

Simply Said 2012



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Co. Clare VEC
Clare Adult Basic Education Service

*A Collection of Writings
by Students
of the
Co. Clare
Adult Basic Education Service*

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Foreword

Welcome to the 24th edition of *Simply Said*, the annual publication of writings by adult learners taking part in programmes with the Clare Adult Basic Education Service. Between the covers are stories, words of wisdom, poems, recipes and much more.

This year's writings celebrate life experiences, family gatherings, journeys that bring joy and memories that lift the spirit. Some tell of loss and of sadness too, or pay tribute to those who have made an impression on the writer's life. Others tell of the work that people do and the pastimes that they love. Many of this year's writers have found what is special in everyday life, perhaps in furnishing a room or in cooking a meal. Their insights offer a real gift to the reader.

We would like to thank CABES learners in North Clare who made the wonderful quilt that is pictured on the cover of this year's *Simply Said*. The quilt is called *Uisce*, the Irish word for water and reflects the importance of water in our lives, globally and locally. The quilt design was inspired by discussions on the importance of water on Pemba Island, Tanzania and on our own island of Ireland. At the heart of these discussions was a focus on making ethical choices that help to create a fairer world.

Special thanks are due to our volunteer tutors who encourage learners to value the knowledge that they have and support them on their learning journeys. Thanks also and well done to those involved in the planning and production of *Simply Said* 2012.

Finally, and most importantly, congratulations and thank you to all who have written stories for this year's publication!

Best wishes,

The CABES team

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A shocking disaster

An earthquake is one of the most terrible kinds of natural calamities. There are various kinds of disasters. There are earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, wildfires, tsunamis and communicable diseases etc. Man may escape other kinds of calamities but if an earthquake occurs, there is no way out.

A massive earthquake hit the north-east of Japan on 11 March 2011, triggering a tsunami that caused extensive damage. The quake was the fifth largest in the world since 1900 and nearly 8000 times stronger than the one which devastated Christchurch and New Zealand in February 2011. This earthquake measured above 8.9 on the Richter scale.

The tsunami rolled across the Pacific Ocean and moved towards the north-east coast of Japan. Cars, ships, trains and buildings were swept away and thousands of people lost their lives. In short, big cities like Tokyo were wiped away. Thousands of people were ordered to evacuate the coastal areas. Hours later, the tsunami hit Hawaii and places as far away as South America, Canada, Alaska and the entire U.S. West coast were put on alert.

Due to the massive earthquake and tsunami, one of the biggest nuclear power plants in Fukushima broke down and it resulted in producing hazardous radiation to the entire world. The death toll rose throughout the day but the true extent of the disaster was not known because roads to the worst hit areas were washed away or blocked by debris and airports were closed.

After the shock of this disaster, it still affects the economical, industrial and scientific growth of the country. Because of the radiation Japan has lost its export status with other countries in the world for a while. This was one of the biggest earthquakes and tsunamis that have happened recently in the whole world. The shock of the huge death toll and massive loss is still with the people in Japan.

By Jiby

A woman I admire

I admire my mother. She loves me and my sister and my brother. She is ready to help us any time and it doesn't matter how she is feeling herself. She is never downcast.

My mother bakes very good pancakes. Not just anyone bakes such good pancakes.

By Tatiana

An Easter tradition in Poland

In Poland we have a lot of traditions at Easter. One of them is preparing a basket with food and blessing it in the church on Easter Saturday. We put in the basket meat, bread, painted eggs, horseradish, salt and a figure of a lamb, which is a symbol of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The basket is decorated with white cloth.

We go to church to bless the food and the next day on Easter Sunday we prepare a big breakfast with all of the family and we share the blessed food.

By Urszula

Basil

Basil is my dog. He arrived for Halloween three years ago this year. My son and his friend thought they would surprise me with him as all my children had left home and they thought I might do with some company. When I saw him first I said "take him back", I did not want a dog. He is a medium-sized dog, black with a little brown and biscuit colour. He was so funny to watch running around with his little short legs and the ears flopping away.

We kept him in the shed by night for a few months and in the house by day. Now he has his own little couch in the kitchen day and night. He is obsessed about playing with the tennis ball or any ball. If he hears anyone playing ball anywhere he is over to them. One day I locked him in the shed as I had a few young children outside playing, next thing I saw him halfway out the window and stuck. It was so funny to see him.

I am so glad I called him after Basil Fawlty. He is just as crazy and so funny. I spend a good bit of time throwing the ball for him a few times a day up the field. Great exercise for me as well. He can run very fast, I think there must be a greyhound somewhere in the family tree. He can do a very funny thing with his ears. When you are talking to him he puts his ears straight up and out and they are big ears. I call them his aerals.

He knows that if he takes a shoe or something that he should not have that we will give him a treat like a bit of ham or a dog biscuit. He knows when someone is due home from work as he is inside the door a half hour before the car turns in.

I love him so much as he is a real true friend, never grumpy, unfriendly or in a bad mood. His yearly visits to the vet do not go too well as first he does not like the journey in the car. Then he does not like to be put on a table and examined. He has growled at the vet a few times. I will put a muzzle on him for the next visit. He will of course give me his sad look. I think Basil is the dog that won the lottery.

By Mary

A letter to my mother

Dear Mother
Every day I miss you more
How I wish that you could walk through the door
And sit with me and talk some more about the
Good old days.
The good times and the bad times
The way you used to sing and tell me stories
Of your younger years,
I think I took them for granted, I thought you
Would never die, but when you did part of me
Went with you,
We cannot turn back time, only look forward to
The future, when we met again and then I will
Never let you go.

By Joe

A lady from Kosovo

My name is Besa. I'm from Kosovo. I live in Ennis. I'm married and I have four children. I have two sisters and two brothers in Kosovo.

In February I passed the Driver's Theory Test. I'm very happy.

By Besa

Mother's economy bread pudding

I am now middle aged but discussing different types of cakes and recipes brought me back to my youth, where I had happy memories of my mother's baking and how she managed on a tight budget; such were the times.

We all loved her homemade bread pudding as did my husband when we first met. She would collect day old crusty bread, soak it in milk or water (if she had extra milk). She would squeeze out excess liquid from the bread and beat together egg, left over milk with cinnamon and sugar. She then added some raisins or sultanas, put the mixture in a pudding dish and baked it in the oven for 40 to 50 minutes at 180°C

By Margaret

My first year in Ireland

When I came here I found it difficult to live in Ireland because I didn't know any people or any places. But after some months I met someone who talked to me and asked me about my country. I told her I didn't know any places in Ireland so she said: "I can take you out." I said: "Okay." That's how I know many places in Dublin.

By Mabel

Education

I came to Ireland ten years ago. I didn't know anybody and it was difficult for me. I didn't understand English. One Tuesday morning I went to town and I met somebody. He spoke to me slowly in English so I could understand him. He was a Ghanaian man. Then, one day somebody told me about Adult Education. I started English classes. I love English. It has given me understanding.

By Theresa

Thai Ta

My name is Ta. I came to live in Ireland in 2011 but the first time I came to this country I was on holiday, in 2005. It was the first time I travelled to Europe. Everything is different from my country. Ireland is very green, clean and quiet. It has beautiful houses and nice food. The weather is so changeable- four seasons in one day! Also, people are very nice. In 2011 I came to Ireland to stay. I came to school and met students from many countries. I am happy here but I always miss my family in Thailand. I have planned to visit them every year. Thank you Ireland.

By Ta

Now I am happy

My name is Aissatou. I am from Guinea. When I came to Ireland life was difficult because I didn't speak English. I cried all the time because I missed my family. I wanted to go back home. When I had my second child I felt: "Now I am very happy because I live with my own family." Now I go to English classes at the Adult Education Centre. The teachers are very nice.

By Aissatou

I want to drive

My name is Nazi. I'm from Turkey. I live in Ennis. I'm married. I have four children. My sister has three children and my brother has two children.

My husband can drive. I want to drive, too. I took lessons and I did the Driver's Theory Test. I passed. I am very happy. I like school.

By Nazi

Enjoying Ireland

My name is Polina. I'm from Belarus. I'm fifty-eight years old. I have been in Ireland about eleven years. I worked in a mushroom factory and met a lot of nice people. People in this country are very nice. My English was not very good, it was hard to speak but I could understand what people talked about. I lived in Tubber and now I live in Ennis. I study English at the Adult Education Centre in town.

Last January I went to Belarus for my holidays and had a nice time. I am happy, enjoying my life in this country.

By Polina

I am Indian

My name is Ghazala. I'm Indian. I came to Ireland in 2006. I love my family very much. I have two children. When they go to school and my husband goes to work I stay a few hours alone at home. I miss my mom and dad. That's why I am always busy doing something. I could not speak good English so last year I came to the Adult Education Centre. Here I am learning English. The teachers are very nice. I made lots of friends. I am happy when I come to class. I speak to my parents four times a week and I talk to my brothers twice a week. I want to go to India very soon and spend a lot of time with my family and my friends.

By Ghazala

Indian style rice and vegetable curry

To make the rice: fry rice in sunflower oil, add boiling water to cover. Next add to the rice 2 cinnamon sticks, 3 green cardamom seeds, some cloves and salt. Cover and simmer until the water is gone.

To make the curry: make a curry paste with 6 tablespoons of curry powder, one tablespoon vegetable bouillon, one tin of chopped tomatoes, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sunflower oil and some sifted flour. Stirring with a whisk slowly add the paste to a small saucepan half filled with boiling water, simmer and stir with the whisk until thickened.

Meanwhile cook broccoli and carrots in a saucepan of water. Fry a chopped onion until it is brown at the edges. Fry a chopped red bell pepper and some garlic in a separate frying pan.

When cooked, mix all the vegetables and the curry sauce together with a can of drained chick peas or kidney beans. Heat thoroughly. Serve with the rice. Serves 4 to 6 people.

By Adam

Drown Marzanna

Drown Marzanna is a traditional ritual in Poland on the 1st day of spring. We make a puppet and plunge it into a river or pond. If Marzanna drowns, winter comes back. If she floats, winter swims away with Marzanna and spring arrives.

By Magdalena

Someone I admire

The person I admire had difficulty with speech as a child. Next, in spite of the fact that he did not reach the required standard in several subjects in the entrance exam to the Polytechnic School, he passed the entrance. After graduating, he spent almost two frustrating years searching for a job. Finally, a classmate's father helped him secure a job as a clerk in the patent office.

The reason I admire him is that he did not give up after all these difficulties he met and he did not stay as an ordinary citizen who works a routine of eight hours work and then rests. Instead, he was developing the areas of study in which he was passionately interested. With a few friends, he started a small discussion group called 'the Olympic Academy'. A few years later, he became one of the most famous professors of physics and an extraordinary mathematics professor.

Unlike most people, he was not looking in just one direction. He also obtained doctorates in science, medicine and philosophy. His insightful theories about time and energy have changed the world of science forever. What inspires me most is his philosophical view of the world. He was also a great philosopher who did not touch the dirty political establishment. He declined the offer to become the President of Israel. He was warning people, together with another great philosopher, Bertrand Russell about the dangers of nuclear technology before the United States used an atomic weapon in Japan. Science involved him very much, but it did not destroy his heart or his humanity. He fell in love a few times, he had a few romances, and he was twice married. In my own life, every time I am lost, I stick on one idea. One of his famous citations always helps me to stand up, to take off, and to find solutions to problems. "Everything should be made as simple as it is possible, but not simpler" – the words of Albert Einstein.

By Emil

I like Ireland

My name is Lidia. I'm from Moldova. I love my family very much. I have two children. I like life in Ireland very much because it is very different from my country. I live in Ennis. I go to church every Sunday. I am very lucky because I am healthy and I have many friends.

By Lidia

My visit to Lourdes

We went to Lourdes on 22nd September, 2010. We went with the Franciscans. It cost us €700.00. I saved up €50.00 a week since January for it.

We were in the Hotel Solitaire, there were seven stories. We had to take the lift up to our bedroom.

There were 3 of us in the one room and that didn't suit me, I would have preferred a room of my own or sharing with one person. The food was good.

We had mass twice a day and the candle light procession. We stayed there five days.

We had benediction and a mass in a foreign language on a Sunday. We went on a bus tour up the mountains on a Friday.

We had coffee and apple cake in a little café in a town at the top. On a Sunday we got a bus tour in one of their open buses round Lourdes.

We came home on a Monday and the plane trip was great. We had a snack in the plane on the way back.

By Mary Ellen

Music – my hobby

I have been playing music since I was 14 years of age. I played in "The Favourite" in London with musicians from Waterford and Mullingar in 1994. I used to play on the stage. I was working in the buildings to get the price of a house.

I came home and last year, I played in Glór in Ennis on stage. I like playing Irish music for a pastime.

By Níall

The United States Army

During the 1950's to the 70's the U.S. army was involved in 3 wars. The World War (1939 – 45), the Korean War (1950) and the Vietnam War (1960 – 70).

A popular TV series called M.A.S.H. was based in the Korean War. Korea broke into two, South and North Korea. The Americans forced the North Koreans back up North.

To this day they are facing down each other. One is looking at the other.

By Gerard

Basmati rice with lemon and thyme

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups of water

½ teaspoon salt

¾ cup of basmati rice

½ medium size lemon

1 tablespoon fresh thyme chopped

Pinch of white pepper

Method:

1. Bring the water to the boil in a saucepan and add the salt and rice.
2. Grate the rind of the lemon and add to the rice with the juice of the lemon.
3. Cover the saucepan and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes until the rice is tender and the water has been absorbed.
4. Stir in the fresh chopped thyme and some pepper.

By Adam

President Obama's visit to Ireland

President Obama is the American President. He was born in Hawaii, in the United States.

He arrived here in May 2011. A breezy morning it was. There were several hundred people out to welcome both him and his wife Michelle. He has got two daughters in the family, Malia and Sasha.

When he arrived in Moneygall, he had a drink there, a pint of stout.

On the next Presidential election, we don't know as yet who will win. It would be nice if Obama was re-elected.

Barrick Obama was the first ever black President to be elected. Good luck to him.

By Mary

The old man

My story is about when I got my new house. I was so nervous moving in because I knew nobody on the road and I was on my own with three small children.

The first day I moved in, a knock came to the door and there was an old man standing there, welcoming me to the road.

That was 12 years ago and we became such good friends. We always said that we adopted each other. He helped me with my kids and he became part of my family and used to tell me that my dad sent him to look after us.

In 2009 he got really sick and I looked after him. Then he ended up in a home. I used to go to see him twice a day. When I go to see him I'd bring him a fag. It was a long walk from his room to the smoking area and he used to call it "walking the green mile".

Unfortunately in 2010 he died, it broke my heart and to this day I believe that my dad sent him to me.

By Anne

From the slow lane to the fast one

When I was going to school there was a lot of work done for less of a return than there is today. For example in the line of tillage for farmers, West Clare in general was a bad place for tillage. The land isn't good enough. The exceptions were patches of good deep bog land or patches of fairly good upland. In good upland, horses were used in tillage a lot, but in low-down bog land they would rather do it by all manual labour, such as forks, shovels and spades.

The crops having been sown and growing, the manual work continued. Some people had grubbers. They were adjustable rakes drawn by donkeys in bog land and ponies and horses in upland and both ways.

The most of the weeding was done by shovel and a lot of hand work. It went on during the growing season. The weeds seemed to have an advantage over the cultivated crops, as far as growth was concerned.

Thankfully during the 60's, tractors and machinery became plentiful in the better land. They started sowing a massive scale. Potatoes and all vegetables were coming to the shops. The quality was good and they were not so dear. So people started buying gradually and large scale tillage in West Clare disappeared,

There was also a big change in our transport. The West Clare railway was an important part of transport in my young days. Most of the goods that were in shops came in the train. There was a special horse drawn cart in every town which it served. The driver had a busy day drawing goods from the station. He got some help from the shopkeepers taking in the goods, however, he had to carry most of the bags of flour and meal on his shoulders and stack it in the stores. Cattle were also transported on the goods' trains. That was mainly on the fair days. The goods' trains came mostly from Kilrush.

Passenger trains were the most important to me though, because that was the way I got to Ennis and to Kilrush, and places in between. I'd say about ten carriages would be in each train. They were small, but they were enough for all the passengers that were going at the same time. However, lorries for goods, cars and buses for people gradually took over at the end of the 50's. Then the trains became history in

West Clare in 1961, only the song by Percy French, "Are You Right There Michael are you Right?" is left as a memory

By Joe

The mandolin

I remember the first time I sang and played the mandolin. I bought it in Rafter's Music Shop in Shop Street, Galway. I played for a while and after 3 or 4 weeks practice in The White Castle Hotel in Lisdoonvarna, we formed a 4 piece band. We practised for 4 or 5 months, stayed together and got bookings for 8 or 9 years. We played a lot of the Dubliner's songs and music.

The mandolin is an 8 stringed instrument and is oval shape. It is played with a plectrum and tuned the same as a violin. It is a lovely instrument and sounds lovely playing country and western, ballads or traditional music. I have been involved in music since 1979.

I am self-taught and I love the slow airs. The Golden Star was the band I played in. The Golden Star are from Kilfenora. They are a 13 piece band. I also got on offer to play in England with the first band we formed in Lisdoonvarna (The Mixtures). It was a 4 piece band. There were 3 of the band from Lisdoonvarna and one from Ennistymon. We played in all the Hotels in Lisdoonvarna, Ballyvaughan, Fanore and the pubs in Ennistymon, as well as the Falls Hotel.

By Anthony

Farming when I was young

I lived on a farm of forty acres of land. We kept 10 cows, a horse and an ass. We went to the creamery. We sowed a garden, of cabbage, potatoes, turnips, carrots, parsnips, lettuce and mangles for beet for the cow. We saved turf and brought it home in a creel on the horse and then we'd make a reek of it.

We'd milk the cows by hand, go to the creamery every morning and get paid every month.

We saved hay, brought it home by horse and then we'd make a reek in the haggard. We got a hay shed then.

We sold the calves when they were one year old at the fair. We kept some of the female calves for cows. We fed them with creamery milk and fine meal in a bucket every morning and evening and grass. They got hay in winter time.

We kept two pigs and sold one of them. We killed one pig for the bacon and ate it during the year. We would salt the meat, put it in a barrel for one month and hang it up with brown paper, then you'd have a couple of cuts every day.

By Francie

My friend

I met my friend in school. Helen was new to the school and a teacher asked me to show her around. That is how we became friends. We have done a lot of things together and when we left school we kept in touch with each other. I hadn't seen her in a long time and I went for a job interview. I did not know that Helen was working there, until I got the job. Helen showed me the ropes and she helped me to fit in to the work.

Helen is tall and has brown hair. When I got married, Helen came to the wedding. When Helen got married, I went to her wedding. We both have children. Helen is a happy go lucky person.

We sometimes meet up for a tea or coffee and a scone. I wanted to paint my house and I asked her husband to help me paint the house. I can trust Helen and Helen can trust me.

By Caroline

Kitchen porter

I worked in the West County Hotel as a kitchen porter in the 1980's. I had to work from 7am to 3pm. I used to scrub pots and pans. My fingers used to be sore from them. Other days I used to work from 3pm to 12. I used to wash the same pot twenty times over. Before I

stopped work, I had to wash the floors. It could be 1 o'clock when I was finished.

The chefs could be very cross. They'd throw pots on the floor. They would swear at you. They had a very bad temper. It wasn't that bad, when the work was done we would have the craic.

By Bart

Margo

Margo was born in Donegal. She sings country songs. I like her songs. One of the best songs is Tipperary Town. It's a song about coming back to Ireland.

Margo has a famous brother. He is a well-known singer, Daniel O'Donnell. He sells millions of records all over the world.

By B.B.

Farming in days gone by

I had to get up at 6.30 am. My mother and I would milk six cows and be at the creamery at 8 o'clock, come home from the creamery and feed the calves and the pigs. Come 6 o'clock in the evening, do the same thing again. We kept a mare and foal. We went to the bog and cut turf with a sleán. My father would cut the turf and I would barrow it. We cut the hay with a horse and machine.

My mother would knit all our jumpers for us. She put patches on our trousers and darned our socks and made the bread. We walked the 2 miles to mass every Sunday in all weather.

I miss the smell of new mown hay. I miss the horse and the old way of farming.

By Peter

Cod Livornese

Ingredients:

6 cod pieces

Garlic

Dried chilli flakes

Plain flour

Tin of chopped tomatoes

Herbs – basil and oregano

Mushrooms

2 eggs

Vegetable oil

Method:

1. In a frying pan heat 2cm of vegetable oil. Dip the cod pieces in the flour and cook gently in the oil.
2. To make the sauce - in another frying pan fry the chopped (not crushed) garlic with some dried chilli flakes and the herbs. Blend a tin of chopped tomatoes and add to the garlic mix. Add a little water and salt and pepper. Cook gently.
3. Next gently place the cooked cod into the tomato sauce.
4. Wash and drain the mushrooms.
5. Whisk 2 eggs in a bowl with a little water and some salt and a small handful of flour.
6. Add the mushrooms to the flour and egg batter to coat them.
7. Fry the coated mushrooms in the oil from the fish, add more oil if necessary and fry until crispy. Drain them on a paper towel in a dish.
8. Serve the fish and mushrooms together.

By Francesco

Birth and bereavement

The happiest day of my life was the day my baby was born. The saddest day of my life was the day, 5th May, 2010 when I walked into the funeral home and saw my dearly loved mother in her coffin.

By Mary

Riches of Clare Museum

On 23rd of March our class visited the Clare Museum. It is in Templegate. It is open 9.30 – 1.00 and 2.00 to 5.30 and closed on Mondays. Open Tuesday to Saturday and it's free in.

I liked the audio visual, the water feature upstairs and the video of Clare was good.

By Sylvia

Ben's Holy Communion

My nephew Ben was eight and made his First Holy Communion on the 21st May 2011. He made his Communion in St. Joseph's Church. He wore his school uniform. We had a buffet sent from the Sherwood Inn. Auntie Marita helped with the food. She cooked chips and sausages for the children. We also had a chocolate cake. Ben cut the first slice from the cake. Ben played with his cousins on the playhouse adventure bouncy castle. He really enjoyed his day.

By Breeda

Gandhi

The person I admire is Gandhi. He was a thinker and a political leader. Ghandi was born in 1869 in India. He studied in London to become a lawyer. In 1893, Ghandi went to South Africa and started his work.

During a train journey in South Africa, he was in first class compartment when a "white man" saw him and said that he couldn't sit here. Gandhi refused to move to third class. He was thrown off the train. After this humiliation he started to think about segregation and inequality. Later he would say that night was a decisive event in his life.

As a mature adult Gandhi started to fight against the oppression of the Indian community. He convinced his compatriots to not submit to unfair laws but at the same time they should not fight against their oppressor. His ideas he called *Satyagraha*. This means 'truth force' or 'soul force,' which he believed to be more powerful than violence.

In South Africa he elaborated on many of the ideas that would lead him to become the *Matmaha*: the most respected political leader of India. (*Mahatma* means 'great soul')

In India, Gandhi struggled against the British colonial empire. I like the way he chose to stand up for India's people. He chose nonviolence, passive resistance and civil disobedience. Many times he was imprisoned for his actions.

The British colonists had placed high taxes on salt, and as well as that, they had forbidden the production of salt by Indian people. This was extremely oppressive in a country where salt is necessary for human health because of the heat. His most famous civil disobedience action was known as the Salt March, a march of a great number of people which he led to the sea. When he reached the sea, he picked up a small chunk of salt, a direct transgression of British law. Soon after, thousands followed Gandhi's example and picked up salt off the coast, fatally weakening the colonist's law.

Gandhi's concept of non-violence came from Hinduism which condemned killing, hurting or inflicting suffering on any human being. He gave their dignity back to Indians, because he used their religions, their beliefs, for fighting against the oppressor. I like the fact that he was very intelligent, educated and also so spiritual. He showed that we can join both in a very intelligent way.

Gandhi is one of the great figures of the twentieth century. He was a charismatic popular leader.

By Síham

I miss her

My sister Ana is my favourite person in my family, because she is intelligent, clever, and very funny. It is a pity she is not with me in Ireland. I miss her very much.

By Magdalena

A walk in the walled garden

This weekend I stayed at home and watched television. I like to watch the Disney Channel because I like cartoons but my favourite programme is *Hanna Montana* and *Glee* because it is about young people.

I also like to go out. Last week I went to the Vandeleur Walled Garden. We walked around the garden and took many photographs. There were lovely flowers and plants and there is a fountain in the middle with lots of daffodils all around it. We met the people who work there in the glasshouse. There is a tea shop to buy buns and Taytos and we had lunch there.

I have a dog called Freddy. He is brown and white and I like talking to him and feeding him. He is a very friendly dog. Freddy would like to walk in the Vandeleur Gardens with me.

By Éimear

Coconut and raspberry Moroccan sponge cake

Ingredients:

1 cup of sugar
1 cup of milk
1 cup of vegetable oil
4 eggs
30g butter
3 cups self-raising flour
Baking powder

Method:

1. In a bowl place the sugar, milk, oil and eggs. Mix all the ingredients together with a whisk or electric mixer.
2. Melt the butter and add to the cake mix.
3. Add the sifted flour and 3 heaped teaspoons of baking powder. Mix all together.
4. Grease 2 loaf tins, scatter with flour and pour in the cake mix.
5. Bake for about 1 hour at 200°C.
To prevent the cake becoming crusty on top place a piece of parchment paper over the tins.

6. Test with a knife to make sure they are cooked through. Turn out onto a wire rack. Spread with warmed raspberry jam and scatter with coconut.

By Aícha

A day out in Kilkee

This weekend I went to four different masses and a funeral. It was a lovely funeral and the choir sang a beautiful song – ‘*A mother’s love is a blessing no matter where you go*’. It is a lovely, sad song and I was crying mad when I heard it.

After the funeral mass I went for a walk on the beach in Kilkee. It was very busy because it was lovely day. There was a farmer’s market selling all kinds of things – cakes, buns, plants and trees, hanging baskets with flowers and jewellery. I love the jewellery and I bought a silver chain, brooch and a bracelet all for €6 - a bargain! My mother bought a brooch with sparkly diamonds and it looked lovey on her red coat.

Kilkee has a lovely beach. It was very sandy and it looks very safe for swimming. There are very hard seats for sitting on and you always meet nice people to talk to, always someone you know. People are very friendly. There was an ice-cream van and we got a cone, no chocolate because I can’t eat it. We stayed all afternoon. It was a lovely day out in Kilkee.

By Christina

My village

For years I longed for a rural village to live in and I have found such a place - Kilmihil village. I now call it my home, for me and my family. The people in the village and the neighbours are like one big family as we help one another out when we are in trouble. That’s why I like living here.

We have a good post office and the staff are very good for helping out when help is needed to help post a letter or to ask for information

about anything. We have a primary and secondary school and a play-school for the younger ones. The people who work in the schools are very caring with the kids of all ages. There is a GAA football field in the village where we can go to see football matches. There are three shops in the village; Fitzpatrick's garage and shop, Johnson's shop and Considine's shop and the people who work there are very friendly.

One time when I went into the shop to get groceries I did not have enough money with me, but the shop keeper said I could give it to them the next time I came into the shop. We also have a good credit union in the village. The people who work there are local and they are very helpful if you need to borrow some money. We have cemeteries, undertakers, St Michael's church & shrine. They are all in the centre of the village and all the facilities are easy to get to.

The retirement homes are all newly built and they provide excellent housing for the elderly. The community hall provides excellent activities. Kilrush resource centre helps with crafting, exercising and accessing the internet. The four pubs in the village provide entertainment and social events for the people living there so that they can get together. The FÁS group keep the village neat and tidy and have won awards in the tidy town competition.

Kilmihil is a joy to live in as it is a peaceful place to rear a family. We, as a family, are happy and contented to live in such a peaceful and loving village in West Clare.

By Michael

A special Mum

Last weekend I went home to see my mum because it was my father's anniversary mass. We went to the small church in Inagh and then to the grave. It was a lovely day on Sunday and the sun was shining in the morning. I like going to mass on Sunday mornings.

My sister Margaret cooked the dinner for me and my mother. It was mushroom pancakes with sauce and although I enjoyed it I know my mum likes roast beef. So on Mother's Day I took her out for dinner and we had roast beef because she is a special mum.

By John

A quiet life

I live with my brother Jimmy out in the country near Cree but both my parents are gone to heaven. We live in a small cottage with a turf fire that Jimmy lights. I get the turf and timber for him from the shed to light the fire. It was cold this weekend so I had to go out a few times to get the turf.

Jimmy usually wakes me up in time for the bus to the workshop and then he makes my breakfast. If I'm not at the workshop then he makes my dinner. This Sunday we had a salad with chicken, no spuds. It was nice.

I like living in the country because you can see the countryside changing with the weather. I remember when Michael and I used to run over the hills when we were young. He is my bus driver now. We don't run anymore.

By Joe

My new flat

I have moved into a new flat. It is downstairs with a nice garden but the builders still have to clear up their mess because there is timber all over the place. John is coming to cut the grass.

My flat has just been painted in a nice cream colour. I have two bedrooms; one is quite small, and a sitting room and kitchen. The kitchen is lovely and I have a red toaster, kettle and mugs.

I think I will like living there and so will my cat Bibi. She moved with me from my last house but she is getting used to the new place. My sister is making lovely cushion covers for the couches and I can put all my things in the living room.

I am having a flat-warming party next week and all my family will be coming. A few of my friends from the workshop will also be coming. We are going to make salads, egg and ham sandwiches and a big cake from Flynn's.

I'm going to hide away because it might be too noisy! But I know I will like living in my own place.

By Breda

My friend Gloria

My friend Gloria is very good to me. She is a volunteer with the Brothers of Charity and she takes me out every week. Sometimes we go to Gloria's house for lunch and sometimes we go to Ennis shopping or to the cinema.

Next week we are going to Glor in Ennis to see the Sound of Music. I love this musical and 'Doh Ray Me' is my favourite song. Maria is a nun and she goes out into the hills singing when another nun came to look for her. Maria has to go and look after seven children in a big house. There are many good songs in this show.

Gloria is a very good friend to me and I enjoy being with her and meeting her family. I have made many more friends with Gloria and it is nice to go out for a coffee or lunch.

By Ann Marie

Easy bite-sized cookies

Ingredients:

100g butter

1 teaspoon vanilla essence

50g icing sugar

125g plain flour

Halved walnuts

Icing sugar

Method:

1. Soften the butter by beating with a wooden spoon.
2. Stir in the vanilla essence.
3. Add the sifted icing sugar and stir again.
4. Add the sifted flour and stir altogether to make a soft dough.
5. With floured hands, make small balls with the dough.
This quantity should make 20 balls.
6. Place the balls on a floured baking tray and flatten them slightly with fingers.
7. Press half a walnut onto each cookie.
8. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes at 180°C.
9. Cool on a tray and sprinkle with sifted icing sugar.

By Aícha

My Mam's dog

My mam Bridie was widowed many years ago but she raised seven children on her own. Sadly she passed away four years ago and I still miss her. She always had a dog for company and he was looked after very well – she loved her animals! Goldie was his name and he was a lovely golden Labrador. Mam used to take him for a walk everyday.

Things were going very well for them both until the day mam got a stroke and had to go to hospital and then she went into a nursing home after that. While mam was in the hospital I used to feed the dog everyday but when she went into a nursing home my sister Bridget decided she would take the dog so she took Goldie to her house. She had to tie him up for a while until he got used to his surroundings.

On one occasion she tied him up and went off to work. But when she got back Goldie was gone! The search went on but there was no sign of him anywhere. Everyone felt very sad in case something had happened to poor Goldie.

After three or four days it was looking hopeless but then somebody said they had seen a Labrador near a wooded area close to town. So I spent several days searching for him but to no avail. Finally on the 12th day my neighbour was walking his dog when he spotted a dog like Goldie and he told me straightaway. Goldie returned home back to my mam's house! He was delighted to see me and after that I carried on feeding him everyday. He was happy out, getting more and more used to me.

However, I got up one Sunday morning to find Goldie lying beside my car outside my house, a long way from my mam's house! He had tracked me down and decided to stay. He is still with me after all this time. I am sure my mam would be very happy knowing that I was looking after her dog and that he had come to stay with me.

By Mary

Maths on the computer

Since February I have been studying maths with my tutor on Friday mornings. I enjoy it very much. I have learned a lot in many different areas of the subject. I like doing my maths programmes on the computer. I like to colour in the different shapes and animals and also the people counting in groups. I hope I can continue with my lessons and with my nice tutor.

By Kathleen VB

Limerick hospital

It was a cold winter's evening when I went to Shannon doc in Kilrush. The doctor examined me and sent me to Limerick for tests. I arrived in Limerick about 10.30p.m. It was then I saw how hard the nurses had to work. The waiting room was full and the emergency room was full too. It was going to be a long night.

The first battle I had was meeting the nurses and taking blood that for me was like hell. The thought of a long needle piercing my arm is not something I look forward to and there is always a nurse out there waiting for someone like me for a laugh. As they're asking you what is wrong with you, all you can think of is that needle.

The night was going to get rough and it was a place I did not want to be. I returned to the waiting room to my seat. It was about 11.45 pm when the first two girls arrived through the emergency room. One of the girls had a bandage around her wrist. They sat down beside me and they were off their heads. There was a young girl sitting beside my wife. The two girls started to get messy and wanted the young girl's water, but the young girl would not give it to them. The two girls got up and went to take the water. All I could think of was the needle in my arm and that they would pull it out. The security grabbed the girls and put them outside the door. The opening act was over but there was plenty of more to come.

A man in his early 30's came in, off his head with drink or drugs came into the emergency room. He had no shirt on and his white socks were red with blood. The man staggered around the place and when he opened his mouth you had to close your ears. The nurses tried to

clean him up and put a bandage around his head but he wasn't going to make it easy for them. He took off his bloody socks and hit the nurses with them. The nurses called security and the man started to fight with them. The security men grabbed him and brought him out and finally called the guards. That was the end of him!

There was a young man walking down through Limerick when he was stabbed in the face. He had his hands in his pockets when a fight broke out and he got the worst of it. It was just another problem for the nurses.

The Guards brought in another young boy about 6 in the morning. He was drunk. The Gardai did not take off the handcuffs. One of the nurses told me that it wasn't the first time he had come into the emergency room. They said he was a scut and I agreed with them! There were some more lads that came in drunk. Some kept to themselves and some didn't, but the nurses are well able for them all.

Just before I left for home a bad case came in. An old woman had left the gas on overnight and in the morning when she went to light the ring, the cooker blew up. It blew the slates off the roof and the glass out of the windows. The old lady arrived to the hospital about 9.30 a.m. It was a sad and upsetting sight to see that. The nurses were all over her doing what they could as were the doctors. To think that they have to put up with that most nights or every night, it's beyond me. They are great people and they don't get it said too often.

That is what I saw in just one night, imagine having to see it every night, that would not be for me. We don't give the nurses and doctors enough credit and maybe we should think about it more often when we do have to attend the emergency room. They have so much work to do behind the waiting room that no one sees.

By Alan

The person that I admire

The person I admire is Martin Luther King Jr. He was a great man who worked for racial equality and civil rights in United States of America. He was a pastor of the Baptist Church in Montgomery Alabama. During the 1950's Martin Luther King became active in the movement for civil rights and racial equality.

He participated in the Montgomery Alabama bus boycott and many other peaceful demonstrations that protested against the unfair treatment of African-Americans. Martin Luther King was arrested more than twenty times and his house was bombed. He travelled around the country and spoke twenty-five hundred times, He wrote five books as well as numerous articles. In 1964 at the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. He turned over the prize money to the furtherance of the civil rights movement. On April 4, 1968 he was assassinated.

The reason that I admire him is that he fought for civil rights and against segregation in the USA, using non-violent methods.

By Aldona

Fresh cream chicken pasta

Ingredients:

500g pasta tubes
Tin of tomato puree
4 chicken breasts
2 onions
Garlic
2 carrots
Box of mushrooms
Red bell pepper
Chilli powder
500ml fresh cream
Cracked black pepper
Chicken bouillon
Vegetable oil

Method:

1. In a saucepan of boiling water cook the pasta with some salt.
2. Finely slice the onions, crush the garlic, chop the mushrooms and red pepper, chop the carrots into chips.
3. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry the onions and garlic.
4. Chop the chicken into bite size pieces and add to the onion and garlic.
5. Add 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon, chilli powder, pepper and cracked black pepper.

6. Add the mushrooms and some salt.
7. Add the carrots and the chopped red pepper.
8. Mix a small tin of tomato puree with a little water, add to the chicken mix and cook through thoroughly.
9. Add 500ml fresh cream.
10. Drain the pasta and mix with the chicken
11. Serve with a fresh salad.

By Comfort

Melting Marzanna

In my country one of the many traditions is to welcome spring and celebrate the 21st of March. We make a puppet of straw, dress it in old clothes and carry it over to the water, where we throw her into the water. In this way we bid farewell to winter and welcome spring. It is very good fun because there is no frost and all around is starting to grow. There are flowers, leaves on the trees, and the grass is green. I like spring and summer.

By Elzbieta

Midsummer celebrations in Poland

Midsummer is celebrated from 23rd to 24th June that is on the eve of St. John. It is a festival of fire, water, sun, moon, fertility, happiness and love.

The most popular tradition of the night is to throw wreaths on the water, while dancing and singing by the campfire with a request for happiness and the expulsion of evil spirits.

By Irena

One hundred years of waiting

One day I went for a walk and I saw a big bird. Now I mean big so I called Birdwatch Ireland. They told me it was a White-tailed Sea Eagle. Was I surprised to see an eagle in Mountshannon?

Birdwatch informed me that these birds had become extinct in Ireland over a hundred years ago and up to a hundred had been imported from Norway and released in Kerry as part of a re-introduction programme. The one I had seen was one of a pair who had chosen Mountshannon as a breeding ground. Will this not be great for tourism here?

Of the 100 introduced here as part of the re-introduction programme there are only 70 left. As many were poisoned, poison has been made illegal but we still need to protect our Mountshannon pair.

The happy couple began nest building in recent weeks at Bushy Island close to Mountshannon. The island is being protected during the period of incubation and trespassers will be prosecuted. Fishermen, the life boat and County Council are all on look out.

Although, some pairs hitched up in Kerry, this is the first known nesting since the reintroduction programme began. However as the normal age of breeding for this bird is 5 years and this pair are only three and four we don't know what will happen. Wouldn't it be great if they have young?

As the saying goes, 'Never count you chicks until they are hatched'. For me, it's already a great story that the first White-tailed eagle egg laid in Ireland in over a century was laid right here in Mountshannon.

By Richard

My family

I am a Moroccan woman. I have lived in Ireland since 2006. I go to my country every year because I miss my mother. She is a good and kind woman. She is in her middle age. Also I miss my father, a strong and patient man. He was always looking after us and he is still a good father. I can't forget my brothers. Abdelkarim is a chef in McDonalds in France. Hassam, my second brother, is an engineer in Rabat. He is

31 years old and he has a small family. His wife is a beautiful woman and she is pregnant now. The third brother was born in 1990. He is the youngest. He is in university and I wish him good luck in his studies.

I come back to my sisters. Fatima is the oldest. She has her two sons and a sensitive husband. My second sister's name is Aicha. She also has two sons. Her husband's name is Lahsen and he is a mechanic.

Finally I want to say that they also love to see us, me, my husband and our little son. Really, they miss us very much. The world with no family is horrible. Please God, bless my family.

By Khadija

My favourite room

To get to my room you have to go up the stairs. In my room there's a bed, a TV, a desk and a wardrobe. On the desk there's a computer and a chair. On the floor there's a carpet. In my room there are some lamps and some pictures. I like my room. My room is very nice.

My favourite place in my home is the living room where the family spend all their free time. In the room there are flowers, beautiful paintings on the walls and a clock. There is a TV where I watch interesting programs and my favourite movies. There is a fireplace where I like to light a fire on cold winter evenings. My living room is very nice and pleasant.

By Elzbieta

Fried bananas

Ingredients:

3 bananas

2 tablespoons milk

1 egg

50g sugar

50g flour

250ml orange juice

Vegetable oil

Method:

1. Mash the 3 bananas and add the egg, milk, flour, sugar and some of the orange juice to make a thick paste.
2. Heat 2cm of oil in a frying pan and shallow fry small spoonfuls of the banana batter.
3. Drain on paper and serve drizzled with orange juice and sprinkled with sugar.

By Francesco

My garden

My niece Breda and myself always wanted to have a vegetable garden so this year we decided to do it. We marked out a section of the lawn and we started to dig. We removed the sod and I took it away in a wheelbarrow. Next I dug the ground with a spade before putting in top soil. I raked it out nice and level ready for sowing.

One Saturday, Breda and I went to Seedsavers to buy seeds. We bought carrots, parsnips, peas, beetroot, parsley and lettuce. We sowed the seeds in pots of compost. At the moment the pots are being kept indoors on the window sills. The seeds need heat and water so I water them regularly. When the weather gets warmer and the plants get stronger I will plant them out in the garden. My neighbour will give us cabbage plants later.

Breda and I will take good care of the plants as we watch them grow. We are looking forward to the day when we can go out to the garden and pick vegetables for our dinner.

I hope the slugs won't eat them first.

By Teresa

My life changed when I changed my country

I was born in a big city, I went to church then I started school at 7 years old. In Morocco children start school at 7 years old. I was a good student. When I finished school I was 19 years old, then I studied for a diploma in refrigeration and air-conditioning; I was the only girl amongst 24 boys. Then I started to work with my diploma.

I want to talk now about my country, I was living in a tourist city, Agadir, there is a big supermarket and lovely beach and nice weather all year, a cold day is 18 degrees Celsius. I have all my family and my friends there, and lovely food my mum cooked.

I still remember the first day I came to Ireland it was in March, that cold time in Ireland. I was feeling very cold and it was a big change for me. I came to live in a small town, Kilrush. The food was different, I didn't know anything about Irish food, there was no beach, no hotel or train station.

It was difficult to make contact with people, it was hard to understand them and they could not understand me, that's why I couldn't have friends. I was feeling like I was the only one in town, it was a sad feeling. Then I found out about a computer course and made nice friends.

When I had my baby my life really changed. I am now feeling that Ireland is like my country, and my English is good so people understand me.

By Karima

My nephew Diarmuid's Communion

Diarmuid made his First Holy Communion on 7th of May 2011. He wore his white shirt and uniform, pants and he wore a red belt and dickey-bow tie. He got new shoes. There were 21 other children making it with him. He made it in Ballyea Church. Before the mass, I took a photo of Diarmuid with his friends. Diarmuid brought up a book about their First Holy Communion.

After the mass, everyone took photos of the whole class. Then we went down to the Community Centre and Diarmuid got a professional photo with his family. Then we all went down to his house. We took photos. They had a bouncing castle there. All his family were with him. Diarmuid, his brother and cousins had great fun on the bouncing castle.

The food came from Fanny O'Dea's. It was lovely. We all enjoyed it. Diarmuid had a cake in the Clare colours. There were sparkles on it. It was funny.

Diarmuid and a few of the lads played soccer. They had great fun. The weather was lovely and it was a great day. It was a special day for Diarmuid, and it was his day. He had a great day.

By Helen

One person cannot change the world, it is not worth trying.

I can't agree with that. I think everybody can try to change something. It doesn't have to be something big. Big, important things are done from small steps. Small steps which influence one man and then other people.

People are dependent on each other. It's like a chain reaction. People have to believe in their rights and ideas. Our faith in good fortune and equal opportunities for everyone is the main reason to act.

People like Abraham Lincoln who changed the law, because he believed that segregation was bad. People like scientists who try to make our lives better. Thanks to them we have medicines, quick transport and space ships.

Progress in our world happens because there are some people who think they can change the world.

By Gosia

Our likes and dislikes

I like listening to different kinds of music and socialising with friends. I don't like washing dishes or hoovering!

By Elizabeth

I like tennis, sailing and swimming. I don't like beer or boxing!

By Wioletta

I like listening to music and dancing, swimming, going to my favourite clubs and live music. I don't like chess or scrabble!

By Jurate

I like fishing, rowing and swimming. I don't like opera or boxing!

By Slawek

I like walking my dogs and cooking. I don't like ironing or washing the floor!

By Jelena

I like watching Russian films on TV, reading detective stories and romances and cooking traditional Lithuanian food. I don't like washing dishes or watching football on TV!

By Audra

I like swimming, football, basketball, walking with my dog and going to the gym. I don't like lasagne or chips!

By Pavel

I like karate, football and snooker. I don't like opera or coffee!

By Adam

I like cycling and rock music. I don't like washing dishes!

By Miroslaw

Shopping

I go shopping in Ennis. I buy clothes. I like jumpers. Red is my favourite colour. I buy pants and shoes.

I buy food at SuperValu in Ennistymon. I meet people that I know and I talk to them. I go shopping every day. I love shopping.

By Susan

New life

In the womb all warm and snug
Waiting for their first hug
Patiently waiting for birth
Waiting to enter earth
Nine months in the womb
Their own little waiting room
Happy and content
Each one is heaven sent
Sent by God above
The fruit of precious love
Nine months all alone
Waiting for a new home
In their own little place
A new member of the human race
Bringing happiness and joy
Be they girl or boy
With the miracle of conception
There can be no exception
Each little one is unique
And new life they seek
Each one is a precious treasure
And they bring so much pleasure
So thank the Lord for each new birth
For each new child of God
That enters earth

By Dermot

A person whom I admire – Zaha Hadid

Zaha Hadid was born in 1950 in Baghdad, Iraq. Firstly, she received a degree in mathematics from the American University of Beirut. After that she moved to study at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. Around 1977, she met the engineer Peter Rice (Irish structural engineer, very famous around the world), who gave her support and encouragement early on, at a time when her work seemed difficult to build. In 1980 she established her own London-based practice.

Nowadays, it is a very strong, famous architectural firm with more than 350 people. She has taught in many prestigious institutions around the world and she held the chair in many universities. Also, she is a winner of many international competitions. In 2004, Zaha Hadid became first female recipient of the *Pritzker Architecture Prize*, architecture's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. Her most notable buildings include the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, Ohio; The BMW Central Building in Germany and the Bergisel Ski Jump in Innsbruck, Austria. Zaha Hadid designed an Irish Prime Minister's Residence 1979-80, Dublin, Phoenix Park, but it wasn't realised. She is the person who designed the latest National Aquatics Center for the Olympic Games at London in 2012.

Firstly, I admire her so much because she is a woman, who achieved such high results in architecture, because most famous architects are men. But mostly I admire her for her original and extraordinary works and the use of forms that can be both simple and futuristic.

By Agneta

Homemade pizza

To make the pizza base mix 400g white flour, one sachet of easy quick dried yeast, one teaspoon of sugar, 1 teaspoon of salt, one tablespoon of vegetable oil and 250ml warm water.

Mix altogether and knead on a worktop for 10 minutes. Leave to rise in a covered bowl for 30 minutes. Shape the dough into two equal circles and place on an oiled and floured baking tray or roll out and line a shallow rectangular oven tray. For a crispy base place them in a hot oven for 5 to 10 minutes.

For the tomato sauce you will need tomato puree, a tin of chopped tomatoes, dried herbs such as basil and oregano, some garlic and an onion. Thinly slice the onions and fry until brown. Crush the garlic with a little salt and blend together with the tin of tomatoes, tomato puree and herbs. Add the onions, blend and heat through again. Spread this tomato sauce onto the pizza base.

For the topping you will need grated mozzarella and cheddar cheese. You might also like some black olives and slices of fresh vine tomatoes.

Place these on the pizza base and sprinkle with black pepper and some more oregano and basil.

Bake in a hot oven 250°C for 20 to 30 minutes.

By Abdellali

The shield and the spear: An old story from China

There was once a man who sold shields and spears in the market town of Taixing. He always shouted, "Look at my shields! They are the strongest and the best you will find. They are made of such wonderful material nothing can go through them." Then he would pick up a spear and shout, "Look at this spear, it is the sharpest you can ever buy, it is made of the hardest material, it can go through anything, come and see for yourself!" One day an old man came up to the trader and said, "Tell me what will happen if I throw your spear at your shield?" "Well..... ah....." The trader had no answer to the old man's question.

By Hong

Folklore and superstitions from Bangladesh

Folk beliefs and superstitions are part of our culture. These beliefs are focused on immortality, hostile forces, animals, and communities. Both in Hindi and Muslim communities there are folk beliefs related to the evil eye. This is very strong in rural areas. Mothers put a big round black mark (bindi) on their children's foreheads to save them from evil. Sometimes a black string with shells is tied round the child's waist to break the evil eye. Here is a translation of a lullaby a mother in Bangladesh will sing to her child:

"O moon come, O come make a bindi

On my son's forehead to make him sleep

O aunty of sleep, come and pay a visit to our house.

We don't have a bed, so sleep on my son's eyes."

Folklore teaches us the importance of traditions and it is the root and heart of our culture.

By Mouseímí

Home and Away

My favourite programme is *Home and Away*. It is on every day on RTÉ 2 at 6:30 p.m.

It is a soap. It is set in Summer Bay in Australia. It is on a beach. There are beach houses where people can sleep. My favourite character is Leah because I think she is a good actress. She has a young son and she runs the diner. She recently broke up with Myles.

I like this programme because of the sunny setting and I watch it all the time. I think it is the best programme.

By Peter

Joha

All over the Arab world there are stories about Joha. This is one of them.

Joha had a fabric shop in the souk (market) and he was always asking the porters to carry heavy bales of cloth to his shop. One day a porter decided to play a mean trick on Joha. Joha asked him, "How much will you charge to carry these bales of fabric to my shop?" "Nothing," said the porter.

Joha: "Sorry, I didn't hear what you said. How much do you want?"

Porter: "Nothing, I'm asking you to give me nothing."

Joha: "God's blessings on you. Start carrying."

When the porter finished, Joha thanked him and was shocked when the porter said, "Now give me what I asked for."

Joha: "But you said that you didn't want anything."

Porter: "I didn't say that, I said I wanted nothing."

Joha: "But how can I pay you nothing?"

Porter: "That's your problem. Give me what I asked for or I will go to the qadi (judge) right now."

So they went to the judge and the porter complained that Joha would not pay him for his work.

Judge: "Why won't you pay this man for his work?"

Joha: "How can I pay him nothing your honour?"

Judge: "But you must pay him, and if you don't I will put you in jail."

Poor Joha went away, saying to himself, "Nothing, nothing how can I pay him nothing?"

Three days later they came back to the judge.

Judge: "Well Joha, are you now willing to pay this man?"

Joha: "Yes, yes, your honour, here it is in this bag."

Judge: "What did you find in the bag?"

Porter: "Nothing."

Joha: "That is what you asked for and I hope you enjoy it."

By Asim

The violin player

My grandfather had a special violin that was very old. Some people said it was the devil's violin. The story was that it had come from Vienna to Slovakia where I was born. My grandfather wanted to keep this violin in the family and he always said he would like if one day in the future his grandson would play a particular piece of music on his violin. That piece of music is Tchaikovsky's Concerto in D Major Opus 35. I now own and play this violin and one day I will go back to Slovakia and play this piece at his graveside.

By Patrick

Bosnia

I'm from Bosnia. Bosnia is in Eastern Europe and its capital city is Sarajevo. I was born in Sarajevo and went to high school there. The old town is the most interesting part of the city. It is situated on the north bank of the river and there are many historical buildings there. Today this is a major tourist attraction and the people are very friendly. The Winter Olympics were held there in 1984. In winter it is very cold and it snows a lot. At this time many people go skiing in the mountains.

What people do not know is that summers are very hot in Bosnia, temperatures are sometimes as high as 35 degrees Celsius. It is my country and I think more people from Ireland should visit it.

By Branka

Hot chicken salad

Ingredients:

2 chicken breasts finely sliced
1 onion finely sliced
3 cloves of garlic crushed
1 teaspoon mixed herbs
Fresh chopped parsley and coriander
1 teaspoon paprika
½ vegetable stock cube
Salt and black pepper
Fresh grated ginger
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Method:

1. Mix all the ingredients together and leave to marinate for at least 10 minutes.
2. Fry the mix.
3. Serve with a mixed salad – leaves, tomatoes, cucumber.

By Aícha

A special night

I was coming near the end of my commercial course with exams and interviews out of the way and I was looking forward to my own independence. Although I had worked hard I had really enjoyed my course. For months I had looked forward to a night out with my friends, but we had to carefully plan this as the dance we wanted to go to was on a week night, and in those days treats like this were off the radar for everyone. As time was approaching this special event my friends had worked hard all week so on the night they pretended they were very tired and retired to bed early, only to make their escape from the house to catch the last bus from Cork at eleven pm.

We met at the cross below my house and got on the bus to Mitchelstown. On our journey passing through our local village, the girls saw their father standing on the street talking to some friends. Little did their dad know that his two daughters were on the bus on their way to the dance!

Amid all the joking and laughter I felt something under my seat and wondered what it was. It was my friend's dog! He had got on the bus unbeknown to us. Panic set in – what would we do with the dog? We were approaching the next town so we thought of a little old lady we knew who might keep the dog until after the dance, so we asked the bus driver to wait for us. But we got no reply from her house so we got back on the bus without our dog and continued our journey.

When we reached our destination we could hear the music in full swing. Hurriedly we made our way to the dance hall and danced the night away without a care in the world. One of us had found a man with a car going in our direction. The poor man didn't know that he had three ladies and a dog to bring home after the dance.

We were on our journey home and we were approaching the town where we had left our dog so we told him our story and politely asked him to look for the dog. But there was no sign the poor creature.

The next day the girl's father missed the dog and a big search was launched. He cycled to the local Garda station to report the missing dog. We were terrified that the bus driver would spill the beans on us but luckily it all passed over. We often reminisced about the night we brought the dog dancing and wondered what happened to him. As for the poor man with the car, who was from Clare, we often wondered what he thought of that night. We had a memorable night that will never be forgotten.

By Anne

Egypt

Men from the Middle East like to be ruled by men, not by women. In my country, Egypt, in our ancient history we were ruled by women. The most famous ones were Hatshepsut, Nefertiti and Cleopatra. At that time Egypt was the most powerful country in the world and today ancient Egypt is very important. However, for the last 30 years the country was run by a man who destroyed it and left the people in poverty. Not one factory was built in his time. Seven thousand years

ago women ran things and we still remember this. We need the Pharaohs to come back.

By Shaban

Negar

My name is Negar and I come from Bangladesh. It is a country in Asia. I miss my family there. I lived here since 2008. I love my husband and my daughter. Ireland is a nice country. I couldn't speak English very well when I came to the Adult Education Centre but now I am learning English.

By Negar

Moroccan weddings

Every bride is beautiful on her wedding day, but in Morocco she gets to be a queen too! For the bride, the wedding is like a coronation, she is dressed and treated just like a queen.

The days when most Moroccan marriages were arranged belong to the past. Today's young people choose their own partners, and while parents may have veto power, they often accept their child's choice, recognizing that times have changed. Children still pay homage to tradition and will ask the parents to bless their marriage. A wedding marks the joining together of two families as well as the establishment of a new family. Marriage is considered the most important decision a man and woman can make and the wedding can last from 3 to 7 days.

Before the wedding a team of chefs arrives to prepare the meals and the family employs a group of women who devote themselves to making the bride look her best. They dress her in a traditional wedding gown of brightly coloured silk, overlaid by a sheer gown embroidered with gold thread. Jewels cascade around her face. In the early evening parties are held at the same time at the homes of the bride and groom. Celebrations go on well into the night with a feast, music and dancing. Sometime after midnight the groom goes to the bride's home together with his guests. They sing, beat drums or honk their car horns. When they arrive they find the bride seated on a circular cushion. She is lifted onto the shoulders of the crowd. The groom is

also lifted into the air and they are paraded around like this. Later the bride changes into an outfit reflecting her family's region of Morocco and the party continues. Around dawn the bride changes her outfit again and the couple leave the party. Up until about 30 years ago they would retire to a special room to consummate the marriage. Now they are allowed more privacy and generally go to a hotel.

No matter how many people the family invites to the wedding they always expect more. Parties and feasting continue throughout the week, as the couple visit friends and relatives, display their gifts, and get settled in their new home.

By Abdelaziz

My first day at school

When I was five years old in Bangladesh I went to school with my cousin. She was ten years old. When she left me in the classroom I was so frightened and I began crying. Someone came to me, her name was Ala. She was six years old and she told me to stop crying. She said she was my friend and we played together. I liked playing very much. I did not like to read because I was the slowest in the class.

One day the teacher hit me and told me to read carefully. I tried to read and by the next year I got first place in my class. My teacher was so happy and gave me a digital watch and a pencil box. It is a very memorable thing in my life.

By Mazedra

Italian style scones

Ingredients:

500g self raising flour

200g butter

½ sachet dried yeast

1 spoon baking powder

50g sugar

Vanilla essence

50g raisins

Handful of pecan nuts, crushed

Buttermilk

1 egg

Icing sugar

Method:

1. Mix flour, baking powder and butter together until the mix resembles breadcrumbs.
2. Stir in sugar, vanilla essence, baking powder, yeast, nuts and raisins.
3. Beat the egg and add to the mix with enough buttermilk to make a dough.
4. Knead the dough on a floured work surface.
5. Place the dough in a bowl, cover with a damp cloth and leave in a warm place to rise.
6. Bake in a hot oven 190°C for 20 minutes.
7. Cool on a wire tray and sprinkle with sifted icing sugar.

By Francesco

Farming

I like the farm. My brother and my nephew work on the farm. I like my dog. I feed him in the morning and I feed him in the evening. He is a watchdog. He barks when someone knocks at the door.

There are cows and calves on the farm too. The calves are born in the spring time. The vet comes to the farm to test the cows. I help my brother with baling. My father worked on the farm. I miss my father.

The grass in the fields grows in the spring and the flowers grow. I like summer time on the farm because we do the baling in the summer. I walk my dog in the fields in the summer.

By Michael

My favourite programme

My favourite programme is called SOS. It is on BBC on Thursdays at 8:00 p.m. It is about helping people to do up their houses when they can't do it themselves, which I think is lovely.

There are electricians and all kinds of tradespeople there to help out. They go all around England and are a great team.

I like this programme because the team help people in need, for example, some people lost their jobs.

By Kathleen

Ennistymon

I live in Ennistymon, Co. Clare. I know a lot of people in Ennistymon and they are my friends. I sing with the choir at Mass. I go to Daly's to watch people playing darts. I do my shopping in Fitzpatrick's shop.

I like going to the library to take out books. I like doing art out of books. I like painting and drawing. I paint and draw pictures with Michel in the workshop in Dough. He is a good painter. We copy from photos. I drew a picture out of a book of O'Gorman's shop in Kilfenora. I am keeping the picture myself. I like it.

By Martin

Music

My favourite song is *Aon Focal Eile*. Richie Kavanagh sings it. I like listening to Richie Kavanagh. I have DVDs of him and videos also and tapes. I met him at the Ritz Hotel in Lisdoonvarna. He came down and spoke nicely to me. My mother was with me at the concert.

I really enjoyed listening to Richie's singing. All my friends were along with me.

By William

Wicklow

Wicklow is also called 'The Garden of Ireland'. There are many lovely walks in Wicklow. Wicklow is beside the Irish Sea. The towns in the county include Bray, Greystones, Wicklow town and Arklow. Wicklow has great mountains including the Sugarloaf. Sheep farming is common here and farmers also keep cattle and horses. The famous boxer Katie Taylor is from Wicklow.

By John

My sister

My sister's name is Sharon. Her first car was a Volkswagon Polo. It was blue and it was a fine car. There was a good radio in it. She bought it a few years ago. She lives in Tralee now and has a new car, a Seat Ibiza. I helped to jump start the Polo recently. She also has a new dog. His name is Bruno and he is a collie.

My sister recently got engaged to Gerry. She is a good cook and she cooks me chips and burgers and they are top class. She is a good sister.

By Adrian

Moroccan chicken with cous cous

4 chicken legs
White cabbage
Fresh parsley
Fresh tomatoes
Spices – cayenne, paprika
Tin of tomatoes
Cous cous
Onion
Vegetable stock cube or bouillon
Courgettes
Vegetable oil
Butter nut squash
Salt and pepper

Method:

1. In a saucepan fry the chicken in a little oil, add teaspoons of paprika, cayenne and parsley. Shake the pot to mix the ingredients then add a chopped onion, a vegetable stock cube or bouillon and hot water to cover.
2. Chop all the vegetables into chunks and add to the chicken with the tin of tomatoes, but leave out the courgettes and butternut squash till later.
3. Mix the cous cous with a little oil and water, place in a steamer over the top of the chicken and vegetables so that the flavour rises through to the cous cous.

- Cover the cous cous with cling film.
4. When the cous cous starts to steam add salt and a little oil and stir.
 5. After 10 minutes add a little cold water to the cous cous and stir again.
 6. After ½ an hour add the chunks of butternut squash and courgettes to the chicken (these vegetables are softer and take less time to cook).
 7. Continue to cook the chicken and vegetables and steam the cous cous for a further hour or so, topping up the water if necessary and stirring the cous cous occasionally. The cous cous will increase in volume as it cooks.
 8. Serve the cous cous on a plate, then the vegetables with the chicken on top.

By Aïcha and Aziza

Ear to the Ground

Ear to the Ground is a television programme about farming in Ireland. It is on RTÉ 1 on Tuesday evenings and it is repeated on Sunday afternoons at 1:00 pm. I like this programme very much. There are three presenters; two women and one man. Their names are Helen, Ella and Darragh. It is on after *Fair City*. There are always interesting stories on the programmes.

By Seamus

Lourdes

Lourdes is very nice. I like it there. I have been there a few times with the Lisdoonvarna Faith and Light group. Faith and Light meet regularly on Sundays at 1:00 pm and we plan the trips and always have tea when we have our meetings.

I stay in a hotel with the group and we pray and go to Mass a lot. I enjoy the food, the hotel and the plane ride. We always have lots of fun on our trips.

By Geraldine

Boxnation

The best programme I have seen recently is a boxing fight. It was on *Boxnation* between Miguel Cotto and Antonio Margarito.

They had a fight before, which was a brutal war. Margarito won but he was accused of having illegal drugs on his hands. Miguel Cotto wanted revenge and he got it, with the doctor forced to stop the fight in the 10th round.

I liked this programme because it was interesting. It was about getting revenge.

By Michael

CSI Miami

One of my favourite programmes is *CSI Miami*. It is on RTÉ 2 on Wednesdays at 9:30 p.m. This programme is about forensic detectives who look at a crime scene to help find out who did the crime. There is sometimes drama between the CSI team! The drama is caused by relationships and disagreements.

It is fun to pick out who did the crime at the start and see if he did it. The CSI team use crime gear to help with the crime scene. I like this programme because of how the detectives do their work and how the forensic machines work.

By Patrick

Moroccan mint tea

Ingredients:

Fresh black tea leaves

Good handful of fresh washed mint leaves with stalks

Sugar

Metal teapot

Heat proof glasses

Method:

1. Fill teapot with water and bring to the boil on top of a stove.
2. When boiled spoon in tea leaves depending on the size of pot.

3. Continue to heat the tea and add the mint leaves with the stalks still attached.
4. Add 2 tablespoons sugar depending on taste, and continue on the heat.
5. When ready pour the tea from a height into the heat proof glasses and then pour back into the teapot. Do this two or three times in order to mix the sugar and the flavours.
6. Serve with biscuits and cake.

A very refreshing tea.

By Aicha

My dream job

My dream job is to be a healthcare assistant. I am working step by step with short term and long term goals. At the moment, I am working as a volunteer in Carrigoran Nursing Home, Newmarket on Fergus. I enjoy playing dominoes, playing bingo and also singing and dancing with the patients. There are various things to do each day. I like that very much as there is variety.

I have volunteered for two days in Carrigoran Nursing Home to date, and on Sunday 15th April I am attending the Spring Fair there with a friend whom I appreciate very much – a friend who got me going in the right direction.

In September, I hope to do a FETAC Level 4 in Food and Nutrition and, eventually, I hope to do Healthcare. I long to continue working in the Carrigoran Nursing Home as a volunteer to get the experience and to know all about the nursing home. That way, when I am called in for my real interview, I will be very much prepared and may be accepted for my dream job as a healthcare assistant.

By Sharon

My living room

I varnished the shelves and the window sill in the living room. I have new wallpaper on the wall. It is blue, purple and white. I have lovely new curtains on the windows. I have a television in the living room. I like my living room.

By Margaret

Tom's story

I felt a little bit nervous coming back to education but I had to do it in order to get a licence to be able to tow a trailer. I had heard about CABES in Ennistymon and I wouldn't have known where to start without it. I did not know that I would be using a computer and CD to help me with all the Driver Theory test questions but I got used to it and I am thankful for the classes and I appreciate them very much. I have now made the first step back to education and I would like to continue with reading and writing classes when I finish my Driver Theory preparation classes. I would like to be able to read a newspaper and to fill in a form if I had to.

As a young child times were tough on the road and we were always moving from one place to the next and never stayed in a school for very long. Nowadays, Travellers don't move around from place to place. Times have changed and young Travellers have more opportunities and the best of education available to them.

By Tom

Have you ever considered growing potatoes?

- The potato is one of the most important staple crops in the human diet around the world.
- Potatoes grow best in areas with nutrient rich soil, ample rainfall or irrigation, along with warm days and cool nights.
- Hundreds of potato varieties are cultivated worldwide, the flesh of the potato can be white, yellow, pink, red or blue.

History of the potato

- In the ancient ruins of Peru and Chile, archaeologists have found potato remains that date back to 500 B.C.
- Potatoes were first discovered by the Spaniards in the 16th century, and eaten by the Peruvians 2,000 years previously.
- In 1589 Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618), British explorer and historian known for his expeditions to the Americas, first brought the Potato to Ireland and planted them at his Irish estate at Myrtle Grove, Youghal, Co. Cork.

Growing potatoes in Ireland: some facts

- Total potato production area in Ireland in 2010 was 11,200 hectares.
- Largest potato growing counties are Meath, Dublin, Louth, Donegal and Cork.
- Donegal is the main seed potato producing region.
- Irish consumers spend €162 million on potatoes, €74 million on tomatoes and €49 million on carrots.
- Roosters and Kerr Pinks are the two most popular varieties grown, with 38% of total area planted with Roosters and 21% with Kerr Pinks. (DAFF Report 2010)

Did you know?

- Climate change has effected crop production worldwide.
- In 2007 Russia was the main producer of potatoes globally but now relies on Ireland for potato imports due to decreased yield caused by climate change.
- Less rain in Africa is causing 33% less maize production.
- In central Asia it is predicted a 20% decrease in rice yield per degree Celsius rise in temperature.
- In Europe, southern Europe is expected to be hardest hit by climate change whereas in Northern Europe crop productivity is expected to increase significantly.
- One major concern is the distance that food is transported between farm and plate. Buying local food is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint and hence combat climate change, and what's more you can use organic food from your own back garden!

Potato: nutrition and healing

- The most nutrients, fibre and protein are found in the skins.
- Potatoes are an important source of vitamin C providing more than one third of our daily requirements.
- Rooster Potatoes contain protein, little fat and have almost twice the amount of fibre as the same amount of brown rice.
- Potatoes are alkaline and help detoxify the body.
- They prevent constipation, heart disease and symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome.
- Eating raw potatoes reduces heartburn.
- Potato juice can relieve stomach ulcers and arthritis.
- Warm potato skins applied to your elbow can reduce tennis elbow.
- Poitín made from potatoes is used in the treatment of aching muscles; it is commonly rubbed onto muscles to warm them up.
- A dressing prepared from boiled potato skins can be used in healing and reducing infection in burn wounds.

Ten steps towards becoming a globally responsible gardener & consumer

1. Grow your own: Start with some simple quick growing crops, if space is limited try a window box of lettuce or kitchen herbs. Consider a pot or Grow-Bag of strawberries. Home grown potatoes can be simply grown in a sack at your back door.

2. Harvesting water: Don't feel the need to over water crops. Listen out for daily weather forecasts, water early in the morning or in the evening to avoid evaporation in hot weather. Harvest rainwater for watering and feeding your garden

3. Homemade pest control: To organically control unwanted pests in the garden, make your own sprays with products such as tea, garlic and soap. Feed your garden with a nutrient rich home brew made from compost, nettles or horsetail. Slugs can be enticed with beer, coffee and even skins of grapefruit! Consider growing 'Companion Plants' to reduce pests on your vegetables such as Marigolds or Poached Egg Plant.

4. Composting: Make your own nutrient rich compost from household waste, it will improve the quality of your soil, feed your crops and you will have fewer pest problems!

- 5. Propagate your own plants:** lots of simple methods like sowing seeds, taking plant cuttings, dividing and layering plants can increase your plant stock without having to purchase often imported nursery stock that have travelled thousands of air miles.
- 6. Plant a tree:** Over its lifetime, a single tree will absorb one tonne of carbon dioxide. This is important in controlling global warming.
- 7. Recycling and second-hand:** You don't always have to buy new. Recycled & second-hand products save precious resources and reduce pressure on landfill sites. Use household containers as seed trays e.g. fruit punnets, mushroom trays & yogurt pots. Make recycled biodegradable pots out of egg boxes, newspaper or kitchens rolls. Build raised beds out of recycled timbers or old chest of drawers.
- 8. Support local farmers' markets:** Buy locally grown & produced foods. Buying locally will save fuel and keep money in the community.
- 9. Shopping ethically:** Look for the Fairtrade logo and understand where products are coming from. Avoid heavily packaged products, you reduce energy footprint by minimising waste packaging. Buy fresh food instead of frozen. Frozen foods take ten times more energy to produce.
- 10. Consume Less:** It's not simply replacing bad products with good ones. We also need to reduce the amount of commodities that we buy, use and throw away. Before you go shopping ask yourself a few simple questions- Do I need this? Will I use this? What's going to happen to it when I've finished with it? Consider swapping garden seeds and plants with fellow gardeners and sharing tools and machinery.

*By John, Joe, Kate, James, Ray, Sharon, Terence,
Joyce, James, Johnathon, Kay and Colette
Students in Development Education Horticulture
Class, Shannon*

Quick and easy strawberry smoothie

Take a tin of strawberries and drain the juice.
Place in a blender and slowly add milk and a little sugar.
Add the juice and blend again.
Serve immediately.
Add ice cream or yoghurt to make a richer smoothie.

By Sabah

Somewhere we never saw before

It was summer time and a very nice, sunny day. My children, husband and I planned to go somewhere that we never saw before. We picked Dublin -the capital of Ireland. It was so great. Dublin is a big but wonderful city. It was full of the busy people walking around. There are lovely parks and a big zoo.

After a few hours we became hungry. We went to a restaurant to eat something nice. The children chose a pizza. Me and my husband, we wanted to try some Irish meal. When the waiter came we asked for two small pizzas and coca-colas for the children. We asked him for advice about which Irish meal is good? He advised us to have Irish stew. He was sure we would like it. After 10 minutes we started to eat. All the meals looked lovely and tasted very good.

We had really great time in Dublin. We saw many new beautiful places. We had a good rest and a lot of fun.

By Anetta

My first time dolphin watching

On the eighteenth of July it was my mother's birthday. Max, my mother, my sister, my niece, Katarina and myself were on our first dolphin watch. My brother drove with us to Carrigaholt. He paid the ticket for the trip. From there we went out with the ship to watch the dolphins jumping. You can take no photos of them because they are so quick. For my mother it was the best birthday present ever.

The weather was not sunny and it was not raining. It was cloudy and overcast, but it was dry. I was the last person out of the ship. I told the young man it was my first time ever on the dolphin watch. We saw a lot of them jumping, all around the ship. It was wonderful, beautiful and exciting.

There were a lot of adults and children on this trip. All around us people were speaking in French and German and English.

My niece, Katarina, at the moment speaks only German. While we were out on the boat, she was speaking to the other children on the boat. They spoke only English. The amazing thing was that she understood them and they understood her!

During the trip, the captain spoke to us all over the public address system. He was telling us where to look to see the dolphins jumping and where the dolphin breeding area was.

The captain said that we had to be careful not to disturb the breeding dolphins, so we stayed away from the places where they were breeding. I think the trip lasted two hours.

Later, we went to the restaurant to have the birthday dinner celebration. There were eight people at the meal. It was a memorable and lovely day.

By Suzanne

Pancakes with creamed mushrooms

Ingredients:

170g plain or wholemeal flour

2 eggs

250ml approx. milk

Pack of medium size mushrooms

Garlic

1 onion

Fresh rosemary herb

250ml fresh cream

Sea salt and black pepper

Flour

Butter

Milk

Method:

1. Mix the flour, eggs and milk into a smooth batter, not too thick.
2. Finely chop the onion and garlic and fry. Slice the mushrooms finely and fry. Add to the onions and garlic.
3. Make a béchamel sauce with the flour and butter. Slowly add milk to make the sauce.
4. Mix the sauce and mushroom mix, add cream, salt and pepper and the chopped rosemary.
5. Make the pancakes with the batter, serve with the mushrooms and a salad.

By Abdullali, Sabah, Comfort

The person that I admire

I think that the person I admire is my brother Michael. He is older than me by five years and I admire him for his personality and his values in life. In fact he has a busy life: while he is doing a hard job -he works as a tree and wine grower- he practises a demanding sport. He does mountain running.

He works hard at improving his fitness level and achieves good results in the races: he needs to have a healthy and strict diet and to train almost every day. Today, thanks to his good level and the results that he got in the European tournament race which did (he won several races), he is sponsored by a sports equipment company called *Salomon*.

In spite of that, my brother stays himself: a humble, easy-going and cheerful young man. I admire his determination, his courageous, simple and positive attitude every time, in his job, in his sport and everything that he takes up.

I am proud of him and lucky, I think, to have someone like him at my side who brings me happiness, good energies and strength to my life.

By Agnès

Tatoy Gulang - Grandfather

"Tatoy Gulang is sleeping", my daughter Aisling said. That was at his wake in November 2010 in the mountain village of Kabankalan in the Philippine Islands. Tatoy Gulang had no teeth and never wore shoes. He went jogging every morning for 89 years. He was 5 feet tall. He was a boxer when he was younger and everyday he sparred with all the children in the village. He ate and drank like a caribou. A caribou is like a water buffalo, but very timid. They were used as work horses by the Filipinos. Every year, on his wife's anniversary he cried. He carried all his earthly belongings in a pillowcase which he slept on every night; many nights on the floor at the end of my bed.

He showed up every time I visited, travelling from 200kms away in the mountains on foot. No one told him I was coming as he had no phone. He just knew. I bought him a pair of sandals; he hung them around his neck. I enquired why? I was told he was sparing them for a special occasion. Tatoy Gulang's parents lost all their land during the Marcos regime in the 80's. Tatoy Gulang spoke no English only his local dialect, Illongo, but one time I visited he spoke English to me. No one knew where he learnt it. He said "Hello Terence, How are you? I missed you." Tatoy Gulang, I still miss you.

By Terence

The greatest woman

The greatest woman I know about is Mother Teresa because she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned and dying people in India. She received many honours including the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work.

At the time of her death she had 610 missions in 123 countries and also she was beatified by Pope John Paul II and given the title "Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta".

That's why Mother Teresa is the greatest woman I have ever known.

By Bernadette

Teaching me love

The woman I love the most is my mother. Teaching me to be good and to be helpful to people. Teaching me to be conscientious and how to work in my home. Teaching me love.

By Magdalena

This is my story

I was born and reared in O' Callaghan's Mills. I have three brothers. I was born in 1966, the second oldest. I helped on my parent's farm. We had 14 cows. I milked the cows with the milking machine.

I went to the local school for six months. I wasn't fitting in at all so the teachers spoke to my parents and I was sent to a special school in Galway where I spent 18 years. I learned reading, writing, woodwork, gardening and swimming. I loved swimming in the pool. My friends were Robert, Jimmy, Joe, John Paul, Kevin and Peter who I still meet now and again.

When I finished in Renmore I came home and went to Bawnmore to be assessed for the Brothers of Charity in Ennis. I was accepted and started attending what was then the workshop, doing woodwork training. Then I was moved to the altar bread area making the communions with nine others. After two years I went back to the woodwork, making coffee tables, cots and repairing antique furniture for which I was earning money. Next I moved to the garden where I was potting plants. Some of us then moved to East Clare. Three of us set up a coffee shop which went well for a number of years.

Supported by Clare Supported Employment and CABES Scariff I got three years on a CE Scheme in Tuamgraney, where I was paid good money. Along with four others I planted flowers and shrubs and maintained the flower beds in the village. Since I finished last June I have been volunteering with Enable Ireland in their Ennis shop twice a week.

I live in my own house in Tulla and live off my disability allowance. Woodwork is my favourite hobby and gardening is the one I least enjoy. In my free time I play darts in my home and the local pub. I got out in 30 darts once. This was my best score. I also like bowling.

I like to visit my mother in O' Callaghan's Mills at the weekends. She is seventy-five and in good health. I do a few jobs around her place and she cooks for me.

By Brian

Johnny Barrett

Johnny Barrett is from Charleville, Co. Cork. He sings and plays the keyboard. I saw him at the Gleneagle Hotel in Killarney and in O'Donoghue's pub in Fanore. He plays country and western music. I am going to get some of his CDs.

He talked to me and he was friendly.

By Thomas

When will full equality be achieved?

I consider it won't happen. Men and women are different. Different in many ways: physical, physiological, psychological, emotional and so on. A woman can conceive and give birth to a child but it is impossible without a man. A man can build a house, but only a woman can turn it into a home. Men's and women's lives are interconnected. I think we should try to live in peace, and not oppose each other.

In my home country, the Republic of Belarus, there are more women than men. Belarusian history is a history of wars. Men went to defend their houses and people. Very few of them returned. Women stayed at home. After the last devastating war (WWII, in our country – the Great Patriotic War) and during the Soviet period of our history, women had to work hard on a par with men or by themselves to raise our country from ruins.

Women had to adapt to the circumstances and acquire men's professions. Women qualified for the vote, sat in the government, and worked, worked, worked. Sometimes they forgot that they were still women, weak, tender and in need of strong supportive men.

I like one legend. Once upon a time there were perfect creatures. Ancient gods got angry with them. Gods divided these perfect beings into two parts. One part became a man and the other a woman. Nowadays the separated parts long for reunion. If a man and a woman were a part of one personality they would be happy together.

In conclusion I would like to say the following. We must judge people not by their gender, skin colour or what language he or she speaks. We must judge people by their deeds, business and thoughts.

Men have their strong sides, and women do as well. In modern life everything changes very quickly and we need something real and permanent. Men work and women work, earn money, meet new people every day. Then they come home and have to share domestic chores. People must hang together, I mean women with men and vice versa. And only thus we can be successful and happy.

By Irina

Where I left my heart

I have been living in Kilrush since 2007. This small town is located near the Shannon estuary in the south-west of Ireland.

This is a town with schools, a garda station, a post-office, a health centre, a fire station, a library, shops, supermarkets and two churches. You can also find here: the dolphin museum (if you are lucky you can see bottlenose dolphins in the bay), the Vandeleur Gardens (with a small cafe and a lovely garden full of flowers, especially in the spring and summer) and a beautiful marina.

Kilrush is a very sporty town. You can enjoy the town's passion for Gaelic football but if you are Polish for example and you don't understand Gaelic football rules you can play golf, soccer, rugby or volleyball or even baseball.

This a really nice town with very friendly people who are open to foreigners, but you cannot compare it with my village in Poland where I was born and grew up.

My village is called Bobrowniki Male and is located near the Dunajec River in the south of Poland. This is a very very small place surrounded

by forests and lakes with great views and fresh air. This is a charming place especially in the summer when you can see wild flowers everywhere and in the winter when everything is covered by snow.

In my village there is only one street, with a modern church, a small school, a fire station, a library, a grocer's shop, a soccer field and a playground. People who live here know each other for generations. They are nice and are always ready to give you a hand.

Some people might say this is boring - but this is the place where I left my heart, my family and my friends. For me it is the best place ever and I will always come with pleasure to my small village with one street.

By Monika

Pasta with arabiata sauce

Ingredients:

150g pasta

Garlic

Dried chilli flakes

Tin of chopped tomatoes

Fresh parsley and rosemary

Salt

Vegetable oil

Method:

1. In a pan of boiling water with salt cook the pasta for 11 minutes.
2. In a frying pan place one clove of garlic, 1/2 teaspoon of dried chilli flakes and fry a little in vegetable oil.
3. Add one tin of chopped tomatoes and the chopped fresh parsley and rosemary and some salt. Heat all through.
4. Mix the pasta and sauce together and serve with a salad.

By Francesco

Who I admire the most in the world?

The person I admire most in the world is John Paul II. He was the youngest elected Pope since Pope Pius IX and the first non- Italian to be elected in 455 years. On 16 October 1978, Polish Cardinal Karol Jozef Wojtyla become Pope John Paul II.

His papacy ended after 26 years on 2 April 2005. During his pontificate, Pope John Paul II made trips to 129 countries starting in 1979 with Mexico, Ireland and United Kingdom and Haiti in 1982. He was the first Pope to visit the White House and was very tolerant and he respected people of other cultures.

He made a speech calling for Muslims, Christians and Jews to live together. He forgave the person who wanted to kill him. He defended human rights and the Christian tradition.

The reason I admire him so much is because he was the biggest spokesman for peace. He found God everywhere in his life. He always had a good sense of humour. His love for the whole world was very deep. We all loved Him.

By Hanna

Why I admire Julia Roberts

The woman I admire the most is the actress Julia Roberts because she is always smiling and in a good mood and all her movies are excellent. She has been named one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world by *People* magazine. She is successful in her job and is also the mother of three kids.

By Dýana

Brian's cruise

When we flew to Malaga, we got on board ship. *Adventure of the Seas* was the name of the ship. It was a very large ship, even bigger than the Titanic because it had fourteen decks. We were on deck nine. That night, we sailed up as far as Valencia, and we could get off

if we wanted to, but we didn't, because we had seen Valencia a few years ago, so we stayed sunbathing on the deck instead.

On the cruise, there were about three thousand people and about a thousand crew. That means there was a crew member for every three people, which means we were looked after well. The currency on board was US dollars. The facilities on board were marvellous. There was a crèche, a theatre, two casinos, two swimming pools and even a four bed hospital where I had to spend two days. There were two lady doctors, one was Australian and the other was Filipina. What had me in hospital? Too much carousing and too much sunbathing!

We met a nice Filipino man who was the bar tender. He had been over in Ireland to kiss the Blarney Stone, so he had got the 'gift of the gab'. Everyone got to know me and I was in my element.

The following day we sailed across the Mediterranean to Italy, passing by the island of Corsica and stopping at the town of Livorno on the Italian coast. We got off there and travelled by coach up to Pisa. We spent the day in Pisa, visiting all the sights, especially the famous leaning tower.

Then it was on to Florence, where we had been before, five years ago. My family has a special connection with this city, because my great grandfather emigrated from this city to make a new life in Ireland in 1912, one hundred years ago this year. This explains the origin of my Italian family name, Bussoli. He lived up in Cavan for the first six years, and then he moved to Limerick, where the Bussolis still live. His business was making and selling ice-cream.

Even from our first trip to Florence, we remember the famous sights, for example the statue of David by Michelangelo, the fountain, the *Ponte Vecchio*, which means the old bridge over the river Arno, and the world famous Dome of the cathedral.

The journey back to Malaga took nine hours. Nine hours of enjoying the wonderful Mediterranean sun. In conclusion, we all had the time of our lives.

By Brian

Riches of Clare Museum

On 23rd March my class went to visit the museum. The museum is called Riches of Clare at the Temple Gate in Ennis.

The museum is closed on a Monday. It is open on Tuesday to Saturday. It is free to go in and look around.

I am interested in sport so I liked the GAA things upstairs. The GAA was founded in 1884 and had hurling, football and handball. Clare won the 1995 hurling final.

By Richard

Life is precious

My name is Fidelma and I live in Lissycasey. I come from a family of six, four sisters and one brother. I have to thank my parents for such a good life. We were all healthy children and well educated and in employment at present with not a mention or thought of the 'R' word!

When I was 20 years old I travelled to England where I spent five years. I grew up and found my independence and thankfully worked over there too. I met some wonderful people and learned from life's experiences.

I returned home in 2001 when I met my husband Martin and continued to further my experience in new pastures. I opened my own business in the latter part of 2008 and then fell pregnant in 2009. I gave birth to a wonderful baby boy on the 25th July 2010. I decided to close the business as I wanted to spend time with my little son.

In September 2011 I decided to further my education on a part-time basis and attended the adult education centre. I also continued my work from home, catering for private and corporate functions and also producing soups and salads for retail.

The most important part of my life was growing up and getting married and creating another life, so precious and special. It was such a wonderful experience becoming a mum, even though it brings its challenges. I think it has made me realise how my parents did such an

amazing job rearing six children and to respect them for the life I have had, but also to remember to enjoy every day and live it to the best of my ability.

By Fidelma

Lamb casserole

My name is Joan and I am doing a cookery course with Nora. I love it. I started last September. Since then we have made all kinds of nice things such as casseroles, pizza, soup, pies, roast chicken and doughnuts. I also made an omelette for breakfast. Today I made an apple tart and apple turnovers for the first time. My favourite is lamb casserole. I often make it at home. This week I made queen cakes with my nephew. He loved them. He ate four of them. I really look forward to my cookery class every week.

By Joan

Going with the flow

It's Monday morning again. I must not be late for work. I am dying of a hangover and I wouldn't mind, but I don't even drink.

It was my sister's birthday. She doesn't usually go out at all but this was her special night. It was her 60th birthday. She got really tipsy and insisted on doing the Can-Can with me tagging along. Needless to say, her husband made a quick exit.

I couldn't even lift my leg as my back was stiff, lifting large bags of chips, fish, sauces and coke at work the day before. I didn't want to ruin my sister's party so I let my hair down and tried to go with the flow and it was nice for me to get a break from listening to the news twenty-four, seven. My husband never takes his eyes off it while smoking and giving out about the rest of the nation. "God help us! When will ye see the green shoots?"

Oh well, I'm at the door of the chipper and the whiff of fish and chips is making my stomach queasy and my head spin. Still the show must go on and I must pay the bills. Come four o'clock I'll be off home and into bed. 'Until then!'

By Noreen

My best friend

I met my best friend ten years ago. It was my mother-in-law. Our friendship was to get stronger in the future.

The first time I met my best friend was at my wedding because my mother-in-law lived in Ireland. We became close friends because we got on well.

When Martin's dad died we came to live in Ireland and we moved in with my mother-in-law. I look after her because she has cancer in the bones and breast. It is four years ago since my mother-in-law was given a short time to live but my best friend lives on.

I do not know what I will do when my best friend is gone. She is the friend that has kept me going. She has her good days and bad days but she will not let that get to her. So that is why she is the best friend I ever had.

By Sue

Rice and groundnut soup from Africa

Ingredients:

Long grain rice

Scallions

Diced beef

Garam masala

Fresh tomatoes

Red bell pepper

Onions

Chilli powder

Ginger

Garlic

Maggi cubes

Smooth peanut butter

Vegetable oil

Method:

1. In a saucepan fry the rice in some vegetable oil, add boiling water and the finely chopped scallions. Simmer with the lid on until all the water is absorbed.

2. Boil the diced beef in a little water with 1 heaped teaspoon of garam masala.
3. Chop the tomatoes, red pepper and onions. Fry in oil with chilli powder, grated ginger and garlic, salt and 2 maggi cubes or vegetable stock cubes.
4. Drain the beef and add to the tomato mix.
5. Add 3 heaped tablespoons peanut butter and the juice from the meat. Bring to the boil stirring as the mix thickens.
Add more water if necessary.
6. Serve the beef with the rice.
The peanut butter accentuates the flavour of the meat.

By Adam

Riches of Clare Museum

On the 23rd of March our class visited the Museum. The museum is called the Riches of Clare. The museum is free and closed on Mondays. It is open Tuesday to Saturday and opening times are 9.30 to 1.00 and 2.00 to 5.30.

One thing I liked upstairs was the history of Lisdoonvarna. Lisdoonvarna was fashionable during the 19th century. It was claimed that the water was rich in iron.

By Breeda

My friend

I met my friend in the primary school in Toruń, Poland. I went to school 24 and she went to school 11. My school was new, big and modern and her school was old and needed repair. That year, both of us were starting year 4 class. My friend and I were 10 years old at the time.

My friend's name was Danko. She was of medium build and had long brown hair. Her eyes were brown and she tangled her hair in tails.

We started to meet after school. She lived near school. We spent more time in her home. We went together to play guitar in the youth band.

When we finished primary school, I went to High School 5 and she went to High School 1. We could only meet after school. Sometimes, we spent summer holidays together with her grandmother. Her grandmother lived in a small village. We swam in the river, went for walks and played ball with the other children. Her grandmother was a very nice woman and we liked to spend our holidays like that.

Our friendship broke when she moved to another city. It was very far away and it was a very long distance to visit each other.

After 6 years my friend and her family returned to Torin and we resumed our friendship. At the same time I had a husband and a daughter, Matgosie and she had a husband and two children, a girl Marta and a younger boy called Pawes. Her children liked Matgosia very much. Our families spent almost all the weekends together. We went on the river, went to the forest and we dived in the lake.

Twenty four years ago, my friend moved with her family to America because her husband got a job. It was a very sad situation for us.

We don't meet each other so much now, but we often speak on Skype and send emails to each other. We are the best of friends still.

By Maria

The story of our dog

I have two daughters and they always used to pester me about getting a dog. Last year my youngest daughter, Luzanna, made her First Communion and she got some presents of money. So, she decided she wanted to buy a dog with her own money. My husband went on the internet and found a place where you could buy a Newfoundland puppy. They pestered me to let them go, just to look at the puppies. Finally I said, OK.

The next Sunday we went to Nenagh in the car. I really didn't realise my husband's and daughter's plan was to persuade me. When we saw those lovely puppies the girls were in seventh heaven. I wasn't sure but in the end I said, yes. On the way home, my daughters sat in the back of the car with a lovely black puppy. Suddenly, my youngest daughter started crying. "What's the matter?" I asked. She said, "Mum, this is the best day of my life". Then I knew I had made the right decision! Luzanna and Julia are very good at taking care of their dog.

Her name is Izabella but we call her Iza or Bela and she is part of our family now.

By Yolanta

My first impressions of Ireland

When I came here 7 months ago I couldn't believe that I was living surrounded by cows! I am from a very big city in Spain and I'm used to walking in streets and seeing lots of people.

But I love seeing the green fields here, although I don't like the weather. It's so cold sometimes, but I am getting used to the weather as well.

I think Irish people are very friendly. They are similar to Spanish people; they like talking and they are happy to help you if you have a problem.

In the beginning, it was very difficult for me to meet people because where I am staying there are a lot of small villages and not a lot of people! Even very small villages in Spain have at least 100 people and most villages are much bigger than that.

For me, living here is a great new experience. Apart from learning English, I've made friends with people from other countries. I think that if you want to really learn English you have to stay in an English-speaking country although in the beginning it is very hard.

By Bego

Pineapple and yoghurt dessert

Ingredients:

Fresh pineapple chopped

Fresh raspberries

Chopped fresh mint

Honey

Crunchy oat breakfast cereal

Greek yoghurt

Vanilla essence

Method:

1. Mix the chopped pineapple, raspberries, mint and honey.
Leave for 15 minutes.
2. Add a little vanilla essence to some crunchy oat cereal.
3. Place most of the oat mixture in the bottom of the serving dishes.
4. Layer the yoghurt next.
5. Now place the pineapple and raspberries on the yoghurt.
6. Top with a spoon of yoghurt and a sprinkling of nuts or oats.
7. Drizzle honey all over.

By Abdullali, Sabah, Comfort, Bertha

Christmas morning

I love Christmas morning. It is very exciting in my house. The kids wake up early. They are the first awake and they go downstairs to see what presents they got under the Christmas tree.

It is still dark outside and, from upstairs, I hear the kids opening their presents. I get up and say to them, "Go back to bed. It's too early to get up. It's 5.30 in the morning."

The children open their presents and go back to bed and so do I. Then at 9 o'clock I wake up and go downstairs and under the Christmas tree, is my present. It is really big - a lovely jewellery box.

Then, a few minutes later, the children come down and play with their presents. There is great joy. I put the breakfast on and we have a nice fry and we clean up and do the washing so I can start the Christmas dinner. When the turkey and ham are in the oven, the kids help to peel the potatoes, prepare the sprouts and make the stuffing and gravy. In the afternoon, we have the dinner. That is my wonderful Christmas morning.

By Vivienne

My trip to Bundoran

Last summer I went to Bundoran for my holidays. We got the bus to Galway and then another bus to Sligo. We had a small snack in Sligo and then the bus brought us on to Bundoran.

When we arrived we went to the hotel and had soup, sandwiches and tea. Then we went to our room and unpacked our clothes. My father and myself went down to the beach. It was a lovely day, mild and sunny. Later on we had our dinner and watched television.

Next morning we got up early and had our breakfast. My mother and I went to the swimming pool in the hotel and I swam for a while. Later that day we went to Sligo town and did some shopping. We had lunch there and we had a great day out. We got the bus back to Bundoran and had dinner in the hotel. We went for a long walk by the sea and there were some people swimming. I went to the shop with my father and bought some sweets for later on. That night we went to the bar in the hotel and there was music and dancing.

On Sunday morning we had breakfast and went to 11.00am mass. The church was big and there was a big crowd. Later that day I went for another swim in the pool. We had our dinner in the hotel again and there was more music in the bar. Monday we left the hotel and got the bus home. I really enjoyed our trip to Bundoran.

By Kieran

Moving house

On Thursday the 12th of January 2012 my friends and I moved house. We lived in a house in Ashfield Park and now we are living in Glensheen. We had to move all the furniture and the bed clothes. I have a lovely big apartment. There is a very big kitchen and sitting room. We also got a new television. I help with the cooking. There are six of us in the new house. I love my new home.

By Martina

Camphill in Mountshannon

Camphill Communities are places where people with learning difficulties and volunteers live together as extended families. The Camphill Movement was founded in 1940 when Dr Karl Konig and colleagues established a centre for children in need of special care at Camphill House in Aberdeen, Scotland. Today there are more than 90 Camphill Communities in 21 countries providing opportunities for people of all ages with special needs.

In Clare we are located in Mountshannon as you may already know. We live in three different houses in the village. We have a garden, a weavery and we also make willow baskets. These workshops are spaces where people can learn new skills.

We have welcomed two donkeys just before Christmas and they are Silver and Goliath. They are very happy with us and very good for keeping the grass short. We also have a dog called Bobby and a cat called Bailey who actually prefers milk to alcohol. We are expecting new arrivals shortly as our chickens are getting ready to have little chicks soon, hopefully. That's us for now. We can tell you more next time.

By Richard

Riches of Clare Museum

On 23rd of March my class visited the Museum. It's in the Temple gate. It's free to go in. It's closed on Mondays. It has an upstairs and downstairs.

Two things I liked downstairs were the well and the costumes. The well was very deep. I liked the uniform of the Deputy Lieutenant of County Clare from 1886.

By Kevin

My learning journey

My name is Gillian and I am in my thirties. I have two children, a boy and a girl and I am a single parent.

Having left school with nothing and not knowing what I wanted to do, I worked at many different jobs. After the children were born,

babysitting was too expensive for me so I couldn't work anymore. I was a stay at home mum for eight years.

When my second child started school, I got on a CE scheme in Killaloe. It was here I was introduced to Clare Adult Basic Education Service (CABES) through a tutor from Scariff Adult Education Centre who came to the Molua Centre every Monday.

Learning was something that wasn't on my mind. However, encouraged to learn things we might enjoy or maybe make a difference to our lives, I did Driver Theory class. At the time, owning a car didn't seem remotely possible much less getting thirty-five questions out of forty correct. Today, being able to drive my own car is one of the most important things in my life.

After passing the Driver Theory I started with one-to-one literacy and beginners computers. I continued one module at a time, encouraged and supported all the way until I achieved a FETAC 3 award. Getting a FETAC award was great. My confidence grew and I got my self-esteem back.

Armed with both my learning and new found confidence I was able to make many positive changes to my life, such as changing house, finding work after the CE Scheme and so on. Everything was going great but then bang. The recession came and I was out of work, out of money and bored stiff.

I went back to CABES in Scariff again. A CV was put together for me, I was supported in looking for work. Meetings were set up for me with FAS and career guidance. This resulted in me finding some part-time work and returning to learning once more.

My aim is to qualify as a care assistant and I am currently doing a FETAC 5 Healthcare course with BTEI in Ennis. The going is tough but being able to go back to Scariff Adult Education Centre on my days off has pulled me through half the course so far. Getting there, but still another bit to go!

By Gillian

Volunteering

It was just over two years ago when I started volunteering work in The Irish Cancer shop in Ennis. I spend 3 hours every Wednesday afternoon there and I also help out at other times when necessary. I put tags on the clothes, put them on hangers and steam iron them. Sometimes I work on my own and other times there are other people there to help me. I sweep the floor and put out the recycling bins on Wednesdays as well but there are quiet moments when nothing comes in for sorting. That's when there is time for a cuppa when possible.

I would like to say to people to keep donating whatever you can to this wonderful shop, you are helping a good cause. I like to buy things from the shop when I see something nice.

Giving 3 hours of my time to assist in the Cancer shop was the best thing I ever did and I'm loving every minute of it. The staff members are wonderful to work with.

I've worked with other charities also. I've bag packed in Dunnes and Tesco. Last year I volunteered with the pupils of Gael Scoil junior infants in the St Patrick's Day parade and I enjoyed the whole experience.

For me volunteering is very important in the community because you are assisting people and making new friends. People do appreciate the contribution you are making. I would recommend it to anybody and it costs nothing.

By Gabriel

Another chance

I go to class every Thursday in the Adult Education Centre in Ennis. I really enjoy coming to class and meeting staff and friends. My tutor is called Joe and we both work well together.

In each class we do English reading, writing, spelling and comprehension and I enjoy the variety and the fun in learning in those areas. I use my knowledge of English reading and writing everywhere and especially at work as sacristan in St Patrick's Church in O'Callaghans Mills.

I did not enjoy my days in school when I was younger, but now I like learning much better and I am improving all the time.

By James

Riches of Clare Museum

On the 23rd of March our class went to the Museum. The Museum is near the Temple Gate. It is free admission and it is closed on Mondays. It is opened at 9.30 – 1.00 and closed for lunch from 1.00 to 2.00 and opens at 2.00 – 5.30. It's open Tuesday to Saturday. It's free to go in.

There is upstairs and downstairs. I saw lots of things. I liked watching the video of Clare. I liked the concertina. It was from Caherea, Lissycasey, Co. Clare in 1870. I liked music and dance. It reminds me of my grandfather.

By Helen

Soup from Moldova

Ingredients:

2 carrots grated

1 parsnip finely chopped

3 potatoes finely chopped

1 onion finely chopped

Vegetable bouillon powder

Fresh parsley

Method:

1. Heat half a saucepan of water and add the vegetables, salt and pepper to taste.
2. After 20 minutes add the vegetable bouillon powder and chopped fresh parsley.
3. Cook for a further 10 minutes and serve.

By Pelaheya

Walking

I love to walk. Walking helps me to connect with nature. I experience all different types of weather and over the years I've noticed the changes in the weather. Summer started later this year but temperatures have become more extreme. Winter temperatures have fallen and summer temperatures have risen. This has an effect on the birds in the area.

Birds that migrate from West Clare include the swallow, cuckoo and breeds of wild geese. Recently these birds are arriving later and later to West Clare. The swallows were later this year and I still haven't heard the cuckoo. I think that the changes in the weather are affecting the birds.

By Tony

The turkey

Feeling happy and excited that at long last it was Christmas Eve, but freezing. As I rushed downstairs I could hear my Da out in the backyard chopping up sticks to get the fire started. I ran out to him and asked, "Is it gonna snow Da?" "I don't know, go inside and I will be in in a few minutes", came the reply. My Grandfather shouted out from the downstairs bedroom "John is my pipe on the table out there"? Moving yesterday's newspaper off the table I found his smelly pipe lying on its side with ash hanging out of it. "Do you want me to bring it in?" "Yeah," he shouted back, walking towards the bedroom. I put the pipe in my mouth momentarily just to let on to smoke it and feel like a grown up, but I quickly pulled it out again, the taste was disgusting and I could feel my tongue starting to sting.

As I entered the bedroom with pipe in hand my Granda was trying to sit up straight. He seemed to have about a hundred pillows behind him and the same amount of blankets covering him. I thought he looked hilarious. "There you go." I gave him his pipe and turned to leave the room but got the fright of my life when I was confronted by this gruesome looking animal hanging upside down on his bedroom door. It actually made me jump backwards, if that's possible.

My Granda laughed and asked, "What's wrong with you?" With my voice now starting to quiver I said, "What's that thing on the door and

why is one of its eyes open and staring over at me?" Granda just kept on laughing, as he lit his pipe and filled the room with the smell of pipe tobacco. He told me that's the turkey for tomorrow's dinner. I muttered, "I don't care what it is you will have to open the bedroom door to let me out." He just laughed again and then sucked on his smelly pipe. He told me, "Go and open it yourself, you eejit sure it's dead, it can't do you any harm". But if it's dead why is one of it's eyes open and looking at me?" I stated.

Granda was not for getting out of bed to let me out of the room. He was getting great satisfaction out of the dilemma I found myself in, so it was a relief to me when I heard my Da come in from the yard. I immediately shouted, "Da can you come in here a minute?" On entering the bedroom he quizzed, "What do you want?" I pleaded with him to keep the door open for me while I got out of the room. "I'm frightened of that thing hanging there. It keeps staring at me. My Da shook his head from side to side. "C'mon, I'm too busy for this nonsense", he said as he held the door open whilst grinning at me. I slowly turned myself sideways and pushed tight against the wall to keep as much distance as possible between me and that bedroom door. On exiting the room, I could hear my Granda laughing. I shouted back to him, "Get your own pipe the next time." I suddenly got a clip round the ear from my Da and was told not to give cheek to my elders.

The image of that thing hanging up in my Granda's bedroom stayed with me for the day, but I did get some satisfaction from it later on when I told my younger sister that there were some decorations in Granda's room and my Da said we could put them on the Christmas tree. My little sister was the only girl in the family and she was spoilt rotten, got away with murder at times. She was Daddy's little girl, so I thought to myself this will be a great laugh because she was even terrified of a Daddy long legs.

She rushed straight into the bedroom knowing that if she got her hands on the decorations first she would have to be the boss and decide which decoration went where. Standing in the middle of the living room waiting for the outcome of my little joke I heard her voice coming from the room, "Where are they? I can't see any decorations." I shouted, "They're hanging on the door." Then came a high pitched scream which seemed to last forever. My Da who was standing chatting to my uncle came rushing in shouting, "What the hell's going on?" He headed straight into Granda's room where my sister was

nearly in hysterics. As he lifted her up in his huge arms and tried to comfort her he asked, "What happened to you love, why were you screaming?" She was finding it hard to explain through all the sobbing which also made it difficult for her to catch her breath, but was able to point at the figure hanging on the door. I soon realised the joke had gone a wee bit too far and when she finally told my Da what I'd done I got a good scalping and sent straight upstairs to my room. Well actually it wasn't my room, I shared it with my four brothers.

Lying on top of the bed I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I hated being stuck upstairs in the room especially on Christmas Eve and my Da told me Santa wouldn't be bringing me anything. That didn't really matter to me because when I was arguing with my older brother last week he told me there was no such thing as Santa. Although I did have a good laugh to myself whenever I thought of my sister in the room all alone with that thing hanging on the door. It served her right, I thought to myself, over all the times she got me into trouble. When my Ma came home from work, I was allowed back downstairs but I had to say sorry to my sister. Later on that evening as all the family sat around the huge open fire they had great craic listening to how a dead turkey had frightened me and terrified my little sister. They fell about the place laughing. It's a Christmas I will never forget.

By John

My friend

I met my friend on a summer's day 10 years ago. That was 2002. My friend always lived near me, but it was in 2002 that we became good friends. I was happy to talk to him because he grew up in the same area and we knew each other's families.

Eric always includes me in plans and he plans great days out. Eric has blonde hair and is tall. He is a happy go lucky guy. My friendship will last with Eric because I trust him. I can tell him anything and he trusts me. Trust is very important between friends.

By Patrick

The best time of the day

The best time of the day is early in the morning when the birds are just starting to wake up and the sun is just rising. The children are still in bed.

I sit on the bench in the front garden and watch the sun get higher in the sky. I listen to the birds and I feel the peace and quiet all around me. I watch the flowers opening up for the sun. I see the slugs slide away until tonight.

I sit watching the birds getting breakfast – not nice. I sit and contemplate the day ahead – what I have to do today and where I have to go and I wonder if I will get the chance to sit and have some peace.

Then the children start to stir and, one by one, they get up and start to chatter and argue with each other and I think to myself, “That is the end of my peace and quiet for today.” I can’t wait until tomorrow morning when I get up again with the birds and enjoy the best part of the day.

By Tina

