

The EU Flower: North West Ireland Keeps Leading the Way.



The laneway that leads to Omagh Hostel. (visible in the background)

What is the tourism sector doing to improve its environmental performance? The North West has been leading the way in providing visitors with accommodation at an exceptional environmental standard. Indeed, in EU terms, the region is impressive.

The EU Flower is the only sign of environmental quality both certified by an independent organisation and valid throughout Europe. Customer's environmental expectations are met through limits on energy and water consumption and a reduction of waste production. It also favours the use of renewable resources and substances which are less hazardous to the environment, while also promoting environmental education and communication.

Marella Fyffe was one of the Greenbox's Network Coordinators from October 06 to March 08. We wish her well in her future endeavours.

Focus on: Omagh Hostel

To date, fifteen regional accommodation providers have signed up. The most recent one is Omagh Hostel, run by former Greenbox Employee Marella Fyffe. Omagh Hostel is the first hostel on the island of Ireland to be awarded the EU Flower. It is a small, remote and peaceful family hostel nestled on the edge of the Sperrin Mountains. I asked Marella about some of the EU Flower-related dimensions to Omagh Hostel.

"We have an environmental impact plan in place. We use green electricity from Eco Energy NIE. We also do active things like extensive recycling, reusing and reduction in packaging from our suppliers, composting, use of low energy lighting and LED technology as well as eco friendly cleaners, soaps and the like. Along with this, we promote and actively support cycling and public transport, garden organically and hope to install a reed bed system early next year. Visitors have lots of information available to them on how to reduce their environmental impact too. Recently, we invested in a Biomass boiler. Overall, our carbon footprint is about half the UK equivalent, and we offset this by planting at least, and often more than, 22 trees a year. In fact, we intend to plant 1000 trees in our new woodland" Marella in fact goes way beyond what's required in a whole variety of areas!

Good Luck to the Latest EU Flower Applicants:

- Michael McCann, Meenaslieve Schoolhouse, (Leitrim)
- Harold Rankin, Oakgrove House (Fermanagh)
- Lough Allen Education Centre (Leitrim) www.allen.ie
- Tom and Marietta O'Dowd, Trinity Island (Cavan) www.trinityisland.com
- Nuala McNulty, Tawnylust Lodge, (Leitrim) www.tawnylustlodge.com
- Karen and Shane Gallagher, River Cottage (Leitrim)
- Benwiskin Centre (Sligo) www.benwiskincentre.com
- The Share Centre www.sharevillage.org
- The Field Studies Centre www.field-studies-council.org/derrygonnelly
- Cathal O'Dolan, Rushin House Caravan Park www.rushinhousecaravanpark.com

EU Flower Ecolabel Awareness Seminar

A timely, high profile EU Flower awareness seminar was held in the Crown Plaza hotel on April 22nd last. Both the speakers and topics discussed made up an impressive list. Mary Mulvey (CEO Greenbox) and Paddy Mathews (Environment Manager - Fáilte Ireland) spoke of the EU Flower in Ireland, while representatives of the EU Commission spoke of its implementation and marketing. Mary Madigan Operations Manager, NSAI (National Standards Authority of Ireland - Competent Body in Ireland) spoke of accreditation of the EU Flower, while Ruth Doyle and Paul Chadwick from the Change Campaign (www.change.ie) spoke of the linkages between the campaign and the EU Flower.

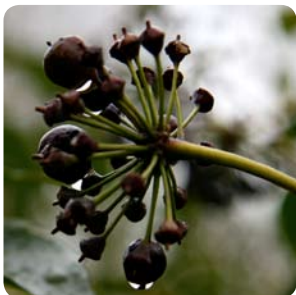


L to R: Rainer Stifter (EU Commission); Ian Wasson, Karen Hughes, (Greenbox) Neal Faulkner (Aisling Consulting); Sinead Barrins (Greenbox); Joe Dolan (Bush Hotel); Paddy Matthews (Fáilte Ireland); Ann Marie Kelly and Niall Walsh (Clarion Hotel).

Recent training Greenbox network members have participated in:

April saw 3 training days with the Greenbox. Each was fully subscribed and thoroughly enjoyed by the participants.

The first was another Leave No Trace training day on 10th April – back by popular demand! This time network member Jerome O'Loughlin (of Ireland Ecotours) took a lively group through their seven Leave No Trace principles: Plan and Prepare, Travel and Camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimise campfires, respect wildlife and finally be considerate. The group met in the Organic Centre, where they had a presentation and some activities. Then off on Jerome's ecobus to, literally, walk the walk!



Liz Franklin's picture from photography class

We also organised a photography masterclass on April 19th. This proved to be so popular that we organised another one for the following day, April 20th. This class also booked out, so we had to organise another class for 10th May, which is now booked out. We have another reserve list building – if you are interested in Photography classes, get in touch and we'll put your name down. (Sinead on 071 9856898)

The development media workshop crew (Michael, Janie and Anya) took the groups on the 19th and 20th. To say that the classes were enjoyable for participants is an understatement. We usually ask for a formal evaluation of some sort, but weren't expecting participants to email us with more feedback again, unprompted, waxing lyrical about what a perfect time they'd had.

Below is a sample of what Liz Franklin told us about her experience: "This could go on forever so I'll try to keep it brief! We had a fantastic day! I learned to see the beauty of nature from various perspectives ... Attention to detail was second to none... they shared their knowledge as a "guide on the side" rather than the "sage on the stage"... I am now confident to learn to use a more complicated camera. I will be recommending the course to others".

Liz also pointed out that the Greenbox package criteria were met, so they spent more than 50% of their time in nature, ate a locally produced organic lunch, shared cars and used no disposable appendages.



Tom O'Dowd's picture from photography class

And from Tom O' Dowd of Trinity Island Lodge: "What a day we had yesterday! It was great and revived our interest in photography. We took some great photos. The day was well organised and well run. We really enjoyed it and intend to promote the Photographic Day with our Lodge on our new website."

Note: The photo master class neatly mirrors the Greenbox ecotourism package that Development Media Workshop run. This ensures that there is an outdoor, learning and conservation dimension to the experience, which is certified and audited to a rigorous standard. For more: www.greenbox.ie/ecobreaks.php

Congrats to all participants who have just completed the Greenbox Ecotourism Label Training. We look forward to seeing your ecotourism packages!

Watch out for the new degree in Ecotourism and Green Event Management in Sligo IT.

Our Profile: Greenbox and its Members at Home and Away

Our profile just keeps rising and rising!

Greenbox Profile Highlights:

Printed press - April edition of the National Geographic's Adventure magazine (circulation of 500,000)

On line - www.abetterwestvirginia.com Glowing feature following study trip from state of West Virginia officials.

Greenbox Network members' profile:

An array of network members have featured in two Guardian specials on slow travel and eco escapes including The Benwisken Centre, Orchard Acre Farm, Breesy Centre, Boho Eco Hire, Omagh Hostel and Trinity Island Lodge. Well done guys!

An even more impressive array of network members are featured in a book that's about to come out by the travel writer Catherine Mack called Eco escape.

This book features 50 eco destinations in Ireland, and almost half of them are part of or are associated with the Greenbox.

According to Catherine Mack, "Mary Mulvey and the Greenbox have been part of the inspiration for writing the book. The Greenbox has had a phenomenal effect on the impression people have of the North West of Ireland: these are the places that don't normally get into the guidebooks. Like the Greenbox, Eco escape is trying to make a difference by publicising these places". For these and more, click on the profile label on our blog <http://greenboxireland.blogspot.com>

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Ecoescapes will be available from 30th May on www.ecoescape.org; www.amazon.com and in bookstores.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM SKILLNET

Park Road Industrial Estate, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. 071 9856898, and sinead@greenbox.ie or skillnet@responsibletourism.ie

Greenbox welcomes new staff member: Sinéad Barrins

The Greenbox is promoting an exciting new training initiative, called Responsible Tourism Skillnet. This will ensure the ecotourism business training and networking provided will continue, develop and indeed expand. This training will be available to all current Greenbox members.

Oliver Moore: So Sinéad, how are you settling in to the Greenbox?

Sinéad Barrins: So far, so good. It's a great programme to be working on, developing the skills of people working in the ecotourism sector. I'm looking forward to working with all our members and the gang here at Greenbox to roll-out engaging training courses.

OM: What exactly will you be promoting over the next two years?

SB: The primary focus for the Responsible Tourism Skillnet will be on increasing knowledge and skills in the ecotourism sector regionally and nationally. Marketing, Environmental Management, IT and Business Management are the main category areas.

OM: Can you give some specific examples of what people might expect?

SB: The environmental management area will include managing your ecological footprint, Leave No Trace – which is an outdoor ethics code – as well as direct cost-effective green business training, such as the Greenbox Ecotourism Label, the certificate in ecotourism and the EU Flower standard. IT will include Web-based Marketing and using IT for business; Business will focus on training in developing

ecotourism packages, along with customer service management, welcome host training, accessing finance and funding, understanding the tourism industry and more. The marketing category is quite exciting: along with marketing in general media training, developing markets, market research, product development and many others.

OM: That's quite a lot!

SB: This is just a sample of training offered. We can also develop training according to your organisations needs, so if you have an idea for a training course this programme can help fund its delivery to your business. If you're looking for some advice and support but don't think that a training day is the answer, discuss it with us – we'll be as open and flexible as possible. It is also the case that this will be rolled out nationally: while the network is based within the Greenbox region and includes existing Greenbox members, it is open to membership from across the country who are currently engaged or interested in ecotourism. I can't emphasise enough how important a vibrant membership will be to the success of the overall project.

To contact Sinéad: Responsible Tourism Skillnet can be reached at 071-9856898



or skillnet@responsibletourism.ie. The Responsible Tourism Skillnet is funded by member companies and the Training Networks Programme, an initiative of Skillnets Ltd. Funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Sinéad Barrins: Bio

The new Responsible Tourism Skillnet is managed by Sinéad Barrins. Sinéad has over ten years experience in working in the development sector in Ireland including project management, strategic planning, policy development and management training development & delivery. Her previous role as the Training Manager with the Carmichael Centre focused on the development and delivery of tailored management training to organisations within the not-for-profit sector. Her international experience as a training consultant in India included delivering management training to managers in Accenture, General Electric, Dell, Ernst & Young, Oracle and Sun Microsystems. She also has experience in dealing with the challenges of global cross-cultural teams in the IT services sector in India. She holds a BA (Mod) in Economics & Politics, an MSc in Development Studies and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Greenbox staff:

CEO: Mary Mulvey, mary@greenbox.ie
Financial Administrator: Bernie Carroll, bernie@greenbox.ie
Network Coordinator: Dr. Oliver Moore, ollie@greenbox.ie
Network coordinator, Administrator:
Olga McCarrick, olga@greenbox
Skillnet coordinator: Sinéad Barrins,
sinead@greenbox.ie/ skillnet@responsibletourism.ie.
Capital Development Coordinator: Karen Hughes
karen@greenbox.ie

The Greenbox Board:

Jackie Maguire (County Manager,
Leitrim County Council);
James Hanrahan (Tourism Lecturer,
Sligo Institute of Technology);
Nigel Brady, (Northern Ireland Energy Agency);
Catherine Ryan (Fermanagh Local Action Group);
Noeleen Tyrrell (Ard Nahoo)
Joe Lowe (Leitrim County Enterprise Board)
Wayne Foord (Organic Centre)

Ian Brannigan (WDC)
Paddy Mathews (Failte Ireland)
Mary Mulvey (Greenbox)



Responsible Tourism Skillnet Launch

Sectoral Launch – 19th May Wineport Lodge, Athlone. 3.15 pm

To accommodate an ever expanding membership outside the north-west region we are launching the Responsible Tourism Initiative in Athlone on 19th May. Paddy Mathews, Environmental Manager with Failte Ireland will launch the Skillnet. Another great opportunity for networking and a date not to be missed.

Regional Launch - 28th May Benwisquin Centre, Ballinrillick, Co. Sligo. 5.30pm

Responsible Tourism Skillnet will be launched by Paschal Mooney, the newly appointed Chairman of the North West Regional Tourism Development Board. We will also have the graduation of the Ecotourism class of '07 at the launch. Networking opportunities, launching a new fund for the sector and refreshments - a definite date for your diary.

This edition of the Greenbox times is printed by the good people at www.printfactory.ie.

The Print Factory in Birr, Co. Offaly, produce the *Local Planet* environmental magazine, and can claim to be Ireland's most environment- friendly printer. They use biodegradable vegetable based inks; a chemical-free plate making process; paper that is either recycled or comes from sustainably managed forests; they reuse rainwater; and use no plastic in delivery. This paper, Era Silk, is made from 50% recycled fibre and 50% fibre from certified forests. The mill where the paper is produced has FSC and PEFC chain of custody certification, plus ISO 14001 environmental management accreditation.

Forthcoming Training Events

Please contact sinead@greenbox.ie to reserve a place. We are currently creating a list for members interested in these trainings. Booking absolutely essential!

Leave No Trace Train the Trainer weekend. Leave No Trace (LNT) is an outdoor ethics code, or a set of guidelines designed to help people who use the outdoors recreationally, at any level, to better respect the environment. Graduates will be qualified to teach others the principles of Leave No Trace through seminars and activities. Will involve overnight camping.

The EU Flower – Increasing Quality and Reducing Costs - 19th May, 11-3pm, Wineport Lodge, Athlone.

This training promotes awareness of the benefits of adopting eco-friendly practices, including the EU Flower Label. The training also provides information on how to achieve recognition for existing eco-friendly practices and the steps that participants can take in their own businesses to be more sustainable and achieve the EU Flower Label.

PC Maintenance for the Beginner 27th May 5-8pm Women's Centre

Manorhamilton This course outlines the basics we all secretly wished we knew! Topics covered will include using virus protection software, Zip and unzip files, set-up new email users, dealing with networking problems, scanning documents, free up disk space, unclutter a hard disk and learning to back-up your files effectively.

Introduction to Internet Marketing June 3rd, 6-8pm, Lough Allen Education Centre

This course examines how to optimise your search engine capacity and develop a user friendly, Google friendly website. Includes email marketing, google analytics, blogging, Google Adwords and link building.

Photography Masterclass: 10th May (booked out) contact the office to reserve a place on the next one.

Network members' Events

Natural Cosmetics, Sun 18th & Mon 19th May 10am - 4pm Orchard Acre Farm, Fermanagh Cosmetics are an area of growing environmental and health concern. The solution? Make your own! Expert tuition and natural ingredients with Pauline Corrigan. You will make and bring home:

- Moisturiser • Cleanser and toner
 - Lip balm and more
- Details from Teresa O'Hare 028 686 21066
www.orchardacrefarm.com
Email: info@orchardacrefarm.com

Nature and Archaeology Weekend, Manorhamilton July 19th & 20th
Details from Nuala McNulty, 087 9172143,
nulamcnulty@eircom.net

Cook With Sophia, Mediterranean Evening, Tuesday 13th of May at 7.30pm, Silver Bear Centre, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan www.beaessentials.ie
info@beaessentials.ie
Contact 049 95 23461

Wild Herbs, Energy Conservation, Poultry, Cooking and Various Gardening Courses, 17th-31st May, Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co. Leitrim.
www.theorganiccentre.ie
info@theorganiccentre.ie
Contact 071 9854338

Into Leitrim Woodwork events 17th (11am-4pm) and 22nd May (12pm & 7pm) Leitrim Design House The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim. Kids Wood World (17th) & A Demonstration of Green Woodworking (22nd) 071 9650533/50550
www.leitrimdesignhouse.ie
email: info@leitrimdesignhouse.ie

www.borderpeople.info

An information gateway, to address questions on crossing the border in either direction. Includes information on taxation, health care, social services, education & banking.