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into 

Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

150

Keeping InTouch

{ *Interactive dialogue with members, and key news items* }

GENERAL SECRETARY'S COMMENT

A very engaging year



Happy
Christmas
to all our
members



As 2017 draws to a close it is timely to reflect on what was a very engaging year for our union.

Branch meetings continue to be the focal point of engagement for most INTO members. A full programme of training for officers was implemented this year by INTO Learning throughout the country. It is clear that this good work is paying off through better attendances at meetings and greater engagement. In every district training events have been organised for new members and for staff representatives. We will build on this in the coming years.

Complementing this work INTO Head Office organised numerous meetings and seminars for members. Over 800 school leaders attended principals' seminars throughout the year. A similar number of members attended retirement planning seminars as they prepare to move on to the next stage of their lives. Information meetings on various topics such as panel rights, promotion and health and safety were extremely well-attended.

At national level the INTO Youth Conference, Principals and Deputy Principals Conference and the Education Conference provided opportunities for members to engage with education policy at national level, making sure that the voice of teachers remains central.

The union's social media presence and engagement continues to expand. Additionally, nearly one in three members now has the leave app on their devices while just under 2,000 members downloaded the conference app. While 758 delegates attended annual congress in Belfast the webcast of the proceedings ensured that over eight thousand members were facilitated to follow the business of Congress.

The first half of the year saw an election for president of the union and a national ballot of members on the Public Service Stability Agreement. While we did not manage to bring pay inequality to an end we succeeded in accelerating the process to address it. Our focus is now on ensuring a timeframe for delivery.

I want to thank all members for this level of engagement which ensures the INTO continues to be, as it has been for 150 years, a strong voice in Irish education. I wish all members a peaceful Christmas and new year.

Sheila Nunan



This year, in lieu of sending Christmas cards, the INTO will donate to the charity Irish Autism Action.

The services IAA provide include raising

awareness, information on education and intervention support, advocacy, counselling, home-based support, research information and advice for families.

IAA does not receive any government funding, their annual income is raised through a variety of fundraising events and projects. Find more information at autismireland.ie

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Letters

Uncertain future for visiting teachers

The headline on the November 2017 issue of *InTouch* stated 'More Progress for Class Size' which is welcomed by all. However, there is a significant cohort of teachers in the Visiting Teacher Service for blind/visually impaired students/deaf/hard of hearing children (VTHVI) who do not enjoy any such reduction.

There have been no additional teachers appointed in this service for the past 15 years. Caseload numbers have increased commensurate with the population of children in school. VTHVIs, who have specialist expertise and qualifications in the education of blind/deaf children, cannot give the appropriate or indeed adequate level of teaching support to these children. This is to the detriment of all.

This service has now been moved to the NCSE. It is intended that permanent appointments of teachers to the VTHVI service will be on civil service terms i.e. year-round teaching positions on a different salary scale from teachers in schools.

This year celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Visiting Teacher Service, the future of which, is now, very uncertain.

Mise le meas,
Rosaleen O'Halloran (VTVI)

Getting the most out of SubSearch

The INTO SubSearch website aims to match teachers looking for work with principals looking for substitutes.

To get accurate results, it is very important that the location of your school is set correctly. This can be done in the 'Edit my School' section of the website. You can zoom out on the map to see what your location is set to and use the green 'Change Point' button to reset your location. Don't forget to click the 'Save School Details' button to save your changes. It is also useful to broaden your search by increasing your search radius using the drop-down menu.

Principals looking for a teacher can log into the site and search for a teacher in their area who is available on a certain day, or days, over the current week and the following week. The search area can be set as a 5 to 75km radius from the school.

Teachers looking for work can set up to three locations where they are able to work. For teachers, it is important to set your availability each week. If you have not updated your availability, you will not appear in search results. Teachers must be registered with the Teaching Council in order to sign up to the site.

As SubSearch is designed to provide subs for the short-term, teachers looking for work are asked to update their availability each week.

If you have any questions about the SubSearch website or are having problems setting up or making changes to your profile, please email subsearch@into.ie or phone Gráinne on 01 8047746.



Tell us what you think



InTouch welcomes your letters. Have your say about something you have read in *InTouch* or want to communicate with other INTO members.
€50 voucher draw each month for letter writers.
Email: editor@into.ie or write to: The Editor, *InTouch*,

INTO, Vere Foster House, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.
Mark all such communications '*InTouch* Letters' and give a contact telephone number and your INTO membership number for verification. Long letters may be edited.

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« *The Irish National Teachers' Organisation ... who's who, what's new, and what's happening* »

Kindling the Flame

INTO 150 Year History (1868 – 2018)

Kindling the Flame: 150 Years of the INTO chronicles and marks the life of the INTO since its formal beginnings in 1868. It is a major contribution to the INTO 150 celebrations.

Bans on organising

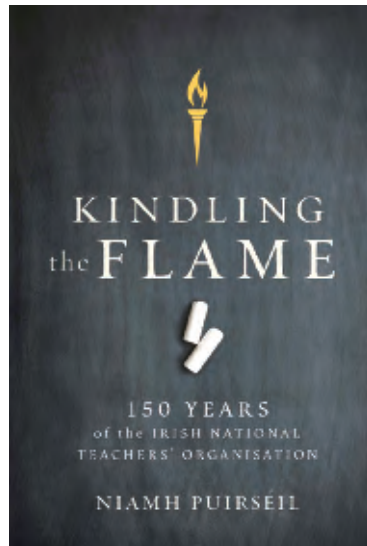
The publication traces the INTO's history as Ireland's longest-established, largest and only all-island teachers' union. From the start, organisation of teachers was opposed and even forbidden. Both the Education Commissioners and the Catholic hierarchy put bans in place at various times. Despite this, and with the assistance of Vere Foster as an external president in its early days, the INTO survived and grew in strength throughout the 19th century.

Into the 20th century, teachers took on a new and more varied, child-centred school programme. Between 1912 and 1920, the INTO also had its first female president, registered as a trade union, elected its first full-time general secretary and fought a wide range of campaigns both on individual cases and on pay and conditions.

Marriage ban and strikes

In the early years of Irish independence, the INTO had to fight on several fronts, against the marriage bar on women teachers and opposing pay and pension cuts in the new state. The struggles later culminated in significant INTO events such as the lengthy 1946 strike, the campaign for pay parity with post-primary teachers, and opposition to the take-over of school principalships by members of religious orders (the issue in the famous Ballina dispute).

Niamh Puirseil's book goes on to analyse events in more recent history including the John McGahern sacking (1960s), the introduction of degree status for teachers (1970s) and the raft of



Kindling the Flame – 150 Years of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation
(Dublin: Gill Books, 2017)

education reviews (1980s). Significant INTO leaders are covered as are disputes including the 1985 pay campaign under the banner of 'Teachers United'.

Today's position and northern events

The story of the INTO is brought up to date in the context of the financial crisis of recent years, with a brief outline of challenges facing the Organisation today.

A unique feature of the book is that it contains two chapters tracing INTO's work in Northern Ireland since partition and the particular challenges faced by the Organisation for its very survival, and then progress, there.

Tribute to the study

Professor John Coolahan acted as advisor throughout the researching and writing of *Kindling the Flame*.

In paying tribute to Niamh Puirseil and her work he said of the publication: "The study is very well researched and is objectively written. In a succinct form, it covers a huge canvas of events, and is located well within the political, economic, social and cultural context of its era. Its launch should be a major celebratory event for the INTO."



John Coolahan, Professor Emeritus of Education, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Niamh Puirseil, historian and author, and Noel Ward, INTO Deputy General Secretary

INTO condemns the non-payment of minor works grant

Last month, the INTO strongly criticised the non-payment of the minor capital works grant to primary schools describing the failure to pay the grant as indefensible.

The general secretary said schools could not plan effectively to maintain and upgrade their buildings and equipment without certainty that the money would be paid. She called on the minister to clarify without delay that the money would be paid to schools this year. The union said repeated requests to the Department for details of a proposed payment date had met with no response.

Recently in the Dáil the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton

announced the Minor Works Capital Grant for the 2017/2018 school year would be "considered" in the context of the Department's overall capital position over the coming weeks. Ms Nunan said with a quarter of the school year gone the least principals were entitled to was the courtesy of a definitive statement. She said vague commitments were no use to principals with school accounts dropping into the red.

The minister also told the Dáil that good budgeting by boards of management would help ensure that funding and grants received during the year are managed to cater for costs

arising throughout the school year. Ms Nunan said the first step in budgeting is knowing what money is available. She said grants and funding had to be received before budgeting could take place. "Without funding, or knowledge of when funding will be made available schools cannot plan."

Ms Nunan said many schools were in a very precarious financial position and needed the funding to ensure that vital repairs and upgrades could go ahead. She said any failure to fund on-going repairs and maintenance of schools would be a significant error and ultimately a waste of taxpayers' money.

Supplementary Panel 2018/19 School Year

Apply to DES by Friday 8 December 2017



Members pictured at a Supplementary Panel information meeting in the Silver Springs Hotel, Cork, on 20 November 2017

Circular 68/17 sets out the arrangements for access to the supplementary redeployment panels for the 2018/19 school year for eligible registered primary teachers in fixed term/temporary positions (this includes substitute positions) and part-time positions in recognised primary schools.

Completed applications must be returned to: Primary Teacher Allocations Section, Department of Education and Skills, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co Westmeath, to be received on or before

Friday 8 December 2017. Members should note that application forms will not be accepted by the DES after this date.

Last month and earlier this month, in order to advise members making applications, the INTO organised a series of information meetings throughout the country. The meetings gave information about the supplementary panel and CIDs and took members present through the application process. Individual queries were dealt with by experienced Head Office staff and officials.

Peter to retire

Peter Mullan, INTO Assistant General Secretary, will retire from the INTO in the new year. Peter became AGS in 2014, having previously served as senior official with responsibility for media and communications since 2002.

Peter currently leads the Communications and Learning Section which has responsibility for issues relating to INTO publications, communication channels, press and media, professional development, trade union training and ICT.

Peter is also editor of InTouch, and oversees a range of INTO publications. He is a member of the National Union of Journalists and the Public Relations Institute of Ireland.



Where your INTO subscription goes

Part 4 in our series on how INTO members' subscription is spent

Capital and publications – INTO buildings and documents

Between them, the capital and publications funds are allocated 14% of membership subscription. This amounts to €1.07 per member per fortnight for the publications fund and €0.78 for the capital fund.

Publications fund

The major item of expenditure under the publications fund relates to printing, design, postage and other costs associated with INTO publications. Such publications range from *InTouch* to the *Irish Teachers' Journal*, the diary and wall planner, plus a wide range of policy papers and documents. The total such expenditure in 2016 was over €534,000.

Other significant costs arising under the publications fund included computer costs of €130,000,

depreciation costs on equipment (€200,000 last year) and a smaller amount on insurance and maintenance (all full-year 2016 expenditure).

INTO publications continue to be widely read and are in demand across all bodies which have an interest in education.

Capital fund

Under INTO rule, the capital expenditure fund is used to meet all major expenditure incurred in the provision and maintenance of organisation property. Practically, this relates to upkeep, repair, security and rates costs of the INTO Head Office at 35 Parnell Square in Dublin (and adjoining offices owned by INTO) and the INTO Belfast office at 23-24 College Gardens.

Maintenance costs in the 2016 INTO accounts amounted to some €315,000.

Since purchasing the INTO's first head office almost 100 years ago, and with the move to a Parnell Square premises in the 1960s, the Organisation has acquired a number of buildings.

While the INTO has not purchased any further property in the past three years, there continue to be mortgage payments to be met on two adjoining buildings in Parnell Square which are owned and partially used by the INTO and which also provide a rental income.

The next article in this series looks at expenditure, including support of members in court and tribunal actions, through the INTO's Contingencies and Legal Fund.

PDC meets with FSSU



The INTO Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee met last month (10 November) in Head Office. The meeting reviewed the very successful Principals' and Deputy Principals' Conference held in September in Mullingar. Feedback received from delegates was extremely positive for the most part.

High on the agenda was the lack of substitute teachers at the present time and the challenges that this poses in particular for principals across the country. Members of the PDC also reflected on the recent budget and the

gains made by the INTO in progressing its priorities.

In light of positions available due to the recent partial restoration of posts of responsibility, the PDC welcomed the programme of training events for assessors organised by the INTO in conjunction with CPSMA.

Guest speaker at the meeting was Louise O'Meara of the Financial Support Service Unit (FSSU), that is currently working to expand services to support the management of over 3,200 primary schools in Ireland. It is hoped that this

support mechanism will substantially reduce the workload for school treasurers. The FSSU is willing to visit schools (perhaps clusters of schools in a particular area) to demonstrate the process involved and explain the online resources. School leaders may contact the FSSU directly should they wish to organise a consultation with the team.

Contact FSSU at 01 9104020, email primary@fssu.ie or visit www.fssu.ie/primary for further information.

Cycle to Work Scheme

Circular 0066/2017 details the Cycle to Work Scheme.

The scheme allows for the purchase of a new bicycle and/or bicycle safety equipment up to a maximum value of €1,000 once every five years.

The cost of the bicycle and/or bicycle safety equipment as stated on the invoice from the supplier will be deducted from salary and the employee will not pay tax, PRSI, Universal Social Charge or Pension Related Deduction on the remuneration sacrificed.

To be eligible, an applicant must be employed in a permanent, contract of indefinite duration (CID), fixed-term, or regular part-time capacity at the date of application. The employment must be capable of lasting until the salary sacrifice

has been recouped.

It is not possible for people paid solely through the online claims system (OLCS), for example: casual or non-casual employees, substitute employees covering maternity leave, parental leave, sick leave, etc., to avail of the scheme.

Full details of Circular 066/2017 can be found on the INTO website.



Job-share register

Members interested in job-sharing can avail of a register provided by INTO Head Office in the Members' Area of the website. The register contains a list of potential candidates for job-sharing.

Those members who wish to have their details added to the register should fill in the form provided. The register will be updated and published each week with new job-share adverts up until the deadline of 1 February 2018.

Please note, the INTO has no role in matching members or approving job-share arrangements. The purpose of the register is simply to facilitate members making contact with potential partners. Members registering should include their contact details in the notice they wish to appear online, otherwise potential partners will be unable to contact them.

The deadline for job-sharing applications to boards of management is 1 February 2018.

Correction

The November edition of *InTouch* stated that teachers who do substitute work while on career break will be paid at their non-casual rate from day 41 of

substitute service. This should have read teachers are paid at their casual rate for **90 days**. We apologise for this error.



Thank you, Aidan

General secretary Sheila Nunan is pictured presenting a gift to retired branch organiser for Cork City South East and Standing Orders representative for District 12, Aidan Buckley. Aidan was a special guest at the CCSE branch meeting in October.

Dip for David

David O'Sullivan, senior official in the INTO's Legal and Industrial Relations Section of Head Office, recently completed a Diploma in Employment Law in the Kings Inns and is currently undertaking the Kings Inns Diploma in Education and the Law.

Before taking up his appointment in INTO Head Office, David was a teacher in Scoil na Mainistreach in Celbridge, Co Kildare. He holds honours B.Ed and M.A degrees and a post graduate diploma in educational leadership. He regularly presents at INTO principals' seminars, officer training and INTO conferences.



David O'Sullivan, Senior Official

Update on retrospective vetting

31 December 2017 deadline for retrospective vetting

The National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons Act) 2012-2016 has set 31 December 2017 as the deadline for retrospective vetting.

To date, 90% of the 100,000 teachers on the Register have been vetted.

The Teaching Council has thanked teachers for their cooperation in ensuring that all registered teachers are vetted by the end of year deadline.

On 11 September, the Council issued notices to the 16,500 registered teachers remaining to be vetted as part of the retrospective vetting process. The INTO advises members who have yet to submit

a vetting application to do so immediately in order to be eligible to renew registration.

Teachers who have completed Stage 1 of the vetting application process by submitting a vetting application to the Council and have received an email link to Stage 2 (the National Vetting Bureau online address form), should complete the address form immediately.

Teachers previously vetted through the Council are exempt from the retrospective vetting requirement.

Teachers can check their vetting status by logging on to the 'My Registration'

section of the Teaching Council website www.teachingcouncil.ie.

DES Circular 0016/2017 sets out the statutory requirements for the retrospective vetting of teaching staff. The statutory vetting requirements for teachers changing schools/jobs continue to apply as set out in DES Circular 31/2016.

Please see the FAQ section of the Teaching Council website which has retrospective vetting FAQs for both teachers and schools/principals. The FAQ section of the Department of Education and Skills' website also provides information regarding the retrospective vetting process.

Renowned educationalist visits INTO Head Office

Andy Hargreaves, global educationalist, policy influencer and chair of education at Boston College, recently met with teacher unions at INTO Head Office. The discussions considered the

role of teacher unions in the educational and professional sphere, particularly in relation to establishing a culture of collaborative professionalism.



From L to R: Noel Ward, Deputy General Secretary; Sheila Nunan, General Secretary; Andy Hargreaves; John Boyle, INTO President; Deirbhile Nic Craith, Director of Education and Research; Maeve Mc Cafferty, official and Michael Mc Conigley, intern.

INTO general secretary appointed to Gender Equality Taskforce for Higher Education



INTO general secretary, Sheila Nunan, has been appointed to the Gender Equality Taskforce for Higher Education established by Mary Mitchell O'Connor, Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Higher Education.

The taskforce has been asked to prepare a prioritised three year action plan, in consultation with stakeholders. Funding of €500,000 was provided in Budget 2018 to support the work of the Taskforce and greater gender equality in the sector.

The taskforce members are Marie O'Connor, chairperson, Ryan Shanks, Prof Philip Nolan, Dr Patricia Mulcahy and Sheila Nunan.

The terms of reference for the taskforce will be to:

- Oversee a review of the systems of recruitment and promotion policies and practices in higher education institutions.
- Review national and international practice and relevant literature including the *Review on Gender Equality* published by the HEA in 2016 and good practices arising from the Athena Swan process and lessons learnt from unsuccessful applications.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders.
- Prepare a prioritised three year action plan.

INTO Congress 2018

INTO Annual Congress 2018 will be held in the INEC, Killarney, from Monday 2 April to Wednesday 4 April 2018

Congress is the governing body of the INTO and, each year, decides the work programme for the CEC and officials of the union for the coming year.

An elected committee called the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) prepares the Congress agenda from motions submitted by INTO branches and districts in the form of order papers listing the business of Congress and motions for discussion.

The INTO president presides over Congress.

Who attends INTO Congress?

- ✧ Delegates elected by INTO branches.
- ✧ Three delegates from each district committee.
- ✧ Members and incoming members of the Central Executive Committee.
- ✧ Members and incoming members of the Benefit Funds Committee.
- ✧ Members and incoming members of the Education Committee, Equality Committee and Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee.
- ✧ Members of the SOC.
- ✧ Two delegates from the Northern Committee.
- ✧ Two delegates from the Accounts Committee.

What is on the agenda?

Annual Congress debates motions submitted by branches, districts or the CEC. It also considers reports from various committees of the INTO including the CEC, Benefit Funds Committee, Northern Committee, Education Committee, Equality Committee, Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee and Accounts Committee.

These reports are published online in the Members' Area of the INTO website.

Some motions to Congress are discussed in public session which is open to delegates and invited guests. These are also webcasted live on the INTO website. Other motions are discussed in private by accredited delegates only.

Delegates to Congress

The number of delegates a branch may send to Congress is laid down by Rule 10 of the INTO Rules and Constitution. Branches may send two delegates for the



John Boyle, INTO President, will deliver his president's address on the first day of Annual Congress 2018. His address will cover issues of concern to members.

first 129 members in the branch with an additional delegate for each additional 65 members or part thereof.

The business of the INTO is governed



Noel Ward, Deputy General Secretary/General Treasurer, will deliver the Financial Report to Congress 2018. This report, which includes details of the financial performance of the Organisation in 2017, is given on Day 1 during private session

by the Organisation's *Rules and Constitution*. This is available in the Members' Area of the INTO website.

Would you like to be a delegate to Annual Congress?

Find out how by attending your branch AGM in January. Check with your staff representative for the date of your AGM (dates are also published on the INTO website).

Who can submit motions to Congress?

Any member is entitled to submit a motion to their branch for discussion at the AGM. Motions passed by branches are sent forward for placement on the agenda for Congress.

What do motions for Congress look like?

- ✧ A motion is a proposition submitted for discussion and vote.
- ✧ It must ask Congress to declare an opinion or call for a course of action – or both.
- ✧ Motions should be designed to promote the aims and objects of the Organisation as set out in Rule 3.
- ✧ All motions must be clear and unambiguous in meaning and intention and must be worded accordingly.
- ✧ All motions must be capable of implementation.
- ✧ Each motion should be brief and concise and should not contain argument.
- ✧ Each motion should deal with one topic only.

Sample motion

The following is a motion which was passed at a previous Congress and is an example of a well-worded motion:

Congress deplores the totally inadequate funding of primary education and calls on the CEC to demand that:

- a. the reductions made over the past years to the school capitation grant be restored in full immediately;***
- b. the minor works grant and the summer works scheme be fully reinstated on the calendar of grants;***
- c. every school receives a reasonable budget to provide for the maintenance, repair and replacement of school ICT***



Standing Orders Committee will meet prior to Congress 2018 to finalise the agenda and prioritise motions for discussion by delegates.



Sheila Nunan, General Secretary, will respond to the ministers for education on Day 2 of Annual Congress.

equipment and that high speed broadband be made available to all primary schools.

How priority is determined for items on the final agenda

The SOC has regard to the following when determining priority for the final agenda:

- ⌘ The consensus among the general membership in relation to the priority issues in any particular year.
- ⌘ The consensus among the SOC in relation to the priority issues, and the motions which will result in the greatest degree of favourable and advantageous publicity for the Organisation.
- ⌘ The degree of urgency attending to a

particular motion.

- ⌘ The extent to which a particular motion will further the objectives of the Organisation.

Congress timetable

What happens at Congress is decided by Rule 13 of the *INTO Rules and Constitution*.

On Day 1 Congress runs from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the latest. The business on the first day includes the president's speech and a response on behalf of the invited guests. During this time Congress also considers financial reports and motions including auditor's report and statement of accounts.

On Day 2, Congress starts at 9 a.m. and

finishes no later than 4.30 p.m. During the first part of this day the ministers for education, or their representatives, address Congress and the INTO general secretary responds. Motions are debated and reports delivered for the rest of the time.

Congress opens at 9 a.m. on Day 3 and the closing session begins at 2.00 p.m. The agenda for Day 3 includes motions in private and public session as decided by Standing Orders Committee. At the end of Congress the next president of the INTO takes up office.

Keep up to date with Congress 2018 info via the INTO website and social media.



Checking the Congress Agenda. The agenda is available in printed format and on the INTO Conference App.



Delegates vote on motions discussed at Congress.

INTO Education Conference

Letterkenny 2017

ICT in education: policy, pedagogy and practice

ICT can enhance, enrich and extend children's learning and transform teaching when deployed appropriately. It prepares children for living in a rapidly changing society and prepares them for employment in new occupations. Technology skills have become as fundamental to living a full life as being able to read, write and compute. Apart from being an engine of sustainable economic growth, technological skills are at the heart of a more cohesive, more



Seán Gallagher, principal of Attymass NS, Ballina, Co Mayo, and former deputy director of PDST was the keynote speaker at the Education Conference

equal and more successful society.

Tension emerges when ICT is presented as an add-on subject in an already over-crowded curriculum. It is not feasible to consider ICT as a stand-alone subject requiring the development of separate skills needing distinct curriculum time. ICT should be considered as a tool and as a means for accessing the curriculum and supporting, enriching and extending teaching and learning. Teachers must be supported in embedding ICT in curriculum and assessment across all subjects. Notwithstanding the importance of skills, ICT in schools must emphasise teaching and learning, not just technology skills.

There has been no shortage of government policies outlining ambitious plans to embed ICT in education. Unfortunately, many of the aspirational documents never came to fruition as they failed to deliver on the promise of supports. Failure to succeed can be traced to under-investment at school level, a lack of a coherent, implementable, developmental national strategy and insufficient capacity to allow teachers to develop their professional practice.



Sheila Nunan, General Secretary, addressing delegates at the conference

Each policy created reasonable expectations among teachers in relation to the use of ICT in primary schools but because of the continued system failures, in the majority of schools, they failed.

The INTO carried out a comprehensive research project on teachers' views on the use of ICT in schools.

View the webcast archive of the Education Conference at www.into.ie/ROI/NewsEvents/Conferences/EducationConsultativeConference/EducationConsultativeConference2017/WebcastArchive/

Current initiatives in ICT

Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020

The *Digital Strategy for Schools* (DES, 2015) aims to further embed technology and digital learning tools in primary and post-primary schools. The Strategy sets out a vision for the role of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment for schools in Ireland. It has been developed around four key themes:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Using ICT
- Teacher Professional Learning
- Leadership, Research and Policy
- ICT Infrastructure



The Digital Learning Framework (2017)

A new *Digital Learning Framework* for primary and post-primary schools has been developed by the DES. The implementation of the Framework is being trialled in a cross-sectoral representative sample of approximately 30 primary and 20 post-primary schools and the outcome of this trial will inform the national roll out of the Framework in September 2018.



Findings from INTO research

The INTO consulted members to determine teachers' views on the use of ICT in primary schools. The feedback from this study will inform future INTO policy in relation to ICT in education including ongoing work by the NCCA on coding. Teachers participating in INTO online summer courses were asked to complete a survey on the use of ICT in education. A total of 2,475 members responded. The INTO also held focus groups with principals attending the INTO School Leadership summer course. The respondents were broadly representative of demographics and schools in Ireland.

Access to ICT

Less than 5% of teachers indicated that students had direct access to an individual computing device in class. The respondents reported that students were more likely to occasionally have access to a shared device (42%). Of their students with special educational needs, only 21% and 20% had access to a dedicated computing device and assistive technology, respectively.

Barriers to the effective implementation of ICT in classrooms and schools included insufficient access to ICT devices for students (34%), pressure to cover the curriculum (33%), insufficient access to high quality broadband (30%), insufficient levels of immediate technical support (28%) and insufficient time for planning and preparation for integrating ICT into the curriculum (20%).

Only 9% of teachers rated their internet quality as excellent. 84% reported that faster broadband would reduce uploading delays and ensure better classroom management. 78% suggested that more reliability would give teachers more confidence to use technology while 59% believed faster broadband would better engage pupils.

Over half of teachers said there is no point in pursuing ICT unless all schools have access to technical supports.

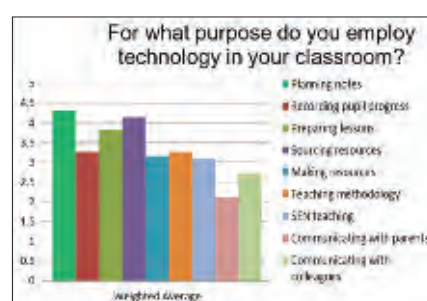
Teachers' perceptions of ICT in education

Nearly all teachers (90%) have a positive disposition and attitude towards the integration of ICT in the teaching-learning process. Almost half the respondents (48%) disagreed that students usually have more knowledge than them. 85% indicated students are more motivated when using computers in the classroom and over half the teachers surveyed

agreed that the use of ICT increases their own motivation. 96% saw ICT as a useful tool in supporting children with special educational needs.

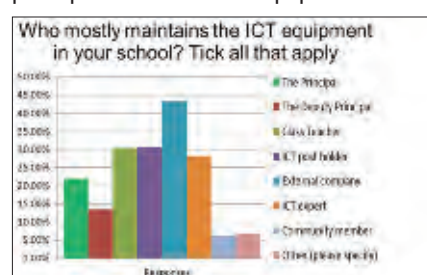
Teaching and learning

The survey revealed that teachers currently use ICT in classrooms in a range of ways. Respondents indicated that they were most likely to use ICT for the purpose of planning (63%) and for the purpose of sourcing digital resources (49%). Fewer teachers tend to use ICT for communicating with parents (5%) or for collaborating with colleagues (10%).



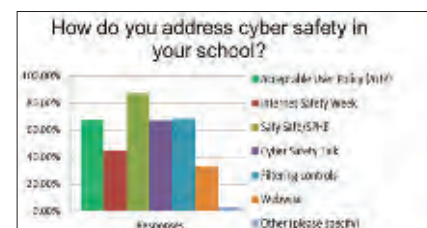
ICT maintenance

The majority of respondents (43%) indicated that they have their ICT equipment maintained by an external company. Responsibility for the maintenance of ICT in schools was also assigned to class teachers (30%) or to an ICT co-ordinator (31%). Some 22% of respondents indicated that the school principal looks after ICT equipment.



Cyber safety

The respondents of the survey were asked to highlight the precautions taken in their schools to ensure online safety. The majority addressed cyber safety through SPHE. Teachers also reported that their school endeavoured to ensure online safety by way of an Acceptable Usage Policy (67%), internet filtering controls (67%) and cyber safety talks (67%). Other teachers use Internet Safety Week (45%) and the Webwise website (33%) as a means of raising awareness of responsible online citizenship.



During the focus groups some principals cautioned that cyber bullying and social media interactions were brought into schools and teachers were often left to deal with the fallout.

Recommendations

1. Provide primary schools with sufficient financial resources to invest in up-to-date technology infrastructure, ensuring that all learning areas have access to a range of ICT equipment as well as provision for the incorporation of students' mobile devices.
2. Support schools to develop plans for the phased integration of digital resources at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. Adopt an integrated approach to procurement that takes full account of the operating costs of ICT equipment and technical support provision.
4. Prioritise the provision of high speed broadband to all primary schools. All schools need a high speed and reliable network that extends to all areas of the school. All computers should be networked, facilitating access to online and locally-based server resources.
5. Prioritise the re-establishment of middle management posts in primary schools to facilitate a coordinated approach to the integrated development of technology usage across the curriculum, in all classrooms, in every school.
6. Develop digital content to support the Irish primary school curriculum that meets the diverse needs of pupils in Irish primary schools.
7. Prioritise and develop a wide range of formal ICT CPD opportunities for teachers. Recognise and support informal structures that facilitate teachers to collaborate in their professional learning.
8. Prioritise and encourage schools in the use of ICT resources and assistive technologies to facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN.
9. Support teachers to enable them to provide learning opportunities that support cross-curricular learning approaches, student-directed learning, collaborative, discovery-based learning activities.

Snapshots from the conference



Deirbhile Nic Craith,
INTO Director of
Education and Research
with Ger Stack,
Cathaoirleach of the
Education Committee

View more photos from the conference on the INTO Flickr account at
www.flickr.com/photos/irishnationalteachersorganisation/



John Boyle, INTO President, speaking
at the conference





Vere Foster medal winners

Vere Foster Medal

The INTO Congress of 1956, held in Belfast decided to organise a suitable memorial as a tribute to the memory of Vere Foster. Captain McCune-Reid, President of the INTO at the time, acted as secretary to the committee which undertook this task. He prepared and published an interesting and informative account of Foster's life and work.

The memorial takes the form of a Vere Foster medal, and is generally awarded by the INTO, to the student obtaining the highest mark in Teaching Practice and/or Curriculum areas of Education.



Sterling Silver, Gold Plated, Hall Marked

Vere Foster 1819 – 1900

First President of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Vere Foster was born in Copenhagen of an Irish-born father. He worked in the UK Diplomatic Corps but left to help the victims of the great Famine on his brother's estate in Ardee, Co Louth.

Concerned by reports of the terrible conditions for those using emigrant ships, Foster campaigned in the USA and Britain for improved conditions for passengers. He helped to found and became the first President of the INTO, travelling throughout the country campaigning for the maintenance and improvement of national schools.

Foster is also known for the popular 'Vere Foster National School Writing Books'. He died in Belfast on 21 December 1900.



Dublin City University



Niall Gillic, from Kells, Co Meath, a student of the B.Ed programme, is presented with the Vere Foster medal by Joe Killeen, INTO Vice President.



Joe Killeen presenting Clara Keane from Marino, Dublin – a student of the PMEPP – with the Vere Foster Medal
Photos: Nick Bradshaw

Mary Immaculate College



Georgina Sutton from Gorey, Co Wexford, was awarded the Bonn Vere Foster Award. Georgina is pictured with Joe Killeen, Vice-President of INTO.

Eoghan Linehan, from Douglas, Cork, was the recipient of not one, but three awards. Eoghan, a graduate of the Bachelor of Education in Education and Psychology programme, was the recipient of the Bonn Vere Foster Award. Pictured here with Joe Killeen, Vice-President of INTO, Eoghan was also awarded the Carlisle and Blake Prize and the Frostburg Scholarship.
Photos: Liam Burke, Press 22.



My time as a student/teacher with the Global Schoolroom



The opportunity to join the teacher education programme run by Global Schoolroom, under University College Dublin, has been a once in lifetime opportunity for me and other teachers in Meghalaya.

It has enabled me to learn from our assigned overseas mentors, to understand their pedagogical approaches, through which we are able to improve our classroom teachings here in North Eastern India.

As a member of the Khasi Jaintia Deficit School Teachers' Association (KJDSTA), I cannot describe in merely a few words all the things I was able to learn during my three years in the programme. What I can say is that my mode of teaching has, without a doubt, improved by a mile compared to what I have been doing in the past years of my teaching career.

From day one of our mentoring and tutoring sessions up to the Teacher Tutor observation, I felt I was completely absorbed in my work. I recall always looking forward for motivating feedback from my tutors and having the need to prove to them that their mentoring and tutoring efforts were not accomplished in vain.

They were there with us, for us and



Valareen Liza Marbaniang, Alienor Michelle Lyngwa and Careen Ester Grace Marbaniang at their graduation in October

helping us all the way.

The modules provided by the course go hand in hand with all the classroom teaching as well as helping us understand the different criterion needed for a good and healthy school environment. What interested me most were the reflection

and reflective diaries where we had to put down our thoughts and feelings into a written format. We would reflect on our past errors and try to make room for improvement on the next task. This has encouraged us to rely on our own SELF, elevating our self-esteem and developing self-concepts to be confident in whatever task assigned is to us.

On completion of the course and finally receiving a diploma certificate, I cannot help but express the amount of joy that came when I realised the importance of what it takes to be a dedicated teacher, a good friend, a leader, an honest worker and, most of all, a role model to my students. It has strengthened my understanding that my obligation as a teacher is to teach with love, patience, understanding and sacrifice. To assist, to provide, to protect and encourage, to innovate, to act, to reorganise, to guide, to mentor, to counsel and finally to learn, unlearn and re-learn.

I believe that this programme indeed will lead to a holistic education and excellence in teaching and learning.

Thank you, Global Schoolroom.

Valareen Liza Marbaniang

Volunteers

Global Schoolroom is now seeking volunteers for the 2018 July

programmes in India, Sierra Leone and Kenya – please visit their website at

www.globalschoolroom.ie to submit online submissions.

GLOBAL SCHOOLROOM (GS) is a teacher education initiative established in 2006 by two Irish teachers which has, since then, brought over 2,000 teachers in India, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Kenya together with more than 200 of their Irish counterparts to share their educational experience and contribute to their professional learning.

Since 2008, GS has facilitated a UCD Collaborative Programme with more than 520 Indian teachers progressing to a Level 7 award. October 2017 saw the third cohort of 165 Indian teachers awarded their University Diploma in Teacher Education at three graduation ceremonies in Shillong, capital of Meghalaya, Guwahati (Dispur) in the state of Assam and the third in Agartala, capital of the state of Tripura.

Since the programme commenced,



During the October mid-term break, INTO president, John Boyle, was invited to give the keynote address at the Global Schoolroom graduation ceremonies in Shillong and Agartala, in North East India near the Bangladeshi border.

GS has witnessed a sustained increase in children attending school and a greater sense of purpose and professionalism amongst Indian teacher colleagues.

In India, GS has worked closely with the Khasi Jaintia Deficit School

Teachers' Association (KJDSTA). GS recognises the value of supporting the professionalisation of the teacher and have been instrumental in establishing a collaborative union-to-union support and training programme between the KJDSTA and the INTO.



Two vacancies in INTO Head Office, Dublin

The INTO is the largest teachers' union in Ireland representing 42,000 members in the Republic and Northern Ireland



Head of Communications (Senior Official)

The Head of Communication will have a strategic role developing and managing an organisational communications strategy for INTO.

This is a senior position under the overall direction of the General Secretary. The person will have responsibility for driving INTO's internal and external communications.

This key strategic role will involve:

- ✳ Managing, developing and editing the production of a wide range of internal communications.
- ✳ Developing, driving and monitoring INTO's online presence across a range of platforms and generating content for online communication.
- ✳ Promoting a positive image of the INTO and the primary teaching profession locally and nationally.

- ✳ Public affairs monitoring and engagement through fostering and developing positive relationships with key stakeholders.
- ✳ Managing all communication aspects of major INTO events.
- ✳ Providing training and media coaching for spokespersons.
- ✳ Promoting the active involvement of members in the affairs and structures of the Organisation at all levels.

The person will have:

- ✳ A strong academic background and appropriate professional experience.
- ✳ Proven success in writing in a variety of media with the ability to convey complex information in a user friendly way.
- ✳ Strong analytical, reporting and project management skills and ability

to work on own initiative.

- ✳ Strong social media skills.
- ✳ A thorough understanding of current issues in education and industrial relations.
- ✳ Ability to manage a diverse team and to collaborate across the Organisation.
- ✳ Excellent communication, presentation and interpersonal skills.
- ✳ Experience of external and internal communications management.

INTO is a good employer and details of terms and conditions are available on request from rwarren@into.ie

Please forward Curriculum Vitae with a covering letter outlining what strengths you would bring to the role to the general secretary at into@dhr.ie

Closing date 5p.m. on 20 December 2017.



Official in Legal and Industrial Relations

The Legal & Industrial Relations Department provides a range of legal services to INTO members including advice and support, representation in various employment tribunals, dealing with Fitness to Teach/Practice and presenting topics of interest at INTO seminars and meetings.

Due to the growth of the Organisation and an ever increasing demand for its professional services, the INTO is seeking to appoint a new official to work in its Legal & Industrial Relations department. The successful candidate will be working with a team who are qualified and experienced in legal, industrial relations and educational

matters and who are committed to providing a quality service to INTO members.

The successful candidate will be expected to have:

- ✳ A third level qualification and a minimum of five years relevant experience.
- ✳ Relevant knowledge of the education sector, industrial relations and legal matters.
- ✳ An excellent work ethic, capacity to act on his/her own initiative and a positive 'can do' attitude and approach to work.
- ✳ Excellent communication skills

including proficiency in research, drafting and editing.

- ✳ Excellent IT skills.
- ✳ Very good project management skills.
- ✳ Strong organisational and time management skills.
- ✳ Excellent interpersonal skills, sound judgement and ability to work co-operatively with our Head Office team.

Application including letter of application and CV to rwarren@into.ie by 5pm 20 December 2017. The INTO is a good employer and a detailed job description with terms and conditions is available on request.

INTO Bursary winners 2017/2018

Every year, all members of the INTO are invited to apply for one of five bursary awards. The bursaries of €1,500 are considered for any project which has been approved as a research endeavour by a recognised third-level institute.

All applications received are examined

by an independent assessor who makes recommendations on the applications. The 2017/2018 bursaries were announced at a ceremony at this year's INTO Consultative Conference on Education, on Friday 17 November 2017, in the Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Lorraine Crean, St Comán's Wood PS,

Roscommon, currently seconded to the NCCA, is studying at St Patrick's Campus, DCU, towards a Doctorate on 'When School and Home Connect – The Family Language Policy of Migrant Families in Ireland'. This work explores the links between educational language policy in Ireland and the family language policy of migrant families. The influence of the school and teachers on the formation of language ideologies and practices of migrant children is explored.



Denis Moynihan, Greenlanes NS, Clontarf, Dublin 3, currently on secondment to the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), is working towards a Masters in UCD on 'Assessing the Self-efficacy of Primary School Teachers in the Use of Digital Technologies'.

This research project aims to survey primary school teachers, using both questionnaires and interviews, about their self-efficacy in the use of digital technologies, in order to ascertain levels of competency and how it affects the use of digital tools in their classrooms.



Rachel Durning McCready, St Mary's NS, Castlefin, Co Donegal, is currently studying at Queens University, Belfast, towards a Doctorate on: 'Exploring the Language Acquisition of Children in their First Years of Primary School with Regard to Oral Language Learning and the Aistear Framework'

This action-research study seeks to address questions such as:

How do children experience language lessons?
How do I teach oral language skills and can my teaching be improved?

Is a short-term intervention to improve language skills necessary, possible, and if so, effective?

Michael Finnegan, Fossa NS, Killarney, Co Kerry, is currently studying at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, towards a Masters Degree on 'How does the Irish Process of School Self-Evaluation allow Principals to Enable and Empower Staff?'

Through considering the SSE process from an organisational psychology (Leadership, Motivation and Engagement, Change Management) and curricular development point of view, it is hoped to ascertain how it allows principals' best support and empower staff. It is also the intention to give consideration to how our present position within the international context of SSE and Whole School Planning informs Irish practices in the present and for the future.



Unable to attend the ceremony was **Anne McArdle, Réalt na Mara NS, Dundalk, Co Louth,** who is studying for a Masters in Trinity

College, Dublin, on 'A Critical Examination of the Droichead Process in the Irish Primary School Context'.

This case study will critically explore and examine the revised Droichead induction programme for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) being rolled out in Irish primary schools from the perspectives of the NQT and the professional support team (PST).

Home School Community

In November, the INTO appeared before the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills on the issue of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. The submission made by the INTO was informed by consultations with teachers and specifically by regular meetings with HSCL representatives.

Background

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme was initiated as a pilot project in 1990 to promote partnership between parents and teachers with the purpose of enhancing pupils' learning opportunities and to promote their retention in the education system. The HSCL Scheme was further extended in 2005 under DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the Action Plan for educational inclusion.

Central to the success of the DEIS Action Plan is the commitment to building relationships between the home and the school to better support children at risk. The INTO acknowledges the significant role that the HSCL scheme has played in helping to tackle educational disadvantage.

However, the HSCL scheme has been seriously impacted in recent years as a consequence of recessionary cutbacks. The INTO is hopeful that the Educational Welfare Service within Tusla will offer a renewed commitment to safeguarding and progressing the HSCL scheme.

Rural HSCL

Initially, all DEIS primary schools, both urban and rural, were included in the HSCL Scheme. However, it is regrettable that, since the abolition of the rural co-ordinators, no progress has been made in filling the gap left behind in the system. Rural DEIS schools have specific needs and would benefit from improved home-school links.

In general, the INTO is of the view that there is a role for HSCL support to build home-school relations in all primary schools. At the very least the HSCL scheme should be reassigned to all schools recognised as having educational disadvantage status, and consideration should be given to extending the scheme to special schools who have particular needs in terms of

home school relations.

Supporting Travellers

The attendance, participation and retention of Traveller pupils continues to be of concern in both DEIS and non-DEIS schools. The HSCL teacher does not currently have the capacity to fulfil the duties previously held by the Visiting Teacher for Travellers (VTT). The VTT had a specific understanding of Traveller culture that has been noticeably lost to the system. The level of engagement required to support Travellers needs intervention beyond that which can be incorporated into the current remit of the HSCL role.

In an attempt to counteract the loss of resources to Travellers, the INTO proposes that consideration should be given to expanding the allocation of HSCL teachers in areas that have a high concentration of Traveller pupils, including non-DEIS schools. Extending the capacity of HSCL to support Traveller pupils and their families would require specific professional development opportunities for HSCL teachers that would enhance their understanding of Traveller culture and their specific barriers to education. An expansion of the HSCL service could only complement support for Traveller families from other education welfare services.

Five-year limit

The DES has introduced a five-year limit on the deployment of teachers to the role of HSCL and this five-year term was restated in the DEIS Action Plan 2017. While there is a rationale to introduce a limit, for example, to enable more teachers the opportunity to take up the role, the INTO suggests more flexibility at local level.

The principal may be best placed to determine the most appropriate teacher for the role of HSCL considering that the responsibility of staff deployment is the function of the school principal as set out in Section 23 of the Education Acts 1998-2012. A balance must be achieved to ensure that the five-year limit does not result in schools losing experienced teachers, who have invested time in establishing strong relationships with families, from the role.

Therefore, the INTO is of the view that schools should be granted the autonomy and flexibility at local level to deploy the best placed teacher to the role of HSCL rather than be confined by a five-year limit.

Home visits

Home visitation is an integral part of the HSCL Scheme's focus on partnership. In many cases it promotes co-operation between the school and the home, and maximises the child's involvement and their retention in the education system. However, the nature of HSCL home visits has evolved in recent years and HSCL teachers sometimes find it problematic fulfilling the requirement for home visits.

In some cases, parents are more amenable to school visits as opposed to home visits. Some parents are reluctant to accommodate HSCL visits in the home as the practice does not align with their culture.

The INTO acknowledges the importance of home visits in ensuring a holistic perspective, however, interactions with parents should be about the contact irrespective of the context. Schools and HSCL teachers need to be trusted with the flexibility and discretion to determine locally whether home or school interactions are most appropriate at any given time.

HSCL CPD

The lack of commitment to date to a system-wide, professional development programme is an ongoing concern for HSCL teachers. The preventative role of the HSCL encompasses a broad remit including courses/classes, transfer programmes, integration with community groups, policy formation at school level, literacy/numeracy development and staff development to name but a few. Therefore, the HSCL teachers need ongoing professional development opportunities in order to extend and enhance their very specific role.

There is some ambiguity around the role of the HSCL. Regular, ongoing access to professional development would help restate and clarify that role particularly within the context of the Educational Welfare Service (EWS). Since

Liaison Scheme

the recessionary cutbacks, professional development opportunities have been minimal.

Professional induction support is also required for newly appointed HSCLs as there is increasing turnover due to the five-year limit. Adequate induction is important to ensure consistency, experience and expertise is harnessed.

With a view to ensuring a co-ordinated, inter-agency approach, the INTO also recommends that professional development should be provided to all teams within the EWS – the HSCL teachers, School Completion Programme (SCP) personnel and Education Welfare Officers (EWO), in addition to providing HSCL-specific professional development.

The INTO is supportive of an integrated approach to supporting families but where the different roles and responsibilities are respected. It may be, at times, appropriate for the various teams to work together, however, it is important that the HSCL teacher is not

expected to undertake the role of social worker or any other professional.

The INTO acknowledges and welcomes the recent commitment by the Educational Welfare Service to a comprehensive CPD programme that is currently underway.

Meitheal

The INTO notes the development of the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) Programme and the Meitheal practice model. While the INTO supports the commitment to professional development, it is important to state that HSCL teachers are not social workers or welfare officers, and they do not want to take on roles for which they are not qualified.


Participation of HSCL teachers in Meitheal should not be obligatory. However, there may be times when it is appropriate for HSCL teachers to become involved with Meitheal where it is of benefit to the child. In such cases they should have the opportunity to do

so with the relevant supports in place.

Any involvement by HSCL teachers or class teachers in Meitheal should be supported with substitution cover and other practical supports as required. Moreover, any involvement in Meitheal or similar programmes should not involve excessive paperwork for teachers and schools.

Conclusion

The INTO is strongly of the view that the role of the HSCL teacher in building lasting relationships between the home and the school is essential in tackling educational disadvantage. Parental involvement, especially in areas at risk of social exclusion, does not just benefit the children and the school – it is a crucial aspect of lifelong learning (OECD, 1997). The HSCL must be supported with regular professional development to allow them to continue to work to enhance the capacity of families to support their children in pursuing improved educational attainment.



...the HSCL scheme has been seriously impacted in recent years as a consequence of recessionary cutbacks

Retirements

Pictures from branch and district functions to honour retiring members



Loughrea

A retirement function was held by Loughrea branch in February to honour Carmel Whelan's retirement. Left to right: Joan Glynn, Branch Secretary; Joe Killeen, INTO Vice President; Carmel Whelan, Killooley NS; Mary Larkin, Branch Committee and Sean Tushy, Branch Chairperson.



Ballina

Ballina Branch held a presentation and retirement function in May. Front row left to right: Ann Hegarty-Loftus, Scoil Iosa; Mary Cawley, Crossmolina NS; Ann Sheeran, Scoil Iosa; Brian Mahon, Kilrusheigher NS; Margaret Boyce, Scoil Iosa and Mary Casey, Scoil Phádraig. Back row left to right: Vincent Duffy, INTO CEC Rep; Aileen Horkan, Chairperson; Michelle Bonner, Branch Secretary and Louise Loftus, Branch Organiser.



District 14 and 15

Retired INTO District 14 and 15 members are pictured with INTO CEC reps Pat Crowe (far left) and Shane Loftus (far right) at an event in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin.



Ennis

Back row left to right: Joan McNamara, Ann O'Loughlin, Mary Heath Leamy, Antoinette Guy Barry, Teresa Browne, Pat O'Brien, John Keamey, Fiona Power, Paddy Conroy, Mary Corbett, Geraldine Carrigg, Sheila Garrahy and Nuala Lynch.

Front row left to right: Cáit Ní Shiocháin, Benedicte McEvoy, Anne Tiernan, Brendan Moran, CEC Rep; Maureen Cronin, special guest; Rosena Jordan, INTO President 2016/17; Anna Marie Darmody, Josephine Kearney, Joe Carmody and Tom Lynch.

Around the branches with the INTO president



John Boyle, INTO President, with staff from CBS NS, Tralee, Co Kerry



Members in Ennis Branch in October



With members from Iar Chonnacht Branch

Members gathering for Youghal Branch meeting



Sexual harassment: Congress

Law change would be 'game-changer' on workplace sexual harassment

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has called for changes in the law to make it easier for victims to report sexual harassment in the workplace.

The general secretary of ICTU Patricia King has written to Regina Doherty TD, Minister for Social Protection, calling for reports of workplace sexual harassment to be treated as 'protected disclosures' as opposed to 'workplace grievances' – thereby ensuring stronger protection and reporting mechanisms for those submitting complaints.

Ms King said an amendment to existing legislation would ensure stronger protection for people suffering workplace sexual harassment and help remove barriers to the reporting of abuse.

Ms King described the proposed change as "a potential game changer and a major step forward for those suffering such abuse".

The Employment Equality Act (1998) adequately defines sexual harassment. It clearly identifies that such harassment constitutes discrimination and, as such, is contrary to the law. However, it stipulates that any infringement is regarded as a 'grievance' and therefore a worker is



Patricia King, General Secretary, ICTU

obliged to submit any such complaint or claim directly to the employer only.

The letter to Minister Doherty notes that this is a matter of grave concern for workers "who find themselves in this appalling predicament as very often the perpetrator can be the most senior ranked person in the employment and the fear of retribution may very well be realised".

This can result in workers who "suffer in silence or are forced to make other work arrangements," Ms King explained.

The Congress proposition would see the current law amended to include provisions set out in the Protected Disclosures Act (2014), giving any such complaints the status of protected disclosures, suggesting that bodies such as the Workplace Relations' Commission or the Health & Safety Authority could be among the bodies prescribed in law to receive such disclosures.

It would also cover disclosures made in the course of obtaining advice or assistance from a trade union official, barrister or solicitor.

"Given all of the above and the serious nature and consequences of sexual harassment we are of the view that the status elevation from 'workplace grievance' to 'protected disclosure' is deserved and may also act as a stronger deterrent to such despicable and shameful behaviour," the Congress letter to Minister Doherty points out.

"I would appeal to you to give this matter your urgent attention and positive consideration," Ms King concluded.



"an amendment to existing legislation would ensure stronger protection for people suffering workplace sexual harassment and help remove barriers to the reporting of abuse"

calls for change in the law

ICTU publish comprehensive new guide to employment equality law

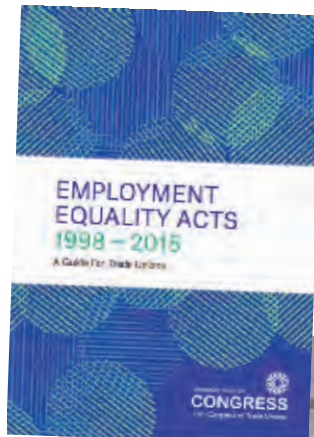
The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has published a comprehensive new guide to employment equality law in the Republic of Ireland. *Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015: A Guide for Trade Unions* is authored by the former chair of the Labour Court, Kevin Duffy, BL.

It was launched in Dublin's Hugh Lane Gallery by David Stanton TD, Minister of State for Justice with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration & Integration.

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015: A Guide for Trade Unions provides a comprehensive guide to the taking of employment rights cases in the Republic of Ireland, in light of the 2015 Workplace Relations Act, and reflects changes in procedures and processes affecting both the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court. It was published with the support of the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission (IHREC).

Launching the guide, Minister Stanton said: "I wish to congratulate the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on the publication of this new equality guide. I believe it will improve understanding of equality legislation and its impact in the workplace. Furthermore, it will also help to change mindsets and increase awareness of the importance of equality in our work environment."

Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner of IHREC which supported the publication of the guide said: "The Commission welcomes this timely and accessible guidance to Employment Equality Acts as a key resource for trade unions and those ultimately



affected by equality legislation."

The chair of the Labour Court, Kevin Foley, said: "The principle of equal treatment in employment is underpinned by the law. It is critical that law is understandable and that all parties to the employment relationship are equipped to understand how that principle of equal treatment set out in law operates."



Pictured at the launch in November were Sheila Nunan, INTO General Secretary; Patricia King, ICTU General Secretary; David Stanton TD, Minister of State for Justice, Equality, Immigration and Integration; Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner, IHREC and Kevin Foley, Chair, Labour Court.

Digital Schools of Distinction shortlisted for EU award

Digital Schools of Distinction has been shortlisted for the European Digital Skills Awards 2017 in the category Digital Skills in Education.

At the time of going to press, a jury was identifying the best project in each award category to receive the European Digital Skills Award 2017 at the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition Conference in Brussels in December 2017. The winners will be announced at the conference by Mariya Gabriel,

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society.

Being amongst the finalists is already a great achievement. More than 240 projects were submitted across five different categories – Digital Skills for all, Digital Skills for the Labour Force, Digital Skills for ICT Professionals, Digital Skills in Education and Digital Skills for Women and Girls.

The INTO is a partner of the Digital Schools of Distinction. The Digital

Schools of Distinction Award is open to all primary schools, recognises excellence in integrating ICT into learning and teaching and aims to build on progress and to encourage improvement.

www.digitalschools.ie/become-a-digital-school/

Read Robbie O'Leary's article on the Digital Schools of Distinction Scheme at www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/InTouch/2017/April2017/InTouch_April2017.pdf



Celebrating the world of science



Aisling Ni Leathlobhair (age 12) and Clodagh Ni Dhonnchaidh (age 12) of Gaelscoil Bhride Thurles pictured at Tipperary Festival of Science at MIC, St Patrick's Campus, Thurles. Pic. Brian Arthur

National Science Week took place from 12-19 November. Hundreds of events, including science shows, hands-on workshops and talks, were held across the country. For Science Week 2017, Science Foundation Ireland called on people to #StopAndAsk questions that they've always wanted to know about the world around them. People of all ages were encouraged to ask their question on social media, such as: "why do I experience fear?", "how can I kick the perfect penalty kick?" or even "is there any truth to the 'sunny south east'?" Science Week 2017, through Science Foundation Ireland, answered the best questions throughout the week.

This year Science Foundation Ireland organised more than 53 days' worth of roadshows and workshops for primary and second-level students in local libraries

and community centres across the country. Schools were also encouraged to run their own Science Week events.

In Limerick, as part of Science Week Mary Immaculate College officially launched a new department entitled the Department of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education.

This new departure responds to the National Strategy for Education (2011) which challenges third-level providers to set out the distinctiveness of their respective institutions. The STEM Education Department will contribute towards producing STEM-literate citizens – a goal that is driven not only by economic imperatives but also from a social justice perspective.

To that end, over 5,000 primary school children, with their teachers and families,

attended free STEM-related activities, organised by the Department of STEM Education, and hosted in both MIC's Limerick and Thurles campuses.

The events, which were all part of Science Week, included the Fantastic Physics Show, interactive experiments on forces, energy (electric and magnesium); the Ugly Animal Show, a performance celebrating the incredible biology of the animal kingdom's most unsightly species; brainteasers workshops delivered by MIC pre-service teachers; building bridges workshops; innovative workshops for teachers on using technology to support physical education and talks on the science behind health nutrition.

For more information about National Science Week visit www.scienceweek.ie or watch Science Week videos at www.YouTube.com/DSEvideo

INTO sponsors Mini-Sevens



At the October meeting of An Coiste Náisiunta of Cumann na mBunscol, John Boyle, INTO President presented a cheque for €23,000 – INTO's sponsorship of the 2017 Mini-Sevens.

2017 marks the 30th anniversary of the MIni-Sevens which are co-ordinated by Cumann na mBunscol.



(Left to right):
Bernadette Ryan,
Cathaoirleach, Cumann
na mBunscol, Gerry
O'Meara, INTO Mini-
Sevens
co-ordinator, John
Boyle, INTO President
and Mairéad
O'Callaghan, Runaí,
Cumann na mBunscol.

Final fever

In Dublin, the football finals in Croke Park, organised by Cumann na mBunscol Átha Cliath, are the highlight of the school year for sports-mad children, teachers and parents and provide unforgettable sporting moments for all involved. Over three days at the end of October 2017, 32 finals were played, involving 64 teams,

over 150 teachers acting as team mentors and almost 2,000 young players. Where finals ended in a draw at the end of normal playing time, trophies were shared in an ideal example of sporting spirit.

In Cork, Sciath na Scol played their football finals in Páirc Uí Rinn and

Mayfield GAA Club. All competitions were concluded after the Halloween break – 31 finals, involving 52 schools, being played over eight days.

In Meath, hurling and camogie leagues took place and the finals were played before large crowds in Trim GAA Grounds on Saturday 11 November. In Armagh, football, hurling and camogie blitzes were organised in September, October and November.

Cumann na mBunscol Laoise played 17 finals over two days in O'Moore Park. Details can be found on @laoiscnmb.

Tens of thousands of boys and girls receive the opportunity to play, and enjoy, Gaelic Games with their friends thanks to the dedication and generosity of teachers in schools throughout Ireland.



John Boyle, INTO President, presents the cup to Cloughduv captain Amy Sheppard along with vice-captain Aoife Lehane, after they defeated Aghabullogue in the F7 Allianz Sciath na Scol final, at Pairc Uí Rinn on 10 November. Picture: David Keane, courtesy of Irish Examiner.



John Boyle, INTO President, presents the cup to Maria O'Donovan, captain of Ovens, after they defeated Carrignavar in the DGF1 Allianz Sciath na Scol final, at Pairc Uí Rinn on 10 November. Picture: David Keane, courtesy of Irish Examiner.



GAA President Aogan Ó Fearghail with his daughter Niamh, a team mentor with St Colmcille's NS, Knocklyon, pictured at the Cumann na mBunscol finals in Croke Park

Consultation: the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum for junior infants to second class

The new Primary Mathematics Curriculum is available on the NCCA website for consultation. This draft curriculum is for children from junior infants to second class in primary schools. The consultation will run until February 2018 and includes a number of elements:

- as part of a school network, teachers and principals are trying out aspects of the curriculum and sharing their feedback;
- an online questionnaire;
- consultative seminars will take place in early 2018.

The consultation findings will be used to finalise a new curriculum.

Research reports that inform and support this curriculum development can be read on the website. The above information and the link to the survey are available on www.ncca.ie/en/consultation.



Mini-Basketball in Irish primary schools

If you are promoting basketball in your school, or if you plan to do so in the future, the Primary Schools Mini-Basketball National Committee (PSMNC) has resources freely available to teachers on their website www.primaryschoolsminibasketballireland.com.

The PSMNC comprises practicing primary teachers who wish to develop the game of mini-basketball in Irish schools. On the website details can be found of primary schools promoting basketball, including many photographs of participating school teams and teachers throughout the country. Contact information on localised mini-basketball events such as leagues, blitzes and fun events is also available. PSMNC organises tailored courses on teaching the sport of mini-basketball in PE and as part of the co-curricular school programme in schools. Many of these courses are arranged in individual schools as part of Croke Park hours. PSMNC has previously organised CPD summer courses on mini-basketball and hopes to run a number of courses next summer in the

following locations: Dublin, Cork, Galway and Carrick-on-Shannon. Details will be published on the website as they become available.

PSMNC also engaged with St Patrick's College of Education and Mary Immaculate College of Education to provide courses for students.

PSMNC, with the support of Basketball Ireland, has developed a library of 18 basketball videos on the game, and on refereeing, which may be an ideal resource for teachers planning PE lessons. Mini-basketball is about far more than playing basketball. It is about enabling children to learn, play and enjoy basketball in a supportive manner. The videos introduce the skills at both a basic level and a more advanced level.

Visit www.primaryschoolsminibasketballireland.com to access the links to dedicated Youtube and Vimeo primary schools mini-basketball Ireland channels. Videos are also available to download.

RICHIE O'MAHONEY, Gaelscoil an Eiscir Riada, An Tulach Mhor and Chairperson PSMNC.



St Hilda's celebrate Lotto win



While many schools throughout the country suffered damage as a result of Storm Ophelia, one midlands school not only escaped unscathed but staff had good reason to celebrate when the school reopened after the extended weekend.

The staff syndicate, comprising 29 current and former staff of St Hilda's Special School in Athlone found out they had picked up a cheque for more than €52,000 from the Lotto. The Lotto Match 5 Plus Bonus win saw each member of the syndicate €1,800 richer.

The original syndicate was set up three decades ago with just nine members. Last month, the group celebrated their success in the school staffroom with "sparkling tea and coffee" before travelling to the National Lottery Headquarters in Dublin to pick up their winnings.

All-Ireland Teachers Golf Champions



St Mary's CBS Portlaoise and Portlaoise College joined forces to be crowned 2017 All-Ireland Teachers Golf Champions. The competition took place during the mid-term break at Dunmurry Springs Golf Club in Co Kildare.

The winning team was made up of John Duggan, Daryl Egan, Noel Donlon and Paul Cahillane. The next competition for teachers will take place in February 2018.

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www.membershipplus.ie/teachers

30/09/2018

Bucharest – Eastern Europe's hidden gem

When you think 'weekend city break' do you imagine the usual suspects; Lisbon, Prague, Berlin, Copenhagen? I did. I had never really considered Bucharest because, among other reasons, there were other European cities that were higher on my 'must see' list.

I used to look for tried and tested destinations that came recommended by friends, family and friends of friends.

Well, let me suggest another option to you that has reasonable flight prices, walkable, free city tours, great food, stunning architecture and the biggest thermal baths complex in Europe.

Read on to see why Bucharest, Romania, is a hidden treat.

How to get there

There are flights from Dublin several times a week and, if you are flexible with the weekend you book, you can get flights for under €100. Flights are under four hours. Upon arrival at the airport, you could pay as little as €20 for a transfer to your hotel in the city centre.

Where to stay

At the time of writing this article, the Novotel in the centre of the city on Calea Victoriei, costs €156 for two people sharing, including breakfast, for a weekend at the end of January. So far, you have spent under €140 each to get to, and stay in, a four star hotel in Romania. Still interested? Keep reading!

There are many hotels to choose from and it is worth doing a little shopping around. Many offer great deals but the décor in some can be a little dated. However, you won't be spending too much time in your hotel because there is so much to see in the city. Check out prices for the Ramada and Mercure Bucharest hotels, also in the city.

What to do

I suggest you spend your Saturday on one of the many walking tours of the city. I did

two walking tours on my visit and highly recommend the Bucharest Walkabout Free Tours. They have two free options, which include an architecture and history tour, as well as two paid tours at €15 pp that showcase the street art scene, as well as a Communist tour, which focuses on the locations of major events related to the dictator's rule and demise. Well worth the few hours needed to wander at a leisurely pace around the city soaking up the history and incredible architecture with knowledgeable guides.

I also did a food tour with Delish Experiences who, for €65, will bring you to a number of traditional Romanian restaurants explaining the culinary

classical styles stand side-by-side with art deco palazzi and boxy communist structures. It can be jarring but nonetheless fascinating.

Saturday was spent walking, so might I suggest on Sunday you indulge in some 'RNR' at the biggest thermal baths complex in Europe? A short taxi ride to the Terme, located just past the airport, will unveil a modern-looking industrial style building but what it houses inside is nothing short of a botanical dome of relaxation. Go early to avoid the crowd and, by early, I mean before noon. A three-hour entry to the Terme costs 75 Lei (around €18) with the 'Elysium' ticket, which grants full access to all areas including pools, saunas, steam room, slides and outdoor tubs. Bring your swimsuit and flip-flops and soak up the chill. You're worth it, after all!

Where to eat

Do check out Vatra for cosy, inexpensive traditional eats, as well as La Mama and Car cu' Bere. However, if polenta and pork and sampling Romanian cuisine isn't all you want to do, then visit CAJU by Joseph Hadad for a brasserie with a familiar menu of seafood, meats and pastas. Make sure to stop by French Revolution bakery by the Athenaeum for the freshest pistachio eclairs you have ever tasted and end your evening with a rooftop cocktail at Nomad Sky Bar in the Old Town.

Bucharest has enough to keep you entertained for a weekend. I only wish I had had more time to visit the countryside in Transylvania or Sibiu or the quaint town of Brasov. Romania has a lot more to offer than you might have originally guessed, so make sure you visit before the secret is out and it becomes just another tourist hotspot.

CIARA MCNALLY teaches in Greystones, Co Wicklow. Check out Ciara's blog www.mysuitcasesdiaries.org for more details on Romania and other holiday inspiration.



Cafes under umbrella roof in Pasagiul Victoriei, Bucharest.

Many restaurants in Bucharest, serve a flavour of the local dishes.



culture and teaching you how to correctly pronounce 'papanasi' while your mouth is full of ricotta doughnut!

Stroll around the delightful cobbled streets of the Old Town and peek inside the stunning orthodox Stavropoleos Church. See the monument to democracy, which bears a striking resemblance to a potato on a skewer, and an impressive array of abandoned buildings yet to be repurposed after the Communist leadership fell.

The city has the nickname of 'Little Paris' and examples of Parisian, neo-

Save with the CCPC's Christmas money saving tips



Are you a savvy spender at Christmas or do you blow your budget as soon you hit the shops? Well, no matter what kind of shopper you are, these festive tips from the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) will help you get more bang for your buck.



Start with the CCPC's Christmas budget planner on www.ccpc.ie. It lists all the main expenses you would expect such

as food, drink and presents but also ones you might not think of, like increased heating and electricity bills, as well as nights out. You can then see how much you can expect to spend compared to the money you have available.



Embrace the digital age. You could save on postage if you send some or all of your Christmas cards by email this

year. Sending a card in the post can be special but there are lots of free sites that let you create your own cards, with family photos and videos so see if it is an option for you.



Shop when it's quieter. Save time and money by shopping at off-peak times. Do up a shopping list before you go, it will help you

avoid impulse buying and unplanned splurges. Then put all you buy into a Christmas-only section of your kitchen cupboards. It will help you see very clearly what you have and what you still need to get. Also avoid buying unnecessary items, like Christmas tape or Christmas napkins,

they are usually much more expensive than the normal ones and not really needed.



Get creative with Christmas crafts. You don't have to spend a fortune to give great Christmas gifts. What about making your

own festive candles and Christmas tree decorations? Ideas include making a photobook of memories for a grandparent or home-made chutney for family or friends. There are many more ideas online on how to save money by making your own gifts. And it's a great way to get the whole family involved and working together.



List everyone that you intend to buy for, then budget a reasonable amount that you can

afford to spend on each person. Making a shopping list will also help you avoid impulse buying and keep track of your spending. The CCPC's Christmas budget planner can help you plan for and keep track of all your expenses.



Use up gift vouchers that are best before end of 2017. If you save your vouchers for a rainy

day check their expiry date. If they are going to expire soon see if you could put them towards a present for someone. Or even better, treat yourself to something nice!



Try a new approach to buying presents. You could agree a spending limit with your friends and family or try an option like a

Secret Santa, so each person only has to buy one present. Or, if there is a special item that you really want to give to

someone, consider splitting the cost with a friend or relative. Keep an eye out for coupons or deals on gifts wherever you can.



Be realistic with your food shopping. It can be easy to buy

more than you need, but bear in mind that most shops are only closed on Christmas day and New Year's day, so there's no need to go overboard.



Do your research. If you have a present in mind, shop around and compare prices, both in

store and online. Keep your eye out for discounts and promotional offers. If you do plan to do some shopping online, be careful. What might seem like a great deal could be more expensive when you add on delivery charges, so be sure to take them into account. Make sure you leave plenty of time for delivery too.



Leave the credit card at home and bring cash or your debit card instead. Credit card debt

can be very expensive if you can't repay it in full immediately or within a few months. When you are spending the cash in your pocket or in your bank account, you will be much less likely to overspend than if you pay with a credit card.

The CCPC's Christmas budget planner can be found at www.ccpc.ie/consumers/tools-and-calculators/budgeting-calculators/christmas-budget-planner/

For more information visit the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission website at www.ccpc.ie

Sinéad Molloy

the fastest teacher in Ireland (on two wheels!)

Many teachers have 'done' the Bike to Work Scheme with great intentions but, for some, the expensive bike ultimately ends up in the shed, gathering dust before being off-loaded on Done Deal. However, for fifth class teacher Sinéad Molloy, an Offaly woman working in Mother of Divine Grace school in Finglas, it's been a different story.

"I bought my first bike in October 2014 and I don't really know why I decided to get involved in cycling. I just had the idea in my head and I thought it was something that I would enjoy."

Wanting to get the most out of her new bike, within a week Sinéad joined her local club Tullamore Cycling and Touring Club.

"I rocked up on a bitterly cold November morning and went out for the club's weekly Sunday cycle," she recalls. "I was very inexperienced, never having cycled in a group and was so ill-equipped. I had runners and clips as opposed to cycling shoes, a pair of three-quarter-length leggings, and a couple of long-sleeved tops under a hi-vis t-shirt. At least I had a helmet!" she laughs.

She remembers cycling from Tullamore to Mullingar and back in a loop, probably about 70km in total. She was dropped from the group at an early stage and remembers thinking, "how am I ever going to get to Mullingar never mind get home?"

But the members were so kind and encouraging and really good to her so when she did eventually get back to Tullamore, exhausted, frozen and wet, she had caught the bug! "I couldn't wait for the following Sunday," she smiles.

Throughout 2015 and 2016 Sinéad continuously improved, taking on board advice from her clubmates and others. She participated in club events and charity cycles and always enjoyed the trips away.

In 2015, the Tullamore Cycle Club did a trip called 'The Shannon Spin' where they cycled the length of the River Shannon over three days. "I was only cycling a couple of months," said Sinéad, "so it was a lot of kms for me to cover, but I had trained to be strong enough to do it and



Sinéad with members of Tullamore Cycling and Touring Club

was so proud when I finished it!"

During 2016, she started to cycle with the A Group in the cycling club, which is predominantly made up of very strong cyclists and racers. She wanted to improve but initially wasn't too sure about racing. But the more she trained, the more she wanted to race. Her aim for 2017 was to compete in the Midland Cycling League and the Dublin Women's League in Corkagh Park, near Clondalkin.

"I hadn't intended on doing any open racing in 2017 at all really, but I heard about a Women's League that the Orwell Cycle Club was running for six weeks," said Sinéad. "It suited me because I am teaching and living in Dublin. I also thought it would give me a good feel for racing as it was aimed at beginners. I

really enjoyed the league. I could see myself improving week after week and getting a feel for how a race is going.

Sinéad won the B Division of the league, and continued to get reasonable results in the Midlands league races too. She looked up a few open races that were coming up and saw there was a National Series Women's League race in Mullingar. She finished fourth, a result she couldn't believe!

This result highlighted Sinéad's talent and commitment, as she was only bettered by three of the best female cyclists from both Northern Ireland and the Republic. It also helped to secure her a place on the Leinster Elite Team for the An Post Rás na mBan.

Rás na mBan is the premier women's



cycling event in Ireland. It runs for five days with a total of six stages to a total of over 400km of racing action. Within six months of her first beginner race, Sinéad competed against over 120 riders from 14 countries, including Olympians and full-time professionals.

Sinéad described Rás na mBan as the toughest challenge she had ever undertaken, both physically and mentally. "I am still relatively inexperienced at racing, especially in comparison to the majority of the other Irish domestic riders who did the Rás, not to mention the international and professional riders. It was such a fast pace from the very start, and even on the climbs, the pace was very fast."

"The most difficult day was the stage on Mount Leinster. It was 112 km, and the

finish was at the top of Mount Leinster at Nine Stones. My legs were so tired from the two previous days, and it was such a long day on the bike, even before we got to Mount Leinster. Going up the climb on the final 10km was incredibly tough."

"My legs were aching, my body was exhausted, and I was very close to packing it in. The only thing that stopped me from getting off the bike was that I knew that so many people, my friends, family, club mates, were supporting me and had wished me well, I knew I couldn't let them down. I knew I wouldn't be able to face them if I had given up."

The entire Rás was a rollercoaster of emotions, with ups and downs and many, many low moments, in which she seriously questioned her ability as a cyclist and whether she would be able to

finish.

Supported by her family, friends and team-mates, Sinéad completed the gruelling cycle, a fantastic achievement for a person who bought her first road bicycle only three years previously.

Sinéad is already looking ahead to next year. She has planned out a tough winter's training before hoping to compete in the national series throughout 2018 before next year's Rás na mBan.

"This year the achievement was to finish the Rás na mBan, but I feel like I need to prove to myself that I can do better. I would love to have the chance to race it again in the future and prove to myself that I can improve on this."

Michael McConigley, Scoil Bhride, Kilcullen, Co Kildare.



Sinéad described Rás na mBan as the toughest challenge she had ever undertaken, both physically and mentally

Christmas

winter warmers

Winter is fully upon us and what better way to warm up after a chilly yard duty than to heat up a delicious bowl of

creamy vegetable soup, or delve into a plate of steamy sausage stars. These recipes work brilliantly for a Christmas

staffroom lunch or even as a little class party idea.

Star Sausage Rolls

Makes 10

What better way to kick off the festive season than with some lunchbox-friendly sausage meat stars. These have all the indulgent ingredients reminiscent of Christmas day packaged into one little bundle of joy, perfect for your lunch box. They also double up as a great canapé or nibble for a Christmas party.

Ingredients

- ✧ 1 packet puff pastry
- ✧ 1 egg, whisked
- ✧ 200g sausage meat or sausages (1/2 packet of sausages)
- ✧ 50g stuffing mix e.g. Paxo (mixed with 100ml water)

Method

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease a baking tray.
- 2 In a bowl combine the sausage meat and stuffing mix.
- 3 Unwrap the pastry, if you have a rolling pin hand roll out the pastry, if not, it will be fine.
- 4 Using a star shaped cutter, cut out an even number of stars. (The amount of stars you get will depend on the size of your cutter.)
- 5 Brush the edges of the stars with egg wash, pop a small piece of mixture in the centre. Place the second star on top and gently press down the edges.
- 6 Brush the top with the egg wash, place on a baking tray and bake for 25 mins until golden brown.

Here are a few ideas to jazz up this recipe each time you make it :

- ✧ Dress it up – Serve with a cranberry sauce on the side to really add that Christmas vibe.
- ✧ Stretch it out – Serve with a light and fresh salad to turn these nibbles into a starter.
- ✧ More texture – Sprinkle some poppy seeds on top for extra crunch.
- ✧ Need your five a day? Add in extra veg – grate in some apple and courgette.



Santa's Soup

Makes 6 bowls

This soup is loaded with seasonal winter vegetables. It is hearty and delicious and loved by everyone who tries it. Our Santa Soup delivers its own gift of nourishment by being packed full of anti-oxidants and vitamin A. Ideal for warding off those winter colds.

Lentils are a superfood. They are cheap, require no preparation, slowly release energy to keep us full all day and are a great source of valuable protein. They pack out the soup and also add a lovely rich creamy texture without adding too many extra calories.

To make a luxurious version of this soup blitz in a little cream and butter at the end. It gives a beautiful rich flavour and lustre to the soup.

Ingredients

- ✧ 2 tablespoons sunflower oil
- ✧ 100g cauliflower (approx half)
- ✧ 100g carrots (approx 1)
- ✧ 200g butternut squash (approx half)
- ✧ 50g red lentils
- ✧ 2 tsp. onion powder
- ✧ 1 chicken or vegetable stock cube
- ✧ 300 mls boiling hot water
- ✧ 300 mls milk



- ✧ Seasoning (1/2 tsp salt)
- ✧ Optional : When blitzing finish with 25g butter and 50mls cream
- ✧ 1 tin alphabet spaghetti

Method

- 1 In a large saucepan, heat the oil.
- 2 Add in the vegetables. Stir continuously for two minutes.
- 3 Add in the lentils and onion powder and cook for another one minute.
- 4 Pour in the hot water and add the stock cube. Bring to the boil and then simmer. Cook for 20-30 minutes until all the vegetable are soft.
- 5 Add in the milk, bring to the boil and season to taste.
- 6 Remove from the heat and liquidise everything together.
- 7 To serve, drain and rinse the tin of alphabet spaghetti and arrange the letters 'Santa's Soup' on top.
- 8 Alternatively, portion up the soup and freeze in airtight containers or strong freezer bags.

Here are a few ideas to jazz up this soup each time you make it:

- ✧ Dress it up – Drizzle with a flavourful oil like pistachio, walnut or avocado.
- ✧ Stretch it out – Add in a tin of alphabet or numberetti spaghetti.
- ✧ More texture – Add large croutons of toasted crusty bread and creamy creme fraiche on top.
- ✧ Need your five a day? Add in extra veg – broccoli and spinach work really well.
- ✧ Add a punch of protein – shred in some leftover turkey.



Foodoppi is a creative educational platform which takes an extraordinary approach to food and STEM education that has proven to be an effective way to foster positive relationships with food while exciting children about learning and gaining STEM skills.

AISLING LARKIN has a degree in Education from Trinity, spent 10 years working in a DEIS school in inner city



foodoppi

Dublin, has a first class M.Sc in Food Product Design and Culinary Innovation and set up Ireland's premier children's cookery school at the Cliff at Lyons a few years ago.

LOUISE LENNOX is a top chef and food broadcaster on TV and radio here in Ireland and has a background in nutrition and

children's food media production. Aisling and Louise joined forces a few years ago and created Foodoppi.

INTO – DCU PhD Scholarship at the Institute of Education, DCU

In 2018, the INTO celebrates 150 years since its foundation. As part of the commemoration, Dublin City University's (DCU) Institute of Education is offering a scholarship for a primary teacher to undertake a PhD in Education.

The three year fully-funded PhD scholarship, offered within DCU's Institute of Education, provides the successful candidate with the opportunity to develop a research project in consultation with two of Ireland's leading education and research organisations, DCU and the INTO. The scholarship aims to provide an excellent professional development opportunity through research as well as meeting the requirements of rigour and originality expected of a doctorate.

The scholarship will commence in September 2018 for a period of three years. The scholarship will cover DCU's PhD fees for three years as well as a stipend of €16,000 per year for three years.

Criteria

The ideal candidate will have:

1. a master's degree;
2. a high standard of critical research and academic writing skills;
3. a strong interest in primary education in Ireland;
4. a high level of competence in written and oral communication;
5. the ability to work independently and collaboratively in meeting demanding research goals.

Terms and conditions

- The thesis topic will be of relevance to primary education and/or the teaching profession in Ireland.
- The scholarship is open to all INTO members, north and south.
- Applicants must be registered with The Teaching Council/General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland.
- INTO union activism desirable.
- It is envisaged that the successful candidate will be a full-time student of

DCU's Institute of Education for a period of three years.

- A copy of the completed thesis will be made available to the INTO library and DCU library.
- The research project will be publicised at INTO/DCU events and in INTO/DCU media platforms.
- The name of the successful candidate will be announced during INTO Congress 2018.
- Applicants should request provisional approval for a career break for the 2018/2019 academic year from their BOM.
- The award is contingent on the applicant meeting all the requirements for admission to doctoral studies at DCU (www4.dcu.ie/registry/postgraduate/index.shtml#Entry) and, following the initial selection process, a detailed research proposal being developed with, and approved by the Dean of Education, DCU.
- Fáilte roimh iarratas a chur isteach trí mheán na Gaeilge.

How to apply

Please complete the research proposal application form and submit with a CV to:

Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith,
Education Section,
INTO,
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... an excellent professional development opportunity through research as well as meeting the requirements of rigour and originality expected of a doctorate

- The closing date for application will be Wednesday, 31 January 2018
- Eligible candidates will be shortlisted by DCU and the INTO.
- It is envisaged that interviews will be held in February 2018.
- All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by the end of March.
- Please forward any queries to Deirbhile Nic Craith (dnc@into.ie).

Teaching matters

Articles and opinions on primary teaching, with tips and ideas for the classroom

FÍS – developing key skills through filmmaking

The FÍS film project for primary schools celebrated its 13th year at the FÍS Film Festival held at the Helix in DCU in mid-November.

Some 900 pupils and their teachers attended the gala event which was staged to resemble a major movie awards night, like the Oscars or the BAFTAs.

MA students in Broadcast Production for Film, TV and Radio produced the event and they also streamed the awards live on the Internet. It all made for one very memorable day for the pupils and the schools.

Schools entering FÍS submit their films for adjudication by the last day of the school year and from these a select number make it to the Festival in the Helix.

Developing curricular skills

The FÍS Film Project is all about getting children to learn about, and get practical hands-on experience in, the techniques involved in storytelling through film – a five minute film. The kind of areas in which pupils develop skills include planning, scripting, storyboarding, filming, music making, set design, costume fitting

and acting. But the whole process is totally cross-curricular so that while engaging in the process the pupils are developing other key skills in communicating, working in a team, taking responsibility, making decisions and problem solving.

FÍS is a great way to teach a particular curricular strand or strand unit, while integrating a variety of subject areas. It also presents an opportunity to go beyond the school and into the wider local community.

This year's festival included awards in four new specific curricular categories that were designed to further embed the project into the curriculum. These covered the areas of geography, history,

science and social issues. The 2016 event had a specific award strand for the commemoration of 1916.

Teacher support

For many teachers the thought of producing a five minute film with their pupils may seem daunting. However, IADT provide support to teachers through a suite of structured lesson plans covering: scripting, storyboarding, the elements of film, using smart devices, lighting, editing and creating a soundtrack. There are also a number of short video tutorials that cover some of these areas.

PDST Technology in Education run two short courses on FÍS and FÍS Animation through the education centre network.

While these normally take place during the summer they can also be run during term time should demand exist.

Check out www.fisfilmproject.ie

The FÍS Film Festival is a joint collaboration between PDST Technology in Education and IADT Dún Laoghaire.

Written by PATRICK COFFEY, PDST Technology in Education.



2017 categories and winners

Film of the year 2017	The Gooseberry Fair	Ardfert NS	Direction	Emigrant Spirits	Milford National School
Art direction	Ads from the Archives	Scoil Raifteirí	Documentary	Dig It: A School Garden Documentary	St Patrick's NS, Skibbereen
Best junior film	Where Do Butterflies Come From?	Scoil San Phroinsias	Editing	Monkey Madness	Ladyswell NS
Best newcomer	Ní Banphrionsa Mé	Scariff Central NS	Horror	The Spooky School of Gardiner Street	Gardiner Street Primary School
Cinematography	The Last Laugh	Sacred Heart, Mulhuddart	Original music	Tom Crean: Fear Cróga Fear Gealgháireach	Scoil na mBráithre
Comedy	My Fellow Saint Hughians	Saint Hugh's NS	Original storytelling	Frozen Fortune	Sacred Heart, Mulhuddart
Costume	Magic Moments	Carrig National School	Originality	The New Boy	St Patrick's BNS, Portarlinton
Curriculum relevance: geography	An Féileacan Oíche	Gaelscoil Riabhach	Production design	The Gooseberry Fair	Ardfert NS
Curriculum relevance: history	Scientific Superhero: The Curie Cure	St Peter's BNS, Monasterevin	Science fiction	The Time Tube	St Peter's NS, Dungourney
Curriculum relevance: science	Kinetic Kids	Carn National School	Soundtrack	In Memoriam	St Aiden's NS
Curriculum relevance: social issues	RESPECT	Presentation Listowel	Special effects	School of Super Heroes	Sundays Well BNS
			Storyboarding	Boo!	Behy NS

Yoga and mindfulness in the classroom of 2017

A new kind of education

Growing numbers of teachers are recognising yoga, breath awareness and mindfulness activities as being beneficial to their students' (and their own!) mental health and wellbeing, and to the learning environment in general.

Indeed, in my own classroom I have seen immense benefits of yoga and mindfulness practices which address the whole child.

Yoga is seen as a welcome non-competitive alternative to sport. It is also becoming part of many physical education curricula worldwide and after-school enrichment programmes. It can help maximise children's academic, social and emotional competence development and can do so in the following ways:

- ✦ Provides students with healthy ways to express and balance their emotions.
- ✦ Promotes a more relaxed, comfortable state of being – the perfect state for teaching and learning.
- ✦ Brings students into the present moment – the most basic requirement for learning.
- ✦ Encourages community and connectedness within the classroom.
- ✦ Helps to create an atmosphere of confidence, enthusiasm and non-competitiveness where everyone can succeed.
- ✦ Provides opportunities for beneficial motor breaks throughout the day.
- ✦ Eases anxiety and tension (such as pre-test or performance jitters).
- ✦ Enhances focus, concentration, comprehension and memory.
- ✦ Provides opportunities for reflection, patience and insight, reducing impulsivity and reactivity.
- ✦ Supports social and emotional

learning.

- ✦ Improves listening skills.
- ✦ Wakes up sluggish minds and creativity as needed.
- ✦ Enhances organisational and communication skills.
- ✦ Improves posture, assisting students to sit comfortably for long periods.
- ✦ Enhances motor skills and balance.
- ✦ Improves mind/body awareness and connection.
- ✦ Improves confidence and self-esteem.
- ✦ Encourages respect for oneself and others.
- ✦ Creates a calm, harmonious classroom.

Based on the increasing evidence supporting the efficacy of children's yoga in the US, special yoga-based programs within US schools are being developed for children. Designed to address stress and anxiety, these place emphasis on individual abilities rather than competition and provide non-threatening and gentle methods to increase physical fitness and enhance health and wellbeing.

Overwhelmingly, research shows that children who practice yoga-based movement, conscious breathing, and mindfulness activities are better able to regulate their emotions, manage stress and calm themselves. They may also choose better foods to eat and engage in more physical activity than children who do not.

The studies also illustrate that centred, calm and focused children learn more easily, have better social skills and, in general, are much happier children.

Studies show that yoga, and exercise in general, facilitates children's executive function, which are the processes required to select, organise, and properly

initiate goal-directed actions. Due to the integration of physical movement with breathing exercises and mental focus practice, yoga may prove to be an ideal form of exercise to enhance those aspects of children's mental functioning central to cognitive development.

Yoga can be beneficial to children of all ages, but it has been found to be particularly so for children with special needs. Studies have shown that yoga benefits children with autism and ADHD. Research showed that daily yoga programmes were found to reduce children with autism's aggressive behaviour, social withdrawal, and hyperactivity, compared with a control group of children with autism who did not practice yoga.

Yoga was effective because it seemed to play to the strengths of children with autism while also reducing stress. Yoga helps address children's heightened anxiety, poor motor coordination, and weak self-regulation, something that otherwise is very difficult to do.

Teachers and parents may notice how yoga benefits children, but the best judges are the children themselves. Students tell me that they are able to concentrate better during the day, focus better on their activities, and pay attention to their tasks – all the finest endorsements towards the practising of yoga for children.

By CLAIRE HENEGHAN, B.Ed, MSc. in Exercise and Nutrition Science (specialising in childhood obesity prevention and health promotion). Claire is a primary teacher in Scoil Rois, Salthill, Galway, works with third level colleges in physical and health education and is a practicing children's yoga instructor in Galway.

WW1 Christmas fund

Since the beginning of The Decade of Centenaries, thousands of children have visited Glasnevin Cemetery Museum to further explore Ireland's history, including World War One.

Drawing on our extensive collection of artefacts, a World War One handling box was created to allow students to literally get to grips with original uniforms, helmets and personal belongings that survived from the front. This opportunity to hold, wear and evaluate artefacts that they had only read about in textbooks proved very popular.

Many of the students focused on the remaining remnants of soldiers' lives and the everyday life of drudgery and survival in the trenches.

Within the handling box there is a small brass tin with the inscription 'Imperium Britannicum Christmas 1914'. It survives from the 'Sailors & Soldiers Christmas Fund' created by 17 year old Princess Mary, the daughter of King George V. The aim of this public fund was to provide everyone serving overseas with a 'gift from the nation'.

Adverts were placed in national

newspapers and subscriptions came flooding in. The following appeal by Princess Mary clearly had impact on the hearts of the nation, "Could there be anything more likely to hearten them in their struggle than a present received straight from home on Christmas Day?"

The lid of the tin is decorated with a delicate embossment of Mary. In the corners are inscribed the names of the Allies; Belgium, Japan, Montenegro and Serbia (Serbia) with France and Russia standing on each side. Interestingly, the contents of the tin varied depending on the category of person who would receive them.

Class A consisted of the Navy, those at the front in France including nurses, the wounded, prisoners, and widows or parents of the deceased. (Prisoners' tins were distributed when they returned home.) The Class A tin was filled with a pipe, tobacco, 20 cigarettes wrapped in bright yellow paper and a lighter. There was an option for non-smokers; they were gifted acid tablets, a writing case, paper and pencil. Troops serving from India received tins filled with sweets and

spices and, as some of the items were deemed inappropriate for nurses, their tins contained chocolate and a card. A simplified gift was given to all other servicemen in Classes B and C.

The huge outpouring of public support and the increased size of the operation meant that many of the tins were not actually sent out until after 1914. A shortage of brass added to the delay in the manufacture and distribution. In 1915, Britain placed an order for brass with the USA. A large amount of this order was lost in May 1915 when the Lusitania was attacked by a German U-boat and sank off the coast of Ireland, with a tragic loss of 1,198 lives.

The public funding was a great success and the final total amounted to £162,591 12s 5d. The vast majority of this figure had come from ordinary households and surplus funds were donated to Queen Mary's Maternity Home. There is evidence of soldiers sending their precious gifts home unopened as presents to their families. Tins were still being distributed even after the war had officially ended and the final production figure was roughly 2.6 million.

Close contact with the personal belongings of soldiers allowed students to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of soldiers' experiences at the front and the efforts of those waiting at home to provide something of the spirit of Christmas to their loved ones in the trenches. The Glasnevin Cemetery Museum WW1 Handling Box and Tour is still available for schools along with the General History Tour.

MICHELLE O'CONNOR, Education Officer and Teacher Liaison at Glasnevin Cemetery Museum, Finglas Road, Dublin 11.
Web: glasnevincemetery.ie. Tel: 01 8826550.
Email: museum@glasnevintrust.ie



Princess Mary Gift Fund 1914

Image reproduced by courtesy of the 8th Earl and Countess of Harewood and Harewood House Trust.

A Christmas Childhood by Patrick Kavanagh

I

One side of the potato-pits was white with frost –
How wonderful that was, how wonderful!
And when we put our ears to the paling-post
The music that came out was magical.

The light between the ricks of hay and straw
Was a hole in Heaven's gable. An apple tree
With its December-glinting fruit we saw –
O you, Eve, were the world that tempted me

To eat the knowledge that grew in clay
And death the germ within it! Now and then
I can remember something of the gay
Garden that was childhood's. Again

The tracks of cattle to a drinking-place,
A green stone lying sideways in a ditch,
Or any common sight, the transfigured face
Of a beauty that the world did not touch.

II

My father played the melodion
Outside at our gate;
There were stars in the morning east
And they danced to his music.

Across the wild bogs his melodion called
To Lennons and Callans.
As I pulled on my trousers in a hurry
I knew some strange thing had happened.

Outside in the cow-house my mother
Made the music of milking;
The light of her stable-lamp was a star
And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

A water-hen screeched in the bog,
Mass-going feet
Crunched the wafer-ice on the pot-holes,
Somebody wistfully twisted the bellows wheel.

My child poet picked out the letters
On the grey stone,
In silver the wonder of a Christmas townland,
The winking glitter of a frosty dawn.

Cassiopeia was over
Cassidy's hanging hill,
I looked and three whin bushes rode across
The horizon — the Three Wise Kings.

And old man passing said:
'Can't he make it talk –
The melodion.' I hid in the doorway
And tightened the belt of my box-pleated coat.

I nicked six nicks on the door-post
With my penknife's big blade –
There was a little one for cutting tobacco.
And I was six Christmases of age.

My father played the melodion,
My mother milked the cows,
And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned
On the Virgin Mary's blouse.

Christmas is the season that evokes joyful memories and recollections, conjuring up a sense of magic and wonder. Patrick Kavanagh's much-loved poem 'A Christmas Childhood' captures the enchantment of Christmas, through the lens of a child who is just "six Christmases of age".

In an era where the average six-year-old is compiling a list for the man in the North Pole which includes the latest tech-accessory and expensive gadgets, it is refreshing to read Kavanagh's beautiful poem, which oozes simplicity and innocence.

With all the hallmarks of a classic piece of poetry, 'A Christmas Childhood' transcends generations and is appreciated by young and not so young alike.

In this poem, Kavanagh's homeland of Inniskeen is shrouded by a heavenly, miraculous quality as he paints a beautiful picture of rural life, re-enacting the 'greatest story ever told' in his own native village. In the silhouettes of "three whin bushes", Kavanagh can see the "Three Wise Kings", while his mother "Outside in the cowhouse" busily carrying out her chores "Made the music of milking". The child poet compares her stable light to the "star" that guided the Magi. An atmosphere of peace and harmony prevails, and we can almost hear the tones of the melodeon as it calls "To Lennons and Callans" with stars twinkling overhead as if to dance to the father's music.

The image of Kavanagh and his parents is reminiscent of that of the Holy Family, a powerful reminder of the intensity and strength of the familial bond, a closeness which is further demonstrated in Kavanagh's renowned poems 'In Memory of my Mother' and 'In Memory of my Father'.

'A Christmas Childhood', which made its way to the shortlist for 'A Poem for Ireland', was read at the graveside of Kavanagh – by another Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, who himself attributed much of his influence to Patrick Kavanagh. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Kavanagh's passing and offers an opportunity to reflect on the late, great writer who is recognised as one of our finest.

The first-born of ten children, Patrick was the son of a cobbler and

small hold farmer, born and raised in the village of Inniskeen, situated amid the rolling drumlins of Co Monaghan. Circumstances and society dictated that his formal education ended after national school and he became an apprentice shoemaker to his father. This was a short-lived career, with the poet himself remarking that he lacked the skills necessary and did not make one pair of wearable shoes!

He was a keen sports fan with an interest in rugby and soccer – regularly cycling to Dundalk to watch matches. He also had a talent for cross country running and, with the hands that worked both farm and penned poetry, Kavanagh was the goalkeeper with his local GAA club (Inniskeen Grattans) for a period. After the passing of his father, Kavanagh worked on the small family farm for 20 years.

Many of Kavanagh's writings capture the social history and rural culture of the time, depicting the conflicts, loneliness and frustrations of country life. His native area was poor but it was the "lack of enlightenment" that Kavanagh regretted more so than the material poverty. Immersed in the rustic rurality, he felt trapped and alienated – his opportunities limited and enclosed by the hedgerows of Monaghan countryside which "flung a ditch on my vision".

He wrote poems regularly for his own enjoyment and, in his mid-twenties, he succeeded in publishing poetry in two non-literary periodicals, the *Irish Weekly Independent* and the *Dundalk Democrat*.

Kavanagh took a different route to most of his contemporaries, the road "less travelled" as expressed by Robert Frost. He swapped the "stony grey soil of Monaghan" for city life, moving to Dublin during the 1930s. The city would become his home until his death in 1967.

His relocating to the city was with the hope that he would broaden his horizons in a stimulating environment; however, Kavanagh's relationship with Dublin was an ambivalent one. He claimed to feel like an exile in the city and, for many years, struggled to make a living as a writer there. He often expressed a great disappointment that Dublin did not live up to his expectations, venting his frustration at the intellectuals. He lived in Dublin

through World War II, during which time he penned what is widely regarded as his finest piece of work, 'The Great Hunger'.

Kavanagh endured a turbulent time, with poor health and alcohol dogging his later years. In 1955, he was diagnosed with cancer and underwent major surgery at the Rialto Hospital. Warm, pleasant weather that particular summer meant that much of his recuperation time and convalescing was spent on the banks of the Grand Canal – heralding a time of renewal for his poetic energies.

In April 1967, Kavanagh married his long-term girlfriend Katherine Barry Moloney (the niece of Kevin Barry, the first Irish republican to be executed by the British since the leaders of the Easter Rising). At 63, the groom was 20 years older than his bride. In a tragic twist, their happiness was short-lived and he died just a mere six months after their wedding.

As we celebrate the golden anniversary of his passing, we remember the legacy of this literary genius. In the poem 'Lines Written on a Seat on the Grand Canal, Dublin', Kavanagh requested that we "commemorate me where there is water, / Canal water, preferably, so stilly / Greeny". Today one can linger on the bench overlooking the stagnant waters of the canal where sits a statue of Kavanagh, with the contemplative look he so often posed. It is fitting that this tribute to the 'man of the soul and of the soil' is located in a serene pocket of a busy metropolitan landscape merging the rural and urban of the poet's dual life.

Just like in life where simplicity was the essence, in death Kavanagh demands no ostentatious display but rather a modest cross stands at his grave bearing the lines

"and pray for him
Who walked apart
On the hills
Loving life's miracles"

AOIFE MULLEN, Scoil Mhuiré na Trócaire, Ardara, Co Louth

The words of Patrick Kavanagh are reprinted from *Collected Poems*, edited by Antoinette Quinn (Allen Lane, 2004), by kind permission of the Trustees of the Estate of the late Katherine B. Kavanagh, through the Jonathan Williams Literary Agency.



Call of the Forest

The Forgotten Wisdom of Trees

Call of the Forest is a documentary film by Diana Beresford Kroeger articulating the value of native forests, their role in climate mitigation measures and how native trees govern and manage our fragile environment, bestowing multiple hidden benefits for all life forms. It features the Woodland League, a County Clare based not-for-profit organisation, which aims to restore the relationship between people and their native woodlands.

Call of the Forest was launched recently in Birr, County Offaly. President Michael D. Higgins acknowledged the launch in a letter. He said "This important film reminds us of the profound importance of our ancient forests and native woodlands, not only in sustaining life on our shared planet but also in inspiring and enriching our culture. The world has recognised the importance of restoring native woodlands, halting the loss of

biodiversity and preventing the degradation of natural habitats through a shared global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. We, all of us, must play our part and so I wish to commend the 'Forest in a Box' initiative for offering school children in Ireland the opportunity to contribute to this global effort".

To coincide with the film's message, The Woodland League has created a replicable simple project, called, The Woodland League 'Forest in a Box', native tree seed incubator system for national schools. The group gifted a Forest Box package with native tree seeds to Gaelscoil na Laochra, Birr, to coincide with the film's screening. The project fits the biodiversity flag objectives of the Green schools initiative.

Find out more about the Woodland League at www.woodlandleague.org/



Diana Beresford-Kroeger explains seed energy to the children



Andrew St Ledger explains the *Know your Native Trees Educational Manual* to the pupils in Gaelscoil na Laochra, Birr, Co Offaly



Answering the Call of the Forest

The BEE begins...

2017 was the first year our school entered a student to the Easons Spelling Bee.

I presented the idea to the children in fifth and sixth classes and there was quite a bit of enthusiasm. I reckoned more than half of the eligible 60 children knew what a Spelling Bee was, and at least as many were interested in competing.

I photocopied lists of words, some sanctioned by the organisers, some not. I had many takers, eager, good, clever children, brave too, willing to give this Bee a go. We practised dummyruns in the classrooms and some pupils realised just how nerve-wracking it could be. Firstly, remembering how to spell words they had fastidiously learned and secondly, calling out the letters, in the correct order, in front of a group of people!

There were super-enthusiastic pupils and timid children who had done their homework, showing quiet confidence when I called their name. Each dummy run produced a different winner. The randomness of the words along with the stagefright was now understood. They were counselled that to win required gritty determination, hard work and some sheer luck.

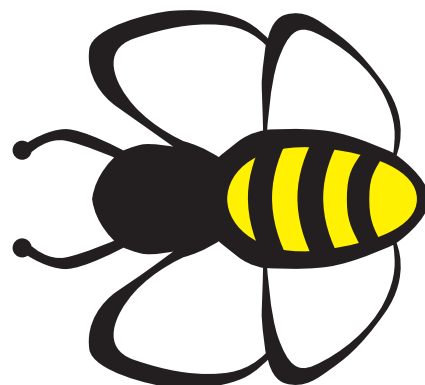
reiterated the procedure and each student stood up, spelled their word. afford... condescending... proletariat... sovereign... They then sat back down – up front if they spelled successfully, in the audience if not. One by one, all the sixth class students were knocked out. Within four rounds, we were down to two fifth class pupils. It was anyone's game, as both of them were well-prepared and determined to win. A mistake that the child would probably never make in other circumstances was made and so our school representative was selected! All involved congratulated her, some through tears, but graciously, and she was overjoyed.

Our girl set about learning to spell

I had many takers,
eager, good, clever
children, brave too,
willing to give this
Bee a go

OUR girl went forward, we took our seats in the audience while her mother hid her head in her hands. The competitors were expertly handled, gently led into a practice round and put at their ease. Exercise ... knock ... chair ... client ... Straight away, some children did the full "Can you repeat that for me / put it into a sentence for me, please?" as they had been coached to do. The atmosphere was electric as the Bee proper began. You could hear a pin drop between the adjudicator asking the spelling and the speller making their attempt.

There were 18 contestants, some obviously nervous, some confident. I



THE day for the school Bee came. The class teachers, an SNA and I sat facing the competitors, with their peer group as audience. Adhering to the rules, we

words from the bright yellow Spelling Bee dictionary each night with her family. Her teacher and I grilled her at every opportunity, aided by her classmates. Within a short couple of weeks, it was time to face the other schools in the county final. We didn't have far to go, arriving with Mom and another supporter, to a school bedecked in dazzling Spelling Bee yellow. Bunting, buzzy yellow bees, balloons, posters, drawings and projects were on display as we made our way to the school hall.

Well done to this school's pupils and their teachers, it was an impressive welcome to all the competitors. The school stage was set up with a number of children's chairs, fantastic Spelling Bee backdrop, and adjudicators' desk. A microphone loomed front centre stage.

maintained eye-contact with our girl as much as I could, trying to convey calm and slow-breathing when it was almost her turn.

People sat on the edge of their seats, parents looked on through their fingers or behind someone's shoulders. Some prayed, all of us held our breath while each courageous speller said their bit.

Words began to be misspelled as the rounds went on. Difficult words for adults, not to mind 11- and 12-year-olds. Pertinent /pertinant ... brusque/brusk ... azalea/azalia The children battled bravely and sadly bowed out when it was clear they were mistaken. "Geranium"? This was a tough contest!

There was the boy who knew he spelled his word wrong two letters in, the child who forgot to insert the 'u' in 'quaint', the competitor who took an age to enunciate each letter, in a very uncertain

**Interested in
entering the 2018
Spelling Bee.**

Visit <http://www.easonedition.com/category/spelling-bee/>



way. When she got to the end of the word and it was correct, some of us nearly leaped up with relief for her!

Applause was offered at the end of each round as the unlucky spellers took their seats in the audience.

Round one: one speller gone. Round two: three more out. Round three: four spellers out. So we were left with something like seven boys, all looking extremely competent and three sound-looking girls.

Round four was a killer round, surprisingly felling all of the boys, leaving just two girls. Our girl was one of them. We were incredulous!

There was no way to know which way this thing could go. Knockout Round One had both contestants spelling correctly. Knockout Round Two offered the other girl a word she obviously wasn't familiar

with, which she valiantly attempted, but unfortunately got wrong.

It was now up to our girl to tap into her great, practised knowledge of spelling and spin out her word correctly. Anthracite...

FOR a person who's never come across this word before, it could be spelled a number of ways. The adjudicator repeated it, slowly pronouncing each syllable.

Our girl went for it, choosing 'c' over 's' for the fourth last letter. She later admitted she really wasn't sure which letter to use, but made a lucky guess. This was our winner!

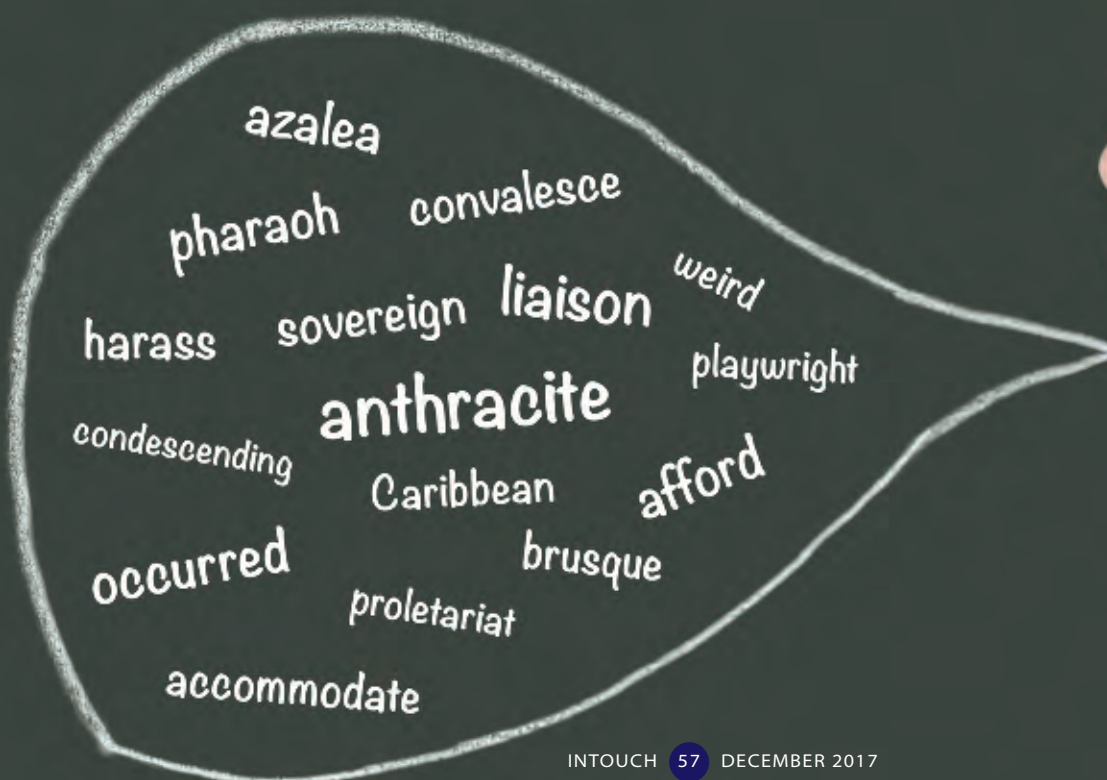
We jumped up, unable to contain our glee! Her mother breathed properly for

the first time in an hour! Our girl was absolutely thrilled, and a little stunned by the whole experience. Gutted, the other competitor took her defeat well, and I found it very heartening to see many of the other spellers come up to offer congratulations to our winner.

Our girl collected her prize, photos were taken and we were told to expect notice of the next round in May. Delighted, we returned to school and our girl was fêted. She immediately started learning to spell the contents of the Collins English Dictionary.

Unfortunately, our girl was pipped at the post in a very exciting provincial final but she will be trying out for this year's competition.

MONITA (Nita) FITZGERALD teaches in St John of God NS, Waterford. Nita is also a published author.



Leabhair don Nollaig

B'fhiú go mór an dá leabhar nua-fhoilsithe seo a cheannach mar bhronntanas Nollag.

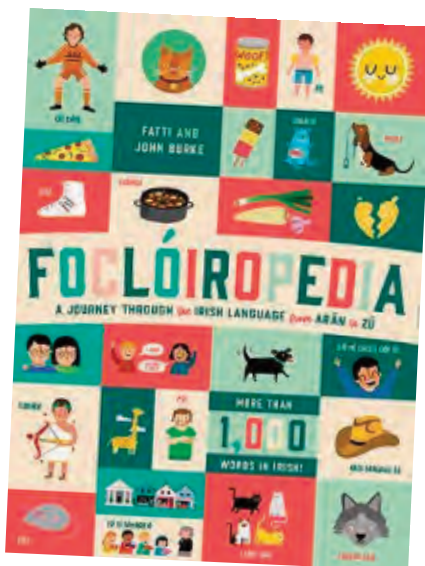
Foclóirópedia

Leabhar iontach, briomhar atá in *Foclóirópedia* le Fatti agus John Burke, a chuireann foghlaim na Gaeilge chun cinn ar bhealach úrnua. Tá léaráidí áille, ildaite ann agus seoid nua le haimsiú ar gach leathanach. Tá breis is 1,000 focal agus frása Gaeilge léirithe, chomh maith le seanfhocail, samhlacha agus logainmneacha.

Tá máistreacht ar stór focal riachtanach do dhuine ar bith atá ag foghlaim teanga agus is cinnte go spreagfaidh an foilseachán comhaimseartha seo suim agus muinín sa teanga, ní hamháin don fhoghlaimeoir óg ach d'fhoghlaimeoirí fásta chomh maith.

Úsáid sa rang

- ☞ Spreag na páistí le leabhar nótaí pearsanta a ullmhú le liostaí focal rangaithe ó thaobh ábhar mar atá sa *Foclóirópedia*. Is féidir leas a bhaint as an bhfoclóir seo agus iad i mbun



scríbhneoireachta agus cur leis de réir mar a thagann focail nua chun cinn sa rang.

- ☞ **Feicim le mo shúilín:** Taispeáin leathanach ón leabhar don rang. Déan cur síos ar íomhá go n-aimsítear an focal ceart, m.sh. 'Feicim ainmhí ...

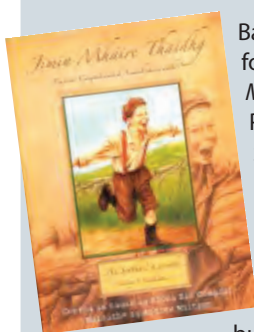
feicim ainmhí mór ... feicim ainmhí le muineál fada' – Sioráf

- ☞ **Aimsigh an focal:** Taispeáin leathanach ar bith agus ceistigh an rang ionas go dtiocfaidh siad ar an bhfocal ceart m.sh. Daoine: 'Cad a thugtar ar dhuine a thugann aire do shláinte ainmhithe? (Tréidlia)
- ☞ **Fiche ceist:** Roghnaigh focal. Lig do na páistí 20 ceist a chur le teacht ar an bhfreagra m.sh. an ainmhí é (is/ní ainmhí é)
- ☞ **Cluiche cuimhne:** Taispeáin leathanach ón leabhar don rang agus clúdaigh ansin é. Tabhair deis do na páistí liosta a scríobh de na rudaí atá ar an leathanach. Bíonn an bua ag an duine a chuimhníonn ar an líon is mó rudaí.

Gill Books 2017.



Jimín Mháire Thaidhg



Ba sa bhliain 1919 a foilsíodh *Jimín Mháire Thaidhg* le Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha (1883-1964), 'An Seabhad', den chéad uair. Scéal a insíodh i nguth an rógaire dána Jimín, buachaill óg

Gaeltachta, trí bliana d'éag d'aois. 'An Máistir a dúirt liom é seo a scríobh ... cúntas a scríobh mar gheall orm féin – sin a dúirt sé a bhí uaidh'. 'Caithfidh mé insint mar gheall ar an Nollaig a bhí againne...' Tugadh tús áite do ghreann agus do spraoi na hóige agus a scéal féin á insint aige.

Is mó páiste a léigh an leagan giorraithe scoile de Jimín agus a bhain súp as mar gurb é Jimín an carachtar ba cháiliúla agus ba spráilúla i litríocht

Ghaeilge na n-óg sa 20ú aois. Fágadh tagairtí don bhás, do bhreith leanaí agus cúrsaí grá ar lár sa leagan scoile a bhí, ach a bhuíochas don Dr Róna Nic



Congáil tá Jimín ina steillbheatha arís san eagrán nua-fhoilsithe neamhghiorraithe den leabhar atá maisithe go gleoite ag Andrew Whitson. Tá cur síos ann ar nósanna agus ar chultúr na Gaeltachta ag tús an fhichiú haois: Jimín agus nósanna na Nollag, Lá an Dreoilín, agus an mheitheal ag baint móna. B'fhiú go mór an leabhar seo a cheannach do dhaoine fásta agus mar leabhar le léamh d'ardranganna i scoileanna Gaeltachta agus lán-Ghaeilge. Tugann sé ní hamháin líofacht agus saibhreas teanga ach greann agus léargas ar aigne an pháiste fosta. 'Is cruaidh an scéal ar bhuachaill a bheith go maith- mharódh sé é tar éis aon tseachtaine amháin'

Cuireadh an t-eagrán nua i gcló faoi dhó in eagrán caighdeánach agus eagrán canúnach Chorca Dhuibhne: *Jimín Mháire Thaidhg* – An tSnáthaid Mhór 2016.

Reviews

Football legend

Legends' Lair, by Joe O'Brien, tells the story of 12-year-old Dublin born Charlie Stubbs who now lives in the shadow of Old Trafford stadium. Charlie has been selected for a trial with the famous Manchester United Club, but must return to live in Ireland following a family bereavement. Not only is his dream of being signed by United at risk, but he must start in a new school and choose a new team for whom he can play. He discovers that his late grandfather played on the famous Legends' Lair, a now derelict hard surface pitch. Can he find this once celebrated football ground and will he get to play on it? Will he ever get his trial with United?

This soccer themed novel would appeal to senior pupils with an interest in sport, especially soccer. Charlie's return to Ireland and his subsequent adventures

both on and off the soccer pitch will keep the reader engaged and wondering what will happen next. Without naming current soccer players the book will remain up-to-date for some time. Match tactics and reports are described in just enough detail to keep a casual reader engaged and there is no debate about the offside rule to complicate matters! Children just want to play and this is what the book is about: playing the beautiful game.

Published by O'Brien Press. ISBN: 978-1-84717-826-8. Cost €8.99.

Reviewed by CIARAN BYRNE, Ballinaclash, Co Wicklow.



A Sailor went to Sea Sea Sea

A Sailor went to Sea Sea Sea – Favourite Rhymes from an Irish Childhood is a delicious treat of a book. Compiled by Sarah Webb and Steve McCarthy, this is a treasure of an anthology filled with rhymes and songs for young and old to enjoy alike.

It is a visually pleasing hard-backed book, and very enjoyable to look through. Each page is filled with captivating illustrations in bold striking colours to help a little person's imagination really lift off whether they are at reading or picture looking stage.

There is a wonderful variety of verse and rhyme included within the book. Classics like *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat*, traditional pieces such as *I'll Tell Me Ma* and a wide range inbetween are included! My personal favourite was *On Top of Spaghetti* followed closely by *If you Should Meet a Crocodile*.

Useful for the younger classroom, where infants would enjoy the unusual verses. The rhymes and tongue twisters would appeal to middle ages and the bright illustrations would make a great stimulus in senior art lessons.

I smiled and laughed as I read through the pages, enjoying the illustrations and have already bought this book as a gift for friends.

O'Brien Press. ISBN 978-184-71779-40. Cost: €17.

Reviewed by ORLA FAULKNER, Drogheda, Co Louth.



Ireland – Test your knowledge

From the *Irelandopedia* series comes this simple, no frills quiz book. The book is laid out in two sections, quizzes at the front and answers in the back. Each of the 10 quizzes is broken down into five rounds of 10 questions. The book complements the *Irelandopedia* series but, as answers are provided in the book, it is not necessary to have the other books from the series on hand. If, however, you do have access to the series, the quizzes in this book could be used as a fun way to get pupils to work in teams and research the answers to the questions.

This quiz book would provide excellent respite from the usual structure of lessons, while at the same time improving on pupils' general knowledge. *The Irelandopedia Quiz Book*, written by Shauna Burke, would inject fun in to any classroom by making a game of learning fun facts about Ireland.

Published by Gill Books. ISBN: 978-0-7171-7863-6. Cost €6.99.



Games from an Irish Childhood

This book took me right back to my childhood with long lost memories of playing games from morning to night with other children on my road. These days it seems hard to tear children away from television and electronic devices but *Red Rover, Red Rover* by Kunak McGann provides a book of games that can teach children to play like we once did.

The book contains easy to follow instructions for childhood games such as Relievo, Kerbs, Queenie-I-O and Elastics. The games are categorised under different headings and there are activities

for all weathers and occasions such as Halloween and birthday parties.

I think this book would definitely encourage children to engage in some physical activity away from the television!

This book would make a great Christmas gift or stocking filler.

Published by O'Brien Press. ISBN 978-184-71794-63. Cost €15.



Finishing Touches

|| Resources for teachers, noticeboard of upcoming events and the Comhar Linn Crossword ||

Noticeboard



Copy date

Copy you wish to have considered for publication in the January/February issue of *InTouch* should arrive in Head Office by 8 January 2018.

The deadline for the March 2018 issue is 12 February.

Email copy to editor@into.ie



Global Citizenship and Human Rights CPD

Why not book a free CPD workshop for 2018 on the theme of Global Citizenship/Human Rights/Global Goals.

Limited availability so email global@into.ie to apply. Latest worldwide developments with great free lesson plans and resources for the whole school. Lessons apply across curriculum.

Also: Why not plan your 17 March / St Patrick's Day event to link with the 17 Global Goals. Check out www.into.ie/globalcitizenshipschool for ideas.



PhD Scholarship

The INTO and DCU School of Education are delighted to announce a PhD scholarship for an INTO member to celebrate and mark INTO's 150th anniversary in 2018. The three year scholarship will commence in September 2018. Closing date for applications is 31 January 2018. The successful applicant will be announced at Congress 2018. Full details of the scholarship scheme are available on the INTO (and DCU) website. See page 48 for more details.



Cornmarket Cumann na mBunscol Awards 2018

The closing date for submission of projects for the 2018 Cornmarket Cumann na mBunscol Awards is Wednesday 10 January 2018.

All details are on the Cumann na mBunscol website: http://www.cnmnaisiunta.com/news/10029700/cornmarket_cumann_na_m_bunscol_awards2018



Reunions

The Past Students' Association of the Church of Ireland College of Education

Annual conference in the Newpark Hotel Kilkenny from 9 –11 March 2018 for all current and past students of CIC DCU, CICE and CITC. The theme for the conference will be 'Strength for Mind and Body', which will include speakers on the topics of PE, Growth vs Fixed Mindset and Making Children more Independent and Resilient. The conference is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and learn some new things to take back to the classroom! It also incorporates the 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 year reunions.

Further information: psacice@gmail.com or Facebook: PastStudents Cice

Coloma College Reunion

To mark the 40th anniversary of the closing of Coloma College, West Wickham, Kent, a reunion for all years is planned for the weekend of 18/19 May 2018. For further details please contact Carmel on 086 2341864 or Maura on 087 9153729.



Principals' Seminar Programme 2017/18

Four more venues available for booking early January, 2018

Newbridge, Co Kildare: Keadeen Hotel – 7 March, 2018
Letterkenny, Co Donegal: Mt Errigal Hotel – 18 April, 2018
Limerick City: Castletory Park Hotel – 2 May, 2018
Glen of the Downs, Co Wicklow: Glenview Hotel – 16 May, 2018

See www.into.ie for further details or email: principalsseminars@into.ie



Christmas closure – Head Office

Head Office will close on Friday, 22 December 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

The office will re-open on Tuesday, 2 January 2018 at 9.00 a.m.

Two pages with Comhar Linn prizewinners, Crossword, resources for the classroom ... from training courses to helpful hints and useful links

Winners of October 2017 Comhar Linn Draw

Car – Toyota Corolla

Sarah Kinsella, Scoil Náis Bhríde, Grange, Tullow, Co Carlow.

Car – Toyota Yaris

Fiona Keenan, Scoil na nAingéal Naofa, Boyle, Co Roscommon.

Cash €2,500

Elma Groves, St John the Baptist NS, Midleton, Co Cork.

Julie Casey, Milford, Co Donegal.

Cash €1,500

Seán O'Coileáin, Inis Eonáin, Co Chorcaí.

Brian Ó Doighre, Monaghan, Co Monaghan.

intouch

Would you like to advertise in InTouch?

Contact Mary Bird Smyth
ads@into.ie or mbird@into.ie

Phone 01 8047724

*There is limited advertising space remaining in the
Jan/Feb 2018 InTouch issue*

For pre-bookings please email **mbird@into.ie**



HomeLink



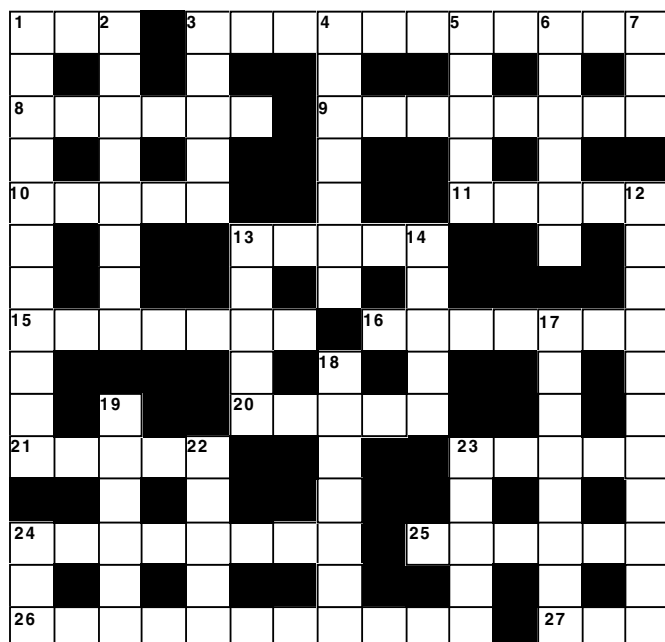
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Comhar Linn Crossword no 186



NAME:
ADDRESS:

A draw for 2 x €100 will be made from all correct entries.
Simply complete the crossword and send it to 'InTouch Crossword', INTO, 35
Parnell Square, Dublin 1, before Friday 19th January, 2018.

ACROSS

1. A note on American public transport. (3)
3. Would one need an enchanted compass to draw up this group of conjurors? (5,6)
8. Bet Ron misspelt the name of a literary family. (6)
- 9 & 20a. The dame's comrades mixed in these spicy ingredients. (8,5)
10. Bury the old exam. (5)
11. Scent encountered in Faro markets. (5)
13. Completely disregard the loud ruffian. (5)
15. 6d & 19d. Mathematical term that might make Maths go on hectic form. (7,6,6)
16. Rice found in the Saab Tim crashed. (7)
20. See 9 across.
21. Can't e bring in a law like this? (5)
23. Funny part of the sitcom I created. (5)
24. The animal makes the insect run away. (8)
25. Too round a rug for a love-apple. (6)
26. Annual tidy-up that leaves the coil pristine. (6,5)
27. Adam's mate from the night before. (3)

DOWN

1. One whose ideal location would be Reading? (11)
2. Fair way to break ring tops. (8)
3. What Dr. Rock drives. (5)
4. That tooth may alter the coin, sir. (7)
5. Country that turns up to help Northern Ireland. (5)
6. See 15 across.
7. Tree found in East Leitrim. (3)
12. This weather feature may conceal tiny change. (11)
13. Punch manufacturers! (5)
14. They work together on a beverage manuscript. (5)
17. Water, from the auction of Ardnacrusha or Aswan? (5,3)
18. Unused wood is what Roosevelt promised Americans. (3,4)
19. See 15 across.
22. Claw encased in Oriental onyx. (5)
23. Royal overheads cause a quarrel in Cavan. (5)
24. A sailor's 'six-pack'. (3)

Winners of Crossword no. 184 are: Christina Slattery, Ardfert, Co. Kerry and Liam O'Sullivan, Cahir, Co. Tipperary

Solutions and winners of Bumper Crossword will be announced in the next issue of InTouch magazine



It is 40 years this November since the Writers in Schools Programme was launched in the Convent of Mercy School, Limerick, by the Arts Council. The programme is one of the longest running arts-in-education programmes in Ireland. Since its inception in 1977, almost one million young people have enjoyed a visit by an artist to their classroom. There have been over 8,000 visits by hundreds of artists to over 4,000 schools nationwide. The programme brings writers and storytellers to primary, secondary and special schools in every county in Ireland, north and south, with the aim of inspiring young people to read and to write creatively.


Each year the Writers in Schools Programme offers a broad range of artists for schools to choose from, both in English and Irish: poets, novelists, children's writers, dramatists, storytellers and screenwriters.

Writers in Schools visits are for 2–2.5 hours with a selected writer, which can be divided into shorter sessions for different class groups (e.g. three 45-minute sessions during one visit);


The cost is €100/£85 per visit. This is half the writer's fee, paid by the school. Poetry Ireland funds the balance plus travel expenses.

Find out more at www.poetryireland.ie/education/writers-in-schools/






portal for irish education
lárshuíomh oidéachais na hÉireann




Star site



SCOIL ROIS NS, TAYLOR'S HILL, SALTHILL
ballanationalschool.com
The use of quality images contributes to a beautiful looking website. Excellent navigation and lots of up-to-date content.

ONES TO WATCH



TATE KIDS
tate.org.uk/kids
Children's section of the fabulous site from the Tate gallery in London. The 'make' section is useful for classroom activities. In a word, brilliant!

AN CUMANN SCOIL DRÁMAÍOCHTA
scoildramaiocht.ie
Cad a dhéanfaidh tú do dhráma na Nollag? Tá neart scrípteanna do dhrámaí agus ceoldrámaí ar fáil ar shuíomh gréasáin An Chumann Scoildrámaíochta. Tá éagsúlacht ann do gach rang chomh maith le físeáin.

100 ACTS OF KINDNESS
coffeecupsandcrayons.com/100-acts-kindness-kids
100 simple ideas for random acts of kindness that your class could do at home or in school.

Top 10
The most viewed resources over a seven day period in November

- 100 ACTS OF KINDNESS**
coffeecupsandcrayons.com/100-acts-kindness-kids
Simple ideas for random acts of kindness.
- MATHS IS FUN – FRACTIONS**
mathsisfun.com/fractions-menu.html
Practical challenges to reinforce learning.
- RAINN AGUS AMHRAIN**
resources.teachnet.ie/clane/2008/index.html
Songs and rhymes based on curriculum topics.
- FRACTION GAMES**
sheppardssoftware.com/mathgames/menus/fractions.htm
Games can be differentiated by speed and difficulty.
- BIA – SCOILNET THEMEPAGE**
scoilnet.ie/go-to-primary/theme-pages/irish/bia
Bricfeasta, Bosca Lóin, Mearbhia, Torthaí, Glasraí, Bia Sháintiúil agus Máirt na hIhnde.
- SA BHAILE – AONAD FHOGHLAMA**
scoilnet.ie/uploads/resources/11797/11428.pdf
Covers Flashcards, questions, display cards and other activities.
- INTERACTIVE GEOGRAPHY QUIZZES**
toporopa.eu/en/index.html
Quizzes on countries, seas, mountains, rivers and cities.
- SEANFHOCAIL NOLLAG**
daltai.com/holidays/seanfhocail-nollag
Christmas proverbs with Irish translations.
- BBC – DAY IN THE LIFE**
<http://vimeo.com/21927963>
One of four episodes created for BBC History to help get kids in to ancient history.
- CHRISTMAS ART IDEAS – SMAOINTE D'EALÁIN NA NOLLAG**
eachleim.com/an_nollaig.html
A school page with lovely ideas and sample nativity art.