

Moriarty's of Skerries  
**SuperValu**

OPEN 7 DAYS  
01 - 849 3111

*Supporting Our  
Local Community*

# SKERRIES NEWS

STORY  
OF OUR  
LIVES

€3

Est 1988

January 23<sup>rd</sup> Mí Eanáir 2026

Vol.39 No.2

[www.skerriesnews.ie](http://www.skerriesnews.ie) [www.facebook.com/skerriesnews](http://www.facebook.com/skerriesnews)

FIND OUT WHAT  
YOUR PROPERTY  
IS WORTH **DNG**

**DNG**

McKENNA HEALY



If you would like a free valuation contact  
DNG McKenna Healy on 01 8491510 or  
email [skerries@dng.ie](mailto:skerries@dng.ie)

**CELEBRATING the best of our town EVERY SECOND FRIDAY**

# 30 years of MSPA



**How Moore School  
of Performing Arts  
grew from just  
48 students to a  
town institution**

P14



**MAKE-UP & BUBBLY:**  
Fun masterclass event  
for charity you don't  
want to miss...

P6

**SKERRIES TOWN FC:**  
€100,000 goal launched  
as club eyes beautiful  
new clubhouse...

P10

**SKERRIES AS GAELIGE:**  
Adam Hutton of The  
Gladstone Band on  
speaking Irish...

P18

Photo: Emily Diebold



93901081314266



**EUROSPAR**



SKERRIES POINT SHOPPING CENTRE

YOUR SUPEREASY SUPERMARKET

Open 7am-10pm  
Monday to  
Saturday  
and 8am-9pm  
Sunday

# Thinking of Selling Your Home in 2026?



Choose your local experts for a **FREE** house valuation

**grimes**<sup>®</sup>  
SELLING FOR GENERATIONS

01 849 0129

skerries@grimes.ie

# SKERRIES NEWS

STORY OF OUR LIVES

€3  
Includes VAT  
Est 1988

www.skerriesnews.ie www.facebook.com/skerries

Fortnightly newspaper of local stories & pictures. Since 1988  
In your packed Jan<sup>23rd</sup> issue:

### NEWS

Ger Heasman's World Powerlifting win **3** News Briefs **5** Tap for SYSS **8** Defib on Red Island **12**

### COVER

Susie and Michelle Moore on 30 years of MSPA **14-16**

### FEATURES

Skerries Theatre - Beauty Queen of Leenane **4** Keeley D Foundation Galentines night **6** St Pats JNS ADHD Flag **8** RIP Rita Somerville **9** Skerries Town FC fundraising drive **10-11**RIP



Timothy Andrew McGowan **11** Skerries Town action shots **17** Cheque for Feileacáin **17** Interview with Adam Hutton on Irish and the Trad Fest **18-19** Skerries Historical Society **21**

### REGULARS

Paul Hopkins **4** What's On **22-23** Skerries Dog - Rosie **24** Planning **25** Manchild - David Diebold **26**

### SKERRIES NEWS IS EDITED BY:

David and Emily Diebold – editor@skerriesnews.ie

### ADVERTISING IS EASY

Check out our website [www.skerriesnews.ie](http://www.skerriesnews.ie) for rates or email [editor@skerriesnews.ie](mailto:editor@skerriesnews.ie) for discounts



### HOW TO CONTACT US

email [editor@skerriesnews.ie](mailto:editor@skerriesnews.ie). Tel 01 849 0629

### COVER PHOTO

Susie and Michelle Moore of Moore School of Performing Arts. Photo: Emily Diebold

### THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Dylan Fingleton, Emma Grimes, Shea Hand, Paul Hopkins, Dónal Kearney, Moore School of Performing Arts, Oona Roycroft



Find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/skerriesnews](http://www.facebook.com/skerriesnews)  
**9,914** followers **175,251** views in last 28 days  
Audience: 68.50% female, 31.50% male (Google Insights)

Skerries News is entirely produced in Skerries and published by a family business, **Monument Media Ltd**, a registered, limited liability company. *Articles and advertisements do not reflect the point of view of the publishers. Contributions may be edited for style and for space. Mistakes happen – we're only human!*  
All content **copyright** 2025

## CHAMPION POWER LIFTER



STRONG: Ger Heasman takes bronze for Ireland

# Ger Heasman wins bronze in South Korea

By EMILY DIEBOLD

GER Heasman only took up powerlifting in 2023, and just before Christmas she won Bronze in the IDFPA in Seoul, South Korea, representing Ireland.

Ger featured on the cover of *Skerries News* last September when there was a big fundraising drive to get her to Seoul for the Open & Masters World Powerlifting Championships 2025.

Ger told *Skerries News*, "It was one of the best experiences of my life, the competition was amazing. Well run with amazing competitors. I was honoured to bring back a bronze for Ireland. Korea was an amazing country. I would do it all again in a heartbeat.

"I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped get me here and who supported me on the way. As always, I am overwhelmed by the support I have received. From encouraging messages to the amazing generosity people have shown in helping to finance this trip. A massive shout-out to the Balrothery Inn and all the staff there. As ever I would be nowhere without my coach Eoin Cashen and club, Resolve Fitness."

Ger is a busy single mum of three, she has lived in Skerries most of her life and works in the Balrothery Inn. She has always been strong and good at sports but only took up power lifting at the age of 41. She never expected to make it to Seoul or to be bringing home a medal for Ireland.

CURTAIN UP

Darkly comic tale comes to Skerries stage

SKERRIES Theatre Group present The Beauty Queen of Leenane by Martin McDonagh, in the Little Theatre in February 11 to 21 (Wed-Sat, 8.15pm).

The play is directed by Mary Shannon, and the cast of four are Dympna McNally, Sarah Byrne, Conor Chatten and Tom Duffy. It is probably the most well-known and popular play by gifted Martin McDonagh, and its award-winning premiere production was produced in the Druid Theatre, Galway in 1996. (Skerries Theatre Group also staged it back in 2008).

Set in the kitchen of a cottage in the west of Ireland, the play centres on the life of Maureen, a 40-year-old, and her brutal relationship with her mother Mag, a 70-year-old. The Beauty Queen of Leenane is one of those plays which, through theatrical innovation, represents a critique of modern life. McDonagh explains the impact of isolation with different literary elements by the interaction between Maureen and Mag, how they are isolated with themselves and with society.

First, the mother-daughter relationship of Mag and Maureen stems from hatred because of the power struggle between them, how similar they are, and the impact they have on each other. Since both characters are isolated from everything, their family ties have disintegrated, giving way to spite, resentment, and hatred.

This circumstance leads the play to the creation of a conflict, character versus character. In other words, Mag is content to control Maureen by deceit and whining, not concerned that Maureen is lonely, love-starved, and likely driven to madness by her mother's selfish demands. Hence, their relationship ends in violence, both in language and in action.

All proceeds of the Opening Night (Wed. 11th Feb) go to Fingal Additional Needs.



Mary



Dympna



Sarah



Tom



Conor

JUST A THOUGHT

Paul Hopkins



WHEN I was a young journalist in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in the late '70s I would regularly write home to my parents of my adventures in a country at war. And that I was okay. They were more like missives, a dozen foolscap pages every other week typed on my proudly-owned sturdy Remington black and yellow portable typewriter. My stock in trade.

My mother would write back. Just one page, half of which said: "Rushing to catch the post, will write with more news soon..." She never did, of course. My father, on the other hand, was a prolific writer of letters. Long and detailed, and in the finest calligraphy I had ever seen. My own grown son and daughter have the same purposeful penmanship.

My father started his work as a civil servant at 16, first as a motorbike dispatcher of telegrams which in those days were more often than not the short-worded wired document that someone had died. This bearer of such sad news then moved on to be a sorter of letters on the Post & Telegraphs mail trains – down day, up night, as it were.

I've often wondered if my Father, in sorting through the letters and reading the address of the recipient and most like the sender, built in his vivid imagination the stories of what the letters might hold: the one from the emigrant son away in Boston, the sister who was a nun and helping the black babies in Africa, the daughter who was coming home, for the first time in years, and with the never-before-seen grandchildren. Perhaps all that gave my father his love for letters and what stories they might tell.

It seems in this digital age we have fallen out of love with the written letter.

In Denmark, it is the end of an era which has endured for centuries, dating back to King Christian IV's 1624 decree to create one of Europe's first modern post offices.

Ten days ago, with minimal fanfare, Denmark's national post office ceased the delivery of letters, and its famous red post-boxes will soon vanish from

# Wait Mr Postman, is there a letter for me?

the streets. PostNord, the Danish postal service, says it took the momentous decision to stop delivering letters after their usage fell by 90 per cent in the past 25 years. The demise of the service was a "difficult" moment, but there was scarcely any demand left for posting letters and the company needed to focus its efforts on parcels.

Ireland may not be far off the Danes' move, if not tomorrow then someday soon. The sending of letters has fallen dramatically in the last 10 years, between 7% and 10% annually, according to An Post. Fewer write letters these days; we text, we voicemail, we do What'sApp video.

It's far more convenient and instantaneous than putting pen to paper and then having to go and get a stamp (price up again next month) at the post office – the few that remain, that is, and where once the post office was a focal meeting place for rural communities.

Similarly, suppliers of goods and service don't send you a bill by letter anymore – they email you. At least, one could argue we are saving the trees.

However, there is more to letter writing than the felling of trees. There is a personal and emo-

*'Sending of letters has fallen dramatically in the last 10 years, between 7% and 10% annually...'*

otional value attached to a letter. Unlike fleeting digital messages on Instagram, a physical letter is a permanent, tangible object that can be held and reread years later.

The act of taking the time to handwrite and post a letter shows a deep level of care and effort which can make the recipient feel loved and valued. Also, old letters can preserve personal stories, family history and the unique voice and personality of the writer long after they are gone.

When my parents died 10 weeks apart in the Millennium year and we cleared out the house to sell it, I found stored away, in a small cardboard box at the back of the wardrobe, a telegram addressed to my father who was down day, up night on the sorting mail train the day I was born. The faded slip of paper simply said: "Baby son. Mother doing well."

Almost 50 years on, here was part of the unique personality, the voice almost, of my parents – from an age where once the telegram was brief but urgent and the long, hand-written letter a mark of how the recipient was valued and loved.

Today, I still have that telegram – and some of those Africa letters my father had kept.

Affairs of the Heart by Paul Hopkins (€14.99), 'a collection of stories to light the soul', is available at monumentmedia-press.com



TRENDING

## Date set for return of Skerries 100

LOUGHSHINNY Motorcycle Supporters Club has announced the return of the Skerries 100 on July 4-5 2026. "One of Ireland's most iconic road racing events is roaring back to life, and we couldn't be happier," the club stated. "The Skerries 100 has always been about community and the unmistakable buzz that takes over the town, and this summer promises to be bigger, louder, and more exciting than ever. We are thrilled to see the event return and to play our part in bringing racing back here. Roll on July 4 and 5!"



## 'Some' paid parking on Red Island



FULL UP: Pictured Wednesday, 10am

AT A council meeting on Monday January 12 a motion was approved to bring in limited paid parking on Red Island. It will be at the smaller carpark beside the playground. The first two hours will be free and after that there will be a charge per hour.

According to Mayor Tom O'Leary it is at the request of the hospitality businesses there who do not want people leaving their cars there all day, and it will enable the spaces to be used more

efficiently for those walking to the restaurants and playground.

There will likely be a ticket system for the cars so the time of arrival can be displayed on the dashboard.

The large carpark will remain free to cater for beach goers, sailors, staff parking and day trippers.

TAKE FIVE

Five things you need to know about what's going on...

**1** Skerries Service Station has now fully converted to Circle K. The new signage is all up and the Circle K rewards card is in operation. It's worthwhile downloading the app to get cheaper fuel.

**2** Skerries Harbour Road has been allocated a grant of €20,000 in the Active Travel investment Grants 2026

**3** Skerries Active Travel Plan has been allocated a grant of €20,000 in the Active Travel investment Grants 2026

**4** Fingal Community Bike Library was allocated €50,000 in the Active Travel Investment Grants 2026.

**5** There is a proposed change of zoning from Green Belt and Open Space to Residential for Holmpatrick. It is a triangle of land that borders Downside and includes the Skerries Allotments. The allotment holders were invited to a meeting with Fingal County Council recently to discuss.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS



Tel: 087 187 6646 email: Brendan.ryan@cllr.fingal.ie @brendanryanNo1

## Cllr Brendan Ryan

In Coast Inn Lounge, Skerries  
2nd and 4th Saturday of each month, 12pm  
Except Bank Holiday Weekends  
No appointment necessary

Serving The People of Skerries

DID YOU SEE?



NIGHT ON FIRE: Northern Lights visible through camera lenses this last week attracted photographers to Red Island to catch the spectacle. Photo: Shea Hand

**FÓGRAÍ**

**'Join our army of beach cleaners' says Tidy Towns**

SKERRIES Tidy Towns would like to thank all those who look after areas on our beaches and would like to invite anyone interested to join them. Even when the beaches look clean there can be little pieces of plastic and other rubbish caught up in the seaweed. A lot of rubbish gets washed up after storms. They supply litter pickers, bags and gloves. Send contact details to tidytownskerries@gmail.com and they'll be in touch. Skerries Tidy Towns is a committee of Skerries Community Association.

**Looking for actors as Skerries gears up for 9 short plays**

SKERRIES Theatre Group are looking for actors. After *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* comes *Skerries Short Cuts* – nine short plays, performances in April, auditions next weekend, January 24 and 25. If you have never been involved before, this is a great opportunity to dip your toe in the water. Seasoned actor? Then it's a chance to try your hand at a new character. More info from STG secretary Marie Kelly on marietkelly@gmail.com

**Sold out! Harps Presentation Gala**

SKERRIES Harps thanks all who snapped up tickets to their Presentation Gala on Jan 30. Tickets are now sold out. For anyone who missed out, please contact Fergal Lynch – 086 898 4657 - to get your name on the waiting list.

**YOU WOULDN'T WANNA MISS...**

**Skincare and make-up masterclass with a glass of bubbly, all for an amazing cause**

'Galentine's Night' in Skerries: celebrating friendship and support

ON Friday, February 6, Joe May in Skerries will be buzzing with excitement as Keeley D Foundation hosts a special 'Galentines Night' where Jennifer Rock aka The Skin Nerd and Rebecca Todd of MUA host a skincare and make-up masterclass to raise much-needed funds for children in palliative care.

It's a chance to gather your pals, enjoy a glass of bubbly, support a great charity and foster community spirit.

Keeley D Foundation is a registered charity that provides essential support to families of children and young adults in a palliative cancer care environment, so no parent has to care for their child alone, ensuring every moment is treasured without financial stress.

The Foundation was established by the parents of Keeley Durnan in August 2024 and in just over 12 months have supported over thirty families throughout Ireland, in areas like Dublin, Cork, Galway, Mayo, Wexford, Wicklow, Tipperary & Kildare.

Keeley left this world in 2023 after an 11 month battle with a DIPG brain tumour. Her dying wish to her Mam, Eimear was to help other children "like her".

On top of providing critical financial and practical support, Keeley D Foundation also provide necessary emotional support for parents and siblings. All new families receive a personal welcome



FOR KEELEY: A cheque from those who ran the marathon for the Keeley D Foundation; Keeleys Dad Alan, Mam Eimear & Brother Jack; a 5K Run

pack designed for each child and their siblings. The families also have access to available support by parents who have experienced a similar journey.

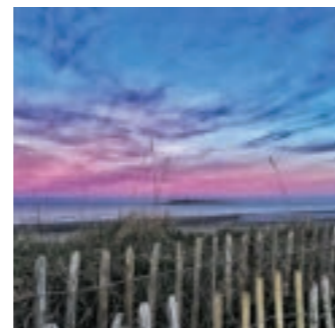
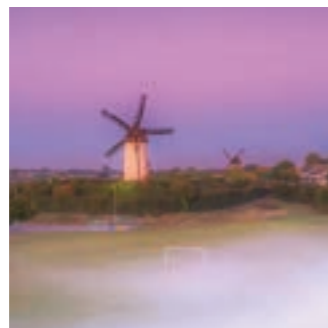
By attending Galentine's Night, you'll be helping to fund essential care and support to families during the worst of times. Every ticket purchased, every raffle entered, and every donation made,

will directly support families fighting for a tomorrow.

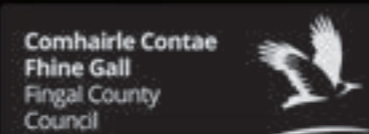
Tickets are available online at [www.keeleydfoundation.ie](http://www.keeleydfoundation.ie)

If you can't make it on the night and would like to support, donations links are always open. You can follow all Keeley D Foundation updates and activities on Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok & LinkedIn.

**HASHTAG SKERRIES**



CAPTURING SKERRIES on Instagram: (left to right) @theycallmebrowner, @itssodublin, @publicart\_ie, and @lovefingaldublin. Some images are cropped.



**THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE**

by Martin McDonagh

Little Theatre Skerries  
11<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> February 2026  
Wed – Sat 8.15pm

Tickets €20/€15  
Greg Reddin's  
085 1342 999  
Scan QR Code

This amateur production of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. [www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk)

**TAP AS YOU PASS BY**

**€3 tap to help a young person: SYSS launches new Community Centre fundraiser**

By EMILY DIEBOLD

A NEW funding initiative has just been launched for Skerries Youth Support Services (SYSS). It is a huge poster on the wall of Skerries Community Centre with an integrated card machine. The committee is hoping that people passing will tap their phone or credit card to support the charity and each tap costs just €3.

SYSS has been running for 11 years now and is completely funded by our community. It is a charity set up to supply free counselling to young people in need - early intervention to help young people when they need it most without having to wait for months and months. Originally the service was just one day a week, but the demand is so great there are now four full days of counselling every week. The wait time is now down to just seven weeks. The cost last year was €70,000 but since it has just been extended to four days it is expected to be more this year. It is hoped that this new easy way of donating will make a big difference to this much needed service.

Michael Matthews of SYSS told



**NEW INITIATIVE:** Sharon Guinan (Manager Skerries Community Centre) Dave Beatty (SYSS), Shay Fanning (Board of Management) using the new tap unit and Mick Mathews (SYSS)

Photo: Emily Diebold

*Skerries News*, "The community centre has been fantastic for us, and because of the foot fall here and the amount of children passing, Sharon (Guinan) suggested putting some kind of a poster here for Skerries Youth Support Services. We were talking about doing signs with positive messages. And then I thought about the tap machine they have in the lifeboat, and in fairness, Dave (Beatty), started on that and he was like a dog with a bone."

The Skerries Community Centre board of management came on board and agreed to organise it.

Shay Fanning of the Board of Management said, "We're funding it for three years to see how

it works. It's such a worthwhile cause."

Sharon Guinan manager of Skerries Community Centre said, "At the beginning, when we were talking about it, we were told you can have three different amounts maybe €3, €5 or a tenor. But then, when we started looking into it, I said, you'd be pressing buttons. It puts people off. It's easier if it's just simple. It's better to get €3 than nothing, so you just hold up your card or your phone and it takes €3. It's easy."

It's a costly system to install but due to volunteers in the community the charity didn't have to spend their much needed funds on it.

Dave Beatty of SYSS said, "It was for nowt. It's a proper community effort. Kerry Grimes designed it, (Grimes Designs) Alan Crilly (Image Depot) did the poster.

Sharon continued, "We have a guy Wayne who does all the steel work for the Community Centre, he did that for nothing. Then our lads made it and put it in. Then Dwyer Electrics did the extra electrical work for us and then the board are funding the monthly costs for the machine. It also glows in the dark so even at night time people can see it and it's hardened glass so it won't break. When we built the coffee shelter here we got hardened glass and then we had some left

over and we had it in the shed. Nothing gets thrown out here."

Dave said, "So there's a huge community effort behind this a huge contribution."

With the sports facilities there - the all weather pitch, the tennis courts, the scouts den, the pitches - all in constant use, hundreds pass by every week and probably thousands in the summer with all the summer camps.

Mick said, "There is huge potential. If people see it they might just tap in passing and it's not just a fundraising, it's also the awareness. This is to change somebody's tomorrow. This is a voluntary group and it's all funded by the people in Skerries. And every penny goes to SYSS.

"We're down to seven weeks wait now and that was because we had a week off over Christmas. We're running four days now, we were only running three. Three in Skerries and one in Balbriggan because we got a free room there - but it's only 10 minutes on the bus. And we have a local girl as one of our counselors, and if it continues the way it is, we're hoping to stay that way. The wait seems reasonable. You just don't want it to be 15 or 20 weeks like it is in other places.

"The goal is just to keep shortening the wait time down to three to four weeks.

"At the moment we're managing that, and we're hoping that with this and a couple of other things that we have in the pipeline that will fund all that.

"It's all community funded. We did get initially €10 grand a year to pay for a day a week - but that wouldn't even pay for a full day a week for a year now because the price has gone up. Last year the service cost over €70,000. It was less before but that's because we had less days. Before it was two days, then three days and now it's gone up to four. It will probably be over €80,000 this year. The need is there and we're doing our best to fill it.

"Last year we had 234 kids and they got up to six counselling sessions each.

Sharon said, "It's really about early intervention. It's not to do with money. People will throw anything at it to help their kids, but they can't even get a counselor. If the wait is three years, then the problems can be so much worse.

Mick agreed, "It's heading them off at the pass. You get them before

the trouble gets too serious."

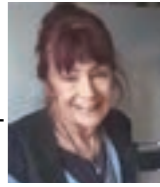
The hope is that other clubs will follow suit and the tap machines will appear in more clubs and other locations around Skerries.

Mick said, "We want to start a trend."

Sharon said, "We want them everywhere. Just one person taping just once a day is a thousand a year. We want to get the message out there that help is available. A lot of Skerries people still don't know what SYSS is. We're doing up posters now and we're putting them on the backs of the doors of the toilets. Alan Crilly is sorting out that for us. Every little helps."

**FONDLY REMEMBERED**

HAVING heard about the passing of Rita Somerville I have felt the need to write a bit about what Rita represented to more than one arty kid growing up in Skerries in the '80s and '90s.



There's this beautiful thing that happens where I remember that very particular smell of Rita's Crafts in Skerries. And it all comes flowing back. Loads of fun handmade craft pieces on the shelves and the scent of random craft classes and craft supplies drifting from the craft room out the back. I must have talked Rita's ear off constantly. Never buying much and coming up with random things to sell like Shenick island painted rocks. Rita never seemed to tire of those chats and always had time

for this arty enthusiastic nervous kid. Each time I think about Rita and the shop it feels like a good warm hug.

And this arty enthusiastic and arty. Rita is one of a few very important people I bumped into in my creative life and perhaps bumped me more toward the joy of creativity. And I'm sure I'm not the only nervous arty kid in Skerries that soaked up the special magic of Rita's enthusiasm for creativity.

She was wonderful and magical and will always be with us as we make things in joy.

- DEE SYNOTT

Rita passed away peacefully on January 17, 2026.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

**FINE GAEL**

*If I can ever be of assistance to you, your family or your business, please contact me on:*

01 618 3621  
 grace.boland@oireachtas.ie  
 graceboland.fg  
 Grace Boland FG

**Grace BOLAND TD**  
 Working for you in Dublin Fingal West

**SCHOOL'S PRIDE**

**St Patrick's JNS celebrates ADHD-Friendly School flag**

By EMMA GRIMES

ST PATRICK'S JNS is celebrating their achievement as an ADHD-friendly school.

The school is proud to announce that it has been awarded the ADHD-Friendly School Flag, recognising their ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive and understanding learning environment for all students. It is a Universal Design for Learning where the school provides flexible teaching and

learning tools.

This achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of staff, students, and the wider school community in ensuring that pupils with ADHD are understood, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

The ADHD Friendly School Programme is a nationwide initiative supporting primary and post-primary schools in creating inclusive environments where students with ADHD can thrive.

On Friday, January 9, the school raised their ADHD Champion flag and thanked Mrs Deirdre O'Donovan who led this initiative in the school.

Becoming an ADHD-friendly school is about more than academic success - it is about wellbeing, confidence, and belonging.

St Patrick's JNS aims to foster a culture where differences are accepted and celebrated, and where students feel safe to be themselves.

BIG DAY: The raising of the flag

ONE TEAM, ONE TOWN, ONE DREAM

# Skerries Town Football Club to raise €100,000 by June

By EMILY DIEBOLD

THE last time we spoke to committee members of Skerries Town Football club was last September. At the time the club had been in the headlines as the clubhouse had sustained serious structural damage and they were trying to get the insurance to pay out to fix it. Now that has all been resolved and the building is structurally sound. However the clubhouse is still not really fit for purpose and neither are the pitches.

At the time of writing, there had been no matches played in the four weeks coming up to Christmas and no matches yet this year due to bad weather and Fingal County Council (who own the pitches) calling off the games.

To remedy this, the club is now involved in a huge sponsorship campaign to redevelop the Skerries Town Parklane. They want to transform the area into a



vibrant community space with an all-weather pitch and a modern clubhouse designed for use by the entire community. Their goal is to raise €100,000 by June 2026.

**PRESSURE**

So far they have raised €15,000, so the pressure is on.

What began as a small community club in 1990 has grown into one of the region's most vibrant grassroots football organisations. As Skerries itself has expanded, so



**FUNDRAISER:**The proposed supporters wall that will be at the club entrance

too has the club - both in size and ambition. Today, Skerries Town FC proudly supports 41 teams (from U9s to senior levels), 949 total members, 804 active players, 9 female teams and 33 male teams, over 145 volunteer coaches, 146 children in the Kids Academy and a thriving 'Football for All' programme that welcomes players of all abilities. This incredible growth reflects the demand in the community - but it also presents new challenges.

The club now has insufficient space to accept new players, inconsistent access to training facilities, over-reliance on council pitches with limited availability, and due to bad weather and council pitches being unavailable, children sometimes going weeks without matches, affecting their development and enthusiasm

David Heaney is on the fundraising committee for the project.

He says, "Our mission, "One Team, One Town," guides us toward a shared vision. And now, with our community's support, we are ready to chase One Dream - a long-term plan that elevates football in Skerries for generations to come."

The vision for the future of the club is to support more than 2000 players within the next five years, with every player training and participating in sports at least three times per week.

**MONEY**

David says, "A local builder came onboard to help us make the club structurally sound. That's done now and he has decided that they want to support us in terms of replacing the grass pitch with astroturf and they're putting in huge support and investment, but we have to raise €100,000 ourselves. We want to make it a spiritual and



**FUN TIMES:** Girls Juniors after practice at Skerries Town Parklane



**MULTI PURPOSE:** What the clubhouse could look like by September 2026

physical home, not just for football but for the community."

The plans for the clubhouse include, a versatile function room - perfect for club events, yoga classes, parent-and-toddler groups, workshops, and community gatherings; modern changing rooms with improved amenities, dedicated first-aid areas, and safe,

clean spaces for all age groups; a café and catering hub, supporting football nights, academy activities, matchdays, and community events; and accessible toilets and facilities, ensuring inclusivity, dignity, and comfort for every visitor.

This redevelopment represents more than bricks and mortar - it's an investment in community

connection, youth development, health, and shared pride.

The fundraising drive kicked off in December and they have already raised €15,000. They have four different projects planned in the spring to raise the rest of the money.

The first is a sponsorship wall. This wall will be at the entrance to the grounds. People can buy a personalised brick to go on the wall. It is €50 for a standard brick, €75 for a family brick, €100 for a supporter brick and €250 for a business brick.

The second is corporate sponsorship and signage. Local businesses can showcase their support with pitch-side signs, wall plaques, event sponsorship and community partnership opportunities.

The third is the Future Legends Easter Blitz. This is a major underage tournament hosted at Park Lane, celebrating youth football in Skerries with invitations to other regional clubs.

The fourth is 'Skerries Legends - the Big Event. This will be a showcase day in mid-May featuring: a Legends match between all the Skerries past and present legends, the unveiling of the Wall of Support, family-friendly celebrations and club history displays, sponsor activations, raffles, community entertainment, and an evening celebration to honour club history, volunteers, sponsors, former players and local legends.

This will be the biggest event of the year - a celebration of everything Skerries Town FC stands for. To help the club - buy a brick (scan the QR code below), spread the word, attend the events and if you are a tradesperson, you can volunteer your skills. All support is welcome and very much appreciated.



Scan here to help

All support is welcome and very much appreciated.

**OBITUARY**

**Timothy Andrew McGowan, RIP: great nephew of well-known Skerries historical figure John Terrance 'Terry' Sherlock**

**TIMOTHY** Andrew McGowan of Encino, California, passed away at age 67 on October 27th, 2025, after a hard-fought battle with leukemia.

Tim was born in Brooklyn, New York on December 26th, 1957, to James and Joan (MacLellan) McGowan, the third of six children, descended from Irish immigrants who arrived in New York in the early 1900s.

Tim's family moved to California in in the early 1970s, eventually settling in the San Fernando Valley. Tim had two children with his former wife, Susan McDermott, and had a career working as an executive in

the television industry. His passion was always acting and he performed in many local theatrical productions.

Tim is the great nephew of local historical figure John Terrance "Terry" Sherlock, through his grandmother, Alice Sherlock, sister of Terry. Alice moved to America in 1921, married Joseph McGowan and had six children.

Her son, James McGowan is the father of Tim. Tim became a dual citizen in 2018 and had the opportunity to visit Skerries in 2019. There he met with local historian Frank Whearity, who gave Tim a walking tour of Skerries, highlighting the Sherlock history.

Tim's passing was marked by a Celebration of Life memorial on January 3, 2026 in Santa Clarita, California. Tim is survived by his two sons Matthew and Morgan, long time partner Pam Meyer and four siblings Cathy, Colleen, Terry and Jimmy.



**MUCH MISSED:** Tim was a great nephew of Terry Sherlock

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

est 1932

**Gerrard L McGowan SOLICITORS**

**CONTACT**  
**Mary Arnold and Donogh McGowan**  
 29 Thomas Hand Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin

**Tel: 8492075**  
 info@glmcgowan.ie | www.glmcgowan.ie

# LIFESAVER Frosties, Tidy Towns and SCA help deliver Red Island defibrillator

By EMILY DIEBOLD

ON JANUARY 8 a defibrillator was installed on Red Island. This was a community project that was first initiated after the tragic death of Con Boyle at the Captains on September 6, 2025.

Con was an experienced sea swimmer in the Skerries Frosties group. He had a heart condition and got into difficulty after a swim. Another Frostie, Darrell Kavanagh, tried to revive him whilst waiting for emergency services and someone else had to run for the nearest defibrillator which was all the way down at the Sailing Club. Sadly Con didn't survive.

## LOCATION

The new defibrillator is located on the fence beside the entrance to the large carpark on Red Island. There is a poster with instructions on its use beside it. To open the box you call 112 and will be given the code to unlock the case. It is there because it has to be attached to an electrical source so that is as close as they could get it to the bathing places..

The launch was attended by

those who were instrumental in the project – Skerries Frosties, Skerries Tidy Towns, Skerries Community Association (SCA), Lydon, Fingal County Council and Mayor of Fingal, Tom O'Leary.

The AED was funded by Lydon and installed by Fingal County Council after representations from Skerries Frosties, Tidy Towns and the SCA.

Emer McGloughlin (a Frostie,

a member of Skerries Tidy Towns and also a member of Skerries Community Association) told *Skerries News*: "We had a liaison meeting with the council and this issue was brought up following the tragic event. It was decided something had to be done."

## TRAGEDY

Grainne Smith of Lydon said, "Tom O'Leary got in contact with us after the Frostie tragedy and we were building in the area, so we just said it's a really good cause and we're happy to support it."

Kevin O'Sullivan (a Frostie) said, "There were a lot of people trying to help Con but it took a long time to get a defibrillator. Con was one of the founding fathers of the Frosties so he was part of the furniture here. He's badly missed."

"The Frosties made a commitment to get one installed here," Emer continued "Catherine McMahon is going to organise training for us in how to use it. She is a Frostie and a retired nurse. It will be for the Frosties but we'll

extend it to other swimming groups who would like training. Breda Shankey of SCA said that the SCA has been looking into the AED situation in Skerries across the town. She said, "We want to improve training and awareness across Skerries about the use of AEDs. It's an SCA initiative that Eric Byrne and myself are involved in."

Eric Byrne explained, "There's a number of people involved. It was partly initiated by the accident but at the moment we're trying to progress the number of First Responders within Skerries and eventually if we have success and the wherewithal to do it, to create a better awareness and a better management of the defibrillators within the town."

They are working on creating a detailed list of all the locations of all the AEDs - those housed outside, so available all the time, and those that are housed in schools and clubs with the hours that they are open.

*Skerries News* will publish the updated list when it is released.



LAUNCH: At the new Defibrillator which is just outside the large carpark; Damian Ryan of Fingal County Council



Pearse Lydon and Grainne Smith of Lydon; Grainne, Ollie Byrne, Mary T Daly, Pearse and Mayor Tom O'Leary



DELIGHTED TO HAVE IT OPERATIONAL: Frosties - Terry McMahon, Emer McGloughlin, Hazel Williams and Kevin O'Sullivan; Fingal - Tom Lannon, Ollie Byrne, Mary T Daly Director of Operations, Damian Ryan, electrical; Emer McGloughlin, Mary T Daly, Mayor Tom O'Leary and Pearse Lydon at the launch of the new defibrillator

Photos by Emily Diebold

# Skerries Walking, Cycling Plan & Traffic Plan: Strong Objection

I strongly object to this draft plan in its current format particularly in the town centre. Fingal County Council must redesign the town centre core plan as it is unacceptable for residents, businesses and visitors. I support augmenting the existing town centre traffic plan and car parking with connected walking and cycling routes.

## 7 KEY POINTS I am calling on the Council to address...

### 1. Car Spaces

Retain existing number of car parking spaces in the town.

### 2. Residents Car Parking Permits

Guarantee retention of parking permits maintaining access to car spaces.

### 3. New Car Parking Options

Provide new car parking spaces within 3 min walk from shops (240-400m). There are sites suitable for that.

### 4. New Car Parking App

for your phone to identify quickly available car park spaces.

### 5. Town Feeder E-Bus

Implement new town feeder bus circulating to all key areas- particularly Skerries Train Station rate (€1-2) Balbriggan has this Bus Eireann B1.

### 6. Green Spine walking & cycling Route

Great idea - walking and cycling from outlying housing estates to town centre core + - to GAA , Soccer, Athletics, Hockey, Local Schools, cafés, shops, medical centres, and new 800m2 Carnegie Library.

No need for a car - reduce traffic congestion - enjoy chats en route, meeting people, social activity.

### 7. Access

Age friendly and disability focus - set down spaces outside pharmacies, GP surgeries. Keep parking close to churches.

I support safe, connected and preferably segregated walking and cycling routes across all of Skerries.

I am Seeking a 'Win Win' solution for all... residents and Town Centre Businesses.

I believe if we get the 'Right Plan' it will improve access to the town for all – walking cycling and cars – and will improve footfall and spend at the local shops and businesses.

I live in the town and I want to see it continue to thrive for all. We have not got the 'Right Plan' yet.



FINE GAEL  
Cllr. TOM O'LEARY *Skerries Councillor*  
Call (087) 245 9897 or Email tom.oleary@cllrs.fingal.ie  
Available by appointment

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

Visit seanbphotography.etsy.com to order today  
Follow me on instagram: seanb.photography\_

COVER STORY

# Skerries stage school celebrates 30 years

Moore School of Performing Arts grew from 48 students to a town institution. We talk with Michelle and Susie Moore about the story of MSPA



**STILL BESTIES:** Michelle & Susie - 30 years working together

Photos: Emily Diebold

By EMILY DIEBOLD

**SISTERS** Michelle and Susie Moore are now celebrating 30 years of their performance art school in Skerries - Moore School of Performing Arts - known to most as MSPA. Now they have over 240 students and eight teachers, and teach dance drama and singing five days a week in Skerries Community Centre in the large hall, the Little Theatre and the Scouts Den.

**How did it all begin?**

**Michelle:** Well we started in Skerries Rugby Club in 1997. Before that I was teaching in the dance centre, Digges Lane in Dublin with Jill Doyle. Then I got pregnant, and Susie took over from me in Digges Lane. We had both gone to Billie Barry growing up.

**That makes sense, that you were both Billie Barry kids. That's a great start in the business...**

**Michelle:** Yes the Billie Barry's are still going strong. Billie's daughter took over there. There's a lot of people that come out of Billie Barry and have gone here and there.

**Susie:** Susan, one of our teachers, is Billie Barry's granddaughter. She's been teaching with us for 19 years.

**You're from a big family aren't you? Did they all go to Billie Barry?**

**Michelle:** Yes we're from a family of 12. My mother sent us all to Billie Barry. We were all in pantos growing up. There was one year I think we had five of us in a panto at once in The Gaiety.

**Susie:** But then I think myself, Michelle and Lorraine, the three younger girls, we continued. whereas the others didn't really. Michelle: We would have done it up until we were 18

**So, after that, you then went on to be a dance teacher?**

**Michelle:** Yes, so it was more as a part-time job. I was teaching in Digges Lane and working in a bank as well, full-time. Susie was working in a bank too.



**EARLY DAYS:** Three Moore sisters, Susie, Michelle, & Lorraine in a Gaiety panto

**Susie:** In our day you would just go straight from a Leaving Cert into a bank. I did four months secretarial course and then got into a bank. We didn't have the opportunities kids have now. There wasn't colleges where you could continue to study performing arts. We got our training in Billie Barrys and between us we did a lot of shows.

**Michelle:** I did Butlins in the summer, and hotels. You did Annie

**Susie:** I did Annie in the Gaiety, myself and Lorraine, for 11 months, with Maureen Potter and Godfrey James. Then I think it was our sister, Caroline, who had children here in Skerries at the time who said, "Why are you teaching up in Dublin, come down here," and that's what got us started here

**Is your family from Skerries originally?**

No, but every summer holiday we were in Skerries. Our Dad is from Man O' War so all our Summer holidays were in Skerries. For two months every year we stayed in Skerries. We never even went home during that time. And we had the best summers.

**It's a great place for big families. So how many of you moved back here as adults?**

**Susie:** We have six siblings living here now.

**Michelle:** No actually five, Paul



**REMINISCING:** So many happy memories

just moved to Rush..

**So that's why you opened in Skerries?**

**Susie:** Yes. We only had 48 students and we started in the Rugby Club

**Michelle:** Yes our first show was only 48 students. We did that in the Little Theatre. Then we moved on to do our shows in the Community Centre - when there was a stage there. We did everything ourselves. It was just the two of us teaching. I was living in Lucan at the time. So I was commuting two or three times a week on the M50. So then we got Mary O'Brien in to do drama.

**How long were you in the**

**Rugby Club?**

**Michelle:** Well my youngest Alex would have been three and he was born in 2001 so it was probably about 2004 that we moved to the Community Centre.

**Susie:** I think probably about 7 or 8 years in the Rugby Club before we moved. We were expanding. We got a singing teacher on board then. We were doing a bit of tap then as well.

**So it was dance, drama and singing?**

**Michelle:** Yes because of the shows. We had dance and got in a drama teacher and a singing teacher and it built from there. Then we were getting more and



**TALENT:** Susie, Leah & Michelle Pirates of Penzance, 2025; Daniel Mahon, Shane Brown, Thomas McHugh & Conor Whearity Helix, 2012



**Do you negotiate pay?**

**Michelle:** It would normally be a set fee. Children don't get paid for pantos. When they were in the National, and if they had a lead, they did get paid at Christmas but it's unusual. When we had children in the productions that came from London, they got paid for that. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Annie and Shrek. The Millbank and the Lark only pay their professional dancers. They don't pay the younger ones. This year we've had 58 of our students in different pantos - the Lark, the Millbank, the National Concert Hall, TLT, and the Helix.

**Susie:** Leah, my daughter, worked in the Lark last year as a professional dancer. She's a choreographer and choreographed there for the last two years. She's in Australia now but she's told us she'll be back in July.

**And she'll work with you again?**

**Susie:** She will yes. Well she works all over. She choreographs shows in Dublin and Dundalk she's booked for stuff already. Summer camps for different people.

**And do your children work with you too?**

**Michelle:** My son Daniel, the middle one, he teaches drama. He did his training in The Lir. He's doing a Page to Stage class with teenagers so they're hoping to put on a play in the Mill Bank at the end of March.

**That's great you both have your children working with you. It's obviously in the blood...**

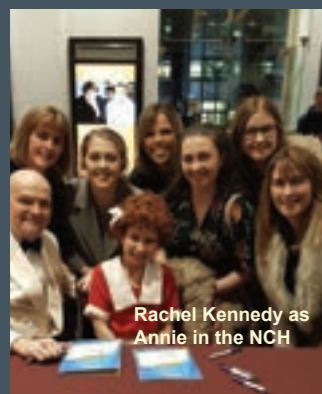
**Susie:** Yes Leah and Daniel and our niece Kelly Brassington. She's a singer. Though she just went to Brighton last week so we got in an ex student, Lainey O'Sullivan, in her place. She's amazing with

CONTINUED OVER

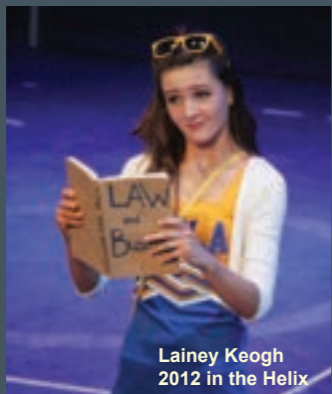
MSPA: 30 YEARS



Joseph and his Techniclour Dream coat



Rachel Kennedy as Annie in the NCH



Laine Keogh 2012 in the Helix

MSPA ALUMNI

Ava O'Connor - Taaffe Training and auditioning for London Colleges this Spring.  
 Rose Flynn - Taaffe Training  
 Eve Duffy - Studying in IADT college for Television & Film studies, writing her own shorts for TV, assisting in MSPA drama  
 Alex Mahon - working on movie sets after studying Film & Television production in DKIT also Stage Manager for the Lark Theatre Panto for 3 years and played Motel in Fiddler on the Roof (RMS 2023).  
 Aebh Kelly - Professional opera singer  
 Laine O'Sullivan - Degree in Drama and Theatre Studies in Trinity College, Laine also has vocal training with Fiona Mullaney, Dr. Aaron Hales and performed as a soloist in numerous concerts, including her Perth Concert Hall debut with the West Coast Philharmonic Orchestra (2024) - Now teaching at MSPA  
 Caoileann Woodcock - Performance art college in London, played the Beauty and Cinderella, in the Stadium Panto, Dublin (2024 & 2025)  
 Thomas McHugh - Performance art college in Barcelona - works in shows in London and worldwide  
 Laobhaise McHugh - Performance art college in London  
 Ross McHugh - Performance art college in London

Martha Byrne - Roy (TV Drama)  
 Aoife Woodcock - Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts  
 Jessica Doolan - singer /song writer  
 Eva Campbell - singer and writes her own music  
 Kerill Kelly - went onto study at Rada - Performed on the Abbey in 2025  
 Chris Kelly - drama, singer, director  
 Daniel Mahon - Studied at the Lir, has performed in many theatres since graduation for Scene & Heard and Fringe Festivals. Appeared in Who We Love (Movie), Staging the Treaty (NCH & TV), Into the Dark (Stage), Grown Ups (TV) & The Knight of the Seven Kingdoms (TV).  
 Leah Meagher - choreographer, AIMS Winner twice studied at Bray Institute of Further Education, in Dance Technique & Choreography  
 Niamh McGowan AIMS winner, director, received her Masters in Gaiety School of Acting  
 Kate Leahy - DCU drama - Dance Captain  
 Aisling Leahy - DCU drama  
 Andrea Hickey -DCU drama  
 Mikey O'Sullivan - Galway College, has played many main parts with their drama & musical societies.  
 Doireann McAuley - UCD College - has been very involved in their musical society, played main parts and this year is choreographer to their musical 'Carrie'  
 Rachel Ryan - College of Dance - TY Year

children. She did a couple of our summer camps teaching children and she's brilliant.

**How many teachers do you have now?**

**Michelle:** Well we had to replace Leah when she went to Australia so now we have two for hip hop. We have Lauren and Emma and Doireann for musical theatre. I think we have about seven or eight teachers

**Susie:** Let me count them - Lucy, Lauren, Doireann, Laine, Susan, Daniel, Eve, Mia, Emma and Amy.

**No wonder you've had to take a bit of a managerial role when there's so much to organise...**

**Michelle:** Yes, I do the wages and all the admin. It's a lot.

**How many children are there now?**

**Susie:** 240 I think

**And how many days?**

**Susie:** Monday Page to Stage, Tuesday singing (that's very popular), Wednesday it's SST - strength, stretching and technique - and there's an adult dance class. Thursday we don't do anything. Friday, we have all our little ones, beginners hip hop and the advanced Jazz class. Saturday is

all day - contemporary, musical theatre, drama, tap and singing.

**Is it all in the community centre?**

**Michelle:** Yes and in the Little Theatre and the Scouts Den.

**Susie:** And we have an older tap class so now we're opening a 6 to 11 year tap class too. That's starting next Friday.

**It seems like you're got everything covered.**

**Michelle:** Yes and our doors are always open. We're always taking new students. We've had quite a few new ones starting in January.

**Susie:** Our year really starts in September when we're preparing for the Christmas show. Then we do Easter camps and we also prepare for an end of year show at the end of May. Then there's summer camps.

**Michelle:** We also now do the Inter Schools singing competition and the Feis Ceoil. There's also a teachers Drama Club so Daniel may put some students in for that.

**Susie:** There's also the Royal Irish Academy of Music. They do grade exams in Drama.

**Michelle:** Over the past years you'll see there are children who have come to us and done their

drama exams are now primary school teachers.

It's not for everyone to do exams or to go on to be in the business. Our motto is 'have fun in a friendly atmosphere'. We want to nurture our kids, but we also want them to stay with us and to love what they're doing. It's not all about competitions. It's making friends and memories. Particularly our shows. They just love them.

**Susie:** Especially our boot camp. We have to tell you about our boot camp. We do summer camps from 5-11 years and then we have a 10 day boot camp for older kids. It's been Daniel, Laura and Kelly for the last few years. They put on a show in 10 days and the kids really love it. It's not just the show, we have cabaret night (just for the kids, no parents) and the talent is amazing.

We go to the harbour and play games one of the nights, they get in for a swim. We bring in pizzas and drinks and sweets. They make up their own dances and little drama pieces. It's about the memories. If you ask any of our kids what's been their highlight of the year, they will say the Boot Camp.

**So now it's been 30 years?**

We're going into our 30th year

now teaching. It's amazing. Unbelievable really when you think about it. When we started off, we really just thought of our nieces at the time, and starting something up for them and maybe keeping it going for 5 to 10 years.

**When you started there were quite a few from your own family?**

**Michelle:** Yes it was mainly our own family and friends and their children. That's what we wanted and it's gone on from there. Really we never wanted a huge school. Just enough to keep us happy and them happy. We know all our students. We're all a family

**Susie:** But what we're thinking of doing to celebrate 30 years is getting a committee together to help us fundraise for a really good special show in the Helix. We'll invite past students back. Everyone is invited.

**Michelle:** It will be in October. The 29th and 30th.

**Susie:** It will be really special. Sure we're at this so long now, we have past students who are sending their children to us now. That's how long we've been doing this.

www.mspa.ie

ON THE BALL



All photos by Dylan Fingleton Photography

**TALENTED** aspiring sports photographer Dylan Fingleton was at the Skerries Town FC Seniors match this week to catch some of the action on the pitch. Skerries Town were playing Maynooth and the final score was 5-2 to Skerries. Expect more great pics from Dylan in the future. Well done, Dylan.

SPONSORED BY SKERRIES NEWS

CHEQUE THIS OUT



**DONATED WITH LOVE:** Edel Fitzgerald and Myles Lally (left), organisers of 'Liam's Lap', the St Stephen's Day rally in aid of Féileacáin and in memory of little Liam Mellows, met to donate a cheque for €4532 collected from riders and online dona-

tions from the day, all to raise funds for a wonderful support system for bereaved parents. Says Myles: On behalf of the Mellows family and friends we thank you so much." Also pictured are Mikey and Kim Mellows (right). www.feileacain.ie/

**Skerries ETNS**  
 Junior Infant Open Day

**Thursday, February 5th,**  
**3pm to 5pm**  
 Explore our facilities.  
 Meet our staff and learn more about what we offer.  
 We look forward to welcoming you!

Admissions open From January 19<sup>th</sup> to February 9<sup>th</sup>  
 See [www.skerrieseducatetogether.ie](http://www.skerrieseducatetogether.ie) for more information

**YOUNG GAELGEOIRS**

Co-founder of Skerries Folk Club **Dónal Kearney** chats to local Irish speaker and musician, Adam Hutton, of The Gladstone Band, about the upcoming Tradfest events in Skerries and the case for speaking Irish in public around the town

# Pop-up Gaeltacht, proper buzz: Tradfest brings Irish and music together in Skerries

I'VE only heard Adam Hutton singing in English – I've never heard him speak it. Until today. Every time I see him about the harbour or on the street, we speak as Gaeilge. Well, I do my best. My own Irish is weak – a broken Ulster accent with poor grammar and a limited vocabulary. But Adam seems to understand. In our

brief chats, I only ever repeat the same few words and I always use the same handful of verbs. But we seem to be able to communicate – a few pleasantries, a question or two about the weekend, and then it's slán go fóill.

For years now, I've been trying to improve mo chuid Gaeilge. That's one of the reasons we at Skerries Folk Club set up the Pop-Up Gaeltacht in March 2025. Since then, Adam and his brother Pacair have joined us a few times. As Tradfest hosts a few Irish language events in Skerries this week, I'm asking Adam what speaking Irish means to him (as Béarla, le do thoil!)

"It's given me massive opportunities to play music out in the Gaeltacht areas Inis Meáin and Inis Oirr and in Belmullet," says Adam, whose Skerries accent I'm hearing for the first time. Usually, he speaks in a strong Connemara dialect.

"Working in the bar in Conradh na Gaeilge was unreal – I had some of the best nights of my life there. And I've met some of my best friends through Irish."

As someone who just moved to Skerries in 2021, I'm still getting to know the town. I've been slowly working out the story with the Irish language community. Adam puts it to me poetically: "Once a raging fire – now it's just the last embers remaining."

When I ask him what he means, he tells me of the connection of the language and the local area. In the year 1800, more than three million people across the island spoke Irish fluently. However, the impact of British imperialism was devastating for the language in the 19th century. Specifically, the National Schools system was founded in

1831, banning the Irish language from the curriculum nationwide. Then, in 1845, An Gorta Mór led to the death or emigration of millions of Irish speakers.

"We think of the countryside nowadays as quiet, desolate, depopulated, but in the 19th and even early 20th century, areas like the Black Hills outside of Skerries was its own village – with people and music and the Irish language being spoken. It's all completely gone. And if I can do my part to keep the ember going, I absolutely will."

I ask him, What does keeping the ember going look like?

**STOPPED**

"Me and my brother go around speaking Irish. Once I was stopped in Belfast by someone from Skerries, who said "you and your brother, you're the two lads that do be speaking Irish around the pub!"

So there are advocates for the language out there living their lives through Irish. However, the obstacles to speaking Irish – even for those who are really committed – are very real.

Adam says, "As a pupil of Réalt na Mara, I would have spoken basic conversational Irish. But, as with a lot of Réalt na Mara kids, any progress is not only halted but absolutely destroyed by the Irish curriculum taught at schools like Skerries Community College."

I learned whatever Irish I have

*'According to the 2022 census, just under 2 million in the Republic believe they can speak Irish...'*



**UNITED BY SONG:** The Gladstone band - Patrick Hutton, Adam Hutton and Tim Sheridan; Dónal's band TRÚ

The Bad Ass Café on Thursday, January 22 and Friday, January 23 at The Temple Bar Pub. Adam will also host the Pop-Up Gaeltacht on Sunday 25th January at midday in The Little Theatre. Afterwards, Skerries Folk Club will host its monthly Singing Session upstairs in Joe May's at 4pm. The Little Theatre will then host my own folk trio TRÚ in concert at 7pm on Sunday evening ("distinctive and atmospheric" –The Guardian). Tickets available via tradfest.com.

Despite its challenges, Adam is energised by the Irish language community's potential for growth in 2026.

"Right now, we're really relying on the good will of the local community to put in the time and effort to do what is essentially a momentous task: helping re-establish the Irish language as a widely spoken medium. It's really about supporting those learners who are sticking their toe in the water and getting them to stick around. If even 10% of those who joined Skerries Pop-Up Gaeltacht last year kept at it and progressed, you should really have a solid foundation to have a thriving Irish language community."

Irish speakers and learners of all levels are welcome to the free Pop-Up Gaeltachts during Tradfest this weekend. Join for excellent trad music from 7:30pm on Friday, January 23 in Joe May's front bar. On Sunday, Adam hosts the Pop-Up Gaeltacht at 12pm in The Little Theatre. All details at tradfest.com. Is fearr Gaeilge briste ná Béarla cliste.

If you see Adam about the town, make sure you shout a solid "Dia dhuit!" to him.

"Be proud of it and speak Irish in public – even if you only have cúpla focal. Let yourself be heard!"

*Bigí linn.*

in the north. Since only catholic schools tend to teach it, not everyone gets the opportunity. I picked it up between the ages of 12 and 14 as a compulsory subject and then had to choose it as a GCSE subject in order to continue. By the time I was 16, I had a decent level of conversational Irish and had spent time in the Donegal Gaeltacht three summers in a row. I enjoyed the curriculum, which was mostly focused on practical usage and conversation – I didn't study a word of literature or poetry. But I gave Irish up at A-Level to study Spanish and Italian instead. I thought I'd get more use out of them. Admittedly, I have briefly lived in South America and Spain – so the language definitely came in handy. So was learning Irish worth my while?

According to the 2022 census, just under 2 million people in the Republic of Ireland believe they can speak Irish, with over half of these admitting they "do not speak it well". Just 1.4% of the national population speak it daily. Even in the Gaeltacht areas, a third of residents could not speak Irish in 2022; a far cry from the vision for the Gaeltacht region, founded in 1926 to protect and strengthen native Irish usage.

"I started kind of re-learning Irish in maybe 2018, and I found there wasn't much of an Irish language community in Skerries. There was a ciorcal comhrá happening in the Mills – and fair play



to whoever was involved with running that – but, since it was on a weekday morning, I wasn't able to attend."

The Skerries Pop-Up Gaeltacht is very much an evolution of the

various Ciorcal Comhrá that have been keeping the language alive in recent years. It meets monthly in Joe May's before the Skerries Folk Club Singing Session upstairs. More regular activities are planned with the imminent opening of the new library and plans are being made for Seachtain na Gaeilge in March.

Sometimes we forget that proficient speakers of a second language were once learners themselves – whether as a child or in high school or as an adult. Coming back to Irish as an adult, Adam is very familiar

with this struggle.

"When you're a learner, it's easy to be discouraged," admits Adam. "Learning a language is difficult – it requires a lot of work. The time it takes to express yourself to a high standard (without frustration) is certainly not overnight!"

In the beginning, it can be embarrassing to not be good at something. And many people don't have the sticking power or the conviction to continue with a musical instrument or grow into a sport or pursue some hobby that requires refined technical skill.

"I really do applaud anyone who forgoes the embarrassment of being a learner. It's not just about being bad at something - with the Irish language, it's something we've been taught culturally to be ashamed of. It's a 2-for-1 deal on the embarrassment scale!"

For Tradfest this year, Adam's group The Gladstone Band play

**Cúpla Focail: a few words to use every day**

Conas atá tú? (Kun-is a-taw to?)  
 Meaning: How are you? (Great conversation starter).  
 Cad é an craic? (Caw jay on crack?)  
 Meaning: What's the craic/news/fun? (Ubiquitous for asking what's happening).  
 Go raibh maith agat (Guh rev maw aw-gut). Meaning: Thank you (Literally "May you have goodness").  
 Tabhair dom an guthán (To-wer dum an guh-awn)  
 Meaning: Pass me the phone (Replace "guthán" with any object like "salann" for salt).  
 Déan deifir! (Jan-jiff-er!)  
 Meaning: Hurry up! (Useful for getting things moving).

Sin é (Shin ay)  
 Meaning: That's it/That's the way (Simple, versatile, and common).  
 Bata agus bóthar (But-a agus bow-har)  
 Meaning: The stick and the road (To give someone their marching orders).  
 Tóg go bog é (Tohg guh bog ay)  
 Meaning: Take it easy/softly (Good advice for relaxing).  
 Is fearr Gaeilge briste ná Béarla cliste (Iss far gwayl-ge brish-ta na bar-la klish-t-a)  
 Meaning: Broken Irish is better than clever English (Encourages trying, no matter how imperfect).  
 Sláinte! (Slawn-cha!)  
 Meaning: Cheers/Health!

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

**OWEN O'SULLIVAN**  
 incorporating  
**KALANNE O'LEARY**

**SOLICITORS**

- Conveyancing
- Probate & Wills
- Accident Claims
- Employment Law
- Litigation
- Enduring Power of Attorney
- Landlord & Tenant
- Buying & Selling Business
- Company & Commercial Law
- Arbitration & Dispute Resolution

**The Cross, Skerries K34RH22**  
**Telephone (01) 849 0896**  
**087 283 0980 / 087 241 6925**  
**info@owenosullivansolicitor.ie**

SKERRIES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Skerries talk salutes the trailblazing Irish women who flew before it was 'allowed'

By OONA ROYCROFT

SKERRIES has its fair share of flying stories - like the day in 1939 when the RAF flying boats landed on South Strand just a couple of hours after Britain declared war on Germany - and plenty of pilots have made Skerries their home. Skerries and aviation seem to go hand in hand. So it was a great pleasure to welcome Michael Traynor to Skerries Historical Society to talk about Irish women pilots of the early twentieth century.

Michael spent seven years researching the lives and achievements of a dozen Irish women who made a huge contribution to aviation history but have largely been forgotten by history. As he spoke to the Skerries audience, his love for his subject shone through. And he's not all talk - he's produced a stunning two volume book, *Petticoat Pilots*, detailing the exploits of each of the dozen Irishwomen pilots. The book title derives from reporters commenting on the 1929 American Women's Air Derby - the world's first air race dedicated to women pilots. The race was nicknamed the Powder Puff Derby so it's hardly surprising that the competitors were dubbed *petticoat* pilots.

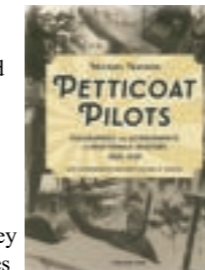
But if female pilots were dismissed as mere fluff by male dominated society, it only made them more determined to make their mark. A career in aviation is not something you can undertake without money and most of our heroines had rich and powerful families behind them, but not all.

A lack of funds wasn't going to stop Sophie Peirce, of Limerick. Having had a rough start in life and with the family suffered from rocky finances, she married early in the hopes of finding some stability. But the First World War intervened and she ended up driving for the British Army amidst the bloody trenches of France. At the end of the war she made a name for herself in athletics and won a good many medals and trophies in the early '20s. Then she caught



a flight to Prague and her life changed. She had discovered her true passion.

Back in London, Sophie took flying lessons and within a couple of months obtained a private pilot's licence. But that wasn't enough for her. She wanted to make a living from flying and set her sights on a commercial licence. The concept of flying a motor driven plane was only a couple of decades old but men had already decided that females were unsuited to the activity: women were banned from holding a commercial licence. Sophie refused to accept this and became the first woman in Britain to hold a commercial pilot's licence. Although she flew for KLM for a while, there was still a lot of suspicion about female pilots and she was let go.



What could she do to keep flying? She married money and became Lady Heath. People labelled her as a gold digger and she didn't try to deny it. She just got on with life and hit the headlines in 1928 with an incredible long distance flight from Cape Town, South Africa, to London. No other female had attempted anything like it before. There are no signposts in the clouds so she had to navigate by following railway lines and rivers.

Monaghan born Mary Westenna came from money but, as is often the case with the wealthy, married a rich man anyway. Sir Abe Bailey was a South African gold mine owner and Lady Bailey decided that she too would make a long distance flight from London to Cape Town and back again. But

Both women succeeded though there were plenty of difficulties along the way and Lady Bailey managed to get through three planes before she arrived in London. They were both feted by the press at the time and given honours. How is it that history has forgotten them? This is only a snippet about two of the twelve women whose fascinating aeronautical careers were researched by Michael Traynor. To find out more, see <https://petticoatpilots.com> or email Michael Traynor at [traynor-michael0@gmail.com](mailto:traynor-michael0@gmail.com) to buy the set of two volumes.

Next month we welcome David Caron to Skerries Bowling Club for the next Skerries Historical Society talk on 10 February: 'The Best of Dublin's (city and county) Twentieth-century Stained Glass Heritage'. Further information on [www.oldskerries.ie](http://www.oldskerries.ie) All welcome, non members €5

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

Robert O'Donoghue TD

GET IN TOUCH

☎ (01) 618 3743

Robert.O'Donoghue@oireachtas.ie

Your Voice in Fingal West





HELP FUND OUR  
FREE COUNSELLING  
SERVICE IN SKERRIES  
FOR 12 TO 24 YEAR OLDS BY  
DONATING €25 PER MONTH.

or scan this code to sign up through our form



@SKERRIESYOUTHSUPPORTSERVICES

Thank You from



PLEASE CALL MICHAEL  
ON 087 252 0962  
FOR FURTHER INFO.

# What's on

## GET OUT

### Fri, January 23

**TRAD FEST:** Trad Session and Pop Up Gaeltacht in Joe May's front bar from 7.30pm

**LIVE MUSIC:** Weekly Friday-night live music at The Bus Bar.

### Sat, January 24

**ARDGILLAN PARK RUN:** Weekly 5k run or walk 9.30am

**FARMER'S MARKET:** Best in local crafts and fare, Skerries Mills, 10.30am-3pm.

**AUDITIONS for Skerries Theatre Group's 'Short Cuts'** - 9 short plays, performances in April. Contact Marie Kelly: marietkelly@gmail.com

### Sun, January 25

**TRAD FEST:** 12 - 2pm, Pop Up Gaeltacht in The Little Theatre. Families welcome. 4 - 6pm, Skerries Folk Club Singing Session; 7pm, TRÚ in Concert at The Little Theatre; 8pm, Trad session in Joe May's front bar

### Mon, January 26

**BINGO** at Skerries Harps Club-house Single book €17, Double book €25 at 8pm sharp

### Tues, January 27

**VINYL NIGHT** hosted by DeRev. The Snug, 9pm-late.

### Weds, January 28

**WALKING CLUB:** Ramble Boyne Valley Camino. From Townley Hall Woods carpark to Mellifont Abbey, Tullyallen, Townley Hall Woods carpark Meeting time 9.45am. Details see skerrieswalking.com.

**LIVE MUSIC:** Covers, ballads and a bit of trad at Nealons.

### Thurs, January 29

**LIBRARY LAUNCH:** Skerries Library opens its doors at 11am for an exciting launch to include the Fanzini street performers from 11.15-12.15, Bohemian Strings string quartet from 11.15-12.45pm, speeches 11.30am-12pm, crafts in the Creative Zone and author visits from children's authors Alan Nolan, Shane Hegarty and Niamh Sharkey for local schoolchildren to enjoy. Drop in between 2-4pm for pop-up badge-making workshop in the Creative Zone!

**TRAD:** Snug, 9pm until late.

### Fri, January 30

**FESTIVAL:** Mná Fest at Ard Gillan Castle - three day festival celebrating female creativity

with female led workshops, demonstrations, installations and performances. Jan 30-Feb 2

**LIVE MUSIC:** Weekly Friday-night live music at The Bus Bar.

### Sat, January 31

**ARDGILLAN PARK RUN:** Weekly 5k run or walk 9.30am

**FARMER'S MARKET:** Best in local crafts and fare, Skerries Mills, 10.30am-3pm

### Sun, February 1

#### ST BRIGID'S DAY

**PUB QUIZ:** Bus Bar weekly favourite. Always fun.

### Mon, February 2

#### FEBRUARY BANK HOLIDAY

### Tues, February 3

**KNITTING** and crochet group 2.30 to 4.30pm at Skerries Library. All welcome.

**FILM ON SCREEN:** Millbank Movies presents *Horseshoe*. When Colm Canavan dies, his adult children gather in the family home. When Colm's will is read out, it has a surprising provision - the four siblings must agree on how the estate is divided up. The problem? They can barely have a conversation without getting into an argument. Millbank Theatre, Rush, 8pm, €8.

**VINYL NIGHT** hosted by DeRev. The Snug, 9pm-late.

### Weds, February 4

**LIVE MUSIC:** Covers, ballads and a bit of trad at Nealons.

### Thurs, February 5

**OPEN DAY:** Junior Infant Open day at Skerries Educate Together National School from 3-5pm. Explore the facilities, meet the staff and learn more about what the school can offer the students. All Welcome. Admissions open from January 19 to February 9 See [www.skerrieseducatetogether.ie](http://www.skerrieseducatetogether.ie)

**FILM ON SCREEN:** Rockabill Film Society at Skerries Sailing Club: The Kitchen Brigade. Cathy is a sous-chef wanting to open a restaurant. With financial difficulties, Cathy accepts a job at a shelter for young migrants. At first, she hates the job then her passion for cuisine starts to change children's lives.. 8.30pm. €10.

**TRAD:** Snug, 9pm until late.

### Fri, February 6

**COFFEE MORNING:** St Francis Hospice coffee morning is on at 10.30am until 12noon. Tickets €5. If anyone would like to donate a prize for the raffle or bake for cake sale please contact Teresa on 087 418 5121.

**CHARITY GALA NIGHT** for Keeley D Foundation. Tickets €20 via [keeleydfoundation.ie](http://keeleydfoundation.ie). Prosecco on arrival. Joe May,

7.30pm. More info from Aishling 087 971 3261 or Niamh 087 297 2275.

**LIVE MUSIC:** Weekly Friday-night live music at The Bus Bar.

### Sat, February 7

**ARDGILLAN PARK RUN:** Weekly 5k run or walk 9.30am

**FARMER'S MARKET:** Best in local crafts and fare, Skerries Mills, 10.30am-3pm

### Sun, February 8

**PUB QUIZ:** Bus Bar weekly favourite. Always fun.

### Mon, February 9

**BINGO** at Skerries Harps Club-house Single book €17, Double book €25 at 8pm sharp

### Tues, February 10

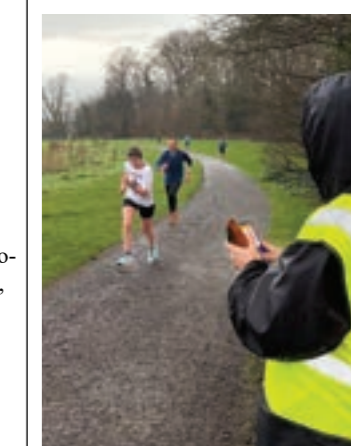
**KNITTING** and crochet group 2.30 to 4.30pm at Skerries Library. All welcome

**FILM ON SCREEN:** Millbank Movies presents 'Palestine 36'. Palestine 36 chronicles the beginnings of the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt by Palestinian Arabs against British colonial rule. Weaving together multiple character strands and using striking archival footage to create emotional engagement with the characters' respective destinies, it sets up the cruelty and injustice of the decades that would follow - eventually leading us to what we are witnessing today Millbank Theatre, Rush, 8pm, €8.

**VINYL NIGHT** hosted by DeRev. The Snug, 9pm-late.

**TALK:** Skerries Historical present a talk by David Caron 'The Best of Dublin's 20th Century stained glass' in Skerries Bowling Club.

## GIVE IT A GO



ARDGILLAN PARKRUN last week saw visitors from as far away as Manchester and Canada, and one runner completing his 250th run. Volunteers always needed to help out, email [ardgillan@parkrun.com](mailto:ardgillan@parkrun.com)

Photos by Ard Gillan Parkrun

### Weds, February 11

**FORGET-ME-NOT CAFÉ :** Tea, cakes and a chat for those living with dementia, their families, carers and friends. Meet others on a similar journey. Free. Skerries Harps 11am-1pm.

**THEATRE:** Skerries Theatre Group presents The Beauty Queen of Leenane by Martin McDonagh directed by Mary Shannon. Play runs from 11th to 21st February (Wed-Sat). Tickets €20/ €15 from Greg Reddins or 085 1342 999 All proceeds of the opening night go to Fingal Additional Needs

**LIVE MUSIC:** Covers, ballads and a bit of trad at Nealons.

### Thurs, February 12

**TRAD:** Snug, 9pm until late.

### Fri, February 13

**LIVE MUSIC:** Bus Bar.

### Sat, February 14

#### ST VALENTINE'S DAY

**ARDGILLAN PARK RUN:** Weekly 5k run or walk 9.30am  
**FARMER'S MARKET:** Best in local crafts and fare, Skerries Mills, 10.30am-3pm

### Sun, February 15

**PUB QUIZ:** Bus Bar weekly favourite. Always fun.

### Tues, February 17

**KNITTING** and crochet group 2.30 to 4.30pm at Skerries Library. All welcome

**VINYL NIGHT** hosted by DeRev. The Snug, 9pm-late.

### Weds, February 18

**LIVE MUSIC:** Covers, ballads and a bit of trad at Nealons.

### Thurs, February 19

**TRAD:** Snug, 9pm until late.

**FILM ON SCREEN:** Rockabill Film Society at Skerries Sailing Club: Horseshoe. . 8.30pm. €10.

To be included or to advertise: contact [editor@skerriesnews.ie](mailto:editor@skerriesnews.ie) or simply call 01 849 0629

**PAWS FOR THOUGHT**



**DOG OF THE WEEK**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Irish Rosettes Pet Shop and Boarding Kennels, Corduff, Lusk. Located half a mile past Blakes Cross on the R132. Open 7 days **01 843 7009** / info@irps.ie / www.irps.ie

**'Rosie'**

**Breed:** Golden Retriever  
**Owners:** The Duigans  
**Age:** One year old  
**Neighbourhood:** Shenick  
**Fave treat:** Ham or a doggie treat from the local coffee shops.  
**Fave toys:** Cardboard boxes - she does a great job shredding them!  
**Loves:** Belly rubs, attention and food of any kind!  
**Hates:** Being left alone  
**Special because:** She can make her dinner disappear in under 10 seconds!

Think your furry pal has what it takes to be Dog of the Week? Send the photo you think best sums up their character to editor@skerriesnews.ie

**JOB DONE**

Find the recommendation you need for that pesky household job with our *Skerries News*

**Top Tradesmen**

Have a recommendation?  
 Send it on and we'll follow it up  
 Want to advertise here?  
 Call Emily at 849 0629

**TOM**  
 TOMMY ORMISTON MAINTENANCE  
**FOR ALL YOUR HOME & MAINTENANCE NEEDS**

**GENERAL HANDYMAN SERVICES**  
**086 084 6991 ormistontommy@gmail.com**

**TONY WALSH ELECTRICIAN**

**Domestic / Commercial / Industrial**  
**Emergency Lighting / Fire Alarm Systems**

**The Willow, Hayestown Road, Rush**  
**Tel: 01 843 8947 / 087 052 4337**  
**tonywalsh39@gmail.com**

**Skerries Power Washers**

Expert external cleaning, so you can enjoy your home the way it's meant to be.

**087 758 9071**

Read our reviews on Facebook

**PLANNING HIGHLIGHTS**

F25A/1063E  
 Pat McArdle  
 21 Strand Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin, K34 Y406  
 Planning Permission is sought for change of use of ground-floor retail unit to residential use (reincorporating into original dwelling), replace shop front opening with 2 no. windows, re-establish internal doors, partially demolish lean-to extension to rear, new ground floor window opening to rear, and all associated site works.  
 Decision Date: 16/01/2026  
**GRANT PERMISSION**

F25A/0906E  
 Martin Kenny  
 Skerries Harps GAA Club, Dublin Road, Skerries, County Dublin, K34 HC89  
 Permission for a link footpath and pedestrian gate to provide a Part M compliant access route between Skerries Community College and Skerries Harps GAA Club grounds and facility.  
 Final Grant Date: 07/01/2026  
**GRANT PERMISSION**

F25A/0910E  
 Anne & Liam O'Callaghan  
 71 Townparks, Skerries, Co. Dublin, K34 X759  
 Demolition of car port to side, construction of single-storey flat-roof extension to front and side consisting of bay window and canopy to front, entrance porch and utility room to side.  
 Final Grant Date: 07/01/2026  
**GRANT PERMISSION**

F25A/0886E  
 Shane Vincenzo  
 9 Kelly's Bay Beach, Skerries, Planning Permission for conversion of attic space to home office, extension of hip roof to form new gable roof with flat roof dormer window to rear, and 2 no. gable windows to side.  
 Additional Information



Received 04/12/2025  
 Decision: 18/12/2025  
**GRANT PERMISSION**

F25A/0979E  
 Chris & Sue Ann Keane  
 16 Little Strand Street, Skerries, K34 YW73  
 Retention permission for:  
 a) Removal and reinstatement of existing roof coverings and structure.  
 b) Removal of existing Chimneys.  
 c) First floor rear extension.  
 Permission for:  
 d) Relocating front door to its original location in the centre of the dwelling and internal alterations to suit.  
 e) Two new ground floor windows to the front elevation  
 f) All associated site works.  
 Decision: 1/12/2025  
**REFUSE PERMISSION & REFUSE RETENTION**

F25A/1204E  
 J. C. Desplat  
 22 The Vale, Skerries Rock, Retention Permission for the development which consisted of two new rooflights to the front roof plane of the existing house.  
 Application: 21/12/2025  
 Final date for submissions 03/02/2026

F25A/1180E  
 Cathal Fanning  
 13 Townparks, Skerries  
 Permission for development to demolish existing rear sunroom and side carport of existing 2 storey detached house. Construct a 2 storey extension to side of house, construct single storey extension to rear

of house, alterations to existing elevations, internal alterations & all associated site works.  
 Application: 18/12/2025  
 Final date for submissions 30/01/2026

F25A/1200E  
 Scrumhalf Ltd.  
 4 Harbour Road, Skerries  
 Permission is sought for the demolition of existing building & the construction of a 3-storey apartment building, comprising 2 No. 2 bedroom apartments on ground floor, 2 No. 2 bedroom apartments on first floor, 1 No. 3 bedroom apartment on second floor with access to roof terrace over (5 No. apartments in total), off-street car parking, off-street bicycle parking, bin storage, connection to all services, utilising existing vehicular access & all associated siteworks.  
 Application: 20/12/2025  
 Final date for submissions 03/02/2026

F25A/1221  
 Sean Ruigrok  
 Site at Blacklands, Loughshinny, Skerries  
 Planning Permission for  
 A. Two storey dwelling house.  
 B. Single storey domestic garage serving same.  
 C. New vehicular access gates to same.  
 D. Waste water treatment plant.  
 E. All associated site works on site.  
 Application: 23/12/2025  
 Final date for submissions 04/02/2026

**CLASSIFIEDS**

Need a cheap ad? Wondering what newspaper? Advertise here for just €5 for up to 75 words.  
**849 0629**  
 editor@skerriesnews.ie

**Maths Grinds**  
 I'm a 3rd year physics and maths student giving higher level maths grinds. Attended SCC and achieved 625 in LC. All inquiries email skerries.grinds@gmail.com

**Miracle Prayer**  
 Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past, I have asked you for many favours. This time I ask for a very special one. Take it Dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your broken heart, where your father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. - DD

**Miracle Prayer**  
 Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past, I have asked you for many favours. This time I ask for a very special one. Take it Dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your broken heart, where your father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. - LM

**Miracle Prayer**  
 Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past, I have asked you for many favours. This time I ask for a very special one. Take it Dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your broken heart, where your father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. - ED

**Raven History Group**  
 The Raven History Group is running a course, "History of Christianity from Crusades to Present". Commencing 7th February Skerries GAA Club at 11.15am. Lectures, Trips, Socials .  
 Text 0879549700/sog1@campus.ie. onmicrosoft.com All welcome

MANCHILD

# Blue Monday came and went (and Tuesday didn't help one bit, by the way)

DAVID DIEBOLD

BY now, January has stopped pretending.

December, for all its chaos, keeps you distracted. Lights, lists, dinners you agreed to in a moment of seasonal optimism. January arrives in wet socks, sits down heavily on the couch, and points at the credit card bill until you admit you've been eating chocolate for breakfast since St Stephen's Day.

And then someone decided we needed a special day to "mark" the misery.

Blue Monday, they call it - as if Monday needed branding.

Still. I'll grant them this: yesterday had a certain density. Monday the 19th came with that particular grey that doesn't even have the decency to be dramatic. Just a low ceiling of "this again," pressing down on Skerries like a damp hat.

I had half-planned to be upbeat. I had a list. I had the kind of optimism you only get before you open the curtains.

Then I did.

The dog looked at me as if to say, "Are we going out in that, or are we finally admitting we're indoor creatures?"

We went out, obviously. The dog cares about routine, not mood.

Down by the harbour, the sea had that iron look it gets in January - cold, quiet, competent. A few brave souls were doing the sea swim thing, laughing too loudly, and fair play to them. I admire them in the same way I admire people who run marathons: from a safe distance.

Anyway. Blue Monday passed. Tick. Badge earned. You'd think Tuesday might offer relief.

Reader, Tuesday did not deliver.

Tuesday wasn't even sad in an interesting way. Tuesday was beige. Tuesday was the realisation you're still finding pine needles in the car and you took the tree down a fortnight ago.

In some houses, the decorations have gone but the ghosts remain: the wreath that looks too accusing to throw out, the box of fairy lights sitting by the hall door like an unpaid invoice. You find yourself eating the last of the tin of sweets with the solemnity of a Viking funeral. In town, you can see it on faces in the SuperValu queue, the nod that says: yes, we're back at it, no, I'm not delighted. Even the seagulls sound like they're complaining.

This part of the month is weird. Christmas is far enough away that you can't dine out on "sure it's still the holidays," but not far enough away that you've emotionally recovered. The kids are back in school, which means you are too, whether you like it or not.

And the light. The light is the main offender. It gets dark at a time when you still feel you should have options. Four-thirty is not a morally acceptable hour to be considering pajamas. Yet there you are, at 4:37, making tea like you're stoking a lighthouse.

You start bargaining with yourself. If I put the big lamp on, it might count as mental health. If I eat soup, it's practically a reset.

You also get sentimental in January, but in a slightly savage way: your brain shows you one perfect summer evening from years ago, then drags you back to the present by the ankle.

January blues are basically your brain doing a stocktake.

What have you achieved? Who have you avoided? Why are you suddenly thinking about that thing you said in 2009?

You can laugh at it - I do, mostly, because if you don't laugh you'll

*'You keep going. You moan, but you keep going. You put on another layer and get out for a walk...'*

end up Googling symptoms at 2am - but there's something real in it too. A low hum. A tiredness that isn't just physical. Everything takes a little more effort when the world goes dark early and the year ahead still feels enormous.

So what do you do?

You do what Irish people have always done. You keep going. You moan, but you keep going. You put on another layer and you get out for a walk, even if it's only to the corner and back.

You also allow yourself small tricks.

You light a candle at 5pm and call it atmosphere instead of admitting you're fighting for your life. You put on music that reminds you your knees were once decorative. You plan one modest thing for February - not a reinvention, just a marker that says: there will be a night out, there will be laughter.

And if you can, you check in on other people. January blues are sneaky: they convince you you're the only one feeling it. Meanwhile, half the town is wandering around with the same "why is everything so loud and grey" look, pretending they're fine because everyone else is pretending too.

I don't have a grand solution. I'm suspicious of grand solutions, especially in January. But I do have a tiny superstition: treat the week after Blue Monday as a weather system, not a verdict.

It will pass. The light will come back. Someone will say, "It's fierce mild," and we'll all believe it because we want to.

Until then, if Tuesday wasn't a day at the funfair, that's alright. Some days are just the corridor. You get through them.

You put the kettle on. You tap the dashboard.

Just in case.

**The Tao of Molly** by David Diebold and Aisling Leneghan is out now, all profits to Skerries Youth Support Services (syss.ie)

PULLING POWER



Photos by Ray Watts

**BARNEY'S TRACTORS:** The 2026 Barney Greene Tractor Run took place on January 4 with almost 200 tractors participating. All funds raised go to St Francis Hospice.



**THE SNUG**  
NEW STREET, SKERRIES

# belgardsales

Google  
5 STAR RATING



Balcunnin, Skerries | By Appointment Only | [belgardsales.ie](http://belgardsales.ie)

## Check out some of our stock for sale!

## See [belgardsales.ie](http://belgardsales.ie) for more



2023  
Hyundai  
Ioniq 6  
Automatic  
Electric  
101,000 km  
€23,599



2017  
Volvo XC90  
2.0 Diesel  
Automatic  
105,000 km  
€37,900



2024  
Tesla  
Model 3  
Automatic  
Electric  
39,000 km  
€36,900



2021  
BMW 5 Series  
2.0 Diesel  
Automatic  
80,000 km  
€33,900



2017  
Mercedes-Benz  
GLA Class  
1.6 Petrol  
Automatic  
23,000 km  
€19,900



2018  
BMW 3 Series  
2.0 Diesel  
Automatic  
93,000 km  
€19,999



2015  
BMW 5 Series  
2.0 Diesel  
Automatic  
177,023 km  
€12,899



2019  
Nissan Leaf  
Automatic  
Electric  
74,000 km  
€9,900

### Enquire: 087 680 4873

WARRANTY ON ALL CARS. AFTER HOURS VIEWING AVAILABLE  
WE ALSO BUY CARS, VIEWING BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

**WE'RE HIRING!**  
Car Valetor / Driver  
087 680 4873