 083 204 0729.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Leaving your job – giving notice and getting references

If you decide to change your job, you must by law tell your employer that you plan to leave. This is called 'giving notice'.

You must give your employer a certain length of notice (for example, two weeks or a month). The length of notice you must give is set down in law and is usually stated in your contract of employment.

How much notice should I give? Generally, your contract of employment states how much notice you must give. Your employer must give you a written copy of these rules, even if the rest of the contract has not been written down in full. You should check what your contract says about giving notice and follow those rules. If you want to make a different arrangement, discuss this with your employer.

If my contract does not specify the notice period what should I do? 'Statutory minimum notice' is the shortest period of notice you are allowed to give under Irish law. If your contract of employment does not specify how much notice to give, you must give the legal minimum

amount of notice, which is one week.

The legal (or 'statutory') minimum notice is set out in Section 6 of the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973.

You do not have to give notice if you have been working for your employer for less than 13 weeks, and you have no contract of employment specifying a notice period.

If I leave my employment what happens if I have outstanding annual leave? If you stop work without taking all the annual leave you are entitled to, your employer must pay you for the days you have not taken. Some employers may offer leave instead (or 'in lieu') of notice. However, this sort of arrangement is not covered by legislation, so you would have to agree this with your employer.

Can I change my mind? Once you have given notice, the only way to withdraw it is by agreement with your employer.

How much notice should I get from my employer? You may be entitled to notice if you are being let go from your job. This means that you are given

notice that your job will end, and a date when this will come into effect. The length of notice you are entitled to, will depend on your contract of employment. There is also a minimum entitlement set out in the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973–2005.

To be entitled to the legal (or 'statutory') minimum, you must have been working for your employer continuously for at least 13 weeks. The amount of notice you are entitled to by law depends on how long you have been working for your employer.

*13 weeks to 2 years – 1 week
2 years to 5 years – 2 weeks
5 years to 10 years – 4 weeks
10 years to 15 years – 6 weeks
15 years or more – 8 weeks*

For example, if you have worked for your employer for five years and three months you get four weeks' notice.

While the notice entitlements under your contract of employment can be more than the minimum periods above, your contract cannot have a notice period less than the above. This means that whatever your contract says, your employer must

give you at least the statutory minimum period of notice. You cannot get less, even if your contract says this.

Can my employer end my employment without giving notice? Your employer does not have to give you notice if any of the following apply:

- You have been working for them for less than 13 weeks
- You are guilty of gross misconduct
- You agree to 'waive your right to notice'

Waiving your right to notice means that you and your employer agree that you can leave your job without working to the end of your notice period. The employer may offer you payment instead of notice for that period.

Does my employer have to give me a reference? There is no statutory entitlement to a reference from your current or previous employer. Few contracts of employment include the right to have a reference when you leave.

However, employers usually provide references when asked to do so. If they do this for some employees, they should

do it for all employees, without discrimination.

What can I do if my employer gave me an unfair or inaccurate reference? Your current employer has a duty of care to you and your new employer. If they give you a reference, it must be true, fair, accurate and not misleading.

If your employer gives a reference which you think is unfair or inaccurate, you may be able to sue them for negligence. You would have to show that the reference caused you loss – for example, if it caused your new employer to withdraw your job offer.

If you think the reference is 'defamatory' (you believe your reputation has been injured as a result of the reference), you may sue the employer under the Defamation Act 2009.

If your current employer gives a misleading reference which later causes a problem in your new workplace, then your new employer may sue them for negligence. For example, if your referee praises you for skills you don't have and as a result you are taken on for a job you cannot do.

Can I read my reference?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, you are entitled to have access to information held about you including your personnel records. Personnel records include written and (if recorded) oral references.

In many cases, you can view personal data in which someone has stated an opinion about you, such as a reference. However, you may not have access to the reference if the opinion was given in confidence, or on the clear and explicit understanding that it would be treated as confidential.

If you need further information about this topic or you have other questions, you can drop-in to the local Citizens Information Service in Bantry or telephone 0818 07 8390. They will be happy to assist you

WEST CORK HELPLINE
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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

FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

A style guide to jazz you up in October



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer

Image Consultant

louise.anewu@gmail.com
Instagram: Louiseodwyer7

My flip-flops are given the utmost priority, not too sure for how much longer but hey, we have had a long successful relationship over the last few months. Yes, we are heading into the darker, cooler months, but there is such comfort in big thick fleece socks, lighting lots of candles in the evening, shopping for boots, wearing the biggest fluffiest Muppet faux fur coats and snuggling under fleece blankets on the sofa. It's all about perspective, isn't it? I read a study recently where huge American deciduous trees (aged 30 years or more) were injected with massive doses of adrenaline so that they wouldn't lose their leaves. For their first winter, none of them lost their leaves but the following spring, every single one of those trees died. How desperately sad! I think we are a lot like trees, we need a bit of hibernation time during the Winter season, we need downtime and we definitely

ly need more sleep.

Of course that doesn't mean that we should hide out, we still need sparkle, lots of it, especially during the darker months and shorter days, which is why my daughter and I headed off 'Jazz Weekend Shopping' yesterday. Cork Jazz weekend means that glitzy, sparkling outfits are not just for one wear at Christmas and that is an absolutely fantastic thing. This is most definitely the best weekend of the year, if you are looking for my humble opinion: It doesn't matter what age you are, you can party all day, party all night, or a little of both (hands up, I always say that we will come home early after a day of jazz but we rarely do!). How could I possibly drag myself away from what is every 'style watcher's' dream weekend. So a new faux fur Muppet coat just had to be bought, I can't wait to wear it. To be truthful, I danced around my kitchen wearing it last night and was very slow to take it off. It screams fun. I can only imagine that some of the younger ones will find themselves sleeping in their Muppet coats on that 'can't wait for Bank Holiday weekend'. Next on the list was gorgeous long boots with a heel, but a heel that will allow you to walk all day and dance all night. This year, boots that tick these boxes are so much easier to find, comfort is everything, but designers have made sure that the balance of comfort and chic style is exactly right, even down to the 'high-street' shops. Checking out quality, I really feel that we are getting better quality at a lower price now when it comes to footwear... So if you haven't bought any new boots yet, shame on you!

Next on the list, some 'glitzy tops' and we found plenty to

choose from. I must admit that there is a fine line between tacky and elegant when it comes to sparkly clothes. The key is not to overdo it. You can wear a black sequin cigarette trouser suit but that means that you go very easy on accessories – actually you don't need any jewellery at all and a red lip will suffice, too much eye shadow could lead you down the slippery slope to fitting in as a guest at 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding'. I'm in love with a pair of Aidan leather trousers from Stouls in Samui, they drip elegance. Outrageous and colourful coats look so much more stylish when worn over a solid colour, no patterns please, keep it very tame. Black is and always will be the go to for most women, that allows you to 'funk up' your hair, wear the most colourful boots or shoes, carry a rainbow-coloured fur bag and really push it out there with jewellery. Go through your wardrobe and root out whatever you have that sparkles in the light and wear it. Text your friends and make a plan to meet for Jazz.

Do I really need to explain what the Jazz weekend does for women? If you are reading this and you have never strolled around and popped into a few random places to hear some Jazz during the day on the Saturday or Sunday, then you are missing so much, I don't care what age you are or what the weather is like! And it doesn't matter whether you like jazz music or not, the atmosphere is electric. I couldn't care less whether I have a drink or five drinks, watching the style brings me right back to living in Manhattan, New York, where I could happily sit in a coffee shop on Fifth avenue for hours at a time,

style-watching. It was glorious and the closest I've ever seen is the style at Cork Jazz Weekend. Don't allow the crowds to deter you, there is room for everyone and start googling tickets right now for the more sought-after gigs.

Life is all about experiences and making memories, just ask any 80-year-old. If I am lucky enough to live until I am 80, I know that I will still be grateful to my wonderful dear friend who constantly reminds me of her grandmother's words... 'I'll worry about what someone else thinks of me when they pay my bills'. I have taken those words of advice on completely and absolutely. I follow my dreams everyday, I wear whatever I want, I used to just hug the people closest to me but in recent times I have started hugging everyone. Life has shown me that you just never really know what is going on with someone else and a hug can change

everything. Learn to laugh at yourself all the time – I do. Some of you probably think that I am outrageous or ridiculous, that's great. I believe that we are put on this earth to experience the full spectrum of human emotion, to live fully, not to hide out behind thoughts of what others think about us or responding with 'I'm good' when you are dying inside. The difference between being alive and being dead is feeling. How many times have you 'not' done something because you simply couldn't be bothered or cared too deeply about what others think of you and, as a result what have you deprived yourself of? You can overthink yourself to a complete stop in life or you can get up every day and say to yourself 'What in God's name have you in store for me today?' I do. While some days it will be like a dark comedy of

errors, other days there will be indescribable joy and love.

Don't limit yourself, it is a construct of the mind. We are limitless, I guarantee you that. I have been privy to research that proves exactly that so go out and have fun, invite friends around for dinner or drinks or a movie, connect with new people and play whatever sports you want, wherever you want,

hug everyone, be very real and take the time to notice when someone isn't doing too well, sing even if you haven't a note in your head, rescue a dog (Seven – a saluki/whippet cross has joined our crew and she brings an abundance of joy), buy some 'make-you-blush' underwear and I'll see you in Cork for some Jazz...you probably won't be able to miss me!

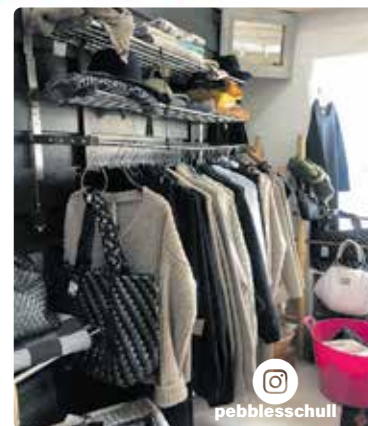
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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Lilly O'Reilly (left) and Alleza Ivanhaenko at the official opening of the Clonakilty Youth Centre. Photo: Martin Walsh.

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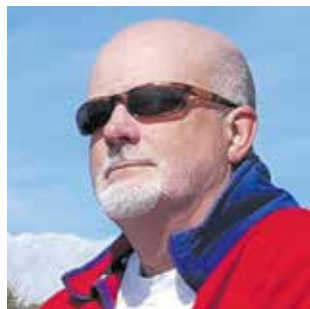


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FOOD, HEALTH & LIFESTYLE : Focus on winter wellness

Distant family...almost



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

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

Recently, I read that perhaps twenty percent of Americans have DNA tested for a variety of

reasons. That is a lot of genetic data for genealogists. This will be of considerable value for the Irish diaspora in the US trying to tie their ancestry back to the Emerald Isle who only have 'Ireland' to go on. Also, for those who are or descend from Irish babies who were adopted out to Americans by the Catholic church, who have no known history and find themselves DNA matching many Irish families.

It is useful for those families still in the homeland looking to reconnect with family long since emigrated. With large families being common, it was not unusual for older children to have emigrated before some of their youngest siblings were born and as a consequence were never known to each other. Literacy at the time was not high, so letters were never written, and other forms of

communication plus the cost of passage were never available.

Particularly in Ireland, the lack of Catholic church records prior to the early part of the C19th means that as you research some of your closest matches you will start to pick up several lines that clearly belong to the same family heading back in the general direction of your ancestral locations. The family names may not mean anything to you, especially if the connection is just over the data horizon in the late C18th. You can see that they are distant family – almost! I shall provide some additional West Cork examples in some future articles relating to my wife's DNA matches as they may also help you in researching yours. The KINGSTON line and its tantalising connection to the O'NEILLS discussed last month was one example of almost connecting on paper.

Another such family comes from Bere island. DNA has already suggested the LOWNEYS of Filane, to the east of Castletownbere, were connected to the LOWNEY families on the island. It seems to be the case with the Filane SULLIVANS and SHEEHANS. There are now five DNA vectors from matches tracking

back to Nora SULLIVAN (1835-1929).

For this to be the case we have to assume that Nora was the daughter of JOHN SULLIVAN and Mary SHEEHAN of Filane (Ardnascaigh) and is the one who married Patrick HOULIHAN in 1856. The family settled at Derrycreeveen on the island. Around this time the HOULIHANS were also being recorded with the surname of HOLLAND, which most took with them when they left Ireland. Of the couples seven known children, three have provided DNA vectors.

Honora aka Anna HOULIHAN/HOLLAND (c1859-1943) married John SULLIVAN Keagh in 1878 and the family settled at Gortamora, Ballinakilla, Bere island. Nine children are known, two of which provide DNA vectors to their descendants.

Patrick HOULIHAN/HOLLAND (1866) emigrated to Butte, Montana. His daughter Mary appears to provide a DNA vector; however, it depends on whose tree you consider the most accurate for the many Irish of the same name in that mining town. So many Irish settled there that there can be major difficulties making the right connections.

Danial HOULIHAN/HOLLAND (1871-1915) married Mary CONROY in 1899 and the couple remained in Derrycreeveen. Two of their children provide DNA vectors. Jerry (1903-1982) and Christy (1907-1984) both settled in Belmont, Massachusetts.

Jack SULLIVAN Shearhig and Catherine SHEEHAN of Filane also provide several lines that almost connect on paper to the previous families. DNA vectors have been found down the lines of two of their children, Catherine (1834-1935) and Stephen (1847).

Catherine married HARRINGTON and moved to Jamaica, New York. Their children Mary Ann (1899, who married BOYLE), Patrick (1904) and Christopher (1919) all provide a DNA vector. Two vectors are provided by children of Catherine (1914, who married BAGGOTT).

Stephen SULLIVAN Shearhig is another who emigrated to Butte, Montana and provides one matching DNA vector.

What other ancient stories can your DNA imply?

Although my wife's DNA is defined as 98 per cent 'Munster', there is two per cent defined as 'Welsh'. That Welsh input occurred on Beara as it is

her maternal side. There are no families of Welsh origins in the historical record to support her connection. Speculation, based purely on common industries, might imply a Welsh copper miner who may have come to work in Beara prior to the 1800s. Copper was being mined as early as the Bronze Age in North Wales and evidence indicates seafaring and trade were more extensive across Europe in those times.

Another pattern recently discovered is a shared segment of hers on chromosome eight, present in lots of Greenlanders. Trees record their ancestry back prior to 1800s with no Irish input. The segment coincides with the DONOVANS on her paternal side, and her Beara families (LOWNEY/SULLIVAN/SHEEHAN) on her maternal side. Further work is required to identify which side. This also suggests a very ancient segment and connection between the two lands.

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



Get in touch for free and confidential career support in the Clonakilty area.
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How to deal with a fearful dog



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.

Fear can manifest in any animal, including ourselves, when something untoward happens that causes a negative reaction resulting in an elevated heart rate, an overwhelming desire to run from a

'perceived danger' or to go on the defensive.

If we humans have a grounded person with us to help us acknowledge that fear and cope with it, we can generally overcome it without it becoming a complete phobia that inhibits our lives.

We need to be that grounded person when it comes to our own dogs. All dogs experience fearful uncertainty at some period in their lives. That's a given. Like us, it's part of the growing up process.

But, in some instances, fear is innate, inherited from fearful parents. Or it could be that a rescue dog has been abused or badly handled by a human. When it's either of those two, then it's very necessary to have a very calm approach to avoid the dog continuing in a fearful state that accelerates into defensive aggression.

Patience, kindness, understanding, consistency and most of all a gentle firmness are what's needed. That sounds like a contradiction in terms, but

bear with me.

When we own a rescue dog, we tend to dwell on their past and allow ourselves and the dog to wallow in it. Yes, by all means, acknowledge that dreadful past or the inherent fearfulness. That's very important. But, then, draw a line on that previous existence. If you keep dwelling on that sad past, you keep it in the present and you and the dog cannot move forward.

Consider this: you have single-handedly rescued this dog from an abusive past and can lead it into a normal, happy life. That makes you a hero! A hero leads his troop to a bright future.

To do that, you must first be positive while gaining your dog's trust. You want your dog to let you deal with all problems, fears in its life. You gently but firmly teach him how to behave in your home, outside, and with other people and dogs. You verbally praise any improvements, reinforcing with a food reward.

An important principle that resonated with me when I learnt Touch therapy was to "MEET ANY DOG WHERE IT'S AT" meaning that I learnt to accept that a dog can be fearful, aggressive, happy, etc., in any given situation.

Firstly, you try to find out why a dog is fearful. If he's afraid of people, other dogs, then the last thing he wants is to be forced into meeting and greeting them. So many people feel they must introduce their dog to numerous people and dogs imagining he will learn to get used to them.

The only thing he learns is that he cannot trust you, his owner, because you keep placing him in fearful situations and you ignore him as he signals his distress. Therefore, he must

fend for himself and generally his fear deepens, more often turning into fear-aggression.

Instead, acknowledge his fear by allowing him plenty of space to watch, use his brain, and assess from a distance. Don't be tempted to move up close and personal. Don't reassure him. Just stand quietly so that he can take his cue from you and relax. If he can sit or stand quietly, then you can move him forward one stride. Praise him and even give him a treat.

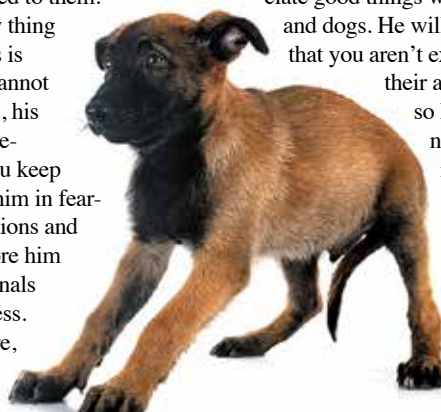
By adopting these tactics, your dog should begin to associate good things with people and dogs. He will also see that you aren't excited over their appearance so he doesn't need to worry either.

Take time to teach him that people and dogs are not an object of

fear. If he's happy just looking at them from a distance as well as able to accept and eat a treat in a normal manner, then move away, especially if the gap is closing with their approach. Remove your dog from any situation before he has a chance to react. Walking away when he's relaxed and happy with you means you can go a bit closer the next time you see people or dogs. If you wait for him to hit his reaction threshold, you will undo in a matter of seconds all the previous good training. The only thing your dog will remember if he reacts is that he's still fearful and under threat. Thus, you've achieved nothing.

As he learns to trust you more in any given situation, the chances of him over-reacting reduces. However, remember that there will always be some set of circumstances that will make him revert to being defensive. Watch him to see if he's getting stressed so that you can remove him before things escalate.

Lead by example so you can both enjoy walks together.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

An A to Z of quirky facts and stories about Cork County published

A new book 'The A to Z of Curious County Cork' exploring the historical curiosities within Cork county's sweeping river valleys, epic mountainous locations and sprawling coastline has just been published.

County Cork is the largest county in Ireland with a heritage that has been written about, celebrated and commemorated over many centuries.

Within the book author Kieran McCarthy looks at the many sites and stories to encounter, which sweep the reader off to ancient underground worlds to myth-making landscapes and ghostly tales. From apparitions to zoomorphic images, the county possesses a myriad of tales to stop the explorer in their tracks, which all add to County Cork's strong sense of place.

The A-Z of Curious County Cork by Kieran McCarthy: A sneak peak....

Censor

In 1941, the writer Eric Cross, fascinated by the vistas of Gougane Barra and the lives of its people, penned a series of articles in The Bell about two larger than life residents of Gougane, the Tailor, Tim Buckley, and his wife Ansty (Anastasia). Eric Cross was born in Newry, County Down, in 1905 and was educated as a chemical engineer. With no direct relationship with Tim Buckley and Ansty, he encountered the couple on a holiday to West Cork in the late 1930s or early 1940s. His interest in human nature brought him back to Gougane on several occasions and to interview the Tailor at length about his life.

The book – The Tailor and Ansty – was a result of Cross listening many nights to the Tailor's stories. It was published in 1942, and a hail of condemnation descended on Cross. The book was debated for four days in Seanad Éireann in 1943 after Sir John Keane tabled a motion condemning the censorship board for banning it. When Sir John Keane insisted on quoting from the book, one senator ordered the quotations to be stricken from the record in case 'pornographers might get their hands on them and peddle them in the marketplace'.

In a letter to the editor of the Irish Press, published on 15 October 1942 (p.3), Eric Cross defended the book: I wrote the book, The Tailor and Ansty, about a man who has been my friend for many years. The manuscript, before publication, was read by many other friends of the Tailor. When published it was received with gratitude by them and was reviewed enthusiastically by every Irish paper without any exception or objection. Last week the book was placed on the list of banned books by the Board of Censorship. Having stood the test of test of acceptance by the many of who are friends of the Tailor and the Press of Ireland. I must protest against the inference created by this ban. In his introduction to the reprint of the book in 1964, Cork short story writer Frank O'Connor noted: 'Tis a funny state of affairs when you think of it. It is the Tailor himself speaking. The book is nothing but the fun and the talk and the laughter, which has gone on for years around the fireside.' The Tailor and Ansty was the first book, eventually, to be 'unbanned' in Ireland.

Children

Near the scenic village of Allihies in the Beara Peninsula is the curious and small white boulder site that according to folklore is where the children of Lir are buried. The story of the children is a famous legend in Ireland. Indeed, there are many areas in Ireland that allege to be the landing spot of the swans after their 900-year journey on the seas and lakes of Ireland. A sign posted by Beara Tourism relates the myth of a jealous stepmother and her banishment of her stepchildren to roam as swans for 900 years: The children were the sons and daughters of Lir, a member of the Tuatha de Danaan clan, who married Eve daughter of King Bov the Red, King of the Tuatha de Danaan. Eve and Lir were blissfully married and had a set of twins – Aed and Finola, and after a short period there followed another set of twins, 2 boys, Conn and Fiara. Unfortunately, Eve died soon after and Lir, not wanting his children growing up without the love of a mother, married Eva, King Bov's second daughter. This was a happy marriage

until Eva became jealous of Lir's devotion of his children. Overcome with hatred she brought the children to Lough Darravagh near their home and transformed them into swans. Realising what she had done and overcome with remorse, she attempted to release the spell but could only ease their distress by enabling them to speak and sing and to remain as swans for 900 years until Christianity was introduced into Ireland. The swans spent the first 300 years on Lough Darravagh close to their home. The next 300 years was spent on the Sea of Moyle, a cold and desolate area between Scotland and the north of Ireland. The last 300 years they endured on the Atlantic Sea. When their time was over the swans, attracted by the ringing of a bell rung by a monk living in Allihies village in the Beara Peninsula, came ashore and immediately were changed back into their human form. The children were by now old men and women (and) were baptised by the monk. A short time later they died and were buried under these large white boulders. Pilgrimage rounds are still made by the local people circling the boulders. Money is still placed on and under the boulders as an offering to the children.

Commune

Off the beaten track near Leap in West Cork is the townland of Clounkeen, where there is an elaborate memorial plaque to William Thompson (1775–1833) and to his ideas of a commune for the local area. Thompson was a pioneer of Socialism, women's rights, workers' rights and tenants' rights when these concepts were very novel indeed. At the unveiling of the memorial in September 2001, Michael Tobin of Rosscarbery Historical Society gave a detailed account of his life and times. Born in Cork City, it seems that William Thompson was self-educated. He was well read in both French and English. He studied the texts of the socialist philosophers in Europe. He tried to apply the teachings of the French and other continental socialists and philosophers to relieve the extreme poverty of the people here, who were exploited by unjust and corrupt landlords. William was 39 years old when he inherited his Leap estate. He



was not an absentee landlord. Between 1824 and 1830 he wrote four major books in his specially constructed turret. His fourth and final book was about the co-operative movement, which was written in 1830. William had plans to begin a Co-operative Community in Carhoogarriff, and in his will he bequeathed his property to thirteen trustees to apply to co-operative purposes. According to local tradition, William had laid the foundation of his community centre in Carhoogarriff. He had prepared a draft constitution of his own community. It offered the complete freedom of thought and expression on all subjects without regard for the feelings of others. Religion was to be a private concern. Women were to be entitled to advance to all political offices and jobs. In 1833 William died before his ambitious plans could be completed.

In time his works were studied by Karl Marx during re-

search for Das Kapital. He was described by James Connolly as the 'first Irish socialist'. It was over sixty years after William's death, in 1894, that Horace Plunkett founded the farming co-operatives. These co-operatives were well managed, and

they kept this country going during the difficult years on the 1920s, '30s, '40s and '50s. A short distance from the Thompson memorial is the successful Drinagh Co-Op, which was founded in 1923.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

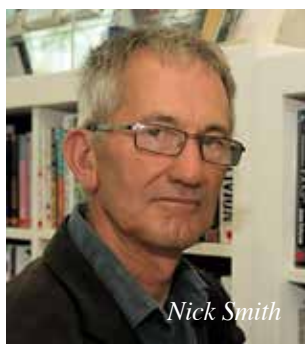
A celebration of Spoken Word

DeBarra's Spoken Word will celebrate its 10th Anniversary on October 11. It owes its existence shares Moze Jacobs to the writer Nick Smith from Rosscarbery, which is why he's sometimes called, tongue-in-cheek, 'The Godfather'. He's anything but. Mild-mannered, fair, methodical, a former furniture-maker, gardener, and social worker, he's quite self-effacing. If he has a big ego somewhere, it's gently tucked away. He doesn't need it. There is an inner logic and consistency to his actions.

"It's been an amazing journey to be honest. Kieran Doyle, head of the Tadhg an Astna Players theatre group in Clonakilty, invited us to a one-day 'reading festival' in June 2013. That's when I suddenly realised that writing prose or poetry can

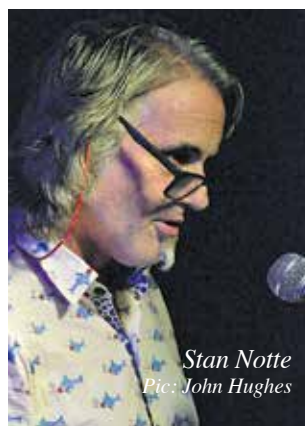
be a solitary activity. Reading your work to an audience gets you validation and support and it leads to the sharing of creative ideas. When that first event was over, we wanted to do it again. Ray Blackwell of DeBarra's Folk Club generously gave us access to the DeBarra's Folk Club to do a monthly event from October."

Nick says he has always "dabbled in writing"; even as a teenager. "I enjoyed playing with words. After moving to Ireland I used my spare time to pen a journal that evolved into short stories. Joining the writers' group in the Clonakilty library provided a great opportunity to mix with other people and hone my writing skills." It paid off. He twice won the 'From the Well' short story competition and is currently working on a



Nick Smith

memoir. "It's the process of coming to terms with being a surviving twin." He also confronted the challenges of public speaking at the local Toastmasters Club which he chaired for two years. And after being at the helm for many years, he's still part of DeBarra's Spoken Word's team together with Margaret O'Regan, Lauren O'Donovan, Catherine Ronan, Paul McMahon, Moze Jacobs.

Stan Nottle
Pic: John Hughes

Plus Stanley Nottle, who will MC the 10th Anniversary event. Stan is quite the Renaissance Man: graphic designer, printer, former Irish navy, theatre maker, video artist and above all, a writer and poet. He, too, was involved in Toastmasters. "It helped develop my confidence. Before that, the place where

I felt most comfortable was the football pitch where you could forget everything that was going on in your life. I'm just as comfortable now in an MC role. It started way back with me narrating nativity plays aged six, when I learned how to project my voice. Eventually, I was the one teaching public speaking. Research shows public speaking is many people's number one fear. Unlike in the US and Canada, where kids are encouraged to stand out, here we have this inner belief that people are going to laugh at us or that 'we're not very good at it'. Whereas the complete opposite is true. Almost everybody in the audience will be rooting for you to do well."

With his boisterous public personality as an MC, Stan brings rock star vibes into any

room. As a sensitive poet, he also maintains an intimate connection with music. The poems in his debut poetry collection, *Found*, are composed using song titles. He'll read some on the night, a few may be fed into ChatGPT by the indomitable Jack Kelleher, there will be bubbly, titbits for nibbling and you're highly encouraged to come in fancy dress and feel/be theatrical, especially at the Open Mic.

With thanks to the Cork Arts Office for its support in the past decade.

*DeBarra's Spoken Word at DeBarra's Folk Club, 55 Pearse Street, Clonakilty, October 11, 8:30pm, free
Part of the West Cork Feel Good Festival.*

West Cork Eurovision hopefuls donating all funds raised from 'What's Another Year' single to Parkinson's Association

Eurovision hopefuls Victoria Keating and Áine O'Gorman have just released their cover of Johnny Logan's 'What's Another Year' with all funds raised from sales going to the Parkinson's Association of Ireland.

Speaking on the single Victoria Keating says, "It's back to the glory days of songwriting,

and we have dedicated it to Shay Healy".

'What's Another Year' was produced, mixed, and mastered by Martin Leahy who also performs pedal-steel, synth, and drums on the single; with Áine O'Gorman performing on piano and strings."

Longtime friends, Victoria and Áine have previously

released three co-written songs, including 2020's 'The Poor Ground', written with Jamie Kelly in response to the Tuam Babies scandal; followed by singles 'Brigid' and 2023's 'Sweet Bird'.

The duo were blown away by support recently for their Kickstarter fundraising campaign that's helping them complete

recording of their upcoming album. Victoria's cancer diagnosis put an urgency to completing this project, which she says has been a lifeline during her treatment. Anyone interested in finding out more about this can find it on kickstarter.com.

Performed by Johnny Logan and composed by Shay Healy



'What's Another Year' won the Eurovision Song Contest in 1980. It was Johnny's first Eurovision win (out of three, as performer and later songwriter) and Ireland's second Eurovision win. The song went on to reach the Number one spot on the UK Singles Chart.

Victoria Keating has worked with Christy Moore extensively since 2011, providing harmony vocals on five albums. She has toured with both Christy and Declan Sinnott playing sold out shows such as Glastonbury and Vicar Street, Dublin. In 2017, Victoria was thrilled to be asked by composer Mark Wilkins to perform in 'The Madrugada', a song cycle based on the lyrics of Mick Lynch, former frontman of Cork punk band Stump. Victoria is building a loyal fanbase on her lockdown project 'Little Rooms, Big Music'. The weekly online show is live-streamed every Friday from her living room and reaches audiences of over 26,000 viewers. Victoria has steadily been releasing music since November 2020. Her single, 'I'm Not Really Here' was released on Oíche Nollaig na mBan. It's the third single to be taken from her debut album, 'Little Rooms'. A concept

album, each song is a different 'room' in Victoria's life; how she lives in or experiences that 'room' and how we all have different 'rooms' to visit, weave in and out of, or sometimes, ignore. Victoria is currently recording her debut album, *Little Rooms* in Wavefield Studio, Clonakilty which is due for release in September 2024.

Ballinadee singer-songwriter Áine O'Gorman writes songs from a deeply emotional perspective. With two musical parents, her mother a piano teacher, Áine had no choice but to pursue a life of music. A full-time musician, after spending years performing in bands, Áine began releasing her own music in 2019 with her debut single 'Lydia'. Since then, she has released more music including 2021's self-titled EP and her 2022 single 'These Empty Rooms'. 'These Empty Rooms' is a powerful tribute to Áine's late mother Margaret O'Gorman, who died tragically 20 years ago, and is a relatable song about grief and living with the empty spaces left behind. 'These Empty Rooms' has been included in this year's Grammy submissions.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Some of the Clonakilty local Gaeltóirí enjoying the sunshine at the September Pop Up Gaeltacht at Café on the Lane.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

‘Listen to the Land Speak’ as Clonakilty’s Samhain festival celebrates our heritage

Walking in the footsteps of celebrated street theatre group Craic na Coillte, who brought colour and creativity to Clonakilty in the eighties and nineties is no easy task but a small group of local artists who have created an annual festival around Samhain is doing an exceptional job of filling those shoes. Since its inception in 2017, this colourful event has been curated by Geata Arts, a small collective of 10 artists, give or take, who working out of a leaky old shed with minimal resources, collaborate closely with different community members and groups to bring Samhain on to the streets of Clonakilty in a spectacular fashion. This year, in the theme of ‘Listen to the Land Speak’, the title of Manchán Magan’s latest book, the festival is focused around the ancient myths that have shaped our national identity. Organisers Mark Dougherty and Ciara Heffernan share with **West Cork People** how over the years the festival has taken on a life of its own and why this celebration of our heritage is so important in the community.

Home to so many talented artists, there is a creative energy in Clonakilty that fosters this type of culturally unique event and expression through art. Relying on grants from Cork County Council, the Arts Council and the support of the general public, the town’s Samhain festival is an annual themed event that has grown to encompass free talks, show films and play concerts, culminating in the Púca Parade, which is open to everyone and encourages active participation, from the making of costumes to taking part in the street parade.

“For us, there is something so important about working with the community in a common goal like this,” share Mark and Ciara. “There are so many wonderful summer events in West Cork that bring joy, but as soon as winter sets in, people are kind of left to fend for themselves. Samhain is a celebration of that, of the darkness. It’s a celebration of the arrival of Winter. Our ancestors celebrated Winter as the first, rather than the last season of the year. The life-cycle began with the winter, the darkness from which all life emerged.”

They stress that the festival is exactly the opposite of Halloween, which is the embodiment of consumerism and capitalism. “This is Samhain, which



is quintessentially Irish and ancient concentrating on the cultural practices and arts that have vanished or are quickly vanishing in Ireland... We aim to create a waste-free event, in that all the costumes are made of natural materials, which are an expression of the land.

As tends to happen in West Cork, this festival of Samhain has developed organically,

taking on a life of its own with each year that passes. “There’s no question of it happening anymore, it just does!” says Mark. “I think people are aware that it is a community project in essence and that their involvement is key. If you don’t make the costumes and join the procession, who will? Saying that, there are some wonderful talks this year, some live podcasts,



incredible musicians and artists, it is going to be wonderful.”

Ciara and Mark and everyone who works so hard to keep Geata Arts and the Samhain festival going do it because they believe that the more communities can gather together for things like this, the longer our culture has a chance of surviving.

“We are seeing the world now through a glaring lens, alone in our rooms with pop-up ads... When the songs have stopped being sung, the ancestors are truly dead. When the stories have stopped being told, we all fall asleep. And when we wake up, what are we waking up to?”

The Púca Parade on Sunday November 5 is open to ‘your’ take on this year’s theme ‘Listen to the land Speak’. To join, simply email geataartsgroup@gmail.com with the name of your entry and number of participants in your group.

Geata Arts work out of a leaky shed and are constantly on a lookout for a better location, which would allow more people to get involved. If you can help with this or would like to make a donation to the festival email geataartsgroup@gmail.com.

All pics: Anna Groniecka

Monday 23rd
October to
Sunday 5th
November

Leap Scarecrow Festival

Get ready for an unforgettable Halloween season!
The 2023 Leap Scarecrow Festival program is packed with thrilling events for all ages.

Check Facebook: Leap Scarecrow festival

- New Scarecrow ‘Green’ competition category
- DAILY Halloween Camp for Kiddies (booking recommended)
- Facepainting, puppet shows & straw crafts at Leap Hall over the Bank Holiday Weekend
- Music at Leap Church of Ireland Friday 27th
- Parade & The Witches Dance on Sunday October 29th

& much much more!



Impressions of Kinsale

‘Off the Palette’ is an exhibition of work by Kinsale Atlantic Artists’ (KAA), on show in the beautiful brand-new Kinsale Library until October 14.

KAA has been running for over seven years, meeting regularly in Kinsale and working together in many different creative mediums. Members enjoy the support and friendship that comes with being part a group of like-minded people and KAA has become a well established part of the wider art community.

‘Off the Palette’ explores places and impressions of the Kinsale

area through paintings, sculptures, mixed media, creative stitching and digital collages; it’s interesting to see what Kinsale looks like through these artistic eyes!

The Library opening hours are 9.30am till 5.30pm, Tuesday to Saturday. Please note the Exhibition is on the ground floor.

For any further enquiries about the group contact 087 238 5262.

Pictured is ‘Charles Fort’ by Gill Good

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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f i t

The Craft Corner



This month **Natalie Webb** is showing us how to make Halloween bunting.

"Have fun making this bunting... let your imagination go wild!"

Materials:

- Lots of different colour card; I used orange, white, green, purple, red and black.
- Scissors
- Glue
- String
- Googly eyes (optional)
- Sticky tape
- Pencil

Method:

First decide what you want to create...this is totally up to you! As you can see I made a few different halloween characters but if you want you

can keep them all the same.

Cut out a triangle template 16cm x 20cm.

Draw around template to create your first shape.

Fold the top flat edge of the triangle over (approx 3cm), this is the back of the bunting.

Now this is where you have fun and use your imagination! Using different colour card cut out shapes for eyes, mouths, teeth... whatever you want! You can also use googly eyes or you can use pencil to draw in extra features; I used a pen to make the scars on Frankenstein's monster.

When you have made enough scary characters for



your bunting, turn them over and put the string under the folds, then tape the fold down to hold the string in place.

Hang wherever you want and I hope you all have a super spooky Halloween!!

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Connecting to the past on an eco-adventure

From a dawn pilgrimage and swim, which brings you along a pilgrim's path that's 300 years older than the Camino to a clifftop walk along Toe Head, immersed in wildlife and stories; to the local placenames and folklore tours, both rich in history and the Irish language, Gormú offers something for everyone interested in experiencing Irish culture in a unique way.

Reared and schooled in Castlehaven, Conor says his father Dan Buckley, with his penchant for local stories and genealogy, and his primary school headmaster Malachy O'Sullivan, a great nature lover, both ingrained a deep love of local history and the environment in him. "At a time when the word biodiversity hadn't been invented yet, in a small rural primary school, we knew the name of every plant that grew in the ditches because of Malachy," he shares. "He was a great teacher who knew all the local stories and passed them on. From him we learned about people like Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill, the 16th-century Irish chieftain and hero, who was a key figure in the Nine Years' War against English rule in Ireland. He departed from Castlehaven Strand to seek Spanish support.

"Over the years those stories stayed with me," says Conor, who for the past year, with the help of the Castlehaven and Myross History Society has been digitising an old hand-drawn map of local placenames that Malachy collated in the 1960s. To date they have almost 1000 local placenames between Castlehaven and Myross digitised. "It's incredible and a real labour of love," shares Conor "with field names, road names, crossroads names and so on."

As we settle into winter with the drawing in of the light, Conor has cut back the tours to two daily until the spring, with some other seasonal pop-up events planned, such as the upcoming 'A Scare at Samhain' taking place during the Leap Scarecrow Festival. The Samhain event has Séan na Gealaí as your guide on the walk up to Myross Wood House, where along the way you'll meet the bean sí (banshee) and chat with the púca (trickster), cailleach (hag) and ollphéist (sea serpent) all characters in Irish history, along the way.

"Séan na Gealaí is a character in Irish folklore who double-crosses the devil," shares



Conor. "As a result he's doomed to wander Ireland for the rest of his days and according to lore, when you do see him, it will be in the form of a light moving across your path! There were lots of these types of stories, pre-electricity, all across West Cork, with gases from bogs and other natural phenomena contributing to their spread."

All of Gormú's tours are sprinkled with folklore, history and of course words 'as gaeilge'. You'll learn how according to Irish folklore the humble heather earned its colour of royalty from God when it volunteered to cover the mountains; or the 'real' story of how the milky way came into being when the 'glas gaibhneach', Ireland's incredibly fertile cow travelled across the night sky with udders full of milk when making her way

back from grazing at Myross to Mullaghmesha, north of Castlehaven; or the story of Simon, who collected the rent from the townland of Bawnlahan (Bán Leathan) up to Cork City, meeting his demise through the Ó Donnabháin Trá's. It's a colourful and fascinating tale that involves murders and a woman stripping off nearly naked before running all the way from Cork City to Myross and, of course, is where the local landmark 'Simon's Point' originated.

Another interesting story, which is based on fact, tells the story of a Viking family by the name of Skiddy with connections to Castlehaven – there is an island in the harbour of Castlehaven called Skiddy Island. They settled in Cork Harbour and bred cats, which they killed for their pelts. "Most

As our society becomes more globalised and increased numbers of people look to connect with their Irish language, culture and heritage before it vanishes, small businesses such as eco-adventure company Gormú in West Cork are busy filling the niche. Gormú co-founder Conor Ó Buachalla tells Mary O'Brien how he was inspired during the pandemic to throw in the towel on his career as a sustainability consultant and set up a business that combined his passion for the outdoors with his great 'grá of local history, folklore and placenames. The Castlehaven native with the talent for spinning stories has just come to the end of his second summer season of four daily tours, with nothing less than an impressive five star review.

of the papers I had read on it could only speculate as to the reasons behind this enterprise," says Conor "until a Swedish professor came on one of my tours last summer and explained that in Viking culture, the cat pelt is seen as a magical cure for ailments!"

As well as getting immersed in the rich tradition of Irish storytelling, you'll pick up Irish phrases like 'fuarchúis', a favourite of Conor's, that has no English equivalent but translates to 'steely courage', often used in times past when things went wrong; or 'éirí in airde' a handy phrase to have in your pocket for when someone is having notions or being high and mighty; or one that's still in use a lot, 'flaithiúlach', used to describe a person who is overly generous.

Conor's stories, enthusiastically told in the way of the seanachai, are gleaned from sources such as the Irish Folklore and the Schools' Collections, as well as from talking to people locally. Each and every one gives a fascinating glimpse into the ways and traditions of old Ireland with local lore

weaved throughout.

"There's a real sense of being in the moment or place as the story connects you to the land," he shares.

For more information or to book a tour or the upcoming A Scare at Samhain event go to www.gormu.com or call Conor on 083 0153545

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

An Endless Thread of joy

Hailing from Crumlin on the outskirts of Dublin city, Richard Egan who performs under the moniker 'Jape' released his latest album 'Endless Thread' on September 29. With a rake of 'instore' sessions booked around the country in early October to promote the release, followed by a tour of Ireland's hottest music venues at the end of the month until early November, Jape meets with **Lauren Guillery** to chat about his joyous new album ahead of his gig at DeBarra's Folk Club in Clonakilty.

Having emigrated to Malmö in Sweden over a decade ago, Richard 'Richie' Egan initially formed Jape as a side project from his main duties as the bassist with The Redneck Manifesto. The last twenty years, the post-punk band has earned a cult-like following among Irish music fans, who travel huge distances to attend rather rare live appearances. In 2016, the band performed at the Clonakilty International Guitar Festival, but has now been on a hiatus since the release of their last album 'The How'.

No longer a side-project but rather an established musical act in their own right, Richie Egan's Jape have released countless albums to date and received awards and critical acclaim from many of these releases. 'Floating' – the catchy debut single from their second album 'The Monkeys In The Zoo Have More Fun Than Me' was released in 2004 and receives significant airplay on late night Irish radio programmes. Jape's third album 'Ritual' won Richie the prestigious Choice Music Prize for Irish Album of the year 2008 and features songs like 'I Was A Man', 'Phil Lynott', and 'Strike Me Down'. Jape's fourth album 'Ocean of Frequency' released in 2011 earned them another Irish Al-

bum of the Year at the Choice Music Prize, making them the only Irish act to date to receive the esteemed award twice.

Since then Jape released 'This Chemical Sea', a rather dancey album recorded in Egan's basement studio in Malmö that features vocals by longtime friend Conor O'Brien from indie-folk outfit Villagers. The album 'Sentinel' that came out in 2019 was more subdued and intimate, and then in 2022 Richie released '9k HI Vol 1' – an electronic "half album" as he calls it, which he recorded primarily using an 80's Casio FZ-1 sampler keyboard.

Whether the 2023 release 'Endless Thread' is indeed Jape's seventh or eighth album is up for debate, but it's undeniable that this accomplished musician's body of work is manifold. Having received no formal music education but simply messing around with music and technology, the self-confessed music geek worked as an audio visual technician and taught himself to play, record, edit, and produce music, as well as making music videos. Oftentimes, his songs integrate samples of 'field recordings' – recordings he does on the go with a tape machine, and more recently using an Apple watch.

Despite using field recordings for the upcoming album, including the sound of an



alarm which he edited to sound like a saxophone at the very start of 'Lashing Through The Minutes', the second single from the album, Richie explains he wanted to do something a little different than in his previous releases. "I really wanted to have those textures in an accessible way. I didn't want it to be an experimental pop music album, so if I was using those textures I was using them in quite a defined parameter, which for me was an actual song. Basically it's my love letter to song, I just love songs so much. In the past few albums, I drifted away from them a bit, and I wanted to come back to that joyful nature of listening to and making music."

In terms of inspiration for the album, Richie confesses he wanted to get back to the childlike joy that music used to give him when he was a kid. "I had lost that completely for a few years," he admits. "I realised music was not the only medicine that could heal me, and that I actually had to do some work outside of music in order to have any joy in my life. So I stopped drinking alcohol, I started to exercise a lot more, I started to do yoga and I started to try and create joy in my life that wasn't fake joy, not like quick dopamine from drinking alcohol or scrolling on social media."

Though he produced all the album himself in his basement

studio, Egan asked David Odlum, a former member of Kila and The Frames to mix the album. "I worked with him before and I just felt like it would be nice to have a second set of ears for the mix and he did an amazing job. I

"I am a working class man and I feel like a working class musician in the sense that now I've worked to make that record. I've worked to do this tour. When the tour is over, I'll work to make another record. I'll just keep working and working and that's the key to it."

really love that Lisa O'Neill album 'All Of This Is Chance', which he mixed. I just loved it sonically." Richie is happy in his own skin creating music in his basement but travels home to Dublin regularly. "I miss the creative community of which I was a very active part of, and all my friends are basically Irish musicians, so I really look forward to playing with

them when I'm doing these gigs coming up, and I always pay close attention to Irish music that's happening."

A number of solo 'instore' gigs booked early this month will see Jape play in the intimate settings of shops and cafés to promote the new release, including Prim's Bookshop in Kinsale on October 1 and Plugd Records in Cork city on October 6. "It was important to me on this record to be able to play the songs live both at the piano and on the guitar with no sort of trickery involved," he confesses. "I've done a lot of stuff in the past where I've backing tracks on the go and I just really wanted to get away from that."

A six-date tour of Ireland with band will start on October 20 in Dublin, passing through Clonakilty on November 3, and finishing at the Roisin Dubh in Galway on November 5. "What's important to me on this one is to expose myself, be vulnerable with the songs and see if they come across. Because I felt like I had got into a spot where I was using backing tracks as a kind of a safety net. They work for sure, but they're boring and they become like a straight-jacket if you have to do any amount of gigs in a row."

Working as a musician is not an easy career. To put food on the table, Egan did some commercial work writing songs for cartoons. "I got the job to write children's songs and it was amazing," he reveals. "It's brilliant as a songwriter because it takes you out your comfort zone. I had to write a Broadway song about how to ride a bicycle!" Nevertheless, releasing an album in the current climate of no easy feat. "I was speaking to someone about the music industry nowadays and I think the idea is – have low expectations and be willing to fail and be willing to continue to work after you've failed. And I think if you can do that joyfully, then you can continue. You need to be a romantic fool to even consider attempting anything, and I love that, I love the underdog," he continues. "I am a working class man and I feel like a working class musician in the sense that now I've worked to make that record. I've worked to do this tour. When the tour is over, I'll work to make another record. I'll just keep working and working and that's the key to it."

Human connection is really important to Richie. For the



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.

tour, he wants to engage his audience in a joyful way. Last month, he asked his followers on Twitter to come up with a name for an interactive 'gig enhancement' whereby willing punters would take part in a quiz to win a prize, three of which would be picked at random and become contestants to test their musical knowledge and general smartness. And so 'Japeardy' came to be. "I wanted to sort of break it down a little bit. If people want to be in the quiz, they can give their name when they come in to the venue. We're going to have three rounds. If you win your round, you come back at the end to play in the final round. It's going to be fun, we'll just have a laugh, and someone wins a prize at the end."

Though he's as yet undecided about getting T-shirts printed to sell at the gigs, Richie will have a vinyl pressing of the new Jape release for sale. His wish for this album is that people give it a listen. "Even a little message saying that the song meant something to you or something like that, that kind of stuff is gold," he says. "I feel a little bit like last days of Rome where I'm just going to do my best and see what happens. If I can get to make another record, I'll be happy."

No doubt Endless Thread will be a mighty success. We can't wait to see Jape unfold the new set of songs.

Jape's album 'Endless Thread' came out on Faction Records on September 29. He will perform at DeBarra's Folk Club on November 3 with support from Rob Cunningham.

October West Cork Gig Listings

Compiled by Lauren Guillery

- Oct 5 John Spillane and the Band of Wrens / DeBarra's Folk
- Oct 6 Martin Hayes / DeBarra's Folk Club
- Oct 7 Ashley Campbell & Thor Jensen / DeBarra's Folk Club
- Oct 8 Natalia Beylis / Levi's Corner House
- Oct 13 Seth Lakeman / Connolly's of Leap
- Síomha / Levi's Corner House
- Oct 14 Duke Special / Levi's Corner House
- Oct 20 Declan O'Donovan / Levi's Corner House
- Oct 26 Mick Flannery / DeBarra's Folk Club
- Qadasi & Maqhingha / Connolly's of Leap
- Oct 27 Mick Flannery / DeBarra's Folk Club
- Polly Barrett Album Launch / Levi's Corner House
- Oct 28 Mick Flannery / Connolly's of Leap

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Spectre of Samhain and the faces between



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.

One of the most remarkable processions of recent years in West Cork was the first Samhain festival in Clonakilty in 2017: to the beat of drums fantastic masked figures with long gilded trumpets loomed out of the dusk and the mist into the yellow haloed lights of Wolfe Tone Street. Others with Venetian-inspired curlew masks beat the drums, whilst a head-wreathed choir, faces painted and bodies gowned in cerebral white, sung and chanted into the liminal spaces that divide the living world from the dead. It was a well-spring of theatrical animism which struck a primal chord; the sense of release whilst under the cover of processional theatre was palpable. The masks, the animal cries and the music gave licence to an alteration of reality which was as unexpected as it was magical.

There are certain paintings which recall this sensation of the mask looming out of the void, where the paint appears ecstatically dripped, scraped or slung against the darkness. One such is Rembrandt's 'Self Portrait as Zeuxis Laughing' (1662). In the theatre of paint this was the Dutch master's swan song, his visceral laughter-through-paint in the face of ruin. There is a devil-may-care attitude to the figure which comes through its wild, spontaneous, visceral application. The drawing is there, the visage of the Master unmistakable, but he was not being precious; he was in full, poetic flight, slamming red and gold against the darkness, daring the promise of death to

diminish him.

Rembrandt eschewed colour in his self portrait as Zeuxis (it is a monochrome of yellows, from ochre to cadmium) and in doing so distanced the work from the mimetic surface of reality, embracing instead something deeper, something closer to the rawness of spirit. He was, at this latter stage of his life (he was to die seven years later) down on his luck, bankrupt and deserted by buyers who had turned away from his thick, edgy application for something more classical, safe and serene. It was perhaps for this reason that he embraced the subject of the classical painter Zeuxis who, as legend has it, laughed himself to death after painting a portrait of an old woman who had commissioned him to paint her as Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Rembrandt used Zeuxis as a mask, stripped his palette bare, and shone. Many of the self portraits by the contemporary Norwegian master Odd Nerdrum shine in a similar away, the painter's rugged fluency allowing shadowed areas to seemingly float on the raw ground of the imprimatura. It is his strangely titled 'Hepatitis' from 1996, however, which feels closest in feeling to Rembrandt's 'Zeuxis', the reds and golds of the figure laughing against the darkness. A close-up of the head reveals Nerdrum's splendid semi-abrasive delivery, the true solidity of the monochromatic form belied by the schism of darting strokes and abrasive distortions, the paint in flux, even as it is fixed, the expression alive even when frozen.

Against these two painterly masks, I would like to pitch Konstantinos Kyrtilis' powerful work, 'Cecco d'Ascoli' (2021). Kyrtilis, a celebrated portraitist from Cyprus bares in his work all the hallmarks of late Rembrandt, from his pared-back palette to his visceral, deeply felt application. 'Cecco d'Ascoli' is no exception. Like Rembrandt's 'Zeuxis' its subject is taken from the distant past; Cecco d'Ascoli (c. 1269–1327) was the diminutive used by the Italian writer and poet Francesco Stabili who was burnt at the stake as a relapsed heretic (Oxford Bibliographies). Like in the work of Rembrandt and Nerdrum the skin of the paint flurries against the darkness, its visceral body alternately protruding from

and dissolving into the canvas. The ecstatic indeterminacy of the boundary between the figure and the void, combined with the figure's melancholy expression gives this painting a great and powerful poignancy. It is a painterly mask of the distant dead, imagined into an oily spell which hovers between being and non-being, the liminal space of genuine art.

Kyrtilis (b. 1974) often draws his thematic material from classical myth, sculpture and writing. He channels classical comedies, such as 'the Birds' by Aristophanes, conjures the tragic figure of the Joker, the poignancy of the marionettist and the mask-maker. His rich, powerful paintings dance with the idea of 'commedia dell arte', the comedy of art, seen as with Rembrandt and Nerdrum, through a tragic lens.



Above: Rembrandt's 'Self Portrait as Zeuxis Laughing'
Left: Konstantinos Kyrtilis' powerful work, 'Cecco d'Ascoli'

Ironically there is no laughter in Kyrtilis' paintings; they are ever sombre and deep.

A painting of a figure surrounded by Venetian masks from 2014 reminds me once more of the Samhain festival of 2017 and the curlew masks worn by the drummers.

From painting to procession, from the painted face to the face-painted choir, the liminal masquerade of art draws us to endings and new beginnings and suspends us magically in the spaces between.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Dynamic dance programme at Uillinn this autumn



Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre has announced the full programme for this year’s Uillinn Dance Season. Now in its sixth year, Uillinn Dance Season has established itself as an extraordinary platform for Ireland’s most cutting-edge dance artists to perform. Taking place from 27 October to 5 November 2023, the programme combines live performance, film screenings and discussion in a series of matinee and late- night evening events. This year’s programme presents diverse and vibrant work by leading dance artists for

audiences in West Cork over 10 days. The Centre is welcoming back award-winning choreographer and dance artist Luke Murphy for his third year to curate the Dance Season at Uillinn: “for me, the craft of programming contemporary dance is a dialogue with you about what’s happening in Ireland in contemporary dance, where the form is going, and how the audiences and artists of west Cork are an active ingredient in that development.” This year’s exciting line-up includes the choreographic work of Alexandre Iseli, Tara Brandel, Elaine

McCague, Isabella Oberländer, and emerging artist Nóra Ní Anluain Fay, alongside a documentary film on Michael Keegan Dolan/Teac Damhsa’s acclaimed production Mám by director Pat Collins. Uillinn Dance Season is part of West Cork Arts Centre’s growing and ambitious contemporary dance programme which presents opportunities for dance research, classes and workshops, professional development, performance and project work with communities both onsite and off in this rural setting. “We’re thrilled to have the support of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media this year, through the Night-Time Economy After Hours at the Museum Scheme. This new opportunity allows us to present more high-quality performances in the evening for deserving West Cork audiences” remarked Uillinn Programme Manager, Justine Foster. “Recognising the challenges facing the development of contemporary dance in regional areas, we are working with a highly regarded dance curator and professional dance artists to implement new and innovative ways of creating and presenting ambitious work, unique to our location.”

Theatre on the Sheep’s Head

Readers have another chance to attend a special theatrical performance of Seán Moylan: Irish Revolutionary at Gortalassa Old School House on Sheep’s Head Peninsula (P75 C589) on Saturday, October 28 at 8pm. A man who sacrificed, suffered, and risked his life for his country, Seán Moylan gave a detailed account of his memories of the War of Independence to the Bureau of Military History. Written by and starry Michael

Patric and directed by Geoff Gould this play is one man’s account of key events during this period. It is precise, passionate, funny, and painful. It is a tribute to him and to all who volunteered, many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice, and to their families who bore it. Age suitability: 14+. Running time: 75min – no interval. Tickets €20. To reserve your seat please contact Brian on 083 1078077 or devine.rooska@gmail.com



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

4			8		9	5		
	7							
		8	1					
		7			3			
6	5		4		1		9	
				8				
					8			
5	9		6			3	4	
		2						5

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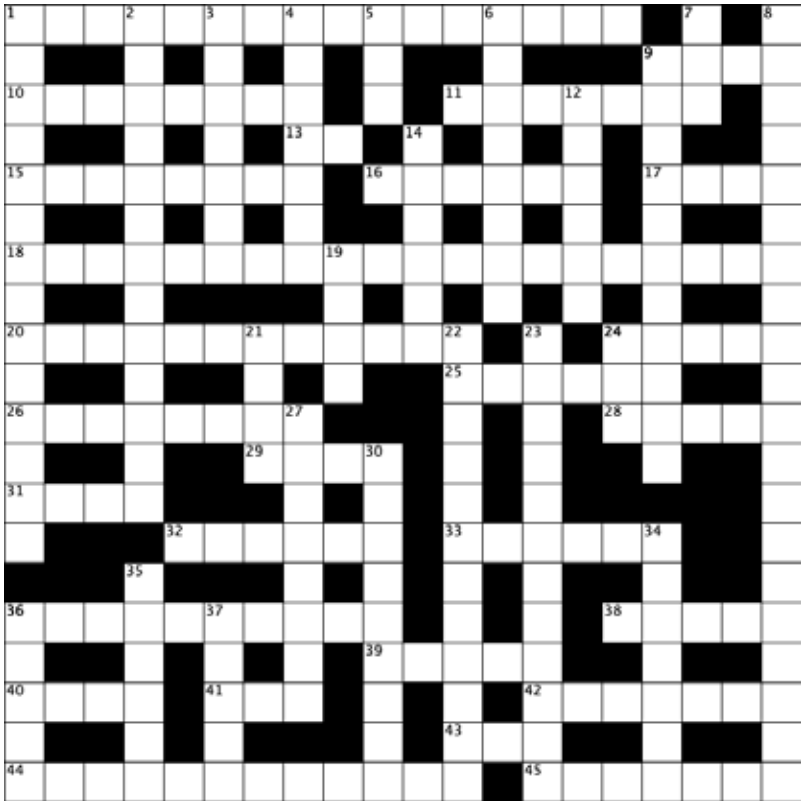
Difficulty: hard

	3	6	5			8		
5								9
	8			1				
	7						6	
				4				7
	6	9			8			
		8		9		3		
		3				4		
	2	1			3		7	

#140181

Difficulty: moderate

In the news Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Libya’s coastline is on which body of water? (13,3)
- 9 Accessory for the one playing the angel (4)
- 10 John Huston’s actor daughter (8)
- 11 I opt nervously to face parent? That’s best (7)
- 13 16th Greek letter (2)
- 15 Plot at RTÉ (8)
- 16 _____Butler, actor who played Elvis (6)
- 17 Native of the former Siam (4)
- 18 Gives limbs little rest (8,4,8)
- 20 Archaic word for pharmacists (12)
- 24 Put a cap on it (5)
- 25 Type of scar tissue (6)
- 26 Attack from overhead (4-4)
- 28 He’s in the detail (5)
- 29 Gaucho’s ball on a rope weapon (4)
- 31 Stronghold; citadel (4)
- 32 Places for debate (6)
- 33 Secret political cliques (6)
- 36 Give up (10)
- 38 Cloth-printing method (5)
- 39 H²O
- 40 Not valid in law (4)
- 41 A strange tree for Mel (3)
- 42 The ‘state of rest’ in Newton’s first law of motion (7)
- 43 Meaning ‘before marriage’ (3)
- 44 German actor, film director and screenwriter known for Fitzcarraldo (6,6)
- 45 Actors Jimmy, Patrick and Kristen (7)

DOWN

- 1 Leader of Libya from 1969 to 2011 (7,7)
- 2 Possible purpose of phishing (8,5)
- 3 Typical example of a characteristic (7)
- 4 No grim ones welcome at harvest time! (7)
- 5 Gesture yes (3)
- 6 Family business like mine opts to change (8)
- 7 paper or traffic (3)
- 8 Morning meal in Asia, Africa or Europe perhaps? (11,9)
- 9 Scandal prone presidential son (6,5)
- 12 Cricket term (6)
- 14 Keep things moving, as in a circus (6)
- 19 Attract (4)
- 21 A rooster always carries one (4)
- 22 Rising rapidly (12)
- 23 Early autumn hedge bounty (12)
- 24 Topper (3)
- 27 Boil smut to get food poisoning (8)
- 30 The largest of the German concentration camps in World War II (9)
- 34 Common little bird leading us to the hawk (7)
- 35 Which instrument is played by Andre Rieu? (6)
- 36 Affirm again, as vows (5)
- 37 Part of LGBTQ+ (5)

Across: 1 Mediterranean Sea; 9 halo; 10 Angelica; 11 optimum; 13 Pi; 15 Montrose; 16 Austin; 17 Thai; 18 restless legs syndrome; 20 apothecaries; 24 limit; 25 keloid; 26 dive-bomb; 28 David; 29 bola; 31 fort; 32 forams; 33 cabals; 36 relinquish; 38 battle; 39 water; 40 mill; 41 elm; 42 inertia; 43 nee; 44 Werner Herzog; 45 Stewart
Down: 1 Miummar Caddag; 2 identity theft; 3 epitome; 4 reggers; 5 nod; 6 nepotism; 7 jam; 8 continental breakfast; 9 Hunter Biden; 12 running; 14 jungle; 19 lure; 21 comb; 22 skyrocketing; 23 blackberries; 24 lid; 27 boutism; 30 Auschwitz; 34 Sparrow; 35 violin; 36 renew; 37 queer

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Caz Jeffreys celebrates 20 years of community singing with event to help the homeless

West Cork community musician, Caz Jeffreys, set up her first harmony singing group in 2003. It would be the first of many more choirs, groups, and workshops throughout West Cork and beyond that Caz would lead over the next twenty years.

In celebration of the milestone anniversary of leading our community in song, Caz is organising a special participatory event on Saturday, October 14 at The Schull Harbour Hotel, Main Street in Schull. The doors will be open from 7.30pm, and the activities start at 8pm.



Expect an informal and fun 'sing-along style' evening, to include Choir Karaoke, and a short performance of original, harmony filled pieces by local composers.

All proceeds from this event will be donated to The Cork Simon Community.

This event is open to all who enjoy singing, be it in a choir or just in front of the mirror with

a hairbrush. No previous experience is needed.

Booking a ticket through Eventbrite is required, as seats will be allocated according to vocal parts. These tickets will be complimentary, however a suggested donation of €10-€20 will be collected upon arrival to the venue.

For those travelling to Schull from further afield, please contact The Schull Harbour Hotel for accommodation rates.

For all enquiries please contact Caz on 083 1425599 or by email at cazjeffreys@gmail.com

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Don Cronin at Gallery Asna

'Aculeate Compositions' is a collection of new work by acclaimed Irish sculptor Don Cronin, which will be showing in Gallery Asna, Clonakilty Community Art Centre through October.

Dan Cronin has been making sculptural work for almost three decades and has numerous public commissions to his name throughout the country. 'Aculeate Compositions' is a

wonderful opportunity to see Cronin's work in the heart of West Cork.

Peter Murray, then Director of the Crawford Art Gallery, writing for the Irish Arts Review in 2015 wrote: "Like these Russian artists of the early 20th century, Cronin references a world of machines and things, a man-made world, evoking ships, airplanes and cars, the high polished finish adding to

the works' seductive brilliance."

'Aculeate Compositions' will be opened by painter Michael McSwiney at 5:30pm Saturday October 7 and continues through to October 28.

Gallery Asna is open daily Mon to Sat 11am to 5pm



A West Cork war heroes' love story

During a tumultuous time in Irish history, two of the nation's most prominent revolutionaries formed a close bond. Tragedy struck and brought them together, sparks flying as they met in West Cork during the most violent period of the Irish War of Independence. This week's episode of Scéalta Grá na hÉireann tackled the fascinating story of General Tom Barry and Leslie Bean de Barra (née Price).

After spending their twenties taking on the might of the British Empire, Tom and Leslie settle down together in a small flat upstairs in the Woodford Bourne Building where Patrick's Street meets Daunt Square. Although Tom original-



ly hailed from Kerry and Leslie was born in Dublin they were both embraced by Cork and considered 'one of our own' by all Corkonians.

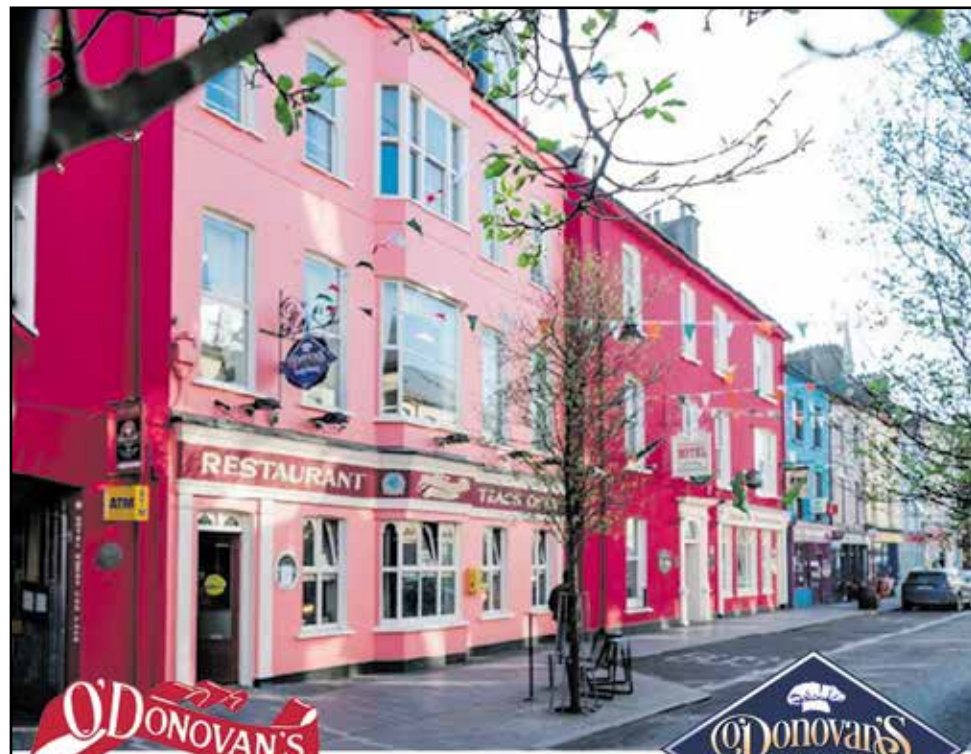
After a bloody and violent start to their lives together, they both played key roles in the War of Independence, Tom and Leslie lived a long and celebrated life together. When their duties allowed they would walk the Mardyke together, take a sup of porter in the Hi-B bar and were regular visitors to the bar in the Victoria Hotel.

They both lived into their 80s and Tom passed away in the Re-



gional Hospital, now the CUH. Both Tom and Leslie share a plot together in St. Finbarr's cemetery and when Leslie died the whole of Cork city came out to mark her passing, the city flags flying at half-mast. Who would believe a Dublin woman could become an honorary citizen of Cork city. For a woman who went on to play a central role in the Irish Red Cross and to set up VHI and Gorta, this is one of her lesser achievements, perhaps.

If you missed this episode on TG4 on Wednesday, you'll find it on the TG4 player.



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ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.
email: astro@katearbon.com
www.katearbon.com

October Sun Signs

Issues from the past are raked through again and a strong theme of control and power struggles dominate this month. It could be tense at times with several planets in opposition to each other and the eclipses providing added drama. The early part of the month sees us dealing with some difficult energies but the later month holds opportunity and a chance to change things for the better. By the month's end, we may have gained more than we thought possible in earlier weeks.

Pluto is a small planet that packs a punch. Lord of the underworld, it represents the shadow side, the hidden and disowned aspects of life. Pluto is prominent, making several connections with other planets during October. Mars is the planet of confrontation and

action. It brings drive and thrust to any situation it impacts. These two form a challenging square aspect on October 9, a few days ahead of Pluto ending its five-month retrograde and Mars moving into its own sign, Scorpio. This energy shift brings a determined ability to endure difficulty and see things through regardless of the adversity. Be cautious about pushing too hard, trying to make your power felt. There may be signs of overreach or too much force being used. This energy can create a backlash and reveal more of the hidden agenda than anticipated. Expect these power dynamics to activate the shadow side of any existing conflict. This revelation can be used to make new choices around what is true and what is truly wanted.

There is also a lot of focus on personal connections, alliances and cooperative ventures this month. Venus themes are still strong during October with an Eclipse in both her signs Libra and Taurus. She generally works well with Saturn the planet of hard work, seriousness and practicality but there is some careful balance required when these two are in opposite positions on the 10th. Relationships that were under stress during the Venus retrograde in July and August can now be consolidated or renegotiated. This planet of social cohesion, romance and enjoyment moves into Virgo on the 9th giving Mercury extra importance. Mercury brings information, news and messages and this peaks around the 20th as it joins with the Sun. The Solar Eclipse on

the 14th heralds a shift, an ending and a beginning, a letting go of something so it can make way for the new. This week mid-month may see a turning point as a past scenario reveals more than it did previously and this can be pivotal in the way events now unfold.

A positive shift in energy can occur into the third week of the month. From the 22nd onwards the more challenging energy can be put to good use as a prompt to do things differently as Venus makes a supportive connection with the benevolent bringer of joy, Jupiter.

There may be a need to let go of old ideas or values as we have our second Eclipse this month on the 28th in Taurus. It can also require that we allow relationships or alliances to change in ways where we

cannot predict the next phase. This can bring up fears or doubts about what is coming next as we relinquish our own agenda, preference or long-term emotional investment. If we can go with this flow during late October our situation will very likely become an even better version of what was originally expected. A version that could not have been imagined as possible before. It's time to allow the unexpected and extraordinary to take place when Venus connects positively with Uranus, wild card planet of renewal and change on the 31st, Halloween!

October has a Solar Eclipse at New Moon in 22 degrees Libra on the 14th at 6.55pm and a Lunar Eclipse at Full Moon in six degrees Taurus on the 28th at 9.24 pm



Aries: The significant relationships that matter most take your attention during this New Moon eclipse. You may have to consider making changes that will allow for greater harmony and mutual benefit. Get to the bottom of things before it's too late. Once you have all the facts you will be in a much better position to make a decision. The Full Moon phase later this month is a time for getting serious but not at the expense of creating a deeper union. Your ongoing personal development is the foundation to ensure all your close connections thrive.



Taurus: Doing your best work is always important but not always a priority. During this eclipse and the New Moon, you can make the changes that have been waiting in the background. Practical concerns and everyday responsibilities can get the benefit of your full attention early in the month. This is a good time to examine how you use your time and energy, with an eye to improving your efficiency and productivity. Your inner world is going to take the focus later when the Full Moon eclipse mood makes you more mellow and self-reflective for a while.



Gemini: You are energised and inspired coming up to this New Moon eclipse time, and you want to express some of the creativity that lies deep within you. You can let yourself be more free, playful, and spontaneous. You are seeing a glimpse of the future and may be more willing to take chances. You can accomplish much if you set your mind to it. It's later this month that the Lunar Eclipse brings some of the rewards and benefits you deserve. The support and encouragement from your extended social group are heart-warming.



Cancer: With the Sun and Moon focus on your home and foundations this Solar eclipse will put things into perspective and allow a new arrangement to be implemented. Where you've been feeling the stress of getting your work and family life balanced now you can make some progress again. You will want to initiate the dialogue and have your say. Plain speaking is required but you may be inclined to do a dramatic monologue. Putting yourself in the limelight may not be what you had in mind but getting acknowledged may be what comes with the Lunar eclipse at Full Moon



Leo: There has been a lot of talk and running around lately and it isn't about to stop during this New Moon eclipse phase. You may have wanted a steady pace but perhaps not at constant high speed. This still doesn't feel like progress. Any connections made now are of value and you will realise this in the weeks to come. The details that have been your focus will open out into the bigger plans as we move into the second half of the month. With the Full Moon eclipse, you can see the horizon and know where you are heading.



Virgo: You feel the need to address your basic resources and check that you have something to fall back on. There is a sense that you can put things in place to make the financial situation more suitable to your needs. Maybe you will start a new project or cash in on some hidden talents to give you the boost you need around the New Moon eclipse. When the Lunar eclipse passes in late October you will understand where your dependencies lie and how to navigate the low points with more confidence. You may even get some unexpected support and benefit from the efforts of another.



Libra: If coming out of your shell was ever required now is an easier time to do it. There is a whole new you or makeover to consider. Even just a simple change could set something in motion. Developing your personality and attracting what you need has never been easier. This New Moon eclipse makes it hard to resist. The Full Moon Eclipse will see you connecting to people in a way that feels good even if it takes you out of your comfort zone. You may get used to some extra company and decide that you are being offered a better deal than you had expected.



Scorpio: There is no doubt that this month is keeping you under the radar and behind the scenes and perhaps even more than in your usual mode. It's certainly the best time for you to do that inner work and get some downtime as it's been more than busy lately. Around the New Moon eclipse a little break or retreat is required, even if it is just a few days out of circulation. The worldly expectations and responsibilities will get your attention later in the month with the Full Moon eclipse and you can apply some new-found wisdom to managing the daily tasks and commitments.



Sagittarius: This month can bring some surprising benefits and you may see more results from your efforts than you expected during this New Moon eclipse. You have the support of friends and associates right now so accept with grace what comes to you. Your mind has been racing and full of ideas and now you can pull out the best options to make your life a bit more fun and enjoyable. When the Full Moon eclipse passes later this month you can put some plans into action to ensure you get that creative project started, or simply book a few days leisure break.

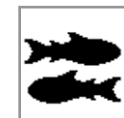


Capricorn: With your career and reputation highlighted during the Solar eclipse, you can make significant gains regarding your ambitions. Recognition for your efforts and receiving credit for your accomplishments are possible now, but only if you've laid the foundations. Certainly now is not the time to mix business with pleasure if you want to avoid trouble. You've been feeling the pressure lately and the home front may benefit from your natural

love of harmony. Trying out some new styles or just making the required adjustments might 'make it' rather than 'break it' over the Full Moon later in the month.



Aquarius: This Solar eclipse is the time to lift yourself out of your usual mundane concerns in order to get a larger perspective on your life. Whilst you have been plugging away and feeling overwhelmed at times, now you will reap the benefits. You really can get things up and running to fulfil the broader vision. This chance to see things from a new vantage point will make all the difference in the world. You simply have to maintain the momentum through the month. A teacher or mentor who appears this Full Moon may be particularly important to you later.



Pisces: There is no time like the present for checking the balance and flow in your life. It's not just about material concerns either. Do you have the energy and personal resources to cover you when things are stretched beyond the usual limits? This Solar eclipse may see you looking to others and accepting their support. The test is to see if you can put it all to good use and build on what you have gained later this month. The Lunar Eclipse is the chance to use your skills and talents to future-proof your energy stores.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Castletownbere woman reaches finals of international photography competition



Jessica Waschkowitz, from Castletownbere, has reached the finals of an international photography competition.

Jessica captured the imagination of the judges for her shot entitled 'Looking out for me', and she's now reached the final of the Down's Syndrome Association's 'My Perspective' photography competition.

When asked why she enjoys taking photographs, Jessica replied: "Here at home we have created a memory tree in our house. We like to hang pictures there of things that made us happy. It makes me happy to look at all the memories and it is great fun to take new pictures and add them to our memory tree."

And it's her dog Casper she says, who inspires her: "I love taking pictures of my dog Casper! He is the best dog. He is a Hungarian Vizsla, my protector and my guide so I don't get lost in the woods. I also love taking pictures of things I see when we are going for hikes or swimming, like flowers, trees or shells at the beach."

When not taking photographs, Jessica works with her dad at Beara Blacksmith's, the family business: "I am working together with my dad in his forge as an art-blacksmith. It is super cool and makes me feel very proud to work with my dad. I am creating metal sculptures and metal pendants and sell them in my online shop."

The My Perspective competition is open to people who have Down's syndrome from across the world. This year entries came from as far away as India, South Africa, Canada and USA. This year was the first time the competition included a children's category.

Jessica and 29 other finalists will be invited to attend a special ceremony in London on October 12 where the winners will be announced.

The competition gives budding photographers who have the genetic condition a chance to show off their talents



to a group of industry professionals.

In years gone by, people with Down's syndrome were photographed as exhibits; the viewer was not supposed to see the person, just the difference. The Down's Syndrome Association's 'My Perspective' competition aims to turn the camera around and give people with Down's syndrome the

chance to show the world from their point of view.

DEELISH
GARDEN CENTRE
TALKS & WORKSHOPS

OCTOBER LISTINGS

- 7th 2-4pm: Table arrangement**
with Renee from 'The Flower and Leaf'... €60
- 8th 2-4pm: Botanical Watercolor Painting**
with Caoimhe.... €60
- 14th 2-4pm: Macrame pot hanger**
with Grace from Pacie Grews'.... €65
- 15th 2-6pm: Korean Natural Farming**
with Darren....€50
- 21st 2-4pm: Wreath Salon**
with Renee from 'The Flower and Leaf'... €80
- 22nd 2-4pm: Centrepiece** with Sonata Dilbe.... €55
- 28th 2-3.30pm: Kids halloween creation**
with Sonata Dibe.... €25
- 29th 2-3.30pm: Kids halloween creation**
with Sonata Dilbe.... €25

*Booking is essential as spaces are limited.
All materials supplied. Complimentary tea/coffee.
Pay in full to book a space*

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GARDENING

Deelish Garden Centre talks and workshops

Over the coming weeks Deelish Garden Centre in Skibbereen will host a variety of garden-themed talks and workshops.

On Saturday, October 7, Renee from 'The Flower and Leaf' florist will host a workshop to help you create a beautiful ceramic table centrepiece made from sustainably-sourced autumnal flowers and foliage. The following Sunday, October 8, talented Caoimhe Pendred will host a tranquil botanical painting session at Deelish. No previous experience is needed and all materials are supplied.

The next weekend, on October 14, Grace from 'Pacie Grews' (see website) will help you create your own jute macramé plant hanger suitable for indoor or outdoor use. On Sunday, October 15, Darren

from Oak Stone Korean Natural Farming (see website and last month's West Cork People article) will host a workshop showing you how to create IMO compost packed with beneficial soil microbes.

Renee from 'The Flower and Leaf' will return on October 21, this time to create your very own Autumnal wreath, using exquisite, sustainably-sourced natural ingredients. Local flower arranger Sonata Dilbe, will host a workshop on Sunday, October 22, creating an Autumnal flower arrangement using fresh flowers and some autumn-themed decorations.

On the weekend of October 28 and 29, it's all about Halloween and the kids! Sonata will be back at the Garden Centre and helping kids create a Broom Stick arrangement on Saturday

and a Pumpkin arrangement on Sunday. Suitable for children aged eight and upwards.

The above workshops include all materials (so you get to take home your own creation) and a complimentary hot drink from our coffee kiosk serving 'Deelishious' Red Strand coffee, teas and hot chocolate. Booking is essential, as spaces are limited and payment will be needed in full to secure a space.

Watch this space, as well as social media, for a listing of November's talks and workshops, as we have a few planned events we are very excited about! In the meantime we look forward to seeing you here at Deelish, as we have already started stocking up for a very busy 2024 season!

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GARDENING



GARDENING

John Hosford
The Weekend Garden Centre

October is an important month in the garden with the harvesting of crops and final bounty of the summer. Preparation for

October in the garden

protection against the winter is also a high priority of the month. As the new academic year commences, I will also discuss forgiving houseplants for students

Pumpkins, Vegetable Marrows, Squashes

Leave pumpkins, squashes and vegetable marrows to cure or dry out in the sun to harden the skin. Store them in a cool, airy well-ventilated shed, raised off the ground on to something like a wooden pallet, keeping away from any contaminants such as paint, sprays or fuels. Don't store damaged or mouldy fruit

and allow space between each fruit.

Overwintering Brassicas

Pick off yellowing leaves from cabbages, cauliflowers, broccoli and kale, as left there, they will be only a source of grey mould (Botrytis). Any tall brassicas should be staked and secured with a stout stake.

Plant out spring cabbage now, protecting against slugs, pigeons and rabbits.

Overwintering onions, as well as garlic, can be planted now.

Broad beans may be sown now. As the seeds are quite large, they need to be planted at least 15cm (6") apart. Protect with a cloche, frame or frost protection fleece, taking adequate precautions against mice.

Pot up parsley and mint in pots and bring indoors. Keep in a bright kitchen windowsill, frame, glasshouse or conservatory, watering in well after potting up to settle in.

Basil will not survive outdoors once you get into October. Bring indoors now into a greenhouse or conservatory.

Fruit Garden

Apples may be picked as they ripen. Store in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, away from all contaminating substances such as paint, disinfectants or sprays. Use sturdy boxes to store, preferably slatted to facilitate movement of air. Pears may need a few days in a warm room to ripen fully. Established strawberry beds should be thoroughly cleaned up, removing all yellowing and old runners. Weed the area thoroughly.

New strawberry plants may

be planted in clean ground.

Order new fruit trees and bushes for planting from November onwards. Fruit trees should be planted in a sunny, well-drained position, where fruit trees were previously not grown.

Glasshouse

Sow Sweet Peas for next spring. Sow five or six seeds to a 12cm pot. These can be grown individually in the spring. Sweet Peas are a classic favourite with elegant, fragrant flowers with many of the old-fashioned varieties having a captivating fragrance and worth seeking out.

Bring tender plants indoors now, such as citrus fruit trees, Abutilon, Pelargoniums, tender Fuchsias, Cacti, Mandevilla and Patio Salvia varieties.

Pick tomatoes as they ripen. Clear out old tomatoes, cucumbers, aubergines and courgettes as they finish cropping.

Sow a few winter lettuce, watering carefully and cautiously.

Choose a variety that is suitable for overwintering and water early in the day to reduce wet and excessive humidity overnight.

Ventilate the glasshouse on warm, calm days. Bubble polythene is a good method of conserving warmth.

Plant/pot Hyacinths, early Narcissi, Amaryllis/Hippeastrum for Christmas/New Year colour.

Remove summer shading from the glasshouse now.

Bulbs for Spring Flowering

Continue planting of Crocus, Anemones, Hyacinths, Daffodils, Narcissi, Iris dwarf and Dutch Snowdrops, Chinodoxa.



Add an organic, slow release fertiliser prior to planting. Tulips are best planted during November/December. If you have already purchased your Tulip bulbs keep them in a cool, dry place.

Houseplants for Students

Houseplants bring many positive and worthwhile benefits to student life such as brightening up their living space and purifying the air, enhancing mental well being, helping attention span and reducing fatigue.

1) Pathos (devil's ivy): a very forgiving plant that will put up with a fair bit of neglect and isn't too fussy about light, tolerating both sunny and shaded positions. For best results: Water every one to two weeks in the summer and once a month in the winter, keep out of direct sunlight, which can burn its leaves. Try to keep your plants cosy, away from draughty windows and doors. Pathos loves humidity – so mist every

week or two.

2) Cactus: There's no cosy or molly-coddling of this spiny classic. Grow in well-drained containers in a sunny spot, watering once a month from late March to late September. Give them a summer boost with a specialist Cactus fertiliser.

3) Chlorophytum comosum (spider plant): The ultimate easy care house plant that purifies the air. They throw out side shoots which can be potted up and given to friends. Only water when the top two cms has dried out. Don't put in direct sunlight. Give a light feed during the summer. Give an occasional misting.

4) Aglaonema (Chinese evergreen plant). Faithful, reliable plant. Keep away from draughts. Mist every few weeks. Re-pot every three years.

Do visit Botanic Gardens/ Public Gardens to see a wide variety of plants including dramatic autumn colour.

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OUT & ABOUT



The Kinsale Tri Club and Regatta committee presented a cheque for €4380.91, raised from the annual 5 Mile road race at the Kinsale Regatta in August, to the RNL at the Lifeboat Station Kinsale. Pictured are Teddy McNamara and Julian Renault with Jeremiah Callanan and RNL crew Thomas Swan, Olivia Keating and Jon Green. Picture: John Allen

GARDENING

Kinsale nursery plants the seed of sustainability

If we are really serious about reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and not introducing invasive pests into our environment, then growing local without pesticides and supporting local growers has never been more important. While it isn't an easy path, an inspiring nursery and flower farm in Kinsale has been doing just that and producing a wide variety of healthy, sustainably produced, entirely peat-free plants.

With sustainability at its very core, all of the stock at Tantalus Plant Nursery and Flower Farm has been grown from seed, divisions and cuttings, all propagated in Kinsale.

The plants are also incredibly hardy, as despite its location off the coast and frequent gales and salt spray, all specimens have been tried and tested, grown successfully as permanent specimens in Tantalus' own garden.

During the cut flower season, Tantalus supplies locally-grown cut flowers and foliage to a number of local retail outlets and hospitality clients.

Managed by Cara Tremayne, a professional hor-

ticalist with an extensive background in horticulture, garden design, and training, the nursery and flower farm is located on a formerly abandoned field that over a decade has been carefully nurtured to become an attractive and productive source of plants and flowers for all seasons.

The site, which runs over three acres bordering large woodlands, has its own woodland area and many large ornamental beds and is teeming with wildlife including hedgehogs, buzzards, many types of birds and a huge array of pollinators.

Cara was initially planting and maintaining the garden with owner Martin Dooney, when the seed of an idea about opening a nursery was planted.

"I have felt that Kinsale needs a plant nursery for over a decade and was more than enthusiastic about filling that niche!" she shares.

Cara has over 20 years of experience working within the amenity horticulture industry in Ireland so she is extremely knowledgeable and has a diverse skillset. As well as impressive qualifications in hor-

tical science and landscape and garden design, she also has a Masters in Biodiversity, Wildlife, and Ecosystem Health so sustainable, wildlife friendly practices as an integral part of nursery operations.

"Peat free and pesticide free is really important to me," she says. "We have a responsibility to our wildlife and environment and, as horticulturalists, we can make huge, positive impacts on both of those."

Tantalus also takes on students who are studying sustainable horticulture in Kinsale college, which has been a particularly rewarding experience. As a result, they're now open to taking on students from other colleges too.

As Tantalus is located at a private residence, the nursery is not open to the public but visits can be made by appointment and the online retail store offers herbaceous perennials and shrubs for delivery by courier or in-person pick up by appointment at the nursery.

For the full selection of plants go to www.tantalusplantnursery.ie



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SPORT



Kilmeen U17 footballers were crowned West Cork champions on Sunday October 1. Holding the cup is Mark Collins pictured with his mother Jane and father Stephen

SPORT

Mizen to Malin boat run raises €110,000 in aid of Mercy University Hospital Foundation

On August 15, John Fleming from Seven Heads, West Cork, and his crew, set off from Ireland's most southerly point, Mizen Head, for a 24-hour charity boat run in aid of the Mercy University Hospital Foundation, that would see them finish at Ireland's most northerly point, Malin Head and raise a phenomenal €110,000, which will go towards the advancement of cancer treatments at the Mercy University Hospital, under Mr. Tom Murphy.

John Fleming spoke about why the Mercy University Hospital Foundation was chosen as the beneficiary of the funds raised "The Mercy is a hospital that so many people from all over Cork, and beyond, hold close to their hearts – we all know someone who has been treated there; and the care patients receive is second to none. Cancer in particular is something no family wants to go through, but thanks to the Mercy's oncology team, people's cancer journeys will

be made a little easier. The more that can be done through research and advancements to enhance the treatment of this illness the better for all of us."

Thanking John Fleming and his team, Mr Tom Murphy explained how funds like this will benefit patients who will undergo cancer treatment at the Mercy; "For those people in Munster diagnosed with cancer, The Mercy will be at the forefront of diagnosis, research, treatment and care, thanks to generous donations and funds raised through events like the Mizen to Malin Boat Run. We place the highest importance on patient dignity and care at the Mercy, so that cancer patients feel comfortable and reassured throughout their treatment and their families feel welcomed. We are committed to deliver services and facilities that will continue to improve their experiences."

John continued, "The Mizen to Malin Boat run would not have been possible without our crew, both on land and sea,

including Denis and John who were advising in the background for getting us safely to our destination. A sincere thanks to everybody who helped to

raise such a meaningful sum of money for this very worthy cause, here in Ireland and indeed to our friends, clients and suppliers in the UK. I have

no doubt Tom Murphy and his team will use this money to work on new ways of tackling cancer, and help to improve the lives of many in our communi-

ties in the years ahead."

For more information on Mercy University Hospital Foundation's work visit www.mercyhospitalfoundation.ie.



(left to right): John Coleman, Sean Murray, Pat Shine, Denis Fleming, Patrick Fleming, Tom Murphy, Mercy Hospital, Cork, Deirdre Finn, Head of Fundraising, Mercy University Hospital Foundation and John Fleming. Pic: Martin Walsh.

MOTORING



CAR REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

The one and only Jeep Avenger E.V.



Normally when I am driving a new car I'm asked questions about the car by passers-by on the street or by people I meet in supermarket car parks. Last week in the new electric Jeep Avenger there was no mistaking the name of the car as the words 'All New Jeep Avenger' were written on the front doors and the back doors carried a sticker saying European Car of the Year 2023.

My test car was the Altitude version of Jeep's new compact Avenger; there are also Longitude and Summit versions. It came in a very attractive Ruby colour and with 18-inch

diamond cut alloys, it certainly was a car that you couldn't miss on the street or supermarket car park.

We are all guilty of using the word 'Jeep' too loosely at times; did you know that only Jeeps made by the original Jeep company in Toledo, Ohio are allowed to use the name on their vehicles?

Jeeps have been in use since World War II, but the Jeeps you see nowadays on Irish roads are much more refined. Jeep were part of Chrysler from 1987 and they are now owned by the Stellantis group and distributed in Ireland by the Gowan Group. The Avenger is built in Tychy,

southern Poland.

The Avenger is positioned below the Renegade and is the smallest vehicle on sale from Jeep; it's produced mainly for the European market. The 'Avenger' name has previously been used by Chrysler, namely the Dodge Avenger and Hillman Avenger.

For me when I hear the word 'Avenger' I think of the old British television espionage series where Patrick Mcnee, dressed in a bowler hat and carrying a black umbrella, played the part of John Steed. His co-stars included Honor Blackman and Diana Rigg.

We are used to driving

large models from Jeep, like the Cherokee, Compass, and Wrangler, so it was a big change to sit into a mid-side SUV like the Avenger.

The Avenger maintains many of the traditional Jeep traits with a seven-slot grille and chunky wheel arches. Also the headlamps are recessed into the bodywork and that means you won't damage the lights if you have a slight prang. The sound from indicators was different, it reminded me a bit of the ticking from grandfather clock.

I didn't like the touchscreen on the dash, not very user friendly. However, you do get an actual button for the radio

volume and I also liked the open storage area on the dash.

At first you would be forgiven for thinking it was a two-door car as the handles to open the back doors are discreet. And like Renault cars the car locks when you walk away from it and then opens when you approach, once the key is in your possession.

There is plenty of room for five well-built adults and leg and head room is fine. With a capacity of 380 litres, the boot is a decent size, but as usual with electric cars, no spare wheel. Also available in other colours

like a very bright Sun, Lake, Granite, Snow and Volcano.

When it comes to electric cars the most important question is range. Well the 51kWh battery should give you close to 390km with some steady driving.

Prices start at €35,995 and road tax is €120. It's a gorgeous car to look at and to drive. It will get plenty of marketing support from the Gowan Group, who are also working hard to revive the fortunes of Alfa, Fiat and Honda.

SPORT

Clonakilty Rugby Club unveils its impressive new 4G pitch

When Clonakilty Black Pudding's Colette Twomey, the sponsor of the town's rugby club, cut the red ribbon to open their brand new 4G pitch recently, the hard work of all at the Clonakilty Rugby Club was felt. Club chairman Eoin Hurley was happier than anyone to see it open, as it creates further opportunities he tells **Matthew Hurley** after a fantastic 2023.

“It’s extraordinary. It’s bigger than we dreamed about when you see it in reality; the space we now have and the opportunity to train. In any weather, we can stick to our schedules and it’s a huge opportunity to get the kids out there training,” says Hurley.

“We can plan better too. Previously, we used two pitches and the training area, where the astro is now. That wasn’t sufficient (for winter). We were using places like a small farmer’s field, the GAA astro in Ahamilla, the hockey club and tennis courts. Sometimes we even went to Inchydoney beach, depending on the tide. This will make our lives easier but also gives great opportunities to the kids in a very safe environment.”

The Astro has been two years in the making. One for the fundraiser. One year to build the new 4G pitch.

Munster rugby stars and Clon graduates John Hodnett and Cian Hurley, as well as Skibberreen grad Gavin Coombes were there to witness this historic event. As was Town Mayor Chris Hinchy.

To have the all-weather pitch now, especially with the storms the county has had over the past month couldn’t have been more perfectly timed. During a time when rugby is at the forefront of the news with the World Cup, it’s quite fitting that a rugby club got a brilliant new facility in West Cork.

“A lot of people have witnessed the construction throughout the summer but there were a lot of people that didn’t see anything at all and were absolutely flabbergasted. We had a great day, thankfully the weather was good to us. We had a good crowd as well, I couldn’t tell exactly how many but we certainly had 500 to 600 people there. There was great interest from the town and great support.

“We had a good branch of people down from the IRFU and Munster Rugby. It was a great day of celebration and went late into the night. Great sense of achievement, that was the main thing. It’s great recognition. We were delighted to have people out to join in on the celebrations,” the chairman adds.

It was a monumental occasion for the town too.

“It’s a win-win for everybody. At the moment we are in the infancy of the astro and have been approached by other clubs to see

if they can use it. We’ll see how it all works out and we’ll review it in six to eight weeks time. If there are slots, we’ll certainly make them available to those who are interested.

“Whether it is local schools or the local soccer club or whoever. Even some businesses have requested opportunities to use it for five-a-side or seven-a-side soccer for internal things. We’ve had interest from Macra as well. They have their own competitions from time to time. It’s great for the wider West Cork area I feel.”

The kids have heroes in John and Cian and they can realise their dreams even more now that they get the chance to play in a new all-weather pitch.

“They were really happy to be there. I think more importantly though, the kids can see that they have managed to succeed in a very tough environment and excel in it. We have girls now in the Munster U16s at the moment,” Hurley adds.

“We have some lads in various age groups, things that John and Cian did years ago and hopefully the kids from today will be just as successful. As a club, it gives us great pride in the two lads. We see more coming in the conveyor belt.”

After the ribbon was cut, the U14 girls team played a red versus green match to open the

astro in style. Fitting, considering the club has plans for an adult women’s team in the near future.

“We had a ladies team a long time ago, it kind of dwindled away. It’s almost 20 years since then. It is in a building phase at the moment, I can’t see us yet being able to put out a strong 15 with five or six substitutes, we simply don’t have the numbers,” Hurley explains.

“It’s a two to three year operation to get it fully up and running. We have a big conveyor belt of girls coming in. Our U16s and U18s are particularly big. We’re in development this year, probably next year too. It’ll be all go in the third year, in the Munster area anyway.”

A year of progress and success in 2023 and the club wants to push on from it. The growth is evident on and off the pitch.

“It’s a huge year for the club overall. We have achieved an awful lot. I think our girls group in particular has gone from strength to strength. We had a number of girls teams in the various leagues this year. The fact is though, to raise the money that we did and spend it well, it’s already been a fantastic year for the club. We’re absolutely thrilled with the product,” the chairman concludes.



L:R | Malachy Boohig (Clonakilty RFC President), Colette Twomey (Clonakilty Black Pudding CEO) and Eoin Hurley (Clonakilty RFC Chairperson). Pic: Dave Sheehan



OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Frank O'Flynn hosted a reception at Cork County Hall to congratulate participants that represented Cork County in the Community Games. Pictured with Representatives from Enniskeane. Pic: Gerard McCarthy



19-year-old Rebecca Hurley from Reenascreena, with Dedicace De Rhuyt, who recorded her first career victory in Lyre on September 9.

West Cork donors honoured by Irish Blood Transfusion Service



Margaret Twomey, Clonakilty; Jim O'Sullivan, Clonakilty; Shirley Shannon, Clonakilty; Donal Dwyer, Belgooly and Sean Collins, Drimoleague were some of the 167 blood donors from all walks of life who were honoured at an IBTS Awards Ceremony in Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork in September All pics: John Allen



Bernie Wilcox Skibbereen; Patrick O'Driscoll, Clonakilty and Helen McSweeney, Macroom.



Kathleen Russell, Ballinascarthy; Sheila O'Reagan, Clonakilty; John Twomey, Inchigeela and Louise Cullinane, Clonakilty



Myrtle Lewis from Kinsale who has donated blood 100 times



Robert Stout, Skibbereen; Paraic O'Gallochorr, Bandon and Donal O'Sullivan, Ballylickey

PRAYERS

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Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for this special one(mention favour). Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in his merciful eyes it will be your favour not mine. Amen. Say the above prayer for 3 days, promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. D.O.S.

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ST. JUDE'S NOVENA
May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and revered throughout the whole world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us. St. Jude worker of miracles pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless pray for us. Say this prayer nine times daily and by the end of the 8th day, your prayers will be answered. Say it for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thanks St. Jude. E.G.

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