



GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE

GLENSTAL ABBEY, MURROE, CO. LIMERICK, IRELAND

ISSUE 19 SUMMER 2023 WWW.GLENSTAL.COM PHONE: (061) 621 000



GLENSTAL ABBEY, MURROE, CO. LIMERICK, IRELAND

Prayer is the foundation of our monastic life and each day in the monastery is centred around times of prayer, together and in private. The backbone of our prayer is the 'Liturgy of Hours' – sometimes called the 'Divine Office' or the 'Work of God' – where the monks gather in the Abbey church at appointed times to chant psalms and sing hymns to God, to listen to the Scriptures and to pray for the needs of the world. This daily round of worship consecrates the course of the day and night as the community gathers in the stillness of the morning, at the setting of the sun, and at the closing of the day.

W E E K D A Y S**6:35am: Matins and Lauds (Morning Prayer)****12:10pm: Conventual Mass****6:00pm: Vespers (Evening Prayer in Latin)****8:35pm: Compline (Monday - Friday: Night Prayer)
Resurrection Office/Vigils (Saturday)****S U N D A Y S****7:00am: Lauds (Morning Prayer)****10:00am: Conventual Mass****12:35pm: Sext (Midday Prayer)****6:00pm: Vespers (Evening Prayer in Latin)****8:35pm: Compline (Night Prayer)**

Liturgies are broadcast each day as per our daily timetable:

glenstal.com/abbey/webcam/

GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE :: ISSUE 19 SUMMER 2023

www.glenstal.com phone: (061) 621 000

A Summer of Hope



The days lengthen and the world of nature explodes into colour; summer is upon us and it is time, once again, to send out an edition of the Abbey Chronicle. We had a very joyful celebration of Easter this year with large crowds attending the ceremonies in the church and online.

During the holy season of Easter, Fr Anselm Barry went home to his eternal reward. After having lived a very long life, working in Glenstal, St Paul's in Rome and Wald in Germany, he passed peacefully into life on 6 May 2023. May he rest in peace.

Later in the summer we will have the joy of celebrating the solemn profession of Br Oscar. Br Oscar has spent the past year in Rome studying theology and living at Sant'Anselmo. He will return to Glenstal for the summer and make his Solemn Profession on 6 August, Feast of the Transfiguration. We are truly blessed to be able to celebrate such moments together as a community.

We are also very pleased that the second phase of the castle restoration project is now moving ahead. The excellent work done on phase one will be extended to other areas of the castle in need of restoration and repair.

As we journey through these summer months let us keep in our thoughts and prayers our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, in Sudan, in the Middle East and in so many other troubled places in our world. Let us ask the God of all consolation to bless his people, rain down justice upon the earth and keep us all in the ways of peace.

Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB

IN MEMORIAM

Anselm Barry

Monk of Glenstal 1949-2023

ABBOT BRENDAN COFFEY OSB

John Francis Barry was born on 24 March 1928 into a family of three boys and three girls. He entered the monastery of Glenstal on 11 March 1947 and took the name Anselm, becoming a member of what was then a fledgling community. Fr Anselm spent much of his long monastic life in Wald, Germany, as chaplain to the nuns and to the school. He made lifelong friends there and put down very deep roots. Anselm was at home in Wald and Wald was very good to Anselm.

As it happens, Fr Anselm was very aptly named. Saint Anselm, his patron, was born in Aosta in Italy. He became monk at Bec in Normandy and ended up being Archbishop of Canterbury. Was Saint Anselm Italian, French or English? I'm not sure the question ever really bothered him. Our Fr Anselm was the same. He was truly international and he too spent some years of his later life in Italy, at St Paul's in Rome. Many a bemused civil servant has struggled over the years to comprehend this

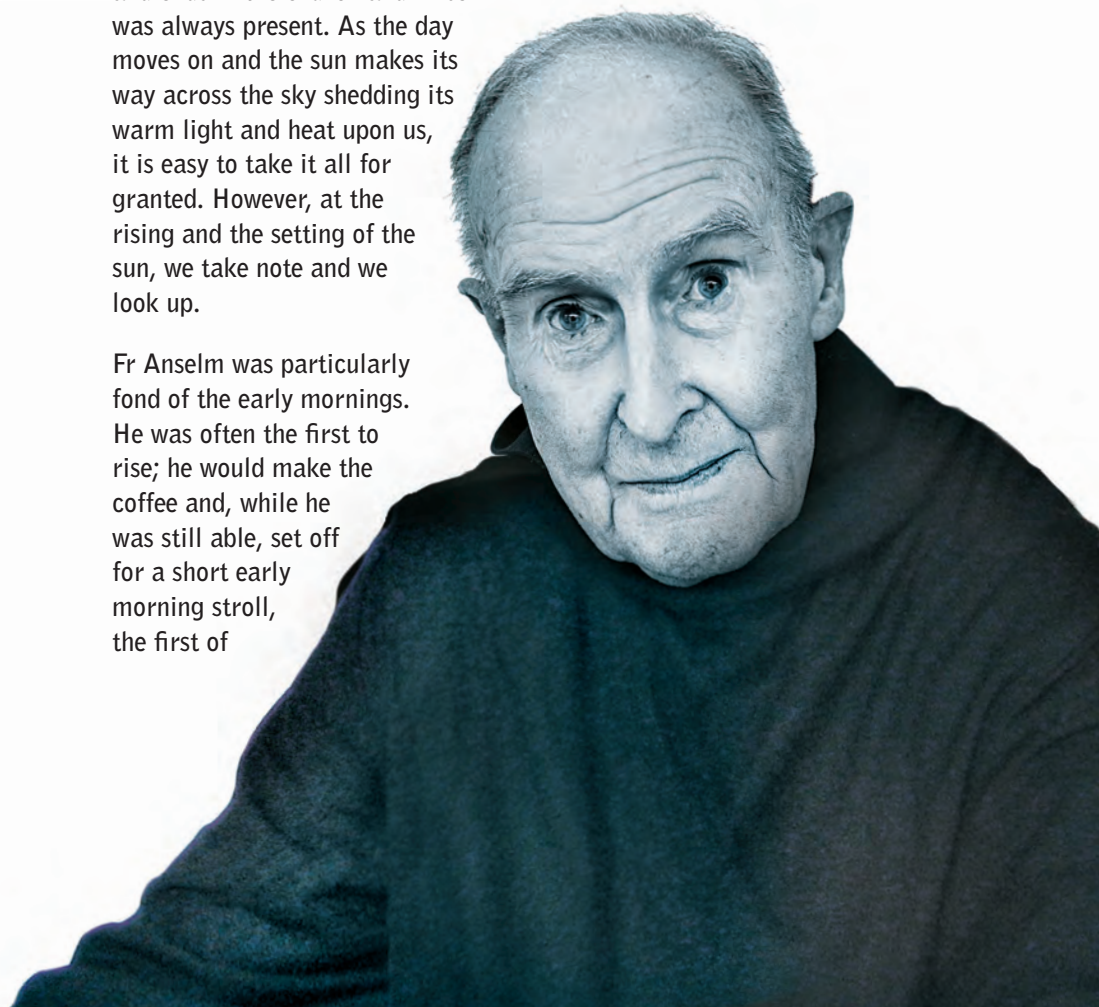
Irish monk with German health insurance and pension. However, wherever Fr Anselm was, he lived a similar daily routine.

The daily rhythm of the monk has two pivotal moments, sunrise and sunset. For a monk the day begins and ends in the church and Anselm was always present. As the day moves on and the sun makes its way across the sky shedding its warm light and heat upon us, it is easy to take it all for granted. However, at the rising and the setting of the sun, we take note and we look up.

Fr Anselm was particularly fond of the early mornings. He was often the first to rise; he would make the coffee and, while he was still able, set off for a short early morning stroll, the first of

several during the day. He saw many dawns in his long life and he admired the beauty and wonder of this daily miracle.

Once the sun rises, it gets on with its business. For Fr Anselm here in this monastery that meant work



in the library, in Wald it was the school and chaplaincy and in Rome hearing confessions and giving tours of the basilica. We thank him for all of his work on earth. All that we do is done under the light of the sun, yet we hardly notice her presence because we are all so busy with our tasks. The same could be said of the course of a human life. We are largely unaware of the gift that each living soul is until their sun begins to set and their light starts to fade. The odd thing about the setting sun is that, as it sets and its heat and light begin to fail, it seems somehow to grow in size. The same was true of Fr Anselm. An unassuming presence, in these last years, his presence somehow seemed to grow in size.

Our life is such a mystery, a gift of God that comes upon us unawares, filling us with wonder. All we really know is that one day this gift of life will return to its source, the Giver of Life. Living to a ripe

old age is in itself no assurance or mark of success. For any one of us, of any age, real success is understanding truth, living with God in love and sharing that love with others. The call from God to a monastic vocation in the Church is a great grace and a solemn responsibility. It is a lifelong vocation, regardless of what happens along the way. Fidelity and perseverance are very monastic virtues. Fr Anselm understood this and remained faithful as a monk to the end.

The sun went down for the last time on the life of Fr Anselm on the evening before the sixth day of May and he was ready and waiting. He passed from this world in the loving care of the staff of St Anthony's, Pallasgreen, for which we thank them. It is from God that we come when we enter life, and it is to him we return when we leave it. May God guard our Brother Anselm's going, on this his final walk into paradise, just as he guarded his coming. ■

Upcoming Events at the Abbey

ICE SUMMER CAMP 2 JULY – 6 AUGUST

From Milan to Madrid, Buenos Aires to Beijing, students aged 11 – 17 will descend on Glenstal for five weeks as we host yet again the Irish College of English (ICE) residential Summer Language & Activity Camp. Class based tuition, learning new skills, games, art, dance, cookery, cultural outings and forest walks, all while living in style in their castle overseas; now who wouldn't want that?!

OBLATE AND ASSOCIATES SUMMER RETREAT DAY 19 AUGUST

Our annual summer retreat day for oblates and associates is somewhat later this year, on Saturday, 19 August. A retreat day in our tradition is not only a time of rest and refreshment but has the possibility of becoming an encounter with Christ himself, who is our ultimate place of rest and renewal, source of

vitality and new beginnings. With him we find rest for our souls. The work of retreat givers, speakers, etc. is just to facilitate that encounter. The retreat day will be led by Fr Columba and Brother Oscar. In the Benedictine tradition some gentle listening to scripture is a particularly fertile source for spiritual awakening.

Fr Columba will introduce some examples of encounter with God from the Bible. The importance of the Bible over the centuries of monastic life gave birth to the famous scriptoria where monks patiently transcribed the Bible page by page, sometimes adding comments and even adding artistic embellishments of great beauty. Nowadays people don't normally copy the Bible onto vellum or papyrus, but some keep journals as a form of meditation and memory making. Br Oscar will focus on journalling as a spiritual practice, with space to do this during the retreat day. ■





Exploring Renewable Energy Options

A commitment to sustainability is not new to Glenstal, with our award-winning geothermal heating project now twenty-years old; but a new whole-campus project is now underway. Senior students Sam O'Farrell, Leo Cuddigan, Hugo Phelan, Brendan Collins and Ethan Tierney explain a range of new terminology that is part of Glenstal lingo: 'Green Schools Initiative', 'Energy Master Plan', 'Baseline Energy Audit', 'sub-metering', 'Register of Opportunities', 'solar energy panels', 'biomass boilers' and 'sonar technology'. Fr Luke highlights biodiversity in the monastery's woodland.

Galvanizing Momentum for Change

SAM O'FARRELL

Our journey on this project of sustainability began 1.5 years ago in Transition Year, a year when one can explore new interests or Netflix! I know it's a cliché, but you get out what you put in. With our teacher, Mr Cathal Reid's encouragement, we wanted to do something worthwhile, so that we could look back on the year with a sense of having achieved something. Embracing the Green Schools Initiative, we focused on problems prevalent in our commu-

nity: waste and litter. The success of this initiative, of becoming a more environmentally friendly and sustainable community depended on involving the 221 students, 102 staff members and 28 monks who share this beautiful campus. John Kiely, the Limerick Senior Hurling Manager, who recently visited the school, spoke of the pride, power, and potential that is unleashed by any team united under the same principles and goals.

Consequently, we first had to get everyone on board. We coupled our school motto of 'Reverence, Respect and Responsibility' with that of the Green Schools: 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'. A 'Glenstal Goes Green' logo was created, and we decided on our action plan. Bins were added around the school and avenue, notice boards with energy saving tips were set up, and many litter pick-ups were organised, inadvertently leading to a great archaeological find that put the great Br Colmán to shame: a Tayto packet from the last century!

This project is now part of the school culture and has led to the development of a campus wide

Energy Master Plan (EMP). One only needs to take a walk through the school atrium to see proof of this: notices with fun-facts and energy-saving tips, instructions to close windows, turn off lights, and use correct bins. Graphs of energy usage are posted around the school to visualise the progress in sustainability and energy saving that we, as a whole community, are making. This team effort has seen great success thus far, but with the EMP it is far from over!

Raising Our Awareness of Energy Consumption

LEO CUDDIGAN

As part of the school's Energy Master Plan, a Baseline Energy Audit (BEA) was conducted to measure energy consumption across our campus. This created a set of base figures against which future improvements can be measured. The Glenstal campus consumed 3,044,210 kWh



of energy in 2022, with oil representing 51% of that total, electricity at 29%, and other sources such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) representing the remainder. The audit calculated the energy use of particular areas, specifically the castle building, and the 1950s and the 1960s school buildings, enabling us to best focus our efforts in reducing energy consumption.

The use of data analysis from Electric Ireland played an important role in understanding the impact of internal factors such as kitchens and laundry on our total consumption as well as the impact of external factors, most notably the weather. The data helped to raise awareness of energy use. By posters and graphs, we illustrated the impact we all have on our total energy consumption.

Looking to the future, by installing submetering across our campus, we hope to isolate areas that disproportionately affect energy consumption while also creating some healthy competition. We hope to see a future where different sections of our community com-

pete with one another in limiting consumption, furthering our goal of reducing our energy use.



Developing an Energy Master Plan

HUGO PHELAN

The EMP developed over the past year and published on 21 February 2023 is Glenstal's plan to reduce our carbon footprint, and to start

generating our own renewable energy. This contains two parts. The first is the BEA, a report that sums up our energy consumption across electricity, oil, and liquefied petroleum gas for 2022. The analysis also shows us which areas consume the most energy.

After the BEA, we developed a Register of Opportunities. Here, we examine areas of high energy demand and prioritise actions to reduce demand. For Glenstal, one of the biggest drains on energy is the heating of the many old buildings. Having upgraded insulation in parts of the Castle, Cinema Gym, Molonium, and Guest House during COVID, we are looking at insulating other parts of the school and monastery. Following the converting of 70% of campus lighting to LEDs, we are exploring further electricity saving options, including modifying personal behaviours (e.g., shorter showers, turning off appliances, keeping doors and windows closed in cold weather). Regarding energy generating options, we are already operating a water source heat pump to supply 25% of the heat energy

for the campus. Sadly, the wind turbine option is not feasible due to wildlife concerns, but a solar PV installation is feasible. A biomass boiler could replace the fossil fuel boilers used for heat and hot water.

Now how are we going to pay for this? Thankfully, the SEAI has several grants that we can avail of which will help reduce the cost of many of these measures. The baseline of energy use in the EMP enables us to gauge accurately the energy saving effect of various initiatives. This objective support is required for grant applications. Some limited grants for solar PV panels are available. More advantageous is the operational support for biomass boilers under the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH), which covers a significant portion of the heating costs for a biomass boiler over the first 15 years. This could remove almost all fossil use from the campus. While it would require a significant initial investment, it could be repaid over time. Much has been achieved in recent years and yet there is more to do to protect the earth, our common home.

Exploring the Possibility of Sonar Technology

BRENDAN COLLINS

The possibility of installing a wind turbine was explored. A test mast was set up in 2008 and readings for 2008-2009 showed an average wind speed of 6.2 meters per second. The feasibility studies at the time questioned the financial viability.

The proposal was re-examined in the light of the current energy prices and the EMP. An Enercon E 40 turbine would at a conservative estimate produce 957,400kWh per annum. The electricity usage profile peaks in the winter months which would have matched the peak production from the turbine. However, there were several planning costs associated with the project. Since September 2022, the initial site of the test mast now falls within the Slieve Felim Special Protection Area (SPA) for the Hen Harrier. The designation

of the original SPA can be attributed to the pioneering work of documenting the presence of hen harriers by Ronan O'Malley while a student in the school in the late 50s and early 60s. In addition, a recent study conducted from July to October 2022 has confirmed the presence of an important bat species on the estate. These environmental concerns make the granting of planning for a wind turbine unlikely and so this project has been abandoned.

The use of sonar technology, presently being explored to divert bald eagles from turbines in the US, might help to divert hen harriers also. Emitting a sound at frequencies that is unpleasant to wildlife could discourage them from approaching certain areas. It is important to note, however, that this would require further research and testing to determine the effectiveness and safety for hen harriers. Hopefully, with technological advances, it will be possible to have both the benefits of green energy with wind turbines and protective measures for the natural bird life. *Continued on page 26.*





Instrument of Grace

WILLIAM FENNELLY OSB

According to the poet May Sarton, "everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace".





EMMAUS O'HERLIHY OSB

Having worked in the garden for the last year, an undertaking I assumed on the sudden death of Fr Brian Murphy, I learned that plants do their own thing in their own time. They grow, manifest beauty and, inevitably, decline all at a time of their own choosing.

A garden simply grows at its own pace and the monastery's terraced garden is no exception. About two

something to be revealed. Simone Weil, the great French philosopher, once wrote that, "attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer".

Labour in the garden is undoubtedly about prayer. Inasmuch as the prayers I utter when gardening vary, they collectively usher me toward a silence before a beauty that is more often than not, brief and solitary.

Gardening demands regularity, much as monks pray the Divine Office. And like the Office, it can form the basis of a spiritual practice that will ultimately change us for the better.

acres in size, it is constantly revealing different parts of its character. There's a certain powerlessness in the waiting for a garden to show its particular character. It requires patience. A gardener must learn to wait. For me, the apprentice gardener, I learned that this waiting involves attention. There is, of course, a necessary attention to the manual work involved when trying to nurture growth, but there's more. This sort of attentiveness is a waiting for

Rainer Maria Rilke, the Austrian poet and novelist, wrote that the "purpose of life is to be defeated by greater and greater things". Having spent most of my work in the monastery trying to accompany students through their adolescence to adulthood, I should have been better prepared. Early, idealised notions of how best to mentor students have long given way to the realization that, at its best, education is about helping students to become ever

more themselves by encouraging them to discover their own possibilities and embrace the adventure of character development. That the garden should be much the same, ought not have surprised me. But it did. And I'm glad of it, in spite of the fact that my expectations are constantly challenged. No amount of thinking can turn a garden into the hanging gardens of Babylon. Only work and growth could make that

order on the monastery's terraced garden. The idea of No Mow May (an annual campaign that aims to adjourn the use of lawnmowers during May in order to reactivate native wildlife) acts like balm to my soul. Although No Mow May offers a welcome respite from mowing the lawns, I must admit that the hope of a paradisiacal garden with perfectly mown lawns retains its allure for me, at least for the moment.

I was startled by this way of thinking: how a garden could teach me a theological point.

happen. In the present-day cyber-age, when computer graphics can tailor images to any particular desire, the garden stands as a solemn rebuke to such indulgent fantasies.

The word 'paradise' comes from the Persian word 'garden'. For the Persians, a garden was enclosed, formal and symmetrical; a clearly structured project to impose order on a chaotic and unruly nature. In spite of my better efforts, I have comprehensively failed to impose

The word 'humility' owes its origin to the Latin word *humus*, which means soil. I am not an especially humble person but the process of sticking my fingers into the soil over the last year has taught me a lot about how modest my mastery of the world really is. I have come to realize that a willingness to embrace such humility is not only the perfect starting point to becoming a moderately competent gardener. It is also the perfect starting point to becoming a better person.



DENIS HOOPER OSB



Last summer Bishop Erik Varden, a monk who has more recently been appointed bishop in Norway, spoke to us about Lent saying, "The forty days aren't just a time during which we have to grit our teeth in order to arrive at our destination. They are also a time during which the Lord would do something with us and in us". Working in the garden is doing something analogous.

with a seed growing into a plant. Of course, when I read the words now it seems obvious, but when I first came across them, I was startled by this way of thinking: how a garden could teach me a theological point. I am grateful for how the garden made this truth available to me in the same ways that I am grateful for the beauty of its plants and the pleasant smell of cut grass and blossoms.

President John F Kennedy once said, "as we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them".

There's an Anglican hymn about the resurrection that has the following very garden-related verse:

*Now the green blade rises
from the buried grain; Wheat
that in the dark earth many
years has lain; Love lives
again, that with the dead has
been: Love is come again, like
wheat that springs up green.*

I was quite literally shocked at how Our Lord's resurrection could be imagined as having something to do

One of the deeper truths of being human is gratitude. Appreciation of the world and all that moves within it is surely one of the great secrets of existence. As I prepare for a summer of playing catch-up with gardening that has been left undone throughout the school year, I look forward to living that gratitude. I take comfort and pride in knowing that I join the line of people named and unknown who have contributed to making the space beautiful.

The land here at Glenstal has been inhabited since at least the sixth century. The ringfort that lies just beyond the garden attests to that. There is a certain 'thickness' in the experience of beauty and human striving here that precedes — and will outlast — all of us. There is an irresistible enchantment of place that effects not only people but nature itself.

In its own way, the ancient yew tree standing in the monastic graveyard urges us to turn toward 'the light of the world' that beckons us to grow fully.

Some of the trees are very old. An ancient yew that stands in the monastic graveyard has been a silent witness to the residencies of the Carberry family and after them, the Barringtons and, more recently, the monks. Its stature effortlessly enhances this place, offering a larger and deeper perspective on all the living and the dying that has gone on here. It helps to remind us that life is so much more than the present moment. Rooted in

a particular place, it epitomizes unhurried light-oriented growth. In the gospel of John, Jesus describes himself as "the light of the world" (8:12). In its own way, this yew tree urges us to turn toward the light that beckons us to grow fully.

Each day of the year the monks meet in choir to chant the psalms together. As a prelude to the entire

psalter, the very first psalm underlines the importance in choosing between a life of virtue or vice. The psalmist refers to "a tree planted by streams of living water ... whose leaves never fade" (Ps 1:3) as a simile of the virtuous person who acts according to the principle of God's law of love. It's a picturesque image of grace that, I think, finds its echo throughout the grounds here, but most especially in the terraced garden. ■

Abbey Updates

BLESSED COLUMBA MARMION COLLOQUIUM IN ROME

To mark the centenary of the death of Blessed Columba Marmion, a colloquium was held on 28-29 April in Rome. Sessions took place at the Pontifical Athenaeum at Sant' Anselmo and the Pontifical Irish College. There were papers in three languages, with the speakers coming from Argentina, Belgium, Croatia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain, including our own Fr Columba.



In the last few years new attention has been paid to Marmion's works, which have now acquired the status of spiritual classics. One of the most interesting themes that emerged from the convergence

of various contributions about Marmion was that, alongside the ideas and expressions which he inherited or borrowed from contemporary writers and thinkers, there was another side to his spirituality which flowed from his own personal encounter with the deeper sources of scripture and liturgy. It was, in all likelihood, his communication of this personal spiritual experience that set his writings apart from those of contemporaries, and made them so popular across the world.

DOCTORAL DEFENCE

Br Emmaus successfully defended his dissertation at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto on 12 April with a thesis entitled: "Rethinking Liturgical Art: How Liturgical Art Advances the Principle of Liturgical Participation". By referring to a set of his own paintings, Emmaus' thesis identified possibilities for a new understanding of the interrelationship between the assembly and a work of art in its ecclesiastical setting. Emmaus is now eligible to convocate in November at the University of Toronto, Canada. ■

Continued from page 15.

Harvesting Solar Energy

ETHAN TIERNEY

Commonly visible on rooftops throughout Ireland today, Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels generate electricity when exposed to light. They could generate roughly 27% of the campus' daytime electricity requirements. These panels might be ground mounted in areas with sun but out of sight of heritage buildings. The other location would be the flat roofs of the school buildings. Ideally this could take place along with installation of a breathable membrane cover on buildings over 50 years old reducing dampness and aiding insulation.

With the rooftop location, civil engineering costs would be minimised and there would be no need for fencing to keep away fauna (deer). The installation of panels on roofs of educational buildings no longer requires planning permission as of October last making the path to solar even easier.

As is evident from the above, the future of Glenstal is bright; from panels to renovations to new additions there is an abundance of possibility waiting to be unlocked.

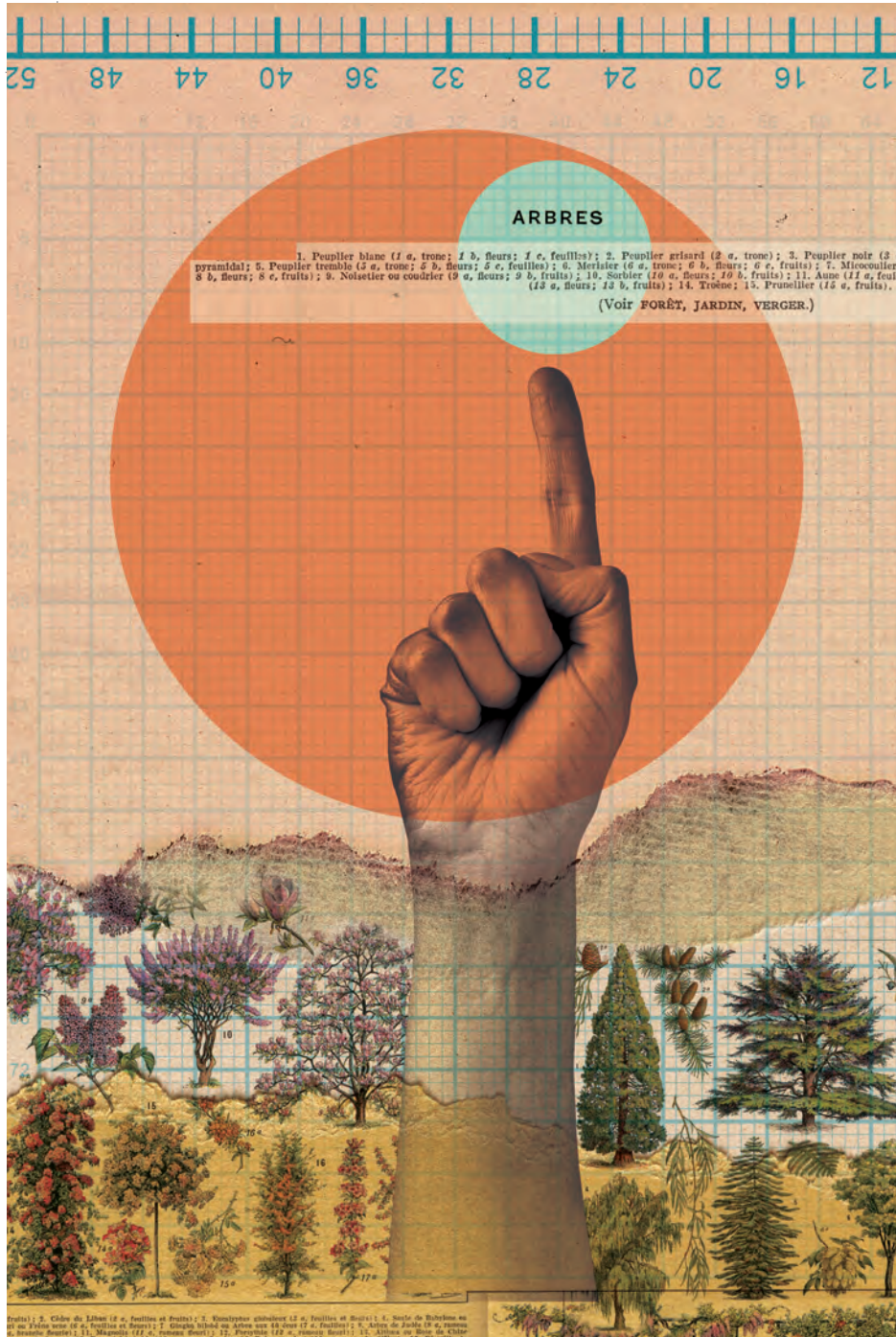
Fostering Biodiversity in Glenstal Woodland

LUKE MACNAMARA OSB

First and second year students with some senior students, along with teachers and monks, planted 300 trees in a long narrow field to the left of the back avenue of the Abbey in recent weeks. Expertise came from Connaught, Munster, and Leinster, and from the continent, especially Spain, Germany and France. The trees planted included, oak, alder, rowan, birch, cherry and crab apple.

With over 200 acres of forestry, much of it being native Oak woodland, Glenstal Abbey is already an oasis for biodiversity. Insects and animal life abound. The woods





provide essential hospitality for many endangered species, such as the Hen Harrier, the Red Squirrel, the Pine Marten, and nine bat species including the rare lesser Horseshoe Bat. The woods are also home to the rare Killarney Fern.

of the school in 1932, successive generations of students, teachers, and monks have planted trees to replace and extend the natural forest. The planting seeks to maintain this habitat for future



Climate change and associated storms, particularly storm Darwin in 2014, have led to significant loss of trees in the last two decades. Since the foundation

generations of plant and animal life, and for local inhabitants and visitors to enjoy. It is planned to continue this work and plant a further 300 trees this autumn. ■

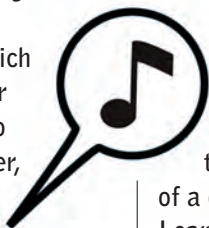
Song of Existence

We are only mouth... But suddenly the great Heartbeat enters into us invisibly and we cry out . . . and then are being, change and countenance. (Rainer Maria Rilke)

Jubilation comes from the Latin for a wild shout. Let our singing be such. We breathe a column of air formed by our singing together. Song gives shape and colour to the pillar of sound. This is vertical breathing: our cathedral of the moment which we build together. Different from horizontal breathing: in and out, which we do every minute of our lives, even in our sleep, to survive. Singing, as prayer, is attaching our voices

to an upwardly moving column. Each one releases ownership, unties the anchor from our hearts, sets the songbird free. Once outside it changes direction and joins the current flowing upwards.

Song is existence as existence was meant to be. Learn to forget for a while your other kind of singing. Join your voice to a deeper flow, allow your mouth to be opened wide by the energy of a different more distant music. Learn the words and the music by heart so the singing becomes an inner bloodstream. Let it carry you to where 'The Spirit and the Bride say come;' 'enter their courts with songs of praise'. ■



Glenstal Abbey Garden Cemetery

Glenstal Abbey Garden Cemetery provides a prayerful and peaceful environment for the interment of cremated remains. Each plot can accommodate one or two urns and is marked by a plaque of local grey granite for engraving individuals' names and dates.

Selecting a cemetery and space is an important decision. Advance planning gives you peace of mind and shows care and concern for your family for whom the final arrangements become less of a burden.

If you have questions or would like to arrange a personal tour, please email us at gardencemetery@glenstal.com or call the Bursar's Office at 061 621045.



WORKSHOP FOR CANTORS SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 10:15AM-11:45AM

**The Advisory Committee on Church Music of the
Bishops' Conference, in association with Glenstal
Abbey invites you to a Workshop for Cantors.**

Tea and coffee on arrival at Monastery Reception.
Donation €10. For information and enquiries contact:
columba@glenstal.com or phone **061-621000**