

Let's

Talk

WATER



Galway  
Atlantaquaria

## What an inspiring night for all, the first 'Let's Talk Water event'!

The first 'Let's Talk Water' event at Galway Atlantaquaria took place on March 27th, 2025 in our AV room, beautifully redecorated by artist Mairead Brennan last year, and it was an absolute blast!

We have decided to start this new series of evening events, taking place every third or fourth Thursday of the month between February and May 2025, as part of our mission to promote ocean and water literacy.

In fact, 'Let's Talk Water' is meant to be a space for all types of stories of connection with water from across Ireland, from academic research to arts and community projects concerning our ocean, lakes, rivers, canals, and transitional waters.

***On March 27th, we heard three fantastic examples of these stories, all very different from each other!***



**Dr Luca Mirimin (Marine and Freshwater Research Centre, Atlantic Technological University Galway)** who provided a snapshot of the latest scientific discoveries in the field of environmental DNA (e-DNA) research, which allows to obtain genetic information from organisms without catching or coming into direct contact with them by testing samples of the water bodies where they live to detect their biological traces (e. g. cells). Firstly, Luca showed the audience the main tools scientists like him need to study e-DNA, like nitrile gloves, large syringes to collect water samples, and a portable sequencer, i. e. a small device which is fundamental to do the magic of telling who the DNA traces found in the water belong to.

In fact, when he began his presentation, Luca guided the audience to understand how DNA allow scientists to distinguish different species, and then he showed how the study of the e-DNA, since its first implementation less than 20 years ago, has revolutionised the way we understand biodiversity by giving scientists the opportunity to track down species living in extreme environments where direct observation is almost impossible, like e. g. the deep ocean.

By sharing a number of case studies, Luca demonstrated how e-DNA can be used to understand human impacts on the health of marine and freshwater ecosystems.





**The second story was shared by Jennifer Cunningham, the Project Manager of Corrib Beo, a voluntary environmental group established in 2019 to restore, enhance and protect Lough Corrib and the Corrib catchment as a sustainable living ecosystem.**

Jen started her presentation describing the unique features of the Lake Corrib, which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), as well as the imminent threats that concern it. After this introduction, she explained how the work of Corrib Beo to achieve the mission of the organisation is built on six key pillars, and she focused in particular on two of them, i. e. 1) education, by showcasing the Eco Advocates field trips, which involved over 850 TY students, and the school field trip in Lough Carra in collaboration with the Lough Carra Catchment Association, and 2) environment, by explaining how Corrib Beo has come together with Corrib anglers, farmers, environmental organisations, a group water scheme and other community groups to create the Corrib Catchment partnership, which mission is to work together to address water quality issues, partnering with local communities and schools.

To conclude, Jen showed a video summarising some of many fantastic activities the amazing Corrib Beo has carried out recently, and she also engaged the attendees with a 3D model box showing the effects of water nutrient pollution.



**The protagonist of the third story was Dr Siobhán Keenan Fitzgerald, the Principal of Eglish Primary School, a Dublin City University Changemaker School.**

Siobhán is a mother, educator, TEDtalker, poet and author. She has always been deeply inspired by water, especially the sea, and in fact her talk focused on the topic of the inspiring nature of water for creativity. In this view, Siobhán recited some of her poems inspired by her own experiences with water, two of which you can enjoy below. Siobhán wrote 'Dansui' when living in Japan, and it talks about a water shortage and the potential peril of that. 'A Part of the Sea' is a poem she wrote over many walks on the Promenade in Salthill and finished on a ferry to France with her family last summer.

"When surrounded by sea, it's hard not to contemplate how small we are in the grand scheme of things or are we. When surrounded by sea, many thoughts, feelings and ponderings are stirred", she said.

Siobhán also read the poem 'Feamainn na Farraige' that she wrote 'as gaeilge' when she was a 18-year old attending the Irish College in the Gaeltacht in Kerry, looking out over the sea at the 'Fathach Marbh' in the Dingle Peninsula.

### 'Dansui' - The Water Runs

How close we were to how it is  
For millions  
But we survived, the lucky ones.  
For us the water runs.  
That it should take nature's hand  
To ridicule the folly of man's  
Reliance on money.  
How many yen would we have  
spent.  
To access her omnipotence.  
Beguile the clouds to hide the sun  
And let the waters run.  
We had no need to dance for rain.  
The water flow begins again.  
Our shortage but ephemeral.  
We had no thirst, we stored at first.  
And slept while there was none  
And now again, the waters run.  
A waterfall with water,  
A fountain now with springs,  
A stream that once more ripples.  
A singing brook that sings.  
For now, it's clear that I can see  
what before I took for granted.  
How close we were to how it is  
For millions.  
But we survived, the lucky ones.  
For us, the water runs.  
Far we remain from knowing the  
pain  
Of penury. In other lands with  
warmer suns. No water ever runs.

### A Part of the Sea

I open up to greet the sea and see  
in it  
a part of me,  
Over there, so wild, so free,  
It rolls along apart from me.  
Everything comes and goes,  
Every wave ebbs and flows,  
Looking at this vast expanse,  
A sea of dreams, a sea of chance.  
I open up to meet the sea,  
as its waves lash towards me  
Dip my toe as waves advance  
Where to go and take that chance  
I pick the stones its waters smooth,  
Feel in my bones what I always  
knew,  
These lashing waves, they smooth  
and soothe me too.  
When overwhelmed by woes  
today,  
this scene can put those thoughts  
away  
Thoughts of worry, wonder,  
sorrow,  
The waves will lash again  
tomorrow  
I feel the magic of the sea,  
Its power, peace wash over me  
Reminding me how small are we,  
apart from and a part of the sea.  
I feel the lure of the sea,  
its balm of calm caressing me.  
Below the surface, a world so vast,  
where life and change are  
happening fast.

And what you see, a mystery,  
a deep releasing sigh,  
The reflected colour of the sky,  
rippling waves roll by  
I open up to feel the waves,  
as they ripple, roll and rise  
Brave them like a surfer who has felt the lows and highs.  
The mysterious magic of the sea,  
its power, peace wash over me,  
Reminding me how small are we,  
apart from and a part of the sea.

The poetry of Siobhán Keenan Fitzgerald sounded even more powerful surrounded by the gorgeous waves painted on the wall of our AV room by artist Mairead Brennan.

We look forward to welcoming you all to our next 'Let's Talk Water' event on April 24, when we will have three more fantastic speakers who will give us very different perspectives about how we can connect with water. Keep following our website and social media to learn more about it!





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