

# SHERKIN NEWSLETTER

Sept 2011 - Issue 42

Hurricanes and DIT have returned to Sherkin so it must be September! The Doomers are all predicting a particularly hard winter ahead and this will be felt by at least those in receipt of certain pensions as the winter fuel allowance has been cut. In the meantime there is a splendid splash of red to be admired at the bottom of the Church Hill where the hawthorn berries are exceptionally huge this year, both in number and size.

The school yard is buzzing again with the addition of three new lads from Baltimore who we hope will settle in quickly and enjoy their time here.

Best wishes also go to Dairine of the Jolly Roger and Finbarr of the Islanders Rest, who both suffered accidents recently. We wish them both a full and speedy recovery and look forward to their next visits to Sherkin.

And we extend a warm island welcome to the newly ordained Fr. Anthony Buckley of Kilmichael, who has joined the parishes of Skibbereen and Rath and the Islands, and wish Fr. Donal Cotter well in his new parish of Bantry.

But sadly the inevitable phone call came last week from La Gomera with the news that George Packard had died. George was always most highly encouraging of creativity, no matter how small the spark of talent or whether it lay in music, painting, culinary arts or literature. For this he will be especially missed. Kordula has sent this newsletter two beautiful pieces to mark George's passing and we commend her for this and send condolences to her, to George's family in USA and to his friends everywhere.

## Sherkin First Responders Group

Urgently needs **ONE** more volunteer for the rota to answer the phone **ONLY**.

**NO** CPR or use of defibrillator required.

Could this person be **YOU**?

You will not be asked for a life time commitment, 6 months or a year would be most appreciated.

For information please call either Jackie 087 6811508  
or Sue 086 2353470

This newsletter is produced by Karen Mould and Sue Cahalane, and published by SIDS. We welcome articles and photographs of news and of general interest, and so do please contact us with information about forthcoming events. Articles can be sent by email to [sherkinnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sherkinnewsletter@gmail.com), or delivered by hand, and any enquiries to 087 7715862. We look forward to hearing from you! **Next deadline 10<sup>th</sup> October**

## **SILENCE PLEASE ...**

On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011, Sherkin Island was once again treated to the delight that is Pat Kinevane. His one-man play "Silent", straight from the Edinburgh Festival where it won a Fringe First, was performed in the community centre.

"Silent", through its dramatic interpretation is the story of suicide, homelessness, homosexuality, depression and other dark subjects but in Kinevane's hands (or body) it is treated with the gravitas it deserves while having enough humour, physicality and the grace of silent movies to keep even the most reluctant theatre-goer amused.

I was there with my New York City teenage nephews who almost fell out of their seats with laughter when Kinevane opened the drama with train station announcements spattered with Cork-accented profanities and posh public address voices.

Last year's performance "Forgotten" centred on four individuals in old folks homes who were certainly forgotten. This year's "Silent" touched on equally invisible souls whom society steps over every evening as we trip gaily home from work while those without a home bed down on shop doorsteps. Kinevane goes from infectious laughter to heart-wrenching tears in sixty seconds and we're with him all the way.

I will never be able to look at an "Actimel" ad again without thinking of his drinking the yogurt on stage, holding us in the suspense of his swallow and releasing the tension by singing the inane commercial "Uh ... Danone". I hope Danone are paying him well!

The packed hall in Sherkin gave "Silent" a standing ovation. For islanders, holiday-makers or week-enders the West Cork Fit-Up travelling theatre adds another dimension to the lovely island. Every Friday in August a different play is performed in the community centre.

"Silent" continues its travels around West Cork and further. Catch it if you can and be prepared to be genuinely moved and to laugh at the same time. A little tip : if you're self-conscious about stating your name in public, don't sit in the front row! And remember ... "if anyone asks, I'm not here".

Reviewed by Nollaig Rowan-Downey.

SILENT from Fishamble Theatre Co. was part of the West Cork Fit Up Theatre Festival 2011.

Written and performed by Pat Kinevane.

Directed by Jim Culletin.

Produced by Marketa Dowling.

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## **Letter from La Gomera**

When I missed the last deadline for the Sherkin Newsletter I was confident that for the next one we would have settled in and I would have something nice to write about. Little did I know then that I would be writing about the last days of George. He was so much looking forward to live here on La Gomera where he improved so much during our winter visit and where we hoped for him to get even better once the move was over and we could relax into our new life into a less challenging environment than Sherkin. In June he came to Sherkin for a last time to bring his affairs in order, to say good bye to house and contents and friends and neighbours. What was intended to be preparing for a new less encumbered life turned out to be a preparation for his death. He didn't take anything with him except a comfortable mattress and his laptop. All the rest in the van was my painting material and paintings that were to ensure that we could open a gallery here where he would sit and chat to the visitors - local and tourists - just as he had done on Sherkin.

Sadly his body failed him, first only a little and much hope was still alive, but gradually and in the end very rapidly and we knew this might be the end. There was pain - a lot - physical and emotional - but his parting was peaceful and the cremation was on the spot and without fuss, just as he had left in his instructions.

As I write this I am riding on the ferry back from Tenerife to La Gomera with the urn containing his ashes next to me. I will spread most of them in the Atlantic, confident that they will arrive in Sherkin waters and also along the coast of Maine, the cherished place of his childhood. A handful I will keep to put into the earth of a palm tree I had bought for us and another handful I will put into a beautiful clay pot in a special place in the gallery so that he can still be part of it while I work and when I exhibit.

Those of you who believe different from us that a body should be interred whole to be ready for resurrection please don't be offended. We all try to do our best to believe and to treat our loved ones with dignity and respect in a way that makes it possible for us to live without them. Because for us who are left behind the road is still on this earth and that is where we live and cope until the time for our own passage into a different realm arrives.

Fond greetings to you all and thanks for sending us so much support through the ether. I could feel it in the room. There was a lot of love and appreciation.

Kordula



George at home on one of his last days in Sherkin

The following letter arrived to Kordula from an ex student of George as she was travelling to George's cremation, and she asked that it be included in this newsletter as a fitting tribute.

I just learned of George's passing. The world has lost an extraordinary being. I am one of the many students he touched at PDS. (I'm sure you will be hearing from many of us in the coming days.) Rick Ross and I spent countless hours with him, both at school as well as at his home. I'm sure our parents thought we had joined a cult George was leading.

George had a unique gift. He was an artist with the ability to awaken and teach students who, at the beginning of the semester, had virtually no interest whatsoever in Joseph Conrad or Ernest Hemingway or how to communicate effectively. He could make beautiful music rise from stiff pages and static ink. But he was much more than an academic instructor: he taught us how to bathe in the vibrancy of life.

To me, teaching is a high art form and George was a master at it. He knew how to open your mind and captivate your heart.

Over the years I have done some adjunct teaching at several universities. George has been my guardian angel guiding and helping me connect with my students. He'd be pleased to know that some of the lessons he taught have been passed on to others.

Shortly after George came to PDS, I interviewed him for the school newspaper. After he read my article, he made a point of telling me how surprised he was by the objectivity and accuracy of the piece. For some reason that comment has stayed with me. It constantly reinforces my drive to find truth in everything I do.

Because I spent so much time with him, I came to know George in a much broader sense than a high school teacher. I was exposed to both his strengths and his weaknesses. However, I always accepted him for who he was. Likewise, he never judged me. He accepted me for who I was. He was more than a teacher—he was a true friend. And, I might add, a friend who never let me down.

Although he has left the body, many if not most of us who came in contact with him carry some of his spirit and life force he so willingly shared. So, like other great beings, he lives on through the lives of others.

I am sorry I have not met you and perhaps there will be an opportunity some day. I do know this, if you were married to George, there is something special about you. Please accept my thoughts and prayers. If there is anything I can do, don't hesitate to contact me. It would be an honour to contribute in some way.

May peace be with you.

Jerry Pitt  
Indianapolis, USA

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### **Nuacht S N Inis Arcáin**

The new school year has begun, and we are all delighted to be back together again. Legs have stretched and maturity descended upon our little group over the holidays but they are still our wonderful classes of whom we are so proud.

To everyone's delight we have been joined by three new children and a new staff member. We would like to welcome the Haley family to S N Inis Arcáin and wish them every success in the years to come, along with Ms Downey, who has joined our staff as learning support teacher and will be in the school every Wednesday.

John Mc Sweeney and Martin Mc Carthy were busy over the summer painting and renovating the school buildings. It is now bright and ready for the new school year (and winter storms). Thank you lads for a job well done.

Barry Mahon was again called on to help continue the bird box camera project. Barry retrieved last year's nest for examination and scrutiny by the children, he has repositioned the camera for a better view of the box and all is ready for the Spring. Let's hope the new inhabitants will steer clear of the camera and allow us a good view in 2012. Thank you Barry.

Slán George.

One evening during my first few weeks, possibly my first week, teaching on Sherkin, I became acquainted with the tall American whom I thought resembled John Wayne. Back in those days I lived on the mainland and the only ferry available to me to leave the island was the 5.30 ferry. So as I sat at the kitchen table which was my desk I heard a gentle knock and the door slowly opened to reveal George Packard. He told me that he had come to welcome me to the island on behalf of the whole island community.

Over the years George continued to help me become part of the Sherkin Community. He taught Jan Ryan and me piano in the school for years. Many a laugh was had and much frustration was

experienced, by all three of us, when bum notes were hit. During one of George and Kordula's dinner parties, he introduced me to grilled mussels which are a firm favourite of mine, and hot chilli which made my lips burn and my eyes and nose water so much I thought I was on fire.

I have many memories of George, but the ones which come to mind today are George's constant battle to put S N Inis Arcáin on a stable footing. During recent years, George worked on a sub-committee to find families and houses to support the school and maybe it was his last work on behalf of the community.

On behalf of S N Inis Arcain I want to extend our sincere sympathies to Kodula and Georges family and thank you George for being you.

Cáit

<p><b>The Islands Craft Shop</b> <b>Baltimore</b></p> <p>Open until the first weekend of October 7 days, 10 – 5pm</p> <p>For locally made fine crafts and unique gifts, including jewellery, knitwear, pottery, silk, leather, toys, cards and books etc.</p> <p>Enquiries to 028 20022 / 20347</p>
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**Tidy Towns 2011 – 288 points, same as last year, no change - not good enough**

	<b>Marks Available</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	40	38
The Built Environment	50	36	36
Landscaping	50	34	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Litter Control	50	40	41
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Tidiness	30	21	22
Residential Areas	40	28	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35	35
General Impression	10	8	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>

So, no change, frustrating. We made an effort, obviously not good enough.  
Extracts - with commentary

*"The beaches are an incredible asset but these aren't even mentioned on your map or supporting information."*

We sent a detailed draft of a development plan, with maps - in previous years we had the beaches..... must have been a new adjudicator. There are signs for the beaches at the cross and at the turn for the beaches

*"There is no sign telling the visitor how to get to the bigger of the beaches from the road. The only hint is a gap in the walls and a please don't litter sign. This path can be done by foot and mountain bike but access for others should be considered without spoiling the area."*

Not sure which beach, maybe Trabawn, if so it is true.....

*"You are referred to the remarks of last year's adjudicator with regard to interpretation. This is an excellent island for walking and could really do with some interpretation."*

*"The south of the island has real potential as a walking route. Could a loop be made here?. It would be ideal and the views across to Chleire are fantastic."*

Quite, where are the walk signs.....?? Interpretation signage (we assume this means explanations/descriptions) is planned, but we need to decide on where and what form of signs, we don't want 'tourist' type stuff, but appropriate styles and locations, preferably not requiring maintenance. BTW, we assume the adjudicator arrived after the map had been put up on the pier, and the sign at the school.

*"Look out for Gunnera infestation. Is there a plan for non-native invasive species?"*

Take note..... if you aren't sure what is invasive ask one of the many experts who live here. As to non-native - what exactly is "native" - technically the fuschia is not native to Ireland..... We assume it means pond weed and other new invasive stuff.

*"Newly painted and roofed houses were seen in a number of areas. Gardening work was on-going on day of visit (being a lovely sunny day). Your householders are to be congratulated for this."*

Take a bow.....you see, it works.....many many thanks to those who contributed by cleaning around your residence.

### **The overall conclusion of the adjudicator -**

*"This is a really pretty island with so many assets. It's great to see that the businesses here are looking well and that householders are taking great care of their properties. However, it is really felt that Sherkin is not taking advantage of what it has. For example: there was not one piece of historical information seen on day of visit, nor wildlife interpretation or a suggested walking route. Surely the amount of bemused visitors at the T-junction up from the pier should be a clue that work is needed on this?. Please do ask your local authority for assistance. The new plans should help."*

Personally I don't like the word "pretty" The objective is to make Sherkin a nice place to live, we try to make our island a nice place to visit, not to prettify it. We thought the Tidy Towns was trying to get away from the hanging basket obsession. Apart from that we would agree with the opinion. We need to help our visitors, we will make that the 2012 priority.

**Meanwhile, many many thanks to all who came out to help and who looked after various parts of the island, we still have to become, again, the tidiest island, that is the objective. Bere Island has lots of historical information signs, could we have proposals for where we might start on Sherkin?**

Not sure what, specifically, we might ask the local authority to do in this respect.  
The report is online at - [http://www.tidytowns.ie/u\\_reports/2011/2011%20County%20Cork\\_West%20Sherkin%20Island%20692.pdf](http://www.tidytowns.ie/u_reports/2011/2011%20County%20Cork_West%20Sherkin%20Island%20692.pdf)

Barry Mahon, September 2011

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## Sherkin Library News

Josephine Jefferies

### Statistics for August

Books borrowed or renewed	222
Memberships new or renewed	7
Internet sessions used	48

### Opening Times

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

### Back to School

It was great to see the whole school rock up to the Library for their first visit since starting back to school this September. What a pleasure to see so many of them all happy and cheerful to be in their own Library again en masse. I look forward to seeing a lot more of them as they empty the Library shelves. Remember kids if the book you want is not on the shelves we can always order it for you. Happy Reading!

The following excerpts are from the Artnews email sent to libraries every month.

### [Workshops and Retreats at Anam Cara Writers' and Artists' Retreat](#)

Anam Cara Writer's and Artist's Retreat is located just outside the colourful village of Eyeries on the Beara Peninsula in West Co. Cork. Anam Cara is a tranquil spot structured to provide support and sanctuary for people working in the creative arts and offers private and common working rooms as well as five acres of walking paths, thirty-four nooks and crannies, a river cascades and a river island, gardens, and a labyrinth meadow. Editorial consultation is also available. Courses include four writing workshop retreat weekend's year around the Celtic holidays of Samhain, Imbolc, Bealtaine, and Lughnasa. – booking and further information at [www.anamcararetreat.com](http://www.anamcararetreat.com) and [www.beara-writing-experience.com](http://www.beara-writing-experience.com).

### **Beamish Cork Folk Festival, Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September to Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

Cork hosts an international gathering of folk musicians including T with the Maggies, Paddy Keenan and Karan Casey, a special *Seamus Creagh Tribute* with Jackie Daly and Matt Cranitch, and many more and will include concerts, performances, workshops etc at Triskel Arts Centre, Spailpin Fanach and various venues throughout the city, including the Ceili Mor on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October and Ceiliuradh Sheain UI Riada at Cork City Library on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October - booking and further information at [www.corkfolkfestival.com](http://www.corkfolkfestival.com)

People's Republic of Cork

A comprehensive list of live music in Cork is available at [www.peoplesrepublicofcork.com/eventguide/](http://www.peoplesrepublicofcork.com/eventguide/)

### **Crawford Art Gallery Free Tours**

Crawford Art Gallery is now offering Free Tours on Saturdays, at 1.15pm – 2.15pm and 3.15pm – 4.15pm. Meeting place is by the gallery bookshop - further information from 021 4907862.

### **Looking at you Looking at me at Tom Barry's, Barrack Street**

Tom Barry's, Barrack Street hosts *Looking at You Looking at Me*, an exhibition of photography by Harry Moore, as part of Cork Artists' Collective Light Box Exhibition - further information from [harrymoore@gmail.com](mailto:harrymoore@gmail.com)

**Charta at The Winery, Clonakilty**

The Winery, Clonakilty is currently hosting *Charta*, an exhibition of works on paper by various artists including Aofie Desmond, Yvonne Woods and Shirley Fitzpatrick – further information from winerywall@gmail.com.

**New Art Works at Camden Fort, Crosshaven**

Five new artworks, commissioned for Camden Fort, Crosshaven, will have been unveiled as part of the redevelopment programme of the Fort Camden military installation overlooking the entrance to Cork Harbour.

Four visual artists, James L. Hayes, Julia Pallone, Julie Merriman, Monica Boyle and poet, Nell Regan were selected for commission, including James L Hayes’ dramatic installation *In Celebration of Two Non-Events*, Julie Merriman installation *For War Department Use*, Nell Regan (poet) and visual Artist Monica Boyle combined installation *Bound for Home* – show continues until Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September.

**Permanent Art Collection at the Nimbus Research Centre, Cork Institute of Technology**

The Nimbus Research Centre at the Cork Institute of Technology is now hosting the Permanent Art Collection, which is part of the estate of the late Charlie Hennessy – further information at [www.cit.ie](http://www.cit.ie).

**Rainfall for August 2011**

The rainfall for the month of August was 57.6mm, which fell over 16 days. 39.5mm fell on the following five days:

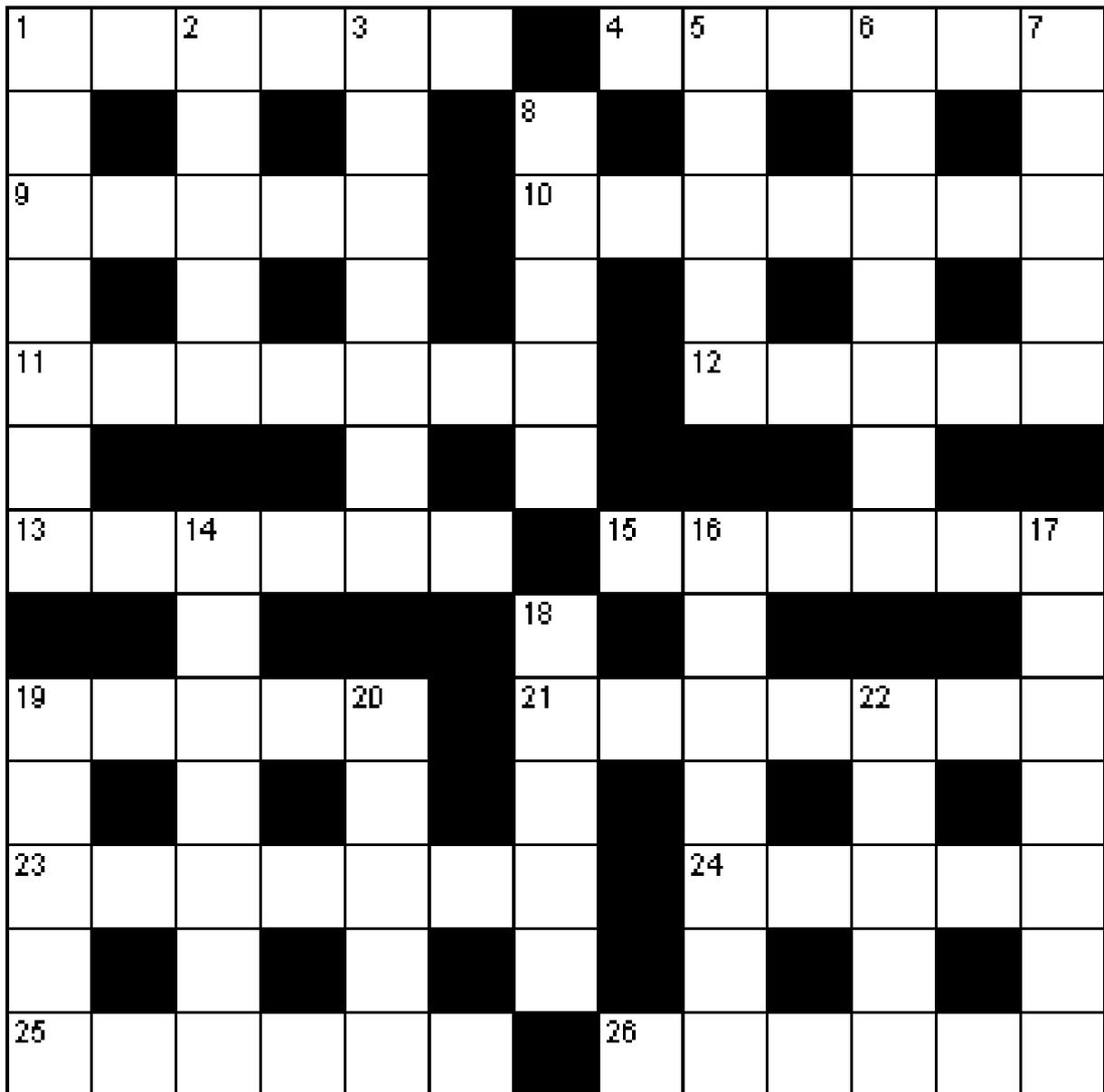
- 5<sup>th</sup> 9.5mm
- 10<sup>th</sup> 14.5mm
- 15<sup>th</sup> 6.8 mm
- 24<sup>th</sup> 4.2 mm
- 25<sup>th</sup> 4.5 mm

The wettest August was 240.5mm in 1986, and the driest was 12.8 mm in 1976.

	9					3	7	
		1		6	2		5	9
		8						6
	5	7			4			
			1		7			
			8			7	2	
9						4		
7	1		5	3		2		
	8	2					9	

1	5	9	7	4	8	3	6	2
2	6	4	9	5	3	1	8	7
7	3	8	2	1	6	5	9	4
5	4	3	1	2	9	8	7	6
8	2	1	6	7	5	4	3	9
9	7	6	8	3	4	2	1	5
4	1	7	3	6	2	9	5	8
6	9	5	4	8	1	7	2	3
3	8	2	5	9	7	6	4	1



**Across**

- 1. Counting device (6)
- 4. A forceful consequence (6)
- 9. Deport (5)
- 10. Relished (7)
- 11. Act of deliberate betrayal (7)
- 12. Movable staircases (5)
- 13. Easily handled or managed (6)
- 15. Lithe (6)
- 19. Device in a brass wind instrument (5)
- 21. Oval (7)
- 23. Slowly moving ice mass (7)
- 24. Large artery (5)
- 25. Throws out (6)
- 26. Sternutation (6)

**Down**

- 1. Turned away or aside (7)
- 2. Similar (5)
- 3. Kitchen implement (7)
- 5. Commissioned military officer (5)
- 6. Unfathomable (7)
- 7. Periodic rise and fall of sea level (5)
- 8. Deceive by mock action (5)
- 14. Assemble in proper sequence (7)
- 16. Scoundrel (7)
- 17. Promote (7)
- 18. Prolonged period of time (5)
- 19. Undefined (5)
- 20. Live (5)
- 22. Sum of money offered as a prize (5)

## Dates for your Diary

### Oct

Sat 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Baltimore Walky Talky Weekend. A series of guided walks around the village and islands accompanied by informed talks about the local history, folklore and wildlife.

Tues 11<sup>th</sup> Proposed first choir meeting of the season at 8pm Islanders Rest. Everyone welcome, old and new members, the more the merrier. No auditions!! For further information call Susan 028 20491.

Each letter in this puzzle is represented by a number 1-26.  
 Can you crack the code and solve the crossword? Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Three letters are already in place to get you started.

14	2	6	8	7		9	21	6	18	21		13	
												T	
5				21		2		2		17		17	
9	11	2	23	19	21	13		3	2	23	21	11	
17		11		5		17		20		10		2	
15	21	17	23	19		18	2	4	U	6	13	21	9
8		21				21		17				21	
	4	20	4	11	25		20	13	5	11	22		
5				21		1				2		21	
26	11	4	20	24	4	21		12	4	22	25	8	
13		19		4		19		5		17		21	
		N											
2	6	17	26	17		17	19	16	3	21	6	6	
17		5		21		13		21				21	
19		19	8	22	25	10		11	5	26	5	13	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			U									T
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
					N							