



voices

A Collection of Writings by Students of
Galway Adult Basic Education Service

Voices

Fifth Edition

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In memory of Paul Hogan

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Foreword

The students, tutors and staff of Galway Adult Basic Education Service are delighted to present the fifth edition of *Voices*.

This year's edition is dedicated to Paul Hogan, former director of the Sandy Road Training Centre. Paul was a friend to Galway Adult Basic Education Service. He welcomed many of our groups in his centre and he was a great believer in the idea of giving people a second chance. Anyone who knew Paul will remember him for his most engaging characteristic: he said it as it was. The stories in *Voices* normally say it as it is and how it was, and this year is no different.

We have a new section, incorporating posts from *galwayvoice*, a blog set up by one of our group classes. The comments on the value placed on returning to education are encouraging to the teachers and management in Galway Adult Basic Education Service. I especially like the 'Coz I'm worth it' comment, and the hope expressed by one of our students that 'the learning process is as smooth as the last wall I plastered!'

Many thanks to all our volunteer tutors, to our regular CGVEC teachers for their great dedication and flexibility, to our administration staff Lisa and Christine for the warm welcome they give, and to Alison Jones, who provides the initial, reassuring encouragement to students who frequently arrive in trepidation.

As ever, we are especially grateful to the writers: they have found their voice.

Kieran Harrington

Long Pieces

This Girl

Why do people hurt the people they love. I have asked people why drink is their life. They can't answer that question. They change the subject. When you walk the streets of Galway you see a lot of winos drinking in Eyre Square. People are homeless because they are treated badly growing up.

This girl left home at a young age and was homeless on the streets. Being homeless is not a nice way to live. She had a child and he was on the streets with her. It was so cold living on the streets with a young child. She was afraid on the streets. This girl would drink for comfort and would bring her young kid in to the pub. She was putting her drink before her son. She should have put her son before her drink.

This girl would walk around Eyre Square for the whole day wheeling the buggy with her son. Then she heard of a homeless place for women and she went up there. She stayed there for a few nights with her son knowing they were warm and had a place to rest their heads and be able to cook food. In this hostel for the homeless they had to look for accommodation every Wednesday. She heard of a place in Ballybane and she moved in there. That did not work out. It was not a place for them to live in. You would not put a dog in it. She had to fight to get her deposit back. Then she was homeless again.

There was no place for her back in the hostel. There were three hostels she was in, so she was walking from hostel to hostel to keep a roof over her son's head. She went back in the hostel and she remembers a TD had said they had another place in Ballybane for her. That was the day she will never forget. She moved in and she was there for a while. When she moved into the neighbourhood she got on with everyone and all of a sudden everyone hated her. It is hard for this girl to escape from the past. Then she would get calls from people threatening to kill her. She was getting more afraid. That area was bad. People had no respect. They would throw nappies into other people's gardens. They did that to the girl and caused rats around the house. Then things went wrong for her. Then she was pregnant with her second child. When the baby was brought home she had her for a while, but the girl didn't stop drinking

The girl tried moving neighbourhood to move away from her past. But people talk and people gossip. People judge others before they actually speak to the person first. They listen to people's lies and actually believing them. This girl has noticed that. People only want to speak to you and get all the information about you and then throw it back in your face and make you feel like crap. People prey on the weak.

This girl feels tired. This girl has been hurt through drink. People are looking at this girl and probably thinking that she is trouble. It's not true. She is only trying to survive, she is only trying to find some shelter. This girl would let people move in with her just for someone to talk to. That was a bad thing to do. She never learned from her mistakes. Then the guards were getting too many calls from that girl and they were concerned and they called up. Then her social workers were called and then the kids were put into the police car.

The day they were taken away from her she just walked out of the house and let the guards do what they wanted. That is the day this girl will never forget. This girl will never forget that she did not put her kids first. She was more concerned about her drinking at that time. It was hard raising kids all on her own. People were putting her down and saying that the kids were going to school hungry and not fed. That really hurt this girl. She has learned that putting her loved ones before her drink is the most important thing in life. This girl has not drunk in the past five years, trying her best to get back what she lost, her children. They are very precious to this girl.

This girl's story has not finished yet. This girl is learning from her mistakes.

Anon

The Hole in the Wall Gang

Galway is one of those places where you never know who you might meet. The other day I met an old friend of mine who I hadn't seen in over 25 years or more in the middle of Shop Street.

'Tony,' said I. 'Well, well how are you doing? Long time no see.'

'Nick,' said he. 'I had a feeling you would be still here.' Big hugs ensued.

'Jesus, what happened to that big ball of black wool you had on your head?' Tony guffawed.

'Look who's talking,' said I. 'You've a head on you like the moon.'

We always had great old crack. So we spent most of the day catching up. He asked me if I remembered the time we went to London via Waterford, Wexford, Rosslare and Fishguard. I did. Here is that story.

The five of us were busking around Ireland at the time. We were all unemployed back in the early eighties. But we had great fun and went to all the festivals that summer. We were based in Tramore in Waterford where I and my brother Pat and Kevin are from. Our friend Tony was from Birmingham and Mick was from Kildare.

So the summer was coming to an end and our plan was to get to London and get the magic bus from there to Greece for the winter. So we started busking in Waterford to get a few bob together for the trip. It wasn't working out so well. Before we knew it we were in the pub having a session for the day, every day. So we decided to head to Wexford; it would be a bit nearer the boat anyway. We said goodbye so many times to our friends that they used just answer, 'Okay, right, see you tomorrow.' We did end up in Wexford and found a good pitch with a few bob coming in. We got wind of an old lodge a mile out the road, it was a good place to put the head down. Before we knew it we were back in to the same old craic as Waterford. Anyway we said we'd try to make the bobs and get the boat to Fishguard where Tony has a friend about two hours away. He said he could get a van and we'd head to London in it. Well we eventually managed to get on the boat one night, but with the clothes on our backs and our instruments - coz someone stole the rest of our stuff when we were having a few pints the night before we left. We got a sliced pan, a pound of corned beef and a couple of tomatoes. Sure what more would you want? Well, and a few pints!

As luck would have it, someone dropped us five pound for the music on the boat, so after eventually getting through customs, we headed to Fishguard. It was a Sunday and everywhere was closed: you couldn't even get a drink or anything. 'Make that call,' we said to Tony, we had to get out of this place. So he tried and tried but there was no reply...we were stuck. No good trying to hitch. He kept trying as the day went on but no reply. That was the end of that we said, only one thing for it: we'll have to jump the train! That night we waited till it was dark and the last boat arrived. One by one we got in the queue for the train. Just before it was about to pull out the conductor came looking for our tickets. I think he knew by the look of us. 'Off with you,' he said, 'out of the station and no hanging around.' There we were again, cold and hungry, and the corned beef was well gone. No sleeping bags, nothing. It was a cold night that night I can tell you! We tried hitching the next day but it was no good. So we decided to try again. The same craic in with the queue. We were nearly on the train when he spotted us. 'If you have no ticket get out of my station,' he said. The train pulled out, but it stopped about 500 yards down the line at a red light. We legged it over the fence and we lifted Mick up to try the door. It opened. The whole carriage looked in amazement. They probably thought it was the hole in the wall gang! Well we definitely had the look of it. We all had long hair and long beards. One of the lads said, 'We just missed it at the station.' We got seats and sat down, legs shaking, adrenaline going. We looked at each other. 'Did we really do that?' Pat asked. Kevin said, 'Well at least we're not desperados waiting on a train.' But that smile was soon off our faces. Who comes along only your man that was after throwing us off at the station. He flipped, just pointed his finger and looked at us with his mad penetrating eyes. We knew we were in trouble when we got to London. He couldn't very well throw us off a moving express train, so he did the next best thing. He called the cops!

We were only as far as Swansea when Mick said, 'Look out on the platform.' There were police everywhere! Before we knew it we were surrounded. We were taken off the train and marched down the platform to the waiting paddy wagon. We were taken to the police station and interviewed one by one. Luckily we all had the same story. We always had the same story! We were put in to holding cells while they decided what to do with us and check us out and see if we were politically involved. Hours later all of us were taken to this room and were questioned about our plans in London. Had we gigs? Where were we staying and all that kind of stuff. Anyway in the end they took pity on us and send us on our way. Luck was with us as one of the sergeants in charge liked music and seemed to have a sense of humour. We were not to go near that train station without tickets. Off into Swansea then to try some of that busking again and see if we

could make a few bob for grub and maybe the train ... and a few pints. But it was a waste of time there was not much interest. Nothing for it but to split up and hitch to London. Myself and Mick went together. It took us three days hard going, luckily the apples and berries were in season! We would have starved otherwise. And we got sleeping bags in the Good As New shop in Swansea before we went on the road. We had to sleep in a shed, a doorway and the last night before we got to London just off the M1, we had a bit of luxury: we slept in an old car. Once we were on the M1 to London we got a lift from an Irish trucker.

I had never been in London before but Mick was. We had to jump the tube from outside London to Piccadilly Circus. We headed to the meeting place: Wards Irish Pub. A fellow from Galway was running it. Mike his name was, from Athenry. A mad house if I ever saw one, full of Scots, Irish, Welsh and Britons, all the boys there in full flight and session. Word got around about our train journey so from there on in we were known as the Hole in the Wall Gang. And Greece...well that's another story.

NP

John

It was after eleven on a cold winter's night. John was walking down by Foster Court when four thugs ganged up on him looking for fags and money. He said he didn't have any. The thugs beat him up and one of them hit him with a bottle on the head. Even though people were passing, no one stopped to see what was happening.

The ambulance came to bring him to the hospital. I was out for a drink that night in my local. I got a call from my wife. It was very quiet in the hospital that night but there were a lot of people on trolleys. I looked in shock and anger at my son John lying on a bed, covered in blood as the doctors tried to stop the bleeding. John is a very good lad. He is quiet by nature. He is very well built. He has a fetching smile.

We were in the hospital all night until five in the morning. The staff in casualty explained they needed to keep an eye on him. I was nearly a year off the cigarettes but that night I smoked about seven of them.

JC

All Ireland's Got Talent

My experience all started after I saw a television advertisement for Ireland's Got Talent. The auditions took place in the Radisson Hotel in Galway. It was a very warm Saturday. That day I got my hair done in the morning and dressed up. I was amazed by the number of people auditioning. After 40 minutes I was called into the audition by a television producer. I sang Ave Maria and blew them away with my rendition. The judges were Daithi O'Shea, Sile Seoige and Pdraig Breathnach. How amazingly excited I was even though nervous at the same time. They said I had sung like Charlotte. got through and would be on television singing for Connaught. It was a week after my friend, Fr. O. H., who was the parish priest of Corofin where I live, passed away. I believe that Fr. O. H. and my late dad Mick were my guardian angels at the audition.

So I had to go to Dublin. In the days leading up to my departure I got loads of calls and messages congratulating me and cheering me on and I went on a shopping spree. I was enjoying every minute. I eventually boarded the train to Dublin accompanied by my sister and my niece. I was anxious and nervous but tried to stay calm. I was outside Trinity College at 8.30 am and the video cameras were on contestants. I saw buses of auditionees pulling up. We had to register at reception, have our photos taken and sign some forms. Waiting is the worst thing and the nerves kicked in. The interview began. They interviewed me on camera beside a waterfall. The producers were Helen and Sean, the same ones who had been at the Galway auditions. It can be intimidating and the cameras can make you really tense. But I felt so proud. It was like becoming a star.

There were dancers, set dancers, bands, and comedians. Out of these talented artists there were two big well known talents. "Cosa Beoga" from Abbeyknockmoy, set dancers who dance with brushes. This is called the brush dance. They gave all they got. Another great talented singer was Don Stiffe.

Suddenly I was called to audition. I was star struck. I met Grainne Seoige, a well known Galway lass who worked with RTE and Sky, and on the programme This Morning on UTV television. We chatted and had a laugh, then I felt at ease. Then my opportunity arrived when I got to sing for three judges. They were Daithi O' Shea, the Connacht judge and his two helpers Sile Seoige and Pdraig Breathnach. So behind the stage I got to hear them talking and then Daithi called me. I spoke for a while, then I sang "Pie Jesu". I could see tears in their eyes, and when I finished they were amazed with my voice. Then I got to sing a second song, 'Bridge over Troubled Water.' The moment came when I was put through.

I stayed calm and then screamed with joy. Then I got through yet again. I made it to the final 16. I felt so proud. I was very happy I got so far. My family were delighted. Unfortunately I didn't get to the final 8 but it has given me a celebrity opportunity. I have 2,308 friends on Facebook, I have videos on YouTube, and this year I am going to make a CD.

KM

The Great Depression

The year was 1930, and my birthday this year was one I would never forget. 'All grown up Kate,' Mama said with a great big smile. I was so full of excitement as I knew Papa was due home any moment. My memory of past birthdays was of papa finding it hard to come through the front door, he would have had so many gifts in his arms. Papa would have always called out 'Come and get them,' and I'd come running. This he didn't call. I ran down the stairs and as I reached the kitchen, I could hear mama and papa talking. I was just about to open the door, when I heard mama cry out 'My God what are we to do?' 'What will become of us?' There and then I knew my papa had just joined the thousands who had lost their jobs. I could hear Papa say we had no money, all our savings had being invested and we had not a cent to our name. 'What are we to tell the children?' I could hear mama crying. Papa then said 'We can't afford to live in this big house anymore.' Then with an upbeat tone in Papa's voice I could hear him say, 'At least we own the car, it will help us on our way.'

We packed up to go. We had to leave most of our possessions behind and sell what we could. I will never forget the dreadful sight of families walking along the road, carrying what little possessions they could. I felt so sad just seeing old and young looking cold, wet, tired and so very hungry, and I cried when I saw little children trying to keep up and they crying with all the pain of this dreadful time we all found ourselves in.

When we reached the next town it was no different. There was a great unrest there, everyone in the same plight. We moved into an old one bed apartment block. Mama sold her jewellery to pay a six months' lease. It was cold, dark and smelly. My sister Meg and I had the bedroom while Mama and Papa had the couch bed in the small kitchen living room. But we were better off than most. We found it hard to sleep with the paper thin walls, and the baby that seemed to cry all the time.

Every day Papa went in search of work, and every day was the same. No work here! I could see how much it was affecting my parents. They had lost that light-hearted carefree spirit I had known. Mama seemed to cry a lot and Papa would just sit quiet, in a stare like he was somewhere else. We had very little to eat and we went to bed hungry and cold most of the time, but we never complained as we knew we were better off than most. Sometimes I would just lie there and think of that silent night, the night the baby stopped crying!

We woke early one morning, there was a great fuss on the street. The people were shouting 'War.' This was all I could hear. I ran to the kitchen, 'Mama, Papa, what is it, what are they talking about?'

'War Kate war!' World War II had just broken out and with it came many changes. One being work, it was plentiful once again. It helped to lift us out of the Great Depression, and when I think back to the day of my sixteenth birthday, well I had grown up.

RR

Rich Boy, Poor Girl

In a small village like ours everyone knows everyone, or do they?

Winter was closing in, the days were getting shorter. It was the time of year when I liked nothing better than to snuggle up by a big log fire, a mug of hot chocolate and a good book.

Father and Mother had gone to bed but I was so engrossed in my book that I stayed up much later. Feeling a little cold as the fire had gone down I had to go out for more wood. It was snowing. I stood awhile looking up at the soft snow flake, floating down, landing on my face. It was so quiet, so peaceful. As I turned to go back inside, I was startled by the desperate cry for help that broke the silence of the night.

I dropped the logs almost crushing my big toe, and ran to the back door and looked out. I couldn't see anyone at first, but once again I heard the desperate cry for help. I turned on the outside light. There before me stood a young girl of about fifteen years. She was pale and her hair was long and tangled. Her clothes

were shabby and dirty. I just stood there frozen, in shock at the sight before me. Looking back at me with pleading eyes the young girl fell to the ground. I ran to her and I tried to pick her up, but I couldn't, she was a dead weight.

I ran back inside and called out to father and mother to come quickly. Mother came running. 'What is it? Who is there?' she asked.

'It's a young girl' I replied. 'We need to get her inside.' Father and mother carried her into the house and lay her on the couch in the living room. Her eyes were closed. We feared she would die.

Father called the local doctor and the police, while I sat there looking at the young girl wondering who she was and where she had come from. Dr. Tully was first on the scene. We left him with the young girl. After a short time he came to the kitchen. He told us she was suffering from exhaustion and in shock. The young girl was pregnant and was about to give birth. Dr. Tully told us there was no time to get her to the hospital. He would have to deliver the baby right now.

Dr. Tully gave mother a list of things he would need. He then called on me to stay to help him. Dr. Tully told me to support the young girl so she could push her baby. I could hardly believe my eyes; this little miracle just entered the world, the most amazing sight. After cutting the cord and wrapping the tiny baby in a towel, Dr. Tully handed her to me while he attended to the young mother.

By the time mother returned with all that was on the list, all was over. Dr. Tully thought it was better not to move the young girl for a while 'Better let her sleep' he said. 'I will be back in the morning.' The police had no idea who the young girl was or where she had come from. There was no report of anyone missing, so they too said they would call back in the morning.

Father and mother went back to bed, while I kept watch over the young mother and her tiny miracle. They both slept soundly, exhausted from their journey. It was almost daybreak before the young girl woke. 'My baby' she cried, 'is my baby ok?' she asked. Handing her the little miracle, I told her she had a fine, healthy baby girl. I then told her Dr. Tully said she needed to rest and that he would be looking in on them later. I offered her a cup of tea and she started to cry and told me I was so kind.

While thinking to myself of the night that unfolded, and the stranger in our living room, I was quickly brought back by the loud knocking on the front door. Running to answer it, thinking it might be Dr. Tully or the police I opened the

door. There was a woman at the door. It was the strange woman who lived in the village and no one ever talked to. She was in a frantic state. She started shouting,

'She is gone!'

'Who?' I asked

'My Peg' she replied.

'Your Peg. I don't understand 'I said quite puzzled.

'Peg,' she said again, 'my daughter.'

Just then Father, Mother and Dr. Tully came out.

'Is everything alright?' mother asked.

'I think we all need to talk,' I replied, so we went to the kitchen. I was just about to explain who the woman was when the kitchen door opened. There stood the young girl holding her baby.

'Please, she begged 'don't send me home with her. Since I can remember I have been reminded that we must hide our mistakes. Some time ago I ran away, I thought I found love, but then she caught up with me and brought me home. When she found out I was pregnant, she told me she would get rid of my mistake, one was enough in any house. I was running away last night, but the pains started. I feared for my baby, I thought we were going to die.'

Dr. Tully phoned the police and they came and took the woman away. As they were leaving I heard them say she would be away for a very long time. But we never found out why. Father and Mother took care of Peg and her baby. I had gained two younger sisters.

DD

Into Africa

It was a bright sunny, breezy day in March 2002 when I left Galway for the experience of a lifetime. I was off to Capetown, South Africa working for six weeks. A group of fifteen went. This group was going to be my family for the duration of the trip. We had met and bonded with the group prior to take off.

On that day in March we met again and started our adventure by bus from Galway to Dublin Airport. There was sadness at leaving our families, but excitement too about what the next six weeks would hold for us.

In Dublin the jet engines roared and we were on our way flying to Heathrow to connect with the plane taking us to Capetown, South Africa. There was no going back now. For better or worse we were going to be in Capetown for the next six weeks. All the group were excited and apprehensive not knowing what was in store. After eleven hours we eventually landed and we all clapped with delight. We got off tired and weary but looking forward to new experiences. The wave of brilliant sunshine hit us when we first stepped out on the magical soil of South Africa.

We were warmly greeted and brought to our apartment that I shared with another man in the group. It was a beautiful apartment overlooking the majestic Table Mountain, the hallmark of Capetown.

I was delighted to be given the opportunity of a lifetime to go work in South Africa. It was a brilliant change and one which was culturally enriching. I was given a car to enable me to go from one job to the next. I was painting and doing handyman jobs, bits of electrical work and carpentry in the crèches in the poor townships. Their crèches, buildings and homes were all made of corrugated tin. The people there were great and welcoming and helpful despite the poverty that faced them every day. I worked from eight in the morning to five in the evening every day sometimes out in the blazing sunshine. I was happy there knowing I was doing my bit to alleviate the suffering of some of those mother and babies, many of whom had contracted AIDS.

The poverty was unreal and made me realise how lucky we are in Ireland. It made me re-evaluate priorities in life.

In my free time I took in the breath-taking sights and enjoyed the cultural experiences. I climbed Table Mountain and marvelled at the spectacular view

from the top. I visited Robin Island where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated, and I saw his jail cell. I visited the Cape of Good Hope and saw where the Atlantic and the Indian oceans meet. I walked and walked every day and never seemed to tire of the South African sun. It seemed like the brilliant sun gave me energy and charged my batteries. The skies there at night were magical and I will never forget them. The best word to describe them is “magical”.

The people were great and so friendly and happy despite all the poverty. They have a very rich culture. This is apparent through their music. I enjoyed many culinary delights. I saw lots of exotic wild animals. I took it all in as I was so delighted to be able to share in such a rich cultural and educational experience. I immersed myself in their people, history and culture while I was there

The six weeks passed all too quickly and it was time to return home to Ireland. I was sad at leaving Capetown, but happy to be able to share my experience and to see my wife and family again. It was an experience I will never forget. It was awesome and breath-taking and the magic that is South Africa will haunt me forever. I fully intend to return there some day for a holiday with my wife and family so that they too can experience the magic and tranquillity of Capetown, South Africa.

GS

Chaffinch

One spring morning last year I was standing inside my window in my utility room, gazing out at the fine sunny morning. I had my car parked right outside my window at the gable end of the house. Suddenly I saw a bird flying towards the window hovering around the footpath. Then she perched herself on the side mirror of the car. She started picking at the mirror flapping her wings vigorously and fighting with her reflection in the mirror. I was admiring the colours of her feathers which were a very bright yellow on her head and her breast. Her tail and wings were speckled with brown, white and blue, I pondered what type of bird she could be. I was wondering why she was staying around for so long. I mentioned it to my husband. He said she was probably a yellowhammer. The next day my neighbour came to visit. I described the colours of her feathers to him. He said she's a chaffinch. A week had come and gone. When one day I was up stairs cleaning my bathroom. I noticed a string of moss and one feather up beside the air vent.

The wind had blown them in. I wondered how the wind blew a string of moss and a feather through the air vent. My curiosity was getting the better of me. It looked like the contents of a bird's nest. Sure enough it was the bird I saw the other day. She had built her nest very discreetly inside the air vent. There was no sign of bird's droppings anywhere that would indicate that there was a bird's nest in there. As the weeks went by I watched her through my binoculars at a distance from the garage door. When she would fly out of the air vent she would zoom down almost hitting me because she was flying like ninety. One evening between five and six o'clock I was in the bathroom again. I heard a lot of commotion. It was then that I realised that there were young chicks hatched out. I was curious to find out how she would get her young out of the air vent so I continued to monitor them. She worked tirelessly every day searching for insects for them. They were getting stronger every day. I could hear them through the vent their wings flapping. I knew it was coming near the time for them to flee the nest. I was sure I would not miss that moment. My friend rang me to ask me to go shopping with her. I was reluctant to go, but I obliged her and went. We were scurrying in and out of shop all day. Every now and then I would spare a thought for the little chaffinch. We took the bus home that evening. I arrived in the door around five o'clock. I didn't hear any commotion like I used to hear every evening around five or six o'clock. They had fled the nest while I was away. All my bird watching was in vain.

JC

To Jump or not to Jump

I used to swim in the Corrib River every summer when I was a young boy. There were three big stone pillars on the Corrib. They were there to carry the train tracks for the train to Clifden years ago. It was a great place to go swimming. Some braver lads would swim out to the third pillar to jump off. There was a steel rope you could pull yourself up with. So one day I got the courage to swim out to it. I used the steel rope to climb up to the top. It was very high when you looked down. I was very afraid. Everyone was shouting at me and telling me to jump. It was easier to jump than to climb down. After what seemed like an age I jumped into the cold deep water. I got this new found courage so I went up and jumped off again and again!

JC

Waves

Every Sunday in the summer when I was a boy in Connemara we would go to the beach. I loved it because we would get minerals to drink and we would meet our friends. I loved building sand castles until one day a big wave knocked me over. I got a terrible fright.

My mother would walk with me along the shore after that and take care of me in the waves. I am no longer afraid of the water.

DH

Honey apples

Many years ago, there was a farmer living about a mile away from where we lived. He had a beautiful orchard which had about fifty apple trees and they were always full of lovely big red apples. We went down to his house several times and asked him for some apples. He wouldn't give us any. He used to set his dogs on us. We knew he used to come to town one day a week on Friday for his pension and shopping. So we watched out for him and saw him coming on his old creak of a bike. We ran across the fields as fast as we could, and when we got to the orchard there wasn't an apple in sight, only white boxes all over the orchard. So we all ran for one each, and pulled them apart looking for apples, but we got a big surprise. They were not full of big red apples but of honey bees, and they nearly stung us to death, only for there was a river nearby. We all ran and jumped in under the water to get the bees off us. Our faces and arms swelled up. So that was the end of getting the red apples.

TD

Jumping at the R.D.S

From a very young age I had a great love of horses. My friends, the Owens family had a farm with a lot of horses. I spent my summers helping them out with. We used to go to the horse shows every week to qualify for the Dublin Horse Show. The Dublin Horse Show was the main event of the year. One year we qualified four horses for the show. There was a lot of work getting ready. When we got to Dublin we stabled the horses first. Then we got the truck ready to line in for the week. I used to jump some of the horses in amateur competitions. In the middle of the week I was exercising a big chestnut with a white face. He was very flighty and nervous. Suddenly he caught me off guard and threw me. I held on to the horse but I broke my thumb. I had to go to St. James hospital to get it put back in. I was in a lot of pain for a few days, but it didn't stop me from getting on the horse again.

JC

College Years

I have been studying professional cooking at GMIT for the past three years. I work in Café Link. I have also been attending the VEC class with Café Link. I also go to a one to one class. This class helps me to learn new words that I need to know around food, menus and health and safety. I work hard and I hope to get work experience in a kitchen over the summer. I love the people where I work, in college and the people in the VEC where I feel I am getting great help. I would like to thank them all.

EG/S

Galway Cultures

I'm Irish. I am learning about different cultures now. On Thursday 27th September, my Café Link class and I visited Mayoralty House Galway with our teacher to meet people from other cultures. We met people from Brazil, Libya, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Nepal, India, China, and Mauritania. We looked at where these places are on the world map and we learned the colours of their flags. We had tea and cakes together. Everyone chatted and told stories. I showed Hussein from Mauritania my project-book on different cultures. We said goodbye and invited our new friends to come to Café Link to visit us some day.

MO'C

Different Faces from Different Places

My family and I live in Galway. I work in Café Link. I go to the VEC too every Monday and Thursday to improve my English reading and writing. Some of my family have gone to other countries to live and work, so it was interesting on Thursday 27th September, to meet some people who have come from other countries to live in Galway. They all spoke different languages and. I had never heard of some of the countries the people came from until Thursday, so it was very nice to meet them.

CL

The Flags of the World

I know Irish culture because I live here in Ireland. But the world is full of different cultures; people who come from countries that have different customs to ours; they have their own flags; they have their own languages; many people have different colour skin to us Irish; and they eat different foods. Meeting people from 10 different countries last Thursday was great. Everyone said their names and what country they came from and as they did I found their flags on the poster and told everyone the colours. Even their names are very different to our names. My name is Ian I was sitting beside Nadia. Pdraig was beside Hassan who found it hard to say "Pdraig". We had tea and biscuits and buns together and I told everyone about my medals. It was lovely to meet all the people from around the world.

IH

A B C D E F G...

Each country in the world has its own language. Language came about because people wanted to be able to communicate with one another. I speak English. I know the alphabet in English. The alphabet is very different in other languages?

A b c d e f g in English = а б ц д е ф г in Russian

Irish speaking people say Dia Duit (“God be with you”) to one another and people who speak Hindi say Namaste (“I honour you”) when they meet.

BO’S

Going to the Library

I went to the Galway Library last week. I walked up to the bus stop at Cemetery Cross, Bohermore from Café Link. The No 2 bus arrived at 10.40. I showed my pass to the driver and sat down. The bus was full of people all going to town. I got out of the bus at Eyre Square and walked across the square, through the shopping centre, out the back door and on to Augustine Street, and down the street to the Library.

I walked up to the desk and asked a woman who works there to help me. ‘I want to leave this book back and I want another book on cultures of the world, please.’ She walked with me to a section marked “Culture” and left me there to look at books. I chose two books. Back at the desk I gave her my card and she checked the books out. I said thank you and left the library, very happy to have two new books to read.

MO’C

Love

Once upon a time there was a young man called Ian. He was a charmer, a kind and gentle person. There was a special look in his eyes. Look and you'd see his magical dream – like seeing a star at night – a true magical prince who loved his special princess.

You, my princess, are so special. Life is too short for me to tell you all I wish. I shed my tears only for you. My heart's dreams are yours. My eyes are for you alone, just for you. I will never forget your bright, cheerful, sensitive personality. Smile and in your eyes I see a sweet beautiful dream of peace in the meadows of love. You have been gifted a magical place in your heart to share that gift. You can see me inside your heart. You will find that the power of our love will conquer the world. It's time to believe. Let go! Let life conquer all mankind to serve you.

IH

Tea

Do you like tea? Irish people love tea. 'T' is for tea. It is an evergreen. Tea first came from Asia. India, Bangladesh, China, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Kenya and Indonesia are among the world's largest producers of tea. It is a very adaptable plant and will grow in different climates and soils in various countries. Tea pickers gather only the top two leaves and a bud from the tips of each bush. They need to be very careful when picking the leaves. We know tea leaves to be brown, well, that only happens after the picked leaves are crushed and dried – they turn a deep brown colour. On tea stalls in countries like India, tea or chay (as it is called there) is made with water, milk and sugar and is kept brewing all the time and served in small glasses. Some people like to add cardamom and ginger to make masala tea.

PR

The I in Internet

I, Ian Haverty, was born in 1970. There wasn't much talk of the Internet or computers then. However, it would be wrong to think that they weren't around. Technology was growing by the time I was born. It was in 1957 that Russia launched the Sputnik satellite into orbit and the US responded by making a huge investment in science and technology. In 1970, the seeds for wireless communications were sown when the University of Hawaii built a network using radio rather than connections via wires. In 1976 when I was six years old, Queen Elizabeth II sent an e-mail. And in 1978 Apple introduced Apple II, the first really popular personal computer that could be used by those with only a small amount of knowledge of computers. Versions of the Apple II continued to be sold until the 1990s.

In February 1987, when I was seventeen years old, a man from Galway called Liam Ferrie emailed a news digest to fifteen colleagues from Digital in other countries. He was one of the first Irish people to realise the Internet's potential for keeping people updated wherever they are. I was twenty four when the Irish Times was one of the first newspapers in the world to go online in October 1994. In 1998, when I was twenty eight, Bertie Ahern and Bill Clinton became the first world leaders to put digital signatures to a joint document –on e-commerce. In 2006, when I was thirty six years old, the Irish Government took the most tax ever in a single day as €850 million was paid by self-employed people through the Revenue On-Line Service.

Bill Gates who is the co-founder and current chairman of Microsoft - the world's largest personal-computer software company has said 'The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow.' And when I'm...

IH

We will

We will eat cupcakes, brack, banana cake, pumpkin soup and pumpkin pie, monkey nuts, sweets, apples, strawberry cheesecake, fruit salad and green salad.

We will drink lemonade, 7-Up, club orange, diet coke, tea, coffee, milk, orange juice, white wine, water, herbal tea, tropical teas, hot chocolate, a pint of beer or Guinness and iced tea.

We will dance to Mozart, salsa music, Irish traditional music, Daniel O'Donnell, The Sawdoctors, Tom Jones, Johnny Cash, Christy Moore, soundtracks from musicals, hip hop, rap, gamelan, line dancing, Dirty Dancing dancing, U2 and Mary Duff.

We will wear red, orange, purple, glittery colours, pink, yellow, team colours, multicoloured, stripes, studs, bright nail varnish, top hats, witches' hats, Connacht hats, Connemara caps, Special Olympics hats and berets.

In the band there will be a guitar, piano, accordion, drums, microphone, amplifier, tin whistle, harmonica, three keyboards, xylophone, flutes, trumpet, clarinet, violin, bassoon, oboe, kazoo, banjo, fiddle, dancers and singing.

We will row boats on the River Corrib, swim in the sea, go horseback riding, surf the big waves, walk in the country, paint pictures, take photos of each other, write stories and poems, do projects, play soccer, go bowling, play table tennis, volleyball, do gymnastics, camogie, football, hurling, Wii, charades, card games, solitaire and bingo. Then we will relax!

We will decorate with face paints and temporary tattoos, woven coloured streamers, monsters, balloons, candles, skeletons, scary sound effects, scary ghosts, Incredible Hulk costumes, witches, wigs and fake blood. We will watch scary movies – Scream 4, The Scarecrow, I know what you did last summer, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Silence of the Lambs, Jaws and The Wind in the Willows.

We cannot allow too much alcohol, bad language, smoking, being mean to people, going home early or drinking and driving.

We will protect each other, be safe, wear our seatbelts, watch the roads, watch for the green man, respect each other, have a good time and be happy.

Barry, Ian, Pdraig, Michael, Mary, Patrick, Breege, Yvonne, Caroline, Ruairi, Bernie and Melissa with Susan Millar.

Eagle's Nest School

My father went to a school called Eagles Nest in Connemara when he was young in the 1940s. He went to the school for about five years.

The school was in an old house. Big birds like eagle, like to build their nests in old buildings or in big trees. There was an eagle's nest in the school house and that is why it was called Eagle's Nest. Father never actually saw the eagle but he did see where the nest was.

My father was the second oldest in his family. He had three sisters and four brothers. He used to walk to school in his bare feet in all weathers, as did all the children at that time. He had to plant the potatoes in the spring with his brother. He fed the cattle in the winter each morning before school.

DH

Fun in the graveyard

I was reared close to the new graveyard in Galway. There was a lot of open space at that time there. The caretakers used to cut the long grass in the summer to make hay. Myself and the other kids would jump off the high wall onto the hay. It was great fun. The caretaker used to shout at us to get out and run after us. It was very hard to get out over the high wall to get away from him. The caretaker was a very tall man. He always wore a pair of corduroy trousers and braces. There was a nickname on him called Tigeen. He always wore a cap which would fall off him as he ran after us. I always wondered why they built high walls around a graveyard – was it to keep the dead in or to keep the living out?

JC

Mahatma Gandhi

When Gandhi died in 1948 he had no job, and he was not rich. He was not a king, or a prime minister. He was just a thin old man dressed in a cotton cloth. He lived a simple life, made his own clothes. His last meal was goat's milk and raw vegetables. Yet one and a half million people went to his funeral. On Sunday, 25th January 1948 Gandhi knelt to prayer. A man bowed to show his respect. Then shot the thin little man three times in the chest. Gandhi said 'oh, God,' and he died.

MM

The Thinking Pig

It was a bright sunny morning. Little Piggy woke up to a very busy and noisy farmyard. 'What is going on?' she thought to herself. She jumped up putting her hooves against the wall. Looking out she could see the farmer and his two sons loading up a big truck with farm animals. She turned to her brothers and sisters but they were nowhere to be seen.

She called out 'Rasher, Sausage, Bacon, Pudding where are you?' But they were nowhere to be found, they were gone. 'Where are they?' little piggy thought to herself, once again. She went over to the wall and looked out at the big truck. Suddenly it dawned on her they must be in that truck. 'But they forgot about me,' she thought. Feeling quite sad and alone little piggy lay down to go to sleep, when up popped a head over the wall from the other side. It was the farmer's little girl.

'Don't be sad little piggy, you will soon have lots of little piggies of your own.'

Little piggy thought about this, and then she thought about her brothers and sisters. 'Does this mean that Rasher will have lots of little Rashers and Sausage lots of little Sausages, and Pudding will have Puddings, and Bacon will have little Bacons?'

Little piggy felt quite tired from all her thinking and lay down and fell asleep. In time she forgot her sadness as she was a very busy little piggy with lots of little piggies of her own.

A Ghost

I loved it there at the weekends, many moons ago during my holidays from school at my grandmother's house in the countryside. The neighbours gathered there and played cards and told ghost stories. They were very frightening. I used to be afraid to go to bed at night. During the day I would go to my friend's house, he was living about a mile away. One evening, it was late when I was going home, there was a lovely bright clear sky with a full moon. The breen to granny's house had trees growing over each other. It looked like an arch. I was walking nice and slowly until I heard a noise behind me. I looked back and saw a white head, white chest with two white legs. I started to run. The faster I ran the faster it came until I fell over a fence and cut my two knees. I scrambled home. So I did not go outside the gate for a week or more. Then one day, Granny asked me to go to the shop for some sugar and fags for her. I didn't want to go. So I asked her for her bicycle. I got the messages, and coming home along the breen there was a pony in front of me. I passed him. I looked back. I saw the pony had a white forehead, white chest and two white front legs. That was the ghost I saw that night who had frightened the life out of me.

TD

My Brother's Wedding

My brother Mark and his girlfriend, Eimear got married on the 10th of June last year in Kilbeacanty church in Gort. They have a little daughter called Seoirsa. They had four bridesmaids and four best men. My sister did a reading at the wedding and my brother's Godchild was the flower girl at the wedding on the day. My Mother brought up the bread and wine with Eimear's godmother. The weather was very hot that day. I travelled with my godfather and father to the wedding. The bride and groom went down to Coole Park to take wedding photos.

AO'C

Civil Defence

The Civil Defence was set up in 1950. It is an organisation comprising of approximately six thousand members who voluntarily make themselves available in their spare time. Much of this time is devoted to attending classes to train for situations which will probably never happen in real life. I volunteered for the Civil Defence in Loughrea. We train on Tuesday nights. We have training for head and spinal injuries and deep cuts. We train for real- life situations. We also do injury role play for paramedics to train on.

AL

Ras An Spideal

My Cousin is an athlete. He decided to start up a charity race for Cancer Care West. There are a lot of people taking up running so it was good to have a local race. A few of the locals including myself lent a hand in the race. The start line was on the Spiddal prom overlooking the scenic Galway Bay, and along the back-roads of Connemara. It was Sunday the 28th of May 2011. The race kicked off at ten o'clock. The weather was good. All the helpers were given different tasks. I was giving out water to the participants, two hundred of them in total. The field was made up of different levels. The age group ranged from 16 to 70. Many of the helpers were assigned to traffic control to help ensure the safety of the participants. The Red Cross and the Gardaí were on hand to facilitate the smooth running of the events. The first runner was past the finishing line in twenty four minutes after running a testing 8 kilometres.

I was grateful for being a part of the success of the race. My experience in being involved in this race gave me a greater appreciation of the importance of being involved in such a worthwhile cause.

Silver Bird

Dad you are so precious. A man with a heart of gold. Without you, life isn't the same. Not a day goes by that I don't think about you, or a night that passes by that I don't dream about you. You will never be forgotten, always be in my heart.

Silver Bird, until we meet again. I have felt your guiding strength in winter. I have felt the warmth of your loving smile in spring. One word I will never forget: "Best". Your love is in all flowers and shrubs of the summer. The sound of that lawnmower. In all seasons fond memories you bring.

God bless you dad.

KM

Keep on Keeping on

Trust in yourself and others. Have faith when things go wrong. Look out for signs you notice around you. No family is perfect. Never say I'm busy to the one who needs you. What I've experienced is true friends are always there. As for the past, leave it there. The past cannot be changed, it can only be accepted. If you are generous you will get it back in different ways. Stop waiting on people who do not care for you. We've all made stupid decisions but we can learn from them. Pray when life is good and pray when it's bad. Strong people need to hear it's okay to need help too. When someone has done a good job let them know. Find the good in people and ignore the bad. People can challenge you but it makes you stronger. If you can't forgive others, don't expect others to forgive you.

My son Emmett is the greatest blessing in my life. I brought him up on my own with no help. He is good fun to have around. My best friend is Pat, who can be a pain and drives me mad at times and that's why I love him so much. There's nothing more beautiful than knowing you are needed and cared for. Understanding yourself is knowing who you really are in this life. So let's all keep battling on.

PU

Rich Boy, Poor Girl

Once, many years ago, there lived a young boy named Chris. Chris was not a prince but sometimes he felt like he was. He had people to wait on him all the time. Chris was addressed as Sir Chris, he had a head chef, the finest clothes and lived in the most beautiful mansion in the whole kingdom. Chris had his own car but he wasn't old enough to drive it yet since he was only 17. Chris was home-schooled. One day Chris said, 'Mother, Father, I want to go to a real school, I don't want to be home schooled any more, I want to be around people my own age'. They agreed. The following week Chris got a letter saying that he was accepted into the local school. He was over the moon.

The day he started in school he saw the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. She saw Chris and walked over and they spoke. Her name was Shane. The day seemed long. Chris was not used to doing schoolwork this long. Shane told Chris all about the school and the sports.

The day came to an end. Chris asked Shane if he could walk her home. She answered:

'Well, Chris, that's very nice of you to offer but I always go home on my own'.

Chris lowered his eyes and said, 'Shane, I like you, I'd really like to be your friend.'

'We are going to see one other every day, of course we are friends,' she answered. Okay Chris, you can walk me just to the hillside.'

They started to walk and talk. Chris had met other girls before but never felt the same about any girl. Shane had feelings for Chris, but she hid them with just talking about different things. They came to the hillside and stopped. Shane said, 'Thank you Chris, but I'll go the rest of the way on my own'. 'Shane, do you live in a castle or somewhere that you don't want me to see where you live'?

'No Chris, I'm not a princess'. As Chris walked back up the hill, he turned around and said, 'Shane, I'll see you tomorrow'.

'Till tomorrow.'

Shane had a real brother and a half sister called Lucy, but they treated one another like real sisters. The next day, Chris met Shane in the schoolyard and introduced

him to her half-sister, Lucy. The bell rang and they went into class. Later, because one of the teachers, Mrs Wilde, didn't turn up, Chris and Shane walked together. Chris could tell that Shane had a dark secret that caused her great pain but she hid it with a beautiful smile. The day was over and Chris walked Shane as far as the hillside and before Shane left, Chris said, 'Shane, would you mind if I waited here for you in the morning and we can walk to school together?'

'Yes, Chris I'd like that! I'll see you at 8 o'clock in the morning.'

Chris walked up to the hillside at 7.30 in the morning. They set off for school. Suddenly Shane fell and hurt her leg really badly. He took her arm, put it around his neck and helped her up, but she couldn't move. Chris called his chauffeur, Carl. He arrived very quickly and he and Chris helped Shane into the car.

When they got to the hospital, she was taken straight to ER. Her leg was broken. But she wasn't going to be kept in. They gave her a wheel-chair later in the evening and Chris and Carl helped her back into the car to drive her home. But she said she couldn't go home because her parents were away and Lucy was staying at a friend's house. Chris offered to take her to his house for the night. They were met by Chris's mother at the door and she was very nice. Chris and Carl lifted Shane in her wheelchair up to the third floor. She was never looked after so well. They brought her dinner to her and Chris put on music afterwards. She also Chris's father later and he was a very nice man too. He said he was happy for her to say. So the day that started off so badly, ended well and before Chris went back to his own room, Shane kissed him goodnight. It was his first kiss and one that he would remember forever.

DD

Nepal

I am from Nepal. When I came to Ireland last year I didn't speak any English. I couldn't go shopping because I couldn't read, write or speak English. My husband had to bring me shopping for food. This was very hard for me because in Nepal I did this job for my family. Then, in school I started to learn to speak, read and write words for food. I asked the teachers or another student a word, and then I wrote it in my book in English and in Nepalese. Words like bread, rice, beans, milk. One day I told my husband that I wanted to go shopping alone with my list of words from school. I did it. This made me very happy. Now, I do the shopping for my family all the time. I am very proud. I want to learn more, for me and my family, for our new life in Ireland.

Gyana

People and Animals

Growing up, I had many dogs that were treated badly. People are so mean like people are with children. Cara was my first dog when I was young. Cara (which means "friend" in Irish)was my best friend. Cara was always tied up and I hate when I see dogs tied up. Dogs should have their freedom. I don't believe dogs should even be on a lead. Cara was treated badly like we were treated. I don't know why people treat dogs unfairly. Murphy was another dog I had. She was a sheepdog. She was black and white. We let the dog out for a while. The neighbour said that Murphy bit him. He did not want us having the dog. But it's in the nature of a sheepdog to nip. Murphy didn't bite because he was well trained. I think it was us the neighbour wanted to hurt. Jack was another dog I had. Jack was given to me through a friend. Jack was poisoned. He got sick so many times and he lost loads of weight. I tried to comfort him but it was too late. I miss all my dogs. I had about nine dogs growing up. Out of the nine dogs only four survived and that was Finn, Seamas, Seamas' mother, Murphy and Murphy's daughter, Fiona. Where I live now, my back garden is not a place for dogs. Dogs need a big field. If I ever won the lotto, I would build a big house for many dogs. Hopefully my children would follow in my footsteps. If you are a dog lover like me and can't have your own dogs, you should volunteer to work in a dogs' home. You can walk the dogs and help feed and muck out. I wasn't always treated right but it doesn't mean that I should be mean to people or animals around me. I hope you understand that it's better to be kind.

M

Two Words a Day

My name is Rosa de Silva. I am from Brazil and I have lived in Ireland for 12 years. When I came to Ireland, I couldn't speak or understand any English at all. I lived in Roscommon for a few months. There, I met a Brazilian man who had lived in America for 3 years. He told me that if I learned 2 new words every day I would have 14 new words a week. I started to do this in the meat factory where I worked. I would just point and somebody would tell me how to say a word. After a few months I wanted to learn words from outside the factory. So, I started to draw pictures of things and then I would ask people in the factory for the English word. Then I would write the word, but I could only do this phonetically – I wrote the way that I heard it; the way I spoke it. It was not always right. I made many mistakes. I decided to take the next step and go to school to learn to write correctly. In class, our teacher told us about her problem trying to speak a different language when she lived in Germany. It was a very funny story. We talked about how we use different ways to get our meaning across. We are all the same. Our teacher told us these were strategies. After that I was not embarrassed.

Rosa de Silva

Communication

My name is Heather and I am from China. When I came to Ireland, I came alone. I only had a few simple English words. I couldn't share my feelings with anyone. So, I had to use body language and mime to explain what I wanted. For example, if I needed to buy shampoo, I couldn't "read" shampoo on the bottle so I would have to mime it in a shop. When I was hungry, I would put my hands to my mouth or rub my stomach – but sometimes people thought I was sick or had a pain in my stomach or was pregnant! But, people would help me and I learned the language this way. It was slow and very difficult. In class, our teacher said that many people have this problem when they are learning a new language. This made me feel better. We talked about this in class and surprise surprise, many students had this problem, including the teacher! We can now laugh at our mistakes. We can correct them too!

Heather

Blogs from *galwayvoice*

As smooth as the last wall I plastered...

Hi everyone. Yesterday I woke up and smiled. I wasn't tired and I didn't feel down...I had somewhere to go. Coming back to education is like when I began plastering. I hope the learning process is as smooth as the last wall I plastered!

I suffered years of memory loss after an illness and found it difficult to read, write, spell and do math. I came back to education to get the confidence to read and write again. I choose to look on being made redundant as an opportunity to go back to education to learn new skills. Going back to education is like getting out of a cage and being free.

Coz I'm worth it ...

We are using I Pads in class now – it feels great to be part of something new. We were able to download our blog so it looks like an app. I never in a million years thought I would be writing things like that and using words like that. It makes me feel good to get an iPad every class - coz I'm worth it. We help each other use the spelling apps and we check who has looked at our blog. We take turns reading comments.

I had a little talk with myself...

Before I decided to return to adult learning, I had a lot of doubts and fears. This was due to an illness that caused memory loss in which my reading, writing, spelling and maths were affected. This led to my lack of confidence.

The embarrassment of not being able to read or write properly and having to ask for help, was just one of my fears. I had a little talk with myself...

I rang GABES and made an appointment. They made me feels so relaxed as I related my problems. After our talk, I decided there and then that I wanted to get my education back on track. I decided to take on math, computers and English. I went to all three classes. I found the teachers so friendly and understanding. They went out of their way to help and encourage everyone in the class.

My reading, writing, spelling, maths and computers have improved. The doubts and fears have left and my confidence is beginning to come back. GABES is not like any ordinary school of the past. It is a happy and encouraging place to learn. I hope people that need the help, get the courage to embrace tackle their fears.

I'm finding my voice...

The reason I decided to go back to education was because I need to get out of my shell. I suffer from an illness. I have post-natal depression. I was hibernating away from the world. I said to myself that hibernating was not going to help my illness. So I decided to change my life. Changing my life meant going back to education. I've felt so happy with myself since.

I had no self-esteem and did not know how to talk to people, what to say to people; I did not know how to be myself. When I talked to someone, I used to feel afraid to speak in case what I said would be laughed at.

I heard about GABES from a friend. I went for an interview and was invited to the ITABE group class. It is great to know that I can go into my class with no one judging me. I have learned a lot since I started in GABES. I will keep on learning. This is all I want to say now but it's not all I have to say. There are more words to come but I'm finding my voice.

It's now or never...

I worked for years in plastering and when it came to filling in forms and invoices the problem began. I found it hard to read the form and fill in the invoices. The thing is when we had the house plastered we had to fill in the invoices to give to the builder. There were three of us working together and when we had to fill the invoices in one would say, 'You fill it in,' and the other would say, 'No, you fill it in.'

So that's how we found out the three of us had problems reading and spelling so we would have to run around the site and ask people how to spell this word and how to spell that word. When the work stopped, I decided I had to do something about it and when I was walking in Galway, I saw a sign for Adult Education so I said to myself, 'It's now or never.'

It was hard to come in and tell someone that I had a problem with reading, writing and spelling. But I met Alison and told her my problem. She made it easy for me to come back to Adult Education. After each class, I feel like I am getting better at my reading and writing so it is helping me a lot and most important I am back around people again. I'm even tweeting!

Yes, I have to open this door...

Yes, I have to open this door. Computers, reading and writing, Facebook, email and work skills programs are steps to a new dimension in our lives.

Am I a person that goes with the flow and goes back to education? I feel I am. When I came out of treatment, the seed of reading was planted again. This year the VEC helped me read and write and learn computers and I settled into a being in a classroom environment. When I'm willing to learn, the teacher appears.

Life is like one big journey and we have to go with the flow. Doing these courses opened my eyes and let people in. I love to learn. I hope to go on and become a chef or find what I would like to do with life. I always wanted to be an artist and make things. Now I know I can do this and have more confidence in myself and my life and the way I live it.

Learning for life...

I returned to education because I hurt my back and was unable to get employment doing physical work. I did not have a Leaving Cert to begin with. I knew this was going to be a big challenge for me. I had great difficulties with learning at school. I could not spell or do much with maths so all the other subjects were affected because of this. When I was at school, I was put down as stupid and lazy and was convinced that it was my fault that I could not learn. I wanted to learn but I had so many problems it was impossible for me to ever achieve anything.

This has held me back all my life. So I ended up working in jobs that did not require these skills. I was never happy with any of these jobs as they were badly paid and I was not valued for the work I did. I started going to classes in the VEC and found it an amazing experience. I found other people who had similar problems to me. I realised I could learn and found it so exciting that I could do something with my life. I did a Diploma in Community Development last year and at present I am doing a BA in Community Development Business and Enterprise. I go to the VEC two days a week getting support and help with my studies. Never did I think this was possible! Going to classes in the VEC has empowered me: I believe in myself.

We're on a roll...

We are two students in the ITABE work-skills class. We left school at an early age and did not get to finish out our education. The only qualification we got was our Inter-Cert. We decided to come back to adult education to improve our English and writing. We are also doing a computer class which is very enjoyable. We feel we have come a long way. We had no confidence about filling out forms and all that sort of stuff. We decided we needed help with reading and writing; we needed to get the help to get a job and now we are on a roll!

Along the yellow brick road...

I contacted the VEC after a long illness. I'm better now, and I appreciate that. I decided to go to classes in spelling and math, but with the help of the teacher I've also learned computers, which is a bonus. I have got back the confidence that I had when I worked in a job which I loved, but that was a time ago.

Well the VEC has been very good for me. I now have level 3 FETAC in computers. My spelling has improved too, however it's still a work in progress! A volunteer tutor started me on my journey. It is difficult to get here, but I still make the journey. I feel as if I'm getting to Oz. These are the steps I've taken now to get on in this modern world. So I'll onwards along that yellow brick road. I have the heart and I have the energy, but there are a few things I still need, especially confidence. But I've got the drive now to progress along the yellow brick road to Oz, which is third level education and a qualification.

I never stopped starting...

I am so excited about the New Year. I found that time has taken on another dimension for me and my days are filled with so much new and exciting things I want to do. I believe it will not be short-lived like all the other New Year beginnings. For some reason, it is the first time I have realised I could do something about my life and for me. Learning for life is so wonderful; it fills my days with thoughts and thinking in different forms which I can identify as abstract at times, and a process that occurs naturally when you find the way to comprehend and understand anything you are interested in learning about. This is happening because I am honest with myself and do not have to hide all the years of shame attached to my lack of education. Realising for once that it was not my fault to begin with, that was important. I don't know where it will lead to or what journey it will take me on. That does not matter right now. Life has now become a place of wonder and amazing happenings. It is like a rebirth in a sense for me. I read my first book over the Christmas, and I am looking forward to starting another. I was one of these people who never stopped starting, without ever getting anywhere. I find that I could be anywhere within my mind no matter where I am physically. This is so good. The experience is a living one. I am not afraid. I can be happy. I am beginning to like who I am. I'm free.

A Stairs and a Lift

This is about a stairs and a lift. I attend the ITABE course in Galway Adult Basic Education Service in Mayoralty House. I go three days a week. The classes are on the second floor of this building and access is by a lift and, of course, a stairs. There I was another day climbing those stairs all thirty six steps. Yes, I counted them. On this particular day, my energy levels were low, very low. As I climbed each step, my legs were getting sorer. By the time I had reached my destination, I was also out of breath. I opened the door to go to my class, hardly able to talk. There she was, the Deputy Centre Director and a few other people, with that big smile any time you meet her. I have never seen her with a frown or a sad face. She is caring and helpful as is all the staff I have come in contact with. Seeing I was in distress, she asked me why I had not used the lift. The answer to this question was simple. Taking the stairs is faster than the lift. 'The lift is an old one,' she said. It works on a pulley system.'

My imagination kicked in.

'Well, whoever is up there pulling it should pull faster and if that person is too old then a younger person should be given the job!'

Keep reading these blogs...

<http://galwayarp.wordpress.com/>

I came to classes in GABES to get my confidence back after an illness and of course to learn more about computers, techniques in spellings and grammar.

They ease the students into a learning environment that suits them, be it one-to-one or a class situation. These classes help people from all walks of life to conquer their fears and low self-esteem as well as overcoming the stigma of not being able to read and write. These classes not only teach basic reading, writing, mathematics and computers. The tutor of the ITABE class has taught students from the basics in computers right up to creating a blog.

They also build up the students' confidence and help them understand the system and outside influences that played a role in causing their lack of educational skills, fears and low self-esteem, as well as the problems with authority and schooling. This is important as most students feel that they were at fault.

To take part in a group setting is hard for most students at first. Within a few months the change is remarkable. Not only do the tutors teach but the students themselves have input and learn from one another. One of the main things we learned is that everyone has something to contribute from their past experiences.

I have experienced a lot in these classes, above and beyond what I originally intended to accomplish and achieve. This has got me wondering. Where did these classes first originate in Galway and who was that person or who were those people that took the time to teach someone basic reading and writing? And how did it grow? Over the next few weeks, I hope to be able to answer some of these questions. Keep reading this blog and experience the changes in confidence the students have with learning.

A poem begins with a lump in the throat

Robert Frost

A Walking Contradiction

I see you in the shadows,
With a crooked smile upon your face.
Alongside the broken window,
You look so in place.

Cos everything here is broken.
Everything here is broken.
Yes everything is broken.

What a shame,
All for capital gain,
You left it all broken.

Walk away,
Walk away,
Like you used to.

You're a walking contradiction
With no shame or nor grace.
Look around at this place.

You've left it all broken.
Yes everything broken.
What a shame,
What a shame.

NP

Martin

In Winter I remember you tending the fire
In Spring I remember you did carpentry for FAS
In Summer you took me to London for my birthday
In Autumn you brought me to school
I remember your face looked like mine
I remember your voice, it was soft
I remember your smell, nice aftershave
Missing you is black
A rainy day

JF

Paddy

In Winter I remember you with Mam
In Spring I remember you travelling on the bus
In Summer I remember you on the farm
In Autumn I remember you smoking the pipe
I remember your face was nice and friendly
I remember your smell was clean
Missing you is like blueness and unhappy
Remembering you is like family events, happy.

PD

Missy

Missy, a fur ball
With four little paws.
A cute little face.
A wiggly tail.

You came for a short time.
Your spirit was big.
Learning all kinds of tricks.
Never learning to beg.

You were so full of fun,
And yet you so young,
When taken from life,
By a hit and run.

If only they knew,
What they left behind,
Lots of broken hearts,
A void in our lives.

You were a pet and a friend,
Ever true to the end.
We will miss you missy,
Our true little friend.

Little did they know
When you first came to stay,
That you would steal all our hearts
In such a special way.

We will miss you missy,
Our true little friend.
We will love you always,
To the very end.

Mother's Handbag

My Mother's handbag is quite old,
But the treasures inside,
Are like gold.

You won't find make-up or perfume in there,
But a photo or two,
Which she guards with great care.

You will find reading glasses,
And tissues and sweets,
Her rosary and medals,
And sometimes some treats.

You may find a scissors,
A plaster or two.
A purse with some money,
And a pill for the flu.

It's something she guards
And won't leave behind.
Her handbag is special,
They are one of a kind.

RR

Challenge

The challenge is great once you pass the front gate
If you're feeling unsure leave Mr. Negative at the door
From the day you came in your foundation will begin
With a network of people who'll build you up like a steeple
Your confidence will grow and your knowledge will flow
So no more unsure just step through the door.

RR

A True Champion

A true champion of the world, a professional athlete

I am the best in the world

I am damn proud now

I am happy, on top, a leader.

I promise you this;

I am standing on my own two feet

With my head held high.

I salute the flag, and my country honours my name

You will be by my side through thick and thin

And I will be there just for you.

IH

Vampire

Vampire

Wings black cloaks red blood

Ghosts and goblins

Boo! Ha ha ha ha

I have come to suck your blood

Flying through the forest

Graveyards with the rising dead

They pass through this world and on

RR

An Adventure

Writing is like an adventure:

I never know where it will go

When putting pen to paper

And letting my mind just flow.

I go to places I have never been,

Meet people I have never seen

And names I never heard before,

And where this comes from I'm not sure,

But there is one thing that I know,

The more I write the more words flow

And out of this a story can grow.

Writing words down one by one,

I know a story has just begun,

Sometimes happy, sometimes sad;

Whatever the mood, I'm always glad.

And in my mind's eye I can see

The story as it grows to be.

Each word is like a footstep,

Each sentence like a track,

The paragraphs are like the hills I climb

Sometimes stopping to look back.

And if I like the path I'm on,

I go at such a pace;

Sometimes in a hurry,

Like I'm in a race.

When I tell you writing is an adventure

And it takes me to the unknown,

I know this from the times I've sat

And the journeys I have flown.

So if you have some spare time,

Why don't you give it a go?

Try putting pen to paper

And let the words just flow.

RR

Titanic

She set sail on her great adventure,
Driving on like a hungry beast,
Breaking water for the first time
To her it was her greatest feast.

She hosted with great honour
Their wealth and all
She was fitted with the best
And yet it wouldn't be her quest.
When the mighty blow had struck,
Her strength to the core was shook.
We heard her moan and groan with pain,
Water her misfortune again.

She fought the good fight on that night;
The battle not hers to win.
The water had her in its grasp
Titanic gave in.

Farewell, Great Lady, be at rest,
In your short life, you were the best.
The history books tell your story
Your memory lives in fame and glory.

RR

Living in the Moment

One more...I'm on a roll today!

Living in the moment

Living for ever

Saying why are we here

This moment is ours

Together we are free

Starting here living through

Taking steps forth

Past regrets and future hopes and dreams are ours

Together we will go on

Through this life

Every day changing each moment for the better

Moment by moment

Minute by minute

Second by second

We will carry each other going on to the end.

Moments will pass and times will be hard

Difficult places will be here

Pass they shall

Moment by moment

Minute by minute

Second by second

We will carry each other going on the end

GM

Life worth Living

A life worth living

A strange world we live in

But colourful

All kinds of everything have a place in the world

I belong here

We all belong some where

We are not alone

We all help each other in our own way

Some of us just take longer to see the help we need from each other

The faults we have can disappear by reaching out

By saying a prayer or just to smile at one another

A hand shake or a hug

Or just kick the ball and pass it on and score that goal in life

People need people

Friends need friends

Just like this we can change the world

Friends and fellowship go together

We all walk that path of life

We have walked it all a lot

And sometimes lost more than we need to lose

But just say help

Cause some things turn out bad for everyone

A helping hand is needed

To carry on and live

This life is worth living

It is there to be lived

And there to pass on.

GM

Lisa

Born to be she had no rights
She couldn't choose another
Placed in trust of evil hands
Life sentenced to her mother

No cosy pram, no cotton sheets
A drawer was Lisa's bed
Locked away she screamed and cried
And hoped she might be fed

Of course she got no bottle
Just bruises black and blue
Poor helpless little sweetheart
There was nothing she could do

Time just lingered slowly
She struggled by the day
Her tiny cries grew fainter
Then Lisa slipped away

Uproar was the outcome
Her body had been found
An inquest told her story
The welfare system frowned

What good now was their statements
And worthless legal ties
Along the line there is failure
And someone is telling lies

Lisa is safe in heaven now
Her suffering is done
But act in time tomorrow please
And save our little one

JCQ

I read recipes the same way I read science fiction. I get to the end and say to myself, “well, that’s not going to happen.”

Rita Rudner

Dublin Coddle

Cooking Time 40-50 minutes

Serves 4 people

Ingredients

One large onion

Four large pork sausages

Two tablespoons parsley, finely chopped

Four rashers

400g potatoes

200ml stock or water

Salt and pepper

Garnish, parsley

Equipment

Chopping knife

Boards

Scissors

Tablespoon

Measuring jug

Pot stand

Saucepan

Greaseproof paper

Serving dish

Directions

Gather equipment, collect and weigh ingredients, set table.

Chop rashers

and sausages into bite sized pieces.

Wash, peel and slice potatoes thinly.

Peel and slice the onion. Layer onion, rashers, sausages, potatoes and parsley in a saucepan season with pepper and salt between layers.

Pour on the stock bring to the boil and then press a sheet of grease paper on top of the coddle.

Cover, reduce to a simmer and cook for 40 minutes until the liquid is reduced and the potatoes are broken down and thickening the liquid

Look into the coddle during cooking and add a little water if necessary

Turn onto a serving dish. Garnish with the remaining parsley.

Serve with soda bread.

Irish Stew

Cooking time one hour minimum, serves 3

Ingredients

400g gigot lamb chops

One large onion, two carrots and one stick celery optional

500ml water or stock

One sprig fresh thyme or one quarter teaspoon dried thyme

One tablespoon fresh parsley with stalks or two teaspoons dried parsley

One level teaspoon salt

Pepper

Six potatoes

Garnish fresh parsley

Directions

Gather equipment, collect and weigh ingredients, and set table.

Wipe meat, trim fat, but not bone, cut into large pieces.

Put into saucepan add salt, pepper, thyme, chopped parsley and the water or stock.

Cover and begincooking on a moderate heat.

Wash potatoes and peel thinly.

Dice two potatoes very finely and add to pot.

Quarter the other four potatoes and add to pot.

Peel and slice the onion. Wash and slice carrots and celery if using.

Add to the pot. Stir. Bring to the boil.

Lower heat, cover and simmer for one hour minimum until tender.

When tender, lift potatoes onto a serving dish.

Give the stew a good stir to break up the chopped potatoes to thicken the sauce.

Thicken with a little instant potato powder smash if it is too watery, stir in only one teaspoon at a time.

Serve in a casserole dish garnished with chopped fresh parsley.

Beef Nehari

Serves 6 - 8

Ingredients

1kg of beef- diced
2 cups of oil
100gm of plain flour - dissolved in a glass of water
2 small onions chopped
1 pack of Nehari Shan masala (available in all Asian stores)
1 tablespoon of ginger paste
1 tablespoon of garlic paste
3 green chillies sliced
8 glasses of water

Directions

First you heat the oil and then add the beef and stir for 5 to 10 minutes. Then put the ginger and garlic paste and stir for another 10 to 15 minutes. After that mix the packet of Nehari Shan Masala and stir for 5 minutes. Add the water and leave until cooked. When the meat is cooked add the flour mix continue to cook for 20 minutes. In a frying pan, heat oil and fry the onion until it changes colour, then add in the Nehari and continue to cook for 10 minutes and your dish is ready. Garnish with green chilli, ginger and lemon to taste. Serve with naan bread.

Shareef

Rice with Spinach Sauce

Ingredients

2 cups of rice

1 bag of spinach

500g of beef

1 onion grated and 1 onion chopped

1 grated clove of garlic and 2 teaspoons of kucharek

A pinch of salt

1 stock cube

A quarter of a red pepper

Directions

Bring a saucepan of water to boil and add the meat, salt, pepper, garlic and stock cube.

Simmer for 10 minutes. Then add the spinach and onions.

Cook for ten minutes, then add red oil, and cook for 20 minutes then it will be ready.

Then serve with rice and enjoy with your nice food...

Housseine

Nigerian Rice

Ingredients

A tin of chopped tomatoes

One table spoon of salt

8 table spoons oil

3 glasses of water

A green pepper chopped and a whole sliced onion

A stock cube and some spices such as curry powder, thyme, garlic and ginger

One kilo of beef or fish

Directions

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the onion, fry for two minutes

Pour in the chopped tomatoes and cook for 10 to 12 minutes

Add the green pepper and cook for two minutes

Add the beef and cook for three minutes

Add one table spoon of salt

Add the stock cube and the spices

And cook for five minutes

Serve with rice

Jude

Chicken Biryani

Serves 10

Ingredients

2 kg of chicken thighs
750g of rice - soaked for 20 minutes in water
3-4 onions - chopped
300g of potatoes
3-4 tomatoes - chopped
Quarter cup of natural yogurt
1 tablespoon of garlic paste
2 tablespoons of ginger paste
3-4 green chillies - whole
3-4 tablespoons of lemon juice
A cup of oil
1 packet of Shan Chicken Biryani Mix
13 cups of water

Instructions

Heat the oil and fry the onions until a light golden colour.

Add the chicken, garlic paste and ginger paste. Stir fry for a few minutes then add the Shan Chicken Biryani mix and yogurt. Continue to stir fry for another few minutes.

Add 3 glasses of water and the potatoes. Cover and cook on a low heat until the chicken is tender.

Stir in the tomatoes, chillies and lemon juice. Remove from the heat and leave to rest.

Drain the rice that has been soaking.

In another saucepan put the rice with 10 glasses of water and 2 tablespoons of salt.

Cook until the rice is nearly ready and drain.

Put half the rice in a saucepan and pour the chicken mix over it. Then add the remaining rice.

Cover and cook on a low heat until the rice is tender.

Serve with raita and salad.

Tamsella

Algerian Couscous

Ingredients

500g of couscous
1 tablespoon of oil
1 teaspoon of salt
Water
2 onions - finely chopped
2 carrots - cut into strips
1 and half courgettes - cut it into strips
2 potatoes - quartered
1 teaspoon of salt
500g of chicken
1 and half tablespoons of oil
1 teaspoon of chili powder
1 tea spoon of Ras al Hanouta
1 half teaspoon of cumin
1 glass of chick peas
1 glass of water

Directions

In a large bowl put the water, couscous, oil and salt and rub with your hands. Now put the couscous in a steamer and steam on top of a saucepan for about 10 minutes. Then put in a big bowl and rub the couscous with the oil and water and steam for about 5 minutes.

Directions for the sauce

Put the onion, oil, chicken, cumin, chick peas, salt, black pepper, chili powder, a glass of water and the ras al hanout in a large saucepan on a medium heat until the chicken is cooked.

Then put the carrots, potato, courgette, and another glass of water into the saucepan and cook for 10-15 minutes.

Remikia

Momo

Ingredients

500g of strong flour

300g of minced lamb

300ml of hot water

2 onions - chopped, 3 gloves of garlic

1 tablespoon of salt

1 tablespoon of coriander powder, 1 tablespoon of cumin powder

1 tablespoon of meat masala

Coriander leaves - chopped

Oil

Directions

Mix the flour and hot water together in a bowl and knead the dough

Cover with plastic wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Mix the mince, chopped onion, salt, coriander powder, cumin powder, meat masala and coriander leaves together.

Roll the dough out with a roller and cut into round pieces with a glass.

Take a piece of dough and put a teaspoon of the mix into the middle of the dough. Fold the edges together and continue folding and pinching all around the edges of the circle until you come back around to where you started then close the hole with a final pinch.

Finally, oil the steamer surface lightly before putting the momo in.

Put as many as you can without touching each other at one time.

Add the momos when the water is boiling.

Steam for about 10 minutes and then serve hot with the Chatni sauce.

Chatni Sauce

Ingredients

200g of cherry tomatoes
10g of sesame seeds
2 green chillies
A coriander leaf
1 glove of garlic
Half teaspoon of salt

Directions

Boil the tomatoes in a saucepan.
Fry the sesame seeds in a dry frying pan for a minute.
Mix the tomatoes, sesame seeds, salt, garlic, coriander leaf and green chilli together then blend it in a blender.

Gyanu

Sponge Cake

Ingredients

5 eggs
1 glass of sugar
3 Tablespoons of potato flour, 3 tablespoons of plain Flour
1 Teaspoon of baking powder
250ml of fresh-whipped cream, 200g of Strawberries
3 Teaspoons of sugar
4 Bananas

Directions

Whisk the egg whites with the sugar then add the yolks.
Next add the potato flour, plain flour and baking powder.
Mix with a wooden spoon
Then put into a 10 inch baking tin
Put in the oven and bake for 25 minutes at 180 degrees

Loutfi

Sel Reoti

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 cups of rice

2 tablespoons of sugar

Pinch of black pepper

1 cup of water

2 spoons of butter

3 cups of oil

Half a cup of plain flour

Directions

Wash and soak the rice for 4 hours

Drain excess water and grind into a fine paste

Then add the butter, sugar, flour and pepper into the rice paste

Water occasionally to make a batter (not too thick)

Next, put the oil in a pan and pour the batter as a continuous ring into the hot oil.

Fry until they become golden brown.

Ishwori

Chicken Curry

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 10 Chicken legs
- 2 Cups of veg oil
- 3 Teaspoons of garlic paste
- 1 Teaspoon of salt
- 4 Onions finely chopped
- 1 Teaspoon of turmeric powder
- 1 Teaspoon of ginger paste
- 1 Teaspoon of chili powder
- 3 Cinnamon sticks
- 6 Bay leaves
- 1 Teaspoon of cumin powder

Directions

Heat a frying pan with oil.

Fry the onion until golden brown.

Add the garlic paste, salt, turmeric powder and chili powder.

Cook for 15 minutes.

Add the chicken, cumin powder and bay leaf.

Cook for another 20 minutes.

Serve with rice.

Mizanur

Chicken Yassa

Ingredients

4 chicken thighs
3 tablespoons of oil
4 onions finely chopped
1 teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of coarse black pepper
A diced red pepper
1 teaspoon of kucharek
100g of frozen mixed vegetables
One stock cube

Directions

Firstly heat the oil a large pot.
Mix the chicken with half the salt, half the coarse black pepper and the kucharek in a bowl.
Then put it into the pot for 15 to 20 minutes.
Then take it out from the pot and wash the pot.
Mix the onions and red pepper with the rest of the salt, kucharek, black pepper, stock cube and vegetables.
Put it into the pot for 10 to 15 minutes.
Then put the chicken back into the pot for 5 minutes.
Serve with rice.

Alassane

Borscht

Serves 10

Ingredients

Half a chicken
3 litres of water
1 carrot cut into thin strips
100g of cabbage cut into thin strips
1 onion diced
2 beetroots cut into thin strips
1 tablespoon of tomato paste
3 big potatoes diced
1 tablespoon of sunflower oil
1 tablespoon of salt
1 red pepper cut into thin strips

Directions

Put the chicken into a saucepan with the water and boil for 1 hour
Meanwhile, heat some oil in a frying pan, when the oil is very hot
add the onion and fry until it is golden brown.

Then mix in the carrot and fry for 3 minutes.

Mix in the pepper and fry for 3 minutes.

Add the beetroots and fry for 3 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and fry for 3 minutes.

When the chicken is ready take it out.

Add cabbage to the stock, boil for 10 minutes, and then add the potatoes.

Add the fried vegetables and salt to the stock.

Then bring the borscht to boil and simmer for 15 minutes.

Serving suggestion: serve with a spoon of sour cream.

ALLA

Chicken and Potato

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 kg of potatoes cut into big pieces

1 kg of chicken legs

A pinch of ground black pepper

A pinch of garlic powder

A pinch of salt

3 stock cubes

A teaspoon of nutmeg

3 tablespoons of oil

Directions

Put the potatoes and chicken into a large bowl.

Mix in the pepper, garlic powder, salt, stock cubes, tomato puree, nutmeg and oil. Mix well and then leave for 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees.

Put it in an oven proof dish and put it in the oven for 40 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked.

Mireille

Bourake

Serves 6

Ingredients

A packet of frozen filo pastry

One onion finely chopped

500g of mince beef

1 teaspoon of salt

1 teaspoon of black pepper

A bunch of parsley

Oil

A handful of grated cheese

Directions

Heat the oil in a frying pan, then put in the onion and fry until golden brown.

Then put in the mince beef, salt and black pepper, when everything is fried put the parsley in.

Take a piece of pastry and put one or two tablespoons of stuffing in the middle.

Add some cheese and roll it.

Fry until they are golden brown.

Nassima

Salpicao

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 stock cube - chicken flavour

500g of chicken breast

1 can of olives - halved

1 small can of processed peas

1 can of sweet corn

250 ml of fresh cream

350 ml of mayonnaise

2 tomatoes - chopped

4 spring onions - chopped

50g of raisins

A pinch of ground black pepper

A pinch of salt

250g grated fried potatoes (Brazilian shop - batata palha) 50g to sprinkle on top

Directions

Boil the chicken breast in water with a stock cube for 20 mins.

When it's cooked, drain the chicken, then shred and leave to cool.

Mix all the dry ingredients with the chicken in a large bowl then put the mayonnaise and fresh cream and mix well.

Flatten into a Pyrex dish and sprinkle with the grated fried potatoes.

Ketlin

Avial

Serves 6

Ingredients

1 green plantain
1 carrot
100g of green beans
2 potatoes cut into strips
1 tomato
2 drumsticks
2 green chillies
1 Indian brinjal
1 raw mango - sliced
Half teaspoon of turmeric powder
Salt – as needed
1 grated coconut
1/2 teaspoon of cumin seeds
1 teaspoon of chopped garlic
3 pearl onions
A small spring of curry leaves

(You can also add most vegetables into this dish. But cut them all the same size. Harder to cook vegetables should be put in the bottom of the pan)

For Garnishing

1 teaspoon of Coconut Oil. A small spring of Curry Leaves

Instructions

Cut all the vegetables lengthwise 1 inch in length.

Put all the vegetables (except the raw mango) into a saucepan and add water to half cover the vegetables. Add salt and turmeric into it and mix well. Close the lid and cook it on a medium heat stirring occasionally.

When the vegetables are half cooked add the mango to it.

Grind together the coconut, cumin seeds, garlic, onions & curry leaves.

Once the vegetables are cooked well, add the ground paste and cook for another few minutes. (Do not overcook as it can get dried up quickly).

Garnish it with coconut oil and curry leaves and close the lid.

Serve with plain rice as a side dish.

Binumon

Ambaten

Serves 6

Ingredients

1kg of potatoes
500g of mince meat
100g of coriander
100g of parsley
2 onions - quartered
1 clove of garlic
1 teaspoon of black pepper
1 and 1/2 teaspoons of salt
2 teaspoons of tomato purée
3 eggs
1 cup of flour
1 litre of oil

Instructions

Put the coriander, parsley, onions and garlic into a food processor.

Blend.

Empty into a bowl and add the salt, black pepper, tomato purée and 1 egg, mix together.

Peel the potatoes and cut length ways into 3 slices after you need to carefully partly cut the potato slices to open it half way.

Put the stuffing into the potato.

Coat the potato in flour and after that coat in the egg.

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius

Fry in the oil for 10-15 minutes.

Put the potato on to a tray and put in the oven for 10 minutes.

Serve with salad.

Amal

Algerian Soup: Chourba

Serves 6

Ingredients

300g of lamb
2 carrots finely chopped
Half a jar of chopped tomatoes
1 onion finely chopped
100g of pinhead oatmeal
2 tablespoons of salt
3 tablespoons of olive oil
1 tablespoon of black pepper
Half a tablespoon of cinnamon
1 tablespoon of mixed spices
50g of parsley chopped
30g of mint chopped
150g of chick peas
1 tablespoon of tomato puree

Instructions

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, add the lamb and the onion and cook for 10mins.

Add the chopped tomatoes, parsley, salt, pepper, cinnamon, carrots, and courgette. Cook for at least 5 minutes.

Add 700ml of water and mix together, cook for another 10 minutes.

Put the chickpeas, pinhead oatmeal and tomato puree in.

Mix them again and leave it for at least 20 minutes.

Finally add the mint and enjoy.

Sofiane

Dumplings

Serves 2

Ingredients

25 dumpling wraps

For the dumpling filling:

250g of minced beef or pork

50g of veg oil

5g of salt

5 spring onions - chopped

3 tablespoons of soy sauce

A pinch of white pepper powder

2 teaspoons of sugar

Directions

Put the meat in a large bowl.

Add the oil, salt, soy sauce, pepper, sugar and the spring onions and mix well.

Take a wrap in one hand and put a tablespoon of the filling in the centre of the wrap.

Fold the wrap in half around the filling and then pinch the edges together to close.

Next steam them for 15-20 minutes.

Heather



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