



A question of science - We examine Clare entries to Young Scientist Exhibition

17-21 NEWS



Part 2 of our look back at the sporting year

29-32 SPORT

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Hospital trauma for attacked mother

Mother feels 'let down' by HSE after being left in ward with troubled son

Dan Danaher

A CLARE mother has revealed her traumatic experience in University Hospital Limerick (UHL) after being left in the same room as her son after he had allegedly assaulted her for the first time.

John has been diagnosed with Autism, Intellectual Disability, Tourette's Syndrome and Temporal Sequencing Disorder. Until January 2021, John was consistently described as very gentle with no major issues recorded.

The first time John (not his real name), allegedly struck his mother, Mary (not her real name), she said she had to get the Gardai and ambulance and they both ended up in UHL on April 23, 2021.

Mary doesn't know why she has been continuously assaulted by her son when she is on her own, but feels he has been badly let down by the HSE.

"When I asked him why he is doing this, he doesn't know. I think he has a fantasy world going on in his head because of spending too much time on his computer," she said.

"He sees me as this character and that character is bad. He is a wonderful person when he is not like that. None of us have blamed him."

"It is not his fault. When he was 16, his teacher said you have to keep him busy or he will get stuck in his head. He is not unique."

She says she can't understand how she was left in a hospital room with him after he allegedly assaulted her.

"We were in a room near a waiting corridor in the ED. John and me," she said.

"I was left with the person for the weekend who had been attacking me all morning. When he woke up on Saturday morning, he thumped me and knocked me off the chair."

"When I told a house doctor that my son had knocked me off the chair, he said we might try a bit of medication. My son is 16 stone."

"I got to UHL at about 5pm on Friday. I was in the room all day Saturday, his dad came at 11pm on Saturday. I went home to bed, I came back in on Sunday morning and we left at 3pm on Sunday with John."

"John was in a trolley and I was on a chair. Night staff did give me a tea and sandwich."

"Staff were terrible with John, they were rough taking his bloods and didn't take into account he has an intellectual disability. The nurses were appalling."

"I couldn't leave him on his own."

"No one came near me and asked what can we do for John. It looked like a psychotic episode and something snapped."

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WALKING TALL



Sean O'Connor, Lahinch, getting some fresh air with his dog Max on Lahinch Prom on Monday afternoon.

Photograph by Arthur Ellis

Clare man finding God in gay bars

Andrew Hamilton

A CLARE MAN, who has spent 17 years trying to bridge the gap between the Catholic Church and the LGBT+ community, believes that many gay Catholic priests are struggling under the current teachings of the Church.

Ballinruan man, Michael Moloney, has been travelling

Europe as an unpaid missionary since 2007, visiting places where gay people congregate and speaking to them about God.

He helped to found the Medjugorje LGBT Ministry in London in 2019, and through this has helped thousands of gay people to rediscover a relationship with God. He believes that the Church is changing, but the pace of change is frustratingly slow.

"The Church is so afraid of getting into this gay area, which I find so sad. There is a terrible lack of pastoral outreach and pastoral care. I have many friends who are gay priests and are struggling incredibly through shame and repression," he said.

"Unfortunately, so many priests went into the Church to hide from life, to hide their sexuality.

"My experience of God is the total opposite. God has given me life, has given me love and given me passion."

"Religion has given us all these rules and regulations. It is like driving behind a hearse when you have a sports car. But the Church is still learning. When you look at other religions, they have just as much of a problem with the gay issue and maybe more."

"So rather than getting angry, I want to be the solution. I think that God has given me a mission to shed light on God's love for gay people. So rather than criticising the Church, I want to help the church move forward and evolve. I want to take away the taboo, to take away the fear, God is love and God loves everybody."

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Females occupy higher paid roles at Clare County Council

Andrew Hamilton

THE annual Gender Pay Gap Report which was published by Clare County Council recently showed a Mean Gender Pay Gap of -10.29% meaning the average hourly rate of females is higher than the average hourly rate of males on the snapshot date.

While this does not mean that males are paid less than females

for doing the same job, it indicates that, on average, females occupy higher paid roles than males.

Employers with more than 150 employees in Ireland are required to publish their gender pay gap data before the end of 2024 and within six months of their reference date. All local authorities, including Clare County Council, use June 30 as their reference date.

The report also showed a Median Gender Pay Gap of -18.61 per cent. The median is the figure that falls in the middle of a range where the salary of all relevant employees is listed, from the lowest to the highest.

The median pay gap is the difference between the hourly rate of the middle-paid male and the hourly rate of the middle-paid female, expressed as a percentage of the male hourly rate.

Director of Service for Finance and Support Services Clare County Council Noeleen Fitzgerald said, "Publishing our gender pay gap data helps to reinforce our focus on supporting an open and inclusive workplace at Clare County Council. Our organisation is a place where all employees have the same opportunities for recognition and career development and are treated fairly and equitably at work."



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CC, JANUARY 3, 2025

East Clare sewage issues high up on Deputy Cooney's agenda

Dan Danaher

THE need to streamline bureaucracy for the provision of new sewerage treatment facilities in rural parts of Clare such as Broadford and Cooraclare was highlighted by Deputy Joe Cooney in his first meeting with An Taoiseach Simon Harris.

In an interview with *The Clare Champion*, Deputy Cooney revealed the Fine Gael leader has pledged to examine new ways to try and fast-track the provision of new wastewater treatment facilities in rural areas.

If more investment needs to be allocated to Uisce Éireann to develop more wastewater treatment facilities in rural areas, Deputy Cooney stressed this needs to be looked at.

"In the past, we were told if water charges came in money would be used to improve and provide new wastewater treatment plants. That is not the case now so other options need to be looked at."

"It is frustrating for places like O'Callaghan's Mills, Bodyke, Ogonnelloe and Flagmount who are trying to keep small shops and businesses going but unfortunately because of the lack of new housing developments we are seeing businesses closing down," he said.

Over the coming months, Deputy Cooney hopes to raise some of his key Election priorities in the Dáil such as more affordable housing, Ennis Hospital, childcare and infrastructure in rural parts of the county, which he described as a "disaster" at the moment.

"There are 51 settlements in Clare without adequate wastewater treatment facilities, which is not good enough. This needs to be addressed in the near future. We all know this isn't going to happen overnight, it is going to take time but we need to lay a good foundation to build on that in the future."

"Housing development could take place in rural villages if they had proper wastewater treatment facilities. A lot of these communities have good national schools, community

halls, GAA and soccer facilities, but they can't build houses because they don't have the required vital infrastructure."

Last year, Deputy Cooney attended a meeting between Clare County Council officials and members of the Broadford Action Group who were told it could take up to five years before a new sewerage scheme was completed in the village, which the former councillor acknowledged was "crazy".

The first sitting of the 34th Dáil on December 18 got underway at 10.30am and didn't conclude until after 6.30pm.

His first impression of the Dáil is the fact there is a big difference between Clare County Council and the premier house in the Oireachtas.

"There are 28 councillors in Clare County Council who work with the executive. There are 174 TDs in the Dáil, which has increased from 160. It will be interesting depending on the formation of the next Government and where ministers are appointed."

"It will be important that we have ministers in the Mid-West region and hopefully in the Clare area for the good of our county and the Mid-West region. I would like to see a better spread of ministers throughout the country."

"It is important we have more ministers from the Munster region and West of Ireland for rural Ireland. A lot has been achieved over the last few years, but a lot still needs to be done. It is important to have a say at the Cabinet table to get more funding for rural parts of the country," he said.

Dáil Clerk, Peter Finnerty read out the names of Timmy Dooley, Joe Cooney, Donna McGettigan and Cathal Crowe as the new Clare deputies who were elected with 170 others.

Independent Wexford Deputy Verona Murphy was elected as the new Ceann Comhairle. While Sinn Féin proposed and seconded Mary Lou McDonald as the next Taoiseach, she was decisively defeated.

The date for the resumption of the Dáil

on January 22 was agreed following another vote.

Deputy Cooney travelled to Dublin the night before to attend a Fine Gael parliamentary meeting.

Having returned to Clare, Deputy Cooney met various groups to discuss a variety of issues in the week leading up to Christmas.

The Killaloe Municipal District poll-topper described his first Fine Gael parliamentary meeting as a new and good experience.

"The big discussion point at the moment is the formation of the next Government. A lot happened the week after the General Election. Different groupings sat down to discuss the formation of the next Government. Then we had Christmas and now the New Year is coming in."

"It is important to get it right and get a good Government in place and the next Government think of rural Ireland and the Mid-West region as well as the Dublin catchment area so the whole country is given consideration," he said.

Deputy Cooney is sharing office space in the Dáil as outgoing deputies are still clearing out their offices. This includes 18 Fine Gael deputies who didn't seek re-election.

However, the O'Callaghan's Mills public representative expects to be allocated a new Dáil office early in the New Year.

While the former Fine Gael councillor is examining the possibility of using the former Post Office building at the Market as a constituency office in Ennis, no final decision has been made yet and he confirmed this may take another week or two.

Asked if he would be running constituency clinics, Deputy Cooney said he is considering holding clinics throughout the county but wants to set up his constituency office first.

"It is important to meet people in different parts of the county and see what people's concerns are so we can hear what we need to take back to Government so we can deliver for the county," he concluded.

BEST FOOT FORWARD



Grace Burton, Shannon, Ruth Quinn, Shannon, Luke Banks, Shannon, Bridget Murdoch, Cratloe, Christine Organ, Sixmilebridge and Ann Caffrey warm up before the Illaunmanagh Park Run in Shannon on Saturday.

Photograph by Arthur Ellis

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Clare Champion

Killaloe hotelier 'gobsmacked' by bridge plans

Dan Danaher

A WELL known hotelier has revealed he is "gobsmacked" about plans to pedestrianise the old Killaloe Bridge possibly next March on St Patrick's Day, in the absence of vital supporting infrastructure.

Eoin Little is totally opposed to the Section 38 unveiled by Clare and Tipperary County Councils, which intends to ban vehicular traffic on the old bridge once the new Shannon River Crossing opens to motor vehicles.

The Lakeside Hotel Manager doesn't believe it makes sense to "sell a plan to people that doesn't exist" because the necessary infrastructure isn't in place to close the old bridge.

He has called on the two local authorities to put their plans on hold for an extended period to see what the real impact of the new Shannon Crossing is on the existing one.

Mr Little recalled this proposal was never brought up when he was a member of the Lough Derg Marketing Group, which was previously led by former Tipperary Chief Executive Joe MacGrath.

"I am looking at plans quoting an increase in tourism. We will be bypassed with the new crossing and we are definitely bypassed if you close the existing bridge."

"A key part of the new plan is two sites for parking that don't exist. One of them

has been bought and the other is not for sale. I think it is a bit dishonest to present a plan that doesn't exist and they accept it doesn't exist as the infrastructure is not in place to do what they are doing."

He agrees that no heavy goods vehicles should be allowed to travel on the existing bridge once the new crossing is in place.

When construction started on the new Shannon River Crossing and Killaloe By-Pass, Mr Little acknowledged there would be plus and minuses including the negative of being bypassed but there would be an advantage of less traffic congestion for locals and tourists when the new crossing is operational.

"Everyone knows about the queues of traffic in Killaloe and Ballina. When the through traffic is taken away, that should increase the appeal for people to visit the twin communities."

Acknowledging pedestrianisation is proposed in the Killaloe Ballina Mobility Plan, which was drawn up in 2020, Mr Little described this as a "conceptual" plan that was never discussed with him, which on a personal level wasn't important, but considering the Lakeside Hotel is in situ 125 years, he felt it was wrong not to discuss it with key personnel in the two local towns.

"The fact they have gone for the nuclear option first without any infrastructure beggars belief. I have been told that this could happen in March. There are

no footpaths in place. As far as I am aware, there have been no accidents on the bridge."

"I was asked the question would I bring my kids across the existing bridge. I do bring them across the bridge and I will continue to do so. When the heavy goods vehicles are taken out, it becomes much more pleasant," he said.

Describing the traffic lights on either side of the existing bridge as a minor inconvenience, he pointed out people will not want to walk across the bridge on a "rainy November" day.

"Hotel guests want convenience. The last two summers have been terrible," he said.

While the two councils are referring to the Charles Bridge in Prague as what could be achieved with pedestrianisation, Mr Little pointed out there is another bridge where cars can travel very close to it.

"I think they are misselling this concept. I remember seeing the Killaloe Ballina Mobility Plan a few years ago and thinking some of those ideas would be lovely but nothing is in place five years later to implement this mobility plan."

"There isn't even a footpath from the Lakeside Hotel down to the town. That would be more important for me than pedestrianising the bridge."

"It could take years to provide the necessary infrastructure to support pedestrianisation, which may not happen."

"The date we are hearing for pedestrianisation is St Patrick's Day, the start of the tourist season, which is a big slap in the face to locals."

He felt it was very "cynical" to host the public information meeting a week before Christmas.

Senior Planner, Brian McCarthy recalled the two councils put a lot of work into producing the Killaloe Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan - a coherent blueprint for what could happen once the new Shannon River Crossing opened.

This Mobility Plan included two rounds of public consultation as well as input from statutory agencies before it was adopted by the two local authorities.

"This plan set out the vision for both local authorities to work together on a range of projects including the Killaloe Bridge, which was very clearly identified for pedestrianisation."

"Like any plan, it depends on co-operation between local authorities, land owners, and a range of agencies. It sets out very clearly what the two councils are trying to achieve," he outlined.

Acknowledging the Mobility Plan is "aspirational" and "impractical" in the absence of new car parks and footpaths on both sides of the old bridge, Mr McCarthy pointed out the two councils completed a very open and democratic process before the Mobility Plan was adopted.

He confirmed the two councils are hoping to make a joint application for RRDF funding next March.

Asked about the timing of the public information meeting a week before Christmas, Mr McCarthy pointed out it was very well attended with plenty of details provided by staff from Clare and Tipperary County Councils.

James Whelan of Killaloe River Cruises has warned traders could lose up to 20% of their business from unplanned visitors who would turn around and drive elsewhere if the old bridge is closed.

Mr Whelan has also proposed pedestrian safety could be improved on the old bridge with speed ramps or increasing the width of the pedestrian walkway before adding a new railing.

Mr McCarthy said both councils want to enhance the appeal of Killaloe and Ballina for locals and tourists.

Asked what will happen if councillors in one local authority vote for pedestrianisation and public representatives in the neighbouring one vote against it, Mr McCarthy said he fully respected the reserved function of councillors, but couldn't comment on supposition on what might happen.

In addition to the public information meeting, Mr McCarthy confirmed the council was prepared to engage with all residents, traders and stakeholders concerning this issue.



Kilrush woman dies following road traffic collision

THE 82-year-old woman who tragically died in a road traffic collision near Kilrush on Sunday has been named as Mary McMahon from Knock, Kilrush. She was the driver and sole occupant of one of the vehicles involved in the two-car incident, and was pronounced dead at the scene. The Knock resident was one of 16 people killed on the nation's roads in December and her death brings the total number of road traffic fatalities to 178 this year.

Mary McMahon (née O'Donnell) was originally from Shruleawn, Foyne, county Limerick and was predeceased by her husband, Sonny. She will be deeply missed by her sons Gerry, Pat and Paul, daughter Maria, sister Eileen, brother Leo, eight grandchildren, as well as her wider family, friends and neighbours. Through her death notice on the RIP.ie website, her family offered their appreciation to the emergency services crew who attended to their mother on the day.

The collision in which she died involved two cars and occurred on the R473 at Kilcarroll, around five kilometres from Kilrush town at approximately 2pm on Sunday last. Ms McMahon's body was removed to the mortuary at University Hospital Limerick before being released to her family. No other injuries as a result of the incident were reported.

According to figures released by the Roads Policing division of An Garda Síochána on Tuesday, December 31, the total number of roads' fatalities in the state was 178 this year; 71 of these included drivers, 35 passengers, 39 pedestrians, 18 motorcyclists and 11 pedal cyclists, and four E-scooter drivers. The total number of people killed on the country's roads when compared to 2023 was ten less than the figure for that year (183). The total number of collisions was 164 as compared to 172 for 2023.

Following the elderly woman's passing, the national death toll increased when on Monday a man died from the injuries he sustained in a traffic collision in county Louth on St Stephen's Day.

Meanwhile, the road at Kilcarroll remained closed throughout much of Monday for a technical examination by Garda Forensic Collision Investigators, and local diversions were put in place.

Following the fatal collision, Gardai made an appeal for any witnesses to the collision to come forward. They have requested any road users who may have camera footage – including dash-cam – and who were travelling in the area at the time to make their footage available to investigating Gardai. Anyone with any information is asked to contact Kilrush Garda Station on 065 908 0550, the Garda Confidential Line on 1800 666 111, or any Garda Station.

Death of Ballina rugby star

TRIBUTES have been paid to a former rugby star forward who died recently.

Pat Rohan, Cullinan, Ballina, died unexpectedly before Christmas.

A father to Ben, he was a brother to Margaret, Michael, Myra and Matt and uncle and second father to Mark, Adele, Dermot, Jennifer, Michael Junior, Danielle, Megan and James. He was adored by grand nieces and nephews.

Mr Rohan's career spanned three decades from the '70s through to the '90s, making his debut as a teenage lock forward in the 1974-5 season when the Ballina-Killaloe RFC reached the final of the Webb Cup, losing narrowly to Bohemians at Thomond Park. In the same year, a Ballina Killaloe RFC member recalled he acquired his nickname after replicating in a Webb Cup match in Galbally an error committed by the legendary Moss Keane in an international a few weeks previously.

The deceased became a fixture in the Number 8 position and five years after his debut he was one of five survivors of the 1976 team when the club lifted the Webb Cup after defeating Abbeyfeale RFC at Rathbane.

Mourners extended their sympathy while his remains reposed at his mother's home. Cremation took place in Shannon Crematorium on Saturday.

'Being brutally honest with God'

Clareman Michael Moloney is leading a push to reunite Church and LGBT+ community

Continued from page 1

"God doesn't have a problem with gay people. God loves everybody. But I think the church needs to download some of this wisdom from God and to talk about this and open this up. Pope Francis is trying to do this and he is getting a lot of stick for it."

"Things are getting better but they are moving very slowly. Some countries are more progressive than others. It is a generational thing. I am 42 and people of my age and younger find it quite easy to talk about sexuality but the older generation don't."

Born and raised in Ballinruan, Michael studied Math in Dublin before qualifying as one of Ireland's youngest actuaries at the age of just 23.

Despite this early success and the prospect of a lucrative career ahead of him, Michael began to suffer from anxiety and depression. As he struggled to understand his own sexuality, and how that affected his relationship with God, he faced an existential crisis.

At this lowest point in his life, he felt a calling from God and realised that his life's mission was to heal the wounds that exist between the LGBT+ community and the Catholic Church.

"I have 17 years of direct experience of Jesus. Experiencing God on a daily basis was loving, practical, accepting, kind, encouraging. He was the ideal father," he said.

"The first thing that I realised was that so many of the people in the Church that talk about God, have never really experienced him. They talk the talk but they don't know his love."

"That is why a lot of priests, even though they are nice people, let's face it, they look kind of miserable. There is no point talking about love with a frown. Many people have an experience of priests almost like they are angels of death. God is life and priests are dressed in black."

At this lowest point in his life, Michael says that he heard the voice of Jesus, and Jesus was asking him to go to Toulon in France.

"So Jesus started talking to me and I didn't know what to do. I mean, my life was a mess. The first thing that Jesus told me to do was to go to France and he named a town in the south of France that I had never been to before," he said.

"I was petrified. I had depression, I had anxiety and now, in the eyes of the world, I am hearing voices. I was scared that I would be labelled as a mental case."

"It was only these continuous religious experiences that kept me rising over the waters of this doubt. I came to realise that the bible never condemned gay people. When you read the teachings of the church you realise that God loved gay people just the same as anyone else."

"It gave me the strength to rise above it and see the homophobia. These people were talking about love and compassion, but they were only full of fear and taboos."

"It was at this time that I really started having these amazing mystical experiences. I would receive holy communion and I would feel this energy, this heat, going through me. It was like I was going to burst with love."

"It was like Jesus was teaching me about this love but he was also showing me the rot that was in the Church. When I spoke to priests about my experiences, I was told not to talk about any of it – don't talk about my experiences, don't talk about my sexual orientation. It was

horrendous.

"I was never so hurt in my life. Here I was, someone in need of help and healing, and God was bringing back to life. God had saved me and it was like they [the priests] were trying to kill me again.

"To be honest I was appalled by the lack of love, the lack of compassion, the lack of empathy, the lack of spirituality. "That pushed me to spend more time in the church itself. I had to go right to the source. I started praying and it was through that that my spiritual life increased.

"It gave me the strength to rise above it and see the homophobia. These people were talking about love and compassion, but they were only full of fear and taboos.

"It was at this time that I really started having these amazing mystical experiences. I would receive holy communion and I would feel this energy, this heat, going through me. It was like I was going to burst with love.

"It was like Jesus was teaching me about this love but he was also showing me the rot that was in the Church. When I spoke to priests about my experiences, I was told not to talk about any of it – don't talk about my experiences, don't talk about my sexual orientation. It was

reience, they didn't believe me, they had no time for it. That was very painful."

After Toulon, Michael travelled to India where he took part in a healing ministry for two years. He then spent a number of years in Australia and back Ireland, before eventually travelling to Croatia.

"Up until I arrived in Medjugorje I was more or less on my own. In Medjugorje I met another person, Seamus was his name," said Michael.

"He had a similar story to me except he had drugs and sex in his background, while my issues were really around depression and anxiety."

"He too was gay and had been touched by God. So we became very good friends and started travelling together, as friends."

"We started visiting gay places, gay clubs, gay pubs, gay beaches, whatever. We started reaching out to gay people, talking to them, praying with them, telling them about God's actual love for them."

"The response was amazing. The amount of rejection that gay people have felt."

"Every second gay person has

thought about suicide at one time or another."

"You hear the same pattern again and again. They were religious when they were young, maybe served in mass, thought about becoming a priest, realised they were gay, now they don't go to church anymore, struggle with suicide, struggle with depression."

"It became frustrating because, other than praying with them, there wasn't a lot that we could offer them. The Church is still very broken when it comes to any further help."

"In the process of all of this we met one fella, Tony, who was suicidal, we prayed with him and I felt a certain healing. Afterwards he asked me what had happened and I said that it was the Holy Spirit."

"He was transgendered and I told him that God loves him whether he is trans or whatever else. He moved into the apartment where we were staying and I started bringing him to mass, bringing him to adorations and to see some priests who were open to everybody."

"He was praying one day after that and wondering what I should do after Cro-

atia and I heard Jesus, as clear as day, say that I should go to London."

"So myself and Tony and Seamus ended up going to London."

Michael has lived for nearly two decades without a paying job, surviving on the donations and good will of others.

His move to London opened up a new chapter of his life, and he is now able to continue his outreach work within the structure of the Catholic Church.

"I spend 17 years living off of providence, which means that I had no source of income other than donations. When we arrived in London we knew nobody, not a single person," he said.

"We were guided bit-by-bit and eventually we met a priest who works with gay Catholics in London, he is a chaplain appointed by the Cardinal."

"He was exceptionally open to us. We would always be wary of a priest who was being nice to us because it could be a front for gay conversion therapy. But this priest understood God's love for gay people."

"He invited us to stay in his parish and we have been here for the past five years. He has become our spiritual

director, we have set up a ministry of outreach to the gay community."

"We continue to go out into the gay community, we go out into clubs and pubs, meet people and connect on the donations and good will of others."

"Honestly, dealing with the Catholic Church can be like teaching a granny how to use YouTube, you need a lot of patience."

"We called our group the Medjugorje LGBT Ministry, as Our Lady is appearing to people in Medjugorje at the moment. It is about praying from the heart, tell God your story as it really is."

"Talk about sexuality, gender, your struggles, all of it. Whatever you are struggling with, hook-ups or porn, whatever it is. It is about being brutally honest with God."

"The work has been branching out and I have been doing more. I have done a bit of work in Ireland in recent years."

"In some ways it can be quite frustrating, they [the Church] are still quite cautious about what they want me to say and what they don't want me to say."



Michael Moloney and his friend Rayne Vergara at the Cliffs of Moher.

North Clare man on mission to talk openly about spiritual awakening of gay people

Andrew Hamilton

"Like it was something that only happened to the pagans up in Dublin. It was something that wasn't spoken about in rural Clare at the time. My parents were very hard working. They had looked after us. As far as they were concerned, they had done everything right so it, [being gay], just wasn't an issue."

"That day sent a chill through my spine. It was like a death sentence for me. When it is coming from your own mother and you know that she is spiritual as well. There was a hopelessness, a despair. It was like I had been diagnosed with a terminal cancer."

"At that stage I did what a lot of people in that situation do, you go silent. I wasn't outwardly gay looking, so I just played along. People would have said that I didn't have time for a girlfriend because I was studying."

"I got the reputation for being a bit moody, a bit awkward. You are, because you are living with all of this repressed stuff. You want to get away from Clare, you want to get away from Ireland."

"When I qualified as an actuary that's what I did, I started a new life for myself in Paris. I needed to be out of Ireland, away from all of it and I wanted to find myself."

"So I went to Paris and after a few months I had what I call a nervous breakdown. At that point my whole world came crumbling down. I started wondering about what is what when it comes to religion, spirituality, sexuality – all of it."

"She whispered to me that he was 'G.A.Y.'. She said, 'isn't it awful, what would I do if any of mine were like that, than God that you are not'."

"I never forgot that. I think experiences like that mark you when you are that age. I couldn't exactly say that she was homophobic. Being gay was never spoken about, there was just this fear. If you grew up in a religious environment, I think that people felt that they were protected or maybe vaccinated from being gay."

"I had a breakdown and it took me eight months to get over it. I was back in Clare at that time and going back between Ballinruan and Ennis to get treatment. After eight months I took a job in Dublin and I started to get panic attacks again, except worse than before."

"Having grown up in a deeply religious household, Michael came to a new understanding of God at this time."

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"Having grown up in a deeply religious household, Michael came to a new understanding of God at this time."

"I was doing this meditation at home one day and all of a sudden, totally out of the blue, I had this inner vision of Jesus and Mary looking at me."

"I am the last person on Earth who would have expected that. I wasn't even looking for Jesus. I don't know did I even believe in Jesus at that stage. But it gave me great hope."

"From that day until now I still have daily experiences of Jesus, of Our Lady, of Saints, of grandparents. It was a spiritual awakening that this change is possible."

"This spiritual awakening changed the course of Michael's life."

"God put it in my heart to talk about the spiritual awakening of gay people. There are no examples in the church of someone who is gay. You have people who used to be alcoholics, people who used to be poor, or this or that. But there is no example of a gay person. So I wanted to talk about my journey to God as a gay person," he said.

"I knew I was gay but I didn't know what to do. It was like I was throwing myself at God's mercy saying, here I am God, what are you going to do with me?"

"It took a good few years. I got involved in the Church environment and there were a lot of people pressuring me not to say that I was gay. There were people saying that I could be 'straightened out'. So I gave it some time, but as time passed it became clear to me that I was getting more gay if anything."

"It was like being right handed or left handed. So there was no real notion that I could be made not gay."

"The church has unfortunately abused people in this way in the past. I told people that I could be a holy gay or an unholy gay."

"While Michael believes that a lot must change in the Church if member of the LGBT+ community are to be comfortable as fully practicing Catholics, he does feel that this change is possible."

"The Church doesn't teach anywhere that gay people are condemned to hell. But there has been an unspoken taboo about it down through the years. It is not mentioned. It is almost like even God himself doesn't know what to do with those gays," he said.

"This contributes to the prejudice that exists. The association that is made between being gay and being a paedophile, the taboo, the shame. The Church has contributed enormously to all of that and it still does."

"I still get called all sorts of names and often times it is from Church people. Pope Francis has done a lot to talk about the gay issue and he gets labelled as a heretic and a false Pope. It is a massive issue and the Church unfortunately is not practicing what it is teaching. In the catechism it says very clearly that homosexual people are loved by God and called to holiness like anyone else, but yet the Catholic Church is one of the most discriminatory organisations in the world when it comes to gay people."



Michael Moloney.

"I met a therapist then who taught me about breathing techniques and calming your mind, things like subconscious belief systems."

Ryan recalls life of Biddy Early - 'The Wise Woman of Clare'



Author Meda Ryan, whose book looks back at the life of the infamous Biddy Early.

Jessica Quinn

2024 marked 150 years since the death of the infamous Biddy Early, however despite the passage of time the legends surrounding this four time widowed woman continue to live on.

Biddy Early The Wise Woman of Clare by Meda Ryan, a book that had been out of print for some years, is now back in print.

The Ennis based historian and author tells us she was surprised when her publishers Mercier Press informed her that they were reprinting the book, although she is regularly asked where the book first published in 1978 could be obtained.

"Biddy is dead 150 years yet legends still surround this controversial woman. Arguments still persist as to whether Biddy was a witch or a person of God because she possessed powers and natural gifts beyond the comprehension of those who knew her personally. The very mention of her name in any part of Ireland, especially in County Clare, releases an astonishing flood of stories of cures, foretelling s, warnings and broken spells," says Meda.

Reflecting on writing the book she says, "Initially when asked by Mercier Press to write a book about Biddy, I was sceptical about Biddy as a person, and wondered if the stories were legend, but the more research I did the more fascinated I became. Due to the

stories, I heard and read I have to say, I was scared sometimes, but I felt convinced I had a task to do. I had to write that book. It was like the fitting of large jigsaw pieces together."

In her well-researched publication, there are many unusual stories. Meda recalled to *The Clare Champion* just a brief summary of Biddy's extraordinary life, with lots more for readers to explore in her book.

"Biddy was born in Lower Faha, a townland between Feakle and Gort in 1798, and christened Brigid Ellen Connors. She was called Biddy Early, after her mother. Her mother's maiden name was Early, and she used to pick wild herbs and wild flowers and make a brew. She continued to do this for the rest of her life.

"Winter 1816 almost 18 months working hard for him; he raised the rent. She and other workmates refused to pay the higher rent for living in the hovels. She decided to lead a protest. When his henchmen came to evict her.

"She stood on the doorway, her red hair piled high. That night they burned Sheehy mansion, and his body was never found. Then she wandered the roads and eventually went to the House of Industry, known as the Poor House. For her keep she had to work - scrub the stairs and the corridors. She got into trouble one day and this resulted and her pride and joy - her long flowing hair was cut short.

"One early morning Biddy left and again and wandered the roads, went to fairs. One day she got friendly with a man named Pat O' Malley, a widower. Though he was 20 years older than her and had one son, when he asked her to marry him, she agreed, and moved in with him in Gurteenreigh. Now she had security and

good-looking with long-flowing red hair.

"There were constant battles between her and her relatives. So early one morning she left, and wandered the roads. After some time, she got domestic employment from an unmarried Landlord named Sheehy. Often, he would abuse her. She used to collect herbs, nettles and wild flowers and make a brew. She continued to do this for the rest of her life.

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was mistress of the house.

"She continued to collect herbs and make her cures; local people admired her talent. She would never take money but she would take gifts. Many brought gifts of poteen. Her husband drank more than was good for him, so after a few years he died. But his son now had the little farm.

Daniel O'Connell came to her one day around this time - however, their discussion was kept confidential. Sometime later, she married her step-son, and was mistress of the house, and she continued with her cures. Neighbours would come and people from far away some she would always warn them to be careful with the little bottle of 'the cure' she gave them. Her step-son died in 1840. But she had a son born to her and they worked together.

"When she'd travel out to town with her husband, she kept the bottle under her shawl, wrapped in a red cloth. Long lines of horse-drawn carts would line the road to Biddy's house.

"People came from far and near hoping to get a 'cure', a portion from Biddy or perhaps tell them something about their future. She had become notorious, and the priests would warn people about her - they would denounce her from the pulpit, saying to stay away from her. Some saying that she is in touch with the devil.

"The police found her a nuisance and believed she had poteen

bottle fall" or some such advice. If something happened the bottle this appeared to be an omen that something bad would happen. The patient would die, or get continually worse, so 'the story' goes.

"She kept a bottle which became known as Biddy Early's bottle. She would look into this and get the information she needed to know and give the caller a little bottle. She would always say "Be careful on the way home" or "don't drop the bottle" or "mind the humpy bridge, don't let the

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"The police found her a nuisance and believed she had poteen

in the house, but could never find any when raided. So, they decided to try her as a witch. They took her to court and the witnesses they had lined up did not turn up, as they believed it would be unlucky to go against Biddy. She was with her shawl over her shoulders, dressed in her finery including her frilly bonnet and travelled in the cart with her husband. Due to lack of evidence the case was dismissed.

"Long lines of horses and carts lined the road and over the humpy bridge while they waited patiently to meet Biddy inside in the cabin or at the half door. Her husband Tom continued to drink the gifts of poteen that came to the house, and died in 1868. Meanwhile her son also died. She was now over 70 years of age, but still very good-looking, but lived on her own at night, which she never liked.

"As people continued to bring poteen as a gift. Her young husband drank. Sometimes he had 'good' days and some 'bad' days. After eight months of illness, he died in the cabin April 30, 1870. So, at the age of 72, Biddy was a widow for the fourth time.

"She was often not well, and at night-time she was known to be at her fireside 'telling her beads'. It was said the she 'never performed any cures, only in the name of the Holy Trinity'. A regular caller to

her bedside was neighbour and friend, Pat Loughnane. Anxious to bring about reconciliation between Biddy and the Church, he asked her if she would agree to a visit from Fr Connellan, though for many years she did not go to Mass, because she would have to listen to the priest denouncing her from the alter.

"In the afternoon of April 22, 1874, she breathed her last. Though having been excommunicated in life, 27 priests attended her funeral. She is buried in an unmarked grave.

'Biddy Early - The Wise Woman of Clare' by Meda Ryan is now available. Living in Ennis, Meda is a historian and prominent journalist. She is the author of many other books including *'The Day Michael Collins Was Shot'*, *'Tom Barry: IRA Freedom Fighter'*, *'Michael Collins And The Women Who Spied For Ireland'*, *'The Real Chief: Liam Lynch'*, and *'Thomas Kent 16 Lives'*.



Visits to UHL curtailed due to flu outbreak

THE HSE Mid West have issued a statement advising that due to high numbers of patients with flu in University Hospital Limerick visiting at all hospitals in the UHL Group is being curtailed to one visitor per patient.

The statement advises that "No-one should visit hospital if they feel they have flu. University Hospital Limerick (UHL) is managing high attendances at its Emergency Department (ED) and significant inpatient admissions, driven by a spike in hospitalisations of people with flu over the past week."

"As of Monday, December 30, there were 76 patients with flu in UHL alone. This is a 204% increase on the 25 recorded on Monday of last week."

"Given the demand on services, we are immediately taking the following actions: restricting visitors across all sites to one visitor per patient; Children not permitted to visit adult wards at this time; Visiting hours of 2pm to 4pm and 6pm to 9pm to be strictly enforced."

To curtail any further spread within the community, the UHL Group is urging visitors to clean their hands on entry and exiting of wards and to wear face masks, which are available in the hospital.

'This is part of a national trend, which saw flu hospitalisations across the country increase from 742 people on Friday to 809 on Saturday.'

HSE Mid West is urgently appealing for people not to visit any of our hospitals at all if they feel they have flu.

ED attendances at UHL over the last three days have averaged 288 compared with 2023's average daily attendance of 219. Over the past two weeks attendances have increased by 30% compared to 2023. This is part of a national trend, which saw flu hospitalisations across the country increase from 742 people on Friday to 809 on Saturday.

Bernard Gloster, HSE CEO, said, "We expect the number to reach around 900 in the coming week and are taking several measures to prepare for the potential surge in hospitalisations

and intensive care admissions due to the flu."

To respond to the demand in the Mid West, as elsewhere in the country, community healthcare measures have been ramped up, including longer opening hours at some GP practices and increased out-of-hours services.

HSE Mid West urges people across the region to assist in curtailing the spread of flu by staying at home if you have symptoms. People should adhere to simple coughing and sneezing etiquette, such as using a tissue or coughing/sneezing into your elbow, and not your hands. You should consider all available healthcare options, including local pharmacies, your family doctors, or the ShannonDoc out-of-hours GP service on 0818 123 500. Visitors to our hospitals are asked not to visit if you have any symptoms of vomiting or diarrhoea, a cough, cold or a temperature.

HSE Mid West is also providing access to urgent care facilities as an alternative to ED. These include:

Injury Units in Ennis, Nenagh and St John's Hospitals, operating 8am-8pm all year including bank holidays and weekends. Patients are typically seen and treated in under two hours, no appointment is needed, and there is no charge if you are referred by your GP.

Medical Assessment Units are located in Ennis, Nenagh and St John's hospitals. They provide an alternative option for GPs to secure prompt assessment and treatment of medical patients who otherwise might have presented to ED at UHL.

Additional consultants are on duty in UHL at weekends and bank holidays to assist with patient discharges and hospitals have limited surgical treatments to urgent cases only.

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*Based on a modern 6 MW turbine and CSO 2022 data on household electricity consumption.

windenergyireland.com





Sharmila Bano with Conor Anderson, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, and Gráinne Ryan, Climate Action Programme Manager.

Photograph by Conor Healy/Picture It Photography

Climate consciousness is the common thread that unites us all

Named as Clare's Climate Ambassador in 2024, Sharmila Bano says there is plenty of 'active hope' for the future

Sharon Dolan D'Arcy

CLARE'S new Climate Ambassador, Sharmila Bano who has been recognised by An Taisce for her work with Loop Head Climate Action, has been reflecting on the path that led to her award. Ms Bano was one of 148 citizens from a wide range of backgrounds chosen to be Climate Ambassadors in 2024. This intergenerational programme enables proactive citizens who decide to upskill in climate science, solutions and communications to carry out climate actions with support from An Taisce.

The mindful consumption campaigner set up the Loop Head Climate Action team, runs youth climate workshops and involved in flood risk assessment locally in west Clare. An Taisce has described her as a "Future Citizen" - someone who is not just safeguarding their local community today, but also working to protect our future planet and the future of many generations to come.

A natural climate communicator, Sharmila has an affinity for youth education and inclusion, and she transitioned BT Young Scientist's student interactions into peer-to-peer learning workshops with schools in West Clare. She designed and implemented a Youth Education Programme called 'Awareness to Action' for 85 students in nine local schools exploring climate-conscious topics through conversations and games.

Reacting to her award, Kilkee based Ms Bano said it caught her off guard and attributed it to the upbringing she received from her parents as well as the guidance from her University of Limerick (UL) professor.

For Sharmila, the award was a passion project and the trajectory of

how she even arrived at it, "is how life happens" she claims. Encouraged to apply by Tony Collins of Loop Head Together, she looked at it as the ideal avenue to bring a project she had developed during the pandemic to the field.

Adamant she could not have done it on her own, she says, "There was a series of events which gave me a helping hand so it was not a solo story. To me, it is a common love; a common thread that unites us all, but to see it in action is pretty empowering."

Sharmila, who is originally from India, has lived in Ireland for over 20 years. Having lived widely in both highly urbanised areas and rural areas as well as travelling both areas, she personally experienced eroding ecosystems across the world, and now believes it is impossible to miss the awareness and hide the science. But the pandemic hit her hard when she had to spend part of it back home in India as her father passed away. She feels that that time was an eye opener for her with Covid visibly bringing out our inter-connectedness to nature, and then when humans stepped back, nature came out.

For her, there was a clear connecting of the dots between human impact and nature. Recalling that time, she says CO2 emissions actually did go down but they didn't do down as much as expected. On the other hand, companies like Amazon made billions in the pandemic because people were all at home and buying more stuff online not helping the fact that the root cause of the climate crisis is over consumption.

Once she left India, motivated by her renewed climate awareness she deliberately decided to return to education studying both in Chicago, and at UL for a higher diploma in sustainability.

"I learned so much and was inspired by the infectious hope of the next generation in exchange for my knowledge... An Taisce really helped me shift that perspective from hard facts to the simple joy of human contact, and having the joy of the young ones."

Their training helps you to understand you can find joy and synergy in activism... The Awareness to Action Programme really was developed out of my own journey, and as I went along, it is a climate education, a grassroots activation and acceleration programme by creating 'raindrop ripple

effects' in the community. "It prioritised the young voice in their own natural home environment, preparing them as 'future custodians' of Loop Head by exchanging ideas with nationwide partnerships. It was not only impactful but fun connecting together."

Designed to develop that ripple effect, her programme advocates first making small changes, and then from ripple to ripple through several small

changes made, they soon amount to a big change. And she wanted to accelerate that, because she believes we are racing against a narrow window of time to activate.

"The focus is basically on underscoring climate science - the where, why and how. It connects the dots from everyday lifestyle changes you can make to the wider stuff. Then the action is locally based but tying in to viability, and this is very important because we are a transactional society and our currency is money. Everybody has different priorities; some are at it for social justice for example, but whatever the rhythm, we are all of this planet."

"Everyone has a small common vision for our homes or for our young ones, and we are united in that."

Asked was she mindful of climate anxiety in students when delivering the programme, she says, "I was very sensitive to climate anxiety. I worked with 5th and 6th class and TY students, so it was age 11 plus I was speaking to. At first, they were overwhelmingly engaged with great enthusiasm and co-operation. What I really appreciated was their honesty; they were very thoughtful and there was plenty of humour - we were able to laugh - and they expressed a range of thoughts and a lot of feelings. The programme was kept very interactive so there was a lot of learning from most angles."

Sensitive to the hard realities and tough facts, she had an idea to bring together two participant workshops. So they talked about the science, and at one workshop they took this knowledge and together envisaged their potential climatic futures together. At that point, the students were practising what kind of potential future they might be living in, so when they are there, they will know they have prac-

tised for it.

"You combine science with imagination and look at what could happen, and then it gives you a sense of agency so what other steps can we maintain in our lifestyles then? That is all well and good; it is hearts and mind so we had to acknowledge and express how we act and feel."

She is also at the beginning of an exciting and much-needed initiative called the 'Active Hope' programme which is about building resilience in young people and about acknowledging a range of emotions and then sharing them within their group. "We are all in this together and that gives us the ability to move and organise activism," she says.

Aside from her education work, through community engagement, she helped others learn about energy consumption and grouped local activists to set up the Loop Head Climate Action team.

Another worthwhile project for her was her involvement in 'The Big River Watch' - an Irish collaboration with the UK which forms the basis of river monitoring. In the 'Future Thinking' An Taisce module, she ran circular fashion events and ran a team swap shop with the Ukrainian community locally. She also did a flood risk assessment for the peninsula, with her UL professor's blessing.

Working with five BT Young Scientists, her idea was to have a youth-to-youth engagement or a peer-to-peer experience. "So the adult voice is very jaded and I speak from personal experience with teens when I speak to them, but when they talk to their friends they are all tuned in and they've even got their own lingo," she says.

As part of her research, Sharmila attended the Young Scientist competi-

tion where she spoke with 40 stalls and did a lot of preparation work canvassing schools and speaking with them. She noticed that around 50% of the stalls were about climate and the other 50% were about artificial intelligence (AI) but thinks there is "a certain synergy" between the two.

Happy to be living so close to the Loop Head Peninsula, she views the region as quite multi-cultural with a progressive mindset. From a climate perspective, she believes that Loop Head's location is fascinating, with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the large Shannon Estuary on the other so it has both river and coastal impacts.

When asked for advice on how people can start climate action, she says, "I find the holiday season is a great opportunity. It is a time when we generate much waste but it is also a time when families gather together. So this Christmas, I invite family and friends to gather around, check their carbon footprints with Climate Hero and World Wildlife Fund's online carbon calculators and make a pledge for the New Year on any one or two climate actions as a start."

Finally, Sharmila said attributed her award to people who helped her, thanking An Taisce Climate Officer Monica Mullins, 5th, 6th, and TY students and teachers from Kilkee, Doolin, Kilbaha Primary and Secondary Schools; BT Young Scientists from Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine (Kerry); Loretto Secondary (Cork); Athlone Community College (Westmeath); St Mary's High School (Cork); Gaelscoil Láimhín (Limerick); Dr Annmarie Ryan from UL Kemmy Business School; Anna and Roisin from Project Mobilise who were funded by CLDC SICAP; Global Action Plan; Kilrush Ladies Club; and Tony Collins and Liz Greehy from Loop Head Together.



The Self Help Africa women's group in Iten, Kenya, say thank you for the support they received from Self Help Africa and the people of Ireland through Irish Aid.

'We breathe the same air'

Self Help Africa is supporting people in 14 countries on the continent as they battle a grave humanitarian crisis

Ronan Scully — Self Help Africa

people at immediate risk of starvation or death, the rich world can no longer look away.

A grave humanitarian emergency is developing before our eyes, and yet it seems as if the world's eyes are averted. East Africa faces a convergence of increasingly recurring and intensifying climate crises, mainly drought and flooding, conflicts, disease outbreaks, severe hunger and economic shocks. These, including the impact of El Niño conditions, are driving millions of people into displacement, acute food insecurity and malnutrition, public health emergencies, and destitution with approximately 25% of the population experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2024.

I have worked with charities endeavouring to end poverty and suffering in poorer parts of the world for most of my adult life, 38 years in total so far. And it is sometimes a case of 'two steps forward, one step back.' At the moment, as I see it, not long ago we were reporting great economic growth in parts of Africa, particularly East Africa, however, now at the end of 2024, these regions are on the cusp of a global food crisis like nothing they have seen before.

The reasons for this are complex, but put simply, a combination of devastating floods and unseasonal drought and unrest due to conflicts especially in parts of Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. The Global Hunger Index is reporting that people do not have enough food to eat in 42 countries around our world and that famine is now looming in Sudan, Somalia, parts of Northern Ethiopia, Northern Kenya and Gaza due to conflicts. In 2012, member states of the UN pledged that they would work to eliminate global hunger by 2030.

In addition, there were 281.6 million people in 59 countries and territories facing "crisis level or acute food insecurity". The report points out that there was "notable progress" made to tackle hunger between 2000 and 2016. However, this progress has slowed notably in the last number of years because of the effects of Covid, many wars and conflicts, the higher costs of living and the severe effects of climate change, which now makes the target of zero hunger by 2030 looking "unlikely" to be achieved. These findings are extremely worrying.

Horrible Hunger

THE horrific stories of hunger are truly shocking. Millions upon millions of people in the region are in need of food assistance, most of which are the rural poor farming communities left with barren fields and empty grain stores. The longest drought in recorded East Africa history has given way to rains and flash flooding, and the ongoing conflicts are continuing unabated in places.

Food and energy prices remain stubbornly high. 45.9 million people are facing high levels of food insecurity with escalating hunger levels in Sudan, northern Ethiopia, Somalia, parts of Kenya and South Sudan. 10.8 million children under the age of five years are facing acute malnutrition by the end of 2024 and this is expected to worsen during the lean season. With many

Please Don't Look Away

BOTH local commentators and international observers blame the current crisis on global warming and serious conflicts in the region, and an inability of rural poor and vulnerable households to adapt to the impact of changing climate on their ability to produce the crops they need to put food on the table, from one month to the next.

The environment in East Africa is burning. It's melting. It's flooding. It's depleting. It's drying. It's dying and is evoking a dystopian type of future. In my work with Self Help Africa we are so thankful to Irish Aid and the Irish public for their continuing support. I have heard from African colleagues and many African families I have recently visited, particularly in Ethiopia and Kenya and east Africa that they have one plea for the rest of the world.

"Please don't look away. Please help. Our children are suffering; our children are dying. We feel forgotten. Everyone is suffering." They are suffering together and they're hoping to find drops of clean water, nutrition for their children and medicines to prevent the worst from happening.

Addressing climate change is a human rights issue for everyone and there is still time to act and make a better, more equal and safer world for all. But that time is now. We must not deliver this future of hunger and suffering to our children, and their children especially the children of East Africa. And we don't have to, for we, the generation with the most powerful technological tools in history, have the capacity to respond to it and change it.

No Guarantees

THIS is where the organisation I work for comes in. Across East Africa and many parts of Africa, Self Help Africa is implementing programmes that are focused on improving agricultural production, helping households to adapt to changing climate, and supporting



Young children play outside their school in Kenya.

for many millions of people across sub-Saharan Africa and East Africa included. As anyone who is involved in farming in Ireland will tell you, there are no guarantees when it comes to producing on the land. Yields fluctuate all of the time, depending on the weather, while prices for farm commodities also go up and down, depending on the seasons, and numerous other factors.

In Africa, it is no different, and today the changes in climate are putting more pressure, and more challenges in the way of vulnerable poor communities for whom the margins – between having enough and not – are narrow indeed.

At Self Help Africa with help and support from Irish Aid, we are responding as best we can to this crisis, supporting communities who are on the frontline of changing climate in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and other parts of East Africa, as they struggle to make ends meet against near insurmountable odds.

We are introducing new crop varieties to small-scale farming households, promoting alternate drought tolerant crops and supporting irrigation development, just some of the ways that can help families to survive. New and improved breed livestock are also being promoted, while 'climate smart' farming techniques are being encouraged

to allow farmers to grow food even in these tough conditions.

'Climate smart' farming might sound complex, but it can be a lot simpler than it sounds! For example – leaving stems and stalks of grain crops in the field after harvesting is one simple, yet effective way to retain moisture in the soil and keeping the sun from beating down directly on the earth, while 'zero tillage' planting – a method that encourages farmers to dig just a small hole for each seed, rather than tilling an entire field, is another way of keeping whatever moisture does exist, in the ground.

Fact of Life

TODAY, more than half of the world's population lives on less than two euros a day. Almost one billion people across the globe, most of them children, live with hunger or malnutrition as a regular fact of life. These numbers are daunting, but they should not paralyse us. They should instead call us to reflect and take action.

Rather than looking at the current crisis in parts of Africa as too big for us to tackle, we should look at it as an opportunity to put our care for humanity into action, to be the carers in society, to lift up the virtues and ethical principles that enhance human dignity. We can make a difference if we mobilise

together in unity to combat poverty, because we have done so in the past.

There is reason for hope and no excuse for inaction. As I said at the start of this piece, the work is however sometimes frustrating, as the changes in climate and situations of conflicts can at times unravel months and years of good work.

Code Red

EAST Africa's global request for help couldn't come at a worse time, as other large-scale humanitarian crises unfold in places like Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. But we cannot turn our backs on East Africa – we must learn from what the history books tell us about the region. You need only look back to the Horn of Africa drought in 2011, which affected 13 million people and resulted in more than 250,000 dying from hunger in Somalia and the Horn of Africa countries.

Back then, the early warning signs began to emerge a full year earlier, yet the international community took until the peak of the crisis to act at a sufficient level. But it was too late and much of the damage had been done already. In the years that followed that scandalous failure of the international system, a range of preventive measures were put in place to ensure

history did not repeat, including the implementation of large-scale drought resilience programs and strong policy commitments from donor countries. But here we are again.

This drought is forecast to be the strongest in Ethiopia and Malawi in 30 years, yet funding commitments from international donors are worryingly low. Ireland must play its part too like it did in 2011 when it gave much needed funding for the Horn of Africa drought response and was commended for its leadership in galvanising other donors to act.

This is no ordinary year in Ethiopia. This is a "code red" and it needs to be treated like one. Hunger, drought, starvation and utter despair – will it ever end? Has nothing been achieved for all the money, time and effort that has gone into trying to end this kind of African human tragedy?

The question is totally legitimate – as is the frustration and bewilderment that millions of people in Africa appear to be as vulnerable to this kind of catastrophe today as they were more than a quarter century ago. But I know from my own experience that things have changed in Africa a great deal over the past 30 years or so, and that even in the tragedy and suffering that we saw recently in Somalia, Sudan, parts of Kenya, The Congo, Ethiopia and other parts of Africa, there are signs of hope for the future.

Glimmers of Hope

DESPITE the challenges, change is possible and there are glimmers of hope. At a national level, change will depend on policies that place food security and sustainable farming at the core of climate action plans. These policies must be shaped by dialogue between governments, the private sector and civil society.

Collaborations are vital to addressing food insecurity and supporting African farmers. Many countries, including in sub-Saharan Africa, have made bold public commitments to improve food access for the people living there. Ethiopia has committed to allocating 10pc of its national budget to agriculture. Such public pledges drive accountability, but without international support, many countries are unlikely to meet their targets.

International change requires reform of international finance to reduce debt burdens and allow governments to invest in the agriculture sector and direct support through innovative and effective partnerships. Our Government, through Irish Aid's Africa Agri-Food Development Programme, for example, offers matched funding to Irish businesses seeking to partner with companies in sub-Saharan Africa.

These collaborations are vital to addressing food insecurity and supporting African farmers as they scale up production. Self Help Africa partnered with the EU in Kenya and Zambia to deliver €70m in investments for small and medium-sized enterprises during the last four years, connecting

more than 300,000 farmers to new markets, introducing "climate-smart" farming practices and creating more than 2,600 jobs.

World Food Day which was held recently serves as a powerful reminder that feeding the world's population remains a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to refocus our efforts on Africa, all too often forgotten as other crises grab the headlines. Remember No Food = No Future!

Thank You

THOUGH I saw suffering on my last trips to Kenya and Ethiopia where I was joined by Alan Kerins Warriors for Humanity project along with 30 GAA stars from Ireland including Ciara Crogan from Spencerville and Muireann Scanlon from Cratloe and both part of the Clare County GAA Team where we planted thousands of trees as part of the Self Help Africa and the GPA One million Tree's campaign.

I also met some truly beautiful people – all of them friendly and welcoming. I came away feeling richly blessed to have met them and as though I was the one being helped, not the other way round.

By an accident of birth, I am Irish, but I could have just as easily been Kenyan, Ethiopian or African. The various trips to Kenya and Ethiopia and indeed many of the other African countries I have lived and worked in made me realise the numerous similarities there are between us all.

We breathe the same air. We walk the same way. Our spirits need love and acceptance. Our bodies need food, water and sleep. We share the same humanity. We are really not so different.

My lasting impression of Kenya and Ethiopia on my most recent trips was not the scale of their poverty, but the spirit of their people. Drought, floods, climate change, hunger and physical suffering have not stolen their hope. They remain joyful and hopeful when they have every reason to be depressed. You can hear hope in their songs: 'The Lord will bless someone today. It may be you. It may be me. It may be someone by your side'.

Thank you for helping us to help them and give them a hand up on their journey through life.

To Make A Donation

AT Self Help Africa through the help and support of Irish Aid and the generosity of the Irish public and our partners on the ground, our long term strategy expressly identifies the changing climate and the problems it can create as the context within which we must implement our work.

To make a donation you can make a credit or laser card donation by phoning 01 6778880 or donate through our website www.selfhelpafrica.org or simply send whatever you can afford to Self Help Africa, Westside Resource Centre, Seamus Quirke Road, Westside, Galway.



2024 THROUGH THE LENS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KELLY



Tony Kelly of Clare makes his victory speech after receiving the Liam MacCarthy cup following their All-Ireland final win over Cork at Croke Park.



First class pupils backstage during rehearsals for the Barefield National School Spring Concert in glór, Ennis.



Mick O'Dea of Cree and Pat Commane of Kildare lead a horse with turf baskets during the Monster Field Day as part of the annual Festival Of Fun in Kilmihil.



Judges Ruth Brown, Down, and Tim Carey, Westmeath, eyeing up the stock on parade at Kildysart Show.



Someone To Look Up To... Young Senan O'Grady of Carlow, whose dad comes from Kilmihil, patiently waits for an autograph from Clare player Robin Mounsey as the latter does an interview following their Division 1A Round 2 win over Waterford at Walsh Park.



Let Sleeping Dogs Lie... Toni Keating and her four-month-old son Seamus wait for their dog Daisy to wake up and vacate the child seat while on a visit to Kilfenora.



Collectables dealer Bernard Daffy selling his wares at the Point-To-Point in Quakerstown.



A fan shields his eyes from the sun during the Munster Hurling League Group A Round 3 game at Páirc Uí Rinn.

THROUGH THE LENS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KELLY

2024



Eve DeLoughrey gives a goodbye kiss to her mother Beibhinn Tuohy on her first day of school at Clarecastle NS.



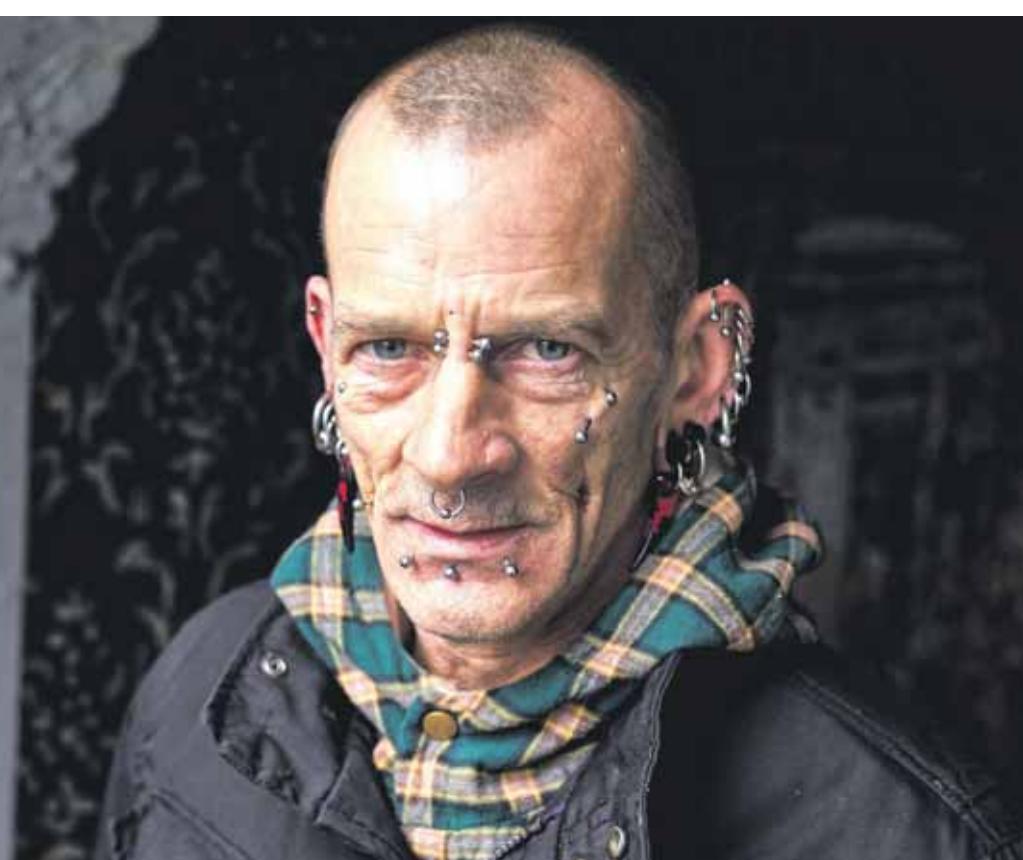
Kieran Bell out doing his errands on O'Connell Street, Ennis.



Man Of God... Charles Clancy, as Monsignor O'Hara, during rehearsals for Kitrush Choral Society's production of 'Sister Act'.



Mia O'Reardan and Clodagh Harkin return to terra firma after taking part in a charity cold swim at Lough Bunn.



Body Art enthusiast Paul Coughlan photographed in Ennis.



Shipping Lanes... A ship anchored on the Shannon near Moneypoint provides the backdrop for motorists travelling on the Killimer-Kitrush road.



Toasty... Sun worshippers take in rays at White Strand as the fine spell continued in June.



The crucifixion scene, with Felix Omorodion as Jesus, being nailed symbolically to the cross by Bishop Fintan Monahan, during the outdoor Stations Of The Cross on Good Friday at Cloughleigh.

East & Southeast Clare

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O'Connell roars her way to first ever Formula Woman final

DISPLAYING nerves of steel, Broadford woman Laura O'Connell has motored all the way to the first-ever Formula Woman Nations Cup final, which takes place in Dubai from May 1 to 4.

Finishing in an impressive 17th place out of 50 drivers at the recent qualifying rounds in Dubai guaranteed Ms O'Connell a spot on the starting grid where she will compete as part of a fifty-strong field of racing drivers from across the globe.

Driving at speeds of more than 200 kilometres an hour on a straight stretch didn't faze the 25 year-old biochemist who qualified after her first lap to seal a place in the coveted Cup final.

Racing for four years, Ms O'Connell's best lap time was one minute and eight seconds to travel 2.1 kilometres.

"I am absolutely over the moon to have qualified for the Formula Woman Nations Cup Festival. I had a good day at the track, but I believe that I have a lot more left in the tank for the big race in May 2025. It was fantastic to secure a top 20 finish, coming in 17th place from a field of 50 drivers, all of whom are hugely accomplished.

"I have trained in the Radical SR3 but this was my first time being competitive in it. It was very exciting. It was great to have my mother and father with me and friends who are living in Dubai who came to cheer me on.

"I qualified after my first lap, so I could go out and enjoy my next two sessions. I went faster in my second session, which was amazing.

"It is going to be even bigger in May when it is supposed to be televised live around the world. I am really looking forward to it and will get back into training next week," she said.

The former Clare camogie player is one of only two Irish women set to compete at the prestigious event, joining Hanna Celsie.

All the competitors were allocated only one lap to reach the qualifying time in three sessions - a morning, afternoon and evening slot, which left no room for error.

Looking ahead to the final in May, O'Connell outlined her ambition is to secure a top ten spot, which is a huge challenge, requiring a significant amount of work in advance of this event.

"The field is extremely tough and hugely competitive with many experienced drivers on the grid. I intend to give it my all and represent Ireland to the best of my abilities at the event."

The Formula Woman Nations Cup Finals will broadcast to over 120 countries with an expected attendance of over 60,000.



Broadford's Laura O'Connell on track following her qualification for the first ever Formula Woman Nations Cup in Dubai.

As part of a behind-the-scenes look at the first-ever group of racers in Formula Woman, renowned director Jessica Phillips has been following the drivers and filming a docuseries with O'Connell set to star along with her counterparts.

The objective of Formula Woman is to develop a pathway to progress female drivers to compete regularly in all forms of motorsport all the way up to Formula One.

Having discovered Formula Woman on Tiktok, Ms O'Connell entered one of its competitions in April 2021 in the United Kingdom and has been training with Formula Woman since then.

With more than 500 competitors

in the overall competition, it was split up into a UK and international series where Ms O'Connell found herself up against 300 other drivers for what proved to be a daunting experience.

However, this sparked her love for motor racing as she always loved motorsport. "I always loved watching motorsport but this was when my love for getting out on track became a thing," she explained.

Last year, she participated in the Irish karting championship and the Tillotson T4 series as well as some races in the United Kingdom to prepare for and upgrade her licence for the Formula Woman Nations Cup.

This helped to be selected by Formula Woman to represent Ireland in

the Nations Cup. "Karting is a brilliant way to get started in motorsport. No matter how long you are in motorsport you will go back to karting at some point to do some training because it is as close to a single-seater car as you can get. Karting is great for learning how to control a car and how to build up your speed."

"For Formula Woman, the tracks are bigger, the cars are bigger and faster. We are driving a Radical SR3. It is a very light car only 620 kilograms. It is very quick, has 220 brake horsepower and can travel up to 220 kilometres an hour on a straight stretch.

"It is quite exciting to drive. I drove the Radical SR3 in Dubai travelling up to 220 kilometres an hour on the

straight stretches. Going into corners, I was driving at between 80 to 160 kilometres an hour depending on how slow it was.

"In Formula Woman, you are on your own in the car. You can chat with your coach before and after the race and you have a team of mechanics. But once you head out on the track you are there by yourself. There is no one in your ear telling you where you are going wrong."

"There were a lot of girls who had laps deleted after spinning. Luckily, I wasn't one of them. If you don't press the clutch when you are spinning, you could lose the gearbox as well."

"There a lot of things to be thinking about when you are crashing out.

Thankfully, I didn't experience this," she recalled.

When Ms O'Connell is driving at speeds of more than 200 kilometres an hour on a straight stretch, she said it doesn't feel much faster than doing 120 kilometres an hour on the motorway until she starts to brake and feel the G-force turning into a corner.

She outlined motor racing drivers need a strong upper body to cope with the G-force that occurs when the car decelerates from a high speed turning into a corner.

While Ms O'Connell is keenly aware of the risk of injury, which she keeps to the back of her mind, she pointed out this has been greatly reduced thanks to more safety precautions.

East Clare swimmers make a splash for a pair of local charities



Crowds took to the cold water of Lough Derg on Christmas Day in aid of two East Clare charities.

Photograph by Arthur Ellis

A LARGE crowd of hardy swimmers took the plunge into Lough Derg's cold water for two local community groups on Christmas Day.

This annual event, which was held in Two Mile Gate, Ogonnelloe, was dedicated to raising essential funds for Killaloe Tidy Towns and a new organisation Killaloe/Ballina Community First Responders.

In addition to helping people in Killaloe, Ballina and surrounding areas to get in some healthy exercise before dinner on Christmas Day, it also proved to be a great social outlet as exiles met up with friends and relatives on the shores of Lough Derg.

Parking was at a premium as a large number of cars lined the approach roads to the Ballycuggeran amenity area.

There was a great buzz of excitement as a large crowd lined up on the green area to watch hundreds of people from Ballina, Killaloe and surrounding areas don their swimming costumes for a quick dip or swim.

Members of Killaloe Coast Guard kept a watchful eye on the water during the swim in the unlikely event that someone needed assistance.

Volunteers from the Coast Guard gave up their time to provide a boat and land crew on standby for everyone's safety.

This group provides a vital service in the locality every day throughout the year.

Team Ireland swimmer Finn McGeever, who competed in the men's Four by 200 metre freestyle relay at the 2020 Olympics, said his brother, Rory, who was at home for the first time in six years felt this year's event attracted a much bigger attendance compared to 2018.

After completing the swim, Mr McGeever said they spoke to their friends in Australia through Facetime to outline how successful this year's event had been.

"The Christmas Day Swim is always a great event that raises money for local charities and community groups. The swim itself takes about 30 seconds and then everyone stands around having a coffee and talking for about an hour."

"This swim is the highlight of Christmas for me and my family," he said.

Róisín McGeever swims in Ballycuggeran on a very regular basis, arriving between 11 and 12 noon.

"We are very lucky to live near Ballycuggeran. The new pontoon with disabled access is amazing. The engineers changed the ladders in the design and now the ladders that were installed are much safer. It is very safe to go in from the pontoon," she said.

Killaloe Ballina Community First Responder (KBCFR), Haaris Sheikh, Ballina, said the group was delighted with the huge turnout for this annual fundraising swim.

Mr Sheikh said it was great to have a major fundraiser that raises funds for two community groups who are making a positive impact in the locality.

Once an emergency call is made, he explained the Killaloe Ballina CFR will be tasked by the National Ambulance Service (NAS) for assistance and aim to arrive on scene within several minutes before the arrival of the am-

bulance service. "We only operate through the ambulance service. Once there is a 999 call, we will receive a text alert."

Following months of training, the KBCFR group will become active within a 15-kilometre radius of Killaloe and Ballina from January 6.

With 13 volunteers in the group, members have different expertise including nursing, Coast Guard, fire service and paramedics.

KBCFR will be able to attend critical events such as people with cardiac arrest, chest pain, choking and unconscious passing out. Last year, Jonathan, Christopher, Róisín McGrath and Brendan Ryan's daughters stepped up to organise the annual Christmas Day Swim, a tradition that has thrived in Two Mile Gate for more than three decades.

They were assisted by Christy McGrath, who was one of the initial founders, relatives, friends, neighbours and other people who provided food and music.

Alan Gibson provided the attendance with entertainment and photographer, Charlie McGrath took photographs to record the event.

Jonathan McGrath told *The Clare Champion* the Christmas Day swim is getting bigger and bigger every year. Mr McGrath thanked everyone who contributed in any way to making this event such a success.

He paid tribute to Sixth-Year students in St Anne's Secondary School, Killaloe, who raised money through their 24-hour fast, and the Killaloe Coast Guard who arrived early to ensure everyone was safe.

In fact, Mr McGrath estimated €4,500 was raised by the students and from bag packing at local supermarkets before the swim.

"Every effort—whether it's driving a van, lending equipment, or patrolling the area—makes a huge difference. Volunteers consistently amaze us with their dedication and commitment," he said.

While Mr McGrath confirmed they

Charity drive spreads some Christmas cheer

AN estimated €40,000 has been raised in cash donations for the Killaloe Ballina Area Better Christmas Fund over the last five years.

That's according to Eddie O'Gorman, who is one of the main driving forces involved in a charity drive that provides a timely boost to people in need in the run-up to Christmas Day.

Up to 100 age-appropriate wrapped Christmas presents were donated for the Christmas Fund most of which came from Kincora Kids creche.

A large quantity of non-perishable items were collected during the food drive from Boher National School, Killaloe Girls' National School, Killaloe Boys' National School and Ballina National School.

This included tins of beans, pasta, rice and other long-lasting food. Three-quarters of the food that was collected was distributed to those in need on December 22, while the remaining quarter was retained for distribution throughout the year.

This was completed with the assistance of the Killaloe Ballina Family Resource Centre, Mary O'Mara, Ballina and Clarecare, who decided what recipients received in their Christmas parcel.

Mr O'Gorman explained some people received food and a voucher, some got a food voucher only and some got cash to pay off electricity or gas bill.

The names of worthy recipients come from a variety of sources including local schools, Killaloe Gardai, Clarecare and the Family Resource Centre.

The Fund covers Killaloe, Ballina, Ogonnelloe, Scariff, Portroe, O'Brien's Bridge and Newport. Numerous families in South-East Clare and North Tipperary have benefited from receiving supermarket vouchers, fuel deliveries, donations towards energy bills and mini hampers in recent years.

Mr O'Gorman said this was the last year he and his wife, Jackie, will organise and collect donations for the Fund as he feels it is not fair for the same people to be asking local businesses for donations for five successive years.

While Mr O'Gorman confirmed they will help out next year, he said they would

not be the main organisers and expects donations and the Christmas raffle will be spearheaded by the Killaloe Ballina Family Resource Centre.

Over the last five years, he recalled they received tremendous support from businesses who donated new toys and from families who gifted Christmas presents that were never opened and could be easily reused.

However, Mr O'Gorman said he would continue to be involved in organising the Christmas Market where it is expected the Family Resource Centre will have a staff to sell raffle tickets to raise money for the Christmas Fund.

He was delighted with the success of the inaugural market, which attracted at least 36 stalls within a five-mile radius of Killaloe Bridge.

"Local shops and small and medium enterprises set up stalls in the Family Resource Centre. A lot of people said to me they purchased their Christmas presents at the Christmas Market, which was brilliant."

The Killaloe Ballina Ukulele Orchestra, Deirdre Scanlan and friends, Fionn O'Gorman and John Touhy played free of charge for three hours.

"The Local Youth Service provided tea, coffee and scones in the cafe, while local food providers provided food at the front of the centre. It was flawless. Had we known what we now know, we could have run it for three instead of five hours. We also could have put some stalls out in the back yard."

"Every stall holder made money during the Christmas Market. People stayed for the three years. Santa Claus also paid a visit and children enjoyed having their photograph taken with him. Next year, we are hoping to have an even bigger Christmas Market. I am hoping to secure a big band for next year," he said.

He thanked Michelle Curtin who ran the Christmas Market with him along with Rebecca Kelly, Louise Foy Pakla and Leah O'Gorman.

He also paid tribute to the Family Resource Centre and everyone involved in the food drive and raffle who contributed to the Christmas Fund.

North&WestClare

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Farmers' Bash in Hylands

AFTER the success of last year's event, the second ever Farmers' bash will take place in Ballyvaghan on Saturday, January 11. The event, which is organised by local man Thomas Francis, aims to provide a much needed social outlet for farmers and help to tackle rural isolation.

The event, which takes place at Hylands Burren Hotel, is also a fundraiser for Embrace Farm. "Bringing farmers and the wider rural community together for a night out is the stepping stone on the way to stamping out rural isolation and promoting a good level of mental health," said Thomas. "I find that across the country, agriculture can be a lonely and challenging sector to work in. Hopefully nights like this create a safe environment for everyone to come and talk and maybe offer help or just even listen."

Tickets can be booked by contacting reception at Hylands Burren Hotel.

"Community is all we have. Therefore we need to look after each. At the end of the day, all we have is each other and there is no stronger bond than a strong healthy community," said Thomas.

"People can book tickets by calling Hylands Burren Hotel and even, if it's a last minute situation, we will still get you seated no problem."

Lights raise funds for RNLI

THE townland at Shyan, Lisroe, Kilmaley, has seen the night sky come alive to the beautiful lighting of Christmas lights put in place by the Conlon family.

Damian, Aileen, Seanie, Connor and Sarah put together over 70 different formations of bringing Christmas to the people of their own area.

It took a massive effort to tie all the stories of Christmas together from the journey of the Holy Family to the crib and then to light up the great story bringing joy, hope and light to all the people who pass that way.

Their efforts are all worthwhile as they have donated all the proceeds from the beautiful arrangement to the RNLI Lifeboats.

It is such a wonderful way to share the joys of Christmas bringing life to someone in the pearls of the sea, reaching out to bring someone home who would be lost and that chair at the Christmas dinner table to be empty.

The fund presently online on iDonate has raised close on €1,500 and people can also contribute by just putting whatever they can into the post box at the Conlon family home.

People can stop for a minute as they pass that way and acknowledge the effort put by the Conlon family and make a donation if desired or simply share the joy with the Conlon family who have put in the effort.

The lifeboat crews value and appreciate the help of all who give their time and effort in saving a life.

DUFFY'S CHEMIST CHRISTMAS RAFFLE RESULTS

1st €50 Linda Fashions Elizabeth Guerin
2nd €50 Patrick Bourkes Mary Tubridy
3rd €25 Haven Arms Daisy Scanlon
4th €25 Coco Lemon Jacqueline Hall
5th €25 G Beauty Ann King
6th €25 Ryan Del Marie Roche
7th €25 Duffys Angela Fulham
8th €25 Duffys Emma Harvey

Congratulations to all our winners and Happy New Year to all our customers, from John Duffy and Staff.

1849 tragedy to be recalled with community fundraiser

Sharon Dolan D'Arcy

THE 175th anniversary of the Poulnasherry Bay ferry disaster of 1849 will be marked locally by the Querrin community on Sunday, February 2, at the Ferry Fundraising Run for Querrin Schoolhouse.

Tragedy occurred at Cammoge Point on the Bay on December 12, 1849, when a boat, returning from Kilrush sank claiming the lives of forty-one people including 12 children who drowned just yards from their destination. The majority of those on board were famine destitute people hoping to be admitted to the workhouse at Kilrush. Local amateur historian, Robert Brown has chronicled the disaster in his history blog on the Kilkee Heritage page of clareheritage.org where he has told:

"Cammoge Point in Poulnasherry Bay looks a very pleasant place with the tide full in however, on a cold windy dark December afternoon in 1849 calamity struck. Located near Clarefield, not far from Kilkee, the isolated stretch of stony beach was once a short cut from the extreme west of the county to Carnacalla near Kilrush. About three-and-a-half miles could be saved from the journey to Kilrush by crossing the mouth of Poulnasherry Bay. The route was availed of for hundreds of years and, in fact, a ferryboat operated from Cammoge Point until 1927. However, the picturesque point was the scene of total devastation on December 12, 1849, when a boat, returning from Kilrush, sank. Forty-one people drowned within a mere 30 yards of completing the journey."

A ferry operated across the mouth of Poulnasherry Bay in the 1800s between Cammoge on the west side and Carnacalla on the Kilrush side. There was a landing site on the Carnacalla side which is not obvious now. The rights were held by the Cox Family of Mountpleasant Demesne. In the mid-1800s, they employed a ferryman named Brew to operate the service.

"That evening, the ferry was making a crossing, carrying a large number of people who were starving due to the Famine. They had come from the western parishes and had gone to Kilrush to seek refuge in the workhouse earlier that day. Unfortunately, they were turned away and so made the fatal return journey. Loading the boat at Carnacalla was haphazard, due to the fact that it was the last ferry that day. Around halfway through the crossing, it was noticed that water was coming in. Two boatmen and a mother with her child were rescued by a boat belonging to Benjamin Cox JP. Thirty-five bodies were recovered and laid out on the beach. The blame was laid on the boatman, with *The Clare Journal* accused him of overloading the boat."

Historian Ignatius Murphy stated that, "In 1848 in an auxiliary workhouse in Ballyerra [Kilrush], there were over 1,000 children. They were being looked after by two paupers, who themselves were ordinary inmates. 12 children who drowned that winter evening did not last long in the bitter waters of Poulnasherry Bay. After docking in Carnacalla on the morning of December 12, 1849, the famine-stricken occupants disembarked and walked the two-mile trek to Kilrush. They found the streets swarming with paupers, while demented shopkeepers and house owners tried to steal themselves. At the workhouse gate they were met by Daniel O'Gorman (relieving office for Moyarta) who told them to wait at the gate while he pleaded for their relief. The result was the admission of a few. It then got so dark that it was necessary to have candles lit. This was the signal, even for diehards, to go home, most of the ferry passengers having already left."

A boat owned by the local magistrate, Mr Cox came to their rescue and also rescued a woman and a very young child. Newspaper reports of the day starkly described the scene at Cammoge:



The view from Carnacalla on the Kilrush side of Poulnasherry Ferry.

Point saying Captain Kennedy [Kilrush-based Poor Law Inspector] was early on the spot with Dr O'Donnell, the medical officer of the union.

"But the night being dark and stormy and the boat being at the other side of the ferry, they were unable to cross. A more fearful sight never presented itself to the human gaze. Old and young, parents and children lay inter-mixed with the seaweed and rocks, where the ebbing tide had left them," one report said. Another report read, "There were to be seen the mother and her child clung together, the arms of the child clasped around the mother's neck. Even

when brought to land, it was difficult to sever the iron grasp of death."

At the inquest held by Coroner Francis O'Donnell from Kilkee the following day, the ferryman, Thomas Brew who survived the calamity told what had transpired. "When only 30 yards from dry land, she filled and sank under us. I took off my jacket and jumped out and swam about a boats length from the bow of the boat. I returned and took hold of the side and went hand over hand to the stern, where Laurence McNamara was holding," he recounted.

Laurence McNamara was a boatman, and

was the last person to board the doomed vessel. Significantly, Tim Keane, from Clarefield, testified at the inquest he had been a boatman on the ferry for 15 years although he wasn't on board when it sank. "I knew the boat to be leaky for the past month," he said. He also claimed the boat had been old when he started working as a ferryman.

The location of the victims' graves, remains unknown to this day. It is said that many victims were buried at Kilnaglighagh graveyard however, just one victim, 24-year-old John O'Brien, was buried in his own plot. The inscription on

his grave reads, "Erected by Patrick O'Brien in memory of his beloved son John who was drowned at the ferry Dec 12th, 1849 aged 24 years. May he RIR Amen." Mistakenly, the inscription should have read RIP which today makes this gravestone a curiosity.

Poignantly, some of the older people who drowned at Cammoge Point, had lived through West Clare famines in 1817, 1822, 1830, 1837 and 1842. A memorial monument with the victims' names was erected at the site of the disaster during the 175th anniversary commemorations of the Great Famine.



The ruins of the ferryman's cottage at Poulnasherry Bay.

Excitement builds for whale spotting trips

Sharon Dolan D'Arcy

THERE have been continued sightings over the Christmas period of the humpback whale who is residing in the Shannon Estuary since late November. Multiple sightings of the animal in the Estuary have thrilled both local whale researchers and the general public, not least because it is the first ever recorded incident of a humpback whale in the Estuary.

Meanwhile, the Kilrush-based Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) are offering the opportunity to see the humpback whale in the Shannon Estuary aboard the Wild Atlantic Wave passenger boat which accommodates 12 passengers and two crew.

They have organised two trips per day over three days from Thursday, January 2 through to Sunday, January 4 departing Kilrush Marina. A trip lasts two to three hours and costs €100 per person although they say that sightings are not guaranteed.

The whale, which was first seen on the Estuary on November 26 apparently continues to thrive in its new home, and it has been spotted by several passengers on

the Shannon Ferry Group crossing between Killimer and Tarbert in Kerry over the past few days. Last Saturday afternoon, it was observed breaching on several occasions between Moneypoint Power Station and the ferry port with many members of the public even seeing it from land and capturing their own photographs. Reported sightings of the whale generally come via the IWDG website and also through a WhatsApp group between interested volunteers in Kilrush.

Ronán Berrow who is the IWDG volunteer organising the viewing trips, told *The Clare Champion* he is excited at the prospect of people getting to see the whale, and he estimates the weather conditions on the Shannon should be good to facilitate viewings.

"We were out there three days ago and that is when we got those videos and pictures of it breaching. It was between Moneypoint and Killimer and following the tide up river, and then it swam down river with the tide again. We estimate at the moment it is off the north Kerry coast near Carrig Island.

"It is very active and there have been plenty of breaches but at the

same time, it is not the easiest thing to find in the water. I know what to look for because I have been out before on research trips where we look for whale matches between Ireland and Iceland.

"We put it out there to offer the chance to support the group [IWDG] and these trips are more to give people a chance to see it, and it could be gone tomorrow. We have got a photo of the

fluke [the tail] now but we could always get a better picture as the light wasn't great that day."

When asked what the potential was like for people to see the whale this week, Mr Berrow said that it is hard to say what it is going to do however, it has been seen to follow the tide up river because it is feeding on sprat and herring as the fish move up tide.

On the last day Ronán was out

on the river, there were lots of birds feeding which could be an indicator the famed humpback is nearby, he said.

The west Clare man who works at sea and is currently in training to be a ship captain has said that a percentage of the fare receipts from the whale-spotting excursions will be donated to the IWDG to help pay the costs of their research.

Since the first sighting of the humpback in late November, the IWDG succeeded in locating it on December 3 and again the following week, and obtained images to help identify the animal. Because they were unable to match it to the IWDG Humpback Whale Catalogue, they reckon it is a new arrival.

Drone footage of the whale next enabled them to determine a length, and they estimate it is a young, immature male with a body length of 7.7 metres.

Concern for the whale's safety in the Shannon Estuary is increasing as the Estuary is a busy waterway for large cargo ships carrying thousands of tonnes of material to and from Ireland via Moneypoint, Aughinish, Foynes and Tarbert.

In addition, the Shannon Ferry makes regular crossings from Tarbert to Killimer, and several pleasure boats often use the same waters.

The IWDG have said that a recently published paper highlighted that ship strikes are the primary threat for large whales globally since the near total elimination of whaling.

Research has shown that when vessels do not exceed ten knots,

mortality rates drop drastically and so many countries have implemented seasonal speed restrictions during key times for the whale population, or in important habitats such as breeding grounds. However, in rougher conditions it is difficult to detect the creatures, and they remain low in the water with their blows often missed when winds are high.

Visual observation also becomes impossible during the night, in fog or in heavy rain.

The IWDG have confirmed it is in regular communications with the Shannon Foynes Port company regarding the presence of the humpback whale in the Estuary and has advised them on the benefit of a temporary speed restriction of ten knots.

Ireland is well-known as a feeding ground for humpback whales with some younger individuals overwintering in Irish coastal waters instead of migrating to West Africa or the Caribbean for breeding.

They IWDG says that as the population grows, it is possible that this particular whale will not be the last seen feeding in the Estuary.



A picture of the humpback whale off the coast of Clare. Photograph by the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

THE CLARE CHAMPION
FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2025

ShannonTown

Donna gets down to business on first day in Dáil Éireann

SHANNON'S Donna McGettigan became the first person from the town ever to sit in Dáil Éireann the week before Christmas.

In 2025 she intends to open a local office, but says that she will also hold clinics throughout the county, especially in Ennis and West Clare, neither of which have a TD based there.

She said she was struck by the history of female parliamentarians on her first day in Leinster House. "When you're going around you see photos of female participation down through the years, there's a mural of all the female senators, there's a picture of all the female TDs and it's lovely to be involved with that. There is more female representation but we still have a long way to go."

One of her first priorities is to get to know here own parliamentary party colleagues. "It is very important. You'd know someone who have always been vocal and out there, and I'd have met them down through the years through various campaigns. But there are also ten of us who are new TDs."

There are also many other new people to become familiar with. "You are bombarded with all these new faces, whether its the fantastic ushers who are there, or the members of the other parties, you're trying to get to know who's who and what's what. I wouldn't say it's daunting but it is striking when you go in there and it's all new faces and you're going to have

to work with them all. You're trying to learn all the faces, but there's not a hope you'll learn them all!"

There is an awful lot to get used to, but she says the level of support is great. "We had an induction on Tuesday, the day before the first Dáil sitting. We were brought around, we were actually brought into the Chamber and shown how the voting system works. At the moment because there is no Government in place the voting system is through voice call or roll call or actions, it's not electronic yet because we haven't assigned seats just yet. They show you all of that, where to go when you come in. If you see the Chamber on TV it looks massive, but it's very closed and personal when you're in there. The ushers are there at your beck and call, they are just amazing."

"Now that you're a TD you're suddenly an employer and if you haven't been one before that can be daunting. They are there to give you great advice, go through all the forms you have to fill out and make sure they are done properly and correctly. You're looking for staff and they help you with that, they help you with fobs, help you with parking, they help you with everything."

She said it was positive to see a female elected as Ceann Comhairle, but she said the role shouldn't have been used to sweeten a party political deal. "People were saying that the

election of Verona Murphy as Ceann Comhairle was a bargaining chip, and that's not something to be welcomed although the fact that she is the first female Ceann Comhairle is very welcome. That's very historic and I wouldn't want to take anything away from her in relation to that. She was very good starting off, she said she would work with all parties and she was strict on the time. She started very well and having a female in that position is great."

She also criticised the other two big parties for not meeting with Sinn Féin on potential government formation. "The way we look at it is we are the second biggest party in there. Whatever about going into Government, but to not even talk to us is disenfranchising our voters. You would have seen at the count, you would have had people voting number 1 Fine Gael and number 2 Sinn Féin. We got transfers in every box and it shows that while people might be slow to change there is change coming. We believe change will come and we'll be there."

The Dáil won't meet again until January 22 and she said such a long break is not deserved. "They called us out for wasting time in the Dáil on the first day, but it all took less than an hour. Five weeks is a long time. Their whole thing through the campaign was stable government, that doesn't scream stable government when you're looking for that long of a break when you more or less know what is happening."



Donna McGettigan is raised aloft following her election to Dáil Éireann in November 2024.

Photograph by John Kelly

Shannon athlete, Fitzmaurice hits the road to claim silver medal in Big Apple Half Marathon

SHANNON'S Karl Fitzmaurice finished second in the Big Apple Half Marathon, held in New York on December 14.

He finished the demanding course in 1 hour nine minutes and 58 seconds.

It was an immense performance on a very difficult course. "There were about 5,000 in it. It was -5 for the race, it was actually Baltic and the course was very hilly, I couldn't believe how hilly Central Park is. The course was two laps of Central Park and then another mile at the end. There were over 200 metres of elevation."

Karl went to America on the Wednesday before the race, which was held on a Saturday morning, beginning at 8am.

He stayed in Queens at the home of fellow runner Ian Slobody, and he felt that operating on Irish time was no drawback, given the early morning start.

Overall he was very happy with his time, on a course which was a bit longer than it should have been. "I wanted to do it in 69 minutes and I actually did, because the course was actually longer than the half marathon distance. I did the half marathon in 68:58. The marathon is 13.1 miles but this was 13.45 miles. It was quite a bit longer. I think they were just trying to fill the two laps and have a bit up to the finishing line."

There was a fairly tough contest for second position, while he had the winner in his sights as he crossed the line. "The third fella was a pro runner from Philadelphia. We were battling away, I only overtook him on the tenth mile. The winner took off like the hammers of hell after the fifth mile. I could see him finish, but he was probably about 400 metres ahead. Third place was about 40 seconds behind me."

Outside of work, running and preparation for races takes up a huge proportion of his time. "I train every day of the week more or less. I'm a member of Wolfe Tones and I go to the gym there for the running, a lot of the gym work is there. I'd be running seven or eight times a week."

"I try to get to the physio once a month as well, to look after niggles and stuff. The roads are very demanding."

Most of the running is around Shannon and he'd be a familiar figure to many. "I train around the industrial estate and around Tullyglass Hill, also at the hill by Tola's School. Mostly the industrial estate and the hillwork in those places."

In general the preparation is a massive part of life. "It is, but I try to distance myself from it as well. I work at the lab in UHL during the day, I'd be home around 6pm and then I'd probably train from about 6.30 to 8pm, every night. It does take a lot of time."

Twenty nine years of age now, he is increasingly focusing on longer distances.

"It used to be 10k, but I'm getting older now and I'm stepping up to distances like half marathons and marathons. In the New Year I'm going to try and win the Limerick Marathon. I came third in it last year. For New York I thought getting in the top ten would be realistic."



Shannon Athletic Club's Karl Fitzmaurice crosses the line in second place in the Big Apple Half Marathon, and right, poses with his coveted medal.

Cúpla focal

THE New Year will see the foundation of a conversational Irish group in Shannon, with all indications that there is a high level of interest in the town.

Eighteen-year-old Shane Doody is looking to get it going and he says there is lots of enthusiasm. "I put the call out on Facebook and the interest was overwhelming. I started up a WhatsApp group them and to date there's around 82 people in it. There is massive interest in it."

The lead up to Christmas is a hard time to get any group started, but he says some work was done. "We have been doing little bits here and there, although it's a poor time because everyone is busy. We have come up with a name, Gaeilge le Chéile. We're now looking at venues to have our first get-together in the New Year.

The first get-together will be to establish our numbers and stuff. At the moment we are trying to set up a committee, and to get people to take on roles."

Anyone with even a very basic cúpla focal will be welcome. "It's an Irish speaking group, anyone with any level of Irish can join, even if they just have the basics. It's not tutoring, it's not teaching or anything like that; it's a group of people coming together to use the Irish that they do have. We'll be looking to have our meetings at the weekends, it'll be most likely coffee mornings once we find the right venue. Just to come together for an hour and practice the Irish that we do have. Further down the line we'll be looking to promote the language in general and the culture."

Shane says people of all ages have been interested in joining. "There is quite a mix. A few people my age are in it. A lot of people who are middle aged are coming back to give the language a go again. You have elderly people as well, looking to give it another go and to try and pick it up again."

He reiterated that people don't need to have good Irish to take part. "Our ethos is that anyone with any level of Irish can come, no matter how broken they think it is. We're proud of our language and proud that we will have a group in Shannon in the New Year so there will be somewhere to speak it."

Aviation entrepreneur to touch down in Dromoland for talk

SHANNON Chamber are hosting a fireside chat with aviation veteran and entrepreneur Conor McCarthy on February 11 next at Dromoland Castle.

Mr McCarthy is Executive Chairman at Emerald Airlines and Dublin Aerospace.

He entered aviation through an apprenticeship with Aer Lingus, but sheer determination to scale new heights and explore new horizons saw him become

a major player in a very dynamic sector.

His stamp can be found in air-lines worldwide, in MRO and in aviation consultancy.

He is taking time out to share his story with Shannon Chamber members and guests in a lively and inspiring fireside chat with an equally energetic aviation enthusiast, John Ludden, General Counsel, High Ridge Aviation.

Based primarily in Dublin,

Ireland, Conor is the Founder and Executive Chairman of Emerald Airlines, Ireland's newest regional airline, and the exclusive operator of the Aer Lingus Regional network.

He is also the founder of Plane-Consult, an aviation consultancy company. Over the past 19 years PlaneConsult has worked in many airlines including easyJet, Aer Lingus, AirAsia, Qantas, Jetstar, Air Deccan, Pegasus, Alaska

Airlines, Copa, Thai AirAsia, AirAsia X, MAS, flyNAS, Saudia and vivaAerobus.

Conor is a co-founder, shareholder, and former director of AirAsia and its affiliates in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan and India.

After graduating from Trinity College, Conor quickly rose to the level of EVP and was appointed Chief Executive of Aer Lingus Commuter at the age of 28.

Conor was the Director of Group Operations & Safety for Ryanair from 1996-2000. During this time the airline tripled in size and Conor was responsible for the famous Ryanair 25-minute turnaround, new Base roll-out, and successful delivery and introduction of the first Ryanair Boeing 737-800s.

In 2009 Conor established Dublin Aerospace, parent company to Exeter Aerospace and

Exeter Aerospace. Dublin Aerospace is now one of the world's leading providers of Aerospace MRO services with capabilities in APU Repair & Overhaul, Base Maintenance, Component Repair and Landing Gear Overhaul.

Dublin Aerospace has recently developed a state-of-the-art Landing Gear facility in Ashbourne, Ireland and started up Exeter Aerospace in the UK.

John Ludden is a founding partner and General Counsel of High Ridge Aviation, where he leads a global legal team. High Ridge Aviation — along with its subsidiary LR AirFinance — brings competitive financing and liquidity solutions to commercial aviation clients around the globe.

He has extensive expertise as a senior aviation lawyer and previously served as General Counsel at GECAS, GE's former aviation finance business and the owner of

the world's largest fleet of commercial aircraft.

In addition to mentoring and supporting the development of younger talent, John has endeavoured to advance the industry from within. He has been a champion of the Aviation Working Group's (AWG) pioneering efforts, including the advancement of the Cape Town Convention and driving continued improvements in the trading of aircraft.

Farming

Email: editor@clarechampion.ie Telephone 065 6828105



Utilising the CBV to purchase your 2025 dairy-beef calves

Niall Mullin, B&T Drystock Advisor, Teagasc Galway/Clare

Here is where the CBV can help you out.

What is the CBV?

The CBV is a tool that gives an insight into the genetic merit of an animal that is destined for beef production based on its percentage. It takes into account five key beef production traits: carcass weight, feed intake, carcass fat, carcass conformation and docility. This allows you to identify calves that are faster growing, will have better conformation, be more feed efficient and also more docile. In order for a CBV to be generated for a calf they must have a sire recorded when registered. Purchasing calves with no sire recorded leaves you in the unknown as to the genetic background of that animal.

How is the CBV expressed?

The CBV is expressed as a euro value similar to the FEBI and Euro-star indexes currently in place. The higher that euro value is, the greater genetic merit potential that animal has. Animals are assigned to one of three different breed types: beef x beef; beef x dairy; and dairy x dairy. This is important as it ensures that dairy/beef animals are not being compared to beef animals from the suckler herd for example. Animals are then assigned a star rating from one to five which farmers will be familiar with by now. Five star animals are in the top 20% of the national population for that breed type, with one star animals being in the bottom 20%.

If you are considering purchasing two dairy x beef calves, one with a CBV of €120 and the other has a CBV of €45. The calf with a value of €120 should deliver €75 extra profit than the lower value calf through increased carcass weight and conformation, better feed efficiency, etc.

The higher value animal may also be slaughtered at an earlier date which reduces costs also.

What research has been done to date?

Research has been conducted at the Teagasc research centre in Grange, and is still ongoing. One trial compared how Angus steers – both of high and low CBV – performed under a grass based diet.

This trial undertaken by Dr Nicky Byrne and many others, found that every €1 increase in the CBV of Angus type steers, resulted in an extra €1.85 net profit. The trial also compared a housed finishing strategy versus animals being finished at grass with the results outlined below.

The high CBV steers were capable of being finished both indoors or outdoors before winter housing while being supplemented with concentrates at grass.

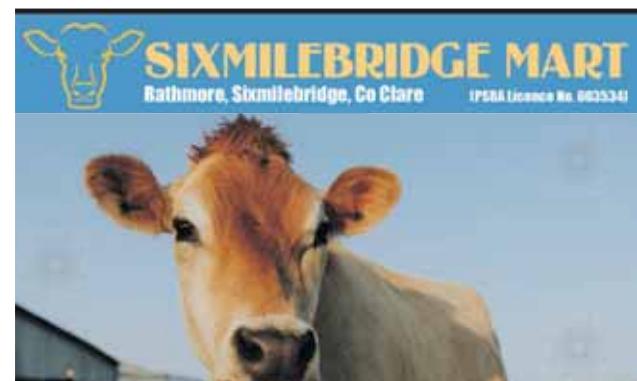
However, the low CBV Angus steers achieved carcass fatness quickly but produced lower carcass weights which resulted in a reduction in farm profitability. These animals provide less flexibility as they need to be allowed to grow at a slower rate at pasture to develop their frame and then fed in a short 60-day finishing period. With the need for reduced age at slaughter to reduce agricultural emissions and increase profitability, low CBV animals will not meet this criteria. The high CBV steers also had better carcass traits with 75% meeting overall carcass specifications compared to 52% of low CBV Angus steers.

Take-home messages

- Higher CBV animals are more efficient, have an increased carcass value and have a higher chance of meeting carcass specifications.
- Consult with the farmer you are buying your calves off to get a list of each animals CBV when selecting your calves to purchase as they are only available on the herd owners ICBF account.

The beef merit of calves can vary significantly within the same breed so don't purchase calves solely based on how they look on the day.

Genotyped animals being traded through marts will have their CBV displayed on mart boards so ensure you take this into account if purchasing through the marts.



FIRST SALE OF 2025

Saturday, 11th January

Wishing all our patrons a very Happy and Peaceful New Year

Tel: 061 290751 / 061 290748

Email: sixmilebridgemart@gmail.com



Sellers are reminded to ring to confirm subject sales.

ENNIS MART – (065) 6824411

Thursday 9th January 2025 11:00am – Cull Cows followed by Aged Bulls and Heifers

First Sale of 2025 11:00am – Bullocks

Monday 13th January 2025 10:30am – Sheep Auction

Tuesday 14th January 2025 11am – Calves, Runners, Suckler Stock

11am – Weanling Bulls

12:30pm – Weanling Heifers

11:00am – Cull Cows followed by Aged Bulls and Heifers

11:00am – Bullocks

Thursday 16th January 2025 11:00am – Cull Cows followed by Aged Bulls and Heifers

11:00am – Bullocks

Ennis Office will be open on Monday, 6th January 2025 to take entries

KILRUSH MART – (065) 9051108

First Sale of 2025 - General Cattle Sale including calves.

Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 11am

Clare Marts would like to thank their customers and wish them a very happy New Year - 2025.



BUSINESS & APPOINTMENTS

Main personal finance considerations to start the new year for Irish people

AS we step into a new year, it's the perfect time to take stock of our personal finances. Whether you're in your 30s, 40s, or 50s, starting the year with a solid financial plan can help you achieve your goals, manage your money more effectively, and set yourself up for long-term financial success. For Irish people, there are specific financial considerations to focus on as you navigate the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead. From budgeting and saving to investments and tax planning, here are some key personal finance considerations to start the new year strong.

1. Review Your Budget and Track Your Spending

A new year is a great time to assess your budget and make adjustments where necessary. Often, as our lives evolve, our spending habits change, and it's important to ensure that your budget reflects your current situation and financial goals.

• **Track Your Spending:** Start by reviewing your spending from the previous year. Identify areas where you might have overspent, or where you can cut back. Are there any subscriptions or services you no longer need? Is there room to reduce discretionary spending, such as dining out or entertainment? Small changes can make a big difference in the long run.

• **Set Financial Goals:** It's helpful to establish clear financial goals for the year. Whether it's paying off debt, saving for a holiday, or building up your emergency fund, setting concrete, measurable goals will give you direction. Break down your goals into monthly or quarterly targets, so you can keep track of your progress.

• **Emergency Fund:** One of the most crucial elements of your budget is ensuring you have an emergency fund. Ideally, this should cover three to six months of living expenses. If you don't have one yet, consider setting aside a portion of your income each month until you reach your target amount.

2. Maximise Your Savings and Investments

As the year begins, it's important to review your savings and investments to make sure you're on track for your financial future.

• **Savings Accounts:** If you're not already maximizing your savings, consider moving your money into an account that offers higher interest rates. The interest rate environment in Ireland has been shifting, so shop around for savings accounts that offer better returns than your current one.

• **Consider Tax-Free Savings Options:** The Irish Government's Special Savings Incentive Accounts (SSIA) and Post Office Savings Bonds are great tools for boosting savings with tax incentives. Another option to consider is the Investment Savings Accounts (ISAs) if available. These tax-efficient accounts allow you to earn interest and returns without paying tax on the profits, making them an ideal vehicle for long-term savings.

• **Investing for the Future:** If you want to grow your wealth beyond savings accounts, consider building a diversified investment portfolio. This could include Irish and international stocks, bonds, property, or even private equity funds. Keep in mind that

FENNELL'S PHARMACY
are looking for a
PART TIME
PHARMACY COUNTER
ASSISTANT
Preferably with some pharmacy
experience to work 3-4 days per week
CV to
fennellspharmacy
@gmail.com



Donal Carey and Tommy Corbett of Carey Corbett Financial Solutions, Ennis.

investing involves risk, so be sure to review your risk tolerance and long-term goals before jumping into new investment opportunities.

• **Pensions and Retirement Savings:** If you have a pension plan or are saving for retirement, ensure that you're contributing enough. In Ireland, pension contributions are tax-deductible, meaning you can lower your taxable income by making regular contributions.

If you haven't done so already, it's a good time to look into your pension options, whether through your employer, a personal pension plan, or a PRSA (Personal Retirement Savings Account). The earlier you start, the more time your money has to grow.

• **Review Tax Credits and Allowances:** Irish tax credits can significantly reduce the amount of tax you owe, so make sure you're claiming all the ones you're entitled to. For instance, tax credits for married couples, single parents, or those with disabilities could apply to you.

Also, if you're a PAYE worker, it's worth reviewing your Tax Credit Certificate to ensure that it's up to date and reflects any changes in your circumstances.

• **Capital Gains Tax (CGT) and Investments:** If you're planning on selling investments, be aware of the capital gains tax rules. In Ireland, the first €1,270 of capital gains are exempt, but anything above that amount is taxed at 33%. Consider your tax strategy before selling assets to minimize CGT exposure.

• **Re-evaluate Debt Management and Pay Off High-Interest Debt**

Starting the new year with a clean financial slate can be empowering, and a big part of this involves getting your debt under control. Whether it's credit card debt, loans, or a mortgage, paying down debt should be a priority.

• **Focus on High-Interest Debt:** Start by tackling high-interest debt first. Credit cards typically carry high interest rates, and the longer you take to pay them off, the more you'll be paying in interest. Set a target date for paying off your credit card debt, and make sure to pay more than the minimum required amount each month.

• **Consider Consolidation:** If you have multiple debts, consolidating them into a single loan with a lower interest rate can help you pay down the total debt more efficiently. Many Irish banks offer consolidation loans, which may help you manage your debt more easily and reduce the overall interest you're paying.

• **Review Your Mortgage:** For homeowners, the new year is a good time to review your mortgage arrangements. Check if you're on the best possible deal. If interest rates have fallen, you may be able to switch to a more competitive rate or explore remortgaging options.

Paying down your mortgage more quickly can also be an effective strategy if you're looking to reduce long-term debt.

• **Get help if you need help:** www.mabs.ie MABS is the Irish money advice service supporting people with money advice, budgeting, and problem debt for 30 years

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Clare students ready to take on the scientific world

Andrew Hamilton

STUDENTS from every corner of Clare are preparing to show off their scientific knowledge at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition in Dublin next week. With 19 projects qualifying from the Banner County this year, it promises to be a year to remember for the county's young scientists.

Many of the projects this year were inspired by real issues which are facing the people of Clare, and indeed issues that have been reported on by *The Clare Champion* over the past 12 months.

One such issue is the quality of the drinking water in North Clare, with Liskeen Lake suffering from algal blooms at various times during the past 12 months.

Lisdoonvarna student, Oisin Jackson, set out to discover if sea lettuce could be used to remove nitrates and phosphates from local water sources.

"Both nitrates and phosphates levels have been rising in local waterways, both fresh water and seawater, which is a problem because algae can thrive in these high nutrients," said Oisin.

"Ulva lactuca can help clean up this water by removing these excess nutrients and bacteria from the water."

"This seaweed can then actually be fed back to the cattle as a very rich food source."

The environment was also the topic of an innovative project by Adam Hehir and Michelle Shannon from St John Bosco's Community College in Kildysart.

Their project, which is entitled Smog Sucks!, looks at air quality in their locality.

"This project is not just an academic exercise for us," they said.

"It is a way to raise awareness about the growing pollution problem in our area and to inspire others to take action."

Meanwhile, the long awaited construction of the Ennistymon Community School has changed many things for the students of North and West Clare, including the nature of school lunches.

The new state-of-the-art school boasts a school canteen which serves hot food to students and staff.

This innovation has not come about without challenges however, and students John Sheridan, Caimin McGlenon and Ruby Cross have set out to try to find a better way to manage the lunch queues at the school, which have become a part of their school days in recent times.

"Lunch queues used to be awful bad at the beginning of the year," said John.

"You could be waiting for 20 minutes to get your lunch and there could be queues right around the school."

"That got us thinking about ways to minimise the congestion and get the queues moving quicker."

As active members of the Green Committee at St Joseph's Secondary School in Tulla, Emily Cronin and Kieran Kelly are deeply committed to environmental sustainability.

This led to a collaboration with the Irish Seed Savers Association garden team in Scariff.

The Irish Seed Savers teams helped them to investigate the protein content in organically grown pea varieties, due to the increasing consumer demand for organic produce that is healthier and more sustainable.

By examining the protein content in these peas, the duo aimed to contribute to the understanding of their nutritional value and support advances in sustainable agriculture in Ireland and abroad.

They hope to promote peas as a new alternative to soy because the extraction process for soy requires chemicals like hexane, which can leave residues in the final product.

Spanish Point students Keelin Corry and Emma Talty set out to investigate the effect that exposure may have along the County Clare coast on the size of air bladders.

They randomly sampled plants at Quilty, Spanish Point and Lahinch beaches, measured and recorded the size of the air bladders on plants in these three areas.

In terms of exposure Spanish Point faces directly onto the Atlantic Ocean and juts out more, so it was expected that the air bladders on plants here would be smaller than those in Lahinch or Quilty which is the least exposed of the three.



Beibhinn O'Loughlin.

Photograph by John Kelly

Student: Beibhinn O'Loughlin**Project:** Looking for tiny fossils hidden in the Burren limestone**School:** Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna**Category:** Chemical, Physical and Mathematical Sciences

BEIBHINN'S inspiration for this project came from a meeting with Burren geologist, Eamon Doyle, who has made many significant discoveries in the Burren in recent years.

She heard about the number of microfossils that exist in the limestone of the Burren and set about making a few discoveries of her own.

She selected limestone of different ages from different parts of the Burren and used an acid to slowly dissolve the stones and leave behind other elements including microfossils. Her project aims to see what is present in the Burren limestone, other than the stone itself and to see if the age of the limestone affects what it contains.

"I collected a sample of limestone from three different locations across the

Burren and recorded the GPS location of each sample," she said.

"When I brought the samples back to the lab, I placed them in buckets and places a strong bleach solution in each bucket. These were left for three days to remove any organic material from the samples."

"I broke the sample down to pea size and then added 250ml of formic acid and left it for two days. The acid dissolved some of the limestone but left the micro-fossils intact."

Beibhinn repeated this process a number of times and then washed and dried the material that was left. She then examined these samples under a stereo microscope and determined what she had discovered buried inside the rock of the Burren.

Best wishes to
**Mary Immaculate Young
Scientists guided once more
by the incredible John Sims**

CLLR JOE GARRIHY

Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare

Email: CllrGarrihy@gmail.com Tel: 086 8219624

FINE GAEL**Student:** Noah Hanrahan, Mae Burns, Orla Connolly**Project:** InstaVape: Ensuring Safe Vaping with Instant, On-the-Go Substance Detection**School:** St Joseph's Community College, Kilkee
Category: Technology

IN RESPONSE to the growing health concerns surrounding harmful chemicals found in vape liquids, Noah, Mae, and Orla developed InstaVape, a device designed to help consumers assess the safety of their vape products in real time.

The increasing popularity of vaping has raised alarms due to the presence of substances like nicotine, diacetyl, THC derivatives, and heavy metals, all of which can pose serious health risks. However, there is currently no simple way for consumers to test the safety of vape liquids before use.

To address this issue, the team created a device that detects harmful chemicals using spectroscopy.

The device works by analysing the absorption of light through vape liquids. Using visible light and UV light sources, InstaVape captures the spectrum of light absorbed by the liquid. Different harmful substances absorb light at specific wavelengths, allowing the device to detect chemicals like nicotine, THC, and heavy metals based on their unique absorption patterns. The spectrometer then displays the results on a computer screen, providing users with instant feedback about the safety of their vape liquids.



Orla Connolly, Mae Burns and Noah Hanrahan.

Photograph by John Kelly

After building the device, to validate the device's effectiveness in real-world conditions, Noah, Mae, and Orla tested it using control samples containing known concentrations of harmful substances.

Once the spectrometer was calibrated, Noah, Mae, and Orla tested several vape liquids. They then tested several commercial and organic vape liquids.

They found that InstaVape was able to accurately detect the presence of harmful substances, such as nicotine, diacetyl, THC, and Vitamin E acetate.

The device demonstrated over 90% accuracy in detecting these chemicals, which are potentially harmful.

Student: Mark Finnegan, Andrew Ivanovas and Connor Fitzpatrick**Project:** Microbial fuel cells as an alternative energy source**School:** St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla
Category: Chemical and Mathematical Science

MICROBIAL Fuel Cells (MFCs) using natural soil from land grazed by livestock, which contained fresh manure, produced a more stable electrical output with higher resistance.

That is one of the key findings from a science project focusing on how Ireland can use renewable energy in farming through MFCs.

The St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla students wanted to see how different types of soil affect the power output of MFCs. MFCs use microbes in the soil to generate electricity. They built several MFCs, each with a different type of soil, and measured how much electricity each one produced.

The trio also looked at factors like temperature, soil moisture, soil pH, and the types of microbes in the soil to find the best conditions for generating renewable energy. Their goal was to find sustainable energy solutions for farming to help reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment.

The students calculated the power output using an equation from Ohm's Law for each of the four soil samples. The highest power output was in this order: 1) Horse Paddock, 2) Organic Soil (control), 3) Clayfield Soil, and 4) Rush (Detritus) Clay Soil.

The Horse Paddock soil showed the highest microbial growth, confirmed by incubating the soil samples on nutrient agar plates for 72 hours. Organic soil had the highest moisture content, while clay soil was tightly compressed, creating conditions that supported microbial digestion in the MFCs. After four weeks, the internal soil temperature ranged between 19°C and 21°C. The Horse Paddock had the lowest pH at 6.8 (slightly acidic) and the highest temperature of 21°C.



Andrew Ivanovas and Mark Finnegan.

Photograph by John Kelly

The Clayfield soil had a slightly alkaline pH of 8.2, while the Organic and Rush soils had neutral pH values of 7.2 and 7.1, respectively. The slightly acidic nature of the Horse Paddock soil may have contributed to its higher power output.

The warmer temperature could indicate increased bacterial respiration, leading to more electrons being produced and thus higher power output.

After six months, MFCs with soils showed

higher power output at lower resistance due to microbial adaptation. They also built six more MFCs using different ratios of manure, organic soil, and clay to find the best combination for maximizing electrical power output.

A sample with 100% clay generated higher power output at lower resistance. The students hope their research will inspire more people to use more sustainable agricultural energy practices.



Best wishes to our two groups of 2nd year students
Noah, Orla, Mae, Ava, Mollie and Laura in the BTYS and
their Science teacher Miss Laura Egan from Management
and Staff at St Joseph's Community College

St. Joseph's Community College,

Kilkee, Co. Clare

Phone: 065-9056446

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Students: Adam Hehir and Michelle Shannon

Project: Smog Sucks!

School: St John Bosco Community College, Kildysart

Category: Technology

THE STUDENTS' project addresses a pressing issue in their local area - pollution. Inspired by the increasing levels of smog in Ennis and its surrounding areas, Adam and Michelle set out to investigate this environmental challenge and propose a practical solution.

Their research began with measuring smog levels across different parts of Ennis.

They observed how emissions from traffic and other sources contribute to poor air quality, affecting both public health and the environment.

Recognising the urgency of this issue, they focused their project on developing an effective, low-cost air filter to help mitigate the problem.

Currently, they are in the design and testing phase of their filters.

Their aim is to create a solution that is both accessible and impactful, capable of reducing pollution in local settings.

'This project is not just an academic exercise for us; it is a way to raise awareness about the growing pollution problem in our area and to inspire others to take action.'

The process involves extensive experimentation to ensure the filters can deliver measurable improvements in air quality. The project has given Adam and Michelle valuable insights into environmental science and the importance of sustainable innovation.

"We believe that 'Smog Sucks' has the potential to make a meaningful contribution toward addressing a global challenge, starting right here in County Clare. As we prepare for the exhibition, we are driven by a commitment to making a positive impact and to showing that young people can play an active role in creating solutions for the future."



Michelle Shannon and Adam Hehir, students of Kildysart Community School, whose project involves inventing a filter to reduce the amount of pollution released from chimneys.

Photograph by John Kelly



Caroline Hamilton of St Joseph's Secondary School in Tulla.

Student: Caroline Hamilton

Project:
Why The Long Face?

School:
St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla

Category:
Social and Behavioural Science

CAROLINE Hamilton (16) chose this topic, as there is little Irish research on the gendered nature of elite equestrianism. She recently competed on the Irish endurance team, completing 80km on her pony 'Cookie'.

For years, she was surprised how few boys attend pony club or compete in equestrian disciplines compared to girls. Interestingly, equestrian sports are unique in that males and females compete together with no concessions for either gender.

However, her pony club has 80% girls and 20% boys while Show Jumping Ireland has 60% girls and 40% boys, suggesting females are more active participants in equestrian disciplines.

At the RDS Dublin Horse Show 2024, she observed lower female participation in many of the adult elite classes and across most of the show jumping classes, from children to adults. The Nations Cup Agha Khan teams comprised of 90% males. There was no female competing in the Puissance event.

This piqued her interest given higher female membership ratios at grassroots level. She learned that equestrian clubs' membership has a majority of female members and competitors from collected data.

However, Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) international rankings highlight that females are not progressing in show jumping at elite level, where 81% are males and only 19% are females in the top 100 ranked riders.

Campaigns and promotion of equestrian female role models like other female sporting stars such as Rashidat Adeleke and Katie Taylor are needed to showcase female equestrians for girls to aspire to.

There is some denial with regard to challenges females may face in equestrianism, but particularly in show jumping. Many survey and interview participants claimed gender had no impact at all on progression in the sport. Given how progress in equestrianism is highly mediated by having the right horse, excellent facilities and coaching, good financial backing; these prerequisites can impact females disproportionately, as explained fully in her project.

It is good to have pride in the fact all genders can share the sport, it is not helpful for those struggling with their aspiration to succeed to have those at the top unable or unwilling to fully acknowledge the unique challenges females face.

Student: Keelin Corry and Emma Talty

Project: Lovely, Bubbly Bladderwrack

School: St Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point
Category: Biological



Keelin Corry and Emma Talty.



Photograph by John Kelly

FUCUS Vesiculosus is a brown algae that is found in abundance along the shores of the North Atlantic Ocean, it is commonly known as bladderwrack. It is a seaweed that is known for its air bladders that allow it to float so that it may better capture the light for photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is the process by which plants make their own food and produce oxygen.

The size of these bladders can depend on factors such as wave action, tidal conditions and light intensity. A bigger air bladder will allow the plant to float closer to the water's surface and this will in turn help the plant to maximise photosynthesis. In an area of high wave action, air bladders can be smaller as there is a need to reduce drag to prevent the plant from detaching from the rocks.

Keelin and Emma set out to investigate the effect that exposure may have along the County Clare coast on the size of the air bladders. They randomly sampled

plants along the Quilty, Spanish Point and Lahinch beaches, measured and recorded the size of the air bladders on these plants. In terms of exposure Spanish Point faces directly onto the Atlantic ocean and juts out more so it was expected that the air bladders of the plants here would be smaller than those in Lahinch or Quilty which is the least exposed of the three.

Keelin and Emma found that the average diameter of the air bladders at Spanish Point were on average 3mm smaller than those in Lahinch or Quilty. They also found that Fucus Vesiculosus was much more abundant in Lahinch and Quilty than it was in Spanish Point. Future areas for research include conducting the same experiment across different seasons to establish if results change in changing weather conditions and an experiment to monitor the effect of light intensity is also earmarked for the future.

They randomly sampled



Grace McNamara.

Photograph by Natasha Barton

Student: Grace McNamara

Project: Improvement of student and teacher wellbeing

School: Mary Immaculate Secondary School
Category: Health and Wellbeing

LISDOONVARNA student, Grace McNamara is hoping to improve the school experience for her classmates and even her teachers by measuring the causes of stress in the school environment and coming up with ways of reducing it.

"I have always been very interested in how the human mind works and I wanted to investigate the wellbeing of students and teachers and how they could be related somehow," she said.

"The idea for the project came from my own experience as a student. I am a fifth year now and that definitely comes with a lot of stress."

"I also noticed my teachers getting very stressed, as well as some of my classmates, especially those whose future college courses require very high levels of points."

Grace created two different surveys and sent them out to the Ennistymon Community School, St Joseph's in Spanish Point, a school in Tipperary, as well as her own school in Lisdoonvarna.

One of these surveys was aimed at students while the other survey aimed to measure the stress levels of teachers.

Grace has found that a number of factors contribute to the stress levels of teachers. This includes changes to the curriculum and the overall workload.

The main causes of stress for students, according to Grace's research, is exam pressures and the pressures surrounding homework.

"Even though students and teachers are feeling stressed as a result of different things, there is a connection between the two," said Grace.

"Students and teachers both feel that their workload is a key factor of their stress levels."

She is also looking at ways in which both students and teachers could manage their stress levels better including walking and other types of exercise.

ST. JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL
Best wishes to our students taking part in the **YOUNG SCIENTISTS EXHIBITION**
www.stjosephsspanishpoint.com
SPANISH POINT, MILTOWN MALBAY, CO CLARE, V95 NW01



Students:
Niamh Cook,
Tadhg Hennessey and
Maire Czyszak

Project:
The effect of blue oyster mushrooms on the rate of decomposition of waste

School: St John Bosco Community College, Kildysart

Category:
Biological Sciences



Tadhg Hennessy, Maire Czyszak and Niamh Cook.

THE STUDENTS started their project on the effect of mushrooms on material decomposition because of their deep concern for the environment and their love for nature in Kildysart. The growing problem of waste and non-biodegradable materials motivated them to explore sustainable solutions. Mushrooms, with their incredible ability to break down complex materials, inspired them to investigate their potential in addressing these challenges.

By understanding how fungi can decompose waste, they aim to contribute to reducing environmental pollution and promoting a circular economy. Their local community and the natural beauty surrounding them drive their commitment to finding innovative, eco-friendly alternatives.

Niamh, Tadhg and Maire first decided to test the mushroom spores in a controlled environment. They set up nine jars. Three were for compost, which is food waste and easily biodegradable waste. Three were cardboard and paper. Three were plastic, but no hard plastic was present, with a tiny of dead grass to encourage growth.

They had one control jar of each type to see how fast and how much of the waste decomposed without a mushroom present.

They placed all the jars in a dark cabinet and watered each of them every day. They took pictures of the jars every three days and recorded their results.

Their project demonstrated that mushrooms are capable of breaking down cardboard, compost and even certain types of plastic.

The enzymes produced by the fungi effectively decomposed organic materials, transforming them into nutrient-rich substances that could be used as natural fertilisers. While plastic proved more resistant, they observed signs of partial degradation, particularly in bio-plastics, highlighting the potential for further development in this area.

The success of their experiments, including the fruiting of all the mushrooms, underscores the versatility and resilience of fungi. This natural process offers a promising, sustainable approach to managing waste. Locally, communities like the students have in Kildysart could utilise fungi to address waste challenges and promote eco-friendly practices.



Oisin Jackson.

Student: Oisin Jackson

Project: An investigation into the feasibility of using *Ulva lactuca* as a method in the removal of nitrates and phosphates from sea water

School: Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna

Category: Biological and Ecological

FIFTH YEAR student, Oisin Jackson, was inspired to take on this project following an increase in the level of pollution in local waterways in recent years.

Nitrate and phosphate levels in water are often associated with run-off from agriculture. They are increasingly being found in rivers and coastal waters in Ireland.

Lickeen Lake in North Clare saw a number of algal blooms in 2024, which were likely brought about as a result of increased levels of phosphates and nitrates in the water.

"Both nitrates and phosphates levels have been rising in local waterways, both fresh water and seawater, which is a problem because algae can thrive in these high nutrients," said Oisin.

"*Ulva lactuca* can help clean up this water by removing these excess nutrients and bacteria from the water. This seaweed can then actually be fed back to the cattle as a very rich food source.

"This sea lettuce occurs naturally all over the world, from Antarctica to Africa. It can be found in any shallow rock pools or coastal areas."

Oisin's project has revealed some very positive results and the sea lettuce has been shown to absorb high levels of nitrates and phosphates in sea water with various different levels of salt.

Oisin aims to build on this project in the future and hopes to create a natural method for removing harmful pollution from waterways while also providing a natural feed for cattle.

Student: Jacob McEntee

Project: Analysis of voice frequencies using FFT

School: Ennistymon Community School

Category: Chemical, Physical and Mathematical Sciences



Jacob McEntee.

INAGH second year student, Jacob McEntee, has been using FFT technology to analyse the voices of different people and plot them on a graph.

"I have been collecting voice samples from every year in the school and examining the frequency of their voice," said Jacob.

"I have sampled 10 male voice and ten female voices from each year in the school."

"I have plotted these voices on a graph and inputted them into an app."

Jacob uses this app to allow for some voices to perform certain tasks.

"Certain voice will be able to turn on a light, if their voices is between a certain range of developments," he said. This technology could allow for electronic equipment to be operated using the voice of a particular person.

"I think this is an interesting area for study and I don't think that a lot research has really been done in this area," said Jacob.

"I have collected a lot of data as part of this project which I will be presenting all of that at the Young Scientists Exhibition."

"I have converted the data onto FFT graphs which I will have at the exhibition in Dublin."



Aine Kelly and Alisha Brody.

Photograph by John Kelly

Student: Aine Kelly and Alisha Brody

Project: Is there a way to improve traffic flow in the Burren?

School: Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna

Category: Social and Behavioural Sciences

AINE KELLY and Alisha Brody decided to tackle a very topical subject as part of their Young Scientist project this year, traffic congestion in North Clare.

"We live in a very busy tourist area and there are a lot of buses on the road throughout the year," said Alisha.

"We are often held up when two buses meet each other on the road. Just this week a local person posted a picture online of buses causing considerable delays on the N67."

During the summer, a trial clockwise traffic system was tried in parts of the Burren.

"We decided to investigate the flow of traffic on three routes, the N67, the R477 and the R480," said Aine.

"When we are finished we will make this information available to Clare County Council."

The group mapped the movement of traffic over a four month period. They also took regular width measurements of the roads being examined and then devised a traffic management plan which would create better movement of vehicles in the Burren. Aine and Alisha devised their own recording sheets which helps them to divide the traffic into its various types - car, bus or other type of vehicle.

The students have also measured the widths of the various different vehicles and have discovered that, in many areas of the Burren, the road is not wide enough for two wide vehicles to pass each other.



Best wishes to our students participating in The Young Scientist Exhibition

ST JOHN BOSCO, COMMUNITY COLLEGE, KILDYSART - WWW.STJOHNBOSCO.IE



Students:
Michaela Kelly

Project:
Is the teabag method a more sustainable way of water testing?

School:
Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna

Category:
Biological and Ecological

THE RECENT impact of an algal bloom in Liceen Lake in North Clare is on the inspirations behind this project from Michaela Kelly. This project is building on a successful project by Michaela for last year's Young Scientist.

She looked at two different lakes in the Burren, one with a shale bedrock and the other with a limestone bedrock.

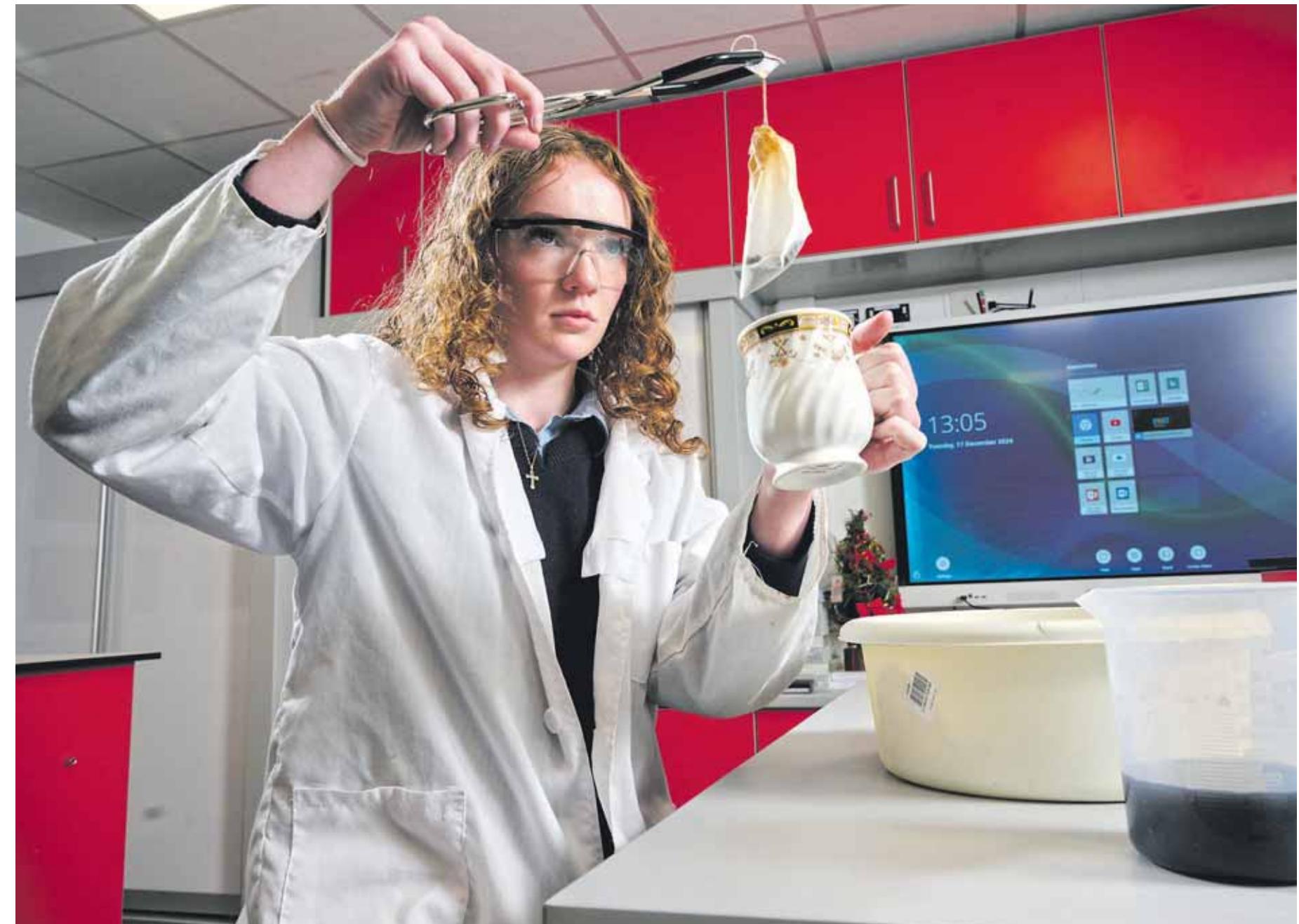
"During my investigation I found a more sustainable method of testing biological activity in water, called the teabag method. My hypotheses is that the geological sub-strata has an effect on the biological activity in lakes," she said.

A key part of her work is to examine the teabag method of testing water and determine how effective it is.

"I filled the teabags with loose green tea and put each of the tea bags in purified water, leaving one for six day, one for 9 days, one for 12 days and one for 15 day. After this I dried and weighed the tea," she said.

"Then I collected water samples from four local lakes and repeated the experiment."

Michaela also tested the water samples from each lake for nitrates, phosphates and calcium and compared the results from each lake with the purified water. She carried out these test to see if there was any relationship between the results that she got from the teabag test and the trophic state of the lake.



Michaela Kelly.

Photograph by John Kelly



John Sheridan, Caimin McGlennon and Ruby Crosse.

Photograph by Natasha Barton

Students:
John Sheridan,
Caimin McGlennon and
Ruby Crosse

Project:
Optimisation of movement in a school campus using graph theory

School:
Ennistymon Community School
Category:
Chemical, Physical and Mathematical Sciences

THE CONSTRUCTION the Ennistymon Community School has changed many things for the students of North Clare, including school lunches.

"We used Dijkstra's algorithm, which is a method for learning how to get from point A to point B in as quick a way as is possible."

The group used the python coding language to create a digital model of their school and then then test different methods of moving people around the school efficiently.

This innovation has not come about without challenges however, and John, Caimin and Ruby have set about trying to find a better way to manage the lunch queues which have become a part of their school days.

"Lunch queues used to be awful bad at the beginning of the year," said John. You could be waiting for 20 minutes to get your lunch and there could be queues right around the school.

"That got us thinking about ways to minimise the congestion and get the queues moving quicker."

The group decided to take a scientific approach to solving this problem and used the actual classes of their own school for the study.

"We started off using five classrooms and built on that bit by bit," said Ruby.

"The group have been working on a number of hypothetical scenarios for how classes of students and teachers could move through the school and are increasing this bit by bit."

The are also planning to map how the entire student and teacher population of the school could most efficiently move around the building.

"By the time the project is fully completed we will have all the rooms in the school included, all the students accounted for, and then we will get a real example of what movement will be like in the entire school building," said Caimin.

The students have integrated the actual school timetable into their model and are mapping how class transitions take place as well as how lunch and break times play out.

Student: Liam Hynes

Project: Investigating the effect of light and temperature on the bleaching of *Corallina officinalis*

School: Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna
Category: Biological and Ecological



Liam Hynes.
Photograph by Natasha Barton

A THIRD year student from Fanore, Liam Hynes was inspired to take on this project after he heard about coral bleaching in places like Australia.

He set out to examine whether the same process is happening to the seaweed in Clare, and if so, what change this process might bring about in the natural coastal environment of Ireland. Bleaching, which is when the colour of plants and organisms change, is often the result of climate change and can have a significant impact on the natural world.

As part of his project, Liam also wanted to examine if the bleaching of seaweed in the beaches off North Clare had an impact on the wider environment of these areas, and in particular on the amount of oxygen in the water. He placed samples of seaweed under lights and into water baths to determine what ef-

fects increased light and the increased heat had on the plant. He also measured the growing environment of *Corallina officinalis* seaweed, to understand how the plant normally grows. His initial results have shown that the seaweed grown under higher than normal intensity of light becomes bleached.

This seaweed is naturally dark red, but grown under a high intensity of light the plants becomes an orange colour.

The change in colour is brought about by the loss of the natural algae in the seaweed which makes the plant itself weaker and vulnerable to disease.

His results have also shown changes in the growth patterns of the seaweed when it is grown in hotter than usual water. These changes also affects the amount of oxygen in the water that exists around the seaweed.

This change to the oxygen level could have a major effect on the wider marine landscape.



Grace Whelan.

Photograph by John Kelly

GRACE LIVES along the coast at Doolin and this is her second Young Scientist project which focusses on marine life.

"I love the sea shore and I love looking at what I find along the shore at Doolin," she said.

"While walking along the shore I noticed that there was many mussels there. I also saw that there was a white-shelled, shell fish, which was also very common on the shore."

After doing some research, Grace decided to investigate why these white-shelled, shell fish, dog whelks, like to prey on mussels instead of other shell fish in the area.

She also decided to see if certain mussels were more likely to be eaten by dog whelks than others.

To carry out her research, Grace collected 100 dog whelks from Doolin and brought them back to her school in Lisdoonvarna for analysis.

The dog whelks were stored in seawater in the school and not fed for four days.

"For the trial I placed 40 mussels of various sizes in eight tanks and left them to settle for an hour," said Grace.

"I then placed 10 dog whelks in each of the tanks and left them to settle for five days."

"At the end of each trial I separated the mussels in each tank into large ones and ones that had holes in them."

"I then measured all of the mussels in the tank using a digital calipers."

"One of the results that I have got so far is that the dog whelks usually bore through the thinnest part of the mussel shell."

Student: Grace Whelan

Project: Are dog whelks, or *Nucella lapillus*, selective about the size of their prey, *Mytilus edulis*?

School: Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna
Category: Biological and Ecological



Ennistymon Community School
Lahinch Road, Ennistymon, Co Clare

Best of luck to our students in the BT Young Scientist final from all at ECS

Phone: 065- 705 4901



Students:
Katie Kane**Project:**
Fashion over Function:
Do Polo Wraps cause
more harm than
good?**School:** Mary
Immaculate
Secondary School,
Lisdoonvarna**Category:** Biological
and Ecological

Katie Kane.

KATIE KANE has been a lover of horses since she was a small child and it is this love that inspired her entry for the Young Scientists Exhibition this year.

Polo wraps, or bandages, are placed on the lower legs of many horses and Katie wanted to discover if these wraps were a benefit or a hindrance to the health of the animals.

"Since I was young I have always had an interest in horses. I have been taking horse riding lessons since I was six years old," she said.

"I always noticed that there were always some horses in every yard who had bandages on their legs."

While there has been no extensive study on this subject to date, it is thought that these polo wraps could cause over-heating and eventually injury in some legs.

"Polo wraps are intended to provide support for horses tendons, even though there is no scientific evidence to prove this," said Katie.

"But there has been some debates and light research to see if polo wraps can actually have a negative effect on horses tendons."

Earlier this year the use of polo wraps on horses was banned in The Netherlands

"We should be doing everything we can to improve the welfare of horses by educating people about the unintended consequences of overheating the tendons of horses by using polo wraps," said Katie.

Katie conducted a series of experiments to record the pattern of heating of horses legs, both without and with polo wraps.

"To accurately measure the temperature of the horses' legs, I strapped a wireless thermometer to the horses using a bandage and some electrician's tape," she said. "I was able to record the temperature of the horses legs through the whole exercise and record that information on my phone."

The horses were exercised for 15 minutes each, which included two separate, four minute long sessions of trotting. The sessions also included a four minute canter before the horse changed rein and was cantered for a final three minutes. Changing rein means that the horse is trotted in a different direction which means that both legs get an even exercise.

Student: Emily Cronin and
Kiera Kelly**Project:** Pea Power: Investigating Protein Content in Organic Pea Varieties.**School:** St Joseph's Secondary School, Tulla**Category:** Biological and Ecological

Emily Cronin and Kiera Kelly.

Photograph by Mairead O'Brien

AS ACTIVE members of the Green Committee at St. Joseph's Secondary School in Tulla, Emily Cronin and Kieran Kelly are deeply committed to environmental sustainability. This led to a collaboration with Irish Seed Savers Association garden team in Scariff who helped them to investigate the protein content in organically grown pea varieties due to the increasing consumer demand for organic produce that is healthier and more sustainable.

By examining the protein content in these peas, the duo aimed to contribute to the understanding of their nutritional value and support advancements in sustainable agriculture. They hoped to promote peas as a new alternative to soy because the extraction process for soy requires chemicals like hexane, which can leave residues in the final product.

Their study employed the Biuret test to detect protein presence, which was indicated by various color changes. Among the varieties tested, Daniel

O'Rourke consistently demonstrated the highest protein levels. This variety also showed remarkable resilience after freezing and cooking, maintaining superior protein retention and a high nitrogen percentage.

In contrast, the Pilot variety exhibited weaker protein concentrations.

To further validate their findings, they conducted a Kjeldahl analysis. This method involves digesting the pea samples in sulfuric acid, which converts nitrogen into ammonium sulfate. The ammonium is then distilled and titrated to determine the nitrogen content.

This project not only shed light on the nutritional value of different pea varieties but also underscored the importance of sustainable agricultural practices.

By focusing on organic produce, they hope to inspire others to consider the environmental and health benefits of sustainable food sources.

Students: Ava Daly, Laura Mahoney and Mollie Collins**Project:** Herd Herbs: Herbal remedies to prevent mastitis in dairy cows**School:** St Joseph's Community College, Kilkee
Category: Biological and Ecological

Mollie Collins, Ava Daly and Laura Mahoney.

Photograph by John Kelly

AVA, Laura, and Mollie developed Mastigold, a natural herbal remedy designed to prevent mastitis using the anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties of turmeric, garlic and aloe vera.

The team formulated Mastigold in three forms, paste, powder and water trough blocks, giving farmers flexible options for administering the remedy. The paste

and powder were mixed with the cows' feed, while the blocks were designed to dissolve slowly in the water.

Additionally, aloe vera gel was applied externally to soothe and protect the cows' udders from irritation and inflammation. Over a six-month period, the team tested these remedies on a treatment group of cows and compared them

to a control group. Key indicators such as somatic cell counts (SCC), the incidence of mastitis, and milk yield were closely monitored.

The results of the study were promising, showing that Mastigold was effective in all three forms.

The treatment group had a significantly lower somatic cell count.

The incidence of clinical mastitis in the treatment group was reduced.

In conclusion, Mastigold shows great potential as a natural alternative to antibiotics for preventing mastitis in dairy cows.



Paddy Lawless and Sean Ahearne.

Photograph by Natasha Barton

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE or AI is one of the key emerging areas of science and technological research at present, and its presence is also being felt at this year's Young Scientist Exhibition.

Ennistymon Community School has pioneered the study of robots in schools in Clare and Paddy and Sean decided to combine this access to robots with the new advances being made by AI.

Their project involves attempting to create robots which could "learn" how to navigate their way through a maze.

"It took a lot of trial and error," said Paddy. "And sometimes starting from scratch again when what we were doing didn't work."

Paddy and Sean downloaded a sample, digital maze, and tested their robots to see if they could escape from it.

"We started off by getting the robots to escape from the maze using regular code," said Sean.

"Once they could do that, we tried to do it faster and update the robots quicker. After that we asked ourselves could we be using reinforced learning. So we made our own maze and we have been using that ever since."

The pair are planning to create a physical representation of their maze and the hope is that their robots will be able to escape from any maze and to escape faster each time.

Student: Paddy Lawless and Sean Ahearne**Project:** AI Control of Robots using Reinforcement Learning Algorithms**School:** Ennistymon Community School
Category: Technology**ST JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL***Best wishes to our students taking part in the Young scientists Exhibition*Tulla, Co Clare | T: 065 683 5113 E: admin@sjt.ie www.sjt.ie

Town & Country

For inclusion in notes email editor@clarechampion.ie



BALLYNACALLY

Café Closure

DEAR Community, the Estuary Way Community Café had its final day of service for the year on Tuesday, December 31. The café managers will now take a well-deserved break throughout January after a busy few months leading up to Christmas. During this time, they will also address a few minor tasks around the café. The management would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported the Estuary Way Community Café. They have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know all of you and appreciate your visits and kindness. They look forward to welcoming you back when the café reopens on February 1. May you be blessed with good health and happiness for 2025 and thank you for your continued support.

Church Matters

JANUARY anniversary will take place at this Saturday night's mass at 7pm. A remembrance tree was placed on the church grounds at Ballycorick Church during Christmas. People are still invited to have their absent loved one's name (those who are deceased, in hospital or away from home) written on a ribbon which will be placed on the tree and will also be prayed for at a mass on Little Christmas for a donation of €5 in aid of the Fr David Education Fund. You can contact Mary Sheehan or Ingred Flynn or place your donation with the name(s) of your loved ones + your own name in an envelope and drop it in the letterbox at the parochial house at Ballycorick. Collection boxes are available in the church for the coming year and if anyone is missing a box or would like to get one let father know or contact parish office. The Pastoral council would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy new year

Race Night

CLONDEGAD would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to or supported our fund raising race night on December 27. Your generosity and participation made the event a tremendous success. As we look ahead to another exciting year of competitive football for all ages, we warmly welcome your continued support. Your ongoing purchase of lotto tickets is especially appreciated, as it enables us to continue providing training and opportunities for players across all age groups throughout the year. The Lotto jackpot currently stands at €12,000, and tickets can be purchased online through the club's website or in local shops. We wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year and thank you for being an essential part of our journey.

Ladies Gaelic

FOLLOWING our recent EGM, we are delighted to announce that Jim Garry has been elected Chairperson of Fergus Rovers. Mairead Hayes received heartfelt thanks from all present for her work and dedication to the Club over the past three years. In other news, Alan Culligan was named Club Officer of the Year at the Clare Ladies AGM. Alan is a very deserving recipient of this award, having done a tremendous amount of work for both the Club and County. Congratulations, Alan. Wishing all our members a happy New Year, and we look forward to returning to the pitches in 2025.

BODYKE/TUAMGRANEY

Nollaig na mBan

BODYKE Nollaig na mBan gathering for ladies of all ages will be held on Monday, January 6, at 7pm in Bodyke GAA Clubhouse. Join the ladies for a cuppa and a chat and further information is available by ringing 089 7017460.

Sunday Mass

FOR the month of January 2025 Sunday Mass returns to Bodyke church at 9.30am each Sunday. There will be no evening Mass in Tuamgraney for the month of January.

First Friday Call

SICK or housebound parishioners who would like a first Friday call from the priest or those who would like to arrange a hospital visit for a sick relative are asked to call the parish office on 087 1498763.

Recent Death

THE death has taken place of Maurice Cunningham, Dalkey, County Dublin, father of Og Dobson, Tuamgraney. His remains were removed to Dalkey Church for funeral Mass and burial took place in Deansgrave Cemetery.

COORACLAIRE/CREE

Diamond Wedding

DROMELIHY was the site of more celebrations over the festive season as local couple, Martie and Vinnie Qually celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary after 60 years of marriage. The happy couple married on a cold, frosty December day in 1964, when Martie recalled that the ceremony at 10am was a little delayed as some people had difficulty travelling in the icy conditions from Ennis. On the day, there were no excuses for either Martie or Vinnie being late as both had travelled only down the road from their respective homes in Dromelihy. It was in Dromelihy they settled and reared their family of eight while both of them taught in Cree NS. Well there



The Lynch family from Ruan and Dublin get a quick selfie before setting off on the 'Run for Joe' 7k fun run and walk in Corofin.

was nothing cold and frosty about the festive gathering held in The Golf Club, in Kilrush, where Martie and Vinnie gathered with all their children, their spouses and partners, together with all of their 15 grandchildren to celebrate this momentous event. The happy couple were flooded with good wishes from family, friends and neighbours to celebrate this lovely occasion.

Football Success

RECENTLY at an award ceremony in Eire Óg Clubhouse, Aimee McNamara and Aisling Kelly were presented with their Clare Minor Football Munster Final medals by Marty Morrissey. Aisling also picked up two separate awards on the night Player's 'Player of the Year' and Management's 'Player of the Year' award. Well done to both girls on a great year with the Clare Minor Football team.

Parish Golf

THE Cooraclaire/Cree Golf Society recent outing at Spanish Point Golf Club, where the overall winner of the Paddy Burns Memorial Cup competition, was Ailish Lorigan. First in the men's section was Michael Cooney and Mary Downes was first in the Ladies.

Wedding Celebrations

A CEREMONY to celebrate the marriage of local teacher and footballer, Anne-Marie Callinan, from Dromelihy and her new husband, Sean Eyles from Coolmeen took place in St Senan's Church, Cooraclaire on Saturday, December 21. The maid of honour was Anne-Marie's sister, Patricia Callinan and the bridesmaid was Lisa Downes.

The bestman and groomsman were Michael and Colm Corry. The page boy was the bride's nephew, TJ Courtney and the flowergirls were Chloe Corry and Erin Copley. The mass was officiated by Fr Tony Casey, PP. A reception was held after the church in The Falls Hotel, Ennistymon. The bride is the

daughter of Paddy and Mary Callinan, Dromelihy and the groom's parents are John and Mary Eyles, Coolmeen. The happy couple plan to live in Coolmeen.

Recent Deaths

THE death occurred of Bridie Tubridy (née Kelly) at her home recently in Clohanebog, Cree. Predeceased by her husband John Joe and daughter Carmel. Mourned by her son Martin, daughters Vinnie, Rita and Josephine, her grandchildren and great grandchildren, her relatives friends and neighbours. Her funeral mass was celebrated in St Mary's Church Cree and burial was in Knocknabilla Cemetery. Bridie was a hard working woman who loved playing her 45 card game.

The death took place of Maureen Meade (née Grogan), Tiernagloane, Cooraclaire, at Mowlam Nursing Home. Predeceased by her husband Pat and sadly missed by her daughters Marian, Kate, Breda and Carmel, her sons Mike, Jim, Donal and Joe, her grandchildren and great grandchildren, her sister Sr Kathleen Grogan, brothers Stephen and Willie, relatives, friends and neighbours. Her funeral mass was celebrated in St Senan's Church Cooraclaire and burial was in Kilmacduane Cemetery. Maureen was widowed at a young age and worked hard to raise her family. She was an expert on crochet and needlework.

The death took place in England of Bridget Tobin (née Gutherie), formerly Cree. May they rest in peace.

COROFIN-KILNABOY

Phenomenal Fundraising

SHANE Slattery, father of Joe, who suffered life-changing injuries in a training ground accident in November and Joe's uncle Clive, who established a GoFundMe page to raise money for Joe's future care both took to social

media recently to thank everyone for the huge support shown by so many individuals and organisations and to express their gratitude and amazement at the level of financial donations and out-powering of goodwill towards their family at this difficult time.

In excess of €20,000 was generated by two fundraisers held in Corofin over the weekend. As part of Corofin GAA Club's Race Nite on Friday at O'Riain's Bar a raffle was held for a signed Clare jersey while the proceeds of the Willie Corbett Memorial auction race and the winning prizemoney of €1,000 were all donated raising just over €6,000. On Saturday more than €14,000 was generated from the Run for Joe event which was very well organised by Kilnaboy Athletic Club and which attracted a huge level of community participation. Earlier, a series of fundraising events organised by Mary Immaculate Secondary School in Lisdoonvarna, where Joe is a student and his father a teacher, brought in more than €26,000. The response from groups from all over Clare and beyond has been phenomenal with Candlelight Walks and other sponsored walks, St Stephen's Day swims, coffee mornings, charity matches, Spinathon and much more being organised, which has seen the total raised so far surpass €700,000 this week.

Live Crib

THE Christmas Eve mass at St Joseph's Church, Kilnaboy, which attracted a very large congregation saw the return of a Live Crib which had been a feature of this celebration for many years, but which had been discontinued with the advent of Covid. Thanks was expressed to all involved including decorators, musicians, readers, Kilnaboy Youth Club, the outside crib maker, the good shepherd and the children who made sure the figures went in the crib, and to Fr Des Hillery for a wonderful celebration of this sa-

cred occasion.

Dance On

FORTNIGHTLY Friday social dancing in Corofin will resume with the first dance of 2025 happening on Friday, January 10, with the Galway band of Tommy Flaherty and Francis Fahy providing the music. Waterford father and son combo Teddy and Cathal Barry will be the next act, on January 24 while entertainment in February will see Pat Costello from Tipperary followed by Peter Burke, Larry and Carmel Brown, known as Checkers and The Michael Collins Band both making a second visit of the season will keep the dancing going during March.

Recent Deaths

THE death occurred at the weekend of Mrs Philomena (Phil) McCarthy (née Gilligan), of Commons South, Kilnaboy. She reposed at St Joseph's Church, Kilnaboy, on New Year's Eve and was buried in the local cemetery following funeral mass on New Year's Day.

The death occurred in Ennis last week of Mrs Eileen Bradley (née O'Loughlin), former owner of Bofey Quinn's Bar, Corofin. Mrs. Bradley purchased the Corofin premises in the 1970s from the original owner Josephine Clune and they ran it for a couple of years before it was acquired by Tom Moroney and family.

CRATLOE

Goal Mile

OVER 100 people took part in the Cratloe Goal Mile Run which took place in Cratloe Forest Road network on Christmas morning. Amongst the happy gathering were the Lohan family, Brickhill and Brian's presence with the Liam MacCarthy Cup was very much appreciated by young and old for photographs.

DOONBEG

A Peaceful Christmas

A PEACEFUL and quiet Christmas but nonetheless enjoyable sums up the festive period in Doonbeg parish. Religious ceremonies in Doonbeg and Bealaha churches were well attended by parishioners and family members, who returned home for Christmas. Very few wreaths ventured out on St Stephen's Day. Many tributes were paid to Doonbeg Development workers and voluntary helpers for decorating Doonbeg Village with Christmas trees, wreaths and flickering candles and lights for the festive season. Thankfully it was an accident and crime-free Christmas in the area.

Christmas Day Swim

THE 10th annual Christmas Day Charity Swim held in Killard White Strand, Doonbeg was very successful. Some 50 men, women and teenagers braved the chilly and damp conditions to meet the daunting challenge. The festive enthusiasts took the plunge in their wetsuits, swimwear and bikinis for the occasion. Speaking on behalf of the organisers, Colm Killeen said the sponsored swim was in aid of Laura Lynn Charity and Doonbeg Children's Playground.

DOORA/BAREFIELD

Church Matters

FIRST Friday Mass of the year at Church of the Immaculate Conception, Barefield, on this Friday, January 3, will be at 7pm. If you or someone you know would like a First Friday call please contact Fr Tom or the office.

The Parish Office at 3 The Woods, Cappahard, Tulla Road, will re-open on Monday, January 6, at 9am. Hours are from 9am to 5pm; Monday and Tuesday and 9am to 1pm on Wednesday.

Mile Buiochas

THE parish extends a word of thanks and gratitude to everyone involved with the CES Scheme for their continued dedication to our parish. It is an invaluable resource to the parish and we are very grateful for all the good works undertaken.

Laid to Rest

THE gentle and kind soul of Paul Cusack, Carrig Hill, Shannon, and late of Ennis Road, Newmarket-on-Fergus and ASL Airlines Shannon, brother of Michael, Dearpark, Doora, was laid to rest in the past week in the peace and quiet of Illaunmanagh Cemetery, Shannon.

Sean O'Boyle, Castlerock, Tulla Road, Ennis, and formerly of O'Boyle's Shop, Connolly and Claremorris, County Mayo, passed on to his eternal reward during the past week unexpectedly, but peacefully. Deeply regretted by his loving wife Mary (née McAuliffe), daughter Martina (McMahon), son-in-law Colin and adored grandchildren Andrea, Barry, Stephen and Orla.

Fondly remembered by his loving family, his brothers Tom and Martin, sisters-in-law, niece Leanne and nephews Jonathon and Darren, extended family, friends and neighbours.

Sean lay in repose in at Murphy's Funeral Home, Kilmaley. Funeral Mass was St Joseph's Church, Ennis, with burial afterwards in the peace and quiet of Mount Temple Cemetery, Kilmaley.



Crowds take part in the Run for Joe on Saturday morning.

Photographs by Natasha Barton

Town & Country

For inclusion in notes email editor@clarechampion.ie



Gerard (Gerry) Arthur, 7 Riverside View, Inagh, and formerly of Creggaun, Doora, was laid to rest in the past week. Gerry went to his eternal reward, peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family, after an illness he bravely fought. Gerry was one of the old farming families from Doora who had roots in the Creggaun area for many years. Greatly missed and loved by his wife Matilda (O'Callaghan), his sons Sean, Gerard, Brian and Niall, his daughters Noelle and Aisling, sons-in-law Andrew and James, daughters-in-law Elaine, Mary, Sarah and Noleen, his sister Mary Egan (Kilmihil) brothers Francis, Christy, Martin and Pat. Adored grandfather to Luke, Ryan, Adam, Robyn, Alice, Abbie, Darragh, Johnny, Annabelle, Luna Mae and Joey. Sadly missed by his brothers in law, sisters in law and a wide circle of friends.

Gerry reposed in the Church of the Immaculate Conception Inagh. After funeral mass Gerry was laid to rest in the adjoining cemetery.

FEAKLE

GAA Presentation

A SPECIAL presentation of a personalised plaque was made to all members of county final winning team, recently in Shorrt's. The plaques were hand-crafted by John Touhy and he personally presented them to all players.

A commemorative calendar celebrating the Feakle County champions, their mentors and supporters proved to be a highly coveted present for the Christmas season. The last few copies are available from Feakle PO or from Eileen Donnellan.

Recent Death

THE death has occurred of Michael (Mike) Hayes, Kilbarron, Feakle. Mike was a much respected judge of cattle and was well known at markets throughout the county. He was an accomplished musician and a well-known figure, astride his Honda 50, throughout the parish. His funeral Mass was celebrated in Feakle church and he was interred in the local cemetery. May he rest in peace.

FLAGMOUNT / KILLANENA

Christmas Mass Services

OVER the Christmas period there were large attendances at church services with Christmas Eve mass in Flagmount and Christmas morning mass in Killanena. The pastoral council wish to thank everyone who contributed to make the mass services so moving, sacristans, choirs, readers and children who participated.

Special thanks to Fr Kieran Blake and Fr David Carroll for such meaningful homilies.

GAA

THE Killanena GAA Club held its annual Race Night at Canny's on Sunday night last. The club wishes to thank everyone in the community who supported the race night by sponsoring races, purchasing fast horses and attending on the night.

Parish Pastoral Council Nominations

THE Killanena Flagmount Pastoral Council is seeking parishioner candidates to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council. The selection will take place in January 2025. People are encouraged to nominate themselves and/or other parishioners.

The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to assist in the administration of the pastoral aspects of parish life. Nominations can be placed in the weekly baskets at weekend mass or leave them at Flagmount or Dromindoo Post Offices for collection.

KILDYSART

Recent Deaths

THE death has taken place of Tommy Scanlan, Main Street, Kildysart, and formerly of Crovraghan. Most of his working life he spent in the Cahercon Estate managing the farm work and various other duties. Well regarded in the community, he was also a great supporter of the Clare teams, especially the Clare hurlers and enjoyed their great All Ireland achievements. Following Requiem mass in St Michael's Church, interment took place in the local cemetery.

Tommy is predeceased by his parents Margaret and Patrick, sisters Peggy, Teresa, brothers Patrick, Jimmy, Sean and is survived by brother Michael, sister Mary (Farrell), sisters-in-law Kathleen, Mary, relatives, neighbours and many friends.

The death has also taken place of Mary Corry (née Fitzpatrick), Main Street, Kildysart, and formerly of Inch, Kilmaley. Mary worked as an office worker in Shannon in her early years and after coming to Kildysart got very much involved in her farm work. The large attendance at her funeral was testament to the high esteem she was held in the community.

Following requiem mass in St Michael's Church, a cremation ceremony took place in Shannon Crematorium. Mary is predeceased by her parents Michael and Bridget, brother Gerard and is survived by her husband Terence, daughters Valerie and Fiona, son Noel, sons-in-laws and daughter-in-law, sister Martina, brother Tom, extended family, relatives, neighbours and many friends.



Participants warm up before the Run for Joe.

KILLALOE/BALLINA

Guests of Honour

JUST before work ceased on the Shannon Crossing project for the Christmas break, a Ballina teenager had the honour of being one of the first to have been officially photographed on the new bridge. James Goode, son of Joanne and David, who secured maximum points in his 2024 Leaving Certificate, was honoured when presented with a certificate for achieving joint highest marks, nationally, in Engineering by Mayor of Clare, Alan O'Callaghan. James attended the local St Anne's Community College where his engineering teacher was Tom Doyle. Well done to James and his proud teacher.

Killaloe Church News

DAILY Mass will continue in Killaloe at 11am for this current week. There will be no St Pio Mass on Thursday evening.

On Sunday last, the Jubilee Year of the Diocese of Killaloe will take place from July 2 to July 9, departing from Cork, and arriving in Dubrovnik. Pilgrims will be accompanied by the Spiritual director, Fr Rexon. If you require further details, please contact Séan and Elaine Connolly on 085 8636371 or 067 32178.

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje

THE 2025 Nenagh pilgrimage to Medjugorje will take place from July 2 to July 9, departing from Cork, and arriving in Dubrovnik. Pilgrims will be accompanied by the Spiritual director, Fr Rexon. If you require further details, please contact Séan and Elaine Connolly on 085 8636371 or 067 32178.

Christmas Day Swim

WELL done to everyone who attended the Christmas Day swim at Twomilegate in Killaloe. Weather conditions were most favourable for the huge numbers of swimmers who took the plunge in aid of two well-deserving or-

ganisations - Killaloe Tidy Towns, and Critical Killaloe/Ballina Community First Responder group.

Well done also to our local Killaloe Coast Guard volunteers who gave of their time to ensure the safety of participants and onlookers. They also provided the marquee and generators for the event.

We are deeply indebted to these great people who provide a vitally important service in our locality and beyond 24/7/365 on a voluntary basis.

24-hour Fast

WELL done to the Leaving Certificate Class at St Anne's Community

who spent the last day of school term on a 24-hour fast in support of Critical Killaloe/Ballina Community First Responders and Killaloe Tidy Towns. All the students thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Prestigious Award

CONGRATULATIONS to Denis Ryan, a Kerryman, a Nenagh-based Garda and member of Killaloe Photography Group and Limerick Camera Club - who has been named winner of the National and International divisions of this year's Du Noyer Photographic competition.

His excellent studies of Geological Landscapes in Ireland and Italy wowed the judges in the competition, run by the Geological Survey Ireland in conjunction with the Irish Geological Association.

Lough Derg FC

TURKEY Tournic 'A' tournament made it a festival of football on Saturday last in UL. Lough Derg won 1, lost 1 and drew 1 in the group stage but the head to head with Tulla meant a 3rd place play off. Derg went behind early

on against Bridge Utd but goals from Phelim Hennelly and Charlie Hass meant Derg finished in third place.

Best for Lough Derg were captain Cody Williams and Phelim Hennelly.

With 120 kids from five different clubs

coming together across the morning and afternoon tournaments and with St. Bernard's coming from Galway, we went interprovincial! A big thanks to

Alannah McCole and Conor McFadden (Tulla) for refereeing all day. What an amazing day!

Ballina Killaloe RFC

THE following is a tribute to the late Pat "Moss" Rohan, penned by one of

his team-mates from the adult phase

of the Ballina Killaloe RFC during the final three decades of the 20th century.

"Pat's career spanned the three

decades from the '70s through to the '90s and he made his debut as a teenage lock forward in the 1974-5 season when the Ballina-Killaloe XV reached the final of the Webb Cup, losing narrowly to Bohemians at Thomond Park. In the same year he acquired his nickname after replicating in a Webb Cup match in Galbally an error committed by the legendary Moss Keane in an international in Paris a few weeks previously. Pat went on to become a fixture in the Number 8 position and five years after his debut he was one of five survivors of the 1976 team when the club lifted the Webb Cup after defeating Abbeyfeale RFC in Rathbane.

A scrupulously fair player, his powerful carrying yielded countless tries from the backs of scrums and mauls. He was certainly one of the best players, arguably the greatest, to ever represent the old adult club.

Extremely popular on and off the field of play, he will be greatly missed by his many friends and old colleagues. Our sympathies go out to the Rohan family on their sad loss.

Road Hurling on St Stephen's Day

THE annual Smith O'Brien's GAA Road Hurling/Camogie event was a great success on St Stephen's Day in Bridgetown and attracted a total of 30 teams. The club wishes to thank all who took part, donated spot prizes, bought raffle tickets or turned up to support the competitors. A special thanks to Derek Conway who runs this enjoyable event every year and Derek was awarded in a special way this year when his team won the competition.

The winning Camogie team was led by Leah Scanlan. Certainly, a great day was enjoyed by all.

Ballina GAA Healthy Club

ON Wednesday, December 11, Ballina GAA Healthy Club were delighted to

hold a Christmas coffee morning and social get-together for our local senior citizens and the community in Ballina Parish Hall.

It was really wonderful to welcome students of Ballina National

School who provided fantastic festive

music for the occasion. The organisers wish to thank all who attended and, of course, the young people who are always so popular with our senior citizens.

May the gentle souls of Pat, Liz, Maura and Bridgid rest in peace.

KILLIMER

Poker Classic

KILLIMER GAA Club and Kilrush LGFA are holding a Poker Classic on Friday, January 10, at Kilrush Golf Club, starting at 9pm. Tickets available from Bryan at 087 066 8071.

Recent Deaths

THE death occurred recently of Phyllis Browne of Derryloough. Following requiem Mass in St Senan's Church Knockerra, burial took place in the adjoining cemetery. Sympathy is extended to her husband John, daughters Yvonne, Caroline and Loretta, son Damien, extended family, relatives and friends.

The death has taken place of Mary Grogan of Carhufree. Following requiem Mass in St Senan's Church Knockerra, burial took place in Burrane cemetery. Sympathy is extended to her daughter Anne Marie, sons John, Michael and Kevin, extended family, relatives and friends.

Sympathy is extended to Marian McKeown on the death of her father John Joe Moody of Kilrush.

The death has occurred of John Meehan of Cappa, Kilrush and formerly of Clooneyellis, sympathy is extended to his brother JJ of Burrane and other family members.

KILMALEY

New Year Greetings

PP Fr John McGovern took the opportunity at the weekend masses to wish all parishioners at home and abroad a very Happy New Year. He went on to say, "as we come towards the end of the year it is fitting to acknowledge with gratitude the wonderful and dedicated people who help make our parish the vibrant, faith-filled community it is. I thank all who supported our parish and who are active in ministry. We thank all who helped with Liturgy, Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Basket Collectors, Counters, Envelope Distributors, Sacristans, Safe Guarding Representatives, Choirs, Organists, the Property and Finance Committee, organisers of Eucharistic Adoration. I want to express our gratitude to our schools, Principals, teachers and school staff and acknowledge their role in forming the hearts and minds of our young people. A special word of appreciation to the boards of management who look after our schools in the parish. We thank everyone who joins us for mass in person or online each week and all who support our parish both spiritually and materially."

Above all we give our thanks to God who has blessed our parish with such wonderful parishioners. Along with my colleagues in Crioch Callan pastoral area, Fr Donagh and Fr Martin, I wish you all a happy, prosperous and blessed New Year."



Danny and Ronan Murphy with Emily Cullinane and Jessie the dog taking part in the run in Corofin.

Photographs by Natasha Barton



Gary Madden, David O'Neill and Conor Scott. The first three athletes over the finish line were John Morrissey (18:44), Quinton Bourke (18:59), Gary Madden (20:09), Olive Gleeson (22:52), Loretta Duggan (24:38) and Joanne O'Dea (25:01). Saturday's full results together with a complete event history are available on the Clarisford parkrun Results Page.

Recent Deaths

PAT (Moss) Rohan, Cullina, Ballina, died unexpectedly on December 17. He is survived by his son Ben; siblings Margaret, Michael, Myra and Matt; nieces and nephews Mark, Adele, Dermot, Jennifer, Michael Jnr, Danielle, Megan and James; sister-in-law Elizabeth; best friend Leah; grandnieces and grandnephews; relatives, extended family and many friends. Pat's Cremation Service was held in Shannon Crematorium.

Liz Hepburn (née Murphy), Legane, Grange, Ballina and formerly of Kilfinny, Adare, died peacefully on December 19. Predeceased by her husband Jimmy and son Michael, she is survived by her daughters Andrea (McCarthy) and Pam; son Shaun; son-in-law Brian; daughter-in-law Sheila; grandchildren and great-granddaughter; brothers, sisters, extended family, relatives and friends. Cremation Service was held in Shannon Crematorium.

Maura O'Driscoll, 2 New Street, Kilaloe and formerly of Ballyloughnane, Oginneloe, and Lakes Nursing Home, died peacefully at University Hospital, Limerick, on December 24. Predeceased by her parents Michael and Mary, brother James and stepmother Delia, she is survived by her sisters Chrissie and Anne; relatives, neighbours and friends. Following Requiem Mass in St Mary's Church, Oginneloe, Maura was buried in the New Cemetery in Oginneloe.

Brigid Galvin (née O'Connor), Caherdavin Heights, Limerick, and formerly of Castlecranna, Carrigatogher, died peacefully at her home on December 26. Pre-deceased by her parents Mary Jane and Bill, and her brothers Joseph, Noel and Jack and she is survived by her husband Billy; daughter Natasha; son Olaf; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; siblings Maureen, Pauline, Toni, Carmel and Della; nieces, nephews, extended family, relatives and friends. Following Requiem Mass in Christ the King Church, Caherdavin, Brigid's Cremation Service was held at Shannon Crematorium.

May the gentle souls of Pat, Liz, Maura and Bridgid rest in peace.

KILLIMER

Poker Classic

KILLIMER GAA Club and Kilrush LGFA are holding a Poker Classic on Friday, January 10, at Kilrush Golf Club, starting at 9pm. Tickets available from Bryan at 087 066 8071.

Recent Deaths

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The death has occurred of John Meehan of Cappa, Kilrush and formerly of Clooneyellis, sympathy is extended to his brother JJ of Burrane and other family members.

KILMALEY

New Year Greetings

PP Fr John McGovern took the opportunity at the weekend masses to wish all parishioners at home and abroad a very Happy New Year. He went on to say, "as we come towards the end of the year it is fitting to acknowledge with gratitude the wonderful and dedicated people who help make our parish the vibrant, faith-filled community it is. I thank all who supported our parish and who are active in ministry. We thank all who helped with Liturgy, Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Basket Collectors, Counters, Envelope Distributors, Sacristans, Safe Guarding Representatives, Choirs, Organists, the Property and Finance Committee, organisers of Eucharistic Adoration. I want to express our gratitude to our schools, Principals, teachers and school staff and acknowledge their role in forming the hearts and minds of our young people. A special word of appreciation to the boards of management who look after our schools in the parish. We thank everyone who joins us for mass in person or online each week and all who support our parish both spiritually and materially."

Above all we give our thanks to God who has blessed our parish with such wonderful parishioners. Along with my colleagues in Crioch Callan pastoral area, Fr Donagh and Fr Martin, I wish you all a happy, prosperous and blessed New Year."

Town & Country

For inclusion in notes email editor@clarechampion.ie

Hunting The Wren

THE old tradition of Hunting The Wren in the Parish on St Stephen's Day continued last week when members of the local camogie club turned out in big numbers. They were very well received especially by the younger people. All monies raised goes to club funds for the coming season.

Safety Concerns

MOTORISTS and people using the main road from Ennis through Inch, Kilmaley, Connolly and on to Miltown Malbay have expressed fears regarding their safety as they drive along the route.

The recent storm brought down several trees with the road being blocked at Beechpark, Inch and Kilmaley. What was most noticeable was the poor condition of the centre of the trees. It is hoped that in the interest of safety that local representatives will ensure that this matter is given full attention.

Recent Deaths

THERE was widespread shock and sadness at the sudden death of Martin Hehir which took place last week at his residence in Bealcragga, Connolly. Martin was in his early sixties and was predeceased by his father John, mother Maura, brother Gerard and sister Bridget. He was well known in sporting circles and was a founder member of Connolly Celtic Soccer Club. Over the years he worked for the club, especially at underage boys and ladies' soccer. Reposing of his remains took place in St Michael The Archangel's Church, Connolly. Cremation took place in Shannon Crematorium after funeral mass in Connolly Church. Fr John McGovern PP was the celebrant. He is survived by his brothers Padraig, Sean, Micheal and Joseph, sisters Maura and Margaret, nieces and nephews Garry, Zoe, Brendan, Sean, Patrick, Fiona, Niall, Jonathan, Paul, Lisa, Sinead, Seamus, Claire, Joseph, Noelle, Niamh and Megan, aunt Bridie, sisters-in-law, grandnieces and nephews, many cousins, extended family and his many friends.

The death has also taken place at University Hospital Limerick of Sean O'Boyle, Casterrock, Tulla Road, Ennis, and formerly of O'Boyle's Shop, Connolly, and Claremorris, Mayo. Reposing of his remains took place at Murphy's Funeral Home, Kilmaley. Burial took place in Mount Temple Cemetery, Kilmaley, after funeral Mass in St Joseph's Church Ennis. He is survived by his wife Mary (née McAuliffe), daughter Martina (McMahon), son-in-law Colin, grandchildren Andrea, Barry, Stephen and Orla, brothers Tom and Martin, sisters-in-law, niece Leanne and nephews Jonathan and Darren, extended family, friends and neighbours.

Sympathy is also extended to Tom Fitzpatrick and family, Slaveen, Inch, on the death of Tom's sister Mary Corry (née Fitzpatrick), Main Street, Kildysart.

KILNAMONA

Christmas Services

CHRISTMAS Eve Mass in Kilnamona was celebrated to a packed Church as many visitors from such far flung locations as Florida, returned to the homestead. The contribution of the various volunteers, including readers, Church repainting group, Ministers of the Eucharist, the Choir and the various Committees, to parish and church activities during the year, was acknowledged.

The Christmas magazine, produced by the Kilnamona Development Association, was made available to everyone after Mass and is also available online.

Hunting the Wren

A NUMBER of groups hunted the wren on Stephen's Day, to raise funds for developments and activities for the coming year.

Recent Death

CONDOLENCES to the Shannon and Hegarty families on the sad passing in Kilnurra McMahon, of Veronica Shannon (née Hegarty), formerly of Knockatemple, Kilnamona. May she rest in peace.

LABASHEEDA

Gortglass Swim

THANKS to everyone who took part in, attended or supported the annual Christmas Day lake swim at Gortglass Lake, Kildysart. All proceeds are going to the West Clare Cancer Centre and donations can still be made to this worthy cause.

Wedding Bells

CONGRATULATIONS to Sarah O'Brien, daughter of Gerry and Mairead, Mountshannon, Labasheeda, and Ger Donnellan, Kildysart, who were married at St Kieran's Church, Labasheeda, recently. May they enjoy many years of happiness together.

Recent Deaths

SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Veronica Shannon, Drumdugan, Kilmurry McMahon, who passed away after a short illness. Veronica was in her mid-nineties and enjoyed a very active life. May Veronica rest in peace.

The passing of Jane Larkin Ryan, Kilkee and Labasheeda, has evoked much sadness in the area. Jane is



Jade McMahon, Doolin, with her dog Louie on Lahinch Beach on Monday afternoon.

deeply missed by her husband Keith, son Rocco, parents Joseph and Angela, brothers Jimmy and Kevin, parents-in-law Michael and Anne Ryan, brother-in-law Jonathan and extended family. May Jane rest in peace.

LISSYCASEY

Clare LGFA Honour Alan

FERGUS Rovers ladies' football official Alan Culligan, Lissycasey, was recently announced as club officer of the year at the Clare Ladies' football Annual General Meeting.

Alan is a very worthy recipient of this award and does a huge amount of work for both club and county. Huge congratulations has been extended to Alan by all in Fergus Rovers.

Meanwhile, Fergus Rovers has a new chairperson in Jim Garry who was appointed to succeed Mairead Hayes.

At the annual meeting huge thanks was expressed to Mairead for her work for the club over the past three years.

As You Were

A SUCCESSFUL year was reviewed when members attended the Annual General Meeting of Lissycasey GAA club last week. Three trophies were on display marking success in the Cusack cup, minor (U-17) an U-13 championships. Written reports were presented by the officers and the various team managers.

Tributes were paid to the outgoing officers, Eamonn Finnucane (chairman and County Board delegate), Kieran Kelly (vice chairman) Maureen O'Haire (secretary), Jackqui Coughlan (treasurer), Niamh Normoyle (Lotto co-ordinator), Frank Culleton (registrar) Sean Hayes (Children's, Health and Well Being officer), Michael O'Rourke (Coaching officer) and Danny

Athletics Relays

EIGHT teams from Fergus Athletic Club competed in the Clare athletics relays at Leen Road last week. The boys U-10 team won the silver medals while the girls U-8 and U-14 teams finished in third places. The novice B men's team of John McHugh, Cathal Hill, Shane Culligan and Ollie Haugh finished in third place.

Hunting the Wren

THE age old St Stephen's Day tradition of hunting the wren was maintained by Lissycasey GAA on Thursday last. Club volunteers travelled the parish providing entertainment and, in the process, raising much needed funds for the day to day running of the club.

Recent Death

SYMPATHY is extended to Kay Meaney, Decomade Lower, Lissycasey, on the death of her father Paddy Normoyle, Crossderry, Coolmeen.

Following requiem mass at St Benedict's church in Coolmeen on Tuesday, he was laid to rest in Kildysart cemetery.

MEELICK/PARTEEN

Road Benefits

FORMER Councilor PJ Ryan was in Meelick at the weekend and he said,

"The awarding of the contract for the completion of the Northern Relief Road is very welcome news for Meelick and it will open up the area in a variety of ways.

During my time on the Council I kept pushing to have this work completed. Access to all areas will now be opened up with extended sewerage, water and public lighting and even access to the very popular GAA grounds. It's a win-win for everybody."

Illegal Dumping

THERE was a huge amount of rubbish dumped illegally in the parish during the Christmas period.

This has been reported to Clare County Council on an ongoing basis and was removed once crews were back on the ground.

Meelick School

WELL done to our pupils who sang carols before mass in the church of St John The Baptist over the Christmas period. performances were excellent and greatly appreciated by all in attendance.

Thank you to Dr Ray O'Connor for leading the carol singing and playing the guitar so brilliantly.

Recent Death

THE death occurred recently of James Considine, Bishop Murphy Park, Parteen, and late of Dunes Stores, Jetland, on December 21, peacefully at Milford Care Centre, surrounded by his loving family. Beloved husband of Audrey and adored father of Liam and Sarah.

Sadly missed by his loving brother Ger, sister Caroline, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, extended family, friends and all his colleagues in Dunnes Stores. Predeceased by his parents Rita, Gerry and his sister Noreen.

MILTOWN MALBAY

Mindfulness Counselling

THROUGH the initiative of the Pastoral Council there is an opportunity available locally to offer free counselling to people from the parishes, should they wish to avail of help to cope with anxiety stress, depression support, personal relationship challenges, grief and loss therapy, mindfulness practices, life transition counselling or cultivating compassion and self care. The counselling service is free and open to all. Please contact Anne at 087 2180037 or Fr Donagh at 087 2322140 for more information.

Boxing Christmas Show

ST Michael's Golden Gloves Boxing Club has made great progress since it started over two years ago and the members train regularly a few times during the week together with taking part in interclub competitions and tournaments. Their expansion plans were highlighted by the open Christmas Show which took place on December 22 with the programme starting at 11am and the committee are grateful

to everyone who came out to support all boxers at the show and they thank all the local businesses that put up spot prizes, with a special word of gratitude to Tommy Lyons, Mike Daly and Paddy McDonagh for refereeing all the bouts. They thank their sponsors from the USA for their generous contributions, which helps them supply their boxing members with the correct training equipment. For the Christmas Show the trophies were sponsored by the Johnson Family and their support has been present since the club was opened. A significant reason for the success of the show was the support from other clubs with over seventy boxers entered from Kilfenora, Ennis, Tralee, Galway, Westend Limerick, Trojan, and Listowel Boxing Clubs.

The organisers congratulate all boxers who took part and represented their clubs with great skill and respect in keeping with the core principles of the sport. Prize winners were Jake Murphy, St Michaels as 'best home boxer', Jayce Nagle, Trojan B C as 'best away boxer' and both Paddy O'Donoghue, Kilfenora BC and Jason Daly, Westend BC for winning the 'best bout of the day'. The club thanks everyone for coming to support and all volunteers for helping out.

Launching the Golfing New Year

ACTIVITIES for the new golfing year in most golf clubs officially begin with the Captain's Drive-in and Spanish Point Golf Club will get their year underway on Sunday next, January 5, when 2025 Captains Elaine Rouine and James Mahon drive into office at 11am. They will host a nine hole scramble with a draw for partners afterwards and the prize giving takes place later together with social activity and all members are invited to support the occasion. Golf was first played in

Spanish Point in 1896, on a course then called West Clare Golf Club and started by the Morony family who resided at Miltown House, Spanish Point. They also owned the luxurious Atlantic Hotel overlooking the beach which attracted visitors from all over Ireland and Britain and had an offer that included Golf, Food and Accommodation for a cost of 1 guinea. The first recorded membership fee in the club was 2 shillings and 6 pence. Affiliated to the Golfing Union in 1915, Spanish Point Golf Club was voted the Best Nine Hole Golf Course in Munster 2019, by the Golfers Guide to Ireland. So all is in place for Elaine and James to lead the club through 2025, with the various committees in position, competition fixture lists finalised, the course in good condition with improvements planned and all members looking forward to an enjoyable golfing year.

Spirit of Christmas

WHILE they may be on the Christmas break the staff of St Joseph's Secondary School would like to thank the many people who attended the school's annual Christmas Carol Service 2024 which was held in St Joseph's Church, Miltown, on the Wednesday before the festive season. It was a magical night for the students as they as a big group and individually showcased their amazing talents and brought so much Christmas cheer to the school, staff, students and the local community.

All who attended or watched on the church webcam say a massive thank you to all who were involved in organising such a special night of music and reflection in the lead up to Christmas. There is a collection of great clips posted on the school's Facebook and X pages and for anyone who might be interested in having a look back at the school's celebration of Christmas it is available on the storage tab of the church webcam.

Items from the Parishes

THE Senior Citizens' Christmas Party was held before the seasonal breakup and was an extraordinary day as the community together with the Senior Citizens who attended in the Quilty Tavern had a wonderful get together. A sincere thanks is passed to all who made it possible, to the new committee, the musicians and all who made it such a memorable day. The parish councils and clergy send a sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the Priests Christmas collection on Christmas Day.

The Miltown Graveyard committee thank all who supported their collection and for anyone who wishes to donate on-line they can do so with the following information: Miltown Malbay Parish Graveyards Account Number 12799171 IBAN: 47BOFI0433312799171 BIC: BOFIIE2D and they appreciate all who continue to be so generous.

The tea and coffee morning in Miltown Malbay Community Centre continues every Friday from 10.30am to 11.30am and all are welcome.

Coore Church

THE Most Holy Redeemer Church, Coore community are grateful to Gerard McGuane for the kind donation of an 8 foot fresh Christmas tree for the Church in Coore and they appreciate his kindness and support every year. Thanks also to Martin Corry, Senan McCarthy, Joe and Niall Pilkington for the fabulous job they have done completing the tiles in the front porch in Coore Church, their time and effort is so appreciated by all. They thank the community who supported the Christmas Eve Mass and collection for the Coore Graveyard and the committee are hoping these funds will help to improve walkways and railings and hopefully much more in the new year. This is so important for the upkeep of the graveyard, and they appreciate the generous support at this time.

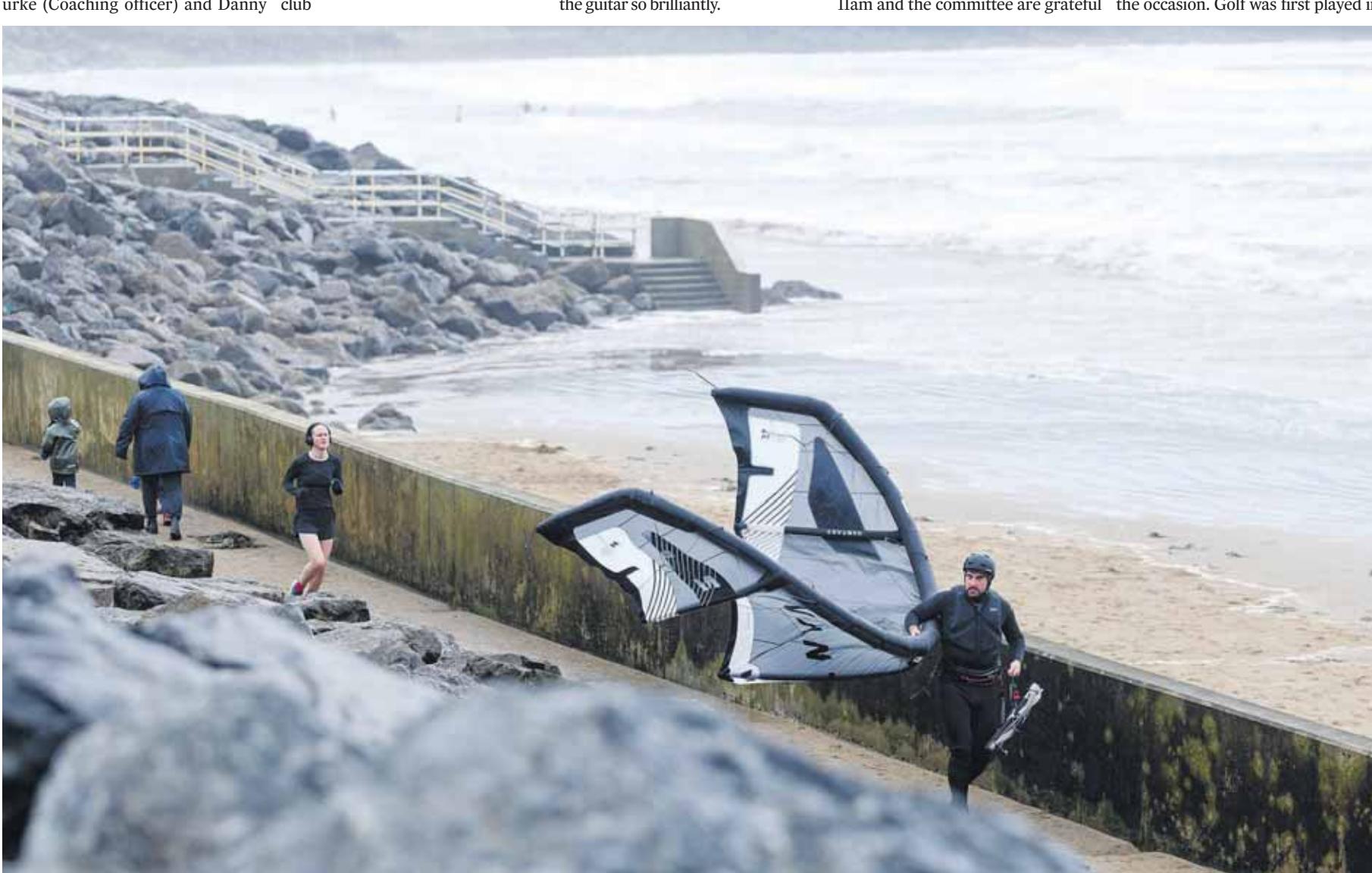
Recent Deaths

THE death occurred of Dr Paddy O'Kelly, Slanemore, Mullingar, and formerly of Mullagh on Christmas Day. He died peacefully following an illness in the company of his wife and family at The Hermitage Clinic, Lucan. Paddy will be very sadly missed by his wife Mary, his son John and his wife Susan, his brother John, sister Mary and his extended family. He reposed at Gilsenan's Funeral Home, Mullingar on Sunday, December 29, and Paddy's Funeral Mass took place on Monday, December 30, in the Cathedral of Christ the King followed by burial in Walshestown Cemetery.

The death occurred of Michael Rynne, Corrig, Inagh on December 27 peacefully at home. He was predeceased by his son Alan, his sisters Maura, Margaret and Annie, his brothers Francie, Pat, James and JJ. Michael is sadly missed by his wife Mary, son Declan, daughters Martina and Lorraine, sister Teresa Crowe and his extended family.

He reposed at the Church of Immaculate Conception Inagh on Saturday, December 28, and his Funeral Mass took place on Sunday, December 29, followed by burial afterwards in Inagh cemetery. Expressions of sympathy are passed to Daniel and Gerard McCarthy, Quilty, on the death of their sister-in-law Bridie McCarthy, Long Island NY wife of the late John Joe McCarthy.

They are all mourned by their families and friends and prayers are asked for the repose of their souls.



Walkers, runners and kite surfers braved the elements on Lahinch Prom on Monday.

Photographs by Arthur Ellis

Town & Country

For inclusion in notes email editor@clarechampion.ie



NEW QUAY/ BELLHARBOUR

Christmas Day Swim at Flagg Shore

THIS Christmas, the Flagg Shore was the scene for a lively Christmas Day Swim in memory of John O'Donoghue who bravely fought Motor Neurone Disease until his death in May 2024. John had become a wonderful spokesperson and raised great awareness of the disease in order to provide more help and support for others suffering the same disease. All proceeds gathered at the Swim and online through the idonate page are going to help the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association with its work. Well over 100 people scrambled into the icy waters while as many more gathered along the shore to cheer on their friends and family as they took the plunge. Plenty of hot drinks were provided by volunteers afterwards and the camaraderie between all was very evident.

The New Quay Ice Breakers committee are very appreciative to all who participated to make it such a great success and will announce the final tally of funds next week. Meanwhile, people can still donate online by visiting www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/IMNDAswim.

New Quay Connection

THE Burren con Brio string quartet for the second Christmas running has been able to donate to UNICEF Ireland specifically for children in Gaza as a result of busking in Galway Shopping Centre on December 23. The four Farrell siblings from New Quay sought permission from management at the Centre to organise a few hours of busking to help families suffering in Gaza. Combining the bucket donation and idonate page the teens raised €1,771 for the charity. Online donations can still be made up until January 6, then the full amount will be transferred to UNICEF.

Little Christmas Dinner

THE ladies of the parish are meeting up for their annual Little Christmas celebration on Saturday, January 11, in Linnane's Bar, New Quay. Sheila Deegan and Ann Shields are taking bookings. There certainly won't be any early breakfasts on January 12.

O'CALLAGHAN'S MILLS

Christmas Ceremonies

LARGE crowds attended the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day masses in the three churches in the parish. St Patrick's Church, O'Callaghan's Mills, St Senan's Church, Kilkishen, and St Vincent de Paul Church Oatfield were decorated, with the crib in each church being the centre of attention.

Meanwhile, the annual Christmas Swim took place on Saturday, December 21, at Cullane Lake. Despite the wind and rain a large crowd took part. Mulled wine, hot chocolate and mince pies were served after the swim. All funds raised went towards the Joe Slattery fundraiser.

The Blacksticks Cup

O'CALLAGHAN'S Mills GAA Club and camogie club organised a charity mixed hurling tournament on St Stephen's Day in Hamilton Park, Kilkishen. Four teams took part with up to eighty players from the GAA and camogie clubs taking part.

There were two semi-finals and a final played. The winning team was captained by Sean O'Gorman and Edel McNamara. Pat O'Brien presented the Blacksticks Cup to the joint captains. All funds raised were also donated to the Joe Slattery Fund.

Handball

THE Clare Handball Board have been awarded the National She's Aces Irish Open Women's Only Event. It will take place in nine venues in Clare on the weekend of January 17 to 19. The Handball Courts hosting the games include O'Callaghan's Mills, Kilkishen, Tuamgraney, Tulla, Clooney Quin, Toonagh, Clarecastle, Newmarket and Shannon. The various events will be from U-11 up to Senior Premier Ladies.

Recent Deaths

THE death took place recently of Cyril Costelloe, Red Gate Cross, O'Callaghan's Mills. Predeceased by his mother Eileen, brothers Thomas and Andy, sister Anne, sisters in law, brother-in-law, nephews, nieces, neighbours and friends. Cyril's remains were removed from McMahon's Funeral Home, Sixmilebridge to St Senan's Church, Kilkishen. After requiem mass burial took place in Clonlea Cemetery, Kilkishen.

OGONNELLOE

Bridge Results

THE Oginneloe Bridge Club celebrated the Christmas Party in The Killaloe Hotel and Spa on Monday last. A great night of festivities was had by all. President Margaret Bane presented the various prizes for the previous three nights. The wonderful evening culminated with resident poet, Orlaith Ringrose reading one of her poems, 'The Bridge DT's' to rapturous applause. The winners on bottle night were Martin Mason and Orlaith Ringrose. Second place went to Liam Gavin and Connie McKenna with Carmel Mc Mahon and Noreen Lane coming third. On voucher night, first place went to Connie McKenna and Kath-



Mike and James (8) Meehan from Newmarket-on-Fergus at Illaunmanagh Park Run in Shannon on Saturday.

RUAN/DYSART

Recent Deaths

IT was with great sadness and disbelief that news filtered throughout the parish on Tuesday evening, December 17, of the sudden death of Tom O'Brien, Belkelly. The esteem in which Tom and his family were held by the people of Oginneloe, and wider afield, was shown by the huge crowds of mourners who filed past his remains in St Mary's Church. This is same church as Tom would have been baptised, received his First Communion, his Confirmation and attended weekly Mass all his life. Sympathisers filed past his remains for over four hours in a very dignified manner. His funeral Mass was celebrated by his brother Fr Jerry, who was joined on the alter by bishop Fintan Monahan, Fr Keiran Blake, Fr James Grace, Fr Jackie Sharpe, Fr John Jones and Fr Brendan Moloney.

The beautiful ceremony was further enhanced by the wonderful music and singing of the local choir. The homily by Fr Jerry reminded us of all Tom's love of farming, GAA, politics and his family. Family members were all involved in readings, prayers of the faithful, reflection and the eulogy. After his funeral Mass, Tom's remains were brought to the New Cemetery past guards of honour from the local hurling and camogie clubs where his children all played for the clubs and of course his love of politics was not forgotten where local TDs and councillors joined for a guard of honour in his memory. His final resting place was beautifully decorated and prepared by the local men of the parish and surroundings.

With the rain threatening, the final prayers were said by Fr Jerry and music was played as a fitting tribute to a great man. Tom is survived by his wife Catherine, sons John and Peter, daughters Ann-Marie, Claire, Marian, Roisin and Regina, his sisters Ann,

WEDDING Bells rang out in St Tola's Church, Dysart on December 28, when Zoe Whelan, daughter of Denis and the late Paul Whelan, married Michael Hogan, of Kilfenora. Celebrant was Fr Des Hillary. Zoe's maid of honour was Clara Coughlan and her

bridesmaids were her two sisters, Lisa and Emily. Bestman was Joe O'Loughlin and groomsmen were Sean Hogan and Brendan Darcy. Mae Hogan was flower girl and Donnchadh Mahon was Pageboy. The reception was held in Woodstock Hotel.

St Stephen's Day Fun

THE parish league in hurling and camogie took place in the local GAA field on St Stephen's Day. The reigning champions, Ruan South, were beaten by Ruan North, in an eventful final. Ronan McMahon refereed all the games, which, at times, wasn't an easy task, but he carried out the job fairly and efficiently. Proceeds made on the day went towards the Joe Slattery fund, for his future care. Afterwards the crowd assembled at Morty Kelly's Pub, where members of the camogie team provided great music and entertainment.

Charity Walk

JUST a short reminder that the annual Toonagh Charity walk will take place on Sunday, January 12, so it'll be a great opportunity to get out and walk off the excesses of Christmas. Full details will be in next week's Notes.

Parish League

IN the camogie parish league, Ruan faced off against Toonagh/Dysart, with the Ruan side of the parish coming away with the win after an exciting match. The virtual wren took place on the Ruan Camogie Club Facebook page and a group hunting the wren also stopped by Murty Kelly's in Ruan in the evening time for a bit of a session. Thanks to everyone who has already contributed. The link for online donations is still open on the Ruan Camogie Facebook page should anyone else like to contribute.

SHANNON

Library Bookclub

THE Adult Bookclub meet next Tuesday, January 7, at 7pm. The monthly book clubs are the perfect place to meet new people and discover new stories. This month they are reading 'The Penguin Book of Christmas Sto-

ries: from Hans Christian Andersen to Angela Carter' edited by Jessica Harrison. Copies of the book are available in Shannon Library or as an eBook/eAudiobook through the BorrowBox service. New members welcome.

Active Retirement Group

THE group meet on the second Wednesday of every month in the Oakwood Hotel and all are welcome. The next meeting will be next Wednesday, January 8, at 11am. All are welcome to attend and to join the group.

Meals On Wheels

SHANNON Senior Citizens Club continue to provide 'Meals on Wheels' three days per week. They deliver three course meals on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in Shannon for only €5 per meal. If interested, please contact 'The Kitchen' before 10am at 061 364144. They would welcome any additional volunteers to spread the work load of delivering meals.

St Senan's Rugby Club

THIS Saturday the Junior 2nd team are away to Thomond RFC AT 2.30pm and the U-18s are away to Dolphin-Carrigaline. On Sunday, the Junior 1st team host Old Christians in the Challenge Cup Shield semi-final on Sunday, January 5, at 2pm and the U-14s are away to Old Crescent at 12noon.

Recent Deaths

MAUREEN Kirby (née Grey), Corrib Drive, passed away peacefully in University Hospital Limerick on Monday, December 23. Maureen was predeceased by her husband Michael and son-in-law Mike McKey. Maureen's remains were reposed in McMahon's Funeral Home on Saturday followed by removal to Mary Immaculate Church Shannon.

Funeral Mass was celebrated on Sunday followed by burial afterwards in Illaunmanagh Cemetery. Sympathy to her daughters Eileen and Teresa, son-in-law Kevin, grandchildren Jeanette, Conor, David, Neal, Evan and their partners, great grandsons Oran and Rian, sister Aileen and her partner Geraint, nephews, nieces, extended family, neighbours and her

many friends.

Mary McNamara (née Greene), Foyle Park, passed away peacefully in University Hospital Limerick on Sunday, December 22. Mary's remains were reposed in McMahon's Funeral Home last Friday followed by cremation service in Shannon Crematorium. Sympathy to her children Mary, Michael, Liz, Valerie, Richard, Yvonne, Rachael and Chris, daughter-in-law Natalie, sons-in-law Carl, Mike and Luke, grandchildren Kieran, Kyle, Stephanie, Lauren, Emily, Olivia, Luke, Kacey, Alex and Sharla, extended family, neighbours and friends.

Paul Cusack, Carrig Hill, passed away suddenly on Saturday, December 21. Paul was originally from Ennis Road, Newmarket-on-Fergus and worked with ASL Airlines Shannon. Paul's remains were reposed in McMahon's Funeral Home last Friday.

Funeral Mass was celebrated in St John and Paul's Church on Saturday followed by burial afterwards in Illaunmanagh Cemetery. Sympathy to his wife Deirdre, son Gary, daughter Sarah, sisters Mary and Geraldine, brothers Michael, PJ, Seamus, Cyril and Johnny, mother and father-in-law Margaret and Tom Frawley, Fidelma, Ciara and Conor, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, cousins, extended family, neighbours, work colleagues, and a large circle of friends.

Martin Fitzgerald, Glaise Na Rinne, passed away at University Hospital, Limerick on Sunday, December 22, after a long illness. Martin was predeceased by his parents Con and Maisie and infant sisters Bernadette and Breanana. Martins remains were reposed in Mc Mahons Funeral Home last Saturday. Cremation service took place in Shannon Crematorium on Sunday. Sympathy to his wife Irene, son Ian, daughter Tracy and son-in-law Shane, his brothers Austin, Conor and Pat, sister Olivia, sisters-in-law Jackie Margaret and Susan, brother-in-law George nieces, nephews, extended family, neighbours and friends.

Leanne Delaney, Iris Elga, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on Thursday, December 19. Leanne was predeceased by her father Michael. Leanne's remains were reposed at her on Sunday, December 22. Funeral

Mass was celebrated in St John and Paul's Church the following day with burial afterwards in Illaunmanagh Cemetery. Sympathy to her children Dynika, Derek, Warren and Jonathan, mother Mary, brothers and sisters Anne Marie, Michael, Gerard, Christopher, Liam and Serena, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, extended family, neighbours and her many friends.

Mary Kelly (née O'Sullivan), Cronan Lawn, passed away peacefully in Ennis General Hospital on Friday, December 20. Mary, originally from Adrigole, Cork, was predeceased by her husband John and son John Jr. Mary's remains were reposed in McMahon's Funeral Home on Sunday, December 22. Funeral Mass was celebrated in St John and Paul's Church on Monday, December 23, followed by burial afterwards in Illaunmanagh Cemetery. Sympathy to her daughters Frances and Maria, sons Michael, James, Kieron and Thomas, daughter-in-law Jane, grandchildren, great grandchildren, brothers Phil and Connie, sisters Margaret and Kathleen, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, extended family, neighbours and her many friends.

SIXMILEBRIDGE

Recycling Appeal

BRIDGE United AFC will host their annual recycling fundraiser this Saturday, January 4, when the gates at the club grounds on Shannon Road will be open from 9am to 3pm to facilitate drop-offs.

However, if Saturday is unsuitable, people can donate beforehand. Access to the grounds will be available and people can leave items outside the front door of the clubhouse. Club members will also arrange collections should it be required and people wishing to avail of this service can contact Finbar on 086 8750128, Jonathan 086 8798232 or Mark 086 8039059.

Community Games Fundraiser

SIXMILEBRIDGE Kilmurry Community Games are holding their annual gamble for sheep on Sunday next, January 5. The venue as usual is Gleeson's Bar with the first round at 6pm. All proceeds will go towards the running of the community games in the parish.

Rose Garden Appeal

THE flower bed has been prepared and thanks to the generosity of people the planting of roses in the rose garden at Ballysheen Graveyard will go ahead in the spring. A spokesperson for the Ballysheen Conservation Group said people were very generous and because of such goodwill the rose garden can now be completed and further landscaping will also take place to ensure that Ballysheen Graveyard.

"Thanks to the amazing volunteers who work there daily, the rose garden will bloom in the Spring. This, we hope, will bring some joy and comfort to all who visit," the spokesperson added.

Tractor and Truck Run

THEY were of all shapes and sizes and well in excess of 100 vehicles took to the streets of Sixmilebridge and neighbouring parishes for a run to raise funds for Bunratty Search and Rescue and Clare Sports Partnership SICP. Decorated with festive lighting, the convoy left the grounds of Sixmilebridge Mart and headed out the Shannon Road towards Bunratty and taking in the villages of Newmarket and Kilkishen en route back to their base at the mart. The Keep'er Lit Tractor and Truck run is an annual event raising much needed funds for their chosen charities.

WHITEGATE/ MOUNTSHANNON

Honouring Heroes

A SPECIAL commemoration was held at Croke Park in mid December to honour the Dublin hurling team who defeated Galway in the All-Ireland Final of 1924 at Jones Road. Three generations of the Holland family from Nutgrove, Whitegate travelled to GAA HQ to attend this special event as Michael Holland who hailed from Nutgrove in Whitegate lined out on this history making team. The event was organised by Dublin's Ballymun Kickhams club with Jarlath Burns, Uachtarán Cumann Luthchleas Gael in attendance.

The Dublin team who won the hurling All-Ireland of 1924 consisted of players who were all born outside Dublin. Relatives of the players gathered in the Hogan Stand with memorabilia and exchanged stories to mark this centenary.

The relatives of Michael Holland who attended the event were: his nephew Tommy Holland, his grandnephew Michael and his great-grandnephew Niall.

Mass Times

FOR the month of January weekend Mass will be celebrated in St Flannan's Church, Whitegate on Sundays at 11am. All weekday Masses in the parish remain unchanged.

Card Game

PROGRESSIVE 45 Card Game continues every Sunday evening in Whitegate GAA Clubhouse at 8pm. New players are always welcome. Recent winners were Kathleen McNamara and Biddy Foley for last two weeks.



Runners warm up before the run in Shannon on Saturday morning.

Photographs by Arthur Ellis

BIRTHDAY
REMEMBRANCECAHILL OISÍN
(Birthday Remembrance)

Remembering Oisín's 25th birthday on the 3rd of January, his seventh away from home. Your birthday brings memories of laughter and fun and all the celebrations since your first one. We cherish the happy times and smile just at the thought, we hope you know the magnitude of joy your life with us brought. You are missed in the morning of every day. Missed in the evening as light fades away. Missed in a thousand and one little ways, around every corner a memory stays. Happy Birthday Oisín we love and miss you so much, Dad, Mam, Becca, Eilís, Caoimhe and Caolinn, xoxo.

CAHIR JAMES
BRIDGET and SEAMUS
(34th, 20th and 16th
Anniversaries)

In loving memory of James, Bridget and Seamus Cahill, late of Ballyduff, Barefield, Ennis, Co Clare. Time and years slip gently by but love and memories never die. Sadly missed and always remembered by your loving family. **Anniversary Mass** in Barefield Church on Friday, 3rd January, 2025 at 7pm.

CARRIG JOHN (Johnny)
(2nd Anniversary)

In loving memory of my husband Johnny, whose anniversary occurs on 6th January 2025. RIP. There is a gift of life you cannot buy, a gift so rare and true, it's a gift of a wonderful husband and father like the one we had in you. We keep in our hearts the love of the past, for it is planted there forever to last. RIP. Lovingly remembered by Violet and family, daughter-in-law, sons-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren. **Anniversary Mass** in the Cathedral, Ennis, on Sunday, the 5th January, 2025 at 11:30am.

BELL DAN
(2nd Anniversary)

In loving memory of Dan Bell, late of Patrick Street, Clarecastle, who died on the 5th of January, 2023.

"Will those of you who think of Dan today, a little prayer to Jesus say".

Lovingly remembered by his sons Frank and David, daughter Sarah, daughter-in-law Carmel, son-in-law Mikey and grandchildren Michael, Emma, Ava and Daniel. **Mass** will be held in Ss Peter and Paul's Church, Clarecastle on Saturday, the 4th of January at 7pm.

BRODY JOE
(23rd Anniversary)

In loving memory of Joe Brody, Shalle, Kilhamona, who died on 28th January, 2002. It does not take a special day for us to think of you, each Mass we hear, each prayer we say is offered up for you. Sadly missed by your wife Maura and family. **Anniversary Mass** on Saturday January 4th, 2025 in Kilhamona Church at 6.30pm.

BURKE PATRICK
(3rd Anniversary)

Remembered with love. Patrick (known as Paddy) Burke of Breaffa North, Miltown Malbay, Co Clare and Pinne, London, who died on 5th January, 2022.

No longer in our lives to share, but in our hearts you're always there. So fondly remembered by your wife, Nancy, daughters Geraldine and Patricia, grandchildren Mary Anne, David, Michael, Clare, their partners, and your great grandchildren and many relatives. **Anniversary Mass** on Saturday 4th January at 6pm in St Joseph's Church, Miltown Malbay.

BYRNES PAUL
(4th Anniversary)

In loving memory of my precious fiancé Paul, Raftord/Ahascragh, Shannon who died 8th January, 2021.

I keep in my heart my love of the past, for there it was planted forever to last. Your presence I miss, your memory I treasure, loving you always, forgetting you never. Your heartbroken fiancé, Aine, xxx.

CAHILL
BERNADETTE and MARTIN
(25th and 6th Anniversaries)

In loving memory of our dear parents, Bernadette and Martin Cahill, late of Griffin Road, Kilrush, whose anniversaries occur around this time. Gone are the days we used to share, but in our hearts you are there. The gates of memory will never close, we miss you more than anyone knows. Always remembered by your loving sons, Michael, Martin, John and Tim, daughters, Brenda, Veronica and Maria, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren. **Anniversary Mass** in St Senan's Church, Kilrush on Saturday, 4th January at 6.30pm.

CASEY PEGGY and JIM
(12th and 44th Anniversaries)

In loving memory of Peggy and Jim, The Whitehouse, Shanaway, Ennis. Cherished memories silently kept of beautiful parents we love and will never forget. Sadly missed along life's way, quietly remembered every day by all your loving family. **Mass** in the Cathedral on Sunday, 5th January 2025 at 11.30am.

CLANCY JOHN
(15th Anniversary)

In loving memory of John, of Rusheen, Kilfenora, whose 15th anniversary occurs on 5th January. Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed, still very dear. Sadly missed by his loving family.

COFFEY BRIDGET
(2nd Anniversary)

In loving memory of dear wife and mother, Bridget Coffey, Glenaffrin, Newmarket-on-Fergus, who passed away on the 8th of January, 2023 RIP. There's a face we shall always remember, a voice we shall recall, a memory to cherish forever of one so dear to us all. Lovingly remembered by your husband Michael and John. **Anniversary Mass** will be on Sunday, 5th January at 10.30am in Newmarket-on-Fergus Parish Church.

DARCY MARY and PADDY
(9th Anniversaries)

In loving memory of our dear Parents, Mary, who died on 25th November, 2015 and Paddy, who died on 12th January, 2016. Those special years will not return when we were all together, but the love and memories within our hearts will remain forever. We know that you are now at peace, our thoughts of you will never cease. Sadly missed by your loving children, Patricia, Michael, Ann, Marion and Sharon and their families. Also remembering their son Johnny, who passed away in April 2024. May they rest in peace. **Anniversary Mass** in St Joseph's Church, Ennis on Sunday, 5th January at 11.45am.

CONNOLLY MARGARET
(1st Anniversary)

In memory of a loving mother, grandmother and great grandmother, Margaret (Madge) Connolly, late of Church Street, Scariff, Co Clare, who died on the 3rd of January, 2024. Also thinking of our dad, Michael (Mickey) at this very sad time. One lonely year without you Mam, that's what it is today. We often think about you, you are never far away. We seldom ask for miracles but today just one would do, to leave our door wide open and see you, Mam, walk through. Sadly missed by your loving family, daughters Elizabeth and Eileen, sons Anthony and Patrick (Teedy), daughter-in-law Sharon, grandchildren and great grandchildren. **Mass** will be offered on Saturday, 4th of January at 6.30pm in the Sacred Heart Church, Scariff.

CARRIG JOHN (Johnny)
(2nd Anniversary)

In loving memory of my husband Johnny, whose anniversary occurs on 6th January 2025. RIP. There is a gift of life you cannot buy, a gift so rare and true, it's a gift of a wonderful husband and father like the one we had in you. We keep in our hearts the love of the past, for it is planted there forever to last. RIP. Lovingly remembered by Violet and family, daughter-in-law, sons-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren. **Shared Anniversary Mass** on the 19th of January in Lissycasey Church.

DEVITT PADDY
(24th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Paddy, Knockature, Inagh, who died on 5th January 2001, RIP. We don't forget the face we loved, or the memory of your smile, or the happy times you shared with us, that made our life worthwhile. Sadly missed, always remembered by your loving family. **Mass offered**.

DOHERTY MARY
(2nd Anniversary)

In loving memory of aunty Mary (née Fitzpatrick), Crimlin, Fanore, Co Clare, who passed on the 3rd January, 2023. A smile for all, a heart of gold, the very best this world could hold. Never selfish, always kind, these are the precious memories you left behind. All of us, nieces, nephews, wider family, neighbours and friends miss you dearly but treasure our special memories. **Anniversary Mass** will be in St Patrick's Church, Fanore on Saturday 4th January at 7pm.

FAHEY GERALDINE
(8th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Geraldine, who died 29th December 2016. "Our lives go on without you, but nothing is the same, we have to hide our heartache, when someone speaks your name. Sad are the hearts that love you, silent are the tears that fall, living without you is the hardest part of all. You did so many things for us, your heart was so kind and true and when we needed someone, we could always count on you. The special years will not return, when we are all together, but with the love in our hearts, you walk with us forever". Sadly missed by her loving husband Jerry, sons Mike, Tommy and Patsy, daughter Tina, son-in-law Jimmy, daughter-in-law Clare, six granddaughters and two great grandsons.

CARROLL ANN
(21st Anniversary)

In loving memory of my sister, Ann Carroll, late of St Flannan's Road, Killaloe, who died on 5th January 2004, RIP. Always willing, helpful and kind, what beautiful memories you left behind. Always remembered by your sister Josephine and Charlie.

CONWAY PAT
(5th Anniversary)

Treasured memories of a special husband, father and grandfather Pat Conway, Ballyea, Inagh, who passed away on January 12th 2020. May he Rest in Peace. The world may never notice if a snowdrop doesn't bloom, or even pause to wonder if the petals fall too soon, but every life that ever forms or ever comes to be, touches the world in some small way for all eternity. Sadly missed but loved always by your wife Nancy, children, grandchildren, family and friends. **Anniversary Mass** for Pat will take place in Inagh Church on this Sunday, January 5th at 11am.

CARROLL ANN
(21st Anniversary)

In loving memory of my mother, Ann Carroll, late of St Flannan's Road, Killaloe. Another year with out you Mam, doesn't get any easier. We don't need special days to think of you, because every day I think of you. Missed so much, always with me. Geraldine, Pat and girls.

CARROLL ANN
(21st Anniversary)

In loving memory of my mother, Ann Carroll, late of St Flannan's Road, Killaloe, who died on 5th January 2004, RIP. The ones we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed, still very dear. Always remembered by your sister Breda, Phil and John.

CORCORAN O'NEILL
THERESA
(3rd Anniversary)

In loving memory of Theresa, Cahercon, Ennis and Templemore, who died on 31st December, 2021. Deep are the memories, precious they stay, no passing of time can take them away. In our hearts your memory lingers, sweetly tender, fond and true. There is not a day dear Theresa, that we do not think of you. Sadly missed and always remembered by your husband Jim, together with the O'Neill and Corcoran families. **Masses offered**.

CARROLL ANN
(21st Anniversary)

In loving memory of my sister, Ann Carroll, late of St Flannan's Road, Killaloe, who died on 5th January 2004, RIP. The ones we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed, still very dear. Always remembered by your sister Breda, Phil and John.

CASEY PEGGY and JIM
(12th and 44th Anniversaries)

In loving memory of Peggy and Jim, The Whitehouse, Shanaway, Ennis. Cherished memories silently kept of beautiful parents we love and will never forget. Sadly missed along life's way, quietly remembered every day by all your loving family. **Mass** in the Cathedral on Sunday, 5th January 2025 at 11.30am.

DALY JAMES
(1st Anniversary)

In loving memory of the late James Daly formerly of Lissycasey and latterly of Ennis. The **Anniversary Mass** will be held on Sunday the 5th January at Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Lissycasey. No longer with us but always remembered by his son John.

FOX AGNES and FRANK
(21st and 26th Anniversaries)

In loving memory of Agnes and Frank Fox, 8 Cormac Street, Ennis. Mam died on the 24th of January 2004 and Dad died on 14th December 1998, RIP. Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, missed and very dear. Loved and remembered by your daughter Marion, sons Frankey and Ciaran, grandchildren Rachel, Ian and Darren. **Anniversary Mass** on Sunday, 5th January at 11.30am at the Pro Cathedral.

THANKSGIVING

O HOLY ST JUDE, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor for all who invoke your special patronage in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me now in my present and urgent petition. In return, I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. St. Jude pray for us and for all who invoke your aid. Say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys, three Glorias. (This Novena has never been known to fail).

THANKSGIVING

In loving memory of our dear parents, Agnes and Frank Fox, 8 Cormac Street, Ennis. Mam died on the 24th of January 2004 and Dad died on 14th December 1998, RIP. Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, missed and very dear. Loved and remembered by your daughter Marion, sons Frankey and Ciaran, grandchildren Rachel, Ian and Darren. **Anniversary Mass** on Sunday, 5th January at 11.30am at the Pro Cathedral.

LIVINGSTONE ANNE
(1st Anniversary)

In loving memory of Anne Livingstone (née Mac Namara) Loughagoa, Corofin, Co Clare who passed away on 31st December, 2023. We think of you in silence not a day goes by and a memory comes into our hearts to make us smile. We miss you waving at the door when saying goodbye. Always remembered by your loving daughter, loving sons, grandchildren, great grandchildren and extended family. **Mass** has been offered.

THANKSGIVING

O MOST BEAUTIFUL Flower of Mount Carmel, Fruitful Vine, Splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this, my necessity. There is none that can withstand your power. O show me herein you are my mother. O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3 times). Holy Mary I place this cause in your hands (3 times). Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine. This prayer must be said for 3 days, the favour xx

SINCERE THANKS

to Almighty God, Our Blessed Lady, Ss. Anthony, Augustine, Alexian Bros., Martin Pio, Catherine McAuley, Teresa, Jude, all the Holy Angels and Saints, for favour received. Very grateful. A believer in prayer.

THANKSGIVING

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GALVIN GEMMA
(10th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Gemma Galvin, who died on the 3rd of January 2015. We sat beside your bedside, our hearts were crushed and sore; we did our duty to the end, till we could do no more. In tears we watched you sinking, we watched you fade away; and though our hearts were breaking, we knew you could not stay. You left behind some aching hearts, that loved you most sincere; we never shall and never will, forget you, mother dear. Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by Shelly and John. **Mass offered**.

GRIFFIN MARGARET
(Gretta)
(1st Anniversary)

In loving memory of our dear mother, Gretta, who died on 2nd January 2024. They say there is a reason, they say that time will heal. But neither time nor reason, will change the way we feel. For no one knows the heartache that lies behind our smiles. No one knows how many times we have broken down and cried. We want to tell you something so there won't be any doubt, you are so wonderful to think of, but so hard to do without. Missed and loved every day by your daughters Oonagh, Sarah and Jenny, son-in-law Paul and adored grandchildren, Emily and Daniel. **Anniversary Mass** on Sunday, 5th January 2025 at 11.45am at St Joseph's Church, Ennis.

KEANE PAT
(6th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Pat Keane, Clarecastle, who passed away on 3rd January 2024. Softly in the evening you heard a gentle call, you took the hand God offered and you quietly left us all. Rest in Peace Patrick. Sadly missed by your wife Keane, Sandra and Gillian and their extended families. **Mass** will be offered on Sunday, 5th January 2025 at 12 noon in St Peter and Paul's Church, Clarecastle.

KEARNEY
JAMESY and TERESA
(34th and 7th Anniversaries)

In loving memory of PJ, late of Beechpark, Ennis, who passed away on the 6th January 2024. Those we love don't go away and walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed and very dear. Sadly missed by Michael, Hilda, Declan, Niall and their families. **Anniversary Mass** on Sunday the 5th of January at 11am at Church of the Scared Heart, Scariff.

HENNESSY PADDY
(2nd Anniversary)

In loving memory of Paddy Hennessy, School Road and Cloneyogan, Lahinch, who died on January 2nd, 2023. Our lives go on without you, but things are not the same, it is hard to hide the heartache when someone speaks your name. If memories keep us together, then we are never far apart, for you are always in our minds and forever in our hearts. Deeply loved, sadly missed and always remembered by his wife Tess, son Colin, daughter Tracy, daughter-in-law Aileen, son-in-law Liam, grandchildren Conor, Séan, Chloe and Jamie, sisters-in-law Kitty and Evelyn, brother-in-law PA, nephews, nieces and extended family. **Anniversary Mass** on Sunday, 5th January at 9.15am.

HOGAN FR KEVIN
(16th Anniversary)

Remembering Fr Kevin, former AP, Inagh and late of Furnace town, Feakle. Greatly missed by his family and friends. Will those who remember Fr Kevin today, a little prayer to Jesus say.

HYNES
FLAN and MARY
(24th and 33rd Anniversaries)

Special are the memories, precious they stay and no passing of time can take them away. They bring a smile, sometimes a tear but always a wish that you were still here. Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Will those who think of them today, a little prayer to Jesus say. Always remembered by your loving family. **Anniversary Mass** offered.

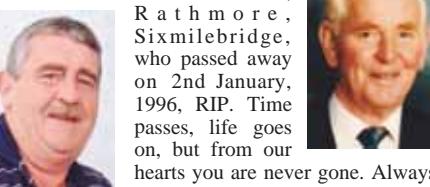
KENNEALLY MARY
(6th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Flan and Mary Hynes, 73 St Michael's Villas, Ennis. The beauty of a memory is that it's always there, like a penny in your pocket, you can take it anywhere. And when your heart is heavy and your eyes are filled with tears, you can focus on a memory and travel through the years. Take comfort as you go, in a lifetime of sweet memories of those who loved

IN MEMORIAM

O'CALLAGHAN JERRY
(8th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Jerry, 8 Willow Park, Ennis, eighth anniversary on 6th January and his baby daughter, Maria. So sadly missed by his wife Carmel, son Jerry Jnr, daughter Eileen Rose, all his grandchildren, daughter-in-law Rachel, son-in-law Paul, sisters and brothers-in-law. Jerry we miss you every day of the year, we love you every day of the year, we remember you every day of the year. Until we meet again! Sleep safe in the arms of Jesus, we love you. **Anniversary Mass** 6th of January at 7.30pm in St Peter and Paul's Cathedral, Ennis.

O'REILLY BERNIE
(29th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Bernie, Rathmore, Sixmilebridge, who passed away on 2nd January, 1996. RIP. Time passes, life goes on, but from our hearts you are never gone. Always remembered by Mary and your loving family.

RYNNE BRIDIE, MARY ANNE and PATRICK
(10th, 20th and 22nd Anniversaries)

O'SULLIVAN JOHNNY
(4th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Johnny. You held my hand when I was small, you caught me when I fell, you are the hero of my childhood and my later years as well. And every time I think of you, my heart still fills with pride, though I will always miss you. Dad, I know you're by my side. In laughter and in sorrow, in sunshine and in rain, I know you're watching over me until we meet again. From your loving daughter Jackie, son-in-law Mick and grandkids Dylan, Lennon and Kayden.

RYNNE PAT
(30th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Pat, RIP, late of Corrig, Inagh, Co Clare and London, who died on 3rd January 1995.

God saw you get tired and a cure was not to be, so he put his arms around you and whispered "Come to Me." Sadly missed, son Patrick, daughter-in-law Stephanie and grandchildren Patrick and Jake.

SCANLAN WEST PAULINE
(8th Anniversary)

In loving memory of a beautiful wife and wonderful mother, Pauline, who passed away on the 6th January, 2017. May the winds of Heaven blow

softly and whisper in your ear, how much we love and miss you and wish that you were here. Thinking of you always, loving you forever, Alan, Scarlett and Ruby, xxx. **Anniversary Mass** in Clarecastle Church on, Friday 3rd January at 7pm.

SCANLAN WEST PAULINE
(8th Anniversary)

In loving memory of our daughter Pauline, who died on 6th January 2017.

You can always tell where a beautiful soul has been by the tears and the smiles left behind. With precious and cherished memories of our daughter Pauline, forever beautiful, forever loved and forever in our hearts. Loved and sadly missed by Mam and Dad.

SCANLAN WEST PAULINE
(8th Anniversary)

In loving memory of Pauline, our sister, always missed, never forgotten. Quietly remembered every day. No longer in our life to share but in our hearts, you are always there. Loved and remembered by Lorraine and Paschal, Tricia and Ronan, Alberta and Des, nephews Jack, Alex and Des, nieces Alannah and Keelin.

SHANNON MARTIN
(12th Anniversary)

In loving memory of our dear dad, Martin, Commons Kilnaboy, Co. Clare, who departed this life on the 7th January 2013, RIP. January is here with sad regret, bringing back a morning we will never forget. You left us alone without goodbye but our memories of you will never die. Forever in our hearts. Sadly missed and always remembered by your loving sons, Martin and PJ and your daughters, Maura, Brid and Eilish, sons-in-law and grandchildren.

VAUGHAN MARY
(1st Anniversary)

In loving memory of our aunt Mary, Cahercalla Road, Ennis and formerly of Ardboula, Tulla, whose First Anniversary occurs on January 1st, 2025. Sadly missed and always remembered by Maria, Pat, Jim and Breda. "We hold you close within our hearts, and there you shall remain, to walk with us throughout our lives until we meet again. So sadly missed but never forgotten. Your loving son Joe and daughter-in-law Jennie, granddaughter Carol and her husband Cillian. **Anniversary Mass** on Saturday, 5th January, 2025 at 11am in St Mary's Church, Quin.

ROCHE NORA
(3rd Anniversary)

In loving memory of Nora Roche (née Healy), of Clahane, Liscannor, Co Clare, who died on 3rd January, 2022. No longer in our lives to share but in our hearts you're always there. So fondly remembered by your sisters, nieces and nephews, grand nieces and nephews and friends. **Anniversary Mass** on 6th January at 11am at the Church of St Brigid, Liscannor.

Memorial Cards

Wallet Cards - Bookmarks

Acknowledgement Cards

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



COLLINS
CECELIA (Cissie)

CASSIDY
OLLIE



Toomore, Ruan

Died December 5th, 2024

STRAW

ANIMALS/LIVESTOCK

WANTED - CATTLE -

HORSES

We also buy lame and

culled cows and cattle.

Also wanted, all kinds of horses, cobs

and ponies. 087 6681171

Darragh, Ennis

Died December 1st, 2024

SUGAR AND FODDER BEET

for sale. Delivered if required. Tel

086 6858383.

FARM/GARDEN

STRAW

ANIMALS/LIVESTOCK

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We also buy lame and

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HORSES

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culled cows and cattle.

Also wanted,

A portrait of childhood

CLARE ARTS Office will host a photographic exhibition by Beata Rosik at the Clare Museum at Arthur's Row in Ennis, from January 6 to February 1.

Beata is a Polish artist and has been living in Ennis since 2007. Beata's passion is Fine Art Photography and she has been doing photography since she arrived in Ireland, 15 years ago.

Beata's photographs are globally appreciated and have been displayed in photo exhibitions in countries like Canada, India, Romania, Slovenia, England, Georgia, Oman, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Singapore and other locations.

Beata has represented Ireland in the International Photo Competitions organised by the International Federation of Photographic Art, the Global Photographic Union and the Photographic Society of America.

She has won many international competitions including gold medals and special awards for Best Author.

Beata received special photography distinctions for outstanding and valuable participation from Cyprus, India and Romania and in 2021/2022 she won the special award for Best Female Entrant in three international photo competitions in Cyprus.

Beata also received the Tones Studio Residency Award from Clare Arts Office in 2021, which is a great honour for her.



A portrait by Beata Rosik.

As well as displaying her work at exhibitions all over the world, she has had exhibitions at the Clare Museum and the Scariff Library Gallery in 2022 and 2023. Since 2022 she has showed her work at Culture Night events in Ennis. She has four Blue Pin Awards which is the best award a photographer can get in an International competition.

She has received the GENIUS Distinction Award from Agile Photographic Society in Bangladesh and form Cyprus.

Beata's passion is photographing people, especially children.

It is obvious from some of her photographs that Beata had quite a tough childhood in Poland but her love of children shines through her work.

She loves to work with prism and is passionate about working with different techniques.

Beata is excited about the future and what her photography can bring. Her motto is 'the best picture is yet to come'.

She moved to Ireland because she was "disappointed with the quality of life in Poland" and wanted a better life for her son.

"We say our life started again in Ireland," she told *The Clare Champion*.

She spent a few years working at the Polish School in Limerick, however not long after her arrival in Ireland she was diagnosed with cancer describing this as "a tough period" of her life.

It was during her treatment that she discovered her love for photography.

"I took a small camera in my hand one day and looked through the lens and I enjoyed it, hence I bought a better camera with a better lens," she said.

"I started with landscape photography. Ireland is so beautiful, everyone wants to capture it in photos. Unfortunately the weather isn't always as beautiful as the views, that's why I started working with people on portraits."

Beata says that her arts is inspired by everything.

"Movies, music, nature, artists from medieval times, especially my favourite Leonardo Da Vinci or more contemporarily a photographer named Jan Saudek," she said.

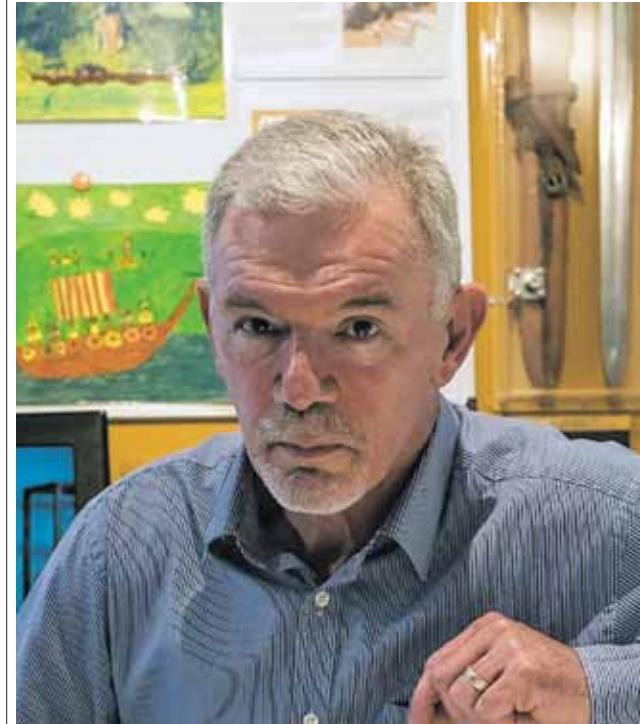
"Part of my photos are paintings where you can notice my quite tough childhood."

She is passionate about working with different photographic techniques.

"Photos with the prism are one of my favourites. These photos are hard to make and understand. I think that photos like that define each artist."

"Working with prism is a way of moving one image into a different image, which makes a new image," she said.

The exhibition, which is entitled *Shadow of a Young Soul* will continue until February 1.



John Sheehan, Head of Department of Archaeology at University College Cork, who will speak in Ennis next week.

THE NEW season of Clare Museum's Lecture Series continues on Wednesday, January 8 2025 at 7.30pm, with a talk by John Sheehan entitled *Stairway to Heaven: The Archaeology of Skellig Michael*.

This talk will explore some aspects of the island of Skellig Michael, one of Ireland's World Heritage Sites.

It is best known for its Gaelic monastery, founded between the 6th and 8th centuries, and its variety of inhabiting species, which include gannets, puffins, a colony of razorbills and a population of approximately fifty grey seals.

The island is of special interest to archaeologists, as the monastic settlement is in unusually good condition.

The monastery is situated at an elevation of around 180 metres above sea level.

The hermitage on the south peak contains a dangerous approach and is largely closed to the public.

Because of the often difficult crossing from the mainland and the exposed nature of the landing spots, the island is accessible only during summer months.

UNESCO designated Skellig Michael a World Heritage Site in 1996.

The island featured in three recent Star Wars films.

Ireland's Publishing Show coming to Clare

IRELAND'S Publishing Show, the premier writers' conference for those at all stages of their writing journey, will come to Clare this March.

Aspiring writers, established authors, and industry professionals alike are invited to join the Ireland's Publishing Show, which will take place from March 18 to 20, at the Inn at Dromoland.

This three-day event is designed to inspire, educate, and connect writers of all experience levels, offering unparalleled opportunities to grow professionally and creatively.

The event will include a host of speakers from across the publishing world.

This will include bestselling self-published authors, traditionally published professionals and experts in selling directly to readers through platforms like Kickstarter.

The conference aims to offer something for everyone, whether they are just starting out, looking to expand their reach, or seeking advice on how to take their career to the next level.

Some of the notable speakers include author Steve Higgs,

author and comic book creator Tony Lee, bestselling science fiction author, Sarah Noffke and Gerald M Kilby, who is one of Ireland's best selling independent authors.

Other speakers include Celeste Barclay, who is a historical romance and publishing strategist, Jonathan Brazee who is a military sci-fi author, Adam Beswick who is a self-publishing and direct sales expert and James Blatch, a self-publishing expert and the co-founder of the show.

Other speakers include Cara Clare, a romance author and entrepre-

neur, Tammi Lebrecque, who is a 'newsletter ninja', email marketing guru, Maria McHale, an author and writing expert and Casey King, who is an author and hybrid publishing strategist.

Marketing and business consultant, Paul Ian Cross will also take part in the event, as will Lorna Sixsmith, non-fiction author and expert in author branding.

In addition to an exciting lineup of presentations, workshops and panels, the Ireland's Publishing Show offers invaluable networking opportunities,

where attendees can connect with industry leaders and fellow authors, share ideas, and collaborate on future projects.

The event is aimed at independent authors, traditional publishers, or people seeking to enhance their craft and business acumen.

The Publishing Show will include networking opportunities where people can meet fellow writers, industry professionals, and potential collaborators and a conference lunch on both days which will offer a great chance to mingle with speakers and fellow attendees.

For more information about the event visit irelandspublishingshow.com.

The show will also include a special gala dinner which will include a celebration of the talent present at the show and will include gourmet food, entertainment and additional networking opportunities.

The conference will take place at the Inn at Dromoland in County Clare, just 15 minutes from Shannon Airport, making it easily accessible for both local and international attendees.

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For more information about the event visit irelandspublishingshow.com.

Colour me in and win a Book Voucher

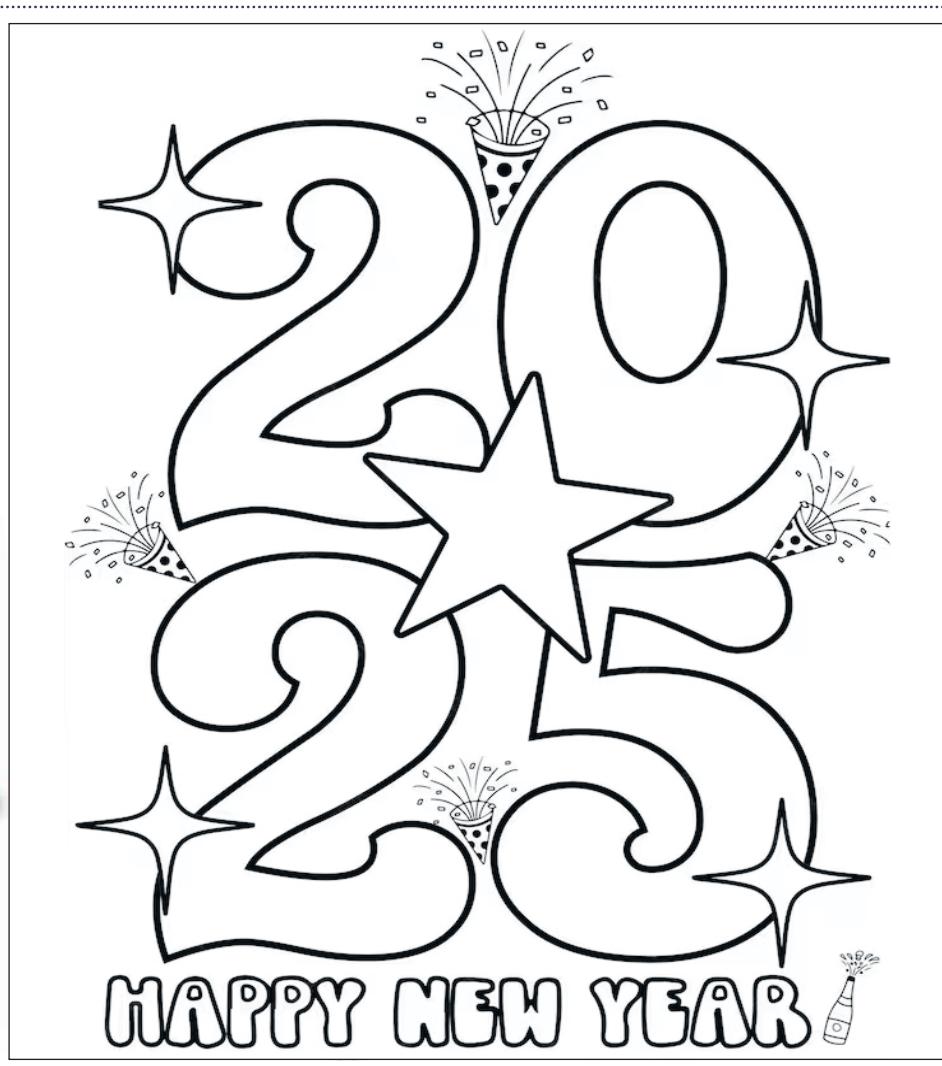
NEW CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Across

- 1. Clergyman has clay thrown out? Precisely! (10)
- 2. Sewing implements not quite unnecessary (7)
- 3. Carpenter is to go in without fish (5)
- 4. North-east race, after deductions (4)
- 5. I can roar about for pasta (8)
- 6. A group of directors on a ship (6)
- 7. A game with nets? (6)
- 8. Meant to be at home, getting looked after (8)
- 9. Help with a Verdi opera (4)
- 10. Never-failing courage (5)
- 11. Make up your mind to do the puzzle again (7)
- 12. Agree to write (10)

Down

- 1. Proficient in a small department (5)
- 2. It's a little higher than the ankle - or a little lower! (4)
- 3. A little mischief-maker, a scallywag, a rogue (6)
- 4. Green tea brewed for a youngster (8)
- 5. Not lewd, wild or disappointed (3,4)
- 6. Swirling in and out in flood (10)
- 7. Part of the harness said to be put back (10)
- 8. Magnificence makes Edgar run (8)
- 9. Part of Canada - and parts of Iran too! (7)
- 10. Thirteen cards for eleven players in Scotland? (6)
- 11. I had been first but didn't work (5)
- 12. Norwegian capital in Czechoslovakia (4)



SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



WIN €30
Ennis Bookshop voucher
Email a photo of your coloured in picture
or complete crossword to
clarechampioncompetitions@gmail.com

Jive & Slop Dance classes

For: Beginners

Starting: 13th & 14th January, 2025

Locations:
Gort & Tulla

Contact: Senan Murphy 086 3709437
or Google: www.jivewithsenan.ie for details

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VISUAL ARTS

glór presents
Reawakening with Adam Pomeroy and Ian Kelly

Runs in glór gallery until Saturday 18th January

EVENTS

Danny O'Reilly

Sunday 5 January | 8pm | €32

David O'Doherty

Friday 10 January | 8pm | €25

Suitable for ages 16+

Second Saturday Soundscapes

with Stephen Heffernan, Liam O'Brien and Hajime Takahashi, & Félim Collins

Saturday 11 January | 1pm | Foyer | Pay what you can!

The Fureys

Saturday 11 January | 8pm | €35

Film Season @ glór with Access Cinema - The Outrun

Tuesday 14 January | 8pm | €8

Little John Nee presents Zeitgeist Jukebox

Wednesday 15 January | 8pm | €18/€16 Conc.

Wednesday: 75 Mins Suitable for Ages 14+

glór Café is open 10am - 2.30pm daily. One-hour free parking.

• Pre-book your tickets on www.glor.ie or on 065 6843100.

Please note that €1 booking fee applies.



APPRECIATION

From Moore Street to Croke Park

Tommy Mangan was a legend of Clare and Kilmurry football who passed away earlier this week in his 90th year. Joe Ó Muircheartaigh pays tribute to the larger than life character from Moore Street in Kilmurry through the words of the man himself.

"The backyard of our house on Moore Street in Kilmurry is where I first started playing football. It was my Croke Park and in 1947 it was my Polo Grounds. I used to put up posts at either end. I'd be on my own playing the games - Kerry against Cavan. I was Joe Keohane, Paddy Bán Brosnan, John Joe O'Reilly and Peter Donohue. I'd be talking to myself as I was playing and commenting on the game like Micheal O'Hearn was in New York."

Tommy Mangan

IT WAS Tommy Mangan talking and holding court in the Johnson's Bar on Kilmurry's Henry Street over 20 years ago as he reeled in the football years that took him from Moore Street to the Cricket Field on the old Vandeleur Estate and well beyond.

It was just after mid-day and Tommy order a whiskey for himself and with a few more with it over the course of a few hours made for a compelling football story, with the most famous All-Ireland final of them all being a reference point of his youth as he aspired to being a county footballer.

He was feeding off those around him in Kilmurry where the tradition stretched back to the Shannon Sweepers team in the earliest days of the GAA through to the first great Shamrocks of Erin team that emerged to win county senior titles in the early 1900s.

"I listened to that match from New York on Jack Madigan's radio on Moore Street," he recalled. "Michael Tubridy, the vet, lived next door to us. His son Mick won an All-Ireland for Cork in 1945.

"Michael used to make footballs for him. He'd get corks, wrap them with very strong brown paper and hard cord. The ball would actually hop. I kicked the ball into Tubridy's yard one day. I climbed over to the get the ball and when I hit the ground all his dogs appeared from no where and surrounded me. I was screaming. Michael Tubridy came out, his grey hair brushed back and wearing dark-rimmed glasses.

"He cleared the dogs and then said: 'what do you think the dogs would do if I hadn't been here'. 'I don't know' was my answer. 'They'd eat you,' he said.

"I never went in there again if the dogs were there. Tubridy was one of the few places where there was a real football. To go in after school and hop the ball on the tiles was a huge thrill for me."

Tommy was nine when Mick Tubridy brought All-Ireland glory to Cork and Kilmurry, which in time would see the Cricket Field where he learned to kick the ball renamed as Capt Tubridy Memorial Park in his honour.

It's where Tommy honed his footballing craft too, as he chased his dream of kicking ball in Croke Park like Mick Tubridy did when scoring a crucial goal in that All-Ireland final win over Cavan in 1945.

"It was my dream to play in Croke Park," he recalled. "I remember as a young fella when PJ O'Dea was going off to play for Clare against Derry in the National League final in Croke Park on Easter Monday, 1947.

"After mass I ran up to PJ and



Tommy Mangan with Marty Morrissey at an event launch in 2012.

Photograph by John Kelly.

asked him about going to play in Croke Park. He said Croke Park was like a billiard table.

"All I wanted to do was play football - I used to gather the pennies to buy boots and go and get them in Bill Ahearne's, or Miko McMahon's. You'd get the boots and pay a shilling a week for them until you had them paid off.

"They didn't mind as long as you paid them eventually. My first real big game was against Ennis CBS in Cusack Park. I was about 14 and was put in corner-forward. I got a goal and a point and we won by a point.

"To beat Ennis was something big and afterwards I had my first ever meal in a hotel. We went to the Queen's Hotel and it was like going to Buckingham Palace. My first game with the Kilmurry seniors was in June '51. I was only 15. We were playing against the great Faughs team in Cooraclare.

"We beat the Faughs twice that year in the championship and the Cusack Cup.

"That same year I played by first senior game for Clare - I had just gone 16. We were playing the All-Ireland champions Mayo in Miltown Malbay. I was playing corner-back and marked Peter Sonlon."

"By then Tommy was already a star, with the impact he made on the county minor teams of 1951, '52 and '53 being a lasting testament to his qualities as a footballer, as well as being a strong man and a leader.

He was centre-back and captain of the last Clare team to win the Munster minor title in 1953 - that was all of 72 years ago now when Clare scored a famous win in Fitzgerald Stadium in Killarney that put Tommy on the road to Croke Park for the first time.

"In 1953 there were four of us left from the '52 minor side," Tommy recalled. "Patrick O'Dea

and myself from Kilmurry, Frankie Cassidy from Ennis and Jim Drury from Miltown. We should have won in '52 after beating Kerry in the semi-final in Tralee.

"It was a great to beat Kerry down there and I'll always remember Kerry great John Joe Sheehy that day - it was the first time I met him. He came into the Clare dressing room and told us out straight that the better team won. It was a big thing for a Kerry man to admit.

"We were good and should have won the Munster final after it, but the full-back was an O'Grady from Kildysart and in the Munster hurling final the week before he got his finger badly gashed. They brought Frank Kennedy back to full-back from centre-forward.

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ground for the objection was that the referee could not be considered unbiased," reported The Kerryman, "since he was a member of the Cork minor football selection committee and trainer of the team".

However, Munster Council chairman Jerry O'Keeffe was having none of it and ruled the objection was "lost on all points". This is, this ruling wasn't handed down until the eve of the Munster final, with news that the game was definitely on the following day only reaching county secretary Sean Guinane late on Saturday.

"I was walking down Moore Street with two buckets of water," recalled Tommy, "and Andrew Mac came up to me and said: 'Come on we're going to the Munster final'.

"There was no ferry running that time," he continued, "so we had a long drive that Saturday night. I left down the two buckets of water and got my gear. I remember my mother giving me a ten-shilling note, and then I sat into Andrew's car and made the Munster final".

"There was no ferry running that time," he continued, "so we had a long drive that Saturday night. I left down the two buckets of water and got my gear. I remember my mother giving me a ten-shilling note, and then I sat into Andrew's car and made the Munster final".

"The morning was very wet and I remember Patrick O'Dea kicking a point to give us the lead. The ball landed over the bar and on top of the net and the water sprayed all over the place.

"I remember stopping in Faranfore on the way back from Killarney and posting a postcard to a brother of mine in America. I never put down the score. I just told him in the card that Clare had won the Munster final. It was a great day for Clare."

Tommy was getting the chance to live his Croke Park dream - the dream getting better when Clare hammered Louth in the All-Ireland semi-final.

Cork won by 2-9 to 3-5, but straight away Kerry lodged an objection to the result: "The main

football, but not a September to remember.

"I think we were badly prepared for that final," he recalled. "As far as I remember Kerry invited us over where they would train us. The County Board in its wisdom turned down the offer and brought us around the county playing matches.

"We went to Ennis to play the

Faughs, we played Kilrush and Miltown. It was the wrong preparation - they were senior teams and were a lot stronger than us. The ground was very heavy and we shouldn't have played those games. On the day of the All-Ireland I was muscle-bound.

"We stayed at Buswells Hotel on Kildare Street. We were crowded into rooms, some of us had to sleep on the floor. Cousins and friends we never knew we had were arriving at the hotel looking for a place to stay. We got no rest.

"Mayo were awarded a penalty and I went into goal for it, but I didn't block it. I don't really know why I went in for the penalty, I was captain I suppose. We were beaten at that stage anyway.

"There were a lot of rumours that some of the Mayo team were overage. "My mother came from a place called the Highway - it's on the Fries to Castlemaine road. The first time I ever heard Mick O'Connell's name was in Fries. I was with a fella called Bawn Griffin who said there was a great Con Brosnan", said Sean.

"This praise from Kerr

had turned into something much greater than that - in the late 1950s there was a suggestion that Tommy might declare

for the Kingdom. It would have been a going home of sorts for Tommy, with that Kerry blood coursing through his veins.

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JUNIOR SOCCER REVIEW

Avenue United back on top

Evan Greer

2024 saw Avenue United A re-establish themselves as the top side in Junior soccer in Clare.

David Russell's charges won the Maloney Hardware Premier Division, following an unbeaten league campaign, finishing ahead of Newmarket Celtic and Bridge United.

They then met rivals Newmarket Celtic A in the final of the Clare Cup.

Clashes between the sides have always been fiercely contested over the years, none more so than when Avenue beat Celtic 3-1 to end the Newmarket men's reign as FAI Junior Cup champions in a fiery encounter.

The Cherries were looking for their third Clare Cup in a row, but the game itself was a struggle for both sides, as there was heavy rain throughout, leading to a match where very few opportunities for a winner presented themselves.

Neither side could find a goal in normal time or extra time, which meant the Cup would be decided in a penalty shootout.

After three penalties each, it was Newmarket who led the shootout, with Ronan McCormack, Tadhg Noonan and Eoin Hayes all finding the net.

Mossy Hehir converted Avenue's first effort, but captain Ronan Kerin saw his penalty saved by Shane Cusack.

However, Avenue were given a lifeline when Nathan Bonaventura hit the crossbar, and Harvey Cullinan saw his effort go over

the bar.

Philip Talty and Dylan Casey both converted to level matters and Steven McGann made no mistake in slotting home the winning penalty to complete the three-in-a-row and also give the Cherries their second league and cup double in three years.

Newmarket Celtic B claimed First Division honours, while Fair Green Celtic continued their ascent in Clare Junior Soccer by winning the Second Division.

The Third Division was won by Shannon Olympic B following a strong campaign.

The 2024/25 season began with the League Cups, and it was Avenue United A and Bridge United A who met in the Premier Division League Cup decider.

In an evenly-matched contest, neither side had any success in finding a winner in normal

time with the game finishing 2-2, therefore, the game would be decided by penalties, and it was the men from the Bridge who emerged victorious on a 3-1 scoreline to seal the first piece of silverware on offer for the season.

The First Division Cup final saw two Clare sides face off,

with Fair Green Celtic taking on Ennis Dons A. Once again, there was very little to separate the two sides but it was William Bello who popped up with the winning goal for Fair Green Celtic as they ran out 1-0 winners.

The Third Division League Cup final was contested between Avenue United B and Newmarket Celtic C. Much like the other deciders, there was very little between the sides, as the score was 1-1 entering injury time.

Avenue did win a penalty in stoppage time, which wasn't converted after Owen Hadden's effort hit the crossbar, but the

ball eventually fell to Gary Roche who fired home to seal cup glory for the Cherries.

Following on from some strong showings by Clare sides in national cup competitions, there would have been some optimism about a good run in the Oscar Traynor cup.

Clare were drawn alongside Limerick Desmond League, Limerick District League and Kerry.

With two sides coming out of the group, there were hopes that Clare would have a chance of making a Munster final, with Donie Garrity naming a strong side that included several FAI

Junior Cup winning players from Newmarket Celtic A.

However, an opening round 1-0 loss to Limerick District League had Clare on the back foot.

This was followed by another narrow 1-0 to Limerick Desmond League, which all but confirmed Clare's elimination from the competition, barring other results working in their favour.

Facing Kerry in their final game, Clare were hoping to end on a high, and did just that, running out winners on a 6-0 scoreline, with Avenue's Steven McGann grabbing four goals.

However, a 1-1 draw between both Limerick sides meant that they would progress out of the group at the expense of Clare and Kerry.

In terms of national competitions, no team could replicate Newmarket's FAI Junior Cup success from 2023 or match their efforts in reaching the Munster Junior Cup final in the same season.

However, Avenue and Bridge United are still in the hunt in both competitions.

Both sides have been impressive in reaching the last 32 of the FAI Junior Cup, with Avenue being handed the task of trying to dethrone the defending champions, Donegal's Cockhill Celtic.

The Bridge were also handed a home tie against Kilkenny's Evergreen FC.

Both sides are also into the last 16 of the Munster Junior Cup, with Bridge meeting Waterford's Dungarvan FC and Avenue taking on Cork side Coachford AFC.



Photograph by Natasha Barton

Avenue United players celebrate winning the 2024 Clare Cup Final against Newmarket Celtic.

INTERMEDIATE FOOTBALL REVIEW

Tones the glory, Naomh Eoin the story

Derek Dormer

ELEVEN first teams and an Ennistymon second string took part in a championship that will be remembered most for the runners up which says a lot considering Wolfe Tones completed a unique Intermediate double.

However whenever the 2024 race for glory is spoken about there'll be one club on everyone's lips and that is of course the fairytale journey of Naomh Eoin.

Although their memorable campaign ultimately ended in defeat, their five game winning streak and subsequent march to a first ever Intermediate final was undoubtedly one of the stories of the summer.

ing in the group stages and easily progressed to the knockout phase before comfortably dispatching a severely depleted Shannon Gaels outfit, who had enlisted the services of well known hurling coach Fergie O'Loughlin as their manager, in the quarter-final.

Exacting revenge on Kilrush in a repeat semi-final from their clash twelve months earlier the side coached by Ennis native Kieran Ryan were a joy to watch with entertaining attractive football of their philosophy.

Veteran Gary Leahy returned to the fold and was the conductor in chief with his ability to create and raise green flags at crucial stages paramount to their success. Six goals in the knock-out stages highlights their potency and with a youthful side that also claimed an U-21 B title the Shannon club who were rather unlucky losers in the Provincial semi-final should not be out of place dining at the top table for 2025.

Dominant for almost the entire second-half of the final itself, they will look back at a lengthy spell where they had a virtual monopoly on possession but unfortunately for them they just couldn't transfer that dominance onto the scoreboard and the eventual four point defeat will probably take quite some time to recover from.

This is in no way meant to take away from the champions who a week on from the hurling equivalent completed a remarkable and unique Intermediate Championship double. Johnny Bridges charges improved for every out-



Wolfe Tones captain Dean Devaney holds the intermediate football championship cup aloft after his team defeated Naomh Eoin in the final.

Photography by Eugene McCafferty

JUNIOR HURLING CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW

Kilmaley finally get the John Daly cup

Michael O'Connor

SINCE the start of the last decade Kilmaley had ambitions to win the Canon Hamilton like all senior clubs but most assuredly they really wanted to bring home Junior A honours. Losing finals, semi-finals and quarter-finals became the norm and with each passing year was the doubt that it would ever happen. The Junior A groups included Banner, Clooney-Quin, Clarecastle, Crusheen, Ballyea. Group 2: Sixmilebridge, Éire Óg, Scariff, Ennistymon. Group 3: Kilmaley, Wolfe Tones, Clonlara, Cratloe, O'Callaghan's Mills.

After a number of keenly contested games the four quarter-finals were unveiled. Scariff created a slight shock with a point to spare (1-17) to (1-16) over Clonlara. Éire Óg won the local derby (2-12) to (1-6) against Clarecastle.

In another derby it was another one point win as O'Callaghan's Mills sneaked past a disappointed Clooney-Quin. In the fourth quarter-final and one of the better games of the Junior A championship, Kilmaley had two points to spare over all new nemesis Banner (1-17) to (1-15).

As teams moved on to the semi-finals it was a case of any one team was capable of winning the title with no outstanding side split on the quarter-finals.

This was proven by O'Callaghan's Mills having two points in hand (3-12) to (1-6) over Éire Óg, Scariff, Ennistymon. Group 3: Kilmaley, Wolfe Tones, Clonlara, Cratloe, O'Callaghan's Mills.

Once more was a county final destination and it was d-day for Kilmaley to gain silverware. With no indication of what could transpire it was expected that the title decider would go down to the wire but reality was different as Kilmaley

opened up and controlled from the start and secured a memorable championship win on a (0-24) to (0-12) scoreline.

Terrific Tulla top Junior B title race

Men who were central to Tulla's senior championship success in 2007 are still playing for the club and delivering bit performances at Junior B in the past seasons.

With 18 sides in the junior B split into two groups of 5 and a further two of four sides it does need a side of strong endurance and ability to stay the course and Tulla had that in abundance.

The four groups included in group 1, Sixmilebridge, Tulla, Clonlara, Ruan and Smith O'Brien's. Group 2 comprised

of Parteen/Meeleek, St Joseph's Doora/Barefield, Broadford, Ballyea and Newmarket-on-Fergus. Group 3 saw a group of Inagh/Kilmalona, Clarecastle, Corofin and Kilmaley. The final group was made up of Feakle, Tulla, Éire Óg and O'Callaghan's Mills.

Once the group games were played the scene was set for the last eight ties and first up Tulla faced Feakle (1-14) to (2-9). Clarecastle and Sixmilebridge played out a thriller with the Magpies (1-19) to (1-18) ahead at the end. In the third quarter-final Inagh/Kilmalona and St Joseph's was another quarter final with just a score between them as St Joseph's led (4-10) to (3-12) ahead at the end.

In the fourth tie Tulla showed intentions of ultimate glory defeating Parteen/Meeleek (0-19) to (0-12). Crusheen housed the semi-final clash of Tulla and St

Joseph's with Tulla always on top winning (0-17) to (1-6) and in the second last four game Clarecastle with a late rally overcame Tulla to secure a final place that ultimately saw Tulla take final honours.

An ever-increasing Junior C hurling championship saw once more two grades, Premier and Junior C. In the Premier group the last four Cratloe had a strong (6-13) to (1-6) win over Inagh/Kilmalona as Wolfe Tones had to dig deep to make another adult final with a (1-10) to (1-9) success over Whitegate.

In the Premier Junior C final Cratloe had way too much to spare over Wolfe Tones in Newmarket winning (3-8) to (0-8).

In the Junior C proper Clonbony secured a famous title win after many years of trying when they scored a (4-13) to (0-11) win over Kilkee/Bealaaha before a great attendance in Clarecastle

ball and Clare were drawn alongside Limerick Desmond League, Limerick District League and Kerry.

With two sides coming out of the group, there were hopes that Clare would have a chance of making a Munster final, with Donie Garrity naming a strong side that included several FAI

Junior Cup winning players from Newmarket Celtic A.

However, an opening round 1-0 loss to Limerick District League had Clare on the back foot.

This was followed by another narrow 1-0 to Limerick Desmond League, which all but confirmed Clare's elimination from the competition, barring other results working in their favour.

Facing Kerry in their final game, Clare were hoping to end on a high, and did just that, running out winners on a 6-0 scoreline, with Avenue's Steven McGann grabbing four goals.

However, a 1-1 draw between both Limerick sides meant that they would progress out of the group at the expense of Clare and Kerry.

In terms of national competitions, no team could replicate Newmarket's FAI Junior Cup success from 2023 or match their efforts in reaching the Munster Junior Cup final in the same season.

However, Avenue and Bridge United are still in the hunt in both competitions.

Both sides have been impressive in reaching the last 32 of the FAI Junior Cup, with Avenue being handed the task of trying to dethrone the defending champions, Donegal's Cockhill Celtic.

The Bridge were also handed a home tie against Kilkenny's Evergreen FC.

Both sides are also into the last 16 of the Munster Junior Cup, with Bridge meeting Waterford's Dungarvan FC and Avenue taking on Cork side Coachford AFC.

INTERMEDIATE HURLING REVIEW

Dramatic finish to intermediate final

Derek Dormer

AT THE outset of this championship two teams in particular were tipped for a return to Senior level. Having suffered the ignominy of relegation in 2023 former Munster club champions Clarecastle and Wolfe Tones were expected to battle it out with one or the other returning to Senior at the first attempt. Both clubs topped their respective groups keeping them apart in the draw for the knockout stages and a clash between the two seemed inevitable.

The quarter-finals saw Killanena defeat Whitegate in a derby clash that went right to the wire with an inspirational Keith Smyth sideline proving decisive while Clare Senior Robin Mounsey inspired Ruan to a comfortable victory over the 2023 beaten finalists Sixmilebridge.

Wolfe Tones with an Inter County spine of Darragh Lohan, Rory Hayes and Aron Shanahan were expected to easily account for Parteen-Meeleek but matches are played on pitches not on paper and this quarter-final was in the balance throughout with the Shannon club under manager Barry Keane receiving quite a scare before advancing by the bare minimum.

The magpies were raging favourites when taking on Tulla in Corofin but the Rory Gantley coached side completely out fought Clarecastle especially in the final quarter to pull off a shock result and advance to a semi-final show-down with Killanena. Both semi-finals took place over two days in Tulla with weather conditions wreaking havoc for the Tubber Killanena clash that saw an in-

Tubber side. Most experts felt the firework as manager Barry Keane's disposal would prove too much for the North Clare club with Wolfe Tones registering a mouth watering 18-103 on route to the final. Battle hardened Tubber had other ideas though and contrary to popular belief they tore into their opponents from the outset.

Heading into the closing stages a shock result seemed likely as Tubber led by the minimum as the clock approached the sixtieth minute mark. Keane's charges summoned the resolve to fire over a leveller and everybody in Cusack Park awaited the full time whistle and extra time. However referee Gus O'Callaghan awarded the Shannon club a free direct from the restart much to the dismay of the Tubber management. Protests at the awarding of the free resulted in the ball being moved forward.

The game then finished on a more contentious note than necessary with the linesman bringing the sliotar back to the position where the free was awarded before the referee moved the ball back up again giving sharpshooter Cian O'Rourke an opportunity to land the winner.'

spired performance from 2013 All Ireland winner Patrick O'Connor guide the Pat Taaffe side to their fourth final in seven years after suffering defeats in 2017, 2018 and 2020. The other semi final saw the Tones deliver their best performance of the campaign to easily account for Ruan and set up a first championship meeting with Tubber in 12 years.

In the lead up to the final nobody outside of the Tubber camp realistically gave them much hope as it was expected that the Inter County contingent of the Shannon club along with top players like Daithí Lohan and Aaron Cunningham would prove too much to handle for an ageing



Wolfe Tones' Captain John Guilfoyle lifts the Intermediate Cup following their win over Tubber.

INTERMEDIATE LADIES' FOOTBALL REVIEW

Townies claim first ever crown

Derek Dorner

THIS year's Ladies' Football Intermediate Championship comprised of just seven teams from the unfortunate withdrawal of Clarecastle. The executive decided that there would be two groups with the top two teams in each group qualifying directly for the semi-finals while the teams in second and third place would then play each other in the quarter-finals.

After plenty of early shadow boxing it eventually came down to the business end of the championship with four teams still standing in the form of Ennis club Éire Óg, West Clare clubs Cooracare and Kilrush while North Clare were represented by Liscannor.

The semi-finals will be remembered most for the clash of Éire Óg and Kilrush. After a riveting entertaining battle that ebbed and flowed throughout the game finished all square and it was off to extra-time.

Played in Kilrush the home side seemed to have the upper hand at the beginning of the extra time period and inspired by Aoibhín Cotter they led by three points with the clock ticking down and a return to the County final looked odds on for the Shams. However the Shane Daniels coached

petition deciding the outcome.

It really was nail-biting stuff and the large crowd that had descended upon Kilrush for the game most certainly got value for their money. Displaying nerves of steel Éire Óg kicked three of their first four attempts while Kilrush missed two of theirs sending the townies into wild celebration and a County final while one could only feel for the girls in green who sunk to their knees in despair. The shootout is a cruel way to lose but with the split season and time constraints there aren't really any other viable alternatives for now.

In the other semi-final Liscannor who had eased into the final four overcame Cooracare by four points on a 3-9 to 2-8 scoreline. The beaten semi-finalists then played each other in the shield final with the Milesians defeating Kilrush 3-6 to 1-10.

The County final itself took place in Shanahan Memorial Park in Doonbeg on the sixth of October. While it didn't have the drama of the semi-finals it was still a quality game with the townies having far too much firepower for a gallant Liscannor outfit and ran out deserving eight point victors on a 2-12 to 1-7 scoreline securing a first ever Intermediate title and a maiden voyage at Senior level awaits the townies in 2025.

'It really was nail-biting stuff and the large crowd that had descended upon Kilrush for the game most certainly got value for their money. Displaying nerves of steel Éire Óg kicked three of their first four attempts while Kilrush missed two of theirs sending the townies into wild celebration and a County final.'

townies, who probably should have won in normal time, weren't to be denied and inspired by a player of the match performance from Orla Devitt they managed to reel in their opponents and take the game all the way to the most dramatic of conclusions with a twenty five metre free kick com-



Aoife Corey, Alana McInerney and Orla Devitt of Éire Óg celebrate their win over Liscannor in the Intermediate Ladies' Football Final.

Photograph by Natasha Barton

INTERMEDIATE CAMOGIE REVIEW

Third consecutive final sees Tulla return to senior ranks

Derek Dorner

IF AT first you don't succeed try and try again is a well known motto and can be used to describe the brave girls from Tulla after their persistence and determination were finally rewarded when Clonlara referee Aaron Hogg blew the full time whistle on the 2024 Intermediate final in Cusack Park.

Two successive County final defeats would test the resolve and character of any side. Their first defeat came at the hands of Clarecastle-Ballyea after a replay in 2022 and twelve months later it was the turn of the Parish girls to inflict the fatal blow with a late somewhat fortuitous goal ultimately deciding the day in a closely fought contest.

To see Doora/Barefield go on and lift the Munster crown afterwards must have also tested their resolve and their mental strength. From the outset of the championship there was no questions surrounding their desire and willingness to go again as they seemed to be a side on a mission with defeat out of the

'To finally get over the line and win the Intermediate Championship is an incredible feeling and the final whistle was an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.'

question.

After comfortably progressing to the semi-finals they then accounted for familiar rivals Whitegate by four points on a 0-17 to 1-10 scoreline to advance to their fourth (including the 2022 replay) final in three years. Standing in their way of ultimate glory was an unexpected opponent in the form of newly amalgamated club Broadford/Bodyke who had surprised everyone when overcoming the pre-championship favourites Clooney-Quin by the

bare minimum in a riveting semi final on a 2-11 to 0-16 scoreline.

Tulla entered the final as overwhelming strong favourites courtesy of an earlier meeting when comfortably dispatching Broadford/Bodyke by fourteen points in the group stages. It's never easy trying to beat the same opposition twice though and the final itself was a far more tighter affair than was in truth anticipated but experience of the big day eventually told as the East Clare girls emerged three point winners on a 1-15 to 0-15 scoreline with star forward Bridín Dinan at the fore. Club stalwart and goalkeeper Lorraine O'Loughlin speaking to *The Clare Champion* for this review cited relief as the overriding emotion.

"To finally get over the line and win the Intermediate Championship is an incredible feeling and the final whistle was an unforgettable experience for everyone involved. The sense of relief was powerful as all the hard work, all the dedication to training shown by the girls and the determination and perseverance to keep coming back was rewarded at last and it's great to look forward to 2025 and Senior Camogie."



The Tulla team celebrate their win over Broadford-Bodyke in the Intermediate Camogie Championship Final.

Photograph by Natasha Barton

U-21A AND B FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW

Top trio taste U-21 title glory

Michael O'Connor

THE BIGGEST club in the county St Joseph's Doora/Barefield have in recent years bar intermediate wins worn the bridesmaid tag in finals losing four minors A hurling and football finals in the last three years.

So, when they lifted the U-21A cup in Clarecastle it was a welcome sight for those in Gurteen. Lissycasey, their victims had less than a month previous overran St Joseph's in the U-17A final so revenge is a dish best served cold in a (1-12) to (0-14) win for the Parish men.

In the quarter finals Lissycasey strolled part Naomi Eoin/O'Curry's/

Kilkee (2-16) to (1-7) as Ennistymon had two points, (0-13) to (2-5) to spare over Kilrush Killimer. Clondegad edged over Cooracare (1-11) to as St Joseph's signaled intent with a (14) to (3-2) win over Corofin.

In the semi-finals a superb game was played as reigning champions Ennistymon were dumped out by Lissycasey (0-8) to (0-7) as Clondegad could not contain St Joseph's who won with two goals to spare (2-8) to (0-8) to set up a memorable final meeting. Kilrush Killimer who have tasted U-17A success in recent years took the U-21A shield with a (0-12) to (1-7) success over Cooracare.

A year of great success at inter-

mediate grade prompted other sides in Wolfe Tones to step up and obtain their own piece of glory and silverware. Reaching the U-21B final against a talented if perhaps young Kilmurry Ibrickane side they showed no mercy scoring four goals in the decider to secure a near double scores win, (4-9) to (0-11) over the many times champions.

In the opening rounds the eventual champions defeated Shannon Gaels/ Killimer/Coolmeen/Kildysart (3-10) to (2-6). In a low scoring tie in poor conditions Cratloe had one point to spare (2-4) to (1-6) over Clarecastle. Kilmurry Ibrickane worked hard and edged Banner (1-14) to (2-9) while Éire Óg had 14 points to spare, (3-13)

to (0-8) over Doonbeg. As expected Wolfe Tones had little difficulty dispatching Cratloe (3-12) to (1-7) and in a tighter affair Kilmurry Ibrickane just about got over Éire Óg (0-12) to (0-9) to set up the final many predicted at the commencement and again led to success for the Shannon town men.

Banner won the U-21B shield final as with the U-21C football final St Joseph's Miltown who based on results were too strong for the grade scored a (10-10) to (0-6) win over Western Gaels in what was the closest game the winners had all season.

Killeen/Cusacks/Liscannor won the U-21C shield accounting for Parteen/Meeleek.



Bernard Keane presents the U-21A Football Championship Cup to St Joseph's Doora/Barefield joint-captains Fionn Kelleher and James Curran.

Photograph by Eugene McCafferty

RACING

Much to look forward to on the racing front in 2025

Michael Duggan

2025 is just a few days old and it offers the perfect opportunity to reflect on what has been an excellent 12 months on the local racing front.

County Clare Hunt ran two hugely successful point-to-points during the year, with Bellharbour last February and Quakerstown - on its traditional Easter Sunday date - both attracting large crowds.

Beagh jockey, Eoin Mahon, achieved his best-ever seasonal tally of nine winners when the 2024 point-to-point season came to an end at Ballingarry in South Tipperary in late May.

Mahon has really impressed in the saddle over the last few years, and he

had already made a flying start to the 2024/25 season between the flags. That's no surprise given that he works really hard and it's nice to see his undoubted talents recognised by some of the top handlers in the country.

Speaking of Mahon bring us along nicely to his much-decorated neighbour Derek O'Connor.

On the Thursday of this year's Galway Summer Festival, a rumour swept around the packed enclosures that O'Connor's ride aboard JP McManus' 4/9 favourite Vicar Street (finished fourth) in that afternoon's concluding bumper was to be his last-ever appearance in the saddle.

As often is the case, those rumbblings proved well wide of the mark as the Tubber genius is still going strong.

Yes, he has diversified slightly over the past few years, in that he combines his riding duties with training (very successfully) at his impressive Fiddaun Stables on the Clare/Galway border.

His yard is home to a large draft of well-bred young horses owned by JP McManus, with O'Connor entrusted with the task of educating them before they are dispatched to various trainers in Ireland and the UK.

O'Connor is, without question, the top amateur rider Ireland has ever produced. To-date, he has ridden a staggering 1,351 winner on the point-to-point circuit.

His successes are not limited to the pointing fields either, with big-race victories coming his way at this year's

Cheltenham and Aintree festivals. In Cheltenham O'Connor got the week off to a flyer when guiding JP McManus' Corbets Cross to victory in the opening day's National Hunt Chase. Twenty fours later, he was again the toast of punters when bringing 13/8 Inothewayurthinkin, also in the green and gold hoops of McManus, through in the closing stages to record a memorable eight-length victory in Wednesday's Cheltenham Foxhunters.

The multiple champion was denied an historic hat-trick when Its On The Line was chinned close home (beaten three-parts-of-a-length) in Friday's Cheltenham Foxhunters.

That combination went on to put the record straight when successful in Aintree equivalent three weeks later,

and rounded off a brilliant campaign when landing the Champion Hunters' Chase at the Punchestown Festival.

Good innings for Banner connections at Galway Festival

Kilmaley native Richard O'Brien - who trains in Ballingarry, County Limerick - had a good year and he got the 2024 Galway Festival off to the best possible start when fading the opening race with the impressive Feud.

A maiden hurdle winner in Listowel over the June Bank Holiday weekend, Feud rocked up to Ballybrit to take on some pretty smart rivals in what looked a competitive winners' race.

Racing in the silks of the Lough Hyne Racing Partnership, Feud proved more than equal to the task as he powered up the final hill to win by a comprehensive three-and-a-half lengths.

Regally-bred - he is a half-brother to this year's Irish 1,000 Guineas winner Fallen Angel, Feud hasn't been seen in public since, with O'Brien suggesting his charge is being geared up for a spring campaign.

Cratloe-owner trainer Michael McDonagh can look back on a successful year, while Norman Lee's Gort yard continues to thrive as does Brian McMahon and his neighbour John Staunton.

Miltown Malbay trainer Danny Howard had a brilliant year, with the

victory of his cheaply-purchased Sylkie at the Galway Festival a particular highlight. She proved that victory was no fluke when returning to Ballybrit for the September meeting where she again thrilled her owners - the Sylkie Syndicate - with a typically gutsy victory.

Racing in Ireland at the moment is dominated by three out four of the bigger yards. That's just the way it is, with the most influential owners gravitating towards those at the top of the tree.

Thankfully, there are still plenty of Banner racing people holding their own in the game, and there is much to look forward to in 2025.



Jeannot Lapin, with Ricky Doyle on board, clear the last on their way to winning the Beginners' Steeplechase at the Leopardstown Christmas Festival at Leopardstown Racecourse in Dublin.

Photograph by David Fitzgerald/Sportsfile

Clarecastle trainer basking in bumper Christmas victory

Michael Duggan and Derek Dorner

HORSES don't know what price they are in a well-worn cliche in racing circles. Cliche or not it certainly was the case in Leopardstown last week where Jeannot Lapin - trained by Clarecastle native Gearoid O'Loughlin - won the Beginners' Chase at the massive odds of 150/1.

Having his first start for Wexford-based O'Loughlin, Jeannot Lapin - who ran three times in point-to-points for Tipperary handler Sam Curling - proved a sensation as he lowered the colours of some better-fancied rivals. Ricky Doyle rode a good race on the shock winner, bringing the Dominic Jones-owned five-year-old through to take up the running between the final two fences.

A massive horse, Doyle's mount sailed out over the last and stayed on strongly to beat What's Up Darling by a comfortable two-and-a-half-lengths.

O'Loughlin - who is currently based in County Wexford having worked a lot of top yards before setting up on his own two years ago - felt after seeing the horse that he had the potential to be a really good two-mile chaser and after the success he has his sights set on bigger days ahead.

"Having a winner in Leopardstown over Christmas is special. I'm delighted for his owner who is a great

good. I bought him off Sam (Curling) at the Doncaster sales for three thousand and for Dominic who was looking for a horse and I liked the look of this fella. He was so big that I felt he had huge scope and I had a feeling he just didn't stay in the point to point races."

"With his pedigree through champion hurdle winner Epatante the two-mile chase would be perfect for him and when he did a piece of work in Tipperary a couple of weeks ago I thought to myself that was good enough to see him compete here. I felt he was entitled to be in a race like this. Willie and Gordon had strong horses and we'd be delighted with the way he powered home."

A summer's grass also stood to Jeannot Lapin according to winning trainer, who added, "He is a massive horse and was just a shell in the spring. His owner brought him home and fed him all over the summer and it made a huge difference."

Speaking of the owner, Gearoid the son of former Clare Senior Hurler Victor O'Loughlin, has had bigger race wins including a grade three hurdle than the 150 to one shot but readily admits he is hopeful the profile of a big-priced winner over the Christmas period will attract some more owners and clients to his growing stable.

"Having him off Sam (Curling) during the week about Jeannette Lapin the nephew of two-time Liam MacCarthy winner Ger 'Sparrow' O'Loughlin feels a crack at

character. We didn't really have anything mapped out for the horse, today was the plan and to buy one for three grand to run and win here is phenomenal."

"He is a giant, I don't think I have ever had anything to do with a racehorse as big as him. We have over twenty horses in training and of course we're always open to new clients and new horses. We've had notable wins like the Ulster National with Space Cadet but have no doubt about it, this is a tough extremely competitive business and a lot of really hard graft goes into it."

"Dominic and Paula have been brilliant to us and for them as I've said a Christmas winner especially like that will always be special and I was also thrilled for my partner Rebecca because she deserves huge credit."

"We are in this together and the time you have to put into training horses is well documented with early mornings and long days the norm. It's a 24/7 operation over the 365 days so it was that bit extra special to celebrate with her and definitely brightened the Christmas spirit as they say but as always it's immediately back to the grindstone."

Speaking exclusively to *The Clare Champion* during the week about Jeannette Lapin the nephew of two-time Liam MacCarthy winner Ger 'Sparrow' O'Loughlin feels a crack at

a big novice chase is next. "Look it was only a beginners' chase and although there were top stables competing he's still learning his trade. The manner he finished was impressive though and offers came in for him immediately after the race. It's always good when you buy cheap and work with the horse and then that horse delivers."

"Whatever happens with the ownership after all these offers I'd be hopeful to still have him in training. I think he could be a really exciting young horse and if he continues to improve there might be some really big days ahead which of course can only always be good for our stable. Buying a horse cheaply and ending up in grade one races is always what we would be aiming for. Living just outside Kilteely we are lucky to have a really good set up and good people that enjoy their work."

You have to enjoy it and have a love of horses otherwise you just couldn't put in all those hours and be anyway successful," he concluded.

DEREK O'CONNOR might have been out of luck aboard the unplaced Corbett's Cross in the Kempton's King George on St Stephen's Day, but he was swiftly back in the winner's enclosure

when 24 hours later guiding well-backed 4/5 favourite Bioluminescence in the featured McMahons Builders Providers Irish EBF Dawn Run Mares' Novice Chase.

Racing in the silks of top owner JP McManus, this daughter of Walk In The Park was representing the powerful yard of Meath trainer Gavin Mullins.

Second in the early stages, O'Connor allowed the market leader stride on with a circuit to race. Spring heeled at her fences, Bioluminescence was never in danger of defeat as the six-year-old, who was having her first start over the larger obstacles, stayed on powerfully to see off Willie Mullins' Paggane by three lengths.

The winner is a €60,000 2021 Derby Sale graduate and won a point-to-point as a four-year-old under O'Connor in Boulta back in November 2022.

Earmarked as a contender for the Mares' Chase in Cheltenham next March, Tubber's O'Connor was impressed with the performance, saying: "Her jumping is just unbelievable. She is a big mare but has a huge jump to match. I'd say a step up in trip and softer ground would suit her even more."

"I saw her school around Tipperary two weeks ago and her jumping was a joy to watch. I knew she was good to jump as I had ridden her before, but I watched her that day from the ground

and she was electric."

"She won a Grade 3 over hurdles and now a Grade 2 over fences. Fair play to Gavin (Cromwell), he has handled her exceptionally well. It's a big ask to start off over fences in a Grade 2, but she done it very well," he added.

Galopin excels in Savills romp

THERE were many excellent performances over the Festive period, but the standout display was undoubtedly that of Galopin Des Champs in Leopardstown's Savills Chase.

Beaten by Martin Brassil's now-side-lined Fastorlow in the John Durkan on his seasonal return, it was expected Willie Mullins' dual Gold Cup-winner was strip fitter for his post-Christmas assignment.

His regular rider Paul Townend took the bill by the horns as bounced the 5/6 favourite straight into the lead. Jumping for fun, Audrey Turley's right-year-old turned in a stunning performance. Turning into the home straight in this €175,000 three-miler Townend's mount had everything in behind the stretch.

Any doubts that Galopin Des Champs might be coming to the end of his tether on the run to the last were dispelled when he just changed gear and drew away to beat stable companion Fact To File by seven-and-a-half-lengths.

This was a monstrous effort by the winner. To jump out and make all against the best of the rest in such fashion just shows how good he is. There is every chance he's still improving, which must be scary for any future rivals, and the hat-trick in the Gold Cup is definitely doable.

Runner-up Fact To File ran a blinder too. A Bellharbour point-to-point winner for Pat Doyle as a four-year-old, his effort was full of promise. He was mixing it with the big boys and he's a horse with a huge future over fences.

If Mullins was thrilled with Galopin Des Champs, he will have been deflated following the disappointing effort of his State Man who never looked happy when only third to Gordon Elliott's talented mare Brighterdays ahead in Sunday's Grade 1 Neville Hotels Hurdle.

Sam Ewing was deputising for the injured Jack Kennedy aboard the daughter of Kapparde who surged clear from before two out to deny Closutton 66/1 shot Winter Fog by 30 lengths. An under-par State Man could only manage third, a further length-and-a-quarter away.

Brighterdays ahead has definitely put herself firmly into the Champion Hurdle picture, while it's back to the drawing board where State Man is concerned.

