



THE INNOVATION JOURNEY



Originally from London and now living in Kinvara, county Galway, Mary Bermingham co-founded the Burren Nature Sanctuary along with her husband, Roy. Mary first visited Kinvara over 30 years ago, not planning it would become her professional and personal home. Always a nature lover, Mary is also an engineer by trade.

Opened in 2013, the Burren Nature Sanctuary aims to be an accessible place where all ages can engage with and learn about nature conservation. Originally a 50-acre certified organic suckler cow farm, the farm is now devoted to nature conservation. The organic farm was not a full-time occupation, as both Mary and Roy worked full-time. The cows still play a role on the farm, doing a conservation job in the wildflower meadow.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

The Burren Nature Sanctuary is a sanctuary for biodiversity in a biodiversity crisis. It provides a local

cultural and environmental resource that builds on what exists already in the Burren, as a hugely diverse place for flora and fauna. It is a varied enterprise that includes a café, gift shop, visitor centre, 'slow cabin' visitor accommodation, while also delivering guided walks and courses. It provides employment, attracts people to the locality and delivers environmental education to visitors and the local community.

The Burren Nature Sanctuary is one part of a range of practices led by Mary, to engage people with nature. This is with the wider goal that nature engagement is a first step in tackling the climate and biodiversity crisis. Mary produces the 'Nature Magic podcast' and published 'the Nature Magic' book that documents years of experience on what works in environmental education and nature engagement. The impact also extends to collaborations where the Burren Nature Sanctuary also works with partners to understand their impact and new approaches to biodiversity conservation. Partners include the National Botanic Gardens and Botany and Plant science Department in the University of Galway.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.burrennaturesanctuary.ie/>