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Is it worth it?

Tralee, €120,000



What it is: A two-bedroom, semi-detached house within walking distance of Tralee town centre.

The problems: This little house comes with two features any owner-occupier is likely to want to remove: the sitting tenant and the old-fashioned heating system, which combines electric storage heaters with a solid fuel stove. One of the bedrooms faces the street, windows are single-glazed, and parking is on-street.

The advantages: Vacant possession apparently poses no problem. A canny investor might opt to play landlord, however, given the current €125-a-week rent more or less covers the monthly payments on a mortgage. There's also no stamp duty. There's a side entrance and decent rear garden and the town centre is nearby.

✦ *DNG WH Giles, 066 712 1073*

Dara Flynn



"SOMEONE SUGGESTED WE GIVE THE TRICKY WALL A PUSH, BUT IT REALLY DID FALL DOWN ON ITS OWN!"
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Time and place Lainey Keogh

A close-knit community

Lainey Keogh, 50, the fashion designer, remembers her time in Leeson Street, Dublin, when she fell in with U2's crowd and found her calling by making a sweater for their producer

I lived at No 73 Upper Leeson Street, at its junction with Morehampton Road, in 1982. I was young, free and single. My sister, Irene, and I found this place. It was a garden apartment with long back and front gardens, so we were in the green. It was in an old building with beautiful light and high ceilings.

I was working at St Vincent's Hospital and I would cycle to work. It was a breeze. I had done microbiology at college, but while working at the hospital I discovered that I didn't want to be a microbiologist. I was meeting lots of interesting creative and artistic people — the kind of people I have always been drawn to.

Irene was managing Windmill Lane Recording Studios, and a band called U2 were recording there. One evening, I went to have a pint with her at a pub just around the corner from the studio, and I met Adam Clayton [U2's bassist], Steve Lillywhite [the producer], Paul McGuinness [the band's manager] and Bill Whelan [the composer]. We all became great mates. I think I fell in love with Steve at first sight.



Leeson Street: memorable times

Meanwhile, I was knitting my first sweater. A woman called Beri Brophy would drop into the apartment with bulging bags of fluffy, beautiful balls of colour. I worked with her for at least two years. She had mad, long red hair and was an extraordinary, eccentric woman with great stories.

One night, Steve and Adam came over for dinner and they saw the sweater. Steve said: "Oh, please make me one." And I did. The jumper I made for Steve was a million miles from a traditional style. It was a buzzing, modern, night-time jumper — in black mohair with images of the night sky.

I had always been playing around with knitting small things. I probably picked it up from my mother, because when we went back to school she would always make us a new sweater in amazing colours. It's very comfortable doing something your mum did for you as a child. She taught me how to do it.

Our family is creative, I suppose. I have seven sisters and two brothers. We had a fantastic, wild childhood. We were raised on a beautiful, sunny farm not far from town in north Co Dublin. Irene has the greatest people skills known to man. One of my sisters is a photographer, another is a computer whizz and another is working around the world on sustainable research.

In 1982, I met Michael Mortell [the designer] at an alternative fashion show, organised by Kieran Owens. Michael saw all my friends wearing my clothes, people such as Ursula Steiger [the photographer] and U2's stylist, Marian Smith, and Adam's girlfriend, Sheila Roche. All these interesting people in interesting clothes, stuff that would catch your eye. He asked if I'd like work on knitwear for his collection.

Greenhouse effects: DIY paper logmaker

What is it? A DIY paper log-maker that turns old newspapers, cardboard and even private documents into fuel for the fire.

How does it work? Tear up your old newspapers, documents or cardboard, and soak them in a bucket of water until they form a pulp. This takes at least an hour if you agitate the paper, but a few days of soaking is recommended. More than nine days is not advised, as it causes bacteria to form. A tablespoon of bleach in the bucket will speed up the process.

Fill the log-maker with pulp, depress the handle and, hey presto, you have a home-made paper briquette. Leave in a warm place, such as a greenhouse, for a week to dry out. The logs will burn as well as firewood for up to two hours.

How green is it? There's a bit of effort involved, but if you produce enough briquettes, you will dramatically cut down on your use of fuels from



non-renewable resources. For regular users of firewood that isn't replaced by replanting, DIY logs are definitely the greener option.

How much does it cost? €34.99 for a standard-sized log-maker.

How much will it save me? Despite the effort, payback is pretty immediate: essentially, you're producing fuel for free. The more briquettes you make, the more you save.

Where can I get it? From Ecostore.ie. Mention The Sunday Times Home section when you place your order to receive free nationwide delivery.

■ **Paint the house — save the planet?** Earthborn paints differ from conventional paints. They're VOC-free, acrylic-free and oil-free and certified free of harmful emissions, with ingredients sourced from plants, clay and earth pigments. Available from Ecoshop.ie, 01 287 2914, or see earthbornpaints.co.uk for a list of stockists throughout Ireland.

■ **Babies can now be green too.** The Irish website Ecobaby stocks a range of guilt-free disposable eco-nappies. They're pricier than leading brands, costing from €15.99 for a 48-pack (not including delivery), but they are 100% compostable and will even break down in a domestic worm composteer. www.ecobaby.ie

✦ property-ireland@sunday-times.ie



Keogh is inspired by her friends

I was about 23 at the time and it was no bother for me to go off and do this. I took a leave of absence from my job at St Vincent's. They encouraged me to do it; I don't think that I fitted in well with the medical hierarchy.

My work with Michael went on to sell around the world and did really well. I found that people wanted what I did and it was intoxicating. It was a young, energetic, joyful time. I travelled to Paris, London, New York. I spent the time finding my new lifestyle, making new friends, flowering. It was a constant party.

I found I was inspired by my friends; they each had their own energy field, their own vibration. Adam, for instance, inspired a Japanese Manchurian warrior style because he was like that — brave, courageous, strong and really solid. His whole aura is strength: he's the bass player, the driving force. Steve, then, was very magical, lunar and emotional. He's very mystical, he's not straight-up — not in a bad way, but in a mystical, multi-layered way.

I found everything I touched worked; everything I wanted came to me. All I do now started from there, so living at No 73 was a special time for me. It was the place where I fell in love, knitted my first sweater, found my creative journey, my buzz and made my best friends. It was a memorable era.

We didn't own the building so, as is the way when you are renting, the lease ended. But I was having the time of my life, so it didn't matter where I landed. I wasn't sad at leaving No 73 — I'm not sentimental. I had discovered what I could do for the rest of my life and I hope the people who live there now are having the time of their lives as well.

✦ *Lainey Keogh shows her spring/summer collection on Wednesday at the Westbury Hotel as part of Dublin Fashion Week*

Interview by Kate Butler

Swim against this tide of negativity

We know King Canute best for his unsuccessful attempts to hold back the tide. The 11th-century Viking king is ridiculed today for plonking his throne at the water's edge and commanding the incoming waves to go back.

But he never gets credit for his original motive: to show fawning courtiers that even the most powerful of kings are only human.

There's more than a touch of Canute in the saga of Martha's Vineyard, Jim Sheridan's house in Dalkey, which is now at the centre of a very public €4m lawsuit the film-maker is pursuing against the builders, architects and others involved in its construction.

Sheridan claims water has been seeping into the property and that two potential purchasers pulled out of buying it in 2007 because of a failure to sort out the problem. He wants €2m to fix it and another €2m to compensate for the subsequent fall in the property's value.

As one of the lucky few to get a look around this house soon after it was



THE MARKET
MARK KEENAN

finished, I marvelled at the fact that construction technology had come so far as to allow us to build a home that was at least partly in the sea. I assumed it was possible — why else would someone spend millions doing it?

The patio is covered at high tide and the spray of the waves pelts the master bedroom window. This is a home that

truly interacts with the waves — albeit more than its owner would now like.

Back then, we were at the height of the tiger economy and everyone was confident, bold, brash and brave, like Sheridan and his architects, De Blacam and Meagher. Sheridan unashamedly wanted to make a statement with Martha's Vineyard. He wanted to build a landmark home, a truly special house.

But last week even the neighbours took the opportunity to sling stones, bemoaning the disturbance caused over three years in building it.

I for one hope that the problems can be put right — because Martha's Vineyard is without doubt one of the most beautiful homes to be built in Dublin in decades.

Not only is it brave and exciting, but people forget that it's also been designed with a generous civic spirit. One of the reasons the house sits in the sea is to keep the best sea view in Dublin open for all who walk along that road.

Thanks to De Blacam and Meagher's extraordinary treatment of that site and

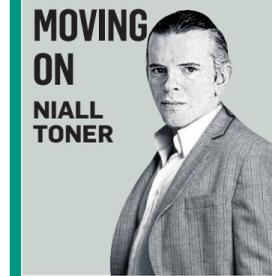
Sheridan's public spiritedness, a wide gap is open at road level. The downside for Sheridan is that the public can stroll across his roof if they so wish.

Even knowing about its alleged problems, the fact two people still wanted this house for €7m even after the property downturn had kicked in really speaks volumes.

The funny thing is that the world's most lauded house, Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright (1935), was also set in a unique spot on water and it, too, was plagued with problems and rows between the client (who called it "Rising Mildew" and "a seven-bucket house" because of its leaks) and the designer and builders.

Whether it succumbs to the waves or not, Martha's Vineyard should be applauded simply because it represents an attempt to create something truly different and special and the willingness to take a real risk to do that.

A touch of King Canute, perhaps, but also the sort of Wright stuff we all need right now.



MOVING ON
NIALL TONER

WOOD BUY?

British reporters say that **Ronnie Wood**, below, the Rolling Stone and honorary Kildareman, has been looking at homes in London. Wood and his young Russian girlfriend, Ekaterina Ivanova, recently ran the rule over a €4.25m house in Old Church Street in Chelsea, but the pair are now said to be looking in north London instead. Wood's estranged wife, Jo, is also living in London and the pair still own a Georgian rock star pad in Clane, Co Kildare, which is showing no sign of hitting the market, despite plenty of media speculation that it might as a result of the couple's split.

RYAN HIGH

Just where is **Gerry Ryan** living now? Well, depending on who you choose to believe, the beefy broadcaster with the penchant for scatological humour is either in a penthouse apartment in Ardoyne House, the skyscraping early 1970s block overlooking Herbert Park in Ballsbridge, or in the nearby Four Seasons Hotel. As far back as November, reports had Ryan resident in the luxury Ballsbridge apartment, supposedly owned by a friend of his. Currently, there is a four-bedroom unit for sale in the prestigious block for €1.69m, which Ryan could well afford, even with his recent pay cut.

PRICE OFF

The Dalkey-Killiney rockbroker belt may be suffering from Ireland's property crash, but things are not going much better for some Hollywood A-listers. The movie star **Nicholas Cage**, for example, has been forced to knock about 44% off the price of his 1,200-sq-ft LA pad, the one formerly owned by both Dean Martin and Tom Jones. Originally on the market for a cool \$35m (€19m), it is now a snip at \$19.75m.



✦ **Got any gossip?**
E-mail property.ireland@sunday-times.ie