



# CRANN

AUTUMN/WINTER  
ISSUE 2020 | NO:112

€4 (STG £3)

Ireland's tree magazine





**NEED A GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THE GARDENERS IN YOUR LIFE?**

**Gerry Daly, Editor**

**A subscription to The Irish Garden magazine is the gift they will remember you for all year long. Order your gift subscription now!**

**(01) 2947712**  
**www.irishgardensubs.com**

**Belvedere**  
House, Gardens & Park

**A FASCINATING ESTATE TO VISIT**

This magnificent 160 acre lakeside estate boasts a fully restored Georgian Villa built in 1740 by the famous architect Richard Castle for Robert Rochfort — later Lord Belvedere. The estate has a fascinating Victorian Walled Garden, with one of Ireland's finest collections of rare and special plants. The naturalistic designed 18th century parkland, punctuated with Romantic Follies includes the largest in Ireland: 'The Jealous Wall'. Within the welcoming Visitor Services Centre is a Licensed Restaurant and Gift Shop, there are also four outdoor children's play areas and many picnic areas on the estate/ Whether you are part of a gardening group, historical society, school tour, active retirement association, family gathering or group of friends a visit to **Belvedere is a superb day out with a difference**

**Location:** 5km south of Mullingar on N52 • 1 hour from Dublin, M4/N4 Exit 15  
**Sat Nav:** Latitude Longitude 53.4756-7.36733 • **Opening Times:** 7 days a week all year round from 9.30am. Seasonal closing times apply • **Admission Rates:** Adult €8. Student/Senior €6. Child €4. Family Ticket (2A + 2C) €23. Each additional child €3. Season Tickets and Gift Vouchers available • **Online Booking** see [www.belvedere-house.ie](http://www.belvedere-house.ie) • **Catoca Fine Food and Giftware:** Great food, great service, great location. Catering for all your special occasions and corporate events. [www.catocafinefood.com](http://www.catocafinefood.com) • **Parking:** Free car parking available on site

**Address:** Belvedere House Gardens & Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. **Tel:** 044 9338960  
**Email:** [info@belvedere-house.ie](mailto:info@belvedere-house.ie) **Web:** [www.belvedere-house.ie](http://www.belvedere-house.ie)  
[www.facebook.com/Belvedere-House-Gardens-Park](https://www.facebook.com/Belvedere-House-Gardens-Park)

**PATRON**  
Michael D Higgins  
President of Ireland

**EDITOR**  
Paddy Smith

**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**  
Crann Directors

**PRINTING**  
GPS Colour Graphics Ltd, Belfast

**CRANN BOARD CHAIRMAN**  
Mark Wilkinson

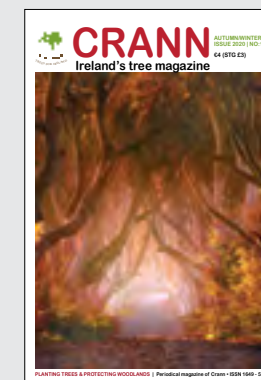
**SECRETARY**  
Diarmuid McAree

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
Mark Wilkinson, Peadar Collins,  
George Cunningham, Gerard Deegan,  
Orla Farrell, PJ Fitzpatrick,  
Diarmuid McAree, Marie Louise  
O'Donnell, Ercus Stewart, Joan Whelan

**NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**  
John Feehan, William Merivale.

**ADMINISTRATOR**  
Marguerite Arbuthnot-O'Brien

**CRANN HEAD OFFICE:**  
People for Trees (Ireland) Ltd.  
trading as Crann,  
P.O. Box 860, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.  
Tel/Fax: (01) 627 5075  
Email: [info@crann.ie](mailto:info@crann.ie)  
Website: [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie)



#### COVER

The iconic King's Road in the Dark Hedges, Co Antrim, was one of the pictures entered in this year's Crann/Coillte Photographic Competition (results Pgs 8-13). The image, taken two years ago, was submitted by Pawel Zygmunt of Oldtown, Co Dublin. The judge, Mark Wilkinson, remarked on the photographer's excellent use of light..

#### PICTURE CREDITS

Pawel Zygmunt; Maxwell Photography; Orla Farrell; Clara Clark; Giants Grove Project Management Group; Marie Louise O'Donnell; Dale Treadwell; Patrick Moran; George Cunningham; Ger Clarke; Eamonn O'Dea; Ellenor McDonnell; Michael Yallop; Des Glynn; Joe Barry.

# I don't usually do regrets but one has been niggling at me lately



**A**ND it's an awfully silly one, and one that I wouldn't normally admit to anyone. But what the heck! I'm in my 'I don't care' mood.' Years and years and years ago, I was at a function in our local library where the guest speaker was Joe Duffy. He was great, and majored on the fact that he was a Dub coming all the way down to enemy territory in County Meath. But before the proceedings started he was standing to one side, all alone and maybe even looking a bit lost for a few moments. And to my regret, I didn't walk over and talk to him. I was simply too shy, too odd.

I like Joe Duffy. There, I've said it. I enjoy his *Liveline* programme immensely and, now that I'm retired, I wouldn't miss it if I could help it at all. It is most un-cool to like Joe Duffy, but I just don't care. I take some solace from the fact that my brother-in-law Brendan regularly listens to a podcast of Joe on his car radio when he is driving anywhere.

I know, I know. As I said at the start, this is silly and, in the grand scheme of things, it is nothing to be concerned about. But during these strange Covid-19 days the oddest of things come into our minds, and I think we should savour them.

I do have more substantial regrets. One is that I never went to university. In the 1950s it wasn't the done thing that it has become these days. For that reason, I did get immense satisfaction from being invited, twice, to give talks in university: once to students as part of their course, and secondly to university staff, including three professors. So there!

Another regret is I haven't kept a diary throughout my life. Only twice have I done so. Once when I spent a week working in Copenhagen and I wrote a diary every evening out of sheer boredom. The second time was this year. I have been keeping a diary every day since early March, as a record of my life during the Covid and I am already knocking great entertainment and fun out of it. Others are too, because it has been published as a book (*Cocooner, A Lockdown Diary*).

I also regret that we didn't plant a tree for each of our three children when they were born. We have three mature trees in our front garden but the point is, none of them were planted to mark the occasion of their births. If they were born these days, we would have considered a Giant (see Pg 6).

*Paddy Smith*



@TreesForIreland



Crann – Trees for Ireland



cranntrees

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

PEFC  
www.pefc.ie

**Letters & Articles to Editor:** To Crann Office as above. Crann Membership Unwaged/DAP €25, individual €35, Family €45, Life €700, Corporate €100

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 ISSN 1649-5217  
Registered Charity No: CHY13698  
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.

RDS-Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

## 2021 Irish Forestry and Woodland Awards

Celebrating and rewarding excellence in Irish Forestry since 1988

# €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 2021 Awards, contact:

**RDS Forestry**  
e: [forestry@rds.ie](mailto:forestry@rds.ie)  
t: 01 240 7215

[www.rds.ie/springawards](http://www.rds.ie/springawards)  
@theRDS



Steven Meyen, Teagasc Forestry Advisor, presents Ross Buchanan, Co. Donegal, with the 2020 RDS-Teagasc Farm Forestry Award

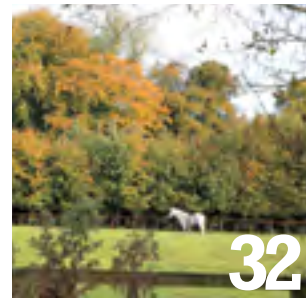




# CRANN CONTENTS

Autumn/Winter | 2020

- 4 AGM**  
A report from the Crann – Trees for Ireland AGM, held on 30 October by Zoom
- 6 NEWS**  
An update on Giants Grove.  
Marie Louise O'Donnell joins the Board of Crann
- 7 Keeping busy**  
During the Covid lockdown, **Dale Treadwell** pottered till he could potter no more and then...
- 8 Photographs**  
The 2020 Crann/Coilte Photographic Competition winner is a Fermoy woman
- 14 Hidden Gems**  
**Emma Reeves** on the near-perfect beauty of a plantation at Tara Mines, Navan
- 17 Bark**  
**George Cunningham** reveals fascinating stories about the forgotten 'skin' of trees
- 20 A New Look**  
**Ger Clarke** opens our minds to different ways to see the trees and things all around us
- 22 The Year**  
**Orla Farrell** of Easy Treesie found interesting ways to celebrate trees during the limitations of Covid
- 26 Peadar Collins**  
Discovers that 'Joy and Significance' say one thing to him: Doneraile Park, Co Cork
- 30 Urban Trees**  
**Michael Yallop** ponders on the extraordinary attitude of some people to street trees
- 31 Tidy Towns**  
Not much happening this year, but Minister Humphreys commits to a better 2021



- 32 Forestry**  
**Joe Barry** says it's time to counteract the concerted moves that are demonising forestry
- 34 Matt Fogarty RIP**  
**Mark Wilkinson** recalls the Tipperary man's determination to grow trees no matter what
- 35 Letters**  
A Crann member takes Mark Wilkinson to task about his column in our summer issue
- 36 The Speaking Tree**  
**George Cunningham** was really shocked to read Michael Harding's opinions on trees

## The 100,000th tree is presented to President Michael D Higgins

**T**HE 100,000th tree to be planted by the Crann / Easy Treesie project was presented to the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, by "veteran" tree-planters Sam Harrison (10) and his younger sister Maeve (8), celebrating National Tetra Pak Tree Day on 1 October.

The two Plant-for-the-Planet Climate Justice Ambassadors met with the President at Áras an Uachtaráin as he recognised the Irish schoolchildren's initiative which is being carried out in collaboration with the Tree Council of Ireland and with the support of Crann – Trees for Ireland, of which the President is Patron.

The project was conceived in 2007 by a 9-year old boy in Germany who, inspired by Nobel Laureate Dr Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt movement, challenged the children of every country in the world to plant one million trees as a climate action.

"When we discovered that Ireland had 1 million schoolchildren, we said to ourselves in our national school in Baldoyle, Dublin: well how easy could that be!" says Crann board member and founder of the Irish project, teacher Orla Farrell. With support from local authority Fingal County Council, the schoolchildren had soon planted 3,305 trees in their nearby park, one for every primary school in Ireland.

Following that success, children from every school in the neighbouring Malahide area came out in 2018 to plant in their local parks and the project was soon copied all over the country with help from local authorities, Scouting Ireland, Tidy Towns, sporting and other community groups. 30,000 Coillte trees were planted in one week alone during National Science Week, spearheaded by this initiative. Trees on the Land donated a further 30,000 trees and Coillte doubled its usual allocation for National Tree Week to advance community participation in native tree planting in support of the children's project.

Covid-19 has created a major challenge. Undeterred, the project has continued online with children from Dublin City and counties Fingal, Meath and Donegal planting oak, birch and hazel trees in pots at their own



President Higgins with his dog, Bród; Crann – Trees for Ireland Director Diarmuid McAree; Maeve and Sam Harrison; and Matt Harrison, a volunteer with Easy Treesie; at the presentation of the landmark tree in the grounds of Áras an Uachtaráin

homes or in their gardens and on farms.

The tree-themed event in Áras an Uachtaráin was replicated with 1,500 Scots pine saplings, grown at the Coillte state nursery, being planted in schools all over the country in association with the Tree Council of Ireland. Incoming Tree Council president Éanna Ní Lamhna also planted a tree with Minister Pippa Hackett at the adjacent Castleknock National school.

The team was then charmed to be treated to a guided tour of the gardens of Áras an Uachtaráin delivered by an expert in the glorious autumn sunshine. The children arrived to the Park by electric vehicle, smartly decked out for the event in Easy Treesie masks and matching t-shirts made by Irish firm Reid's of Nassau Street. Both children, who are keen animal lovers, were delighted to meet the President's world-famous dog, Bród, who was equally delighted with the children's company having recently lost its playmate, Síoda. The resident cat also joined in the ceremony with enthusiasm.

The delegation brought along a basket of the Coillte Scots pine saplings which are being planted this season at project planting sites around the country, including the landmark Tree Champion 'Easy Treesie/Crann *Crown* communities of Shankill, Baldoyle, Swords and Malahide, Co Dublin; Fermoy, Co Cork, and Athenry, Co Galway, where the sapling will mark the 2,020th sapling planted by the children to mark the Galway 2020 City of

Culture. Hand-turned wooden bowls from Blackwater Makers, Cork, Everlasting Fruit Bowls as symbols of health are being awarded to tree champion schools and organisations in each of these communities.

Diarmuid McAree, Director of Crann – Trees for Ireland, said: "We are delighted to be here with our Patron, President Higgins, on National Tree Day as he accepts this gift of native Scots pine trees. We welcome the success to date of the Crann/Easy Treesie project to plant one million trees with Ireland's schoolchildren by 2023. Even with the constraints imposed by Covid-19, I look forward to the completion of this project and to the educational, environmental, cultural and well-being benefits that it will bring."

At the Áras event, Sam Harrison said: "A Uachtaráin, is mise Sam Harrison agus tá mé deich mbliana d'aois. Is Ambasadóir Ceartas Aeráide mé ar son Acadamh na gCrann. Is mór an onóir dom an crann seo a bhronnadh ort ar son an Acadaimh."

Afterwards, Orla Farrell expressed her heartfelt thanks to the President for the extraordinary honour of this invitation recognising the UNESCO-backed global trillion tree project. "We'd also like to thank our most generous supporters from every sector of Irish society as we redouble our efforts to Plant-for-the-Planet."

The President has had this short film of the occasion posted on the official Áras website: [https://youtu.be/VmfXGeqUh\\_U](https://youtu.be/VmfXGeqUh_U).

### 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	
Lib	€700	
Corporate	€100	

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

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.



# OUR ANNUAL MEETING TAKES PLACE ONLINE

**C**rann – Trees for Ireland held its annual general meeting via Zoom on Friday 30 October.

Opening the meeting, the Chairman, Mark Wilkinson, said we had sadly lost two people this year – our esteemed Director Bill Connell in February last and, quite recently, a former vice-president of Crann, Matt Fogarty (see obituary Pg 35). Both would be sorely missed and, on behalf of Crann, he expressed sympathy to their families and nearest and dearest.

The Chairman gave a brief report to the meeting, thanking Crann Administrator Marguerite Arbuthnot-O'Brien for her hard work and diligence. He also thanked Paddy Smith, Editor of Crann magazine, describing it as "a huge part of what we are and which shows us off in a very fine light." He acknowledged the great work of Dale Treadwell in bringing the message of trees to young people throughout the country.

He said that, unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the schools, Easy Treesie and Tidy Towns programmes had been curtailed but, thankfully, virtual events kept the show on the road.

Referring to our 2019 calendar which was produced with support

from the Forest Service, he said it was a surprisingly good success. We had planned to sell the calendars but we ended up giving them away by way of promotion.

He reported that we have had success with corporate organisations off-setting their carbon 'sins' by helping Crann, and this trend has been growing along nicely. "We would love to be in a position to pick and choose rather than be dealing with some of the organisations that have approached us so far," he said, "but maybe they are the ones with the greatest sins that need to be offset!"

## Treasurer's Report

The year-end accounts were prepared by Duffy, Burke & Co, Galway, for approval at the AGM. Gavan Duffy attended the meeting online to present the accounts and answer any questions raised. He stated that traditionally our returns filing date would be 30 September

but it had been extended until February 2021.

Crann member John Brownlee enquired if, due to our financial position being quite healthy, we could revert to having more issues of Crann magazine during the year as it was a great advertisement for the organisation. Marguerite offered to send a copy of the accounts and notes to anyone interested; just email a request to [info@crann.ie](mailto:info@crann.ie)

## Resolution

A resolution was presented and adopted to increase the number of Directors from nine to no more than 12.

## Excerpts from Secretary's report

Crann Administrator Marguerite Arbuthnot-O'Brien read the Secretary's report: an overview of Crann activities which had taken place in the year since the 2019 AGM. This report outlined

the work of all the programmes and projects that Crann has been involved in since the 2019 AGM.

As a result of the annual Crann Open Photographic Competition, sponsored by Coillte, we created a calendar for 2020, co-sponsored by the Forest Service, highlighting some of the photographic entries. The feedback was wonderful and we intend to repeat the process for a 2021 calendar, which will also feature poetry.

Sept 2019-Mar 2020.

School Project visits continued nationwide as Dale Treadwell travelled with his workshops and organised tree planting with pupils in various counties.

Oct-Nov '19. With the support of the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte, October started off with National Tree Week. There were mega tree planting events arranged with school children from far and wide.

November saw an extremely busy Science Week, which focused on climate action. It commenced with Crann board member Orla Farrell of Easy Treesie planting trees on the RTÉ news bulletin and ended with a broadcast on TV3 with the Lord Mayor of Dublin and his City Council team with hectic tree-planting in between. Closing the week, which recorded 30,000 trees being planted, the Minister for Climate Action, Richard



Bruton, attended Baldoyle Racecourse Community Gardens with local schoolchildren, under our mantra 'the right tree, in the right place'.

Orla, in arranging the 2019 Tree Academy, sponsored by the EPA, managed to organise it as the first children's event to be held at the Royal Irish Academy (RIA).

December 2019. The Bar Council of Ireland hosted a charity art exhibition and sale in the Distillery Building, Dublin, in aid of Crann – Trees for Ireland. It was a great success and a wonderful platform on which to raise public awareness. We thank the Bar Council for organising this event and look forward to repeating it.

January 2020. The year got off to a great start. Following a meeting with Coillte, the Crann/Easy Treesie project received a commitment to double the usual 15,000 saplings in advance of National Tree Week. This figure was then matched by the Trees On The Land charity, bringing a record 60,000 trees to be distributed to communities from Dingle to Donegal. Schools, colleges and Tidy Towns groups benefit from this initiative. Thankfully, all of the trees were distributed before the Covid-19 restrictions were initiated,

therefore the trees were either planted as planned or heeled-in for the next season.

We wish to acknowledge a very important addition to Orla's Team – an intern, Mr Asfand Bakht Yar, known as AB, who brought his wonderful expertise to the tree-planting events.

February. A group of TY students in St Angela's Ursuline Convent, Waterford, contacted us to say that they had chosen Crann – Trees for Ireland as their charity. They held a 'colour run' in February, attended by 300 people, and they engaged with the forestry department of WIT to get involved with tree planting. Following their various events, they donated €3,000 to Crann.

March-October. Zooming had become a daily task now and it was a wonderful asset which enabled work to continue on a virtual stage. Children engaged with nature and proudly displayed their actions of tree planting in their own gardens and communities. Home schooling opened new opportunities to carry out environmental education. RTÉ requested permission to post the film series 'The Irish Tree Trail' on their Home School Hub, as well as podcasts with Dale Treadwell and Matthew Jebb (National Botanic Gardens).

We had planned to host an

international conference in 2020 on the theme "Forests for Health and Green Jobs" but due to Covid-19 that may now have to take place in virtual format in 2021.

Our Giants Grove project is progressing favourably and the trees are growing well in the magnificent environs of Birr Castle. The project received a most welcome donation for the preparation of the ground for Phase II. More news about this project is on Pg 6.

We welcome that the Irish Environmental Network (IEN) have been proactive with our membership, offering to share surplus funding to groups who are trying to cope with adapting to Covid-19 restrictions.

Our Board continued to be involved in local events nationwide throughout the year, while abiding by Covid-19 guidelines.

Crann continues to promote the nationwide campaign, Public Participation Networks, via our membership and Crann magazine. The PPN initiative enhances the Tidy Towns work which is the backbone of local community participation.

Our engagement with councils on local submissions/issues feeds into national level when making submissions about our national

landscape and climate change issues.

Like most non-profit organisations we are not guaranteed funding, everything is project-oriented and has to be applied for by way of applications/submissions, with no guarantees. This means that donations and volunteers assist us greatly in achieving our project targets.

We welcome suggestions, input and co-operation from our members. We always ensure that the organisation gives value for money, even though our funding has reduced in certain areas.

Now more than ever, we are continually exploring ways of increasing our resources and looking for innovative projects to achieve our objectives – by making a difference with the planting of trees, raising awareness and educating our young adults of the future in a fun way.

Always mindful of 'what a difference a tree makes!'

## Any Other Business

Marie Louise O'Donnell asked if we had responded to recent negative articles in the media about conifers and greenhouse gas emissions. Board members Diarmuid McAree and Orla Farrell said they had just earlier attended a Tree Council of Ireland meeting and that very item was on the agenda. The CEO of the TCI was currently collating a response from members based on facts rather than opinions. This was welcomed by the Board.

Diarmuid McAree emphasised that in responding to any criticism about trees and tree planting "we have to deal with scientific facts, evidence-based research and not hypothetical unsubstantiated conjecture. We need to promote clear-cut, unambiguous and positive messages about the benefits of trees, forestry and woodlands but we should also fully accept and acknowledge that there are problems with planting the wrong trees in the wrong places." Welcoming this discussion, the Chairman said it was a topic we would follow closely.





# Balloons signal continued high interest in Giants Grove

By PADDY SMITH

**I**N SPITE of the Covid-19 restrictions during which visitors cannot have access to the Giants Grove site at Birr Castle, Co Offaly, the enthusiasm for the project remains high.

"That's because it's such an imaginative project," says Clara Clark, Chairperson, Giants Grove Project Management Group. "It has the knack of capturing people's minds and hearts through its vision into the centuries ahead."

"In these difficult times, we have all become more aware of everything around us and something like the Giants Grove reminds us of our mortality. When I look up to the night sky I know I'm looking into the distant past. When I

think of Giants Grove I know I am looking into the distant future when these giants will reach maturity. Goodness knows what society will be like when this comes to pass."

Clara sent us two samples of feedback from sponsors of trees in the grove:

*To everyone who makes Giants Grove possible, I want to applaud your project with bringing the redwoods back to Ireland. When I found out about your project I was in tears. You're saving Giants. Bless you.*

*My father immigrated from Ireland to USA when he was a child and my mother is second generation Irish American. So our family has a strong Irish history which we are quite proud of.*

*It touched my heart when I learned that you're working so hard to protect the redwoods. Right now it is needed as California is in dire straits*



The balloons from Portland, Maine (but not this year)  
Below: Lord Rosse with the Mollan family (Clara Clark's family) redwood this autumn



## New Crann director: Marie Louise O'Donnell

**C**RANN – Trees for Ireland is pleased to announce the secondment of the Co Mayo-born academic, broadcaster and politician, Marie Louise O'Donnell, to the board of our organisation. She is a former Senator (2011 to March 2020), having been nominated to Seanad Éireann by the then Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

Marie Louise, who was born in Foxford and now lives in Dublin, played a key role in the arts at Dublin City University over a



23-year period, including in the launch of the Helix cultural centre. She became widely-known as a broadcaster through her vivid and distinctive contributions to the Today programme with Pat Kenny and Sean O'Rourke from 2010 on RTE Radio 1. Earlier in

her career, she worked with the BBC and presented programmes for Radio 4.

We asked Marie Louise to write something about herself, now that she is a Director of Crann – Trees for Ireland. Here's what she gave us:

When I was young my mother recited poems to me about trees.

I listened to the language the poets used, the whisper of the Aspen, the gnarled branches of the old Oak and the humble bend of the weeping Willow.

As a child I watched their green leafed skirts spread out in

the middle of summer. I listened to their branches echoing in the wind at night and I waited for their buds, blossoms and berries to come to life in spring.

These child-like feelings about trees never left me. I read and understood trees as the vast breathers of the earth. They must be planted and preserved.

I have a weeping willow in my front garden. It is bigger than my house. It minds my heart and cools my mood.

It is a privilege to be on the Board of Crann.

*Marie Louise O'Donnell*

*with drought and wildfires.*

*Again, thank you so much for taking care of the trees.*

*"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."*

Rhoda.

And, from an American ballooning club who come annually to Birr and who have sponsored 12 trees:

*Send no certificates. Use the funds for the trees, Sequoiadendron giganteum and sequoia sempervirens. Let Lord Rosse decide. It is his vision of the Giants Grove. We are very grateful for over 20 years of flying [our balloons] out of the arboretum, and hopefully we will be back next Fall. We can talk and view then. Have fun with plantings. Hope the deer are not nibbling the sempervirens.*

*To a long lasting future.*

George York, Portland, Maine, USA

# Life in Lockdown can be good

DALE TREADWELL pottered till he could potter no more and then. . .

**W**ELL, what a year it's been. I was up in Carndonagh, Co Donegal, doing my thing at the library with school groups from all over the Inishowen Peninsula the Thursday morning that the message came through that all schools were to close that day. The day prior, I had been tree-planting in the community college in Corofin, Co Clare.

Then, just like that, bang, my booked-out spring of schools projects came to an abrupt halt; there were to be no more trees planted, no more pollinator gardens set up, no more stories read. As spring turned to summer and now summer to autumn, my dinosaurs have remained in hibernation.

Like many, I have learnt to Zoom, although my versions of Zoom are working out more elaborate than most. It all started with my wife's 50th party on Zoom, involving an elaborate projection of a cruise scene on the wall behind her. (Not quite the real thing but more real than the return of the cost of her and her friends' funds for the voyage she was meant to be on.) The next version of Zoom involved attempting to go online to school groups through a mix of shared screen experiences of pre-recorded videos and live interaction with bug viewers, flipbook versions of my children's books, etc.

I have spent most of my time pottering in the garden until I could potter no more, and walking the legs off the dog. Spent quality time with my own immediate family, sometimes in

the inevitable arguments that come from being in close proximity 24/7. Some quality time with various craft beers and not so quality time paying for it next day! Most of the time I spent outside in the sanctuary of my trees. And also online to participate in the strange world of online funerals for loved ones.

Lockdown projects have included tree houses and solitary bee hotels. Not forgetting Geodesic domes that began as small constructions my son, Nathan, and I put together with sticks we cut in the garden, to a 4-metre-diameter version that we have moved to his primary school garden to act as an outdoor classroom.

Other projects have included a series of videos. You can watch them on the links below. They include Making Solitary Bee Hotels (for the Heritage in Schools Scheme), and National Play Day activities, from Action Man Science, Bug Hunts, Dinosaur Shows. Also, videos of my eldest daughter, Leah, reading my books: Harry the Hedgehog, Patricia the Painted Lady Butterfly and Robby the Robin. 18-23 on the DCC playlist.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCnZ3fV3j08>

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPcmdTaOXhm8S\\_muginX7n653w2fH6VBv](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPcmdTaOXhm8S_muginX7n653w2fH6VBv)

I was the 2nd most popular vid for Science Week, the most popular being the presenter zapped by a million volts of electricity.

Mine is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQjBU81rTU>



A Geodesic dome built by Dale in idle lockdown moments





# Fermoy woman got lost to win our top prize

By PADDY SMITH

**S**TRAYING off the beaten path accidentally can often pay dividends, according to Deirdre Casolani, the winner of the 2020 Crann/Coillte Photographic Competition.

It happened to her when she set out to go to one place near Fermoy, Co Cork, where she lives, and ended up at another location. And it was here that she spotted the setting for her first-prize winning photograph.

“We were heading for the reservoir in Fermoy and we got lost,” she remembers, “but we found ourselves in this wood, Upper Glenabo Woods, and there were beams of light coming down on the bluebells. It was just perfect for a photograph.”

Then she said to herself that she would love to have some young kids in the picture. “So I came back the following week with a friend and her children. I was beginning to get worried that the bluebells would be flattened by some very heavy rain we’d been having, but we found a spot where they were just perfect, and there was even a huge log that we could all sit on.”

They spent three-and-a-half hours there, having fun – including a picnic – and taking some striking photographs. One of them won our competition.

“Days like this, and places like this, put you in good humour,” she said. “They lift my spirits and I get lost in the moment.”

She is grateful to the children for their patience: Eli, aged 8, and Hanna, aged 5. And to their



parents, Padraig and Juelie Conway, for their co-operation.

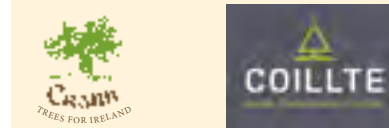
Originally from Kildare town, Deirdre has lived a colourful life. Still is, judging by her photographs. She and her husband, Tony (who is from Castletyons, Co Cork), and their two sons, Cillian and Conor, lived in Spain for a number of years, then moved to Malta for another spell before returning to Ireland. They bought a period house in Fermoy and have spent time refurbishing it.

Her foray into photography began seriously when she joined Fermoy Camera

Club (which, incidentally, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year). She took the winning picture on her Nikon D750, a full-frame DSLR camera she bought on a visit to the US. Her very first camera was a 35mm Minolta, followed by a Canon DSLR and then, when she joined the club, a Nikon D3100 (“a dotey little small one”).

She has done well in camera club competitions. “I have an eye for things,” she said. “My background is in design, and this has helped in my photography. I was originally in the fashion industry,

The 2020 Crann/Coillte Photographic Competition is sponsored by Coillte, Ireland’s largest commercial forestry and land solutions company.



then moved into interiors, then into property management (in Spain). In recent years I have worked on window design and visual displays. But this area has really slowed down since Covid and I may have to re-invent myself

again,” she laughs.

To say that Deirdre is enthusiastic about photography is an understatement. She fervently describes locations and pictures, taking the listener into the moment where she clicked the shutter and took yet another striking picture. She loves action photography and waxes lyrical about a great picture she once got of a cyclist in an ironman competition, all in the lashing rain with the competitor and a spectator (and the photographer) literally dripping with water.

One of her proudest moments was in her

## JUDGE’S COMMENTS

We are very impressed with the high quality of this year’s entries. So many of your photographs were of such high merit that it made the judging rather difficult.

All the entries stuck to the brief very well and the file sizes were large, giving Crann plenty of options for reproducing the images.

The Crann – Trees for Ireland calendar was a great success this year, and with plenty of lovely tree and woodland scenes to choose from, should be even better next year. Those of you who are disappointed not to be in the prizes could be happy to see your image in the calendar.

A big thank you to everyone who entered a photograph; they were all excellent. I do hope you enter again next year and get your friends do the same.

*Mark Wilkinson, LIPF*

1st PRIZE €250

**LOVE IS SHARING A BLUEBELL**

Location:

Upper Glenabo Woods, Fermoy, Co Cork

Photographer:

**Deirdre Casolani**

O’Connell Place, McCurtain Street, Fermoy, Co Cork

**JUDGE’S COMMENT:** Our winning photograph this year is a slight departure from the norm in that it features people: two lovely children in a very well composed image. Obviously, a lot of thought went into setting up the pose; the bluebells and the pale leaves on the trees tell us what season the photo was taken. Altogether a superb photograph – well done!

first year in Fermoy Camera Club when she won Photograph of the Year and, later on with the same photo, won a gold medal in the Southern Area Camera Clubs (SACC) regional qualifying round of the IPF Nature Photographer of the Year 2016. More recently a picture of her’s made it to the final top three in the programme’s camera club competition chosen by professional photographer Jenny McCarthy on Virgin Media’s Ireland AM.

I have a feeling we haven’t heard the last of this photographer.







**2nd PRIZE €100  
WATER'S EDGE**

Location:  
Lough Bray, Co  
Wicklow

Photographer:  
**Kevin Barrett**  
O'Connell Kilquade,  
Greystones,  
Co Wicklow

**JUDGE'S  
COMMENT:**  
The runner-up  
(and subsequent  
photos) is where  
the difficulty starts.  
Too much choice!  
This tranquil scene  
is good for the  
soul, beautifully  
composed, lovely  
light and superb  
reflections in  
the calm waters  
of the lake, with  
the mountain as  
a backdrop, all  
combine to make a  
delightful image.



**3rd PRIZE €50  
TREES, STONE  
WALLS AND THE  
GRASS IS GREEN**

Location:  
near Conna, Co  
Cork

Photographer:  
**Kaye English**  
Main Street,  
Conna, Co Cork

**JUDGE'S  
COMMENT:** A  
photo that could  
have been called  
The N17! though  
I'm not sure where  
this simple clear  
image was taken,  
but it was a beech  
tree in early  
summer and it is  
pin sharp.

**COMMENDED  
JUDGE'S COMMENT**

I love a good monochrome photograph  
and **Dinosaur** fits the bill nicely;  
good contrast, pin sharp and lots of  
interesting detail.



**DINOSAUR**

Location: Blarney  
Castle Gardens,  
Cork.

Photographer:  
**Adam Whitbourn**  
The Garden  
House, Blarney  
Castle, Cork



**ESCAPE**

Location: Lota woods,  
Glanmire, Cork

Photographer: **Shazia  
Waheed**  
Lotamore Crescent,  
Banduff, Cork





**BALLINASTOE WOODS**  
Location: Ballinastoe Woods, Roundwood, Co Wicklow  
Photographer: **Ita Martin**  
Seabury Lawns, Malahide, Co Dublin



**ON THE EDGE**  
Location: Crough wood, Mahon, Co Waterford  
Photographer: **Padraig Molloy**  
Blackhill, Duncannon, New Ross, Co Wexford



**THE FARAWAY TREE**  
Location: Glendalough, Co Wicklow  
Photographer: **Kevin Barrett**  
Kilquade, Greystones, Co Wicklow



**COMMENDED JUDGE'S COMMENT**  
**Escape (Pg 11), Ballinastoe Woods and Castle Woods** are three good images with one thing in common: a path which leads the eye into the photograph and gives the viewer a focal point.  
**Kings Road** (our Cover picture) and **Golden Carpet** are both taken in portrait mode and make excellent use of autumn colour. The former is a famous scene from TV and films, but I don't see any pictures capturing this scene as well as this photographer has, with excellent use of light. The latter shot is of a sycamore tree (much-loved by honey bees) in the autumn with the light falling on the leaves. Two good photos.  
**On The Edge** is a nicely-shot picture of a venerable beech guarding a moving brook, clever use of a slow shutter speed combined with a small aperture setting give a great sense of movement to the waterfall. This image was undoubtedly taken with the camera on a tripod. Well done!  
Finally, **The Faraway Tree** is another autumn photograph where the vivid colour of the fallen leaves contrasts with the pastel shade of the background, leading the eye into the middle of the scene. A lovely image, well taken.

**GOLDEN CARPET**  
Location: Dun na Ri, Kingscourt, Co Cavan  
Photographer: **Haydn Hammerton**,  
Evergreen Court,  
Kilmessan, Co Meath



**CASTLE WOODS**  
Location: Castle Woods, Bailieborough, Co Cavan  
Photographer: **Oliver Gargan**,  
Barrack St, Bailieborough,  
Co Cavan

**PHONE PHOTO WINNER**

**JUDGE'S COMMENT**  
This year the phone section has more good photographs than in previous years. I'm not surprised as I have just purchased a new phone which has the ability to take bigger images than my SLR camera!  
**WINNER**  
**Autumn Giant.**  
This well-composed photo comes saturated with gorgeous autumn colours and lots of light.  
*Mark Wilkinson, LIPF*



**WINNER €50 AUTUMN GIANT**  
Location: Balrath Woods, Co Meath  
Photographer: **Andrew Yeates**  
Tubberclaime Meadows, Athlumney, Navan, Co Meath



# The beauty behind the scenes at Tara Mines

But something wasn't quite right, says EMMA REEVES

**T**HE company I work for, Forest Environmental Research and Services (FERS), has had a long relationship with New Boliden (Tara) mines.

One of the first biodiversity surveys carried out by our company was that of the tailings pond and surrounds in 2008. I remember being blown away by the diversity of invertebrates, plants and animals which exist both on and metres away from the moonscape of the tailings pond.

I realise now how lucky I have been to witness such beautiful habitats; the ponds are off-limits to the public, for obvious reasons. Health and safety and environmental issues are incredibly important to Tara and are never overlooked. It is this isolation of the lands conferred by strict health and safety policies that has resulted in a biodiversity bonanza. People-proof fencing results in an impressive diversity. Orchids abound and, on the ponds themselves, flocks of whooper swans roost; in excess of 300 individuals have been observed. Massive squawking flocks of winter, migrant waders are commonplace. The sheer quantity of life in the area is phenomenal.

The estate holds some of the most abundant natural habitat I've ever seen. Tara have become increasingly aware of what

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



they possess and how important it really is. They wish to protect, document, monitor and enhance the biodiversity they currently steward.

The handsome gent in one of our photographs is Oliver Fitzsimons, from the Environmental Section of Tara Mines. He and his colleagues work adjacent to the Kells Road in Navan, in the middle of a 2.5ha area of woodland. They noticed that although their little wood was beautiful (a beauty-spot by the roadside, all the truckers have a wee nap there), it wasn't quite right.

Natural woodlands have a complex system of growth and regrowth. It is a climax habitat; and it doesn't get better than this. When Tara (New Boliden) first located to Navan to mine for lead and zinc back in the 1970s it planted thousands of trees in order to screen the primary operation at Knockumber. This minimised any impact on the historic landscape of Meath. These plantations (now almost 50 years of age) have been managed



An almost absence of a shrub layer results in the lack of a three-dimensional structure within the Tara Mines woodland

Below: The plantation of thousands of trees in the 1970s screened the Tara Mines operation from the historic Meath landscape

akin to commercial plantations (without the harvest as a final outcome!). This has resulted in a single-aged stand lacking the 'structural diversity' so integral to the ecological integrity of naturally regenerated woodlands. So, inappropriate management of the wood is the key to why Oliver's wood isn't really working. He wisely had us come and have a look.

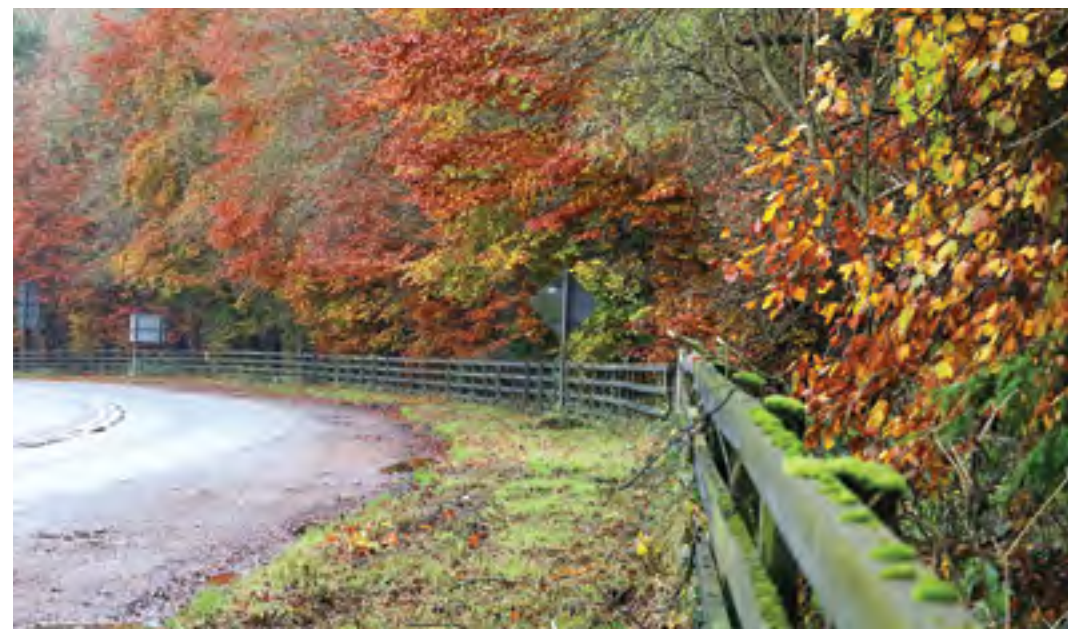
FERS then undertook a biodiversity assessment of the little wood. It consisted of mixed broadleaved woodland, mainly ash, beech and The Evil One, Sycamore. FERS is currently preparing a management plan to enhance the biodiversity resource already present. This woodland habitat is a stone's throw from the River Blackwater

(a primary component of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC/SPA) and, with appropriate management, has the potential to be an ecological corridor and a stepping-stone habitat of national importance. These habitats help animals and, therefore, genetics, move. The most useful areas of biodiversity are generally very large areas; for example the River Blackwater by our little wood. The movement of, say, the genetics of ash dieback resistance, without linkages between habitats, would be incredibly difficult. Connectivity between habitats is vital and can be achieved through linear habitats, like our hedgerows and waterways, or through stepping stone habitats such as a series of low intensity agricultural fields or woodlands. Without an 'ecological corridor,' biodiversity suffers at the landscape level and produces island habitats destined for doom.

The woodland is dominated by beech and ash, but sycamore has begun to encroach. Under current management practices, there is none of the diversity in age structure that

is required to support a rich diversity of flora and fauna. All the trees were planted at the same time, they will all die roughly around the same time point. As was mentioned, the woodland is currently being managed as though for a commercial timber extraction, so evenly spaced trees with long, straight, good quality trunks is the norm. Obviously, that's no longer Tara's goal; biodiversity is now far more critical than agroforestry. With a few minor and cost-effective management measures, this woodland can be transformed into a more sustainable habitat and an invaluable component of an ecological corridor as a stepping stone habitat in a few short years.

The assessment of the woodland indicated that currently it supports a relatively poor assemblage of plant, bird and mammal species owing to a lack of suitable 'niche' habitats as a result of the current management practices. People often mistakenly think that beech is a species native to Ireland owing to the abundance of this beautiful tree within the Irish landscape. It was, however, introduced



Pictures: PATRICK MORAN





Left: The Tara Mines plantation from the 1970s, as it is today

Above: A view of the Tara Mines plantation from the R147

Below: Oliver Fitzsimons of the Environmental Section of Tara Mines

and flourished in the Irish climate and has become naturalised. Populations are relatively static. It's not the same brute as sycamore, which can easily overrun a little wood fairly quickly. Unfortunately, a beech-dominated woodland in Ireland supports relatively little in the way of biodiversity as it is essentially a non-native species. Beech does, however, support a large diversity of fungal species and this is apparent even in a woodland as young as this one. Beech leaves are full of lignin and therefore rot very slowly, creating a thick humus layer capable of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration far greater than that of our native species. This messes up nutrient cycling in our native woodlands, so a pragmatic approach is best advised in dealing with this species.

In the little wood on the Kells road, beech is very dominant but its presence at this time of year with its autumnal, almost flaming beauty would no doubt be missed by the motoring public.

So how can Tara improve the little wood? Currently, the woodland supports relatively little in the way of floral or faunal diversity. There is some, however. Images of foxes and pine marten were captured by encouragement with peanut butter; dead specimen of badger and hedgehog were noted on the roadway adjacent. A few small, cost-effective changes in the management could make all the difference to the biodiversity of this woodland. It could

'blossom' in a few short years. For example:

- Ringing invasive species like sycamore. This prevents the proliferation of this species, opens up the canopy, allowing shrub species to bolt in order to fill the space, and provides standing dead-wood, so vital to invertebrates and those species dependent on them. Leaving standing slow, rotting, dry, dead trees also slows down carbon release, creating an important means of carbon capture in the mid to long term.

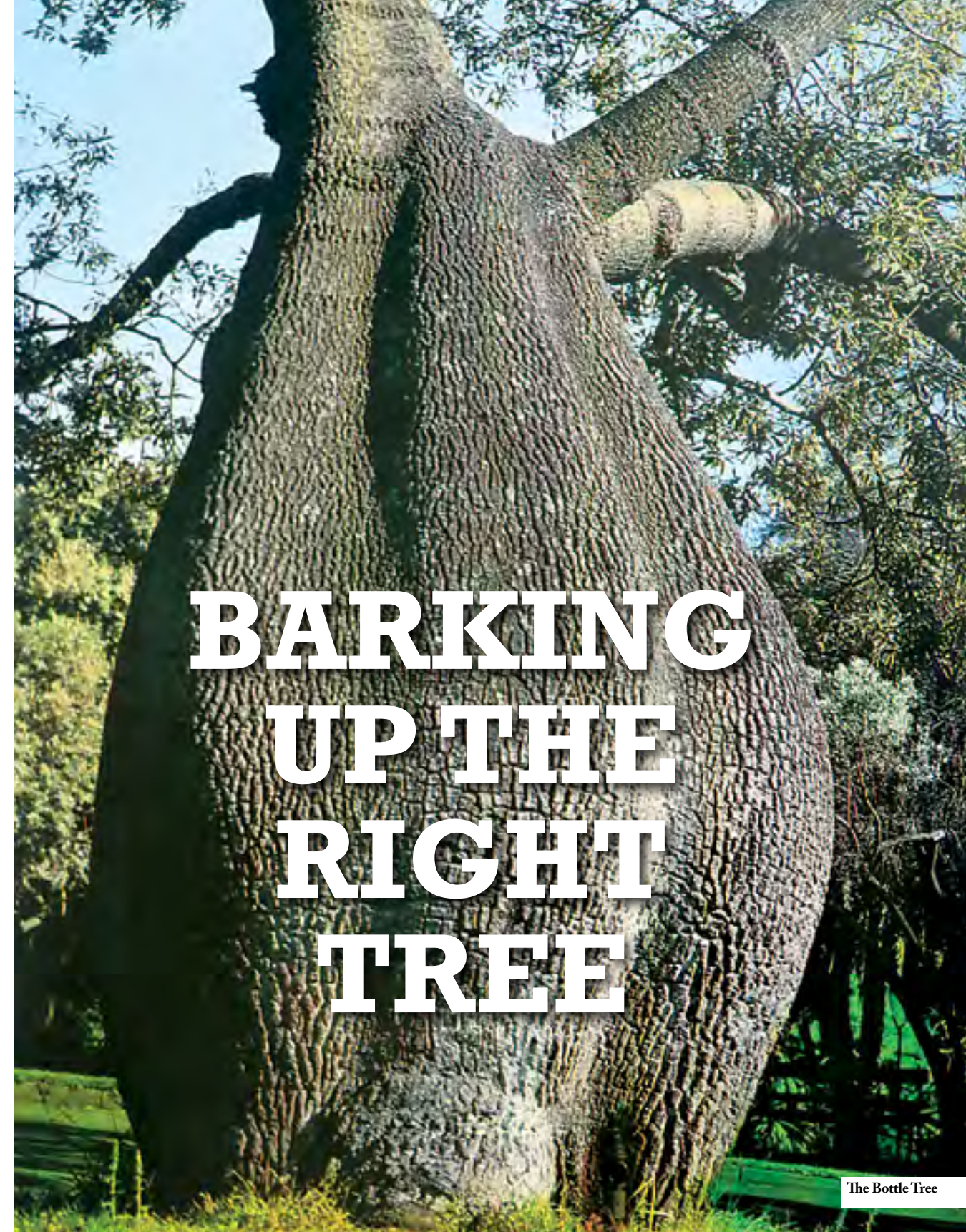
- Currently, there is a lack of mature and 'veteran' (hundreds of years old) trees. (The older the tree the more biodiversity they hold; similarly, the more wrinkles you have the more respect you attain and the more interesting you become.) It is the multitude of snags, crevices and rot associated with these age classes that provide opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds. Simple measures such



as erecting bat and bird boxes can enhance the woodland in the lack of structural diversity.

- Currently, there is an almost total lack of a 'shrub layer', resulting in the lack of a three-dimensional structure within the woodland – this is key to the many species of mammal that require cover when moving through a wooded landscape. The regeneration of a shrub layer can be allowed to proceed naturally, or it may be kick-started by underplanting with native hazel, holly, elm (wych) and oak. Ash will seed-in naturally and should be permitted to grow. In addition, elements of this shrub layer will form the future canopy layer, which is an essential component of a thriving woodland ecosystem.

It will be interesting to see how a change in management approach towards a more empathetic and worthy goal will alter the wood over the next few years and I hope to follow the progress and report back to Crann readers with good news for biodiversity. It really heartens me to think that enormous multinational companies have started to consider the importance of biodiversity and to really push for actual change. I think that there is a lot of potential for larger organisations with large estates to make similar efforts as those of Tara. Indeed, they should be compelled to do so as clever environmental projects can contribute to tackling the biodiversity and climate emergency we now find ourselves in.



The Bottle Tree

**C**AN you eat it? Well, I don't think that we will see bark on any Irish hotel menu soon, or flavouring any dishes. But the right kind of bark from the right tree was part of a staple sustenance of indigenous people worldwide. For example, the inner bark of pines was part of the diet for many native Americans.

Edible or not, the multiple uses of bark

By GEORGE CUNNINGHAM

down the centuries have been significant all around the globe. In the not too distant past it was the primary source of chemicals and pharmacy, including tannins, alkaloids, oils, bitters, dyes and resin, not to mention fibres. Although many synthetic materials have replaced bark properties, its natural ingredients still reign supreme in aspects

such as that of natural rubber which remains competitive against its artificial counterparts, particularly for vehicle tyres, surgical gloves and condoms. And what about the spicy aromatic bark of the cinnamon tree, which flavours so many of our delicacies of eats and drinks?

Most people would see bark as analogous to an animal's skin with its basic purpose of conserving water and protecting the tree's living system from temperature extremes as





Maple



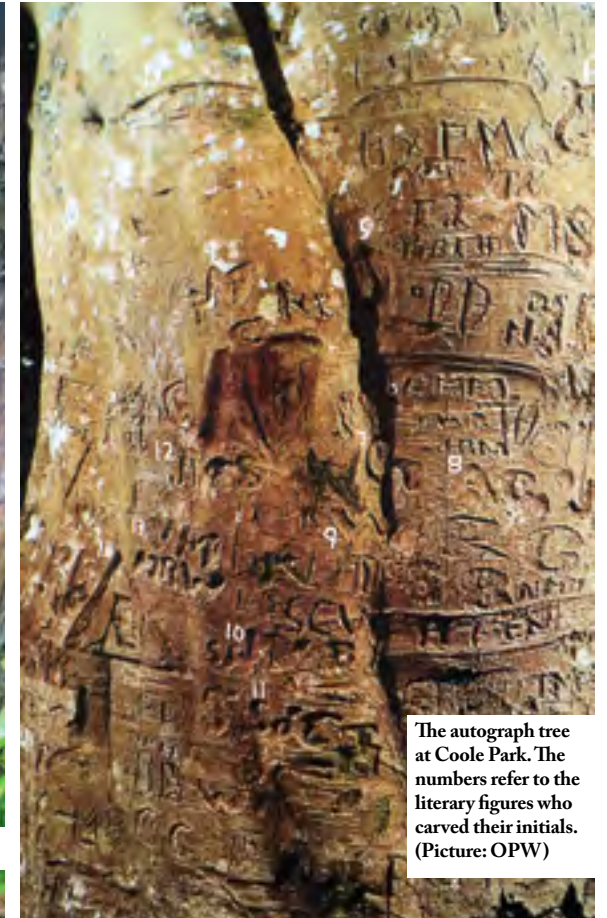
Silver Birch



Mountain Ash



Hawthorn



The autograph tree at Coole Park. The numbers refer to the literary figures who carved their initials. (Picture: OPW)

well as from diseases. In an Irish or European context, tree bark is now mainly used as a garden mulch: it improves the soil texture, suppresses weeds and conserves water.

From the thousands of books that have been published on trees, you can count on almost one hand the volumes devoted exclusively to bark. It rarely figures in tree identification, the leaves and flowers and fruit commanding pre-eminence and the beauty and usefulness of bark largely ignored and briefly commented upon. Young trees have smooth bark which cracks as they age in a pattern that is distinct for that tree species. While a seasoned woodsman can identify a tree from a mere glance at its bark, to the average person the changes in bark pattern at different stages of the tree's growth can be quite confusing.

In general, in these islands we don't have the striking bark colours, texture and patterns of tropical trees, although the eucalyptus, plane and strawberry do present multicoloured images.

The Scot's pine mature thick plated bark (reddish) offers protection from fire. The white bark of the silver birch evolved to reflect sunlight, protecting it from the damage of

ultraviolet rays (the same is true of many tropical examples such as the baobab). Most of our deciduous trees have bark that becomes rugged as the tree ages. Oak, for example, becomes a series of 'ridges and furrows often cross-fissured into rectangular and hexagonal shapes.' The beech is a bit of an exception and doesn't become as rugged. The bark of the mature hornbeam has been described as like 'the skin of elephant.'

Among the unusual volumes in my library is a thick bark-bound volume of the treasures of art in wood from Russian museums and

libraries, 'an artistic inheritance occupying an honourable place in the treasure-house of world culture.' Another is a work from Portugal devoted to cork bark, *Cork*, with a slip case of cork housing the book. This was a valued gift from Diarmuid McAree (now a fellow Crann director) in honour of the Roscrea tree conferences in the 1990s. It tells the complete story of this *Quercus suber* bark 'an unique gift to the comfort of mankind', as it has been described. It has a long history: Egyptian tombs have been found containing amphorae with cork stoppers. John Evelyn in

his seminal work on forests, *Sylva* (1662), has remarkably few references to bark but he does comment on the cork tree, 'I shall not need rehearse the uses of the bark of this tree, it is so well known.'

The most outstanding bark book of our time is *Bark, an Intimate look at the World's Trees* by Cedric Pollet (English trans 2010) which was awarded the Redouté Prix Artistique for 2009 in his native France. In this large quarto volume, Pollet presents the most spectacular, striking and remarkable examples of bark that he has found across five continents, each image a work of art in itself. Truly magnificent, it is one of the most beautiful illustrated books that it has been my joy to handle.

Throughout the world, but particularly in tropical climes, the properties of bark were widely used, often for medicinal purposes such as the *Cinchona* bark from South America, the source of quinine used to treat malaria. At home, the bark of the willow helped in the discovery of aspirin. And what of the 'tree of life', *Betula papyrifera*, with its almost indestructible bark, essential for canoes, wigwags, roofs and paper, among many other uses?

But the most widely commercial use of bark in late medieval times in these islands was that of oak bark, tannins from which came into their own from the seventeenth century up to about 1860. Indeed, for many score years during the nineteenth century oak bark was

more lucrative than oak timber itself. Research has shown that it wasn't always so, as the (oak) timbers of pre-1600 buildings still had their bark left on. But from 1780 on, tanyards and leather tanning became a huge industry, even becoming a bigger consumer of oak trees than the shipyards. And the army became bigger customers than the navy; boots and saddles were in huge demand.

Excessive fines and penalties were imposed for the unauthorised barking of trees and no one other than dyers and tanners were allowed to be in possession of bark. For some reason, fish nets and lines were not to be tanned and

fishermen or others found barking trees were fined £5.

The slump for oak bark came in the 1860s when it was discovered that South American trees gave stronger tannins and the imports were cheaper. However, the question posed by Arthur Rackham gives some food for thought: 'Would the story be different if railways had decided, as they did in most European countries, to use sleepers of small oaks rather than imported pines?'

One use of bark – now frowned upon – was the carving of initials there-on; the most famous Irish example being Lady Gregory's autograph tree at Coole where many of the literary 'greats' were invited to carve their initials on the copper beech in her garden. Thankfully, many guests who arrived penknife at the ready were not given the honour! In time, this majestic tree will have its revenge as it slowly encloses the letters.

Bark, of course, has a biodiversity unique to each tree and a symbiotic relationship with its bark dwellers. While its tannins help protect it from fungus and bacterial disease, it is the tree's first line of defence and often exhibits the first signs that all is not well with the tree.

Many of us pride ourselves on our ability to identify a tree: in summer from its leaves and flowers or fruit and in winter from its silhouette on the landscape. How about trying to do so from one of its most important elements: its bark.



Right: George Cunningham says this is one of the most beautiful illustrated books that it has been his joy to handle

Far right: A work from Portugal devoted to cork bark, *The Cork*, with a slip case of cork housing the book.

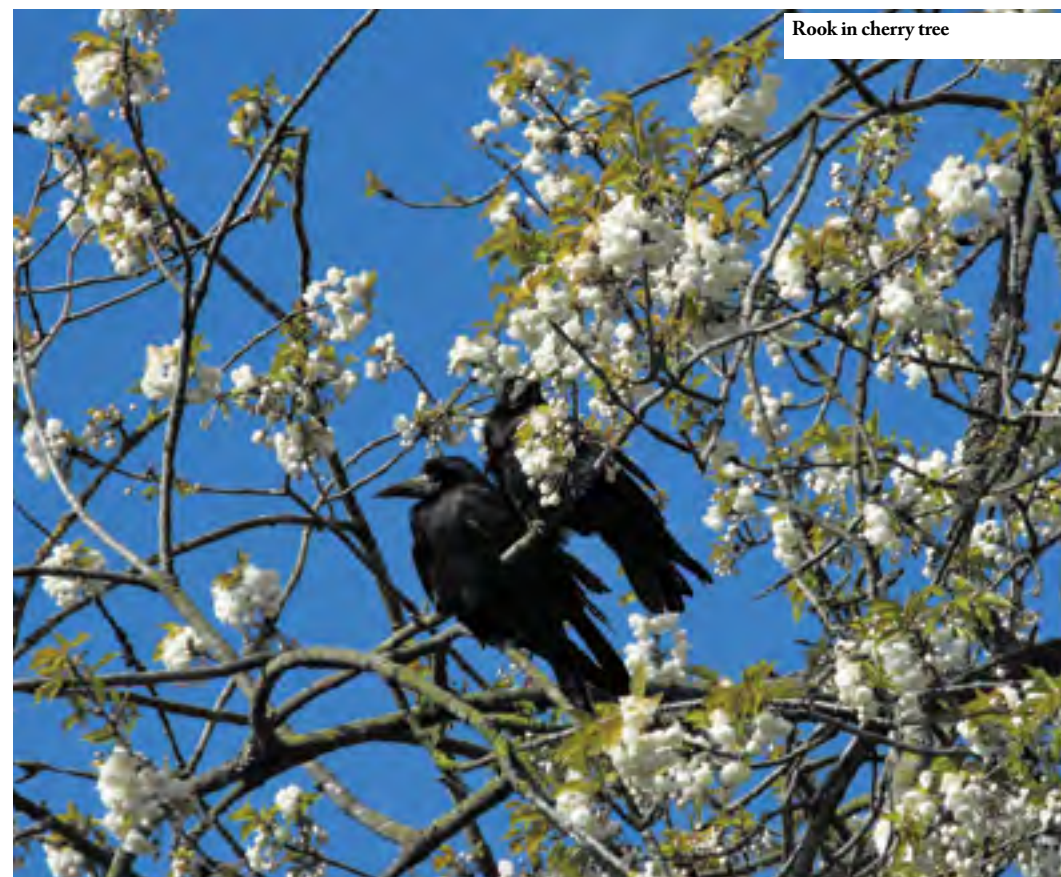


# A NEW LOOK

As he prepares for the next phases of his life, GER CLARKE deliberates on trees and things



Ger Clarke on the shore of Ballinakill Bay, looking over to Letterfrack pier, Co Galway



Rook in cherry tree

**J**UST sitting here now, outside, for the last 7 months since it all began. And I am beginning to feel the sides closing in on me. The ambient noise is back, most of the swallows left last week (I'm writing this in late September), what ushered in the Vernal equinox is tomorrow being replaced by the Autumnal one, and I am, still, here. Yon Robin sings for itself, only focussed on the changing daylight hours and what that implies.

The trees, now beginning to prepare for hibernation (imagine that! Hibernation in good old Hibernia) yes, the trees seem lower, slower, darker and more silent. Truly we have been gifted with the perfect year, wet winter, long warm sunny spring, damp summer and no major storms that I can recall. Those trees, though, crowd me and as I look and see what is all around me, I see that age has caught up with me.

If I can use the next 10 years or so and still be sensible, then I can use that time to transfer –download – cache the knowings and goings of my life and times into the grandkids. Give them a balance and a set of memories. Their world will be expanding then, in their mid-teens.

Mine? Well it will be happily dissolved in the achievement of transfer. Maybe the encroaching trees will be kind, too.

Tall trees – to reach the skies – the clouds by day, the stars by night, and green to soothe and gentle the spirit.

*How can I transfer the connections?*

*Of seeing*

*Of feeling*

*Of hearing and listening*

*Of understanding*

Being still, here, for so long, half a year or more. Spring, into summer and at last into autumn. Samhain approaching, with the Celtic New Year for me to celebrate. A time for us to rest after the long day's light, to restore lost energy, to recover from injury and bad health, to refocus and see a new way forward. A busy time for the soul and the spirit as I get ready to enter my final retirement and begin the welcome journey into the last transition, to Old Fella. I love the Australian way and most other first peoples' way of respecting the elders and making a space for them in the community life.



Lie down under a tree

It matters to me, too, that I need the Trees just as much as I need the Sea and Birdsong, I need the Mountains and Oh! For the sound of a wave on the beach or over the rocks and pebbles at Carrowhubbock, Inishcrone, or the Moy tumbling over the weir at Ardnaree, Ballina.

Different sights and sounds affect me differently but, all for my own good.

*Trees and water*

*Mountains and Sea*

*Roots of my life*

*Supporting me*

## Appendix 1

Patio Lines, written on 10 June, a Wednesday, in the evening.

The entertainment value of the vocal sharings of Messrs Robin, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Magpie, Rook, Raven (infrequent) serve as a choral backdrop to my daily life in the garden, mostly on the patio, these days. Slightly less wholesome are the incessant chirruping of the five families of Sparrow calling from the gutters and nearby fuchsia and berberis. The Tits have moved away to the distant hedges and since I purged the Leylandii I don't hear the high-pitched calls of the Goldcrest quite so often.

A pair of Bullfinch announce their arrival with that distinctive call, but these days they are always in transit. So too are the Wagtails. Both were more frequent visitors in April and May when the dandelions were in full bloom. The arrival of a Sparrowhawk, silent sudden dashing glide out of the Oakwood and into the *Prunus* tree (sparrows the target) brought momentary silence to the early evening concert. The sentinel corvids looked on, not a sound, no warning.

Yet, when I throw out the remains of the day on the lawn, they swoop down behind my back before I have taken a dozen steps. And they have a call to supper, I recognise it now, and, within seconds, 20 or more of those bigger rooks jostle and bully their way to the food. The youngsters of the recent hatching, still lacking the fearsome spear-beak and dinosaur-throat of the adults, call and flutter their wings, begging dinner from the parents. Avian Olivers, wanting more.

And are always obliged.

The Robins and Blackbirds continue to sing into the darkening sky. As 10pm approaches and passes, they still sing, long beyond their normal bedtime. Such is the sun cycle (circadian rhythms) @ 53° N. Bats, who usually don't appear until well after the last Blackbird has triumphantly screeched its alarm through the hedgerow, have begun their nightly dance along the tree margin. Flitting and darting in the most haphazard way. But, oh so serenely silent to my human ears.

Then, the light goes out in the west, And, only then, I rest.

## HOW TO SEE A TREE

### Exercise 1

(1) Look at the Landscape from afar, then the treescape.

2) Then look at the tree shapes, identifying and naming them.

3) See the colours of them.

4) Identify unique features with each shape and colour.

5) Draw or photograph them.

6) All from afar.

7) Annotate your drawings, with any additional observations.

8) Describe the landscape fully

### Exercise 2

Select a tree from that treescape.

Approach it slowly, but not too close.

See what is new now from the mid-distance. Record the new impressions and features.

Stop awhile to make sure you have seen all the new features.

Look more closely at the area all around the tree.

Don't move until you have absorbed all the information provided.

Finally, name all your senses.

### Exercise 3

Get up close to the tree

See it all, roots trunk branches twigs leaves colour shape feel

taste smell arrangement of leaves twigs buds flowers fruit

inhabitants blemishes and the rest

Note it all down, meticulously, on your phone, tablet, notebook

and/or in your memory bank.

Do all this again and again, many times

And in every season

Find out its name and background, its history

### Exercise 4

Photograph it,

Get to know

Draw it

Its friends

Paint it

Its neighbours

Caress it

Its enemies

Climb it

Its needs

Lie under it

Its goals and desires

In the sun

Love it

At night

Plant its seeds for it

Listen to it

That's all

*Ger Clarke works for the Mission Outreach Department of the Columbans in Ireland and he has worked extensively with teachers, students and schools in the area of ecology and justice.*





# A YEAR TO BE REMEMBERED

By ORLA FARRELL

**I**N a season where world attention has been on presidential tweets, the Patron of Crann sent a message to his 136K Twitter followers: “President Michael D Higgins marked National Tree Day 2020 with members of the Easy Treesie Project and Crann – Trees for Ireland”.

We were so excited that the President shared our goal in a film posted from Áras an Uachtaráin, quoting young Sam Harrison (see picture on pg 3). “My class planted a hundred trees on our Tree Academy... There are a million school children in Ireland and the plan is to plant a tree for every single child by 2023.”

I write this on the first day of the first planting season of the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021–31. There are great reports of Covid vaccines coming soon; the closest we have to a vaccine for our climate is tree planting; simple, cheap carbon capture. Is this just my view? Our biggest virtual communications this year have been with my all-time favourite web platform. In Easy Treesie’s bid to make earth cooler, we feel very cool indeed partnering with the TEDx Countdown, a global initiative to accelerate solutions to the climate crisis. We went into full virtual festival mode for our watch party which, despite its serious intent, was, like all TED (Technology, Education, Design) events a feast of “ideas worth spreading”.

I felt we had come very far indeed from when we first pushed our rusty, rescued supermarket trolley down the path from our school to the park to plant our first five Tree Week saplings a few years ago. Now we were the licensed co-hosting watch-party for Irish youth with Jane Fonda and Chris Hemsworth (aka Thor), promoting the talks of our distinguished guests, quoted below.

“We start this new decade, knowing it is the most consequential period in history.” *Prince William.*

“We now have one last chance to truly change our course.” *Christina Figueres* (architect of the Paris

## A Season of Virtual RealiTREE

■ The Crann/Easy Treesie Project: planting 1m trees with Ireland’s 1m school children and their communities by 2023.

■ Joining the UNESCO-backed Plant-for-the-Planet’s [www.trilliontreecampaign.org](http://www.trilliontreecampaign.org) challenge, with the aim of reducing global heating by 1 degree during the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, 2021–31 while other solutions to the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis are found.

■ We have planted 101,390 trees to date.

■ Our goal this year: planting 100,000 trees in 2021.

Climate Accord).

“We know we need to stop the damage and start the repair.” *Tom Crowther* (who has counted the world’s 3 trillion trees and mapped the world’s space for 1 trillion more).

“Science tells us, every day, with more precision, that urgent action is needed -- and I am not dramatizing, this is what science says -- if we are to “keep the hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change. And for this we must act now.” *His Holiness Pope Francis.*

Our next step was to host a TEDx circle. We celebrated Halloween with a Trick or Tree-t online occasion; these events are small-group discussion, like a book club for TED talks. By

hosting the event online and providing free tickets through the Eventbrite service, once again we could facilitate visitors from not only Ireland but from an international participation.

Kai Zheng, attending from ETZ Zurich who are working on the Trillion Tree Tracker App, commented: “It was fascinating to hear about all your wonderful projects in Ireland and the excitement about contributing and eagerly trying to make our world a better place.”

Cllr Joe Newman, who has done trojan tree-planting with our project, told the group the story of how he set up the Swords Woodland Association with the aim of stopping urban sprawl and planning space for trees in the fast-growing town, providing a template for similar organisations.

Aileen Crossley of Mastercard spoke of the great ambition of Mastercard Ireland to facilitate the planting of trees and her work on animating tree films to engage children and her co-workers and customers to plant trees.

Last Earth Day it did seem as if we were looking at a wipe-out of all action. Tree Week had just been cancelled, a week when in one morning we had had 245 Tralee schoolchildren at a planting-and-PoeTREE workshop in other years. Biodiversity Week, when we had run nine Tree-planting Parties in seven days last year? Also cancelled, and with it the financial support that came with it. World Environment Day, when we had welcomed the Minister for Climate Action to launch our first City Park woodland? Another day of staying apart. The Crann calendar with its colourful tree pictures was covered in blacked-out events.

The need to address the scourge of Covid-19, to limit contacts and stay apart, is abundantly clear and we have had to face these challenges as have all other business, social and environmental activities. So how were we to make lemonade from the lemons we had been handed?

We had harnessed the magic of the online from our very earliest initiatives. Everyone loves a well-written manual;

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



President Higgins and Diarmuid McAree of Crann – Trees for Ireland at the Áras an Uachtaráin presentation event  
Opposite: Sam and Maeve Harrison at Áras an Uachtaráin

## CRANN for Christmas

Give a gift of CRANN membership to someone this Christmas

Membership subscriptions enable Crann – Trees for Ireland to fulfil its mission to enhance the environment of Ireland through planting, promoting, protecting and increasing awareness about trees and woodlands. We would like your friends to share the benefits of Crann Membership and to help achieve its climate action mission.

### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Annual: Unwaged/OAPs €25, Individual €35, Family/School €45, Corporate €100, Life €700



## NEW MEMBER DETAILS

Name.....

Address .....

..... Tel.....

Email:.....

Gift message .....

PAYMENT METHOD Online via website [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie) OR

I enclose cheque/postal order for € .....

Please make cheque payable to Crann and Post to:  
Crann – Trees for Ireland, PO Box 860 Celbridge, Co Kildare



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

the knack is having them to hand. Because the better ones are often slim volumes they can be easy to lose and spring-cleaning is happening now all the time as people delight in decluttering. By making our film series on how to recognise each of Ireland's 28 native trees with our now newly-elected Tree Council President Éanna Ni Lamhna in 2016 we shared what we were doing in the easiest way possible: searchable how-to videos. We made our film, 'How to Plant a Tree Sapling – It's Easy Treesie' (Winner at the National University of Ireland Galway REELScience Film Awards 2020) for the same reason, to share what we had learned with children and their families everywhere at no cost. This year we also made a film of our Tree Academy at the venerable Royal Irish Academy in Dublin to capture the day's actions and inspire. From this good base we asked ourselves what more of our million-tree project activities could be moved online?

Our first goal was to continue to spread the word and ensure people could hear of our project. In the past this has been done through teachers talking to teachers, but also through the media and social media. We increased our activities in this area and now have thousands of followers enjoying our message of Positivi-TREE based mainly in Ireland but also in other countries across the globe.

A really exciting part of this promotion occurred on Culture Night when we ran a 4-hour Ext-TREE-vaganza of Culture for 100 zooming participants. We ran premieres of six new films. Seriously, a four-hour zoom? No, it was even longer because we were running across two platforms! Dublin Culture Night simultaneously ran our film of socially distanced apple-tree planting with families in Santry Woods on their special Culture Night channel. Thanks to all 100 participants. Rory Malone gave a wonderful presentation on Artists for Climate Change. Aoife Wilson of We Make Everything Simple ran a Pose-of-the-Tree workshop from the tree-lined Palmerstown Park. Diarmuid McAree of Crann – Trees for Ireland spoke of the importance of trees. Poet Anto Kerins returned with a spellbinding session. Here is an excerpt from our report to the organisers:

"An amazing feature was the spread of visitors; we had a participant in Northern Canada who could describe seeing and smelling the smoke from the Western American forest fires; a couple of front-line workers cycling through Germany describing the forests there that day; our poet, artist and one of our film makers were in the capital, I don't know where the other film maker beamed in from but, hey, it didn't matter,

Edward Stevenson of the Swords Woodland Association provides support for the children planting Trees on the Land heritage apple trees supplied by Future Forests at Santry Demesne for the NearTV Culture Night film.



she was there! In the middle of her birthday dinner! Best of all, our 7-year old star from one of our films Harper, with her dad, Adam Hosp, who co-wrote the script of the Mastercard animation 'Priceless Planet', beamed in from St Louis, Missouri! These are only some of the locations that were represented. We had a speech from a Ghanaian representative of our tree planting trillion-tree project live from Africa and from Irish abroad from Croatia. Many were enjoying a glass of something nice! Our sponsor, Patagonia, could join in with a staff member at a time convenient to them at their outlet. It was great to be able to support artists through this event; they appreciated it and so did we. We made several new films for this event specifically, which have received huge attention on social media since and we can use them forever more! Online Culture Night was a great success for us. For one, given the travel restrictions which were just coming in on that day, I ran Dublin Culture Night from a small village in Co Louth. And on this, our third Culture Night, our event had a new Donate Button; this was a good idea!"

Organising planting in safety has required a lot of planning. And we have done it. We are operating using deliveries and couriers for socially distanced planting, such as when we arranged apple tree deliveries to Athenry, Roscahill and Celbridge.

We salute here our long-time supporters, members of the Rotary Club of Great Britain and Ireland. Their Raheny branch – where I am Environmental Secretary – has a new motto, "The Art of the Possible", which this year sums up our angle too.



Tree Day saw the Greenore Tidy Towns plant the northernmost East Coast Scots Pine of the 1,500 planted with schools and their communities all over the country, while over the road Rampark NS added to the tree planting carried out with ourselves and local forester Dom with three Heritage Apple trees purchased by our project from Trees on the Land, as well as quantities of spring bulbs, to mark the appointment of Julie Kirk,

The principal and staff of St Paul's school, Ratoath, Co Meath, give a 'Tree Cheers' for Mark and past pupil Harry Bogan as we plant out tree #100,001, planted in a pot in St Patrick's Week during our first Online Tree Academy with the Innovate2Zero project



Greenore Tidy Towns members plant Scots pine on the Cooley Peninsula against a backdrop of the village's iconic pines on Tetrapak National Tree Day

Left inset: Children from St Anne's NS Shankill and friends who have won the NUI Galway Science Festival Film Awards for their film, How to Plant a Tree Sapling – Easy Treesie

newly-appointed principal of Scoil Áine here on the Cooley Peninsula (not far from the Biden homestead). Their thank-you reads: "The children had a great day of planting last Thursday."

We will be working with Julie to enable some re-planting by the children of adjacent Coillte Ravensdale forest which was ravaged by fire last summer. This is one of the many projects lined up for socially-distanced planting. Athenry is as usual early out of the traps and we will plant one of the Scots pines which were presented to President Higgins marking the 2,020th tree of our Galway 2020 City of Culture planting. Another of the Scots pines will be planted by Shankill Tidy

Towns and yet another in Seagrang Park, our first urban park woodland of the project. Other school planting is tabled at the High School, Rathgar, Our Lady's Templeogue, planting their 1,000th tree, and Kylemore Abbey. Planting continues at Santry Woods and Racecourse Park, Fingal, and we are collaborating on numerous projects, some of particular scientific interest involving water purification with the Tree Council of Ireland.

Local organisations have been the first responders during the Covid crisis. Our project with Roscahill Tidy Towns members, sponsored by Galway County Council, planted 1,000 saplings, slowly and surely using their networks built over years of voluntary endeavour to ensure all work was carried out in safety. The Orchard Project engaged eight similar communities in Co Kildare in a 14,000-sapling feat of civic-spirited engagement. Our other main projects for which we received very welcome sponsorship from counties Fingal and Cork were completed as planned, with certain necessary modifications to meet national best practice safety guidelines.

Our project has planted on public land as far as possible. However, with this year's onset of national restrictions coinciding with Tree Week, in order to have the trees safely in the ground we allowed planting on some farms and in some gardens to ensure no precious sapling was lost. The trees will achieve the goal of capturing carbon and improving biodiversity wherever they are planted.

We welcome a myriad of new supporters to our cause. Mars Ireland not only made a

generous contribution towards tree-planting, a tree for each of their 300 employees in their new collaboration with the Nordic countries, Mars North Europe: hearing that our project is powered by chocolate they sent us a tree-mendous supply of MaTREETEsers TREEsers. I mean Maltesers Teasers. These have been distributed to tree-planting children in Co Louth and to Baldoyle Tidy Towns. This Dublin suburb is now well on track to be the first Fingal suburb to emulate Shankill, Athenry and Goresbridge by planting 'Trees For All', not just one for each local schoolchild but in the name of their residents of all ages.

We are so very grateful to all of our supporters old and new with a very special mention for Coillte and charity Trees on the Land. We have a big shout-out for some of our newest supporters: RIA printing house who are sponsoring trees for two of their new publications. GreenPrint-Maxol has asked us to plant 500 trees on their behalf and contribute to education on aspects of the transition to clean energy highlighting the many benefits of trees. The Friendly Brothers of St Patrick have made a generous donation towards our tree planting – we are in search of a site on public land with a connection to the holy man, if any reader has a suggestion.

I leave the last word with our Environmental Intern, Asfand Bakht Yar, currently finalising his research on attitudes to Environmental Education in Dublin schools which he carried out during his Master's Degree placement with us from Dublin's Technological University.

"It has been a Tree-t to work with Easy Treesie! If you want to bring a change in the whole citizenry, it's important that the change starts with the children. This is why I love and cherish the Easy Treesie Project; it's very easy to plant a tree, so plant as many as you can! And plant when you can because Climate Change is not waiting for anyone."

You can learn all about our project on the [www.easytreesie.com](http://www.easytreesie.com) blog and on our social media. You have no room to plant? We can sort that. You can sponsor Easy Treesie project trees for €10 on the [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie) website and at <https://www.trilliontreecampaign.org/> donate-trees where you can sponsor trees on projects all over the world. Or you can phone or email Marguerite and arrange a €10 donation for a tree to be planted as part of our project and you can download an e-Tree Certificate if you are giving a gift, which you can print if you would wish. You can pay directly using our PayPal or credit card options.

Have you an idea worth spreading to do with trees and climate action? Please get in touch with [orla@easytreesie.com](mailto:orla@easytreesie.com) and let's share our love of trees!





Playing amidst the leaves on the Lime Walk in Doneraile Park

# Where Joy and Significance come together to say one thing: **Doneraile Park**

By PEADAR COLLINS

**G**ROWING up here in Kildorrery, Co Cork, I found there was always an undercurrent of sadness, outrage and loss about two major estates on our doorstep: the wanton destruction of Kingston's Castle, burnt to the ground after the British surrendered, and then the valueless decisions to allow wonderful estates like Bowenscourt to simply be chopped up.

Thankfully, that can't be said about Doneraile Park. It is true to say that we are well rid of the tyranny that fattened the owners of these fine places but we must also take stock of the value of what they built.

Just as products of war such as atomic energy, jet engines and the internet have all become domestic essentials decades later, the largescale private pleasure grounds of former imperialists have become the inspiring countryside parks where all can enjoy being at one with nature.

Doneraile Park, formally a 1,000-acre demesne seat of power for 300 years of the St Ledger family is, by any country mile, one of the island of Ireland's finest parkland landscapes. At every stage of development of this fine place, the planning and execution were on an industrial scale. No modern hydraulic power, but hundreds, I'm sure, of able-bodied people moving tens of thousands

of tonnes of soil and rock over a lifetime, reconstructing the flow of rivers, building mile after mile of high stone walls, expertly built stone foundations, covering exposed rock outcrops to present flush flowing meadows merging with man-made natural looking lakes. Each phase of development from the 1630s up the late 1800s, all overlapping, extended out over 500 acres of prime limestone soil in the valley of the Awbeg, a tributary of the Blackwater in north county Cork. Without argument, the best productive land in Ireland.

My primary interest in Doneraile are its trees but what lifts them off the canvas is how well Doneraile is designed. Harnessing the natural amphitheatre-like valleys to give stunning distant views of far-off groves and open parkland with herds of wild deer, lakes,

PICTURES: EAMONN O'DEA



Around every bend, a different option



ponds and weirs, radiating out north-east and south from the main house which was built in the 1720s. It's from this frame of mind that Doneraile was designed. Hence the clever use of so many lengthy ha-ha's (sunken fences), in case an obstructive style of overground fence would detract from the visual flow over nature's landscape, and lest they interfere with one's line of sight from the house, facing east. The very fact that they built a dog-leg into this major stone construction that is this sunken fence says to me that nothing was spared to sculpt this garden of significance.

The sunken walls of the many ha-ha's at Doneraile are only one major engineering feat. The park boasts 12 acres of walled-in gardens which are, in the main, in great structural condition. This again says to me that these guys took their time; if it was worth doing it was worth doing well.

***The four significant cornerstones of Doneraile Park, as I see them, are stone construction, sculpting of the landscape, water and trees. All woven together seamlessly as if by nature's permission.***

I have spent the last 25 years designing, supplying and building small-to-largescale tree projects, private, commercial and state. I still have not met a client where time isn't being crammed into a vise. What am I saying? Today we want the shortest distance to a result. We have banking corporations bursting with money, but needing it back fast. Average visionaries bursting with elongated qualifications and egos to match, who can't identify what they recommend on a plant schedule. Designers who have no artistic flair to sketch, but allow computers to produce straight, boring lines that result in nothing that is compatible and friendly to our senses.

I'm not talking hippy here; they are even more boring. But just as all our house designs in developments have only one significant difference from each other, i.e. the key that opens the front door, our gardens and, more importantly, our recently-constructed public parks are becoming very boring also.

If this is the way for the foreseeable future, then places or spaces like Doneraile Park will never go out of fashion but will continue to provide a very special timeless experience. Which we need more than is realised.

Again, I say my primary interest in Doneraile are its superb trees, both individually and as a collective. The history of the trees within Doneraile can be associated with the evolving development from the time of the original castle (no longer visible) that stood close by the main entrance with the grounds of the original tiered walled river garden, to the present main house, recently refurbished, looking out north to



**Peadar Collins (left) with Michael O'Sullivan at a Spanish chestnut in Doneraile Park. Picture: Eamonn O'Dea**

**Inset: Peadar and Michael at a giant redwood in the park. Picture: Ellenor McDonnell**

**Below: Doneraile: Where trees and history come together perfectly**

the widened river with its series of weirs and bridges.

The first major establishment of trees was a belt of *Quercus petarea*, planted in 1720 and still standing solid 300 years later. Prior to this it has been noted that there was an ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) avenue or walk where the now towering beech entrance avenue stands. By the size, and more importantly the obvious perilous state, of some of these beech, I would say they are standing some 200 years.

I imagine that the original tree planting would have relied on the collection of native species such as the oak and ash but, as the importation of new species started to develop in and around the early decades of the 1800s,

more adventurous species that do very well here started to be introduced.

In the very well-informed book *A Taste of Doneraile Park* by local (and I don't mind saying brilliant) researcher Micheal

O'Sullivan, the connection between Kew Gardens in London (the centre of plant distribution globally in the 1800s) and Doneraile Park is well documented. This would explain why Doneraile holds a large

collection of significant trees.

When I say trees of significance, I point to more than the handsome 300-year-old oaks. Almost central in the grand design and obviously aligned from the house to a statistically positioned Lebanese cedar high in the north park, making the line of sight to the Triumphal Arch entrance, stands a very wise old-looking Spanish chestnut (*Castania sativa*). This continues to hold focus as a curiosity for fascinated children, as inevitably they are drawn to climb it.

A close lifelong friend of mine, Eamonn O'Dea (also a much better photographer than I) captures all that's so important about Doneraile for Crann magazine readers: its trees and their place in the formative minds



of so many children that benefit from this wonderful space. Eamonn captures the autumnal magic of Doneraile Park's mature lime (*Tilia europea*) walk in the company of his charming daughter. The lime walk is a botanical portal positioned in one of the many internal hoops within the greater expanse of wider loops.

The park invites you to stay longer than you would plan to, by leading you to explore, and explore again, a different option around every bend. A maze of roads and paths are dotted with supreme, by Irish and European standards, Californian Redwoods, the Giant (*Sequoia dendron Giganteum*) and the Coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*).

Doneraile Park is home to a large collection of evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*) and a very unique and rare lucombe oak in very fine condition. This tree holds the privileged recognition as one of Kew Garden's special heritage trees, discovered by William Lucombe of Exeter to be a most unusual modern (1762) creation. It was formed by the crossing in nature between the Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) and the Mediterranean cork oak (*Quercus suber*). Also, there are fine collections of larch and ancient Irish yews close to the wilderness area of the central gardens east of the main house.

If I were to say where the most perfectly formed copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*) tree I have ever seen anywhere (and I have seen thousands of them, believe me), it would be the recently-planted copper beech out at the front of Doneraile Court. I would estimate that it was planted in the last 75 years.

In 2014, Doneraile experienced a horrific attack by Storm Darwin. The collateral damage was enormous. If this is not a wake-up call, nothing is. The writing on the wall asks quite simply: where are our contingency plans? We have inherited the beauty of Doneraile Park, in part due to the visionaries of two and three hundred years ago but also to the hundreds of people that worked so physically hard to make it.

***On a micro scale, if we don't change the oil in our engines, do we expect them to go for ever? On a macro scale if we don't steadily add to the stock of both trees and unique arboretum-style trees in our parks, can our future generations expect to inherit what we are enjoying today?***

I get it that the OPW are doing a superb job and I am most grateful to them. However, without a major 20-30-year tree stimulus plan for our superb parks we are looking at an empty botanical legacy.

More trees, please! They don't last forever.



# Separating ourselves from nature

By MICHAEL YALLOP

Urban Forester  
Bsc Hons Hort, ISA Cert Arb,  
Tech Arbor A



**W**HAT do you say to someone who wants you to cut the tree down outside their house because the leaves fall on their driveway?

As an urban forester, I encounter this sort of attitude quite regularly. It's part of a list of issues such as honeydew on cars, blocks light, blocks satellite, can't widen my driveway, it's dangerous and going to blow down, it's too high, can you cut it down and plant a small tree?

I am referring here to the trees within our urban and peri-urban environments, an area of arboriculture I personally feel we totally underestimate and under-manage. As our towns and cities increase in size, are we seeing people more divorced from the natural world in search of the 'neat and tidy'?

What drives people to under-value the trees around them? People put a value on their house, their clothes and their car but see no value in the tree at the front of their house, only the trouble it brings. In many cases, residents only want trees felled due to leaf fall, but if that person lived near a woodland, we would not fell all the trees because leaves blew into their garden. And they would likely be in awe of the beauty of the woodland.

Unfortunately, in too many cases trees are felled or too-harshly pruned to appease residents.

It is also common to find poorly-selected tree species like *Pyrus Spp* or *Malus Spp* which generate large volumes of fruit and a lot of complaints due to the fruit falling on driveways and footpaths. Selecting suitable species to avoid issues like this is very important.

Another issue is honeydew from aphids

falling on cars. *Tilia tomentosa*, silver lime, isn't attacked by aphids as the insects cannot get access to the leaf veins to feed (Carter, 1992). So, for street planting we would eliminate the problem of honeydew on cars if we were to plant this type of tree instead of the common lime.

Then there are the residents who see a tree as a risk. They deem the tree too large and feel it may blow over. In many of these cases I have been able to point out the benefits of the tree to the person.

Something else I have noticed lately is many newer housing estates focusing on more intensive housing density and trees taking a back seat. Is this creating the detachment from nature and need for perfection in our cities for 'neat and tidy'? You would be surprised at how many people live on streets that have few or no trees on them, only small shrubs. And they like it this way. They feel a tree is only going to encroach and destroy this space.

Biophilia is a term describing our need to interact with nature. It is used by both E.O. Wilson and D. Slatore who examine our need to seek connections with nature. My own theory is that some people are moving away from this rather than getting closer; for example, those residents who want the tree removed because it sheds leaves. When trees are intended for replacing outside houses, many residents refuse for fear of a return to what was previously there.

Unfortunately, as I have written previously in Crann magazine, many new street trees are damaged or destroyed. I find this to be a common feature in our mature street trees: where trees are ring-barked, holes drilled, nails driven in, chopped with an axe and, most dangerous of all, partly sawed through. The latter not only constitutes a danger to the resident but also to those passing under it. If residents have issues, surely it should be possible to meet these residents and discuss their issues before it comes to damaging the tree.



Some new estate are being designed with no street trees outside the houses  
Below: Let's give some recognition to those who are tree advocates on our streets



I want to also give some recognition to those who are tree advocates on our streets. Those who have requested their trees not to be removed, those who say the tree looks better with a canopy all the way to the path, those who see the beauty in autumn colour. The saying that 'Every tree needs a champion', coined by Bartlett Tree Experts, sums it all up for me. We need people to take care of those young street trees outside their homes, and to embrace size and stature of the large trees on our streets.

For those who open a conversation with me saying 'I love trees but...', I say imagine your road without trees. They provide clean air, shade and cooling to our urban heat spots. People like this will always provide tree-related issues (in some cases justified) where roots damage walls or pathways. But these are the result of poor tree selection and tree planting pit construction in the beginning. Decisions in cases like that have to be made on a cost basis of retaining the tree for its eco-system services by repairing the wall and building a floating footpath or just felling the

tree and reinstating the path.

Innovations such as Tree Week are wonderful for promoting tree planting but the focus should be on trees within our urban communities as well as planting in big open spaces or in schools. Rarely do we see a photo of street tree plantings. As a consequence, residents miss out on seeing the benefits of a tree outside their own door. It would be a good idea to educate them on the benefits of trees and the particular species that are suitable for specific locations, to help put fears to rest about the

issues I mentioned above.

Education is key. I would love to see something being rolled out to promote our city trees, championing what we have and showing residents of estates that leaf fall is just part of nature. In the United States, large mature street trees adorn their housing estates and have huge leaf fall, but they find ways to deal with it. Our streets are a little narrower so we must formulate a solution of our own. We must look at developing new approaches for our new estates to integrate more tree cover.

There will always be some issues with our trees, but minds can be changed, practices can be changed and improved. Connecting with people is as important as ever. Using our experience and knowledge to help people understand more about their trees is vital.

## References

Kellert, S. and Wilson, E., 2013. The Biophilia Hypothesis. 2nd ed. Washington: Island Press.  
Slatore, D., 2019. The Urban Forestry Movement and Urban Greening.  
Carter, C., 1992. Lime Trees and Aphids. Arboriculture Research Note. Surrey: Arboricultural Advisory & Information Service.



## Volunteers take heart from Minister's 2021 commitment

By Paddy Smith

**T**he spirits of Tidy Towns volunteers throughout the country have been lifted by the firm commitment from the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, given on 4 November, that the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition will proceed in 2021.

The Minister said: "We may need to alter and adapt our approach to delivering the competition next year, given the on-going constraints posed by Covid, but we can retain the ethos of the competition that has stood the test of time so well."

Meanwhile, Crann - Trees for Ireland has answered calls for help and advice from Tidy Towns committees in various parts of the country. Some of these are mentioned in Orla Farrell's article in this issue (pages 22, 23, 24 and 25). Another noteworthy effort was in Athenry where the local Tidy Towns group obtained 12 apple trees from Crann. The variety planted was Malus (Uncle John's Cooker apples), a native Irish variety. The tree planting took place on 11 July at Cullairbaun housing estate, Tuam Road, Athenry.

Jim Reidy of Athenry Tidy Towns is the tree planting project manager for the



Jim Reidy (with check shirt), from Athenry Tidy Towns Committee, leads the planting of 12 apple trees supplied by Crann - Trees for Ireland. He is helped by volunteers from the committee and from the Cullairbaun housing estate. (Pictures: Des Glynn, PRO, Athenry Tidy Towns)

group and he said they aim to promote the planting of native fruit trees to support our pollinator insects and biodiversity.

Athenry Tidy Towns won the National Tree Project Award as part of the National

Tidy Towns competition in 2018 for planting, with the help of school pupils, thousands of native trees and forming a wildlife corridor on the outskirts of the town. Planting was carried out from 2013 to 2018.

## Crann's Assist Programme

Crann has a Tidy Towns Assist Programme which consists of a visit from one of our tree experts - who will meet committee members, do a site visit along with an advice clinic and make suggestions on various issues of interest to the Tidy Towns initiative.

This programme assists groups with planting schemes, improving knowledge, raising awareness and achieving valuable extra points for their community efforts.

If interested, we ask that your Tidy Towns Committee become a 'Group Member' of Crann at a special rate of €45 p.a. The Advice Clinic costs €150 plus travelling expenses of 50c per mile (agreed prior to visit), invoice supplied. Contact us via [info@crann.ie](mailto:info@crann.ie) or PO Box 860, Celbridge, Co Kildare, with your details.



# It's time to sort out this crazy bureaucracy

By JOE BARRY

**F**ORESTRY is currently being demonised for multiple reasons, most of which are wildly incorrect. I have read where trees are blamed for causing both drought and flooding, and being guilty of the destruction of our landscapes. Yet trees create clean air and are a source of natural habitat and food for multiple species. Woodland is wonderfully efficient in reducing flooding and slowing the movement of water on hillsides. Grass and corn are harvested annually, having received huge doses of chemical fertilisers and sprays, yet trees remain virtually untouched for their lifetimes and receive, at most, negligible amounts of fertiliser. Most areas being afforested receive no artificial fertiliser and no sprays whatsoever, yet the opposite is being pedalled as true. It seems that if you repeat something often enough, people will believe it.

Current regulations are strict and require at least 15% broadleaves to be planted on any one site and a further 15% left for biodiversity. That means that 30% of the area is left for nature. This undoubtedly delivers a huge environmental bonus, yet it is rarely mentioned.

What a change it would make if similar regulations were applied to dairying and tillage. The recent success of the hen harrier scheme or the Burren LIFE scheme demonstrates what actually can be achieved. Forestry also provides thousands of rural jobs while replacing imports and producing timber for construction and a host of other uses. With the development of laminates, timber can viably replace concrete (a major source of CO<sub>2</sub>) and steel in construction projects.

Woodland provides a wonderfully diverse wildlife habitat, yet forestry continues to attract negative publicity. Scotland is on course to plant 10,000 new hectares of forestry every year, yet the rate of afforestation in Ireland in 2017 actually fell, to 5,000 hectares, and is currently falling further. Irish landowners planted enthusiastically in the 1990s, establishing 25,000 hectares of woodland in 1995 alone. They would continue to do so if it were not for an extraordinary increase in bureaucracy and the vocal anti-forestry lobby whose aims are difficult to understand.

Up to recently it has taken at least two years to receive permission to plant as little as a quarter of an acre with trees and most landowners give up eventually due to the number of objections that forestry attracts. It's time to sort out the bureaucracy that has brought the afforestation schemes to a standstill.

Landowners are told they must plant more hardwoods, yet there are no sawmills that can handle them in any quantity. The last one in Dundrum, Co Tipperary, was closed many years ago by Coillte, so to insist that farmers plant broadleaves, while being absolutely correct from an environmental and landscape viewpoint, is simply non-viable from a landowner's point of view.

This is a huge topic which requires sensible debate among qualified individuals rather than being driven by ill-informed commentary in social media and in the press. It is a commercial fact that planting broadleaves devalues land, so the State must become more proactive in funding their planting and management rather than burdening farmers and others with a loss-making enterprise.



By JOE BARRY

**I**T'S an ill wind... The chaos that the current pandemic has inflicted on our economy and our society in general has also brought reduced pollution levels, cleaner air and clearer skies. More significantly perhaps, it has encouraged a sense of unity and a steadily growing shift in public attitudes that highlights the urgent need for us to change our ways.

Policies that only a few years ago would have been politically and publicly unacceptable are now being widely discussed and looked at in a more positive light. To sustain a healthy planet, we need clean unpolluted air and water, more trees, and farmland that is, for the greater part, free from harmful herbicides and pesticides. Sustainable farming practices can deliver a reduction in the monocultures of grass and tillage crops, improve plant diversity and increase the areas of environmentally friendly habitats. It is in this specific regard

where forestry and the establishment of more woodland must play its part.

Modern farming (and I state this as a farmer with a lifetime's experience of grassland and woodland management, livestock production and tillage) is undoubtedly the cause of a large percentage of the pollution currently affecting our rivers, lakes and the countryside in general. Farmers have been encouraged to practice a high-cost/high-input system that is not only an environmental disaster but is no longer economically viable. The millions of euro spent on fertilisers and chemicals annually should be greatly reduced.

It must be noted that the EU have moved in this direction and, to make it happen, they need Ireland's support. Sustainable, close-to-nature farming delivers the retention of organic matter in the soil, an increase in biodiversity and a farm industry working in harmony with nature rather than beating it in to submission. Wooded riparian zones and flood plains should be re-established to further reduce run-off of excess nutrients into

watercourses. This will enhance water quality and further benefit wildlife, much of which has disappeared from rural Ireland in the past five decades. It is no longer necessary, or indeed viable, to use herbicides and pesticides as the cure for all agricultural difficulties.

Walk into any garden centre and an astonishing range of weedkillers, insect killers and fungicides can be purchased. In addition to farm crops, the obsession for spraying lawns, for example, is based on ignorance of what we are actually putting on plants and on clever marketing campaigns by the chemical companies. This, in turn, is reinforced by advice coming from TV programmes and gardening articles that suggest home-owners should kill dandelions, clover, daisies, moss and virtually anything that grows in a lawn other than grass.

Yet the wildflowers (weeds?) that appear naturally in a lawn are not only attractive but at the same time help support birds, bats, bees and multiple species of insects. There are even products sold to kill worms, yet since the time of Charles Darwin it is known how essential

worms are for improving and maintaining soil fertility.

Commercial farming must continue to provide food and jobs but, with more enlightened practices, it can operate successfully in tandem with the natural world. If the Dutch can do it, so can we.

Water quality remains very poor in Ireland, thanks to weak laws and a lack of enforcement by the EPA. This allows both industry and agriculture to continue to allow toxic chemicals and harmful sediments reach our rivers and lakes. Industrial pollution is still widespread and poorly policed. Agricultural pollution, however, is defended as being almost a necessary side-effect of modern farming practices.

Monocultures of ryegrass and grain crops leave little room for wild life. They are probably necessary to a degree on fertile areas if populations are to be fed but the ongoing destruction of adjoining wild areas is largely responsible for the disappearance of our farm birds and insects. Sections of all farmland should be managed for nature rather than tilled

To sustain a healthy planet, we need clean unpolluted air and water, more trees, and farmland that is, for the greater part, free from harmful herbicides and pesticides.



and reclaimed for commercial farming. Slurry spreading attracts a wide range of regulations, as does the use of fungicides and pesticides, but, in practice, these are not fully enforced. It has been proven that residues of sprays such as glyphosate can remain in straw after harvest, which in turn can harm plants that are grown using farmyard manure as their fertiliser. (Due to pressure from Brussels, the Department of Agriculture have recently banned 92 sprays and fungicides for use in farms and gardens.)

This represents a good start in rethinking the entire system of agricultural and horticultural management. The monocultures of ryegrass, common to virtually every dairy farm, require large applications of chemical fertiliser, several times annually. Some of the run-off of these chemicals then inevitably finds its way into ditches, streams and rivers. Flooding has increased in many areas, due in some degree to climate change but also due to the manner in which rivers have been over-drained and housing estates and roads built on our flood plains.

River drainage only speeds up the flow of water which then descends rapidly on to the lower areas and floods them. Prior to much of the drainage that has occurred, water movement was slowed by the very nature of winding river courses that contained natural weirs and abundant weed growth. The Dutch are currently



Advice from TV programmes and gardening articles often suggest that home-owners should kill dandelions, clover, daisies, moss and virtually anything that grows in a lawn other than grass. The grass at the base of this birch tree has autumn cyclamen.

restoring many of their former flood plains and see them as an essential tool for flood management in the future.

We can grow trees and produce food productively and sustainably and do so in tandem with the needs of the natural world. But to achieve this, we need a massive rethink on the recommendations of our current systems. This applies especially to our advisory services. It is not too late to change but it is down to our policy-makers and our consumers to demand better practice if farm songbirds and almost-

extinct species such as curlews are to survive. This must begin at the top with the Department of Agriculture giving sound, sensible and environmentally safe advice.

Farmers are not to blame for trying to support their families but they are caught in a treadmill of increasing cost of inputs and decreasing food prices. Food is probably too cheap but a more knowledgeable public are prepared to pay for properly produced food they trust to be clean, healthy and free from dangerous trace elements.

## OBITUARY

IT WAS with great sadness that we learnt of the sad passing of our great friend Matt Fogarty, Ballinderry, Nenagh, Co Tipperary. He was a former vice-president of Crann and has been a keen Crann supporter for the last 35 years.

I first got to know Matt when I started to buy trees from him in the 1990s; at the time I was planting lots of hedging, both beech and hawthorn. I'll always remember his comment when I was buying the former and he said: "There are no teenage beech in Ireland." So true, but he loved all trees, both conifer and deciduous.

There is an apocryphal tale told about him attempting to get a loan from his bank to establish his tree nursery. Apparently they turned him down so he got a livestock stocking loan and used that to purchase his tree stock. The rest is history!

Matt was having a problem in

## Matt Fogarty RIP

dealing with public bodies (don't we all!) as they didn't think he was qualified, and didn't have the right letters after his name. Matt's solution was to get himself a degree in arboriculture.

He was very well travelled in his quest for knowledge and was

happy to share that knowledge with us all. In 2017 Crann had a field meeting in Ballinderry at his nursery. The day was a great success with many aspects of trees being discussed at length. He was always generous with his time with people of shared interest.



The late Matt Fogarty (Picture: Nenagh Guardian)

Among Matt's many awards were the RDS Forest Service Award (2010) and the Society of Irish Foresters' honour of Forester of the Year in 1995 and, again, in 2000. He also won the 2014 Just Forests National Tree Huggers competition for a cedar of Lebanon tree that he had planted in memory of his beloved wife, Mary, who died ten years ago.

Matt died peacefully on 14 October at University Hospital Galway. He was 86.

He was predeceased by his wife Mary and his sisters Pauline and Bridie. He is sadly missed by his son Denis, daughters Christine, Breda, Annette, his six grandchildren, and his sister, Sr Virgilius.

His many friends and all of us in Crann, who couldn't attend his funeral because of these strange (Covid) times, would like to pass on our deepest sympathies to his family.

Mark Wilkinson

# Tipp member challenges Mark Wilkinson's 'Speaking Tree'

Dear Sir,

Issue 2020 No 111 of Crann magazine seemed designed to provoke debate, including as it did three articles which seemed to defend and, indeed, promote monoculture conifer plantations.

In *The Speaking Tree*, Mark Wilkinson asks why afforestation should require environmental surveys beforehand; this suggests such a level of naivety as to be unbelievable. Any parcel of land can have any number of environmentally beneficial uses, depending in great part on what is needed in that area and what already exists on said piece of land and the management thereafter. The notion that we as landowners can just choose to smother our landscape in a blanket of spruce with no regard to the effect on the local, national and global environment is, as has been shown, ludicrous and verging on the morally criminal. It is, to borrow a phrase, the worst kind of bad husbandry.

In citing Scandinavia as an example of happy conifer plantations, Mr Wilkinson seems to be ignoring the widely available evidence which demonstrates the problems facing the Scandinavian countries due to their reliance on the timber industry. I would draw your readers attention to the following paper: <https://plantationdefinitiondiscussion.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/the-swedish-experience-shrinking-forests-expanding-tree-plantations/>

Native conifer forest, like the Caledonian pine forest, has a percentage of native

conifers, mostly pine with Norway spruce geographically confined to a very small area, mixed with a wide variety of deciduous trees and shrubs: oak, alder and aspen, for example. This creates an open light-filled woodland and accounts for the fact that one of the main features of Scandinavian coastal forest is the variety and abundance of lichen. The countries of this region are aware of the degradation of their natural habitats by commercial forestry. Again, I suggest the following:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4313832?seq=1> and would be appalled to find the destruction of their lands being held up as a prime example of how we should treat ours.

I am horrified to find such views expressed in a journal I understood to have a greater understanding of these matters.

Yours,  
Alasdair MacDonald,  
Kilburry West, Clonmel, Co  
Tipperary

### Mark Wilkinson responds:

In his excellent letter, Mr MacDonald stated that it almost felt as if the recent issue was designed to provoke debate.

He is absolutely correct in this assumption and in *The Speaking Tree* I tried to illustrate how lopsided the entire discussion on conifer v. broadleaves has become.

In the 1970s when Crann was founded, our mission was to put broadleaves on the map. At that time, virtually no broadleaf or native species were being planted and, happily,

our campaign was hugely successful in that broadleaves now account for over 30% of all planting.

It is important however to remember that Crann never was and I hope never will be "anti-conifer". We appreciate all trees and value them for their different attributes and we are greatly distressed to see how the anti-conifer lobby has succeeded in bringing almost all planting, including that of broadleaves, virtually to a halt.

In the last issue of our magazine, the benefits of both conifer and broadleaf woodland were clearly outlined in terms of wildlife and general environmental benefits so I do not need to list them here. I will just add that our sawmills, which provide thousands of rural jobs, due to the increasing shortage of timber are being forced to import from abroad. Is this a good thing in a country with the best conditions for silviculture in Europe? Is it a good thing that young farmers cannot supplement their incomes by planting part of their landholdings due to sometimes violent local objections based on falsehoods?

We welcome debate but let us be sure that it is honest and not based on prejudice and falsehoods. Diseases currently threaten many of our treasured native trees like ash and oak so we cannot ignore this reality. We need greater diversity and a fuller understanding of sustainable silviculture and we must increase planting trees for all purposes and needs and encourage our farmers and landowners to do so.



A Tree Class. 1st class SH primary, Roscrea, around some memorial trees in the school grounds in September (Picture: George Cunningham)

## That welcome grey envelope

Dear Paddy,

As always, I love to see the grey envelope containing the latest issue of Crann arriving through the letterbox and this latest issue (Spring/Summer 2020) didn't disappoint.

The variety of the articles and the array of inspiring photos are highly commendable.

I particularly liked the thrust of the articles by Joe Barry and Orla Farrell (Good Tree/Bad

Tree). To quote Joe: "We must be sensible and work with the conditions we have and grow trees that not only benefit the landscape and environment but are sustainable and useful". I couldn't agree more.

Thank you and all the contributors for the informative and interesting reading.

Kind regards,  
Elizabeth Murphy  
(by email)





# More trees can enhance the Irish landscape

**E**XQUISITE Ireland is being ruined by trees' read the headline to one of Michael Harding's recent columns in *The Irish Times*. Crestfallen and shocked, I wrote to the editor: 'What an ugly, misleading and distressing title. Your former editor D(ouglas) G(ageby) is not the only one turning in his grave. His more correct title would have been, *Exquisite Ireland is being ruined by a lack of trees*.' Unsurprisingly, the letter was not published.

The content of the column was not reflected in the title where Mr Harding's gripe was about commercial forestry, particularly as it pertained to the area in and around Co Leitrim. In his following two columns, Michael Harding wrote of his love of trees: silent words of contrition?

Much has been made of the social problems accruing from the continued and ongoing afforestation of poor land sold by farmers to gain a reasonable living. It is a festering political problem but the reality is we need commercial forestry. But we also

need trees, millions of them, for a multitude of beneficial reasons: habitats, amenity, health, enhancement, shelter and other diverse personal and public uses.

And then when we plant we don't let them become what they are: trees. Along with having, after Iceland, the poorest tree cover in Europe, we also have the lowest number of heritage, champion or aged trees. We find all sorts of reasons and excuses to cut them down. The law in this regard is weak and not on the side of the trees. There are, of course, many efforts being made to plant trees around the country; a notable project is Easy Treesie, highlighted once again in this magazine, while the Tidy Towns' tree-planting efforts are also admirable. We need these tree pockets to explode and become commonplace rather than unusual.

Local authorities, to my mind, are one of two key players in reforesting Ireland. Many have positive attitudes but too many seem to lack a coherent policy on tree planting and are all too ready to cut down perfectly healthy trees, sometimes for flimsy reasons. Also, tree planting needs to be managed properly. Not

only the right tree in the right place but with proper support and protection, too. Research has shown that it takes seven years to grow a tree in an urban setting, i.e. for it to survive.

The second key player is the farming community. We can't seem to get the message across that small pockets of trees are profitable on so many fronts: shelter, enrichment and drainage of the soil, shade, enhancement of the property and firewood for the household and farm, to name but a few.

As has been said, the best time to plant a tree is 80 years ago; the second-best time is now. Plant, nurture and respect. What is respected in a country will be honoured there.

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.

**BORD na MÓNA**  
Naturally Driven

Bord na Móna requires 500,000 tonnes of biomass annually to co-fuel its power plant at Edenderry, Co. Offaly. The company is now offering long term sustainable contracts for the supply of:

- Sawdust
- Woodchip
- Pulp Wood



For further details please contact:  
**Donal McGuinness**  
Mob: 086 3426933  
Email: donal.mcguinness@bnm.ie

**Joseph Spollen**  
Mob 087 965 4645  
Email: Joseph.spollen@bnm.ie

Specialising in the growing and supplying of first class forestry plants to the Irish Forestry market



GROWING QUALITY FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE

[www.nonesohardy.ie](http://www.nonesohardy.ie)

Tel: 353 (0) 539429105  
Paulbeg,  
Shillelagh,  
Co. Wicklow,  
Ireland



**VAN DER WEL LIMITED**

Nurseries and Garden Centre  
AUGHRIM, CO. WICKLOW

Tel.: 0402-36595 <> Fax.: 0402-36506 <> E-mail: mail@vanderwel.ie

For a wide range of Hedging & Hedgerow plants (including Native species), Ornamental trees, Conifers, Shrubs, Fruit trees/bushes and much more.

**Please Visit: [www.vanderwel.ie](http://www.vanderwel.ie) and have a look at our Pricelist and Web Shop**





**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

- [agriculture.gov.ie](http://agriculture.gov.ie)



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