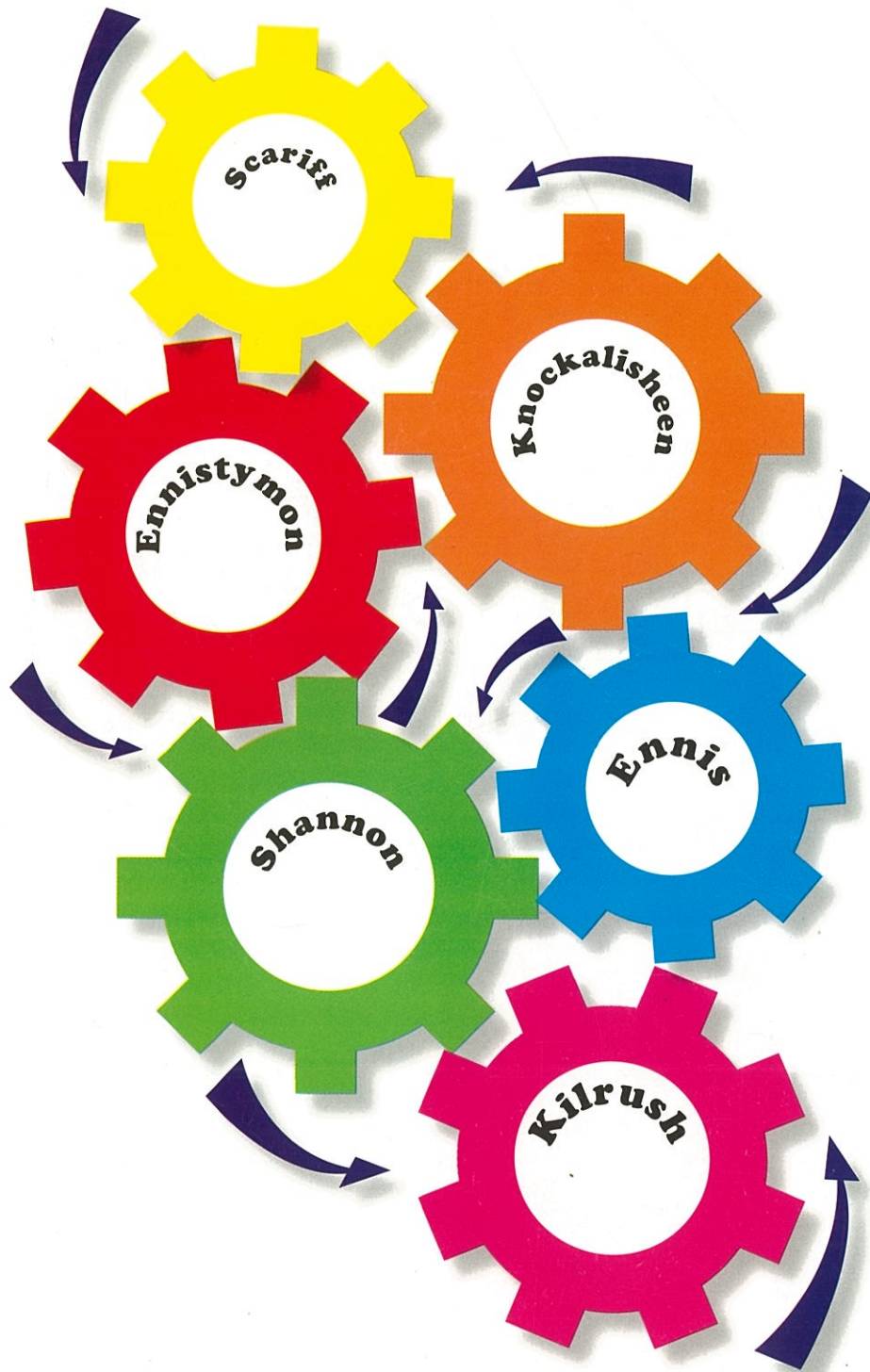


# *Simply Said 2003*



Issue 15

Co.Clare VEC

Clare Reading & Writing Scheme



*A Collection of Writings  
by Students  
of the  
Co. Clare  
Reading & Writing Scheme*

## Acknowledgements

This publication was produced by:

Co. Clare V.E.C.  
Clare Reading & Writing Scheme  
Adult Education Centre  
Clonroad  
Ennis  
Co. Clare

Your comments and suggestions are very welcome.  
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Funded by:

Department of Education & Science with assistance  
from the European Social Fund as part of the  
National Development Plan 2000-2006.



## **Foreword**

The students, tutors and staff of the Clare Reading & Writing Scheme are delighted to present the fifteenth issue of Simply Said, our annual student magazine.

The growing number of students with the Clare Reading & Writing Scheme means that this year we have over one hundred and fifty students from around Co. Clare contributing to Simply Said. Their jokes, stories and poems make this issue of Simply Said a joy to read.

A sincere thank you to all students, volunteer tutors, staff members and other supporters who have helped in the organisation and production of this year's magazine, and in other ways throughout the year.

Very hearty congratulations to all students whose work is represented here. Well done and best wishes for continued success!

*Moira*

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## The House

I am a big house. I am very old. I've seen many families live in my home - good and bad people have lived here. Some took very good care of me, others, did not. But I am strong. I was built to fight the strong winds that come from the North and they are very strong. I am still standing.

I've been empty now for many years. My windows are broken, my lovely garden is covered with weeds. Wild birds make their nests in me. They are company for me. I love the little field mice and rabbits. My roof is good, but I don't like the wind when it blows through me. My "For Sale" sign is long gone. I wish to be a home again, to have children. I love their voices, their laughter. Children make me happy. I'm sad now.

Some men came to see me today. One was a builder. I'm sure the other man was the owner. They walked through me, banged my walls, and examined me up and down for a very long time. The builder said I would need a lot of work, maybe it would be better to knock me and build afresh. My heart is broken. You will say houses don't have hearts, but they do. My owners' dreams and sorrows and memories happened in here.

I hope they will repair me. Yes, there are people coming and children! A lovely lady says, "We will have a picnic on the porch." I listen to the children who are playing around me. They have found the old oak tree where children long ago played on a swing. I know they like me. It's in their voices. They say they will make a tree house. I listen to the lady; she says I've got style and likes that I'm in the country.

The children will love it, but the man says that maybe the builder is right. I should be knocked. I'm so sad, but I know the lady is my friend. She says she would love to work in the house. She doesn't mind, and the children love the house.

They talk and talk. At last, the man says if it is what they want, but it's going to be hard work. Still, if the basic repairs are done, yes, my heart is full! Soon the house will be a home again with children happy. They are going now. But I know they will be back.

*By Mai*

### **My First Day in Ireland**

My name is Fatima Zohra. I am from Morocco and I'm here to visit my husband. I don't know yet how many days I will be staying here. I have one little problem, I love speaking English but I don't have the chance to speak much. Every day I want to know what I should do to speak more English. I want to have a winter's day in Ireland. I like the rain.

*By Fatima*

### **The Field**

The Field was on Wednesday 30th April in Glór. The play was written by John B. Keane. The main characters were Mick Lally and Mary McEvoy. It was set in the 30's and 40's.

There were 20 seats booked and four of us sat together and we enjoyed the show. It was on for two hours. The first part was as good as the second and I enjoyed every minute of it but we have to thank Caroline and the Adult Education Centre for booking it for us.

*By Jimmy*

## **Frogs Spawning Spring Coming**

Each year I look out for the first sign of spring, as I know it. That is the frogs beginning to spawn. Sadly last spring they picked the wrong location. The first place I observed them was in a drain with its water supply coming from the farmyard.

Every other year they would not spawn there because it would be polluted water. They set up in a pool that had formed in a level place down the drain. I observed them each morning as I walked my dog. A little at first and each morning a big addition would be there. The frogs would dive under water when I was investigating their progress.

It was the end of January when I housed the cows because the weather was so dry up to then, but it started to rain a little at first like the frogs spawning, but as time went on it made heavier floods.

Then about two weeks into February it made a deluge. I missed a couple of days seeing the frogs on walking the dog in that area of the land. The next fine morning I resumed my walk stopping to look at the frogs as usual.

I was shocked to see two frogs belly-up in the water and one other taken from the pool and half-eaten by a prowling fox or some animal.

Sizing up the situation it flashed to my mind that it was the polluted water that caused it, and I had interfered with their happy abode by putting in the cattle some weeks earlier. As well as that they had spent a lot of time indoors, thereby creating more infected water, which was washed from the shed and yard.

*By Joe*

## **St. Patrick's Day**

I like St. Patrick's Day. It is a very special day for Irish people. The Irish people go to celebrate in O'Connell Street in Dublin. I like the way everybody dresses for St. Patrick's Day - the old people, young people and children dress very beautifully. The people have fancy dress, floats, Irish flags, fine arts, and dance and percussion groups in the parade. I was surprised that the Irish people had such a very nice parade.

I stayed in Dublin overnight and it was very nice. I had a wonderful day on Saturday. I met lots of people from all over Ireland. They were very nice to me and I had a great time. I would like to thank three wonderful people, Gerson, Almeida and John for inviting me to Dublin.

Thanks.

My thanks to my teachers Karl, Margaret and Beatriz and especially to the Adult Education Centre School for the effort, patience and dedication that you had with me to help me how to learn English.

Thanks also to my computer teachers Amanda and Caroline.

Thank you very much. I enjoyed myself.

*By Frederico*

## **Snooker**

Last night I watched a brilliant snooker match between Ken Doherty and Mark Williams. At one stage Mark Williams was leading by ten frames to two, but Ken Doherty made a great comeback to level at one stage at twelve all, but Williams always regained the lead.

*By Michael*

## **French Toast**

2 eggs  
1 onion  
250ml milk  
100g cheese  
Sunflower oil  
1 French baguette

Grate the cheese with the coarse grater. Beat two eggs with a little milk into the bowl. Add the grated cheese and chopped onion. Then add a little salt and pepper. Pour in the leftover milk and whisk all the ingredients. Cut the baguette into slices. Dip each slice into the mixture. Using the fork put a little cheese from the bowl on one side of each piece of bread. Heat the sunflower oil in the frying pan and first fry the side with the cheese until it is golden brown (about 2 minutes on each side).

If you would like sweet toast just whisk the eggs with milk. Dip each slice into the mixture. Add a little sugar to the sides before frying.

## **Honey Moon**

75ml Tequila  
1 soup spoon of honey  
Juice of half a lemon

Squeeze the juice of half a lemon into the shaker. Add the tequila and honey. Shake up until the honey is melted into the shaker and the mixture is frothy. A couple of ice-cubes will make it easier to shake.

*By Margarita*

## **The Copper Kettle**

One day my Gran decided to throw out the old copper kettle. She gave it to me and told me to throw it in the rubbish dump. Two weeks went by and one day I was throwing out more rubbish, when I saw a little thrush and six baby thrushes in it. I kept feeding the thrushes with bread and eventually they got big and flew away. The old copper kettle was useful after all.

*By Noreen*

## **Living with Michael Jackson**

I watched the T.V. programme "Living with Michael Jackson" last night. It was interesting but Michael Jackson was off putting because he was black and then turned white and also he has plastic surgery. It was amazing how he spent so much money on whatever he wanted, for example he picked out a chess set worth \$40,000.

He seemed very foolish and he ruined his face and his life. He also seemed unhappy. He should stop expressing himself, he should get a real life, not a plastic surgery life.

He said he would never give his children the life he had and that his father had been very cruel. He used to beat him with a belt if he made a mistake.

*By Mary Ellen*



## **Hurling**

Hurling is a fast game and to play the game you need a ball and hurley. To play the game what you need is players on your team. You have two goals to score into. There are points and goals. The hurley is hard and the ball is fairly soft to hit. No one knows where it started, but in ancient Egypt there are drawings of the hurling game on cave walls. It was banned for 200 years, because a lot of bloody battles usually followed a game. Then people started to play G.A.A. sports. In 1884, hurling was once again the official game of Ireland. It is said that a nomadic tribe called the Celts brought the game to Ireland in 600 and that is why it is mentioned in many Irish legends especially Cuculainn. The first senior hurling final was played in 1887. The Scottish form is called Shinty and Bandy is the Welsh form. Some people say Scottish Shinty led to the creation of the sport Golf.

*By Martin*

## **If I Were Governor**

If I were a governor I would change the type of police force because they are brutal and corrupt. I'd change currency back to Irish money because the currency has become devalued. I would make prison conditions respectable because it's inhuman to keep prisoners in bad conditions. Have no Nice Treaty, let Europe have no say because we want to be more independent. Send young ones to the army, so we would have an army ready for war. Put prices on the budget low. Lower the cost of living because everything is too expensive for ordinary people.

*By Michael*

## **My Story**

In 1999 I came to Ireland, because there was war in Kosovo. When I came here I couldn't speak English and I couldn't read or write. I lived in Tralee, Co. Kerry, where I worked as a waitress for two years. In 2001, I moved from Tralee to Ennis. In July I heard about the Adult Education Centre. Then I started study in September 2001. I studied English and computers. I am in second year and I am enjoying it very much.

*By Florie*

## **Eminem**

I like Rap music because we are able to dance to the music. I like Eminem because he has brilliant music and wicked tunes. I like his film 8 Mile because it tells his life story and how he became famous. It also tells why he hates his mom and what she did for him to hate her and how he met his ex-wife Kimberley. Eminem's real name is Marshall Mathers. Some of his albums are called the Marshall Mathers LP, the Slim Shady LP and the Eminem Show.

Eminem is from Kansas City and he has one child, a girl, called Haley. Eminem had to appear in front of a court. He was up in court for possession of an illegal firearm. He did not have to go to prison but he had to pay a fine of \$250,000. Eminem is also part of a rap band called D12, which stands for Dirty Dozen. A few of the members are called Proof, Eminem, Kneiver and Bazzar. There are two more members of D12 but I can't think of their names.

*By Kevin*

## One More Push

Lying there so very young,  
Not knowing what was going to come,  
A little boy,  
A little girl,  
Oh my head is in a whirl.

A nurse came over to my bed,  
And said you're doing fine,  
First we will break your waters,  
You will be next in line.

So open wide and I'll put this inside,  
So I opened my mouth,  
Oh my dear, the other end, she cried,  
I'm not a dentist she hastily sighed with laughter.

So I'm lying here now indiscreet,  
With nurses around me and at my feet,  
It won't be long I hear them shout,  
One more push it will soon be out.

One more push that's all they say,  
One more push it's now another day,  
Lying there too tired to push,  
I see a knife so I push and I push,  
Lying there with legs north and south,  
"A baby girl" I hear them shout.

They left her beside me wrapped in a sheet,  
My baby girl she's so complete,  
Lying here with so much pride,  
Because my new baby is by my side.

Lying here thinking back,  
For one to feel so much pain,  
And then so much love,  
It can only come from God above.

*By Joanna*

## **The Field**

It was on in the Glór on Wednesday the 30th April 2003 at 12.00 noon.

Main actors:  
Mick Lally  
Mary McEvoy

Main characters:  
Bird  
Bull McCabe  
Tadgh  
The Widow

The writer:  
John B. Keane who now has passed away and is buried in Listowel, Co. Kerry.

The scene:  
The main parts in the play were in Flanagan's Pub, the field, and the church.

The atmosphere:  
I did not like it because it was all school kids. The evening time I would have liked more.

The group:  
There were nine of us from our Youthreach Progression Group and we had a great time.

*By Deirdre*

## **The Mart**

I went to the mart on Friday. It was on in Ennistymon; there were Shorthorns there, and they got a good price. Farmers from North Clare come to Ennistymon mart. It is a great day out.

*By Thomas*

## **Boxing**

Boxing is a great sport. It can teach you how to defend yourself. You can become very talented at this sport. The boxing club in Ennis, Co. Clare is open over 40 years and a man by the name of Colm trained in it. Now he owns it and trains other people in it. He brings them to other counties boxing. Sometimes if some of the boxers are good enough he would bring them to places like England and America. Sometimes they win and sometimes they lose.

A few weeks ago a boy in Ennis Boxing Club went to America boxing for Ireland. He had three boxing matches and he won them all. His name is Michael and he is 19 years old.

*By Jim*

## **My Experience with Surgery**

A few weeks ago I had an operation on my left leg. I had varicose veins removed.

The surgeon's name is Mr. Byrnes and I had the operation in the County Hospital in Ennis. I didn't feel anything until I came back from theatre and my legs were bandaged up. I was in hospital for a few days and I then went to my sister's house in Co. Mayo.

We walked a few miles every day. The bandages are now off and I only have to wear a surgical stocking. The whole experience wasn't bad and I'm glad I had the veins removed.

*By Angela*

## **My Battle with the Slugs**

Last year I sowed peppers three times in the glasshouse. Each time the seeds came up and I was right happy. They weren't long up when I went out one morning and the shaggers of slugs had eaten them all (excuse my language). I don't like using chemicals on my plants so I had to find another way to get back at the slugs. I got in touch with some other organic gardeners and they gave me some unusual tips.

The next time I sowed the peppers I was ready to do battle with the slugs. I spread some orange peel around the young pepper plants. They say that the slugs don't like the scent of orange peel. Thankfully, so far, it seems to be keeping them at bay. If that fails, I have another plan a local organic farmer told me about. This involves spreading broken eggshells around the pepper plants. The slugs don't like the sharp edges of the shells so they keep well clear of the plants.

I try as much as possible not to use any artificial products in my garden. I grow a plant called comfrey, some of which I steep in a barrel of water with some nettles. This is left steeping for a few weeks and then I pour it on the plants as a feed. There's a horrible smell out of it but it is a right good feed for all the plants.

Blight can be a problem for the late potato crop. What I do is mix bluestone and washing soda in a barrel. I strain this through an old pair of tights into a spraying can and spray it over the stalks.

My personal belief is that many illnesses are caused by the use of chemicals. That's why I use only organic products in my garden. I would like to see a lot more farmers and gardeners using organic sprays and manure for the sake of all our health.

*By Michael*

## **Great Time in the Canaries**

The first time we went on holidays was to the Canaries -the Green Hills Hotel. Over in the Canaries you'd swear you were in Paradise. Now don't get me wrong, Ireland is very nice. In the Canaries the houses are painted white with red roofs. The nightlife is great over there - people have a great welcome for you.

Food is very cheap over there. You could eat out all the time. Two bottles of Bud - €4, beat that for value. A litre of local beer cost €2.50, 20 John Players Blue also €2.50. It's no wonder people go abroad on holidays.

The apartments were lovely. We were at the pool from 9 in the morning for a few hours. After that we walked around and did a bit of sightseeing. We went to the restaurants and pubs in the evenings. We're going to Ibiza this year- we'll see how it compares with the Canaries.

*By Thomas*

## **How I Would Like to Live my Life**

This is how I would like to live my life in the future. The person I would like to marry would have to be kind. I'm not too gone on good looks. I wouldn't put up with any disrespect. I wouldn't care about money. Money can't buy you happiness. Before I settle down I would like to visit Ibiza and go clubbing. I will like clubbing when I'm older. I don't want to live in a house. I like to keep moving; you see more things. I like London. I lived in England before. When you have kids it ties you down to a house, because they need to go to school. I would love to have a few girls and a few boys.

*By Mary*

## Writings from the Friary Day Care Centre

We are doing a gardening course in the Friary Day Care Centre. We started by planting seeds in little trays. In a few weeks when they grow into small plants, we will transplant them into large pots. The weather has been beautiful for gardening - just the right amount of sunshine and rain to help the plants grow.

We are going to Michael's back garden on the Gort Road to plant vegetables. We don't know what we're planting yet. I've never planted vegetables before - just always bought them in the supermarket. I hope we plant carrots, parsnips and cabbage as they are my favourite vegetables.

The only thing I dislike about gardening is the dirt getting under my nails. I could wear gloves but it's hard to hold the tiny seeds with gloves on. Sometimes I get very dirty. I have to take off my good clothes and change into old ones.

We have a beautiful garden here in the Friary. It's between the Friary church and the Poor Clare's Convent. When the flowers bloom we will put the pots on the patio outside the day room. It will be lovely out there in the summer with the tables and chairs.

*By Celia*

When I start colouring I can hardly stop. We do some colouring at the start of every reading and writing class. I like to draw things myself and then colour them in. My tutor won't let me colour for the whole class - just some of it. The rest of the time we practice writing my name and we're trying to learn to count the Euros. I'm getting used to counting them now.

*By Brendan*



I don't like going to the dentist because it hurts too much. I've been going now for over 2 years. I can't wait to get my new teeth - everything will be all over and the new ones won't hurt ever. I'll have all my new teeth for the summer.

*By Phil*

I can't read books from the library. I have heaps of them and I can't read them. That's all I'll write.

*By Mary*

I was going in to the post office one Wednesday. There was a big black dog sitting outside with 3 pups and they were very cross. They were growling and I was afraid to pass them.

*By Bernadette*

The doctor put me on a diet because I'm too fat. Now I can't go to the pub on Saturday night for a few pints because they're too fattening. Ann said I could go and have two or three pints and it would do me no harm. I usually have a big drink of milk before I go to the pub but I can't have that now either - it's too fattening.

*By Martin*

I bought a coat in the charity shop down at the end of Parnell Street. I paid €10 for it. It's black and white check with a velvet collar. It will look nice with my grey skirt.

*By Bernadette*

## **My Summer Holiday**

Last summer my father booked a week's holiday for me and my mother. He chose a lovely place called Youghal, which is in Ireland. The day arrived for us to go on the holiday. I was very excited. It was a Saturday morning and we were about to begin our journey; the weather was very dull. The trip to Youghal took about three hours. On our arrival in Youghal the weather was lovely. It was really sunny.

We booked into our holiday home, it was a beautiful house, I felt really comfortable there.

The first thing we did was to go and buy some food shopping. We returned to the holiday home and cooked a lovely meal. I had some very enjoyable walks in Youghal town. A few days later I decided to spend some money, so I went shopping for new clothes. I was extremely happy with what I bought.

There was a beach not far from Youghal town. It was only a short drive from our holiday home. We went to a lovely town called Dungarvan. It was a very warm day. In Dungarvan there were plenty of shops and the town was very busy.

The holiday came to an end. It was time to drive home to Ennis. I will always remember my trip to Youghal.

*By Helen*

## **What is cheese made of?**

Cheese is made from milk. The milk is taken from mammals such as cows, goats or sheep. The milk is left in a warm place to go sour or curdle. After a time the milk separates into solid lumps called curd and a thin liquid called whey. The whey is drained off and the curd becomes cheese.

*By Michael*

## **Aston Villa F.C. History**

The club was formed in 1873/4. Their first game was against Aston Brook at St. Mary's Club. The first match was played in Aston Park. They won the F.A. Cup in 1887 and 1895. They were expelled from the competition. In 1897 they built their own stadium. They won again in 1899, 1900 and 1910. In 1999-2000 they were in their first F.A. Cup final in over forty years and host to Chelsea.

*By Patrick*

## **Shoeing a horse**

A blacksmith works all day in the forge. He works on all kinds of irons in the forge. He brings the horse in to the forge to shoe him. He turns the horse around to the door towards the light. The blacksmith starts the fire to warm the irons. He takes the horse's hoof and puts it behind his own legs.

He then takes off the old shoe. He pares down the horse's hoof. He smooths down the horse's hoof to measure for the horse's new shoe. He puts the shoe into the fire to heat it up. He does this to shape and brand the shoe.

He takes the shoe and puts it into the water to cool it down. He puts the shoe on the horse's hoof; and then he nails the shoe to the horse's hoof. He smooths down the horse's hoof and he turns the nails down. He finishes off the horse's hoof, the horse is ready to go.

*By Tony*

## **My Favourite Cartoon**

My favourite cartoon would have to be the Simpsons because it is funny and light hearted.

My favourite character would have to be Marge who is the long-suffering wife of Homer who is the employee of Mr. Burns owner of the Nuclear Plant. Homer is a slob, an idiot and his son, Bart, is the troublesome underachiever. Lisa, on the other hand, strives to be sensible and is the complete opposite of Bart. Then Mr. Burns is a conniving irritating man who always forgets Homer's name. Mr. Smithers is the devoted employee of Mr. Burns.

The character, Barney, spends all his life in Moe's pub, always belching and seems happy with his life.

Marge's sisters are so evil and they particularly despise Homer, who hates to see them coming.

School principal Seymour Skinner fancies himself as a war veteran.

His mother is a very oppressive woman and drives the life out of her son.

In my opinion, I think the characters are well drawn out and they'd make you laugh and think.

*By Catherine*

## **The Field**

It was on in the Glór on Wednesday the 30th of April at 12.00 noon. It was set in the 30's - 40's. The writer was John B. Keane. The characters were Bird and Bull McCabe. The actors were Mick Lally and Mary McEvoy. There were 4 parts in it. They were the pub, the field, the church and auctioneers. It was good but I prefer if it was in the evening. It was very noisy. There was loads of school ones there so we really didn't hear it that much.

*By Geraldine*

## **My Wedding Day**

On the 27th of January 2000, I got married to a girl by the name of Maggie. We got married in St. Patrick's Church in London.

We lived in London for five months but I did not like it there so we moved back to Galway for about 8 months, and then we moved to Ennis.

We are in Ennis for about two and half years and we like it. All of my cousins are living in Ennis. We are hoping to get a house so we can settle down and rear our family.

*By Tom*

## **The lofty height of professionalism and the not so obvious joys of being a mother.**

It is true to say that having a big family has had a slowing effect on my working outside the home life. Not for the reasons of lack of time, but for another less tangible reason.

I think one night stands out in my memory that sums up the whole situation by its telling.

I was getting ready for a gig in a local pub one night and trying to psyche myself up for it. I was feeling very apprehensive to say the least as I had previously had a partner who played guitar and took care of setting up the equipment, and tonight for the first time I was on my own. I stepped out of the shower and talked to myself very sternly as I dried. You are not stressed out, your children have not turned you into a hysterical basket case, and you will be a professional now!

"Keep talking, keep talking, and maybe you might even believe it yourself," the little critic inside my head was jeering me. "Don't listen to her," another voice was saying indignantly, "The kids are bathed, they're having their toast,

and they're going to bed fed, full happy and contented! Ok, so the house looks like nobody is in charge here! But you're out there earning a living and you are quite capable of being professional." "Ya right" says that nasty little voice. I stare critically into the mirror and decide it's about time I put in a bit of an effort. I carefully apply very little make up, one doesn't want to sing for the night looking like either Aunt Sally or Casper!

My son, Tony, carries all the heavy equipment to the car and I smile to myself, thinking there's a positive thing about having five sons! We drive down in a panic, late as usual, and when we finally find a parking place (a tiny red mini, loaded to the gills with huge speakers which looks ridiculous) we arrive into the pub red faced with exertion from extracting the two enormous speakers from the very tiny car! Still muttering and hissing at each other we enter an atmosphere that is cool and calm and foreign to both of us! A very stark contrast to the mayhem we had just come from!

"Deep breath, compose yourself" I tell myself! I pause to hold the door for my disgruntled son and treat him to my most serene smile. He rewards me with that dazed look of disbelief that in my mind says, "You're a schizophrenic, and a hypocrite to boot!" My eyes plead with him to not expose me for the neurotic, terrified, fraud that my churning stomach and knocking knees were telling me I am. Tony sighs deeply, smiles reassuringly and quietly asks me where I would like to set up.

Weak with gratitude that I am to be allowed to pretend I am comfortable with this and that I have even the vaguest clue where the best place to position the equipment for the best sound is, I stride confidently over to a corner, which truth to be told, I had chosen because I could hide there nicely and be as inconspicuous as it was possible to be!

Everything plugged in, set up, nothing left to do except hoist the speakers up onto the stands, when we notice they are upside down. The holes that the speaker stands were to sink into were facing up when they should be underneath. Does it occur to either of us that those deep dark holes going deep into the centre of each of these black giants,

designed to contain the speaker stands and nothing else, could be a home for anything other than what any 'professional' would normally keep there? No it did not. Not until we hoisted it up to slide it onto its stand and there was a shower of Lego, coins, sausages and a scattering of somewhat dated chips!

I watched in horror as Tony scrambled around the plushly carpeted floor on his hands and knees frantically stuffing the offending objects into his pockets. Oh well, nothing I can do now except get started and try to get through the next two hours as best I can.

As I sit down, I see for the first time my knees and realize they are generously coated with a mixture of strawberry jam and snot! Could one hug from a toddler really do so much damage? The mother in me didn't even think about it as I had given Meabh one last hug before I had gone out the door. Well she was wrapped around my knees looking up adoringly, what else could I do? Added to that, there were two nappy pins dangling from my left shoulder! Take the word working from 'working mother' and you're left with what I am first and last, a mother! I notice the stricken look on Tony's face and our eyes meet, and we both just burst out laughing. He whispers to me, "You must have been very bad in a past life. What did you do to deserve all of us?"

"I don't know Tony, just lucky I guess." He smiles, shakes his head and goes home.

*By Cathy*

### **Banoffi Pie**

You boil 2 tins of condensed milk for 3 hours. Then you get digestive biscuits, put them in a paper bag and beat them until they are like little pieces. Then you get 3 bananas and chop them into rounds. Then you get cream and whip it. Then open the tins of condensed milk and pour into a round tin (biscuits in first). Next put the bananas and then put the cream and leave it in the fridge for 2 hours to set.

*By Lisa*

## **The Horse Trainer**

I have been training horses for 20 years or more. Here is how you go about it. First you mouth them by putting a bit in it. Then you ring them. You put a stake in the middle of the field and tie the horse onto it with a length of rope and every day for a few days for 10 minutes, you ring them on the left side and then on the right. The next thing you have to do is put the harness on and then put a pallet behind the horse to get him used to pulling. When he gets used to the pallet you put the cart behind him to get him used to the road. If the horse is shy or nervous you put the horse in the running river; it takes all the nerves out of him. When you are shoeing a horse you have to be careful in case you quick him. Some of the horses I owned were 'Speedy Bells', 'Lucky' and 'Rodney', but my favourite was 'Rose'.

*By William*

## **Pakistani Women**

My name is Hajira. I am from Pakistan. I am a married woman. My husband's name is Ijaz. He is a very caring man. He is a very handsome man. I have no children. I have lived here for two years. Ireland is a beautiful country. My country is also beautiful. I love my country. I love Pakistani food. Pakistani food is very tasty. I have six sisters and two brothers. My parents are not educated. My five sisters are married and only one is not married. My big brother is a doctor and my younger brother is a student in college. My father is dead. I am a Muslim woman.

*By Hajira*



## **My Local Football Team**

My local team is called Kilrush Shamrocks. Their manager is Donie. They train on the pitch in Kilrush and sometimes train in Ennis. Their jerseys and togs are green and white. I like to watch them train.

I am very involved with my club. I help out at matches. I bring the water bottles onto the field. I mind the medical kit in case of an injury. I am the assistant P.R.O. When there is a function on, I make up a poster on the computer and I hand them into the shops. I help to clean up after the functions.

The last time we won the championship was in 1987. We are hoping to win it out this year.

*By Kieran*

## **A Tidy Lawn**

I like doing the lawn at my house in Cusack View. In order to keep it neat and tidy, I use a lawn mower to cut the grass. I then put the grass into a compost bin. Very soon now I will be planting flowers in the flowerbed at the back of the house along by the wall. Sometimes I cut back the hedge with clippers. The cuttings also go into the compost bin. If there are leaves on the lawn I gather them up with a rake and put them in the compost bin. Our house looks nice and neat.

*By Patrick*

## **S Club 7**

There were 7 people in S club, now there are 6, because Paul left the group. Their names are Rachel, Hannah, Tina, Jo, John and Bradley. I have four CDs and two videotapes of S club. I went to see them in the cinema. They were very good and I enjoyed the film. They were on T.V. a lot and I liked to watch them. They have a CD called 'Sun Shine'. My favourite songs are 'Don't Stop Moving', 'Reach For The Stars' and 'Two In A Million'. Hannah is my favourite singer in the group. Her real name is Hannah Louise Spearritt. She was born in Great Yarmouth in 1981. She has blue eyes and blonde hair. She has a sister called Tanya and a brother called Stuart. She likes Michael Jackson's 'Thriller', her mother's Sunday roasts and going clubbing with her friends. Hannah's favourite beauty product is moisturiser. The films she likes include 'Grease' and 'Titanic' and she likes to read books by Roald Dahl. She enjoys wearing her brown leather jacket. I hope that S club continues to make records for a long time.

*By Joan*

## **Dallas**

My favourite programme on television was Dallas. I used to watch it every week on television. It was all about the Ewing family and their oil problems. J.R. Ewing was the meanest of the family, and Bobby was the quietest in the family, and Cliff Barnes was another problem in the family. Somehow they all got on together and I loved Dallas, but it's not on any more. I miss it so much.

*By Thomas*

## **Mountain View**

I live in Mountain View with a house parent and three others Brian, Danny and Paddy.

At the moment we have a 4 bed-roomed house, with a kitchen cum dining room, a sitting room and a utility. We have a bathroom upstairs and two of the bedrooms are en-suite.

We recently got planning permission for an extension, which will add a day room, another bedroom and an en-suite bathroom for every bedroom. We have no date set yet, but hopefully the work will start soon. I like Mountain View as I can walk into town from there.

*By David*

## **Farming Long Ago**

My mother and I would milk the cows. We had six cows. Some of the cows would calf in March and April. I would go to the creamery in April with the horse and car. My father and I would go to the bog in May. We would cut four trailers of turf for home and four trailers for sale at £20 a trailer. We used to have six cattle for sale at £30 a beast. We would sow the spuds in April and corn, oats and barley. We would dig the spuds in September and harvest the corn. We would cut the corn with the scythe and sometimes with the horse and machine. We would cut the hay in July with the horse and machine. We would shake the hay with the forks. We would thrash the corn in October. There would be four or five men thrashing the corn. We would kill a pig in November for home and kill one for sale.

*By Peter*

## **Rainbows**

Sunlight is made up of lots of colours mixed together. Rainbows occur when the sun shines through drops of rain. That's because when sun shines through water droplets the light breaks up into all its different colours, making a rainbow.

Rainbows are really circles, not arcs. We can't see the whole circle because the earth blocks our view of it.

*By John*

## **Snow Brings Curiosity**

Winter

Winter feels like a lonesome evening.  
A winter sky is like an empty heart.  
Where winter trees are like a frightened child,  
Winter snow brings curiosity.

*By Michael*

## **Spirit of Dreams**

In my dreams I am standing on the ocean.  
I make up magical potions.  
I make the stars and moon shine bright,  
I take away your sorrow and fright,  
I am the spirit of dreams.

*By Eileen*

## **The Silver Lady**

I lived in a small village in the west of Ireland for a few years and it was a very beautiful place, but the reason I left there was because I got a very bad fright.

I was coming home one night after visiting a friend around 11 o'clock. I had a nice walk ahead of me, about 3 or 4 miles, but it was a nice night so I did not mind. Anyway, I was walking down this country road at a very relaxed pace when all of a sudden I heard this 'tap tap' sound behind me. I looked behind but I could not see anyone or anything, but still the sound kept coming closer and closer. When I listened hard it sounded very like high heels. The closer the sound came the quicker I walked. My heart was thumping so badly. Eventually I plucked up the courage to stop and look behind. To my amazement, there about a half mile behind me was this beautiful young woman dressed in a beautiful shimmering silver gown. She looked so sad, I felt sorry for her, but at the same time my hair stood up at the back of my neck and I started walking again.

As it turned out, I was very lucky because about 20 minutes later she disappeared and when I got into the village I met some people. I started to tell them what I had seen. They really put the wind up me, because they told me I was lucky to be alive to tell the tale. Apparently the story goes that if the silver lady smiles at you, and you smile back at her, you die on the spot. I was very lucky that night and I thank God I am still here to tell the story of the strange silver lady.

*By Cathy*

## **My New Nails**

I admired my friend Patrice's nails. When she told me that they were false I decided to get my own done. I phoned the nail studio in Francis Street to make an appointment. I went at 3.30 on Tuesday. Louise took out a box of nails and she fitted them on my own nails. Then she glued them on. She cut them and filed them in a nice shape. She showed me different colours. I picked a wine colour. Louise painted the nails for me and then asked me if I would like a transfer on them. I picked a transfer from a huge selection that she showed me. The transfer was little diamonds. These were glued on the nails. My false nails looked lovely. I thanked Louise and paid her. I could not wait to get home to show my family.

*By Karen*

## **My Nephew Benjamin**

My sister Eithne had another baby boy. The baby was born on the 20th October 2002. His name is Benjamin David Patrick. Fr. John baptised Benjamin in the Cathedral. He loved the holy water poured on his head. Sarah and Patrick were godparents to Benjamin. Some pictures were taken of Benjamin. We all had a beautiful dinner when we got home. Benjamin is a very clever baby. He likes warm milk in his bottle, not cold milk. He twists and turns his head to look all around him. Benjamin is Daniel's brother. I love my two nephews Daniel and Benjamin. They are the best boys and I will always help them.

*By Breeda*

## **A Warm Heart**

Winter

Winter feels like any empty pocket.  
A winter sky is like a dark dreary night.  
Where winter trees are like any empty shell,  
Home is like a warm heart.

*By Jimmy*

## **The Field**

I went to see a play called 'The Field' on the 30th of April 2003. It was at 12.00 noon. There were four of us from the Adult Education Centre. We all went together. We had good seats and we were able to see and enjoy it well.

The play was mostly set around the pub. There was also a bit of it set in the chapel and field.

The actors were very good. They played their characters well. I thought that the man that played the character Bird was the best.

The play was about keeping the land in the community and not letting any blow-ins take over and destroy the land. The people stuck together, kept the land and moved the impostor out of the picture by him being killed by 'accident'. That was basically the end of the play. I enjoyed it very much and would love to see more plays in the future.

I would like to thank my teacher Caroline and her peers for making it possible to go and see the play.

*By Pat*

## **Our House**

My sisters and I moved into our new house last year. We each have our own room. We have a lovely kitchen. We travel by bus each day to the day centre. We have our meals there. We do woodwork and gardening at the centre. We also help with the housework and do reading and writing with Katie and Mary. We sometimes go to the beach in Lahinch. We like to take walks there.

*By Marie & Susan*

## **Table tennis**

I love to play table tennis and I think it is my favourite hobby. Words cannot express what feelings occupy me when I meet good competitors and have enough time to play the game with them. Speed, difficult technical elements, good reactions, physical condition and a vision are required to play table tennis.

Now I live in Ennis but there isn't any table tennis club with good competitors. To my deep disappointment this means that I can't practice. But I think that one day my life circumstances will let me enjoy the game again.

*By Ihar*

## **What is a meadow?**

A meadow is a field of grass that is cut once a year to make hay for cows to eat in winter. Farmers make hay at the end of the summer. For the rest of the year the meadow is home to all kinds of animals and beautiful flowers.

*By Suzanne*



## **Think Healthy**

Something had to go. It was certainly not going to be my clothes so it had to be the weight. I had heard about Weight Watchers so I made enquiries about the venue and times of classes.

I had no idea what to expect, it was all very new to me. There were two queues, one for registering and one for weighing in. I picked the wrong one and had to start all over again. After the weigh-in we had our weekly talk. We were advised as to what to eat and not feel hungry.

I got so carried away with the 'Tuna Fish'; I forgot my reading and writing class. I am so surprised and delighted with my progress that I will continue going to the classes.

It really is an eating programme for life. It makes me aware of buying quality food and giving myself time to prepare, cook and enjoy it.

*By Carmel*

## **Feels Great to be Alive**

Summer

This day is full of life -  
Trees and wild birds.  
The fish are running free  
With all the colours of summer.  
It feels great to be alive.

*By John*

## **The Field**

It was on in Glór on the 30th April on a Wednesday at 12.00 noon. The writer was John B. Keane. It was set in the late 30's-40's. The main actors were Mick Lally and Mary McEvoy and some of the characters were 'Bird' and 'Bull McCabe'. The play was set in 4 parts.

I found it funny and a good laugh. There were special effects in the play; for example, the rain, for most of it was set in Flanagan's Pub. I thought it was a good story but I think I would prefer the film instead.

*By Trudy*

## **Chip**

Chip was a young boy who lived in England. Chip was only nine years old when his life began to change. Chip had two brothers and a sister and a Dad he barely knew. His mother was great. She worked when the children were at school and she cooked, cleaned, washed and slaved when she got back from work.

One day, Chip and his friends went out for a ride on their bikes. There was an old house on a hill. This was no ordinary house. This was a condemned house, and condemned for the fact that no one would live in it. It was a big dark house with a dark secret that Chip was about to find out.

One of Chip's friends said, "I dare ya to go in Chip, you wimp," so Chip said, "I'm no wimp," in an angry voice and in that anger he ran up the hill leaving his bike on the ground.

Just as he was about to open the door, his friends ran away. Chip was thinking "Who is the wimp now." He then heard something moving. "Never mind," he said, jarring himself on. He finally went in. Suddenly, he was grabbed

from behind and pushed down a hole in the floor. He almost lost his life with the fright.

As he looked around he could see that everything that was lost or stolen in the past ten or eleven years was here. Then a man jumped out from behind a cupboard. He had a long grey beard and long shaggy hair. He was wearing clothes belonging to all the men from the neighbourhood.

He spoke with a soft voice and polite manner. "What's your name son?" he asked. "Chip, Chip, sir," Chip said very shakily. They began talking. They talked about Chip's life and the man's life and the reason he was where he was and also his name was Joe.

Joe lived in the house all his life. When he was much younger, his parents died in a car crash outside the door of the house. Everybody saw what happened. It was a horrible accident. Joe was also in the car but he was saved and left without his parents. He was only nine years old just like Chip when it happened.

*By Bernie*

## **My 21st Birthday Party**

April 4th 2003 was my 21st birthday. I was excited when I got up that morning. I got lots of cards and presents. My mother gave me a big bunch of flowers for my birthday. My mother arranged a party for me in the Éire Óg clubhouse. The hall was decorated with balloons. All my family and friends came to my party. We had lots of food, sandwiches and sausages, taytos and drinks. I had a big birthday cake with pink icing and twenty one candles. I blew them out. I had a disco as well. I danced a lot. I loved my birthday party.

*By Michelle*

## **Independent Living**

I live independently in Pine Grove in Ennis. I have a lovely flat for one person. It has one bedroom, bathroom and a kitchen. I do my own cooking and shopping every week. I also enjoy my cup of coffee in town. I do all my own cleaning, housework and washing.

As my parents are dead, I stay at my sister's house every 2 or 3 weekends. I join up with friends and go to the cinema every now and then.

I am also looking forward to going to the Joe Dolan concert on Friday night. When I am in town at the weekend, the bread that I do not use I bring to the ducks in the River Fergus. While I was feeding the ducks I saw a mother, father duck and 13 baby ducklings sailing up the river. All I was sorry for was that I hadn't a camera to take a photo of them, as they looked so cute.

I like the soaps on T.V. - Eastenders sometimes, but Fair City is my favourite programme.

I have three jobs that keep me very busy. I work in the altar bread section in the workshop making communion breads. I work in Banner House on the Clare Road cleaning the offices. I also work in Árd na Gréine cleaning offices there.

My boyfriend and I sometimes go walking to Ballyalla. We come back by the Auburn Lodge Hotel and we would have our tea there and a drink afterwards. Sometimes we go to Drumcliff graveyard and pray for all our friends who have been laid to rest. R.I.P. We enjoy a nice walk around, especially when the weather would be nice. I have a mobile phone so my friends can contact me easily.

*By Mairead*

## **An Idle Mind is the Devil's Workshop**

The sewing class in the Knockalisheen Centre is totally multicultural. There are people not only from different countries, but also from different tribes, such as Yorubas and Ibos. The tutor keeps us on our toes, not only as regards sewing. She loves imparting her wisdom and we look forward to each session eager to learn something new and 'European'.

In Nigeria, sewing is referred to as tailoring or fashion designing. It is a basic vocation found in most families, but also a very lucrative and popular business, unlike in Ireland where it seems to have died out. There is a lot of competition in the design of local attires. Nigerians, for example, are very fashion conscious.

Apart from the big companies and designers we also have what is called the Obioma trade. These are local tailors who carry hand machines on their shoulders and go from street to street making basic amendments for people for a small amount of money. They are very popular because they are cheap and convenient.

Well, the sewing class here has been a rewarding experience. Making the quilts was new for us - quilts are not used in Africa because of the tropical weather. Also one can be subject to physical punishment in learning environments in Africa, so here, to learn in such serene circumstances is amazing for us. The sky is our limit!

In conclusion, I would say, as we do back home, that sewing is a very 'satisfying vocation'. But most importantly, here in Ireland, it has helped us to keep busy. Remember, as the saying goes: 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.'

*By Rhema, Tempitope and Stephainie*

## **Do our Dreams mean Something?**

My name is Laura and my question to you is, do our dreams mean something? Are they a sign for the future? In my experience I think so. I'm now 17 and can still remember most of my dreams as a child. As a child, I didn't understand but now I do. (I used to dream that my parents were separated and didn't know where I was living. It was strange really because I never saw my Dad's house and my little sister was living with my mother.) It didn't hit me until I was twelve and both my parents decided their marriage wasn't working and went their separate ways. A couple of years later I got so out of control that my parents thought it would be best for me to leave and let the Mid-Western Health Board look after me.

If you look back on this you'll see that my dream did tell me something. It was a warning, letting me know what was going to happen in the near future.

It is crazy really because do you believe in this sort of stuff or think it is crazy? In this world I believe anything is possible. Our minds are a whole other world just trying to make sense of it all. It does happen, people read, write, go to war, fly a plane, and drive a car. Why not have the powers to see strange or different things? Everyone is different and senses something different. It's a confusing world.

*By Laura*

## **People are Frightened - War**

The colour of war is blue night.  
The picture of war is this sky,  
A sky full of violence.  
People are frightened.

*By Kieran*

## **Ukrainian Apple Pie**

It is a very easy recipe, easy to make and doesn't take a lot of time. The taste is just lovely. The ingredients you need are:

4 eggs  
5 apples  
1 mug of sugar  
1 mug of flour

Break the eggs and separate the yolk from the whites. Whisk the egg whites with sugar. Add the yolks and whisk again. Sieve the flour into the mixture and mix them all together very carefully.

Peel the apples and cut them into slices. Put the apples into a greasy tin and cover them with the mixture. Bake in a hot oven (180°-200°) for 30 minutes.

Enjoy it!

*By Nataliya*

## **A Poem About Summer**

Summer comes three months a year,  
The burning rays scorching near,  
The hot sun burning down  
On the people in the town.  
Here is a rule we love to teach-  
Slip on that t-shirt at the beach,  
Slap on that sun cream, don't be a fool,  
Always remember this golden rule.  
Now slap on a hat, be sun wise  
And you will have a big surprise.  
The long hot days of summer sun  
Will always be filled with lots of fun.

*By Ronan*

## **The Field**

We went to see a play called 'The Field' it was on in Glór. The main actors were Mick Lally and Mary McEvoy. There were 4 main parts to this play and it was set in the late 30s-40s.

There were special effects in this play. The main characters were the Bull McCabe and Bird.

The atmosphere was good. Everybody seemed interested. There were about nine from our group that went up to see the play.

The play started at 12.00 and it finished about 2.30 pm. The play was o.k. Near the end, I found it a bit boring. Mick Lally was very good playing the Bull McCabe.

*By Gillian*

## **Supporting the Olympics**

I am looking forward to going to Dublin to see the World Games with David, Gerard, Patrick and Tommy. Pauline will be driving us up in the Space Wagon.

We will be staying for three nights in the Great Southern Hotel near Dublin Airport.

We will have breakfast in the restaurant for the three mornings.

I will be sharing a room with Tommy. I will be supporting the soccer boys.

I hope we will have a nice time in Dublin. I hope the weather will be beautiful and sunny.

It would be great if the lads won the soccer. We will be there to cheer them on every day.

*By Danny*



## **Busy Days**

I have been working in the pottery factory for five years. I like working here. I check the mugs for chips. I wet the mugs with a sponge to clean them. My work is very messy but it doesn't annoy me. I do eight trays a day. I put them upside down on the tray.

I have a friend called Mary and she works with me in my section. I don't want to work in the glazing in case I break the mugs. I work with Rachel and she is my friend. Lottie and Liam are supervisors they are kind to me and I am fond of Gary. I like going to the reading and writing classes with Maire. We do lots of things and have plenty of discussions.

I get the bus in Limerick every day. I get up at six o'clock in the morning I go to the canteen for a cup of tea. Then I begin work at eight o'clock. We finish work every day at four p.m. I am very tired after work. I live with my mother and I look after her when I come home from work.

*By Veronica*

## **Shopping**

Every Wednesday I walk down to Dunnes Stores after work. I go into the Ladies Department to have a look around. If I see something I like I go into the fitting room to try it on. Then if I like it I bring it up to the cash desk and pay for it. I give the cashier my club card as well. The cashier puts my new clothes into a bag with the receipt. Then I go to the Café to wait for my Dad.

We usually go to The Auburn Lodge Hotel afterwards to meet my Mum. There are music sessions on in the bar. We stay there for a few hours and then we go home.

*By Dorothy*

## **Floating Mind**

Dreams are the clouds in the sky,  
Dreams are people with wings who can fly.  
Dreams are all up and down,  
Some make you excited,  
Some make you frown.  
My dreams are white, not sad and black.  
I must leave my fantasy now and come back.

*By Lynda*

## **Dream Holiday**

When I win the lotto I will go to New York for a holiday. I will bring my wife and six kids. We will fly from Shannon on Aer Lingus. We will get a yellow taxi to Times Square and will stay in the New York Hilton in two bedrooms. I would book the children in. My wife and I will go for a few pints downstairs.

The next day we would go sight seeing to Central Park and go to the Zoo, rent bikes to go around the park and later take a carriage ride.

I would like to visit Lower Manhattan to see where the World Trade Centre was, then go back to the hotel by the Brooklyn Bridge.

When in New York I would like to visit Belmont Race Track and back horses just for the fun. I would like to buy a horse for \$200,000 to leave in New York so I would come more often.

We would go shopping mad before we go home, buying toys and clothes.

*By Paddy*

## **My Favourite Soccer Team**

My favourite soccer team is Manchester United. They are ahead of Arsenal. They are going to win the title on Saturday. They are on 77 points at the top of the table. Manchester United has lots of players. They are going to be Champions of the Premiership on this Saturday. My favourite player on the Manchester United team is Ruud van Nistelrooy.

*By Gerard*

## **My Life**

My name is Rita. I am from Lissycasey. I have 3 sisters and 1 brother. Laura is 25, Karen is 24, Emer is 21 and my brother Michael is 10. Last May my cousin Seamus was getting married. The person he was marrying was from Meath, so we all had to go up to Meath.

The wedding was on a Saturday so we left on a Thursday to be there early. We stayed in a hotel called the Cabra Castle it was lovely. I had to share a room with my sisters and my brother had his own room. We all had a fantastic time and we arrived back home on Sunday.

I work in the Clare Youth Centre 5 days a week, I work in the coffee bar for a few hours. I also do subjects they are Maths, English, Irish, Woodwork and Computers. I enjoy them very much.

*By Rita*

## **The Irish Wheelchair Association**

I work for the Irish Wheelchair Association. The work I am involved in is with people with disabilities. These people I am involved with have a range of different types of disabilities from wheelchair impairment and many other disabilities.

My work involves taking members off the bus; unclamping the wheelchairs, wheel them on the lift, which is operated by pressing a button beside the lift. The wheelchair then descends and I wheel them into the centre.

Once in the centre when everyone is settled they may request tea or coffee which I enjoy doing, we also cook a meal, it might be; Irish stew one day, bacon and cabbage or fish and chips.

When lunch is over the members like playing cards, others like shopping. I enjoy working with people with disabilities.

On a personal note, we take so much for granted like getting out of bed in the morning. Unlike some of the people I work with. They have to wait for two carers before they can even think about getting out of their bed. The procedure for this is to hoist the person from the bed into the wheelchair and this is done before the person can even use the bathroom. To shower the person we need the hoist again to settle the person in the shower. Breakfast time, some people with disabilities can't feed themselves so the carer has to make sure the person eats as much as they want.

People with disabilities like to be as independent as they can so when the members come into the centre you must always make sure you know exactly what they are capable of before you judge their capabilities and allow them independence to do things for themselves.

People using wheelchairs are not disabled in other forms and must be allowed to be active in every way.

Respect the person. Treat them as you would treat any person outside the wheelchair group.

People must be aware that the person in the wheelchair is a person to be treated with respect. I have found that dealing with people in shops, speak to me and use eye contact with me avoiding the wheelchair person. Equality matters and people without disabilities need to learn all about people with disabilities.

*By Mary*

## **The Wax Museum**

I went to the Dublin wax museum on a school tour for a day when I was small, I don't remember much, but I liked it. My friends and I went to see Michael Collins in the wax museum and I went into the maze there, I got lost a few times in the dark but I found my way out. "My friend got stuck, I had to go back for him. We got bored of that so we went to see more of the wax museum and we saw Mary McAleese and a lot more wax people. Then we went to the chipper up in Dublin and a man said to us "Give me a pound and I will watch your car for you." So the people paid him and said to us, "If we don't pay he won't watch the car for us."

*By Darren*

## **My Dog**

I have a dog named Sandy. He is 3 years old. He is coloured brown. He is a fox terrier. He likes eating, sleeping and walking. I like to bring him for a walk. He likes lying down on the chair. He doesn't like pussycats. He likes to bury bones.

*By Joan*

## **How to Make Playdough**

100g plain white flour  
1 tsp cooking oil  
150 ml water  
50g salt  
Food colouring  
1 tsp cream of tartar

1. Put the flour, salt, cream of tartar and cooking oil into a saucepan and stir together.
2. Add 1 - 2 teaspoonfuls of food colouring to the water and stir well. The more you add the deeper the colour will be.
3. Gradually add the water to the other ingredients mixing thoroughly to remove any lumps.
4. Cook over a low to medium heat. Stir continuously until the dough becomes thick and leaves the sides of the pan almost clean.
5. Scrape the mixture from the saucepan onto a smooth flat surface. Put the saucepan into soak immediately.
6. Leave the playdough to cool for at least 10 minutes.
7. Knead the cooled playdough until it becomes smooth and pliable. You can mix 3 colours to get a marbled effect.
8. Wrap the playdough in cling film and store in the fridge.

*By Noel*

## **Peaceful Summer Moon**

Summer

This day is full of children playing.  
Their laughter is the colour of rainbows.  
They are happy and warm.  
And at night the peaceful summer moon is in my window.

*By Marie*

## **Jokes**

When God was giving out brains you thought he said trains  
and asked for a slow one.

When God was giving out ears you thought he said cheers  
and asked for three.

When God was giving out heads you thought he said beds  
and asked for a kingsize.

When God was giving out noses you thought he said roses  
and asked for a big red one.

*By Miguel*

## **Working Man**

I am working in the Pottery Workshop for twenty-seven years. At the moment I am working in the fettling section. I fill sixteen trays a day. I usually work with mugs and tankards. Sometimes I let a mug fall and break and I get cross with myself.

I like my job, I do some of the care-taking duties as well, cleaning tidying and sweeping. I go to reading and writing classes every week. I enjoy them, I hope by going to class

I will get a better job. I love machines especially lawnmowers. I am interested in how they work, and the different types there are.

Sometimes my health isn't good and I have to mind myself. I like being busy and having plenty to do.

*By Charlie*

## **Budgerigar**

A budgerigar is a small brightly coloured pet bird. Budgerigars originated in Australia. An Australian Aboriginal name, from budgeritgar meaning 'good cockatoo'.

I have two pet budgies. I got my first budgie two and a half years ago for my birthday. She is bright yellow with tints of green on her back. She is very pretty. I just got another budgie, he is bright blue with black spots on his back and his name is Joey, and the yellow one is called Tuesday.

My Tuesday is very spoiled (I think) and bold. She is always at the other bird, it looks like she is fighting with him all the time. She makes funny noises at him and picks at his head and pulls his tail and his feathers fall out. I tell her to "stop, that's bold", she just tweets back at me like she was laughing at me. I always tell Tuesday to mind Joey "he is only a baby". When I say to Tuesday "are you coming out to play", she flips over to me and if she does not bite me she's allowed to come out, but she comes out anyway and she flies all around my room. Joey is still a bit scared but slowly he will be as bold as Tuesday.

*By Katherine*



## **Peace and Sleep are Disturbed - War**

The colour of war is yellow.  
The picture of war is shots on the streets.  
The streets are full of sorrow  
All peace and sleep are disturbed.

*By Jamie*

## **Skiing Holiday**

A group of 36 flew out from Dublin Airport to Salsburg. Then travelled by coach to St. Johan in Austria on a skiing holiday.

It was a wonderful experience. Conditions were perfect for skiing, as there was lots of snow. It was 50cm deep. At night time we went to the pubs and the nightclub. I met very nice people on the trip. I hope to go skiing next year.

*By Cathal*

## **My Boyfriend**

I have been working in the Pottery Workshop for eleven years. I work with Emma in the glazing area. Emma is a nice boss. I like to work, it occupies my mind. I met my boyfriend in work, we met in the casting area. In the beginning we were just friends. I thought he was very good looking and after awhile, I asked him out for a meal. Paul was delighted. We went to the Shannon Knights and in return Paul asked me to go to some dances that were on in Limerick. I love dancing and I was very happy to go with him.

Phil is a good friend of mine in work if it wasn't for work I would not have made so many friends and I would not have met Paul.

*By Marion*

## **Sponge Cake**

3 oz (85g) flour  
3 large eggs  
4 oz (110g) caster sugar

Heat the oven to 190°C / 375°F or gas mark 5. Line two 7in (18cm) tins with greaseproof paper.

Sieve the flour and keep in a warm place. Whisk the eggs and sugar until they are thick. Fold in the flour slowly gently to the whisked eggs and sugar with a spatula or a metal spoon. Pour the mixture evenly into the two tins. Bake above the centre of the oven for about 12 minutes. Let the sponge cool before turning out onto sugared paper. Spread jam fruit or cream onto one of the sponges and put the other on top.

*By Margaret*

## **My Grandmother**

My Grandmother was a very special person to me. She was born in November 19th 1900. She lived in Cappafean, Crusheen, Co. Clare.

Her father had four sons from his first marriage. So he married her mother and she was born, but just at the age of five months old her mother died, her grandmother and aunt brought her up.

She would tell me of the old times. It was very interesting to hear of times gone by. My grandmother married when she was twenty-five. Her husband and she married into the family home, bought land and raised a family of six girls and two boys on the farm.

My grandmother was a beautiful person, she was caring and had a great sense of humour. She could tell funny stories and she loved her birthday parties. She would never be the first one to go home. She liked meeting people. I will always remember the happy times I had with her.

On the 27th March 2003 she died at the age of 102 years leaving 31 grand children, 40 great grand children, 6 daughters, 1 son and 3 sons in law.

*By Anna Marie*

## **Cats - The Friendly Hunter**

Cats and humans have lived together for thousands of years because cats make excellent pets, but cats still have a wild side. They are clever hunters and will catch small animals even when they're well fed.

Kittens love to play with each other and often have pretend fights. Playing helps them to learn to hunt.

Cats are so good at getting out of sticky situations that people often say they have nine lives. In fact they are very agile and good at slipping their way out of danger. They have keen eyesight and their whiskers help them to sense things.

*By Elizabeth*

## **A Night Out**

My name is Connie. I live in Ballynacally with my mother, father, sister and brother.

We often go to the Old Brogue in Killimer on a Saturday night. I love going there because of the music and the dancing. I often get up on the floor dancing with my wheelchair, as there is plenty space.

*By Connie*

## **Dolphin Families**

Most dolphins like to be with other dolphins. They move around together in groups called 'pods'. They are very clever animals and have many ways of 'talking' to each other. Dolphins often leap out of the water and into the air. Some people think they do this to breathe or as a sign to other dolphins, others think they do it for fun.

As it leaps a dolphin breathes in air through a hole at the top of its head. Some dolphins have a curvy mouth that makes them look as if they are smiling.

*By Adrian*

## **The Crèche**

I did my work experience there and I love the baby room. I help feed them with their dinner. I hold the babies when they cry and rock them to sleep in my arms. Sometimes I rock them to sleep in their chair seats.

One of the babies is nearly 10 months and he has just taken his first step. He looked so cute. I hope to do a childcare course, as I really enjoyed the work.

*By Sylvia*

## **A Clare Day**

On May 18th of this year a big hurling event took place in a Co. Cork stadium. The two counties that played were, Clare and Tipperary. We were watching the match at home and it was so wonderful. Also the players played at a very high level and showed lovely skills in this match. Clare won the game. We had a great time. The event was very well organized. I wish this team good luck for the rest of 2003 and beyond.

*By Kefah*

## **The Training Centre**

I now attend the training centre at the Brothers of Charity, Ennis. I travel from Newmarket on Fergus to Ennis every day.

At the centre I enjoy doing cooking, woodwork, washing up, writing and working on the computer. I have lots of friends there.

*By Paul*

## Westport

This year I am going to Westport for a week in June. There will be 8 of us travelling together.

We will be staying in a hotel with a swimming pool and gym. We will be going on both walking and driving tours during the week.

One of our house parents will drive the mini-bus, so we will be free to stop any time or at any place we feel like it.

I was never in Westport before, but people tell me it is a great place to go to on holiday.

*By Jíll*

## Translations

Romanian	English
Eu am 27 di ani.	I am 27 years old.
Eu sînd din Romania.	I am from Romania.
Aeuma locuiesc in Corofin.	Now, I live in Corofin.
Imi place boxul.	I like boxing.
Aceostó sceoalá este in Ennis.	This school is in Ennis.
Corofin este nie Soct.	Corofin is a small village.
Ireland este frumosá forá.	Ireland is a nice country.
Galwei este poorte prumos oras.	Galway is a very nice city.

*By Sorín*

## **My Holiday Down Under**

Last August I went to Australia for three weeks to visit my sister who has been staying in Sydney for one year. My cousin Orla went with me.

We really enjoyed the flight it was with Singapore Airlines. The flight was very long so we made a few stops. We flew from Shannon to Heathrow we had a four-hour delay before we got the flight to Singapore, stopped over here for refuelling before our final flight to Sydney arriving at 7 o'clock in the morning. My sister met us at the airport; I was very tired after the long flight nearly twenty-four hours travelling.

I wanted to go sightseeing straight away, but the tiredness came over me and I slept for a couple of hours. When I woke up my sister took me to the Olympic Pool for a swim, it was a great experience to swim in the pool where the games took place.

Bright and early the next morning we went into the city and got the ferry and cruised around Sydney Harbour, taking in all the beautiful places like the Opera House and Darling Harbour.

The next day we went to see Tango Zoo off Sydney Harbour, there was much to see lots of different wild animals and birds. We went to Surfer's Paradise and the Great Barrier Reef, as I like to surf and also a bit of diving. In Surfer's Paradise we went to Waterworld we had a great time with all the water slides.

There is so much to do and see in Sydney, lots of different parks and buildings to visit. Centre Point, the tallest revolving building in Sydney, was stunning, I could see for miles around. The nightlife was great.

I went to some nightclubs. The Australian beer was nice and it wasn't too dear. The weather was sunny warm and we had lots of barbecues. Before I knew it my holiday was

coming to an end. It was sad to leave Sydney. It was the best holiday I ever had. I hope to go back some day soon again.

*By Noel*

## **A Short Story about Rwanda**

My name is Marie and I am from Rwanda. Rwanda is a small country of around 26,338 km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population of about 8 million. It is geographically situated in central Africa.

To the north of Rwanda we have Uganda. To the south there is Burundi. To the east we have Tanzania and Congo is in the west of Rwanda.

3 tribes occupy Rwanda, the Twa tribe, Hutu and Tutsi. We speak 2 languages. Kinyarwanda is our native language and French is an official language because we were colonised by Belgium.

Historically, Rwanda hadn't been occupied until the Twa tribe arrived first. They were hunters and they lived in the forest. The Hutu tribe arrived after them. They were farmers. They started to build houses to live in. The Tutsi tribe were the last ones to arrive. They were looking after their animals. After the Tutsis arrived in the country, they found that the Hutu were well organised and had a chief to govern them. The Tutsi joined them and accepted that they were to be governed by a Hutu chief. But time after time, the Tutsi took power from them. The chief was replaced by a king from the Tutsi tribe and he had been ruling the country until 1959 when the Belgians decided to give power back to the majority (Hutu) and bring democracy.

We had our first president in 1959. 3 years later it was our independence in 1962.

*By Marie*



## **Salt**

Don't eat too much salt. We all need some salt but most of us eat much more salt than we need. About two thirds of the salt we eat is added by food manufacturers, when food is processed. Of the remainder about half is added during cooking and at the table and half is naturally present in food.

Eating too much salt can contribute to some people having high blood pressure and this in turn is associated with heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. So it is worth trying to cut down on the amount of salt eaten.

How to eat less salt:

Add less salt to food when cooking. Use a black pepper mill, herbs, spices and lemon juice to flavour food instead. Try to get out of the habit of adding salt to food at the table. Always taste food before you add salt. Salt substitutes may also be useful. Cut down on salty snack foods like crisps, salted nuts and other salty nibbles. When buying tinned vegetables, choose those marked 'no added salt'.

*By Karen*

## **Donkeys**

Donkeys are just little horses. The main differences are that they have bigger ears, longer coats and shorter fatter tails. Male donkeys are called 'Jacks', females are 'Mares' and babies are 'foals'. There is also an animal called a mule which is half donkey and half horse.

*By Brian*

## **My Life**

I work in the smoke house in Lisdoonvarna. I pack fish at the smoke house. Greg is my manager. Alan takes me to work 3 days a week.

I have a twin sister in Kilfenora and I visit her at the weekend. I also have a cousin Margaret living in the house.

I am going to Mayo on my holidays this year. Everyone from the house is going. This is my first holiday this year. I come to the day house every day. I have a tutor helping me to read and write. She is American. I work with Mary and Katie also. I help in the kitchen as well. We have a workshop at the house and Eddie makes lovely jewellery and we make lawn furniture. I love playing music and Helen is my teacher.

Clare and Tipperary played hurling last Sunday and Clare won the match. They have to play Cork next. It was a good game of hurling.

*By Martin*

## **Happy Times at the Dulick Centre**

I will be finishing my time at the centre soon. I have been here four years. During my years here I made a lot of friends. I got on well with all the supervisors. I learned a lot of new skills such as gardening, cookery, computers and woodwork. We were taken on many outings. The supervisor took us to the swimming pool and we went on nature trips to Ballyalla Lake. I will be sad to leave, but I will be looking forward to finding a job.

*By Ann*

## **Joe Dolan**

Last Friday night my friends and I went to Limerick to see Joe Dolan. The show started at eight o'clock in Dolan's. Joe sang on stage for a couple of hours and we danced and sang with him.

We all had a great night. Afterwards we had our photograph taken with Joe Dolan.

*By Edel*

## **My Trip to the Hairdressers**

One Saturday I went to the hairdressers in Cloughleigh. I was having a Bodywave done. Claire washed my hair and Dorothy put in the curlers. I had to sit under the dryer for about an hour. I looked at some magazines while I was waiting.

After the hour had passed Dorothy took out the curlers and shaped my hair. She sprayed some hairspray on my hair to hold it.

I paid Claire and headed into town for some shopping.

*By Anne*

## **Our Farm**

Every Saturday I help my father with the cattle and cleaning out the sheds around the farm. In the wintertime we fodder the cattle.

I work in the Mart in Ennis two days a week, cleaning out the rings after the sales are over. I start at 9.30am on Wednesday and Friday mornings and I finish at 3.00pm. My dad collects me each evening.

*By Brian*

## **A Visit Home**

On the May Bank Holiday weekend I went home to see my Mum.

On Sunday we went to Mass in Tulla. Afterwards we drove to my sisters in Quin for our dinner.

We had lamb chops, potatoes, peas and gravy for dinner. It was lovely. We had ice cream for dessert and a cup of tea.

We stayed at my sisters' house that night.

On Monday my sister drove me back to my house in Elm Park.

*By Bridget*

## **Summer**

I love the summer, the fine weather and bright evenings. I enjoy going for short walks. It is lovely to see the countryside green and the various flowers in bloom. I like being brought for a drive in the summer especially to the seaside.

*By Martin*

## **Going Home**

Every weekend I go home to see my Dad. He lives in Mullagh. My sisters, Ann and Mary live there too. I love going home at the weekends to see my Dad because I miss him during the week.

Ann cooks our dinner and I help to clean the house. Mary washes up and I dry the dishes.

Every Sunday we all go to Mass together.

*By Jude*

## **My Brother's New House**

We had some good news last week. My brother got engaged to Linda and they are getting married in September 2004. They just bought a new house together in Birdhill.

On Sunday my two sisters, Mary and Michelle, and I went to see my brother's and his fiancée's new house. They used to live in Killaloe.

There are lots of houses in their estate. Their house is number 26. There are two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. Downstairs there is a kitchen, dining room, living room and a toilet.

They have a kennel in the back garden for their dog Rua. They have also sowed lots of plants in the garden.

*By Teresa*

## **The Big Surprise**

Last year our house parent brought Bernie, Jude and myself to Galway. We stayed in a hotel. On Saturday we went into town to do some shopping. I bought two mugs for our house parents and a top for myself.

That night I had a lovely surprise my twin sister, Helen, who lives in Galway came to the Hotel to see me. We sat in the bar chatting all night about old times.

I wish she lived nearer to Ennis then I would be able to meet her more often.

*By Maire*

## **My New Bed**

For the last year I have been saving up for a new bed. Last weekend I finally got my new double bed. I bought it in the Factory Shop near the Courthouse. It cost me €550. I was lucky to get it in the sale. I paid another €20 to have it delivered to my house in Woodlands. The girls in my house helped me to take out the old bed. Thundi came and put my new bed together. I spent my first night in my new bed on Saturday. It was so cosy I didn't want to get up on Sunday Morning.

*By Nuala*

## **My Niece's Holy Communion**

My niece, Kate, is making her Holy Communion in June. She is going to wear a white dress, a veil and white shoes. Her Mum bought her a new prayer book and Rosary beads.

She got a beautiful Claddagh ring from her Mum and Dad. All my family are going to be there. We are invited back to my brother, P.J.'s house for some food afterwards.

*By Martina*

## **My Visit to England**

I went to England. I flew from Shannon. My sister, Jane, took me to the plane and my sister Mary met me at Stansted Airport. I stayed for a week and we had a good time. England is very noisy and busy. We stayed in Chlemsford but we went to Colchester to the shops.

*By Kathleen*

## **The Kitchen Delivery**

Last Wednesday we went on a delivery from Bredin's Hardware Store.

We took the road through Crusheen and on into Galway. There we delivered a kitchen and some doors to a customer. We came back by Killanena. We drove down a road beside the church. There we delivered kitchen units and a worktop to another customer.

We drove back into Ennis to the store. I really enjoyed the day and hope that I will get to go on another delivery soon.

*By Patrick*

## **Lourdes Pilgrimage**

My Pilgrimage to Lourdes is in June of this year.

I go there to pray with all my friends. I will be going for five days. I am going from Shannon Airport. I will bring my wheelchair with me. I will be staying in the new hospital where the doctors and nurses will look after me.

I will get pizza and chips to eat and we will be staying up late every evening.

I will pray for my sister-in-law's father who died recently and light some candles.

I will buy some postcards to send home to my parents. I hope to buy a Lourdes jigsaw for myself and a Lourdes ring for my sister in law, Claire.

We will go to Mass every day and I hope to meet the priest. We will be singing at the church too.

At night time we will get the bus up to the hotel where we will have a singsong. I will buy drinks and listen to the music there. We will have great fun.

*By Helena*

## **Boyzone**

Boyzone were my favourite band but they split up. My favourite CD is 'Boyzone by Request'. I love the song "I Love The Way You Love Me".

I would love to see the lads getting back together.

Ronan Keating sings solo now. He has some lovely songs. I especially like 'Baby Can I Hold You Tonight'. I have his CD at home and I listen to it all the time.

I saw Ronan on the Late Late Show one night with Pat Kenny. He talked about the past when he was part of Boyzone.

*By Desmond*

## **Work and What it Means to Me!**

I have been working since I was sixteen years of age. Like my brother I started work in the timber yards in Limerick. My father worked there and he got me in, I liked working there. I was always busy.

Unfortunately I had a bad accident. It happened with one of the machines and I lost three of my fingers. I was out sick for months. It was a dreadful time. I had to go on the dole. I then got a job with a furniture removal company and I enjoyed this until we drove under a bridge and we lost half the van.

I joined the pottery workshop seven years ago and have been very happy here. At first I didn't like it, the dust was dreadful and your clothes were destroyed.

Conditions are much improved now and I enjoy doing my job. Liam is my supervisor, he is very good to me and we work well together. I have a good social life with the people in work. We go on outings and I met my girlfriend here.

*By Paul*



## **The Pottery Workshop**

I have been working here in the pottery workshop for ten years. I have worked in all sections of the workshop. I started work when I was seventeen years of age. I worked in McMahon's timber yard. My father worked there and it was him who got me the job.

After a year I was let go. Then I got a job in a fish shop. I hated it. It was smelly work. I couldn't stick it. I left and I haven't eaten fish since. Then I went to Dunnes Stores, I got a job stacking shelves. I liked it there, it was clean and warm but you never got proper breaks or a decent lunch hour. After Dunnes, I was on the dole for six months. It was wintertime and I was miserable, nothing to do all day and I got very down. I hated the dole queue. It was awful waiting in the queue. It was dreadful, the pushing and shoving.

I wanted a job. I got very depressed. I heard there were jobs going in the pottery factory. I was delighted when I started work in the pottery. I tried working in all the sections but the kiln section where I am at the moment is by far the best. I like working in the kiln, having the responsibility of working and maintaining it, makes me feel good.

I work with John. We work well together and we share the jobs. There is a good social life with the job, we go on outings and I met my girlfriend here. I am very happy here.

*By Ger*

## **My Story**

I was born and raised in India. There I met my Irish husband, Francis. We got married and our first child Desmond was born.

When Desmond was a year and a half, we moved to Ireland. First we lived in Dublin. This was a difficult time for me. I was in a strange land and I couldn't speak the language. As my husband could speak my language (Tamil), it was easier to speak my own language rather than use English.

However, this meant I depended on my husband for everything even doing the shopping. I went to English classes in Dublin. I found them difficult. They concentrated mostly on writing. I copied the writing from the board and hadn't a clue what it was about.

When I was expecting my second child, we moved to Clare. I became a student of Clare Reading & Writing Scheme in Scarriff Adult Education Centre. My tutor believed I should concentrate mostly on speaking the language and reading and writing would follow. We travelled to the centre together one day a week and this was an extra language class for me as we talked about nature, the weather, our families and our different cultures.

Here I am today, a VTOS student in East Clare Adult Education Centre, being supported by Clare Reading & Writing Scheme. I am really happy now. I have lots of friends. I can now do so many things for myself like shopping, banking and so on. I have just applied for my Driver Theory Test. Wish me Luck!

It's a long, long way from Pondicherry to Clare. However Clare is now the home of my future dreams. Up the Banner!

*By Amutha*

## **Memories**

My friend Annette died on March 11th, 2003. I am sad and I miss her a lot. I knew her for nearly 20 years. She was my best friend and we did everything together. We walked to Mass daily and sometimes went for a coffee. She was always laughing and joking and in good form. Annette kept us all in good humour and is missed by everyone. We all have lovely memories of her.

*By Anne*

## **Ireland's Own**

I like Ireland's Own. There are nice stories in it. I enjoy the songs and the riddles. I like the Country and Western songs the best. Here is a funny incident from Ireland's Own -  
What A Find!

A party of city school children went for an outing to the country. One of them found a pile of empty milk bottles. "Oh! Look Miss!" one of them shouted to the teacher, "I have found a cow's nest!!!"

*By Breda*

## **My new Home**

I came to Kilrush eight months ago. This is a home; it is much better than all the other places I have been to. I have made great friends and the nurses are all caring and kind. We have breakfast at around eight o'clock, dinner at one o'clock and have supper at six o'clock. I go to Mass when I am feeling good and I go for walks when the weather is good. I go for coffee once a week.

*By Deirdre*

## **Report on What's Happening in the Soaps**

I like the soaps on the telly. They are good fun. It is interesting to watch them every week, what people are getting up to, who's doing what to whom. There are great storylines and characters at the moment.

Coronation Street

Sarah and Bethany are reunited with Gail back home but peace doesn't last long.

Norris is turned down for a mortgage and Emily can breathe a sigh of relief. She is very happy.

Audrey has found out her savings aren't as good as she first thought.

Jack and Vera continue to win competitions. This week, it was a dream house, or so Vera thought. Actually it was a green house.

Fair City

Hannah died in Fair City and there was a special programme last Monday night.

Ciara is showing off her bump in a bright pink top but her mother isn't happy.

Heather bought a new car from Floyd.

Emmerdale

Marlon is home far quicker than he expected because he has no visa. We find out this week that Cain is Debbie's dad.

Eastenders

Kat Slater is seeing Dennis Watts and Alfie isn't happy. His hope of becoming her new love seems dashed. Poor Alfie. Laura and Ian are still at loggerheads. Sonia gets a surprise when she receives a birthday present of a laptop from Phil. It was a birthday wish of Jamie's who died at Christmas.

I love my soaps. I would be really disappointed if I had to miss them. Mam and I love to sit down in the evenings and forget everything and watch the soaps.

*By Maeve*

## **Is it Time for a Change?**

I have been working here in this factory for over twenty years. Some say it's too long. I've made some nice friends here. I work in the canteen with Mary and Nora. We get on well. We don't tolerate any messing in there. I am responsible also for the cleaning of the offices.

Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to work somewhere else, but I'm anxious about the change. I've made a nice life for myself here in Shannon. I have good friends, a nice home and a good social life.

*By Phil*

## **My illness and the way it has affected me**

The first time I got sick was in 1995. Since then I have been hospitalised fifteen times. I spent thirteen of those admissions in Our Lady's Hospital in Ennis, and the other remaining two times I was in the new admissions unit in Ennis County hospital. Our Lady's was a horrible place, but the staff and the nurses were lovely. Why I went in and out of hospital fifteen times was because I always had it in my head I could do without my tablets.

In 1995, I was diagnosed with manic depression I never accepted that I had manic depression till the year 2002. I did so much damage to myself. I sold two sites and spent the money on nothing and flittered it away.

It was only then that I realised it was the manic depression. I learnt from my mistakes. And since I have accepted my illness I have a better quality of life. It is now over a year since I have been in hospital. Now I always make sure I take my tablets every day. I take five and a half tablets per day.

I used to bottle everything up. Now I speak my mind. I met someone nice, and she is a tower of strength to me. I was lucky to find her. Now I don't feel so isolated. I can talk and share things. Life is looking a lot better.

*By Michael*

## **The Red Ribbon Project**

We went to Limerick shopping and visiting the prison and the Red Ribbon Project. We found out all about viruses and sexually transmitted diseases at the Red Ribbon Project. They also gave us free samples of condoms and I hoped and prayed that when we got to the prison we wouldn't have to empty out our pockets and show them what we had. I could just imagine the prison officer's face when we took out those things from our pockets! I enjoyed my day out shopping at the Crescent!

*By 'Ebony'*

## **Moving to Newmarket**

The best thing my mother and I ever did was to move to Newmarket village.

The buses are near us. The church is on our doorstep and that makes it very handy for my mother and me to go to mass every morning at 10.00 a.m.

The post office is down the street and the shops are near enough for us to get our groceries.

Now that my mother is getting on, it is very reassuring to know that the doctor is just across the green.

I love to go for a walk regularly and there are many pleasant walks nearby. I can go to the shortsweep or, if I have energy, I will go on the longsweep. Sometimes I go down by the lake. I have a dog that has got very fat and these walks will help her to lose weight, and help me to keep trim.

We are living here seven years in June and we know lots of people since moving in. The people of Newmarket are very friendly and we meet people every morning at Mass where we have time for a chat.

Before moving to Newmarket we lived in the home place in Drumline, which was a farm. Once all the family had

grown and left, the house was very quiet. The house was in off the road down a lane. It was very quiet. You wouldn't see very many people. Where now when you open the door, there are always people passing our front door.

By moving to Newmarket village I was able to attend my reading and writing classes where I have made many friends in the centre. My mother and I are very happy in Newmarket.

*By Phillis*

## **The Special Olympics in Ireland**

This is the year for people with disabilities. It is also the year of the Special Olympics. Thousands of people with all kinds of disabilities from all over the world including Ireland will be coming to Dublin to take part in their respective sporting events. These athletes have been training for a long time and are preparing themselves for their big moments in June. There are loads of people working behind the scenes including the main sponsors, Bank of Ireland, who will be assisting these athletes and their coaches with their training schedules and have them in peak shape as much as possible. These special athletes are staying all over Ireland from North to South and East to West. They will be staying in various guesthouses and hotels nationwide to prepare themselves for their big day in June. Everyone in Ireland including professional people is giving their 100% support for these special sporting people. Millions of euro have been spent and also saved to enable Ireland to host the Special Olympics, even advertisements in 2002 were screened on our television sets to highlight this important event.

We're hoping the weather stays good for this wonderful event due to take place, and hopefully the wind and rain does not spoil what promises to be a very special occasion for these bright and special athletes. There were advertisements in the local papers last year requesting people all over Ireland to help provide some kind of

suitable accommodation for these special sporting people and their coaches for them to enjoy themselves and the hospitality in that Ireland can provide. Well, those requests from the papers have been answered and everyone is doing their part to give these visitors the welcome they have earned. No doubt they are all looking forward to their big day in June. All are hoping to become heroes in their own events. They are dreaming of standing up on the number one podium receiving that special gold medal from the President, which would mean a lot to them. Even listening and singing to their National Anthems would be their pride and joy. It's every athlete's dream to win the gold medal in the Olympics.

Just look at Sonia O'Sullivan, Eamon Coughlan and John Tracey who have won medals and they are proud of it. Later in life they will be able to show their children and grand-children just what they won in the Olympics. Maybe these special athletes will be able to do the same thing. But one thing is for sure, after all the hours and months of training with respective coaches, these athletes will be going to these Olympics to give their 100% effort into whatever sports they are involved in. They will be doing their utmost to achieve the goal they trained for. Everyone likes to dream about their favourite sporting people, and maybe to try and achieve those same goals. The Special Olympics is a unique competition that will take place in June, let's all wish everyone taking part every success in their events and hope they all enjoy themselves here in Ireland. The special smiles upon these athlete's faces will be a joy to watch for everyone, including the families and friends in their respective countries. No doubt you'll see their smiles on the television. No matter what happens on the day or night, these countries should be very proud of their competitors for what they did.

*By Gabriel*



## **Cat**

Kevin O'Connor

Prowling from the garden rear  
Under branch-bowed trees you came  
And found me here  
Confronted me with narrow glint  
Not a hint of fear or favour  
Just your trenchant beauty ever  
From wind and light and air outside  
And threw my soul to liquid light  
And knew you threw my soul to liquid light  
Cat, I wonder what you're at..?

This is a poem that I like. It reminds me of the cat that lives in my garden and occasionally hops onto the kitchen window.

*By Robert*

## **Word Processor Operators**

Word processing can be an immensely rewarding job as the system reduces repetitive typing and all work can be printed out immaculately. Many word processor operators earn more than the average secretary so it is a worthwhile skill to acquire.

It is important to have good light in the office where the word processor is situated and light should not be on the screen. Attention should also be paid to correct levels of heating and ventilation. Adjustable chairs and screens can give the operator a good working position.

*By Carl*

## Basic Needs In Congo

The issue of welfare in Congo is not a newly known phenomenon. People have been trying by different means and ways to improve the welfare in the developing countries in general and particularly in the Congo. Nothing yet seems to have come out of this struggle. Actually, the situation is worse than it was 15-20 years ago. This means at least one generation has to live in dire straits.

When talking of welfare, the first aspect is good physical health, which is generated first by good nutrition. This basic need (good nutrition) is barely met in my country. The International Community, by means of its branches and NGOs (Non Governmental Organisation) are trying to help, but they have forecast that the situation is going to deteriorate.

In my opinion, the problem is already diagnosed and the causes are known. The problem is **leadership**. The government in my country does not respect its own plan, and therefore it does not follow the priorities of the country.

If the international communities really want to help, they have to examine the government's plan first. The plan has to suit the priorities of the country.

Also the aid or credit must be in the form of concrete investment, which will directly benefit the population. If not, the burden is still on the contributors as there is an interdependence of nations.

*By Mikamibua*

## **Soaps**

I enjoy watching the soaps on television. There are some great characters in 'Fair City', 'Coronation Street' and 'Home and Away'.

My favourite characters in 'Fair City' are Leo, Bella and Christy.

The ones I enjoy most in 'Coronation Street' are Kirk, Tyrone, Fizz, Jack and Vera.

In 'Home and Away' the characters I like most are Sally, Flynn, Jesse and Rhys.

*By Ger*

## **My Holiday in Portugal**

Last week I went to Portugal for a holiday with my family and we stayed in an apartment near the beach. As we landed I could see the sea - it was crystal blue and looked brilliant. The beach was sandy and went on for miles. There were lots of rocks and caves to go into but the sun made it very hot to walk on the sand.

I went on the jet skis with my sister - they were very big, powerful things but I loved the speed. My sister wanted me to slow down. It was excellent craic. We went to the marine zoo, which had dolphins, sharks, seals and tropical fish in tanks. There was a show with the dolphins and they jumped up through hoops and swam really fast through the water. You could pay a hundred euro to go and swim with them. I did a lot of swimming in the pool - the water was lovely and warm. The food was quite good but you couldn't get any spuds! I thought Portugal was fantastic and I would love to go again.

*By Richard*

## **The Football Field**

In 1924 a committee was set up in Miltown Malbay to investigate the provision of a permanent playing field for St. Joseph's G.A.A. club.

Two fields were rented from the Hillery Family and the selection of these fields was the responsibility of a newly formed sub-committee. On the 28th March 1925, a concert was organised to pay for the necessary work at the football field.

The first inter-county games were played there on 14th June 1925 when Clare played Waterford in the Senior Football and Junior Hurling.

On 20th May 1951 the football field was re-opened and named the Hennessy Memorial Park, in memory of the Miltown and Clare All-Ireland footballer Patrick Hennessy who was shot dead in Miltown by the military. County Board Chairman, Rev. Michael Hamilton, and several other board officials were present. Club chairman, Michael O'Friel N.T. presided over the official opening and his address pointed out the necessity of keeping such facilities in good repair for the youth of the parish and thanked all whom helped.

Mr Bob Fitzpatrick N.T. thanked Miltown exiles for their generous financial help. To mark the occasion, Clare played Kerry in a Senior Football challenge game that the home side won by 1 - 8 to 1 - 4.

*By Ger*

## **My Own Place**

Ten years past,  
The home I chose.  
The sweeping land,  
My first child grows.  
Soft, salt air  
Hard limestone.  
In a growing world,  
It's a place to call my own.

*By Katherine*

## **Red Ribbon Project**

I went to Limerick to visit the Red Ribbon Project with my group. It was very interesting as we learnt about what projects go on there. They help with support groups, providing counselling and giving advice about lots of things. They also talked about HIV and Aids and about awareness, about having safe sex and protecting yourself from any infections. They also give out free condoms and advice to people who want it. They also go out giving advice to groups of young people about safe sex and how to protect yourself. I thought it was good because it makes young people aware of the risks of having unsafe sex. The people there are very easy to talk to and you don't feel uncomfortable in any way.

*By Shelley*

## **Missing Margaret**

My mother died when she was still young, just sixty-three years old. She suffered from diabetes and then she got gangrene in her leg. She died after a heart attack.

My mother worked very hard all her life to keep us after my father died. There were fifteen of us in the family but only thirteen lived. Two little boys died very young. My father died over 22 years ago in October and my mum looked after us all. We didn't have much money but my mother made sure we had enough.

Thirty-three years ago my sister, Margaret, left school and ran away with her boyfriend. She never came back and my mother was heartbroken. Till she died my mother always talked about her, wondering if she was all right or where she was. We have never heard from Margaret and we don't know where she is. My father tried to search for her through the Salvation Army, but he had no luck.

When Margaret left she had a small baby girl, but she left her behind. Now this little girl has three children of her own and Margaret doesn't even know she is a grandmother. It's very sad for all the family not to know where she is. My mother and father are both gone now and we miss them very much.

*By Elizabeth*

## **My New Flat**

I moved into a flat on Monday evening in May. Everyone from my old house helped me to move my things in. Ann Marie slept in the flat with me the first night so I didn't feel lonely. I was upset the first night in the new flat because I found it hard after being in the shared house for so long. But we called back to the old house to visit all my friends

and Sammy, the dog. The second night I was o.k. I just watched T.V. and relaxed after work and Helen stayed with me that night.

I think I will like living in the new flat. I will be more independent and be able to do things for myself. I am very near the shops and I can cook for myself. The flat is very nice and warm and cosy. My bed is lovely and big and the sun shines in through the window in the morning. Besides, my friends are all nearby and they will call in to see me.

*By Mary*

### **My Sister's Wedding**

My sister, Martina, is getting married in August and I will be a bridesmaid. My dress is maroon and it has a big bow behind it with a long skirt, short sleeves and a round neck. It looks lovely and I tried it on already. Martina's dress is long and white and made of silk, I think. She looks beautiful in it. It will be a big wedding with all my family and many neighbours. The reception is at the West County Hotel - I've been there before for my sisters Fiona's and Moira's weddings. They will be bridesmaids too. I hope the weather will be nice for it. We will have a big reception, then a disco afterwards. We won't get home till 5 o'clock in the morning. I love weddings because I love watching the bride go down to church. Everyone is always happy and we have a great time singing and dancing all night.

*By Colette*

## **Shania Twain - Pop Queen!**

My favourite pop singer is Shania Twain because she is a very good singer and her music is lovely. She is a rock singer and she has done many songs. Her last song was 'Feel Like a Woman' - which is great to sing along to. I like watching her on the T.V. She is very good looking and has a lot of confidence. She has just had a baby and lives in Switzerland with her husband Robert John 'Mutt' Lange. Her music is amazing, the way she can sing everything so clearly. She has nice clothes and always dresses well. She has a lot of singles out now and I would love to hear her in concert and meet her. I think she has great talent and I am a big fan of her music.

*By Orla*

## **My Best Friend Orla**

Orla is my friend and we are friends for nearly five years. She is very kind and good to me and we talk about different things. Orla phones me some weekends, we are always talking about boyfriends and we always talk to each other. We have fun and she understands me and she gives me good advice. I have a good time with her. Orla has a lovely family and I hope she will come to my house some weekend - which would make me very happy. We would go to the Quilty Tavern some night and we will be dancing and enjoying ourselves - she has a smile on her face and she makes me laugh. If I have a problem she always gives me advice and she helps me. She is a jolly person and I am glad to have her as a friend. She is always there for me.

*By Kathleen*



## Advocacy

Advocacy means speaking up for yourself and for others. It is important for people to have their say and feel more confident and make choices about their lives. It is very important for people with learning disabilities because they often feel left out and that no one hears them and they are being ignored. We feel left out socially because of transport difficulties, lack of wheelchair access and acceptance by other people. I am the Brothers of Charity representative for the people in Kilrush and I represent their views at the regional meetings of the National Service Users Council. We discuss things like money, standards of practice, work prospects, relationships and independent living for people with physical and learning disabilities. Our last meeting was in Roscommon and it was the first time in my life I had been on a train. The staff at the station in Limerick were very helpful and they knew beforehand that I was in a wheelchair. It was funny when they came with a ramp to help me into the carriage. In Dublin, they came with a ramp again and helped me out. The taxis also had ramp access and were easy to get in and out of.

Advocacy has helped me to be more confident and I can ask for things that I couldn't before. At first I was terrified of speaking out but now I enjoy being the Kilrush representative. Our next meeting is in Waterford and I am looking forward to that.

*By Patricia*

## **Shopping in Tralee**

On Sunday we went to Tralee. We got the ferry from Kilimer at 11 o'clock and then we drove down to Tralee. We went to the new shopping centre and went to Roches first of all. We had a good look around. The clothes were lovely and then we went upstairs to have a look at the kitchen utensils. I bought a lovely new purple mug for myself - it was pottery. I saw some lovely tea towels but I didn't buy any for myself. We went to the café and had a coffee and bun. Then we looked at the furniture, bed linens and cushions. We had dinner at a hotel - I had pork chops, salad and chips. It was a really good dinner. Then we had to leave at 8 o'clock to get the ferry back home. It was a wonderful day.

*By Kathleen*

## **My Favourite Soap**

I like watching Coronation Street on the T.V. My favourite character is Gail because she is a nice person. Audrey her mother is very nice too because she helped Gail with money even though she didn't have much herself. Gail's husband Richard was a murderer. He killed Maxine and tried to kill Emily to get her money. He tried to kill poor Audrey too but she got away. Richard got killed in the end and the police put him in a zippered bag and Gail threw her wedding ring into the water too. I really like watching Coronation Street because it is sad and funny and can be exciting. I like to know what everyone is doing. I like Fair City and East Enders too.

*By Ann Marie*

## **Helping on the Farm**

I love to farm and help my Daddy. I love riding and driving the go-kart around the place. The best place is down the road because in the field I can get stuck. If I do get stuck my Mammy pulls me out but she gives out to me sometimes for doing it. I got the go-kart at Christmas from Santa and I love going on it. It's handy to have for taking things around the farm. I bring nuts for the cows or rubbish for burning. The go-kart needs a new seat now because the old one is awful loose - so I will have to fix it. My Daddy promised to get me a tractor when I am older but they cost a lot of money. We need a new tractor to carry up small, handy bales and drop them down the road. I am getting a new fork too. I really like farming and some day I will help my Daddy do a lot more.

*By Adrian*

## **Walking with Rover**

On Saturday I go for a walk with my dog Rover. He is a small dog with black and white fur, a bit like a sheepdog and he is very friendly and wants to lick my face. We usually walk down to the cross and back, that takes us about half an hour. Rover sometimes runs off and tries to chase cows so I keep him on the lead all the way. He is a good guard dog because he barks when strangers come to the house but he is very friendly and happy.

*By Pauline*

## **Saturday Shopping**

I like to go shopping to Milltown with my sister Clare. We go on a Saturday and we look at the shops. Then we go to Coughlans for something to eat. Sometimes I sit and watch the telly. I like watching everything, all the soaps like Coronation Street, Eastenders and Fair City. Sometimes we go down to the Quilty Tavern with my Mum and Dad and we like set dancing. I am learning to do the set with Mary at the workshop. It is great fun. I like listening to my CD player up in my room especially to Celine Dion and 'My Heart Goes On' from Titanic.

*By Máiread*

## **My Favourite Sport**

My favourite sport is soccer because I like to go to football matches and watch my favourite team. My favourite team of all time is Manchester Utd. because they score a lot of goals when they are playing and they are at the top of the Premier League table. I like watching Man Utd. on the television. You have to have good weather for playing and watching football matches. It is nice to watch football when the weather is dry and sunny - I don't like standing in the rain. I like watching Gaelic football, too, but I don't have a favourite team.

*By Brian*

## **Limerick Prison**

We went to Limerick prison with our group. We saw the women's prison and the gym and the visiting room. We saw a cell, too. There are a lot of cells in the prison but all they can hold is fifteen women, the rest is for the men. The women are locked up for sixteen hours a day and they stay in and watch the telly or listen to their music. We saw a small part of the men's side and we saw the yard where the women play handball and football. There are a lot of video cameras everywhere and it was all very noisy. I thought it was a bit frightening because the cells looked small and people are locked up from 7.30 at night to 8.00 in the morning. There are a lot of guards and they get three meals a day. I would hate to be in a place like that because you get no peace and you might have to share your cell with someone you hated. It was an interesting visit and I won't ever end up in a place like that!

*By 'Chelsea'*

## **Our Visit to a Farm**

I took my son, Joseph, to visit some relations who live on a farm. He is nearly three and a half and he loved the tractor. He had a ride on it and was thrilled. Then we took a look at the animals - there were some cows and horses but they were in the fields, so we looked at the hens and ducks and had a play with the dogs. Joseph loved the hens but he was a little bit frightened of them. The dogs played ball with Joseph - he would throw it and they would carry it off. We'd have to scream for it back. It was great fun! It was the first time Joseph had been to a proper farm and he had fun but it was pouring with rain by the time we left.

*By Ellen*

## **Black Beauty**

I like reading very much. Everyday I read a little. I prefer short stories. This year I read Black Beauty. It was a long story and I really enjoyed it. I had seen the film on television some time ago. The book was more interesting now, as I had already seen the film. Here is what the story is about. It is a horse talking about his experiences from when he was born until he got old. He had good owners and bad ones. As a young foal he lived with his mother on a farm. Then he was taught how to pull a carriage and he was sent to work in London. He had a lovely groom. He saved a boy in a fire by calling out. He was sold again and his new owner did not treat him too well. He was very unhappy. His last home was on a farm. He had a lovely groom and was fed well and treated well. He was really happy. Anyone that likes reading, it is a lovely book to read.

*By Margaret*

## **Wedding in Boston**

My name is Seamus and I work at the Brothers of Charity in Ennistymon. My family and I went to Boston in May for my brother's wedding. His name is Gerard and her name is Mo. We had a lovely day at a hotel in Boston.

We then went to New York, took a boat ride, and went to the zoo, St. Patrick's and shopping. Also took a ride on the subway. It was a great holiday and I hope to go and visit again.

*By Seamus*

## Exercises for Wheelchair Users

I do exercises with Michelle every week and we do breathing exercises, throwing the body ball, moving our arms and bending forwards. The exercises are very good to keep you in shape and they are fun to do. I enjoy doing them and feel good afterwards. It is very hard to keep fit when you are in a wheelchair and people don't realise that it is easy to gain weight on top. You still need to exercise your heart even in a wheelchair. Here are some of the exercises we do:

1. Breathing properly: breathe in through your nose slowly, breathe out through your mouth slowly, like blowing bubbles. Do this two or three times when you start.
2. Arm Lifts: lift up your arms as high as possible. Then move your arms to each side slowly. Then bring them to the front. Do this ten times.
3. Side Bends: lift your arms up in the air. Then bend your body at the waist to move your arms to the side. Do this on the other side. Do ten on each side.
4. One Arm Lift: one arm out straight in front of you and the other across your chest. Then bend from the waist to lift your arm above your head. Do ten of these on each side.
5. Rowing the boat: put both your arms forward. Then bring them back and bend at the elbow like rowing a boat. Do ten of these.

*By Maura*

## **My Father**

My father died four years ago. His only wish was to be buried in Limerick where he was born.

It was a big thing for the family as he was our rock. But he got his wish and was buried with his Mother and Father the day that President Clinton came to Ireland. It was a big thing, as we had to ask the Gardai for permission to go ahead, which was fine. Only we had to take a long route to the church, which no one minded.

So many people turned up, it was a lovely turnout. My brother and I heard things about our Dad that we never knew. He'd saved a baby from drowning; the baby, now a young man was there to tell his story. He trained young boys in boxing and helped out in a load of other things. We were so proud. Those people and young boys who are now men will never forget my Dad and we will always remember and never forget.

My four children and I moved here from England four years ago after my Dad died and we have never looked back or regretted our decision since.

My children can play out without me panicking. They have settled really well and made loads of friends. They miss here when they go on holiday to England as over there, their freedom is taken away from them. The only thing I miss is all the shops, nothing else. I never settled in England as a child and I loved my summer holidays to Ireland and I wouldn't want to go back.

I always wanted to come back and I finally got here and here I intend on staying. My mother only lives down the road from us. My only wish is that my children do well and continue to enjoy their childhood in Ireland as much as I did as a child.

*By Patricia*



## **The life of Angela**

I was born in a family of 13. My parents worked very hard for us. We were brought up in a two bed-roomed house. My father worked hard on the boats and my mother worked in the home a lot. In the year of 1997 my father died with Alzheimer's, I still miss him a lot and I cannot come to terms with his death. There is no one in this world as good as my father and mother. I have two children and I live with my partner. I get on really well with my partner and my children. We do a lot together. I visit my mother a lot too, she is a great mother and I wish she could be here forever but all good things come to an end. But I hope I will have my mother for another while. I just could not imagine my life without her.

*By Angela*

## **A Poem for Clarice**

**C** is for Clarice, cuddly and warm,  
**L** is for the love she brings us all,  
**A** is for apple, she's the apple of my eye!  
**R** is for the rainbow she brings to my life,  
**I** is for Ireland where she is free,  
**C** is for clever, she's as clever as can be,  
**E** is for everything, she means that much to me!

*By Linda*

## **The Gift of Life**

2002 was a good year for me and my family. My husband and I have been planning a baby for several months and thought that it would never happen. We were giving up hope and were not going to try anymore but to our surprise after all the praying to God, He gave us another little baby. We were thrilled and when I found out we told the four children and my family. They were all excited. My oldest child is thirteen, then eleven, nine and the youngest is seven.

The nine months went quickly with no problems and the last few weeks were slow and we were getting anxious to meet our new baby. So October came, the month I had been waiting for and on the 3rd of October my beautiful baby girl was born weighing in at 7lbs 4oz. She was so tiny with a mop of beautiful, black hair, tiny and perfect with ten tiny fingers and ten tiny toes. The birth was great and I couldn't sleep after it, I just kept looking at her. I couldn't wait to show her to the world and to my surprise, at six o'clock my whole family came in to see us. I wasn't expecting anyone, her dad held her and he couldn't believe how small she was. Everyone took turns to hold her. It was a great day for my family and me. It is wonderful the gift of life - it brings everyone closer together and every time I see my little girl now, she is nearly seven months old, she always makes me happy to see her little face and her big smile. Thank you God for all my children, the best gift anyone could get, the gift of Life.

*By Linda*

## **My Life in Kildare**

I was born in Kildare and lived there with three of my four children and my mother and father and sister and brother lived beside me. I miss them a lot and my oldest child stayed with my parents. I lived in the country, which was nice and quiet. I had a lot of friends who I still stay in touch

with and I like to visit at least once a month to get all the news of my friends and family.

I am the mother of four kids - aged ten years, eight years, six years and six months old. I came from Kildare to live in Kilrush in 2001 with my partner. My kids have a good life since we came down. My kids go to the beach and the seaside to Cappa to play in the park. I still miss my home in Kildare and my mother and father and the rest of my family and friends. But I have met some nice people down here and I have started a course with other girls who are all very nice and I really enjoy my time with them.

*By Sue*

## **My Grandmother**

My grandmother is eighty years old. She looked after me when I was a baby. I think of all the lovely things that my grandmother has done for me and I love her as a mother. Everyday I go over to my grandmother's house and I do things for her. She loves to see my children, Rachel and Sarah, coming. She loves having fun with them. I remember my Nana washing me and changing my nappies when I was a baby. I remember her always buying me clothes. She is the best grandmother.

My grandmother looked after me and now I want to look after her. I will never be able to pay her back for all the things that she has done for me. There have been no small children in my Nana's house till Rachel and Sarah came along. When she sees them it makes her day. Thank you Nana for all you have done for me.

*By Linda*

## **The Women's Group**

I enjoy coming up to the Women's Group every morning because I am learning new things and meeting all the other women. I love doing the Art, we are doing drawing and painting. I love doing the computers - learned how to write letters and so on. The sewing was fun when we made cushion covers.

Everyone is very friendly and helpful and I feel part of a lovely group. I am looking forward to our outing - we might be going to Kerry. Our tutor is very nice and helpful and the co-ordinator is lovely.

It has taken me out of myself, I didn't want to leave the house before but now I feel confident. It was lonesome when the girls had gone to school and I used to feel very down. But now I can come to the group and feel a part of something.

I have eight children, the eldest is 28 years old and the youngest is just nine. The house was always noisy but now it's very quiet since the older ones have left. I have reared my grandchild since she was six months old and she is five now. I love minding the children. I look after my other daughter's kids at the weekends, too. Now they are older they still come back to see me at weekends - it is lovely having children but sad to see them go. I love all my children very much and I still worry about them.

*By Lourda*

## **The Premiership**

This year's premiership was very exciting and very interesting. Manchester United won the title by a few points from Arsenal and Newcastle United. Man United had a great run in and all their players played well. My team, Liverpool, did well later in the season but just failed to get a champions league spot. I enjoyed the games on television.

*By James*

## **Growing Up**

I was born in Kenturk and I went to school there. I was reared by my grandparents, I call them my mother and father and I loved them very much. I was eleven when my father died, he was the best father God could have sent for my family. I have five brothers and seven sisters and I used to go to school with my sister, Brigitte, and then we would play afterwards. When I made my First Holy Communion my Auntie Helen gave me new clothes and I remember my first swimsuit and we went swimming. We used to skip school sometimes and go to the park, I remember the birds whistling, the sand and the seaside, and we'd go in a boat. It was a long time ago. I started working when I was 14 years old. My first daughter was called Dolores. She was brought up by her grandparents. I was married in Kilrush and I have a son and four daughters. One is married and I have four grandchildren now. Sadly I lost a granddaughter about six weeks ago, she has gone back to God.

*By Marie*

## **My Trip To Galway**

On the May Bank Holiday weekend my Mum and I went to Galway. We went to visit my sister, Fidelma, and my nephew Ben on the Friday evening.

Fidelma had dinner ready for us when we got there. We stayed at Fidelma's house that night.

On Saturday morning after breakfast we got the bus back to Ennis.

We spent the day shopping in Ennis and got the bus back home to Bodyke that evening.

*By David*

## **My Family**

My name is Josie. I come from a family of twelve, six sisters and five brothers. My Dad died in 1972 and my Mom died last October twelve months. I miss them both. I got on very well with both of them.

My Mom used to ask me to do something and I'd tell her "I would think about it". My parents had 35 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. I get on very well with all my family. One day when my Auntie and her 2 daughters were visiting from Limerick, my Mam asked me to put on 4 eggs. Josie put them on and then went down to the bedroom. When I came out of the bedroom and back out to the kitchen, the water had boiled off the eggs. My Mom said to me that she would not ask me to prepare eggs again.

*By Josie*

## **The Dulick Centre**

I am James and I live in O'Callaghans Mills, Co. Clare. My age is 19 years. My father is deceased and I have four sisters. My sister Anne who is handicapped is in a home in Co. Tipperary.

The Dulick Centre is very good and interesting. At the centre we do computers, gardening, English, cookery, arts and crafts and sewing. I get on well with the people and the staff and I am a very happy person.

*By James*

## **Life has to continue**

Everyone hopes to live a peaceful and happy life without fear of torture or humiliation. The reason is that we all love life and we all have feelings and emotions. We all need to live our life with dignity and humanity. As we all belong to one God, it means we have to live with others as brother and sister.

On the other hand, we all know that we will go from this life sooner or later. The only one who decides our end is God. So, what I want to say, is why are there some people still thinking badly about others. Why do they want everything for themselves? They probably want themselves to be the owners of the whole world. They want to control our planet by making wars, creating problems, killing innocent people, destroying and damaging others properties. So I really feel sorry them, especially, when they hide their bad behaviour under the umbrella of liberation and democracy. They think that others are not aware of their real faces and the plans behind them.

But I am sorry to tell these people that we all aren't afraid of every simple thing in this world. Our lives have to continue and our earth is for good people who do good deeds in their lives.

*By Meissa*

## Soup for the Skin

My contribution is about something many learners of English have gone through and presumably have quickly forgotten. After years it may occur as a party joke.

Many years ago my friend Sophia and myself were invited to a party in Northern Ireland. She was very nervous because she had her eye on one of the boys. After we entered the room, she shouted in his direction "Hi forks!" - and was never seen in this area again!

Last Christmas I got my own story of mix-ups - one of many. My neighbour, Susie, rang to ask us if we could care for her horse while she was away visiting her parents. We agreed, but unfortunately she came around when we weren't there. Somehow she managed to find a piece of paper and scribbled feeding instructions and Christmas wishes. At the end, she mentioned her homemade gift. My husband found it, gave me the gift and read her note aloud quickly while we left the house.

According to him, Susie had presented us with a cold bar of soup, and as I smelled the mint flavour I replied that the English must be strange people; they freeze soups and present four people with a tiny bit. Besides, I hate food with a mint taste, and went to throw it away, bearing in my mind to praise the taste of her soup after her return. But my husband wanted to taste it, and so I put it into the freezer and forgot about it.

Days later, the note reappeared, and this time, I read it more carefully. I got a big laugh as I took the 'soup' out of the freezer and put it in the bathroom!

*By Simone*



## **This World**

This world is gone mad with war. There is hardly any peace any more. It is hard to live in the world thinking of what people are going through and thinking of what they are thinking. They are probably angry, distressed and depressed.

All this war leaves shortages of food and water. It also causes pollution. It is not healthy for people. The pollution alone could kill everybody.

The colour of war is red and black. The sky is lit up and looks dramatic. Everybody lives in fear for their lives. Everybody is looking for peace and comfort.

*By Eileen*

## **A rough World**

It is hard to live in a rough world.  
People are covered in the dust of war.  
The colour of war is brown.

War makes it hard to get food and water.  
War is bad - it is not good for the people of any country.  
People are hurt by war.  
Young children can't go out to play.  
People feel angry - their lives are not the same again.

*By Frank*

## **Ibiza**

On May 2, 2003 I went on holidays to Ibiza. I had always wanted to go and at last this was the day. I went with my wife Kathleen, my brother Michael and his wife, Nellie, and a good friend of mine named Tom, and his wife. Another good friend John, and his wife Margaret came as well.

Some of them stayed for the first week and then other friends came from for the second week - Michael and Kathleen, and Davie and Marina.

Ibiza town was a bit disappointing. It was like any other city and had a McDonald's, Spar, and Burger King. I expected to see beautiful beaches. But 'Plada Bonza', a couple of miles away, had great beaches.

On the first two days, the weather was great. Then on the Wednesday, it rained hard, so hard that the raindrops would hurt you. It rained for 24 hours and then it was back to clear skies again and temperatures of 28 degrees Celsius. We stayed in Jet apartments. They were fantastic.

There are a lot of Irish-run pubs and restaurants in Ibiza. There was good music in a place called Murphy's bar. The band was called the Murphy Brothers.

Even though Ibiza town was disappointing, we had a brilliant two weeks. I really enjoyed being with friends and family.

*By Paddy*

## **My heart is the Sun**

When I go to bed at night,  
I see the colour yellow in my dreams,  
The colour of the warm sun feeling my heart.  
I imagine my heart is the sun.

*By Ciara*

## **Nightmares**

In my dreams when I go to bed at night,  
I see the stars sparkling in the sky  
and I get this weird feeling - a dangerous feeling  
that something strange is going to happen.  
I see these colours flying around my head - green and red,  
I look up at the moon that brightens up the darkness of the  
night and see lots of bats flying round.

Then I walk through a field and think to myself,  
'What's going on?'  
I walk and walk for hours and miles  
waiting for the sun to rise, waiting for daylight.

*By Caroline*

## **Emotions**

Emotions can be good,  
Emotions can be bad,  
Emotions can make you happy,  
They can also make you sad.  
Emotions can go high,  
Emotions can go low,  
Everybody has them, no matter where they go.

*By Orla*

## **The Bull Ring**

One cold and frosty night,  
The moon it shone so bright.  
To the bullring we did go,  
Laughing and skating through the glow.

As the night went on till late,  
We knew our fun was far too great,  
As one of the gang was skating past,  
He hit the path way too fast.

He went over the hedge and out of sight  
But he gave a shout and laughed out loud.  
Said he, "Laughter and fun are of the order  
Frost and cold are not a bother.  
So off ye go and skate the ring over and over again  
With Jack Frost."

## **Say Nothing and Say it Often**

I come before you to stand behind you  
To tell you something I know nothing about.

There is a mother's meeting for the fathers  
Admission is free and you pay at the door.  
Bring your own seats and sit on the floor.

*By Winifred*



