



VOLUME 32

ISSUE 2

MARCH 2026

Garden City News is a free newsletter produced by Barcaldine 60 & Better Program (which supports older people to stay safe and maintain and strengthen connections to the community and reduce risk of harm and social isolation) with contributions from others, for participants and older people in the community. Please share this newsletter. In Barcaldine, volunteers deliver newsletters, or you can collect one from The Willows. The newsletter can be emailed to you, or you can find it on Barcaldine Regional Council website.

Barcaldine 60 & Better Program Auspicee of



Funded by Queensland Department
of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and
Child Safety

Contact Information

The Willows

13 Willow Street

Barcaldine Q 4725

Phone: 4651 2354

Email: jeanw@barc.qld.gov.au

Hours of Operation:

Mon -Thu 8:00am - 1:00pm

Fri 8:00am - 12:00pm

Coordinator: Jean Williams

Committee Executive

President: P. Miller

Vice President: J. E. Williams

Secretary: C. Balderson

Treasurer: S. Jackson

Activity Times and Dates March 2026

Tai Chi: Tuesdays 9:00am

Thursdays 9:00am

Exercises: Thursdays 8:30am

Indoor Bowls: Thursdays 10:00am

Croquet: Fridays 8:00am

Line Dancing: Friday 9:30am

March

Talk: 10:00am 1st Tuesday 3rd March

Hoy: 10:00am 2nd Tuesday 10th March

Meeting: 10:00am 3rd Tuesday 17th March

Bingo: 10:00am 4th Tuesday 24th March

Easter Bingo 5th Tuesday 31st March

Other events during the year.

Elder Olympics

Senior's Month October

MISSION STATEMENT To enable older people at a community level to participate in decisions and activities which affect their health and wellbeing.

VISION STATEMENT Sustaining a strong age friendly community where older people are respected, valued and empowered.

DISCLAIMER The Barcaldine 60 & Better Program reserves the right to edit all articles as necessary. Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the 60 & Better Program. Information is of a general nature and not meant to be specific advice.

Co-ordinator's Notes

Welcome to the Garden City News for March. We've had plenty of rain and the sound of lawn mowers can be heard across the town. Insect repellent is probably on everybody's shopping list as well.

The year has started slowly with croquet being cancelled a couple of times. Our activities offer physical and social activity and interactions which have come about through consultation and feedback. We've introduced line dancing on Friday mornings in response to participant requests. We welcome all who'd like to share some time with us whether it's for the tai chi, exercise croquet or bowls or for hoy and bingo or just to pop in and enjoy a cuppa and a yarn.

Our guest for the talk at 10:00am on 3rd March will be Barcaldine Regional Council Director of Corporate and Community Services, Bianca Acimovic. Please come and make Bianca's acquaintance and share morning tea. We invite you to come and join us in our other activities too. As there is a fifth Tuesday in March we'll play Easter Bingo on 31st March. The bingo cards will have pictures not words this year.

As Seniors Social Inclusion Programs, 60 & Better Programs are funded by the Queensland Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety. Barcaldine Regional Council currently has a service agreement which expires on 30th June 2029. In providing community support, it is expected services will provide activities that are low cost or free and open to any older person in the local community. Services will bring older people together on a regular basis by providing a range of programs and activities to create social connections. This can aid increased awareness of healthy lifestyle options, reduce social isolation and improve links to other agencies and the community.

We look forward to your company at an activity.

This month, the patron saints of Wales and Ireland are commemorated. St David's legacy lives on through the phrase '*Gwnewch y pethau bychain mewn bywyd*' - 'Do the little things in life' - which is still a well-known maxim in Cymru (Wales). Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.

St Patrick was a missionary who spread Christianity across Ireland. St Patrick's Day is celebrated across the world with wearing green and parades and parties.

An Irish prayer

May your glass be ever full.

May the roof over your head be always strong.

And may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead.

Till Next Time Take Care "Wise men are not always silent, but they know when to be.". *Jean*

Congratulations, Condolences

Last month I omitted to acknowledge the people who have birthdays in February. Belated Birthday Greetings to Pam Miller, Lyn Batchelor, Wendy Boyd, Steve Egerton, Lyn Davies, Jill Williams, Lionel Walsh, Andy Stewart, Bill Balderson, Gloria McKean, Joan Argow and Clare Ogden.

We send Birthday Wishes to Jenny Thompson, Euan Miller Heather Tysoe, Norma Hauenschild, Ivan Bashford, Shirley Jackson Beccy Plumb and Gay Gesch who are having birthdays in March.

On a sadder note, we report the deaths of Bill Owens, Sissy (Malveen)Thompson, Eileen Newton, Jan Hartman and Jan Winter. We send our sincere sympathy to their families and friends. Those who knew them will have treasured memories.

Illicit drug use and older Australians

<https://adf.org.au/insights/aod-older-australians/>?

More older Australians are using illicit drugs. But this doesn't mean that there are more older adults using illicit drugs for the first time. It's more likely that people who have used illicit drugs in the past are continuing to do so as they age.

Illicit drug use includes:

non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs such as opioid-based pain relief medications, benzodiazepines etc.

illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants

other psychoactive substances, including inhalants such as petrol, paint or glue

In 2022/23, one in ten older Australians said they used illegal or non-prescribed drugs.

The most commonly used illicit drug by older Australians is cannabis.

What are the harms of illicit drug use for older adults?

Illicit drugs have similar harms to alcohol.

Drug use can lead to dependence (addiction), overdose, and death, especially among older Australians. In 2021, overdose caused 63% of drug-related hospitalisations and 95% of drug-related deaths in older adults.

Two thirds of drug overdose deaths involved more than one drug type. The top two most common drug types involved in overdose deaths were opioids, followed by benzodiazepines. Understanding how to take these types of drugs safely is important to reducing your risk of harm.

How can older adults reduce drug-related harms?

Illicit drug harms can be reduced by:

- not mixing illicit drugs with other substances such as alcohol and prescription medications
- starting low and going slow – testing with small amounts and taking doses with longer intervals, especially if you haven't used before or for a while

- understanding how long a drug stays in your system to reduce overdose risk
- ensuring your equipment is sterile if you inject drugs. You can get sterile injecting equipment through needle and syringe programs. Search for the 'Needle and Syringe Program' closest to you on the Australian Government's Health Direct website.
- talking to your doctor if you are worried about your drug use.

Free flu vaccine program extended

The free flu vaccination program in Queensland is being expanded in 2026. From 1 March every Queenslanders aged six months and over can access a free influenza vaccine ahead of the peak flu season.

A needle-free nasal spray flu vaccine will be available for eligible children aged two to five years for the first time.

The state government will also amend legislation to expand the scope of practice for trained health practitioners, meaning vaccinations can be administered by registered nurses, midwives, pharmacists, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

The change will allow the practitioners to vaccinate more age groups in a wider range of locations, including workplaces, at community and public events, and in remote First Nations communities.

Free flu vaccines will continue to be available in primary care settings, including GP clinics, community pharmacies, and community centres.

Health Consumers Queensland 12/02/26

Concession Cards

Eligibility for an Australian concession card generally depends on receiving specific government payments (like Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Job Seeker) or meeting income and residency tests for cards like the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card or Low-Income Health Care Card, providing discounts on bills, health, and transport. Key cards include the Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) for payment recipients, the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) for seniors not on a pension but meeting income/residency rules, and the Low-Income Health Care Card (LIHCC) for those on payments or meeting low income thresholds,

Stop. Check. Protect.

Tips for shopping safely online.

Shopping online can be easy and convenient, but not everyone you deal with online can be trusted. Many scams are sophisticated and difficult to recognise, but there are steps you can follow whenever you buy or sell online to help protect your money and personal information.

Stop. Take a moment before giving your money or personal information to anyone.

Check. Make sure the person or business you're dealing with is genuine.

Protect. Act quickly if anything seems suspicious.

Purchasing online

Some red flags that target buyers include:

- The web store or seller reviews are all positive and give little detail.
- An expensive item is offered at an unrealistically low price.
- The website has no returns information or terms and conditions.

The seller does not display an ABN, privacy policy or consumer rights information

Unusual payment requests, such as: money orders, pre-loaded or pre-paid cards, multiple PayIDs or bank accounts, requests to pay unfamiliar businesses, delivery messages from Australia Post or a courier service when you are not expecting a parcel.

Scams can result in: losing your money, receiving an item you didn't order, having your personal information stolen.

Selling online

Some warning signs of scams that target sellers include: buyers offering too much money, requests to refund fake overpayments, emails claiming payment that has not been received.

Safeguarding against scams

To help protect yourself against scammers you can:

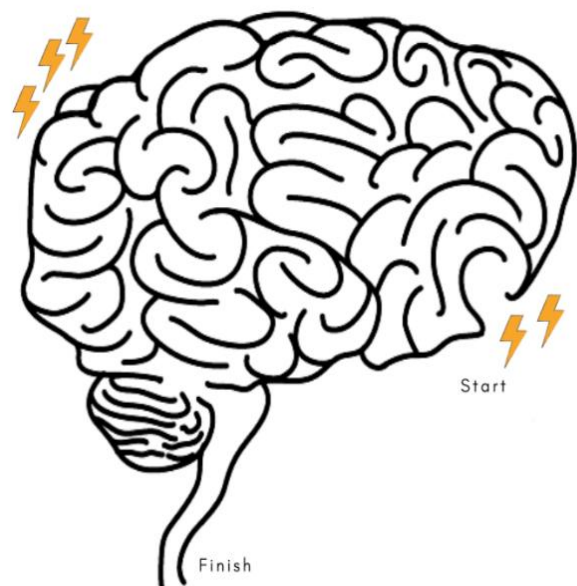
- check ABNs on **business.gov.au**

To help protect yourself against scammers you can:

- check ABNs on **business.gov.au**
- watch out for deals that are too good to be true
- avoid shopping through social media ads
- check web addresses for spelling errors
- read independent reviews
- research standard retail pricing
- use PayPal or credit card
- confirm payment has cleared before shipping.
- **What to do if you've been scammed**
- Contact your bank immediately and freeze credit cards.
- Change passwords and passphrases.
- Contact IDCARE if identity information is involved.
- Report the scam to Scamwatch at **scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam**
- beconnected.esafety.gov.au

Brain Maze

Instructions: Your brain communicates with the rest of your body using tiny jolts of electricity that travel through the brain. Use your pen or pencil to travel through the brain maze. For extra difficulty, can you name the 4 lobes within each hemisphere of the brain? Look up their functions or what each does.



Why regularly taking laxatives over the long term can be a bad idea

If you've ever been constipated you may have tried laxatives. They're easy to get without a prescription and often help get things moving. Certainly a lot of people use laxatives and some older people are very reliant on them to help with bowel function.

There are five main types of laxatives (all are oral):

1. bulk-forming laxatives (also known as fibre laxatives), which absorb water to form a soft, bulky stool and prompt normal contraction of bowel muscles. Common brands include Metamucil and Benefiber
2. osmotic laxatives, which draw water into the colon to allow easier passage of stool. Common brands include Osmolax, Actilax and Movicol
3. stool softeners such as docusate (brand name Coloxyl), which acts like a detergent and allows fat and water to mix in with hard stool – this makes it softer and easier to pass
4. stimulant laxatives, which trigger rhythmic contractions of the bowel muscle. Common brands include Dulcolax, Bisalax and Senna
5. lubricant laxatives, which coat the bowel and soften the stool. A common brand is Parachoc.

Before starting a laxative you should try dietary and lifestyle changes such as: eating more foods with fibre in them, such as kiwifruit, corn, oats and brown rice, drinking more water, doing more exercise.

But if constipation persists, you might think about a laxative. Consider starting with gentler options, such as the bulk-forming laxatives or stool softeners, and implement those dietary and lifestyle changes listed above.

It's a good idea to see your local doctor when starting a laxative; constipation may be a sign of something more concerning, especially if there are other symptoms such as rectal bleeding. Your

doctor can also advise whether laxatives might interact with any other medications you take.

Laxative abuse is when someone takes laxatives to lose weight through frequent and repeated use of laxatives. The most common symptom of laxative abuse is diarrhoea, which can mean abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting and weight loss.

But laxative abuse can also disrupt the body's electrolytes. The main electrolyte in poo is potassium. As the body loses more and more potassium through diarrhoea, you can end up with lower blood potassium levels.

This can lead to generalised muscle weakness, heart complications, changes in heart rhythm, in extreme cases, stopping your heart beat, which can lead to death.

A 2020 systematic review of case reports found that laxative abuse can cause mild to severe cases of cardiac complications. Laxative abuse can also lower other electrolytes, such as calcium and magnesium, leading to painful muscle contractions.

Occasionally the kidney can be severely affected by chronic laxative abuse. If you take just the recommended dose of laxatives, though, the risk of serious electrolyte complications is extremely low.

Laxative abuse is commonly associated with eating disorders, so it's important anyone found to be abusing laxatives also undergo a comprehensive mental health assessment. A plan might be needed to address the broader problem

Laxatives are obtained easily without a prescription and are very widely used in the community. They are certainly helpful for treating chronic constipation. However, they can cause side effects such as diarrhoea and electrolyte imbalances. Long-term use and overuse can lead to problems. It's always a good idea to consult your doctor before starting laxatives, especially if you have other medical issues or are taking other medications.

Source: <https://theconversation.com/why-regularly-taking-laxatives-over-the-long-term-can-be-a-bad-idea->

Crispy Smashed Potatoes with Herb Sauce

1kg baby potatoes
4 cloves of garlic, crushed,
1 cup flat-leaf parsley, finely shredded
2 spring onions, finely sliced,
½ lemon, juiced and zested
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1.5 tbsp olive oil
¾ cup low-fat Greek yoghurt



Pre-heat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced) and line a large baking pan with baking paper. Place potatoes in a large saucepan of cold water and bring to the boil. Boil for 10 minutes or until tender. Drain potatoes in a colander and then pour out onto the baking pan.

Using the bottom of a small glass, press down firmly on each potato to lightly ‘smash.’

In a small bowl, combine the garlic, parsley, onion, lemon zest, Dijon mustard and olive oil. Mix well and brush half the salsa over the potatoes. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the potatoes are golden and crisp.

To serve, drizzle over the remaining salsa and serve alongside the Greek yoghurt. Feel free to swap potatoes for 1kg of sweet potato. Simply cut into 3cm long cubes before cooking

Gingerbread Overnight Wheat Biscuits

2 wheat cereal biscuits
¼ tsp mixed spice
⅛ tsp ground ginger
⅓ cup milk
150g Greek yoghurt
Cinnamon spice, to dust



In a bowl or small container, crush wheat biscuits and mix them with spices and milk. This forms the base. Spread yoghurt over the base. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Cover and keep in fridge overnight or for at least 2 hours.

This breakfast recipe makes it easy to get a healthy start to your day without much brain power. Make it ahead of time and leave in the fridge overnight, for a grab-and-go option in the morning.

Tropical Frozen Yoghurt Bites

3 ripe bananas, mashed
2 passionfruit, pulp retained
227g canned crushed pineapple in juice, drained
1 ½ cups low-fat Greek yoghurt

Place the bananas, passionfruit pulp and pineapple in a large mixing bowl. Add the Greek yoghurt and mix together using an electric mixer. Using spoon gently pour scoop the yoghurt mixture into two ice-cube trays and smooth the tops of the trays. 2 Place in the freezer and freeze for roughly 3 hours, or until firm and set, but not frozen. Serve immediately.

Feel free to use 3 tablespoons of canned passionfruit pulp, instead of fresh passionfruit, if you would prefer. Feel free to use a food processor instead of the electric mixer, if you would prefer. Alternatively, you could also roughly mass the fruit together and then stir in the Greek yoghurt. Feel free to use ice-block moulds instead of the ice cube trays, if you would prefer. These ice cube bites could also be used as the base of a smoothie. Blend up 4-6 cubes with a cup of low-fat milk for a tasty tropical smoothie.

Dietary guideline 1 eat for health.gov.au

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.

Achieving and maintaining a [healthy weight](#) can help older people keep more active, manage their [weight](#) can help older people keep more active, manage their health problems better and live life more. The best way to do this is to try to follow the recommended number of serves from the five food groups and avoid extra serves and discretionary foods and drinks.

However, we also know that people who are over 65 years often have better health if they carry a little extra weight and have a slightly higher body mass index. Sometimes too, people with chronic health problems can put themselves at risk of malnutrition by restricting what they eat. If you are unsure about the benefits of losing extra weight, talk to your health professional.

Shoes for hip and knee arthritis, (Excerpt from The Conversation 24/02/2026).

People with hip and knee osteoarthritis are advised to wear “appropriate footwear” to minimise their pain. Osteoarthritis is a condition that affects the tissues in and around a joint, including bone, cartilage, ligaments and muscles. It is more common in older people, and people with excess body weight. It causes joint pain and stiffness and can lead to disability.



About 2.35 million Australians have osteoarthritis and this number is predicted to increase as the population ages and obesity rates rise. Osteoarthritis commonly affects the hip and knee joints, making it difficult to walk. There is no cure, so self-management is important. That includes wearing the right type of shoes.

There are many causes of osteoarthritis, but excessive force inside the joint when someone is walking is thought to play a role. Excessive joint forces can also increase the chance of osteoarthritis worsening over time. Shoes are our connection to the ground and can influence how forces are transmitted up the leg during every step. Some shoe features are particularly important.

Shoes with higher heels increase joint forces. For example, shoes with six-centimetre heels increase knee forces by an average 23% compared to walking barefoot. Some shoes come with supportive features, such as insoles that support the arches. Other supportive features include being made with a stiffer material in the sole or heel.

Many people, and clinicians, think these stable and supportive shoe features are best for people with osteoarthritis. But biomechanical research shows shoes with these supportive features actually *increase* knee force by up to 15% compared to shoes without them. Arch-supporting insoles also increase knee force by up to 6% when added to shoes.

Our biomechanical research from 2017 in people with knee osteoarthritis showed flat flexible shoes reduced knee forces by an average 9%

compared to stable supportive shoe styles. This suggests flat flexible shoes could be better for osteoarthritis. To find out, we conducted two clinical trials to look at people’s pain levels.

Our new clinical trial involved 120 people with *hip* osteoarthritis. They were randomised to wear different types of flat flexible shoes, such as flexible ballet flats, or different types of stable supportive shoes, such as supportive runners. People were asked to wear their shoes for at least six hours a day. After six months we measured the change in hip pain when they walked.

We found flat flexible shoes were no better than stable supportive shoes for reducing hip pain. These findings differ to those from our 2021 clinical trial in 164 people with *knee* osteoarthritis. In that trial, we found wearing stable supportive shoes for six months reduced knee pain when walking by an average 63% more than wearing flat flexible shoes.

It’s unclear why findings differed between the knee and hip. But it might be because joint forces are higher in knee compared to hip osteoarthritis, and so there may be greater potential for stable supportive shoes to reduce knee forces, and therefore knee pain.

In both trials, more complications, such as foot pain, were reported by people who wore flat flexible shoes. This might be because these shoe styles provide less protection for the feet. For people with knee osteoarthritis, stable supportive shoes are likely to be more beneficial than flat flexible ones.

For people with hip osteoarthritis, neither shoe type is better than the other for improving hip pain. But for all older people – including those with hip and knee osteoarthritis – it is sensible to avoid ill-fitting shoes, as well as shoes with high or narrow heels, due to an increased risk of falls.

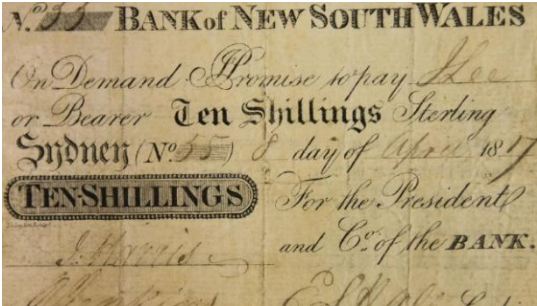
For younger people with knee or hip osteoarthritis but who are not at risk of falls, it may still be advisable to avoid high heels given their potential to increase joint forces.



From The Australian Book of Records <https://theaustralianbookofrecords.com.au/>

Australia's Whitest Beach: Lucky Bay, Esperance, WA is one of the most stunning and unique bays in Australia. Spanning over 5 kilometres, offering a magnificent stretch of the whitest beach in Australia and sparkling clear blue water.

The World's Largest Fringing Reef: Ningaloo Marine Park stretches approximately 300km along the west coast of the Cape Range Peninsula near Exmouth, WA approximately 1200km north of Perth. The total area of the reserve is 2435 km². Ningaloo Reef, is the longest fringing barrier reef in Australia, and the only example in the world of extensive fringing coral reef on the west coast of a continent.



Australia's First Bank Note: The colony of NSW printed its (and Australia's) first bank notes in 1817 and on it featured an assurance from the Bank of New South Wales. The bank wanted to assure customers it intended to be fair and equitable as the financial underpinning of a growing colony.

Courtesy of Australian Museum.



Two burglars were robbing an apartment. One said, "Somebody is coming in the door! Quick, jump out the window!" And the other guy said, "Are you out of your mind? We're on the thirteenth floor!" And the first guy said, "This is no time to be superstitious!"

A mother told her mischievous son

"Every time you are bad I get another grey hair."

"Gee Mum, You must have been really bad when you were young.

Just look at grandma's hair." replied the son.

Dad: What's wrong son?

Son: I lost my dog.

Dad: Don't cry, we'll put an ad in the paper.

Son: That won't help, the dog can't read.

A bellhop passed through the hall of the St. Francis Hotel whistling loudly.

"Young man," said Manager Woods sternly, "you should know that it is against the rules of this hotel for an employee to whistle while on duty."

"I am not whistling, sir," replied the boy, "I'm paging Mrs. Jones's dog."



MARCH 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1 St David's Day
2 Men's Shed	3 60 + Tai Chi Talk	4 Men's Shed Cultural Assn CHSP	5 Exercises Tai Chi Indoor Bowls	6 Croquet Line Dancing	7 World Day of Prayer Anglican Church Races	8 International Women's Day
9 Men's Shed	10 60 + Tai Chi 60 + Hoy	11 Men's Shed Cultural Assn	12 Exercises Tai Chi Indoor Bowls	13 Croquet Line Dancing	14 Barcy Ball	15
16 Men's Shed	17 60 + Tai Chi 60 + Meeting St Patrick's Day	18 Men's Shed Cultural Assn Mass at <i>The Willows</i> CHSP	19 Exercises Tai Chi Indoor Bowls	20 Croquet Line Dancing	21 Equinox	22
23 Men's Shed	24 60 + Tai Chi 60 + Bingo	25 Men's Shed Anointing Cultural Assn	26 Exercises Tai Chi Indoor Bowls	27 Croquet Line Dancing	28	29
30 Men's Shed	31 60 + Tai Chi Easter Bingo				Easter 3- 6 th April	

Lobes of the Brain
Frontal, Parietal, Temporal, Occipital

9 Letter word NIGHTMARE

9 Letter Word Square

Find as many words as possible made from the letters in the grid below. Each letter may only be used once. Always include the central letter in the words

Make words with a minimum of 4 letters.

N	G	E
I	A	M
R	T	H

Unscramble the letters below to make words relating to all things Irish.

1. satin tackrip
2. rockhams
3. nilbud
4. genre
5. unclhaper
6. hisir candng
7. pubrelic
8. phar
9. topato fineam
10. icelag
11. rouf feal colver
12. top fo glod
13. iownbar
14. ricemilk
15. elderam elsi

Split Word – Fruits
 APPLE, ORANGE, BANANA, LEMON,
 WATERMELON, STRAWBERRY,

SPLIT WORDS – Fruits

Each section below contains one part of a word. Your task is putting them together to form the names of fruits. There is a total of 9 words on the page.

LE	WATER	NA
PINAP	ORAN	MAN
BERRY	STRAW	APP
ON	ME	MELON
BANA	GE	PLE
LI	LEM	GO

Solutions to: Anagrams - Ireland

1. Saint Patrick
2. Shamrock
3. Dublin
4. Green
5. Leprechaun
6. Irish dancing
7. Republic
8. Harp
9. Potato famine
10. Gaelic
11. Four leaf clover
12. Pot of gold
13. Rainbow
14. Limerick
15. Emerald Isle