



ICPO NEWS

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ICPO

It is estimated that at any one time there are in excess of 1,200 Irish people in prison overseas. Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) has contact with Irish people in prisons in more than twenty five countries, the majority of whom are in the UK, with many more detained throughout the US, Australia, Europe, South and Central America and Asia.

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) was established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985 in response to serious concerns regarding the number of Irish men and women in UK prisons. These deeply held concerns related to their trials and subsequent imprisonment.

In recent years ICPO has been able to offer a more comprehensive service to prisoners and to expand our existing services to prisoners' families. ICPO works for all Irish prisoners wherever they are. It makes no distinction in terms of religious faith, the nature of the prison conviction, or of a prisoner's status.

The objectives of the ICPO are to:

- Identify and respond to the needs of Irish prisoners abroad and their families;
- Research and provide relevant information to prisoners on issues such as deportation, repatriation and transfer;
- Focus public attention on issues affecting Irish prisoners (ill-treatment, racist abuse, etc);
- Engage in practical work in aid of justice and human rights for Irish migrants, refugees and prisoners at an international level;
- Visit Irish prisoners abroad where possible both in the UK and elsewhere.

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Greetings from all in the ICPO.

I begin this newsletter on a sad note. ICPO Casework and Family Support Officer, Claire O'Connell, passed away on Tuesday, 9th April after a courageous battle with illness. Claire received many letters of support from clients and they meant a great deal to her and to us. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

In this edition we have included a number of informative articles about deportation and Irish prisoners in the UK accessing the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme, as well as an update on repatriation.

My thanks as always to our regular contributors - Caitríona Ní Bhaoill, author of Smidín Gaeilge and Ian Hanna for his popular sports supplement. Lastly I wish to thank the ICPO staff and volunteers (in particular Eileen Boyle) for their hard work in putting this newsletter together.

If there is anything you would like to see covered in the newsletter please do let us know. Also, we particularly like including your stories (real or fiction) as well as your excellent poetry so do keep sending them to us.

Brian Hanley
ICPO Coordinator



Cover Page Photo: Lough Tay, Co. Wicklow

Claire O'Connell - A Tribute



With profound sadness, I find myself once again writing about the untimely passing of a member of our team.

Claire O'Connell joined ICPO in the summer of 2014 as the Casework and Family Support Officer and set about her work with conscientiousness and conviction. Without needing any explanation Claire knew what to do. Her remarkable empathy allowed her a sensitive and compassionate understanding of the challenges facing her clients. She cared deeply about their welfare and strove to do her best for them each and every day.

Claire had a keen intellect and was a formidable advocate. A solicitor by profession, she harnessed her legal training and directed it in support of those most in need of a voice. Whether it was requesting medical treatment for an Irish person in prison in the United States or a letter to a Community Welfare Officer for a prisoner's family, Claire was articulate, persuasive and very effective.

Claire cared about her clients and they cared about her. It has been humbling for us all to witness the outpouring of concern and kindness from so many of her clients since she became ill

in January 2018 and we have received dozens of cards, messages and letters from clients all over the world. We compiled many of these messages and shared them with Claire. They meant so much to her.

And so it is most fitting that a modest selection of their words, highlighting the difference she made in people's lives, are included here too:

- "We would like to thank you for the help we received from you when John* was imprisoned. We're so very grateful. Our minds were totally at ease when you spoke to us. We don't know if we would have got through it without you."
- "Paul* was very enthusiastic that I write to you and thank you for all your support so far. He wanted me to convey how much he appreciates it, and that it makes a huge difference to "know someone somewhere is thinking about you." He also mentioned that his father finds you to be a "rock" of support, so you've earned giving yourself a good slap on the back."
- "I just wanted to thank you Claire and the ICPO for all your help. With the money that you generously provided, I have been able to buy proper meals and am slowly regaining lost weight. I've also been able to buy medicines to treat infections and insect bites (the fire ants are really nasty!)."
- "Thank you once again for your help Claire. I can't tell you how much it means that there's someone there to be my voice."

Those who knew Claire well knew what a wonderful singer she was and how much she loved music; often travelling the country for a gig, seisiún or concert. In recent months, she posted a message on her Facebook page which read: "Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway". And that was Claire - no matter the obstacle or adversity, she persevered. Perhaps there is something in Claire's outlook that all of us can take with us.

Claire was a warm, engaging, witty and adventurous person. She was also a loving wife, mother, daughter, sister and friend. After a courageous battle with illness and a life that comprised a thousand kindnesses, may she now rest in peace.

Brian Hanley
ICPO Coordinator

* Names have been changed to protect privacy of individuals

ICPO Research on Irish prisoners serving IPP sentences

In December 2012 the Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence (IPP) was abolished by the Legal Aid, Sentencing, and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012.

IPP sentences *attracted widespread criticism as they were '... poorly planned and implemented and resulted in unjust punishments.'*¹ In 2012, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the UK violated Article 5(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights, in the case of three prisoners sentenced to IPP sentences, where reasonable provision for their rehabilitation was not made.

However, LASPO was not applied retrospectively meaning that any prisoner who was sentenced to an IPP sentence will continue under the terms of this sentence. According to recent figures from the UK Ministry of Justice, there were still 2,489 IPP prisoners in custody at the end of 2018.² Moreover the number of IPP prisoners who have been recalled to custody continues to increase; in 2018 the recalled IPP population grew by 22% (to 1,016). The proportion of the IPP population who are post-tariff continues to increase; 91% of IPP prisoners were post-tariff at the end of last year.

While the numbers of IPP prisoners still in prison are decreasing, progress is slow and it will be some time before the last IPP prisoner is released. According to the Parole Board CEO "Without further legislative change the legacy of IPP prisoners will remain for many years to come, not least because it can be expected that the rate of progression will slow down as the number of IPP prisoners in the system falls."³

Irish IPP Prisoners

While research has been carried out on IPP sentences and its impact on prisoners and families, it would appear that all of this is general and does not look specifically at Irish (or indeed other Foreign National Offenders). It is not possible to say with certainty how many Irish people are serving IPP sentences nor how many have been recalled to prison after release.

As a result of the High Court Judgment in *MCK -v - The Minister for Justice and Equality*⁴ the

option of applying to transfer their sentence to Ireland has been effectively closed off to IPP prisoners. The Court in *MCK* upheld the Minister's discretion to decide to refuse to accept applications for repatriation from IPP prisoners on the basis that no comparable sentence exists in Irish legislation.

ICPO Research

The ICPO has worked with Irish prisoners serving IPP sentences and their families providing advice, support and advocacy since this sentence was introduced and continues to do so. In order to better understand the needs of Irish IPP prisoners and their families and continue to support them effectively, we intend to carry out research on the issues facing Irish IPP prisoners and their families over the next 6 months, subject to permission from HMPS. This will enable us to have a better picture of the numbers of IPP prisoners still serving sentences and of those IPP prisoners who have been released but recalled to prison and the issues facing these prisoners and their families.

What you can do?

If you are an Irish prisoner serving an IPP sentence or have served an IPP sentence but have been recalled to prison, we would be very grateful if you could participate in our research. If granted permission by HMPS, we will be writing to Irish people serving IPP sentences in England and Wales with further information about our research and also distributing a short questionnaire. All responses will be kept confidential. If you are an Irish IPP prisoner and you are not sure if the ICPO is aware of you, please contact us.

Catherine Kenny
ICPO Caseworker

¹ Howard League for Penal Reform, The never-ending story: Indeterminate sentencing and the prison regime Research briefing, <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/>

² Ministry of Justice, Offender Management Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales, Publish 31 January 2019, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/>

³ Parole Board Chief Executive's Blog, Third Edition - October 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chief-executives-blog-3rd-edition-october-2018>

⁴ [2018] IECA 110

Repatriation Update

Since our last update in the Christmas newsletter in December there has been some movement on the long awaited legislation to address the problems with repatriation. In February the Department of Justice and Equality circulated a *General Scheme* (also known as 'Heads') of a Bill for observations by other Government Departments. This is the first step in preparing any new legislation and it is welcome progress.

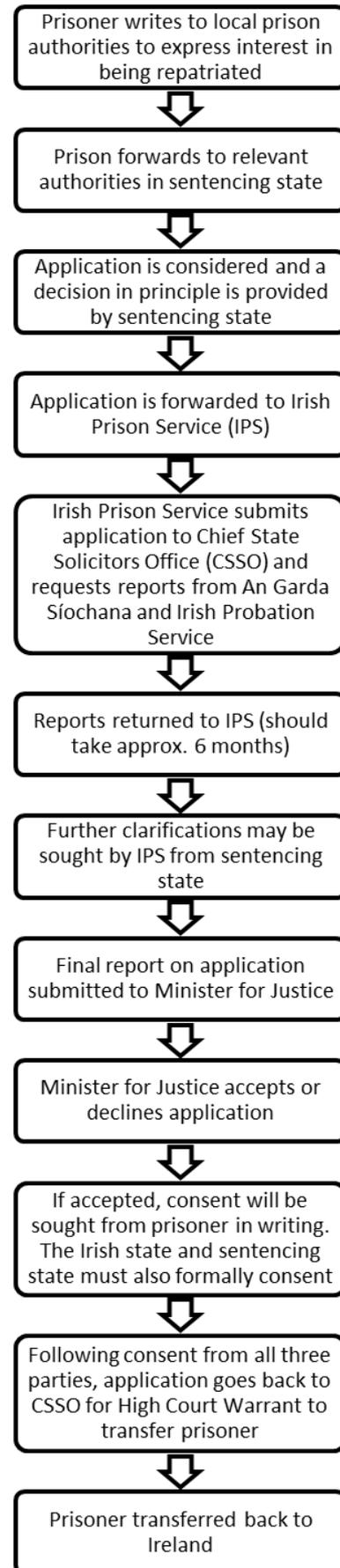
The next step is for the 'Heads' to be approved by Government Ministers before the Bill can be drafted fully by the Office of the Attorney General. Once it is drafted, it then has to go through a consultation process, before finally being introduced in the Oireachtas and going through several different stages of debate. This is a time-consuming process and delays are to be expected between the various stages. While it is likely to be some time before the legislation is enacted, in practice it currently only affects determinate sentenced prisoners in the UK. The Irish Prison Service has stated that life sentence prisoners in the UK can be accepted back without legislative change, and prisoners seeking transfers back to Ireland from countries other than the UK don't present the same problems.

To our knowledge no prisoner has been repatriated since applications were 'reactivated' in October, 2018. We continue to seek updates from the Irish Prison Service and will contact you and/or your family whenever information is available on individual applications.

Ciara Kirrane
Caseworker, Information and Policy Officer

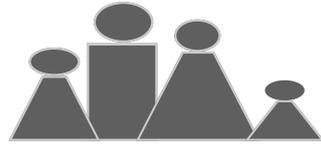
Application process for transferring a sentence from a foreign country to Ireland.

The process may take 2+ years





FAMILY MATTERS



*This section is for families who have a loved one in prison.
Do you have useful information that may be helpful to other families?
Have you a question you would like to see answered on this page in the future?
If so, please contact Leslie Alcock, Casework and Family Support Officer, ICPO
Maynooth. Email: leslie.alcock@iecon.ie or call on +353-1-505-3110.*

For those of you who I haven't been in contact with yet, my name is Leslie Alcock and I'm the Casework and Family Support Officer here in the ICPO. Over this and future editions, I will continue to use this space to highlight and share helpful information to support families who have a loved one in prison. In this feature, I want to take a look at children.

Having a loved one in prison overseas is challenging on families for numerous reasons such as the distance, the difficulty related to planning a visit, the communication restrictions, prison regulations, language barriers and the financial implications. These challenges are particularly tough for those with children, especially if they are finding the separation very difficult.

Many parents struggle to decide whether or not to tell their child that they have a parent in prison. Some parents struggle with managing the day to day life in a single parent home when one parent is in prison. Other families struggle with the cost associated with visiting their loved one regularly and the impact the visits have on their children. And those in prison often experience profound guilt because the impact their sentence can have on their child and their family as a whole.

Effects on Children

Having a parent in prison can impact children in various ways depending on the circumstances. They may experience feelings such as sadness, shame, embarrassment, confusion and anger. They may also feel isolated because they think they are the only ones with a parent in prison. Crest Advisory report that over 300,000 children are affected by parental imprisonment in the U.K. which according to the Office for National Statistics is three times more than children affected by divorce in the U.K. However, nurturing a relationship with your child while in prison can

reduce these possible negative impacts of parental imprisonment. Having a parent in prison doesn't mean that the child has been abandoned and it's important to maintain contact to reassure them of this. You can maintain contact by writing letters or sending cards to your child regularly and talk to them on the phone regularly. While on the phone or in a letter make sure you tell them you love them and praise them as often as you can. Children respond well to praise and it also helps with their self-esteem and their overall wellbeing.

Effects on parents

Having a partner in prison when you have children can cause significant stress on the parent at home. Having a loved one in prison may also cause financial difficulties as well as loneliness in their loved ones absence. The parent at home may also feel concern for their partner in prison and guilt for not being able to support and assist them more. However difficult it may be, prioritizing one's own health and wellbeing is crucial in continuing to provide care and support to your child and your partner.

Similarly, being separated from your child and your partner can be very difficult on the parent in prison. The imprisoned parent can often feel responsible for the situation and will worry and stress about the financial and emotional implications their imprisonment has on their family. They can also feel isolated and lonely as they could feel like their family might not understand what life is like for them in prison. Nurturing a relationship with your child and partner will help, especially if the imprisoned parent can establish ways to provide emotional and practical advice and support on the phone and via letters and visits.

Deciding whether or not to tell your child about the imprisonment of a parent?

It can be very difficult for parents to decide

IPPs and the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme (TERS) – a synopsis of a recent UK High Court decision

*The content of this article is for general information purposes only and is **not** legal advice. If you need advice about your own particular situation, please consult a solicitor.*

The High Court in London recently dismissed the challenge of an Irish man serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) in respect of a decision by the Home Secretary to refuse to deport him and as a consequence means he was unable to access the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme (TERS).¹

Background

The claimant, Mr Foley was sentenced in August 2010 to an IPP sentence with a minimum tariff of four years. In April 2012, he was notified that the Home Secretary was considering whether to deport him but was subsequently informed that no further action would be taken. In 2016, his solicitors wrote to the Home Secretary requesting her to reconsider the decision not to deport the claimant. They were informed that while further consideration had been given to the decision not to deport Mr Foley and careful note was given to his offending and of his conduct in prison, the original decision not to deport him was maintained.

Further representations were made in 2017 and again the original decision not to deport Mr Foley was maintained. The Home Office letter noted that it had been previously decided that the public interest is not generally served by deporting Irish nationals 'except in 'the most exceptional circumstances'. However, Irish nationality did not mean that a person could not be deported and there were a number of offences where deportation could be considered. It was also not accepted that this policy was discriminatory, rather that Irish nationals are treated more favourably in relation to immigration and deportation.

The law in relation to Irish citizens and deportation

The High Court judgment outlined the law in relation to deportation, TERS and Irish citizens –

the following is a brief summary:

The Immigration Act 1971 ("the 1971 Act") provides that non-UK citizens are liable to deportation from the UK if their deportation is considered by the Home Secretary as furthering to the public good. Under the UK Borders Act 2007 the Home Secretary is required to make an order for automatic deportation in respect of a foreign criminal in certain circumstances.

The Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016 (and prior to these, the 2006 Regulations), set out the immigration rights of EEA nationals coming to and remaining in the UK including limitations on the right to free movement. The 2006 Regulations were in force when the decision was made in 2012 not to deport Mr Foley. The Regulations provide that freedom of movement and residence can be restricted on grounds of public policy, public security or public health. Measures taken on these grounds must be proportionate and based solely on the personal conduct of the individual. The Regulation provides for protection against expulsion and issues including the length of time the individual has spent in the country, family situation, health and other factors must be considered.

Provisions were made under EU law allowing the UK and Ireland to 'continue to make arrangements between themselves relating to the movement of persons between their territories.'

In 2007, after carrying out a review of Government policy on deportation of Irish nationals and taking account of the close ties between the UK and Ireland and the common travel area, the then Home Secretary announced that Irish nationals would only be deported where a court has recommended deportation in sentencing or where the Home Secretary concludes that it is in the public interest to deport the person given the exceptional circumstances of the case.

The Claimant's challenge

Under the Tariff-Expired Removal Scheme (TERS), where a deportation decision is made in

Catherine Kenny - ICPO Maynooth

respect of a Foreign National Offender (FNO), that person may be removed from the UK once they have served the minimum tariff.

1. Mr Foley challenged the Home Office decision on a number of grounds including the following: The discretion to deport Irish prisoners was restricted by the operation of a policy or practice amounting to the 'blanket prohibition' of deportation of Irish nationals.

2. Violation of Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) upon discrimination on the grounds of race or nationality given the different treatment of Irish national prisoners compared with other FNOs.

It was argued on behalf of Mr Foley that no Irish prisoner was deported in the past three years despite at least around 100 prisoners being considered for deportation in each of those years, therefore no real discretion was exercised in relation to the deportation of Irish prisoners. The Court held however that because there were no deportations during a particular period that did not mean that there was a blanket ban. Government policy provides that deportations of Irish citizens will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances. It did not consider that discretion in relation to deportation was restricted by existing policy.

In relation to discrimination on the basis of nationality, it was claimed that the policy regarding deportation applied only to Irish nationals and therefore Irish prisoners are

discriminated against in relation to other FNO's as the policy has a consequence of preventing Irish prisoners from returning home. This prolongs the detention of Irish prisoners because if they are not to be deported it means they are not eligible for removal from custody under TERS.

The Court noted that this argument was dealt with in the *Doherty* case where it was held that the policy had 'an objective and reasonable justification for treating Irish FNOs differently from other FNOs from other EEA member states.'²The Court held that the 'material difference is between foreign national offenders being deported, and those who are not being deported.' Their situation is not comparable and there was no difference in treatment on grounds of nationality.

This is the third case relating to the deportation of Irish prisoners that has come before the UK and Northern Ireland Courts in the past three years.³ In each case, the Court has dismissed the application and the current policy of deporting Irish nationals only in exceptional circumstances remains in place.

¹ *Foley, R (On the Application Of) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2019] EWHC 488(Admin) (05 March 2019). <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2019/488.html>

² *Doherty's (Edmund) Application* [2016] NI QB 62

³ In addition to the present case and that of *Doherty*, referred to above, *Connell, R (on the application of) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* was decided by the UK Court of Appeal in 2018. (See ICPO Spring Newsletter for brief summary of judgment).



WALKING THE CAMINO A PERSONAL ODYSSEY

Let's first introduce ourselves . We are staff members of the Irish Episcopal Conference based in the Columba Centre in Maynooth, Co, Kildare, Alison, Bernie (ICPO), Ian (ICPO) and Lisa. And of course, our mascot, Woody, a character from the very successful series of films "Toy Story". He even has his own Facebook page called 'Woody's Camino'. In early 2018 the idea was mooted that as part of our own personal spiritual journey we decided to walk in September part of the Camino on the French route. We started at Sarria and finished in Santiago de Compostela, a journey of about 118 km. Here are our stories.

Alison; I'm a 51 year old mother of three grown up children and one grandchild. I was excited at the thought of doing the Camino as I had watched the movie 'The Way' and I wanted to feel that free. No fixed abode for a week, no housework, no office work, not having to think of anyone or anything, just walking all day long in the sunshine through beautiful country side, how hard could it be?

The Camino is tough. Blisters are almost inevitable, you will be physically tired and you will carry supplies of blister packs and painkillers which will be needed more than you could believe. As my walking buddy reminded me the pain is the Camino's way of making sure you are living in the present. If the Camino was easy, it wouldn't be the same gift. That's what it's about. Pain is an inevitable part of life; it's how we deal with it that matters.

There were days when I just don't know how I kept going. My feet were sore to the point where I thought I would get sick with the pain, every pebble on the ground was like a sharp knife going through me but I did and I was proud of myself for not giving in to the pain. At the end of each day over a Camino meal and a bottle of vino we would chat about our walk, the little villages we passed through but mostly we talked about our sore feet but we would still look forward to the next day walking and talking.

I'm not sure what I expected from doing the Camino, I had read so many peoples life changing stories I was excited at the prospect. There were no epiphanies; not even one. We may not always be aware what it is that we gain from an experience but completing this journey has been a personal achievement for me. On the last day we went to the Pilgrims' Mass where we queued to hug St James. For me personally I had my Camino moment!

Bernie; Camino for us was 118km or 211,350 steps. Graffiti on one of the markers along the way said "Jesus didn't start in Sarria" I don't believe Jesus was ever anywhere near Sarria and we didn't have the luxury of taking 7 weeks off work to walk the entire Camino so we did what we could in 7 days. Each day as we started out the following quote came to my mind "*Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can*".

On the first day we foolishly carried all the things we thought were necessary for the day but as the week rolled on each day we carried less, we needed less, by day 5 we were down to carrying water, a few euro, and the pilgrim passport. We visited little churches along the way, spoke to people from all over the world and simply putting one foot in front of the other again and again, up hills and down, through soaring temperatures, we made our way along the Camino towards Santiago. With joy and great emotion, at the end of the fifth long hot day we got the first view of the spires of the Cathedral in the distance from the Mont do Gozo (Hill of Joy). Later, as we entered the Cathedral though our feet were in ribbons we were in high spirits and proceeded to do the pilgrim rituals, a visit to the tomb of St James and then queued up to hug his statue at the back of the main altar. During mass as I sat on the floor near the sanctuary, I watched people pass up and down the cathedral, young and old, fit and infirm, people of all nationalities there to celebrate mass together. It was a holy and beautiful celebration. The Botefumeiro was raised and swung from side to side and people stood in awe at the power and beauty of the scene.

Camino hurts you physically but strengthens you spiritually. When you think there is nothing left inside you to take another step, from somewhere or someone comes the inspiration to dig deep inside and find that strength to take that next step and another and another.

Ian; I wanted to do the Camino for spiritual and personal reasons, where I could think and give thanks for all the blessings I have in my life so far. My feet caused no difficulties apart from one blister but I certainly felt the pain of some of my fellow walkers! During the first day which was the hardest we developed into a close knit team where our support for one another became evident. This quickly developed during the week to one of us taking out a leaflet called "The Five Symbols of the Camino" and after reading about bandages, it guided us to think about how we deal with the pains of life and do we have life wounds which we need to deal with? The day before it dealt with rucksacks prompting us to talk about what excessive baggage are we carrying? Silence follows for a while and then the trust, fellowship and hardship we have shared on this pilgrimage kicks in and the talking and listening begins. Without realising it we have covered nearly 12 km to the lunch break. The Camino is alive in us as we walk..... as we talk.....and as we listen..... I even found myself talking out loud to myself after I had gone off course for nearly a km and had to backtrack!

This was the Camino for me, the walking.....the talking... and the listening. I found it very powerful yet releasing and my Camino moment came as I shared the Monte do Gozo with three other people who are far more and always will be more than work colleagues and friends. The small, plain undecorated church beside the hill where we said a few prayers for loved ones, our colleagues, for those on whose behalf we work, those who are sick and our fellow pilgrims had a bigger and more profound impact on me when compared to finishing at the cathedral in Santiago.

Lisa; For me, the Camino was an exercise in living in the moment. It's an opportunity to take time out and reflect, something that can be difficult to do with the distractions of day to day life. I'm at a point in life when I'm considering my next steps and the Camino really helped me to gather my thoughts and ideas for the future.

It forces you to get out of your own head, think about the steps you are taking and the people around who are sharing the journey with you. At the start I was so focussed on reaching the end of the walk each day. This meant that I didn't get to really appreciate where I was or what I was doing. When I started to take my time and make the most of my walk each day, it changed my perspective on it.

It's definitely not a race, and it's not about reaching the finish line at the end. While I felt happy and proud to have reached Santiago and receive my Compostela, I felt that the Camino was the journey I had already taken. It was about accepting and realising the challenge I was undertaking. I've heard people say that when you are meant to do the Camino, you will know. I think now was definitely my time to do it and I would recommend it to anyone who feels the same..



This article is taken from the April edition of Intercom magazine with the kind permission of the editor.



Sports Shorts

with Ian Hanna

Oh we all know the adage saying there is many a slip between cup and lip and there is only a short distance between a clap on the back or a kick in the rear. Well on the fields of sporting endeavour nothing could be truer and the Irish rugby squad is a walking, talking example of this. But more about them later. Let's great cracking as the ball is in and the game is on!

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

What a tremendous and inspiring performance by Ireland's Special Olympics team at the recent World Games in Abu Dhabi. The team consisting of 91 competitors won 86 medals which is a truly remarkable performance. Many congratulations are due to the athletes, their coaches, families and especially to their volunteers, two of whom, Eileen and Joan are also volunteers with ICPO in Maynooth. Well done to everyone concerned.



BOXING

No doubt in my mind but that the indomitable star of Irish sport at the moment must be Katie Taylor. What a person! What a role model! Everything that is good in professional and amateur sport and life is embodied in her. When she turned to the professional ranks after the disappointment of the 2016 Rio Olympics she stated that her goal was to simultaneously hold all four World Titles. Currently she is a unified lightweight female world

champion, having held the WBA title since 2017, the IBF title since 2018, and the WBO title since earlier this month. She said her planned showdown against Belgian, Delfine Persoon, the reigning WBC lightweight world champion for the undisputed lightweight championship of the world would be her toughest fight yet. This fight is scheduled for first of June in Madison Square Garden. We will all be rooting for her.

SOCCER

Oh what a mess! An uninspiring 1-0 win away against the 194th world ranked team Gibraltar to be immediately followed by the stepping down, sort of, of the Football Association of Ireland's CEO, John Delaney. He was appointed to a UEFA related role within the FAI. A much better performance at home saw them win 1-0 against Georgia but sterner tests wait against the group favourites, Switzerland and Denmark. As for Mick McCarthy, in his second coming as manager of the Irish team he now knows that the players available to him are nowhere near as talented as the squad he managed when they qualified for the World Cup in Japan and South Korea in 2002. His predecessor, Martin O'Neill despite qualifying Ireland for the 2016 European Championships in France resigned after a disastrous final year winning just once in 11 matches. Results will tell and the other teams in our group are Switzerland and Denmark. The first two qualify for the finals but bear in mind Switzerland and Denmark qualified for the last 16 at the recent World Cup in Russia. It is not a tough group but we need to win our home games and get points on the road. My prediction; I think we will qualify as being the group runners-up.

GAA

Heavy is the head that wears the crown and are there cracks appearing in the super Dublin team as they try to complete an unprecedented five senior All-Ireland football titles in a row? For the first time in six years they will not be involved in the



Summer 2019

knock-out stages of the National League having lost three of their six games. Kerry are introducing plenty of young stars as a result of their five in a row All-Ireland winning minor teams and their blend of youth, experience and strong pedigree of winning saw them reach the National League final where they lost narrowly to Mayo. Mayo under a second period of management by James Horan won the National League final with an aggressive fast style of play. This is Mayo's first national title since 2001 and in the interim they managed to lose three league finals and seven All-Ireland finals including the 2016 replay) since their last league win in 2001. Tyrone has changed from their ultra defensive style of play to a more adventurous one culminating in their recent defeat of Dublin in Croke Park. Apart from these three other contenders include Galway and Donegal but come the final whistle in the All-Ireland final, I expect Jim Galvin and his Sky Blues to create a monumental piece of GAA and Irish sporting history.

This time last year I predicted that Kilkenny would win the hurling All-Ireland but I was wrong and happy to be so as Limerick finally won their first All-Ireland in 45 years. The famine is well and truly over as the Treaty County - so often the bridesmaid on hurling's biggest day - finally got over the finish line to secure the county's eighth All-Ireland success. Limerick also convincingly won the National League defeating a hungry Waterford outfit. There are about eight teams of equal ability and it is true to say that anyone one of them could win the All-Ireland. Galway, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Clare, Wexford, Waterford, Limerick and Cork all look lively and hungry and I think Limerick could retain their crown. But as I said at the start, 'Heavy is the head that wears the crown'.

RUGBY

Well I think it is fair to say that the burden of expectation and being favourites is not something Irish teams cope well with. We had a very mediocre Six Nations being well beaten by England at home in our first match from which we never recovered. We won away playing poorly against Scotland and Italy but thoroughly beat a very poor French team at home. In the last game in Cardiff, Wales tore us

apart which I think was the most worrying aspect of the tournament. Am I apprehensive? No as I have faith that Joe Schmidt will get the players mojo back in time for the World Cup next September. I believe he is focussed on getting to the semi-final in that competition, something an Irish team has never done and it will copper-fasten his legacy as he retires as Ireland manager after the World Cup.



ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

In October 2018 the Russian fighter, Khabib Nurmagomedov, prevented a bid by Conor McGregor to regain the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) lightweight title with a dominant submission victory in round four. The occasion was marred by the post contest brawl and there are no current plans for a re-match. This result meant that Conor has tasted defeat in his last four visits to the octagon (cage) as he lost to Nate Diaz in August 2018. Conor seems to have lost his focus and direction and some people suggest that the boxing match against Floyd Mayweather in August 2017 and its accompanying huge pay packet might have turned his head. So what is the future for Conor? It is thought that he will fight again in the summer of 2019 but an opponent has yet to be named. Speculation is that it may be a third fight against Nate Diaz at lightweight which is each man's natural weight.

So thanks again for all your sports queries and if anyone wants some fitness programmes such as from 'Couch to 5Km' or strength building just let me know and I will send them to you.

Dogfight

The small city of Waterford in Ireland's south-east isn't really a city at all. Home to about fifty thousand people, it has the legal right to proclaim itself a city as it has a cathedral. But then so does Armagh, two cathedrals in fact and there are only twelve thousand people living there. Waterford is a large town at best and back in the 'sixties it wasn't even that. It was a small county town sitting on a wide expanse over the River Suir with the train station directly across the old bridge. Crossing the bridge to catch a train technically brought you into county Kilkenny.

At that time a train departed every morning of the week at seven o'clock sharp for Rosslare Harbour in County Wexford. This train connected with the nine o'clock morning ferry service to Fishguard Harbour in Wales and destinations onwards to places like Bristol, Birmingham and London. Between Waterford Station and Rosslare Harbour there were several stops en route over the ninety minute journey. These included Campile and Wellington Bridge, Wexford and Rosslare Strand. The stations of Campile and Wellington Bridge were about mid-way between Waterford and Rosslare and just a few miles apart. Both were just tiny village stops with scarcely even a platform and there was a level crossing halfway between the two where the railway line crossed a road.

One particularly fine morning the train set out as usual. It was a beautiful summer's day and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. The train was packed to capacity with holiday makers bound for the UK and Irish ex-pats returning home to England after visiting relatives in the old country. There were also British tourists returning home after holidaying in Ireland and young men and women going to the UK to try and find work. There were kids hanging out of the train windows, waving balloons and laughing and the bar and dining car were chock-a-block full. There was a carnival type atmosphere and everyone was looking forward to the adventurous journey ahead. As the train approached the level crossing about quarter to eight in the morning the red lights started to flash, the alarm bells started to wail and the barrier crashed down into place.

The first person to arrive at the barrier was an elderly man in his eighties walking his dog. Realizing he would have to wait a few minutes, he tethered his little terrier to the barrier by its lead and sat down to wait patiently on a stone wall at the roadside. He placed his cap on the wall beside him, fished around in a pocket of his old raincoat for his tobacco pouch, took out his pipe and started to fill it.

The second person to arrive was a farmer delivering milk to the local dairy on a horse and cart. There were at least a dozen large churns of milk on the cart worth a tidy sum. The farmer himself was a big man in his fifties with hands like shovels. A little over six feet, he had that red-faced look of a man who was no stranger to a glass of whiskey and looked like a London telephone box wearing a donkey jacket.

The third person to arrive was the postman on his bicycle, which had a large mailbag strapped either side of the saddle above the back wheel. He was short but looked fit, somewhere in his thirties and his uniform had seen better days.

All three were waiting patiently when a fourth man turned up in a flash new car. The car, an expensive model in jet black gleamed in the morning sunlight. The driver, a young man in his twenties, wore a dark suit with collar and tie and looked quite uncomfortable in the heat of the morning sunshine. He was obviously a businessman in a hurry and immediately wound down his window and started to vent his fury at this inconvenient delay. He was shouting and swearing that he was going to be late and began to pound his fist on the car horn in annoyance.

This startled the horse somewhat and it shied away from the noise, knocking the postman off his bicycle and buckling the front wheel. The postman was furious and promptly stood up and punched the horse on the side of its head as hard as he could. This led to the horse kicking the cart up in the air and the farmer's milk going all over the road. The terrified horse kicked out a second time and smashed a front headlight on the car. The farmer was incensed at the loss of his milk and the assault on his poor horse. He went and punched the postman in the face, breaking his nose. The postman was incandescent at the sight of his own blood all over the road so he picked up what was left of his bicycle and threw it at the farmer. He missed the farmer but hit the shiny new car putting a dent in the bonnet.

The motorist was furious. Firstly, there was a delay and he was going to be late. Then some stupid horse had kicked out his headlight and now some twit had dented the bodywork on his lovely car by throwing a bicycle at it. He jumped out of his vehicle, swearing blue murder and a three-way fight started in the middle of the road between the farmer, the motorist and the postman.

This was no handbags at twenty paces either. It was a properly vicious fight with blood being spilled, eyes being gouged and biting. The road itself was now covered in rolling empty milk churns, a small river of milk, parcels, letters, blood from the postman's broken nose and a couple of teeth from the businessman's mouth that the farmer thought the young motorist wouldn't need any more.

Meanwhile, the poor old man was still sitting on the wall appalled at the way events were unfolding. He didn't really want to get involved in the melee but felt he must do something. He put his pipe on the wall next to his cap and went to the middle of the road to try and break up the fight. Just as he did so, the train went roaring past with children hanging dangerously out of the windows, laughing and waving. Several half-drunken men stared in amazement through the windows of the bar/dining car at the punch up in the middle of the road below. And then the train was gone.

Immediately the lights stopped flashing, the cacophonous alarm bells stopped ringing and the barrier of the level crossing lifted twenty feet in the air. This effectively hanged the poor dog by its neck as it was still tethered to the barrier by its lead. The poor old man was heartbroken by this chain of events and sued Irish Rail in a court of law. He argued that there should have been signs warning of the dangers of tethering live animals to the barrier of the level crossing but that none were in place at that time.

The judge agreed with the old man and he won his case receiving financial compensation from Irish Rail for the loss of his poor little dog.

Honest Jim, UK



“ “

*What I say to myself
in the morning!*

Today

I will Let GO
of the past that I do not need
and **CREATE**
the future that I want



” ”

Are prisons in England and Wales on the brink of collapse?

Crime, austerity, drugs, overcrowding, discrimination, poor healthcare, violence, mental health and gang activity are just a few in a long line of serious problems facing prisoners incarcerated in England and Wales.

Irish prisoners serving sentences overseas often face the added difficulty of dealing with an unfamiliar legal system and being a considerable distance from family and friends. Many experience extreme hardship and prison conditions including safety are a major cause of concern. A prison officer who served in the British Infantry during the Troubles recently said "I feel more vulnerable walking the landings in British prisons than I did walking the streets of Northern Ireland."

Prisons have three main purposes: public protection, deterrence and rehabilitation. Deterrence and rehabilitation are questionable in the current climate of overcrowding - due to a prison population that has more than doubled in 20 years - 23hr lock downs and severe staff shortages. These conditions create the ingredients for prisons to become extremely volatile places and begs the question, who are we locking up? The Criminal Justice Alliance estimates that 21,000 mentally ill people in prison are competing for just 3,600 high and medium secure beds reserved for mental-health patients in English prisons.

Some say the prison system is using the United States as a model. According to a 2018 report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), nearly 2.2 million adults were held in America's prisons in 2016. That's more than China who have four times the population. A 'let's get tough on crime' mind-set and a skewed view of prisons being 'holiday camps' only serves to feed into the idea that not only is it ok to imprison those most in need but also we should throw away the key.

Many studies have shown that prisoners who experience humane conditions are more likely to respond to rehabilitative programmes. However, those who experience poor conditions and mistreatment are more likely to return to the community in a worse state than when they went in to prison, ultimately increasing the risk of reoffending. This in turn is one of the causes of the cycle we have coined 'revolving door'. Official data has revealed that the number of prisoners in England and Wales is the highest imprisonment rate in Western Europe. We are seeing more headlines such as 'Prisons in England and Wales, facing meltdown', 'British jails in jeopardy' and 'Squalid prisons are just the start.' With cuts across the criminal justice system, from the police to legal aid and the courts, it seems more and more people are being convicted. Whatever is causing this crisis should be addressed urgently and we need to have a conversation starting with prisoners themselves. So, we would like to hear from you, - the residents of Her Majesty's Prisons. What do you think is the problem, the solution and most importantly what can be done in the meantime to improve the situation?

Thoughts and ideas are welcome!



Your Letters



Last year Catherine Kenny, ICPO Caseworker, wrote an article on preparing for release. It was full of essential information but mainly dealt with what the Irish Council could do to help. Not what we could do for ourselves. It inspired me to take the time to share my thoughts on the subject. I have been fortunate enough to have her as a case worker for a short time and take this moment to say 'thank you for your valuable time and assistance.'

What can we do for ourselves to ensure a fighting chance to remain free upon release?

We all hope to some day be released. Some of us have definitive sentences but for others, like myself, the future is uncertain and can only hope to be released. The question we all have is what will I do when I get out? Do I have any marketable skills? How will I support myself and family?

As only those of us in prison know, our best prospects lie in vocational training - electrician, plumber, mason etc. I only mention these because they are the most lucrative. They offer a living wage with knowledge. Any vocational classes given in prison will only provide you with the basics of any trade. Where the best we can hope for is a job as a helper or apprentice. It is up to us to seek more. I have found that if you show a true desire to learn, teachers want to teach. They want to share their knowledge and the 'tricks of the trade'.

I myself was a plumber for many years before I came to prison. I took the plumbing classes offered, not because I could learn anything but to share my knowledge. Giving those interested a better shot at success. Besides, I truly love what I did. The point I am trying to make is that our time need not be completely wasted.

We learn patience in prison. Everything is hurry up and wait. We work through this frustration because we have no choice and need only to apply that learned patience in the real world. It's much harder when food, shelter and prosperity are the new necessities at the end of the day. But without patience we are doomed to fail.

Another helpful learned habit is saving and buying only what you truly need not what you want. We all know how bad the pay is in prison, earning pennies a day. We, therefore, save to buy the things we want

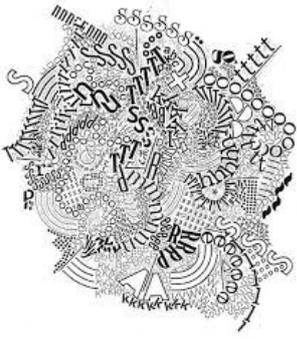
but really don't need. I have a friend who opened 'a store' selling items from the commissary. For every two items you take you pay back three. He took those items and converted them to cigarettes which he converted into cash. He then had family buy stocks in his name. He spent over thirty years in jail. He was hit at the board several times but never gave up hope. When he was finally released he had more than enough to get on his feet and get started living life. We all thought he was cheap, never gave anyone a break or a deal. Truth be told he had a plan and stuck to it. If we can learn to save here, not only will we walk out but will have saved enough to buy the basic tools we will need to earn a living.

This is essential to success when seeking employment. Be honest, offer to work the day for free to show what you can do. I have done this, it works. Don't be discouraged if it takes time - perseverance is the name of the game. Lastly, whether you walk out of prison with little to nothing or have managed to save a little, take advantage of the different programmes available to you in your community. There are more than you think out there. Some of this can be done from prison through different outreach programmes but it is up to you to find them. After release the internet is probably the best place to look.

The most important thing is to never give up! It is so easy to say 'this is too hard'. Ride out the rough times. Life is what you make it! If given a second or in some cases, a third or fourth chance, don't squander it. Like the old saying goes 'God helps those who help themselves'. He also helps fools and idiots but don't be one of those. The help is not the same. Good luck, make a plan and stick to it.

JL, USA

Poetry Corner



A New Group in Jail

I never thought I'd end up in jail,
Life right now feels like a huge fail,
As bad as it is, I must stay confident
To use my time wisely and try and be positive.

So I joined a new group at jail this week
Because a clear path to freedom is what I seek.
It was great hearing other prisoners tell their stories
As it's comforting knowing we all have similar worries.

A lack of love some of these men feel
So to fill the void they go ahead and steal.
Some of the men have assaulted their wives
They are rightly ashamed for the rest of their lives.

Some of the others have sold drugs to get extra money
Because, as the old saying goes 'No money, no honey',
At the end of the day we have all broken the law
No one is perfect and most people have at least one
secret flaw.

Some check the calendar and count down the days
Telling us they've learned their lesson and changed their
ways.
Some tell the truth and some men are lying
Because some prisoners are junkies and aren't afraid of
dying.

I can't understand why some keep coming back.
I wish I was free now to get my life back on track
But my day will come and I'll walk at the gate
Where my daughter will be waiting with Hayley, my best
mate.

SD, Australia

Family

Listless, sleepless, insomnia
Thoughts of family
Rushing all around.
Thinking of those
Dear to the heart
Building for the future
Without falling apart.
The warmth
True reality of it all
History not repeating
Moving forward
Moving on
Living, learning
Caring, sharing
Experiencing with everyone.

I followed the steps
of my father
but lost myself
along the way.
Trying to reach this path
And prove I'm worthy
Of having my day.
Being the man
My parents would be proud of
Happy sincere and helpful
'til my end of days.

S.S, UK

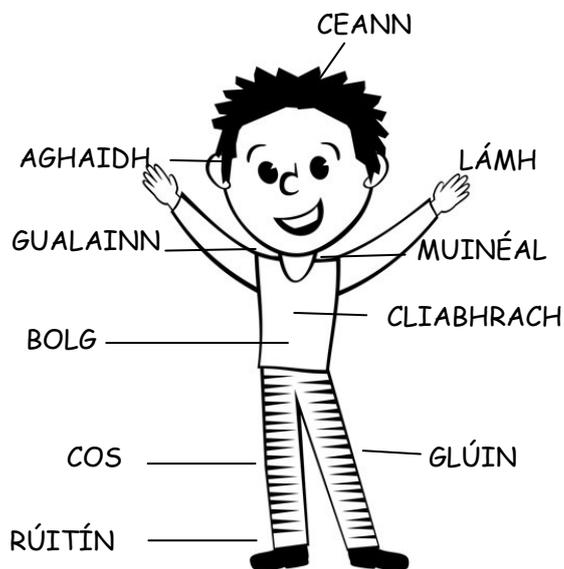




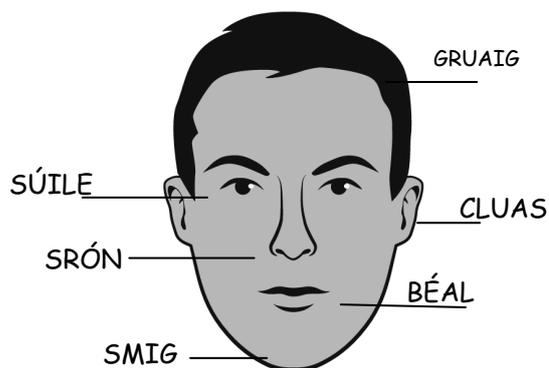
Smídín Gaeilge

Mo Chorp

Ceann	<i>kyown</i>	Head
Gruaig	<i>groo-ig</i>	Hair
Aghaidh	<i>eye-g</i>	Face
Súile	<i>soo-la</i>	Eye
Cluas	<i>cloos</i>	Ear
Srón	<i>shrone</i>	Nose
Béal	<i>bail</i>	Mouth
Smig	<i>smig</i>	Chin
Muinéal	<i>mwinayl</i>	Neck
Gualainn	<i>goo-linn</i>	Shoulder
Droim	<i>drim</i>	Back
Cliabhrach	<i>cleev-rock</i>	Chest
Bolg	<i>bolg</i>	Stomach
Uilinn	<i>ill-inn</i>	Elbow
Lámh	<i>law-v</i>	Hand
Cos	<i>cus</i>	Leg
Glúin	<i>gloon</i>	Knee
Rúitín	<i>root-een</i>	Ankle



Súile	<i>soo-la</i>	Eye
Cluas	<i>cloos</i>	Ear
Srón	<i>shrone</i>	Nose
Béal	<i>bail</i>	Mouth
Smig	<i>smig</i>	Chin
Méar	<i>mayor</i>	Finger
Ordóg	<i>ord-oh-g</i>	Thumb
Bairicíní	<i>bar-ikini</i>	Toes



Bhris mé mo.....	<i>vriish may mo</i>	I broke my.....
Ghortaigh mé mo	<i>gurtig may mo</i>	I injured my.....
Tá pian I mo	<i>taw peen i mo</i>	I have a pain in my.....
Folláin	<i>fullawn</i>	Healthy
Sláinte mheabhrach	<i>sawncha vyawrock</i>	Mental health
Intinn fholláin i gcorp folláin	<i>intinn fullawn i gurp fullawn</i>	Healthy mind in a healthy body

challenge yourself!

Going Green

N Q B D S M W B Y O E P F N E E Z F N O
W L H F Q L O U V E U D X T N C Y K I J
S O U N V K R O U P Z E S Y V B L D N K
X K J W O K P W F R T U X C I T S A L P
Y E I R G O U L J U D N U O R N O U S B
E Y I E O J L Z H J M M D M O H C A N S
E U X C Q N Y D R J I E E I N O S M K A
Q B X Y A F W D E V G T S S M R B K F W
T Q T C T R G A T R A S Z P E E I V Z C
B G L L I F D N A L I Y O Y N N U K D V
W H S E S N R D W M R S E H T O L C T Y
N A U C V P A P E R T O O B I Z Y O Z I
A T L U C B S G A S R C F L W O U K E U
J X D D L P Y G R E N E D R A G A Y E H
V C C E S G Y Q T O Y G U E S R N E F P
N I U R L A B O H P W M T S T S I G R L
F F V M M Q X C K B I W P Y E H I O M W
L B S E W I X W T C O D L R F O N T A D
D D P M C V B Z J P S G T X V G Y B K T
C Y V J W X F P L W Y A O P P U G O W O



Brain Teasers

1. What can you hold without ever touching or using your hands?
2. What kind of room has no doors or windows?
3. What kind of tree can you carry in your hand?
4. What can you catch but not throw?
5. Which word in the dictionary is always spelled incorrectly?



challenge yourself!

How well do you know our world?

Q. How many times a minute does the average adult elephant's heart beat?

A. Only 25. In man, the average adult heartbeat is 70 to 80 times per minute.

Q. If seedless oranges don't have seeds, how are they propagated?

A. By grafting. The original seedless orange was a mutant.

Q. How did the horse chestnut tree get its name?

A. From the early use of chestnuts as a medicine for horses.

Q. Bovine means cow-like, what does murine mean?

A. Mouse like.

Q. How many beats per second does a bumblebee flap his wings?

A. 160.

Q. What distance can the average healthy slug cover in a day?

A. 50 yards.

Q. How many hairs does the average human scalp contain?

A. Between 120,000 and 150,000.

Word Puzzle Pictures

1 Hands Hands HANDS <i>Hands</i> DECK	2 _____ _____ _____ read _____ _____	3 ⇒ SECRET ⇐ SECRET SECRET	4 KKjustKK
5 F F I R R E E	6 PEN sword	7 FA TH ER	8 GET IT GET IT GET IT GET IT
9 K C U T S	10 ONCE 12:20pm	11 LONG _____ DUE	12 HOROBOD

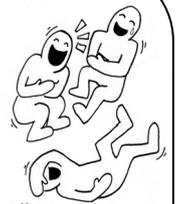
challenge yourself!

Can you Spot 7 Differences



Prison Humour

1. Why did the picture go to jail? Because it was framed.
2. Why was the parrot in prison? Because it was a jail-bird.
3. Police Officer: "How high are you?" Prisoner "No officer, it's "Hi, How are you?"
4. Who never minds being interrupted in the middle of a sentence? A convict.
5. What's an inmates favourite food? Cellery



Sudoku

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

Each Sudoku grid has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must ever 3x3 square.

Answers

- Spot the Difference:** 1. Border missing in picture. 2. Bottom of first bucket. 3. Water in second bucket. 4. Extra splash from pot in front. 5. Under the piano. 6. Colour of pen. 7. Line on flower vase.
- Brain Teasers:** 1. Your breath. 2. Mushroom. 3. Palm. 4. A cold. 5. Incorrectly.
- Word Puzzle Pictures:** 1. All hands on deck. 2. Read between the lines. 3. Top secret. 4. Just in case. 5. Crossfire. 6. The pen is mightier than the sword. 7. Step Father. 8. Forget it. 9. Stuck up. 10. Once upon a time. 11. Long overdue. 12. Robin Hood.



RECENT EVENTS IN IRELAND

Special Olympics Ireland team win 86 medals in this year's World games held in Abu Dhabi



The opening ceremony of the Special Olympics World Games was held recently in Abu Dhabi. Ireland was well represented with 91 competitors winning an astonishing 86 medals.

A baby gorilla has been born at Dublin Zoo.



The youngster arrived on April 1st

Brexit



Brexit continues to cause uncertainty across Europe with no clear resolution in sight. It has been a worrying time for many but especially for Irish businesses and those living along the Irish border.