

Sherkin Newsletter



December 2011 Issue 45

Another year drawing to a close which must have got a few people thinking at least, as a number of articles arrived in to this newsletter with reminiscences to share, which is great.

As the year ends we extend best wishes to Lizzie O'Connor on her retirement from the FAS C.E. Scheme and wish her well in her relaxation from chores, and welcome Richard Haley on to the scheme who will be involved mainly with outdoor work.

Congratulations also to Robbie Murphy and Syd Cheatle, who after a nomination process are now Sherkin's two representatives on the West Cork Islands' Community Council.

Congratulations too in advance of 6th January when Kitty O'Driscoll will enter a new decade and celebrate a very big birthday!!

And good luck to all those participants who have been rehearsing for Christmas concerts at school and at church, and a thank you to all those behind the scenes helpers who keep the shows on the road, year in year out.

And while you are all busy planning feasts over the festive season for family, friends and neighbours, don't forget to put out food and water for the birds.

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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 Jan 2012**



Another Story Miriam Dunne



I was kneeling on a newspaper in the tunnel planting some garlic, my hands covered in muck, when a picture of a fairy tale creature caught my eye. She had long golden curls, eyelashes that swept her cheeks and a mouth parted in a pearly smile. Only her nose looked out of joint. It was more of a snout or maybe it was a crease in the newspaper crumpled at that point under my knee.

Beneath the vision the caption read:

PETRA E'S WEDDING COST 12 MILLION POUNDS

I gasped, forgot the garlic and read on. The drinks involved Chateau Petrus at £4,000 a bottle and with 250 guests that worked out roughly at £48,000 a head. The wedding which took place in a 15th Century castle in Italy included performances by the Black Eyed Peas, Eric Clapton and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra who had been flown in for the occasion, even the 3 cellos had seats of their own on the plane at a cost of more than £100,000. I almost wept to think of all the good one could do with that money and how anyone could justify spending it on a wedding.

I remembered back to my wedding day in London long ago when Syd had to forge the letter of consent because I was underage and my mother wasn't keen and wouldn't allow us to live together when we moved back to Ireland. In fact she sent a priest after us, a Jesuit who was in the middle of a nervous breakdown, but that's another story.

After forging the letter, I bought a ring in Woolworths and the day was set. We asked someone in the house where we lived to be best man. This turned out to be Geoff Stephens who turned up in Baltimore, twenty years later out of the blue. But that's another story too.

We went to the pub after the wedding and bought Geoff a drink. Syd and myself shared half a bitter between us as we were stony broke after all the 'expense'. My only regret was that we didn't have a camera to take a picture of the Dunne – Cheatle wedding which cost a fabulous four pounds ten.

Christmas à la Provence Nuala Mahon

We have lived outside Ireland for so long now, that for the festive season I can only remember Christmases from my childhood in Ireland. These were shrouded in magic and steeped in tradition. We were all hauled out of bed for first mass at 6 am. Before leaving, my father slipped into the "front room" to switch on the Christmas tree lights. The younger members of the family were not allowed to see the tree until we had finished breakfast. After Mass my father lit, with great difficulty, the fire in the kitchen, a task normally carried out with complete efficiency by my mother! We were then permitted to drag the kitchen table over in front of the fire for our "fry". My brothers, both older than me, ate as slowly as possible to delay my seeing what Santa had left under the tree. These Christmases were filled with happiness.

When we married we left Ireland immediately and returned only for a brief period when the children were born, Hence we have adopted a little of each of the traditions we have experienced in many places, over the years.



Here in Provence Christmas begins officially on December 4th, the feast of St Barbe. Like all well organized villages it actually started here on 1st December with fireworks! We are a village of about 2,500 souls but we really can make spectacular illuminations. These take place around our millpond just outside the walls of the ancient village. Everyone joins a parade from the church to the millpond. Houses, en route, are lit by night-lights provided by the local town council. School children make little boats, with sails, that they float, in long chains. Each little homemade creation supports a night-light. The adults cheer on the efforts of the children, warmed by mulled wine. The lights of the Christmas tree are switched on and when the light fades from the sky the fireworks start. It is a really spectacular event. Everyone comes out to watch.

Each weekend before Christmas we have a display of cribs in the streets, made by the people of the village and by the shopkeepers. A winner is selected from the entries but I feel that winning is not so important; participating is what it is all about. Cribs here are more local scenes than

representations of the nativity. The little figurines, called 'santons' often represent local people such as the butcher, the baker or the grocer. (Above : crib made in old leather hat box) Santons were first made in Marseilles in 1803 and were quickly adopted into Provençal traditions.

Many villages hold a "Marché de Noel". Our neighbouring village holds theirs on Sunday next. The day starts with a sung mass in the now famous village church where "Jeanne de Florette" was filmed. Then the street market is officially opened. This consists of small stands of local produce and crafts. In the afternoon there is a living crib. I am not sure what this involves as it will be the first time we have seen this. More choir singing follows. Throughout the day we will be well supplied with mulled wine. I hasten to add this village is within walking distance of our own.

Christmas here is spread over the 24th and the 25th of December. The table is laid with three tablecloths and these are removed one by one on each of the days over Christmas. On the 24th before attending midnight mass the "gros souper" or big supper, is eaten. This usually consists of several dishes of fish and vegetables. When I ask my friends to describe what they see as the traditional supper for Christmas Eve I get as many different answers as questions I ask. The one constant is that everyone is completely devoted to providing their extended families, which all assemble for the feast, with as much food as can possibly be fitted on a table. After mass the traditional 'thirteen desserts' follow. Seeing my shock at the thought of thirteen desserts they assured me that only a small quantity of each is taken. The desserts are then left on a side table and family and friends help themselves over the days of Christmas. These desserts consist mostly of dried fruit and nuts like figs, raisins, apricots, hazel and walnuts, mandarins, nougat, quince apples and several other treats are added. Something called "a pump" cake is another specialty. Try as I might I could not establish if this was a cake, a brioche or a biscuit...

On Christmas day children open their presents left under the tree for them by Pere Noel. The family then relaxes together and eats modestly, much as we do on the day after Christmas. The really big feast here is New Year's Eve.

A very Happy Christmas to everyone on Sherkin

Murphy's Pub & Islander's Rest

TABLE QUIZ

Thursday 29th December at 7.30pm
To raise funds for the Tidy Island Group
to buy some equipment, plants
and information boards
€20.00 per table.

Quizmaster: Capt. John



Murphy's Pub and Islander's Rest

Celebrate New Year's Eve on Sherkin Island with dinner in our restaurant, overlooking the harbour.

Contact us to book your table.

Complimentary glass of champagne with your meal.

Limited seating in the restaurant.



Special menu on the night.

info@islandersrest.ie or phone 028-20116.

Granny's Song Norman King

These are the words of a Christmas song my granny sang to me around 1942-1943. I have no idea who wrote it so it must be Anon.

Among the hills of Iceland, cut off by frost and snow,
There lives a jolly fellow whom all are glad to know.
The children flock around him and this is why, because
He loves all the children and they all love Santa Claus.

Jingle jingle jingle, jing jing jing
Oh the pretty things to us he'd bring.
Santa Claus is coming, surely coming,
Hear his sleigh bells ring ting a ling.

Have a happy Christmas everybody and as for the new year here's a bit of advice :
"Life is not about weathering the storm, it's about learning to dance in the rain" (Karen Drinkwater).
Xxx

The Origin of Words Darragh Taaffe

Free Reign-

This is a spelling error which has led to a misunderstanding, though the meaning remains the same fundamentally. Many people thought that a free reign meant a 'royal' power to do anything. The correct phrase is a "free rein" and it comes from the days of before cars when horses were the main source of transport. When navigating a steep or winding path one would relax the reins so that the horse could pick the softest path as he was more likely to do a better job than the rider.

That's the "Acid Test"-

Meaning a demanding, ultimate challenge on measure of quality or capability. It is from very old times. Nitric acid was used to determine the purity or presence of gold, the currency before coinage. Gold will

not dissolve in nitric acid whereas less costly silver and base metals do – hence the acid test.

Battle of the bulge-

Meaning to try and diet or lose weight against the odds. Originated from a battle during World Word II which was called the Battle of the Bulge. The Germans broke through the allied lines into Belgium, in a battle the allies were never going to win and the Germans breached the allied lines at Bulge. Thereafter the battle of the Bulge somehow became associated with weight or middle age spread, a battle that one is never going to win.

Pipe Dream-

Meaning an unrealistic hope. Originates from the “dreams” resulting from opium pipe-smoking hallucinations.

To Eat Humble Pie-

Meaning to be humble in apologising for something. Umble is an old English word for offal- the bits of animals never eaten. It was a pie usually eaten by the poor as the finer cuts were left for the “well to do”. Umble became humble over the years.

I’ll Take a Rain Check-

Meaning ‘I won’t do it now but I’ll do it later’. A rain check was offered to people who had tickets to a baseball game that was called off due to rain. They were offered a rain check as a ticket for a game at a later date to make up for the missed game.



Sherkin Library News Josephine Jefferies

Statistics for November

Books borrowed	191
Memberships new or renewed	4
Internet sessions used	20

Opening Hours

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

West Cork Art News

Each Library receives an email from the West Cork Art News and I have always thought it’s a shame you all don’t get to see it. It contains a weekly listing of events going on locally that involve literature, music, theatre, visual arts, films, festivals, dance, courses/workshops, opportunities and general information. If you have the internet you can pick up the news on www.corkcoco.ie or if you would like me to forward the weekly info on to you please drop by or phone on 028 20009 during library hours and give me your email address I would be happy to do so.

Garda News

As part of the service at Garda Community Relations and Community Policing, the Garda are producing a quarterly newsletter, Community Times, to keep our communities informed of news, initiatives, events and important developments happening in the areas of Community Policing and crime prevention. The December 2011 edition is the first to appear on the Garda website. It can be viewed in both Irish and English at the following link <http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=8415>

Britannica Christmas Spotlight for Children

Many Primary School children will be learning about Christmas, which takes place on 25th December. We’re hoping that children will find our latest Christmas Spotlight to be of great help with homework

and school projects. Read the in-depth article featuring full details of the Christmas holiday, which is a time when people buy presents for one another, decorate Christmas trees and sing Christmas carols, in celebration of the birth of Jesus. This is also the time when the legendary figure of Santa Claus is said to visit children around the world to deliver them presents.

In the *Activity Centre* there are the usual puzzles and games including: Word search, Crossword, a Quiz and also a step-by-step instruction on how to make an origami Christmas tree in 3D, plus much more to entertain them. <http://spotlight.britannica.co.uk/Christmas>

Author's Letter

I wrote to children's author Terry Deary this past Tuesday to thank him for writing such fabulous books for kids, in particular the *Horrible Histories*, which are avidly read by our Sherkin children and are always flying off the shelves. He wrote back very quickly, the next day in fact. Here is his answer for everyone to enjoy.

Hello Josephine,
How enormously kind of you to take the time to write and so flattering too. I get many messages from fans (young and old) but for a professional to pass so complimentary a judgement is rare and special.

The Scots made such a fuss about my history of Scotland (long story) but the Irish have always been as generous as you. That means more to me, perhaps, because my ancestors are Irish (Deary from Derry/Donegal) and I always say my story-telling gene came from my Celtic blood. I always wanted 'Horrible Histories Ireland' to do the country proud. As with Scotland and Wales books, it's not the people who were 'horrible' but the things that were done to the people.

I've retired from children's books, now that the industry is going down as surely as the Titanic, but it is good to know my work made an impact while it was around.

Very best wishes to you and your readers for Christmas and 2012.

Terry Deary

And I second that.....Happy Christmas Everyone!

Murphy's Pub and Islander's Rest

invites you for a

Christmas Tipple and Nibble

on Friday 23rd December at 7.00pm.



We would like to wish all our customers a Happy
Christmas and prosperous New Year.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE



at St. Mona's Church
Sherkin Island

Sunday 18th December 2011
at 3.30pm

ALL WELCOME

Donations welcome in aid of St Vincent de Paul

Ferries leaving Baltimore at 12.00 noon & 2.00 pm. Return ferry leaving Sherkin at 5.45 pm.

Rainfall for November 2011

The rainfall recorded at Sherkin Island Marine Station for November 2011 was 130.1mm, of which 107.5mm fell on 9 days:

1st	8.9mm
10th	8.7mm
16th	8.6mm
17th	13.8mm
18th	19.3mm
21st	12.1mm
24th	6.8mm
28th	18.5mm
30th	10.8mm

November 2009, with 306.6mm was the wettest November since 1972. The driest November was 2004, with 33.8mm.

Jokes from the kids!!

What do monkeys sing at Christmas ?
Jungle bells Jungle bells

Why are Christmas trees like bad knitters ?
They both drop their needles

What did the bald man say when he got a comb for Christmas?
Thanks I'll never part with it.

Why is a burning candle like being thirsty?
Because a little water ends both of them!

What do you give a train driver for Christmas?
Platform shoes.

What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas tree?
Pine-apple.

How long does it take to burn a candle down?
About a wick.

I can lift a reindeer with one hand.
I bet you can't
Well you find me a reindeer with one hand and I'll lift it.

How many legs does a reindeer have?
Six , forelegs at the front and two at the back.

Whats the difference between a biscuit and a reindeer?
You can'y dunk a reindeer in your tea!

When should you feed reindeer milk to a baby?
When it's a baby reindeer!?

New Years Eve
 @
The Jolly Roger
"Crazy hat" party!
Buffet - Jean Paul Style

Book now to avoid disappointment

THE JOLLY ROGER WILL BE OPEN EVERYDAY OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD

Green Pages

Have you something you no longer want, something you would be happy to give away FREE to a new home, rather than throw it away? Why not advertise it here? If you are interested in the item(s), contact the person who is offering it directly.

Description	Photo	Contact
2 Jigsaw puzzles. 1000 pieces 28" x 20" 'The Ball on Shipboard' by Tissot and 1500 pieces 33" x 23" Celestial chart.		Sue 028 20415
Selection of stylish ladies and gents outerwear, including rain gear, jackets, coats, umbrellas, hats etc		Darragh Taaffe at Jolly Roger 086 2566616

Ideas of things you might want to give away: Old furniture, a half bag of cement, plant seedlings, flower pots, plates, envelopes - the list is endless! A photograph is not necessary, but might be helpful. Send details of the items directly to the newsletter.

Baltimore Breakwater Development – Public Consultation

On Tuesday evening, December 6th last, there was a public meeting held in the Fr. Cashman Community Hall, Baltimore, to discuss the development of a breakwater off Baltimore Pier. It was attended by up to 50 members of the public, many with different interests in relation to the pier e.g. fishing, ferries, leisure craft, marine tourism and the islands. The meeting was organised by Baltimore and Skibbereen Harbour Board and presented by representatives of Cronin Miller Consulting Engineers, who had been asked to undertake the project.

The meeting was informed that the ongoing work on the piers would be in vain without a breakwater to protect the piers into the future, as well as provide shelter for boats in the pier area all year round. The main reason for the meeting was to get feedback from the public as part of the planning process. They hope to go for planning permission for the project early in the new year, and if this is successful, they hope to begin work in the second half of 2012.

SIDS News

To all members,

I wish to inform you of changes to the Management Committee of SIDS (Sherkin Island Development Society) following a meeting of the membership of SIDS, at the planned 2010 AGM of SIDS on Dec 4th 2011. (Unfortunately the scheduled AGM could not be concluded on Dec 4th 2011 due to the incompleteness of the Audited accounts for 2010.).

The outgoing Management Committee consisted of Dan Reilly, Karen Mould, Feargal O'Connor and Cliona Walsh.

The following outgoing members did not seek re-election to the new Management Committee:

Dan Reilly,
Karen Mould,
Cliona Walsh.

The new Interim Management Committee comprises of:

Joe Aston (Chairman),
Robbie Murphy (Secretary),
Barry Mahon (Treasurer),
Michael Collins (Vice Chairman),
Maureen O'Neill (Assistant Treasurer),
Anthony O'Reilly,
Feargal O'Connor,
Mark O'Neill,
Martin O'Driscoll.

We would be grateful if all future correspondence to SIDS can be directed to the Chairman (Joe Aston) or the Secretary (Robbie Murphy) at sidssecretary@gmail.com unless otherwise stated. It is hoped to have a reconvened 2010 AGM early in the New Year once the 2010 Audit accounts are complete.

SIDS Membership renewal form:

If you wish to renew your annual membership please sign and return the renewal of membership form, which members received with the agenda for the recent AGM of Dec 4th 2011. Forms should be returned to the SIDS secretary, Robbie Murphy, with the required €5 (cheques made payable to Sherkin Island Development Society) on or before 4th March 2012 otherwise your membership will unfortunately be terminated.

The form also contains a questionnaire regarding where and how the Sherkin Newsletter and other information from SIDS should be sent to each member. If you need a new form they are available from the secretary.

Robbie Murphy, Secretary, Sherkin Island Development Society, Sherkin Island.

**Sherkin Island Development Society – SIDS
Monitoring Committee Report for the 2010 reporting period.**

Background

For the year 2010 the following were the members of the Monitoring Committee –
Maureen O’Neill
Sean Kelly
Barry Mahon

The committee’s role, as agreed at the EGM of June 2007, is to “ensure the working of the Committee, officers and staff members are fully compliant with the rules and procedures of the Society”

2010

It is with regret that the Committee is unable to compile a report for 2010, in accordance with the requirements of the EGM of June 2007.

This is especially regrettable because 2010 was the year in which SIDS and the residents of Sherkin Island were honoured to receive a visit from the then President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, who presented the Diplomas to the successful candidates of the BA in Visual Arts of the Dublin Institute of Technology which is run on Sherkin. SIDS has been the promoter and supporter of the course since its inception and a very significant effort has been provided by the SIDS Committee and the Course Management in ensuring its success.

The Monitoring Committee has been in contact with the Chairman of SIDS since mid-2011 in order to carry out its functions. However, as of 1 December 2011, the Monitoring Committee has not received the minutes of SIDS Committee meetings nor the Audited Accounts of SIDS. These are specifically mentioned in the terms of reference of the Monitoring Committee as required information in order to fulfil its functions.

In our previous reports on 2008 and 2009 we have pointed to a number of options that the SIDS committee might consider to improve the management of SIDS and reduce the administration load. Unfortunately it seems that these suggestions do not appear to have been acted upon, in particular the suggestion that the Auditor be asked to provide day to day support for the treasurer in preparing the financial reports.

In the opinion of the Monitoring Committee, the AGM for 2010, on December 4 2011, will not be in a position to approve the accounts for 2010, even if they are presented at the meeting. The Members present at the AGM may approve the accounts without sight of them or analysis, but the Monitoring Committee would suggest this should not happen.

Local Community Development Plan for Sherkin Island 2012

On Saturday December 10th a meeting, organised by Comhar na nOileán Teo, was held in the Community Hall on Sherkin Island and attended by 22 people. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Local Community Development Plan (LCDP) for Sherkin Island for 2012. The Facilitator for the meeting was Pádraig Ó Briain who has been contracted to Comhar na nOileán Teo to help with the drafting of the LCDP 2012 work-plan that will be submitted to Comhar na nOileán Teo, by December 19th 2011, as Sherkin's Plan. The one-year plan for 2012 is a necessary step in the process in order to receive funding and for the appointment of a Development Worker to Sherkin Island

SIDS Chair, Joe Aston, addressed the meeting by reminding everyone that since the last time an Island Development Plan was discussed, the country had lost its economic sovereignty, and so we do not want to dream up grandiose plans to spend another few of the IMF’s euros, in ways that will only leave our children deeper in debt. We need practical, realistic projects that we would be happy to invest in ourselves, and which will enable us to grow a healthy and sustainable community here on Sherkin.

Those present at the meeting suggested many proposals for the LCDP, under such headings as Infrastructure, Education, Health, Tourism, Business opportunities and Renewable Resources.

Comhar na nOileán Teo is the newly formed (in 2008/2009) LEADER/Partnership Company for the inhabited offshore islands of Ireland. It has a charitable status and the Board is totally voluntary in nature and is responsible for ensuring the co-ordination and strategic direction of the company. It takes over responsibility for LEADER/R.S.S. and other programme delivery from Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann. Comhar na nOileán Teo have five full time staff who run the Rural Social Scheme, Leader, Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) and Walks programme on the islands. Website address: <http://www.oileain.ie/cot> /* *

Dates for your Diary

December

- Fri 16th Darts for a turkey and bottle of wine at the Jolly Roger 9pm
- Sat 17th-24th The Glebe Christmas Emporium for all your gift shopping, Baltimore, 12-6pm
- Sun 18th Christmas Carol Concert at St. Mona’s church at 3.30pm, in aid of St. Vincent de Paul
- Tues 20th School Christmas play, “A Christmas Carol” at 1pm in the school, plus a SPECIAL VISITOR!! All Welcome!!
- Fri 23rd Tipples and Nibbles in Islander’s Rest at 7pm
- Fri 23rd Darts for a turkey and bottle of wine at the Jolly Roger at 9pm
- Sun 25th Christmas Day Mass at 9am at St. Mona’s church
- Thurs 29th Table Quiz in aid of Sherkin Tidy Island group at the Islander’s Rest at 7.30pm

January

- TBC Darts game against De Barra’s of Clonakilty

We wish everybody a happy and peaceful Christmas and a bright New Year!!

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