

# SEA & STONE



*free*



**Oileáin Iarthar  
Chorcaí**  
West Cork  
Islands

*Creative Places West Cork Islands  
Year in Review 2024  
Oileáin Iarthar Chorcaí  
Athbhreithniú ar an mBliain 2024*

*Bere Island  
Cape Clear  
Durse Island  
Heir Island*

*Long Island  
Sherkin Island  
Whiddy island*

*An tOileán Mór  
Oileán Chléire  
Oileán Bao  
Inis Uí Drisceoil*

*An tOileán Fada  
Inis Arcáin  
Oileán Faoide*

# Dive into the arts

*it's easier than you think*



## Looking back looking forward

BY PETER PRENDERGAST,  
PROJECT RESEARCH & COORDINATION

It's been two years since I began working on the Creative Places West Cork Islands (CPWCI) project. There was no template for this role, as regional support for the arts was a new idea being developed by the The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and supported nationally via the local authorities - we have in many ways been breaking new ground. It became clear from the outset that the job was to invite people to initiate projects, and for me to create the structures to make the projects happen. With the support of the project partnership, we are creating a funding mechanism that is future proofed and adaptable to the unique needs of the islands.

Funding for year four of the project has still to be secured and is dependent on the merits of this phase of the programme. I have been heartened by the commitment of sections of the community and the projects activated across the islands have given me confidence that we, as a creative community, can continue the work.

The first two years of the project have seen us deliver support for long standing festivals within the region such as the West Cork Music suite of festivals, Open Ear (islanders' night) and some new ones too such as Bobstock, the first Bere Island Festival and the Festival of

Music on Heir Island. Our Islander Artist programme supported work by Simon Kidd, Kirstie Affleck, Mary Sullivan, Norman King, Mona O' Driscoll, and Fergus Murphy. Islanders were also supported through *Try It Series* initiated by Cally at the Sherkin library, these include, Eoin Marshall, Nigel Towse, workshops by Madeleine Dunne, and others.

Some project highlights have included Pauline Hanley's Bere Island International Poetry Prize and Stephen Carter's Leatherwork for Islanders, the music meetings on Oileán Chléire, Sherkin and Heir Islands organised by Neisha Azzopardi. Thanks to Nuala Mahon for her photography work. I was also very impressed with the Oileán Chléire ceramic throw down managed by Catherine Ryan and the achievements of the men's shed on Bere Island. Much appreciation also to Jesse Jones & Nkosi: The Moth Catchers on Sherkin was a beautiful initiative. I have also worked more closely this year with Fiona from the Sherkin Island Development Society and Oscar from Bere Island Projects Group, both have initiated a lot of new and exciting projects. And of course in 2024 we hosted the National Creative Places Network with Damien McGlynn from Create (the national development agency for collaborative arts) and

Katie Lowry from the Arts Council. Both organisations supported our work with great energy and vision.

I'm looking forward to working again with Róisín Ní Chonaill on this year's Bobstock on Oileán Chléire and continuing our support to Sherkin's Harmony in Blue singers. In 2025 we will also have an exhibition celebrating our work across the islands, this will be at the LHQ Gallery at Cork County Council. Some works included here will be a selection of objects by Diarmuid O'Driscoll, a film by William Bock, the complete collection of the wooden boat plaques by Sherkin's Nigel Towse and John Simpson, a wall-based work by Kirstie Affleck, and other works that shine a bright light on island life.

In 2025 we will also move forward with our Storytellers in Residence: Paddy O'Brien, Nuala Hayes and Simone Schuemmfeder. This is a seven-islands project that will explore themes and rhythms through storytelling and composition. We are also now ready to move forward on the Ocean & Environment commission with renowned filmmaker Eóin Heaney who will create a new artwork that truly defines the islands under the Ocean & Environment theme.

### What's been happening with the Creative Places National Network?

The Arts Council's Creative Places programme is a national initiative. The Arts Council in partnership with Cork County Council are the main sponsor of the project enabling our work here on the West Cork Islands. The Creative Places project objective is to cultivate cultural support into places that have been previously overlooked.



In April 2024 the West Cork Islands of Sherkin and Heir facilitated the National Creative Places Network.<sup>1</sup> During the two day event coordinators from all the other locations came to West Cork in what was a fantastic few days of sharing, learning and connecting.



In 2024 we also facilitated Arts Council research through Sarah Boiling and Associates who met with representatives from the islands at locations on Sherkin and Bere Island. This research resulted in a national network-wide report that analysed the good work being done across the country. This report concluded that the West Cork Island's programme would merit continued support beyond the initial three year phase.

1. Maeve Mulrennan, Ian McDonagh, Peter Prendergast Cork County Council | Damien McGlynn, Carolann Courtney & Aoife Dunne, Create | Eilish Langton, Athy | Seonaid Murry, Edenderry | Marina Ni Dhubhain, Uíbhreachaigh | Jennifer Webster, Macuilliam | Deryn O Callaghan, Enniscorthy | Mary Smyth, Ballaghaderreen | Heather Brett & Kim Doherty, Ballyconnell | Sheila Quinn, Shannon | Deirdre Orme, Edgeworthstown | Sinead Dowling & Louise Osborne, Bagenalstown, Carlow Arts Office | Jenny Sherwin, Wicklow Arts Office | Martin O Donoghue, Play Strategist and Kristina Borysova for her drone work.

### Our partnership

The Project Partnership Group is made up of representatives from local arts and development agencies. From left to right, Peter Prendergast, Project Coordinator, Creative Places West Cork Islands, Judith Gilbert, Comharchumann Chléire, Maeve Mulrennan Cork County Council Arts Office, Aisling Moran, Community Development Coordinator, Sherkin Island Development Society (Sherkin, Long and Heir Islands), Ian McDonagh, Cork County Council Arts Office, Ann Davoren, Director - Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre. Missing from photo Bernie Orpen, Bere Island Projects Group (Durseay, Whiddy & Bere Islands).

Photo: Emma Jervis





# Art happens everywhere



# What did we do in 2024?

## Sewn Up

Jordyn Lynch, Neisha Azzopard  
Making and Workshops  
Sherkin Island 2023 & 2024

Sewn Up is a project about up-cycling and repairing unwanted items. The project utilises skills local to Sherkin Island such as stitching/machine stitching, crochet, and textile layering. With thanks to Dan from Sherkin Northshore for getting us going.



## Sweet Home Sweet

Jane Hayes  
Exhibition and workshops  
Bere Island Community Centre  
25 and 26 October 2024

An exhibition of work created with and for very young children and families of Bere Island. Participants were invited to come in, take their time, relax, stop, look, listen, lie down, sit, have a little walk around, chat or whatever they felt like.



## Leatherwork for Islanders with Stephen Carter

Bere Island Community Centre  
From 8 October 2024 to April 2025

This project provides the invaluable skill sharing of leather work to Bere Islanders. With these new skills in leatherwork, it is hoped that leatherwork will continue to be passed down through the generations for years to come.



## My Townland, My Story

Children from the Islands  
Publication and Book Launch  
St Michael's National School,  
Bere Island  
19 September 2024

My Townland, My Story is a project led by Bere Islander Mary Sullivan. This book project tells the unique and important stories of the West Cork Islands from the perspective of its children. The project takes influence from the The Schools' Collection, which harnessed the folklore and local tradition of home, dating back to 1937.

Image: Picture by Eddie Sheehan age 11, Dursey Island.



## Flower Boxes

Bere Island Men's Shed group  
Community flower boxes and planters  
Bere Island  
Summer 2024

The Men's Shed is a committed group of some 20 people. In the Summer of 2024 with the help of Creative Places, the men along with participants from the Active Retirement Group, the Tourism and Environmental Group, the local Primary school and After-School Club were set the task of building beautiful plant boxes for the island. The project was truly intergenerational.



## Juggling for everyone

### TRY IT SERIES

Try It Series with Daniel Q Sherkin Island, Crows Gable  
2 July 2024  
With thanks to Sherkin Library



## Mary Sullivan

Artist book: Softback  
Dimensions: 220 x 165  
Pages: 48  
Design: Stuart Coughlan edit+  
Photography: Jed Niezgod, Mickael Do Couto & Mary Sullivan  
Print: Print Dynamics, Dublin  
Texts: Sarah Kelleher & Cristin Leach  
First Edition: 200 copies  
For sale: Uillinn, West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen



## Bobstock

Bobstock: The Revival  
Music Festival  
Cape Clear / Oileán Chléire  
Saturday 6 July 2024

Bobstock was always a landmark weekend for the island. In 2024 Bob was revived and incorporated the talents of local islanders and visiting musicians.



## Harmony in Blue

Facilitated by Susan McManamon  
Singing in Harmony  
Sherkin Island  
Summer 2023

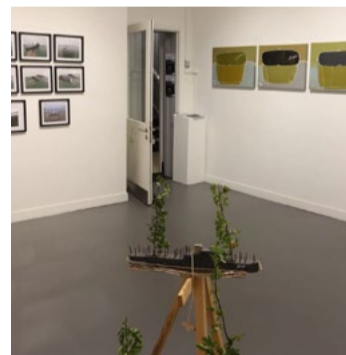
Musician and Choir Director Susan McManamon facilitated four workshops, in June, July and August 2024. The group focused on unaccompanied singing in harmony. For some taking part, this is their first time singing, others have previous experience with choirs but for everyone involved, this is their first time singing together. On Saturday 31 August, the singers shared the songs they've explored together in harmony. Harmony in Blue were joined by the singing group The Ferns.



## "Youreyesfourteen"

Fergus Murphy  
Solo exhibition  
Townhall Art Centre, Co Cavan  
26 September - 9 October 2024

FxMurphy presented a new body of work at Townhall Arts Centre in September 2024. Fergus says: "The work is a response to the efficacy of colonialism, a construct that still seems to pervade and inform our world despite a presumed demise."



## Quilting workshop

Harriet Andrews  
Bere Island Women Create  
January 2024



## Music Meeting

Sherkin Island  
The Jolly Roger  
9th June 2024

## Cape Clear

Kevin Mc Cann, Danny Stewart,  
Mairtín Ó Méalóid, Brennus Voarino,  
Séamus Ó Drisceoi, Kevin Kearney

## Sherkin Island

John Simpson, Bridgid Madden,  
Simon Crockett, Neisha Azzopardi,  
Daniel O' Conner, Nigel Towse



## Crochet Workshop

Catherine Sullivan  
Bere Island Women Create  
March & April 2024

Introduction to crochet with an emphasis on the various stitches, pattern reading and creation.



## Jon Sousa & Adam Agee

Concerts  
Oileán Chléire  
11 and 12 June 2024  
Sherkin Northshore 13th



## Hula Hoops & Juggling

Kate Mitchell  
Children aged 6 +  
Bere Island  
22 June 2024

## Material library/ material mapping

Simon Kidd  
Residency & Workshop  
Oileán Chléire  
Ongoing through 2025

Simon is a Northern Irish artist who is now based on Oileán Chléire. His current project is to create objects, sculptures, vessels, artefacts and pots which begin with the island and accentuate the stories and feelings of "place".

Image: Carraig an tSáile, live cast rockface, press moulded stoneware, wood salt gas fired with local stones, wild clay, and local ash, 64x44x12cm, 2023



## Dursey Island Artist Residency

Annemarie Ni Churreáin  
Dursey Island  
January & February 2024

Annemarie is from the Donegal Gaeltacht and was our inaugural Dursey Island artist in residency. This was a pilot project.

## Fireside Sessions

Facilitated by Shanti, Guitar Duo,  
Neisha & Simon.  
Concerts & gatherings  
Sherkin & Oileán Chléire  
Winter 2024

To help us through the colder more isolated months, musicians Simon Crockett and Neisha Azzopardi have been developing the fireside sessions. Hosted by Dan from Northshore these sessions and been a great, with musicians from the island joining for instrumental jam sessions each night.



## Podcasting Skills

### TRY IT SERIES

Facilitated by Toma McCullim  
Bere Island Active Retirement Group  
24 October 2024

Toma works with community groups to explore their stories through podcasting and sound art skills.



## The Crow's Old Gold

Carina McNally  
A Play  
In collaboration with playwright  
Éadaoin O' Donoghue

The Crow's Old Gold explores the mythology of the magical blacksmith, the Gaibhleann Gabha, on Crow Island at the end of the Beara Peninsula, the Hag of Beara on Dursey Island and the rocks Bull, Cow and Caf. Centring on Goibhniú, the Dé Danann blacksmithing God, the play is set on a rock near Dursey Island called The Crow where he is reputed to have had his magical forge.

## Bere Island International Poetry Prize

Facilitated by Pauline Hurley  
Bere Island  
Bere Island Arts Festival  
May to September

Winner: Fiona Hanley. Shortlisted: Faye Boland and Michael Dooley.

## Laureate na nÓg

Whole Wide World Tour  
Sherkin Island  
April 2024

The Laureate na nÓg day of literature events for children took place in April and was facilitated on Sherkin island with invited families from Oileán Chléire. A great day was had in the spring sunshine. With thanks to Sherkin Island Development Society for hosting the group

## Ceitheal Chléire Trá Pháidín Lúnasa

Trá Pháidín  
Residency  
Oileán Chléire  
26 - 29 August 2024

## Flotilla of boats to Long Island

The good folk from Sherkin Island

On a sunny spring morning a group of Sherkin musicians set sail for Long Island, performing outdoors in several locations.



## The St Anthony

Ronan Collins and Nigel Towse  
2025 and 2026

The St Anthony is a traditional half-deck fishing vessel built on Sherkin in 1925. Over the course of 2025/26 it is hoped it will receive a full restoration, which will preserve its heritage, facilitate some skill transmission, and also engage the local community in through workshops, storytelling, and coffee mornings.



## Bere Island Arts Festival

19 - 22 September

Bere Island Arts Festival curated a collection of performances, experiences, readings, screenings, concerts, and exhibitions across the island. Performances and exhibitions turned regular spaces into artistic and performance venues, including the Heritage Centre, Wild Atlantic Glamping and former military buildings such as The Drill Hall and The Lecture Theatre (old Camp Church), offering a diverse cultural landscape for attendees.

The festival welcomed a host of inspiring artists and performers, including acclaimed poets Enda Wyley and Peter Sirr, visual artist Bill Griffin, renowned folk singer Lisa Lambe, and the creative trio behind Building the Boat: poet Keith Payne, dancer Inma Pavón, and sound artist Mick O'Shea. With over 30 events held across the weekend, the broad offering of this festival meant there

was something for everyone to enjoy.

Exciting new events were added this year including a poetry and movement workshop, a pop up Gaeltacht, and the seven Islands Art Exhibition as well as some highlight events from last year such as The Long Table Lunch, Dancing at The Crossroads, and The Choir Project which was expanded to include islanders from Sherkin Island and Oileán Chléire. Additionally My Townland, My Story, a project led by artist, and Bere Islander, Mary Sullivan, was launched at the festival. This book project tells the unique and important stories of the West Cork Islands from the perspective of its children.

These events, among many others, ensured a vibrant and engaging experience for all attendees, highlighting the cultural richness and creative spirit of Bere Island.

[bereislandartsfestival.ie](http://bereislandartsfestival.ie)



## Collective Mending & Repurposing Sessions

Facilitated by Marianne O' Drisceoil Colaiste Pobail Chléire, Oileán Chléire  
September & October 2024

Skill sharing and revamping the old on Oileán Chléire.



## Eoin Warner in conversation with Tim O' Leary

West Cork Literary Festival  
Whiddy Island Schoolhouse  
13 July 2024

Naturalist, wildlife documentary presenter and Bantry native Eoin Warner had a public interview with Whiddy's Tim O' Leary about his work and the wildlife and landscapes of Ireland's islands. [westcorkmusic.ie/events/2024/eoin-warner](http://westcorkmusic.ie/events/2024/eoin-warner)



## Le Chéile & Dancing at the Crossroads

Sherkin community exhibition  
June & July 2024

Le Chéile ran from the 28 June to 11 July with opening reception and dancing at the crossroads on Sunday the 30th of June. Le Chéile was a showcase of craft, art, photography and stories of boats from Sherkin Island. This was an island-wide opportunity, that was open to all islanders to take part. In 2024 CPWCI supported the production of a once-off publication designed by Sherkin's own Deirdre Ní Luasaigh with contributions by islanders past and present.



## Nature & Place Writing with John Connell

West Cork Literary Festival  
Writing Workshop  
Whiddy Island  
13 July 2024

Bestselling author and farmer John Connell was on Whiddy for a three day writing workshop on nature and place. Starting with the work of Henry David Thoreau and his seminal book *Walden* he investigated how nature and place writing has been with us in its modern form for over a century.



## Hidden Stories

Róisín Ní Chonaill, Tomasz Madajczak & Inma Pavon  
Residency  
Oileán Chléire  
Ongoing in 2024

Oileán Chléire dance project with Inma Pavon, Róisín Ní Chonaill and Tomasz Madajczak. The project involved movement and film reinterpretation of traditional stories emerging from the land, nature, and historical remains of Cape Clear Island. Photo: Inma Pavon, Cape Clear Island.



## Workshop | Local Wild Plants & Flowers

Sonia Caldwell / Kilcoe Studios  
Oileán Chléire & Bere Island  
May & June 2024

In early summer Sonia ran workshops for Oileán Chléire and Bere Island. The initial workshop explored the local wild plants and flowers on the islands through an outdoor walk. The second workshop developed these into drawings that could be transferred to linen for embroidery and tapestry.



## Writing With Water

Bernadette Burns & inni-k  
Artist residency  
Sherkin Island  
July 2024

Visual artist Bernadette Burns, musician inni-k and curator Sarah Searson. Writing with Water is an ongoing project to explore our emotional relationship with the sea.



## Pottery Throwdown

Oileán Chléire Biennial Ceramic Weekend  
The Cape Clear Island Pottery Throwdown  
24 and 25 August 2024

Featured demonstrations by professional throwers.

Lisa Wilson, Kinsale  
John Sheehy of Louis Mulcahy Pottery Ballyferrier  
Simon Kidd, Cape Clear Island  
Catherine Ryan, Cape Clear and Jim Turner, Clonakilty.

Competitions for throwers & cancers. Opportunities to have a go on the wheel under the guidance of a professional thrower.



## Sherkin Island Bloomsday

Ken Cotter & John Simpson  
Workshop  
Sherkin Island, The Jolly Roger  
15-16 June 2024

Two days to celebrate Ulysses and to enjoy performances of Ulysses-related musical and artistic activities in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

Ulysses is full of humour, history, allegory and literary chicanery. However, it is the music of Ulysses that can often be overlooked by readers. By listening to these songs together and discussing how their themes interweave with the themes of the novel, many additional layers of Joyce's genius will be revealed. Ken & John were joined on Sherkin Islands for a Bloomsday weekend to celebrate the music of one of the most famous novels in English literature.



## West Cork Chamber Music Fringe Festival

The Sonoro Quartet. Sarah Jégou-Sageman, Jeroen De Beer [violins], Séamus Hickey [viola], Léo Guiguen [cello]  
Concert  
Whiddy Island Schoolhouse  
3 July 2024



## Voices of Youth

Graffiti Theatre Company & MEITHEAL Phlean Teanga Chléire  
Practice & Performance with John McCarthy  
Oileán Chléire 2024 & 2025

This project is aimed at Cléire teenagers and is to encourage the voice of Cléire teenagers to be creative through writing and drama.

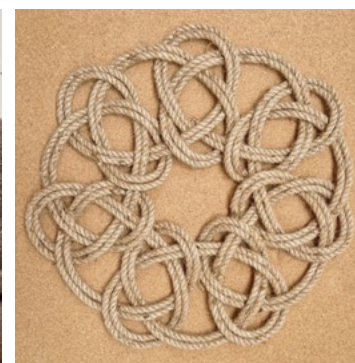


## Nigel Towse

### TRY IT SERIES

Try It Series  
Workshop  
Sherkin & Heir Islands  
February & April 2024

Nigel Towse taught residents of Sherkin and Heir Islands how to create the Carrick Bend Knot.



## The Art of Living

Filmmaker Cormac O'Connor  
Culture Night film screening  
19 September 2024

The Art of Living, a documentary celebrating creativity as we age was shown on Culture Night 2024 at the community centre on Sherkin Island. The documentary features Sherkin islander Brigid Madden.

## Music Meeting Heir Island

Heir and Sherkin musicians joined together at The Boathouse on Heir Island on Saturday July 20th

Photo by: Nuala Mahon



## Masters of Tradition

Fergus & Ruairi O'Gorman  
Concert  
Whiddy Island  
Sunday 25th August

Fergus & Ruairi O'Gorman (flute and bouzouki), members of the renowned McEvoy/McGorman family played the marquee outside the Bank House pub on Whiddy Island.



## Community Céilí

Gerry McCarthy and Band  
Whiddy Island Community Hall  
29 June 2024

## Watercolour Workshop

Tetiana Milshyna  
Bere Island  
Postponed

Summer is a busy time on the Islands and our plan to have an afternoon of watercolour painting during World Lighthouse Day was scuppered due to lack of accommodation for our artist that weekend :( If you want to help creative endeavours on the islands we would welcome any assistance you might have to accommodate our project artists.

## Lá Teanga na Gaeilge / Irish Language Day

Fastnet Film Festival  
Oileán Chléire  
26 May 2024

Clár Gearrscannáin Gaeilge – Curated Irish Language Short Film Programme.

## Open Ear Islander's Night

Mohammad Syf Khan, Flowers at Night & Sherkin Island Musicians  
Open Ear  
Sherkin Island, Jolly Roger Pub  
30 May 2024



open ar

## Start Standing

### TRY IT SERIES

Rachel Donnelly  
Movement workshop  
Sherkin Island  
January 2025



## Eoin Marshall

### TRY IT SERIES

Try it Series  
Medicinal herb kitchen workshop  
Sherkin Island  
April 2024

Participants learned about the medical uses of the plants found across Sherkin Island. This was a lovely opportunity to discover more about the biodiversity of the island, as well as the ways in which people's knowledge of plants and their homes shaped life in the past.



## The Moth Catchers

Jesse Jones, Naomi Nkosi accompanied by Philip Strickland (lepidopterist) and Irene Buckley (composer).  
Research Residency  
Sherkin Island  
11 - 13 June 2024

Inspired by the work of feminist Mexican surrealist Remedios Varo this was a three-day research residency on Sherkin Island with lead artists Jesse Jones and Naomi Nkosi. Philip set up some humane moth traps on the island to catch moths, so that their habitats, mannerisms, characteristics, movements and very importantly the sounds they make could be observed.



## Festival of Music on Heir Island (FOMOH)

EU & Irish Doctors orchestra, The Harte sisters & Paddy O'Brien  
Heir & Sherkin Islands  
4 - 8 June 2024

There were sharing music events and rehearsing each day, culminating in three concerts. The musicians were joined by storyteller Paddy O'Brien and traditional musicians The Harte Sisters. FOMOH also visited Sherkin Island for a lunchtime concert.



## Ukes go Bere

Eva McMullan, Fergal O'Connor & children from St. Michael's National School, Bere Island  
Ukulele festival  
Bere Island  
June 2024

Ukes Go Bere is weekend festival, included drumming, vocal and ukelele workshops, and a live, free performance.



## The Museum of Birds and Beasts

Tess Leak and Sharon Whooley  
Participatory Arts Project  
All Islands  
2024 and 2025

The artists will work with islanders to develop a Museum of Birds and Beasts, exploring folklore and artefacts. Working with farmers, ferry drivers, islanders connected to fishing, bird enthusiasts etc to collect stories of bird, animal, and marine lore.



# The words run like rivers

## A SELECTION OF POETRY AND STORIES FROM THE WEST CORK ISLANDS



*The inaugural poetry competition run by Bere Island Creative Writing Retreats was won by Fiona Hanley with her poem **Gobnait Leaves the Mainland**. Second place was awarded to Michael Dooley and third place to Faye Boland. Judged by Enda Wyley, the competition had over 100 entries from Ireland and beyond. All entries had to have the word island in the title or body of the poem. The winning entries were read by the poets during the Bere Island Arts Festival at the wonderful location of Wild Atlantic Glamping. We are very grateful to Creative Places for funding this wonderful competition .*

*Pauline Hurley*

### Gobnait Leaves The Mainland

*By Fiona Hanley*

Before you're a saint there's the story —  
a girl like any other — black sallies

of hair, green questioning eyes  
and a family who want to own

your blood, make of your life  
their argument. Restless,

you want to seize the colour  
of your veins — burst

like a rose into your essence.  
Restless, you rove

through fields to cliff edges —  
gaze at the distant

islands — stepping stones  
to a life that could be yours

for the giving — whole  
in your hands. You repeat out loud

their names —  
Inis Mór, Inis Meáin, Inis Oírr

and wait for a sign,  
an augury of summoning.

And quivering it comes  
and iridescent winged

it hums through the fog  
of a February morning —

honey bee, honey bee,  
honey bee —

and you reach your hand  
towards it, already leaving

the mainland.

### Island Medicine

*By Harriet Andrews*

The door is open, step outside to lift your gaze  
to the ocean and the vast space beyond.  
Smell the air and feel the breezy warmth  
and tickly springy turf between your toes.

Absorb the peaceful quiet stillness,  
then walk through lanes of returning flora;  
primrose, bluebell, spurge and sorrel,  
honeysuckle budding, wild strawberries hiding.

Smell the coconut gorse in a westerly wind  
and newly cut silage heaped in lines to dry,  
steaming dung-heaps, fresh from wintering sheds,  
adding sweet-sour odours to the clean spring air.

A cuckoo calling, bumble bee busy  
in apple blossom, bleats of new life,  
a lamb standing on the back of a prone ewe  
rabbits racing from a trundling tractor.

On a fine May day, under wide blue skies,  
as twittering swallows soar and dive,  
embrace this place, find space inside you  
to hold it, mind it, let it restore you.



### Bere Island

*By Noah Fitzgerald, Age 6  
From 'My Townland My Story' collection*

I live in Derrycreeveen on the West side of Bere Island. Five people live in my house. I live in a two-storey house with a hidden attic. Seven people live near me. My family do not live near me. They are in County Mayo. We don't have any landmarks near us but we have nice views. There are lots of trees, flowers and sheep around me. After school I love doing crafts and playing with playdoh. I love playing football, reading, writing and dancing.



### Saol Leon ar Chléire-a naoi bhliana daois

*By Leon  
My Townland My Story collection*

Tá an saol go deas ar Chléire, téim go dtí an trá beagnach gach lá i rith an tsamhraidh. Uair amháin, shnámh mé i dtonnta an-ard bhí sé an-spraoiúil. Imrím le mo dheirfiúr Elea den chuid is mó don am. I ngach áit a théann tú ar an oileán feiceann tú ainmhithe, éin, ba, féileacáin agus gach ainmhí ar féidir leat smaoineamh air. Tá timpeall 100 duine ina gcónaí ar Oileán Chléire agus sílim b'fhéidir fiche páiste, is áit an-sábháilte anseo do pháistí. Tá go leor bláthanna áille anseo le feiceáil agus le roghnú do Lá na Máithreacha. Níos mó rudaí a fheiceann tú anseo ná Caisleán, teach solais briste, cnoc clocha in aice leis an bpointe is airde ar Rinn Chléire. Tá scéal ann faoi chnoc na gcloch agus an teach solais fastnet. Ar Rinn soiléir tá bláthanna againn le peitil ghorma agus foichí agus beacha éagsúla. I dteach mo mhuintire tá Mamaí, Papa, mise (Leon), mo dheirfiúr Elea agus mo dheartháireacha Elay agus Milo. Is as an nGearmáin muid agus labhraímid Gearmáinis sa bhaile, Gaeilge ar scoil agus Gearmáinis, Béarla agus Gaeilge le daoine sa phobal. Is é mo chara is fearr Maya, agus mo chairde ar an oileán ná Hazel, Charlie, Saorlaith, Maher, Mahmoud agus Kevin agus go leor páistí a thagann ar ais sa samhradh. Sin é an scéal faoi mo shaol ar Oileán Chléire.

### Whiddy Island

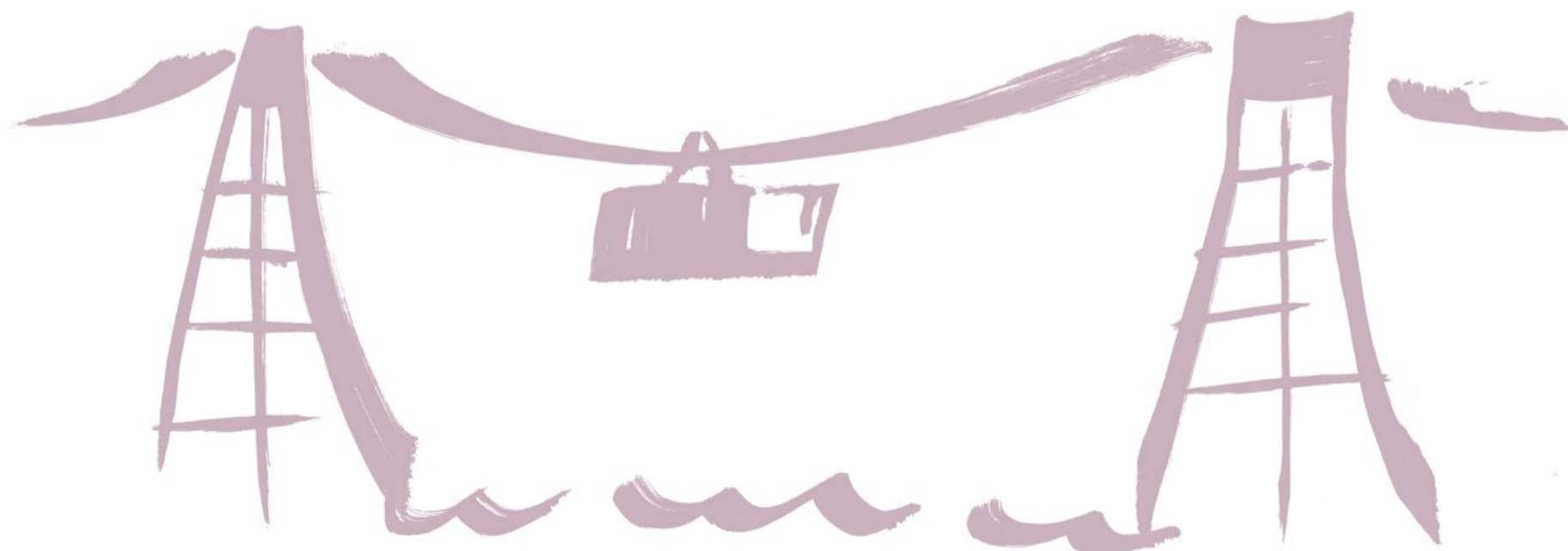
*By Kaiden (written by mum)  
From My Townland My Story collection.*

My name is Kaiden Harry Lea, I live on Whiddy island near Bantry town. I'm 5 and a half years old. I live with my mummy and she home schools me. My favourite thing to do is play and create and be with King my kitten. I love to play in the fields and down at the beach and to see my neighbour James and his doggy Tazbe. I live on a farm with my mum. It's not our farm though. My Mamo (Nana) lives down the road in her house with two horses Tinkerbell and Roadi. I'm the only kid on Whiddy. But I like to go to Bantry and go to the playground to see my friends and sometimes they visit me at my house. We go for picnics near the terminals where you can see the oil tanks and sometimes you see the boats out at sea I love to play outdoors on my play set or at the beach or indoors making dens. There are lots of trees and flowers in my garden with fields next to our house with lots of pheasants, cows, hare and sometimes donkeys too. I love living on Whiddy island because I get to be as wild and loud as I can be apart from at bed time. Then I have to go to sleep. I love all the different boats I get to travel on and sometimes get to sail them. And when our landlord Keiran lets me drive the digger or tractor on his lap and when I work for Christine our landlady she gives me chocolate for keeping my eye on the cows.

### Fielding on Durseý Island

*The following poem was written by acclaimed Irish Poet Annemarie Ní Churreáin during her Residency on Durseý Island in early 2024*

Then, after a torn night, I'm tearing uphill  
along the lit side of the island, in heavy woools  
and laced boots, the ice of January in my throat.  
Mart is there with the gate held open. And in I go  
to see the calf, birth-wet and right where it landed  
-legless but alert, the ears pricked up inside  
a thin rain-coat of slime and gazing around  
at grassgrassgrass as if to wonder *Where am I now?*  
The air is thin as water over the temple rocks.  
I have missed the calving by a breath, missed  
what I imagined might take hours of standing  
around, looking, probing. Would I need to help?  
What to name the calf? And would my camera last  
to capture everything in real time? Now,  
the cow swings her oblong head into my path,  
eyes bright as fire, fielding me in her glare,  
with all the dark knowledge of what humans are  
and what they do. The calf is beginning to wobble up  
to the surface of its new life, moon and bones.  
*Where am I now?* I'm in shock. Or love?  
Mart ushers me back outside the gate.  
*Come now, let's leave them alone.*  
*Everything is as it should be.*





## Remembering John Walsh

**Creative Places is a project that embraces the natural creativity of islands and brings us together. We are all born with artistry and creativity, that can present itself in so many different ways.**

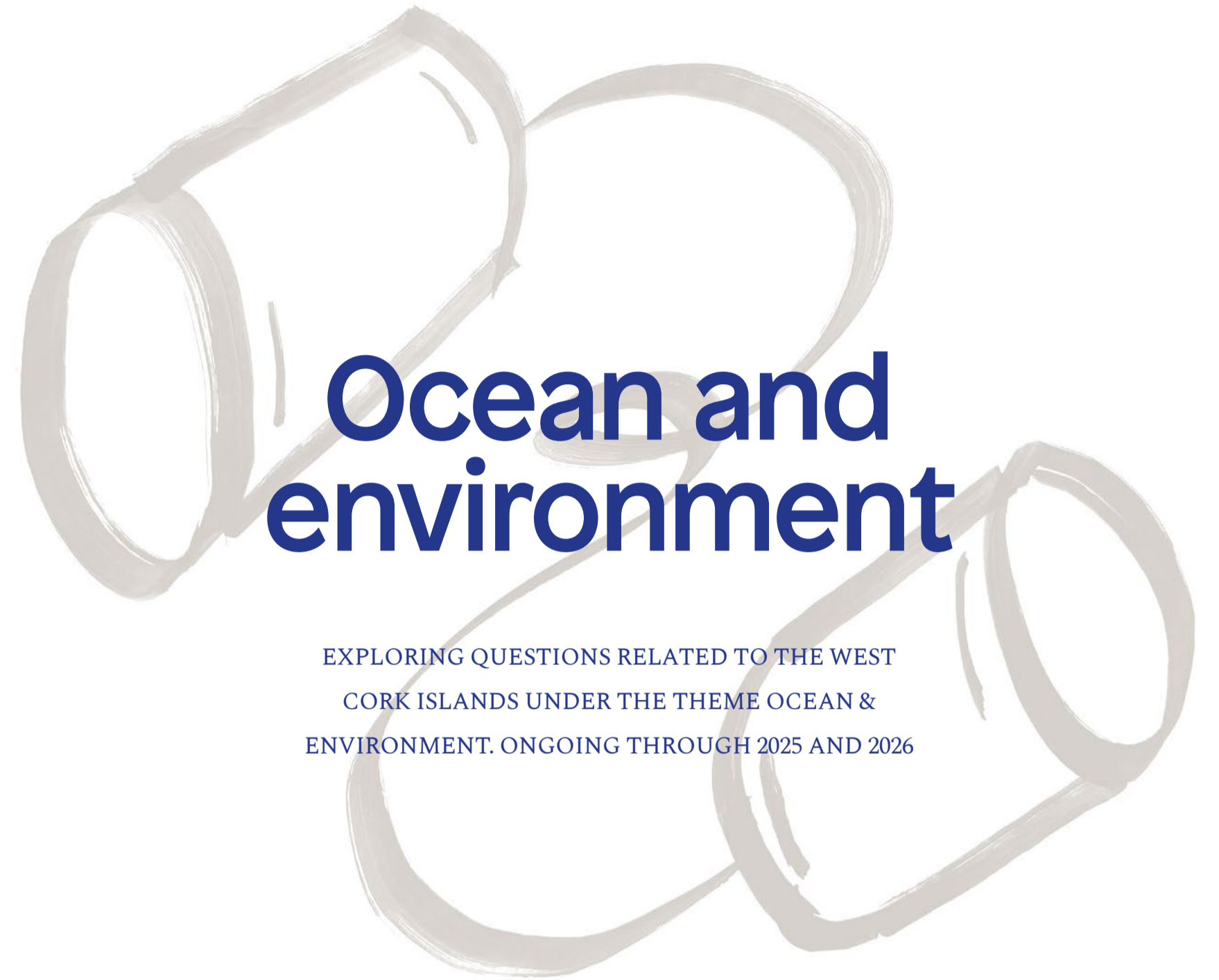
John Walsh, Bere Island, was creative through his visions, the thoughtful manner in how he interacted with the world, and his ability to turn visions into reality. John was a creative visionary with determination and drive to improve life on the islands. He could see the world through so many different lenses; that of son, husband, father, farmer, fisherman, artist, islander and friend. All the while holding steadfast in the knowledge that we need all aspects of life to make our islands thrive. He saw an opportunity to engage and promote the Islands, by bringing new people and skills to the West Cork Islands. A project that unites

all the seven West Cork Islands making us stronger together.

He played a pivotal role in securing funding and delivering the programme. John worked on many funds and projects throughout his career. Through his creativity, optimism and hard work these projects came to life in the form of; sports hubs, community groups, heritage centres, park runs, radio stations, festivals, education and much more. No idea or project was off limits. His persuasive passion was evident when he pitched these ideas to family, friends, colleagues, funders and islanders.

A leader who we gladly followed.

John Walsh's impact will be felt and seen on the West Cork Islands for generations to come. Thank you John for your time, generosity, kindness, drive and vision.



# Ocean and environment

EXPLORING QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE WEST  
CORK ISLANDS UNDER THE THEME OCEAN &  
ENVIRONMENT. ONGOING THROUGH 2025 AND 2026

## How you can get involved

There are several ways to engage in the project, and we encourage active participation as a creative, as an audience member and as a member of the community.

If you are living and working on one of the Islands and want to pursue a project, contact your Island Development Office, where application packs are available. Packs include examples of previous projects and a simple application form that you can fill in.

Ideas can also be brought forward by discussing the idea with the project coordinator at:

Email: [peter.prendergast@corkcoco.ie](mailto:peter.prendergast@corkcoco.ie)  
Website: [reativeplaceswci.ie](http://reativeplaceswci.ie)  
Instagram: [@cpwestcorkislands](https://www.instagram.com/cpwestcorkislands)

Or join our newsletter:  
[corkcoco.ie/en/resident/arts](http://corkcoco.ie/en/resident/arts)

### Current opportunities

- Islander Artist / Maker
- Research & Development

**Eóin Heaney is the recipient of the CPWCI Ocean and Environment Commission. An acclaimed Irish filmmaker renowned for his evocative storytelling and innovative cinematic techniques.**



\*Parish

Eóin directed *Foreclosed*, an experimental film depicting homes whose previous owners have failed to meet their mortgage payments and thus have been evicted. Now owned by banks, these places bear the marks of ruptured lives and hasty departures highlighting themes of isolation and ambiguity in contemporary suburbia.

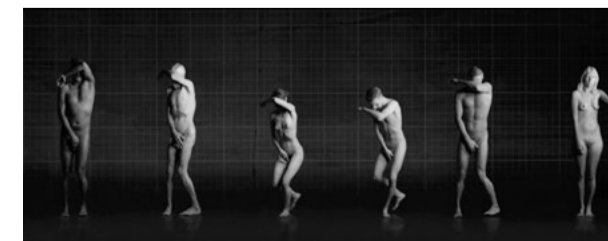
Eóin's 2014 hypnotic dance film *Turning* was inspired by the work of Eadweard Muybridge and explored the cyclical nature and repetitive behaviour of contemporary Irish society. This project demonstrated his interest in blending different art forms to convey complex social commentaries.

In 2021, Heaney released the multi-award winning *Spirit Level*, a short film examining the legacy of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. Using Seamus Heaney's poem *Mycenae Lookout* as a touchstone, the film explored how cinema can depict, contest, and subvert historical understanding, acknowledging the powerful capacity of film to influence public discourse about the past.

His 2024 experimental film *M/S* delved into the representation of illness and the radical possibilities of love, care, and dying on one's own terms. Drawing from his seventeen years of experience as the primary carer for his mother, Susan Heaney, who suffers from multiple sclerosis, the film was co-authored with her, offering an intimate portrayal of their shared journey.

In the same year, Heaney premiered *Parish*, a hybrid documentary that examines the representation of community identity. The film follows a communal choreography, presenting a cinematic moveable feast where a diverse group of people add colour, nuance, and shape to their community identity through the vivid, visceral nature of memory and its connection to dramatic experience.

Throughout his career, Eóin Heaney has consistently demonstrated a profound commitment to exploring intricate human experiences and societal issues, solidifying his place as a significant voice in contemporary Irish cinema.



\*Turning

# Tail Tales

THREE STORYTELLERS IN  
RESIDENCE. EXPLORING THEMES  
AND RHYTHMS THROUGH  
ORAL STORYTELLING AND  
COMPOSITION ACROSS THE SEVEN  
WEST CORK ISLANDS.

## Es war einmal ... Fadó, Fadó ...

SIMONE SCHUEMMELFEDER

Living in Germany, I grew up with fairy tales, especially the ones collected by the Brothers Grimm. There was a certain thrill to listening to those tales and knowing that they had been collected in the area I was born in – Weserbergland, the Weser-Mountain-Area in the middle of Germany. The town I was born in, Höxter, claims to be the “Hänsel and Gretel Town”, which added excitement and quiet terror to our Sunday family walks in the woods. I was expecting to stumble across the remains of the well-known gingerbread house in every thicket we passed. We never did find it, but my father kept telling us that we must have been very close. Snow White and Sleeping Beauty were supposed to have lived not far from us and then there is Hameln up the river, famous for its tragic role in the legend of the Pied Piper.

It never occurred to me to use my love for stories to make a living, until I came to Ireland. As the apprentice of Irish

storyteller Liz Weir, a new world of stories opened up to me. I enjoyed delving into the wealth of Irish stories. Becoming a storyteller myself, I researched, listened to and told many new stories and it made me look at the folklore of my country again with a different perspective. For example, I was told that the hawthorn tree holds a special place in Irish culture as the Fairy Tree, which is never supposed to be cut down if you do not want to lose your life, and even breaking a branch of it may result in a broken limb. I was amazed at this and wondered if there was something similar in German stories. While not many people in German might remember now, there is a tree that was regarded with similar respect, and that is the Elderberry tree. It is connected to “Mother Holle” (another tale collected by the Brothers Grimm and another name of “Berchta” or “Percht”, a fierce and beautiful figure of Germanic mythology). Elderberry trees were planted around the house for protection and if the family had to flee, they would bury their most precious possessions under the tree to find again when they returned. This is only one example of how my exploration of other culture’s stories has brought me back to the stories of my childhood. In my work as a storyteller, I look for these connections we make through stories. I am looking forward to making many more connections through the stories we will hear and tell on the seven islands this year.



## Siúlach Scéalach Stories Travel

NUALA HAYES

The story was not born with Robbie Fox  
Nor with his father  
Nor his father’s father  
But farther back than any could remember

Cox told the story  
Over twelve nights at Christmas  
It was the story  
Made Christmas real  
When it was done  
The new year was in  
Made authentic by the story  
The old year was dead  
Buried by the story  
The man endured  
Deepened by the story....

The above words are extracted from Brendan Kennelly’s poem *The Story*.

They are in fact an elegy for the loss of the story and the storyteller and I heard them for the first time, recited by Brendan at a celebration on the Late Late Show for Eamon Kelly the actor and seanchaí. Eamon, who died aged 87 in

October 2001, was hugely popular in Ireland. For many people he was the embodiment of the seanchaí, the storyteller of the past in Ireland. I was in the company of my father Micheál OhAodha, who was a radio producer and was the person who created a space on the air for Eamon on Radio Éireann, as it was in the old days, and so began the popularity of the genial Kerryman who began his stories with “*In my father’s time...*”.

My father was fond of saying “never let the truth get in the way of a good story” and he also described Eamon’s use of words to quote himself, as ‘captured in lazy flight from Irish to English’.

A seed must have been planted in my head at that time because now, many years later I find myself in a world where stories and words are still in flight and sometimes land in the heads of people who love to listen and share them. In the last 25 years the search for stories has brought me to many places in the world, from Australia to Canada, to festivals across Europe, to the small island of Kea in Greece, to Vesterbotten in Northern Sweden along with millions of mosquitoes and last year to Scotland with the stories of Peig Sayers.

In 2005, I spent almost a year on Oileáin Chléire recording the stories, poems and prayers of the older people of the island, which resulted in *Bóithrín na Smaointe*, a miscellany of Cape Clear Memories, with photographs by John Minahan. Most of those wonderful people who shared their experiences have now passed, but their memories and images live on.



This drew me to the project with Creative Places. Stories and storytelling connects people and places. That delicate thread which connects the past to the present and which finds new life in shared stories is what draws me in and I look forward with joy and anticipation to meeting and sharing with the people on the seven islands of West Cork.

## The Red Scarf

PADDY O’BRIEN

Dennis O’Connor, that’s Dinny Jim Dan  
A young man from old Dingle town.  
At football or fishing he was the man  
At both he’d won fame and renown.

When fishing at sea he felt wild and free  
At football he’d yet to be bet  
And all were agreed that with skill and with speed  
He’d put ball or big fish in the net

At a dance in The Grove he met Mary O’Shea  
And he knew from the moment they met  
That this beautiful girl had his mind in a whirl  
And his heart was entwined in her net

All around his home place it was plain from his face  
That Dennis was smitten for life.  
And the people would say that Mary O’Shea  
Would make him a gorgeous young wife.

Lá an Dreoilín they strolled down the boreen  
The wran music still rang in his head  
As he held her tight on that bright moonlit night  
He said tell me the day we’ll be wed

He gave her the ring. He felt like a king.  
For her ’twas the happiest time  
She giggled to see him go down on one knee  
And sing her a sweet silly rhyme.

He said “Mary Mary quite contrary  
How you’ve won my heart  
Mary Mary quite contrary  
We’ll never be apart”



That night ‘neath the moon he promised that soon  
They’d be married and happy together.  
They’d build a new home close by the sea foam  
And contented they’d live there forever.

Then came a chance on a boat bound for France  
For Dennis to earn great pay.  
He kissed both her cheeks, said it’s just a few weeks  
You can meet me back down on the quay

Mary gave a soft sigh as she bade him goodbye  
But she smiled as the boat sailed away.  
For she knew that ‘ere long her young fisherman strong  
Would return and would never more stray

At night in her bed thoughts of him filled her head  
And she sometimes felt lonely and sad.  
Then his poem she’d recite and ’twould bring her delight  
And make her feel happy and glad.

Mary Mary quite contrary  
How you’ve won my heart  
Mary Mary quite contrary  
We’ll never be apart

Out at sea Dinny sweats, the work’s hard as it gets  
In sunshine, in wind and in rain.  
Then a storm of great force blows them way off their course  
And they end up in Northern Spain.

‘Twas in Santander, while sheltering there  
Through laneways and streets Dinny roamed.  
In a dusty old shop where he happened to stop  
Found a gift for his girlfriend at home.

A silk scarf he saw, bright red as the haw  
‘Twas the present he’d bring Mary back  
He imagined the scene with her eyes emerald green  
And her long flowing hair coloured black

This silk scarf so red danced a dream in his head  
In a bright box he wrapped it up tight  
His heart sang a song as their boat sped along  
When they set out for Ireland that night

Within a few days they had reached Dingle Bay  
On the quay were his mom and his dad  
But as he drew near his heart filled with fear  
Their faces were downcast and sad

Tight tight was their hold as their story they told  
His Mary had just passed away  
His loving heart broke with the words that they spoke  
She’ll be buried in Dingle that day

His cries filled the air he sank down in despair  
He thought of the present he bought her  
Flung the box on the tide with the red scarf inside  
It floated away on the water.

Then to church where inside he wept and he cried  
She lay in her coffin sealed tight  
He begged and implored to see her once more  
To gaze on her beauty so bright

The lid was undone then everyone  
Saw him bend and then stagger and sway  
Round her neck white as milk was the scarf of red silk  
Which he’d thrown on the water that day.



# It begins with *an idea*



If you have a creative idea that you'd like to express, for and about the West Cork Islands, you can chat with your island development office or Peter Prendergast, Project Coordinator and we will help make it happen.

**Peter.Prendergast@corkcoco.ie**

## What's in store for 2025

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

### Eco day for the islands

A day of learning, doing and enlightenment around environmental questions facing the West Cork Islands.

### Children's Drama Classes

*Children's Drama Classes*  
Bere Island  
13 March - 12 June 2025  
Maria O'Sullivan and Shirley Cahill

Bere Island Project Group and Creative Places West Cork Islands are working together to deliver a 12 week drama class for the children of Bere Island. This will provide an opportunity for active participation and learning for all the primary school children. The community Centre on Thursday evenings from 5-7pm.

### Simon Kidd

*Workshops on material mapping*  
Febuary/March 2025  
Cape Clear

A series of workshops on contemporary and experimental ceramics.

### Island Exhibition

*LHQ Gallery, Cork County Council*  
Various Artists/Makers  
March - April 2025

This exhibition will be an expression of island life through artifacts, objects and contemporary art works.

### Bobstock

*Cotters Pub, Cape Clear*  
One Morning in August  
June 2025

Bobstock is a daytime indie rock music festival for Cape.

### A radio play for Bere Island

*Bere Island*  
Musician Liz Clark  
Early 2025

A series of interactions with the community of Bere Island to make a radio play.

### West Cork Music

*Whiddy, Sherkin, Heir and Oileán Chléire*  
Various artists/makers  
Summer 2025

Creative Places continues its support to the West Cork Literary, the West Cork Chamber Music, and the Masters of Tradition festivals, with special fringe events on Whiddy Island.

This year there will be a special series of concerts on Oileán Chléire, Sherkin Heir, and Whiddy Islands.

## Creative Places West Cork Islands Project Partners



Creative Places West Cork Islands is part of the national Creative Places programme developed and funded by the Arts Council.



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