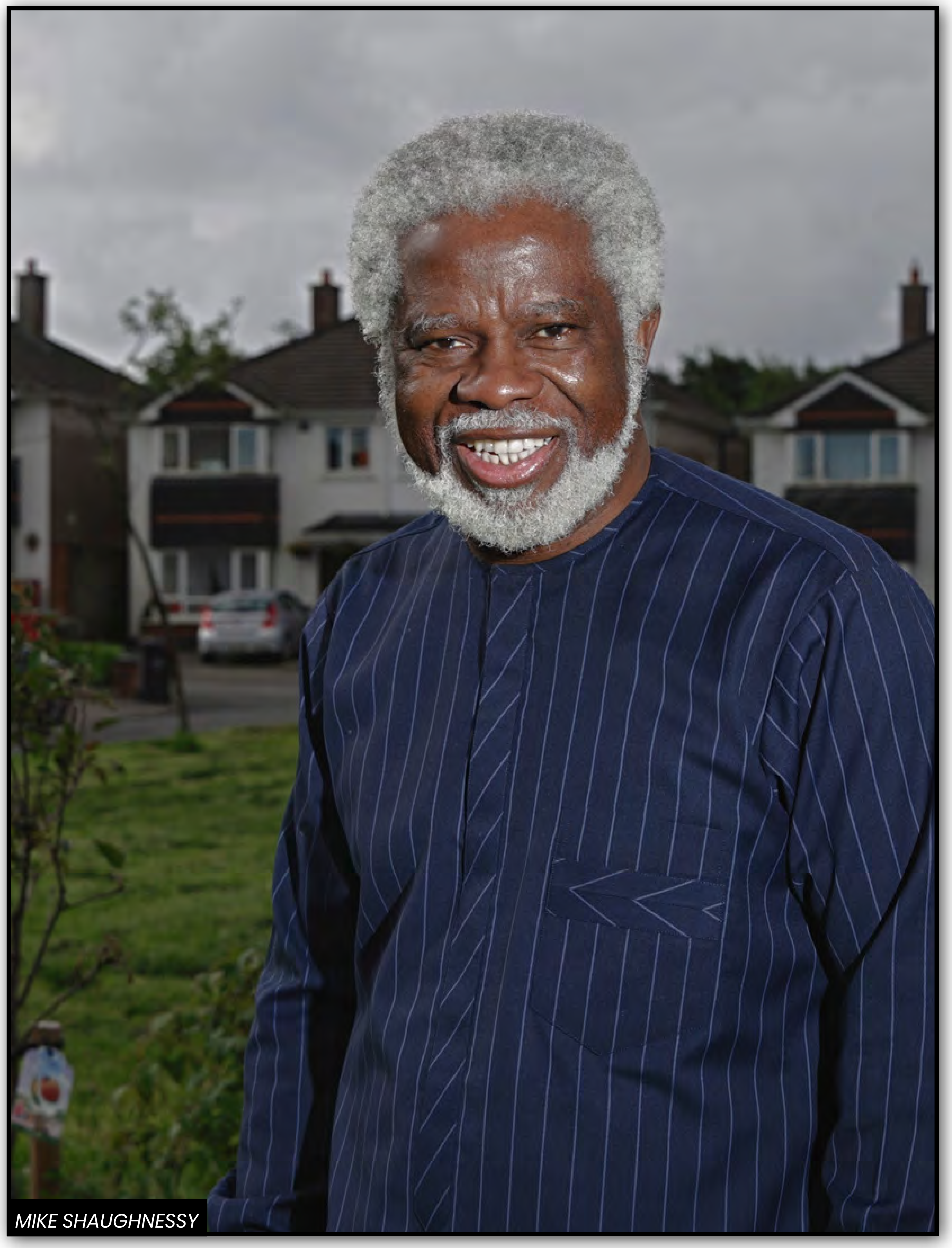
POSITIVE AGEING WEEK 2023 OUR LOCAL HEROES

Reframing how we think, feel, and act about older age



MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Andy Osayimwen

Is Gael-Nigéarach é Andy agus sna seascaidí atá sé. Bhog sé go Gaillimh in 2015 chun cónaí ansin lena bhean chéile agus a chúigear clainne. Cé gur mar eacnamaí atá sé cáilithe, chuir sé spéis i bhforbairt pobail i dtús na 90idí nuair a thosaigh sé post mar bhainisteoir tionscadail in eagraíocht (Operation the Youths Must Survive) a thug léargas agus misneach do dhaoine le linn na paindéime VEID/SEIF. Eagraíocht phobalbhunaithe a bhí inti a thug cuairt ar scoileanna, oifigí, carrchlóis agus áiteanna poiblí eile chun eolas agus oideachas a chur ar fáil don phobal.

Tar éis dó teacht go hÉirinn, thosaigh Andy ag obair go deonach le Ability West, áit ar thug sé daoine amach chuig imeachtaí sóisialta chun cluichí a imirt agus deoch a ól uair sa tseachtain. Bhí sé ag obair le Enable Ireland chomh maith, ag cuidiú leo airgead a bhailiú. Bhí sé ina bhall d'fhoireann oibrithe deonacha Gaillimh 2020, áit ar chuidigh sé cláir a chur le chéile agus imeachtaí a eagrú. Is mór an cúnamh a thug sé lena chinntiú gurbh í tairiscint Chathair na Gaillimhe a roghnaíodh i gcomórtas a raibh mórchathracha Eorpacha eile istigh air freisin.

Chomh maith leis sin, bíonn obair dheonach ar bun go páirtaimseartha ag Andy mar Stiúrthóir Airgeadais in eagraíocht charthanachta i nGaillimh, TREM House of Mercy.

Nuair nach mbíonn sé ag obair, is maith leis an léitheoireacht agus a bheith ag siúl ar mhaithe leis an bhfolláine, agus is fear mór spóirt é freisin.

Andy is a Nigerian-Irishman in his mid 60's, who moved to Galway in 2015 to enable him to live with his wife and family of five children. Though qualified as an Economist, his interest in community development came to the fore in the early 90's when he became a project manager of an organisation (Operation the Youths Must Survive) which provided enlightenment during the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It was a community-based organisation which visited schools, offices, motor parks and other public places offering information and education to the community.

After coming to Ireland, Andy began volunteering with Ability West where he took service users on social outings for indoor games and drinks once a week. He also worked with Enable Ireland, helping with fundraising and with Galway 2020 where he was part of the volunteering team which helped to put together programs and activities - assisting in no small way to ensure Galway City won the competitive bid also entered by other notable European Cities.

Andy also volunteers on a part-time basis as a Finance Director in a charity organisation in Galway, TREM House of Mercy.

In his free time, he enjoys reading and walking to keep a healthy lifestyle and is an avid sports enthusiast.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Angela Fahy

Is iomaí focal a d'fhéadfaí a úsáid agus tú ag cur síos ar Angela Fahy: cairdiúil, lách, tugtha don spórt, don cheol, don scéalaíocht agus don scríbhneoireacht, agus dearcadh oscailte aici agus teacht aniar inti, agus níl ansin ach a thús. Rugadh Angela in 1934 agus d'fhás sí suas i gceantar Chreachmhaoile tar éis gur cuireadh ar altramas í. Bhí sí ag obair i bPáirc Mhuirlinne agus í amach sna déaga. Is iomaí cuimhne gheal atá aici ón gceantar, áit a ndeachaigh sí ag damhsa le cairde nua, agus áit ar chas sí ar a fear céile, a phós sí in 1954. Naonúr páistí atá ag Angela agus 15 gharpháiste. Cúigear páistí atá ag na garpháistí agus beirt atá sa chéad ghlúin eile. Is duine í Angela a thugann faoin saol go gníomhach fonnmhar. Tá neart rudaí a bhfuil suim aici iontu, agus d'aithneofá sin ó na scéalta spéisiúla a bhíonn aici.

Bíonn loinnir i súile Angela agus í ag cuimhneamh siar ar an am atá caite. Tá cuimhní aici ar thráthnónta ag imirt biongó, oícheanta fada a chaitheamh ag damhsa ag an Astaire nó an Seapoint agus coinneáil uirthi ansin chuig an mbálsheomra arbh fhearr léi, an Hangar.

Ní bac uirthi é aois Angela ar chor ar bith agus ní ligeann sí d'aon rud stop a chur léi. Caitheann sí an chuid is mó dá cuid ama anois ag suí faoin ngrian sa phóirse, ag féachaint ar an saol mór ag dul thar bráid, ag bualadh lena cairde, ag insint scéalta, ag canadh amhrán, agus ag éisteacht leis an nuacht is déanaí ón dream óg.

Good humoured, open-minded, resilient, a storyteller, kind, interesting, lover of sports, music and writing - these are just some of the many words that could be used to describe Angela Fahy. Born in 1934, Angela was a fostered-out child, who grew up in the Craughwell area. She worked in Merlin Park from her late teens, where she has many fond memories of making new friends to go to dances with and meeting her husband, whom she married in 1954. Angela has 9 children, 15 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren. She has a lust for life, with many passions and interests, which are very evident in her captivating stories.

As Angela reminisces, you can see the glint in her eyes. From the memories of the evenings she spent playing bingo, dancing the evening away in The Astaire, or The Seapoint and maybe finishing the night off dancing in The Hangar (her favourite ballroom).

Angela is the embodiment of positive ageing; she won't let anything keep her down. She now spends many of her days sitting in her sun trapped porch, watching the world go by, meeting up with friends, sharing stories, singing songs and listening to what is going on in the world for younger generations.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Anne Cox

Rugadh Anne i nGaillimh, chaith sí roinnt blianta i mBaile Átha Cliath agus ansin d'fhill sí ar Ghaillimh chun tús a chur lena gairm mar mhúinteoir – gairm a mhair beagnach 40 bliain agus a thaitin go mór léi ar feadh an ama sin. Is gearr go mbeidh seachtó bliain slánaithe aici. Tá sí pósta, agus tá ceathrar páistí aici, chomh maith le beirt gharmhac a bhfuil sí an-cheanúil orthu. Tá Anne an-ghnóthach ó chuaigh sí ar scor in 2013. Thosaigh sí le ranganna scileanna ríomhaireachta, agus bíonn rud éigin ar bun aici i gcónaí. Tar éis di teacht chuici féin ón ailse in 2016, ghlac sí páirt i ngrúpa ceardaíochta agus fuála de chuid Ionad Acmhainní an Taoibh Thiar. Rinne siadsan níos mó ná 200 cairdeagan do naíonáin réamhaibí in Ospidéal Choláiste na hOllscoile, Gaillimh, agus hataí beaga ag gabháil leo. Baineann Anne an-tairbhe as bualadh go rialta le daoine a bhfuil an meon céanna acu léi féin agus tuigeann sí go mbaineann tábhacht mhór leis an nasc sóisialta sin.

Is ball deonach í Anne de Bhord an Ionaid Acmhainní agus tugann sí cúnamh le roinnt imeachtaí agus gníomhaíochtaí do pháistí i rith Fhéile Ealaíon an Taoibh Thiar (Westside Arts Festival), féile a mbíonn an-tóir uirthi. Chomh maith leis sin, is ball í de ghrúpa lásadóireachta, Lásadóirí na Coiribe, agus bhain sí an-taitneamh as caille a dhéanamh dá hiníon anuraidh as lása Charraig Mhachaire Rois.

Is maith le Anne a bheith ag déanamh damhsa líne, aeróbaic uisce, agus ag déanamh taighde ar a sinsir, agus is é an caitheamh aimsire is fearr léi ná a bheith ag bácáil dá cairde agus dá gaolta. Ní stopfaidh sí ag foghlaim rudaí nua go brách. D'fhill sí ar an rothaíocht le linn na srianta a cuireadh i bhfeidhm le linn COVID agus baineann sí an-spraoi as an ngníomhaíocht sin!

Anne was born in Galway, spent some years in Dublin and returned to Galway to start an almost forty year career in teaching, thoroughly enjoying every day. She will soon be seventy years old, is married with four grown up children and has two darling grandsons. Retirement in 2013 has provided Anne with a very busy schedule for the last ten years, starting with computer literacy classes. After recovery from cancer in 2016, she joined the Westside Resource Centre Craft and Patchwork group which produced over 200 sets of baby cardigans and hats for premature babies in University College Hospital Galway. Meeting with like-minded people on a regular basis is really important to Anne, bringing home to her how important this social connection is.

Anne is a voluntary member of the Board of the Westside Resource Centre, assisting with various events and child-centred activities during the popular Westside Arts Festival. She is also member of Lásadóirí na Coiribe, a lacemaking group and thoroughly enjoyed making her daughter's Carrickmacross veil last year.

Anne also enjoys line dancing, aquafit, ancestry research and baking for friends and relatives is her much loved pastime. Never one to stop learning, she returned to cycling again during COVID restrictions and thoroughly enjoys it!

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Ann King

Meon dearfach atá ag Ann maidir le bheith ag dul in aois. D'fhás sí aníos ar fheirm sa Láithreach Mór, Béal Átha Glúinín agus bhíodh sí ag obair go crua ó bhí sí óg, ag obair ar an bhfeirm mar go raibh cuid dá deartháireacha agus deirfiúracha níos sine imithe ar imirce. Shocraigh sí síos i nDabhach Uisce nuair a pósadh í féin agus John in 1967 agus thóg siad seachtar clainne. Thosaigh sí ag obair taobh amuigh den teach ansin agus tar éis di dul ar scor theastaigh uaithi rud éigin a thabhairt ar ais don phobal. Ba ansin a thug sí faoin obair dheonach, ag plé le lónadóireacht don phobal le COPE i nGaillimh. Baineann sí taitneamh as gach gné den obair mar cuireann sé cothú ar fáil do dhaoine scothaosta, go háirithe iad siúd atá ina n-aonar. Tá na baill foirne mar a bheadh teaghlach aici, agus tá gach duine lách agus meas acu ar a chéile. Is mór ag Anne é a bheith sa ghrúpa daoine sin. Is maith léi freisin obair dheonach a dhéanamh in Cheshire Galway, áit ar casadh daoine uirthi a bheidh ina cairde aici ar feadh a saoil. Tá Ann anonn sna hochtóidí anois agus tugann sí spreagadh don iomaí duine de bharr meon na hóige a bheith aici – bíonn sí ag garraíodóireacht, ag obair go deonach, ag tabhairt cuairt ar a leabharlann áitiúil, ag siúl agus ag tabhairt aire dá fear céile, John.

Creideann Ann go daingean gur cheart cabhrú le daoine eile agus bíonn cluas le héisteacht uirthi agus comhairle mhaith aici i gcónaí. Molann sí a bheith gníomhach agus tú ag dul in aois, aire a thabhairt do do shláinte, a bheith gnóthach agus coinneáil suas leis an saol sóisialta.

Ann has a positive attitude when it comes to ageing. She grew up on a farm in Laraghmore, Ballyglunin and worked hard from a young age, helping out on the farm as some of her older brothers and sisters had emigrated.

She settled into life in Doughiska after marrying John in 1967 and they reared seven children. She then worked outside the home and after retiring she wanted to give something back to the community, taking on voluntary work with Community Catering in COPE Galway. She enjoys all parts of the work as it provides sustenance for older people, especially some who are on their own. With a friendly family atmosphere, the team exudes kindness and respect, and Ann feels privileged to be part of that group. She also enjoys volunteering at Chesire Galway where she has made life-long friends too.

Well into her eighties, Ann is an inspiration to many as she remains young at heart by gardening, volunteering, visiting her local library, walking and caring for her husband, John. Ann's motto is to help others along and she is always there with a listening ear and some good advice. She recommends keeping active in older age, looking after your health, being occupied and keeping active socially.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Con O'Donovan

Ón uair a bhí Con ina fhear óg ag fás aníos in Ard Ó bhFicheallaigh lasmuigh de Chloich na Coillte, bhí sé gníomhach i gcónaí ina phobal. Bhí tionchar mór ag gluaiseacht na gcomharchumann – áit ar oibrigh comharsana agus pobail as lámha a chéile chun cabhrú le chéile, jabanna a dhéanamh sa cheantar, agus bheith ag obair mar ghrúpa – ar a dhearcadh ar an saol ón uair sin i leith. Rinne sé staidéar ar Eolaíocht Tuaithe agus Shóisialta i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, chuaigh sé ina Chomhairleoir Talmhaíochta agus bhí sé ina Stiúrthóir Ceantair sa Roinn Talmhaíochta nuair a chuaigh sé ar scor. 'Chaith mé 43 bliain ag obair agus bhain mé taitneamh as gach lá de. I nDún na nGall a bhuail mé le Eileen, mo bhean chéile álainn – bhí sí sách 'top of pops'! Pósadh muid in 1967, tá seisear páistí againn agus dáréag sa gharchlann.'

Rud eile a thug pobail le chéile arbh ea Cumann Lúthchleas Gael agus bhí Con sáite ann ar feadh a shaoil, ní hé amháin ar an bpáirc imeartha ach ag obair leis an eagraíocht féin ó bhí sé 15 bliana d'aois, nuair a bhí sé ina Rúnaí ar an gClub ag St. James', Ardfield. Bhí róil éagsúla aige agus go leor freagrachtaí eile air freisin le St. James' eile, in Mervue an babhta seo.

'Thug mé faoi deara le linn na paindéime go raibh an saol an-deacair ar go leor daoine nach raibh aon ghníomhaíocht ná cairde acu.' Is é an chomhairle a chuirfeadh Con ar gach duine, idir óg agus aosta, ná dul amach agus páirt a ghlacadh sa saol mór. 'Gheobhaidh tú ról i gcónaí, aimseoidh tú rud úsáideach le déanamh i do phobal féin.'

Since Con was a young man growing up in Ardfield outside Clonakilty, he has always been active in his community. From an early age the co-op movement - where neighbours and communities worked together to help each other out, do local jobs, work as a group - was a big influence on his outlook in life. He studied Rural and Social Science in University College Cork, became an Agricultural Advisor and retired as a District Superintendent in the Department of Agriculture. 'I worked 43 years and enjoyed every day of it. I met my lovely wife Eileen in Donegal, she was fairly "top of the pops"! We got married in 1967, have 6 children and 12 grandchildren.'

The GAA was another avenue where communities came together and Con has been steeped in GAA all his life, not only playing but taking on responsibilities within the organisation from the youthful age of 15, when he was the Club Secretary in his local St. James', Ardfield, to taking on various roles and many other responsibilities with another St. James' in Mervue.

'I found during COVID a lot of people who had no activity or friends found it very hard.' Con's advice to everyone, young and old is to get out and keep yourself involved. 'You'll always find a role, find something useful to do in your community.'

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Gerry Mylotte

Is as Dún Mór, Co. na Gaillimhe ó dhúchas do Gerry Mylotte agus tá sé ag cur faoi anois i gceantar Mervue i gcathair na Gaillimhe. Is fear gnaíúil é a mbíonn baint aige leis an iliomad gníomhaíochtaí a bhíonn ar bun ag pobal Mervue. Is breá leis aire a thabhairt dó féin agus tá a chroí is a anam sa snámh farraige, mar sin feicfidh tú é amuigh ag siúl gach lá agus é ar a bhealach ó Mervue go Bóthar na Trá le haghaidh seal a chaitheamh san uisce. Tá sé sin mar a bheadh cógas aige agus ní scaoileann sé an babhta snámha thairis riamh. Is cuma báisteach, clocha sneachta, gaoth nó sneachta a bheith ann, gabhfaidh sé amach chun tabhairt faoin siúl agus an snámh.

Ní fear é a bhíonn ina shuí síos go socair ach amháin nuair a bhíonn sé amuigh lena chairde i Sonas, ag imirt cártaí nó ag freastal ar an gClub Bricfeasta. Tá muinín ag Gerry as féin agus é ag gabháil fhoinn agus ní raibh drogall ar bith air páirt a ghlacadh in Sanctuary Choir Factor de chuid SCCUL i mbliana, rud ar bhain sé an-tairbhe as. Tá sé an-ghníomhach sa phobal, agus is breá leis a lá a chaitheamh ag cabhrú le daoine eile. Mar sin má bhíonn lámh chúnta ag teastáil ó dhuine ar bith níl le déanamh acu ach dul chuig Gerry.

Seans go bhfeicfeá an fear uasal seo freisin i mbun maoirseachta ag Staid an Phiarsaigh, áit a mbíonn sé ag obair go sona sásta ar an taobhlíne agus ag cabhrú le himreoirí na Gaillimhe, bídís ar an bpáirc nó lasmuigh di.

Tá Gerry 64 bliain d'aois.

Gerry Mylotte is originally from Dunmore, Co. Galway and now lives in the Mervue area of Galway city. He is an outgoing character and involves himself in the many activities the Mervue community has to offer. He loves to look after himself and is passionate about sea swimming, so you will see him clocking up his steps every day as he walks from Mervue to Salthill for his daily dip which he never misses as it's his medicine. No matter if there is rain, hail, wind or snow he will bear the elements to get his tonic.

Never a man to sit still except when he's socialising with his friends in Sonas, playing cards or attending the Breakfast Club. Gerry is a confident singer and without hesitation, took part in this year's SCCUL Sanctuary Choir Factor and thoroughly enjoyed it. He is very proactive in his community, and he loves to fill his day helping others, so if anyone needs a hand Gerry is always there to assist.

You could also find this legend of a man stewarding at Pearse Stadium, where he gets to experience his love for the game from the sideline and assisting the Galway Team on and off the pitch.

Gerry is 64 years old.

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Captian Charles John Ball

Bhíodh an Captaen Charles John Ball ina Mháistir Longa ar Aistir thar Lear sula ndeachaigh sé ar scor. Ó shin i leith bíonn sé ag gabháil don bhabhláil mata ghearr faoi dhíon le Cumann Scoir Ghníomhaigh Bhóthar na Trá. Is é John Cisteoir Cúnta an Chumainn Babhlála agus is eisean a thógann an t-airgead ag an doras.

Rud eile a bhfuil spéis ag John ann is ea an damhsa ciorcail, agus níl sé i bhfad ó chaith sé lá iomlán i nGairdín Bhríghide, áit a raibh sé féin agus grúpa daoine ag damhsa taobh istigh agus taobh amuigh ag an gciorcal cloch. Gach maidin ar feadh dhá uair an chloig déanann John a chuid cleachtaí fisiteiripe ina sheomra leapa chomh maith le hanálú domhain agus ióga. Ansin cuireann sé isteach 15 nóiméad ar a rothar cleachtaidh.

Ar feadh na mblianta d'fhreastail John ar dhamhsaí tae in Óstán Bhaile Chláir na Gaillimhe gach Domhnach agus b'annamh a scaoil sé aon damhsa thairis. Go dtí le déanaí bhíodh sé ag imirt Scrabble le grúpa daoine in Óstán Chuan na Gaillimhe, agus gach Déardaoin anois imríonn sé Scrabble le Clíona, iníon leis. Imríonn sé ficheall freisin le Richard, garmhac leis.

Tá John ina bhall den Ionad Fóillíochta in Óstán an Ardilaun agus téann sé ag snámh ansin uair sa tseachtain. Bhí sé san fharraige freisin le déanaí, ag trá na bhForbacha. Bhí John ina bhall de chlub gailf na Gaillimhe ar feadh thart ar 25 bliain ach ní imríonn sé galf a thuilleadh.

Captain Charles John Ball is a retired ship's Master Foreign Going. Since his retirement he has become involved in short mat indoor bowling with the Salthill Active Retirement Association. John is the Assistant Treasurer of the Bowling Club and takes the money at the door.

Another of John's interests is circle dancing, and recently he had a whole day at Brigit's Garden, where he and a larger group danced both indoors and outdoors at the stone circle. Every morning for 2 hours John does his physio exercises in his bedroom as well as yoga deep breathing. Then he does 15 minutes on his practice bike.

For years John has attended tea-dances in the Claregalway Hotel every Sunday where he rarely missed an afternoon dance. Until recently John played scrabble with a group at the Galway Bay Hotel and now every Thursday, he plays scrabble with his daughter Cliona. He also plays chess with his grandson Richard.

John is a member at the Leisure Centre in the Ardilaun Hotel and swims there once a week, and recently was swimming in the sea at Furbo beach. John was a member of Galway golf club for about 25 years but no longer plays. John is now 91 years of age.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Josephine O'Halloran

Sular imigh sí ar scor, bhí Josephine ag obair le Comhpháirtíocht Chathair na Gaillimhe in oifig an Bhaile Bháin.

Tráthnóna amháin thug a mac chuig an ionad pobail áitiúil i mBaile an Phoill í ag súil go mbeadh gníomhaíochtaí ar bun acu a thaitneodh léi. Thaitin siad léi go deimhin! Chláraigh Josephine le rang a bhí ar siúl ar an Máirt le grúpa daoine scothaosta eile a thug The Oak Tree Group orthu féin. Ina dhiaidh sin, rinne sí ranganna ealaíne, ríomhaireachta, ióga, tai chi, grianghrafadóireachta, ceoil, cócaireachta agus go leor eile. Ansin chláraigh sí le cór agus bhí sí ag canadh in éineacht leo ag roinnt ceolchoirmeacha. Tá sí ina Cathaoirleach ar The Oak Tree Group anois. Rinne sí cúrsa ar a dtugtar 'The Living Well Programme' ar Zoom le déanaí agus anois rachaidh sí i mbun oiliúna chun an cúrsa a mhúineadh í féin! Is ball í Josephine freisin den 'Coffee Morning Gang' a bhuaileann le chéile gach Luan i mBaile an Phoill chun píosa comhrá a dhéanamh agus bheith ag cniotáil agus ag fuáil. Ba é an chéad rud a rinne sí ná pluid linbh do mháithreacha agus naíonáin ón Úcráin a tháinig go Gaillimh.

Dúirt Josephine gurbh é clárú leis an Ionad Pobail i mBaile an Phoill an rud is fearr a rinne sí ar a son féin ó chuaigh sí ar scor. Tá comhluadar iontach ann, agus ní gá d'aon duine a bheith uaigneach níos mó.

Josephine is a retired lady who previously worked with Galway City Partnership in their Ballybane Office.

One evening her son brought her to their local community centre in Ballinfoile suggesting they may have activities for her to enjoy. And they did! Josephine joined a class on Tuesday mornings with a group of fellow mature students who called themselves the Oak Tree Group. She went on to complete classes in art, computing, yoga, tai chi, photography, music, cookery and more. Later she joined a choir group and has performed with them at a number of concerts. She has since gone on to become Chairperson of the Oak Tree Group. She recently completed a course called the 'Living Well Programme' over Zoom and will now go on to train to deliver the course herself! Josephine is also a member of the 'Coffee Morning Gang' who meet every Monday in Ballinfoile where she enjoys having a chat, doing some knitting and sewing. Her first offering was a baby blanket for Ukrainian mothers and babies coming into Galway.

Josephine said that joining the Community Centre in Ballinfoile was the best thing she did for herself since she retired. There is great companionship, and no one needs to feel lonely anymore.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Mary Fahey

Is iontach an Cúramóir Teaghlaigh í Mary a chaitheann a cuid ama ag tabhairt aire dá deirfiúr, bean a bhfuil míchumas intleachta idir éadrom agus measartha uirthi. Thug Mary aire dá tuismitheoirí freisin go dtí go bhfuair siad bás roinnt blianta ó shin. Ní hamháin go dtugann sí aire dá deirfiúr ó cheann ceann an lae, ach tacaíonn sí léi ina cuid fostaíochta freisin trí Scéim Dreasachta Fostaíochta.

Tá Mary agus a deirfiúr ina mbaill de chlub siúlóide áitiúil a mbaineann an bheirt acu an-mhaitheas as.

Ní gan ghábh a bhí saol Mary. Tá sí tagtha chuige féin ón ailse, ach dá ainneoin bíonn sí ag tabhairt go fonnmhar, stuama faoin saol. Díol suntais is ea féith an ghrinn atá inti agus a meon diongbháilte. Glacann Mary páirt i ngníomhaíochtaí pobail éagsúla, cosúil le club áitiúil na mban agus seisiún Aquafit seachtainiúil, agus is ball gníomhach í den Ghrúpa Tacaíochta do Chúramóirí ina ceantar féin.

Tá Mary 69 bliain d'aois agus is eiseamláir iontach í don aosú dearfach – bean atá dícheallach dúthrachtach, a ghlacann páirt sa phobal agus a bhfuil cur chuige an-dearfach aici i leith an tsaoil. Chun tabhairt faoin saol le díograis, bíonn gníomhaíocht beartaithe ag Mary gach lá – bualadh le cairde i gcomhair tae nó caife agus babhta comhrá, nó píosa siúlóide a dhéanamh leo. Tuigeann sí go gcaithfidh sí aire a thabhairt dá sláinte agus is é an mana atá aici ná coinneáil uirthi go gníomhach, dearfach chun an tseanaois a choinneáil ó dhoras chomh fada agus is féidir!

Mary is an exceptional Family Carer who devotes her time to caring for her sister who has a mild to moderate intellectual disability. Mary also took care of her parents until they passed away some years ago. Not only does she provide constant care for her sister, but she also supports her in her employment through an Employment Incentive Scheme.

Mary and her sister are also members of a local walking club which they both enjoy.

Mary's journey has not been without challenges. She is a cancer survivor, yet her determination shines through as she embraces life to the fullest. Her remarkable personality is highlighted by her sense of humour and positive attitude. Mary actively participates in various community activities, such as her local ladies club, her weekly Aquafit, and is an engaged member of her local Carer Support Group.

At 69 years, Mary is a wonderful model for positive ageing given her unwavering dedication, involvement and positivity. To embrace life to the fullest, Mary has an activity planned for every day, either by way of meeting friends to have a cuppa and a chat or a walk. She is conscious of keeping healthy and her motto to actively continue with positivity is to....'keep the old lady out' for as long as is possible!

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Pamela Hardiman

Rugadh Pamela ar an mBóthar Mór agus bhog sí go Mervue nuair a bhí sí ocht mbliana d'aois. Is ansin atá cónaí uirthi fós. Duine bodhar is ea í agus úsáideann sí an teanga chomharthaíochta. Chuaigh sí chuig scoil chónaithe do na bodhair agus í ceithre bliana d'aois. Nuair a chríochnaigh sí an scoil, thosaigh sí ag obair ag Royal Tara Giftware i nGaillimh, ag maisiú píosaí ceirmeacha. Bhí dúil mhór aici san ealaín i gcónaí agus ba chuid dá saol í.

Phós sí fear a bhfuil éisteacht aige agus bhí seisear páistí acu, atá fásta anois agus cónaí orthu i gcontaetha éagsúla. Choinnigh sí suas leis an ealaín agus leis an gceardaíocht agus is breá léi na ranganna ealaíne oideachais pobail a thugann GRETB. Is iomaí rud atá déanta aici: foghlaim faoi chomhréir na haghaidhe, cártaí a dhéanamh, bláthfhleasca a dhéanamh, coinnle a dhéanamh agus buidéil ghloine a mhaisiú.

Tá Pamela ar dhuine de bhunaitheoirí Ionad na mBodhar i nGaillimh agus tá baint aici leis an ionad sin le breis agus caoga bliain. Bhí sí ina Cathaoirleach, ina Cisteoir agus ina Rúnaí ar an gcoiste. Is breá léi gur as Gaillimh di agus a bheith ina ball de phobal na mBodhar, agus bíonn sí fós ag obair ar son cothroime agus comhionannas do phobal na mBodhar.

Pamela was born in Bohermore and moved to Mervue when she was eight years of age, remaining there since. She is deaf and a sign language user and went to a boarding school for the deaf at the age of four. When she finished school, she started working at Royal Tara Giftware in Galway, decorating ceramic pieces. She has always loved art and it became a part of her life.

She married a hearing man and had six children who are all now adults living in several counties. She has kept up the art and crafts and absolutely loves the GRETB community education art classes that she attends. She has done everything from learning the proportions of the face, to making cards, wreath making, candle making and decorating glass bottles.

Pamela is a founding member of the Galway Deaf Centre (GDC) and has been involved with them for over fifty years. She held positions as Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary on the committee.

She loves being a Galwegian and a member of the deaf community and continues to advocate for fairness and equality for the deaf community.

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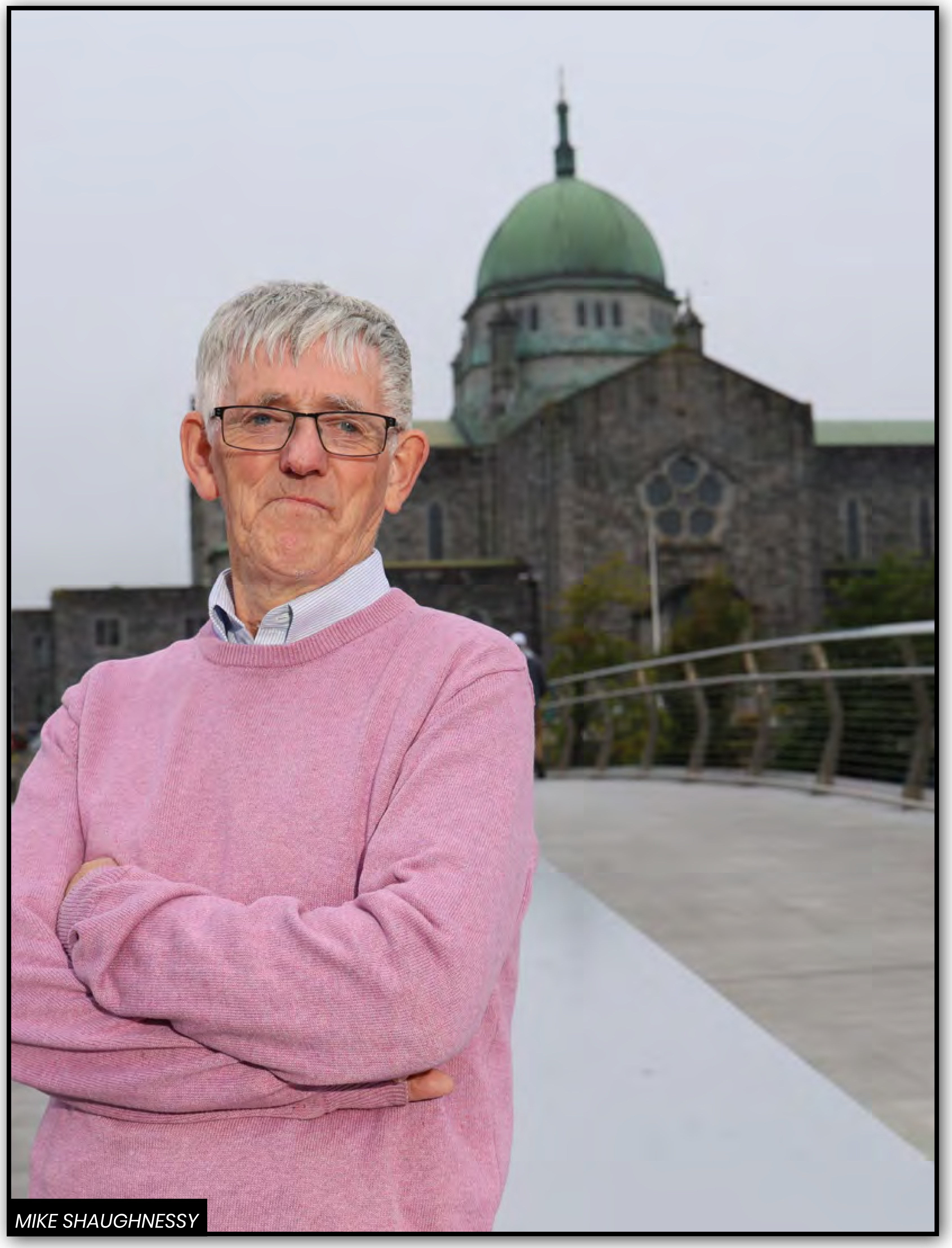

MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Peter McDonagh

Is mór an méid atá déanta ag Peter ina shaol agus é 72 bliain d'aois anois. Is as Cloch na Rón ó dhúchas dó, agus tá cónaí air i nGaillimh ó bhí sé 18 mbliana d'aois. I nDabhach Uisce atá sé anois ina árasán féin, agus is breá leis a shaol neamhspleách ansin.

Ainmníodh Peter faoi dhó do Ghradam an Mhéara le cúpla bliain anuas as an méid a chuir sé le saol an phobail sa chathair. Bhí sé ag obair i siopa Naomh Uinseann de Pól ar feadh 22 bliain agus thaitin sé sin go mór leis. Is iomaí cara a casadh air ansin. Is breá le Peter a bheith ag péinteáil agus tá an-chumas grianghrafadóireachta aige. Téann sé chuig ranganna go rialta chun snas a chur ar na scileanna sin. Tá sé ina ghrianghrafadóir anois ag go leor de na himeachtaí a reáchtálann Seirbhís Bhráithre na Carthanachta. Bíonn sé i gcónaí i láthair ann chun na seomraí a shocrú roimh na cruinnithe.

Is iomaí saothar ealaíne atá déanta aige don gharraí daingean i gCill Churnáin tríd an gclár 'That's Life' a ritheann Bráithre na Carthanachta. Freastalaíonn Peter ar ghrúpaí abhcóideachta agus ar chomhdhálacha a bhaineann le habhcóideacht, agus cothaíonn sé feasacht ar chearta daoine faoi mhíchumas ina chuid oibre le Bráithre na Carthanachta.

Reáchtálann Peter a sheisiúin Come Dine With Me féin lena chairde agus baineann sé an-taitneamh as fáilte agus féile a chur ar fáil dá chuid aíonna. Tá sé buíoch as an saol a chaith sé agus deir sé i gcónaí go bhfuil an t-ádh air an saol sin a bheith aige.

Peter has fit a huge amount into his 72 years. From Roundstone originally, he has lived in Galway since he was 18 years and now lives in Doughiska in his own apartment, loving the independence it gives him.

Peter was nominated twice for a Mayoral Award over the past few years for his contribution to community life in the city. He worked in the St Vincent de Paul shop for 22 years and loved it, making many friends while he was there. Peter adores painting and has a great gift for photography, regularly attending classes to improve these skills. He is now the photographer for many of the events run by the Brothers of Charity Service, where he's always there to help set up the rooms in advance of meetings.

He has made many artistic pieces for the walled garden in Kilcornan through the "That's Life" Brothers of Charity programme. Peter attends advocacy groups and conferences relating to advocacy, and promotes awareness of disability rights with the Brothers of Charity.

Peter runs his own "Come Dine With Me" sessions with his friends and he really enjoys entertaining and looking after his guests. He is grateful and always says he is very lucky to have the life he has.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Philomena Grealish

Shlánaigh Philomena, nó Phil mar is fearr aithne uirthi, 80 bliain d'aois i mbliana. In Mervue na Gaillimhe atá cónaí uirthi, agus tháinig sí ansin ó Chorcaigh in 1968. Tá baint ag Phil le go leor eagraíochtaí agus is cúis bhróid aici a bheith ina ball gníomhach de Bhord Chomhar Creidmheasa Cholm Cille, áit a bhfuil sí ar an gCoiste Margaíochta agus ar an gCoiste Creidmheasa faoi láthair. Tá baint ag Phil le heagraíochtaí eile ar nós SCCUL Enterprises CLG agus Coiste Cuimhneacháin na bPáistí in Ospidéal na hOllscoile, Gaillimh, i measc go leor eile.

Thart ar 10 mbliana ó shin, bhí Phil páirteach i ngrúpa a chuir tús leis an gclár oibrithe deonacha a chuireann fáilte roimh dhaoine in Ospidéal na hOllscoile, Gaillimh, ina bhfuil 40 oibrí deonach anois. In 2017 bronnadh an gradam 'oibrí deonach na bliana' ar Phil as ucht Seirbhís don Phobal agus Cuimsiú Sóisialta i rith na mblianta fada a chaith sí ag obair go deonach le grúpaí éagsúla i gcathair na Gaillimhe agus go háirithe le Comhar Creidmheasa Cholm Cille.

Caitheann Phil an-chuid ama gach lá ag tacú le muintir a pobail féin. Bíonn sí gníomhach ag siúl, ag bualadh le cairde agus ag lorg deis cuidiú le daoine a bhfuil cuidiú ag teastáil uathu. Tá aithne fhairsing agus meas mór ar Phil ina háit chónaithe agus san áit a ndéanann sí obair dheonach. Is eiseamláir iontach í den aosú dearfach, agus is mór an inspioráid í do dhaoine eile.

Philomena, or Phil as she is more commonly known, turned 80 this year, having moved to Mervue in Galway from Cork in 1968.

Phil is involved in many organisations and takes pride in being an active member of the Board of St Columba's Credit Union and is currently on the Marketing Committee and Credit Committees. Phil is involved in other organisations such as SCCUL Enterprises CLG and the Children's Remembrance Committee at University Hospital Galway, among numerous others.

Some 10 years ago, Phil was part of the group who started the meet and greet volunteering programme at University Hospital Galway, which has now grown to 40 volunteers. In 2017 Phil was awarded the volunteer of the year title for Community Service and Social Inclusion for her many years of volunteering with various groups within Galway city and in particular with St Columba's Credit Union.

Every day Phil gives countless hours to support the people of her local community. She stays active by walking, meeting friends and always looking to help where help is needed. Phil is known and respected by so many where she lives and where she volunteers. She is a wonderful example of positive ageing, and she is such an inspiration to others.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Valentyna Nazarenko

Tháinig Valentyna go Gaillimh ón Úcráin nuair a thosaigh an cogadh agus tá sí ag socrú isteach sa saol in Éirinn le bliain anuas. Is duine gníomhach, dearfach, dícheallach í Valentyna. San Úcráin, bhí sí ina stiúrthóir ar chuideachta fóntais áit a raibh sí freagrach as a chinntiú go raibh timpeallacht na cathrach glan.

Is breá léi am a chaitheamh lena beirt iníonacha agus a beirt gharpháistí agus is é an rud is fearr léi a dhéanamh lena garpháistí ná cuairt a thabhairt ar áiteanna nua in Éirinn, go háirithe caisleáin agus páirceanna. Is breá léi a bheith ag cócaireacht dóibh, agus bíonn an-tóir acu ar an borsch a dhéanann sí, ar na pancóga le cáis, agus ar na cácaí silíní. Is aoibhinn léi dul go dtí an trá lena garpháistí agus aithne a chur ar dhaoine de mhuintir na hÉireann.

Is garraíodóir díograiseach í Valentyna, agus mothaíonn sí uaithi na crainn torthaí agus na fíniúna a bhí aici san Úcráin. Déanann sí iarracht i gcónaí freastal ar imeachtaí garraíodóireachta i nGaillimh.

Ní raibh sé éasca ar Valentyna aistriú chuig saol nua i nGaillimh an tráth seo dá saol, ach tá sí ag baint sult as a cuid ama anseo agus ba mhaith léi buíochas a ghabháil le muintir na hÉireann as lámh chúnta a thabhairt di féin agus dá teaghlach i ré seo an dúshláin.

Valentyna moved to Galway from Ukraine after the breakout of the war and has been settling into life in Ireland for the past year. Valentyna is an active, positive, and hardworking individual. In Ukraine, she worked as a utility company director where she was responsible for ensuring a clean environment in the city.

She thoroughly enjoys time with her two daughters and two grandchildren and her favourite thing to do with her grandchildren is visiting new places in Ireland, especially castles and parks. She loves to cook for them, and they can't get enough of her borsch, pancakes with cheese, and cakes with cherries. She loves to go to the beach with her grandchildren and meet new Irish friends.

Valentyna is a keen gardener, and she misses her many fruit trees and grapevines in Ukraine. She always tries to attend gardening events in Galway.

It has been difficult for Valentyna to transition to a new life in Galway at this stage of her life, but she is enjoying her time here and wishes to thank the Irish people for giving her and her family a helping hand in this difficult time.

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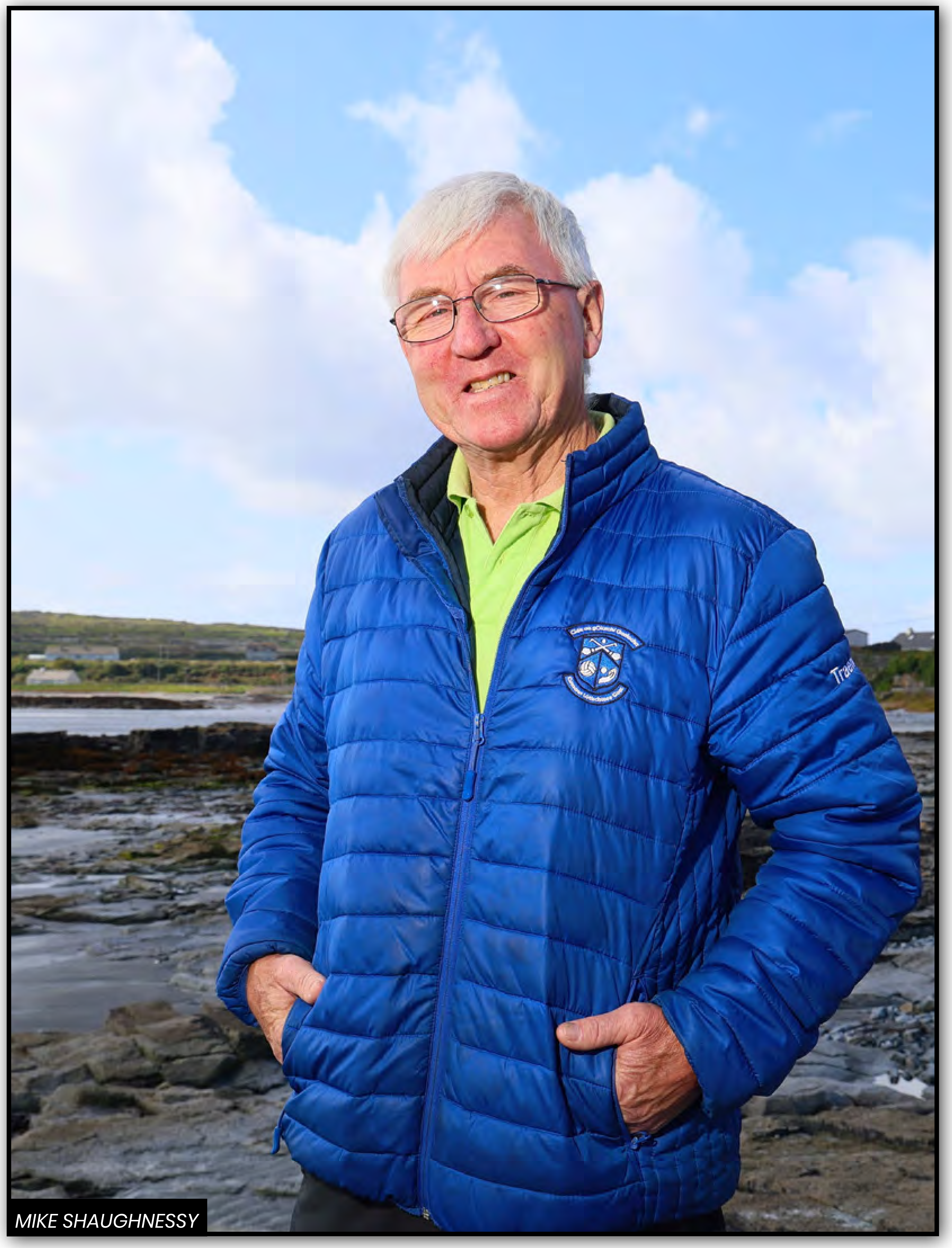

Arthur Ó Flaithearta

Fear spreagúil, gníomhach agus lán le fuinneamh is ea Arthur ó Flaithearta atá ag obair go deonach ar son phobal Inis Mór le blianta fada.

Tá sé lárnach i gClub Óige an oileáin ó chéadbunaíodh é I 1975, ar Choiste Halla Rónáin ó 1984 ar aghaidh agus chaith sé tréimhse fada ar choistí áitiúla deonacha eile – Pátrún Inis Mór, Comharchumann Iascairí Gaillimh agus Comharchumann Forbartha Árann ina measc.

Chaith sé na blianta, i gcuideachta tuismitheoirí eile na háite, ag traenáil agus ag réiteach gasÚir an oileáin le haghaidh na gCluichí Pobail Réigiúnacha agus Náisiúnta. Bhí sé lárnach i gClub Peile Naomh Éinne ó bunaíodh é in 1976, sa sacar 'cúigear an taobh' sna hochtóidíanuas go dtí 2005/2006, I gCLG Oileáin Árann ó 1996 ar aghaidh agus I gCúl Campaí na nGasúr le roinnt blianta anuas.

Is iad na coistí deonacha a choinneos beo cultúr agus spiorad pobal ar bith agus is cinnte go bhfuil Arthur I gcroílár an phróisis sin in Árainn. Ní hamháin sin ach is léir nach gcuireann an aois isteach ná amach air agus é chomh gníomhach céanna anois agus a bhí sé riamh – nár laga Dia é!

Arthur Ó Flaitharta is an exciting and active man who is full of energy and has been working voluntarily for the community of Inis Mór for many years.

He has been involved in the island's Youth Club since it was first established in 1975, on the Rónán Hall Committee from 1984 onwards and spent a long time on other local voluntary committees - Pátrún Inis Mór, Galway Fishermen's Co-Operative and Aran Development Co-Operative among them.

He spent years, in the company of other local parents, training and preparing the island's boys for the Regional and National Community Games. He was an Irishman at Club Peile Naomh Einne since it was founded in 1976, in soccer 'five a side' in the eighties until 2005/2006, in the Aran Islands GAA from 1996 onwards and in Cúl Campai na n'Gasúr for several years.

It is the voluntary committees that keep alive the culture and spirit of any community and Arthur is certainly at the heart of that process in Aran. Not only that but it is clear that age does not affect him, and he is as active now as he has ever been - God has not weakened him!

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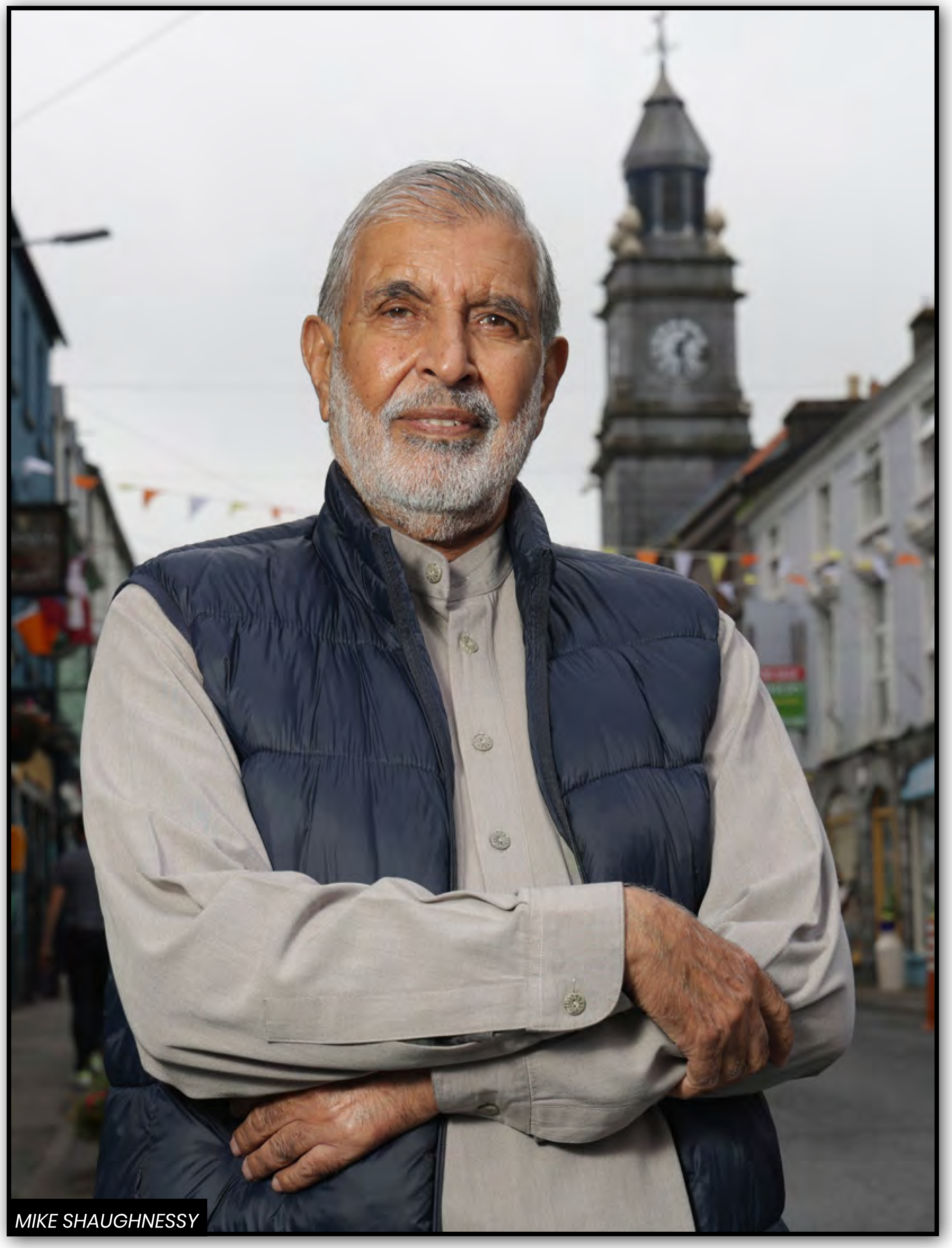

MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Asgher Ali

Tá aistear fada curtha de ag Asgher chun teacht chun cónaí in Éirinn le Parveen, a bhean chéile. Is as an bPacastáin ó dhúchas dó agus tá cónaí anseo air ó 2015. Sé bliana déag is trí scór atá sé, agus ní raibh an t-aistear éasca air – ní raibh ach fíorbheagán rudaí aige leis nuair a tháinig sé, ní raibh an teanga ar a thoil aige, agus bhí air dul i ngleic leis an aimsir!

Bhí sé uaigneach agus bhí mearbhall air, agus tá sé an-bhuíoch de na daoine a chabhraigh leis a bhealach a dhéanamh sa saol nua, go háirithe nuair a tháinig sé ar dtús agus deacracht aige é féin a chur in iúl. Ní bhíonn sé riamh éasca rud éigin nua a fhoghlaim ach choinnigh sé féin is a bhean orthu ag streachailt leis an mBéarla agus d'éirigh leo dul chun cinn a dhéanamh agus a bheith in ann píosa comhrá a dhéanamh.

Is duine an-chineálta é Asgher a bhfuil croí mór ann. Tá go leor cairde Éireannacha aige anois atá mar a bheadh teaghlach aige, mar a deir sé féin, agus is féidir leis smaointe agus mothúcháin a roinnt leo, rud a deir sé a chabhraigh go mór leis socrú síos ina phobal.

Is breá leis an dúlra agus baineann sé féin agus a bhean taitneamh as cuairt a thabhairt ar áiteanna áille thart timpeall na hÉireann. Tá sé léirithe acu nach bhfuil sé ró-dhéanach riamh tabhairt faoi dhúshlán nua (agus eachtra nua) agus deir Asgher go mothaíonn sé anois gurb í an tír seo a thír féin agus gurb iad muintir na hÉireann a mhuintir féin.

Asgher has come a long way to set up home in Ireland with his wife Parveen. Originally from Pakistan and living here since 2015, this 76 year old found the journey difficult, arriving with very few possessions, unable to speak the language and having to deal with the weather!

It was a lonely and confusing time, and he is very grateful to the people who helped him navigate this new life, especially in those early days when he found it difficult to express himself. Trying to learn something new is never easy but with perseverance, he and his wife were able to study English and make themselves understood.

Asgher is a very kind, warm-hearted person. He has made a lot of Irish friends he describes as 'family', with whom he can share his thoughts and feelings and which he says, has helped him greatly to settle into his community.

He loves nature and he and his wife enjoy travelling and exploring the 'beautiful places' around Ireland. They have shown that it is never too late to take on a challenge (and an adventure) and Asgher says he now feels 'like this country is my own country and Irish people are my people'.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Bríd Uí Chonghaile

Rugadh Bríd ar Inis Oírr agus tá sí ag cur fúithi anseo ó shin. Cé nár chónaigh sí riamh taobh amuigh den oileán is bean mhór taistil í agus is aoibhinn léi cuairt a thabhairt ar a clann agus garchlann taobh amuigh. Thar na blianta bhí páirt mhór aici i gcoistí áitiúla ar an oileán, mar shampla Comhar Chaomhán, Coláiste Ghobnait agus Glór na nGael.

Tá a croí is a hanam sa gceol, damhsa agus amhránaíocht, ceapann sí gur am amú ama é a bheith i do shuí síos nuair a thosaíonn dreas croíúil ceoil! Ó d'éirigh sí as a cuid oibre níl sí díomhaoineach mar go nglacann sí páirt i ranganna ióga, imeachtaí sóisialta, tograí fuála agus cniotála le Comhar na nAosach agus Mná le Chéile.

Bhí suim ag Bríd i gcónaí Gaeilge na háite a roinnt le duine ar bith a bhí ag iarraidh í a fhoghlaim. Caitheann sí go leor ama lena garchlann ag roinnt seanscéalta agus nósanna an oileáin leo mar go gceapann sí go bhfágfaidh na comhráite seo canúint agus blas Ghaeilge Inis Oírr acu go brách. Tá bealach deas gnaíúil, fáiltiúil le Bríd agus í gcónaí réidh le lámh chúnta a thabhairt nó píosa gáire a dhéanamh.

Bríd was born on Inis Oírr and has been living there ever since. Although she has never lived outside the island, she is a great traveller and loves to visit her children and grandchildren outside. Over the years she played a major role in local committees on the island, for example Comhar Chaomhán, Coláiste Ghobnait and Glór na nGael.

Her heart and soul is in music, dancing and singing, she thinks it's a waste of time to be sitting down when a hearty musical treat starts! Since she quit her job she has not been idle as she takes part in yoga classes, social events, sewing and knitting projects with Comhar na nAosach and Mná le Céile.

Bríd was always interested in sharing the local Irish with anyone who wanted to learn it. She spends a lot of time with her grandchildren sharing old stories and customs of the island with them because she thinks that these conversations will leave them with the dialect and taste of Inis Oírr Irish forever. Bríd has a nice, welcoming way and is always ready to lend a helping hand or share a smile.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Bridget Hynes

Admhaíonn Bridget go raibh cion aici riamh ar dhaoine scothaosta agus tuigeann sí anois, tar éis blianta fada, gur duine acu í féin!

Tar éis dá cuid páistí teacht ar an saol, thosaigh sí ag obair in ospidéal do gheiriatraigh ina ceantar féin, agus ba mar sin a cuireadh tús le blianta fada sa ghairm chúraim. Deir sí go dtagann an fonn cúraim atá uirthi óna tuismitheoirí, inimircigh Éireannacha a chuir fúthu sa Ríocht Aontaithe, agus a bhíodh i gcónaí sásta lámh chúnta a thabhairt do dhaoine eile.

Nuair a tháinig sí chun cónaí in Éirinn, theastaigh uaithi rud éigin a dhéanamh chun tacú leis na seanóirí ina pobal féin. Le cabhair ó dhlúthchara léi, bhunaigh sí Sean-Chairde in 2001 – áit ar féidir le daoine scothaosta bualadh le chéile uair sa tseachtain agus píosa spraoi a bheith acu.

In ionad a bheith ag suí ar an tolg le linn na paindéime COVID-19, chinn Bridget rud éigin a dhéanamh. Thosaigh sí ag obair le gníomhaireacht cúraim agus thaitin gach nóiméad den obair sin léi. Bhain sí amach QQI Leibhéal 5 sa Chúram do Dhaoine Scothaosta (ina ham saor!) agus anois tá sí ag obair go deonach le Solas Meals on Wheels agus leis an Dementia Café. Is breá le Bridget a bheith ag damhsa, tá sí ag gabháil don aeróbaic uisce agus don snámh le blianta fada anuas agus níl sé i bhfad ó thosaigh sí ag imirt gailf. Tá sí meáite ar leanúint ar aghaidh chomh fada agus is féidir léi. Tá a croí is a hanam sa gharraíodóireacht (tá gairdín mór aici) agus ceapann sí go bhfaighidh sí níos mó ná a dóthain aclaíochta ag iarraidh slacht a choinneáil ar an ngairdín!

Bridget admits she has always had a grá for older people and realises now, after many years, she is one!

After her children were born, she began working in a local Geriatric hospital which started many years in the caring profession. She attributes her caring ways to her parents, Irish immigrants living in the UK, who were always willing to give a helping hand.

Moving to Ireland, she wanted to do something to support the Seniors in her community. With the help of a dear friend, she started Sean Cháirde in 2001 – a place where older people can meet weekly and have fun.

Rather than sit at home during Covid, Bridget decided to do something. She started Care agency work and loved every minute of it. She completed a QQI Level 5 in Care for the Elderly (in her spare time!) and now volunteers for Solas Meals on Wheels and the Dementia Café. Bridget loves dancing, has taken part in Aqua Aerobics and swimming for years and has recently taken up golf. She is determined to keep going as long as she can and as a keen gardener (with a large garden) she reckons she'll get more than enough exercise trying to keep it tidy!

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Carmelita Lee

Bean tí is ea Carmelita atá gníomhach ina pobal agus is duine í ar breá léi comhluadar. Cuireadh a dúshlán nuair a cailleadh a fear céile, Tom, ach fuair sí misneach agus sólás as an tacaíocht óna comharsana, a thug an-aire di.

Bíonn sí gníomhach san iomaí gné den saol. Is sacraistí í agus ball den chomhairle thréadach, agus bhí an-bhród uirthi nuair a bronnadh an gradam 'Golden Pen' uirthi as 50 bliain seirbhíse. Tá sí ar dhuine de bhunaitheoirí an Ghrúpa Scoir Ghníomhaigh agus ina ball de chlubanna éagsúla, agus an grúpa 'Computers How Are Ya' agus Cumann na mBláthanna ina measc, agus is breá léi a bheith páirteach sa phobal.

Tá meon an eachtraí ag Carmelita, rud a thug chuig gach contae in Éirinn í, agus is breá léi ceol tíre – téann sí chuig a oiread ceolchoirmeacha is féidir léi. Faigheann daoine eile spreagadh óna díograis i leith an tsaoil agus tugann a cairde 'Sky News' mar leasainm uirthi – rud a léiríonn gur duine aireach, comhbhách í a bhíonn i gcónaí sásta lámh chúnta a thabhairt do dhaoine eile. Tá cur chuige simplí aici maidir leis an saol: bí lách, bí cabhrach, cloígh leis an gcreideamh, agus cuir meon dearfach chun cinn. Is eiseamláir í de dhuine a chaith saol maith agus a bhíonn seasta ag cabhrú le daoine eile.

Carmelita is a true people person, a housekeeper by profession and active in her community. Her life took a challenging turn with the loss of her beloved husband, Tom but she found strength and solace in the support of her caring neighbours.

In every facet of life, she is an active participant. She is a sacristan, a member of the pastoral council, and the proud recipient of the 'Golden Pen Award' for 50 years of dedicated service. She is also a founding member of the Active Retirement Group and a member of various clubs, including the 'Computers How Are Ya' group and the Flower Club and she thrives on community involvement.

Carmelita has an adventurous spirit which has taken her to every county in Ireland, and she is an ardent fan of country music, attending as many shows as possible. Her enthusiasm for life is infectious, earning her the nickname 'Sky News' among friends - a testament to her attentive, empathetic nature and her willingness to lend a helping hand. Her life motto is simple: be kind, be helpful, keep the faith, and promote positivity.

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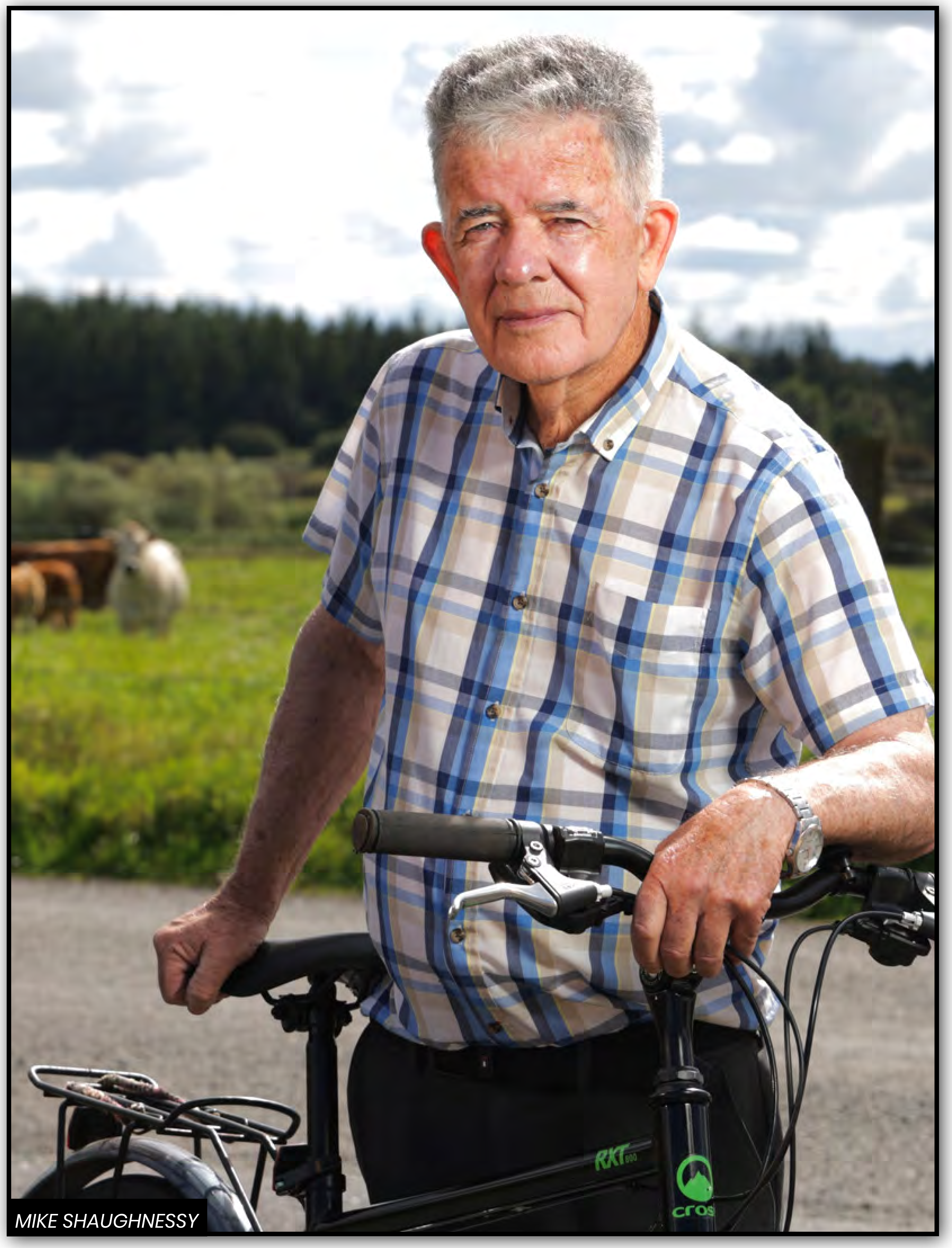

MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

James Heneghan

Deir a chairde faoi James go bhfuil sé ar dhuine de na daoine is séimhe, is gealgháirí, is dearfaí agus is cuidiúla a chasfaí ort riamh. Tá sé ina measc siúd is sine ina ghrúpa siúlóide áitiúil 'Seen But Not Herd', agus é 72 bliain d'aois, ach ní chuireann an aois aon bhac air.

Leagann James béim mhór ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le gníomhaíocht choirp agus muid ag dul in aois. I mí Eanáir ghlac sé páirt i gcúrsa cuaillí 'Fit Farmer' inar chuir sé iontas ar gach duine leis na torthaí iontacha a bhain sé amach. Níor stop James ansin: d'fhreastail sé ar sheisiúin siúlóide seacht seachtaine leis an ngrúpa ina cheantar féin agus sa chomharsanacht. Ní fhéadfaí gan suntas a chur sa díograis a léirigh sé i leith na seisiún, na gcúrsaí agus na n-imeachtaí go léir agus tugann sé spreagadh do gach duine a bhfuil aithne acu air. Bíonn sé ar a dhícheall ag iarraidh a leibhéal aclaíochta a fheabhsú agus deir sé gur bhain sé an-tairbhe as an rud uile dá shláinte choirp agus dá mheabhairshláinte araon.

Is feirmeoir é a bhíodh ina thiománaí bus le Ability West go dtí go ndeachaigh sé ar scor, agus tá fonn cúraim go smior ann. Tá an-mheas go deo ag a chairde nua go léir sa ghrúpa 'Seen But Not Herd' air.

James is described by his friends as 'one of the most gentle, cheerful, positive and helpful people you could meet.' At 72, he is one of the more senior members of his local walking group 'Seen But Not Herd' but he does not let this hold him back!

James really highlights the importance of physical activity as we age. In January he took part in a 'Fit Farmer' activator pole course in which he amazed all with his outstanding results. James did not stop there as he then attended a follow-on seven weeks of walking sessions with the group in and around his local community. His attendance and enthusiasm at all the sessions, courses and events have not gone unnoticed and he is an inspiration to all who know him. He works hard to improve his fitness level and said he found the whole experience very rewarding for both his physical and mental health.

A farmer and a retired bus driver with Ability West, caring for others is in his nature and at the heart of James' personality and all his new friends in the "Seen But Not Herd" group feel very lucky and happy to call him a friend.

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Janet Sutton

Is focail iad 'seirbhís' agus 'pobal' a luaitear le Jan, gan trácht ar fhéith iontach an ghrinn atá go smior inti. Ba ghníomhaí pobail í Jan ar bhealaí éagsúla ar feadh a saoil: bíodh sí ina comhordaitheoir ar Ógtheagmháil Chathair na Gaillimhe agus, ó chuaigh sí ar scor, ina comhalta boird d'Ionad Acmhainní an Ghoirt, rudaí ar thug sí fúthu go cairdiúil croíúil. Cosúil le go leor daoine scothaosta a bhíonn gnóthach gníomhach, is iomaí rud a gcuireann Jan spéis ann. Is ceardaí oilte í, ball de Cheolfhoireann Phobail Chinn Mhara agus tá sí tosaithe ag déanamh líníochta agus péintéireachta.

Is dócha gurb é an áit is fearr le Jan ná a gairdín féin. Is mór aici an comhshaol agus tá cion aici ar an dúlra ó bhí sí ar scoil. Measann sí gurb ise caomhnóir an stráice dhá acra ar a bhfuil cónaí uirthi agus bíonn sí ag obair go crua chun aire a thabhairt do na speicis a chónaíonn ar an talamh sin léi.

Rud dearfach is ea an dul in aois i súile Jan, deis chun leas a bhaint as an gcríonnacht a thagann le taithí shaoil chun dul i bhfeidhm ar an tréimhse atá romhainn agus chun aird a dhíriú ar an éagóir agus cur ina choinne. Mar a deir sí féin, '*Nuair a bhíonn an aois seo slánaithe agat, is beag atá le cailliúint againn de bharr an fhírinne a insint nuair is gá sin agus tacú le daoine nach dtugtar éisteacht dóibh.*'

Service and community are two words that come to mind to describe Jan, liberally seasoned with a wonderful sense of humour. Jan has been a community activist in different ways all her life whether it was as coordinator of Galway City Youth Reach or, since she retired, as a board member for Gort Resource Centre, all undertaken with a light, human touch. Like many busy, active older people, Jan has many facets to her interests. She is a skilled craftsperson, a member of the Kinvara Community Orchestra and has taken up drawing and painting.

Jan's favourite place is probably her garden. A committed environmentalist with a love for the natural world since she was at school, she sees herself as guardian of the two acres she lives on and works hard to look after the species that she shares the land with.

Jan sees getting older as a positive opportunity, a chance to use the wisdom of living a long life to not only help sculpt the future but also to highlight and combat injustice. As she says, '*At our age, we have little to lose by speaking the truth where necessary and advocating for people who don't have a voice.*'

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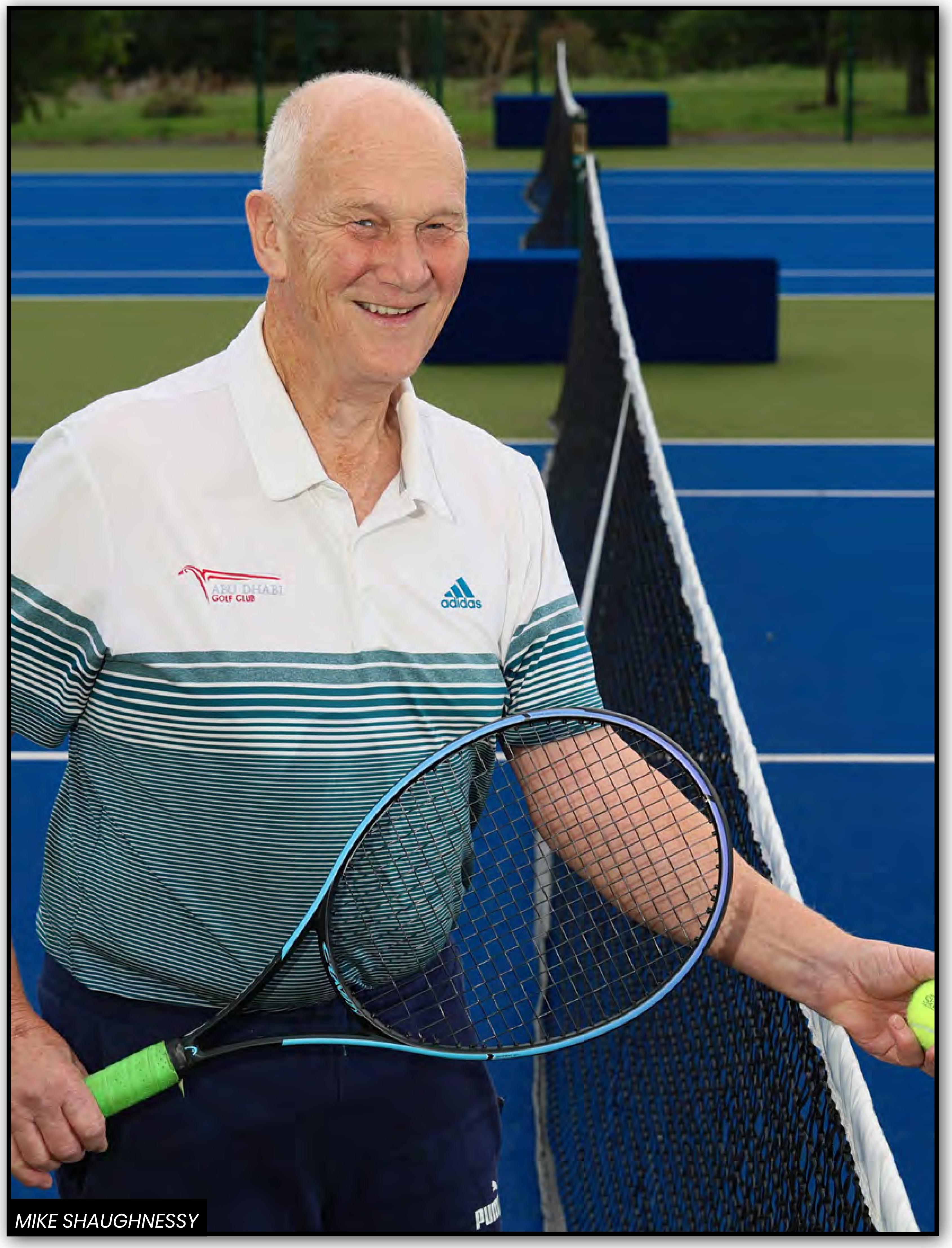

MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Joe Staunton

Is as ceantar na Críche do Joe ó dhúchas, agus cé go raibh cónaí air in áiteanna eile ina óige, d'fhill sé ar Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe lena bhean chéile Ann agus a gclann chun cuideachta a bhunú, Cal Cool Air Conditioning Company, cuideachta ar éirigh go geal léi. Dhá bhliain déag is trí scór atá Joe anois, agus is minic a bhíonn sé le feiceáil ag Club Leadóige Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe, áit a mbíonn sé ag imirt go dúthrachtach díocasach i gcluichí singile agus cluichí dúbailte. Ach ní díreach imreoir é Seosamh, seaimpín is ea é ar bhealaí eile freisin – bíonn sé ag fónamh ar choistí éagsúla, chabhraigh sé leis an gclub aistriú go dtí a áras nua agus cuidíonn sé leis féachaint chun cinn agus é ag réiteach don am atá le teacht. Nuair nach mbíonn raicéid leadóige á luascadh aige, seans go mbeidh Joe ag cur tús leis an imirt ag Club Gailf Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe. Níl aon mhaolú tagtha ar an gcion mór atá aige ar na spóirt!

Mar sin féin, is é an chomhbhá an tréith is suntasaí atá ag Joe. In éineacht le duine eile, bhunaigh sé Ballinasloe Care and Repair, grúpa a chuidíonn le comharsana atá ag dul in aois le jabanna beaga a bhfuil an baol ann nach ndéanfaí iad murach sin. Fágann sé sin go mbíonn daoine scothaosta in ann fanacht níos faide ina dtithe féin. Bíonn Joe fós ag déanamh obair dheonach leis an ngrúpa, rud a chuidíonn go mór leis na daoine a dtugann sé cúnamh dóibh.

Is spreagadh dúinn go léir an fuinneamh gan staonadh atá aige agus an díograis lena dtugann sé faoin saol.

Joe's roots trace back to the Creagh area, and though he explored life elsewhere in his youth, he eventually returned to Ballinasloe with his wife Ann and their family to establish the very successful Cal Cool Air Conditioning Company. At 72, he's a regular fixture at the Ballinasloe Tennis Club, where he takes on singles and doubles matches with unwavering enthusiasm. But Joe is not just a player, he's also a behind-the-scenes champ, serving on various committees and helping the club transition to its new home and he continues to be involved in its future development. When he's not swinging a tennis racket, you can find Joe teeing off at the Ballinasloe Golf Club. His passion for sports remains undiminished!

Yet, what truly sets Joe apart is his caring nature. He co-founded Ballinasloe Care and Repair, a group dedicated to helping elderly neighbours with small tasks that might otherwise go unattended. This enables them to maintain their independence in their own homes for a longer period. Joe continues to be an active volunteer with the group, making a meaningful impact on the lives of those he assists.

Joe's boundless energy, commitment to community, and zest for life are an inspiration to us all.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Juda Uí Loinsigh

Bíonn Juda Uí Loinsigh coinnithe ag imeacht le go leor rudaí difriúil. Is breá léi a bheidh ag cniotáil, ag cróiseáil agus ag grianghrafadóireacht. D'fhoghlaim sí le cniotáil agus í ina cailín óg ach níor fhoghlaim sí le croiseáil go dtí gur tháinig an dianghlasú i 2020, am a mhúin sí an cheird di féin trí breathnú ar físeáin Youtube. Tá a siopa ceardaíochta féin aici a d'oscail sí cúpla bliain ó shin chun a cuid oibre a thaispeáint. Cuireann sí béim ar stíl traidisiúnta an oileáin ina cuid oibre.

Bíonn Juda gníomhach i go leor grúpaí. Déanann sí obair dheonach sa séipéal ag tabahirt amach comaoineach agus ag tabhairt cúnamh don sagart agus is iomaí deireadh seachtaine a fheicfidh tú í ag parkrun an oileáin le veist na hoibrí deonach uirthi.

Taobh amuigh dhe sin bíonn a ciud caitheamh aimsire aici a bhaineann sí an-taithneamh as. Is breá léi dul ar siúlóidí timpeall an oileán agus ag tógáil pictiúirí de na pabhsaeir, ainmhí, éanachaí nó na radharcanna a fheiceann sí. Freisin tá sí mar bhall den ghrúpa snámh a théann ar snámh chuile lá agus cé nach raibh sí ábalta snámh ar dtús, thosaigh sí ag siúl san uisce agus ag snámh beagán de réir a chéile agus anois bíonn sí ag snámh gan stró.

Juda O'Loinsigh is kept going with many different things. She loves knitting, crocheting and photography. She learned to knit as a young girl but she didn't learn to cross stitch until 2020, when she taught herself the craft by watching YouTube videos. She has her own craft shop which she opened a few years ago to display her work, emphasizing the traditional style of the island in her work.

Juda is active in many groups. She does volunteer work in the church giving out communion and helping the priest and many weekends you will see her at the island's parkrun with her volunteer vest on.

Outside of that she has her hobbies which she is very fond of. She loves going for walks around the island and taking pictures of the birds, animals, or the sights she sees. She is also a member of the swimming group that goes swimming every day and although she couldn't swim at first, she started walking in the water and swimming a little bit by bit and now she swims with ease.

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Mike Shaughnessy

Kevin King

Chuaigh Kevin ar scor ceithre bliana ó shin ó ghnólacht a bhunaigh sé féin agus a bhí ar an bhfód ar feadh 45 bliain, ag deisiú bróg agus uaireadóirí. Tá sé ar dhuine de thriúr bodhar atá féinfhostaithe i nGaillimh, agus in ainneoin na ndúshlán a bhí le sárú aige, rith Kevin an gnólacht leis féin agus níor lig sé don easpa cumas éisteachta bac a chuir ar an obair sa phobal.

Úsáideann gach duine de theaghlach Kevin – é féin, a bhean chéile agus a mhac – an teanga chomharthaíochta. Bhí sé ar dhuine de bhunaitheoirí Ionad na mBodhar i nGaillimh 53 bliain ó shin agus bhí sé ag fónamh ar go leor coistí dá chuid. Tá sé fós ina bhall gníomhach den Ionad agus déanann sé obair dheonach le daoine eile as gach cearn den chathair agus den chontae. Agus é ina chónaí sa Bhaile Bán, bhuaigh Kevin go leor duaiseanna agus gradam thar na blianta as ucht a chuid bláthanna agus a ghairdín.

Tar éis dó dul ar scor bhog sé go Béal Átha Glúinín, agus bíonn sé fós ag déanamh beagán obair pháirtaimseartha ag deisiú bróg chomh maith le bheith ag obair ina ghairdín. Tá fonn ar Kevin a bheith gníomhach agus a bheith ag foghlaim, agus thug sé faoin gcócaireacht le déanaí. Is maith leis dul ar an mbóthar ina veain champála freisin agus glacann sé le roinnt orduithe fós i gcomhair bróga sainoiriúnaithe, agus é ag baint leas as na scileanna atá aige chun cabhrú le daoine cé go bhfuil sé ar scor.

Kevin retired 4 years ago from a business he set up himself and ran for 45 years, carrying out shoe and watch repairs. One of 3 self-employed deaf people in Galway, despite the challenges he experienced, Kevin ran the business on his own and never let his deafness be a barrier to working in the community.

Kevin's entire family including himself, his wife and their only son are all deaf sign language users. He was a founder member of the Galway Deaf Centre 53 years ago and sat on many a committee, where he is still an active member and volunteer along with others from all over the City and County.

While living in Ballybane, Kevin won many awards and presentations for his flowers and garden over the years. After retiring he moved home to Ballyglunin, where he still does a small bit of part-time shoe repair work and enjoys working on his garden.

Kevin wants to keep active and to learn, recently doing a cookery class. He also likes to head off in his campervan and he still does some special orders making adaptive shoes. He enjoys using his skills to do good and help people even though he is retired.

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Margaret Keaney

I gCaiseal, i gConamara atá cónaí ar Margaret agus tá sí beagnach 80 bliain d'aois. Tá seisear páistí aici, ochtar garpháistí agus tá páiste amháin ag garpháiste léi. Thug Margaret aire dá fear céile Josie, a cara cléibh, go dtí gur bhásaigh sé in 2022 agus thug sí aire freisin dá tuismitheoirí, nach maireann. Is comharsa iontach tuisceanach í.

Tá an-aithne ar Margaret ina pobal as an obair dheonach a dhéanann sí. Bhunaigh sí féin agus a fear céile Club Sóisialta Naomh Conaill in 1992, chun tacaíocht shóisialta a chur ar fáil do dhaoine scothaosta. Is bean í atá chun tosaigh ar a ré féin – bhí sí ag obair chun an t-aonrú sóisialta a sheachaint ina pobal tuaithe fiú sula raibh taighde againn a léirigh tionchar an uaignis ar shláinte daoine. Bhíodh sí féin agus a foireann bheag oibrithe deonacha ag bailiú airgid chun cruinnithe seachtainiúla, bricfeasta, dinnéir Nollag, sos faoisimh deireadh seachtaine agus turais lae a chur ar fáil do dhaoine scothaosta.

Bhí Margaret ar Bhord Bainistíochta na scoile áitiúla agus bhí sí ina hionadaí coiste do Sheó Capaillíní an Chaisil ar feadh 30 bliain. Creideann Margaret sa tábhacht a bhaineann leis an intinn agus an corp a aclú, agus bíonn sí ag siúl go rialta, déanann sí píosa léitheoireachta gach lá, agus is breá léi tabhairt faoin gcrosfhocal uair sa tseachtain.

Is cinnte go bhféadfaí an seantéarma Gaeilge 'Meitheal' a lua le Margaret agus is mór an spreagadh a thugann sí dúinn go léir.

Margaret lives in Cashel, Connemara and is almost 80 years. She has six children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Margaret cared for her late husband and best friend Josie until his death in 2022 and had cared for her late parents also. She is a wonderful and considerate neighbour.

Margaret is very well known in her community for her voluntary work. She and her late husband set up St. Conal's Social Club in 1992, to provide social support for older people. She is a lady ahead of her time, who was helping to prevent social isolation in her rural community, before we had research showing the impact of loneliness on people's health. She and her small team of volunteers fundraised to provide weekly meetings, breakfast, annual Christmas dinners, a respite weekend break and day trips for the older people.

Margaret has sat on the Board of Management of the local school and has represented the Cashel Pony Show Committee for 30 years. Margaret believes in the importance of keeping the mind and body active, and walks regularly, reads every day, and she loves her weekly crosswords.

Margaret epitomises the old Irish term 'Meitheal' and is truly an inspiration to us all.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Mary Jo Heanue

Tá Mary Jo ina cónaí ar an gClochán agus bíonn sí le feiceáil thart ar an mbaile ag caitheamh a seaicéid ar a bhfuil an lógó 'Connemara Ambassador' agus í ag obair go deonach chun fáilte a chur roimh chuairteoirí ar an gceantar. Is breá léi bualadh le daoine agus labhairt leo agus ós rud é go bhfuil cónaí uirthi ansin le breis agus 55 bliain, mothaíonn sí go bhfuil sí in ann cuidiú leo nó comhairle a chur orthu agus aon cheisteanna faoin mbaile a fhreagairt.

Bíonn sí páirteach ina lán carthanas agus eagraíochtaí ar fud Chonamara, Grúpa Scoir Ghníomhaigh an Chlocháin agus Bantracht na Tuaithe ina measc, agus bhunaigh Mary Jo Grúpa Sóisialta Siúlóirí in 2018 a bhfuil airgead bailithe aige don iomaí carthanas. Spreagann sí baill den ghrúpa siúlóide i gcónaí chun bheith níos gníomhaí nó bheith 'chomh gníomhach agus is féidir'.

Nuair nach mbíonn sí ag obair, is breá léi a bheith ag léamh, ag ceardaíocht, ag tabhairt faoi ranganna ióga agus, ar ndóigh, ag siúl! Ní bhíonn Mary Jo díomhaoin riamh ach ina ainneoin sin bíonn an t-am aici i gcónaí breathnú isteach ar a comharsana. Is breá léi aire a thabhairt dá garpháistí agus baineann sí an-taitneamh as píosa comhrá a dhéanamh leo (deir sí go gcoinníonn siad ar an eolas í!). Mothaíonn sí gur tábhachtach an rud é a bheith gníomhach agus spreagann sí a teaghlach agus a cairde i gcónaí chun saol dearfach gníomhach a chaitheamh agus buíochas a ghabháil le Dia gach lá.

Mary Jo lives in Clifden and can be spotted locally wearing her jacket bearing the logo 'Connemara Ambassador' as she volunteers to welcome visitors arriving in the area. She really enjoys meeting and talking to people and having lived there for over 55 years, she feels she is well-equipped to give assistance or advice and answer any questions about the town.

While involved in many charities and organisations around Connemara, including the Clifden Active Retirement Group and the ICA, Mary Jo set up a Social Walkers' Group in 2018 which has since fundraised for many charities. She always encourages members of the walking group to be more active or "as active as they can be".

In her spare time, she enjoys reading, crafts, yoga classes and of course, walking! Mary Jo is never idle yet always makes time in her busy day to check in on her neighbours. She enjoys minding her grandchildren and especially enjoys their chats, as she says they keep her up to date! She feels it is important to stay active and would always encourage her family and friends to enjoy a positive and active life and to thank God every day.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Mary Warde Moriarty

I dTuaim atá cónaí ar Mary, agus is cúis bhróid aici é gur bean den Lucht Siúil í. Is máthair agus seanmháthair í agus is cara le gach duine í. Bíonn sí an-ghníomhach ag tacú leis an Lucht Siúil agus tá an-spéis aici i gcraobh ghinealaigh an Lucht Siúil le himeacht na nglún.

Rugadh Mary in 1943 agus seachtar a bhí sa chlann léi. Glantóir simléar agus gabha stáin a bhí ina hathair. Dhéanadh a máthair bláthanna páipéir agus théadh sí ó theach go teach ag babhtáil earraí cosúil le fáiscíní gruaige agus pictiúir naofa ar bhia. Saol an-chrua a bhí ann agus í ag dul ó bhaile go baile i bpuball. Ní raibh aon oideachas ar Mary agus in 1964, agus í 17 mbliana d'aois, chuaigh sí chuig a haintín i Sasana chun post a chuardach. Ansin a bhuail sí lena fear céile, Frank Moriarty, fear socraithe as an gCabhán, agus í ag obair san ospidéal.

Chuaigh Mary go dtí ranganna oíche i Sasana agus d'fhoghlaim sí conas léamh agus scríobh. Nuair a d'fhill sí ar Éirinn sna 70idí thosaigh sí ag obair mar ghníomhaí don Lucht Siúil, agus ba í ba chúis le hathruithe móra ar shaol mhná an Lucht Siúil. In 1983 d'éirigh léi ina cuid iarrachtaí ionad oiliúna a oscailt i dTuaim do dhaoine den Lucht Siúil, idir óg agus sean.

Scríobh sí dhá leabhar, 'Turn of the Hand' agus 'Travellers Settled'.

Mary is a proud Traveller woman living in Tuam. She is a mother, grandmother and friend to everyone. She is very actively involved in supporting Travellers and has a keen interest in investigating the family tree of Travellers down through the generations.

Mary was born in 1943 and came from a family of seven. Her father was a chimney sweep and tin smith. Her mother made paper flowers and went house to house trading items such as hair clips, and holy pictures in return for food. It was a very hard life as she moved from town to town in a tent. Mary had no education and in 1964 at the age of 17, she went to her aunt in England to find work. She met her husband Frank Moriarty there while working in the hospital, a settled man from Cavan.

Mary went to night classes in England and learned how to read and write. Returning to Ireland in the 70's she began working as a Traveller activist, making significant changes to the lives of Traveller women. In 1983 she was successful in her efforts to open a training centre in Tuam for Travellers of all ages.

She went on to write two books 'Turn of the Hand' and 'Travellers Settled'.

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Michael Mannion

Fear uasal 69 bliain d'aois is ea Michael atá ag baint sult as an saol ó chuaigh sé ar scor in 2012, tar éis dó 35 bliain a chaitheamh ina státseirbhíseach sa Roinn Oideachais. Tá sé tugtha go mór don spórt agus bhí sé ina Oifigeach Caidrimh Phoiblí do Bhord Pheil Ghaelach na mBan i nGaillimh. Is minic anois a d'fheicfeá é ag obair mar mhaor deonach i Staid an Phiarsaigh, agus é ag féachaint chuige go mbainfidh gach duine an-sult as na cluichí.

Tá cion aige ar an nGaeilge, agus ó chuaigh sé ar scor tá céim sa teanga bainte amach aige. Is iomaí ról atá aige ina phobal féin. Tá sé ina Rúnaí ar a ghrúpa áitiúil Béilí ar Rothaí agus is Sacraisteoir dá Shéipéal é, ar bhonn deonach. Is Maor Deonach é freisin ag Scrín Chnoc Mhuire, agus is ansin a chaitheann sé an deireadh seachtaine i rith Shéasúr na hOilithreachta agus na Nóibhéine.

Coinníonn na gníomhaíochtaí agus na freagrachtaí sin go léir gnóthach é, ó thaobh meabhair agus coirp araon, agus is cúis bhróid aige é gur chuidigh siad go mór leis teacht ón andúil san alcól – tá sé 24 bliain anois ó bhí deoch mheisciúil aige.

Fear an-ghníomhach is ea Micheal agus níor lig sé don aois ná do na dúshláin cur isteach ar an díograis atá aige i leith an tsaoil.

Oibrí deonach dúthrachtach a bhfuil baint mhór aige leis an bpobal.

Michael is a 69 year old gentleman who's been enjoying retirement since 2012, after 35 years working as a civil servant in the Department of Education. One of his biggest passions in life is sports and he served as the P.R.O. for the Galway Ladies Gaelic Football Board. Nowadays you'll often find him as a voluntary steward at Pearse Stadium, making sure everyone has a great time at the games.

He has a love for Gaeilge, and since retirement has pursued this interest and achieved a degree in the language. In his community, he wears many hats. He is the Secretary of his local Meals on Wheels Group and serves as the Voluntary Sacristan for his Church. He is also a dedicated volunteer steward at Knock Shrine, devoting his weekends to the Pilgrimage Season and Novena.

All these activities and responsibilities keep him busy, both mentally and physically, and he is proud to say they have played a significant role in his recovery from alcoholism and his 24 years of sobriety.

Micheal is a very active man and has not let age or challenges diminish his enthusiasm for life.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Una Cullinan

Deir gach uile dhuine a bhfuil aithne acu uirthi go bhfuil Una ar dhuine de na daoine is spreagúla agus is dearfaí i mBaile Chláir na Gaillimhe.

Beagnach 95 bliain d'aois atá sí agus tá sí fós ag tabhairt go fonnmhar faoin saol. Is breá léi a bheith ag taisteal agus thug sí cuairt ar a beirt iníonacha san Astráil cúpla uair. Ní túisce a fhaigheann sí cuireadh ná imíonn sí léi ar cuairt ar ghaolta agus cairde éagsúla a bhfuil cónaí orthu ar fud na hÉireann agus Shasana. Tá meas aici ar an scil a bhaineann le litir a chumadh, agus le linn na paindéime scríobh sí chuig gach duine ina leabhar seoltaí. Dúirt roinnt daoine léi go raibh an-ríméad orthu an litir nó an cárta a fháil uaithi. Tosaíonn sí ag obair ar an liosta Nollag agus gan é ach ina Shamhain.

Is breá le Una Bingo a imirt agus cé go raibh tréimhse dhianghlasála na paindéime deacair uirthi, lean sí uirthi ag imirt Biongó ar Zoom. Téann sí amach ag an mbiongó arís anois agus is breá léi bualadh lena cairde. Deir sí nach bhfuil cuid acu tagtha ar ais go fóill agus go bhfuil súil aici go mbeidh an misneach acu é sin a dhéanamh go luath. Is cócaire agus báicéir iontach í Una agus is maith léi cácaí beaga a thabhairt chuig an mbiongó le roinnt lena cairde agus iad ag ól tae nó caife. Níl sé ach tamall ó shin ó bhácáil sí cúpla císte Nollag do dhaoine a bhfuil cónaí orthu ina n-aonar.

Cónaíonn gariníon Una agus a teaghlach léi, rud a oireann di, mar deir sí go gcuidíonn sé léi greim a choinneáil ar a hóige má bhíonn páistí sa teach.

According to all who know her, Una is one of the most inspiring and positive people in Claregalway.

Una who is nearly ninety-five, lives her life to the full. She loves to travel and has visited her two daughters in Australia several times. Only needing the nod, she is off to visit various relations and friends who live all over Ireland and England.

Valuing the art of letter writing, during Covid Una used her time to write to everyone in her address book. Several people said how lovely it was to get the letter or card from her. She begins her Christmas list as early as November.

Una loves to play Bingo and while she found the Covid lockdown difficult, she continued to play Bingo on Zoom. She is back playing in person now and enjoys meeting her friends, remarking that some of them have not returned and she hopes they will get the courage to do so soon. Una is a great cook and baker and likes to bring buns to Bingo to share with her friends over a cuppa. Not too long ago, she baked several Christmas cakes for people who lived alone.

Una's granddaughter and family live with her, which suits her, as she says having children in the house keeps her young and up to date.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Una O'Halloran

Is bean í Una O'Halloran a léiríonn fírinne na comhairle 'má tá cúnamh uait, iarr ar dhuine gnóthach é.' Bíonn rud éigin i gcónaí ar bun ag Una, agus bíonn baint mhór aici leis an iomaí tionscnamh phobail. Ina measc sin tá an Yarn Group, áit a roinneann sí smaointe agus scileanna le daoine eile. Tá baint aici freisin le cumann áitiúil na mBailte Slachtmhara agus tá go leor babhtaí bailithe bruscair eagraithe aici sa phobal, agus muintir na hÚcráine páirteach iontu, rud a chabhraíonn leo aithne a chur ar mhuintir na háite.

I mBóthar na Trá a rugadh í, i Maigh Cuilinn a tógadh í agus tá cónaí uirthi anois in Uachtar Ard, áit a bhfuil sí féin agus Paddy, a fear céile, gníomhach sa phobal le 56 bliain anuas. Is iomaí caitheamh aimsire atá ag Una: siúl, léamh, cróise, cniotáil agus ceardaíocht de gach cineál. Is é déanamh gúnaí an ghairm atá aici agus is iomaí gúna pósta a rinne sí do mhuintir na háite in Uachtar Ard i gcaitheamh na mblianta. Creideann sí go mór san athchúrsáil, agus déanann sí uaschúrsáil ar gach cineál troscáin – tá cúrsa cumhdaithe troscáin déanta aici le GRETB. As earraí athchúrsáilte a rinneadh na stóilíní agus na cathaoireacha ina teach álainn agus tá siad gleoite amach is amach. Tá Una ar dhuine de bhunaitheoirí an ghrúpa siúlóide áitiúil freisin agus is breá léi a bheith amuigh faoin spéir, ag bualadh le gach duine agus ag comhrá.

Una O'Halloran is the epitome of 'want something done, ask a busy person.' Una is constantly on the move, and heavily involved in many community initiatives. One of which is the Yarn Group, where she shares ideas and skills with others. She is also involved in the local Tidy Towns and has organised numerous litter picks where our new community of Ukrainians have been involved which helps them to connect with the wider community.

Born in Salthill, raised in Moycullen and now living in Oughterard, where she and her husband Paddy, have been active members of the community for 56 years. Una has a vast number of interests: walking, reading, crochet, knitting, and crafts of all descriptions. A dressmaker by profession, Una has made many a wedding dress for the locals in Oughterard throughout the years. One of Una's great passions is recycling; she upcycles all sorts of furniture, having done an Upholstery course with the GRETB. Her footstools and chairs in her beautiful home are all made from recycled items and are fabulous. Una is also one of the founders of the local walking group and she loves to be out in the local area, meeting and chatting with everyone.

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MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

Veronica McGrath

Rugadh Veronica, nó Vonnie mar is fearr aithne uirthi, sa Chaisleán Riabhach i Ros Comáin in 1941 agus bhí sí ag obair ar fheirm ar feadh a saoil. Pósadh Veronica agus John McGrath in 1968, agus bhí seisear cailíní agus buachaill amháin acu. Bíonn sí ag tabhairt cúnamh dóibh anois ag tabhairt aire dá naonúr garpháistí.

Bhí Vonnie ina cúntóir baile ar feadh deich mbliana agus bhain sí taitneamh as gach nóiméad de. Bhí sí ag obair freisin in Ionad Cúraim Lae na Fairche áit a raibh an-spraoi aici le gach duine agus freastalaíonn sí anois ar an Ionad dhá uair sa tseachtain agus baineann sí sult go háirithe as na turais a dtéann siad orthu. Is breá le Veronica a bheith ag éisteacht le Midwest Radio, agus is breá léi a bheith amuigh faoin spéir agus ag tabhairt aire dá cuid bláthanna. Is ministir Eocairiste san eaglais í agus creideann sí gurb é a creideamh daingean a chuidíonn léi nuair a bhíonn an saol deacair.

Bíonn Veronica i gcónaí gnóthach ar na meáin shóisialta, d'ainneoin a haoise, agus coinníonn sí suas leis an nuacht agus leis an gcaint ar Facebook. Is breá léi na grianghraif go léir a chuireann daoine muinteartha léi in airde. Tá tábhacht ar leith ag baint leis an teaghlach do Veronica agus níl aon rud níos fearr léi ná ceiliúradh teaghlaigh, agus í timpeallaithe ag a clann agus a garchlann go léir. Nuair nach mbíonn sí i gcuideachta na ndaoine sin, bíonn sí gnóthach ag coinneáil suas lena saol le FaceTime agus WhatsApp.

Veronica, or Vonnie as she is more commonly known, was born in Castlerea in Roscommon in 1941 and has worked on a farm all her life. Veronica got married to John McGrath in 1968, together raising a family of six girls and one boy, and she now helps to take care of her nine grandchildren.

Vonnie worked as a home help for ten years and enjoyed every moment of it. She also worked in Clonbur Day Care Centre where she had great fun with all involved and she now attends the Centre twice a week where she especially enjoys the outings they go on. Veronica loves listening to Midwest Radio, and she really enjoys being outdoors and looking after her flowers. She is a Eucharistic Minister in the church and believes her strong faith is what helps her get through the tough times in life.

For a woman of her age Veronica is always busy on social media and keeps up with the news and gossip on Facebook especially enjoying all the family photos that are posted. Family is especially important to Veronica and she loves nothing better than when there is a family celebration, and she is surrounded by all her children and grandchildren. When everyone is not around, she is busy keeping up with their lives through FaceTime and WhatsApp.

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