

*A Collection of Writings*  
*by*  
*Learners of*  
*Core Skills Provision*

## Acknowledgements

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Clonroad Business Park,  
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Your comments and suggestions are very welcome.  
Please contact 065 6897646

Co-ordination team:

Karl Quinn, Pauline Murphy, Katie Lewis, Margot Walsh, Maire Dempsey, Mary Flanagan, Bernie O'Brien, Patricia Moloney, Collette O'Brien, Laura Barrett, Margreat Khalil, Kala Maloney, Pauline O'Mahony, Clare Sheahan, Amanda O'Connor, Laura Rowland, Sheila Daly Maher and Victoria Hook.

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## Foreword

Welcome to the 31<sup>st</sup> issue of *Simply Said*, the annual collection of writings by adult learners taking part in courses with Core Skills Provision in County Clare.

The writers of *Simply Said* attend classes in centres all around County Clare. Some attend group classes in reading, writing, spelling, maths, English language, computers, cookery, horticulture, craft, sewing, stained glass, history, heritage and woodwork. Others work on their own with a tutor to practice their reading and writing skills. Every writer carries out the same process of writing, editing, correcting, re-drafting and proofreading their work before their final piece is produced in this publication.

This edition has almost 150 articles contained within its pages. This year's writers were inspired by many things, such as languages, history, sport, objects and travel. The writers have shared their knowledge about life in Ireland, about crochet, gardening, woodwork and favourite places. We have stories about Brazil, London, Ghana, Salthill and Shanghai.

The image on the front cover of this year's *Simply Said* was chosen to commemorate 100 years of Votes for Women in Ireland in 2018. To mark that momentous occasion and mark International Women's Day, March 8, Colette O'Brien delivered a presentation in Clonroad campus to outline what led to women getting a vote. Following on from that, Nicola Barnes' sewing class were inspired to design and make a quilt to commemorate the event. Ennis Museum hosted the launch of the quilt on International Women's Day in 2019.

The images on the back cover are from 'Every object tells a story' - a course delivered in Mullagh and Miltown Malbay. Members of the public were invited to bring in meaningful objects that they own and that might have a connection to local, national or international history or events. The stories of the objects are within these pages.

Thank you to all the tutors, especially the volunteer tutors, who encourage learners to value the knowledge that they have and who support them on their learning journeys. Thanks and well done to those involved in the planning and publication of this year's book.

Finally, and most importantly, congratulations and thank you to all who have written in this year's publication. We hope you enjoy reading *Simply Said 2019*.

The novelist, Kazuo Ishiguro, wrote: "But in the end, stories are about one person saying to another: This is the way it feels to me. Can you understand what I'm saying? Does it also feel this way to you?"

The Core Skills Team

## Contents

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Page</b>
A trip to London	Breeda.....	1
My new life in Ireland	Agnieszka K .....	1
Arabic course	Aloma .....	2
Tiger	Susan.....	4
I like	Michael .....	4
The tunnel	Seamus.....	4
Crochet	Margaret .....	5
Liverpool	Stefan .....	5
I like	William .....	5
Positive box	John .....	6
From Mount Callan to Shanghai	Patrick.....	6
I like	Michael .....	7
Salthill, Galway	Algis.....	7
Lahinch, Co. Clare	Marian .....	7
Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare	Feri.....	8
Kilkenny	Karel.....	8
Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare	Jan .....	8
From boyband to manband	Colm, Mike and John .....	9
Gardening	Mike .....	10
John's story	John .....	11
Jimmy	Emma .....	11
Christmas	K.....	12
Families across the world	Colm .....	12
Nearly over the line	Colm .....	13
Your smile will change a lot	Dalal.....	14
Thank you my light	Fatima .....	14
My first taste of pizza	Mark.....	15

My friend, the bench	Mary.....	16
Poem in Arabic	Patrick.....	20
Oh beloved! (English translation)	Patrick.....	20
Sewing	Michelle.....	21
Sewing	Tina.....	21
Coming to Ireland	Freny .....	21
Weather	Ayse .....	22
Poem 1	Nabilah.....	23
Poem 2	Nabilah.....	24
The chicken	Adam.....	24
Quilt class	Tania .....	25
100 years of votes for women	Mabel .....	26
The quilt	A .....	26
The television	Susanne.....	27
Think about life	Camilla .....	28
I hope	Nadia.....	28
Education	Aliya .....	28
This is my story	Paul .....	29
Turning point	Kenneth.....	29
Vera	Frank .....	31
My son	H.B. ....	32
My feelings about Ireland	Ildiko.....	32
Easter	Genet .....	32
What makes me happy	Joanna .....	33
To my baby	F .....	33
History of Ghana	Sawiri .....	34
My passion for chemistry	Monica M.....	35
Walking in nature	Adil .....	36
What's going on around me	Catherine.....	36
Comfort food from childhood	Catherine.....	37

Memories	Mary.....	38
The day the Sí came to Spain	Catherine.....	38
The morning walk	Theresa .....	40
Hazel	Michelle.....	41
Courage	Mary.....	41
Equality	Mary.....	42
Clown World	John Paul and Martin .....	42
Zoe and Happy - the unicorns	Eabha and Kelly .....	43
The tooth fairy	Freya and Rosemary.....	44
Spider-man	Martin and Pat.....	46
The Robot Toy story	Rasheed and Awatif.....	47
The epic tale of Cuphead and Mugman	Stephen, Stephen, Shauna.....	48
My dog, Nala	Kayden and Veronica.....	50
The shark	Rihanna and Martin .....	51
Fortnite teddy bear story	Justin and Jaros .....	52
Meet us the Killaloe ITABE group	Anna, Desmond, Ross Paulanne, Shane and Síun .....	53
My story	Kwaku .....	54
About me	Zaina .....	54
My name is Amina	Amina .....	54
My story	Mayssa .....	54
About me	Mary.....	55
I'm Solange	Solange .....	55
From Syria to Ennistymon	Issa.....	55
My name is Iwona	Iwona.....	56
I'm from Syria	Ali.....	56
Things I like	Mitu .....	56
Likes and dislikes	Bianca .....	56
From Morocco to Ennis	Asmae .....	57
My name is Martha	Martha.....	57
My life in Ennistymon	Moharrab.....	57

From Hong Kong to Ennis	Shuk.....57
Music and soul (ceol agus anam)	Sabina .....58
Finding me!	Denise.....58
Cork trip	Helen .....59
My name is Shukri	Shukri.....59
My journey from Indian Ocean to Atlantic Ocean	Sadia.....59
Happiness is in little things	Carmen .....60
I am always happy	Maria.....60
Holy Sepulchre of Villa de Cura	Maria.....60
Independence Day in Brazil	Adriana .....61
The Masters 2019	John .....62
A poem taken from a book	Ann Marie .....62
My favourites	Alan.....64
Memories	Bernard.....65
Najwa's special pasta dish with chicken and mushrooms	Najwa .....65
My computer class	John .....66
My minestrone soup	Deborah.....67
Buying my new car	Senan.....67
Walking	Joe .....68
Cranberry bread	Brigid .....68
An account of William Shakespeare and some of his famous lines	Anne Marie .....69
Two for joy	Rita .....70
Winter solstice	Mandy .....70
A policeman, standing over a dead dog, takes off his cap and weeps	Kay .....71
The surprise	Donal .....72
Best friends	Josephine .....74



The hunger moon	Elaine .....	75
The mountain road	Angela.....	76
Snow falling on a river	Lily.....	77
My Norwegian cruise	Brendan.....	77
Somebody out there	Amy.....	78
Lahinch heatwave 2018	Sinead .....	79
Glenstal Abbey	Tony.....	80
Mikhail Baryshnikov	Ina .....	80
Orange Warsaw Festival	Monika.....	81
Ayrton Senna	Clélia.....	81
Songkran festival	Ta.....	82
A big change, a gigantic adventure	Ricardo .....	83
The story of two men from my family	Ali.....	85
My learning journey	Jane .....	85
My life	Lily.....	87
The last	Kathleen.....	88
Pendant watch	Mary.....	90
My blue rosary	Mary .....	91
Rosary	Mary .....	92
The candlesticks	Bridget .....	93
Purple Heart medal	Pat .....	95
My quilt (bedspread)	Toni.....	96
Sewing sampler	Toni.....	97
Butter moulds	Michael .....	98
Knitted cotton quilt	Mary .....	99
Patrick Pearse Ten Shilling Silver Commemorative Coin (1966)	Ann Marie .....	101

## **A trip to London**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 I went with my two sisters, Helen and Martina to London. We stayed in the Qbic Hotel, which was near the tube station. I went to Festive Family Carols at St. Martin in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square London. I also went ice-skating that night.

On Sunday I went to Mass in an old church called St. Etheldreda's Church. I went to *Rapunzel* in Hoxton Hall. They threw sweets out to all the children. They were dressed nice and sang lots of panto songs. It was so funny, my two sisters and I laughed going out.

We went to Spitalfields Market. It is a big market. We bought our sister, Carmel, a jumper in her favourite colour, wine. On Monday we went to Liberty Shop to get our mother a tapestry. A few doors up, was Hamley's Toy Shop. My sister, Martina, bought me an 'I Love Hamley's' teddy bear at the shop.

We went back home early Monday evening. I would like to go back and see more of London.

*By Breeda*

## **My new life in Ireland**

I am from Poland. I came to Ireland because I wanted a change in my life. Life in Poland was very difficult for me. I worked hard and long hours but my wage was not enough to do things I would like to do. I was alone with my two children. We lived in a big house that was in a very poor condition. At the time I met my husband, he was working in Ireland. Then, I made a decision to move to Ireland too. I started my new life. I didn't have to work for the first few months after I came to Ireland. Later, I got a job in a hotel as a kitchen assistant. I worked hard but I was happy enough with my job. Now, I have a new challenge - learning English, which I need for my new job in a shop. I know that if I speak English fluently, it will open up a whole new better future for

me and my family. I am attending an evening English course in Core Skills in Ennis.

*By Agnieszka K*

## **Arabic course**

If you had told me five years ago that I would be studying Arabic, I would have said, 'No way! Why would I want to do that?' Yet, here I am, at the end of my second Arabic course. You might wonder what made me change my mind. Well, here are the reasons. First, Katie, the coordinator of the adult education courses, here in Ennistymon, asked me if I would be interested in an Arabic language course as they would be starting one soon. I replied I would think about it. I am always interested in learning a new skill. However, the most attractive aspect was that this would be a free course. I would not have to pay! I am retired, living on a pension, so this was a major drawing card. The second reason was that it was a challenge.

I am 71 years old. I wanted to prove to myself that I am still capable of learning and retaining knowledge. If I studied Arabic, which to me is a difficult language, it would give me a sense of fulfilment. It would prove that 'even an old dog can learn new tricks'. The third reason was that I have a nephew in the U.S. Embassy in Washington, D.C. He was stationed in Lebanon and had to learn Arabic. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if I could surprise him by talking Arabic?'

As I mentioned before, I am at the end of my Arabic course. It gives me great satisfaction to know that I have come this far. From knowing nothing about the language, I now know the alphabet, can read and write to a certain extent, make sentences, and even count in Arabic.

It has been a steep learning curve! I have struggled with it because it was difficult to learn a totally new script and write from right to left, rather than going from left to right, which I have been used to doing all my life. At times, I was so frustrated, I wanted to give up, walk away from it all. After all, I didn't need Arabic, so

why put myself under pressure? However, I am not the kind of person that gives up easily. If I take something on, I like to see it to the end. So, I persevered and I am glad I did so. Here I am today with a new language added to my set of skills. I have also broadened my horizons by learning about a new country, its culture and its people.

All this learning I have acquired would not have been possible without our tutor, Margreat. She is a great teacher - calm, patient, and ready to explain a subject more than once.

We are a small group, about 9 of us, and we get along well. We are relaxed in class and this is conducive to learning. We are comfortable with Margreat because we know that we can ask her any questions without feeling embarrassed or appearing stupid. She makes sure that each of us understands what we are learning. If we don't get it the first time, she will go over it again and again till we do. That is the mark of a good teacher! Sometimes, she tells us incidents from her own life to illustrate a point. For example, when we were first learning the alphabet, she explained that her mother would tell her to imagine that the third letter, 'teh,' was like a plate with food on it and it stuck in her head. We also have fun in class. Learning would be very dull if it was all serious with no sense of humour. Someone's misinterpretation of a word or sentence could send us into gales of laughter.

I would like to thank Core Skills for making it possible for me to enrich my life by acquiring new learning. They have helped many others like me, mature students who have learned new skills, and gone back to their communities feeling confident and enriched, students who can stand tall and know their self-worth. I have done different courses through CABES, the last one being stained glass. I loved this craft. Last month, we were invited to a reception in the Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis at which we were presented with our certificates. That was a proud moment indeed, holding that piece of paper and knowing that I had achieved what I had set out to do.

*By Aloma*

## **Tiger**

Black stripes and orange fur,  
tiger cubs around her.

Big claws, big paws,  
hear her purr.

*By Susan*

## **I like ...**

I like  
to watch *Dancing with the Stars*,  
walk the dog on the roads, not too far,  
feed silage to the cows,  
swim in the pool - but how

I like to sleep on Saturdays!

*By Michael*

## **The tunnel**

We are going to dig in the tunnel on Saturday. We are getting ready for planting. We will plant tomatoes, cabbage and onions. We will plant the cabbage and onions outside and we will plant the tomatoes inside.

We will plant the onions in beds. You dig a small hole in the compost and put in the onion. We will plant the cabbage seeds in beds too. You don't have to cover the onions or water them. The rain waters them. You have to cover the cabbage seeds. We grow tomatoes in the tunnel. They get heat in the tunnel and we put a small heater in there as well.

Tomatoes love heat. Slugs love cabbage!

*By Seamus*

## **Crochet**

I have started a crochet class. I have yellow, pink and purple wool. You use one needle for crochet and it has a hook at the end of it. I go to an ICA crochet class every week.

I have a crochet pattern. I am working on a circle. When I am finished it, I will put it on my table to decorate it.

*By Margaret*

## **Liverpool**

I went to Liverpool to see a match. There were stands, benches and lots of people in the stadium. Fans were singing and cheering.

Liverpool Football Club started in 1892. Their club crest has a bird and fire on it. Jürgen Klopp is the manager of the Liverpool team. I play football in midfield.

Roy Keane was a good footballer. He was my favourite player, even though he didn't play for Liverpool.

*By Stefan*

## **I like ...**

I like woodwork,  
cutting and sanding the wood.

I like walking,  
meeting people and stopping to smile and say hello.

I like making friends,  
and I like home.

*By William*

## **Positive box**

A positive box can be a timber box or a cardboard box, with a lid and a small letterbox opening. It can be painted and decorated. The box is then filled with positive thoughts and funny jokes. These are some of the thoughts that make me happy!

*Swimming in the pool makes me feel fresh.*

*I love the cinema.*

*Winning money!*

*Say, 'Hello,' to make someone happy.*

*We're all different.*

Positive thoughts can change you a little bit.

*By John*

## **From Mount Callan to Shanghai**

I like turf cutting. We do it in the summer time. We foot the turf, stack it, and turn it to dry it. We bring it home in a trailer and we store it in the cabin. We have turf fires in the winter. The bog is in Mount Callan.

I went from Mount Callan to Shanghai, China, to play football in the Special Olympics in 2007. It was very warm there. The city was busy and people worked late. I didn't see any bogs in Shanghai.

*By Patrick*

## **I like ...**

I like walking the dog for my friend. He's a big dog called Sam. He's happy when he sees me. I bring him to a park. I stay out for an hour. He loves to sniff the grass.

I like to go to horse riding every week. There is a dog there called Ted. He takes my shoes, but he leaves them back when I tell him. I ride through fields and over hills. My horse's name is Schillaci.

*By Michael*

## **Salthill, Galway**

My favourite place is Salthill in Galway. There is a lovely beach and prom there. The prom is 3 km long. There are fishing boats on the sea. Galway city is nice. In the summer time, it is busy. In winter time, it is a bit quieter. There are buskers on the street singing and playing music. There are buskers in Lithuania as well. That is where I am from. They play accordions, fiddles, guitars and other traditional instruments. I like Galway because of its streets and its music.

*By Algis*

## **Lahinch, Co. Clare**

My favourite place is Lahinch. There are good restaurants in Lahinch. Surfing, kayaking, golfing and swimming are very popular there. The Irish Open Golf Tournament is on in Lahinch in July 2019. The village will be very busy.

Trucks are bringing boulders to the beach to stop storm damage. When it is stormy, it is windy and it rains a lot in Lahinch. There are floods on the prom and there are very big waves.

*By Marian*



## **Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare**

My favourite place is Ballyvaughan. There is a famous dolmen there. It is nearly 6,000 years old. Dolmens are old burial places.

I like the old cottage houses in Ballyvaughan. Some of them have thatched roofs. There is a lovely harbour for boats. There are boats on the harbour and people go fishing. It is a peaceful place with mountains across from the harbour and sunshine in the summer time.

*By Ferí*

## **Kilkenny**

My favourite place is Kilkenny. There is a castle there that was built in 1195. There are three old churches there that are very nice. There are lots of shops, hotels and restaurants. In summer time, lots of tourists visit Kilkenny. Kilkenny is famous for hurling.

*By Karel*

## **Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare**

My favourite place is the Cliffs of Moher. The word 'Moher' comes from an Irish word that means 'ruin'. The cliffs are 300 million years old. In summer time, it is warm at the cliffs. The sea is calm.

*By Jan*

## **From boyband to manband**

A *Westlife* tribute band called *Lifetime* sings 'Hello my love'

'Hello my love'

No one knows 'bout the things that I've been through with you  
There were times I'd drive you nearly mental  
But when you're mad, you're still beautiful  
And I know that I'm punching way above  
So lucky that we fell in love  
Sometimes I wonder am I enough?  
'Cause you could have someone without a belly or a temper  
Perfect teeth, hair growing where it's meant to  
You know my lips are all I can hold against you  
This is all that I'll ever need, you and I

Hello, my love  
I've been searching for someone like you  
For most my life  
Happiness ain't a thing I'm used to  
You could have fallen hard for anyone  
Plenty of fish in the sea, hey now  
For all of time, now I know  
It's just my angel and me

No one knows 'bout all the good things you do  
When people take advantage of you  
Your heart is pure and so beautiful  
And I know that it's just the way you are  
Father's eyes, but mother's daughter  
And you tell me that you don't give enough

Songwriters: Steve McCutcheon/Edward Sheeran  
'Hello My Love' lyrics ©Universal Music Publishing Group

*By Colm, Mike and John (Lifetime)*

## Gardening

I was doing a reading and writing class with a one-to-one tutor in the Adult Education Centre, when I heard about a horticulture garden class that was coming up.

My grandfather was a head gardener in a boarding school back in the 1960s. They used to grow all their own fruit and vegetables for the school to eat. I always had an interest in gardening and have worked with some landscape gardeners over the years, so I signed up to do the horticulture class.

Tuesday morning was the first class at 9:30 and there were twelve of us in the class. The teacher did a skills demonstration in the class on how to take a hardwood cutting of a blackcurrant plant. Then we went to the garden and polytunnel and each of us took a cutting of a blackcurrant plant to pot up to grow.

We learned how to grow different things each week in class. We learned how to grow plants from seeds, how to sow seeds indoors and outdoors for vegetables and flowers, and how to plant pots and window boxes.

As the weeks went by, it was great to see the vegetable plants growing in the garden. We had to keep the vegetable garden free of weeds with some light digging.

In the polytunnel we had strawberries, tomatoes and peppers growing. When the strawberries and tomatoes got ripe, I just had to pick some of them to taste. There is nothing like eating your own fruit and vegetables that you helped to grow.

It is nice working outside in the garden with Mother Nature all around you listening to the birds singing. It is good for the body and soul.

I thanked the horticulture teacher for making the course so enjoyable to do, and I also thanked my reading and writing tutor for all her help over the year.

*By Mike*

## **John's story**

I live in Quilty. I went on a trip to Killarney with Mary and Michael. We went to Murphy's pub for a nice meal. We also saw the horses and jaunting cars. There were lots of mountains, streams and a waterfall to be seen. We went to see Dr. Crokes playing Gaelic football.

I also went on a trip to Tralee with Josephine and we bought clothes there. We had a meal in a restaurant. During the month of September, I went to Salthill in Galway with Adrian and Seán. We went to the amusements there and had a meal. I also went to Clarenbridge in Galway on a day trip with my sister, visiting our cousins in the countryside.

I enjoy going on trips and I am looking forward to going to Westport in September for two days.

*By John*

## **Jimmy**

My story is all about my golden retriever dog called Jimmy. I mind him to the last.

Jimmy loves his food and loves to go for his walk every day. Golden retrievers love swimming but our one doesn't. I always make sure he has a nice warm bed to go into every night. He can be a very bad dog. Sometimes, he doesn't want to go into his nice warm bed.

My brothers got Jimmy for my eighteenth birthday. He is ten years old now. He is a good looking dog and even better looking since he got his new hair cut last Wednesday.

Jimmy is loved by all the neighbours around here. He means everything to me.

*By Emma*

## **Christmas**

Christmas is a lovely time of the year. I have holidays from work and look forward to spending time with my wife and kids. Santa comes to the house bringing excitement. I also get to catch up with friends and family.

The one thing that annoys me about Christmas is that it seems to be advertised earlier and earlier every year. Straight after Hallowe'en, everything on TV is about Christmas. I also feel people can get carried away spending money on things they don't need for Christmas. Everyone feels you have to have your trolley overloaded with food. It's as if there's a war coming and the shops will never re-open. A lot of this food ends up in the waste. Also, I find that people give gifts to their children, like dogs and other pets, without much thought and end up regretting it. Their poor pets often end up being abandoned in the New Year. So, I think people should think more in the lead up to Christmas. It should be about spending time with your loved ones.

*By K*

## **Families across the world**

My brother and sister-in-law can't get home because of the government for at least another year. When an emigrant comes home to Ireland, they are prevented from buying a house for the first six months as banks won't discuss a mortgage until you are working here for six months. Christmas 2020 is when I expect them home. Kieran and Marie have three children: 'The Christmas Girls',

Ella and Hannah; and 'The Little Man', Conor. Conor looks like the boy out of the *Home Alone* movies, which he watches.

'The Three Amigos' - Micheál Martin, Mary Lou McDonald and Leo Varadkar - sort this out and get our long lost Irish families back home. I want to have them here. It's hard seeing them on Skype or FaceTime on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. I would rather talk to them over the phone and not see them. At least this way, I can imagine that they are over the road. It's hard to take. Kieran, Marie, Ella, Hannah and Conor would love to be back in Ireland, in County Clare. I'd love to be more hands-on as a godfather and uncle. As grandparents, my parents wish the same. Hopefully, all of us will be back in the same country some day.

*By Colm*

## **Nearly over the line**

There is a big job to do in 2019. We last won the All Ireland in 2013. Before that was '95 and '97. I was just a boy. I am a man now and I am hoping for a new golden era. If Gerry O'Connor and Donal Maloney, the current joint Clare managers, can pull it off this year they will be up there with Ger Loughnane and Davy Fitzgerald. Davy is currently the Sixmilebridge head coach and, who knows, next year he might be the manager. It's 'Do or Die' for the Clare management this year as the championship is coming around very fast. I think Anthony Daly ('Dalo') will be the Clare manager in 2020.

A Tipperary friend sent me a text message one time: 'There's only one Eoin Kelly, not in Waterford boy, but in Tipperary!' I had a think about this and, in my mind, the only Kelly I know is Tony Kelly who wears the saffron and blue, so I replied, 'Man, I only know one Kelly – Tony Kelly here in Clare!'

Clare and where I'm from, Sixmilebridge, are called 'hurling country'. We are never out of the saffron and blue with club and county. My wish for an early Christmas present is that my club will

win the county final and my county will win the All Ireland. I have a gut feeling that both will get over the line.

*By Colm*

### **Your smile will change a lot**

One of the most beautiful things you can give to others is happiness.

The key to happiness is a smile. Your smile will change a lot, and it will not cost you anything. Just smile at the face of a sad person. He will forget his grief, as he smiles at you.

A beautiful smile is the shortest way to the hearts of others. It gives them happiness and broadcasts hope and optimism.

*By Dalal*

### **Thank you my light**

How hard it is to be in the darkness of a cloudy night without light. You will feel lonely and you will be afraid because you can't see and know what is happening around you. You really need the light to overcome that darkness in the night, but don't give up because the sun will shine and everything will become clear.

I could never overcome that darkness without my language teachers. I am really grateful to every teacher who had and still has a role in my English learning.

Thank you teachers.

*By Fatima*

## **My first taste of pizza**

The karate competition had ended. The fighting had stopped. It didn't take long for the arena to become lifeless. Only one thing left for us to do: PIZZA.

Within a flash, a smell of cooked bread and mozzarella cheese filled the small restaurant we found ourselves standing in. The look of starved faces and faces of delight as they were tucking in was making me hungry. Waiters were whizzing around the tables effortlessly, seating large groups of people, taking orders and pouring drinks as if they had all the time in the world. We were seated at a slightly elevated table, letting us see all the comings and goings. The table next to us got their order. It was the size of the table that they sat around, not much room left for drinks. The base looked half an inch thick and the cheese on top was also just as high, waiting to flow over. The waiter cut the pizza into triangles, but no sooner had he finished than the cheese slowly made its way into the gaps covering the sliced marks.

The waiter appeared, towering above us with a stern but polite demeanour, wielding his little notepad. 'Three cold beers, please, and the same as what they have on the table next to us.' The waiter had gone just as quickly as he had appeared. Our drinks arrived. My mouth was dry. I took a long sip. It was cold and refreshing and reached every part of my body. My thirst was now quenched but my appetite was still to be satisfied as I watched the table next to me out of the corner of my eye.

A dark shadow appeared above the table. Finally, the moment had arrived. The pizza, which seemed to have been ordered an eternity ago, was making its way onto the table. Suddenly, the refreshing drinks we had meant nothing, as we pushed them to one side. I looked down on the pizza as the warmth rose up. I couldn't see the bread around the edges; it was covered with golden light brown cheese dripping over the edge onto the biggest plate that ever existed. The waiter sliced the pizza and, as before on the other table, the cheese made its way into the gaps like lava running down a volcano. The waiter held a large pepper pot, made of wood, in both hands; it was nearly as tall as he was. He gave us a glaring stare; time seemed to stand still whilst the



bustling carried on in the background. We gave him the nod to add whatever contents this weapon concealed. He twisted the large cap on the top; it gave a grinding noise as a sprinkle of black dots appeared on the soft melted cheese. They seemed to rest on the top; anything heavier would surely sink and drown into the cheese, never to be seen again. Anyway, what harm can one more ingredient do?

The moment had arrived. I slid one hand under the edge of the pizza and pulled it towards me. The cheese was slowly stretching. Was there no end to it? As I pulled further, I needed the use of my other hand to stop the slice from bending downward, giving permission to the cheese top layer to slowly work its way off the other layers. At this point, I felt I had enough support under the pizza to finally raise it up into the air. As I was lifting the slice of pizza, cheese was making its way off the tip of the slice. I had to raise it even higher, almost above my head, whilst leaning back. I opened my mouth as large as I possibly could, my eyes focused on the dripping cheese. It made its way into my mouth as my teeth melted into the soft warm cheese. Finally, my first taste of pizza.

*By Mark*

## **My friend, the bench**

John and myself were all set for our trip to Kazakhstan. I would be working for five days while he found the best sights to visit in the evenings. Having successfully managed to navigate Ataturk airport with several last minute gate changes we landed in Almaty at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>, looking forward to a rest and one day together to explore before I started work on Monday. Tired but glad to have arrived, we presented ourselves at the passport control booth. Little did we realize the adventure on which we were about to embark.

The passport official took my passport and completed a white entry form and went eventually to the visa page. There was much looking and checking and then she directed me to accompany

her to another booth. Here, her colleague joined in the discussion on the visa, whilst I waited with bated breath to hear what the problem was. More officials in large plate-like hats appeared and an animated discussion ensued – I was certainly causing a stir. Eventually, I was informed that my visa was dated from the 7<sup>th</sup> and not the 6<sup>th</sup>! I produced a letter and documents stating ‘5 working days from the 7<sup>th</sup> and two traveling days’ – no joy, the visa was valid for a month but only from the 7<sup>th</sup>. I asked what my options were, thinking naively that this was a simple misunderstanding; one option was to be deported – rather drastic I thought, so what are the others? Wait until midnight, (15.5 hours!), or approach the consul when he arrived for work. At this stage, John had gone through, not realising that there was a problem, and he was waiting to collect the cases.

Off to a rather uncomfortable metal bench in a small square holding area bordered by the landing bay on one side and the line of passport control booths on the other – not too enticing, no creature comforts here but, hopefully, the stay will be short. John arrived back to the booth to see what the problem was and asked if he could come back through and wait with me. Not possible; he could not come back through passport control as he did not have a re-entry visa – we resorted to shouting to each other across a four foot barrier.

Back I go to my bench to wait for the consul to arrive for work and, if reason prevails, a resolution to my problem. I booted up the computer – could do a little work while I wait, at least take my mind off the clock. An hour passes before there is some activity behind the consular screen. I approach tentatively, documentation in hand, and present myself. ‘Visa says 7<sup>th</sup>. You have to wait,’ and the curtains close! Fourteen and a half hours with only the bench for company!

Doors opening to herald the arrival of another flight: they are somewhat infrequent! This one brings my work colleague from the UK who kindly donates two bananas and a pear he acquired on his business class flight. Agreed to delay the start time Monday morning and off he went to explore the delights of Almaty. Decided to share the spoils with John, so headed for the barrier

and signalled to him where he dozed on his bench in the baggage hall. I caber-tossed the bananas and had a short chat before a 'hat' agreed to accompany me to the arrivals hall to buy a couple of cups of coffee – humanity in action. Gave a cup to John and once more back to my bench, which was not in a very communicative mood. Maybe try to sleep to pass another couple of hours but Bench isn't too welcoming to this idea; back to the book.

Action amongst the 'hats' indicated shift changeover and a short diversion from my conversations with the bench. Very regimental with all the male passport controllers in formal uniform standing to attention; ladies have no hats but also stand to attention. Short pep talk and into their booths – excitement; another flight must be arriving to add a diversion. I wonder where this one came from; obviously, from the bags coming through the population of Almaty shop, outside the country. A very colourful Cossack, complete with high grey curled fur hat and braided jacket joins the queue, adding much lacking colour to the surroundings. Silence again. Just you and me Bench!

A couple of hours later lunch arrives courtesy of the hospital I will be working at tomorrow; share with John across the barrier assisted by one of the friendlier 'hats'. Back to Bench, 'Have you missed me?' No reply from my silent companion.

Many hours later at 10:00 pm I approached the barrier for another chat, little realising it would be my last of the night. A very official 'hat' tells me I am not allowed to stand on the blue line and to return immediately to my bench, at which point John is ejected from the baggage hall. Well, Bench, here we are again, just the two of us. Book is finished. Computer is just about out of battery; maybe a trip to the toilet to break the boredom - depressing thought that.

Midnight arrives – at least that is what I think - and I approach the barrier hoping there is a 'hat' around as it has been silent and somewhat empty since my last banishment. Relief as he appears from a booth; I am not alone. I ask him very nicely if I may now please proceed through passport control. Oh dear, he holds up

his mobile phone and in large numbers it reads 23.59. I must remain where I am it seems. Together we count down the last minute and I am finally allowed to enter Kazakhstan.

A week later and work completed, I am back at the airport and, once more, passport control – they are hardly going to keep me here! More problems, much looking and scanning of the passport and looking at me. The queue is getting longer and longer and there is no movement from this 'hat'. After what seems like hours, I am finally signalled through and wait just at the end of the booth for John to join me.

Oh! Another 'hat' coming and a finger holding the white form emerging from the passport control booth! Sorry John, hope you make it alright but I am heading fast for security and freedom!!

*By Mary*

يا محبوبه  
يا غزالة يا زهرة نادرة في الصحراء  
نبض قلبك كإيقاع الأرض  
صوتك كالريح التي تهمس لي  
عندما أحلم بأجلي  
أفكر في حبك إلى الأبد

بقلم / باتريك

*Poem in Arabic with translation in English, both by Patrick*

### **Oh belovèd!**

Gazelle!

Oh rare flower of the desert!  
Your heart beat the pulse of the Earth  
Your voice the whispering wind  
Calling to me  
When I dream of the End  
I think of your love  
Everlasting

*By Patrick*

## **Sewing**

Sewing bridges the gaps, crosses the divides and makes us believe in ourselves. Our thoughts and inspirations can become a reality, and with this thought in mind the possibilities are endless.

*By Michelle*

## **Sewing**

My name is Tina. I am attending a sewing class with Nicola. I had not done any sewing since I had been in secondary school, which was a long time ago. I have discovered that I love sewing. I love making things for myself and my home. I have really enjoyed the classes, and Nicola could not have been more helpful. She has truly inspired me to keep it up. I am sorry that the classes are ending soon, but glad I'm leaving with a new hobby and new friends.

*By Tina*

## **Coming to Ireland**

In 2009 I met my husband who is from Ireland. We married in 2011 and often spoke of him returning to Ireland some day.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2018 my kids and I moved to Ireland to be with my husband. At first everything was strange for me, and my English was not very good.

We stayed with my husband's parents in the beginning, while I sorted out my residency, and also while trying to get the children prepared for school.

In September we moved into our own house. Since then I have enjoyed more freedom and I passed my driver theory test. I am

currently taking driving lessons with a view to taking my driving test later this year.

When I first came to Ireland, it was suggested to me to start taking English classes. I was nervous about this, but since I started the class my confidence has grown and I am now well able to converse with Irish people.

Thank you to Ingrid for teaching me better English and for giving me the confidence to open up to those that surround me.

*By Freny*

## **Weather**

When I came to Ireland in summer days, the sun was shining everywhere. People were very kind and they always had smiles on their faces and I said, 'Oh my God! Such a nice country,' but I didn't know anything about this country. I didn't know what people liked or what they got angry about or what they believed in. I didn't know anything.

Time went by really fast. I made friends and I understood people. During this time, I also understood Ireland's weather. It was sunny when I left home, an hour later it was raining, and then it was sunny again. When I got home it was snowing. Then I thought about the weather. I saw 4 seasons in a day.

In my country, 'rain' means beauty, love and peace because it is a warm country. People are warm, just like my country. I thought again. The weather is cold and rainy but how are these people happy? I found the answer: the country's sun, its smiling and kind people.

*By Ayse*

*Nabilah wrote the following two poems in Arabic but then translated them into English. She wrote them a little while ago and has been writing poetry for many years. They do not have titles.*

## **Poem 1**

There's a Love story left among Sea Waves  
It narrates pain, parting and groan  
It narrates worries and sorrows of people who threw all their  
burden on the 'shoulders' of the Sea  
Over there ... the place where my roots emerged ... where I grew  
up ... in its bosom  
I left my soul there ... and migrated very far away  
Dreaming of a better future ... a future with good omens  
So we have to abandon our beautiful things  
That clear sky ... shining by sunlight ... gave me rest and ease  
It accompanied me whenever I walked ... It amused my loneliness  
all the way  
How much I missed a bright morning ... on ruins ... that left a lot in  
myself  
And that friend ... whom I met from time to time  
So here was the cache of memories ... I poured whatever comes  
to my mind  
How much I miss a road ... my feet used to trample on it  
So there was my wounded homeland which I hope to recover  
again

*By Nabilah*



## Poem 2

I feel that bitterness goes within my arteries  
It muddles the clarity of my thought and reminds me of all the  
groan  
I sit in my room which is devoid of warmth  
My mind strays among its corners ... I'm absentminded...What  
happened to my dear homeland?!!!  
I ask myself ... how the situation brought me to alienation and  
wailing!!!  
I became body without soul ...  
My body's in a very far place  
I left my broken soul there ... in my wounded homeland  
So the scenery of ruins and destruction don't leave my  
imagination forever  
I am here ... very far ... dreaming of a healthy homeland again  
And I cry my family, my friends and a lover ... God Almighty took  
him from me after so great love  
Oh ... Where's that sea which was my best friend?!!!  
Whenever I was annoyed, I ran so quickly to narrate my great  
agony to it ...  
And where's that tomb which I left behind me?!!!  
I miss its visit all the while ...  
Oh my deep thoughts are so many ...  
They follow me even to my bed  
My thoughts never comfort me ... nor my body stops wailing

*By Nabilah*

## The chicken

Well, the thing about my life – when I was a child I was born in a  
very small village and I remember I had some very good friends.  
One day our parents left us at home and they went to the market.  
Me and my friends stayed at home and we were scared.

We decided to go out and look around. We found a hen on the  
road and one of my friends caught it, broke the hen's neck and  
then someone we knew came along. They said, 'What

happened?' and we said, 'Nothing.' The person left and we went back to the place where the hen had his neck broken and we took that hen. We took it home and we made a barbeque; then ate it.

In the evening our parents came home and they were asking me, 'Where did you get this hen?' and I said to them, 'My friend got it.' 'Where?' they said and then I said that he got this hen from his house. Then they said, 'OK.'

In the morning my mum went to my friend's house and got information and came back home. My mum said to me, 'So you lying to me, yeah?' I said, 'No way. How am I lying to you mum?' She said, 'If you don't stop lying, we will go to your friend's house.' We went there ...

*By Adam*

## **Quilt class**

I am delighted to be in Nicola's quilt class, making this lovely piece of art, *100 years of Votes for Women* in Ireland, which will be displayed at Ennis museum. When we started I didn't have any idea what it would look like at the end. First, we decided what exactly to put on the quilt; then we did lots of measuring, choosing fabrics, and dying fabrics in 2 main colours – green and purple. I was working on the ballot box and flying geese. I cut the pieces and sewed them to use for a border.

At the end of every class we have seen that our quilt was getting better and better. Some of the girls made embroidery; the Irish flag was made with crochet; also we made smocking, which we've seen in the museum on the last trip there. We made binding to finish the quilt and put tabs to hang it.

I am looking forward to seeing it in the museum.

*By Tania*

## **100 years of votes for women**

My name is Mabel, talking about *100 years of Votes for Women*. It's been 100 years since women won the right to vote in Ireland but that didn't solve gender injustice. Ireland was quick to elect a woman member of parliament but it's been slow going thereafter.

Not everyone won the vote in 1918, and still not everyone is living their best.

Saudi Arabia granted women the vote in 2015 but they were only given permission to take part in municipal elections. Although it marked significant progress for Saudi women, a system of male guardianship makes it difficult in practice for women to vote.

*By Mabel*

## **The quilt**

We were a sewing group at the Adult Education Centre and had been working together on various items for two years. As our course finished, we decided to do a group project and as it was the centenary of the suffragettes, we thought to mark this important occasion for women. We came up with the idea for a quilt showing how women lived their lives, the clothes they wore, and the embroidery stitches they used. We chose to use green and purple, the colours that suffragettes wore.

The six women in this group who came together have very diverse backgrounds; two from Asia, two from Africa, two Europeans and our tutor is Welsh! So there was a good mix of ideas and cultures. We met for the class one day a week for three hours. I loved that we would break for a cup of tea and would go up to the canteen and, each week, we would take turns to bring in food from our different countries. This was a real treat for us all and it made for great conversations.

We are delighted our quilt is on display in the Ennis museum. We are also thrilled our quilt is the book cover of the *Simply Said 2019*. It made all our hard work worthwhile.

*By A*

## **The television**

I know that all old people and young people have their TVs on all day from morning to late evening. I want to tell everyone what I watch on TV. I only have 8 channels. There are a lot of long shows and good shows. I like *Tipping Point* on TV3. It's on from 4-6 during the week on E3 but, at the weekend, it's on at different times. From Monday to Friday on RTÉ 1, I watch the *Six One News* and weather, sometimes *Nationwide*, *EastEnders*, *Fair City*, *The Zoo* and some cooking shows – Rory O'Connell, Nevin McGuire and Donal Skehan.

On RTÉ 2, I watch programmes about wildlife, sport and a lot of other good shows. I also like watching the Galway races when they're on RTÉ 1 or 2. I like the RDS horseshow, the show jumping and all the other races like Cheltenham, Ascot races and Newmarket races, and also the steeplechase races.

*The Cube* is also a good show. I enjoy watching *At Your Service*, and *Little House on the Prairie*, which are very good shows. They are on TG4 and RTÉ 1. *The Weakest Link* is also a good show. *Winning Streak* and *Catchphrase*, *Big Star's Little Star*, and *The Chase* are very good shows.

My favourite shows are *Little House on the Prairie*, *At Your Service*, *Winning Streak* and *The National Lottery*.

I'm from Germany and watching Irish TV has helped me improve my English spelling, writing and speaking. I would recommend watching Irish or English TV programmes, but not movies, to help you learn and improve your English.

*By Susanne*

## **Think about life ...**

Hello everyone! My name is Camilla. I'm 37 years old. I'm married and I've one son; his name is Cauã. We are from Brazil. I came to Ireland in December 2018. I like living here but I don't like the rainy days. I started to learn English. I have a sweet teacher and friendly friends.

I hope we have a good life here. I would like to see my son grow up in a good environment. I think we need to enjoy life wherever we are.

*By Camilla*

## **I hope**

Our family moved to Ireland and I hope we changed the destiny of our children.

*By Nadia*

## **Education**

I believe that education is important for personal and nations' growth. It gives knowledge on social problems like crime, corruption, poverty, poor health, equality and career growth. If we are all educated we can improve our self-development, which in turn will improve our country's development, socially and economically. That's why I like Ireland, because Ireland has a very good environment for education.

*By Aliya*

## **This is my story**

For me, the love of golf is really something. As a golfer with a disability, golf has opened many doors.

I have played the game for four years now. Through it I have made a great many friends, some have become my team mates and some have become my coaches. I have learned a lot from them and developed my golfing skills.

In July 2015, nine golfers from four corners of Ireland, including me, took part in the Special Olympics in Los Angeles. It was a dream come true for my family and friends and especially for me. I competed with my team mates and we won bronze. I felt so honoured representing my country and my club, Ennis Golf Club.

When I came home, Ennis Golf Club had a special celebration for me in recognition of my achievement.

I want to thank my team mates, family, coaches and friends for helping me make this dream become a reality.

*By Paul*

## **Turning point**

My name is Kenneth. I come from Limerick. I lived in St. Mary's Park. It is known as the Island Field. I lived there for most of my life with my grandparents. When my sister passed away, I went back living with my mommy. We couldn't live there any more over what happened with my sister, so we moved from the Island Field to O'Malley Park, known as Southill. When we moved there, it was grand. We thought it was a nice place so we started to settle down. I started going to a new school and started meeting new friends and started to enjoy myself. I got my horses and dogs moved up there. It started to look good for me. I was beginning to get over what happened with my sister.

Then, my grandfather called up to me and Mommy and baby Danny. He told me I could start working with him on the following

day, as I was old enough to work. I started to see a lot of crime and drugs and people killing other people over drug bills. I told the grandfather what was going on up in Southill. He told me then to go home to pack my bags, and move down to my grandparents'. I moved back down to St. Mary's Park. I started to look up to my grandfather because I didn't know who my father was, so I started calling my grandparents Mama and Dada.

I was up in Southill every day with my mother. I went out with my friends and they asked me did I want to steal a car? I said no because my grandfather would kill me. They started calling me names so I went home that night to my grandfather. He told me I did the right thing by not going with them. The next day came and I was up in my mother's house again. I went out to the boys. They were smoking cigarettes and they asked me did I want one. I said no and they said things to me, so I turned around and said, 'Give me one,' and I started smoking it. I thought I was cool, smoking with the boys. We went up to Tesco. They said, 'We are robbing a car,' and they asked me to help. I wouldn't. They went into town and robbed a car and went up to Southill and burned it out. I went home that night. My grandfather asked me what did I get up to, so I told him. My grandfather was very cross with me. He went up to Southill the next day to see my friends but when we got there, we saw my friend getting arrested by the guards. He went to court and went to jail.

I came down to Clarecastle to the girlfriend and I was telling her all about it. She didn't like me being up there. She said it to her mam and, after a while, her mam asked me did I want to move down. I said yes.

I am living here a year and a half now and I got myself a course in VTOS. I love it down here because I can start to live my life and not get in trouble. I rang the grandfather and told him what I am doing and he was proud of me. I am much happier down here now. I am meeting new people, starting to make new friends and my life is so much better since I moved from Limerick. I am working with Jimmy in Clarecastle with the horses. I am a lot happier doing what I am doing, going to my course and working with Jimmy in my spare time. I hope to have my own place after

Christmas and have my own horses to be working with. I don't think I could ask for anything better for my life.

The experience I had made me a better person. It has made me more independent. I am more determined to make myself a better and happier life.

It's good to take time to reflect and see what is going on around you, and it helps a person to be more self-aware. I think when someone is going down the wrong road and then stops doing what they are doing wrong and turns their life around, you can see a lot.

*By Kenneth*

## **Vera**

Vera is a crime drama on television. Brenda Blethyn plays Vera, a detective chief inspector with the Northumberland police. She wears a raincoat and hat; even when the weather is fine she still wears the raincoat and hat. She is very determined to solve the crimes that come before her. She can be tough with her officers and she makes them work very hard on every case but she cares about them and respects them.

She keeps a bottle of whiskey and two glasses in her office drawer. After a day's work she has a drink with one of her colleagues. They talk about the day's events and try to come up with a plan.

In one episode, a body was found in a dump. The driver of a bulldozer noticed it just in time and he called the police. Her death was a mystery that was difficult to solve because one person was taking the blame for someone else. This was only discovered towards the end of the episode when Vera started to see cracks showing in the real murderer. The arrest was made and Vera went back to the station to solve another crime.

*By Frank*



## **My son**

My son is 16 years old now and I am worried about his life and his future. He is in a new country, living in a new culture and speaking a new language. He feels he is a man now. He would like to be a spy in the army in the Special Forces in the Irish army. He is doing body building now and psychology. He is always worried about not being accepted into the Irish army because of his different nationality.

I hope he can get his Irish nationality as soon as possible to achieve his goal.

*By H.B.*

## **My feelings about Ireland**

When I arrived in Ireland I did not know what my feelings would be about this country. My feelings got better bit by bit. The Irish people are very nice. I do not have any problems with the weather. I like this temperature because it is not too hot. I do not mind that it rains a lot. People are open-minded here. Everyone is very kind to each other.

I like everything about my Irish life.

*By Ildiko*

## **Easter**

Easter in my country is celebrated every single day during this period. Before Easter, all Orthodox Christian people fast for 50 days from midnight to 3 p.m. When Easter comes everybody is very happy because Jesus is resurrecting from the dead. When Passover arrives from Good Friday to Saturday at 3 p.m., no food is eaten and we go to church.

After 3 p.m., we go back home and eat food with all the family together. Easter for Ethiopian Christian people is a great celebration. I miss my country at Easter.

Thank you for reading my story.

*By Genet*

### **What makes me happy**

I came to Ireland 12 years ago. When I arrived I did not have any kids, just my boyfriend Jacob. Time has flown in Ireland. Before I knew it, we were a family after two years. It was my husband, my daughter and me. Each day that passes it gets better and better. I am a really happy mother and the perfect wife, I think! I have made lots of friends here and so have my family. I am a very friendly woman and I like people who have good energy. I now have three kids. They are very smart, funny and they surprise me every day.

I think smiling is very important in this day and age. Lots of people forget to be nice to each other. I think, when you do what you want and what makes you happy, your life will be richer and you will feel satisfied :-)

*By Joanna*

### **To my baby**

A baby is like dew on a flower on a summer's morning, like a breeze in the spring, like a star near the moon, like the sun rays. It is just like everything beautiful. A baby is a small bud that blooms and brings with it love and new life, happiness and hope. A small baby's smiles wipe away the fatigue and sadness. In his small eyes, I see the light that ignites my heart and his love. No matter how difficult it is to care for a baby, I only need one hug to regain my strength and overcome everything. My baby also needs hugs

to overcome difficulties. When I think how much he needs me, I want to give him more love and attention, and that makes me happy.

I wish every woman and man in the world had a baby to feel the same way I do.

*By F*

## **History of Ghana**

My name is Sawiri and I come from Ghana. Ghana was first known as the Gold Coast because gold was everywhere and you could find it especially on the coast. Ghana gained her independence from the British on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March in 1957, under the leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. People still celebrate him because of the bold decision he made by fighting hard to obtain independence for the people of Ghana. There are other people who criticise him because, after independence, he was using Ghana's resources to pursue a united Africa. This is the reason why he wanted to become the leader. Because of this, people believe he misused our FCS resources on something he could not achieve.

My country, Ghana, has many resources like cocoa, timber, cashew nuts, gold and, recently, oil has been discovered too. The common languages spoken in Ghana are English and Akan (Twi).

Ghana is a Christian country. The Islamic religion is also common. Both Christians and Muslims live peacefully to the extent that Christians marry Muslims.

Ghana also has many tourist attractions like Osu Castle, Kintampo Waterfalls, and Boabeng Fiema Monkey Sanctuary. We also have nice beaches like Labadi beach, Winneba beach and Cape Coast beach.

The sport that is dominant in my country is football. Ghana has produced many football players, among them Essien, Abedi Pele,

Tony Yeboah, Asamoah Gyan and Thomas Partey, who currently plays for Atlético de Madrid. Ghana is the only African country that has ever reached the quarter final of the FIFA World Cup.

There are a lot of ethnic groups in Ghana and each ethnic group has its own language and favourite food. Ghana has a very rich culture and I recommend everyone to go and visit Ghana some day.

Ghana is a very peaceful country and I am proud to be a Ghanaian.

*By Sawiri*

### **My passion for chemistry**

Chemistry is everything. I decided to study chemistry because I always enjoyed the chemistry classes at high school. When I went to university, I have to say that some subjects were very difficult for me but, as time went on, I began to understand a lot of important things that we apply in daily life, like how a battery or a match works. However, the practices in different kinds of laboratories such as analytical, organic, inorganic, physics and biochemical were very exciting. So, I started to like chemistry more and more.

There are people who think that chemistry is too abstract because it is not easy to understand; for example, what an atom or a molecule means, or why we cannot mix bleach and ammonia. But, despite appearing to be boring or uninteresting for some people, it is very important in many fields. I'd like to highlight the pharmacological area because, obviously, the world has always and will always need medicines and medical treatments. Another important and interesting area is the area of cosmetics and perfumery. In addition, we have other interesting fields like fireworks, ceramics, petrol, etc.

Finally, I would like to say that chemistry is also broad. It touches so many sciences including biology, physics and materials. Therefore, it needs a variety of types of skills and open curious minds!

*By Monica M*

## **Walking in nature**

After a stormy and rainy week, the sun showed us its smiling face. In the morning, we had a nice breakfast with all the family members. After breakfast, I replaced the defective part of my car with a new one. Our children said they wanted to spend some time at the cinema. Their aunt left them at the cinema and then she went back home. We started to think about an activity that would take a few hours. Finally, we decided to go to Dromoland Castle. This hotel has a great park and we could do many activities. There is also a small lake. At the entrance to the hotel's land, there is a person in charge. We told him we had come to visit the area. He let us enter by car for free. There was a variety of activities such as walking, cycling, fishing, riding and, most importantly, golf.

The weather and landscape were very nice. We walked around the lake and we took a lot of photos. After we had left, we started to make plans to go there again. Our kids had returned home a few minutes before us and everyone was very happy with their activities.

*By Adil*

## **What's going on around me**

The bus into town is a joy. Last Saturday, I was sitting on my own behind two women who were having a great chat. I tuned in, closed my eyes and enjoyed the show.

'I got a right shock Mary, let me tell you, when I turned around from the sink and there he was, bold as brass.'

'Oh God Josie, I'd have fainted away, I'm the worst...'

'No good fainting Mary. I opened the back door and roared at him to get out. Do you think he moved?'

'Oh God, What did you do Josie?'

'I hit him such a wallop that he landed flat out on the floor. He wasn't getting up in a hurry. I left him there for someone else to deal with and off I went for the bus.'

'You are so brave Josie. I get the shivers even thinking about the likes of that. Isn't it awful early for wasps though ...?'

*By Catherine*

## **Comfort food from childhood**

\*'Gallon Apple Pie' recipe

Bramley apples  
Suet pastry  
Sugar  
Love

Friday was always a hard day at school, at least it was when you were afflicted with the Presentation nuns. Friday was the day for tests, in every subject – a savage day altogether. On Friday mornings, we children knew that if we whinged and begged hard enough, we would have 'Gallon Apple Pie' for dessert.

'Gallon Apple Pie' was always made on the pot-bellied stove in the old basement kitchen. It took several hours to cook, so our mother had to have it made and ready to put on the stove by 11:00 a.m. The gallon tin was first buttered and lined with suet pastry. Then a layer of Bramley apples and sugar were added, followed by more pastry, apples, and so on until the gallon tin was full, when a final layer of pastry was laid on top. We called these layers 'rooms'. It was a clever way of cooking, as it meant everyone got their share of apples and pastry. The lid of the gallon tin was put on tightly, and the whole thing was wrapped in tin foil and placed on a low heat on the pot-bellied stove, to simmer all day. The juice would turn a rosy pink and the pastry would become lovely and fluffy. Mmmm – I can taste it yet.

Many a sore heart was lightened by this pie. We could smell the lovely aroma from the top of the driveway as we came home from school. Ahhh! 'Gallon Apple Pie'. Maybe the world wasn't so bad after all.

I have no memory of what the main course might have been, but I remember that pie, and my mother unwrapping it, watched by seven pairs of hungry eyes.

*\*A 'gallon tin' was a tin that would have held boiled sweets in bulk. Strangely enough, it certainly would not have held a gallon – eight pints – it would have held about four at most. You might be given one by a shopkeeper if you were lucky, and it was a very handy thing to have for storage.*

*By Catherine*

## **Memories**

Daredevil girls  
Climbing the garden wall  
Shimmying up the apple tree  
Stealing forbidden fruit  
Screaming with laughter  
Getting high on the fear  
Of getting caught.

*By Mary*

## **The day the Sí came to Spain**

Bathed in warm sun we sat, almost drowsy with the joy of it. Cangas in the afternoon was Spain in miniature. We lounged at our table beside the prom, lulled by the quiet sibilance of Galician Spanish around us, and the eternal shhhhh of the surf on the strip of golden sand below. We had plates of calamari with half a

lemon on the side. These lemons are grown locally, we were told. No wax on these skins, no preservatives of any kind. The taste told the story.

We sipped sweet Galician wine and had even stopped talking. We just .... were. And then whoosh! Out of nowhere, a powerful gust of wind lifted plates, glasses, cutlery and food and sent them crashing down on the prom. Lettuce and tomatoes whirled above our heads. The wind shrieked as it passed us. We sat stunned. Had there been an explosion nearby? Everybody else hurried indoors, laughing as they ran. No one looked the least bit frightened.

In less than a minute all was calm again – not even the slightest breeze. The waiters soothed us with fresh glasses of wine and more calamari. An interpreter was found for us who explained that these sudden gusts are common in Cangas in Spring. ‘They come hurrying down the sides of mountains,’ he said. ‘They bring Summer.’

‘Well,’ I said, ‘it is the same Atlantic, and Galicia is Celtic just like us. Why wouldn’t the same Sí-Gui that blows hay cocks over the cliffs at Slea Head on a calm Summer day also turn up at Cangas in April? Just a short hop really.’

A black cat quartered the sand below, about his feline affairs. Apart from him, the beach stretched away, golden and empty.

We grew silent again.

*By Catherine*



## **The morning walk**

Sleeping soundly  
Sharply woken  
Yap, yap, yap  
Loudly spoken

Here we go again  
The morning chore  
Collar, lead, bags  
We bang out the door

We face the weather  
Oh! What a delight  
It's beautiful out  
Sunny and bright

The little robin chirps  
As it gathers its load  
Butterflies and bees  
Exchange their code

Where am I going?  
With my face so glum  
Straighten those shoulders  
Pull in that tum

Put a spring in your step  
Hold your head up high.  
I can't wait for tomorrow  
Alas, it will start with a sigh

*By Theresa*

## Hazel

*In the 'Tree Ogham' tradition, the Hazel tree represents the qualities of Intuition, Wisdom and Insight.*

That nagging feeling in the pit of my stomach,  
Perilous to ignore.  
Will she think I'm interfering?  
What to do?

That nagging feeling in the pit of my stomach  
Won't go away.  
Trust my instinct, ask the question,  
Be gentle.

Be confident in my lack of wisdom.  
Take courage from a lifetime's insights.  
Conquer the fear.

*By Michelle*

## Courage

She was walking into the courthouse when she saw him. Fear coursed through her and she wanted to run but was so terrified she was unable to move. She thought, 'Where is my friend? She is always late.' Could she not be in time today when I badly need her support?' She closed her eyes and hoped he would disappear but when she opened them he was standing beside her. He grasped her hand; she winced with pain. She was hardly able to breathe. 'We don't have to do this,' he said, pressing harder, which made her feel weak at the knees. Her heart was racing; her hand was numb; she tried to free it but he held on firmly.

The courthouse was filled with people bustling around, yet she felt all alone with this monster. She kept repeating to herself, 'I will go through with this barring order. I must be strong. The rest of my life depends on my actions today. I cannot let everyone down.'

She tried to free her hand but his grasp tightened and he would not let go. She saw her friend coming towards her with a look of horror on her face when she saw her husband standing beside her. She jerked her hand free with all her strength and walked away without a backward glance. Her hand was numb but her heart was full of courage and determination to survive and grow.

*By Mary*

## **Equality**

I admired the beautiful bird boxes  
He had created  
Houses for executive birds, he mused  
I smiled  
Deep in my soul I cried.  
My vision  
Homes for birds  
In a birdland  
Without class distinction.

*By Mary*

## **Clown World**

The clown's name is Pennywise. He lives in Clown World. It is scary in this world.

Steve and Steve Black are friends. Steve Black is a clone of Steve from a different dimension.

However, Steve Black turns bad and he gets his ghost friends to attack Good Steve.

Luckily, the zombies came to Steve's rescue and they helped Steve then to mine diamonds and pearls. He became very rich.

Steve decided to make Steve Black pay for what he did to him.

So Steve decided to go to Steve Black's mine where he had a secret temple. He found dead skeletons there and decided to get his ghosts to get into the skeletons and they became stronger. Then Steve Black arrived and there was a battle between Good Steve and Steve Black. Good Steve hit Steve Black on the leg and sent him flying into another dimension called 'the world of the fire'. There he was burnt up into ashes.

Good Steve was the winner and everything he touched turned into diamonds. Steve Black came back through the portal and he was changed into good, and Steve and Steve Black became good friends.

*The End*

*By John Paul and Martin*

## **Zoe and Happy - the unicorns**

### *Chapter 1 - Muddy Puddles*

Once upon a time, there were two unicorns who were sisters. They were called Zoe and Happy. They lived in a magical friendly land with their family and friends.

On rainy days they loved to play outside, walking into the puddles. It was Tuesday. Zoe and Happy looked outside. They saw it was raining so they decided to go out and call for their friends. They had great fun playing in the puddles with their friends, until their mum called them in for lunch. After lunch they both went for a rest. When they woke up, Zoe and Happy started coughing. They called their mum to tell her they did not feel very well.

Their mum checked them and could see they were indeed both sick. She decided to give them some medicine, hoping it would make them feel better. She told them to stay resting in their beds

of straw. 'No more playing outside in the rain and jumping in muddy puddles,' said Mum.

## Chapter 2 - *The Carnival*

One day Happy and Zoe's mum brought them to a carnival. It was so exciting. There were slides, swings and a skating rink. Zoe wanted to go skating and Mum had to buy a ticket for her. Happy decided that she wanted to try to win a teddy at the shooting stall. Zoe had a great time skating and when she was finished, she came back to her sister who was smiling because she had won a teddy.

They had a great time at the carnival. When they went home, their mum said she would cook a pizza. While the pizza was cooking, Zoe and Happy played outside. There were still some puddles left, even though it had stopped raining. They couldn't help it. Even though they were not supposed to, they both jumped in the puddles.

When the pizza was cooked, Mum called them in home. They relaxed eating their food and watched a movie. They were both very tired after their long exciting day and when it was bedtime they went straight to sleep.

*The End*

*By Eabha and Kelly*

## **The tooth fairy**

Once upon a time, there was a tooth fairy. His name was Figgy Snap Dragon.

His job was to collect teeth.

Figgy had brown hair and brown eyes. He had big gold shiny wings.

He had a blue top, gold pants, blue shoes and a golden collar.

He was twelve years old.

He started his tooth fairy training on his twelfth birthday. He worked very hard.

He was the best out of the boy tooth fairies.

Eli was the best out of the girls.

The hardest part of being a tooth fairy was getting out of the house without being caught.

Figgy moved out of his home to live with the other tooth fairies to begin his job.

A girl called Freya's tooth fell out. She was nine years old.

She put her tooth under her pillow. Freya planned to kidnap the tooth fairy.

She got a glass bell and a rope that was attached to the glass.

Freya left the window open and pretended to fall asleep.

Figgy the tooth fairy came in the window. The glass fell on top of him.

Figgy was scared. Everything went dark. ... Freya turned on the light.

She saw the tooth fairy and asked Figgy to bring her to Fairyland.

Figgy said, 'No! I will tell Santa and the Easter Bunny that you are kidnapping tooth fairies. Let me go now and I won't tell them that you are being bold.'

Freya said she would let Figgy go if he brought her some fairy dust and was her tooth fairy forever.

The tooth fairy Eli came to take poor Figgy back home safely.

*The End*

*By Freya and Rosemary*

## **Spiderman**

### Chapter 1 - *Peter Parker*

One day Peter Parker was in school when a spider bit him. Peter turned into Spiderman. He had super powers. He could shoot out webs and jump onto buildings and climb walls. He was a good person. He was a super hero.

There were some villains who wanted to steal money, so they tried to rob a bank. Spiderman came and stopped them. He used his webs and then he brought them to the garda station. They were put into jail. Spiderman felt good because he had stopped the villains from robbing the bank.

The villains escaped from jail. Then the guards chased them, but the guards were not able to catch them. Spiderman came and caught the villains. There were more villains in the bank, and a fight broke out in the bank. Spiderman saved the day and killed all the villains.

Spiderman bought his own house. Some bad guys came and killed his two dogs. Spiderman, the guards and the army S.W.A.T. team came but the bad guys got away. No one was able to catch them. The bad guys went home and were never seen again. Spiderman was not happy as he had lost his two beautiful dogs.

*The End*

*By Martin and Pat*

## **The 'Robot Toy' story**

### Chapter 1 - *The Toy*

One day there was a toy everyone wanted. There was a poster about the new toy. The poster said the store would open tomorrow on Saturday at 11am, and that they would then reveal the name of the toy.

Everyone was so excited. The next day, before 11am, there were people standing in front of the shop. It was 10:30am. That must mean the people really wanted the toy.

At 11am, when the shop opened, the shop-keeper said, 'Instead of all of you running inside the shop we should have a raffle. There is a total of 10,000 toys, so we will do the raffle every day and we will give out 50 toys a day. If you want to be in the raffle, you have to get a dollar note and a piece of paper. Write your names on the paper and put your names into the raffle box with your money. You can put in as many as you want. Now, I will reveal the name of the toy. It is 'Robot Toy'.'

The raffle starts in thirty seconds. There was a boy called Timothy there. He asked his mom if he would be allowed to put money in the box. His mom said, 'Yes.' He put out his hand. His mom only gave him one dollar. He put out his hand again. His mom did not give him any more money.

'Can I at least have five dollars? Everyone else is putting in \$10 or \$20 dollars.' 'No!' said his mom. Timothy was sad because he only had one chance.

There were different types of robots - big ones, small ones, tall ones, all different shapes and sizes.

Timothy wanted a tall robot. The raffle began and he heard one of his friends' names being called out. At first he was happy for his friend but he also felt sad because his name was not called. A few more names were called, but not Timothy's. He was very sad and went home. The next day in school, he found out that all of



his friends had got tickets. Poor Timothy! Everyone was sad for him.

On his way home from school that day, an old man stopped him in the street waving in his hand a ticket. 'This is for you Timothy,' he said. Timothy couldn't believe his eyes. He was so excited and happy. He thanked the old man.

The next day after school, the whole class went to the toy store to pick out their robots. Timothy got to pick his favourite tall robot. He was very happy.

*The End*

*By Rasheed and Awatif*

## **The epic tale of Cuphead and Mugman**

### *Chapter 1 - The Beginning*

Once upon a time, there was a little boy called Tommy. He lived in 41, Cuphill Street. One day, he went outside to play with his friends. There was a big bang! Tommy went over to see what caused the big bang. Suddenly, a big blast hit Tommy in the face and knocked him to the ground. All Tommy's friends rushed over to help him. When Tommy stood up, his friends were shocked to see Tommy's head turned into a cup.

Tommy ran home to see for himself. He went into his bedroom and looked into the mirror. He was shocked. His head really was turned into a cup.

## Chapter 2 - *Super Powers*

Tommy was so upset about what had happened to his head, he punched the wall and the wall broke into pieces. He was not expecting that to happen. He told his mammy and daddy what had happened. They were very upset. Tommy decided to go to the pool with his friends. He asked his mom and she said he could go.

## Chapter 3 - *Tommy Can Fly*

Tommy had embraced his cuphead and so had his family and friends. When he asked his friends to go to the pool, they agreed. When they got to the pool, Tommy jumped off the diving board and, to his amazement, he started to fly. Everyone was surprised. After the pool, Tommy decided to fly all the way home.

## Chapter 4 - *Mugman is Here*

Mugman came out of a hole in the ground. Mugman was from Outer Space. He wanted to rule the world. So he got an army of robots together. Mugman had built his army and they were very powerful. It was all over the news. Everyone was so worried. Mugman and his army had robbed banks, shops and people's homes.

## Chapter 5 - *Cuphead Discovers Mugman*

Cuphead was tired from all the flying. He lay down on his bed for a rest and turned on the television. Tommy was shocked when he saw the news. He saw a sea of green robots and a boy who looked like him. It was Mugman. Mugman and his army were robbing the bank.

## Chapter 6 - *Cuphead meets Mugman*

Cuphead picked up his magical shield and his sword and flew out the window. He flew down to the bank and saw Mugman with the bag of stolen money. His army was close by him. Cuphead

said, 'Stop! Mugman, it is not nice to be bad.' Mugman replied, 'I love to be bad!'

'You look like me. We can be friends,' said Cuphead. Mugman started to smile and feel happy again. All he ever wanted was a friend. Mugman sent his army home. All the green robots jumped back into the hole in the ground.

## Chapter 7 - *The Friendship Begins*

From that day on, Tommy Cuphead and Mugman became best friends. They loved that they looked different. They did everything together; flew through the sky, played games and protected the town. They always had lots of fun but always wondered was there anybody out there like them?

*The End for now! ... To be continued ...*

*By Stephen, Stephen and Shauna*

## **My dog, Nala**

### Chapter 1 - *Welcome to My Home*

Nala is 10 years old. She is a Labrador dog. She loves playing ball, going for a walk and she loves hugs. I love taking her for a walk.

Nala does not like the cold. She sleeps under the table beside the heater all night. She has two sisters, Roxy and Juno. One of their favourite things to do is to go to the river and swim. Nala loves jumping into the water when I throw the ball in for her, or fetching a stick when I throw it as far as I can.

I love running in the field with Nala running beside me. Her favourite foods are doggy biscuits and mushrooms.

## Chapter 2 - *Something in the River*

One day I was out walking Nala by the river when I saw something in the water. I moved closer to get a better look. I saw that it was a little puppy! The poor puppy looked very tired.

Nala loves the water so she jumped in to help the puppy. She pushed the little puppy back to the water's edge so I could lift the poor little thing out of the water.

The puppy was very frightened but Nala played, and licked her. The puppy quickly calmed down. They played together in the grass for a while.

After a few minutes, I heard a boy calling a dog's name. It was the name of the puppy that Nala had saved in the river. The boy came up to me and thanked me and Nala for saving his puppy. The boy told us his puppy's name was Juno, and his own name was Jack. We all played together for ten minutes until it was time to go home. I was so proud of my dog, Nala. She is the best pet ever.

*The End*

*By Kayden and Veronica*

## **The shark**

The shark lives in the ocean. Sometimes, the shark kills people in the ocean.

The shark bit my friend when she was swimming. I saw the shark and started running away. I got my phone and I called 999. The ambulance came and when I went to the hospital with my friend, she was bleeding a lot.

I was very worried that my friend was going to die. The shark had eaten her leg. I was crying in the hospital. My friend survived but she had to get a new leg.

I went back to the beach and killed the shark. I felt very sad for my friend and for the shark.

*The End*

*By Rihanna and Martin*

## **Fortnite teddy bear story**

### Chapter 1

Once upon a time, one teddy bear went on a battle bus. He got out of the bus and landed in Tilted Towers and glided. He landed on a clock building tower and broke down. He found a chest and a golden scar. The storm was coming so he went into the circle. Then he found a guy building, so he started to build. He took out his scar gun and shot him. The guy had a sniper. He shot the bear and got him for 12 shields. But he had a jug of energy drink so he drank it and he got 100 shields and health. He found a lama. He opened it and he got another gun.

### Chapter 2

And he found as well a 'Thanos hand', so he grabbed it and he became 'Thanos' and there were 25 people left. He went in the middle of nothing and suddenly he found a cannonball. So he got into it and he flew to Retail Row.

*By Justin and Jaros*

## **Meet us the Killaloe ITABE group**

My name is Anna and I live in Ballina. I am from Poland. I have one brother and one sister.

I am learning English. I enjoy drawing and music. I like to play card games. I really like doing arts and crafts with my friends.

*By Anna*

My name is Dessie and I live in Killaloe. I enjoy watching TV and listening to music.

*By Desmond*

My name is Ross. I am also from Killaloe. I like walking, going out and swimming. I enjoy computer classes.

*By Ross*

My name is Paulanne. I enjoy watching horseracing and running.

*By Paulanne*

My name is Shane and I live in Killaloe. I have two brothers. They are Alan and Jason.

I enjoy YouTube, dogs and dance. I even enjoy maths class. I like watching soccer matches and support Liverpool.

*By Shane*

My name is Síun and I live in Killaloe. I enjoy watching YouTube and going out for tea and cake.

*By Síun*

## **My story**

I'm living in Ennis. I am in Europe. I left my children in Africa. I am not happy at all.

*By Kwaku*

## **About me**

My name is Zaina. I am from Morocco. I am married. We have three children.

I don't like a lot of rain. I don't like cold. My favourite food is chicken. I like staying at home. I sew and fix clothes for my family and my friends.

*By Zaina*

## **My name is Amina**

My name is Amina. I am from Morocco. I am married. We have three children. I don't like sunny days. I don't like very hot days. My blood pressure goes up. My favourite food is sardines. My sister says I'm like a cat.

*By Amina*

## **My story**

My name is Mayssa. I am from Syria. I am married and we have two children - twin boys. I love my family. I like spring but I don't like allergies in spring. My favourite food is vegetables. I like meeting my friend in her house. We cook together.

*By Mayssa*

## About me

My name is Mary. I'm 55 years old. I'm Ghanaian. I'm a married woman. I live in Ennis. I am a cleaner. I have a lovely family. I have four children.

I like potato fufu but I don't like potato chips. My favourite food is carrots. I like meeting my children in my home.

*By Mary*

## I'm Solange

I'm Solange. I'm from Brazil. I live in Ennis now.

My family is big. I have three sisters and one brother. I have one son, two daughters, five granddaughters, two grandsons and one great granddaughter.

I'm a student. I study English. I like coffee but I don't like smoking. My favourite fruit is bananas. I like Ireland. The weather is good for me.

*By Solange*

## From Syria to Ennistymon

My name is Issa. I am from Syria. My language is Arabic. I live in Ennistymon. I have a wife and 5 children - three boys and twin girls. I don't have a job. I'm a student. I study English. I like swimming. I don't like coffee.

*By Issa*



## **My name is Iwona**

My name is Iwona. I'm from Poland. I'm a student. I live in Ennis for three months now. My family is my husband and two children - a son and a daughter. I like coffee and long walks in the mountains. My favourite sport is football. My language is Polish.

*By Iwona*

## **I'm from Syria**

I'm from Syria. My name is Ali. My family is from Syria. I don't have a job. My language is Arabic. I like my car. I don't like war. My favourite fruit is apples and my favourite drink is water.

*By Ali*

## **Things I like**

My name is Mitu. I am from Bangladesh. My language is Bangla. I live in Ennis with my family - my husband and three children. I don't have a job. I am a housewife. I like my children. I like tea and biscuits. I don't like coffee. I don't like animals. I only like birds. My favourite food is vegetables and rice. My favourite friend's name is Shemul. I go to Bangladesh for holidays.

*By Mitu*

## **Likes and dislikes**

My name is Bianca. I'm from Romania. I live with my sister in Ennis. I speak Romanian. I like shopping. I don't like cats. My favourite food is pizza.

*By Bianca*

## **From Morocco to Ennis**

My name is Asmae. I am from Morocco. I live in Ennis. My family is me and my husband. I am a student. I speak Arabic. My favourite animals are cats. I like chicken. I don't like tea and coffee.

*By Asmae*

## **My name is Martha**

My name is Martha. I'm from Ghana. I live in Ennis. I am a cleaner and I am a student. My language is Twi.

*By Martha*

## **My life in Ennistymon**

My name is Moharrab. I am from Syria. I live in Ennistymon. I have 4 children – 2 girls and 2 boys. My wife's name is Sanaa. I like soccer and gardening.

*By Moharrab*

## **From Hong Kong to Ennis**

I'm Shuk. I'm from Hong Kong. My language is Chinese. I live in Ennis. My family is my four children and two grandchildren. I don't have a job. I'm a student. I don't like exercise. My favourite drink is coffee and my favourite food is dessert.

*By Shuk*

## **Music and soul (ceol agus anam)**

Music, ceol, musica, muzyka, musique, zene, muziek, tonlist, cerddoriaeth ...

the same language people around the world  
everyone understands each other without barriers  
freedom  
the same smile  
music and soul as one.

Listen to the rain, feel the sunshine  
catch and keep the power of music,  
power of love,  
power of colours of nature,  
feel the power of waterfalls  
look at the stars.

Listen to your soul  
Be gentle like a rainbow, light like butterfly's wings  
Be like a bird over the walls of division  
Be like a flying condor in the Equador's mountains  
like condor el pasa ...

Be a creator of your dreams

Music and soul, ceol agus anam

You are unique

*By Sabina*

## **Finding me!**

Being a full time carer can be very isolating, but since starting the childcare course I feel I am reconnecting with the outside world. I have found something that I am interested in and that fits in well with my home life.

*By Denise*

## **Cork trip**

I went on the bus. The bus was very busy. When I arrived, I met my brother. We went into town on Easter Saturday. I had a look but didn't buy anything. That night we relaxed and watched a movie.

On Easter Sunday, we went for a drive. We had lunch at Seaview House, Ballylickey, near Bantry. It was nice. We also visited the Gap of Dunloe. The sun was coming in and out all weekend.

I started my journey home on Easter Monday. I really enjoyed my trip away for Easter.

*By Helen*

## **My name is Shukri**

My name is Shukri. I'm from Somalia; now I live in Kilrush. I have been in Ireland for one and a half years.

I like baking and cooking. I want to learn more English. I hope one day I will open my own bakery.

*By Shukri*

## **My journey from Indian Ocean to Atlantic Ocean**

My journey started in Mogadishu, then continued on to Dublin, Naas, Portlaoise and finally to Kilrush. Mogadishu is located just north of the Equator on the Indian Ocean and it has very hot weather. It is not as peaceful a place as it used to be thirty years ago.

Although there are differences between these locations, e.g. weather, living standards and culture, my intention is not to compare Somalia to Ireland, but to appreciate that I witnessed these two great oceans. I could say there are similarities in Somalian people and Irish people when it comes to hospitality.

Both of them are welcoming societies. Overall, Ireland is a great place to live.

*By Sadía*

### **Happiness is in little things**

I am happy when I am healthy, when my family is happy, when I talk to my friends and laugh together, when I manage to make a good cake or when the house is clean. I am happy when I wake up in the morning and drink a good cup of coffee, when I read new things or when I watch old movies.

For me, happiness is when I see smiles on the street and then I know people are fine.

Happiness means freedom to be able to do what I want. Happiness means I can enjoy all the good and beautiful things God has created.

*By Carmen*

### **I am always happy**

I am always happy because I'm one of those people who think positively, despite adversity. I try to be content and always keep a smile.

I am happiest when I can visit my family in Portugal. We share stories, food, family outings, smiles, hugs, laughter, and love.

*By María*

### **Holy Sepulchre of Villa de Cura**

In the Zamora municipality of Aragua state, there is a town called Villa de Cura in Venezuela. Every Good Friday, Villa de Cura

becomes the epicentre of attention for those who profess the Catholic Christian religion in Venezuela.

Year after year, the procession of the Holy Sepulchre of Villa de Cura begins on Good Friday morning from Casa del Santo. The image of Jesus Christ in the sepulchre is 1.65 metres long and weighs 60 kilograms. Thousands of orchids and purple and white flowers adorn the glass coffin that holds the statue. It is carried by about 80 men during the journey that lasts for about five hours in its first stage. These men are called the 'Association of Holy Chargers'.

From Casa del Santo in Villa de Cura, the procession of the Holy Sepulchre travels to the Mother Church, 'San Luis Rey', and then at night it returns to its home. Every year, it is accompanied, both day and night, by the faithful devotees who make their pledges. The beautiful procession of the Holy Sepulchre has been a religious tradition for more than 190 years.

*By María*

## **Independence Day in Brazil**

Independence Day is the national holiday of Brazil. It is on September 7<sup>th</sup>. In all of the states of Brazil, the celebrations of the Independence holiday of Brazil attract tourists and Brazilians. They enjoy school parades, music bands and parades of armed forces.

The city streets are decorated with flags; people see fireworks, sing the anthem of the Independence of Brazil, the anthem of Brazil and the anthem of the local state. Brazilians take advantage of this holiday with their relatives and friends to celebrate the day when Brazil ceased to be a colony of Portugal.

*By Adriana*

## **The Masters 2019**

The Masters tournament is one of the four major championships in professional golf. The tournament is always staged in the first full week of April at the same location, Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta Georgia, USA. This golf course is considered by many to be the greatest golf course in the world.

The tournament has a number of traditions. Since 1949, a green jacket has been awarded to the champion. The champions' dinner is held on the Tuesday before each tournament and is open to past champions and certain members of the Augusta National Golf Club. Since 1960, a fun contest at the par 3 course has been played on Wednesday, the day before the first round. Nobody who has won this has gone on to win the tournament proper.

Jack Nicklaus has the most Masters won - six between 1963 and 1986. Tiger Woods has won five and his win this year has been hailed as the greatest comeback in golf history as he had not won a major for over 10 years. European golfers had never won the Masters before the 1980s but then Seve Ballesteros won in 1980 and 1983, Ian Woosman 1991, Bernard Langer 1985, 1993, Sandy Lyle 1988, Nick Faldo 1989, 1990, 1996, José Olazábal 1994, 1999, all have won the Masters. Although Irish golfers have won many majors in the last decade (9 in total) none has won the Masters.

*By John*

## **A poem taken from *Ag Crú na Gréine*, by Gabriel Fitzmaurice**

### **Cúl an Tí – le Séan Ó Riordáin**

Tá Tír na nÓg ar chúl an tí  
Tír álainn trína chéile  
Lucht cheithre chos ag siúl na slí  
Gan bróga orthu ná léine  
Gan Béarla acu ná Gaeilge.

Ach fásann clóca ar gach droim  
Sa tír seo trína chéile  
Is labhartar teanga ar chúl a' tí  
Nár thuig aon fhear ach Aesop  
Is tá sé siúd sa chré anois.

**This translation by Helena McMahon**

At the back of the house is the Land of the Young,  
A higgledy-piggledy place,  
Our four footed friends walking all around  
Without shirt or shoe or lace  
Without a trace of English or Irish

But on each back there grows a cloak  
In this higgledy-piggledy place  
And a language is spoken at the back of the house  
That no one knows but Aesop  
And he is in the clay now

I choose this poem because it's very descriptive in the language used, very musical with beautiful images. It seems to be a very archaic poem with deep meaning attached. There is a lovely description given of the animals without a care in the world – roaming so freely around. My interpretation of the poem is that the cares of the world were considered in a light-hearted manner and that the material side of life didn't matter then and, in reality, didn't exist. As a summary to this, people were at one with nature, and spoke their own traditional language. To sum up they were an abstract, aloof people.

*By Ann Marie*



## **My favourites**

Hi, my name is Alan. I have a wide range of interests including music, films and sports. I have done the alphabet with my interests and likes. So here it goes:

A is for apples  
B is for books  
C is for cinema  
D is for devoted  
E is for the *Eagles* band  
F is for films  
G is for grapes  
H is for hobbies  
I is for Irish  
J is for joyful  
K is for kind  
L is for lemonade  
M is for music  
N is for nice  
O is for organic  
P is for parsnips  
Q is for quizzes  
R is for reading  
S is for Sci-fi movies  
T is for tennis  
U is for unchanged melody in a song  
V is for vegetables  
W is for water  
X is for *X-Files* TV programme  
Y is for yourself  
Z is for zoo.

That's it now.

*By Alan*

## **Memories**

A couple of weeks ago I came across an old friend. We had been in school together, from infants up to 14 years. We started reminiscing on things we used to do after school. Some days we would 'mitch'. We got into lots of trouble over that. Saturday was a great day; we were free. We used to go bird nesting, jumping trenches or skinning orchards. I wasn't so hot at jumping trenches. Many times I finished up in the water. I would have to go home and Mum would kick up stink. This was all done in our bare feet, usually in the summer time. Those were the good old days.

*By Bernard*

## **Najwa's special pasta dish with chicken and mushrooms**

Ingredients:

- ½ kilo penne pasta
- 2 chicken breasts diced
- 2 onions
- ½ litre milk
- 250 ml cooking cream
- 2 tbsps. flour
- 2 tbsps. butter
- ½ tsp. salt and pepper
- ½ tsp. garlic salt
- 1 chicken stock cube
- Punnet of mushrooms
- 50 grams cheese
- 1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Preheat oven to 180°C, moderate heat.

Cook pasta in a medium pot with boiling water, following instructions on the packet. Drain pasta when cooked.

Place diced chicken, onion and mushrooms in a frying pan, with oil. Cook on a medium heat hob.

Add crushed chicken stock cube, garlic salt, and salt and pepper.

In another pan, on a low heat, melt the butter. Add flour and milk and stir well until sauce has a thick consistency.

Add the white sauce to the chicken, onion and mushrooms. Mix well and stir in the cooking cream.

Then add the chicken, onion and mushroom mixture to the cooked pasta and place all the mixture into deep oven-proof glass dish. Add grated cheese on top. Place into the preheated oven for 5 minutes, until the cheese is melted.

*By Najwa*

## **My computer class**

I go to my computer class once a week.  
I like going to my class on the day as  
I learn something new each day and have the craic.  
My teacher is very good and understanding all the time.  
I will now finish my poem until I go to my  
Computer class, next time.

*By John*

## **My minestrone soup**

Ingredients:

1 cup of red kidney beans (rinse before adding)  
1 yellow onion, chopped  
5 cups of chicken or vegetable stock (add more water if needed)  
1 zucchini/courgette, chopped  
2/3 carrots chopped, depending on their size  
Fresh or frozen spinach, around 1 cup size. If using frozen spinach, thaw out first and drain out water.  
1½ teaspoons of sugar  
1½ teaspoons of dried basil, oregano or parsley  
2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar  
500g canned plum tomatoes (chop before adding to soup)  
½ cup dried pasta, like macaroni or any small pasta, or you can use small white potatoes in place of the pasta (around 4 potatoes cut in half)

Method:

In a large saucepan, add everything but the pasta, spinach and vinegar. Partially cover saucepan and simmer - don't let the soup boil. Simmer until the vegetables are tender. If adding pasta, add now, with the spinach.

Simmer until pasta is cooked. Then add balsamic vinegar and simmer for another ten minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

*By Deborah*

## **Buying my new car**

I would like to buy a new car. The car I would like is a Mazda 6 1.6 diesel. The year I would be thinking of buying is a 2017. Cahercalla Motors in Ennis is our local dealership for Mazda cars in Ennis. I will look in here for a new car, but will also check on *Done Deal* and *Car Zone* websites for the best offers. I like it because

there is a lot of space in it and the boot is very big, and you don't have to get it through the NCT every year. Also, it has good power in it and it is good on diesel.

*By Senan*

## **Walking**

My favourite thing to do in the evening is go for a walk. I live in Kilrush and enjoy walking out to Cappa and Aylevaroo. This is a lovely walk beside the Shannon Estuary. I can see Scattery and Hogg Island and there are lovely views across to north Kerry. The ships are visible entering the estuary en route to Foynes and Moneypoint. These ships would often anchor overnight in the estuary just off Cappa and Kilrush.

*By Joe*

## **Cranberry bread**

Ingredients:

450g plain white flour  
1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
1 level teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons sugar  
75g cranberries  
1 egg  
425ml buttermilk

Method:

Preheat oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas 7.

In a large mixing bowl, sieve in the flour and bicarbonate of soda. Then add the salt, sugar and cranberries.

Mix well by lifting the flour and fruit up into your hands and letting them fall back through your fingers. This adds air and gives lighter bread.

Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture; add the egg and buttermilk. Mix together until it forms a dough, which should be softish but not too wet and sticky.

When it comes together, turn it out onto a floured work surface. Roll the dough into a round. Place on a floured baking tray. Cut a cross in the top.

Place into the oven immediately and drop the temperature to 200°F/400°F/Gas 6. Bake for 35-40 minutes. To check the bread is baked, tap the bottom; if it is baked enough it will sound hollow.

*By Brigid*

## **An account of William Shakespeare and some of his famous lines**

William Shakespeare was born on or about the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1564 and though he spent most of this working life in London among actors and playwrights, it was at New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon that he died in 1616 at the age of forty two. His grave and monument may be seen in the Stratford parish church. There is a Shakespearian Centre near William Shakespeare's birthplace. The Shakespearian Centre is an international memorial to the poet, built to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Levi Fox is the director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Some inspiring lines from *Hamlet*, one of Shakespeare's plays:

'Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure but reserve thy judgement.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not expressed in fancy; fancy, rich not gaudy,  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man

And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all, to thine own self be true  
And it must follow as the night the day  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

In my opinion, these lines are the most expressive and fundamental in relation to life's journey.

*By Anne Marie*

## **Two for joy**

The sky is awash with life today  
Magpies flying past with bits of twig  
Dangling, all business, their monochrome wings  
Flashing like nuns from a time forgotten.

Best of all,  
They travel in pairs,  
Harbingers of joy to the superstitious,  
And the lovelorn,  
On this glorious April morning.

*By Rita*

## **Winter solstice**

They came out of the sunrise when the mountains were still in deep shadow behind them, at the hour when the first golden rays of sun were tentatively emerging over the peaks -- the trickle preempting the aureate flood to come. The sky, cloudless and Alaskan in its purity, stretched into infinity as the swish of feet through the frosty grass shattered the icy capillaries beneath rough sandals. Clad in non-descript brown tunics, hoods raised against the cold, and hands invisibly tucked into opposing sleeves,

the druids filed past on their eternal pilgrimage; a Camino with no beginning or end, one that allowed for no deviation from the intended path. As he stood there stunned, an observer lost in a performance only he could see, he felt the unreality of the situation begin to overwhelm him and drag him into a vortex, where one world became the other and nothing was what it seemed ...

*By Mandy*

### **A policeman, standing over a dead dog, takes off his cap and weeps**

What will I do now? My best friend is lying lifeless. No more friendly welcome home after a long hard day at work ...

I remember well when I first got him as a pup. Full of mischief, he was - biting my socks, taking my shoes. He always appeared to be listening to me, even when I came home fuelled with rage, after a bad day in court, the judge almost making fun of my attempt to do my job to the best of my ability ... almost like he'd waited six months to make little of anyone who had to listen to him.

If I didn't have the dog to go for a run with!

He always got so excited when I changed out of my uniform. Just quietly did whatever I asked of him. Unconditional love, that's what I got from him.

I'm getting angry now. Why the hell did this happen! Was he hit by a car? Or poisoned? If he was useless, nothing would have happened to him! He was only, what? ... six in human years, forty-two in dog years. Almost middle-age ... Is that the reason I was so fond of him?



I'm still on duty. It might be wise to dry my face and do what is expected of me.

Cap on.

Back to duty.

The show must go on.

*By Kay*

## **The surprise**

Miriam is a single mother of three boys: John (13), Danyel (11), and Charlie (7) and they live in Hill View, which is a part of Saint James' Estate. Miriam is a small but mighty woman, who is fierce protective of her boys. John is street smart and childish, Danyel is quiet but has wisdom and understanding beyond his years, and Charlie ... well, Charlie is stubborn and cheeky.

One cold evening in mid-November, Miriam, Danyel and Charlie came home early. Now normally that doesn't happen, because Miriam would be working until six in the evening; her job was greeting the tourists, taking bookings, doing the books at the reception in Kilrush Walled Gardens. Then she would have to walk to her mother's house on the other side of town and, once there, she couldn't leave until nine or ten o'clock, when her mother went to bed.

This evening was different. It was Friday and that meant her eldest son, John, would be staying the weekend. He usually lived with his grandmother. Earlier that morning, Miriam left the key for John so when he'd finished school, he could go home and have the fire lit in the range. Miriam would collect Danyel and Charlie at her mother's and they would go home. Saint James' Estate was a lovely area - perfect gardens, beautiful houses and helpful neighbours. When Miriam, Danyel and Charlie came home, they heard a lot of racket outside their backyard. They went out to see what was going on and there was John with his friend, Michael, hammering a hook into the wall of the shed. On the grass was a

long iron chain, but what caught Miriam, Danyel and Charlie's attention was a fully grown, thoroughbred, black cocker spaniel running around.

'Where did you find the dog?' Miriam asks John.

John explained that Michael's brother won the dog in a game of poker last night and when he took the dog home, his mother Catherine told him he had two days to get rid of her, as they already had enough dogs.

'So, when I came home earlier, Michael asked me if we wanted a dog and I said yes, and there she is. Her name is Molly.'

Danyel and Charlie were beyond excited.

'Michael, get rid of the hook and chain. She's not going to be tied up. Molly will live inside where it is nice and warm with us because she's part of the family now.'

That evening Miriam cooked a lovely beef stew with oxtails, which everyone wolfed down, including Molly. She rented a few movies and, to their surprise, brought some treats. It was a perfect evening for everyone. The fire in the sitting room was on, and Molly was fast asleep in front of it. John, Danyel and Charlie were on the couch watching the latest fantasy film and Miriam was in her chair by the fire, reading. When it was time for bed, John, Danyel and Charlie made up a bed for Molly using an old box they found under the stairs, along with some old pillows and a blanket. They each patted her good night and Molly nestled down in her new home - a warm, comfy bed beside a range.

And that is where she stayed for the next seventeen years.

*By Donal*

## Best friends

The message was there on my PC:

*Mom passed away during the early morning hours. She died peacefully, without any pain. You don't have to come. It is too far north, Jo. And I'll understand if you don't come. In fact, you'd have to meet all the relatives and there might be tension and I wouldn't want you to go through that.*

Typical of my dearest friend; she didn't want me to be hurt, even though she was bearing the worst pain with the death of her mom. Jeanette was appealing to me to be patient.

We were friends for the past thirty-four years, and there was hardly a thing we didn't know about each other, down to our bank accounts. She relied on me and I felt the same about her. When we were young mothers, living far away from Ireland, we even put each other in our filings with the lawyers, that if either of us should pass away, or die suddenly in a crash, the other would take over the raising of the children. Our husbands had agreed to this arrangement. We were emigrants. Now, thirty-four years later, she continued living in Canada, on her second marriage. I had married again also and had moved back to Ireland. We remained close. Her mom lived in the north of Ireland and I live in the west, very far away from my friend. Our lasting friendship was a little incongruous because she is Protestant and I am Catholic, which seemed to perplex our friends. It was perfectly normal to us. Thankfully, the culture in Canada was so fresh and free and without judgement, on that score anyway.

When the message came, there was no doubt where I should be. I started packing. There were no tears because, in truth, her mom, who suffered dementia, had reached the age of eighty-two, so her demise was expected, and she no longer knew us. In fact, Jeanette had kept me informed of her condition, telling me to expect news at any time.

Her next message was:

*I'll try to get out tomorrow. As soon as I hear of arrangements, I'll let you know.*

Thinking of my good friend, and knowing the crushing pain of losing a loved one, my mind raced into preparation mode. A series of personal messages followed, almost frantically. Her plans were for a few days at home in Belfast. She would fly to New York, connect with a flight to Heathrow; then, after a layover of a few hours, she would arrive home some time the following day. With tickets in hand, it was daunting travel to arrive at her family's meeting.

Meanwhile, all the time on hyper-listen for the muted electronic note announcing a message on either the iPad or mobile phone, I went to bed knowing she was in the air, or some place en route.

*By Josephine*

## **The hunger moon**

The hunger moon bathed Kilbaha strand in a silvery glow, giving a dreamy quality to the already ethereal white horses thrashing the rocks. Hannah stood facing the tide, squaring up to the powerful beast before her. She had always felt a great affinity with the sea, as if the ocean reflected her mood somehow. It was unusually restless tonight, throwing punches at the sea wall instead of its usual swishing caresses. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, drawing power from the moonlight on her skin and the wind billowing her skirts. Hannah felt the restlessness in her soul. She knew it had been there for a while. Standing there in the dark, she finally felt brave enough to visit that place inside herself. It was a place she couldn't stay too long, for fear she might not come back. She opened her eyes and looked around. Her eyes fell on the old cottage ruins up on the cliff.

'The hunger moon of 1947. One hundred years on from the famine that tore us apart,' she said aloud.

Her grandad used to tell her stories of how people had literally fallen down from hunger, wasting away to their death on the side

of the road. He said people were driven to do unspeakable things in order to survive. Suddenly the wind changed, and Hannah's mind drifted in another direction. She wondered what life would be like 100 years from now. Would everyone live in a perfect world? Would women earn the same as men? Surely people would no longer have to emigrate or be forced out of their homes because they couldn't afford to pay their rent. Surely decent healthcare would be accessible to everyone, not just those with money. Surely little villages like Kilbaha would be thriving by then, with post offices, banks and garda stations aplenty. Surely it could only get better than this? Hannah looked up at the hunger moon, a blazing beacon of hope for the future. She placed her hand on her heart and found it beating hard against her palm. Something told her it wasn't going to be as easy as all that.

*By Elaine*

## **The mountain road**

The mountain road winds on before me.  
Tall grass, cut turf and purple *fraoch*.

I see the faces and hear the names  
Of people long ago,  
Who walked the mountain road like me.

This was their mountain road once,  
Just as it was my mountain road later.  
Now, another generation owns that mountain road.

The fields on one side roll along,  
Lovely names - *Gort na Cráth* and *The Partners' Field*.  
The Atlantic on the other side,  
Inlets - *Poll Caol* and *Poll Bríste*,  
Sound loud with crashing waves.

I reach the two goilíns and sit on the mountain top.  
Rest awhile in my present time,

Then I turn for home and walk the  
Mountain road again.

*By Angela*

### **Snow falling on a river**

I have a beautiful image in my mind  
Of standing by a river  
After a fall of snow

I hear the river babbling  
Over the stones  
Melodious and relaxing

The light reflects off the trees  
And beautiful colours  
Reflect off the water  
Like crystals

All around is white  
But the river runs on  
Regardless

*By Lily*

### **My Norwegian cruise**

I left on my cruise on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018. I went on the cruise ship, the 'Magellan'. We left from Dublin port. My first stop was Kirkwall on Orkney Island in Scotland. I went on a tour of Scapa Flow. The next day I went to Bergen in Norway, where I explored the town.

The following day, I went to Olden where I went on an excursion to the glacier. Then, the next day, we sailed up to Eidfjord. The scenery was beautiful. We spent two days at sea, and then we arrived in Liverpool where I went on a Beatles tour of Liverpool. The next day, we arrived back in Dublin where I got a bus back to Limerick.

*By Brendan*

## **Somebody out there**

As you sit there wondering  
Just maybe somebody out there will hear the sounds

The sound of the ocean  
The sound of the wind  
The sound of the rain  
The sound of the birds nesting and making a home  
The sound of the people chirping in the wind  
The sound of the eyes and what they say

The things that can't be seen can never not be heard  
The beat of the heart that carries the cells  
They hear the sound when the brain takes a breath of peaceful  
harmony  
Which somebody out there will hear

The music is played  
The song is sung  
The dance will never end  
The sound of the vibration from the ground to the tippy toes  
The sound of the land joining the dance  
The sound of the trees  
The sound of the sky  
The sound of the stars  
The sound of the moon  
The sound of the sun

The sound of love

Somebody out there

All around

There's somebody out there that hears the sound

*By Amy*

## **Lahinch heatwave 2018**

Avoiding the jellyfish as we swam

Cooling ourselves from the midday sun

Tremendous camaraderie took hold

As fellow swimmers recognised us of old

Kites were flying high, laughter was loud

Teenagers threw balls along the strand

Children making sandcastles the waves knocked

Toddlers paddled courtesy of Mamma's hand

As the tide started sweeping in

I became aware of many figures donned in burkas

Relishing their freedom on the strand

Being away from their war torn Syria

Later I heard they were a party of ninety

Scattered between three Clare villages

I hope they saw that night's gigantic red sunset

And for that day forgot their numerous dead

*By Sinead*



## **Glenstal Abbey**

We left Labasheeda at 8:30am. We went by bus to Glenstal Abbey and we arrived at 10:10am. We had tea and buns when we arrived and looked around the shop. We went to the library to see a film about Glenstal Abbey. The Barrington's built Glenstal in 1838. The 1916 leaders are remembered by a stone with the leaders' names on it and a tree to remember every one of them. We walked around the garden. Barrington's wife was killed by the IRA in 1921. They left in 1923. Barrington's wife is also remembered by a tree and a stone as well. We saw an icon church on the grounds, which is a small church.

We went to Mass at 12:10pm, celebrated by the monks. We had dinner in the dining room at 1:00pm. In one half of the yard is a secondary school, which is for boarders and day pupils. Rugby, tennis and athletics are sports played here. The other half of the yard is for visitors and the church and icon church, library and shop. The monks are there since 1927. They have seen all the changes in the place since they came. After Mass one of the monks talked about the place and guided us around the grounds. We did a bit of a shop before we left Glenstal Abbey at 3:30pm. We left for Labasheeda and were home by 5:30pm.

*By Tony*

## **Mikhail Baryshnikov**

Mikhail Baryshnikov was born in Riga, Latvia, on 27 January 1948. He is a famous dancer and actor. He started his dance studies at the ballet school in Riga.

He had a very difficult childhood. His father was a very cruel man. His mother left him with his grandmother and then committed suicide. Mikhail stopped communicating with his father.

Mikhail became a soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre in Leningrad. He worked there for seven years and he became famous.

In 1974 he did not return from touring Canada. He stayed there. Then he received an invitation to work in the U.S.A. Nowadays, he is a businessman.

*By Ina*

## **Orange Warsaw Festival**

Orange Warsaw Festival is a music festival in Poland. More than 300 thousand people attend it and listen to live music. Almost 60 bands, singers and DJs perform on stage. They play rock, pop, hip hop, dance and electronic music. These are some of the artists: Kings of Leon, Years & Years, Imagine Dragons, Martin Garrix, Beyoncé, Linkin Park, The Prodigy, The Offspring, Moby, Jamiroquai, Ms. Lauryn Hill, Cypress Hill, Nelly Furtado, Skunk Anansie, Basement Jaxx, Fatboy Slim. The atmosphere is incredible!

The festival takes place at Sluzewiec racecourse, in Warszawa (Warsaw). This year it starts on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

People get there by car, bus, taxi or train. There are a lot of street food and drink stalls and they also sell alcohol. It is great fun for all ages. The experience remains in your memory for a long time. Anyone who likes having fun should go there.

*By Monika*

## **Ayrton Senna**

Ayrton Senna was born in São Paulo on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1960. Today he would be 59 years old.

Three times champion of the world as a Formula One driver, but he got 41 victories in total if we also consider the karts.

His death was very sad for all Brazilians, but many people cried in the whole world. Although his family was rich, he was always a

simple guy; for this he was loved by all. On Sundays, women stopped in front of TVs to look at him. He was famous for his good looks and good humour.

One time he saved the life of a French racing driver, Erik Comas, turning off the engine and helping him to get out of his car. His biggest rival was Alain Prost and, after Prost retired from racing, Michael Schumacher. Great rivals!

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 1994, Rubens Barrichello suffered an accident during the training and was taken to hospital. Senna went to visit him. Barrichello was out of the Grand Prix in Imola, Italy. Sad. The day after was much sadder: the driver Roland Ratzenberger died during qualifying for the San Marino Grand Prix on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1994. That would be enough to cancel the Grand Prix, but the race generates a lot of money and the big carmakers didn't want to cancel it.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May it was Senna's turn. He crashed into a concrete barrier at the Tamburello corner and died a few hours later.

After Senna's death, many people stopped watching the Grand Prix, including me.

*By Clélia*

## **Songkran festival**

Thailand has a water festival (Songkran) every April to celebrate the New Year. It starts on 13<sup>th</sup> April. People visit their families. In the morning, they go to the temple to listen to the monks' prayers. Everybody brings some food to give to the monks. They stay in the temple for two hours.

In the afternoon, people go back to the temple for the water pouring on the monks and the elderly. The monks sit on the chairs. Old people wait in a queue and then sit on the chairs after the monks. They pour water on the hands and feet of the monks first,

and then on the elderly. The water has flowers and some baby powder in it. At the same time, the monks say some prayers and the elderly give you their blessing.

On this day, ladies wear the Thai sarong and men wear long trousers.

After that, people throw water at each other all day. In some places, they play with water in the streets for two days. Everyone participates, young and old.

At night time they have a big dinner and in some houses there is music, drink and dance. In big towns there are free concerts and lots of stalls selling food, clothes and drink all night.

The next day, people go to the temple to give food to the monks and listen to their prayers. When they get home, the young pour water on the hands and feet of their parents and the elders. The parents give them their blessing. Parents get gifts from their children, usually money.

Young people go out in the village and throw water everywhere. Everyone enjoys the day.

*By Ta*

## **A big change, a gigantic adventure**

My name is Ricardo. In this story, I want to talk about my trip to Ireland and my new life here. It started around Christmas of 2017 when I realised that I needed a change in my life because it was difficult to find a stable job in my country. I started to look for a country that suited me because I am a rugby player. I was thinking of Ireland or England. I was looking in forums and websites for work as a volunteer on farms. Finally, I decided it was going to be Ireland.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018 I arrived at my destination: Ballyneety, Limerick, with my survival English ('Hello.' 'How are you?' 'How much?' 'How many?' and a few more words). I started working on a farm as a volunteer with a lovely farmer who loves rugby.

After my first week, I started to look for a rugby club to go training and meet people in the evenings. I found a great club called Garryowen Football Club - everyone is friendly and they are like my rugby family. I remember my first training session as if it was yesterday. When I arrived on the bike, which I had borrowed from the farmer – whose name is John - there was only a boy and a girl and I tried to explain that I was there for training. I had to show them my email because they didn't understand me and I didn't understand them. Now it's funny, but at that moment I was really scared. I then met my rugby colleagues. When I got back to the farm I was very tired, but very happy.

After two weeks, I started to speak a little more English (to my surprise) and I wanted to thank John. On Croker Farm – just in case you want to visit it - you can rent a room with sauna, so I spoke with one of the guests and asked about the best seats to see a rugby match in Thomond Park. I decided to buy two tickets, one for John and one for me.

The day I had been waiting for finally arrived. Munster versus Ulster. We were in the city, close to the stadium where I could soak up the atmosphere. I bought a scarf. Inside the stadium, everything was amazing!

During the match, I explained that I've been a referee in Spain since 2009. John told me that his nephew is a professional referee. When the match was over, we went to talk to John's nephew. We talked about refereeing matches and decisions that we have to make. At the end, he told me how to become a referee in Ireland and I refereed my first match on my last weekend before going back to Spain. I had to do a good job.

That was my last week in Ireland so I was sad because my adventure was coming to the end, but I was also excited about

returning here in June and starting a new adventure. I will tell you about that some other time.

I have to say, I am very happy because I finished my first season as a rugby player with good results; and as a referee on my last match, as an assistant judge, on a final of under-18s in Thomond Park. I am going to work during the summer to improve my fitness and my English for the next season. I will be better than now.

*By Ricardo*

### **The story of two men from my family**

When I was a child, my grandmother told me a story about two Syrian men. The two men, who were related to my family, worked as labourers in the Ottoman army ship. The men were well-built and good swimmers so they were selected to load and unload goods from the ship. The ship often sailed to Europe. In the 1840s when Ireland was going through difficult times, Khaleefah Abdul-Majid I, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, sent some money and food aid by a ship. The two men were on the ship that was stopped and told to return by the British army. But the ship's captain and crew delivered the food aid to Ireland by night according to my grandmother. One of the men died while working on a ship and my grandmother did not know more about the other man.

*By Ali*

### **My learning journey**

This is an overall view of my start in adult education in Clonroad. It was my first time living away from home. Two people in the house encouraged me to go to adult education.

I met with the guidance counsellor, Conor, who is attached to the Clonroad college. First, we talked about previous experience and interests. We came to the conclusion that a retail and catering

course would be suitable, as I have retail experience. The culinary part of the course was given by Nora. This included food, nutrition & healthy options; and breads, pastries & desserts. I got great value from this section of the course, as a lot of the material was new to me. Nora was very helpful throughout.

The retail section of the course was mainly presented by Laura and Margaret. This covered areas such as digital media and word processing. During this part of the course, my computer skills were greatly enhanced due to the excellent tutoring I was given. The next course I did was office administration. This course is a good foundation for anybody interested in reception & office administration. At the end of the course, I discussed career preparation with Trish. I was interested in childcare at level 5 but I felt this was a big step to take on, having just come from a full level 3 award. As a result, I discovered a business administration course at level 4, which I thought would be very useful and would bridge the gap. I did IT, career planning and business calculations.

At the end of the year, I did an interview to get onto childcare QQI level 5. I was successful. I am currently doing this course, with Barbara and Marian as my main tutors. They have been very supportive throughout and made my pathway easy as they monitored my progress and advised on approaches to study and work experience. They gave me assignments to carry out and always gave good instruction and encouragement, which made it easier for me to understand the assignment and complete it. I am enjoying all the modules, in particular the work experience part. I am doing one hundred and twenty hours work experience. One of my ambitions when I was younger was to work with children and also to combine this with my art background. I will be applying for SNA positions once my course is finished at the end of June.

I would not have been able to achieve all of this without the brilliant help from all of my tutors at the LCETB, Ennis.

*By Jane*

## **My life**

My name is Lily. I am from the Travelling community. In my own family there is Margaret, Tom and myself. I am an only child. My childhood was great. My parents are fantastic role models. My father can't read or write but that has never stopped him in achieving what he wants to achieve. My mother is a very inspiring woman. She did not have a lot of education when she was young. She encouraged me to do my Leaving Cert and to obtain my lifeguard awards. She went back to education herself. She has come a long way, considering she didn't go to school very often in her childhood. She is a qualified childcare worker and she loves her job.

To be honest with you, I never wanted to do my Leaving Cert, but she encouraged me to do it. The reason I didn't want to do it is because I am dyslexic. I was embarrassed about it, but my mother and I talked to my principal and help was organised. My reading and writing improved and at the end of the day, I am glad to have done my Leaving Cert. Always seek help if you have problems with reading and writing.

Another thing I loved about my school was that I had great friendships there, never got bullied and nobody ever gave up on me. I made friends for life and I appreciate everything that was done for me. The last day of school was very difficult for me. I had made so many friends. We all had a great bond – my friends, teachers and principal. They were all excellent and were there during the hard times when I needed them. My grandparents were very proud of me. I was the second in the family to do the Leaving Cert and the first Traveller in my school to do so. I got an award from the school for this, but the award was also given to me for just being me. It was a very emotional day for me. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry that day. I would love to encourage young Travellers to do their Leaving Cert and bond with the settled community. We are all equal in God's eyes.

I gave a speech once to the pupils and teachers in my school, all three hundred of them. I spoke about the joy in being in that school and all it has given me. I also spoke about Traveller culture. Some of the questions I was asked were about the Traveller way of



life, e.g. marriage. I was asked about Travellers getting married at a young age. I told them that, personally, there was a lot I had to do before that.

When I finished school, I did a QQI level 4 tourism and hospitality course. I have a hunger to keep on learning and I intend to do a childcare course like my mother. During my time on the tourism course, I got the opportunity to fulfil one of my dreams. I became a fully qualified lifeguard. Alongside this award and my childcare course, I hope to become a swimming coach.

I am a people person and I made lots of friends whilst doing this course. Some, I knew already and are from the settled community, and others were new to me. We all mixed very well and everyone was treated equally.

My mother is a great example to me. She finally won the battle when I achieved my Leaving Cert. I never saw a mother as proud of her child as she was of me that day. She is very inspiring. She dreams big and treats everyone equally. She is always there for people and gives them a helping hand. She is very caring and a great mother. She is one in a million.

*By Lily*

## **The last**

My name is Kathleen. They say that every object tells a story. My object is a last.

I think the last is over 200 years old. It was handed down to my father, Dennis, who used the last to repair shoes for the family and neighbours.

The last was made from cast iron. I don't know who gave it to my father, nor where it was made, but it does have some numbers and letters on it.

My father had two lasts: a big one for the men's boots, and a smaller one was for the women's and children's shoes.

### *Mending the shoes*

When the day was wet my father would not be able to work outside and so he would stay indoors and mend the shoes. I was one of seven children. My father would send one or two of us to Paddy Barry's shop in Miltown Malbay, which was three miles away, for the leather, and the tacks and metal tips for the shoes. The tips were for the toes and the heels of the shoes. We used to cycle into town and walk back home with the leather, which was too big for us to cycle with. The leather was a hard flat sheet.

When my father had the leather, he would put the shoe on it first and draw around it with his pencil. He kept the pencil behind his ear. He cut out the leather then with a special knife. With the small scraps of leather he would do the same for the heel.

Then he would start at the toe of the sole of the shoe with the first tack to secure it in position, and then work back from there finishing near the heel. Then he'd do the same with the heel.

He would trim the leather after that with his special leather knife. This knife had to be kept very sharp. He sharpened it on a sharpening strap that was fastened at one end to the sash window and he held the other end in his hand. He'd run the knife up and down the leather strap to hone the blade. He'd trim off the excess leather around the sole, and then file the edges with his rasp. Then he'd wet his thumb and smooth off the hairy edges. Last of all he'd hammer on the tips, which had spikes in them, onto the toe. For the heel, he'd nail on the segs, which were horseshoe shaped. These would help the soles and heels from wearing too quickly.

### *Caring for our shoes*

When we came home from school, if our boots were wet, we'd to take off our boots and lay them sideways at the gullet to dry out. Air would come in through the gullet to dry the inside of the shoes.

At night time we had to pack the boots with *The Clare Champion*, screwed up.

He said you should never leave any boots or shoes standing up on their soles. Instead lay them on their sides to let air go into them.

*By Kathleen*

## **Pendant watch**

I got a lovely pendant watch from my aunt, Kathleen, who lived in America, when she came home on holiday to Ireland in 1952.

I was overwhelmed and loved the pendant watch so much, and I didn't want to wear it just in case I lost it. When I did wear it I was so proud of it, and everyone admired it. At the time I had not seen a pendant watch before, only wristwatches or the pin-on watches that nurses wear.

When I came by the pendant watch it wasn't a new one. My aunt had been wearing it herself, and wanted me to have it to remember her by. It's hard to put an age on it but my aunt went to America when she was 18.

My aunt Kathleen met her husband-to-be, Joe, on the boat going to America. She was six weeks on the boat. Arriving in America, they kept in touch, and they married a few years later. They had four children.

My aunt worked as a hairdresser and beautician in New York, and she loved jewellery. Whenever she came home to Ireland, she would always bring bits and pieces of jewellery with her and often leave some with me to wear, as I was her only niece in Ireland. I always really appreciated these gifts because jewellery was very dear here in Ireland and I particularly liked jewellery. She gave me bracelets too.

Everyone got parcels from America. Some you'd like and some you wouldn't. If you didn't like it, you'd pass it on to neighbours; same with the jewellery.

*By Mary*

## **My blue rosary**

My name is Mary. I grew up in rural County Sligo and, in February 1959, when I was 18 years old, I went to Coventry to train as a nurse.

This was a time before Skype or mobile phones, so my only contact with home was by post. As well as getting letters, my mother used to send me the local paper, *The Sligo Champion*.

Every year, in our local church in the month of May, we had a mission (a week of prayer, and missionary priests preaching the gospel). Outside the church, stalls were set up where people could buy holy objects.

That May, after I arrived in Coventry, I got my usual post. But this time, when I opened the paper, neatly tucked inside it was a blue rosary beads. My mother was browsing at the stalls after the mission ceremony when she picked up the rosary and thought it would be nice to send it to me. In the 60 years since they were gifted to me, the rosary beads have been with me - one of my most treasured possessions.

When I went to Coventry, I travelled along with another girl that I didn't know before then. Her sister had trained in the same hospital we were going to. We travelled by plane because we had reduced fares from Aer Lingus for being nursing students. I think that is still the case for nurses. Although I had left my own family behind in Sligo, I found a second family among the other girls with whom I worked.

When we finished our general training, we trained as midwives. Part of the time, this work was visiting expectant mothers in their

homes. We cycled from house to house just like in *Call the Midwife*, but our mothers did not live in tenements. Coventry had been bombed and was completely rebuilt after the Second World War, so all the houses were new.

My husband and I returned to Ireland in 1969 to his home place in County Clare with our two older children, and we had six more children after that. When my family was reared, I returned to nursing.

I still use my rosary.

*By Mary*

## **Rosary**

My name is Mary, and every object has a story. My story is about a rosary beads.

My cousin in England gave it to me 5 or 6 years ago after his mother, my aunt, Mary, died. It belonged to his mother but, originally, it had been my great-grandmother's rosary.

My grandmother, Nora, gave it to my aunt, Mary, when she was going to England. My aunt moved to England when she was 18, and became a nurse.

My grandmother, Honora (shortened to Nora), and grandfather, Daniel, and all the family used to say the rosary every evening when all the work was done, kneeling on the flag floor in front of the big open hearth fire. If a neighbour called in while the family was saying the rosary, they would also get down on their knees and join in. Everyone carried their own rosary beads in their pockets. There was no electricity until the 1950s, so in the winter time, the Tilley lamps would be lighting over the fireplace. Before they had the Tilley lamps they had oil lamps over the fireplace, which were smaller lamps than the Tilley.

The rosary is very sentimental to me. I use it myself to say the rosary. It's very special because it was my great grandmother's. One day I will give it to my daughter, Claire, and I expect she will give it to her daughter, Róisín.

*Saying the rosary:*

Bless yourself  
Say a short prayer  
The Creed (I believe in God)  
Our Father  
3 x Hail Mary  
The Glory

*The decades - 3 different decades:*

Joyful Mysteries - on Mon, Thurs  
Sorrowful Mysteries - on Tues, Fri  
Glorious Mysteries – on Weds, Sat, Sun  
Hail Holy Queen  
Litany of Our Lady  
Get up off your knees, bless yourself and go.

*By Mary*

## **The candlesticks**

*The story begins*

I have a pair of brass candlesticks, 23cm tall, which were a gift to my mother and father for their wedding in 1937.

*From London to Mayo*

My mother and father lived in Oxford. During the war my mother came home to Ireland with my two sisters, Mary and Teresa. She was pregnant with me at the time. She often talked about the lights being out in London, and how dark it was until they got to the boat at Holyhead. From there, she had to travel to Dublin,

and then from Dublin to Westport, Co. Mayo. I am sure that was a very hard journey! She took as many things as she could with her. That is how the candlesticks ended up in Mayo.

### *Blessing of the candles*

My grandmother used to clean the church, and my sister says that my grandmother had the candlesticks blessed in the church.

### *Pride of place*

The candlesticks were on the mantelpiece always and we were told not to touch Granny's candlesticks! When people died locally, their families would often have borrowed the candlesticks as, back then, people were waked in the house. Some people did not have any candlesticks of their own. I remember that the candlesticks also went to the church a couple of times.

People also borrowed the candlesticks when they had the *Stations of the Cross* in their homes.

### *A light in the window*

The candlesticks were always lit at Christmas. At Christmas time, it was red candles that were lit. In those days, people did not light candles until Christmas Eve.

We got electricity into our home in the late 1950s, but as there were no electric candles then, the pair of brass candlesticks was still in use every Christmas until the family moved to England in 1961.

### *From Mayo to Clare*

When my grandmother died, the candlesticks were packed away and lay in a shed for several years. When my sister moved from England to Westport, she unpacked lots of my grandmother's belongings. In conversation with her one evening, I asked for a keepsake of my grandmother's. She offered me the candlesticks.

I was delighted to bring them to Dunsallagh to take pride of place on my own mantelpiece.

*By Bridget*

## **Purple Heart medal**

Mark Craig was born in Portnoo, Co. Donegal in 1910. He was third eldest of a family of eight. I'm told he was a fun-loving character who loved music and was a good singer who also wrote songs to commemorate local events.

Work was difficult to find at the time and he helped his father, my grandfather, who was a carpenter.

Mark followed his older sister to America where he joined the American army. He served there for some years, before being sent to France as Platoon Sergeant in AT Company of 114th Infantry Regiment in the 44th Infantry Division.

Marc (as the Americans spelled his name) spent some months in France. He was in charge of three gun crews and one mine platoon.

According to Bob Deich, who was in his platoon, and whom my son Connor managed to make contact with, 'Marc was known as Red. He grew a red goatee while in combat in Europe. He was a dedicated and terrific soldier who could be known as a soldier's soldier.'

On 26th November 1944, in Schalbach, the barn Mark was sleeping in was hit by shellfire. He died that night from wounds that he suffered. Mark is buried in Epinal American Cemetery.

He was awarded the Purple Heart '*for military merit and for wounds received*' in action on 18th January 1945.

*Tin fiddle*



Before going to America, Mark worked with a local farmer in Co. Donegal. This man recognised his love of music and he gave Mark an old tin fiddle which, I am told, he used regularly.

When Mark went to America, he left the fiddle at home. As my children were involved in music, my mother, Mark's sister, gave the fiddle to them. I showed it to Niall Crehan, one of the famous musical Crehan family who had a music shop in Dublin. He took the fiddle back with him and returned it a year later, having restrung and cleaned it and repaired the bridge.

The Crehans returned all the original parts and they told me that the fiddle was made by a tinsmith, but he was obviously also a fiddle player as the design is so perfect.

*By Pat*

## **My quilt (bedspread)**

My knitted quilt has been handed down to me from my mother, via my grandmother and great grandmother. We think it is around 150 years old. It is 200cm by 220cm. The story goes that the quilt was started by my great-grandmother, Honor, 1847 to 1911. She married my great grandfather, Patrick in, we think, 1870. They had 6 children, John, Ellen (known as Elsie), Thomas, Nora, Catherine and Margaret. My grandmother, Elsie, always told us that they (the girls) all worked on the quilt, usually at night, knitting as part of the family pastime, and education in needlework.

They loved that time together and learned from each other how to do the stitches and follow patterns. The material used in making the knitted quilt was white cotton thread. This had been used to sew up the flour bags that came to the house full of white flour for bread making. Grain was grown locally and brought to the mill in Kilrush, where it was milled into flour. The flour bags were approximately 1.5 yards by 1.5 yards when opened out. It took four of these bags to make a double bed sheet. They'd have boiled the cloth to soften it first, and bleached it. The flour bags

were also used as pillowcases, feather filled, using feathers from farmyard fowl. I remember collecting the feathers from the geese at Christmas time. They'd go up your nose; the down from the ducks and geese was so fine.

We had two men working on the farm. The women who'd come to help with the plucking were their mothers. Their families would have been given a gift of food at Christmas. Bigger families would get a goose. The smaller families would get a duck. Later, we'd start rearing turkeys.

It took two years or more to collect all the cotton thread from the sacks. It was rolled up in balls to wash it and to straighten it out. (The thread was also used for sewing up stuffed goose.) Knitting and crochet were the crafts used mostly in the family. My quilt is knitted, and each of the girls took turns in doing it, knitting long strips with different Aran patterns, which were later sewn together.

My mother never used the quilt. When she passed away, I felt it was a shame that no one had seen it or used it. So, one day, I took it out and I repaired the bits that needed mending. I washed it and bleached it. I am using it now in my guest bedroom, and all my friends and relatives visiting love it. And I love it.

*By Toní*

## **Sewing sampler**

I cherish the memories in the sampler that my auntie, Nora, made. Nora (known to us as Mother Monica FCJ) made the stitched samplers at her training college, and had them presented at her needlework examination. She joined the FCJs (the Faithful Companions of Jesus, a French order) in Limerick, and went away to training college. When she returned, it was to Bunclody in Wexford.

On the sampler, there are examples of:

how to make a patch; a tab; darning to repair a hole; pleating; embroidery; buttonhole; flat seam and French seam; gathers; hemming; cut thread work; and cross stitched initials 'N M' for my aunt's initials.

*By Toní*

## **Butter moulds**

I have wooden hand carved butter moulds. They were used to make very decorative detailed shapes using homemade country butter, and served on the visit of important people and on special occasions. They were given to me by my cousin, May, as a sentimental gift in remembrance of my childhood days when I spent my summer holidays in her home in Rhine. I can remember filling these moulds with that lovely salted homemade butter in the mid-1950s, so they are very special to me, and tell their own story. May later worked as housekeeper for Dr. Paddy Hillary in Spanish Point, and continued when he was president in Áras an Uachtaráin.

These moulds tell me today of the lifestyle, customs and everyday happenings in Rhine back then, that sadly are now gone, and I cannot see returning. I have a picture of a farmhouse consisting of kitchen, scullery, parlour, 3 bedrooms on the ground floor and a garret upstairs where I slept. All the household furniture was handmade, and whitewash made from 'lump lime' was used to paint the house inside and outside.

Fruit, vegetables and potatoes came from the kitchen garden. Meat, which was mainly poultry, bacon and rabbit, as well as the milk for butter, and bread, were all produced on the farm. Knitting and dress-making provided most of the family's costumes, and their fire fuel was the turf and the bog deal saved from the bog. Their mode of transport was the pony and trap for to take us to town now and then, and to Mass every Sunday. The pony and gig was used for work on the farm and to take the milk to the

creamery. Food for the livestock consisted of grass, hay, fodder beet, and turnips and potatoes cut up in the pulper. Above all, I can recall the loyalty and true bond of friendship among all the neighbours, always ready to help one another.

These stories really helped me when I worked my own shop for forty years, and helped me to fight some of the changes that came during that period. The biggest change of all was that as a young boy I could see people were so dependent on each other but, by the time I retired from business in 2005, people were trying so hard to be independent of each other.

So when I look at my butter moulds, I can always recall these memories and tell these stories, and envy those people of my childhood who were self-sufficient and happy.

*By Michael*

## **Knitted cotton quilt**

### *The humble flour bag*

'A flour sack or flour bag is a cloth sack, usually made of cheap cotton, used to store flour.

Because they came along with the purchase of essential flour, flour sacks were universally recycled and used by many cultures as a source of free textiles for clothing and other necessities.

Flour sack towels were used in domestic residences for quite some time. In the past, flour sacks would be bleached, washed, cut and sewed by the homemakers so as to use them in many different ways.' (From *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopaedia)

Flour sacks were designed with easy use in mind. Sacks were stitched along one side and across the bottom with a simple chain stitch so that stitching could be removed by clipping the top loop and pulling out the entire line of stitching very quickly. The string could be saved for other uses – knitting and crochet.

The knitted cotton quilt is a fine example of how the thrifty housewife put her talents to use when times were hard, and money and materials scarce. *Swirling Star* is a pattern from the 1800s and from examples of photos or works found in museums and private collections. (McCall's *New Book of Country Needlecrafts*).

Swirling stars are knitted from the centre out, using double pointed needles. The striped corners are achieved by using a Quaker stitch. Mine is a double bed size quilt but the pattern can be adapted to any size using more or less squares.

My quilt has been handed down to me through my parents and grandparents and is a treasured keepsake.

My mother was overjoyed when we eventually found the pattern for the family heirloom in McCall's *New Book of Country Needlecrafts*. She went on to create her own masterpiece, which she used as a quilt for her own bed. Later on, my neighbour gifted me a smaller quilt for my baby for his cot.

These quilts are a precious link with the past and present members of my family and, hopefully, they will be treasured in the next generation.

*By Mary*

## **Patrick Pearse Ten Shilling Silver Commemorative Coin (1966)**

In 1966, in an initial attempt at decimalisation, a ten shilling piece was introduced in Ireland. Its design commemorates the Easter Rising of 1916.

It features the portrait of Pádraig Pearse facing right, and is the only Irish circulating coin to depict the bust of anyone associated with Irish history or politics. The reverse is a beautiful sculpture of the mythical warrior Cúchulainn by Oliver Sheppard to be found in the General Post Office, Dublin. Although an official memorial to the Rising in the run up to the twentieth anniversary, it really came from the Celtic revivalist interest in the myth of Cúchulainn. It was the first Irish coin to feature an engraved edge – *Éirí amach na Cásca 1916*.

The object was given to me in 1969 as part of the christening tradition of giving a baby its first silver coin by placing it in the baby's hand before the ceremony began, thereby ensuring a prosperous life ... whether that is how it happened or it was just handed over, I will never know! The gift bearer was Jack, a fellow Clare man who worked alongside my father. Both had emigrated to Jersey in the early 1960s to work in the booming construction industry there. They were part of a tight-knit but rapidly growing Irish community in the island, and took much pride in their own heritage. This is reflected in this gift, which would have been a rare enough commodity in the Channel Islands!

Move forward to 1978 and this coin was to spark my initial interest in Irish heritage when it took pride of place in my coin collection, which I presented at the age of nine to gain my Brownie 'Collector' interest badge. During the badge examination I was asked which coin was my favourite? I chose this one, simply as it reminded me of a chunky silver coin a pirate would pull out of a treasure chest and dig his teeth into to determine its authenticity! I was also drawn towards the fascinating image of Cúchulainn and the raven on his shoulder and wondered at the story behind it.

At the time I did not yet appreciate the meaning of the commemorative coin, understand the inscription on the edge, know anything about this figurehead or of the statue depicting a mythical scene on the reverse side of the coin; however, that was to change.

A year later, my family moved back to Ireland and I was attending Scoil Náisiúnta Mágh (Moy, Lahinch) which, in 1981, was recognised by the Department of Education as the first all-Irish school. In latter years, I have realised that this mirrored the same ground-breaking teaching practices initiated by Pádraig Pearse himself (e.g. Pearse was closely associated with the song 'Óró sé do bheatha bhaile,' for which he wrote additional lyrics – a tune we frequently sang in competitions or played on the tin whistle in the school marching band!).

When I look at this coin now, this keepsake reminds me of fond memories growing up in the Irish community in Jersey in the '70s. It also encapsulates my passion for the many aspects of our heritage. I can read the writing around the edge – to quote Pádraig Pearse himself, 'Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam' – 'a country without a language is a country without a soul.' I have visited the statue of Cúchulainn in Dublin and appreciate what the coin represents.

I appreciated it even more when I found out when looking into the story behind this object that of the two million minted, apparently nearly one and a quarter million of them were subsequently melted down due to lack of uptake; that said, it still remains my favourite in the collection!

*By Ann Marie*