



Gurteen Gazette

August 2025



Students getting stuck in with sheep shearing, under the guidance of George Graham.



While hosting a number of Church of Ireland summer camps, we received a visit from Bishop Adrian Wilkinson.



Our Winter Barley Harvest done under brilliant blue skies!

Principals Welcome

As the end of the summer term approached, the students worked tirelessly to complete and submit all the required assessments. Teachers focused on the detailed work of correcting exams and assignments, followed by exam boards. The great news is that Gurteen College has had another year of excellent student results, with a 98% pass rate on the full-time level 6 Agriculture course and a 100% pass rate on the full-time level 6 Equine course.

Some students found the work at Gurteen easy and breezed through the course whilst making plans for their future. Others were more focused on enjoying life, but with help and encouragement from their families and teachers, they managed to also gain a qualification.

Well done to every student who completed their studies in 2025. We wish each of them the best of luck as they embark on the next phase of their life.

Over the summer period the sounds and sights at Gurteen change - we host summer camps for various groups including Pony Club and Church youth groups. The lunchtime volume in our canteen seems to be inversely correlated to the age of the diners - I notice some of my more experienced colleagues subtly adjusting the time they choose to take a lunch break to avoid the noisier periods. Other summer visitors to Gurteen include various commercial organisations hiring our facilities for events. The EPA and DAFM both held well-attended training sessions, and a number of machinery companies held demonstrations of their latest equipment and technology. During the month of August, the campus will resonate with the sound of builders and maintenance contractors as we take the opportunity to complete some improvements before the new year starts.

Our final priority in the summer is to ensure each member of staff has the opportunity to take a very well-deserved break from work. In September, we anticipate welcoming a record number of residential students onto our campus, with the L5 equine course and level 8 Agricultural Science & Sustainability both bringing significant numbers of students to Gurteen.

I hope you enjoy reading the Gazette and catching up with our news. Please do share it with friends and neighbours - better still, encourage them to share their contact details with us.

-Principal Jon Parry



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Agriculture Course Updates

Two competing demands pull on students' time as the end of term approaches:

1. The clear need for individual focus on the final few assignments and exams required to successfully complete the course, and the constant reminders from teachers about the long-term value of holding the coveted 'green cert.'
2. The distant drone of a forage harvester provides a short-term lure of promised income and the joy of being part of a harvest team.

The change we witness in students during their time is one of the very real pleasures of being a teacher. We see many nervous or shy youngsters enter Gurteen and two years later leave as confident adults. Congratulations to everyone who completed their agriculture course in 2025 - we are very proud to have you as Gurteen alumni. Finding the balance between these dual pressures is another part of each students personal development and education.

Level 5 Agriculture:

Students on the Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture completed an 8-week period of farm placement in the spring and returned to Gurteen at Easter, eager to share their stories of working with prize livestock or driving significant horsepower! The final term of the L5 includes demonstrations and classes focused on seasonal practical skills such as sheep shearing and fertiliser spreading.

We hope each of the Level 5 students enjoys their Summer and will return to Gurteen in September excited to start their chosen Level 6 course.

Level 6 Agriculture:

The second-year agriculture students taking the Advanced Certificate in Dairy Herd Management or Advanced Certificate in Drystock Herd Management returned to Gurteen in late May, having completed a longer 16-week period of farm placement. The final few weeks at College are a combination of a few charity events, some fun activities, and the serious business of completing the last few projects and theory exams.

We are delighted that 98% of our Level 6 students passed the course; it's a great testament to the work they have completed over the previous two years' leave. We wish every one of them the very best in their next adventure, and hope they keep in touch!



Students were visited by Atkins Farm Machinery with a number of Fendt Tractors to do some demonstrations.



A group of our Level 6 students completed a sprayer course as the end of term finished up.



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Harvesting Hope – a future for sustainable agriculture?

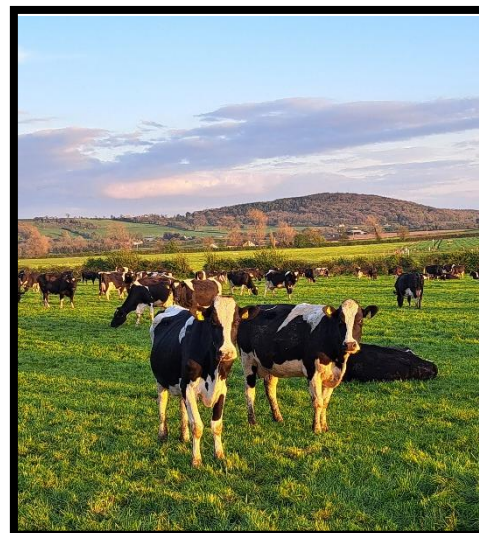
There is no question now but that we are living in a warming world and that we are largely responsible. It seems the longer we turn away from the problem, the worse it will get. We in the United Diocesan Council for Mission have been asking ourselves how we can contribute in a small way to a vision of a world where we live sustainably with nature, working with our Creator rather than against Him. For our sprawling diocese, of which is dominated by agricultural land, we think a good place to start is agriculture.

Many of our parishioners in unions and parishes up and down our united diocese make their living from agriculture. They and their families depend on it.

At the beginning of the year, the UDCM got some funding for a conference on the subject of sustainable agriculture. **It will take place on Saturday, 20th September**, in Gurteen College. This is an ecumenical venture with the Methodist Church in the context of our shared Covenant.

After the discussion sessions are finished, we will have a shared harvest service in Gurteen for our participants. John Feehan, noted naturalist, scientist, and theologian, who has written the definitive history of Irish Agriculture, will give the address.

We start at 10.00 am, where the morning session will focus on sustainable agriculture. It will be chaired by Jim Dwyer, a practicing dairy farmer and chairman of the Board of Governors of Gurteen. Joined by a panel that will include Ken Gill, an organic beef and tillage farmer, and Kim McCall, who manages a 214-acre mixed livestock farm in Calverstown, Co. Kildare. Staff and students of the degree course in Agricultural Science and Sustainability, which Gurteen runs in association with the Technological University of the Shannon, will also take part in this session, giving us their take on the future of farming.



After lunch, the discussion will address farming, welfare, and succession. Farming is the most dangerous and uncertain job of all; farmers have to cope with unpredictable weather events and seasons, attacks on livestock, disease risk and injury, isolation, unexpected global events that affect farmgate prices, and now, after being encouraged to maximise production, they are being told they are a major part of our country's carbon footprint problem! This is a time of great challenge as well as great opportunity. One of our panellists will be George Graham, who is well known for speaking of his own experiences and how he has overcome many challenges in his life. Also, at this session will be Embrace FARM, an organisation that supports farmers affected by suicide and bereavement. Succession is an issue of major concern to some farmers. Anne Marie Doherty will speak about this issue and the supports available to farming families to help them address it.

At the end of this session, approximately 3.30 pm, we will close with an ecumenical harvest service of worship and praise.

We are charging 20 euros for the day, payable at registration, and most of this sum will be donated to the work of Embrace FARM. You can also **book directly by contacting Michael Hanna at Michael.hanna4@gmail.com. Tel or text to: 087-8326113** Numbers are limited, so don't delay!





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We're very pleased with our Silage cuts.



Our suckler bred heifers enjoying the good weather!



The delivery of the tractors is one of our favourite days of the year!

Farm Update

The summer has been fairly kind for us here on the farm. Conditions for growth have been steady, which really helps when managing stock and filling the reserves. First and second cut silage were bountiful, with additional silage bales made too. The yields have given us great confidence in our winter feed stocks for cows and cattle, whilst also making sufficient bales of hay/haylage for horses and sheep.

Prices continue to be good on the farm with livestock prices continuing to trend above the average for previous years. Long may it continue and ultimately, it helps cover the increased cost of production.

Back in April we received our new fleet of John Deere Tractors from Templetuohy Farm Machinery- a day that's always exciting for us over on the farm! The delivery included the John Deere 6M 125, the 6M 130 and the 6M 140!

Breeding in the dairy and suckler herds have finished, and we wait for next week's scanning results to see just how well breeding has gone. Ultimately though, we are confident of a good result. We harvested our winter barley in perfect conditions in July, with a yield of 3.8 tonnes/acre and low moisture levels (17.5%). We sowed a crop of fodder rape direct into the stubbles which will be grazed by the sheep over the winter. We are hopeful of harvesting winter wheat and spring barley in the first week of August, but we don't expect any bumper crops but are ever hopeful!

Unfortunately, our challenges with TB continue, and we have lost significant numbers across our dairy and beef herds. Our next test is due in October, and like all farmers we live in hope that the test is clear. Fingers crossed!

That all aside, summer work continues in getting sheds washed and maintenance done before we start to house stock again. We are already making plans for next year in hopeful anticipation of another good year.

-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager



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Our first-years have completed their first semester at Gurteen; we're looking forward to seeing them back in September!



Degree students out exploring Scohaboy Bog.



Degree Course Updates

As our Agricultural Science and Sustainability degree students completed their last semester of the 24/25 year, it was clear to see both the mix of maturity developed in our 3rd years since completing Industry work placement and their excitement of moving forward to their last year of their degree programme. Our students were placed in a mix of businesses from Animal Breeding to Ag advisors to our Dairy co-operatives. Many gained summer work in their placements, confirming for us the need for their skills in the industry and the ability of our students.

Our 1st and 2nd years had their heads down for summer Exams at the end of the semester, a stressful time for some but also a chance to show their ability and all they have learned this year. Feedback surveys were very positive from the students, and it's clear from them that the mix of location for the course enhances the experience greatly for our students; the chance to experience Gurteen Farm's animals and its people adds a massive amount to the future industry leaders we are developing.

Provisional CAO application numbers came our way too for the Degree programme, and we are delighted to see so many first preferences for this TUS/Gurteen collaboration. This indicates strong 1st year numbers again this coming September. We also see many of our Gurteen level 6s looking to join the degree programme for the next semester. It's brilliant to see them want to take on the next challenge and stay in Gurteen to do so. Next semester, we will see the first time we will have 4 years running in the Degree programme. So, a busy year ahead, new challenges for staff and students, which I am sure both will rise to!

-Anne Marie Doheny, Degree lecturer



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Equine Course Updates

Wow, what a year that has been!

Year 2 is now complete, and we have officially got our very first year of Equine graduates, with graduation taking place in November.

It has been a very busy year to say the least. From the very first year, we have come quite a long way and we are continuing to grow.

Our Level 6 Graduates have now gone out into the Equine Industry after a successful time on work placement, with many remaining in their work placement locations to continue in full time employment! A fantastic achievement that truly shows the value of the work placements- plus we couldn't be prouder of our graduates!

Our students this year got to see many different aspects of the industry and got to meet people that are involved within the industry, such as Anne O'Connor the Executive Officer of Treo Eile who helps to rehabilitate Racehorses after their racing Career and Shirley Jones from Top Spec Nutrition.

The trips that the students went on included visits to The Irish National Stud, Kildangan Stud, Connolly's Red mills factory and the sales in Goresbridge.

With the new academic year fast approaching the Equine interviews have been conducted and for the first time the course has been oversubscribed.

With that being said, the course offers have gone out and we will soon be welcoming our new level 5 students to join our Equine course here in Gurteen in September.

The new academic year has a lot in store with new adventures to be had. The trips are being planned, the classes and exams are being put together and most importantly the horses are planning their return to Gurteen for the new academic year.

With that being said, it is now time for all of the equine team to have a very well-deserved break and enjoy the summer before the busy planning begins!

-Naomi Ruane, Equine Course Coordinator



Students had a fascinating visit to the National Stud for a tour of their facilities.



Recently the equine team headed out to the Mancy Equine College in France to explore possible collaborations in the future- watch this space!

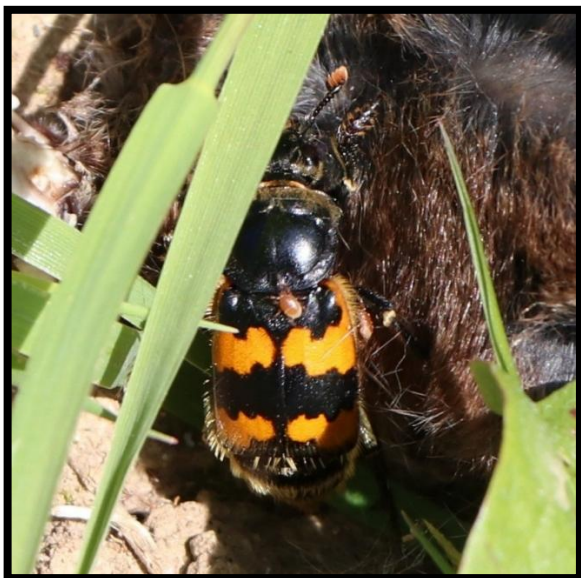


Level 5 Students completed their dressage exams before the end of term.



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Kevin Helion's exciting discovery of the beetle is a great find that highlights the biodiversity found on our farm!

Beetle discovery- their first sighting in Co. Tipperary!

While on a routine butterfly walk in May, Kevin Healion- one of the superb degree lecturers spotted a number of unusual beetles. Upon closer inspection it turns out this is a wonderful discovery that reflects our brilliant biodiversity across the farm:

"A species of black and orange beetle was found in Co. Tipperary for the first time, on the Gurteen College farm in May. The 'Common Burying Beetle' (*Nicrophorus vespillo*) isn't actually common, with only 42 records for Ireland listed with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and no records for Co. Tipperary until now. Three beetles were seen flying to a mouse carcass along the willow plantation by TUS lecturer Kevin Healion during one of his butterfly monitoring walks on the farm. The beetles are about 2 cm long and have a fascinating lifecycle. The parent beetles detect a small animal corpse from far away, bury it as a food store, lay eggs, then stay to care for their young larvae. The beetles thus play a valuable role in natural recycling processes. Thanks to expert Louise Garcia for identification based on the photos."

Want more frequent updates? Follow us on all our social media pages!



Our Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture students got well and truly 'stuck in' at the Bogathon at Lisduff Adventure Farm, as an end-of-year fun day to celebrate two years of working hard!

Final places for September 2025!

The start of the 2025/2026 academic year is quickly approaching- but we do have a final few places remaining- though we'd recommend you apply sooner rather than later so as to avoid disappointment!

If you're looking ahead and already planning on joining us in September of 2026, great news! Applications will open in October, plus our first **Open Day will be on October 10th**! Contact us now to book your place- we can't wait to see you!

Call (067)21282 Email: info@gurteencollege.ie

Website: www.gurteencollege.ie



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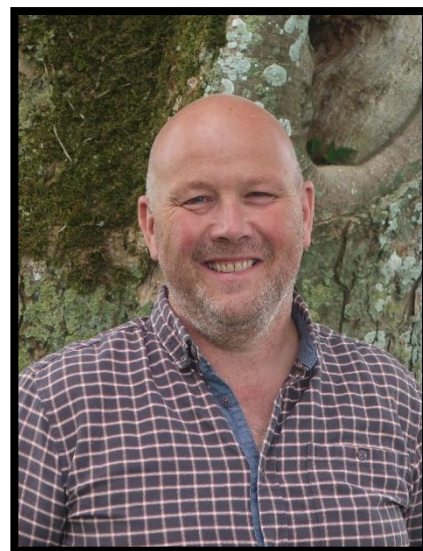
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Produced and Published by Molly Parry- Promotions and Social Media Officer

Staff Updates- Welcome John Flanagan!

We've been delighted to welcome John Flanagan to the Gurteen College team as our new Deputy Principal. Brought up on the family dairy & beef farm near Holycross, Tipperary, John studied agriculture first in Waterford, then the University of Aberdeen. Since graduating from there, he's gone on to work within the farming industry in Ireland, New Zealand, France, and Scotland. Having most recently worked as a Senior Policy manager for the national farm lobbying organisation NFU Scotland, John is returning to education with eleven years' experience, formerly working as a Senior lecturer in Agriculture at the Barony (Dumfries) campus with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

'From the moment I set foot at Gurteen I knew it was the right place for me. Gurteen has such a special, positive vibe; with fantastically dedicated and friendly staff. With such strong foundations, I am really looking forward to playing my part in building on Gurteen's existing strong reputation and contributing to future plans, as the college continues to evolve to meet the needs of successful rural sector and the rural professionals of tomorrow.'- John Flanagan



The easiest way to get to know him though may be through some quick questions! Here's the insight he's given us:

What inspired you to go into agricultural teaching?

That's a tricky question really. I never set out to be an agricultural teacher. That said, when I was farming in France and things were at a bit of a crossroads on the farm, I remember chatting to a family friend who commended working in agri-education to me given my experience. It totally piqued my interest and when a job came up with SRUC (Scotland's equivalent of Teagasc), it seemed like fate! It's really rewarding being a small part in seeing a young person fulfil their potential and awake their curiosity about the world.

Favourite tractor brand?

My favourite tractor make will always be Massey Ferguson. 'If it's not red, it can stay in the shed'. Some of the earliest photos of me are with my Grandad on an old grey Fergie and I have grown up around them as it was, and still is, the tractor of choice at home. I also love the Harry Ferguson story and the cultural icon that the '135s' have become.

Favourite sports and sports teams?

As a proud Tipperary man, hurling and the GAA run in my blood. I have played rugby and soccer, but nothing compares to the passion of Tipperary hurling. Well done to the lads this year. They lifted the whole county!

In our house each year, with the strong Scottish connection, the Ireland vs Scotland rugby match always has a big significance and gets the blood pumping too! You'd expect nothing less from two fiery Celtic nations!

What part are you looking forward to most when term starts?

As this is my first year at Gurteen College, I am really looking forward to meeting and getting to know the students and what motivates them. The start of term is always a mixture of anticipation and nerves for everyone, lecturers and students alike. For me, that shows how much everyone cares for the agricultural sector and the passion they have for it.