

MAD ABOUT CORK



Urban gardening

– Mad About Cork on their inner city projects

Mad About Cork is a group of volunteers making positive changes in our city through street art and urban gardening. Formerly of Reimagine Cork, we have been holding weekly meet-ups for the past year where anyone can come along to help us make Cork a little better. So far, just a few hours work every Saturday has gone a long way.

Driven and organized by artist Alan Hurley and journalist Kevin O'Brien, our volunteers have created and maintained a guerrilla garden on an abandoned site on Kyle St and planted up a disused jetty on Patricks Quay. We've built and installed flower boxes on North Gate Bridge and Coleman's Lane, and we've recently begun making moves onto Douglas Street.

We've also painted numerous pieces of varied street art around town. Most recently we've created tributes to the woman known as 'Cork's Schindler', Mary Elmes, an unsung hero of World War 2; and also to the legendary The Frank and Walters, with Taylor Swift throwing shapes to their song 'Tony Cochrane'. These pieces are painted on electrical boxes and can be found on the South Mall and Grand Parade respectively.

Right now we're planning a project that will

see us grow fruit and veg around the old town area of the Coal Quay. To help us on our way, we've been lucky enough to be awarded a grant from GIY Ireland and Energia's 'Get Ireland Growing' campaign. Our aim is simple – to bring members of the community together and to grow edibles in the heart of the city. Some of the things we'll be growing will be a nod to the Coal Quay's past. These include onions and potatoes, all of which would have been sold in the area by the Cork 'shawlies' in days gone by. There was even a time when the area was known as 'Potato Quay'.

Our plan is to build large wooden boxes filled with soil and install them on a site on Corn Market Street. These boxes will be used for the larger vegetables like potatoes and onions, while we'll also use recycled plastic containers for growing strawberries, lettuces, and herbs. Luckily, we have a plant scientist on-board, John O'Sullivan, who spent five years researching sustainable potato production in the Andes. Even though the Coal Quay is a long way from South America, John should still be able to lead us to a bumper crop of Golden Wonders at the end of the summer.

With the project set to begin in early April

we'll be looking for volunteers from the local area and the wider Cork community to come help out on this project. No experience of gardening is needed, just a willingness to get stuck in on any Saturday you are free to do so.

Along with this project we'll also be working on lots of other urban gardening and street art projects in the coming months. Keep up to date with our work @MadAboutCork on Facebook, twitter and Instagram, and to get involved email info@madaboutcork.