

# Bob & Kate's – a success

by Jackie McLaughlin

EVERYTHING we see is created twice. First in the mind, then in reality. It takes a certain kind of something to dream of setting up a business and something even more to execute that dream.

When all around you has crumbled due to recession and there's no confidence to be found, but you push ahead anyway, well that takes a special kind of something. Audacity maybe, most definitely courage, and a vision.

In January 2013, Tommy Doran opened Bob & Kate's Gift & Home in Clane and relocated to Main Street, Clane in 2015 and is now celebrating four years of successful trading there.

The shop is stunningly decorated and the windows stand out and Bob & Kate's have been the recipient of many window display awards since the move in 2015.

The atmosphere in the shop is warm and very friendly and there's good banter with staff Ann, Elaine, Mariann, and of course Tommy. The placed is filled with luxury pieces, from the inexpensive to the reasonably priced, each section with its own theme.

Tommy is an advocate for the Irish crafter and stocks Irish made crafts

from jewellery to crystal and glass, to scented soaps, creams and candles, handmade cards, occasional and speciality mugs, plaques and wall creations, to name a few.

There are pieces that are classic, many that are quirky, some familiar, others original and numerous one-offs.

Every item purchased is beautifully wrapped free of charge and there is free on-street parking for two hours.

## Jewellery

Tommy has a story to tell for every product on the shelves of his shop.

He stocks a wide range of jewellery from Irish suppliers with timeless and elegant ranges from Cristallo Di Milano, Knight & Day and Kilkenny Silver who offer a wide range of Irish Hallmarked Sterling Silver pieces, from Claddagh to Celtic designs in pendants, earrings, rings and more.

He also stocks pieces from Tipperary Crystal which are beautifully packaged and reasonably priced.

Tommy makes a concerted effort to support Irish traders and stocks many products from 'start ups' saying himself: "you have to lend a hand as best you can."

He champions authentic Irish crafts, attending craft and gift shows around the country in a



Bob & Kate's in Clane on Main Street, an emporium of unique gifts under one roof.

bid to do so.

## Irish Handmade Glass

Next stop on the tour was Irish Handmade Glass, and on the shelf was a coloured glass tree, visually delicate but sturdy to hold, and standing proud.

"It's the tree of life," says Tommy.

Below it, two blue coloured glass love birds.

"These are bought a lot for engagements and weddings and indeed many a person buys these gifts and takes them to America," he says.

"Americans love Irish handmade gifts."

The shelves are full of beautiful glass pieces, even the Children of Lir swans. Each piece is etched with the signature IHG and the bigger pieces have certificates of authenticity and included in the box is the story of how each piece was made.

Their designs are varied, colourful and contemporary and very affordable. Bob & Kate's Gift & Home are the only stockist of Irish Handmade Glass products in Kildare.

## Scented Candles

Who doesn't love scented candles? In the shop in various locations are an array of

beautifully scented quality laden, organically sourced and environmentally produced Irish scented candles such as the Brooke & Shoals range.

They smell great and Brooke & Shoals use only natural wax, infused with fragrance oils and essential oils.

"They make little gift sets too, with hand cream and candles, scented sachets for your car, wardrobe or handbag."

Tommy gave me a gift of a candle to bring home, the award-winning Grapefruit, Lime and Pomelo. It's been burning in my living room all day. Divine!

Bob & Kate's stock the popular Max Benjamin and has a wide range of these beautiful candles in store as well as Cork produced La Bougie.

Another Irish candle maker from Galway is Julie Clarke. Julie's product comes with a difference, in that after the candle burns out, the candle holder, a charming translucent porcelain lantern, is perfect for a tea light. No waste there and again made of natural wax.

Yet another innovative Irish candlemaker, Eimear Wright Candlemaker who Tommy says has created something different.

"Using natural soy

wax blended with essential and fragrance oils, she uses a wooden wick. It's pine and when it burns it sounds like a crackling camp fire."

## Healing Lotions & Potions

On many of the shelves are creams and perfumes made of eco-friendly and recyclable materials and brimming with wellbeing.

Irish supplier Dublin Herbalists are proving very popular.

"Here's Skin Saviour which has Arnica and St John's Wort in it and is excellent for damaged skin, cuts and bruises, but also joint pain and arthritis but there's so much more in her range," says Tommy.

"My daughter particularly loves this one – it's Every Day Cleansing Gel with apricot and carrot seed oil, she washes off her makeup with this every night, it's brilliant."

On the next shelf are the cutest recyclable products made from bamboo cane.

Jo Browne from Carlow have a wide range of luxury products from the Natural Solid Perfume which rubs on and is made of essential oil and organic beeswax and perfect for travel to the beautiful Aroma Air Diffuser filling the space with a glorious perfume.

There are fabulous face creams and serums, soaps and even a facedoath all made with bamboo silk.

On we go to this delicious soap.

"Here we have Celtic Caprine Goats Milk Soap made in Ballyvaughan," says Tommy.

"Brilliant for anyone who has eczema or psoriasis or even people with delicate skin. It's beautifully scented, Lilac, Ocean Rain, Cedar and Saffron.

"And they all have a

Celtic design and retain the shape while using."

I bought one before I left, and I can vouch!

## From the Kiln to the Shelf

Bob & Kate's stock some beautiful pottery and one of the most colourful and innovative is Shannonbridge Pottery.

They make a wide range, with themes such as Burst of Colour, Orchard, Bee Garden and on and on.

The colours and designs are varied and magnificent, stripes, spots, shapes, pictures and stories.

Tommy says the company is always moving ahead with new ideas, patterns and designs.

On the shelf sits the daintiest soap dish and tray beside the cutest domes for candles.

Rossa handcrafted pottery is also available in Bob & Kate's who specialise in thrown ceramics and originate from the clays of Tipperary.

All are 100% hand-made, unique and signed by the potter. Earthware products available include candleholders, vases, serving bowls and more.

## Crossogue Preserves

"Here's another lovely success story," says Tommy.

"Crossogue Preserves in Tipperary who have won many awards, their latest product is Gin and Tonic marmalade, and there's the Lime Tequila one too.

"There are many jams like Apple Plum Jam and then there's the chutney – here's a Red Pepper Chilly Chutney, it's gorgeous with cheese and that.

"And here's the Irish Honey and this honey is like silk. It's gorgeous. There's also Strawberry

Wishing Bob & Kate's continued success

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Wishing Bob & Kate's  
continued success



# story in the heart of Clane

and Champagne as well, I could go on. "And for what you get it only costs about €4 a jar."

## Cards

Bob & Kate's stock a wide range of cards and there is a card for every occasion available as well as Irish handmade cards which can be personalised on demand.

## Wild Goose

"This is very popular," says Tommy. Based in Kinsale and set up in 1970, Wild Goose create a unique range of artefacts taking from Ireland's rich cultural heritage and the contemporary world.

Each piece starts with an inspiring thought, an image or an emotion and is given a physical form by each crafts-person.

"The newer ones reflect the modern life, with pieces to celebrate civil ceremonies. Themes like Take My Hand, From here to eternity, Always Sunrise Somewhere."

Other products available include scented drawer liners, wardrobe hangers, handmade fine art pictures, mugs with themes: her ladyship, his lordship, chief gardener, biker etc. Bamboo travel mugs, real feel roses with fragrant sprays, brilliantly made tin camper vans, motor-

Bob & Kate's in Clane on Main Street has special and memorable gifts inside or that unique piece for the home. BELOW: Tommy Doran of Bob & Kate's in Clane on Main Street is your guide to that special gift for the home.



bikes and caravans, a beautiful range of handbags and more, so much more.

But right in the heart of the shop is a charity initiative which is very close to Tommy's heart. He was moved when telling me this story. After a short illness himself he was recovering at home. On television an advert run about young children in India living in abject poverty and on the streets. It said that without help

many of the young girls end up destitute and on the streets. Having two daughters, this struck a chord with him. He made enquiries through the Hope Foundation and now sponsors a girl named Mona.

## Mona's Story

At five years old, young Mona was living under a flyover on the street with her mother. After collapsing, she was taken to hospital. Her condition was

described as very bad and she was diagnosed with Tuberculosis and treatment was started.

Her mother was found a few days later and instructed on the care required for Mona. Medication was prescribed, and her mother was told that the child was not to be left alone and should be sent to school.

After several visits by the Hope Child Watch Team, Mona was again found alone and had

not been taking her medication. Mona's mother was not able to care for her child so she was placed in one of HOPE's Protection Homes to complete her treatment and for her safety and protection.

She did have a sponsor for many years. They were unable to continue their sponsorship of Mona so Tommy kindly stepped in and took over her sponsorship. Mona is now twelve years old and is in school.

Tommy gets a handmade Christmas card and letter from Mona each year along with an education progress report. Mona dreams of becoming a craft teacher when she grows up. It only costs €250 to sponsor a child's education.

"The payment covers their uniform, books and costs. The Hope Foundation works to promote the protection of street and slum children in Kolkata.

"HOPE works to effect immediate and lasting change in the children's lives by providing healthcare, counselling and education.

## Tommy's Initiative

"I have set up an initiative here in the shop to continue raising funds, so my suppliers give free gifts and we sell tickets and the winner gets the gifts and the money goes towards the education of these street/slum children in Kolkata. I'm hoping to raise €1000 this year says Tommy, a worthy cause!!"

Tommy is very appreciative of the continued support from his customers who support business by shopping local in Clane. He would like to thank each and everyone who supports him daily.

Bob & Kate's is located on Main Street, Clane, County Kildare and a visit to this store is a must.

Too many more years of success for Bob & Kate's Gift and Home, from everyone at Cristallo Di Milano.

**Jas Manzor The Village Inn**  
Main Street, Clane.  
Tel: 045-868117

Best wishes & continued success Tommy from Seamus and Kitty Manzor

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