



KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF: Clodagh Murphy and the sock puppets are in training to break the world record for the most people wearing sock puppets, organised by Dowlcha Puppets. The record-breaking event will take place on 7 August in Fitzgerald's Park as part of the Cork Puppetry Festival. PHOTO: CLARE KEOGH

»»» Laya Healthcare City Spectacular 2017



Zoe Noonan, Dale O'Neill-Good and Darnlan O'Neill with Paul the Puppet at the Laya Healthcare City Spectacular 2017 at Fitzgerald's Park. The Cork Independent was a media sponsor for the highly successful festival. PHOTO: WENDY GOOD



Asha Speight and Holly O'Keeffe. PHOTO: ALAN RING



Sophie Manton, Sophie McGrath and Niamh Manton. PHOTO: EILEEN CONWAY



Aoibheann and Anne Marie O'Mahony with Sophia Rathcliff.



Elaina, Molly and Kaitlin Firges. PHOTO: ALAN RING



Her Majesty's Secret Service. PHOTO: EILEEN CONWAY



Her Majesty's Secret Service. PHOTO: EILEEN CONWAY



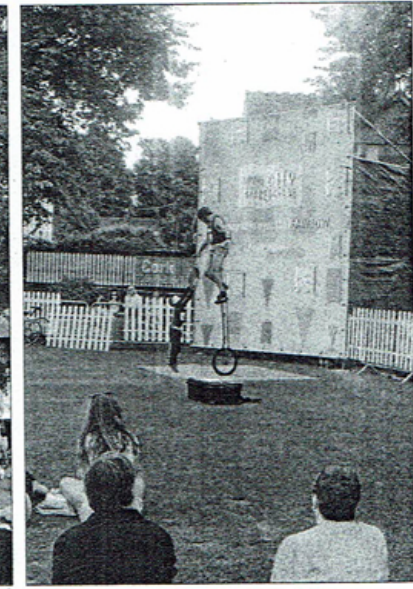
Caoimhe Hegarty. PHOTO: EILEEN CONWAY



Aoife Houston and Daisy Tubirdy. PHOTO: ALAN RING



The Amazing Mr Fish. PHOTO: EILEEN CONWAY



Her Majesty's Secret Service. PHOTO: EILEEN CONWAY

Packing a punch at Puppet Festival

Gracie Swana Ngwesa

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Pick up a puppet and get set to break a world record! Puppets and their pals are set to descend on the city as the Cork Puppetry Festival takes place from Sunday 30 July to Monday 7 August. On Sunday, the launch day of the fourth puppet festival takes place in Bishop Lucey Park with Punch and Judy puppet shows at 12pm, 1pm and 2pm. The event is free and you can also walk away with your own puppet by taking part in sock-puppet making workshops for €3.



The Cork Puppetry Festival takes place from Sunday 30 July to Monday 7 August.

On Monday 7 August Boy with No Story' a new sock-puppet makers are invited to join in an attempt to break the world record for the most people wearing sock puppets as part of the Puppet Picnic in Fitzgerald's Park. The current record stands at 365. The Puppet Picnic also features the Dowtcha Youth Ensemble performing the premiere of 'The

The festival is being organised by Dowtcha Puppets and there will be a programme of puppet shows across the week which will include companies from Greece, Iceland, Germany and the UK, as well as showcasing the best of Cork and Irish puppetry.



A DIFFERENT VIEW: Ian Humphreys, internationally acclaimed Heir Island artist, is bringing his exhibitions to Liss Ard in Skibbereen for the rest of the summer and to the Doswell Gallery in Rosscarbery until 10 August. PHOTO: EMMA JERVIS PHOTOGRAPHY



GIVE IT SOCKS: Clodagh Murphy is among those who are training to break the World Record for the most people wearing sock puppets this weekend on 7 August in Fitzgerald's Park, as part of the Cork Puppetry Festival, organised by Dowtcha Puppets. The Cork Puppetry Festival is ongoing and will run until 7 August. See corkpuppetryfestival.com. PHOTO: CLARE KEOGH

No record, but hands up if you liked the Puppetry Festival



Members of the Tessier and MacCarthy families from Frankfield, enjoying a picnic during the Cork Puppetry Festival, organised by Downtcha Puppets at Fitzgerald Park. Picture: David Keane

CORK will have to wait a little longer to earn a new place in the record books but a small army of sock puppets was still created at Fitzgerald Park.

Organised by Downtcha Puppets, the fourth Cork Puppetry Festival, took place on bank holiday Monday and included an attempt to break the record for the most people wearing sock puppets.

An enthusiastic crowd turned out for

■ **Grainne McGuinness**

the attempt, with attendees given the opportunity to create their own sock puppets before lining up to be counted.

The organisers even had a drone in attendance to record the hundreds of puppeteers and their puppets but they fell a little short of the number needed to break the record.

There were 325 counted in the Park but the current record, set in Townsville in Australia, stands at 363 puppets.

Organisers vowed to have another try next year while the many children in attendance still enjoyed an entertaining afternoon.

The world record attempt took place as part of the Puppets Picnic. Puppets roamed Fitzgerald Park and DIY Puppet Show Booths gave people the chance to try out their newly-created puppets.

The Downtcha Youth Ensemble also performed *The Boy with No Story*, a tale about a teenage boy's adventure at his first party.



Sonya Macken from Carrigaline, is all smiles at the Cork Puppetry Festival. Picture: David Keane



Paulina and Olivia Olczak from Sarsfield's Road, having fun at Fitzgerald Park. Picture: David Keane



Leo and Sarah Barry from Old Youghal Road, having fun with their puppets during the festival. Picture: David Keane



A section of the large crowd taking part in the puppet world record attempt, during the Cork Puppetry Festival. Picture: David Keane

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Dowtcha Puppets are my second family

Puppeteer Leslie Burton talks about her US roots, living by The Lough and the upcoming Cork Puppetry Festival



ENTERTAINER: Leslie Burton who performs in 'Jackie and the Potato Plant', as part of Cork Puppetry Festival.

TELL us about yourself;

I'm a puppeteer and performer, and I'm doing a PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies at UCC. I've lived in Cork for the better part of a decade, though I'm from California originally, and I show no signs of going anywhere anytime soon!

I've always loved puppetry, from the silliest shows for little kids to the darker, avant-garde work for adults that's happening in cities like London, Paris, and New York.

I have a studio space in Outlaw Studios that I share with a couple other nutty puppet people whom I love. I'm so glad to have gotten to know the team at Dowtcha — they've really become a second family, and this year's Cork Puppetry Festival looks like the most exciting one yet!

Where were you born?
Mountain View, California.

Where do you live?
In Cork, in a place called Fairyville (really!).

Family?
I have an older brother Brad and an older stepbrother Peter, a dad Jeff and a stepdad John, and of course my mom Connie. They all live up and down California and Arizona.

Best friend?
I have lots of best friends! My oldest best friends are Ali and Alleigh, a physicist and a genetic counsellor. When we were teenagers, they already knew that they wanted to be what they now are, and I always said that I'd probably be a starving artist. So, I'm the only one to actually exceed expectations so far, given that I eat regularly.

Earliest childhood memory?

PERSON TOPERSON

At about age three, running crying to my mother and telling her that I had backed over my imaginary daughter, Alla-Malayia- Toot, in a kiddie car.

Person you most admire?
Peter Schumann of the Bread and Puppet Theatre in Vermont. He's been mixing art and activism in amazing ways since the 1950s and he's still going strong on his family's farm. I was an apprentice performer there last summer, and it was one of the best experiences of my life.

Person who most irritates you?
As an American, the person I've been finding most irritating lately has got to be Donald Trump. I love home, but I'm glad I live in Ireland!

Who would you like to see as Minister for Finance and why?
Doc Brown from *Back to the Future*, primarily because he could go back and pretty much fix everything. He would probably need some advisors, though, and Ebenezer Scrooge (after his night with the ghosts, of course) could probably help there.

Where was your most memorable holiday?
The Bridges of Ross in County Clare, right near Loop Head lighthouse. It's a magical place and I have to get back soon!

Favourite TV programme?
The Muppet Show or the *Golden Girls*... or possibly *Say Yes to the Dress*, if I'm feeling particularly silly. Cooking competitions are sometimes

captivating, and I have been caught from time to time watching *Come Dine with Me*...

Favourite radio show?
Democracy Now is probably my favourite show, and I love to listen to NPR when I'm on long trips. When it comes to music, I always hear great things on Paul McCloone's and Louise Duffy's shows on Today FM.

Your signature dish if cooking?
I've been a vegetarian for five years, so I tend to throw a lot of vegetables into pasta and call it done. Every Christmas I bake a bunch of pies and make sure to share them around, so that might be my most recognizable cookery feat to date.

Favourite restaurant?
I'd live in the Quay Co-op if they'd let me! The breakfast bagels there are heavenly.
Further afield, the St. Peter Stiftskulinarium in Salzburg (which is billed as the oldest restaurant in Europe) is spectacular and the Cafe Louvre in Prague is art-deco-tastic. And I can't leave out La Bonne Soupe in NYC, which has the best French onion soup on the planet. I could carry on forever naming places!

Last book you read?
I dip in and out of a lot of books, most recently they're all related to my PhD! Society of the Spectacle by Guy Debord is amazing for its clear-sightedness — and it predicts so much about today's culture, though it was written in 1967.

Best book you read?
It's hard to pick one best book! Winnie the Pooh and The Little Prince are all-time favourites, though, and I often go back to them, just to see how they're doing.

Last album/CD/download you bought?
Cafe de Paris, a compilation of French Cafe music, because I absolutely needed Django Reinhardt's "Nuages." It's got a lot of other great classics on it, too.

Favourite song?
Right now, it's got to be Alt J's cover of *Lovely Day*, the Bill Withers song. It really dives inside the original and turns it into a different, (equally awesome) song.

One person you would like to see in concert?
I'd love to get to Depeche Mode's concert when they come to Dublin in November!

Do you have a pet?
There are three wonderful dogs back in the States -- Willoughby, Oliver, and Petra -- but I'd love to have a dog with me now!

Morning person or night owl?
I used to be a night owl but lately I'm falling in love with the early morning.

Spendthrift or saver?
Spendthrift I'm afraid! I guess my philosophy is that money is there to be spent. For that reason I'm unlikely to ever own a house... Luckily, I love camping.

Name one thing you would improve in your area in which you

live?
I'm right next to the Lough, so there's not much I'd change! It's beautiful there, and there's a cello every Wednesday evening through the summer.

What makes you happy?
Hedgehogs and alpacas. I need to go to more agriculture shows, because all the alpacas and hedgehogs seem to convene there. And dogs, of course — all of them! Rainbows always make me happy as well, though I know it sounds like something a little girl would say. Rock on the little girls!

How would you like to be remembered?
I'd like to be remembered as some kind of magical unicorn creature person. Failing that, I'd like someone to remember me as a decent sort of human being. Maybe something in between?

What else are you up to at the moment?
Fellow puppeteer Michael O'Donnell has just launched a new company called Humble Bee Puppets, and with him I've been hard at work preparing an all-new, original, spectacular, stupendous show called *Jackie and the Potato Plant*. It's a twisty-turny take on Jack and the Beanstalk with a heroine whose favourite thing to do is climb! It's premiering at the Village Hall on August 4 at 12pm and 3pm as part of the Cork Puppetry Festival, and we hope everyone can make it!

Organised by Dowtcha Puppets, the 4th Cork Puppetry Festival, will take place from July 30 to August 7 and will present a fantastic programme of puppet shows. See www.corkpuppetryfestival.com.

Play sings the virtues of life against hard-wired depression

THE only pity about the visit of this sweet little play is that the run is so short. It opened last night and there are two more chances to see it — this evening at 6 pm or 9 pm.
Depression and suicide are in the background of the piece from start to finish but there is a restlessly cheerful spirit to the performance by James Rowland and a defiantly life-affirming feeling to the script by Duncan MacMillan and Jonny Don-

ahoe. In a sense it is something that maybe shouldn't work but it works very well indeed.
The central premise of the story is that a seven-year-old boy returns home to find that his mother has been hospitalised after a suicide attempt. When she comes home he puts a list on her pillow outlining everything that is brilliant about the world. It a list offered with endless hope that this is the irrefutable proof

REVIEW: Every Brilliant Thing, Everyman

that life is worth living. After all, life does include brilliant things like ice cream, staying up late to watch telly and so on.
As the young lad grows through his teenage years and into young adulthood the list becomes more nuanced, particularising the track of

great albums always worth listening to (he reckons it's track seven). The possibly doomed nature of the project to sing the virtues of life against hard-wired depression is acknowledged. But it doesn't stop the project. It doesn't stop the desire to keep living.
George Perrin directs the play to maximise the conversational sense of the one-man performer's relationship with the audience.

Audience is carefully thought out here and done with gusto. Almost everyone in the small audience — sitting on stage in a circle around the actor — gets to deliver a line or word. Four or five people are selected to play a more active part. What comes across as playful and simple is cleverly devised making the show constantly lively and sometimes quite moving.

By Liam Heylin



EchoGirl Says

IT'S that time of year again! My annual trip to the opticians takes place every summertime.

I wear glasses you see, for reading, watching TV and also in class to read the white board.

I have had them since I was just four-years-old, so I am well used to them by now, in fact it has never bothered me wearing them!

Mam wears hers too, you see, and Dad had them when he was little, he showed me funny pics from his family album — they were huge ones!

I know other little girls and boys don't like wearing their glasses, but as Mam and Dad always remind me, it's for my own good! I wear glasses so that I don't hurt my eyes by straining to see without them, or so that I can read books at school and learn things. I also wear them so I can get out and about safely and not trip over things, or bang into stuff!

They also allow me to enjoy myself — by seeing the TV/the movie screen/playing cards with my friends etc.

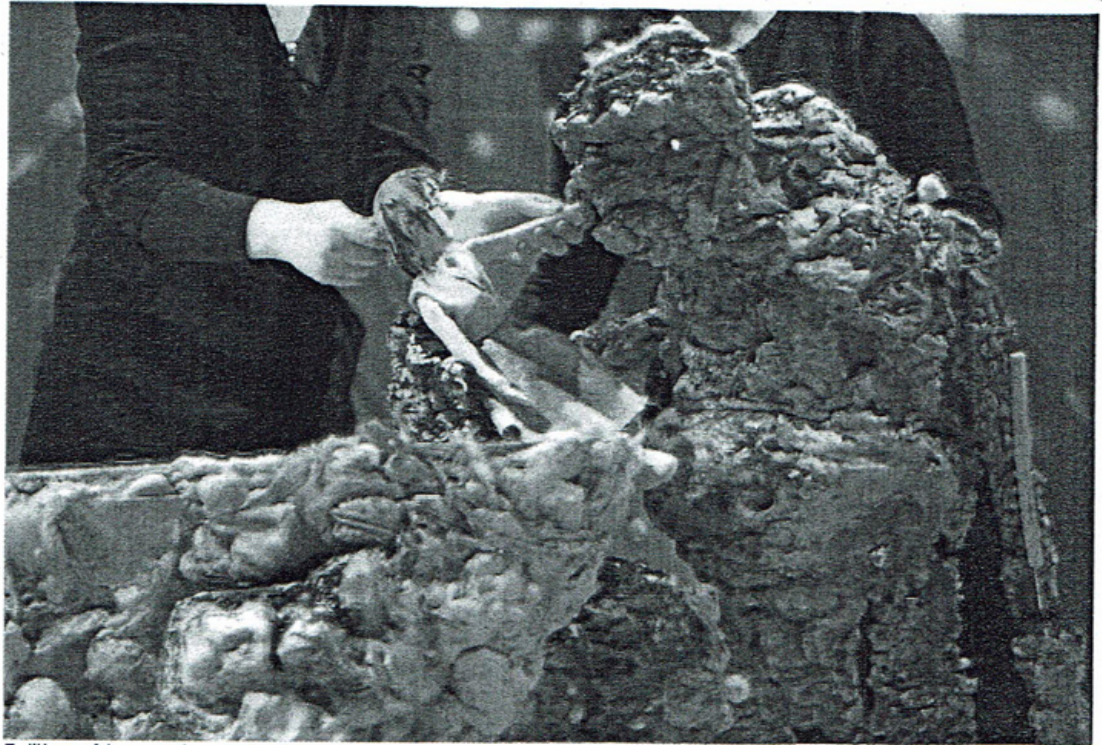
After all if I couldn't do any of those things, life wouldn't be much fun would it!

Mam has always let me choose my own glasses, so I have had red ones, pink ones, purple ones! Princess ones! Plain ones!

I've had a few mishaps too, especially in the past six months, where my brother sat on them and broke them (because I left them on the seat!), also when I fell I put a big scratch on them. Then there was the time I took them off and gave them to Dad to mind, and he put them in his pocket, but didn't realise there was coins in there - scratched again! But the funniest was when the neighbours dog got hold of them, and we had to chase him around the green to take them back. We had been playing outside and I took them off, while we were doing our gymnastics, and he ran away with them! I won't be doing that again!

Do you wear glasses? Do you like wearing them? What colour are they? I bet you look really cool!

Love Echo Girl



'Troll' is one of the puppet shows running, it re-imagines Iceland's favourite folk tales through the eyes of a young girl.

No Downtcha you'll have fun at puppetry festival

THERE'S lots in store at this year's Cork Puppetry Festival, from July 30 to August 7, presented by Downtcha Puppets.

The festival opens on Sunday July 30 in Bishop Lucey Park with much-loved Punch and Judy Puppet shows and sock and a puppet making workshops (11am to 5pm).

Seven days later the festival will culminate in a world record attempt in Fitzgerald Park on August 7 to break the record for the "Most People Wearing Sock Puppets". The World Record will take place as part of the Puppets Picnic where puppets will roam around Fitzgerald Park and the Downtcha Youth Ensemble will perform 'The Boy with No Story'.

Here are some of the other highlights:

- 'Troll' re-imagines Iceland's favourite folk tales through the eyes of a young girl and her unusual friend from the mountains, August 5 at 12 noon and 3pm, Granary Theatre, Mardyke, Cork.

- Presented by the Banyan Theatre Company (Northern Ireland) the much-loved classic The Emperor's New Clothes runs at The Village Hall, on August 7, at 3pm.

- The Puppet Circus comes to Cork with The DaSilva Marionette Circus Show (United Kingdom) where puppets will perform aerial acrobatics on the flying trapeze and participate in spectacular cycling



Puca Puppets will feature at this year's Cork Puppetry Festival.

- stunts, at The Village Hall, August 3, at 12 noon and 3pm.

- Join Outside the Box Circus in their three-legged house for an amazing mix of aerial circus and puppetry, at the Granary Theatre, Friday August 4 at 12noon and 3pm.

- Your Man's Puppets will present 'The Salmon of Wisdom' which tells the story of young Fionn, a boy left on his own who meets Aoife and Grainne, the Makers of Warriors in the ancient forest, at the Village

- Hall, August 6, 12 noon and 3pm.

- A must for smaller children is the performance by Little Gem Puppets of 'Maggie', also at The Village Hall, on Saturday August 5, at 12 noon and 3pm, which is loosely based on the story of Hansel and Gretel

- Humble Bee Puppets present 'Jackie and the Potato Plant', at The Village Hall, on August 4, 12 noon and 3pm, a fun-filled retelling of Jack and the Beanstalk.

- The History of Tom Thumb is at

- The Village Hall on August 7, 3pm, by Banyan Theatre Company, a comic interpretation of the traditional tale.

- Carol Walsh in collaboration with Puca Puppets will present Bloom "N" Buzz, an interactive theatrical experience also for young children at the Granary Theatre, on August 6, at 12 noon and 3pm.

- Tickets available on www.cork-puppetryfestival.com or call 087 3530420.

Dowtcha Boy, having a nap at the Puppetry Festival



Six-month-old Ellen O'Sullivan from Farmer's Cross, with her puppet, at the Cork Puppetry Festival organised by Dowtcha Puppets at Fitzgerald's Park, Cork.
Picture: David Keane

All About Cork

Monday, August 7, 2017

Pulling the strings



Emily Hogan, Blackrock, at the Cork Puppetry Festival launch event at Bishop Lucey Park, Grand Parade.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

Evening Echo, Saturday, July 29, 2017



WIN TICKETS TO THE CORK PUPPETRY FESTIVAL & DINNER IN UNCLE PETE'S

Organised by Downtcha Puppets, the 4th Cork Puppetry Festival will take place from July 30th to August 7th. The festival will present a fantastic programme of puppet shows, with world class international and local acts.

There will be puppet making workshops running throughout the week, culminating in a world record attempt in Fitzgerald's Park on August 7th for the 'Most People Wearing Sock Puppets'.

Tickets for all performances are available on www.corkpuppetryfestival.com
In association with Uncle Pete's Pizzeria and the

Evening Echo one lucky winner will receive a family meal on Saturday August 5th and tickets to see 'Tröll' by Iceland's 'Handbendi'.

Tröll re-imagines Iceland's favourite folk tales through the eyes of a young girl and her unusual friend from the mountains. A little bit folk tale, a little bit ghost story, it is an unmissable experience for all the family.

PRIZE DETAILS

Tickets to see 'Tröll' on August 5th at either 12pm or 3pm and pre show meal in Uncle Pete's Pizzeria

ENTER FREE ONLINE

www.eveningecho.ie/competitions

Terms & Conditions apply



Evening Echo



A giant sock puppet and friends in training to break the world record for the most people wearing sock puppets, which takes place on August 7 at Fitzgerald Park, as part of the Cork Puppetry Festival, organised by Downtcha Puppets.

World record bid at puppet festival

THE Cork Puppetry Festival will open tomorrow at 11am in Bishop Lucey Park with the much-loved Punch and Judy Puppet Shows and puppet making workshops.

■ Ronan Bagnall

The festival runs all week and culminates in a world record attempt at Fitzgerald Park on August 7 to break the record for the most people wearing sock puppets.

The world record will take place as part of the Puppets Picnic where puppets will roam around Fitzgerald Park and the Downtcha Youth Ensemble will perform 'The Boy with No Story'.

This year's programme features world class international puppet shows for children, families and adults.

Children will be mesmerized as fairy stories and folklore are brought to life by puppets.

The show, Troll, which reimagines Iceland's favourite folk tales through the eyes of a young girl and her unusual friend from the mountains will take place in the Granary Theatre next Saturday.

Combining a little bit folk tale, a little bit ghost story, Troll has been described as an unmissable experience for all the family.

Presented by the Banyan Theatre Company (Northern Ireland) the much-loved classic The Emperor's New Clothes will be told through the use of puppetry, original music and storytelling.

The Puppet Circus is also coming to Cork with The DaSilva Marionette Circus Sho where puppets will perform aerial acrobatics on the flying trapeze and participate in spectacular cycling stunts.

The Evening Echo and RED FM are the media sponsors of the Cork Puppetry Festival.

Performances will take place in the Granary Theatre and the Village Hall in the city.

For the full timetable of events see www.corkpuppet-festival.com.

Taoiseach's Brexit comments 'unhelpful'

■ UK think tank says land border checkpoints 'have to happen'

Daniel McConnell
Political Editor

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar's recent headline comments on Brexit have been branded as "dirt" by a UK-based think tank, who says Ireland's stance is mysterious.

Dr Graham Gudgin, chief economic adviser with the London-based think-tank Policy Exchange, has said border checkpoints, between North and South "have to happen."

He said Ireland's new hardline stance on Brexit is "incoherent and unhelpful." In a new policy paper, Dr Gudgin said: "Leo Varadkar said that the border was Britain's, not Ireland's, problem, and that Irish work on technical solutions would cease."

Most strikingly he also said that the border should be moved to the Irish Sea. What this implied was that no customs or checks border, which would remain largely invisible as it does today. Instead, customs checks would occur at airports and airports.

"This is idea apparently came as a surprise to officials in Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs and does not seem to have been based on much thought or analysis. Such ideas are incoherent and unhelpful," he added.

Dr Gudgin, a former economic adviser to David Trimble former Northern Ireland first minister, said it is clear a "new cold wind has been blowing from Dublin" on the vexed issue of the Irish land border.

The previous Irish position of preparing for a technical solution to minimise border disruption has been overturned.

He said Erika Kenny, taoiseach until June, had impli-

citly accepted a border would be necessary, and had begun preparations, along with the British, to minimise disruption. But he says a clear change in position from Dublin has taken place since the change of leadership.

Dr Gudgin has said that the EU27's negotiating position on the border explicitly states that the integrity of the EU's Legal Order must be maintained.

This means a tightly managed border around the Single Market. The May Government's position is that Northern Ireland, as part of the UK, will almost certainly be outside the Single Market.

"Border checks will thus have to take place at the land border, not at Belfast. It is difficult to imagine what a border at the Irish Sea would actually mean," he said.

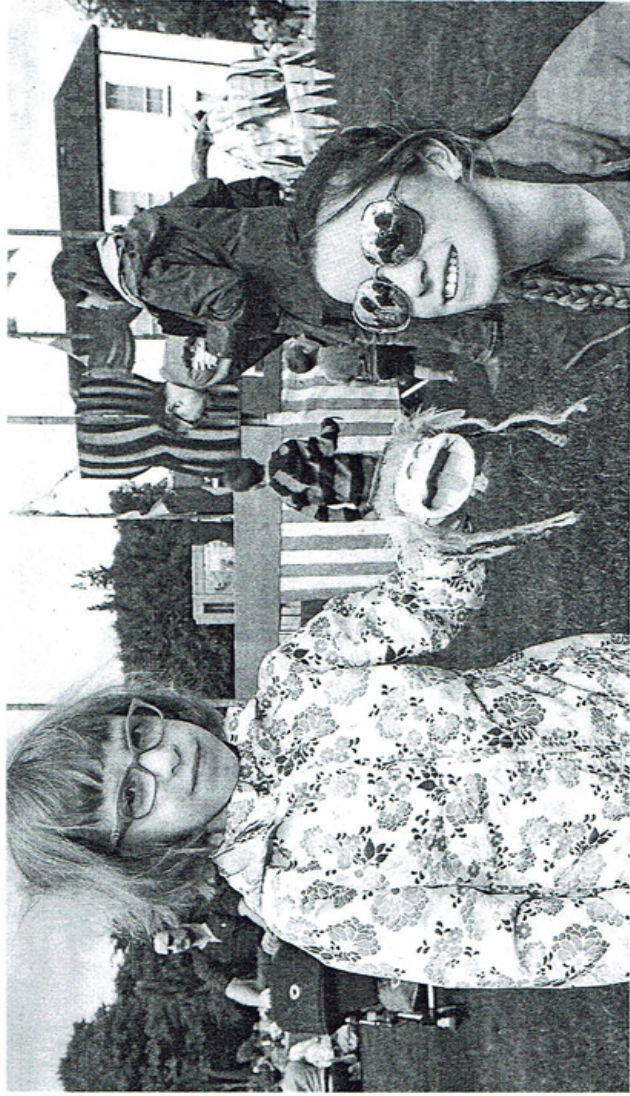
Dr Gudgin said that it was interesting that by the time Mr Varadkar was in Belfast last Friday, there was no mention of the island of Ireland being the border.

"None of this appears to have been thought through, and the likelihood is that Ireland's DPA officials have quietly buried the idea," he said.

"When the Irish ambassador in London was pressed on BBC Radio 4's *Todday* programme, he firmly sidestepped the issue. Significantly, there was no mention of it in Leo Varadkar's major policy speech at Queen's University Belfast last Friday," he added.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Government said Ireland has been preparing for Brexit since before the UK voted to leave the EU last year. On Friday last, he noted, the Taoiseach had put forward a number of practical solutions.

Hand in glove



Julia Hoffman, Richmond Hill, shows her puppet to Katie Malone of Red FM, at the Cork puppetry festival organised by Dorchu Puppets at Fitzgerald's Park, Cork. Pictures: David Keane



A section of the large crowd taking part in the puppet world record attempt, during the Cork puppetry festival.



Edvardas, Ina and Erikas Leonavicius from Blackpool, enjoying the fun at the Cork puppetry festival.



Conor, Emma, Brendan and Sean Calnan from Carrigaline.



Grace Kelly from Bishopstown, having fun with her puppet during the Cork puppetry festival.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID KEANE FOR THE IRISH EXAMINER

men arrested in connection with the incident in the seaside town, and will appear before Ennis District Court on an unknown charge. The two others were released by gardai and a decision on whether they will face charges will be made later by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Haugh died in University Hospital Limerick after being stabbed in a row in the Marian Estate in Kilkee around 1.15am on Sunday.

Warning to Cork Harbour swimmers

Swimmers have been advised to avoid crossing shipping channels after Crosshaven RNLI lifeboat shadowed a man to shore after he refused to leave the water in Cork Harbour yesterday evening.

The man was allegedly swimming from Cobh to Spike Island and back for a bet, and had ignored a harbour pilot boat order to leave the water when a Naval Service vessel and harbour tug were heading up the channel.

Crosshaven lifeboat launching authority Hugh Mocker said going out alone across shipping channels is very dangerous. "This man was extremely lucky he did not become a statistic," he said.

Man, 73, rescued from Tory Island

A man had to be taken from an island off the Co Donegal coast after falling and suffering injuries.

The 73-year-old man suffered a dislocated shoulder and also had other injuries when he fell on Tory Island yesterday afternoon.

He was taken by the Rescue 118 helicopter to Letterkenney University Hospital where his condition was described as stable last night.

Call for more school guidance posts

Restoring the last 200 guidance counselling posts lost by second-level schools in 2012 is recommended by the National Youth Council of Ireland. It wants €12.6m extra invested next year to add to the restoration of 400 guidance posts when schools re-open this month.

NYC's pre-budget submission also urges the Government to spend €20m bringing child and adolescent mental health services staffing up to levels set out in national policy. Council deputy director James Doorley said it is critical that staff and resources are available for young people with mental health difficulties when they need them.

Driver dies after car crashes into wall

A driver died after his car crashed into a wall in a residential area in Dublin last night.

Pulling the strings at puppet fest

"THERE'S a yearning for live performance that's absent from gaming and animation, and ultimately there's an opportunity for puppetry there."

Cliff Dolliver is the director of Cork Puppetry Festival, which is about to celebrate its fourth year as the Republic of Ireland's only festival dedicated to the art form.

In this saturated media and entertainment landscape filled with TV and digital distractions, he says, the live craft of puppetry has even more to offer than ever.

"It can take your breath away," says Dolliver. "You can have some incredibly magic moments with puppetry; it's a really beautiful art form and so versatile: it's really easy to entertain children with because kids just invest so automatically and so unquestioningly in it. And it's so universal: name any culture and you'll find some kind of investing life into inanimate objects, some form of puppetry connected to storytelling that goes with it."

Dolliver, who arrived in Ireland in 1999, hails originally from Tasmania and founded Cork-based Downtcha Puppets with the late Mick Lynch.

Downtcha Youth Ensemble, an initiative designed to train budding puppeteers in all aspects of the craft, will perform their new production, *The Boy with No Story*, as part of the programme. They are joined by 30 performers from 12 national and international puppetry companies.

As well as providing family-friendly entertainment, Dolliver says the festival's remit is also to raise the profile of puppetry and to have an Irish forum for the industry.

"We just want it to grow into a self-sufficient institution, and to get stronger and keep improving the programme. We want to set up Cork as a centre for puppetry in Ireland and in the west of Europe."



Cliff Dolliver of Downtcha Puppets hosts the Cork Puppetry Festival this weekend.

To this end, the Irish branch of Union International de la Marionnette (Unima) will hold a meeting at the week-long festival, and an academic symposium on puppetry and disability will be held at UCC to coincide with the festival.

Cork Puppetry Festival will also try to put Cork on the map with a world record attempt for the largest number of people holding sock puppets. The current record, 365, was set last year in Townsville, Australia, but Dolliver is confident that Cork Puppetry Festival patrons can beat that. Families are being asked to raid the odd sock box and donate their unwanted woolies to the festival club. The festival also includes workshops so that adults and children alike can take part in the attempt on the last day of the festival, at a family fun day in Fitzgerald Park.

"We wanted a big event at the end with a sense of celebration, and to make the festival feel participative,"

says Dolliver. "What better way than a world record attempt that everyone can get involved in?"

Family fun aside, there are some adults-only events on the programme, like Clown's Houses from Berlin-based company Merlin Puppet Theatre. With the Irish puppetry tradition historically centred around kids' TV offerings, Dolliver says the art form is still developing in Ireland, and hasn't met its full potential as a component of other forms of theatre, and in work for adults.

"It's still predominantly for children; there's not a lot of work for adults being produced in the country," he says. "But it's beginning to be used more often as a component of other theatrical styles: Operas, dance, pantomimes, and theatre."

Ellie O'Byrne
■ Cork Puppetry Festival runs from July 30 to August 7 at venues in Cork City. corkpuppetryfestival.com



Feature |

Louise O'Neill

Ben Affleck has a new girl-friend. I know, I'm delighted for him too. Her name is Lindsay Shookus and she's just a 'regular girl'.

According to sources, Ben has 'never really dated a regular girl before', leading me to wonder what sort of alien life forms he's been copulating with up until now. (No judgment Ben, you do you.)

In direct contrast to Shookus's 'regular girl', we have Jennifer Garner, Affleck's ex-wife, self-proclaimed 'good girl'.

"I grew up being the good girl," Garner said in a *Newsweek* article in 2004. "All the Garner girls are. We're a good-girl family." Garner bakes, she is photographed at the local farmers market surrounded by her adorable children, she goes to church every Sunday, she sacrificed a promising acting career to support her husband and raise her kids. 'Goodness', as the Buzzfeed reporter Anne Helen Peterson posited, has become the backbone of Garner's public branding.

I have to be honest here, I don't really care about Ben Affleck or his love life. What does interest me is the manner in which the media has pitted these two women against one another. The Regular Girl versus the Good Girl. It is fascinating to observe how often women are expected to perform their femininity in this way, and are, time and time again, forced to conform to certain stereotypes. Women are not allowed to be fully formed, well-rounded individuals.



sult of generations of movies and TV shows portraying men in their fifties, sixties, and beyond as sexually viable human beings and women of the same age as dried-up husks.

We find it difficult to view women over the age of 60 as sexually attractive because we have simply never seen it before.

When we call women 'girls', we are contributing to a culture that insists that the younger a woman is, the more appealing she is (please see the 'barely legal' category on porn sites for proof). No wonder many women themselves do not like to be referred to as such, when the term 'woman' seems to connote a decline in societal value.

The word girl is the technical definition of a female-identifying person who is below the age of 18. 'Girl' is a female child and therefore to refer to women as girls is infantilising, reducing women to a childlike state.

And what do we think about children? We think they are in need of care, of protection. Children need boundaries. Children need an adult to guide them due to their innate helplessness. It is striking to put that into context in a country like Ireland that still refuses to grant women bodily autonomy by allowing us access to safe, legal abortion.

If we think of women as 'girls', perhaps on some level we do not believe they are mature enough to make such

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

1 Sock it to them

The Cork Puppetry Festival with Downha Puppets kicks off in Cork from tomorrow in the Bishop Lucey Park with much-loved Punch and Judy puppet shows and sock and puppet making workshops. Seven days later, the festival will culminate in a world record attempt in Fitzgerald's Park on August 7 to break the record for the Most People Wearing Sock Puppets. ■ Tickets and information from www.corkpuppetryfestival.com

2 Fillies and Fashion

The annual Galway Races starts on Monday but heads are expected to turn on Thursday with Ladies Day with prizes worth €12,000 on offer. Celebrity judges include Aohibhin Garryh and Baz Ashmawy. Gates open from 11am on Thursday and the judges begin style spotting from 11.30am noting originality, flair, and poise. Twenty finalists will then be invited to present themselves at the g Hotel Best Dressed Marquee to meet each of the judges in person. ■ www.thehotel.ie/best-dressed-lady-galway-races.html

3 Mother Jones

The 6th annual Spirit of Mother Jones Festival begins in Shannon in Cork on Tuesday and continues until Saturday.

