



# ICPO NEWS

Issue No. 89

Autumn 2024



*Halfpenny Bridge, Dublin*

Photographer: Antonio M.

## ICPO

It is estimated that at any one time there are in excess of 1,100 Irish people in prison overseas. Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) has contact with Irish people in prisons in more than thirty countries, the majority of whom are in the UK, with many more detained throughout the USA, Australia, Africa, Europe, South and Central America and Asia.

The 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 vision of ICPO is of a world where the human rights of Irish prisoners overseas are respected and their dignity is honoured.

- We work with all Irish prisoners and their families wherever they are and at all stages of the imprisonment process.
- We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- We ensure the privacy of everyone we work with.
- Everyone we work with is treated as an individual and the service provided is tailored to their needs.
- We stay with people on their journey maintaining a presence as long as needed.

## STAFF

### Maynooth

Leslie Alcock, Orla Dick, Ian Hanna, Catherine Kenny, Ciara Kirrane and Bernie Martin.

### London

Marie Norbury, CEO, Fr. Gerry McFlynn, Liz Power, Breda Power, Mahrukh Shabir and Sally Murphy, Kamran Rasheed Traveller Equality Project: Ellena Costello, Fiona Mullen and Sadie Montague.

## VOLUNTEERS

Maynooth: Sr. Anne Sheehy, Eileen Boyle, Joan O'Cléirigh, Betty Wilson, Harry Carberry and Bianca Costura

London: Sr. Moira Keane

ICPO is a registered charity with covenanted tax status under its parent body the IECE UK: 280742 Ireland: CHY 5956

Views expressed in 'ICPO News' are the author's own and not necessarily those of the ICPO

How to contact us:

ICPO, PO Box 13484

Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

Tel: 01-505-3156 Fax: 01-629-2363

Email: [info@icpo.ie](mailto:info@icpo.ie) Web: [www.icpo.ie](http://www.icpo.ie)

ICPO, PO Box 75693, London NW1 W7ZT, England

Tel: 0207-482-4148

Email: [prisoners@irishchaplaincy.org.uk](mailto:prisoners@irishchaplaincy.org.uk)

For information on the work of the ICPO London office please see their website: <http://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/irish-prisoners/>

Material on these pages are copyright © the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas or reproduced with permission from the copyright owner. It is not permitted to reproduce, republish, redistribute or resell, in all or in part, any material from this newsletter without the written permission of the editor.

ICPO is greatly indebted to its funders for their generous support:



IRISH CATHOLIC  
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE  
COMHAIL BISPÉAD CAITLÉACH ÉIREANN



Society of St Vincent de Paul



Government of Ireland

Emigrant Support Programme

An Bliain Ghobháil Eileitracha agan Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Greetings from the ICPO.

I am pleased to introduce our autumn edition of the ICPO Newsletter as well as Bianca and Harry who started volunteering with us in the Maynooth office a few months ago. We are thrilled to have them on board and really appreciate their help and support. I would like to thank Harry and Bianca for their contributions to the newsletter and hope you all enjoy their very interesting articles on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, Glasgow Celtic FC and the Cost of Living.

In this edition, you will also see that Catherine provided an update on Repatriation, focusing on transfers from EU countries. She also wrote a very informative article on the conditions of Irish Prisons, as it may be one of many factors one needs to consider when deciding to apply to transfer their sentence to an Irish Prison. This edition also includes an article from Orla outlining her recent visit to Australia and the positive impact of prison visits. We have our usual and very popular Sports Shorts from our own sports commentator Ian and an update from London by Fr. Gerry.

You will also see that Ciara provided a comprehensive summary of our Family Information Day, which we recently hosted. We host two of these events every year and invite families we support to attend. The purpose of the Family Information Day is to provide information, share experiences and offer support to those who attend. The Family Information Day also provided us with the opportunity to welcome our colleagues Fr. Gerry and Breda from the London Office and to introduce the new CEO of the Irish Chaplaincy, Marie Norbury. The ICPO London Office is a project of the Irish Chaplaincy. We are delighted to have Marie on board and wish her every success in her new role.

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to this year's winners of the Listowel Writers' Week competition. Well done to Maurice for your award-winning poem, and to SP for your success in the short story category. I would also like to congratulate Terry, John, and Chris, the winners of the ICPO Writing Competition, "I Get Knocked Down but I Get Up Again." This

competition was inspired by our late colleague Claire O'Connell, and we extend our deepest thanks to her husband, Enda McCabe, for serving as the competition's judge. I really hope that you enjoy all the short stories and poems enclosed in this edition as much as I did and thank you to all who submitted stories and poems.

Some of you may have participated in the past but for those of you who are new to the ICPO or have yet to complete one, we conduct a survey every two years that we send to all the Irish people in prisons worldwide. This is your chance to share your concerns, as well as your thoughts on what you appreciate about the ICPO and our services. It is also an opportunity for you to suggest ways we can improve. Your feedback is very important to us at the ICPO, as we strive to provide the best service possible and plan for the future. Our next survey will be included in our Christmas Newsletter. If you have completed our survey previously, we encourage you to participate in this one, as some of the questions will differ.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to inform us if you move to another prison. We do not receive automatic notifications of such changes. We only learn about your move if you or your loved ones inform us. Please keep us updated on any relocations so we can ensure you continue to receive our correspondence, including these newsletters.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to this newsletter and sent in stories and poems. Please keep them coming. Finally, my thanks to Eileen, Ian, Ciara, Catherine, Orla, Bernie, Bianca, Harry, Gerry for writing articles and to all the staff and volunteers, who helped to organise the printing and mailing of the Newsletter.

Leslie Alcock  
ICPO Co-ordinator

# Conditions in Irish Prisons

## Background

There are many factors people might consider when deciding to apply to transfer to serve their sentence in an Irish prison (repatriation). These will almost certainly include being close to family and friends and rehabilitation supports and opportunities. One of the questions people who wish to transfer their sentence back to an Irish prison (repatriation) often ask the ICPO is "What are conditions like in Irish prisons?" The following brief information will give you an indication of the conditions in Irish prisons. Depending on the country you are detained in, the conditions in Irish prisons may be an improvement or they may be worse.

## Prisons in Ireland

There are 12 prisons in Ireland: one high security (Portlaoise Prison), nine medium security (Mountjoy Prison; Dochas Centre - Mountjoy Female Prison; Arbour Hill Prison; Castlerea Prison; Cork Prison; Limerick Prison, Midlands Prison, Wheatfield Place of Detention, Cloverhill (Remand) Prison), and two low security, open prisons (Loughan House and Shelton Abbey). The majority of female prisoners are accommodated in the Dóchas Centre in Dublin with the remainder accommodated in Limerick Prison.

## Services provided in Irish Prisons

The services provided by the Irish Prison Service to prisoners include education, library, work and training, psychology and spiritual services. Staff shortages have had a negative impact on some services and, there were for example 122 days where prisoners were unable to access education in 2022. According to the Irish Prison Service website, prison healthcare service provides prisoners with access to the same range and quality of healthcare services as that available under the Medical Card scheme in the community.

## Overcrowding

Following approximately a decade of a declining prison population, the number of people in prison in Ireland has been rising again in recent years. Earlier this year the Irish Prison Officers Association (IPOA) described the levels of overcrowding in prisons here as "a ticking time bomb" The IPOA went on to say that 50 prisoners were sleeping on the floor in Cork prison and with a few exceptions most cells were doubled up and in Castlerea prison, all cells

were doubled up. The situation has not improved and in June for the first time ever, the number of people in prison in Ireland went over 5,000. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, there were total of 5,623 prisoners in the system including 4,934 in custody and also including people on temporary release, lifers in the community and people being detained in hospital including the Central Mental Hospital. The total bed capacity is 4,516.

## Overcrowding in Irish prisons 'a ticking time bomb'

In reply to a parliamentary question from Patrick Costello TD, the Minister for Justice pointed out that the Irish Prison Service must accept into custody every person committed to prison by the courts and therefore has no control over the numbers committed to prison. The Minister pointed out that when the number of people in custody exceeds the spaces available, the Irish Prison Service try to deal with this situation by transferring prisoners between prisons and making use of Temporary release. Overcrowding has meant that some prisoners have to sleep on the floor.

## Other conditions

Less than half of prisoners in Irish prisons are in single cells and over half have to use the toilet in the presence of other prisoners. Improvements have been made in relation to family contact although practices vary between prisons. Positive developments have included in-cell telephones in some prisons, the facilitation of video calls and extended access to Sunday visits. In April 2024, 781 prisoners in total were subject to a restricted regime. 761 prisoners were on a restricted regime for protection reasons and of these 731 were there at their own request.

## Further information

If you would like more information about Irish prisons or on repatriation more generally, please contact myself or your ICPO Caseworker.

**Catherine Kenny**  
Casework, Policy and Information Officer

<sup>1</sup> Irish Examiner, 04 December 2023, Prison officer shortages impacts inmate education programmes,

<sup>2</sup> RTE, Overcrowding in Irish prisons 'a ticking time bomb', 29 Mar 2024.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2024-07-02/316/>

<sup>4</sup> IPRT, 2022, Progress in the Penal System.

# Transfer of sentence (repatriation) update

This article focuses on transfers from EU countries and on some of the questions that we have been asked by Irish people in prison in EU countries. The law in relation to transfers from EU countries which came into force last year is complex. As more applications are being processed to completion we will have a better understanding of how it will work in practice. If you have any additional questions, please do let us know.

## **I applied to be transferred back to Ireland a few years ago but my application was refused. Has the law changed?**

**Y**es, the Criminal Justice (Mutual Recognition of Custodial Sentences) Act 2023 came into force in May 2023. This Act brought EU law on transfers into Irish law. This EU law is called Framework Decision 909/2008/JHA and it applies in all European Union countries.

You may apply again if you wish. It is worth carefully considering the reason(s) why your previous application was turned down. If for example, your application was turned down because your links with Ireland were not very strong as you lived in the sentencing country since you were a child with your family, this will not have changed and it may be again considered that your transfer would not improve your chances of rehabilitation. However, if your previous application was not approved because your sentence was incompatible with Irish law, your chances of being transferred may be better under the new legislation. This is because Ireland by bringing the EU Framework Decision has agreed to recognise other EU states laws, decisions and judgment in relation to criminal matters.

## **Do I have a right to be transferred back to an Irish prison?**

**T**he purpose of allowing a person to transfer their sentence back to their home country is to facilitate their rehabilitation. Being closer to family, friends and networks can often help people in prison to get their lives back on track. If it is thought that your transfer back to Ireland will not benefit your rehabilitation you will not be transferred. When deciding whether your chances of rehabilitation would be improved by being transferred to Ireland, the authorities in the country where you are in prison should take account of factors such as your attachment to Ireland and whether you have family, linguistic, cultural, social or economic and other links to the executing State.

There are a limited number of other reasons why your application might be refused. In addition, some countries only permit transfers where the person has served a certain amount of their sentence in that country.

## **Can I be transferred without my consent?**

**Y**es, in certain circumstances. Until the change in the law last year, consent had to be obtained from the prisoner as well as both countries. You can be transferred back to Ireland if you are an Irish citizen and live here (that is Ireland was your normal place of residence before you were imprisoned). If you will be deported to Ireland after your sentence, you may also be transferred without your consent. Some people have valid reasons for not wishing to be transferred back to Ireland including having family and friends in the country where they are serving their sentence, they are engaged in education or training which will benefit them on release or they may fear for their safety if returned to an Irish prison. You should be given an opportunity to give your opinion (either verbally or in writing). This will be considered by the authorities in the country where you are but they can still go ahead with the transfer if they think it will facilitate your rehabilitation.

If you have applied to transfer your sentence back to Ireland or the EU State where you are is seeking to transfer you without your consent, we can contact the Irish Prison Service and get regular updates on your behalf if you wish. If you have any questions or comments, please also send them on to us.

**Catherine Kenny**  
Casework, Policy and Information Officer

# The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations

Hello there,

I would like to introduce myself.

My name is Harry Carberry, I am a national of Scotland born in Govan in Glasgow but have lived in Ireland for nearly three decades now. I attended my brother's wedding here in Dublin and as a consequence of that I met and married a lovely Irish girl and was fortunate enough to land a job here. I am a proud Scot and a massive Glasgow Celtic fan and try to go over at least 4 times a year to watch them play. I recently started volunteering for the ICPO and I am very much looking forward to contributing to this excellent organisation. I worked for many years with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London and worked in various Embassies around the world but was lucky enough to remain based in Ireland for the most part.

For many years, I was HM Consul of the British Embassy in Dublin and my team's job was looking after the welfare of British nationals who either visited Ireland or lived here. That could take many forms from dealing with missing persons cases, persons experiencing mental illness, the death, hospitalisation, arrest or detention of a British citizen, emergency passports and many other scenarios.

A major part of my remit and duties involved visiting British nationals who had been arrested or imprisoned here in Ireland and I was in regular contact with the Gardaí and in and out of the Irish prisons advocating on behalf of those clients. I visited every prison in Ireland, often on a weekly basis. This gave me an excellent grounding and understanding of how prisons worked in Ireland and I hope to use my experience as I work with the team in the ICPO.

**Do you know much about the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) or how it might affect you?**

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) is an international treaty adopted in 1963 that outlines the guidelines for how consular relations are conducted between countries. The treaty contains 79 articles that set rules on the functions, privileges and immunities of consular officers and it ensures that consular officials can assist their nationals abroad, handle legal matters like issuing passports or

visas, and protect the rights of their citizens.

The VCCR has been adopted by 182 countries to date.

The VCCR can be a complicated document to read in its entirety, so let's just hone in on the part of the Vienna Convention that affects you. It is article 36 on Consular relations. What that means is that the country that is detaining you has a legal obligation to tell you that you have the right to speak to the Irish Embassy's Consular team in that country. Article 36 of the VCCR requires local authorities to notify all detained foreigners without delay of their right to have their consulate or embassy notified of their detention.

As a foreign national, confirming you have the right to contact your Government is one of the first things that the prison should tell you. We know from experience however that many prison staff are not aware of the Vienna Convention or how it applies to your incarceration. If that is the case, you should tell the prison authorities that you have the right to make contact with the nearest Irish Embassy and they should, without delay, allow you to do so. If you know any Irish citizen in your prison, share this information with them. You should also tell your family and friends about the ICPO as they are also there to support them.

Don't think of this as 'big brother' is watching you. Think of it that there are people out there willing to help you and the Irish Embassy Consular staff are there to help you with all manner of things. You might be feeling isolated or be discriminated against. You might be struggling with the local language or the legal system. Their main duty is to look out for your welfare and they will **NOT** judge you in any way, regardless of the crime you have been accused of or are sentenced for.

If you do make contact with the nearest Irish embassy, they will do their best to assist you and they should give you the contact details for the ICPO. The ICPO is a charitable organisation that works on behalf of Irish people who are in prison overseas and they can provide information, support and advice to these prisoners and their families to help them to cope with the challenges of imprisonment and increase their chances of rebuilding their lives after release.

# F

## AMILY 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 Ciara Kirrane, Casework and Family Support Officer, ICPO  
Maynooth. Email: [Ciara.kirrane@icpo.ie](mailto:Ciara.kirrane@icpo.ie) or call on +353-1-505-3110.*

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October family members gathered in the Ashling Hotel in Dublin to attend ICPO's Family Information Day. We hold these events twice a year, usually in Spring and Autumn, for the families of Irish people in prison overseas. We gather together for a couple of hours to provide information, share experiences and to offer support. The day is an opportunity for families to meet others who are going through a similar experience and to meet ICPO staff and volunteers.



We organise a programme that we hope is of interest to families, usually on topics that we think will help families in some practical way as well as hearing from people with lived experience of imprisonment overseas and life after a prison sentence. Often we arrange for people from other organisations to come in and talk to families on a certain topic.

At the most recent Family Information Day we heard from Gwen Harris who works with MABS, the Money Advice and Budgeting Service here in Ireland. Gwen gave a comprehensive overview of managing finances and how to feel more in control of your money. She provided some very useful information and tools and I think people came away

feeling more confident about budgeting for ever-increasing costs. MABS provides an invaluable service to people throughout the country, through a network of 60 offices where you can arrange one-to-one appointments. They also work with the prisons in Ireland to help people prepare for release. If you are returning to Ireland after release it would be worth contacting MABS through their Helpline 0818 072000 or by making an appointment at your local office.

We also heard from a former ICPO client, who was released from prison in Europe over a decade ago. He talked about finding his way after release and the things that he found gave him direction. He focused on education and availed on any opportunity he could to take a course, both while in prison and when he came back to Ireland. He went on to do a Degree in Community Work, as well as a Masters degree, and now works with at-risk young people in Dublin. He said that while he wasn't always sure what direction it would take him, he seized any opportunity that came his way to study and get work. He got a place on a CE (Community Employment) scheme which provided him with valuable experience and was a pathway back into Employment. His story is one of great optimism and hope; despite feeling that his life was over when he went into prison, he has managed to reshape his future completely since his release.

One of the most powerful things about the Family Information Days is seeing family members connect with each other. People reconnecting with those they have met at previous days and enjoy getting updates on how their loved ones are doing.

Newcomers are welcomed and although it can be daunting to attend for the first time, we find that the same people come back to each event because of the support they get from each other. There is always a great buzz in the room over coffee breaks and lunch, as people chat about their loved ones and often exchange tips like the best way to send photos, or how to book visits. The atmosphere is one of genuine care and compassion for each other and it is really lovely to see.

Family Information Days are a huge highlight for ICPO staff and volunteers also. It gives us an opportunity to meet face to face with people we may only have email or phone contact with throughout the rest of the year. It reminds us of the value of our work and is a huge source of pride to know that bringing families together provides some comfort through what can be a very difficult period.

The next time you are speaking to your family members please let them know about the Family Information Days and encourage them to contact our Maynooth office so that we can add them to our mailing list and keep them informed about

upcoming events. We also run a monthly online meeting for families, on the last Thursday of the month, which might also be of interest to your family member if they have internet access. Here is some of what the family members said they liked about the most recent Family Information Days we have held:

- ‘Meeting up with familiar faces’
- ‘Talks from people who are going through the same or been through the same’
- ‘To be able to meet face to face; it instils that I am not alone’
- ‘Information updates, sharing of information & stories, practical advice, being part of a community’
- ‘I am so glad that I went to the family day. I learned a lot about different things and realised that we are not the only ones who have the heartache of having a loved one locked away.’
- ‘It helped being around people who were going through a similar experience’

## **ICPO Penfriend Scheme**

**The Scheme helps Irish people in prison abroad stay connected with everyday life in Ireland. It can also ease feelings of loneliness and isolation. If you don't have a penfriend and would like to correspond with one of our penfriend volunteers, please write to us for an application**

**Our contact address is:**

**Sr. Anne Sheehy, ICPO, PO Box 13484  
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Republic of Ireland.**

# Update from London ICPO Office

By the time you receive this newsletter, summer will have come and gone. In truth, it wasn't much of a summer weather-wise, with a few warm and sunny days followed by wet and windy days. Let's hope for a decent Autumn and a mild Winter.

## Comings and Goings:

Marie Norbury is the new CEO of the Chaplaincy. Marie comes to us from PACT (Prison Advice & Care Trust), an organisation which will be familiar to many of you and so has considerable experience and understanding of the prison system and its impact on prisoners and their families. We wish her well.

After fourteen years at the centre of Chaplaincy operations, we have had to say goodbye to Declan Ganly, our Admin officer. Declan has been our only IT man holding together the three Chaplaincy projects of Elderly Irish, Travellers and Prisoners. A great person to be around, Declan was always willing to help and go the extra mile. However, our loss is someone else's gain and we wish him every success and happiness in his new job.

Declan has been replaced by Mahrukh Shabir. Mahrukh comes with an impressive CV as an Executive Officer for the Ministry of Justice, and a Research Team Administrator. We wish her well.

## Northern Ireland's prisons

The population of Northern Ireland's three prisons (Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Wood YOI and Female) has risen by almost 40% in the past three years. There is now increased pressure on accommodation at the largest prison, HMP Maghaberry, in Co Antrim. This is bad news for those of you hoping to transfer to prisons there to be closer to families.

## Irish Prisons:

And the picture isn't much better in the south of Ireland, where prison numbers have increased by 26% in the past five years, forcing the authorities to frantically try to find ways to alleviate over-crowding.



## New Government:

Finally, since our last newsletter, we have a new government in place here. Interestingly, one of the first issues of concern has been the state of the prisons. At one point during the past few months there were only around 300 places left in the entire estate. And there have been damning reports on the condition of many prisons. Of 37 adult male prisons inspected in the period 2022-2025, just one was rated good for purposeful activity! Ninety-nine per cent is the capacity at which prisons in England and Wales have been operating since 2023.

James Timpson, formerly of Timpson (the key cutting and footwear business) has been appointed as the new prisons minister, a move which many have welcomed given his interest in the issue and his willingness to employ ex-offenders in his business. The prison estate cannot be turned around overnight anymore than the NHS can, but at least it is back on the table as a major issue of concern in need of addressing. So we will watch this space with interest.

However, we would like you to get in touch and let us know what life has been like for you. This is your newsletter and we want to include as much as possible about your prison experience. Please feel free to send us your reflections, poems and art work, etc. Also, your ideas for things to include in future issues.

We always want you to know that we are here for you and your families, willing to reach out and help in any way we can. So keep in touch and let us know how best we can help you.

Stay safe and keep well.

The London Team

(Breda, Liz, Ellena, Fiona, Sadie, Sally and Gerry)





## Winner of Listowel Writers' Week Competition 2024



WINNER: Poetry  
Writing in Prisons Overseas



WINNER: Short Story  
Writing in Prisons Overseas

### The Sycamore Tree

If you look on any tourist map  
You will see a sign for Sycamore Gap.  
A beauty spot for all to see  
Dominated by a Sycamore tree.  
The star of films, standing alone  
And below, Hadrian's wall, built from stone.  
One of England's historic treasures,  
Where people gathered at their leisure  
To see the tree, so straight and tall  
Growing there beside the wall.  
Standing there, four hundred years  
Then one dark night it disappears.  
Not any more a stately tree  
And never more will it be.  
Now just branches on the ground  
Remnants of history scattered around.  
One man's action, without glory  
Brings to an end the Sycamore story.  
Changing history in one foul sweep  
For the Sycamore we all should weep.  
It stood proud, it stood tall,  
Now just a memory to us all.

Maurice McCullough. UK

### The Window

Asleep in this world, I gaze imaginatively through the glass  
and emotionless steel that contains my thoughts. Wide  
eyed I dream. I dream of an existence that once yet still is;  
only it is no longer mine. A siren sounds and draws my  
attention. Through the imitation daylight, I see the  
accompanying blue halo as it strobes past all of its  
reflective haunts.

I watch as if in fascination as it undoubtedly awakens a  
multitude of different personalities. A breeze of light wind  
echoes its presence with squawks annoyance at another as it  
attempts to dominate a superiority over domain.

Behind me, my observation flap squeaks its uncoiled  
advertisement and a disembodied hushed tone asks if I am  
ok. It is 5.30am. Signs of life welfare checks.

Now the seagulls call to one another. Either the seas are  
rough or their scavenging alarm clocks have just gone off.  
So many points of light. Street lights, brake lights, traffic  
lights. I begin to wonder what kind of story I could create  
if I were to join all the points together.

What would be the point? I am only a hundred metres from  
that world yet it is a million light years away. I welcome this  
window of concrete and steel, as I fear this world of my  
creation.

SP, UK



# Sports Shorts

with Ian Hanna

Welcome to more musings on Irish sports and boy do we have some stories to share with the Paris Olympics and Paralympics taking pride of place. As well as the Sports Shorts we are introducing a series of articles on the rivalry between major football clubs in England, Scotland and Europe, clubs like Liverpool and Everton, Man Utd and Man City, Celtic and Rangers, Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid. It will be an interesting addition and we thank Harry Carberry, our new volunteer in the Maynooth office for this initiative.

The Roman god, Victoria, was the goddess of victory, competitions and athletes; Her Greek equivalent was Nike as the goddess of victory in both peace and war and yes her name is now associated worldwide with a major athletic clothing and footwear company. Nike and Victoria certainly smiled on Ireland during the Paris Olympics and Paralympics held in July, August and early September. But more anon on that. We have other sports to look at so without further ado, On your marks, get set, GO.

## OLYMPICS

The 2024 Paris Olympics were the most successful for Ireland and 100 years since we first competed in the Olympics, and yes, guess where, in Paris of course. What a connection! 133 competitors represented Ireland, our biggest number ever. Four golds and three bronze medals is a fantastic haul and when we consider the near misses, especially in kayaking, athletics, sailing and show jumping we could have achieved a much higher number. Add to that we had Kellie Harrington in lightweight boxing, Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy in the Men's rowing lightweight double sculls crowned back to back Olympic champions. O'Donovan also made history as the first Irish athlete ever to win medals at three Olympic Games, two golds and one silver.

Meanwhile Philip Doyle and Daire Lynch made history by winning a bronze medal in the Double Sculls. This is the first-ever men's heavyweight Olympic rowing medal for Ireland, securing their place in Irish and Olympic history.

Daniel Wiffen is the first Irish swimmer to win an swimming Olympic medal when he won the 800m and claimed a bronze in the 1,500m while Mona McSharry

won bronze in a very tough 100m race. All eyes were on Rhys McClenaghan as he fought off very stiff competition to win the gold in the pommel horse gymnastics. In doing this he completed the set of Commonwealth, European, World and Olympic gold and he is the first gymnast to win an Olympic medal for Ireland.

Our hearts went out to Rhasidat Adeleke who finished fourth in her speciality event the 400m and also fourth in the Women's 4 x 400 Relay twice missing out on a bronze medal. In the 400m she ran her third fastest time ever of 49.28 to finish fourth, making history in the process by becoming the first Irish woman ever to contest an Olympic sprint final. This was her debut Olympics and the 21 year old has a career full of promise and achievement ahead of her. It would take a couple of pages to devote the well earned recognition all associated with preparing, coaching and guiding our athletes but let us just sit back and enjoy their successes and becoming Olympians. When the team returned home on Mon 12 Aug over 20,000 people lined O'Connell Street in Dublin to welcome them home. Then over the past few weeks we have enjoyed the local towns and villages creating their own welcome home to those athletes who grew up in their own local communities.

Hot tailing the Olympics was of course the Paralympics and Team Ireland had 33 athletes participating. In Tokyo in 2021 Ireland won four gold, two silver and one bronze in swimming, cycling and athletics. In the Paris Paralympics we won one gold, three silver and two bronze in cycling, swimming and on the track. Our gold came in the 28.3km road time trial. Piloted by Linda Kelly, the tandem bike of 42-year-old Dunlevy took gold for a third consecutive Paralympics. This is Dunlevy's fourth Paralympic gold medal and seventh in total. That is some achievement and represents many years of effort, toil, injury, setbacks, joy and celebration.

## SOCCKER

Well, well, well, miracles never cease. In July at long last the FAI finally announced who will succeed Stephen Kenny as head coach of the men's national team. It took the FAI 231 days, nearly eight months, including missing two deadlines in February and April



# Autumn 2024

and in what was a much maligned process, to appoint Icelander Heimir Hallgrímsson, to the job. He was co-manager of Iceland when in the Euros Finals in 2016, they advanced to the quarter finals and was manager when he led them to the World Cup finals in 2018. He was manager of Jamaica when he resigned to take up the Ireland appointment in the middle of the qualifying games for the Copa America, when it was clear his team was not going to qualify, eventually finishing last in their group. He is also a qualified dentist and has kept up his practice. One of his first appointments was to make John O'Shea who was interim Irish manager until Hallgrímsson was appointed, one of his back room team. His regime commences in earnest with Ireland playing England, Greece and Finland in their UEFA Nations League. The first match was against England in Dublin on 07 September where Ireland were outclassed and fortunate to lose on a score line of 0-2. It could have been a lot worse except for the brilliance of Irish goalkeeper, Caoimhin Kellegher of Liverpool. It is ironic that the England interim manager, as they look for a successor to Gareth Southgate, is none other than Lee Carsley, who played for Ireland 39 times. Lee was the manager when England U21 won the European championship in 2023 beating five times winners Spain in the final. Even more ironic is that there was much speculation that the FAI wanted him for the Ireland job, but he quashed these rumours very early. Ireland then played Greece again in Dublin losing 0-2 and already pressure is building up on the new manager to secure a win away or at least a draw against Finland on 10 October, 24

The Irish soccer public will give a big welcome to Heimir but will expect and demand far more consistency and a return to winning ways than his predecessor enjoyed. The draw for the UEFA qualification groups for the 2026 World Cup finals will take place in late November/December. The World Cup is taking place in Mexico, USA and Canada all of whom are automatic qualifiers. With a bit of luck, the Aviva stadium will rock once again as the Boys in Green plot their course for New York, Ottawa and Mexico City.

## GAELIC FOOTBALL

Yet another major surprise and nobody but nobody saw this years' All-Ireland football pairing in the stars, in their tea leaves, in the clouds, anywhere! 10 times winners Galway against one time winners Armagh with the Tribesmen the favourites. Galway won in Connacht after a couple of scares, while Armagh lost in a penalty shoot-out (5-6) after extra time to a resurgent Donegal in the Ulster final. Both teams progressed through the All-Ireland round robin group stages when the two teams fought out a thrilling draw but ultimately qualified for the All Ireland quarter finals. Galway faced the All-Ireland holders, Dublin and won a cracking game by a point and marched to the semi-final and a game against Donegal winning it 1-14 to 0-15. Armagh defeated favourites Kerry in their semi-final 1-18 to 1-16 after yet another period of extra time. The stage was set, a cracker of two unlikely finalists, each side knowing that they had a rare glimpse of All Ireland senior football glory. After a tense encounter, the Orchard County emerged victorious winning their 2nd title after a 1-11 to 0-13 win against Galway in the final. The men from the Orchard County played better football and were more willing to attack than the Tribesman, who lost despite having a majority of possession. What now for 2025? Dublin and Kerry will threaten again as will a number of Ulster sides, Armagh, Donegal and Derry while from the West, Galway and Mayo should emerge. I reckon Kerry are smarting pretty badly and they will regain the Sam Maguire.

## HURLING

If we thought the football finalists came out of the long grass, nobody likewise thought we would see Cork verses Clare in what was a game for the ages on 21 July. The final score was Clare 3-29, Cork 1-34 after extra time, a total of 75 scores. Resulting in a one point win for the Banner and their fifth All Ireland title. In Hurling we had an exciting, exhilarating provincial and All Ireland series with all the expectation on the Treaty from Limerick to become the first team to win five senior hurling All Irelands in a row. The Banner gave notice of their intent by winning the National League while



# Sports Shorts

Cork and Kilkenny likewise let the other teams know they had eyes on the Liam McCarthy cup. In the Munster championship all the games were close and Cork had to defeat Limerick to ensure they remained in the hunt for an All-Ireland, this they did and as third placed team advanced to the quarter finals with Limerick defeating Clare in an pulsating final. In Leinster the biggest shock was the dismal performance by Galway who finished a sad fourth as Kilkenny easily defeated Dublin in a one sided final while Wexford claimed third spot. The quarter-finals went to plan with two tasty semi-finals on offer, Limerick against Cork and Clare against The Cats. In two end-to-end games The Rebels brought Limerick's five in a row crashing down winning an epic game 1-28 to 0-29 while Clare defeated Kilkenny 0-24 to 2-16, scoring six late unanswered points. The final was a compelling contest, that raged with intensity from first whistle until last, both teams passionate and always defiant and at times the lead ebbed and flowed, then stalemate until Clare finally won and Tony Kelly, the Clare captain accepted the Liam McCarthy cup on the steps of the Hogan Stand.

In 2024 the hurling and football championships gave us everything we associate with sport but dark clouds are solidifying on the horizon as the defensive game plan in football is preventing exciting fast attacking play. This needs to change as the blanket defence is making a lot of games unwatchable. Already the managerial merry go round is in full swing with Davy Fitzgerald departing Waterford to take the reins in Antrim hurling, which Henry Shefflin resigned as Galway hurling manager to be replaced by Micheál Donoghue on a four year contract. A Galway native

Michael led Galway to their last All Ireland success in 2017.

## RUGBY

Ireland concluded an incredible year-long season which began in earnest in August 23 with some World Cup warm up games and concluded with a one point win over South Africa on 13 July 24 on their two test match summer tour in South Africa. The 2023-2024 season saw Ireland coming to terms with the retirement of the one and only Johnny Sexton who won 119 caps for Ireland, 30 of which were as captain, scored over 1,000 points, won two Grand Slams including four 6 Nations and four European Champions triumphs with Leinster. He was capped six times for the British and Irish Lions.

In the autumn international series this November Ireland host, New Zealand, Argentina, Fiji and Australia which will prepare Ireland in their quest to their 6 Nations title. On the club front Leinster lost the European final for the third time in a row and it will take a herculean effort to win it this season.

So much more to write about but lack of space dictates I have to end now. I hope you enjoy the Glasgow Celtic story and both Harry and I wish you all the best in your own fitness programmes. For me the Paralympians are a testimony to not allowing themselves be regarded as how others see them but how they see themselves. All of them have overcome adversity, taken control of their lives, refused to be subdued and worked towards where they want to be. I think there is a lesson in what they have achieved for all of us.

---

## ICPO Client Survey

Every two years, we send out a survey to every Irish person in prison worldwide. This is your opportunity to tell us the issues of concern to you as well as what you like about ICPO and our services and what we can do better. Your opinions are important to us and help us to plan for the future.

Our next survey will be sent out with our Christmas Newsletter. If you have filled in our previous surveys, please fill in this one as some of the questions will be different.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in our survey - we look forward to reading your responses



# GLASGOW CELTIC FC

As an Irish person, it's a good chance that you might be a football fan. Irish fans support a number of the bigger English premier clubs like Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal, Leeds etc. Glasgow Celtic connections to Ireland run far deeper and there is a universal support for Glasgow Celtic by most Irish fans culminating in massive support for Glasgow Celtic in Ireland. Have you ever thought why? I would like to give you an insight to why that is. And hopefully I might have recruited a few new fans Celtic to follow the 'Hoops' along the way.

## History of Celtic

Celtic was founded in Glasgow in 1887. The club was established by Irishman Brother Walfrid to celebrate Glasgow's Irish population. Celtic would represent Irish immigrants in Glasgow before growing to become one of the best-supported football teams in the world.

As if being founded by an Irishman wasn't enough, Celtic's first manager, Willie Maley, was also from Ireland. It didn't take long for Celtic to taste success and the Glasgow club claimed its first league title in 1893. That was just six short years after Celtic was founded.

## Why Are Celtic Linked to Ireland?

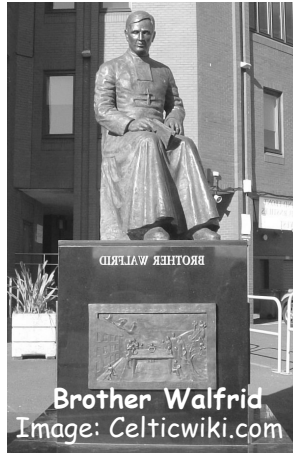
Celtic's links to Ireland go right back to the club's creation. The club was established by Brother Walfrid, an Irishman, to improve the living conditions of Irish communities in Glasgow. Even the name, 'Celtic', was chosen to showcase the club's Irish and Scottish heritage.

The Irish connection to Celtic is at the heart of what the club represents and throughout its history that bond has only grown stronger. It started with Walfrid's hopes and dreams for making Irish lives better in Glasgow. He wanted Celtic to reflect the club's Scottish and Irish identity and the club adopted some Irish symbolism soon after its creation.

The Celtic cross was used as the club's emblem before it was replaced with a four-leaf clover. Both are strong Irish symbols. In 1892, when Celtic's stadium, Celtic Park, was built there was a little patch of Ireland on the playing surface. The first sod of turf laid at Celtic's new home had been imported from Donegal in Ireland. When Celtic Park was redeveloped in 1995, that symbolic gesture was repeated when turf from Donegal was once again laid.

Celtic quickly established itself as one of the best teams in Scotland in its early years before Rangers came onto the scene. Once Celtic's great rival also got a taste for success it became a bitter battle between these two foes that lasts to this day. Collectively they are called the "Old Firm" and it is one of the oldest rivalries in the world of football today.

Celtic became the first British team to win the Champions League, or European Cup as it was known at the time. The famous 1967 victory over Inter Milan in Benfica is a fond memory for many Celtic fans, even if



most were not alive to witness it first-hand.

That Celtic team—which featured star players such as Billy McNeill, Bobby Lennox, and Jimmy Johnstone—is remembered as "The Lisbon Lions."

All 11 of the players that day were born within a 20 mile radius of Glasgow. A feat that is unlikely ever to be repeated in the modern game.

Being a supporter of Celtic is a way of life, you are born into it. Once established it's very hard to leave it behind. I was born in Glasgow and my support for Celtic was passed down from generation to generation.

I recently attended the Scottish cup final in May 2024 and watched Celtic defeat their local and biggest rival Glasgow Rangers, the winning goal was scored by Adam Idah, an Irish international who Celtic have just bought.

Celtic holds the European attendance record for a match held at Hampden Park April 1970 when 133,391 people watched Celtic defeat Leeds United 2-1 on their way to the European cup final. I was there that day with my da as he lifted me over the turnstiles. I can still remember being scared at the sheer volume of people who were there.

Since living in Ireland, the recent game was my first cup final in over 20 years and my son Callum was there with me and we had a great day. It is a day I will never forget. There is a strong association between the Scottish/Irish community in Glasgow but also, Celtic's fans reach is worldwide.

Celtic's support is traditionally associated with Irish republican values and the flying of the Irish flag, singing Irish folk and rebel songs are a common feature at home games. Part of Parkhead fan base has a section known as the green brigade. They are very vocal with a political element to it. Celtic FC has often been fined by UEFA for some of the flags or banners flown by the green brigade, more recently for flying the Palestinian flag.

I hope you enjoyed learning a wee bit more about my team. Hopefully you might well be a Celtic fan already, if not. What are you waiting for?

**Harry Carberry**  
ICPO Volunteer

# The Cost of living in Prisons

Hello everyone,

My name is Bianca and I started volunteering with the ICPO a few months ago. I interned with the ICPO last year as part of my Professional Development module for my Masters in Comparative Criminology at Maynooth University. With the increasing cost of living, the ICPO asked me to do some research on this topic as we want to get a better understanding of how this is affecting all of you.

Regardless of the country or state, what most prisons or detention facilities have in common is a very low pay rate. It can vary from a few cents to a few euros, which can leave people wondering what they can or cannot afford. We have found that the people we support are left questioning how often to ask for help and from whom. And will it be possible to save money to have for release? In our experience, some countries or states don't offer payment for work done and some of the people we work with are not provided with opportunities to work and earn a wage.

In addition to a very low pay rate, it also appears that over the past few years, the products provided in shops and commissaries have become more expensive. In our experience, this has resulted in increasing the financial and emotional burden being placed on you and your families.

For instance; in order to get basic hygiene products, it cost €36 for one of our clients in a European prison to get toothpaste, toothbrush, laundry liquid, shampoo and soap. Additionally, online sources suggest that in Spain a deodorant and shampoo can start from €2.39. Head and Shoulders shampoo sells for £2.99 in England, £2.40 in Scotland and an average of \$7 in America or Australia. Sanitary products vary approximately between \$3.50 to \$5 in the United States. All of the above products cost the same in the community. However, the big difference is between the wage a person can earn in prison versus the community.

Similarly, if someone wanted to try to maintain a healthy lifestyle and purchase nutritional options such as fruit or vegetables, it can start from £1.50 for kiwi, apples, and go up to £2.49 for grapes in the UK. Other options such as a packet of noodles could cost from £0.40 to £0.65 and if you would like to buy something sweet, like a Kit-Kat chocolate bar it could cost £1.25 and a Snickers bar from £0.90 to £1.40 in the UK. From what we understand, all these items together can add up to more than people earn.

Other important essential items such as clothing are sold at even higher rates. For example, in some states in the United States a sweatshirt costs between \$15 to \$23, sweatpants cost between \$17 to \$26, a long sleeve tee costs between \$10 to \$14 and boxer briefs cost between \$5 to \$9. Considering the cost of items outlined above, we can see and understand that it must be very hard for someone to afford to purchase any of the above items when the average wage in prisons in the United States is approximately \$0.52 per hour.

However, from discussions with the ICPO caseworkers, we understand that the most amount of money is spent on phone calls to friends and family. Phone calls are considered more important than any other item money can buy. We believe that keeping that connection with your loved ones plays a fundamental part in maintaining relationships. Keeping in touch with family and friends provides comfort. In our experience, we see that it makes people feel less lonely. According to the Marshal project in the United States, calls are a '*survival necessity*', especially for people struggling with their mental health. Consequently, taking this into consideration, in the United Kingdom the cost varies between £5 to £10 per month and \$14 to \$24 per month in Australia for 25 to 100 universal minutes. While the purpose of a phone call can cause stress, the increasing costs of international phone calls can add to one's stress as it may restrict someone from calling and spending enough time with their loved ones.

From the initial research some of which is outlined above, it is clear that the increasing costs of items such as hygiene products, clothing and food coupled with the low pay rates, it can be extremely difficult to budget for these basic necessities while maintaining contact with your loved ones without additional financial support.

We would welcome your thoughts and experience on how you manage with the increasing costs of living. Especially if you have any tips or advice you have that we could share with others? To further help with our research, we would also really appreciate it, if you could let us know how much items such as food, clothing, and hygiene products cost in the prison you are in? It would be also really useful to know what the hourly/daily rate of pay is for work in your prison to compare with other regions.

**Bianca Costura**  
ICPO Volunteer

# Australian Prison Visits

Recently, I visited a number of the people we work with in Australia across five different states. I also attended the LINK conference in Perth, an annual event dedicated to showcasing the collaborative efforts and networking initiatives of Irish agencies in Australia. This conference highlights how these organisations work together within their communities to provide invaluable support to the Irish diaspora in Australia and how we can support them in that work.

Prison visits are offered to provide practical and emotional support, as well as fostering an increased sense of connection to the diaspora, which can profoundly influence the well-being of those visited. For the person in prison, a welfare visit often represents a vital connection to the outside world and a reminder that they are not alone or forgotten. This connection can be a lifeline, providing emotional support and a break from the isolation and monotony of prison life. A visitor can help alleviate the stress and anxiety associated with imprisonment, offering a listening ear and a source of empathy and understanding. "Thank you for travelling such a long way to see me Orla, it is nice to spend time with someone who treated me like a real person. I am so grateful to the ICPO for making me feel like my life mattered".

Emotionally, these visits can be incredibly uplifting for people in prison. It can boost their self-esteem and provide a sense of hope and motivation to engage in positive behaviours and rehabilitation programmes. Welfare visits offer people an opportunity to discuss their needs and concerns, which may otherwise go unheard, leading to better support and resources being allocated to them.

Families with a loved one in prison overseas often experience intense emotional distress. The physical distance amplifies their worries about safety, health, and fair treatment. Communication barriers, cultural differences, and unfamiliar legal systems heighten their sense of helplessness and frustration. Financial burdens increase due to legal fees and travel costs for visits. My visit with their family member can provide them with the relief of knowing someone has been able to visit them, spend time with them and to pass on messages of support from home.

Personally, I often leave these visits with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to advocating for better conditions and support for those we assist. Despite the vast distances to travel, particularly when it comes to the continent of Australia, the importance of these visits remains at the very forefront of my mind.

In conclusion, the impact of a prison visit in a welfare capacity is profound and multifaceted. For those in custody, it provides essential emotional and practical support, while for visitors; it offers valuable insights into that individual and informs the way in which we provide wrap-around support to that person. These visits highlight the importance of human connection and compassion in addressing the complex challenges of the criminal justice system.

**Orla Dick**  
**Caseworker**

## (References from Page 14:1

1. The Marshall Project: "Prison Money Diaries: What People Really Make (and Spend) Behind Bars". Website: [Prison Money Diaries: What People Really Make \(and Spend\) Behind Bars | The Marshall Project](#) 2. UK Labour Law Blog "Pay for Work in Prison - by Virginia Mantouvalou". Website: [Pay for Work in Prison - by Virginia Mantouvalou - UK Labour Law \(uklabourlawblog.com\)](#) 3. What do they know "Canteen price list" for Bedford, Wandsworths, Norwich, Oakwood, Chelmsford, Berlinnie, Glenochil and Perth. Website: [WhatDoTheyKnow - Make and browse Freedom of Information \(FOI\) requests](#) 4. Department of Correction Washington State "Commissary (Store)". Website: [Commissary \(Store\) | Washington State Department of Corrections](#) 5. Federal Bureau of Prisons "Commissary list" for Arizona, California, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. Website: [BOP: Federal Bureau of Prisons Web Site](#) 6. Paloma Ucelay "Economatos en las cárceles españolas, precio de los productos". Website: [Economatos en las cárceles españolas: café, tabaco, champú \(funcionarioprisiones.com\)](#) 7. PrisonVoiceMail UK. Website: [Prison Voicemail. Your voice matters.](#) 8. PrisonVoiceMail Australia. Website: [Prison Voicemail. Your voice matters.](#)

# ICPO Writing Competition

I GET KNOCKED DOWN BUT I GET BACK UP AGAIN



## Never Give Up

Well, life was going well for me on the outside, I had everything, a nice home, job and wonderful partner.

Suddenly, in 2017, I got

caught up in something well beyond my control and found myself once again banged up inside, only this time absent of any prospects of release progression or security downgrade. Back then things looked and seemed pretty grim. Those dark days dragged me down at times but I kept finding the courage to get back up again. Initially things were tough both mentally and physically. I never shaved for weeks on end and lost interest in most things including my appearance and self.

Gradually, I found my writing skills again, writing poetry, short stories, doing puzzles and letters to ICPO in Ireland. I took up painting from memory and pictures imprinted on my mind. I entered the Koestler Awards, selling three out of four of my paintings. I gained several certificates and above all recognition for all my efforts and work.

The years soon passed quickly and during which I had many a challenge to face. One, being beaten up without reason or warning. That took me back to square one and I withdrew from social life. Isolated in my cell for over 8 months and applied to transfer to a better place where I would feel safe, secure and above all able to socialise and be myself again. I arrived here in 2022, soon settled down and took up my writing and painting skills where I had left in that dark place. I entered the Listowel Writers week in 2023 and won 1<sup>st</sup> place with a poem entitled 'Mothers Tears'. I was over the moon, more so as it was at a time where I'd just been told my father had sadly passed away! Though feeling said at my loss, in a sense I had won something worthwhile. I must say thanks to the ICPO, my friends in life, my family and son.

It's been nearly a year since my father's passing and I'm coping as best one can. Today, I continue to flourish with my writing, poems and painting as often as I can. I do enjoy doing something constructive and worthwhile. I tend not to dwell on the past and look to a future. I remain positive, upbeat and help others in need of advice, support or just a chat. I never fail to pass each day with a laugh over some old joke or a story of days gone by, growing up in Ireland. I'm motivated to face each day no matter how hard with a smile on my face and be positive upon my outlook. I've never given up and I never will. Memories keep me going as they are well imprinted in my mind and they are one thing that cannot be erased or taken away from me.

I want to thank all those who helped me get this far in life without you it wouldn't be possible. You are all within my thoughts and prayers each day! I also want to thank the ICPO for encouraging me to keep writing, remain focussed and positive and enter all the many competitions on offer each year. My advice to anyone who may find themselves in similar circumstances is this 'NEVER GIVE UP'. There's always light at the end of any black tunnel. Things beyond our control just happen in life whether inside or on the outside world. Fill your time with things that will keep the mind occupied each day. Some pens and paper are one way of stimulating your creative side. I never believed I would become a decent writer but here I am today, writing this short story for you to read. So if I can do it and come through those darkest of days, you can too. Challenge your inner talents and jot down anything that will appeal to others.

It's now 2023 and for 7 years I've battled with life's ups and downs, coming through them all a better man. Go on, give it a go. Put pen to paper and see what you can achieve.

**John McFall, UK**



# ICPO Writing Competition

## I GET KNOCKED DOWN BUT I GET BACK UP AGAIN

### I get knocked down but I get up again



There is no doubt about how hard the prison environment is and it tests you to your limit.

You have no freedom; you're exposed to people and experiences that you would normally avoid. You don't have the privilege of choices and you're constantly frustrated by the way the prison system works.

You are constantly wishing time away and struggling with missing family and friends, at the same time as trying not to fall down that deep dark hole of depression and anxiety. Overcoming these challenges is one of the toughest experiences a person can go through.

I remain as positive as possible despite the negative environment I find myself in and reliving the past experiences that brought me here. I try and concentrate on the future and remembering the good things that I achieved in my past and what I would like achieve upon release.

I am constantly trying to better myself, learn new skills and engage more with people to prepare myself for release and give myself the best possible opportunity to succeed. I look at this part of my life as just a chapter of the journey that has an end. I will be able to start the next chapter upon release and repent my sins while doing good within the community.

I try and break time into small chunks and concentrate of the positives. These are the things like gym days, library visits, canteen days and attended contact with family and friends.

Each day I set myself realistic goals to achieve, this could be something like going outside on exercise, completing a piece of artwork, reading a book or creating a new design of cards I make and send them on to my family and friends. This is pertinent to my mental health and keeps me pushing forward to better me. Routine is a massive part of prison life, personal hygiene and engaging with staff and other prisoners helps keep you grounded and on the right path, it gives you the structure you need to survive and stay focused.

I am always trying to be proactive, picking up after people, taking out the bins, cleaning the wing and servery etc. This again gives me structure. Motivation during these days is remembering how tough it has been, what I have been through up to this point and the fact that I am surviving despite it all. I try and turn my mood with positive thinking, how I got myself in this position and how I will do things differently in the future.

I endeavour to make my days positive by engaging in enrichment activities such as a friendly game of cards with a group of people I have become good friends with, creating artwork and drawings, my card making that I send to family and friends on special occasions. I also give these to friends on the wing to send to their families. I like entering competitions with my artwork, playing dominoes and crib, watching wildlife programmes and meditating to relax.

I believe I am a good judge of character and spend my time with inmates I now class as friends that bring positive elements to my life and express the characteristics true to the people I wish to associate with when I am on release. I avoid the people within the prison that bring negative energy that at times I entertained in the past. This is paramount to my new path to a better future.

The friends I have here help me on the dark days in prison, this and my faith are two constants that keep me going. My faith gives me comfort and companionship as well as guidance.

I've been knocked to what feels like the lowest point a person can reach. I am now rebuilding so I am able to stand tall again and be proud of my achievements. I have learnt from my mistakes and prison has reformed me into the person I wish I always had been.

Sometimes you can do everything right and things will still go wrong, the key is never stop trying.

**Chris Wray, UK**

# ICPO Writing Competition

## I GET KNOCKED DOWN BUT I GET BACK UP AGAIN



When I look back on my sentence I do wonder how I have survived. I came into prison in 2005. I was sentenced to life with a tariff of 9 years and 6 months. I accepted what I did was wrong and pleaded guilty in the court of law.

On my arrival here in prison the first thing I wanted to do was get into work and get what I needed. I could not expect my family to send monies into me. I was lucky to get a letter as I only have one member of my family who can read and write.

I got into work and saved up. Basically, I did not get anything but tobacco, a lighter and papers on my first pay of £17.50. For a few months after I continued to save getting nothing except tobacco. Then I got my first radio/CD Player. It cost me £20 from Argos. The months went by and I continued to save and got to know a few lads I could call friends. A couple of Irish lads did help me out with a bit of food until I was up on my feet. By this time I had a tidy sum saved up and I was happy.

I had contact with my sister Lucy by telephone but I could only talk with her every two or three weeks as I needed to put credit onto the phone pins. One of the Irish lads I made friends with got me the details of an organisation known as the ICPO in Ireland. He said if I write they would write back to me. I first wrote to Fr. Gerry McFlynn in the London office. This was about 2008. I explained I was from Ireland and would be looking at being transferred to Ireland. At this time I did write to the Home Office asking to be deported but this was refused. Fr Gerry put me in contact with the ICPO in Ireland who found me a penfriend (the late Sr. Agnes, RIP). I was given support and help in how to apply for repatriation to Ireland. This is still in progress.

The help and support I was receiving from the ICPO lifted my spirits and helped me to fight the dark days and believe in myself.

I went on to be a Listener here then became a representative for the RC Church and the Traveller's Group. This gave me the challenge to help those

### My Survival

around me so with being a Representative, I wrote to organisations asking for help for those at Mass and in the Traveller's Group. Again, the first port of call was the ICPO who did their best to help out. I got support from Religious groups and Traveller groups and still receive Traveller magazines for the group. My penfriend kept me busy with letters and I was doing my bit for the Chapel and Traveller's group. I continue today to work in the same shop, upholstery, and I have learnt a lot from that. I have put myself in a position where I know I can confidently make a living when I'm out of here. I'm a mentor in the workshop, so help those who arrive to learn the job required in the shop. Again, this gives me a purpose and I was supporting other inmates and learning how to work with people from different backgrounds. I was and still am a busy man. I did course work here to help me lower my risk of offending, education courses to support my reading and writing and I gained certificates for cookery, health and safety and engineering. Now I am doing more coursework with an organisation known as 'Criminon'. This covers self-respect and personal integrity. I intend to carry on as this will keep my mind active and help me to pass on the time and skills to others.

Yes, to this day. I do miss my family and my freedom but I accepted I was in the wrong. I accepted my sentence and did something about it. I'm into my retirement age now but I feel healthy and I'm happy with life so this will keep me going with hope that one day they will let me be free then I can continue to work and help those around me.

We don't get by by sitting in a cell doing nothing, taking drugs or fighting the system. We must be strong so it's a case of please do something with your life, don't expect others to do it for you. Make the most out of a bad situation. You are still a human being. There are still people out there and in here that will look up to you. There are still people willing to help you if you let them so don't lose faith. Get up and do something. I did and I can only thank the Lord for those who did help me along the way.

**Terry Smith, UK**



Brush up on your Irish with Caitriona Ní Bhaoill

# Smidín Gaeilge

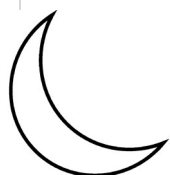
## An Fómhar

Duilleoga buí	Dill-ogue-a bwee	Yellow Leaves
Duilleoga oráiste	Dill-ogue-a or-aw-shta	Orange Leaves
Duilleoga dearga	Dill-ogue-a dariga	Red Leaves
Duilleoga donn	Dill-ogue-a dune	Brown Leaves
Damhán Alla	Do awn ala	Spider
gráinneog	Grawnogue	Hedgehog
Iora rua	Ira roo-a	Red Squirrel
Sciathán Leather	Shkee hawn la-her	Bat
feirmeoir	Fare-myore	Farmer
Tarracóir	Tar-acore	Tractor

### Tá na laethanta ag éirí níos giorra

Taw nuh lay-han-ta egg ire-y neece gira

The days are getting shorter



### Cloistear tinnte ealaíona

Clushtur tinta al-ee-na

You can hear fireworks/bangers

Sméara dubha	Smare-a dove a	Black berries
Puimcín	Pum-keen	Pumpkin
Dearcáin	Darcawn	Acorn
Oíche Shamhna	ee-ha how-na	Halloween
Creatlach	Crat-lock	Skeleton
Cailleach	Kyle-ock	Witch
Púca	Pooa	Ghost
An Ghealach	On gya-lock	The Moon
Milseáin	Milshawn	Sweets
Bab nó Breab	Bob no brack	Trick or Treat
Cnónna	Cnowe na	Nuts
Úlla	Oola	Apples
Bairín Breac	Bore een brack	Barm brack
Fáinne Ór	Fawn ya ore	Gold Ring
Fear bréige	Far brayga	Scarecrow

# Challenge yourself!

## Codeword

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	10		19		21				15		12		19
2	15	20	24	2	25	14		19	9	15	7	23	24
3	26		24		14		1		25		26		6
4	25	4	8	25	14	14	20		14	25	25	9	25
5	22		14		20		2		19		24		12
6	19	1	25	3		22	13	25	22	6			
7	2		24		18		15		2		14		17
8				22	19	11	26	25		21	25	2	19
9	19		1		14		15		21		2		3
10	11	14	25	19	1		18	26	19	16	7	3	18
11	13		2		25		20		22		3		26
12	15	22	25	19	3	24		23	25	26	8	5	25
13	14		24		2				2		25		23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					K				P			

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		Z										

Enter the letter in each circled cell in the order given below to reveal a themed answer.

8J	9E	6A	10L	3M	13K	12E	2C	7I	4D	2K	9M

Courtesy: Richardson Puzzles and Games

## Brain Teasers

- The combined age of Bill and Bob is 49. Bill is twice as old, as Bob was when Bill was as old as Bob is now. How old are the brothers?
- Joe Clarke has 4 daughters. Each of his daughters has a brother. How many children does Joe have?
- How many 9's are there between 1 and 100?
- In a bicycle race, the man who came two places in front of the last man finished one ahead of the man who came fifth. How many contestants were there?

# Challenge yourself!

## Buildings Wordsearch

ABBEY

APARTMENT

ARENA

BANK

BARN

BOUTIQUE

CABIN

CASINO

CHATEAU

DORMITORY

DUPLEX

FACTORY

FIRE STATION

FORTRESS

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

LODGE

MALL

MANSION

MOSQUE

MUSEUM

PALACE

POSTOFFICE

RESTAURANT

SHACK

SKYSCRAPER

TAVERN

TEMPLE

TOWER

GARAGE

HOSPITAL

IGLOO

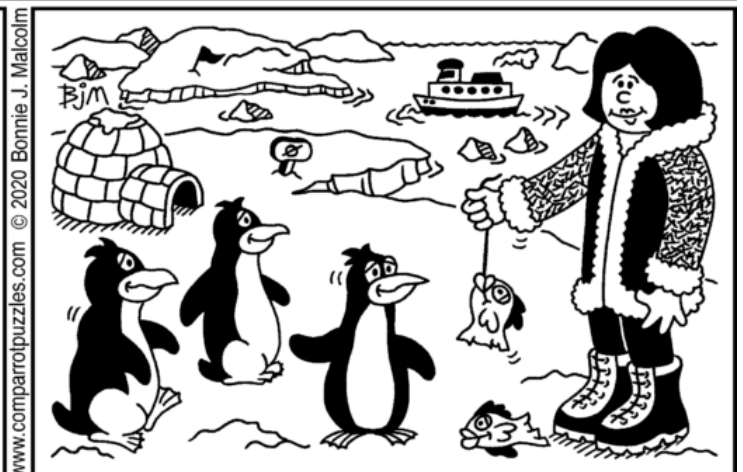
HALL

HOTEL

JAIL

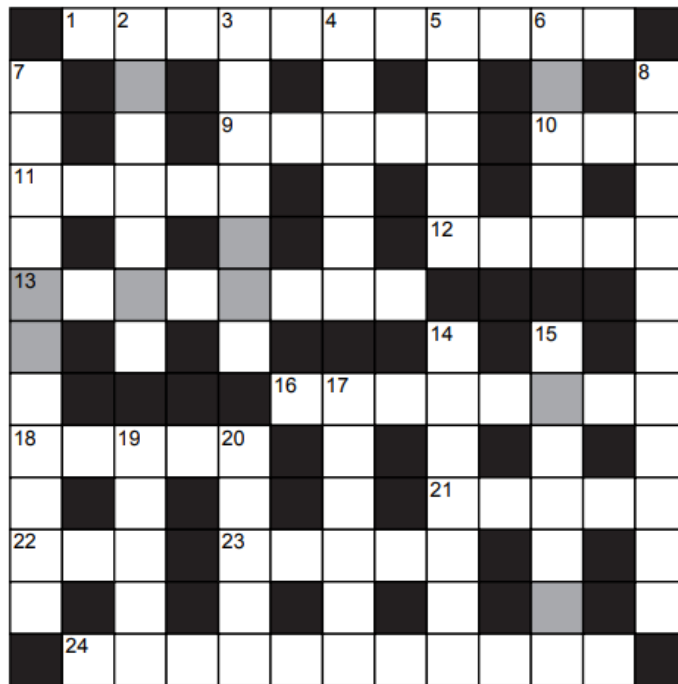
## Spot the Difference

Can you Spot 12 Differences between these two pictures?



# Challenge yourself!

## CROSSWORD



### Across:

- 1 Eg Plato (11)
- 9 Mammal that eats bamboo (5)
- 10 Kind or sort (3)
- 11 Break apart forcibly (5)
- 12 Nocturnal insects (5)
- 13 Person who rebels (8)
- 16 State of Australia (8)
- 18 Covered with water (5)
- 21 Recurrent topic (5)
- 22 Road vehicle (3)
- 23 One-way flow structure (5)
- 24 Branch of physics (11)

### Down:

- 2 Small villages (7)
- 3 Subatomic particles such as electrons (7)
- 4 Solitary (6)
- 5 Lyrical poem or song (5)
- 6 Authoritative proclamation (5)
- 7 Likeness (11)
- 8 Very tall buildings (11)
- 14 Indefinitely many (7)
- 15 Cherubic (7)
- 17 Deer horn (6)
- 19 Pertaining to the ear (5)
- 20 Total disorder (5)

Unscramble the letters in the shaded squares to reveal a themed word

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

## Sudoku

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.

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

Courtesy::  
Richardson Puzzles and Games

# Challenge yourself!

## Word Puzzle Pictures

1 SPLOSTACE	2 B E D	3 AGENT AGENT	4 DOUBT DOUBT
5 STAY ----- NIGHT	6 ↑ 2 u	7 B B A A R R	8 STEP PETS PETS
9 INJURY + INSULT	10 MCE MCE MCE	11 T I M E A B D E	12 IF

## Answers

### Crossword

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

Keyword: BADMINTON

### Brain Teasers

1. Bill is 28 and Bob is 21.
2. 5.
3. 20
4. There 6 contestants. The man came in 4th place

### Codeword

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

Keyword: FRANKENSTEIN

### Soduko

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

**Spot the Differences:** 1. Penguin's tail is hidden. 2. Fin on fish is hidden. 3. End of fishing line is missing. 4. Small iceberg is missing. 5. Pocket on jacket is missing. 6. Heel on boot is coloured in. 7. Inside of igloo is coloured in. 8. Penguin's flipper is coloured in. 9. Iceberg behind igloo has moved. 10. Exhaust from boat has moved. 11. Sign on shoreline has moved. 12. Flag is facing the other direction

**Word Puzzle Pictures:** 1. Lost in space. 2. Bed spread. 3. Double Agent. 4. A shadow of doubt. 5. Stay overnight. 6. Up to you. 7. Parallel Bars. 8. One step forward, 2 steps backwards. 9. Add insult to injury. 10. Three blind mice. 11. Long time no see. 12. a big If.

# RECENT EVENTS IN IRELAND



## Stranded Cruise ship finally leaves Belfast

Passengers on a round-the-world cruise have been left stranded in Belfast for three months after their voyage was beset by delays.

The *Odyssey* arrived at Queen's Island in the Northern Ireland capital to be outfitted before it was scheduled to leave on 30 May for the first leg of a three-year cruise. But until Monday 30 September, the ship was stuck in Belfast.

Passengers of the *Odyssey* had been living in hotels and rental accommodation in the city while the vessel was made seaworthy. Most passengers talked about the warmth of their welcome in Belfast during their elongated stay.



## The Ploughing Championships 2024

Europe's largest outdoor event, the National Ploughing Championships, was held from 17 to 19 September in Ratheniska, Co Laois.

This year exhibitors and visitors alike thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the glorious weather. There was so much for visitors to enjoy from quality livestock & serious machinery to fashion, celebrities, influencers and sports stars galore. There was something for every member of the family to enjoy.

Anne's Lane, just off South Anne Street, Dublin has this very colourful installation. The umbrellas, reflected in the puddle, in this photo are quite descriptive of the weather we have had this year.  
Photographer: Antonio M.



Day after day, and year after year,  
Little by little the leaves appear;  
And the slender branches  
spread far and wide,  
Till the mighty oak  
is the forest's pride

'Little by little',  
said a thoughtful boy,  
Each precious moment I will employ,  
And always this rule  
in my mind shall dwell:  
Whatever I do, I'll do it well.



Meet the ancient Irish warrior Lugh.  
Bianco Custura, a volunteer worker for ICPO took this photo on a visit to Dún na Sí Amenity & Heritage Park, Moate, Co. Westmeath.