



Sherkin Newsletter



Issue 49 - April 2012

The Easter visitors have mostly left the island by now and the greenfly are attacking the roses, so this must all mean that it's now Summer! Creation is all around, new calves are galloping in the fields and the lanes are full of primroses. The Fiddle Fair is just around the corner, Sherkin Tidy Islands are looking for volunteers, the Baltimore Drama group are perfecting their lines for their visit next week, and the Island Craft shop is quietly celebrating 30 years of business.

So, to check that you are in good shape, especially after all the Easter eggs, and ready to enjoy the summer and all these activities you are invited to attend the free Blood Pressure and Diabetes Screening Clinic in the Community Hall on Monday 16th April between 10am and 1pm.

Congratulations to Niamh Murphy-O'Driscoll and Aoibheann Murphy who performed with the 'Bluebirds', the Baltimore Children's choir, on 1st April in the Fr. Cashman Hall, Baltimore. Under the direction of Katy Salvidge, these Bluebirds, along with the Baltimore adult choir and numerous individual musical performers, all came together to give a most joyous concert which raised €1500 for the Tit Bonhomme Fund and Skibbereen Animal Welfare. Well done to all!

Best wishes to Ronan Murphy whose First Holy Communion will take place in St.Mona's church on Saturday 12th May.

And congratulations to the local lads, Aidan Walsh and Patrick O'Driscoll who got to the semi final stage with their Skibbereen team in the U14 Joe Kidney Rugby Blitz held in Cork recently. They are pictured here front left with Declan Kidney, the Irish team manager, who no doubt was the right man to give encouragement for next year.



This newsletter is produced by Karen Mould and Sue Cahalane, and published by SIDS. We welcome articles of news and of general interest, and so please do contact us with information about forthcoming events. Articles can be sent by email to sherkinnewsletter@gmail.com, or delivered by hand, and any enquiries to 087-7715862. We look forward to hearing from you! Next deadline 10th Mar 2011

SIDS: Progress Report from the Treasurer

My report to the delayed 2010 AGM outlined the overall situation in which SIDS finds itself, as a result of a lack of management in the 2008 to 2011 period. Since then, ably supported by Linda O'Beirne and Maureen O'Neill, I have been trying to get a handle on where we are with regard to various grants due, which we might still get.

As you know the grant we were awarded for the BAVA since mid-2009 was not drawn down by the previous administration. In addition, we did not have a Development Worker since early 2010, and therefore there was no income from this source. It should be understood that SIDS day to day expenses are, in part, supported by these grants. Of course, without a Development Worker or the BAVA, SIDS would not have the same expenses but that is not a realistic view. As the politicians say 'we are where we are'.

I have been in contact with the responsible officials in the Department of Community, Gaeltacht and Rural affairs, the agency who supplied the grant for the BAVA. They agree we have money due, but they are scrutinising our expenses in detail. We have made a submission and are in negotiation. Hopefully we will have some positive news soon.

As you will also know the staff on the BAVA course have been working without income since the beginning of the year. The AGM decided in principle to fund, if possible, the final sessions for the current final years students, while the sub-committee for the BAVA looks for new sources of funding.

One piece of good news is that Comhar has provided SIDS with the money we were due for printing the West Cork Islands Strategy document. SIDS undertook to have this printed but did not make any submission to recover the costs. Comhar, with Bere Island Project Group, are undertaking the appointment of a Development Worker, interviews have been held and an appointment is expected shortly.

One of the many items I discovered in my trawl through the various financial documents is that SIDS paid almost €1000 in fees and charges to our bank in the 2009/10 period. Most of these charges were as a result of being overdrawn in the bank while continuing to issue cheques. With Maureen's and Linda's help we have put in place a system where financial transactions are dealt with at one monthly session, and a close watch is kept on them. We are still working under an overdraft but have told the bank that our overdraft authorisation is cancelled, except for a small facility to cover continuing direct debits such as the ESB etc.

It is my intention to have the financial affairs sorted, at least from the point of view of the management of day to day matters, by the date of the 2011 AGM, which will be held before June 30th. Meantime, any and all help to provide SIDS with income will be welcome. In this regard the Regatta is central to our efforts, and I hope I can rely on all Members and Friends of Sherkin to restore the Regatta to its place as our main source of income.

Barry Mahon 30 March 2012

Donie
Mossie O'Halloran

There was no hint of slowness, not like the slowness after his operation last year, as he clambered down the ladder.

He looked and stood straight, right hand on the small of his back, elbow askew and the half coat flung out behind it as he took in the scene. Dirmuid Minihane's dingy lashed across the end of the pontoon, Glenan's aluminium punt lengthwise and his own navy 'Caroline' outside her.

The evening was setting in, still bright though for an overcast mid-March day. The tide, making since after 4 was still well low. Surely he saw me loading up for the last ferry of the day, the 7 on a Wednesday, and a good scatter on board an' all.

I saw him as I pulled away, standing there, straight, observing the scene and then I got caught up with the banter on board.

Coming home the ferry was quiet, just a couple, strangers, a courting couple I'd guess and myself. I listened to Radio na Gaeltachta to see would I hear any tune I'd know or one that might make this still calm night memorable as I made my very last crossing before heading for the North Sea in a fortnight's time.

All tied up and shut down by 20 to 8, I noticed activity on the Cattle Slip across the way. Some movements from people on board the pier construction crowds' RIB, and anxious faces.

CPR movements. Then the robotic voice of the defibrillator cut through the stillness and silenced the whisperers. 'Stand Clear'. More anxious faces and flashing lights.

'Caroline' bowline free was pointing east, her stern still fast to the punt inside, pointing east to the Cattle Slip as if she wanted to go to her master, to take him home.



Are you ready for the Digital switchover in Nov 2012?

The following information came to SIDS from a local provider of this new technology that you are going to need to get installed if you wish to continue watching RTE television programmes.

The good news is that if you already have Sky (or similar) you will not be affected by the digital switchover, as you are paying Sky for your RTE service. However, if you do not have Sky you will need a **saorview receiver** for every television you wish to watch RTE on. So, either you buy a new tv with this installed or buy a saorview box. You will only receive the Irish stations on saorview so to receive the English stations as well (eg. bbc, itv, channel 4 etc) you will need a dish.

There is no such thing as a digital aerial so in a lot of cases there is no need to change your existing aerial.

Guide prices:

to replace an old rusty Sky dish	€80
triax saorview box	€80
free to air system installed	€190 (dish and box and no RTE's)
RTE and BBC etc on one box	€160
Aerial installed	€70
dish, aerial and box for all channels	€300

Dishes and aerials are long lasting and galvanised to tolerate the obvious salt air.

My plan is to give it one long day on the island and get around to everyone, or stay over and spread it over two days depending on response. If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact Kieran 087-2210005 www.westcorkdigital.ie Thanks!

Tidy Islands

Nuala Mahon

It's that time of year again when the sun begins to shine and the grass grows incessantly. We will be making a huge effort to put Sherkin back on the winning Tidy Towns map. The main aim is to keep the island tidy and to try to enhance its natural beauty rather than prettifying it. This requires as many of you as possible to come out and help. We get together about once a week starting about six o'clock in the evening and spend about an hour doing what we can. The more people who help the more we can do to keep our island looking great. No great gardening skills are needed - if you can wield a sweeping brush then we need you!

Thursday 26th April	Pier area
Thursday 3 rd May	Phone box/Tree crossroads
Thursday 10th	Jolly/Hotel area
Thursday 17th	Rugher
Thursday 24th	Cuinne
Thursday 31st	Children's garden area
Thursday 7th June	Beach crossroads and church
Thursday 14th	Beach area

Above is a provisional time table of work parties but Susan will be providing a blackboard confirming the dates and times as we go through the Summer. You do not have to commit to every week, come when you can and do what you can. Neither do you need to be a resident, everyone is welcome so bring along your visitors and get them involved.

Recycling

Unfortunately there is no news yet about the Rugher so the advice from the newsletter is as follows.

1. Try to reduce the amount of stuff you bring on to the island as what comes in has to go out again, in one form or another.
2. Glass can still go in the coloured bins on Sherkin pier
3. The 'bring centre' at Marsh Rd, Skibbereen accepts all your recyclables, (paper, plastics, electrical, etc).
4. The Baltimore compactor for landfill is expected back in time for the summer. In the meantime there is also a compactor at the filling station in Cork Rd, Skibbereen. €5 per sack.

A Trip on the Hanorah on 21st August 2011

Stuart Rees

The build-up started long before with Ellen Atkinson's great win in a raffle held at the Islander's Rest - a half day's sailing trip with Nigel Towse on the Hanorah. She generously suggested that her dad (George) and myself should take it. The golden ticket sat on my bedside table in Birmingham for many months; Sherkin was a dream away. I was thinking if I would ever get to use that ticket and what the day would be like and how Nigel would be.

21st Aug 2011 arrived. It was a typical Sherkin weather day - light wind, spots of rain, then sun. We weren't sure if it was officially a trousers day or shorts. We went in shorts and Nigel wore trousers.

Meeting Nigel properly, I was a little apprehensive as I wondered if he would remember me from our previous random maritime meetings when Nigel, with his seemingly mystical powers, had appeared to help and advise on many occasions, just when we needed him and when our novice attempts to sail and manœuvre the boat had taken a turn for the worst. For example, 'The Dock Pier grounding' when I had to leave our boat and stand in the water while waiting for Nigel to pick me up whilst his boat was still moving for which I performed a forward roll come 'Fosbury Flop' out of the mud and arrive upside down on his deck.... Would he remember that day and call the whole trip off?!

Anyway, we met down at the Dock Pier, all very relaxed. I didn't know which boat it was but as we approached the 'Hanorah' I could see it was a traditional wooden boat with neat lines, no plastic, grey finish with green trim and a lovely white top to the mast and lots of ropes coming down from it (I hoped we didn't have to know all their names) and a neatly tied sail across the foredeck .

The Hanorah is a 1892 (25ft-6 long) Heir Island lobster boat rescued by Nigel and re-built by him with the part time help of a local boat builder, Liam Hegarty and 10 students on a FETAC course. She is accurately restored in every detail. Even the ropes are real hemp as Nigel will not allow a nylon rope on board. She was very much a working boat, this being reflected in the design - everything is practical and designed so the boat can be easily handled and the lobster pots can be lifted and worked on. Because all the work has to take place on the deck the main sail doesn't have a boom so it is sheeted onto a metal runner looped over the back of the boat. I was told this is called a "horse" - a brilliant feature and very practical.

Having boarded the Hanorah we rigged the sails, Nigel making it all seem very easy. We cast off the mooring line and we were away, quietly, just the power of the windno motor to get us to open water, with Nigel 'all sail and perfectly controlled'. We headed out towards Heir Island right hand side (east), Nigel adjusting rope and sails and explaining things about the boat and sailing. I really enjoyed the easy way Nigel went about things... not too worried about us getting all the names of things correct which made it simple to understand how the Hanorah responded to the different settings of sail and wind direction.

We didn't prepare too well for this trip - no food or beer - but I did remember to grab a pack of biscuits as we left the house. I handed them around and it was all so peaceful as we sailed along chatting to Nigel about the boat and how he came to be based on Sherkin.



I got to steer as we continued to Horse Island, then headed for Rossbrin harbour. Nigel sailed us into the harbour to have a closer look at the boats, all under sail, something we would never attempt in case we lost control and smashed the other boats up!

The sun was now shining again, the sky had blue in it as we cruised away from Horse Island back across towards Sherkin. We thought it would be good to try and do some fishing. Normally, we would stop the boat and throw the line over but Nigel had a different way of fishing as we sailed and produced what I thought was a brilliant invention that I had never heard of and so simple ...the Otter Board. Nigel showed us this board that tows under water, so simple, and when you have caught a fish it floats to the surface and sure enough we did. We soon had a few mackerel and Nigel then showed us the easy way to gut the fish.

We headed back towards Sherkin, Nigel pointing out landmarks for me to aim the boat at. Soon we started to approach a very narrow gap between some rocks. George and I would have started the motor if possible or turned around but Nigel just took the tiller and navigated us back through some very jagged rocks, pointing out how to read the land as it descends into the sea. Soon we were back at the mooring. It seemed as if we had only just left but four hours had gone by. It was a very memorable and enjoyable experience thanks to Nigel's expertise and easy-going manner.

To book a similar trip on the Hanorah contact **Nigel** direct at 086 3777634

Sherkin Library News

Josephine Jefferies

Statistics for March

Books borrowed	173
Membership new or renewed	15
Internet sessions used	25
Visitor count	105

Opening Hours

Tuesday	1.30pm – 5.30pm
Thursday	11am – 2pm
Friday	5.30pm – 8.30pm

The Moth/Altun Short Story prize

The Moth Magazine presents the Moth/Altun Short Story Prize, for which entries are now being accepted – full information available at www.themothmagazine.com – closing date Monday 30th April.

2012 Over The Edge New Writer of The Year competition

In 2012 Over The Edge is continuing its annual creative writing competition, open to both poets and fiction writers. The winning poems and the winning story will both be published in a special Over The Edge Tenth Birthday anthology which will be published during 2013. Entries should be sent to Over The Edge, New Writer of the Year competition, 3 Carby Road, Newcastle, Galway, Ireland - contact details on a separate sheet. Criteria: fiction of up to three thousand words, three poems of up to forty lines, or one poem of up to one hundred lines. The closing date is Wednesday, August 8th, 2012. Further information from 087-6431748 and from over-the-edge-openreadings@hotmail.com.

Congratulations to the Islands Craft Shop on its 30th Anniversary.

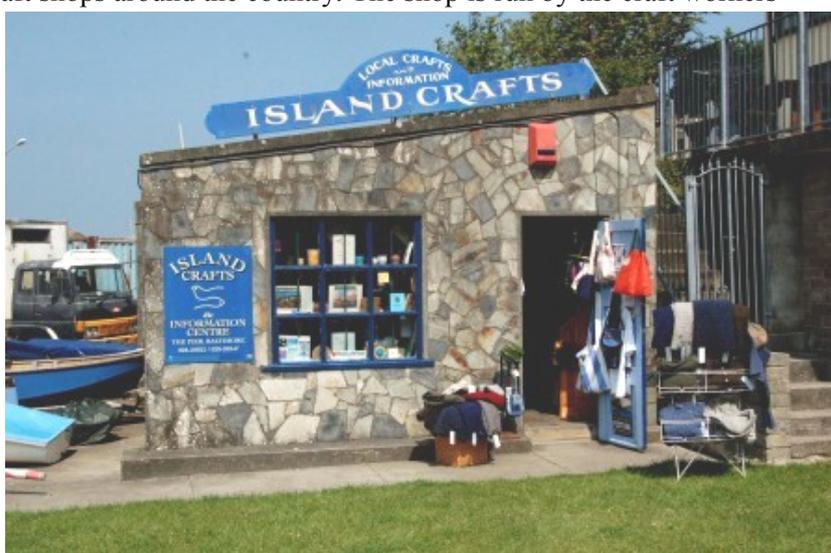
The Island Crafts Shop, in Baltimore, conveniently located close to the main ferry pier celebrates its 30th anniversary this year since Sherkin Island Knitwear joined forces with Cape Clear Pottery in 1982. Over the years many island craft workers have sold their work through this outlet which offers a wide range of knitwear, jewellery, pottery, silks, leather, metalwork, pictures, books and cards, unique to the area and not available in other craft shops around the country. The shop is run by the craft workers themselves, providing a direct sale to customers, and where individual commissions can be arranged.

Island Crafts also provides a valuable tourist information service for the islands, with details of ferry schedules, local services and upcoming events. While many enterprises and organizations, some with considerable fanfare have come and gone over the intervening years the Islands Craft Shop has incrementally built up the quality and range of its products and service through the quiet but

incessant hard work, imagination and effort of all concerned. It is truly self-sustaining, reinvesting in the premises over time and returning most of the proceeds to the craft workers involved.

For anyone visiting Baltimore or travelling onwards to Cape Clear, Sherkin or Heir Islands the Islands Craft Shop is well worth a visit.

Open: Easter to October.



Tel: 028 20347 / 028 20022

Bird news March/early April 2012

Julian Wyllie

“The spring hasn’t quite happened yet” or words along those lines is what this piece should really be called. It is now just before dawn on 11th April and, as yet, I am yet to see either Swallow or House Martin this year and the only Sand Martins I have seen have been in Skibbereen. I can’t remember ever having to wait beyond 10th April for the first Swallow, although it doubtless has happened, albeit in Scotland. But it does strike me as excessively late – maybe today will be the one. In fact all migrants are showing signs of tardiness, with only Wheatear (two at Sherkin Point on 23rd March), White Wagtail (six at Horseshoe on 24-25th March), a scattering of Chiffchaffs singing across the island from 16th March, up to four Sandwich Terns in Baltimore Harbour during the second half of March and an early April sprinkling of Willow Warblers making themselves obvious.

There have been other good birds though, best of which Sherkin-wise was a plumage perfect spring adult Scandinavian Rock Pipit at Sherkin Point on 23rd March; this is a sub-species of our own regular Rock Pipits and was presumably on its way to, eh, Scandinavia. Also nearby on the same day was a Black-throated Diver in Gascanane Sound, by far the scarcest of the three commoner diver/loon species in West Cork and only the third or fourth record for Sherkin. Two Purple Sandpipers feeding with a flock of Turnstones at Reenahoe on 29th March weren’t much commoner in Sherkin terms, and were as always, a welcome sight.

Birds of the month though have to go to non-islanders. Firstly, a one-day Red-flanked Bluetail found by Ciaran Cronin at Galley Head on 25th March is going to end up as one of the top five birds in Ireland in 2012, no matter what happens over the next seven and a half months. An absolute gem of a bird and many thanks are due to the ‘team’ that between them managed to ensure that I got to see it. You know who you are! Secondly, an adult Night Heron, found by myself by the Ilen River at the back of the Eldon Hotel in Skibbereen as I was mentally preparing myself for the weekly shop, made sure that I got virtually no shopping done but was successfully seen throughout the day by several Cork birders and the spent the next week or so in the same general area, ensuring that all those who wanted to see it got to do so, taking some superb photos in the process. Although nowhere near as rare as the Bluetail (a 3rd for Ireland, the previous two also being one day birds, on Dursey & Cape, and seen by only a very fortunate few), the Night Heron was about the 74th for Ireland (40 of which were prior to 1966) with the last record being a one-day bird back in 2008, also in Co. Cork. So definitely a less than annual occurrence on a nation-wide basis.

On a sadder note, it was with dismay that I saw Mount Gabriel burnt to a cinder the other morning. Although I’ve heard plenty quips and comment about the radar domes, I’ve heard no mention about the Stonechats, Meadow Pipits and Linnets, all of which are early nesters, particularly in a year such as this with such a warm March, and all of whom will have lost their first broods. Linnets in particular are reluctant to leave the nest whilst incubating under any circumstance and often perish in gorse fires. Another potential victim is the Skylark, though they tend to nest slightly later, so hopefully survived, or rather avoided, the disaster. To leave you all on a happier note, the Sherkin Skylark population is once again thriving, with its epicentre in north-west Farranacoush, with at least seven singing birds, and at least two other birds singing in Cloddagh and Slievemore respectively.

For further info or to report sighting, contact Julian on 0870 619186 or at jhwyllye@gmail.com

Riot

Dolly O'Reilly

Violets are subversive –
All winter they stay underground
(They don't make a sound) –
But on the First of May
They burst through concrete and clay
They crowd the roads and laneways –
Now they're free
They come in solidarity –

Rainfall for March 2012

The total rainfall for March was 29.00 mm, 22.1mm of which fell on 4 days:

3 rd	2.4 mm
5 th	3.2 mm
6 th	4.2 mm
16 th	12.3 mm

The month was the 4th driest March since records began in 1973. The driest March recorded since 1973 was 2000, with 20.2 mm. The wettest March was 1989 with 180.6 mm.

BA Visual Art

Ber Burns

There will be an exhibition of work by this year's graduates of BA Visual Art in venues throughout Sherkin Island on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May, from 12 o'clock to 5.00. This exhibition will take place in lots of different locations around the island. Many thanks to the generosity of the community in giving spaces to the students to show their work. It will be a celebration of the partnership between students and community. There will be a brochure available with a map to show the different venues.

This will be followed by a party in the Islanders Rest, on Saturday night (19th) with music and craic, and we hope everyone will come to help the students to celebrate.

The West Cork Arts Centre will exhibit the work of these graduates during the first two weeks in June. The graduation will take place on Sherkin on Saturday 6th October. Congratulations to Anna, Anne, Chris, Danny, Diarmuid, Donagh, Gana, Ginny, Klair, Jane, Janet, Jo, Jocelyn, Luisa, Margrit, Maureen, Michele, Paul and Wendy on completing four years of study on Sherkin.

Blood Pressure and Diabetes Screening Clinic

MONDAY 16th APRIL 10am - 1pm

Sherkin Community Hall

All welcome for the free service!

Dates for the Diary

April

Mon 16th Blood pressure and diabetes check clinic in Community Hall from 10am-1pm.
 Thurs 19th Baltimore Drama group present 'The Cripple of Inishmaan' by Martin McDonagh at the Islanders' Rest @8.30pm.
 Thurs 26th Tidy Islands first organised clean up night of 2012 at the Abbey Pier @6pm.

May

Tues 8th – 10th 'New Energy Era' forum at Liss Ard Estate, Skibbereen
 Wed 9th – Sun 13th Baltimore Fiddle Fair, performances in the marquee, Glebe Gardens and Dun na Sead. Concerts by Altan, Frankie Lane, Foghorn String Band, Martin Hayes et al. Sessions in the pubs too!
 Sat 12th First Holy Communion in St. Mona's Church
 Fri 18th Confirmations take place in Rath Church.
 Sat 19th – 20th Final year BAVA students exhibition in various venues on Sherkin.
 Fri 25th – 27th Baltimore Wooden Boat and Seafood Festivals.

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