



Annual Report

Tuairisc Bhliantúil



Bantracht na Tuaithe
ICA - For All Women

Irish Countrywomen's Association
The Countrywomen's Trust

2022 - 2023



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Ravensdale Guild, Louth Federation, presenting a cheque for €6,600 to The Birches Day Care Centre





Organisational Information

Business Address:

58 Merrion Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Auditors:

DMQ Accountants Limited,
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors,
Summerhill, Wicklow Town, A67 TD54

Bank:

Allied Irish Bank, Dyer Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland,
Bank of Ireland, 2 College Green, Dublin 2

Company Registration Number: 16219

Charity Number (Revenue): CHY4947

Charity Registration Number: 20006730

Company Secretary: Joanne Dunphy Allen - 2022

Ann Lonergan - 2023



Remembering June O' Dwyer

ICA South West Regional President



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

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

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

June is survived by her daughters Sharon and Helena and son Jonathan.

May she Rest In Peace.



L to R: June O'Dwyer, South West Regional President and Ann Lonergan, Chair of the NAC and Tipperary South Federation President



L to R: Ann Lonergan, Chair of the NAC and Tipperary South Federation President, Hilda Roche, National President and June O'Dwyer, South West Regional President

A Year in Review

A Chomhbhaill,

As National President I see at first hand the wonderful work that goes on in ICA at National, Federation and Guild level. I hear and see of the work being done by big and small Guilds in their communities, and the amount of money raised for charities. Our members are hugely talented and always looking to learn and develop their skills. Members continue to enjoy weekends and weeks in An Grianán, looked after so well by Manager Niamh Donegan and her staff. It is a magic place where we can learn, relax, meet other members, enjoy delicious food and chat and laugh together. An áit ina mbíonn mná bíonn caint, where there's women there's talk, and there is also fun and laughter and support. That is the essence of ICA.

The 2022 AGM was hosted by Meath Federation and on the Friday we visited the graves of Kitty Harlin (R.I.P) National President 1988-1991 and Lady Fingal (R.I.P) the 2nd National President of ICA who was in office from 1912-1942....30 years! Our Winter Conference was held in Cork, in November, and on the Friday we had a tour of the very impressive UCC campus. Our Spring Conference was held in Galway with a talk on the history of Galway, and as at all our conferences there was great entertainment. Anna Sinnott retired after working in ICA for 12 years. She is missed. We welcomed Alice Regis as Communication and Members Officer and Eileen Fallon as Finance and Operations Manager. Great things are happening in ICA, many of which would not have happened without the immense amount of work done by our CEO Eufemia Solinas and Rebecca Ryan, Head of Administration. There are many new exciting initiatives happening, see projects overleaf. We re-launched our new Counselling Service for ICA members and their families at our Spring Conference.

I visited many Guilds and Federations during the year and look forward to getting to lots more. Guilds and Federations celebrated Nollaig na mBan, Lá le Bríde and got involved with the photo action 'Stop Gender-Based Violence' on International Women's Day. You will see some reports and photos of the varied events that happened around the country in this Annual Report.

It has been a challenging year in ICA and our biggest challenge is to bring ICA into full compliance with regards to our structure.

With the support of the NEB, the NAC and all our members, we will meet this challenge.

We had the Tree of Unity on display at the AGM 2022 and at our conference in Galway and at the AGM. In my inauguration address, I said the my aim was to move forward in the best interest of ICA.

That is still my aim. That is what we have to do.

Tabhair aire daoibh féin agus dá chéile Take care of yourselves and each other
Le gach dea-ghuí.



Hilda Roche

Hilda Roche, National President



Report from the Chair of the NAC

Fellow Members,

As I come to the end of my second term of office as Chair of the NAC I reflect on the highlights and the challenges that we faced together over the last 12 months.

The NAC meetings held in 11th June 2022, 17th September 2022, 28th January 2023 and 25th March 2023 bring together all the voices from around the country and gives us an excellent insight into the issues in each of our Federations. We can learn from each other and share best practice. The topics are many and varied and as Federation Presidents who represent our counties, the NAC is well-placed as a forum to make our voices heard.

One of the most tangible success stories of the past 12 months is the request from a grandmother in Westmeath Federation for the ICA to help her in facing 4 school pick-ups a day! This story was brought to the table by Helen O'Gorman Westmeath Federation President and the NAC brought it to the NEB asking how could the ICA help.

Funding was sought from the Community Foundation of Ireland under the Older Persons Fund to train 10 participants from all regions of the country in how best to advocate for the issues that most affect them. 2 residential training weekends were held in An Grianan in January and February 2023 where the participants learned policy influencing skills and communication training learning how to conduct radio interviews and how to plan a lobbying campaign. The ICA has just launched a campaign asking the Government to provide Affordable Afterschool Childcare for All. Watch this space!

Other issues raised at the NAC included the ICA supporting the call to action on the controversial forestry deal. This issue was raised at the NAC meeting in January 28th by Kathleen Gallagher, Sligo Federation, and together with the Irish Wildlife trust, the Irish Farmers Association and other environmental organisations the ICA joined the call to action and demanded that the deal is abandoned and the Coilte Forestry Act be reformed. The ICA supported the demands made to the Government for the immediate development of a new sustainable forestry model and urgent support for farmers and those working in forestry towards a just transition which accounts for biodiversity, climate mitigation and sustainable production.

Also, on the issue of biodiversity the NAC leant its voice to the campaign to protect and incentivise native Irish hedgerows. Along with several other Irish non-governmental organizations, the ICA sent a letter to Minister McConalogue in January 2023 recommending a change in hedgerow payments and regulations. This campaign continues as does the ICA support.

The last highlight that I would like to mention is the ICA's participation in the campaign to end gender-based violence. We have seen an alarming rise in the number of murders and attacks on women in Ireland. We joined together in a Photo Action on social media and called on the Government to have a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence.

I would like to thank all my fellow Federation Presidents for their dedication and their support to me over the last 12 months. and I look forward to working with you all in the next year.

Ann Lonergan Chair of the National Advisory Committee

Caherciveen Guild, Kerry
Federation, celebrating
its 60 years.



Our organisation

ICA is a national organisation of women founded in 1910. In 2022, we had 6,300 members in 437 Guilds across the country come together in friendship and fellowship to enhance their wellbeing and develop new skills.

A hallmark of the ICA's work for over a century has been its contribution to community life, in leading the advancement of women's role, their rights and opportunities, and improving the quality of family.

Our charitable objectives are to advance education and benefit the community through:

Bringing women together in fellowship and friendship, developing and improving the quality of life in Ireland through co-operative effort.

Supporting and promoting Irish language and culture.

Promoting the development of women in Ireland, nationally and internationally.

Our Organisation

ICA members can be found in communities across Ireland.

In 2022 - 2023 there were 437 Guilds organised in 27 Federations

Members meet regularly and plan a programme of events for the year. Across all Guilds there are common features: meetings, social events, campaigning activity, cooperative work in communities, fundraising, and participation in Federation and national ICA activities.

Each Guild is different and responds to the interests of its members. Guilds come together in County Federations to work on their county and national issues and campaigns, led by the National Executive Board and supported the National Advisory Committee.

ICA Central Office provides support to the whole organisation, facilitating training, conferences, events and competitions. It manages the national resources of the Association.

An Grianán, our Adult Education College in Co. Louth provides education, training, and specialists programmes, which ICA members can attend as individuals or in Guilds and Federations groups. It also welcomes guests, who are not members of the ICA, to a wide range of courses.

Participants of the "ICA Unity in Diversity" Project in Dublin Federation receiving their certificates



Meetings Matrix

Meetings of the National Executive Board Irish Countrywomen's Association

2022

22nd January 2022
2nd February 2022
23rd February 2022
21st March 2022
9th April 2022
29th April 2022
20th May 2022
21st May 2022
25th June 2022
19th August 2022
27th August 2022
9th October 2022
26th October 2022
3rd November 2022
10th November 2022
15th November 2022
23rd November 2022
7th December 2022
15th December 2022

2023

12th January 2023
19th January 2023
11th February 2023
13th February 2023
15th February 2023
22nd February 2023
3rd March 2023
7th March 2023

Meetings of the Directors of the Countrywomen's Trust

2022

21st January 2022
17th June 2022
23rd June 2022
18th November 2022
2nd December 2022

2023

13th January 2023

Meetings of the National Advisory Committee

2022

5th February 2022
11th June 2022
17th September 2022
3rd December 2022 -
(Federation Presidents' Forum)

2023

28th January 2023
25th March 2023



ICA in Action



1. ICA members protesting for climate action. | 2. Members of the Dunshauglin Guild, Meath Federation, attended the Dunshaughlin Harvest Festival. | 3. Members of the Smithboro Guild, Monaghan Federation, celebrating the 42nd Anniversary of their Guild. | 4. Members of the Moyvane Guild, Kerry Federation, on their outing to East Cork. | 5. Members of the Killeshandra Guild, Cavan Federation, celebrating the 70th Anniversary of their Guild. | 6. Members of the new Guild in Millstreet, Cork Federation. | 7. Members of the Mainistir na Feile Guild, Limerick Federation, presenting a cheque for €2,287 to members of the Irish Red Cross. | 8. Members of the Castledermot Guild, Kildare Federation, visiting the Shankill Castle. | 9. Members of the Carraig na bhFear Guild, Cork Federation, celebrating the anniversary of women getting the vote.



ICA in Action



1. Members of the Monaghan Town Guild, Monaghan Federation, attending a demonstration for four autumn arrangements| 2. Members of the Lebane Guild, Galway Federation, enjoying High Tea. | 3. Members of the Ballinea Brotenstown Guild, Westmeath Federation, on their recent outing. | 4. Members of the Castlebar Guild, Mayo Federation, at the collection for the shoebox appeal. | 5. Members of Carlow Federation on their outing. | 6. Members of the Horseleap/Streamstown Guild, Westmeath Federation, busy card making. | 7. Members of Laois Federation at the Federation's Winter Conference.



Selection of **Federation Activities**

Meath Federation

- **Federation AGM 2022:** Election of the new President and Secretary.
- **Pitch & Putt Finals:** The team from Dunshaughlin and Ardcath Guilds finished in second place.
- **Million Starts Project:** The Federation took part in the ICA Million Stars Project.
- **Federation Walks** in Trim.
- **Annual Table Quiz:** Kilcloon Guild went on to represent Meath at the National Final.
- **Blackberry Solo Competition:** The Federation was represented by Geraldine McNally from Coole/Summerhill Guild who reached 3rd place.
- **Gem Pack porter cake competition:** Breda Fitzsimons from Coole/Summerhill Guild represented the Federation.
- **Aldi Brown Bread Competition:** Maeve Louli from Lismullen Guild went on to be joint winner at the National ICA heat in An Grianan and finished third representing ICA at the finals at the Ploughing Championships in September.
- **Yearbook:** Dunshaughlin entered the Guild Yearbook competition and were the only entrant in the country.
- **Federation Competition:** Carmel Yore of Dunshaughlin Guild won the prize for the nicest handwriting (Friendship & Fellowship).
- **September Federation meeting:** The Federation presented certificates of achievement to members for the various training events and competitions during the year.
- **Annual Federation Trip** to Bundoran.
- **Winter Federation meeting:** The Federation had a hot supper then all entrants took part in a Fashion Parade for the 'best dressed from a charity shop for €20 or less'.



Some Meath Federation members who received certificates of achievement from their President at the September 2022 meeting.



Members of Meath Federation enjoyed a wonderful 4 day trip to the Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran.



Selection of *Federation Activities*

Wicklow Federation

- **Tinahely Show:** The Federation participated in the August Tinahely Show, the first one to take place since the pandemic.
- **September Federation Meeting:** The Federation had a presentation and a workshop on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Autumn Upcycling Day:** Members from across the county gathered to work with a tutor on upcycling items from their own wardrobes.
- **1920's night and Guild of the Year Competition:** The event was carried out in November and it was attended by almost 100 Federation members almost all in fabulous costume. The night included sketches, craftwork and produce all on a 1920's theme.
- **67th Annual ICA Drama Festival:** The event was carried out in January and it saw both ICA and other amateur theatre groups perform sketches and short plays across three nights of fabulous theatre in Glenealy, Co Wicklow.



The display of crafts that the Federation showed at the Tinahely Show



Some Wicklow Federation members who participated in the 1920's night.



Some member of Wicklow Federation participated in the 167th Annual ICA Drama Festival



Selection of Federation Activities

Longford Federation

- **Sporting activity:** Nordic Pole Walking was the sport of choice this year. The Federation took part in Walk with Charlie in Cornhill and enjoyed a cup of tea on return provided by the Ennybegs Guild.
- **International Women's Day:** The Federation had a presentation held by a Female Business owner, a Councillor and the International Officer followed by Afternoon Tea and Music. The Federation also took part in their own early morning walk for the Mental Health Charity Pieta House.
- **The Activator Walking Programme:** The Federation took part in the event through The Longford Sports Partnership.
- **Gardening Evening:** The Federation learned the best ways of creating our Flower Baskets and prolonging flowering by a local Horticulturist.
- **June Federation Meeting:** The Federation held a Remembrance Evening where each Guild President lit a Candle in Remembrance of our dear loved ones who passed away during Covid 19 and all the efforts of members who hardly worked during the pandemic.
- **Agricultural Show:** In July, the Federation was involved in the Co. Longford Agricultural show.
- **Trip to the Lost Valley:** The event involved a guided tour and walk through the Lost Valley which has connections of Famine Times.
- **Sports Day Events:** Members of the Federation took part in Pitch and Putt, Walk by the Canal and Chair aerobics followed by an enjoyable barbeque.
- **Fashion Show:** The show held in October involved modelling clothes which were new and second hand.
- **Cookery Cup:** The Competition saw each of the 12 Guilds compete against each other in Cooking a compulsory dish and a choice of three items from four.



Some Longford Federation members on their trip to the Lost Valley in Louisburgh



Some Longford Federation members who participated in the Fashion Show



Selection of Guild Activities

The main objectives of the Association are to advance education and benefit the community through bringing women together in fellowship and friendship thus developing and improving the well-being, knowledge and skills of women and improving the general quality of life in Ireland through co-operative effort of women

These snapshots show examples of ways in which ICA Guild activities enhance women's well-being across the country



Camross Guild, Laois Federation, celebrating its 70th Anniversary

Improving the quality of life by keeping fit

Keeping fit is of paramount importance to all of us, but if you can do it as a group activity, it can become a fun way to improve many aspects of your health. **Clifden Guild** in Galway Federation enjoyed learning 2 new activities this year, yoga and bowls. Floor and Chair yoga classes were very popular and enjoyed by members in **Killaban Guild** in Laois Federation, **Golden-Kilfeakle Guild** and **Powerstown /Lisronagh** and **Ballingeary Guilds** in South Tipperary, as well as **Minaun Guild** in Waterford Federation. Chair and Floor yoga improves mobility skills, increases endorphin levels and improves concentration and relaxation. **Legan Guild** in Longford Federation chose Pilates as their exercise this year. Aqua-aerobics was the exercise of choice for the members of **Carrick-on-Suir Guild** in South Tipperary Federation and a very ambitious course in Kettlebells was chosen by **Bree Guild** in Wexford Federation. Since the Pandemic, walking has been a strong contender as the exercise of choice for many Guilds, including **Doora Guild** in Clare Federation, **Kilcummin Guild** in Kerry Federation, **Sligo Town Guild** in Sligo Federation and **Kill Guild** in Kildare Federation. The members of **Blanchardstown Guild** in Dublin Federation gave it a new twist choosing a "Walk and Talk" session meeting in the Phoenix Park every Friday morning and encouraging new friendships and socialising. The members of **Bonniconlon Guild** in Mayo Federation enjoyed scones and tea after their 5 KM walk in the local countryside. The members of **Cappamore Guild** in Limerick Federation combined walking with fundraising and raised money for the Breast Cancer Research institute in Galway. **Clane Guild** in Kildare Federation took up classes in activator pole, walking specifically designed for those with arthritis, a fun group activity with a beneficial result.

Promoting women internationally

The ICA has been a member of the Confederation of Family Organisations of the European Union - COFACE Family since the 1970s. Mary O'Halloran National Treasurer represents the ICA and attended expert meetings in Amsterdam, Prague and Monza and delivered a presentation on the lack of affordable childcare in Ireland at the meeting in Prague. Expert meetings inform European Policy and promote the rights of families across Europe. For more information see COFACE Families Europe (coface-eu.org/)



Volunteering and raising funds for the benefit of our communities

Volunteering time and skills and fundraising are a large part of ICA life.

Shanagarry Guild in Cork Federation combined a trip to visit their local garden centre with a fundraiser for the Red Cross. **Carndonagh Guild** in Donegal Federation held a Tea Day and raised funds for local Ukrainian migrants who are now living in the locality. **Garristown Guild** in Dublin Federation and **Abbeyknockmoy Guild** in Galway Federation participate in Daffodil Day every year to raise funds for the Irish Cancer Society. Abbeyknockmoy Guild picked as many daffodils as possible, arranged them into small bunches and sold them in churches in many parishes. The Shoe Box Appeal run by Team Hope is always popular with ICA Guilds. **Portlaoise Guild** in Laois Federation met weekly for a craft class all year and made many knitted items to be included in the shoe boxes. **Labasheeda Guild** in Clare Federation and **Aghabog Guild** in Monaghan gave of their time and their funds to provide a Christmas Party with presents, goodie bags, refreshments and a DJ for all the local parish children and their families. **Muckross Guild** in Kerry Federation and **Cushinstown Guild** in Wexford Federation also donated their time and their skills to knit blankets and baby clothes for newborns as well as hats and gloves for the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin. Guilds in Louth Federation donated their time and skills, with members in **Blackrock Guild** making Calico dolls to be used by the play therapists in Crumlin Children's Hospital, and **Ravensdale Guild** spent the year knitting clothes to raise funds for local charities. Volunteering to organise and fund a Senior Citizens party has long been the preserve of many local ICA Guilds including **Horace Plunkett Guild** in Meath Federation, **Camross Guild** in Wexford Federation, **Garristown Guild** in Dublin Federation, **Edenderry Guild** in Offaly Federation and **Kilabban Guild** in Laois Federation. The members of **Drumboylan Guild** in Roscommon Federation also donated of their time fundraising for the North West Hospice selling their delicious cakes and serving tea to their local community. The members of **Benekerry Guild** in Carlow Federation were involved in the Carlow Christmas Tree festival crafting their own trees out of different materials and raising funds. The members of **Santry Guild** in Dublin Federation created twiddle muffs for patients in the Mater hospital suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Improving knowledge and skills

Adult Education is one of the cornerstones of the mission to improve the knowledge and skills of ICA members. The members of **Lough-an-Leagh Guild** in Cavan Federation learned how to upcycle furniture during their craft class and repainted a small chair. The members of **Aughadown Guild** in Cork Federation went on a Heritage walk with a local historian visiting a ruined medieval church in their locality. Craft classes are a mainstay of all Guild meetings and the members in **Raphoe Guild** in Donegal Federation bring women together twice a month for their craft class learning patchwork, crochet, knitting and other crafts. Members of **Ardmore Grange Guild** in Waterford also organised a knitting class to improve Guild members skills. **Dollymount Guild** in Dublin Federation improved their knowledge of a local sweet factory in a presentation entitled "Lemons Sweets" given by historian Cormac Moore. **Castleknock Guild** in Dublin Federation attended lectures and visits to historical monuments as part of the the Dublin Festival of History. **Rosscahill Guild** in Galway Federation took up flower arranging as their new skill with many beautiful results. **Dundalk Guild** in Louth Federation focussed on their personal safety attending classes on self defence. **Louth Village Guild** also in Louth Federation took up classes in painting watercolours learning about mixing up colours and using different brushes. **Castlebar Guild** in Mayo Federation enjoyed learning new crafts with a local crafter who taught them a variety of Christmas Crafts. Members in **Lakeview Guild** in Sligo Federation enjoyed 10 weeks of art classes and members of **Gleann Guild** also in Sligo Federation enjoyed classes in gardening and a demonstration of flower arranging. **Avoca Guild** in Wicklow Federation benefitted from learning about skincare and upcycling, while **Wicklow Town Guild** also in Wicklow Federation enjoyed a trip to the theatre to see South Pacific in the Bord Gais Energy Theatre. **Crossmolina Guild** in Mayo Federation learned how to use foraged natural and recycled items to make beautiful decorations and wreaths.



Supporting the Irish language, culture and history

Seachtaine na Gaeilge is always promoted in ICA Guilds and members of the National Committee Coiste na Gaeilge take time at each of the National events to encourage the use of Gaeilge by singing, using Irish phrases and listening to Irish poetry. Members of **Castlepollard Guild** in Westmeath Federation took a course on Irish History and did a tour of Dublin landmarks of historical note around the Rising of 1916. **Templemore Guild** in North Tipperary Federation held An Irish Night inviting all the Guilds in the Federation to join the celebration. Members of **Rathanna Guild** in Carlow Federation invited their local community to join them in sharing memories of Rathanna during National Heritage Week. **Clifden Guild** in Galway Federation held a Zoom meeting in Irish to promote the use of the language. **Gort Guild** also in Galway Federation held a workshop for children and adults in their local community to gather rushes for, and learn how to make St Brigid's Crosses, keeping this ancient craft alive in a year which celebrated St Brigid for the first time with a new bank holiday in February.

Developing and improving well being and promoting good mental health

The importance of good mental health has been highlighted by many Guilds in the last few years. The members of **Knocknacarra Guild** in Galway Federation enjoyed a Mindfulness Workshop, walking on the beach, learning mindfulness exercises and how to make healthy snacks. **Loughrea Guild** also in Galway Federation enjoyed a therapeutic retreat day which included meditation and music therapy. **Manorhamilton Guild** in Leitrim Federation focused on improving their mental health by offering members 4 nights of talks on mindfulness and self-care delivered by a local life-coach. **Mayo Federation** offered its Guilds an afternoon with Psychologist Shane Martin who shared his thoughts on "Your precious life", it was very uplifting and ensured that members will not wait until it is too late to seek help.

Improving the lives of women in Ireland

Bruskey Guild in Cavan Federation were keen to learn from the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the women in their Guild. They participated at the Virginia Agricultural show and presented 3 items: a craft made during lockdown, a collage that reflected effects of Covid 19 in their community and a cake that celebrated the ending of restrictions. **Butlersbridge Guild** also in Cavan Federation marked International Women's Day by yarnbombing the railings of Cavan Court House and covered a section of the railings in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. **Drimoleague Guild** in Cork Federation also celebrated International Women's Day by inviting their own members and members of the public to a Vintage Afternoon Tea encouraging participants to wear national dress and vintage clothing. **Abbeyleix Guild** in Laois Federation participated in the One Million Stars to end violence project and many hundreds of stars were made and exhibited locally for 1 month showing solidarity for the victims of domestic and gender based violence. Members all over the country took part in a Photo Action to end gender based violence and the Spring Conference held in the Galway Bay Hotel in Salthill, saw a presentation from the National Women's Council on the importance of including SPHE on the senior cycle of all secondary schools in Ireland, including all those with a religious ethos. Education being one of the best ways of fighting gender based violence.



ICA Projects

Unity in Diversity



The ICA project 'Unity in Diversity' was granted funding by the Education and Training Boards of the City of Dublin and Cork. The aim was to support women living in communities of need, to promote cultural diversity, community education and access learning opportunities via the learning of handcrafts. In Dublin, Ann Fleeton was the tutor in the classes which took place in the ICA Central Office in Dublin 4. Ann taught a wide range of handcraft skills including fabric collage, hand appliqué, printing with plants on fabric, natural dyeing using berries and bark, fabric painting, patchwork and hand dyeing on silk and cotton fabrics.

In Cork, Eleanor Calnan delivered the training in 3 locations around the county. Participants in Millstreet, West Cork and South West Cork learned a wide variety of skills which included card making, making cushions covers, Carrickmacross lace, embroidery, patchwork, candlewick embroidery, knitting and needle felting. All participants were invited to complete a post evaluation form and many stated that their skills level had greatly improved, citing other benefits ranging from mental health to community engagement.



Above some members of Millstreet Guild displaying their cushion covers



Above some participants learning hand sewn patchwork in ICA Central Office

Guth Eagna - The Voice of Wisdom

FACILITATED BY

**Community
Foundation
Ireland**



The Voice of Wisdom Project is funded by the Community Foundation of Ireland as part of the Older Persons Fund. The project is entitled Guth Eagna - The Voice of Wisdom . The aim is to upskill ICA members to act in a advocacy role and act as ambassadors for themselves and their communities. 10 participants representing cities and regions of Ireland took part in 2 residential weekend training sessions in An Grianán. The participants spent the first weekend in January 2023 learning policy Influencing skills and the second weekend in February receiving communications training. The aim of the first campaign is to call on the Government to use the childcare supplement to fund affordable after school childcare for all National School Children.

Participants seen here on left with Pat Montague, the tutor, and staff support.



Mindful Counselling

The ICA is delighted to herald the return of the free counselling service for members. Supported by the Hospital Saturday Fund, the Mindful Counselling service aims to achieve the provision of much needed counselling services for women in Ireland. The ICA has engaged the services of Maura Davis MIACP. Maura is the founder and CEO of [CounsellingandTherapy.com](https://www.counsellingandtherapy.com). Mindful Counselling provides therapy in person, online (video) and phone counselling. Therapists are allocated to members all over Ireland. Each member will be offered up to 6 counselling sessions free of charge. Each session is 1 hour duration.

Counselling is also available for spouses and partners of ICA members and adult children (18-24) living at home.

This confidential service offers ICA members support with a range of issues including anxiety, stress, grief and loss, relationships, addictions, family issues and trauma and critical incidents.



The Hospital
Saturday Fund



Mindful Counselling



Sketching Class



Craft Class



Creative Writing Workshop

Arts and Craft classes in Central Office

The learning of Arts and Crafts has always been at the heart of the ICA ethos. The Handcraft Committee have offered taster classes in Central Office for many years, during 2022 was the first time that the Arts Committee offered something similar, including a 2-hour introduction to Creative Writing was offered by writer Estelle Birdy and the topics covered included:

- How to find those nuggets that make your story authentic and engaging.
- Write what you know, not what you are.
- Learn how NOT to stray into memoir.
- Hit them hard from the start.
- Edit, Edit, Edit.

Anne Carleton offered 2 classes in sketching, where the participants learned how to sketch a face and how to use perspective.



ICA National Events



ICA members during the AGM held in Meath on the 28th of May 2022



Produce Committee Stand at the AGM held in Meath on the 28th of May 2022



Winners of the Arts Awards receiving their prizes at the Winter Conference held in Cork on the 5th of November 2022



Hilda Roche, National President, and Ena Howell, Cork Federation President at the Winter Conference held in Cork on the 5th of November 2022



Pat Montague, our Advocacy trainer, presenting on Advocacy and its benefits at the Spring Conference in the Galway Bay Hotel Salthill on 11th March 2023



Hilda Roche, National President, and Cathy Curlette, Galway Federation President at the Spring Conference held in Galway on the 11th of March 2023

National Competitions

2022 - 2023

Dublin is embarking on our second year of running the National Competitions. We would like to thank our members who took part last year and sincerely congratulate all the prize-winners.

While Covid19 still impacted some competitions last year, we hope to have a “full house” this year.

The 2023 Competition booklet was sent to all Guilds with the September 2022 mailing. It was also posted on the ICA website. We thank Rebecca and Alice in Central Office for their input.

We are encouraged by the level of entries received for competitions, this year, where the closing date is imminent or already passed. Thank you, members!

Competitions weekend is in An-Grianán April 1st & 2nd.

We look forward meeting many members there.

- The final of the Table Quiz will be held on Saturday afternoon.
- The “Solo Singing Voice of ICA” is scheduled for Saturday evening. Sunday morning will see competitions (hopefully) for Set dancing and Eleanora Gibbon Shield for Music and Baumann Shield for Music.
- On Sunday afternoon Eleanora Gibbon Cup for Drama will be competed for.
- On Monday April 3rd will be the finals of Gem Pack baking competition and TASK Creative Writing Competition.
- We hope these occasions will be enjoyed by all.

We are also very grateful that our National President has agreed to fit these dates into her already busy schedule.

It would not be possible to hold these competitions without the generous monetary contribution of our sponsors Gem Pack and Task Community Care Ltd. We thank them sincerely.

The final cog in the wheel, to ensure the success of the competitions, is of course Niamh our Manager in An-Grianán and staff. She has been most helpful and accommodating.

Helen Uí Mhúineacháin,
Secretary of the National Competitions



Helen Uí Mhúineacháin,
Chair of the National
Competitions Committee
and Dublin Federation
President with the new
Competitions Booklet



Some wonderful medals!



Carlow Federation on
coming 3rd in the
National Pitch and Putt
2022 Competitions at
Seapoint Club



An Grianán



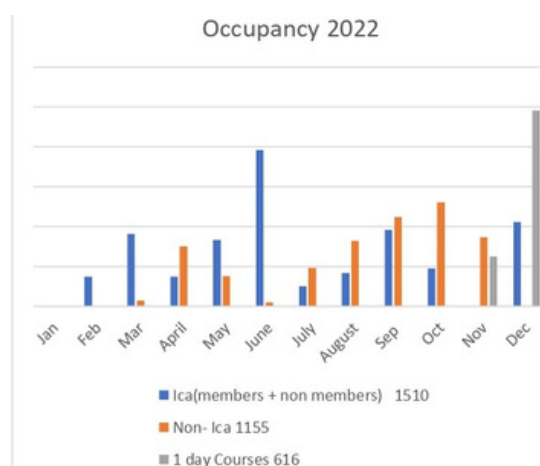
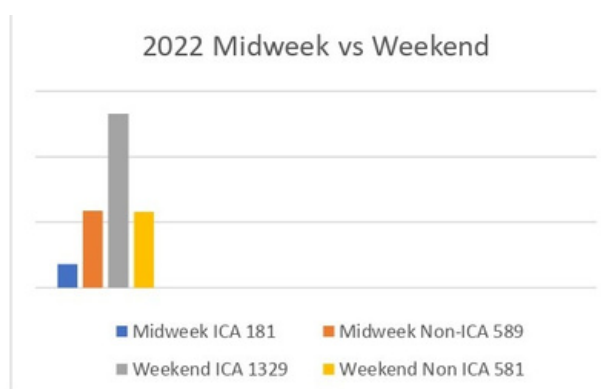
In 2022 over 3000 people crossed the doors of An-Grianan to partake in a course of their choice and enjoy our wonderful hospitality! We welcomed both members, non-members and corporate groups to name but a few. Participants got to choose from our well renowned courses like Woodland Embroidery with Eleanor Hewitt, the ever popular Fabric Sculpture with Justine Prendergast and one of our new but very popular courses, Pyrography with Pauline Meehan. We were also delighted to offer some new courses in Upcycling with Martina Fitzgerald, Wreaths for any season with Marion, and many other courses requested by our members.

Last February we kicked off with Lace week which received a great response when introduced. Our members made some beautiful pieces and Lace week has now become a bi-annual midweek course with courses in February and October, Bobbin Lace and Carrickmacross Lace are the most requested Lace courses at present but we are always looking to expand our offerings so let us know if there's any other lace course our members would like. Handcraft Week is still the most popular week of the year, we were thrilled to book out again and a big Thank You to the Handcraft Committee for their wonderful work which makes Handcraft week such a success.

We held the semi finals of the Brown Bread Competition in August, the arrival of the Nationwide film crew added a sense of excitement to the day. We were delighted by the attendance on the day and thanks to all competitors who make these occasions a wonderful part of the ICA/An Grianan calendar.

The Art Committee ran an excellent programme in 2022, it was very well supported and we were delighted to see Drama back on the course list here at An Grianan. Our National President, who is no stranger to the stage directed the drama group and a very enjoyable evening was had watching the sketches. The Arts Committee worked tirelessly in promoting the Arts Weekend which was a great success.

Our ICA occupancy for 2022 was as follows:



We welcomed back some wonderful groups including Dublin Chamber of Music, Recorder and Viola group and The Irish Doctors choir. We were truly spoiled with the beautiful music filling the house.

We also welcomed Erasmus Student Network Ireland and over 130 students joining us from every corner of Europe to enjoy our wonderful facilities and beautiful surroundings. To say they enjoyed themselves is an understatement and we really hope to welcome them back in the future!

Our one day events are gathering momentum and this year we welcomed new and old groups from Active age groups to Walking groups to those who just wanted to relax, eat and enjoy themselves. Everybody was welcomed warmly and everyone went home feeling refreshed and happy!

Our Annual Garden Party for 2023 will take place on 7th July 23 and we are sure it won't disappoint! From our much loved fashion show to dancing the night away - it's not to be missed. Book Early to avoid disappointment.

In other news we are delighted to announce that commencing Spring 2023 An Grianán will work closely with LMETB to run English courses 3 days per week for the local Ukrainian displaced families, reaffirming our Adult Education Centre status.

The Boxing Club and Tennis Club are doing very well, we are delighted to announce that the Termonfeckin Tennis Club have applied for planning permission to extend their courts to include a mini practice tennis court and to construct a new two story extension with viewing balcony. All of these improvements will ensure their entry into the Dublin League Competitions. If any members would like to use the courts during their stay just let us know in advance so we can organise this.

We endeavour to make our members and guests stay as enjoyable as possible and will do all we can to enhance it in any way possible. We welcome suggestions for new courses. 8 participants are required for courses to proceed so please get your friends together and join us.

Niamh Donegan
An-Grianan Manager

Tallaght Guild, Dublin Federation,
enjoying the Christmas Day
Experience in An Grainán.



Ladies parading at the An
Grianán Garden Party





Treasurer's Review

2022 - 2023



Mary O'Halloran, ICA National Treasurer, speaking at the COFACE Conference in Prague October 2022

The impact of the COVID19 pandemic was still in evidence at the start of 2022 which affected the organisational activities, however by the summer a range of Guild, Federation and National activities had recommenced.

Members returned to An Grianán in great numbers, midweek and weekend occupancy shown in the report overleaf reflects this. Over 3,000 members and non-members attended a variety of courses in the 12 months.

There is value in the ICA membership: you are part of a likeminded community, enjoy the support of other women and you have an opportunity of networking with your fellow members. You benefit from opportunities for socialising, learning and taking part in voluntary work impacting on your communities. The other benefits of ICA membership include insurance cover, the Member Benefit Programme, range of communications and bi-annual national conferences. You have the support of the staff in Central Office and the benefit of the Adult Educational Centre at An Grianán.

Funding was granted for some new projects, including funds from The Older Persons Fund of the Community Foundation of Ireland, which aims to support the delivery of an advocacy project called Guth Eagna – The Voice of Wisdom. Funding allowed ICA to provide training to a small groups of its members in communication and policy influencing techniques, as well as the identification and development of an advocacy campaign for the Affordable Afterschool Childcare for All for the benefit of many of our members. We look forward to lobbying our local representatives as part of this campaign in the next few months.

Funding from the Cork and Dublin ETBs, as part of the Reach Fund 2022 was awarded for the Unity in Diversity project, which aimed to upskill women in handcrafts in both rural and urban settings and research educational and training needs of non-EU migrant women in rural Ireland. Funding from the Hospital Saturday Fund has helped with the relaunch of the Mindful Counselling Service for ICA members and their families. We encourage all members and their families to make use of this service, which offers up to 6 free sessions either online or in person, with a therapist local to them. There are more funding projects in the pipeline, and we look forward to seeing these progress in the future.

As well as being the National Treasurer, I am also the ICA representative to the Administrative Council of COFACE Families Europe. As such, I have attended some of the European expert meetings and gave a presentation to the COFACE Assembly on the lack of affordable childcare options in Ireland. The affordable childcare campaign is an initiative that I am committed to deliver in Ireland to bring us in line with other European countries where childcare is much more affordable. We are working towards hosting the next expert meeting of the COFACE Families of Europe in Dublin, in April 2024.

Please take an opportunity to familiarise yourselves with the great work of COFACE Families Europe, you can find more information on wwwcoface-eu.org.



Income and Expenditure account

Financial year ending 31 December 2022

	2022 €	2021 €
Income resources	1,022,191	524,910
Cost of sales	(203,041)	(101,777)
	819,150	423,133
Administrative expenses	(850,794)	(564,903)
other operating income	100,983	348,948
Operating (deficit) / Surplus	69,339	207,178
Exceptional administrative expenses	(297,723)	(13,678)
(Deficit) / surplus for the financial year	(228,384)	193,500

All the activities of the organisation are from continuing operations.



Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2022

	2022 €	2021 €
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	12,314,320	12,331,853
	12,314,320	12,331,853
Current assets		
Stocks	7,001	8,299
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	28,795	44,772
Cash at bank and in hand	827,504	964,605
	863,300	1,017,676
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(191,213)	(134,738)
Net current assets	672,087	882,938
Total assets less current liabilities	12,986,407	13,214,791
Net assets	12,986,407	13,214,791
Reserves		
Revaluation reserve	8,932,721	8,932,721
Restricted funds	24,840	21,790
Income and expenditure account	4,028,846	4,260,280
Members funds	12,986,407	13,214,791

#EndGenderBasedViolence

