



# CRANN

Ireland's tree magazine

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Forests  
*for wood*



Forests  
*for people*



Forests *for*  
climate



Forests *for*  
nature

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[www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie) #greenerfuture4all

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# Meeting a changing tree world through education

**T**HE world never stops changing/evolving. This we can be sure of. Any organising of nature for human benefit must respect one discipline. Anticipating the next season ahead of nature, the ultimate Boss.

We grow our discipline through tradition and education. So how does Ireland fare on education?

Ireland has a number of facilities, colleges and universities so I put out some enquiries hoping to hear back from each of them. To my delight UCD were very responsive.

The UCD Forestry degree is one of 11 options in the Agricultural Science programme. The course is accessed through CAO code DN250 and the points requirement in 2021 was 440. To be eligible for admission, students must achieve an O6/H7 in English and have Irish, mathematics, one laboratory science subject and two other recognised subjects.

The first year of the four year programme is largely common to most of the degree options; this is to ensure that all students have a strong foundation in the core sciences, maths and economics. The relevance of all these subjects becomes clear to students as they progress through their chosen specialisation in subsequent years.

Succeeding years of the Forestry programme address subjects such as soil science, business management, wood science, forest protection, silviculture, forest management, forest planning, health & safety, agricultural botany, forest harvesting, GIS & remote sensing, inventory & sampling and forest policy & law. Forestry students also undertake a 16 week placement at the end of their third year which provides them with a 'real life' exposure to the sector.

Forestry has been taught at UCD for over 100 years. And while the name has remained constant, the content of the programme continues to evolve in tandem with evolving forestry practice.

I was very much encouraged when listening to Marie Doyle, School of Agriculture and Food Science UCD, on her broad view on Irish Forestry. Her insightful historical knowledge answered questions and observations I have made in previous Crann magazine editions.

Forestry, and forestry practice, can be quite a polarising topic in Ireland where our highly productive plantations, largely comprised of coniferous species, are sometimes seen as barren wastelands, devoid of biodiversity and the rotational system of management seen as rather barbaric in terms of the landscape impact. However, the context for the establishment of such forests has its roots (pardon the pun) in some rather insightful policy decisions taken in the early years of the Irish state.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the forest cover

in Ireland was about 1pc of the land area.

With the establishment of the state, the Government saw the need to become self-sufficient in timber production – but not at the cost of our ability to produce food. Thus, a very low ceiling was placed on the price (reflecting the quality) of land that could be purchased by the State for afforestation. This began Ireland's long association with planting trees on marginal land – peatlands, gleys, mountains and the notion that only land marginal for agricultural production was suitable for forestry, persisted for several years. Many of the practices that were used, the sites that were selected, etc. would not happen today. But the same can be said of agricultural practices, or medicine or any other discipline. With a raft of challenging sites to plant, early Irish foresters had quite a task to find species that could thrive and develop into timber producing trees.

Since the advent of the sustainable forest management paradigm, forestry students now experience a much broader interpretation of forestry as we seek to balance all the productive functions of forests and maintain biodiversity, landscape character and increasing requirements for recreational access to forests. Alternatives to clearfelling, like continuous cover forestry, and the development of multi-storied, multi-species forests are now important as we strive to create resilient forest ecosystems.

We will always need timber and timber products, and indeed the use of sustainably produced timber has a significant role play to play in carbon sequestration. How we marry this with the often prevailing perception that felling trees is 'bad' is an ongoing challenge.

From my interview with Marie Doyle it is clear to me that UCD takes a progressive view to educating the next generation of Irish foresters. Embracing the changing needs of the future of forestry yet mindful of what has been achieved by generations of foresters that delivered the mature woods we enjoy today.

The future of Irish forests will continue to grow but will reflect a now mature state 100 years on. Where the beauty and value of the trees will set the tone as much as the obvious commercial needs and challenges in a forever changing world.

*Peadar Collins,*

*Chairman of the Board.*

*Peadar would like to thank Marie Doyle of UCD for her assistance with this article*



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**OUR MISSION:** To enhance the environment of Ireland through planting, promoting, protecting and increasing awareness about trees and woodlands.

The views expressed by contributors to the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Board of Crann or its committees. We welcome all articles on trees and related topics. Crann Magazine is the periodical publication of People for Trees (Ireland) Ltd, trading as Crann. Crann is a voluntary, non-profit organisation dedicated to planting trees and protecting Ireland's woodlands. Crann ISSN 1649-5217 Registered Charity No: CHY13698



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## CRANN Membership applications

Ireland was once entirely covered with woodland. It is now the least wooded country in Europe. CRANN is Ireland's leading tree organisation, uniting people with a love of trees. CRANN's mission is to enhance the environment of Ireland through planting, promoting, protecting and increasing awareness about trees and woodlands. CRANN is pursuing this mission through contributions to urban & rural planting projects, through its schools programme and through this magazine.

### Members receive:

- A copy of CRANN magazine.
- Invitations to join with other members on a variety of woodland walks and talks.
- Access to advice and information about trees in Ireland.
- Most important of all, by joining CRANN you will be helping secure a future for Ireland's rich heritage of trees and woods.

Annual Membership rates:	Unwaged/DAPs	€25
	Individual	€35
	Family	€45
	Life	€700
	Corporate	€100

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a chq/postal order for: € \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed application form with payment to:

CRANN, P.O. Box 860, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

Payment option: via PayPal [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie)

CRANN is an Irish non-profit organisation promoting and planting broadleaf trees.







Diarmuid McAree accepting a cheque for €3,110 on behalf of Crann from Lieutenant Diarmuid O'Dwyer

## 'LIKE BRANCHES ON A TREE, WE ALL GROW IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, YET OUR ROOTS REMAIN AS ONE'

**I**N MARCH 2022, as Spring was dawning, members of the 11th Potential Officers' Class planted 1,200 Irish broadleaf trees in Coolmooney Camp, Glen of Imaal, Wicklow. For every €5 donation that was made a Birch, Alder, or Oak tree was planted on behalf of donors, and happily this brilliant idea coincided with National Tree Week.

A total of €6221.21 was raised and was split between charities Crann - Trees for Ireland and Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann or ONE, the registered Irish charity for veterans of the Defence Forces. Diarmuid

McAree accepted a cheque for €3,110 on behalf of Crann, from organiser Lieutenant Diarmuid O'Dwyer, and presented the class with a certificate to mark this great initiative.

11th Potential Officers' Class members: Diarmuid O'Dwyer; Andrew O'Neill; Valerie Cole; James Pierce; Barry Smyth; Bryan Collins; Daniel Moylan; Karl Johnston; Karl Bolger; Sean Finlay; Stephen Doyle; Rory Behan; Gearoid Murphy; Brian Ankers; Dairmuid Maher; Eamonn Fitzsimons; Philip Kearney; Ryan Fitzpatrick; Thomas Duffy; Phil Cole; James McHugh; Stephen King; Eoin Stanley and Darren McConville



### CRANN - 'TREES FOR IRELAND' 2022 AGM

We have made the following arrangements to hold our 2022 AGM, bearing in mind the COVID advice and the needs and safety of our members and also subject to the public health situation at the time of the meeting. The "venue" meeting shall be restricted to numbers attending, therefore, it will be a ticketed event (see Eventbrite details herewith).

Please note that as the date approaches we may have to cancel the in person "venue" meeting and hold a virtual meeting via Zoom. Updates will appear on our website [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie)

**The arrangements for the AGM are as follows: Saturday 1st October 2022 at 1.00pm, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, D09 VY63**

The meeting will be limited to the standard business of a general meeting. Proxies will be available for those who may not be able to attend. Proxy Forms are available on request, to be received by Crann - Trees for Ireland, PO Box 860, Celbridge, Co Kildare no later than 5p.m. Wednesday 28th September 2022. To request a proxy form Email: [info@crann.ie](mailto:info@crann.ie) or Tel: 01-6275075

Booking via Eventbrite: [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/crann-trees-for-ireland-agm-2022-tickets-377379340767](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/crann-trees-for-ireland-agm-2022-tickets-377379340767)



# Crann is well covered in Shankill

**N**ational Tree Week 2022 in Shankill was a busy affair with the young, the old and the inbetweens all getting involved, Crann was on the front foot organising events, alongside DLR Parks Department, and even made it to the front cover of SCAN (Shankill Community Action Network) magazine.

Congratulations must go to the first year students from Willow Park, Blackrock who planted one

hundred trees, Silver birch and Scots pine.

While in Stonebridge Park a team from Shankill Tidy Towns also planted Silver birch and

Scots pine, 200 of them,

and a big shout-out to the Shankill Irish Language Circle who planted a Magnolia tree and an Irish yew while reciting Irish poems and singing Irish songs relating to trees.

And finally on another note the children of Shankill and their parents have been working their magic on the wonderful Fairy Forest in Shanganagh Park, fairy doors, fairy houses, toad stools and signs have all been put in place to create a peaceful and wondrous place to walk and relax.

Good work all round



## NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY WEEK AT BELVEDERE



PJ Fitzpatrick and Diarmuid McAree with the walking group

**T**HE Crann walk in the grounds of Belvedere House examined “the whole value of trees”, said PJ Fitzpatrick, a local member of Crann, who led the walk with Diarmuid McAree also of Crann.

“The right tree in the right place is what’s important, and what we covered is everything from the root of the tree, what’s going on under the ground, to the relevance of the trunk of the tree, which absorbs carbon, and leading to the crown of the tree, the branches, leaves, flowers, and all the insects and birds”.

*The Woodland Walk at Belvedere House, Gardens and Park was part of National Biodiversity Week. It was a guided forest walk covering ecology, biodiversity, tree identification and more.*





Students from Willow Park school who planted 200 trees



Diarmuid McAree with a very attentive group

# Tony Carey

## Inspired, passionate and master of arboreal knowledge

**V**ERY SADLY we heard of Tony's passing on Saturday 18th June 2022. Tony will be remembered by his fellow friends and board directors as a shining

light in the history of Crann. As Chairman Tony's energy at meetings was infectious. He drove the meetings with passion and purpose. Always on brief and courteous.

Tony applied himself to the organisation unselfishly. Always available without expecting reward. Determined to put Crann's flag firmly where trees were needed and wanted.

Many people love trees just as much as Tony but Tony not only loved trees he was fascinated by them. Like a miner finding a precious seam, Tony would dig deep into the rich botanical depths of a tree. Studying and understanding the trees evolution over millions of years and how it applies in the modern world. He was one of Ireland's finest Tree minds. Our Board would often meet followed by a tour with Tony leading through an arboretum. Tony's taxonomy prowess would shine when challenged. He would trace a tree to the ends of its native plant kingdom.

Tony's great achievement without question was his devotion to the Californian Redwoods. Both *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Giant redwood) *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coastal Redwood). These he would honour with an idea which only he can be credited with: the Giants Grove at Birr Castle.

As Chairman, Tony initiated this great project on behalf of Crann in conjunction with Lord Rosse at Birr castle and Demesne. The Board of Crann recognise this as Tony Carey's great homage to trees and our organisation. May his memory be associated with their success into the future.

As current Chairman of the Board of Crann may I on behalf of Crann and all its members and associates wish Tony a fond farewell. May he Rest in Peace

Peadar Collins



Tony Carey RIP

### The Redwoods

*Here, sown by the Creator's hand.  
In serried ranks, the Redwoods stand:  
No other clime is honored so,  
No other lands their glory know.*

*The greatest of Earth's living forms,  
Tall conquerors that laugh at storms;  
Their challenge still unanswered rings,  
Through fifty centuries of kings.*

*The nations that with them were young,  
Rich empires, with their forts far-flung,  
Lie buried now—their splendor gone:  
But these proud monarchs still live on.*

*So shall they live, when ends our days,  
When our crude citadels decay;  
For brief the years allotted man,  
But infinite perennials' span.*

*This is their temple, vaulted high,  
And here, we pause with reverent eye,  
With silent tongue and awestruck soul;  
For here we sense life's proper goal:*

*To be like these, straight, true and fine,  
to make our world like theirs, a shrine;  
Sink down, Oh, traveller, on your knees,  
God stands before you in these trees.*

Joseph B. Strauss



# Recording data for the future at Giants Grove

Sean McGinnis

**T**HE WORLD'S first forest management school was founded in the University of Giessen, the Holy Roman Empire, in 1778. For the majority of those almost 250 years the basic forest management tools were the humble pencil and paper. Data collected in the field was meticulously recorded with such detail and precision that the finished result often looked more like art than a working file to my modern eyes. One of the finest, oldest, and most beautiful of these documents is the Birr Castle Demesne Tree Inventory which is kept safe in the archives of Birr Castle.

Considering my handwriting, things have luckily changed a lot since then, particularly in recent years. Today the basic tool of forest mapping is the Geographic Information System (GIS). Put (very) simply, GIS is a type of database containing geographic data (boundaries, plots, locations, etc.) combined with computer software to analyse and manage that data. Basically, the map and the data are now one document, and although it is not as beautifully presented it is far more efficient, easier to create, simpler to use, and a lot more useful than the paper documents of old.

So, considering the history of such detailed forest mapping in the past at Birr Castle, and the long 1200-year future ahead of the Redwoods at the Giants Grove, we recently decided to completely overhaul and update our GIS using the most modern, advanced, Global Positioning System (GPS) available. Now every Giant's position in the largest Redwood Forest outside of the United States is accurate to within 2cm. The decision was made as we believed it was essential to provide a strong foundation for all the future data yet to be collected from the Grove.

Right now, individual trees can be assessed and highlighted for management inputs such as fertiliser and vegetation control, or problems can be recorded, measured, and instantly shared from the field to anyone involved. However, the real advantage will be how the current data will be used as a basis in future experiments. For example, the soil will be analysed at regular intervals to see how the Redwoods



Liam Stapleton gathering Coordinate data  
Left: 2021's growth with sunglasses for scale  
Below: The Earl of Rosse with the Birr Castle Demesne Tree Inventory



impact carbon sequestration, microbes, and nutrition, over time. Or the growth rates will be examined to see how the Redwoods respond to the various site types and nurse species influencing them. Perhaps the most important data will come from studying the effects of climate change, particularly as this is a very real threat to the Redwoods in their native sites. Every little detail of Giants Grove will be studied, and the more accurate our information is today, the more accurate and effective our data will be tomorrow. Hopefully it can make a difference.

Of course there's always a down-side, and

unfortunately now anyone visiting their tree at Giants Grove will find that its coordinates have changed as the old system was only accurate to within 4 meters on a cloudy day. But don't worry, the new system will allow you to enter the co-ordinates into Google Earth, and you will be directed to within 2cm of your tree.

Young Redwood forests are very rare, not many people have seen one, so do come and visit Giants Grove.

*Follow Giants Grove on Facebook and Instagram*

## THE PROJECT

Giants Grove [www.giantsgrove.ie](http://www.giantsgrove.ie) at Birr Castle, a voluntary partnership between Birr Castle and Crann – Trees for Ireland, is planned as the largest grove of giant redwoods outside California, a mix of giant and coastal redwoods. These redwoods were native here before the Ice Age 3 million years ago.

The planting, maintenance and establishment of the 1,000 redwoods is being financed by you, the Giants Grove sponsors, dedicating trees to family and friends. Your tree will be associated with a GPS coordinate within the grove, identified on your certificate.

More information: [www.giantsgrove.ie](http://www.giantsgrove.ie) or email [info@giantsgrove.ie](mailto:info@giantsgrove.ie).







The one and only,  
Paddy Smith who has  
retired from Crann

## OUR PADDY

**O**F ALL the articles in this edition this one is the most important. Without our Paddy this magazine would be just a mere leaflet. Paddy Smith faithful, clever, gentle and articulate brought this facet of Crann, our magazine, to a professional level.

Paddy, we are all, your readers, your colleagues in Crann most appreciative for your years of service to Crann. Joe Barry was indeed very smart to catch you when you retired from the *Irish Independent*. From the time you become our new editor and brought out the autumn edition in 2007 till our previous edition you have grown our magazine and set it to a standard of which we are proud.

It's one thing to bring out a magazine, it's another thing to deliver a professional quality magazine. This is where your journalistic power shone out. My first impression of you Paddy, was following a story in your car to a roundabout on the Mitchelstown bypass. I just mentioned the idea and the next thing I know you drove down from Trim in Co. Meath (to the fantastic Co Cork where all Meath men long to live), with your proper camera and note pad to get the story 'The Magic Roundabout'. I thought to myself this guy is a real newspaper man!

Paddy your admirers from the Board would say 'We have had a wonderful association with you Paddy for many years now. Always courteous professional and caring. We shared healthy issues interspersed with scholarly asides. We will miss your advice, good humour in spite of adversity, and indomitable spirit.'

Stay safe and well Paddy. Thanks for your friendship and encouragement.

Ar aghaidh go deo, GC.

Paddy Smith, you are Top Notch,  
Peadar and all the Board

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2022

Our annual photographic competition, sponsored by Coillte, attracted another record entry last year. Standards were very high and we look forward to receiving equally good images for this year's contest.

Theme: **Trees, Forests & Woodlands**

Sponsored By: **Coillte**

First Prize **€250**

Second Prize **€100**

Third Prize **€50**

**ENTRY IS FREE!**

**Closing date: October 15, 2022**

Digital entries should be emailed to

[CrannCoillte2022@gmail.com](mailto:CrannCoillte2022@gmail.com)

Prints should be posted to **Crann – Trees for Ireland, Photo Competition, Crann, PO Box 860, Celbridge, Co Kildare.**

### RULES

- This competition is open to all amateur photographers.
- Entries can be digital (emailed) or prints (posted).
- Emailed images must be in jpg/jpeg format, minimum file size 2MB, maximum file size 8MB.
- NOTE: Emailed entries must be as attachments to the email (not embedded in email).
- Prints of photos should be minimum size 6x4 inches (15x10cm) up to maximum size A4.
- A certain amount of manipulation of digital images to enhance the subject matter is allowed but gimmicky special effects are not.
- Each photographer may submit up to 3 entries.
- Prints should have the following information on the back: Name, Address, Telephone Number, Title of Print, Location and Date Taken.
- Prints should NOT be mounted.
- Prints cannot be returned.
- Emails should have the following information: name, address, Telephone number, email address, title of picture, location and date taken.
- The copyright of the image remains the photographer's. However, Crann and Coillte retain the right to use any images in future publications and on related social media and websites e.g. Crann may use some of the competition pictures in related third party publications, tweets, website, social media and promotional literature like calendars. You may be requested to supply the images in high resolution eps/jpeg format for this purpose.
- Entering this competition implies full and whole acceptance of the competition rules.
- The judge's decision will be final and no correspondence or communications will be entered into in relation to the results

### PHONE CAMERAS

We have a special section for phone camera photographs.

Entries should be emailed to

[CrannCoillte2022@gmail.com](mailto:CrannCoillte2022@gmail.com), with the words

'Phone camera' entered in the subject line.

**The winner will receive a special prize of €50.**

### CALENDAR

Photographers who enter our competition may see their pictures selected to appear in a wider range of platforms, thus promoting Crann – Trees for Ireland.



In a world that can be hostile to them, trees bring many significant benefits to humans







# A climate for trees

## A natural approach to human health and well-being

AIDAN FFRENCH examines the Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown  
Trees and Urban Forestry Strategy 2022-2031

**T**REES are intrinsic to human life, though that may not always be so obvious. We tend to take trees for granted. But let's consider: trees are truly amazing; as John Parker, Chief Executive of the Arboricultural Association says, "a tree basically makes itself out of air water soil and sunshine" Now, that is quite something! And trees bring many significant benefits to humans including clean air, oxygen, shelter, food, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and spiritual sustenance. Increasingly, people recognise the vital role of trees to human health and well-being and to climate adaptation and biodiversity. The Covid pandemic highlighted the vital need for us to re-connect with and care for Nature, especially with more of more of the population living in urban areas (63pc Census 2016). And just as humans need each other and live in communities, so do trees. Scientists such as Professor Suzanne Simard ([www.suzannesimard.com](http://www.suzannesimard.com)) are finding that trees function as communities of solidarity, supporting each other through

symbiotic relationships with mycorrhizal fungi. Our connections with each other and trees are no less important. Embracing this holistic understanding, in late 2020, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLR) embarked on a review and update of its first Tree Strategy (2011-2015). It is anticipated that the new strategy will be launched later this year.

### Developing the New Strategy

It's worth noting that in the Republic of Ireland, in the absence of any national tree policy or legislation or guidelines, there is no obligation on local authorities to prepare, let alone to resource and implement tree strategies. Preparation of the new DLR strategy is mandated by Action 14 of the council's Climate Action Plan 2019-2024. The review audited the outgoing strategy's Action Plan (2011-2015), finding that most of its 14 actions had not been completed owing to a lack of political and management commitment, insufficient staff resources and most significantly, the lack of a tree officer. It's worth noting that of the country's 28 city and



county councils, only two employ full-time tree officers (Dublin and Cork city councils). This is not in line with best international practice in Europe, North American, Australia and New Zealand. A literature review of best international exemplars was conducted, focusing on leading, progressive cities such as Greater Lyon, France, Pittsburgh, USA and Melbourne, Australia. Key lessons from these cities include building capacity (resources) to delivery goals, maintaining up-to-date databases (the evidence base), engaging civil society through collaboration and citizen science, and investing in appropriate and adequate human, technical and educational resources. In contrast to the first strategy, a draft was only written after undertaking a two-part exercise – an issues paper for public consultation, followed by an in-depth stakeholder engagement process.

The paper identified key challenges and opportunities for public consultation, including: the coincidence of tree inequity and socio-economic disadvantage (Pobal Index), increasing losses of mature trees due to building developments, the lack of a tree officer, and opportunities for voluntary tree stewards and citizen scientists. Sixty-four submissions were received, mostly from individuals, with nine from the 40 county councillors, and submissions by three NGOs – CRANN Trees for Ireland (which is represented on the Council's Climate Strategic Policy Committee), Arboricultural Association (Ireland), Bat Conservation Ireland, and the Irish Farmers' Association. Submissions were well-disposed towards trees and many expressed interest in being involved in tree activities. For example, 78pc were interested in citizen science projects and/or a voluntary tree stewardship scheme. There was strong support for drafting a new strategy along with strong calls for investment of adequate human resources to plan for and manage the urban forest. The main concerns were: the lack of a tree officer, tree losses in built developments, diversity in tree planting, education and more tree planting.

The public consultation was followed by participatory stakeholder engagement which had the benefit of early identification and assessment of the views of a wide range of stakeholders, prior to writing the strategy. A key goal was to 'activate' delivery of the strategy's goals by identifying potential partners. Participation was inherently interactive with proforma questionnaires and workshops with five focus groups: –

1. Businesses, Institutions, Schools, Colleges, Private Landowners
2. Community Groups (Public



Participation Network, residents' associations, Tidy Towns, gardening groups)

3. Internal - DLR Staff - across grades, departments

4. Youth 1 (DLR Youth Parliament - Comhairle na nÓg)

5. Youth 2: Young people living in disadvantaged areas

**Key takeaways of the Focus Group workshops:-**

- The need to change perceptions and raise awareness of the value of trees as living organisms
- There is genuine public support for the strategy with a range of current and potential volunteer resources. The strategy should identify collaborative actions between the council and civil society in communication, education, community participation and tree care.

### **Towards a shared vision - a county culture of tree care**

The strategy emphasises that everyone is responsible for trees. While the county is well-provided with trees (19pc canopy cover, with areas of low cover in certain

districts), the council is directly responsible for only 33pc of the tree cover with the remaining 66pc in private and institutional ownership. Care for the county's trees extends beyond the council to include individuals, communities, educational bodies, NGOs, private landowners, developers, businesses and state bodies. So, managing and expanding tree cover requires a collaborative approach driven by a shared vision of collective responsibility. The strategy's vision is that, by 2031 the citizens of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown will have fully embraced a culture of care for trees and will share the environment with trees in an inspiring, healthy urban forest, receiving benefits that maximise human well-being and climate resilience.

The vision will be achieved by humans sharing well-designed urban places with trees – what I call informed co-habitation. This requires a new, evolving mindset that fosters the culture of care.

### **Ethical philosophy – trees are living dynamic organisms**

Recent research by forest scientists like



Trees are not just to be regarded as some part of street furniture but partners living with us

The DLR trees strategy is founded on the ethical philosophy of consistent respect for trees, recognising trees as living organisms, and not as mere objects. The council is committing to the practical application of this ethic in its arboricultural and landscape design practices. For example, the council design practices will follow the mantra, “Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reasons, Rightly-Planted” by applying best international standards biosecurity, species selection and pit designs. This will ensure optimal tree health at maturity because planting will be designed to meet the functional needs of trees above and below ground, providing sufficient space, water and maintenance that optimise growth.

The strategy comprises four main parts: -

1. WHY A STRATEGY: vision, philosophy, principles and objectives
2. WHAT WE HAVE: the county's tree resources
3. WHAT WE STAND FOR: policy statements and practices
4. WHAT WE WILL DO: implementation (action plan)

Key Policies updates in the Strategy

- Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reasons, Rightly-Planted
- Resolving Inequity in Tree Cover
- Diverse Planting: apply the 10-20-30 Rule
- Mini-Forests and Tiny (Pocket) Forests
- Climate Resilience: best practices in Biosecurity and Tree Procurement

## Conclusion - from rhetoric to reality

The strategy is ambitious in its scope and intent. Priority actions in 2022–2025 are: -

- Re-commence street tree surveys
- Digitise annual tree planting programme
- Develop a voluntary tree stewardship programme
- Develop a tree citizen scientist programme
- Develop urban woodlands and ‘mini edible forests’ (pilot to start autumn 2022)
- Prepare street tree planting plans at district, neighbourhood levels
- Develop new rules for developers

It is anticipated that DLR's Strategy Policy Committee for Environment and Climate Action will adopt the strategy in the near future. Moving from the document's aspiration and rhetoric to real delivery will require dedicated and consistent commitment to the strategy's action plan. To that end, the council is minded to appoint a professional tree officer to co-ordinate delivery of the strategy. By then, three of the state's 28 city and county councils will have appointed tree officers.

Peter Wohlleben (*The Heartbeat of Trees*) and Canadian forest ecologist, Professor Suzanne Simard (*Finding the Mother Tree*) and are revealing the intrinsic ‘social’ communities that constitute forest and tree communities; and that trees do indeed ‘talk to each other’ (e.g. through mycorrhizal relationships) and act in solidarity across species. Based on these exciting revelations, ecologists, activists, arborists and landscape architects increasingly recognize trees as living, breathing organisms. They are not merely the objects of aesthetic or visual value that some architects, engineers and planners seem to regard as inanimate

street furniture, in the same frame as bollards or lighting!

We're moving beyond this narrow anthropocentric (human-centred) frame that largely focuses on utilitarian values. Trees have their own inherent value as living organisms, deserving our care and respect, especially when we ‘invite’ them to co-habit with us in often hostile urban environments. Seen from an ethical perspective we can come to a more holistic appreciation with its practical application to the planning and design to meet the needs of trees in our villages, towns and cities. Likewise, our newly re-discovered need for connecting with nature can spur us to a more evidenced-based, professional approach to urban forestry. This is particularly relevant to the concept of biophilia - “the urge to affiliate with other forms of life” - introduced by American biologist Edward O. Wilson (*Biophilia*, 1984).

An ethic of trees as living organisms, married to biophilia, provides a basis to build a modern culture of tree care in Ireland. We can also draw on our ancestors, a deep culture around the sacredness and dignity of trees in pre-Christian Ireland and in Celtic Christianity.



Together: children playing beneath the trees at Ballintyre Hall, Dundrum

**EMMA REEVES**  
finds an often  
overlooked plant  
that transforms  
into a flaming  
bush in Autumn

# The Splendid Spindle

Spindle in early Summer  
is an unassuming plant



Photos: Patrick Moran

Dr Emma Reeves, who lives near Navan, has a PhD in botany from UCD



**F**OR THE best part of the year the little Spindle is often overlooked. Its smooth lanceolate leaves are of a green that could only be described as 'meh, it's tiny flowers are nondescript and inconspicuous and it rarely forms a plant with a decent shape. Come autumn it transforms itself into fire, easily spotted in the hedgerow as a flaming bush. Leaves turn red, purple and orange. The spindle's show at the end of the year culminates with the ripening of incredible pink fruits which dangle from the branches until well after the disappearance of the showy leaves.

There are many cultivars of *Euonymus* available in garden centres, generally in autumn when they look their best in full fiery dress. Why do the leaves become so attractive? Grimly, it is all to do with the Programme of Cell Death in the process of senescence. Shortening day lengths, decreasing temperatures other environmental stimuli signal alterations in gene expression. New enzymes are produced. The green chlorophyll within the leaves is broken down. The plant attempts to store essential proteins for the winter, the purple-red anthocyanins and yellow carotenoids, once hidden by chlorophyll green, become exposed.

The fruits are formed of four round capsules of a deep, almost metallic, shiny, rose-pink. When ripe, the capsules split and expose the seed which is wrapped in a golden-orange aril. They are exquisite and resemble something Cadbury might produce. There's only one conclusion reached when a child sees this potential delicacy. 'It must taste delicious'. This is not the case it is foul tasting and poisonous. However, there do not appear to be many records of serious poisonings. If the seeds are ingested, the presence of toxic alkaloids may cause diarrhoea, vomiting and hallucinations. As a kid, following the a disappointing taste test, I decided that the gorgeous pink capsules were best gathered for necklace assembly.

There are 1652 records of this tree throughout

Spindle provides a welcome home for several types of *Lepidoptera* which are protected by a layer of webbing that is produced by caterpillars



Ireland, it is almost nationwide. It appears to be less widespread in the Northwest and Southwest of the country (National Biodiversity Data Centre). It is far more frequent on calcareous soils. Typically, Spindle is most often found in the hedgerow habitat but can be a dominant woodland pioneer species in unmanaged open habitats. In its typical habitat it is associated with other low growing trees such as Hawthorn, Hazel and Blackthorn and climbing plants like Ivy and Dog rose. I always associate the Spindle with dry stone boundary walls with ancillary unmanaged hedgerows, the untidy branches poking up at the top of the wall in all directions.

There are several species of *Lepidoptera* which are dependant on Spindle. Including the Magpie Moth, Scorched Carpet Moth

and The Spindle Ermine Moth. Colonies of Spindle Ermine Moth larvae are observed on the uppermost leaves of the Spindle. They are protected by a webbing secreted by the dark black and blue, stripy caterpillars as they munch through the leaves in June. The larval stages of the Holly Blue butterfly also occur on Spindle. The flowers, like those of the ivy plant are underwhelming to look at. They are monoecious having both sexes. They do provide an excellent source of pollen and nectar for our bees and hover flies. The leaves are quite juicy and soft and attract a range of aphids such as the brown Spindle Aphid. The presence of large quantities of these parthenogenic ladies encourages predation by lacewings, hoverflies and ladybirds.

The populations of invertebrates found inhabiting the Spindle plant attract

the attentions of the typical hedgerow, insectivorous birds such as the Wren, Cold tit, Dunnock and Bluetit. The seeds are a great favourite of overwintering birds like the Fieldfare and Redwing and also to Robins, Blackbird and Wood pigeon. The orange aril is full of fat and protein, the seed itself is excreted.

Considering its oddities, spindle doesn't have a diverse Irish folklore. In early Irish Law, the *Fodla fado*, Spindle was grouped with the Lower Divisions of the Wood. Its wood is very hard and was used to make knitting needles, skewers, pegs, toothpicks and spindles (hence the name).

As long as you don't try to eat it, the Spindle is a lovely little tree, perfect in hedgerows for winter interest and excellent for biodiversity all the year round.



# Early monastic site at Killeshin

Words and photographs GEORGE CUNNINGHAM



The graveyard walls at Killeshin are beautifully adorned with navelwort



The ornate and unique Hiberno-Romanesque mid twelfth century doorway at Killeshin.

THE MONASTIC ruins at Killeshin in eastern Co Laois, highlighted by the beautiful superb doorway are surrounded by walls laden with colourful navelwort. It is now treeless. The mid - nineteenth century planting of *macrocarpa* proved too big for the enclosed site and had to be removed recently. A pity that the multiple timber trunks were not cut at a higher level to allow the creation of a modern sculpture taking its genesis from the 800-year-old doorway.



The wall plaque reads: James Fitzgerald built this wall and planted these trees 1787.

The trees he planted are long gone. Later planting included this Monterey cypress, which posed a danger and had to be cut down.





Evening light in  
Dartrey forest





# FLOURISHING IN THE WOODS

JOAN WHELAN recounts the benefits to all of a weekend with the Irish Forestry School Association

**I** WAS moved to write this article having returned from a powerful weekend at the end of May, amongst trees, with the Irish Forest School Association (IFSA). On the border of Cavan and Monaghan, in the splendid surroundings of Tanagh Outdoor and Adventure Education Centre, just outside Cootehill, over 60 members of the association gathered for their fourth annual national gathering. The centre is part of what was once the vast Dartrey estate, the country estate of the Dawson family. It was established in 1992 and is operated by Cavan/Monaghan Education and Training Board. Dartrey Forest is now managed by Coillte as a commercial plantation.

Described in 1844 as 'languishingly beautiful', the landscape of the forest and

the surrounding area is composed of a series of lakes joined by the Dromore River amid a backdrop of rolling parkland and the characteristic rounded hills of this part of Ireland. A vigorous local campaign to save the 'Dartrey Oaks', some of which date back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, took place in the early part of the 21st century.

A highlight of the weekend was a heritage walk through the forest, across the oldest cast iron bridge in Ireland, to Black Island, to what is known locally as the Temple. Currently under restoration by the local heritage committee, this is the Lady Anne Dawson Temple. It was completed in 1744 and designed by James Wyatt, the renowned architect. As we closed the magnificent heavy wooden door, watched over by an ancient yew, the evening light shining through the

central oculus, one of our number began to softly sing *Amazing Grace*. It was a profound moment, nestled deep in the forest, in this tiny memorial modelled on the Pantheon in Rome.

The IFSA was founded in 2016. We bring Forest School practitioners together to inspire inclusive, playful learning for all, in nature. We want to build resilience and relationships, through our connection with each other, and the natural world, while inspiring creativity and supporting wellbeing. Forest School is a progressive, experiential approach to learning. Think of placing your hands in wet mud; walking barefoot on soft grass; placing your cheek against the rugged bark of a tree...but also, think about how that feels for the tree, the grass, the tiny creature landing on your skin. Forest School is about cherishing and promoting a deep and abiding connection to



Weaving stories of the land



The guardian yew at the Lady Anne Dawson temple



The inner lough, Dartrey forest

the natural world in how we live our lives.

Our gathering is a way to help all members to deepen their practice and so we provided a mix of lectures, discussion, workshop and more informal skill-share sessions, as well as opportunities to connect with nature, and to have fun!

On Saturday morning, I presented some of the findings of my recent PhD study. I highlighted the crucial role that trained Forest School leaders play in making quality Forest School accessible in our primary schools. I also explored how introducing Forest School can help to change the places we call schools to include local nature.

Our workshop leaders included Carol Barrett, the co-founder of Down to Earth Forest School in Galway. Carol explored how we can preserve and share the traditional stories of the land in our practice, using the gifts of nature and traditional weaving skills. Sarah Whelan and Sinead Walsh are both special education teachers and Forest School leaders. In their workshop they explored how we can make Forest School accessible to all using The Therapeutic Forest© approach to

capitalise on the restorative benefits of the Forest. We believe part of our role is to enhance our woodlands through how we manage and care for our forest places. So we were delighted to learn more about how to successfully restore a hedgerow in a session called An Choill Bheag - Growing Habitats in Schools led by Niamh Ni Dhuill from LEAF (An initiative of Learning about Forests).

Sunday began slightly cloudy, as we gathered on the parkland for an energising discussion. Linda Coughlan, the Forestry course co-ordinator at Ballyhaise Agricultural College reminded us about the range of forestry and forestry related courses available to both school-leavers and older adults. Our discussions ranged from the functional to the aesthetic, ideas that were powerfully shared in presentations from local Forest School leader Marian Dempsey; Savina Donohue, who was until recently curator of Cavan County Museum, and Brian MacDonald, a local campaigner on behalf of the ancient woodlands of Dartrey.

As we wound down towards the close of the gathering, some of our most experienced Forest School practitioners led 'skillshares' on

fire-making skills, campfire songs and ideas for fostering Gaeilge in Forest School. All the while the staff of Tanagh looked after us with warm hospitality and nourishing vegetarian meals.

I came away with a renewed commitment to the role of the natural world, and trees in particular, in helping us all to live good and fulfilling lives. Part of our task as communities is to find ways to support commercial forestry alongside more effectively preserving and caring for and expanding our diminishing treescapes. The two should not be incompatible, in my view.

Joan Whelan is a Director of CRANN and Chairperson of the Irish Forest School Association. She is a retired primary school principal and set up the first Irish Forest School practice in her school in Dublin in 2012. She recently completed her PhD in DCU exploring the potential of Forest School as caring pedagogy.

For more information about Forest School in Ireland see [www.irishforestschoolassociation.ie](http://www.irishforestschoolassociation.ie)





Dale and an attentive audience with students from Naul NS



# BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS

by DALE TREADWELL

**A**FTER another absence from the pages of the CRANN magazine, I thought I should make a return, previously in my last piece I wondered out loud if I really had that much to add to contributions, fortunately this last year has seen a return to in person school visits and community tree planting activities so I have lots to report on.

I also feel a little shamed by my lack of putting pen to paper from an old college and friend Mr. Stephen Butler who after 37 years of service at the Dublin Zoo has released a compelling read for any plantsperson anorak entitled *Gardening for Gorillas* (inset). I cannot recommend it highly enough as it plots the trials, tricks, and triumphs of a zoo horticulturalist. My meagre couple of paragraphs of ramblings cannot compete with Stephens's literary explanation of his life's work in transforming the

grounds of the Dublin Zoo to the horticultural pleasure that they are to visitors and animal inhabitants. The book is available at the Zoo or from Stephen himself for more information please see

[www.gardeningforgorillas.com](http://www.gardeningforgorillas.com)

I am delighted to report that Crann community tree-planting returned with a post-Covid bang in December of last year in numerous parkland areas of Fingal including Malahide Demense, Paddy's Hill and Woodlands in Portmarnock, parks in Castleknock, Baldoyle, Sutton, Blanchardstown, and Clonsilla were also

enhanced with tree plantings by local community groups.

I was hoping that I would retire my Matilda the Mattocks who once graced the front cover of this magazine as I had advanced up to preparing planting sites with an auger, unfortunately for me the auger eventually broke me before it finally died itself after an event for Tree Week in Skerries!!! Also Matilda has had to have yet another handle change after a site in Whitesnake estate Blanchardstown, near killed me and the mattocks the weekend prior to Christmas!!!

Thank you to Sinead Fox from Fingal county council for organising the project and to the many volunteers who came out on weekends to do their part in local parks in 'treehancing' their environment for years to come it was 'Treemendous'.

Community plantings before Christmas, were followed up by another Fingal Tree initiative in schools early in 2022. From January until the Easter Holidays I visited some 17 different schools throughout the Fingal region, to plant trees in grounds and local parks and I have a waitlist for another 20-odd Fingal schools in the Autumn when tree-planting season kicks off again in earnest!!!

Till the Autumn, Happy Tree Days!!!!



Dale needs to get a handle on things

# Grow your h



It's to appreciate the qualities of timber, our own home-grown sustainable building material.  
Photo by Avel Chuklanov



ome

## JOE BARRY presents a sustainable solution for producing affordable housing in Ireland

**A**BOUT fifteen years ago, I purchased a log cabin and had it erected in woodland in Leitrim. I searched long and hard to find a reasonably priced house that was constructed with slow grown, well-seasoned timber and eventually, through an Irish agent, had one delivered from Eastern Europe.

The firm I bought it from are sadly no longer operating but there are many others, some good, some not so good so it is worth putting in some time in researching what you are buying. Good quality log cabins make excellent housing and are a far cheaper option than the traditional concrete structures we are familiar with.

It is a simple process. Pre-fabricated sections arrive on a lorry complete with a team of erectors and it is just a question of their slotting all the pieces together, a bit like building with Lego. All I had to do was provide a concrete pad and the standard essentials for any home such as an electric connection, proper sewage facilities and of course a water supply. The rest was done speedily and efficiently by the construction team. I think it took them three days to complete the job.

My original plan was to use the cabin as a holiday home but for various reasons, I never used it other than to enjoy the facilities when working from time to time in the woods. After two years, it seemed a total waste to have something like this lying idle for much of the year so I got the same firm who were delivering other cabins to Ireland to take it apart and re-erect it on my farm in Meath.

It now makes an excellent farm office. Taking it down and re-erecting it took all of four days, amazing really when you compare this to the time it takes to build traditional housing. I mention all of this to demonstrate how convenient and cost-effective timber houses are compared to the tedious task of conventional house construction.

Yet there appears to be a bias against such housing among planners and also a reluctance among our population to build such residences. Why this I simply cannot understand. We can literally grow our own homes by using the timber from our woodland and doing so in the most environmentally friendly way possible. European larch and Western red cedar to

mention just two species, are relatively slow growing and make perfect construction materials that will happily withstand being exposed to the vagaries of Irish weather. Other faster growing species like Spruce are perhaps better suited for being undercover and used as part of the internal construction.

It is worth noting that my cabin has roof and floor insulation but none in the walls because I was advised, correctly, that it was not necessary. The thickness and density of the timber provides excellent heat retention.

While the timber used in my cabin was from whole logs, laminated timber is finding ever more uses in construction and enables the building of multiple storey high rise buildings which are apparently stronger and safer than those that use steel and concrete. It is of course obvious which materials are better for reducing carbon and helping to slow global warming.

Timber is an excellent insulator and the fact that it is something we can grow superbly here in Ireland and use, over and over again, makes it a neglected asset in these times of metals and plastics and concrete. We need to better appreciate the qualities of timber, our own home-grown sustainable building material.

On the subject of sustainable materials, a while ago my fencing contractor took down some post and rail fencing and re-erected it on another part of the farm. He remarked on how little decay had occurred and this prompted me to do some hard thinking and finally recall that it was fencing that I had purchased exactly fifty years ago. Other than some decay at the points where the wood was nailed, it was perfect reusable and while the efficacy of the preservatives used was better then than now due to the removal of some of the more toxic elements in the mix, I found it astonishing that it had stood the test of time through most of my lifetime.

Reduce, reuse and recycle are excellent guidelines for sustainable living. Coupled with the fact that we could easily meet all of our own timber needs without relying on costly imports makes planting trees a total no brainer.

Surely even Minister Hackett would agree with those facts and for once and for all, sort out the backlog of applications to plant more trees. It is difficult nowadays to listen to the news without hearing endless rants about the shortage of affordable housing.

The solution is simple.  
Just grow it.



The joy of beholding ivy-free ash; what a treasure each tree is, what an added benefit to any farm, aesthetically and financially.





An all too familiar scene on the Irish landscape: ivy-infested ash trees which will lead to bigger distorted shapes and eventually mangled crowns

GEORGE CUNNINGHAM suggests we need proper research and a mature debate on

# Ivy: Friend or Foe?

**I**N MY small garden, front and rear, ivy is very much an enhancing feature. It adorns walls and fences, climbs the trunks of larch, birch and flowering plum and I cultivate it in small pots for friends. Two main patio pillars have been ivy-covered for the past forty years, providing shelter and nesting for birds in Spring, and a host of other creatures of which I am not aware. So I am no enemy of ivy but it is very much under control with its growth balanced. Not like the infestation of ivy, particularly on ash trees, which mars much of our hedgerow landscape and doesn't permit these trees to reach their full potential. I am very much aware of ivy's enormous value to the biodiversity of our wildlife but would argue that its unfettered growth needs balance.

Pierce McCan's article, 'Help! Ivy has taken over my ash plantation,' and Joe Barry's brief but emphatic response, that ivy does NOT harm trees once again brings timely attention to this age-old question (ongoing since Pliny's time) as to whether or not ivy is

injurious to trees - it does not live off them and it manufactures its own food. Frequently over recent decades, and almost once a year, the topic is raised in the letters' pages of *The Irish Times*, reiterating all the pros and cons but with no definite conclusion. People seem to take entrenched positions on the controversy with a woeful lack of research to back up the positions taken.

Risteard Mulcahy's book *For Love of Trees...* is a serious and comprehensive study of just how widespread the problem is. The photographs alone emphasise its scale as it appeared almost thirty years ago; to my mind it is not much better today, maybe even worse. What wonderful hedgerows full of vibrant ash we could have around Irish farms. Instead we have, in the main, ugly infestations of ivy smothering this noble tree, the limbs and the crown - distorted and mangled - unable

to reach their full potential, starved of vital nutrients and liable to topple under the full weight and spread of the unrestrained ivy sail. How sad that at a time when ash is under mortal threat we can't help the stalwarts that struggle for survival on our landscape. Thankfully full-scale ivy tree growth is not tolerated

in our arboreta, public parks and gardens.

The problem appears to be an Irish one; unrestrained growth of ivy on trees does not seem to be as widespread across the water. And therein could lie part of our problem, because it is not a problem little research was or is needed there to get to the actuality of the situation, and so we couldn't piggy back on the results. We badly need a mature debate on the issue and then an Irish research programme to get definitive answers before a reasonable strategy that will gain support from all quarters can be put in place.

In the meantime, could I suggest that some advice be given to our farmers - most of whom proudly and competently manage their hedgerows - to help the struggling ash, encouraging them to cut the ivy on every second infested tree. I believe in a relatively short space of time the growth of the freed ash will be dramatic and greatly enhance our living landscape with benefits for all.

My title, 'Ivy: Friend or Foe' was taken from a very informative woodland path notice in Oakpark Forest Park, adjoining the Teagasc Research Centre in Carlow town.

Risteard Mulcahy, *For Love of Trees... Trees, hedgerows and the environment*. Environmental Publications, 8vo, cards, 80 pps. Dublin 1996.





James Nolan, Ballyknockan, Co. Wicklow digs in for National Tree Week as one of the youngest Easy Treesie volunteers.



# Saying THANK YOU with Flowers? We say it with TREES!

ORLA FARRELL brings us up-to-date with the wonderful ongoing work of Easy Treesie and their mission to plant one million trees

**B**EFORE regaling you with the latest escapades of the Easy Treesie planters it is incumbent upon me to acknowledge the contribution of Paddy Smith, our esteemed Crann editor and wonderful mentor. Paddy has done so well in capturing the scope of our project - (planting a million trees with Ireland's million school children and their communities) and telling our story starting with our first Plant-for-the-Planet Tree Academy back in 2017. That was the cold winter day when that first merry band of Climate Justice Ambassadors planted 300 saplings in North Dublin. We are very grateful to him for his journalistic excellence which put a shape to our snowballing story (now at over 330k trees planted!) and wish Paddy every happiness in his well-earned retirement. We are this summer in the safe hands of our new editor Gabriel Bruton and we wish him

continued success with his work on this much-loved publication.

It's Monday morning on National Tree Week, our busiest week of the year and I notice a slight, just a very slight, tickle in my throat. The launch the previous day on a sunny, breezy March Sunday had been my idea of peak fun! The opening event took place in the Botanic Gardens with a Tree Planting Masterclass by its director, Matthew Jebb and his godfather, Thomas Pakenham. On the way, Crann director Mark had made me coffee and toast with honey (from his own beehives) after we loaded up many boxes of the latest Crann magazines from his garage for distribution to the great and the good. Maybe I had picked up a chill? Or was I simply feeling the effects of the dust from deep-cleaning our electric tree-transporting workhorse, the Leaf? We'd had a particularly muddy planting party with Swords Tidy Towns. Well, best do another test all the same.

In dressing gown and slippers, I waited for a single red-line to show.

I'd been just about to suit-up in tree planting attire and wedge the remaining kit for Tree Week between our boxes of magazines into the car; 30 spades, 250 pairs of gloves and of course, for afters, chocolate. The great Pat Peters from the Coillte nurseries in Ballintemple (who also retires this year; a huge thank-you to him and the Coillte team for their tree-mendous support!) had delivered sealed forestry bags with seven different native tree species, to be delicately packed at the end.

My destination? West Cork, to a Junior Infant workshop in a small primary school as part of a wider "Tree of Life" art project sponsored by Biomarin based in Ringaskiddy. From there to Limerick to our great project collaboration at the newly-opened Coláiste Chiaráin with planting to be captured on video by drone. And after that to Connemara and the celebration of the GAA Green Clubs'

## EASY TREESIE

45,000 sapling-project at their Connacht Centre of Excellence in Ballyhaunis. Then back to do a webinar at the invitation of the Tree Council for "Film Friday". Finally, a chance to thank all these planters in person after two years of Covid restrictions. We'd already met many of the Dublin volunteers as these restrictions were lifted and had the pleasure of supporting many planting parties and team up with some new and existing collaborators such as Life Terra, One Tree Planted, Trees in the City and the Swords Woodland Association. Everything we do is in fact a collaboration and I was looking forward, with great excitement to meeting our friends across the country.

Oh I must sit down! After evading the dreaded Covid for two solid years of all the days to find myself looking at those two bold red lines! Now of course every week is Tree Week with us, every day is Tree Day for that matter. But what timing!

I register my test result on the App, my husband at least tests negative and I phone those I have met recently. Crann vice-chairman Mark had brewed me that coffee in his lovely conservatory; he reports feeling fine. I'd also enjoyed a hot chocolate with Crann director, Diarmuid, in the Botanic Gardens' Garden café; he too felt fine. Not so our children though and some of their friends we'd been on a trip with the week before. Oh dear. Well this is what we have all been living through so like everyone else there was nothing for it but to isolate myself and see how the show might go on.

First call is to our chairman, Peadar. He kindly agrees on the spot to head to Limerick to congratulate all the children and their school community there who will be finishing their 2,000-tree project. This works out very well because we are sending this school an Award of three seven-metre lime trees in recognition of their Trojan efforts and now Peadar can scope out the best spot for them in keeping with our right-tree-right-place mantra!

What of the Cork Infants? Well guess what, it turns out that we can all talk on Zoom! What of Connemara? Éanna Ni Lamhna, Tree Council President and Brendan Fitzsimons, CEO will be there to congratulate the GAA - so like magic all is sorted. The webinar? Let's postpone until Biodiversity Week and who knows, we might even get a sponsor for it then...(we did! Thank you, Irish Environmental Network! Watch our "Trees on the Farm" webinar with Dr. Rory Harrington of VESI on our YouTube channel). We have a superb team of Easy Treesie volunteer helpers and they worked so hard all week with the Coillte and other nurseries who were getting trees to all corners of Ireland. When life gives



Members of the Irish Refugee Council and the Scoil Mhuire School community, Tullamore join Brendan Fox, Curator, Museum of Everyone and Orla Farrell



us lemons in this project, we like to make lemonade and on that Monday morning, sipping a fragrant lemon and honey drink, I thanked my lucky stars for all who worked to vaccinate us which now allowed me to feel well enough to carry on with doing what could be done confined to base. What joy to now be able to join in the series of online events that were going on all week on all things trees!

And first among the virtual sessions was a broadcast of the second visit by RTE Nationwide to our project "birthplace" at

Seagrang Park, North Dublin. Many of the children who had planted our original 300-sapling woodland in the park had returned to admire them, to add to the planting and to talk on camera with their local Tidy Towns group about how this area of once-bare grass is now a haven for wildlife. "There used to be no trees here at all", says Hannah Kaye Ricablanca as they walk through the woodland they planted when still in primary school. Now they are in Transition Year they delight in coming out to enjoy





Pupils from Coláiste Chiaráin at Ward River Valley Park, arriving at a Planting Party in collaboration with Fingal County Council and the Swords Woodland Association



Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia i measc na gCrann



Willow and Charlie McCoy, Co. Wicklow. Go Greener with Grange Con in their community tree planting initiative

this local new amenity and keep it spruce! "I'd say it was about this big", says Hannah, holding her hand out at waist height beside a Hornbeam which towers over her now, "and now it's nearly triple the size!". Their enthusiasm is evidence enough and a clear endorsement that tree planting encourages stewardship of the local environment among youngsters.

"This isn't just the community coming out for the benefit of meeting others...well there is that, it's a really important aspect of course, but we are in a Climate and Biodiversity crisis Emergency", says Aoife Cannon of Baldoyle Tidy Towns. "So it's so much more now; people are doing it out of concern and also to feel like they're doing something really positive to help with these crises". RTÉ interviewed many of the tree lovers in this seaside Dublin Biosphere town which has planted a tree for every member of its 7,500 residents, and visited the Racecourse Community Garden, where the first of our Dublin nurseries was established. Journalist Valerie Waters took her crew to meet Una and Sam Wilson who showed us the trees they had fundraised for and planted with their neighbours on a bare green, back when they moved into their new house over fifty years ago. They spoke with pride as they stood under these stands of magnificent mature trees of how once their



children and now their grandchildren enjoy them for play. The green is a model for anyone looking for a template to move from a grass-only vista!

One popular discussion of relevance to our project is why not just fence areas off, walk away and leave nature to rewild and the trees to plant themselves? Surely this would save lots of work? There is a fashionable idea circulating that this is the fastest, best way to restore our environment and it certainly sounds easy. I asked many experts for their opinion about this idea, among them Crann board member Mark Wilkinson.

Mark has a lot of experience with areas set aside to rewild. His answer is that the usual result in Ireland is for invasive or dominant species to take over. Results depend on what species are immediately local to the rewilding area and, given the sterility of much of our landscape, one ends up as a rule with a general lack of variety. A related issue is how we are to provide timber, a renewable raw material in this era of a new respect for home-grown sustainability. I guess re-leafing Ireland will take more than one approach, a balance always sounds sensible to me. Given the urgency of bringing down global heating and supporting habitats for biodiversity, David Attenborough recommends having a blend of forests, woodlands AND well-managed tree farms so we won't argue

Mayor of Fingal Cllr Seána Ó Rodaigh presents Orla Farrell with a Certificate of Appreciation at the Fingal County Council Mayor's Awards 2022



with him! Our contribution to making Earth cooler relies on engaging with local experts as we employ tried and tested methods of re-establishing woodlands using a diversity of appropriate species, giving nature a helping hand.

As more tree planting communities join us - a list of over 315 at the last count, not including our essential supporters and sponsors - the list of thank-yous could easily fill the whole magazine! We are also adding to our list of new well-wishers and supporters apace and we continue to treasure our long-standing sponsors, among them; ReThink Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Crowne Plaza - Tifco, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Maxol, ServiceNow, HHGlobal and the IEN. We welcome new sponsors this year, among them, Nando's, Truform Laser Dies, Kelsius, Penneys and EY as well as many generous tree-lovers such as Edith Delaney, Gerard and Agata Byrne, and Leonard Daly. Our thanks to all for this invaluable support.

A special mention to Rachel Byrne who, under the direction of Prof. Yvonne Buckley of Trinity College, Dublin has carried out an impressive study of tree survival rates on three of our Dublin planting sites and our TU Dublin environmental intern, Virginia Njagi who has, with her engineering background from Cape Town University, been applying her project management skills to putting our expanding project into better order. We are proud to report that our former Masters in





Pioneering Tree Academy planters celebrate planting a tree for every resident of Baldoyle

Sustainability interns Asfand and Opeyemi are enjoying their new roles in An Taisce and StitcherAds and that Asfand has been accepted on a PhD. study programme.

Another volunteer who has logged truly outstanding results is our Community Liaison Facilitator, Steven Doody. Steven's Masters Degree in Fine Arts is such a great background for his public participatory art work. His current projects include leading his original "Orchard Project", new projects "Putting Down Roots" and "Hiding a Forest in Plain Sight" as well as a slew of other initiatives. His delight in establishing orchards and woodlands has inspired the planting of countless trees and he has held children as young as four utterly spellbound. At Steven's orchard planting at Bonnybrook Early Education Centre, our tiny tree planters had their own impressive garden tool collection but universally preferred digging in the mud with their bare little hands, calmly carrying over fat worms and other exciting minibests for us to admire.

We declare every day to be a Tree Day on the Easy Treesie project. But there is an actual National Tree Day, National Tree Week and many other highlights of our year. Here are the ones we always generally mark with an action, big or small. As we're a project of school children, their communities and supporters we use the Academic Year format.

## USEFUL CALENDAR OF TREE EVENTS

Month	Event	2022 - 2023 dates;	Notes
September	Culture Night (Dublin).	Friday 23rd In-person event	Patagonia Dublin
October	National Tree Day	Thursday 6th	A day marked by school educational initiatives
October	Climate Action Week	Mon 10th - Sunday 16th	An Taisce Green Schools' Climate Action Week
November	Science Week	Mon 7th - Mon 14th	SFI-lead Initiative.
November - late April	Bare Root planting season		Bare Root planting continues. This is the easiest and most cost-effective time for tree planting.
March	National Tree Week	March 19th - 26th TBC by Tree Council of Ireland	Traditionally this week incorporates International Day of Forests on March 21
March	Seachtain na Gaeilge	Wed 1st- Fri 17th	Bíonn plandáil trí mheán na Gaeilge le scoileanna
March	Earth Hour	Sat 25th 20:30 - 21:30	Turning off non-essential lights for one hour as a symbol of commitment to the planet, started in 2007
April	Earth Day	Saturday 22nd	Anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970
May	Potted / Root Ball Tree planting	Year round	
June	World Environment Day	Monday 5th	Also the birthday of our charity, Crann - Trees for Ireland in 1986.

If your community would like to participate, to join our waiting list, email [orla@easytreesie.com](mailto:orla@easytreesie.com) with "Trees" in the subject line and we'll help if we can. If you can't plant a tree yourself, Easy Treesie can plant one - or many - at €10 per tree at one of the new woodlands we are establishing! You'll be helping children & their communities improve our environment by sponsoring us on [www.easytreesie.com](http://www.easytreesie.com)

Colm in his workshop sanding down a hurl  
Right: the planks of ash as they come in before they are worked on  
Below: what the finished hurl looks like



# FROM ASHES





By GABRIEL BRUTON

**W**HEN Colm Foley got a Hurl repair kit for his 14th birthday it set him on a path that would lead him to setting up one of Dublin's few Hurl making businesses. Colm was just 22 when he set up 65 Hurls, with the support of his parents and friends and machinery that he had picked up along the way he decided to explore the massive untapped market of making and supplying hurls to hurlers in Dublin and beyond.

Having come from GAA background and being passionate about hurling having played it from an early age, and still playing, Colm knew what made a good hurl.

Through trial, error and time, skills were learned, 'my big thing was to always get to try and get the consistency' says Colm and being in the fortunate position of being young and willing to work to attain his dream he set about establishing himself in market that was populated with generational hurley-makers from outside Dublin.

All that was needed was a good supply of quality ash, since starting the business acquiring suitable ash has been a problem and with the impact of Covid and the ongoing situation in Ukraine the problem has been magnified.

65 Hurls gets its ash from wherever it can, the suppliers they deal with know the type of wood needed to make hurls and with 9,000 hurls being produced by them last year it is some amount of wood that is needed.

As Colm says 'It's always been hard to get Ash. Like it's an extremely particular type of

cut you need from the tree. You know, you don't just go to a sawmill and say, here cut me a thousand planks. You know, they need to be done the right way'.

Ash is used for Hurl making because of its natural strength, spring and also its weight. When a tree is about 25-30 years old it is mature enough to be used for making hurls. The ash butts needed will produce anything from 25 to 50 hurls so it is a long production cycle for the ash tree.

Not having a whole lot of space to store the cut planks means that 65 Hurls buy wood every month and are constantly making hurls, building up their stock for the busy times.

Having grown up in a time when there wasn't many, if any, hurl makers in Dublin the style of hurl used varied because players and clubs were getting hurls from all over the country so consistency was always an issue.

Colm has experimented with styles and shapes from various counties all over Ireland and now produces a range of seven different styles including the distinctive 65 Hurl style.

65 Hurls has grown up with its market as more and more underage players are using them and Colm knows that this is where the future lies - if underage players like his hurls, the feel, the weight and the shape they will keep coming back long into the future.

Having already added to his workforce with Barry, a graduate from DIT with a degree in Timber Product Technology, who grew up around timber and also has a feel for a hurl and for making them. Colm would like to think that the business is in a good place to grow more and next year he will have been in operation for 10 years and counting.

[www.65hurls.com](http://www.65hurls.com)

# TO CLASHES

# Why trees are essential **living architecture** in modern German and Dutch Towns

By PEADAR COLLINS

**I**t's quite amazing how diverse the landscapes we humans exist in. From the wilds of the beautiful and hauntingly barren Burren landscape of Co. Clare to the densely populated highly organised regions in Europe of the Benelux and north western Germany.

Trees exist in both places. Few trees or people survive the Burren but proportionally trees and people exist in the correct necessary order in these densely populated areas of northern Europe.

I say this because I feel here in Ireland, we are not planning our towns mindful of the tree to people density well enough. We are certainly making some in-roads but not enough. One particular town in Ireland, Shankill is very driven to plan a tree for each of its inhabitants. This project 'Trees of all project' has and is very well supported by Crann members. Starting off seven years



Peadar with Mayor  
Angela Stähler and Ulrich  
Mollenhoff



It is truly a credit to the Dutch with such a demand on space that they invest hugely in trees



The Dutch countryside exceeds european norms with tree and human coexistence and generous biodiversity planning.



Dutch motorways are lined with select trees each given its suitable space and suitable soil



ago with a target of 11,000 and I believe has exceeded the target.

Just as Dutch and German planners build schools, social facilities and shops first, and then build the house. They also plan ahead with tree planning. Trees are their priorities too.

Not only do they plan on a street-by street form but on a total city overall strategy. On a recent visit to city of Münster in Germany, I was given a city tour of its trees and parks by a local member of the city council Ulrich Mollenhoff and his colleague, who is the

Mayor of the city, Angela Stähler. Both Ulrich and Angela very kindly entertained me at the city hall which is one of Europe's most significant locations.

It was here that Westfalian Peace deal was finalized which brought to an end the infamous Thirty-years war. (1618-1648). It was this treaty that in many ways would lead to the stability that would go on to see

It was this Peace treaty that in many ways lead to the stability that would go on to see European countries develop in a sustainable way, knowing that the counties boundaries

were agreed and understood. This treaty is still in power and serves as the oldest international treaty still in use.

The city of Münster has a uniquely planned treescape. The linear waterway Aasee was used not only as a water feature but also for planting a liner park on both sides of the water. The construction of the green/treescape generates a flow of air. This in turn helps regulate the inner city air temperature, especially during the hot and still summers that this part of Germany regularly experiences.



*The construction of the green/treescape generates a flow of air. This in turn helps regulate the inner city air temperature, especially during the hot and still summers*

This design which is primarily tree-orientated further enhances the quality of life of the local Germans where the linear parks are a human highway for pedestrians and most importantly cyclists.

I'm a country boy but I would live at home in Münster and feel at one with nature as much as I do in the heart of the Irish countryside.

I can't be in Germany and not visit The Netherlands where I once lived and worked. I must say, I do owe a lot of gratitude to the Dutch who like the Germans also *get* the value and beauty of trees.

Where the Germans have bigger plans it also helps that they have bigger spaces. The Dutch too can think big but have refined and distilled their thinking so well to go with their precious space. It is truly a credit to the Dutch that with such a demand on space that they invest hugely in trees. Their country really does co-exist with trees. The Dutch countryside, which to be frank, is flat and uneventful, exceeds European norms with tree and human coexistence and generous biodiversity planning. The Netherlands is an old country with old traditions but it is very modern in appearance.

As part of my trip I drove from the Westland Veiling Poeldijk where I worked with the wonderful Herman Troost, 27 years ago, to visit him and his son in a suburb of Den Hague. This would be a journey of about 10 kilometres and all along the way we never left the shade of trees. Dutch motorways are not planted with hundreds of millions of trees. No, the roads are lined with select trees each given its suitable space and suitable soil. The result are trees as nature intended.

Big and handsome!

## GREEN DAY FASHION



January saw Colaiste Choilm/ GaelCholaiste Choilm run their 'Green Week'. A number of activities were scheduled including a recycling scavenger hunt for first years, a recycling fashion show for the second years while the third years participated in a table quiz during their CSPE or SPHE classes. Green Day took place on Friday, January 21. All students and staff were asked to wear an item of green clothing. The money collected was donated to three selected charities including Crann- Trees for Ireland



## CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY FOR CRANN



Crann would like to thank transition year students, Aaron Lally, Patrick Conroy, Mark Balaz, Patrick Ruane, James McGuire, at St. Brendan's College, Belmullet, Co. Mayo who made sustainable Christmas decorations through their TY project in order to raise funds for Crann.

## OUR ANNUAL DRAW

Please note that due to Covid and operational issues, it has been decided to hold over our Draw until the usual year end slot. Therefore, you may expect a draw card in the Autumn/ Winter issue of Crann Magazine.

We wish to thank you all for your continued support of our work, with special thanks to the sponsors of our Draw Prizes.

## RAYMOND COYLE

The Board of Crann was saddened to hear of the death of Raymond Coyle of Tayto Park, he was a loyal friend and supporter of Crann - Trees for Ireland for many years. May he Rest in Peace

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

**O**VER 95pc of all pupils will leave primary school with a woeful lack of knowledge of the natural world that surrounds them. Most are unable to name the common trees, not to mention the birds of the air, the stone on which their landscape sits or the diverse flora and fauna; the same unfortunately holds true for a sense of the place to which they belong. We have a truly dedicated cohort of teachers: professional and caring and it is not their fault that this dreadful situation is so prevalent.

Up to the late 1960s there was no attempt at any environmental education in Ireland. The 'new' curriculum of the early 1970s heralded a new approach backed up with dedicated service from the Department of Education: a special unit headed by an enlightened inspector Seán de Búrca organised detailed filmstrips on local studies and nature with notes and in-service training. Sadly these initiatives all fell away as the universities took an academic grip on teacher-training and the Department of Education become obsessed with governance and policy issues, allowing the universities to control fully the content of teacher-training curricula. Young teacher trainees had to take liberal arts subjects which suited the universities but had little relevance to the task of broadening the minds of their future young charges, or of imparting basic facts about their immediate world. And so pupils remained and remain ignorant of the natural world around them; and this became the accepted norm.

As I said not the fault of the teachers (I am full of admiration for them; primary schools are happy places with happy pupils). But is this what we want of our schools? Do we want our children to grow up ignorant of the world around them? Granted there are individual teachers who are able to equip their pupils with basic knowledge of their local living world. But this is the exception when it should be the norm.

What can change it? A widespread concerned public reaction to the present



**It's important that future generations are informed of the world they inhabit**

plight would certainly help, but unfortunately recent generations are also, in the main, too divorced from the natural world to realise how dire the situation is. We need a champion at government level to say: this is not right; our children and our future generations should have this basic knowledge. A caring Taoiseach could quickly alter present policies; look at what Taoiseach Charles Haughey achieved in areas in which he was passionate about. I am encouraged by the words Taoiseach Micheál Martin spoke at a recent biodiversity conference in Dublin Castle: 'communities need to be at the heart of biodiversity action... our fortunes as a species and a society are

inseparable from the fortunes of the natural world of which we are a part...what is good for nature is ultimately good for society and the economy.' He went on to say how a walk in the woods resonated deeply with him and gave him a feeling of well being that cannot be replicated in other settings. Words of a caring, thoughtful man. Continue to speak out Taoiseach, and give future generations a chance to not only smell the roses but to get to know them too.

**GEORGE CUNNINGHAM**

## THE SPEAKING TREE

The concept of The Speaking Tree dates back to the 5th century BC in India when the founder of Buddhism meditated for 49 days under a Pipal tree, or *Ficus religiosa*, and became enlightened. This column in Crann is a platform for thoughtful comment that may stimulate debate or just reflect on the way of the world.

*George Cunningham's main passion in life has been in education at all levels: from primary school principal to adjunct senior lecturer in history; from adult conferences and summer schools to school libraries, heritage and environmental issues. At present he is organising a boutique bookshop in Vincents, Roscrea and has just delivered over 250 new books to a school library in the town. His Roscrea People Book Project is reaching the figure of 75,000 vols resourced and donated to schools and institutions, locally, regionally and nationally, since 1987.*



# Biomass Required

**Sawdust | Woodchip | Pulp wood | Forestry thinnings & residues**

Bord na Móna has a substantial annual biomass requirement to fuel its power plant at Edenderry Co. Offaly. The company is offering suppliers a continuous year round offtake with sustainable contracts.

**For further details  
please contact:**

**Kevin Whelehan**  
087 1732448  
kevin.whelehan@bnm.ie

**Joseph Spollen**  
087 965 4645  
joseph.spollen@bnm.ie

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087 185 3647  
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**2023 RDS  
Irish Forest and  
Woodlands Awards**  
Climate-Smart Agriculture

# Call for Entries

## €9,000 Prize Fund

Whether your woodland is for commercial, recreational or a number of different purposes, there is an award category for you. Everyone is encouraged to enter with prizes for winners and runners-up in every category.

**For more information on the 2022/23 Awards, contact:**

RDS Forestry  
e: forestry@rds.ie  
www.rds.ie/agriculture  
t: 01 240 7215  
@theRDS

**Closing Date for Entries – July 31, 2022**



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Ailín agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



## Thin your forest now!

Consider the **Woodland Improvement Scheme**  
for Broadleaf and Broadleaf Mixed Forests

1st thinning grant of **€750** per ha  
2nd thinning grant of **€500** per ha

### The scheme is aimed at:

- Nurse tree removal
- Bio-Diversity enhancement
- Timber quality
- Landscape improvement

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/642e6-forestry/>



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