

RST Newsletter

Rathfeigh • Skryne • Tara



DIGITAL VERSION FOR DURATION OF CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

SATURDAY 25th APRIL 2020

ISSUE NO. 4



This pastoral scene of Skryne Castle was sent in by Teresa Maguire

On The Front Line



A tired looking Saoirse McGrath coming off a long night shift in Beaumont hospital. Saoirse is an ICU nurse in Beaumont and like many other nurses and doctors throughout our County and Country they are on the frontline in the battle against the COVID – 19 outbreak. Whilst all of us can maintain our social distance from each other our medical workers by the very nature of their work must get up close and personal to patients who are often critically ill with this dreaded virus. They are the difference between life and death in many instances and we owe our health care workers a great debt of gratitude. Throughout our community the flags are flying in support and appreciation for this brave group of people many of them from our own parish. They place their own health and indeed lives on the line every time they go to work and they do us all proud.



Skryne G.F.C. Cumann Luthchleas Gael Scrín

A Chairde,

I hope you are all keeping well at this time. Our facilities are in lock down since mid-March and the sights and sounds of our young people using our facilities now appear to be a distant memory. The sacrifice we are called upon to make is significant but it is one we must make and continue to make as long as the situation demands it. The threat from COVID – 19 is real as we learn from news bulletins each day and it impacts on people like ourselves across our County and Country. The response from our members is admirable as they have placed the health and wellbeing of our community above all else. I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for your cooperation, understanding and patience.

Our Club in conjunction with the first responders has put in place a group of volunteers who are ready to assist and have indeed assisted our community when and where the need arose. Our Club featured on RTE on Thursday 16th of April and this programme showed the great work this group of volunteers are engaged in at this time. A big thank you to all who were involved but a special thanks to Stephen Naughton who was the leading man on this occasion.

I think we can all agree how well our facilities looked on national television on that evening and of course the care and upkeep of our grounds continues in compliance with HSE guidelines in readiness for the resumption of our games whenever that may be. Thanks to Gordon, Dermot and Kevin for their ongoing commitment in keeping our grounds and facilities up to the standard we have come to expect.

In addition we have teamed up with Supervalu, Centra, Meath County Council, and An Garda Síochána to assist them in whatever way we can. The battle against this deadly virus continues and we must all continue to work together in the best interests of our community. *Ni neart go chur le cheile.*

Slan go foil agus bi curamach.

Seanán MacCraith

Cathaoirleach

Scrín CLG

Fly a Flag for Club-County-Country from Cormac Grendon

"Fly a Flag Initiative showing Support and Solidarity for Front Line workers"



As you would have seen on your travels there is certainly no shortage of flags flying and the abundance of colour.

This is all part of our fly a flag for Club-County-Country showing support to the front line workers from the parish and outside who are working hard to overcome the current pandemic.

We are ever so grateful for the work they are doing and it is certainly been shown with the amount of flags that are flying. We put the call out on our Skryne GFC social media platforms and it really took off from there.

Meath Daily TV heard of our initiative and made contact with us to do a video. From this RTE also made contact and wanted to do a Segment on a program called "Ireland on Call". It was fantastic to see the area with so much colour and it was also a massive boost for moral. The Meath Daily TV had over 3.7k views while the video "Ireland on call" has over 7.1k views and 61 shares on our social media platforms. All videos can be seen on Social Media Platforms or RTE player from last Thursday 16th April.

Together we will get through this and come out on the other side.

Well done to the Battigan's who have their flag flying, their son who is involved with the U7s made his own flag. It's all about using your own initiative and also keeping busy. Well done !!!!

Thanks to all those who have put their flags up and sent them into our social media platforms or you can Whatsapp them to 087 9409677 and we will put them on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram Stay safe and thank you.

Congratulations

To Cormac Grey and his wife Sarah, Australia on the birth of their 2nd son Loughlin Peter.

Condolences

Sympathy to Jim Lynch, formerly of Colvinstown and now retired from London living in Bawnboy in Cavan for over 10/12 years, on the death of his wife Gina. Jim has always been a great Meath and Skryne supporter and rarely missed any of Meath's matches or Skryne's finals even when living in London and still comes up Skryne for funerals.

Correspondence

We received the following email from Maureen Devine in Melbourne

Could you please add me to the mailing list for the RST newsletter?

My name is Maureen Devine and I live in Melbourne, Australia.

My mum, Mary Devine (nee Dolan) grew up in Oberstown, Tara and was the sister of Martin Dolan who lived in the house they grew up in.

I have been to Ireland a few times and spent a lot of time with Martin, and around the Skryne area. Mum travelled back to Ireland from Australia with my family a couple of times and spoke about her childhood around the Skryne area.

Mum passed away in 2016, and Martin in 2017.

I enjoy reading the newsletter, especially when familiar names pop up.

Skryne National School from Martin Kennedy

We are getting closer to a return to normality with every passing day. The sun is still shining - it hasn't failed to appear at any stage since school closure was imposed on us. We have so much to be thankful for. The weather is good, the evenings are bright, stores are well stocked, there is no shortage of anything - not even toilet rolls! Most of us are lucky enough to have some space around our house where we can play and exercise. We have phones, laptops, tablets etc. which we can use to keep in touch with friends and family we are unable to visit for the moment. On top of all this we have the very best of healthcare available to us should we need it and a whole army of amazing frontline workers - and many associated others - doing their level best to keep us safe, cared-for and well.

There must be a very big price to pay for all of this. Let's look at the bill.

We have to spend more time at home with our parents and siblings and we can't visit friends and families or partake in group activities. Many of us have to work from home. That doesn't sound too bad. We are sure that most of us can buckle up for another bit and play our part in this worldwide fight against Covid 19.

It really does matter that you play *your* part in this fight by following all the guidelines handed down by the Government advisors. Any chain is only as strong as its weakest link and this week we have been hearing news of people becoming a bit more casual in their adherence to the restrictions. Please don't be that weak link. The prize for us all is a great one. We can save lives! There are few times in your life when you will be able to make such a marvellous claim - but now is that time. Do the right thing. Stay at home. Fan sa bhaile. Stay safe. Fan slán.

Over the Easter break we carried out a short online survey trying to gain some insight into how you are all managing with this new strange environment of learning at home. The results were quite pleasing with the vast majority of you finding the work manageable. You also seem more than happy with the support you are receiving from the school. This is very pleasing as we are all learning to pick our way through this new reality. One area where there was a considerable difference of opinion was the area of weekly versus daily work. The split was roughly 60%/40% in favour of a weeks work being given in one serving. There was never going to be a one-size-fits-all solution to this dilemma. Following a staff meeting held remotely last Monday, teachers have agreed to post a weeks work over the weekend but to break it into daily tasks. This should go some way towards satisfying both sets of opinion on this issue. Again let us remind you that the work given is a suggested "best option". Teachers will highlight the most important elements to be covered. If you can manage to cover it all then all the better. There are NO "MUST DO" sections. Each household will be different to another. Simply do your best to keep the children engaged with the learning

process. As mentioned last time out, routine and structure will give the best possibility of good learning outcomes.

There was a large degree of satisfaction with the mix of materials being sent out. Project work was seen as enjoyable and very useful by a great number of respondents. We will continue to supply this mix. We have received some great examples of your work over the past weeks and of course all the teachers love to hear from you. Remember to use the individual emails from website to get your work to your teacher. Is breá leo é a fháil.

Enter all the competitions we are sending to you. You never know your luck! Read while you have such a great opportunity. Use the **myOn** resource from the website and of course get a few AR quizzes completed. We are watching the results closely.

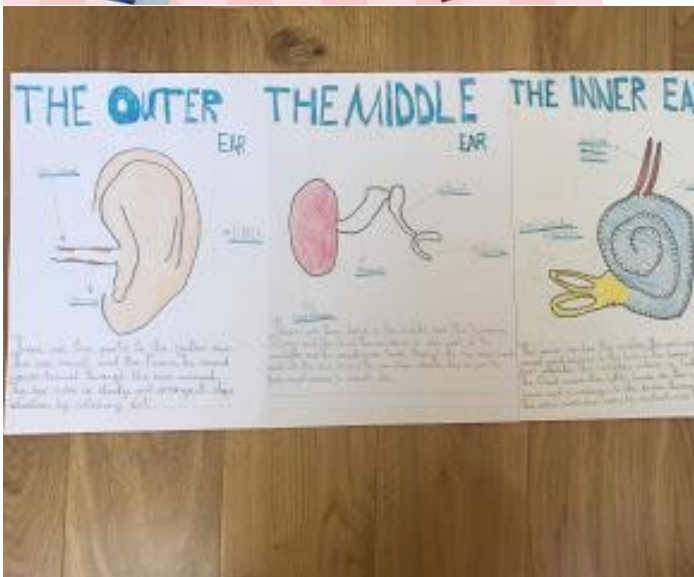
Last week I referenced a line from a John Lennon tune. Hope you checked it out. You can't really reference John Lennon without mentioning Paul McCartney also. I had thought of throwing out the classic "Yesterday". A great line that goes..... "Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away...." but then the next line says, " Now it looks as though they're here to stay." - so I did just that. I threw it out!

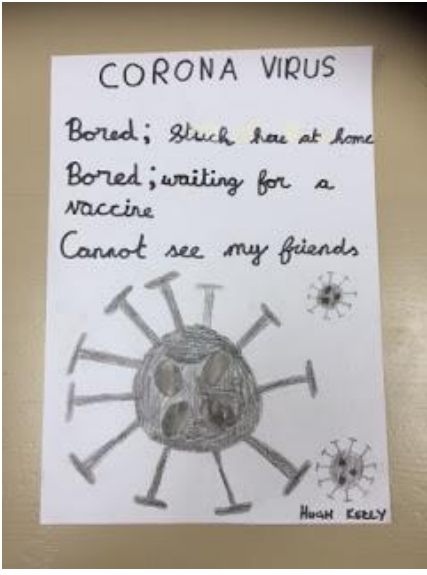
*Instead I am going to suggest a much lesser known McCartney tune called "**Hope of Deliverance** from the darkness that surrounds us".*

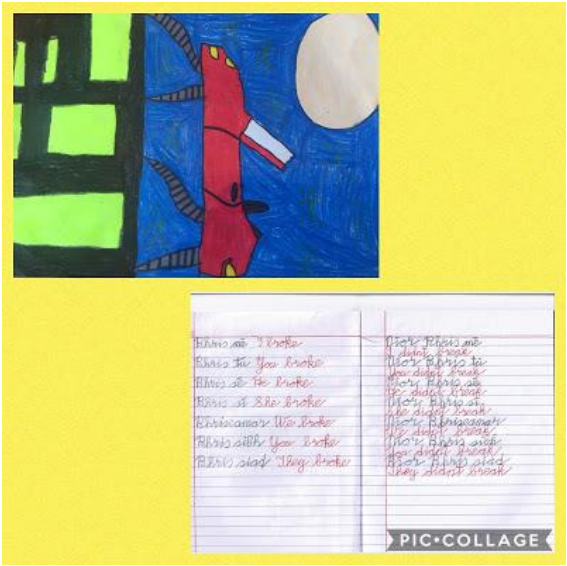
We must all have hope. In the meantime here are some examples of the variety of work sent in to teachers in recent weeks. They are the hope of the future.

We are safe.

--
Martin Kennedy,
Scoil Cholmcille,
Skryne,
Tara,
Co. Meath
17521W





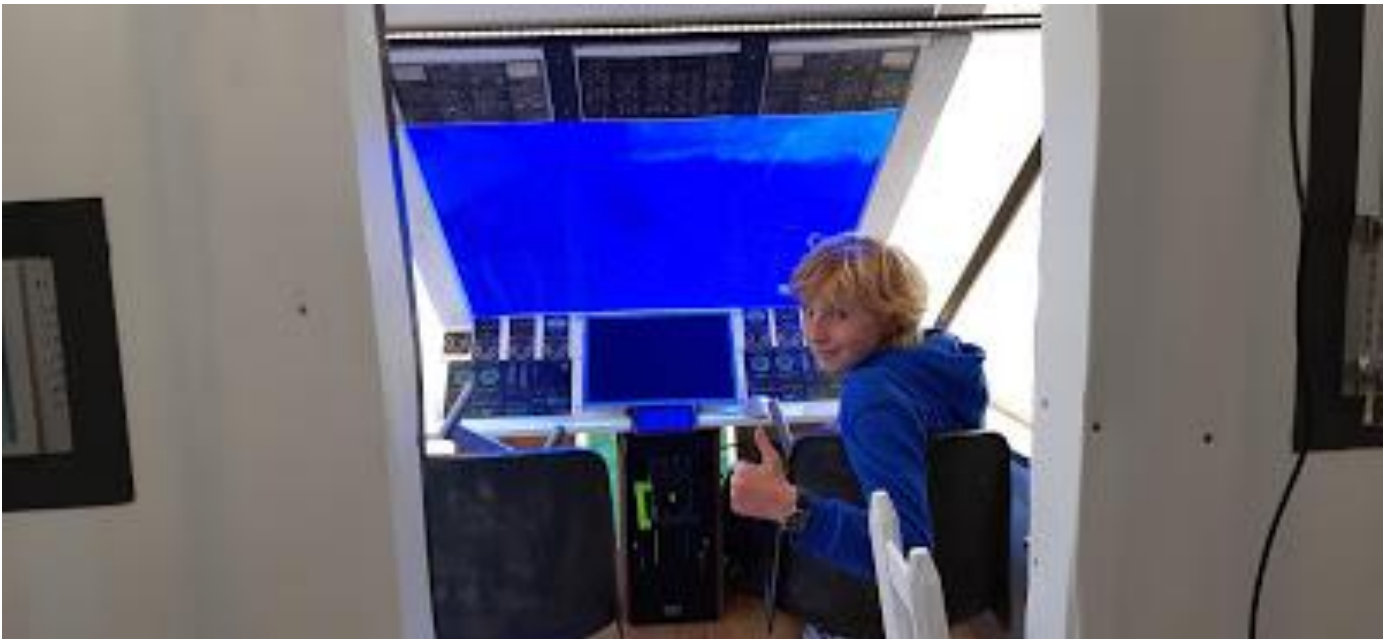


The French Revolution

Finn's Spaceship

Once the restrictions are lifted, Finn is ready to return to school in style, because he's spent the last few weeks building a spaceship in his garden. How cool is that? We just hope that he comes back to Scoil Cholmcille as it looks like he just might have found a planet somewhere out there where the schools are still open.

"Hey Finn, we have a few aliens we would like you to take home when you are going."

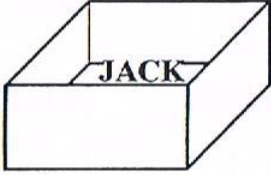


Dingbat Challenge

Here is a little item we have been having some fun with in Skryne NS in recent times. A favourite of many Table Quiz rounds is the Dingbat challenge. If you fancy your chances then have a go. Great to keep the old grey matter working. If you are having any trouble then ask one of our clever pupils. Many have become quite adept at solving these. We will give you the solutions in next issue - and by the way - Judges decision is FINAL.

What's the prize? - Another set next issue.

We are calling this Set 19.

<p>HOLIDAY ————— CCCC</p>	<p>O N C U E</p>	<p>MEASEGSS</p>
<p>DOSE DOSE</p>	<p>LOST ————— BOARD</p>	<p>& OUT</p>
<p>➔ m o r n i n g</p>	<p>Warning Warning Warning Warning Warning ←</p>	

Rathfeigh National School from Seamus Tansey

Adversity

Benjamin Disraeli (former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom) famously said that “there is no education like adversity”. In the current crisis that we are experiencing we are seeing people and communities pulling together for the better good and people are thinking “outside the box” to keep their businesses afloat. I’m sure the children are thinking outside the box also to keep themselves busy and active. We, as a society, must think outside the box also to ensure that life can return to something resembling normality in the next few months. If schools are to reopen then it will have to be done in a manner that differs significantly to what we normally are used to. Hopefully, this can happen in a safe environment before the summer. I hope this can happen particularly for our sixth class pupils as it would be very sad for them not to be able to say goodbye properly to their school mates and teachers after spending eight formative years in school.

A Picture Paints A Thousand Words

Last week the Irish Times were running an art competition for children titled “Isolation Art”. The children had to draw a picture which reflected their experiences (good or bad) over the last few weeks since the school was closed. We asked the children in Rathfeigh to send their entries to the school also via the school e-mail or through the online learning platform “Edmodo”. The entries were excellent. It’s true that “a picture paints a thousand words” as the pictures expressed their varied emotions with a mixture of positivity and a little negativity. As the entries were of a very high standard the teachers decided on “Zoom” during the week that all the children who entered deserved a prize. The children will get their prizes on returning to school which will hopefully be before the summer.

Juniors: Aibhlinn, Niall

Seniors: Aoibhinn, Ella

First: Mia, Jessica, Nicola

Second: Leila, Faye, Isabelle

Third: Sonas, Archie, Freya, Ava, Eoin, Seán

Fourth: Harris, Ruadhán, Katelin, Killian, Isobel, Timmy

Fifth: Jay Jay

Sixth: Nini, Gracie, Cara, Chloe, Amy

If any entry to the school was not included in the list above please e-mail the school as the entries were sent to the various teachers on Edmodo and by e-mail. This may have resulted in us missing an entry or two by mistake!!

Examples of some of the children's work can be seen below.





The Tuesday Club from Norbert Coyle



Tuesday Club members ventured abroad to Dalgan Park on 30/6/2015 hoping to catch the Meath senior s practising at midday ,,,,imagine they are all five years older in such a short space of time !!!!

Loneliness

The American singer/songwriter, John Prine who died last week, wrote this song about the loneliness of old people and the onset of alzheimer's while in his early twenties. It speaks volumes for what so many people are experiencing during this coronavirus epidemic.

Hello In There

We had an apartment in the city
Me and Loretta liked living there
Well it's been years since the kid's have grown
A life of their own and left us alone

John and Linda live in Omaha
And Joe is somewhere on the road
And we lost Davey in the Korean war
And I still don't know what for
Don't matter anymore

You know that old trees just grow stronger
And old rivers grow wider everyday
And old people just grow lonesome
Waiting for someone to say
Hello in there, hello

Me and Loretta we don't talk much more
She sits and stares through the back door screen
And all the news just repeats itself
Like some forgotten dream, that we'd both seen

Someday I'll go and call up Rudy
We worked together at a factory
But what do I say?
If he asks what's new?
Nothing what's with you?
Nothing much to do

You know that old trees just grow stronger
And old rivers grow wider everyday
And old people just grow lonesome
Waiting for someone to say
Hello in there, hello

If you're out walking down the streets of town
And spot some hollow ancient eyes
Well please just don't pass them by and stare
As if you didn't care
Say hello in there, hello

You know that old trees just grow stronger
And old rivers grow wider everyday
And old people just grow lonesome
Waiting for someone to say
Hello in there, hello

To listen to this song follow the YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVhA01J0Zsg>

Déjà vu from Maurice Daly

History repeats itself. Came across this poem written in 1869, reprinted during 1919 Pandemic.

This is Timeless....

And people stayed at home
And read books
And listened
And they rested
And did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened
More deeply
Someone meditated, someone prayed
Someone met their shadow
And people began to think differently
And people healed.
And in the absence of people who
Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
The earth also began to heal
And when the danger ended and
People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.



From the Archives

This interesting nugget of information appeared in the Rathfeigh Historical Society's 'A Window on the Past', issue no. 2, published in 1991

WHEN IS AN ACRE NOT AN ACRE?

When the Cromwellian war was ended and the Adventurers who had invested money to finance the campaign were offered one acre per pound invested they protested that this was not an adequate return. They did not get any more acres per pound invested, but their protest did earn them a greater return on their money, thanks to a bit of "sleight of land" executed by the Authorities!

Whether to avoid legal complications or as a face-saving exercise the offer was improved, not by giving more money per acre but by the simple expedient of increasing the size of the acre! The English Government decreed that the Adventurers would be rewarded, not with one statute acre per pound but with one, newly invented, 'plantation' acre - the equivalent of one and two-

third statute acres. Thus everybody was satisfied - everybody, that is, except the unfortunate people driven off the acres, whether plantation or otherwise.

Some people might comment that the British Government had anticipated George Orwell's theory in "Animal Farm" that all acres were equal but some were more equal than others!

From 100 Years Ago

Alleged Vandalism at Tara

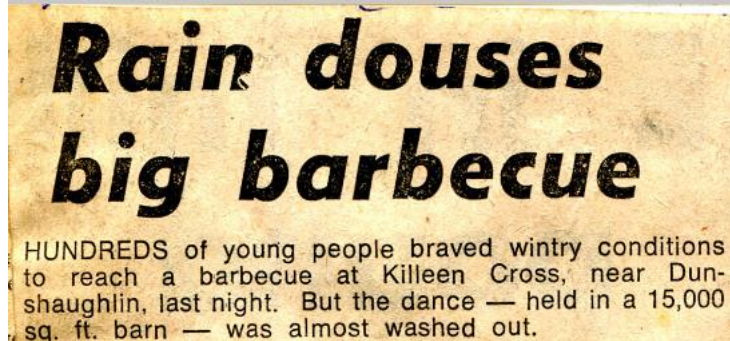
WANTON DAMAGE TO ST. PATRICK'S STATUE

Mr. E. Englishby, Dunsany, writes stating that a dastardly outrage was perpetuated on the statue of St. Patrick on the Hill of Tara a few Sundays ago by a number of strangers who came to the scene on bicycles. A youth who was an eye-witness declares that the vandals first attempted, but failed, to wrench the staff from the hand of the statue, and then they attacked it with stones and broke off all the fingers except one. Then, cautioning the youth to keep a still tongue, they made their way back in the northerly direction in which they came, and from which, Mr. Englishby adds, "All good things come from." The writer also recalls a previous damage done to the statue, and suggests that something should be done in the way of the inauguration of a local fund to repair, at least, the abutment of this fine statue, even though it has to remain minus a thumb and three fingers.

Meath Chronicle, April 3rd 1920

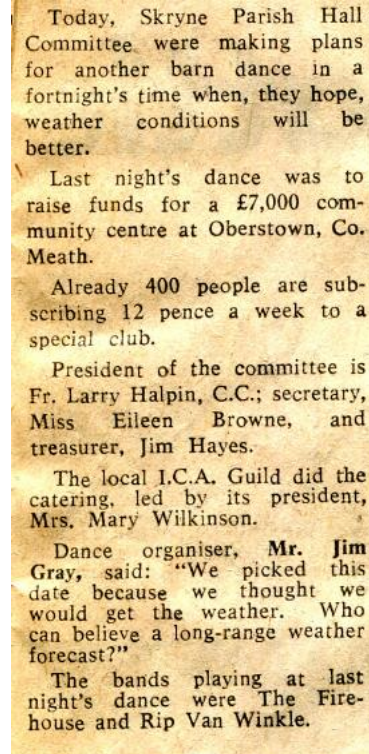
From 50 Years Ago

From the Sunday Independent



**Rain douses
big barbecue**

HUNDREDS of young people braved wintry conditions to reach a barbecue at Killeen Cross, near Dunshaughlin, last night. But the dance — held in a 15,000 sq. ft. barn — was almost washed out.



Today, Skryne Parish Hall Committee were making plans for another barn dance in a fortnight's time when, they hope, weather conditions will be better.

Last night's dance was to raise funds for a £7,000 community centre at Oberstown, Co. Meath.

Already 400 people are subscribing 12 pence a week to a special club.

President of the committee is Fr. Larry Halpin, C.C.; secretary, Miss Eileen Browne, and treasurer, Jim Hayes.

The local I.C.A. Guild did the catering, led by its president, Mrs. Mary Wilkinson.

Dance organiser, Mr. Jim Gray, said: "We picked this date because we thought we would get the weather. Who can believe a long-range weather forecast?"

The bands playing at last night's dance were The Firehouse and Rip Van Winkle.

Programme from Skryne Scenics - a variety group that was in Skryne at the time.

PART ONE

1. PERCY FRENCH
2. BALLAD SESSION - SEAN FOX
MAY DUNNE
KIERAN STAUNTON
3. SKETCH- CIVIC STRIFE
JOE TOBIN & MICHAEL NEYLON
4. SONG - OLIVE LYNCH
5. SKETCH - BARNEY,S BULL
BARNEY JOE TOBIN
SALLY ENDA NEYLON
MR. McNABB Michael McGoldrick
TITO QUIGLY Michael Neylon
Rancid Reilly MARY RYAN
6. CEILI TIME - JIMMY GRAY
7. SKETCH - FAMILY GROUP
Photographer HARRY NAUGHTON
Emilly JOSIE SAVAGE
Ede MARY RYAN
Grandma ANNE CARTHY
Aunt Maria ENDA NEYLON
Farther JOE TOBIN
8. SONG - JASPER BENNETT
9. CHRISTMAS TIME
INTERVAL

PART TWO

10. SHOOTING OF DAN McGRUE
11. SKETCH - THE TOFF AND THE TRAMP
Padraig McGoldrick. Dermot Carthy.
12. SONG - ENDA NEYLON
13. SKETCH - THE QUARE FELLA
Larry Padraig O'Rourke
Minnie Anne Carty
Young Man Patrick McGoldrick
Young Woman Ann Savage
Old Woman Mary Ryan
Tramps Phillip Savage
John Blaney
Guard Michael Neylon
14. DANCE - ANNE CARTY
15. SKETCH - SEVEN DAYS
Chairman Michael Neylon
Priest Joe Tobin
Nun Enda Neylon
I.C.A. Member Josie Savage
President of N.F.A. Padraig O'Rourke
Doctor Michael Ryan
16. SONG - CATHERINE FARRELL
17. CROPPY BOY
18. BLACK & WHITE MINSTRELS

A Day Like No Other by John Scanlon

Thursday, April 9th 1964 was a very important day in my life. On that day my family and I left Lispolé, Co. Kerry, to start a new life in Meath, on a farm provided by the Irish Land Commission in Beauparc.

I was only a child at that time, a few months short of my 8th birthday but this whole thing had fired my imagination and I couldn't wait to hit the road. Preparations had been going on for months – ages as far as I was concerned. The previous November my Dad had done a compulsory week's course in Athenry Agricultural College in preparation for the new challenge, much to the amusement of his friends. From Christmas on the machinery on the farm, all of which was horse-drawn, was sorted out. Some was sold as Dad had already decided that the horse had no future on the new farm. Shared machinery was given to the other half of the venture. The old mowing machine and the furze crusher were sold to a travelling man for scrap. The tub trap, our Sunday transport for Mass, was sold to a man who lived 12 or so miles away. With it went the beautiful, black, trap harness which only made its appearance on Sundays. I was horrified to see it all go as I loved travelling in the trap and, childlike, I couldn't understand how we'd manage without it. A week or two before we left, Dad went to Dingle fair and brought home a bunch of heifers which would be needed to expand our tiny dairy herd in the new land.

All of our property was transported in two double-trailer lorries, the household stuff and furniture in one and the cattle, horse and farm gear in another. This posed quite a problem as the lorries weren't able to access our road. There was a sharp turn into our cul de sac from the already narrow side road so everything had to be brought down to the main road the night before and left outside the local shop. Fortunately, it was a dry night, a rare occurrence in Lispolé. All of our neighbours were involved in this operation and as usual I was in the midst of them, getting in the way and bursting with excitement. The house was stripped of everything except mattresses and our shouts echoed through it. How our poor parents put up with it all, I've no idea.

All was action the next morning. My mother and our family of six children were to travel with our local minibus man, Thomas, while Dad was coming by truck to keep an eye on his stock. The cows were milked at an unearthly hour and then they and the new cattle were driven to the truck while our friend, John Griffin, loaded a few calves on the trailer of his Massey 25. I remember being amazed to see John coming out of the calf shed with a calf in his arms. Not an unusual sight, you might think, but this calf was a couple of months old and anything but a lightweight. Much to my disappointment, I wasn't allowed down to the road to see the action there but I soon forgot about that when the VW bus arrived. Another novel experience for me.

I had no qualms at all about leaving home. I have no doubt that older members of the family had their own worries and regrets about it as we had no experience of travel and Meath might as well have been on the moon as far as we were concerned. This applied to our neighbours too who were far more familiar with Chicago and London than they were with Navan. My uncle simply couldn't understand how my parents could leave home and, in fact, he never visited although he lived to be nearly 99 years of age and had ample opportunity. Travel was very limited in West Kerry in the 1960s unless somebody was emigrating, which, in a sense, we were. This meant that I was totally unprepared for the emotion of leaving. Our lovely neighbour, Mary, who was like a second mother to us, couldn't bear it and burst into floods of tears.

Looking to Mam for reassurance I saw her eyes full of tears and I was very confused by all of this. My little world hadn't even considered problems like this.

We stopped for lunch in Limerick at the home of one of our neighbours who had lived there for some years and continued on to Beauparc after that. I have no recollection of that part of the journey as I probably slept. The excitement of the previous few days demanded repayment, I suppose. We arrived at our new home, which my mother had never even seen before, towards evening and encountered our first problems. No water or electricity had been connected but worse than that, all of our belongings were in the trucks crawling their way up the 1960's roads through the centre of the country. However, they duly arrived and we were able to have something to eat.

The next surprise happened that evening as people, most of them Kerry people but others too, appeared from nowhere to help out. The cows were all but carried into the shed and milked. Brown Bob was brought down from his stall at the front of the truck and released in the field. We had left a little farm of 19 fields behind us and we were now in possession of a bigger farm of only three fields, the largest being the field of the house so when the cattle were left out they put their tails in the air and galloped away to the bottom corner to investigate their surroundings. Our neighbour and driver, Thomas, watched them go. "Man oh man", said Thomas, "and the cows looks like hens below in the corner." This was the image that Thomas brought with him back to Kerry, causing much field-envy among Dad's friends.

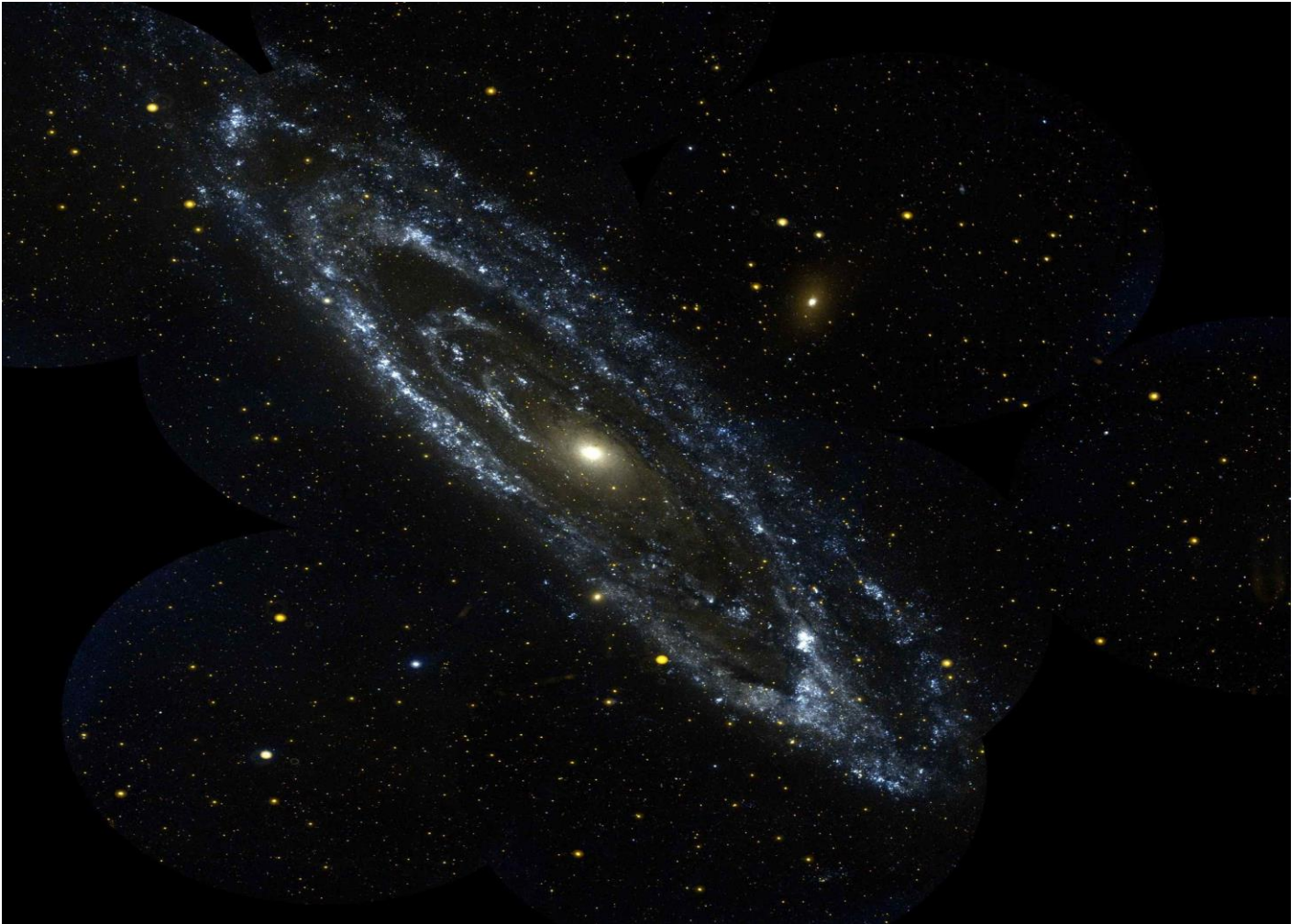
I made my first Meath friend that evening and I'm pleased to say that we still see each other occasionally. Declan Byrne lived, and still lives, just the other side of the bridge from us. He was interested in one thing only that day. The horse. As a young lad Declan really loved horses and loved to be near them. Later on in the evening he took me to meet his parents and off I went without mentioning this to anyone. This caused pandemonium when my absence was noticed and my sister, Mary, had to come and look for me. By now it was dark and as we came down the hill from the bridge, I saw the light from the oil lamp in the kitchen window across the field and rushed into a gap in the fence to go home. As usual, no thought went into this process. The gap, which is now the entrance to Seneschalstown Football pitch, was no more than a gap at that point and I learned my first lesson about barbed wire that evening. I split my eyebrow just above the eye (fortunately) and added to my poor mother's load of worry and fluster as I arrived in dripping blood. A day to be remembered, without a shadow of doubt.

There are no photos of the move but the photo below was taken in 1963 in Kerry



John's Dad, two American cousins, his younger sister, Josephine and John - and Bob!

The Night Sky by Tony Canavan



This is the Andromeda Galaxy (picture courtesy of NASA).

The best time at the moment to see the Andromeda galaxy is at 4 am when it is at an altitude of 22 degrees with azimuth of 50 degrees. Can be seen through binoculars or telescope depending on the light pollution. If you find the 'W' of Cassiopeia and follow, towards the horizon, the 'V' arrow it points to the Andromeda galaxy. It is circumpolar. It has an altitude of only 5 degrees in the evening sky.

It is 2.6 million light years away and it is one of our closest galaxies. It is home to an estimated one trillion stars and is substantially larger than the Milky Way. Together with the Milky Way (our home) the Large Magellanic Cloud, and the Small Magellanic Cloud, it forms the 'Local Group'. We travel through the cosmos together. The Andromeda galaxy is approaching us at 100 kilometres a second and will collide with the Milky Way (not in the sense of a car crash) in a few billion years and will after few more million years eventually merge forming an even larger galaxy and in the process 'kick start' a new generation of star formation.

The Show Must Go On

A huge shout out to the local farming community who are working hard to keeping the show on the road while the rest of us are cocooning or self isolating from home



Thank You



A very big thank you to Paddy & Liz O'Donoghue for setting up their 'Little Library' a few years ago. While it does not contain a huge number of books it has the surprise factor of discovering a literary gem that you have been waiting to read

Wildlife, Badgers by Tom Bannon

BADGERS

Night Ramblers -----

My fascination with badgers was awakened as a boy visiting my grandparent's house in the wilds of East Clare. Tales about an almost mythical creature who rambled the countryside after dark and the belief that if you were unfortunate to have a badger bite you it wouldn't let go until it heard your leg bone break was enough to send shivers along your spine and ensure you were vigilant if you were out after dark.

This was a world pre-internet and where modern technology in the form of a TV half the size of a room was capable of beaming a single TV station into the house.

Many nights during the holidays were spent around the big open hearth in the kitchen listening to older family members and visiting neighbours telling stories and yarns. If Donald Trump thinks fake news is a recent invention, it was definitely alive and well back then also.

One regular night rambler who visited was Jem Moroney who farmed a small holding further up the mountain from my Grandparents and was only too eager to tell the attentive young holiday makers from Dublin how he had narrowly escaped certain injury from a late evening encounter with a ferocious badger.

Jem's story recalled that in the half light as he walked along the mountain track from his home, he could hear rustling in the hedgerow and went to poke the bush with a stick. Suddenly a large badger charged from the undercover and grabbed hold of his leg.

The quick thinking Jem instead of hitting the badger, calmly snapped the stick. The snapping twig mimicked the sound of a bone break and forced the badger to release its grip and gave Jem an opportunity to escape saving his leg and possibly his life.

Must have been some truth in the story as similar tales are told about badgers all over the country and in many other countries but think the only ones that got their leg pulled that evening were the gullible city children.

Luckily, badgers are plentiful in RST area where we have a wonderful mixture of woodland, open country & deep ditches and badgers have roamed this area for generations.

They are nocturnal emerging from their setts at night to play and forage in the local fields.

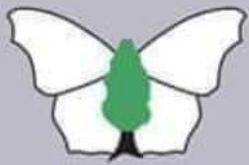
They following well-trodden paths across the countryside so it's not too difficult to encounter one if you are out after dark.

They may also visit your garden in search of earthworms and food. You may see signs of where their sharp claws have rooted up grubs from under the soil surface. If you are feeding birds with bird feeders, they will willingly Hoover up the peanuts that have fallen on the ground.

Their presence produces a varied reaction from gardeners, some consider them a nuisance as they root up bulbs, eat fruit and vegetables, and dig up the manicured lawns. Others are delighted to have these wonderful creatures visit and an opportunity to observe our most distinctive and possibly best loved mammal.

Pictured below are some of our resident RST badgers that you might encounter visiting your garden





Butterfly
Conservation

Butterflies and Moths to see in April



Holly Blue



Emperor Moth



Orange-tip



Ruby Tiger moth



Brimstone



Streamer moth



Speckled Wood



Purple Thorn moth



Peacock

The Swallows Return by Tom Bannon



Sightings of swallows returning to Ireland and County Meath reported during the week. Delighted to see the swallows return to the shed here at Macetown on Sunday evening. A bit of normality during these strange times.

Our Feathered Friends by Anne Frehill

Among many lessons learned from this pandemic is that we can never take anything for granted, family, friends, health, employment, travel, to name but a few. For several years too, experts have informed us that the natural world cannot be treated in a cavalier fashion because we are destroying it by many of our actions.

Just imagine if there were no birds no bees no clean water, no trees and so forth. Slowly, the whole ecosystem would collapse and the earth as we know it would be no more.

Take for example birds, they are everywhere, yet if they were taken away our world would be robbed of so much joy and beauty. What can compare to the heavenly dawn chorus on a golden morning in April or May. And who could not be moved, by the sight which I saw in the garden only yesterday. A thrush with bits of moss and twigs in its beak watching from atop a pole to make sure there were no predators around. And when it deemed that the coast was clear disappearing into a cavity in an old gnarled apple tree where the same family build a nest year after year.

Swallows are one of my favourite birds. Despite the lockdown due to Coronavirus, on April 14th airborne travellers arrived at our home. The first one made landfall at 10. 20 am to be precise. I happened to be passing an upstairs window when I spotted him settling on an old wire suspended between two sheds. This is the earliest that I have ever recorded their arrival, but the Irish Wildlife Trust affirm that they annually arrive in various parts of Ireland between 6th and 16th April.

Swallows however should not be confused with house martins. The latter have a distinctive white patch on their backs above their tails and build their nests out of mud on the walls of houses close to the eaves or beside gutters. Swallows never do this as they nest indoors in sheds and barns.

In mid to late September I each year I bid them a fond adieu as groups seem to practise lining up on wires for a few days before their actual departure. They travel in families with the young birds shadowing their parents as they migrate to Africa for the colder months. Incredibly, Ornithologists have discovered that the young birds are still able to make the journey themselves even if their parents have perished.

In the recent past, scientists discovered a substance called magnetite in the beaks of many swallows. This magnetic mineral is believed to align to the earth`s magnetic field rather like a compass, helping migrating birds to navigate their long journey.

The return journey to Africa takes about 6 weeks but there are many perils en route.

It is astounding that such tiny birds prove to be so robust and survive everything from raging tempests to sandstorms as they flyover seas and deserts. Migrating swallows can traverse up to 200 miles a day at speeds of roughly 17-22 miles per hour.

It is believed that many swallows return every April to the same nest-sites in sheds and barns, where they were born. They like to nest high up near horses or cattle but for many years the decline in dairy farming on this island did not help the species.

The Irish name for a swallow is fainleog and they were always welcomed as a sign that Winter had ended. Farmers believed that the presence of these birds protected their stock from disease, curses and even fire. Of course, I can hear the cynics among you complain about all the droppings from their nests but there are several simple ways to deal with such issues!

If you can label this as a fault it is indeed a slight one when you consider that they are harbingers of Summer and can add so much joy to our lives. While to watch them in flight is awe-inspiring as they perform aeronautical feats which would put the Royal Air Force's famous *Red Arrows* to shame! They can soar, circle, glide and dive-bomb as our docile ginger cat discovered to his peril last year. He was taking forty winks in the sunshine and one swallow who was trying to catch flying insects near the ground attacked him. Tom beat a retreat under some bushes and for the remainder of the summer ran for cover if he saw a swallow approaching.

Finally, I must mention their delightful twittering, as they engage in courtship, egg-laying and subsequent rearing of the young. It is surely music to any ear even the most jaded!

Wildflowers by Brid Conroy

The month April is possibly named from the Latin word 'aperire' meaning to open as this is the time when so many flowers open their buds and all of our trees are opening their leaves.

Here are a few of the wildflowers you could expect to see on your walks through Skryne at the moment



Dandelion- *Taxacum Bulgaria*

These very familiar native plants populate our lawns and roadside verges offering one of the earliest sources of food for our bees.

The name is derived from the French 'dent de lion' as the jaggedly toothed leaves were thought to resemble the teeth in a lion's jaw.

Several of our native butterflies and moths lay their eggs on dandelion leaves and the seed heads are a valuable food source for seed eating birds like goldfinches.



Hairy Bittercress - *Cardamine hirsuta*

A member of the mustard family the leaves of this very common plant are edible and taste a bit like rocket and have vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, beta carotene and antioxidants. It can be eaten raw in salads or cooked like you would spinach. This is probably one of the most common 'weeds' in Irish gardens so next time you are weeding your garden you could harvest your lunch at the same time!



Cowslips - *Primula veris*

This beautiful native plant's flowers can be made into a tea which is meant to be good for insomnia, headaches and nervous tension. The scented flowers also make delicious wine.

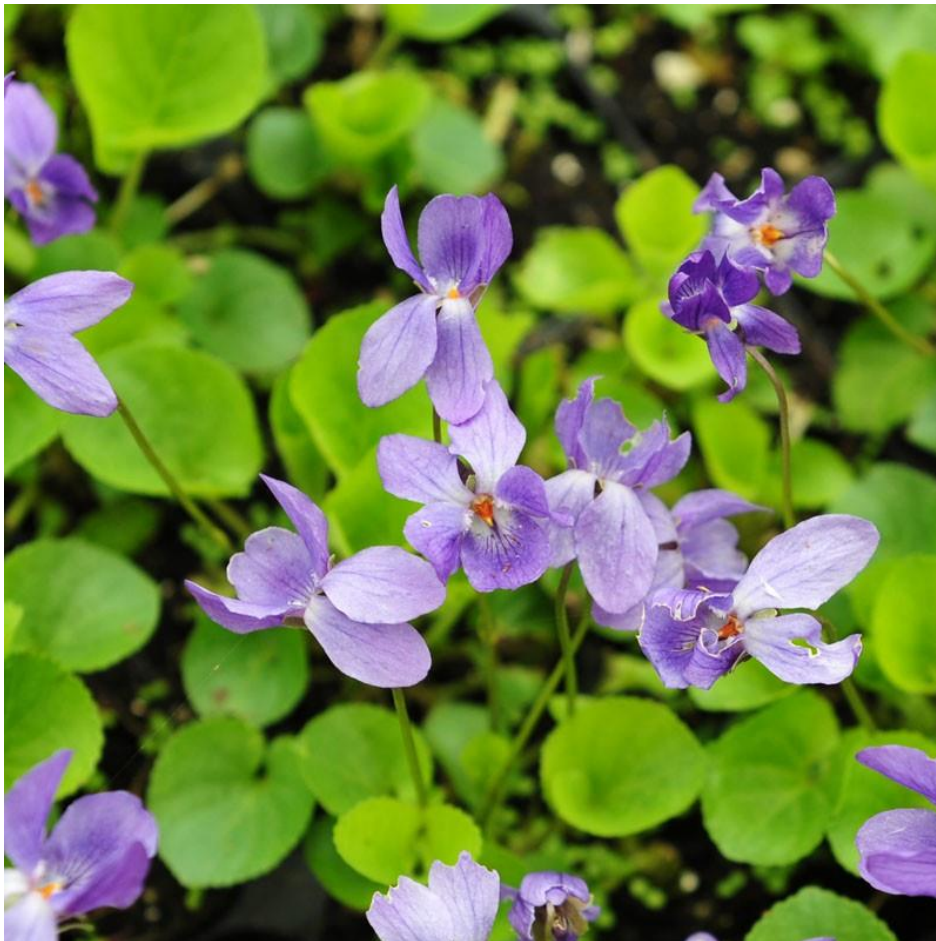
It suffered a huge decline due to modern farming practices but thankfully in recent years has been recolonising unsprayed grass verges and banks.

In Shakespeare's 'Henry V' he says that the cowslip is a sign of well managed pasture!



Cow Parsley - *Anthriscus sylvestris*

On roadsides, woodland margins, in hedgerows and shady places, from April to June, this tall, downy perennial stands gracefully with its umbels of white petaled flowers. It is a decorative flower that works well in floral arrangements and will look well in a vase for up to a week. It can be easily confused with hemlock which is poisonous and hogweed which has a sap that will cause burn so take great care to correctly identify it before cutting it!



Sweet Violet - *Viola odora*

The sweet violet has a long and romantic history. The ancient Greeks first used it to make perfume, the ancient Roman's to make wine, ancient Britons used it for cosmetics and medieval French troubadour used it to represent constancy in their tales of chivalrous love. They are most often found in shady hedge banks and can be distinguished from the common dog violet by their sweet scent.

Poem

This poem written by Joan Gallagher was published in the Rathfeigh Historical Society's 'A Window on the Past', issue no. 5, 2000

GRANDCHILDREN

by Joan Gallagher

Those kids will be the death of me, they have me in a daze,
They keep on asking questions like, how were the olden days.
How did you get to school before the bus or Mummy's car,
You never had to walk it, surely t'was too far.

What did you do when you came home and had your homework done,
No computers, videos or T.V, what did you do for fun?

Well, we had lots of trees to climb and lambs to watch at play,
We had mushrooms to collect and help build cocks of hay.
We found loads of plums and apples, not always with permission!
Sure how on earth would we have had the time to watch a television.

We had the roads to ourselves to cycle on, no cars to knock us down,
And we had absolute riches if we had half a crown.
Our parents never worried about things like kidnappin,
It never even crossed their minds, such things could ever happen.

Old Farm Machinery by Tom Bannon

Can you name these two old pieces of farm equipment? Answers in next week's RST



COVID 19 Community Support Group and Club Together

As you are aware Skryne GFC joined forces with the Active First Responders a few weeks back to form the local COVID 19 Community Support volunteer group to help local people most in need however we can in these restricted times. Since then the GAA has partnered with SuperValu and Centra to help keep the most vulnerable of us to keep well stocked up with essentials to get through these difficult times. As part of this "Club Together" initiative Skryne GFC have partnered with Supervalu Johnstown who will contact the COVID 19 Community Support group to assist with the delivery of groceries to the more vulnerable in our parish. This will be a drop and go service to ensure all physical distancing guidelines set out by the HSE will be adhered to all times.

I hope you will agree this could be a great help to the more isolated in the parish so please spread this message out to all your local contacts that may require the service or may know someone who does. The service will be up and running in the coming week with details advertised on all Skryne GFC social media platforms.

Thanks again and mind yourselves!

COVID 19 Community Support group

Cormac Grendon 0879409677

Ross Philips 0879798822

Des Manning 0860584116.

Stephen Naughton 0872225572;

Niall Muldoon 0852091801;
Sean O Regan 0868145169
Christy O Connor 086 2854057
Declan Smyth 087-2504983
A.F.R. (9 am - 6pm) 0868853713.

Please contact any of us for further information or assistance

Notices

Local Handy Man Available

SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Carpentry / Wooden Floors / Cabinet Making
- Radiator covers made to measure
- Shelving for Hot Presses
- Side Gates made to measure
- Under Stairs storage units
- Garden Maintenance including Hedge Cutting
- Power-washing Paths & Patios
- Supply and Fitting of Fireplaces & Stoves

NO JOB TOO SMALL!

Contact: Pauric

T: 046 9034846

M: 085 1597105

Swans of Oberstown would like to inform our customers that we are doing our best to keep the shop open and are taking advice from the government and the HSE on how best to do so.

Customer safety is of paramount importance to us all and we kindly request the same in return for all our staff. Please maintain the new social distancing etiquette and follow all HSE guidelines.

The Swan family would like to thank all our customers for your continued support. Rest assured we will strive to keep the shelves well stocked with all the essentials, together with lots of goodies to help us through these challenging times. As well as offering somewhere safe to shop we are also doing deliveries where possible. At the moment we are open from 8am-8pm. Stay safe.

I would be willing to offer any advice to readers regarding their vehicles. With garages closed readers may have queries regarding issues that they are worried about.

Ron Chawke

Ron Chawke Motors

086-1717159

ronchawkemotors@gmail.com

Local person seeking to buy site with a view to building a residential property in the Skryne/Tara area

Contact details:

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Contacts

Do you have family or friends living abroad or elsewhere in Ireland who would like to receive the RST?

Do you have neighbours or friends who do not have email?

Perhaps you could send us their contact details, or family member details, and we will add them to our mailing list

Please send all articles to jimconroy747@gmail.com or to patriciaconroy1@hotmail.com