

Edition 43 February 2018

Death of Dolores O’Riordan

Music fans all over the world were shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden death of singer, songwriter and Cranberries band member, Dolores O’Riordan. She was found dead in a London hotel where she was staying while recording in London. She was only 46.

Dolores was born in 1971 in Ballybricken in Co. Limerick the youngest of seven children. She was singing and writing her own songs from the age of 12. She became lead singer with rock band the Cranberries when she was only 19. A gifted songwriter she wrote many of the band’s top selling hits including “Zombie” and “Linger”. She had an unusual high pitched, haunting voice which gave the band their own unique sound. At the height of their success in the 1990’s, the band became popular all over the world especially in the United States where many bands find it difficult to have success. They made seven albums and sold more than 40 million albums world-wide.

In the last few years, due to depression and other health problems Dolores had stopped touring and singing in public and the band had split up. Her marriage to her husband of 20 years, Don Burton also ended. However, the band had started recording again recently and were planning to go on tour in the coming months.



Although she travelled all over the world, Dolores remained a Limerick girl at heart and was a regular visitor to the county where her mother and family still live. Local people were extremely proud of her success. It was only fitting then that her funeral was held in Limerick where thousands queued to pay their respects and say goodbye to a great talent.

Dolores was mother to three children, Taylor (20), Molly (17) and Dakota (12). May she rest in peace.

Mary Lou to Lead Sinn Féin

Later this week party leader and president of Sinn Féin political party, Gerry Adams, will step down after 34 years at the helm.

Dublin TD Mary Lou McDonald will take over the position and will be the first woman ever to lead the party. The post of vice president will also be held by a woman, Michelle O’Neill, who became leader of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland, following the death of Martin McGuinness last year.

Gerry Adams has been involved in affairs in Northern Ireland since the 1960’s and was involved in the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement. He was an MP up until 2011 when he was elected to the Dáil as a TD for Louth. Under his leadership Sinn Féin’s following has increased to make it the third most popular party in the country.



Dublin woman, Mary Lou has been a TD for Dublin central since 2011. She was a member of the European

Parliament before this. She said she is proud to accept leadership of the party and is looking forward to the challenges ahead.

Michael Lyster to retire

In RTE, Michael Lyster, host of the popular TV sports show The Sunday Game, has also announced that this will be his last year. The very popular Galway man also retires after 34 years as presenter of the GAA sports show.



Here also a woman is to take over the role for the first time ever. Joanne Cantwell, a former Dublin footballer and sports reporter on TV and radio for the last 11 years will take over at the end of 2018.



Edition 44 March 2018

Luck of the Irish

On Saint Patrick's Day people in almost every city in the world will celebrate the Irish by attending parades and wearing green on the day. For a small country, Ireland and its people have over the years made their mark in all corners of the world. In fact, American President Donald Trump has made the month of March "Irish American Heritage Month", to celebrate the huge role played by Irish men and women in America over hundreds of years. From politics and sport to music and film Irish people have always taken part at the highest levels. So, it comes as no surprise that today we have many young Irish people who are making a name for themselves on the world stage.

31-year-old boxer, Katie Taylor from Bray in Wicklow is taking the boxing world by storm. Boxing since she was 12 she is now said to be the most successful boxer ever in the history of Women's boxing. She holds five World



Championship Gold medals and in 2012 she won a gold medal, when women's boxing was for the first time included as an Olympic sport.

Last year Katie took the big step of becoming a professional boxer

and in October won her first World Title. She went on to defend her title in December beating the American champion. She is now the Women's Lightweight Champion of the World and is only the second woman ever to hold a boxing world title. Her last fight is said to have earned her a 6-figure sum.

However now she has become the person everyone wants to beat. So, in April this year she will once again defend her World title. It will be a night to look forward to for boxing fans all over the world but especially for her thousands of fans here in Ireland who have admired Katie and watched her career over the years. We wish her lots of luck.

Carlow girl and actor Saoirse Ronan at aged 23, has already had more success than most actors will ever have. She has starred in 5 successful films for which she has a Golden Globes award and 2 Oscar nominations.

Saoirse's parents who are both from Dublin, emigrated to New York in the 1980's where her father worked as a builder and a barman before becoming an actor. Her mother worked as a nanny. Saoirse was born there but when she was



3 the family moved back to Ireland and lived in Carlow where she attended the local school for a few years. She began acting when she was just 9.

Singer and former member of the boy band, One Direction, Niall Horan, 24, from Mullingar in Westmeath is now following a hugely successful solo career. He is already performing to sell out concerts all over the world and his recent album,



all the songs of which he himself wrote, has reached number 1 in the music charts in many countries.

Niall first became famous when he took part in the BBC singing competition "The X Factor" in 2010. He was not picked as a solo singer, but the judges asked him to form a band with 4 other singers. The band, One Direction went on to become one of the most successful bands ever and were said to be among the highest earning musicians in the world, before they split in 2016.



34-year-old Norah Patten from Ballina in Mayo is one of only 12 people chosen from all over the world to take part in an astronaut training course in Florida. Norah has always been interested in air and space

travel even designing a rocket from a washing up liquid bottle when she was 15. She studied aircraft engineering in college and has taken part in many space experiments over the years. If her training is successful, Norah may well fulfil her dream by becoming the first Irish person to travel to space.

Ireland Win the Grand Slam

It was the stuff dreams are made of! For the Irish rugby team beating England on their home ground in Twickenham on St Patrick's Day was certainly a dream come through. This win also meant Ireland won the six nations Grand Slam for just the 3rd time ever.



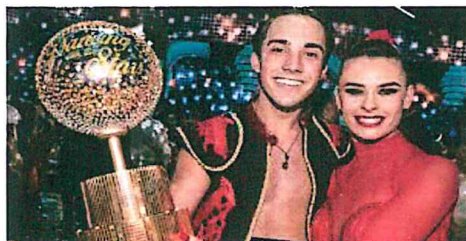
Team captain Rory Best and team head coach Joe Schmidt both praised the players for their fantastic performance in a

hard-fought game which saw them score 3 tries and win on a score of 24-15.

The match was a sell out with many people paying way above the price in order to get a ticket. However more than 1.3 million Irish viewers watched the match on TV.

Dancing with the Stars

After 12 weeks of live Sunday evening dance contests, Dancing with the Stars finally came to an end with 19-year-old Jake Carter and his partner Karen Byrne winning the Glitter Ball trophy. Jake who comes from Liverpool is brother of well-known country and Western singer Nathan Carter. In the final the pair beat off competition from All Ireland Camogie winner Anna Geary and comedian Deirdre



O Kane and their partners. This was the second year the show was held in Ireland and was

family entertainment at its best with more than half a million viewers every Sunday night.

Many well-known people took part again this year including sports commentator Marty Morrissey. A lot of hours of practice went into learning all the different dances performed each week. Most of the performers had never really done much dancing before this. However, everyone agreed they had a fantastic time while also managing to lose weight and become fitter. RTE has said the show will return for a 3rd series in 2019.

Martin Luther King's 50th Anniversary

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King. From 1954 until his death in 1968 King was leader of the civil rights movement which stood up for the rights of black people in America. The civil rights movement tried to get the government to change the laws of discrimination against black people through peaceful means by holding large marches and rallies.

This was a time in America when black and white people were not allowed to sit together in restaurants and when travelling on public buses had to sit in different sections. In 1955 in the town of Montgomery in Alabama, a black woman, Rosa Parks, refused to give up her seat in the black section of a bus to a white person. She was arrested and this caused uproar among the black community.

Martin Luther King instead of using violence organised a complete boycott by black people of all buses in the county. This boycott lasted for over a year until the bus company having lost a lot of money, ended the divide of black and white seating areas on the buses. This was the first big success of King's civil rights movement.

Many more non-violent protests and marches followed including a march to Washington in 1963. Here King gave his famous "I have a dream" speech when he spoke about his dream of a future in America where all people would be treated equally and not judged by the colour of their skin.

In 1964 he was given a Nobel Peace award for his work and that year he was successful in gaining the right to vote for all Black Americans. Separate seating areas in restaurants and school canteens also ended.

In April 1968 King was shot dead in a hotel room in Tennessee. Sadly, he never got to see Barack Obama become America's first black president in 2009. Martin Luther King is remembered today as a leader who inspired future generations with his dream of equal rights for all people of every race and colour.

Edition 46 May 2018

Vicky Phelan

In 2011 Vicky Phelan like thousands of other women went for a smear test and was told that it was clear. However, 3 years later, mother of two Vicky was diagnosed with cervical cancer for which she underwent treatment. Sadly in 2017 the cancer returned and Vicky was given the terrible news that it was not curable and that she would probably have a year at most to live.

While awaiting a scan in the hospital Vicky was reading through her chart when she discovered a letter saying that she had been given wrong results for her smear test in 2011. In fact, cancer cells were present in her body since then. She had not been informed of this. Last month Vicky was awarded

€2.5 million in a case brought against the American Laboratory reads smear tests. A medical expert said during the case that



Vicky been given the correct results in 2011 she would have had a 95% chance of a complete recovery. Vicky was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement to prevent her from speaking publicly about what had happened. She refused to do this and continued her fight for all information to be out in the open. It was then discovered that several hundred women like Vicky had been given wrong results in their smear tests and many of them had never been informed up to this. It is now known that at least 17 of these women have since died.

Vicky, having done a lot of research into her illness found a new treatment drug which is being trialled in America. With the help of her family, friends and work colleagues who fundraised on her behalf, she raised enough money to go on this new treatment. Vicky Phelan through her courage and determination has highlighted a serious injustice done to her and many hundreds of women here in Ireland. She is a fighter but above all she is a wife and mother to two young children. Vicky has worked with NALA on many projects and we wish her the very best.

Ed Sheeran concerts

English singer /songwriter Ed Sheeran is performing in nine sell out concerts all over Ireland during the month of May. Tickets first went on sale a year ago and were sold out in a few hours. In all more than 400,000 people in Ireland will attend his shows.

The 27-year-old red haired Ed whose grandparents come from Ireland is considered to be Irish at this stage. He has sold more records in Ireland than in any other parts of the world and among his hits have been some Irish traditional sounding songs such as "Galway Girl".

Getting ready for GDPR

NALA is taking a number of steps to ensure we comply with new data protection laws. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be introduced on 25 May 2018. It will replace current data protection laws in the European Union. The new law will give individuals greater control over their data by setting out additional and more clearly defined rights for individuals whose personal data is collected and processed by organisations. The GDPR also imposes corresponding and greatly increased obligations on organisations that collect this data.

What is personal data?

Personal data is any information that can identify an individual person. This includes a name, an ID number, location data (for example, location data collected by a mobile phone) or a postal address, online browsing history, images or anything relating to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of a person.

What NALA is doing for GDPR

We have taken a number of steps to help us comply with the GDPR including an audit of our current data management procedures. This audit will help us to update our policies and procedures on all areas of data management including data requests, retention and destruction. NALA staff are also being provided with training to ensure they are prepared for the GDPR.

Edition 47 June 2018

Magdalene survivors visit the President

Two hundred and thirty women who had spent time working in the Magdalene Laundries all over Ireland were invited recently to meet the President.

President Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina welcomed the women to Áras an Uachtaráin for a special reception followed by a dinner in the Mansion House. The women, many of whom are in their 80's, came from all parts of Ireland and from as far away as the UK, America and Australia for the occasion. The event was organised so that these women would be given a chance to share their stories of the time spent in these institutions and also to give their views on how the Magdalene Laundries should be remembered in the future.

For almost 100 years women who had babies outside marriage, orphans and women who were seen as being trouble makers were all sent to these laundries to work. From 1922 more than 11,000 women spent time in these laundries in various parts of Ireland, many of them spent their entire lives there. Most of them were treated very badly and not allowed to leave. The last laundry closed in 1996.



President Higgins apologised to the women on behalf of the State for the wrong done to them and the abuse they received at the hands of the church

and the State. He said it was a dark shame on our country to know that many thousands of women were robbed of their human rights and hoped that they could find it in their hearts to forgive.

For many of the women who travelled from abroad this was their first time setting foot in Ireland since they left the laundries and had never before shared their stories of time spent in them. Hundreds of people lined the streets to cheer the women as they travelled on buses to the Áras and to the Mansion House.



In its 12th year Bloom once again attracted huge crowds to the Phoenix Park in wonderful sunshine to enjoy the country's largest garden and food exhibition.

70 acres of show gardens, plants, flowers garden furniture and food and drink tents were enjoyed by garden lovers of all ages from professional garden designers to ordinary garden lovers eager to enjoy the day out.

Pope Francis to visit Ireland



Pope Francis is to visit Ireland on August 25 & 26 this year as part of the World Meeting of Families.

The pope who is 81 will attend a large gathering in Croke Park and the following day will say mass in Phoenix Park. He will also visit to Knock Shrine in Co Mayo. It is also believed that he will pay a visit to the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin which gives dinners to more than 1500 people daily. He has also asked to visit a prison.

The last visit by a pope to Ireland was in 1979 when Pope John Paul visited here. 2.7 million people went to see him on that occasion. Although the number of Catholics in Ireland has become smaller since then, it is believed that many people will still turn out to welcome Pope Francis. Tickets for the 3 events which are free will be available online from June 25th by visiting www.gov.ie/popeinireland).

Ireland says yes

In the recent referendum 67% of Irish people voted in favour of changing the 8th amendment. This means that the government can now pass a law allowing abortion to become available in Ireland.

Although the law has not yet been fully discussed or debated by the different parties, it is thought that a woman choosing to have an abortion within the first 12 weeks of her pregnancy will no longer have to travel outside the country to do so.

Edition 48 July/August 2018

Ireland in a Heatwave

The months of May, June and July have brought brilliant sunshine and high temperatures to all parts of Ireland. Temperatures in



some areas went as high as 32 degrees making Ireland hotter on some days than Spain and Portugal.

Sales of ice-cream have gone up by 12%, BBQ food by 10% and an increase in the sales of drinks and sun tan lotions has meant that supermarkets in Ireland have seen a rise in sales of €27 million over the last 12 weeks, according to a recent market survey.

While most people are enjoying this hot spell, the lack of rainfall has led to drought right across the country. Farmers are worried about a shortage of water for animals and crops. Grass has stopped growing leading to a lack of animal feed. As water levels drop people have been asked to cut down on water usage. Not leaving a tap running, limiting a shower to less than 4 minutes and using waste water from washing up to water plants are all simple ways of saving water. Irish Water have limited water supply in many of the larger towns and cities and have put a ban on the use of water hoses in all parts of the country.

People are being warned of the dangers of spending too long out in the sun. With 11,000 cases of skin cancer diagnosed in Ireland last year it is important to protect our skin against sun damage by wearing a sun protection factor greater than 30 or 50 in the case of children. Wearing a hat and sunglasses and drinking plenty of water is also very important.

In the 1980's Australia began a campaign to remind people of the need to stay safe in the sun. The message was known as "*Slip. Slop, Slap*" *Slip* on a shirt, *Slop* on the sunscreen and *Slap* on a hat. This message was put on posters in all public buildings, streets and motorways and has been very successful in reducing the rate of skin cancer in Australia.

Women's Driving Ban Lifted in Saudi Arabia

It is 100 years since women in Ireland were allowed to vote for the first time and also allowed to stand for election. However, it wasn't until 2015 that women in Saudi Arabia were allowed to vote. In the Olympic Games of 2012 Saudi women were allowed to enter for the first time and just last month were allowed to drive and hold a driving licence. Before this a woman in Saudi Arabia had to hire a taxi or be driven by a male relative.

Since the driving ban was lifted more than 120,000 Saudi women have applied for driving licences. This is a huge step forward for women's independence and follows many years of protests by women's rights supporters, many of whom who were put in prison over the years.

However, women in Saudi are still under strict religious laws that does not allow them to own a passport, travel or marry without the consent of a male guardian.

Cave rescue in Thailand

The world watched as a major rescue began in Thailand of 12 young members of a soccer team and their coach, from a cave 1km below ground and 2km from the main entrance. Rescue efforts were made even more dangerous as heavy rain flooded the cave.

The boys all under the age of 16 and their 25-year-old coach who were on a trip were missing for 9 days before being located, the heavy rain had pushed them further along the passage way to the cave. Expert divers were brought in to deliver oxygen, water and food with one diver losing his life while doing so. Heavy rain and flooding meant it took another week before the rescue could begin

A team of 90 expert divers led the dangerous rescue which involved walking, climbing swimming and diving through the narrow passages all done in complete darkness. None of the boys were able to dive so each one had to be guided out by two divers. After 17 days of being trapped in the cave all 13 were rescued safely over 3 days and are said to be well.

Pope Francis visits Ireland



In August Pope Francis paid a visit to Ireland as part of the World Meeting of Families. Although nothing like the 1.2 million people who turned out to greet Pope John Paul in 1979,

large numbers attended the 3 events at Knock Shrine, the mass in Phoenix Park and the concert in Croke Park where many national and international singers performed. Pope Francis visited President Higgins in Áras an Uachtaráin. He visited the Capuchin Day Centre for the homeless in Dublin and met with Brother Crowley, founder of the centre as well as a number of homeless people.

He met with members of the government in Dublin Castle where the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar welcomed the Pope to Ireland. In his speech the Taoiseach said the Church were the first to provide services such as education, health care and welfare of the poor here in Ireland before the Irish state was set up. However, he spoke about the abuse that many thousands received at the hands of those in positions of power in the Catholic Church in schools, mother and baby homes, orphanages, churches and hospitals. He reminded the Pope that there is still much to be done to give healing to survivors of abuse and asked the Pope to ensure that truth and justice be brought out in the open. Later the pope had a private meeting with 8 survivors of clerical abuse here in Ireland and in his speech in the Phoenix Park spoke about the abuse and asked forgiveness.

Trump Visit Cancelled



It was announced that the president of the United States, Donald Trump was to visit Ireland in November.

However, it was later cancelled without any reason being given. Mr. Trump who owns a luxury hotel and golf Course in Doonbeg in Co. Clare was expected to pay a visit to the resort.

Presidential Election

The election of our new president will be held on Friday 26 October. Outgoing president Michael D. Higgins is seeking another term and so far, there are several other candidates who have put their names forward, among them business men, Gavin Duffy, Peter Casey and Seán Gallagher who ran in the last election, Joan Freeman founder of the organisation Pieta House, debt campaigner David Hall, artist Kevin Sharkey and Roscommon farmer John Groarke.

Limerick and Dublin Celebrate

After a wait of 45 years Limerick won the 2018 All Ireland Hurling Final in a nail-biting finish which saw them beat Galway by just a single point. Thousands of supporters turned out to welcome home the All-Ireland winning team when they returned to Limerick with the Liam McCarthy Cup.

The Dubs celebrated their 4 in a row All Ireland football win defeating Tyrone. This is their 6th All Ireland win in 8 years, 5 under the management of Jim Gavin.

Lisdoonvarna Match making festival

Forget about online dating websites, Ireland's oldest match making festival takes place every September in Lisdoonvarna in County Clare. The festival which has been running for 150 years was once regarded as the holiday resort for farmers after their busy summer period. However, in recent times it draws thousands of visitors from all over the world who come to enjoy the music and dancing, many of them hoping to find a partner.

Local matchmaker, Willie Daly who owns The Match Maker Bar is on hand to help you find a match. Willie, whose father and grandfather were also matchmakers claims to be very successful in bringing couples together and has set up more than 3,000 marriages over the years. He believes the best way to bring couples together is the old-fashioned way by getting them talking around the table face to face and dancing!

Music sessions and dancing takes place in all the pubs and hotels in the town from early morning until late every day for the entire month of September.

Edition 50 October 2018

McManus gives a gift to the GAA

To celebrate Limerick's All Ireland hurling win, Limerick businessman, J.P. McManus has donated €3.2 million to the GAA to be divided between each of the 32 counties of Ireland. Each GAA county board will receive €100,000 to be divided equally among every club in the county.

McManus who is said to be a billionaire started his career as a greyhound and horse racing track bookie. He is heavily involved in the horse racing industry and has had many successful winners down through the years. World famous Irish champion jockey, Tony McCoy rode for McManus for many years up until his retirement in 2015.



McManus is well known for his generous donations to many charities in Ireland. He hosts a large golf competition every three

years in which all the top international golfers take part. He is a personal friend of American golfer Tiger Woods. The money raised goes to charities and non-profit community projects all over the Mid-West region.

Every year he funds college scholarships for 100 students from low income families who have achieved top marks in the leaving certificate. The award is worth €6,750 a year to each student for the duration of their chosen 3rd level degree. He has sponsored the GAA in Limerick for the past 5 years and has given large sums to pay for the county GAA stadium. He has also contributed to the new wing of the University Hospital in Limerick and to the University of Limerick.

He is owner of the famous Adare Manor, the 5-star luxury hotel and golf course which stands on 800 acres. It recently re opened after major renovations which took more than 2 years to complete. Earlier this year it was named Hotel of the Year 2018. It is believed that McManus hopes to host the Ryder Cup Golf classic there in 2026.

Storm Ali upsets the National Ploughing Championships

The National Ploughing Association was forced to cancel the second day of the event this year which was held in Screggan near Tullamore in Offaly.



It was decided to call off the event for safety

reasons as Storm Ali caused gusts as strong as 140km per hour to blow across the country. Many of the tents and temporary buildings which had been put up for the festival were damaged. It is the first time the event has had to be cancelled due to the weather. Two people lost their lives in accidents due to the storm. A man died in Newry when a tree fell on him and a female tourist was killed when the caravan she was sleeping in was blown into the sea near Clifden in Galway.

The Irish and British Met services have been giving names to storms since 2013 and in 2015 invited the public to send in names they would like to see used. A storm is given a name if it brings wind that has an orange or red weather warning. The reason the storms are named is to raise public awareness of storms and the safety risks involved. Names are given in alphabetical order with every second one being male or female. The American Met office has been naming storms for many years.

Already since the start of the storm season which starts in Autumn we have had Storms Ali, Bronagh and Callum. The next storm when it arrives will be Deirdre followed by Erik and Freya. The letters Q U X Y and Z are never used.



Dear reader

To mark the 50th edition of our monthly worksheet "The Distance Learner" we invite you to enter our competition below.

We have been writing the worksheets for 5 years now and a big thank you to all our readers over the years and for all your comments and suggestions.

Kind regards

The NALA Distance Learning Team

Competition

*To be in with a chance of winning a €25 book voucher
answer the following question*



J.P. McManus is from what Irish county?

*Please send answer and your name by
text to, 087 198 4228*

or

email to, distance@nala.ie

Closing date is October 31 2018

***All correct answers will be placed in a draw
Best of luck!***

Edition 51 November 2018

100 Years since World War 1 ended

On November 11th remembrance ceremonies were held across the world to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1. In 1918, at 11 minutes past 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month (November) a cease fire was called. An agreement known as an Armistice was signed in France ending 4 years of war.

The war was fought between 2 sides the Allied forces and the Central Powers. The Allied forces included Britain, France, Belgium, Russia and later Italy. The Central Powers led by Germany, included Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. America joined the war in 1915 on the side of the Allied Forces after a German submarine sank a British passenger ship, the Lusitania, off the coast of Ireland killing 1,200 passengers many of them American.

Armies from both sides dug thousands of miles of ditches known as trenches which faced each other across the middle of Europe. This was known as the Western Front. Soldiers lived and slept in these trenches until ordered to move forward and fight back the enemy side. Conditions in the trenches were terrible with dead bodies, mud, rain and cold. Rats and lice were a big problem and caused many diseases.



A famous event happened on Christmas Day in 1914 when soldiers from both sides stopped fighting for a few hours. They met in the area between the trenches, known as "No Man's Land", they shared cigarettes, sang Christmas carols and a few played a game of football. Sadly, this was short lived as the fighting began again the next day.

65 million soldiers fought in the war, 10 million died and 21 million were injured. Many of these were as young as 16 or 17.

In the countryside close to the western front the red poppy flower could be seen growing wild in the fields. When the war

ended the poppy became a symbol of remembrance of those who died in battles here during World War 1.



It is believed that more than 200,000 Irish men fought in World War 1 as members of the British Army. 36, 000 of them lost their lives. Ceremonies were held in many counties to remember them. President Higgins led the largest of these which was held in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin. Members of the Irish army as well as relatives of those who were being remembered, also attended.

By the time the war ended most of Europe was left in ruins. Millions of people had been killed or badly injured and millions more faced a future without loved ones. So terrible were its effects that it was believed that World War 1 would be the "war to end all wars". However, this was not to be the case as less than 21 years later World War 2 began.

Michael D. is Re-elected as President

Michael D. Higgins along with his wife Sabina is now beginning another 7 years as president of the country after winning 56% of votes in the recent election.

Mr Higgins who is 77 has been involved in politics for almost 50 years. A member of the labour party until he became president he has served as a senator, a TD and a government minister. He was also Mayor of Galway. Outside of politics he was a lecturer in Galway university for many years as well as a writer and a poet.

At his inauguration in Dublin castle he spoke about his vision for Ireland where every person is treated equal and with respect regardless of belief or difference.



Too often in the news these days we hear stories of violence and anger among people. However, what we don't see in the headlines are the millions of kind deeds that people perform every day of the week.

Some of these are very often quite by accident. Sometimes without it being planned an opportunity arises for us to get a chance to perform a small random act of kindness that may well be the making of another person's day. Most of the time these acts will go unnoticed and unrewarded.

Recently people across the country were asked to give an example of a kindness they had shown to another or that someone had shown to them. These are a few examples:

"When I was working in a shop one day, I noticed an elderly lady whose leg seemed to be bleeding. I asked her was she ok and she said that someone on the bus had stood on her foot and it was sore, her cut was bleeding a lot. I took her to the bathroom and cleaned and covered her cut. She was upset. I asked her where she lived and I gave her a lift home in my car. She was so happy to be looked after and came in a few days later with a little gift." A from Dublin

"Six years ago, a young couple in our village with small children had a fire in their house and it was badly damaged. They had to move out of their house for several months. My wife and I had a chat one night and decided to help them. We decided to give them a gift of some money to help them out. We went to them and explained what we would like do for them and asked if it was ok. We gave them the money and they were delighted. When the house was renovated and they moved back in we were asked to the house warming to thank us for the help we gave them."

F from Laois

"On a lovely sunny day last summer I was sitting in my

garden when my neighbour who is a girl in her 20's stopped her car outside my gate and came in and gave me an ice cream. She was coming from the shop, saw me sitting outside and decided to give me a little treat!"

F from Clare

"I was in a queue at the checkout of a supermarket awaiting my turn. There was a young mother and a small child ahead of me. When her shopping was added up she was short a little over €5. She asked the assistant to take back a couple of things including some yogurts. The little boy started to cry and was asking her not to give back the yogurt. I said to the woman that I would give her the money she said it was ok but I insisted. She was very thankful." M from Cork

A few years ago I lost my son in an accident. I work as a school secretary and took some time off work. The day I returned to work a month from I was feeling very down when to my surprise a little girl came to the door of the office with a bunch of flowers for me. She didn't say anything she just smiled. It was such a lovely thought."

M from Mayo

Many believe that "what goes around comes around" in other words when you show kindness to others kindness will be shown to you at a later stage.

In Cork city in 1953 a mother was out walking with her baby daughter who was in a pram. She was pushing the pram up a steep narrow hill when two cars turned down the hill. To her horror the second car went to overtake the first car which meant she and her baby would be crushed. Seeing the danger, the driver of the first car pulled over stopping the second car and the accident was avoided. The woman went to thank the driver and saw that it was the famous Cork hurler Christy Ring.

26 years later, Christy Ring collapsed and died suddenly on a street in Cork. The first person to run to his assistance was a young teacher who had seen it happen. This young woman was none other than the baby in the pram who Christy had saved from a possible death all those years before.