



# Gurteen Gazette

## July 2021

### Principal's opening words

Congratulations to all the students who completed their courses in 2021, you have shown resilience and fortitude, during a very disrupted year. We are very proud to welcome you into the Gurteen alumni - you will always have a unique story to tell about studying during Covid lockdown. The dedication, commitment, and strong team spirit of the Gurteen staff has again shone through with exceptional feedback and student survey results. We wish every student well as they leave Gurteen and start the next chapter of their story, we know some are embarking on degree courses, many are heading home to farm in the family business, and more still are starting new careers in various sectors of the agricultural industry.

Gurteen has a different buzz about the campus during the summer months, gone are the student cars and familiar daily pattern of bustling corridors and on farm practicals. They are replaced by teachers feverishly working to get all the corrections completed and results entered. As well as this, the housekeeping and maintenance team spring into action taking the opportunity to complete improvement work while there are fewer people on site. And of course, the farm team are facing into harvest.

I hope you enjoy reading the gazette, please do share it with friends and neighbours – better still encourage them to join our mailing list so we can send the next one straight to them.

-Jon Parry, Principal

### Want more frequent updates?

Follow us on all our social media pages!

 [Facebook.com/GurteenCollege](https://www.facebook.com/GurteenCollege)

 [@gurteencollege](https://www.instagram.com/gurteencollege)

 [@gurteencollege](https://www.twitter.com/gurteencollege)

 [Gurteen College](https://www.youtube.com/GurteenCollege)

 [www.gurteencollege.ie](http://www.gurteencollege.ie)



**Students doing a Tractor Pull, in aid of Charity.**



**Time for sheep shearing, and a great teaching opportunity for those students interested.**

### A Successful Applicants Day!

On June 24<sup>th</sup> we were super excited to welcome a number of our excited applicants, and their families, onto our campus! The day comprised of group tours of all our fantastic facilities including our state-of-the-art farm workshops, student accommodation and our teaching facilities. People were also encouraged to talk to all our staff about any and all questions they might have!

It was great to have people onsite, and it really gave a buzz for September when the course starts- we cannot wait to welcome our next intake of students into the Gurteen family and give them the best Gurteen Experience possible!

**If you're interested in visiting our campus, you can email [info@gurteencollege.ie](mailto:info@gurteencollege.ie) and we can arrange a bespoke tour, just for you!**



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## Farm Update

It's been a busy few months on the farm, but fortunately economics and weather appear to be treating us fairly at the moment! The lamb prices have been strong throughout the season, beef prices are climbing, the winter barley harvest went well, and the remaining crops look in good condition. As well as this the milk price held firm even through the peak supply months.

The final phase of our dairy development was completed in the spring when a new water ring main and additional troughs installed across the grazing platform, the investment proved vital during the recent spell of hot weather.

Sustainability continues to be a core focus of our farming process, the use of protected urea fertiliser and spreading slurry with a trailing shoe have helped reduce the farms ammonia emissions. Gurteen is part of the national Signpost farm network- looking at further developing practical approaches to meet the environmental challenges head on.

**-Jon Parry, Principal**



**In May we donated a weanling to the Hooves4Hospice cause. The money raised through the sale is put towards building a hospice here in the Midlands.**



**Winter Barley being harvested in glorious sunshine.**

## Course Update

The academic year has come to an end for our Full-Time students with Level 5 Certificate and Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture students completing their respective courses in June. Some Level 6 students have chosen to continue farming full time, at home or elsewhere. A portion of our Level 6 advance students have decided to continue with their studies to further education. We wish all our Level 6 students the very best in their chosen path.

The part time and distance courses are at various stages of completion. There's a part time and distance course which started last October, they have progressed well through the course and have nearly completed the Level 5 portion of the course. We also have a new Distance course that started in June which takes place on Saturdays. We're very pleased with how the new course is going! The students studying as part of the Bord na Mona and Laois Offaly ETB continue their course as planned throughout the summer twice weekly. We are also currently enrolling for another Part Time course due to begin next September.

Despite the challenges that the recent academic year has posed, the students and staff have adapted remarkably well. Blended learning is now a normal part of our vocabulary, zoom classes and Moodle are no longer so daunting. Covid has had many negative consequences, but I believe it has shown that education can be more accessible to those who may find full time study difficult.

**-Stephanie Scully, Assistant Principal**



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## Alumni Profile- Alex Butler

"I studied crops and machinery when I was in Gurteen, and I suppose the main reason I went to Gurteen was I knew a few previous students and they highly recommended it. Along with knowing a few of the lecturers, I knew I'd know a few friendly faces. Little did I know that was the case for all the Gurteen staff. The other reason I chose Gurteen was that the college let students get very hands on, on the farm. I have lots of great memories of Gurteen but one of my fondest memories was when a group of my friends pushed my car (black beauty) into the hallway of the main building opposite the canteen... needless to say it wasn't there long when Brendan came, but even though not very enamoured even he could see the funny side! From then on the micra was always locked.

Two winters' after leaving Gurteen, I went on to do a harvest in Australia with a contractor where we started cutting near the Queensland border and worked our way south to Victoria-a stretch of over 1600k . On returning home I started to get serious about farming and have been building up year on year with machinery and acreage. This has been a lot of hard work as even though I come from a contracting background there was no land at home . I started by renting a farm and from there I progressed to share farming, but I hope to rent more land in the future. I am fortunate to have got as far as I have as I now farm over 300 acres of combinable crops along with some grassland."

## Did you know?

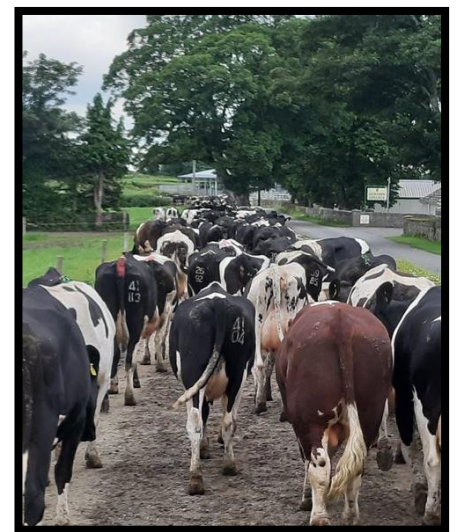
Gurteen College has a vast and wonderful history. What not a lot of people know though, is that Gurteen was the first college in Ireland to allow female students to attend right from the day we opened! It's something we're incredibly proud of!



**Our crops are starting to turn- it's time to look forward to the harvest period.**



**Alex Butler - Gurteen Alumni**



**We have a pedigree herd of 240 Holstein Friesian cows!**

## Are you an Alumni?

At Gurteen we're proud of all of our past students, and where life has taken them. If you have your own stories to tell and would like to be included in the next *Gurteen Gazette* then contact us today with your story!

We'd love to hear from you and catch up!

Email: [mparry@gurteencollege.ie](mailto:mparry@gurteencollege.ie)



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## Wildlife and Gurteen College

Here at Gurteen we're extremely lucky to have a wide variety of wildlife on campus. We've had sightings of kingfishers, red squirrels, and herons. To help protect these species and many others, and to conserve the rural ecosystems of Ireland we've dramatically reduced the amount of hedge cutting we're doing- as hedgerows provide perfect nesting grounds for birds such as the robins, wrens, and the elusive yellowhammers.

Protecting our local species is important and we're determined to do our part!



**A wild hedgerow on our farm. Leaving it wild like this creates perfect habitats for important wildlife.**

## Governor Profile- Dr. Bridget Lynch

Dr. Bridget Lynch joined the Board of Governors in September 2019, the then chair Karen Brosnan didn't need too long to persuade Bridget to join. Bridget currently chairs Academic Council and is a member of the Sustainability subcommittee. Bridget joined Teagasc, Johnstown Castle in January of this year as a Senior Research Officer in the Environment, Soils and Land Use Department. Prior to this, she was Associate Professor of Grass and Forage Science in University College Dublin where the majority of her research and teaching was based at UCD Lyons Farm. Having spent her early career in third level agricultural education, Bridget sees the value in the breath of commercial farming enterprises and land uses Gurteen has to offer its learners. Bridget is originally from Co. Waterford, growing up on a suckler to finish farm. She and now lives in South Wexford, farming a mixed dairy, beef and sheep farm with her husband, Pdraig and family.

Are you interested in studying with us? We have a **full-time** course, a **part time** course, and a **distance** course on offer! For all the information on the courses, and how to apply, you can visit our website at [www.gurteencollege.ie](http://www.gurteencollege.ie) or get in contact with us directly by emailing [info@gurteencollege.ie](mailto:info@gurteencollege.ie) and calling (067) 21282

## Gurteen Clothing and Merchandise

We're very excited to announce that we now have an **online shop**, hosted by O'Neills! If you would like to own some Gurteen branded clothing, you can buy it online and have it delivered straight to your door. You can get hoodies, jackets, gilets, and bags all with the Gurteen Crest on. Go to **oneills.com** and click on **Clubs & Education** and search up **Gurteen College**.





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## Level 6 student success story- Catherine Grier

My name is Catherine Grier, and I grew up on a Dairy and Suckler farm in Ramelton, Co. Donegal. I decided to pursue a career in the agricultural sector as I developed a huge passion for milking cows and helping out around the farm from a young age. Due to my enjoyment of practical learning, Gurteen became the best choice for me, where I have now completed two years and obtained my Level 6 Certificate in Dairy Herd Management.

I have to say these were the best two years I've experienced in a long time as I am so very thankful for all the help from the all the staff I have received. As a deaf student, I do find it very hard to keep up with what is going on around me in class especially this year, but the lecturers ensured I didn't miss a thing as they provided extra notes for me to what was being discussed in class and included subtitles in their videos. Without this help I wouldn't have gotten the results that I did get.

My late Grandfather Ivan Grier, who also was a past student back in the day and was a year above Gurteen's very own Richard Hamilton, played a huge part of my life through farming and football. To take off the farm boots and put on the football boots is what I do regularly as I am part of the Irish Deaf Women's football team, Doncaster Deaf Football Club, and the Donegal Women's team. My last outing with the Irish Deaf Women's football team was back in November 2019 where we went to Switzerland for the World Deaf Finals where we finished 9th place in the world, and I received player of the match against Spain which was a 4-4 draw. We are now hoping to qualify for the World cup in Brazil in 2022.

Within the success with my little football hobby, I have received a Sports Scholarship to study at the LYIT where I aim to study for a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Agriculture with Degree Award option of Animal & Crop Science.



**Catherine Grier, Level 6 Dairy Herd Management student, who gained a scholarship with LYIT**



**Principal Jon Parry awarding Catherine with flowers after her success in her sporting ventures.**

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**Walsh Plumbing and Heating Ltd.** have a longstanding working relationship with Gurteen Agricultural College providing Mechanical services.

We enjoy watching the College constantly evolve, like ourselves, to be the best we can be.

We wish Gurteen, its staff and students continuing success for many years to come.



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**Charles Gallagher of the IHFA presenting John Coakley and Aaron Murphy with their Student Bursary Prize.**

## Staff Update

We are delighted that Peter Grogan has stepped into the role of Assistant Principal, whilst Stephanie Scully takes a period of maternity leave, best wishes to Stephanie and her growing family.

Peter has worked as a teacher at Gurteen since 2017, with a focus on beef production and animal nutrition. He has developed a strong reputation at Gurteen and is very well respected by students and staff – he has a great eye for detail and a clear focus on helping students achieve their full potential. We are sure he will make a fantastic Assistant Principal.

Peter is a proper Gurteen success story, having left school he gained a distinction in the level 6 drystock management course here at Gurteen College, he clearly got the bug for learning and so progressed to Waterford IT and graduated with a first-class honours' degree in land management. Not satisfied with that he progressed to UCD and took a Masters in Agricultural Innovation. Having completed his own education Peters career turned full circle as he returned to Gurteen as teacher and now Assistant Principal. When not teaching Peter is kept fully occupied working in his family partnership on their home farm in Co. Offaly.

## Celebrating Success at Gurteen College

It's been a busy time here at Gurteen, but a wonderfully successful time for all staff and students!

In March we welcomed Charles Gallagher of the IHFA onsite to award both John Coakley and Aaron Murphy with the Student Bursary Prize! The IHFA Student Bursary is awarded based on a combination of a student's class project, IHFA assignment and an interview. Congratulations again to them for winning this amazing prize.

During their time at Gurteen, students complete a Personal Effectiveness module. This module aims to help them in personal and professional development with such skills as communication and project management. As part of this, the students planned and organised a charities day in May- supporting the likes of Embrace FARM, Irish Cancer Society, Mental Health Ireland and many others. Overall, our students managed to raise over €500 and we're extremely proud of the students!

In June we also were proud to present Chris Holton, Oisín Larkin and Caroline Enright with their trophies for winning the "2021 Beef Stock Judging Competition" at this year's inter-colleges Macra Na Feirme Challenges Day. It's wonderful to see our students succeed in such events- well done again to the three of them!



**Peter Grogan (left) stood with Chris Holton, Caroline Enright and Oisín Larkin who won the "2021 Beef Stock Judging Competition."**