GREEN SHOOTS
maynooth green campus
NEWSLETTER

Issue 1, Spring 2020

Welcome to the first edition of the new Maynooth Green Campus Newsletter!

It comes to you at a strange moment: carbon emissions are down, energy consumption is less, birds are singing and bees are buzzing. Yet this is mostly due to a general lockdown, so our new soundtrack, though pleasant, is eerie and, while the planet is getting a brief and much needed breathing space, we are conscious of the irony. Some articles in this issue will address this in more detail. In this issue too, we have several articles on biodiversity, birds, pollination, energy, and a range of activities, all of which can give us some hope.

Maynooth Green Campus Team

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In this edition...

Biodiversity on our doorsteps

Dr Jim Carolan

Biodiversity working group

Biology Dept.

April is one of my favourite months of the year for biodiversity. Trees and hedgerows are in full bloom, cowslip, celandine and dandelion adorn our roadside verges, birds and birdsong fill the air and insects are once again on the fly in our gardens, parks and meadows. Unlike previous years, however, April 2020 finds the human inhabitants of the planet unable to enjoy the same freedom of movement as our animal cousins. Many of our parks, campuses and woodlands are closed or have reduced access, limiting our potential to experience Nature at her most diverse.

During this period of restricted movement, a new trend of recording and appreciating the biodiversity found on our doorsteps and slightly beyond (within a 2km of course), has emerged. Social media is awash with photos, sightings and records of the plants and animals found right under our noses, and often overlooked. In fact, the National Biodiversity Database Centre (NBDC) has developed several citizen science initiatives aimed at encouraging the public to monitor and record the biodiversity around us.

One of these initiatives The Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) count, may be an excellent way to pass the time while we are confined to our homes. FIT counts involve the counting and recording the insect visitors to your garden over a short period of time. You first locate a nice patch of flowers (roughly 50cm x 50cm) in your garden and then record the number of insects that visit the patch within a 10-minute period. FIT counts, not only provide an excellent excuse to visit your garden, but the activity can be a fantastic way to introduce children to biodiversity and the science of observing and recording nature. Records can also be submitted to the NBDC through their online data submission system, which contributes to our understanding of insect abundance and distribution across Ireland.

The main categories of insect that typically visit our gardens are butterflies & moths, hoverflies, bees & wasps and beetles & ladybirds. Among these are some of our most important pollinator species and many are key indicators of biodiversity itself. By recording and tracking their abundance it is hoped that we can determine whether the actions of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan are working and that the fortunes of our pollinating insects are improving. Let's hope our fortunes also begin to change soon.

Maynooth University is a partner of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and is actively engaged in the promotion and protection of local and regional biodiversity.

Peacock butterfly. Photo by Sarah Larragy

Simple guide to FIT counts

1. Wait for a good day. The weather should be warm and dry.
2. Find a location containing target flowers (this can be anywhere). You will need to watch insects in a 50cm by 50cm square patch.
3. Take a photo of your target flower.
4. Print out the recording form and fill out the background information about the weather and your flower patch.
5. Set a timer for 10 minutes.
6. Count every insect that lands on one of the flowers of your target species within the 50cm x 50cm patch.
7. Add your results to the online data submission system.

For recording sheets and more information on FIT counts and insect identification see:
https://pollinators.ie/record-pollinators/fit-count/

Birds on campus: A survey

Prof Phil Dix

Biodiversity working group

Biology Dept.

Maynooth University campus has always provided rich and varied habitats for a wide range of wildlife, a feature which has been enhanced by numerous recent initiatives including wildflower meadows, bug hotels and bird and bat boxes. Birds constitute the most conspicuous wildlife and have benefited since 2014 from the provision of a range of nestboxes, initially mostly for small birds (e.g. tits, robins, blackbirds, starlings and house sparrows), and more recently more specialised boxes for swifts, dippers, woodpeckers, peregrines and barn owls. It is early days for the last three of these, but all these species are found locally and would be welcome additions to the avifauna breeding on campus.

The provision of nestboxes took place through the efforts of the University ground staff, led by Stephen Seaman, in co-operation with the Kildare Branch of Birdwatch Ireland. Last year, we decided it was time to carry out a more comprehensive evaluation of the birds of the campus. Six surveyors took part, split into two groups, one each for the North and South campus. Beginning in April 2019 these teams met on an early morning during the last week of each month and spent about two hours walking a prescribed route covering the entire campus, recording all the birds seen or heard. To aid geographical analysis of the data, the campus was divided into 100 metre squares, and the sightings in each square were recorded.

The survey was carried out for eleven months, until February 2020, but unfortunately Covid-19 intervened to prevent us completing the set in March. However, we have collected a large amount of data which we will use to profile the numbers, distribution and seasonal variation of birds on campus. This will be a substantial task, but we thought readers of this newsletter would be interested in a summary of the relative abundance of the 49 species of bird recorded during the survey. These are listed in ranked order on the following table, with the birds seen only once or twice listed at the end. The numbers represent the total number of sightings of each species (North and South campus combined), over the eleven months of the survey. Of course, this total can include multiple sightings, in different months, of the same individuals, but the totals do reflect their relative abundance. Most species are resident, found throughout the year. The main exceptions are the two Winter thrushes (redwings and fieldfares) both of which make the top 20, but were only present over the three Winter months, and the swifts, swallows and house martins that were only present in the Summer.

Rank	Species	Sightings
1	Jackdaw	1,143
2	Woodpigeon	1,034
3	Rook	620
4	Blackbird	349
5	Robin	264
6	Blue tit	252
7	Wren	214
8	Chaffinch	213
9	Magpie	194
10	Starling	191
11	Hooded crow	142
12	Redwing	135
13	Pied wagtail	105
14	Goldfinch	103
15	Herring gull	93
16	Fieldfare	75
17	Great tit	69
18	Song thrush	68
19	Swift	67
20	Greenfinch	65
20	Long-tailed tit	65
22	Mistle thrush	59
23	Mallard	55
24	Swallow	45
25	Bullfinch	43
26	Goldcrest	31
27	Coal tit	27
28	House sparrow	23
29	Black-headed gull	20
30	Dunnock	18
31	Chiffchaff	12
31	Treecreeper	12
33	Blackcap	11
34	Feral pigeon	8
35	House martin	6
36	Sparrowhawk	4
36	Linnet	4
38	Peregrine falcon	3
38	Cormorant	3

Maynooth University Bird Survey

April 2019 - February 2020

There were also two sightings each of: Dipper, Grey heron, Grey wagtail, Jay, Lesser redpoll and willow warbler, and single sightings of: Collared dove, Moorhen, Snipe and Raven.

A few favourites

Prof Phil Dix

Biodiversity working group

Biology Dept.

Photos by Maura Boyle

Here are some brief profiles of four of the most familiar small birds, all of which are in our top 20.

BLUE TIT (Meantán gorm) *Paras caeruleus*

A very common and widespread resident, certainly the most familiar of the tits because of its agility and confiding nature. The sexes are similar, and it is easily distinguished from the coal tit and great tit by its pale blue crown and the narrow black stripe through the eye, crossing the white cheeks. They are common on both campuses and were ranked 6th most numerous bird in the survey. They are hole nesters and take readily to nestboxes. At least 25 boxes on campus have been used by blue tits, many of them on several occasions, including those on the lawn in front of the Phoenix restaurant.

CHAFFINCH (Rí rua) *Fringilla coelebs*

There are an estimated two million breeding pairs of chaffinches in Ireland, probably making it the second most abundant bird species (after the shyer and less conspicuous wren). The numbers in the Winter are even higher as it is a partial migrant, its numbers being significantly enhanced by an influx from more Northerly climes. The male bird (pictured) is very distinctive, with its blue crown and nape, and red face stretching down to most of its underparts. The female is less colourful, mostly pale brown, but shares with the male the diagnostic double white wing bars. These are apparent when the bird is at rest, and are very obvious in flight. The male has a distinctive but monotonous song, usually delivered from a high vantage point.

ROBIN (Spideog) *Erithacus rubecua*

Another very common and familiar species, which needs little introduction. Often very tame and easy to approach they ranked 5th most abundant species on campus, and are equally common on both campuses. Unlike tits they do not nest in holes, but take readily to open-fronted nestboxes. There are several of these on the South campus, at least one of which has been used by robins. It is apt that the one pictured is singing, as they do so much of the time, even outside of the breeding season. Unlike the chaffinch, where the song is always almost exactly the same, with the robin you recognise it by its voice, not what it is saying. It is one of the most beautiful of bird songs, lyrical, plaintive, and continually varied. It is also unusual in that both sexes sing (usually it is only the male), and they can frequently be heard at night.

GOLDFINCH (Lasair Choille) *Carduelis carduelis*

One of Ireland's most colourful birds, it is also one of the most successful, with numbers that have increased greatly in recent decades, as anyone feeding birds in their garden will have noticed. It is therefore perhaps surprising that it is only ranked 14th in abundance on campus. Despite that it can easily be seen on both campuses, often in twittering flocks around patches of scrub, particularly if there are thistles, the seed heads of which are its favourite food. The sexes are similar and they are easily identifiable, even in flight when the yellow wing bar is very obvious. The twittering song is also distinctive and on campus can only really be confused with the much less common linnet.

News, Updates & Events

Dorena Bishop

Waste management working group

History Dept.

Maynooth Green Campus visit Thornton's Recycling

On Friday 28 February some of the Maynooth Green Campus committee visited Thornton's Recycling plant on Killeen Road, Dublin 10. Peter Hanifin gave us a tour of their facilities where we saw first hand what happens to the dry recycling green bin waste that is collected from Maynooth University. From collection and sorting to the final bailing process we saw first hand the importance of our continued efforts to correctly segregate our waste.

Mireia Guardino Ferran

MGC Co-ordinator

Fairtrade at Maynooth

Maynooth was the first university campus in Ireland to become registered with Fairtrade in 2006. In 2019, Campus services renewed work in this area in conjunction with Maynooth Green Campus, for example by successfully linking Fairtrade tea and coffee discounts to the use of reusable cups. More recently we organised an event to kick start #Fairtrade Fortnight 2020 at Your Space in the Student's Union in conjunction with Fairtrade Ireland and ethical Dutch chocolatier, Tony Chocolonely. It was good to see that a company producing chocolate bars can ensure that cocoa can be sourced without slave wages and guaranteeing a fair price to farmers. Maynooth campus will introduce more Fairtrade products and events to promote good practice more widely. Please remember to look out for Fairtrade produce, whether on or off campus!

MU's Climate Ambassadors

MGC Coordinator, Mireia Guardino-Ferran and MSU Green Campus Senator Aoife Hynes recently entered The Climate Ambassador programme. It is Ireland's first ever initiative to train and support individuals taking action on climate change. The programme is co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce with support from the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment. Since then Mireia has undertaken further training and an online meeting with RTE's meteorologist Siobhán Ryan, who spoke about weather patterns vs climate. Our hope is to bring the Climate Ambassador training to Maynooth Campus so students and staff could join the ever-growing team of climate activists!

Charles Seaman (SPCM), Ann Marie Cudden (Maynooth Student's Union), Stephen Seaman (Grounds Supervisor), Dorena Bishop (Waste working group), Ivan Griffin (Campus Services)

Aoife Hynes (MSU Green Campus Senator), Mireia Guardino-Ferran (MCG coordinator)

Mary Jenning (Maynooth Tidy Towns liaison) and Mireia Guardino-Ferran (MCG coordinator) at the Fairtrade supporters' conference.

Tony Chocolonely's Marketing manager Nicola Matthews at the Student's Union.

SDGs Advocate training

Maynooth Green Campus is committed to work towards the UN goals for sustainable development (SDGs), and this is part of our Green Charter. Mireia Guardino-Ferrar of MGC is one of 26 SDG Advocates nationally. Advocates receive training to deepen their understanding of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, represent the project internationally and lead transformative change in

Ireland. The project is delivered by Development Perspectives and it is a collaborative project that sees, Concern, Saolta, Ireland Rural Link, Maynooth University, AONTAS, and Irish Aid partnering together. The programme will support Mireia in promoting implementation of the Goals through projects on campus.

Solitary Bee nest-making workshop

Stephen Seaman (Grounds Supervisor) with MGC groups members at the Bee Nest-making workshop.

On Thursday, February 13, 2020 - 12:00 to 15:00, Grounds Manager Stephen Seaman organised a Solitary Bee nest-making workshop at MU Library on behalf of MGC. Members of the local community, staff and students produced over 100 Solitary Bee nests to take home for their own gardens. The workshop gave everyone the opportunity to learn the importance of the many solitary bee species in Ireland, and their habitats. We also ran a competition to win a Bee Hotel. Watch out for more workshops and join us at the next one!

National Spring Clean postponed

MGC has supported An Taisce's National Spring Clean month (April) since 2013. Normally, we set a day in April to invite staff and students from all faculties to join together for a community clean-up event. While we have registered for 2020, An Taisce has postponed all organised clean-ups until 5 May, subject to further notice. We will let you know more as we are made aware of developments.

#FridaysForFuture Maynooth

Since it began, MGC members have supported and attended many of the #FridaysForFuture Global Strike days in Maynooth town. These gatherings have been a great way to engage with staff, student body and the wider community. We commend the community members who attend every week, including Maynooth Students Union (MSU), Trócaire,

Maynooth ETNS pupils at a recent #FridaysForFuture strike.

Maynooth Tidy Towns and of course the students from all the schools. Their efforts and energy are heart-warming. 15th March 2019 - global strike day - saw the biggest participation yet by Maynooth town. In attendance there were pupils from all the secondary and post-primary schools, Maynooth Campus students, and Maynooth Educate Together (ETNS) students.

Good advice from Greta on Covid-19

Greta Thunberg, who has acknowledged Maynooth town's Climate Action efforts via Twitter, was also one of the first global figures to realise the need for a change of tactics during the Covid-19 crisis, and to show solidarity with the older generation who are at greatest risk. So, let all generations work together for the good of all. A better world is possible. Please, join the movement for Climate Action Now!

Campus Energy Update

Ciaran Coffey

Energy management working group

Energy Manager, Building Services Eng.

Public Sector Monitoring and Reporting

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland reports annually on progress towards national energy targets in the public sector. Maynooth University recorded a 36.8% reduction in 2019 when compared with the 2009 baseline. The implementation of enhanced operations, strategic campus planning, energy awareness campaigns and community engagement has resulted in an achievement which exceeds the public sector target reduction of 33% by 2020.

Delivering on national energy reduction targets ahead of schedule, this significant reduction in energy per student (full time equivalent) has been supported through the implementation of plant upgrades, boiler replacement, LED light replacement, enhanced building insulation measures and sophisticated building management systems.

However, there is much more work to be done as the recent introduction of the 2030 energy targets sets new challenges for the University. Maynooth University has a proactive strategy towards energy management and is ready to rise to the challenge. Adopting a collaborative approach across a wide range of Green Campus initiatives will ensure that sustainability is at the heart of all our developments.

New Teaching and Learning Building

In August 2019 construction of the new Technology Society and Innovation Building started on site. Due to be commissioned in early 2021, this development will be our most energy efficient building on campus. Energy Efficiency features include:

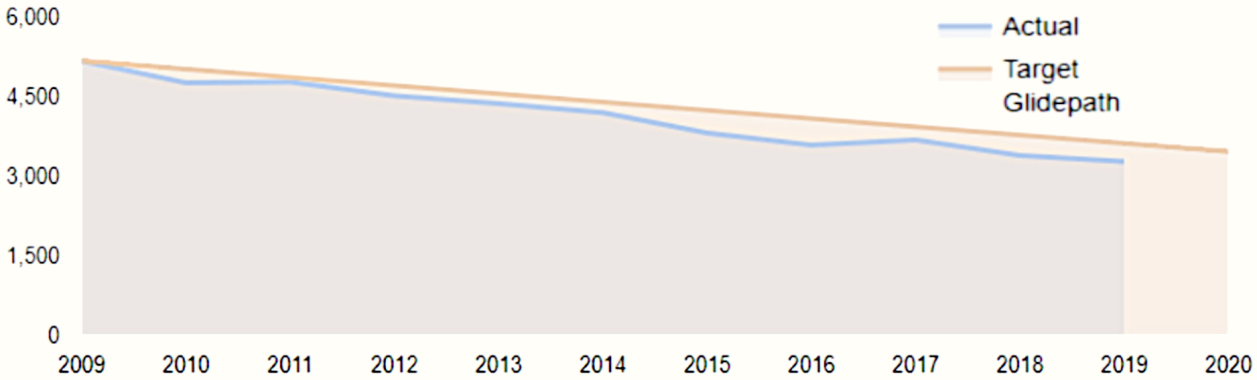
- An array of 80 no. Solar Photo Voltaic Panels, with an output of 24 kilowatts
- Natural daylight strategies combined with intelligent LED lighting management systems
- The removal of gas heating from the building design as part of decarbonisation strategies
- Natural ventilation strategies, heat pump technologies, high efficiency electric heating and hot water systems
- Very high levels of building fabric insulation with excellent air-tightness

Student Centre

Construction of the new Student Centre will commence this summer and will deliver another highly energy efficient building by late 2021 with extensive photovoltaics, rainwater harvesting and a host of other sustainable design features.

External Lighting

The University is advancing a proposal to upgrade external lighting on the North Campus as part of a SEAI Better Energy Community scheme and if successful, this project will be part funded by energy savings which will accrue over the payback period. This project will improve overall campus light levels, safety and security, achieve better light colour uniformity, and reduce carbon emissions and energy costs. A proposal to upgrade the South Campus external lighting with LED fittings is also being advanced in consultation with Conservation Architects.



Energy Reduction Glidepath 2009 - 2019

Energy Update continued

Solar PV

Through one of our energy suppliers the University is exploring the option to install another Solar PV installation on one of our existing buildings. The array would comprise of 12kWs of a Solar Electricity Generation unit which could provide renewable energy and data for research.

ISO 50001 Certification

In 2018 MU/SPCM achieved ISO 50001, a certified international Energy Management System. In tandem with the continuous improvement approach we continue to develop our Energy Monitoring System. We currently monitor all significant energy users on both campuses. Over time we hope to introduce multiple meters in each building to enhance energy performance management.

South Campus Heating Project

In recent years SPCM have carried out a programme of energy related projects on the South Campus. In 2015 the Heavy Fuel Oil installation in the Powerhouse was converted to gas. Subsequent summer works have rolled out the installation of modular gas boiler systems in the Aula Maxima, Dunboyne/Humanity House, New House, Powerhouse, Riverstown House and Stoyte House buildings. A complete overhaul of the Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHP) has been implemented to improve related energy efficiency. The above gas boilers can be easily converted to run on bio-gas in the future when it comes on stream. In conjunction with these works the upgrade of extended heating systems and pipework has commenced and will continue over the coming years as funding becomes available.

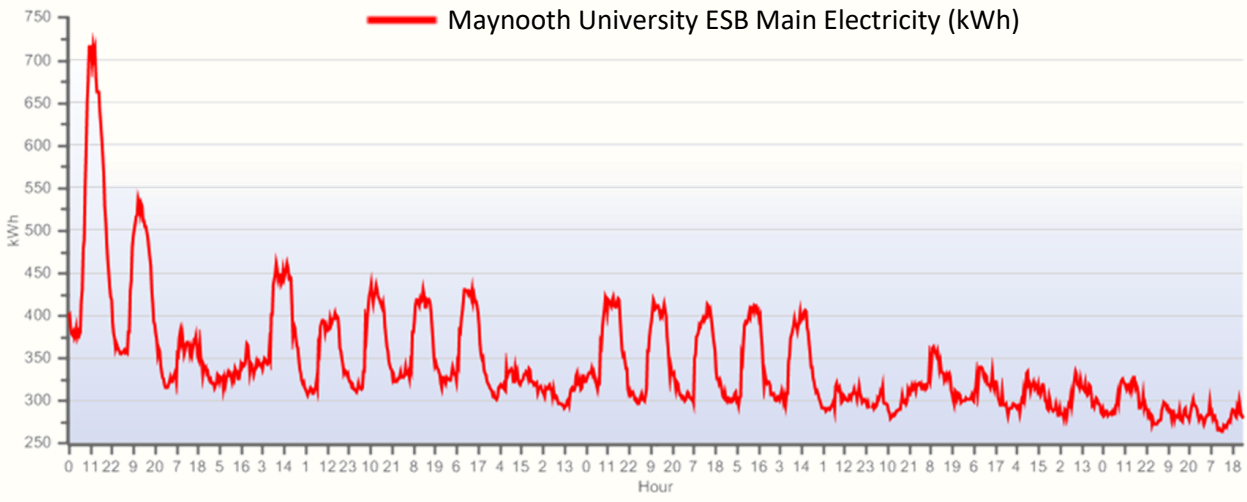
Fabric and Roofs

A programme of building fabric and roof upgrade projects has been undertaken in the Pugin-designed St Mary's and St Patricks, adopting insulation works in keeping with the sensitive architectural integrity of the buildings.

Energy Consumption 12th March to 5th April 2020

During these unprecedented times of COVID-19, the campus has been placed in hibernation mode as our students learn and staff work from their homes. To ensure that we are not deploying unnecessary resources in this period of essential-activity-only on campus, our team have set the electrical systems, heating systems and cooling associated with IT to minimum levels.

The graph shows the reduction in electricity consumption across a three-week period starting Thursday 12th March, each peak represents a daily peak use. The flattening of the graph as it reaches 5th April reflects that all but essential electrical and mechanical plant has been turned off.



Energy Reduction at Maynooth University from March 12th - April 4th.

Links to learning

Dr Zerrin Doganca Kucuk

Communications working group

Education Dept.

A Froebelian Ecofeminist Sense

Dr Máire Nic an Bhaird and Laoise Ní Chléirigh along with a group of final year Froebel Department students availed of the lush campus recently in an effort to explore some of the wonderful flora and fauna of Maynooth University. During their bilingual *Teanga an Ghrá* elective which runs until May, students are examining ways of sustaining biodiversity, protecting our trees and nurturing a love for the natural world through a Froebelian Ecofeminist lense. Stephen Seaman, Abigail Maher and Joe Larragy were extremely helpful in identifying some of the lesser known trees on their investigative session around the south campus, so it was a very successful joint effort! The students said they are both enthused and energised to know more, before they share this sustainable knowledge and love for the environment with younger nature detectives in primary schools from September 2020.

Teachers as Critically Reflective Practitioners

Students in their fourth year of the Bachelor of Science with Education Course complete a year-long module entitled 'Teacher as critically reflective practitioner'. One of the purposes of this module is to provide a space for students to reflect critically on education in light of contemporary political and social developments. As part of this, students will be completing a four-week unit this semester entitled **'Activism, sustainability, and science education'**. Over the four weeks, students will be given the chance to think about the relationship between science education, sustainability, and the contemporary ecological crisis. How can science education contribute to an ecologically just world? What role might science education have in caring for the planet that is common to us all? How can science education engage with sustainability issues in a way that is sensitive to their intersections with other social and political injustices? In addressing these questions, students will have the opportunity to engage with African indigenous perspectives on science, with the view to reflecting on how such perspectives can help reframe what is meant by 'sustainability' beyond the dominant discourses of the West. Students will also be introduced to the principles of 'eco-pedagogy' and 'ecofeminism' in order for them to think about the explicitly activist potential of science education in these politically charged times.

Ireland's Biodiversity Spring-Summer Workshops

Maynooth Green Campus and the Department of Biology have over the past number of years hosted workshops organised by the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) on identifying and recording Ireland's biodiversity. These workshops enable individuals to gain new skills and take part in Citizen Science projects that help track change in the status of Ireland's flora and fauna. This year we are delighted to be hosting a workshop on identifying Irish birdlife by song. This very popular workshop is sold out but a full list of workshops is available from the National Biodiversity Data Centre at https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/events/

Dr Máire Nic an Bhaird and Laoise Ní Chléirigh with their students from the Froebel Department

The biodiversity on our campus – time for a 25-year update.

In 1995 Lynne Whittaker from the Biology department and others published a book (Bowering et al., 1995) on campus biodiversity including a list of plants found on campus. In an exciting summer project this year, 25 years on from the 1995 survey and celebrating 50 years of Biology at Maynooth, Dr Gail Maher (Biology) and Dr Helen Shaw (ICARUS/ Geography) will be developing an updated inventory to see what has changed. We will be providing an internship for an undergraduate student through the Maynooth Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research (SPUR) as well; so will be helping to train one of the next generation of botanists. In addition, this collaboration, developed through the Green Campus biodiversity committee, also highlights the synergies between Biology and Geography ahead of the new intake of Biological and Geographical Science students, a new and exciting BSc course available at Maynooth from September 2020.

There have been many changes on campus, with new infrastructure, and also a renewed interest in nature, leading to areas of the campus where mowing is less frequent to allow wild flowers to flourish. Generally, over recent decades, vegetation in Europe has become more homogenous, with more common species and less rare ones. It will be interesting to see if Maynooth campus has begun to shift away from this trend, or if we need to do more to ensure that biodiversity flourishes on our campus. Look out for us during the summer - or come and give us a hand!

Reference

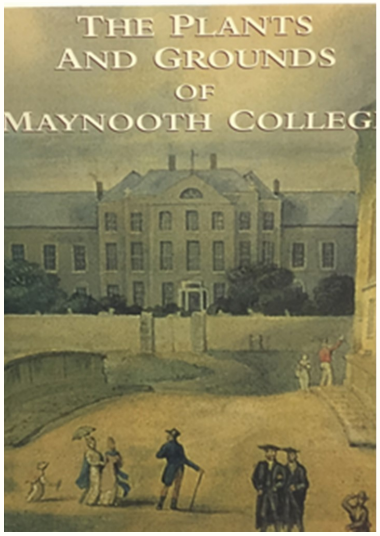
Bowering, L., Reilly, P.A. and Whittaker, P.A., 1995. The plants and grounds of Maynooth College. Stationery Office for the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

A Recent SFI Project from Geography Department

*Space, Surveyors, and Students: STEM and Sustainable Development Goals (5*S) Project* has been granted with an SFI Discover Award. The project will be led by Dr. Conor Cahalane from the Geography Department in collaboration with the Education Department in Maynooth University and TU Dublin, Ordnance Survey Ireland, Esri Ireland and the Society of Chartered Surveyors. The project aims to develop a capacity for STEM education by training in-service and pre-service teachers with exciting space-themed content and develop interactive and inspiring instructional materials to feed curiosity and interest in using, interpreting and communicating scientific data. Another focus of the project will be on citizen science applications using Copernicus data to study and discuss the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this way, the project can feedback to the public at the national level, showing interested parties what they can do with it in their own locales as citizen scientists.

Science Methodology Module with a Sustainability Focus

Sustainability is presented as one of the four elements in the recent Junior Cycle Science syllabus and there are sustainability related learning outcomes in the all of the strands as biology, chemistry, physics, and earth and space strands. However, it is considerably difficult to teach such an interrelated and complex issue especially for science student teachers. In the Education Department, Dr. Zerrin Doganca Kucuk mentions about some innovative instructional materials such as interactive simulations to teach sustainability and inclusion of scientific argumentation to discuss sustainability from different perspectives in the Year 3 science methodology module.



Collage of flower photos on MU Campus. Photos by Dr Abigail Maher

Climate Justice 2020

Dr Joe Larragy

MGC Chair

Applied Social Studies Dept.

It is hard to believe now that COVID-19 was just about on the radar when we assembled on 26th February for a conference on A Just Transition. We were delighted that President Michael D. Higgins and his wife, Sabina, were able to attend the event. Several great presentations from leading UK and Irish social policy theorists and analysts addressed the conference on a range of topics in a significant effort to join the dots between social justice and environmental sustainability.

The event was supported by MUSSI, Applied Social Studies and Sociology and it was a significant milestone in the work of Maynooth Green Campus in furthering its work on climate justice. It was not the first time that Prof Ian Gough was in Maynooth. In 2018, he gave a lecture on his book, Heat, Greed and Human Need. This year, he was joined by several others, including Anna Coote, who spoke about the concept of universal basic services, and whose book on this subject was launched later in the day. Other keynote contributions came from Hugh Frazer on a new feasibility study on an EU Child Guarantee, and David Donoghue, who was a key contributor in the UN's path to agreeing the 2015 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. The conference brought together several other scholars, policy analysts, students and faculty members. It will help greatly in our current efforts to mainstream environmental and climate justice in the curriculum and research of colleagues in the coming period.

The timing of Social Justice Week (SJW, 9-13 March) was a bit unfortunate. The theme of SJW this year was 'Home'. Ironic then that, by the end of the week, we would all have to work from home, not quite locked down as yet, but grateful that we had a home to go to and work from, as we struggled with the technology to adapt our teaching.

Most SJW events went ahead and the week was really excellent this year, with very good engagement across departments on a range of topics, even though we had to cancel events scheduled for Friday 13th March due to the national COVID-19 closure of schools and colleges. Unfortunately, this meant that the Walton Lecture by Texas based scientist Professor Katharine Hayhoe on "Christians, Climate, and our Culture around the World" had to be cancelled. Fortunately, the Dean's Lecture, did go ahead, hosted by the Department of Anthropology. Professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen of University of Oslo spoke on "Knowledge and Power in an Overheated World: Fake News, Neoliberalist Hegemony and the Rise of Nativist Politics"

How topical the themes of Social Justice Week have proved to be, not just in relation to Climate but the Covid-19 crisis. Once again, we are horrified by the ignorant and shocking response to the pandemic from the White House, and some imitators in other countries. But when the going gets tough, the tough get going and it is really inspiring to see the efforts taking place at state and local level in the USA, as well as across the globe. In Ireland too, we have managed to pull together in the current emergency, though immense challenges will loom larger as we go on. Once again, we see that this is a very small world we all share. We can learn much from Covid-19 that is relevant to the longer term on the climate front. We need to work together, and listen to what the scientists say, not only about Covid-19 but also about climate change, and to put justice and truth to the fore. We have had enough of ignoramuses and blustering snake oil salesmen. It is time for some home truths.

From right to left: Dr Joe Larragy, Dr Anna Coote, Dr Mary Murphy, Ms. Sabina Higgins, President Michael D. Higgins, Prof Ian Gough, Prof Philip Nolan.

Towards a 'just recovery'

Prof John Sweeney

Water conservation working group

ICARUS/ Geography Dept.

We've all heard the birdsong. Maybe it was always there but the bustle and noise of our everyday lives concealed it. As we view the outside world from our windows, or venture briefly into the dance of separation on our pavements, we have become acutely aware of the extent to which the things we took for granted four short weeks ago have changed utterly. Waiting for the swallows to arrive has replaced waiting for a visit from a friend or relative. The car sits idle and the tragic news each night on our tv screens means we ration our consumption of news, just as we ration our food supplies. In a sense we are displaced in time backwards to an earlier age and only the magic of Zoom or Facetime keeps us in contact with the human side of our existence.

The current virus is not the first such pandemic to befall humanity, and probably won't be the last. Relatively less serious epidemics occurred with SARS in 2002-3 and MERS in 2012. The common factor in a lot of these emergent diseases is that they result from a viral crossover from animals to people. This has increased in frequency in recent years as the need for space for humanity has pushed back and removed natural spaces. As natural habitats shrink and are stressed further by climate change, the risks of such transmissions increase. It must be acknowledged though that the unhygienic killing of species known to be natural hosts for such viruses, such as pangolins and bats, as happened in Wuhan, makes for a greatly increased risk of viruses making the jump and spreading globally with the tragic impacts we are now experiencing.

Some positive signs, at least in Ireland, are now emerging that a community pulling together can be effective in 'bending the curve'. So hopefully we can begin to look beyond this summer and ask questions about what we have learned and where we want to go as a country and as a society.

The first lesson is that globalisation has a price. We have learned the truth that we are not immune to what happens in a market place in central China, or indeed anywhere in the world. Pope Francis in his 'climate change' encyclical five years ago referred to 'Our Common Home'. He was talking about climate and sustainability. In the aftermath of the present crisis we must not forget that Ireland will not be immune from these other looming problems any more than it was immune to Covid-19. The death toll from the current virus may ultimately be huge, but not as huge as the current World Health Organisation's estimate that in 10 years' time 250,000 additional deaths per year will be occurring from the direct and indirect effects of climate change if we do not change our present trajectory. This will occur every year until mid-century at least, not the kind of once-off we are presently experiencing.

Secondly, the social response to the crisis has been inspirational. Despite the hardships, Irish society has been a beacon of hope as to what a small country can achieve by pulling together. The speed at which the crisis emerged stifled attempts by vested interests to place the economy above the health and wellbeing of people. Unlike the climate change story where decades of lobbying and millions of euros and dollars were invested in stalling progress, for once political leaders listened to the science and acted admirably in unison.

Thirdly, in learning the lessons of the past it is important not to rush back to a 'business as usual' trajectory. For some, a crisis is an opportunity to recover lost ground. Already we hear calls for deregulation, for reducing public participation in decision making, and for limiting environmental protection. In the EU calls for dropping current climate targets and scrapping emission trading systems have been voiced by Prime Ministers of some eastern Member States. We will probably see vested interest-based arguments for single use plastics being deemed more hygienic and biocide production needing to be ramped up to produce more disinfectants. But we should ask whether taxpayers' money should be expended on restoring to full throttle industries like aviation and shipping, which have done little to reduce their emissions and are stubbornly outwithside the Paris Agreement. As academics we also have to consider whether the great conference exodus is really necessary on the scale of the past and whether more sustainable mechanisms to interact could be used.

In many ways the logic of Green Campus should be stronger than ever in the years ahead. But the hard-won benefits must be protected. Make no mistake, powerful forces will try and recover the ground they lost and for that reason, the voice of Green Campus and other bodies must not be drowned out either at institutional or national levels. Many things have changed over the past month, but as we look out our windows at spring bursting forth, we must ensure that a 'Just Recovery' takes place and that Green Campus principles underpin this.

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