

Which ICA Aim does this fit? (tick as many as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving quality of life</li> <li>Promoting and supporting Irish Language</li> <li>Promoting women in Ireland and Internationally</li> </ul>
Tell us more about the activity	<p>What did you do?</p> <p>Why did you do it?</p>
Who benefited from what you did?	
How did they benefit?	
Fund-raising	<p>Did the activity cost money?</p> <p>If yes, did you fund-raise for it?</p> <p>If you did, how did you fund-raise?</p> <p>How much have you fund-raised in total this year?</p>



## Irish Countrywomen's Association ~ Bantracht na Tuaithe February 2022

A Chomhbhaill, Fellow Members,

“Anois teacht an Earraigh , Beidh an lá ag dul chun síneadh  
Is tar éis na féile Bríde, Ardóidh mé mo sheol”

Now with the coming of spring, the days will grow longer  
And after St Brigid's Day I will raise my sail.

This song by the blind poet Raftery is particularly relevant at this time with the lifting of restrictions. We can raise our sails and get back to our Guild and Federation meetings and events.

We can plan and look forward to events with more confidence.

Please continue to get your photos and reports of ICA events into your local papers. We need to promote ICA in every way we can. Send your photos into Central Office to admin@ica.ie so we can include them in the next newsletter.

There are many great ICA events to look forward to.

March is a busy month with the Spring Conference hosted by South Tipperary Federation in The Clonmel Park Hotel on Saturday 12th March. Please register on Eventbrite, details overleaf.

I am really looking forward to the contest weekend 26th and 27th March in An Grianán with the Table Quiz, the Blackberry Solo Singing competition, Make and Model competition, Eleanora Gibbon Cup for drama, Baumann Shield and Eleanora Gibbon Shield for Music and Patsy Lawlor Set Dancing competition on 26th 27th March as well as the Gempack baking final and Creative Writing competition on 30th March in An Grianán.

These are always great events and I am delighted we are able to have them again.

The contests committee has put together a great selection of competitions with something for everyone. So check the booklet and get your entries in. The booklet is on the front page of the website. Let us showcase the wonderful talent there is in ICA.

Get your bookings into an Grianán and enjoy the great variety of courses in this special place. The Garden party, which we have missed so much, is on Friday 24th June.

On a sad note we lost another great former National President, Kitty Harlin, She will be fondly remembered by all in ICA.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam

You can contact me on hilda@ica.ie.

I am really looking forward to meeting with you during 2022.

Hilda Roche National President

*Hilda Roche*



**SPRING CONFERENCE**  
**CLONMEL PARK HOTEL, CO. TIPPERARY**  
**SATURDAY 12th MARCH 2022**

PLEASE CUT OUT THIS  
LAST PAGE, COMPLETE IT  
AND RETURN IT TO  
CENTRAL OFFICE  
admin@ica.ie or 58 Merrion  
Road, Dublin 4.



Return form by  
Tuesday 15th  
March 2022

View the hotel here: [www.clonmelparkhotel.com](http://www.clonmelparkhotel.com).

Please call the hotel directly on 052 6188714 to book your accommodation quoting ICA.

ACCOMMODATION PACKAGES FRIDAY 11th March 2022

BED AND FULL IRISH BREAKFAST

Double / Twin room en-suite	€119.00
Single room en-suite	€109.00

DINNER, BED AND FULL IRISH BREAKFAST

Double / Twin room en-suite	€179.00
Single room en-suite	€139

On Saturday 12th March delegates can purchase their lunch after registration.

The lunch options are:

Soup and Sandwiches with Tea/Coffee €11.50 per person

Choice of Main course and dessert with Tea/Coffee €20 per person

Eventbrite

In order to help us to manage numbers, we invite all members to register with Eventbrite to attend the conference. Copy and paste this link to register:

<https://bit.ly/3rAQzdf>

**AGM**  
**KNIGHTSBROOK HOTEL AND SPA, CO. MEATH**  
**SATURDAY 28th MAY 2022**

View the hotel here: [www.knightsbrook.com](http://www.knightsbrook.com)

Please call the hotel directly on 046 9482100 to book your accommodation and **remember to quote ICA.**

ACCOMMODATION PACKAGES FRIDAY 27th May 2022

BED AND BREAKFAST

Single room en-suite	€149
Double / Twin room en-suite	€179

DINNER, BED AND BREAKFAST

Single room en-suite	€185
Double / Twin room en-suite	€249

Registration via Eventbrite to follow in April 2022.

Details of lunch to follow in next newsletter.

AGM 2022 Preliminary Agenda

10:30 am	AGM Opens
10:45 am	Welcome and Introductions
11:00 am	National President Address
11:45 am	Reports NEB and NAC
12:15 pm	Motions and Voting
1:00 pm	Lunch
2:15 pm	Roll call of Federations
2:30 pm	Competitions
3:00 pm	Speakers
4:15 pm	Raffle
4:30 pm	Close of AGM

**Your Contribution to the ICA Annual Report 2021-2022**

The ICA Annual Report is currently being prepared. As every other year, the Annual Report provides us with an opportunity to include some examples of the work of Guilds and Federations throughout the year. This showcases ICA activities, the work you do in your communities and the contribution the ICA makes to women, families and our communities in Ireland. We understand that this might be a difficult task as some Guilds have not had any opportunity to meet during the Covid 19 Pandemic, which impacted across 2021. We welcome any information about the local engagement in the last year and particularly photographs. Please ensure to provide captions and have consent from the individuals pictured.

The examples should be activities, other than the day to day meetings that would happen in ICA, and should showcase the great work ICA women do, and should relate to one of the ICA's aims which are:

- A) (i) Bringing women together in fellowship and friendship
- (ii) Developing and improving wellbeing, knowledge and skills of women
- (iii) Improving general quality of life in Ireland through the co-operative effort of women
- B) Supporting and promoting the Irish language and culture
- C) Promoting the development of women in Ireland and internationally

Please return this form to Central Office, 58 Merrion Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 or by email to [admin@ica.ie](mailto:admin@ica.ie) before **Tuesday 15th March 2022.**

**ICA SHOWCASE**

Federation	
Guild	
what event / activity are you going to de-	
Which ICA aim does this fit? (Tick as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bringing women together in fellowship and friendship</li><li>Developing and improving wellbeing, knowledge and skills</li></ul>



## Interview with Chrissie Keating

Thomastown Guild, Kilkenny Federation, active ICA member for the last 70 years.

I was invited to join the ICA by Mrs Flood, a garden designer of note, who designed the Rose Garden in Mount Juliet and who liked the ethos set out by Anita Lett. It was 1951 and I was just 17 years old.

At that time I was working at the Kilmurry Estate as a poultry mistress. The estate was owned by Mrs Hoblan, horse trainer to the Queen, for horses to be ridden side-saddle. She was another forward thinking woman, as all her livestock and chickens were organic. When I married my husband in 1955, I had to give up work as was usual then.

I have held various roles in our Guild including being Guild President 3 times! I've entered so many competitions, I can't count them all. I have 7 Bronnari awards which include; Cooking, Sewing, Knitting, Patchwork, Rush work, Skin curing and Lumra Rugging. Forty years ago, I was told that I was the only person keeping the Lumra Rugging craft alive in the South East! I also was awarded Demonstrators bars and a Teaching Diploma. With my teaching diploma I was accepted a teaching post as one of the first teachers in the now world renowned, Grennan Art and Craft School in Thomastown.

In the beginning, Thomastown Guild had between 40 and 50 members. Over the years we have participated in so many community activities from setting up the annual Blood Bank to initiating the local Horticultural Show where produce and craftwork was sold every year. Our numbers have fallen and now we have only 10 members. The average aged has also changed over the years, but the one thing that has never changed, is our Guild meetings are always full of laughter and craic!

The role of ICA has changed a lot too. For some of our members, the Guild meeting was the only time they got out of the house apart from Mass on a Sunday. They didn't even get out to do the shopping, at that time a van used to go around with groceries. Now women "jump in the car and go anywhere". We didn't have cars at the time. The good old trusty bike was our only transport. I was one of the lucky ones to have a car, but you still had to be economical with the petrol! It was good if you had a neighbour to chat to but around Thomastown a lot of women lived outside the town and were quite isolated. So the friendship that the ICA brought to us was so important.

In the ICA you learned to be part of something different. It brought friends to your life and helped you when you might be down. You could learn skills to help in everyday life. ICA gave us a voice. Public speaking in our Guild helped shy, timid women to be able to voice opinions that they may have never been able to before. We had to know how to sew, mend and make clothes. We were the queens of upcycling then. We learned how to budget and get the best out of what we had. How to eek out food to cover a few days. No fast food then! When the Craft Classes return to Central Office, I will be there with my daughter Brigid to continue learning, socialising, having fun and enjoying all that ICA has to offer. Chrissie Keating, Thomastown Guild.

If you have been a member of ICA for a long time, please contact Central Office to tell your story; admin@ica.ie

## NATIONAL PROCEDURES COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following members will now form part of the National Procedures Committee;

Lillie Byrne, Horace Plunkett Guild

Margaret Condon, Ashford Guild

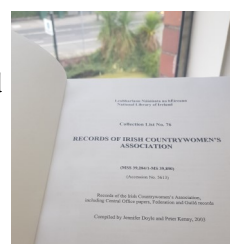
Margaret Houlihan, Maynooth Guild

Barbara Meer, Bonniclon Guild

## National Library donation

In December the ICA donated nearly 100 boxes of archive material from Central Office to the National Library of Ireland. Helen Rutter Annaduff Guild worked tirelessly for months with the help of staff in Central Office to prepare the records for the Library. Records of Guilds and Federations can now be accessed via the following accession number NLI MS Acc. 10,926.

Special thanks to Ann Harrington Blackrock Guild, Margaret Stevens Ashford Guild, Margaret Condon Ashford Guild and Pauline Scully Tallaght Guild for all their help with collating the Guild Annual Reports.



## Kitty Harlin RIP

Kitty Harlin was the ICA National President from 1988 to 1991. Kitty was a founder member of Scurlogstown Guild, Meath Federation and involved in the first Scurlogstown Olympiad festivals. She went on to become Meath Federation President from 1979 to 1981. She was appointed to the board of ACOT (The National Advisory and Training Body) and represented ICA on the Consumer Committee in Brussels. In 1998, she was chairperson of the Meath People in Need RTE Telethon committee.



During her time as National President she was elected president of COFACE - the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Community, the first person from outside the major European countries to hold the role, overseeing 90 organisations across member states. She was also a founder member, vice-president and spokesperson for the International Year of the Family. She was awarded a special UN Testimonial for her "exemplary support to the United Nations Programme during the International Year of the Family 1994." Upon hearing of the sad passing of Kitty Harlin COFACE issued the following statement; **"Kitty is part of COFACE and Europe's DNA. Her legacy is of great importance and felt today more than ever as we advocate the rights of families and for gender equality"**. Kitty Harlin died surrounded by her family, in her 96th year, on 22nd January 2022. May she Rest In Peace.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE REMINDER

**Considering the impact to activities of the current Covid 19 pandemic, the NEB has agreed a reduction of €5 on the annual membership for 2022.**

**The annual membership fee of €45 is now due and should be paid to your Guild Treasurer.**

## Vigil for Ashling Murphy RIP



An Grianan and Central Office joined many other thousands of homes around the country on 18th January to remember the life of Ashling Murphy. Hilda Roche, National President issued a statement calling for all members to light a candle/ have a minute's silence on this day to remember Ashling and all women who have been or are being affected by violence.

The tragic untimely death of Ashling Murphy has touched the hearts of the members of the Irish Countrywomen's Association and everyone around the country. ICA offer our deepest sympathy to Ashling's family and friends. We remember all the women who have died due to violence, those who are missing and those who are living with violence. This tragedy must be a catalyst for change. We welcome the statement made by Minister for Justice, but there must be actions taken and not just words. We stand together with all women. Violence against women must stop.



Vigils in Athboy (on left) and Navan Guilds (one right) in Meath Federation.





## GUIDELINES FOR GUILD AND FEDERATION MEETINGS

On Friday 21st January 2022, following public health advice, the government agreed that most of the public health measures currently in place can be removed. **This means we welcome the return to Guild and Federation meetings with no restrictions on social distancing, capacity or the need to show Covid certificates.** However attendance at meetings is still a personal choice, if individuals still have concerns about themselves or their family members, they should continue to assess their individual situation. There are ways to reduce risk, especially for those who may be more vulnerable. For further guidance go to the Risk Aware site. <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c7c67-be-risk-aware/>



As stated on the gov.ie website, the efforts of the Irish people over recent weeks to reduce social contacts, and take care when they did meet others, combined with the high uptake of the vaccination and booster programme, has made a considerable difference to the public health situation.

A number of public health measures will remain in place until 28 February 2022:

- requirements for mask wearing in all settings where currently regulated for
- Continuing to follow the current advice for those with symptoms, cases and close contacts as announced by the government on 12 January 2022
- continued focus on maximising the uptake of the primary and booster vaccination

### KEY MESSAGES:

1. If you have any symptoms – isolate and get a test. If you are a close contact follow the guidance on the HSE website [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
2. The best way to keep yourself safe is to ensure you are fully vaccinated and have your booster.
3. Continue to wear masks in appropriate settings

## NEWS FROM AN GRIANAN—Dates for your diary 2022



**Lace Week** will take place from 21st – 25th February. Classes include Tatting, Carrickmacross Lace, Bobbin Lace and Knitted Lace. Book your place NOW. Call An Grianán now on 041-9822119

**Drama Weekend** will take place from 18th to 20th March. This is particularly for those who joined Hilda Roche on Zoom during lockdown for Anyone For Drama, but it is open to all. Book your place now by calling 041-9822119.

Get your hats and fascinators ready, **The Garden Party** will take place in An Grianán on 24th June 2022. Call 041-9822119 to book your place.



Christmas 2021 and Nollaig na mBan 2022

On left, members of Bonniclonon Guild Mayo Federation, helping Team Hope with the Shoe box appeal. Below left, 92 shoe boxes were filled by the members of Borris in Ossory Guild, Laois Federation. Below right, members of Ballingarry Guild Limerick Federation on a Christmas Outing. Bottom right, Carlow Federation on a Nollaig na mBan walk. Bottom left, members of Westmeath Federation with their decorated Christmas Candles. Centre in yellow, Kay Devine, Mayo Federation at Lough Talt on Nollaig na mBan.



Below: The Inaugural Roscommon Christmas Festival. Marie Donnellan from Violet Hill Guild and Pauline Healy from Roscommon town Guild giving a seasonal floral demonstration.



Right: Two seasonal examples of the beautiful Christmas decorations made by Drogheda Guild Louth Federation during their Floristry Course.

