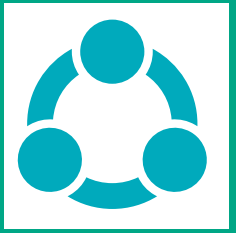


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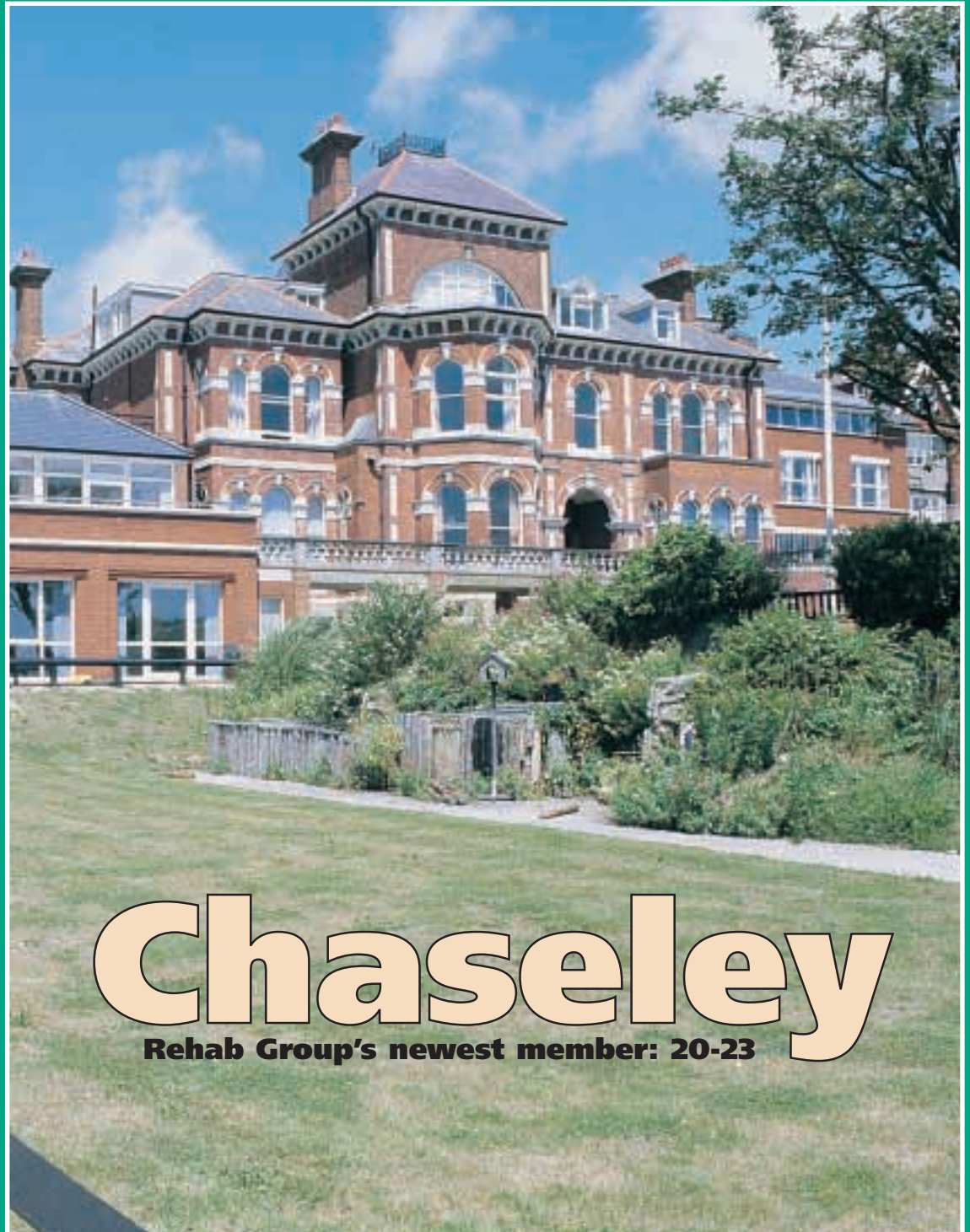
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Editorial Team

Published by the Rehab Group

Managing Editor:

Stephen Farrelly

Editor:

Chris Macey
(2057311)

Assistant Editor:

Dara Duffy
(2057268)

Contributor:

Dolores McKeever

Design:

Sean Mannion
mannon@indigo.ie

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Rehab Recycling Partnership is planning to restore Ireland's tarnished green image by doubling the country's glass recycling rate



Recycling plan

Rehab Recycling Partnership (RRP) has drawn up a blueprint to increase glass yields at its bring banks to a staggering 200 million containers a year by 2006.

The ambitious proposal comes in response to a Government initiative which will result in a massive expansion of waste recycling in Ireland, including investment in infrastructure totalling €127 million.

The RRP plan, titled Glass Recycling in Ireland – A Positive Approach, is based on a major up-scaling of its nationwide bring bank network to 3,600 sites from a current total of just under 1,400 over the next four years.

This will enable the company to single-handedly double glass recycling in this country to a minimum of 62,000 tonnes each year.

Said Gandon Enterprises chief executive, Ashley Balbirmie: "Ireland currently has one of

the worst glass recycling records in Europe. We reprocess just 31 per cent of our waste glass compared to rates of over 90 per cent in Europe's greenest nations.

"The RRP plan alone will double the country's recycling rate to 60 per cent at the very least, which will put Ireland well on the way to restoring its tarnished green image."

Mr Balbirmie said with four out of five glass containers from households around the country ending up in landfill, it was clear that members of the public were the chief culprits behind Ireland's awful recycling record.

"In fairness, however, there is a considerably lower concentration of bring sites in Ireland, compared to other European countries which makes it more difficult for Irish people to participate in the recycling process."

At present, there is around one public bring



Operations at the RRP plant at Ballymount, left and above.

has a lot of bottle!

site for every 3,000 people in this country. But in Austria, for example, there is one site for every 270 people – over 10 times more per capita than in Ireland. However, under the RRP plan the bring site density here will increase to 1:1000.

Mr Balbirnie said that all RRP is seeking from Government is half of the €11.93 million required to finance the plan from the funds earmarked to support recycling infrastructure.

This includes the cost of providing the new bottle banks, along with new buildings, plant and equipment that must be in place for the company to actually recycle the extra glass deposits.

“RRP is the only glass recycling company in Ireland that operates nationally,” he added. “It has been responsible for

every major development in the sector to date and in 2002 will carry out at least three quarters of all glass recycling in the State. As a result the company is uniquely placed in terms of expertise, experience and scale to deliver on Government policy.”

However, a significant challenge facing the industry is the absence of any market in the State for waste glass following the closure of the giant Ardagh plant in Ringsend. All recovered glass is currently going to Quinn Glass in Northern Ireland, but there is no guarantee this will continue into the future.

Additionally, transport costs make it uneconomic to sell waste glass abroad, whilst creating new markets through alternative uses for glass, such as in road

building, requires significant further research over a number of years.

“In spite of the Government’s commitment in this area, there is now a real danger that all glass recycling in Ireland could cease unless urgent action is taken to ensure that a variety of markets exist for our waste glass,” said Mr Balbirnie.

“One solution lies in Government subsidies being made available to defray freight costs incurred by companies involved in exporting glass for recycling. This would cost the State considerably less than the financial, let alone the environmental cost of landfill. As a complementary measure, the Government should fund research into alternative uses for waste glass, such as in construction materials.”

Ger Kelly and Martin Henry are among a growing band of NTDI graduates who have joined the ranks of the nation's entrepreneurs by setting up successful businesses. Rehab News tells their stories.

In a split second on an autumn day in 1989, Ger Kelly's life changed forever.

He was on his way to the University of Limerick where he worked as a barman when his motorbike struck a pothole as he took a corner and spun out of control. There was nothing he could do to avoid a head on collision with a van travelling in the opposite direction.

When Ger regained consciousness in hospital, he discovered that he had broken both his legs and smashed his pelvis in the crash. He was told he would never walk again.

But after a long and painful struggle, the Limerick man proved his doctors wrong by regaining the use of his legs. And his story doesn't end there. Today, Ger runs his own business in Limerick which he set up after completing an upholstery course in his local NTDI centre.

"My life changed completely after the motorbike accident. I spent four months



NTDI entrepreneurs

in traction and it took me another two years to recover. Even then, I was in and out of hospital so often that it was impossible to get back into the workforce, so I decided to enrol with NTDI."

Encouraged and supported by the staff at NTDI Limerick, Ger entered a portfolio for the City & Guilds Medals for Excellence and was one of just seven Irish people to be awarded with a medal. Ger was invited to travel to London in

June 2000 to receive his bronze medal from Prince Philip.

"It was obvious from the beginning that Ger had a natural aptitude and flair for upholstery," said Pat McConnell, upholstery instructor, NTDI Limerick. "But he also worked very hard. He passed all of his exams in just three months, an amazing feat when you consider that it can take others up to three years."

With his medical operations finished



and the NTDI upholstery course completed, Ger's thoughts turned to the future. "Starting my own business, is something I never even dreamed about before I started with NTDI. But when a suitable unit became available earlier this year, I decided to just go for it."

"The staff at NTDI Limerick were wonderful. They gave me great support and practical advice, and even helped me prepare the business plan. Now I have my

own business, I'm delighted to be able to give something back to the centre by providing work experience to upholstery trainees."

It's a good job that Ger has the help because business is booming at GK Upholstery. In addition to numerous private orders, Ger has been sub-contracted to do upholstery work for local bars and restaurants. He is already looking for more workshop space and plans to

Ger Kelly, left: "The staff at NTDI Limerick were wonderful. They gave me great support and practical advice, and even helped me prepare the business plan."

expand the business further in the near future.

Martin Henry is another NTDI graduate who has displayed true entrepreneurial spirit and determination. Martin is the owner of Mayo Computers, a thriving computer business located in Ballyhaunis.

Mayo Computers builds and adapts computer systems for homes and businesses, provides computer training, sells computer parts and carries out repairs and upgrades.

Although only up and running a few months, Mayo Computers is already doing well. Martin employs a full-time trainer and two part-time assistants, and with further development and expansion plans in the pipeline, it's likely this number will increase in the near future.

Martin had been working as a computer operator in a local factory until he was injured in a horrific DIY accident. As a result of the accident with a circular saw, he lost the use of a finger and a certain amount of feeling in his left hand. The accident had a huge impact on Martin.

Continued next page

Martin Henry, pictured with his wife, Martina. Martin started his business, 'Mayo Computers', after completing NTDI's Information Technology by Distance Learning Course.



“It totally changed both my working and family life. I was one of those people who had always been on the go and then suddenly everything was brought to a full stop. I had to give up work and spent most of the year in and out of hospital.”

In March 1999, he enrolled in NTDI Castlebar's Distance Learning programme and had achieved ECDL and NCVA Level II certificates within 18 months.

“Distance Learning was the perfect solution as it meant that I could stay at home, study and look after my young son while my wife went out to work. The course itself was excellent. The standard of training and the level of support was superb and the tutors were always open to input from the students.”

“There was a really good social element to the course. The monthly meetings were a great way to get to know other students. I had been quite down after my accident and the meetings really opened up my eyes to the fact that there are people out there who are worse off than me.”

And the course offered a lot more than just IT training. “We covered everything from effective communications to self-development and received practical advice on issues such as health and safety and enterprise awareness. In fact, throughout the course, students were encouraged to think about setting up their own businesses.

“I think that it can be very difficult for people with disabilities to gain employment. A lack of education and awareness

among employers is a big problem. They need to focus more on people's ability and not just the disability. It's a shame that such capable and qualified people are not being given a chance to secure a job.

“Self-employment is a solution to this problem, but it's not an easy path. The Government could certainly do a lot more to encourage people with disabilities to set up their own businesses, particularly through grants and financial supports. Despite these difficulties, it's great to see an increasing number of people with disabilities putting their skills and talents to use by setting up their own businesses and becoming employers themselves.”

You can contact Ger or Martin at:

Ger Kelly: 061 458 481

Martin Henry: 0907 32843

Rehab's longest established training centre is to host a groundbreaking project for recovered drug users



Rosaleen Doonan and members of staff at Coolamber.

Coolamber opens doors

A new chapter in the colourful history of Coolamber Manor – Rehab's longest established training centre – will begin shortly with the launch of a groundbreaking social inclusion project for recovered drug users.

The NTDI centre in the magnificent manor house, which is set on 150 acres at Lisryan in County Longford, had been facing closure before agreement on the programme was reached with the Department of Tourism Sport & Recreation and the Eastern Regional Health Authority.

But from August, Coolamber will now become home to an initial group of 10

live-in students who have all proved their willingness to turn their lives around after overcoming drug addiction. "Many of the participants will be from marginalised areas, whilst some will have no educational qualifications and will never previously have been in employment," says NTDI Longford area manager, Rosaleen Doonan who came up with the idea for the programme. "In a lot of cases they will also have extremely low levels of confidence and self-esteem."

"This combination of factors makes it difficult, if not impossible for these people to turn over a new leaf by getting a job and becoming productive members of

their communities. This is where NTDI can help."

The one year programme, simply called Coolamber, will provide the participants with certified skills training leading to employment, or further training and education. Crucially, they can also tap into any other supports they require – from literacy and numeracy training to help in developing their social skills.

Already, a major refurbishment programme has been completed at Coolamber, along with construction work on equestrian, gymnasium and other leisure facilities. These will not just be

Continued next page

open to the programme participants, but also to the local community on a membership basis.

NTDI developed the project, which will cater for 20 students when it is fully established, following concerns that Coolamber would have to close as a training centre due to dwindling numbers for some existing programmes, coupled with the costs of maintaining the facility.

“This programme could never have got off the ground without the immense contribution of regional programme development officer, Sheila Byrne and all the Coolamber staff,” says Ms Doonan.

“But now the future of Coolamber as an NTDI facility, which it has been for 40 years is secure. The programme not only safeguards existing jobs locally, but will lead to new job opportunities for the duration of the programme which we hope will be long-term.”

Meanwhile, programmes that were previously based in Coolamber have been relocated to NTDI’s state of the art new centre at Grafton Court in Longford town, as part of an expanded local service.

Coolamber is unique within NTDI in offering a residential facility, which Ms Doonan says is vital in giving participants the “opportunity to have space away from their own communities, a factor, which, may have significantly contributed in the past to their drug dependent lives”.

“Once the students have acquired all the social, vocational and educational skills they require, they will be re-integrated back into the community, either in



employment or further training with the assistance of their local NTDI centre.” The first step, however, is a two week period to assess each prospective participant’s understanding of the programme, as well as their ability to sustain a drug free lifestyle and their motivation to change their lives for the better.

“The programme is open to anybody over 16 years of age from anywhere in the State who has recently completed a detoxification programme,” according to

Ms Doonan. But the assessment procedure will be extremely strict and all participants must be one hundred per cent drug free. Random testing will take place throughout the duration of each programme as part of the entry conditions.

“NTDI is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for staff and service-users alike and once the programme is up and running a liaison group including nominees from the local community will be established.”



The programme is open to anybody over 16 years of age from anywhere in the State who has recently completed a detoxification programme

ers to employment. It will also look at identifying individual needs in relation to job/training retention,” says Ms Doonan.

Throughout the programme educational support will be provided by a full time remedial teacher to deal with literacy/numeracy issues. Psychological supports will be provided by a full-time counsellor supported by a full-time rehabilitation psychologist.

With participants remaining at Coolamber throughout the year long course, except in the case of family or medical emergencies, huge effort has also been put into developing an interesting and varied recreation and evening programme.

This includes a wide range of activities including IT, art, equestrian, gym, project work, football, basketball, adult literacy and life management. There is also a games room and special facilities for musicians.

Supervised social outings will also form part of the programme.

“This is the first programme of its kind for ex-drug users in Ireland and possibly anywhere else,” adds Ms Doonan. “Through its emphasis on vocational goals, it will help each participant to map out their own specific route to a productive and independent life and give them every conceivable support in getting there.”

Those considered suitable will then be invited to reside in the centre for a further two week assessment, so they can decide if they feel able to commit to moving to Coolamber for a whole year.

The first stage of the programme involves modules such as healthy lifestyles, learning to learn, personal development, health and safety as well as an introduction to a variety of vocational skills training.

The second stage involves a greater

concentration on vocational skills in areas like horticulture, equestrianism, agriculture, hotel hospitality & accommodation and IT. Other modules include personal development and creative skills which also carry certification.

The final stage of the programme covers areas such as career decision making, job seeking skills, research/site visits and job placement with support.

“This stage will focus on identifying career paths and tackling potential barriers