

Heritage Week 2014

“Ensuring and Guarding Affordable Housing for Biodiversity”

Macroom Library, Tuesday, August 26th, 2014



Themed “ensuring and guarding Affordable Housing for Biodiversity”, the aim of the presentation was to introduce participants to the language of what is understood by “Sustainable Development”. We all understand the growing need in Ireland to provide “Affordable and Social Housing” for those of our Citizens that lack the finance to procure a Bank Loan. And a noble aspiration it surely is.

The Heritage Talk commenced with the question – “Are you breathing? Thank a Tree”, intended to remind us of the value of our Air. We breath long, deep, joyful breaths because of the Global Forest and the Food Chains within our Woodlands – a mature Tree eats the CO₂ of two adults and 2 children annually. By “atmospheric exchange” our Carbon Exhausts (out-breath) are absorbed by Green Plantlife and by Chemical action combined with Sunlight, Oxygen is produced abundantly. Mammals can survive 5 minutes without oxygen.

Three quarters of life on Earth (Biodiversity) are dependant on or associated with native Woodlands and Individual Trees. Our Irish Oak supports 264 Irish Insects – the introduced Horse Chestnut according to research, hosts 4 insects.

The Global Water Cycle is intimately connected to and affected by our Global Forest – the reverse is equally true. As Deforestation accelerates in the developing World – to feed; clothe and shelter our rapidly expanding Human Population – the Climatic Thermostat is impacted. The Forest uptakes Surface and Ground Waters and “respires” (Mammals “perspire”) fine aerosols of pure H₂O into the Biosphere. Mammals can survive 5 days without Water.

Our Air and Water are produced by the functions and cycles of Earth’s Biodiversity. But Nature needs space to function!

“Hedgerows measure the success of the Irish Farm” according to Diana Beresford-Kroeger (Nuclear Botanist/U.C.C. Graduate). Bats and Butterflies travel our countryside by field boundaries – the former being Nature’s Pest Controls Corps – the latter an important pollinator – more so since the decline of Ireland’s Honeybee population.

Diversity within Species was demonstrated – we presented two Irish Oaktrees with very different features: - the Upland Sessile Oak and the Lowland Common form. Each has mastered their chosen habitat.

Our potted Oak Specimens sat easily with their primitive ancestor – the Common Yew Tree. Deciduous Trees evolved in recent geological Time. Coniferous Forests once covered a hot-humid-swamp landscape with dinosaurs roaming (all 60 ton of them) during the Upper Jurassic.

Within our Upland Blanketing Bogland (and Raised Bogs), 192 Species of Plant and Animal have found their home. Capacity to adapt to very acidic environments reminds us of the Passion for Existence inherent in all life-forms.



Recalling John Paul II's reference to Dante's description of Earth, as "Only Flower Garden of Cosmos" – the loss of Species to Extinction, as subtle as the growth of our fingernails, will unravel Earth Ecology.

Human inroads into areas that support Vulnerable and Endangered Habitats represent "Bad Planning" – unless the impacts can be proven not to pressurize or threaten that Habitat's capacity to "Self-repair". We call this "Sustainable Development" – balancing the needs of 9 Billion Humans (2050) with safe-guarding the very Engine that maintains Life on our Pilgrim Planet.

Participants afterwards gathered in Macroom Demesne and planted a grafted Brian Ború Oak Sapling and 2 Common Yews on a 1.6 Acre site, provided by the Demesne Trustees for a 3 Year Community Woodland Planting Project.



The Author thanks Macroom Library for the venue – the volume of attendance both endorses Heritage Week in Macroom and bodes well, we pray, for our guardianship of Wilderness Space – no matter how big or small. The 167 associated Insects on an Irish Silver Birch in a Town garden need that particular species of Tree – guard their home.

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