

The National Ploughing Championships 2022

The 91st National Ploughing Championships took place in Ratheniska in September 2022 and Laois Federation hosted the ICA marquee. There was a fantastic array of events, from flower arranging to crime prevention. Many thanks to Anne Cass and all her Federation committee for the varied programme and information table.

The Brown Bread Baking Competition sponsored by Aldi, was one of the highlights of the Championship. We were delighted to have two ICA members as finalists: Maeve Louli, Meath Federation and Tina Early, Galway Federation.

Congratulations to the winner Mr Daragh O'Brien from Killock.

We received over 30 expressions of interest to join the ICA over the 3 days, these have been passed on to the relevant Federations. We look forward to welcoming many new members.

CAPTION COMPETITION:

Would you like to win an ICA book of Bread and Baking? What is Michael D. Higgins saying to our National President Hilda Roche? Come up with the answer and caption to the photo to be in with a chance of winning. Email your answer to office@ica.ie by Monday 19th December.



Unity in Diversity

Unity in Diversity is a Handcraft project funded by the Education Training Boards of the City of Dublin and Cork as part of the REACH Fund 2022.

The project aims to support the integration of women living in urban communities of need and in rural isolation by supporting community education, providing learning opportunities at local level aimed at the provision of skills training and or upskilling covering the subject of Arts and Handcrafts. The courses in Dublin took place in Central Office, led by artist Anne Fleeton, a skilled handcraft and textile artist. In Cork, courses are taking place with ICA tutor Eleanor Calnan. We take this opportunity to thank ETBs and the Reach Fund for their support



Issue No: 5 December 2022

A Chomhbhail, fellow members,

A lot has happened in ICA since the last newsletter went out in September. Confidential ICA business has been leaked to the media resulting in public controversy for our great organisation. It has been very upsetting for all. There are so many plans in the pipeline to showcase all that is great about ICA, the talent, the money raised for charities, the events held in Guilds and Federations, and the work done by ICA members in their communities.

In September we had three great days at the ploughing in Laois. Congratulations to Laois Federation on the fabulous display of crafts in the ICA tent. Federation President Ann Cass and her team did a superb job and had a great variety of demonstrations. Tina Early and Maeve Louli our two finalists in the National Brown Bread Competition did ICA proud. I attended the 90th anniversary of the W.I in Northern Ireland and was at the 90th anniversary of Innishannon Guild Cork. October was another busy month starting with the Arts weekend organised by the Arts Committee. Ballinora Guild won a Bronnra for their history of Ballinora Village. I had a lovely group of ladies on the drama course. I was at a meeting in Marley Guild Dublin. They have nearly 100 members and have a great programme of activities. Some members had learnt how to play the ukulele on zoom during lockdown and we enjoyed their playing. Celbridge Guild Kildare celebrated their 60th Anniversary with a delicious afternoon tea. Carrick-on-Suir Guild also celebrated 60 years with a dinner dance. As I write this, I am thinking of June O'Dwyer who loved these sorts of events. We had, what turned out to be, our last dance together. May she Rest In Peace. I was sorry I couldn't attend the Bronnra event in Mullingar organised by the Produce committee. Congratulations to the organisers and those who were awarded Bronnras. I attended the Women in Agriculture Conference in Trim Co Meath and sent a message to Macra na Feirme who were holding their conference in An Grianán. There was great feedback on the Winter Conference in Cork. My thanks to Ena Howell Cork Federation President and all her team for looking after us so well. In November I visited Sandyford Guild Dublin and heard of all their events and activities. I was in Kildare for more celebrations as Maynooth Guild celebrated their 70th anniversary with afternoon tea and Newbridge Guild celebrated their 60th with a meal and a trip to the local theatre to see the play, Calendar Girls. Fundraising idea for ICA?! I was delighted to attend Laois Federation's meeting in Mountmellick where my mother came from. I have so many childhood memories of visits and holidays there. My last trip was to Galway for the launch of the strategic plan for 2022-2025 of the National Breast Cancer Research Institute. ICA has long been involved in fundraising and supporting this work. As we move into December Guilds and Federations will be having Christmas events. I am looking forward to joining Westmeath Federation for afternoon tea. I hope to see some of you at the Christmas events in An Grianán which are always fabulous and to visit my own Guild too for our Christmas celebrations.


Thank you for your support and for your encouraging messages.
Nollaig Shona Daoibh, Le gach dea-ghuá



Hilda Roche
Hilda Roche, National President

Timelines to AGM 2023

To comply with the ICA Constitution, Guilds are reminded of the important dates for receipt of Motions to be considered at AGM 2023.

- 
- End of December 2022: Guilds submit motions to Federation for consideration.
 - 10th February 2023: deadline for receipt of motions at Central Office.
 - 25th February 2023: Draft AGM agenda to be circulated to Guilds, 90 days in advance of the AGM.
 - 12th April 2023: deadline for receipt of suggested amendments to motions submitted for inclusion on AGM agenda will be considered by the National Procedures Committee.
 - 28th April: Issuing of Final Agenda to Guilds by post.
 - Saturday 27th May 2023 AGM

Digital communication Guidelines

Guild WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms are a very useful and efficient way of communicating.

The aim of using WhatsApp is to send messages to the entire Guild, which are relevant to ICA.

The messages in the Guild WhatsApp groups can come from members in their personal capacity or are sent on behalf of the Guild or Federation Committee. The ICA Central Office neither sends nor monitors messages on WhatsApp.

ICA requests that Guild members note the following guidelines when using Guild WhatsApp groups.

1. The group should never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a fellow member, a committee member or the association as a whole.
2. The group is not a political platform for airing opinions on current affairs.
3. The group should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group.
4. Posting in a WhatsApp group is considered to be posting on social media, so defamation laws apply to WhatsApp comments and messages.

Deirdre Dunne is the Support Co-ordinator with ALONE. She is available to attend Guild and Federation meetings to speak to members on how to support older people to age at home. She can be contacted by email or phone, see below:
deirdre.dunne@alone.ie or by phone on 083 0625966

CLARIFICATION ON MATTERS RAISED RECENTLY IN THE PRESS

ICA Structure – work to date:

The ICA is a charitable organisation, consisting of two interlinked facets:

- The Countrywomen's Trust is a registered company limited by guarantee (CLG) set up in 1956.
- The Irish Countrywomen's Association is an unincorporated association, founded in 1910.

The current National Executive Board (NEB) has been engaged with the Charities Regulator since last November (2021) to address this and the related regulatory issues seeking to ensure full compliance with both company law and charity law and this engagement is ongoing. This remains the priority. As this process develops, we will provide further updates.

The ICA have retained legal advisors due to the work we are doing with the Charities Regulator. Their advice has been essential in relation to our legal structure and governance. All appointments followed appropriate procedure.

Historic matters

ICA has received correspondence from members and Guilds across the country seeking clarification on matters which were reported in the national press. Some of the issues highlighted in the press relate to our structure which is being addressed as outlined above.

Here are the facts in relation to the other issues raised:

- The office rental was a temporary measure. This is no longer the practice. The matter has been addressed with the Charities Regulator and all appropriate governance measures have been put in place since.
- Entertainment costs relate to entertainment arranged for members throughout the year in An Grianán, e.g. Federation weekends. This is a cost incurred in furtherance of our charitable objects. As part of the educational and cultural activities organised in An Grianán and with the aim to promote Irish culture, week-end long activities provided to the members often offer local Irish entertainment as part of both such objectives and as to enable bringing together women in friendship and fellowship. The entertainment costs, as presented in the Financial Statements cost, refer to musicians and artists contributing to this purpose on ad-hoc occasions.
- The art sale took place sixteen years ago. Having carried out relevant checks, it is the understanding that the sale was within the remit of the relevant decision-makers at the time. It was their role to make decisions in relation to the property of the ICA, for the benefit of An Grianán and acting in the best interests of the charity. It is also our understanding that both the art sale and the commission from the sale of Daniel O'Donnell concert tickets supported the urgent needs of An Grianán e.g. fixing of kitchen roof.

All of these financial matters were fully disclosed in the Financial Statements of the relevant year.

Grant Thornton produced a Report from the Review of Policies and Procedures in place for the payment of the National President of the Irish Countrywomen's Association in September 2018. The matter of its circulation was addressed at the Reconvened AGM held on 23rd November 2019 in the Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise. The record shows that members were provided with the relevant explanation.

We are doing everything possible to secure a strong and positive future for the benefit of you, our members, and the organisation we love.



ALONE

Supporting older people
to age at home



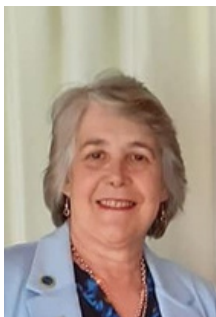
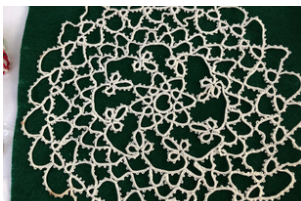
An Grianán upcoming events 2023

The varied programme of events in An Grianán can be viewed on the website www.an-grianan.ie

Coming up in 2023 is Laceweek, which will take place from 20th to 24th February. Handcraft Week will take place from 27th - 31st March. For more information, please contact Niamh Donegan and her staff on 041-9822119.



Photos from Handcraft week '22 (left) and an example of lacework made during Laceweek '22 (right)



June O'Dwyer R.I.P. Regional President of the South West Region

It is with great regret that the ICA announced the passing of June O' Dwyer, ICA Regional President of the South West on Thursday 24th November 2022. June has been a member of the National Advisory Committee since 2018 as she represented South Tipperary as Federation President from 2018 – 2021. June joined the present National Executive Board in May 2021 when she was elected ICA Regional President of the South West.

A committed ICA member, June has been an active member of South Tipperary Federation for more than 20 years. She has held many roles at Guild and Federation level and was a keen supporter of the 15 plus Guilds in her Federation.

A well-loved and passionate member of ICA, June was always on hand to help her fellow members on the National Executive Board and the Federation Committee. Her loss will be keenly felt at National, Federation and local level.

June is survived by her daughters Sharon and Helena and son Jonathan, and our thoughts and prayers are with all the family at this sad and difficult time.

May she Rest In Peace.

Above, June O'Dwyer on the right with Hilda Roche, National President and Ann Lonergan, Chair of the National Advisory Committee at the 80th Anniversary of South Tipperary Federation in 2021.



Left; Borris in Ossory Guild, Laois Federation has once again supported the Shoe Box Appeal, an annual campaign that delivers gifts straight into the hands of children affected by poverty. The Guild has added 72 boxes to the 270 boxes that were already brought to Portlaois by the Guild.

Thank you for your inspiring efforts.



Pictured left to right: Professor Michael Kerin, Research Director, Hilda Roche, ICA National President, and Caroline Loughnane, Chairperson National Breast Cancer Research Institute at the launch of Strategic Plan 2022-2025 on Wednesday the 30th of November.



Explore the finest range of exclusive gift ideas handmade by local craftspeople at the annual Waterford Crafts Christmas Craft Fair until the 22nd of December. To find more information: <https://mail.gartermilane.ie/events/christmas-craft-fair-2022/>



Above; Guilds in Monaghan Federation restarted their meetings in September and have wasted no time!



Left; Congratulations to Camross Guild in Wexford Federation! The Guild has celebrated its first meeting in the new Hub building



Behind the masks!
Members of Dunshauglin Guild, Meath Federation attended the Dunshauglin Harvest Festival!



ICA Noticeboard



Galway Federation Spring Conference Dinner

Galway Federation are hosting a dinner with entertainment on Friday 10th March in the Galway Bay Hotel. Tickets cost €35 euro. Please contact Rose Mary Conneely to buy your ticket on 087 2176443 or by email rmconly@gmail.com



The Spring Conference 2023

The Spring Conference will take place in the Galway Bay Hotel on Saturday 11th March 2023.

The Galway Bay is situated in Salthill and there is a special rate for ICA members.

To book please call 091 514 645 and remember to note your ICA membership.



Full and Plenty cookbook

Marie Keane, Tuam Guild, is looking to buy a copy of the original edition of Maura Laverty's 400-page cookbook 'Full and Plenty'. It was first published in the 1960s. If you can help, please contact Marie by email on keanembmarie@gmail.com

Safefood Ireland

There are many helpful resources on the Safefood Ireland website www.safefood.net

Notice of AGM 2023

The AGM of the ICA will take place on Saturday 27th May 2023 in the Athlone Springs Hotel, Athlone Co. Westmeath. Call 090 644 444 to book. Remember to note your ICA membership when booking.



Left and right; Kilkenny Federation conferred long service certificates to some of their members.



Above; members of Mountmellick Guild, Laois Federation who had a lovely visit from Hilda Roche, National President. Hilda's mother came from Mountmellick and she shared many of her early memories of her visits to Mountmellick.



Above; The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) European Area Conference was held on 19-22 September 2022 in Glasgow, Scotland.



Above; Sandyford Guild, Dublin Federation, with Hilda Roche, National President..



Above; What a Ploughing and what beautiful stands!



Left; Maynooth Guild who celebrated its 70th birthday



Congratulations to Sheila Smith, the winner of the Solo Singing Competition portrayed here on the right together with Hilda Roche on the left.



Left; Castlebar Guild's collection for the Shoebox Appeal, with Mary O'Reilly, Eileen Quinn and Eileen Derrig



Above; Mayo Federation Table Quiz. Pictured left to right: Geraldine Kavanagh from Bonniconlon Guild, who hosted the night and prepared the questions, Sheila Baynes, Maura McGuinness, and Patricia Lavelle.



On the 5th of November ICA held its Winter Conference 2022 in Cork, a great day in which members had the opportunity to meet up and hear more on some important topics.

A special thanks to the Conference supporters, Safefood, SielBleu, Green Thread and TASK, who delighted us with interesting presentations and information about their work.